Otero County

2023

Point In Time Report

A Project Funded by The City of Alamogordo and Otero County

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What is Homelessness?

HUD Definition

As per HUD definition, a literally homeless individual or family is an individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence. The individual's or family's primary nighttime residence is a public or private place not meant for human habitation. Or the individual or family is living in a publicly or privately operated shelter, or is exiting an institution where (s)he has lived for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering the institution.
https://osh.sccgov.org/sites/g/files/exjcpb671/files/Glossary%20of%20terms.pdf

Within HUD's definition, there are four categories of homelessness:

1. Literally Homeless
2. Imminent Risk of Homelessness
3. Homeless Under Other Federal Statutes
4. Fleeing/Attempting to Flee Domestic Violence

https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/coc-esg-virtual-binders/coc-esg-homeless-eligibility/four-categories/

The McKinney-Vento Definition of Homeless

(This data is routinely reported by school districts)

Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (per Title IX, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act) defines *homeless* as follows:
The term "homeless children and youths"--

- (A) means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence (within the meaning of section 103(a)(1)); and
- (B) includes–
    - (i) children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals;

- (ii) children and youths who have 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 (within the meaning of section 103(a)(2)(C))
- (iii) children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- (iv) migratory children (as such term is defined in section 1309 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii). https://nche.ed.gov/mckinney-vento-definition/

What is a PIT Count?

Point-in-Time (PIT) Count is the annual process of identifying and "counting" individuals and families experiencing sheltered and unsheltered homelessness on a single night in January as outlined and defined by the U.S. *Housing and Urban Development Department* **(HUD)**. HUD requires any community receiving funding from the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants, which includes both the Continuum of Care (CoC) and Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funding, to conduct an annual count.

The full PIT count includes

- Sheltered Count: the count of people who are sheltered in emergency shelter and transitional housing on a single night;
- Unsheltered Count: uses surveys and street outreach to account for individuals and families experiencing unsheltered homelessness on the night of the count; and
- Housing Inventory Count (HIC); an inventory of the capacity of provider programs within a Continuum of Care that provides total numbers of beds and units dedicated to serving people experiencing homelessness (and, for permanent housing projects, were homeless at entry, per the HUD homeless definition), categorized by five Program Types: Emergency Shelter; Transitional Housing; Rapid Re-housing; Safe Haven; and Permanent Supportive Housing.

Taken together, the Sheltered, Unsheltered, and Housing Inventory Counts paint a complete picture of our homelessness response system, with the sheltered and unsheltered counts illustrating the need for services and the HIC illustrating our capacity for providing those services.

By conducting the counts annually, we hope to provide better information to service providers, governmental entities, and everyday residents of New Mexico to work together to develop effective and solution-based interventions addressing homelessness across the state. https://www.nmceh.org/_files/ugd/6737c5_4ecb9ab7114a45dcb25f648c6e0b0a30.pdf

The portion of the PIT Count conducted by 100% Otero reflects those homeless individuals who were ***Unsheltered*** on January 30, 2023.

Why Count Unsheltered Homeless Individuals?

Information about unsheltered homeless people is useful for:

- service planning
- demonstrating a need for resources in the Continuum of Care application
- raising public awareness about the issue of homelessness

- accurately measuring and identifying the needs of populations that are the hardest to serve (chronically homeless)
- measuring performance in eliminating homelessness, particularly chronic homelessness. https://www.hudexchange.info/sites/onecpd/assets/File/Guide-for-Counting-Unsheltered-Homeless-Persons.pdf

Otero County Historical Data

2021 Otero PIT Count

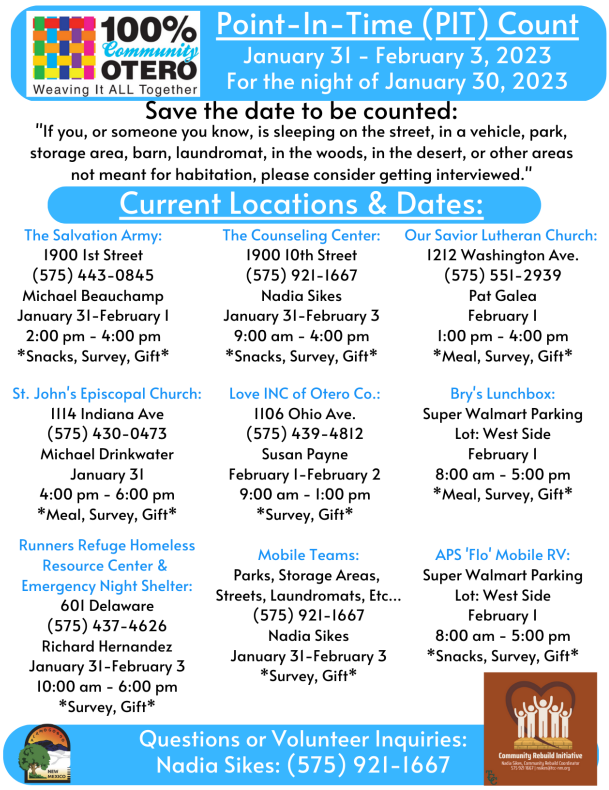
- Coordinated by Pastor Mike Degner through Hope Community Center, with volunteers including some from 100% Otero.
- Was conducted *mainly* in Alamogordo
- 90 Interviews completed ~ approximately 109 people total
- Demographics
    - 59 Males, 29 Females, and 2 People who Identify as Transgender
    - 10 people had a partner
    - 12 Children included in the count.

2022 Otero PIT Count

- Coordinated through **100% Otero** Housing Team, with volunteers
- Conducted mainly in Alamogordo with some efforts in Tularosa
- Interview sites: Mobile Team, Mountain View Church, Curbside Meal Sites, Corinth Baptist Church, Otero County Administration, Love INC, The Counseling Center, Community Park Tularosa, Counselors, Housing Authority, PMS, PACE
- **TOTAL surveys completed 22 - TOTAL people counted 24**
- 2022 Results
    - Locations
        - Tent: 7
        - Vehicle: 4
        - Abandoned building: 2
        - Outdoors: 8 (some shared locations, some not)
    - Demographics
        - 18 identified as male
        - 6 identified as female
        - Age range: 16-74 (2 people did not reveal their age)
    - Medical Questions
        - 13 reported a mental health condition
        - 3 reported a substance use disorder
        - 9 reported a disability or traumatic brain injury
    - 12 people were from New Mexico
    - 5 were NOT homeless when they arrived in Otero County
    - 4 were experiencing homelessness when they came to Otero County

2023 Otero County PIT Count Methodology

The 2023 Otero County PIT Count was coordinated by Nadia Sikes under the auspices of 100% Otero.



