



BAKERSFIELD-KERN REGIONAL HOMELESS COLLABORATIVE 2022 PIT COUNT REPORT

The Bakersfield-Kern Regional Homeless Collaborative (BKRHC), also known as the Bakersfield/Kern County Continuum of Care (COC) CA-604, has completed the annual 2022 Point-in-Time Count following guidance from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The annual PIT Count provides a snapshot view of those experiencing homelessness who are sheltered and unsheltered in Kern County. Results from the PIT Count are used to allocate resources to address homelessness in Kern communities.

This was the first PIT Count conducted in-person since the COVID pandemic began. Typically conducted in January and in-person, it was necessary to postpone the PIT Count to February to ensure the safety of the community, those experiencing homelessness, and PIT volunteers. Due to public health concerns, the 2021 PIT Count was conducted using the Homeless Management Information System. The 2020 PIT Count was the first time the in-person survey was conducted using a mobile device.

There were a total of 1603 unduplicated persons sleeping in shelters and unsheltered on February 23, 2022. This is an increase of 1.5% from the total unduplicated persons found in the last in-person PIT Count in 2020 (1,580).

The findings of the 2022 PIT Count indicate more of those experiencing homelessness have been able to seek shelter. The PIT Count resulted in 875 persons (55%) who were sleeping in shelters and 728 (45%) who were unsheltered. The additional emergency shelter beds funded by BKRHC, the City of Bakersfield, and County of Kern contributed to a dramatic shift from 2020, when 576 (37%) of those experiencing homelessness were sheltered.

Table 1. Kern County Homeless Population on February 23, 2022

Homeless Population				
Sheltered Status	Adult	Adults with Children	Children	Total Count
Sheltered	641	73	161	875
Unsheltered	720	2	6	728
2022 Combined Total	1361	75	167	1603

Following the HUD PIT Count guidance, BKRHC conducted their first in-person count since 2020 with additional safety precautions for staff and volunteers. Due to the ongoing pandemic, HUD provided an opportunity for COCs to complete their PIT count during the last week of February and like many CoCs, BKRHC elected to postpone the January count.

Conducted nationally, the PIT Count is a snapshot of sheltered and unsheltered individuals experiencing homelessness. In Kern County the PIT count is usually performed annually via a concerted volunteer effort by homeless service providers and their staff, City and County employees, and community volunteers. The PIT Count contributes to an understanding of trends for Kern County and other participating Continuums of Care throughout the United States. Though HUD requires a biennial count, the BKRHC completes an annual count to better understand changes and needs within the community. The PIT count is best understood when taken in context with other data points regularly reported by BKRHC. For a current list of reports and presentations, please see the BKRHC website at www.bkrhc.org.

PIT Count Methodology

The annual unsheltered PIT count uses an in-person interview of individuals experiencing homelessness throughout Kern County currently sleeping on the streets (e.g., tents, encampments), in cars, or other places not otherwise meant for human habitation. Information from the questionnaires is collected on mobile devices.

The HUD data extrapolation tool was used to complete the data set for the demographic data (gender, ethnicity, race). PIT Count data was entered into the HUD tool, automatic calculations performed to obtain the extrapolated totals, and built-in error tracking review completed to ensure any data warnings were corrected. HDX (HUD) and the associated data entry also provided real-time error tracking to ensure that any discrepancies not otherwise caught during the data scrubbing, extrapolation, or data balancing would be flagged for follow up and correction.

Demographic Characteristics of People Experiencing Homelessness

Household Status

Of the 1603 individuals included in the 2022 PIT count, there were a total of 1403 households (Table 2). There were 74 households with at least one adult and one child, and 1324 households comprised of adults without children. There were five (5) households with unaccompanied minors (children only households).

