

APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY

OVERVIEW

The San Francisco Homeless Point-in-Time Count and Survey was designed and implemented through a collaborative CoC-wide effort that included various City departments, the Local Homeless Coordinating Board, and community-based organizations.

The 2024 San Francisco Homeless Point-in-Time Count and Survey was performed in accordance with HUD's Point-in-Time Count standards and informed by HUD's best practices and methodology guidance. The goal was to produce a point-in-time estimate of individuals and families experiencing homelessness in San Francisco, a region which covers approximately 47 square miles. Several primary data collection components were integrated to produce the total estimated number of persons experiencing homelessness on a given night. A detailed description of these components follows.

Components of the Homeless Census and Survey

The methodology used in the 2024 Point-in-Time Count and Survey had four components:

- **General Street Count:** A nighttime complete coverage count of unsheltered homeless individuals and families between the hours of 8:00 p.m. and midnight on January 30, 2024. This included those sleeping outdoors on the street or in parks; at transit stations; in tents or makeshift shelters; in vehicles; and in abandoned or public properties, like parking garages and related locations. Individuals staying in safe parking sites that do not meet HUD's definition of shelter were also included as unsheltered per HUD guidance.
- **Targeted Street Count of Unaccompanied Youth and Young Adults:** A nighttime count of unsheltered unaccompanied youth under 18 and young adults 18-24 years old on January 30, 2024 between the hours of 8:00 p.m. and midnight. This was led by special youth teams who canvassed known locations where unaccompanied children and youth were known to congregate as identified by youth homeless service providers. Upon completion, data from this targeted count was carefully reviewed against the results from the general street count to remove possible duplicates.
- **Targeted Street Count of People Sleeping in Vehicles:** An early morning count of unsheltered individuals and families sleeping in vehicles on January 31, 2024, between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 9 a.m. This was led by family service providers who canvassed known locations. Data from this count was carefully reviewed against the results from the general street count to remove possible duplicates.
- **General Shelter Count:** A count of homeless individuals and families staying at publicly and privately operated shelters on the night of January 30, 2024. This included those who occupied emergency shelters, transitional housing, and domestic violence shelters.
- **Homeless Survey:** In the weeks following the count, an in-person interview with 956 unique sheltered and unsheltered homeless individuals conducted by homeless outreach workers and peer surveyors. Data from the survey were used to refine the Point-in-Time Census estimates, to obtain population and subpopulation characteristics for unsheltered clients, and to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the experiences of homeless individuals in San Francisco.

The Planning Process

To ensure the success and integrity of the count, many City departments and community agencies collaborated on community outreach, volunteer recruitment, logistical plans, methodological decisions, and interagency coordination efforts. ASR provided technical assistance for these aspects of the planning process. ASR has over 25 years of experience conducting homeless counts and surveys throughout California and across the nation. Their work is featured as a best practice in the HUD publication, *A Guide to Counting Unsheltered Homeless People.*, as well as in the Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago publication, *Conducting a Youth Count: A Toolkit.*

Community Involvement

Local homeless and housing service providers and advocates were valued partners in the planning and implementation of this count. The Local Homeless Coordinating Board (LHCB), the lead entity of San Francisco's Continuum of Care, was invited to comment on the methodology and subsequently approved it. The planning team was comprised of staff from HSH and consultants from ASR. Throughout the planning process, the planning team requested the collaboration, cooperation, and participation of several government agencies and nonprofit providers that regularly interact with homeless individuals and possess considerable expertise relevant to the count. Local department and agency public health and safety guidelines were followed, and health and safety protocols were distributed to all enumerators and surveyors in advance as part of their training materials.

GENERAL STREET COUNT METHODOLOGY

Definition

For the purposes of this study, the HUD definition of unsheltered homeless persons was used:

- An individual or family with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train stations, airport, or camping ground.

Methodology

Consistent with previous years, the 2024 street count methodology followed an established, HUD-approved "night of the count" method followed by a sample survey. This methodology combines a complete census to enumerate the total homeless population while applying a non-random, convenience sampling approach to conducting the Homeless Survey to generate necessary demographic information for the unsheltered population.

Gender and age estimates for unsheltered individuals were extrapolated from self-reported survey data. Observation-based gender data from the app-based tally sheet were only used for the purposes of deduplication.

