

2024 Point in Time Count

People Experiencing Homelessness in Maine

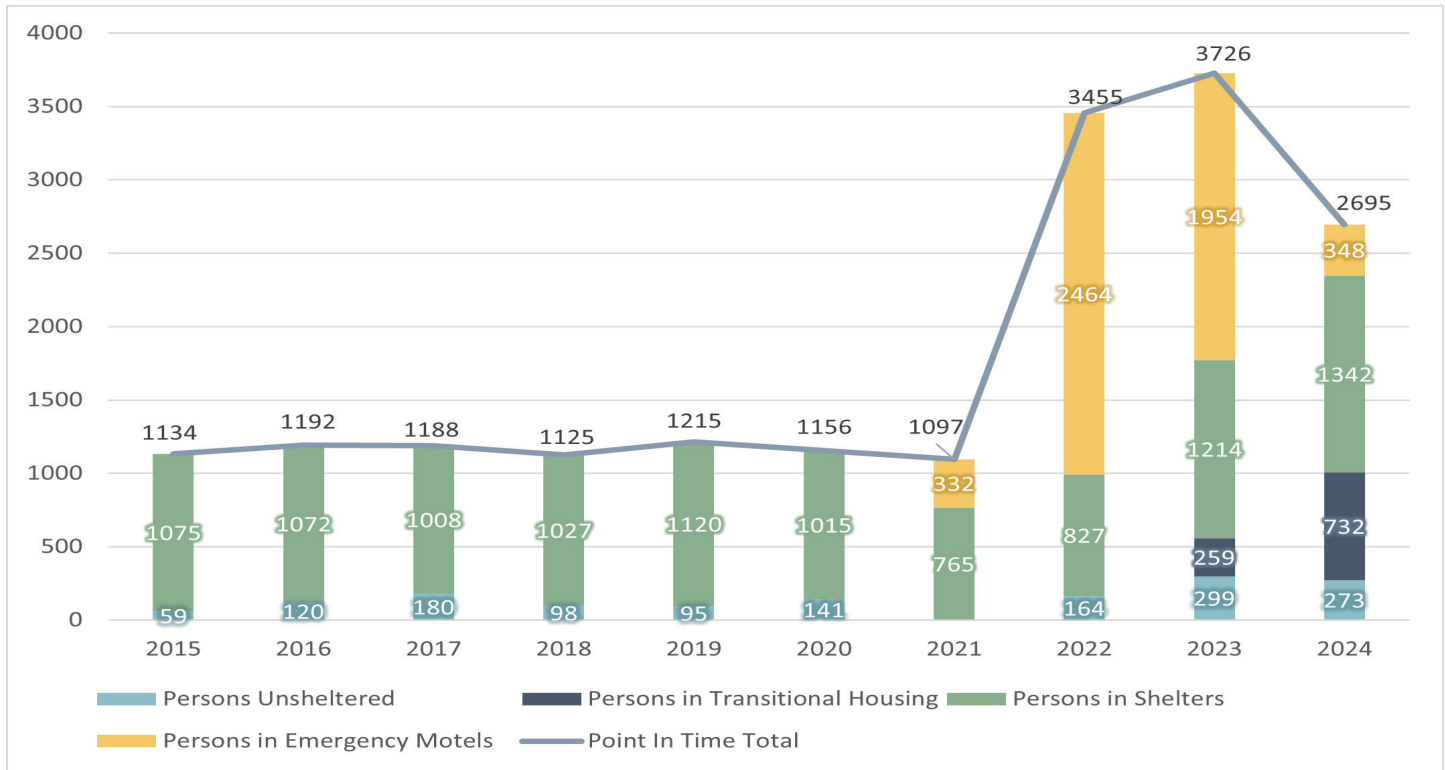


Figure 1: Trends. Point in Time counts over the years, distinguishing between those in homeless shelters, in emergency motels, in transitional housing, and without shelter. Transitional Housing includes temporary housing arrangements designed to help individuals and families experiencing homelessness to successfully transition to permanent housing.

On January 23, 2024, the total count of people experiencing homelessness in Maine was 1,031 less than in the previous year. Despite the apparent decrease, the reduced count is not the result of fewer people facing housing crises and homelessness; it is the result of changes in program availability. The overall reduction is more than accounted for by the decreased count in emergency motel rooms, for which pandemic-related funding is no longer available. The count of those without shelter, in traditional shelters, and in transitional housing all remain elevated.

