



Yolo County Homeless Count 2026

Press Release and Executive Summary

January 27, 2026

The Yolo County Homeless and Poverty Action Coalition in collaboration with Yolo County, Social Servicing Organizations, Nonprofits, and other key Community Stakeholders conducted its 2026 Homeless Count on January 27, 2026. The Homeless Count, also known as the Point-in-Time (PIT) Count, is a survey of individuals and families identified as experiencing sheltered and unsheltered homelessness within the boundaries of Yolo County on a single night in January.

Why is There a PIT Count?

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires a count bi-annually of people experiencing homelessness who are unsheltered or sheltered in emergency shelter, transitional housing, and Safe Havens on a single night. The count data is critical to determine the scope of homelessness, define existing resources, and identify any gaps in services in Yolo County. Continuums of Care (CoCs) must also conduct a count of unsheltered people experiencing homelessness in even-numbered years.

The 2026 count identified **912 people** experiencing homelessness on January 27, 2026. When considering the numbers in this report, it is important to recognize that they reflect only those persons identified as homeless within the County on a single day. Many individuals and families move in and out of homelessness during a year, so it's important to understand that the actual number of people experiencing homelessness in 2026 could differ periodically from the numbers reflected in this overview and summary.

Total Sheltered and Unsheltered Final Numbers by Jurisdiction

	Davis	West Sacramento	Woodland	Winters and Rural	Total Countywide
Sheltered	53	159	103	0	315
Unsheltered	141	199	217	40	597
Combined Total	194	358	320	40	912

Davis:

Sheltered **39** → **53** **+36%**
 Unsheltered **123** → **141** **+15%**

Woodland:

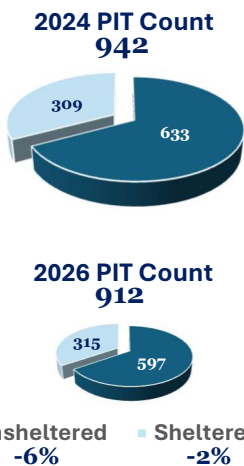
Sheltered **165** → **103** **-38%**
 Unsheltered **251** → **217** **-14%**

West Sacramento:

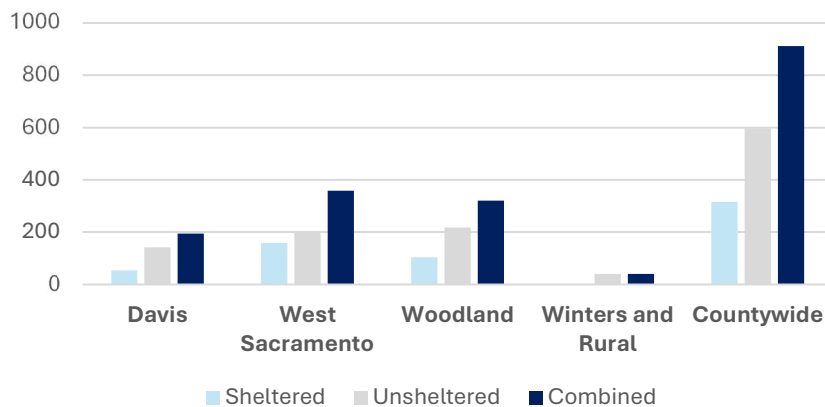
Sheltered **105** → **159** **+51%**
 Unsheltered **184** → **199** **+8%**

Winters & Rural:

Sheltered **0** → **0** **0%**
 Unsheltered **75** → **40** **-47%**



Homelessness by Comparison

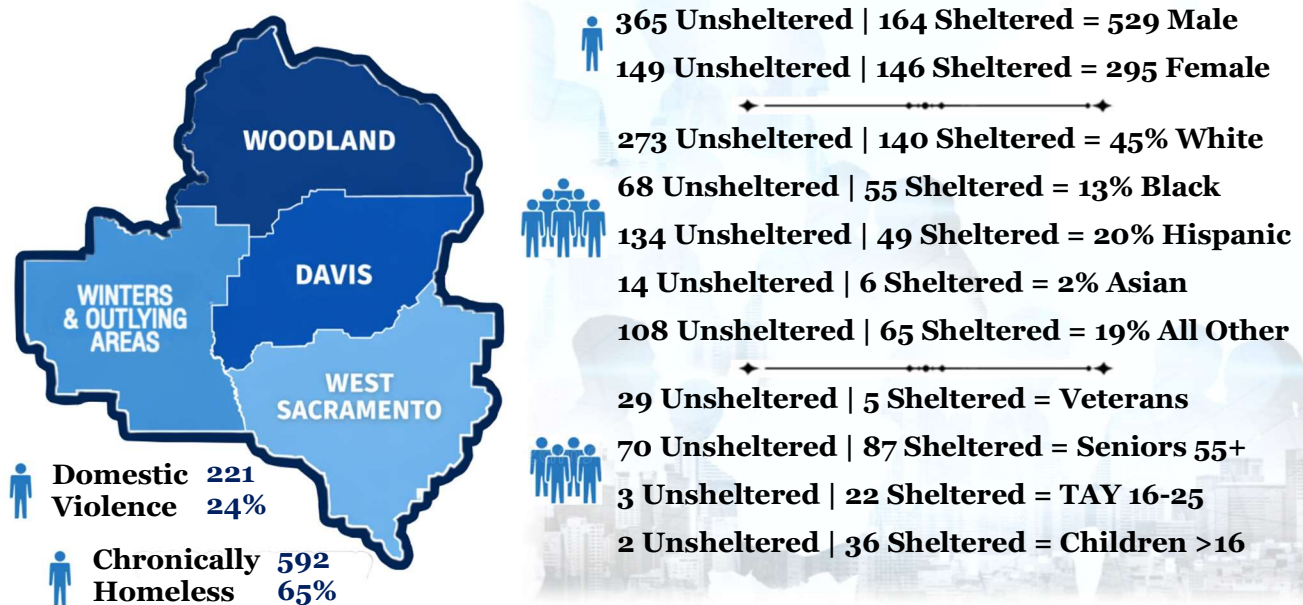


What are the Findings of the PIT Count?

The PIT identified **912** homeless individuals in Yolo County, a decrease of 30 from last bi-annual count when 942 people were counted. The unsheltered count portion revealed a total of **597** individuals. HUD defines an unsheltered individual as a person whose primary nighttime residence is a place not meant for human habitation. This includes locations most commonly seen when considering an individual homeless, such as streets, sidewalks, encampments, automobiles/vehicles, under bridges, abandoned buildings, yet also locations that are not so common because of visibility or traffic, such as parks, riverbeds, bus/train/light rail public transit areas, and even doorways or open outside businesses are now becoming common locations. The hope is to understand the condition of homelessness towards solutions and to discover ways to humanely ease any suffering while solutions are being discovered.

Considering these factors the local CoC, the County, Law Enforcement, service providers, and outreach teams conducted the unsheltered count. Trained staff and community workers were deployed in the early morning hours to canvass predetermined geographic zones across Woodland (**217**), Davis (**141**), West Sacramento (**199**), Winters (**40**), and rural areas. Using a combination of street outreach techniques, visual observation, and brief surveys, enumerators identified individuals staying in places not meant for human habitation, such as encampments, vehicles, and public spaces. The individual surveys are used to discover several relevant information points.

Yolo County at a Glance



The sheltered PIT Count in Yolo County was conducted in alignment with requirements from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development by collecting data from all emergency shelters, transitional housing, and safe haven programs on January 27th. The **315** sheltered homeless individuals were accounted for by the participating providers that extracted the client level data directly from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to capture individuals and households enrolled in programs, ensuring accuracy and deduplication. For programs not fully integrated into HMIS, the County utilized reports and data captured in Systems Performance Reports as well as the Survey123 system to securely collect standardized participant information, which is then reviewed, validated, and merged with HMIS data. This combined approach ensures comprehensive coverage of sheltered populations, consistent data quality, and compliance with HUD PIT Count reporting standards.

What does this information tell us?

It is important to acknowledge that while the PIT Count is only a one day snapshot of the state of homelessness in Yolo County, these metrics reveal that homelessness here in Yolo County is both widespread and highly concentrated among single adults, especially unsheltered adults age 25–54, many of whom report long stays in the county, chronic homelessness, and significant health challenges like serious mental illness, substance use disorders, and physical or developmental disabilities. They also show that most people are living outside or in vehicles rather than in shelters or transitional housing, and that homelessness has grown substantially since 2017 even after a slight decline since 2024, with **912** people homeless in 2026 (**597** unsheltered, **315** sheltered)

For understanding why people in the community become homeless, the data highlight keys local drivers and risk factors. Many unsheltered people report growing up in Yolo County, having family here (**381 or 64% of the total counted**), or moving from nearby Sacramento or other California communities, which underscores local and regional housing market pressures rather than people “coming here for services.” High rates of eviction, criminal convictions, histories of foster care, domestic violence (**221 or 24% of the total counted**), and disabling conditions point to structural factors like inadequate affordable housing, tenant protections, and availability/funding of services connected to behavioral health and re-entry support as major contributors to homelessness.

