




SAN JOSÉ



HOMELESS

POINT-IN-TIME CENSUS & SURVEY

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT

2015

REPORT PRODUCED BY ASR

ABOUT THE RESEARCHER

Applied Survey Research (ASR) is a nonprofit, social research firm dedicated to helping people build better communities by collecting meaningful data, facilitating information-based planning, and developing custom strategies. The firm was founded on the principle that community improvement, initiative sustainability, and program success are closely tied to assessment needs, evaluation of community goals, and development of appropriate responses.

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SERVICE PROVIDERS

Asian Americans for Community Involvement · Bill Wilson Center · City Team International · Community Services Agency · Community Solutions · Community Technology Alliance · Downtown Streets Team · Family Supportive Housing · Gilroy Compassion Center · HomeFirst · InnVision Shelter Network · Next Door Solutions to Domestic Violence · Salvation Army · Santa Clara Office of Education · Santa Clara County Office of Supportive Housing · South County Housing · Support Network for Battered Women · Valley Homeless Health Care Program · West Valley Community Services

The City of San José, County of Santa Clara and ASR would also like to acknowledge the 335 volunteers, service providers and County and City employees who registered as volunteers for the census efforts and the many community and faith-based organizations that helped to recruit volunteers.

Finally, this study would not be possible without the 190 homeless census and survey workers, 856 survey respondents, and dozens of outreach workers whose efforts are reflected throughout this report.

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POINT-IN-TIME JURISDICTIONAL FUNDERS

City of Campbell

City of Cupertino

City of Gilroy

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Town of Los Gatos

City of Milpitas

City of Monte Sereno

City of Morgan Hill

City of Mountain View

City of Palo Alto

City of San José

City of Santa Clara

City of Saratoga

City of Sunnyvale

County of Santa Clara



Introduction

Every two years, during the last 10 days of January, communities across the country conduct comprehensive counts of their homeless populations to measure the prevalence of homelessness in their communities. Communities collect information on individuals and families sleeping in emergency shelters and transitional housing, as well as people sleeping on the streets, in cars, in abandoned properties, or in other places not meant for human habitation.

These biennial Point-in-Time counts of sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons are required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) of all jurisdictions receiving federal funding to provide housing and services for homeless individuals and families. Currently, the Santa Clara County Continuum of Care receives more than \$15 million in federal funding, a key source of funding for homeless services in Santa Clara County.

Communities report the findings of their Point-in-Time counts in their annual funding applications to HUD. The data collected helps the federal government better understand the nature and extent of homelessness nationwide. Biennial Point-in-Time counts are the primary source of nationwide data on the sheltered and unsheltered homeless population.

The County of Santa Clara and the City of San José have worked in conjunction with Applied Survey Research (ASR) to conduct the 2015 Santa Clara County Homeless Census and Survey. ASR is a nonprofit social research firm with extensive experience in homeless enumeration and research.

PROJECT OVERVIEW AND GOALS

The County of Santa Clara and the City of San José partnered with Applied Survey Research (ASR) to conduct the 2015 Santa Clara County Census and Survey. Together, they identified four key project goals:

- To preserve current federal funding for homeless services and to enhance the ability to raise new funds;

- To improve the ability of policymakers and service providers to plan and implement services that meet the needs of the local homeless population;
- To measure changes in the numbers and characteristics of the homeless population since the 2013 Santa Clara County Homeless Census and Survey, and to track progress toward ending homelessness; and
- To assess the status of specific subpopulations including veterans, families, unaccompanied children and youth, and those who are chronically homeless.

FEDERAL DEFINITION OF HOMELESSNESS FOR POINT-IN-TIME COUNTS

In this study, HUD's definition of homelessness for Point-in-Time counts was used. The definition includes:

- An individual or family living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangement (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state, or local government programs for low-income individuals), or
- An individual or family with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground¹

It does not include individuals or persons living in families who were living in “double ups,” hotels/motels, or an institutional setting.

PRIMARY COMPONENTS OF THE STUDY

The Santa Clara County Census and Survey had four primary components:

- 1) A Point-in-Time enumeration of unsheltered homeless individuals and families (those sleeping outdoors, on the street, in parks or vehicles, etc.);
- 2) A targeted Point-in-Time enumeration of unsheltered, unaccompanied homeless children and youth;
- 3) A Point-in-Time count of homeless individuals and families who have temporary shelter, including those staying in an emergency shelter, transitional housing, or using hotel/motel vouchers; and
- 4) A qualitative survey of a representative sample of homeless adults and youth administered in the weeks following the census efforts.

This report is intended to assist service providers, policymakers, funders, and those in local, state, and federal government to gain a better understanding of the population currently experiencing homelessness, measure the impact of current policies and programming, and plan for the future. The results of both the census and survey presented in this report provide invaluable data regarding the number and characteristics of homeless individuals and families in Santa Clara County. These data can help guide countywide efforts to mitigate and end homelessness.

¹ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (December 2012). Housing Inventory Count and Point-in-Time Count of Homeless Persons: Data Collection Guidance Version 1.1.



Point-In-Time Census

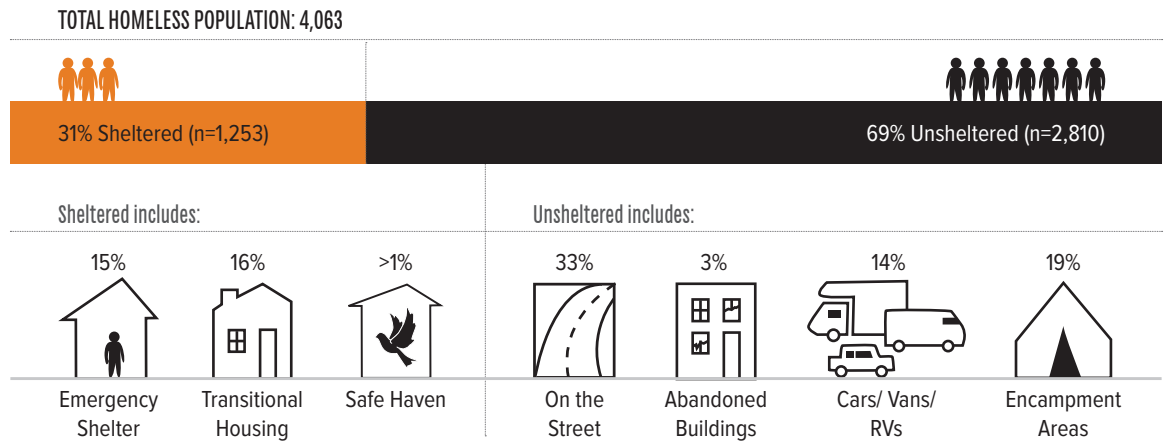
The 2015 San José Point-in-Time Count was part of the larger Santa Clara County Point-in-Time effort. The count included a complete enumeration of all sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons in the San José. The general street count was conducted on January 27 and 28 from approximately daybreak to noon.

Teams of homeless guides and housed volunteers canvassed all 177 square miles of San José. Individuals in emergency shelters, transitional housing, and domestic violence shelters were counted on the evening of January 27, 2015. The general street count and shelter count methodology were similar to those used in 2013, however in 2015 most shelters reported data using the County's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) rather than paper or online surveys.

NUMBER AND CHARACTERISTICS OF HOMELESS PERSONS IN SAN JOSÉ

A total of 4,063 people were counted in San José on the mornings of January 27 and 28, 2015. Approximately 69% of the population was unsheltered, this included 778 people living in encampment areas. Roughly 31% of the population was counted in shelters (emergency shelters, transitional housing facilities, and safe havens).

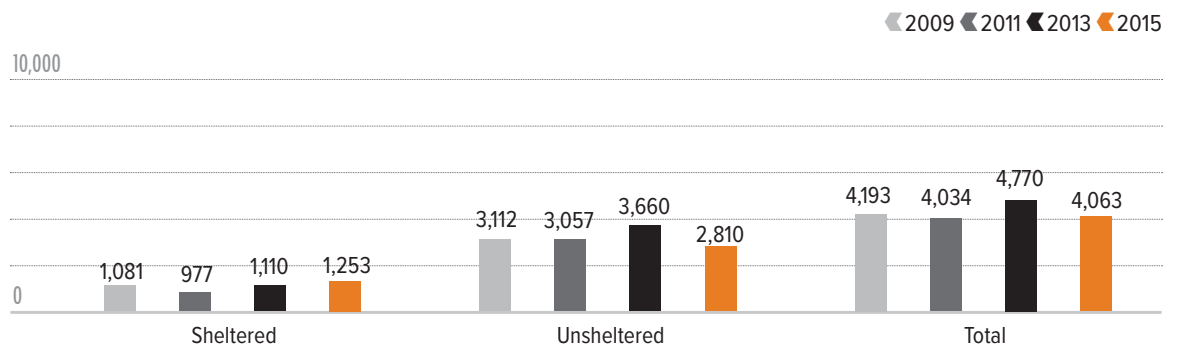
FIGURE 1. TOTAL NUMBER OF HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS ENUMERATED DURING THE POINT-IN-TIME HOMELESS CENSUS



Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015). San José Homeless Census. San José, CA.

There was a 15% decrease in the homeless population of San José between 2013 and 2015 (705 people). The number of people counted in San José encampments decreased from 1,230 in 2013 to 778 in 2015. The San José shelter count increased by 145 people between 2013 and 2015, a 13% increase.

FIGURE 2. TOTAL NUMBER OF HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS ENUMERATED DURING THE POINT-IN-TIME HOMELESS CENSUS BY SHELTER STATUS WITH TREND

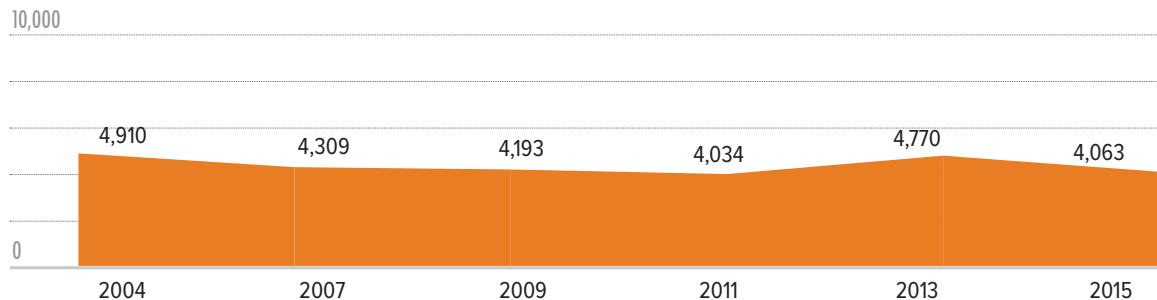


Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015). San José Homeless Census. San José, CA.

Note: Changes in the shelter count may reflect changes in shelter designations and listed shelters rather than capacity or usage.

While the population saw a large decrease from 2013, the number of people counted in the 2015 Point-in-Time Count was similar to that of the 2011.

FIGURE 3. SAN JOSÉ HOMELESS CENSUS 11-YEAR TREND



Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015). *San José Homeless Census*. San José, CA.

The majority of those counted in the 2015 Point-in-Time Count were adults 25 years or older (81%). Five hundred and thirty-six of those counted were transition age youth between 18-25 years old, 503 of which were living independently. There were 250 children under the age of 18 included in the count. Of those children, 87% were living with family members (including at least one adult), 15% (32 children) were living on their own.²

FIGURE 4. HOMELESS CENSUS RESULTS BY HOUSEHOLD TYPE AND AGE GROUP (2015)

	CHILDREN UNDER 18	ADULTS 18-24	ADULTS 25+	TOTAL
Sheltered	212	96	945	1,253
Persons in family households	210	30	132	374
Persons in non-family households	2	66	813	881
Unsheltered	37	440	2,333	2,810
Persons in family households	7	3	4	14
Persons in non-family households	30	437	2,329	2,796
Total	254	536	3,278	4,063
Percent	6%	13%	81%	100%

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015). *San José Homeless Census*. San José, CA.

² In a sustained effort to improve data on the extent of youth homelessness, Santa Clara County conducted a dedicated youth count similar to those conducted in previous years. As in previous years, Bill Wilson Center staff and youth provided the insight and manpower needed to enumerate homeless children and youth in the San José. For more information on the 2015 youth count see Appendix 1.

Seventy-four percent of those counted were male, twenty-six percent were female. Few individuals were identified as transgender during the street and shelter counts.

A higher population of the female population was enumerated in shelters (62%) compared to 29% of males. The transgender population was largely unsheltered (92%).

FIGURE 5. HOMELESS CENSUS RESULTS BY HOUSEHOLD TYPE AND GENDER (2015)

	FEMALE	MALE	TRANSGENDER	TOTAL
Sheltered	396	855	2	1,253
Persons in family households	201	171	0	374
Persons in non-family households	195	684	2	881
Unsheltered	647	2,141	22	2,810
Persons in family households	8	6	0	14
Persons in non-family households	639	2,135	22	2,796
Total	1,043	2,996	24	4,063
Percent	26%	74%	>1%	-

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015). San José Homeless Census. San José, CA.



Homeless Survey Findings

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) describes the method used for the 2015 count as a “blitz count” in that numerous people conduct the count over a very short period of time in an effort to avoid duplicate enumeration. The count is followed by a face-to-face representative survey. The survey sample is then used to profile and estimate the condition and characteristics of the county’s homeless population and subpopulations for the purposes of HUD reporting. These data are also collected at the city level to help inform local service delivery and strategic planning. The results of the “blitz” census are combined with survey data to provide estimates of the number of people affected by a given experience. The survey also provides additional information on the experiences of those who are unsheltered and sheltered in the City of San José.

This section provides an overview of the findings generated from the homeless survey in San José. Surveys were administered to individuals experiencing homelessness after the completion of the 2015 Point-in-Time Count, between February 1 and March 16, 2015. The survey effort resulted in 626 complete and unique surveys³. In an effort to mitigate sample bias and faithfully represent the overall population experiencing homelessness in San José, surveyors were recruited from multiple organizations and areas. Efforts were made to target respondents based on living accommodation, age, and geographic location.

³ Additional information regarding the City of San José and Santa Clara County Homeless Census & Survey can be found in the appendices, including: the homeless survey Methodology.

The following table is a brief overview of census population and the survey population.

FIGURE 6. SURVEY AND CENSUS POPULATIONS

	CENSUS POPULATION	SURVEY POPULATION
Age 18-24	13%	13%
Families	10%	5%
Sheltered	31%	26%
Total Population	4,063	626

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015). San José Homeless Census and Survey. San José, CA.

SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

In order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the experiences of homeless persons in the City of San José, respondents were asked basic demographic questions including their age, gender, sexual orientation, and ethnicity.