Looking back to 2022 and 2023, we observed a significant increase in the count of Persons in Shelter, which in the above figure we have separated by Persons in Shelter and Persons in Emergency Motels. Although that increase may indicate increasing homelessness, it is also a byproduct of the emergency relief available under the myriad of COVID-19 response programs. Those relief programs made access to no-cost shelter in motels available to individuals and families who would otherwise have relied on informal solutions to their housing needs, such as doubling up with a friend or couch surfing. Importantly, such informal arrangements are not classified by HUD as experiencing homelessness. In contrast, staying in motels paid for by emergency relief programs is classified as experiencing homelessness. COVID-related emergency relief programs have now expired. Although a small portion of emergency motels are now in use as transitional housing, the remainder are no longer available. Therefore, we are now seeing the count decline as many return to informal arrangements that are unobservable to us or not classified by HUD as experiencing homelessness.

Technical note: the Bridging Rental Assistance Program (BRAP), a DHHS-administered program previously included in transitional housing, is no longer included in HMIS data because it is not a dedicated homelessness program. Therefore, this report adjusts the transitional housing count for 2023 to exclude BRAP as well, ensuring that the transitional housing populations remain as consistent as possible in the years depicted, while also acknowledging that a portion of what were previously emergency motels were added to the transitional housing stock in 2024.

Youth & Families

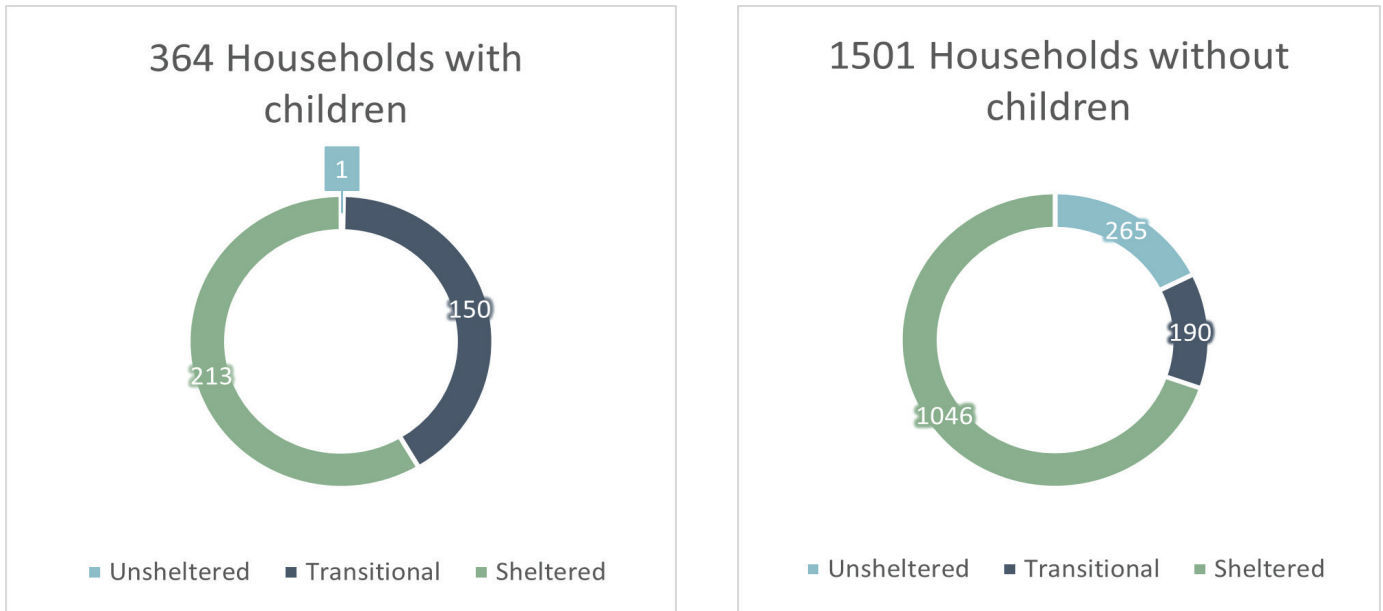


Figure 2a & 2b: Households and Children. In 2024, of the 1,865 households experiencing homelessness during the Point in Time, 19.5% had at least one child. Of those with at least one child, less than 0.5% were unsheltered. Of those without children present, 17.7% were unsheltered.

