THE COALITION
OF HOMELESS SERVICES PROVIDERS

SAN BENITO COUNTY 2024
HOMELESSNESS
POINT-IN-TIME COUNT & REPORT

Prepared by
Applied Survey Research

ASR

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 in 1980 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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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The 2024 San Benito County Homeless Count and Survey planning team would like to thank the many individuals and agencies who contributed to this project. The participation of community volunteers and partner agencies is critical to the success of both the count and survey efforts. Many community volunteers, city and county employees, and local community-based organizations assisted with all aspects of the count, from the initial planning meetings to the night of the count and the publication of this report.

INTRODUCTION

As required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) of all receiving federal funding to provide homeless services, Continuums of Care (CoC) across the country report the findings of their local Point-in-Time count in their annual funding application to HUD. Currently, San Benito County receives annual federal funding.

The San Benito County Point-in-Time Homeless Count and Survey was designed and implemented as part of the broader CoC-wide effort across Monterey and San Benito Counties. Therefore, the research methodology and infrastructure that supported the San Benito County effort was consistent and uniform throughout the continuum, and the findings summarized in this report represent the San Benito County subset of the CoC-wide results. San Benito County results, whose results were included in the CoC homeless data exchange (HDX) submission to HUD, are reported in a separate report.

As the Continuum of Care lead agency, the Coalition of Homeless Services Providers has partnered with ASR to conduct its Point-in-Time (PIT) Count since 2011, maintaining a similar yet continually improving data collection methodology. This helps ensure consistency from one count to the next. ASR is a locally based social research firm that has over 23 years of experience in homeless enumeration and needs assessments, having conducted over 100 comprehensive homeless counts and surveys throughout California and across the nation. Our work is featured as a best practice in the standard process HUD publication, *A Guide to Counting Unsheltered Homeless People*, as well as in the Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago publication, *Conducting a Youth Count: A Toolkit*.

Project Overview and Goals

In order for the Homeless Count and Survey to best reflect the experience and expertise of the community, ASR held planning meetings with local community members. These community members were drawn from City and County departments, community-based service providers, and other interested and informed stakeholders. These individuals comprised the 2024 Planning Committee and were instrumental to ensuring the 2024 San Benito County Point-in-Time Homeless Count and Survey reflected the needs and concerns of the community.

The 2024 Planning Committee identified several important project goals:

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

- To improve the ability of policy makers and service providers to plan and implement services that meet the needs of the local homeless population;

- To measure changes in the numbers and characteristics of the homeless population and track the community's progress toward ending homelessness;

- To increase public awareness of overall homeless issues and generate support for constructive solutions; and

- To assess the status of specific subpopulations, including veterans, families, youth, young adults, and those who are chronically homeless;

- To conduct the PIT count in such a manner that the health and safety of all participants was a primary operational consideration, and all County Public Health recommended practices were followed in field work associated with the PIT count.

Federal Definition of Homelessness for Point-in-Time Counts

In this study, the HUD definition of homelessness for the Point-in-Time Count was used. This definition 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.

It should be noted that the broader definition of homelessness defined by the McKinney-Vento Act and used by K-12 school districts includes persons and families living in "double-up" situations as well as hotels and motels. However, this definition could not be used for purposes of this report.

SAN BENITO COUNTY
2024 POINT-IN-TIME COUNT & SURVEY

Every two years, typically during the last 10 days of January, communities across the country conduct comprehensive counts of the local homeless populations in order to measure the prevalence of homelessness in each local Continuum of Care.
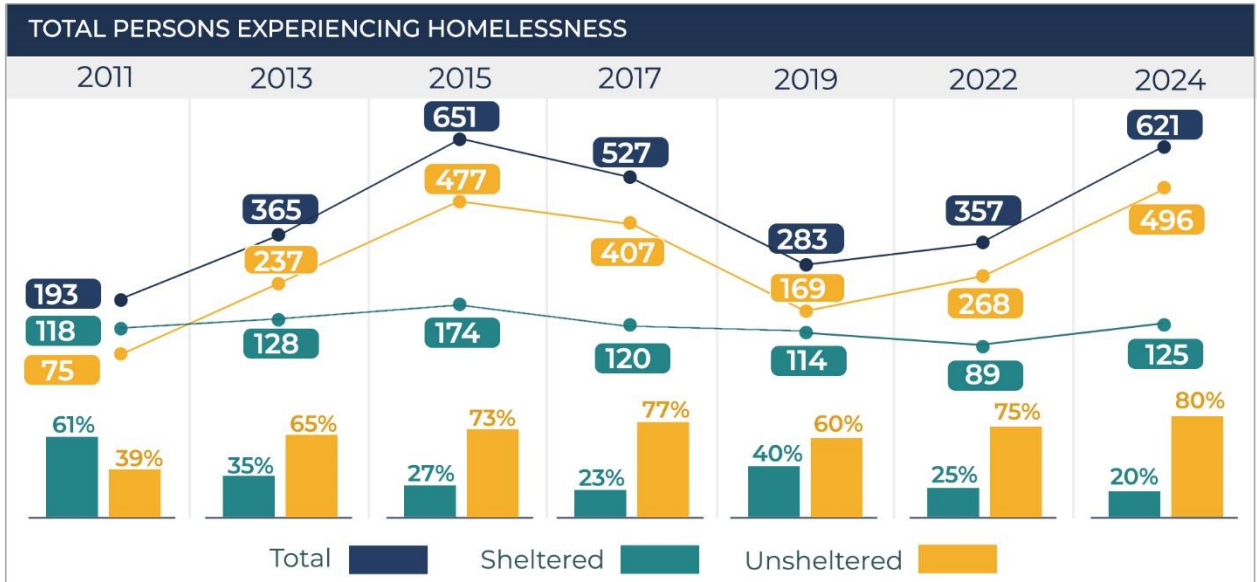
The 2024 San Benito County Point-in-Time Count was a community-wide effort conducted on January 31, 2024. In the weeks following the street count, a survey was administered to 74 unsheltered and sheltered individuals experiencing homelessness in order to profile their experience and characteristics.
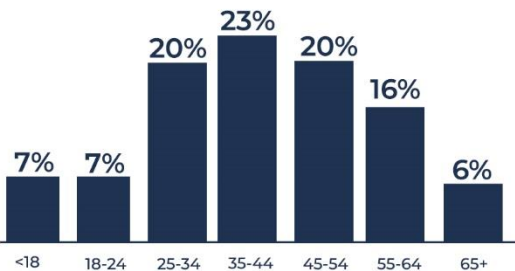
THE COALITION
OF HOMELESS SERVICES PROVIDERS
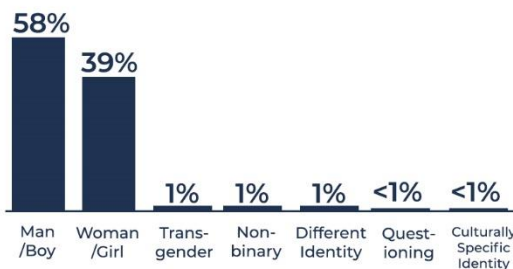
ASR

TOTAL PERSONS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS:

621

80% Unsheltered n=496

20% Sheltered n=125

TOTAL PERSONS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

	2011	2013	2015	2017	2019	2022	2024
Total	193	365	651	527	283	357	621
Unsheltered	75	237	477	407	169	268	496
Sheltered	118	128	174	120	114	89	125
Sheltered %	61%	35%	27%	23%	40%	25%	20%
Unsheltered %	39%	65%	73%	77%	60%	75%	80%

Legend: Total, Sheltered, Unsheltered

DEMOGRAPHICS

AGE

<18	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
7%	7%	20%	23%	20%	16%	6%

GENDER

Man /Boy	Woman /Girl	Transgender	Non-binary	Different Identity	Questioning	Culturally Specific Identity
58%	39%	1%	1%	1%	<1%	<1%

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Heterosexual	LGBTQ+
94%	6%

RACE/ETHNICITY

	NOT HISPANIC/LATINA/E/O		HISPANIC/LATINA/E/O
American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous	2%	2%	
Asian or Asian American	1%	1%	
Black, African American, or African	8%	1%	
Middle Eastern or North African	1%	1%	
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	1%	1%	
White	22%	8%	
Multi Racial	5%	1%	
Hispanic/Latina/e/o		45%	
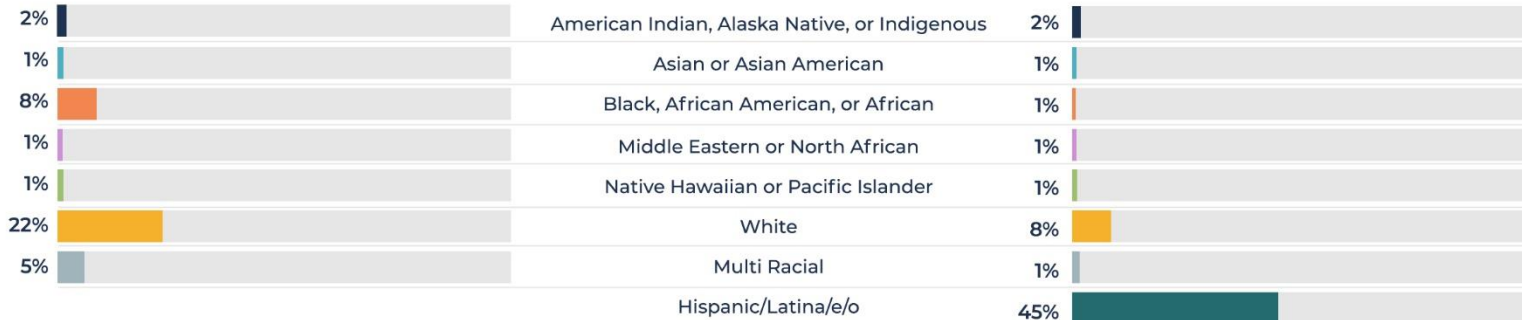
DATA PORTRAITS

RESIDENCE AT TIME OF HOMELESSNESS

- San Benito County: 84%
- Other CA County: 15%
- Out of State: 1%
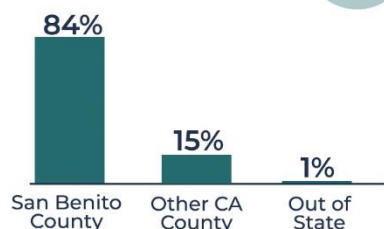
DURATION OF CURRENT HOMELESSNESS

- 7 Days or Less: 3%
- 8-30 Days: 4%
- 1-3 Months: 12%
- 4-6 Months: 10%
- 7-11 Months: 3%
- 1 Year or More: 68%