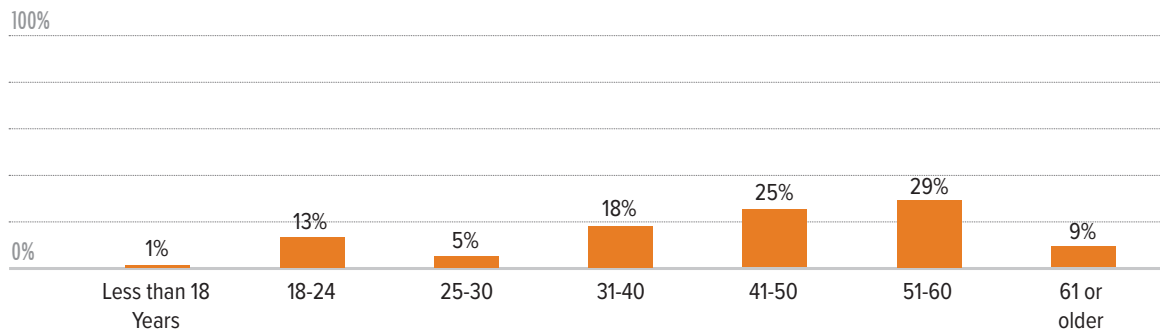
AGE

Respondents were asked how old they were the first time they experienced homelessness for the first time in 2015. Nine percent of respondents reported they were under the age of 18, 24% were between the ages of 18-24, and 67% were over the age of 25.

Previous data has suggested the population of individuals experiencing homelessness has been aging. However, recent research by Stephen Metraux, PhD has shown that traditional outreach efforts in national Point-in-Time counts and service-based enumerations may have overrepresented the number of individuals in these older age groups. Metraux's data suggests that older individuals may be more service connected and therefore easier to reach through traditional outreach strategies. The City of San José and Santa Clara County continue to excel in their efforts to reach and enumerate younger populations, including unaccompanied children and youth, in the unsheltered Point-in-Time Count through dedicated encampment and youth outreach.

Fourteen percent of survey respondents were under the age of 25 in 2015. Thirty-eight percent of those surveyed were over the age of 51. As in previous years, the most common age for respondents was between 30 and 50 years old (43%).

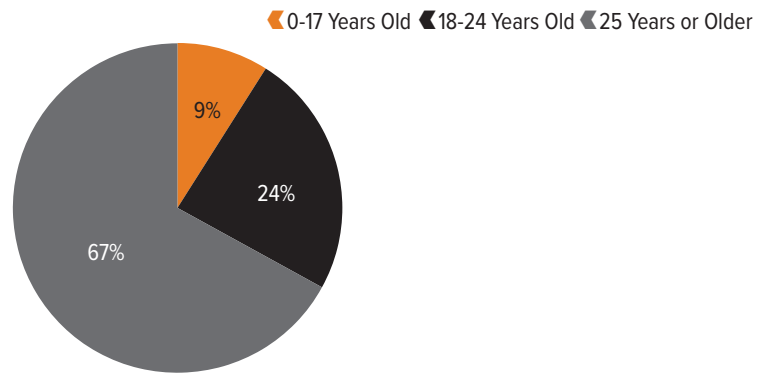
FIGURE 7. AGE



2015 n:626

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015). San José Homeless Survey. San José, CA.

FIGURE 8. AGE AT FIRST EXPERIENCE OF HOMELESSNESS



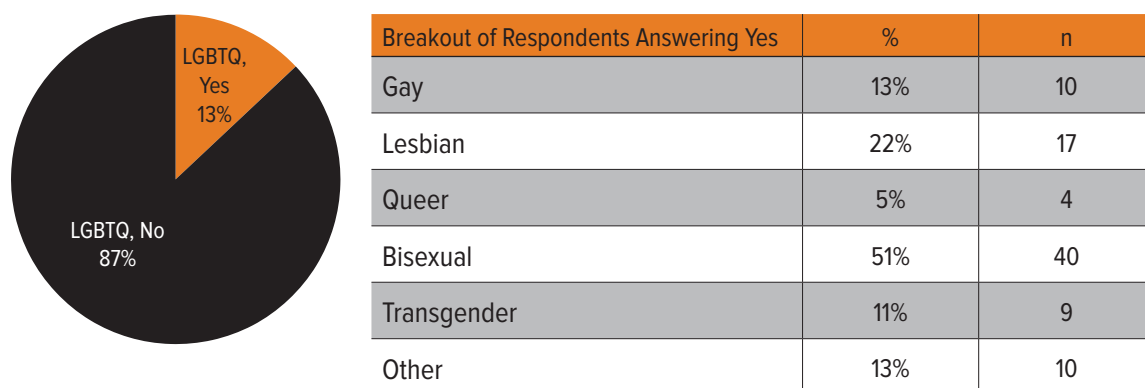
2015 n:600

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015). San José Homeless Survey. San José, CA.

GENDER AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION

The majority of survey respondents identified as male (65%), 34% female, and 1% transgender. While there are limited data on the number of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) individuals experiencing homelessness, available data suggest LGBTQ individuals experience homelessness at higher rates, especially those under the age of 25. Thirteen percent of homeless survey respondents identified as LGBTQ in 2015. Of those, 51% identified as bisexual, 22% lesbian, 13% gay, 11% transgender, 5% queer, and 13% other LGBTQ. Among those who identified as LGBTQ, 53% were female. A higher percentage of youth under age 25 identified as LGBTQ than their older counterparts (19% compared to 12%).

FIGURE 9. SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND LGBTQ IDENTITY



LGBTQ n:626; Breakout n: 79 respondents offering 90 responses

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015). San José Homeless Survey. San José, CA.

Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

PREGNANCY AND PARENTING

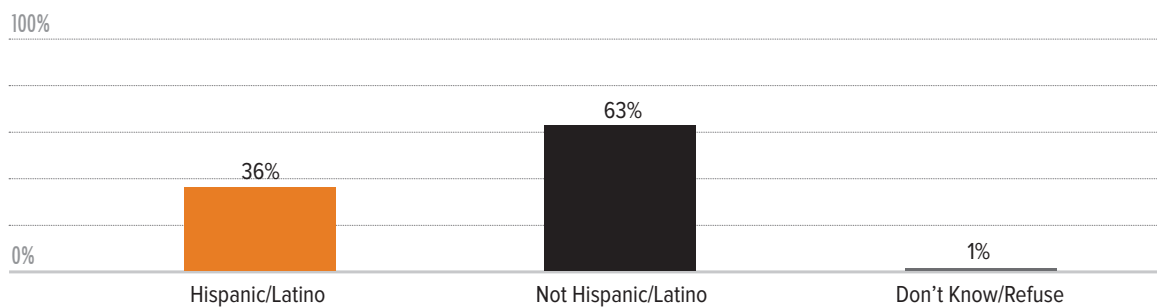
Survey respondents were asked about pregnancy status for the first time in 2015. Six percent of female respondents reported they were pregnant at the time of the study. Five percent of respondents reported they were currently living with a child under the age of 18.

RACE/ETHNICITY

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) gathers data on race and ethnicity in two separate questions, similar to the US Census. When asked about their ethnicity, 36% of homeless survey respondents in San José identified as Hispanic or Latino. In regards to race, 39% identified as White, 20% Black or African-American, 7% American Indian or Alaska Native, 2% Asian, 1% Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and 31% multi-ethnic or other.

In comparison to the general population of the City of San José, a higher percentage of respondents identified as Hispanic or Latino (36% compared to 26%). In terms of race, a much higher population of survey respondents identified as Black or African-American, 20% compared to 3% of the general population. In contrast, 2% of homeless respondents identified as Asian, compared to 37% of the general population.

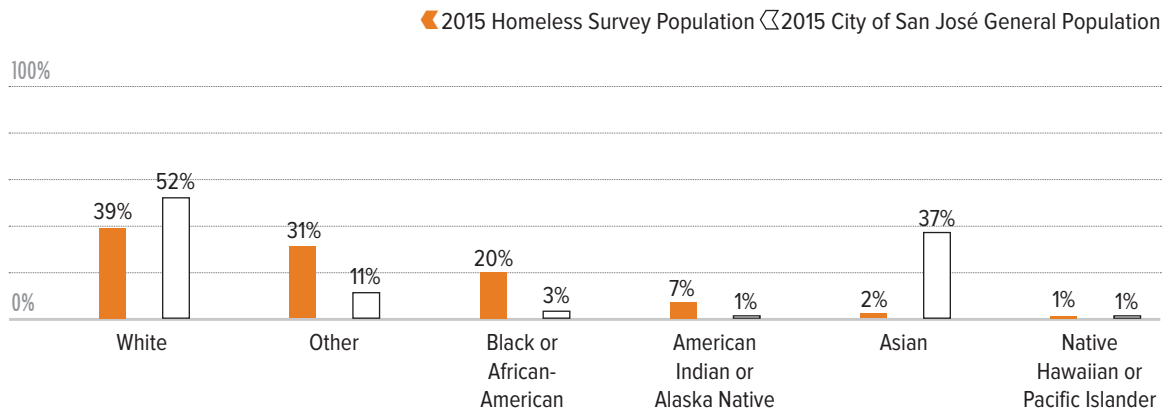
FIGURE 10. HISPANIC OR LATINO ETHNICITY



2015 n:620

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015). San José Homeless Survey. San José, CA.

FIGURE 11. RACE



2015 n:568

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015). San José Homeless Survey. San José, CA. U.S. Census Bureau. (April 2015). American Community Survey 2009-2013 5-Year Estimates. Table DP05: ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates. Retrieved from <http://factfinder2.census.gov>.

FOSTER CARE

It has been estimated that one in four former foster youth experience homelessness within four years of exiting the foster care system.⁴ In the State of California, foster youth are now eligible to receive services beyond age 18. Transitional housing and supportive services for youth 18-24 are provided by two programs, Transitional Housing Placement-Foster Care for youth 18-21 and Transitional Housing Placement-Plus for youth ages 18-24. It is hoped that these additional supports, implemented since 2012, will assist foster youth with the transition to independence and prevent them from becoming homeless. Extended care and assistance for current and former foster youth, including a Transitional Housing Placement-Plus program, are accessible in the City of San José.

In 2015, 16% of respondents reported a history of foster care, the same as in 2013 (16%). The percentage of youth under the age of 25 who had been in foster care was much higher than adults over the age of 25 (40% compared to 14%). Sixteen percent of youth reported they were living in foster care immediately before becoming homeless, representing roughly 2% of the overall homeless population. Yet less than 5% of youth under the age of 25 reported that aging out of foster care was the primary cause of their homelessness.

In 2015, 18% of homeless respondents in San José reported a history of foster care. The percentage of youth under the age of 25 who had been in foster care was much higher than adults over the age of 25 (43% compared to 14%). Twenty percent of youth reported they were living in foster care immediately before becoming homeless. Yet approximately 5% of youth under the age of 25 reported that aging out of foster care was the primary cause of their homelessness.

FIGURE 12. HISTORY OF FOSTER CARE



2015 n:595

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015). *San José Homeless Survey*. San José, CA.

⁴ United States Interagency Council on Homelessness. (2012). *Amendment 2012, Opening Doors: Federal strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness*. Washington: D.C.

LIVING ACCOMMODATIONS

Where individuals lived prior to experiencing homelessness, and where they have lived since, affects the way they seek services as well as their ability to access support from friends or family. Previous circumstances can also point to gaps in the system of care and opportunities for systemic improvement and homelessness prevention. Survey respondents were asked about both the geography and environment in which they were living prior to experiencing homelessness.

PLACE OF RESIDENCE

Eighty-four percent of San José respondents reported having lived in Santa Clara County at the time they most recently became homeless, similar to 2013 (85%). Of those living in Santa Clara County at the time they most recently became homeless, 77% had lived in the county for more than 10 years. Among San José respondents who reported living outside of Santa Clara County at the time they became homeless, 38% reported they had been in Santa Clara County for less than a year.

FIGURE 13. PLACE OF RESIDENCE AT TIME OF HOUSING LOSS

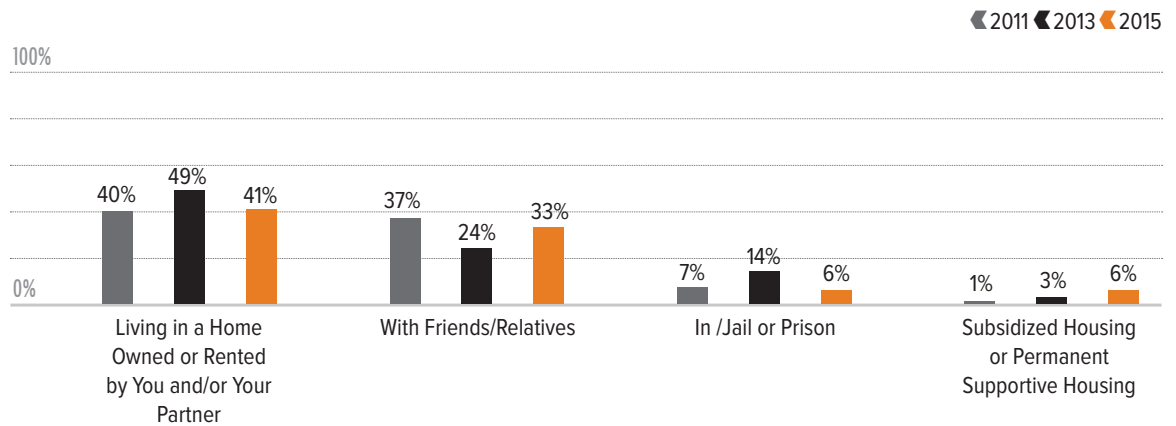


Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015). *San José Homeless Survey*. San José, CA.

PRIOR LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

Most often, homeless respondents reported living in a home rented or owned by themselves, a partner, family or friends. Less often, respondents became homeless after leaving institutions. Forty-one percent reported living in a home owned or rented by themselves or their partners, down from 49% in 2013. Thirty-three percent of respondents reported staying with friends or family immediately prior to becoming homeless, up from 24% in 2013. Six percent reported they were living in subsidized or permanent supportive housing, up from 3% in 2013. Six percent of respondents reported they were in a jail, prison or juvenile detention facility immediately prior to becoming homeless down from 14% in 2013. Three percent were in foster care, 2% were in a hospital or treatment facility.

FIGURE 14. LIVING ARRANGEMENTS IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO BECOMING HOMELESS THIS TIME (TOP FOUR RESPONSES IN 2015)



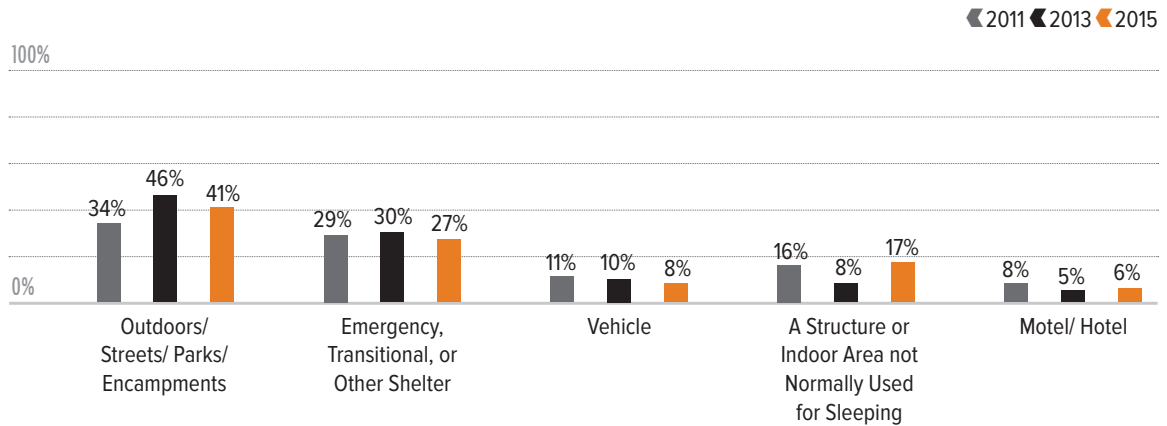
2011 n:671; 2013 n:435; 2015 n:590

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015). San José Homeless Survey. San José, CA.
 Applied Survey Research. (2013). San José Homeless Survey. San José, CA.
 Applied Survey Research. (2011). San José Homeless Survey. San José, CA.

