2013 San Francisco

HOMELESS

COUNT & SURVEY

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT

SEAL OF THE CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

ASR

Acknowledgements

The 2013 San Francisco Homeless Count and Survey planning team would like to thank the many individuals and agencies who contributed their considerable talents and efforts to this project. The participation of partner agencies and volunteers is critical to the success of the count, from the initial planning meetings, to the night of the count, and through the final stages of the project. Hundreds of community volunteers and City staff, and local community-based organizations assisted with all different aspects of the count.

The San Francisco Local Homeless Coordinating Board (LHCB), the coordinating body for San Francisco's Continuum of Care, provided oversight for the 2013 Homeless Count project. We thank the members of the LHCB for their valued input and guidance. Meetings of the LHCB also served as a forum for stakeholder and community input on the project. We also thank the Homeless Emergency Service Providers Association for their input on the survey design.

We thank Project Homeless Connect for volunteer recruitment, providing volunteer refreshments, and logistical support.

The following agencies helped in our planning efforts: San Francisco Human Services Agency, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, US Department of Housing and Urban Development, Department of Public Health, the Mayor's Office, Office of City Administrator, and the San Francisco Police Department.

In particular, we would like to mention the following individuals for their time and effort: Mayor Edwin Lee, Steve Arcelona, Joyce Crum, Daryl Higashi, Charles Morimoto, John Murray, Megan Owens, Rajesh Parekh, Rann Parker, Trent Rhorer, Lt. William Roualdes, and Ali Schlageter.

We thank Centro Latino, St. Ignatius High School, the United Council of Human Services, and the San Francisco Department of Public Health for lending the use of their facilities as dispatch centers on the night of the count.

We thank Pamela Tebo and Kim DaRosa of the San Francisco Human Services Agency for their media coordination.

We appreciate the following programs and sites that provided data for the sheltered count:

SHELTERS

Asian Women's Shelter ▪ Central City Hospitality House ▪ Compass Family Center ▪ Dolores Street Community Services ▪ Hamilton Family Emergency Shelter ▪ Hamilton Family Residences ▪ Huckleberry House ▪ Interfaith (Winter) ▪ La Casa de Las Madres ▪ Larkin Street Youth Services Shelters ▪ MSC South Next Door ▪ Providence ▪ Raphael House ▪ Rosalie House ▪ SFHOT Stabilization Rooms ▪ St. Joseph's Family Shelter ▪ The Sanctuary

SAFE HAVEN

▪ A Woman's Place ▪

TRANSITIONAL HOUSING PROGRAMS

A Woman's Place ▪ Brennan House ▪ Cameo House ▪ Compass Family Services Transitional Housing ▪ Hamilton Transitional Housing Program ▪ Larkin Street Youth Services Transitional Housing Programs ▪ SafeHouse for Women ▪ Salvation Army Transitional Housing Programs ▪ Swords to Plowshares Transitional Housing ▪ HealthRIGHT360 Transitional Housing Programs

JAIL

San Francisco County Jail

HOSPITALS

California Pacific Medical Center ▪ Kaiser ▪ San Francisco General Hospital ▪ St. Francis ▪ St. Mary's ▪ Veterans Administration Hospital

TREATMENT PROGRAMS

Community Awareness and Treatment Services ▪ Department of Public Health Respite Center ▪ Friendship House Harbor Light ▪ HealthRIGHT360 Programs ▪ SFGH Psychiatric Inpatient ▪ Swords to Plowshares DeMontfort House ▪ VA Programs

RESOURCE CENTERS

MSC South ▪ A Woman's Place ▪ United Council of Human Services

A team of trained currently and formerly homeless surveyors administered surveys on the streets of San Francisco and at various service locations. We thank them for their excellent work.

Table of Contents

Introduction

Every two years, during the last ten days of January, communities across the country conduct comprehensive counts of their homeless population in order to gain a better assessment of the individuals who are currently experiencing homelessness, and to apply for federal funding for homeless programs.

All jurisdictions receiving federal funding to provide housing and services for homeless individuals and families are required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to conduct a biennial Point-in-Time count of unsheltered and sheltered homeless persons. Currently the San Francisco Continuum of Care receives over $23 million in federal funding, a key source of funding for the county's homeless services.

The Point-in-Time count must include all unsheltered and sheltered homeless persons staying in emergency shelters and transitional housing programs on the date of the count. Jurisdictions report the findings of their Point-in-Time count in their annual funding application to HUD. The data collected through Point-in-Time counts across the United States help the federal government to better understand the nature and extent of homelessness nationwide.

San Francisco has worked in conjunction with Applied Survey Research (ASR) to conduct the 2013 San Francisco Homeless Count and Survey. ASR is a non-profit social research firm with offices in San Jose, Claremont, and Watsonville, Calif., with extensive experience in homeless enumeration and research.

The San Francisco homeless count had two primary components: a Point-in-Time

enumeration of unsheltered homeless individuals and families (those sleeping outdoors, on the street, in parks, or vehicles, etc.) and a Point-in-Time enumeration of homeless individuals and families who have temporary shelter (those staying in an emergency shelter, transitional housing, or using stabilization rooms).

The 2013 San Francisco Point-in-Time Count was a city-wide effort. With the support of 334 community volunteers, staff from various City departments and the San Francisco Police Department, the entire city was canvassed between the hours of 8 p.m. and midnight on January 24, 2013. This resulted in a visual count of unsheltered homeless individuals and families residing on the streets, in vehicles, makeshift shelters, encampments and other places not meant for human habitation. Shelters and facilities reported the number of homeless individuals and families who occupied their facilities on the same evening of January 24, 2013.

San Francisco conducted a supplemental count of unaccompanied children and youth under the age of 25 years old on the afternoon of January 24, 2013. This supplemental count was part of a nation-wide effort, established and recommended by HUD, to understand the scope of youth homelessness. The youth count was conducted between the hours of 1 p.m. and 5 p.m., when unaccompanied children and youth were more likely to be visible. The count was conducted by trained currently homeless youth enumerators.

In the weeks following the street count, an in-depth survey was administered to 954

unsheltered and sheltered homeless individuals of all ages.

This report provides data regarding the number and characteristics of homeless persons in San Francisco. This report focuses special attention on specific subpopulations including chronically homeless, veterans, families, unaccompanied children under the age of 18, and unaccompanied youth, also known as Transitional Age Youth (TAY), between the ages of 18-24.

To better understand the dynamics of homelessness over time, comparisons with the San Francisco Homeless Count and Survey results from previous years, including 2011 are provided where available and applicable.

DEFINITION OF HOMELESSNESS

In this study, HUD's definition of homelessness for Point-in-Time counts was used. The 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 [1]

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, hospital, and rehabilitation facilities were gathered and are included in this report where applicable.

PROJECT PURPOSE AND GOALS

The 2013 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 since the 2011 San Francisco Homeless Count and Survey, and to track progress toward ending homelessness;

» To increase public awareness of overall homeless issues and generate support for constructive solutions; and

» To assess the status of specific subpopulations including, veterans, families, unaccompanied children under 18, transitional age youth, and those who are chronically homeless

It is hoped that the results of this research will assist service providers, policy makers, funders, and local, state, and federal governments to better understand and plan for the needs of individuals and families facing homelessness.

Point-in-Time Count

The 2013 Point-in-Time count included a complete enumeration of all unsheltered and publicly sheltered homeless persons living in San Francisco. The general street count was conducted on January 24, 2013 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, and institutional housing. The general street count and shelter count methodology for enumeration was similar to the 2011.

In order to improve data on the extent of youth homelessness, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) required all communities conducting 2013 Point-in-Time counts to gather information on the number and characteristics of unaccompanied children (under 18) and youth (ages 18-24) in 2013. HUD and the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) encouraged communities to conduct targeted youth counts. San Francisco rose to this challenge and using best practice strategies for outreach and enumeration, a supplemental youth count was conducted during the afternoon on January 24.

Number and Characteristics of Homeless Persons in San Francisco

The number of individuals counted in the 2013 general street count and shelter count was 6,436. Compared to 2011, this was a decrease of 19 individuals. The supplemental youth count found an additional 914 unaccompanied children and transition age youth. Only the street and shelter count can be compared to 2011, but when combined with the new youth count, the total number of unsheltered and sheltered persons residing in San Francisco on the evening of January 24, 2013 was 7,350.

A nine year trend of comparable Point-in-Time data from general Count efforts (excluding the targeted youth count) identified only a slight increase in the number of persons experiencing homelessness in the City, a 3% increase between 2005 and 2013.

Figure 1.   UNSHELTERED AND SHELTERED POINT-IN-TIME HOMELESS COUNT TREND
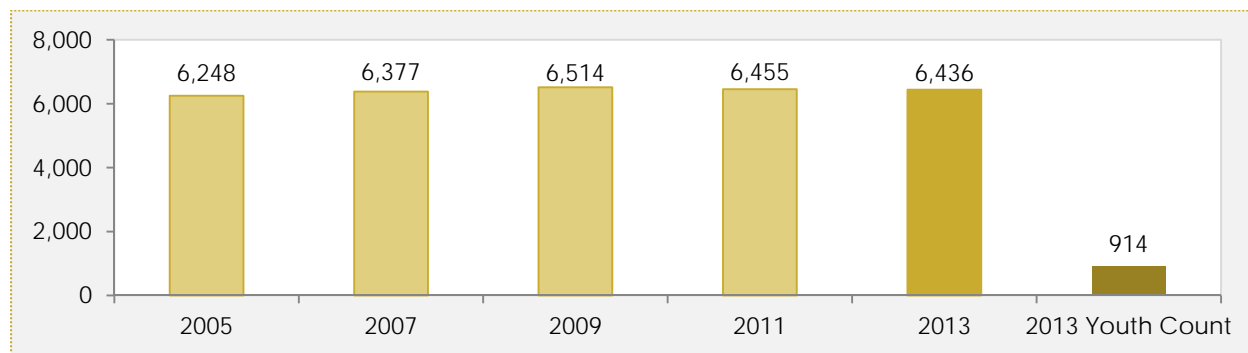
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2013). San Francisco Homeless Count.

Approximately 59% of those all individuals counted in the 2013 San Francisco Point-in-Time Count were unsheltered. The number of unsheltered individuals was significantly affected by the targeted youth count. Eighty-seven percent of youth under the age of 25 were unsheltered in 2013.

Figure 2.   TOTAL NUMBER OF HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS ENUMERATED DURING THE POINT-IN-TIME HOMELESS COUNT (2011 AND 2013)
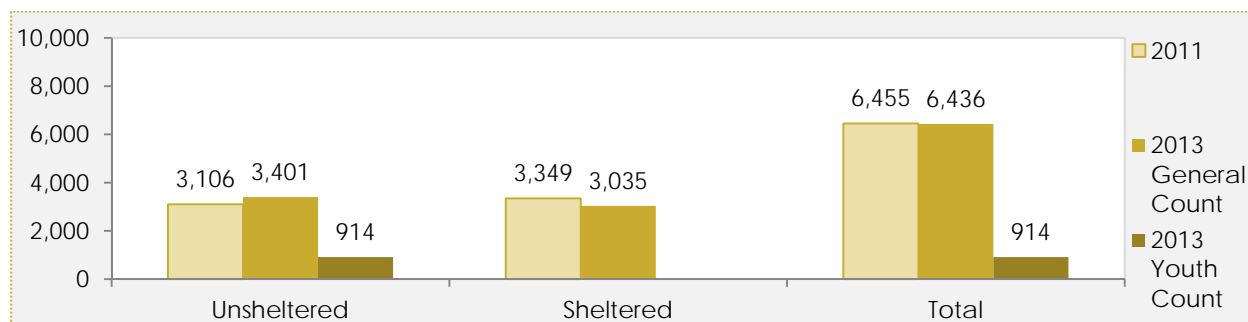
Source: San Francisco Human Services Agency. (2011). San Francisco Sheltered and Unsheltered Homeless Count. San Francisco, CA. Applied Survey Research. (2013). San Francisco Homeless Count. Watsonville, CA.
Note: Sheltered and unsheltered totals include non-HUD defined facilities including jails, hospitals, and treatment centers.

Of the more than 3,000 individuals counted in the shelter count, 689 persons (23%) were in non-traditional shelter settings. Four percent of the City's homeless population was housed in jails and hospitals on the night of January 24, 2013. The number of homeless inmates reported by the San Francisco County Jail on the night of the PIT count was 317 in 2011, and 126 in 2013 (a difference of 191 people). This contributed significantly to the variance between the 2011 and 2013 proportion of sheltered people.

Figure 3.   HOMELESS COUNT RESULTS (2013)

	Single Adults 25 Years and Older	Unaccompanied Children and Youth Under 25	Persons in Families	Total	% of Total
Street count	2,633	1,649	33	4,315	59%
Emergency shelter and safe havens	1,187	65	374	1,626	22%
Transitional housing	262	186	272	720	10%
Resource centers	112	0	0	112	2%
Stabilization rooms	233	2	0	235	3%
Treatment Programs	93	0	0	93	1%
Jail	126	0	0	126	2%
Hospitals	123	0	0	123	2%
Total	4,769	1,902	679	7,350	-

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2013). San Francisco Homeless Count.
Note: Street Count includes individuals, persons in families, as well as those residing in cars, vans, RVs, and encampments.
Note: Social workers or appropriate staff counted patients who identified as homeless in local hospitals and treatment centers. The San Francisco Jail referenced booking cards to determine homeless status.

Ninety-one percent of those experiencing homelessness were single individuals. More than 9% were persons living in families, a similar breakdown to 2011.

Figure 4.   FAMILY STATUS OF TOTAL HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS ENUMERATED DURING THE POINT-IN-TIME HOMELESS COUNT
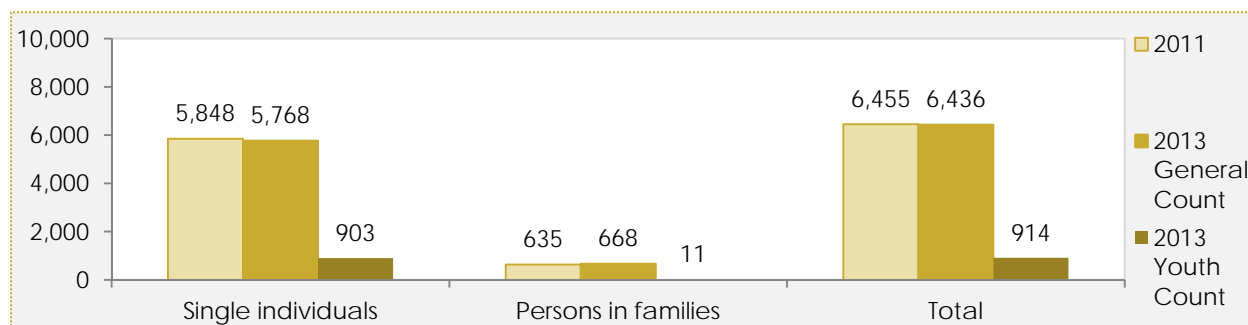
Source: San Francisco Human Services Agency. (2011). San Francisco Sheltered and Unsheltered Homeless Count. San Francisco, CA. Applied Survey Research. (2013). San Francisco Homeless Count. Watsonville, CA.

Total Number of Unsheltered and Sheltered Homeless Persons, by Jurisdiction

The 2013 San Francisco Homeless Count data are presented below, organized by the 11 County Supervisor Districts in San Francisco.