Table 2. Household Status of Homeless Population in 2022

Household Status of Homeless Population in 2022								
Household Type	Households		Adults		Children		All People	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
At least one adult and one child	74	5%	75	5%	162	97%	237	15%
Children only (no adults)	5	0%	0	0%	5	3%	5	0%
Adult without children	1324	94%	1361	95%	0	0%	1361	85%
Total	1403	100%	1436	100%	167	100%	1603	100%

Gender

HUD updated their gender categories for 2022 with “gender non-conforming” being replaced by “a gender that is not singularly ‘female’ or ‘male’”, transgender encompassing both female to male and male to female transitions, and the inclusion of questioning.

Breakdown of data by gender revealed that males overwhelmingly represented the sheltered and unsheltered populations (Table 3). For sheltered individuals, males made up 60% of the total while women comprised 39%, and individuals identifying as a gender not singularly female or male and transgender made up 1% of the total sheltered population.

Totals for unsheltered individuals saw males at a 3:1 ratio to females (74% versus 24%), while individuals identifying as a gender not singularly female or male were 2% of the unsheltered population.

Table 3. Gender and Sheltered Status of 2022 Homeless Population

Gender						
Gender	Sheltered		Unsheltered		All People	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Female	344	39%	174	24%	518	32%
Male	527	60%	540	74%	1067	67%
A gender that is not singularly 'Female' or 'Male'	1	0%	12	2%	13	1%
Transgender	3	0%	2	0%	5	0%
Questioning	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	875	100%	728	100%	1603	100%

Age

For the total number of individuals in both sheltered and unsheltered groups, 10% were children under the age of 18, 6% were homeless youth (those aged 18 – 24), and 83% were adults over the age of twenty-four (24) (Table 4). Unsheltered adults comprised most individuals for that group whereas children and youth comprised higher totals among those who are sheltered.

Table 4. Age Breakdown of 2022 Homeless Population

Age						
Age Group	Sheltered		Unsheltered		All People	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Children (under 18)	161	18%	6	1%	167	10%
Youth (18 - 24)	59	7%	40	5%	99	6%
Adults (over 24)	655	75%	682	94%	1337	83%

Total	875	100%	728	100%	1603	100%
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Ethnicity and Race

Ethnicity for individuals experiencing homelessness within sheltered and unsheltered groups were 59% Non-Hispanic/Non-Latin(a)(o)(x) to 41% Hispanic/Latin(a)(o)(x) (Table 5).

For Race, most individuals identified as White (71%) with the second highest group at 20% of total homeless individuals in 2022 identified as Black. American Indian, Alaska Native, Indigenous, Asian, and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander each totaled 2% or less. Individuals identified as having multiple races comprised 5% of all people surveyed (Table 5).

Table 5. Ethnicity and Race Breakdown of 2022 Homeless Population

Ethnicity & Race						
	Sheltered		Unsheltered		All People	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Ethnicity						
Non-Hispanic/Non-Latin(a)(o)(x)	525	60%	416	57%	941	59%
Hispanic/Latin(a)(o)(x)	350	40%	312	43%	662	41%
Total	875	100%	728	100%	1603	100%
Race						
American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous	26	3%	13	2%	39	2%
Asian or Asian American	3	0%	9	1%	12	1%
Black, African American, or African	199	23%	119	16%	318	20%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	7	1%	7	1%	14	1%
White	623	71%	516	71%	1139	71%
Multiple Races	17	2%	64	9%	81	5%
Total	875	100%	728	100%	1603	100%

Sheltered and Unsheltered Homeless

For 2022, sheltered individuals comprised a slight majority of total individuals surveyed during the PIT Count (Figure 1). Of the 55% of sheltered individuals, 40% utilized emergency shelters while 14% were in transitional housing units (Figure 2).

Sheltered and Unsheltered Homeless in 2022

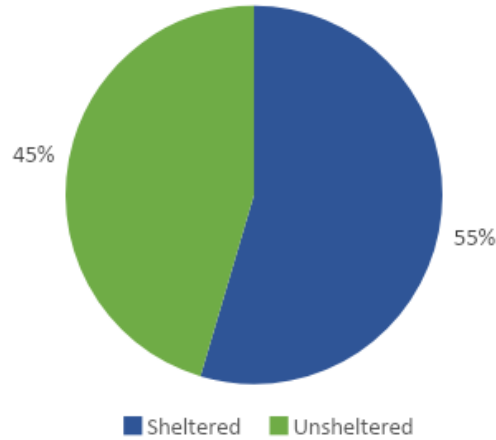


Figure 1. Sheltered and unsheltered percentages for total 2022 PIT Count population.

