



SAN FRANCISCO

2017

HOMELESS UNIQUE YOUTH
COUNT & SURVEY
COMPREHENSIVE REPORT



REPORT PRODUCED BY ASR

ABOUT THE RESEARCHER

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

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- At the Crossroads
- Homeless Youth Alliance
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- LYRIC
- Third Street Youth Center and Clinic

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Introduction

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

The Point-in-Time Count provides an opportunity to address gaps in understanding and knowledge. In 2013, it was recognized that little was known about the population of homeless youth under the age of 25 in the City and County of San Francisco. Since that time, San Francisco has conducted a dedicated homeless youth count, in conjunction with its general Point-in-Time Count efforts.

In order to improve data on the extent of youth homelessness, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) asked all communities conducting Point-in-Time Counts to gather information on the number and characteristics of unaccompanied children (under 18) and youth (ages 18-24) starting in 2013. Communities were encouraged to conduct unique youth counts, and San Francisco rose to this challenge using best practice strategies for outreach and the enumeration of homeless youth.

The 2017 Unique Homeless Youth Point-in-Time Count of homeless, unaccompanied children and transitional-age youth was conducted as part of the broader Point-in-Time Count of all unsheltered and sheltered homeless persons living in San Francisco. This dedicated count is part of a nationwide effort, established and recommended by HUD, to improve our understanding of the scope of youth homelessness. Trained youth enumerators who currently or recently experienced homelessness conducted the count in specific areas where young people experiencing homelessness were known to congregate.¹

This is an important year for national data on young people experiencing homelessness, as HUD will use 2017 youth count results as a baseline for measuring progress towards ending youth homelessness by 2020. In 2017, the dedicated youth street count was conducted on the evening of January 26, 2017 from 6 p.m. to midnight, overlapping the time and location of the general count. It focused on areas of San Francisco where youth were known to congregate.

The general street count was also conducted on January 26, 2017 from approximately 8 p.m. to midnight and covered all 47 square miles of San Francisco. A shelter count was conducted that

¹ Significant deduplication efforts were made in 2017 to ensure unaccompanied children and youth were not captured in both the youth and general street count efforts. For more information on these efforts and the overall count methodology, please see Appendix 1.

evening and included all individuals staying in: emergency shelters, transitional housing facilities, domestic violence shelters, and institutional settings.

This report focuses on the number and characteristics of unaccompanied homeless children and transitional-age youth counted in the 2017 San Francisco Homeless Point-in-Time Count.

FEDERAL DEFINITION OF HOMELESSNESS FOR POINT-IN-TIME COUNTS

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

- Living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangement; or
- With a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground.

This narrow definition of homelessness is in contrast to the considerably broader definition adopted by the City and County of San Francisco. The definition of homelessness in San Francisco expands HUD's definition to include individuals who were "doubled-up" in the homes of family or friends, staying in jails, hospitals, and rehabilitation facilities, families living in Single Room Occupancy (SRO) units and in sub-standard or inadequate living conditions including overcrowded spaces. While this data is beyond the scope of this project, information on those residing in jails, hospitals, and residential facilities were gathered and are included in this report where applicable.

PROJECT OVERVIEW AND GOALS

The 2017 Youth Planning Committee identified several important project goals:

- Establish an accurate baseline enumeration of homeless youth in San Francisco to measure progress towards the national goal of ending youth homelessness by 2020
- Define the extent of homelessness among unaccompanied children and youth in San Francisco
- Identify the primary causes of homelessness, patterns of service usage, and programming needs among unaccompanied homeless children and youth

It is hoped that the results of the research will assist service providers, policy makers, funders, and local and federal governments to better understand the homeless youth population. The intent of the Unique Homeless Youth Count & Survey is to help policy makers and service providers more effectively develop services and programs to support this population in San Francisco.

Point-In-Time Count

The 2017 San Francisco Homeless Point-in-Time Count & Survey included a complete enumeration of all unsheltered and publicly sheltered homeless persons. The general street count was conducted on January 26, 2017 from approximately 8 p.m. to midnight and covered all 47 square miles of San Francisco. The shelter count was conducted on the same evening and included all individuals staying in: emergency shelters, transitional housing facilities, domestic violence shelters, jails, hospitals, and treatment facilities. The general street count and shelter count methodology were similar to those used in 2013 and 2015.

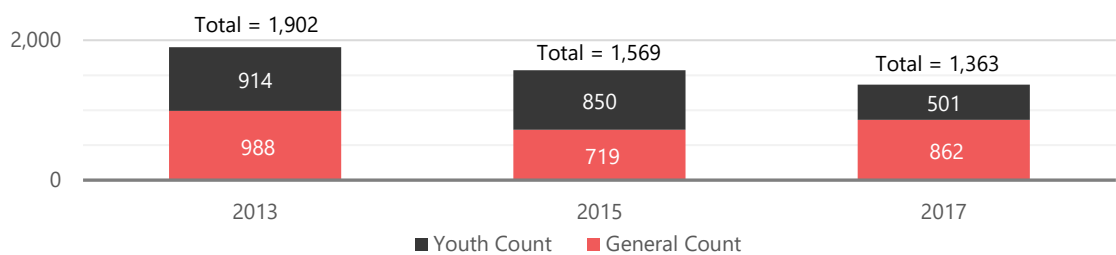
In a sustained effort to improve data on the extent of youth homelessness, San Francisco conducted a dedicated youth count similar to the one conducted in 2013 and 2015. The dedicated youth count methodology was improved in 2017 to better ensure unaccompanied children and transitional-age youth were not included in both the general street count and youth count. For more information regarding the dedicated youth count, deduplication, and project methodology, please see Appendix I.

NUMBER AND CHARACTERISTICS OF HOMELESS PERSONS IN SAN FRANCISCO

On the night of January 26, 2017, a total of 7,499 homeless individuals were counted in the City of San Francisco. Of those, 1,363 were unaccompanied children and transitional-age youth (TAY). The overall number of people counted in the Point-in-Time Count decreased slightly between 2015 and 2017, as did the number of unaccompanied children and youth.

In 2017, 1,363 unaccompanied children and youth were identified across the entire Point-in-Time Count.² In 2015, 1,569 unaccompanied children and youth were enumerated in the Point-in-Time Count.

FIGURE 1. UNSHELTERED AND SHELTERED UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN AND TRANSITIONAL-AGE YOUTH POINT-IN-TIME HOMELESS COUNT TREND

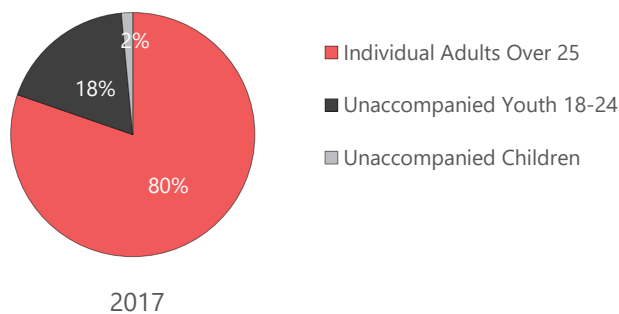


Source: Applied Survey Research. (2013-2017). San Francisco Homeless Count. Watsonville, CA.

Note: While the youth count identified 513 persons, only 501 of those were unaccompanied children and youth; the other 12 were children and youth in families.

Unaccompanied children and transitional-age youth accounted for 20% of the individuals counted in the 2017 Point-in-Time Count. This was similar to 2015, when unaccompanied children and youth represented 21% of the individuals counted.

FIGURE 2. POINT-IN-TIME COUNT AGE DISTRIBUTION OF INDIVIDUALS

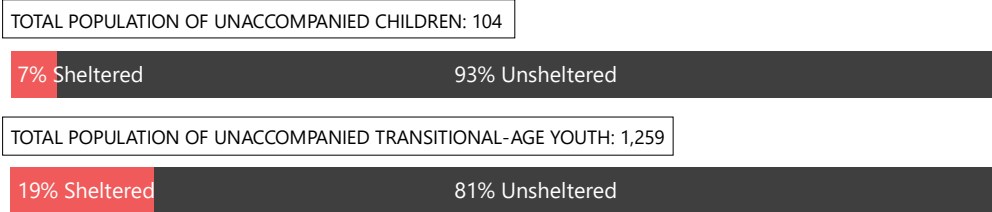


Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). San Francisco Homeless Count. Watsonville, CA.