Enumeration Team Recruitment and Training

In 2024, the planning team outreached to nonprofit partners throughout the city with staff expertise in homeless service provision and street outreach. Nonprofit partners and program staff were also encouraged to recruit persons with lived experience to act as experienced guides on enumeration teams. Homeless guides were paid \$20 for online training as well as \$20 per hour worked on the day of the count.

Over 150 outreach workers and homeless guides participated in the general street count. A limited recruitment of additional volunteers was targeted towards city staff and staff of nonprofits homeless service providers. Approximately 75 volunteers were recruited to assist with lower-density routes and ensure enough coverage for a complete census.

Outreach organizations and program staff were able to select routes for enumeration from an interactive GIS planning map tool that enabled planning for complete coverage of San Francisco. High-density homeless routes were identified in advance and prioritized for outreach workers and personnel with direct service experience alongside people with lived experience of homelessness. Outreach workers were encouraged to select routes they had familiarity within their regular street outreach work to leverage their expertise on specific locations observed when counting.

In order to participate in the count, all enumerators were provided written and video training materials to review in advance. Additionally, targeted trainings were held for multiple groups throughout the county who were able to convene a large enough group of attendees. Training materials covered all aspects of the count, including:

- definition of homelessness;
- tips to visually identify persons experiencing homelessness and occupied vehicles;
- how to use the smart phone application to record observations;
- how to use the route maps to ensure the entirety of the assigned area was covered;
- and other tips to help ensure an accurate and safe count.

Safety Precautions

Every effort was made to minimize potentially hazardous situations. Parks considered too big or densely wooded to inspect safely and accurately in the dark on the night of the count were enumerated by outreach teams on the morning of January 30. The majority of parks, however, were deemed safe and counted on the night of the count. Law enforcement agencies were notified of pending street count activity in their jurisdictions. In census tracts with high concentrations of homeless encampments or illicit activity at night, specialized teams were identified and assigned to areas they had experience in. Enumeration teams were advised to take every safety precaution possible, including bringing flashlights and maintaining a respectful distance from those they were counting.

Logistics of Enumeration

On the evening of the street count, small teams of two to four people were created to enumerate designated areas of San Francisco for the street count. Each team, typically comprised of homeless outreach workers, lived experience guides and/or staff of City or nonprofit providers, was provided with their assigned PIT route maps, access information and training materials for the smartphone application, and field observation tips and guidelines, including vehicle identification criteria. All teams were confirmed to be on their routes by their local agency coordinator who reported to a central PIT count dispatch center to confirm they were on route and on task for enumeration of their route assignments.

All accessible streets and parks in the enumerated routes were traversed by foot or car. The San Francisco Survey 123 smartphone app was used to record the number of homeless persons observed in addition to basic demographic and location information. Dispatch center staff also verified that teams completed the entirety of their assigned areas.

Multipliers

As in all previous counts, updates were made to multipliers used to estimate persons living in tents, cars, RVs, and vans. Since the number of persons residing in tents and vehicles is not always visible to general street count teams on the night of the Point-in-Time count, a multiplier is applied to tents and vehicles where the number of persons was unknown. In 2024, the tent multiplier was derived from a March 2024 survey conducted by SF HOT teams. Vehicle multipliers for cars, RVs, and vans were derived from observed results captured in the Survey 123 smartphone app.

Methodological Improvements

Targeted Vehicle Count

San Francisco has experienced an increase in individuals living in vehicles in recent years. This population can be difficult to identify at night, as visibility into vehicles is often limited and windows are often obstructed. In 2024, the planning team partnered with family providers to conduct an early morning count of people living in vehicles in known hot spot areas. This effort also allowed for more direct interaction with people living in vehicles, allowing for the identification of families in vehicles that may have otherwise been assumed as occupied by adults only. Vehicle count observations were carefully analyzed for potential duplication with the general count using information collected regarding vehicle type, license plates, and geolocation data.

Unsheltered Family Call List

Unsheltered families are a challenging population to visually identify during the street count and have long been suspected as an undercounted population. In 2024, the planning team partnered with family providers to improve upon a process piloted in 2022 to identify unsheltered families with a call list. Following the night of the count, HSH distributed a call list to Family Coordinated Entry Access Point service providers consisting of families recently engaged with the homelessness response system. Providers called these families to verify the housing status of their household on the night of January 30, 2024 and collected details necessary to deduplicate against observations made during the general count. This process contributed to the count of unsheltered families in 2024.