Figure 5.   TOTAL UNSHELTERED AND SHELTERED HOMELESS COUNT POPULATION BY DISTRICT AND FAMILY STATUS (2013)

District	General Count				Youth Count			
	Individuals	Persons in Families	Total Persons	% of Total	Individuals	Persons in Families	Total Persons	% of Total
1	239	21	260	4%	104	0	104	11%
2	20	0	20	<1%	4	0	4	<1%
3	190	0	190	3%	203	0	203	22%
4	136	0	136	2%	0	0	0	0%
5	106	52	158	2%	185	0	185	20%
6	2,576	462	3,038	47%	219	0	219	24%
7	19	0	19	<1%	0	0	0	0%
8	95	0	95	1%	68	0	68	7%
9	400	107	507	8%	53	11	53	7%
10	1,914	16	1,930	30%	4	0	4	<1%
11	52	0	52	1%	0	0	0	0%
Confidential/ Scattered Site Locations in San Francisco	20	10	30	<1%	63	0	63	7%
Total	5,768	668	6,436	100%	903	11	914	100%
% of Total	**90%**	**10%**	**100%**	**-**	**99%**	**1%**	**100%**	**-**

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2013). San Francisco Homeless Count.

As in previous years, Districts 6 and 10 had the greatest number of unsheltered homeless individuals, 32% and 30% respectively. District 6 neighborhoods include the Tenderloin, South of Market (SoMa) and District 10 includes the southeast corridor, from Potrero Hill to Bayview and Hunters Point.

Figure 6.   UNSHELTERED AND SHELTERED COUNTS BY DISTRICT

SAN FRANCISCO 2013 POINT-IN-TIME COUNT
Total Homeless Population, By District

Note: City of San Francisco not reflected in map. Source: Applied Survey Research, 2013 San Francisco Homeless Count.
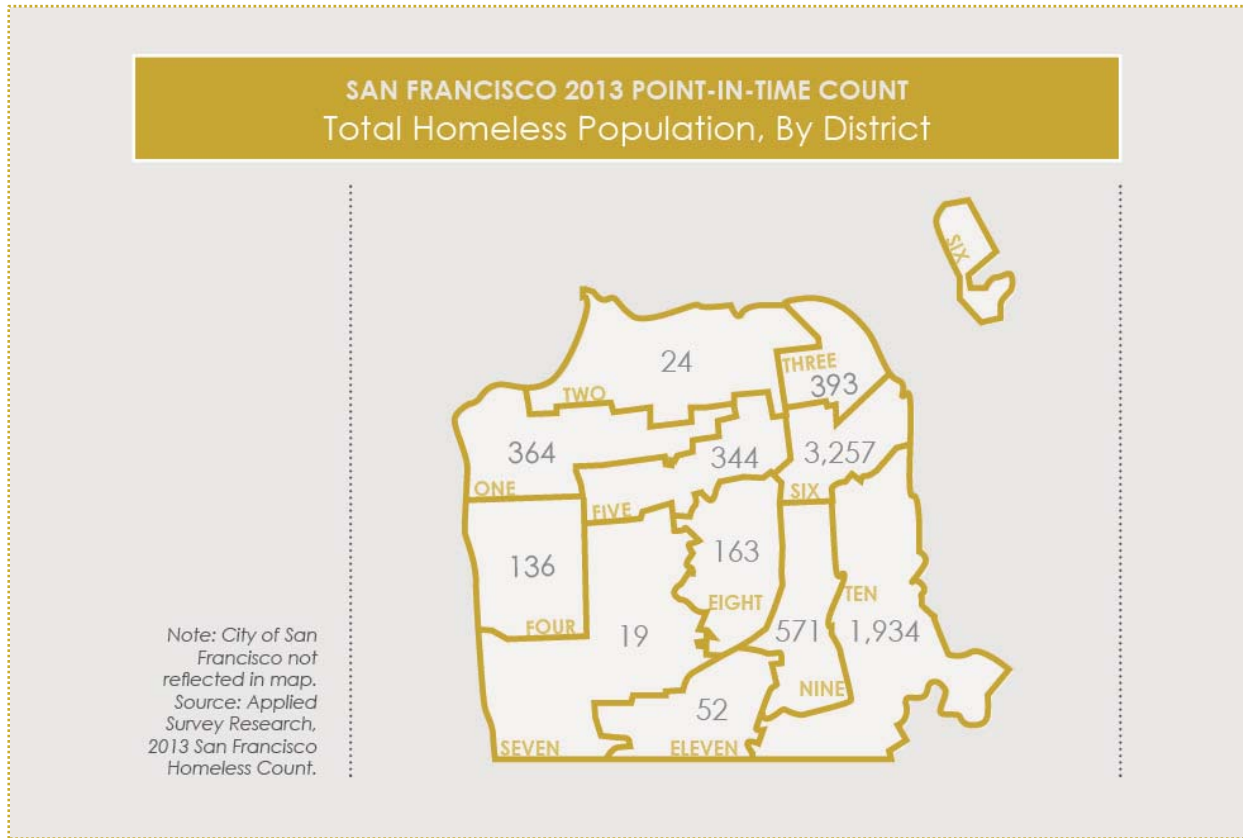
The targeted youth count focused only on areas of the City where youth were known to congregate. The youth count was conducted by peer enumerators. Their efforts focused on counting only those in the targeted age group and in areas where youth would not be seen during the general count outreach. The table below details the impact of the targeted youth count in each supervisorial district. Homeless youth tended to be seen in Districts 9, 8, 6, 5, and 3.

Figure 7.   UNSHELTERED HOMELESS COUNT RESULTS GENERAL AND YOUTH COUNT COMPARISONS

District	2011	2013		
		General Count	Youth Count	Total
1	106	217	104	321
2	35	20	4	24
3	188	160	203	363
4	83	136	0	136
5	180	99	185	284
6	1,001	1,145	219	1,364
7	36	19	0	19
8	108	95	68	163
9	124	183	64	247
10	1,151	1,274	4	1,278
11	69	40	0	40
Confidential/Scattered Site Locations in San Francisco	27	13	63	76
Total	3,106	3,401	914	4,315

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2013). San Francisco Homeless Count.
San Francisco Human Services Agency. (2011). San Francisco Unsheltered Homeless Count. San Francisco, CA.

Trend data of the unsheltered population by district showed increases in many districts. While the youth count accounted for many of these changes, the distribution of the City's unsheltered population did alter slightly between 2011 and 2013. Districts 2, 7, and 11 saw decreases in their unsheltered populations between the two years. Meanwhile, District 1 more than tripled between January 2011 and January 2013, and Districts 3 and 9 almost doubled.

Figure 8.   UNSHELTERED HOMELESS COUNT RESULTS COMPARISON 2001-2013

District	2007 Total	2009 Total	2011 Total	2013		
				General Count	Youth Count	Total
1	218	120	106	217	104	321
2	81	60	35	20	4	24
3	206	189	188	160	203	363
4	70	74	83	136	0	136
5	114	115	180	99	185	284
6	1,239	1,167	1,001	1,145	219	1,364
7	21	45	36	19	0	19
8	190	92	108	95	68	163
9	200	132	124	183	64	247
10	349	444	1,151	1,274	4	1,278
11	20	43	69	40	0	40
Confidential/ Scattered Site Locations in San Francisco	63	-	27	13	63	76
Total	**2,771**	**2,709**	**3,106**	**3,401**	**914**	**4,315**

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2013). San Francisco Homeless Count.
San Francisco Human Services Agency. (2011). San Francisco Unsheltered Homeless Count. San Francisco, CA.
San Francisco Human Services Agency. (2009). San Francisco Sheltered and Unsheltered Homeless Count. San Francisco, CA.
San Francisco Human Services Agency. (2007). San Francisco Sheltered and Unsheltered Homeless Count. San Francisco, CA.
Note: For years prior to 2011 City of San Francisco includes the numbers reported in parks and by California Department of Highway Patrol. In 2011 and 2013, these numbers were reported by district.

Homeless Survey Findings

The methodology used for the 2013 homeless count is described by (HUD) as a "blitz count", followed by an in-person representative survey. This two stage method includes an observational homeless count followed by a survey sampling effort. The survey sample is then used to profile and estimate the condition and characteristics of the city's homeless population and subpopulations for the purposes of HUD reporting and local service delivery and strategic planning. The results of the "blitz" count and the homeless shelter count, combined with the survey are the foundational data elements for all data discussed in the following report.

This section provides an overview of the findings generated from the 2013 San Francisco Homeless Survey. Surveys were administered after the completion of the Point-in-Time count, between January 28th and March 11th, 2013. The survey effort resulted in 952 complete and unique surveys.

Based on a Point-in-Time count of 7,350 homeless individuals (including 914 youth), these 952 completed surveys represent a confidence interval of +/- 3% with a 95% confidence level when generalizing the results of the survey to the estimated population of homeless individuals in San Francisco.[2] In other words, if the survey were conducted again, we can be confident that the results would be within 3 percentage points of the current results.

In order to ensure a more representative sample, garnering information from subpopulations that are often hidden or hard to reach, efforts were made to target respondents based on living accommodation, age, and geographic location.

Figure 9.   SURVEY SAMPLE (2013)

	Count Population	Survey Population
Age 18-24	26%	17%
Families	11%	7%
Sheltered	41%	33%
Total Population	**7,350**	**952**

Basic Demographics

In order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the experiences of homeless residents in San Francisco, respondents were asked basic demographic questions including age, gender, sexual orientation, and ethnicity.

Age

In 2013, youth under the age of 25 years old were targeted by both the count and survey efforts. This targeted outreach resulted in an increased number of survey respondents (17%) falling within the Transitional Age Youth category of 18-24 years old. The highest percentages of respondents (29%) were between the ages of 31 and 40, followed by those who were 41-50 years old (26%).

Figure 10. SURVEY RESPONDENTS AGE, 2013
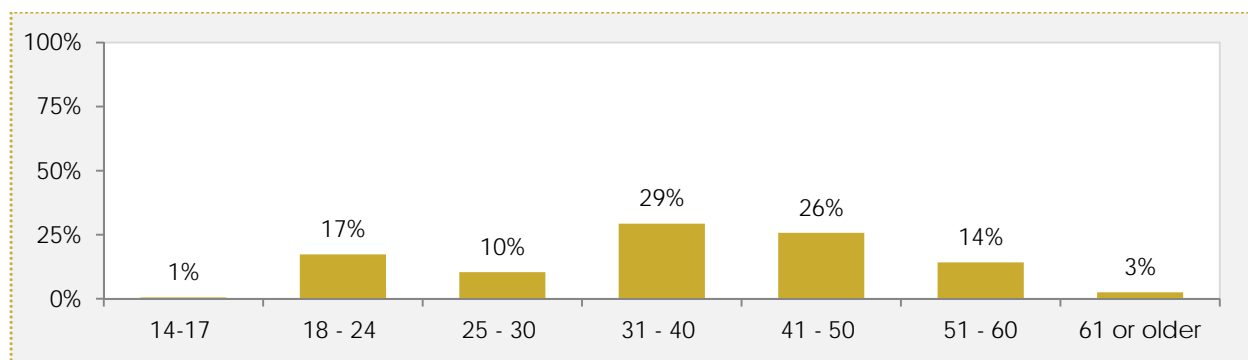
2013 n: 924
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2013). San Francisco Homeless Count.

Gender and Sexual Orientation

More than two thirds of survey respondents identified as male (69%), with 27% female, and 3% transgender.

The 2013 survey marked the first year respondents were asked to identify their sexual orientation. Seventy-one percent of homeless survey respondents identified as straight. More than one in four respondents (29%) identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual or "other" (LGBTQ), including 16% identifying as bisexual and 11% as gay or lesbian. This was higher than the general San Francisco population with approximately 15% identifying as LGBTQ according to 2013 San Francisco City and County Controller study.[3]

When comparing homeless respondents who identified as LGBTQ to straight respondents, there was greater ethnic diversity in the LGBTQ population and a higher percentage of individuals living out of state when they most recently became homeless (17% compared to 13%). LGBTQ respondents had more frequent episodes of homelessness in the last 12 months with 66% having more than one episode, as compared to 57% for straight homeless respondents. LGBTQ respondents had higher percentages of HIV/AIDS (16%

compared to 5%) and higher percentages of substance abuse disorders (49% compared to 41%). Other survey data were similar between the two populations.

Race/Ethnicity

Twenty-nine percent of survey respondents identified as White/Caucasian, followed by 26% who identified as Hispanic/Latino and 24% as Black/African American in 2013. In comparison to the overall population of San Francisco, there were a disproportionate number of Hispanic/Latino and Black/African Americans experiencing homelessness. The overall San Francisco population was 16% Hispanic/Latino in 2013, but the percentage of homeless respondents identifying as Hispanic/Latino was 26%. Similarly, 6% of the overall population was Black/African-American in 2013, while the percentage of homeless respondents was 24% Black/African-American.

Figure 11.   TOP 5 RACES/ETHNICITIES
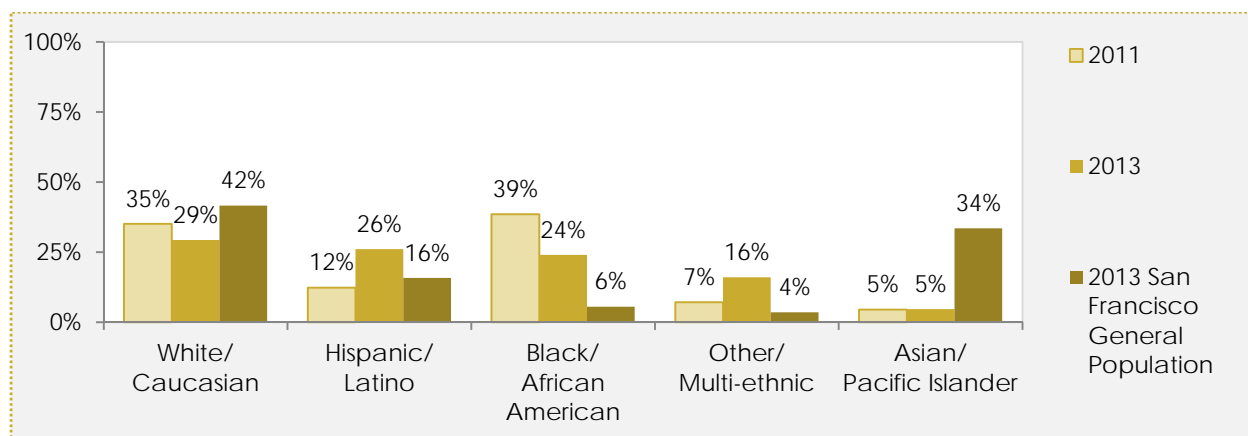
2013 n: 945; 2011 n: 1012
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2013). San Francisco Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.
San Francisco Human Services Agency. (2011). San Francisco Unsheltered Homeless Count. San Francisco, CA.
California Department of Finances. (2013). P-3: State and County Total Population Projections by Race/Ethnicity and
Detailed Age, 2010-2060. Retrieved April 2013 from http://www.dof.ca.gov/

Foster Care

It has been estimated that 12 million persons in the United States have been in the foster care system, this represents about 4% of the general population.[4] However, researchers have repeatedly noted the connections between foster care and homelessness.

Eighteen percent of 2013 respondents reported having been in the foster care system. This was higher than in 2011 (13%) but similar to 2009 (17%). Of those who reported having been in the foster care system, 28% had been in the system for more than ten years and 14% had been in the system for less than one year, similar to 2011 data. The percentage of youth under the age of 25 who had been in foster care was much higher than adults over 25 years old. One in four youth survey respondents reported having been in the foster care system.

Living Accommodations

Where an individual lived prior to experiencing homelessness and where they have lived since, affects the way people seek services and helps to determine their well-being. Survey respondents reported many different living accommodations prior to becoming homeless, though most lived in or around the San Francisco Bay Area with friends, family, or on their own in a home or apartment.

