



2011 Santa Cruz County

HOMELESS CENSUS & SURVEY COMPREHENSIVE REPORT



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INTRODUCTION

Close to two million Americans experience homelessness each year.¹ For most, this is caused by the gap between income and the cost of housing. Yet for many, health conditions, mental health, substance abuse, trauma, and lack of support, prevent them from obtaining permanent housing.

Biannually, communities across the country conduct comprehensive counts of their homeless population, in order to gain a better understanding of the current homeless population, and to apply for federal funding for homeless programs. Santa Cruz County has worked in conjunction with Applied Survey Research (ASR) to conduct the Santa Cruz County Homeless Census and Survey for adults, families and unaccompanied children every two years, since 2001. ASR is a non-profit social research firm based in Santa Cruz County, California, with extensive experience in homeless enumeration and research.

The 2011 Santa Cruz County Point-in-Time (PIT) Count was a community-wide effort. Conducted January 25, 2011, the count and subsequent surveys provide 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. Currently, Santa Cruz County receives \$1.7 million in Homeless Assistance Grant money. This is a critical source of funding for the city and county budget for homeless services.

According to HUD, the PIT 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 application to HUD. In addition to determining funding for county programs, the compilation of data collected through PIT counts across the United States help the federal government to better understand the nature and extent of homelessness nationwide.

The Homeless Census had two components: a PIT enumeration of unsheltered homeless individuals and families (those sleeping outdoors, on the street, in parks, or vehicles, etc.) and a PIT enumeration of homeless individuals and families who have temporary shelter (those staying in an emergency shelter, transitional housing, or using motel vouchers). The entire county was canvassed from deployment locations based in Felton, Santa Cruz, and Watsonville by teams of trained homeless workers and community volunteers. This unsheltered homeless enumeration methodology, developed by ASR in 2001, has been highlighted by HUD in the 2008 *Guide to Counting Unsheltered Homeless People*.

¹The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness. (2010). *Opening Doors: federal strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness*. Washington, D.C.

The unsheltered street enumeration was divided into two separate counts: a primary count of homeless individuals and families and a secondary count which focused on unaccompanied children and youth (children without a guardian and under the age of 25). The primary count took place during the early morning of January 25, 2011 between 5:30 am and 11:00 am. The unaccompanied children and youth count took place in the afternoon of January 25, 2011, from approximately 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm, when children were more likely to be visible in the community.

In order to capture the number of homeless individuals and families staying in shelters and transitional housing programs, shelter providers in the county completed an online survey, reporting the number of homeless individuals and families who occupied their facility on the night of January 24, 2011.

In addition to the countywide homeless census, an in-depth 29 question survey was administered in the weeks following the street count to 498 sheltered and unsheltered homeless individuals. The survey was designed to yield qualitative data about the adult homeless population in Santa Cruz County. Unaccompanied homeless children and youth also took the survey, as well as answering 28 additional survey questions that asked specifically about their circumstances as unaccompanied children. A total of 50 homeless children and youth answered the survey.

The results presented in this report provide invaluable data regarding the number and characteristics of homeless persons in Santa Cruz County, which can help guide countywide efforts to mitigate and end homelessness. This report focuses special attention on specific subpopulations including chronically homeless, veterans, families, and unaccompanied children and youth. These groups have been identified by the federal government as populations of particular interest in the 2011 PIT counts.

Federal Definition of Homelessness

In this study, HUD's definition of homelessness was used. The definition includes the following:²

- An individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, and
- An individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is:
 - » A supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill), or
 - » An institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized, or
 - » A public or private place not designated for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

Certain homeless individuals are excluded from this definition, including: unsheltered homeless individuals who were "doubled-up" in the homes of family or friends; and sheltered homeless individuals in jails, hospitals, and rehabilitation facilities. However, where this data is available, we have included it in this report.

² Title 42, Chapter 119, Subchapter I, §10302(a) of the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations.
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Project Purpose and Goals

In 1987, President Ronald Reagan signed into law the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, providing funding for a range of services to address homelessness. Since 2005, the U.S. Congress has required that local governments receiving federal funds under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act must conduct Point-in-Time counts of their homeless populations every two years. HUD uses information from the local Point-in-Time counts, among other data sources, in the congressionally-mandated Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress (AHAR). This report is meant to inform Congress about the number of people experiencing homelessness in the U.S. and the effectiveness of HUD's programs and policies in decreasing those numbers.

In order to generate accurate and useful data about the local homeless population, the County of Santa Cruz and its municipal governments carry out this homeless census and survey. The 2011 Santa Cruz County Homeless Census and Survey Project 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 2009 Santa Cruz County Homeless Census 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 unaccompanied homeless children (without a guardian and under the age of 18), homeless families, homeless veterans, and chronically homeless.

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 the homeless population by examining current statistics in various geographical contexts. It is hoped that the 2011 Santa Cruz County Homeless Census and Survey will help policy makers and service providers to more effectively develop services and programs to serve the county's homeless population.

The data presented in this report provide an updated view of the homeless in Santa Cruz County. Due to similarities in research methodologies, comparisons to the Santa Cruz County Homeless Census and Survey results from 2007 and 2009 are provided where available.

POINT-IN-TIME COUNT AND ANNUAL ESTIMATION

The Santa Cruz County Point-in-Time (PIT) count was conducted on Tuesday, January 25, 2011, from 5:30 am to 11:00 am. Enumeration teams consisting of approximately 40 local volunteers and 60 homeless guides canvassed all 52 U.S Census Tracts in Santa Cruz County to directly observe persons in non-shelter, non-service, public locations. Local shelters and institutions reported their occupancy for the night prior to the count to insure that all homeless individuals and families both sheltered and on the street, were counted.³

Number and Characteristics of Homeless Persons in Santa Cruz County

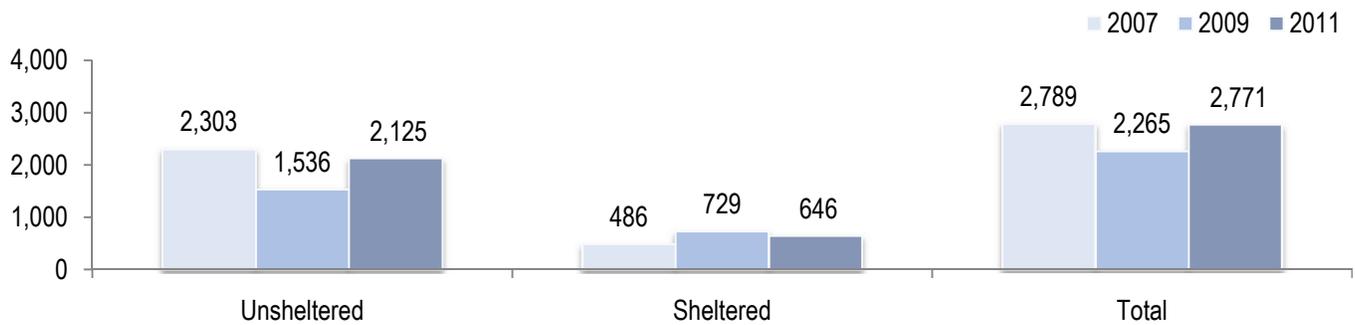
- A total of 2,771 homeless individuals were counted in the 2011 Homeless Census.
 - » Between 2009 and 2011, the total number of homeless individuals enumerated during the homeless census increased 22% from 2,265 to 2,771.
- The number of unsheltered persons increased by 38% between 2009 and 2011 while the number of sheltered persons decreased by 11% since 2009.
 - » In 2011, 77% of the population (2,125 individuals) was 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 abandoned buildings that were counted by enumeration teams.⁴
 - » Nearly one-quarter (23%) were sheltered (646 individuals). This number included individuals who were occupying emergency shelters (including domestic violence shelters) and transitional housing facilities, or using vouchers to stay in motels or hotels.⁵

³ A detailed explanation of the methodology used for the 2011 Santa Cruz Homeless Census can be found in Appendix I, copies of the census instruments and forms can be found in Appendix II.

⁴ The number of individuals enumerated in cars, vans/RVs, encampments, and abandoned buildings are estimates based on empirical data from the 2011 Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Survey respondents who indicated that they usually stay in a car, van, RV, encampment, or abandoned building at night were asked to indicate how many people usually stay there, producing an average 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 encampments, and 3.98 for abandoned buildings.

⁵ It is important to recognize that the Point-in-Time count happens in January when both the North and South County winter homeless shelters are open. These two programs increased the counties numbered of sheltered individuals by 107 persons, and accounts for 17% of sheltered population.

Figure 1: Total Number of Homeless Individuals Enumerated During the Point-in-Time Homeless Census



Source: Applied Survey Research. (2007). Santa Cruz County Homeless Census. Watsonville, CA.
 Applied Survey Research. (2009). Santa Cruz County Homeless Census. Watsonville, CA.
 Applied Survey Research. (2011). Santa Cruz County Homeless Census. Watsonville, CA

- Individuals in families were 14% of the 2011 Point-in-Time homeless population, compared to 20% in 2009.
 - » Individuals in families were 3% of the unsheltered homeless population,⁶ and 50% of the sheltered population.

Figure 2: Homeless Census Results (2011)

	Single Individuals	Persons in Families	Total	% of Total
Street enumeration	2,065	60	2,125	76.7%
Shelter enumeration	326	320	646	23.3%
Emergency Shelter	249	129	378	13.6%
Transitional Housing & Safe Havens	77	191	268	9.7%
Total	2,391	380	2,771	100.0%

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2011). Santa Cruz County Homeless Census. Watsonville, CA

- Of the adult homeless population enumerated, 34% were men, 13% were women, and 53% were of undetermined gender.
 - » Among the unsheltered adult homeless population, 33% were men, 9% were women, and 58% were of undetermined gender.
 - » Among the sheltered adult homeless population, 42% were men, 26% were women, and 32% were of undetermined gender. Most service providers did not specify the gender of people in families.

⁶ For the unsheltered count, a group of homeless individuals was determined to be a family if the grouping included at least one child estimated to be under the age of 18 who was accompanied by at least one adult.

- Youth under 18 years of age (either living on their own or with their families) comprised 11% of the 2011 homeless population enumerated during the PIT count, this was compared to 13% in 2009.
 - » Youth under 18 years of age comprised 5% of the unsheltered homeless population and 30% of the sheltered population.
 - » The number of unsheltered youth increased by 65 individuals between 2009 and 2011, this increase may have been due, in part, to the dedicated youth count.

Figure 3: Homeless Census Population, 2009-2011 Comparison

Setting	Men			Women			Youth			Persons of Undetermined Gender/Age			Total Individuals			
	2009	2011	Net	2009	2011	Net	2009	2011	Net	2009	2011	Net	2009	2011	Net	%
Unsheltered	437	664	227	96	192	96	34	99	65	969	1,170	201	1,536	2,125	589	38.3
Single Individuals	428	651	223	84	172	88	11	72	61	89	79	-10	612	974	362	59.2
Persons in families	9	13	4	12	20	8	23	27	4	0	0	0	44	60	16	36.4
Individuals in cars, vans, RVs	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	663	897	234	663	897	234	35.3
Individuals in encampments	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	120	138	18	120	138	18	15.0
Individuals in abandoned buildings	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	80	44	-36	80	44	-36	-45.0
Individuals reported by park ranger	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	17	12	-5	17	12	-5	-29.4
Sheltered	235	188	-47	82	117	35	252	196	-56	160	145	-15	729	646	-83	-11.4
Emergency Shelter ¹	173	163	-10	40	83	43	93	80	39	54	52	-2	360	378	18	5.0
Single Individuals	173	162	-11	40	69	29	0	10	8	0	8	8	213	249	36	16.9
Persons in families	NA ²	1	-	NA ²	14	-	93	70	23	54 ²	44	-10	147	129	-18	-12.2
Transitional Housing	62	25	-37	42	57	15	159	116	-43	106 ²	93	-13	369	268	-101	-27.4
Single Individuals	62	16	-46	42	15	-27	6	6	0	0	40	40	110	77	-33	-30.0
Persons in families	NA	9	-	NA	42	-	153	110	-43	106	53	-53	259	191	-68	-26.3
Total Unsheltered and Sheltered	672	852	180	178	309	131	286	295	9	1,129	1,315	186	2,265	2,771	506	22.3

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2009). Santa Cruz County Homeless Census. Watsonville, CA.
 Applied Survey Research. (2011). Santa Cruz County Homeless Census. Watsonville, CA.

² This includes those who were using vouchers to stay in motels or hotels.

² “Persons of undetermined age and gender include those estimated to live in vehicles, abandoned buildings, encampments and parks. This category also includes sheltered adults in families, as shelter providers were not required to report their gender.

- While the Point-in-Time count increased between 2009 and 2011, ten year trend data shows the number of homeless persons in Santa Cruz County has decreased since 2000.

Figure 4: Santa Cruz County Homeless Census Ten Year Data Trend

Census Components	2000	2005	2007	2009	2011	2000-11 Net Change	2000-11 Percent Change
Census Total	3,239	3,371	2,789	2,265	2,771	-468	-14.4%

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2009). 2009 Santa Cruz County Homeless Census. Watsonville, CA.
 Applied Survey Research. (2011). Santa Cruz County Homeless Census. Watsonville, CA.

Total Number of Unsheltered and Sheltered Homeless Persons, by Jurisdiction

As in previous years, the 2011 Santa Cruz County Homeless Census collected data on the geographic distribution of sheltered and unsheltered homeless families and individuals in Santa Cruz County. This data allows for the assessment of needs and programs addressing homelessness at both the city and county levels. Data on the total number of sheltered and unsheltered families and individuals are presented in the following charts. It is important to recognize the way jurisdictional data is affected by the location of shelter facilities. Therefore, the overall numbers are followed by separate sheltered and unsheltered counts.

Figure 5: Total Unsheltered and Sheltered Homeless Census Population by Jurisdiction and Family Status

Jurisdiction	Individuals			Persons in Families			Persons of Undetermined Family Status ¹			Total Persons		
	2009	2011	Net Change	2009	2011	Net Change	2009	2011	Net Change	2009	2011	Net Change
Total Incorporated	710	979	-273	384	300	-84	379	348	-31	1,473	1,627	154
City of Capitola	2	5	3	0	0	0	9	9	0	11	14	3
City of Santa Cruz	540	634	94	152	188	36	209	248	39	901	1,070	169
City of Scotts Valley	0	11	11	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	13	13
City of Watsonville	168	329	161	232	112	-120	161	89	-72	561	530	-31
Total Unincorporated	223	318	95	33	71	38	495	743	248	751	1,132	381
Aptos/Rio Del Mar	9	70	61	4	4	0	2	137	135	15	211	196
Live Oak/Twin Lakes/Opal Cliffs	14	129	115	5	59	54	90	188	98	109	376	267
North Coast	33	1	-32	0	0	0	115	59	-56	148	60	-88
San Lorenzo Valley	150	48	-48	19	0	-19	241	42	-199	410	90	-320
Soquel/Santa Cruz Mountains	6	37	31	2	8	6	18	98	80	26	143	117
South County	11	33	22	3	0	-3	29	219	190	43	252	209
Other (Confidential Locations)	8	3	-5	33	9	-24	0	0	0	41	12	-29
TOTAL	941	1,300	359	450	380	-70	874	1,091	217	2,265	2,771	506

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2009). Santa Cruz County Homeless Census. Watsonville, CA.
 Source: Applied Survey Research. (2011). Santa Cruz County Homeless Census.. Watsonville, CA.

¹ "Persons of Undetermined Family Status" include those living in vehicles, encampments, abandoned buildings, and parks who were enumerated in these settings during the street census.

Figure 6: Unsheltered Homeless Census Population by Jurisdiction and Family Status

Jurisdiction	Individuals			Persons in Families			Persons of Undetermined Family Status			Total Persons		
	2009	2011	Net Change	2009	2011	Net Change	2009	2011	Net Change	2009	2011	Net Change
Total Incorporated	395	668	273	15	31	16	379	348	-31	789	1,047	258
City of Capitola	2	5	3	0	0	0	9	9	0	11	14	3
City of Santa Cruz	274	409	135	5	19	14	209	248	39	488	676	188
City of Scotts Valley	0	11	11	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	13	13
City of Watsonville	119	243	124	10	12	2	161	89	-72	290	344	54
Total Unincorporated	223	306	83	29	29	0	495	743	248	747	1,078	331
Aptos/Rio Del Mar	9	70	61	4	4	0	2	137	135	15	211	196
Live Oak/Twin Lakes/Opal Cliffs	14	117	103	5	17	12	90	188	98	109	322	213
North Coast	33	1	32	0	0	0	115	59	-56	148	60	88
San Lorenzo Valley	150	48	102	15	0	-15	241	42	-199	406	90	-316
Soquel/Santa Cruz Mountains	6	37	31	2	8	6	18	98	80	26	143	117
South County	11	33	22	3	0	-3	29	219	190	43	252	209
TOTAL	618	974	356	44	60	16	874	1,091	217	1,536	2,125	589

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2009). Santa Cruz County Homeless Census. Watsonville, CA.

