

March 18, 2021

Re: Support for the creation and maintenance of sanctioned encampments and bridge housing.

Dear Honorable Mayor Liccardo and members of the San Jose City Council,

The Human Services Commission strongly supports the establishment and maintenance of sanctioned encampments as an immediate response to the lack of affordable permanent housing, emergency shelter, and overnight warming facilities in San Jose.

The City of San Jose and Santa Clara County have implemented a number of programs to respond to this affordable housing shortage crisis, but data from the [2019 San José Homeless Census & Survey Report](#) shows homelessness has nonetheless steadily increased. In 2019 there were 6,097 unhoused residents in San Jose<sup>1</sup>, 1,785 were observed residing in unsanctioned camp communities (Please see Appendix A).

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.” San Jose counted 1,553 individuals experiencing chronic homelessness. The federal government identifies four subpopulations with particular challenges or needs, including:

- 47% Individuals with disabilities (unsheltered total not reported)
- 476 Veterans (60% unsheltered)
- 98 Families with children-313 members (30% unsheltered)
- **216 Unaccompanied Youth (99% Unsheltered)**
- and 1,175 Unaccompanied Young Adults (93% unsheltered)

Additionally, in 2019 4,409 Santa Clara County students qualified as homeless according to the McKinney Vento definition<sup>2</sup>.

Sadly, we know that the 2019 numbers reflected have likely increased further in response to the global pandemic, as orders to shelter in place have closed schools, places of employment, and emergency shelters. At the same time the unemployment rate for San Jose nearly tripled, from 2.3% in December 2019 to 6% in December 2020<sup>3</sup>. Anybody that has driven or walked the streets of downtown or East San Jose knows without doubt that more and more of our neighbors are unhoused and barely surviving under inhumane conditions.

The commission cares about the human rights of all San Jose residents and recognizes that our city has been divided on the issue of sanctioned encampments. Several such encampments have been

<sup>1</sup> In 2017 there were 4,350 unhoused residents in San Jose.

<sup>2</sup> <https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:4cb52088-50f9-4f40-b689-d28c3ec93dfa>

<sup>3</sup> SAN JOSE-SUNNYVALE-SANTA CLARA METROPOLITAN STATISTICAL AREA (MSA) (SAN BENITO AND SANTA CLARA COUNTIES) Leisure and hospitality jobs down over the month and over the year  
[https://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/file/lfmonth/sjos\\$pds.pdf](https://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/file/lfmonth/sjos$pds.pdf)

studied and provide a road map to success<sup>4</sup>. For instance, in Seattle housed residents were initially opposed to sanctioned encampments and city council divided. However, once housed neighbors saw that sanctioned encampments did not lead to an increase in crime or depreciation of property values fear subsided<sup>5</sup>. With thoughtful design and a commitment to preserving the human rights of all residents we believe that that sanctioned encampments will provide a way to ensure safety for all while meeting the basic human needs of our most vulnerable neighbors-including a warm bed, access to bathrooms, fresh water, trash service, laundry, protection, healthcare, security, for belongings, and areas for food preparation. Additionally, education, recreation, and employment opportunities should be considered essential components of the planned design.

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<sup>4</sup> City Sanctioned Homeless Encampments: A Case Study Analysis of Seattle's City-Permitted Villages  
<https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:21414280-36e0-4d39-87c8-74d87e26a22c>

<sup>5</sup> A Place to Be-Alternatives to Unsanctioned Homeless Encampments: A Report for the City of Oakland from the Goldman School of Public Policy, University of California, Berkeley. <https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:21599c5e-d581-4fe0-beb4-447affca62a1>

