

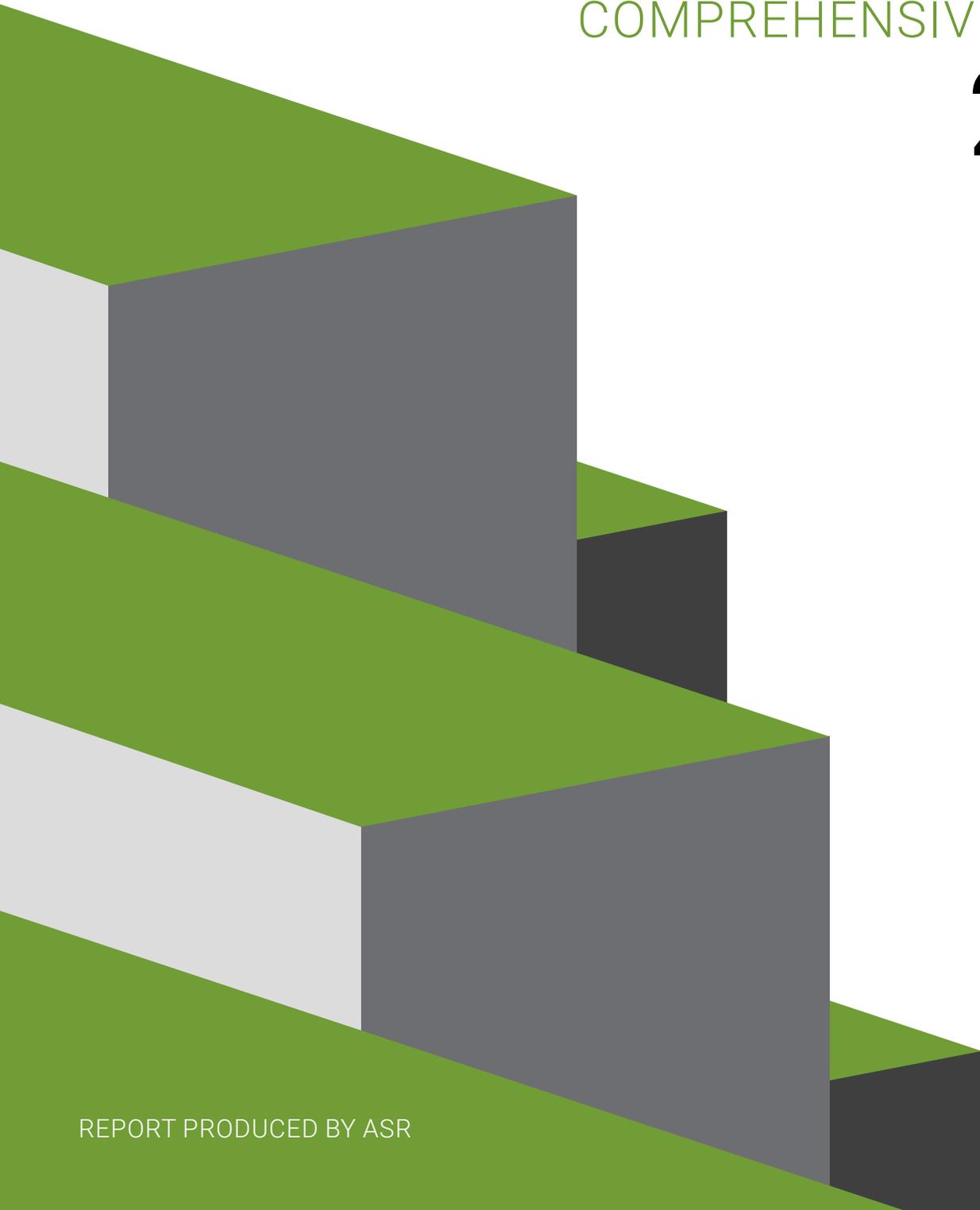


North County

HOMELESS CENSUS & SURVEY

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT

2019



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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Acknowledgements

The 2019 Santa Clara County Homeless Census and Survey planning team would like to thank the many individuals and agencies who contributed to this project. The participation of community volunteers and partner agencies is critical to the success of both the count and survey efforts. Hundreds of community volunteers, city and county employees, and local community-based organizations assisted with all aspects of the count, from the initial planning meetings, to the night of the count and to the publication of this report.

ASR would like to give special thanks to the individuals currently experiencing homelessness who acted as surveyors and guides during the count. Without their dedication and knowledge, the Homeless Census and Survey team would not have been able to conduct these efforts. They provided access and knowledge about the community that would have been unobtainable without their support. These individuals took time out of their day to participate in this effort and we owe them thanks.

PROJECT PLANNING COMMITTEE

Kathryn Kaminski, Leila Qureishi, Lorena Diez

POINT-IN-TIME JURISDICTIONAL FUNDERS

- City of Campbell
- City of Cupertino
- City of Gilroy
- City of Los Altos
- Town of Los Altos Hills
- Town of Los Gatos
- City of Milpitas
- City of Monte Sereno
- City of Morgan Hill
- City of Mountain View
- City of Palo Alto
- City of San José
- City of Saratoga
- City of Santa Clara
- City of Sunnyvale
- County of Santa Clara

OTHER ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following organizations were involved in the planning and data reporting process:

- Abode
- Bill Wilson Center
- County of Santa Clara
Office of Supportive
Housing
- Diocese of San José
- PATH
- Sacred Heart
Community
Services

Acknowledgements

- Bitfocus
- Destination: Home
- City of San José
- City of Sunnyvale
- Gardner Family Health Network
- HACSC
- HomeFirst
- Housing Choice Coalition
- Santa Clara University
- Santa Clara County Office of Education
- St. Joseph's Family Center

The following locations acted as deployment centers and we are very thankful for their participation and support during the count:

- Bill Wilson Drop-In Center
- Emmanuel House
- Salvation Army
- Gilroy Compassion Center
- City Team Ministries
- Mountain View CSA
- Opportunity Health Center



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 estimate 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 of all jurisdictions receiving federal funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to provide homeless services, Continuums of Care (CoC) across the country report the findings of their local Point-in-Time Count in their annual funding application to HUD. Currently, the Santa Clara County CoC receives approximately \$26 million dollars annually in federal funding.

Santa Clara County has partnered with ASR to conduct its Point-in-Time Count since 2007, maintaining the similar methodology across every count and thus ensuring as much consistency as possible, from one year to the next. ASR is a social research firm that has over 19 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*.

Building on the 2017 effort, this report represents the second year of a regional sub-report focused on North County. This report is based on individuals and families experiencing homelessness in Los Altos, Mountain View, Palo Alto, and Sunnyvale. Data presented come from both the PIT as well surveys from individuals and families living in shelters and on the streets of the North County region. There will be an additional regional sub-report focused on South County, allowing for a wide breadth of data on homelessness in Santa Clara County, including the county overall, the City of San Jose, North County, and South County.

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, youth, young adults, 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 around community 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 was 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.



Point-In-Time Census

The 2019 Santa Clara County Point-in-Time Homeless Census represents 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 Unaccompanied Children and Youth:** An afternoon count of unsheltered unaccompanied youth and young adults 18-25 years old on January 29, 2019.
- **Targeted COE Street Count of K-12 Students and Their Families:** A count of unsheltered homeless students and their families reported by the Santa Clara County Office of Education and their participating school districts 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.

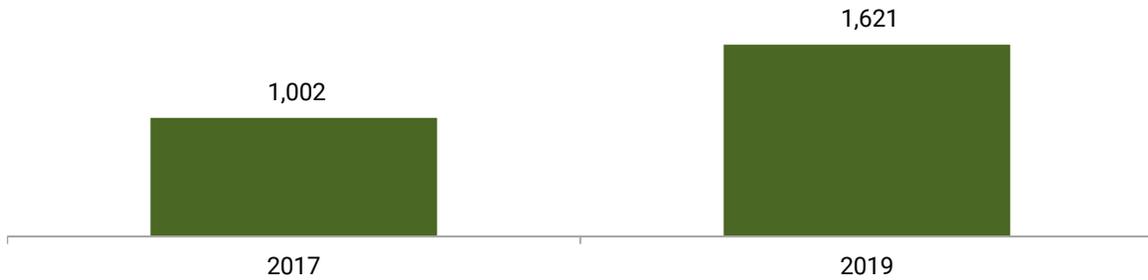
This section of the report provides a summary of the results of the Point-in-Time Census. For comparison, results from prior years are provided in order to better understand the shifting dynamics of homelessness over time.

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

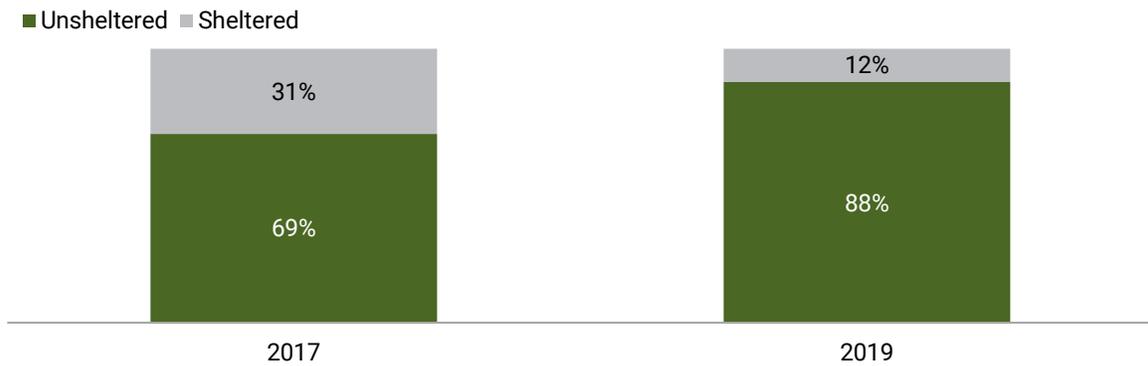
NUMBER AND CHARACTERISTICS OF NORTH SANTA CLARA COUNTY HOMELESS PERSONS

North Santa Clara County had a total of 1,621 persons experiencing homelessness on January 30, 2019, an increase of 62% from 2017. North County saw an increase in the number of individuals living outdoors, rising from 69% of the population experiencing homelessness in 2017 to 88% in 2019.