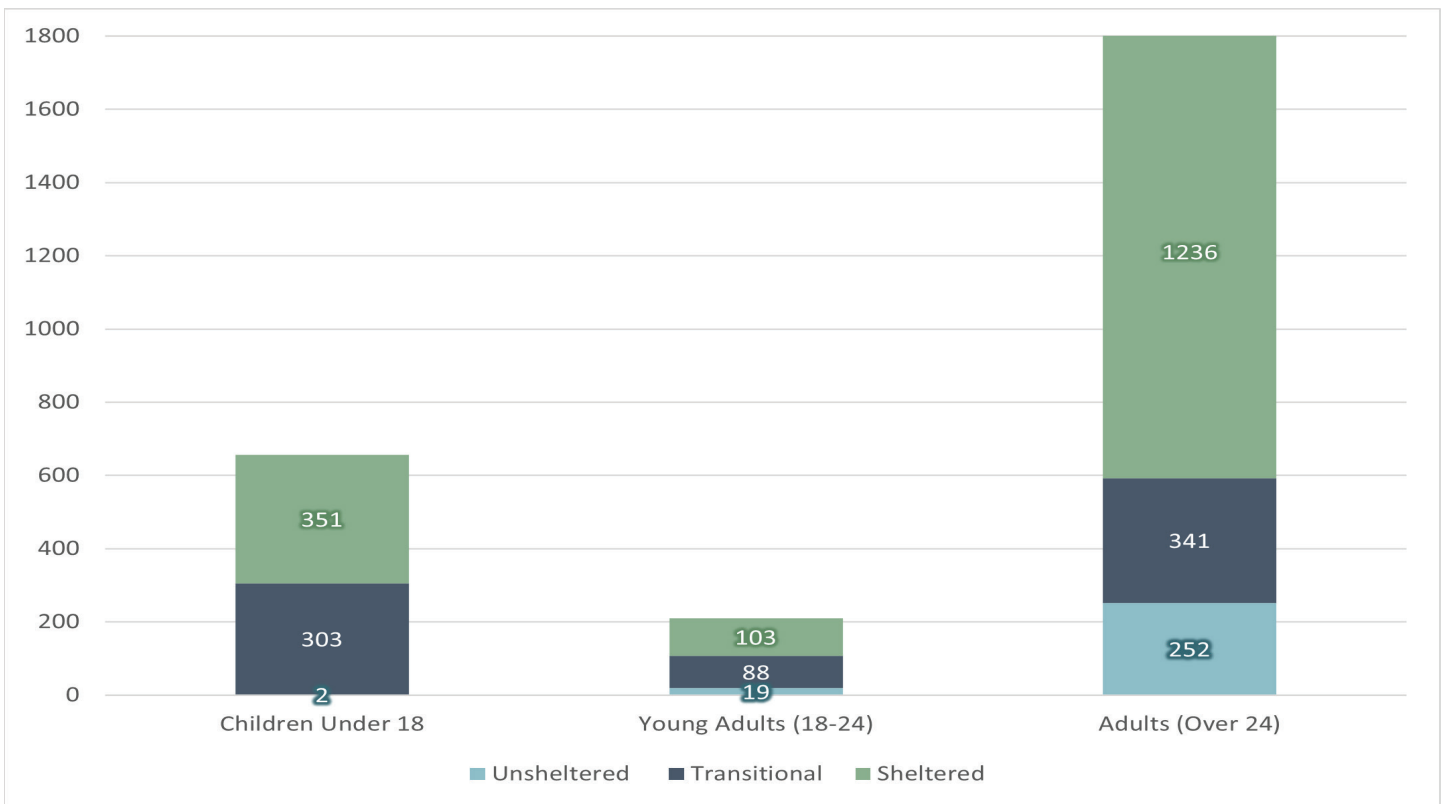


Figure 3: Children and Youth. Of 656 children under age 18 experiencing homelessness, only two were unsheltered. Of 210 young adults, 9% were unsheltered.

