
City of San José

HOMELESS CENSUS & SURVEY

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT

2019



REPORT PRODUCED BY ASR

ABOUT THE RESEARCHER

Applied Survey Research (ASR) is a 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 of needs, evaluation of community goals, and development of appropriate responses.

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Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	4
INTRODUCTION	5
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	7
POINT-IN-TIME CENSUS	9
Number and Characteristics of Persons Experiencing Homelessness.....	10
HOMELESS SURVEY FINDINGS	12
Survey Demographics.....	13
Living Accommodations.....	17
Primary Cause of Homelessness.....	20
Services and Assistance	21
Employment and Income.....	24
Health	25
Domestic/Partner Violence or Abuse	26
Criminal Justice System.....	27
HUD DEFINED SUBPOPULATIONS	28
Individuals Experiencing Chronic Homelessness	29
Veterans Experiencing Homelessness	32
Families Experiencing Homelessness.....	36
Youth and Young Adults	39
CONCLUSION	44
APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY	45
Street Count Methodology	46
Youth Street Count Methodology.....	48
Shelter Count Methodology.....	49
Challenges.....	49
Survey Methodology	50
APPENDIX B: DEFINITIONS & ABBREVIATIONS	52
APPENDIX C: TABLE OF FIGURES	54
APPENDIX D: FIGURE SOURCES	56



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- The many service providers who were a tremendous help in recruiting homeless peer enumerators, opening their facilities for trainings and deployment, and facilitating the survey administration process.
- The homeless count and survey workers, as well as the survey respondents, whose efforts are reflected throughout the findings of this report.
- The community members, faith-based organizations, service providers, and County and City employees who helped recruit volunteers and who participated in the homeless census efforts.

PROJECT PLANNING COMMITTEE

Leila Qureishi, Kathryn Kaminski, Lorena Diez,

POINT-IN-TIME JURISDICTIONAL FUNDER

City of San José

SERVICE PROVIDERS

- Abode Services
- Bill Wilson Center
- Bill Wilson Drop-In Center and Opportunity Health Center
- Bitfocus
- City of San José
- City of Sunnyvale
- City Team Ministries
- County Office of Supportive Housing
- Destination: Home
- Diocese of San José
- Gardner Family Health Network
- Gilroy Compassion Center
- Housing Authority of the County of Santa Clara
- Housing Choices Coalition
- HomeFirst
- People Assisting the Homeless (PATH)
- Salvation Army Emmanuel House
- Santa Clara University
- Santa Clara County Office of Education
- Silver Creek High School
- Southside Community Center
- St Joseph's
- West Valley Community Services



Introduction

Every two years, during the last ten days of January, communities across the United States conduct comprehensive counts of the local population experiencing homelessness. These biennial Point-in-Time Counts measure the prevalence of homelessness in each community and collect information on individuals and families residing in temporary shelters and places not meant for human habitation, and ultimately help the federal government better understand the nature and extent of homelessness nationwide.

As required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) of all jurisdictions receiving federal funding to provide homeless services, Continuums of Care (CoC) across the country report the findings of their local Point-in-Time Census in their annual funding application to HUD. Currently, the Santa Clara County CoC receives approximately \$26 million dollars annually in federal funding with the majority of that funding going to efforts within the City of San José.

The City of San José Point-in-Time Homeless Census and Survey was designed and implemented as part of the broader Santa Clara county-wide effort. Therefore, the research methodology and infrastructure that supported the San José effort was the same as Santa Clara County, and the findings summarized in this report represents a subset of the county-wide results.

The City of San José and Santa Clara County have partnered with ASR to conduct the Point-in-Time Count since 2007, maintaining a similar methodology and thus ensuring as much consistency as possible from one year to the next. ASR is a social research firm that has over 20 years of experience in homeless enumeration and needs assessment, having conducted homeless counts and surveys throughout California and across the nation. Their work is featured as a best practice in the HUD publication, *A Guide to Counting Unsheltered Homeless People*, as well as in the Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago publication, *Conducting a Youth Count: A Toolkit*.

PROJECT OVERVIEW AND GOALS

In order for the Homeless Census and Survey to best reflect the experience and expertise of the community, ASR held planning meetings with local community members. These community members were drawn from city and county departments, community-based service providers, and other interested stakeholders. These individuals comprised the 2019 Planning Committee and were instrumental to ensuring the 2019 Santa Clara County Homeless Point-in-Time Count and Survey reflected the needs and concerns of the community.

The 2019 Planning Committee identified several important project goals:

- To preserve current federal funding for homeless services and to enhance the ability to raise new funds;
- To improve the ability of policy makers 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 and track the community's progress toward ending homelessness;
- To increase public awareness of overall homeless issues and generate support for constructive solutions; and
- To assess the status of specific subpopulations, including veterans, families, unaccompanied children, transition-age youth, and those who are chronically homeless.

This report is intended to assist service providers, policy makers, funders, and local, state, and federal governments in:

- Gaining a better understanding of the population currently experiencing homelessness;
- Measuring the impact of current policies and programming; and
- Making informed decisions with respect to strategic planning, capacity building, and advocacy campaigns to prevent and end homelessness.

FEDERAL DEFINITION OF HOMELESSNESS FOR POINT-IN-TIME COUNTS

In this study, the HUD definition of homelessness for the Point-in-Time Count is used. This definition includes individuals and families:

- Living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangement; 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.

City of San José

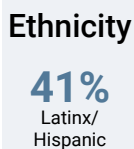
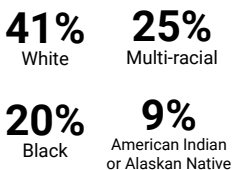
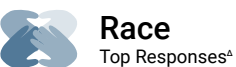
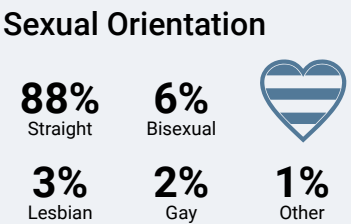
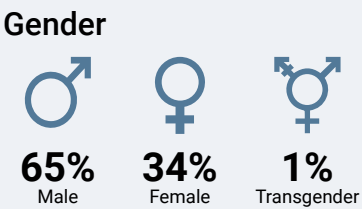
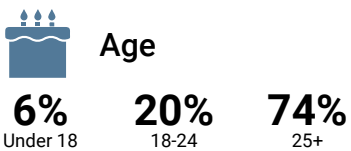
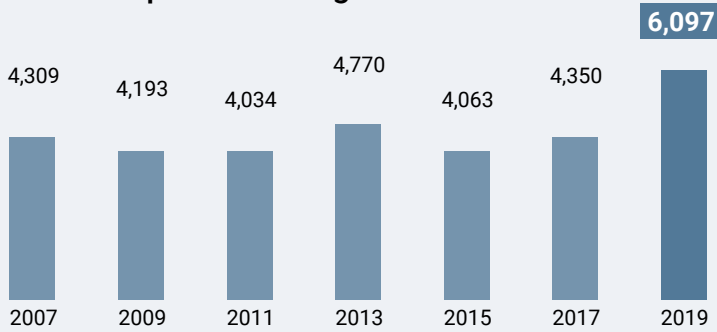
Homeless Census & Survey

2019 Executive Summary

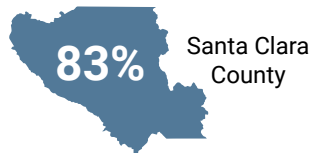
Every two years, during the last 10 days of January, communities across the country conduct comprehensive counts of the local homeless populations in order to measure the prevalence of homelessness in each local Continuum of Care.

The 2019 City of San José Point-in-Time Count was a community-wide effort conducted on January 29th and 30th, 2019. In the weeks following the street count, a survey was administered to 908 unsheltered and sheltered individuals experiencing homelessness, in order to profile their experience and characteristics.

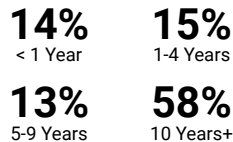
Census Population: Longitudinal Trend



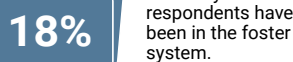
Residence Prior to Homelessness



Length of Time in Santa Clara County



Foster Care



Encampments

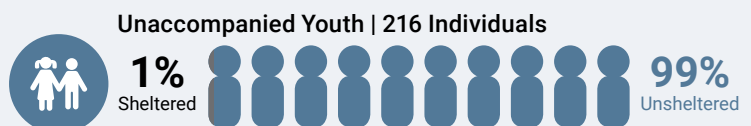
1,782 individuals were observed living in encampments.



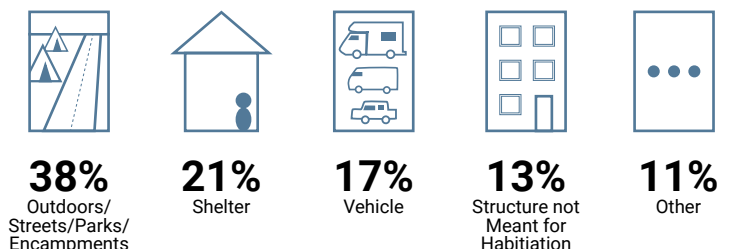
2019 Sheltered/ Unsheltered Population



Subpopulation* Data

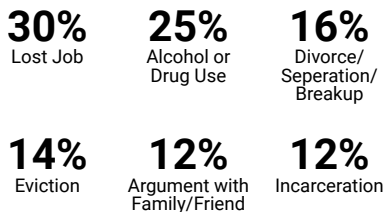


Current Accommodation



Primary Event or Condition That Led to Homelessness*

Top 6 Responses^Δ



First Episode of Homelessness



39% of survey respondents indicated their current episode of homelessness was their first.

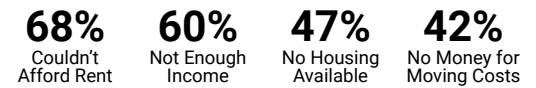
Interest in Permanent Housing

88% of survey respondents said yes when asked if they would accept affordable permanent housing if it became available soon.



Obstacles to Permanent Housing*

Top 4 Responses^Δ



Duration of Current Episode of Homelessness



Self Reported Health*

Current health conditions that may affect the housing stability or employment of those experiencing homelessness.



42%
Psychiatric/ Emotional Conditions



36%
Alcohol & Drug Use



31%
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder



24%
Physical Disability



23%
Chronic Health Problems



11%
Traumatic Brain Injury



2%
HIV/ AIDS Related Illness

Disabling Conditions

47% of survey respondents reported having at least one disabling condition.



A disabling condition is defined by HUD as a developmental disability, HIV/ AIDS, or a long-term physical or mental impairment that impacts a person's ability to live independently, but could be improved with stable housing.

Services and Assistance

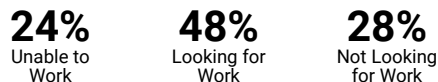


66% of survey respondents reported receiving benefits.

Employment Status

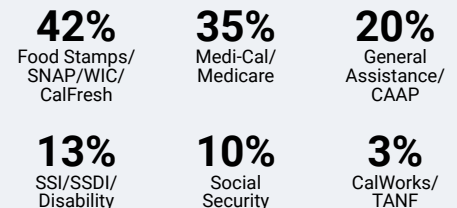


If Unemployed Currently...



Services Currently Accessing*

Top 6 Responses^Δ



*Subpopulation Definitions

Chronically Homeless

An individual with one or more disabling conditions or a family with a head of household with a disabling condition who:

- » Has been continuously homeless for 1 year or more and/or;
- » Has experienced 4 or more episodes of homelessness within the past 3 years.

Veterans

Persons who have served on active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States. This does not include inactive military reserves or the National Guard unless the person was called up to active duty.

Families

A household with at least one adult member (persons 18 or older) and at least one child member (persons under 18).

Unaccompanied Youth & Young Adults

Youth under the age of 18 and young adults between the ages of 18 and 24 years old (TAY) who are experiencing homelessness and living without a parent or legal guardian.

+ Multiple response question, results may not add up to 100%.

Δ Only displaying top responses, all response data will be available in full report.

Note: Some percentages have been rounded so total percentage will equal 100%.

The complete comprehensive report includes a more detailed profile of the characteristics of those experiencing homelessness in the City of San José. It will be available in late summer 2019.

Source: Applied Survey Research, 2019, Santa Clara County Homeless Census & Survey, Watsonville, CA.



Point-In-Time Census

The 2019 City of José and Santa Clara County Point-in-Time Homeless Census represented a complete enumeration of all sheltered and unsheltered persons experiencing homelessness. It consisted of the following primary components:

- **General Street Count:** A morning count of unsheltered homeless individuals and families on January 29-30, 2019. This included those sleeping outdoors on the street; at bus and train stations; in parks, tents, and other make-shift shelters; and in vehicles and abandoned properties.
- **General Shelter Count:** A nighttime count of homeless individuals and families staying at publicly and privately-operated shelters on January 29, 2019. This included those who occupied emergency shelters, transitional housing, and safe havens.

The Point-in-Time Census also included the following supplemental components:

- **Targeted Street Count of Youth and Young Adults:** An afternoon count of unsheltered unaccompanied youth (individuals under 18) and young adults (individuals 18-24) on January 29, 2019.
- **Targeted COE Street Count of Students and Their Families:** A count of unsheltered homeless students and their families reported by the Santa Clara County Office of Education for the night of January 29, 2019.
- **Homeless Survey:** An in-person interview of sheltered and unsheltered individuals conducted by peer surveyors in the weeks following the general street count. Data from the survey were used to refine the Point-in-Time Census estimates.

This section of the report provides a summary of the results of the Point-in-Time Census. For comparison, results from prior years are provided in order to better understand the dynamics of homelessness over time.

For more information regarding the research methodology, please see *Appendix A: Methodology*.

NUMBER AND CHARACTERISTICS OF PERSONS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

The San José Homeless Census and Survey found a total of 6,097 persons experiencing homelessness on January 29-30, 2019, a 40% increase from 2017 and the highest the number has been during the last 15 years. There were more homeless individuals who identified as male (64%) than female (34%), transgender (2%), and gender non-conforming (<1%).

Figure 1. TOTAL POINT-IN-TIME COUNT OF PERSONS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS IN SAN JOSÉ

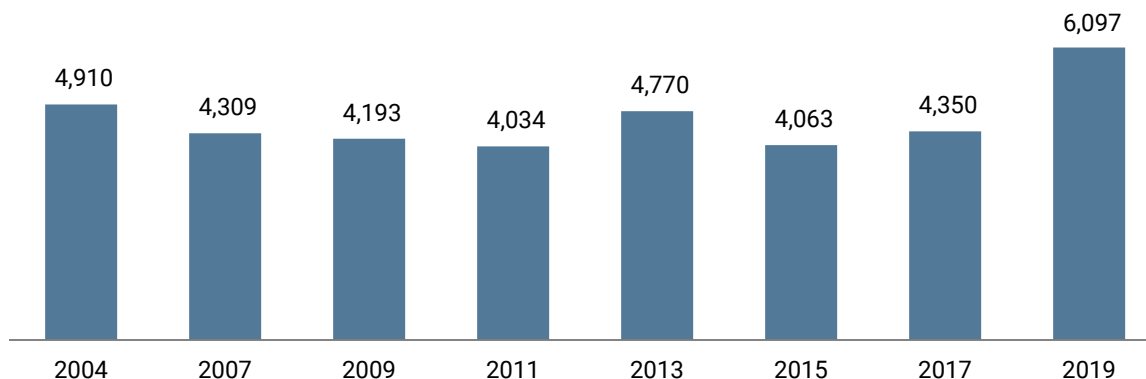
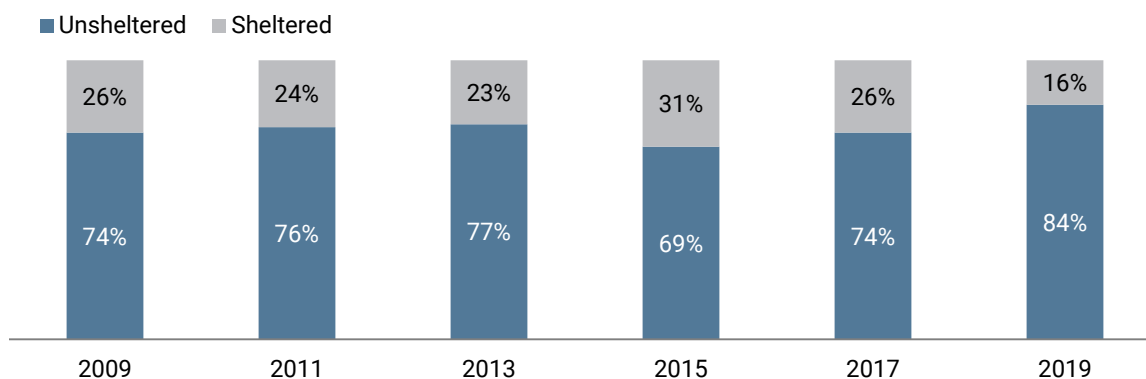
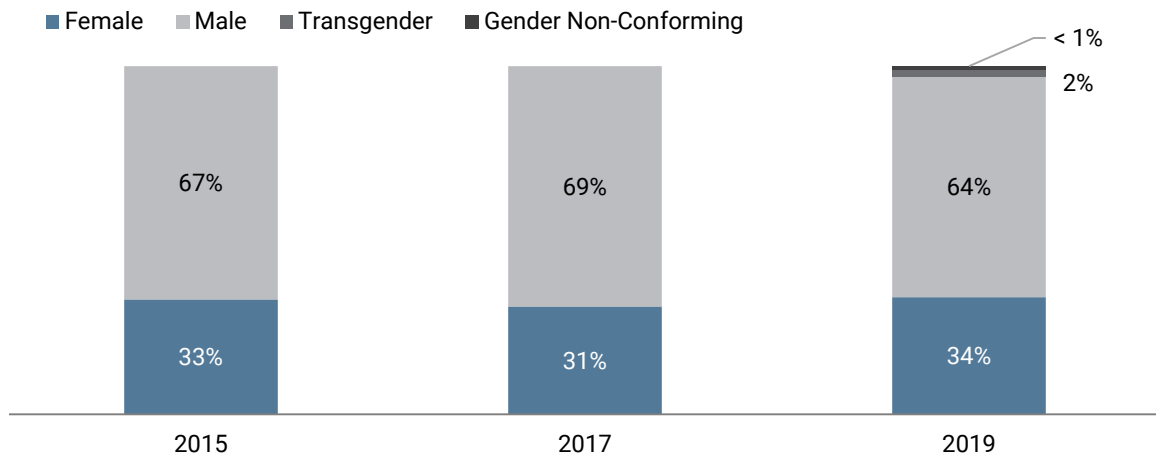


