Asheville-Buncombe Continuum of Care (CoC) Updates

City Manager's Report
April 28, 2026



Key Takeaways

- The CoC's 2026 Point-in-Time Count identified a slight increase in homelessness, with results demonstrating continued impact from Helene
- The CoC's Strategic Plan is already responsive to count results with implementation actively underway
- Early wins indicate high potential for community-level collaboration through the CoC
- To continue scaling response to homelessness, the CoC will need to identify additional resources

2026 Point-in-Time Count Results

- CoCs conduct Point-in-Time (PIT) Counts annually as a snapshot to inform national and local understanding of homelessness
- This year's count occurred February 10, 2026, with **137 volunteers** participating
- The CoC's System Performance Committee reported results to the CoC Membership at the March 26, 2026 meeting
- Results are simply a snapshot and a useful indicator to understand the larger picture, but there is no one perfect dataset on homelessness
- The System Performance Committee is working with multiple data sources (e.g. the Homeless Management Information System) to develop baseline system data to be publicly available this year



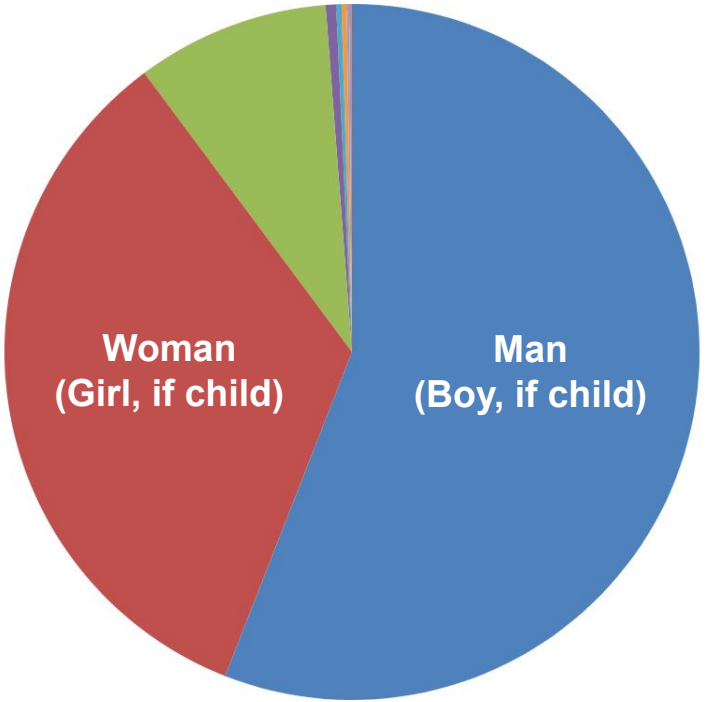
2026 Point-in-Time Count Results

- Identified systemic contributors to homelessness
  - Lack of affordable housing is the determining factor for rates of homelessness
    - Research shows that personal factors like addiction or mental illness can precipitate loss of housing, but don't drive the community rate
  - Community continues to experience impacts from Helene and will for years to come
    - 16% of people reported Helene as the cause of homelessness
  - Homelessness system was already under-resourced pre-Helene
    - More funding, shelter and housing inventory, and service provider capacity are needed
- Key factors in this year's results
  - Increased shelter inventory from ABCCM, Safe Shelter, and Covenant Community Church
  - Code Purple wasn't called on the night of the count, so up to 95 people counted as unsheltered may have been in shelter had Code Purple been available
  - A strong partner in Barnardsville provided a more accurate count in that community than in years past

Totals

	2024	2025	2026	% Change
Shelter	270	270	245	-9.3%
Transitional Housing	250	157	245	+56.1%
Unsheltered	219	328	334	+1.8%
Totals	**739**	**755**	**824**	**+9.1%**

