

Strategies to Break the Cycle of Homelessness in Response to the 24-hour Homeless Point In Time Count

ADDENDUM

RESPONSE TO INCREASED HOMELESSNESS IN PALM BEACH COUNTY



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The most recent Point in Time count shows a 32% increase in homelessness in Palm Beach County. Although Palm Beach County (PBC) has been

one of the leading counties within the state of Florida with respect to expending federal stimulus dollars to mitigate homelessness, the factors below attempts to provide context on why homelessness has increased.

Increased Cost of Rent in Palm Beach County

In South Florida, the cost of renting a home is rising much faster than the national average. According to a recent study by Florida Atlantic University, the average rent in the county has increased by more than 32% over the past year. According to the [affordable housing needs assessment](#) conducted by Florida International University and the Housing Leadership Council, the housing affordability demands of low- and moderate-income workers in Palm Beach County and its municipalities had not improved before the COVID-19 pandemic despite impressive post-recession job growth numbers and low unemployment.

Renters are Cost Burdened

With 56.6 percent of households paying more than 30% of their gross income on rent, Palm Beach County is one of the most unaffordable places to live in the US. Market asking rents in new multi-family apartments in July 2020 ranged from \$1,956 for a one-bedroom to \$3,162 for a three-bedroom apartment. There are 97,368 cost-burdened renter households in Palm Beach County, of which, 52.7% (51,282 renter households) are "severely" cost-burdened. More importantly, the vast majority of extremely low-income renters are unable to afford housing in every type of market.



The Number of Evictions are Increasing

The county's Office of the Commission Auditor recently released its second quarterly evictions and foreclosure report for 2022. It showed a jump in eviction cases in county court from April to June. Compared to the same period in 2021, evictions increased by 45 percent in June, 52 percent in April, and 84 percent in May. The highest number was in June, with 1,599.

Rental Subsidies

Palm Beach County and its partners are attempting to address the issue of rising rent and the lack of affordable housing. The county has implemented a number of initiatives to help low-income families find housing, such as providing rental and utility assistance to more than 20,000 households and increasing the number of affordable housing units.



Wages Outpaced By Increase Cost of Housing and Inflation

The rising cost of gas and food in Palm Beach County is concerning for many residents. With wages remaining stagnant and the cost of living rising, it's becoming increasingly difficult for many families to make ends meet. [Local research and reports](#) show entry-level travel agents, pharmacy techs, plumbers, postal carriers and therapists that are seeing less than \$1 increases in hourly wages, which does not keep up with inflation. The data also shows entry-level wages have decreased for the following jobs in Palm Beach County: veterinarians, surgical assistants, optometrists, air traffic controllers, tutors, firefighters and social workers. [Research](#) also shows that just because there's been tremendous job growth in some fields does not mean the wages are higher.

Business Growth has Impacted on Housing Market

Palm Beach County continues to grow in population. Businesses are relocating to the area and creating economic opportunities for new residents. This influx of businesses has had a major impact on the housing market, leading to an increase in demand and a subsequent rise in rent prices. The high demand and increasing rental prices have had a significant impact on the people already living in Palm Beach County. Many people are struggling to keep up with the rising cost of living, and are being forced to move further away from the city in search of more affordable housing. This has had a negative effect on the local economy, as businesses are unable to attract and retain employees due to the high cost of living.

The salary needed to purchase a home has gone up by more than 55 percent in the past year because of rising interest rates and high home prices, according to RedFin, a real estate brokerage. In West Palm Beach, one needs an annual salary of \$115,707 to qualify for the purchase of a home. This represents a 58 percent increase from the previous year. The increase in interest rates is a major reason for this. Last year, interest rates at one point were around 3%. Now, the interest rate is close to 7%.



Affordable Housing Gap

According to Reinhold Wolff Research Associates, there is an estimated annual (2020-2023) demand for an additional 6,683 rental apartments in Palm Beach County. Renter-occupied units in Palm Beach County have increased by 14,109 units (8.9%) since 2014, while owner-occupied units have increased by 4,378 units (1.2%). Based on the gap analysis, housing construction activity has not kept pace with the County's population growth resulting in an average annual supply gap of 2,732 housing units during the last ten years.

