



SOLANO COUNTY

2017 HOMELESS CENSUS & SURVEY

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT



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

Every two years, during the last ten days of January, communities across the country conduct comprehensive counts of the local population experiencing homelessness. These censuses measure the prevalence of homelessness in each community and collect information on individuals and families residing in emergency shelters, transitional housing, people sleeping on the streets, in cars, in abandoned properties, or in other places not meant for human habitation.

The biennial Point-in-Time Census is the only source of nationwide data on sheltered and unsheltered homelessness, and is required by the 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. Currently, the Solano County Continuum of Care (CoC) receives more than \$1.2 million in federal funding, a key source of funding for homeless services in Solano County.

Continuums of Care report the findings of their local Point-in-Time Census in their annual funding application to HUD, which ultimately help the federal government better understand the nature and extent of homelessness nationwide. Census data also help to inform communities' local strategic planning, capacity building, and advocacy campaigns to prevent and end homelessness.

Solano County has worked in conjunction with Applied Survey Research (ASR) to conduct the 2017 Solano Homeless Point-in-Time Census and Survey. ASR is a social research firm with extensive experience in homeless enumeration and needs assessment.

The Solano County Homeless Point-in-Time Census has two primary components: a point-in-time enumeration of unsheltered homeless individuals and families (those sleeping outdoors, on the street, in parks, or vehicles, etc.) and a point-in-time enumeration of homeless individuals and families residing in temporary shelter (e.g., emergency shelter or transitional housing).

The 2017 Solano County Homeless Point-in-Time Census was a comprehensive community effort. With the support of 30 individuals with lived experience of homelessness, 81 community volunteers, law enforcement, and staff from various city and county departments, the entire county was canvassed between 6 a.m. and 10 a.m. on January 24, 2017. This resulted in a peer-informed, visual count of unsheltered homeless individuals and families residing on the streets, in vehicles, makeshift shelters, encampments and other places not meant for human habitation. Shelters and facilities reported the number of homeless individuals and families who occupied their facilities on the previous evening of January 23.

Solano County also conducted a specialized census of unaccompanied children and transition-age youth under the age of 25. This dedicated census is part of a nationwide effort, established and recommended by HUD, to improve our understanding of the scope of youth homelessness. Trained youth enumerators who currently or recently experienced homelessness conducted the census in focused areas where young people experiencing

homelessness were known to congregate.¹ This is an important year for national data on young people experiencing homelessness, as HUD will use 2017 youth census results as a baseline for measuring progress toward ending youth homelessness by 2020.

In the weeks following the unsheltered census, an in-depth survey was administered to 439 unsheltered and sheltered homeless individuals of all ages. 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 Solano County on a single night in January. Special attention is given to specific subpopulations, including chronically homeless, 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 2015, are provided where available and applicable.

FEDERAL DEFINITION OF HOMELESSNESS FOR POINT-IN-TIME CENSUSES

In this study, the HUD definition of homelessness for the Point-in-Time Census 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 ground.

PROJECT PURPOSE AND GOALS

In order to for the 2017 Solano County Point-in-Time Census and Survey to best reflect the experience and expertise of the community, ASR held regular planning meetings with local community members. These community members were drawn from city and county departments, community-based service providers, and other interested stakeholders. These individuals comprised the 2017 Planning Committee, and were instrumental to ensuring the 2017 Solano County Homeless Point-in-Time Census and Survey reflected the needs and concerns of the community.

The 2017 Planning Committee identified several important project goals:

- 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 2015 Solano County Homeless Point-in-Time Census and Survey, and to track progress toward ending homelessness;
- To increase public awareness of overall homeless issues and generate support for constructive solutions;
- To assess the status of specific subpopulations, including veterans, families, unaccompanied children, transition-age youth, and those who are chronically homeless; and

¹ Significant deduplication efforts were made in 2017 to ensure unaccompanied children and youth were not captured in both the youth and general unsheltered census efforts. For more information on these efforts and the overall census methodology, please see Appendix 1.

- To preserve current federal funding for homeless services and to enhance the ability to raise new funds.

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



Point-In-Time Census

The 2017 Solano Homeless Point-in-Time Census and Survey included a complete enumeration of all unsheltered and publicly sheltered homeless persons. The general unsheltered census was conducted on January 24, 2017 from approximately 6 a.m. to 10 a.m. and covered all 907 square miles of Solano County.² The shelter census was conducted on the previous evening and included all individuals staying in emergency shelters and transitional housing facilities. The general unsheltered and shelter census methodology were similar to those used in 2015.

The methodology used for the 2017 Solano County Homeless Point-in-Time Census is commonly described as a “blitz count” because it is conducted by a large team over a very short period of time. As this method is conducted in Solano County, the result is an observation based census of individuals and families who appear to be homeless. The census is then followed by an in-person representative survey, the results of which are used to profile and estimate the condition and characteristics of the local homeless population. Information collected from the survey is used to fulfill HUD reporting requirements, and to inform local service delivery and strategic planning efforts.

In a continuing effort to improve data on the extent of youth homelessness, Solano County also conducted a dedicated youth census similar to the one conducted in 2015. The dedicated youth census methodology was improved in 2017 to better ensure unaccompanied children and transition-age youth were not included in both the general unsheltered census and youth unsheltered census. For more information regarding the dedicated youth unsheltered census, deduplication, and project methodology, please see Appendix 1.

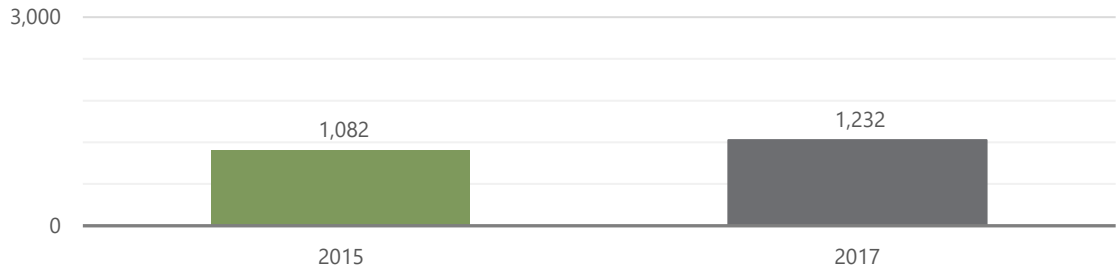
² Volunteers covered all publicly accessible roads and additional areas identified as “hot spots” in the planning process.

NUMBER AND CHARACTERISTICS OF HOMELESS PERSONS IN SOLANO COUNTY

TOTAL POPULATION

Point-in-Time Census data from 2017 shows a 14% increase in the total number of persons experiencing homeless in Solano County compared to 2015. Nearly three-quarters (74%) of the population were unsheltered in 2017, similar to 2015.

Figure 1. TOTAL NUMBER OF HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS ENUMERATED DURING THE POINT-IN-TIME HOMELESS CENSUS WITH TREND



Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

SHELTERED AND UNSHELTERED STATUS

Of the 1,232 total persons enumerated during the 2017 Solano County Point-in-Time Census, 132 persons (11%) were staying in a shelter, 183 persons (15%) were staying in a transitional housing program, and 917 persons (74%) were living on the street, in abandoned buildings, in encampment areas, or in vehicles.

Figure 2. TOTAL NUMBER OF HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS ENUMERATED DURING THE POINT-IN-TIME HOMELESS CENSUS



Source: Applied Survey Research. (2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

Figure 3. WHERE WERE YOU STAYING ON THE NIGHT OF JANUARY 23?



2017 n=439

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

HOUSEHOLD TYPE

Persons in families increased slightly since 2015, representing 13% of the 2017 Homeless Census population. Eighty-one percent (81%) of those persons in families were enumerated in shelters and 19% were enumerated on the street or in abandoned buildings, vehicles, or encampments. Additionally, adults 18-24 also increased from 11% of the population in 2015 to 17% in 2017.

Figure 4. HOMELESS CENSUS RESULTS BY HOUSEHOLD TYPE AND AGE GROUP

	2015					2017				
	CHILDREN UNDER 18	ADULTS 18-24	ADULTS 25+	TOTAL	% OF TOTAL	CHILDREN UNDER 18	ADULTS 18-24	ADULTS 25+	TOTAL	% OF TOTAL
Sheltered	45	17	225	287	27%	75	45	195	315	26%
Households with children	45	5	47	97	9%	75	14	42	131	11%
Persons in non-family households	0	12	178	190	18%	0	31	153	184	15%
Unsheltered	17	100	678	795	73%	38	164	715	917	74%
Households with children	8	1	8	17	2%	20	3	8	31	3%
Persons in non-family households	9	99	670	778	72%	18	161	707	886	72%
Total	62	117	903	1,082	--	113	209	910	1,232	--
Percent	6%	11%	83%	--	100%	9%	17%	74%	--	100%

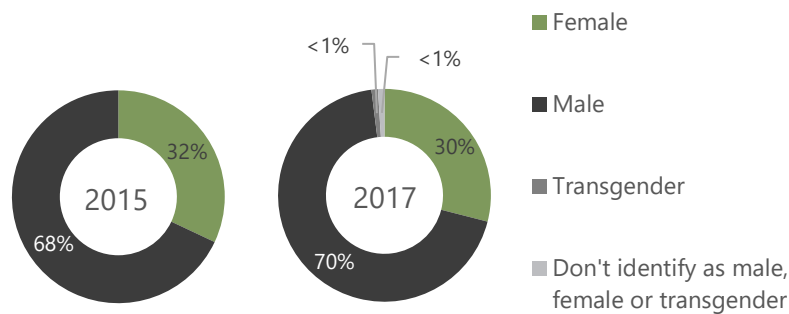
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

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

GENERAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Seventy percent (70%) of the population experiencing homelessness was male in 2017. This was a slightly higher proportion than in 2015 and is reflective of neighboring communities and national data. Interestingly, 74% of the unsheltered population was male, while males made up 59% of the sheltered population.

Figure 5. TOTAL HOMELESS CENSUS POPULATION BY GENDER

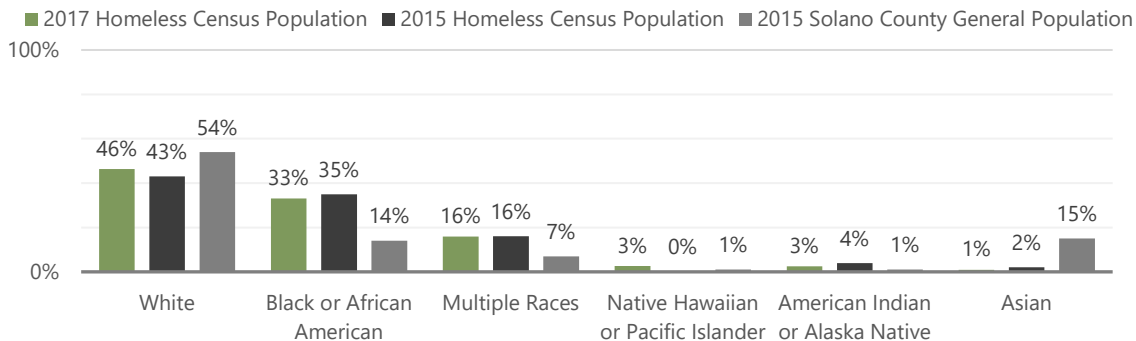


Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

2015 n=1,082; 2017 n=1,232

Non-White ethnicities were overrepresented in the homeless population compared to the general population of Solano County. Thirty-three percent (33%) of those experiencing homelessness identified as Black or African American, compared to 14% of the general population.

Figure 6. TOTAL HOMELESS CENSUS POPULATION BY RACE



2015 n=1,082; 2017 n=1,232

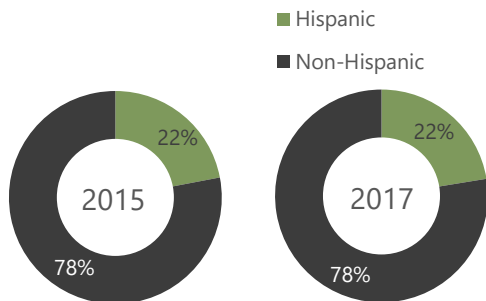
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

U.S. Census Bureau. (May 2017). American Community Survey 2015 1-Year Estimates, Table DP05: ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates. Retrieved from <http://factfinder2.census.gov>

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

The proportion of those who identified as Hispanic or Latino did not change from 2015, staying at 22%.

Figure 7. TOTAL HOMELESS CENSUS POPULATION BY HISPANIC/NON-HISPANIC



2015 n=1,082; 2017 n=1,232

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

Homeless Survey Findings

This section provides an overview of the findings generated from the survey component of the 2017 Solano County Homeless Point-in-Time Census and Survey. Surveys were administered to a randomized sample of homeless individuals between February 7 and February 14, 2017. This effort resulted in 439 complete and unique surveys. Based on a Point-in-Time Census of 1,232 homeless persons, with a randomized survey sampling process, these 439 valid surveys represent a confidence interval of +/- 3.75% with a 95% confidence level when generalizing the results of the survey to the estimated population of homeless individuals in Solano County. In other words, if the survey were conducted again, we can be confident that the results would be within 3.75 percentage points of the current results.