² Please note that while 513 individuals were counted in the supplemental youth count, only 501 of those individuals were unaccompanied children and TAY; the other 12 were children and TAY in families.

Of the 1,363 unaccompanied children and youth included in the Point-in-Time Count, 104 were under the age of 18. Seven percent (7%) of those children were counted in City shelters, as were 19% of transitional-age youth.

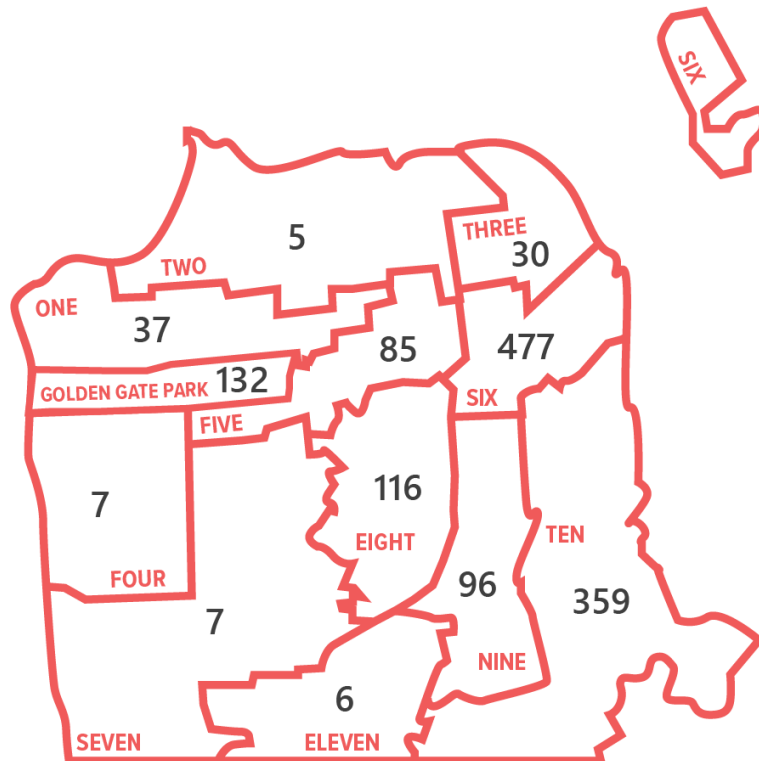
FIGURE 3. HOMELESS COUNT RESULTS ON UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN AND TRANSITIONAL-AGE YOUTH BY SHELTER STATUS



Source: Applied Survey Research. (2013-2017). San Francisco Homeless Count. Watsonville, CA.

The general Point-in-Time Count efforts cover the entire city, but the supplemental youth count efforts focus in on specific neighborhoods of San Francisco where unaccompanied children and youth are known to congregate. These areas were identified by youth who had or were experiencing homelessness, as well as knowledgeable youth service providers. While the supplemental youth count focused on districts 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, and Golden Gate Park, unaccompanied children and transitional age youth were identified in all districts, as well as areas of Golden Gate Park. In 2017, 37% of unaccompanied children and youth were identified through the dedicated youth count effort.

FIGURE 4. MAP OF SAN FRANCISCO DISTRICTS



The table below shows data on all unaccompanied children and youth counted in both the general street count and youth count efforts. The majority of unaccompanied children and youth were found in districts 6 and 10. Overall, more than one third (35%) of people under the age of 25 counted in the 2017 Point-in-Time count were identified in district 6.

FIGURE 5. TOTAL UNSHELTERED AND SHELTERED SAN FRANCISCO POINT-IN-TIME COUNT UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH UNDER 25 POPULATION BY DISTRICT

District	2015 Unaccompanied Youth and Children	2017 Unaccompanied Youth and Children
1	36	37
2	0	5
3*	38	30
4	0	7
5*	198	85
6*	705	477
7	2	7
8*	179	116
9*	72	96
10*	151	359
11	28	6
Confidential/ Scattered Site Locations in San Francisco	7	6
Golden Gate Park*	153	132
Total	1,569	1,363

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). San Francisco Homeless Count. Watsonville, CA.

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

Note: * Denotes areas where the supplemental youth count took place.

Homeless Survey Findings

This section provides an overview of the findings generated from the 2017 San Francisco Homeless Youth Survey. Surveys were administered to a randomized sample of homeless youth under the age of 25 between February 1 and February 21, 2017. This effort resulted in 229 unique surveys. Based on a Point-in-Time Count of 1,363 unaccompanied homeless children and youth, with a randomized survey sampling process, these 229 valid surveys represent a confidence interval of +/- 6% with a 95% confidence level when generalizing the results of the survey to the estimated population of unaccompanied homeless youth in San Francisco. In other words, if the survey were conducted again, we can be confident that the results would be within six percentage points of the current results. Data are presented on both the adult and youth survey population where available.

Due to the often hidden nature of youth homelessness, there are limited data available on unaccompanied children and transitional-age youth experiencing homelessness. Although largely considered an undercount, current federal estimates suggest there are 35,686 unaccompanied children and transitional-age youth on the streets and in public shelters across the country.³ Young people experiencing homelessness have a harder time accessing services, including shelter, medical care, and employment due to the stigma of their housing situation, lack of knowledge about available resources, and a dearth of services directed towards young people.⁴

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 unaccompanied homeless children and transitional-age youth. As part of this effort, the federal government placed an increased focus on gathering data on unaccompanied homeless children and youth during the Point-in-Time Count.

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. Missing values are intentionally omitted from the survey results. Therefore, the total number of respondents for each question will not always equal the total number of surveys conducted.

³ Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2016). Annual Assessment Report to Congress. Retrieved 2017 from <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/2016-AHAR-Part-1.pdf>

⁴ National Coalition for the Homeless. (2011). Homeless Youth Fact Sheet. Retrieved 2011 from <http://www.nationalhomeless.org>.

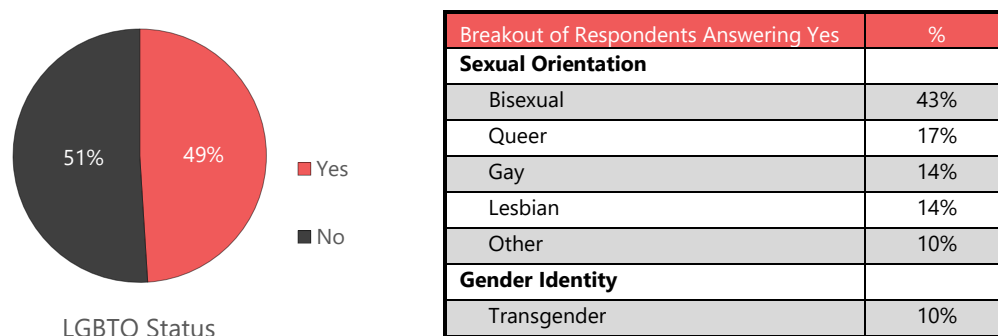
SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

GENDER AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION

The gender breakdown of the homeless youth population was different than that of the adult homeless population. Half (50%) of youth respondents under the age of 25 identified as male, less than the general population (64%). Thirty-nine percent (39%) identified as female, 10% as transgender, and 2% as genderqueer/gender non-binary.

It has been estimated that, nationally, 40% of homeless youth self-identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and/or Queer (LGBTQ), a disproportionately higher percentage than in the general population (10%).⁵ Nearly half (49%) of youth survey respondents identified as LGBTQ, higher than the adult population (25%).

FIGURE 6. SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY



LGBTQ Under 25 n = 229; Breakout n = 113

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2017). San Francisco Homeless Count. Watsonville, CA.

