



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO  
HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY



County of San Mateo

# 2026 One Day Homeless Count

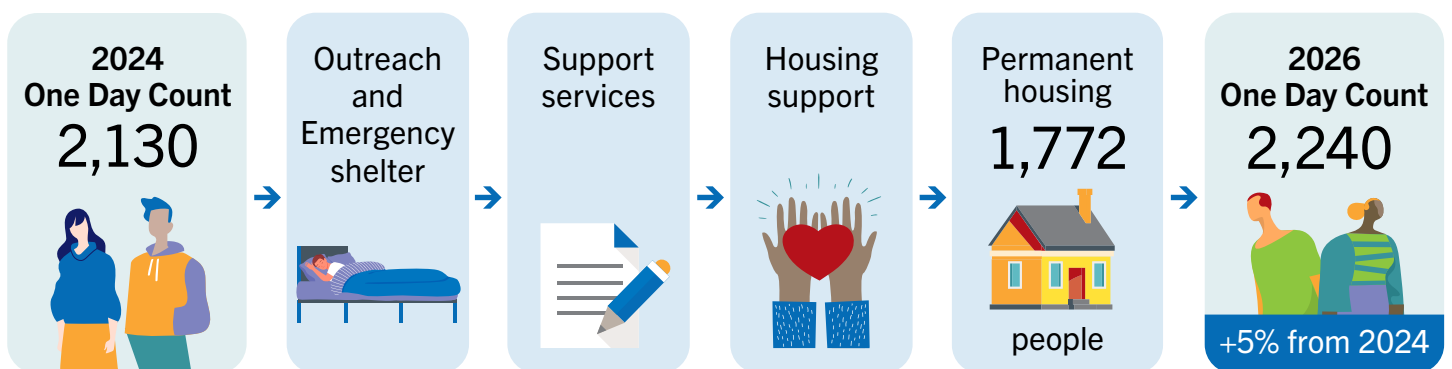
Executive Summary

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

On the night of January 28, 2026, the County of San Mateo’s One Day Homeless Count and Survey, referred to in this summary as the Count, found that **2,240** people were experiencing homelessness. The number of people in shelters increased by 110 to **1,095**, while the number of individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness remained flat at **1,145**.



While the Count is a federally required biennial census, these findings alone limit visibility into the progress made in the local system of care: between the 2024 and 2026 Counts, 1,772 people moved through the system to permanent housing. Additionally, the County has made significant progress in closing the gap between the sheltered and unsheltered, ensuring a higher percentage of our unhoused neighbors have a roof over their head, with nearly half of all individuals now counted in shelters.



*One Day Counts are snapshots. Housing placements are measured over time.*

## INTRODUCTION

The County's Human Services Agency (HSA) coordinates the biennial Count, which is known nationally as the Point-In-Time (PIT) Count. The 2026 Count was conducted in the early morning hours of Thursday, January 29, 2026, and in-depth surveys with people experiencing homelessness were collected over the course of the following week. Over 300 volunteers, consisting of community-based provider staff, members of the public, and City and County staff and officials, conducted observational counts of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness in each census tract in the County. Homeless outreach staff and community expert guides conducted surveys of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness throughout the County.



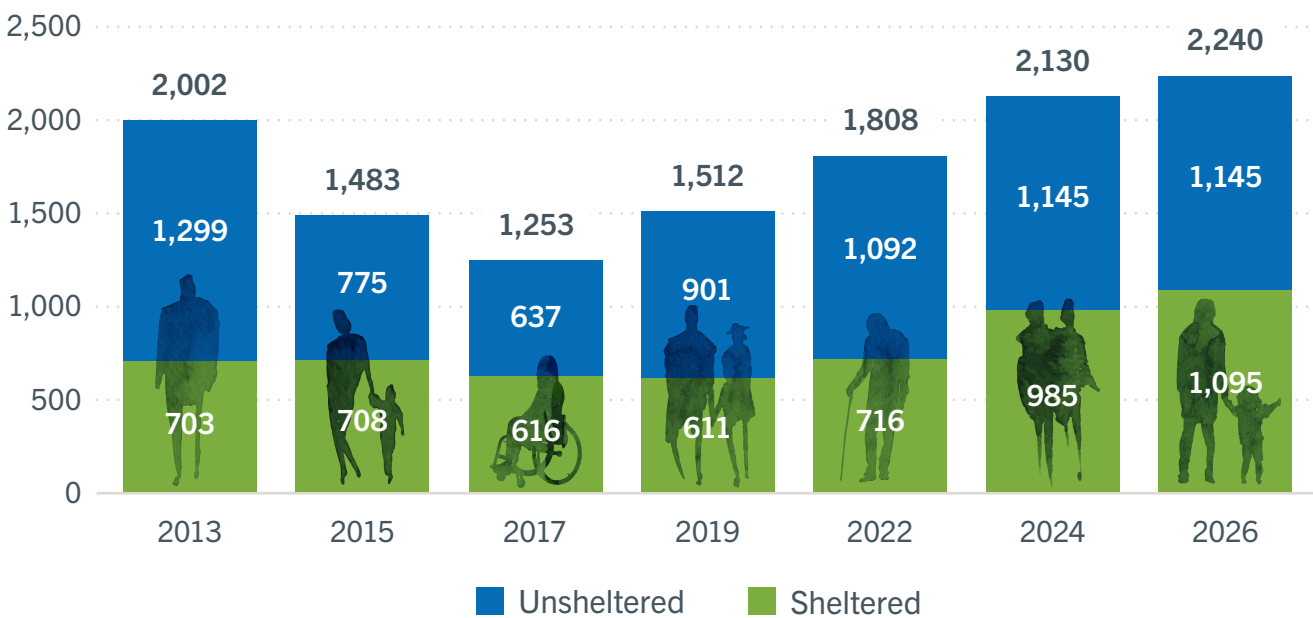
Conducting and reporting on the Count is a mandatory activity required by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), helping the federal government track homelessness year over year. The data collected also helps local policymakers and service providers better understand people experiencing homelessness and trends over time. It also serves as one of many sources of information the County and its partners use to assess needs and improve support for people and households experiencing homelessness.