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2011). Santa Cruz County Homeless Census. Watsonville, CA.

¹ Persons of Undetermined Family Status" include those living in vehicles, encampments, abandoned buildings, and parks who were enumerated in these settings during the street census.

Figure 7: Sheltered Homeless Census Population by Jurisdiction and Family Status

Jurisdiction	Individuals			Persons in Families			Total Persons		
	2009	2011	Net Change	2009	2011	Net Change	2009	2011	Net Change
Total Incorporated	315	311	-4	369	269	-100	684	580	-104
City of Capitola	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
City of Santa Cruz	266	225	-41	147	169	22	413	394	-19
City of Scotts Valley	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
City of Watsonville	49	86	37	222	100	-122	271	186	-85
Total Unincorporated	0	12	12	4	42	38	4	54	50
Aptos/Rio Del Mar	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Live Oak/Twin Lakes/Opal Cliffs	0	12	12	0	42	42	0	54	54
North Coast	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
San Lorenzo Valley	0	0	0	4	0	-4	4	0	-4
Soquel/Santa Cruz Mountains	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
South County	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other (Confidential Locations)	8	3	-5	33	9	24	41	12	29
TOTAL	323	326	3	406	320	-86	729	646	-83

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2009). Santa Cruz County Homeless Census. Watsonville, CA.

Applied Survey Research. (2011). Santa Cruz County Homeless Census. Watsonville, CA.

2011 Annual Estimation

A Point-in-Time (PIT) homeless enumeration has an inherent bias of not capturing homeless individuals who experience short episodes of homelessness during other times of the year. More people experience homelessness annually than can be counted at any given point in time, as people cycle in and out of homelessness. Based on data from the 2011 Santa Cruz County Homeless Census and Survey, ASR used the annualization formula detailed by the Corporation for Supportive Housing to calculate an annual estimate of the number of homeless individuals in Santa Cruz County over the course of a year. This approach is the HUD-approved method for calculating the annual estimate of homeless individuals based on the Point-in-Time count.

Three factors were used to determine the annual estimate:⁷

- A = The Point-in-Time count of currently homeless individuals (found in the street and shelter counts)
- B = The number of currently homeless individuals who became homeless within the last 7 days; and
- C = The proportion of currently homeless individuals who have experienced a previous homeless episode within the past 12 months.

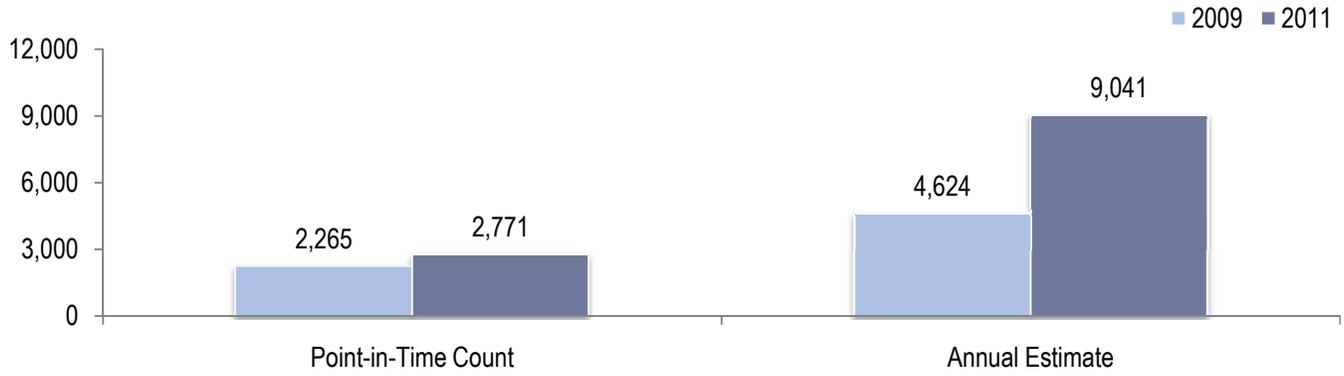
The equation for calculating the annual estimate: $A + [(B*51)*(1-C)] = \text{Annual estimate}$

- For Santa Cruz County: $2,771 + [(141.321*51)*(1 - 0.13)] = 9,041.41 \approx 9,041$ persons
 - » The annual estimate for the number of homeless individuals in Santa Cruz County was 9,041 persons. This was a 95.5% increase from the 2009 annual estimate of 4,624 people.
- Based on the 2009 American Community Survey population profile, this annual estimate of homelessness represented 3.5% of Santa Cruz County's total population of 256,218 people.⁸
- Factors that contributed to the increase in the annual estimate include the overall increase in the Point-in-Time population, and the number of individuals who had become homeless in the 7 days prior to the survey (5%).

⁷ Burt, M. and C. Wilkins. (March 2005). Estimating the Need: projecting from point-in-time to annual estimates of the number of homeless people in a community and using this information to plan for permanent supportive housing. Corporation for Supportive Housing.

⁸ U.S. Census Bureau. (2010). 2009 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. Retrieved February 2011 from www.americanfactfinder.org.

Figure 8: Point-in-Time Count and Annual Estimate of Homelessness in Santa Cruz County



Source: Applied Survey Research. (2009). Santa Cruz County Homeless Census and Survey. Watsonville, CA.
Applied Survey Research. (2011). Santa Cruz County Homeless Census and Survey. Watsonville, CA.

HOMELESS SURVEY FINDINGS

This section provides an overview of the findings generated from the 2011 Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Survey data is separate from the Point-in-Time count and is meant to supplement census data and provide a more complete picture of the county’s homeless population. Surveys were administered between February 6 and March 18, 2011, providing 498 completed, unique surveys. Due to the sensitive nature of survey questions, respondents were not required to answer every survey question. Respondents were also asked to skip questions that did not apply to them. These 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.⁹

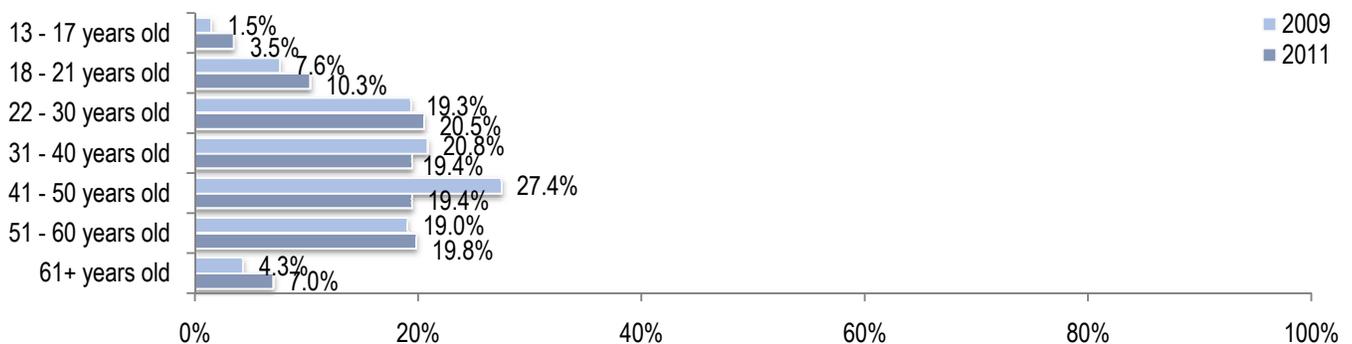
Demographics

In order to measure the diversity of the homeless population of Santa Cruz County, respondents were asked to answer several demographic questions pertaining to their age, gender, ethnicity, and family status.

Age

- 79% of the homeless population was between the ages of 22 and 60 years old.
 - » In 2009, 27% of the population was between 41 and 50 years old, in 2011, this age group represented just 19% of the population.
 - » 14% of the homeless population in Santa Cruz County was under the age of 21 in 2011, compared to 9% in 2009.
 - » 7% of the population was over the age of 61, up from 4% in 2009.

Figure 9: Survey Respondents by Age



2009 N=394; 2011 N=484

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2009). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

Applied Survey Research. (2011). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

⁹ Additional information regarding the 2011 Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey can be found in the appendices, including: a detailed explanation of survey methodology (Appendix I); the survey instrument (Appendix III); and overall survey results (Appendix IV).

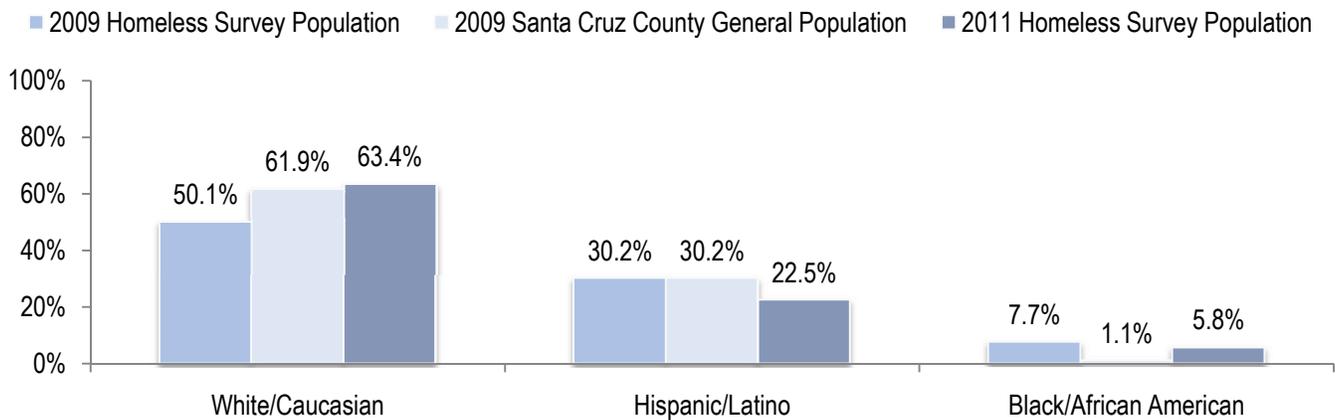
Gender

- Male survey respondents accounted for 67% of the total homeless survey population, 32% were female.
 - » One percent (1%) of the population identified as transgender or other.

Race/Ethnicity

- Compared to the overall county population, there were fewer homeless individuals who identified as Hispanic/Latino, and more who identified as Blacks/African Americans.¹⁰ The percentage of White/Caucasian was nearly the same in the survey population as in the overall County population.
 - » 63% of homeless survey respondents identified their racial/ethnic group as White/Caucasian.
 - » 23% of homeless survey respondents were Hispanic/Latino.
 - » 6% of homeless survey respondents were Black/African American.

Figure 10: Respondents by Race/Ethnicity (Top 3 Races/Ethnicities)



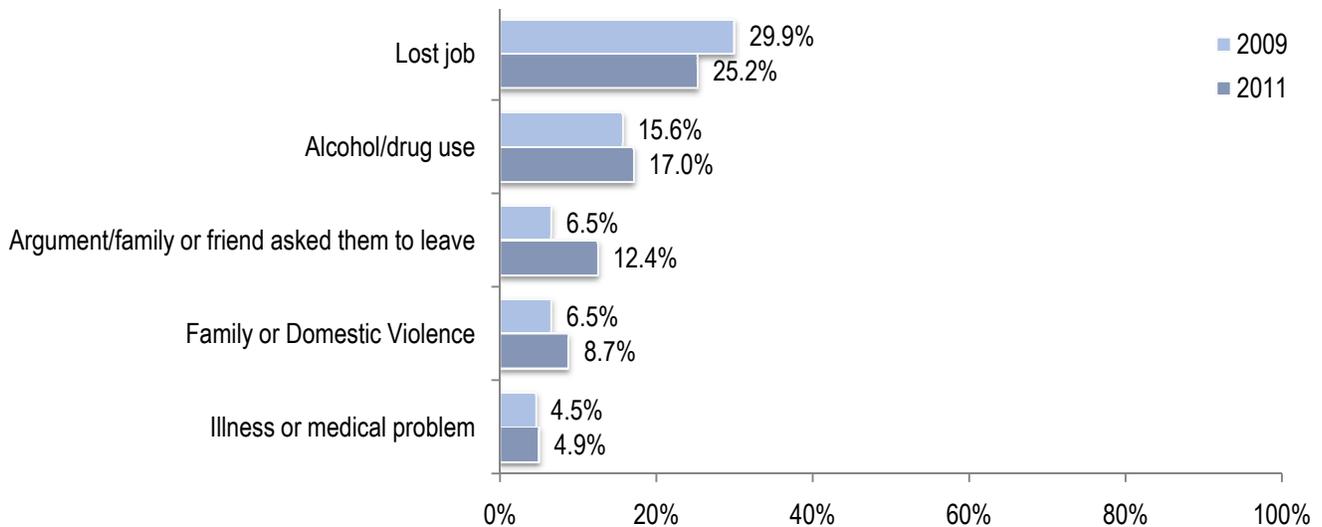
2009: N =401; General Population N=251,398; 2011: N= 497
 Source: Applied Survey Research. (2009). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.
 Applied Survey Research. (2011). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.
 Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2010). 2009 American Communities Survey 1 year estimates. Retrieved March 2011 from www.americanfactfinder.com.

¹⁰ U.S. Census Bureau. (2010). 2009 American Communities Survey, 1 year estimates. Retrieved March 2011 from www.americanfactfinder.org .
 © Applied Survey Research, 2011

Primary Causes of Homelessness

- The highest percentage of the survey population (25%) said that the loss of a job was the primary cause of their homelessness. However, this percentage decreased from 30% in 2009.
- Seventeen percent (17%) of survey respondents said the primary cause of their homelessness was alcohol/drug abuse.
- Twelve percent (12%) reported an argument with family or friends who asked them to leave was the primary cause of their homelessness.
- To track the impact of the mortgage crisis on homelessness, the 2011 survey queried respondents about foreclosure as a primary cause of homelessness.
 - » In 2009 there were a total of 7 respondents who cited foreclosure as their primary cause of homelessness.
 - » In 2011, only 4 respondents (less than 1% of the population) cited foreclosure as the primary cause of their homelessness.

Figure 11: Primary Event or Condition that Led to Respondents’ Current Episode of Homelessness (Top 5 Responses in 2011)



2009 N=398; 2011 N=493

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2009). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

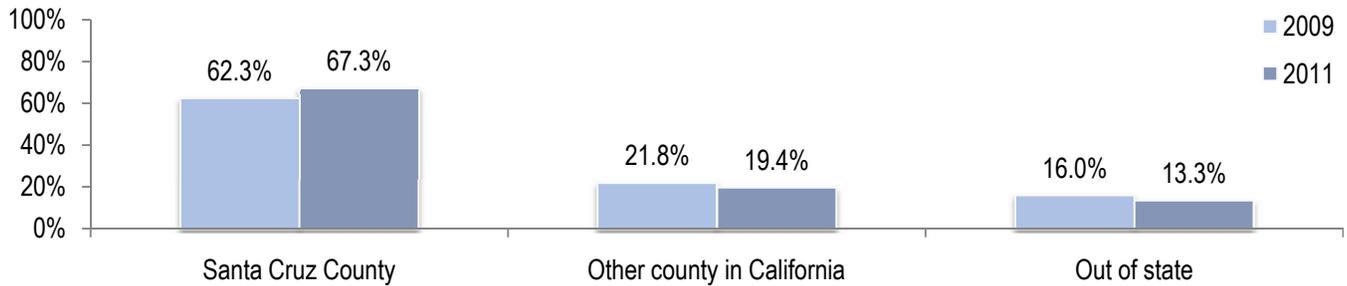
Applied Survey Research. (2011). 2011 Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

Residency before Homelessness

County Residency

- The majority of survey respondents (67%) said they had been living in Santa Cruz County when they most recently became homeless. This percentage was slightly higher than in 2009 (62%).

