Allegheny County 2024 Point-In Time Count of People Experiencing Homelessness

May 2024

OVERVIEW

Each year, Allegheny County participates in a national census, required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), of the number of people experiencing homelessness on a single night. The Point-in-Time count enumerates people experiencing homelessness in the County who are sheltered (residing in emergency shelters), unsheltered (residing in places not meant for human habitation) or participating in a short-term, supportive housing program (transitional and safe haven). HUD mandates that the count occurs during the last 10 days in January every year. In 2024, the count took place on January 30. The low temperature on that night was 33 degrees Fahrenheit.

Point-in-Time counts vary over time, due to changes in the number of people experiencing homelessness, revised guidance from HUD in how the Point-in-Time count is conducted and variations in the capacity of the homeless support system.[1] Fluctuations in the number of volunteer surveyors, weather conditions and areas surveyed can contribute to variations from year to year that are unrelated to changes in the number of people experiencing homelessness. In addition, people who are in unstable housing situations but not considered homeless by HUD's definition are not included in the Point-in-Time count; for example, HUD does not include people who are in danger of becoming homeless soon, people living in doubled-up situations, or people enrolled in supportive housing programs for the formerly homeless.

While the Point-in-Time count allows for annual comparisons, DHS also maintains a real-time dashboard that tracks the daily number of people in emergency shelters and a weekly count of people known to be experiencing unsheltered homelessness based on their engagement with street outreach teams. This is important because we need not wait for an annual count to understand what is happening in our region. On January 30, the Point-in-Time count and the dashboard differed just slightly, as the dashboard does not include counts from domestic violence shelters and the unsheltered count is not posted daily.

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[1] In 2024, there were no changes in the HUD guidance from the previous count. See https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/hdx/pit-hic/#2024-pit-count-and-hic-guidance-and-training for the latest guidelines.

HOW DO WE CONDUCT THE POINT-IN-TIME COUNT?

The Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS) manages the Allegheny County Continuum of Care's Point-in-Time count. DHS relies on Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data to gather information about those staying in emergency shelters on the night of the Point-in-Time count as well as for those staying in transitional or safe haven housing. Shelter and program staff use HMIS to record client enrollment, demographic and other information. Additionally, each domestic violence shelter provides the number of clients (adults and children) served on the night of the Point-in-Time count. Over the past year, DHS increased the number of emergency shelter beds in the system. On the night of the count, shelter capacity, including all domestic violence shelters, was 1,011.

To conduct this year's count of unsheltered individuals, DHS coordinated 20 internal and external street outreach teams consisting of 21 outreach staff and 28 volunteers to canvass geographic locations throughout the County. In some areas, particularly the Central Business District (Downtown) and in the surrounding areas of South Side, North Side and the Strip District, teams engaged in street-by-street canvassing. To cover so much ground in other neighborhoods and municipalities, teams prioritized specific areas where there are known encampments, unsheltered individuals, or individuals who panhandle/frequent specific intersections. Teams also spoke with police, mail carriers and convenience store workers to gather information on specific locations to survey. Additionally, surveyors went to drop-in centers in Downtown, Uptown, the North Side and the South Side to ask people where they planned to stay or did stay on the night of January 30. See the **Appendix** for coverage area maps.

Upon completion of data collection, DHS staff began a comprehensive de-duplication process to ensure that individuals were not counted more than one time, given the multiple data collection methods involved for sheltered and unsheltered individuals.

The data collected during the Point-in-Time is submitted to HUD, to create a yearly homelessness assessment report presented to Congress. For more information, visit HUD's website here.

WHO IS COUNTED AS PART OF THE POINT-IN-TIME COUNT?

The Point-in-Time count does not represent all individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness in the County. Not every geographic area is surveyed, and there may be individuals staying in abandoned buildings or secluded wooded areas who are not counted.

