


Agenda Report Reviewed by:
City Manager: 

CITY OF SEBASTOPOL
CITY COUNCIL
CITY COUNCIL MEMORANDUM

Meeting Date: Oct 17, 2023
To: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers
From: City Council/Staff Liaison to Unhoused
Vice Mayor Diana Rich/ Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director
Subject: Quarterly Report on the Unhoused
Funding: Currently Budgeted: Yes No Not Applicable

Account Code: [Fill in Account Number]

Costs authorized in City Approved Budget: Yes (Finance Initialed _____) No (Finance Exempt)

INTRODUCTION/PURPOSE:

This quarterly report on the unhoused is submitted by Vice Mayor Diana Rich, as City Council Liaison to Service Providers for the Unhoused, and by Planning Director Kari Svanstrom, as Staff Liaison to Oversee Issues Related to the Unhoused.

This quarterly report is submitted pursuant to the direction of the City Council, which directed the two appointed liaisons to provide quarterly reports on the unhoused to the City Council. This report is the report for the 3rd quarter of 2023.

DISCUSSION:

Sonoma County Section 8 Voucher Lottery

The Sonoma County Housing Authority has announced that it will be opening its Housing Choice Voucher waitlist lottery October 1 -31. The Housing Choice Voucher program - formerly known as the Section 8 program - provides financial assistance to very low-income individuals and families to enable them to afford housing in the private rental housing market. After the close of the application period, 750 applicants will be randomly selected for placement on the waitlist. All those who are placed on the waitlist can expect to have an opportunity for service within two years. For those who are not placed on the waitlist, application periods for project based voucher waitlists will be opening in the near future. Anyone interested in receiving notifications of waitlist notifications of waitlist openings, may register their email address here:

https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/CASONOMA/subscriber/new?topic_id=CASONOMA_376

Annual Point in Time report (Annual Homeless Census and Survey)

The County also completed the 2023 Point-in Time Count Results for the County (See attachments, and: <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/health-and-human-services/health-services/divisions/homelessness-services/what-we-know-about-homelessness/homeless-count>)

Quick take-aways for Sebastopol include:

- Homeless population increased slightly from 2022 to 2023, from 78 to 87, but still less than 2020 when it was 129 persons. West County (unincorporated) saw a significant jump in unsheltered homeless, from 22 in 2022 to 96 in 2023.
- Of the unhoused in Sebastopol, 40 are sheltered (46%), while 47 (54%) were not; this is in line with the County as a whole, and a reduction in the unsheltered population.
- There were 2,266 persons experiencing homelessness in the County of Sonoma in 2023, representing a decrease of 22% from 2022. Fifty-seven percent of persons experiencing homelessness were living in unsheltered conditions, a decrease from 72% from 2022.

West County Community Services (WCCS)

WCCS provided the following updates for Park Village and Homeless Services:

- One Tiny Home is in place at Park Village and is currently using a housing voucher which has already increased rent to the property. Families in both apartments are now also using vouchers
- Four more Tiny Homes are on order. Arrival will be staggered between December and April. The Tiny Homes will likely have housing vouchers and the increased income will drive own City expenses at Park Village
- Work continues on Elderberry Commons at which WCCS will provide case management and service navigation at the 29 units once remodeling is completed by the contractor hired by Burbank Housing Authority
- WCCS, through a County contract, is hiring an Outreach worker to focus on western West County and the coast.

WCCS Homeless Outreach Coordinator

- The City of Sebastopol contracts with West County Community Services to provide a full time Homeless Outreach Coordinator to serve the needs of the unhoused population. Maria Rico, the Sebastopol Outreach Worker, continues to serve as the city's main connector between our homeless residents and the services they need to gain housing and build healthier lives.

Maria Ricco, who goes by “Ricco,” is Sebastopol’s Homeless Outreach Coordinator. Her report (see attachments) provides the numbers and statistics that capture the overall portrait of our current population of people living on our streets. Ricco has produced an outreach flyer including information about the various support services in town (see attachments).

Horizon Shine

The Horizon Shine RV Village opened in February of 2022 and has remained operational since then. The property is owned by St. Vincent de Paul Sonoma County, leased to Sonoma Applied Village Services (SAVS). Horizon Shine provides a 24-7 safe parking side for RVs and other lived-in vehicle, with supportive services provided on-site. SAVS’ report is a separate item from this report, as they are required by their Temporary Use Permit for the operation of the safe parking site to provide quarterly reports to both the City Council and Planning Commission. As St Vincent de Paul has submitted a grant application to the State (pending results), SAVS has begun working on transition planning for its residents. Vice Mayor Rich and Director Svanstrom have been meeting with SAVS Board members and Executive Director Brumley to discuss the upcoming transition, and SAVS will be including this as a section in its quarter reports.

Elderberry Commons

The Elderberry Commons property is owned by the Sonoma County Community Development Commission. The Commission is working with non-profit partners West County Community Services and Burbank Housing Development Corporation, to complete the work needed to convert the site to permanent supportive housing.

Construction plans include the addition of kitchenettes and plumbing and electrical changes and accessibility improvements.

The County has developed an FAQ which can be found here: <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/ElderberryFAQ>.

The County is transitioning ownership and property management responsibilities to Burbank Housing, a non-profit housing organization. West County Community Services (WCCS) will be providing supportive services.

Regarding the relocation of people who were sheltered at the site while in use as a non-congregate shelter, out of twenty seven people, nine were placed in permanent supportive housing or an apartment if their health allowed, ten were relocated to other non-congregate shelter sites with similar services, two self-exited declining placement services, four went to share housing, one was housed outside the county, and one went to a rehabilitation facility.

Currently WCCS and property management staff are on site daily. In addition, the County has security personnel monitoring the site. There has been some activity involving people trying to camp and do laundry but nothing of a destructive or disruptive nature. The few folks encountered on site were referred to alternate managed sites with services and left the premises without incident.

The County's design work associated with the conversion is almost complete. It will be submitted to the Sebastopol Building Dept well before the end of October. Permitting generally takes a month or so for plan review and issuance of a building permit. The property transfer and construction are both expected to be complete before the end of 2023. Occupancy is tentatively planned for around the end of March to early April.

Warming/Cooling Center

In June of this year the Sonoma County Civil Grand Jury released its 2022-23 report. Prominent in that report were concerns about the need for a coordinated County-wide strategy for warming and cooling centers. The County of Sonoma responded by producing an Emergency Operations Plan Annex, approved by the Board of Supervisors that same month. The County's news release confirmed that County staff would be "coordinating and contracting with local groups to ensure such centers can be opened quickly when needed." The City of Sebastopol has been in contact with County representatives and has been assured that the County is moving forward with these efforts. Given the status of Sebastopol's current deficit (\$1.68M deficit in a \$12.5M total budget), the City is hopeful that funding opportunities will be made available to allow Sebastopol to operate warming and cooling centers as needed.

In the absence of funding support for a warming/cooling center plan, Sebastopol's recourse will be to rely on the community, as happened in December of 2022, when the Community Center, SAVS, advocates for the unhoused, and volunteers came together to open a warming center during a particularly cold winter period. (Sebastopol's December of 2022 grass roots effort was noted in the Grand Jury Report.)

The City also has as a back-up plan its current practice of providing transportation to any unhoused needing shelter when the weather is particularly harsh. Our police department offers this service to anyone, no questions asked. The effectiveness of this safety net is proven by the fact that our unhoused have availed themselves of the service, and have been transported to shelters as they requested. Although this may not be an effective measure in some communities, in ours, with officers who have fostered respectful relationships with the unhoused, it's proving to be effective.

The City is hopeful that a more formal solution will be forthcoming. The next quarterly report will provide additional details, with particular attention to any funding opportunities that would support the opening of warming and cooling centers for our citizens in need.

Continuum of Care Report

The Sonoma County Continuum of Care is responsible for coordinating the homeless services system of care. Governed by a seventeen-member Continuum of Care Board, the countywide effort is responsible for oversight of funds designated to the Continuum of Care and planning/policy development for addressing homelessness. Una Glass is the West County representative to the Continuum of Care. Please see Una Glass’s report included in the attachments.

Future Funding

The State Legislature has passed AB 1487, legislation that would allow the Bay Area Housing Finance Authority (BAHFA) to place a regional bond (likely on the November 2024 general election ballot) for affordable housing. BAHFA is a part of the Association of Bay Area Government (ABAG) with decisions made by their Executive Board related to this matter. BAFHA recently presented on this to the Sonoma County Mayor’s and Councilmember Association, as well as the Cities and Towns Adivosry Committee. If passed, this bond measure would provide funding for affordable housing production, preservation, and protections.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

The proposed action is Not a project under CEQA Not exempt Exempt under Section _____ from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

GOALS:

City Council Goals

Goal 5: Provide Open and Responsive Municipal Government Leadership

5.3.3. Encourage and increase public awareness of City Policies, decisions, programs and all public processes and meetings, by investigating effective methods of communication and obtaining feedback from the community.

General Plan Goals

Policy D-6 – Work to prevent homelessness and support housing services to the homeless.

Action CHW 5c: Practice an open-door policy in City programs, and actively engage and encourage participation from all individuals regardless of ethnicity, race, religion, class, disability, sexual orientation, and gender.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

The proposed action is Not a project under CEQA Not exempt Exempt under Section _____ from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

PUBLIC COMMENT:

As of the writing of this staff report, the City has not received any public comment. However, staff anticipates receiving public comment from interested parties following the publication and distribution of this staff report. Such comments will be provided to the City Council as supplemental materials before or at the meeting. In addition, public comments may be offered during the public comment portion of the agenda item.

PUBLIC NOTICE:

This item was noticed in accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act and was available for public viewing and review at least 72 hours prior to schedule meeting date.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None, informational only

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive Report

Attachments:

County Flyer for Vouchers Lottery

WCCS Homeless Outreach Coordinator Report and Brochure

COC Quarterly report from Una Glass

Homeless Point-in-Time Count Report

BAFHA Housing Bond briefing



Sonoma County
Community Development Commission

Housing Authority

Agenda Item Number 11a

Sonoma County Housing Choice Voucher Fact Sheet

Sonoma County Housing Authority will open its Housing Voucher waiting list lottery application period from Oct. 1-31.

How does it work?

- After the application period closes, 750 applications will be randomly selected to be placed on the housing choice voucher (section 8) "waitlist".
- Beginning in December 2023, all persons who submitted a waitlist application will be notified by mail whether they were selected to be placed on the Waitlist or not.



- Applicants who are placed on the Waitlist will be served within 24 months.
- Those who are not selected, who still want service, may reapply during the next application period.
- Once all applicants on the waitlist have been served, a new lottery will be conducted - likely in October 2025.

Where to apply?

All persons interested in applying for the waitlist MUST submit an application anytime between Oct. 1-31. No application will be accepted prior to the opening date.

Applications for the waitlist lottery will be accepted online at www.waitlistcheck.com/CA085 or in person at 1440 Guerneville Drive, Santa Rosa, CA 94503.

Need assistance? We are here to help.

Applicants who need assistance completing an application may visit the Housing Authority Office at 1440 Guerneville Road, Santa Rosa. We are open Monday to Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Paper applications are available upon request by calling (707) 565-1848 * TDD (707) 565-7555

If you are a person with a disability and have a disability-related need to access any programs, services, or activities provided by the Sonoma County Community Development Commission or the Sonoma County Housing Authority, you may contact the Sonoma County Housing Authority at (707) 565-7500. Translation Services Available upon request.

Hoja Informativa de Vales de Elección de Vivienda

La Autoridad de Vivienda del Condado de Sonoma aceptará solicitudes desde el 1 de octubre hasta el 31 para su lotería de lista de espera de Vales de Elección de Vivienda.

¿Cómo funciona?

- Después que se cierre el período de solicitud, se seleccionarán 750 solicitudes al azar para colocarlas en la "lista de espera" del vale de elección de vivienda (sección 8).
- A partir de diciembre de 2023, todas las personas que presentaron una solicitud serán notificadas por correo si fueron seleccionadas para la lista de espera o no.



- Los solicitantes que sean colocados en la lista serán atendidos dentro de 24 meses.
- Aquellos que no son seleccionados, que aún desean servicio, pueden volver a solicitar durante el próximo período de solicitud.
- Una vez que todos los solicitantes en la lista hayan sido atendidos, se llevará a cabo una nueva lotería, probablemente en octubre de 2025.

¿Dónde aplicar?

Todas las personas interesadas DEBEN presentar una solicitud entre el 1 y el 31 de octubre. No se aceptarán solicitudes antes de la fecha de apertura.

Las solicitudes para la lotería de lista de espera se aceptarán en línea en www.waitlistcheck.com/CA085 o en persona en 1440 Guerneville Drive, Santa Rosa, CA 94503.

¿Necesita ayuda? Estamos aquí para ayudar

Los solicitantes que necesitan ayuda para completar una solicitud pueden visitar la Oficina de la Autoridad de Vivienda en 1440 Guerneville Road, Santa Rosa. Estamos abiertos de lunes a viernes, de 8 a.m. a 5 p.m. Las solicitudes de papel están disponibles bajo petición llamando al (707) 565-1848 * TDD (707) 565-7555.

Important Announcement!

October 1st-31st at 5pm Sonoma County Housing Authority is opening up a lottery to offer Section 8 Vouchers that can be used anywhere in Sonoma County except the City of Santa Rosa. Make sure to sign up with an active email! If you need in person assistance meet Rico at the Sebastopol Christian Church Barnabas Program from 8:30am-11am on Mondays and Thursdays, except holidays. <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/sonoma-county-housing-authority-opens-new-housing-choice-voucher-waitlist-lottery>



October 2023

S	M	Tu	W	Th	Fr	Sa
1 LO	2 B	3	4	5 B	6	7
8	9 B	10 HT	11	12 B	13	14
15	16 B	17 SS	18	19 B	20	21
22	23 B	24 HT	25	26 B	27	28
29	30 B	31 LC				

LO=Lottery Open, LC=Lottery Closed,
B=Barnabas, HT=Laundry Day at Hi-Tide,
SS= Social Service Day at the Library

West County Community Services

16390 Main Street
PO Box 325
Guerneville, CA, 95446

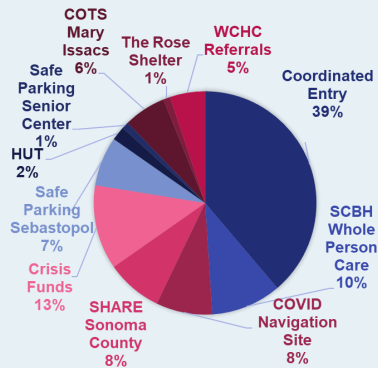
Maria Rico aka "Rico"
Homeless Outreach Coordinator
Greater Sebastopol Area
Work Cell Phone: 707-888-3804
E-mail:
maria.rico@westcountyservices.org

Hope & Home: Connecting the Community of Sebastopol

Welcome to Hope & Home's newsletter! Together, we strive to make a difference in the lives of those experiencing homelessness, bringing hope and a sense of home to our community.



Guiding the way forward.



Did you know?

Statistics:

- ◆ In Sonoma County, over 1,826 individuals face homelessness each night
- ◆ Over 271 are families with children
- ◆ Over 174 are youth under the age of 25.

Success Stories

- ◆ WCCS Outreach Efforts since February 2023 has successfully housed 5 individuals and 1 Mother and her child in Sebastopol.
- ◆ Sheltered: 61 in the past year
- ◆ Provided Financial Assistance for 13 individuals with Car Registration, Car Insurance or Maintenance for those who are living in their cars since February 2023.



Food and Laundry in Sebastopol

SATURDAY LUNCH PROGRAM SEBASTOPOL

1st Saturday-Sebastopol Christian Church: 7433 Bodega Ave (Hwy12)
11:45-1pm

2nd Saturday-Sebastopol Community Church: 1000 Gravensteing Hwy N. 12-12:30

3rd Saturday- St. Stephen's Episcopal Church: 500 Robinson Rd. At Noon

4th Saturday-Sebastopol Methodist Church: 500 North Main St. opposite of Safeway 12-12:45 pm

5th Saturday-Enmanji Buddhist Temple, serving at St.Stephen's Episcopal Church at Noon.

Sebastopol Christian Church Baranabas Program continues to provide hot breakfast, showers, and bag lunches on Mondays and Thursdays from 8am-11am. Bag lunches on request and subject to availability throughout the week, with assistance from Community Church.

The Food Pantry on the grounds of St. Stephen's Church provides bagged dry food, milk, eggs, M, W, F, Sat from 10am -Noon.

Laundry Day! Every 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the Month at the High-Tide Laundromat: 992 Gravenstein Hwy S, Next to Fircrest Market from 9:00am to Noon. 1 free load. Bus 24 drops you off right there.

Services Offered

1. **Housing Assistance:** Learn about our housing programs providing safe and stable homes. Make an appointment with Rico to explore housing problem solving and enroll in Coordinated Entry if appropriate.
2. **Medical Support:** Details about homeless services available for homeless individuals. 3rd Street House has a "Health for the Homeless" program and they also offer Behavioral Health Services including Enhanced Case Management Services at: 16312 Third Street Guerneville, Ca 95446 (707) 824-3398
3. **Job Search Support:** Explore our job training programs helping individuals gain valuable skills. Contact Susan Carrier [\(707\) 823-1640 Ext. 141](tel:(707)823-1640) susan.carrier@westcountyservices.org
4. **Safe Parking** at the Sebastopol Community Church is full but if you're living in your car in Sebastopol and you're interested in Safe Parking please talk to Rico to be placed on the waitlist.
5. **Food and Clothing:** Information on where to access food banks, get assistance applying for CalFresh by calling 211 or come to the Sebastopol Christian Church during Barnabas on Mondays and Thursdays from 8:30am-11:00am for in person support.
6. **Social Service Day** at the Sebastopol Library every third Tuesday of the Month. Next one is October 17, 2023 from 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm

**City of Sebastopol
Homeless Services Outreach Coordinator (HSOC)**

August 2023 Report

Submitted: September 1, 2023 by Maria Rico

Refer people without homes to Coordinated Entry as proper:

Introduction

As HSOC, my primary responsibility is to identify and aid homeless individuals in our community. This report outlines the referrals and services provided to homeless individuals over the past month.

Referrals to Coordinated Entry and CNS Shelter in Guerneville and COTS Mary Isaacs in Petaluma

In August, the homeless outreach efforts yielded significant results. Four more individuals were successfully enrolled into Coordinated Entry. Additionally, 2 individuals were referred to the shelter in Guerneville and were admitted shortly after being referred, 2 individuals had been referred to COTS Mary Isaacs shelter in Petaluma on 7/24/2023 and they were finally admitted successfully on Tuesday 8/29/2023.

This successful outcome exemplifies the effectiveness of Coordinated Entry efforts and the importance of collaboration between different organizations and specialists. The COTS staff were exceptional and welcoming to our unsheltered from Sebastopol and encouraged them to give it one night when they kept changing their minds about staying in the shelter throughout the intake process. It reaffirms the significance of providing housing and support to those experiencing chronic homelessness, enabling them to achieve positive and transformative changes in their lives.

Represent WCCS at relevant meetings:

As part of my role as HSOC, I have been representing West County Community Services (WCCS) at relevant meetings in the community. This report outlines the meetings I have attended and the information shared on behalf of WCCS.

Coordinated Entry Meetings, Every Friday 11am-12:30 or 1pm

Throughout July, I actively represented my agency in various relevant meetings, particularly in the Coordinated Entry (CE) gatherings. On August 22 from 10:30 am-11:30 am the presentation of the Quarterly Evaluation Report for CE by Manuel Galvan from Home First stated that the total of enrollments in the entire County of Sonoma are 1,434 Individuals, 271 Families and 174 Transitional Aged Youth (TAY). The percentage of individuals enrolled by gender is: 56.48% Male, 42.16 % Female and 1.10 % Gender nonconforming. The percentages enrolled by Race is: 70.31% White, 3.83% Unknown, 0.97% Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, 7.80% Mixed Race, 7.05% Black, African American or African, 1.45% Asian or Asian American, 8.59% American Indian or Alaskan Native or Indigenous, 76.61% are Non-Hispanic/Latin(o)(a)(x) and 22.03% are Hispanic/Latin(o)(a)(x). The percentage of individuals placed in the Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) Range is 16.96%, Rapid Re-housing 24.05% and Middle Range is 58.99%. The ones scoring in the Middle Range 58.99% will never be offered any housing placement through the CE prioritization list but they do help identify the number of unhoused in each area of Sonoma County which determines how the funding is distributed according to those numbers.

Sebastopol Homeless Support Meeting August 23, 2023 11am-noon

During the meeting, I had the opportunity to present the results of my homeless outreach efforts in the community, as outlined in the previous report. The attendees were updated on the progress made in enrolling individuals into Coordinated Entry and referrals to the CNS shelter in Guerneville and COTS

Mary Issacs in Petaluma. Additionally, the challenges faced in finding suitable placements and the dedication to improving support services were emphasized.

As the Homeless Outreach Coordinator for the greater Sebastopol area, I presented the data outlined in the Quarterly Report for Coordinated Entry released the day before this meeting as stated above. It is important to be transparent about the possibilities of housing options in order to problem solve a realistic plan for housing with each individual we serve.

Although most of the housing projects that are up and running have been filled there is more big projects in process of opening for Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) including 29 units at Elderberry Commons in Sebastopol which may open this Winter. This project will be filled through the Coordinated Entry by-names-list from the top down when it opens since the property will belong to the County of Sonoma who has contracted WCCS to oversee the project and offer Case Management Services.

Coordinated Entry Veterans, Sandra Stolfi LCSW

Sandra Stolfi is the Coordinated Entry Specialist at the VA Health Care System in San Francisco. Sandra reached out to me to complete a HUDVASH Screening for every Veteran that I've added to the Coordinated Entry by-names-list. When completing the screening they are scored and placed at the top of the list based on vulnerability. I have successfully completed 3 HUDVASH Screenings and they have been placed at the top of the list.

I attended a meeting run by Sandra Stolfi via Zoom on August 9, 2023 from 10:30 am- 12 pm. This meeting gave me the opportunity to work with all government run services for veterans including Nation's Finest, Robinson House leaders and Case Managers for veterans. Will Van Sant, LCSW is the assigned Social Worker for all of the veterans in our area including Sonoma, Mendocino and Lake County.

Kate Mather from Nations Finest is Coordinating to send VA Employment services to the Sebastopol Christian Church's Barnabas program on Thursdays as they are available. Will Van Sant already showed up to meet one of our homeless veterans and gave him a free phone. He will return with more for our veterans when he is available.

Leadership coordination of services:

Throughout the reporting period, I have taken on a leadership role in distributing services to various vulnerable populations in the greater Sebastopol area. My commitment to addressing homelessness and supporting low-income families has led me to make myself available by phone or email, ensuring a prompt response to the needs of individuals at risk of homelessness or already experiencing it. In my role as a leader coordinating the distribution of services for homeless and low-income families in Sebastopol, I have been steadfastly committed to community education and collaboration. I have actively engaged in educating both the community and partnering agencies about the intricacies of accessing services, consistently identifying persistent barriers within the system. Furthermore, I have proactively proposed innovative solutions to address these challenges, fostering a more inclusive and efficient support network for those in need. My leadership has not only facilitated greater awareness but also driven tangible progress in enhancing service accessibility and effectiveness for our vulnerable populations.

Develop relationships with clients and connect them to services:

My role in developing relationships with clients and connecting them to services has resulted in a significant achievement. Specifically, I successfully facilitated the admissions of a senior woman and her adult disabled son, who had been the subject of numerous concerned-filled emails, into a shelter with winter accommodations and access to comprehensive wrap-around services. Although the process was arduous and challenging, their trust in me played a pivotal role in their decision to give this opportunity a

genuine chance. This achievement stands as a testament to the collective effort of all those who provided support during their most challenging times while surviving on the streets and persevering through the harsh winter.

Develop a citywide services matrix, including relevant county services, to inform housed and unhoused communities about the type and availability of services:

As HSOC, I continue to distribute the updated Sebastopol Resource Guide to unhoused individuals and other providers in the community.

Rather than pursuing the development of a citywide matrix, I have chosen to implement a more accessible and dynamic approach. In my next report I will introduce the concept of a newsletter designed to enhance communication and resource dissemination. This newsletter will be distributed via email to our partnering agencies and will also include physical copies distributed directly to the unhoused community. This initiative aims to establish a vital channel of communication, ensuring that both our partnering agencies and those in need are kept well-informed about evolving resources and changes within our support network. By opting for this newsletter, we aspire to foster a more responsive and inclusive platform for updates on available services, thereby promoting enhanced outreach and support for our community.

In line with our resource constraints, the newsletter will be updated and printed either on a monthly or bi-monthly basis, contingent upon the availability of funds. This flexible approach will allow us to consistently provide valuable information to our community while managing our resources effectively. Within the newsletter, I am committed to including crucial announcements from various agencies, such as our Barnabas program, Sebastopol Library, and the Sebastopol Police Department. These updates will encompass a wide spectrum of information that directly impacts the homeless community, fostering a comprehensive and responsive communication channel for all stakeholders.

By incorporating contributions from these key agencies, the newsletter will serve as a holistic source of vital information, ensuring that the unhoused community remains informed about relevant resources, services, and opportunities. This collaborative effort emphasizes our commitment to facilitating community empowerment and fostering a sense of inclusivity, where everyone has access to the essential information they need to improve their quality of life and navigate the support network effectively.

Increase citywide understanding of rules and laws:

My efforts to enhance citywide understanding of rules and laws have been notably bolstered by the implementation of our informative newsletter, as detailed above. This initiative, supported by an evolving and constructive partnership with the Sebastopol Police Department (SPD), has enabled us to disseminate essential legal and regulatory information effectively. By collaboratively highlighting key updates and education content within the newsletter, we aim to foster a greater awareness and adherence to rules and laws within our community. The forthcoming section of this report will delve into the promising developments in our relationship with the SPD, illustrating how this collaboration is contributing to our shared goal of promoting civic understanding and compliance.