Figure 12: Where Respondents Were Living at the Time They Most Recently Became Homeless



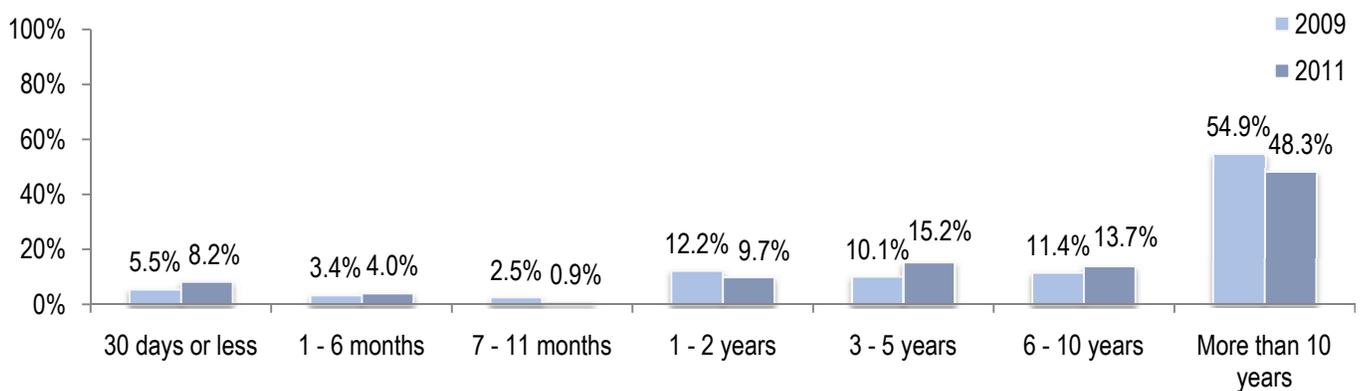
2009 N=400; 2011 N=495

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2009). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

Applied Survey Research. (2011). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

- » Of respondents who had been living in the county at the time they most recently became homeless, 87% had been living in the county for a year or more.
- » 62% had been living in Santa Cruz County more than 5 years prior to becoming homeless.

Figure 13: Of Respondents Who Were Living in Santa Cruz County When They Most Recently Became Homeless, Length of Time Respondents Lived in County Prior to Becoming Homeless



2009 N=237; 2011 N=329

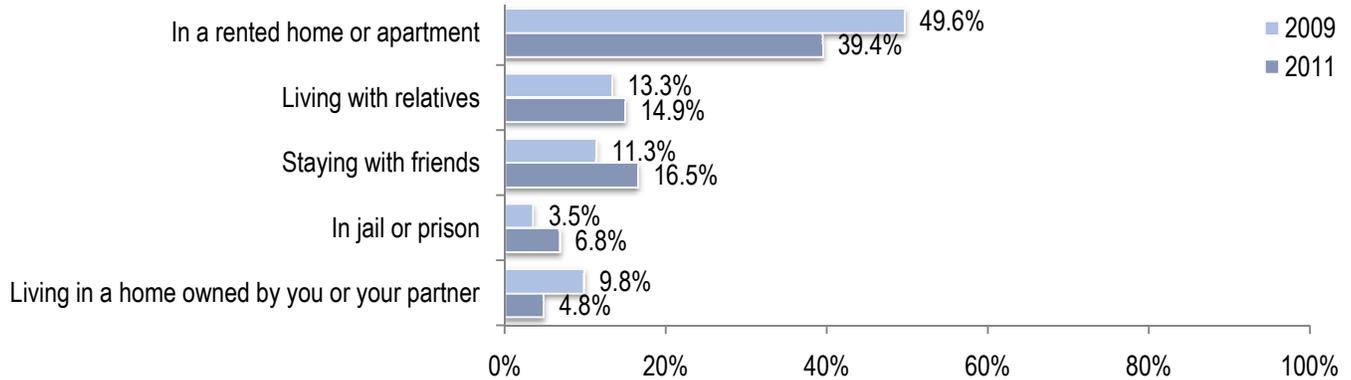
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2009). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

Applied Survey Research. (2011). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

Previous Living Arrangements

- 40% of survey respondents indicated they were living in a rented home or apartment immediately prior to becoming homeless this last time, this was down from 50% in 2009.
- More respondents reported they were living with friends and/or family prior to becoming homeless in 2011 than in 2009.
 - » 15% were living with relatives, compared to 13% of 2009 respondents.
 - » 17% had been staying with friends; this was up from 11% in 2009.

Figure 14: Living Arrangements Immediately Prior to Becoming Homeless This Time (Top 5 Responses in 2011)



2009 N=399; 2011 N=497

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2009). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

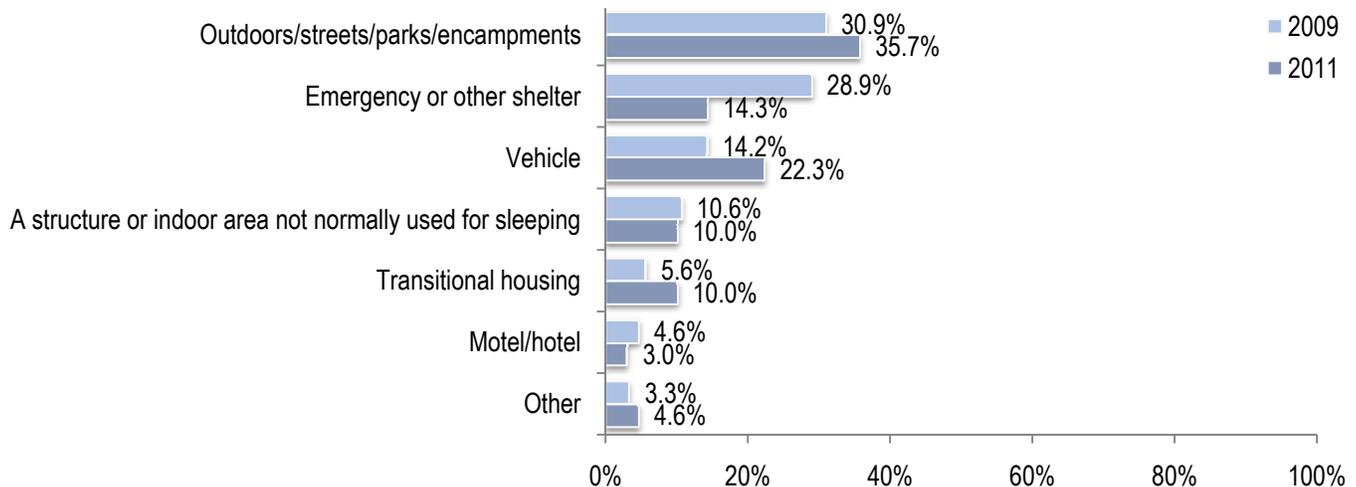
Applied Survey Research. (2011). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

Access and Obstacles to Obtaining Shelter while Homeless

Usual Nighttime Accommodations

- 36% of survey respondents reported living outdoors, on the street, in parks or encampments. This was an increase from 31% in 2009.
- 22% reported living in their vehicle; this was up from 14% in 2009.
- 10% reported living in a structure not normally used for sleeping.

Figure 15: Where Respondents Usually Stay At Night



2009 N=395; 2011 N: 498

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2009). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

Applied Survey Research. (2011). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

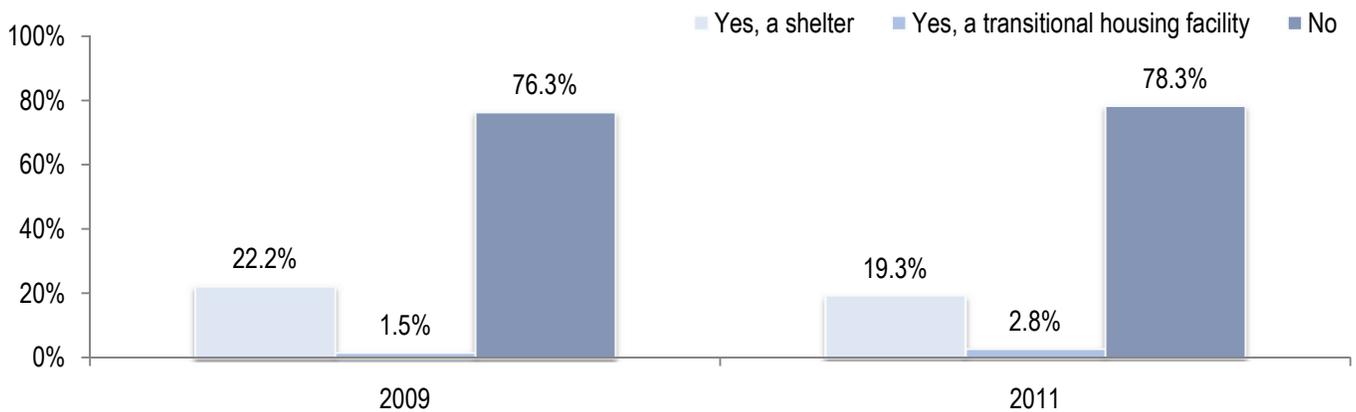
Living Alone and with Others

- 64% of survey respondents indicated they were living alone at the time of the survey, compared to 66% in 2009.
 - » 39% of respondents, who were not living alone, reported living with a child.
 - » 30% reported living with a spouse or significant other.

Access to Shelters

- 22% of the survey population indicated that they had tried to stay at a shelter or transitional housing facility in Santa Cruz County, in the 30 days prior to the survey, but had been turned away. This was compared to 24% of 2009 survey respondents.

Figure 16: In the Last 30 Days, Have You Ever Tried to Stay at a Shelter or Transitional Housing Facility in Santa Cruz County and Been Turned Away?



2009 N=396; 2011 N=498

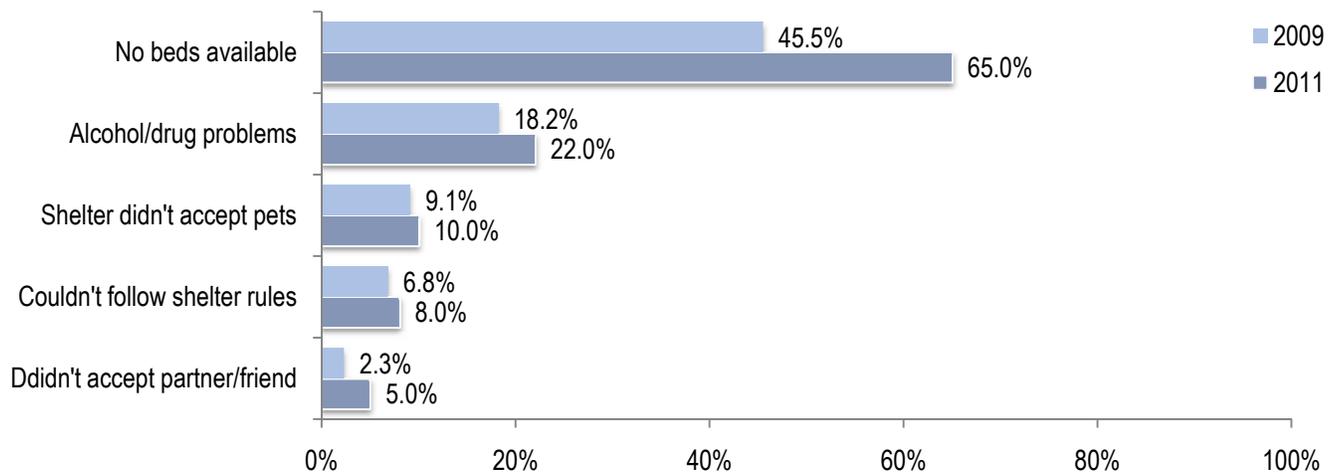
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2009). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

Applied Survey Research. (2011). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

- Of those who were turned away, a lack of available beds was most commonly cited as the reason for being denied admittance to the shelter (46% in 2009 and 65% in 2011), followed by the respondent’s alcohol/drug problems (18% in 2009 and 22% in 2011).¹¹

¹¹ These responses were not mutually exclusive.
 © Applied Survey Research, 2011

Figure 17: Of Respondents Who Tried to Stay at a Shelter in the Month Prior to the Survey, Reasons They Were Turned Away (Top 5 Responses in 2009)

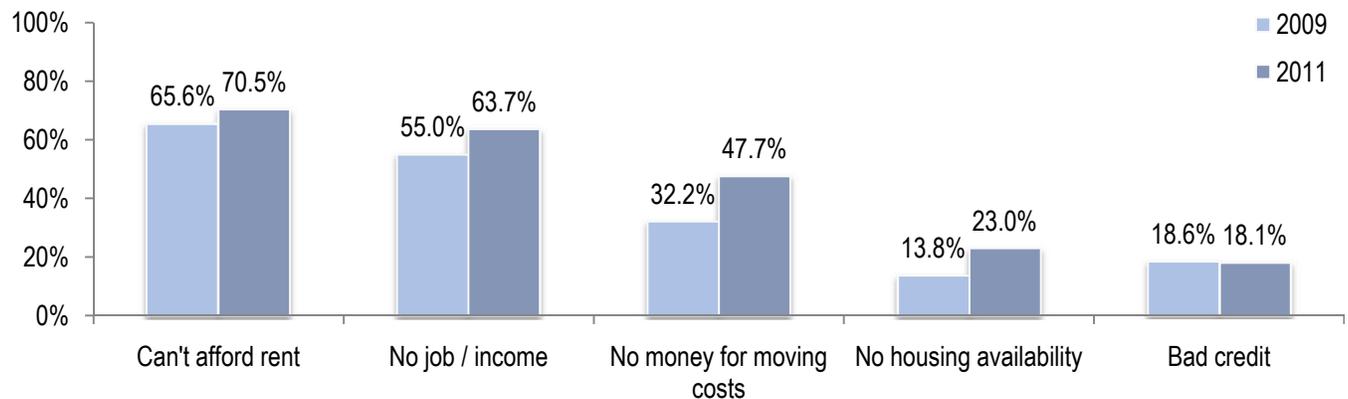


Multiple response question with 88 respondents offering 111 responses in 2009, and 100 respondents offering 132 responses in 2011. Source: Applied Survey Research. (2009). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA. Applied Survey Research. (2011). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

Obstacles to Obtaining Permanent Housing

- 71% of survey respondents indicated that not being able to afford rent was keeping them from securing permanent housing, compared to 66% in 2009.
- 64% cited unemployment or no income as a major obstacle to obtaining housing, compared to 55% of 2009 respondents.¹²

Figure 18: Circumstances That Were Preventing Respondents From Securing Permanent Housing (Top 5 Responses)



Multiple response question with 398 respondents offering 915 responses in 2009 and 491 respondents offering 1,331 responses in 2011. Source: Applied Survey Research. (2009). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA. Applied Survey Research. (2011). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

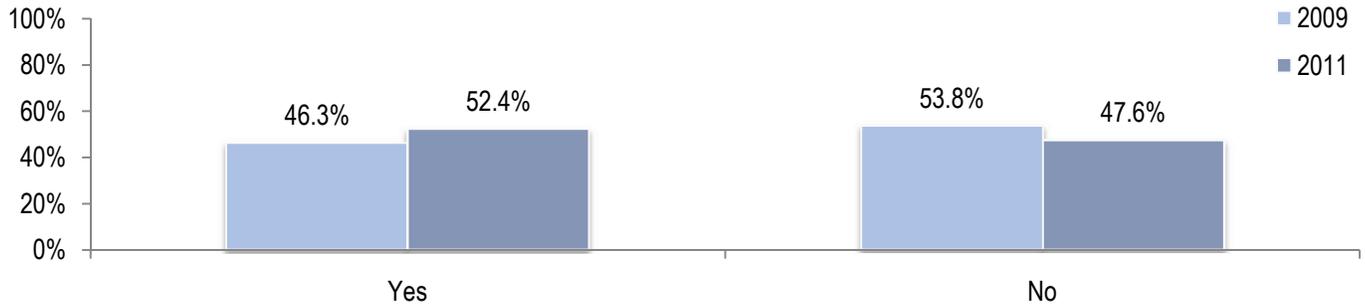
¹² These responses were not mutually exclusive.
17

Occurrence and Duration of Homelessness

Occurrence of Homelessness

- From 2009 to 2011, the percentage of survey respondents who indicated that this was the first time they had been homeless increased from 46% to 52%.

Figure 19: Is This the First Time You Have Been Homeless?

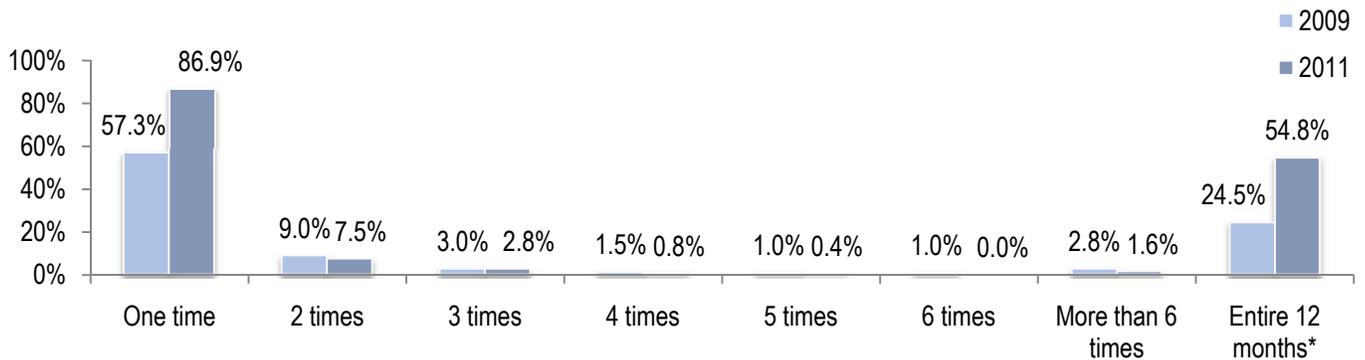


2009 N=400; 2011 N=496

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2009). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.
Applied Survey Research. (2011). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

- 87% of respondents indicated that they had been homeless only once in the past 12 months.¹³
- 8% of respondents indicated that this was their second episode of homelessness in the past twelve months.

