



Point-in-Time Homeless Count Analysis  
2018



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## *Executive Summary*

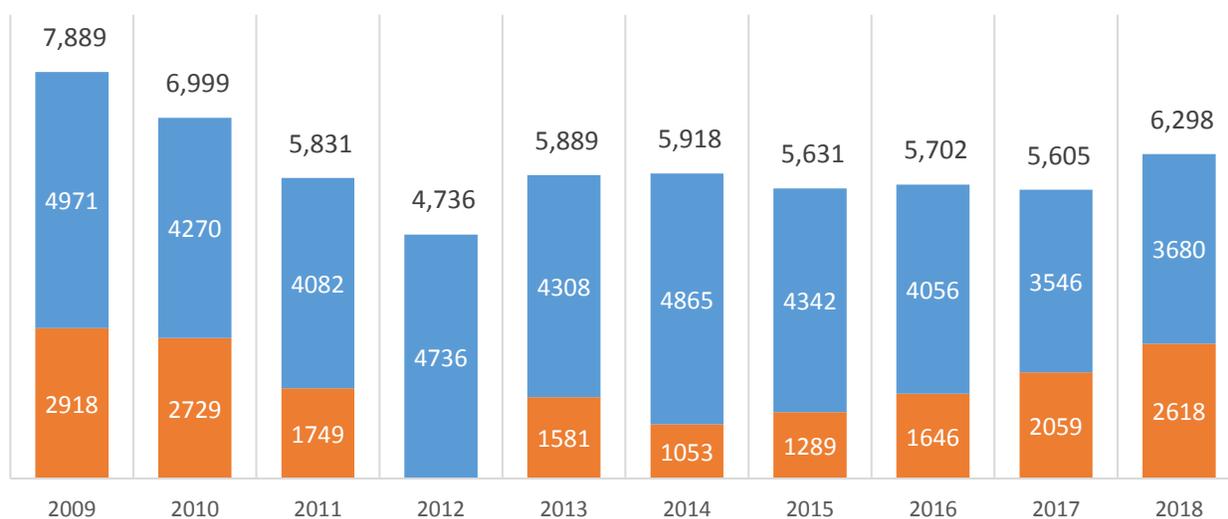
The annual Maricopa Regional Point-in-Time Homeless Count (PIT Count) stems from partnerships between the Maricopa Regional Continuum of Care (CoC) and communities throughout the region. The Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG), a council of governments, staffs the CoC and serves as the hub of collaboration between the CoC and local communities to devise a count that estimates the numbers of people experiencing homelessness throughout the Maricopa County Region. Each local community is essential to the goal of coordinating volunteers to engage with people experiencing homelessness. The partnerships between the CoC and local communities enable the CoC to systematically assess the pervasiveness of homelessness in the region as required by the HEARTH Act. Ultimately, the coordinated efforts of each local community with the CoC mitigate homelessness throughout the region, with the eventual goal of ensuring that homelessness in the Maricopa County Region is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

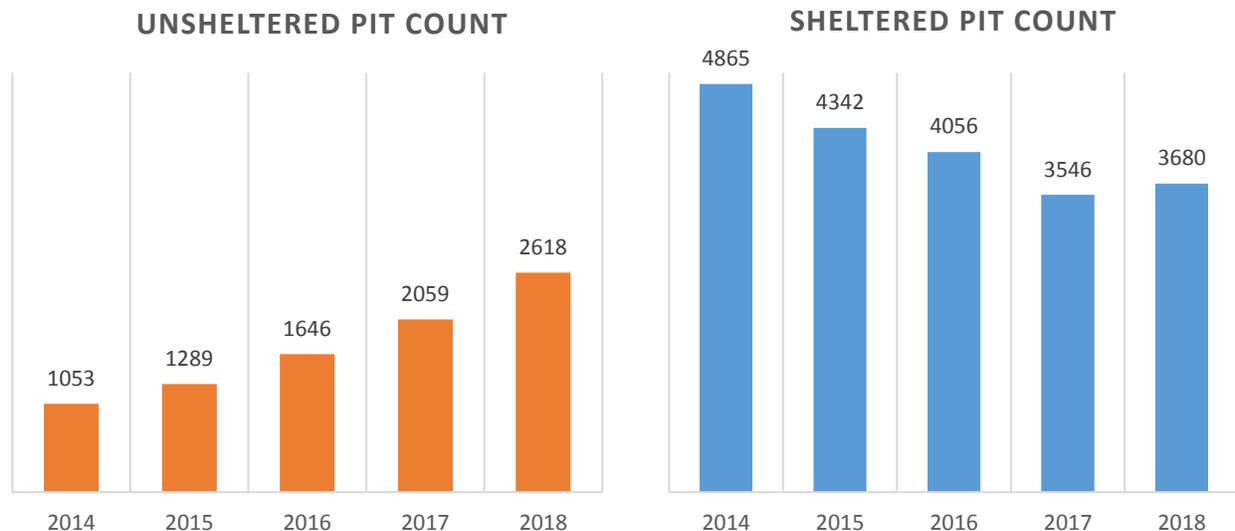
To quantify the needs of the community, the PIT Count serves as a one-night snapshot of the number of people experiencing homelessness in Maricopa County. This count is part of a national effort to identify the extent of homelessness throughout the country. Every January, volunteers and outreach teams from local communities collaborate to survey and count the number of homeless persons in their respective locations. The PIT Count includes both sheltered and unsheltered homeless populations. With the information provided by the PIT Count, the Maricopa Regional Continuum of Care and local communities can determine how best to address homelessness.

As shown by the PIT Count totals from 2009-2018, while the overall numbers remained steady from 2013 to 2017, the 2018 PIT Count showed an overall increase from previous years' counts.

### TOTAL PIT COUNTS, 2009-2018

■ Unsheltered Total Persons     
 ■ Sheltered Total Persons





Furthermore, the unsheltered count has been increasing since 2014 by approximately 25% each year, while the sheltered count has generally been decreasing.<sup>1</sup> The number of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness increased from 2,059 in 2017 to 2,618 in 2018, which was a 27% increase. From 2014 to 2018, there has been a 149% increase in the unsheltered count.

This year, significant efforts were made to improve the accuracy of the count. Regional coordinators increased their recruitment efforts, with over 700 volunteers participating, and held robust local trainings for these volunteers in preparation for the count. This could have led to more effective coverage and identification of homeless individuals and families. Furthermore, the methodology for the sheltered count also substantially improved to ensure that homeless services providers contributed and verified accurate capacity/occupancy data for the Sheltered PIT Count.

Maricopa County continues to be one of the fastest growing counties in the nation, and with a tight housing market, there is an insufficient supply of affordable housing. Individuals and families, as well as homeless service providers seeking to assist clients, are having a harder time locating affordable housing units. Barriers to housing are increasing as well, as landlords are often reluctant to accept vouchers or rental assistance and are instituting background checks and income requirements.

It is important to keep in mind throughout this report that the PIT Count is a one-day slice of the entire narrative of homelessness throughout the county. There are other resources that can be combined with the PIT Count to fully understand the extent of homelessness in the Maricopa County Region and to make accurate and effective recommendations for the future.

This PIT Count report outlines noteworthy aspects of the PIT Count, including some important changes in methodology and prominent results in 2018. The goal of the PIT Count and this report is to provide the Continuum of Care and local communities an understanding of needs within the region.

<sup>1</sup> During the 2017 PIT Count, 3 unresponsive agencies did not provide data on their services, resulting in a lower sheltered count.

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## *Introduction*

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### GENERAL

Every year, the Maricopa Regional Continuum of Care and local communities facilitate the planning process for the regional Point-in-Time Homeless Count. The PIT Count serves as a one-night snapshot of homelessness in the region and includes both an unsheltered and sheltered count.

This PIT report will summarize the background, research methodology, results, and limitations of the 2018 PIT Homeless Count. The purpose of this report is to share the results of the count with the community, to explain the methodology used, and to offer an analysis of the findings.

Hundreds of volunteers throughout the region cooperate in groups to identify and count unsheltered individuals and families experiencing homelessness in the county for the PIT Count each year. Simultaneously, shelters in the region connected to the local Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) submitted data on persons staying in their shelters. The sheltered PIT Count collects data from emergency shelters (ES), transitional housing (TH), and Safe Haven (SH) programs. For shelters in the region not

connected to the local HMIS, a shelter count form is distributed to be filled out and returned. Likewise, for the night of the count, a Housing Inventory Count (HIC) must be submitted that takes an inventory of bed and unit capacity of providers, TH and SH programs that offer beds and units dedicated to serving persons who are homeless. The HIC and sheltered PIT Count are designed to occur simultaneously to determine gaps in housing need.