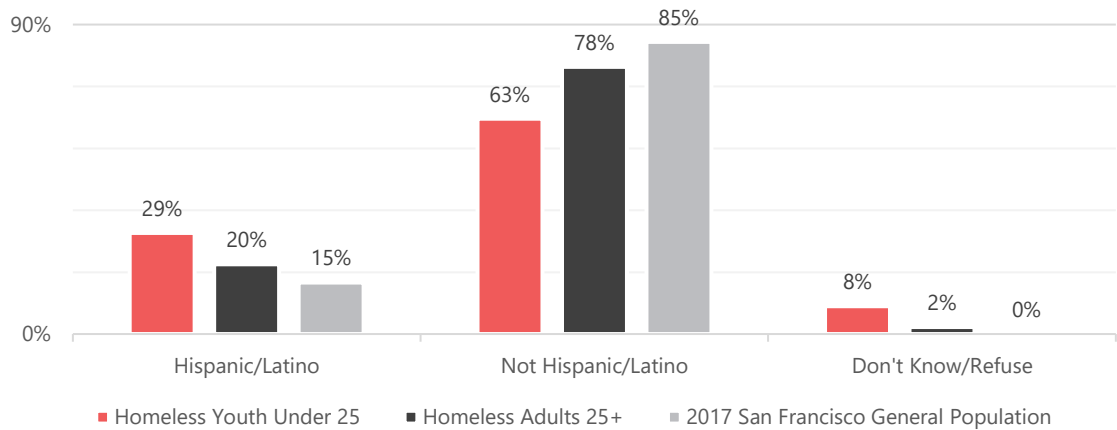
Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100.

⁵ Durso, L., & Gates, G. (2012). Serving our Youth: Findings From a National Survey of Service Providers Working with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Youth Who Are Homeless or At Risk of Becoming Homeless. Retrieved 2017 from <http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Durso-Gates-LGBT-Homeless-Youth-Survey-July-2012.pdf>

RACE AND ETHNICITY

Race and ethnicity were asked in two separate questions, similar to the U.S. Census. In regards to ethnicity, 29% of youth respondents reported they were Hispanic or Latino, compared to 20% of respondents 25 years and older. The highest reported race for youth respondents was Multiracial (35%), followed by Black or African American and White, each representing 26% of the youth population.

FIGURE 7. ETHNICITY

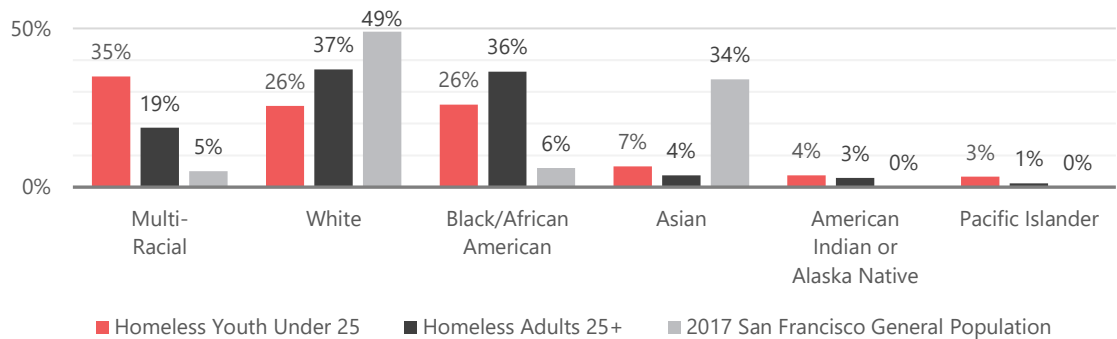


Under 25 n = 211; Over 25 n = 806

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2017). San Francisco Homeless Count. Watsonville, CA. And U.S. Count Bureau. (April 2015). American Community Survey 2011-2015 5-Year Estimates. Table DP05: ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates. Retrieved from <https://factfinder.census.gov>.

Notes: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

FIGURE 8. HOMELESS POPULATION BY RACE AND AGE



Under 25 n = 215; Over 25 n = 840

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2017). San Francisco Homeless Count. Watsonville, CA. And U.S. Count Bureau. (April 2015). American Community Survey 2011-2015 5-Year Estimates. Table DP05: ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates. Retrieved from <https://factfinder.census.gov>.

Notes: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

RESIDENCY

More than half (56%) of youth survey respondents reported they were living in San Francisco at the time they most recently became homeless. Twenty-eight percent (28%) had moved to San Francisco from another county in California. Sixteen percent (16%) moved to San Francisco from out of state, compared to 9% of respondents over the age of 25. In 2017, two-thirds of youth (66%) reported staying in San Francisco year-round, this was down from 81% in 2015.

FIGURE 9. PLACE OF RESIDENCE AT TIME OF HOUSING LOSS



Under 25 n= 225

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2017). San Francisco Homeless Count. Watsonville, CA.

While homeless youth may move more often than youth who are not experiencing homelessness, many 18-24 year olds move multiple times during their young adult lives. The US Census Bureau data on the general population of transitional-age youth in San Francisco showed that 40% had moved at least once in the prior year. Of those who had moved, 43% moved within the state of California, 17% reported moving from out of state, and 12% reported moving from another country.⁶

PRIOR LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

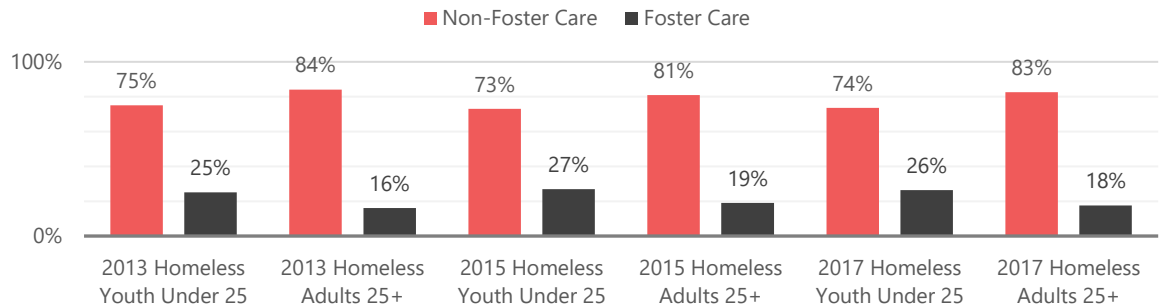
The type of living arrangements maintained by youth before experiencing homelessness provides a look into what types of prevention and intervention services might be offered to help them maintain their housing. Twenty-three percent (23%) of homeless youth reported they had lived with both parents prior to experiencing homelessness, 20% lived with a single mother, and 7% a single father. Twenty-two percent (22%) reported living with a friend, 10% with a stepparent or other family member, 5% in a group home, and 3% with a foster family.

⁶ U.S. Census Bureau. (2015). 2011-2015 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table B07001. Retrieved 2017 from www.census.gov

HISTORY OF FOSTER CARE

It has been estimated that one in five former foster youth experiences homelessness within four years of exiting the foster care system.⁷

FIGURE 10. EXPERIENCE WITH FOSTER CARE



Under 25 n = 208; 2017 Over 25 n = 817

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2017). San Francisco Homeless Count. Watsonville, CA.

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

In 2017, twenty-six percent (26%) of youth respondents reported a history of foster care. Nine percent (9%) of youth with a history of foster care reported they were living in foster care immediately before becoming homeless, and 7% reported aging out of foster care was the primary cause of their homelessness. Respondents were not asked where they were living while they were in care, however 53% of youth with a foster care history reported they were living in San Francisco at the time they became homeless.