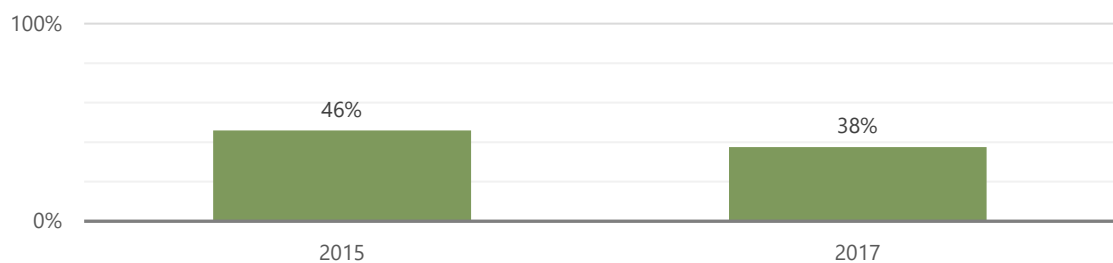
In order to respect respondent privacy and to ensure the safety and comfort of those who participated, respondents were not required to complete all survey questions. Missing values are intentionally omitted from the survey results. Therefore, the total number of respondents for each question will not always equal the total number of surveys conducted.

DURATION AND RECURRENCE OF HOMELESSNESS

DURATION 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. Thirty-eight percent (38%) of survey respondents were experiencing homelessness for the first time, lower than in 2015 (46%).

Figure 8. FIRST TIME HOMELESS (RESPONDENTS ANSWERING “YES”)

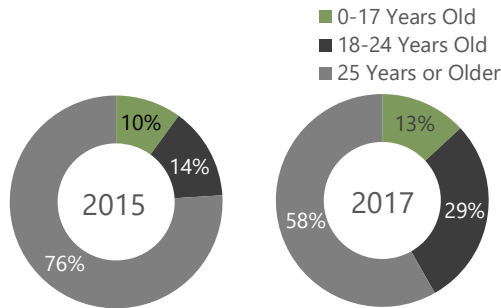


2015 n=355; 2017 n=436

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

While 22% of the population enumerated in 2017 was under age 25, 42% of survey respondents reported they were under 25 the first time they experienced homelessness. This has implications for how the community connects with children and persons in families during the census and survey and how everyday outreach and information about county services is distributed.

Figure 9. AGE AT FIRST EXPERIENCE OF HOMELESSNESS

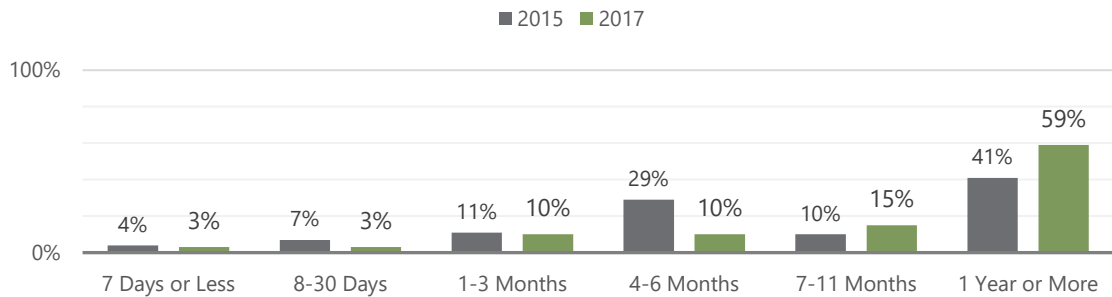


2015 n=350; 2017 n=434

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

In 2017, 59% of survey respondents reported they had been homeless for one year or more; this was up from 41% in 2015. A lower percentage reported they had been homeless for 4-6 months, becoming homeless in late summer/early fall, in 2017 compared to 2015 (10% and 29%, respectively).

Figure 10. LENGTH OF CURRENT EPISODE OF HOMELESSNESS



2015 n=354; 2017 n=433

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2013-2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

LIVING ACCOMMODATIONS

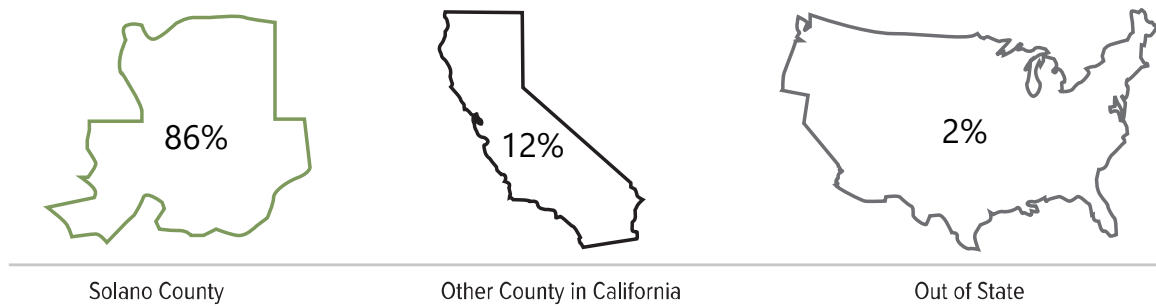
Where individuals lived prior to experiencing homelessness and where they have lived since impacts the way they seek services, as well as their ability to access support from friends or family. Previous circumstances can also point to gaps in the system of care, and opportunities for systemic improvement and homeless prevention.

PLACE OF RESIDENCE

Knowing where individuals were living before they lost their housing informs discussions regarding how local the homeless population is to Solano County. This information can also influence changes to available support systems if the Continuum of Care finds increasing numbers of individuals living locally before experiencing homelessness.

Eighty-six percent (86%) of survey respondents reported they were living in Solano County at the time they most recently became homeless, 12% were from another California county, and 2% were living out of state.

Figure 11. WHERE WERE YOU LIVING AT THE TIME YOU MOST RECENTLY BECAME HOMELESS?

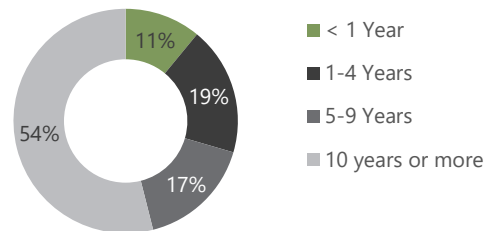


2017 n=436

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

Respondents were also asked how long they had been living in Solano County. More than half (54%) had been in the county for 10 years or more. Eleven percent (11%) had been in the community for less than a year.

Figure 12. LENGTH OF TIME IN SOLANO COUNTY

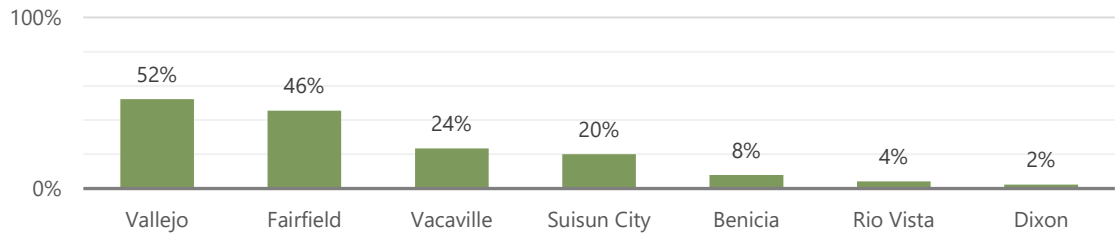


2017 n=429

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

Respondents were asked which cities within Solano County they had slept in during the 12 months prior to the study. Many respondents reported staying in multiple cities, primarily those cities with the highest population density and access to services. Fifty-two percent (52%) of respondents reported they had stayed in Vallejo in the past year, 46% had stayed in Fairfield, and 24% had stayed in Vacaville.

Figure 13. CITIES SLEPT IN DURING THE PAST YEAR



2017 n=425

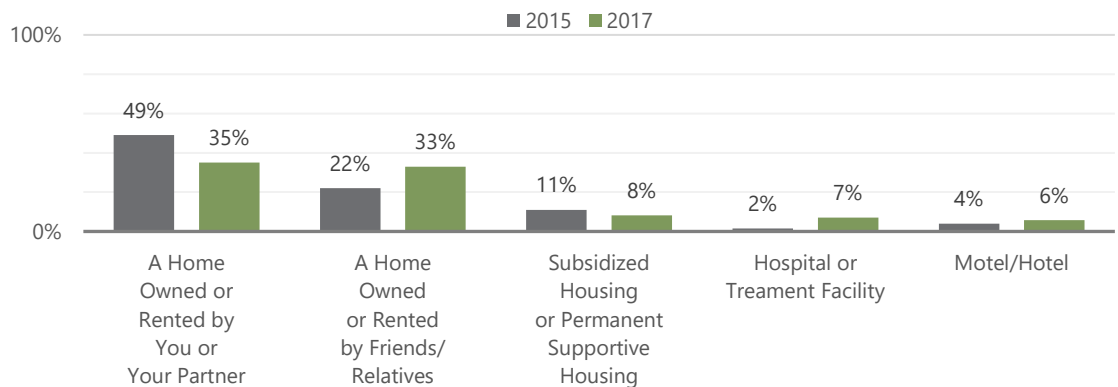
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

PRIOR LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

Similar to previous place of residence, the type of living arrangements maintained by individuals before experiencing homelessness can influence what types of homeless prevention services might be offered to help individuals maintain their housing.

A third (33%) of respondents reported they were staying in the home of a friend or family member in 2017, up from 22% in 2015. A smaller percentage reported they were staying in their own home prior to homelessness in 2017 compared to 2015 (35% and 49% respectively).

Figure 14. LIVING ARRANGEMENTS IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO BECOMING HOMELESS THIS TIME



2015 n=343; 2017 n=428

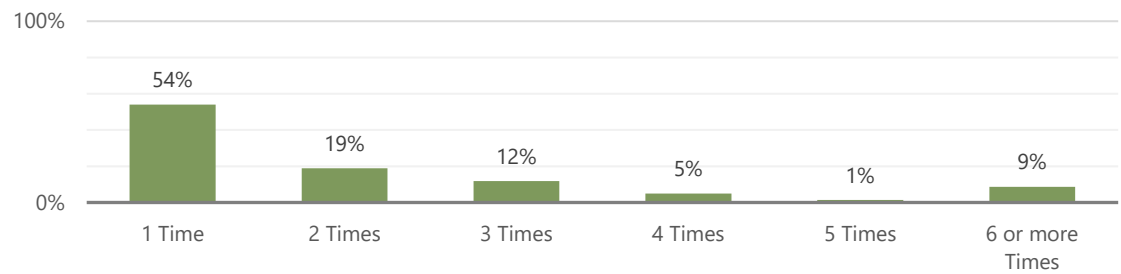
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

RECURRENCE OF HOMELESSNESS

Many individuals who experience homelessness will do so numerous times, as people often cycle in and out of stable housing. Recurring homelessness is also an indicator of the homeless assistance and housing systems ability to address individuals' needs for stable, permanent housing.

Fifty-four percent (54%) stated they had experienced homelessness just once in the past three years, however 15% of those surveyed said they had been homeless four to six times in the past 3 years.

Figure 15. SEPARATE EPISODES OF HOMELESSNESS IN LAST 3 YEARS



2017 n=436

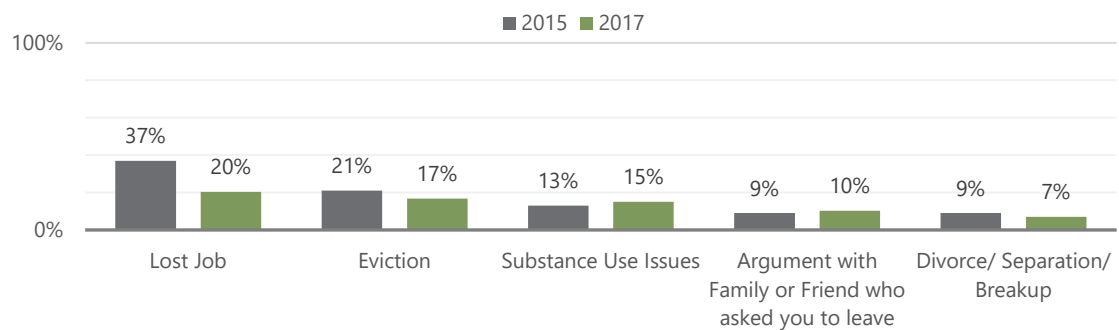
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

PRIMARY CAUSE OF HOMELESSNESS

The primary cause of an individual's inability to obtain or retain housing is often difficult to pinpoint, as it is often the result of multiple and compounding causes. However, an inability to find adequate housing can lead to an inability to address other basic needs, such as healthcare and adequate nutrition.

While job loss remained the number one reported cause of homelessness in 2017, the percentage of respondents decreased from 37% to 20%. Responses were more diverse in 2017, and a slightly higher percentage reported substance abuse as the primary cause of their homelessness (15% compared to 13% in 2015).

Figure 16. PRIMARY CAUSE OF HOMELESSNESS (TOP FIVE RESPONSES)



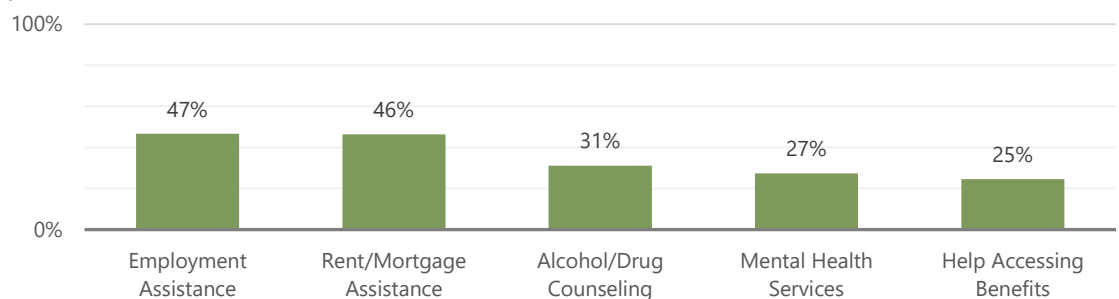
2015 n=352 respondents offering 472 responses; 2017 n=436 respondents offering 516 responses
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

OBSTACLES TO OBTAINING PERMANENT HOUSING

Many individuals experiencing homelessness face significant barriers in obtaining permanent housing. These barriers can range from housing affordability and availability to accessing the economic and social supports (e.g. increased income, rental assistance, and case management) needed to obtain and maintain permanent housing.