For creating better policies, programs, and services, the demographic and subpopulation details can point us directly to priority interventions. The prevalence of chronic homelessness (**592 or 65% of the total counted**) and disabilities supports investments in permanent supportive housing and low-barrier shelter paired with robust behavioral health care and disability benefit enrollment. Household data showing that the vast majority are single-adult households, with a smaller but still significant group in families with children, suggests the need for differentiated program models e.g., scattered-site PSH and diversion for single adults alongside rapid re-housing and prevention for families.

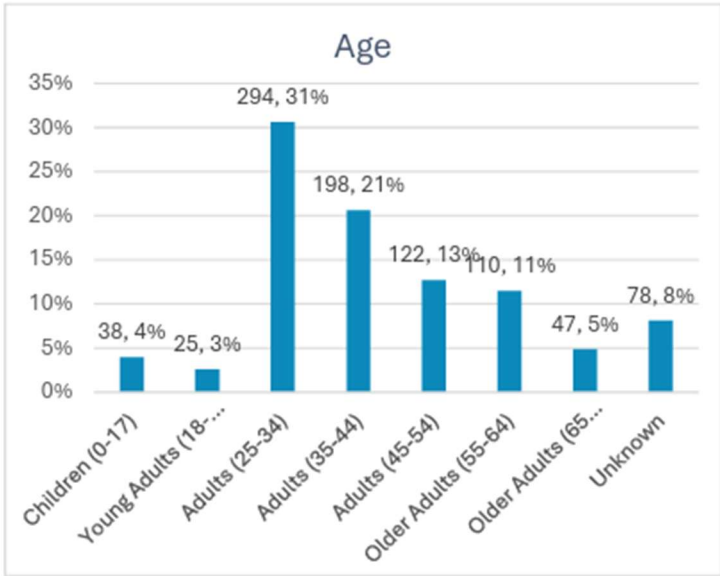
The time-series trend (2009–2026) is crucial for tracking progress in reducing homelessness and evaluating policy impacts. The countywide combined count rising from **459** in 2017 to **746** in 2022 and **912** in 2026, with especially sharp growth in unsheltered homelessness since 2019, shows that current efforts have not been sufficient to keep pace with the need, even where sheltered capacity has increased modestly. These trend lines give leaders a concrete way to set measurable goals (for example, reducing unsheltered homelessness by a set percentage by a target year) and to test whether new strategies actually change the numbers over time.

For educating and involving the community, the PIT metrics translate a complex issue into understandable facts that can dispel myths and build support. Showing where people sleep (mostly outside, in cars, or makeshift locations), how long they have lived in Yolo County, and the extent of trauma, disability, and victimization helps residents see homelessness as a community health and safety issue, not simply a matter of individual choice. These numbers can be used in public presentations, neighborhood meetings, and school or faith-based outreach to ground conversations in reality and invite volunteers and advocates into targeted efforts like outreach, landlord engagement, and prevention.

Finally, for securing funding from federal, state, local, and private sources, the PIT dataset provides the quantitative backbone funders expect. Clear counts of total, unsheltered, chronic, veteran, and survivor populations, linked to demonstrated trends over nearly two decades, are exactly the metrics required in HUD CoC applications, state homelessness grants, and many private foundation proposals. The level of detail by city, household type, and health condition allows the county and cities to justify specific budget requests (e.g., for PSH units, behavioral health teams, or domestic violence related housing) and to demonstrate accountability by tying future funding renewals to changes in these same indicators.