⁷ Fernandes, AL. (2007). Runaway and Homeless Youth: Demographics, Programs, and Emerging Issues. Congressional Research Services, January 2007, <http://www.endhomelessness.org/content/general/detail/1451>

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

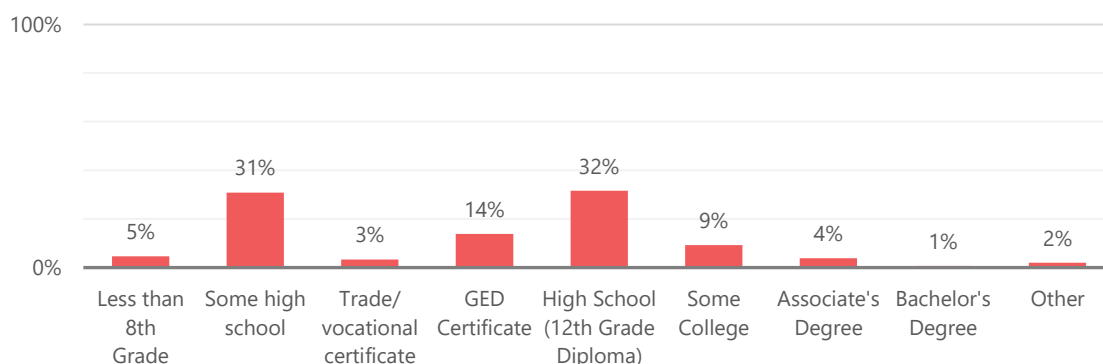
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN AND TRANSITIONAL-AGE YOUTH

In March of 2017, a national study looking at homelessness among community college students reported that on average 13-14% of community college students are homeless, and 27% of their homeless student population is under the age of 21. Of those who reported being homeless, just over 2% reported spending time in a shelter.⁸

While the majority of youth respondents in this survey were over the age of 18, 36% had not completed high school or received a GED. This is compared to 7% of the general population of youth 18 to 24 in the City of San Francisco.⁹ Forty-five percent (45%) had completed high school or received their GED, 4% had attained an associate's degree, and 1% had completed college. Forty-three percent (43%) of youth reported they were currently enrolled in some kind of education or vocation program.

It is important to note that many youth who are sleeping outside are attending school. Of the 43% of youth who reported current enrollment in an education or vocation program, 68% reported that they were also unsheltered.

FIGURE 11. EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN AND TRANSITIONAL-AGE YOUTH



Under 25 n=152

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2017). San Francisco Homeless Count. Watsonville, CA.

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

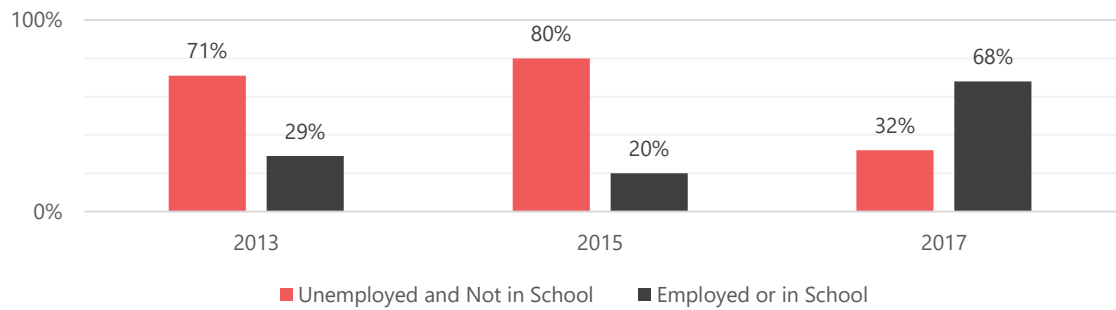
⁸ Goldrick-Rab, S., Richardson, J., & Hernandez, H. (2017). Hungry and Homeless in College: Results from a National Study of Basic Needs Insecurity in Higher Education. Retrieved 2017 from <http://wihopelab.com/publications/hungry-and-homeless-in-college-report.pdf>

⁹ U.S. Census Bureau. (2015). 2011-2015 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table S1501. Retrieved 2017 from www.census.gov

EMPLOYMENT

Youth who are delayed in obtaining their first job are less likely to progress in their career, more likely to earn less, and experience delayed benefits such as health care and retirement. Many people who experience extended joblessness during youth are often seen by employers as lacking basic skills and experience.¹⁰ Sixty-eight percent (68%) of youth respondents reported currently being enrolled in some sort of education or vocation program, or having a job, paid internship, or other type of employment. Thirty-two percent (32%) of respondents reported being unemployed and not in school.

FIGURE 12. EMPLOYMENT STATUS



2017 n=173; 2015 n=147; 2013 n=157

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2013-2017). *San Francisco Homeless Count*. Watsonville, CA.

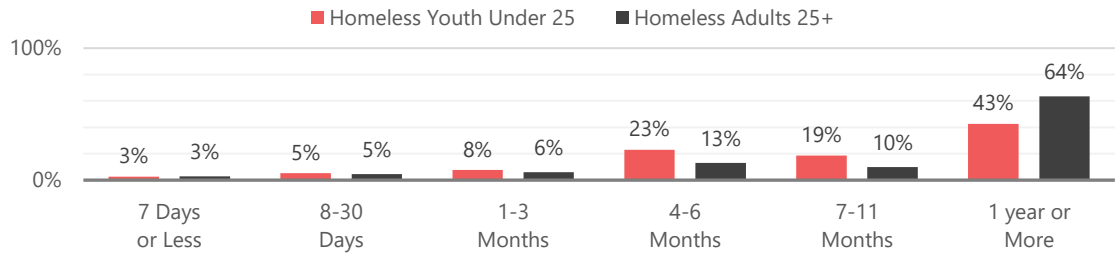
Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

¹⁰ Ferguson, K. Youth Society. Employment Status and Income Generation among Homeless Young Adults Results from a Five-City, Mixed-Methods Study. September 2012 vol. 44 no. 3 385-407

DURATION AND RECURRENCE OF HOMELESSNESS

Unstable living conditions, poverty, housing scarcity, and many other issues often lead to individuals falling in and out of homelessness. For many youth, the experience of homelessness is part of a long and recurring history of housing instability. For this reason, youth were asked how long they had experienced homelessness this current time. Forty-three percent (43%) of homeless youth respondents reported being homeless for a year or longer.

FIGURE 13. LENGTH OF CURRENT EPISODE OF HOMELESSNESS



2017 Under 25 n=225; 2017 Over 25 n= 870

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2017). San Francisco Homeless Count. Watsonville, CA.

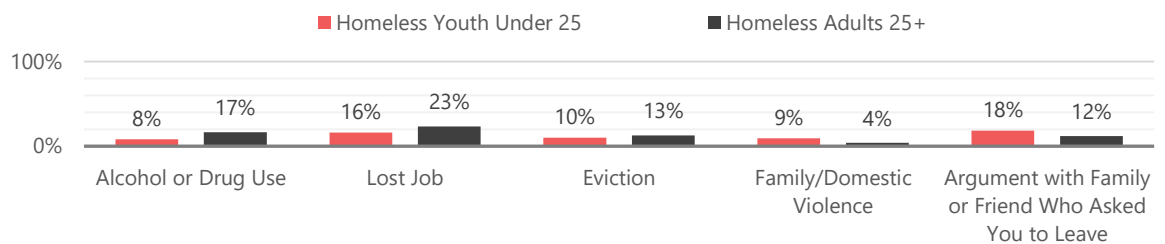
Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Despite their young age, 68% of youth reported having multiple experiences of homelessness. Thirty-two percent (32%) of youth respondents reported experiencing homelessness for the first time, compared to 23% of adult respondents. This was lower than in 2015 when 45% of youth respondents reported experiencing homelessness for the first time.

PRIMARY CAUSE OF HOMELESSNESS

Homeless youth survey respondents reported some differences in cause of homelessness compared to respondents 25 years or older. Eighteen percent (18%) of youth reported an argument with a friend or family member who asked them to leave as the primary cause of their homelessness, compared to 12% of individuals over 25. Fewer reported a job loss as the primary cause of their homelessness compared to that of adults, 16% compared to 23%, respectively. Eviction (10%), family/domestic violence (9%), and alcohol or drug use (8%) were also among the most commonly reported causes by youth respondents.