### HOMELESSNESS OVER TIME

Between 2024 and 2026, sheltered homelessness increased by 11%, continuing the increase observed since 2019, and reflecting, in part, the County’s decision to expand shelter capacity in response to rising need, economic conditions, and high housing costs that placed more residents at risk of homelessness.

Between 2024 and 2026, the total number of people experiencing homelessness increased by 110 (5%), due to more people in shelters. The population was not static; some individuals remained unhoused, while others newly entered or exited homelessness during that period.

**FIGURE 1. Number of People Experiencing Homelessness Over Time**



### UNSHELTERED SLEEPING LOCATIONS

The figures below show the categories of sleeping locations for individuals who were unsheltered on the night of the 2026 Count and a breakdown of sleeping locations for the Counts from 2013 to 2026.

FIGURE 2. Sleeping Locations of Unsheltered People in 2026 Count

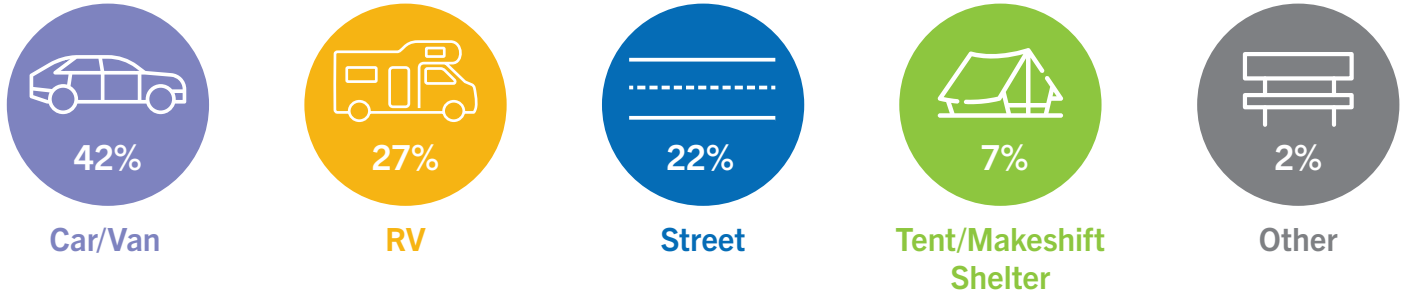
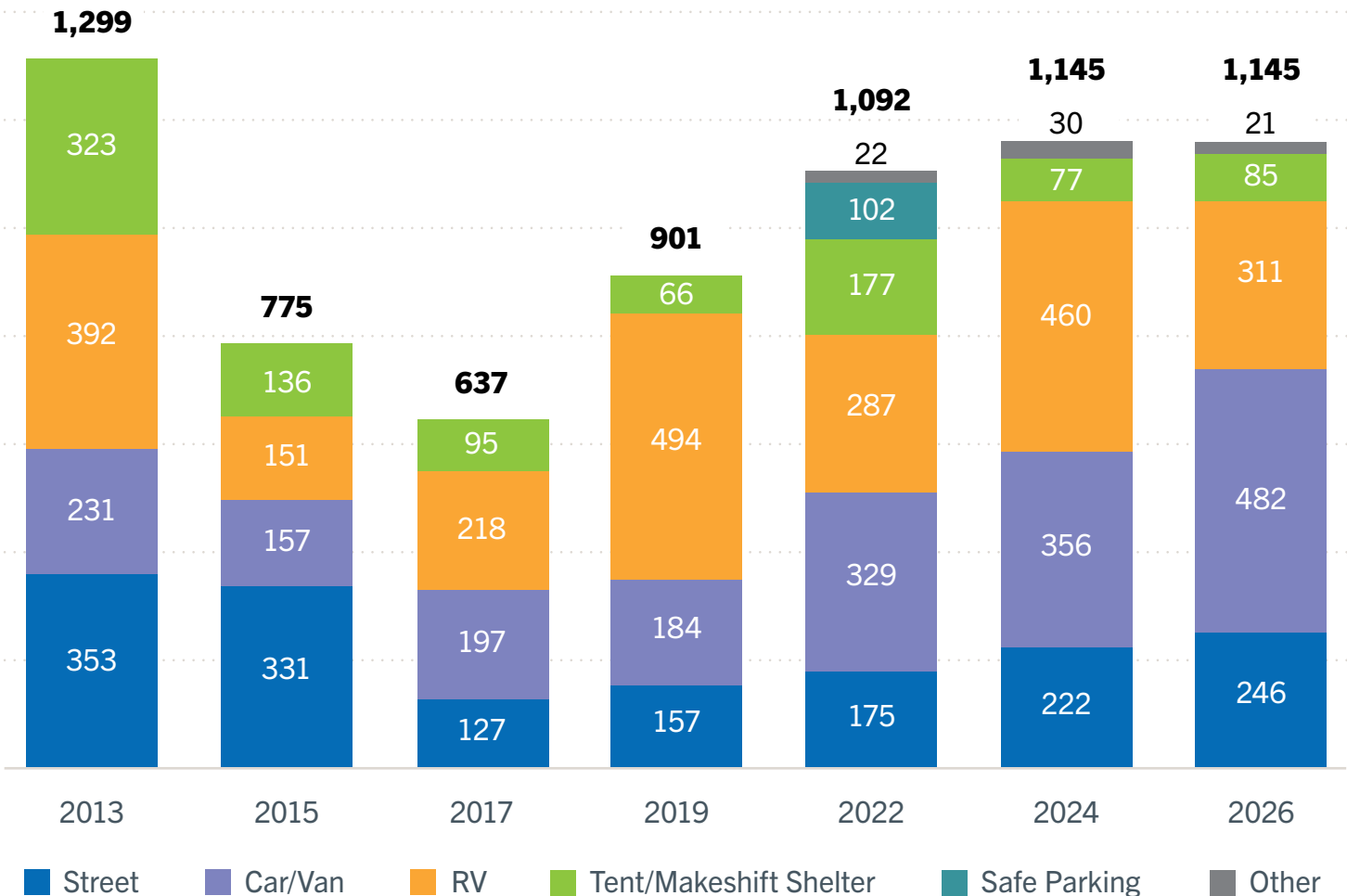