In 2017, nearly half (47%) of respondents reported employment assistance might have helped to prevent their homelessness. Other economic assistance was also cited by a number of respondents, as were mental and behavioral health services.

Figure 17. WHAT MIGHT HAVE PREVENTED YOU FROM BECOMING HOMELESS?



2017 n=431

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100. Data are not comparable to 2015 due to a change in response options.

SERVICES AND ASSISTANCE

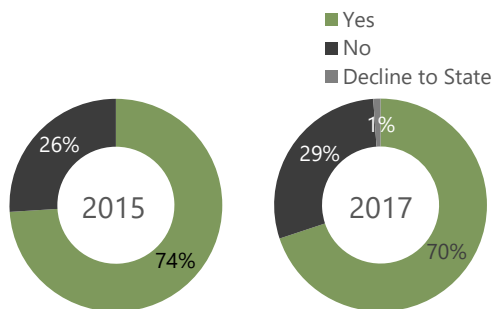
Solano County provides services and assistance to those currently experiencing homelessness through federal and local programs. Government assistance and homeless services work to enable individuals and families to obtain income and support. However, many individuals and families do not apply for services. Many believe that they do not qualify or are ineligible for assistance. Connecting homeless individuals and families to these support services creates a bridge to mainstream support services and prevents future housing instability.

GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE

There are a variety of forms of governmental assistance available to individuals experiencing homelessness. However, knowledge of services available, understanding of eligibility requirements, and perceived stigma from receiving governmental assistance can all impact the rate at which eligible individuals access these supports.

Seventy percent (70%) of those surveyed were receiving government assistance, while 29% of respondents reported not receiving assistance. Twenty-one percent (21%) of those who reported they were not receiving services reported they were not interested. However, 26% of respondents reported they were not receiving assistance for the following reasons: 26% believed they were not eligible, 17% had no permanent address, and 12% had no identification. Fifteen percent (15%) had applied for assistance and were awaiting a response.

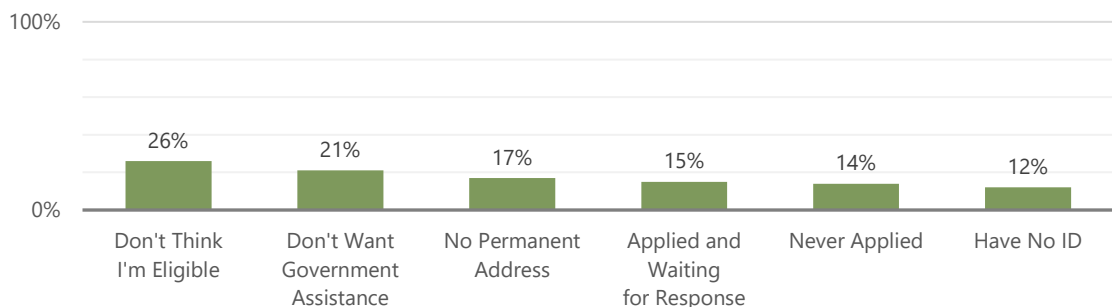
Figure 18. PERCENT RECEIVING ANY FORM OF GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE



2015 n=327; 2017 n=438

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

Figure 19. REASONS FOR NOT RECEIVING GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE



2017 n=110

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

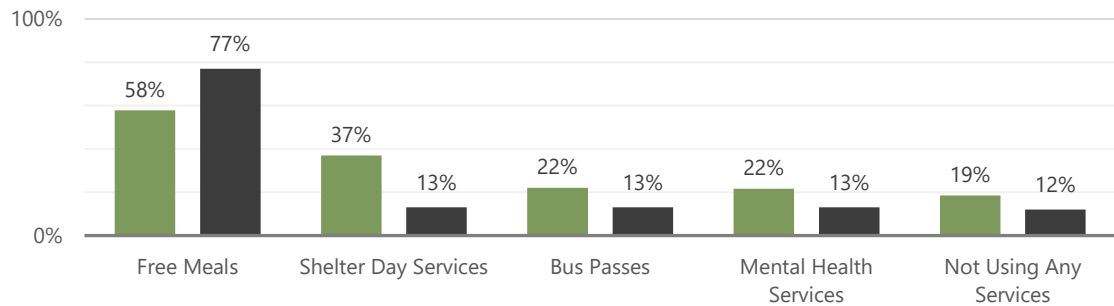
Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100.

SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

In addition to governmental 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. Types of services used in Solano County were free meals, emergency shelter, shelter day services, bus passes, and mental health services.

A higher percentage of 2017 respondents reported they were not using any local services in 2017 compared to 2015 (19% and 12% respectively). In 2017, 58% of respondents reported accessing free meal programs, down from 77% in 2015. Thirty-seven percent (37%) reported accessing day shelter services, compared to 13% in 2015.

Figure 20. ACCESS TO OTHER SERVICES OR ASSISTANCE



2015 n=301 respondents offering 457 responses; 2017 n=422 respondents offering 1,177 responses

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

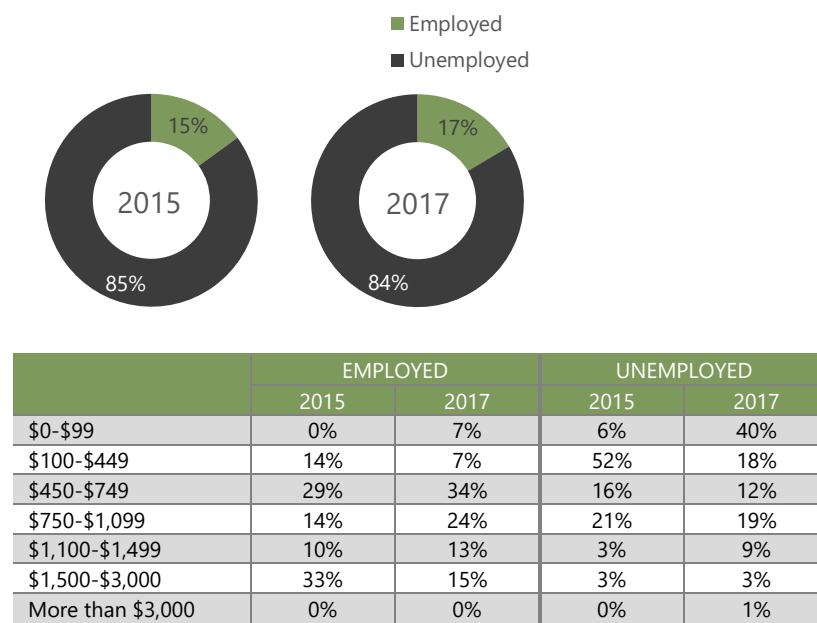
Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100.

EMPLOYMENT, INCOME, AND EDUCATION

While the majority of survey respondents reported being unemployed, a number reported part-time or full-time work, and many were receiving an income, either from public or private sources. Despite some income, data suggest that employment and income were not enough to meet basic needs.

Seventeen percent (17%) of survey respondents reported employment in 2017, similar to 2015. While those who were employed reported slightly higher incomes than those who were unemployed, they were not making enough to support stable housing and other living expenses.

Figure 21. EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME



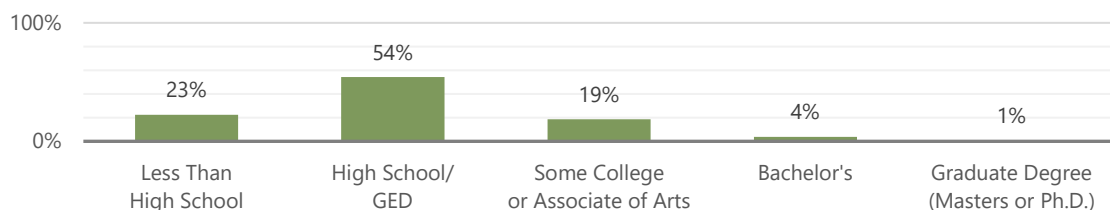
2015 employment status n=315; 2015 Income employed n=21; 2015 Income unemployed n=103; 2017 employment status n=431; 2017 Income employed n=71; 2017 Income unemployed n=360

Note: Employed includes those with part-time, seasonal, and full time employment.

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

Twenty-three percent (23%) of respondents reported they did not have a high school diploma or GED. Yet, nearly one-quarter (24%) had completed some form of higher education.

Figure 22. HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ACHIEVED



2017 n=426

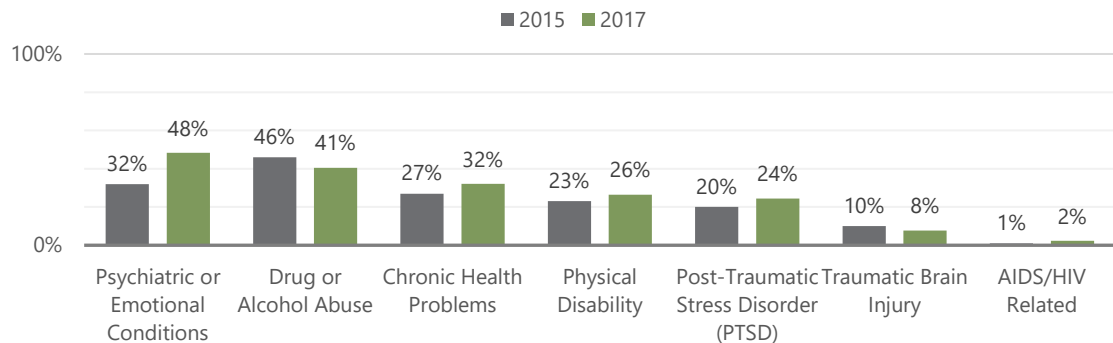
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

HEALTH

The average life expectancy for individuals experiencing homelessness is 25 years less than those in stable housing. Without regular access to healthcare and without safe and stable housing, individuals experience preventable illness and often endure longer hospitalizations. It is estimated that those experiencing homelessness stay four days (or 36%) longer per hospital admission than non-homeless patients.³ In Solano County, individuals reported that the following health conditions keep them from holding a job, living in stable housing, or taking care of themselves: HIV/AIDS related illnesses, drug or alcohol abuse, physical disabilities, chronic health problems or medical conditions, and psychiatric or emotional conditions.

Nearly half (48%) of respondents reported psychiatric or emotional conditions, and 24% reported PTSD. Forty-one percent (41%) reported substance abuse. Compared to 2015, a higher percentage of respondents reported psychiatric or emotional conditions and chronic health problems.

Figure 23. HEALTH CONDITIONS



2015 n=339-348; 2017 n=439

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

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

³ Sharon A. Salit, M. E. (1998). Hospitalization Costs Associated with Homelessness in New York City. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 338, 1734-1740.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OR PARTNER ABUSE

Histories of domestic violence and partner abuse are prevalent among individuals experiencing homelessness and can be the primary cause of homelessness for many. Survivors often lack many of the financial resources required for housing, as their employment history or dependable income may be limited.

The percentage of individuals experiencing homelessness in Solano County who indicated they had experienced domestic violence or partner abuse was 28%. Of those individuals, 32% were sheltered and 66% were unsheltered.

Figure 24. HISTORY OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



2017 n=132

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

FOSTER CARE HISTORY

Nationally, it is generally estimated that at least 20% of foster youth experience homelessness after exiting care.⁴ In the state of California, many foster youth are eligible to receive extended care benefits as they transition into adulthood, up until their 21st birthday. Implemented in 2012, the aim of extended foster care is to assist foster youth with the transition to independence and prevent them from experiencing homelessness.

Ninety survey respondents (21%) reported being in the foster care system at some point in their lives. Of those 90 individuals, 67% were unsheltered on the night of the Point-in-Time Census.

Figure 25. HISTORY OF FOSTER CARE



2017 n=90

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

⁴ Fernandes, AL. (2007). Runaway and Homeless Youth: Demographics, Programs, and Emerging Issues. Congressional Research Services, January 2007, <http://www.endhomelessness.org/content/general/detail/1451>.

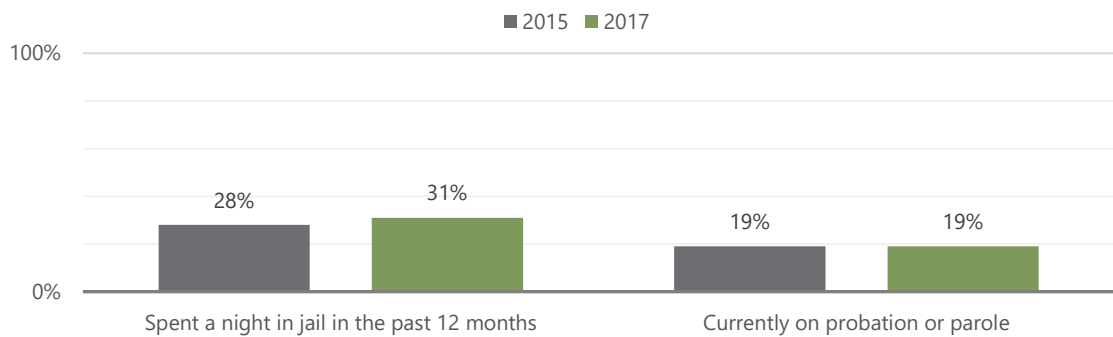
CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Homelessness and incarceration are often correlative. Individuals without stable housing are at greater risk of criminal justice system involvement, particularly those with mental health issues, veterans, and youth. Individuals with past incarceration face significant barriers to exiting homelessness due to stigmatization and policies affecting their ability to gain employment and access housing opportunities.⁵

INCARCERATION

When asked if they had spent a night in jail or prison in the last 12 months, 31% of respondents experiencing homelessness responded they had spent at least 1 night in jail or prison. Nineteen percent (19%) of respondents reported they were on probation or parole at the time of the study.