FIGURE 14. PRIMARY CAUSE OF YOUTH HOMELESSNESS (TOP FIVE RESPONSES)



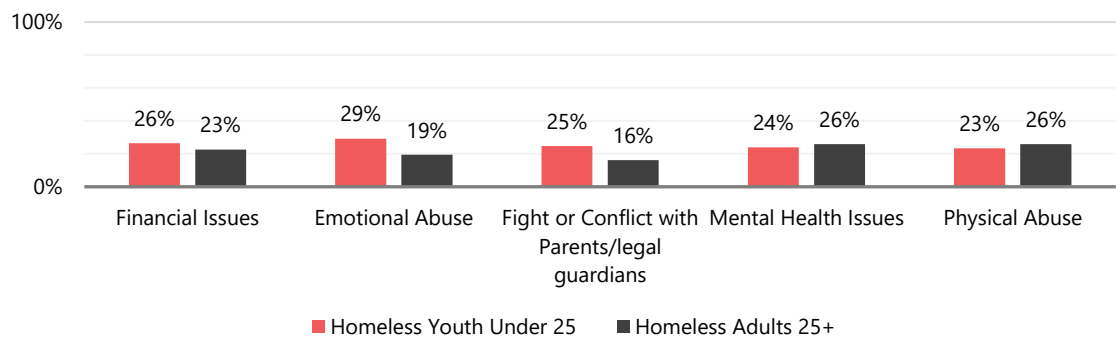
2017 Under 25 n=218; 2017 Over 25 n=855

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2017). San Francisco Homeless Count. Watsonville, CA.

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

In addition to asking about the primary cause of their homelessness, youth were asked to identify other contributing causes. The most frequent response in 2017 was financial issues (36%), followed by emotional abuse (29%), fight or conflict with parents/legal guardians (25%), mental health issues (24%), and physical abuse (23%).

FIGURE 15. CONTRIBUTING CAUSES TO YOUTH HOMELESSNESS (TOP FIVE RESPONSES)



2017 Under 25 n= 154 individuals offering 363 responses; 2017 Over 25 n=31 individuals offering 65 responses

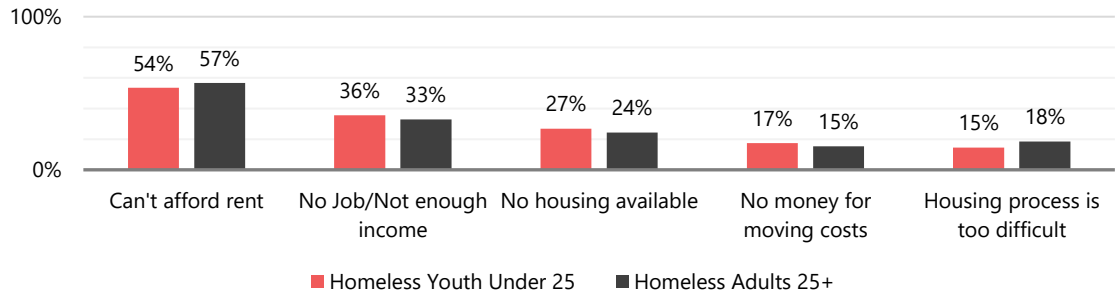
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2013-2017). San Francisco Homeless Count. Watsonville, CA.

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

OBSTACLES TO OBTAINING PERMANENT HOUSING

Forty-three percent (43%) of youth reported that they did not expect to have stable housing within the 12 months following the survey, less than 2015 (52%). When asked about barriers to permanent housing, 54% reported that they could not afford rent, followed by 36% who reported not enough income or no job. Twenty-seven percent (27%) reported not enough housing was available, followed by 17% who could not afford moving costs, and 15% who felt the housing process was too difficult.

FIGURE 16. OBSTACLES TO OBTAINING PERMANENT HOUSING (TOP FIVE RESPONSES)



2017 Under 25 n= 213 offering 470; 2017 Over 25 n= 843 offering 1,940

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2017). San Francisco Homeless Count. Watsonville, CA.

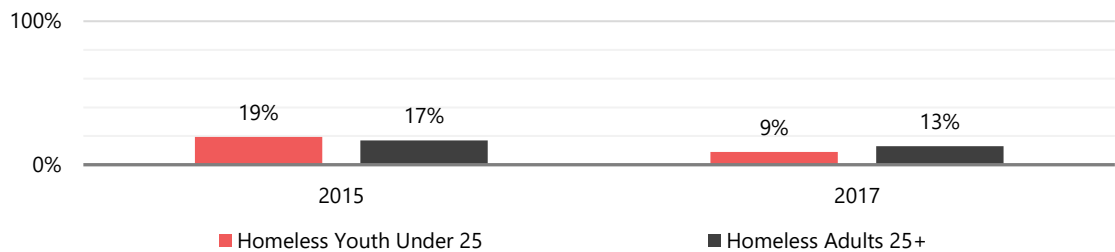
Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100.

EXPERIENCES WITH THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Homeless youth often interact with law enforcement more frequently than the general population due to their experiences on the street. Some homeless youth are involved in the criminal justice system, and that experience places them at greater risk for homelessness by creating barriers to employment and housing.

Twenty-nine percent (29%) of youth reported they had been involved with the justice system before turning 18, and 10% were on probation or parole at the time they most recently became homeless. Nine percent (9%) reported they were on probation or parole at the time of the survey. Four percent (4%) reported incarceration was the primary cause of their homelessness, and 5% reported their criminal record was preventing them from obtaining permanent housing.

FIGURE 17. CURRENTLY ON PROBATION OR PAROLE?



2017 Under 25 n = 214; 2017 Over 25 n = 826

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2017). San Francisco Homeless Count. Watsonville, CA.

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

SAFETY AND WELLBEING

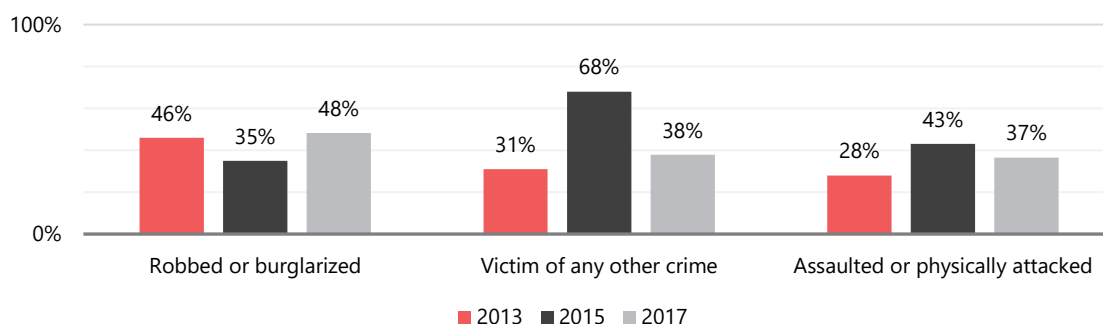
VICTIMIZATION

National research suggests that homeless youth are more likely to be the victims of crime rather than the perpetrators.¹¹ In San Francisco, one in three youth (33%) reported that they felt “a little unsafe” or “very unsafe” in their current living situation, higher than in 2015 when one in four youth (25%) reported feeling unsafe.

In addition to feeling unsafe, half of youth (50%) reported that their safety had been threatened one or more times in the 30 days prior to the survey, and 35% of youth reported that they had been assaulted or physically attacked in the year prior to the survey.

Nationally, research has shown homeless youth are at increased risk of exploitation, including trading sex or drugs for basic needs. National research has shown that an estimated 60% of commercially sexually exploited children (CSEC) are homeless.¹² In San Francisco in 2017, twenty-six percent (26%) of youth reported trading drugs for a place to stay, compared to 27% in 2015. Twenty-four percent (24%) reported trading sex for a place to stay, compared to 20% in 2015.