PERSONS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS IN NORTH SANTA CLARA COUNTY

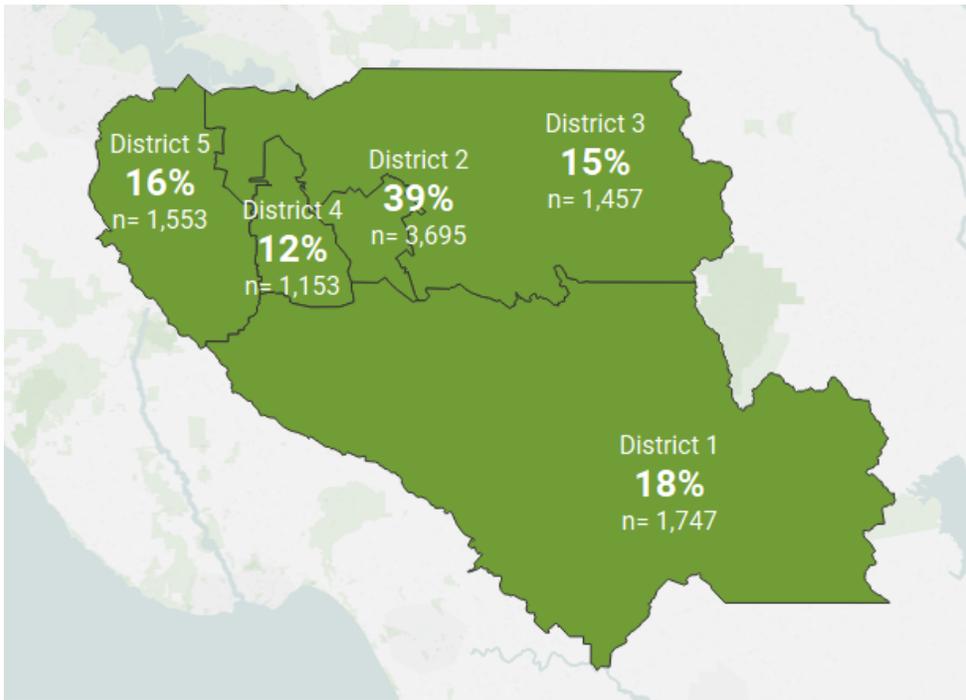


PERCENTAGE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS BY SHELTER STATUS



STATUS	2017	2019	'17-'19 % CHANGE
Sheltered	156	193	24%
Unsheltered	846	1,428	69%
Total	1,002	1,621	62%

HOMELESS POPULATION BY COUNTY SUPERVISORIAL 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 Count, 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. A survey quota was developed based on location and shelter status to help ensure a greater random distribution of survey respondents. A more precise quota representing precise sampling protocols was beyond the scope of this effort. The sampling plan employed is HUD approved and consistent with previous County PIT count efforts.

For North Santa Clara County, the Homeless Survey effort resulted in 175 unique, complete, and valid surveys. Based on a Point-in-Time Count of 1,621 homeless persons, with a randomized survey sampling process, these surveys represent a confidence interval of +/-7% with a 95% confidence level when generalizing the results of the survey to the entire Point-in-Time homeless population in Santa Clara County. In other words, if the survey were conducted again, we can be 95% certain that the results would be within 7% points of the current results. It should also be noted that the 2017 survey effort was more limited than 2019 with 84 North County surveys of the estimated 1,002 persons experiencing homeless. The result is a confidence interval of +/-10% with a 95% confidence level, higher than our 2019 effort.

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*.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF NORTH COUNTY SURVEY RESPONDENTS

In order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the experiences of individuals and families experiencing homelessness in Santa Clara County, respondents were asked basic demographic questions including age, gender, sexual orientation, and race/ethnicity.

AGE

Nearly half (47%) of North County survey respondents were 51 or older, slightly less than in 2017 (55%). Twenty-three percent (23%) were between the ages of 25 and 40.

RESPONDENTS BY AGE

AGE GROUP	2017	2019
Less than 18 Years	0%	0%
18-24 Years	1%	7%
25-30 Years	2%	4%
31-40 Years	17%	19%
41-50 Years	25%	23%
51-60 Years	40%	35%
61 Years or More	15%	12%

2017 N=88; 2019 N=175

GENDER

Nearly two-thirds of survey respondents (65%) identified as male, 33% identified as female, and 1% identified as transgender or gender non-conforming (i.e., didn't identify as male, female or transgender). This is a similar breakdown compared to Santa Clara County as a whole, but represents a decrease in respondents identifying as male from 2017, when 71% did so.

RESPONDENTS BY GENDER



2019 N=175

LGBTQ+ IDENTITY

While there are limited data available on the number of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) individuals experiencing homelessness, nationwide data available suggest LGBTQ+ individuals experience homelessness at higher rates, especially those under the age of 25. Eighteen percent (18%) of homeless survey respondents identified as LGBTQ+ in 2019, more than Santa Clara County (13%) but less than in North County in 2017 (25%). Of those respondents, half (52%) identified as bisexual and 16% identified as gay.

DETAIL OF RESPONDENTS WITH LGBTQ+ IDENTITY

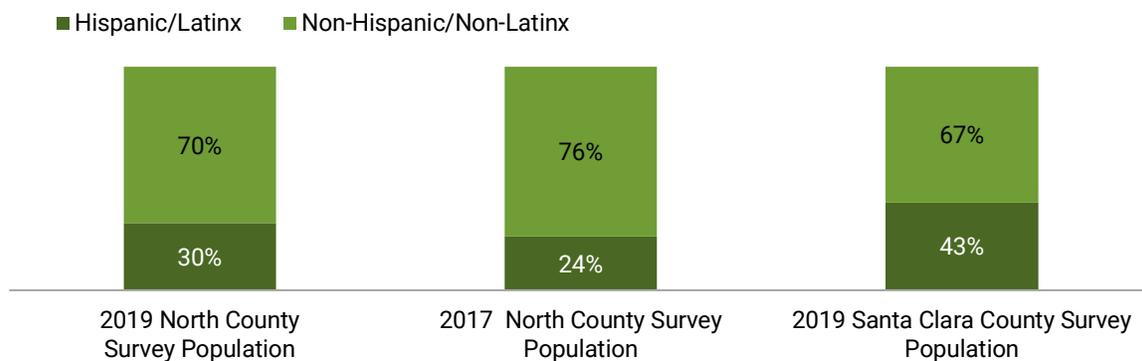
LGBTQ+ IDENTITY	2017	2019
Gay	9%	16%
Lesbian	5%	3%
Bisexual	73%	52%
Transgender	9%	3%
Queer	0%	3%
Other	5%	29%

*2017 N=22 respondents offering 22 responses; 2019 N=31 respondents offering 33 responses
Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100.*

RACE/ETHNICITY

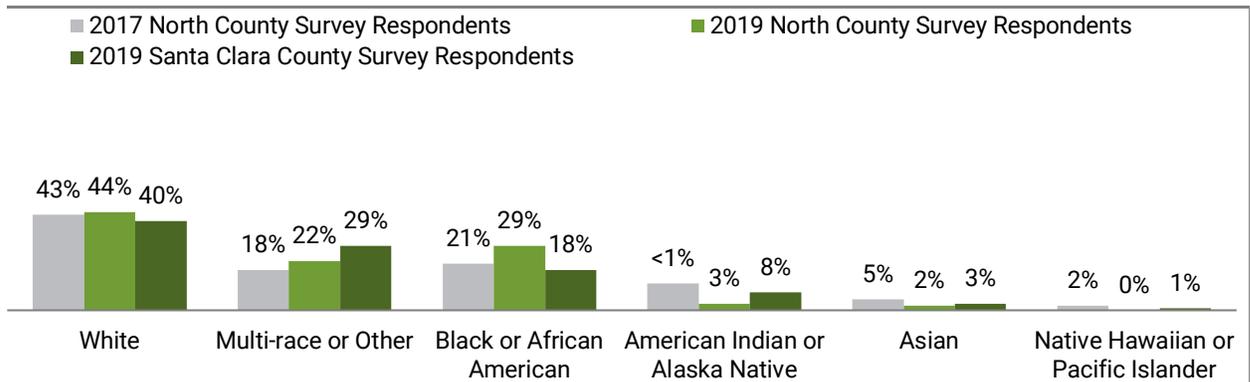
The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) gathers data on race and ethnicity in two separate questions, similar to the U.S. Census. When asked if they identified as Hispanic or Latinx, more than half (59%) of homeless survey respondents reported they did not identify as Hispanic or Latinx in 2019. In comparison to the general population of Santa Clara County, a higher percentage of homeless survey respondents identified as Hispanic or Latinx (41% compared to 26%).

RESPONDENTS BY HISPANIC OR LATINX ORIGIN



North County Homeless Survey Population: 2017 N=84; 2019 N=175; Santa Clara County Survey Population 1,359

RESPONDENTS BY RACE

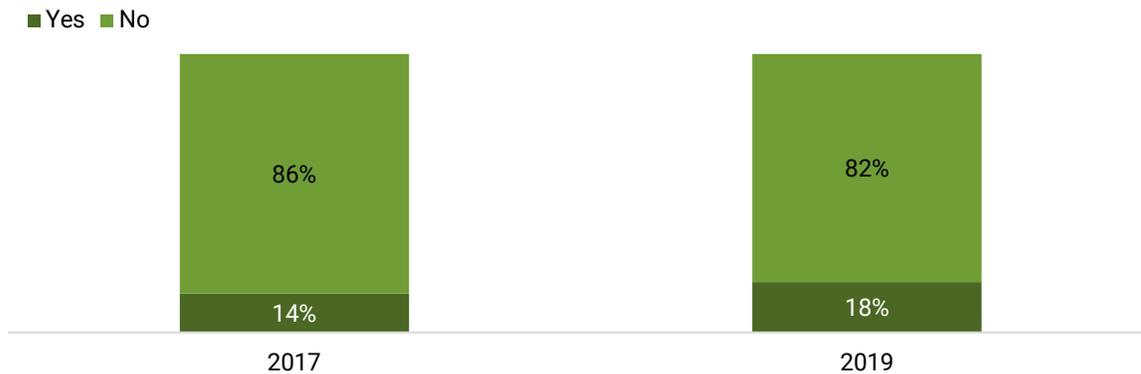


North County Homeless Survey Population: 2017 N=87; 2019 N=161; Santa Clara County 2019 N: 1,359

HISTORY OF FOSTER CARE

Almost one in five (18%) survey respondents in North County indicated they had a history of foster care, a slight increase from 2017.