Data from the street and shelter count are collected to measure homelessness on a national and local scale and then reported to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) through the Homelessness Data Exchange (HDX) website. As part of the Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR), the data is provided to Congress annually. The AHAR is used by HUD, Congress, additional federal departments, and the general public to understand the nature and extent of homelessness. The AHAR also is an important measure of local and national progress toward ending homelessness.

## METHODOLOGY

Each Continuum of Care throughout the nation conducts a PIT Count, utilizing HUD recommended practices and a variety of methodologies based on local demographic and geographic characteristics. Given the large geographic area of the Maricopa County Region specific methodologies were adopted for the count to ensure efficiency and effectiveness. With 9,224 square miles to cover for the PIT Count and 24 municipalities involved in the planning process, a combination of non-random sampling and extrapolation was used, with a focus on prioritizing resources where homeless persons congregate.

The Maricopa Regional Continuum of Care PIT Count included three surveys in the count to identify geographic and demographic data: (1) an in-person interview with a brief survey for approachable unsheltered persons; (2) an observation survey for unsheltered, but unapproachable, unwilling, or sleeping persons; and (3) a survey for shelters to count clients on the night of the count.

Because it has the largest homeless population and a vast geographic area, the City of Phoenix uses an extrapolation formula. They counted homeless populations in high and low density grids and extrapolated numbers for uncounted areas based on the previous year's high/low density designations. All other cities used a direct census method that counted the number of usable surveys completed by volunteers and outreach teams.

To ensure that the data collected are as accurate as possible for an unduplicated total, de-duplication involved the comparison of unique client identifiers and personally identifying information (PII). Furthermore, the sheltered and unsheltered counts were planned to occur

at the same time in a “blitz” format to avoid double counting. The interview questions also contained a screening question (e.g. “Have you already completed a count survey?”) to ensure that duplication did not occur.

On the morning of January 23, 2018, more than 700 volunteers and surveyors reached out to homeless men, women, and children staying in shelters and sleeping on the streets. Our volunteers were extensively trained before the count. Compared to last year, several cities increased their number of volunteers. For example, the City of Glendale enhanced the number of volunteers engaged in the count to 144 in 2018.

In addition to adding more volunteers to the PIT Count, an increased number of outreach workers participated in the count as well. These outreach teams often focused on areas where previous counts identified high numbers of unsheltered persons, leading to a more directed method of counting.

Furthermore, specific efforts were made to better count youth and families experiencing homelessness. Two youth providers hosted magnet events for youth experiencing homelessness for targeted engagement. Additionally, the coordinated entry system reached out to families who were already known to be experiencing homelessness to ensure they were included in the count.

Again, it is vital to note that homelessness is more prevalent than is captured by the Point in Time count, which is a one-night snapshot of homelessness in the county. Other data sets, in conjunction with the PIT Count, can provide a more comprehensive understanding of homelessness throughout the region.

## CHANGES IN METHODOLOGY IN PAST YEARS

A general timeline of the process through which the PIT Count evolved from 2009-2018 is below:

2009-2011 – The PIT Count used a visual tally for the unsheltered counts; no interviews were conducted.

2011 – A heavy rain led up to the day of the count, and continued on the day of the count. This may have contributed to a reduction in the unsheltered count.

2012 – There was no count, as the Maricopa Regional CoC decided not to conduct a count this year and to focus efforts on refining the PIT Count methodology.

2013 – The methodology was significantly changed from a tally to an in-depth survey. Furthermore, the time changed from a night time count to an early morning count.

2014 – The survey became more detailed due to HUD data collection requirements.

2015 – The Super Bowl was held in Phoenix/Glendale, so the count was moved to the end of February. The Men's Overflow and Parking Lot data was reclassified from sheltered to unsheltered.

2016 – A magnet event was held for homeless youth for the first time.

2017 – More volunteers and outreach teams participated in the count. The count also prioritized counting homeless families and youth and asked a more comprehensive question on gender identity.

2018 – Municipalities continued to increase recruitment and training efforts, resulting in significantly more volunteers for a more full coverage count. This year, a new mobile app was piloted which allowed volunteers to download and submit surveys electronically. The survey also included a new age category for older adults (62+) and a question was added that asked: "If you had to choose one thing, what would be most helpful to you right now?" For the sheltered count, there was an emphasis on data quality for both HMIS and non-HMIS providers to verify capacity and occupancy data.

Continual improvements to methodology from previous years led to a successful 2018 PIT Count. Particularly, as mentioned, along with more outreach and volunteer teams who participated in conducting the unsheltered count throughout the region (especially in Phoenix, Mesa, Tempe, and Glendale), special efforts were made to count homeless families and youth. The Maricopa Regional CoC will continue efforts to refine the methodology to ensure that the PIT Count is as accurate, efficient, and sensitive as possible.

## *Data Analysis*

### GENERAL ANALYSIS

**Figure 1: Overall 2018 PIT Count Results Table**

2018 Count Results						
	Sheltered			Unsheltered	Total	Percentage Change from 2017
	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing	Safe Haven	Street		
Total Number of Persons	2099	1555	26	2618	<b>6298</b>	<b>+12.4%</b>
Subpopulations						
Homeless Singles	1245	661	26	2572	<b>4504</b>	<b>+19.6%</b>
Homeless Families	239	266		14	<b>519</b>	<b>+4.8%</b>
Total persons in homeless families (# of children in fam.)	835 (521 children)	875 (558 children)		46 (21 children)	<b>1756 (1100 children)</b>	<b>-2.4%</b>
Households with Only Children	19	19		0	<b>38</b>	<b>-2.6%</b>
Unaccompanied Youth (18-24)	108	127		142	<b>377</b>	<b>+34.2%</b>
Chronic Homeless	353		5	616	<b>974</b>	<b>+3.7%</b>
Homeless Veterans	80	169	26	138	<b>413</b>	<b>-15.5%</b>
Chronic Homeless Veterans	19		5	84	<b>108</b>	<b>+24.1%</b>

Figure 1 depicts the overall trends from the 2018 PIT Count. The numbers of some populations increased from 2017 to 2018, including the total number of homeless persons, singles, families, chronic, and unaccompanied youth. However, other populations saw a decrease in their total numbers, particularly homeless veterans and households with only children. Overall, the total number of homeless persons determined from the PIT increased by 12.4 percent from 2017 to 2018, for a total of 6,298 persons in 2018. Of these individuals and families, 3,680 were sheltered and 2,618 were unsheltered.

Because the PIT is only a one-night snapshot of homelessness in the county, it is subject to fluctuations. Therefore, PIT reports must be supplemented with other sources to provide a more comprehensive picture of homelessness in the region.

*Figure 2: 2014-2018 Unsheltered Populations by Municipality*

Municipality	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
Avondale	13	27	37	20	12
Buckeye	22	0	0	0	0
Carefree	0	0	0	0	0
Cave Creek	1	0	2	1	0
Chandler	54	27	14	31	18
El Mirage	2	0	0	0	0
Fountain Hills	0	0	0	0	0
Gila Bend	8	7	9	0	0
Gilbert	4	2	1	1	0
Glendale	164	57	44	25	39
Goodyear	22	7	7	1	2
Guadalupe	9	0	8	0	5
Litchfield Park	0	0	0	0	0
Mesa	144	130	95	155	55
Paradise Valley	0	0	0	0	0
Peoria	38	22	31	30	13
Phoenix	1735	1508	1235	994	771
Queen Creek	5	1	1	0	0
Scottsdale	67	50	67	0	39
Surprise	39	16	6	7	0
Tempe	276	202	88	24	97
Tolleson	9	0	0	0	2
Wickenburg	2	1	0	0	0
Youngtown	4	2	1	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>2618</b>	<b>2059</b>	<b>1646</b>	<b>1289</b>	<b>1053</b>

Figure 2 identifies the total unsheltered count for each municipality that participated in the street count from 2014 to 2018. PIT values for Phoenix in this figure are client data supplemented with an extrapolation method. The municipality with the most substantial homeless population throughout the years has consistently been Phoenix, followed by Tempe and Mesa, while Glendale also saw a significant increase this year. These communities increased the number of outreach groups and volunteers participating in the PIT Count in 2018.

The unsheltered count has increased steadily since 2014. From 2017 to 2018, the unsheltered population count increased by 27%.