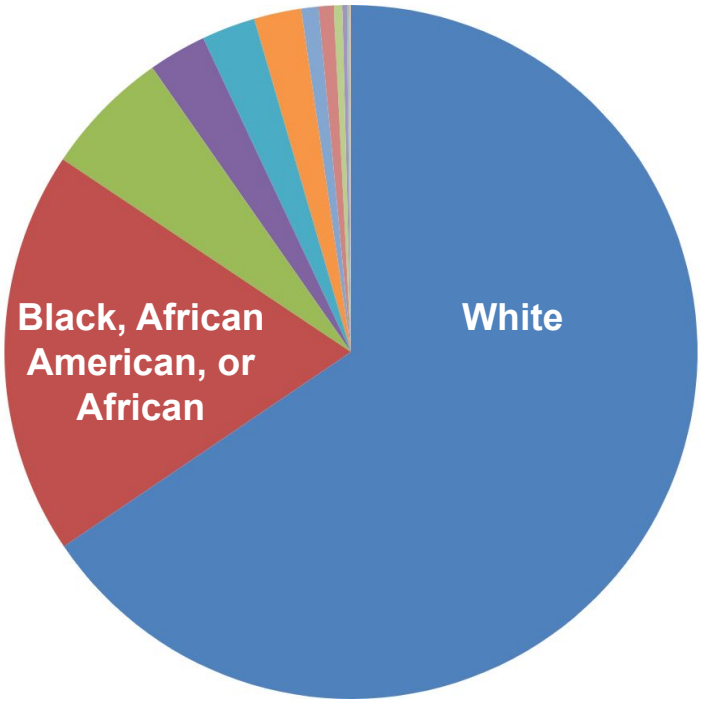
Gender



In 2024 the Buncombe County female population was 51.9%

	2024	2025	2026	
Man (Boy, if child)	68.1%	65.8%	55.9%	461
Woman (Girl, if child)	29.6%	31.8%	33.9%	279
Unknown	0.9%	1.6%	9.0%	74
Non-Binary	0.5%	0.0%	0.5%	4
Transgender	0.3%	0.0%	0.2%	2
Different Identity	0%	0.0%	0.2%	2
More Than One Gender	0.4%	0.5%	0.1%	1
Culturally Specific Identity	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	1
Questioning	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0

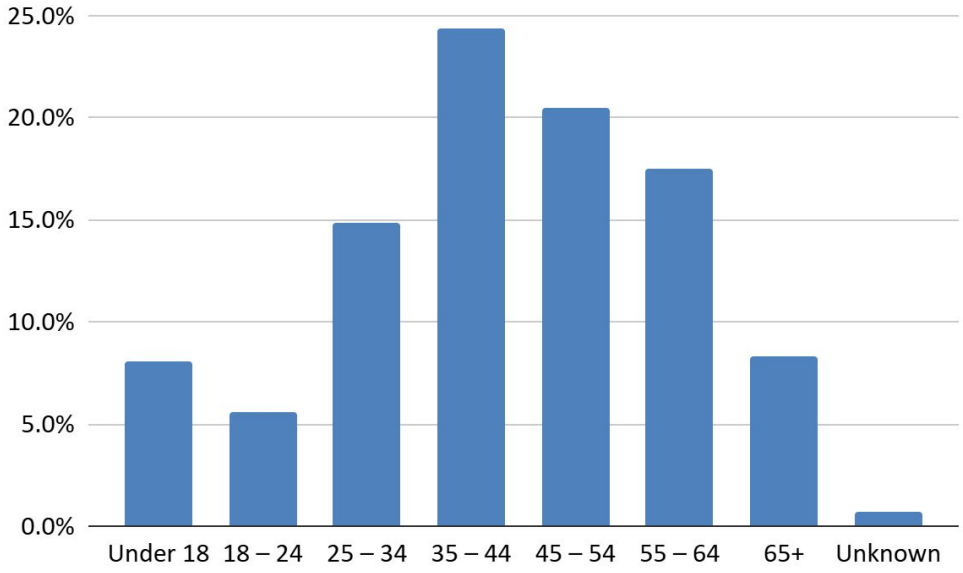
Race



	2024	2025	2026	
White	73.3%	68.1%	65.4%	539
Black, African American, or African	18.4%	17.6%	18.8%	155
Unknown	3.0%	3.0%	5.9%	49
Hispanic/Latina/o	1.1%	1.6%	2.7%	22
Multi-Racial (not Hispanic/Latina/o)	2.2%	2.9%	2.5%	21
American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous	1.6%	2.1%	2.2%	18
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.5%	0.8%	7
White & Hispanic/Latina/o	1.9%	1.7%	0.7%	6
Black, African American, or African & Hispanic/Latina/o	0.3%	0.4%	0.4%	3
Multi-Racial & Hispanic/Latina/o	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%	2
Asian or Asian American	1.0%	0.5%	0.1%	1
Middle Eastern or North African	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	1

