



2011 San Francisco

# HOMELESS

POINT-IN-TIME COUNT & SURVEY

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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## INTRODUCTION

The 2011 San Francisco Homeless Point-In-Time Count was a community-wide effort that took place on the night of January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2011. The count provides information about the homeless population that is critical to program and service planning, helps to inform the allocation of resources for services to help the homeless, and offers a means of measuring the impact of homeless programs and services. In addition, it is required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as part of a national effort to enumerate the homeless population. All jurisdictions receiving federal funding to provide housing and services for the homeless through the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grant are required to conduct a biennial Point-in-Time count of unsheltered and sheltered homeless persons sometime during the last ten days of January. This information helps the federal government better understand the nature and extent of homelessness nationwide. The data presented in this report provide an updated point-in-time snapshot of the homeless population in San Francisco.

The purpose of this report is to share the results of the count with the community, to provide a discussion of the methodology used, and to offer analysis of the findings. The 2011 report places special attention on homeless subpopulations that have been identified as areas of interest by HUD. These populations include chronically homeless, veterans, and families.

## METHODOLOGY

The 2011 San Francisco Homeless Point-In-Time Count was performed using HUD recommended practices for counting homeless individuals. Thanks to the involvement of hundreds of community volunteers, and staff from various city departments, the study included a comprehensive field enumeration of homeless individuals residing on the streets of San Francisco on January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2011. At the same time, the City conducted a count of sheltered homeless persons in emergency shelters and transitional housing programs and persons self-identifying as homeless who were staying at other facilities on January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

This approach to counting San Francisco's homeless population generates a basic number of individuals and families. In order to generate detailed profiles of homeless individuals more than 1,000 surveys of homeless individuals, were conducted on the street and in shelter facilities in the weeks following the count. Data from this representative survey sample revealed more detailed information about population demographics, family status, causes of homelessness, length and recurrence of homelessness, usual nighttime accommodations, and access to homeless services. The surveys were conducted by a trained team of paid, currently and formerly homeless survey workers, and unpaid community volunteers.

### HOMELESSNESS MCKINNEY-VENTO DEFINITION

1. An individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, and
2. An individual or family who has a primary nighttime residence that is:
  - » A supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations; or
  - » An institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized; or
  - » A public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings

*\*San Francisco's definition of homelessness has been expanded to include those residing in jails, hospitals or rehabilitation facilities.*

## RESULTS OF THE 2011 HOMELESS POINT-IN-TIME COUNT & SURVEY

The number of homeless individuals and families living in San Francisco in 2011 was 6,455 slightly less than in 2009.

- Between 2009 and 2011, the total number of homeless individuals enumerated during the homeless count decreased by 59 individuals, from 6,514 in 2009 to 6,455 in 2011.
- 6,455 homeless persons were counted on January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2011.<sup>1</sup>
- Of the total, 5,728 met HUD's definition of homeless.
  - » 3,106 were unsheltered. This included the individuals counted on the streets, as well as the number of people estimated to be living in the occupied cars, vans, RVs, encampments, and makeshift structures that were counted by enumeration teams.<sup>2</sup>
  - » 2,622 were sheltered in emergency shelters (including domestic violence shelters), transitional housing facilities, resource centers and stabilization units.
- An additional 727 individuals were counted in institutional settings not recognized by HUD for the Point-in-Time count, such as residential rehabilitation facilities, hospitals, and jails.

The percentage of chronically homeless persons in San Francisco decreased from 62% in 2009 to 33% in 2011.

- In 2004, the city launched a 10-year plan to end chronic homelessness, more effectively connecting chronically homeless individuals to permanent supportive housing.

