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Housing for Health Partnership Reports Sustained Progress in 2024 Point-in-Time Count

The Housing for Health Partnership (H4HP) is pleased to announce the complete 2024 Point-In-Time (PIT) Count is now available.

As previously announced, the 2024 PIT Count shows Santa Cruz County maintained progress in reducing the impacts of homelessness on individuals and the community. The number of people experiencing homelessness is 1,850, a 2.6 percent increase from the prior year when the count showed the lowest number of persons experiencing homelessness ever recorded.

"This data demonstrates the effectiveness of local investments and strategies, including the Housing for a Healthy Santa Cruz County framework, in contributing to sustainable reductions in homelessness," Santa Cruz County Housing for Health Director Robert Ratner said. "While the overall numbers remain essentially unchanged, the full report demonstrates that our community still has challenges ahead of us in addressing this issue."

Inconsistent State funding to address homelessness and the spiraling cost of housing threatens progress in managing homelessness locally. According to a recent study, Santa Cruz County is not only the least affordable rental market in the nation, but housing costs are 20 percent higher than the next least affordable market. The lack of affordable housing and housing in general make it extraordinarily difficult to find safe, suitable homes for everyone.

At present, 86 percent of the population lived in Santa Cruz County at the time they became homeless, and 30 percent are experiencing homelessness for the first time. A new addition to the report includes more detail on where those surveyed sleep, with 35 percent sleeping outside and 27 percent in shelters.

The top causes reported by individuals for homelessness was job loss, at 36 percent, followed by eviction, which affects 29 percent. Additionally, 26 percent of the

homeless population are employed, and 45 percent believe that employment assistance is the most effective way to prevent housing loss.

The issue of homelessness is impacting a wide range of populations in our county. Between 2023 and 2024, the percentage of Latinos experiencing homelessness increased to 29 percent, while homelessness among seniors grew by seven percent. These increases are in line with national and statewide trends. Homelessness is also affecting those with physical and mental challenges, with 55 percent of the homeless population reporting a disabling condition and 46 percent having a substance use disorder.

The report also indicates significant decreases in homelessness in the City of Santa Cruz. These decreases were the result of investments and a pro-housing approach to addressing the affordable housing issue. The data showed increases in other jurisdictions, including the unincorporated area.

The Housing for Health Partnership, the County coalition of local jurisdictions and key service providers, remains committed to working collaboratively with community partners to develop sustainable solutions and create healthy living situations for all County residents, including through the [Housing for a Health Santa Cruz County plan](#).

The full report of the 2024 PIT Count can be viewed on the [Housing for Health Partnership website](#).

ABOUT THE HOUSING FOR HEALTH PARTNERSHIP

The Housing for Health Partnership is a collaboration of the County and each city within Santa Cruz County, along with local homelessness service providers. It acts as the federally-designated continuum of care for Santa Cruz County and helps allocate State and federal funding to address homelessness. The County of Santa Cruz serves as lead agency for the H4H Partnership. For more information, visit our [website](#), [FaceBook page](#), and [Instagram account](#).