Figure 26. SPENT A NIGHT IN JAIL OR PRISON IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS



2015 n=316-338; 2017 n=431-433

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). Solano County Homeless Census

⁵ Greenberg, GA, Rosenheck, RA. (2008). Jail Incarceration, Homelessness, and Mental Health: A National Study. *Psychiatry Serv*, 2008 Feb;59(2): 170-7.

SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

In order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the experiences of individuals and families experiencing homelessness in Solano County, respondents were asked basic demographic questions including age, gender, sexual orientation, and ethnicity.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Survey respondents ranged from age 14 to 85. Twenty-two percent (22%) of respondents were under the age of 25, 40% were between 25 and 40, and 38% were 41 and older.

Figure 27. SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY AGE

Age Group	2015	2017
Less than 18 Years	1%	4%
18-24 Years	5%	19%
25-30 Years	14%	14%
31-40 Years	16%	26%
41-50 Years	21%	21%
51-60 Years	36%	13%
61 Years or More	7%	3%

2015 n=360; 2017 n=439

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

A total of 35 survey respondents identified as lesbian, gay, queer, bisexual, transgender, or other.

Figure 28. SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND LGBTQ IDENTITY

	2015		2017	
	%	n	%	n
LGBTQ Status				
Yes	8%	29	8%	34
No	92%	331	92%	392
BREAKOUT OF RESPONDENTS ANSWERING YES				
Gay	14%	4	11%	4
Lesbian	48%	14	14%	5
Queer	0%	0	0%	0
Bisexual	31%	9	63%	22
Transgender	0%	1	9%	1
Other	3%	1	9%	3

2015 LGBTQ n=360; 2015 Breakout n=29 respondents offering 29 responses;

2017 LGBTQ n=439; 2017 Breakout n=35 respondents offering 37 responses

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

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

Subpopulations

Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness outlines national objectives and evaluative measures for ending homelessness in the United States. In order to adequately address the diversity within the population experiencing homelessness, the federal government identifies four subpopulations with particular challenges or needs. Consequently, these subpopulations represent important reportable indicators for measuring local progress toward ending homelessness.

The following sections examine each of these four subpopulations: chronic homelessness, veteran homelessness, homeless families with children, and unaccompanied homeless children and transition-age youth. They will identify the number and characteristics of individuals included in the 2017 Solano County Homeless Point-in-Time Census and Survey.

CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

The 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 in the last three years that total one year, *and* also has a condition that prevents them from maintaining work or housing. This definition applies to individuals as well as heads of households.

The chronically homeless population represents one of the most vulnerable populations on the street; the mortality rate for those experiencing chronic homelessness is four to nine times higher than that of the general population.⁶ Data from communities across the country show that public costs incurred by those experiencing extended periods of homelessness include emergency room visits, interactions with law enforcement, incarceration, and regular access to social supports and homeless services. These combined costs are often significantly higher than the cost of providing individuals with permanent housing and supportive services.

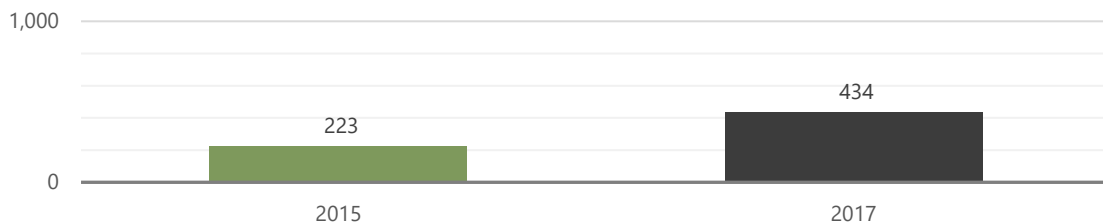
The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development reported that roughly 22% of the national homeless population, or 77,486 individuals, was chronically homeless in 2016.⁷ Chronic homelessness has been on the decline in recent years as communities across the

⁶ United States Interagency Council on Homelessness. (2010). Supplemental Document to the Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness: June 2010. Retrieved 2017 from https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/BkgrdPap_ChronicHomelessness.pdf

⁷ Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2016). Annual Assessment Report to Congress. Retrieved 2017 from <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/2016-AHAR-Part-1.pdf>

country increase the capacity of their permanent supportive housing programs and prioritize those with the greatest barriers to housing stability. While the national decrease in chronic homelessness seems promising, federal budget constraints limit the amount of money available to support housing programs and services. As a result, *Opening Doors*, which began with a plan to end chronic homelessness by 2016, has extended the goal to 2017.⁸

Figure 29. TOTAL NUMBER OF CHRONICALLY HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS ENUMERATED DURING THE POINT-IN-TIME HOMELESS CENSUS WITH TREND



Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

Figure 30. CHRONIC HOMELESS POPULATION ESTIMATES



Source: Applied Survey Research. (2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

Figure 31. CHRONIC HOMELESS CENSUS POPULATION BY SHELTER STATUS

	2015	2017	15-17 NET CHANGE
Sheltered	9	60	+ 51
Unsheltered	214	374	+ 160
Total	223	434	+ 211

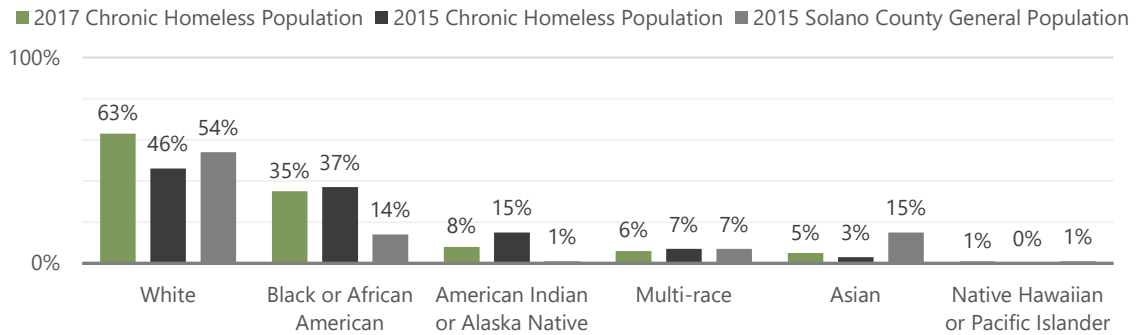
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

⁸ Cavallaro, E. (2017). Ending Chronic Homelessness, Now in 2017. National Alliance to End Homelessness. Retrieved 2017 from <http://www.endhomelessness.org>

DEMOGRAPHICS OF CHRONICALLY HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS

The race of survey respondents experiencing chronic homelessness generally aligned with those of the general population, with 63% White, 35% Black or African American, and 5% Asian.

Figure 32. CHRONIC HOMELESS CENSUS POPULATION BY RACE



2017 Chronic n=133; 2015 Chronic n=76

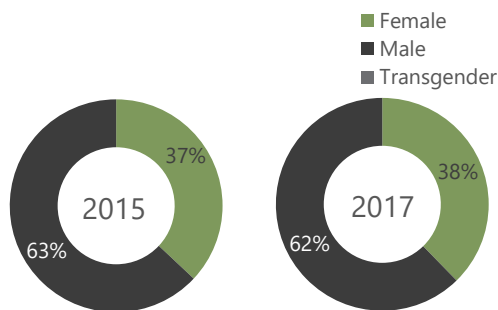
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

U.S. Census Bureau. (May 2017). American Community Survey 2015 1-Year Estimates, Table DP05: ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates. Retrieved from <http://factfinder2.census.gov>

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

A slightly higher proportion of the chronically homeless population was female compared to the overall population experiencing homelessness (38% compared to 30%). This proportion differed slightly from that of 2015 when over one-third (38%) of those experiencing chronic homelessness identified as female.

Figure 33. CHRONIC HOMELESS CENSUS POPULATION BY GENDER

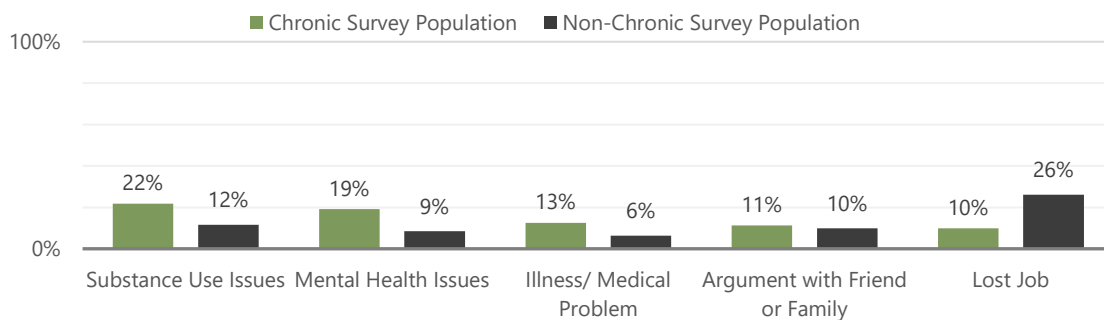


Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

PRIMARY CAUSE OF HOMELESSNESS AMONG THOSE EXPERIENCING CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

Among individuals experiencing chronic homelessness, 22% reported their primary cause of homelessness was substance use issues, followed closely by mental health issues (19%). This differs significantly from the general population of people experiencing homelessness, in that over a quarter reported becoming homeless due to job loss.

Figure 34. PRIMARY CAUSE OF HOMELESSNESS (TOP FIVE RESPONSES), CHRONIC AND NON-CHRONIC COMPARISON



2017 Chronic n=152; 2017 Non-Chronic n=284

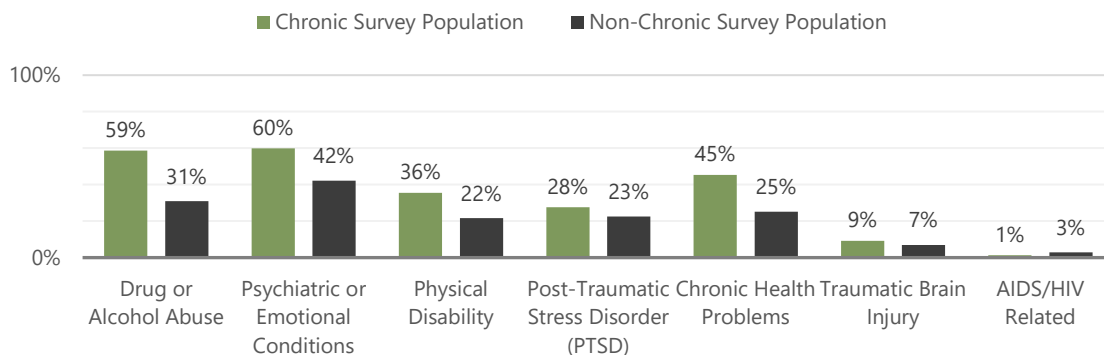
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

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

HEALTH CONDITIONS AMONG THOSE EXPERIENCING CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

Those experiencing chronic homelessness reported suffering from higher rates of almost every health condition than non-chronically homeless survey respondents, particularly drug or alcohol abuse (59% versus 31%). Additionally, 60% of those experiencing chronic homelessness reported having a psychiatric or emotional condition, and 45% reported chronic health problems.

Figure 35. HEALTH CONDITIONS, CHRONIC AND NON-CHRONIC COMPARISON



2017 Chronic n=152; 2017 Non-Chronic n=287

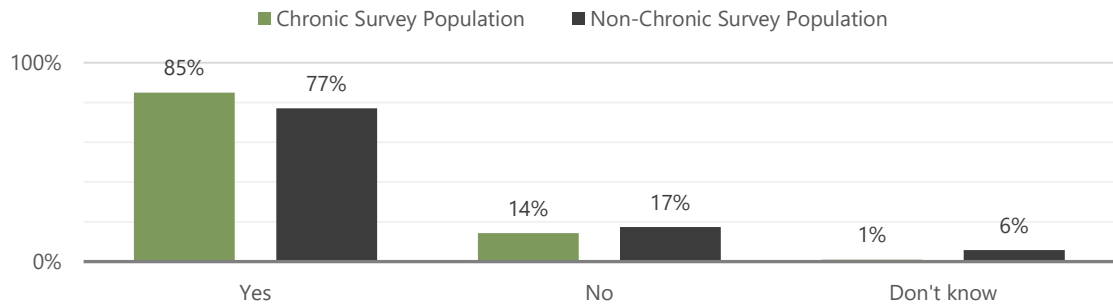
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

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

MEDICAL INSURANCE AMONG THOSE EXPERIENCING CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

Eighty-five percent (85%) of those experiencing chronic homelessness had medical insurance, while 14% did not.

