



2011 City of San Jose

# HOMELESS CENSUS & SURVEY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



55 Brennan St.  
Watsonville, CA 95076  
(831) 728-1356

991 West Hedding St., Ste. 102  
San Jose, CA 95126  
(408) 247-8319

[WWW.APPLIEDSURVEYRESEARCH.ORG](http://WWW.APPLIEDSURVEYRESEARCH.ORG)

## INTRODUCTION

Close to two million Americans experience homelessness each year.<sup>1</sup> For most, this is caused by the gap between income and the cost of housing. Yet for many, health conditions, mental health, substance abuse, trauma, and lack of support prevent them from obtaining permanent housing. Biennially, counties across the country conduct comprehensive counts of their homeless population, in order to gain a better understanding of the current homeless population in their community, and to apply for federal funding for homeless programs. The City of San Jose worked in conjunction with the County of Santa Clara and Applied Survey Research (ASR) to conduct the 2011 City of San Jose Homeless Census and Survey of adults, families and unaccompanied children.

## METHODOLOGY

The 2011 City of San Jose Homeless Census and Survey was performed using HUD's recommended practices for counting and surveying homeless individuals. This study included a comprehensive field enumeration of homeless individuals residing in the City of San Jose on January 25–26, 2011. In order to generate detailed profiles of homeless individuals in the City of San Jose, 674 surveys of homeless individuals were administered in the weeks following the census. Data from this representative survey sample revealed detailed information about the overall homeless population. The research design relied on self-described and self-defined responses, which is an approved method in homeless research.

## RESULTS OF THE 2011 HOMELESS CENSUS AND SURVEY

**There were 4,034 homeless individuals counted in the 2011 Homeless Point-in-Time Census.<sup>3</sup>**

- It is estimated that 10,844 persons experience homelessness annually in the City of San Jose.
- Based on the 2007-2009 American Community Survey population profile, this annual estimate of homelessness represent approximately 1% of the City of San Jose's total population of 948,244 people.<sup>4</sup>

**The largest group of homeless individuals in City of San Jose were white males between the ages of 31 and 50.**

- Nearly two-thirds (64%) of homeless survey respondents were male, 33% were female, and 3% identified as "transgender" or "other."
- 42% of survey respondents were White/Caucasian, 28% were Hispanic/Latino, 18% were Black/African American, and 6% identified as Asian.
- Thirty-nine percent (39%) of all survey respondents were between 31-50 years old.

### HOMELESSNESS DEFINITION

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

- The majority (77%) of survey respondents were living in Santa Clara County when they most recently became homeless.
  - » Of these, 83% indicated they were living in the City of San Jose.

#### More individuals were unsheltered than sheltered.<sup>5</sup>

- 76% of those counted within the 194 census tracts were unsheltered (3,057 individuals) and 24% (977 individuals) were in shelter facilities such as emergency shelters, transitional housing facilities, and safe havens in the City of San Jose.
- 34% of survey respondents were sleeping outdoors, on the streets, in parks, or in encampments.
- 11% of survey respondents slept in their vehicles.
- One-quarter (25%) of survey respondents cited job loss as the primary cause of their homelessness.

#### CITY OF SAN JOSE ENUMERATION FINDINGS

Census Components	2009	2011	2009-2011	
			Net Change	Percent Change
Street Enumeration	3,112	3,057	-55	-1.8%
Shelter Enumeration	1,081	977	-104	-9.6%
Emergency shelter enumeration <sup>1</sup>	667	516	-151	-22.6%
Transitional housing enumeration	414	461	47	11.4%
<b>Total Count for HUD</b>	<b>4,193</b>	<b>4,034</b>	<b>-159</b>	<b>-3.8%</b>
<b>Annual Estimate</b>	<b>8,941</b>	<b>10,844</b>	<b>1,903</b>	<b>21.3%</b>

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2009). 2009 City of San Jose Homeless Census.

Applied Survey Research. (2011). 2011 City of San Jose Homeless Census.

<sup>1</sup> This includes those who were using vouchers to stay in motels or hotels.

#### 49% of survey respondents indicated this was the first time they had experienced homelessness, an increase from 43% in 2009.

- 45% of survey respondents had been continuously homeless for a year or more.
  - » 21% indicated it had been more than two years since they were in a permanent housing situation.
- 15% of survey respondents indicated that since they most recently became homeless, they had needed medical care but were unable to receive it.
- 19% of all survey respondents indicated they were currently experiencing chronic health problems.

#### 73% of the homeless population reported experiencing a disabling condition in 2011.

- 24% of the population had a physical disability.
- 39% reported having at least one mental health problem including mental illness, depression and PTSD.
- 47% of survey respondents reported that they were experiencing a substance abuse problem (alcohol and/or other drugs).