FIGURE 18. EXPERIENCES WITH CRIME IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS



2017 n=180-185; 2015 n=142-145; 2013 n=160-164

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2013-2017). *San Francisco Homeless Count*. Watsonville, CA.

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

¹¹ Gaetz, S. (2004). Safe Streets for Whom? Homeless Youth, Social Exclusion, and Criminal Victimization. *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice*. University of Toronto Press. 46, 4, 423:456.

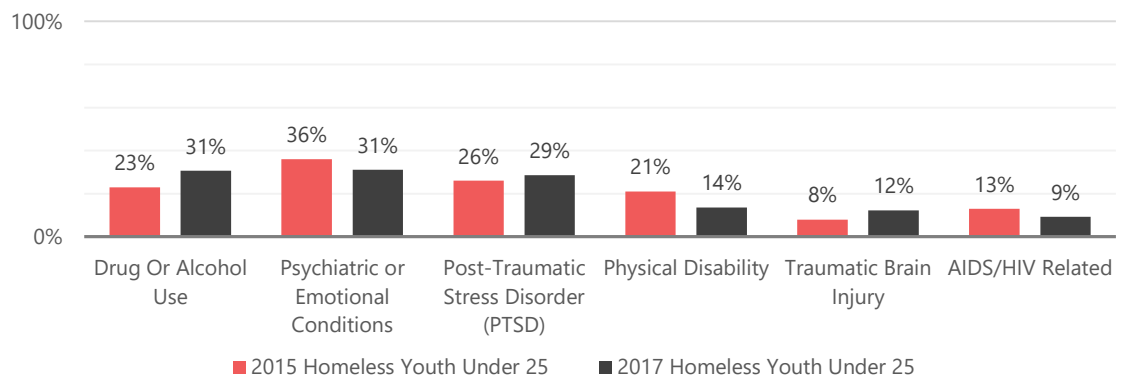
¹² Gaetz, S. (2004). Safe Streets for Whom? Homeless Youth, Social Exclusion, and Criminal Victimization. *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice*. University of Toronto Press. 46, 4, 423:456.

HEALTH STATUS

Homeless youth respondents were asked about their physical health. Almost half of youth respondents (49%) reported that their physical health was “good” or “very good.” This was slightly lower than in 2015 (55%). In 2017, 13% reported their physical health was “poor” or “very poor.”

Youth were also asked about specific mental and physical health conditions. Forty percent (40%) of youth reported one or more health conditions, including psychiatric and emotional conditions (31%), drug or alcohol use (31%), and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (29%).

FIGURE 19. HEALTH CONDITIONS AMONG UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN AND TRANSITIONAL-AGE YOUTH



2017 n=212-217, 2015 n=163-166

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). San Francisco Homeless Count. Watsonville, CA.

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

When asked about current needs relating to health and wellbeing, 36% of youth reported dental care, followed by health care (35%), personal hygiene (30%), eye care (25%), and counseling or mental health care (24%).

SERVICES AND ASSISTANCE

San Francisco benefits from a number of agencies dedicated to serving homeless children and youth. While youth have access to services in San Francisco and many are eligible for assistance, it is youths' perception of the service system that may matter most. If youth believe that they cannot access services or are ineligible, they will be less likely to seek assistance or support.

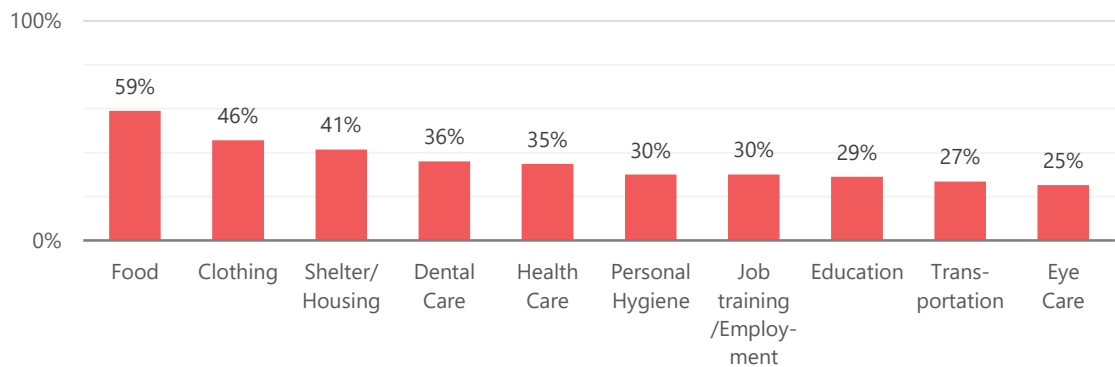
Youth were asked about frequency of accessing youth-specific services in the 12 month prior to the survey. Forty-five percent (45%) of youth reported they had accessed youth specific services "often" or "always" in the 12 months prior to the survey, while 11% reported that they never accessed youth specific services.

Questions around barriers to accessing services and housing were also asked. Twenty-eight percent (28%) of youth reported they did not know where to go for help, and another 28% reported they did not have an ID or personal document. Forty-three percent (43%) of youth reported that their age prevented them from receiving permanent housing, and 32% felt that their age prevented them from receiving employment.

SERVICE NEEDS

Youth reported that their greatest service needs were basic needs and health needs: food (59%), clothing (46%), shelter/housing (41%), dental care (36%), and health care (35%).

FIGURE 20. CURRENT NEEDS OF YOUTH (TOP TEN RESPONSES)



2017 Under 25 n = 186 offering 779 responses

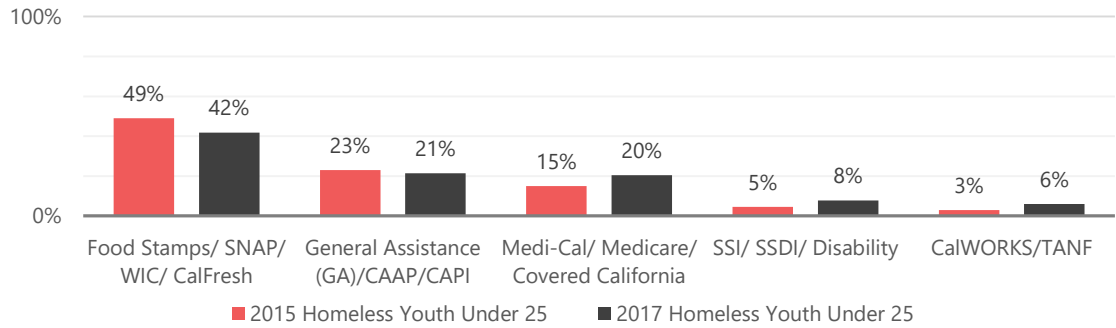
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2017). San Francisco Homeless Count. Watsonville, CA.

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

GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE

Sixty-three percent (63%) of youth reported they were receiving some form of government benefits. This was lower than the percentage reported by adult respondents (75%). Forty-two percent (42%) of youth reported they were receiving food stamps, and 21% reported they were receiving General Assistance. Overall, youth survey respondents in 2017 were somewhat better connected to services than in 2015 when 61% of youth reported receiving some form of government assistance.

FIGURE 21. GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE RECEIVED (TOP FIVE RESPONSES)



2017 n=196 offering 281 responses; 2015 n=155 offering 157 responses

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). San Francisco Homeless Count. Watsonville, CA.

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

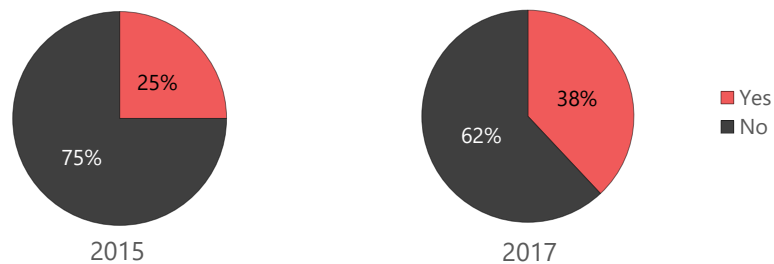
Among those youth not receiving government assistance, 10% never applied, 9% reported not having an ID, and another 9% reported not knowing where to go. Seven percent (7%) reported that they did not think they were eligible for assistance.