Partner with City staff and first responders in homeless response:

My recent partnership engagement with citywide responders has taken a significant step forward, initiated by a proactive outreach from the Chief of Police Ron Nelson and Captain Jim Hickey, who expressed their interest in collaborating more closely. In response, I arranged for my Director Danielle Danforth to

attend the meeting scheduled with Chief Nelson and Captain Hickey of SPD, which took place at the Police Department on August 30, 2023 from 10am to 11am. During this meeting, we provided an in-depth overview of our Outreach efforts, shedding light on a noteworthy development—the financial support for my role as the Homeless Outreach Coordinator. Specifically, we highlighted that my paycheck is now shared equally, with 50% funded by the City of Sebastopol and 50% by the County of Sonoma. This arrangement not only contributes to the economic recovery of Sebastopol but also ensures the continued provision of my full-time, 40-hour role. Additionally, we solidified plans to conduct weekly ride-alongs with a patrol officer, dedicating 3-4 hours per week to this collaborative effort, commencing in the first Thursday of September in the afternoons and every Thursday afternoon moving forward. This strategic partnership signifies our commitment to fostering a more integrated and responsive approach to community outreach and support.

Develop volunteer/civic engagement opportunities around homelessness:

As part of my ongoing efforts to provide support and assistance to individuals experiencing homelessness, I actively participate in the Sebastopol Library's Social Worker Day, which takes place every third Tuesday of the month from 1:30 pm to 3 pm.

During these monthly sessions, I have been able to address critical documentation needs by providing one individual with an affidavit for their birth certificate. This month I provided 2 birth certificate affidavits and 2 ID Vouchers during the Social Worker event. I also provided information about how to obtain Crisis Funds and what is needed to do so. This simple yet essential step is crucial in enabling individuals to access various services and benefits. I also provided a 3rd ID Voucher during my outreach efforts outside of this event for a total of 3 ID Vouchers this month and bus passes to get it done.

My ongoing participation in this initiative reinforces our commitment to working collaboratively with community partners to provide comprehensive and compassionate support to individuals experiencing homelessness. By leveraging these opportunities, we can continue making a positive impact on the lives of those in need, fostering an inclusive and caring environment for all members of our community.

Safe Parking:

I am delighted to report a significant milestone in our homeless outreach efforts. The Safe Parking program at the Sebastopol Community Church is still at full occupancy, with a total of six individuals now safely accommodated in designated parking spaces, and an additional two individuals occupying the HUTs (Homeless Utility Trailers) on site.

One of the Safe Parking spaces was rotated. I was able to help obtain a Section 8 Voucher with the Sonoma County Housing Authority (SCHA) for one of the females who was in the Safe Parking program and her minor son which is now in process. Another woman who desperately needed a Safe Place to park her large van was able to come to me to ask for help and I was happy to put her in that recently open parking space. I am also happy to inform you that I was able to obtain a second SCHA Section 8 Voucher for one of our HUT occupants who is aged out of TAY and a 3rd SCHA Section 8 Voucher for another individual who also aged out of TAY that's now sleeping on the streets of Sebastopol. In reality the 2 individuals and the mother with a son fall in the 58.99% Middle Range that would not likely be offered housing placement through the Coordinated Entry system. This is a huge win for the Sebastopol area since WCCS obtained a total of 5 SCHA Section 8 Vouchers for the West County area and I was able to secure 3 out of those 5 for the unhoused in Sebastopol.

September 2023 Goals

- * Enroll/Update the homeless individuals/families in Coordinated Entry for the housing prioritization list.
- * Attend Coordinated Entry meetings every Friday from 11am-12:30 pm to advocate for the homeless individuals from Sebastopol who were placed on the housing prioritization list as they come up.
- * Begin Outreach Ride-alongs with SPD patrol every Thursday afternoon
- * Complete a Newsletter and distribute by October 1st.
- * Outreach at the Sebastopol Christian Church Mondays and Thursdays from 8:30am-11am.
- * Attend by-weekly meetings for Veterans on Coordinated Entry with Sandra Stolfi
- * Attend Sebastopol Homeless Services Meeting on Wednesday September 20 from 11am
- * Attend WCCS Case Management Meeting on September 6 from 9:30am-10:30am
- * Attend Social Worker Day on Tuesday September 26, 2023 from 1:30pm-3pm
- * Moving forward my shifts will be Monday through Friday from 8:30am-5pm but may vary from there depending on client's needs. I can be reached at (707) 888-3804 or maria.rico@westcountyservices.org

City of Sebastopol
Homeless Services Outreach Coordinator (HSOC)
September 2023 Report
Submitted: October 4, 2023 by Maria Rico

Refer people without homes to Coordinated Entry as proper:

Introduction

As HSOC, my primary responsibility is to identify and aid homeless individuals in our community. This report outlines the referrals and services provided to homeless individuals over the past month. Referrals to Coordinated Entry and CNS Shelter in Guerneville and The Rose Shelter

In August, the homeless outreach efforts yielded significant results. **Five** more individuals were successfully enrolled into Coordinated Entry. Additionally, **2** individuals were referred to the CNS shelter in Guerneville and were admitted shortly after being referred, **2** individuals had been referred to the women’s shelter in Santa Rosa called The Rose, with the Redwood Gospel Mission. One of the women who was successfully admitted to The Rose was admitted through a back-door entrance with Lisa Diaz from Verity who specializes in helping Human Trafficking victims in Sonoma County. The second referral to The Rose was also guided by Shannon from Verity who specializes in helping survivors of domestic violence.

This successful outcome exemplifies the effectiveness of Coordinated Entry efforts and the importance of collaboration between different organizations and specialist. It reaffirms the significance of providing housing and support to those experiencing chronic homelessness, enabling them to achieve positive and transformative changes in their lives.

Represent WCCS at relevant meetings:

As part of my role as HSOC, I have been representing West County Community Services (WCCS) at relevant meetings in the community. This report outlines the meetings I have attended and the information shared on behalf of WCCS.

Coordinated Entry Meetings, Every Friday 11am-12:30 or 1pm

Throughout September, I actively represented my agency in various relevant meetings, particularly in the Coordinated Entry (CE) gatherings. I am happy to inform you that I was successful in placing **three** individuals during the month of September in housing placement through Coordinated Entry. One individual was placed in Rapid Re-Housing (**RRH**) after being mitigated down the list to score in the rapid re-housing range. One individual was enrolled in Coordinated Entry on 6/22/2023 and was offered a Permanent Supportive Housing (**PSH**) on 9/15/2023 in a small to mid-size studio in Santa Rosa. The third one was a young man around 19 years old who was enrolled in Coordinated Entry as a Transitional Aged Youth (**TAY**) on 9/25/2023 and offered a **PSH** with TLC’s transitional housing program on 9/29/2023.

Coordinated Entry Veterans, Sandra Stolfi LCSW

Sandra Stolfi is the Coordinated Entry Specialist at the VA Health Care System in San Francisco. I attended a meeting run by Sandra Stolfi via Zoom on September 6, 2023 from 10:30 am- 12 pm. This meeting gave me the opportunity to work with all government run services for veterans including Nation’s Finest, Robinson House leaders and Outreach Case Managers for veterans. Will Van Sant, LCSW is the assigned Outreach Social Worker for all of the veterans in our area including Sonoma, Mendocino and Lake County.

Will Van Sant and a HUDVASH Case Manager came to the Sebastopol Christian Church’s Barnabas program to do Outreach and get to know our unsheltered veterans in the area. Will gave one a sleeping bag and made some phone calls to start the process of getting another one into Robinson House for the winter and securing a HUDVASH Voucher for another homeless veteran. The HUDVASH Case Manager Diana from Nations Finest was successful in contacting one of our veterans who has a voucher and a deadline to meet to implement his voucher on a housing placement. This veteran is also being offered the opportunity of applying for the next HUT available at the

Sebastopol Community Church. We are scheduled to do an interview with the church staff for them to decide if they will accept him in the HUT this Friday 10/6/2023.

Leadership coordination of services:

Throughout the reporting period, I have taken on a leadership role in distributing services to various vulnerable populations in the greater Sebastopol area. My commitment to addressing homelessness and supporting low-income families has led me to make myself available by phone or email, ensuring a prompt response to the needs of individuals at risk of homelessness or already experiencing it.

In my role as a leader coordinating the distribution of services for homeless and low-income families in Sebastopol, I have been steadfastly committed to community education and collaboration. I have actively engaged in educating both the community and partnering agencies about the intricacies of accessing services, consistently identifying persistent barriers within the system. Furthermore, I have proactively proposed innovative solutions to address these challenges, fostering a more inclusive and efficient support network for those in need. My leadership has not only facilitated greater awareness but also driven tangible progress in enhancing service accessibility and effectiveness for our vulnerable populations.

Develop relationships with clients and connect them to services:

My role in developing relationships with clients and connecting them to services has resulted in a significant achievement. Specifically, I successfully facilitated the admissions of two vulnerable women into an all-women's shelter as mentioned above. I successfully placed in Rapid Re-Housing one vulnerable woman who is recovery from recent server trauma and one young man who is vulnerable in more ways than he realizes. I was also effective in providing food assistance through meals and assist with CalFresh issues for 5 individuals this month and out of 9 Crisis Funds Request, 5 were approved and paid for. This was possible due to the levels of trust and reputation I am gaining in the unhoused community about how much effectively I can direct and coordinate the distribution of services in the area.

Develop a citywide services matrix, including relevant county services, to inform housed and unhoused communities about the type and availability of services:

As HSOC, I continue to distribute the updated Sebastopol Resource Guide to unhoused individuals and other providers in the community.

Rather than pursuing the development of a citywide matrix, I have chosen to implement a more accessible and dynamic approach. Attached to this report I am introducing the October 2023 Outreach Newsletter that works more as a tool for our unhoused and at-risk of homelessness. It will also help spread awareness in the community about what is being done around them to help those in need. The concept of a newsletter designed to enhance communication and resource dissemination. This newsletter will be distributed via email to our partnering agencies and physical copies have been distributed directly to the unhoused community since last week. The response to the newsletter was of gratitude for creating a tool they can use throughout the month for guidance on services offered in Sebastopol and how they can help themselves. This initiative aims to establish a vital channel of communication, ensuring that both our partnering agencies and those in need are kept well-informed about evolving resources and changes within our support network. By opting for this newsletter, we aspire to foster a more responsive and inclusive platform for updates on available services, thereby promoting enhanced outreach and support for our community.

Increase citywide understanding of rules and laws:

My efforts to enhance citywide understanding of rules and laws have been notably bolstered by the implementation of our informative newsletter, as detailed above. This initiative, supported by an evolving and constructive partnership with the Sebastopol Police Department (SPD), has enabled us to disseminate essential legal and regulatory information effectively. By collaboratively highlighting key updates and education content within the newsletter, we aim to foster a greater awareness and adherence to rules and laws within our community. I have emailed Sergeant Dack Thompson a copy of the newsletter and communicated to him my willingness to put any announcements from the SPD to the unhoused community that could help them avoid adding more problems to their situation. The forthcoming section of this report will delve into the promising developments in our relationship with

the SPD, illustrating how this collaboration is contributing to our shared goal of promoting civic understanding and compliance.

Partner with City staff and first responders in homeless response:

My recent partnership engagement with citywide responders has taken a significant step forward, I have been checking in with Sergeant Dack Thompson on a weekly basis to collaborate our efforts with the unsheltered individuals. Sergeant Dack Thompson's unwavering dedication in supporting one of our community's most vulnerable survivors of human trafficking shines brightly. With immense patience and a deep understanding of the ongoing trauma she faces, Sergeant Thompson engaged in compassionate dialogue to address her severe mental health challenges. When the time was right for the survivor to access crucial services, I was able to join the conversation and, within just 10 minutes, gently convinced her to transition into an all-women's shelter. Determined to ensure her safety and comfort, I swiftly coordinated with victim services to secure a back-door entrance to the shelter. Thanks to Sergeant Thompson's exemplary commitment and quick action, he secured permission from his Captain and Chief of police to personally transport her, providing her with a sense of safety and assurance in her new living situation—all achieved efficiently and promptly on a Friday afternoon from 2-3pm. Moving forward, Sergeant Dack Thompson and I have decided to change our outreach time to better fit both our schedules and work flow to Wednesday mornings and by phone throughout the week. This strategic partnership signifies our commitment to fostering a more integrated and responsive approach to community outreach and support.

Success Stories

In a powerful testament to collaboration, a homeless individual on parole and at high risk for recidivism bravely reached out to me via text seeking help. Quickly springing into action, I arranged for a nourishing lunch bag to be waiting for him at the Sebastopol Police Department, offering sustenance for the day. On 3/29/2023, after a referral to the shelter in Guerneville, he was swiftly accepted and I made sure he had a meal and a bus pass for the journey. Coordinating seamlessly with our outreach team in Guerneville, we ensured a smooth transition into the shelter. Fast forward to September 21, 2023, and this individual had astonishing news—he had not only thrived, but he had become a case manager, guiding others towards recovery. His journey saw him successfully complete a residential treatment program, evolve into a substance abuse counselor, triumph over parole, secure a home and a car, and dedicate his life to assisting the vulnerable unhoused community in Vallejo, California. In a heartening turn of events, he sought collaboration once more, this time to aid a domestic violence survivor in need. Although circumstances changed, his story stands as a beacon of hope, showcasing resilience, gratitude, and the transformative power of collective support in overcoming adversity.

Develop volunteer/civic engagement opportunities around homelessness:

As part of my ongoing efforts to provide support and assistance to individuals experiencing homelessness, I actively participate in the Sebastopol Library's Social Worker Day, which takes place every third Tuesday of the month from 1:30 pm to 3 pm. This month it took place on the fourth Tuesday of the month due to conflicting events in the big room at the Library. Moving forward the event will continue to be every third Tuesday of the month.

During these monthly sessions, I have been able to address critical documentation needs by providing one individual with an affidavit for their birth certificate. This month I provided 3 birth certificate affidavits and 3 ID Vouchers during the Social Worker event. I also provided a 3 more ID Voucher during my outreach efforts outside of this event for a total of 6 ID Vouchers this month and bus passes to get it done. I was also able to get out the first version of my October Outreach Newsletter and get feedback from the unsheltered community on how to improve the format and organization of the newsletter to make it more useful to them as a tool.

My ongoing participation in this initiative reinforces our commitment to working collaboratively with community partners to provide comprehensive and compassionate support to individuals experiencing homelessness. By leveraging these opportunities, we can continue making a positive impact on the lives of those in need, fostering an inclusive and caring environment for all members of our community.

Safe Parking:

The Safe Parking program at the Sebastopol Community Church has one Safe Parking space available! Unfortunately, I had to terminate one of the Safe Parkers on 10/3/2023 after careful review and compliance monitoring. It came to our attention that he had not consistently utilized the safe parking facility as required, failing to use it seven night a week as stipulated by the program guidelines. Ensuring consistent participation is vital for the effective functioning of the program, maintaining safety, and promoting a secure environment for all program participants. In light of the persistent non-compliance with the program's fundamental requirement of utilizing the safe parking space on a daily basis, we had no choice but to terminate his participation from the Safe Parking Program.

After a review of the Safe Parking Program, the Sebastopol Community Church Board and Staff involved in the process, decided to go back to having 3 Safe Parkers and 2 HUT individuals with new requirements such as, they must have a working cell phone to receiving messages regarding the new bathroom codes or other notifications or reminders the church staff would like to send as needed.

We have a total of **two** individuals now safely accommodated in designated parking spaces, and one individual occupying one of the HUTs (Homeless Utility Trailers) on site.

In a heartwarming update, another HUT four a resident on October 1, 2023, marking a pivotal success. Currently, I am in the process of extending this opportunity to the homeless veteran, as previously mentioned. The previous HUT occupant triumphed, successfully navigating the Whole Person Care process and gaining entry into Sonoma County Behavioral Health. Furthermore, he established crucial primary care through West County Health Center's 3rd Street House and their impactful "Health for the Homeless" program. Remarkably, he secured full-time employment in construction, allowing him to soon receive a Sonoma County Housing Authority Section 8 Voucher, a testament to his resilience and determination. Grateful for the support provided during challenging times, this individual who is in his late 20's, is now on a trajectory towards a thriving life.

September 2023 Goals

- * Enroll/Update the homeless individuals/families in Coordinated Entry for the housing prioritization list.
- * Attend Coordinated Entry meetings every Friday from 11am-12:30 pm to advocate for the homeless individuals from Sebastopol who were placed on the housing prioritization list as they come up.
- * Continue Outreach Efforts in Collaboration with SPD patrol every Wednesday morning.
- * Continue updating and distributing the Outreach Newsletter.
- * Outreach at the Sebastopol Christian Church Mondays and Thursdays from 8:30am-Noon.
- * Attend by-weekly meetings for Veterans on Coordinated Entry with Sandra Stolfi
- * Attend Sebastopol Homeless Services Meeting on Wednesday October 18 at 11am.
- * Attend WCCS Case Management Meeting on October 4 from 9:30am-10:30am
- * Attend Social Worker Day on Tuesday October 17, 2023 from 1:30pm-3pm
- * Moving forward my shifts will be Monday through Friday from 8:30am-5pm but may vary from there depending on client's needs. I can be reached at (707) 888-3804 or maria.rico@westcountyservices.org

DATA POINTS	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Cumulative/Non-Cumulative	et
# Of new people contacted (un-duplicated number)	6	26	14	6	5	8	4	7	non-cumulative	
# Of camps citywide	6	4	13	16	10	4	2	3	non-cumulative	
# Of camps pre sweep	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	non-cumulative	
# Of RVs on Morris St , Laguna Pkwy & Palm St., or other areas in seb	3	7	14	11	2	3	2	2	non-cumulative	
# of other vehicles Morris St, Laguna Pkwy & Greater seb. area	8	16	21	23	4	5	2	3	non-cumulative	
# Of people housed by WCCS (shelters, ACS/NCS, family)	50	51	54	55	56	57	61	63	cumulative	
# Of people displaced (returning to Morris)	1	2	4	1	3	2	2	1	non-cumulative	
# Referrals/requests for outreach service (Seb.City, SPD, and community)	17	15	6	3	4	8	4	6	non-cumulative	
# Of Housing referrals	5	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	non-cumulative	
# Food Assistance/referrals	8	10	5	7	2	2	5	5	non-cumulative	
# of people accessing benefits (SNAP, Cal-Fresh, UI Benefits, SSI, GA,)	3	5	12	8	2	2	2	3	non-cumulative	
# Of healthcare referrals (includes IMDT refs)	2	1	10	2	1	1	2	1	non-cumulative	
# Expired Registrations (Morris and Laguna, & Greater Seb. Area)	3	3	0	6	4	1	1	3	non-cumulative	
# Registration Renewals (WCCS fund req. submitted)	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	non-cumulative	
other types of assistance (Zoom appts, other programs/services) ie taking people to court, etc	2	5	2	2	2	5	2	1	non-cumulative	
# Of Volunteers hours (6 vol. x 9 wks. x 4hr shifts)	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	non-cumulative	
Community Engagement Mtgs (SAVS, WCHA, City Council, neighborhood meetings)	10	4	3	2	2	3	2	5	non-cumulative	
# of people who became un-housed in sebastopol	2	4	6	1	1	1	3	0	non-cumulative	
# of people who became un-housed in cities other than sebastopol	1	4	2	2	3	2	1	2	non-cumulative	
# of people enrolled in Coordinated Entry		12	9	6	8	6	4	5	non-cumulative	

Memo

From: Una JM Glass, Sebastopol/West County COC Board Member

To: Sebastopol City Council

Date: 10/03/2023

Regarding: Sonoma County Continuum of Care update -

The Continuum of Care (CoC) is Sonoma County's collaborative effort at representing the homeless services system of care. This system of care includes local governments, nonprofits, faith-based organizations, and business. Governed by a seventeen-member Continuum of Care Board, the countywide effort is responsible for oversight of funds awarded to the Continuum of Care **plus**, planning/policy development for addressing homelessness countywide, regardless of funding source. Governed by the COC's Charter, and mandated to exist by the Federal Government, the Board consists of local elected officials and appointees, nonprofit representatives, and subject matter experts, as well as individuals with lived homeless experience. The Sebastopol City Council is the entity responsible for appointing a representative to the COC Board to represent the interests of west county – i.e. the Fifth Supervisorial District. The Sebastopol City Council appointed former City Council Member, Una Glass, to the COC West County seat in December of 2022.

Recent CoC Board Activity

Over the past quarter much of the COC's work has focused on preparing the policies and structure for the next NOFA (Notice of Funding Availability) round to avoid the problems that occurred during the July 2023 NOFA round that suffered from ill defined process, lack of accurate data, and general dysfunction. A lot of progress has been made toward a better process for the next NOFA round. Additionally, the COC has been reviewing many housekeeping items at its board meetings such as, approving compliance filings that get sent to HUD and updating minor charter revisions. The COC also has engaged in the list of activities below.

System Performance Measures - System Performance reports for the past year have been submitted to HUD and can be viewed at the link below:

<https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/health-and-human-services/health-services/divisions/homelessness-services/what-we-know-about-homelessness/homeless-data>

COC staff, with input and review from COC Board members, are working to develop *better and more transparent* "system performance measures". These "measures" are data that show how well Sonoma County's system of care is doing in its mission to care for the unhoused and significantly reduce the incidence of homelessness. Staff, with input from the Board, is working to ensure that the COC is much more data informed in its decision making and has defined a three step process to improve use of data.

PHASE 1 – Decide which data elements to use to evaluate system and program performance (to ultimately inform program and funding decisions).

PHASE 2 – How the data is used to educate and inform the public. This is the data visualization piece, planned to be brought to the CoC Board in October 2023.

PHASE 3 – How the data elements are used to inform System of Care decisions – how the data elements are presented, who and what is recommended for funding, and what quality of analysis goes into that. This needs to be done before the close of 2023 and be part of how the FY 24-25 Local Homelessness Services NOFA is developed, issued, and scored.

The COC Board recently approved the list of data elements that have been identified under Phase 1. Staff is now moving on to Phase 2 to design compelling and clear formats that will presenting these data in the future.

COC Communications Plan – COC staff leaders as well as Board members have identified the need for better communications. The Sonoma County Continuum of Care developed a 5-year Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness in 2022 (effective 2023-2027). The plan identified many important priorities and strategies, including implementing an effective communications approach as a Year One priority. County of Sonoma Department of Health Services’ (DHS’) Ending Homelessness Team established an internal staff group to guide the communications effort. The COC Board recently approved the team’s Communication Plan presented to the COC Board. The Plan included details regarding the key elements listed below:

- Social media posts and print media content;
- Regular opportunities for the public to speak with and ask questions of key officials within the System of Care, including members of the LEAP Board;
- A dashboard of data and key metrics associated with the System of Care), including comparisons to State and National data, as well as trends over the previous 3-year period;
- Progress made to date on the COC Strategic Plan;
- Content relevant to persons experiencing homelessness; and
- Content relevant to diverse audiences, using culturally competent methods and translations.

Of particular note is a planned website redesign that will present more thorough information to the public AND serve as a way for homeless individuals to access critical information regarding services.

Membership Meeting

The Sonoma County Continuum of Care has “members”. The City of Sebastopol is a “Member” of the COC. A membership meeting is held every quarter with the next membership meeting scheduled for October 19th 2023 from 1 to 4. The Agenda and Information about this meeting can be found on COC website. <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/quarterly-membership-meeting-october-19-2023> .

Warming Centers

The issue of “Warming & Cooling Centers” was discussed at a COC Board Meeting. Board Members, including Una Glass, expressed their desire for the COC to instigate an effort for coordination in provision of warming and cooling centers and in the system of reimbursement for these services from funding sources. These centers provide a lifeline to the unhoused when severe weather occurs. The Board directed staff to identify and work with stakeholders, County agencies and municipalities to prompt work on some sort of coordinated system.

Tribal Seat – With direction from the COC Board, staff is working to recruit an individual from the Sonoma County Native American community to sit on the COC Board. The Board has approved the addition of a seat specially for the Native American Community. This is important because the Native American community is disproportionately represented amongst the unhoused and the Native community has very particular needs.

Name Change – COC’s in many other communities have adopted more “user friendly” or clearer names. The COC Board has directed staff to develop alternatives names for the organization. For example, the COC might be called the Sonoma County Homelessness Alliance - or - the Sonoma County Collaborative to End Homelessness. Staff will be presenting alternatives to the Board along with the option to retain the same name.

Provider Presentations – Board meetings now include an agenda item for an individual provider to present information about their organization. We have heard from Share Sonoma County and Homeless Action Sonoma (HAS). These presentations are very informative.

Upcoming NOFA Next Steps - A first draft of a NOFA template is being developed for feedback in October 2023. After Board approval, staff plans to release the NOFA in December 2023/January 2024 to ensure enough time for review by the Funding and Evaluation Committee and CoC Board. The NOFA will be released even if funding amounts are not yet fully known.

Strategic Plan Progress - See **Lead Agency Initial 2023 Efforts** below for a table showing COC strategic plan implementation progress.

Lead Agency Initial 2023 Efforts	Plan id	Start Date	Projected End date	Assigned	Notes
In alignment with Built for Zero, establish a single By Names List to better serve all individuals experiencing homelessness in Sonoma County	3.6a	1/1/2023	9/1/2023	Thai	Target date of completion - September 2023. In progress. Presentation to CoC Board at August 2023 meeting.
Create a new vulnerability assessment, prioritization, and placement process to replace the VI-SPDAT that includes an analysis of individuals' housing strengths and results in equitable housing placement	3.7a	6/1/2023	12/31/2023	CE redesign working group	Home Base's Technical Assistance is helping with this effort. Meetings are taking place with providers for feedback on a weekly basis with Homebase. August update - meetings are being held with stakeholders.
Develop a robust communication strategy to keep the public and individuals experiencing homelessness more informed of services, policy changes, challenges, and successes	3.5a	5/1/2023	9/1/2023	Michael and Alea	An Internal DHS Workgroup is now meeting weekly to develop this strategy; focus is on website development and also communicating success stories. A redesigned website is in staging process and can be shared with CoC Board in September 2023. Success stories were circulated online via Public Affairs on the County Facebook page in July 2023.
Strengthen and prioritize the supportive services in the existing homeless response system	2.1 a+b	1/1/2023	Ongoing	Systemwide	The FY 2023-24 NOFA has attempted to start to address this. A draft NOFA will be developed by mid-September 2023 and shared with providers for feedback and discussed in person with all providers in the first week of October 2023.
Build an effective and equitable subregional street outreach model	2.5b	7/1/2023	12/31/2023	BFZ improvement team	In progress. Sonoma Valley is starting a subregional street outreach project funded by Measure O. Petaluma is also being funded by Measure O for a similar endeavor. Outreach teams are meeting as part of BFZ efforts as well.
Adopt a long-term funding strategy for homeless services	3.1b	1/1/2203	9/30/2023	Lead Agency and CoC Board	Reviewed at July 2023 CoC Board meeting. Targeted for another round of feedback at September CoC Board meeting. Utilization of Stella M, a HUD HMIS reporting/data visualization system, is being explored internally to provide a better way to look at how system flow and performance can be used in projecting long-term funding.
Ensure the system of care and its individual programs are evaluated based on key performance metrics	3.14a	1/1/2023	10/15/2023	F&E Committee	Internal working group has developed a metric template. Shared with providers in person at August meeting. Targeted for CoC Board review in September and then will be utilized in 23-24 NOFA (end of 2023)
Add 200 PSH and 100 non-congregate shelter beds	1.2a , 1.3a	1/1/2023	Tally by 12/31/2023	Systemwide	In Calendar 2023, the County of Sonoma added 87 NCS Beds. Catholic Charities/Burbank will add 30 NPLH PSH beds towards the end of June 2023. Studios at Montero added 60 PSH beds in May - June 2023. Housing inventory Chart reflected over 200 new PSH beds in 2023. Achieved for PSH.
Ensure an effective transition to Department of Health Services	N/A	1/15/2023	7/1/2023	Lead Agency	August update - contracts still in process of being transferred to DHS from CDC. All current contracts are now being processed through DHS. Continued integration of IMDT/HEART/EHT via in-person all hands meetings.