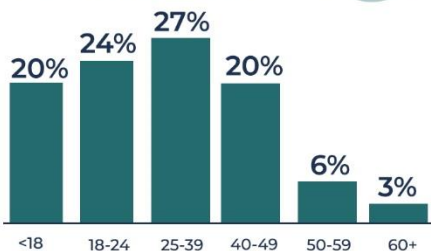## FIRST EPISODE OF HOMELESSNESS

22% Reported their current episode of homelessness as being their first

AGE AT FIRST EPISODE OF HOMELESSNESS

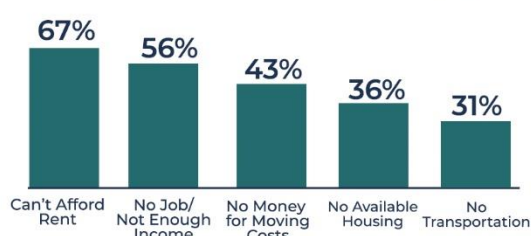- <18: 20%
- 18-24: 24%
- 25-39: 27%
- 40-49: 20%
- 50-59: 6%
- 60+: 3%

PRIMARY CONDITION THAT LEAD TO HOMELESSNESS*
(Top 5 Responses)

- 44% Alcohol/Drug Use
- 34% Financial Issues (Job Loss, Eviction)
- 34% Fight/Conflict
- 32% Legal Issues
- 23% Mental Health Issues

OBSTACLES TO OBTAINING PERMANENT HOUSING*
(Top 5 Responses)

- Can't Afford Rent: 67%
- No Job/Not Enough Income: 56%
- No Money for Moving Costs: 43%
- No Available Housing: 36%
- No Transportation: 31%

EMPLOYMENT STATUS

18% had some form of employment

AMONG UNEMPLOYED RESPONDENTS

- Were looking for work: 45%
- Were unable to work: 14%
- Were not looking for work: 41%
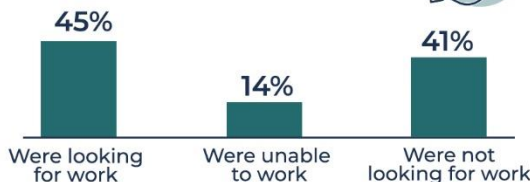
FOSTER CARE

9% of survey respondents have been in the foster care system

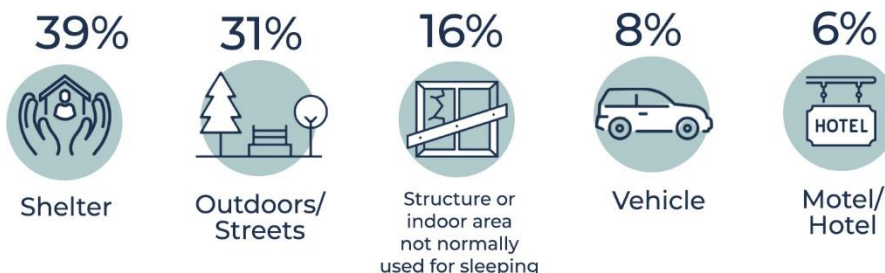## JUSTICE SYSTEM INVOLVED

39% of survey respondents spent one or more nights in jail/prison/juvenile hall in the past year.

21% on probation/parole at the start of their most recent episode of homelessness

SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY SLEEPING ACCOMMODATION

- 39% Shelter
- 31% Outdoors/Streets
- 16% Structure or indoor area not normally used for sleeping
- 8% Vehicle
- 6% Motel/Hotel

SELF-REPORTED HEALTH

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

DEPRESSION
60%
Report having depression

SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER
37%
Report having a substance use disorder

PTSD
36%
Report having Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

PSYCHIATRIC OR EMOTIONAL CONDITIONS
34%
Report having a psychiatric or emotional condition

CHRONIC HEALTH CONDITION
33%
Report having a chronic health condition

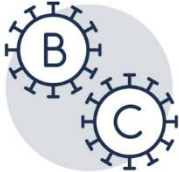## PHYSICAL DISABILITY
29%
Report having a physical disability

TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY
7%
Report having had a TBI

CHRONIC INFECTION w HEPATITIS B or C
3%
Report having a chronic infection

HIV/AIDS RELATED ILLNESS
0%
Report having an HIV/AIDS related illness

DISABLING CONDITION
50%
of survey reposdents report having at least one disabling condition

GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE

60%
Of survey respondents reported receiving government benefits.

SERVICES CURRENTLY ACCESSING* (TOP 6 RESPONSES)

45%	41%	11%	11%	10%	10%
Not Using Any Services	Emergency Shelter	Alcohol/Drug Counselng	Housing Navigation	Job Training/ Employment Assistance	Transitional Housing

REASONS FOR NOT RECEIVING GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE*
(TOP 6 RESPONSES)

36%	24%	16%	8%	8%	8%
Don't want government assistance	Never Applied	Don't think I'm eligible	No ID	No Permanent Address	Paperwork Too Difficult

SPECIAL POPULATIONS

CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS 2024 TOTAL — 287

29% Sheltered n=84

71% Unsheltered n=203
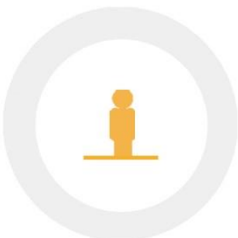
VETERANS 2024 TOTAL — 21

0% Sheltered n=0

100% Unsheltered n=21

FAMILIES 2024 TOTAL — 89

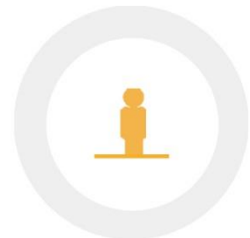**100%** Sheltered n=89

0% Unsheltered n=0

UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN + TAY 2024 TOTAL — 2

100% Sheltered n=2

0% Unsheltered n=0

SUBPOPULATION DEFINITIONS

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

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

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

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

UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH YOUNG ADULTS
Youth under the age of 18 and young adults from the ages of 18 to 24 years old (TAY) who are experiencing homelessness and living without a parent or legal guardian.

□ Source: 2024 San Benito County Homeless Survey, N=74
* Multiple response question, percentages may not add up to 100%

Note: Some percentages have been rounded so total percentage will equal 100%.

ASR

POINT-IN-TIME COUNT

The 2024 San Benito County Point-in-Time Homeless Count represents a complete enumeration of all sheltered and unsheltered persons experiencing homelessness at a specified date and time. It consisted of two primary components:

- **General Street Count:** An early morning count of unsheltered homeless individuals and families on January 31st, 2024. Teams focused on those sleeping outdoors on the street; at bus and train stations; in parks, tents, and makeshift shelters; and in vehicles and abandoned properties.

- **General Shelter Count:** A nighttime count of homeless individuals and families staying at publicly and privately-operated shelters on January 30, 2024. This included those who occupied emergency shelters and transitional housing units.

This section of the report provides a summary of the results of the Point-in-Time Count. For comparison, results from prior years are provided to better understand the trends and characteristics of homelessness over time.

For more information regarding the research methodology, please see **Appendix A: Methodology.**

NUMBER AND CHARACTERISTICS OF PERSONS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS IN SAN BENITO COUNTY

Figure 1: Total Point-in-Time Count of Persons Experiencing Homelessness

| Year	Count
2011	193
2013	365
2015	651
2017	527
2019	283
2022	357
2024	621
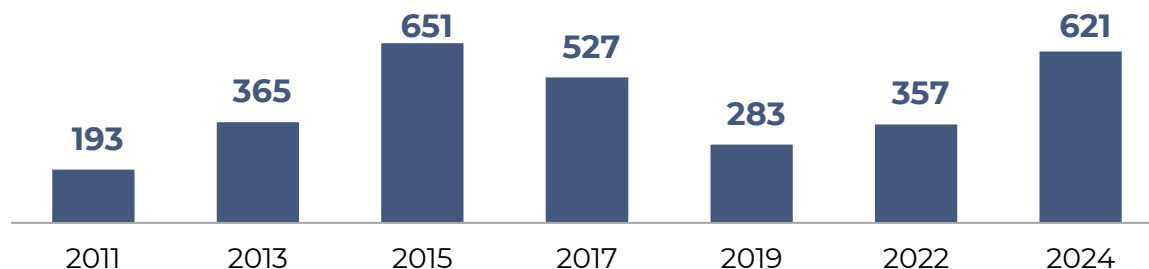
Type of Shelter

The majority (80%) of individuals experiencing homelessness in San Benito County were unsheltered, sleeping on the streets, in abandoned buildings, vehicles, and encampment areas and in other places deemed unfit for human habitation. The remaining 20% of the population resided in shelters, either emergency shelters or transitional housing. Permanent supportive housing and rapid rehousing shelter data is not included in the PIT data reporting per HUD.
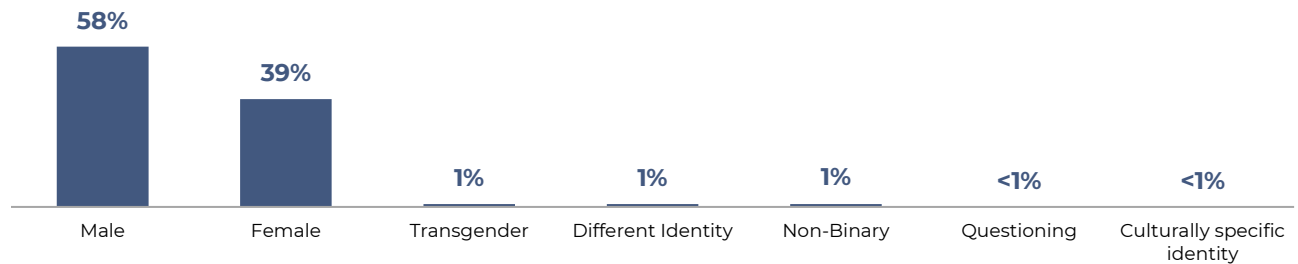
Figure 2: Homeless Count Population by Shelter Status

