

MEMORANDUM

To: Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness
From: HomeBase
Re: 2009 Homeless Census Results
Date: April 17, 2009

Background

RSC has often discussed the challenge of addressing the issue of homelessness without knowing enough about the characteristics of the homeless population and the size of the homeless population. In response to this challenge, HUD created a requirement that jurisdictions that receive Federal funding for homeless assistance through the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act conduct a point-in-time homeless count every two years.

The RSC has discussed completing the homeless census and evaluating the resulting data several times over the past few years. In June 2002, we discussed methodologies and the cost-effectiveness of counting the homeless. In May 2004, we looked into the value of HMIS in this effort. In November of that year, HomeBase presented a Briefing Memo at the RSC meeting on HUD's suggested methodologies for conducting homeless counts. In March 2005 and April 2007, the RSC discussed the homeless count results for those years and provided feedback and impressions of the counts conducted in member's communities. In July 2007, we discussed methodologies for enumerating the homeless population.

Homeless Census

HUD requires that jurisdictions that receive Federal funding for homeless assistance through the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act conduct a point-in-time homeless count every two years. Jurisdictions must count sheltered and unsheltered homeless individuals and families within one 24-hour period during the last week of January.

HUD requires that communities count the number of homeless persons who meet the McKinney-Vento Act definition of "homeless" to allow it to aggregate the data to understand national trends in homelessness. Some communities choose to count using a broader definition of homeless in order to inform community decisions and allocations of resources, and then parse the data for HUD reporting requirements.

HUD allows each community to determine its own enumeration technique within certain boundaries. Strategies differ across communities. Several communities, for the first time, used the

same methodology in 2007 and 2009 and are now able to accurately compare the data they collected.

This year, reports from providers indicate large increases in requests for assistance, spurred by the economic crisis. The counts occurred in January, relatively early in the “meltdown” but some providers had been noting an increase in need as early as September 2008 in the family systems of care.¹ While some communities are seeing large increases in their census results, other communities are seeing overall decreases in their census results, with increases in certain sub-populations only.

Results

Many communities have not yet published their 2009 homeless census results. This memorandum summarizes the executive summary reports of several Bay Area communities that have published their data. Communities that have not yet published their results include: Alameda (expected in June), Santa Clara, Sonoma (expected in May), Santa Cruz, Monterey, and Sonoma.

¹ Family Shelter System in Crisis, Report by Juan A. Ochoa, Compass Community Services, September 24, 2008.

Marin County

Summary Results

	2007	2009
Unsheltered in Marin County	400	1147
Sheltered in Marin County	602	623
Total	1002	1770

*** Marin's methodology changed from the 2007 count and cannot be accurately compared.*

In addition, 3028 individuals were precariously housed for a total of 4798 homeless and precariously housed individuals (homeless by the McKinney DOE definition).

Marin used an expanded definition of homelessness; according to HUD's more narrow CoC definition of homelessness, Marin had 351 unsheltered and 726 sheltered homeless persons.

Detailed Results and Community Analysis

Age (for 1770)

- 0-18: 461
- 19-25: 159
- 26-64: 669
- 65+: 21
- Adult not specified: 460

Gender (out of 1388 who completed survey)

- Male: 836
- Female: 452
- Transgender: 9
- Not Stated: 91

Household Breakdown (for 1770)

- 70% were single
- 17% were one-parent families

Disability (information limited to participating adults, 57% of adult population counted)

- 59% of those surveyed reported a disability or substance abuse problem
- Of those with a disability 41% reported a physical disability, 32% reported a mental/emotional disability, and 24% reported substance abuse.