High Density Routes

San Francisco faces challenges enumerating people experiencing unsheltered homelessness on certain streets that have a high density of individuals gathering outdoors and often involve illicit activities. These night markets congregate from evening to early morning hours and pose increased safety risks for enumerators, as well as difficulties in accurately identifying housing status. While San Francisco will continue to seek guidance from HUD on how to count individuals in these areas while adhering to PIT Count standards, several efforts were made to improve count accuracy and safety in these areas in 2024:

- Coordination with representatives from the Drug Market Agency Coordination Center (DMACC), a multi-agency task force, to identify hot spot routes and plan count logistics and safety precautions
- Recruitment of service providers with special expertise and training to engage in these areas to conduct enumeration on these routes
- Development of enhanced training materials with additional tips on visual indicators of homelessness

Point-in-Time Count Challenges and Limitations

There are many challenges in any homeless enumeration, especially when implemented in a community as large and diverse as San Francisco. Point-in-Time Counts are “snapshots” that quantify the size of the homeless population at a given point during the year. Hence, the count may not be representative of fluctuations and compositional changes in the homeless population seasonally or over time.

The methods employed in a non-intrusive visual homeless enumeration, while academically sound, have inherent biases and shortcomings. Many factors may contribute to count accuracy. For example:

- It is difficult to identify homeless persons who may be sleeping in vans, cars, recreational vehicles, abandoned buildings, or structures unfit for human habitation due to limited visibility.
- Open air drug market activity throughout nighttime hours creates dense gatherings on certain city blocks of upwards of 500 individuals. These environments pose challenges in discerning housing status by visual observation only and introduce opportunities to overcount.
- Certain living situations are considered homeless by HSH are not counted as homeless per HUD’s PIT reporting requirements. These situations include households overcrowded or “doubled up” in SROs, people residing in health care facilities, jails, residential treatment centers who are otherwise homeless, and people temporarily staying with friends, family, or in hotels/motels that are otherwise homeless.
- Homeless families with children are suspected to be more likely to seek shelter in these settings and may be underrepresented in the PIT as a result.
- Weather can impact a homeless person’s likelihood of seeking a hotel, friend or family member’s home, or other shelter source on a given evening.

In addition, HUD requires the Count to represent homelessness between sunset and sunrise. San Francisco conducts the bulk of its count between the hours of 8:00 p.m. and midnight, but there may be differences observed in other time windows.

YOUTH STREET COUNT METHODOLOGY

The goal of the 2024 dedicated youth count was to improve representation of unaccompanied homeless children and youth under the age of 25 in the PIT Count. Many youth and young adults experiencing homelessness do not use homeless services, are not easily recognized as youth by adult street count teams, and may be in unsheltered locations that are difficult to find. Therefore, traditional street count efforts are not as effective in reaching youth.

Research Design

Since 2013, planning for the 2024 supplemental youth count included homeless youth service providers and youth with lived experience of homelessness. Local service providers identified locations where homeless youth were known to congregate and recruited youth and young adults currently experiencing homelessness with knowledge of where to locate homeless youth to serve as guides for the count.

As in past counts, the locations corresponded to areas in the neighborhoods of the Haight, Mission, Tenderloin, Union Square, Castro, the Panhandle, Golden Gate Park, Buena Vista Park, Ocean Beach, Lake Merced, Park Merced/Lakeside areas, the Bayview, Treasure Island, the BART system, the Muni system, and the Embarcadero. Service providers familiar with the map areas identified in each neighborhood were asked to recruit currently homeless youth to participate in the count.

Youth workers were paid \$20 per hour for their time, including time spent in training prior to the count. Youth and youth service provider staff members were trained in where and how to identify homeless youth as well as how to record the data.

Data Collection

Youth worked in teams of two to three, with teams coordinated by youth street outreach workers. The youth count was conducted at the same time as the general street count, from 8:00 p.m. to midnight on January 30, 2024. Golden Gate Park was also covered by youth count teams between 7:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. on January 30th.

Street Count De-Duplication

Data from the supplemental youth count and general street count were compared and de-duplicated by assessing location, gender, and estimated age.