HISTORY OF FOSTER CARE



2017 N= 84; 2019 N=174

LIVING ACCOMMODATIONS

Where individuals lived prior to experiencing homelessness and where they have lived since impact the way they seek services, as well as their ability to access support from friends or family. Previous circumstances can also point to gaps in the system of care and 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 much of the homeless population is local to the region. This information can also influence changes to available safety net systems if the Continuum of Care finds increasing numbers of individuals living locally before experiencing homelessness.

Almost two thirds (61%) of respondents reported living in Santa Clara County at the most recent time they became homeless, less than in 2017 (74%). Forty-four percent of survey respondents (44%) had lived in Santa Clara County for 10 or more years, while 20% had lived in Santa Clara for less than one year. The survey didn't specify where in the County respondent's residence was so this is not available for a "North" county breakdown.

PLACE OF RESIDENCE AT THE MOST RECENT TIME EXPERIENCING HOMELESS



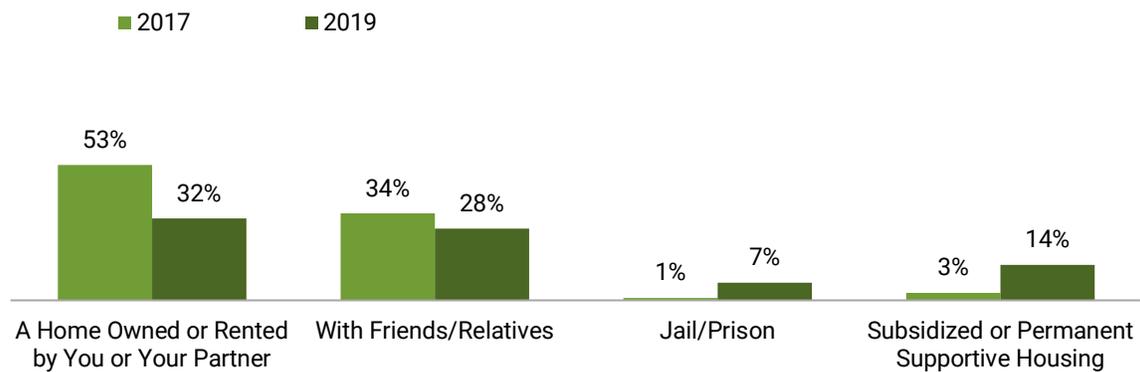
2019 N=173

PRIOR LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

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

Just under one-third (32%) of survey respondents reported living in a home owned or rented by them or their partner prior to becoming homeless, a noticeable decrease from 2017 (53%). Twenty-eight (28%) reported they were living with friends or relatives, 7% reported they were in jail or prison, and 14% were staying in subsidized housing or permanent supportive housing.

LIVING ARRANGEMENTS IMMEDIATELY BEFORE BECOMING HOMELESS (TOP RESPONSES IN 2019)



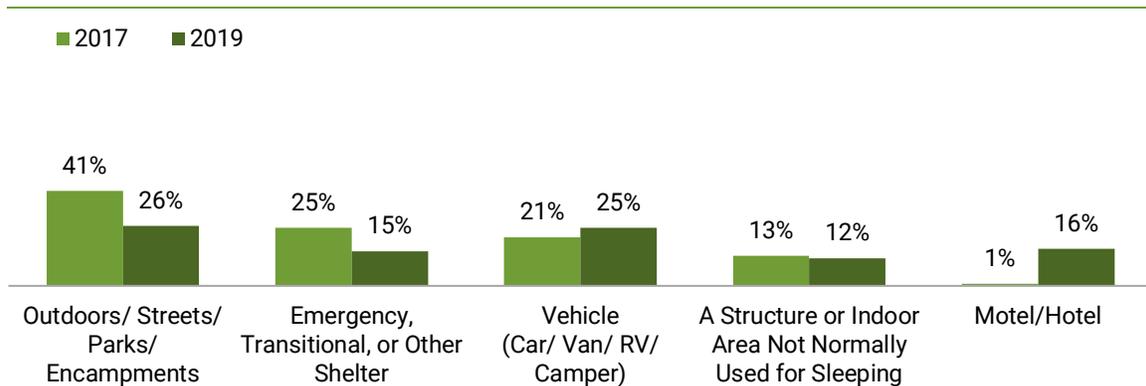
2017 N=88; 2019 N=170

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 individuals experiencing homelessness are sleeping can help inform local outreach efforts.

One-third (34%) of survey respondents reported currently living outdoors, either on the streets, in parks, or in encampment areas. In a change from 2017, the second most common living arrangement was vehicles, where a quarter of the survey population indicated staying.

CURRENT LIVING ARRANGEMENTS



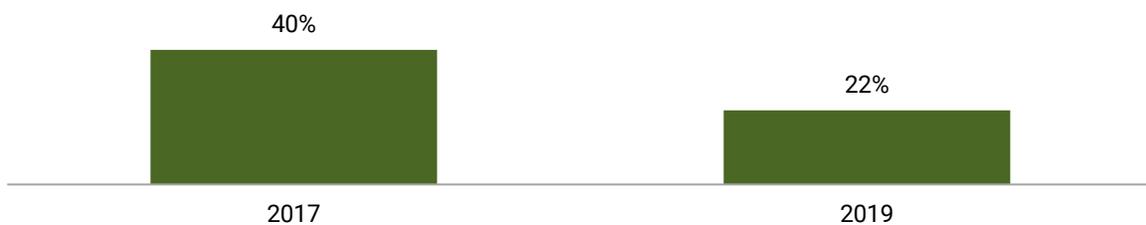
2017 N=88; 2019 N=175

DURATION AND RECURRENCE OF HOMELESSNESS

Unstable living conditions, poverty, housing scarcity, high cost of living, low wages, and many other issues often lead to individuals cycling in and out of homelessness. For many, the experience of homelessness is part of a long and recurring history of housing instability. Local data and reporting from outside the Census and Survey suggest that Santa Clara County sees large numbers of individuals experiencing first time homelessness. Of those surveyed in 2019, 22% reported that their current episode of homelessness was their first time experiencing homelessness, representing a decrease from 40% in 2017.

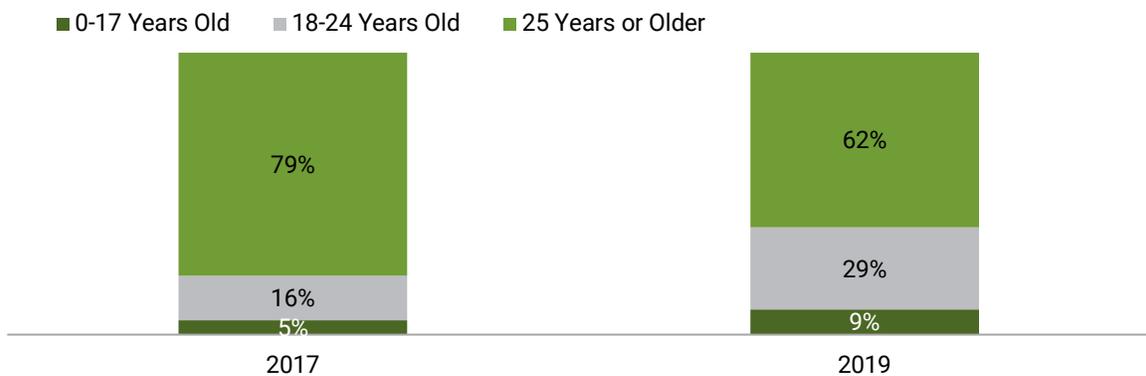
Respondents were also asked how old they were when they experienced homelessness for the first time. In response, 9% of respondents reported that they were under the age of 18, 29% reported they were between the ages of 18 and 24, and 62% reported they were 25 years or older.

CURRENT EPISODE IS THE FIRST TIME EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS



2017 N=88; 2019 N=171

AGE WHEN EXPERIENCED HOMELESSNESS FOR THE FIRST TIME



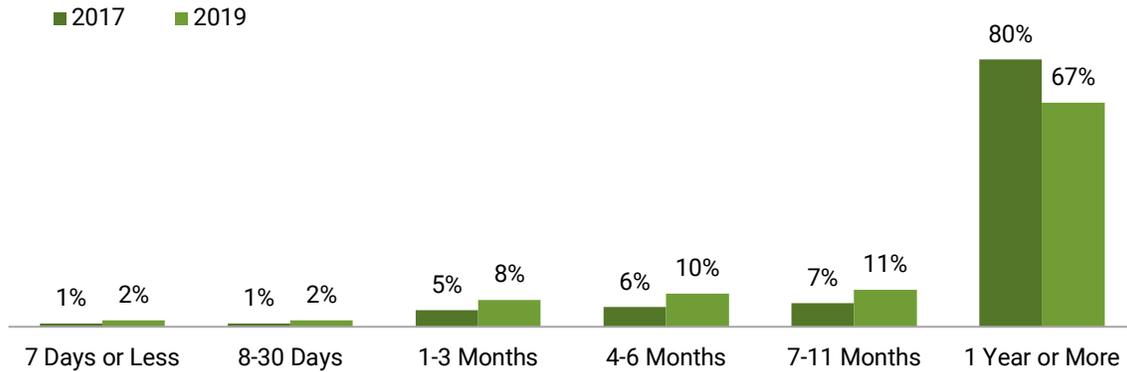
2015 N=913; 2017 N=87; 2019 N=171

Note: After a large increase in the youth and young adult population in 2017, there was an increased number of surveys targeted at the youth and young adult population in 2019. This may have led to the increase in numbers of individuals experiencing homelessness for the first time before turning 25.

