



2007 SAN MATEO COUNTY HOMELESS CENSUS AND SURVEY

Findings

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2007 San Mateo County Homeless Census and Survey

The following is a summary of some of the learnings from the 2007 San Mateo County Homeless Census and Survey.

NUMBER OF HOMELESS PEOPLE

Point in Time Numbers

The 2007 Census determined that there were **2,064 homeless people in San Mateo County on the night of January 30, 2007** comprised of:

- 1,094 unsheltered homeless people who comprise 1,082 households; and,
- 970 sheltered homeless people who comprise 693 households (in emergency shelters, transitional housing, motel voucher programs, residential treatment, jails, and hospitals).

Annual Estimate

Using the “annualization” formula developed by the Corporation for Supportive Housing, there are an estimated **6,646 homeless people in San Mateo County on an annual basis**.

This 2007 Homeless Census identified more people than the previous 2005 Homeless Census, which was the basis for the HOPE Plan. The 2005 Homeless Census/HOPE Plan identified:

- 1,385 homeless people on a single night; and,
- 4,030 homeless people over the course of a year.

The 2007 Homeless Census identified approximately 49% more homeless people on any given night and about 65% more people over the course of a year. The main reason for this significant increase in the numbers is the improved data collection methodologies used in 2007, rather than any actual increase in the numbers of homeless people over the past two years. This result confirmed the impression reported by the HOPE planners and stated in the HOPE Plan that both the point in time and annual estimates represented a significant undercount of homeless people in San Mateo County.

The relative percentages of households with children versus those without children was approximately the same in 2005 and 2007. Single individuals and couples without children who are homeless outnumber homeless families with children. Since the HOPE Plan was based on the correct assumption that the majority of unmet need for affordable/supportive housing and services was among this single adult population, the 2007 census figures confirm that the focus on strategies to house the single adult homeless population are appropriate.

HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

The 2,064 homeless people counted comprised **1,775 households** as follows:

- 1,649 households without dependent children (93); and,
- 126 “family” households, i.e., with dependent children (7%).

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Geographic Breakdown

Cities	General Population	% of General Population	Homeless Population (Sheltered & Unsheltered)	% of Homeless Population	Unsheltered Homeless Population	% of Unsheltered Homeless Population
Daly City	103,300	14.50%	80	3.88%	42	3.84%
East Palo Alto	31,500	4.42%	248	12.02%	222	20.29%
Half Moon Bay	12,250	1.72%	83	4.02%	74	6.76%
Menlo Park	30,400	4.27%	229	11.09%	52	4.75%
Redwood City	75,100	10.54%	487	23.59%	212	19.38%
San Bruno	41,250	5.79%	31	1.50%	31	2.83%
San Mateo	93,100	13.07%	317	15.36%	62	5.67%
South San Francisco	60,400	8.48%	188	9.11%	97	8.87%
Unincorporated	63,500	8.91%	162	7.85%	162	14.81%
Scattered Site Motel Programs	NA	NA	88	4.26%	0	0%
Other Cities	201,625	28.30%	151	7.32%	140	12.8%
TOTAL	712,425	100%	2,064	100%	1,094	100%

Please note that the Homeless Population column includes the Sheltered Homeless who by definition are located where the emergency shelters and transitional housing programs are, which skews the data. Therefore, the Unsheltered Homeless Population column is a more accurate reflection of the location of homeless people in San Mateo County.

Age, Race and Gender

The Homeless Survey identified the following demographic profile of San Mateo's homeless population:

Age

- 3% are between 18 – 21 years old
- 92% are between 21 – 60 years old
- 5% are more than 60 years old

Race

- 41% are Caucasian
- 31% are African American
- 17% are Hispanic/Latino
- 3% are Asian
- 2% are Pacific Islander
- 1% are American Indian/Alaskan Native
- 4% are Multi-Ethnic/Other

African Americans are disproportionately overrepresented and Caucasians are disproportionately underrepresented among the homeless population in San Mateo County:

- 2.2% of the county's population is African American (according to the 2001 California Health Interview Survey), and African Americans comprise 31% of the homeless population.
- 54% of the county's population is Caucasian (according to the 2001 California Health Interview Survey), and Caucasians comprise 41% of the homeless population.