CURRENT LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

Twenty-seven percent reported staying in a public shelter (emergency shelter, transitional housing facility or alternative shelter environment). Forty-one percent of survey respondents reported currently living outdoors (either on the streets, in parks or encampment areas). Seventeen percent of respondents reported they were sleeping in public buildings, bus stations, foyers, hallways, or other indoor areas not meant for human habitation. Eight percent reported staying in their vehicles.

FIGURE 15. USUAL PLACE TO SLEEP AT NIGHT



2011 n:674; 2013 n:452; 2015 n:609

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015). *San José Homeless Survey*. San José, CA.
 Applied Survey Research. (2013). *San José Homeless Survey*. San José, CA.
 Applied Survey Research. (2011). *San José Homeless Survey*. San José, CA.

PERSONS RESIDING IN ENCAMPMENT AREAS

A total of 778 homeless individuals were living in encampments in the City of San Jose at the end of January, which represents 19% of the total homeless Point-in-Time count population. This was a significant decline from 2013, when 1,230 persons were counted in encampment areas and represented 26% of the Point-in-Time count. Data from encampment outreach teams suggest females now comprise over 33% of encampment residents, which is similar to the percentage of the general homeless population but an increase from previous data on encampments. Other demographic information is similar to the general homeless population. Homelessness exceeding 4 years was reported by nearly twice as many encampment respondents compared to those in other settings (more than 80% and 45% respectively). Over 40% of encampment residents report having a pet, compared to 21% of the general homeless population. Finally, encampment residents report that they are much more likely to have been San José residents when they became homeless than the general homeless population (94% versus 84%).

DURATION AND RECURRENCE OF HOMELESSNESS

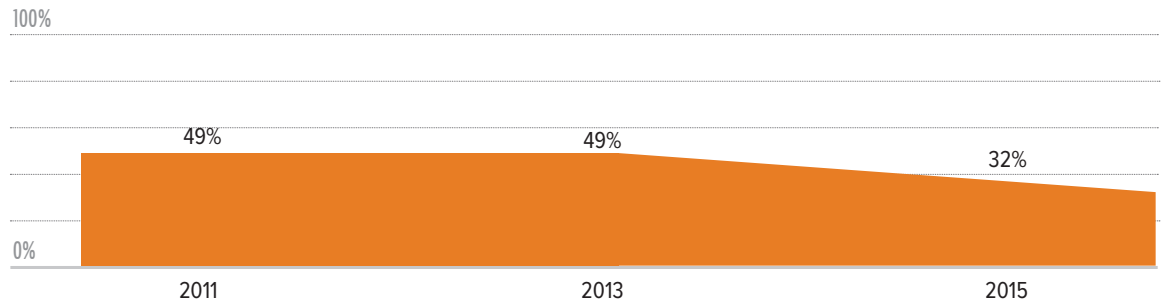
RECURRENCE OF HOMELESSNESS

Unstable living conditions often lead to individuals falling in and out of homelessness. For many, the experience of homelessness is part of a long and recurring history of housing instability.

Compared to 2013, more respondents reported a previous experience of homelessness. Less than one third of 2015 respondents reported they were experiencing homelessness for the first time, compared to 49% in 2013. Nineteen percent reported they had experienced two or more episodes of homelessness in the past year; 48% reported they had experienced homelessness four or more times in the past three years.

Sixty-four percent of San José survey respondents reported they had been homeless for a year or more, a slight increase from 58% in 2013. Six percent reported that their current homelessness had been less than one month, compared to 9% in 2013.

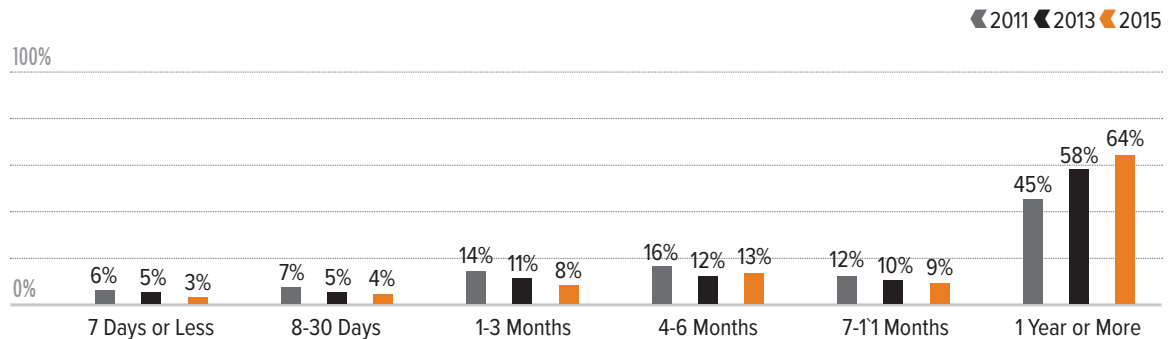
FIGURE 16. PERCENT EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS FOR THE FIRST TIME (RESPONDENTS ANSWERING 'YES')



2011 n:674; 2013 n:456; 2015 n:616

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015). San José Homeless Survey. San José, CA.
 Applied Survey Research. (2013). San José Homeless Survey. San José, CA.
 Applied Survey Research. (2011). San José Homeless Survey. San José, CA.

FIGURE 17. LENGTH OF CURRENT EPISODE OF HOMELESSNESS



2011 n:661; 2013 n:449; 2015 n:602

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015). San José Homeless Survey. San José, CA.
 Applied Survey Research. (2013). San José Homeless Survey. San José, CA.
 Applied Survey Research. (2011). San José Homeless Survey. San José, CA.

PERMANENT HOUSING

A common misconception about individuals experiencing homelessness is that they do not want housing and prefer to live outdoors, also known as being homeless by choice. Respondents were asked if they would want affordable permanent housing, were it available, and 92% said “yes,” similar to 2013 (93%).

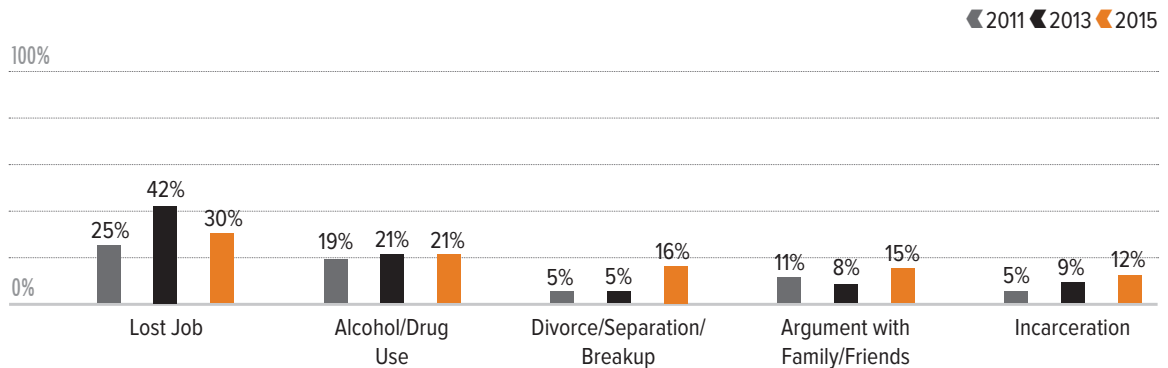
PRIMARY CAUSE OF HOMELESSNESS

The primary cause of an individual’s inability to obtain or retain housing is often difficult to pinpoint, as it is often the result of multiple and compounding causes. Thirty percent of respondents reported job loss as the primary cause of their homelessness, down from 42% in 2013. Twenty-one percent reported drugs or alcohol. These two have remained the most frequently cited causes of homelessness since 2004.

Many respondents reported causes associated with personal relationships as the cause of their homelessness. Sixteen percent reported divorce or separation and 15% an argument with a family member who asked them to leave. Five percent reported domestic violence.

Some respondents cited mental (7%) or physical health conditions (7%). Others reported challenges with the criminal justice system. Twelve percent of respondents reported incarceration was the primary cause of their homelessness; this was up from 9% in 2013. An additional 2% reported housing restrictions due to probation or parole, which was down from 4% in 2013.

FIGURE 18. PRIMARY CAUSE OF HOMELESSNESS (TOP FIVE RESPONSES)



2011 n:667; 2013 n:443 respondents offering 566 responses; 2015 n:611 respondents offering 897 responses

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015). San José Homeless Survey. San José, CA.
 Applied Survey Research. (2013). San José Homeless Survey. San José, CA.
 Applied Survey Research. (2011). San José Homeless Survey. San José, CA.

Note: Multiple response question (Years 2013, 2015). Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Note: Caution should be used when comparing data across years due to changes in question format.

Eleven percent of respondents reported eviction was the primary cause of their homelessness, however the cause of their eviction is not specified.

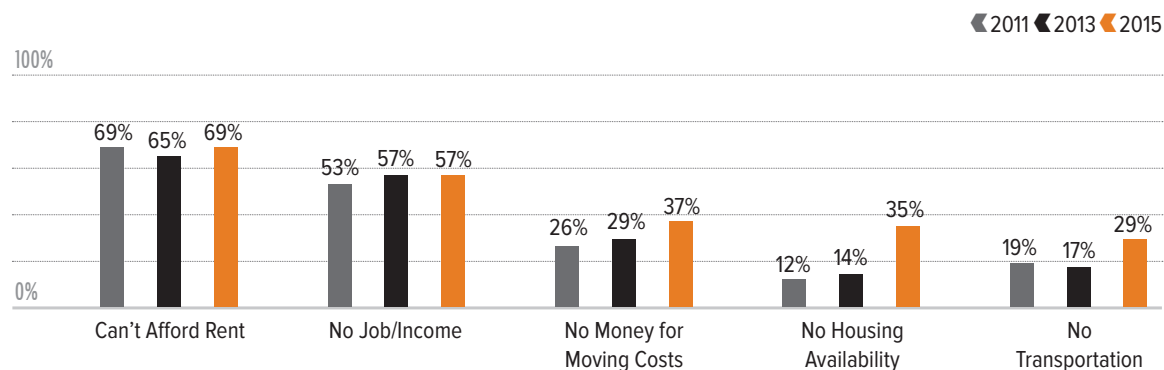
OBSTACLES TO OBTAINING PERMANENT HOUSING

Respondents were also asked what prevented them from obtaining housing. Most respondents reported multiple obstacles, often a mixture of income or access-related issues. The most frequently cited obstacle was the inability to afford rent (69%). More than half reported they couldn't find work or obtain enough income (57%) or money for move in costs (37%). Thirty-five percent reported there was no housing available.

Other challenges existed such as lack of transportation 29%, poor credit (25%) and eviction records (11%).

Twenty-two percent reported their criminal record prevented them from obtaining housing and 6% reported restrictions for probation or parole were impeding their ability to find housing.

FIGURE 19. OBSTACLES TO OBTAINING PERMANENT HOUSING (TOP FIVE RESPONSES)



2011 n:667 respondents giving 1,568 responses; 2013 n:414 respondents giving 995 responses; 2015 n:593 respondents giving 2,001 responses

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015). San José Homeless Survey. San José, CA.
Applied Survey Research. (2013). San José Homeless Survey. San José, CA.
Applied Survey Research. (2011). San José Homeless Survey. San José, CA.

Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

PREVENTION OF HOMELESSNESS

Respondents were also asked what might have prevented them from experiencing homelessness. The most frequent responses were employment assistance (33%) and drug and alcohol counseling (30%), corresponding to the most frequently cited causes of homelessness.

Twenty-eight percent reported rent or mortgage assistance may have prevented their homelessness, this was down from 33% in 2013. Twenty percent reported mental health services. Seventeen percent of respondents reported help accessing benefits, up slightly from 12% in 2013. Fifteen percent reported the support of case management upon exit from a facility such as a jail, prison, hospital or juvenile justice facility would have prevented their homelessness, again this was a slight increase from 13% in 2013.

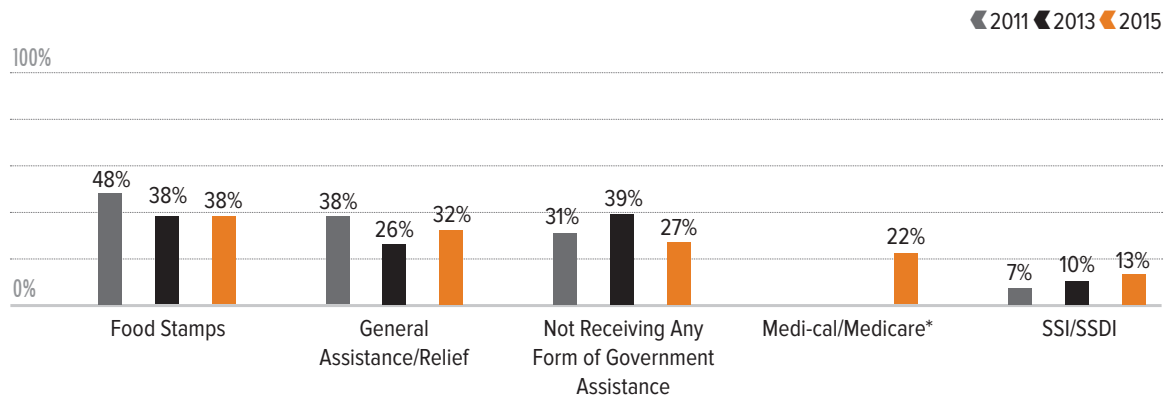
SERVICES AND ASSISTANCE

The City of San José provides funding for services and assistance through the administration of federal and local funds for those currently experiencing homelessness. Government assistance and homeless services enable individuals and families to obtain needed income and support. However, many individuals and families do not apply for services. Some do not want to ask for assistance and many believe that they do not qualify or are ineligible.

GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE

Nearly three quarters of respondents in 2015 reported they were receiving some form of government assistance (73%), up from 63% in 2013. The most frequently reported benefit was reported receiving CalFresh/food stamps (38%). Nearly one third (32%) of respondents in 2015 reported receiving General Assistance (GA). Thirteen percent reported receiving SSI, SSDI and 7% Social Security. Twenty-two percent reported they were on Medi-Cal/Medicare, this was the first year respondents were asked about this benefit.