Figure 2. POINT-IN-TIME HOMELESS POPULATION BY SHELTER STATUS - LONGITUDINAL



	2009	2011	2013	2015	2017	2019	'17-'19 NET CHANGE
Sheltered	1,081	977	1,110	1,253	1,119	980	-12%
Unsheltered	3,112	3,057	3,660	2,810	3,231	5,117	58%
Total	4,193	4,034	4,770	4,063	4,350	6,097	40%

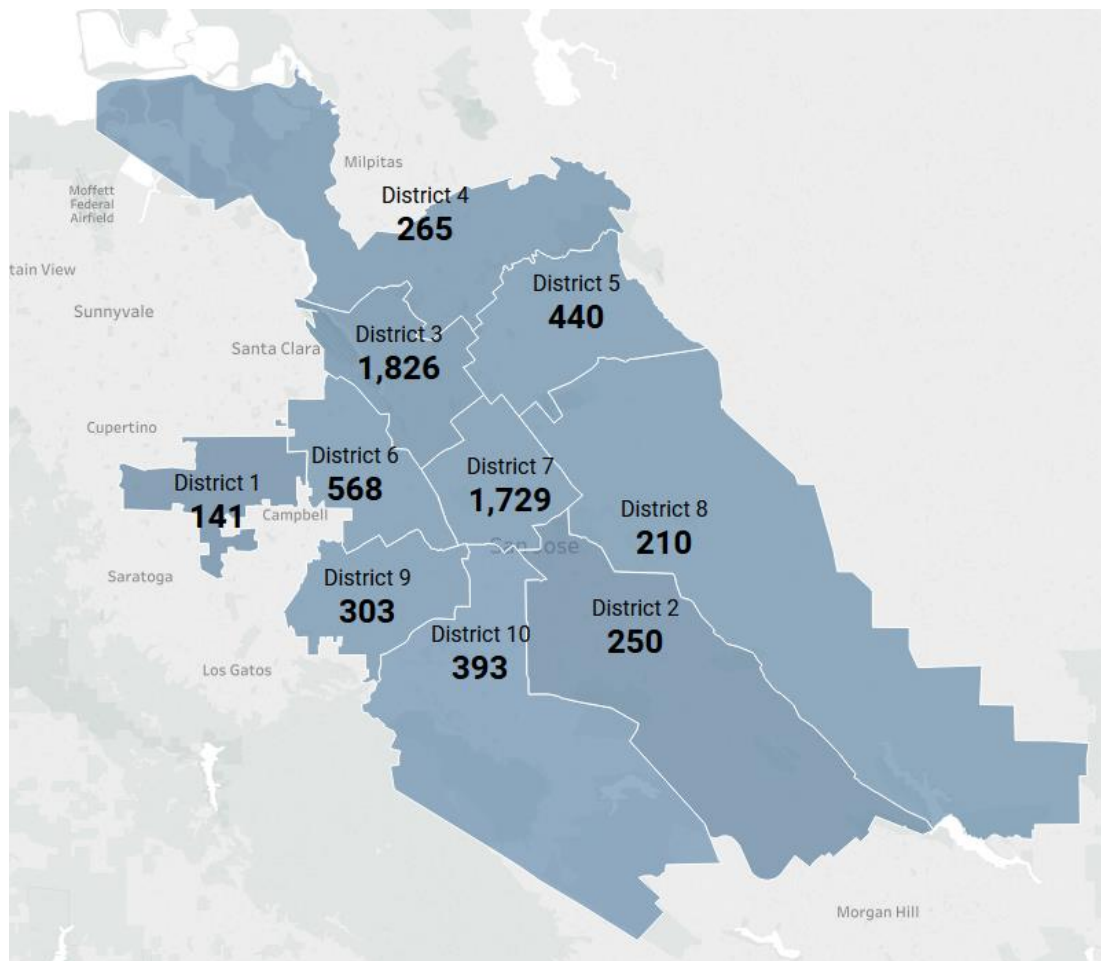
Figure 3. POINT-IN-TIME HOMELESS POPULATION BY GENDER



2015 N=4,063; 2017 N=4,350; 2019 N=6,097

Note: in 2015 and 2017, individuals identifying as transgender or gender non-conforming were less than 1% of the population.

Figure 4. POINT-IN-TIME HOMELESS POPULATION BY SAN JOSÉ CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT





Homeless Survey Findings

This section provides an overview of the findings generated from the Homeless Survey component. In the weeks following the Point-in-Time Census, an in-depth survey was administered to collect basic demographic details as well as information on service needs and utilization. Surveys were administered between January 29 and February 28, 2019 to a randomized sample of individuals and families currently experiencing homelessness.

The Homeless Survey effort resulted in 925 unique, complete, and valid surveys collected in the City of San José. Based on a Point-in-Time Count of 6,097 homeless persons in the City of José, with a randomized survey sampling process, these surveys represent a confidence interval of +/- 3% with a 95% confidence level when generalizing the results of the survey to the entire Point-in-Time homeless population in San José. In other words, if the survey were conducted again, we can be 95% certain that the results would be within 3% points of the current results.

In order to respect respondent privacy and to ensure the safety and comfort of those who participated, respondents were not required to complete all survey questions. Therefore, any missing values were intentionally omitted from the survey results and the total number of respondents for each question will not always equal the total number of surveys conducted.

For more information regarding the research methodology, please see *Appendix A: Methodology*.

SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

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

AGE

Fifteen percent (15%) of survey respondents were under the age of 25 at the time of the 2019 survey. One-fifth (20%) of respondents were between the ages of 25 and 40, and 65% were 41 years or older.

Figure 5. SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY AGE

AGE GROUP	2015	2017	2019
Less than 18 Years	1%	<1%	1%
18-24 Years	13%	11%	14%
25-30 Years	5%	7%	6%
31-40 Years	18%	13%	14%
41-50 Years	25%	24%	22%
51-60 Years	29%	37%	30%
61 Years or More	9%	8%	13%

2015 N=626; 2017 N=331; 2019 N=925

Note: Individuals under the age of 18 are extremely difficult to identify when conducting street surveys and their response rate above reflects that difficulty.

GENDER

Nearly two-thirds (65%) of survey respondents identified as male, 34% identified as female, 1% identified as transgender, and <1% did not identify as male, female, or transgender.

Among the female respondents, 2% indicated that they were currently pregnant.

LGBTQ+ IDENTITY

While there are limited national data on the number of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ+) individuals experiencing homelessness, available data suggest LGBTQ+ individuals experience homelessness at higher rates, especially those under the age of 25. More than one in ten (12%) survey respondents identified as LGBTQ+ in 2019, down from 35% in 2017. Similar numbers of individuals identified as LGBTQ+ in 2017 and 2019, but the increase in overall homelessness drove down the percentage of individuals experiencing homelessness in 2019. Of those, 47% identified as bisexual, 24% identified as lesbian, and 18% identified as gay.

Figure 6. LGBTQ+ SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY IDENTITY

LGBTQ+ IDENTITY	2017	2019
Bisexual	84%	47%
Lesbian	7%	24%
Gay	3%	18%
Transgender	5%	13%
Other	5%	7%
Queer	0%	3%

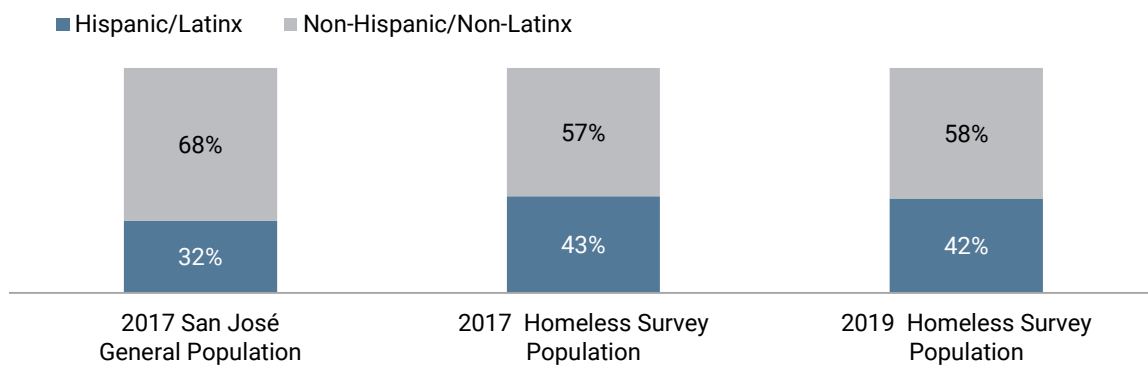
2017 N=111 respondents offering 115 responses; 2019 N=114 respondents offering 128 responses

RACE/ETHNICITY

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) gathers data on race and ethnicity in two separate questions, similar to the U.S. Census. When asked if they identified as Hispanic or Latinx, more than half (58%) of homeless survey respondents reported they did not identify as Hispanic or Latinx in 2019. In comparison to the general population of San José, a higher percentage of homeless survey respondents identified as Hispanic or Latinx (42% homeless respondents compared to 32% in the general population).

In regard to racial identity, differences between the general population and those experiencing homelessness were more distinct. A much higher proportion of homeless survey respondents identified as Black or African-American when compared to the general population (19% compared to 3%), whereas a smaller percentage of the homeless survey population identified as Asian (4% compared to 36%).

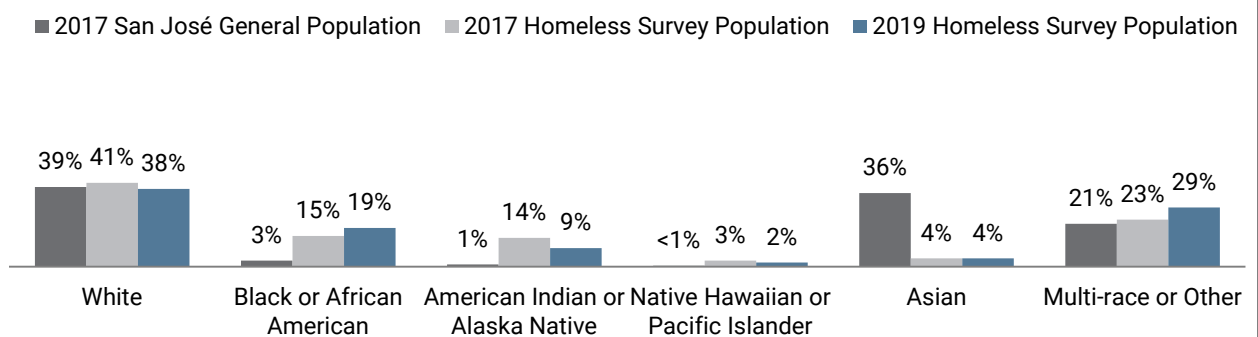
Figure 7. SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY HISPANIC OR LATINX ORIGIN



San José General Population: 2017 N=1,035,353

Homeless Survey Population: 2017 N=323; 2019 N=877

Figure 8. SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY RACE



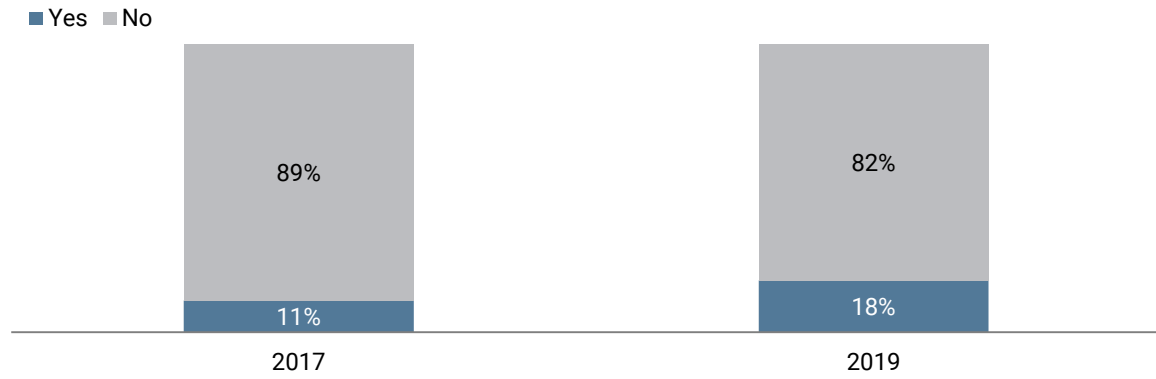
San José General Population: 2017 N=1,035,353

Homeless Survey Population: 2017 N=284; 2019 N=847

HISTORY OF FOSTER CARE

In 2019, 18% of survey respondents reported a history of foster care, higher than in 2017 (11%).

Figure 9. HISTORY OF FOSTER CARE



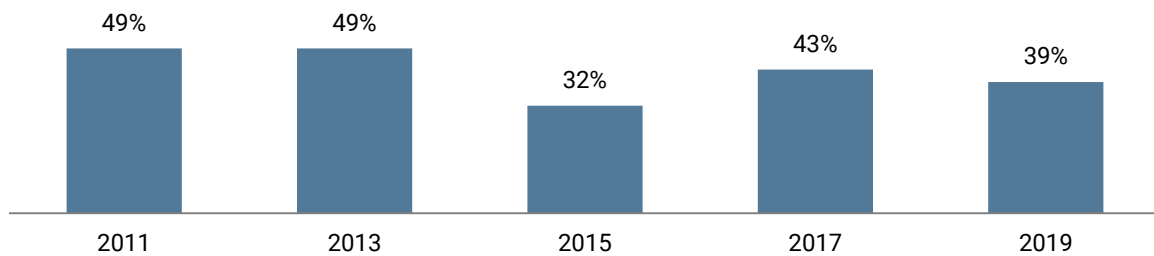
2017 N=328; 2019 N=905

RECURRENCE OF HOMELESSNESS

Unstable living conditions, poverty, housing scarcity, and many other issues 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. Of those surveyed in 2019, 39% reported that their current episode of homelessness was their first time experiencing homelessness. Conversely, 61% reported they had experienced homelessness previously.