Regional Homelessness Services and Programs Report – as of August 2023

Santa Rosa

A camping ordinance went to Santa Rosa City council and there will be a second reading on August 22nd – if passed a second time, the ordinance will be effective in September. It is similar to Rohnert Park’s camping ordinance. The ordinance includes locations where camping is not allowed under any situation, as well as rules and conduct regulations when camping does occur due to not enough available beds.

The City of Santa Rosa received a State Encampment Resolution Fund (ERF) award. The related agreements were approved in August, and the city is still waiting for the funds to arrive. They are strategizing to determine how they are going to meet the spending requirements (ERF funds need to be spent down 50% by June of 2024).

The City of Santa Rosa has been participating in homelessness prevention discussions with All Home and Bay Area Community Services and are working with County partners on a homelessness prevention program. The City will be putting out an RFP for HOME-ARP funds (about \$2,400,000), and one of the eligible uses is homelessness prevention.

Rohnert Park

Rohnert Park recently secured a Pro-Housing designation by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). This gives a competitive advantage to jurisdictions that appropriately promote the development of affordable housing. There are now four Pro-Housing Designees in Sonoma County.

RP funds five major homelessness programs:

- **Master Lease PSH program with Catholic Charities.** Uses rooms at The Palms in a PSH environment. Graham Thomas and Dan Madden are the leads with Catholic Charities.
- **HOST Team – Catholic Charities.** Outreach in RP specifically – three persons dedicated to RP, four days per week with one office day.
- **SHARE Sonoma County.** SHARE (Laurie Mitchell and Rey Robles) provides coordination and support services to three master leased homes in Rohnert Park. Two families and one single in one of the RP homes. Housed ten people in the recent three-week period.
- **Unsheltered Friends Outreach (UFO).** Lisa Tassano – “most important part of the service is feeding people to meet people,” are also going out with home-cooked meals 2 days a week, mobile shower 1x a week, clothing and toiletries. “The most important thing is that we teach folks to move forward in life to feel good about themselves, take care of themselves...” “new experience to work with clients who are housed ... you can get someone a beautiful place and People need a lot more mentorship and support” to stay housed.
- **HomeFirst Safe Sleeping location.** Staff provides supportive services 16 hours a day, goal is placement into long-term housing. About 25 residents there in August.

Labath Landing. 60 units of interim housing. Referrals to Labath can be off of the By Names List. UFO and HOST can also make referrals. LL Office # is 707-237-2640. Alison Johnson-Carney is the new HomeFirst Community Engagement coordinator. Alison hosts workshops regularly at LL, including art sessions and resume writing. Volunteering or donating to the LL program contact information is at labathinfo@homefirstsc.org.

Petaluma and South Sonoma County

Petaluma's news involves a new component to Street Outreach that brings in HomeFirst to perform work outlined within the City's homelessness strategic plan. The new programming focusses on the community's roughly 100 person By Names List, and includes activities like landlord engagement. As HomeFirst starts work, the City and its partners will work to make sure that services are not being duplicated.

HomeFirst's work may involve integration with the City of Sonoma, to manage a BNL there as well. One of the current providers of outreach, the Downtown Streets Team (DST) may start to focus more on job training and workforce development, as HomeFirst focuses on the BNL. Please see the linked Year 1 Dashboard that consultant Andrew Hening has developed to focus community attention and efforts on the BNL: <https://share.sonoma-county.org/link/XkO8jvrZJKs/>

At COTS, staff is working on a new expansion of PSH programming, funded in part by Measure O and Providence Health Care. COTS will enter into a few master leases, but is looking for leads on more. At the Studios at Montero (SAM), a Project Homekey-2 PSH Project, 58 of the 60 total units filled. Residents housed there are a mix – SAM has seniors and TAY and families. More services and programming is coming to the site, as specific client needs are better known. The County's Project Homekey IMDT Cohort is visiting SAM, with up to two drug and alcohol abuse counselors visiting the site in person.

PPSC (Petaluma Peoples Services Center), is working (along with COTS, the Petaluma PD, Providence, Kaiser, and the County) on a model called "Sober Circle." The program helps provide additional support and recovery resources to individuals who are willing and ready to become sober. At SAM, PPSC and others are noting that the high numbers of seniors necessitate a different type of case management – it may focus less on job training and more on, for example, In Home Supportive Services and elder care. PPSC asks that the Continuum of Care continue to focus on this issue of the growing ranks of housing-vulnerable seniors in Sonoma County.

Healdsburg and North County

The L&M Village in Healdsburg (Project Homekey-2 interim housing site) is currently at full capacity and all construction is complete with clients successfully exiting the program. The next quarterly update on the L&M comes to the Healdsburg City Council on September 5, 2023.

Healdsburg continues to work on new affordable housing projects, including the recently opened “The Randall” at the Mill District (41 residents who are <60% AMI) and the recently renovated and reopened apartments on Piper and University. Other projects in the pipeline include the Saggio Hills Affordable Housing project by Freebird Development, the Dry Creek Commons by Burbank Housing, and the North Village Affordable Housing being developed by Burbank Housing.

The City, in partnership with Reach for Home was also awarded \$200,000 for additional capital improvements to the L&M Village that will enhance resident services and \$141,000 in CDBG-CV for extended outreach in the North County and a laundry program for those experiencing homelessness.

The Northern Sonoma County Homelessness Task Force, formed by Supervisor Gore, also met this month, continuing the group’s work on implementing the Northern Sonoma County Homelessness strategies.

West County – from West County Community Services

Visitors to and residents of the Park Village community in Sebastopol will see important improvements, where the first swap-out of an older housing unit with a new Tiny Home has occurred. This is part of a larger effort by WCCS to replace older housing units with up to 8 new tiny homes of various sizes and scope. With one completed, they are now in the final phases of doing the next four units. WCCS will likely attempt to swap out one per month. WCCS received Measure O funding for about \$370,000 of these replacements and will work to convert them over time.

The first Tiny Home also has a tenant with a Sonoma County Housing Authority housing choice voucher, which is also an innovation with SCHA and tiny homes. This model may be replicated at other locations across Sonoma County, as wheeled (but anchored) and other tiny homes are used with housing choice and other vouchers to improve the financial sustainability of tiny home projects for persons with very low income.

The Guerneville Navigation Center continues its operations through the summer, with additional CoC funding approved for FY 23-24. The Navigation Center is fully funded to remain open for the entire fiscal year with a 24/7 navigation site.

On the Street Outreach front, in recent years, WCCS had 1 full-time outreach worker funded through the City of Sebastopol. Going forward, WCCS will have 2.5 outreach workers funded in part by the CDC, with the remainder funded through the City of Sebastopol. Current staffing is at 2.0 FTEs, with the greater Sebastopol area, and Guerneville/River Basin areas all covered. WCCS will hire the third FTE and then divide up the subregional street outreach zone in a different way. But for now, WCCS reports that WCCS has all of the areas covered where the highest numbers of people experiencing homelessness are congregated. When the third FTE comes on board, their focus will be on non-traditional sites.

Sonoma Valley

Homeless Action Sonoma is pleased to report that the Home and Safe Village now has about 20 clients on site, and has been open about three weeks now. One person has already been housed through CE (using an enhanced assessment) at Studios at Montero. Another ten folks are in the process of getting placed in new senior housing in Sonoma. HAS is pleased with recent MOUs with the Hanna Center and with local health providers to help with client care. There is a waiting list of 40 people to come into the Village. About 3-4 people per week will approach Village personnel for housing – almost all from Sonoma (Annie refers to them as the “hidden homeless”). All HAS Village clients are enrolled in CE, Medicare, IDs, EBT, HMIS. HAS currently has three caseworkers and 1-2 open positions.

City of Sonoma working on contracts with Petaluma to have a new street outreach and BNL effort via HomeFirst.

This information was included in the last report. It is included again in case readers may need a refresher in how the COC functions and what it is.

Background on COC Structure and Purpose

The Continuum of Care (CoC) is Sonoma County's collaborative effort representing the homeless services system of care. This system of care includes local governments, nonprofits, faith-based organizations, and businesses. Governed by a seventeen-member Continuum of Care Board, the countywide effort is responsible for oversight of funds designated to the Continuum of Care and planning/policy development for addressing homelessness countywide regardless of funding source. The Board consists of local elected officials and appointees, nonprofit representatives, subject matter experts, and individuals with lived homeless experience.

Every geographic area nationally (usually counties) is required by HUD/the federal government to establish a Continuum of Care Governance structure that includes three things: (1) A Lead Agency to manage the business of the CoC and support the CoC Board, (2) an entity to manage an HMIS (Homelessness Management Information System) system and select a federally approved HMIS software system, and (3) an entity/system that tracks unhoused individuals cases and that manages coordinated entry to the homeless system of care between jurisdictions and providers. In Sonoma County these entities are:

- The Lead Agency has been designated by the CoC Board as the County of Sonoma.
- The HMIS system has been designated by the CoC Board as the County which also contracts with a software vendor.
- The Coordinated Entry system maintenance and management has been designated by the CoC Board as nonprofit vendor, HomeFirst.

The CoC Board meets monthly via Zoom. Its agenda, reports and link to its meetings can be found [here](#). Additionally, the COC has subcommittees that include Board members and designated individuals from the community. Sebastopol/West County's COC representative is Una Glass, who is a member of the Funding and Evaluation Committee as well as a member of the governing Board.

The CoC Board adopted a 5 Year Strategic Plan in December of 2022. The plan was also adopted by the County of Sonoma Board of Supervisors. The Plan's three primary objectives are:

1. **Invest in more housing and prevention.** It is imperative to reduce the inflow of people into homelessness and create more pathways to long-term housing stability. Doing so will require investments in both homelessness prevention and housing solutions.
2. **Strengthen supportive services.** The current system of care strains to meet the complex and diverse supportive services needs of people in the community who are experiencing the crisis of homelessness. That strain is felt not only by people experiencing homelessness, but also by homeless service providers, who are overtaxed and under-resourced. Building supportive services capacity is critical to ease this strain and better meet the needs of those in a housing crisis.
3. **Operate as one coordinated system.** Sonoma is a large county with many local governments and a broad array of service providers and other stakeholders whose work directly or indirectly impacts homelessness. To achieve functional zero, partners across the

county must work to develop shared priorities, aligned investments, seamless coordination, and equitable solutions to the crisis of homelessness. (note: Functional Zero is that point when a community's homeless services system is able to prevent homelessness whenever possible and ensure that when homelessness does occur, it is rare, brief and one-time.)

These three goals are meant to guide the priorities of all the jurisdictions throughout the County.

The CoC also includes “memberships”. Some of the seats on the CoC Board are elected by member organizations. The member organizations are listed at the bottom of this report. The COC holds quarterly membership meetings that provide a venue for information exchange between members.

Voting Members of the Sonoma County Continuum of Care.

1. St Vincent de Paul
2. Santa Rosa Community Health
3. Interfaith Shelter Network
4. City of Santa Rosa
5. Disability Services and Legal Center (DSLCL)
6. City of Healdsburg
7. City of Petaluma
8. Sonoma County Office of Education, Education for Homeless Children and Youth
9. City of Cotati
10. Community Support Network
11. COTS- Committee on the Shelterless
12. West County Health Center
13. Homes 4 The Homeless
14. Face to Face
15. Food for Thought
16. Dry Creek Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians
17. West County Community Services
18. Providence
19. City of Rohnert Park
20. Redwood Gospel Mission
21. Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Santa Rosa
22. Kaiser Permanente
23. Petaluma Health Center
24. Social Advocates for Youth
25. DEMA Consulting and Management
26. City of Sebastopol
27. County of Sonoma
28. Nation's Finest
29. Homeless Action!
30. Rohnert Park Chamber of Commerce
31. Center Point Drug Abuse Alternatives Center
32. Burbank Housing
33. SAVS (Sonoma Applied Village Services)
34. Reach for Home
35. Homeless Action Sonoma
36. HomeFirst
37. The Living Room
38. NAACP Santa Rosa-Sonoma County
39. Town of Windsor

ACRONYMS & COMMON TERMS – Updated 11-2-2022

AAF	Annual Adjustment Factor	CTAC	Cities and Towns Advisory Committee
ACC	Annual Contributions Contract	DCSS	Department of Child Services
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act	DDA	Disposition and Development Agreement
AFFH	Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing	DHCS	Dept of Health Care Services (State dept)
AHA	Affordable Housing Agreement	DHS	Department of Health Services (County dept)
AHDA	Affordable Housing Development Assistance (Santa Rosa)	DSLCL	Disability Services and Legal Center
AHP	Affordable Housing Program (FHLB)	DST	Downtown Streets Team (Petaluma)
AMI	Area Median Income	EA	Environmental Assessment
APE	Area of Potential Effect	EIR	Environmental Impact Report (State)
ASHC	Affordable Housing and Sustainable	EIS	Environmental Impact Statement (Federal)
BHDC	Burbank Housing Development Corporation	ELI	Extremely Low Income
CalHFA	California Home Finance Agency	ENA	Exclusive Negotiating Agreement
Cal-ICH	CA Interagency Council on Homelessness	EOP	End of Participation
CAPIT	Child Abuse Prevention, Intervention and Treatment Fund	ERAP	Emergency Rental Assistance Program
CAPSC	Community Action Partnership Sonoma County	ESG	Emergency Solutions Grants (formerly Emergency Shelter Grants)
CASp	Certified Access Specialist	ESL	English as a Second Language
CBDO	Community-Based Development Organization	FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
CCC	Center for Community Change	FESG	Federal Emergency Shelter Grants Program
CCOC	Cloverdale Community Outreach Committee	FHA	Federal Housing Administration
CCofSR	Catholic Charities of Santa Rosa	FHANC	Fair Housing Advocates of Northern California
CDBG	Community Development Block Grant	FHIP	Fair Housing Initiatives Program
CDBG-CV	CDBG for Coronavirus Response	FHLB	Federal Home Loan Bank
CDBG-DR	CDBG for Disaster Recovery	FHP	Fair Housing Plan
CDC	Community Development Commission	FMR	Fair Market Rent
CE	Coordinated Entry	FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
CEF	California Equity Fund	FSS	Family Self-Sufficiency Program
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act	FY	Fiscal Year
CFH	County Fund for Housing	FYE	Fiscal Year End
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations	GAO	Government Accounting Office
CHAS	Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy	GR	Gross Rent
CHD	California Human Development Corporation	GSE	Government-Sponsored Enterprises
CHDC	California Housing Development Corporation	HAC	Housing Assistance Committee
CHDO	Community Housing Development Organization	HAP	Housing Assistance Plan
CHFA	California Home Finance Agency	HAS	Homeless Action Sonoma
CHRB	Community Housing Resource Board	HCD	Housing and Community Development (State of California)
CHRP-O	California Housing Rehabilitation Program for Owner-Occupied Housing	HCDA	Housing and Community Development Act
CHSC	Community Housing Sonoma County	HCV	Housing Choice Voucher
CIF	Community Investment Funds (FHLB)	HDS	Housing Discrimination Study
CLG	Centro Laboral de Graton (Graton Labor Center)	HEART	Homeless Encampment Access and Resource Team (County)
C of O	Certificate of Occupancy	HEAP	Homeless Emergency Assistance Program
CoC	Continuum of Care	HELP	Housing Enabled by Local Partnerships (funded by CalHFA)
COOP	Continuity of Operations	HERO	Helping Enrich Resource Opportunity
COTS	was "Committee on the Shelterless"	HEROS	HUD Environmental Review Online System
CPI	Child Parent Institute	HHAP	Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention
CRI	Community Resources for Independence	HHIP	Homeless Housing Incentive Program
CRLP	Commercial Rehabilitation Loan Program	HHSC	Health and Human Services Committee
CSF	Community Services Fund	HMDA	Home Mortgage Disclosure Act
CSHHP	California Self-Help Housing Program	HMIS	Homeless Management Information System
CSN	Community Support Network	HOME	Home Investment Partnerships Program
		HOPWA	Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS
		HOST	Homeless Outreach Service Team

ACRONYMS & COMMON TERMS – Updated 11-2-2022

HPRP	Housing Prevention Rapid Re-Housing Program	NIMBY	“Not in My Back Yard”
HQS	Housing Quality Standards	NOFA	Notice of Funding Availability
HSD	Human Services Department (County dept)	NOFO	Notice of Funding Opportunity
HUD	US Department of Housing and Urban Development	NOI-RROF	Notice of Intent to Request Release of Funds
HUD/202/811	HUD New Construction for Elderly/Handicapped	NPLH	No Place Like Home
HUD/236	HUD Mortgage Insurance & Interest Reduction Payment for Multi-Family Rental Projects	NSCS	North Sonoma County Services
HUD/8	HUD Section 8 New Construction Program	NSP	Neighborhood Stabilization Program
IG	Inspector General	OMB	Office of Management and Budget
IGR	Independent Group Residence	PASS	Plan for Achieving Self-Support
IIG	Infill and Infrastructure Grant	PBV	Project-Based Voucher
IMD	Institute of Mental Disease	PCC	Program Coordination Committee
IMDT	Interdepartmental Multi-Disciplinary Team	PHA	Public Housing Authority
InRESPONSE	Mental Health Response Team (Santa Rosa)	PHADA	Public Housing Authorities Directors Association
IOLERO	Independent Office of Law Enforcement Review and Outreach (County agency)	PHC	Partnership Health Plan California
IPA	Independent Public Accountant	PHM	Public Housing Manager
JPA	Joint Powers Authority	PHRA	Public Housing Reform Act of 1998
JRT	Joe Rodota Trail	PIC	Public and Indian Housing Information Center
LASC	Legal Aid of Sonoma County	PIH	Public and Indian Housing
LHA	Local Housing Authority	PI	Public Infrastructure (County department)
LI	Low Income	PII	Personal Identifiable Information
LIA	Live-In Aide	PJ	Participating Jurisdiction
LIHF	Low Income Housing Fund (San Francisco-based Fund Source)	PLHA	Permanent Local Housing Allocation
LISC	Local Initiatives Support Corporation	PMSA	Primary Metropolitan Statistical Area Established by the US Census
LMIHAF	Low and Moderate-Income Housing Asset Fund	PPSC	Petaluma People’s Service Center
LSA	Longitudinal Systems Analysis (HMIS)	PRA	Public Records Act
MAI	Member of the Appraisal Institute	PRMD	Permit & Resource Management Department (Sonoma County)
MAR	Monthly Activities Report	PS	Payment Standard
Measure O	¼ Cent Sales tax for housing/homelessness	PSA	Purchase and Sale Agreement
MHP	Multi-Family Housing Project (HCD)	PSH	Permanent Supportive Housing
MITCS	Multi-Family Tenant Characteristics System	PSIF	Preliminary Site Information Form (Part of the RECD Process)
MRBP	Mortgage Revenue Bond Program	PUD	Planned Unit Development
MSA	Metropolitan Statistical Area	QC	Quality Control
MSS	Mobile Supportive Services	QFHO	Qualified Fair Housing Organization
MWBE	Minority and Women’s Business Enterprises	QHWRA	Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998
MYFS	Mendocino Youth & Family Services	R&R	Reinvestment and Revitalization Fund
NAHB	National Association of Home Builders	RCAC	Rural Communities Assistance Corporation
NAHRO	National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials	RCF	Residential Care Facility
NAMI SC	National Alliance on Mental Illness Sonoma County	RDIP	Rental Development Incentive Program
NAREB	National Association of Real Estate Brokers	REAC	Real Estate Assessment Center (HUD)
NBOP	North Bay Organizing Project	RECDS	Rural Economic Community Development Service
NBVR	North Bay Veterans Resource Center	REFB	Redwood Empire Food Bank
NCCLF	Northern California Community Loan Fund	RFH	Reach for Home
NDP	Neighborhood Development Program	RFP	Request for Proposals
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act	RFQ	Request for Qualifications
NFHA	National Fair Housing Alliance	RHCP	Rental Housing Construction Program (State of California)
		RRH	Rapid Re-Housing
		RRP	Rental Rehabilitation Program
		RTA	Request for Tenancy Approval

ACRONYMS & COMMON TERMS – Updated 11-2-2022

SAHA	Satellite Affordable Housing Associates
SAMHSA	US Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
SAVS	Sonoma Applied Village Services
SAY	Social Advocates for Youth
SCPEO	Sonoma County People for Economic Opportunity
SCFBOP	Sonoma County Faith-Based Organizing Project
SCRIMS	Sonoma County Rental Information and Mediation Services
SEMAP	Section 8 Management Assessment Program
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
SLE	Sober Living Environment
SMI	Severe Mental Illness
SMSA	Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area
SOS	Sonoma Overnight Support
SPARC	Site Plan and Architectural Review Committee (Petaluma)
SPMs	System Performance Measurements (HMIS)
SRO	Single Room Occupancy
SSA	Social Security Administration
SSI	Supplemental Security Income
Stella M	HUD online tool to assist in homelessness response system effectiveness
Stella P	HUD program using LSAs to show system performance
SVDP	St. Vincent de Paul
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
TAT	Threat Assessment Team
TBA	Tenant-Based Assistance
TBRA	Tenant-Based Rental Assistance
TCAC	Tax Credit Allocation Committee
TLC	TLC Child and Family Services
TLR	The Living Room
TOD	Transit-Oriented Development
TOT	Transit Occupancy Tax (Advertising Fund)
TR	Tenant Rent
TTP	Total Tenant Payment
UA	Utility Allowance
UDAG	Urban Development Action Grant
URP	Utility Reimbursement Payment
USDA-RD	United States Department of Agriculture – Rural Development
VAMA	Voluntary Affirmative Marketing Agreements
VASH	Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (voucher)
VAWA	Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2005
VCA	Voluntary Compliance Agreement
VLI	Very Low Income
VVC	Vietnam Veterans of California
WCCS	West County Community Services
WPC	Whole Person Care
WRS	Women's Recovery Service
YIMBY	Yes in My Backyard



COUNTY OF SONOMA

2023 POINT-IN-TIME

COUNT RESULTS

ABOUT THE RESEARCHER

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

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INTRODUCTION

In late January, volunteers and guides fanned out across the County of Sonoma as part of an annual effort to understand the needs, number, and circumstances of persons experiencing homelessness. Point-in-Time (PIT) Counts measure the prevalence of homelessness in each community and collect information on individuals and families residing in emergency shelters and transitional housing, as well as on people sleeping on the streets, in cars, abandoned properties, or other places not meant for human habitation.

The Point-in-Time Count is the only source of nationwide data on sheltered and unsheltered homelessness and is required by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) of all jurisdictions receiving federal funding to provide housing and services for individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

The Sonoma County CoC reports the findings of their local Point-in-Time Count annually to HUD. This information ultimately helps the federal government to better understand the nature and extent of homelessness nationwide. Point-in-Time Census and Survey data also help to inform communities' local strategic planning, capacity building, and advocacy campaigns to prevent and end homelessness.

Sonoma County worked in conjunction with ASR to conduct the 2023 Sonoma County Homeless Point-in-Time Census and Survey. ASR is a social research firm with extensive experience in homeless enumeration and needs assessment that has worked with Sonoma County on their Point-in-Time Counts since 2009.

The Sonoma County Homeless Point-in-Time Count consists of two primary components: (1) a point-in-time enumeration of unsheltered, tents, or vehicles, and (2) a point-in-time enumeration of homeless individuals and families, such as those sleeping outdoors, on the street, or in parks and families residing in temporary shelter, including emergency shelters or transitional-housing facilities.

The 2023 Sonoma County Homeless Point-in-Time Count was a comprehensive community effort. With the support of individuals with lived experience of homelessness, community volunteers, staff from various city and county departments, and law enforcement, the entire county was canvassed between the hours of 5:00 AM and 9:00 AM on January 27, 2023.

The count was a peer-informed, visual count of unsheltered homeless individuals and families residing on the streets and in vehicles, makeshift shelters, encampments, and other places not meant for human habitation. Shelters and transitional-housing facilities in Sonoma County's annual Housing Inventory Chart (HIC) also reported the number of homeless individuals and families who occupied their facilities on the night prior to the day of the count.

A specialized count of unaccompanied children and transition-age youth under the age of 25 was conducted on the same day. This dedicated count was designed to improve the understanding of the prevalence and scope of youth homelessness. Eighteen trained youth enumerators who currently or recently experienced homelessness conducted the count in specific areas where homeless youth were known to congregate.

In the weeks following the street count, a comprehensive, close-ended survey was administered to 445 unsheltered and sheltered individuals and families. The survey gathered basic demographic details as well as information on service needs and utilization.

This report provides data regarding the number and characteristics of people experiencing homelessness in Sonoma County on a single night in January. Special attention is given to specific subpopulations, including chronically homeless persons, veterans, families, unaccompanied children under the age of 18, and transition-age youth between the ages of 18 and 24.

To better understand the dynamics of homelessness over time, results from previous years, including 2011, 2013, 2015-2019, 2020, 2022 are provided where available and applicable.

PROJECT OVERVIEW AND GOALS

In order for the 2023 Sonoma Point-in-Time Count and Survey to best reflect the experience and expertise of the community, ASR held planning meetings with local community members to review current goals and address continuous improvement goals. These community members were drawn from city and county departments, community-based service providers, and other interested stakeholders. These individuals comprised the 2023 Planning Committee and were instrumental to ensuring the 2023 Sonoma County Homeless Point-in-Time Count and Survey reflected the needs and concerns of the community.

The goals of the 2023 Point-in-Time Count:

- 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 2020 Sonoma County Homeless Point-in-Time Count and Survey, and to track progress toward ending homelessness;
- To increase public awareness of overall homeless issues and generate support for constructive solutions; and
- To assess the status of specific subpopulations, including veterans, families, unaccompanied children, transition-age youth, and those who are chronically homeless.

