KERN COUNTY

POINT IN TIME COUNT

2023 REPORT

Bakersfield - Kern

BKRHC

REGIONAL HOMELESS
COLLABORATIVE

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Acknowledgements

The Bakersfield-Kern Regional Homeless Collaborative (BKRHC) Point in Time (PIT) Count Committee would like to thank all the individuals and partner agencies who contributed to this endeavor and whose efforts were instrumental in the success of the count. Over 462 volunteers registered to participate in the 2023 PIT Count with 312 individuals assigned to survey teams and headquarters support staff. Employees from the County of Kern, City of Bakersfield, homeless service providers, and community organizations gave their time with several aspects of planning, implementing, and conducting the count.

A huge thank you to Adventist Health for their sponsorship of this year's event and for their volunteer contributions. Thank you to the Mission at Kern for providing logistics space for the PIT Count, to the PIT Committee members and committee chair Manuel Vieyra (Flood Ministries) for providing leadership and guidance in planning for such a huge undertaking, to partners with lived experience of homelessness for gifting us with insight where it was needed, and to the BKRHC staff for their commitment and support to the work.

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A special thank you to the private citizens and volunteers of Kern County who took part in the count and showed that, through collaboration, we can complete extraordinary work.

Thank you to all the participating organizations who provided their time, energy, and support to the Kern County 2023 PIT Count, including volunteers from:
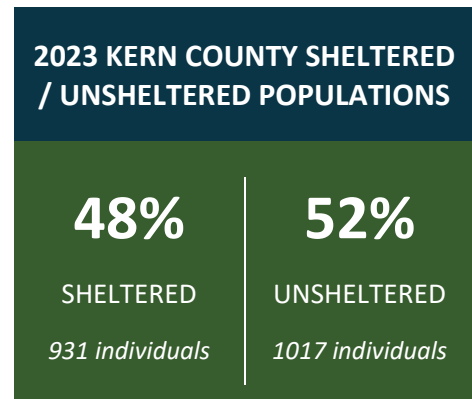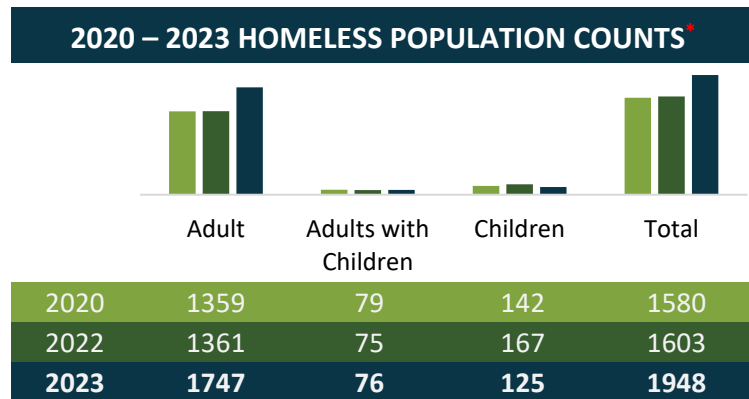
Adventist Health • All of Us or None • Alpha Omega Wellness Center • Amazon • American General Media • American Kids Sports Center • Aspiranet • Bakersfield College • Bakersfield Recovery Services, Inc • Bakersfield Rehab Center • BARC • Bitwise Industries • Boys and Girls Club • BroidaCo Auto Sales • Cal – Student Opportunity and Access Program (SOAP) • California State University Bakersfield • California Veterans Assistance Foundation • Casa Esperanza • Chevron • City of Bakersfield • City of Ridgecrest • CityServe • Clemmer & Company • Clifford and Bradford • Clinica Sierra Vista • Com Plus Inc • Community Action Partnership of Kern • Community College Services • Community Water Center • Correctional Kern Behavioral • County of Kern • Cushman & Wakefield • Dagny's Coffee • Department of Corrections • Department of Veterans Affairs •

Dignity Health • First5 of Kern • Flood Ministries • Good Steward Pest Management • Greater Bakersfield Legal Association • Habitat For Humanity Golden Empire • Health Net • Housing Authority of the County of Kern • Jessica Armstrong • JustServe • Kaiser Permanente • KC Steakhouse/ Stockyard • Kern Council of Governments • Kern County Grand Jury • Kern County 999 Foundation • Kern County Superintendent of Schools • Kern Health Systems • Lazzerini Family Foundation • Li and Liao Optometry • LifeHouse Church • Loud For Tomorrow • Manila Inn • Mercy House • NBC Universal • Oasis Family Resource • Office of Assemblyman Vince Fong • Office of Senator Shannon Grove • Omni Family Health • Paradise Cove • Peralez Insurance Advisor • Positive Visions • Ridgecrest First Aid • Rock Canyon Builders • South University • Stewards • Telecare Corporation • The Courts • The Daily Independent • The Gombos Company • The Needs Center • The Open Door Network • The Salvation Army • United Way of Kern • Villagers Inc • Walter Mortensen Insurance • Wasco Free Will • Women's Center High Desert • Wood Smith Henning • Youth 2 Leaders Education
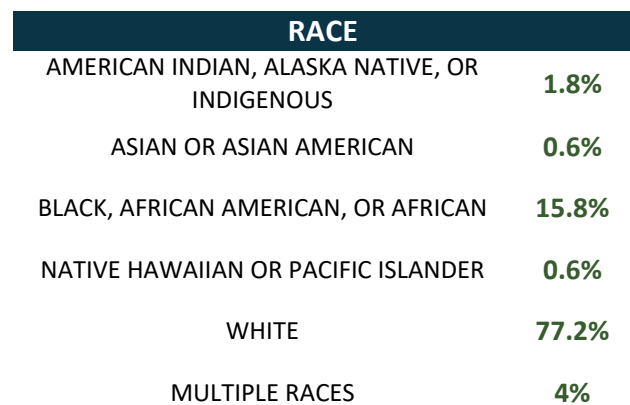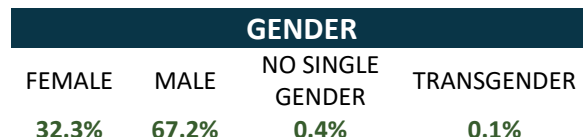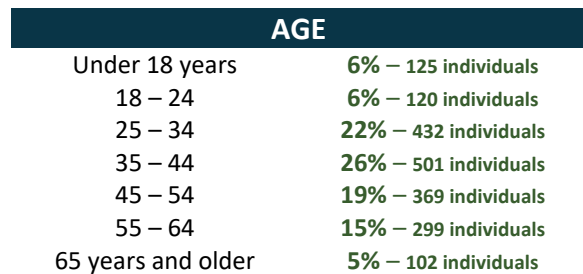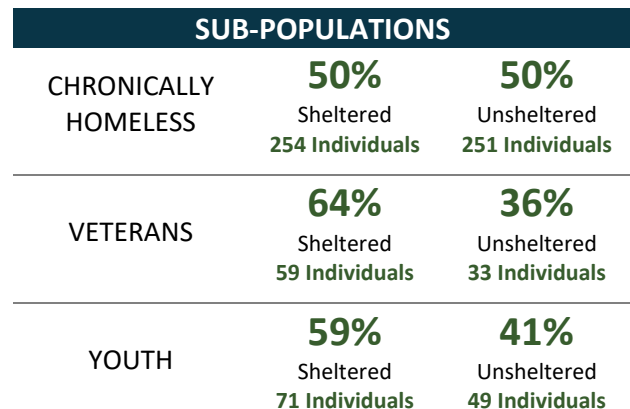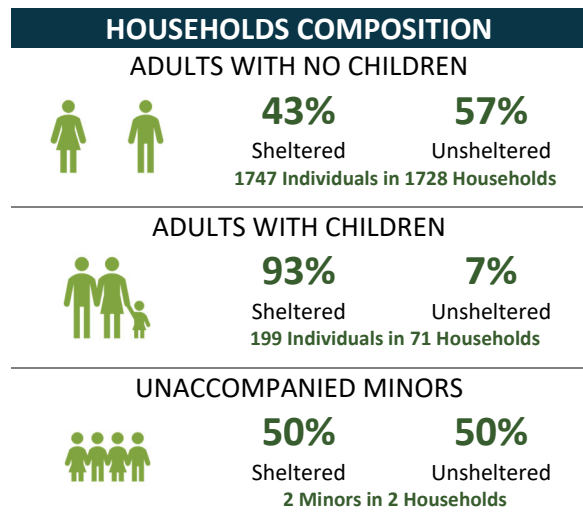
Kern County 2023 PIT Count Summary