Gender & Race

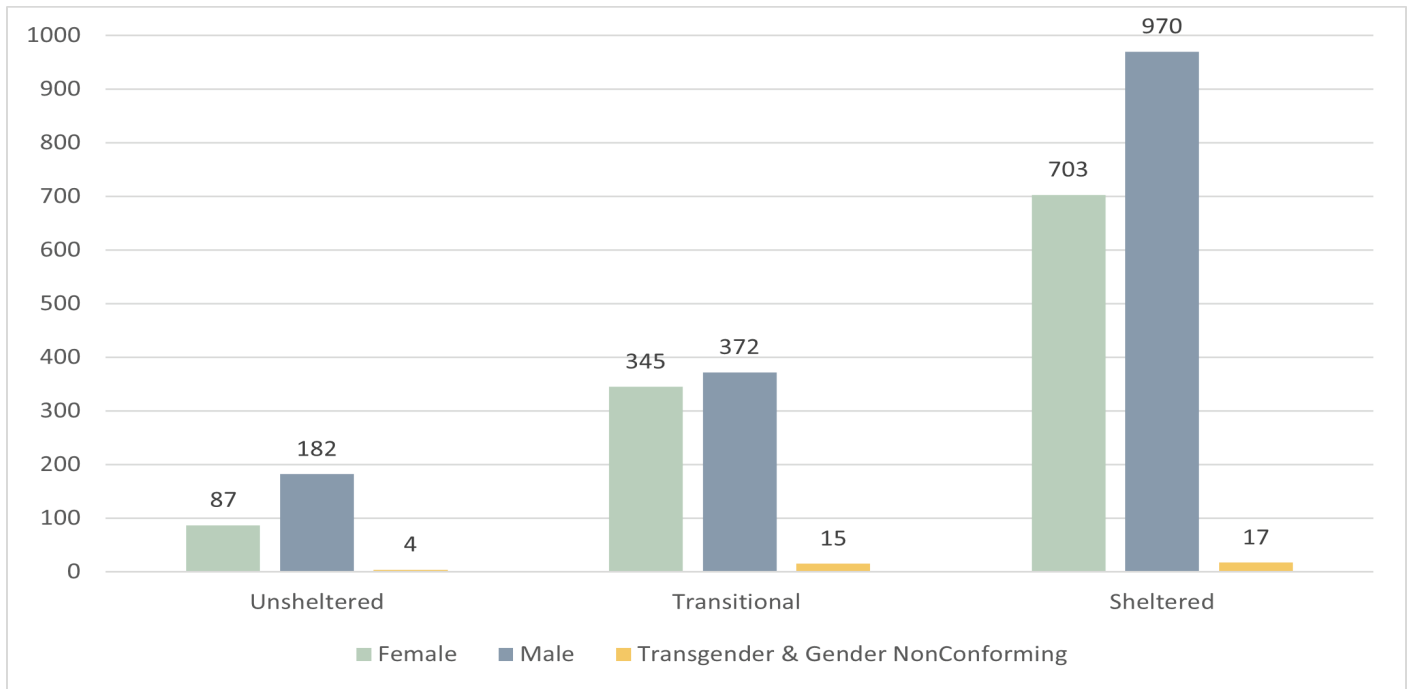


Figure 4: Gender Distributions. As a percentage, men make up a much larger share (66.7%) of the unsheltered population than the sheltered (57.4%) or transitional (50.8%) populations.