Affordable Housing Plan and Housing Bond

The county recently worked with community partners to develop a Housing Action Plan. The plan aims to produce, rehabilitate and preserve 20,000 units of workforce and affordable housing by 2032. Palm Beach County Voters said yes to more housing, approving a \$200 million bond for affordable units in November 2022. The bond, which will be paid for by property tax increases, is designed to subsidize the construction of 20,000 workforce and affordable housing units.

The Homeless and Housing Alliances Strategic Response to Increased Homelessness

In an effort to strategically address homelessness in Palm Beach County, the Homeless and Housing Alliance (HHA) developed a comprehensive homeless plan called [Leading The Way Home](#). The following strategies below are designed to augment the plan, providing a more prioritized focus in order to address the increased number of individuals experiencing homelessness in the County.



Prevent Homelessness

- Prioritize housing for homeless families using the 6.4M Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) reallocation funds
- Launch affordable housing relocation initiative
- Launch Eviction Prevention Workgroup to make policy recommendations that will mitigate evictions
- Relaunch the Rapid Response Eviction Assistance Program (RREAP) program
- Expand the Roommate Matching Program
- Relaunch the ERAP Mobile Outreach Unit
- Enhance the diversion program for individuals, families and youth

Expand Capacity for Temporary and Permanent Housing

- Relaunch SMART Landlord Campaign and include incentives for property owners
- Work with municipalities to demo, rehab and rebuild housing that is scheduled to be condemned
- Streamline all available housing and the process for obtaining units through the Affordablehousing.com project
- Expand Hotel Support Capacity to Increase Exits to Permanent Housing-Family Promise
- Develop Notice of Funding Availability to advance \$8.7M HOME ARPA strategies to increase affordable housing stock
- Open the Housing Resource Center in the Lake Worth Beach area
- Support the Faith Hope Love project to build affordable housing for veterans
- Enhance process to maximize utilization at all shelters