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. These findings are similar to 2017, when 64% of respondents reported they had been homeless for a year or more.

LENGTH OF CURRENT EPISODE OF HOMELESSNESS



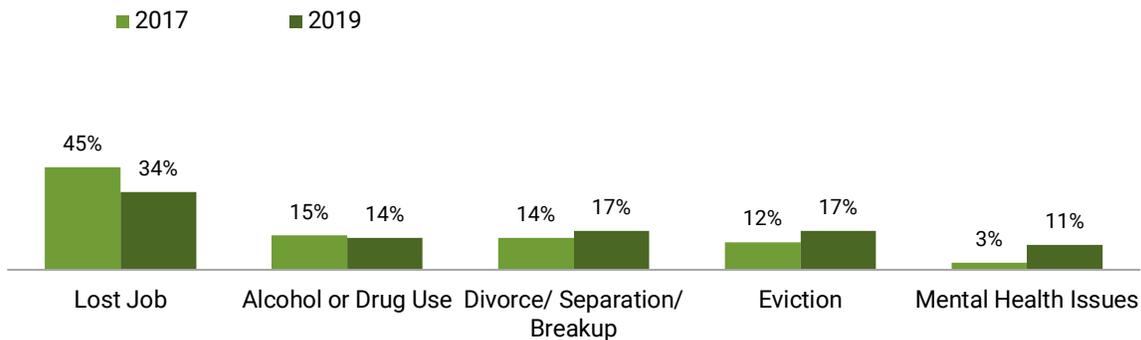
2013 N=836; 2015 N=911; 2017 N=585; 2019 N=1,335

PRIMARY CAUSE OF HOMELESSNESS

The primary cause of an individual’s inability to obtain or retain housing can be 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 healthcare and adequate nutrition.

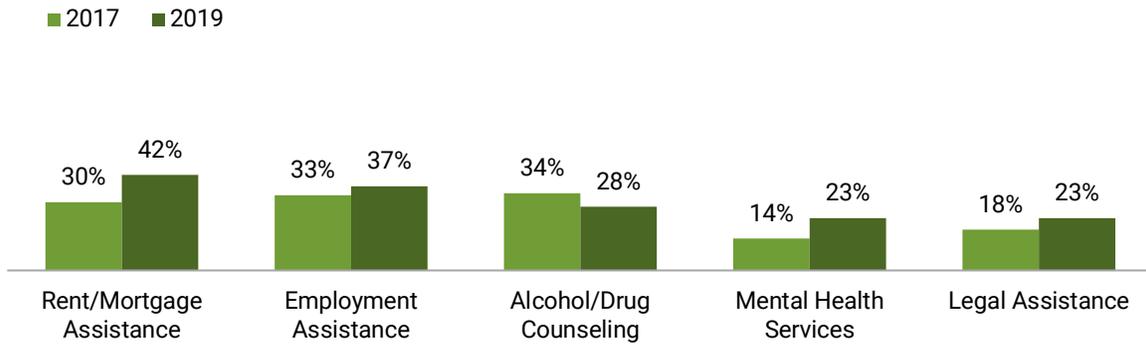
The most common cause of homelessness identified by survey respondents was job loss, as it was in 2017. However, it decreased from 45% in 2017 to 34% in 2019. Eviction rose slightly from 2017, reaching 17% in 2019. Mental health issues as the primary cause of homelessness increased from 3% in 2017 to 11% in 2019.

PRIMARY CAUSE OF HOMELESSNESS (TOP RESPONSES IN 2019)



2017 N=87 respondents offering 109 responses; 2019 N=174 respondents offering 259 responses

WHAT MAY HAVE PREVENTED HOMELESSNESS (TOP RESPONSES IN 2019)



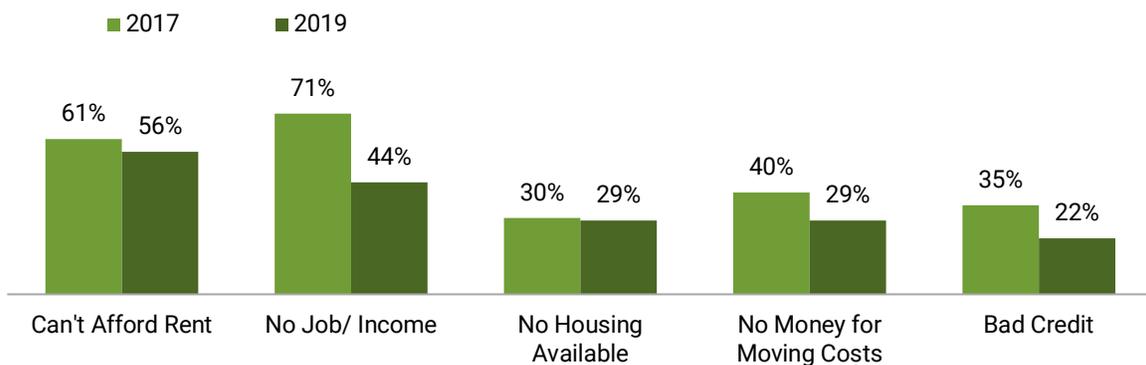
2017 N=567 respondents offering 943 responses; 2019 N=1,321 respondents offering 3,003 responses

OBSTACLES TO OBTAINING PERMANENT HOUSING

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

When asked what prevented them from obtaining housing, the most common response was “can’t afford rent,” reported by 56% of survey respondents, representing a decrease from 2017. This was followed by 44% who reported a lack of job or income, a large decrease from 2017 when it was 71%.

OBSTACLES TO OBTAINING PERMANENT HOUSING (TOP RESPONSES IN 2019)



2017 N=88 respondents offering 309 responses; 2019 N=174 respondents offering 493 responses.
 Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100.

SERVICES AND ASSISTANCE

The County of Santa Clara 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 homeless individuals and families to these support services creates a bridge to mainstream support services and can prevent future housing instability.

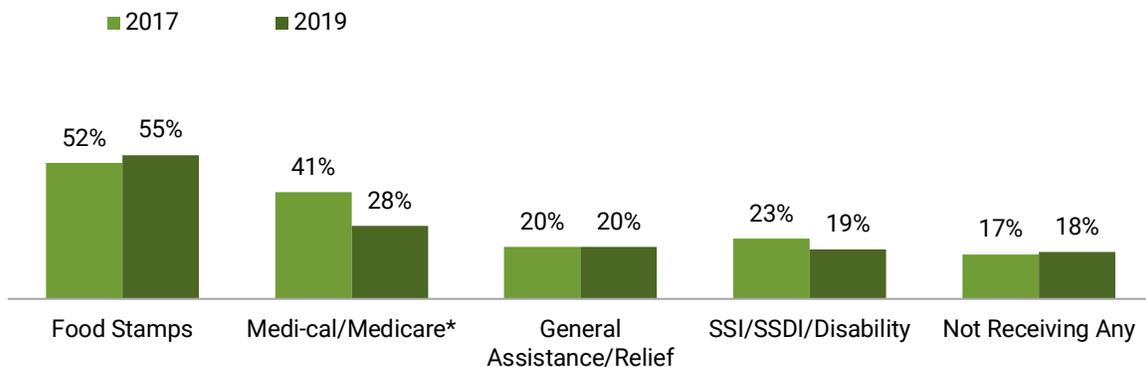
GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE

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 perceived stigma of receiving governmental assistance.

The majority (82%) of survey respondents reported in 2019 that they were receiving some form of government assistance, similar to 2017 (83%). When comparing responses to 2017, there was a slight increase in persons using food stamps (55%, up from 52%), while the percentage of survey respondents who indicated they were receiving Medi-Cal or Medicare decreased from 41% to 28% in 2019.

Of those who reported they were not receiving any form of government support, there were two noticeable differences from 2017 to 2019. There was an increase in the percentage of survey respondents who reported not wanting government assistance, rising to 24% in 2019. Additionally, there was a drop on the number of respondents who did not think they were eligible for benefits, falling to 27% in 2019, from 47% in 2017.

RECEIPT OF GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE (TOP RESPONSES IN 2019)

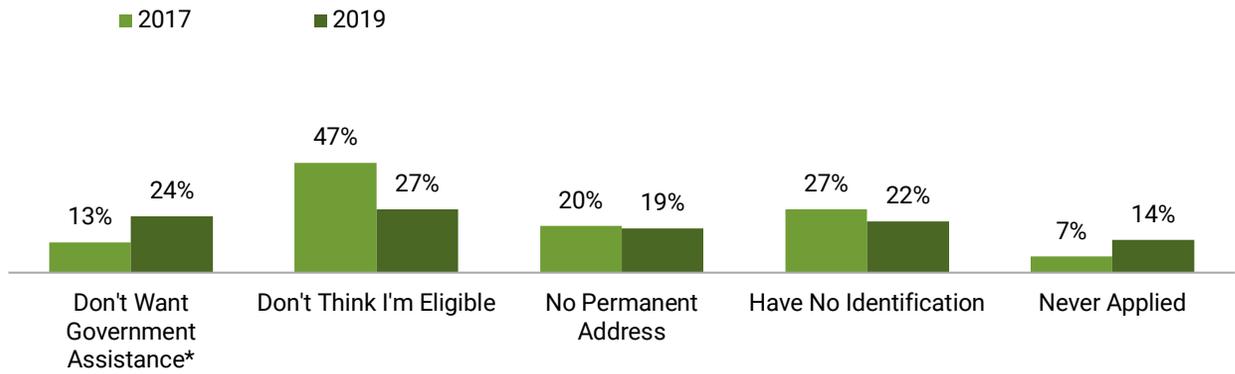


2017 N=86 respondents offering 148 responses; 2019 N=155 respondents offering 234 responses

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

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

REASONS NOT RECEIVING GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE (TOP RESPONSES IN 2019)