■ Unsheltered ■ Sheltered

| 2024 | 80% | 20% |
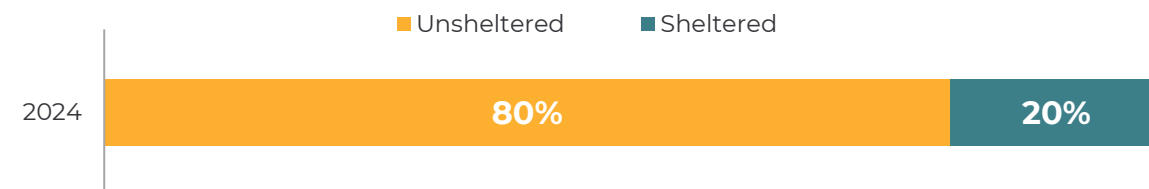
2024 N= 621
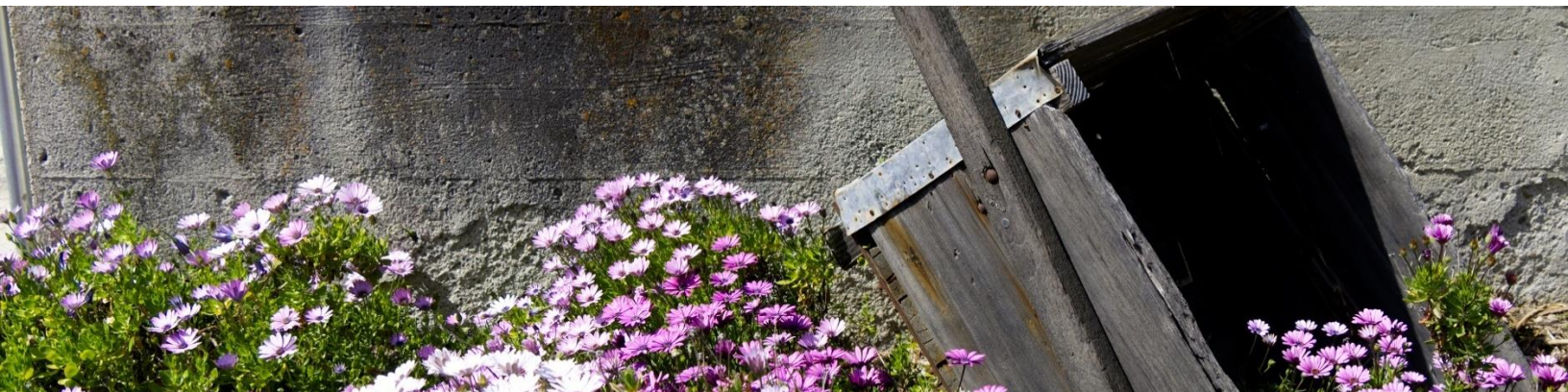
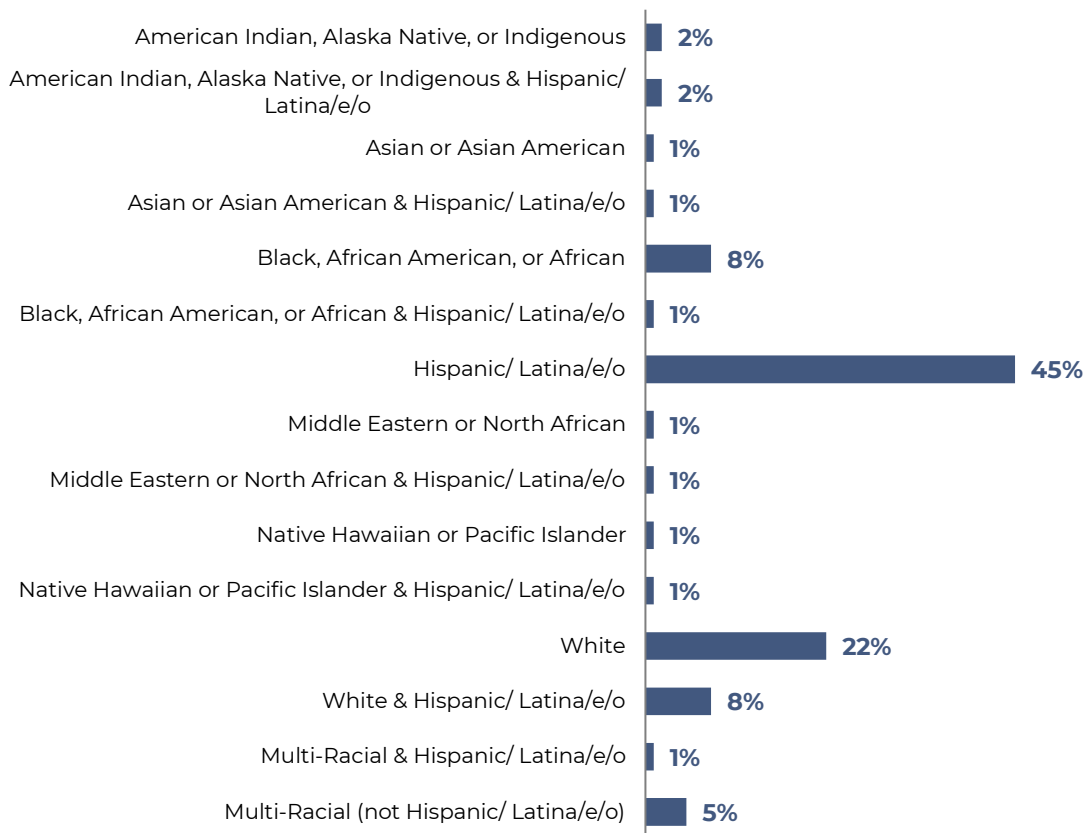## Characteristics of Persons Experiencing Homelessness

Fifty-eight percent (58%) of homeless individuals were male, 39% were female, 1% were transgender, and 1% were non-binary. Forty-five percent (45%) indicated that they were of Hispanic/Latina/e/o origin. In terms of racial identity, 22% identified as White, 8% identified as Black/African American, and 5% identified as multi-racial.

Figure 3: Homeless Count Population by Gender

Male	Female	Transgender	Different Identity	Non-Binary	Questioning	Culturally specific identity
58%	39%	1%	1%	1%	<1%	<1%

2024 N=621

Figure 4: Total Homeless Census Population, by Race

Race	Percent
American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous	2%
American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous & Hispanic/ Latina/e/o	2%
Asian or Asian American	1%
Asian or Asian American & Hispanic/ Latina/e/o	1%
Black, African American, or African	8%
Black, African American, or African & Hispanic/ Latina/e/o	1%
Hispanic/ Latina/e/o	45%
Middle Eastern or North African	1%
Middle Eastern or North African & Hispanic/ Latina/e/o	1%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	1%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander & Hispanic/ Latina/e/o	1%
White	22%
White & Hispanic/ Latina/e/o	8%
Multi-Racial & Hispanic/ Latina/e/o	1%
Multi-Racial (not Hispanic/ Latina/e/o)	5%

Homeless Count Population: 2024 N= 621

Jurisdictional Breakdown

Figure 5: Homeless Population by Jurisdiction

JURISDICTION	UNSHELTERED	SHELTERED	TOTAL
Total Incorporated	219	124	343 (55%)
Hollister	218	124	342
San Juan Bautista	1	0	1
Total Unincorporated	278	0	278 (45%)
Total	497	124	621

Note: % change was not calculated when jurisdiction was below 25 individuals.

HOMELESS SURVEY FINDINGS

This section provides an overview of the findings generated from the 2024 San Benito County Point-in-Time Homeless Count Homeless Survey component. As previously mentioned, an in-depth geographically representative survey was administered in the weeks following the Point-in-Time Count to collect basic demographic details as well as information including service needs and utilization. Surveys were administered between January 31 and February 27, 2024, to a randomized sample of individuals and families currently experiencing homelessness.

The Homeless Survey effort resulted in 74 unique, complete, and valid surveys. Based on the Point-in-Time count of 621 homeless persons, with a randomized survey sampling process employed, these surveys should represent a confidence interval of +/-9% with a 90% confidence level when generalizing the results of the survey to the entire Point-in-Time homeless population in San Benito County. In other words, if the survey were conducted again, we can be 90% certain that the results would be within 9% 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. Therefore, any missing values were intentionally omitted from the survey results and the total number of respondents for each question will not always equal the total number of surveys conducted. Don't know and refusals were omitted from the response percentage calculations.

For more information regarding the research methodology, please see **Appendix A: Methodology.**

DEMOGRAPHICS OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Age

Ten percent (10%) of survey respondents were under the age of 25 at the time of the 2024 survey. Twenty-five percent (25%) were between the ages of 25 and 40, and 65% were 41 years or older.

Figure 6: Survey Respondents by Age *

AGE GROUP	2019	2022	2024
Less than 18 Years	0%	0%	1%
18-24 Years	5%	8%	9%
25-30 Years	8%	17%	11%
31-40 Years	31%	10%	14%
41-50 Years	19%	25%	22%
51-60 Years	28%	29%	27%
61 Years or More	9%	11%	16%

2019 N=124; 2022 N=107; 2024 N=74
* Survey results are not representative of the under 18 year old population.

Gender and LGBTQ+ Identity

Six percent (6%) of homeless survey respondents identified as LGBTQ+ in 2024, down from 30% in 2022.

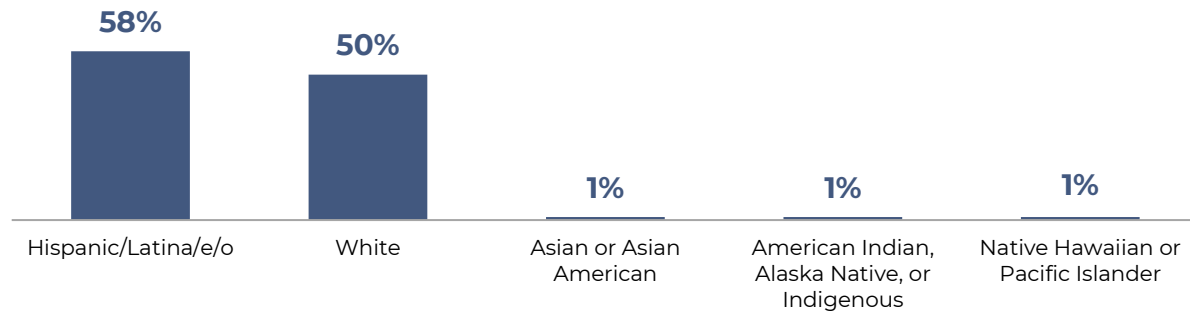**Figure 7: Survey Respondents Who Identify as LGBTQ+**

Legend: ■ Yes ■ No

	2019	2022	2024
No	88%	70%	94%
Yes	13%	30%	6%
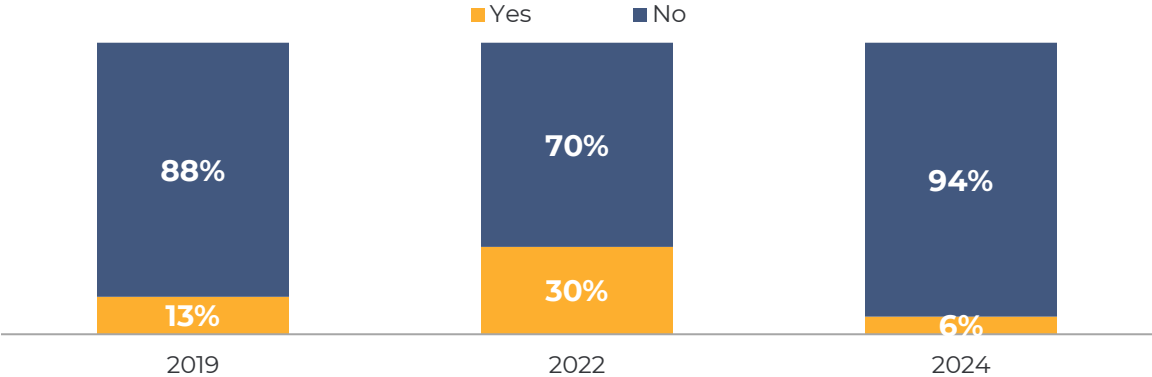
LGBTQ+ Identity: 2019 N=124; 2022 N=101; 2024 N=72

Race/Ethnicity

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) now gathers data on race and ethnicity in one question, a change from years past. Over half (58%) of homeless survey respondents identified as Hispanic/Latina/e/o in 2024, similar to 2022(60%).