This report is intended to assist service providers, policy makers, funders, and local, state, and federal governments in gaining a better understanding of the population currently experiencing homelessness, measuring the impact of current policies and programming, and planning for the future.

FEDERAL DEFINITION OF HOMELESSNESS FOR POINT-IN-TIME COUNTS

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

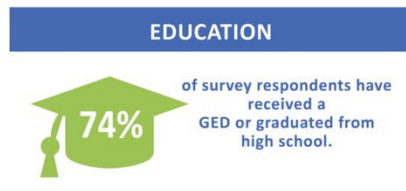
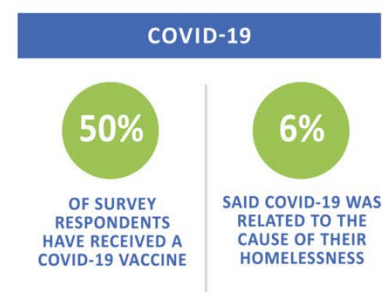
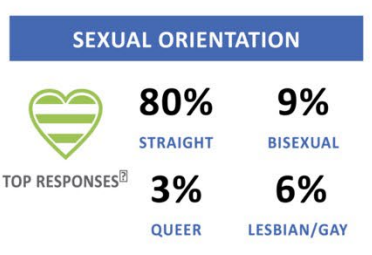
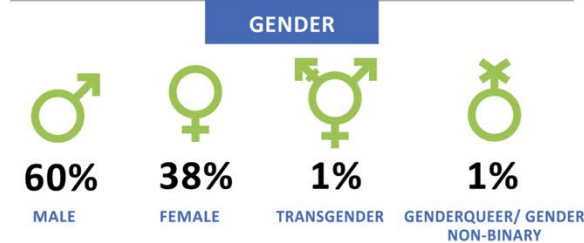
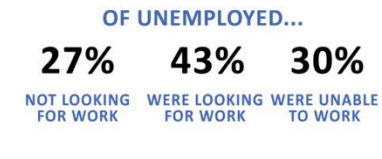
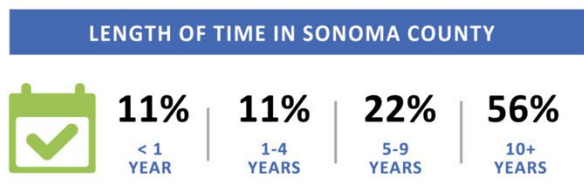
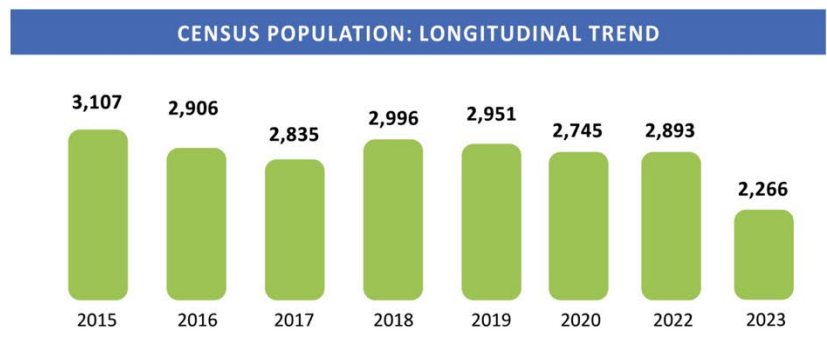
- Living in a supervised publicly- or privately-operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangement; or
- With a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park,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

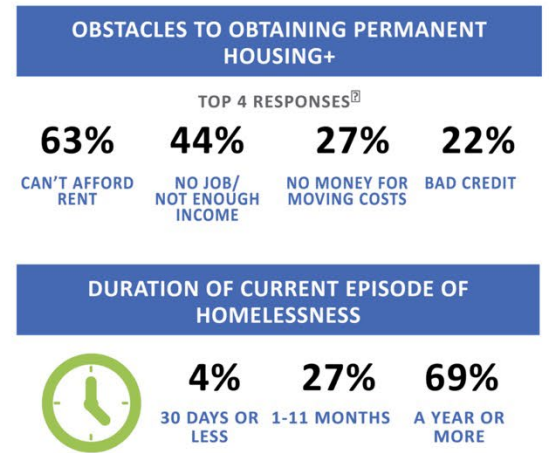
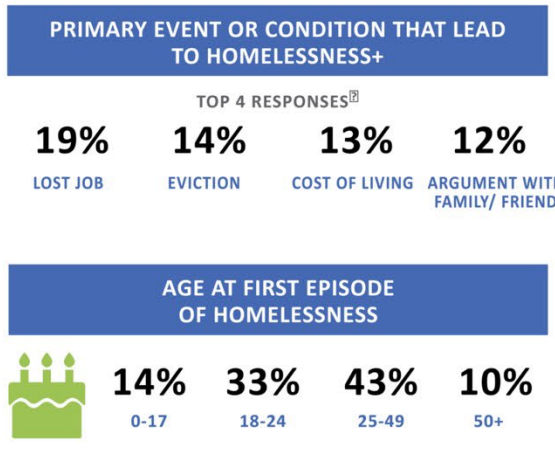
SONOMA COUNTY

2023 HOMELESS POINT-IN-TIME COUNT & SURVEY

Every two years during the last 10 days of January, communities across the country conduct comprehensive counts of the local homeless populations in order to measure the prevalence of homelessness in each local Continuum of Care.

The 2023 Sonoma County Point-in-Time Count was a community-wide effort conducted on January 27th, 2023. In the weeks following the street count, a survey was administered to 445 unsheltered and sheltered individuals experiencing homelessness in order to profile their experience and characteristics.



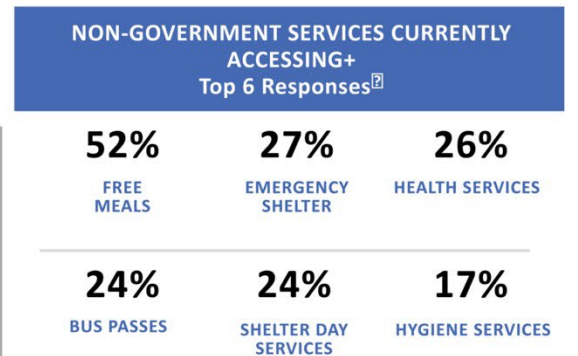
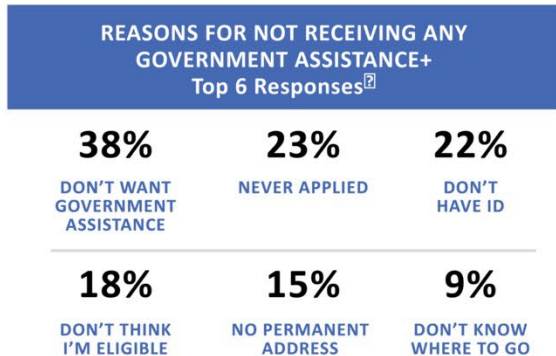
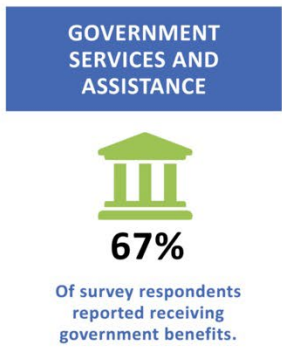


SELF REPORTED HEALTH+

Current health conditions that may affect the housing stability or employment of those experiencing homelessness.



A disabling condition is defined by HUD as a developmental disability, HIV/AIDS, or a long-term physical or mental impairment that impacts a person's ability to live independently but could be improved with stable housing.



*SUBPOPULATION DEFINITIONS

CHRONICALLY HOMELESS

An individual with one or more disabling conditions or a family with a head of household with a disabling condition who:

- » Has been continuously homeless for one year or more and/or;
- » Has experienced four or more episodes of homelessness within the past three years.

VETERANS

Persons who have served on active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States. This does not include inactive military reserves or the National Guard unless the person was called up to active duty.

FAMILIES

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

UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH & TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH (TAY)

Children under the age of 18 and young adults between the ages of 18 and 24 years old (TAY) who are experiencing homelessness and living without a parent or legal guardian.

+ Multiple response question, results may not add up to 100%.
 Δ Only displaying top responses, all response data will be available in full report.
 Note: Some percentages have been rounded so total percentage will equal 100%.

The complete comprehensive report includes a more detailed profile of the characteristics of those experiencing homelessness in Monterey. It will be available summer 2023.
 Source: Applied Survey Research, 2023, Monterey County Homeless Census & Survey, Watsonville, CA.

POINT-IN-TIME CENSUS

The 2023 County of Sonoma Homeless Point-in-Time Census and Survey included a complete enumeration of all unsheltered and publicly- or privately-sheltered homeless persons. The general street count was conducted on January 27, 2023 from approximately 5:00 AM to 9:00 AM and covered all of Sonoma County. The shelter count was conducted on the previous evening and included all individuals staying in emergency shelters, transitional-housing facilities, and domestic violence shelters. The general street count and shelter count methodology were similar to those used in 2022 and previous years.

The methodology used for the 2023 Homeless Point-in-Time Census and Survey is commonly described as a “blitz and survey count” since it is conducted by a large team over a very short period of time. Outreach coordinators and volunteers traversed the county in order to identify persons experiencing homelessness. We then surveyed 445 individuals experiencing homelessness to gain an understanding about their experiences and characteristics. As this method was conducted in Sonoma County, the result was an observation-based count of individuals and families who appeared to be homeless.

The point-in-time occupancy of homeless shelters in Sonoma County was collected for the night of January 26, 2023. All shelter data were gathered either directly from Sonoma County’s Homeless Management Information System. All shelter occupants were listed on the HIC report that the Sonoma County CoC submits to HUD.

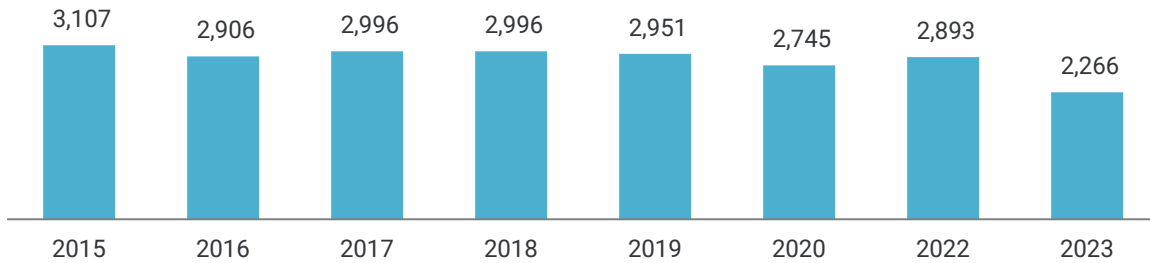
The count was followed by an in-person representative survey of persons currently experiencing homelessness. In Sonoma County, the results of which were used to profile and estimate the condition and characteristics of the local homeless population. Information collected from the survey was used to fulfill HUD reporting requirements and inform local service delivery and strategic planning efforts.

In a continuing effort to improve data on the extent of youth homelessness, Sonoma County also conducted a dedicated youth count similar to the youth counts that have been conducted since 2009. The dedicated youth count methodology was improved in 2017 to better ensure unaccompanied children and transition-age youth were not included in both the general street count and youth count. For more information regarding the dedicated youth count, de-duplication, and project methodology, please see *Appendix A: Methodology*.

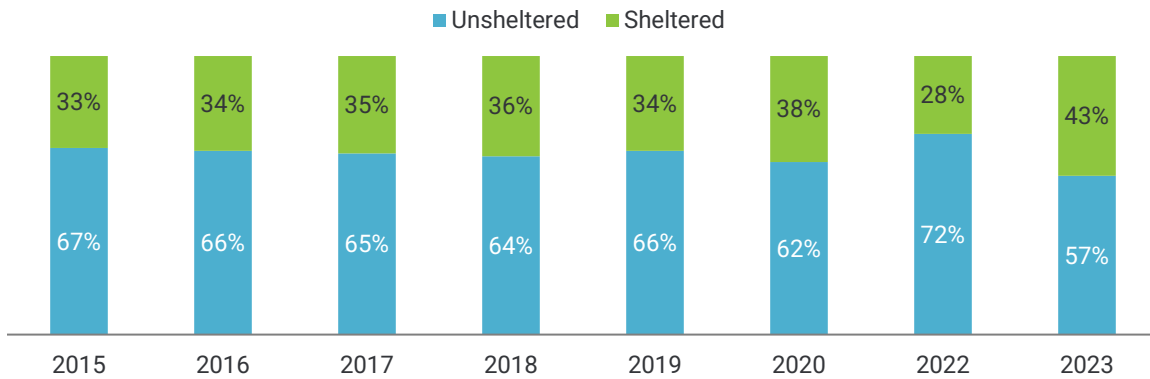
NUMBER AND CHARACTERISTICS OF HOMELESS PERSONS IN SONOMA COUNTY

There were 2,266 persons experiencing homelessness in the County of Sonoma in 2023, representing a decrease of 22% from 2022. Fifty-seven percent of persons experiencing homelessness were living in unsheltered conditions, a decrease from 72% from 2022.

Total Number of Homeless Persons

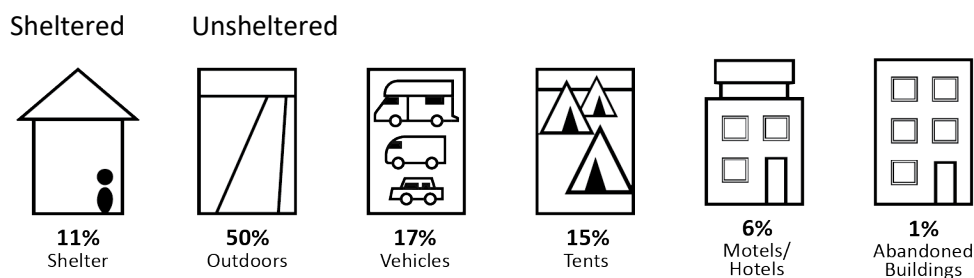


Total Homeless Census Population by Shelter Status



	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2022	2023	2022-23 % CHANGE
Sheltered		1,000	988	1,067	994	1,043	805	975	21%
Unsheltered		1,906	1,847	1,929	1,957	1,702	2,088	1,291	-38%
Total		2,906	2,835	2,996	2,951	2,745	2,893	2,266	-22%

Total Number of Homeless Persons Surveyed, by Location



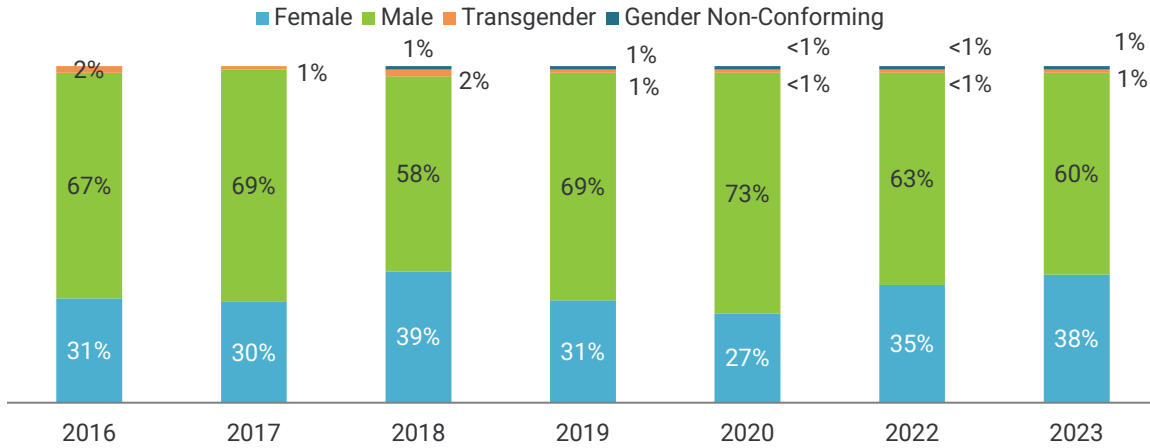
Total Number of Homeless Persons, by Jurisdiction and Shelter Status

JURISDICTION	UNSHELTERED			SHELTERED			TOTAL		
	2020	2022	2023	2020	2022	2023	2020	2022	2023
North County	205	155	103	4	40	15	209	195	118
Cloverdale	29	23	9	4	0	0	33	23	9
Healdsburg	69	97	18	0	0	15	69	97	33
Town of Windsor	38	8	26	0	40	0	38	48	26
Unincorporated	69	27	50	0	0	0	69	27	50
South County	427	679	337	170	89	163	597	768	500
Cotati	37	79	9	0	6	6	37	85	15
Petaluma	133	214	157	163	79	88	296	293	245
Rohnert Park	241	365	141	7	4	69	248	369	210
Unincorporated	16	21	30	0	0	0	16	21	30
West County	290	62	143	37	65	70	327	127	213
Sebastopol	129	40	47	0	38	40	129	78	87
Unincorporated	161	22	96	37	27	30	198	49	126
Sonoma Valley	54	93	109	34	29	20	88	122	129
Sonoma	46	66	40	15	15	0	61	81	40
Unincorporated	8	27	69	19	14	20	27	41	89
Santa Rosa	726	1,099	599	798	582	695	1,524	1,681	1,294
Santa Rosa	719	1,089	465	742	569	695	1,461	1,658	1,160
Unincorporated	7	10	134	56	13	0	63	23	134
Undisclosed Location	0	0	0	0	0	12	0	0	12
Total	1,702	2,088	1,291	1,033	805	975	2,745	2,893	2,266

Note: Confidential beds have been included in their respective jurisdiction(s) since 2018.

Total Number of Homeless Persons, by Gender

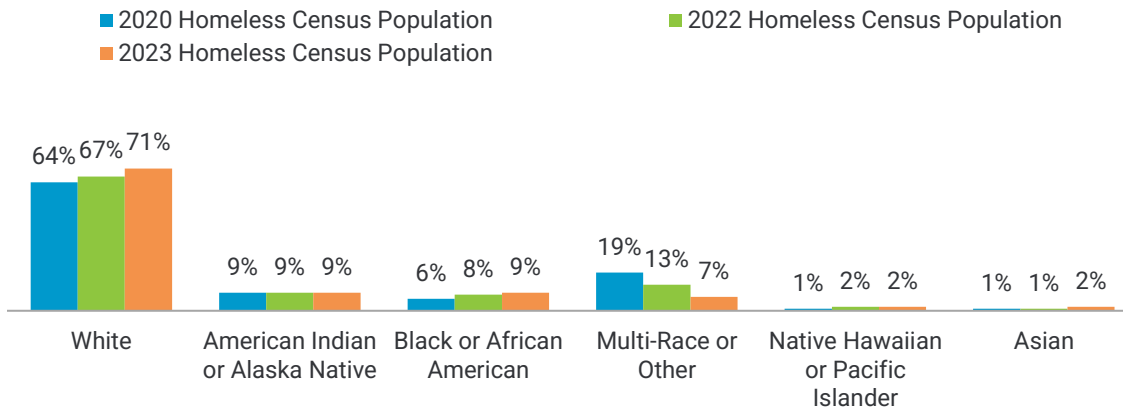
Men made up three-fifths (60%) of the persons identified during the PIT count, a decrease from 63% in 2022. Women were 38% of the persons identified, while transgender and gender non-conforming respondents were 1% each.



2016 N = 2,906; 2017 N = 2,835; 2018 N = 2,996; 2019 N = 2,951; 2020 N = 2,638; 2022 N = 2,893; 2023 N = 2,266

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding. Transgender data were not collected prior to 2016 and Gender Non-Conforming data were not collected prior to 2018.

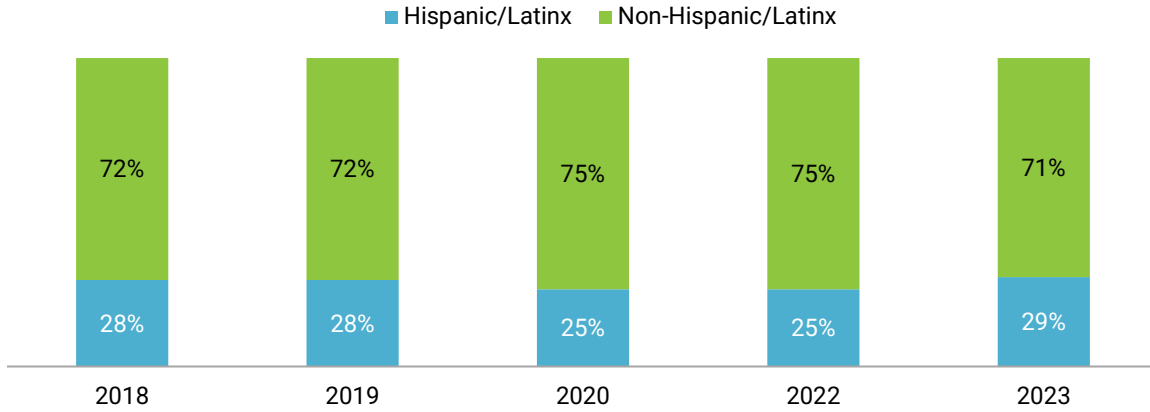
Total Number of Homeless Persons, By Race



2020 N = 2,638; 2022 N = 2,893; 2023 N = 2,266

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

Total Number of Homeless Persons, by Ethnicity



2018 N = 2,996; 2019 N = 2,951; 2020 N = 2,638; 2022 N = 2,893; 2023 N = 2,266

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

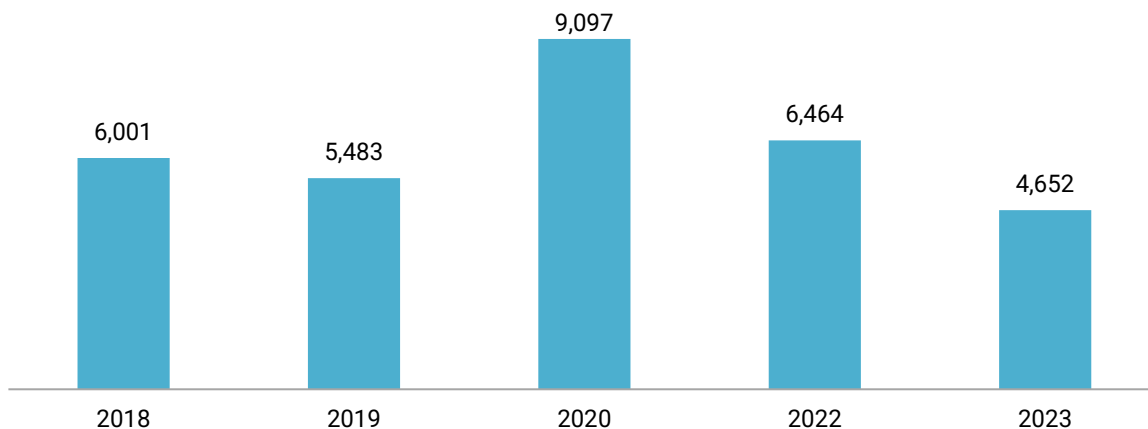
ANNUALIZATION

By definition, the Point-in-Time Count only provides a snapshot of homelessness during a single point in time and therefore may not adequately reflect the number of unique persons experiencing homelessness throughout the year. Consequently, it does not reflect the number of people who are homeless at other times or the total number who access the homeless support system throughout the year.

To address this shortcoming, an annual estimation formula can be used to profile the number of persons who may have experienced homelessness in Sonoma County over the course of a year. While this estimate is valuable and can inform the complexity of enumerating those persons experiencing homelessness, the calculation can also be volatile due to survey sampling and, in particular, the impact of certain variables such as the prevalence of short-term homelessness, specifically when there are many respondents whose homeless experience is seven days or less.

With these caveats laid out, the 2023 Sonoma County annual estimate is 4,652 unique homeless experiences over a year, a large decrease (28%) from 2022, though similar to the overall percentage decrease.

Annualization



HOMELESS SURVEY FINDINGS

This section provides an overview of the findings generated from the *survey* component of the 2023 Sonoma County Homeless Point-in-Time Census and Survey. Surveys were administered to a randomized sample of homeless individuals between January 27 and mid-March, 2023.

To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the experiences of individuals and families experiencing homelessness in Sonoma County, Respondents were asked basic demographic questions including age, gender, sexual orientation, and ethnicity.

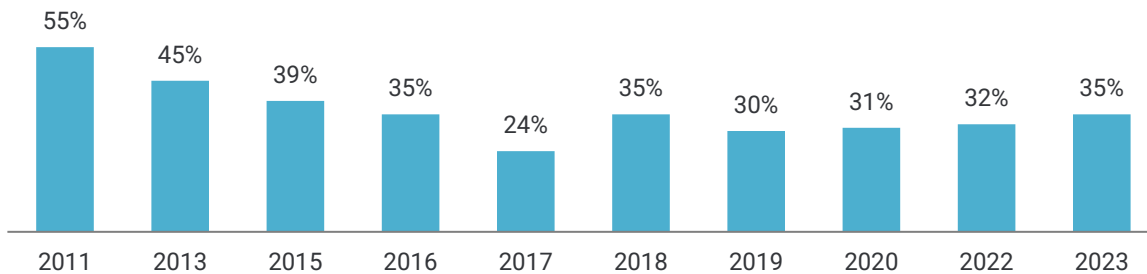
Based on a Point-in-Time Count (PIT) of 2,266 homeless persons, with a randomized survey sampling process, these 445 valid surveys would represent a confidence interval of +/- 4.2% with a 95% confidence level when generalizing the results of the survey to the entire estimated population of homeless individuals in Sonoma County. In other words, if the survey were conducted again, we can be 95% certain that the results would be within 4.2 percentage points of the current results.

In order to respect respondent privacy and to ensure the safety and comfort of those who participated, respondents were not required to complete all survey questions though they were asked to be generally responsive to all questions. Missing values were intentionally omitted from the survey results. Therefore, the total number of respondents for each question will not always equal the total number of surveys conducted. For more information regarding the survey methodology, please see *Appendix A: Methodology*.

DURATION AND RECURENCE OF HOMELESSNESS

Unstable living conditions, poverty, housing scarcity, and many other issues often lead to individuals falling in and out of homelessness. For many, the experience of homelessness is part of a long and recurring history of housing instability.