SOCIAL CONNECTIONS AND ASSETS

Responses to youth homelessness have continued to stress the need for connecting homeless youth with family and community members who can support their transition into adulthood. Information was gathered on the relationships youth had with their parents, as well as with other supportive adults.

Twenty-two percent (22%) of youth reported trying to move back in with their parents or family members. Fourteen percent (14%) of youth reported having contact with their parents or family “a couple times a year,” while nearly half (49%) reported having contact at least “a few times a month.” No youth respondents reported that their parents were currently homeless, a large decrease from 11% in 2015. Over one third (38%) of youth reported that they had a supportive adult in the Bay Area, a significant increase from 2015.

FIGURE 22. SUPPORTIVE ADULT IN THE BAY AREA



2017 n=192; 2015 n=150

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). San Francisco Homeless Count. Watsonville, CA.

Appendix 1: Methodology

OVERVIEW

The purpose of the 2017 San Francisco Homeless Point-in-Time (PIT) Count & Survey was to produce a point-in-time estimate of people who experience homelessness in San Francisco, a region which covers approximately 47 square miles. The results of the street counts were combined with the results from the shelter and institution count to produce the total estimated number of persons experiencing homelessness in San Francisco on a given night. The subsequent, in-depth qualitative survey was used to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the experiences and demographics of those counted. A more detailed description of the methodology follows.

COMPONENTS OF THE HOMELESS COUNT METHOD

The Point-in-Time count methodology used in 2017 had three primary components:

- The general street count between the hours of 8 PM and midnight – an enumeration of unsheltered homeless individuals
- The youth street count between the hours of 6 PM and midnight – a targeted enumeration of unsheltered homeless youth under the age of 25
- The shelter count on the night of the street count – an enumeration of sheltered homeless individuals

The unsheltered and sheltered homeless counts were coordinated to occur within the same time period in order to minimize potential duplicate counting of homeless persons.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

To ensure the success of the count, many City and community agencies collaborated in community outreach, volunteer and youth worker recruitment, logistical planning, methodological decision-making, and interagency coordination efforts. Applied Survey Research (ASR), a social research firm, provided technical assistance with these aspects of the planning process. ASR has over 15 years of experience conducting homeless counts and surveys throughout California and across the nation. Their work is featured as a best practice in HUD's publication, *A Guide to Counting Unsheltered Homeless People*, as well as in, *Conducting a Youth Count: A Toolkit*, published by Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND INTERAGENCY COORDINATION

Local youth homeless and housing service providers and advocates have been valued partners in the planning and implementation of this and previous counts. The Local Homeless Coordinating Board (LHCB), the lead entity of San Francisco's Continuum of Care, was invited to comment on the methodology and subsequently endorsed it. The youth planning team was comprised of staff from

the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing and consultants from Applied Survey Research. Throughout the planning process, the planning team requested the collaboration, cooperation, and participation of several agencies that regularly interact with homeless youth and possess considerable expertise relevant to the count. Several planning meetings were conducted leading up to the count with individuals, including representatives from At the Crossroads, Homeless Youth Alliance, Larkin Street Youth Services, LYRIC, and Third Street Youth Center and Clinic.

YOUTH STREET COUNT METHODOLOGY

GOAL

The goal of the 2017 dedicated youth count was similar to that of past youth counts in 2013 and 2015, to be more inclusive of children and youth under the age of 25 experiencing homelessness. Many of these children and youth 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.

HUD has announced that the youth count in 2017 will be the “baseline” for future years, serving as a barometer to gauge the effectiveness of future efforts to end homelessness amongst children and youth. Recognizing that youth have been underrepresented in the past and need special outreach to make sure it doesn't happen again, ASR worked with San Francisco to develop a localized strategy to better include unaccompanied children and youth under 25 in the count. Just as in past years, the goal was to improve upon the process, not just replicate what was done in past years.

RESEARCH DESIGN

As in 2013 and 2015, planning for the 2017 supplemental youth count included many youth homeless service providers. Local providers and youth experiencing homelessness identified locations where homeless youth were known to congregate. The youth planning committee identified high density areas that should be enumerated by youth teams. As in past counts, the locations corresponded to areas in the neighborhoods of the Haight, Mission, Tenderloin, Union Square, Castro, SOMA, the Panhandle, Golden Gate Park, the Bayview and the Embarcadero. Service providers familiar with the map areas identified in each neighborhood were asked to recruit currently homeless youth to participate in the count. At the Crossroads, Homeless Youth Alliance, Larkin Street for Youth Services, LYRIC, and Third Street Youth Center and Clinic recruited more than 75 youth to work as peer enumerators, counting homeless youth in the identified areas of San Francisco on January 26, 2017. Youth workers were paid \$15 per hour for their time, including the training conducted prior to the count. Youth were trained on where and how to identify homeless youth as well as how to record the data. It has been recognized by the Department of Housing and Urban Development as well as the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness that youth do not commonly congregate with homeless adults and are not easily identified by non-youth. For this reason, they have accepted and recommended that communities count youth at times when they can be seen, rather than during general outreach times.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The youth count was conducted from approximately 6 PM to midnight on January 26, 2017. Youth worked in teams of two to four, with teams coordinated by youth street outreach workers. Data from the supplemental youth count and general street count were compared and de-duplicated by looking at location, gender, and age. In total, 72 persons under the age of 25 were identified as duplicates and removed from the data set.

STREET COUNT DE-DUPLICATION

Data from the supplemental youth count and general street count were compared and de-duplicated by looking at location, gender, and age. In total, 72 persons under the age of 25 were identified as duplicates and removed from the data set.

GENERAL 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 2017 street count methodology followed an established, HUD approved methodology used in the 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013, and 2015 counts, with the addition of dedicated youth outreach since 2013. In 2007-2011, all areas of San Francisco were fully canvassed by adult community volunteers and service providers with no additional outreach by youth. In 2013, dedicated youth outreach began to help develop a clearer picture of the extent of youth homelessness. Changes were made to the youth count in 2015 to improve these efforts, and a similar methodology was used in 2017.

In 2017, San Francisco tested the utilization of a mobile application and piloted counting on buses with the intention of improving accuracy and efficiency of the count.

VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING

Many individuals who live and/or work in San Francisco turned out to support San Francisco's effort to enumerate the local homeless population. More than 750 community volunteers and City staff registered to participate in the 2017 general street count. The Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing led the volunteer recruitment effort. Extensive outreach efforts were conducted, including outreach to local non-profits and volunteer agencies that serve individuals experiencing homelessness.

The count and volunteer participation was publicized through many avenues. For example, the Local Homeless Coordinating Board (LHCB) promoted community participation at all general meetings and subcommittee meetings for several months leading up to the count, the planning committee sent a press release informing the community about the count and making an appeal for volunteer participation, and a Facebook event detailing information about the count and how to register was set-up by the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing.

Community volunteers served as enumerators on the night of the count, canvassing San Francisco in teams to visually count individuals experiencing homelessness. City staff supported each of the four dispatch centers, greeting volunteers, distributing instructions, maps, and equipment to enumeration teams, and collecting data sheets from returning teams.

In order to participate in the count, all volunteers were required to attend an hour of training immediately prior to the count on January 26, 2017. The training took place from 7 PM to 8 PM, and in addition to the presentation given by lead staff at the dispatch center, volunteers received printed instructions detailing how to count unsheltered individuals experiencing homelessness.