Figure 8: Survey Respondents by Race

58%	**50%**	**1%**	**1%**	**1%**
Hispanic/Latina/e/o	White	Asian or Asian American	American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

Homeless Survey Population: 2024 N=74 respondents offering 83 responses
Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100.

INCIDENCE AND DURATION OF HOMELESSNESS

First Incidence of Homelessness

Of those surveyed in 2024, twenty-two percent (22%) reported that the current episode of homelessness was their first-time experiencing homelessness, representing an increase, but similar to 2022 and 2017. Respondents were also asked their age at the time they experienced homelessness for the first time. In response, the majority (56%) reported they were 25 years or older, while 24% reported between the ages of 18 and 24 years and 20% reported they were under the age of 18.

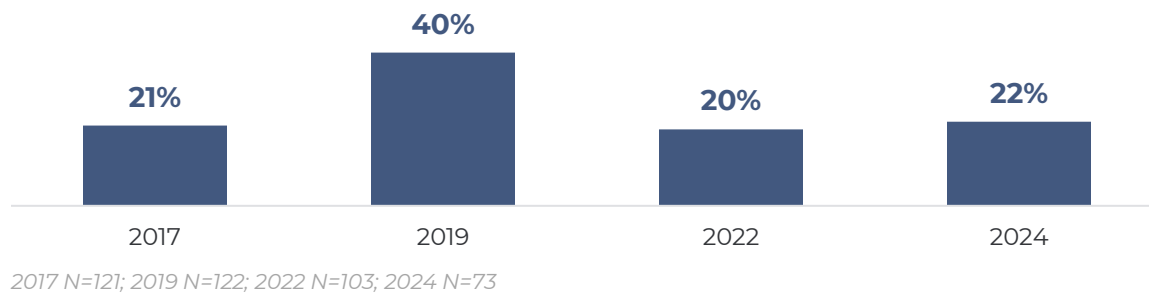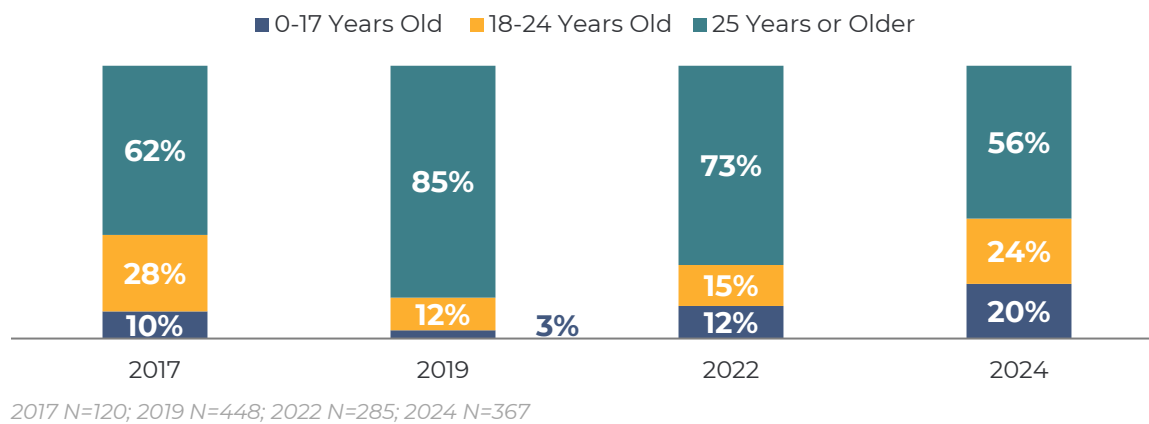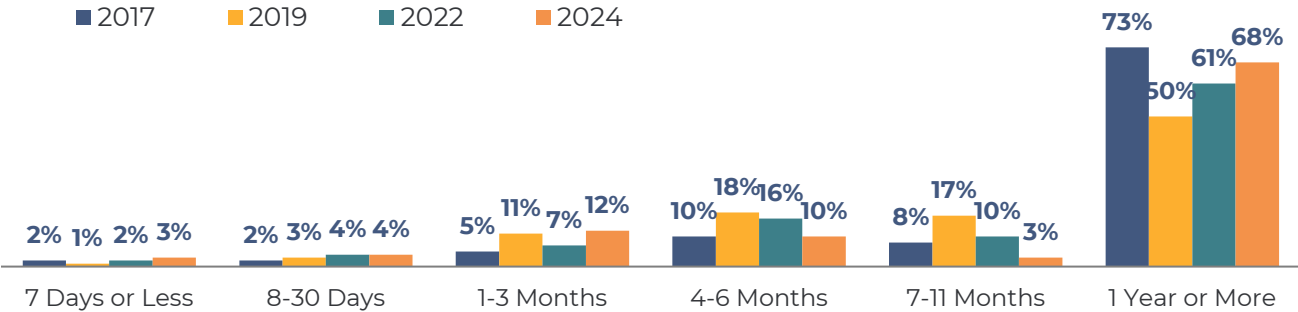**Figure 9: Current Episode Is the First Time Experiencing Homelessness**

2017 N=121; 2019 N=122; 2022 N=103; 2024 N=73

Figure 10: Age When Experienced Homelessness for the First Time

2017 N=120; 2019 N=448; 2022 N=285; 2024 N=367

Duration of Homelessness

When asked about the duration of their current episode of homelessness, the majority (68%) of survey respondents reported they had been homeless for a year or longer, representing an increase from 61% in 2022 indicating they had been homeless for a year or more.

Figure 11: Duration of Current Episode of Homelessness

Legend: ■ 2017 ■ 2019 ■ 2022 ■ 2024

Category	2017	2019	2022	2024
7 Days or Less	2%	1%	2%	3%
8-30 Days	2%	3%	4%	4%
1-3 Months	5%	11%	7%	12%
4-6 Months	10%	18%	16%	10%
7-11 Months	8%	17%	10%	3%
1 Year or More	73%	50%	61%	68%

2017 N=121; 2019 N=122; 2022 N=100; 2024 N=72

LIVING ACCOMMODATIONS

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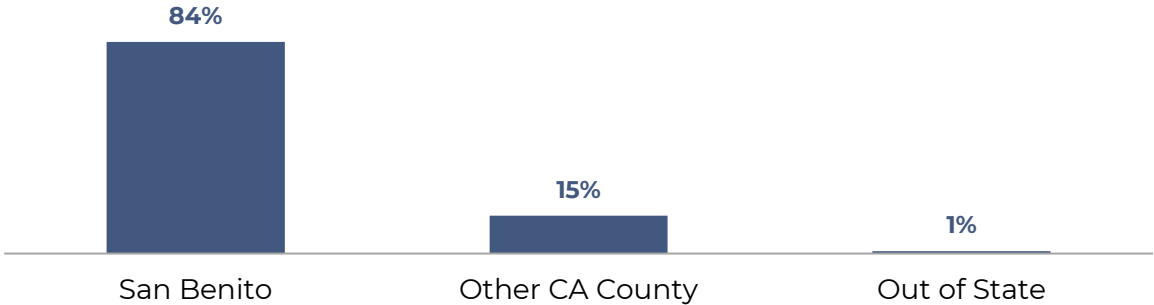
Place of Residence

Knowing where individuals were living prior to their housing loss informs discussions regarding how much of the homeless population is local to the region. This information can also influence changes to available support systems if the CoC finds increasing numbers of individuals living locally before experiencing homelessness.

The 2024 survey revealed that the majority (84%) of respondents reported they were living in San Benito County at the most recent time they became homeless, a decrease from 2022 (95%). Fifteen percent (15%) of respondents reported they were living in another county in California, and 1% reported they were living out of state.
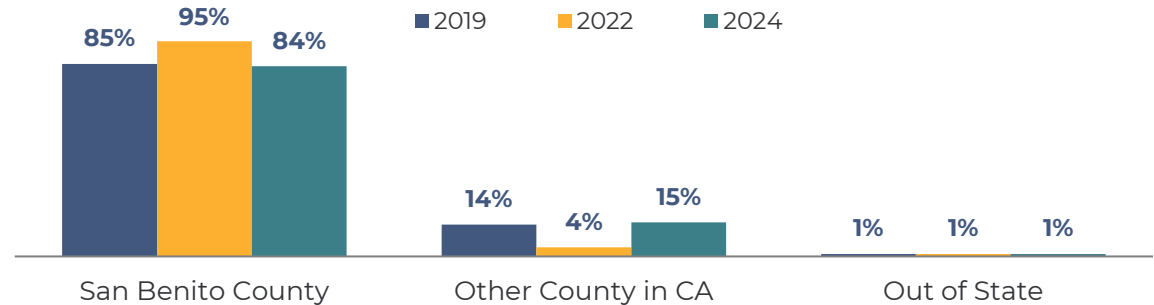
When asked how long they had lived in San Benito County, over three-quarters (76%) responded 5 years or longer, while 8% indicated they had resided in San Benito County for less than one year.