- Among both men and women, 12% of survey respondents indicated that they were experiencing domestic/partner violence or abuse at the time of the survey.
- 3% (16 individuals) had HIV/AIDS.

**The majority of survey respondents (70%) indicated they were receiving some form of government assistance.**

- 48% were receiving food stamps (SNAP) and 38% were receiving GA benefits.

## SUBPOPULATION DATA

### Chronic Homelessness

**It is estimated that on any given night, the City of San Jose has a chronically homeless population of approximately 1,474 persons.**

- The percentage of chronically homeless in the City of San Jose (37%) was higher than the national findings. The federal government estimates that 17% of all homeless individuals across the nation were chronically homeless.<sup>6</sup>
- The *number* of chronically homeless individuals in the City of San Jose increased by 10% from 2009 to 2011.
- It is estimated that on any given night in 2011, there are 22 persons in chronically homeless families in the City of San Jose.

#### CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS DEFINITION

An unaccompanied homeless individual (18 or older) with a disabling condition\* or a family with at least one adult member (18 or older) who has a disabling condition\* who:

- » Has been residing on the streets or in a place not meant for human habitation, an emergency shelter, or a safe haven,
- AND
- » Has been continually homeless for one year or more; or
- » Has experienced four or more episodes of homelessness within the past three years.

\*A disabling condition, for the purposes of this study, is defined as a physical disability, mental illness, severe depression, alcohol or drug abuse, chronic health problems, HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, Hepatitis C, trauma, or a developmental disability.

### Veterans

#### VETERAN DEFINITION

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

**The number of veterans in the City of San Jose was 383 in 2011. This represents 10% of the total point-in-time population.**

In 2011, HUD and the Department of Veteran's Affairs (VA) agreed to use the HUD Point-in-Time count as the definitive federal estimate of veteran homelessness.

- The majority (79%) of homeless veterans were unsheltered in 2011.
- 54% of homeless veterans were chronically homeless.

## FAMILIES

### DEFINITION

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

## Families with Children

There were a total of 336 persons in families counted in the City of San Jose, which represents a 13% decrease from 2009.

- In 2011, 8% of the total homeless population in the City of San Jose were persons in families.
- 90% of homeless families were sheltered.

## Unaccompanied Children

Homeless children and youth are an extremely difficult demographic to capture and federal understanding of this population is limited.

**601 homeless children and youth (under 25) were counted during the 2011 Point-in-Time count.**

- 126 children under 18.
- More youth were living on the street (94%) than in shelters (6%).
- The majority (81%) of youth survey respondents reported wanting to get off the street.
- 71% of youth survey respondents reported that they usually plan their life day to day.
- Nearly two-thirds (63%) of youth survey respondents reported having support from friends and family would help them achieve their goal of getting off the streets.

## UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN

### DEFINITION

The federal government defines unaccompanied children as any person under age 18 who presents for housing or services alone.

## SUMMARY

The 2011 City of San Jose Homeless Census identified 4,034 homeless individuals. This count, however, should be considered conservative since it is well known that even with the most thorough methodology, many homeless individuals stay in locations where they cannot be seen or counted by enumeration teams. Further, many women and families try to remain hidden for safety. The majority (76%) of those enumerated during the count were unsheltered, while 24% were sheltered. Compared to the 2009 count, the overall homeless population decreased by 1% (representing a decrease of 52 persons).

The homeless survey revealed a diverse population with many different needs. However, the survey showed that most homeless persons were 31 to 50 years old, were living in the City of San Jose at the time they became homeless and had been homeless for more than one year. Forty-two percent (42%) of survey respondents were White/Caucasian, 28% were Hispanic/Latino, 18% were Black/African American, and 6% were Asian. Ten percent (10%) of the total homeless population were veterans of the United States Armed Forces. Thirty-seven percent (37%) of the homeless population were chronically homeless.

Key causes of homelessness included economic factors such as job loss or unemployment. One-quarter (25%) of homeless survey respondents reported the loss of a job as the primary reason they became homeless. Nearly one-fifth (19%) reported that their alcohol or drug issue was the primary cause of their homelessness. A large majority (84%) of survey respondents stated that they were currently unemployed.

Seventy-three percent (73%) of survey respondents reported that they had one or more disabling conditions. Nearly half (47%) of survey respondents reported that they were currently experiencing substance abuse issues, highlighting the critical importance of integrated support services.

---

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1,6</sup> The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness. (2010). *Opening Doors: federal strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness*. Washington, D.C.

<sup>2</sup> These populations are considered according to the federal definition of the term.

<sup>3</sup> This total excludes homeless individuals who were housed in jails, hospitals, or rehabilitation facilities as they do not meet HUD's homeless definition for the point-in-time count.

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. (2010). *2007-2009 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimate*.

<sup>5</sup> It is important to note that the count is conducted in January when the winter shelters are opening and running, which increases the percentage of homeless individuals in shelter facilities.