Prior to PIT Count:

Training - 27 local volunteers participated in training conducted by The NM Coalition to End Homelessness. Not all were able to volunteer during the actual survey dates.

Marketing/Promotion - The PIT Count was promoted by posting flyers in areas that homeless individuals might congregate. Flyers were also distributed throughout the community to community health workers, food pantries, and community health agencies. Members of 100% Otero spoke to the community about the event during appearances on local radio stations.

Appreciation bags - Preparation of appreciation gift bags containing hygiene items, socks, hats, gloves, snacks, and a gift card.

PIT Count: January 31-February 3, 2023

The dates of canvassing and first 14 survey questions were predetermined by HUD; two more questions were added by The New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness.

Teams spread throughout the county in the early mornings, throughout the day, and early evenings to contact possible homeless individuals. Teams would strike up conversations and ask if the individuals would be willing to participate in the survey. The initial question determined if the individual was homeless according to the HUD definition. If so, the interview continued. Once the interview was completed, an appreciation gift bag was offered.

Survey forms were collected and entered by 100% Otero into the Survey Monkey set up by The New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness. The Coalition will compile all of the information collected throughout the state and prepare a 2023 Balance of State report. Otero County raw data can be found in this report.

PIT count volunteers gathered after the count to discuss highlights and challenges of the 2023 Otero County PIT Count.

Highlights of this year's count included the training the volunteers received, the fact that Tularosa law enforcement was involved in the project and the way the volunteers were encouraged and trained to conduct the interviews in a "straight" talking, non-judgemental manner. The Community Health Workers from Gerald Champion Regional Medical Center were deemed the heroes of the count for addressing some individual needs immediately.

Challenges discussed at the wrap up included: difficulties in locating individuals experiencing homelessness, how to deal with the occasional individuals who did not want to engage and how to encourage those who did not consider themselves homeless but met our definition to participate in the survey. It was mentioned that the survey times did not include evenings and that might be

something to consider in the future. Since the PIT Count training stressed the safety of volunteers, extra precautions may be needed if future surveys are conducted after dark. The challenge of communication with and utilization of volunteers given work and personal schedules was also discussed.

Recommendations for future counts included:

- Creating teams in advance to make sure everyone has a partner at all times
- Varying the gift card options in the appreciation bags (Dollar General, fast food, pet food, VISA)
- Getting out in the evening/night for interviews
- Notifying law enforcement in each community
- Giving out cigarettes?
- Asking the interviewees if they have future plans.
- Taking food and water to increase the time the interviewees will participate in the conversation
- Taking the Day of Hope event to other communities in Otero County
    - Tularosa
    - Chaparral

2023 Otero County PIT Count Data

- Coordinated through **100% Otero** Housing Team, with volunteers
- Conducted in Alamogordo, Tularosa, Chaparral, La Luz, Dog Canyon and other desert locations.
- Interview sites: Mountain View Church, Salvation Army, Community Meal Sites, St. John's Episcopal Church, Our Savior Lutheran, Love INC, The Counseling Center, Community Park Tularosa, Tularosa Library, Bry's Lunchbox, Rustic Cafe, Walgreens parking lot, Runner's Refuge, Our Lady of the Light La Luz Food Pantry
- The Mobile Teams went to areas where homeless individuals are known to congregate
- Note: Some individuals declined to answer some questions which did not disqualify their survey but affects the total responses for specific questions.

Total Surveys Completed	40
Total People Counted	49
Age Range Respondents were asked their specific age as another layer to prevent duplication.	18 - 63 (4 children under 18)
Average Age	47
1. Have you already completed a survey about where you stayed on Monday, January 30?	
This question prevents duplication.	
2. Where did you stay on Monday, January 30?	
Vehicle	12
Abandoned Building	3
Shed/Garage/Storage Unit	1
Street, Park, Camp ground or Other outdoor location	15
Homeless, won't disclose where	8
Bus or Train Station	1
3. What gender do you most identify with?	
Male	29
Female	12
Transgender	0
Questioning	0

A gender other than singularly female or male (e.g. non-binary, gender fluid, agender culturally specific gender)	0
Data Not Collected	8
Refused	0
4. Do you identify as Hispanic or Latinx?	
Yes	10
No	28
Refused	2
Data Not Collected	0
5. Of those listed, which race do you most identify with? (Select all that apply)	
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1
Asian	0
Black/African American	6
White	16
American Indian or Alaskan Native	6
Tribal Affiliation: Mescalero Apache	4
Refused	2
Data Not Collected	7
6. Is this the first time you have been homeless?	
Yes	9
No	18
7. How long has it been since you had stable housing?	Range 1 month - 10 Years
Average length of time since had stable housing	2.5 years
8. How many separate times have you been on the streets or in shelters in the past 3 years? (Including your current experience)	
1	6
2	7
3	3

4	1
5+	9
9. If you added up all of your homeless experiences in the past 3 years, would it be more or less than 12 months?	
More	24
Less	5
10. Are you from New Mexico?	
Yes	19
No (AZ, OH, CO, TX, CA, MI, SD, NJ, GA, MO)	15
11. Have you served at least one day on active duty in the US Military?	
Yes	3
No	29
12. Have you been diagnosed or self-diagnosed with the following? (only asked of respondents age 18+)	
A Mental Health Condition	20
A Substance Abuse Issue	9
HIV/AIDS	0
Any disabling condition of long duration such as a chronic physical illness, traumatic brain injury, developmental disability)	13
Refused	2
Data Not Collected	3
No	5
13. Is your current housing status a result of domestic violence? (only asked of respondents age 18+)	
Yes	4
No	29
Refused	3
Data Not Collected	3