SHELTER COUNT METHODOLOGY

Goal

The goal of the shelter count is to gain an accurate count of persons residing in temporarily shelter across San Francisco. These data are vital to gaining an accurate, overall count of the homeless population and understanding where homeless people receive shelter.

Definition

For the purposes of this study, the HUD definition of sheltered homelessness for Point-in-Time Counts was used. This definition includes individuals and families living in publicly or privately operated shelters designated to provide temporary living arrangements for people experiencing homelessness, such as emergency shelters, transitional housing, and safe haven facilities.

Research Design

The occupancy of emergency shelters, transitional housing programs, and safe haven programs with beds dedicated to individuals experiencing homelessness was documented for the night of January 30, 2024. Information was collected for programs operating in San Francisco and reportable per HUD guidance. Data was collected on household type, age, gender, race and ethnicity, veteran status, chronic status, and if individuals had certain health conditions.

Data Collection

To collect data on individuals staying in shelters, ASR worked with HSH staff. HSH collected data on all emergency shelters, transitional housing programs, and safe havens operating in San Francisco. Where possible, data on clients served in temporary shelter situations was pulled from HSH's administrative data systems: the Online Navigation and Entry (ONE) System, San Francisco's HUD-compliant Homeless Management Information System (HMIS); and the SF COVID-19 Placement Tool, a database developed by RTZ Systems for SIP hotel shelter bed management.

A small number of shelter programs that do not maintain client enrollment data in either the ONE system or the SF COVID- 19 Placement Tool were asked to submit data. A dedicated staff person from each facility submitted their data for clients served on the night of February 23, 2024, via a web-based Shelter Count Survey administered by HSH. A designated staff person provided the count for each of these facilities; clients were not interviewed. For these programs, all persons experiencing homelessness were included in the Point-in-Time Count per HUD reporting requirements.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Planning and Implementation

The survey gathered information on gender, family status, military service, duration and recurrence of homelessness, nighttime accommodations, causes of homelessness, and access to services. These insights were gathered through a combination of open-ended closed-ended and multiple response questions. The survey data bring greater perspective to current issues of homelessness and to the provision and delivery of services.

Surveys were conducted by both outreach workers and peer survey workers with lived homeless experience who were referred by local service providers. Training sessions for recruited survey workers were facilitated by ASR and community partners. Potential interviewers were led through a comprehensive orientation that included project background information as well as detailed instruction on respondent eligibility, interviewing protocol, and confidentiality. Survey workers were compensated at a rate of \$10 per completed survey.

To facilitate data collection, a gift certificate was offered to respondents in appreciation for their time and participation. The incentives were widely accepted among survey respondents.

Survey Sampling

Strategic attempts were also made to reach individuals in various geographic locations and of various subpopulations such as homeless children and youth, minority ethnic groups, military veterans, domestic violence survivors, and families. San Francisco surveyed 956 unique respondents based on a Point-in-Time Count estimate of 8,323 homeless persons, with a pseudo-randomized survey sampling process. The results obtained from the 956 valid surveys are statistically reliable within a margin of error of $\pm 3\%$ at a 95% confidence level. This means that there is a 95% chance that the actual values for the entire population of individuals experiencing homelessness in San Francisco fall within 3% of the survey results.

To collect a diverse and representative survey sample, San Francisco recruited both professional outreach workers and peer survey workers with lived experience. The planning team worked closely with local service providers to identify their places of expertise and had survey locations correspond to the neighborhoods of peer survey workers.

As in past counts, the locations corresponded to areas in the neighborhoods of the Haight, Mission, Tenderloin, Union Square, Castro, the Panhandle, Golden Gate Park, Buena Vista Park, Ocean Beach, Lake Merced, Park Merced/Lakeside areas, the Bayview, and the Embarcadero. Service providers familiar with the areas identified in each neighborhood were asked to recruit currently homeless individuals with lived experience and community expertise.

In order to increase randomization of sample respondents, survey workers were trained to employ an “every third encounter” survey approach. If a person declined to take the survey, the survey worker could approach the next eligible person they encountered. After completing a survey, the randomized approach was resumed. In more remote locations where respondents were sparser this survey interval was modified to accommodate completion deadlines and respondent scarcity.