HUD requires that the Point-in-Town count include people who are staying in emergency shelters, those who are unsheltered, and those participating in transitional and safe haven housing programs. Starting in 2023, DHS changed how it presents Point-in-Time data by separating out those in transitional and safe haven housing from those who are staying in emergency shelters or unsheltered. This change provides a clearer picture of the number of individuals who are experiencing an immediate housing crisis versus those enrolled in programs that provide interim housing stability. Transitional and safe haven programs provide temporary housing and supportive services that typically last up to two years. Safe haven programs are specifically for veterans.
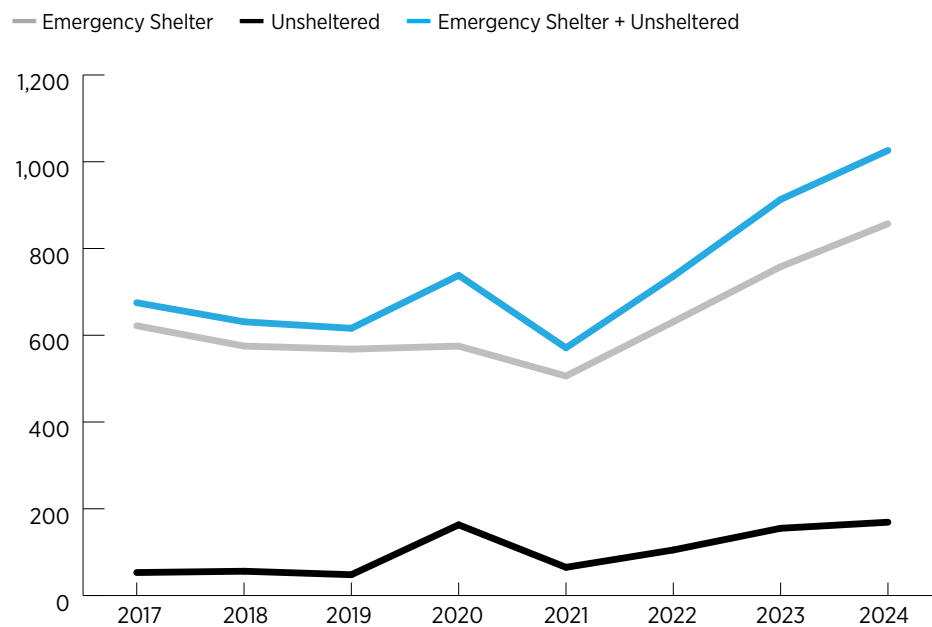
HOW MANY PEOPLE WERE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS ACCORDING TO THE POINT-IN-TIME COUNT ON JANUARY 30, 2024?

On January 30, 2024, in Allegheny County, 1,026 individuals were staying in emergency shelters or experiencing unsheltered homelessness (compared to 913 in 2023).[2]

- 857 were staying in emergency shelters (84% of overall count)
- 169 were unsheltered (16% of overall count)

The number of people experiencing homelessness in Allegheny County on the night of the Point-in-Time count has risen steadily since 2021.

Allegheny County Point-in-Time Count, 2017–2024

An increase in the number of individuals staying in emergency shelter (+99) is largely responsible for the increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness in the 2024 count. Between the 2023 and 2024 counts, DHS and its partners temporarily increased capacity at some existing emergency shelters and a new severe weather (Code Blue) shelter, which was open on the night of January 30.

The number of individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness increased (+14) since 2023, but the percent increase of 8% is smaller than the year-over-year increases in 2022 and 2023, which were 62% and 48%, respectively.

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[2]   In addition to those in emergency shelter and unsheltered, 123 individuals were staying in transitional housing and 15 individuals were staying in safe haven housing. HUD includes these programs as part of the Point-in-Time count.

WHAT ARE THE KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THIS YEAR'S POINT-IN-TIME COUNT?

Point-in-Time 2024, Selected Demographics by Household Type and Location

	ADULT-ONLY				ADULT-CHILD	
	EMERGENCY SHELTER (N=533 INDIVIDUALS)		UNSHELTERED (N=169 INDIVIDUALS)		EMERGENCY SHELTER (N=324 INDIVIDUALS)*	
	#	% AMONG INDIVIDUALS IN ADULT-ONLY HOUSEHOLDS IN SHELTER	#	% AMONG UNSHELTERED INDIVIDUALS	#	% AMONG INDIVIDUALS IN ADULT-CHILD HOUSEHOLDS IN SHELTER
Gender						
Female	181	34%	55	33%	197	61%
Male	341	64%	112	66%	127	39%
Transgender	3	1%	1	1%	0	0%
Non-binary or gender not singularly male or female	8	2%	1	1%	0	0%
Race/ethnicity						
Black alone	244	46%	60	36%	222	69%
White alone	229	43%	97	57%	57	18%
Multiracial	39	7%	7	4%	18	6%
Another race alone+	9	2%	3	2%	7	2%
Latino (of any race)	12	2%	2	1%	20	6%
Age						
Under 18	0	0%	0	0%	193	60%
18-24	48	9%	6	4%	31	10%
25-34	92	17%	34	20%	39	12%
35-44	116	22%	77	46%	43	13%
45-54	101	19%	30	18%	15	5%
55-64	122	23%	16	9%	1	<1%
65-Over	54	10%	6	4%	2	1%
Veteran	35	7%	9	5%	1	1%
Adult Survivor of Intimate Partner Violence	30	6%			32	24%**

+ American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous; Asian or Asian American

*No adult-child households were unsheltered

** Denominator= Age 18+

A total of 1,026 individuals (702/68% adults and 324/32% in households with children) were in emergency shelter or experiencing unsheltered homelessness on the night of the 2024 Point-in-Time count. No children were unsheltered.