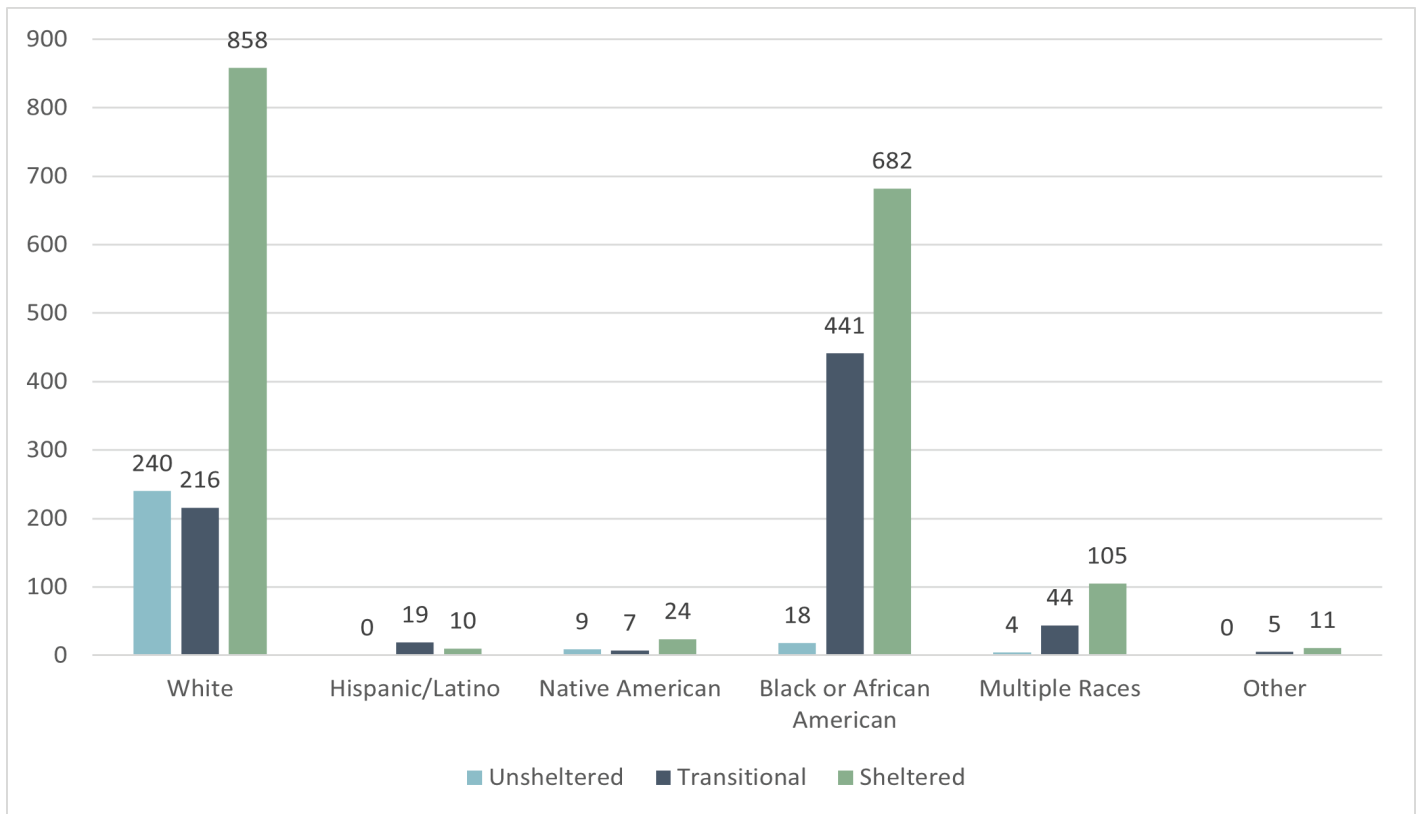


Figure 5: Racial Distribution. White and Black or African American Mainers were the largest racial groups experiencing homelessness in 2024. "Other" includes those who self-reported as Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and Middle Eastern or North African: individually, each of those categories made up less than 0.5% of the homeless population.