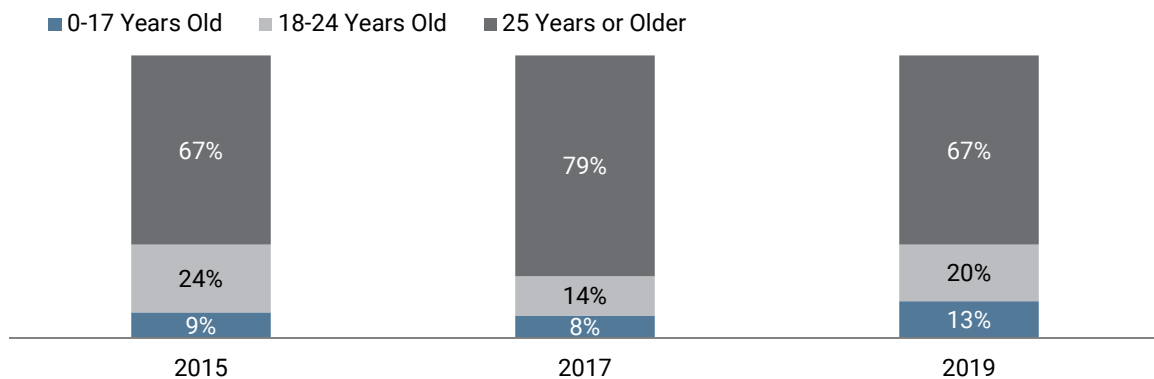
Respondents were also asked how old they were when they experienced homelessness for the first time. In response, 13% of respondents reported that they were under the age of 18, 20% reported they were between the ages of 18 and 24, and 67% reported they were 25 years or older.

Figure 10. CURRENT EPISODE OF HOMELESSNESS IS THE FIRST TIME EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS



2011 N=674; 2013 N=456; 2015 N=616; 2017 N=330; 2019 N=894

Figure 11. AGE WHEN EXPERIENCED HOMELESSNESS FOR THE FIRST TIME

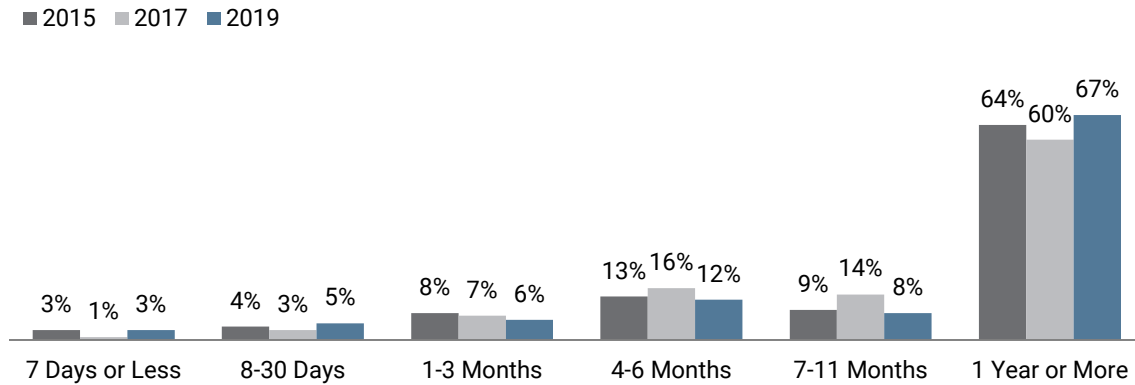


2015 N=600; 2017 N=320; 2019 N=906

DURATION OF HOMELESSNESS

When asked about the duration of their current episode of homelessness, two-thirds (67%) of survey respondents reported they had been homeless for a year or more. This finding is higher than 2017, when 60% of respondents reported they had been homeless for a year or more.

Figure 12. LENGTH OF CURRENT EPISODE OF HOMELESSNESS



2013 N=449; 2015 N=602; 2017 N= 330; 2019 N=910

LIVING ACCOMMODATIONS

Where individuals lived prior to experiencing homelessness and where they have lived subsequently impacts their strategies in seeking 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 to opportunities for systemic improvement and homelessness prevention. Survey respondents reported many different living accommodations prior to becoming homeless, although most lived in or around Santa Clara County with friends or family, or on their own in a home or apartment.

PLACE OF RESIDENCE

Knowing where individuals were living prior to their housing loss informs discussions regarding how local the homeless population is to the region. This information can also influence changes to available support systems including the development of prevention services if the Continuum of Care finds increasing numbers of individuals living locally before experiencing homelessness.

The majority (83%) of respondents reported living in Santa Clara County at the most recent time they became homeless, the same rate as 2017. Among these respondents, 71% had lived in Santa Clara County for 5 or more years, while 14% had lived in Santa Clara County for less than one year. According to the US Census Bureau, 4% of the population nationwide moved across county lines in 2016, the last year data was available.

Eleven (11%) of respondents reported they were living in another county in California, and 6% reported they were living out of state.

Figure 13. PLACE OF RESIDENCE AT TIME OF HOUSING LOSS



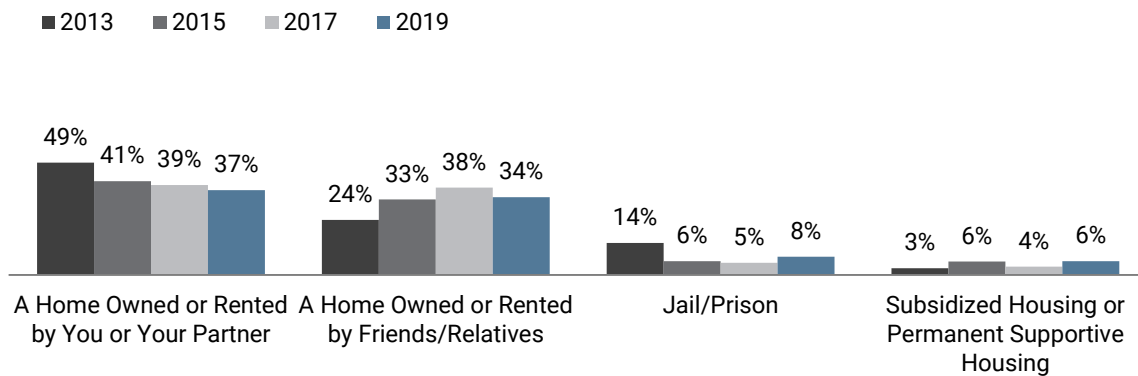
2019 N=905

PRIOR LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

Similar to previous place of residence, the type of living arrangements maintained by individuals before experiencing homelessness can influence what types of homeless prevention services might be offered to help individuals maintain their housing.

Well over one-third (37%) of survey respondents reported living in a home owned or rented by them or their partner prior to becoming homeless, similar to 2017 (39%). Thirty-four percent (34%) reported they were living with friends or relatives, 8% reported they were in jail or prison, and 6% were staying in subsidized housing or permanent supportive housing.

Figure 14. LIVING ARRANGEMENTS JUST PRIOR TO BECOMING HOMELESS



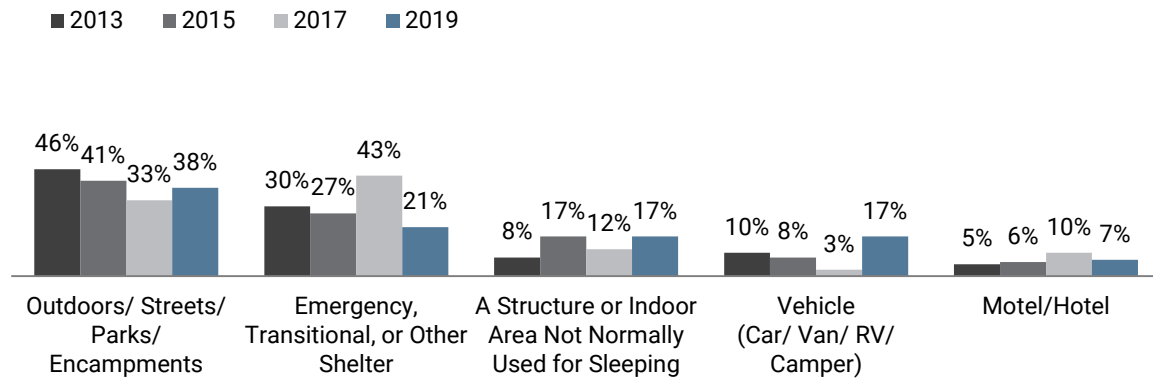
2013 N=435; 2015 N=590; 2017 N=323; 2019 N=896

CURRENT LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

While basic information on where individuals were observed during the general street count effort was collected, survey respondents were still asked about their usual nighttime accommodations. Understanding the types of places homeless people are sleeping can help inform local outreach efforts.

Thirty-eight percent (38%) of survey respondents reported currently living outdoors, either on the streets, in parks, or in encampment areas. Twenty-one percent (21%) reported currently staying in a shelter or transitional housing, 17% reported staying in a structure/area not normally used for sleeping, and 17% reported staying in a vehicle, significantly more than 2017's 3% and previous years too.

Figure 15. CURRENT LIVING ARRANGEMENTS



2013 N=452; 2015 N=609; 2017 N=331; 2019 N=925

Note: 2013 response option specified that motel/hotel was paid for by an ad agency.

PERSONS RESIDING IN ENCAMPMENT AREAS

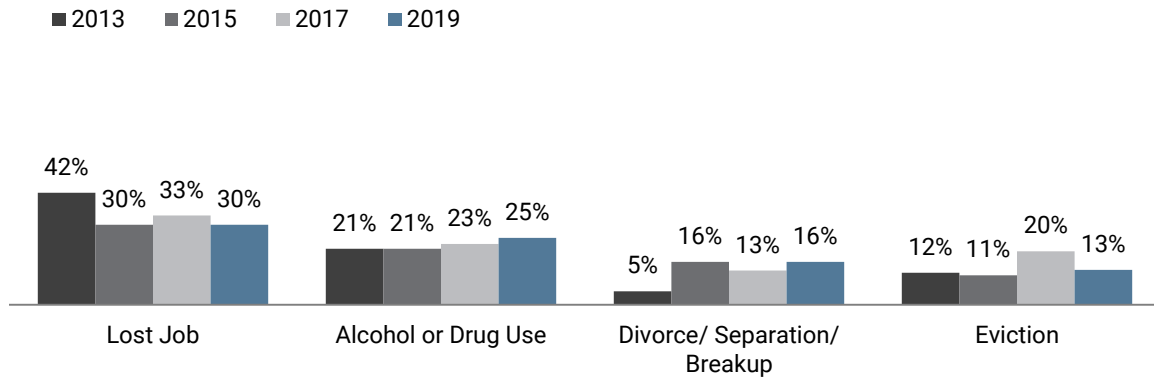
There were 1,782 individuals experiencing homelessness enumerated in encampment areas in the City of San José. This represents a 177% increase from 643 in 2017. Individuals identified in encampments represented 29% of the overall San José Point-in-Time homeless population in 2019, more than 2017 (15%).

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 inter-related causes. An inability to secure adequate housing can also lead to an inability to address other basic needs, such as physical, mental and behavioral health and adequate nutrition.

Thirty percent (30%) of survey respondents self-reported job loss as their primary cause of homelessness, while 25% cited alcohol or drug use, 16% cited a divorce/separation, and 13% cited eviction.

Figure 16. PRIMARY CAUSE OF HOMELESSNESS (TOP RESPONSES IN 2019)



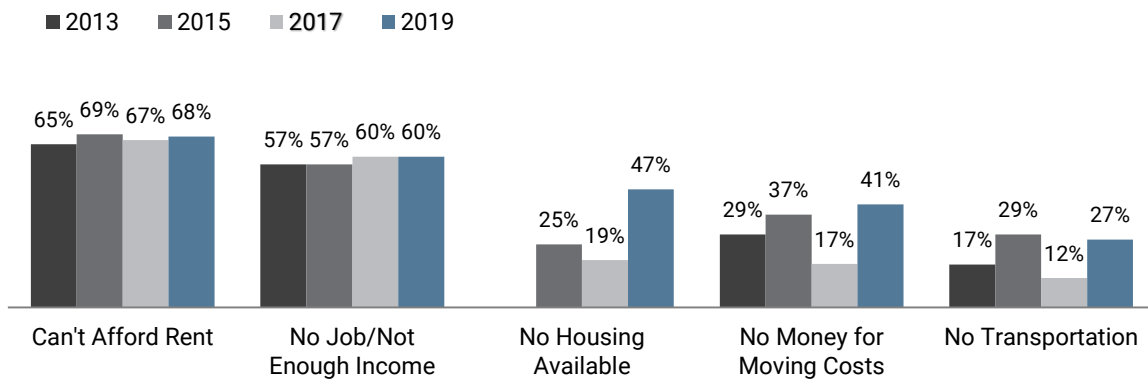
2013 N=443 respondents offering 566 responses; 2015 N=611 respondents offering 897 responses; 2017 N=329 respondents offering 463 responses; 2019 N=915 respondents offering 1,337 responses

OBSTACLES TO OBTAINING PERMANENT HOUSING

Many individuals experiencing homelessness face significant barriers in obtaining permanent housing. These barriers can range from housing affordability and availability, to accessing the economic and social support (e.g., increased income, rental assistance, and case management) needed to access and maintain permanent housing.

When asked what has prevented them from obtaining housing, the most common response was “can’t afford rent,” reported by 68% of survey respondents. This was followed by 60% who reported a lack of job or sufficient income, 47% who reported a lack of housing availability (significantly higher than the 19% reported in 2017), and 41% who said that they had no money for moving costs.

Figure 17. OBSTACLES TO OBTAINING PERMANENT HOUSING (TOP RESPONSES IN 2019)



2013 N=414 respondents offering 995 responses; 2015 N=593 respondents offering 2,001 responses; 2017 N=324 respondents offering 724 responses; 2019 N=907 respondents offering 3,100 responses
 Note: “No Housing Available” was added as a response option after 2013.

SERVICES AND ASSISTANCE

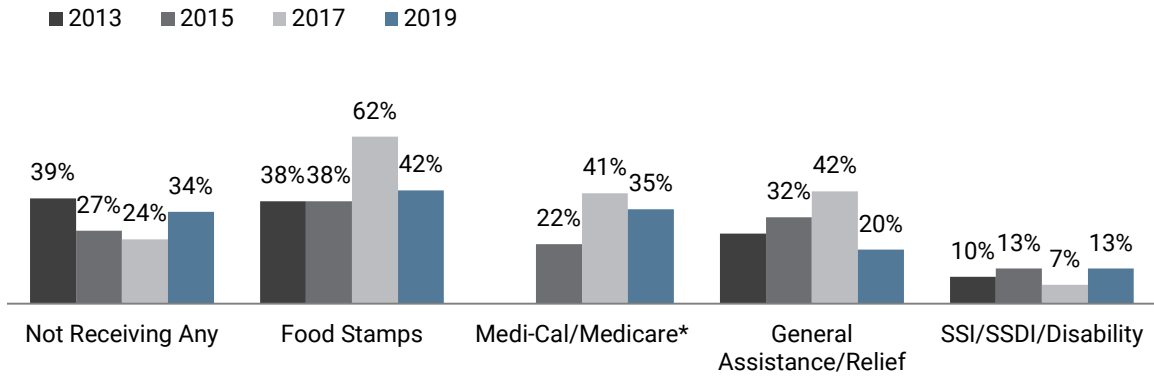
The City of San José provides services and assistance to those currently experiencing homelessness through federal, state and local programs. Government assistance and homeless services work to enable individuals and families to obtain income and support. However, many individuals and families do not apply for services, as many believe that they are ineligible for assistance. Connecting individuals and families experiencing homelessness to these support services creates a bridge to mainstream support services and can prevent future housing instability.

GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE

There are various forms of government assistance available to individuals experiencing homelessness. However, usage of these supports is impacted by knowledge of services available, understanding of eligibility requirements, and sometimes the perceived stigma of receiving government assistance.

About two-thirds (66%) of survey respondents reported in 2019 that they were receiving some form of government assistance though the receipt of assistance was generally down. Of those who reported they were not receiving any form of government support, the greatest percentage reported they did not want government assistance (40%). Twenty-eight percent (28%) did not think they were eligible.