Sheltered and Unsheltered Homeless by Shelter Type in 2022

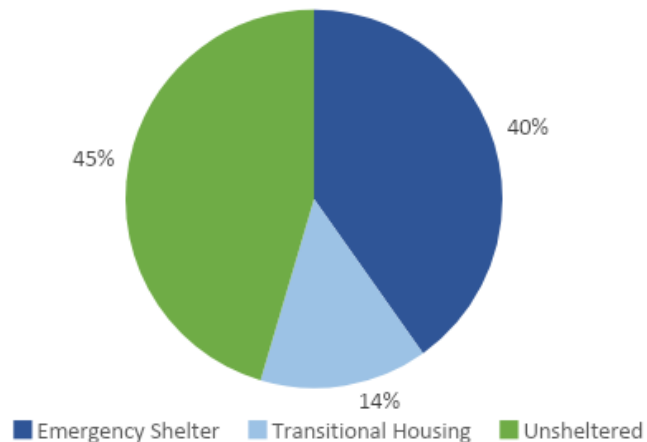


Figure 2. 2022 countywide shelter breakdown between individuals in emergency shelters or transitional housing and unsheltered individuals.

Homeless Adult Subpopulations

Additional adult subpopulations are identified in the PIT Count to address their unique housing and support service needs. These subpopulations include veterans, individuals with mental illness or HIV/AIDS, those with an identified substance use disorder, and domestic violence survivors.

Also included are individuals that self-reported chronic homelessness. HUD defines someone as chronically homeless as meeting the following criteria¹:

- A homeless individual with a disability, who:
 - Lives in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter, and

Has been homeless and living as described for at least 12 months or on at least 4 separate occasions in the last 3 years, as long as the combined occasions equal at least 12 months and each break in homelessness separating the occasions included at least 7 consecutive nights of not living as described.

- An individual who has been residing in an institutional care facility for less, including jail, substance abuse or mental health treatment facility, hospital, or other similar facility, for fewer than 90 days and met all of the criteria of this definition before entering that facility; or
- A family with an adult head of household (or, if there is no adult in the family, a minor head of household) who meets all of the criteria of this definition, including a family whose composition has fluctuated while the head of household has been homeless.

¹ Definition of Chronic Homelessness

<https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/coc-esg-virtual-binders/coc-esg-homeless-eligibility/definition-of-chronic-homelessness/#:~:text=The%20definition%20of%20chronically%20homeless%20is%3A,in%20an%20emergency%20shelter%2C%20and>

Chronically Homeless Individuals

25% (367 adults) of the total homeless subpopulation self-reported as chronically homeless.

Veterans

Veterans accounted for 6% (95 adults) of the total homeless subpopulation.

Mental Illness

Of the total adult homeless subpopulation count, there were 360 adults (25%) who self-reported a serious mental illness.

Substance Use Disorders

There were 501 adults (34%) in the homeless subpopulation who self-reported having a substance use disorder, which includes alcohol or drug use or both.

HIV/AIDS

Twelve (12) adults (1%) make up the subpopulation living with HIV/AIDS.

Domestic Violence Survivors

72 adults (5%) make up the total number of individuals that are survivors of domestic violence within the homeless subpopulation. The majority were living in emergency shelters or transitional housing.

Table 6. Adult Homeless Subpopulation for 2022 PIT Count

Homeless Subpopulations						
Additional Homeless Populations	Sheltered		Unsheltered		Total Adults	% All Adults
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
All Homeless Adults	737	50%	727	50%	1464	100%
Veterans	56	59%	39	41%	95	6%
Chronically Homeless	217	59%	150	41%	367	25%
Serious Mental Illness	307	85%	53	16%	360	25%
Substance Use Disorder	210	42%	291	60%	501	34%
HIV/AIDS	5	42%	7	58%	12	1%
Survivors of Domestic Violence	69	96%	3	4%	72	5%

Other Data Considerations

Several other factors were considered during the PIT Count. For those individuals experiencing homelessness that were unsheltered these include: reasons why shelter was not sought, income, and self-reported health.