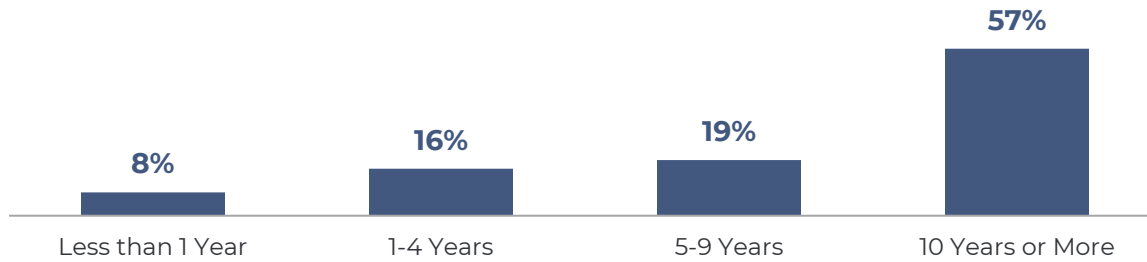**Figure 12: Place of Residence at Recent Episode of Homelessness**

2024 N=74

Figure 13: Place of Residence at Episode of Homelessness

2019 N=124; 2022 N=97; 2024 N=741

57%

19%

16%

8%

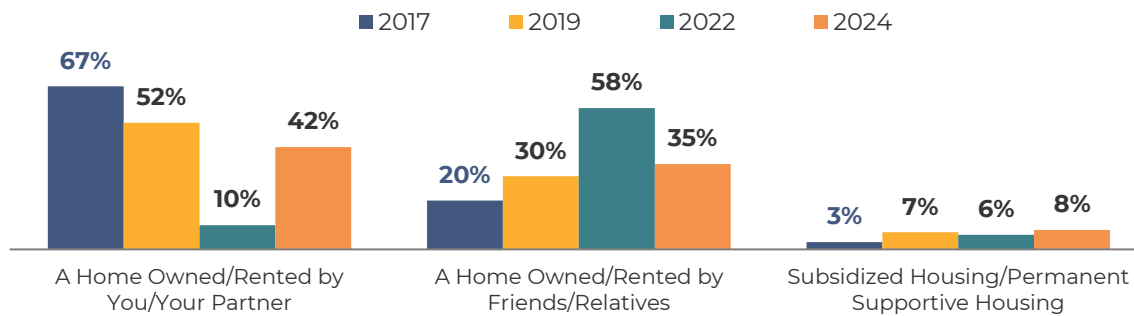| Less than 1 Year | 1-4 Years | 5-9 Years | 10 Years or More |

2024 N=74

Prior Living Arrangements

Over a third (42%) of survey respondents reported they were living in a home owned or rented by them or their partner prior to becoming homeless, a significant increase to what was reported in 2022 (10%). Thirty-five percent (35%) reported they were living with friends or relatives and 8% reported they were staying in subsidized or permanent supportive housing.

Figure 15: Prior Living Arrangements (Top Responses)

■ 2017 ■ 2019 ■ 2022 ■ 2024

67% 52% 10% 42%

20% 30% 58% 35%

3% 7% 6% 8%

| A Home Owned/Rented by You/Your Partner | A Home Owned/Rented by Friends/Relatives | Subsidized Housing/Permanent Supportive Housing |

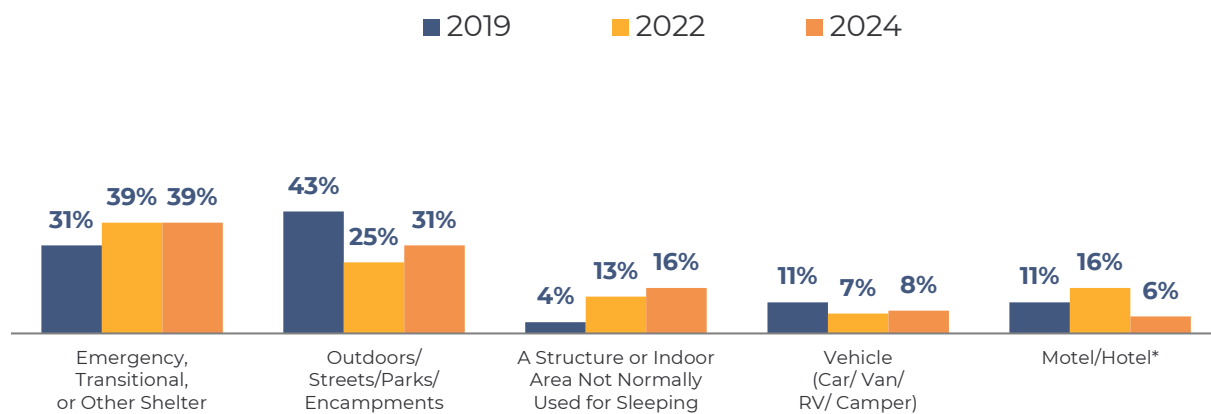*2017 N=114; 2019 N=123; 2022 N=88; 2024 N=72*

Current Sleeping Accommodation

While basic information on where individuals were observed during the general street count effort was collected, survey respondents were still asked about their usual nighttime accommodations. Understanding the types of places individuals experiencing homelessness are sleeping can help inform local outreach efforts.

Thirty-nine percent (39%) reported currently staying in a shelter or transitional housing. Thirty-one percent (31%) of survey respondents reported currently living outdoors, either on the streets, in parks, or in encampment areas, an increase from 2022 (25%). Sixteen percent (16%) reported staying in a structure or indoor area not normally used for sleeping.

Figure 16: Total Homeless Population Surveyed, by Sleeping Accommodation

■ 2019　　■ 2022　　■ 2024

	Emergency, Transitional, or Other Shelter	Outdoors/ Streets/Parks/ Encampments	A Structure or Indoor Area Not Normally Used for Sleeping	Vehicle (Car/ Van/ RV/ Camper)	Motel/Hotel*
2019	31%	43%	4%	11%	11%
2022	39%	25%	13%	7%	16%
2024	39%	31%	16%	8%	6%

*2019 N=122; 2022 N=102; 2024 N=67*

CAUSES AND OBSTACLES OF HOMELESSNESS

Causes of Homelessness

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

Forty-four percent (44%) of survey respondents self-reported alcohol or drug use as the primary cause of their homelessness, a significant increase from previous years. Over a third (34%) cited financial issues (job loss, eviction, etc.), 34% cited a fight or conflict, and 32% cited legal issues.

**Figure 17: Primary Cause of Homelessness**
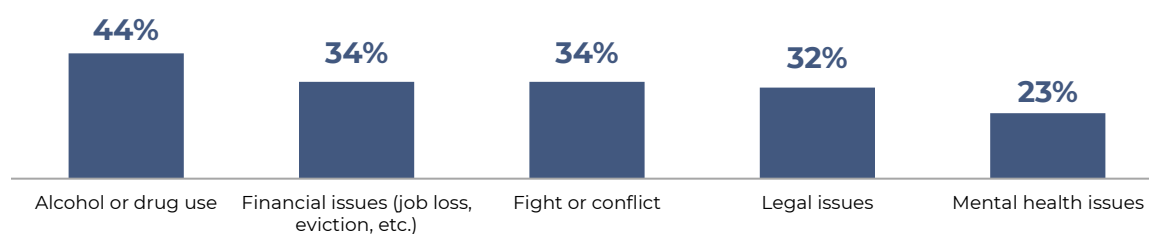
2024 N=73 respondents offering 204 responses
Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100.

Obstacles to Obtaining Permanent Housing

Many individuals experiencing homelessness face significant barriers to 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 secure and maintain permanent housing.

When asked what prevented them from obtaining housing, the most common response was "can't afford rent," reported by 67% of survey respondents, suggesting housing affordability and poverty issues as key obstacles. This was followed by 56% who reported a lack of job or not enough income, and 43% who said they had no money for moving costs. Survey respondents were asked if they have received a housing voucher of any kind in the last 12 months, 12% of all respondents revealed they had, and 63% of those respondents reported that they were able to successfully use the housing voucher.

Figure 18: Obstacles to Obtaining Permanent Housing (Top Responses 2024)
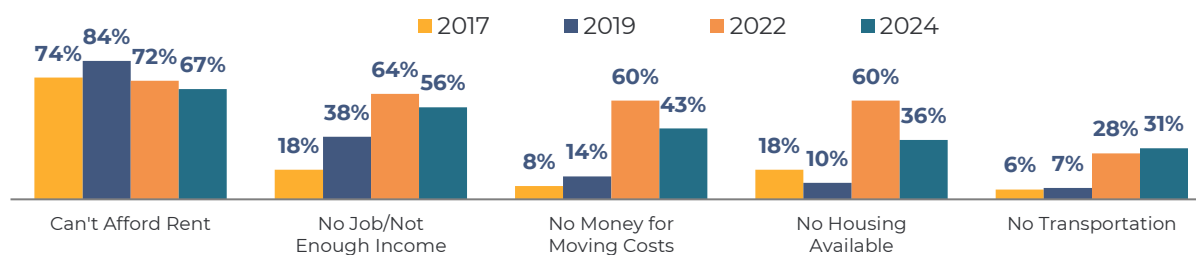

2017 N=114 respondents offering 1,77 responses; 2019 N=122 respondents offering 236 responses; 2022 N=94 respondents offering 484 responses; 2024 N=72 respondents offering 227 responses
Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100.

HISTORY OF FOSTER CARE

Nine percent (9%) respondents indicated that they had been in foster care sometime in their lifetime, higher than in 2022 (7%).

Figure 19: History of Foster Care
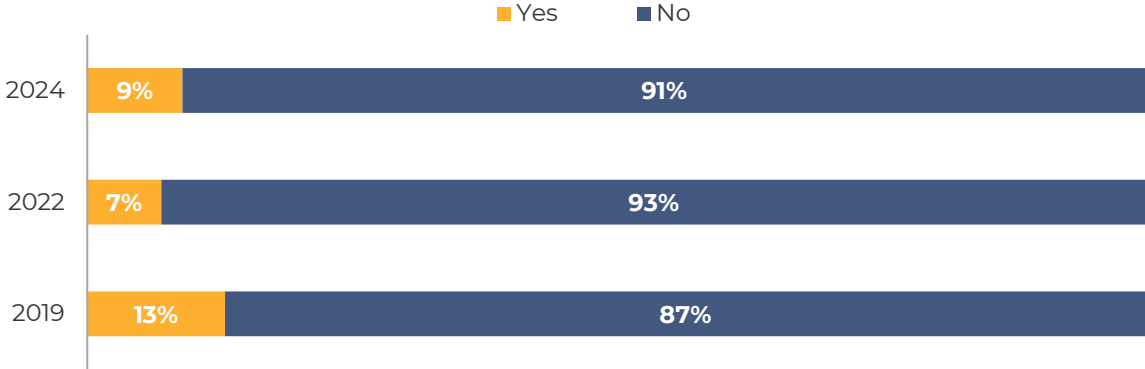
*2019 N=122; 2022 N=86; 2024 N=70*

SERVICES AND ASSISTANCE

San Benito County provides services and assistance to those currently experiencing homelessness through federal, state, 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, as many believe that they are ineligible for assistance. Connecting homeless individuals and families to these support services creates a bridge to mainstream support services and can help prevent future housing instability.