Subpopulations in the 2024 Point in Time Count

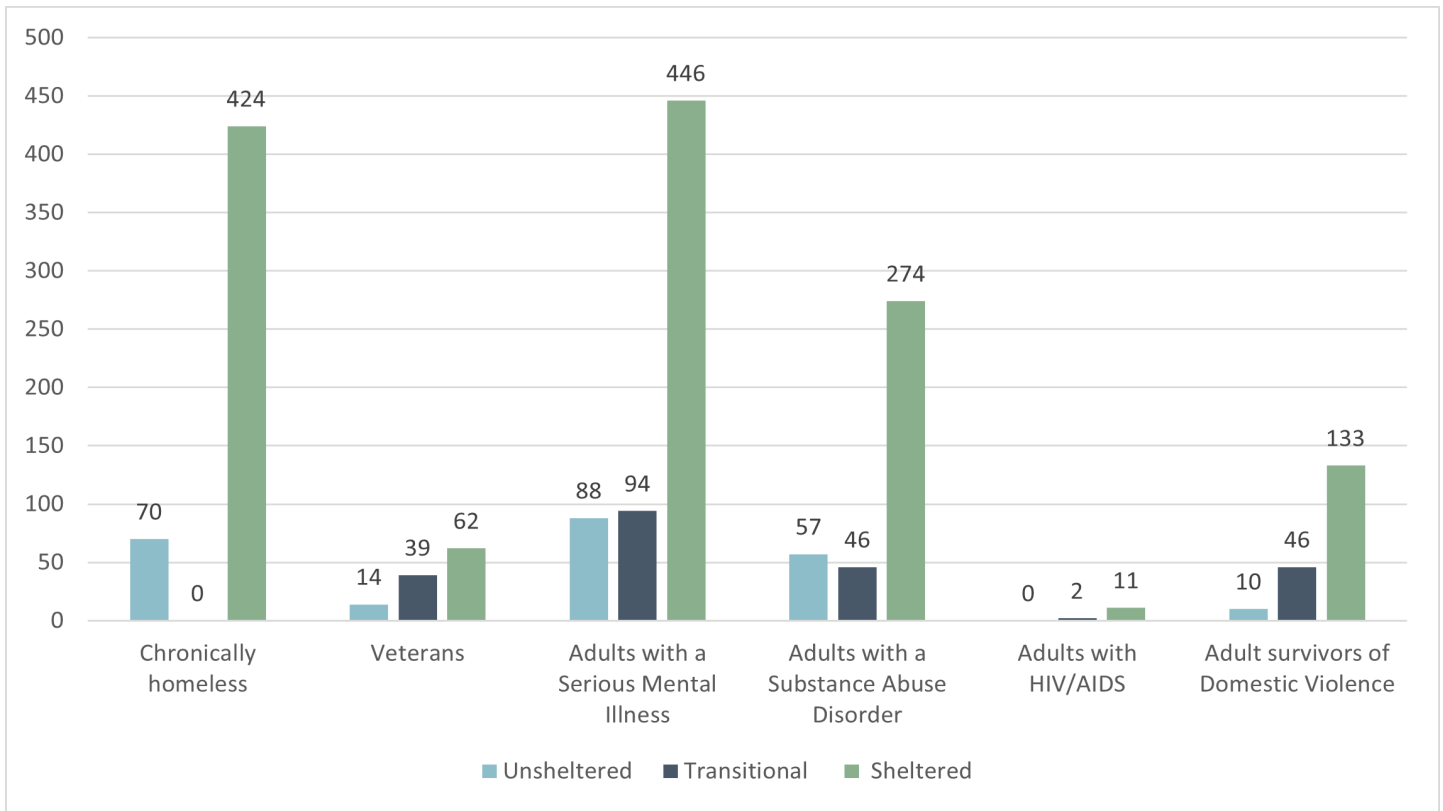


Figure 6: Special Needs Populations - as reported from HMIS, the unsheltered count, and aggregate DV data. These subpopulations are not mutually exclusive. 21.1% of those counted were chronically homeless. Less than 5% of the total were veterans. 26.8% struggle with serious mental illness and 16.1% with a substance use disorder.