FIGURE 20. TYPES OF GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE RECEIVED (TOP FIVE RESPONSES IN 2015)



2011 n:663 respondents offering 916 responses; 2013 n:437 respondents offering 537 responses; 2015 n:580 respondents offering 855 responses

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015). *San José Homeless Survey*. San José, CA.
 Applied Survey Research. (2013). *San José Homeless Survey*. San José, CA.
 Applied Survey Research. (2011). *San José Homeless Survey*. San José, CA.

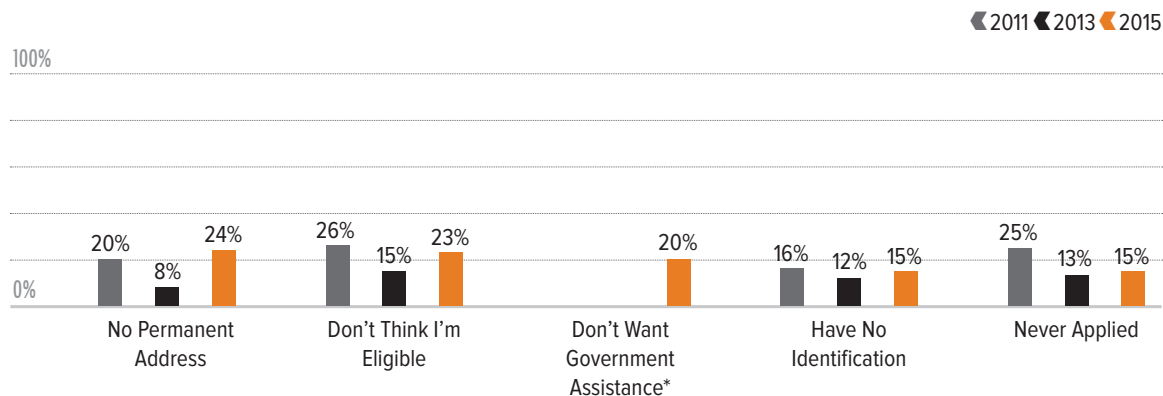
Note: Multiple response question.

Note: Medi-Cal/Medicare was added as a response option in 2015.

REASONS FOR NOT RECEIVING GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE

Of those who reported they were not receiving any form of government support, 24% reported their lack of a permanent address prevented them from assistance. Nearly one-quarter did not think they were eligible for assistance (23%) and one in five (20%) reported they were not interested in receiving support. One in nine reported they had been turned down for benefits.

FIGURE 21. REASONS FOR NOT RECEIVING GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE (TOP FIVE RESPONSES IN 2015)



2011 n:195 respondents offering 341 responses; 2013 n:168 respondents offering 220 responses; 2015 n:143 respondents offering 218 responses

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015). San José Homeless Survey. San José, CA.
 Applied Survey Research. (2013). San José Homeless Survey. San José, CA.
 Applied Survey Research. (2011). San José Homeless Survey. San José, CA.

Note: Multiple response question (Years 2011, 2015). Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Note: response option changed in 2015 from “don’t need” to “don’t want.” Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding. In 2013, 22% of respondents reported they did not need government assistance.

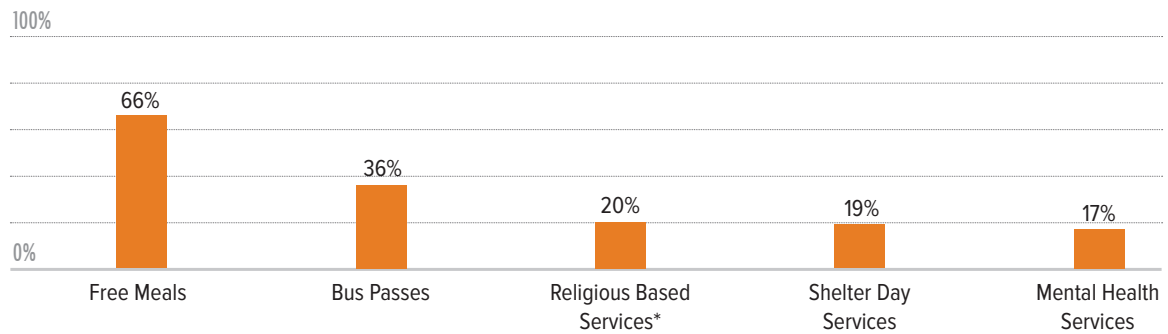
Note: Caution should be used when comparing data across years due to changes in question format.

SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

A higher percentage of respondents reported receiving direct assistance such as shelter or free meals (85%). Two-thirds reported accessing free meals, 36% bus passes. Twenty percent reported accessing religious based services and 19% reported accessing shelter day services. Seventeen percent reported using mental health services, 14% drug or alcohol counseling and 12% outreach services.

While many respondents reported job or employment assistance would have prevented their homelessness, 10% reported they were accessing those services at the time of the survey.

FIGURE 22. SERVICES OR ASSISTANCE (TOP FIVE RESPONSES)



2015 n:577 respondents offering 1,260 responses

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015). San José Homeless Survey. San José, CA.

Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

*Note: Religious based services was added as a response option in 2015.

EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME

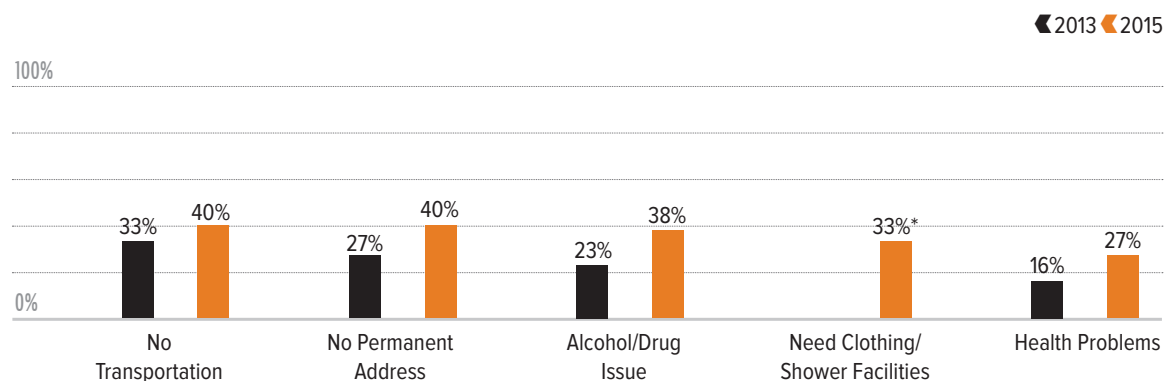
While the majority of homeless survey respondents reported being unemployed, some had part-time or full-time work. Many were receiving an income from benefits, either public or private. Yet data suggest that employment and income were not enough to meet basic needs.

EMPLOYMENT

The unemployment rate in Santa Clara County in January 2015 was roughly 5%, down from nearly 8%, in 2013.⁵ However, labor market data shows current labor trends in the Bay Area favoring high-end technical employment. It is also important to recognize that the unemployment rate represents only those who are unemployed and actively seeking employment. It doesn't represent all joblessness.

The unemployment rate for homeless respondents was 82%, higher than in 2013, 65%. Of those who were unemployed 55% reported they were looking for work; 24% reported they were unable to work. The most frequently cited barrier to employment was transportation (40%). Other barriers included basic resources including the lack of a permanent address (40%) and clothing or shower facilities (33%). Thirty-eight percent reported drug or alcohol issues prevented them from obtaining work, health problems or disability were each cited by 27% of respondents. Twenty-three percent reported their criminal record prevented them from obtaining work. More than one in five reported that age was an issue (21%).

FIGURE 23. OBSTACLES TO OBTAINING EMPLOYMENT



2015: 493 respondents offering 1,778 responses

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015). San José Homeless Survey. San José, CA.

Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Note: Respondents were not asked about the need for clothing or shower facilities in 2013.

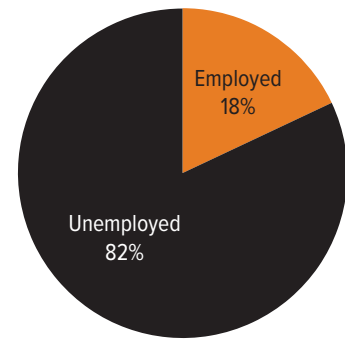
⁵ State of California Employment Development Department. (2013). Unemployment Rates (Labor Force). Retrieved 2013 from <http://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov>

INCOME

Income, from all sources, varied between those with regular employment and those who were unemployed. Thirty-nine percent of unemployed respondents reported an income of less than \$99 per month, in comparison to less than 2% of those who were employed. Unemployed income is typically from government services, benefits, recycling, or panhandling. Among those with employment, less than 22% reported an income over \$1,500 a month. This is in comparison to an average monthly rental price of \$2,009 for a one-bedroom and \$2,538 for a two-bedroom in San José. It is also important to note that respondents who reported making more than \$1,500 represented less than 4% of the survey population.

FIGURE 24. EMPLOYMENT AND MEAN MONTHLY INCOME

	EMPLOYED		UNEMPLOYED	
	%	n	%	n
\$0-\$99	2%	2	39%	195
\$100-\$449	15%	16	31%	158
\$450-\$749	22%	23	7%	37
\$750-\$1,099	21%	22	14%	69
\$1,100-\$1,499	17%	18	6%	30
\$1,500-\$3,000	16%	17	3%	13
More than \$3,000	6%	6	0%	1



2015 employment status n:626; Income employed n:104; Income unemployed n:503

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015). San José Homeless Survey. San José, CA.

HEALTH

The average life expectancy for individuals experiencing homelessness is 25 years less than those in stable housing.⁶ Without regular access to health care, individuals experience preventable illness and often endure longer hospitalizations. The health effects of homelessness are not only costly to individuals' longevity but also to the system of care. Data suggest that those experiencing homelessness stay four days (or 36%) longer per hospital admission than non-homeless patients.⁷

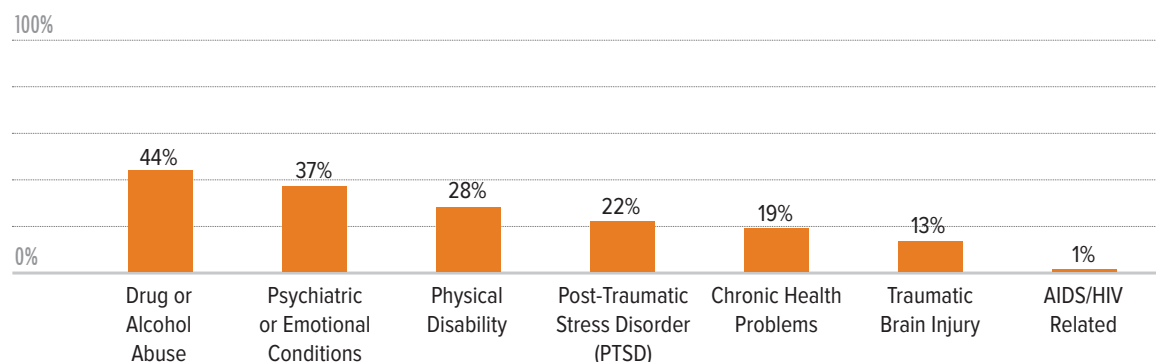
HEALTH CONDITIONS

Nearly two-thirds of respondents (65%) reported one or more health conditions, up from 60% in 2013. These conditions included chronic physical illness, chronic substance abuse and severe mental health conditions. Fifty-two percent of survey respondents with these conditions reported their condition limited their ability to take care of personal matters or get or keep a job.

The most frequently reported health conditions were drug or alcohol abuse (44%), a psychiatric or emotional condition (37%), followed by a physical disability (28%). Twenty-two percent of respondents reported having PTSD.

Recent studies have looked at the incidence of Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) among those experiencing homelessness.⁸ Thirteen percent of respondents in San José reported a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). This was in contrast to 2% of San José respondents in 2013.

FIGURE 25. HEALTH CONDITIONS



Drug or alcohol abuse n:595; Psychiatric or emotional conditions n:592; Physical disability n:584; Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) n:587; Chronic health problems n:598; Traumatic Brain Injury n:580; AIDS/HIV related n:582

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015). San José Homeless Survey. San José, CA.

Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

6 O'Connell, J.J. (2005). *Premature Mortality in Homeless Populations: A Review of the Literature*, 19 pages. Nashville: National Health Care for the Homeless Council, Inc.

7 Sharon A. Salit, M. E. (1998). Hospitalization Costs Associated with Homelessness in New York City. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 338, 1734-1740.

8 Topolovec-Vranic J, et al. (December 2012). Traumatic Brain Injury among people who are homeless: a systematic review. *BMC Public Health*. 8;12:1059. doi: 10.1186/1471-2458-12-1059.

ACCESS TO CARE

Forty-four percent of respondents reported the Emergency Room (ER) was their usual source of care. Twenty percent reported using Valley Homeless Healthcare Program (VHHP), a homeless clinic, or a mobile van. Seventeen percent reported they had usual primary care and 7% a VA hospital or clinic. Forty-five percent of respondents reported they had seen the same medical service provider two or more times in the 12 months prior to the survey.

Twenty-seven percent reported they had spent a night in the hospital or psychiatric facility in the 12 months prior to the study.

DOMESTIC/PARTNER VIOLENCE OR ABUSE

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) recommends asking about physical, emotional, or sexual abuse over a lifetime. Three percent of all survey respondents reported they were currently experiencing domestic/partner violence or abuse; this was down from 7% in 2013. When asked about experiences across their lifetime, 25% reported domestic violence, this was the first time this question was asked in the City of San José.

When analyzed by gender, 5% of all women respondents and 2% of all men were currently experiencing domestic violence. Thirty-eight percent of women reported experiencing domestic violence previously, compared to 18% of men.⁹ Among respondents who reported any experience of domestic violence, 11% reported it was the primary cause of their homelessness. Respondents in the City of San José reported lower incidents of domestic violence, both current and past, than did respondents countywide, in 2015.

FIGURE 26. HISTORY OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



2015 n:590

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015). *San José Homeless Survey*. San José, CA.

⁹ Overall survey response rates are high, however the percentage of respondents who refused to answer current domestic violence was 5% among men and 21% among women. Seven percent of men declined to answer lifetime violence, as did 20% of women.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

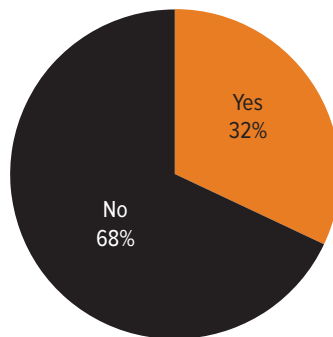
Individuals recently released from the criminal justice system often face housing challenges that may contribute to their homelessness.

INCARCERATION

Twenty percent of respondents reported they were on probation or parole at the time of the survey, similar to 2013. Thirty-two percent of survey respondents had spent at least one night in jail or prison in the 12 months prior to the survey, similar to 2013 (30%).