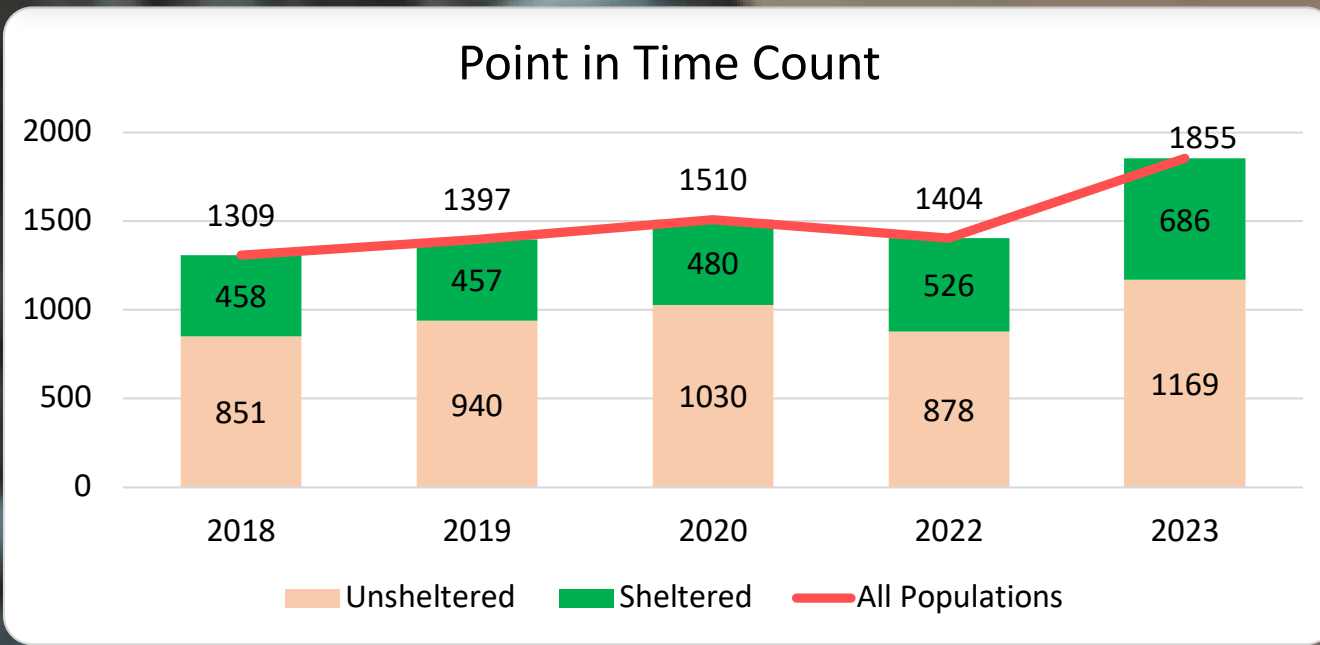
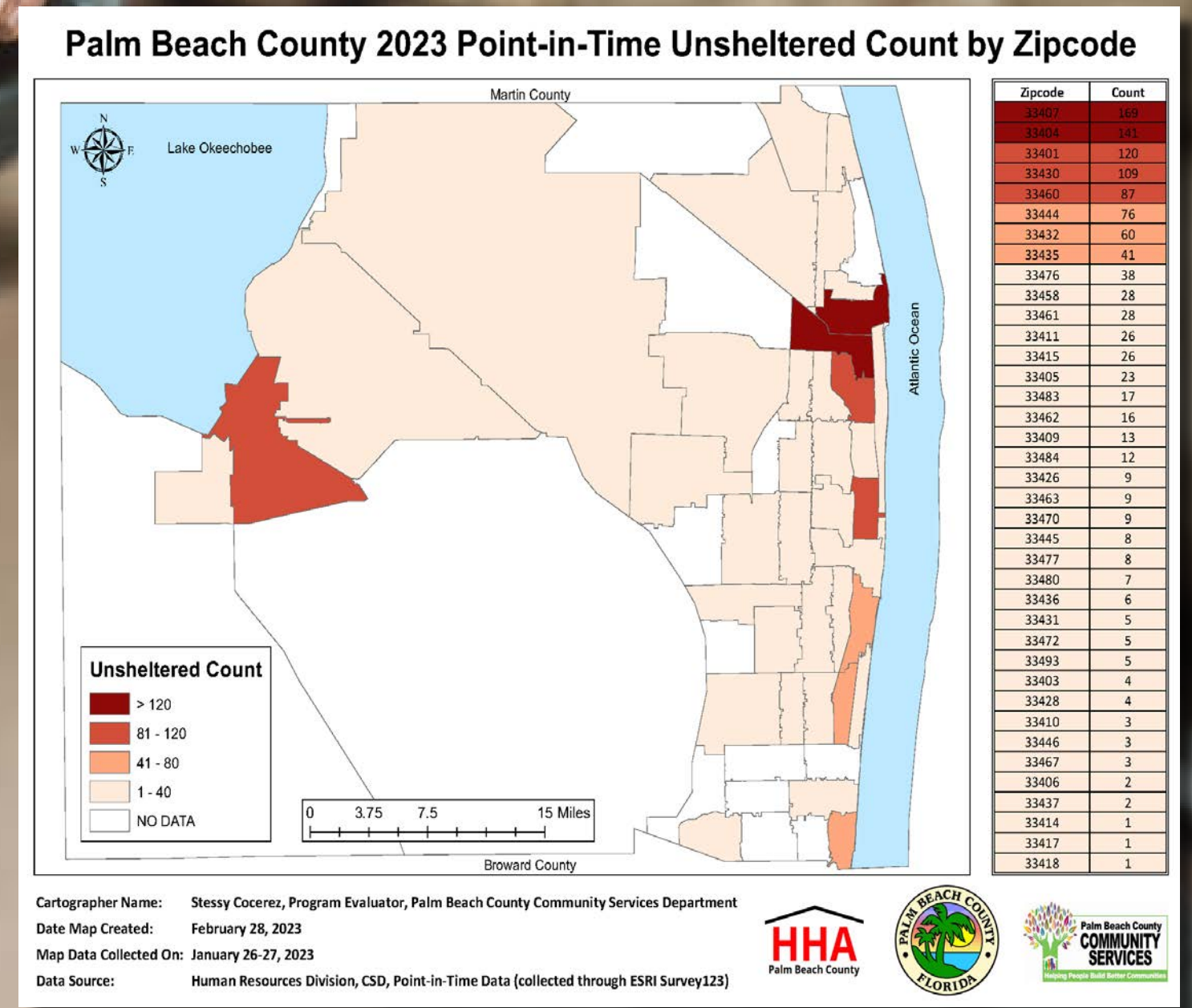