Chronically Homeless, Veterans & Survivors of Domestic Violence 2015 - 2024

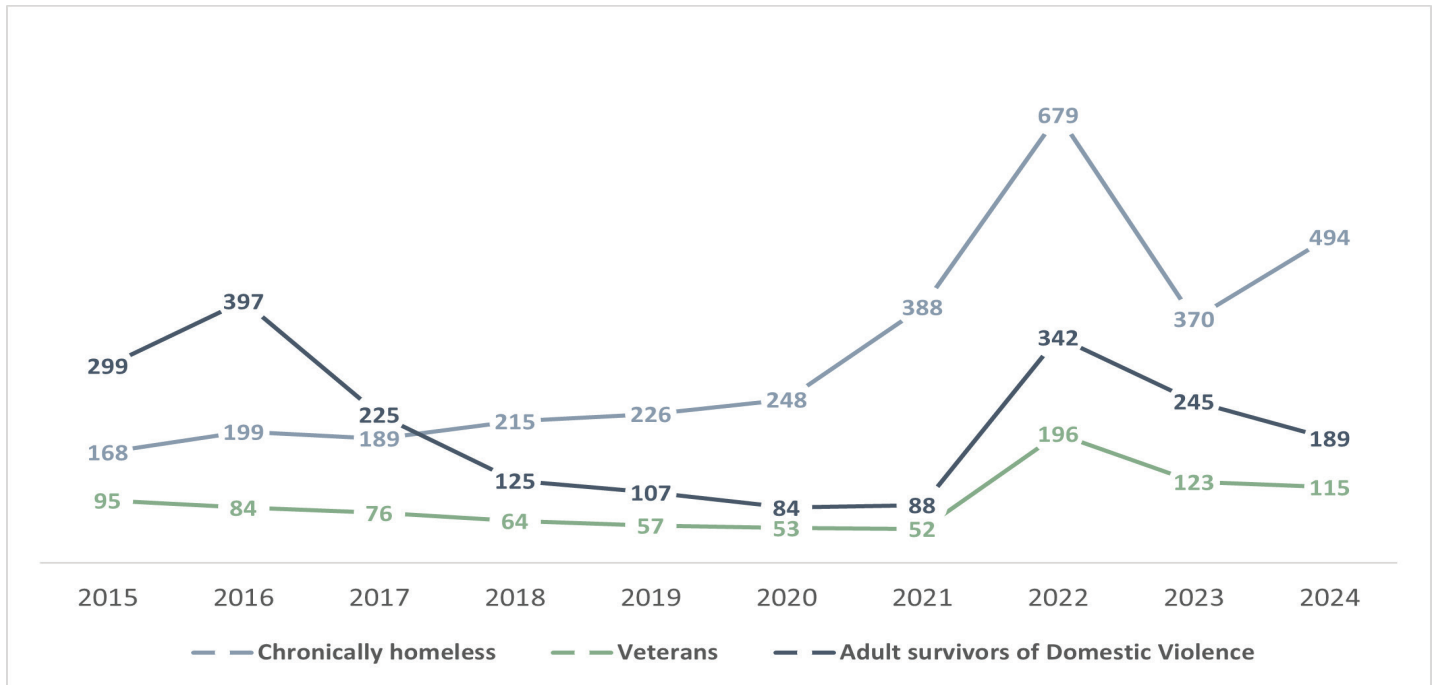


Figure 7: Special Needs Population Trends. The increased count across all three groups in 2022 can be attributed to availability of emergency relief programs discussed on page 1. However, all three subpopulations remain elevated in 2024 relative to pre-pandemic counts.