14. Did any family or household members, such as your child, spouse/partner, or parent stay with you on Monday, January 30th?	
Yes	3
No	26
Refused	1
Data Not Collected	10
14a. If Yes,	
How many children under 18 stayed with you?	4
How many people 18-24 stayed with you?	1
How many people over age 24 stayed with you?	4
14a. Additional Household Member Information	
Age(s): 18, 43, 47, 50, 55, 63	
Gender: Male - 3 Female - 3	
Ethnicity: Hispanic/Latin(a)(o)(x) - 1	
Race: White - 4	
Refused	
Data Not Collected - 1	
15. What caused you to be unsheltered on January 30?	
Disability	1
Nowhere to go	2
No ID	1
Lost job	2
Utilities	1
Eviction	1
Mental health issues	3
High cost of rent	2
No income	10
No SSI	1

Can’t get a job due to physical condition	1
Family issues	2
Life circumstances	1
Don’t get along with others	1
Just released from incarceration	1
16. What keeps you from using the shelter system?	
Only lets in certain people	1
COPE over capacity	1
Not available	9
VA and Alamo Housing didn’t work	1
Uncomfortable with other people	2
Don’t know of any shelters	7
Guy that runs the shelter is rude	1
Shelter won’t take dog	3
No shelter for women	4
Don’t need one; I’m doing fine	1
Too far, only in Las Cruces	2
Don’t like the man in charge	2
Law enforcement	1

Number of Individuals Housed in Shelters on January 30, 2023

- COPE 11 adults; 3 children
- Runner’s Refuge 3 adults

Number of Children Considered Homeless Using the McKinney-Vento Definition

- Alamogordo Public Schools reports 157 homeless students in February 2023
- Cloudcroft Municipal Schools reports 2 homeless student in April 2023
- Tularosa Municipal Schools reports 2 homeless students in April 2023
- Chaparral - unknown (no response at at time of printing from Gadsden School District)

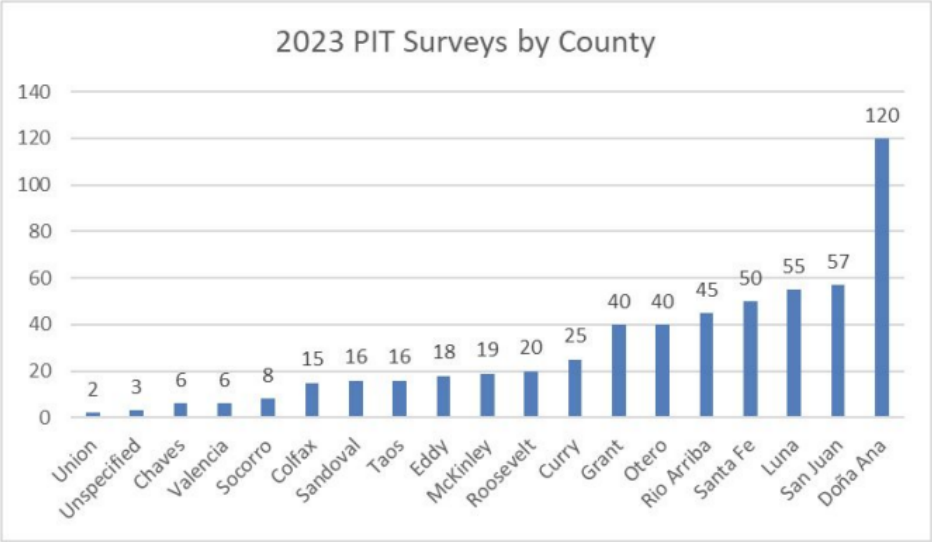
New Mexico PIT Count Data

The full report of 2023 statewide data has not been released as of early April, 2023. The New Mexico Coalition To End Homelessness will release a Balance of State report at https://www.nmceh.org/pitreports at a later date. This link can also be used to view the 2021 and 2022 reports.

The following information contains the Balance of State PIT Count of ***Unsheltered*** individuals compiled to date. NOTE: These counts do NOT include those for Bernalillo County.

2023 Point in Time - New Mexico Unsheltered Survey Results

County	Surveys (Households)	Households Without Children	Households with at at least one Adult and one Child	Individuals	Refusals
Chaves	6	6	-	7	23
Colfax	15	15	-	15	4
Curry	25	22	3	46	1
Doña Ana	120	119	1	133	79
Eddy	18	18	-	18	12
Grant	40	40	-	41	14
Luna	55	55	-	58	20
McKinley	19	19	-	19	19
Otero	40	39	1	49	0
Quay	0	-	-	0	3
Rio Arriba	45	45	-	52	0
Roosevelt	20	20	-	26	0
San Juan	57	53	4	78	125
Sandoval	16	15	1	19	18
Santa Fe	50	50	-	53	23
Socorro	8	8	-	8	0
Taos	16	15	1	24	3
Union	2	2	-	2	0
Unspecified	3	3	-	4	0
Valencia	6	6	-	6	2
Total	**561**	**550**	**11**	**658**	**346**