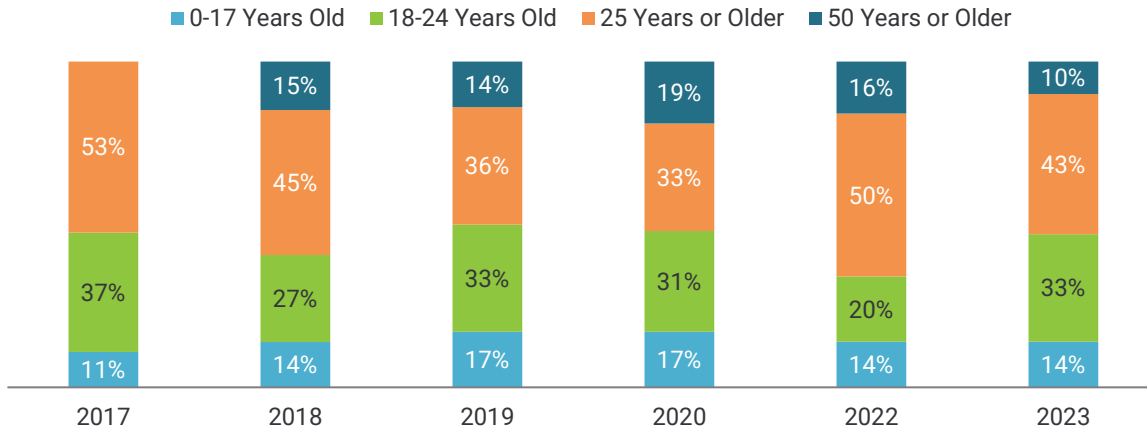
First Time Experiencing Homelessness (Respondents Answering “Yes”)



2011 N = 617; 2013 N = 533; 2015 N = 609; 2016 N = 605; 2017 N = 678; 2018 N = 519; 2019 N = 498; 2020 N = 444; 2022 N = 385; 2023 N = 442

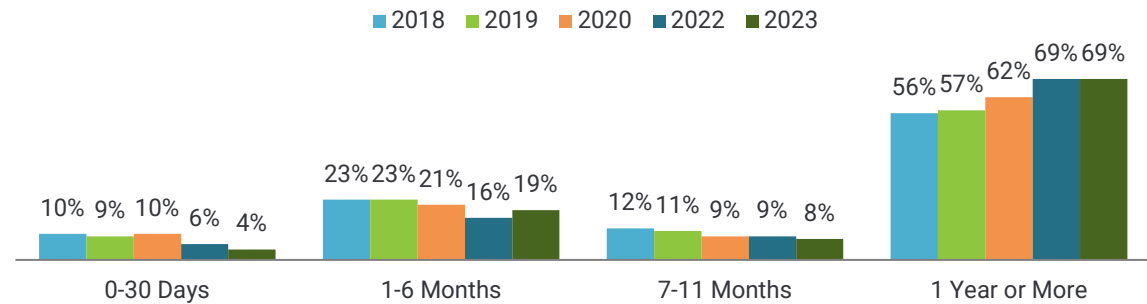
Age at First Experience of Homelessness

In an effort to better understand the experiences and age distribution of those experiencing homelessness, respondents were asked how old they were the first time they experienced homelessness. Since 2018, there is an emerging trend of those experiencing homelessness for the first time at age 50 or older.



2017 N = 675; 2018 N = 513; 2019 N = 511; 2020 N = 435; 2022 N = 413; 2023 N = 440

Length of Current Episode of Homelessness

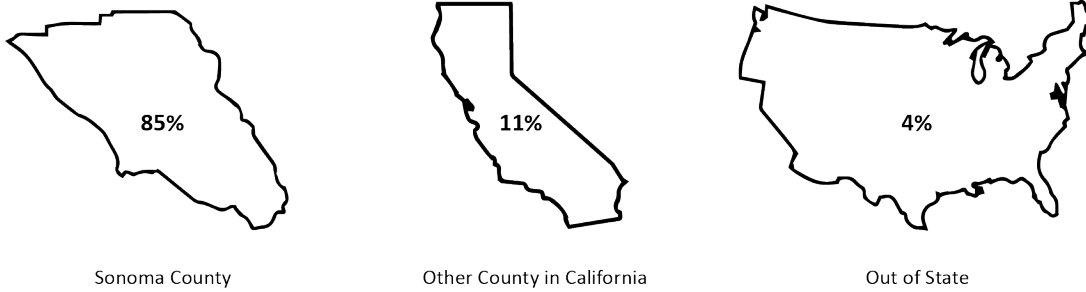


2018 N = 519; 2019 N = 516; 2020 N = 444; 2022 N = 420; 2023 N = 441

LIVING ACCOMMODATIONS

Where individuals lived prior to experiencing homelessness and where they have lived since impacts the way they seek services, as well as their ability to access support from friends or family. Previous circumstances can also point to gaps in the system of care and to opportunities for systemic improvement and homelessness prevention. Survey respondents reported many different living accommodations prior to experiencing homelessness, although most lived in or around Sonoma County with friends, family, or on their own or with a partner in a home or apartment.

Place of Residence at Time of Housing Loss

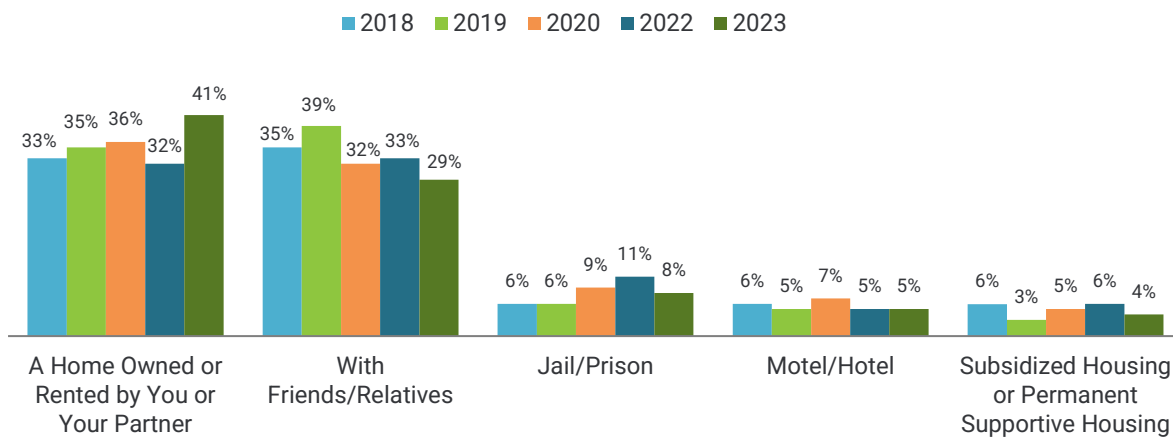


2023 N = 434

PRIOR LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

Similar to our respondents' previous place of residence, the type of living arrangements maintained by individuals before experiencing homelessness can influence knowledge of and access to various types of homeless prevention services available to help individuals maintain their housing.

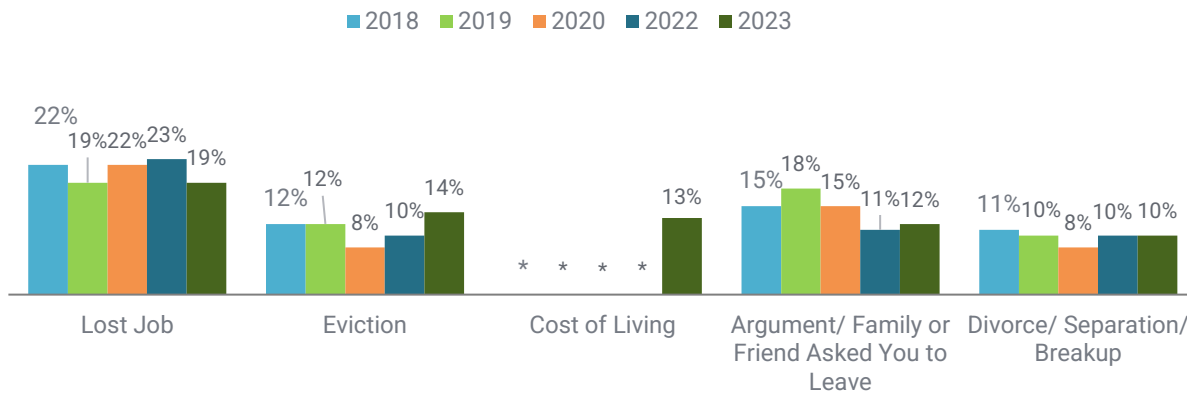
Living Arrangements Immediately Prior to Becoming Homeless This Time (2023 Top 5)



2018 N = 506; 2019 N = 501; 2020 N = 431; 2022 N = 396; 2023 N = 426

Primary Cause of Homelessness

The primary cause of a person or family’s inability to obtain or retain housing is often difficult to pinpoint, as it is often the result of multiple, inter-related causes. An inability to secure adequate housing can also lead to or result in an inability to address other basic needs, such as healthcare and adequate nutrition. In our survey question, respondents were asked to list their self-assessed *primary* cause of the experience of homelessness.



* Note: Cost of living was added as a response in 2023

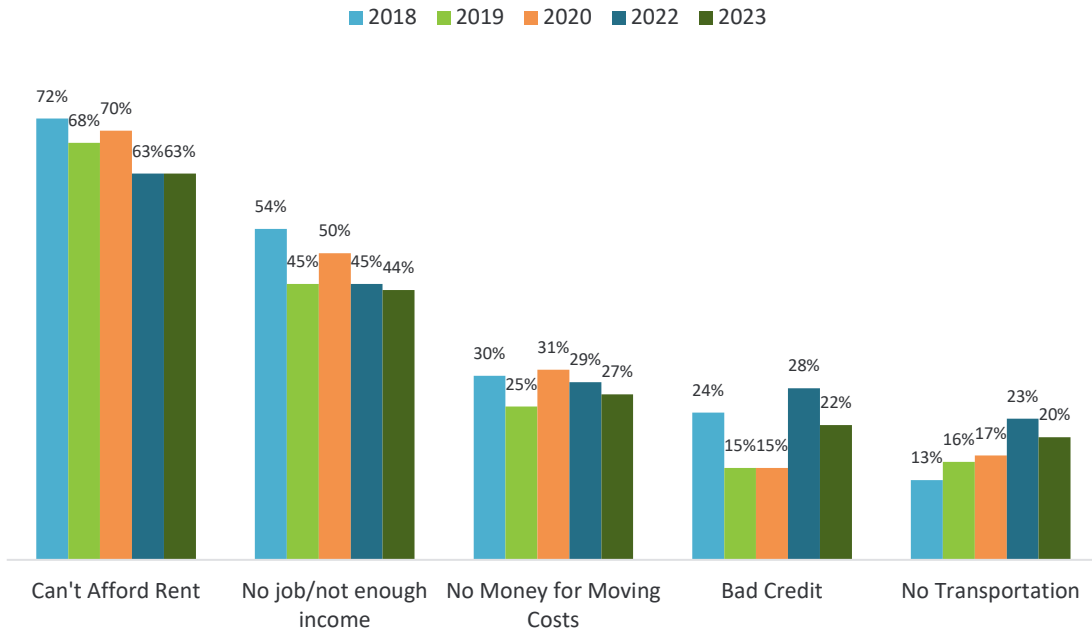
2023 PRIMARY CAUSE OF HOMELESSNESS			
Lost Job	19%	Family/Domestic Violence	6%
Eviction	14%	Illness/Medical Problem	5%
Cost of Living	13%	Probation/Parole Restrictions	2%
Argument with Family or Friend	12%	Hospitalization/Treatment	2%
Divorce/Separation/Break Up	10%	Foreclosure	2%
Alcohol or Drug Use	9%	Aging Out of Foster Care	2%
Mental Health Issues	8%	Fire	2%
Landlord Raised Rent	7%	Other	9%
Incarceration	6%	Don't Know/Decline to State	4%

2018 N = 506 respondents offering 660 responses; 2019 N = 511 respondents offering 635 responses; 2020 N = 438 respondents offering 542 responses; 2022 N = 397 respondents offering 475 responses; 2023 N = 433 respondents offering 576 responses

OBSTACLES TO OBTAINING PERMANENT HOUSING

When asked about the obstacles to permanent housing, the most common response amongst survey respondents was an inability to afford rent, with 63% choosing that option. Lack of job or income was the second most common (44%), followed by difficulties affording moving costs (27%).

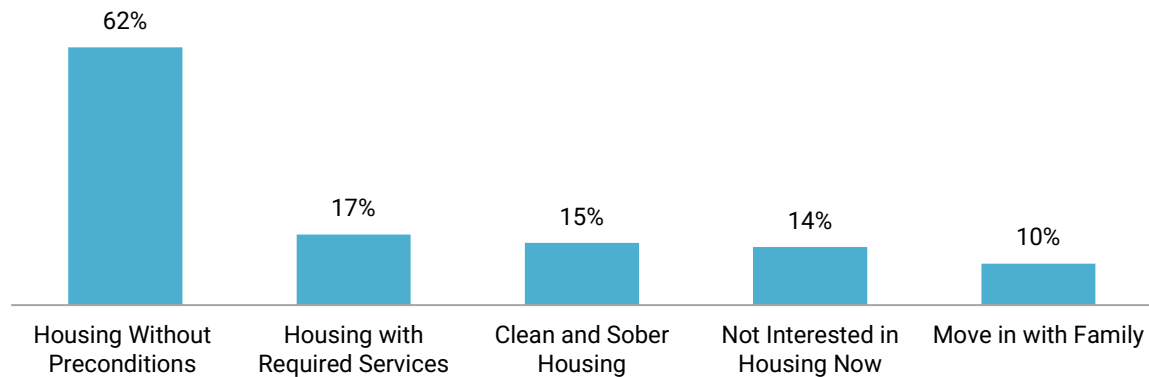
Obstacles to Obtaining Permanent Housing (Top 5)



2018 N = 503 respondents giving 1,489 responses; 2019 N = 513 respondents giving 1,331 responses; 2020 N = 436 respondents giving 1,130 responses; 2022 N = respondents 404 giving 1,145 responses; 2023 N = 428 respondents offering 1,152 responses
 Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100.

Housing Type Desired

Survey respondents most desired housing without any sort of preconditions, were it to be offered to them.



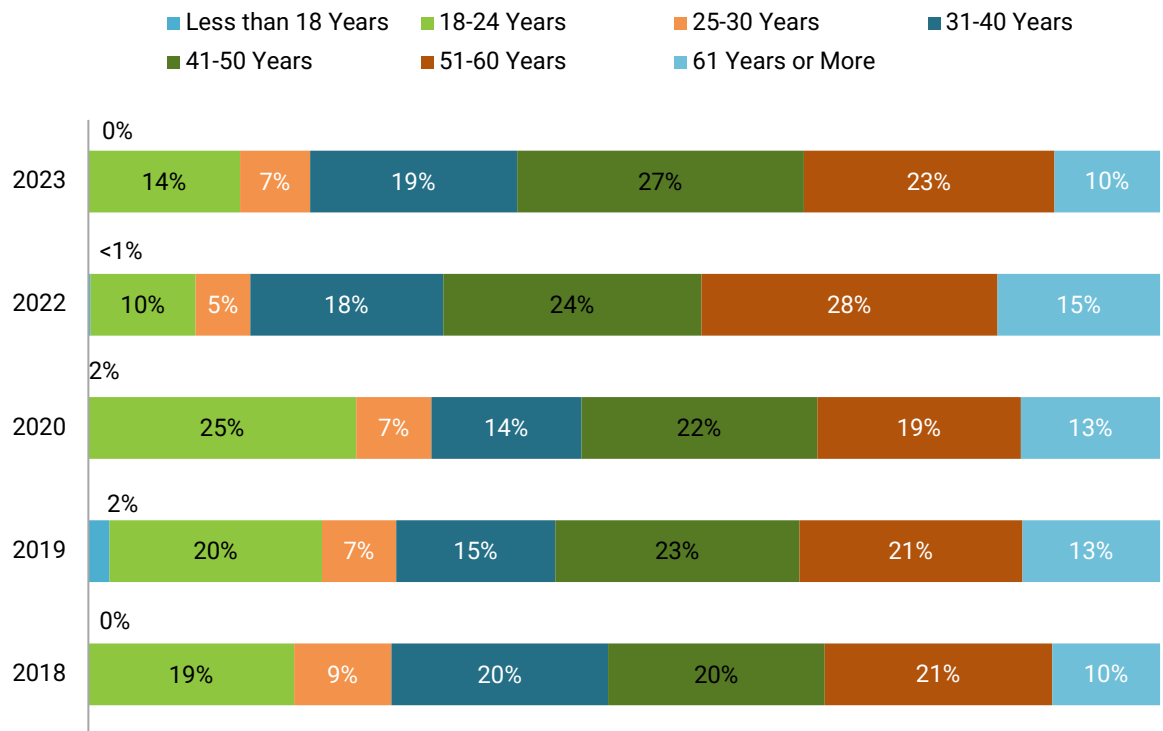
2023 N = 416 respondents offering 546 responses

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

In 2023, 61% of survey participants identified as male, 36% identified as female, 2% identified as transgender, and 1% did not identify as male, female or transgender. Among the female respondents, 4% indicated that they were currently pregnant.

Age

Three-fifths of survey respondents were over the age of 41. The age group with the most respondents was 41-50 years old.

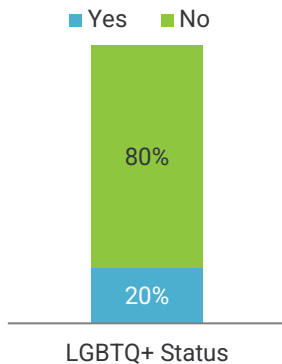


2018 N = 519, 2019 N = 520, 2020 N = 444; 2022 N = 428; 2023 N = 445

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

LGBTQ+ Status

Persons identifying as LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, gender non-conforming, transgender, or queer) are overrepresented in the population experiencing homelessness when compared to the general population: as of 2018, 5.6% of the US population Identified as LGBT.¹ According to the 2023 Sonoma Homeless Survey, twenty percent (20%) of survey respondents identified as LGBTQ in 2023, down from 23% in 2022.



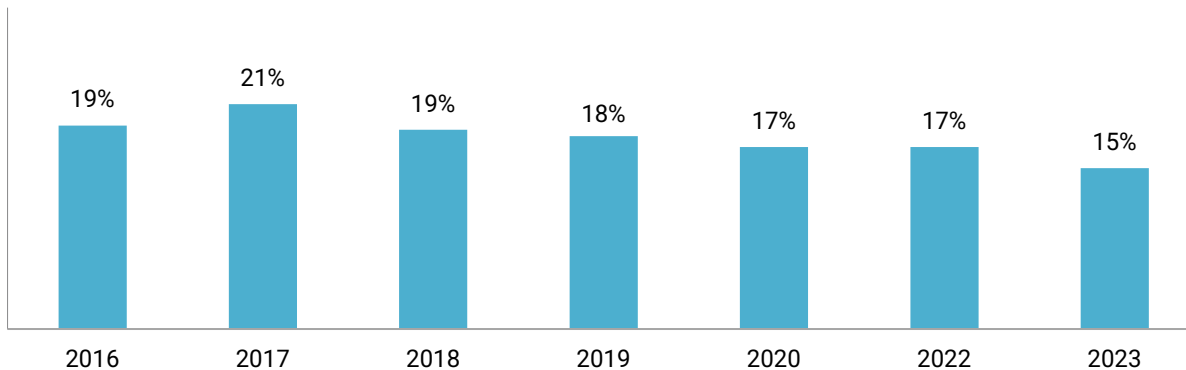
Breakout of Respondents Answering Yes	%	n
Gay	16%	14
Lesbian	12%	11
Queer	13%	12
Bisexual	44%	39
Other	15%	13

LGBTQ 2023 N = 46

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

Foster Care

In California, it is estimated that 24% of foster youth experience homelessness after exiting care.² In 2023, 15% of survey respondents reported a history of foster care, similar to previous years.



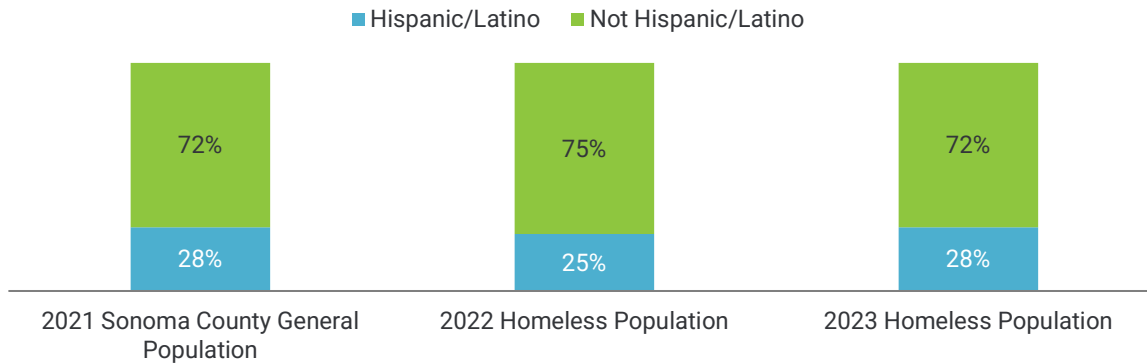
2016 N = 563; 2017 N = 645; 2018 N = 510; 2019 N = 504; 2020 N = 423; 2022 N = 408; 2023 N = 425

¹ Jones, J. (2021). LGBT Identification Rises to 5.6% in Latest U.S. Estimate. Gallup. Retrieved 2023 from <https://news.gallup.com/poll/329708/lgbt-identification-rises-latest-estimate.aspx>

² Broslawski, A. (2021). Foster Youth and Homelessness. Homeless Policy Research Institute. Retrieved 2023 from https://socialinnovation.usc.edu/homeless_research/foster-youth-and-homelessness/

Race/Ethnicity

Twenty-eight percent (28%) of survey respondents identified as having Hispanic/Latino ethnicity, similar to to 2022 and identical to the overall county population.

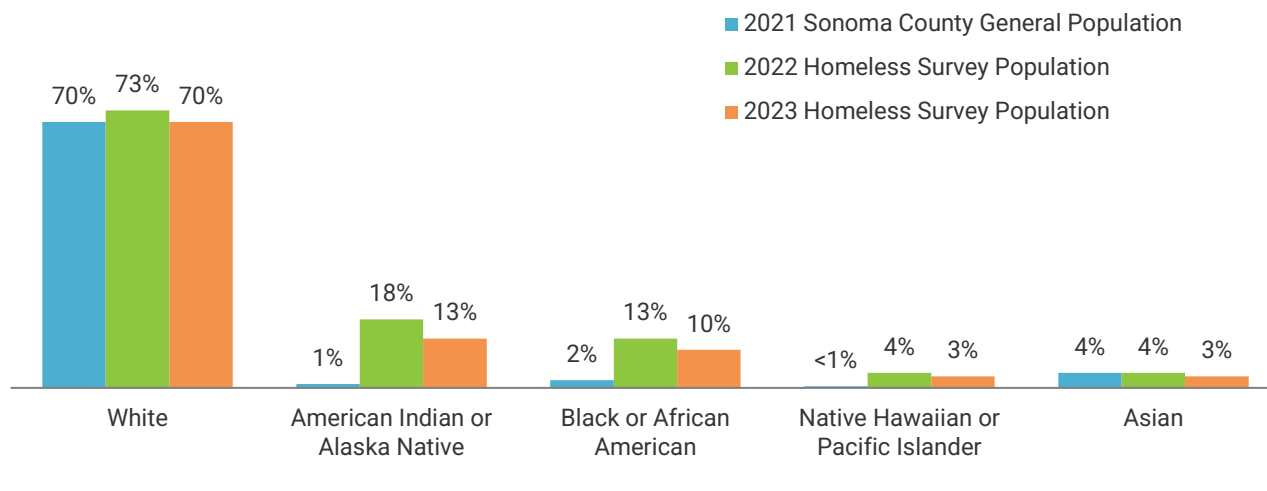


2022 N = 388; 2023 N = 401

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2017-2021). Sonoma County, California, DP05 Demographic and housing characteristics [Data].

2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved from <https://data.census.gov/>

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



2022 N = 412; 2023 N = 421

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2017-2021). Sonoma County, California, DP05 Demographic and housing characteristics [Data]. 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved from <https://data.census.gov/>

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

SERVICES AND ASSISTANCE

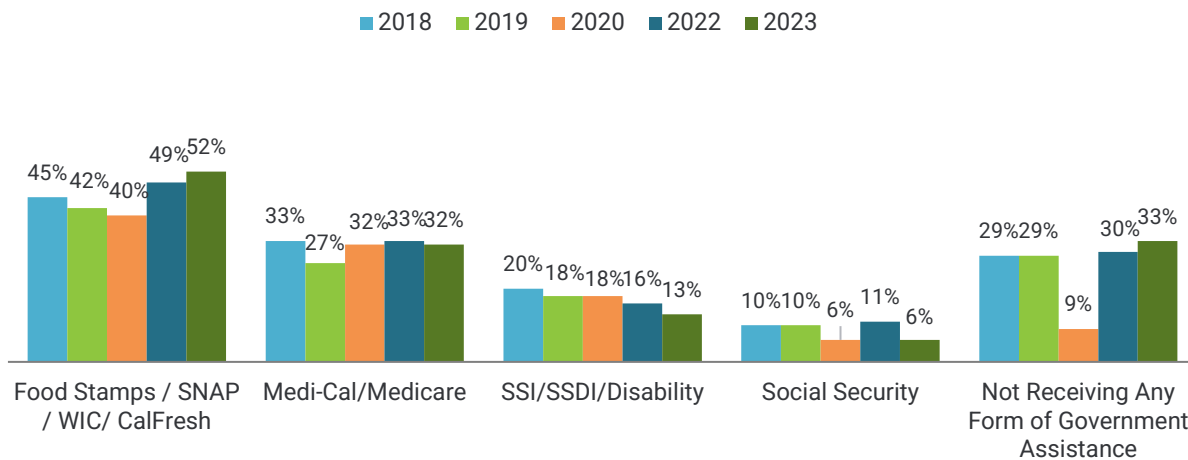
Sonoma County provides services and assistance to those currently experiencing homelessness through federal and local programs. However, many individuals and families do not apply for services, as many are not interested in receiving assistance, or believe that they are ineligible for assistance.

There are various forms of government assistance available to individuals experiencing homelessness, though usage of these supports is impacted by knowledge of services available, understanding of eligibility requirements, and perceived stigma of receiving governmental assistance, amongst others.