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

Every effort was made to minimize potentially hazardous situations. Parks considered too big or densely wooded to inspect safely and accurately in the dark on the night of the count were enumerated by teams of SF Recreation and Parks staff, Police Officers, and SF HOT staff during the dawn hours on January 27. The majority of parks, however, were deemed safe and counted by volunteers on the night of the count. Police officers and law enforcement districts were notified of pending street count activities in their jurisdictions, and volunteers were given a safety briefing by dispatch center leads during their training. Additional safety measures for volunteers included the deployment of an experienced SF HOT outreach worker with teams enumerating high density areas and the provision of flashlights to walking enumeration teams. No official reports were received in regards to unsafe situations occurring during the street count in any area of San Francisco.

STREET COUNT DISPATCH CENTERS

To achieve complete coverage of San Francisco within the four-hour timeframe, the planning team identified four areas for the placement of dispatch centers on the night of the count – the Civic Center, Mission, Sunset, and Bayview districts. Volunteers selected their preferred dispatch center at the time of registration, based on familiarity with the area and/or convenience. To facilitate the timely deployment of enumeration teams into the field, the planning team divided up the enumeration routes and assigned them to the dispatch center closest or most central to the coverage area.

LOGISTICS OF ENUMERATION

Volunteers canvassed routes of approximately 6 to 30 blocks in teams of two to six volunteers. Walking teams canvassed routes in commercial areas and other locations known to include sizable homeless populations, while driving teams counted more sparsely populated and residential areas by a combination of driving and walking. Each team received a map, which demarcated the area to be canvassed and clearly showed the boundaries of the counting area. Two smaller inset maps showed the approximate location of the route within the broader context of San Francisco and pinpointed the location of known hotspots for homelessness. Dispatch center volunteers provided each team with tally sheets to record the number of homeless persons observed and 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.

As in previous years, densely populated areas with known large populations of homeless persons were enumerated by experienced outreach workers from SF HOT, a trained outreach team that works with the local homeless population year-round.

SHELTER COUNT METHODOLOGY

GOAL

The goal of the shelter and institution count was to gain an accurate count of persons temporarily housed in shelters and other institutions across San Francisco. These data were vital to gaining an accurate overall count of the homeless population and understanding where homeless persons received shelter.

DEFINITION

An individual or family living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangement (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and

hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state, or local government programs for low-income individuals)

RESEARCH DESIGN

The homeless occupancy of the following shelters and institutions was collected for the night of January 26, 2017. While HUD does not include counts of homeless individuals in hospitals, residential rehabilitation facilities, and jails in the reportable numbers for the Point-in-Time Count, these facilities are included in San Francisco's sheltered count because these individuals meet San Francisco's local definition of homelessness and the numbers provide important supplemental information for the community and service providers in their planning efforts. The following facilities participated in the count:

- **Mental Health Facilities and Substance Abuse Treatment Centers:** The Department of Public Health and local agencies assisted in collecting counts of self-identified homeless persons staying in various facilities on the night of January 26, 2017.
- **Jail:** The San Francisco Sheriff's Department provided a recently conducted survey with a count of the number of homeless persons in the County Jail.
- **Hospitals:** The San Francisco Department of Public Health assisted with the coordination of obtaining count numbers from the hospitals. Staff from individual hospitals collected the number of persons who were homeless in their facilities on the night of January 26, 2017. The numbers reported for the hospitals did not duplicate the inpatient mental health units.

A designated staff person provided the count for each of these facilities; clients were not interviewed. For the emergency shelters, transitional housing programs, resource centers, and stabilization rooms, all persons in the facility on the night of the count were included in the Point-in-Time Count because these are homeless specific programs. For the hospitals and treatment centers, social workers or appropriate staff counted patients who identified as homeless. The San Francisco County Jail referenced a recently conducted survey about housing status to determine the number of people who were homeless prior to incarceration.

CHALLENGES

There are many challenges in any homeless enumeration, especially when implemented by volunteer enumerators in a community as large and diverse as San Francisco. 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.

While the risk of an undercount is much greater, it is also important to recognize that the count is conducted over the span of a few hours and people may be counted twice as they travel from one location of the city to another.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

The survey of 229 homeless youth under the age of 25 was conducted in order to yield qualitative data about the homeless youth community in San Francisco. Survey data came from both the youth specific survey and the general survey. These data 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, length and recurrence of

homelessness, usual nighttime accommodations, causes of homelessness, and access to services, as well as more youth specific questions around educational attainment, access to youth services, and greatest needs through open-ended, closed-ended, and multiple response questions. The survey data bring greater perspective to current issues of homelessness, youth homelessness, and to the provision and delivery of services.

The youth specific surveys were conducted by youth who were currently experiencing or had recently experienced homelessness, who were trained by Applied Survey Research and HSH. Youth surveyors were recruited by homeless youth survey providers. Training sessions led potential interviewers through a comprehensive orientation that included project background information, safety precautions while interviewing, and detailed instruction on respondent eligibility, interviewing protocol, and confidentiality. Youth surveyors were compensated at a rate of \$7 per completed survey.

It was determined that survey data would be more easily collected if an incentive gift was offered to respondents in appreciation for their time and participation. Five dollar gift cards were given as an incentive for participating in the 2017 Homeless Youth Survey. The gift cards were easy to obtain and distribute, were thought to have wide appeal to youth, and could be provided within the project budget. This approach enabled surveys to be conducted at any time during the day. The gift proved to be a great incentive and was widely accepted among youth survey respondents.

SURVEY ADMINISTRATION DETAILS

The 2017 San Francisco Homeless Youth Survey was administered by the trained survey team between February 1 and February 21, 2017. In all, the survey team collected 229 unique youth surveys

SURVEY SAMPLING

The planning team recommended approximately 200 surveys for 2017. Based on a Point-in-Time estimate of 1,363 unaccompanied homeless youth, with a randomized survey sampling process, the 229 valid surveys represent a confidence interval of +/- 6% with a 95% confidence level when generalizing the results of the survey to the estimated population of unaccompanied homeless youth in San Francisco.

The 2017 continued the practice from 2013 and 2015 of a survey that was an integration of previous approaches and was administered in both transitional housing facilities and on the street. Strategic attempts were made to reach individuals in various geographic locations. One way to increase the participation of youth survey respondents was to recruit peer survey workers. Like past surveys, the 2017 survey also 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 encountered whom 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. It is important to recognize that while efforts are made to randomize the respondents, it is not a random sample methodology.

DATA COLLECTION

Care was taken by interviewers to ensure that respondents felt comfortable regardless of the street or shelter location where the survey occurred. During the interviews, respondents were encouraged

to be candid in their responses and were informed that these responses would be framed as general findings, would be kept confidential, and would not be traceable to any one individual.

DATA ANALYSIS

To avoid potential duplication of respondents, the survey requested respondents' initials and date of birth, so that duplication could be avoided without compromising the respondents' anonymity. Upon completion of the survey effort, an extensive verification process was conducted to eliminate duplicates. This process examined respondents' date of birth, initials, gender, ethnicity, and length of homelessness, and consistencies in patterns of responses to other questions on the survey.

SURVEY CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

The 2017 San Francisco Youth Homeless Survey may have some variance in the data that the homeless individuals 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 recommended individuals who would be the best to conduct interviews and they received comprehensive training about how to conduct interviews. The service providers and City staff also reviewed the surveys to ensure quality responses. Surveys that were considered incomplete or containing false responses were not accepted.

Appendix 2: Definitions and Abbreviations

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

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

Emergency shelter – The provision of a safe alternative to the streets, either in a shelter facility or through the use of stabilization rooms. Emergency shelter is short-term, usually for 90 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-age youth – Young people between the ages of 18 and 24 years old who are not accompanied by a parent or guardian and are not a parent presenting with or sleeping in the same place as their own child(ren).

Transitional housing – Housing in which homeless individuals may live up to 24 months and receive supportive services that enable them to live more independently. Supportive services – which help promote residential stability, increased skill level or income, and greater self-determination – may be provided by the organization

managing the housing, or coordinated by that organization and provided by other public or private agencies. Transitional housing can be provided in one structure or several structures at one site, or in multiple structures at scattered sites.

Unaccompanied children – 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.



SAN FRANCISCO

2017 HOMELESS UNIQUE YOUTH
COUNT & SURVEY

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT