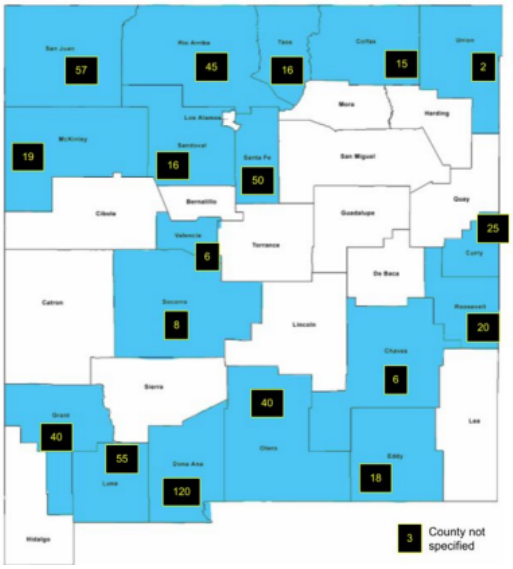


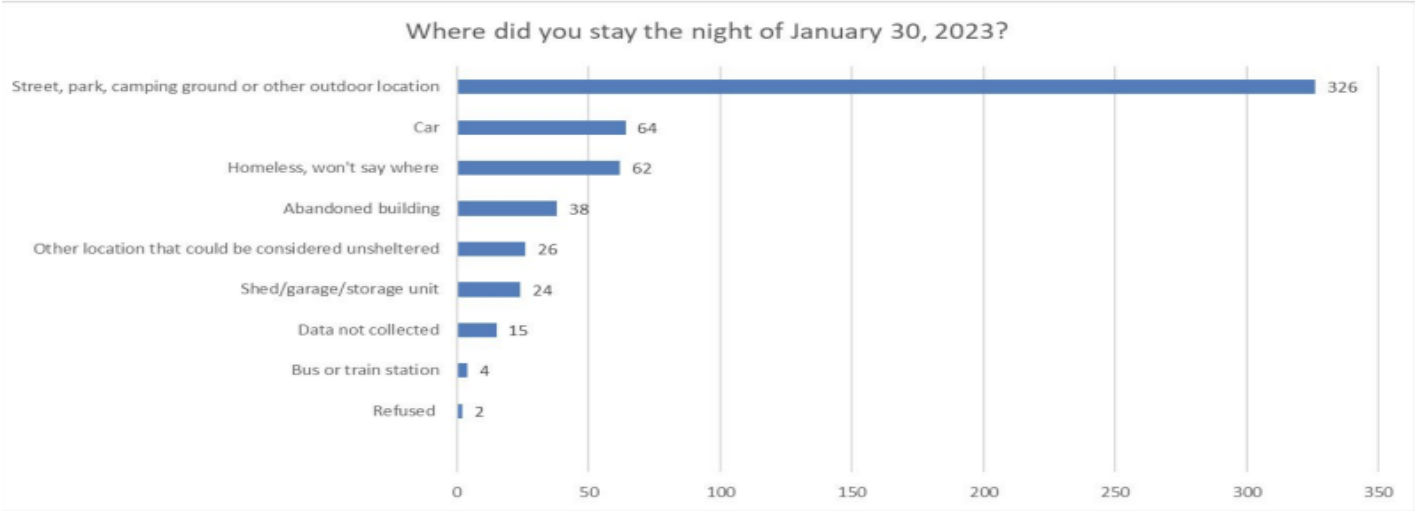
New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness

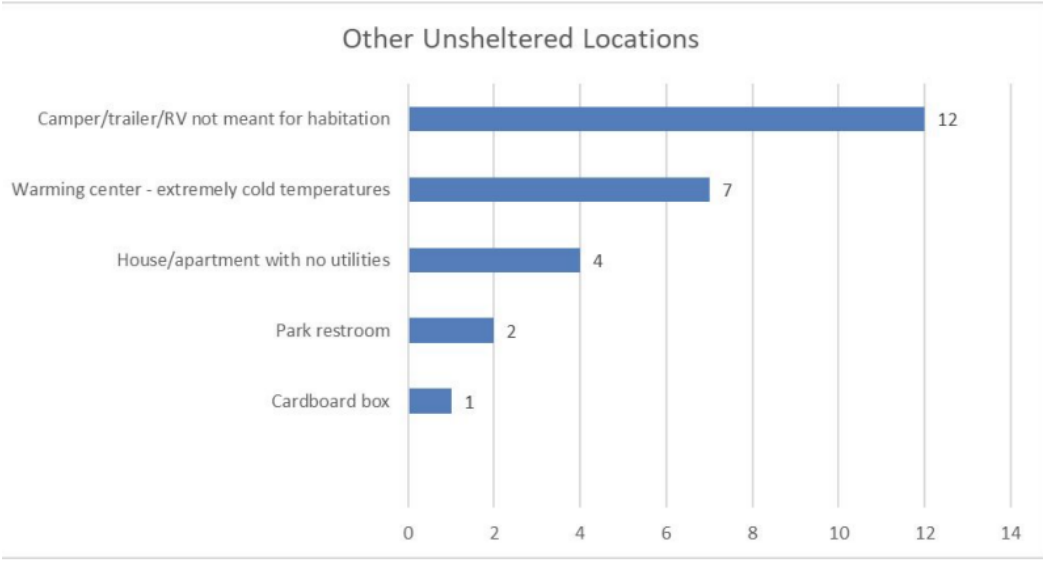
NM-501

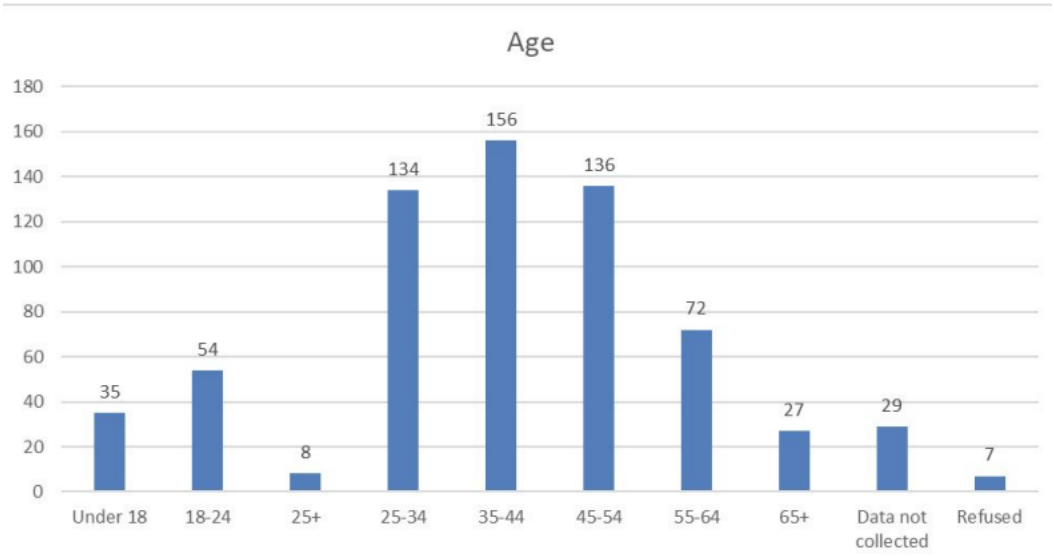
2023 Unsheltered Point-in-Time Count Surveys