Place of Residence

Thirty-nine percent of respondents reported having lived outside the City at the time they most recently became homeless, an increase from 27% in 2011. Of those living in the City at the time they most recently became homeless, 63% reported having lived in the City for three or more years.

One in four (24%) respondents reported they were living in a different California county at the time they most recently became homeless, up from 16% in 2011. Yet, many 2013 respondents reported that they had not traveled far. Six percent reported they were living in Alameda County, 3% in San Mateo County, 2% in Santa Clara County, 2% in Contra Costa County and 2% in Marin County.

 Of those who reported they were not living in the City, they reported moving to the City for many different reasons. The most frequently cited were: work or a job (17%), access to homeless services (14%), and visited and decided to stay (14%). Other responses included: passing through (11%), friends or family (10%), got stranded (7%), and born or grew up in the City (7%).

SAN FRANCISCO 2013 POINT-IN-TIME COUNT
Residence

Respondents' residency at the time they most recently became homeless

San Francisco 61%
24% Other county in California
15% out of state

Top 3 reasons reported for moving to San Francisco

For work or a job (17%)
Visited and decided to stay (14%)
Homeless Services (14%)

Source: Applied Survey Research, 2013 San Francisco Homeless Count.

2013 Residency n: 927

Previous Living Arrangements

Thirty-eight percent of respondents reported staying with friends or family immediately prior to becoming homeless. Thirty-five percent reported living in a home owned or rented by themselves or their partner.

Four percent of respondents reported they were in a jail/prison or a juvenile justice facility prior to becoming homeless. Less than 3% were in a hospital or treatment facility, and less than 1% reported directly exiting from foster care into homelessness.

Current Living Arrangements

Seventy-nine percent of respondents reported living alone. Of those who lived with someone, the largest percentage lived with a spouse or significant other (62%), with a child/children (45%), other family members (12%) or a parent (3%).

One in three respondents (34%) reported usually sleeping outdoors, either on the street or in parks or encampment areas in 2013. An additional one-third (33%) reported that they usually lived in an emergency shelter, transitional housing facility or other shelter environment. Thirteen percent of survey respondents reported living in cars, vans, RVs or campers, up from 3% in 2011.

Figure 12.   USUAL PLACES TO SLEEP AT NIGHT (TOP 5 RESPONSES)
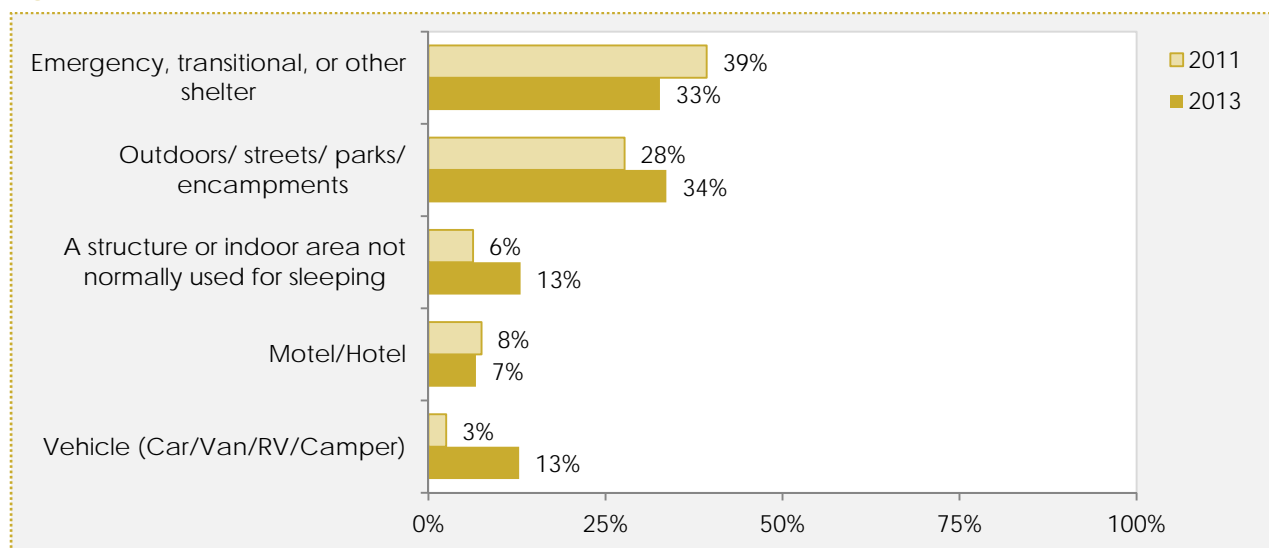
2013 n: 943; 2011 n: 1,006
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2013). San Francisco Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.
San Francisco Human Services Agency. (2011). San Francisco Unsheltered Homeless Count. San Francisco, CA.

Shelter Stays

Access to Shelters

The current emergency shelter reservation system in San Francisco is called CHANGES. Individuals may attempt to reserve a shelter bed by going in person to one of the shelter reservation sites and reserving a space until all available spaces are filled. Unclaimed spaces are available for reservation daily at the shelter reservation sites after 4:30 pm.

Forty percent of survey respondents reported they were able to make reservations through CHANGES when they sought them, and an additional 25% reported being able to make reservations some of the time. Of those who reported they were able to make reservations, 17% reported they received travel tokens.

Obstacles to Obtaining Permanent Housing

The most commonly cited obstacles to obtaining permanent housing were associated with economic factors. More than half (55%) reported not being able to afford rent, followed by 52% who cited a lack of income or a job, and 29% who did not have the money for moving costs. An increased percentage of respondents reported that there was no housing available, from 8% in 2011 to 23% in 2013.

Figure 13.   Obstacles to Permanent Housing (Top 5 Responses in 2013)
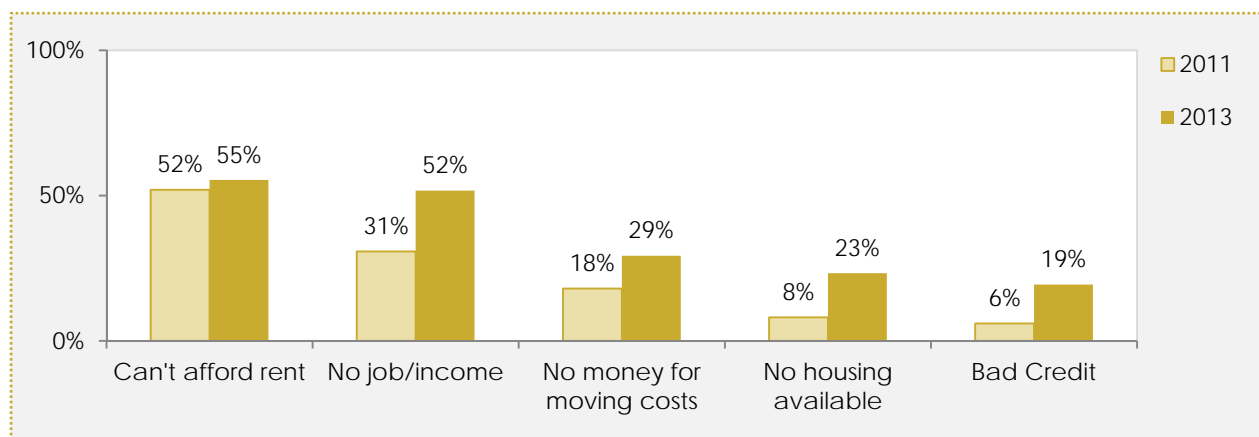
2013: 901 respondents offering 2,555 responses 2011: 987 respondents offering 1,572 responses
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2013). San Francisco Homeless Count.
San Francisco Human Services Agency. (2011). San Francisco Unsheltered Homeless Count. San Francisco, CA.

Duration and Recurrence of Homelessness

For many, the experience of homelessness is part of a long and recurring history of residential instability. Individuals may fall in and out of homelessness as they assemble different subsistence strategies and housing opportunities.

Number of Times Homeless

Almost half (48%) of survey respondents reported they were experiencing homelessness for the first time in 2013, a decrease from 53% in 2011. Of those who were not experiencing homelessness for the first time, 41% reported they had experienced homelessness four or more times in the past three years.

Figure 14.   First Time Homeless
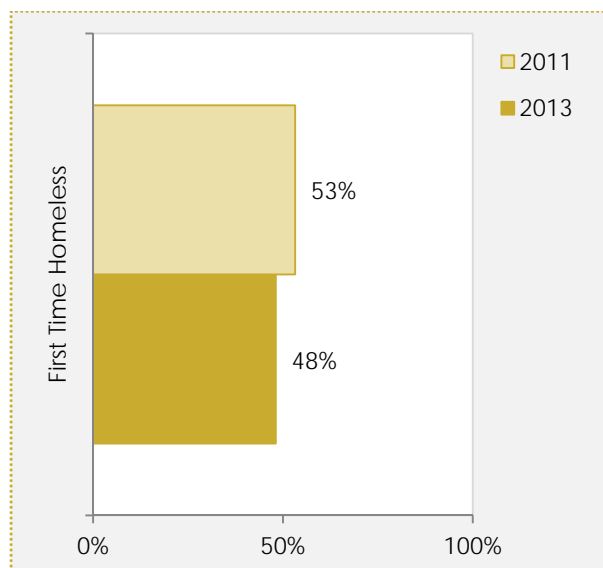
2013 n: 454; 2011 n: 541
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2013). San Francisco Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.
Applied Survey Research. (2011). San Francisco Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

Duration of Homelessness

More than half (54%) of respondents reported they had been without housing for one year or more.

The length of time survey respondents reported being homeless was similar to previous years. There were slight increases in the number of persons who reported they had been homeless for seven months or more, however.

Figure 15.   LENGTH OF CURRENT EPISODE OF HOMELESSNESS

2013 n: 944; 2011: 950
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2013). San Francisco Homeless Count.
Applied Survey Research. (2011). San Francisco Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

Primary Causes of Homelessness

An individual's experience with homelessness is often the result of multiple and compounding causes originating at both the individual and societal level.

In a struggling economy, many face financial vulnerability to homelessness. When asked to identify the primary cause of their homelessness, 29% reported the loss of a job, 16% reported having an argument with a friend or family member who asked them to leave, and 11% reported alcohol or drug use.

While it was not one of the top three responses, 6% of those surveyed reported divorce, separation or breakups caused their homelessness. Less than 1% reported foreclosure as the primary cause of homelessness.

Figure 16.   PRIMARY CAUSE OF HOMELESSNESS (TOP 3 RESPONSES IN 2013)
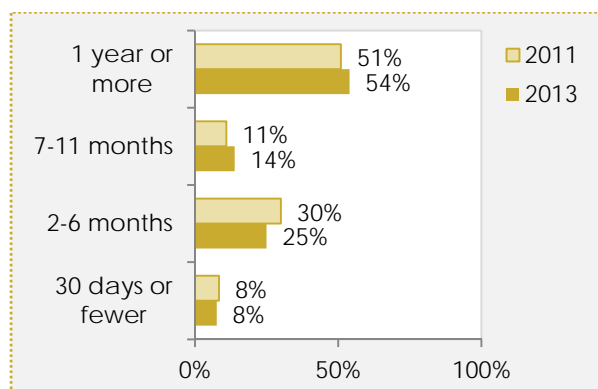

2013: 931 respondents offering 1,057 responses; 2011: 1,008 respondents
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2013). San Francisco Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.
Applied Survey Research. (2011). San Francisco Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

Services and Assistance

San Francisco provides services and assistance to those currently experiencing homelessness through federal and local programs. Government assistance and homeless services work to enable those experiencing homelessness to obtain income and support. However, many individuals and families do not apply for services or believe that they do not qualify for assistance.

Government Assistance

The prevalence and types of government assistance received by survey respondents in 2013 was similar to those of respondents in 2011. More than half of survey respondents (54%) reported receiving government assistance in 2013. The largest percentage (33%) reported receiving CalFresh (food stamps) and WIC (women, infants, and children food assistance) in 2013.

Nineteen percent reported receiving General Assistance, a slight decrease from 2011. Thirteen percent reported having SSI, SSDI, or non-veteran disability benefits, down from 22% in 2011. Eight percent had Medi-Cal/Medi-Care, 5% got TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families), and 4% reported receiving Veterans Disability Compensation.

Figure 17. TYPES OF GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE RECEIVED (TOP 5 RESPONSES IN 2013)
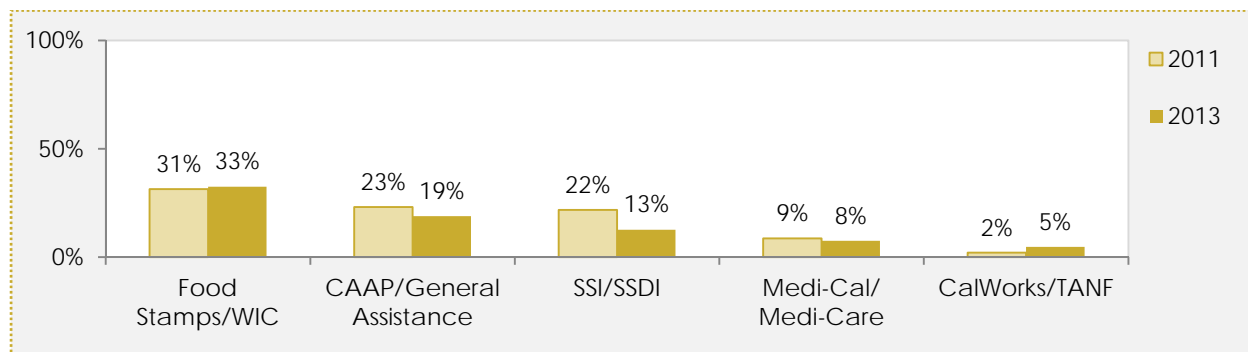
2013: 917 respondents offering 1,182 responses; 2011: 928 respondents offering 1,219 responses
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2013). San Francisco Homeless Count.
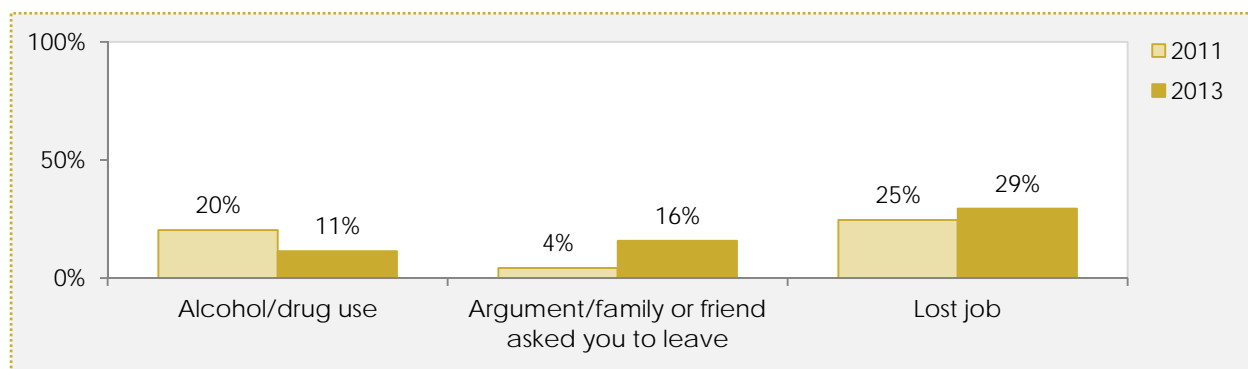*Applied Survey Research. (2011). San Francisco Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.*
Note: CAAP is San Francisco's County Adult Assistance Program

Reasons for Not Receiving Government Assistance

The top two reasons for not receiving government assistance included: respondents didn't think they were eligible (35%) and they did not want assistance (30%). The percentage of respondents who did not think they were eligible more than doubled, from 14% in 2011 to 35% in 2013.