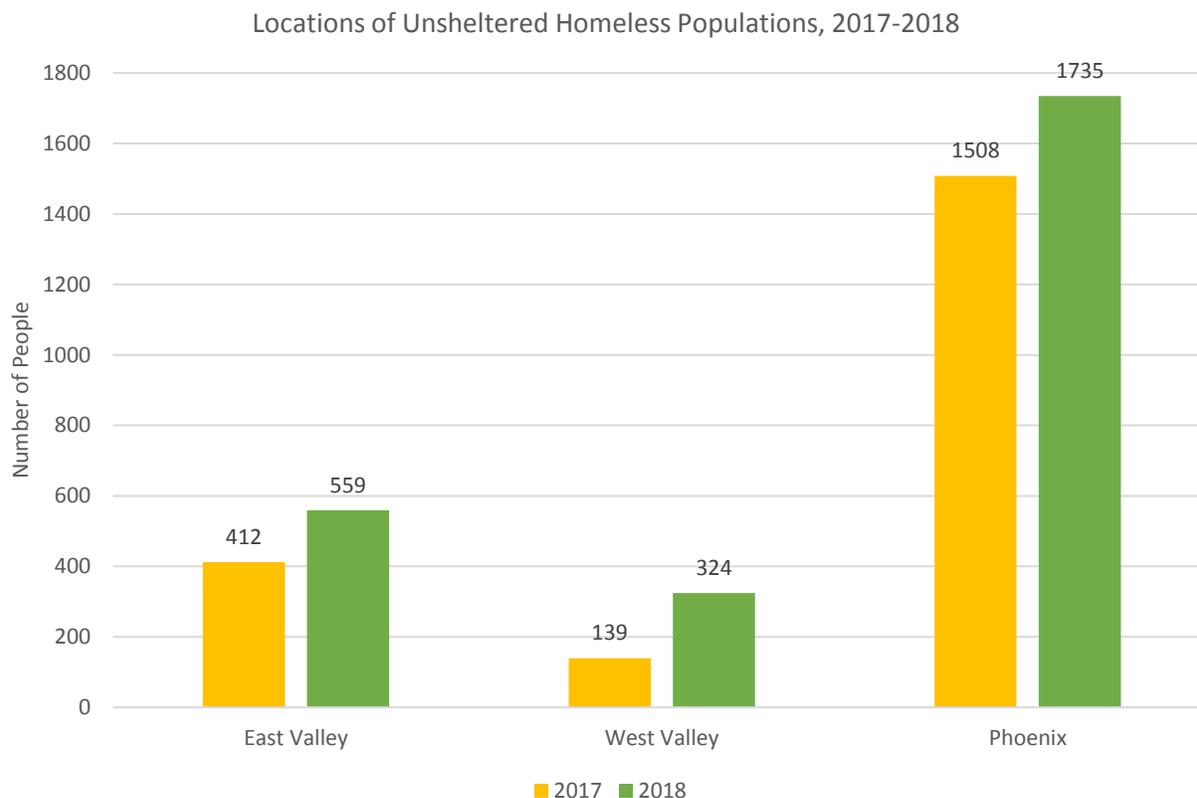
**Figure 3a. 2017-2018 General Locations of Unsheltered Populations**

Figure 3a depicts the disparity between the unsheltered populations residing in different locations within Maricopa County. It is clear that from 2017 to 2018, there has been an increase in the unsheltered population across the region. Phoenix contains the vast majority of unsheltered homeless individuals (~66%).<sup>2</sup> Notably, there is a large difference between the East and West Valley,<sup>3</sup> with the East Valley containing a 9% larger unsheltered homeless population than the West Valley in 2018. Because approximately twice as many people live in the East Valley, a larger number of people experiencing homelessness is likely reflected in the larger population, which could explain the stark difference in homeless persons between the East and West Valley.

Furthermore, municipalities increased the number of volunteers, outreach teams, and level of training this year for the unsheltered count, which led to more regional coverage and better identification.

<sup>2</sup> PIT values were extrapolated for Phoenix.

<sup>3</sup> **East Valley** includes: Mesa, Chandler, Tempe, Gilbert, Scottsdale, Fountain Hills, Queen Creek, Guadalupe, Paradise Valley, and Carefree. **West Valley** includes: Avondale, Buckeye, Glendale, Goodyear, Litchfield Park, Peoria, Surprise, Tolleson, Youngtown, Wickenburg, Gila Bend, El Mirage, and Cave Creek.

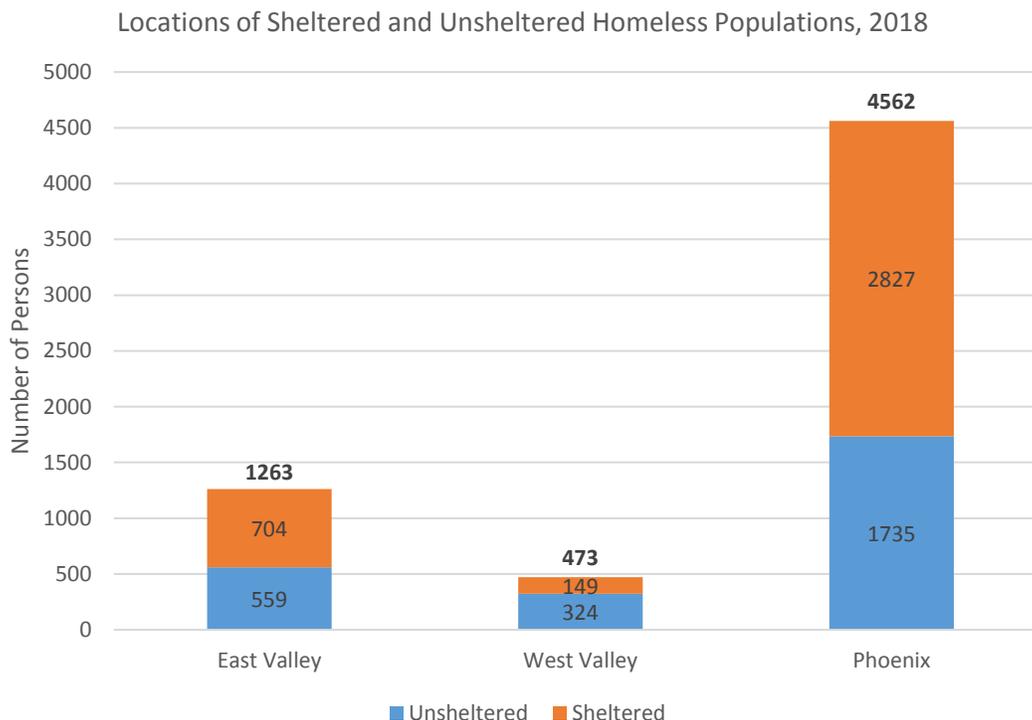
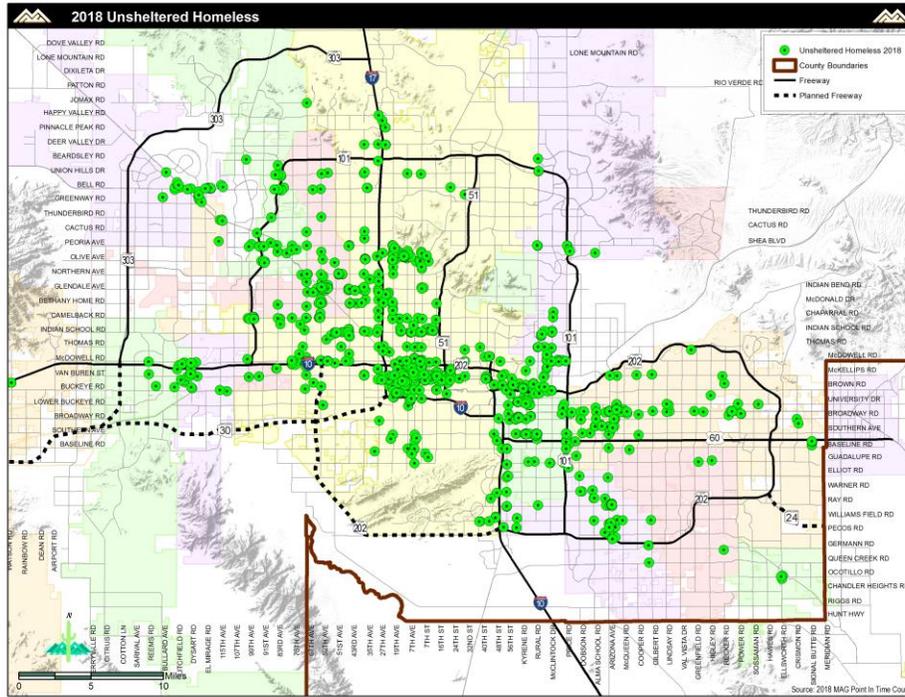
**Figure 3b. 2018 General Locations of Sheltered and Unsheltered Populations**

Figure 3b depicts locations of unsheltered and sheltered populations identified during the 2018 PIT Count. This shows a similar trend as Figure 3a, where the East Valley has more sheltered and unsheltered individuals and families than the West Valley. In addition, similar to the 2017-2018 comparison in Figure 3a, Figure 3b also demonstrates that Phoenix has substantially more people experiencing homelessness than the East and West Valley. The unsheltered PIT value for Phoenix in this figure is client data supplemented with an extrapolation method; without extrapolation, 985 persons experiencing unsheltered homelessness were identified in Phoenix. It is also important to consider the location of emergency shelters, Safe Havens, and transitional housing programs for the sheltered count. The majority of these programs are located centrally which would contribute to the significantly larger sheltered number in Phoenix, whereas fewer programs are located in the East and West Valley.