2017 N=15 respondents offering 32; 2019 N=37 respondents offering 62 responses.

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

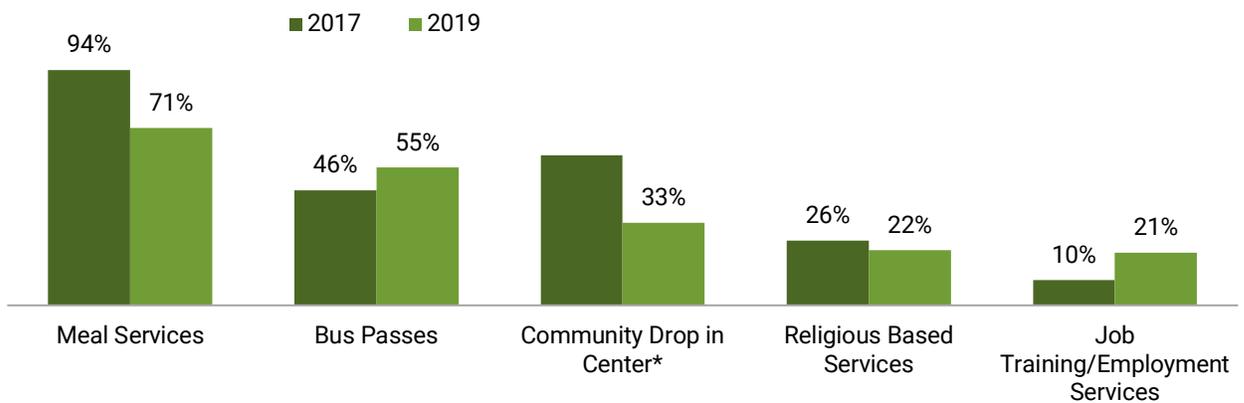
*In 2013 the response option changed from "do not need" to "do not want," which was an option in 2011.

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 (93%) of survey respondents in 2019 reported they were accessing other services and assistance beyond government assistance. The most frequently cited types of assistance respondents reported accessing were meal services (71%), bus passes (55%), and community drop in centers (26%).

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



2017 N=88 respondents offering 245 responses; 2019 N=170 respondents offering 147 responses

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

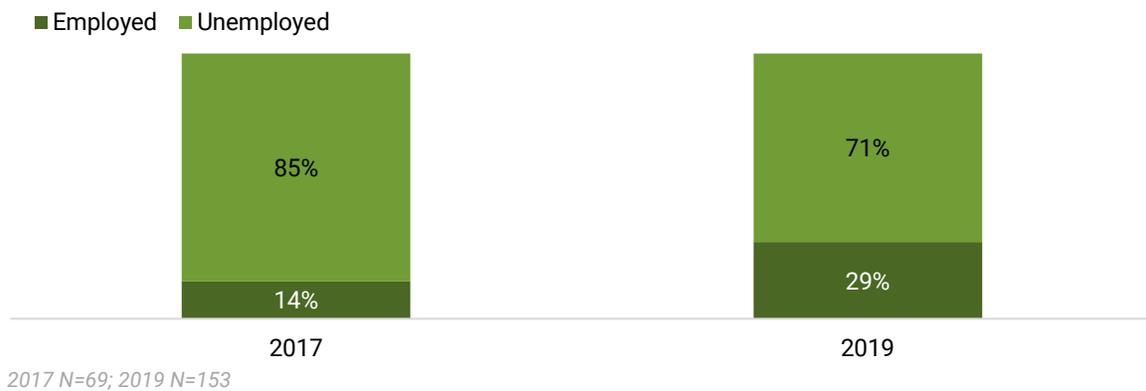
Note: * Community drop in center response were added in 2017.

EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME

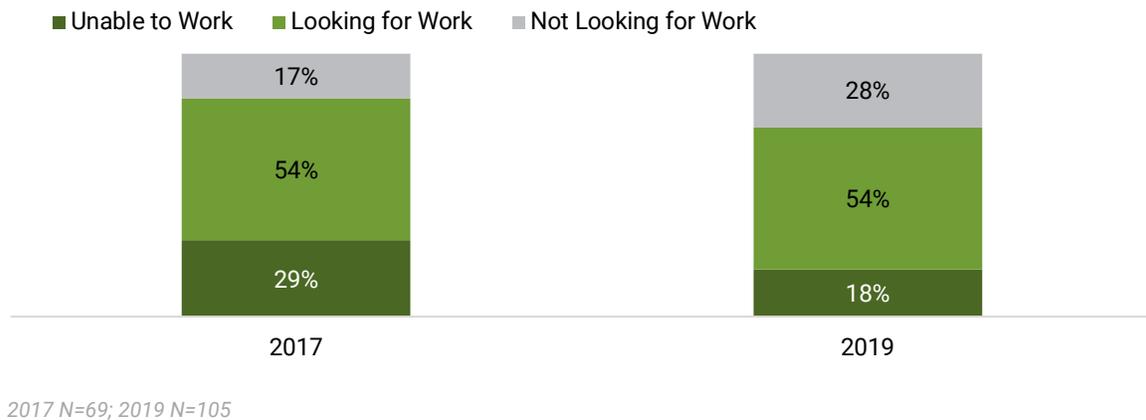
The unemployment rate in Santa Clara County in January 2019 was at 2.9%, slightly down from 3.6% in January 2017.¹ It is important to recognize that the unemployment rate represents only those who are unemployed and actively seeking employment. It does not represent all joblessness, nor does it address the types of available employment.

The unemployment rate among homeless survey respondents was 71%, a decrease from 85% in 2017. Forty-seven percent (54%) of unemployed respondents indicated that they were currently looking for work, 28% indicated they were not, and 18% indicated they were currently unable to work.

EMPLOYMENT STATUS



UNEMPLOYED BY WORK STATUS



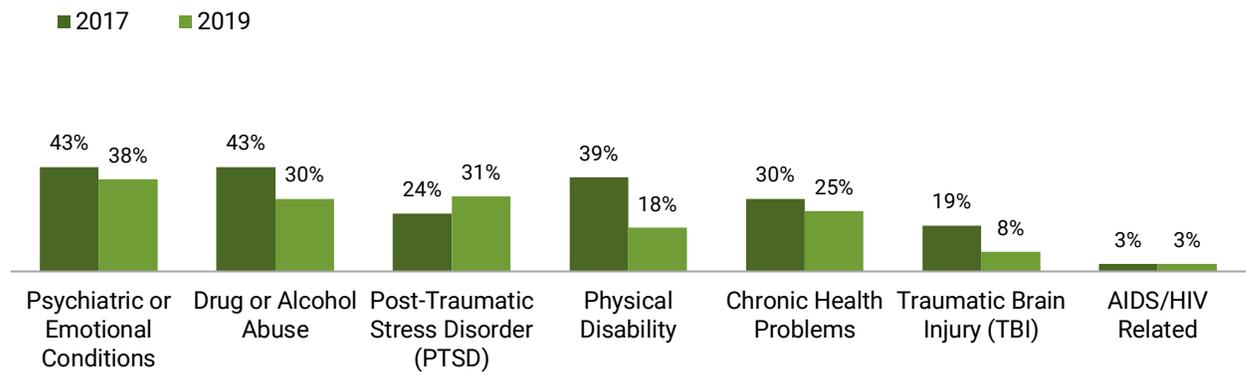
¹State of California Employment Development Department. (2019). Unemployment Rates (Labor Force). Retrieved from <http://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov>.

HEALTH

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 (38%); drug/alcohol abuse (30%), and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder or PTSD (31%). PTSD was the only health condition that saw an increase from 2017 to 2019, while all other health conditions saw decreases.

HEALTH CONDITIONS



2017 N=88-89; 2019 N=175.

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

Histories 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 dependable income may be limited.

Ten percent (10%) 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, 35% indicated that they had, an increase from 22% since 2017.

HISTORY OF BEING PHYSICALLY, EMOTIONALLY OR SEXUALLY ABUSED



2017 N=88; 2019 N=171

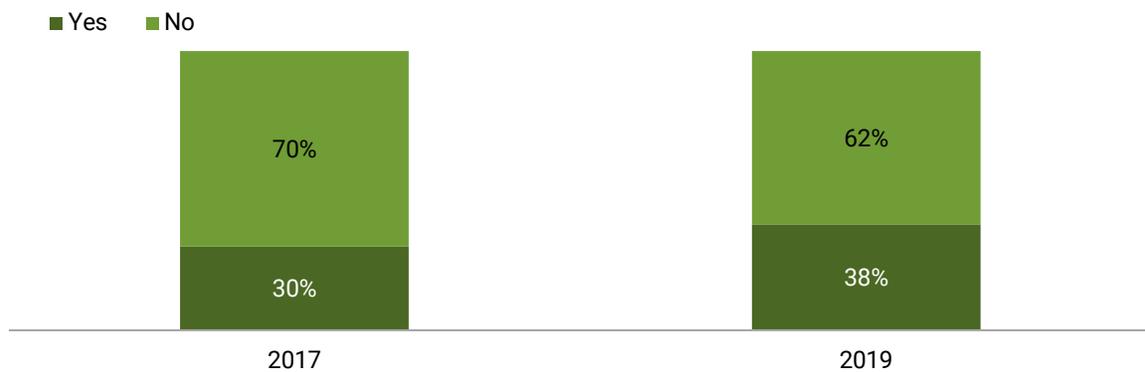
CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Homelessness and incarceration are often related. Persons without stable housing are at greater risk of criminal justice system involvement, particularly those with mental health issues, veterans, and youth and young adults. 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

INCARCERATION

When asked if they had spent a night in jail or prison in the last 12 months, nearly forty percent (38%) of survey respondents reported that they had, similar to 2017 findings (26%). Eighteen percent (18%) of respondents also reported being on probation or parole at the time of the survey.

SPENT A NIGHT IN JAIL OR PRISON IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS



2017 N=80; 2019 N=158

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



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:

- Chronically homeless individuals with disabilities;
- Veterans experiencing homelessness;
- Families with children experiencing homelessness
- Youth and young adults.