Where People Were the Night of the Survey

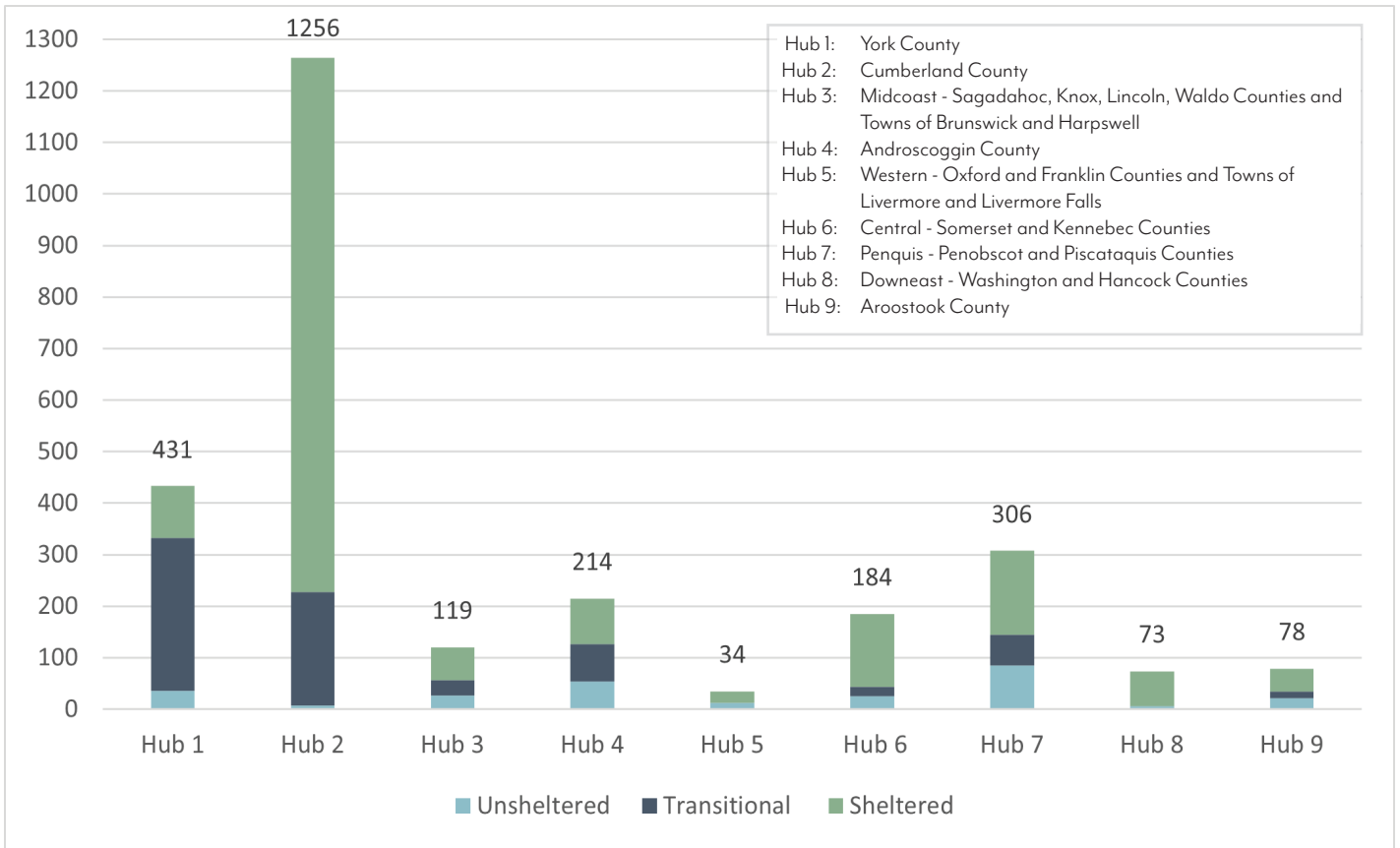


Figure 8: Counts by Regional Hub. Hubs 1 and 2 represent the largest population centers. However, the ability to find and survey the unsheltered population in less urban parts of the state is a sign of the significant improvements in organizing capacity that the Hub system redesign has brought.

About the Point in Time Count

The Point in Time count is a survey of sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons on a single night each year. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires that each Continuum of Care* conduct an annual Point in Time count within the last ten days of January. HUD uses the Point in Time count from each of the 50 states as a primary data source for the Annual Homeless Assessment Report. Each count is planned, coordinated, and carried out locally. Information from emergency shelters and other service providers is collected through Maine's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), supplemented by paper surveys and mobile app-based surveys to incorporate the unsheltered count. Both the HMIS and survey data are comprised of self-reported information about the individuals. In Maine, Hub Coordinators organize the unsheltered portion of the count in each of the nine Homeless Service Hubs throughout the state, relying on support from local volunteers and nonprofit organizations.

The data from these surveys can take several weeks to accurately process. This includes several days of supplementary data gathering, collation of these data from organizations throughout the state, and then several more weeks for data validation and deduplication. The end product is a snapshot that, along with other reports and continuous HMIS data tracking, contributes to our understanding of homelessness in Maine.

*A *Continuum of Care* is a group of service providers who work together in a collaborative planning process to develop programs that address homelessness. The Maine Continuum of Care covers the entire State of Maine and supports projects throughout the region.

About MaineHousing

MaineHousing is an independent quasi-state agency created in 1969 by the Maine State Legislature to address the problems of unsafe, unsuitable, overcrowded, and unaffordable housing. MaineHousing is a \$2.5 billion financial institution with a staff of over 190 people and is governed by a 10-member Board of Commissioners - 9 appointed by the Governor, plus the State Treasurer serving ex-officio. Each year, MaineHousing assists more than 90,000 Maine households and invests more than \$750 million in the Maine economy.

MaineHousing administers programs that finance the development affordable rental housing, create and modify housing for people with special needs, provide housing for people who are homeless, administer federal rental assistance programs, provide low-income households with heating and energy assistance, and repair or weatherize homes of low-income homeowners.

The Homeless Initiatives department at MaineHousing works with homeless service providers and other organizations toward a shared goal of preventing and eliminating homelessness. Homeless Initiatives administers grants and programs addressing the needs of persons experiencing homelessness in Maine. These programs and grants provide funding for shelter operations and housing navigation services, permanent and temporary rental assistance, and planning and technical assistance.

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For more information about MaineHousing programs, please contact us at:

Maine State Housing Authority
26 Edison Drive | Augusta, Maine 04330
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mainehousing.org