The County of Santa Clara has been focusing on developing a comprehensive system to address the needs and risks of former offenders. Implemented in 2011, the County's Re-entry Program is intended to link inmates to effective in-custody and community-based programming. Sixteen percent of San José respondents reported they had used, or were using, Re-entry services at the time of this study.

FIGURE 27. SPENT A NIGHT IN JAIL OR PRISON IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS



2015 n:593

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015). San José Homeless Survey. San José, CA.



Homeless Subpopulations

Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness outlines national objectives and evaluative measures for ending homelessness in the United States. In order to adequately address the diversity within the population experiencing homelessness, the federal government identified four subpopulations with particular challenges or needs. The following section looks at each of these populations to identify the number of people counted during the Point-in-Time count on January 27 and 28 as well as the characteristics of each population.

The following section estimates the number and characteristics of individuals included in the Point-in-Time Count and Survey who meet the definition of each subpopulation.

Of the 625 unique surveys completed in the City of San José in 2015, 229 were completed by chronically homeless individuals, 71 by homeless veterans, 33 individuals in homeless families, and 79 by unaccompanied children and transition age youth. Surveys were completed in both unsheltered environments and shelter settings.

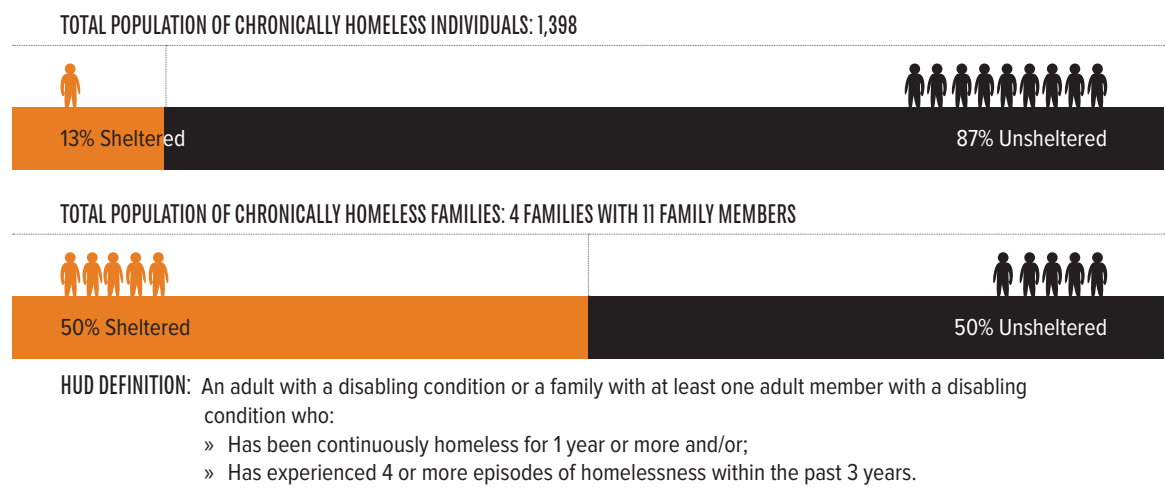
CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

The Department of Housing and Urban Development defines a chronically homeless individual as someone who has experienced homelessness for an extended period of time and also has a condition that prevents them from maintaining work or housing. This definition applies to individuals as well as adult household members.

The chronically homeless population represents one of the most vulnerable populations on the street, mortality rate for those experiencing chronic homelessness is four to nine times higher than the general population. Data from communities across the country have shown that public costs incurred by those experiencing extended periods of homelessness include emergency room visits, interactions with law enforcement, incarceration, and regular access to social supports and homeless services. These combined costs are often significantly higher than the cost of providing individuals with permanent housing and supportive services.

The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) reported that roughly 15% of the national homeless population was chronically homeless in 2014 or 84,291 chronically homeless individuals.¹⁰ Chronic homelessness has been on the decline in recent years, as communities across the country increase the capacity of permanent supportive programs and prioritize those with the greatest barriers to housing stability. While the decrease in national chronic homelessness seems promising, federal budget constraints have limited the amount of money available to support housing programs and services. As a result, *Opening Doors*, which began with a goal of ending chronic homelessness by 2015, has extended the plan to 2017.¹¹

FIGURE 28. CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS POPULATION ESTIMATES



Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015). *San José Homeless Census & Survey*. San José, CA.

PREVALENCE OF CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

There are an estimated 1,409 chronically homeless individuals and persons in families in San José. As the definition of chronic homelessness excludes those in transitional housing, the chronic population is largely unhoused. Eleven of the 1,409 people identified as chronically homeless were persons living in families with children under 18 years old.

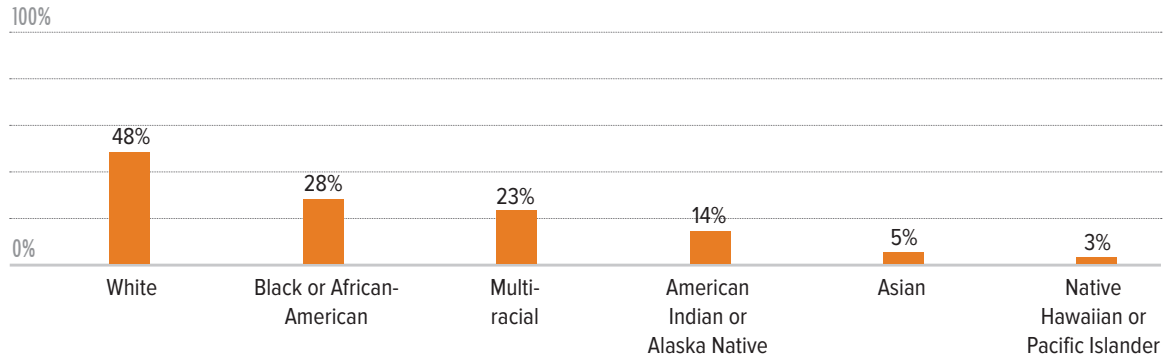
10 U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness. (2015). Annual Update 2014. Retrieved 2015 from <http://www.usich.gov/>

11 Cavallaro, E. (2015). Ending Chronic Homelessness, Now in 2017. National Alliance to End Homelessness. Retrieved 2015 from <http://www.endhomelessness.org>

DEMOGRAPHICS OF CHRONICALLY HOMELESSNESS INDIVIDUALS

The majority of chronically homeless individuals were male (70%), higher than the non-chronically homeless population (62%). Roughly one-third of chronically homeless respondents identified as Non-Hispanic or Latino (37%), similar to the non-chronic population. Eleven percent of chronically homeless respondents identified as veterans, similar to 12% of those who were not chronically homeless. A lower percentage of the chronic population identified as LGBTQ (10% compared to 14%), however this may be due to the age differences between the populations.

FIGURE 29. RACE AMONG THOSE EXPERIENCING CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS



2015 n:207

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015). *San José Homeless Survey*. San José, CA.

Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

PRIOR RESIDENCY AND CURRENT PERIOD OF HOMELESSNESS AMONG THOSE EXPERIENCING CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

Eighty-four percent of chronically homeless respondents reported living in Santa Clara County at the time they most recently became homeless, similar to the non-chronic population. A higher percentage reported they had been living in a home or apartment rented by them or a partner prior to becoming homeless (47%) compared to the non-chronic population (37%). Thirty-three percent reported they were living with friends or family members.

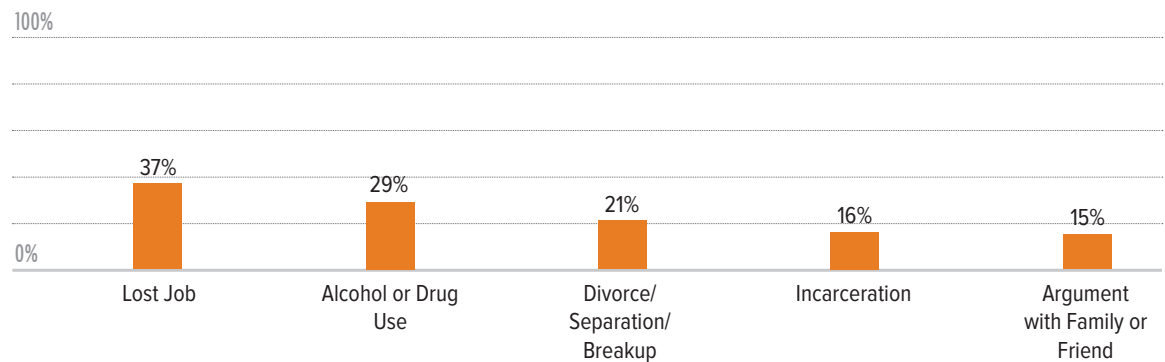
By definition chronically homeless individuals have been on the street for an extended period of time, this may include a single period of homelessness longer than one year or multiple episodes. Eighty-one percent of chronically homeless respondents reported their current episode of homelessness had been one year or longer. More than a quarter (27%) of chronically homeless respondents reported they had not experienced homelessness previously.

PRIMARY CAUSE OF HOMELESSNESS AMONG THOSE EXPERIENCING CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

Primary causes of homelessness among those who are chronically homeless showed the diversity within the population. By definition, those who are chronically homeless have a condition which prevents them from retaining work or housing. However, many disabling conditions can arise after one has already lost housing. When asked about the primary cause of their homelessness, the most frequent response among those experiencing chronic homelessness was job loss (37%). This was higher than non-chronic respondents (27%). Twenty-nine percent reported alcohol or substance abuse as the primary cause of their homelessness; this was in contrast to 16% of non-chronic respondents. Fewer chronically homeless respondents reported economic factors as the primary cause of their homelessness, but more reported divorce or separation (21% compared to 13%), incarceration (16% compared to 10%), mental health issues (11% compared to 4%), and illness (11% compared to 5%). Both populations included an argument with friend or family members in the top five causes.

While chronically homeless respondents reported difference in the initial cause of their homelessness compared to non-chronic respondents, they reported similar things prevented them from obtaining permanent housing. The most common responses was the lack of a job or income (73%), the inability to afford rent (67%), no money for move in costs (52%). Chronically homeless differed from non-chronic respondents in the percentage that reported transportation as a barrier; 37% compared to 24% of the non-chronic population.

FIGURE 30. PRIMARY CAUSE OF HOMELESSNESS (TOP FIVE RESPONSES) AMONG THOSE EXPERIENCING CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS



2015 n:226 respondents offering 396 responses

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015). San José Homeless Survey. San José, CA.

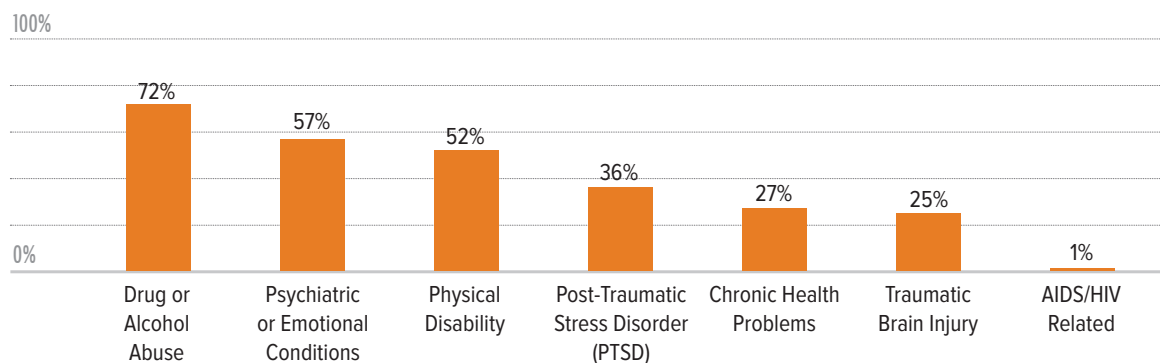
Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

HEALTH CONDITIONS AMONG THOSE EXPERIENCING CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

While the definition of chronic homelessness requires a condition that prevents an individual from maintaining work or housing, many respondents reported experiencing multiple physical or mental health conditions. Seventy-two percent of chronically homeless respondents reported alcohol or substance abuse. Fifty-seven percent reported a psychiatric or emotional condition, 36% Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). More than half (52%) reported a physical disability. Chronic illnesses such as Cancer, Tuberculosis, or Diabetes were cited by 27% of the non-chronic population. One in four (25%) chronically homeless respondents reported Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) compared to 5% of non-chronic respondents.

Nearly two thirds of chronically homeless respondents reported using the Emergency Room as the primary source of health care (61%) compared to 34% of non-chronic respondents. The second most commonly reported source of care was the Valley Homeless Healthcare Program (VHHP), Homeless Clinic, or mobile van (22%) all of which are local programs targeted to those experiencing homelessness.

FIGURE 31. HEALTH CONDITIONS AMONG THOSE EXPERIENCING CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS



Drug or alcohol abuse n:222; Psychiatric or emotional conditions n:219; Physical disability n:216; Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) n:216; Chronic health problems n:220; Traumatic Brain Injury n:210; AIDS/HIV related n:210

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015). San José Homeless Survey. San José, CA.

Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

ACCESS TO SERVICES AMONG THOSE EXPERIENCING CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

Chronically homeless respondents most commonly reported receiving CalFresh (35%) and GA (36%). Eighteen percent of chronically homeless respondents reported they were on SSI/SSDI/Disability. Yet, nearly one-quarter of chronically homeless respondents reported they were not receiving any form of government assistance (24%). Those who were not receiving benefits reported a lack of ID (26%) and permanent address (26%) prevented them from receiving benefits.

In 2015, higher percentages of chronically homeless respondents reported accessing local services such as food, shelter and care compared to those who were not chronically homeless. More chronically homeless respondents reported accessing free meals (71% compared to 62%), mental health services (20% compared to 15%), religious based services (25% compared to 17%) and shelter day services (21% compared to 19%). Thirty-four percent reported accessing free bus passes, which was lower than the non-chronic population (38%).

INCARCERATION AMONG THOSE EXPERIENCING CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

Forty-one percent of chronically homeless respondents reported they had spent one or more nights in jail or prison in the 12 months prior to the survey, compared to 26% of non-chronic respondents. Twenty-four percent of chronically homeless respondents were on probation or parole at the time of the survey.