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

CHRONICALLY HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS

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 and their families. Individuals experiencing chronic homelessness were those who self-reported meeting the above conditions, as well as those who were identified during the shelter count.

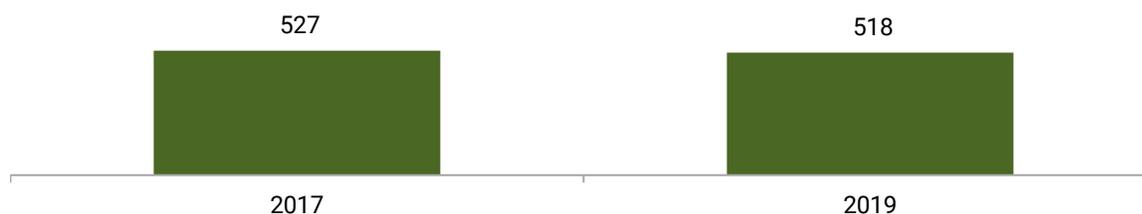
The chronically homeless population represents one of the most vulnerable populations on the street; the mortality rate for those experiencing chronic homelessness is four to nine times higher than that of the general population.⁴ Data from communities across the country reveal that public costs incurred 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. 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.⁵ 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 CHRONICALLY HOMELESS PEOPLE

There were 518 individuals experiencing chronic homelessness in 2019, a very slight decrease from 2017. However, those 518 individuals make up 32% of the population experiencing homelessness in North County, while in 2017, they represented 53% of the population. Individuals experiencing chronic homelessness were unsheltered at similar rates as in 2017, with 88% living on the streets.

CHRONICALLY HOMELESS SUBPOPULATION

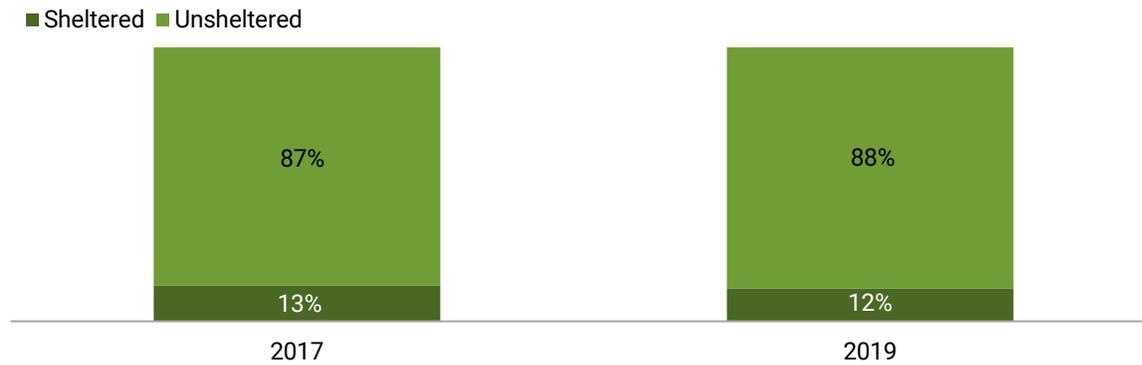


Note: HUD defines a chronically homeless individual as someone who has experienced homelessness for a year or longer—or who has experienced at least four episodes of homelessness totaling 12 months in the last three years—and also has a disabling condition that prevents them from maintaining work or housing.

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 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>

CHRONICALLY HOMELESS SUBPOPULATION BY SHELTER STATUS



VETERANS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Many U.S. veterans experience conditions that place them at increased risk for homelessness. Nationwide, veterans are at risk for 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.

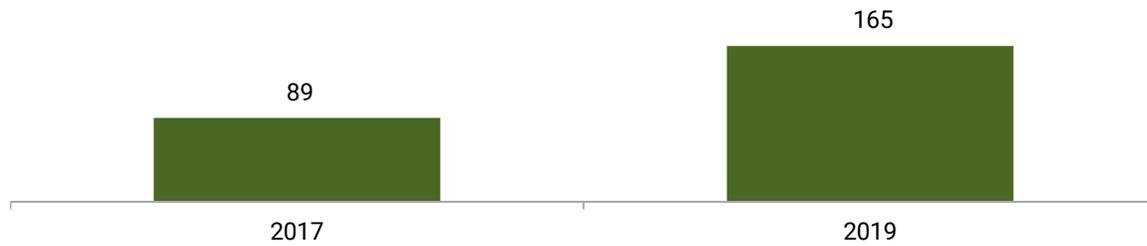
Between 2007 and 2018, there has been a 38% decrease in the number of homeless veterans nationwide. According to data collected during the national 2018 Point-in-Time Count, 37,878 veterans experienced homelessness across the country on a single night in January 2018.⁶

ESTIMATES OF VETERANS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

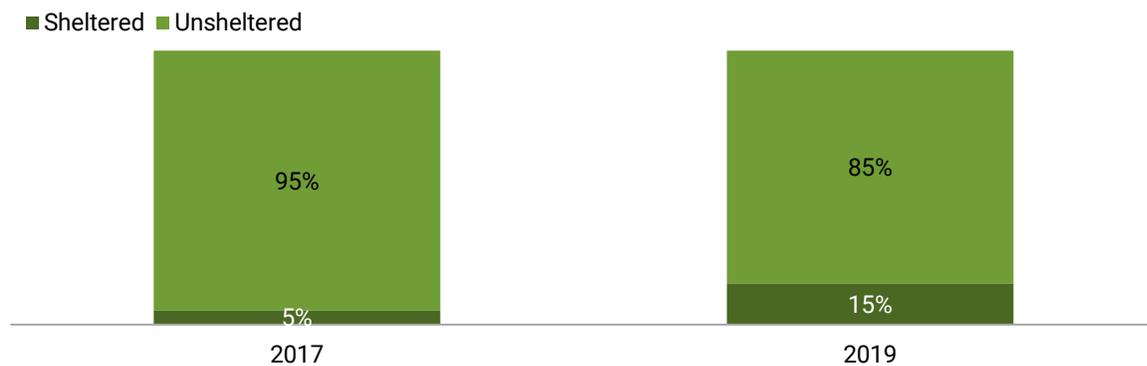
There were 165 veterans experiencing homelessness in North County in 2019, almost twice as many as in 2017. Eighty-five percent of veterans experiencing homelessness were unsheltered.

⁶ Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2018). Annual Assessment Report to Congress. Retrieved 2019 from <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/2018-AHAR-Part1.pdf>

VETERANS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS



VETERANS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS BY SHELTER STATUS



FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

National data from 2018 suggest that 33% of all people experiencing homelessness are persons in families.⁷ 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.

Nationally, the majority of homeless families are households headed by single women and families with children under the age of six.⁸ 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.⁹

⁷ U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2019). The 2018 Annual Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress. Retrieved 2019 from <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/2017-AHAR-Part-1.pdf>

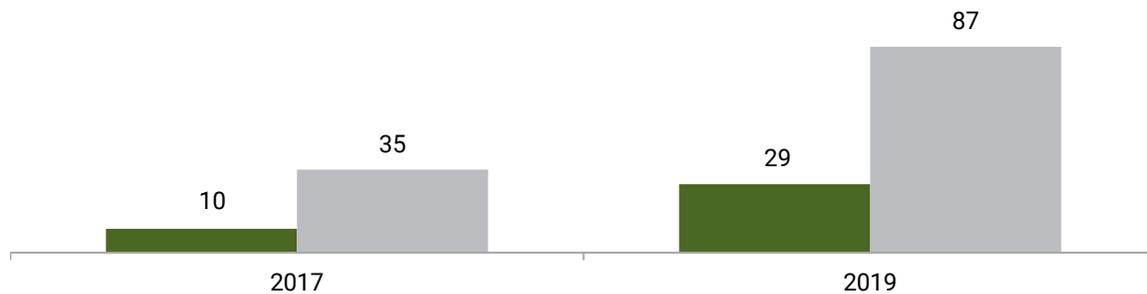
⁸ U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2007). Characteristics and Dynamics of Homeless Families with Children. Retrieved 2015 from <http://aspe.hhs.gov/>

⁹U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness. (2015). Opening Doors. Retrieved 2015 from <http://www.usich.gov/>

ESTIMATES OF FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

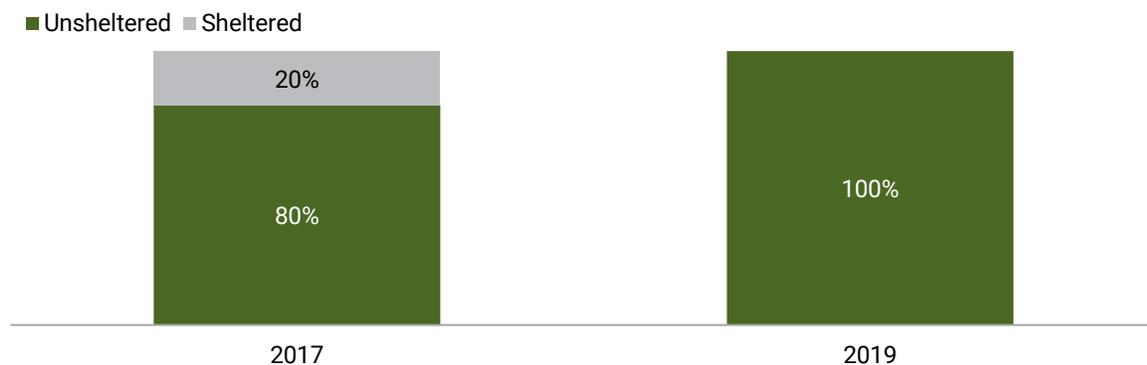
In 2019, there were 29 families experiencing homelessness, with 87 family members. This represents a decline from 2017, when there were fewer than half that number of individuals in families experiencing homelessness. All of the families experiencing homelessness in North County were unsheltered.

