



New Bedford

Point In Time | Take Aways 2024

- **Overall Count:** The 2024 PIT Count identified 346 people, both sheltered and unsheltered, an overall figure largely consistent with the past few years. Despite such consistency, 2024's overall PIT Count nevertheless was the lowest count total since 2013. Although the number of unsheltered persons increased, the count of 236 for those in shelter reflects the second lowest shelter count on record.
- **Sheltered:** The sheltered count (emergency and transitional) of just 236 people reflects the lowest census since the tracking of counts dating back to 2010. The average number of people living in shelter since that initial count is 337; the 2024 shelter count is 30% below that 15-year average. The majority (59%) of single adult households in shelter were living in emergency shelter rather than transitional settings, a ratio that is echoed for families: 88% of all persons living in family households were in emergency shelter rather than transitional settings.
- **Unsheltered:** Fair weather on the night of the 2024 Count meant the CoC's cold weather overflow shelter was closed leaving unhoused persons who typically found refuge on colder nights presumably unsheltered. Because of this, the 110 people counted in 2024 can be understood as a combination of 80 folks on the streets and 30 who would have been housed in the overflow shelter were it open. Conversely, in 2023 the cold weather overflow shelter was open and did house 30 people who would have otherwise been unsheltered that night; combining these folks with the 67 individuals counted as unsheltered on the streets would increase the 2023 unsheltered number to 97. In this way, though the 2024 unsheltered count is certainly higher, it is not altogether inconsistent with the previous year had the overflow shelter and weather not played a role in establishing the count.¹ Without the variable of 30 cold weather overflow beds, an apples-to-apples comparison shows an increase of 13 individuals (19%).
- **Individual versus Family Households:**
 - **All Households in Shelter:** During the 2024 PIT Count there were 155 households in shelter, 76% of whom were individual (single adult households) and 24% of whom were family households. Individual (single adult households) outpaced family households at a rate of roughly 3:1, a ratio consistent with 2023.
 - **Individual Households in Shelter:** The number of sheltered individual households in 2024 (118) decreased by 21% from 2023's total of 149 sheltered individual households.
 - **Family Households in Shelter:** The number of sheltered family households in 2024 (37) was 20% less than the (46) sheltered family households recorded in 2023. Similarly, the 2024 figure begins revealing a multi-year decline in the number of sheltered family households in New Bedford. This is particularly noteworthy given that the city has not experienced the same level of impact seen in other communities across the Commonwealth at a time when the state family shelter system has reached capacity.
 - **All People:** The number of people sheltered and unsheltered within single (228) vs. family households (118) reflects a ratio of just under 2:1 people living in single vs. family households.

¹ The U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) mandates that seasonal overflow shelters are not to be included in a count if they are not open during the PIT Count; conversely, they *must* be included in the count when they are open, thus presenting data challenges over the long term.

- [Families in Shelter and Unsheltered Settings \(People\)](#): The number of people experiencing homelessness living in family households with children in 2024 (118) is a 33% reduction from the 2023 total (157) and 68% less than the 2022 total (198).
 - [Individuals in Shelter and Unsheltered Settings \(People\)](#): The number of individuals living in single adult households in 2024 (228) increased by 2% over the 2023 count (216) and by 26% over the 2022 count (172).
- **Subpopulations.** Consistent with past years, those self-identifying as having a serious mental illness and/or a substance use disorder, as well as those who have/were victims of domestic violence, represented the most prevalent subpopulation attributes among both sheltered and unsheltered adults. These three particular areas have remained consistently high over the past 15 years.
- **Self-Identified Subpopulations.** Of the 283 sheltered and unsheltered adults, 42% most frequently self-identified as experiencing serious mental illness (119), and/or 25% as suffering from substance use disorder (71).
 - [Adults in Shelter](#): In 2024, sheltered individuals self-identifying as severely mentally ill continued to decline with only 15% (42) people. This is a significant drop from the previous two years that saw higher numbers: 2022 with 116 sheltered adults and in 2023, 110 sheltered adults. Similarly, those living in shelter self-identifying as having a substance use disorder in 2024 (15) reflects a sharp decrease from 2023's 110 and even 2022's 69 persons. That same cohort remained fairly consistent as a percentage of the overall shelter count between 2023 and 2024 when self-identifying as victims of domestic violence.
 - [Adults Unsheltered](#): The 2024 count marked the highest number of unsheltered adults self-identifying as having severe mental illness and/or substance use disorder since such counts have been conducted. Of particular note is that 70% (77) of unsheltered adults self-reported as having a severe mental illness in 2024 – triple the number of those self-identifying the same way just a few years ago in 2021.
- **Domestic Violence.** Roughly 17% (48) of the sheltered and unsheltered population counted in 2024 identified as fleeing/surviving domestic violence. While the actual number of those self-identifying in this way is slightly lower than the 15-year average of 55, as a percentage of the overall count, the 2024 percentage of 17% is slightly greater than the 15-year average of 14%.
- **Veterans.** For the first time in four years, New Bedford's unsheltered count revealed three individuals self-identifying as being veterans. At the same time, the overall number of veterans in emergency shelter and transitional housing (42) was below the 15-year average of 46.
- **Utilization.** During the 2024 PIT, emergency shelter utilization was 87% (154 of 178 beds), transitional housing was 83% (90 of 108 beds) and permanent housing utilization was 95% (510 of 537 beds). For each type of shelter/housing, the 2024 utilization rates were significantly higher than those recorded in 2023, attributable to the increasing demand for housing and correlating supports.
- **Housing Inventory.** Beyond the extent to which the Continuum of Care's portfolio of shelter and housing is utilized, the actual quantity of beds in each category bears relevance when considering the broader context of homelessness.