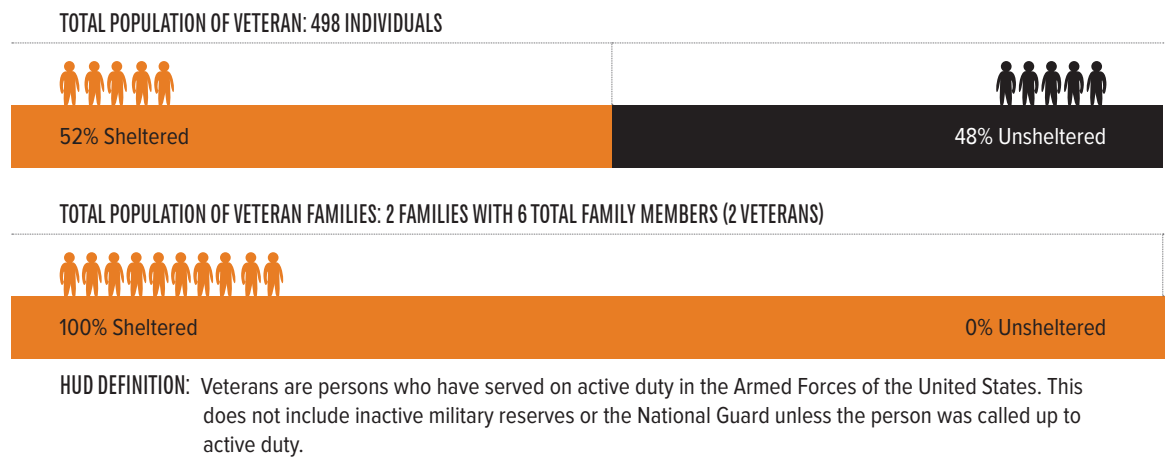
HOMELESS VETERAN STATUS

Many U.S. veterans experience conditions that place them at increased risk for homelessness. Veterans have higher rates of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), sexual assault and substance abuse. Veterans experiencing homelessness are more likely to live on the street than in shelters and often remain on the street for extended periods of time.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides a broad range of benefits and services to veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces. These benefits can include different forms of financial assistance, including monthly cash payments to disabled veterans, health care, education, and housing benefits. In addition to these supports, the VA and HUD have partnered to provide additional housing and support services to veterans currently experiencing homelessness or in danger of becoming homeless.

Between 2009 -2014, there has been a 33 percent decrease in the number of homeless veterans. According to data collected during the 2014 Point-in-Time Count, 49,933 veterans experienced homelessness on a single night in January 2014.¹²

FIGURE 32. HOMELESS VETERAN POPULATION ESTIMATES



Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015). *San José Homeless Census & Survey*. San José, CA.

¹²Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2015). Annual Assessment Report to Congress. Retrieved 2015 from <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/2014-AHAR-Part1.pdf>

NUMBER OF HOMELESS VETERANS

It is estimated that veterans comprise less than 5% of the adult population of San José.¹³ Yet it is estimated that veterans represent 12% of those experiencing homelessness in the city. While national data show veterans have been more likely to be unsheltered, less than half of the city's homeless veteran population was unsheltered in 2015.

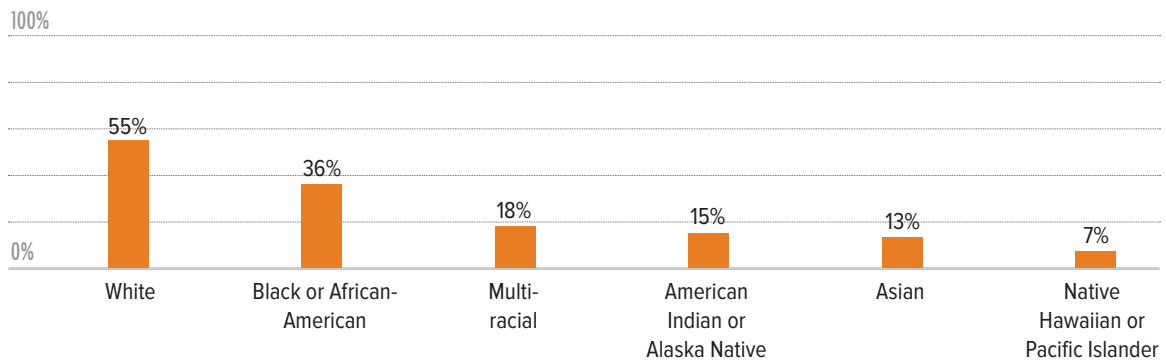
DEMOGRAPHICS OF HOMELESS VETERANS

Sixteen percent of homeless veteran survey respondents were female. Twenty percent of veteran respondents identified as Hispanic or Latino. Fifty-five percent of veteran respondents reported their racial identity as White/Caucasian, and 36% as Black/African-American.

Seventy-five percent of homeless veterans were living in Santa Clara County at the time they most recently became homeless, lower than the non-veteran population (85%).

The greatest percentage of veterans reported they were living in a home owned or rented by themselves or a partner (46%), more than the non-veteran population (40%). Veterans more often reported they were in jail or prison just prior to becoming homeless, 7% compared to 6% of non-veterans. Four percent reported they were in a hospital or treatment facility, compared to 2% of non-veterans.¹⁴

FIGURE 33. RACE AMONG HOMELESS VETERANS



2015 n:62

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015). *San José Homeless Survey*. San José, CA.

Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

¹³U.S. Census Bureau. (2014). Table S2101: Veterans Status. 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved 2015 from factfinder.census.gov

¹⁴Nearly 15% of veteran respondents reported they were living in a situation different from those offered as responses on the survey. Respondents had the opportunity to write in what these may have included but did not. Future studies may include the option of active military service, in an effort to assess whether or not veterans are experiencing homelessness immediately after discharge from the armed forces.

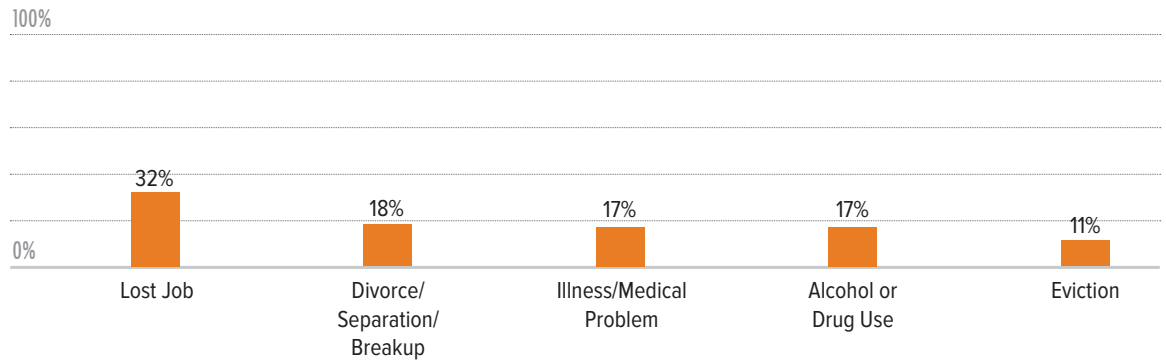
LENGTH OF HOMELESSNESS AMONG HOMELESS VETERANS

Fewer veteran respondents reported they were experiencing homelessness for the first time, 27% compared to 32% of the non-veteran population. When asked about the length of their current episode of homelessness, 1% of veterans reported they had been on the street for a week or less, yet 62% reported they had been on the street for a year or more. A high percentage of veterans reported they were homeless for between 4-6 months, corresponding to late fall of 2014 (22%).

PRIMARY CAUSE OF HOMELESSNESS AMONG HOMELESS VETERANS

The most frequently cited cause of homelessness among veterans was job loss (32%), similar to the non-veteran population (30%). Drug or alcohol was the second most cited cause of homelessness among the total population of respondents but this was lower among veterans, 17% compared to 21% of non-veterans. Eighteen percent reported a divorce or separation was the primary cause of their homelessness, compared to 16% of non-veterans. Sixteen percent reported a medical condition as the primary cause and 11% reported mental health issues were the primary cause of their homelessness, higher than non-veterans were 6% reported each condition.

FIGURE 34. PRIMARY CAUSE OF HOMELESSNESS (TOP FIVE RESPONSES) AMONG HOMELESS VETERANS



2015 n:71 respondents offering 102 responses

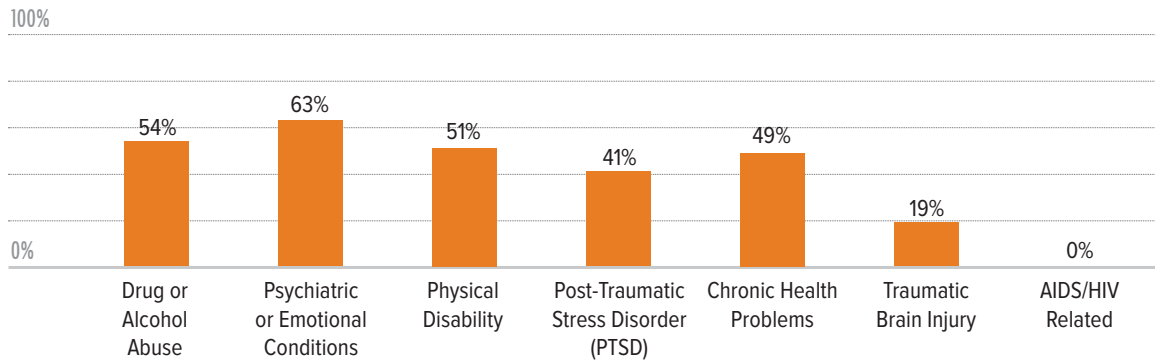
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015). San José Homeless Survey. San José, CA.

Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

HEALTH CONDITIONS AMONG HOMELESS VETERANS

A higher percentage of veteran respondents reported having one or more disabling conditions, 63% compared to 51% of non-veterans. Half of veterans reported a physical disability (51%). Fifty-nine percent of veterans reported chronic health problems compared to 15% of non-veterans. Forty-one percent of veterans reported having PTSD, 63% reported a psychiatric or emotional condition. Both were nearly double that of non-veteran respondents who reported 20% PTSD and 34% a psychiatric or emotional condition. Veterans also reported slightly higher substance abuse (54% compared to 43%).

FIGURE 35. HEALTH CONDITIONS AMONG HOMELESS VETERANS



Drug or alcohol abuse n:65; Psychiatric or emotional conditions n:65; Physical disability n:63; Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) n:63; Chronic health problems n:69; Traumatic Brain Injury n:63; AIDS/HIV related n:63

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015). San José Homeless Survey. San José, CA.

Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS AMONG HOMELESS VETERANS

Based on Point-in-Time Count data, it is estimated that 246 veterans are chronically homeless in the City of San José. This represents 49% of the veteran population. No veterans living in families were identified as chronically homeless at the time of the study.

ACCESS TO SERVICES AMONG HOMELESS VETERANS

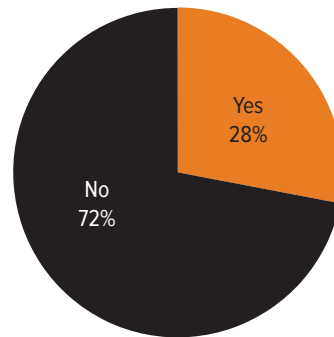
Overall, the number of veterans connected to any form of government assistance was higher than the non-veteran population 82%, compared to 72%. The percentage of veterans receiving many mainstream or civilian benefits was lower than non-veterans, however many veterans were receiving Social Security income or connected to VA benefits. Twenty-five percent of veterans reported receiving VA disability benefits, 10% reported some other form of VA benefits and 50% of veterans reported using the VA as their primary source of medical care.

Veterans were more connected to many local services than non-veterans. Twenty-eight percent were accessing mental health services, compared to 15% of non-veterans. Twenty-two percent of veterans were connected to drug and alcohol counseling, compared to 13% of non-veterans.

INCARCERATION AMONG HOMELESS VETERANS

Fewer veteran survey respondents reported they had spent one or more nights in jail or prison than non-veterans, 28% compared 33%. The percentage who reported being on probation or parole was comparable to non-veterans (19% and 20% respectively).

FIGURE 36. A NIGHT SPENT IN JAIL OR PRISON IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS AMONG HOMELESS VETERANS



2015 n:68

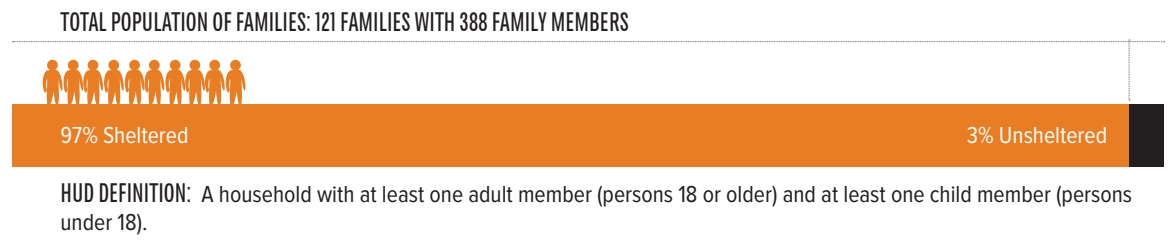
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015). *San José Homeless Survey*. San José, CA.

HOMELESS FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

National data from 2014 suggest that 37 percent of all people experiencing homelessness are persons in families. Very few families experiencing homelessness are unsheltered. Public shelters serve 90% of homeless families in the United States, a significantly higher proportion of the population compared to other subpopulations, including unaccompanied youth. Data on homeless families suggest that they are not much different from families in poverty.

The risk of homelessness is highest among households headed by single women and families with children under the age of 6.¹⁵ Children in families experiencing homelessness have increased incidence of illness and are more likely to have emotional and behavioral problems than children with consistent living accommodations.¹⁶

FIGURE 37. HOMELESS FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN POPULATION ESTIMATES



Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015). *San José Homeless Census & Survey*. San José, CA.

15 U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2007). *Characteristics and Dynamics of Homeless Families with Children*. Retrieved 2013 from <http://aspe.hhs.gov/>

16 U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness. (2013). *Opening Doors*. Retrieved 2013 from <http://www.usich.gov/>

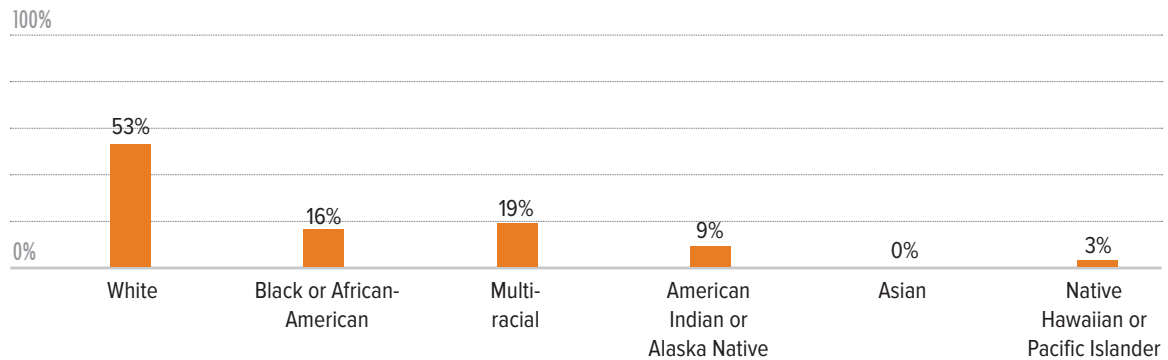
NUMBER OF HOMELESS FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

Data from San José showed a slight decrease in the number of homeless individuals in families counted in the Point-in-Time Count. There were 388 persons in families identified during the 2015 count, down from 417 in 2013. 97% percent of families identified during the count were staying in county shelters or transitional housing programs.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF HOMELESS FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

In total, 33 heads of households with children under the age of 18 participated in the 2015 San José Survey.¹⁷ Eighty-five percent of survey respondents in families were female, much higher than survey respondents not in families (31% female). Forty-two percent of those surveyed identified as Hispanic or Latino, slightly higher than the non-family heads of household (36%).