Of the respondents to the Survey who were identified as having been chronically homeless:

- 51% identified as being Caucasian
- 28% identified as being African American
- 11% identified as being Hispanic/Latino
- 3% identified as being American Indian/Alaska Native
- 2% identified as Asian
- 4% identified as Multi-Ethnic/Other

Gender

- 66% are male
- 34% are female

Children

- 41% reported having children (living with them or not)
- Of those, 68% reported having children under 18 living with them, 29% reported that their children were in foster care, and 25% reported having children under 18 living with them

Veterans

- 27% of the Homeless Survey respondents reported having served in the US Armed Forces

CHARACTERISTICS OF HOMELESSNESS

The Homeless Survey confirmed that a significant number of homeless people have been homeless for long periods of time and/or many times within the past 3 years (i.e., are "chronically homeless"):

- 41% had been homeless for one year or longer
- 30% had been homeless 4 times or more in the past three years

The Homeless Survey confirmed that the majority of homeless people in San Mateo County have been in the community for a long time:

- 66% reported living in San Mateo County at the time they became homeless
- Of these, 73% had lived in San Mateo County for 3 years or more before becoming homeless, with 52% reporting having lived in San Mateo County for more than 10 years before becoming homeless.

Immediately before becoming homeless:

- 35% were renting a home or apartment
- 28% were living with relatives or friends
- 16% were in publicly funded institutions, i.e., jail or prison, hospital, treatment programs
- 10% were living in a home owned by themselves or their partner

The primary events or conditions for becoming homeless were both financial and behavioral:

- 31% reported alcohol or drug use;
- 18% reported loss of a job;
- 7% reported being evicted due to non-payment of rent; and,
- 6% reported incarceration
- 6% reported mental health issues

The primary reasons identified for not being able to get permanent housing were:

- 54% can't afford rent
- 53% don't have jobs
- 32% have bad credit
- 31% don't have move-in monies
- 18% don't have transportation
- 14% have a criminal record
- 4.3% don't want permanent housing

INCOME, EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION

The Survey confirmed that the majority of homeless people have very little and in many cases no income:

- 80% reported being unemployed, 10% reported being employed full-time and 10% were employed part-time
- 44% reported having no income from government benefits (e.g. food stamps, SSI, etc.)
- 46% reported having no income from any other sources (i.e. job, panhandling, etc.)
- 20% receive MediCal and 13% received SSI benefits (although many homeless people report being disabled)
- 21% reported receiving some income from panhandling and 18% reported receiving some income from recycling

The main reasons people weren't able to get employment were:

- 36% reported alcohol/drug use
- 23% didn't have transportation
- 23% didn't have a permanent address
- 21% reported health problems
- 20% reported being disabled
- 18% had a criminal record
- 3% reported not wanting to work

The highest level of education completed by homeless people surveyed were:

- 39% had some college, no degree
- 25% had an AA degree and 6% had a BA degree
- 19% had a high school diploma/GED

DISABILITY

The Survey provided the following data:

- 57% reported having depression
- 35% reported having a mental illness
- 35% reported having a physical disability
- 33% reported drug abuse
- 31% reported alcohol abuse
- 28% reported chronic health problems
- 26% reported post traumatic stress disorder
- 12% reported developmental disability
- 2% reported HIV/AIDS

(Although they were not included in the preliminary report, data were collected on the percentages of people with co-occurring disabilities. This data will be presented in the a report.)

The Survey respondents who were identified as being chronically homeless indicated:

- 25% reported having 1 disability
- 26% reported having 2 disabilities
- 18% reported having 3 disabilities
- 31% reported having 4 or more disabilities

SERVICE NEED/USE

The Survey data on service use was relatively consistent with the data on disability and employment:

- 41% reported using alcohol and other drug services (31% reported alcohol abuse and 33% reported drug abuse)
- 30% reported using mental health services (35% reported having a mental illness)
- 12% reported using job training services (80% reported being unemployed)
- 4% of those surveyed were not using any services at all

The Survey data confirmed that many homeless people are frequent users of emergency services:

- 43% get their medical care from the San Mateo Medical Center, Stanford Hospital, or SF General Hospital emergency rooms (ER)
- 24% have used the ER 3 or more times in past year
- 38% reported having spent at least one night in jail in the last 12 months

The Survey data provided the following additional information about service use:

- 27% of those surveyed were veterans, however, only 10% reported receiving veterans benefits. This is consistent with national data that indicates that about 25% of homeless veterans nationally are homeless, and many of them do not receive any veteran's benefits.
- 13% of those surveyed reported having been in foster care, which is consistent with national findings that a significant number of emancipated foster youth become homeless. 12% of those surveyed reported having at least one child in foster care.

- Only 7% reported experiencing domestic/partner violence or abuse. This figure is somewhat low compared to national averages. ASR is conducting some additional analysis to attempt to understand this result.