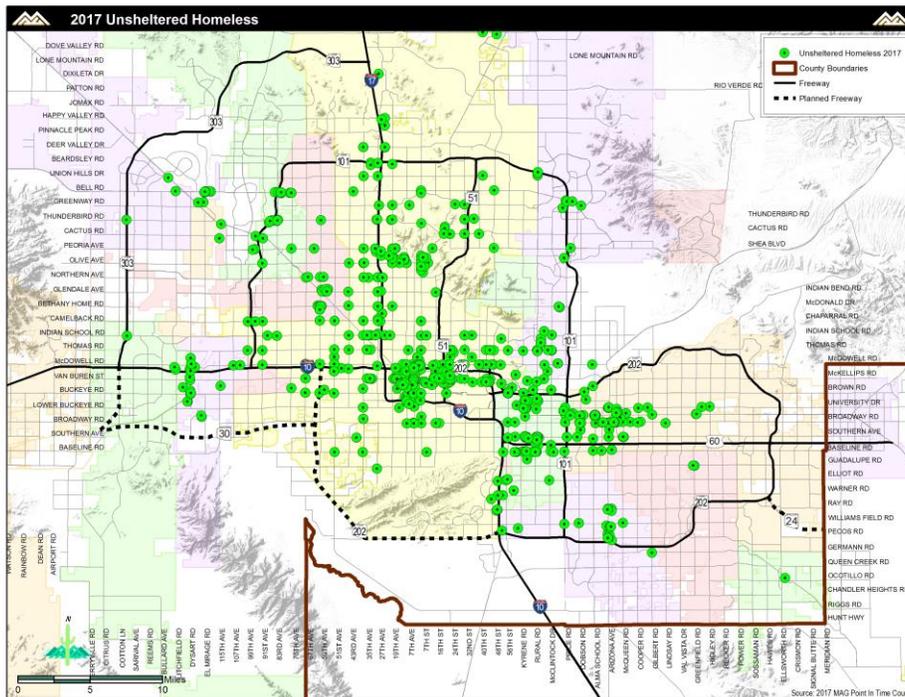
**Figure 3c. 2017-2018 Locations of Unsheltered Homeless Population – Map**

Figure 3c depicts the locations of the unsheltered homeless population for the past two years on visual maps, and demonstrates that unsheltered homelessness is a growing issue across the region.

*2018 only:*



*2017 only:*



## DEMOGRAPHICS

*Figure 4: 2018 Total Homeless Populations by Gender*

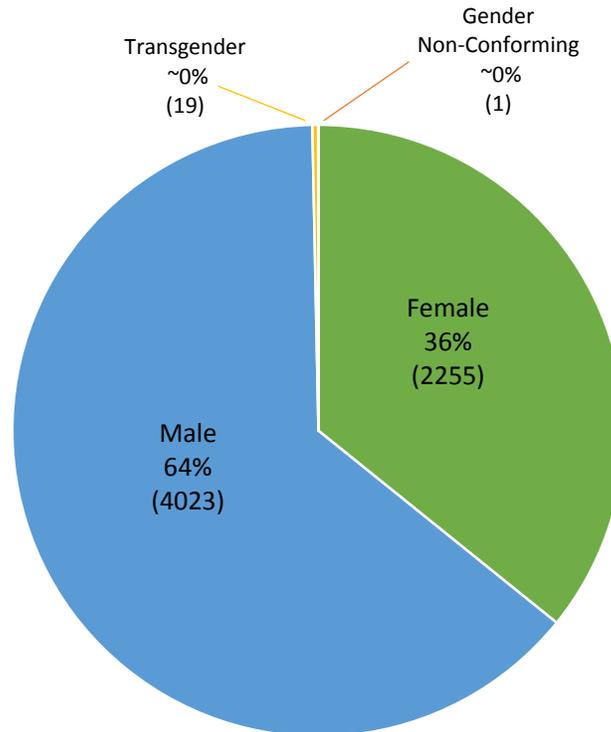


Figure 4 depicts the genders of all persons identified as homeless during the 2018 PIT Count, including extrapolated data from Phoenix. The overall data trend is consistent with previous years with the majority of the homeless population identifying as male. In 2018, 19 individuals identified as transgender from the total PIT population.

Recently in 2018, the response choice of “Does not identify as male, female, or transgender” was changed to “Gender Non-Conforming i.e. not exclusively male or female” by HUD requirement. In 2018, one individual identified as Gender Non-Conforming, and was an unsheltered individual aged 25+. Demographic information (age, race, etc.) was not provided for the sheltered count on individuals identifying as transgender or gender non-conforming. Although these two categories appear as relatively small percentages, they are an important subset of the PIT Count to consider. Evidence suggests that LGBT individuals (especially youth) face homelessness at a disproportionate rate.

**Figure 5: 2018 Total Homeless Populations by Age**

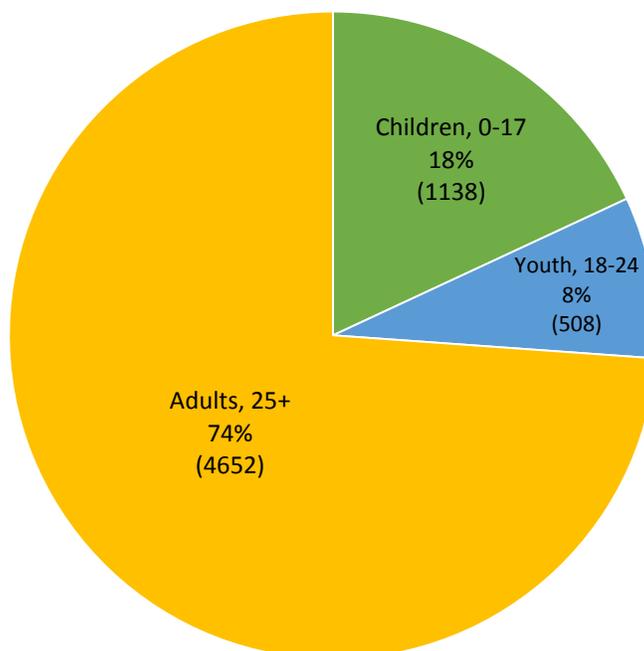


Figure 5 depicts the general age ranges and their compositions in the total 2018 PIT Count homeless population, including extrapolated data for Phoenix. Adults made up the large majority at 74%. The number of children followed at 18%. Of the 1,138 children found, 1,100 were accompanied in a family. The remaining 38 were unaccompanied (approximately 3% of the total population of children). Lastly, the smallest age range covered youth aged 18-24 years old at 8% of the total population. These values are consistent with data gathered in previous years.

Overall HMIS numbers are similar to the numbers explored here. Out of the total number of persons passing through HMIS in 2017 that reported age (31,732), 71% are adults 25 years old and above while approximately 21% are children and 8% are youth.

*Figure 6: 2018 Total Homeless Populations by Ethnicity*

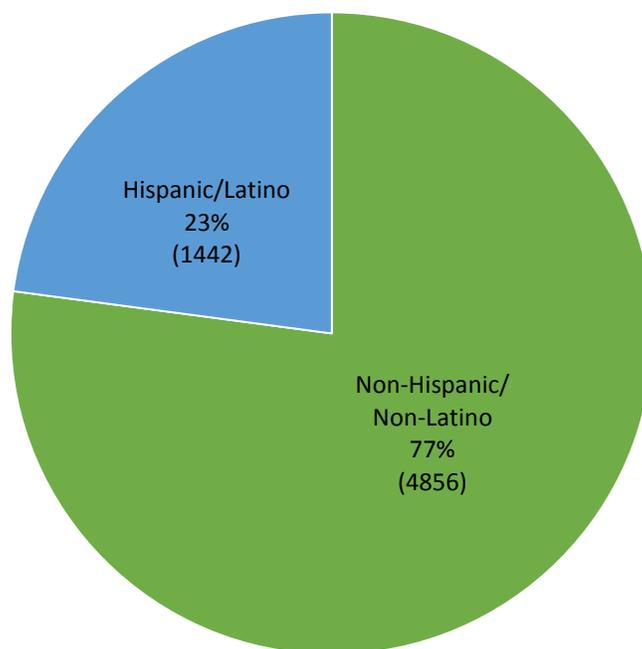


Figure 6 depicts the ethnicities of homeless persons in the 2018 PIT Count, which consists of Hispanic/Latino persons and Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino persons. Similar to last year, approximately  $\frac{1}{4}$  of these persons identified as Hispanic/Latino, whereas the other  $\frac{3}{4}$  of persons identified as Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino.