The increased sampling of youth under the age of 25 had some effect on the frequency of certain response options. Compared to their adult counterparts, fewer youth reported they did not think they were eligible for assistance (16% compared to 39%), and more reported they did not want government assistance (36% compared to 29%).

Figure 18.   REASONS FOR NOT RECEIVING GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE (TOP 5 RESPONSES IN 2013)
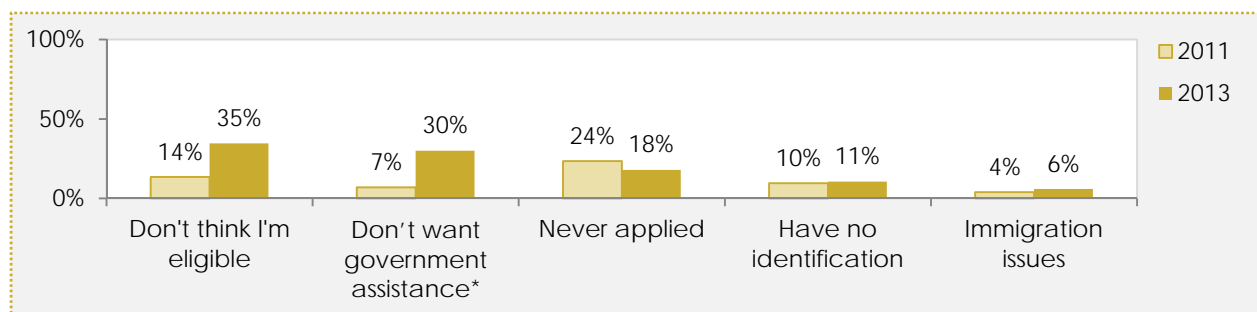
2013: 406 respondents offering 515 responses; 2011: 230 respondents offering 301 responses
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2013). San Francisco Homeless Count.
Applied Survey Research. (2011). San Francisco Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.
Note: Between 2011 and 2013 the response option changed from "do not need" to "do not want."

Services and Programs

The use of emergency shelter services declined from almost half of respondents (47%) in 2011 to just one-third of respondents (33%) in 2013. However, there were increases in the percentage of respondents using other services from 2011 to 2013 including free meals (from 55% to 59%), shelter day services (from 12% to 18%), health services (from 18% to 26%) and mental health support (from 14% to 16%).

Figure 19.   SERVICES OR ASSISTANCE (TOP 5 RESPONSES IN 2013)

2013: 896 respondents offering 1,992 responses; 2011: 978 respondents offering 2,047 responses
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2013). San Francisco Homeless Count.
Applied Survey Research. (2011). San Francisco Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

Employment and Income

While the majority of homeless survey respondents reported being unemployed, some had part-time or full-time work. Many were receiving an income, either public or private. Yet, data suggest that employment and income were not enough to meet basic needs.

Employment

The unemployment rate in San Francisco in January 2013 was 6.9%, down from 9.5% in 2011. [5] This rate represents only those who are unemployed and actively seeking employment. It doesn't represent all joblessness. The unemployment rate for homeless respondents was 62%. Twenty-two percent of respondents reported working full-time, part-time, seasonal, temporary, or casual employment.

Of those who were unemployed, the primary barriers to employment included many basic needs, such as a phone (28%), and clothing or shower facilities (27%). While not in the top five responses, mental health conditions (20%), health conditions (18%), and disabilities (19%) were each reported by respondents as a barrier to employment in 2013.

Figure 20.   RESPONDENTS' BARRIERS TO OBTAINING EMPLOYMENT

	2011	2013
1	Need education/training (27%)	No phone (28%)
2	No permanent address (22%)	Need education/training (28%)
3	Need clothing/shower facilities (17%)	Need clothing/shower facilities (27%)
4	No jobs (16%)	Alcohol or drug use (25%)
5	Alcohol or drug use (14%)	No jobs (24%)

2013: 560 respondents offering 1,624 responses; 2011: 931 respondents offering 2,046 responses
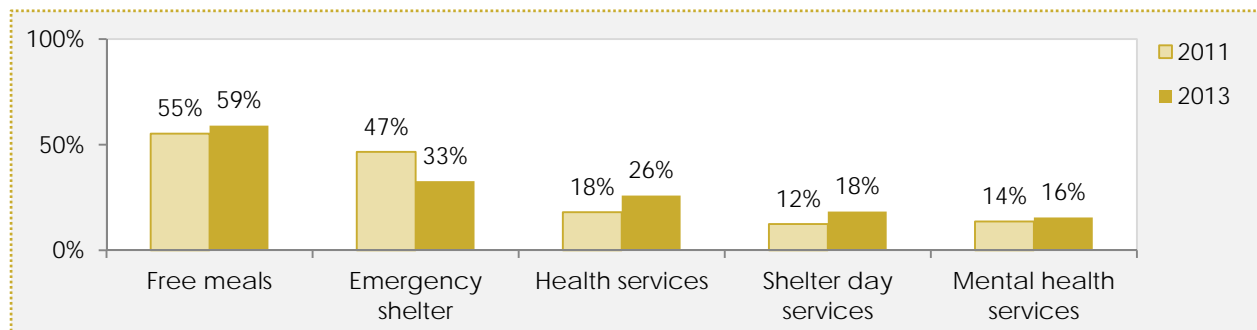*Source: Applied Survey Research. (2013). San Francisco Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.*
Applied Survey Research. (2011). San Francisco Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.
Note: Response options changed between 2011 and 2013.

Income

Thirty-nine percent of respondents reported they did not have any form of income from private or public sources, 37% had an income from government benefits and 20% had incomes from private sources.

Overall these respondents' income was highly variable. Their average monthly income was largely dependent on their employment status and whether or not they were receiving government benefits. While the mean income from both government and non-government sources for those who were employed was $909 dollars per month, these individuals were only 35% of the population. Most respondents were unemployed, with a mean income of $568 per month.

It is important to note that just 54% of all respondents (517 people) reported the amount of income they were receiving from government and/or non-government sources.

EMPLOYMENT AND MEAN MONTHLY INCOME

	Employed		Unemployed		Total	
	Mean income	n	Mean income	n	Mean income	n
Income from government sources	$558.24	337	$566.29	38	$565.80	375
Income from non-government sources	$862.94	118	$507.06	50	$606.60	168
Income from all sources	$908.57	440	$567.96	77	$607.50	517

Employment status n= 905 Income n=482
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2013). San Francisco Homeless Count
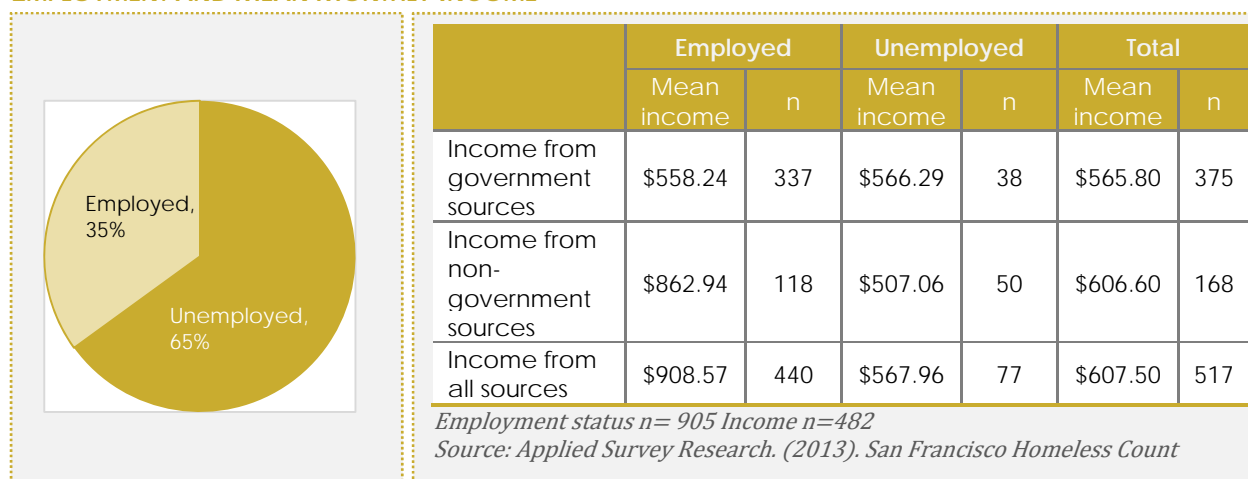
Panhandling

Some survey respondents who reported income from non-government sources cited panhandling as the source of that income. When asked specifically about panhandling, 34% of survey respondents reported they did panhandle. Of those who panhandled, the average amount they received per day was $6.37. Panhandling was less common among those who were experiencing homelessness for the first time. Of those who reported panhandling, 64% reported having been homeless for one year or more.

Health

Without regular access to health care, individuals suffer preventable illness, longer hospitalizations, and a higher rate of premature death. A study conducted by National Health Care for the Homeless found that the average life expectancy for a person without permanent housing was between 42 and 52 years old. That's more than 25 years younger than the life expectancy of the average person in the United States. It is estimated that those experiencing homelessness stay four days (or 36%) longer per hospital admission than non-homeless patients.[6]

Disabling Conditions

Almost two out of three respondents (63%) reported one or multiple disabling conditions. These conditions included chronic physical illness, physical or mental disabilities, chronic substance abuse and severe mental health conditions. Thirty-seven percent of survey respondents with a disabling condition reported their condition limited their ability to take care of personal matters or get or keep a job in 2013.

Physical Illness and disabilities

More than one in four (26%) survey respondents reported they were currently experiencing some form of a chronic physical illness. Including: 11% of respondents who reported hepatitis C, 6% reported AIDS or HIV, and 1% reported having tuberculosis. Nine percent of respondents reported a physical disability in 2013, compared to 30% in 2011. 2013 was the first time respondents were asked about traumatic brain injury and 2% reported having it. Twenty-nine percent of respondents reported a substance abuse disorder in 2013.

Figure 21.   DISABLING PHYSICAL CONDITIONS
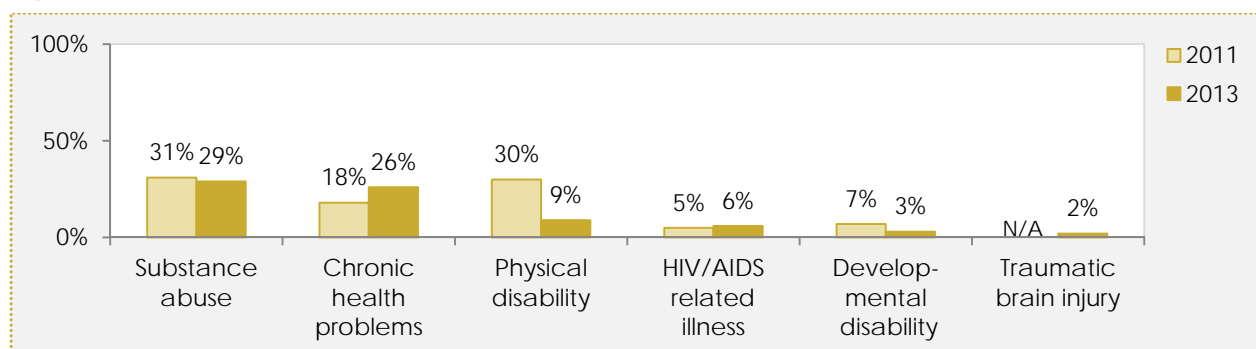
2013: 902 respondents offering 1,643 responses
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2013). San Francisco Homeless Count.
Note: Mental illness includes bipolar disorder, schizophrenia and other mental illnesses; it does not include PTSD or depression as those conditions are reported separately.

Mental Health Conditions

More than one in three respondents (37%) reported having a severe mental health condition. Twenty-nine percent of the homeless respondents reported chronic depression in 2013, in 2011, 42%. Twenty-two percent of 2013 respondents reported a specific mental illness (such as bipolar and schizophrenia), and 15% percent reported Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), similar to 2011.

Figure 22. DISABLING MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS
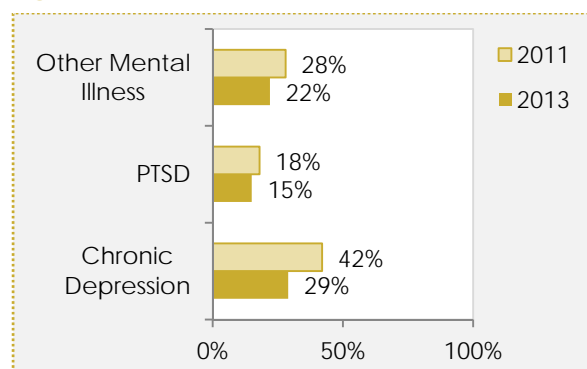
2013: 902 responses offering 1,378 responses
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2013). San Francisco Homeless Count.
Note: Other mental illness includes bipolar disorder, schizophrenia and other mental illnesses; it does not include PTSD or chronic depression as those conditions are reported separately

Domestic/Partner Violence or Abuse

Five percent of all survey respondents reported they were currently experiencing domestic/partner violence or abuse. Fifteen percent of female respondents reported domestic/partner violence as a primary cause of their homelessness; however, when looking at homeless respondents in families, that percentage jumped to 27%. In fact, domestic violence was the most frequently cited cause of homelessness among survey respondents living in families.

When analyzed by gender, 12% of all women respondents and 2% of all men were currently experiencing domestic violence.

Although domestic violence is consistently underreported, these percentages for the homeless survey respondents are much higher than the general U.S. population, in which 1.8% of women reported rape, physical assaults and being stalked in the last 12 months.[7]

Access to Medical Care

One in four (24%) survey respondents reported needing medical care in the last year but going without it because they were unable to receive it. Another 37% reported they had not needed care in the last year.

Forty-seven percent of respondents reported that their usual source of care was a community clinic or free public health clinics and 26% used the emergency room as their usual source of care, a decrease from 39% in 2011.

Figure 23.   USUAL SOURCE OF MEDICAL CARE
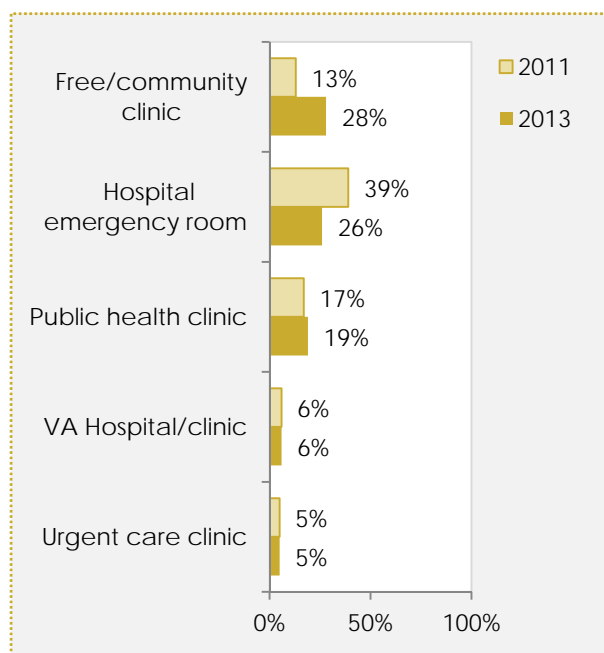
2013: n= 891; 2011: n= 942
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2013). San Francisco
Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.
Applied Survey Research. (2011). San Francisco
Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

Emergency Room (ER) Use

A San Francisco study of ER use among those experiencing homelessness shows homeless individuals, compared to the general population, are three times more likely to use an emergency department at least once in a year and homelessness is associated with repeated emergency department use.[8] Emergency room use is costly to the public health care system and may result in overcrowding.