FIGURE 3. Sleeping Locations of Unsheltered People Over Time

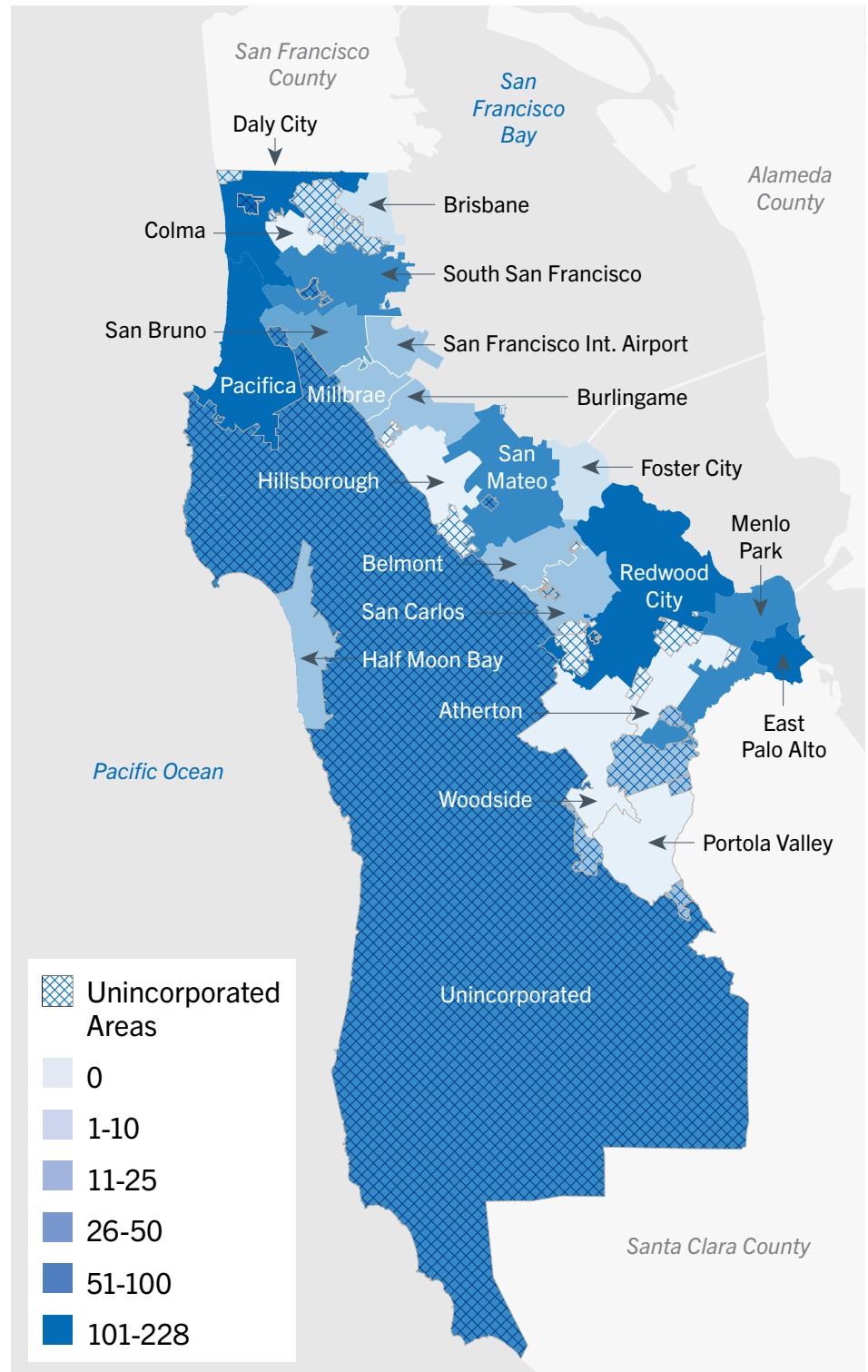


\* "Safe Parking" is a type of program that serves people who are residing in their vehicles.  
 \* "Other" includes abandoned buildings, boats, and other types of vehicles/structures.

## LOCATIONS OF PEOPLE EXPERIENCING UNSHELTERED HOMELESSNESS

TABLE 1. Unsheltered Homeless Count by Jurisdiction

Geographic Place	2026 Unsheltered Count
Atherton	0
Belmont	12
Brisbane	8
Burlingame	18
Colma	0
Daly City	147
East Palo Alto	107
Foster City	6
Half Moon Bay	16
Hillsborough	0
Menlo Park	57
Millbrae	17
Pacifica	228
Portola Valley	0
Redwood City	175
San Bruno	42
San Carlos	14
San Francisco Int. Airport	21
San Mateo	81
South San Francisco	72
Unincorporated Coastside	95
Unincorporated North	4
Unincorporated Central	0
Unincorporated South	25
Woodside	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,145</b>



## CONCLUSION

Homelessness is complex and deeply personal. People become homeless for many reasons: job loss, health challenges, rising rents, and lack of income are among the most common drivers. Addressing homelessness requires a compassionate and coordinated strategy that recognizes individual circumstances and experiences in helping people move from homelessness to stable housing while also responding to the underlying dynamic challenges that can lead to housing instability.

The County has in recent years made significant investments across a continuum of services to address homelessness, from prevention measures to supporting permanent housing placements out of homelessness.

Shelter capacity in the County has expanded by 41% since 2020, including the County's four new non-congregate shelters, which created 449 shelter beds that provide private spaces and intensive support services for each resident, as well as recent expansions at County shelters, including 45 additional beds at a congregate shelter and 15 new beds at a transitional housing program that specializes in providing mental health services. Since 2013, the County has committed approximately \$365 million in Measure K and other County dollars to create more than 5,100 affordable permanent homes. In addition to such investments, the County continues to explore opportunities for innovation and improvement of existing homeless support systems. For example, the County has piloted enhanced supports and services focused on people living in encampments and implemented a comprehensive restructuring of countywide homeless outreach designed to more effectively engage with unhoused residents. The County is also participating in a new national initiative called Right at Home, which seeks to help households at highest risk of losing housing remain stably housed through flexible financial assistance and case management.

From outreach and engagement to case management, shelter, and affordable housing, County staff across multiple departments, our nonprofit providers, and our community and city partners are committed to helping residents find stability and a path forward.