Data Collection

Care was taken by interviewers to ensure that respondents felt comfortable regardless of the street or shelter location where the survey occurred. During the interviews, respondents were encouraged to be candid in their responses and were informed that these responses would be framed as general findings, would be kept confidential, and would not be traceable to any single individual.

Data Analysis

The survey requested respondents' initials and date of birth so that duplication could be avoided without compromising the respondents' anonymity. Upon completion of the survey effort, an extensive verification process was conducted to eliminate duplicates. This process examined respondents' date of birth, initials, gender, ethnicity, length of homelessness, and consistencies in patterns of responses to other survey questions. This left 956 valid surveys for analysis. Due to the sensitive nature of the survey, respondents were not required to answer every survey question, and respondents were asked to skip questions that were not applicable. For this reason, the number of respondents for each survey question may not total 956.

Survey Methodology Changes

To align with the new HUD FY2024 HMIS data standards, the race, ethnicity, and gender questions and the response options were updated, ensuring comparability with HMIS data. The following updates were made to the Point-in-Time Count Survey:

- **Race:** Changed question to “What race and ethnicity do you identify with?” in 2024. Respondents were able to self-identify with one or more of eight different racial and ethnic categories – Asian or Asian American; American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous; Black, African American, or African; Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander; Hispanic/Latina/e/o; Middle Eastern or Northern African; White; and Other. Previous versions asked, “What race or races do you identify with?” and required respondents to select one or more answers from six options – Asian; American Indian or Alaska Native; Black or African American; Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander; White; and Other.
- **Ethnicity:** This question eliminated due to the introduction of a combined race and ethnicity question in 2024. In previous years respondents were asked to identify themselves as Hispanic/Latin(a)(o)(x) or non-Hispanic/Latin(a)(o)(x).
- **Gender:** Respondents were able to self-identify with one or more of eight different gender categories – Non-binary; Woman (Girl if child); Man (Boy if child); Transgender; Questioning; Culturally Specific Identity (e.g., Two-Spirit);

Survey Challenges and Limitations

The 2024 San Francisco Homeless Survey methodology relies heavily on self-reported data collected from outreach workers, many of which have lived experience with homelessness, and peer surveyors. While self-reporting allows individuals to represent their own experiences, self-reported data are often more variable than clinically reported data. San Francisco uses a peer-to-peer interviewing methodology to maintain consistency and reduce bias. When interviewed by peers, respondents are encouraged to be more candid with answers that may reveal personal information or elicit strong emotional reactions. Further, service providers recommended individuals who would be the best suited to conducting interviews and these individuals received comprehensive training about how to conduct interviews.

The planning team reviewed the surveys to ensure quality responses. Surveys that were considered incomplete or containing false responses were not accepted; the process included reviewing individual surveys submitted by surveyors and assessing patterns in survey responses for inconsistencies.

It is important to recognize that variations between survey years may result from shifts in the demographic profiles of surveyors and accessibility to certain populations. Survey confidence intervals presented indicate the level of variability that may occur from year to year when interpreting findings. While every effort was made to collect surveys from a random and diverse sample of sheltered and unsheltered individuals, the hard-to-reach nature of the population experiencing homelessness prevents a true random sampling. Recruitment of diverse and geographically dispersed surveyors was prioritized.

However, equal survey participation across all populations may be limited by the participation and adequate representation of subpopulations in planning and implementation processes. This includes persons living in vehicles, who are historically difficult to enumerate and survey.

Consequently, survey data and data derived from survey responses may shift from year to year. It is for this reason Point-in-Time Count data should be used in conjunction with other community sources of data on individuals and families experiencing homelessness to gather a comprehensive understanding of the community.

APPENDIX B: SUPPLEMENTAL POINT-IN-TIME COUNT DATA

SUPPLEMENTAL SHELTER COUNT

The official Point-in-Time Count uses the HUD definition of homelessness, which includes individuals and families:

- Living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide a temporary living arrangement; or
- With a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground.

The City and County of San Francisco serves a broader population inclusive of individuals exiting institutions like jails, hospitals, or residential facilities who were homeless prior to entry, families living in Single Room Occupancy (SRO) units, and families “doubled up” or living overcrowded in housing with one or more additional households.