The 2023 Point-in-Time Count was an endeavor taken on by a dedicated group of individuals and volunteers through a community-wide effort to cover Kern County. The count conducted from January 24th through 27th comprised a single night shelter count and a three day unsheltered count.

2020 – 2023 HOMELESS POPULATION COUNTS*

	Adult	Adults with Children	Children	Total
2020	1359	79	142	1580
2022	1361	75	167	1603
2023	1747	76	125	1948

*2021 PIT Count was not conducted in person due to COVID, HMIS data used.

2023 KERN COUNTY SHELTERED / UNSHELTERED POPULATIONS

48%
SHELTERED
931 individuals

52%
UNSHELTERED
1017 individuals

HOUSEHOLDS COMPOSITION

ADULTS WITH NO CHILDREN

43% Sheltered   **57%** Unsheltered
1747 Individuals in 1728 Households

ADULTS WITH CHILDREN

93% Sheltered   **7%** Unsheltered
199 Individuals in 71 Households

UNACCOMPANIED MINORS

50% Sheltered   **50%** Unsheltered
2 Minors in 2 Households

AGE

Under 18 years	**6%** – 125 individuals
18 – 24	**6%** – 120 individuals
25 – 34	**22%** – 432 individuals
35 – 44	**26%** – 501 individuals
45 – 54	**19%** – 369 individuals
55 – 64	**15%** – 299 individuals
65 years and older	**5%** – 102 individuals

GENDER

FEMALE	MALE	NO SINGLE GENDER	TRANSGENDER
32.3%	**67.2%**	**0.4%**	**0.1%**

SUB-POPULATIONS

CHRONICALLY HOMELESS	**50%** Sheltered **254 Individuals**	**50%** Unsheltered **251 Individuals**
VETERANS	**64%** Sheltered **59 Individuals**	**36%** Unsheltered **33 Individuals**
YOUTH	**59%** Sheltered **71 Individuals**	**41%** Unsheltered **49 Individuals**

ETHNICITY

IDENTIFIED AS HISPANIC/LATIN(A)(O)(X)	**41%**

RACE

AMERICAN INDIAN, ALASKA NATIVE, OR INDIGENOUS	**1.8%**
ASIAN OR ASIAN AMERICAN	**0.6%**
BLACK, AFRICAN AMERICAN, OR AFRICAN	**15.8%**
NATIVE HAWAIIAN OR PACIFIC ISLANDER	**0.6%**
WHITE	**77.2%**
MULTIPLE RACES	**4%**

Introduction

The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines homelessness as individuals who lack resources and support networks to obtain permanent housing and can be categorized as those who are literally homeless, imminently homeless, unaccompanied youth or families with children/youth, and individuals or families fleeing or attempting to flee various forms of violence such as domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, sexual assault, or other life threatening conditions.

The nationally conducted PIT Count is an annual snapshot of sheltered and unsheltered individuals experiencing homelessness within a geographic area. Specifically, Kern County covers over 8,100 square miles with a variety of ecosystems ranging from high deserts, chaparral-laden mountains, and fertile agricultural land within the valley.

Although HUD requires Continuums of Care (CoC) to conduct counts biennially, the Bakersfield-Kern Regional Homeless Collaborative completes an annual count to identify changes within the homeless delivery system and understand the needs within the community.

Methodology

The 2023 PIT count utilized a HUD-approved methodology for conducting the count of individuals experiencing homelessness in Kern County. Typically, the PIT count occurs over a 12-hour time period. The shelter count was completed using a survey hosted within the ArcGIS Survey 123 application, a geographic information system that works by collecting data via survey administration, and occurred on the night of Tuesday, January 24, 2023. The unsheltered count was completed the following morning on Wednesday, January 25, 2023 utilizing the unsheltered version of the ArcGIS survey application, however that morning's count was decreased by one hour overall due to a later start time.

For the unsheltered PIT count, the BKRHC PIT Committee and Governing Board approved the addition of two extra days to continue the count for encampment areas along the Kern River and rural areas. The methodology change, allowable by guidance provided by HUD, included several required contingencies to ensure surveys were not duplicated on individuals already surveyed on prior days. These measures included comparison of personally identifiable information including name or date of birth and survey screening questions (e.g., have you already been surveyed).