Reasons For Not Sheltering

Of the total respondents providing a reason as to why they did not seek shelter, several factors were present (see Table 7).

Table 7. Survey Responses for Why Individual Did Not Seek Shelter

Reasons For Not Seeking Shelter		
Survey Response	Count	%
Reasons Don't Know	186	25%
Reasons Other	167	22%
Lack of Freedom	96	13%
Over crowdedness	78	10%
None Available	58	8%
Fear Dangerous People	50	7%
Feeling of Imprisonment	31	4%
Constant Theft	28	4%
Low Sanitation Standards	23	3%
Long Waiting List	18	2%

Causes Depression	16	2%
Total	751	100%

Income

There were 89 total respondents that answered the income question during the PIT count.

Table 8. Income Levels for Individuals Experiencing Unsheltered and Sheltered Homelessness

Income		
Income Levels	Unsheltered	Sheltered
Less Than 10,000 Total	6	7
10,000 to 20,000 Total	14	14
20,001 to 30,000 Total	4	27
30,001 to 40,000 Total	1	8
40,001 to 50,000 Total	0	3
More than 50,000 Total	3	2
Total	28	61

Self-Reported Health and Disease

For individuals experiencing homelessness, a total of 322 respondents provided a self-reported health condition that ranged from a single disease to as much as six (6) self-reported co-morbidities (Table 9).

There was a total of 461 instances of self-reported diseases with Asthma and Hepatitis C comprising the highest percentages (33% and 20% respectively) in the unsheltered population and Asthma and Diabetes comprising the highest percentages (30% and 23% respectively) in the sheltered population. Because of co-morbidity, disease instances were reported separately to indicate the highest prevalence of self-reported diseases among the unsheltered and sheltered homeless populations (Table 10).

Table 9. Number of Self-Reported Health Co-Morbidities for Unsheltered and Sheltered Homeless Population

Self-Reported Health and Co-Morbidities				
# Of Self-Reported Diseases	Unsheltered	%	Sheltered	%
1	108	71%	76	45%
2	29	19%	76	45%
3	11	7%	12	7%
4	3	2%	5	3%
5	0	0%	1	1%
6	1	1%	0	0%
Respondents who answered health question	152	100%	170	100%

Table 10. Disease Types for Unsheltered Homeless Population

Disease Types				
Disease	Unsheltered	%	Sheltered	%
Asthma	71	33%	72	30%
Diabetes	34	16%	57	23%
Heart Disease	32	15%	42	17%
Hepatitis C	44	20%	36	15%
HIV/AIDS	7	3%	5	2%
Tuberculosis	8	4%	10	4%
Valley Fever	22	10%	21	9%
Total Instances of Disease	218	100%	243	100%

Unsheltered Homeless and Institutional Settings

Drug abuse, mental health and incarceration are all factors that can contribute to homelessness. Among the unsheltered individuals experiencing homelessness, participation in a drug abuse program was the highest self-reported program or institution.

Table 11. Self-Reported Participation in Drug Abuse Program or Institutional Setting

Table ##. Self-Reported Participation in Drug Abuse Program or Institutional Setting	
Program/Institution	Count
Drug Abuse Program	245
Jail/Prison (Released within the last 90 days)	53
Mental Health Institution	37

Comparison of 2022 PIT Count Totals to Historical Data

The PIT Count provides a snapshot view of homelessness in Kern County. Current and prior PIT Count data provides a look at recent trends of that snapshot view (Tables 12 and 13). Consideration should be given to the survey methodology used and comparison between data collected using similar methodologies. Because a different methodology was used in 2021, stronger comparisons for purposes of recent trends can be made using the 2020 data, a year in which a similar methodology was used to that of 2022.