While there are challenges in identifying and quantifying families “doubled up” or living in SROs, information on homeless individuals residing in jails, hospitals, and residential treatment facilities was gathered to provide broader context to the scope of homelessness experienced in San Francisco. The following table summarizes the total number of additional people counted in these settings that likely qualify for homeless services upon exit.

	San Francisco Supplemental Point-in-Time Count Numbers		
	2019	2022	2024
Total number of persons	1,773	1,238	980
Total number of individuals	1748	1,172	919
Total number of families	11	36	25
Total number of persons in families	25	66	61

Fewer individuals were reported as homeless upon entrance to these sites in 2024 with an overall reduction of 20% since 2022. This decrease is, in part, due to a decrease in the number of treatment centers surveyed. In 2024, 39 treatment centers were identified and surveyed down from 59 in 2022.

SUPPLEMENTAL SHELTER COUNT METHODOLOGY

Goal

The goal of the supplemental shelter count is to better understand the extent of the population currently residing in temporary institutional settings that may otherwise be homeless. These institutional settings are not reportable according to HUD requirements for the Housing Inventory Count (HIC) or Point-in-Time Count.

Scope

For the purposes of the supplemental count, the San Francisco Supplemental Point-in-Time Count includes data from jails, hospitals, and residential treatment facilities. Due to challenges identifying and locating families living in SROs and persons “doubled-up” in the homes of family or friends, these individuals are not included in the scope of this count.

Research Design

The following types of facilities were identified for inclusion the San Francisco Supplemental Point-in-Time Count:

- **Residential Treatment Facilities:** The San Francisco Department of Public Health and local agencies assisted in collecting counts of self-identified homeless persons staying in various residential treatment centers not specifically designated for homeless persons (e.g. mental health facilities, acute crisis or treatment centers, detox facilities, etc.) on the night of February 23, 2024.
- **Jail:** The San Francisco Sheriff’s Department provided data on inmates who were in County Jail on the morning of February 23, 2024, and provided the number of persons who were experiencing homelessness at the time of arrest. The method for gathering jail data is explained further below.
- **Hospitals:** The San Francisco Department of Public Health assisted with the coordination of obtaining count numbers from hospitals. Staff from individual hospitals collected the number of persons who were self-identified as homeless in their facilities on the night of February 23, 2024. The numbers reported for the hospitals did not duplicate the inpatient mental health units.

For the City and County of San Francisco’s expanded definition of homelessness, appropriate staff at hospitals and treatment centers were identified prior to the Point-in-Time Count and asked to complete the online shelter count survey detailing the number of homeless individuals they served on the night of January 30, 2024. A total of 39 hospital and residential treatment programs were represented in the supplemental count, a reduction from the 61 hospitals and residential treatment programs surveyed in 2022. As a result, 510 homeless people were counted in these programs, a 40% decrease from the 860 counted in 2022.

To obtain data from the county jails, HSH worked closely with the Sheriff’s Office. As in previous years, the Sheriff’s Department generated a list of all inmates in county jail facilities on the night of January 30, 2024.

470 inmates in San Francisco County jails were identified as otherwise homeless on the night of the 2024 PIT Count compared to 366 homeless inmates identified in 2022. While this represents a 28% increase in the total number of homeless inmates identified compared to 2022, the rate of homelessness amongst inmates was similar (40% compared to 43%), as the total jail population increased from 842 to 1160 in this time period.