The PIT count utilizes an in-person interview of individuals experiencing homelessness throughout Kern County. For those individuals who were not able to complete a survey or in situations where it was impossible or unsafe for a volunteer to survey an individual, an observational survey was completed. For instances where demographic (gender, race, ethnicity) data could not be collected, the HUD data extrapolation tool was used to obtain missing data

extrapolated from data that was present. Data underwent a thorough process that included scrubbing/cleaning, deduplication, error-checking within the extrapolation tool, analysis, post analysis review, and entry into HUD's reporting system, which also conducts automated, real-time error tracking. Any errors caught in HUD's reporting system were corrected before the data submission could be completed.

Even prior to official submission to HUD, the data and report are reviewed and approved within the CoC's Governing and Executive Boards.

Current and Comparative Data

During the 2023 PIT Count a total of 1948 individuals were counted, 931 comprised sheltered individuals and 1017 comprised unsheltered individuals. This is a 22% increase in the total number of individuals when compared to the 2022 PIT Count (1603 individuals).

Sheltered and unsheltered counts both trended upward with an increase of 6% and 40% respectively.

When not considering the additional two days of this year's unsheltered count, the single day 2023 unsheltered count included 825 individuals. Comparing single day unsheltered counts from 2022 (728 individuals) and 2023 results in only a 13% increase in unsheltered individuals. This is important to note as the additional two days of the 2023 unsheltered count added nearly a 25% increase in surveys conducted.
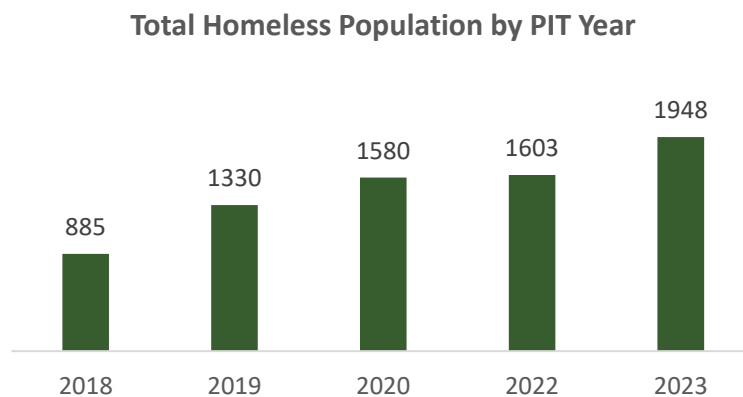
Total Homeless Population by PIT Year

Figure 1. Total homeless population by PIT year.

Sheltered and unsheltered status by PIT year.

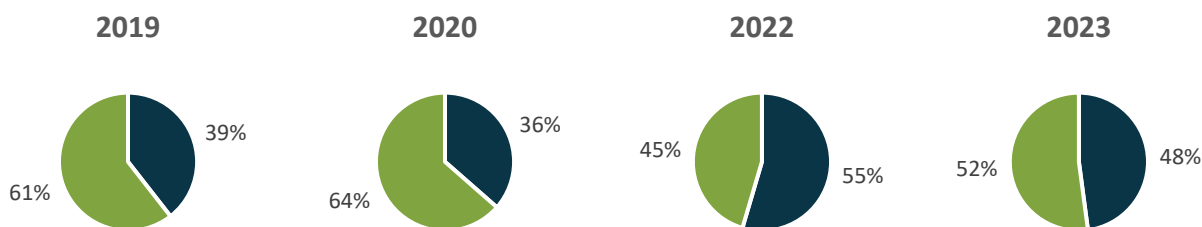| 2019	2020	2022	2023

Figure 2. Comparison of sheltered (blue) and unsheltered (green) populations by PIT year.

More sheltered individuals utilized Emergency Shelter programs versus Transitional Housing programs during the night of the 2023 shelter count.
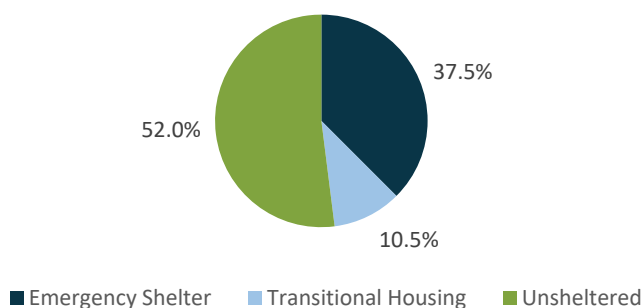
Shelter and unshelterd breakdown by program type.

■ Emergency Shelter   ■ Transitional Housing   ■ Unsheltered

Figure 3. Shelter program and unsheltered utilization percentages.

Key Findings
Population Demographics

Age

Children (under 18 years) and youth (aged 18 – 24) comprised 6.42% and 6.16% of the total sheltered and unsheltered homeless populations respectively, while adults (aged 25 and older) comprised the remaining 87.42% of the population. Specifically, nearly half of the entire homeless population consisted of adults between the ages of 25 – 44 and 5.24% of individuals experiencing sheltered or unsheltered homelessness were considered elderly (102 individuals aged 65 or older).
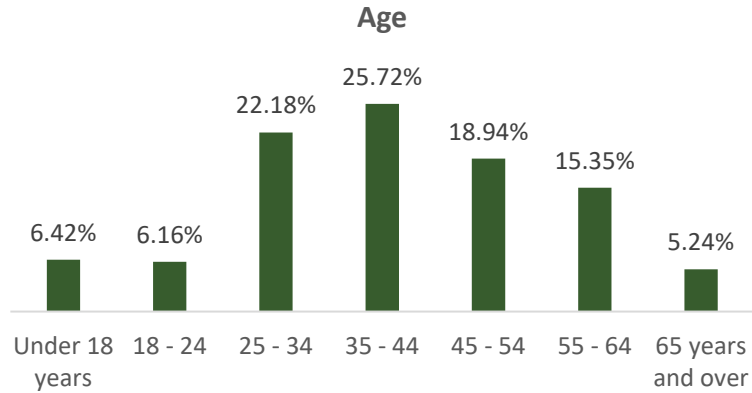
Age