There is not a large disparity between the Hispanic/Latino composition of the homeless population as compared to the general census population of the region encompassed by the CoC. Hispanic/Latino persons make up 30% of the 2016 ACS Census data, and make up 23% of the homeless population.

**Figure 7: 2018 Total Homeless Populations by Race**

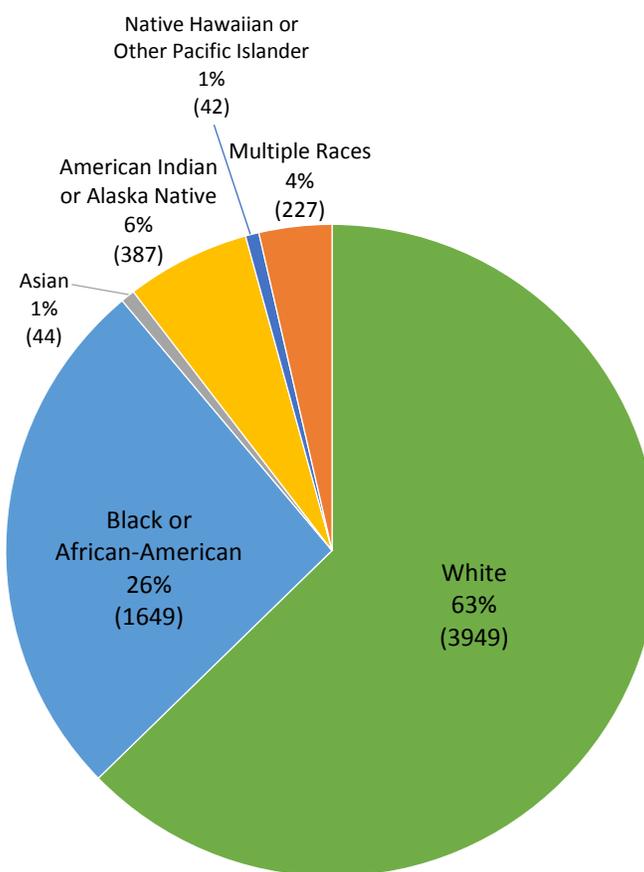


Figure 7 depicts the races of the total homeless populations for the 2018 PIT Count including extrapolated data from Phoenix. The overall data trend is consistent from that of the past two years, where the majority of the population identifies as White, at 63%. The second largest group identified as Black or African American at 26%. Together, these two races account for 89% of the PIT Count homeless population. The other race categories, including American-Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and Multiple Races together accounted for 12% of the 2017 PIT Count.

Racial disparities are evident when comparing the racial composition of the 2018 PIT Count homeless population to general county census data. In the U.S. Census Bureau's 2017 Population Estimates, Black/African-American individuals made up 6.1% of the Maricopa County population, whereas Black/African-American populations made up 26% of 2018 PIT Count. Similarly, Native Americans made up only 2.8% of the general county population estimate, but represented 6% of the homeless population identified during the PIT Count. These populations are homeless at a clear disproportionate rate when compared to Maricopa County population estimates.

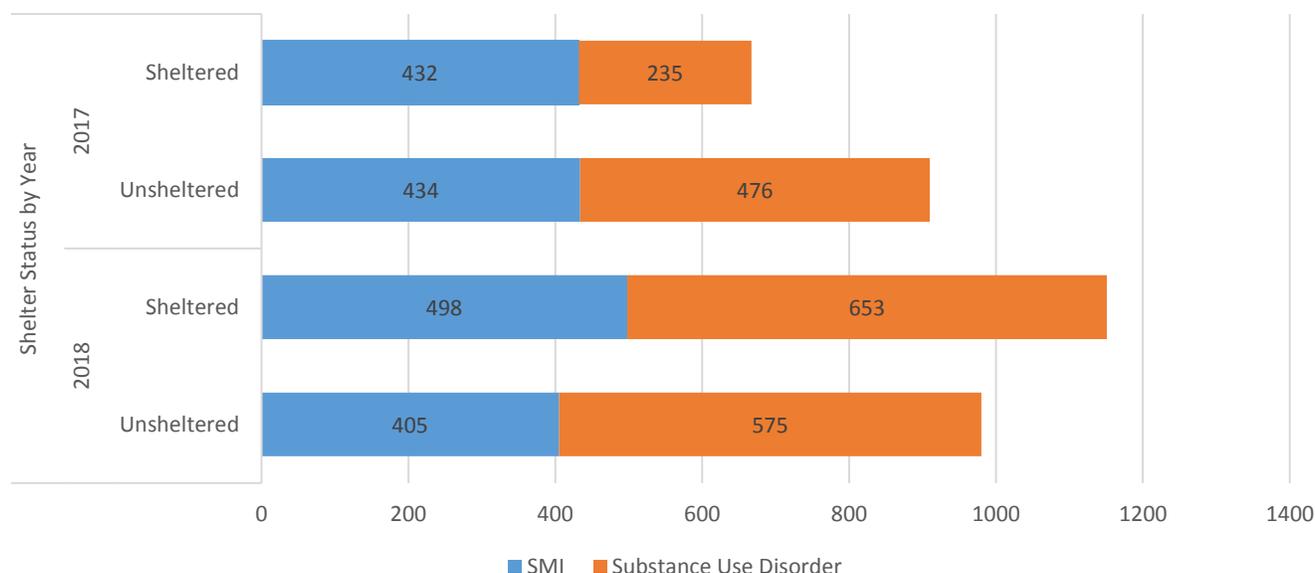
**Figure 8a: 2017 and 2018 Subpopulations of Homeless Persons**

Figure 8a shows the number by housing status of persons with serious mental illness and substance abuse disorders, two major subpopulations identified by HUD. Overall, 14% of the 2018 PIT Count homeless population reported serious mental illness, while 19% reported substance abuse. The total number of persons who self-reported a serious mental illness increased by 4% from 866 in 2017 to 903 in 2018. The total number of persons who identified as having a substance abuse disorder in a self-report increased by 73%, from 711 in 2017 to 1,228 in 2018. However, it is important to note that these responses are self-reported and cannot be verified. The numbers are reflective of how comfortable people surveyed felt regarding disclosing this sensitive information during a public PIT Count.

Furthermore, due to the self-report nature of the question on the PIT survey, there may be fluctuations between yearly PIT counts that may not necessarily reflect the status of homeless persons and the disabilities affecting them in the region. Data from the PIT Count could be supplemented with jail data, behavioral health data, healthcare data and other homelessness data (including coordinated entry data, AHAR data, and other HUD data) to provide a better understanding of the prevalence of disabilities in the homeless population. Data are also available for HIV and Domestic Violence populations.

**Figure 8b: 2018 (Unsheltered) Conditions Preventing Holding a Job or Living in Stable Housing**

758/1868 = 40.6% of survey participants from the unsheltered count **self-reported** that they had a disabling condition.

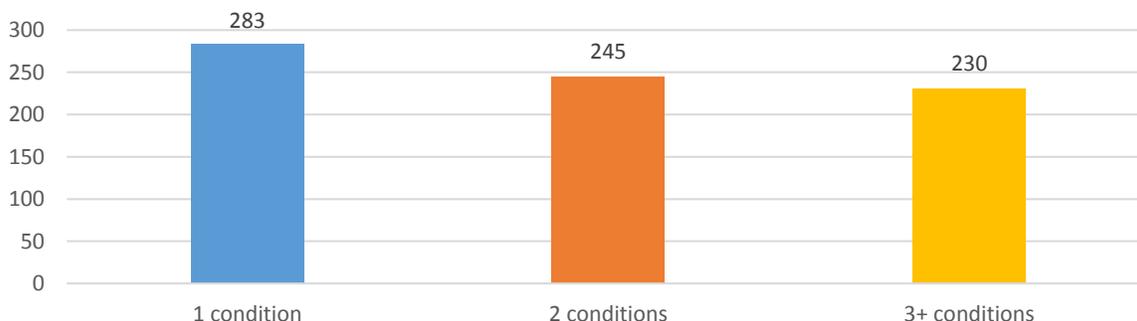


Figure 8b shows the number of unsheltered individuals who responded “yes” when asked whether they faced any conditions that kept them from holding a job or living in stable housing. The disabling condition options included the three major HUD category conditions: (1) substance abuse (drug abuse, abuse of prescription medication, and alcohol abuse), (2) mental health (PTSD, developmental disability, mental illness), and (3) HIV/AIDS, as well as traumatic brain injury, ongoing medical condition, and physical disability.

Approximately 37% of individuals who responded “yes” reported one disabling condition. 32% reported two conditions, and 30% reported three or more disabling conditions.

## POPULATION COUNTS

**Figure 9: General Homeless Families and Singles, 2017 and 2018**

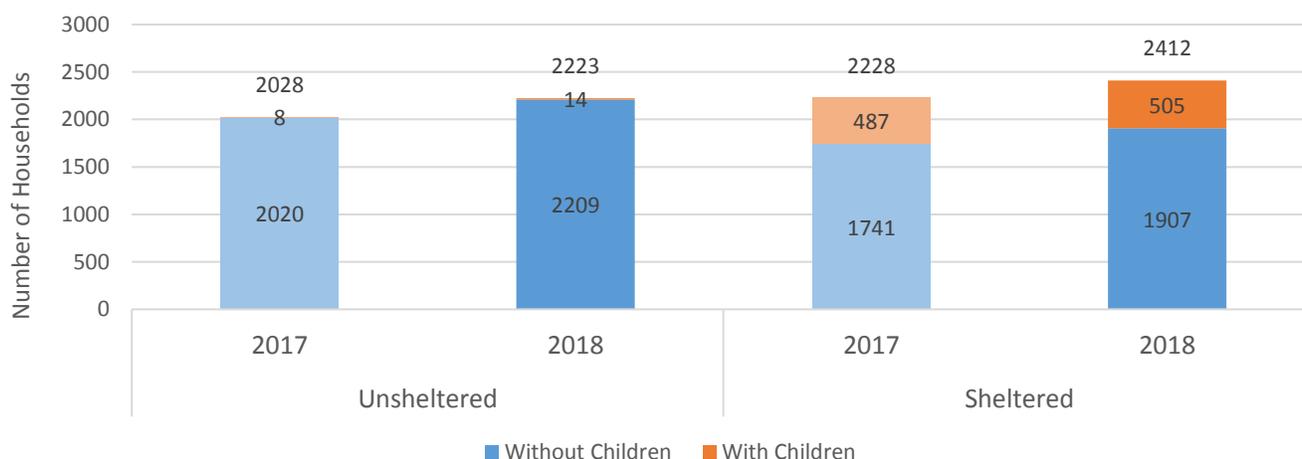


Figure 9 demonstrates the general trends of homeless families and singles in Maricopa County in 2017 and 2018. A larger proportion of families were sheltered than unsheltered (26% of sheltered households were families, while less than 1% of unsheltered households were families in 2018). This trend has

remained consistent from 2016 to 2018, but overall unsheltered numbers have continually increased each year. There are explanations to why this may have been the case (see Introduction).

**Figure 10: Chronic Homeless Families and Singles, 2017 and 2018**

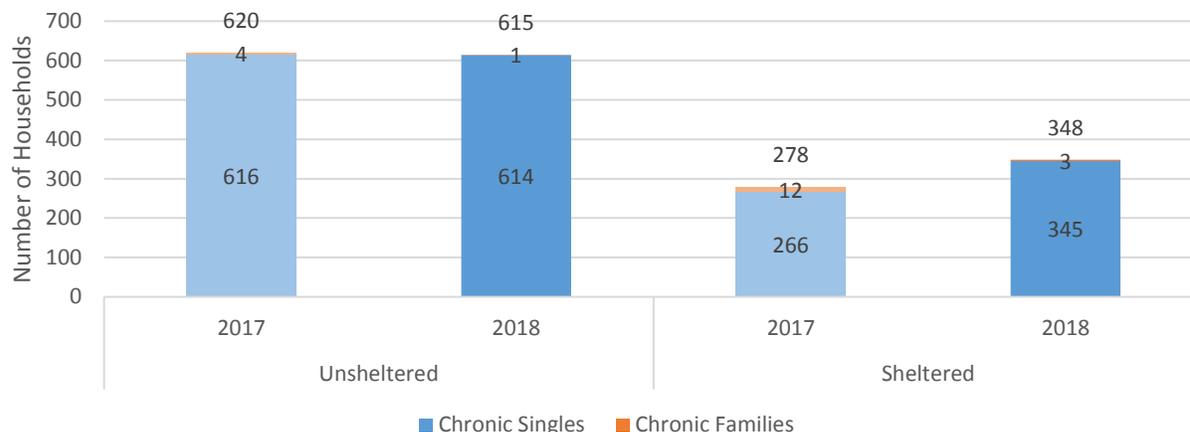


Figure 10 depicts the unsheltered and sheltered status of chronic homeless families and singles in 2017 and 2018. Unsheltered numbers of chronic homeless singles decreased a bit from 2017 to 2018, and only one chronic homeless family was identified in the unsheltered PIT Count. However, sheltered numbers have increased for singles and decreased for families.

**Figure 11: Veteran Homeless Families and Singles, 2017 and 2018**

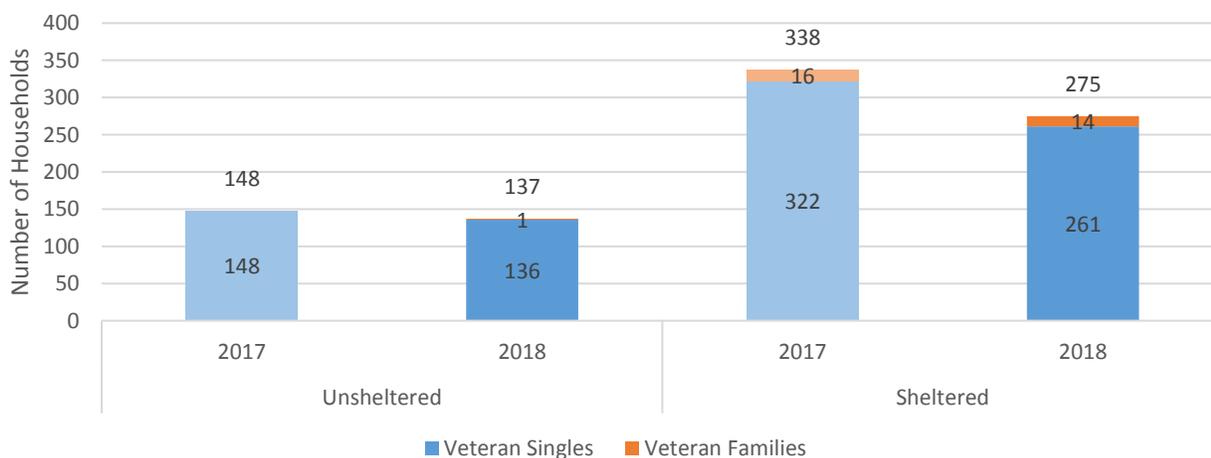


Figure 11 depicts the unsheltered and sheltered status of veteran homeless families and individuals in 2017 and 2018. The number of sheltered and unsheltered veterans experiencing homelessness has decreased from 2017 to 2018. Similar to last year, a majority of veterans are in shelter, and only one unsheltered veteran family was identified.

However, the number of chronically homeless veterans identified during the PIT Count increased. Out of the total number of veterans experiencing homelessness during the 2018 PIT Count, 108 were chronically homeless veterans (84 unsheltered and 24 sheltered), whereas there were only 87 chronically homeless veterans (71 unsheltered and 16 sheltered) in the 2017 PIT Count.

**Figure 12: Unaccompanied Youth and Parenting Youth, 2017 and 2018**

Figure 12 depicts the unsheltered and sheltered status of unaccompanied youth households and parenting youth households in 2017 and 2018. The HUD definition of “youth” includes all persons under 25 years old. A majority of the youth population in both 2017 and 2018 were sheltered. All parenting youth were sheltered in 2017 and 2018, and the total number of parenting youth decreased from 2017 to 2018. The number of unsheltered unaccompanied youth identified in the PIT Count decreased from 2017 to 2018, and the number of sheltered unaccompanied youth increased substantially.

## ADDITIONAL DATA

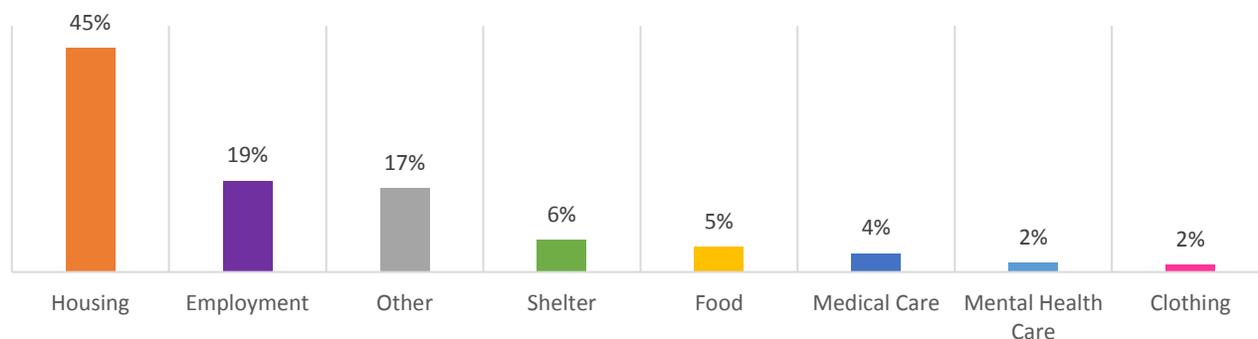
**Figure 13: Most Helpful Resource (Unsheltered only)**

Figure 13 depicts the results of a new question that was added to the unsheltered interview survey this year: “If you had to pick one thing, what would be most helpful to you right now?” Volunteers were trained to not read out the categories so that the survey participant could respond without any leading. The most common response was “Housing” (45% of responses) followed by “Employment” (19% of responses). The “Other” category included: transportation, shower/restroom, ID, money, Social Security, legal assistance, nothing, family, phone, etc. In the future, similar questions may be added to the survey for input on services.

**Figure 14: Unsheltered PIT Count by Age Group**

2018 Unsheltered PIT by Age Group		
Age Group	#	% of Total Unsheltered
Children (0-17)	<b>21</b> (all in families)	1%
Young Adults (18-24)	<b>168</b> (142 unaccompanied)	6%
Adults (25+)	<b>2429</b>	93%
Estimates based on self-reported age:		
Adults (25-61)	<b>2220</b>	85%
Older Adults (62+)	<b>209</b>	8%

Figure 14 depicts an estimated breakdown of age groups from this year's unsheltered count. HUD requires that age is reported in three categories: Children (0-17), Young Adults (18-24), and Adults (25+). This year's interview survey and observation tool added an extra age category for Older Adults (62+) to start tracking this subpopulation. Since answers were voluntary, not all survey participants reported age, but based on those that did self-report we were able to estimate the number of Adults (25-61) and Older Adults (62+). It appears that the majority of people identified in the unsheltered PIT Count were Adults (25-61), making up 85% of the unsheltered total. The next largest age group was Older Adults (62+) which accounted for approximately 8% of the unsheltered total, followed by Young Adults (18-24) and Children (0-17).

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## *Supplemental Data*

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### **Partnership with School Liaisons**

The McKinney-Vento Act requires that every school district/local educational agency (LEA) employ a local homeless education liaison. School liaisons play an important role in identifying children and youth experiencing homelessness and assisting these students.

This year, the Arizona Department of Education sent out a pilot Point-in-Time Count survey to Maricopa County LEA school liaisons and received 82 responses. The LEA survey results were not included in the official PIT Count results reported to HUD, but are included in this local PIT Count report as supplemental data on youth homelessness in the region.

LEAs reported aggregate data, so there is no way to de-duplicate from the PIT dataset and these students may have been counted during the PIT Count. Also, this year's survey did not distinguish whether a student was unaccompanied or accompanied by their family, so these students may be in a household with their family, or may be unaccompanied youth. This would be a good addition to the survey to further compare to PIT Count results of accompanied and unaccompanied youth/children.

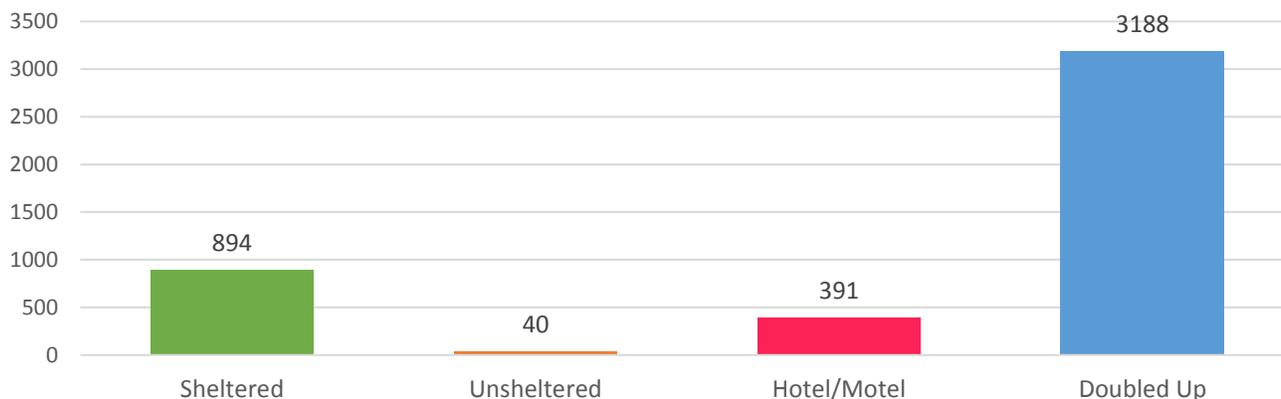
It is important to note that the McKinney-Vento LEA definition of "homeless" is different from that of the Point-in-Time Count. The McKinney-Vento definition includes children and youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, such as those who are couch surfing, doubled up, or living in a hotel/motel. The Point-in-Time Count specifically focuses on people who are "literally homeless" living in places not meant for human habitation or staying in emergency shelter/transitional housing/safe haven programs.

The first question on the LEA PIT survey asked, "What is your LEA/Charter's current (2017-18) total number of students experiencing homelessness?" Survey responses reported a total of 5,301 students experiencing homelessness that have been served throughout the school year. Students and families that have since resolved their housing crisis and are no longer experiencing homelessness may still be included in this number if they were identified earlier in the school year.

The second question asked, "What is the number of active students experiencing homelessness on the night of January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2018?" Survey responses reported 4,513 children and youth experiencing homelessness on the night of the PIT count. The 2018 PIT Count identified 1,646 youth ages 0-24 experiencing homelessness on the night of the count. The difference may be due to the PIT Count specifically focusing on a "literally homeless" definition of sheltered/unsheltered homelessness, while the LEA definition includes more categories.

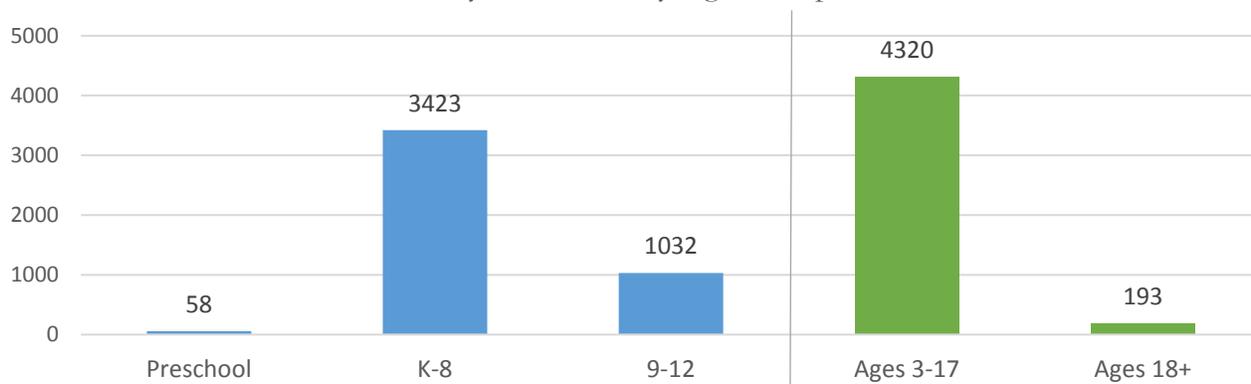
School liaisons were also asked to report the number of active students experiencing homelessness (as of the night of the PIT Count) by primary nighttime residence, grade, and age group.

Number of Students Experiencing Homelessness during the 2018 PIT Count,  
by Primary Nighttime Residence



The majority of students were in “doubled up” living situations, which is not counted as part of the PIT Count. Only 40 of the reported students were living in an unsheltered situation, and 894 were reported as sheltered. This trend matches the results of the PIT Count, which identified significantly less youth ages 0-24 that were unsheltered (189) than those who were sheltered (1,457).

Number of Students Experiencing Homelessness during the PIT Count,  
by Grade and by Age Group



School liaisons also reported aggregate numbers of students experiencing homelessness the night of the PIT Count by grade level and age group. Of the students experiencing homelessness reported during the PIT Count, the majority were in grades K-8 and were ages 3-17. Similarly, PIT Count results showed a much larger number of children under age 18 (1,138) than young adults ages 18-24 (508).

Since this was a pilot survey, not all school liaisons participated. There are over 200 school liaisons in Maricopa County, and the Maricopa Regional CoC will continue to explore opportunities to expand the partnership with school liaisons to provide more information on youth experiencing homelessness across the region.

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## *Methodology Recommendations*

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- Increase Coverage
  - Consider changing from extrapolation to direct census method in Phoenix to achieve a consistent methodology and to potentially increase reliability.
  - Continue to increase recruitment efforts for volunteers in each city and town to cover more geographic area.
  - Discuss the potential for coordinating response centers on the day of the PIT Count to provide immediate assistance to the most vulnerable.
  - Send volunteer teams to emergency shelters on the day of the PIT Count to more accurately capture sheltered PIT Count numbers.
  
- Continue to Refine Survey
  - Improve the electronic survey and have more volunteers use it for enhanced data quality.
  - Add age category of Older Adults for both the unsheltered and sheltered counts.
  - Incorporate additional questions that dive deeper into an individual's experience with homelessness, such as: reason(s) for homelessness, city of prior residence, services accessed.
  - Consider adding a question that determines whether the individual became homeless in Maricopa County/Arizona.
  - Refine survey to ask about specific sexual orientation/gender identity for youth (18-24 yrs.) who are nationally more at risk for violence related to sexual orientation/gender identity.
  
- Integrate other Data Sources
  - Integrate PIT Count data with other HUD data, including the AHAR and HIC to determine where gaps lie.
  - Integrate data from other systems of care with PIT Count data.
  - Further analyze the similarities and differences between PIT Count data and HMIS data.
  - Continue to partner with the Arizona Department of Education and school liaisons in Maricopa County to provide supplemental PIT Count data regarding youth homelessness.
  - Compare PIT Count results to relevant housing data for Maricopa County such as rental rates and evictions.

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## *Limitations*

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While the PIT Count provides valuable information about homelessness in the region, it is an evolving process with several limitations to keep in mind.

First, it is especially difficult to capture the extent of family and youth homelessness during a one-night count because family and youth homelessness is often a “hidden” issue. Because many families live in their cars, volunteers may not be able to spot them and family homelessness may be disguised as travel. Youth do not typically congregate in areas where homeless adults and often are integrated into larger youth groups—those experiencing homelessness and those not—and may not be easily identified by volunteers. Both families and youth may fit the definition of homelessness under other programs (doubling up, couch-surfing, etc.) and are not included in the HUD numbers but do represent the vulnerability of these populations.

External to the PIT Count, if Maricopa County was not currently experiencing an affordable housing crisis, perhaps the overall PIT numbers would be even lower. For example, as the economy improves, housing costs in the area have skyrocketed, making affordable housing scarce. This has created a more difficult obstacle to placing individuals and families into affordable housing, as many landlords are raising barriers, such as background checks and income limits, with clients with vouchers. Other landlords who previously accepted vouchers no longer accept vouchers of any kind.

The size of Maricopa County makes it difficult to identify all persons experiencing homelessness. Data collected and analyzed are a general representation of a one-night snapshot in the region. These counts are not a final say in the demographics of the homeless population in Maricopa County, but do provide a representation of total populations. There are more people who experience homelessness over the course of the year than on any given single night.

As a result, PIT Counts tend to under-represent short-term homelessness and over-represent individuals who have experienced homelessness for a long time. The PIT Count should work hand in hand with the AHAR and HMIS data, both of which demonstrate the number of people served through the homeless services systems throughout the year. These collaborations provide a larger picture of homelessness in the county, acting as support to the one-night snapshot the PIT provides.

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## *Conclusion*

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MAG and local participating municipalities coordinated a successful 2018 PIT Homeless Count. The widespread collaborative effort allowed critical data to be collected and analyzed to communicate a general snapshot of homelessness in the region.

Overall, there was a 12% increase in total number of homeless persons from 2017 to 2018, and the number of unsheltered persons increased by 27%. There continues to be an increasing trend in the number of unsheltered persons across the region. A continued collaborative effort will ensure that this data is used to determine an effective plan and solutions to provide affordable housing to all homeless singles and families in Maricopa County.

Homelessness is a complex, recurring issue in the region. Planning efforts for the annual PIT Homeless Count have been enhanced each year as more resources are made available, and recruitment efforts for volunteers continue to improve. In addition, the partnership between MAG and municipality PIT Count coordinators is growing stronger in an effort to unify planning efforts. With the coordination, planning efforts, and initiative of the Continuum of Care, including MAG, supporting communities, and agencies, the region will continue to collaborate on efficient and effective approaches to provide housing and end homelessness regionally. Homelessness remains a complex and challenging issue, and solving the problem will take commitment and alignment of resources. Ending homelessness in the region remains the top priority for the Maricopa Regional Continuum of Care.

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## *Special Thank You*

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*The parties listed below were integral in the planning process of the 2018 PIT Homeless Count.*

### **Municipality: Coordinator(s)**

City of Avondale: *Donna Gardner*

City of Buckeye: *Don McWilliams*

Town of Carefree: *Stacey Bridge-Denzak*

Town of Cave Creek: *Tom Clark & Marshal Adam Stein*

City of Chandler: *Riann Balch*

City of El Mirage: *Iva Rody & Sgt. Chris Culp*

City of Fountain Hills: *Ken Valverde*

City of Gila Bend: *Kathy Venezuela*

Town of Gilbert: *Robert Kropp & Melanie Dykstra*

City of Glendale: *Renee Ayres-Benavidez & Charyn Eirich-Palmisano*

City of Goodyear: *Sgt. Alison Braughton*

Town of Guadalupe: *Jeff Kulaga*

City of Litchfield Park: *Sonny Culbreth*

City of Mesa: *Emily Greco, Liz Morales, & Bryan Goodwin*

Town of Paradise Valley: *Lt. Freeman Carney*

City of Peoria: *Jack Stroud, Det. Lisa Scott, & Sgt. John Naerbrass*

City of Phoenix: *Scott Hall & Katie Gentry*

Town of Queen Creek: *Tracy Corman*

City of Scottsdale: *Greg Bestgen & Gene Munoz-Villafane*

City of Surprise: *Christina Ramirez & Lt. John Bacon*

City of Tempe: *Kimberly Van Nimmegen*

City of Tolleson: *Janey Montoya*

City of Wickenburg: *Lt. Amy Sloan*

City of Youngtown: *Lupe Romero & Greg Arrington*

### **Organizations**

*Maricopa Association of Governments*

*Crisis Response Network*

*UMOM Family Housing Hub and PYRC*

*One·n·Ten*

*Community Bridges, Inc.*

*Valley Metro*

*Community Resource and Referral Center*

*Arizona Department of Education*

MAG would also like to thank all the volunteers, providers, and outreach teams that participated in the 2018 Point-in-Time Count, as well as the Maricopa Regional CoC Board, Committee, and Data Subcommittee for their input and support towards this year's PIT Count.

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## *Appendix: Glossary of Terms*

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### Continuum of Care

An administrative geographical unit; the local or regional body that coordinates funding and services for homeless people.

### Continuum of Care Program Competition

HUD makes funding available to homeless provider programs. The CoC Program is designed to promote a community-wide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness; to provide funding for efforts by nonprofit providers, States, and local governments to quickly re-house homeless individuals and families while minimizing the trauma and dislocation caused to homeless individuals, families, and communities by homelessness; to promote access to and effective utilization of mainstream programs by homeless individuals and families; and to optimize self-sufficiency among individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

### Emergency Shelter

Any facility, the primary purpose of which is to provide temporary or transitional shelter for the homeless in general or for specific populations of the homeless.

### Homeless

An individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, as well an individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations; an institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized; or a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

### Homeless Family

A household with at least one adult (age 25+) and one child (under age 18).

### Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

A local information technology system used to collect client-level data and data on the provision of housing and services to homeless individuals and families and persons at risk of homelessness. Each Continuum of Care is responsible for selecting an HMIS software solution that complies with HUD's data collection, management, and reporting standards.

### Household

All the people who occupy a housing unit. A household includes the related family members and all the unrelated people, if any, such as lodgers, foster children, wards, or employees who share the housing unit. A person living alone in a housing unit, or a group of unrelated people sharing a housing unit such as partners or roomers, is also counted as a household.

### Housing Inventory Count (HIC)

The HIC is a snapshot of a Continuum of Care's housing inventory on a single night during the last ten days in January. It should reflect the number of beds and units available on the night designated for the count that are dedicated to serve persons who are homeless. Beds and units included on the HIC are considered part of the Continuum of Care homeless system.

### McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants

The largest federal investment in homeless assistance, and is responsible for funding many local shelter and housing programs.

### PIT Homeless Count (PIT Count)

Continua of Care are required to conduct an annual count of homeless persons who are sheltered (i.e. persons in emergency shelter, transitional housing, and Safe Havens on the night of the count) and unsheltered.

### Transitional Housing

A project that has as its purpose facilitating the movement of homeless individuals and families to permanent housing within a reasonable amount of time (usually 24 months). Transitional housing includes housing primarily designed to serve deinstitutionalized homeless individuals and other homeless individuals with mental or physical disabilities and homeless families with children.

### U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Established in 1965, HUD's mission is to increase homeownership, support community development, and increase access to affordable housing free from discrimination. To fulfill this mission, HUD will embrace high standards of ethics, management and accountability and forge new partnerships — particularly with faith-based and community organizations — that leverage resources and improve HUD's ability to be effective on the community level.