Figure 36. MEDICAL INSURANCE, CHRONIC AND NON-CHRONIC COMPARISON

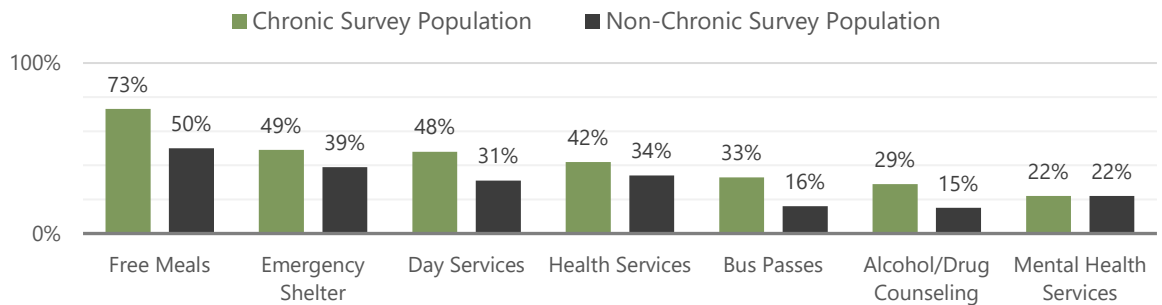


2017 Chronic n=133; 2017 Non-Chronic n=243
 Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

ACCESS TO SERVICES AMONG THOSE EXPERIENCING CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

Of those experiencing chronic homelessness, 73% receive free meals, almost half (49%) use emergency shelters and/or day services (48%), and 42% use health services.

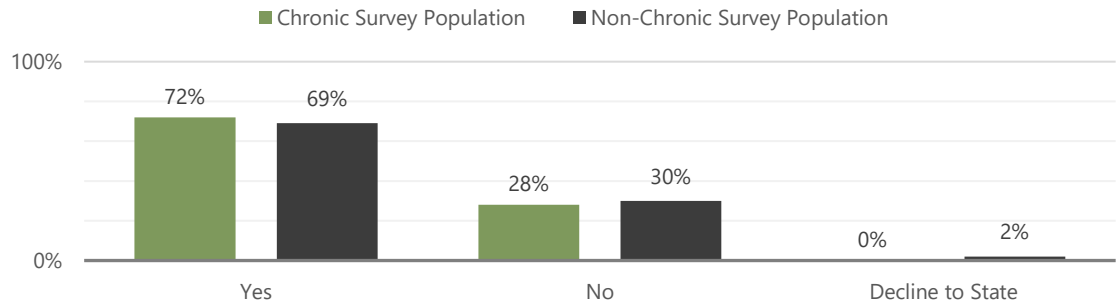
Figure 37. SERVICES AND ASSISTANCE, CHRONIC AND NON-CHRONIC COMPARISON



2017 Chronic n=147; 2017 Non-Chronic n=275
 Source: Applied Survey Research. (2017). Solano County Homeless Census.
 Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100.

Seventy-two percent (72%) of chronically homeless reported receiving some form of government assistance, which includes social security, food stamps (CalFresh), disability, CalWORKS, and Veterans Affairs benefits.

Figure 38. GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE, CHRONIC AND NON-CHRONIC COMPARISON



2017 Chronic n=152; 2017 Non-Chronic n=286

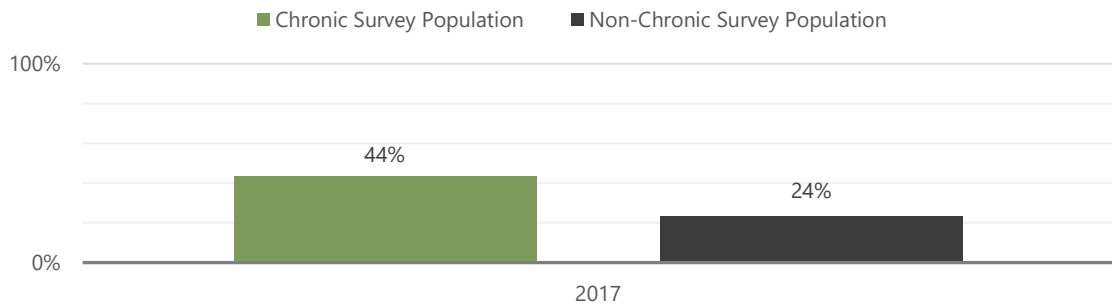
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

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

INCARCERATION AMONG THOSE EXPERIENCING CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

While about a quarter (24%) of non-chronically homeless respondents stated they had spent a night in jail in the past year, 44% of those experiencing chronic homelessness had spent at least one night in jail in the past year.

Figure 39. NIGHT SPENT IN JAIL IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS, CHRONIC AND NON-CHRONIC COMPARISON



2017 Chronic n=151; 2017 Non-Chronic n=280

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

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

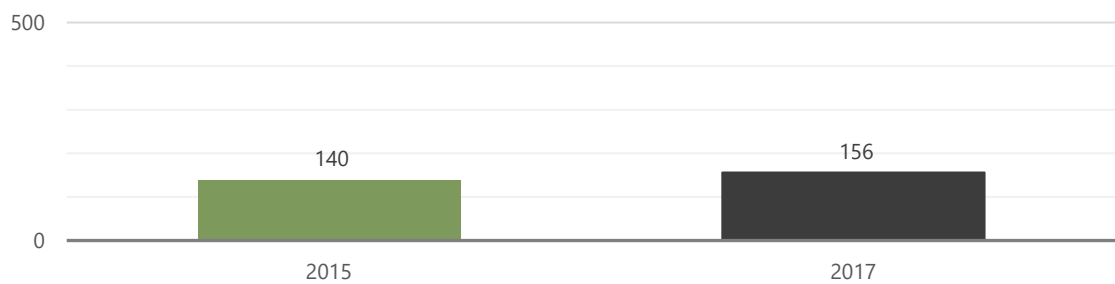
HOMELESS VETERANS

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.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides a broad range of benefits and services to veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces. These benefits can involve different forms of financial assistance, including monthly cash payments to disabled veterans, health care, education, and housing benefits. In addition to these supports, the VA and HUD partner to provide additional housing and support services to veterans currently experiencing homelessness or at risk of experiencing homeless.

Thirteen percent (13%) of the total homeless population were veterans, with two thirds unsheltered on the night of January 23rd.

Figure 40. TOTAL NUMBER OF HOMELESS VETERANS ENUMERATED DURING THE POINT-IN-TIME HOMELESS CENSUS WITH TREND



Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

Figure 41. HOMELESS VETERAN POPULATION ESTIMATES

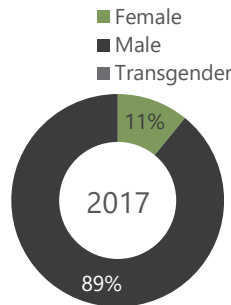


Source: Applied Survey Research. (2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF HOMELESS VETERANS

The majority of homeless veterans were male (89%).

Figure 42. HOMELESS VETERAN CENSUS POPULATION BY GENDER

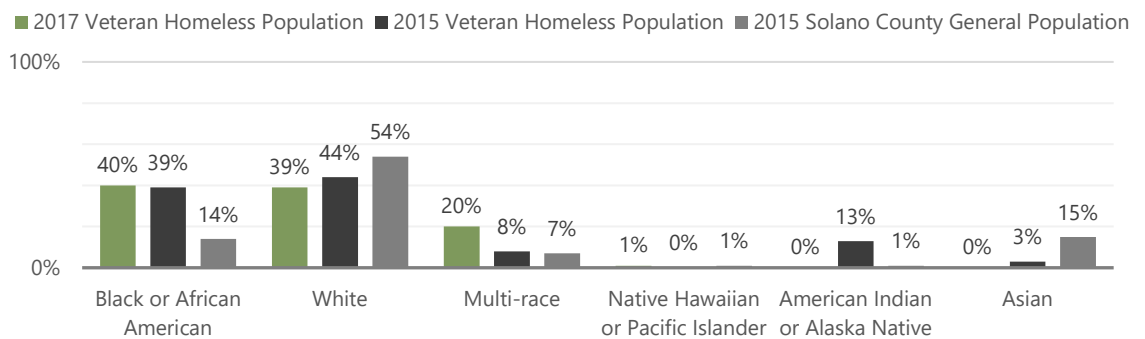


2017 Veterans n=156

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

As with the overall population experiencing homelessness, a higher percentage identified as Black or African American (40%), and multi-race (20%) compared to the general population of Solano County.

Figure 43. HOMELESS VETERAN CENSUS POPULATION BY RACE



2017 Veterans n=156; 2015 Veterans n=39

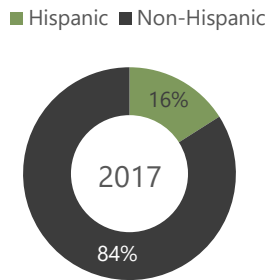
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

U.S. Census Bureau. (May 2017). American Community Survey 2015 1-Year Estimates, Table DP05: ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates. Retrieved from <http://factfinder2.census.gov>

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

Sixteen percent (16%) of veterans experiencing homelessness identified as Hispanic or Latino.

Figure 44. HOMELESS VETERAN CENSUS POPULATION BY HISPANIC/NON-HISPANIC



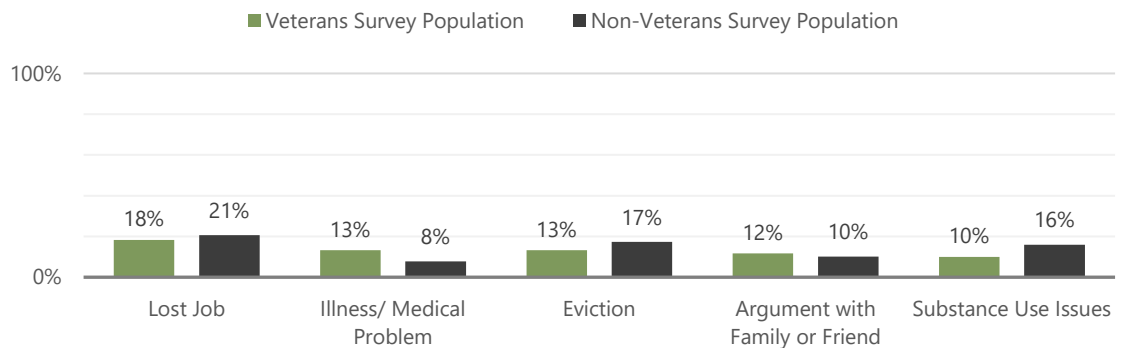
2017 n=156

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2016-2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

PRIMARY CAUSE OF HOMELESSNESS AMONG THOSE HOMELESS VETERANS

The top five primary causes of homelessness among veterans were lost job (18%), illness or medical problem (13%), eviction (13%), an argument with a family member or friend (12%), and substance use issues (10%). This is comparable to the non-veteran survey population that stated their primary causes of homelessness to be lost job (21%), eviction (17%), substance use issues (16%), mental health issues (13%), and arguments with family or a friend (10%).

Figure 45. PRIMARY CAUSE OF HOMELESSNESS (TOP FIVE RESPONSES), VETERAN AND NON-VETERAN COMPARISON



2017 Veterans n=60; 2017 Non-Veterans n=376

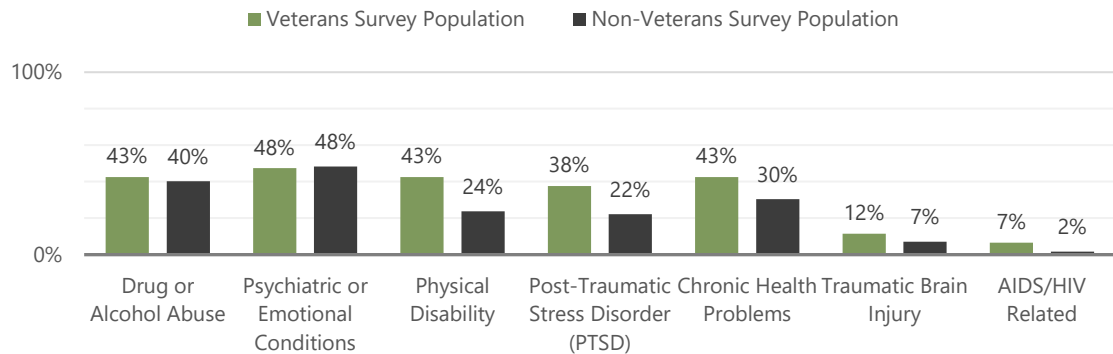
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

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

HEALTH CONDITIONS AMONG HOMELESS VETERANS

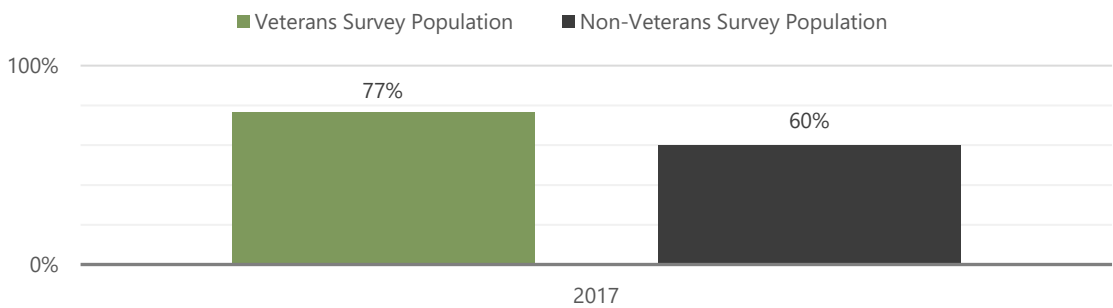
Veterans experiencing homelessness experienced health issues at or above the level of non-veterans. They experienced the following conditions at a much higher rate than their non-veteran counterparts: physical disabilities (43% versus 24%), post-traumatic stress disorder (38% versus 22%), and chronic health problems (43% versus 30%).