### 2011 HOMELESS COUNT RESULTS AND COMPARISONS WITH 2009

	Single Individuals		Persons in Families		Family Status Unknown		Total		Total Net Change
	2009	2011	2009	2011	2009	2011	2009	2011	09-11
Street	1,269	1,882	25	95	1,415	1,129	2,709	3,106	397
Emergency Shelter	1,206	1,194	310	285	0	0	1,516	1,479	-37
Transitional Housing	785	541	179	255	0	0	964	796	-168
Treatment Centers	262	241	31	0	0	0	293	241	-52
Resource Centers	233	145	0	0	0	0	233	145	-88
Stabilization Rooms	307	202	0	0	0	0	307	202	-105
Jails	394	317	0	0	0	0	394	317	-77
Hospitals	94	169	4	0	0	0	98	169	71
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,550</b>	<b>4,691</b>	<b>549</b>	<b>635</b>	<b>1,415</b>	<b>1,129</b>	<b>6,514</b>	<b>6,455</b>	<b>-59</b>

Source: San Francisco Human Services Agency. (2011) San Francisco Unsheltered Homeless Count, San Francisco, CA. San Francisco Human Services Agency. (2011) San Francisco Sheltered Homeless Count, San Francisco, CA.

<sup>1</sup> This total includes homeless individuals who were housed in jails, hospitals, or rehabilitation facilities though they do not meet HUD's homeless definition for the point-in-time count.

<sup>2</sup> The number of individuals enumerated in cars, vans, RVs, and encampments are estimates based on empirical data from the 2011 San Francisco Homeless Survey. Survey respondents who indicated that they usually stay in a car, van, RV, or encampments at night were asked to indicate how many people usually stay there, producing a median number of people for each of these sleeping locations. The multipliers used were: 1.51 for cars, 1.86 for vans/RVs, 3.13 for tents/encampments.

**The largest single group of homeless individuals in San Francisco were black males between the ages of 31 and 50.**

- Nearly two-thirds (68%) homeless respondents were male, 29% were female, and 3% identified as transgender.
- 39% were Black/African American, 35% of survey respondents were White/Caucasian, 12% were Hispanic/Latino, and 7% identified as Other/Multi-ethnic.
- Just over half (55%) of all respondents were between 31-50 years old.

**Nearly half (46%) of unsheltered survey respondents were living outdoors, on the streets or in encampments.**

- 3% of all survey respondents slept in their vehicles.
- 6% of all survey respondents reported living indoors in a place not meant for human habitation.

**Most survey respondents (73%) indicated that they were living in San Francisco when they became homeless.**

- 67% indicated they had lived in the city for one year or more before becoming homeless.
- Of the 27% that were not living in the city when they most recently became homeless, 25% moved to San Francisco for a job or to seek employment.

**More survey respondents indicated this was the first time they had experienced homelessness.**

- 53% of respondents in 2011 said that this was the first time that had been homeless, compared to 45% in 2009.
- 51% of respondents had been homeless for a year or more.
- 29% indicated that they were continuously homeless for the last three years.
- 18% of respondents indicated that since they most recently became homeless, they had needed medical care but were unable to receive it.
- 18% all survey respondents indicated they were experiencing chronic health problems.

**More than half (55%) of all survey respondents said they had a disabling condition in 2011.**

- 30% of the survey population had a physical disability in 2011.
- 28% of respondents reported having a serious mental illness.
- 31% of survey respondents reported that they were experiencing a substance abuse problem (alcohol and/or other drugs).
- 11% of women respondents were experiencing domestic violence/partner abuse at the time of the survey in 2011. While domestic violence rates are often much higher among women, some men also reported experiencing domestic violence. Among both men and women, 7% of respondents indicated that they were experiencing domestic/partner violence or abuse at the time of the survey.
- 5 % had HIV/AIDS in 2011.

**More survey respondents indicated they were receiving some form of government assistance.**

- 75% of respondents indicated that they were receiving one or more forms of government assistance (income and/or non-income), compared to 66% in 2009.
- Of respondents receiving government assistance, 46% report receiving \$500 per month or less.

## SUBPOPULATION DATA

### Chronic

The percentage of chronically homeless decreased from 62% in 2009 to 33% in 2011.

#### CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

##### DEFINITION

An individual or family residing in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven or in an emergency shelter that also:

- » Has been continually homeless for one year or more; or
- » Has experienced four or more episodes of homelessness within the past 3 years; or
- » Has an adult head of household with diagnosable substance use disorder, serious mental illness, developmental disability, post traumatic stress disorder, cognitive impairments resulting from trauma, or chronic physical illness or disability, including the co-occurrence of 2 or more of those conditions.