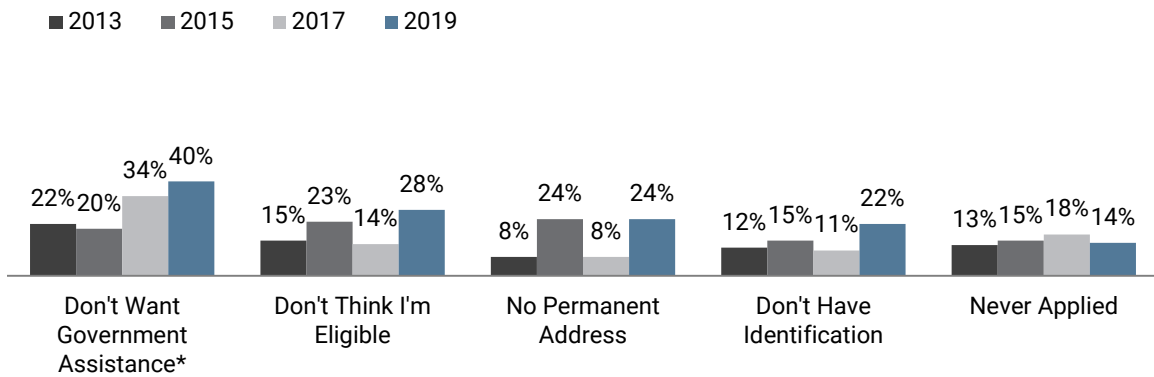
Figure 18. RECEIPT OF GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE



2013 N=437 respondents offering 537 responses; 2015 N=580 respondents offering 855 responses; 2017 N=315 respondents offering 586 responses; 2019 N=885 respondents offering 1,401 responses

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

Figure 19. REASONS FOR NOT RECEIVING GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE)



2013 N=168 respondents offering 220 responses; 2015 N=143 respondents offering 218 responses; 2017 N=74 respondents offering 86 responses; 2019 N=295 respondents offering 507 responses

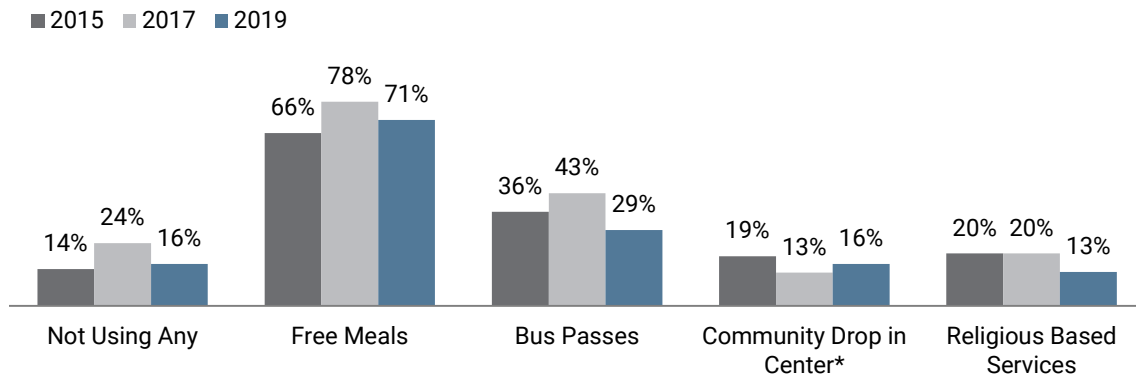
* In 2013 the response option changed from "do not need" to "do not want."

SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

In addition to government assistance, there are numerous community-based services and programs made available to individuals experiencing homelessness. These services range from day shelters and meal programs to job training and healthcare.

A large majority (84%) of survey respondents in 2019 reported they were accessing other services and assistance beyond government aid, up slightly since 2017. The most frequently cited types of assistance respondents reported accessing were meal services (71%), bus passes (29%), and the community drop-in center (16%).

Figure 20. RECEIPT OF OTHER SERVICES OR ASSISTANCE (TOP RESPONSES IN 2019)



2015 N=577 respondents offering 1,260 responses; 2017 N=323 respondents offering 648 responses; 2019 N=899 respondents offering 1,678 responses

* In 2015, the Community Drop In Center response option was Shelter Day Services.

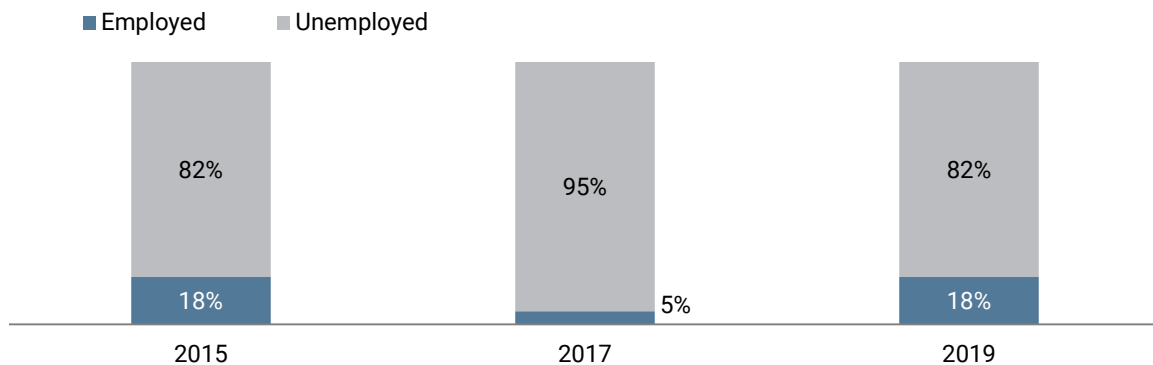
EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME

The unemployment rate in the San José-Sunnyvale metropolitan area in January 2019 was at 3.0%, slightly down from 3.7% in January 2017.¹ It is important to recognize that the unemployment rate represents only those who are unemployed and actively seeking employment. It does not represent all joblessness, nor does it address the types of available employment. In addition, it is likely that the high cost of living in San José makes it difficult for many to afford housing. Housing affordability, housing availability, insufficient income, and employment can all be factors in areas (like San José) with a high cost of living.

Eighty two percent (82%) of survey respondents experiencing homelessness indicated they were unemployed, a decrease from 95% in 2017. Forty-seven percent (47%) of unemployed respondents indicated that they were currently looking for work, 28% indicated they were not, and 25% indicated they were currently unable to work.

While the majority (82%) of survey respondents reported being unemployed, some reported having part-time or having sporadic employment (12%) and full-time employment (6%). Despite some income, data suggest that employment and income were typically not sufficient enough to meet basic needs. For example, of the employed homeless survey respondents, two-thirds (67%) were making less than \$1,100 monthly, and not surprisingly, even more unemployed survey respondents (90%) reported that their income was in the same bracket. Typically, income for unemployed homeless individuals comes from government benefits, recycling, and panhandling.

Figure 21. EMPLOYMENT STATUS



2015 N=626; 2017 N=310; 2019 N=897

Figure 22. MONTHLY INCOME BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS

SALARY	EMPLOYED		UNEMPLOYED	
	2017	2019	2017	2019
Less Than \$750	35%	43%	90%	75%
\$750-\$1,099	29%	24%	7%	15%
\$1,100-\$1,499	14%	12%	2%	8%
\$1,500 or More	21%	21%	1%	3%

2017 N=310; 2019 N=883

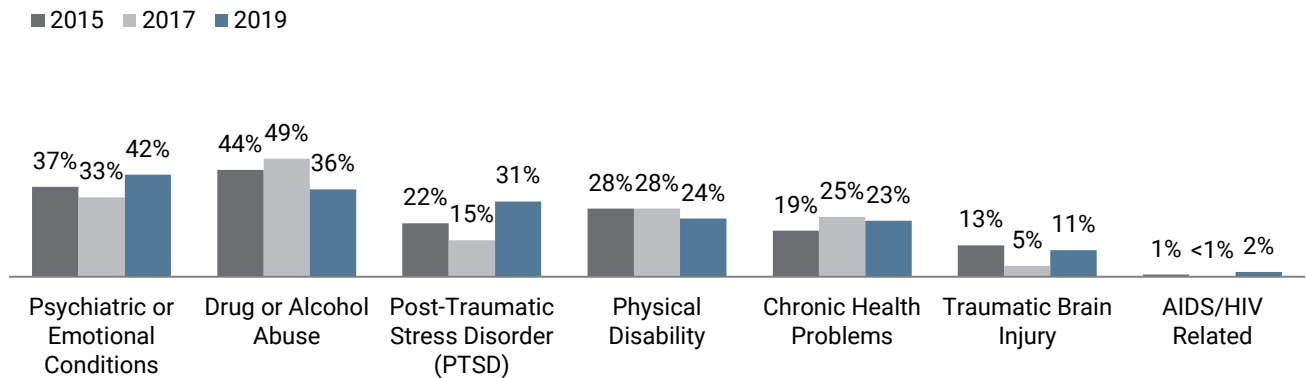
¹State of California Employment Development Department. (2019). Unemployment Rates (Labor Force). Retrieved from <http://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov>.

HEALTH

The average life expectancy for individuals experiencing homelessness is 25 years less than those in stable housing. Without regular access to healthcare and without safe and stable housing, individuals experience preventable illness and often endure longer hospitalizations. It is estimated that those experiencing homelessness stay four days (or 36%) longer per hospital admission than non-homeless patients.²

The top health conditions survey respondents reported experiencing in 2019 were: a psychiatric or emotional condition, such as depression and schizophrenia (42%); drug/alcohol abuse (36%), and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder or PTSD (31%).

Figure 23. HEALTH CONDITIONS



2015 N=580-598; 2017 N=309-325; 2019 N=925

² Sharon A. Salit, M. E. (1998). Hospitalization Costs Associated with Homelessness in New York City. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 338, 1734-1740.

DOMESTIC/PARTNER VIOLENCE OR ABUSE

A history of domestic violence and partner abuse are prevalent among individuals experiencing homelessness and can be the primary cause of homelessness for many. Survivors often lack the financial resources required for housing, as their employment history or stable income may be limited.

Five percent (5%) of all survey respondents reported currently experiencing domestic/partner violence or abuse. When asked about experiences of ever being physically, emotionally or sexually abused by a relative, or another person they have stayed with (spouse, partner, sibling, parent) in their lifetime, 28% indicated that they have been.

Figure 24. CURRENTLY EXPERIENCING DOMESTIC OR PARTNER VIOLENCE

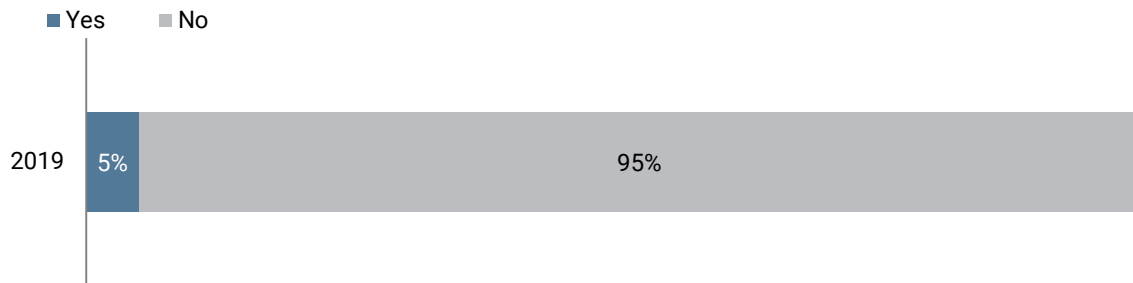


Figure 25. HISTORY OF BEING PHYSICALLY, EMOTIONALLY, OR SEXUALLY ABUSED BY A RELATIVE, OR ANOTHER PERSON WITH WHOM THEY HAVE STAYED



2019 N=925

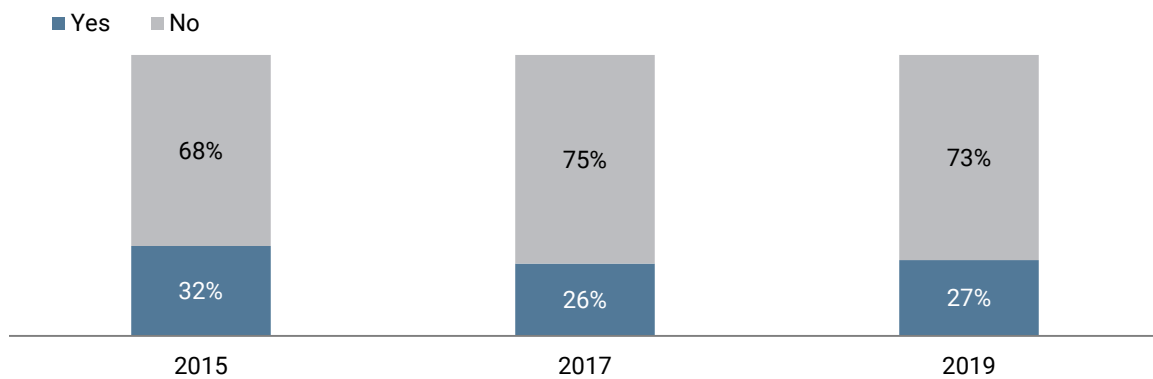
CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Homelessness and incarceration history are often related. Individuals without stable housing are at greater risk of criminal justice system involvement, particularly those with mental health issues, veterans, and youth. Individuals with past incarceration face significant barriers to exiting homelessness due to stigmatization and policies affecting their ability to gain employment and access housing opportunities.³ Also, criminal history and the general lack of available reentry services increases the likelihood of an experience of homelessness for the formerly incarcerated.

INCARCERATION

When asked if they had spent a night in jail or prison in the last 12 months, 27% of survey respondents reported that they had, similar to 2017 (26%). Seventeen percent (17%) of respondents also reported being on probation or parole at the time of the survey, and 12% indicated they had accessed re-entry services.

Figure 26. SPENT A NIGHT IN JAIL OR PRISON IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS



2015 N=593; 2017 N=326; 2019 N=875

³ Greenberg, GA, Rosenheck, RA. (2008). Jail Incarceration, Homelessness, and Mental Health: A National Study. *Psychiatric Services*, 2008 Feb;59(2): 170-7.



HUD Defined Subpopulations

Home, Together: The Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness outlines national objectives and evaluative measures for ending homelessness among all populations in the United States. In order to adequately address the diversity within the population experiencing homelessness, the federal government identifies four subpopulations with particular challenges or needs, including:

- Individuals with disabilities experiencing chronic homelessness;
- Veterans experiencing homelessness;
- Families with children experiencing homelessness; and
- Youth and young adults experiencing homelessness.

These subpopulations represent important reportable indicators for measuring local progress toward ending homelessness. The following sections examine each of these four subpopulations.



INDIVIDUALS EXPERIENCING CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

HUD defines a chronically homeless individual as someone who has experienced homelessness for a year or longer—or who has experienced at least four episodes of homelessness totaling 12 months in the last three years—and also has a disabling condition that prevents them from maintaining work or housing. This definition applies to individuals as well as heads of household who meet the definition.

The population experiencing chronic homelessness represents one of the most vulnerable populations on the street; the mortality rate for those experiencing chronic homelessness is four to nine times higher than that of the general population.⁴ Data from communities across the country reveal 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. According to local data, the top 5% of persons experiencing homelessness who had the highest costs associated with their care were receiving over \$100,000 worth of care per year.⁵ These combined costs are often significantly higher than the cost of providing individuals with permanent housing and supportive services.

In 2017, HUD reported that 86,962 individuals, representing 24% of the overall homeless population, were experiencing chronic homelessness nationwide.⁶ Chronic homelessness has been on the decline in recent years as communities across the country increase the capacity of their permanent supportive housing programs and prioritize those with the greatest barriers to housing stability.

ESTIMATES OF INDIVIDUALS EXPERIENCING CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

Over the last decade, the estimate of individuals in San José experiencing chronic homelessness has fluctuated, and was highest in 2019. There were a total of 1,553 individuals experiencing chronic homelessness in 2019, representing 25% of the overall Point-in-Time homeless population in San José. The percentage of individual experiencing chronic homelessness who were sheltered in San José increased from 11% to 15% between 2017 and 2019.

⁴ United States Interagency Council on Homelessness. (2010). Supplemental Document to the Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness: June 2010. Retrieved 2017 from https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/BkgrdPap_ChronicHomelessness.pdf

⁵ Flaming, D., Toros, H., & Burns, P. (n.d.). *Home Not Found* (Rep.). Retrieved July 1, 2019, from Destination: Home website: https://destinationhomesv.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/er_homenotfound_report_6.pdf

⁶ Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2017). Annual Assessment Report to Congress. Retrieved 2018 from <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/2017-AHAR-Part-1.pdf>

Figure 27. INDIVIDUALS EXPERIENCING CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

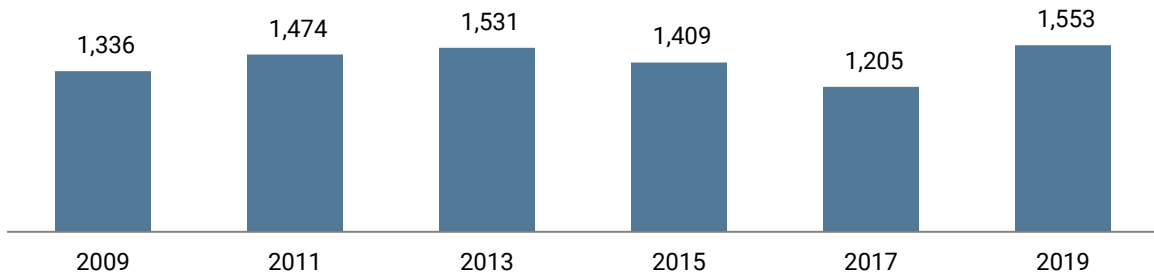
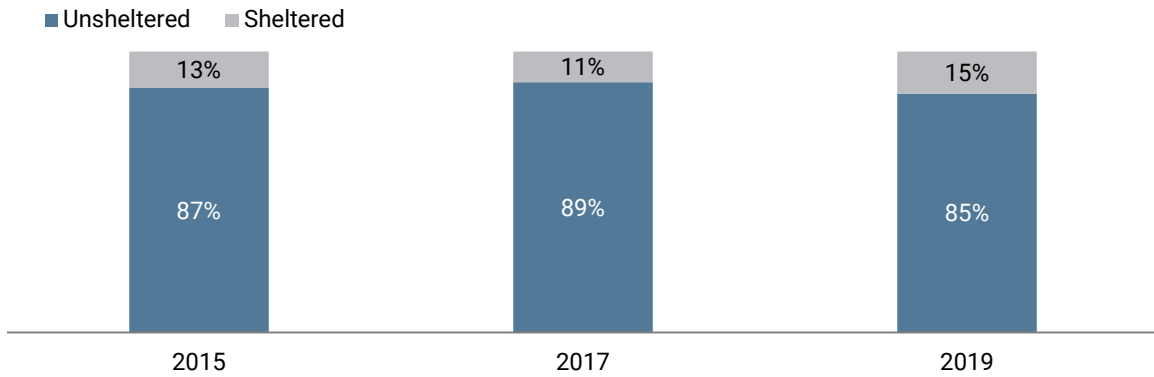


Figure 28. POPULATION EXPERIENCING CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

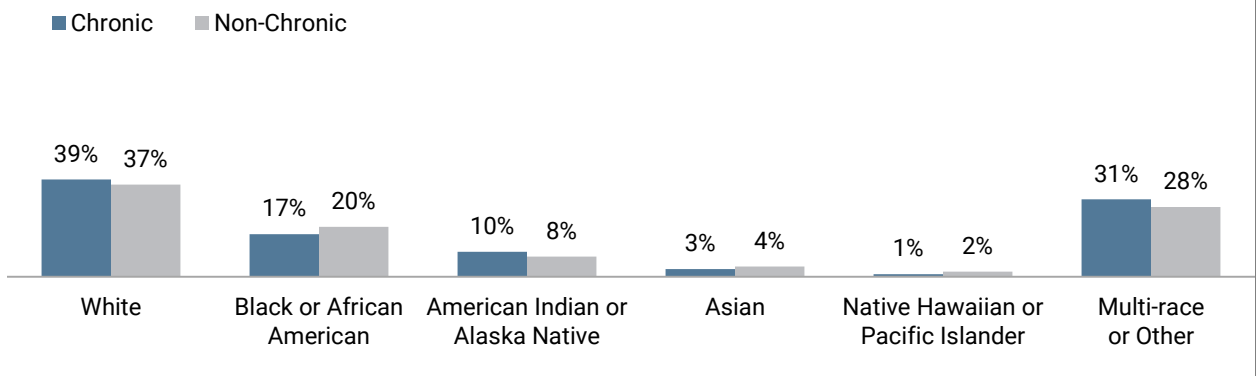


2015 N=1,409; 2017 N=1,205; 2019 N=1,552

DEMOGRAPHICS OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS EXPERIENCING CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

The majority (70%) of survey respondents experiencing chronic homelessness identified as male, slightly higher than the non-chronically homeless population (63%). A similar percentage of respondents experiencing chronic homelessness identified as Hispanic or Latinx (40%), compared to non-chronically homeless respondents (41%). Further, 3% of individuals experiencing chronic homelessness were veterans.

Figure 29. SURVEY RESPONDENTS EXPERIENCING CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS BY RACE

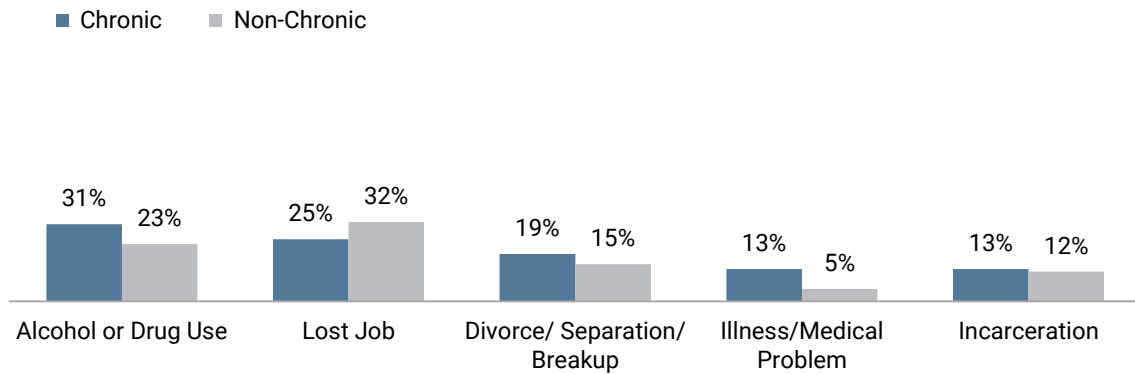


Chronic N=225; Non-Chronic N=622

PRIMARY CAUSE OF HOMELESSNESS AMONG RESPONDENTS EXPERIENCING CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

Alcohol/drug abuse was the most common cause of homelessness cited by survey respondents experiencing chronic homelessness (31%) but was a less commonly cited cause among survey respondents who were not chronically homeless (23%). The next most frequently cited responses were job loss (25%) and a divorce/separation (19%).

Figure 30. PRIMARY CAUSE OF HOMELESSNESS



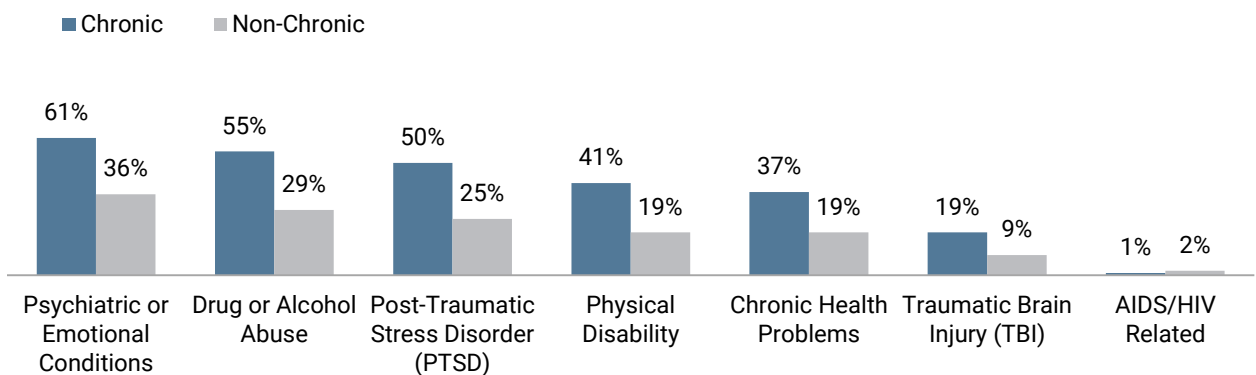
Chronic N=232 respondents offering 355 responses; Non-Chronic N=683 respondents offering 982 responses

HEALTH CONDITIONS OF RESPONDENTS EXPERIENCING CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

To meet the definition of chronic homelessness, an individual must be experiencing at least one disabling condition. In general, higher rates of health conditions were reported among those who were chronically homeless compared to their non-chronically homeless counterparts.

Of the survey respondents experiencing chronic homelessness, 61% reported experiencing a psychiatric or emotional condition, 55% reported experiencing drug/alcohol abuse, and 50% reported experiencing PTSD.

Figure 31. HEALTH CONDITIONS



Chronic N=233; Non-Chronic N=692



VETERANS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Many U.S. veterans experience conditions that place them at increased risk for homelessness. Veterans experience 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.

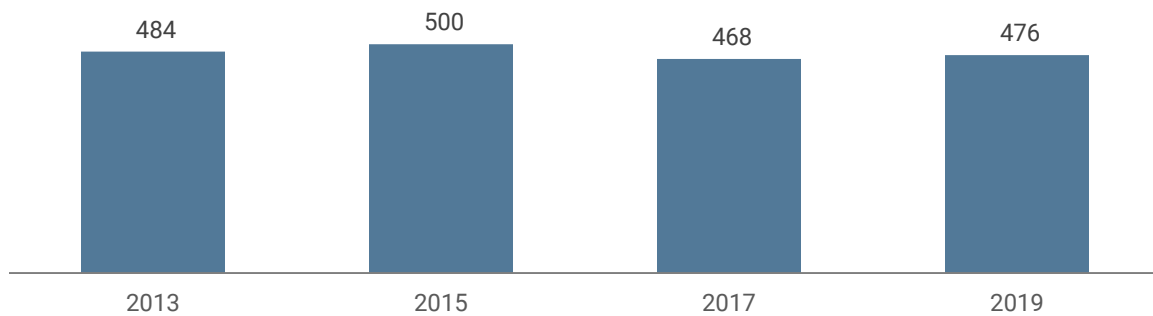
The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs provides a broad range of benefits and services to veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces. These benefits can involve different forms of financial assistance, including monthly cash payments to disabled veterans, health care, education, and housing benefits. In addition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

Between 2007 and 2018, there has been a 38% decrease in the number of veterans across the country experiencing homelessness. According to data collected during the national 2016 Point-in-Time Count, 39,471 veterans experienced homelessness across the country on a single night in January 2016.⁷

ESTIMATES OF VETERANS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

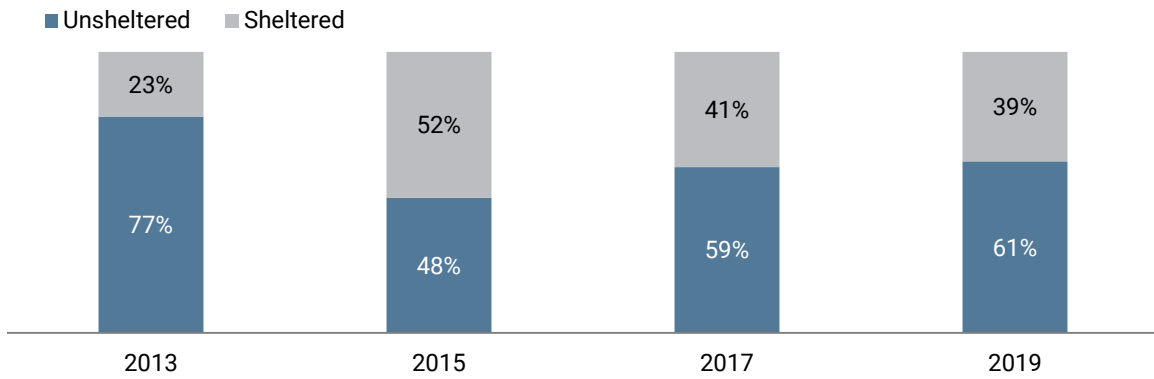
There were 476 veterans experiencing homelessness identified in San José in 2019, representing 8% of the total Point-in-Time homeless population. Sixty-one percent (61%) were unsheltered, while 39% were sheltered.

Figure 32. VETERANS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS



⁷ Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2017). Annual Assessment Report to Congress. Retrieved 2017 from <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/2014-AHAR-Part1.pdf>

Figure 33. VETERANS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS BY SHELTER STATUS

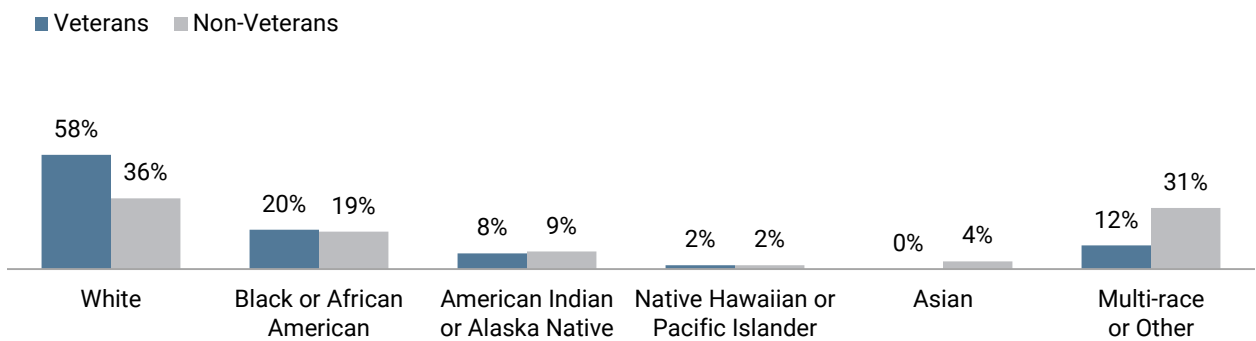


2013 N=484; 2015 N=500; 2017 N=468; 2019 N=476

DEMOGRAPHICS OF VETERANS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

A large majority (88%) of veterans experiencing homelessness identified as male and nearly one-third (29%) identified as Hispanic or Latinx. In terms of racial identity, well over half (58%) identified as White, while 20% identified as Black/African American and another 12% identified as multi-race or other.

Figure 34. VETERANS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS BY RACE

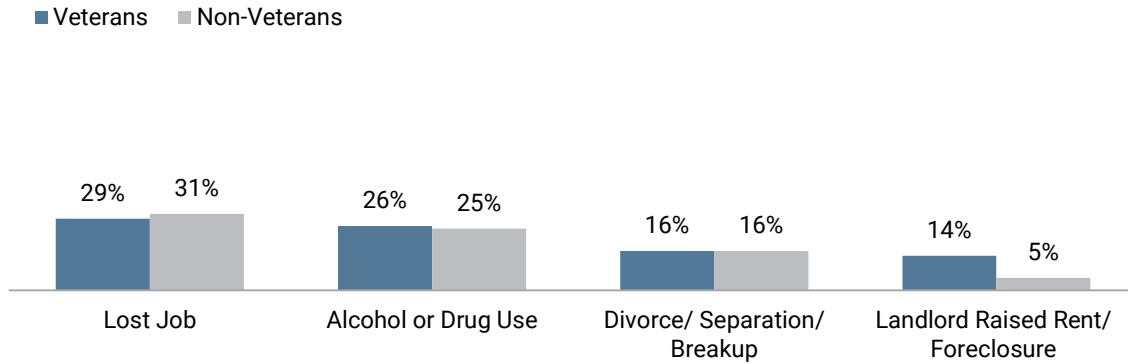


Veterans N=59; Non-Veterans N=782

PRIMARY CAUSE OF HOMELESSNESS AMONG VETERANS

Job loss was the most frequently cited cause of homelessness among veterans, reported by 29% of respondents. Further, 26% cited alcohol/drug use and 16% cited a divorce or separation as the primary cause of their homelessness.

Figure 35. PRIMARY CAUSE OF HOMELESSNESS

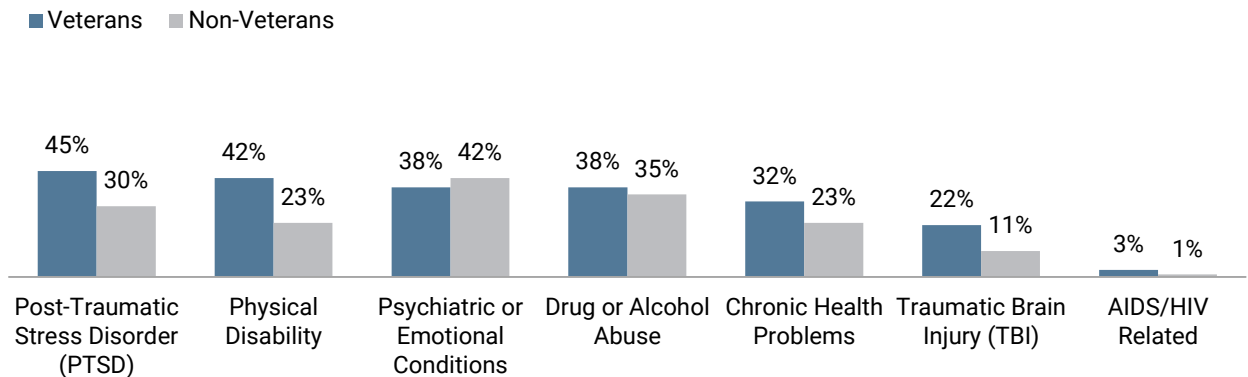


Veterans N=58 respondents offering 77 responses; Non-Veterans N=850 respondents offering 1,253 responses

DISABLING CONDITIONS AMONG VETERANS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

In general, veterans experiencing homelessness reported higher rates of health conditions than their non-veteran counterparts, with exception of psychiatric/emotional conditions. More than half (52%) of veteran survey respondents experiencing homelessness reported having one or more disabling conditions. The most commonly reported condition homeless veterans reported experiencing was PTSD (45%). This was followed by a physical disability (42%), a psychiatric or emotional condition (38%), drug/alcohol abuse (38%), and chronic health problems (32%).

Figure 36. HEALTH CONDITIONS



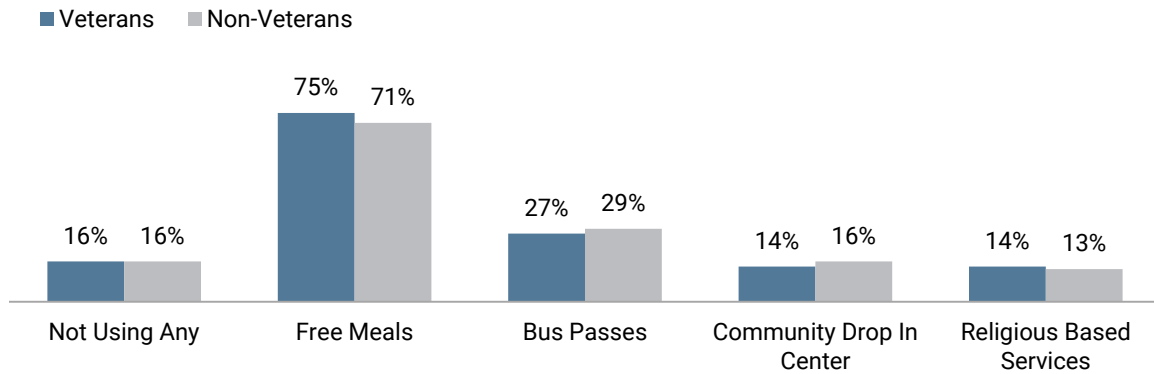
Veterans N=60; Non-Veterans N=858

ACCESS TO SERVICES AMONG VETERANS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

The percentage of veterans experiencing homelessness connected to any form of government assistance was similar to the non-veteran population (67% compared to 66%, respectively). About one in ten (9%) of veteran respondents experiencing homelessness reported receiving VA Disability Compensation.

When asked about the non-government services they were accessing, the most frequent responses were free meals (75%) and bus passes (27%).

Figure 37. ACCESS TO SERVICES



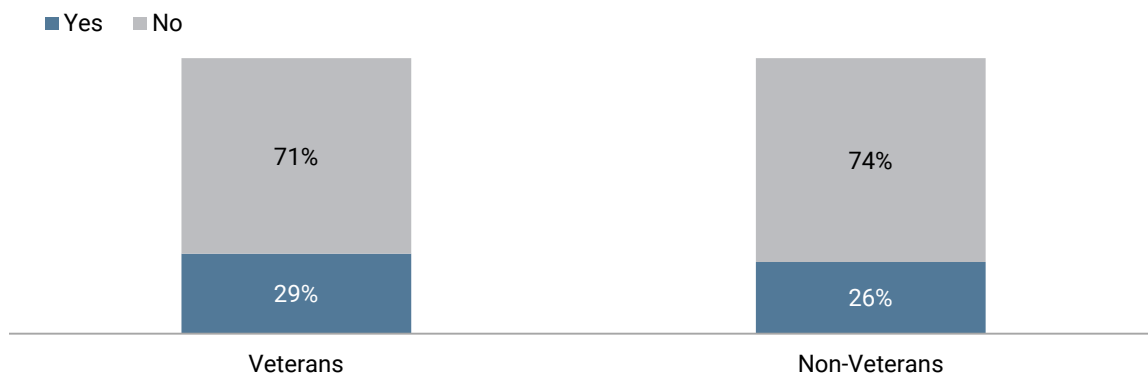
Veterans N=56 respondents offering 104 responses; Non-Veterans N=836 respondents offering 1,561 responses

INCARCERATION AMONG VETERANS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Nationally, among those who are incarcerated, veterans are more likely than non-veterans to be first time offenders, to have committed a violent offense, and to receive longer prison sentences. Veterans who are incarcerated may also face the loss of various VA benefits during this time.⁸

Twenty-nine (29%) of veteran respondents experiencing homelessness reported having spent a night in jail in the last 12 months, slightly higher than non-veterans (26%).

Figure 38. SPENT A NIGHT IN JAIL OR PRISON IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS



Veterans N=51; Non-Veterans N=817

⁸ Military Benefits. (2014). Incarcerated Veterans. Retrieved 2017 from <http://www.military.com/benefits/veterans-benefits/incarcerated-veterans.html>.



FAMILIES EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

National data from 2017 suggest that 33% of all people experiencing homelessness are persons in families.⁹ Very few families experiencing homelessness are unsheltered, as public shelters serve 90% of homeless families in the United States; this is a significantly higher proportion of the population compared to other subpopulations, including youth and young adults. Data on families experiencing homelessness suggest that they are not much different from other families living in poverty.

School districts in the County of Santa Clara and the City of San José use the McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness, a more expansive definition of homelessness than the one mandated for use in the PIT Census. The McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness includes individuals and families who are doubled up, couch surfing, staying in hotel/motels, and other living arrangements that are not included in the HUD-mandated definition of homelessness. Data indicates that there are far more families experiencing homelessness under the McKinney-Vento definition than the HUD-mandated definition.

Nationally, the majority of families experiencing homelessness are households headed by single women and families with children under the age of six.¹⁰ Children in families experiencing homelessness have increased incidence of illness and are more likely to have emotional and behavioral problems than children with stable living accommodations.¹¹

ESTIMATES OF FAMILIES EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Since 2013, the estimate of homeless families in San José has steadily declined to its lowest in 2019. There were a total of 98 families consisting of 313 individual family members experiencing homelessness in San José in 2019. However, this number represents the number of families meeting the PIT Census definition prescribed by HUD, and not the more inclusive McKinney-Vento definition. Were the McKinney-Vento definition used, the number of families experiencing homelessness would be much greater. The families experiencing homelessness subpopulation represented 4% of the Point-in-Time homeless population.¹² The majority (84%) of homeless families were sheltered, while the remaining 16% were unsheltered.

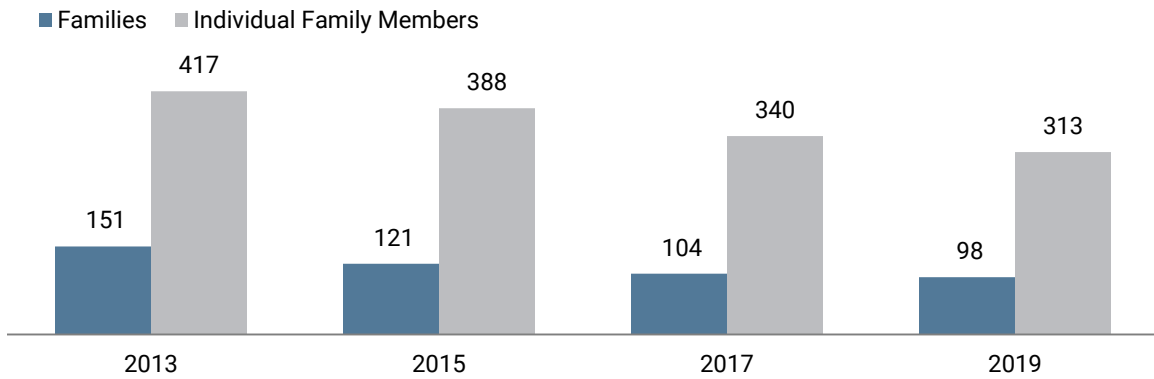
⁹ U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2017). The 2017 Annual Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress. Retrieved 2018 from <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/2017-AHAR-Part-1.pdf>

¹⁰ U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2007). Characteristics and Dynamics of Homeless Families with Children. Retrieved 2015 from <http://aspe.hhs.gov/>

¹¹ U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness. (2015). Opening Doors. Retrieved 2015 from <http://www.usich.gov/>

¹² There is a significant population of homeless families in “double-up” situations. These families may or may not fall within the HUD PIT count definition of homelessness and could not be identified due to their typical location on private property.

Figure 39. FAMILIES EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS



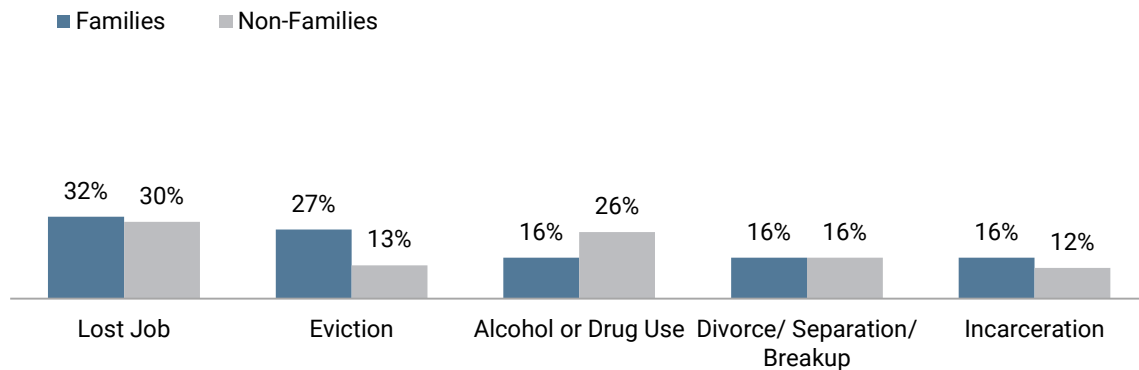
DEMOGRAPHICS OF FAMILIES EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Female family members accounted for 54% of the families experiencing homelessness subpopulation, while males accounted for 46%. Further, 47% identified as being of Hispanic/Latinx origin. In terms of racial identity, 42% of family members experiencing homelessness identified as White, while 23% identified as Black/African American.

PRIMARY CAUSE OF HOMELESSNESS AMONG FAMILIES

The top causes of homelessness reported by families were job loss (32%) and eviction (27%). Lower percentages of non-families cited these same causes.

Figure 40. PRIMARY CAUSE OF HOMELESSNESS

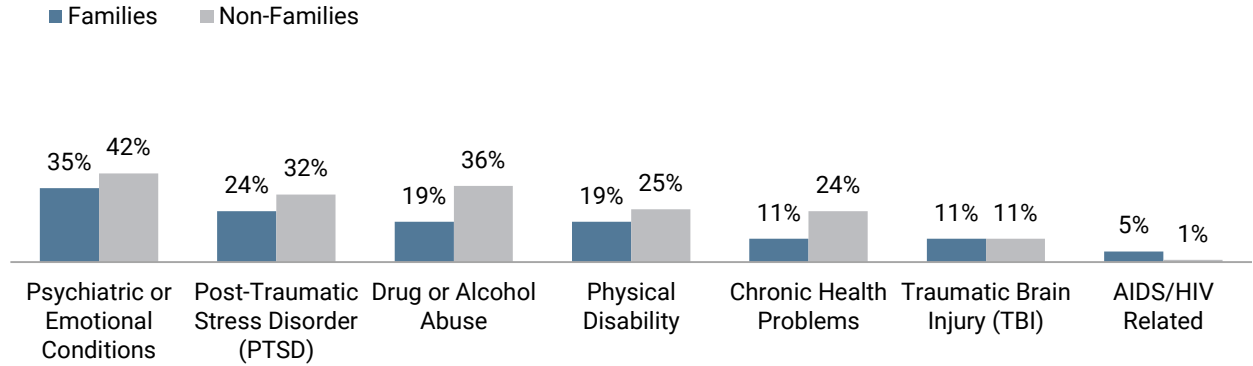


Families N=37 respondents offering 57 responses; Non-Families N=878 respondents offering 1,280 responses

HEALTH CONDITIONS AMONG FAMILIES EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Among families experiencing homelessness, a psychiatric or emotional condition was the most frequently reported health condition (35%), followed by PTSD (24%) and drug/alcohol abuse (19%). Families experiencing homelessness generally reported lower rates of health conditions than their non-family counterparts, with exception of a TBI or HIV/AIDS-related condition.

Figure 41. HEALTH CONDITIONS



Families N=53; Non-Families N=529



YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS

Due to the often concealed nature of youth homelessness, limited data are available on youth and young adults experiencing homelessness. Although largely considered an undercount, nationwide estimates from 2017 suggest there are at least 40,799 youth and young adults on the streets and in public shelters, an increase of 14% over 2016 and almost assuredly an undercount of the phenomenon.¹³ This increase may be due, in part, to the focus on youth and young adults during the 2017 Point-in-Time Count, which served as a nationwide baseline year. Youth are individuals under the age of 18, while young adults are individuals who are between the ages of 18-24. All youth in this category are unaccompanied and not with a parent or adult relative.

In 2012, the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness amended the federal strategic plan to end homelessness to include specific strategies and supports to address the needs of youth and young adults. As part of this effort, HUD placed increased focus on gathering data on unaccompanied homeless children and transition-age youth during the Point-in-Time Count. The results of this effort contributed to HUD's initiative to measure progress toward ending youth homelessness by 2020.

Young people experiencing homelessness have a harder time accessing services, including shelter, medical care, and employment. This is due to the stigma of their housing situation, lack of knowledge of available resources, and a dearth of services targeted to young people.¹⁴

ESTIMATES OF YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Homelessness among youth and young adults is a difficult problem to identify. Youth and young adults experiencing homelessness are less likely to be found among the adult population experiencing homelessness, preferring locations and times of day that make traditional efforts at enumeration difficult due to living in many different unstable housing situations such as couch surfing, hotel/motel sharing, and non-traditional unsheltered locations. Accordingly, a separate youth count effort was put in place, relying on knowledge gathered from youth currently experiencing homelessness as well as their participation in the count itself.

The 2019 Point-in-Time count identified 1,391 youth and young adults experiencing homelessness in San José. This represents an 18% decrease since 2017. Please see the methodology section for further information regarding this decrease and the methodological calculation changes which contributed to it.

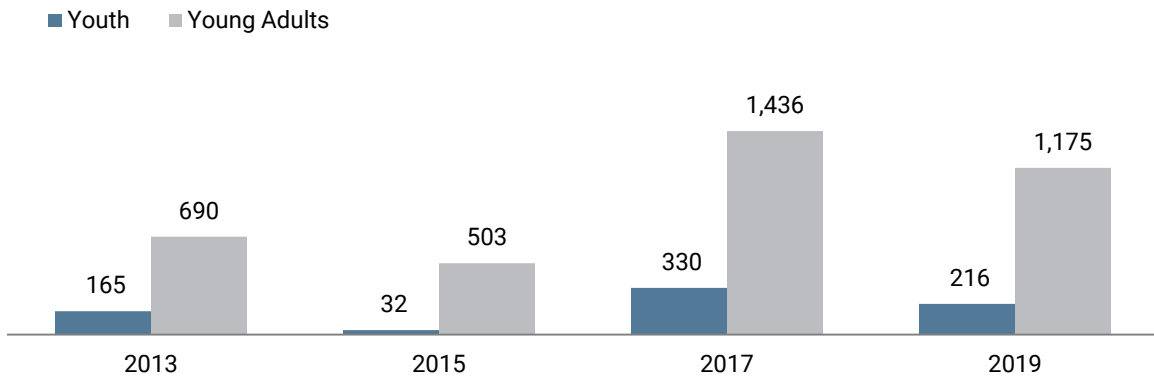
Tracking the shelter status of youth and young adults experiencing homelessness helps to monitor where these vulnerable populations are spending their time. Evidence suggests that youth and young adults stay away from shelters, fearing that they will be reported to law enforcement and/or their families. In 2019, the vast majority (94%) of youth and young adults were unsheltered. The youth and young adults

¹³ U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2017). The 2017 Annual Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress. Retrieved 2018 from <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/2017-AHAR-Part-1.pdf>

¹⁴ National Coalition for the Homeless. (2011). Homeless Youth Fact Sheet. Retrieved 2011 from <http://www.nationalhomeless.org>.