FIGURE 38. RACE AMONG HOMELESS FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN



2015 n:32

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015). San José Homeless Survey. San José, CA.

Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

LENGTH OF HOMELESSNESS AMONG FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

Thirty-six percent of survey respondents in families reported they were experiencing homelessness for the first time, compared to 32% of non-family respondents. Forty percent of family respondents had been without housing for 6 months or less, compared to 26% of non-family respondents. Forty-six percent reported they were living with a friend or family member prior to becoming homeless, 42% had lived in a house or apartment owned by them or a partner.

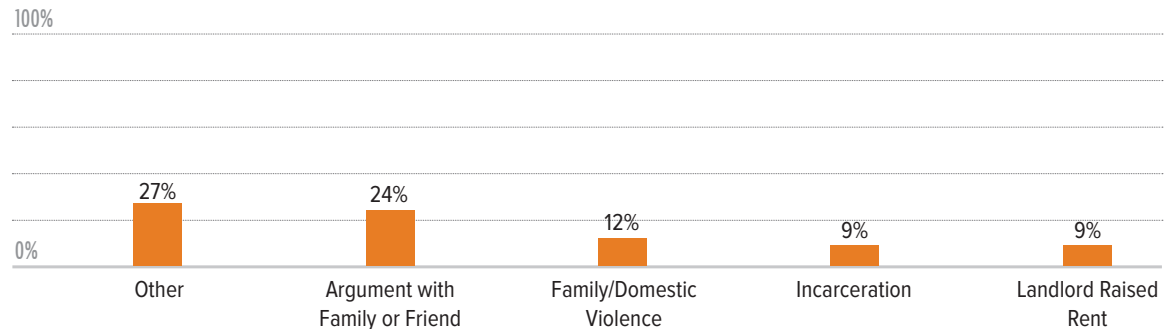
¹⁷ Due to the small number of surveys completed by families in San José, the following data have a high margin of error.

While the margin of error is high, responses were similar to the total Santa Clara County 2015 survey responses by family householders a total sample of 112 heads of households of families with children under the age of 18.

PRIMARY CAUSE OF HOMELESSNESS AMONG FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

One quarter (24%) of family survey respondents reported an argument with a friend or family member that asked them to leave was the primary cause of their homelessness. Twelve percent reported domestic violence, compared to 5% of the non-family population. Very few family survey respondents reported job loss as the primary cause of their homelessness (3%) while it was the most common cause cited by non-family respondents.

FIGURE 39. PRIMARY CAUSE OF HOMELESSNESS (TOP FIVE RESPONSES) AMONG HOMELESS FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN



2015 n:33 respondents offering 35 responses

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015). San José Homeless Survey. San José, CA.

Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE AMONG HOMELESS FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

In addition to most families receiving shelter or transitional housing services, families were well connected to services. Most (80%) of respondents in families reported receiving CalFresh/Food Stamps, more than half were on MediCal/Medicare (53%) and 40% received CalWorks/TANF.

UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS CHILDREN AND TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH

There are limited data available on homelessness among unaccompanied children and youth nationally and locally. Current federal estimates suggest there are 45,205 children and youth on the streets and in public shelters.¹⁸ Homeless youth have a harder time accessing services, including shelter, medical care, and employment.¹⁹

In 2012, the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness amended the federal strategic plan to end homelessness to include specific strategies and support to address the needs of unaccompanied homeless children and transition age youth. As part of this effort, the Department of Housing and Urban Development placed increased interest on gathering data on unaccompanied homeless children and youth during Point-in-Time counts.

The City of San José and Santa Clara County have conducted dedicated youth counts since 2009 and youth survey outreach since 2011. It is the goal of this work to improve data on unaccompanied children and youth in the county and to share these insights with other communities.

FIGURE 40. UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS CHILDREN AND TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH POPULATION ESTIMATES



Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015). *San José Homeless Census & Survey*. San José, CA.

¹⁸ Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2015). Annual Assessment Report to Congress. Retrieved 2015 from <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/2014-AHAR-Part1.pdf>

¹⁹ National Coalition for the Homeless. (2011). Homeless Youth Fact Sheet. Retrieved 2011 from <http://www.nationalhomeless.org>.

PREVALENCE OF UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS CHILDREN AND TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH

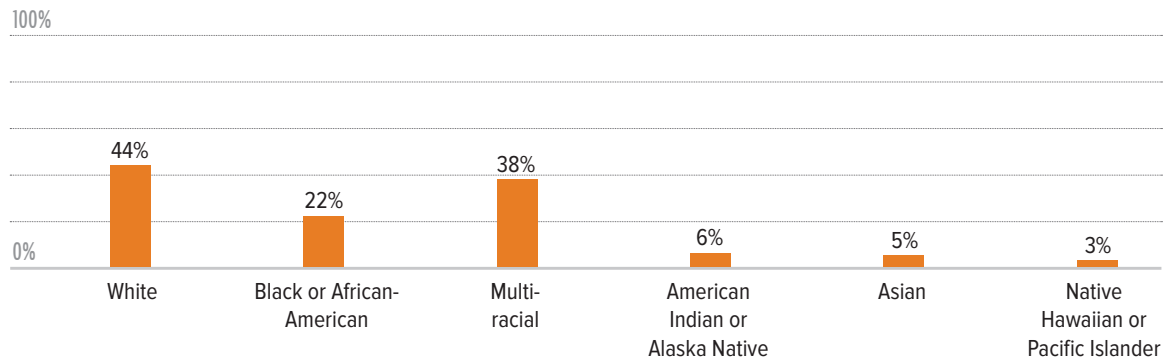
The number of unaccompanied children and youth identified in the 2015 Point-in-Time count decreased. In 2015, 502 unaccompanied transition age youth and 32 unaccompanied children included in the count. An additional 21 transitional age youth with children of their own were included in the 2015 count. The majority of youth outreached during the 2015 Point-in-Time Count were residing in San José at the time of the study. In total 97 youth under the age of 25 years old participated in the survey.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS CHILDREN AND TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH

While more than half of those under age 25 included in the PIT Count were female, 58% of youth who participated in the survey were male. Less than 3% of youth identified as transgender, higher than the older population of respondents (1%). Nineteen percent of youth respondents identified as LGBTQ, compared to 12% of older respondents. Forty-one percent of youth identified as Hispanic/Latino. Nineteen percent of female youth respondents in San José reported they were pregnant at the time of the 2015 homeless survey.

A slightly lower percentage of youth reported living in Santa Clara County at the time they most recently became homeless, compared to older respondents (78% and 84% respectively). Eighteen percent were from another county in California, while 4% were from out of state.

FIGURE 41. RACE AMONG UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN AND TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH



2015 n:63

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015). *San José Homeless Survey*. San José, CA.

Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

INSTITUTIONAL INVOLVEMENT AMONG UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS CHILDREN AND TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH

Forty-three percent of youth survey respondents reported they had been in the foster care system, 20% reported they were in foster care immediately prior to experiencing homelessness. Yet, only 5% of youth felt aging out of foster care was the primary cause of their homelessness.

Twenty-nine percent of youth reported they had spent at least one night in jail or prison in the year prior to the study, similar to respondents over the age of 25 (32%). Seventeen percent were on probation or parole at the time of the survey and 13% reported their criminal record was preventing them from obtaining work or housing.

FIGURE 42. HISTORY OF FOSTER CARE AMONG UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN AND TRANSITION-AGE-YOUTH



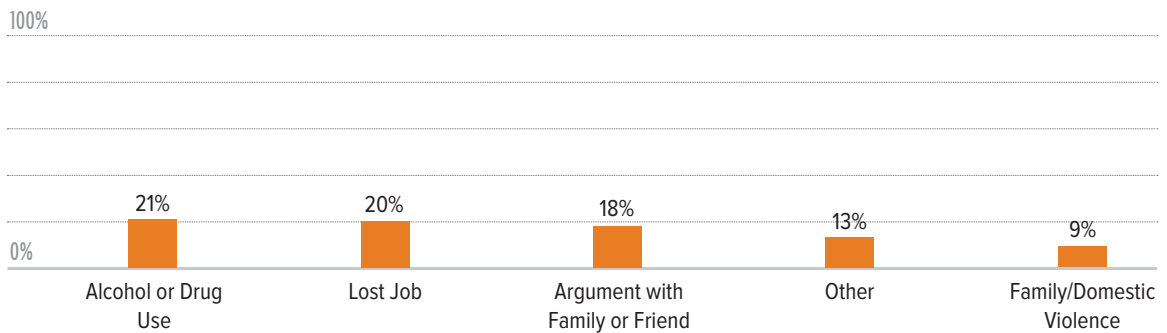
2015 n:75

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015). San José Homeless Survey. San José, CA.

PRIMARY CAUSE OF HOMELESSNESS AMONG UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS CHILDREN AND TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH

The most frequently reported cause of homelessness among youth was drug or alcohol use (21%). This was followed by job loss (19%), and an argument with a friend or family member who asked them to leave (18%). Nine percent of youth reported domestic violence or abuse was the primary cause of their homelessness, this was compared to 5% among those 25 years or older.

FIGURE 43. PRIMARY CAUSE OF HOMELESSNESS (TOP FIVE RESPONSES) AMONG UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN AND TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH



2015 n:77 respondents offering 95 responses

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015). San José Homeless Survey. San José, CA.

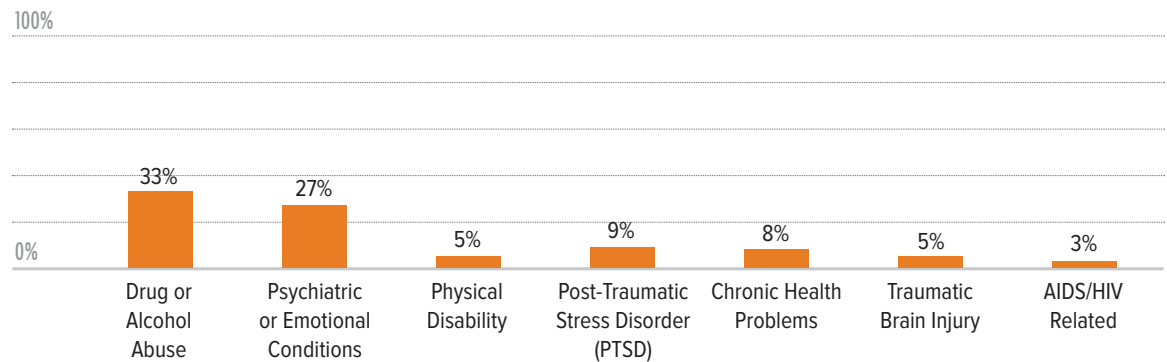
Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

HEALTH CONDITIONS AMONG UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS CHILDREN AND TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH

Though better than the general homeless population, health is still an issue for homeless youth. One quarter of youth reported at least one disabling physical or mental health condition. One third reported drug or alcohol abuse. Twenty-seven percent reported psychiatric or emotional conditions. Overall 33% of youth reported they were currently or had experienced some form of domestic violence or abuse.

Nine percent of youth reported they were receiving disability benefits. Fourteen percent reported they were covered by Medi-cal. Twenty-nine percent of respondents reported using the emergency room (ER) as their usual place of medical care. Twenty-one percent reported they had spent a night in a hospital for a mental health condition in the 12 months preceding the survey.

FIGURE 44. HEALTH CONDITIONS AMONG UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN AND TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH



Drug or alcohol abuse n:78; Psychiatric or emotional conditions n:78; Physical disability n:76; Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) n:77; Chronic health problems n:77; Traumatic Brain Injury n:77; AIDS/HIV related n:76

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015). San José Homeless Survey. San José, CA.



Conclusion

The 2015 City of San José Homeless Point-in-Time Census and Survey was a community-wide effort with two distinct phases:

- 1) A Point-in-Time count of homeless individuals on January 27 and 28, 2015: San Jose's 2015 Point-in-Time Count identified 4,063 homeless persons. 31% of counted individuals were staying in emergency shelters or transitional housing programs and 69% were living on the streets or in vehicles, encampments, or other places not fit for human habitation.
- 2) A Survey of 626 individuals conducted by trained homeless individuals between February 1 and March 16, 2015: Findings from the survey provide key information about the people experiencing homelessness in San José. The 2015 census and survey found that among those who are homeless:
 - » 35% were chronically homeless (1,398 individuals and 11 people in 4 families in the Point-in-Time count).
 - » 14% were adults and children living in families (388 individuals in 121 families).
 - » 14% were unaccompanied children and transition-age-youth (32 unaccompanied children, 503 unaccompanied transition-age-youth, and 21 youth led families with 51 children under age 18).
 - » 19% were residing in encampment areas of the city (778 people).
 - » 12% were veterans (498 individuals and 2 veterans in families).

Overall, there was a 15% decrease in the homeless population of San José between 2013 and 2015 (705 people). The number of people counted in San José encampments decreased from 1,230 in 2013 to 778 in 2015. While the San José shelter count increased by 145 people between 2013 and 2015, a 13% increase, 2,810 people remained unsheltered. The need for housing and services remains high. Across San José and the County of Santa Clara a whole, a diverse group of public and private partners are working together to address these needs through the

implementation of the Community Plan to End Homelessness in Santa Clara County 2015-2020. This plan defines a communitywide road map toward ending homelessness by disrupting systems, building housing, and serving people through client-centered strategies targeting resources to the specific individual or household. It is hoped that data in this report will support these efforts and provide a basis for continued program and community improvement.



Appendix 1: Methodology

OVERVIEW

The purpose of the 2015 Santa Clara County Homeless Census and Survey was to produce a Point-in-Time (PIT) estimate of the number of people in Santa Clara County who experience homelessness. The results of the street count were combined with the results from the shelter count to produce the total number of homeless people in Santa Clara County at one point in time. A more detailed description of the methodology used for the homeless census and survey follows.

COMPONENTS OF THE SAN JOSÉ HOMELESS CENSUS METHOD

The census methodology had two components:

- The street count: an enumeration of unsheltered homeless individuals
- The shelter and institution count: an enumeration of sheltered homeless individuals

STREET COUNT METHODOLOGY

DEFINITION

For the purposes of this study, the HUD definition of unsheltered homeless persons was used:

- Individuals and families An individual or family with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Santa Clara County covers approximately 1,291 square miles.²⁰ The logistics for conducting a PIT street count of homeless people in a county this large and densely populated required the enumeration to take place over a two-day period. The unsheltered and sheltered homeless counts were coordinated to occur within the same time period in order to minimize potential duplicate counting of homeless persons.

VOLUNTEER AND WORKER RECRUITMENT

An enumeration effort of this magnitude can only be successful with the assistance of those who possess an intimate knowledge of the activities and locations of homeless people. Therefore, the recruitment and training of homeless persons to work as enumerators was an essential part of the street count methodology. Previous research has shown that homeless people, teamed with staff members from homeless service agencies, can be part of a productive and reliable work force.

To work on the street count, prospective enumerators were required to attend a 1-hour information and training session. Training sessions were held at multiple locations throughout Santa Clara County during the week prior to the street count. These sessions were attended primarily by homeless persons, staff from homeless service agencies, and staff from the County of Santa Clara, the City of San José, and the City of Palo Alto.

Homeless persons who completed the required training session were paid \$10 on the morning they reported to work for the street count. Homeless workers were also paid \$10 per hour for their work on the count, and were reimbursed for any expenses (mainly transportation costs) they incurred during the hours they worked.

STREET COUNT TEAMS

On the mornings of the census, two or more person teams were created to enumerate designated areas of the county for the street count. A team was ideally composed of one volunteer and one homeless person who had attended a training and information session. Street count teams were provided with census tract maps of their assigned areas, census tally sheets, a review of the census training documents and techniques, and other supplies. Prior to deployment, volunteers and workers were provided with a reminder of how to enumerate thoroughly without disturbing homeless people or anyone else encountered during the street census. Over the two-day census period, 339 census tracts in Santa Clara County were enumerated. Two census tracts were not enumerated as they span the ridgeline on the edge of the County; these are high road mileage tracts that have yielded no counts in prior years.

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

Every effort was made to minimize potentially hazardous situations. Precautions were taken to prepare a safe environment in all deployment centers. Law enforcement districts were notified of pending street count activity in their jurisdictions. No official reports were received in regards to unsafe or at-risk situations occurring during the street census in any area of the county.

20 U.S. Census Bureau. (2009). State and County Quick Facts.

STREET COUNT DEPLOYMENT

Since it was necessary to conduct the enumeration over a period of two days, January 27th and 28th 2015, Santa Clara County was divided into two areas: the area to the east of Highway 17 and Interstate 880 and the area to the west of these freeways. On January 27, the cities of Gilroy and Morgan Hill, portions of the cities of Campbell, Los Gatos, Milpitas, San José, and the unincorporated areas in the eastern and southwestern parts of the county were enumerated. The following morning, January 28, remaining portions of the cities of Campbell, Milpitas, Los Gatos, and San José; the cities of Cupertino, Monte Sereno, Mountain View, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Palo Alto, Saratoga, Sunnyvale, Santa Clara, and the unincorporated areas in the northwestern part of the county were enumerated.

The two-day enumeration effort was conducted between the hours of 6:30 AM and 11:00 AM. This early morning enumeration strategy was selected in order to avoid duplicate counting of sheltered homeless persons and to increase the visibility of the street homeless.

All accessible streets, roads, and highways in the enumerated tracts were traveled by foot, bike, or car. Homeless enumerators were also instructed to include themselves on their tally sheets for the street count, if they were not going to be counted by a shelter or institutional census.

Upon their return, teams turned in their census tally forms and were debriefed by the deployment captains. Observational comments and the integrity of the enumeration effort were reviewed and assessed. This review was primarily done to check for double-counting and to verify that every accessible road within the assigned area was enumerated.

No direct contact with enumerated homeless people was made during the census enumeration.

TARGETED STREET OUTREACH -YOUTH

Unaccompanied youth tend to be difficult to enumerate in the morning census, since they do not usually congregate with the adult homeless population. For this reason, special youth enumeration teams consisting of homeless youth and formerly homeless youth were formed to conduct the targeted count. Youth enumerators were deployed from the Bill Wilson Drop-In Center and were given a general geographical area in Santa Clara County to count rather than specific census tract maps. These teams counted between 3:00 PM and 8:00 PM when homeless youth are most likely to be visible on the streets and were assigned to specific areas to minimize duplication. They enumerated unaccompanied homeless children under age 18 and youth 18 to 24 years old.

In 2015, a female youth from South County participated in the youth count. She provided insight into the whereabouts of unaccompanied youth in Gilroy, San Martin and Morgan Hill. She also conducted the count in the mid-afternoon.

TARGETED STREET OUTREACH –ENCAMPMENTS

The City of San José and Santa Clara County have explored numerous service and outreach initiatives related to the burgeoning growth of encampments in urban locations near waterways, public works, and other general urban open space areas. The City of San José, in particular, funds a homeless outreach and engagement program with Outreach Worker staff dedicated to linking encamped homeless to services and housing. These teams frequent encampments and build relationships that encourage participation in local homeless service initiatives, whether it is housing or other supportive services.

Active encampment areas in the City of San José were identified prior to the census count and special teams of Outreach Workers, familiar with these areas, were organized to count those residing in these larger encampments on the dates of the count. Targeted encampment areas were identified on general street count maps and Outreach Workers, rather than the census street teams counted homeless persons residing in encampments. The result was the most comprehensive profile of the homeless encampments in San José.

While this effort was similar to the methods employed in 2013, the nature of encampment areas in Santa Clara County has changed. A place-based rapid rehousing program and outreach strategies, coupled with waterway abatement efforts led to a shift in encampment populations. This altered the encampment count strategies employed in 2015 and resulted in many encampment areas being enumerated by volunteer and guide teams, rather than outreach workers.

TARGETED STREET OUTREACH –VEHICLES

Identifying individuals residing in vehicles is difficult during the morning hours of the census count. By the time the sun rises, those residing in vehicles have often moved on to more remote locations or have found places where they blend in. North Santa Clara County recognized the need for targeted outreach and provided a dedicated outreach worker to enumerate vehicles prior to sunrise.

SHELTER COUNT METHODOLOGY

GOAL

The goal of the shelter count was to gain an accurate count of the number of homeless persons who were being temporarily housed in shelters across Santa Clara County.

DATA COLLECTION

In 2015 shelter data were collected using the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), which records data on each individual accessing a program on a given night. Data were collected for the evening of January 27, 2015.

Shelter facilities reported their occupancies for the night of the count between census days through the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Community Technology Alliance (CTA), the administrators of the local HMIS system, then reported shelter data to ASR.

All shelters included in the count were listed on the Housing Inventory Count reported to HUD, including shelters providing services to those experiencing domestic violence. While programs serving victims of domestic violence are not required to report data in HMIS, these programs reported their data on the night of the count. Participating agencies included:

- Emergency Shelters
- Transitional Housing Facilities
- Safe Havens

Shelter facilities reported their occupancies for the night of the count between census days through the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Community Technology Alliance (CTA), the administrators of the local HMIS system, then reported shelter data to ASR.

HOMELESS CENSUS CHALLENGES AND ASSUMPTIONS

CHALLENGES

There are many challenges in any homeless enumeration, especially when implemented in a community as diverse and large as Santa Clara County. While homeless populations are usually concentrated around city emergency shelters and homeless service facilities, homeless individuals and families can also be found in suburbs, commercial districts, and outlying county areas that are not easily accessed by enumerators. Homeless populations include many difficult-to-count subsets such as:

- Chronically homeless persons who may or may not access social, health, or shelter services;
- Persons living in vehicles who relocate every few days;
- Persons who have children and therefore stay “under the radar” for fear of Child Protective Services;
- Homeless youth, who tend to keep themselves less visible than homeless adults;
- Homeless people who live in isolated rural areas; and
- Homeless people who sleep in unfit structures

CENSUS UNDERCOUNT

For a variety of reasons, homeless persons generally do not want to be seen, and make concerted efforts to avoid detection. Regardless of how successful the outreach effort is, an undercount of the homeless population will result, especially of hard-to-reach subpopulations such as unaccompanied youth and families.

In a non-intrusive visual homeless enumeration, the methods employed, while academically sound, have inherent biases and shortcomings. Even with the assistance of dedicated homeless service providers and currently or previously homeless census enumerators, the methodology cannot guarantee 100% accuracy.

By counting the minimum number of homeless persons on the streets at a given Point-in-Time, the homeless census methodology is conservative and therefore most likely results in an undercount of homeless persons with immigration issues, the working homeless, families, and street youth. This conservative approach is necessary to preserve the integrity of the data collected. Even though the census is most likely to be an undercount of the homeless population, the methodology employed, coupled with the homeless survey, is the most comprehensive approach available and does provide valuable data for local and federal service agencies.

EFFORTS TO INCLUDE SCHOOL DISTRICT DATA

The Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE) gathers data on the number of children receiving services through their homeless assistance programs. However, this data employs a broader definition of homelessness in its recordkeeping.

In 2013 and 2015, efforts were made by the Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE) to confirm the total number of children, and family members, meeting the Point-in-Time definition of homelessness on January 27th and 28th. These efforts continue to be a challenge and participation by many of the identified districts was limited.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

The survey of 952 homeless persons was conducted in order to yield qualitative data about the homeless community in Santa Clara County, 626 surveys were completed in the City of San José. The survey elicited information such as gender, family status, military service, length and recurrence of homelessness, usual nighttime accommodations, causes of homelessness, and access to services through open-ended, closed-ended, and multiple response questions. The survey data bring greater perspective to current issues of homelessness and to the provision and delivery of services. The survey findings also provide a measure of the changes in the composition of the homeless population since 2013.

In addition to the general survey, youth under the age of 25 were given additional questions, which asked specifically about their experience as homeless children and youth. Due to changes in the survey methods less than 50 youth completed these additional questions. Due to the sample size, these questions have limited use. However, the first two pages of the survey were completed by more than 75 youth under 25, providing insight into their lives on the street and in county shelters. Surveys were conducted by homeless youth in order to maintain the peer-to-peer protocol. The overall protocol for youth surveys was similar to the general survey however the majority of surveys were completed on mobile phones rather than paper.

Homeless individuals and service providers conducted surveys trained. Training sessions led potential interviewers through a comprehensive orientation that included project background information and detailed instruction on respondent eligibility, interviewing protocol, and confidentiality. Because of confidentiality and privacy issues, service providers typically conducted the surveys administered within shelters. Homeless workers were compensated at a rate of \$5 per completed survey.

It was determined that survey data would be more easily collected if an incentive gift was offered to respondents in appreciation for their time and participation. Socks were selected as an incentive to participate in the survey. These socks were easy to obtain and distribute, were thought to have wide appeal, and could be provided within the project budget.

SURVEY SAMPLING

In order to select a random sample of respondents, survey workers were trained to employ a randomized “every third encounter” survey approach. Survey workers were instructed to approach the third person they encountered whom they considered to be an eligible survey respondent.²¹ If the person declined to take the survey, the survey worker could approach the next eligible person they encountered. After completing a survey, the randomized approach was resumed. It is important to recognize that while efforts are made to randomize the respondents, it is not a random sample methodology.

Strategic attempts were made to reach individuals in various geographic locations and of various subset groups such as homeless youth, minority ethnic groups, military veterans, domestic violence victims, and families, including recruiting survey workers from these subset groups.

Trained peer interviewers administered surveys to homeless individuals on the “street.” Surveys were also administered in shelters and transitional housing programs. In order to assure the representation of transitional housing residents, who can be underrepresented in a street-based survey, survey quotas were created to reach individuals and heads of family households living in these programs.

²¹ The survey method of systematically interviewing every nth person encountered in a location is recommended by HUD in their publication, *A Guide to Counting Unsheltered Homeless People*, Second Revision, January 2008, p. 37

DATA COLLECTION

Care was taken by interviewers to ensure that respondents felt comfortable regardless of the street or shelter location where the survey occurred. During the interviews, respondents were encouraged to be candid in their responses and were informed that these responses would be framed as general findings, would be kept confidential, and would not be traceable to any one individual.

Overall, the interviewers experienced excellent cooperation from respondents. This was likely influenced by the fact that nearly all of the street interviewers were homeless workers who had previously been, or were currently, fellow members of the homeless community. Another reason for interview cooperation may have been the incentive gift, which was given to respondents upon the completion of the interview.

DATA ANALYSIS

SURVEY ADMINISTRATION DETAILS

To avoid potential duplication of respondents, the survey requested respondents' initials and date of birth, so that duplication could be avoided without compromising the respondents' anonymity. Upon completion of the survey effort, an extensive verification process was conducted to eliminate duplicates. This process examined respondents' date of birth, initials, gender, ethnicity, and length of homelessness, and consistencies in patterns of responses to other questions on the survey. This left 625 valid surveys for analysis. Due to the sensitive nature of the survey, respondents were not required to answer every survey question and respondents were asked to skip questions that were not applicable. For this reason, the number of respondents for each survey question may not total 625.

SURVEY CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

The 2015 Santa Clara County Homeless Survey, as conducted in the City of San José, did not include an equal representation of all homeless experiences. However, as mentioned previously, based on a Point-in-Time estimate of 4,063 homeless persons, the 625 valid surveys represent a confidence interval of +/- 4% with a 95% confidence level when generalizing the results of the survey to the estimated homeless population in the City of San José.

There may be some variance in the data that the homeless individuals would have self-reported. In self-reporting survey research, there is always some room for misrepresentation. However, using a peer interviewing methodology is believed to allow the respondents to be more candid with their answers and may help reduce the uneasiness of revealing personal information. Further, service providers and county staff members recommended individuals who would be the best to conduct interviews and they received comprehensive training about how to conduct interviews. The service providers and city staff also reviewed the surveys to ensure quality responses. Surveys that were considered incomplete or containing false responses were not accepted.



Appendix 2: Definitions & Abbreviations



- **Chronic homelessness** is defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs as “an unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition who has either been continuously homeless for a year or more, or has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years.”
- **Disabling condition**, for the purposes of this study, is defined as a physical disability, mental illness, depression, alcohol or drug abuse, chronic health problems, HIV/AIDS, Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), or a developmental disability.
- **Emergency shelter** is the provision of a safe alternative to the streets, either in a shelter facility, or through the use of stabilization rooms. Emergency shelter is short-term, usually for 90 days or fewer. Domestic violence shelters are typically considered a type of emergency shelter, as they provide safe, immediate housing for victims and their children.
- **Family** is defined as a household with at least one adult and one child under 18.
- **Homeless** under the category 1 definition of homelessness in the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act, includes individuals and families living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements, or with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground.
- **HUD** is the abbreviation for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.
- **Sheltered homeless individuals** are those homeless individuals who are living in emergency shelters or transitional housing programs.
- **Single individual** refers to an unaccompanied adult or youth.
- **Transition-Age Youth (TAY)** refers to an unaccompanied youth aged 18-24 years.
- **Transitional housing** facilitates the movement of homeless individuals and families to permanent housing. It is housing in which homeless individuals may live up to 24 months and receive supportive services that enable them to live more independently. Supportive services – which help promote residential stability, increased skill level or income, and greater self-determination – may be provided by the organization managing the housing, or coordinated by that organization and provided by other public or private agencies. Transitional housing can be provided in one structure or several structures at one site, or in multiple structures at scattered sites.
- **Unaccompanied** refers to children under the age of 18 who do not have a parent or guardian present.
- **Unsheltered homeless individuals** are those homeless individuals who are living on the streets, in abandoned buildings, storage structures, vehicles, encampments, or any other place unfit for human habitation.

SAN JOSÉ

HOMELESS

POINT-IN-TIME CENSUS & SURVEY

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT

2015