Over half (52%) of survey respondents were receiving food stamps, SNAP, WIC, and/or CalFresh assistance, an increase from 49% in 2022. Thirty-three percent of respondents reported not receiving any form of governmental assistance, an increase from 30% in 2022, and similar to past years.

When asked why they weren't receiving any governmental assistance, 38% of respondents replied that they were not interested in doing so, which represents an increase from 24% in 2022.

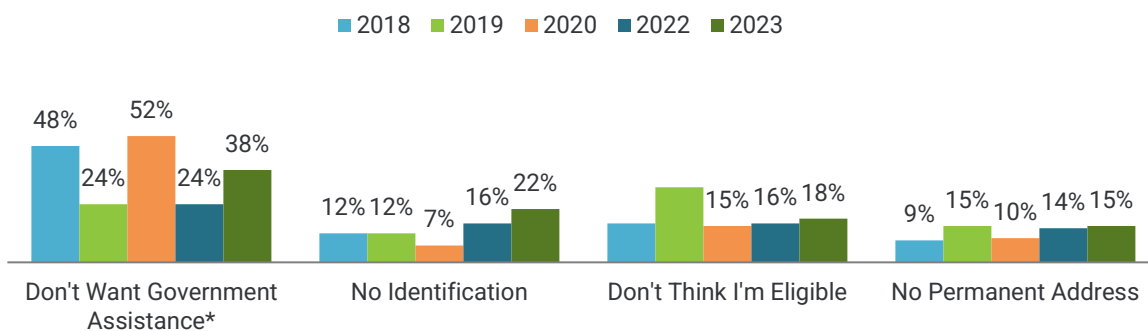
Government Assistance Received



2018 N = 580 respondents offering 855 responses; 2019 N = 315 respondents offering 586 responses; 2020 N = 419 respondents offering 600 responses; 2022 N = 397 respondents offering 631 responses; 2023 N = 445 respondents offering 686 responses

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

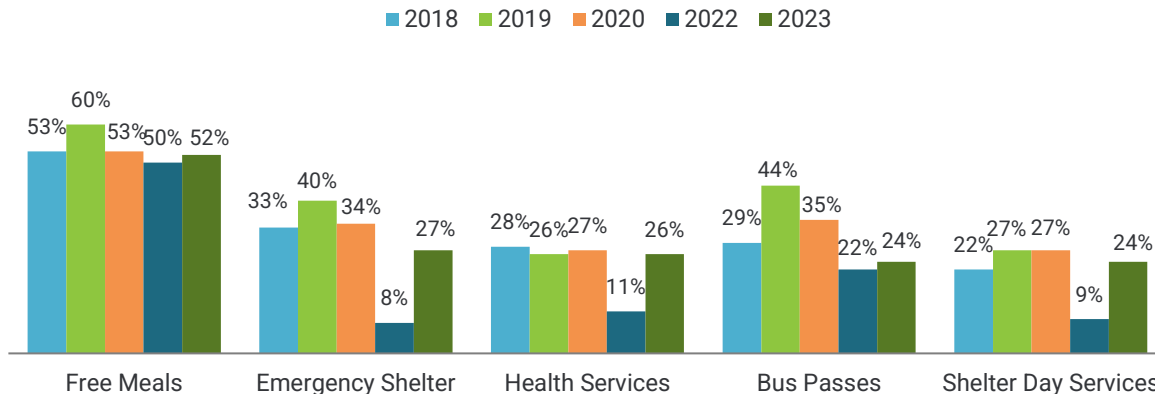
Reasons for Not Receiving Government Assistance



2018 N = 139 respondents offering 184 responses; 2019 N = 292 respondents offering 421 responses; 2020 N = 138 respondents offering 162 responses; 2022 N = 276 respondents offering 422 responses; 2023 N = 128 respondents offering 193 responses

Services and Programs

In addition to government assistance, there are numerous community-based services and programs made available to individuals experiencing homelessness. These services range from day shelters and meal programs to job training and healthcare.

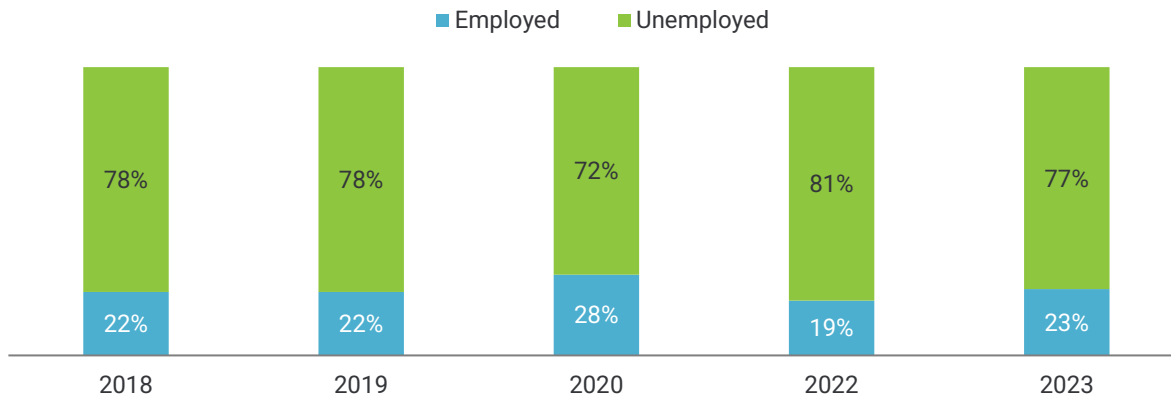


2018 N = 491 respondents offering 1,212 responses; 2019 N = 495 respondents offering 1,328 responses; 2020 N = 429 respondents offering 1,160 responses; 2022 N = 381 respondents offering 613 responses; 2023 N = 411 respondents offering 956 responses
 Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100.

Employment and Income

While over three-quarters (77%) of survey respondents reported being unemployed, a small percentage reported part-time (4%) or full-time work (3%) and many were receiving an income, either public or private. Despite this income, data suggest that employment and income were not enough to meet basic needs.

Nearly one-quarter (23%) of survey respondents reported they were at least somewhat employed. This includes seasonal, part-time, and full-time employment.



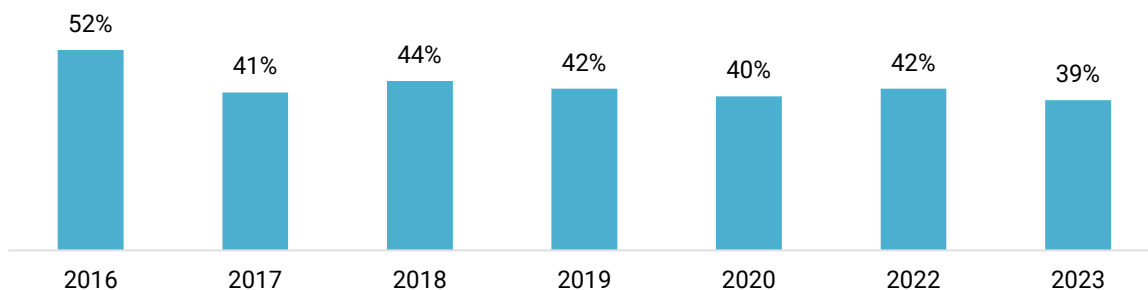
2018 Employment Status N = 500; 2019 Employment Status N = 500; 2020 Employment Status N = 428; 2022 Employment status N = 386; 2023 Employment status N = 385

HEALTH

There are two main focuses when discussing the health of survey respondents. All survey respondents are asked if they are experiencing a range of health conditions. Those who indicate they are experiencing at least one of those conditions are asked follow-up questions to determine if they meet the level of HUD-disabling conditions, health conditions that prevent them from maintaining housing and/or a job.

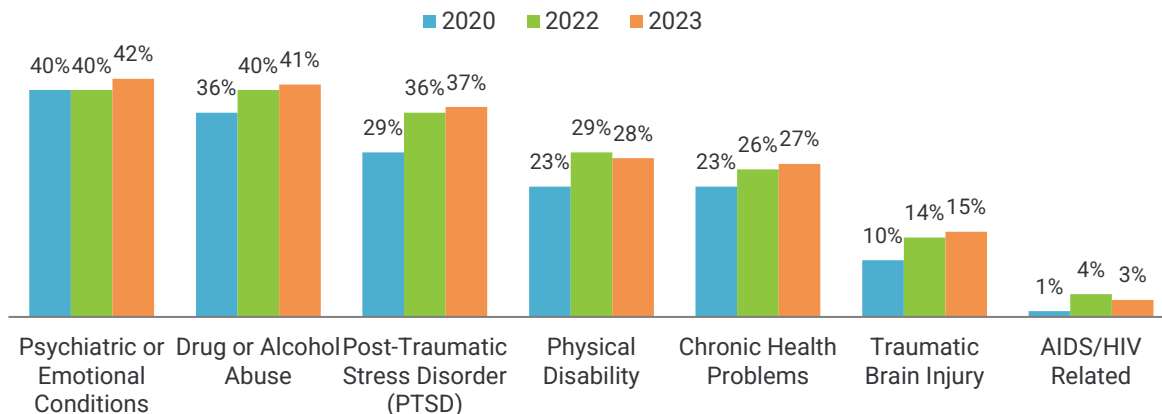
Similar to previous years, 39% of survey respondents reported suffering from at least one HUD-disabling condition. The two most common health conditions experienced by respondents were psychiatric problems (42%) and drug or alcohol abuse (41%), followed by PTSD (37%).

HUD Disabling Conditions



2016 N = 605; 2017 N = 687; 2018 N = 515; 2019 N = 520; 2020 N = 478; 2022 N = 451; 2023 N = 445

Health Conditions



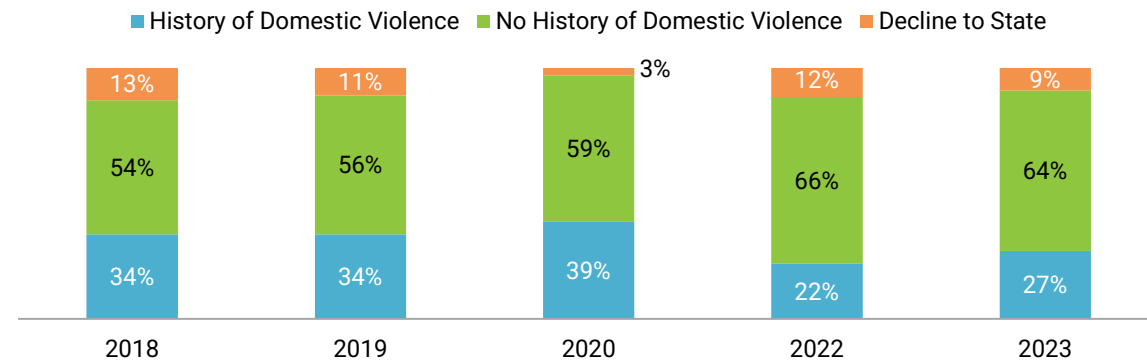
2020 N = 426; 2022 N = 387; 2023 N = 412

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

Domestic/Partner Violence or Abuse

Histories of domestic violence and partner abuse are prevalent among individuals experiencing homelessness and is often the primary cause of homelessness for many. Survivors often lack the financial resources required for housing.

When asked if they had experienced domestic violence in their past, 27% of respondents reported having such a past. This represents an increase from 2022, when it was 22%. Eight percent of respondents reported that they were currently experiencing domestic violence.

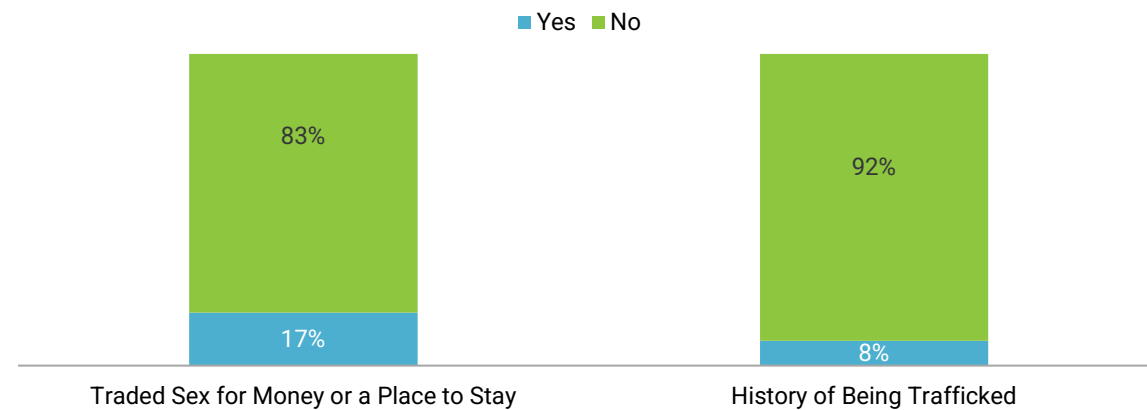


2018 N = 494; 2019 N = 499; 2020 N = 421; 2022 N = 403; 2023 N = 417

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

Sex Trade Involvement

Due to their vulnerable circumstances and precarious access to basic needs, many of those experiencing homelessness have a history of being involved in the sex trade. Seventeen percent of survey respondents reported trading sex for money or a place to stay, in the past. And 8% reported being trafficked in the past.



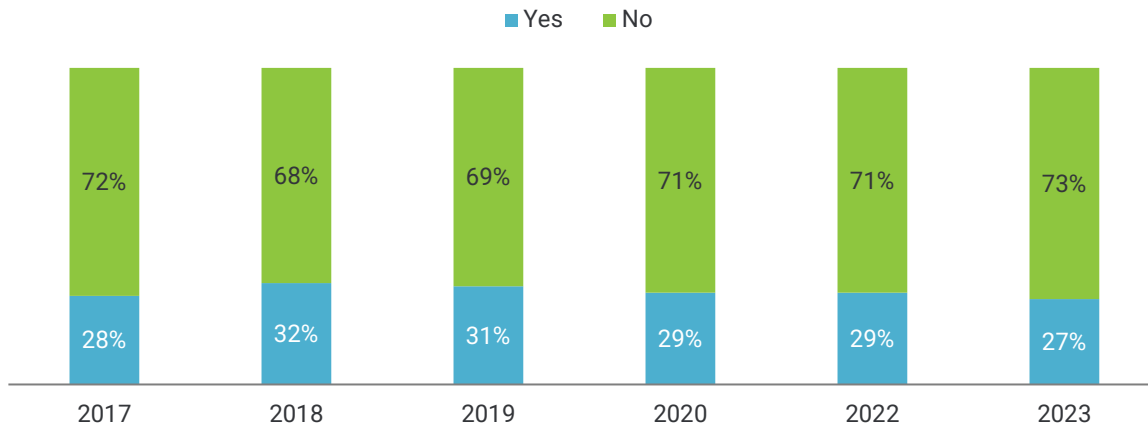
2023 Trading Sex for Money or a Place to Stay N = 414, History of Being Trafficked N = 400

CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Individuals without stable housing are at greater risk of criminal justice system involvement, particularly those with mental health issues, veterans, and youth.

Similar to previous years, 27% of respondents reported spending a night or jail in the 12 months previous to taking the survey. Just under a quarter (21%) of respondents reported being on parole or probation at the time of the survey.

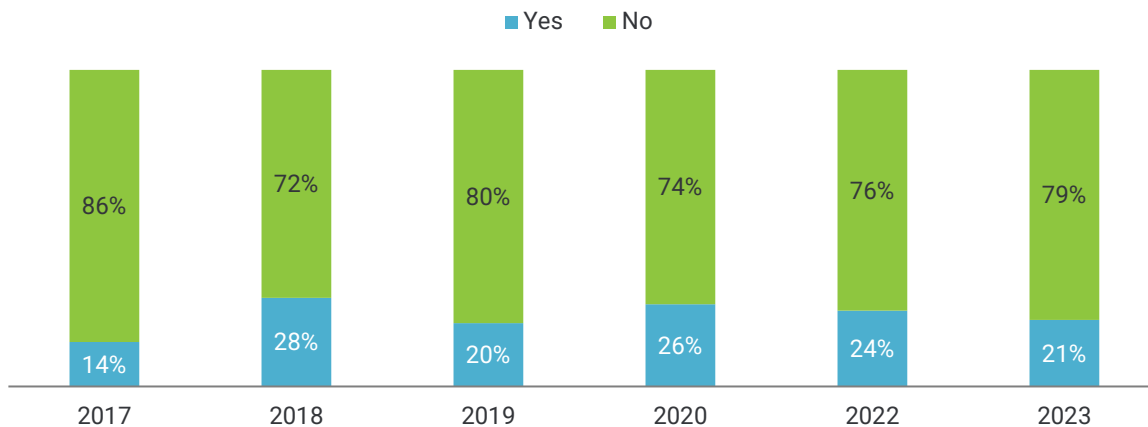
Spent a Night in Jail or Prison in the Last 12 Months



2017 N = 744; 2018 N = 500; 2019 N = 505; 2020 N = 427; 2022 N = 391; 2023 N = 409

Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100%

Currently on Probation or Parole



2017 N = 737; 2018 N = 488; 2019 N = 489; 2020 N = 427; 2022 N = 391; 2023 N = 420

Note: Decline To State was given as an answer option solely in 2013

HUD DEFINED SUBPOPULATIONS

In order to adequately address the diversity within the population experiencing homelessness, the federal government identifies four subpopulations with particular challenges or needs, including:

- Chronic homelessness among people with disabilities;
- Veterans;
- Families with children; and
- Unaccompanied children (<18) and transition-age (18-24) youth.

Consequently, these subpopulations represent important reportable indicators for measuring local progress toward ending homelessness.

The following sections examine each of these four subpopulations, identifying the number and characteristics of individuals included in the 2023 Sonoma County Homeless Point-in-Time Census and Survey.

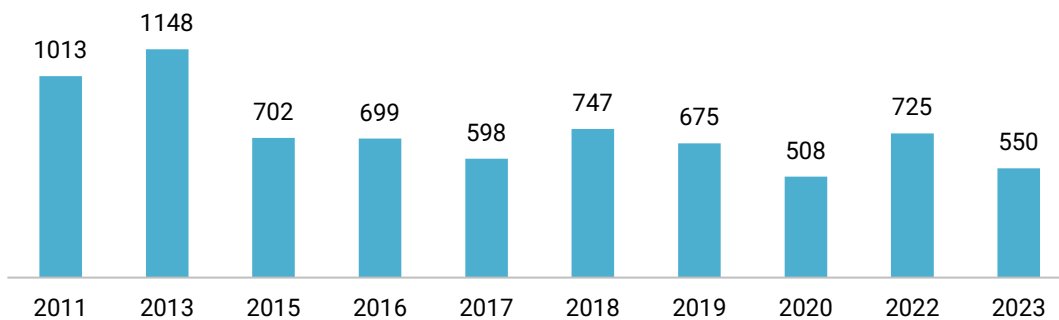
CHRONICALLY HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development defines a chronically homeless individual as someone who has experienced homelessness for a year or longer—or who has experienced at least four episodes of homelessness totaling 12 months in the last three years—and also has a disabling condition that prevents them from maintaining work or housing. This definition applies to individuals as well as heads of household who meet the definition.

The chronically homeless population represents one of the most vulnerable populations on the street; the mortality rate for those experiencing homelessness in high income countries is three-to-eleven times higher than that of the general population.³

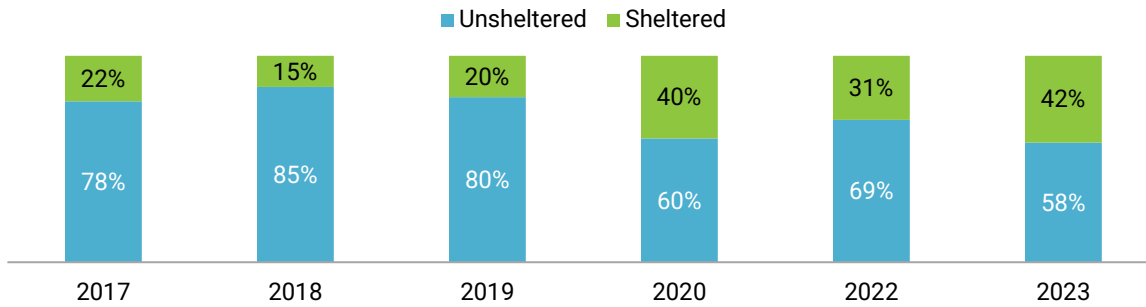
After increasing from 2020 to 2022, the chronically homeless population dropped 24% to 550 in 2023. Just over two-fifths (42%) of the chronically homeless population was sheltered. Sixty-two percent of the population was male, while 34% was female.

Total Chronically Homeless Census Population



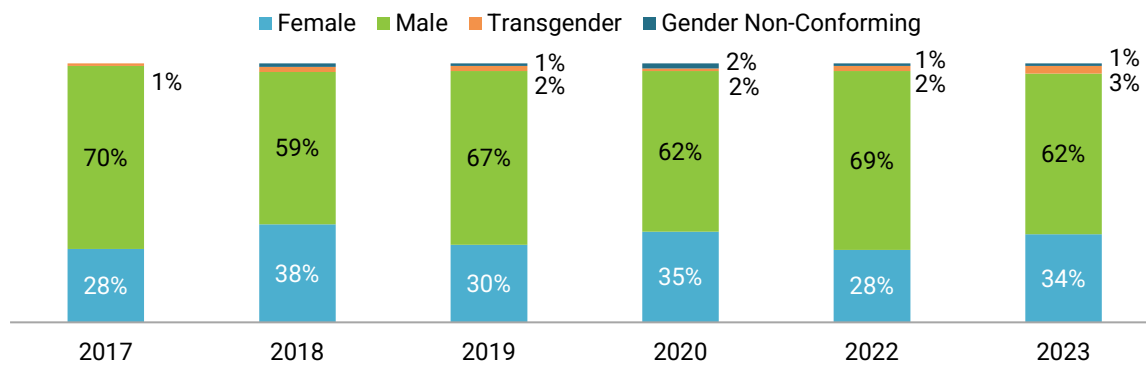
³ Effects of Housing First approaches on health and well-being of adults who are homeless or at risk of homelessness: systematic review and meta-analysis of randomised controlled trials. (2019). *J Epidemiol Community Health*. Retrieved 2023 from [chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcgclcfndmkaj/https://jech.bmj.com/content/jech/73/5/379.full.pdf](https://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcgclcfndmkaj/https://jech.bmj.com/content/jech/73/5/379.full.pdf)

Chronically Homeless Census Population by Shelter Status



	2017	2018	2019	2020	2022	2023	2022-23 % Change
Sheltered	134	115	138	174	224	231	3%
Unsheltered	464	632	537	334	501	319	-36%
Total	598	747	675	508	725	550	-24%

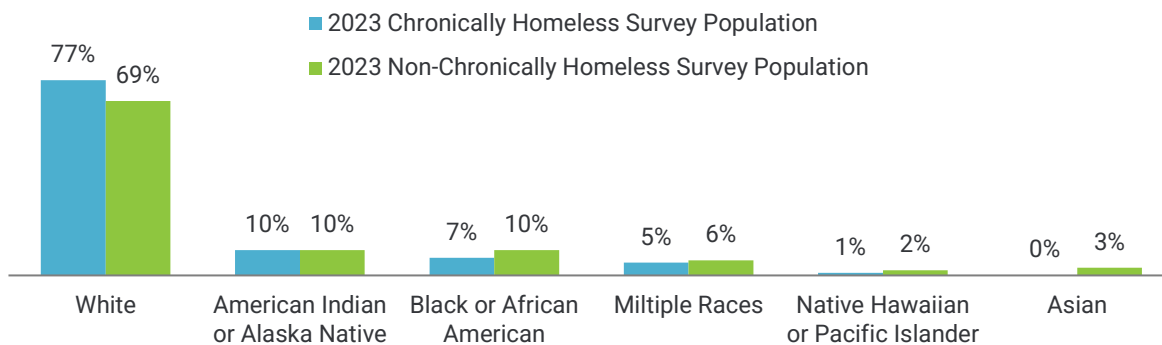
Chronically Homeless Census Population by Gender



2017 Chronically Homeless Population N = 598; 2018 N = 747; 2019 Chronically Homeless Population N = 675; 2020 Chronically Homeless Population N = 508; 2022 Chronically Homeless Population N = 725; 2023 Chronically Homeless Population N = 550

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding. Gender Non-Conforming category was added in 2018.

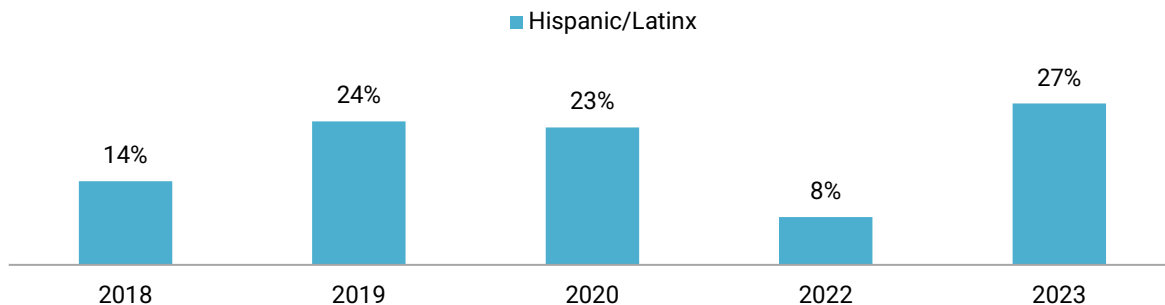
Chronically Homeless Population by Race



2023 Chronically Homeless Survey Population N = 99; 2023 Non-Chronically Homeless Survey Population N = 288

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

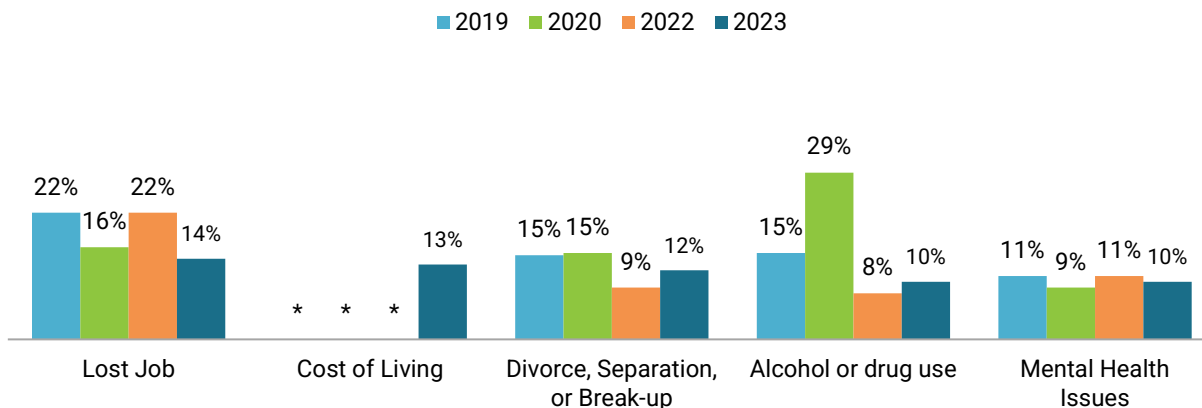
Chronically Homeless Population by Ethnicity



Chronically Homeless Survey Population N = 153; 2019 Chronically Homeless Survey Population N = 123; 2020 Chronically Homeless Survey Population N = 562; 2022 Chronically Homeless Survey Population N = 725; 2023 Chronically Homeless Survey Population N = 103

Primary Cause of Homelessness Among Those Experiencing Chronic Homeless

The most common cause of homelessness amongst those experiencing chronic homelessness was the loss of a job (14%), followed by cost of living (13%).