Figure 46. HEALTH CONDITIONS, VETERAN AND NON-VETERAN COMPARISON



Veterans n=61; Non-Veterans n=378
 Source: Applied Survey Research. (2017). Solano County Homeless Census.
 Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100.

Figure 47. DISABLING CONDITIONS, VETERAN AND NON-VETERAN COMPARISON

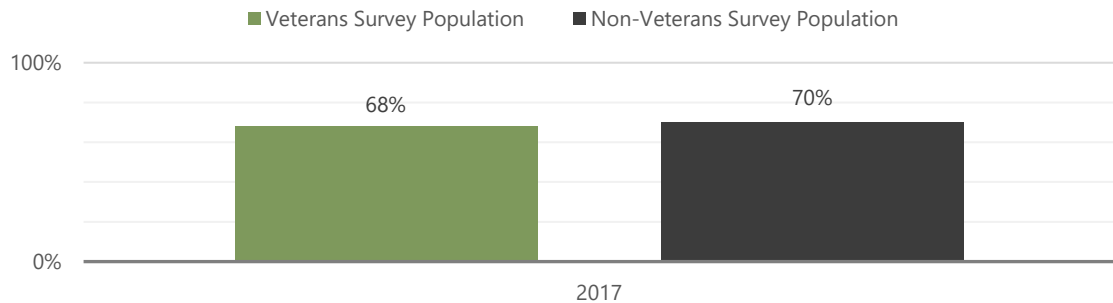


2017 Veterans n=61, Non-Veterans n=378
 Source: Applied Survey Research. (2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

ACCESS TO SERVICES AMONG VETERANS

Veteran and non-veteran survey respondents experienced similar levels of accessing government services (68% and 70%, respectively).

Figure 48. ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT SERVICES, VETERAN AND NON-VETERAN COMPARISON



Veterans n=60; Non-Veterans n=378

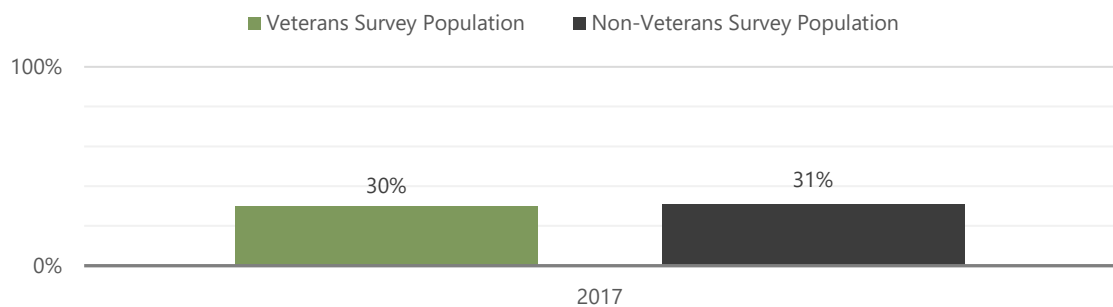
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

INCARCERATION AMONG HOMELESS VETERANS

Among those who are incarcerated, veterans are more likely than non-veterans to be first time offenders, to have committed a violent offense, and to have longer prison sentences. Veterans who are incarcerated may also face the loss of various VA benefits during this time.⁹

Thirty percent (30%) of veterans reported they had spent at least one night in jail or prison in the prior year, similar to the non-veteran population.

Figure 49. NIGHT SPENT IN JAIL OR PRISON IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS, VETERAN AND NON-VETERAN COMPARISON



2017 Veterans n=60; Non-Veterans n=371

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

⁹ Military Benefits. (2014). Incarcerated Veterans. Retrieved 2014 from <http://www.military.com/benefits/veteran-benefits/incarcerated-veterans.html>.

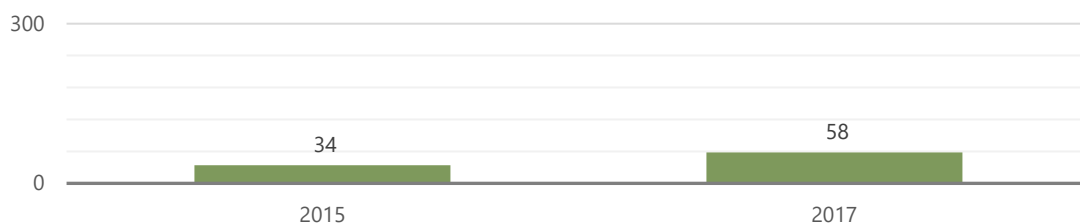
HOMELESS FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

National data from 2016 suggest that 35% of all people experiencing homelessness are persons in families. Very few families experiencing homelessness are unsheltered, as public shelters serve 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 suggest that they are not much different from families in poverty.

The risk of homelessness is highest among households headed by single women and families with children under the age of six.¹⁰ Children in families experiencing homelessness have increased incidence of illness and are more likely to have emotional and behavioral problems than children with consistent living accommodations.¹¹

The 2017 Solano Point-in-Time Census enumerated 58 families with 162 family members. Eighty-one percent (81%) of families experiencing homelessness were sheltered.

Figure 50. TOTAL NUMBER OF HOMELESS FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN ENUMERATED DURING THE POINT-IN-TIME HOMELESS CENSUS WITH TREND



Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

Figure 51. HOMELESS FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN POPULATION ESTIMATES



Source: Applied Survey Research. (2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

Note: There is a significant number of persons in homeless families who are in a “double-up” situation that may or may not fall within the HUD PIT count definition of homelessness that could not be identified due to their typical location on private property.

¹⁰ U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2007). Characteristics and Dynamics of Homeless Families with Children. Retrieved 2015 from <http://aspe.hhs.gov/>

¹¹ U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness. (2015). Opening Doors. Retrieved 2015 from <http://www.usich.gov/>

Figure 52. HOMELESS FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN CENSUS POPULATION BY SHELTER STATUS

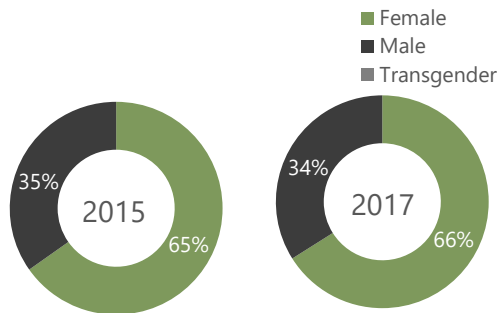
	2015	2017	15-17 NET CHANGE
Sheltered	97	131	+ 34
Unsheltered	17	31	+ 14
Total	114	162	+ 48

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF HOMELESS FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

Sixty-six percent (66%) of persons in families were female in 2017, as most families were headed by single women.

Figure 53. HOMELESS FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN CENSUS POPULATION BY GENDER

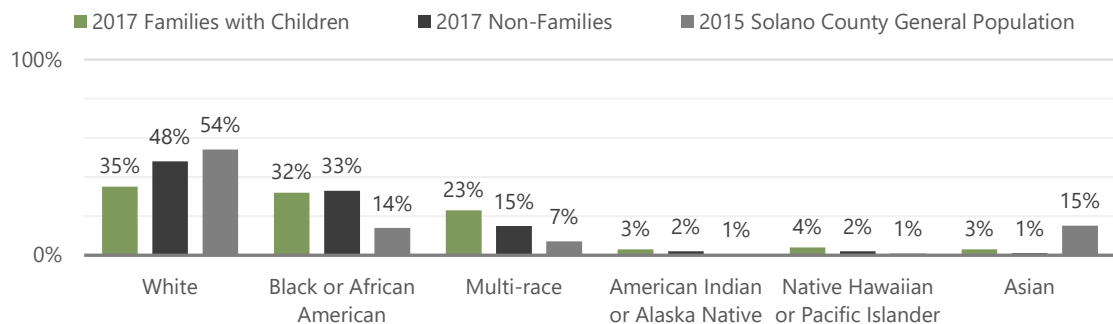


2015 n=23; 2017 n=162

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

Thirty-five percent (35%) of homeless families with children were White, an underrepresentation compared to the general population. Additionally, 32% were Black or African American and 23% were of two or more races, both of which were overrepresentations compared to the general population.

Figure 54. HOMELESS FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN CENSUS POPULATION BY RACE



2017 Families with Children n=162; 2017 Non-Families n=1,070

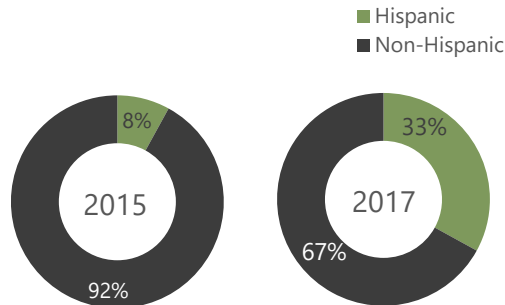
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

U.S. Census Bureau. (May 2017). American Community Survey 2015 1-Year Estimates, Table DP05: ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates. Retrieved from <http://factfinder2.census.gov>

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

One-third (33%) of persons in families experiencing homelessness identified as Hispanic/Latino in 2017, compared to 8% in 2015.

Figure 55. HOMELESS FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN POPULATION BY HISPANIC/NON-HISPANIC



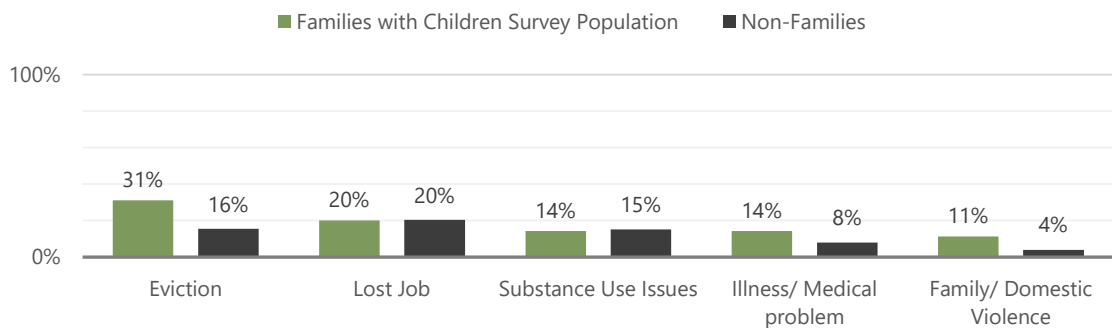
2015 n=24; 2017 n=162

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

PRIMARY CAUSE OF HOMELESSNESS AMONG HOMELESS FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

Families with children experiencing homelessness reported eviction (31%) as the top reason why they became homeless, followed by job loss (20%), substance use (14%), and medical issues (14%).

Figure 56. PRIMARY CAUSE OF HOMELESSNESS, FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN AND NON-FAMILIES COMPARISON



Families with Children n=35; Non-Families n=401

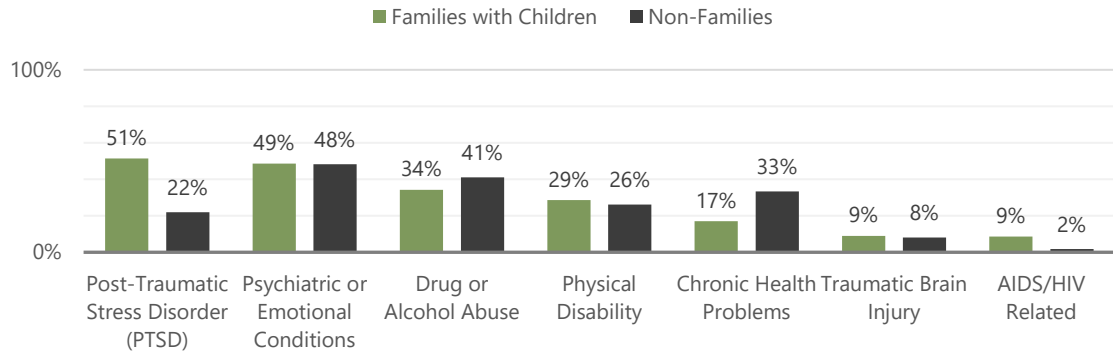
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

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

HEALTH CONDITIONS AMONG HOMELESS FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

Over half of survey respondents in families with children reported having post-traumatic stress disorder (51%), and 49% reported having a psychiatric or emotional condition.

Figure 57. HEALTH CONDITIONS, FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN AND NON-FAMILIES COMPARISON



Families with Children n=35; Non-Families n=404
 Source: Applied Survey Research. (2017). Solano County Homeless Census.
 Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100.