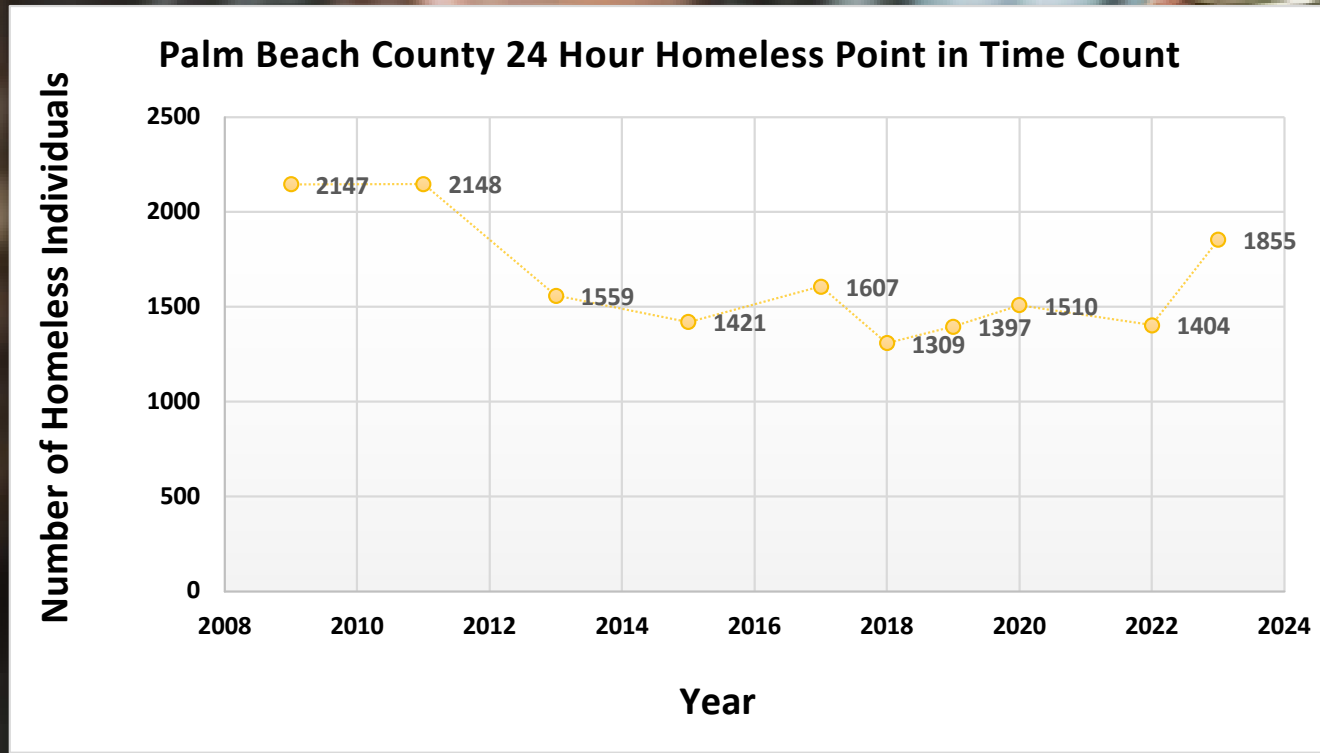