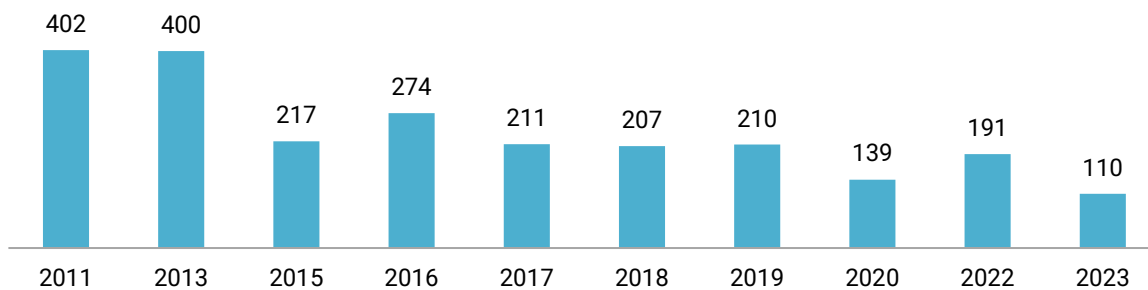
2019 N = 123; 2020 N = 80; 2022 N = 100; 2023 N = 108
 Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100.
 * Note: Cost of living was added as a response in 2023

HOMELESS VETERANS

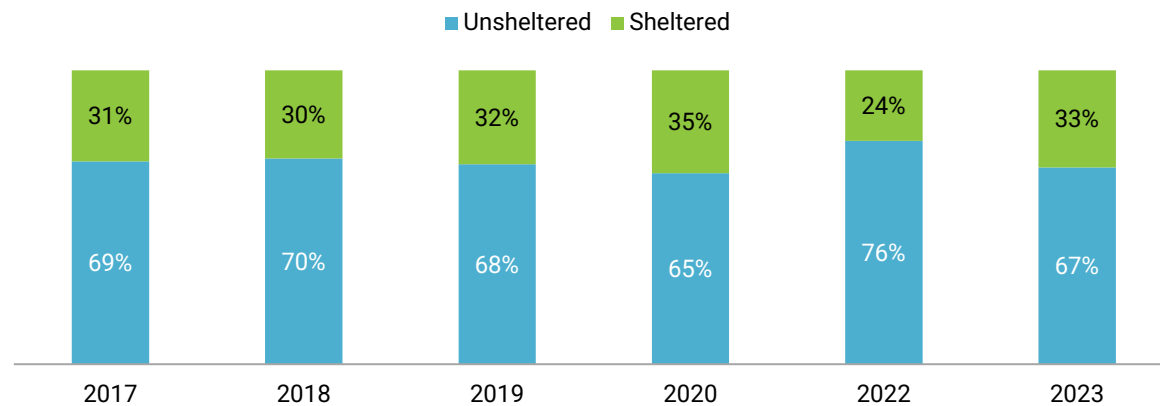
Many U.S. veterans experience conditions that place them at increased risk for homelessness. Veterans experience higher rates of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), sexual assault, and substance abuse. Veterans experiencing homelessness are more likely to live on the street than in shelters, and often remain on the street for extended periods of time.

After an increase to 191 in 2022, the number of veteran experiencing homelessness in Sonoma County dropped to 110 in 2023, the lowest it's been in the last 10+ years. Sixty-seven percent of veterans were unsheltered, a decrease from 76% in 2022. Fifty-five percent of veteran respondents identified as White, while 32% identified as Hispanic/Latino.

Homeless Veteran Census Population

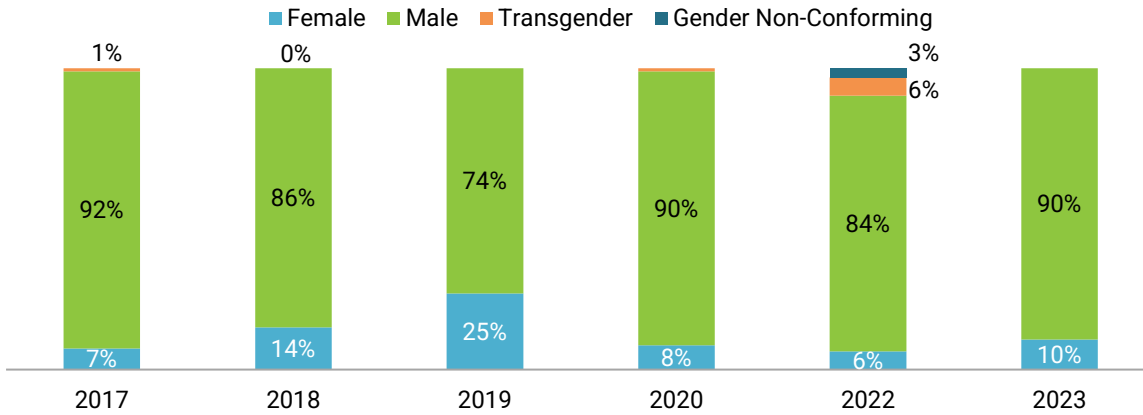


Homeless Veteran Census Population by Shelter Status



	2017	2018	2019	2020	2022	2023	2022-23 % Change
Sheltered	66	63	68	47	45	36	-20%
Unsheltered	145	144	142	92	146	74	-49%
Total	211	207	210	139	191	110	-42%

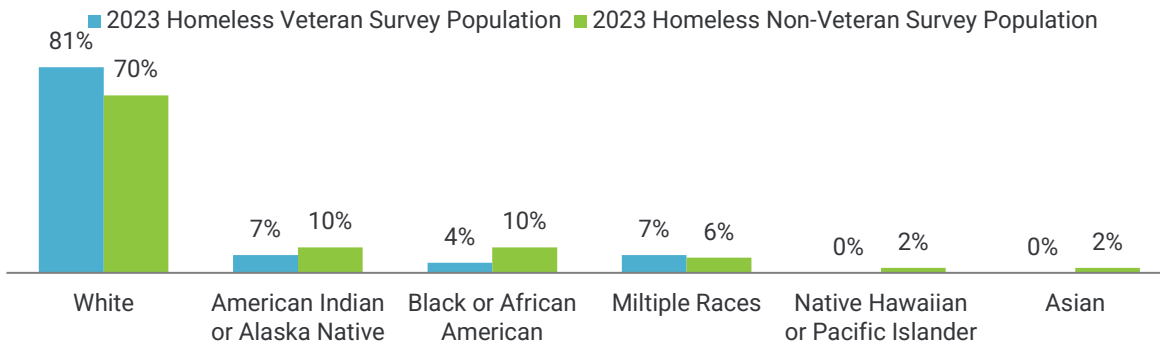
Homeless Veteran Census Population by Gender



2017 N = 211; 2018 N = 207; 2019 N = 210; 2020 N = 134; 2022 N = 191; 2023 N = 110

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding. Gender Non-Conforming category was added in 2018.

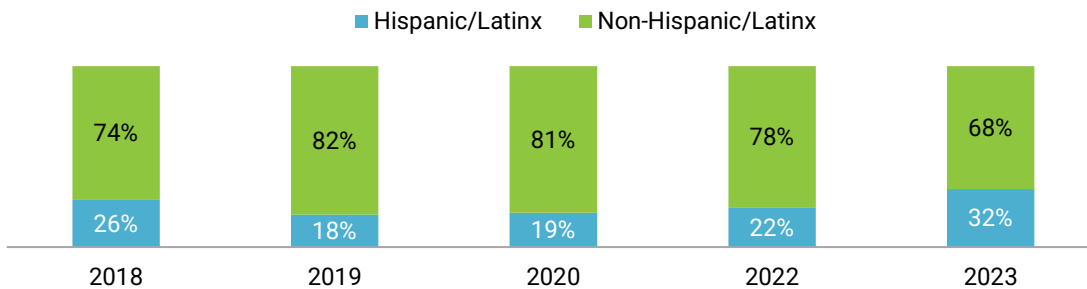
Homeless Veteran Population by Race



2023 Homeless Veterans Survey Population N = 27; 2023 Non-Homeless Veterans Survey Population N = 360

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

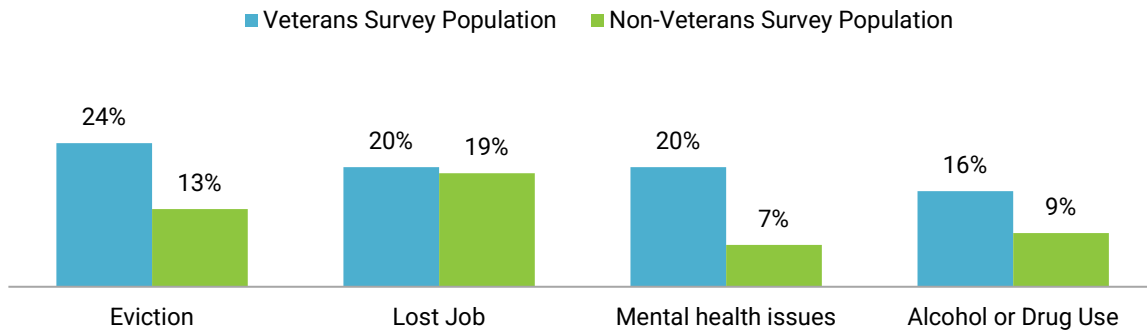
Homeless Veteran Census Population by Ethnicity



2018 Veterans N = 207; 2019 Veterans N = 210; 2020 Veterans N = 134; 2022 Veterans N = 191; 2023 Veterans N = 110

Primary Cause of Homelessness Among Homeless Veterans

Veterans were more likely to cite eviction, mental health issues, alcohol and drug use, and other as the cause of their homelessness when compared to the non-Veteran population.



2023 Homeless Veterans Survey Population N = 25; Homeless Non-Veterans Survey Population N = 408
 Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100.

HOMELESS FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

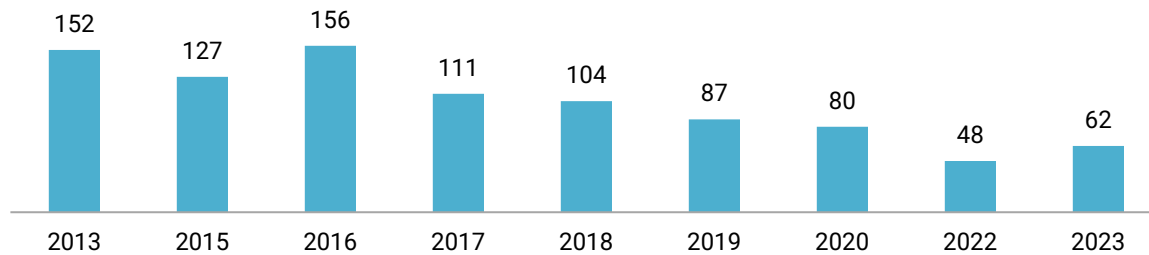
National data from 2020 suggest that 30% of all people experiencing homelessness are persons in families.⁴ Very few families experiencing homelessness are unsheltered, as public shelters serve more than 90% of homeless families in the United States; this is a significantly higher proportion of the population compared to other subpopulations, including unaccompanied children and transition-age youth. Data on families experiencing homelessness suggests that their circumstances are not much different from other families in poverty.

Nationally, the majority of homeless families are households headed by single women and families with children under the age of eighteen.⁵ Children in families experiencing homelessness have an increased incidence of illness and are more likely to have emotional and behavioral problems than children with stable living accommodations.⁶

Families experiencing homelessness can be difficult to identify and even harder to survey. Because of the wide array of supports available to them, families experiencing unsheltered homelessness frequently receive the support necessary to enter shelters or other housing options. This can lead to difficulties in surveying large numbers of families experiencing homelessness, leading to survey results that can be subject to greater fluctuation than other subpopulations. Please use caution when interpreting these results.

In 2023, there were 62 families with 203 family members experiencing homelessness in Sonoma County representing 9% of the total persons experiencing homelessness.

Total Homeless Families with Children, Census Population

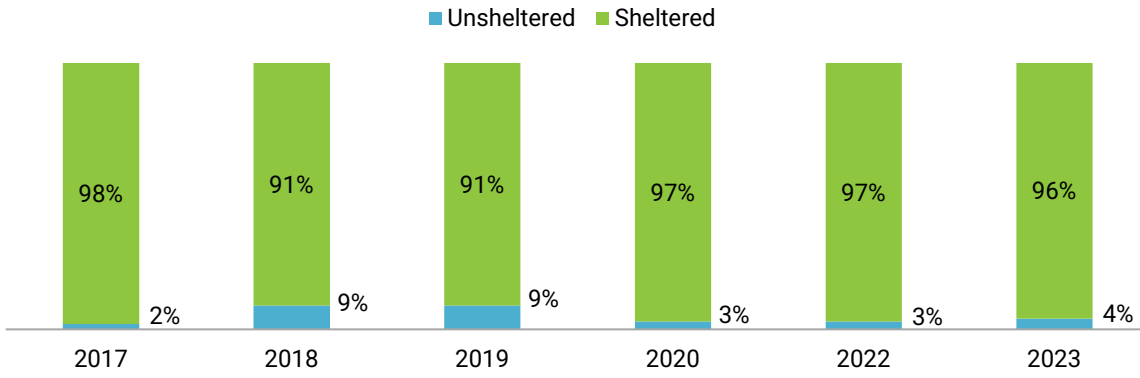


4 U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2020). The 2020 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress. Retrieved 2023 from chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/2020-AHAR-Part-1.pdf

5 U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2020). The 2020 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress. Retrieved 2023 from chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/2020-AHAR-Part-1.pdf

6 U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness. (2015). Opening Doors. Retrieved 2015 from http://www.usich.gov/

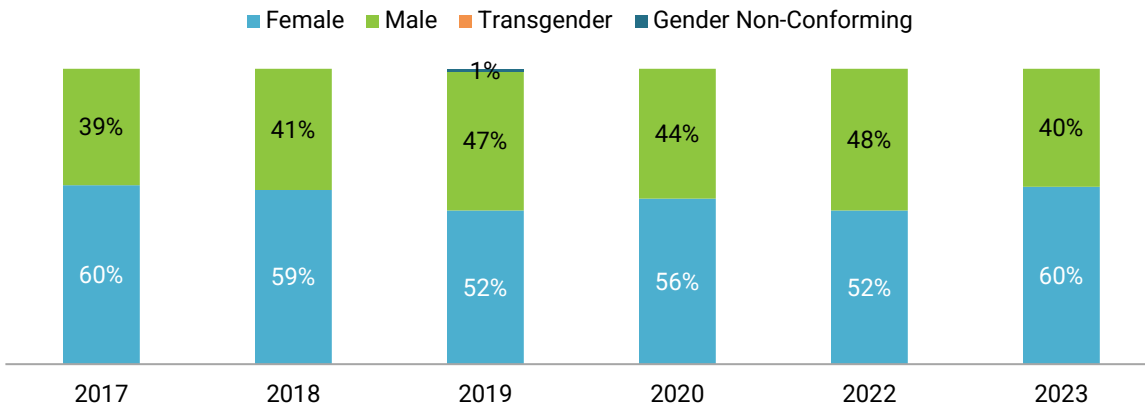
Homeless Families with Children Census Population, All Family Members, by Shelter Status



	2017	2018	2019	2020	2022	2023	2022-23 % Change
Sheltered	319	307	253	227	150	194	29%
Unsheltered	7	32	26	8	5	9	80%
Total	326	339	279	235	155	203	31%

Note: Percent change is not presented due to the small number of individuals.

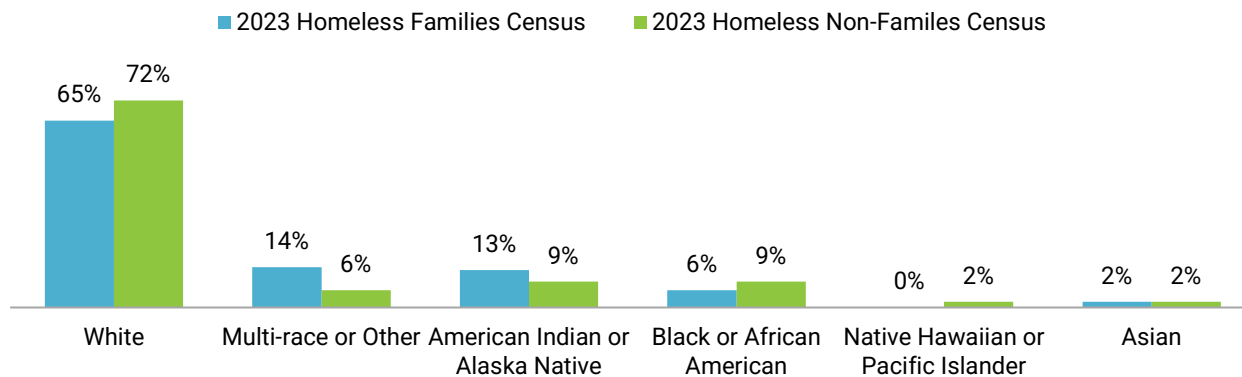
Homeless Families with Children Census Population, All Family Members, by Gender



2017 N = 326; 2018 N = 339; 2019 N = 279; 2020 N = 235; 2022 N = 155; 2023 N = 203

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding. Gender Non-Conforming category was added in 2018.

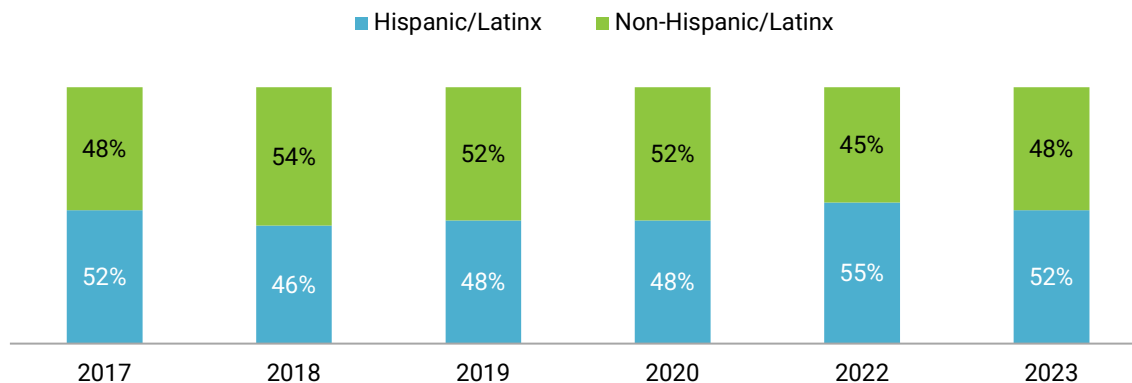
Homeless Families with Children Census Population, All Family Members, by Race



2023 Homeless Families N = 203; 2023 Homeless Non-Families N = 2,063

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

Homeless Families with Children Census Population, All Family Members, by Ethnicity



2017 Homeless Families N = 326; 2018 Homeless Families N = 339; 2019 Homeless Families N = 279; 2020 Homeless Families N = 233; 2022 Homeless Families N = 155; 2023 Homeless Families N = 203

Note: HDX data were prioritized for the 2018 and 2019 reports. Previous reports include survey demographic data for family ethnicity.

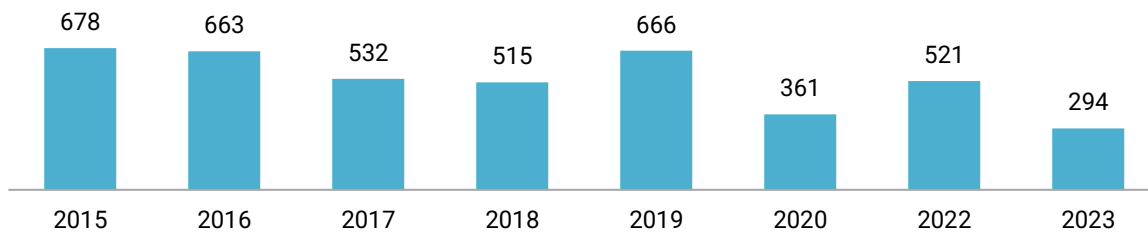
UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS CHILDREN AND TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH

Although largely considered an undercount, nationwide estimates from 2022 suggest there are at least 30,090 unaccompanied children and transition-age youth on the streets and in public shelters, a decrease of 12% over 2020. Young people experiencing homelessness have a harder time accessing services, including shelter, medical care, and employment. Some reasons include the stigma of their housing situation, lack of knowledge of available resources, and a dearth of services targeted to young people.⁷

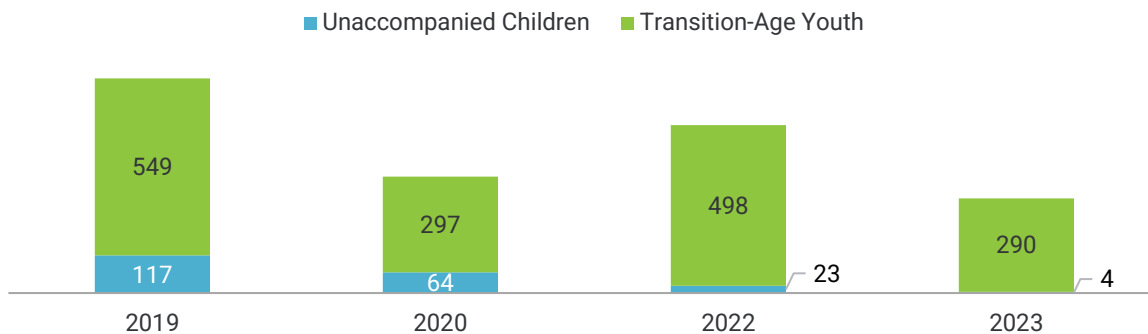
Due to the especially challenging outreach and access efforts necessary to profile the nature of youth homelessness, limited data are available on unaccompanied children and transition-age youth experiencing homelessness.

In Sonoma County, the number of transition-age youth decreased 42% from 498 in 2022 to 290 in 2023. Thirteen (13%) of all those experiencing homelessness in 2023 are unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age.

Total Unaccompanied Homeless Children and Transition-Age Youth Census Population

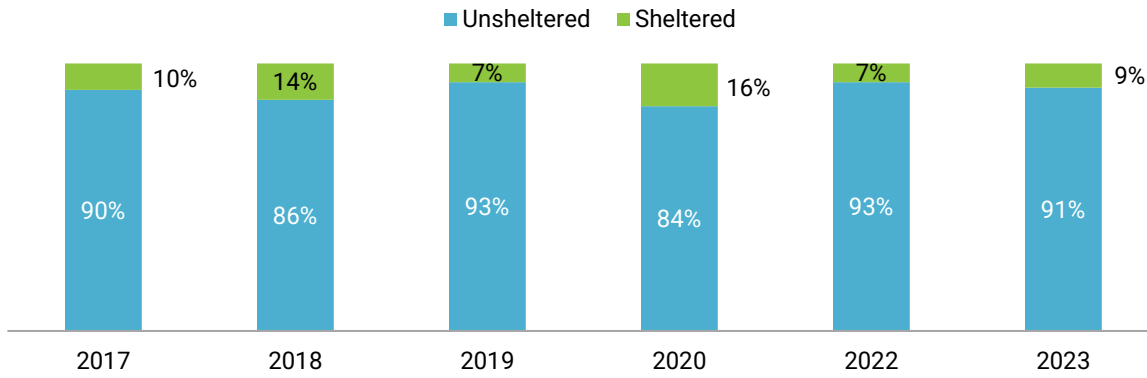


Total Unaccompanied Homeless Children and Transition-Age Youth Count Population



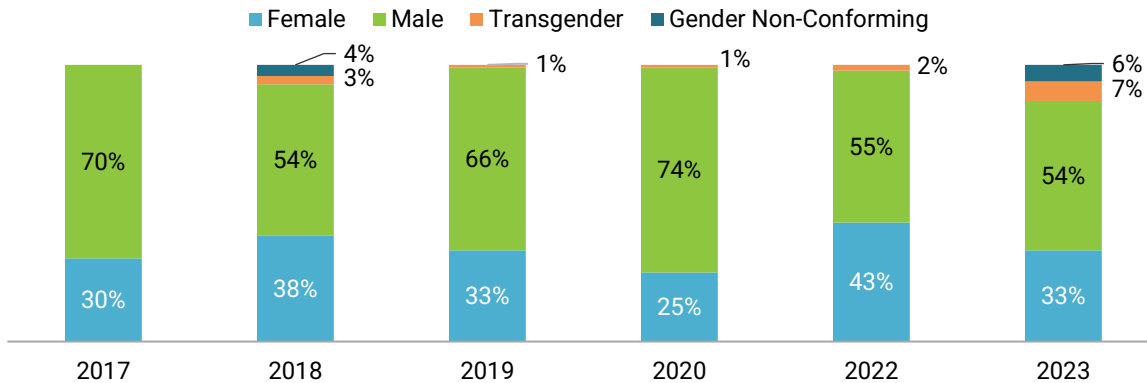
⁷ National Alliance to End Homelessness. (2022). Retrieved 2023 <https://endhomelessness.org/homelessness-in-america/who-experiences-homelessness/youth/>

Unaccompanied Homeless Children and Transition-Age Youth Census Population, by Shelter Status



	2017	2018	2019	2020	2022	2023	2020-22 % Change
Sheltered	52	70	43	57	35	26	-26%
Unsheltered	486	445	623	304	501	268	-47%
Total	538	515	666	361	536	294	-45%

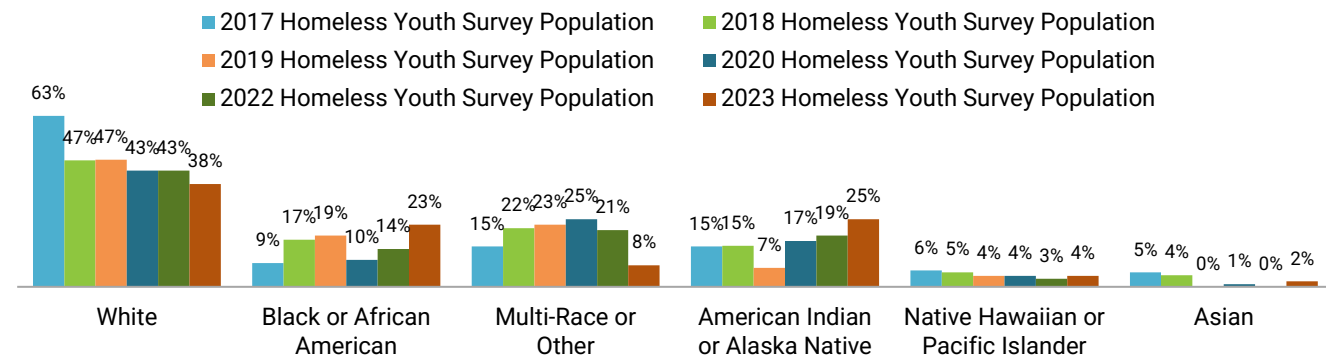
Unaccompanied Homeless Children and Transition-Age Youth Census Population, by Gender



2017 N = 538; 2018 N = 515; 2019 N = 666; 2020 N = 357; 2022 N = 528; 2023 N = 294

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding. Gender Non-Conforming category was added in 2018.