Figure 20: Number of Times Respondents Had Been Homeless in the Last 12 Months, Including This Time



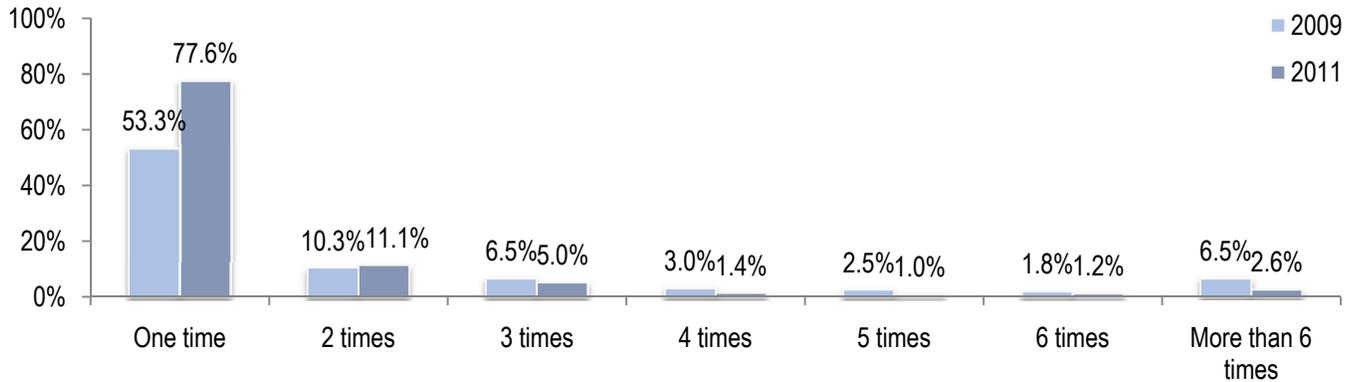
2009 N=400; 2011 N=496

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2009). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.
Applied Survey Research. (2011). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

¹³ This percentage includes respondents who said that they had been homeless the entire 12 months.

- The percentage of the survey population who had been homeless four or more times in the last three years decreased from 14% in 2009 to 9% in 2011.

Figure 21: Number of Times Respondents Had Been Homeless in the Last 3 Years, Including This Time



2009 N=400; 2011 N=496

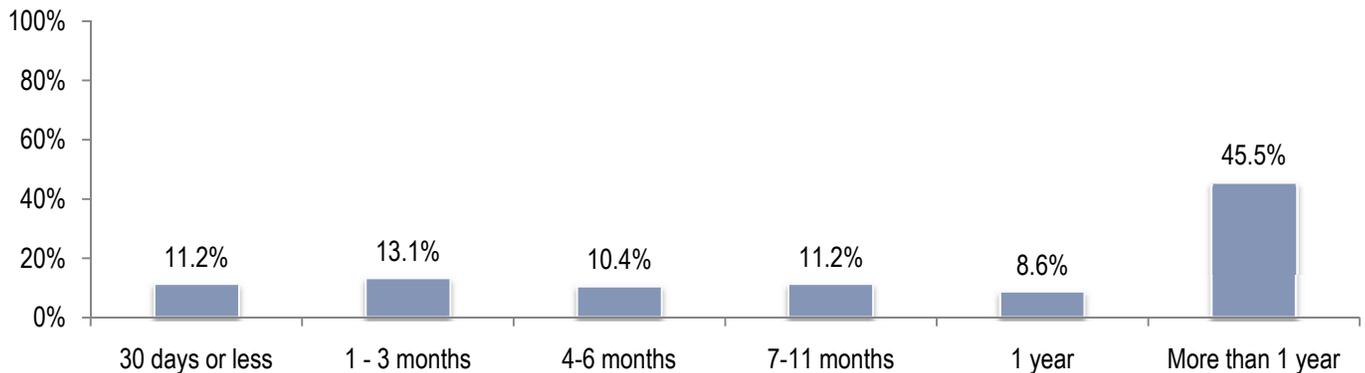
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2009). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

Applied Survey Research. (2011). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

Duration of Homelessness

- When asked how long they had been homeless this current time, 54% of survey respondents reported being homeless for 1 year or more.
 - » 35% had been on the streets for less than 6 months.

Figure 22: Length of Homelessness This Current Time (2011)



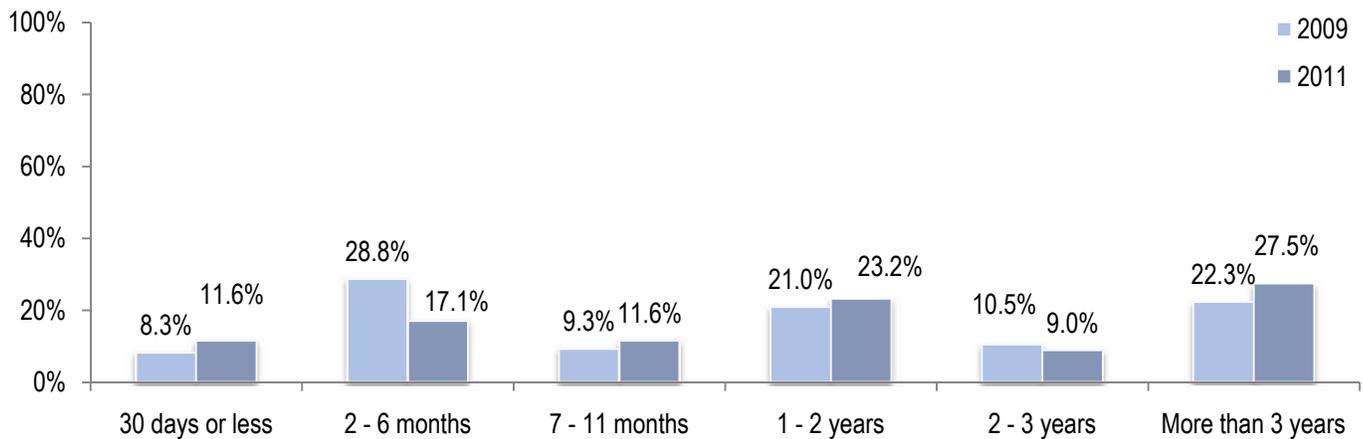
2011 N=490

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2009). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

Applied Survey Research. (2011). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

- When asked how long it had been since they were last in a permanent housing situation, survey respondents reported nearly the same duration as their current episode of homelessness. This consistency in responses is primarily due to the number of respondents reporting only one occasion of homelessness.
 - » Over half (60%) of all survey respondents reported it had been a year or more since they last lived in a permanent housing situation. This is compared to 54% in 2009.
 - » 23% had not had permanent housing for one to two years.
 - » 36% had not had permanent housing for two years or more.

Figure 23: Length of Homelessness Since Last Permanent Housing Situation



2009 N=400; 2011 N=491

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2009). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

Applied Survey Research. (2011). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

Employment and Income

The 2011 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Federal Poverty Level for one person is approximately \$1,089 per month.¹⁴ Income from government sources is excluded from this calculation because the HHS Federal Poverty Levels do not consider non-cash government benefits (such as Food Stamps or housing subsidies) as income when determining the poverty levels for each fiscal year.

The local self-sufficiency standard is a more realistic measure of the true cost of living. The self-sufficiency standard is a measure of income adequacy that calculates how much income working adults need to meet their family’s basic needs without subsidies. While the Federal Poverty Level for one person was

¹⁴ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2011). *Federal Register*, Vol. 76, No. 13, January 20, 2011, pp. 3637-3638.

Retrieved March 2011 from <http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/11poverty.shtml>.

© Applied Survey Research, 2011

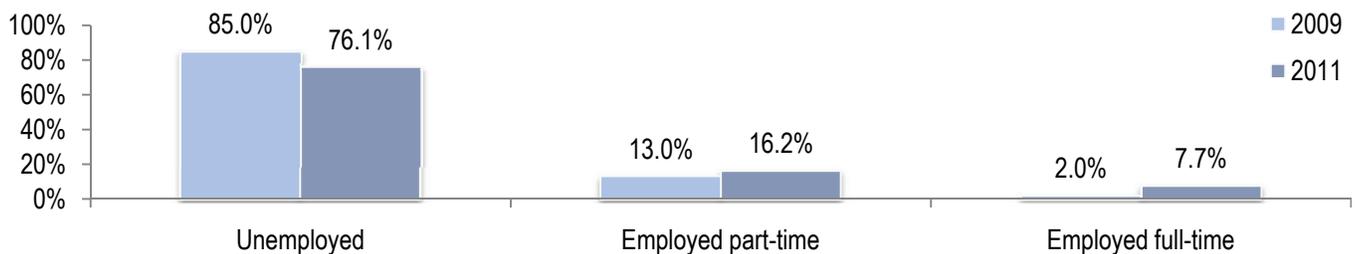
approximately \$1,089 per month, the self-sufficiency standard for a single person in Santa Cruz County was \$2,367 per month.¹⁵

As shown previously, a lack of income – whether from the loss of a job or being unable to find a job– has a great impact on homeless individuals in Santa Cruz County. While some survey respondents were able to earn income from employment, others were receiving income from sources such as public assistance or disability benefits. However, many respondents were receiving little or no income from either government or private sources.

Employment Status

- 72% of the survey population indicated that they were not employed at the time of the survey in 2011.
- 16% of respondents were employed part-time and 8% were employed full-time¹⁶.

Figure 24: Employment Status of Respondents



2009 N=399; 2011 N=468

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2009). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

Applied Survey Research. (2011). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

Note: In 2011, part-time employment includes seasonal and temporary workers, full-time includes self-employed, total excludes those who were retired or reported student status.

Barriers to Employment

- When unemployed survey respondents were asked about obstacles to obtaining employment, the most common response was the lack of available jobs (42%).
 - » 33% of respondents cited the need for clothing as a barrier to employment, up from 22% in 2009.
 - » 30% said job training was a barrier in 2011, up from 25% in 2009.¹⁷

¹⁵ Insight Center for Community Economic Development. (2009). Self-Sufficiency Standard for Santa Cruz County, 2008. Retrieved March 2011 from <http://www.insightcced.org/uploads///cfes/Santa%20Cruz.pdf>.

¹⁶ Part-time employment includes seasonal and day labor, full-time employment includes respondents who indicated they were self-employed. Survey respondents who indicated they were students or retired were not included in these percentages.

¹⁷ These responses were not mutually exclusive.

Figure 25: Respondents' Barriers to Obtaining Employment (Top 10 Responses)

Response	2009	2011	09 - 11 Net Change
No jobs	42.4%	41.7%	-0.7
Need clothing	22.1%	33.2%	11.1
Need training	24.8%	29.5%	4.7
No transportation	32.4%	29.5%	-2.9
No permanent address	34.8%	29.5%	-5.3
No phone	26.7%	27.1%	0.4
Need education	19.7%	26.5%	6.8
Alcohol/drug issues	18.2%	26.5%	8.3
Health problems	19.4%	22.5%	3.1
Disabled	17.9%	20.6%	2.7

Multiple response question with 330 respondents offering 1,138 responses in 2009 and 358 respondents offering 1,204 responses in 2011.

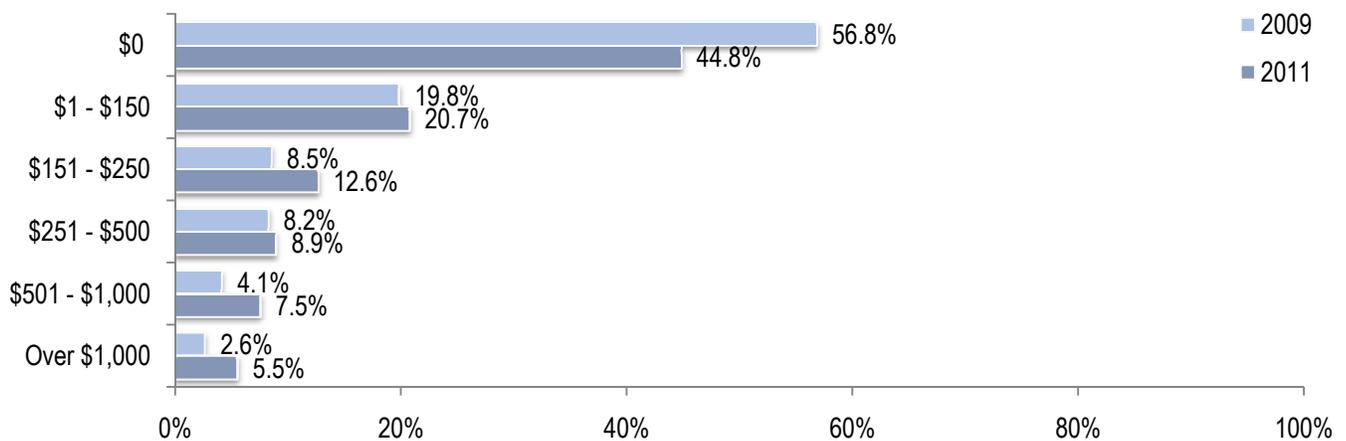
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2009). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

Applied Survey Research. (2011). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

Income from Private Sources

- 45% of respondents were receiving no income from private, non-government sources in 2011.
- 13% received more than \$500 from private sources per month.

Figure 26: Total (Gross) Monthly Income from All Non-Government Sources



2009 N=389; 2011 N=493

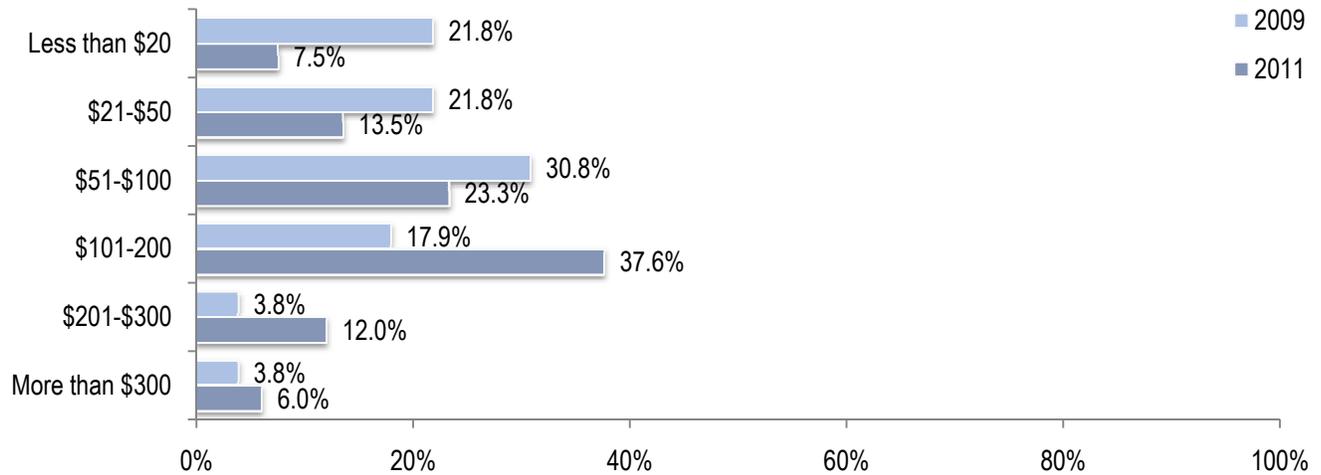
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2009). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

Applied Survey Research. (2011). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

Panhandling

- 33 % of survey respondents reported receiving income from panhandling in 2011.
 - » Of those who reported income from panhandling, 21% reported earning \$50 or less per month, or less than \$2 per day.

Figure 27: Typical Monthly Earnings of Respondents Who Panhandle



2009 N=78; 2011 N = 133

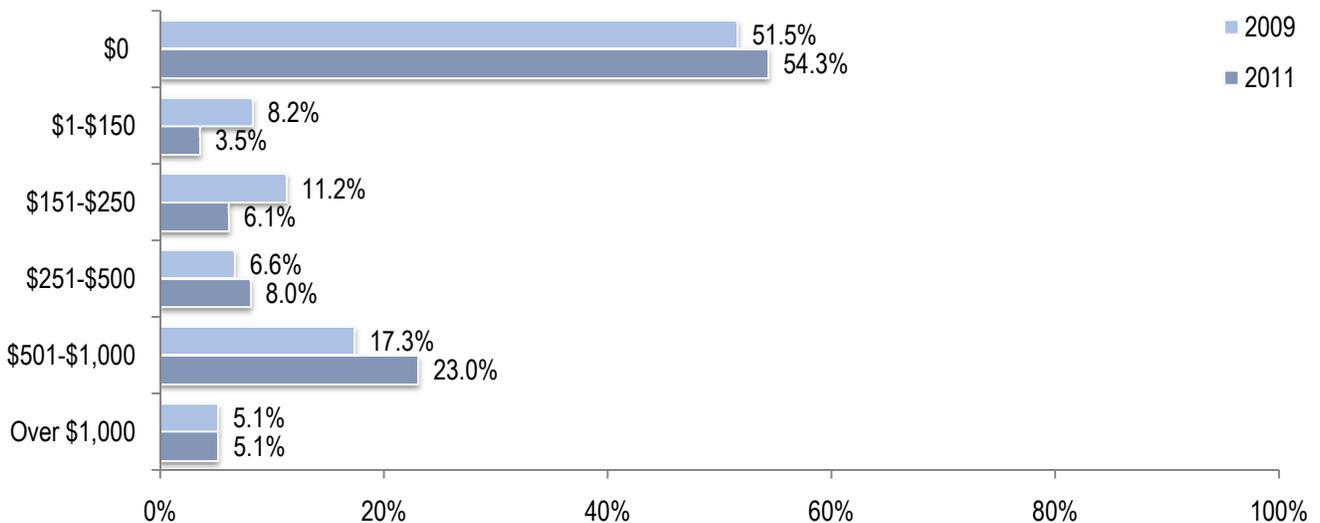
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2009). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

Applied Survey Research. (2011). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

Income from Government Sources

- Over half of survey respondents (54%) indicated they were not receiving any income from government benefits in 2011. This was an increase from 2009, when 52% of respondents were not receiving income from government benefits.

Figure 28: Total (Gross) Monthly Income from All Government Sources



2009 N=392; 2011 N = 488

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2009). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

Applied Survey Research. (2011). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

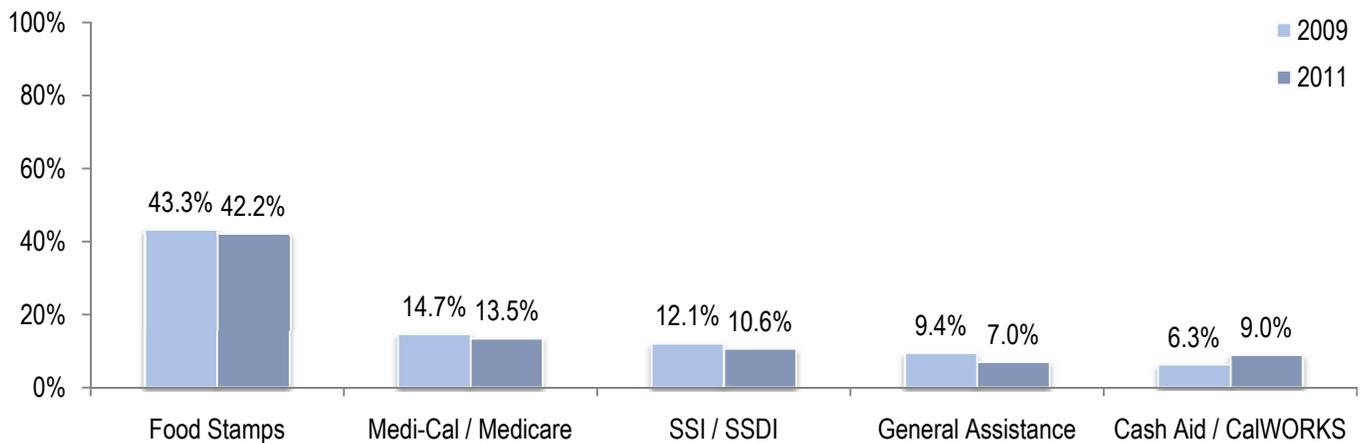
Access to Government Assistance and Homeless Programs

Government assistance and homeless programs work to enable the homeless community to obtain income and services.¹⁸ However, many homeless individuals do not apply for these programs, or do not feel they qualify for aid.

Government Assistance

- 65% of the survey population reported receiving some form of government assistance, while 35% reported not receiving any form of government assistance.
 - » Of those respondents receiving some form of government assistance, the percentage receiving Food Stamps decreased from 43% to 42%, between 2009 and 2011.
 - » Of those receiving some form of assistance, 14% were receiving Medi-Cal/Medicare, and 11% were receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI)/Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI).¹⁹

Figure 29: Of Those Receiving Some Form of Government Assistance, Types of Assistance Received (Top 5 Responses)



Multiple response question with 381 respondents offering 530 responses in 2009 and 498 respondents offering 692 responses in 2011. Source: Applied Survey Research. (2009). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA. Applied Survey Research. (2011). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

Reasons for Not Receiving Government Assistance

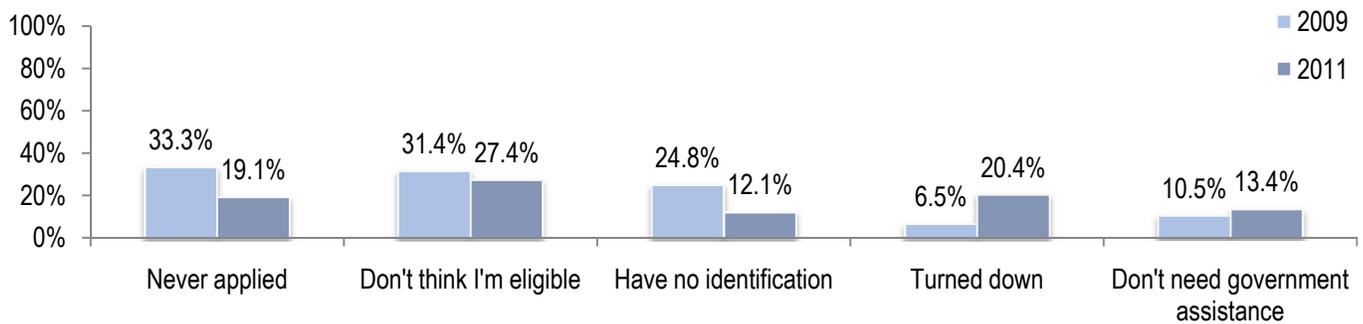
- Of survey respondents who were not receiving any form of government assistance, 27% did not think they were eligible.

¹⁸ For the purposes of this study, the following forms of government assistance were included: General Assistance, Food Stamps, Medi-Cal/Medicare, Veteran’s Benefits, Social Security, Supplemental Security Income (SSI)/Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), Cash Aid/CalWORKS, Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), VA Disability Compensation, and other government assistance.

¹⁹ These responses are not mutually exclusive.

- 19% of respondents reported they had never applied for assistance, compared to 33% of 2009 respondents.

Figure 30: Reasons for Not Receiving Government Assistance (Top 5 Responses in 2011)

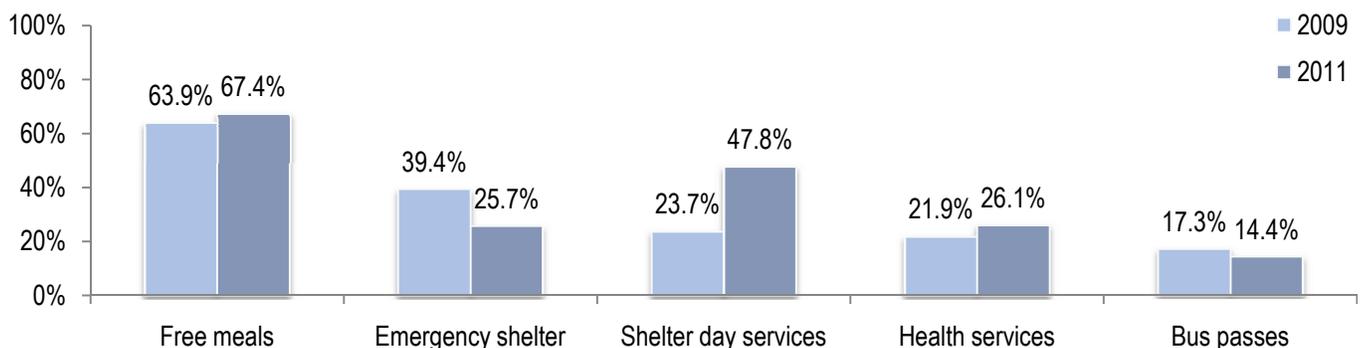


Multiple response question with 153 respondents offering 348 responses in 2009 and 157 respondents offering 239 responses in 2011.
 Source: Applied Survey Research. (2009). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.
 Applied Survey Research. (2011). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

Services and Programs

- The percentage of respondents who were utilizing community services or assistance increased from 85% in 2009 to 87% in 2011.
- Of respondents using services, 67% were receiving free meals and 26% were utilizing emergency shelters.²⁰

Figure 31: Of Respondents Utilizing Services or Assistance (Top 5 Responses in 2011)



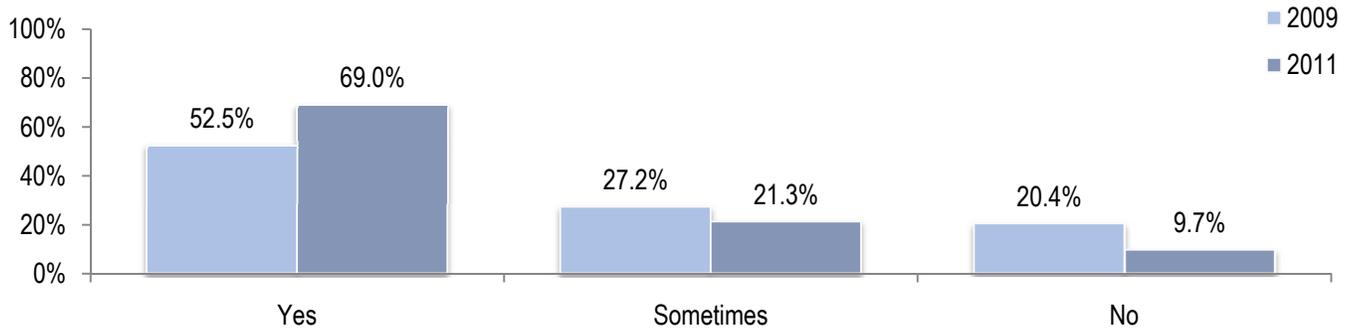
Multiple response question with 393 respondents offering 809 responses in 2009 and 487 respondents offering 1,066 responses in 2011.
 Source: Applied Survey Research. (2009). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.
 Applied Survey Research. (2011). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.
 Note: These responses were not mutually exclusive.

²⁰ These responses were not mutually exclusive.
 25

Access to Food

- 10% of survey respondents reported that they do not usually get enough to eat on a daily basis.²¹
- 21% indicated that they sometimes get enough to eat.
- The majority (69%) of respondents indicated that they usually get enough to eat on a daily basis.

Figure 32: Do You Usually Get Enough to Eat on a Daily Basis?



2009 N=383, 2011 N=493

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2009). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

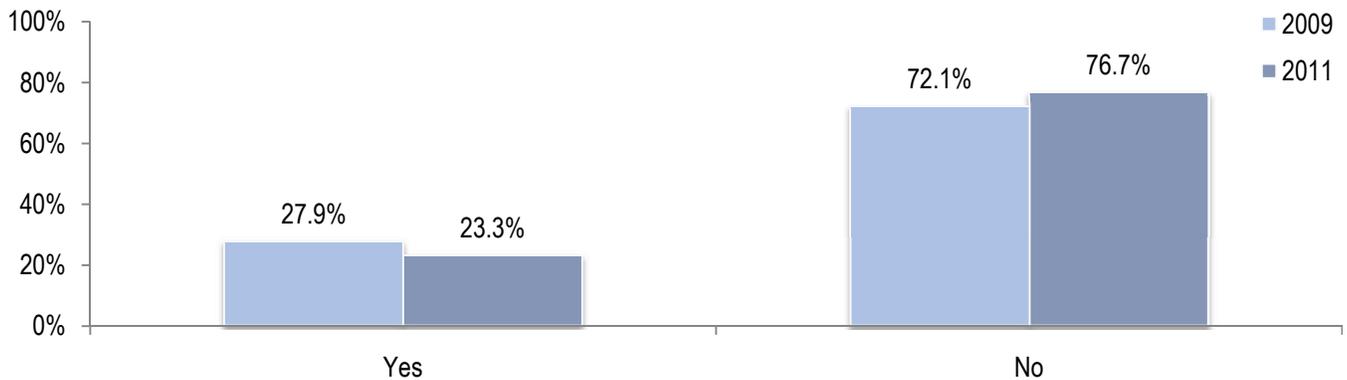
Applied Survey Research. (2011). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

Medical Care and Health Conditions

Access to Medical Care

- 23% of survey respondents reported that since becoming homeless they had needed medical care but were unable to receive it; this was a decrease from 28% in 2009.

Figure 33: Have You Needed Health Care and Been Unable to Receive It Since Becoming Homeless This Last Time?



2009 N=394; 2011 N=486

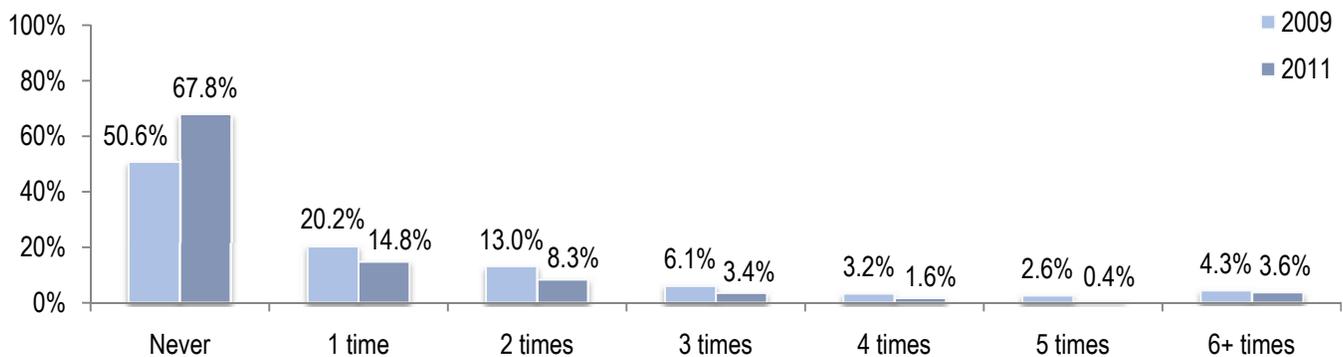
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2009). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

Applied Survey Research. (2011). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

Sources of Medical Care

- When asked about their usual source of medical care, the highest percentage of homeless individuals (29%) reported using the Homeless Person’s Health Project. This was followed by the Emeline Avenue Clinic (11%).
- The percentage of respondents who used the hospital emergency room (ER) increased from 17% in 2009 to 18% 2011.
- 15% of respondents indicated they did not go anywhere to receive medical care, compared to 7% in 2009.
- 32% of respondents indicated that they had used the ER for medical treatment at least once in the 12 months prior to the survey, compared to 49% of 2009 respondents.

Figure 34: Number of Times Respondents Who Had Used the Emergency Room For Any Treatment in the Year Prior to the Survey



2009 N=346; 2011 N=494

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2009). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

Applied Survey Research. (2011). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

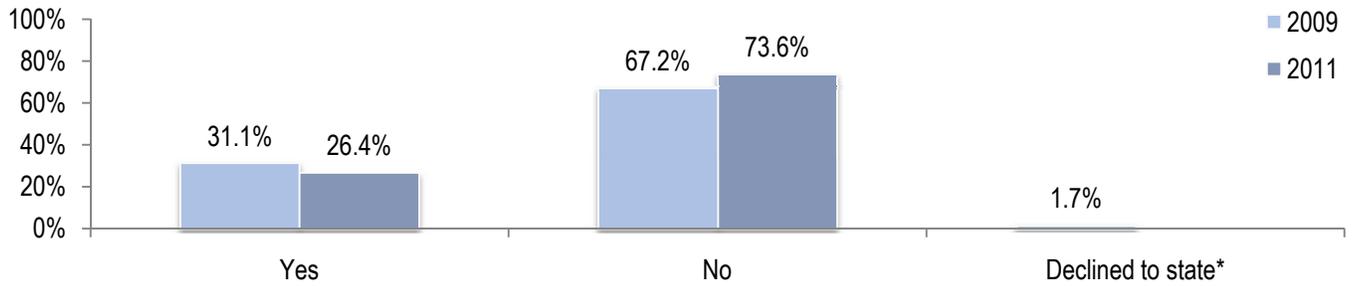
Chronic Health Problems

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the average life expectancy of Americans is 78 years. In 2005, a study released by the National Health Care for the Homeless Council, looked at homeless mortality rates in seven cities throughout the United States, Canada and Europe, and found that the average life expectancy for a person without permanent housing was between 42 and 52 years. The study also indicated that premature death often results from acute and chronic medical conditions aggravated by homeless life.²²

- 26% of survey respondents said they were experiencing chronic health problems in 2011.

²² O’Connell, J. (2005). Premature Mortality in Homeless Populations: a review of the literature. Retrieved January 13, 2011, from <http://www.nhchc.org/PrematureMortalityFinal.pdf>.

Figure 35: Are You Currently Experiencing Chronic Health Problems?



2009 N=354; 2011 N=484

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2009). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

Applied Survey Research. (2011). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

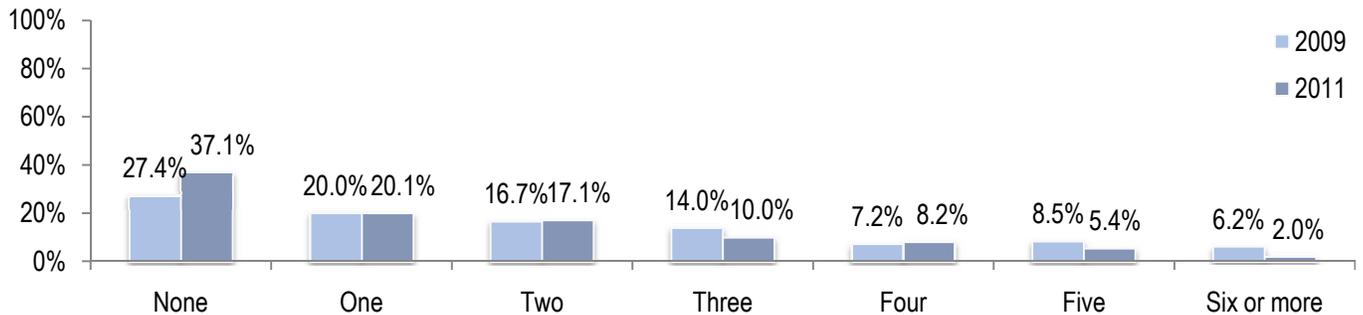
*Note: Declined to state was not an option in the 2011 survey.

Disabling Conditions

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

- 63% of all survey respondents had one or more disabling conditions in 2011.

Figure 36: Number of Disabling Conditions Among All Homeless Respondents



2009 N=401; 2011 N=498

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2009). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

Applied Survey Research. (2011). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

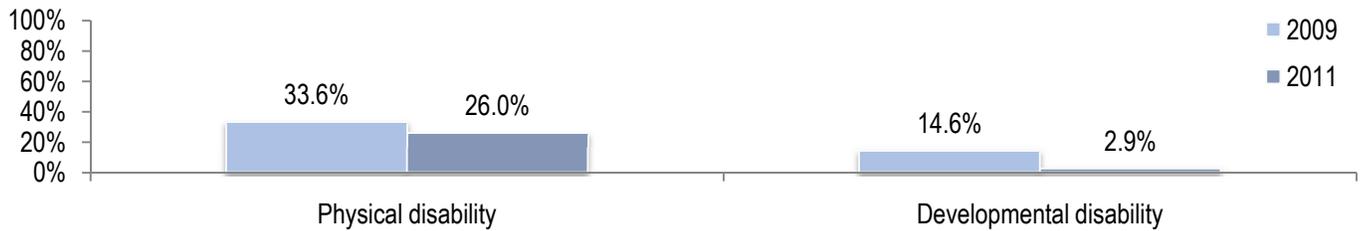
HIV/AIDS

- 7 individuals reported having HIV/AIDS in 2011.

Physical and Developmental Disabilities

- 26% of survey respondents reported a physical disability in 2011, compared to 34% in 2009.
- 3% of respondents had a developmental disability in 2011.

Figure 37: Percentage of Respondents Who Were Currently Experiencing a Physical or Developmental Disability



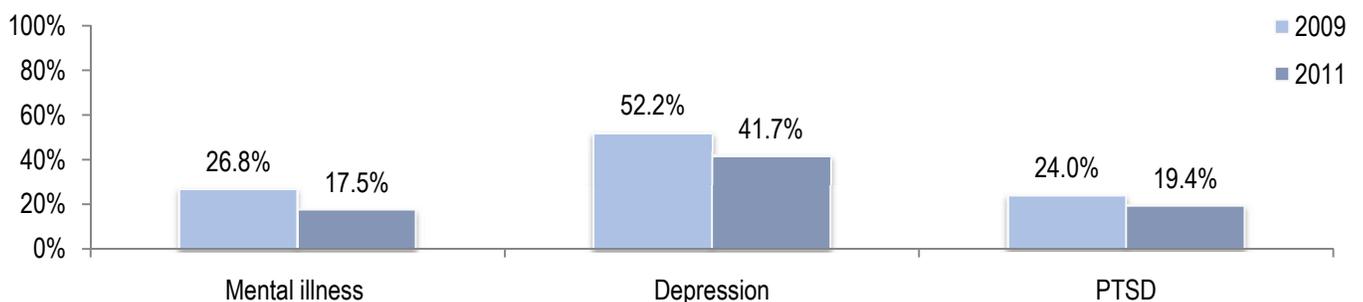
2009: Physical disability N=366, Developmental disability N=363
 2011: Physical disability N=489, Developmental disability N=486
 Source: Applied Survey Research. (2009). 2009 Santa Cruz Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.
 Applied Survey Research. (2011). 2011 Santa Cruz Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

Mental Health

National studies have found that a disproportionate number of homeless individuals suffer from some form of mental illness.²³ Survey respondents were asked about their mental health including mental illness, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). PTSD is an anxiety disorder that can occur following the experience or witnessing of a traumatic event. A traumatic event is a life-threatening event such as military combat, natural disasters, terrorist incidents, serious accidents, or physical or sexual assault in adulthood or childhood.²⁴

- 18% of survey respondents reported having a mental illness.
- 42% of survey respondents reported experiencing depression, and 19% were experiencing PTSD.

Figure 38: Percentage of Respondents Who Were Currently Experiencing Mental Illness, Depression, and PTSD



2009: Mental illness N=362, Depression N=358, PTSD N=354
 2011: Mental illness N=479, Depression N=489, PTSD N=484
 Source: Applied Survey Research. (2009). 2009 Santa Cruz Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.
 Applied Survey Research. (2011). 2011 Santa Cruz Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

²³ National Coalition for the Homeless. (2008). “Mental Illness and Homelessness” fact sheet. Retrieved on May 20, 2009 from http://www.issuelab.org/research/mental_illness_and_homelessness_2008.

²⁴ National Center for PTSD. (2009). Fact Sheet. Retrieved on April 11, 2009 from http://www.ncptsd.va.gov/ncmain/ncdocs/fact_shts/fs_what_is_ptsd.html.

Substance Abuse

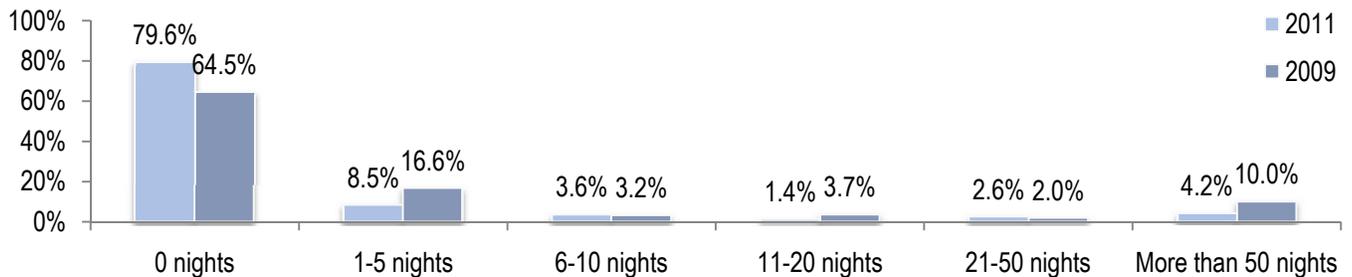
Substance use (alcohol or drugs) was the second-most frequently cited primary cause of homelessness among the homeless survey population in Santa Cruz County. Many survey respondents indicated that they were currently experiencing alcohol or drug abuse.

- 38% of respondents were currently experiencing alcohol abuse and drug abuse problems in 2011.

Incarceration

- 7% of respondents indicated that immediately before they became homeless this time, they were in jail or prison.
- 4% of survey respondents cited incarceration as the primary event that led to their homelessness.
- 15% of respondents indicated that their criminal record was keeping them from securing permanent housing.
- 20% of homeless respondents reported that they had spent at least one night in jail or prison in the year prior to the survey.

Figure 39: Number of Nights Respondents Reported Spending in Jail or Prison in the Year Prior to the Survey



2009 N=349; 2011 N=495

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2009). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.
 Applied Survey Research. (2011). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

Transition from Foster Care

- 12% of respondents said they had been in foster care.
 - » Of those who reported having been in foster care, 7% reported aging out of foster care as the primary cause of their homelessness.

Domestic/Partner Violence or Abuse

- 9% of all survey respondents were currently experiencing domestic violence or abuse. 24% of female respondents reported experiencing domestic violence or abuse, compared to 4% of male survey respondents.
- Of all respondents who reported experiencing domestic violence or abuse, 24% were living with children under the age of 18.

HUD DEFINED HOMELESS SUBPOPULATIONS

Introduction

The homeless remain one of the county's most vulnerable populations; however, more effort is needed to end chronic homelessness and also a renewed focus on addressing homelessness among veterans, families, and youth. HUD defines various homeless subpopulations from the overall homeless community, so that they can learn more about the nature of their homelessness in order to eradicate it. The subpopulations they focus on are: persons in families, chronically homeless individuals and families, veterans, and unaccompanied children.

Chronic Homelessness

The mortality rate for chronically homeless men and women is four to nine times higher than for the general population. Those experiencing long-term homelessness often incur significant public costs – through emergency room visits, run-ins with law enforcement, incarceration, and access to existing poverty and homeless programs.²⁵ In 2011, the federal government announced a 5-year plan to end chronic homelessness. The plan focuses on permanent supportive housing, reducing financial instability, and improving health and housing stability.²⁶

HUD defines a chronically homeless person or family as an unaccompanied homeless individual (18 or older) with a disabling condition or a family with at least one adult member (18 or older) who has a disabling condition who has either been continuously homeless for a year or more OR has had at least four (4) episodes of homelessness in the past three (3) years.

For the purposes of this study, a disabling condition was defined as a physical or developmental disability, mental illness, severe depression,²⁷ post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), chronic health problems, HIV/AIDS, or substance abuse.

Prevalence of Chronic Homelessness

- It is estimated that on any given night, Santa Cruz County has a chronically homeless population of approximately 1,004 persons. Of those, 25 were living in families. In 2011, there were 979 chronically homeless single individuals, a 14% increase from 842 chronically homeless individuals enumerated in 2009.
 - » The chronically homeless survey results were used to project approximately how many people are chronically homeless in Santa Cruz County at a given point in time.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ United States Interagency Council on Homelessness. (2011). *Opening Doors: federal strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness*. Washington, D.C.

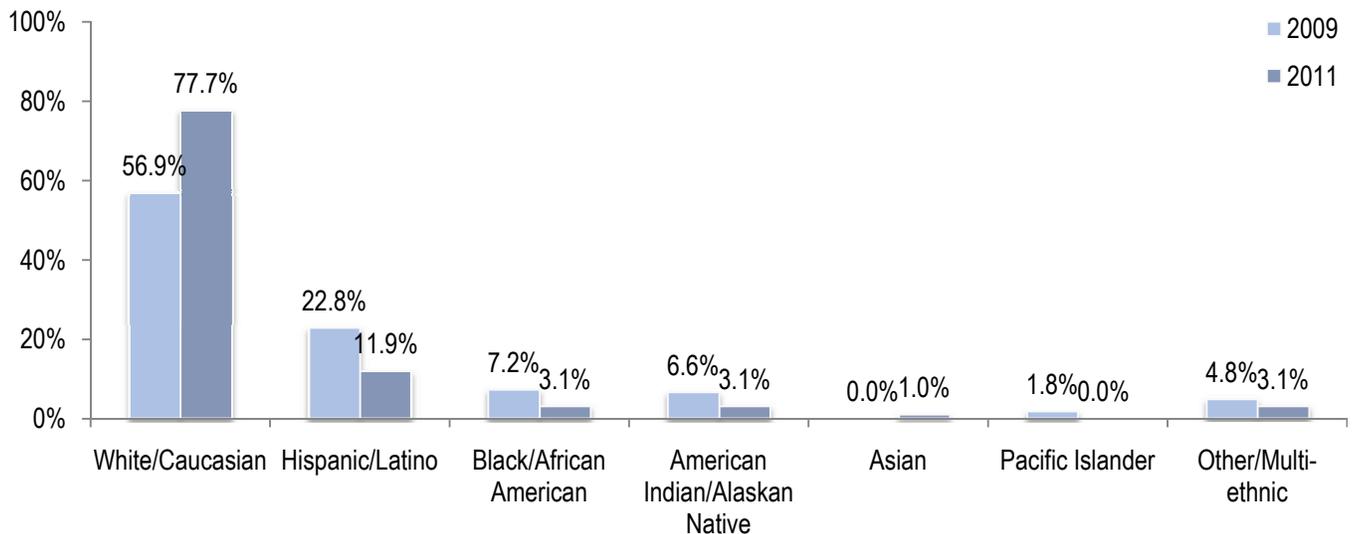
²⁷ Severe depression includes those who reported experiencing depression and who felt that their depression prevents them from getting work or housing.

- » It should be noted that this figure is derived from the population of homeless individuals who are eligible to be considered chronically homeless by HUD; therefore, the chronically homeless population includes only those homeless individuals who are unsheltered or in emergency shelters, and does not include those in transitional housing facilities.
- From 2009 to 2011, the percentage of all survey respondents who were chronically homeless decreased, from 42% to 39% respectively.
- In 2011, HUD expanded the definition of chronic homelessness to include those residing in families, 3% of Santa Cruz County’s chronically homeless population were persons residing in families.
- 47% of unsheltered survey respondents were chronically homeless, compared to 14% of sheltered survey respondents.²⁸
 - » Of chronically homeless survey respondents, 91% reported being unsheltered.

Demographics of the Chronically Homeless

- 79% of chronically homeless individuals were male in 2011.
- The largest percentage of chronically homeless persons indicated they were White/Caucasian (78%), followed by Hispanic/Latino (12%), and Black/African American (3%).

Figure 40: Chronically Homeless Population by Ethnicity



2009 N=167; 2011 N=193

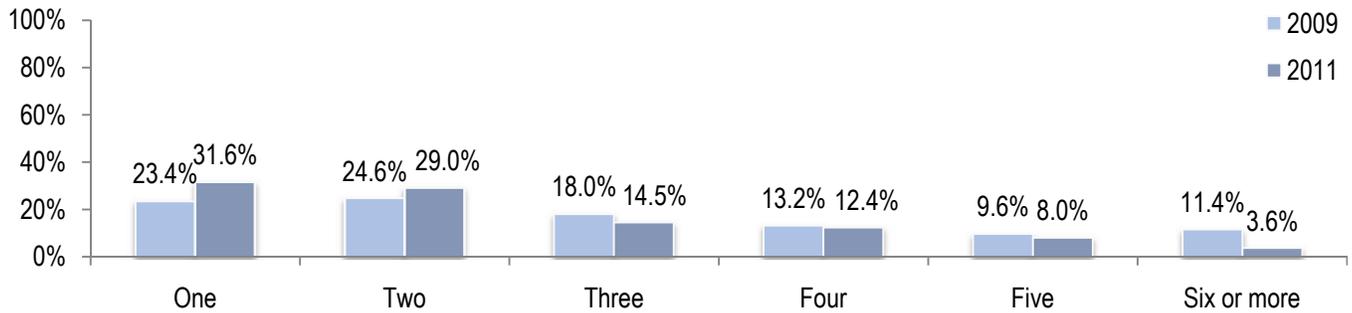
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2009). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

Applied Survey Research. (2011). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

²⁸ HUD’s definition of Chronic Homelessness excludes all persons residing in transitional housing, therefore only those residing in emergency shelters or other short term facilities are included the sheltered chronic population.

- More than two-thirds of chronically homeless survey respondents (68%) reported having two or more disabling conditions.

Figure 41: Number of Disabling Conditions Among Chronically Homeless Respondents

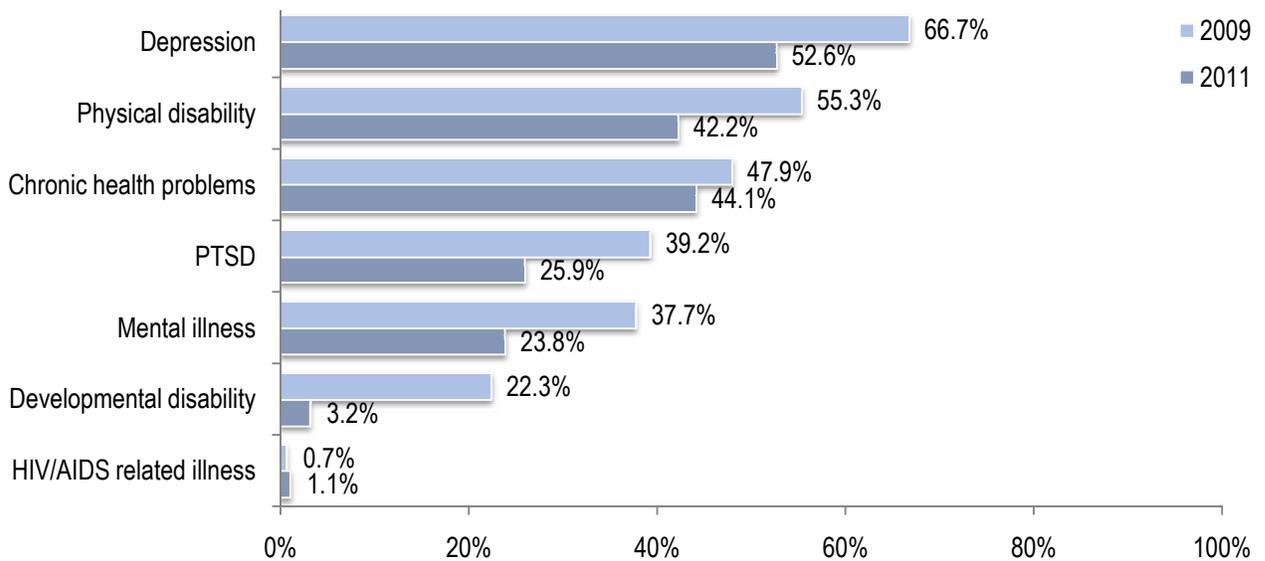


2009 N=167; 2011 N=193

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2009). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.
Applied Survey Research. (2011). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

- The disabling condition reported by the largest percentage of chronically homeless respondents was alcohol/drug abuse (65%), followed by depression (53%), chronic health problems (44%), a physical disability (42%), PTSD (26%), and mental illness (24%).²⁹

Figure 42: Percentage of Chronically Homeless Respondents Who Were Experiencing the Following Disabling Conditions



2009: Depression N=144, Alcohol abuse N=137, Drug abuse N=136, Mental illness N=146, Physical disability N=152, Chronic health problems N=142, PTSD N=143, Developmental disability N=148, HIV / AIDS N=135.

2011: Depression N=190, Alcohol abuse N=192, Drug abuse N=192, Mental illness N=146, Physical disability N=152, Chronic health problems N=142, PTSD N=143, Developmental disability N=148, HIV / AIDS N=135.

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2009). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.
Applied Survey Research. (2011). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

²⁹ These responses were not mutually exclusive.

Primary Cause of Homelessness for the Chronically Homeless

- 27% reported the loss of a job as the primary cause of their homelessness, while 20% of chronically homeless survey respondents cited alcohol/drug issues as the primary cause of their homelessness.

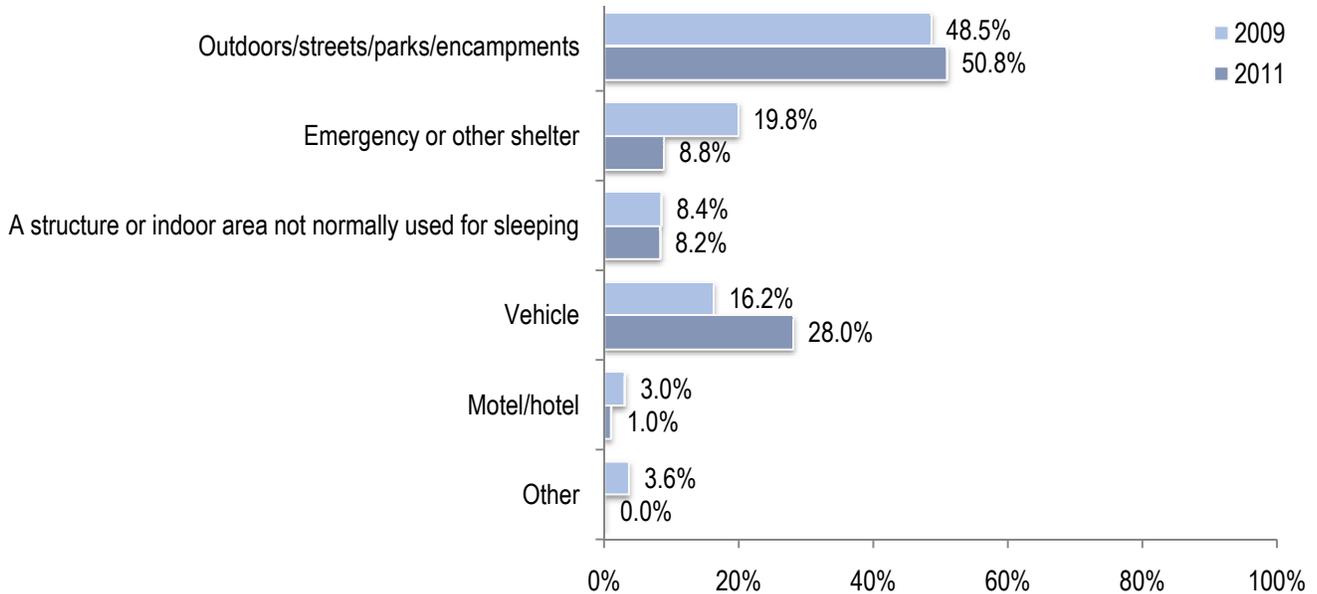
Government Assistance and Local Support Services for the Chronically Homeless

- The types of government assistance most commonly received by the chronically homeless survey population were Food Stamps (35%), and SSI/SSDI (15%).³⁰ However, 36% of chronically homeless respondents indicated that they were not receiving any government assistance.
- The most commonly cited local services used by the chronically homeless were free meals (79%), shelter day services (60%), emergency shelters (25%), and health services (26%).³¹ Ten percent (10%) of chronically homeless respondents indicated that they were not using any services.

Usual Sleeping Places of the Chronically Homeless

- 51% of chronically homeless respondents indicated that they usually slept outdoors (on the streets, in parks, or in encampments) at night, followed by 28% who usually stayed in their vehicles.

Figure 43: Where Do You Usually Stay at Night? (Chronically Homeless individuals)



2009 N=167; 2011 N=193

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2009). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

Applied Survey Research. (2011). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

³⁰ These responses were not mutually exclusive

³¹ These responses were not mutually exclusive.

Veterans

National data shows that only eight percent of the general U.S. population can claim veteran status, but nearly one-fifth of the homeless population has been identified as veterans.³² While the number of veterans experiencing homelessness has been declining over the past two years in the United States overall, 107,000 former service men and women were homeless on a given night in 2009 as estimated by the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (VA).

Although the VA reports that nationally the number of homeless veterans has been decreasing, the number of female veterans experiencing homelessness is increasing, as is the number of homeless veterans who have dependent children.³³

In general, veterans have high rates of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury, and sexual trauma, which can lead to higher risk for homelessness. About half of homeless veterans have serious mental illness and 70 percent have substance abuse problems. Half of homeless veterans have histories of involvement with the legal system. Veterans are more likely to live outdoors—unsheltered—and experience long-term, chronic homelessness.³⁴

Number of Homeless Veterans

- It is estimated that on any given night, 274 veterans are homeless in Santa Cruz County.
- 11% of adult survey respondents reported in 2011 that they had served in the United States Armed Forces; this was down from 13% in 2009.
 - » Of those who served in the Armed Forces, the greatest percentage reported serving in Vietnam (50%).

Demographics of Homeless Veterans

- 94% of homeless veterans were male in 2011.
- The largest percentage of homeless veterans indicated they were White/Caucasian (82%), followed by American Indian/Alaskan Natives (10%). Hispanic/Latino and Black/African American each represented 2% of the homeless veteran population.

Usual Sleeping Places for Homeless Veterans

- 51% of homeless veteran respondents indicated that they usually slept outdoors (on the streets, in parks, or in encampments) at night, followed by 24% who usually stayed in their vehicles.

³² National Coalition for Homeless Veterans. (2010). Retrieved January 13, 2011 from <http://www.nchv.org/background.cfm>.

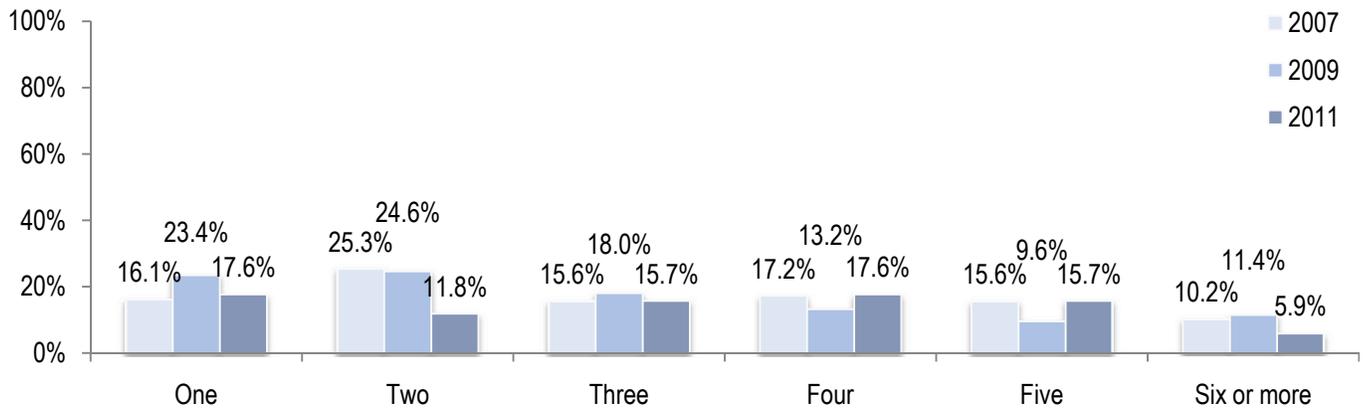
³³ Interagency Council on Homelessness. Opening Doors: federal strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness. Retrieved January 13, 2011 from <http://www.usich.gov/PDF/FactSheetVeterans.pdf>.

³⁴ Ibid.

Disabling Conditions among Homeless Veterans

- The disabling condition reported by the largest percentage of homeless veteran survey respondents was PTSD (59%), followed by a physical disability (55%), alcohol/drug abuse (47%), and chronic health problems (39%).³⁵
- 84% of homeless veterans reported having one or more disabling conditions.

Figure 44: Number of Disabling Conditions Among Homeless Veteran Respondents



2007 N=186; 2009 N=16, 2011 N=51

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2007). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

Applied Survey Research. (2009). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

Applied Survey Research. (2011). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

Primary Cause of Homelessness for Veterans

- 18% of homeless veteran respondents cited alcohol/drug issues as the primary cause of their homelessness. 10% reported divorce or separation, and an additional 10% reported incarceration. 6% of homeless veterans cited loss of a job as the primary cause of their homelessness.

Government Assistance for Homeless Veterans

- The types of government assistance most commonly received by homeless veterans were VA disability benefits (31%), Veteran’s benefits (24%), SSI/SSDI (16%), and FoodStamps/SNAP (16%).³⁶
- 24% of homeless veterans indicated that they were not receiving any government assistance.
- The most commonly cited local services used by homeless veteran survey respondents were free meals (65%), shelter day services (43%), and health services (20%).³⁷

³⁵ These responses were not mutually exclusive.

³⁶ These responses were not mutually exclusive.

³⁷ These responses were not mutually exclusive.

Homeless Families with Children

National reports reveal that one of the fastest growing segments of the homeless population is families with children. Families, single mothers, and children make up the largest group of people who are homeless in rural areas.³⁸ Children in families experiencing homelessness have high rates of acute and chronic health problems, and many have been exposed to violence. Homeless children are more likely to have emotional and behavioral problems than children with consistent living accommodations.³⁹ It is difficult to obtain an accurate count of the number of homeless families and unaccompanied children who are unsheltered. Homeless families and children often seek opportunities to stay on private property, where they are more protected and less visible to the community.⁴⁰

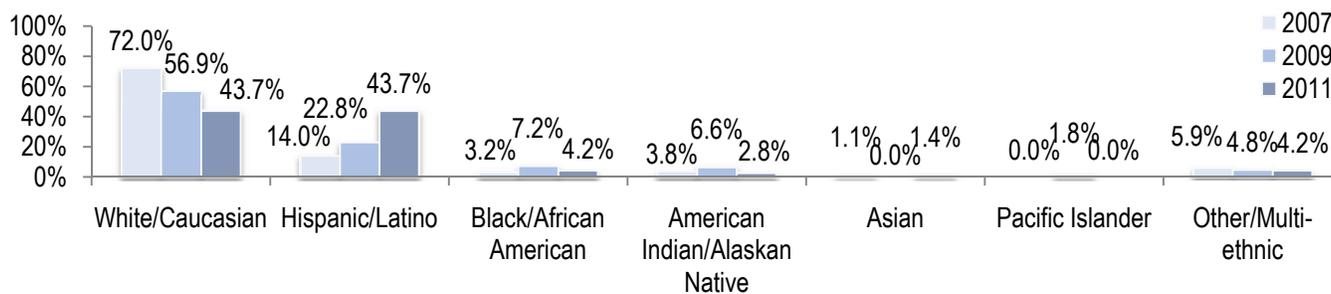
Number of Homeless Families with Children

- Of the 2,771 individuals enumerated on January 25, 2011, 17% (498 people) were living in families with at least one child under the age of 18. Most (89%) were residing in local shelters (438 persons).
- 8% of unsheltered survey respondents were families with children, compared to 36% of sheltered survey respondents.

Demographics of Homeless Families with Children

- 73% of homeless families with children were reported by female heads of household in 2011.
- The largest percentage of homeless individuals living with children indicated they were White/Caucasian (44%), and Hispanic/Latino (44%).

Figure 45: Homeless Individuals with Children by Ethnicity



2007 N=186; 2009 N=167; 2011 N=71

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2007). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

Applied Survey Research. (2009). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

Applied Survey Research. (2011). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

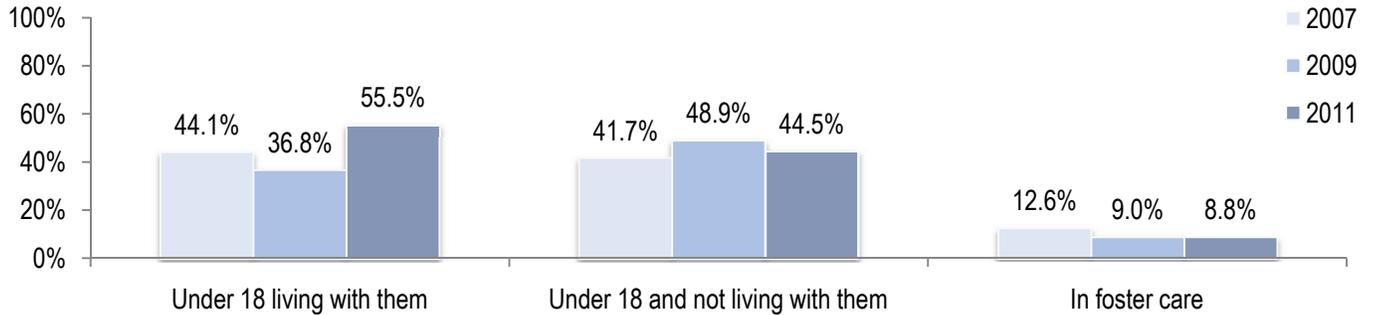
³⁸ Vissing, Y. M. (1996). Out of sight, out of mind: homeless children and families in small-town America. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky.

³⁹ U.S. Interagency Council on Ending Homelessness. (2010). Opening Doors: federal strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness. Retrieved March 2011 from www.usich.gov.

⁴⁰ For more information on homeless children and families in Santa Cruz County and the difficulties of including them in the Point-in-Time count please see Appendix I.

- Of survey respondents with children, 45% reported their children under the age of 18 were not living with them.
 - » Individuals that are not currently living with their children are not considered a family under HUD’s definition.

Figure 46: Of Respondents with Children, Percentage With Children in the Following Living Situations



Source: Applied Survey Research. (2007). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.
 Applied Survey Research. (2009). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.
 Applied Survey Research. (2011). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

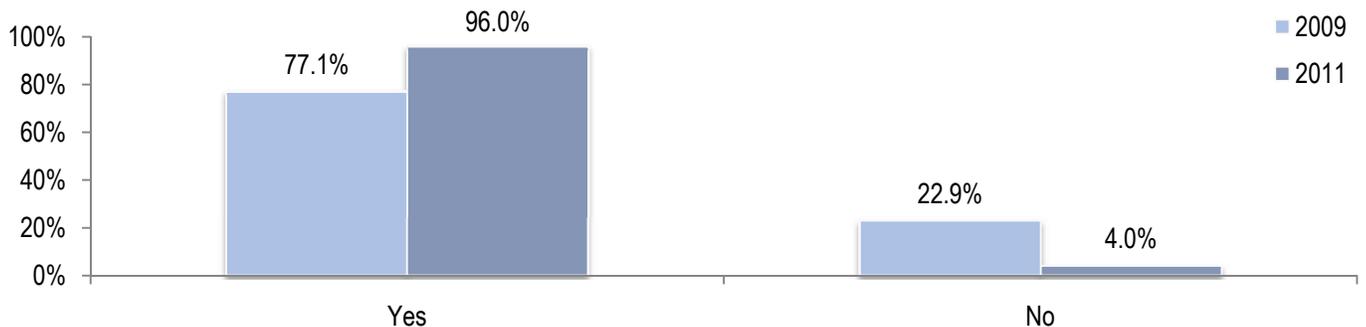
Children in Foster Care

- Of the respondents who indicated they had children, 9% reported that they had children in foster care, the same as in 2009.

Child Education

- 96% of respondents with school-aged children (ages 6-17) living with them indicated their children were in school. This was an increase from 77% in 2009.

Figure 47: Are Your School-Aged Children (Who Are Living With You) in School?



2009 N=35; 2011 N=71
 Source: Source: Applied Survey Research. (2009) Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.
 Applied Survey Research. (2011). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

Primary Cause of Homelessness for Homeless Families with Children

- 22% of homeless families with children reported the loss of a job as the primary cause of their homelessness, 21% cited alcohol/drug issues as the primary cause of their homelessness.

Government Assistance for Homeless Families with Children

- The types of government assistance most commonly received by homeless individuals with children were Food Stamps (72%), and Medi-Cal/Medicare (53%), followed by Cash Aid/CalWORKs (47%), WIC (33%) and General Assistance (17%).⁴¹ However, 10% of homeless parents with children indicated that they were not receiving any government assistance.

Usual Sleeping Places of Homeless Individuals with Children

- 60% of survey respondents living in families reported staying in shelters.
- 15% reported living in an indoor area not normally used for sleeping; this included unconverted garages, attics, and public facilities.
- 7% indicated that they usually slept outdoors (on the streets, in parks, or in encampments) at night, 10% usually stayed in their vehicles.

Unaccompanied Homeless Children and Youth

“Unaccompanied Children” are children under the age of 18 who are homeless and living independent of a parent or legal guardian. Homeless youth are defined as individuals between the ages of 18 and 24 years old. Identifying and including unaccompanied homeless children and youth in the biennial Point-in-Time Count is challenging. Data on the population both locally and nationally is extremely limited. What little data is available suggest the negative effects of homelessness on children are high and those experiencing homelessness face even greater challenges than their adult counterparts. They have a harder time accessing services, including shelter, medical care and employment.⁴²

Santa Cruz County increased their efforts to include unaccompanied children and youth in the 2011 Homeless Census and Survey. A youth focused street count took place on the afternoon of January 25, 2011, from approximately 3:00 pm to 7:00 pm, when children were more likely to be visible in the community. ASR worked with local youth service providers and hired local homeless youth to participate in the count, with the belief that they had particular knowledge and access to areas where homeless children and youth congregate. In addition to the countywide census, unaccompanied children and youth took the basic two-page survey, as well as answering 28 additional survey questions that asked specifically about their circumstances as unaccompanied children. A total of 50 homeless children and youth answered the survey. The following section details results of both the youth specific count and survey.

⁴¹ These responses were not mutually exclusive.

⁴² National Coalition for the Homeless. (2011). Homeless youth fact sheet. Retrieved March 2011 from <http://www.nationalhomeless.org/factsheets/index.html>.

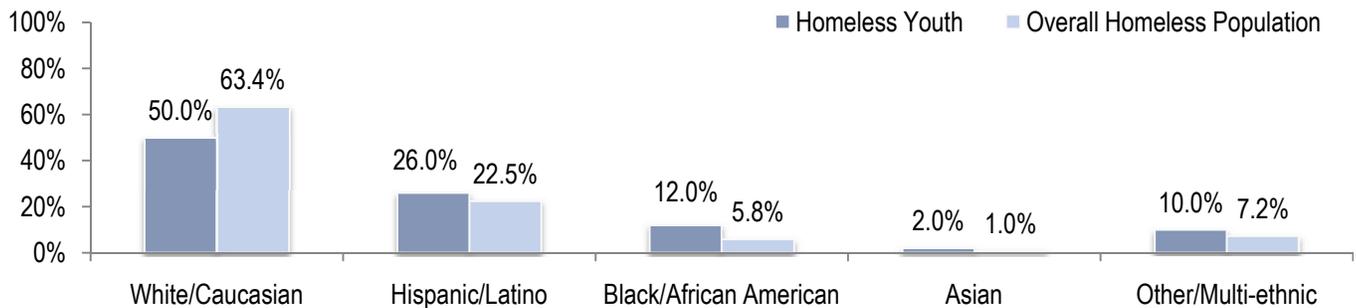
Number and Characteristics

- 143 unaccompanied children and youth were identified during the Point-in-Time count.
 - » It is estimated that 21% of homeless population is under the age of 25.
- 54% of the youth population (under the age of 25) identified as male, while 36% identified as female in 2011.

Demographics

- The largest percentage of homeless youth indicated they were White/Caucasian (50%), followed by Hispanic/Latino (26%), and Black/African American (12%).
 - » The percentages of homeless youth who identified as Hispanic/Latino and Black/African American were higher than in the overall homeless population.

Figure 48: Homeless Population by Ethnicity and Age (2011)



N=50

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2011). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

Education and School Enrollment

- 22% of homeless youth survey respondents reported being in school. Of those respondents, 65% plan on finishing school.
 - » 61% of youth plan on going to college, and 82% have plans for their future; however 74% plan their life day-to-day.
 - » 74% of youth see themselves getting off the street.

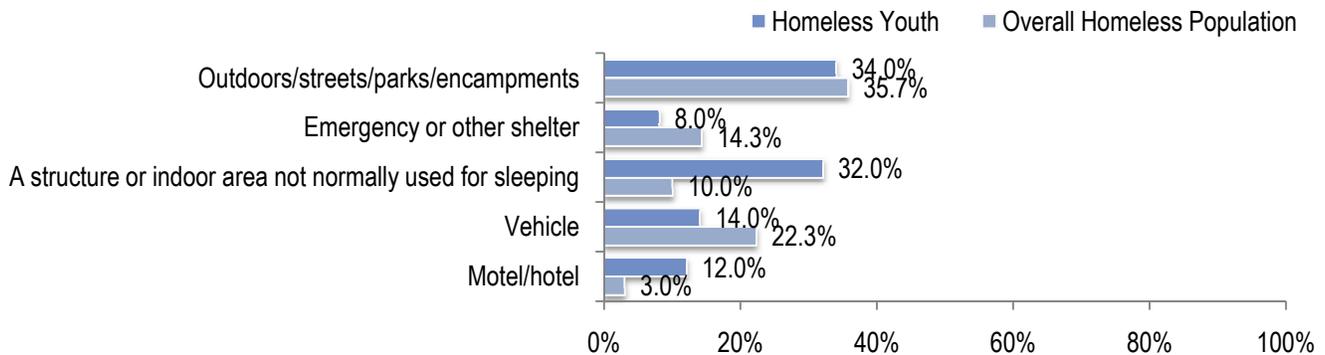
County of Residency

- 92% of youth reported living in Santa Cruz County when they became homeless this most recent time.
 - » 87% of those youth had lived in the county for more than 3 years prior to becoming homeless.

Usual Sleeping Places

- 34% of youth survey respondents indicated that they usually slept outdoors (on the streets, in parks, or in encampments) at night, followed by 32% who usually stayed in a place not normally used for sleeping.
 - » 24% felt very safe in their current living situation; however 28% reported having traded sex or drugs for a place to stay.

Figure 49: Where Do You Usually Stay at Night? (2011)



N=50

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2011). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

Primary Cause of Homelessness

- 36% of homeless youth survey respondents cited alcohol/drug issues as contributing to their homelessness, while 20% reported an argument with family or friend who asked them to leave caused their homelessness.
- 23% of youth respondents have or had homeless parents.

Utilization of Government Assistance and Homeless Services

- The types of government assistance most commonly received by homeless children and youth were Food Stamps (54%), SSI/SSDI (2%), General Assistance (8%), and Medi-Cal/Medicare (6%).⁴³ However, 36% of homeless children and youth indicated that they were not receiving any government assistance.
- The most commonly cited services used by homeless children and youth were free meals (53%), emergency shelters (16%), shelter day services (29%), bus passes (22%) and health services (18%).⁴⁴ Twenty two percent (22%) of homeless children and youth indicated that they were not using any services.

⁴³ These responses were not mutually exclusive.

⁴⁴ These responses were not mutually exclusive.

- The most commonly cited needs of homeless children and youth were food (70%), clothing (56%), transportation (40%), and job training/employment (54%).

Social Support Networks

- 48% of youth reported living with other individuals.
 - » 38% of youth reported living with friends, 21% reported living with their street family, and 21% reported living with a spouse or significant other.
 - » 42% of youth survey respondents reported having stayed 6-14 nights with friends or family in the two weeks prior to the survey.
 - » 34% of homeless youth reported having an adult in the community they could trust. The majority of those reported knowing this person from a friend or drop-in center.
 - » 61% of youth reported having interacted with police or sheriffs “Never” or “Rarely” since becoming homeless.

Physical Health and Wellbeing

- 57% of youth reported their general health was “Good” or “Very good,” while 8% indicated they were in poor physical health.
 - » 32% of youth respondents reported using Homeless Persons Health Project as their primary source of care.
 - » 18% reported having used the Emergency Room at least one time in the past year.

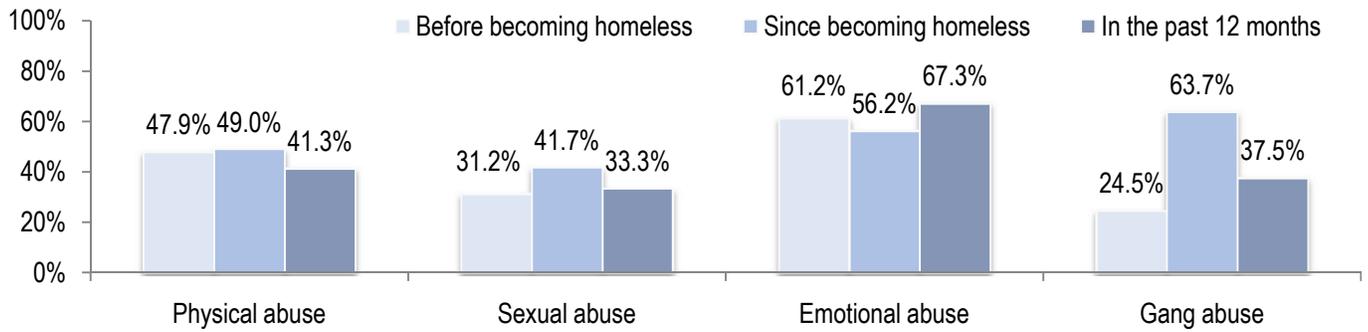
Mental Health and Wellbeing

- 28% of youth respondents reported having a mental illness.
 - » 50% reported depression and 37% reported suffering from PTSD.
 - » 25% of youth reported having sought formal counseling services through government, church or youth programs.
 - » 22% of youth reported that mental issues contributed to their homelessness.

Experiences with Violence

- 46% of youth respondents reported their safety had been threatened 1 or more times in the past 30 days.
 - » 4% of youth survey respondents reported feeling threatened by physical abuse “Very often” or “Always” since they had become homeless.
 - » 56% of respondents reported experiencing emotional abuse since becoming homeless.

Figure 50: Experiences with Violence Prior to and Since Becoming Homeless

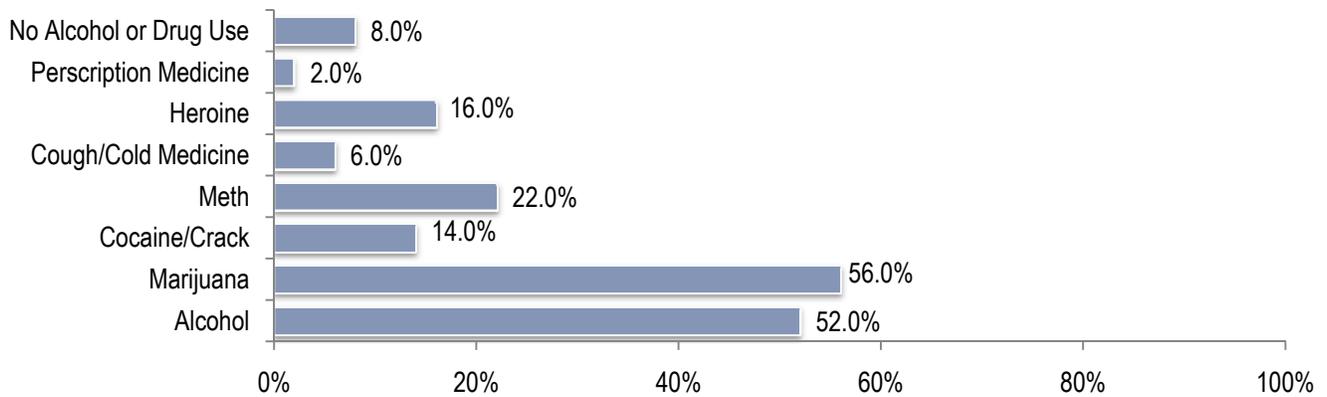


Before Becoming Homeless: Physical Abuse N=48, Sexual Abuse N=48, Emotional Abuse N=49, Gang Abuse N=49
 Since Becoming homeless: Physical Abuse N=49, Sexual Abuse N=48, Emotional Abuse N=48, Gang Abuse N=49
 In the Past 12 Months: Physical Abuse N=48, Sexual Abuse N=48, Emotional Abuse N=48, Gang Abuse N=48
 Source: Applied Survey Research. (2011). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

Drug and Alcohol Abuse

- 67% of youth reported Alcohol or Drug Abuse.
- 85% reported using drugs or alcohol because they enjoyed it and 45% reported using drugs or alcohol to get through the day

Figure 51: Primary Drug of Choice (2011)



Multiple response question with 50 respondents offering 88 responses
 Source: Applied Survey Research. (2011). Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey. Watsonville, CA.

CONCLUSION

The 2011 Santa Cruz County Homeless Census and Survey were performed using HUD-recommended practices for counting and surveying the homeless population. This important effort provided valid and useful data regarding the homeless community in Santa Cruz County. The 2011 enumeration built upon the 2007 and 2009 efforts and continued the compilation of longitudinal data on the experience of homelessness in the county. Continued use of this methodology enables the tracking of key indicators to gauge the changing conditions experienced by homeless individuals and families throughout the county.

It is hoped that the data presented in this report will be used by planning bodies and other organizations within the county to inform additional outreach efforts, service planning, and policy decision-making over the next two years as they continue to address homelessness. It is also hoped that this report will be disseminated to other jurisdictions and educational research institutions in order to gain feedback on the methodologies used and results obtained for the 2011 Santa Cruz County Homeless Census and Survey. By sharing and evaluating this enumeration effort and its results, the homeless support network in Santa Cruz County will be better able to produce constructive and innovative solutions to a problem that clearly affects many people in the community.