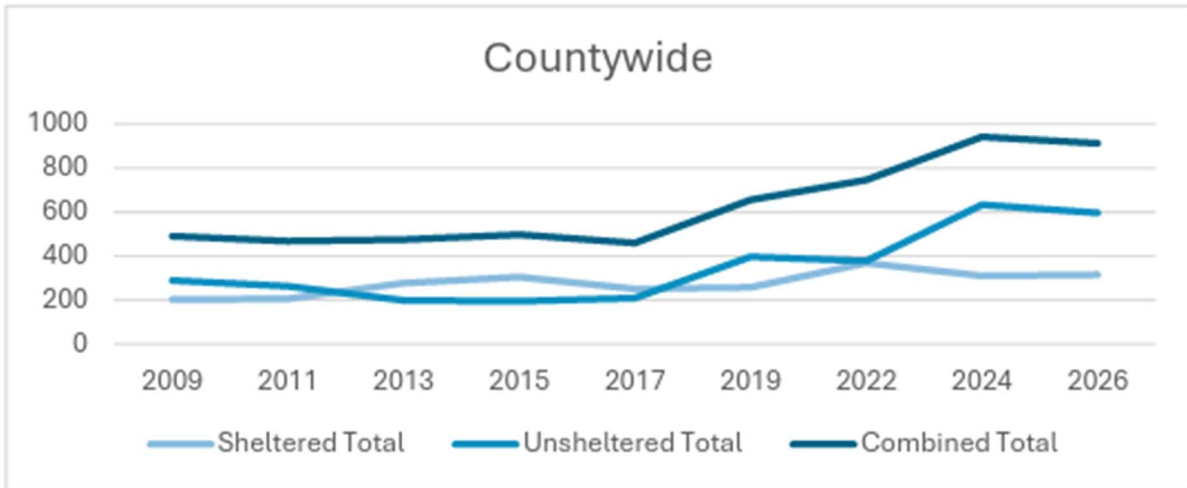
Demographics

AGE

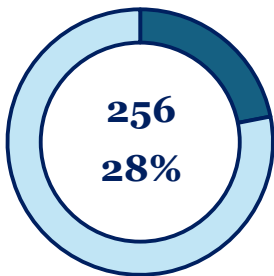


Sheltered vs. Unsheltered		
Age Group	Sheltered	Unsheltered
Children (0-17)	36	2
Young Adults (18-24)	22	3
Adults (25-34)	35	259
Adults (35-44)	59	139
Adults (45-54)	52	70
Older Adults (55-64)	65	45
Older Adults (65 to older)	22	25
Unknown	24	54
	315	597

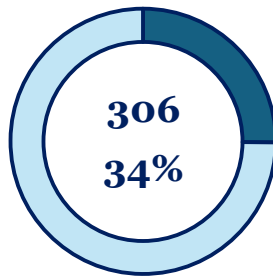
HOMELESSNESS OVER TIME (2009-2026)



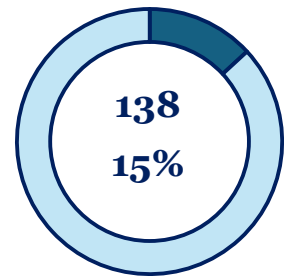
Serious Mental Illness



Substance Use Disorder



Physical Illness or Disability



Sleeping Locations

Location Type	Davis	West Sacramento	Woodland	Winters and Rural	Total
<u>Sheltered</u>					
Emergency Shelter (Year-Round)	36	159	81	0	276
Emergency Shelter (Seasonal)	7	0	0	0	7
Emergency Shelter (Hotel/Motel)	0	0	0	0	0
Transitional Housing	10	0	22	0	32
Sheltered Total	53	159	103	0	315
<u>Unsheltered</u>					
Abandoned Building	1	0	0	1	2
Building not meant for Sleeping	5	0	0	1	6
Outside	71	170	150	18	409
Car, Camper, RV (no hookups)	14	13	33	8	68
Someone Else's Home (outside)	10	0	15	8	33
Institution (released after midnight)	0	0	2	0	2
Hospital	0	0	1	0	1
Motel (agency paid, homeless)	0	0	1	0	1
Motel (<u>self paid</u>)	0	0	2	0	2
Unknown	40	16	13	4	73
Unsheltered Total	141	199	217	40	597

Successes

Countywide, partners were able to conduct a comprehensive PIT count that identified **912** people experiencing homelessness in a single day, with consistent methods and detailed data on shelter status, demographics, health, and history of homelessness. The system is successfully reaching many people with the highest needs: a large share meets HUD's definition of chronic homelessness, and hundreds of adults with serious mental illness, substance use disorders, disabilities, and histories of domestic violence are now visible in the data for planning and funding. The data also show that emergency shelter and transitional housing capacity has grown compared with earlier years, and that the county can produce multi-year trend data (2009–2026) that funders and policymakers expect.

Challenges

The most significant countywide challenge is that overall homelessness remains extremely high and has increased sharply since 2017, driven largely by unsheltered homelessness (**597** people unsheltered versus **315** sheltered in 2026). Most people counted are single adults, many with long lengths of stay in the county and high rates of chronic homelessness, serious mental illness, substance use disorders, physical and developmental disabilities, and trauma histories, indicating that current housing and behavioral health resources are not sufficient to meet the complexity of need. High numbers reporting prior evictions, criminal convictions, foster care involvement, and domestic violence also reveal systemic gaps in prevention, re-entry support, and safety-net services, while the persistence of large unsheltered numbers suggests limited access to low-barrier shelter and permanent housing options.