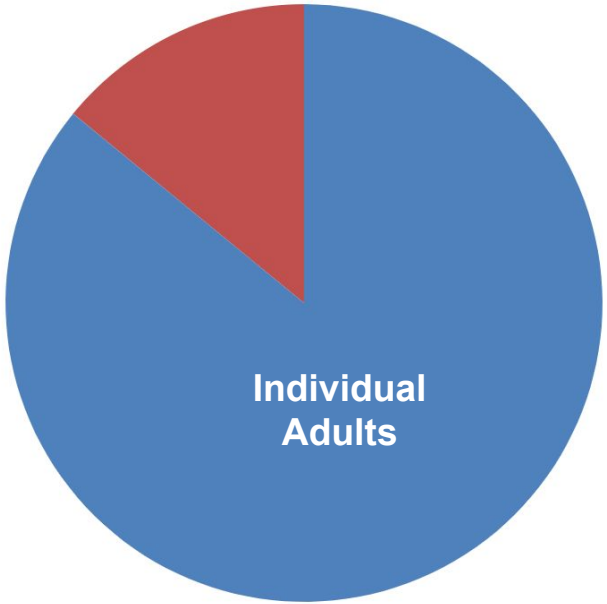
In 2024 the Buncombe County population was 89.2% White, 6.0% Black

Age



	2024	2025	2026	
Under 18	6.6%	3.0%	8.1%	67
18 – 24	5.1%	2.5%	5.6%	46
25 – 34	18.0%	18.7%	14.9%	123
35 – 44	22.7%	24.6%	24.4%	201
45 – 54	17.6%	19.2%	20.5%	169
55 – 64	20.0%	21.9%	17.5%	144
65+	9.9%	9.4%	8.3%	68
Unknown	0.0%	0.7%	0.7%	6

Household Composition



	2024	2025	2026	
Individual Adults	89%	94.2%	85.9%	708
Families with Children	10.7%	5.7%	14.1%	116
Child Only	0.3%	0.1%	0.0%	0

In 2024, 739 people made up 674 households.
In 2025, 755 people made up 708 households.
In 2026, 824 people made up 733 households.

CoC in Action

- Very high engagement: 621 Members, with **103 serving** on the Board, a Committee, or a Work Group
- Committees
  - Advocacy
  - Community Relations
  - Funding
  - Nominating and Membership
  - System Performance
  - System Planning and Implementation
- Work Groups
  - Code Purple
  - Coordinated Entry
  - Emergency Shelter Development
  - Homelessness Prevention

2025 - 2028 Strategic Plan

All actions assigned to CoC bodies (Board, Committee, or Work Group)

- Themes include establishing baseline data, evaluating utilization of existing resources and ensuring maximization, expanding capacity of particular interventions, building infrastructure

Objectives

- Decrease unsheltered homelessness
- Increase exits from homelessness to permanent housing
- Coordinate and expand prevention, diversion, and rapid rehousing
- Build housing-focused system capacity

Early Wins

- Code Purple and Winter Shelter
  - More beds for more populations, shared infrastructure for operations and data
  - Used fair share funding approach with available resources, including City ($428K), County ($50K), and Mission Health ($75K)
- MOU between CoC and Housing Authority for admissions preferences
  - Project-Based Vouchers (no cap) and Tenant-Based Vouchers (25 for people exiting homelessness, 25 for survivors of domestic violence, and 50 Moving On for people with expiring subsidy or who are ready to graduate from a housing program)
  - System-level collaboration developed following CoC process
  - All households (other than Moving On) will receive 12 months of housing case management
  - CoC infrastructure and oversight: all referrals made through Coordinated Entry, shared data, monthly case review meetings, and ongoing reporting to CoC Board

Early Wins: Right at Home

- National initiative to demonstrate efficacy of prevention
  - One of 10 pilot communities to receive a minimum of $5M to serve at least 1,000 households over 3 years
  - Builds on proven model in Santa Clara County, CA with research demonstrating 90% of households still housed after 2 years + every $1 invested saved $2.47 in community costs
  - Goal: prevent thousands of families from losing their homes while creating a clear, evidence-based blueprint for a national homelessness prevention strategy
- Right at Home selection criteria
  - Demonstrated need for homelessness prevention
  - Committed public-sector leadership
  - Data capacity to implement rigorous evaluation
  - Strong local infrastructure, including a lead organization capable of coordinating service providers and managing funds

Large-scale community planning, investment, and implementation that moves the needle on homelessness is what the CoC is built for.

Key Focus Areas

- Foundations
  - Data: quality, reporting, public-facing dashboards
  - Funding Policy
  - System mapping
  - Building infrastructure for CoC-level projects
  - Coordinated Entry redesign: new assessment entering testing phase now
  - Written Standards for service delivery
- Emergency Shelter
  - Work Group has completed needs analysis and initial vision for new emergency shelter
- Pursuing system-level fund development
  - Need for reliable recurring funding CoC can base plans on and deploy strategically
    - Current critical needs: emergency shelter, Code Purple, permanent housing
    - Need to scale services to improve outcomes
  - Anticipate engaging funders this summer



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