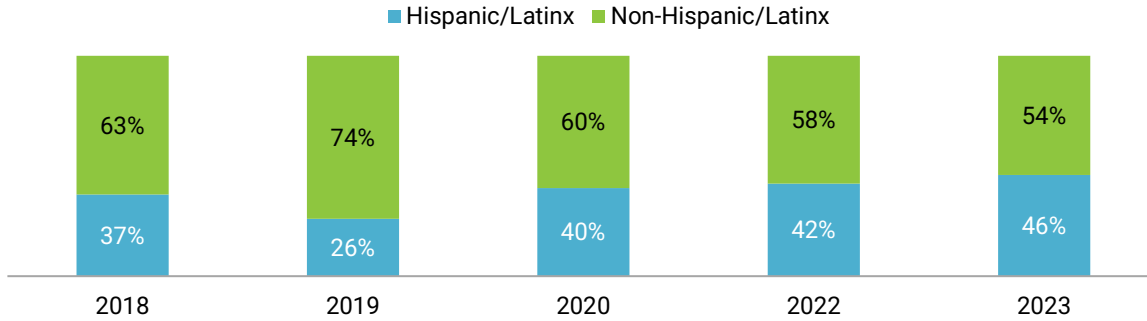
Unaccompanied Homeless Children and Transition-Age Youth Population, by Race



2017 Homeless Youth Survey N = 114 respondents offering 129 responses; 2018 Homeless Youth Survey N = 92 respondents offering 102 responses; 2019 Homeless Youth Survey N = ; 2020 Homeless Youth Survey N = 108; 2022 Homeless Youth Survey N = 37; 2023 Homeless Youth Survey N = 48

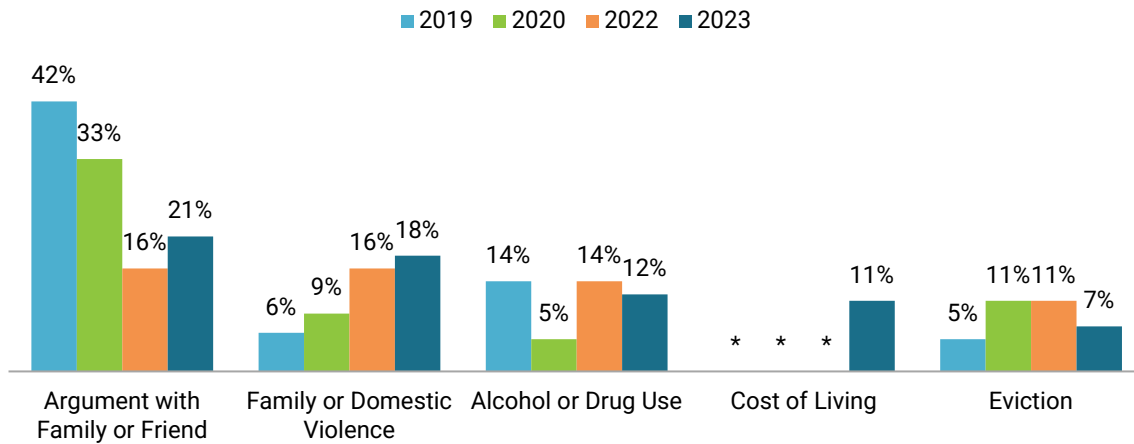
Note: Question changed from a multiple response option to a single response in 2019

Unaccompanied Homeless Children and Transition-Age Youth Census Population, by Ethnicity



2018 N = 515; 2019 N = 666; 2020 N = 347; 2022 N = 528; 2023 N = 294

Primary Cause of Homelessness Among Unaccompanied Children and Transition-Age Youth (2023 Top 5)



2019 Unaccompanied Children and Transition-Age Youth UC/TAY Survey Population N = 111; 2020 UC/TAY Survey Population N = 109; 2022 UC/TAY Survey Population N = 37; 2023 UC/TAY Survey Population N = 57

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

* Note: Cost of Living was added as a response in 2023.

CONCLUSION

The 2023 Sonoma County Homeless Count and Survey was performed using HUD-recommended practices for counting and surveying the homeless population. The 2023 Point-in-Time Count identified 2,266 persons experiencing homelessness in Sonoma County. This represents a decrease of 22% from the count conducted in 2022.

There are numerous interpretations for the cause of the reported decrease including the continued focus on prevention and housing retention, the successes of Coordinated Entry, as well as efforts to re-house those who became homeless after natural disasters that have taken place in recent years.

The 2023 Sonoma County Homeless Count and Survey revealed a diverse population with many different trends and needs. There are many valuable insights into the Sonoma County homeless population from the data collected in this report, including:

OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

- The sheltered count increased by twenty-one percent and the unsheltered count decreased by thirty-eight percent.
- Seventeen percent of the population was counted in vehicles.
- Eighty-five percent of those experiencing homelessness entered into homelessness while living in Sonoma County.
- Forty-seven percent of survey respondents experienced homelessness for the first time before age 25. Ten percent reported experiencing homelessness for the first time at age 50 or older.
- Almost one-fifth (nineteen percent) of survey respondents cited job loss as the primary cause of their homelessness. Sixty-three percent reported unaffordable rent as an obstacle to securing permanent housing and another forty-four percent cited no job or not enough income as an obstacle.
- Eighty-six percent of respondents who were unsheltered or staying in emergency shelter would move into housing if it were available. Sixty-two percent preferred housing without preconditions.

CONCLUSIONS BY SUBPOPULATIONS

Chronically Homeless

- The count of chronically homeless individuals decreased 24% from 2022.

Veterans

- The number of veterans experiencing homelessness in Sonoma County decreased 42% from 191 individuals in 2022 to 110 in 2023.

Families with Children

- The number of families experiencing homelessness increased from 48 families in 2022 to 62 in 2023.

Unaccompanied Children and Transition-Age youth

- There were four unaccompanied children experiencing homelessness, and 290 transition age youth.

In summary, there are still many challenges to overcome in achieving the goal of eliminating homelessness in Sonoma County and in helping homeless individuals and families access necessary services and support. There are also significant successes, noticeably among subpopulations, including decreases in the numbers of chronically homeless

persons, veterans experiencing homelessness, and youth experiencing homelessness. While there are areas that still need more attention, the successes in reducing numbers in subpopulations show a path toward future reductions.

CLOSING

The 2023 Sonoma County Homeless Count and Survey provides valid and useful data that can help create a more comprehensive profile of those experiencing homelessness. The dissemination and evaluation of this effort will help the Sonoma County CoC and all Sonoma County stakeholders continue to produce and refine constructive and innovative solutions to end homelessness and make it a rare, brief, and one-time occurrence. Through innovative and effective housing programs and services, Sonoma County remains committed to moving homeless persons into permanent housing.

Data presented in the 2023 Sonoma County Homeless Count and Survey report fulfills the Sonoma County CoC's federal reporting requirements for Continuums of Care, and will continue to inform additional outreach, service planning, and policy decision-making by local planning bodies over the next year as Sonoma County continues to address homelessness.

APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY

OVERVIEW

The 2023 County of Sonoma Homeless Census and Survey was performed using HUD-recommended practices and using HUD's definition of homelessness. The primary purpose was to produce a point-in-time estimate of individuals and families experiencing homelessness in Sonoma County, a region which covers approximately 1,768 square miles. The results of several components were combined to produce the total estimated number of persons experiencing homelessness on a given night. A detailed description of these components follows.

Components of the Homeless Count Method

The methodology used in the 2023 Point-in-Time Census and Survey had four components:

- 1) **General Street Count:** A morning count of unsheltered homeless individuals and families on January 27, 2023. This occurred from approximately 5:00 AM to 9:00 AM and included those sleeping outdoors on the street; at bus and train stations; in parks, tents, and other makeshift shelters; and in vehicles and abandoned properties. The general street count was designed to take place before shelter occupants were released. In areas with shelters, the immediate area surrounding the shelter was prioritized to eliminate potential double counting of individuals.
- 2) **General Shelter Count:** A nighttime count of individuals and families experiencing homelessness staying at publicly- and privately-operated shelters on the night of January 26, 2023. This included those who occupied emergency shelters, transitional housing, and safe havens. All shelter data were gathered either from Sonoma County's Homeless Management Information System or directly from the shelter.
- 3) **Targeted Street Count of Youth and Young Adults:** An afternoon count of unsheltered youth and young adults on January 27, 2023. This occurred from approximately 2:00 PM to 7:00 PM and was led by special youth teams who canvassed specific areas where youth and young adults were known to congregate. Upon completion, data from this targeted count was carefully reviewed against the results from the general street count to ensure that any possible duplicate counts were removed.
- 4) **Homeless Survey:** An in-person interview with sheltered and unsheltered individuals experiencing homelessness conducted by peer surveyors between January 28 and March 31, 2023. Data from the survey was used to refine the Point-in-Time Census estimates and then used to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the demographics and experiences of homeless individuals.

The Planning Process

To ensure the success and integrity of the count, many county and community agencies collaborated on community outreach, volunteer recruitment, logistical plans, methodological decisions, and interagency coordination efforts. Applied Survey Research (ASR) provided technical assistance for these aspects of the planning process. ASR has over 22 years of experience conducting homeless counts and surveys throughout California and across the nation. Their work is featured as a best practice in the HUD publication, *A Guide to Counting Unsheltered Homeless People*, as well as in the *Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago* publication, *Conducting a Youth Count: A Toolkit*.

Community Involvement

Local homeless and housing service providers and advocates were valued partners in the planning and implementation of this count. Thanks to local efforts, the count included enumerators with a diverse range of knowledge, including expertise regarding areas frequented by homeless individuals, individuals living in vehicles, and persons residing in

encampments. Community partners were also key in recruiting individuals with lived experience of homelessness to participate in the street count and survey efforts.

STREET COUNT METHODOLOGY

Definition

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

- An individual or family with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train stations, airport, or camping ground.

Methodological Improvements

The 2023 street count methodology followed an established, HUD approved methodology used in the 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2022 counts, with the addition of dedicated youth outreach in each of those years. Local homeless and housing service providers and advocates were valued partners in the planning and implementation of this count.

Volunteer and Guide Recruitment and Training

Outreach and program staff did recruitment of persons with lived experience to act as guides, and in some cases embedded reporters, in order to conduct the count in 2023. Homeless guides were paid \$20 for online training as well as \$20 per hour worked on the days of the count.

In order to participate in the count, all volunteers and guides were requested to view a 20-minute training video before the count. Training covered all aspects of the count including:

- definition of homelessness;
 - how to identify homeless individuals;
 - how to safely and respectfully conduct the count, how to use the smartphone app and also access the smartphone app training video;
 - how to use the route maps to ensure the entirety of the assigned area was covered;
 - tips to identify vehicles; and
- other tips to help ensure an accurate and safe count.

Safety Precautions

Every effort was made to minimize potentially hazardous situations. Law enforcement agencies were notified of pending street count activity in their jurisdictions. In census tracts with a high concentration of homeless encampments, specialized teams with knowledge of those encampments were identified and assigned to those areas. Enumeration teams were advised to take every safety precaution possible, including bringing flashlights and maintaining a respectful distance from those they were counting.

Logistics of Enumeration

On the morning of the street count, teams of two or more persons deployed to enumerate designated areas of the county for the street count. Each team was composed of any combination of outreach workers, lived-experience guides, program staff and service-experienced community volunteers. Each team had a lead and prior to the count were provided with their assigned census tract maps, smartphone access information and training, field observation tips and guidelines, including vehicle identification criteria. Teams were instructed meet at one of the designated deployment sites, or to text a central PIT count dispatch center to confirm they were enroute and on task for enumeration of their route assignment.

All accessible streets, roads, parks, and highways in the enumerated tracts were traversed by foot or car. The Sonoma County Survey 123 smartphone app was used to record the number of homeless persons observed in addition to basic demographic and location information. Dispatch center volunteers also verified that at least one person on each team

had a cell phone available for their use during the count and recorded the number on the volunteer deployment assignment sheet. Teams were asked to cover the entirety of their assigned areas.

To ensure that the privacy of individuals experiencing homelessness was respected and that safety concerns were kept as a priority for enumeration teams, teams were asked to conduct observation-only counts and to not have any contact with individuals experiencing homelessness. When they encountered a structure or vehicle that they believed to be inhabited, they had the option to indicate that it was inhabited but that they didn't know the number or the demographic detail (age and gender) of its residents if this could be determined by the team. In order to determine the number of residents of these dwelling types, ASR uses the survey data from respondents who indicated they stayed in the named dwelling type. Demographic detail for those inhabitants is gathered from count data.

YOUTH STREET COUNT METHODOLOGY

Goal

The goal of the 2023 dedicated youth count was to improve representation of unaccompanied homeless children and youth under the age of 25 in the Point-in-Time Count. Many homeless children and youth do not use homeless services, are unrecognizable to adult street count volunteers, and may be in unsheltered locations that are difficult to find. Therefore, traditional street count efforts are not as effective in reaching youth.

Research Design

As in all years, planning for the 2023 supplemental youth count included homeless youth service providers and youth with lived experience of homelessness. Local service providers identified locations where homeless youth were known to congregate and recruited youth currently experiencing homelessness with knowledge of where to locate homeless youth to serve as guides for the count. Late afternoon and early evening enumeration was the ideal time recommended by advocates to conduct the youth count.

Social Advocates for Youth (SAY) took the lead on recruiting 15 youth to work as peer enumerators in addition to 12 youth service provider staff members who accompanied and transported the youth around the county. These teams counted homeless youth in the identified areas of Sonoma County on January 27, 2023.

Youth workers were paid \$20 per hour for their time, including time spent in training prior to the count. Youth and youth service provider staff members were trained on where and how to identify homeless youth as well as how to record the data.

Data Collection

It was determined that homeless youth would be more prominent on the street during daylight hours rather than in the early morning when the general count was conducted. The youth count was conducted from approximately 2:00 PM to 7:00 PM on January 27, 2023. Youth worked in teams of two to four, with teams coordinated by youth street outreach workers.

Both the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness recognize that youth do not commonly congregate with homeless adults and are not easily identified by non-youth. For this reason, these agencies accept and recommend that communities count youth at times when they can be seen rather than during traditional enumeration times.

Street Count De-Duplication

Data from the supplemental youth count and general street count were compared and de-duplicated by assessing location, gender, and age. No duplicates were found.

SHELTER COUNT METHODOLOGY

Goal

The goal of the shelter and institution count is to gain an accurate count of persons temporarily housed in shelters and other institutions across Sonoma County. These data are vital to gaining an accurate, overall count of the homeless population and understanding where homeless persons receive shelter.

Definition

For the purposes of this study, the HUD definition of sheltered homelessness for Point-in-Time Counts was used. This definition includes individuals and families living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements.

Research Design

The homeless occupancy of shelters in Sonoma County was collected for the night of January 26, 2023. All shelter data were gathered either directly from the shelter or from Sonoma County's Homeless Management Information System.

Challenges

There are many challenges in any homeless enumeration, especially when implemented in a community as large and diverse as Sonoma County. Point-in-Time Counts are "snapshots" that quantify the size of the homeless population at a given point during the year. Hence, the count may not be representative of fluctuations and compositional changes in the homeless population seasonally or over time.

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

The methods employed in a non-intrusive visual homeless enumeration, while academically sound, have inherent biases and shortcomings. Even with the assistance of dedicated homeless service providers, the methodology cannot guarantee 100% accuracy. Many factors may contribute to missed opportunities, for example:

- It is difficult to identify homeless persons who may be sleeping in vans, cars, recreational vehicles, abandoned buildings, or structures unfit for human habitation.
- Homeless families with children often seek opportunities to stay on private property, rather than sleep on the streets, in vehicles, or in makeshift shelters.

Even though the Point-in-Time Count is most likely to be an undercount of the homeless population, the methodology employed—coupled with the homeless survey—is the most comprehensive approach available.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Planning and Implementation

A survey of individuals experiencing homelessness was conducted between January 28 and March 31, 2023 to yield qualitative data about people experiencing homelessness in Sonoma County. This data is used for the McKinney-Vento Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance funding application and are important for future program development and planning.

The survey elicited information such as gender, family status, military service, duration and recurrence of homelessness, nighttime accommodations, causes of homelessness, and access to services through open-ended, closed-ended, and multiple response questions. The survey data bring greater perspective to current issues of homelessness and to the provision and delivery of services.

Surveys were conducted by peer survey workers with lived homeless experience. Training sessions were facilitated by Applied Survey Research, Sonoma County staff, and community partners. Potential interviewers were led through a comprehensive orientation that included project background information as well as detailed instruction on respondent eligibility, interviewing protocol, and confidentiality. Peer survey workers were compensated at a rate of \$10 per completed survey.

It was determined that survey data would be more easily obtained if an incentive gift was offered to respondents in appreciation for their time and participation. \$10 gift cards were provided as an incentive for participating in the 2023 homeless survey.

Survey Sampling

Based on a Point-in-Time Count estimate of 2,266 homeless persons, with a randomized survey sampling process, the 445 valid surveys represented a confidence interval of +/- 4% with a 95% confidence level when generalizing the results of the survey to the estimated population of individuals experiencing homelessness in Sonoma County.

The 2023 survey was administered in shelters, transitional-housing facilities, and on the street. In order to ensure the representation of transitional-housing residents, who can be underrepresented in a street-based survey, survey quotas were created to reach individuals and heads of family households living in these programs.

Strategic attempts were also made to reach individuals in various geographic locations and of various subset groups such as homeless youth, minority ethnic groups, military veterans, domestic violence survivors, and families. One way to increase the participation of these groups was to recruit peer survey workers. Since 2009, the ASR survey methodology has prioritized a peer-to-peer approach to data collection by increasing the number of currently homeless surveyors.

In order to increase randomization of sample respondents, survey workers were trained to employ an “every third encounter” survey approach. Survey workers were instructed to approach every third person they considered to be an eligible survey respondent. If the person declined to take the survey, the survey worker could approach the next eligible person they encountered. After completing a survey, the randomized approach was resumed.

Data Collection

Care was taken by interviewers to ensure that respondents felt comfortable regardless of the street or shelter location where the survey occurred. During the interviews, respondents were encouraged to be candid in their responses and were informed that these responses would be framed as general findings, would be kept confidential, and would not be traceable to any single individual.

Data Analysis

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

Survey Challenges and Limitations

There may be some variance in the data that individuals experiencing homelessness self-reported. However, using a peer-interviewing methodology is believed to allow the respondents to be more candid with their answers and may help reduce the uneasiness of revealing personal information. Further, service providers and county staff members recommended individuals who would be the best suited to conducting interviews and these individuals received comprehensive training about how to conduct interviews. Service providers and county staff also reviewed the surveys to ensure quality responses. Surveys that were considered incomplete or containing false responses were not accepted.

APPENDIX B: DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Chronic homelessness – Defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development as an unaccompanied individual or head of a family household with a disabling condition who has either continuously experienced homelessness for a year or more, or has experienced at least four episodes of homelessness totaling 12 months, in the past three years.

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

Emergency shelter – The provision of a safe alternative to the streets, either in a shelter facility or through the use of stabilization rooms. Emergency shelter is short-term, usually for 180 days or fewer. Domestic violence shelters are typically considered a type of emergency shelter, as they provide safe, immediate housing for survivors and their children.

Family – A household with at least one adult and one child under the age of 18.

Homeless – Under the Category 1 definition of homelessness in the HEARTH Act, includes individuals and families living in a supervised publicly- or privately-operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements, or with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground.

HUD – Abbreviation for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Precariously housed – A person who is staying with the household because they have no other regular or adequate place to stay due to a lack of money or other means of support.

Sheltered homeless individuals – Individuals who are living in emergency shelters or transitional-housing programs.

Single individual – An unaccompanied adult over the age of 18.

Transition-age youth – Young people between the ages of 18 and 24 years old who are not accompanied by a parent or guardian and are not a parent presenting with or sleeping in the same place as their own child(ren).

Transitional housing – Housing in which homeless individuals may live up to 24 months and receive supportive services that enable them to live more independently. Supportive services—which help promote residential stability, increased skill level or income, and greater self-determination—may be provided by the organization managing the housing or coordinated by that organization and provided by other public or private agencies. Transitional housing can be provided in one structure or several structures at one site, or in multiple structures at scattered sites.

Unaccompanied children – Children under the age of 18 who are not accompanied by a parent or guardian and are not a parent presenting with or sleeping in the same place as their own child(ren).

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

Association of Bay Area Governments**Bay Area Housing Finance Authority****Housing Committee****Oversight Committee**

September 13, 2023

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Planning for 2024 Regional Housing Bond**Subject:**

Overview of Local Expenditure Planning process required for the 80% of funding administered by Bay Area counties and direct-allocation cities from the anticipated 2024 Regional Housing Bond, and how the Bay Area Housing Finance Authority (BAHFA) is supporting jurisdictions throughout this process

Background:

The San Francisco Bay Area Regional Housing Finance Act (Gov. Code sec. 64500, et seq.) (the "Act") established BAHFA in 2019 and mandates certain aspects of the administration of revenues raised by BAHFA, including how bond proceeds shall be expended. If the anticipated Regional Housing Bond (the "Bond") passes in November 2024, 20% of the funds will be retained by BAHFA for a regional program and 80% of the funds will return to the county of origin. The Act states that counties and certain cities are entitled to receive a direct allocation. In 2024, four cities would qualify for direct allocation: San Jose and Oakland (based on population) and Santa Rosa and Napa (based on their share of regional housing needs assessment ("RHNA") for lower income households in their counties).

Each jurisdiction that receives a direct allocation will be required to submit an Expenditure Plan that meets specific requirements outlined by the Act to the Bay Area Housing Finance Authority to receive their proportion of funding. These Plans are expected to be due in the first quarter of 2025 pending a successful Bond measure.

The Act affords greater flexibility to county and local Expenditure Plans using the 80% return-to-source funds than for BAHFA's Expenditure Plan with the remaining 20% of Bond funds. For example, counties and cities have a larger share of flexible funding (28%) than the regional program (18%). While all bond-funded housing must be deed-restricted, the term of the restriction is undefined for local governments whereas BAHFA's investments must carry a minimum 55-year affordability covenant. Local governments' Production and Preservation funds must be affordable with a cap of 120% of Area Median Income ("AMI"), whereas BAHFA's Production funds are capped at 80% of AMI. For local Expenditure Plans, rental, homeownership, and interim housing are all eligible uses of Production funds, while BAHFA's Production funds are limited to rental housing (though for BAHFA ownership units and interim housing are permitted uses of the flexible funding and local government grant program).

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The Act requires local Expenditure Plans to fulfill the following additional requirements:

- Local governing boards and councils must approve plans at a noticed hearing;
- Must include minimum 52% for Production, 15% for Preservation, and 5% for Protections, though eligibility of Protection programs for bond funding is contingent on the language and passage of an anticipated voter-initiated measure to amend the California Constitution to expand eligible uses of bond funds;
- Production should “prioritize” projects that help meet extremely low income, very low income, and low income RHNA targets; and
- 28% Flexible Funds can be for housing and “housing-related uses.”

If the Expenditure Plan meets all required criteria, the plan is deemed approved. If the ABAG Executive Board and the BAHFA Board vote that a Plan is incomplete, funding could be withheld until a completed Plan is submitted. To create a complete and compliant local Expenditure Plan, BAHFA anticipates that counties will need to conduct outreach and information-sharing sessions with all cities within each county as well as members of the public.

Support to Jurisdictions:

BAHFA is providing technical assistance to inform jurisdictions of these requirements, and to provide data, informational materials, and other support to local agency staff to complete their Expenditure Plans over the coming 18 months.

Over the past three months, BAHFA has held convenings, met with local jurisdiction staff and elected leadership across each county, and distributed materials to assist with the first steps of this process. These activities have included:

- A convening of all housing department leadership from each county (including the direct-allocation cites) to discuss and review the requirements of local Expenditure Plans;
- A convening of all housing department leadership, homeless service leadership, and public housing authority leadership to discuss the challenges of producing and maintaining deeply affordable and permanent supportive housing;
- The distribution of BAHFA- and MTC-created technical assistance materials, including a local expenditure planning template and jurisdiction-specific data packets, as well as guides to equitable engagement and housing-related communications.

BAHFA will continue to provide support to counties and cities creating local Expenditure Plans through public engagement support and sample staff reports and PowerPoint decks. These materials will be designed in partnership with the MTC-ABAG’s Regional Planning Program, which is responsible for the award-winning Regional Housing Technical Assistance program.

At the request of local agency leadership, BAHFA will also be hosting several meetings for local housing staff in fall 2023 to provide an informal space to discuss the expenditure planning process, to problem-solve across jurisdictions, and to share success stories and progress. BAHFA will also provide on-call support.

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Issues:

None

Recommended Action:

Information

Attachment:

A. Presentation

Reviewed:



Andrew Fremier