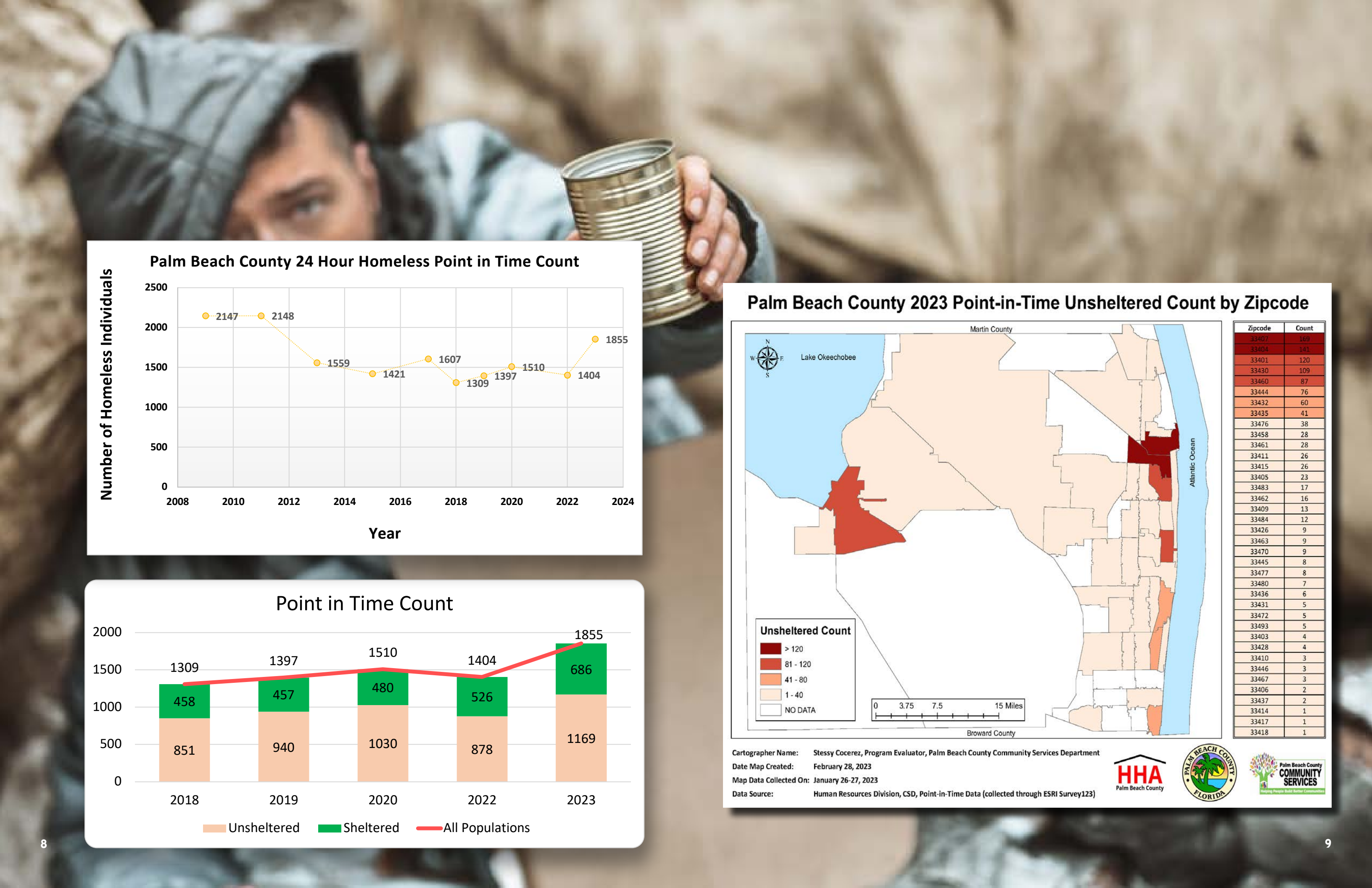
Enhance Coordination and Homeless Supports