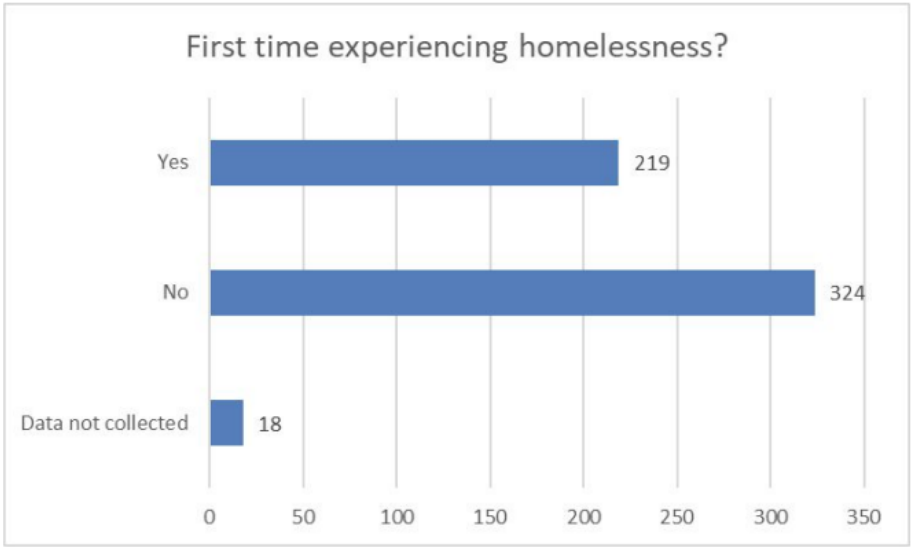
By County

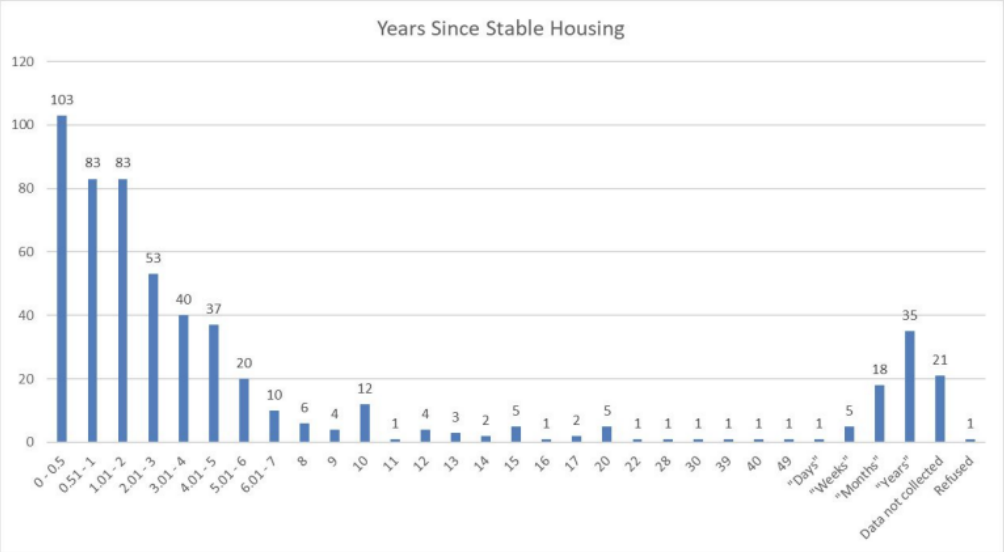


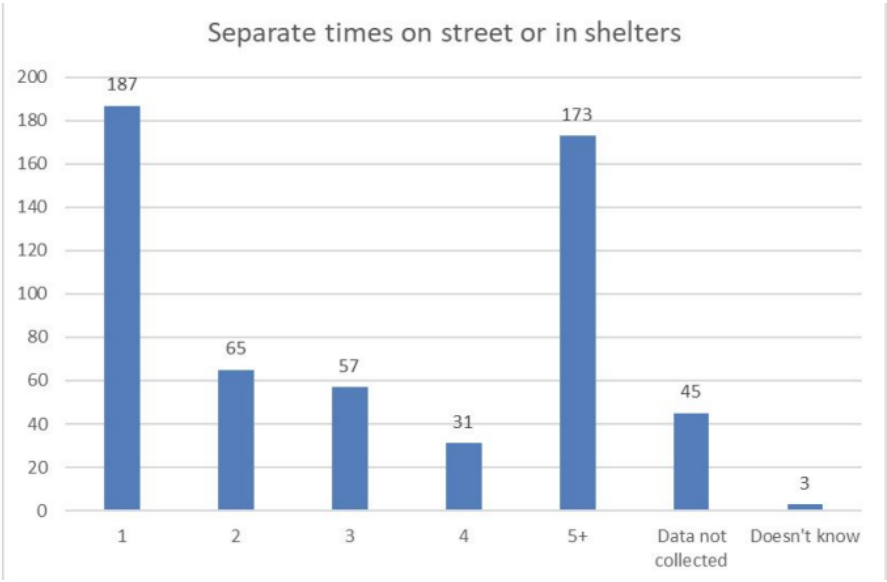


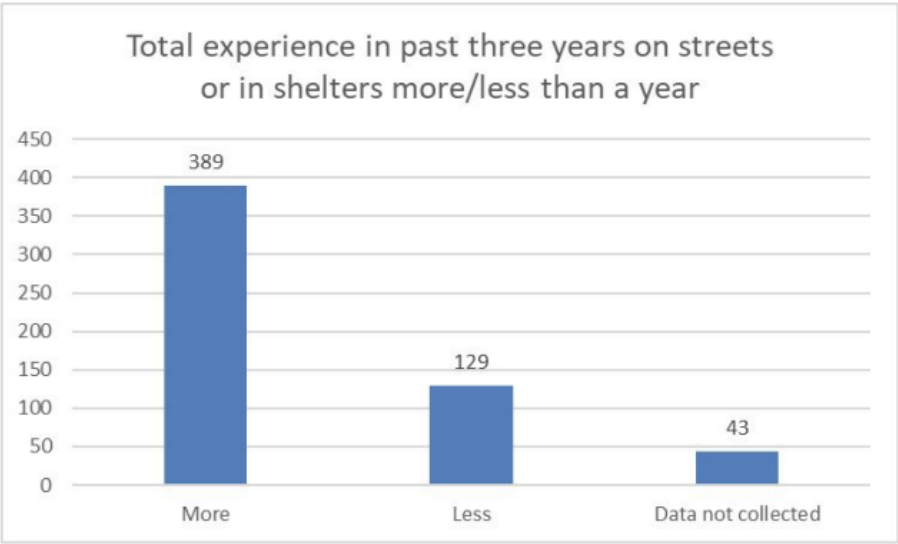

Other Unsheltered Locations
Camper/trailer/RV not meant for habitation
12
Warming center - extremely cold temperatures
7
House/apartment with no utilities
4
Park restroom
2
Cardboard box
1
0
2
4
6
8
10
12
14

