



# COUNTY OF ORANGE

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## County of Orange Announces 2026 Point In Time Count Results

*The biennial report showed an overall decrease of 13.7% in people experiencing homelessness, including a 26.6% decrease in unsheltered homelessness; for first time, Orange County has more people experiencing sheltered homelessness than unsheltered homelessness*

**Santa Ana, California** (May 18, 2026) – Today, the County of Orange (County) and the Orange County Continuum of Care (CoC) announced the results of the Orange County **2026 Point In Time (PIT) Count**. When compared to the 2024 PIT Count, Orange County reported a 13.7% decrease in the number of people experiencing homelessness and, for the first time, more people were in shelter than unsheltered.

A total of 6,321 people experiencing homelessness were counted during the 2026 PIT Count. Of the 6,321 people counted, 3,256 people were in an emergency shelter or a transitional housing program and 3,065 people were unsheltered. In comparing 2026 to 2024, there was a 27% decrease in the unsheltered population along with a slight increase of 3% in the sheltered population.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires that all CoC jurisdictions across the nation complete a biennial unsheltered count and an annual sheltered count of all persons experiencing homelessness in the community on a single point in time during the last ten days of January. The Orange County CoC covers the entire geographic area of Orange County, including all 34 cities and unincorporated areas.

In partnership with the Orange County CoC, the County conducted the sheltered count the night of Monday, January 26, 2026. More than 90 emergency shelters and transitional housing programs participated in this effort, providing participant-level information for those staying the night in each program. The unsheltered count was conducted over three days from Tuesday, January 27, 2026, through Thursday, January 29, 2026, to ensure the County's 800-square-mile jurisdiction was canvassed effectively with support of more than 1,300 volunteers.

The 2026 PIT Count used the same methodology as the 2024, 2022 and 2019 PIT Count, providing the most accurate data comparison on the scope of homelessness in Orange County over the last seven years. The 2026 PIT Count collected participant-level data that includes sheltered and unsheltered; household compositions; subpopulations and disabling conditions information, such as substance abuse disorder; serious mental illness and physical disability; among other demographic factors. The information collected through this process was self-reported and enabled a better understanding of the needs and challenges of people experiencing homelessness.

The County and Orange County CoC are thankful for the partnership and support from community-based organizations, cities and community volunteers who supported the planning and implementation of the 2026 PIT Count. The County would like to recognize CalOptima Health for its significant role in supporting the 2026 PIT Count through a Housing



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and Homelessness Incentive Program (HHIP) grant awarded to the Office of Care Coordination and ongoing commitment to addressing homelessness in Orange County.

Members of the Orange County Board of Supervisors, CalOptima Health and the Orange County CoC Board also shared perspectives on the PIT Count and its role in informing ongoing efforts to address homelessness:

“The PIT results offer data-driven insights that the County and its community stakeholders use to better understand where and how to deploy resources to best serve those experiencing homelessness,” said **Chair Doug Chaffee, Fourth District**. “While this year’s results are encouraging, there remains a great deal of work to do to help prevent homelessness and provide coordinated care for those who are already homeless.”

“Thirty percent fewer people sleep on the streets of the Fifth District because of our intentional policy changes, critical investments in housing opportunities of all types, and a commitment to maintaining our robust system of care. When government functions to uplift the most vulnerable, our entire community improves. The results reaffirm the only way to solve homelessness is through stable, permanent housing and supportive services,” said **Vice Chair Katrina Foley, Fifth District**. “Our expanded shelter network has moved more people off the streets and into beds and homes. I look forward to using this data to prioritize much-needed funding for those services and other critical programs.”

**Vice Chair Foley continued**, “When my team surveyed Costa Mesa, we encountered little hesitancy from the unhoused individuals we spoke with. Most people engaged openly, even when they declined shelter. Some accepted resource cards, while others turned down services. Nearly everyone we encountered faced a health crisis and lacked access to recuperative care or housing without significant assistance.”

“Although we have had success, more work needs to be done to address substance abuse, which is one of the leading causes of homelessness. Forty-five percent of our homeless individuals struggle with it. This is something I’ve been working on – I’ve been to Washington, met with HUD Secretary Turner and have had his representatives visit Orange County. We hope to partner with them to address this problem with prevention, restoration and rehabilitation,” said **Supervisor Janet Nguyen, First District**.

“In 2025, as Chairman of the Commission to Address Homelessness, we prioritized prevention because it became clear that the primary cause for people being unhoused was economic and a lack of affordability in our region. I am confident that efforts to help keep people housed were not only cost-effective, but played a role in reducing the number of people on our streets. County wrap-around services and Homeless Prevention and Stabilization initiatives are having an impact, but more than 6,000 residents still experience homelessness,” said **Supervisor Vicente Sarmiento, Second District**. “As the Board addresses priorities, while facing federal funding cuts, I remain committed to further expanding prevention efforts and supporting innovative approaches to housing, such as small-scale and modular construction, in addition to shared housing platforms to help introduce additional housing thoughtfully, rapidly and inexpensively.”



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“In a state experiencing dramatic increases in the number of homeless individuals in recent years, seeing our County’s decrease in the homeless population speaks to the power of our local coordinated homeless response system,” said **Supervisor Donald P. Wagner, Third District**. “I am especially proud of and thankful to the more than 1,300 volunteers who worked across the County in the early mornings and late evenings over three days to make this count a reality.”

“From our Street Medicine Program and housing development grants to funding for this vitally important PIT Count, CalOptima Health makes significant investments across Orange County to deliver compassionate, comprehensive care to individuals experiencing homelessness,” said **Yunkyung Kim, Chief Operating Officer at CalOptima Health**. “We continue to work with our county, city and Continuum of Care partners to engage people experiencing homelessness where they are to reduce barriers to care and increase access to medical and social services.”

“The Orange County CoC Board is pleased to see the results of the 2026 PIT Count demonstrate a decrease in the number of people experiencing homelessness and increased number of people in shelters. The Orange County CoC has utilized state and federal funding to operate emergency shelter programs, provide homelessness prevention assistance and offer permanent housing support. Investments in these evidenced-based and proven solutions as well as the hard work and dedication of homeless service providers contributed to this decrease, and we should take a moment to celebrate the progress made,” said **Maricela Rious-Faust, Chair of the Orange County Continuum of Care Board**.

**Chair Rious-Faust** continued, “While this progress is encouraging, the Orange County CoC Board recognizes that there is still significant work ahead to ensure every individual, youth and family experiencing homelessness have access to safe housing, supportive services and pathways toward long-term stability. The Orange County CoC Board appreciates the County of Orange’s support with the 2026 PIT Count, specifically the Office of Care Coordination, and its ongoing commitment to addressing homelessness.”

To see the 2026 Point In Time Count Report, [click here](#).

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