Government Assistance

Sixty percent (60%) of survey respondents reported in 2024 that they were receiving some form of government assistance (e.g., social security, Food Stamps, Disability, Medi-Cal, CalWorks, VA benefits), a decrease from 2019 (74%).
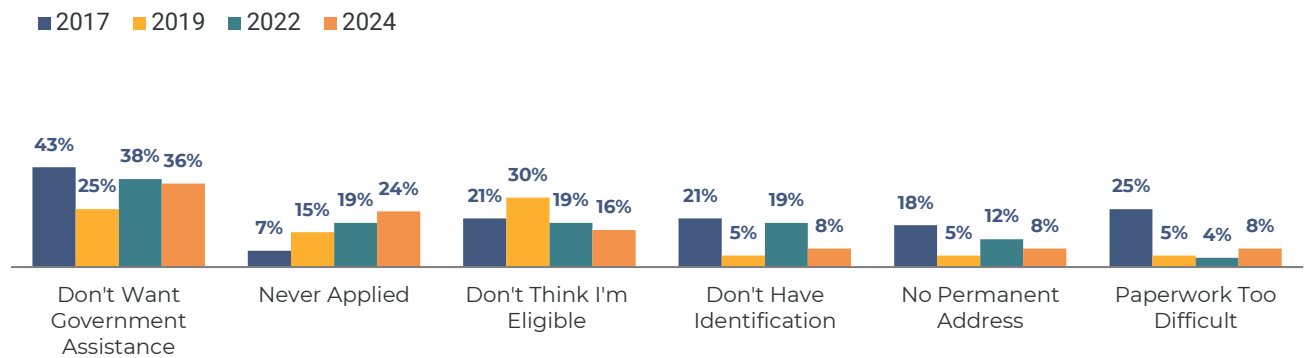
Of those who reported they were not receiving any form of government support (40%), the greatest percentage communicated that they didn't want government assistance (36%). Twenty-four percent (24%) indicated they never applied.

Figure 20: Receipt of Government Assistance
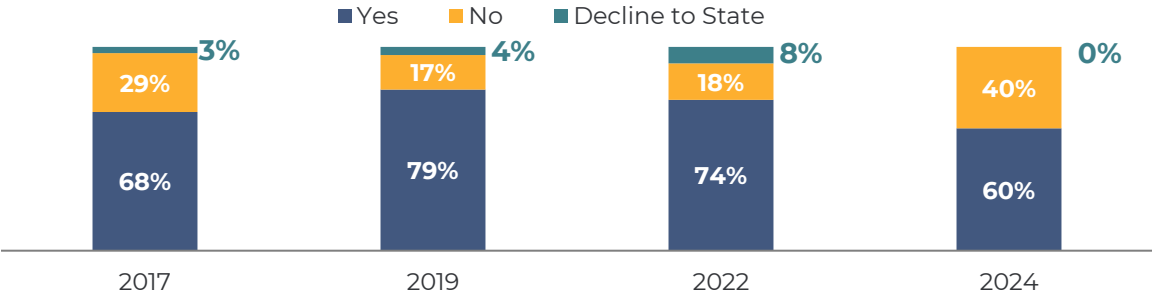
2017 N=120; 2019 N=121; 2022 N=84; 2024 N=67

Figure 21: Reasons for Not Receiving Government Assistance (Top Responses)

■2017 ■2019 ■2022 ■2024

|	Don't Want Government Assistance	Never Applied	Don't Think I'm Eligible	Don't Have Identification	No Permanent Address	Paperwork Too Difficult
2017	43%	7%	21%	21%	18%	25%
2019	25%	15%	30%	5%	5%	5%
2022	38%	19%	19%	19%	12%	4%
2024	36%	24%	16%	8%	8%	8%

2017 N=28 respondents offering 46 responses; 2019 N=20 respondents offering 22 responses; 2022 N=26 respondents offering 44 responses; 2024 N=25 respondents offering 29 responses
Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100.

SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

More than half (55%) of survey respondents in 2024 reported they were accessing non-government forms of services and assistance. The most frequently cited types of assistance respondents reported was emergency shelter (41%), alcohol or drug counseling (11%), housing navigation (11%), job training or employment assistance (10%), and transitional housing (10%). Having a pet is often viewed as a barrier for individuals to access services. Among survey respondents, 19% indicated they have a pet. When asked what services might be beneficial, 54% mentioned dental care, 43% eye care, 37% medical care, 23% mental health services, and 11% substance abuse treatment.

**Figure 22: Receipt of Services or Assistance (Top Responses)**

Emergency shelter	Alcohol/drug counseling	Housing navigation	Job training or employment assistance	Transitional housing	Not using any services
41%	11%	11%	10%	10%	45%
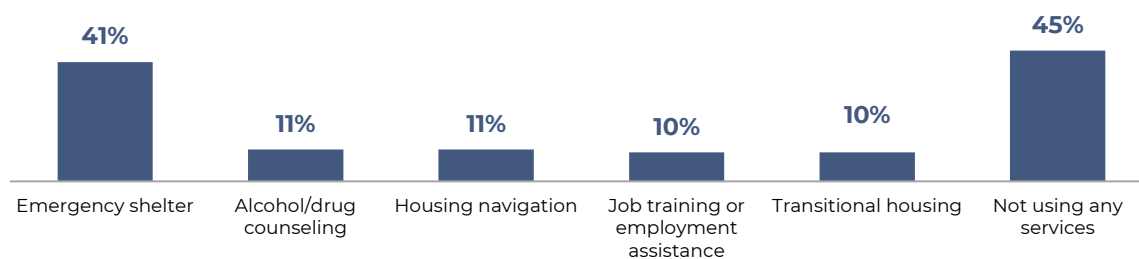
2024 N=71 respondents offering 106 responses

EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME

The unemployment rate in San Benito County in March 2024 was at 8%, the same as it was in January 2022.[1] It is important to recognize that the unemployment rate represents only those who are unemployed and actively seeking employment. It does not represent all joblessness, nor does it address the types of available employment.

The unemployment rate among homeless survey respondents was 82%, an increase from 72% in 2022. Forty-five percent (45%) of unemployed respondents indicated that they were currently looking for work, 41% indicated they were not, and 14% indicated they were currently unable to work. While the majority (82%) of survey respondents reported being unemployed, a number reported having part-time or seasonal/sporadic employment (11%) and even full-time employment (7%). One respondent (2%) indicated they were employed in the agriculture sector and another respondent (2%) was employed in the hospitality sector.

Figure 23: Survey Respondents by Employment Status

■ Employed   ■ Unemployed

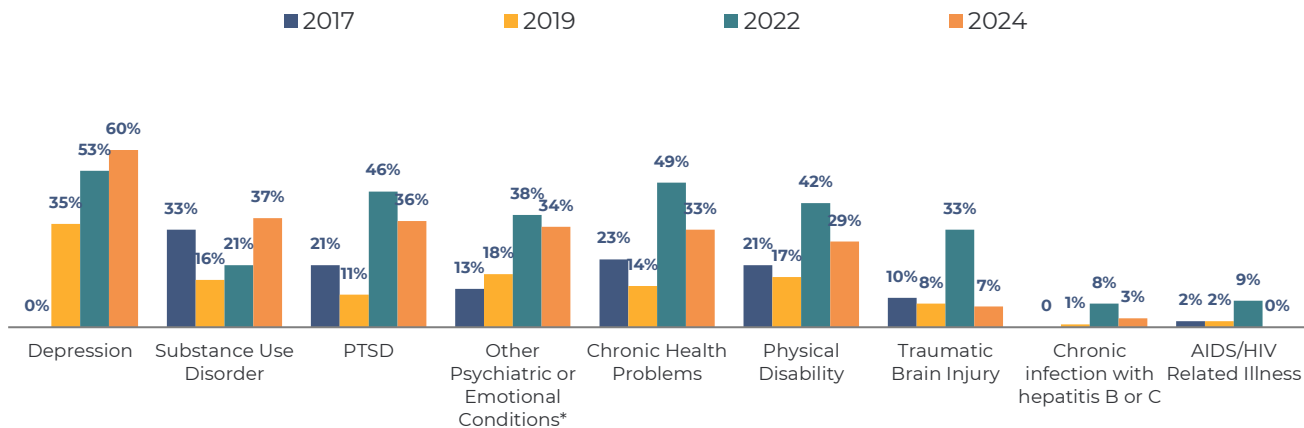|	2017	2019	2022	2024
Unemployed	82%	70%	72%	82%
Employed	18%	30%	28%	18%
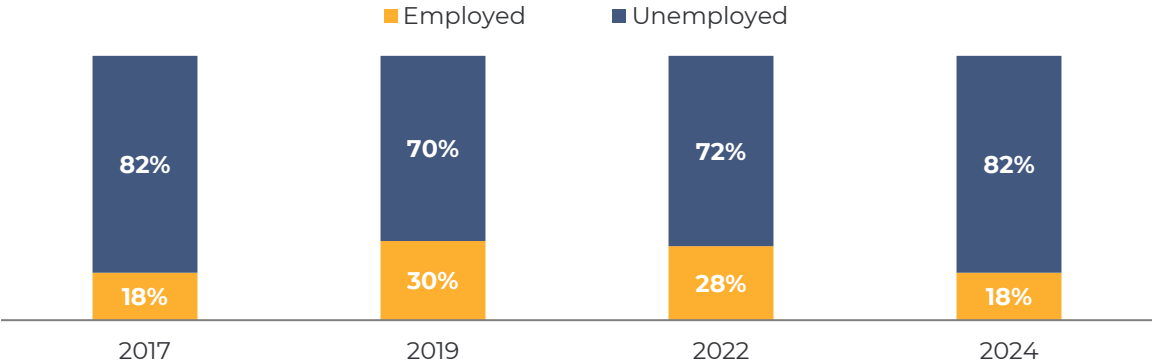
2017 N=116; 2019 N=120; 2022 N=75; 2024 N=68

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[1] State of California Employment Development Department. (2024). Unemployment Rates (Labor Force). Retrieved from http://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov

HEALTH CONDITIONS

The top health conditions survey respondents reported experiencing in 2024 was depression (60%) an increase from 53% in 2022 and 35% in 2019. Substance use disorder the second most cited response in 2024 (37%). PTSD saw a decrease from 46% in 2022 to 36% in 2024.