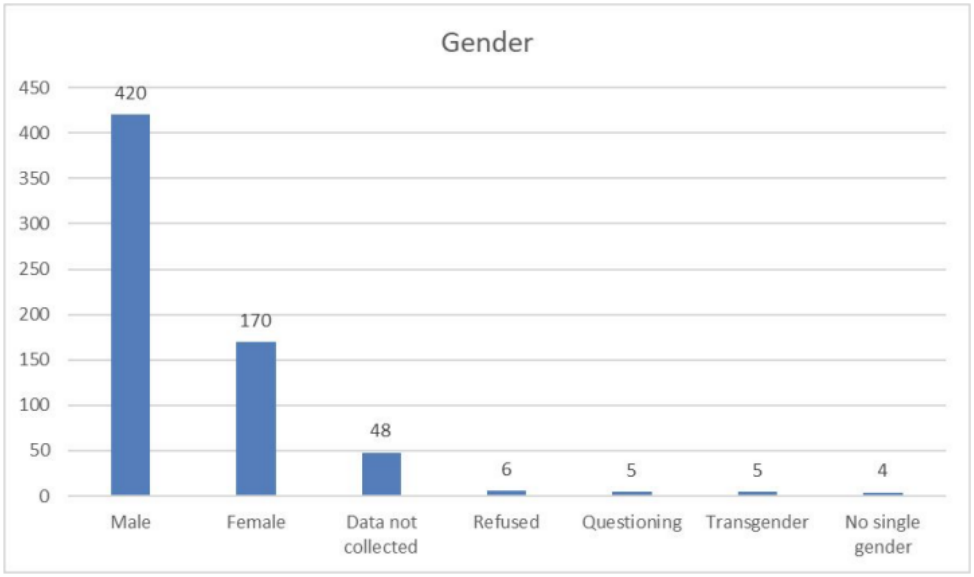

Age
180
160
140
120
100
80
60
40
20
0
35
54
8
134
156
136
72
27
29
7
Under 18
18-24
25+
25-34
35-44
45-54
55-64
65+
Data not collected
Refused

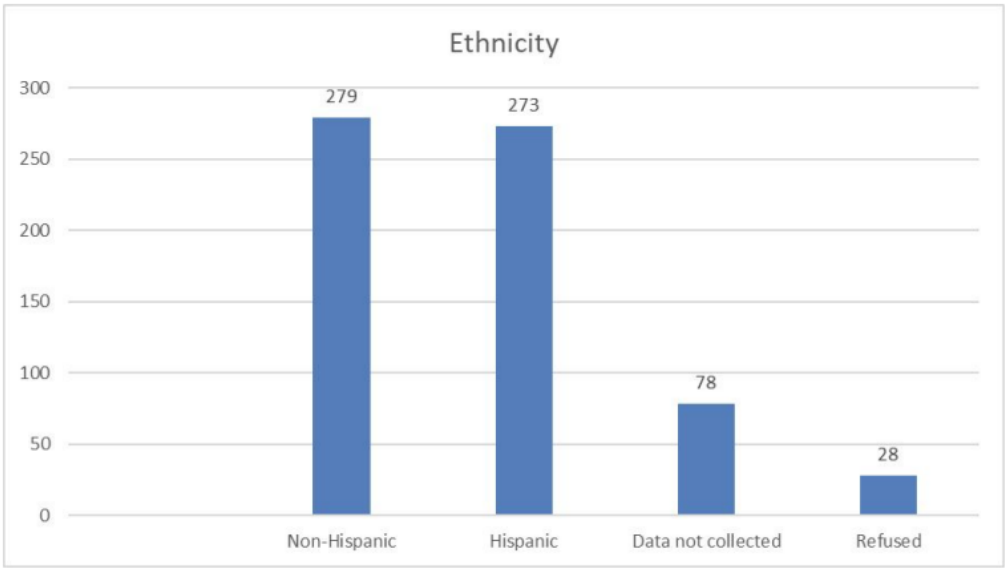

First time experiencing homelessness?
Yes
219
No
324
Data not collected
18
0
50
100
150
200
250
300
350

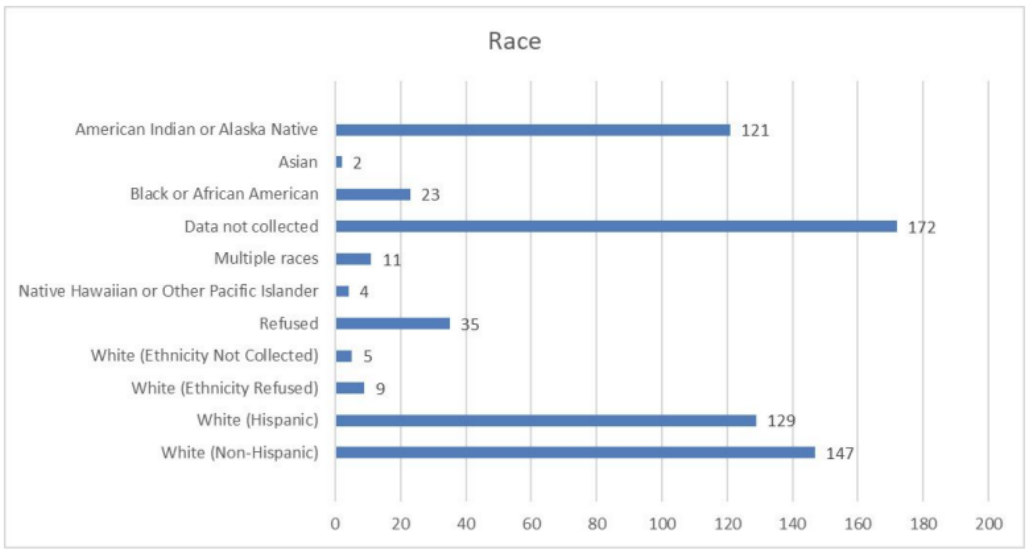

Years Since Stable Housing
120
100
80
60
40
20
0
103
83
83
53
40
37
20
10
6
4
12
1
4
3
2
5
1
2
5
1
1
1
1
1
1
1
5
18
35
21
1
0 - 0.5
0.51 - 1
1.01 - 2
2.01 - 3
3.01 - 4
4.01 - 5
5.01 - 6
6.01 - 7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
20
22
28
30
39
40
49
"Days"
"Weeks"
"Months"
"Years"
Data not collected
Refused