Adult-only households differ from adult-child households both demographically and in how they access and use shelter, which is why we look at these populations separately here. Findings from this year's Point-in-Time count parallel those in recent DHS reports on people experiencing homelessness in the County, which demonstrated that men make up the majority of adult-only households while women-headed households make up the majority of adult-child households. Black individuals are overrepresented among all household types, especially in family shelters, and White men make up the majority of those experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

In more detail, among individuals in adult-only households in this year's Point-in-Time count:

- The majority (76%) were staying in shelters.

- Men were overrepresented in both sheltered (64%) and unsheltered (66%) locations.

- White adults were more likely to be unsheltered (57%) than adults of other races, but Black adults were overrepresented in shelters and in unsheltered locations, as Black individuals make up only 14% of the County's population.

- The unsheltered population skewed slightly younger than those who were in shelter; a third of sheltered adults were 55+ (vs. 13% of those unsheltered).

- Veterans made up a small percentage of both the sheltered (7%) and unsheltered (5%) populations.

- There were 30 adult survivors of domestic violence in shelter; in surveys, an additional three unsheltered individuals mentioned intimate partner violence as a factor leading to their homelessness (See **Appendix**).

- Additionally, among unsheltered adults:
  - 73 (43%) had touched at least one aspect of the homeless system in the two years prior to this year's Point-in-Time count, whether rental assistance, shelter, or housing for the formerly homeless.
  - 26 (15%) had a shelter stay in the month leading up to the Point-in-Time count.
  - Substance use (drug or alcohol), unemployment and lack of affordable housing were the most cited contributors to individuals' experiences of homelessness (see **Appendix** for the full set of responses).
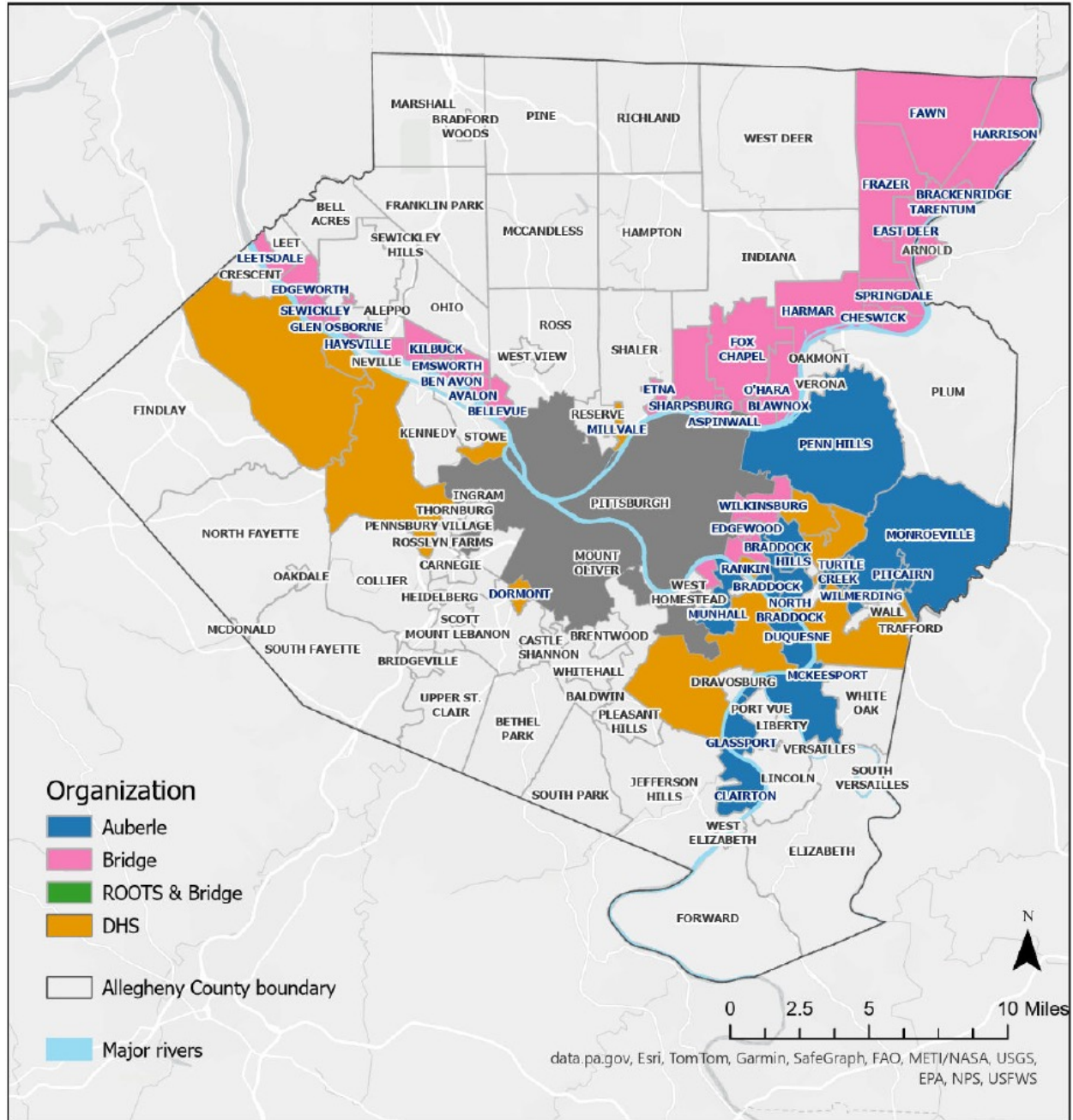
Among the 324 individuals in adult-child households, all of whom were staying in shelter:

- Women/girls were overrepresented (61%), skewed by female-headed households.

- Black individuals were significantly overrepresented, at nearly 70% of those in family shelters.

- There were 93 unique households and they tended to be younger families; most adults were under 45 years of age, and 60% of the family shelter population was under 18.

- Almost a quarter of adults staying in family shelter were survivors of intimate partner violence.
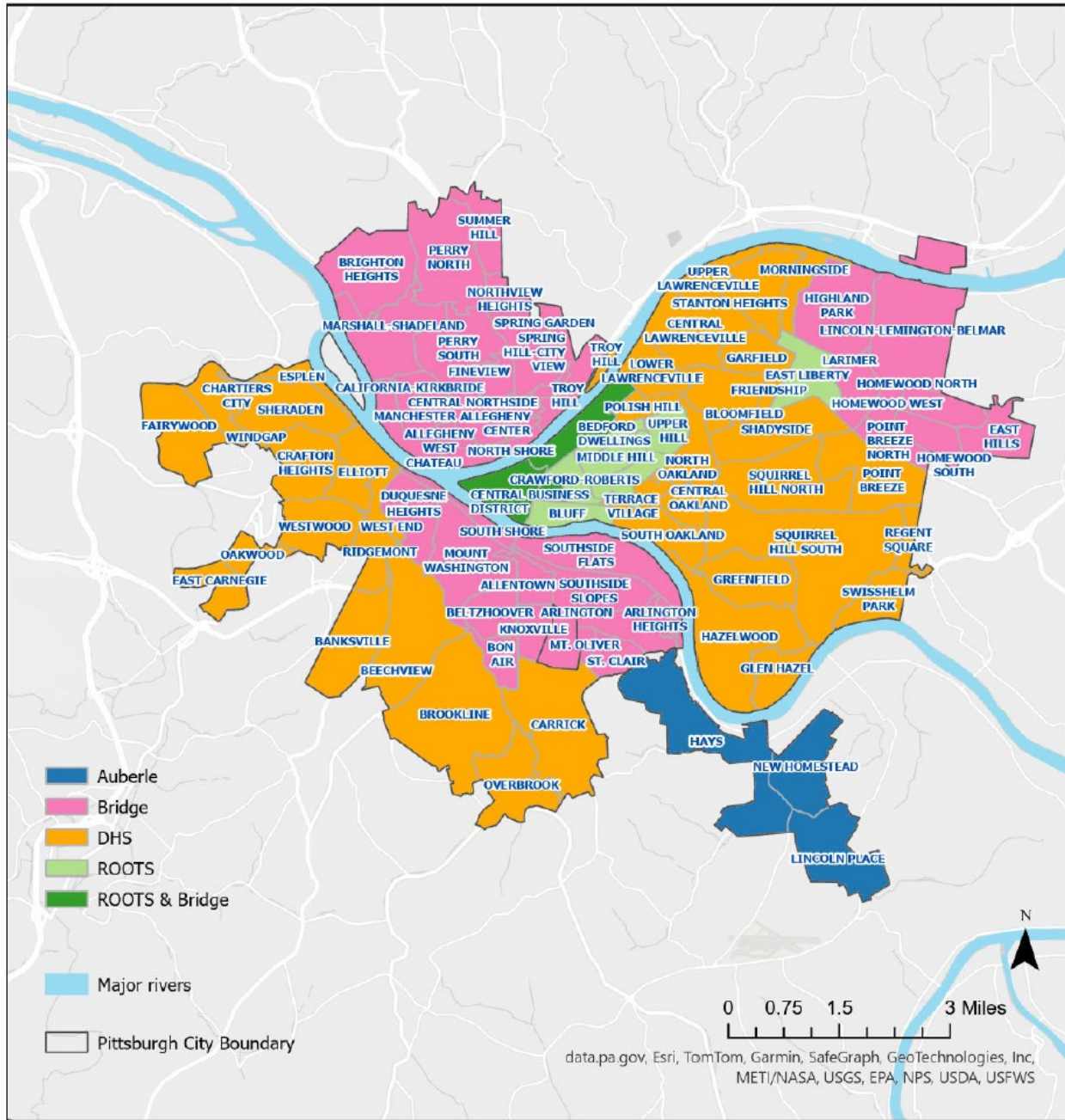
APPENDIX