Figure 24: Health Conditions

Legend: 2017 | 2019 | 2022 | 2024

Condition	2017	2019	2022	2024
Depression	0%	35%	53%	60%
Substance Use Disorder	33%	16%	21%	37%
PTSD	21%	11%	46%	36%
Other Psychiatric or Emotional Conditions*	13%	18%	38%	34%
Chronic Health Problems	23%	14%	49%	33%
Physical Disability	21%	17%	42%	29%
Traumatic Brain Injury	10%	8%	33%	7%
Chronic infection with hepatitis B or C	0	1%	8%	3%
AIDS/HIV Related Illness	2%	2%	9%	0%

2017 N=115-120; 2019 N=115-119; 2022 N=76-80, 2024 N=68-72
* Note: Both depression and chronic infection with hepatitis B or C were not response options in 2017.
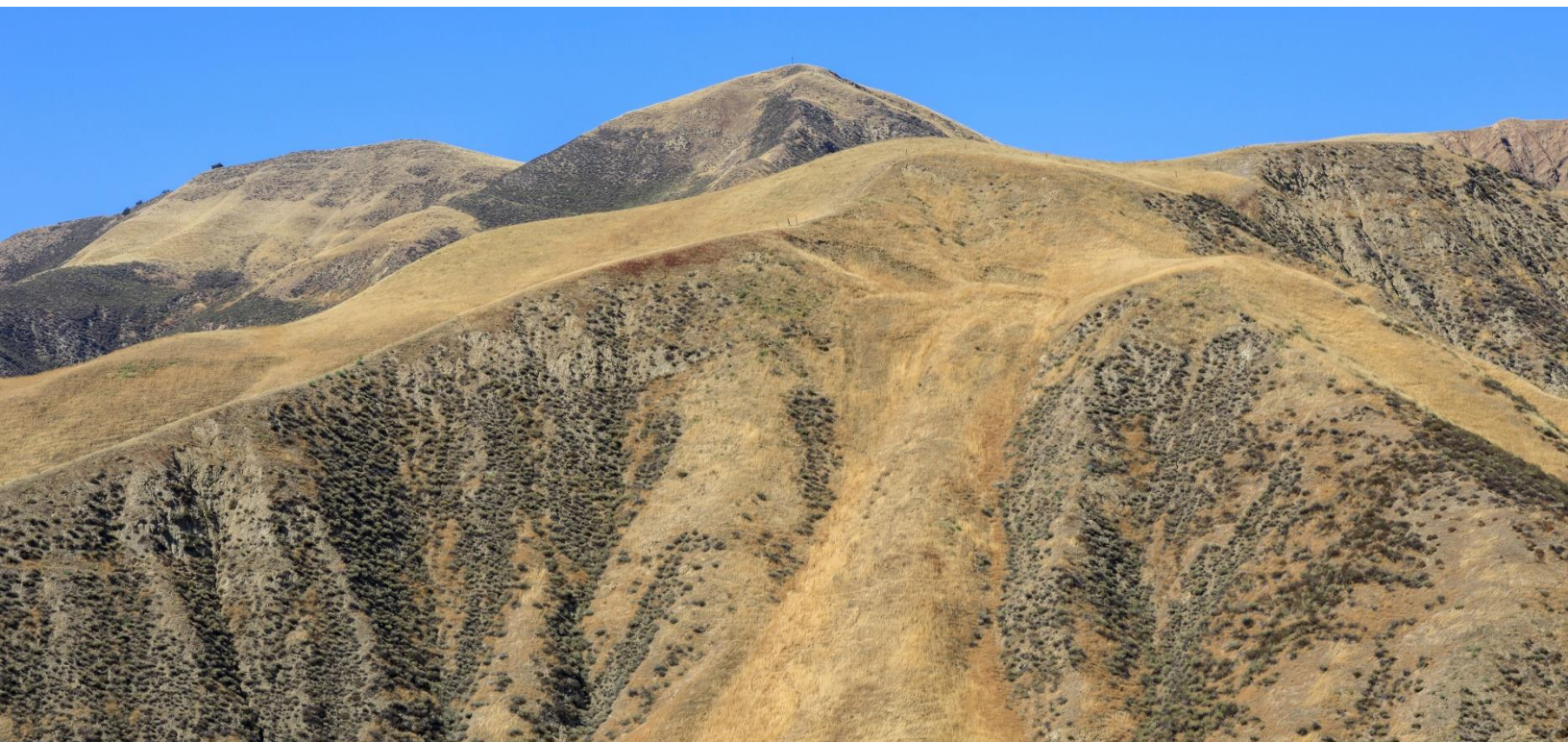
DOMESTIC PARTNER VIOLENCE OR ABUSE

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 the financial resources required for housing, as their employment history or dependable income may be limited.

Ten percent (10%) of survey respondents reported currently experiencing domestic/partner violence or abuse. When asked about experiences of ever being physically, emotionally, or sexually abused by a relative or another person they had stayed with (spouse, partner, sibling, parent) in their lifetime, 51% indicated that they have, a significant increase from previous years.

Figure 25: History of Being Physically, Emotionally or Sexually Abused
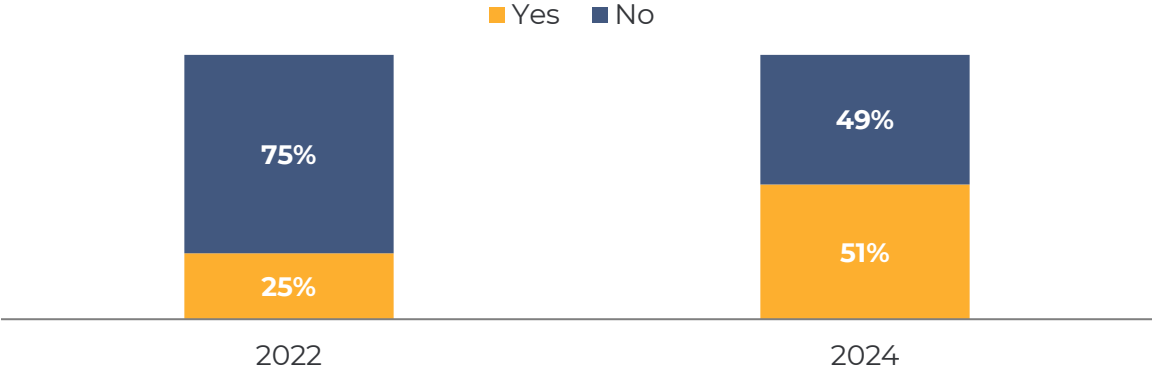
2022 N=45; 2024 N=70

Figure 26: Currently Experiencing Physical, Emotional or Sexual Abuse
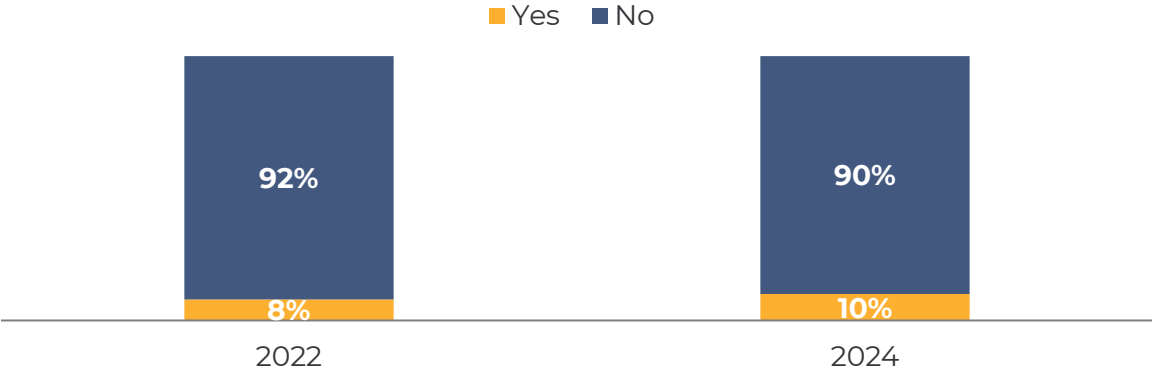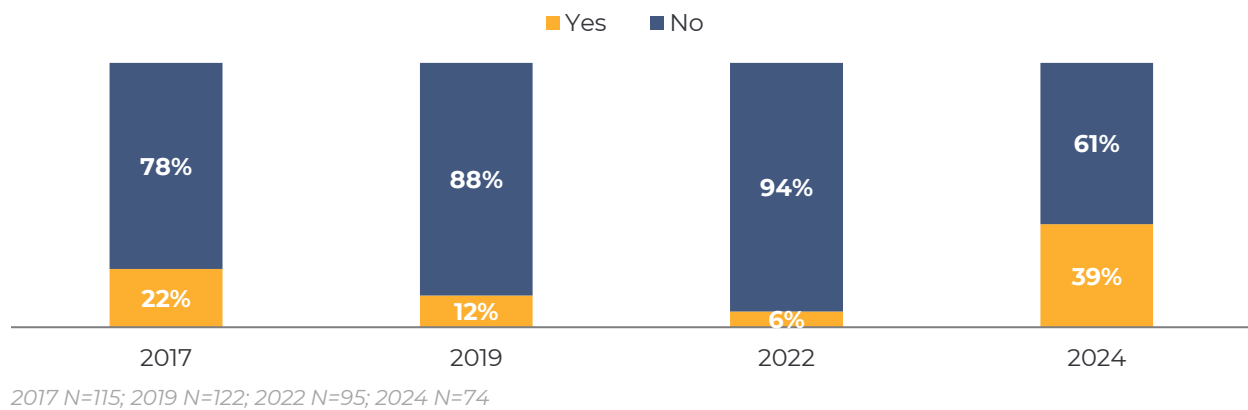

2022 N=48; 2024 N=72

CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Individuals without stable housing are at greater risk of criminal justice system involvement, particularly those with mental health issues, substance abuse issues, veterans, and youth. Also, individuals with a history of incarceration face significant barriers to exiting homelessness due to issues affecting their ability to gain employment and access housing opportunities.[2]

Thirty-nine percent (39%) of survey respondents reported that they had spent a night in jail or prison in the past year, up from 2017 findings (22%), 2019 findings (12%), and 2022 findings (6%). Nineteen (19%) of respondents reported having been on probation/parole at the time they became homeless, and 19% indicated currently being on probation/parole.