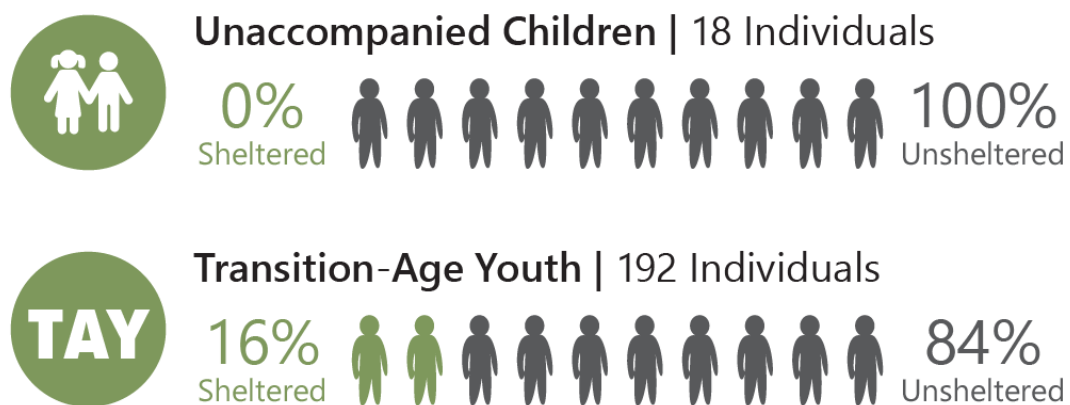
UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS CHILDREN AND TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH

Due to the often hidden nature of youth homelessness, there are limited data available on unaccompanied children and transition-age youth experiencing homelessness. Although largely considered an undercount, current federal estimates suggest there are 35,686 unaccompanied children and transition-age youth on the streets and in public shelters.¹² Young people experiencing homelessness have a harder time accessing services including shelter, medical care, and employment. This is due to the stigma of their housing situation, lack of knowledge of available resources, and a dearth of services specific to young people.¹³

In 2012, the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness amended the federal strategic plan to end homelessness to include specific strategies and supports to address the needs of unaccompanied homeless children and transition-age youth. As part of this effort, the Department of Housing and Urban Development placed increased focus on gathering data on unaccompanied homeless children and youth during the Point-in-Time Census.

Eighteen unaccompanied children and 192 transition-age youth were enumerated during the 2017 Solano Point-in-Time Census.

Figure 58. UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS CHILDREN AND TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH POPULATION ESTIMATES BY SHELTER STATUS

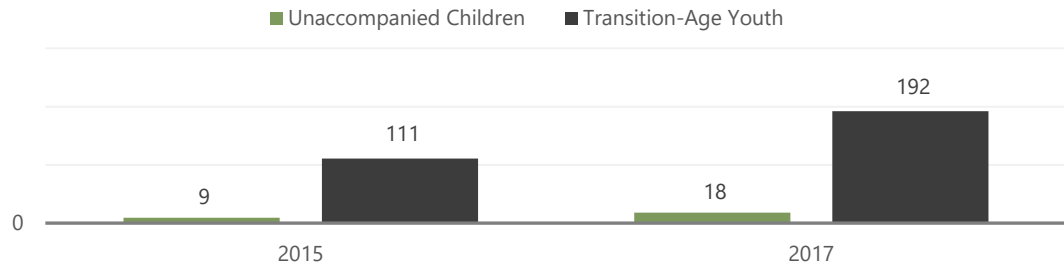


Source: Applied Survey Research. (2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

¹² Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2016). Annual Assessment Report to Congress. Retrieved 2017 from <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/2016-AHAR-Part-1.pdf>

¹³ National Coalition for the Homeless. (2011). Homeless Youth Fact Sheet. Retrieved 2011 from <http://www.nationalhomeless.org>.

Figure 59. NUMBER OF UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS CHILDREN AND TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH ENUMERATED DURING THE POINT-IN-TIME HOMELESS CENSUS WITH TREND

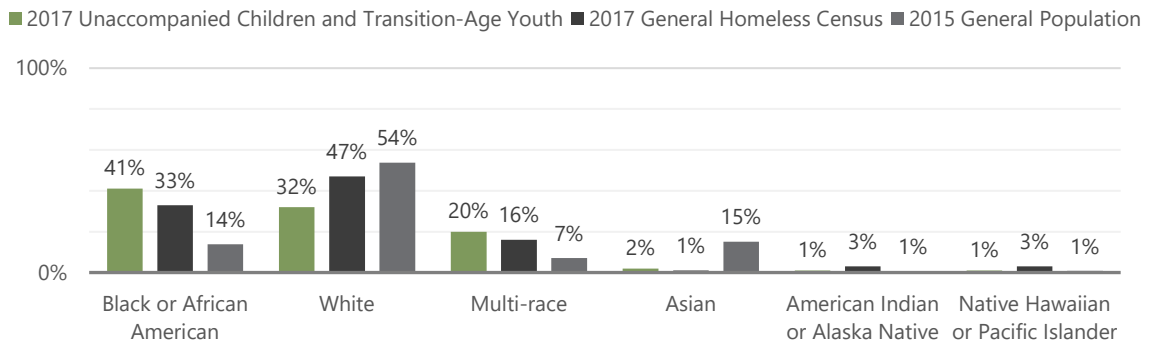


Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS CHILDREN AND TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH

Forty-nine percent (49%) of unaccompanied homeless children and transition-age youth were Black or African American and 48% were White.

Figure 60. UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS CHILDREN AND TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH CENSUS POPULATION BY RACE



2017 Unaccompanied Children and Transition-Age Youth n=210; 2017 General Homeless Census n=1,214

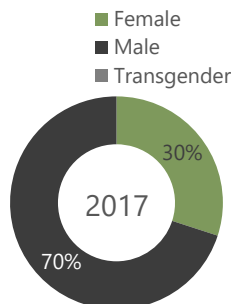
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

U.S. Census Bureau. (May 2017). American Community Survey 2015 1-Year Estimates, Table DP05: ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates. Retrieved from <http://factfinder2.census.gov>

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

Seventy percent (70%) of unaccompanied homeless children and transition-age youth were male and 30% were female.

Figure 61. UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS CHILDREN AND TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH CENSUS POPULATION BY GENDER



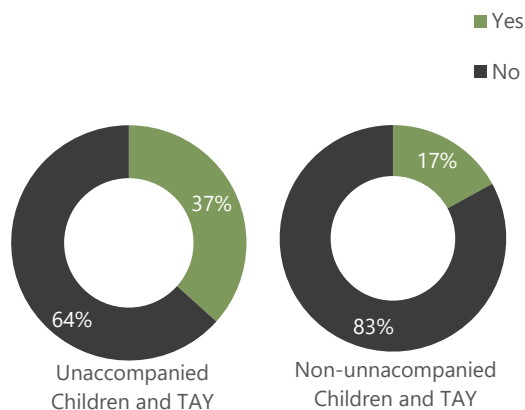
2017 n=210

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2013-2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

FOSTER CARE AMONG UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS CHILDREN AND TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH

Thirty-seven percent (37%) of unaccompanied children and transition-age youth have been in foster care at some point. In the general population of survey respondents, 17% reported a history of foster care.

Figure 62. HISTORY OF FOSTER CARE, UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN AND TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH AND NON-UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN AND TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH COMPARISON



Unaccompanied Children and Transition-Age Youth n=85; Non-unaccompanied Children and Transition-Age Youth n=345

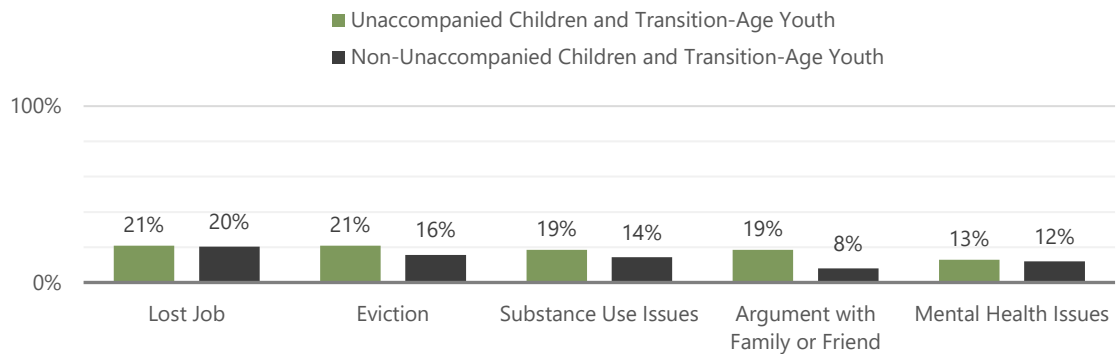
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

PRIMARY CAUSE OF HOMELESSNESS AMONG UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS CHILDREN AND TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH

Unaccompanied children and transition-age youth reported becoming homeless due to job loss (21%), eviction (21%), substance use issues (19%), arguments with family or a friend (19%), and mental health issues (13%).

Figure 63. PRIMARY CAUSE OF HOMELESSNESS (TOP FIVE RESPONSES), UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN AND TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH AND NON-UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN AND TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH COMPARISON



Unaccompanied Children and Transition-Age Youth n=86; Non-Unaccompanied Children and Transition-Age Youth n=350

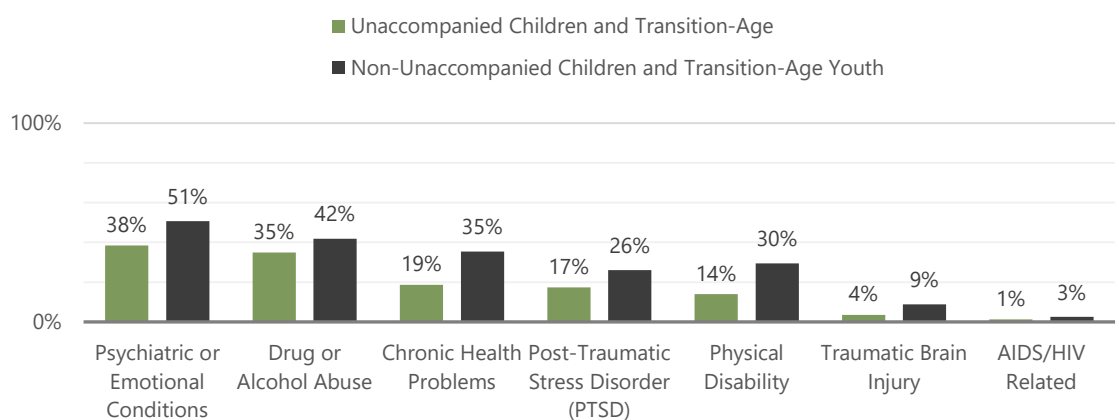
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

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

HEALTH CONDITIONS AMONG UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS CHILDREN AND TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH

Unaccompanied children and transition-age youth reported fewer health conditions than the general survey population, with 14% experiencing a physical disability, 17% reporting Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, and 19% experiencing chronic health problems.

Figure 64. HEALTH CONDITIONS, UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN AND TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH AND NON-UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN AND TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH COMPARISON



Unaccompanied Children and Transition-Age Youth n=86; Non-Unaccompanied Children and Transition-Age Youth n=353

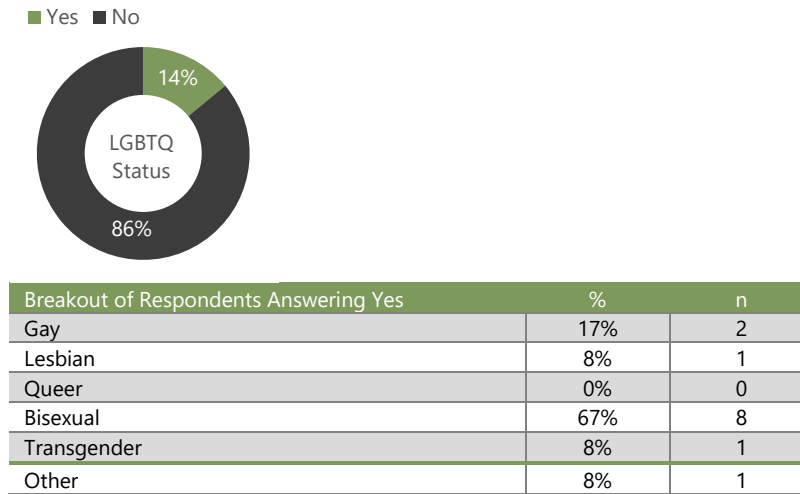
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

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

SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND LGBTQ IDENTITY

Fourteen percent (14%) of unaccompanied children and transition-age youth identified as gay, lesbian, queer, bisexual, or transgender. Among those, the majority identified as bisexual (67%).

Figure 65. SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND LGBTQ IDENTITY AMONG UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN AND TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH



Unaccompanied Children and Transition-Age Youth n=86; LGBTQ Unaccompanied Children and Transition-Age Youth Breakout n=12 offering 13 responses

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2017). Solano County Homeless Census.

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

Conclusion

On the morning of January 24, 2017, community members, community based organization staff, city and county employees, and people experiencing homelessness themselves fanned out through the whole of Solano County to enumerate the homeless individuals within its boundaries. This enumeration should be considered conservative, because despite the most thorough methodology, many individuals experiencing homelessness go to great lengths to remain undetectable.

Some of the results detailed in this report include:

- The Point-in-Time census found 1,232 individuals experiencing homelessness living in Solano County in 2017;
- 74% of the population were living unsheltered;
- 86% of respondents reported living in Solano County before becoming homeless;
- There were 434 chronically homeless individuals in Solano County (35% of the total homeless population);
- There were an estimated 156 veteran homeless individuals (13% of the total homeless population);
- There were 58 families, with 162 family members experiencing homelessness;
- 70% of individuals were receiving some form of government assistance; and
- 84% of homeless individuals were unemployed.

While survey and demographic data from the 2017 Homeless Census and Survey largely mirrors those found in 2015, there was a 14% increase in homelessness in Solano County. Despite a higher number of individuals served by county shelters, the proportion of those living on the streets remained the same. Yet, many individuals reported they were connected to services and providers.

There are many challenges to overcome in order to eliminate homelessness in Solano County. Individuals and families experiencing homelessness show there is a need for increased affordable housing, job training, mental health services, knowledge and availability of government services, and services dedicated to the needs of particular subpopulations, including youth.