# City of San José

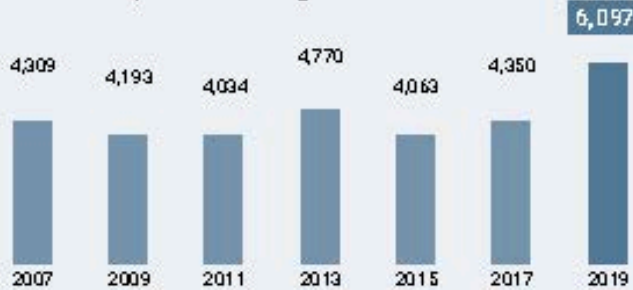
## Homeless Census & Survey

### 2019 Executive Summary

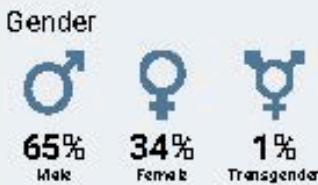
Every two years, during the last 10 days of January, communities across the country conduct comprehensive counts of the local homeless populations in order to measure the prevalence of homelessness in each local Continuum of Care.

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



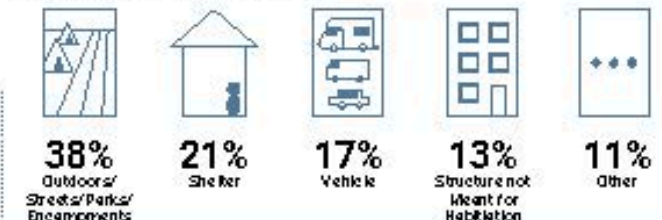
#### 2019 Sheltered/ Unsheltered Population



#### Subpopulation\* Data



#### Current Accommodation



# City of San José

## Homeless Census & Survey

### 2019 Executive Summary

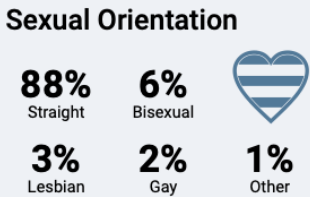
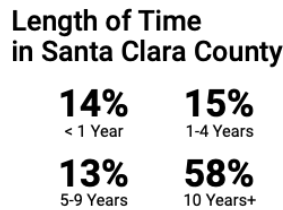
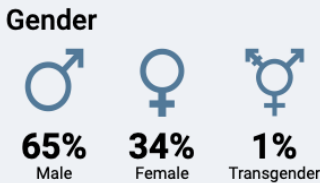
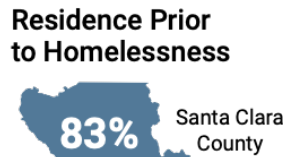
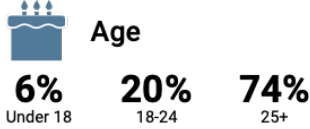
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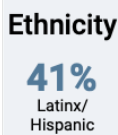
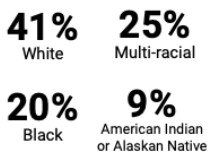


#### Subpopulation\* Data

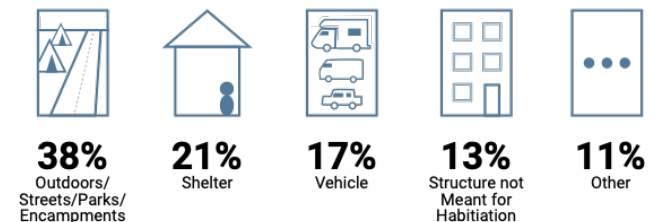


#### Race

Top Responses\*



#### Current Accommodation



Sources for this narrative:

1. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2020). The 2019 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress: Part 1. Point-in-time estimates of homelessness. Retrieved from: <https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/5948/2019-ahar-part-1-pit-estimates-of-homelessness-in-the-us>
3. National Center for Homeless Education. (2020). Federal data summary school years 2015-16 to 2017-18: Education for homeless children and youth. Retrieved from: <https://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Federal-Data-Summary-SY-15.16-to-17.18-Published-1.30.2020.pdf>
4. American Academy of Pediatrics, Council on Community Pediatrics. (2017). Providing care for children and adolescents facing homelessness and housing insecurity. *Pediatrics*, 131(6), 1206-1210. Retrieved from: <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/131/6/1206>
5. Congressional Research Service. (2019). Runaway and homeless youth: Demographics and programs. Retrieved from: <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/RL/RL33785/55>  
How Children Are Faring