- Support the Parking Lot Initiative with Faith based Community
- Expand Parks to Work and Parks to Culinary Initiative
- Add mental health position to the Homeless Outreach Team and inside shelters
- Expand the hours for the Homeless Dispatch Center
- Support the grand opening of The Lord's Place Engagement Center
- Increase the number of partners utilizing the Resource & Referral portal
- Expand transportation options for individuals experiencing homelessness
- Launch housing integration initiative with ReEntry and HIV programs
- Pilot Housing Counseling and Employment Support Initiatives

Legislative Actions and Advocacy

- Support PBC and HHA's Legislative priorities including the expansion of affordable housing through Sadowski funding
- Develop incentives for affordable housing projects using Housing Bond
- Launch a new interactive website and use the platform for advocacy
- Develop messaging to highlight HHA's accomplishments and address stigma against individuals experiencing homelessness





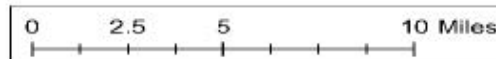
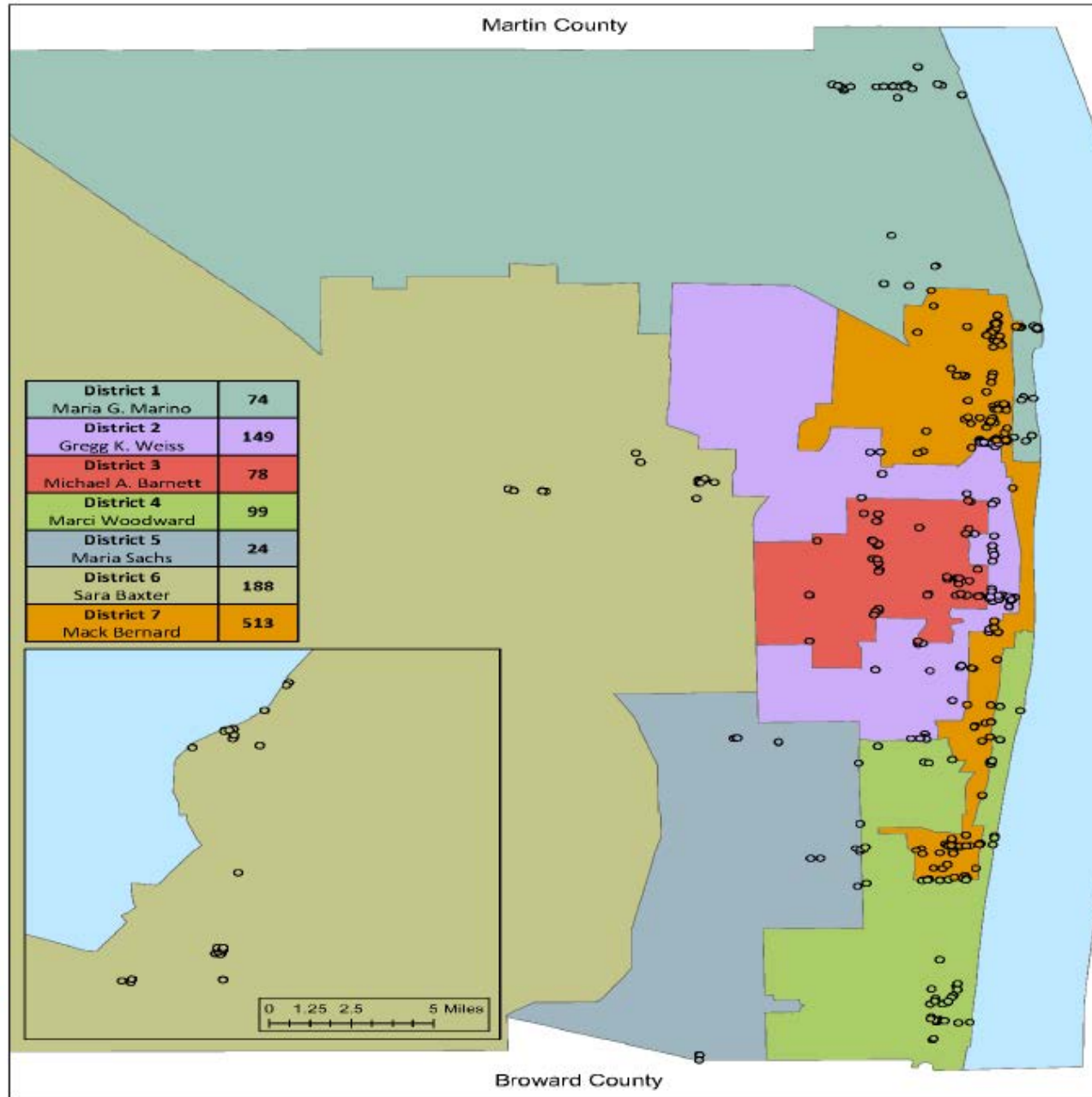
Cartographer Name: Stessy Cocerez, Program Evaluator, Palm Beach County Community Services Department
 Date Map Created: February 28, 2023
 Map Data Collected On: January 26-27, 2023
 Data Source: Human Resources Division, CSD, Point-in-Time Data (collected through ESRI Survey123)