However, this report also includes strengths to build upon: 84% of all homeless families were sheltered, the number of homeless veterans is relatively low, over half the population receives free meals, and there are few unaccompanied homeless children.

ASR hopes the data presented in this report will be used by planning bodies of Solano County and other agencies and organizations within the county to inform additional outreach, service

planning, and policy decision-making over the next two years as they work to address homelessness. By sharing and evaluating this enumeration effort and results, the support network in Solano County will be better able to produce constructive and innovative solutions to a problem that is clearly growing and has serious ramifications for the long term public health of its community members.

Appendix 1: Methodology

OVERVIEW

The purpose of the 2017 Solano Homeless Point-in-Time Census & Survey was to produce a Point-in-Time estimate of people who experience homelessness in Solano, a region that covers approximately 907 square miles. The results of the unsheltered census were combined with the results from the shelter and institution census to produce the total estimated number of persons experiencing homelessness in Solano County on a given night. The subsequent, in-depth qualitative survey was used to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the experiences and demographics of those enumerated. A more detailed description of the methodology follows.

COMPONENTS OF THE HOMELESS CENSUS METHOD

The Point-in-Time census methodology had three primary components:

- The general unsheltered census between daybreak and 10 AM: an enumeration of unsheltered homeless individuals
- The youth unsheltered census between 3 PM and 7 PM: a focused enumeration of unsheltered youth under the age of 25
- The shelter census for the night before the unsheltered census: an enumeration of sheltered homeless individuals

The unsheltered and sheltered homeless censuses were coordinated to occur within the same time period in order to minimize potential duplicate counting of homeless persons.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

To ensure the success of the census, many county and community agencies collaborated in community outreach, volunteer recruitment, logistical planning, methodological decision-making, and interagency coordination efforts. Applied Survey Research (ASR), a social research firm, provided technical assistance with these aspects of the planning process. ASR has over 18 years of experience conducting homeless censuses and surveys throughout California and across the nation. Their work is featured as a best practice in HUD's publication: *A Guide to Counting Unsheltered Homeless People*.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Local homeless service providers and advocates were active and valued partners in the planning and implementation of this homeless census. The planning team was led by Applied Survey Research who worked with the following organizations throughout the census and survey process:

the City of Vacaville, Community Action North Bay, Congressman John Garamendi's Office, Epiphany Church, First Place for Youth, HomeBase, Mission Solano, Solano County Health and Social Services, Solano County Office of Education, Travis Air Force Base, and Valley Church. Applied Survey Research invited feedback and discussion on the methodology in order to have a county-wide endorsement of the census

UNSHeltered CENSUS 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 station, airport, or camping ground.

VOLUNTEER AND GUIDE RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING

Many individuals who live and/or work in Solano turned out to support the county's effort to enumerate the local homeless population. To have a successful enumeration effort of this magnitude, it is crucial to have volunteers and homeless persons who have an intimate knowledge of the local areas. Thirty homeless individuals and 81 community volunteers participated in the 2017 general unsheltered census. Outreach efforts were conducted with local nonprofits that serve homeless individuals and local volunteer programs. Local shelters and service providers recruited the most knowledgeable and reliable homeless individuals to participate in the unsheltered census. Homeless persons were paid \$15 an hour for the training that they received. They were also paid \$15 for each hour they spent out on the day of the unsheltered census.

All homeless individuals and volunteers who participated in the unsheltered census were asked to participate in a training review on the day of the unsheltered census. This training covered all aspects in the unsheltered census, including the definition of homelessness and how to recognize homeless individuals, potential locations homeless individuals may be located at and how to safely and respectfully approach them, and how to use the tally sheets and maps to ensure the entirety of the assigned area was covered.

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

Every effort was made to minimize potentially hazardous situations. Volunteers were encouraged to attend a training session that educated individuals on how to enumerate the homeless without making any contact. High-volume areas and encampments were covered by specialty teams that were comfortable with the areas. Enumeration teams were advised to take all safety precautions possible, including bringing along flashlights and maintaining distance from those they were enumerating. Local law enforcement was made aware of the unsheltered census and participated on special teams in Vacaville and Fairfield. These special teams enumerated previously identified unsafe areas. No official reports were received noting unsafe or at-risk situations occurring during the unsheltered census in any area of the county.

UNSHeltered CENSUS DEPLOYMENT CENTERS

To achieve complete coverage of Solano County within the allotted timeframe, the planning team identified three main regions from which to deploy enumerators: Vacaville, Fairfield, and Vallejo. Volunteers selected their deployment center at the time of registration, based on familiarity with the area or convenience. The planning team divided up the enumeration routes based on census tracts and assigned them to the deployment center closest or most central to the coverage area in order to facilitate the timely deployment of enumeration teams

into the field. Benicia, Rio Vista, and Dixon were deployed from the closest regional deployment center.

LOGISTICS OF ENUMERATION

On the morning of the unsheltered census, teams of two or more were created to enumerate designated areas of the county for the unsheltered census. Each team was ideally composed of one trained volunteer and one trained homeless guide, and they were provided with their assigned census tract map area, tally sheet, training guidelines and other supplies. In some cases where safety concerns were high, public safety personnel were the sole enumerators on the team. All accessible streets, roads, and highways in the enumerated tracts were traveled by foot or car. Typically, no direct contact with enumerated homeless persons was made during the census enumeration. Homeless enumerators were also instructed to include themselves on their tally sheets for the unsheltered census if they were not going to be enumerated by the shelter census. Deployment center coordinators provided each team with tally sheets to record the number of homeless persons observed and basic demographic and location information. Deployment center volunteers also verified that at least one person on each team had a cell phone available for their use during the census and recorded the number on the volunteer deployment log sheet. Teams were asked to cover the entirety of their assigned areas, staying out for as long as it took to cover each tract.

In the communities of Vallejo, Rio Vista, and Dixon, no law enforcement or Code Enforcement personnel participated in the enumeration. In Vacaville, teams consisting of member of both the Code Enforcement outreach team and the Vacaville Police Department enumerated the more active locations and encampments. The majority of Fairfield was enumerated by general census teams, with some high volume areas and encampments covered by the Fairfield Police Department's homeless outreach team.

COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION CENSUS

In the days after the January 24th Point-in-Time Census, representatives from Fairfield Suisun Unified School District and Benicia Unified School District called families known to have recently experienced homelessness to ascertain their whereabouts on the night of January 23rd.

A total of seventeen families were contacted in the week after the census. Thirteen families participated in the brief survey, four families could not be reached, and zero refused to take the survey. All of the participants had children under the age of eighteen.

Out of thirteen families, four families confirmed they were residing in vehicles and one family was staying in a garage on the night of January 23rd, therefore meeting the requirements for the Point-in-Time Census. Additionally, two families were living in transitional housing, and therefore were included in the Point-in-Time Census through shelter data collection. Of the remaining six families, two were staying in a hotel or motel, two were doubled up, and two were living in their own apartment or house.

POINT-IN-TIME UNDERCOUNT

There are many challenges in any homeless enumeration, especially when implemented in a community as large and diverse as Solano County. Point-in-Time Censuses are "snapshots" that quantify the size of the homeless population at a given point during the year. Hence, the census 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 want to be seen, and make concerted efforts to avoid detection. Regardless of how successful outreach efforts are, an

undercount of the homeless population will result, especially of hard-to-reach subpopulations such as families and youth.

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

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

Even though the Point-in-Time Census 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.

METHODOLOGICAL IMPROVEMENTS

The Solano County Point-in-Time Census methodology was expanded and improved in 2017, resulting in a more thorough census of persons experiencing homelessness in Solano County. Changes to the methodology included increased community input, engagement, and local hot spotting efforts. Many counties across the Bay Area saw increases in homeless populations in 2017. While many people attribute these increases to recent increased in the cost of housing and low vacancy rates, those contributing conditions go beyond the purview of the Point-in-Time Census reporting.

Locally, other factors affected the Solano Point-in-Time Census. Police officers that work with homeless populations in Fairfield and Vacaville met with researchers before the census to map areas with a high concentration of encampments or those that would not be safe for regular community volunteers. The day of the census, the same police officers enumerated those predetermined areas. Additional factors that affected the census was the youth unsheltered census effort that identified larger numbers of youth than were enumerated in 2015, as well as flooding in the weeks prior to the census that caused previously hidden populations to seek safety in more visible areas. These combined factors resulted in a higher overall census in 2017.

YOUTH UNSHELTERED CENSUS METHODOLOGY

GOAL

The youth unsheltered census was developed to be more inclusive of homeless children and youth under the age of 25. Many homeless children and youth do not use homeless services, are unrecognizable to adult unsheltered census volunteers, and may be in unsheltered locations that are difficult to find. Therefore, traditional unsheltered census efforts are not as effective in reaching youth. 2017 was a baseline year for enumerating youth, with the goal to improve upon youth census techniques used across the United States in 2015 and have a successful enumeration of the homeless youth in Solano County. This method is strongly recommended by HUD and is a special expertise of ASR.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The Department of Housing and Urban Development and the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness recognize that youth do not commonly come with homeless adults and are not easily identified by non-youth. For this reason, they have accepted and recommended that communities enumerates youth at times when they can be seen, rather

than during general outreach times. This process takes a different planning technique than used for the adult unsheltered census.

Planning for the 2017 supplemental youth unsheltered census included youth homeless service providers. First Place for Youth recruited youth currently experiencing homelessness to attend a focus group in December 2016 to identify locations where youth experiencing homelessness were known to congregate. This group also determined the best time to enumerate youth was between 3 and 7 PM.

The youth unsheltered census began at 3 PM out of the youth-specific deployment center at First Place for Youth, with three teams comprised of two youth and one to two supervisors. They canvassed pre-determined “hot spots” in Fairfield, Vacaville, and Vallejo. Youth workers were paid \$15 per hour for their time, including the training conducted prior to the census. Youth were trained on where and how to identify homeless youth as well as how to record the data.

SHELTER CENSUS METHODOLOGY

GOAL

The goal of the shelter census was to gain an accurate enumeration of persons temporarily housed in shelters and other institutions across Solano County. These data were vital to gaining an accurate overall enumeration of the homeless population and understanding where homeless persons received shelter.

DEFINITION

- An individual or family living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangement (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state, or local government programs for low-income individuals).

RESEARCH DESIGN

All shelter data were collected by HomeBase’s Solano team. Shelters reported the number of individuals they had sleeping at their shelter the night before the census (January 23) to avoid duplication. They also reported basic demographic information.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

The survey of 439 homeless persons was conducted in order to yield qualitative data about the homeless community in Solano County. These data are used for the McKinney-Vento Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance funding application and are important for future program development and planning. The survey elicited information such as gender, family status, military service, length and recurrence of homelessness, usual nighttime accommodations, causes of homelessness, and access to services through open-ended, closed-ended, and multiple response questions. The survey data bring greater perspective to current issues of homelessness and to the provision and delivery of services.

Surveys were conducted by homeless workers and shelter team members, who were trained by Applied Survey Research. Training sessions led service providers and potential interviewers through a comprehensive orientation that included project background information and detailed instruction on respondent eligibility, interviewing protocol, and confidentiality. Homeless workers were compensated at a rate of \$7 per completed survey.

It was determined that survey data would be more easily collected if an incentive gift was offered to respondents in appreciation for their time and participation. Socks were given as an incentive for participating in the 2017 homeless survey. The socks were easily obtained and distributed, were thought to have wide appeal, and could be provided within the project budget. This approach enabled surveys to be conducted at any time during the day. The gift proved to be a great incentive and was widely accepted among survey respondents.

SURVEY ADMINISTRATION DETAILS

- The 2017 Solano Homeless Survey was administered by the trained survey team between February 7, 2017, and February 24, 2017.
- In all, the survey team collected 439 unique surveys using a stratified quota sample based on shelter status, shelter location, and geography.

SURVEY SAMPLING

Based on the Point-in-Time Census of homeless persons with a randomized survey sampling process, the 439 valid surveys represent a confidence interval of +/- 3.73% with a 95% confidence level when generalizing the results of the survey to the estimated population of homeless individuals in Solano County.

The 2017 survey was administered in both 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. Individuals residing in emergency shelters were reached through street surveys during the day when emergency shelters were closed.

Strategic attempts were made via a stratified quota sample to reach individuals in various geographic locations and of various subset groups such as homeless youth, minority ethnic groups, military veterans, domestic violence victims, and families.

In order to increase randomization of sample respondents, survey workers were asked to employ an “every third encounter” survey approach. Survey workers were instructed to approach every third person they encountered whom they considered to be an eligible survey respondent. If the person declined to take the survey, the survey worker could approach the next eligible person they encountered. After completing a survey, the randomized approach was resumed. It is important to recognize that while efforts are made to randomize the respondents, it is not a random sample methodology. This is a challenging approach in a small and geographically diverse survey population, but surveyors did their best to follow the sampling plan and reduce selection bias.

DATA COLLECTION

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

DATA ANALYSIS

To avoid potential duplication of respondents, the survey requested respondents' initials and date of birth, so that duplication could be avoided without compromising the respondents' anonymity. Upon completion of the survey effort, an extensive verification process was conducted to eliminate duplicates. This process examined respondents' date of birth, initials,

gender, ethnicity, length of homelessness, and consistencies in patterns of responses to other questions on the survey.

SURVEY CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

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

Appendix 2: 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 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 90 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.

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 (TAY) – 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.



SOLANO COUNTY

2017 HOMELESS CENSUS & SURVEY COMPREHENSIVE REPORT