Forty-three percent of survey respondents reported having used the emergency room one or more times in the 12 months prior to the survey, while 57% never used it. Approximately 31% of respondents used the ER one to three times, and 4% used it ten or more times.

Figure 24.   USE OF THE EMERGENCY ROOM IN THE LAST YEAR

2013 n: 766; 2011 n: 773
 Source: Applied Survey Research. (2013). San Francisco Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.
Applied Survey Research. (2011). San Francisco Homeless Survey. Watsonville.

Criminal Justice System

Individuals leaving jail or prison face a much higher risk of homelessness due to greater difficulties finding employment and housing. At the same time, those experiencing homelessness are more vulnerable to incarceration.[9]

Incarceration

Seventeen percent of respondents reported they were on probation or parole at the time of the survey, though only 12% reported they were on probation or parole prior to their homelessness.

Thirty percent of survey respondents had spent a night in jail or prison in the 12 months prior to the survey. However, 11% had been incarcerated for five days or fewer.

Figure 25.   NUMBER OF NIGHTS SPENT IN JAIL OR PRISON IN THE YEAR PRIOR TO THE SURVEY

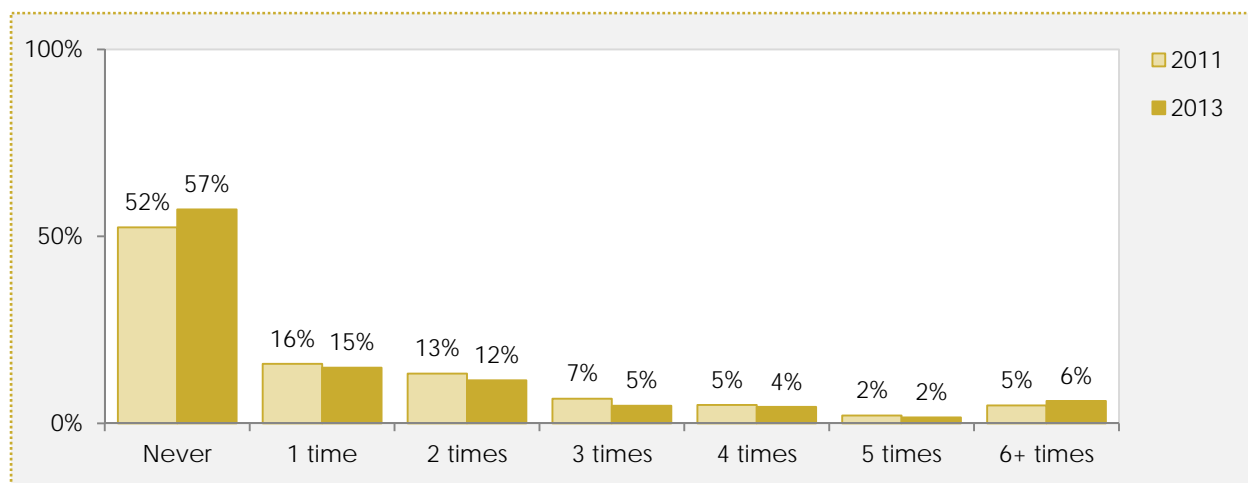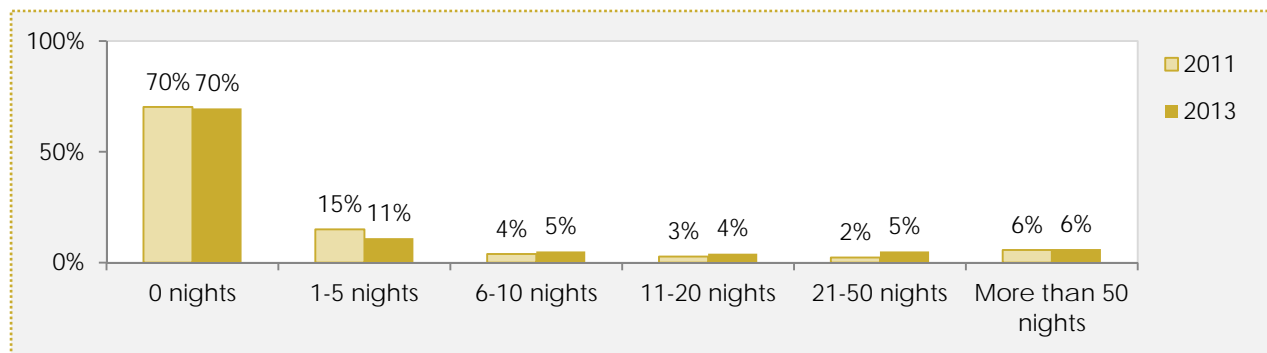*2011: n= 766; 2013: n= 953*
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2013). San Francisco Homeless Count.
Applied Survey Research. (2011). San Francisco Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

HUD Defined Subpopulations

In 2010, the federal government identified three primary subpopulations to focus on in order to move towards the goal of ending homelessness. The subpopulations in the federal plan known as Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness included the chronically homeless, veterans, and families. Since that time, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) released an amendment to Opening Doors, which focuses on preventing and ending youth homelessness. The 2013 San Francisco Homeless Count and Survey emphasize gathering data for each of these HUD defined subpopulations. Of the 952 surveys completed in 2013, 300 were completed by chronically homeless individuals, 105 by homeless veterans, 75 by individuals in homeless families, and 169 by unaccompanied children and transition age youth.

Chronic Homelessness

The mortality rate for those experiencing chronic homelessness is four to nine times higher than the general population. The public cost incurred by those experiencing extended periods of homelessness include emergency room visits, interactions with law enforcement, incarceration, and regular access to existing poverty and homeless services.

The USICH reported that 16% of the national homeless population was chronically homeless in 2012 or 99,834 chronically homeless individuals.[10] The federal strategic plan to end homelessness includes a plan to end chronic homelessness by 2015 by focusing on permanent supportive housing for those with the greatest needs and barriers to housing stability.

SAN FRANCISCO 2013 POINT-IN-TIME COUNT
Chronic Homelessness

HUD DEFINITION — An adult with a disabling condition or a family with at least one adult member with a disabling condition[1] who:

» Has been continuously homeless for 1 year or more.

» Has experienced 4 or more episodes of homelessness within the past 3 years.

CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS 1,977

24% SHELTERED .... UNSHELTERED 76%

[1] For the purposes of this study, a "disabling condition" was defined as a physical disability, mental illness, alcohol or drug abuse, HIV/AIDS, chronic health problems, or developmental disability. Those living in transitional housing are not considered by HUD to be chronically homeless.
[2] The chronic definition excludes those residing in transitional housing.
Source: Applied Survey Research, 2013 San Francisco Homeless Count.

Prevalence of Chronic Homelessness

The percentage of survey respondents who met the definition of chronic homelessness remained relatively stable between 2011 and 2013. In 2011, 33% of respondents were chronically homeless, compared to 31% in 2013. Between 2009 and 2011 the proportion of survey respondents who were chronically homeless decreased significantly: from 62% in 2009 to 33% in 2011. Of those who were identified as chronically homeless in 2013, 116 were living in families, and 1,977 were single individuals living on their own.

Unsheltered vs Sheltered Chronic Population

More than three quarters (77%) of chronically homeless respondents were unsheltered at the time of the survey, up from 69% in 2011. The largest percentage reported living outdoors, on the street, in parks, or in encampment areas.

Seventeen percent of those who were chronically homeless reported living in their vehicle, a substantial increase from the 2% reported in 2011. However, overall respondents living in vehicles were more common in 2013.

Figure 26.   PREVIOUS LIVING ARRANGEMENTS
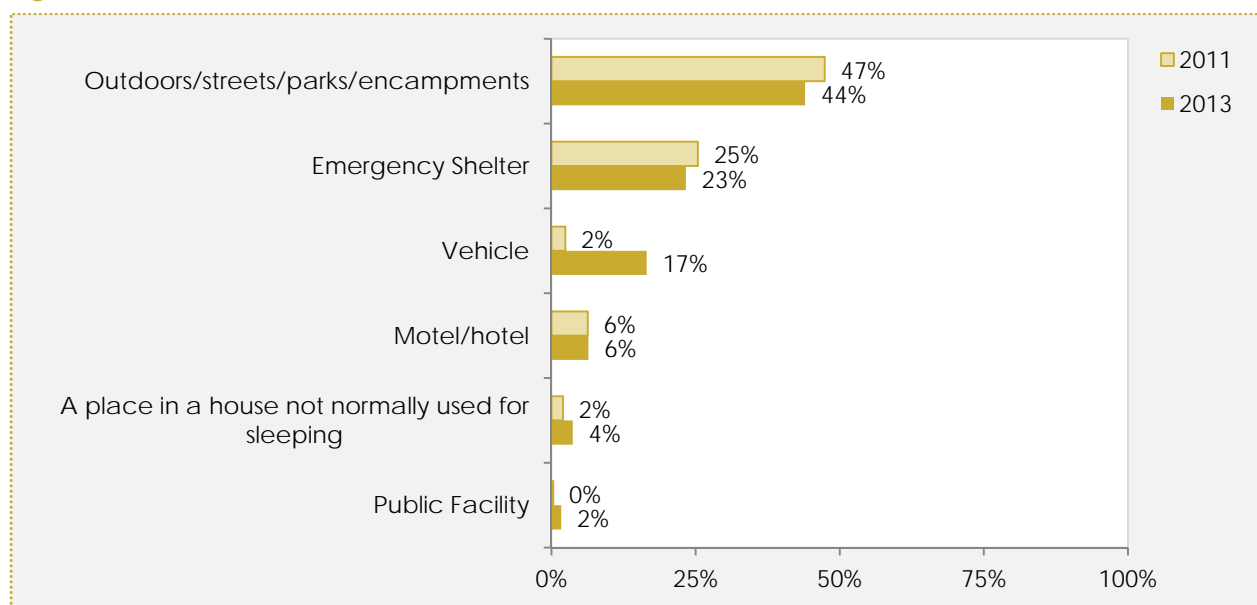
2013 n: 296; 2011 n: 331
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2013). San Francisco Homeless Count.

Demographics of Chronically Homelessness Survey Respondents

The majority of chronically homeless individuals were male (76%), slightly higher than the non-chronically homeless population (66%). The racial and ethnic breakdown of those experiencing chronic homelessness was generally similar to that of the non-chronically homeless population, except for a slightly higher percentage of chronically homeless respondents who identified as White/Caucasian (33%), as compared to 28% in the non-chronic population. Thirteen percent of chronically homeless respondents were identified as veterans.

Health Conditions

While the definition of chronic homelessness is limited to those experiencing a disabling condition, 61% of chronically homeless survey respondents reported experiencing two or more. The percentage of those experiencing multiple conditions was lower than in 2011 (75%).

Of 2013 respondents, the greatest percentages reported having chronic depression (46%) and chronic health problems (44%), followed by mental illness (37%). Ten percent reported having HIV/AIDS, this was much higher than the non-chronic survey population (4%).

Figure 27. PERCENTAGE OF CHRONICALLY HOMELESS RESPONDENTS WHO WERE EXPERIENCING THE FOLLOWING DISABLING CONDITIONS
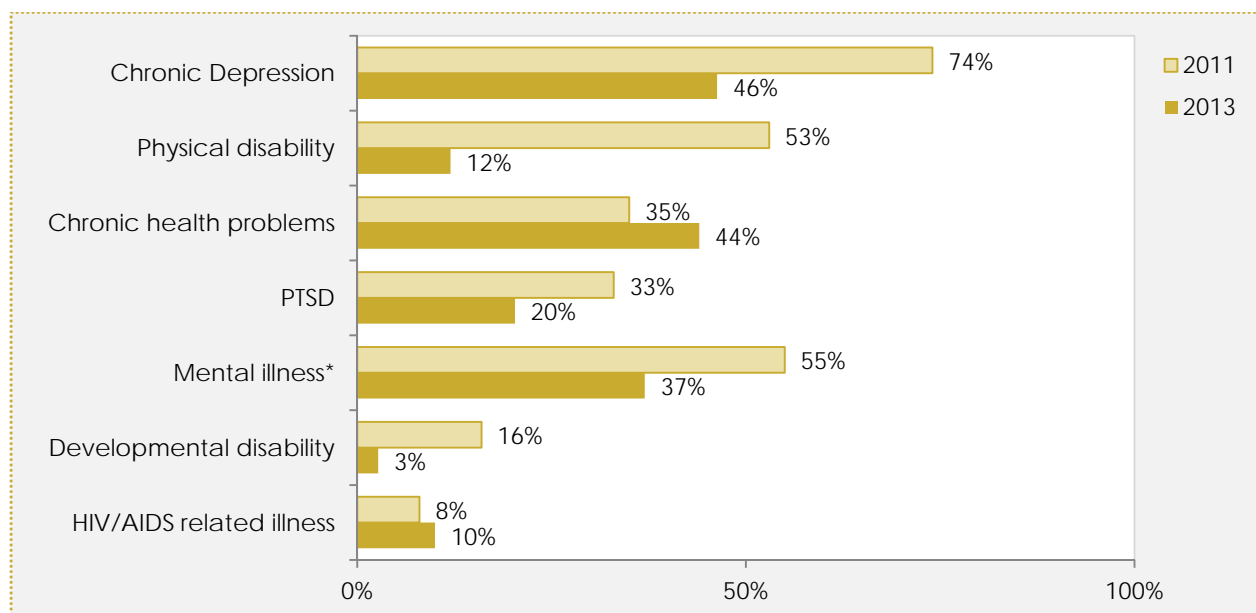
2013: multiple response question with 300 respondents offering 686 responses.
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2013). San Francisco Homeless Count.
Note: Mental illness includes bipolar disorder, schizophrenia and other mental illnesses; it does not include PTSD or chronic depression as those conditions are reported separately.

Emergency Room Use

Fifty-two percent of chronically homeless survey respondents reported having used the emergency room one or more times in the 12 months prior to the survey, as compared to 38% of the non-chronic population.

Primary Cause of Homelessness for the Chronically Homeless

The primary causes of homelessness among chronically homeless survey respondents were similar to those of the non-chronic homeless population. One in five reported job loss as the primary cause of their homelessness. A higher percentage of chronically homeless respondents cited drug or alcohol abuse as the cause of their homelessness, 18% compared to 8% of the non-chronic homeless population.

Access to Services among Chronically Homeless Persons

Less than two-thirds (62%) of chronically homeless survey respondents reported receiving some form of government assistance in 2013, compared to 75% in 2011. Half of those who were receiving assistance reported receiving food stamps; followed by 35% who reported General Assistance, and 28% SSI/SSDI. Just 15% reported receiving Medi-Cal/Medicare benefits.

Of those who were not receiving services, 43% did not believe they were eligible for services. Twenty-nine percent had never applied and nearly one-quarter reported they did not want government assistance.

Incarceration

Forty-four percent of chronically homeless survey respondents spent a night in jail or prison in the 12 months prior to the survey, as compared to 24% for the non-chronic homeless population.