Figure 4. Age Range Distribution for Homeless Population

Gender

As in previous years, males made up 67.2% of the homeless population. Females accounted for 32.3% of the total population, while individuals identifying as no one specific gender represented 0.4% and transgender individuals comprised the remaining 0.1% of the population.
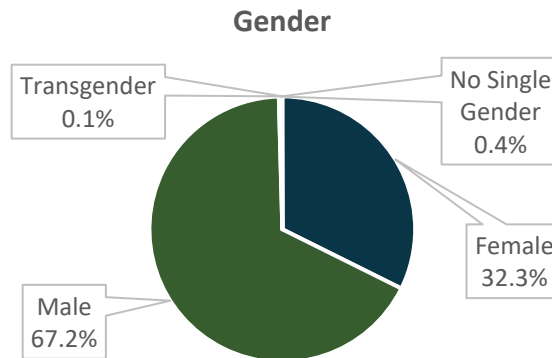
Gender

Figure 5. Gender Distribution of Homeless Population

Ethnicity

There was no change from last year and this year's percentages of individuals experiencing sheltered and unsheltered homelessness who also identified as Hispanic or Latin(a)(o)(x) with 40.6% of the total population representing that ethnic identity (see Table 1).

Race

Individuals who identified as American Indian/Alaska Native/Indigenous, Asian/Asian American, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, or multiracial represented similar percentages as in the previous PIT count year (see Table 1).

There was a noticeable decrease in the number of individuals that identified as Black, African American, or African from 20% in 2022 to 15.8% in the current PIT count with increased shelter utilization when compared to their unsheltered counterparts.

The opposite trend was noticed with individuals who identified as White, with an increase from 71% in 2022 to 77.2% in 2023 and more individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness than staying in shelters. It is important to note that identification of White in the homeless population data does not necessarily constitute an individual identifying as Caucasian, rather it could mean that an individual identifies as Hispanic/Latin(a)(o)(x) and White or non-Hispanic/Latin(a)(o)(x) and White. This detail is critical as data from the latest United States census has Kern County's Hispanic population at 56.1% and White alone/not Hispanic population at 31.1%.

Table 1. Age Breakdown Among Sheltered and Unsheltered Homeless Population.

Ethnicity & Race	Sheltered	Unsheltered	All People
Ethnicity			
Non-Hispanic/Non-Latin(a)(o)(x)	62.5%	56.5%	59.4%
Hispanic/Latin(a)(o)(x)	37.5%	43.5%	40.6%
Race			
American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous	2.1%	1.6%	1.8%
Asian or Asian American	0.9%	0.4%	0.6%
Black, African American, or African	20.3%	11.5%	15.8%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.6%	0.7%	0.6%
White	72.5%	81.4%	77.2%
Multiple Races	3.6%	4.4%	4.0%

Living Accommodations and Duration for Unsheltered Homeless Population
The majority of unsheltered individuals that provided a response to their current living situation resulted in an overwhelming majority living outdoors, typically in places not meant for human habitation which can include tents or other makeshift structures. Unsheltered individuals encountered during the PIT count were also currently living in abandoned buildings, cars, or garages.

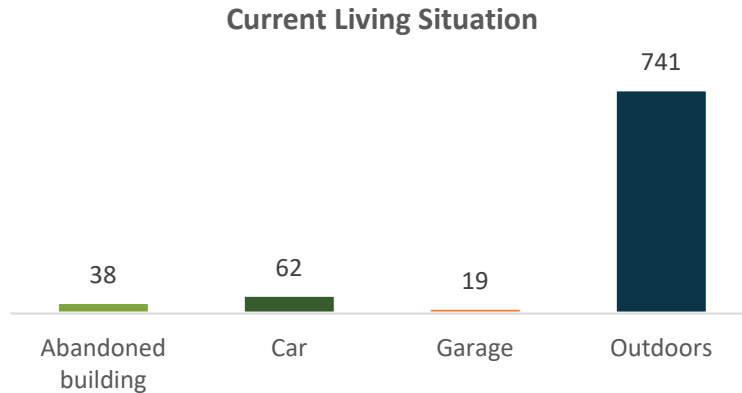**Current Living Situation**

Figure 6. Current living situation for unsheltered individuals.

There were 253 individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness who reported this was their first episode of homelessness. As for length of current episode for unsheltered homelessness, those who have been homeless for a year or more had the highest count.
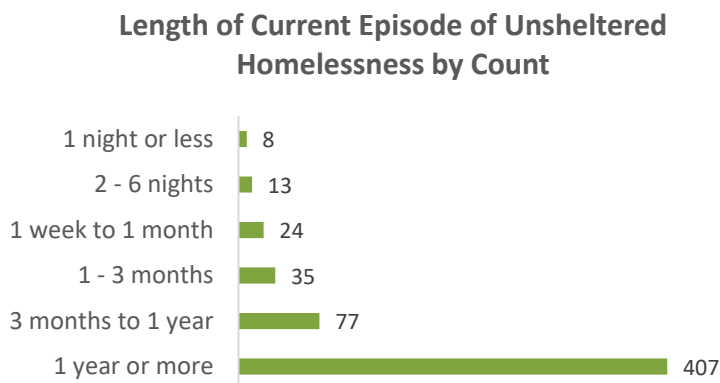
Length of Current Episode of Unsheltered Homelessness by Count

Figure 7. Length of current episode of unsheltered homelessness.

Perceived Causes of Unsheltered Homelessness

Data on perceived causes of homelessness was collected from 513 unsheltered respondents who provided a response to this survey question. The top three perceived causes were other homeless issues (99), addiction or substance abuse (89), and household issues (81). For other homeless issues, these ranged from health issues such as COVID or underlying health conditions, pets, relationships, and lack of systems navigation.

Health and Unsheltered Homelessness

There was a total of 183 self-reported health conditions for the unsheltered population that ranged from a single disease or morbidity to as high as 6 co-morbidities. These diseases include asthma, diabetes, heart disease, hepatitis C, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and valley fever.

Table 2. Morbidity and Co-Morbidity within the Unsheltered Homeless Population.

Number of Self-Reported Diseases (Morbidities)	Count of Individuals
1	74
2	80
3	14
4	14
6	1

Additionally, health insurance data was included as part of the survey questions for this year's PIT count. There were 851 individuals that provided an insurance response when asked. The intersection between healthcare and homelessness has been a recent focus and a better understanding of an individual's insurance availability and their access to quality healthcare can be gleaned from the data. This information can enable better coordination of services between healthcare providers and homeless services organizations.

Table 3. Insurance Among the Unsheltered Homeless Population.

Insurance Type			
Employer health insurance	1	State health insurance	5
Medi-Cal	302	Veterans administration	5
Medicare	23	Other	13
Don't Know	323	No Insurance	179

Special Populations of Interest

Three particular populations of interest within the overall homeless population include individuals who are chronically homeless, those with military service, and individuals aged between 18 – 24 years (youth). The count for these populations is listed below.

Table 4. Count of Homeless Populations of Interest.

Homeless Populations of Interest	Sheltered	Unsheltered
Chronically homeless	254	251
Veterans	59	33
Youth	71	49

Additional Homeless Populations

Other populations of focus for individuals experiencing homelessness include those with self-reported mental illness, substance abuse, HIV/AIDS, and those who identify as survivors of domestic violence (see Table 5).

Mental Illness

There was a total of 530 adults who self-reported a serious mental illness. More sheltered individuals reported a serious mental illness than their unsheltered counterparts.

Substance Use Disorder

382 individuals in the homeless population self-reported a substance use disorder with the majority also being sheltered. Substance use disorders range from alcohol, drug, or alcohol and drug use.

HIV/AIDS

The majority of individuals who self-reported living with HIV/AIDS were also experiencing unsheltered homelessness with 17 respondents.

Domestic Violence Survivors

There were more sheltered individuals who identified as survivors of domestic violence than those that were unsheltered, 52 to 6 individuals, respectively.

Table 5. Count of Additional Homeless Populations.

Additional Homeless Populations	Sheltered	Unsheltered
Adults with a serious mental illness	343	187
Adults with a substance use disorder	220	162
Adults with HIV/AIDS	5	17
Adult survivors of domestic violence	52	6

Unsheltered Population Distribution for Kern County

Density maps provide an overall view of the homeless population spread throughout Kern County and within metropolitan areas. Additionally, count totals are divided up by City. Please see Appendix B for additional information.

Conclusion

Homelessness is solvable in Kern County and efforts are being made to reduce the number of individuals experiencing homelessness at any given time. While the overall number of homeless individuals rose for the 2023 PIT count, consideration should be given to the additional two days of the survey count. Through collaborative efforts, Kern County can come together to accomplish amazing work.

Appendix A: Definitions

Adult

An individual who is aged 25 and older.

Bakersfield-Kern Regional Homeless Collaborative (BKRHC)

The primary entity charged with responsibility for overseeing CoC functions as mandated by HUD, including submission of the annual CoC Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), HMIS oversight, Point In Time Count, Housing Inventory Count, as well as other annual reports.

Chronically Homeless Individual

An individual or family head of household with one or more disabling conditions who has been continuously homeless for 1 or more years and/or experienced 4 or more episodes of homelessness within the last 3 years.

Families

A household that consists of at least one adult who is 18 years of age or older and at least one child who is under 18 years of age.

Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

The U.S. Department that funds low-income and affordable housing initiatives, including the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, through the HUD Continuum of Care Program and Emergency Solutions Grant Program.

Point In Time (PIT) Count

The Point-in-Time (PIT) count is a count of sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness on a single night in January.

Sheltered Homelessness

A state of homelessness where an individual is currently residing in an emergency shelter, navigation center, or transitional housing.

Unsheltered Homelessness

A state of homelessness where an individual is currently residing in a place not meant for human habitation including abandoned buildings, vehicles, park benches, sidewalks, or encampments.

Unaccompanied Youth

Youth under the age of 18 and individuals between 18 through 24 years of age experiencing homelessness and without a parent or legal guardian.

Veteran

An individual who has served on active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States.

Appendix B: Density Maps, Count Totals by City, and Metropolitan and Rural Data by Shelter Status
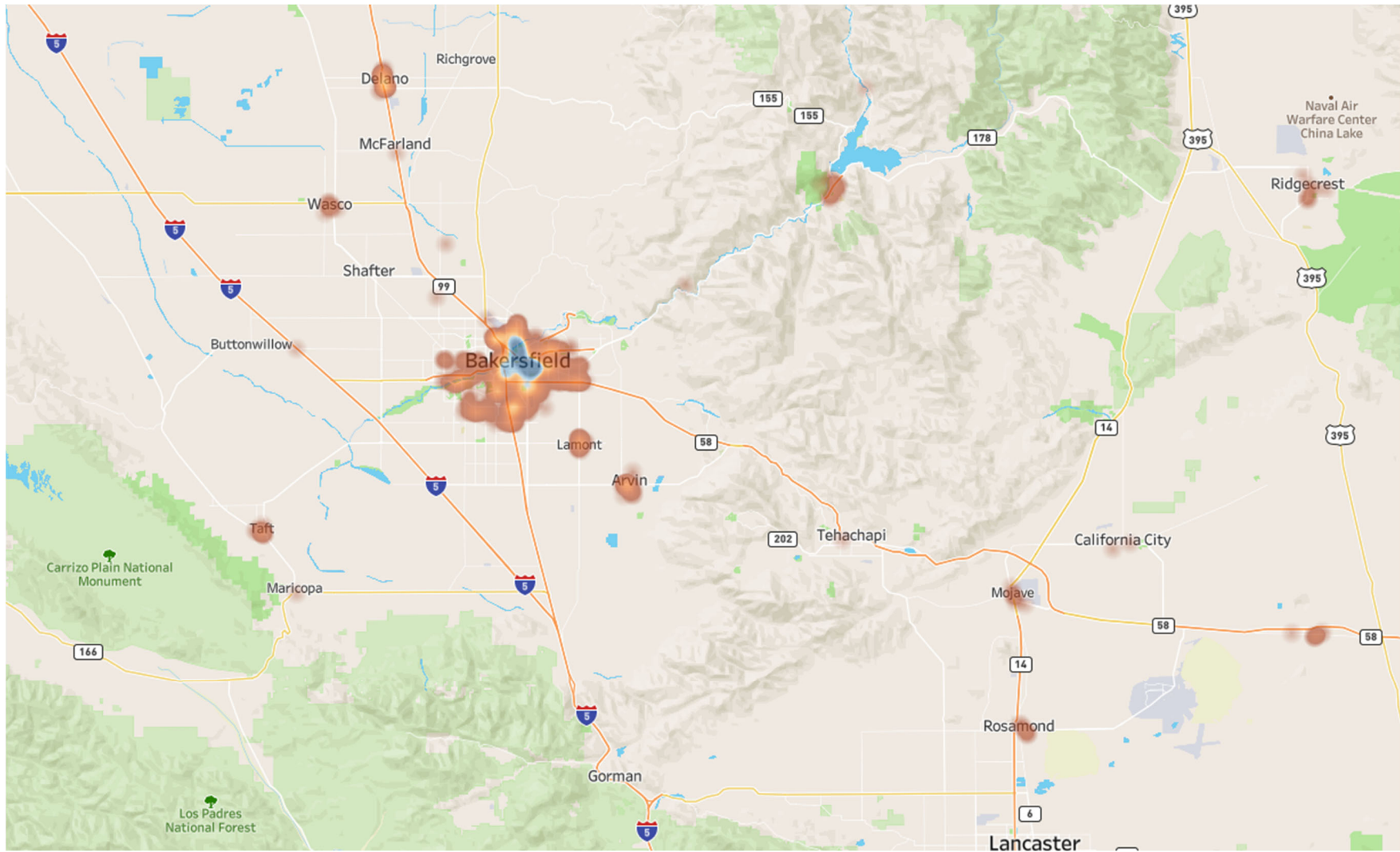

Figure 8. Density map of Kern County for the 2023 Point-in-Time Count.
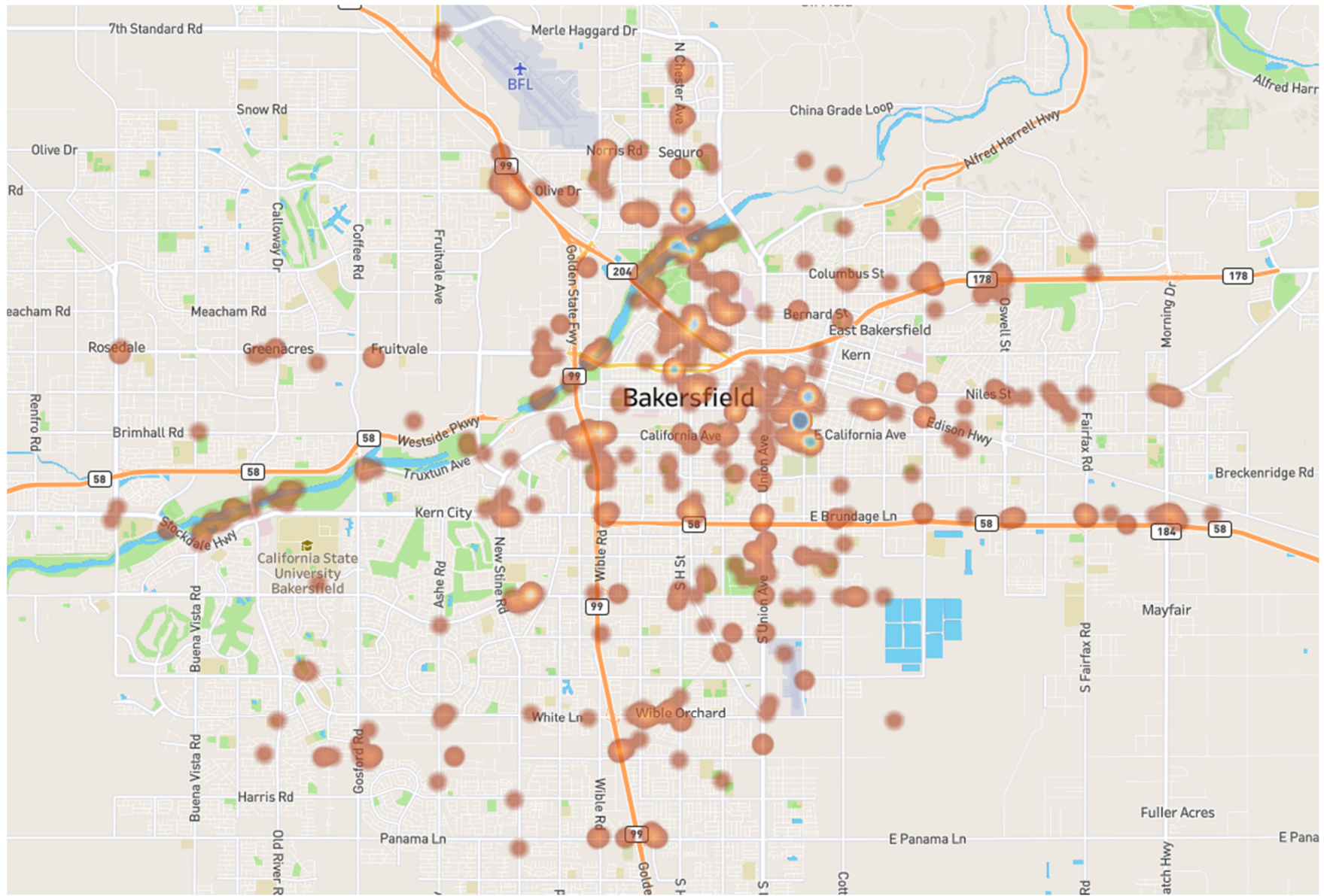
Figure 9. Density map of metropolitan Bakersfield for the 2023 Point-in-Time Count.
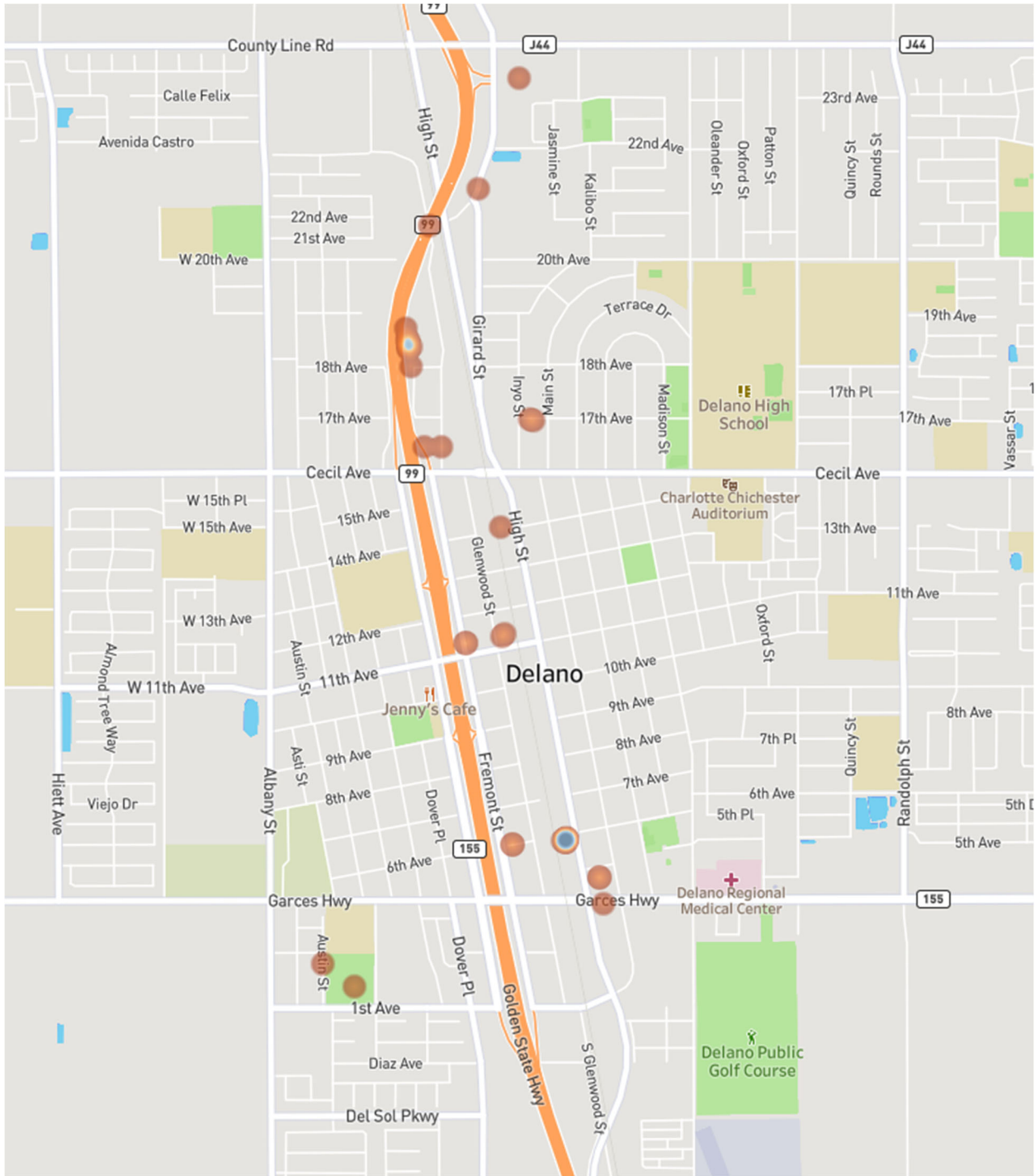
Figure 10. Density map of Delano for the 2023 Point-in-Time Count.
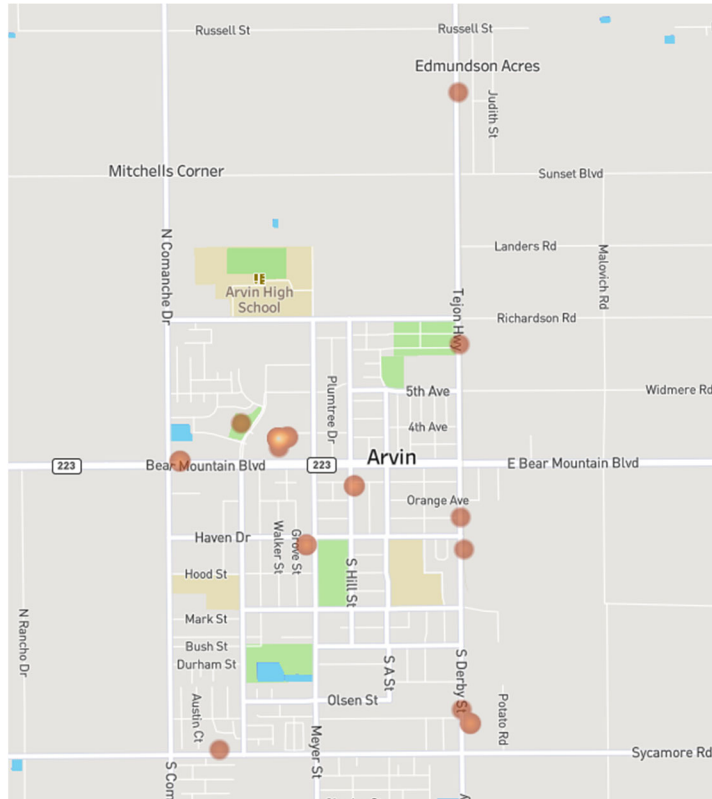
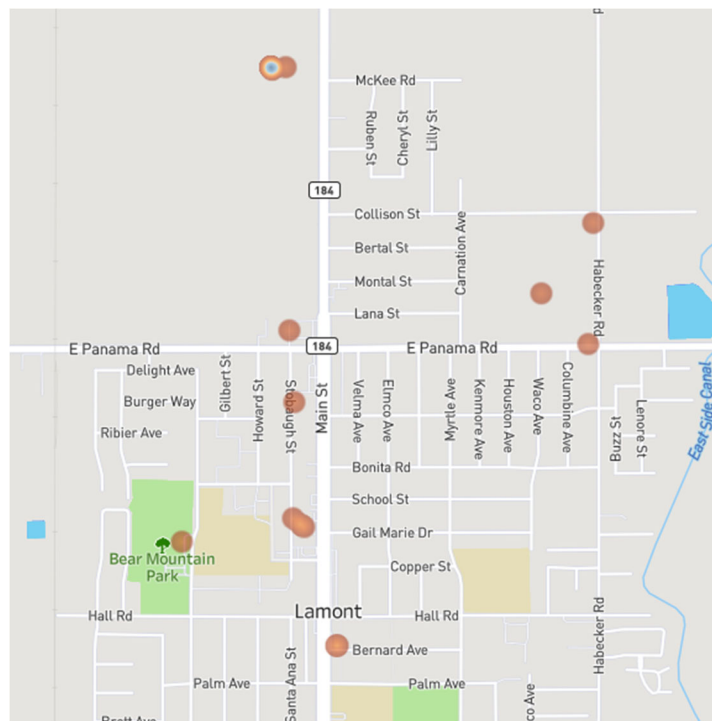Figure 11. Density map of Arvin for the 2023 Point-in-Time Count.

Figure 12. Density map of Lamont for the 2023 Point-in-Time Count.
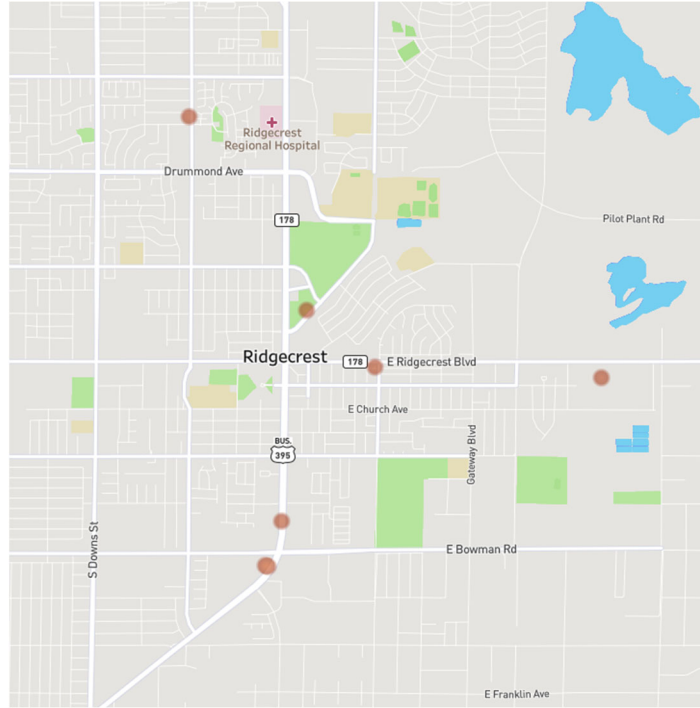
Figure 13. Density map of Ridgecrest for the 2023 Point-in-Time Count.
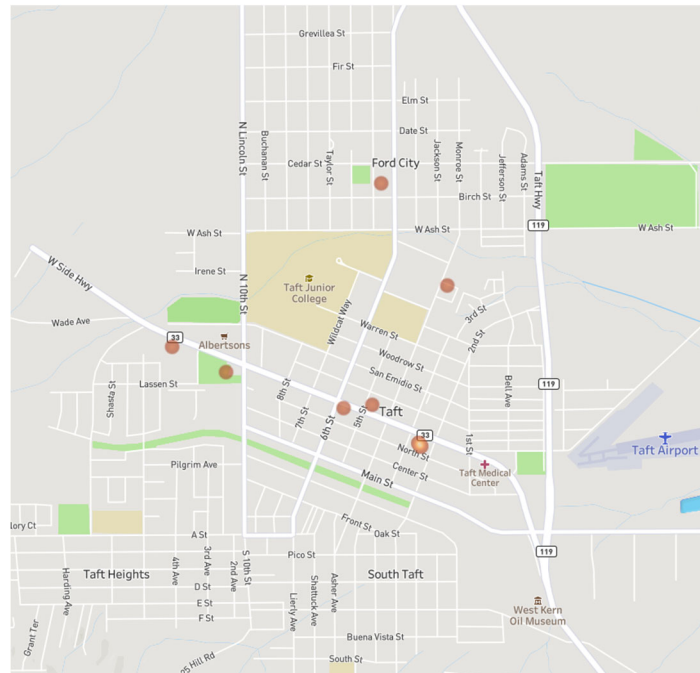