Domestic Violence (information limited to participating adults, 63% of adult population counted)

- 24% had been a victim of domestic violence
- 46% of adult women had been a victim of domestic violence

Chronic Homelessness (information to sheltered adults and unsheltered adults who completed a survey)

- 141 adults met HUD's criteria

Location Where Stayed the Night Before the Count (of 1770 counted)

- 20% would meet HUD's definition of unsheltered homeless
- 252 stayed temporarily with family or friends
- 420 stayed at a transitional housing program
- 233 stayed outdoors
- 193 stayed in emergency shelter
- 78 stayed in a house or boat without plumbing or electricity
- 66 rent floor or closet space
- 64 were in jail
- 65 were in shelter
- 62 were in a car/van or other vehicle
- 38 were in the armory
- 42 were in a campsite
- 36 were in a hotel/motel
- 17 were housesitting without a permanent address
- 15 Other
- 8 hotel/motel paid by agency
- 1 hospital/treatment facility
- 170 were unknown

Other Information

- 37% of those surveyed were homeless less than one year
- 36% of those surveyed had only a single episode of homelessness
- Top reason for being homeless was lack of affordable housing, with a close second being lost job
- 66% had some source of income; 22% were employed
- 60% were residents of Marin County before becoming homeless; 12% were residents in other Bay Area counties
- Number of families with children who were homeless: 222, 111 unsheltered
- Number of families precariously housed: 1002
- Transitional Aged youth stated the two most common reasons for homelessness were violence in the home and exhausted communication with parents
- 20% of youth surveyed met HUD's definition of "literally homeless"
- Precariously Housed
 - Total Households: 1187
 - Single Persons: 198
 - Families with children: 989
 - Adults: 1787
 - Children: 1241

Methodology

Planning for Marin's count began in October 2008 and involved providers, health & human services staff and community based organizations. Planners also held public meetings in the communities where the count would occur and publicized them widely. Publicity occurred through outreach to cities, schools, police and fire departments as well as partnership with 211 of the Bay Area.

Marin's count occurred on January 29, 2009. The count consisted of a sheltered count and an unsheltered count. The unsheltered count was made up of two parts-- counts of unsheltered people who requested services on the day of the count and completed a survey and special outreach to marginalized populations including day laborers, schools (case managers tallied the children/families they worked with), transitional aged youth, people living in encampments, and people in jail. Marin also conducted its homeless count in partnership with Project Homeless Connect.

Sacramento

Summary Results

	2007	2008	2009
Unsheltered in Sacramento County	1005	1266	1194
Sheltered in Sacramento County	1447	1412	1606
Total	2452	2678	2800

Detailed Results

Below is a year-to-year comparison between the 2007, 2008 and 2009 population characteristics:

	2007 Total	2008 Total	2009 Total	% Change From 2007 to 2009	% Change From 2008 to 2009
Chronically Homeless	718	680	468	-34.77%	-31.13%
Mentally Ill	675	913	753	11.56%	-17.52%
Substance Abuse	1312	1442	1345	2.52%	-6.73%
Veterans	383	518	426	11.23%	-17.76%
Persons with HIV/AIDS*	40	49	60	50%	22.44%
Victims of Domestic Violence	551	545	699	26.86%	28.26%
Unaccompanied Youth (under 18)*	9	16	35	288.88%	118.75%

Sacramento also gathered from institutions in the County that are not considered “homeless” by HUD’s standard, including the Mental Health Treatment Center; alcohol and drug residential treatment facilities; five major hospitals; and the jail, including the main jail and Rio Consumnes Correctional Center. These individuals were not included in the summary charts.

Sacramento Mental Health Treatment Center:	33
Alcohol and Drug Treatment facilities:	82
Hospitals	13
Main Jail/Rio Consumnes Correctional Center:	<u>344</u>
Total	472

* Population sizes for persons with HIV/AIDS and unaccompanied youth are relatively small. Therefore, percent change information for these populations is not as informative as percent changes for larger subpopulations.

Community Analysis

The chronically homeless figure dropped from 29.3% in 2007 (718 out of 2,452) to 16.7% in 2009 (468 out of 2,800) a 34.8% decrease over two years. According to the recent Progress Report of the Ten-Year Plan, 320 chronically homeless people have entered housing since 2007, with 149 entering housing in 2008. The decrease of the number of chronically homeless may be attributed to the increase of those placed in permanent supportive housing.

This year's survey results also indicate an increase in homeless families with children, both on the streets and in emergency shelters/transitional housing. The number of households with dependent children increased by 14.3% (from 161 in 2008 to 184 in 2009), and the number of family members in those households increased by 22.4% (from 442 in 2008 to 541 in 2009).