Veteran Status
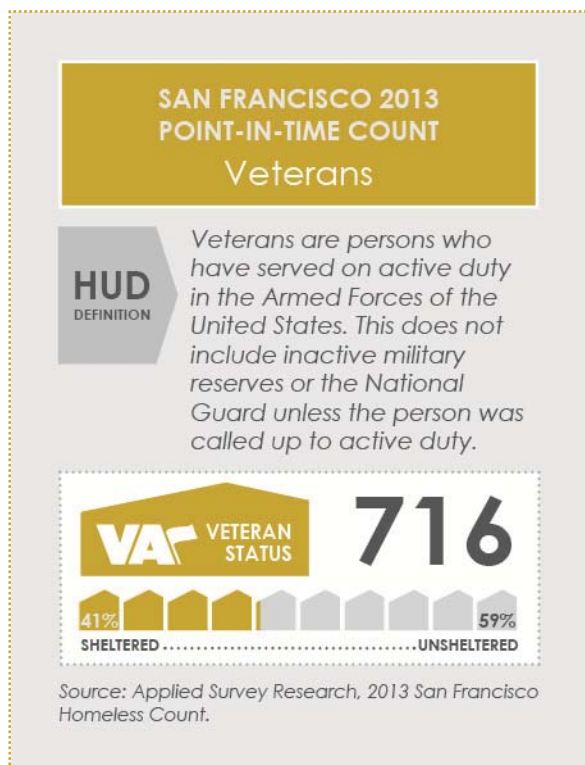
Many U.S. veterans experience conditions which place them at increased risk for homelessness. Veterans have higher rates of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury (TBI), sexual assault and substance abuse. Veterans experiencing homelessness are more likely to live on the street than in shelters and often remain on the street for extended periods of time.[11]

The U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness and the Department of Veterans Affairs reported there were 62,619 homeless veterans nationally in 2012; or 13% of all homeless adults are veterans.[12] The federal strategic plan to end homelessness includes a plan to end veteran homelessness by 2015 by increasing access to housing and health services.

SAN FRANCISCO 2013 POINT-IN-TIME COUNT
Veterans

HUD DEFINITION — *Veterans are persons who have served on active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States. This does not include inactive military reserves or the National Guard unless the person was called up to active duty.*

VA VETERAN STATUS **716**

41% SHELTERED .... UNSHELTERED 59%

Source: Applied Survey Research, 2013 San Francisco Homeless Count.

Number of Homeless Veterans

Eleven percent of survey respondents over the age of 18 years old were identified as veterans in 2013, compared to 17% in 2011 and the national average of 13%. Nearly all veteran respondents (99%) reported having served on active duty in the U. S. Armed Forces. Twenty–three percent reported they were called into active duty as a member of the National Guard or Reserves. Forty-one percent of veterans included in the Point-in-Time Count were sheltered in 2013, slightly lower than in 2011 (46%).

Demographics of Homeless Veterans

Less than 10% of veteran respondents were female and just 2% percent of homeless veterans were living in families with a child under the age of 18. Thirty-four percent of veterans identified as White/Caucasian, 29% as Black/African American and 11% as Hispanic/Latino.

Sixty-five percent of homeless veterans were living in San Francisco at the time they most recently became homeless. The highest percentage (17%) of those who were not living in San Francisco at the time, reported moving to the City to access VA services or benefits.

Length of Homelessness among Veterans

National data suggests that homeless veterans are on the streets for longer periods of time and have a more difficult time getting back into housing.[13] In 2013, San Francisco veteran respondents reported fewer episodes of homelessness than non-veterans, yet a higher percentage reported having lived on the street for extended periods of time. Sixty-three percent of veterans reported having lived on the street for one year or more, compared to 53% of non-veterans.

Disabling Conditions among Homeless Veterans

The percentage of veterans reporting chronic depression decreased from 55% in 2011 to 36% in 2013. However, the percentage reporting PTSD increased from 35% in 2011 to 40% in 2013.

Figure 28.   HOMELESS VETERAN EXPERIENCING DISABLING CONDITIONS
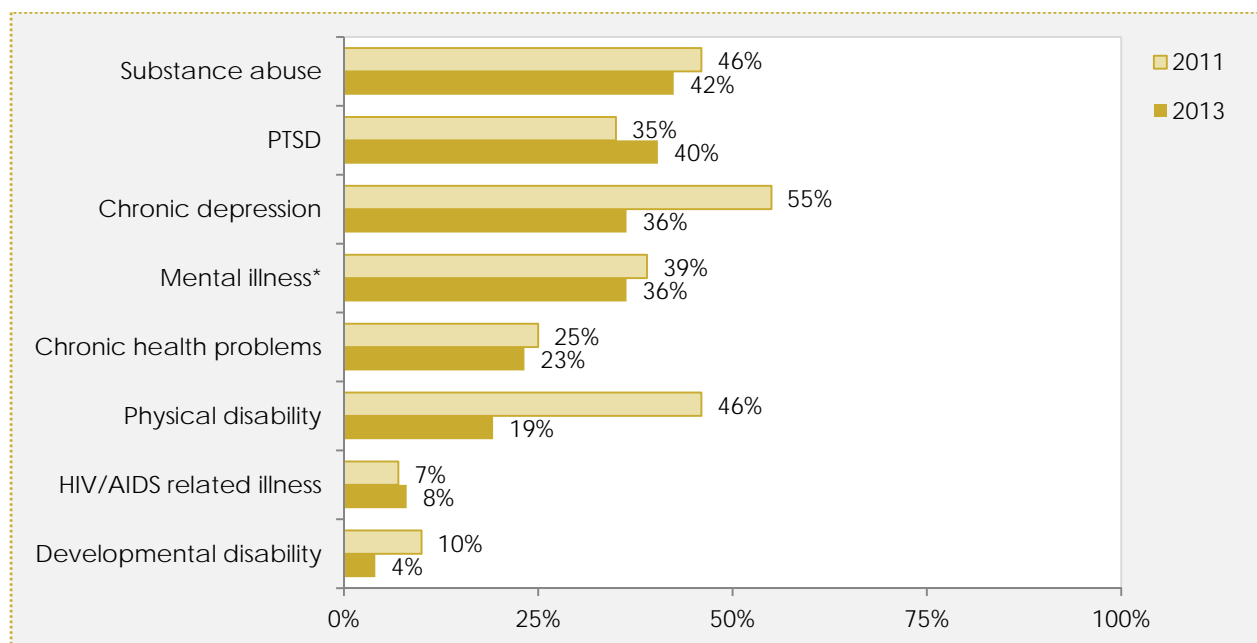
2013: multiple response question with 99 respondents offering 254 responses
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2013). San Francisco Homeless Count.
Note: Mental illness includes bipolar disorder, schizophrenia and other mental illnesses; it does not include PTSD or chronic depression as those conditions are reported separately.

Primary Cause of Homelessness for Veterans

The top three primary causes of homelessness reported by veterans were: job loss (28%), alcohol and drug use (20%), and an argument with a friend or family member who asked them to leave (18%). Nearly twice as many veterans (20%) reported alcohol or drug use as the primary cause of homelessness as compared to non-veterans (10%).

Government Assistance for Homeless Veterans

Eighty-three percent of veterans reported they were receiving some form of government assistance in 2013, similar to 2011 (80%). Of those who reported receiving services, the greatest percentage reported receiving VA Disability compensation (40%), followed by food stamps/WIC/Calfresh (34%).

Homeless Families with Children

The risk of homelessness is highest among families with children under the age of 6.[14] Children in families experiencing homelessness have increased incidence of illness and are more likely to have emotional and behavioral problems than children with consistent living accommodations. [15]

While many homeless subpopulations have decreased in recent years, the number of persons in families experiencing homelessness has increased.[16] It was estimated that persons in families represent 38% of the homeless population, or more than 239,403 persons nationally, in 2012.[17]

SAN FRANCISCO 2013 POINT-IN-TIME COUNT
Families

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

HOMELESS PERSONS IN FAMILIES 679

95% SHELTERED .... UNSHELTERED 5%

Source: Applied Survey Research, 2013 San Francisco Homeless Count.

Number of Homeless Families with Children

Data from the San Francisco Point-in-Time Count showed a slight increase in the number of homeless individuals in families. There were 679 persons in families included in the 2013 count, up from 635 in 2011. One in ten homeless individuals was living in a family with at least one child under the age of 18. While the number of persons in families increased, the percentage of those living on the street decreased from 15% in 2011 to 5% in 2013.

Characteristics of Homeless Families with Children

Surveys were conducted with 75 individuals in homeless families. Seventy-two percent of survey respondents in families were female, much higher than survey respondents not in families (24% female). Thirty-two percent of respondents with families identified as Black/African American and 28% as White/Caucasian. The average age of family respondents was 36 years old, slightly lower than those living without children. More than two-thirds (67%) had been homeless for more than 6 months, and 96% reported their school age children were in school.

Figure 29.   HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS WITH CHILDREN BY ETHNICITY (2013)
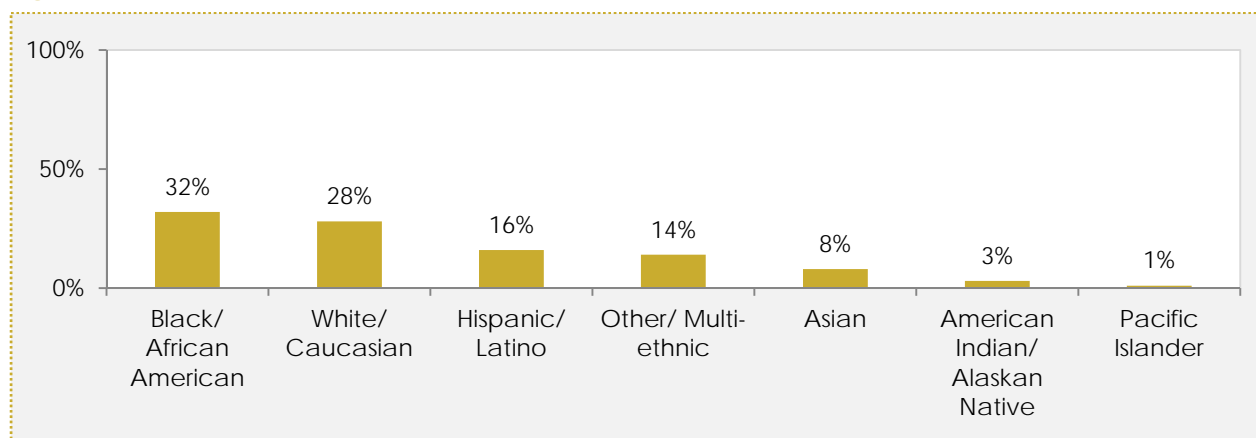
2013 n: 74
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2013). San Francisco Homeless Count.

Primary Cause of Homelessness for Homeless Families with Children

Domestic violence was the most frequently cited cause of homelessness among survey respondents living in families (27%). This was followed by job loss (22%), drug or alcohol abuse (18%) and eviction (15%). Personal relationships were also commonly cited causes of homelessness including 10% who reported a divorce, separation, or breakup and 7% who reported an argument with friends or family members who asked them to leave.

Usual Sleeping Place

Eighty percent of respondents in families reported usually sleeping in emergency shelters or transitional housing, as compared to 29% of homeless individuals not in families.

Government Assistance for Homeless Families with Children

Eighty-five percent of family survey respondents reported they were receiving some form of public assistance. Of those who reported benefits, a large majority (81%) were receiving food stamps/WIC/Calfresh. More than half (53%) were receiving CalWORKs/TANF and 34% were on Medi-Cal/Medicare. Nineteen percent were receiving SSI/SSDI or Disability.

2013 San Francisco Homeless Youth Count Summary: Unaccompanied Children and Transition Age Youth
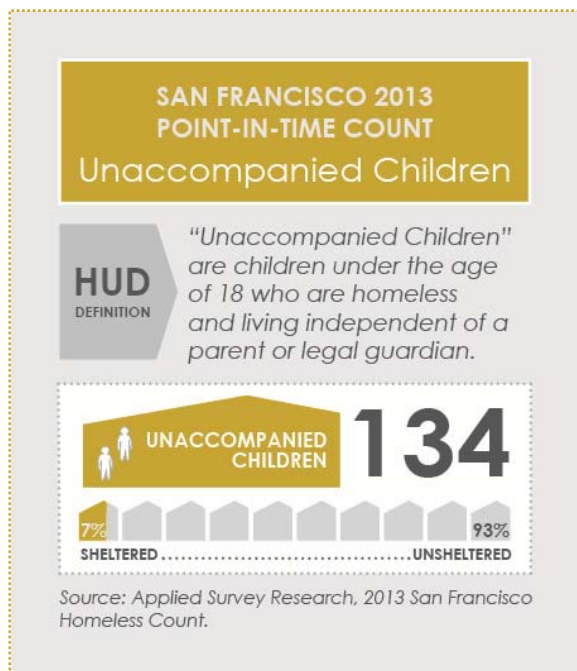
Data on unaccompanied homeless children (under 18) and transition age youth (18-24) are extremely limited at both the local and national level. The data that are available suggest that the negative effects of homelessness on children are high. Homeless youth have a harder time accessing services, including shelter, medical care, and employment.[18]

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 transition age youth. As part of this effort, the Department of Housing and Urban Development placed increased interest on gathering data on unaccompanied homeless children and youth during the 2013 Point-in-Time Count.

San Francisco has made great strides in collecting quantitative and qualitative data on homeless children and youth in the City by conducting a specialized study of these populations. Surveys were administered to 169 youth throughout the City by trained peer interviewers. The following section provides an overview of the findings. More information regarding the youth study can be found in the 2013 San Francisco Homeless Youth Count and Survey.

Number and Characteristics

A total of 1,902 unaccompanied children and youth were counted through the general and supplemental youth Point-in-Time Count efforts. Eighty-seven percent of unaccompanied children and youth were unsheltered.

Similar to that of the general population, nearly three quarters of youth (72%) identified as male. Youth respondents also resembled respondents aged 25 and older in their sexual orientation, with about 28% identifying as LGBTQ. A higher percentage of youth identified as White/Caucasian (41%) than respondents 25 years and over (27%), while a smaller percentage identified as Hispanic/Latino (11% as compared to 30% for those 25 and older).

Figure 30.   HOMELESS POPULATION BY ETHNICITY AND AGE (2013)
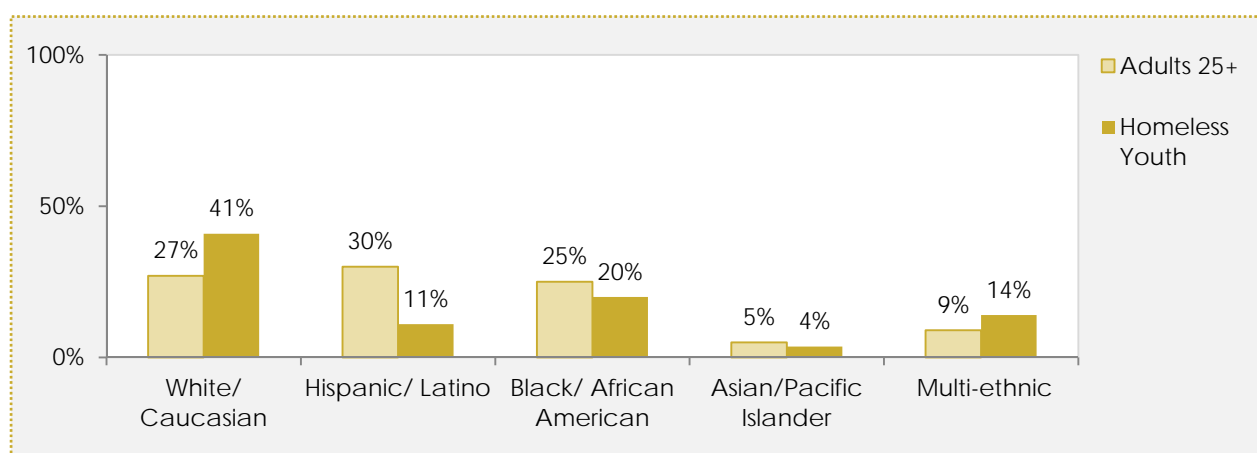
2013 youth n: 164; adults 25+ 754
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2013). San Francisco Homeless Count.

One in four youth survey respondents reported they had been in the foster care system. Eighteen percent were on probation or parole at the time of the survey, yet only 10% reported being on probation or parole prior to experiencing homelessness.