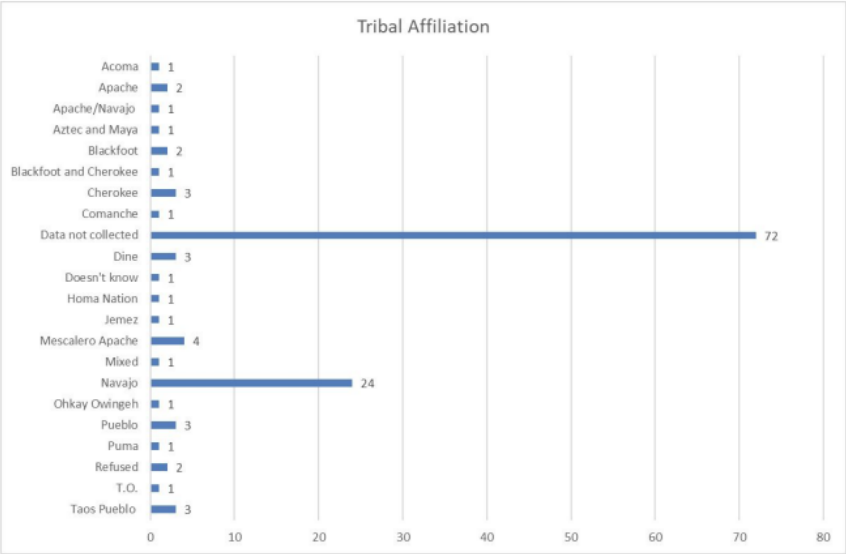

Separate times on street or in shelters
200
180
160
140
120
100
80
60
40
20
0
187
65
57
31
173
45
3
1
2
3
4
5+
Data not collected
Doesn't know

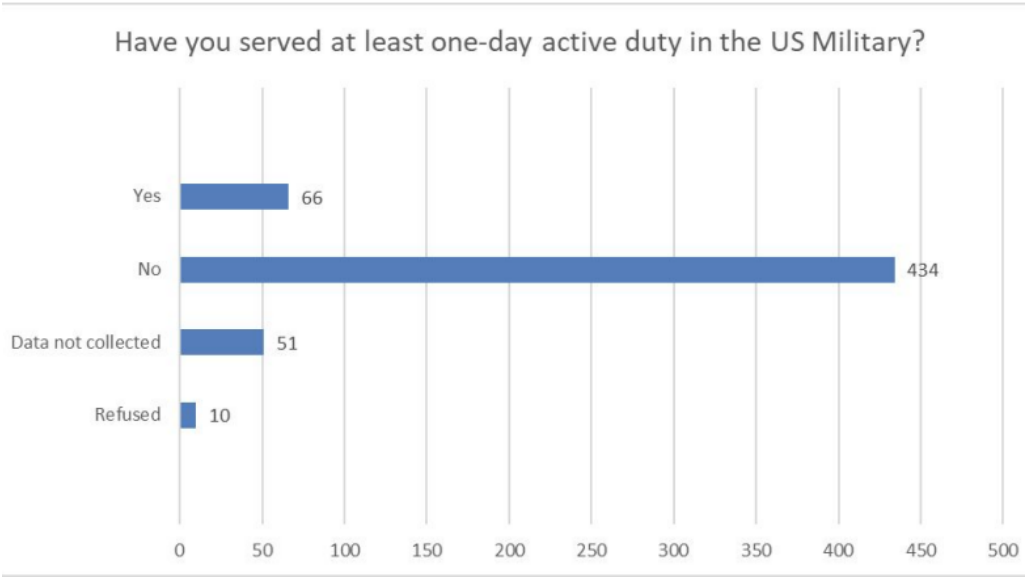

Total experience in past three years on streets or in shelters more/less than a year
450
400
350
300
250
200
150
100
50
0
389
129
43
More
Less
Data not collected


Gender
450
400
350
300
250
200
150
100
50
0
420
170
48
6
5
5
4
Male
Female
Data not collected
Refused
Questioning
Transgender
No single gender


Ethnicity
300
250
200
150
100
50
0
279
273
78
28
Non-Hispanic
Hispanic
Data not collected
Refused

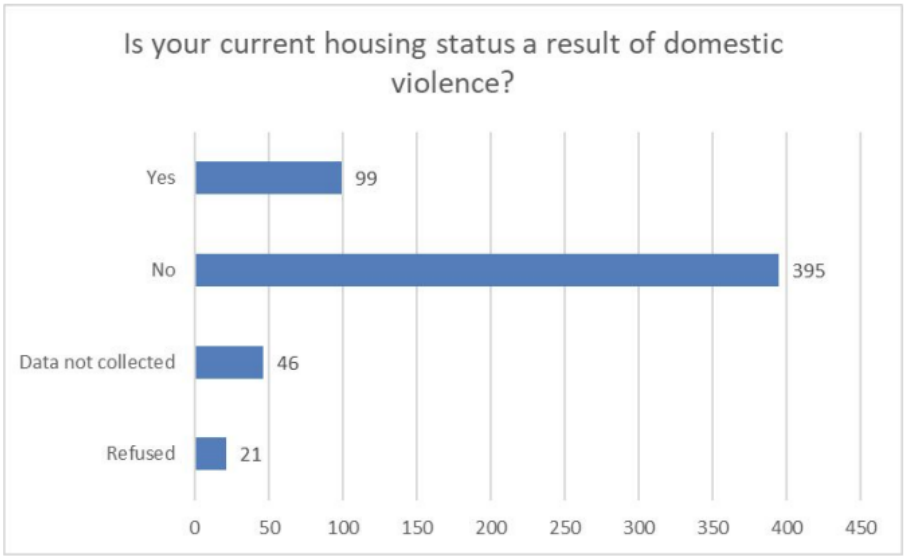

Race
American Indian or Alaska Native
Asian
Black or African American
Data not collected
Multiple races
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
Refused
White (Ethnicity Not Collected)
White (Ethnicity Refused)
White (Hispanic)
White (Non-Hispanic)
121
2
23
172
11
4
35
5
9
129
147
0
20
40
60
80
100
120
140
160
180
200