2022 PIT Count Unsheltered Homeless Distribution Within Kern County

Kern County comprises approximately 8163 square miles. While a concentration of those experiencing unsheltered homelessness can be found in metropolitan Bakersfield, those experiencing homelessness

can also be found throughout the county. Heat maps provide an opportunity to view homeless population distribution within Kern County (Figure 3) and metropolitan Bakersfield (Figure 4). Within the metropolitan area, central and east Bakersfield has the highest homeless population density, in addition to higher concentrations along the riverbed.

Table 12. 2022 PIT Count Totals with Comparison to Previous PIT Counts with Similar Methodology

PIT Count Data by Metropolitan and Rural Breakdowns and Comparison to Previous PIT Counts						
By Area and Shelter Status	Adults	Adults w/ Children	Children	Total People	% Change Previous Year	January 2020 Count
Metro Bakersfield - Sheltered	639	32	73	744	34%	556
Regional Sheltered	2	41	88	131	555%	20
Total County Sheltered	641	73	161	875	52%	576
Metro Bakersfield - Unsheltered	604	2	6	612	-27%	842
Regional Unsheltered	116	0	0	116	-28%	162
Total County Unsheltered	720	2	6	728	-27%	1004
Total Metro Bakersfield	1243	34	79	1356	-3%	1398
Total Regional (Rural)	118	41	88	247	36%	182
2022 Combined Total	1361	75	167	1603	1%	1580
2021 Total*	1633	174	343	2150	36%	
2020 Total	1359	79	142	1580	19%	
2019 Total	1115	74	141	1330	50%	
2018 Total	715	63	107	885	9%	
2017 Total	633	62	115	810	-24%	
2016 Total	875	71	121	1067	12%	
2015 Total	733	71	150	954	-4%	

*2021 PIT Count used an HMIS data only methodology as approved by HUD due to the ongoing COVID pandemic.

Table 13. Unsheltered PIT Count Data Breakdown Within Kern County

Unsheltered PIT Count by Location				
Location	Total Count	Adults	Adults w/ Children	Children
Metro Bakersfield	612	604	2	6
Rural Bakersfield	39	39	0	0
Delano	36	36	0	0
Frazier Park	0	0	0	0
Lake Isabella / Kern River Valley	0	0	0	0
Ridgecrest	7	7	0	0
Taft	18	18	0	0
Tehachapi	2	2	0	0
Wasco	14	14	0	0
Totals	728	720	2	6