The majority of youth survey respondents were over the age of 18, yet one quarter (25%) reported they had less than a high school education. Forty-two percent of homeless youth had a high school education or a GED, and 5% had a bachelor's degree.[19]

Figure 31. HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION
        COMPLETED

- Less than High School (25%)
- High School/GED (42%)
- Some College (26%)
- Bachelor's Degree (5%)
- Graduate Degree (1%)
- Other (1%)

N=168
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2013). San Francisco Homeless Count.
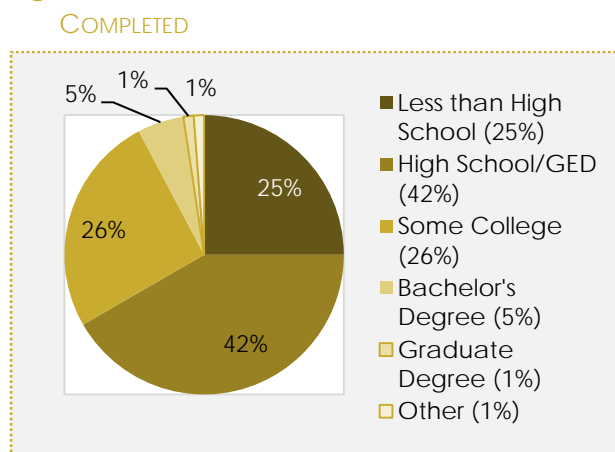
Less than half of youth survey respondents reported living in San Francisco at the time they most recently became homeless and more than one quarter (27%) reported they had lived out of state. The greatest percentage of those who moved to San Francisco after experiencing homelessness reported moving to the City for work (17%).

Primary Cause of Homelessness

Homeless youth survey respondents reported similar causes of homelessness to those 25 and older. More than one quarter of youth respondents cited job loss (28%), and 21% cited an argument with a family or friend who asked them to leave. Similar to homeless families, a higher percentage of youth respondents (9%) reported domestic violence as the primary cause of their homelessness, as compared to those ages 25 and older (5%).

Figure 32. PRIMARY CAUSES OF YOUTH HOMELESSNESS
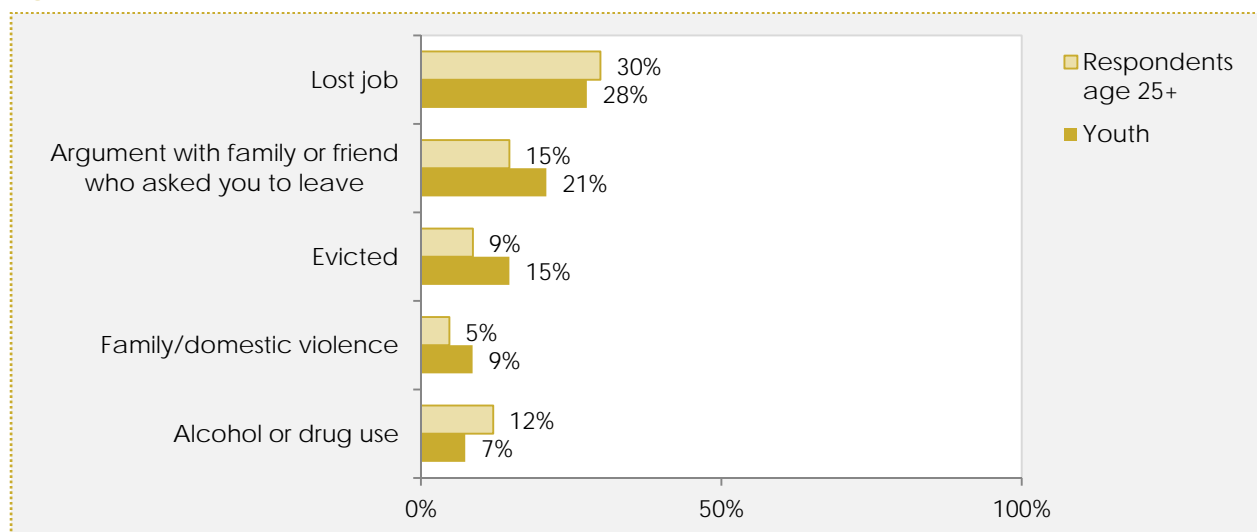
2013: 163 youth respondents offering 197 responses and 740 adults 25+ offering 827 responses
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2013). San Francisco Homeless Count.

Usual Sleeping Places

A higher percentage of youth (51%) reported usually sleeping outdoors, on the streets, or in parks, than did respondents age 25 and older (30%). Conversely, fewer youth reported sleeping in vehicles (2% as compared to 15%). Twenty-one percent reported they had traded sex, drugs or both for a place to stay.

Health and Social Barriers

Though better than the general homeless population, health is still an issue for homeless youth. Sixty nine percent reported their physical health was "good" or "very good." However, 31% reported that it was "fair" or "poor." More than half (69%) reported their mental health was "good" or "very good," and 31% reported that it was "fair" or "poor." Among homeless youth respondents, chronic depression was the most commonly noted health condition (27%), followed by substance abuse (23%).

When asked about drug use, 75% reported marijuana and 55% reported alcohol. Methamphetamine was reported as the primary drug of choice for 19% of homeless youth respondents.

Figure 33.   HEALTH CONDITIONS

2013: 163 youth respondents offering 258 responses and 713 adults 25+ offering 1,341 responses
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2013). San Francisco Homeless Count.

Violence and Crime
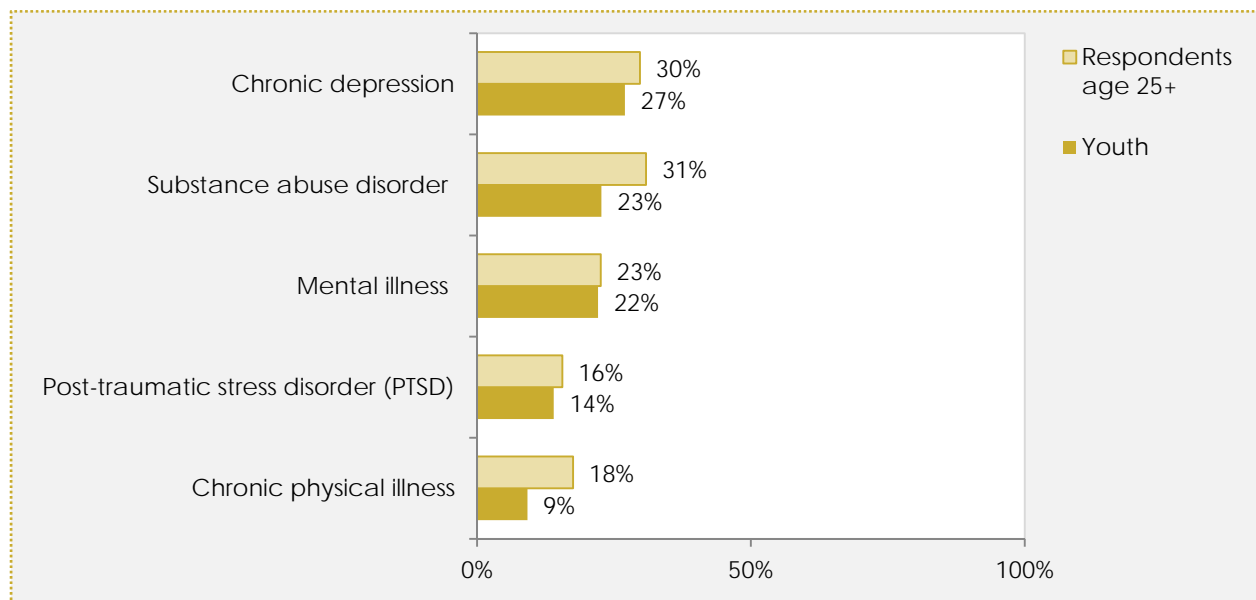
Ten percent of youth survey respondents reported they did not feel safe in their current living situation. Nearly 40% of youth respondents reported their safety had been threatened in the past 30 days. Nearly half (46%) reported they had been burglarized or robbed since becoming homeless. Twenty-eight percent reported they had been assaulted or physically attacked, and 31% had been victim to another crime. Ten percent of youth reported they had been a victim of sexual exploitation.

Figure 34.   EXPERIENCES WITH CRIME
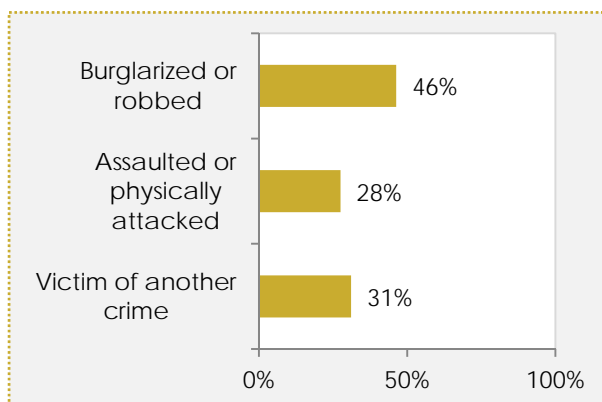
2013 robbed n: 164; burglarized n: 163 and assaulted n: 160
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2013). San Francisco Homeless Count.
Note: Burglarized means that you were not present at the time.

Services and Social Support Networks

Fifty-six percent of homeless youth survey respondents reported there was an adult in the community that they trusted and 60% reported they had someone they could rely on in a time of crisis. Most reported this person was a friend (47%) or family member (17%). Fourteen percent reported it was service provider.

Two thirds (64%) of homeless youth respondents reported they had some form of contact with their parents. Seventy-four percent reported they spoke to their parents by phone or Skype, 26% reported they sometimes visited their parents, and 9% reported often visiting their parents. Less than one in five (19%) reported having tried to move back in with their parents.

2013 San Francisco Homeless Youth Count and Survey

Youth survey respondents were asked 89 questions in total, more than those posed to the overall homeless survey respondents. Their responses provide insight into their experiences and showcase youth who are now estimated to represent 26% of the total population experiencing homelessness in San Francisco. The complete findings of the youth survey are contained in a separate report.

Conclusion

The relatively stable size of the general homeless population and new findings on the number of unaccompanied children and youth obscure the fact that many individual lives have been changed for the better through San Francisco's homeless initiatives. It is important to consider the results of the 2013 count within the context of local efforts to move individuals and families out of homelessness, through the provision of housing and support services. Since 2004, San Francisco has continued several ambitious initiatives to reduce the size of the homeless population, including the 5-Year Strategic Plan Toward Ending Homelessness and the 10-Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness. The percentage of chronically homeless people in San Francisco decreased from 62% in 2009 to 31% of the homeless population in 2013. Over 18,000 homeless people have left the streets or shelter system for permanent housing since January 2004, with the assistance of the programs outlined below.

Care Not Cash: Care Not Cash is a program that offers housing / shelter and support services as a portion of an individual's General Assistance benefits. CAAP is San Francisco's cash aid program for adults without dependent children. By the end of January 2013, a total of 4,018 homeless CAAP recipients had been placed in permanent housing through the Care Not Cash Program.

Housing First: In addition to the population impacted by Care Not Cash, the Human Services Agency master leasing program, called Housing First, also provides permanent housing for homeless single adults referred by emergency shelters and community-based agencies. The number of individuals placed into housing between January 1, 2004 and January 31, 2013 was 1,757. The San Francisco Local Operating Subsidy Program (LOSP) has housed 909 people (605 people in 181 families, and 304 single individuals) with the LOSP supportive housing program.

Continuum of Care Rental Assistance: San Francisco has housed 1,022 homeless people (414 people in 140 families, and 608 single individuals) with federal Continuum of Care funding, using the legacy Shelter + Care program.

Direct Access to Housing (DAH): The Department of Public Health operates the Direct Access to Housing Program, which provides permanent housing to formerly homeless persons with disabilities referred through the public health care system. The DAH program has housed more than 3,000 people since January 2004.

Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) is a permanent housing program targeted to the most vulnerable veterans in the community. This program places homeless veterans with disabilities in permanent housing with ongoing comprehensive support services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs. In order to meet the unique challenge of San Francisco's very expensive and competitive housing market, a special collaboration of the San Francisco Housing Authority, the City and County of San Francisco, and the Department of Veterans Affairs has been convened to increase the number of veterans placed in housing. As of January 2013, 358 veterans were placed in VASH housing.

Homeward Bound: The Homeward Bound Program (HBP) reunites homeless persons living in San Francisco with family and friends living elsewhere. Homeless clients who request to return home through this program must be living in San Francisco, and be medically stable enough to successfully travel to the destination. HBP staff directly contact the client's family member or friend at the point of destination to ensure that the client will have a place to reside and have ample support to assist in establishing stabilized housing and transition from homelessness. A total of 7,123 homeless individuals have been assisted by this program since February 2005.

Rental Assistance: Since 2007, San Francisco has provided short and medium term rental assistance to homeless families to help them transition from shelter and transitional housing to independent housing. Over 500 families have successfully transitioned off of the rental subsidy over the years. Based on the program's success, in December 2012, the Salesforce.com Foundation partnered with San Francisco local government and non-profit providers to provide subsidies for additional families. San Francisco has also provided thousands of households with legal services, case management, or rental assistance to prevent homelessness.

San Francisco's legal and rental assistance for homeless and at-risk families and single adults was augmented significantly from 2009-2012 with federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act resources. The Homeless Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Program in San Francisco served 4,346 people in 2,573 households. While the San Francisco Homeless Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Program was a success, the funding has been discontinued nationally with the end of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act in 2012.

The Housing Access Project: San Francisco's rental assistance and housing placement services also include a federally funded Rapid Rehousing Program for families. The Housing Access Project has served 32 families with rental assistance to move out of shelter or off the streets and transition to stability, and 56 families are currently transitioning as of February 2013.

Project Homeless Connect (PHC): Project Homeless Connect strengthens and utilizes collaborations with city agencies, businesses and organizations to provide comprehensive holistic services, at special events and through continued care, for those who are at risk of becoming homeless, currently homeless or transitioning from shelter to permanent housing. Project Homeless Connect provides bimonthly events which provide a single location where non-profit, medical and social service providers collaborate to serve the homeless of San Francisco. And now Project Homeless Connect has launched Every Day Connect program which links hard-to-access medical and social service, on a daily basis. As of December 2012, 45,524 volunteers provided services to 67,605 homeless and low-income San Franciscans.

San Francisco remains committed to providing housing and services through innovative and effective programs to move homeless San Franciscans out of homelessness. The completion of the 2013 count provides HUD-required data for federal funding for San Francisco's Continuum of Care (CoC). The San Francisco CoC (the Local Homeless Coordinating Board) is a network of local homeless service providers that collaboratively plan, organize, and deliver housing and services to meet the needs of homeless people as they move toward stable housing and maximum self-

sufficiency. These Homeless Assistance Grant funds (more than $23 million annually) provide much-needed resources to house and serve the local homeless population studied in this report.

The data presented in the 2013 Homeless Point-in-Time Count and Survey report will continue to be used by planning bodies of the City and County of San Francisco and other organizations to inform additional outreach, service planning, and policy decision-making over the next two years as they continue to address homelessness.

Appendix I: Homeless Count & Survey Methodology

Overview

The purpose of the 2013 San Francisco Homeless Point-in-Time Count and Survey was to produce a Point-in-Time estimate of people who experience homelessness in San Francisco, a region with covers approximately 47 square miles. The results of the street count 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 any given night. The subsequent 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 had three primary components:

1. The general street count between the hours of 8 pm to midnight – an enumeration of unsheltered homeless individuals
2. The youth street count between the hours of 1 pm and 5 pm – a targeted enumeration of unsheltered youth under the age of 25
3. The shelter count for 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 recruitment, logistical planning, methodological decision-making, and interagency coordination efforts. Applied Survey Research (ASR), a non-profit social research firm, provided technical assistance with these aspects of the planning process. ASR has over twelve 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.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Local homeless service providers and advocates have been active and valued partners in the planning and implementation of this and previous homeless counts. The planning team invited public input on a number of aspects of the count. 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 LHCB was also the primary venue to collect public feedback.