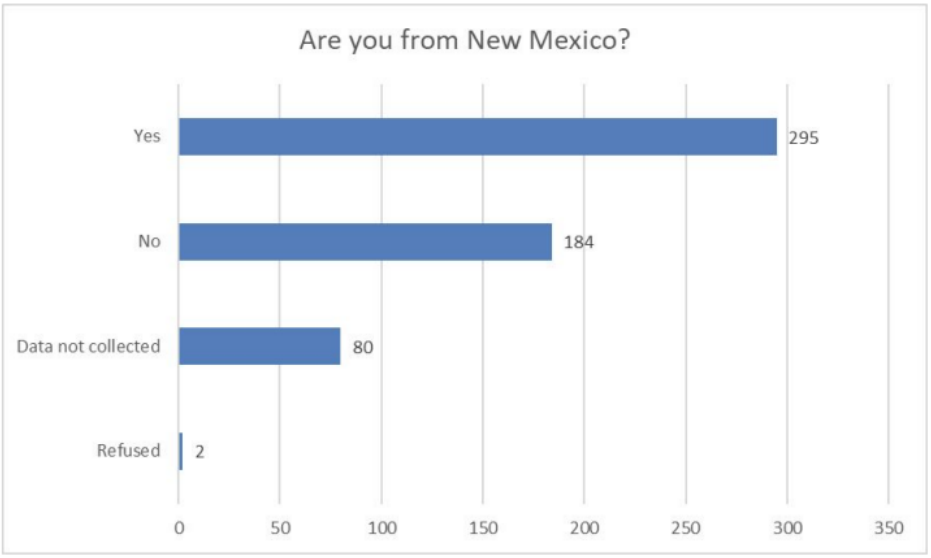




Long-term Disabling Conditions

Mental Health Condition	Substance Abuse Issue	HIV/AIDS	Other Long-term Disabling Condition	Refused	Data Not Collected	No	Total
X							78
	X						81
		X					1
			X				48
X	X						84
X	X	X					3
X	X		X				54
X	X	X	X				1
X			X				35
	X		X				9
				X			17
					X		57
						X	93


Is your current housing status a result of domestic violence?
Yes
99
No
395
Data not collected
46
Refused
21
0
50
100
150
200
250
300
350
400
450


Are you from New Mexico?
Yes
295
No
184
Data not collected
80
Refused
2
0
50
100
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Statistics on Homelessness in America

"In January 2020, there were 580,466 people experiencing homelessness in America…They lived in every state and territory, and they reflected the diversity of our country."
(EndHomelessness.org)

- In that year's PIT Count, of those counted, **61.1% were sheltered and 38.9% were unsheltered.**
- **Over 70% were individuals and almost 30% were families**
- **Approximately 19% of those counted were defined as chronically homeless**
- **6.5% were veterans**
- **6% were unaccompanied youth**

National Alliance to End Homelessness, State of Homelessness: 2021 Edition

What Causes Homelessness?

- Affordable Housing

  More than any other time, there is a lack of housing that low income people can afford. Without housing options, people face eviction, instability and homelessness.

- Income and Housing Affordability

  Low income households often do not earn enough to pay for food, clothing, transportation and a place they can call home.

- Connection between Homelessness and Health (Including mental health)

  Health and homelessness are inextricably linked. Health problems can cause a person's homelessness as well as be exacerbated by the experience. Housing is key to addressing the health needs of people experiencing homelessness.

- Escaping Violence

  Many survivors of domestic violence become homeless when leaving an abusive relationship.

- Impact of Racial Disparities

  Most minority groups in the United States experience homelessness at higher rates than Whites, and therefore make up a disproportionate share of the homeless population.

https://endhomelessness.org/homelessness-in-america/what-causes-homelessness/

Summary

While the PIT Count is currently the most widely-used methodology for enumerating people experiencing homelessness, it is not an exact count and has a margin of error. The margin of error is due to the fact that the numbers are greatly affected by the level of community engagement, methodology, weather, incorrect data submissions, data being largely self-reported, etc. Numbers in this report should be taken to indicate trends rather than exact, unwavering figures.

A survey like the PIT Count tells us that we have *at least* 49 homeless individuals in Otero County. Also, the number of homeless school-aged children reported by Alamogordo, Cloudcroft, and Tularosa schools, as defined by the McKinney-Vento count, is 161, more than three times the number identified by the PIT Count.

The question that comes to mind then is, “What do we need to do?” or “Now what?” The answer involves recognition that there is a homeless problem in Otero County. Solving homelessness requires participation by government officials, local and regional agencies, as well as not-for-profit organizations. Action must be taken on several fronts, including substance misuse, medical and behavioral health, and shelters that accept dogs.

100% Otero plans to continue to address housing shortages and the needs of unsheltered individuals and families, in collaboration with other local groups. 100% Otero conducted an experiment in November of 2022 called Day of Hope. At the event, local service providers were paired with housing insecure individuals. Tangible help was provided such as cell phones, hair cuts, vision and hearing screenings, Ask-A-Nurse and Ask-A-Resident services, flu and COVID vaccines, drop-in behavioral health counseling sessions, as well as Head Start, Medicaid, food stamps and Link2Feed registrations. Legal resources and help with employment and education applications were also available. Four-legged companions were welcomed with food of their own, heartworm checks and vaccinations. 100% Otero is planning similar events in the future at other Otero County locations.

Children, especially, deserve secure housing. The lack of a safe place to live contributes to Adverse Childhood Experiences and subsequent lifelong health and employment issues. 100% Otero wants every child to live a life characterized by safety, good health and happiness, and a future characterized by productivity and contribution.

This report can be viewed at https://www.100nm.org/otero/2023-pit-report/.