Methodology

Held during the evening of January 27, 2009, the Sacramento Homeless Count was a collaborative effort that involved homeless service providers, law enforcement agencies, the County and City park rangers, DHA, the County GIS Department, and approximately 425 volunteers, including currently homeless persons.

HMIS, as well as questionnaires and case notes were used to collect population characteristics. Every eligible, awake person counted on the street was approached and asked to participate in the survey.

Solano County

PLEASE NOTE: Solano County data has been include here, but that County's analysis has not yet been completed.

Summary Results

	2007	2009
Unsheltered in Solano County	1499	425
Sheltered in Solano County	457	Not available
Total	1956	Not available

Detailed Results

SOLANO COUNTY OBSERVED HOMELESS COUNT 2009

	TOTAL
MEN	294
WOMEN	99
Gender Unknown	25
Children (under 18)	7
TOTAL COUNTED	425

In these locations: (one tally for each person)

	TOTAL
Benches	8
Parking Garages	6
Cars/Trucks- assume 2 persons per vehicle	16
Hand-Built Structures - assume 2 persons per structure	68
Under Roadways/Bridges	8
Doorways	11
City Parks	19
Bushes/Undergrowth	7
Bus Stops	5
Walking Around	51
Other (specify) Jail 214	226
Total Per	425

Methodology

The homeless count occurred the night of January 27, 2009

San Francisco

Summary Results

	2007	2009
Unsheltered in San Francisco	2,771	2709
Sheltered in San Francisco	3,607	3805
Total	6,377	6,514

Detailed Results

	Single Adults 2009	Persons in Families 2009	Family Status Unknown 2009	Single Adults 2007 Street	Persons in Families 2007	Family Status Unknown 2007	2009 Totals	2007 Totals	2005 Totals	2002 Totals
Street	1,269	25	1,415	1,935	66	770	2,709	2,771	2,655	4,535
Emergency Shelter	1,206	310	0	1,175	322	0	1,516	1,497	1,754	2,308
Transitional Housing & Treatment Centers	1,047	210	0	1,076	190	0	1,257	1,266	1,141	1,365
Resource Centers & Stabilization	540	0	0	321	0	0	540	321	192	331
Jail	394	0	0	400	0	0	394	400	415	Not reported
Hospitals	94	4	0	122	0	0	98	122	91	101
Total	4,550	549	1,415	5,029	578	770	6,514	6,377	6,248	8,640

Community Analysis

This year's count constituted a 2% increase in overall homelessness and a 2% decrease in street homelessness when compared to the 2007 count. In 2009, homelessness was 25% lower overall than in 2002, and the street homeless population was reduced by 40%.

A total of 9,143 individuals exited homelessness in the City through various initiatives from January 2004 through February 2009. However San Francisco remains a destination for homeless persons from other areas, inhibiting the City's progress toward reducing the overall homeless population. Twenty-two percent of homeless individuals surveyed reported that they first became

homeless outside of San Francisco. Reason for coming to San Francisco, among this group, was “for a job / seeking work” (24%), “my family and/or friends are here” (15%), and “I visited and decided to stay” (15%). In addition, 12% of these respondents indicated that they came to San Francisco “to access homeless services.” Of those living in San Francisco when they became homeless, 27% were relative newcomers, having lived in the City for less than a year; 22% of this group had been in the City for three months or less.

Methodology

The 2009 San Francisco Homeless Count was a community-wide effort that took place on the night of January 27, 2009. For the unsheltered count, volunteers covered every area of the City and City staff counted City parks and highway on-ramps and underpasses. Shelter and transitional housing staff counted people staying at those facilities. Persons self-identifying as homeless who were staying at other facilities on the night of the count were also counted.

A survey of homeless individuals administered primarily in outdoor locations throughout the City was also conducted to gather information about the homeless population’s demographics, family status, causes of homelessness, length and recurrence of homelessness, usual nighttime accommodations, and access to homeless services. A trained team of paid, currently and formerly homeless survey workers and unpaid community volunteers conducted the surveys.

Questions for Discussion:

- How has the recent economic crisis affect your homeless census results? How is it affecting your system of care?
- How has your media strategy about the homeless census differed in 2009 versus prior years?
- How was your count successful this year? What can you share with other communities? What challenges did you have? What information do you want to know about other Bay Area counts?

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