FAMILIES EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS



Note: Collecting data on families experiencing homelessness is, in part, dependent on participation from local school districts. Not all schools can participate every count, leading to fluctuations in the data. Please use caution when interpreting these results.

FAMILIES EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS BY SHELTER STATUS



YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Due to the challenges of street outreach and access to youth and young adults experiencing homelessness, available data on them are limited. Although largely considered an undercount, nationwide estimates from 2018 suggest there are at least 36,361 youth and young adults on the streets and in public shelters, an increase of 14% over 2016.¹⁰ This increase may be due, in part, to the focus on youth and young adults during the 2017 Point-in-Time Count.

¹⁰ U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2017). The 2018 Annual Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress. Retrieved 2019 from <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/2018-AHAR-Part-1.pdf>

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 youth and young adults during the Point-in-Time Count. The results of this effort contribute to HUD’s initiative to measure progress toward ending youth homelessness by 2020.

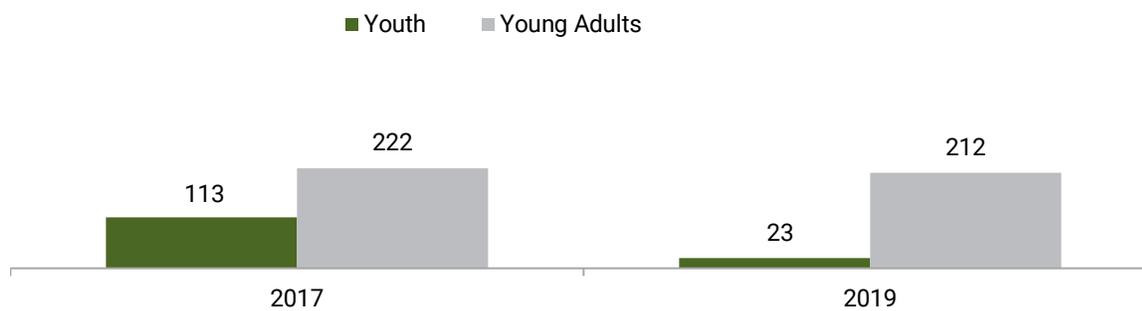
Young people experiencing homelessness have a harder time accessing services, including shelter, medical care, and employment. This is due to the stigma of their housing situation, lack of knowledge of available resources, and a dearth of services targeted to young people.¹¹

ESTIMATES OF YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Homelessness among youth and young adults is a difficult problem to identify. Youth and young adults 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. 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. .

There were 235 youth and young adults experiencing homelessness in 2019. Twenty-three of those were youth under the age of 18. Eighty-eight percent of youth and young adults experiencing homelessness were unsheltered.

ESTIMATES OF YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS



Note: In 2019, methodology in calculating the numbers of youth and young adults experiencing homelessness changed. Please use caution when comparing data. For further information regarding the methodology change, please see Appendix A.

¹¹ National Coalition for the Homeless. (2011). Homeless Youth Fact Sheet. Retrieved 2011 from <http://www.nationalhomeless.org>.

YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESS BY SHELTER STATUS





Conclusion

The 2019 Santa Clara County Homeless Census 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 North Santa Clara County. A few data highlights include:

- The Point-in-Time Homeless Count in North County in 2019 identified a total of 1,621 persons experiencing homelessness, an increase of 62% from the count conducted in 2017.
- More than four in five (88%) persons experiencing homelessness in North County were unsheltered, living in places not intended for human habitation.
- Less than a quarter (22%) 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 34% of respondents), followed by employment assistance (33%), and mental health services (26%).
- The biggest obstacles to obtaining permanent housing were the affordability of rent (56%), a lack of a job/income (44%), and a lack of available housing (29%).
- Homeless survey respondents also reported having these health conditions: a psychiatric or emotional condition (38%); drug/alcohol abuse (30%), and PTSD (31%).
- The estimated counts of the four HUD-identified subpopulations in North County were: chronically homeless individuals with one or more disabling condition (518 persons), homeless veterans (165), members of homeless families with children (87), and youth and young adults (235).

In summary, the 2019 North Santa Clara County Homeless Count and Survey provides valid and useful data that help create a more comprehensive profile of those experiencing homelessness in North County. 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 eliminating homelessness in North County and helping homeless individuals and families access necessary services and support. The dissemination and evaluation of this effort will help the CoC and all 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, Santa Clara County remains committed to moving homeless persons into permanent housing.



Appendix A: Methodology

OVERVIEW

The 2019 North 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. 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:

- 1) **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.
- 2) **General Shelter Count:** A nighttime count of individuals and families experiencing homelessness 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.
- 3) **Targeted Street Count of Youth and Young Adults:** An afternoon count of unsheltered youth and young adults on January 29, 2019. This occurred from approximately 2:00 PM to 7:00 PM and was led by special youth teams who canvassed specific areas where youth and young adults 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.
- 4) **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 for the night of January 29, 2019 in conjunction with participating school districts. Demographic and geographic detail from the COE count was then compared to census data to check for possible duplication, however, no duplicates were found.

- 5) **Homeless Survey:** An in-person interview with 174 unique North County sheltered and unsheltered individuals experiencing homelessness conducted by peer surveyors between January 29 and February 28, 2019. 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 20 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 in counts since 2007, with the addition of dedicated youth outreach beginning in 2015. The 2019 census 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 from the youth count. To prevent overrepresentation of youth when resolving demographic detail 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 day 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 of Santa Clara, City of San José, 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 of homeless individuals, 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 TEAMS

Teams were typically comprised of at least two individuals, one volunteer from the community and one guide who was generally an individual currently experiencing homelessness. Each team was assigned 1-4 census tracts, depending on the size of the tracts. Teams were responsible for covering all areas accessible to the public, including parks, streets, business fronts, and wherever the guide believed there might be individuals experiencing homelessness. Teams were encouraged to have their community volunteer drive their vehicle, while the guide acted as a navigator and enumerator during the process. All teams were given a brief refresher training before heading out into the field.

STREET COUNT DISPATCH CENTERS

To achieve complete coverage of the county within the morning timeframe, the planning team identified five areas for the placement of dispatch centers on the morning of the count: the Opportunity Center in Palo Alto, Compassion Center in Gilroy, Salvation Army in San José, City Team in San José, and the CSA in Mountain View. 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

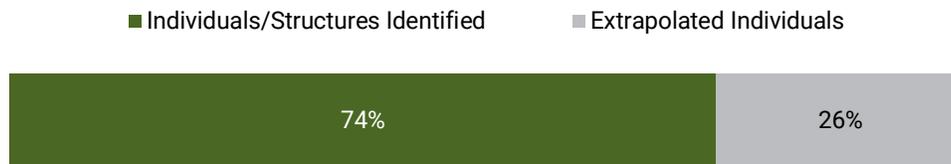
Every effort was made to minimize potentially hazardous situations. Law enforcement agencies were notified of pending street count activity in their jurisdictions. In census tracts with a high concentration of homeless encampments, specialized teams with knowledge of those encampments were identified 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

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.

To ensure that the privacy of individuals experiencing homelessness was respected and that safety concerns were kept as a priority for enumeration teams, teams were asked to conduct observation-only counts and to not have any contact with individuals experiencing homelessness. When they encountered a structure or vehicle that they believed to be inhabited, they had the option to indicate that it was

inhabited but that they didn't know the number or the demographic detail (age and gender) of its residents if this could be determined by the team. In order to determine the number of residents of these dwelling types, ASR uses the survey data from over 450 survey respondents who indicated they stayed in the named dwelling type. Demographic detail for those inhabitants is gathered from count data.



"Individuals identified" are those whom enumeration teams were able to clearly identify as persons experiencing homelessness. "Structures identified" indicates structures (tent, vehicle, abandoned building, makeshift shelter, etc.) enumeration teams saw that they believed to be inhabited. Data suggest that some structures have more than one person staying inside and survey data is used to determine a multiplier for each structure type. Individuals that are added to the count as a result of that multiplier are referred to as extrapolated individuals in the chart above.

SANTA CLARA COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION COUNT

In the days following the street count, representatives from seven school districts called households known to have recently experienced homelessness to ascertain where they stayed on the night of count. This is a significant effort, as many school districts have hundreds of calls to make to ensure that families counted fit the HUD definition of homelessness and were, in fact, experiencing homelessness on the night(s) 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 districts participated in the COE count, while only 7 participated in the 2019 COE count. Once data were gathered, they were then compared to count data to check for duplication. Using demographic and geographic detail, families were cross-checked for duplication and any duplicates are removed.

YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT STREET COUNT METHODOLOGY

GOAL

The goal of the 2019 youth and young adult count was to include accurate representation of 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 youth and young adult count included homeless youth service providers and youth and young adults with lived experience of homelessness. Local service providers identified locations where youth and young adults experiencing homelessness 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 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 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 dawn timeframe when the general count was conducted. Youth worked in teams of two to four, with teams coordinated and supervised by street outreach workers.

HUD and the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness recognize that youth do not commonly comingle 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 count is to gain an accurate count of persons temporarily housed in shelters across Santa Clara County. These data are vital to gaining an accurate overall count of the homeless population and understanding where persons experiencing homelessness 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 whether 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.

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, some homeless persons 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 likely 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.

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. Quotas used for geographic locations, youth and young adults, as well as shelter status. For other subpopulations (veterans, ethnic groups, and domestic violence survivors) peer-to-peer surveyors from those groups were recruited and asked to survey their peers. Empirical data that can be used as the basis for sampling is limited to narrow age categories, geography, and shelter type and status. Further details that would enable better profiling of subpopulation characteristics, such as gender identity and sexual orientation, race and ethnicity, veteran status, and various health conditions are not available for sample planning and are broadly informed by previous PIT count results.

During the survey administrator training process and during surveyor trainings, every attempt was made to recruit a diverse group of capable surveyors who represented a broad range of experiences and backgrounds in order to reduce implicit bias, though full elimination of bias is beyond the scope of this effort. 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 to ensure privacy.

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 potential duplicates. This process examined respondents' date of birth, initials, gender, ethnicity, length of homelessness, and consistencies in patterns of responses to other survey questions. Outlier surveys were further examined and eliminated if they were thought to be inauthentic.