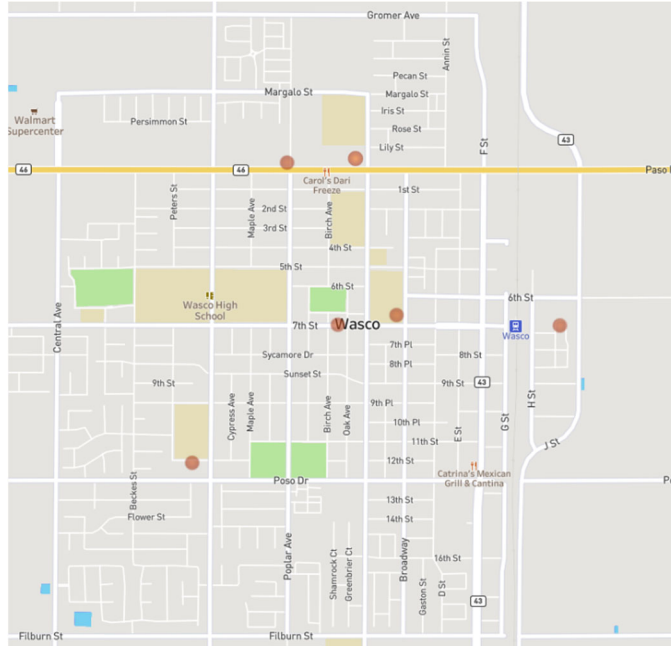Figure 14. Density map of Taft for the 2023 Point-in-Time Count.

Figure 15. Density map of Wasco for the 2023
Point-in-Time Count.

The count of unsheltered individuals for which there was a recordable geolocation and their respective cities can be found on Table 4 below. Records without geolocation points are not included.

Table 6. Unsheltered Population Count by City/Area For Records with Associated Geolocation.

City	Count
Arvin	22
Bakersfield	815
Hwy 99 north of Bakersfield	2
Buttonwillow	1
California City	2
Area east of California City	7
Delano	39
Lake Isabella/Kern River Valley	12
Hwy 178 between Bakersfield and Lake Isabella	1
Lamont	18
Lost Hills	0
Maricopa	1
McFarland	1
Mojave	6
Ridgecrest	7
Rosamond	6
Shafter	0
Taft	10
Tehachapi	1
Wasco	7

Table 7. Metropolitan and Rural Data by Shelter Status[*]

By Area and Shelter Status	Adults	Adults w/ Children	Children	Total People
Metro Bakersfield - Sheltered	739	62	101	902
Rural Sheltered	6	8	15	29
Total County Sheltered	**745**	**70**	**116**	**931**
Metro Bakersfield - Unsheltered	844	4	5	853
Rural Unsheltered	158	2	4	164
Total County Unsheltered	**1002**	**6**	**9**	**1017**
Total Metro Bakersfield	1583	66	106	1755
Total Rural	164	10	19	193
2023 Combined Total	**1747**	**76**	**125**	**1948**
2022 Total	1361	237	5	1603
2020 Total	1359	79	142	1580
2019 Total	1115	74	141	1330

*2021 PIT Count was not conducted in person due to COVID, HMIS data used.