INTERAGENCY COORDINATION

The planning team was comprised of staff from the Human Services Agency's Housing and Homeless Division, Local Homeless Coordinating Board Policy Analyst, and consultants from Applied Survey Research. In the early stages of the planning process, the planning team requested the collaboration, cooperation, and participation of several government agencies that regularly interact with homeless individuals and possess considerable knowledge and expertise relevant to the count. In November 2010, the planning team organized an initial meeting which included representatives of the San Francisco Police Department, the Department of Public Health, the Recreation and Park Department, the Department of Public Works, the Mayor's Office, the Office of the City Administrator, and the Homeless Outreach Team (SF HOT). The planning team requested the participation and input of these agencies in four key areas related to the unsheltered count: the recruitment and mobilization of volunteers among City staff, the identification of "hotspots" for homelessness throughout the City, the recruitment of staff to enumerate homeless individuals in City parks, and the provision of volunteer safety training and security detail on the night of the count. The planning team convened a series of more detailed meetings with the partners to coordinate the logistics of the general street count, youth count, and the park count.

General Street Count Methodology

DEFINITION

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

> » Individuals and families 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.

METHODOLOGICAL IMPROVEMENTS

The 2013 street count methodology followed the same general methodology used in the 2007, 2009 and 2011 counts, with the addition of dedicated youth outreach and consolidated data collection forms. In 2007-2011, all areas of the City were fully canvassed by adult community volunteers and service providers, with no additional outreach by youth. In 2013, the dedicated youth outreach created a more comprehensive study, resulting in an increase in the number of children and youth counted. The 2007-2013 counts differed from the method used in 2005, when densely populated areas of the City were fully canvassed, while outlying areas were enumerated using "hot spot" data.

VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING

Many individuals who live and/or work in San Francisco turned out to support the City's effort to enumerate the local homeless population. Approximately 334 community volunteers participated in the 2013 general street count. The Human Services Agency (HSA) spearheaded the volunteer recruitment effort. Extensive outreach efforts were conducted, targeting local non-profits that serve the homeless and local volunteer programs.

Project Homeless Connect publicized the count and promoted volunteer participation through an e-mail to its volunteer base and an event posting on its website. The Local Homeless Coordinating Board (LHCB), the Continuum of Care's oversight body for San Francisco, also promoted

community participation in the count at all general meetings and subcommittee meetings for several months leading up to the count. The LHCB also posted an announcement and additional information about the count on its website and on the Craigslist website.

The planning committee sent a press release informing the community about the count and making an appeal for volunteer participation approximately two weeks before the count. Volunteers registered to participate, and received additional details on the count via dedicated SFGOV email account monitored and staffed by Applied Survey Research (ASR) support staff.

Hundreds of volunteers served as enumerators on the night of the count, canvassing the City in teams to visually count homeless persons. Volunteers also provided staffing support at 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 before the count on January 24, 2013, from 7 to 8 p.m. In addition to the presentation given by the lead staff at the dispatch center, volunteers received printed instructions detailing how to count unsheltered homeless persons.

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 Police Officers and SF HOT staff during the dawn hours of January 25. However, the majority of parks deemed safe were counted by volunteers on the night of the count. San Francisco Police Department officers provided a safety briefing to the volunteers and provided security at the dispatch centers throughout the night. Law enforcement districts were notified of pending street count activity in their jurisdictions. Additional safety measures for the volunteers included the deployment of an experienced SF HOT outreach worker with teams enumerating high density areas and the provision of flashlights and fluorescent safety vests to walking enumeration teams. No official reports were received in regards to unsafe or at-risk situations occurring during the street count in any area of the City.

STREET COUNT DISPATCH CENTERS

To achieve complete coverage of the City within the four-hour timeframe, the planning team identified four areas for the placement of dispatch centers on the night of the count – the Downtown, Mission, Sunset, and Bayview Districts. Volunteers selected their dispatch center at the time of registration, based on familiarity with the area or convenience. The planning team divided up 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.

LOGISTICS OF ENUMERATION

The San Francisco planning team divided the City into 151 enumeration routes. Volunteers canvassed routes of approximately six 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 the City 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 2011, teams canvassing densely populated areas with known large populations of homeless persons were accompanied by experienced outreach workers from SF HOT, a trained outreach team that works with the local homeless population year-round. SF HOT members provided volunteers with valuable guidance on where and how to look for homeless persons and assisted the team in determining whom to count. Teams in the southeast corridor of the City were accompanied by workers from the Community Ambassadors Program (CAP), a multiracial and bilingual public safety group. Members of these two organizations helped teams through their intimate knowledge of the areas.

Youth Street Count Methodology

GOAL
The goal of the dedicated youth count was to be more inclusive of homeless children and youth, under the age of 25. Many homeless 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.

In 2013, HUD asked communities across the county to increase their efforts to include youth in their Point-in-Time counts. The planning team recognized that homeless youth have traditionally been underrepresented in the San Francisco Point-in-Time counts and worked with ASR to develop a localized strategy to better include unaccompanied children and transitional age youth in the count.

RESEARCH DESIGN
Planning for the 2013 supplemental youth count included many youth homeless service providers. Local providers identified locations where homeless youth were known to congregate. The locations corresponded to eight zip codes, in the neighborhoods of the Haight, Mission, Tenderloin, Union Square, Castro, SoMa, the Panhandle, Golden Gate Park and the Embarcadero. Service providers familiar with the areas were identified and asked to recruit currently homeless youth to participate in the count.

Larkin Street for Youth, At the Crossroads, and the Homeless Youth Alliance recruited 24 youth to work as peer enumerators, counting homeless youth in the identified areas of San Francisco on January 24, 2013. Youth workers were paid $11 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 US Interagency Council on Homelessness that youth do not commonly comingle with homeless adults and are not easily identified by non-youth. For this reason, they have accepted and recommended communities count youth at times when they can be seen, rather than during general outreach times.

During the general census, volunteers, city employees and outreach workers counted just 11 unaccompanied children, while peer youth enumerators counted 114. The number of transition age youth reported by youth during the targeted youth effort resembles the number of youth counted in the general census outreach, though these youth were not duplicate counts. General outreach efforts resulted in a visual count of just 218 youth between the ages of 18 and 24 years old. As mentioned previously this count is noninvasive and allows for count volunteers to identify persons in vehicles and covered sleeping areas to be identified without an age. The age distribution of these individuals is then determined by extrapolation, based on the known age distribution. This extrapolation method resulted in an additional 517 youth between the ages of 18-24 and resulting in a number similar to the targeted youth efforts.

Figure 35.   UNSHELTERED YOUTH COUNT DATA BY SOURCE

		Unaccompanied Children under 18	Transition Age Youth 18-24
General Count	Visual count	11	218
	Extrapolated count	0	517
	Subtotal	**11**	**735**
Youth Count	Visual Count	114	789
	Extrapolated count	0	0
	Subtotal	**114**	**789**
Total Count		**125**	**1,524**

DATA COLLECTION

It was determined that homeless youth would be more prominent on the street during daylight hours, rather than in the evening when the general count was conducted. The youth count was conducted from approximately 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. on January 24, 2013. Youth worked in teams of two to four, with teams coordinated by youth street outreach workers.

Shelter and Institution 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

» Individuals and families living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The homeless occupancy of the following shelters and institutions was collected for the night of January 24, 2013. 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 24, 2013. These Point-in-Time count numbers included inpatient psychiatric services, Acute Diversion Units, medically-assisted and social model detoxification facilities, and residential drug treatment facilities.
» Jail: The San Francisco Sheriff's Department provided a count of the number of homeless persons in the County Jail on the night of January 24, 2013.
» Hospitals: The San Francisco Hospital Council 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 24, 2013. 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 Jail referenced booking cards to determine homeless status.

CHALLENGES

There are many challenges in any homeless enumeration, especially when implemented 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.

POINT-IN-TIME UNDERCOUNT

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

In a non-intrusive visual homeless enumeration, the methods employed, 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 makeshift shelters.

The Local Homeless Coordinating Board, along with community members, expressed concerns about the undercount of homeless families in the Point-in-Time count and with the use of HUD's definition of homelessness. Therefore the information below is meant to provide supplemental data and be used for informational purposes.

The San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) employs a broader definition of homelessness in its recordkeeping. It includes youth living in shelters, single room occupancy hotels, transitional housing, the streets, cars, doubled up, and other inadequate accommodations. SFUSD estimates that there were 2,357 homeless school-aged youth enrolled in the district on January 24, 2013, up from 2,200 in January 2011. The largest number of children in 2013 were in 5th grade (237 children) and 9th grade (236), followed by 10th grade (229). There were 65 children in kindergarten and four children in pre-school and transitional kindergarten.

Compass Connecting Point (CCP) is the central intake point for families facing homelessness or a housing crisis in San Francisco, CCP provides housing search services and manages the waitlist for family three to six month shelter placement. On January 22, 2013, CCP reported that 165 families seeking three to six month shelter placement had been assessed in-person for shelter eligibility and

been placed on the waitlist, and an additional 82 families called to start the assessment process (247 total families seeking shelter). Of the 165 families on the waitlist, 19 were living in three to six month family shelter (12%) and chose to get on the waitlist for a subsequent similar placement, of the 153 living outside the three to six month family shelter programs, 99 were living with friends and family. Also, it's noteworthy that zero families reported sleeping in the street. One family reported sleeping in a store part time, and four families reported sleeping in cars-- all other families were in transitional housing, treatment, or other sheltered settings.

In addition, HSA has considered other unsheltered count methodologies, in the interest of decreasing the subjectivity involved in the count and attaining a more accurate number. One approach that has been considered is conducting interviews of all persons observed during the street count to determine whether they self-identify as homeless. Covering the entire City using this approach would require significantly more volunteers or a multiple-night count. A multiple-night count is a more expensive approach and would require additional resources. Moreover, a multiple-night count would require a methodology to eliminate duplicate counting of individuals. In addition, interviewing raises concerns about disturbing the privacy of homeless persons and compromising the safety of volunteer enumerators.

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 survey of 954 homeless persons was conducted in order to yield qualitative data about the homeless community in San Francisco. 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, military service, length and recurrence of homelessness, usual 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 homeless workers and Community Ambassadors Program team members, who were trained by Applied Survey Research and HSA. Training sessions led potential interviewers through a comprehensive orientation that included project background information and detailed instruction on respondent eligibility, interviewing protocol, and confidentiality. Homeless workers were compensated at a rate of $5.00 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. Socks were given as an incentive for participating in the 2013 homeless survey. The socks were easy to obtain and distribute, were thought to have wide appeal, 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 survey respondents.

SURVEY ADMINISTRATION DETAILS
» The 2013 San Francisco Homeless Survey was administered by the trained survey team between January 28 and March 10, 2013.
» In all, the survey team collected 954 unique surveys.

SURVEY SAMPLING
The planning team recommended approximately 1,000 surveys for 2013. Based on a Point-in-Time estimate of 7,350 homeless persons, with a randomized survey sampling process, the 952 valid surveys represent a confidence interval of +/- 3% with a 95% confidence level when generalizing the results of the survey to the estimated population of homeless individuals in San Francisco.

The 2007 survey was a service-based approach which focused on surveying individuals in drop-in-centers and free meal sites. The 2009 survey was an entirely street-based approached which focused survey efforts on outdoor and street locations. The 2013 survey was an integration of the two previous approaches and was administered in both transitional housing facilities and on the street. In order to assure 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. Individuals residing in emergency shelters were reached through street surveys during the day when emergency shelters were closed.

Strategic attempts were made to reach individuals in various geographic locations and of various subset groups such as homeless youth, minority ethnic groups, military veterans, domestic violence victims, and families. One way to increase the participation of these groups was to recruit peer surveys workers. The 2013 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.

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
In order 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 2013 San Francisco Homeless Survey did not include an equal representation of all homeless experiences. For example, a greater number of surveys were conducted among transitional housing residents than in previous years. However, this provided an increased number of respondents living in families and provided a more comprehensive understanding of the overall population.

There may be 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 and City staff members 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 II: Definitions and Abbreviations

Chronic homelessness is defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs as "an unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition who has either been continuously homeless for a year or more, or has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years."

Disabling condition, for the purposes of this study, is defined as a physical disability, mental illness, depression, alcohol or drug abuse, chronic health problems, HIV/AIDS, Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), or a developmental disability.

Emergency shelter is 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 victims and their children.

Family is defined by HUD as a household with at least one adult and one child under 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 is the abbreviation for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

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

Single individual refers to an unaccompanied adult or youth.

Transitional Age Youth (TAY) refers to an unaccompanied youth ages 18-24 years old.

Transitional housing facilitates the movement of homeless individuals and families to permanent housing. It is 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 refers to children under the age of 18 who do not have a parent or guardian present.

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

Appendix III: Endnotes

[1] Department of Housing and Urban Development. (December 2012). Housing Inventory Count and Point-in-Time Count of Homeless Persons: Data Collection Guidance Version 1.1.

[2] Respondents were not required to complete all survey questions and missing values have been intentionally omitted from the survey results. Therefore, the total number of respondents for each question will not always equal the total number of surveys.

[3] City and County of San Francisco, Office of the Controller (2013). 2013 City Survey Report. [Data set]Retrieved from http://co.sfgov.org/webreports/details.aspx?id=1572. Calculated by San Francisco Human Services Agency May 29, 2013.

[4] Pecora, P., R. C. Kessler, J. Williams, et al. (2010). What works in foster care? Key components of success from the Northwest Foster Care Alumni Study. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

[5] State of California Employment Development Department. (2013). Unemployment Rates (Labor Force). Retrieved 2013 from http://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov

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

[7] National Institute of Justice and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2000). Extent, Nature and Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey. Atlanta, Georgia.

[8] Kushel, M. et al. (2002). Emergency Department Use Among the Homeless and Marginally Housed: Results From a Community-Based Study. American Journal of Public Health. 92(5): 778–784.

[9] Metraux,, S. et al. (2007). Incarceration and Homelessness. 2007 National Symposium on Homelessness Research. Retrieved 2013 from http://works.bepress.com/

[10] U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness. (2013). Annual Update 2012. Retrieved 2013 from http://www.usich.gov/

[11] U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness. (2013). Opening Doors: Homelessness Among Veterans. Retrieved 2013 from http://www.usich.gov/

[12] USICH. (2013). Annual Update 2012. Retrieved 2013 from http://www.usich.gov/

[13] USICH. (2013). Opening Doors: Homelessness Among Veterans. Retrieved 2013 from http://www.usich.gov/

[14] U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2007). Characteristics and Dynamics of Homeless Families with Children. Retrieved 2013 from http://aspe.hhs.gov/

[15] U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness. (2013). Opening Doors. Retrieved 2013 from http://www.usich.gov/

[16] USUICCouncilH.Homelessness. (2013). Opening Doors: Families with Children. Retrieved 2013 from http://www.usich.gov/

[17] USICHU. (2013). Annual Update 2012. Retrieved 2013 from http://www.usich.gov/

[18] National Coalition for the Homeless. (2011). Homeless Youth Fact Sheet. Retrieved 2011 from http://www.nationalhomeless.org.

[19] As a peer to peer survey methodology was used to gather youth survey responses, it is important to note that one homeless youth surveyor had recently completed graduate work and surveying his known universe may have affected