SURVEY CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

The 2019 North Santa Clara County Homeless Survey did not include an equal representation of all homeless experiences. The smaller the subpopulation is, the harder it can be to ensure that it receives full exposure during the survey process. For example, finding families experiencing homelessness presents a challenge and can lead to underrepresentation in the survey results. 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. Locating and surveying individuals who identify as transgender, who have a sexual orientation other than straight, who are experiencing specific health conditions such as AIDS and TBI, and others can pose difficulties and their experiences may not be full represented in this process.

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

COE – The County Office of Education

Chronic homelessness – Defined by HUD 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 HUD 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.

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

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

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

Youth and Young Adults – Young people between the ages of 0-17 (youth) and 18-24 years old (young adults) 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).

Appendix C: Survey Questions

20144

2019 Santa Clara County Housing Survey

Interview Date: _____ Neighborhood or City: _____

Release: _____ (alt)

Interviewer's Name: _____

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Section A: Demographics

1. What are your initials?

2. What is your birth date?

Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

3. What is your gender?

Male Female Transgender

Do not identify as male, female or transgender

4. Are you Hispanic or Latino?

Yes No Don't know

5. Which racial group do you identify with most? (Select all that apply)

White Black or African American Asian

American Indian or Alaska Native Other

Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

6. Do you consider yourself...?

Straight Lesbian Bisexual

Gay Queer Other: _____

7. Are you currently pregnant?

Yes No Don't know

8. Have you ever been in foster care?

Yes No Don't know

Section B: Veterans Status

1. Have you served in the U.S. Armed Forces? (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard)

Yes No Don't know

2. Were you ever called into active duty as a member of the National Guard or as a Reservist?

Yes No Don't know

3. Have you ever received health care or benefits from a VA (Veterans Administration) center?

Yes No Don't know

4. What is your discharge status?

Honorable Dishonorable

General Don't know

Other than honorable Other: _____

5. Is anyone else in your household a Veteran?

Yes No Don't know

Section C: Accommodation

1. Where were you staying on the night of January 29th? (Include 1)

Body/cod or storage structure

Motel/hotel

A place in a house not normally used for sleeping

Emergency shelter Unchecked storage

Transitional housing (Skip to question 2)

Public facility (train station, transit center, bus depot)

Outdoors/street/park Tent

Van Encampment

Outdoor/camp Other: _____

2. How many people, including yourself, usually stay inside your tent, car, van, or RV/camper?

4 people

3. How long have you been homeless this current time? (Include 1)

7 days or less 4-6 months 1 year

6-30 days 7-11 months More than 1 year

4. How many different times have you been homeless in the past 3 years, including this current time? (Include 1)

1 time 3 times 5 times

2 times 4 times 6 or more times

5. Have you been living in an emergency shelter and/or on the streets (including bus stations, underpasses, encampments, abandoned buildings, etc.) for the past 12 months or more?

Yes No

6. In addition to what you have stayed in the past 3 years, how long would you stay in these kinds of places (only in the past 3 years)?

Days _____ Months _____ Years _____

7. How old were you the first time you experienced homelessness?

Under 18 18-24

25-34 35 years or older

8. Do you have a pet (currently living with you)?

Yes No Dog Other None

Section D: Household Members

1. How many people are in your household, excluding yourself? _____

2. Do you have any children under age 18? Yes No Don't know

3. Are all of your children under 18 currently living with you? Yes No Don't know

4. Do you live alone or with other household members? Alone With other household members

5. If you are living with other household members, how many people, including yourself, usually stay inside your tent, car, van, or RV/camper? _____

6. How old are they? _____

7. How do they identify their gender? _____

8. Are they Hispanic or Latino? Yes No

9. Which racial group do they identify with most? (Select all that apply)

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)
What are their initials?	F	L	F	L	F	L
5. How are they related to you?						
6. How old are they?	Under 18	19-24	25 or older			
7. How do they identify their gender?	Female	Transgender	Don't identify as male, female or transgender			
8. Are they Hispanic or Latino?	Yes	No				
9. Which racial group do they identify with most? (Select all that apply)	Black or African American	White	American Indian or Alaska Native	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	Other	Don't know

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Section E: Residency

1. Where were you living at the time you most recently became homeless? (Shade 1)

Santa Clara County Other County in CA Out of State
 Less than 1 year 1-4 years 5-9 years 10 years or more

2. How long have you lived in Santa Clara County? (Shade 1)

A home owned or rented by you or your partner
 Subsidized housing or permanent supportive housing
 Hospital or treatment facility
 A home owned or rented by friends/relatives
 Juvenile justice facility
 Other: _____

3. Immediately before you became homeless, where were you living? (Shade 1)

A home owned or rented by you or your partner
 Subsidized housing or permanent supportive housing
 Hospital or treatment facility
 Motel/hotel
 Jail or prison
 Other: _____

Section F: Cause and Prevention

1. What do you think is the primary event or condition that led to your homelessness? (Shade 1)

Lost job Divorce/separation/break up Mental health issues
 Eviction Family violence
 Incarceration Argument with family or friend
 Alcohol or drug use Who asked you to leave
 Illness/medical problem Spousal/partner violence
 Other: _____

2. What might have prevented you from becoming homeless? (Shade all that apply)

Mental health services Help accessing benefits
 Health insurance/services Employment assistance
 Legal assistance Rent/mortgage assistance
 Alcohol/drug counseling Case management/after leaving
 Transportation benefits hospital/jail/prison/juvenile justice facility

3. What is keeping you from getting permanent housing? (Shade all that apply)

Can't afford rent Criminal record Immigration issues
 No job/not enough income No ID/open work Reservations from probation/parole
 No money for moving costs Medical/health issues Housing process is too difficult
 No housing available Bad credit Child care costs
 No transportation Eviction record Other: _____

4. If you are not using any type of shelter service, why not? (Shade all that apply)

Having children
 They are full
 They are far away
 They are too crowded
 Gains
 They don't accept my pet
 I can't stay with my partner/family
 There is nowhere to store my stuff
 There are too many rules
 They don't accept my pet

5. If affordable permanent housing became available tomorrow, would you accept it?

Yes No Don't know

Section G: Income and Employment

1. What is your total monthly income from all sources?

\$0-\$99 \$450-\$749 \$1,100-\$1,499 More than \$3,000
 \$100-\$449 \$750-\$1,099 \$1,500-\$3,000

2a. What is your current employment status? (Shade 1)

Unemployed
 Employed full-time Employed seasonal/sporadic
 Employed part-time Looking for work
 In the last 6 months have you... (Shade all) Not looking for work
 Lived in long-term housing Been employed

2b. Are you currently... (Shade all)

Unable to work
 Looking for work
 Not looking for work

Section H: Health

1. Do you experience any of the following:

a. Any chronic health problem or medical condition (diabetes, cancer)	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Refuse
b. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Refuse
c. Any psychiatric or emotional conditions (depression, schizophrenia)	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Refuse
d. A physical disability	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Refuse
e. A traumatic brain injury to your brain from a bump, blow or wound to the head?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Refuse
f. Drug or alcohol abuse (including prescription drugs not prescribed for you)	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Refuse
g. An AIDS or an HIV related illness?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Refuse

2. Does it keep you from holding a job, living in stable housing or taking care of yourself?

Yes No Refuse

3. If you live with a spouse, a significant other or parent, do any of the following conditions prevent them from maintaining work or housing? (Shade all that apply)

Chronic health problem Physical disability
 PTSD Traumatic brain injury
 Drug or alcohol abuse Psychiatric or emotional condition
 Dementia/Alzheimers Developmental disability

4. Are you currently experiencing home/domestic violence or abuse?

Yes No Decline to state
 Yes No Decline to state

5. Have you ever been physically, emotionally or sexually abused by a relative, or another person you have stayed with (spouse, partner, sibling, parent)?

Yes No Decline to state

6. Do you receive any disability benefits such as Social Security Disability Income, or Veterans Disability Benefits?

Yes No Decline to state

7. Where do you usually go for medical care?

HIV/AIDS Emergency Room
 None of the above

8. How many times have you seen the same medical provider in the last 12 months?

9. Have you taken the V-SPDAT/Coordinated Entry?

Yes No Don't know

Section I: Services and Assistance

1. Are you currently using any of the following services/assistance? (Shade all that apply)

Free meals
 Bus passes
 Job training/employment services
 Community drop in center
 Legal assistance
 Immigration services
 Behavioral health services
 Religious based services
 Outreach services
 Other: _____

2. Are you currently receiving any of the following forms of government assistance? (Shade all that apply)

Any VA Disability Compensation
 Other Veterans benefits (GI, Health)
 Social Security
 SSI/SSDI/Disability
 Medi-cal/Medicare
 CalWORKS/TANF
 Not receiving any form of government assistance

3. If you are not receiving any government assistance, why not? (Shade all that apply)

Don't think you are eligible
 Don't have ID
 No permanent address
 Never applied
 Benefits were cut-off
 Immigration issues
 Paperwork too difficult
 Don't know/where to go
 Turned down
 Applied and waiting for response
 Other: _____
 Don't want government assistance

Section J: Criminal Justice System

1. Have you spent a night in jail in the last 12 months? Yes No

2. Are you currently on probation or parole? Yes No

3. Have you accessed re-entry services? Yes No

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Appendix E: Figure Sources

All Point in Time Count Data: The figure source is ASR, Santa Clara County Homeless Count and Survey, for the years varying from 2005 to 2019.

All Homeless Survey Findings: The figure source is ASR, Santa Clara County Homeless Count and Survey, for the years varying from 2005 to 2019.

All Subpopulation Data: The figure source is ASR, Santa Clara County Homeless Count and Survey, for the years varying from 2005 to 2019.

All Census Data: U.S. Census Bureau. (January 2017). American Community Survey 2015 1-Year Estimates, Table DP05: ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates. Retrieved from <http://factfinder2.census.gov>



North County

HOMELESS CENSUS & SURVEY

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT

2019