- There was a -47% change in chronic homelessness over the 2 year period.
- Of chronically homeless survey respondents, 69% were unsheltered, compared to 77% in 2009.
- 75% of chronically homeless respondents were suffering from two or more disabling conditions.
- 82% of chronically homeless were male.
- The largest percentage of chronically homeless persons indicated they were White/Caucasian (42%), higher than 35% of the overall homeless population.

### Veterans

The percentage of homeless veterans remained the same between 2009 and 2011.

- 17% of survey respondents over the age of 18 were veterans.
- 36% of homeless veterans were chronically homeless.
- 26% of veteran survey respondents cited alcohol/drug abuse as a primary cause of their homelessness.
- 46% of veteran survey respondents were sheltered.
- 21% of veteran survey respondents indicated mental health services might have prevented them from becoming homeless.

#### VETERAN

##### DEFINITION

Someone who has 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 activated into active duty.

### Families and Children

#### FAMILIES

##### DEFINITION

Homeless families are defined as those currently living with at least one child under the age of 18 years.

- In 2011, 635 individuals in families were counted during the Point-in-Time count, compared to 549 in 2009.
- 85% of individuals living in families were counted in shelters. The remaining 15% were counted on the street.
- 38 unaccompanied homeless children (under the age of 18) were counted during the 2011 Point-in-Time count.

## SUMMARY

The 2011 San Francisco Homeless Point-In-Time Count identified 6,455 homeless individuals living on the streets and in the shelters of San Francisco. A little less than half of all those enumerated during the count were unsheltered (48%), while 41% were sheltered in transitional housing, emergency shelters, resource centers and stabilization units. The remaining individuals (11%) were identified in other institutional settings including jails, hospitals, and treatment centers.

The overall homeless population decreased by 59 individuals between the 2009 and 2011 Point-in-Time counts. However there were some interesting changes within the population, including a decrease in the number of chronically homeless individuals and an increase in the number of individuals residing in families.

The Homeless Survey revealed a diverse population with many different needs; however, some consistent themes emerged from the results. The survey showed that most homeless persons were 31 to 50 years old, were living in San Francisco at the time they became homeless, had been homeless for more than one year, and were receiving some form of government assistance. Thirty-nine percent (39%) of survey respondents were Black/African American, 35% were White/Caucasian, 12% were Hispanic/Latino, and 3% were American Indian/Alaskan Native. More than half (53%) were experiencing homelessness for the first time.

Fifty-five (55%) percent of survey respondents reported that they had one or more disabling conditions. Thirty-one percent (31%) of survey respondents reported that they were currently experiencing substance abuse issues. 20% of survey respondents reported that their alcohol or drug use was the primary cause of their homelessness.

Other key causes of homelessness included economic factors such as job loss or unemployment. Twenty-five percent (25%) of homeless respondents reported the loss of a job as the primary reason they became homeless. A large majority (90%) of survey respondents stated that they were currently unemployed.

Within the overall population 17% of adult respondents ages 18 and older identified themselves as veterans of the United States Armed Forces. Persons in families represented 10% of the overall homeless population, yet 85% of homeless families were counted in shelters on January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2011. Perhaps the most significant change seen in 2011 was the decrease in chronic homelessness. The percentage of chronically homeless dropped from 62% in 2009 to 33% in 2011.

### SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

Increases to the homeless population obscure the significant progress that has been made in getting individuals into needed treatment programs and transitioning individuals out of homelessness and into stable housing.

- » From January 2004 to February 2011, 7,225 single homeless adults were placed in permanent supportive housing through Care Not Cash Housing, Housing First, Direct Access to Housing, Shelter Plus Care, and the Local Operating Subsidy Program.
- » During this time span, another 5,376 homeless individuals left San Francisco to be reunited with friends or family members in other parts of the country through the City's Homeward Bound Program.
- » From January 2004 to February 2011, a total of 12,601 individuals exited homelessness through various initiatives.

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