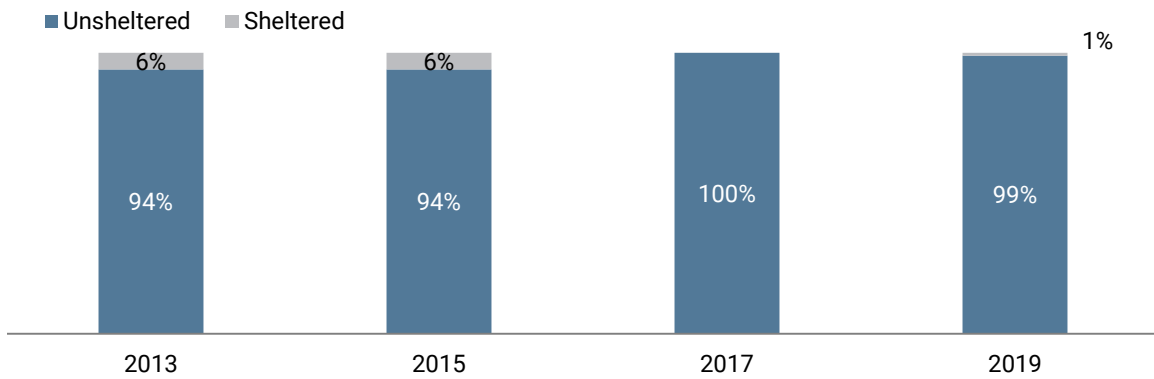
experiencing homelessness subpopulation represents almost one-quarter (23%) of the overall homeless population in the City of San José.

Figure 42. YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS



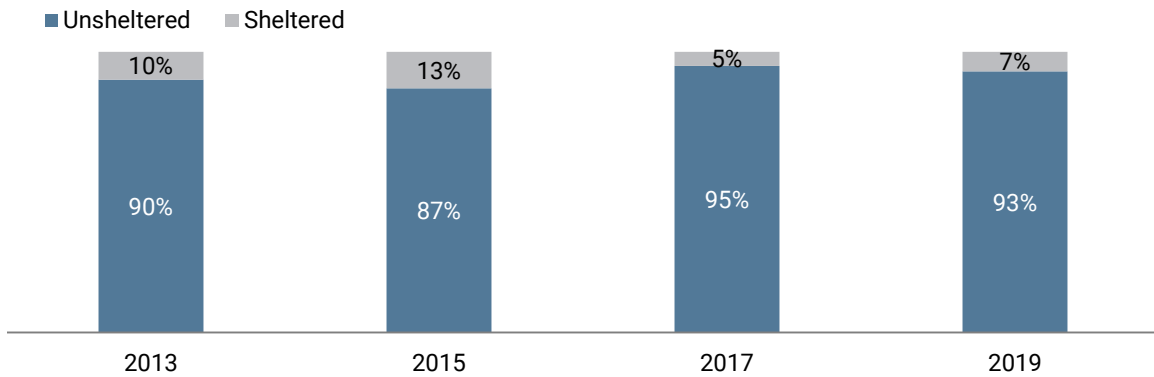
Note: In 2019, methodology in calculating the numbers of youth and young adults experiencing homelessness changed. While the change was a small one, please use caution when comparing 2017 to 2019. For further information regarding the methodology change, please see Appendix A.

Figure 43. YOUTH EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS BY SHELTER STATUS



2013 N=165; 2015 N=32; 2017 N=330; 2019 N=216

Figure 44. YOUNG ADULTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS BY SHELTER STATUS

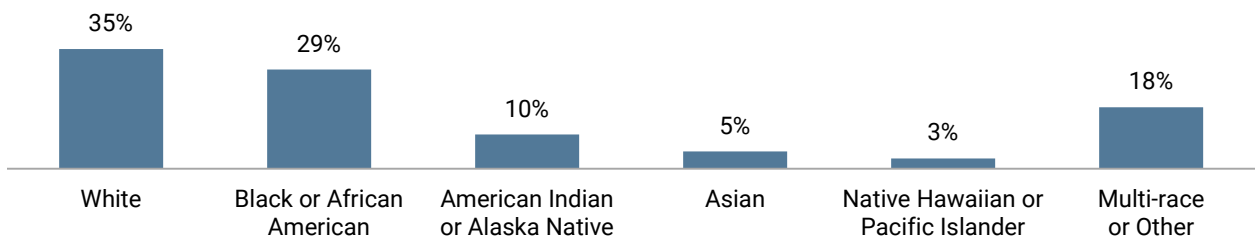


2013 N=690; 2015 N=503; 2017 N=1,436; 2019 N=1,175

DEMOGRAPHICS OF YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Over half (52%) of youth and young adults experiencing homelessness identified as male, 39% identified as female, 8% identified as transgender, and 1% didn't identify as male, female, or transgender. Forty-five percent (45%) identified as being of Hispanic/Latinx origin, and racially, 35% identified as White, 29% as Black/African American, and 10% as American Indian or Alaska Native.

Figure 45. YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS BY RACE

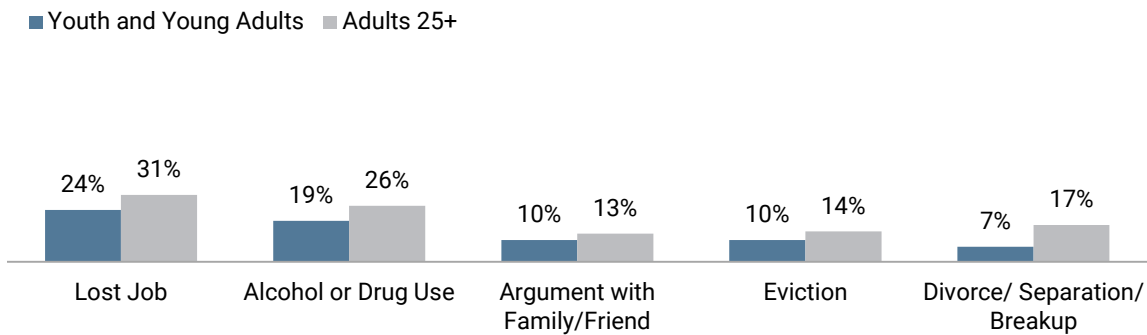


2019 N=1,386

PRIMARY CAUSE OF HOMELESSNESS AMONG YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS

Youth and young adult respondents experiencing homelessness cited similar causes of homelessness compared to adult respondents. The most commonly reported causes among youth and young adults were job loss (24%), alcohol/drug use (19%), an argument with family/friend (10%), and eviction (10%).

Figure 46. PRIMARY CAUSE OF HOMELESSNESS

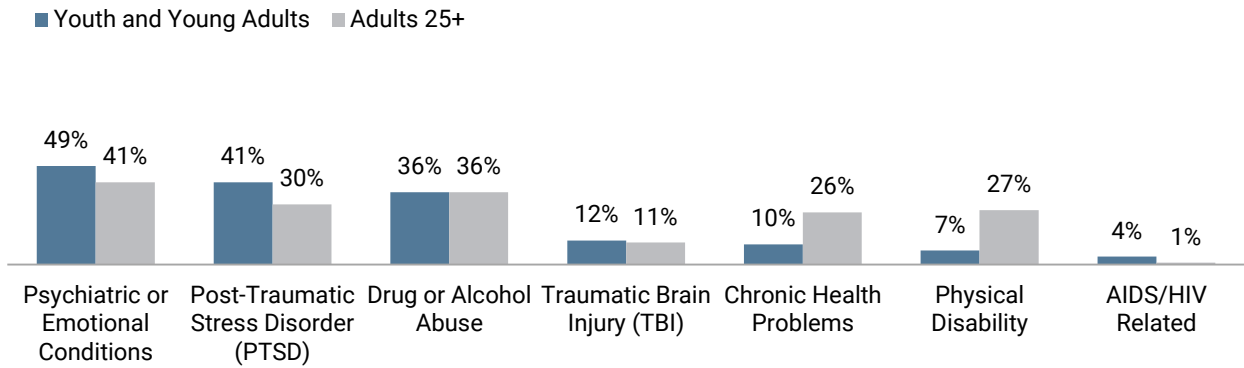


Youth and Young Adult N=135 respondents offering 148 responses; Adults N=780 respondents offering 1,189 responses

HEALTH CONDITIONS AMONG YOUTH & YOUNG ADULTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

A substantial number of youth and young adults experiencing homelessness reported experiencing health issues, and surprisingly in some cases, at higher rates than their adult counterparts. Forty-nine percent (49%) of respondents under age 25 reported experiencing a psychiatric or emotional condition, 41% reported experiencing PTSD, and 36% reported experiencing drug/alcohol abuse.

Figure 47. HEALTH CONDITIONS



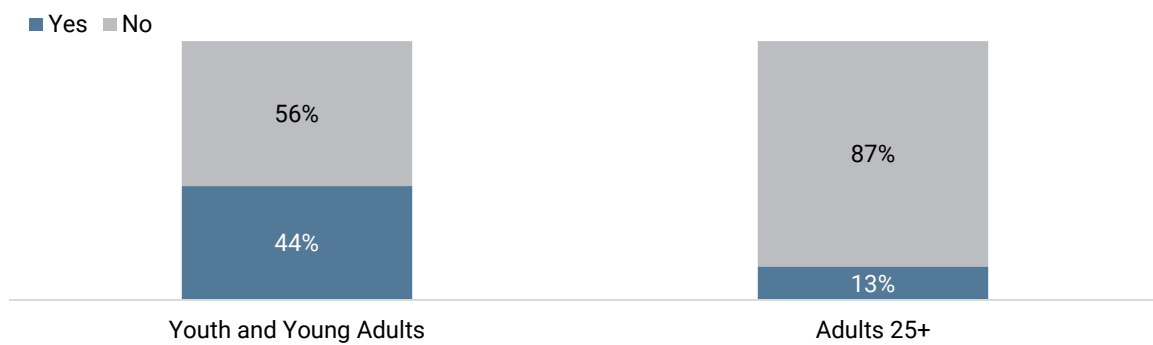
Youth and Young Adult N=133 Adults N=1,306

INSTITUTIONAL INVOLVEMENT AMONG YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Nationally, it is estimated that at least one-third of foster youth experience homelessness after exiting foster care.¹⁵ Forty-four percent (44%) of youth and young adult respondents experiencing homelessness reported they had been in the foster care system. No children or youth respondent cited aging out of foster care as their primary cause of homelessness.

Over one-third (35%) of youth and young adult respondents indicated that they had spent a night in jail in the year prior to taking the survey, higher than adult respondents (25%). On the other hand, a similar percentage of youth and young adults were currently on probation or parole (16%), compared to adult respondents (17%)

Figure 48. HISTORY OF FOSTER CARE



Youth and Young Adults N=133; Adults N= 777

¹⁵ Dworsky, A.; Napolitano, L.; and Courtney, M. (2013). Homelessness During the Transition From Foster Care to Adulthood. Congressional Research Services, Am J Public Health. 2013 December; 103(Suppl 2): S318 –S323. Retrieved 2018 from 10.2105/AJPH.2013.301455.



Conclusion

The 2019 City of San José Homeless Count and Survey was performed using HUD-recommended practices for counting and surveying the homeless population. Data summarized in this report provide many valuable insights about the unique and diverse experiences of homelessness in the City of San José. A few data highlights include:

- The Point-in-Time Homeless Count identified a total of 6,097 persons experiencing homelessness in the City of San José in 2019, an increase of 42% from the count conducted in 2017.
- More than four in five (83%) persons experiencing homelessness in the City of San José were unsheltered, living in places not intended for human habitation.
- Well over one-third (39%) of homeless survey respondents indicated they were experiencing homelessness for the first time, and 67% had been homeless for one year or longer.
- When asked what might have prevented them from becoming homeless, the top answers among survey respondents were rent/mortgage assistance (reported by 45% of respondents), followed by employment assistance (39%), and alcohol/drug counseling (31%).
- The biggest obstacles to obtaining permanent housing were the affordability of rent (68%), a lack of a job/income (60%), and a lack of available housing (47%).
- Homeless survey respondents also reported having these health conditions: a psychiatric or emotional condition (42%); drug/alcohol abuse (36%), and PTSD (31%).
- The estimated counts of the four HUD-identified subpopulations in the City of San José were: chronically homeless individuals with one or more disabling condition (1,553 persons and 25% of the overall homeless population), homeless veterans (476 and 8% of the overall homeless population), members of homeless families with children (313 and 5% of the overall homeless population), and unaccompanied youth and young adults (1,391 and 23% of the overall homeless population).

In summary, the 2019 City of San José Homeless Count and Survey provides valid and useful data that help create a more comprehensive profile of those experiencing homelessness. Data presented in this report fulfill federal reporting requirements for the CoC, and will continue to inform outreach, service planning, and policy decision-making by local planning bodies over the year to come.

There are still many challenges to overcome in achieving the goal of making homelessness in the City of San José rare and brief and helping homeless individuals and families access necessary services and support. The dissemination and evaluation of this effort will help the CoC and all City of San José and Santa Clara County stakeholders continue to produce and refine constructive and innovative solutions to end homelessness and make it a rare, brief, and one-time occurrence. Through innovative and effective

housing programs and services, the City of San José and Santa Clara County remain committed to moving homeless persons into permanent housing.



Appendix A: Methodology

The San José Point-in-Time Homeless Census and Survey was designed and implemented as part of the broader county-wide effort. Therefore, the research methodology and infrastructure that supported the effort was the same as Santa Clara County, which is detailed below.

OVERVIEW

The 2019 Santa Clara County Homeless Census and Survey was performed using HUD-recommended practices and using HUD's definition of homelessness. The primary purpose was to produce a point-in-time estimate of individuals and families experiencing homelessness in Santa Clara County, a region which covers approximately 1,312 square miles (180 square miles of which is the City of San José). The results of several components were combined to produce the total estimated number of persons experiencing homelessness on a given night. A detailed description of these components follows.

COMPONENTS OF THE HOMELESS CENSUS & SURVEY

The methodology used in the 2019 Point-in-Time Census and Survey had five components:

General Street Count: A morning count of unsheltered homeless individuals and families on January 29-30, 2019. This occurred from approximately 4:30 AM to 10:00 AM, and included those sleeping outdoors on the street; at bus and train stations; in parks, tents, and other makeshift shelters; and in vehicles and abandoned properties. In order to canvass all areas within Santa Clara County, the general street count was spread over two days with interstate 880 serving as the dividing line between day 1 and day 2. The general street count was designed to take place before shelter occupants were released. In areas with shelters, the immediate area surrounding the shelter was prioritized to eliminate potential double counting of individuals.

General Shelter Count: A nighttime count of homeless individuals and families staying at publicly and privately operated shelters on January 29, 2019. This included those who occupied emergency shelters, transitional housing, and safe havens. All shelter data were gathered either from Santa Clara County's Homeless Management Information System or directly from the shelter.

Targeted Street Count of Unaccompanied Children and Youth: An afternoon count of unsheltered unaccompanied children under 18 and transition-age youth 18-24 years old on January 29, 2019. This occurred from approximately 2:00 PM to 7:00 PM and was led by a special youth team who canvassed specific areas where unaccompanied children and youth

were known to congregate. Upon completion, data from this targeted count was carefully reviewed against the results from the general street count to ensure that any possible duplicate counts were removed.

Targeted COE Street Count of Students and Their Families: A count of previously-identified unsheltered homeless students and their families conducted by the Santa Clara County Office of Education in participating school districts for the night of January 29, 2019. Again, data was carefully reviewed against the results from the general street count to ensure that any possible duplicate counts were removed.

Homeless Survey: An in-person interview with 1,359 unique sheltered and unsheltered homeless individuals conducted by peer surveyors between January 29 and February 28, 2019 in Santa Clara County (925 in San José). Data from the survey were used to refine the Point-in-Time Census estimates, and then used to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the demographics and experiences of homeless individuals.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

To ensure the success and integrity of the count, many county and community agencies collaborated on community outreach, volunteer recruitment, logistical plans, methodological decisions, and interagency coordination efforts. ASR provided technical assistance for these aspects of the planning process. ASR has over 19 years of experience conducting homeless counts and surveys throughout California and across the nation. Their work is featured as a best practice in the HUD publication, *A Guide to Counting Unsheltered Homeless People*, as well as in the Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago publication, *Conducting a Youth Count: A Toolkit*.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Local homeless and housing service providers and advocates were valued partners in the planning and implementation of this count. Thanks to local efforts, the count included enumerators with a diverse range of knowledge, including expertise regarding areas frequented by homeless individuals, individuals living in vehicles, and persons residing in encampments. Community partners were also key in recruiting individuals with lived experience of homelessness to participate in the street count and survey efforts.

STREET COUNT METHODOLOGY

DEFINITION

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

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 stations, airport, or camping ground.

METHODOLOGICAL IMPROVEMENTS

The 2019 street count methodology followed an established, HUD approved methodology used counts since 2007, with the addition of dedicated youth outreach in each of those years. The 2019 count also saw a change in methodology regarding the extrapolation of demographic detail on tents and vehicles. Challenges were presented in 2019 by a large number of tents and vehicles that were identified as inhabited, but without demographic detail available, combined with large numbers of identified youth and young adults from the youth count. To prevent overrepresentation of youth and young adults when

resolving demographic details on tents and vehicles, a methodological change in the extrapolation of age and gender was implemented.

VOLUNTEER AND GUIDE RECRUITMENT

Many individuals who live and/or work in Santa Clara County supported the county's effort to enumerate the local homeless population. In 2019, over 250 community volunteers and homeless guides participated in the general street count.

Extensive outreach efforts were conducted, including outreach to local non-profits and volunteer agencies that serve individuals experiencing homelessness. Local shelters and service providers recruited and recommended the most knowledgeable and reliable homeless individuals to participate in the count. Homeless guides were paid \$15 for attending an hour-long training as well as \$15 per hour worked on the days of the count.

Volunteers and guides served as enumerators on the morning of the count, canvassing the county in teams to visually count homeless persons. County, city, and ASR staff supported each of the five dispatch centers in San José, Palo Alto, Gilroy, and Mountain View, greeting volunteers and guides, distributing instructions, maps, and supplies to enumeration teams, and collecting data sheets from returning teams.

In order to participate in the count, all volunteers and guides were requested to attend an hour-long training before the count. Trainings were held in multiple locations throughout the county. Training covered all aspects of the count, including the definition of homelessness, how to identify homeless individuals, potential locations where homeless individuals may congregate, how to safely and respectfully conduct the count, how to use the tally count sheets and maps to ensure the entirety of the assigned area was covered, as well as other tips to help ensure an accurate count. If individuals were unable to attend a training in person, a YouTube training video was also made available.

STREET COUNT DEPLOYMENT CENTERS

To achieve complete coverage of the county within the morning timeframe, the planning team identified five areas for the placement of deployment centers on the morning of the count. Deployment centers specific to the City of San José were Salvation Army in San José and City Team in San José. Volunteers selected their dispatch center at the time of registration based on their familiarity with the area or their convenience. The planning team determined the enumeration routes and assigned them to the dispatch center closest or most central to the coverage area to facilitate the timely deployment of enumeration teams into the field.

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

Every effort was made to minimize potentially hazardous situations. Law enforcement agencies were notified of pending street count activity in their jurisdictions. In census tracts with a high concentration of homeless encampments, specialized teams with knowledge of those encampments were identified and assigned to those areas. Enumeration teams were advised to take every safety precaution possible, including bringing flashlights and maintaining a respectful distance from those they were counting.

LOGISTICS OF ENUMERATION

On the morning of the street count, teams of two or more persons were created to enumerate designated areas of the county for the street count. Each team was generally composed of at least one trained volunteer and one trained homeless guide, and provided with their assigned census tract maps, tally sheets, training guidelines, and other supplies.

All accessible streets, roads, parks, and highways in the enumerated tracts were traversed by foot or car. Homeless enumerators were instructed to include themselves on their tally sheets for the street count if they were not going to be counted by the shelter count. Dispatch center volunteers provided each team with tally sheets to record the number of homeless persons observed in addition to basic demographic and location information. Dispatch center volunteers also verified that at least one person on each team had a cell phone available for their use during the count and recorded the number on the volunteer deployment log sheet. Teams were asked to cover the entirety of their assigned areas.

YOUTH STREET COUNT METHODOLOGY

GOAL

The goal of the 2019 dedicated youth count was to improve representation of unaccompanied homeless youth and young adults under the age of 25 in the Point-in-Time Count. Many youth and young adults experiencing homelessness do not use homeless services, are unrecognizable to adult street count volunteers, and may be in unsheltered locations that are difficult to find. Therefore, traditional street count efforts are not as effective in reaching youth.

RESEARCH DESIGN

As in all years, planning for the 2019 supplemental youth count included homeless youth service providers and youth with lived experience of homelessness. Local service providers identified locations where homeless youth were known to congregate and recruited youth and young adults currently experiencing homelessness with knowledge of where to locate homeless youth to serve as guides for the count. Late afternoon and early evening enumeration were the ideal times recommended by advocates to conduct the youth count.

A focus group was held with currently and previously homeless youth to identify areas to canvass for the supplemental youth count. The Bill Wilson Center took the lead on recruiting 26 youth to work as peer enumerators in addition to 10 youth service provider staff members who accompanied and transported the youth around the county.

Youth workers were paid \$15 per hour for their time, including time spent in training prior to the count. Youth and youth service provider staff members were trained on where and how to identify homeless youth as well as how to record the data.

DATA COLLECTION

It was determined that homeless youth would be more prominent on the street during daylight hours rather than in the early morning when the general count was conducted. Youth worked in teams of two to four, with teams coordinated by youth street outreach workers.

HUD and the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness recognize that youth do not commonly congregate with homeless adults and are not easily identified by non-youth. For this reason, these agencies accept and recommend that communities count youth at times when they can be seen rather than during traditional enumeration times.

STREET COUNT DE-DUPLICATION

Data from the supplemental youth count and general street count were compared and de-duplicated by assessing location, gender, and age. In total, 24 persons under the age of 25 were identified as duplicates and removed from the data set.

SHELTER COUNT METHODOLOGY

GOAL

The goal of the shelter and institution count is to gain an accurate count of persons temporarily housed in shelters and other institutions across Santa Clara County. These data are vital to gaining an accurate, overall count of the homeless population and understanding where homeless persons receive shelter.

DEFINITION

For the purposes of this study, the HUD definition of sheltered homelessness for Point-in-Time Counts was used. This definition includes individuals and families living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangement.

RESEARCH DESIGN

All shelter data were gathered either directly from the shelter or from Santa Clara County's Homeless Management Information System.

DATA COLLECTION

To collect data on individuals staying in shelters, ASR worked with BitFocus, the HMIS system administrators for Santa Clara County. BitFocus collected data on all emergency shelters, transitional housing programs, and Safe Havens operating in the county. Data was collected on household status, age, gender, race and ethnicity, veteran status, chronic status, and if individuals had certain health conditions. There were a small, limited number of shelters that do not participate in the HMIS system. To gather their data, ASR collected the same data using a web-based system of reporting.

EFFORTS TO IDENTIFY FAMILIES

Significant efforts were made to include data from all school districts within Santa Clara County. ASR and partners from the county met with district representatives to prepare them for the count and train them in data collection procedures. District representatives were trained to call all families that met the HUD definition of homelessness and ask where they had been staying on the night of the count.

Participation from school districts was not as extensive in 2019 when compared to 2017, and may have had an impact on the number of unsheltered families that were identified in this year's count. In 2017, 12 schools participated in the COE count, while only 7 participated in the 2019 COE Count.

Street enumeration teams are also asked to look for families experiencing homelessness. In order to qualify as a family, there must be an adult with a child under the age of 18. If they identify any families experiencing homelessness, demographic details (age, gender, number of family members, dwelling type) are then compared to the COE count to determine if any are duplicates, which are then removed.

CHALLENGES

There are many challenges in any homeless enumeration, especially when implemented in a community as large and diverse as Santa Clara County. Point-in-Time Counts are "snapshots" that quantify the size of the homeless population at a given point during the year. Hence, the count may not be representative of fluctuations and compositional changes in the homeless population seasonally or over time.

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

The methods employed in a non-intrusive visual homeless enumeration, while academically sound, have inherent biases and shortcomings. Even with the assistance of dedicated homeless service providers, the methodology cannot guarantee 100% accuracy. Many factors may contribute to missed opportunities, for example:

It is difficult to identify homeless persons who may be sleeping in vans, cars, recreational vehicles, abandoned buildings, or structures unfit for human habitation.

Homeless families with children often seek opportunities to stay on private property, rather than sleep on the streets, in vehicles, or in makeshift shelters.

Even though the Point-in-Time Count 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.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

The data collected through the survey are used for the McKinney-Vento Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance funding application and are important for future program development and planning. The survey elicited information such as gender, family status, military service, duration and recurrence of homelessness, 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.

Surveys were conducted by peer survey workers with lived homeless experience. Training sessions were facilitated by ASR, Santa Clara County staff, and community partners. Potential interviewers were led through a comprehensive orientation that included project background information as well as detailed instruction on respondent eligibility, interviewing protocol, and confidentiality. Peer survey workers were compensated at a rate of \$7 per completed survey.

It was determined that survey data would be more easily obtained if an incentive gift was offered to respondents in appreciation for their time and participation. Socks were provided as an incentive for participating in the 2019 homeless survey. The socks were easy to distribute, had wide appeal, and could be provided within the project budget. The incentives proved to be widely accepted among survey respondents.

SURVEY SAMPLING

Based on a Point-in-Time Count estimate of 9,706 homeless persons, with a randomized survey sampling process, the 1,359 valid surveys represented a confidence interval of +/-2.5% with a 95% confidence level when generalizing the results of the survey to the estimated population of individuals experiencing homelessness in Santa Clara County. For the City of San José, based on a Point-in-Time Count of 6,097 homeless persons, the 925 surveys represent a confidence interval of +/- 3% with a 95% confidence level when generalizing the results of the survey to the entire San José Point-in-Time homeless population.

The 2019 survey was administered in shelters, transitional housing facilities, and on the street. In order to ensure 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.

Strategic attempts were also made to reach individuals in various geographic locations and of various subset groups such as homeless youth, minority ethnic groups, military veterans, domestic violence survivors, and families. One way to increase the participation of these groups was to recruit peer survey workers. Since 2009, the ASR survey methodology has prioritized a peer-to-peer approach to data collection by increasing the number of currently homeless surveyors.

In order to increase randomization of sample respondents, survey workers were trained to employ an “every third encounter” survey approach. Survey workers were instructed to approach every third person they considered to be an eligible survey respondent. 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.

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 single individual.

DATA ANALYSIS

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, length of homelessness, and consistencies in patterns of responses to other survey questions.

SURVEY CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

The 2019 Santa Clara County Homeless Survey did not include an equal representation of all homeless experiences. For example, finding families experiencing homelessness presents a challenge and can lead to underrepresentation in the survey results. In 2019, the number of survey respondents living in families was low enough that displaying their survey results were unstable and could lead to misinterpretation of the data. The same applies to youth and young adults, though care is taken to ensure that youth surveyors are involved, to increase the response rate of youth survey respondents.

There may be some variance in the data that individuals experiencing homelessness self-reported. 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 suited to conducting interviews and these individuals received comprehensive training about how to conduct interviews. Service providers and county staff also reviewed the surveys to ensure quality responses. Surveys that were considered incomplete or containing false responses were not accepted.



Appendix B: Definitions & Abbreviations

Chronic homelessness – Defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development as an unaccompanied individual or head of a family household with a disabling condition who has either continuously experienced homelessness for a year or more, or has experienced at least four episodes of homelessness totaling 12 months, in the past three years.

Disabling condition – Defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development as a physical, mental, or emotional impairment, including an impairment caused by alcohol or drug abuse, post-traumatic stress disorder, or brain injury that is expected to be long-term and impacts the individual’s ability to live independently; a developmental disability; or HIV/AIDS.

Emergency shelter – 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 180 days or fewer. Domestic violence shelters are typically considered a type of emergency shelter, as they provide safe, immediate housing for survivors and their children.

Family – A household with at least one adult and one child under the age of 18.

Homeless – Under the Category 1 definition of homelessness in the 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 – Abbreviation for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Precariously housed – A person who is staying with the household because they have no other regular or adequate place to stay due to a lack of money or other means of support.

Sheltered individuals experiencing homelessness – Individuals who are living in emergency shelters or transitional housing programs.

Single individual – An unaccompanied adult over the age of 18.

Young adults – Young people between the ages of 18 and 24 years old who are not accompanied by a parent or guardian and are not a parent presenting with or sleeping in the same place as their own child(ren).

Transitional housing – 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 youth – Children under the age of 18 who are not accompanied by a parent or guardian and are not a parent presenting with or sleeping in the same place as their own child(ren).

Unsheltered individuals experiencing homelessness – Individuals who are living on the streets, in abandoned buildings, storage structures, vehicles, encampments, or any other place unfit for human habitation.



Appendix C: Table of Figures

Figure 1.	Total Point-in-Time Count of Persons Experiencing Homelessness in San José.....	10
Figure 2.	Point-in-Time Homeless Population by Shelter Status - Longitudinal	10
Figure 3.	Point-in-Time Homeless Population by Gender	11
Figure 4.	Point-in-Time Homeless Population By San José City Council District.....	11
Figure 5.	Survey Respondents by Age	13
Figure 6.	LGBTQ+ Survey Respondents by Identity	13
Figure 7.	Survey Respondents by Hispanic or Latinx Origin.....	14
Figure 8.	Survey Respondents by Race	14
Figure 9.	History of Foster Care	15
Figure 10.	Current Episode of Homelessness Is the First Time Experiencing Homelessness.....	16
Figure 11.	Age When Experienced Homelessness for the First Time	16
Figure 12.	Length of Current Episode of Homelessness.....	17
Figure 13.	Place of Residence at Time of Housing Loss.....	18
Figure 14.	Living Arrangements Just Prior to Becoming Homeless.....	18
Figure 15.	Current Living Arrangements.....	19
Figure 16.	Primary Cause of Homelessness (Top Responses in 2019).....	20
Figure 17.	Obstacles to Obtaining Permanent Housing (Top Responses in 2019)	21
Figure 18.	Receipt of Government Assistance.....	22
Figure 19.	Reasons for Not Receiving Government Assistance).....	22
Figure 20.	Receipt of Other Services or Assistance (Top Responses in 2019)	23
Figure 21.	Employment Status	24
Figure 22.	Monthly Income by Employment Status	24
Figure 23.	Health Conditions.....	25
Figure 24.	Currently Experiencing Domestic or Partner Violence	26
Figure 25.	History of Being Physically, Emotionally, or Sexually Abused by a Relative, or Another Person with Whom They Have Stayed	26
Figure 26.	Spent a Night in Jail or Prison in the Last 12 Months.....	27
Figure 27.	Individuals Experiencing Chronic Homelessness	30
Figure 28.	Population Experiencing Chronic Homelessness	30
Figure 29.	Survey Respondents Experiencing Chronic Homelessness by Race	30
Figure 30.	Primary Cause of Homelessness.....	31
Figure 31.	Health Conditions.....	31
Figure 32.	Veterans Experiencing Homelessness	32
Figure 33.	Veterans Experiencing Homelessness by Shelter Status.....	33
Figure 34.	Veterans Experiencing Homelessness by Race	33
Figure 35.	Primary Cause of Homelessness	34
Figure 36.	Health Conditions.....	34
Figure 37.	Access to Services	35
Figure 38.	Spent a Night in Jail or Prison in the Last 12 Months.....	35

Figure 39.	Families Experiencing Homelessness	37
Figure 40.	Primary Cause of Homelessness	37
Figure 41.	Health Conditions	38
Figure 42.	Youth and Young Adults Experiencing Homelessness	40
Figure 43.	Youth Experiencing Homelessness by Shelter Status	40
Figure 44.	Young Adults Experiencing Homelessness by Shelter Status	40
Figure 45.	Youth and Young Adults by Race	41
Figure 46.	Primary Cause of Homelessness	41
Figure 47.	Health Conditions	42
Figure 48.	History of Foster Care	43



Appendix D: Figure Sources

All Point in Time Count Data: The figure source for the data is *Applied Survey Research, (2004-2019) Santa Clara Homeless Census and Survey.*

All Homeless Survey Findings: The figure source for the data is *Applied Survey Research, (2004-2019) Santa Clara Homeless Census and Survey.*

All Subpopulation Data: The figure source for the data is *Applied Survey Research, (2004-2019) Santa Clara Homeless Census and Survey.*

All U.S. Census Data: The figure source for the data is *Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2019). American Community Survey 2017 1-Year Estimates. Retrieved from <http://factfinder2.census.gov>.*



City of San José

HOMELESS CENSUS & SURVEY

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