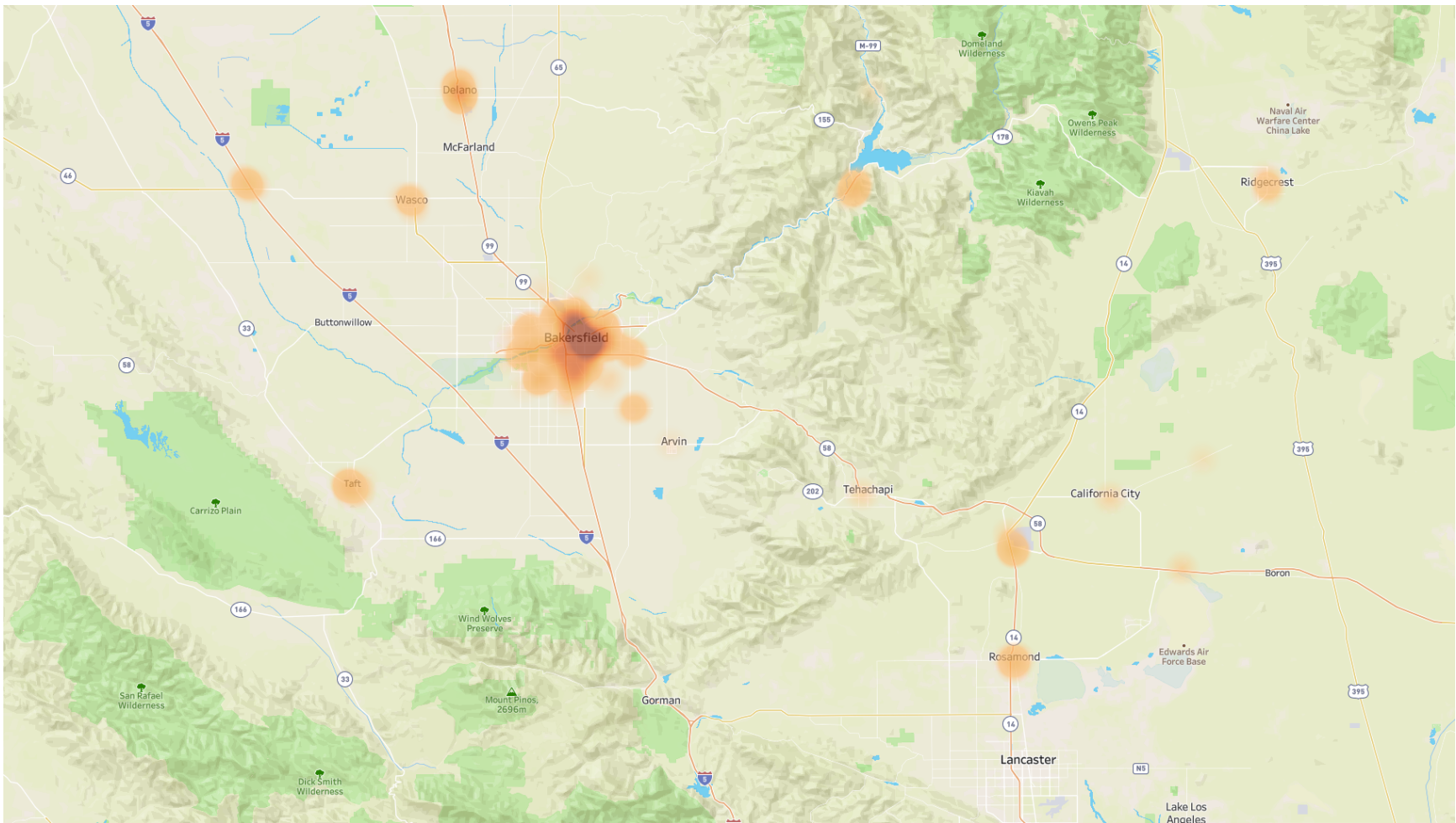
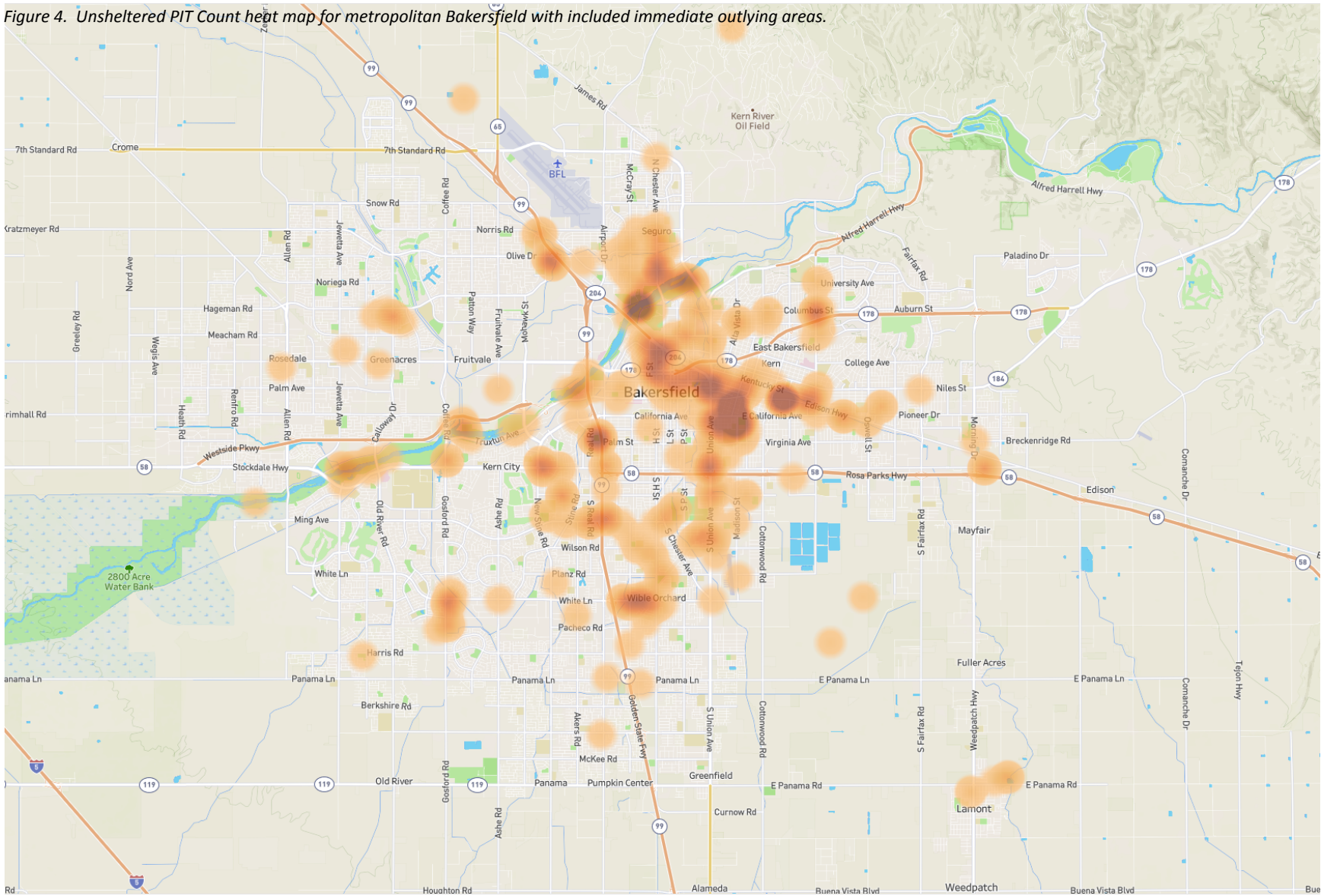