Recommended improvements

Countywide, partners could strengthen collaboration by setting shared goals tied directly to these metrics (for example, agreed upon targets for reducing unsheltered and chronic homelessness over the next few years with significant investment in our interim housing/shelter system throughout the county, and aligning housing, outreach, and behavioral health resources to those goals). The data points to the need for more permanent supportive housing and intensive services for people with disabling conditions, expanded homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing for those at risk of eviction or fleeing violence, and better coordination with systems like health care, justice, child welfare, and domestic violence services. Continued refinement of data collection (including standard training and streamlined surveys) and regular countywide review of PIT and other performance data can help ensure that collaborative strategies are evaluated, adjusted, and clearly communicated to the community and to funders.

Other Things we Consider

Things We Want the Community to Know

On the night of the 2026 Point-in-Time (PIT) Count, **912** people were experiencing homelessness in Yolo County, including **597** people living unsheltered and **315** staying in shelters or transitional housing. This is a one-night snapshot, not a full-year total, and it is shaped by conditions on that specific evening.

About the Decreases in Woodland and Countywide

We want the community to understand that the decreases seen in Woodland and in the overall county totals compared to 2024 do not necessarily mean homelessness has “gone away” or that fewer people needed help. It’s important to consider factors like the 2026 count took place during a period of storm driven weather, and some people who are usually visible outdoors may have found temporary places to stay (like friends’ couches, garages, or other locations) where they were harder to locate and count. In other cases, people may have moved to different areas or stayed out of sight because of the conditions, which can lower the PIT number even if the underlying level of homelessness has not changed as much.

These decreases also sit within a longer-term trend of significant growth in homelessness since 2017, especially among people living unsheltered. When we interpret a single year’s drop, we must look at the bigger picture: multi-year data, shelter and housing capacity, and what outreach staff see every day in our community. A lower PIT number in one year should be read as “encouraging but cautious,” not as proof that the problem is solved.

What a PIT Count can and cannot tell us

The PIT Count is an important tool, but it has limits. It helps us:

- Estimate how many people are homeless on day/one winter night.
- Understand who is homeless (age, household type, health and disability status, veteran status, experiences of violence, etc.).
- Track broad trends over time and show funders that we are using data to guide decisions.

At the same time, the PIT Count:

- Will always miss some people, especially those who are hidden, staying temporarily with others, or reluctant to engage.
- Can be affected by weather, safety concerns, and how many volunteers and outreach workers are available.
- Does not capture everyone who is doubled up, on the verge of eviction, or otherwise at elevated risk of homelessness.

Why this matters for our community

We share these numbers because they help the community see that homelessness is a local issue affecting neighbors, families, seniors, veterans, and people with serious health challenges. The data helps us make the case for more affordable housing, better mental health and substance use services, and stronger prevention efforts. They also show potential funders that Yolo County is serious about using data to plan and to measure progress.

Most importantly, we want people to know that a PIT Count is a starting point for action, not the end of the story. Community members can support solutions by learning about the data, supporting evidence-based programs, reducing stigma, and working together to expand housing and services so that fewer people are experiencing homelessness in the first place.

Conclusion

The 2026 Yolo County Homeless Count identified 912 individuals experiencing homelessness on January 27, 2026. While this represents a slight decrease from the 2024 count (942 individuals), it demonstrates the ongoing significant need for homeless services and housing solutions in Yolo County.

Key findings include:

- 65.4% of individuals were unsheltered (597 people)
- 34.6% were in sheltered locations (315 people)
- 64.9% meet HUD's definition of chronic homelessness (592 people)
- West Sacramento saw a significant increase (289 in 2024 to 358 in 2026, up 23.9%)
- Woodland experienced a decrease (416 in 2024 to 320 in 2026, down 23.1%)
- Davis increased moderately (162 in 2024 to 194 in 2026, up 19.8%)
- Winters and Rural areas decreased significantly (75 in 2024 to 40 in 2026, down 46.7%)

The count demonstrates the critical need for continued investment in homeless prevention, emergency shelter, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing solutions across Yolo County. The high percentage of chronically homeless individuals with disabilities underscores the importance of coordinated mental health, substance use treatment, and supportive services.

The innovative approaches used this year, including extensive pre-planning with GIS mapping, coordinated team deployment, and technology-assisted methods, provide a model for future counters and ongoing homeless outreach efforts.