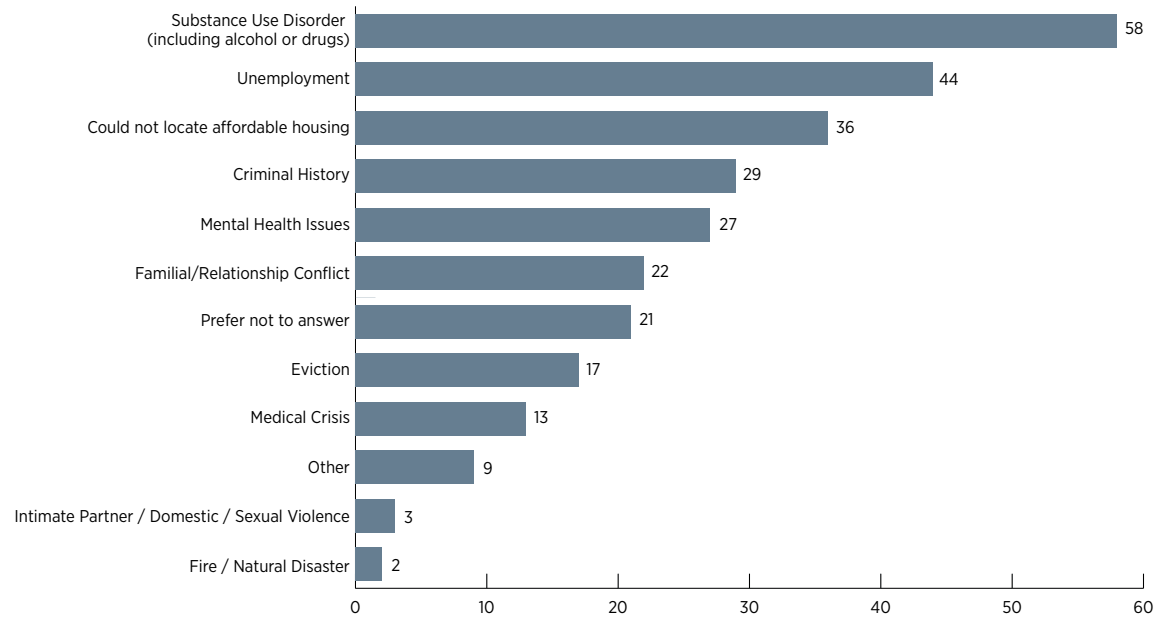### Allegheny County Municipality Coverage, Point-in-Time 2024

City of Pittsburgh Coverage, Point-in-Time 2024

Answers to "*Which of the following situations or factors contributed to your current experience of homelessness?*"
Among unsheltered individuals who provided a response to this question (n=119) on the night of the 2024 Point-in-Time Count.

Fifty individuals (30% of the unsheltered count) chose to not answer this question. Those who were surveyed could select multiple responses.