Challenges and Limitations

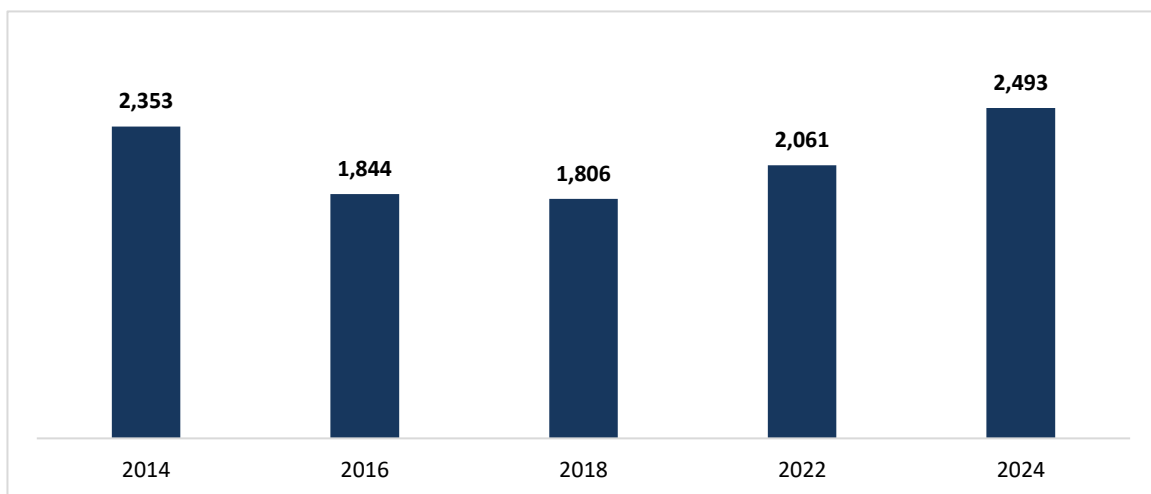
Ensuring comprehensive representation of relevant hospitals and residential treatment centers throughout the city remains a challenge each year. The supplemental count relies on the cooperation of many agencies not otherwise dedicated to homelessness, not contracted through the San Francisco Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing, and not required to report this information.

As most of these programs are not funded by HUD CoC grant programs and are not exclusively or explicitly dedicated to serving homeless individuals, providers may not be identifying the homeless status of patients and clients at entry in a manner consistent with HUD or San Francisco definitions. Improved training and guidance in future counts may help to maximize the accuracy of the data collected.

SAN FRANCISCO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT DATA

In addition to the supplemental shelter count, HSH considers data from local schools. The U.S. Department of Education requires that school districts receiving McKinney-Vento funds report on homeless children that “lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.”¹² This definition is more expansive than the HUD PIT Count definition and may include families that are “doubled-up” or living in motels/hotels. SFUSD’s data reflects information collected on an ongoing basis throughout the school year to meet the broader definition above for McKinney-Vento Act (MVA) compliance. The figures below reflect data as of October 1st of each year to roughly align with the beginning of the school year. Though these figures are more expansive than HUD’s definition of homelessness for the PIT Count and capture a broader timeframe than a single night, this serves as an important source of information and a key indicator of progress on reducing family homelessness.

NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN SFUSD EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS (MVA DEFINITION)



¹² California Department of Education. Definition of Homeless. Retrieved from <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/hs/homelessdef.asp#:~:text=The%20McKinney%2DVento%20Act%20defines,hardship%2C%20or%20a%20similar%20reason>

FAMILIES IN SRO UNITS OR DOUBLED UP

Data on families living in SRO units and individuals who are “doubled-up” is challenging to collect comprehensively and for a given night. While HUD does not count families in these living situations in the PIT Count, HSH serves these families per our local definition of homelessness and considers other data sources that may represent the scope of this population.

The SRO Families United Collaborative, a partnership of five community-based organizations, reported in 2020 that 431 families lived in SROs in Chinatown, Mission, Tenderloin and South of Market neighborhoods.¹³ In addition, San Francisco’s Housing Primary Assessment for families asks a question related to current living situation where “San Francisco Single Room Occupancy (SRO) unit” is a response option. In the year preceding the Point in Time Count, only one family of 931 assessments conducted selected this response option, which may indicate that few families in this living situation are seeking services through HSH.

Families “doubled up” and renting small spaces or rooms in the private market are also challenging to identify clearly in HMIS data. In the Housing Primary Assessment for families, respondents may indicate their current living situation is “With another family (excluding your parents or adult children) in a housing unit in SF and is not being asked to leave.”

- “Staying or living in a family member’s room, apartment or house”
- “Staying or living in a friend’s room, apartment, or house”

Over the course of the year preceding the PIT from January 30, 2023 to January 30, 2024, HMIS data indicates that 603 unique family households identified with one of the living situations cited above. This is a 24% increase % over the 487 family households identified in this manner in the year prior to the 2022 PIT Count.

¹³ San Francisco Controller’s Office. SRO Families United Collaborative. Retrieved from <https://sfcontroller.org/sites/default/files/Our%20City%2C%20Our%20Home/5c.i.%20Families%20in%20SROs%20Presentation.pdf>