Palm Beach County 2023 Point-in-Time Unsheltered Count



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HOMELESS AND HOUSING ALLIANCE

The Homeless and Housing Alliance (HHA) of Palm Beach County (formerly the Continuum of Care) is intended to deliver a comprehensive and coordinated continuum of services for homeless individuals and families. The system's fundamental components include homelessness prevention, outreach and assessment, emergency shelter, transitional housing, supportive services, permanent housing, and permanent supportive housing. The HHA includes community-based membership with representatives from government, business, formerly homeless individuals, law enforcement, banking, housing service providers, faith groups, education, veterans, health care, and concerned individuals. Palm Beach County Division of Human Services (the Division) continues its role as the lead entity for the HHA, which began in January 2006.

Partner	Target Population
Adopt-A-Family of the Palm Beaches	Families & Youth
Area Agency on Aging	Seniors
Aid to Victims of Domestic Abuse	Domestic Violence
Catholic Charities	Individuals & Families
Child Net	Foster Care
Children's Home Society	Youth & Families
Coalition for Independent Living Options	All Sub-Populations
Community Action	Individuals & Families
CROS Ministries	Individuals & Families
Faith Hope Love Charity	Veterans
Families First of Palm Beach County	Families
Family Promise North/Central Palm Beach County	Families
Family Promise South Palm Beach County	Families
Farmworkers Coordinating Council	Individuals & Families
Florida Rural Legal Services	All Sub-Populations
Gulfstream Goodwill Industries	Individuals
Holy Ground	Youth Families
Home Safe	Youth
Homeless Coalition of Palm Beach County	All Sub-Populations
Housing Partnership	Individuals & Families
Jeff Industries	Individuals & Youth
Jerome Golden Center for Behavioral Health	Individuals
Legal Aid Society	All Sub-Populations
Magellan Complete Care	Individuals
Mary's Shelter	Families
Palm Beach State College	Youth
PBC Department of Economic Sustainability	All Sub-Populations
PBC Division of Human & Veteran Services	All Sub-Populations
PBC School District	Youth
Salvation Army	Individuals & Veterans
Society of St. Vincent De Paul	Individuals & families
Southeast Florida Behavioral Health Network	All Sub-Populations
St. George's Center	Individuals & families
St. Anne's	Individuals
The Lord's Place	Individuals & Families
True Fast Ministries	Individuals & families
Veterans Administration Medical Center	Veterans
Vickers House	Individuals & Families
Vita Nova	Youth
YWCA	Domestic Violence



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For assistance, please visit:
www.RentalAssistancePBC.org

For Homeless Services call:
(833) HHA-WILL

For Rental Assistance or Eviction
Prevention Services call:

(833) CSD-WILL

Property owners who are interested in
working with the county can visit:

www.SmartLandlord.org



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TheHomelessPlan.org