Figure 3. Unsheltered PIT Count heat map for Kern County.

Figure 4. Unsheltered PIT Count heat map for metropolitan Bakersfield with included immediate outlying areas.



Discussion

The BKRHC PIT Committee began meeting in August 2021 to plan, coordinate and implement the annual PIT Count. In addition to navigating covering over 8,000 square miles with an all volunteer force, this year the committee faced planning for the safety of volunteers and those experiencing homelessness during another surge in the Covid pandemic. While BKRHC has made strides in the PIT Count by implementing a mobile cell phone application, the count continues to be time intensive, requiring many volunteer hours from service provider staff, and is heavily reliant on a large base of volunteers who must commit to training and arriving in a timely manner to headquarters. Variability in the weather, enforcement activity, travel time to remote areas and other factors can all contribute to count outcomes. By formally establishing a monthly standing PIT committee, BKRHC will explore strategies to achieve an accurate count with available resources and reduce the impact of the variables identified above.

Acknowledgements

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Thank you to the leadership provided by Deb Johnson, PIT Committee Chair and members of the PIT Committee. We would also like to thank our sponsor of the event, Adventist Health. The Mission at Kern County provided the headquarters location. Thank you to the County IT department who provided technical assistance and Public Health for lending their expertise. Flood Ministries provided assistance with mapping team locations. All of Us or None, the Housing Authority of County of Kern and California Veterans Assistance Foundation packaged all of the supplies for the event. Hey Salty donated their communications expertise. The Bakersfield Homeless Center staff supported the registration table and other activities. Thank you to the City of Bakersfield and County of Kern for supporting your employees in volunteering for the event, making available facilities and being partners in this effort. Thank you to the BKRHC staff, the volunteers who came out on a cold, dark morning, and all of the collaborative organizations for their significant assistance.