Figure 27: Spent a Night in Jail or Prison in the Last 12 Months

■ Yes ■ No

	2017	2019	2022	2024
No	78%	88%	94%	61%
Yes	22%	12%	6%	39%

2017 N=115; 2019 N=122; 2022 N=95; 2024 N=74

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[2] Greenberg, GA, Rosenheck, RA. (2008). Jail Incarceration, Homelessness, and Mental Health: A National Study. Psychiatric Services, 2008 Feb;59(2): 170-7.

SELECTED POPULATIONS

Home, Together: The Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness outlines national objectives and evaluative measures for ending homelessness among all populations 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, including:

1. Individuals with disabilities experiencing chronic homelessness;

2. Veterans experiencing homelessness;

3. Families with children experiencing homelessness; and

4. Children and youth under age 25 years experiencing homelessness.

These subpopulations represent important reportable indicators for measuring local progress toward ending homelessness. The following sections examine each of these four subpopulations.

INDIVIDUALS EXPERIENCING CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS
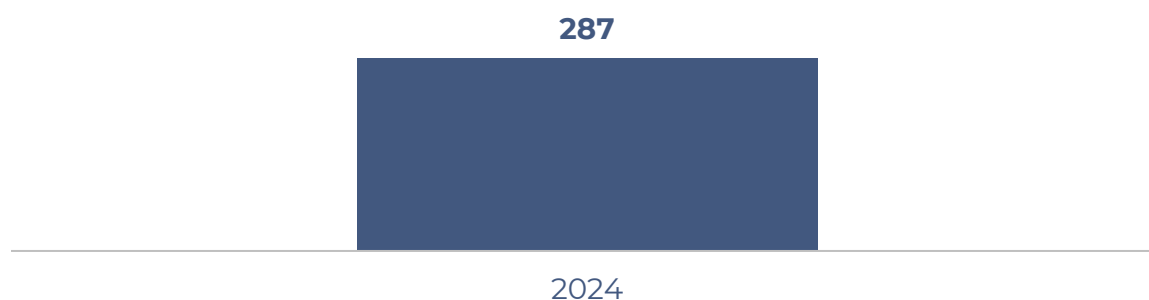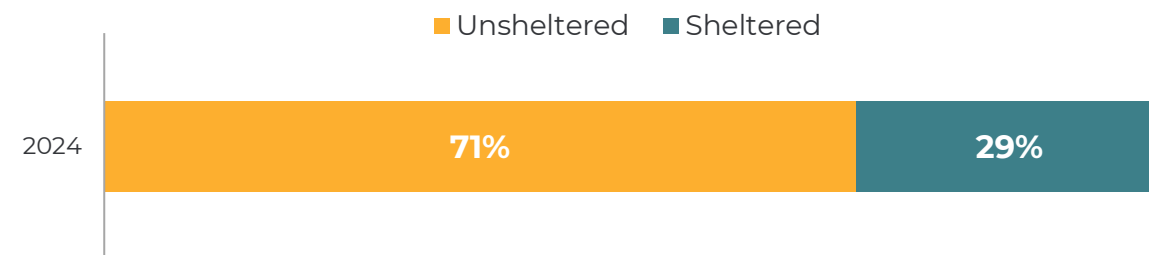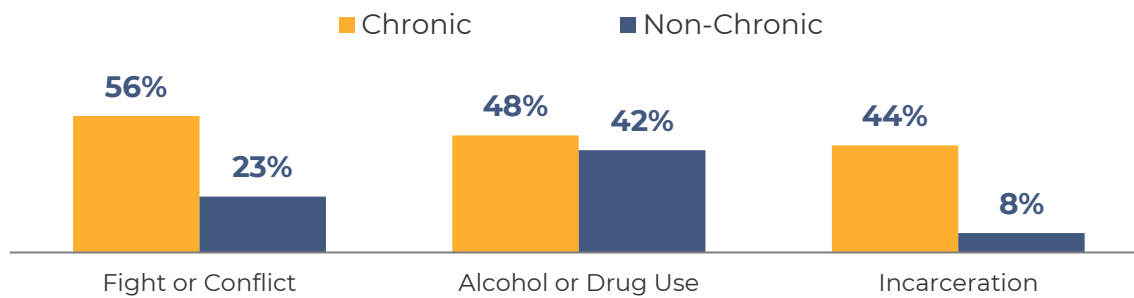
Figure 28: Chronically Homeless Subpopulation

287

2024

Figure 29: Chronically Homeless Subpopulation by Shelter Status

■ Unsheltered ■ Sheltered

2024 | 71% | 29%

2024 N= 287

Figure 30: Primary Cause of Homelessness (Top 3 Responses)

■ Chronic   ■ Non-Chronic

Fight or Conflict: Chronic 56%, Non-Chronic 23%
Alcohol or Drug Use: Chronic 48%, Non-Chronic 42%
Incarceration: Chronic 44%, Non-Chronic 8%

2024 Chronic N=25 respondents offering 90 responses; 2024 Non-Chronic N= 48 respondents offering 114 responses
Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100.

ESTIMATES VETERANS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

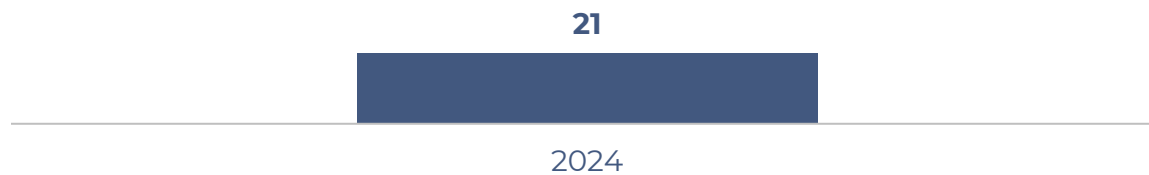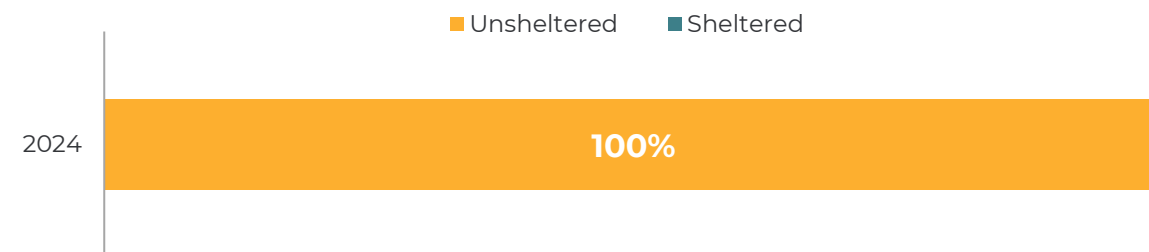**Figure 31: Total Number of Veterans Experiencing Homelessness**

21

2024

Figure 32: Veterans Experiencing Homelessness by Shelter Status

■ Unsheltered   ■ Sheltered

2024: 100%

2024 N= 21

ESTIMATES OF INDIVIDUALS IN FAMILIES EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

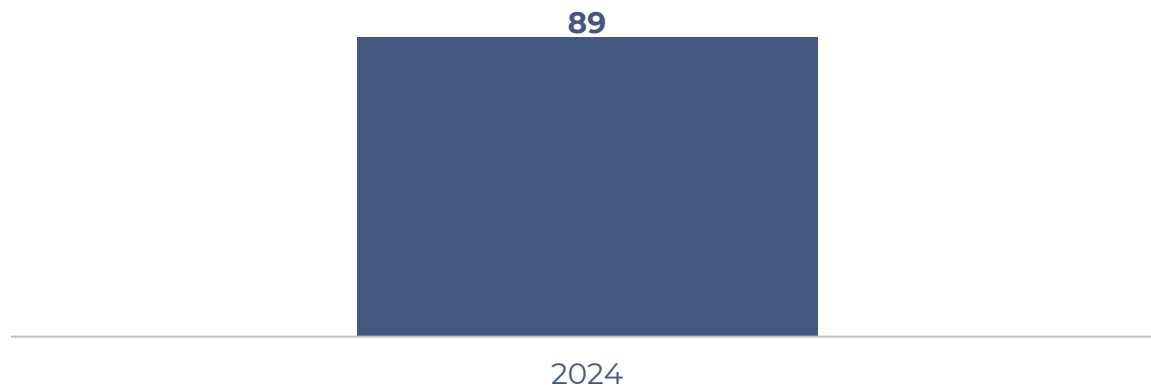**Figure 33: Individuals in Families Experiencing Homelessness Subpopulation**
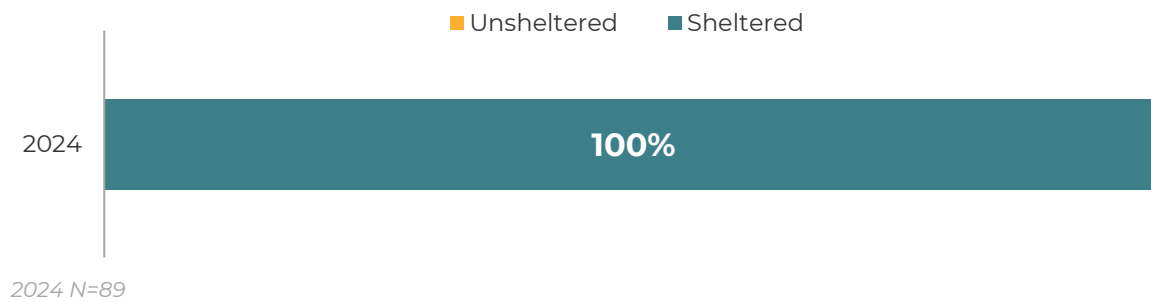

Figure 34: Individuals in Families Experiencing Homelessness Subpopulation by Shelter Status

Unsheltered ■ Sheltered

2024 | 100%

2024 N=89

CHILDREN AND YOUTH EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Figure 36: Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness

2
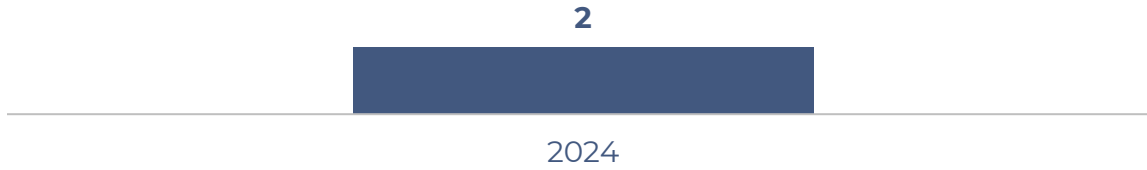
2024

Figure 37: Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness by Shelter Status

■ Unsheltered   ■ Sheltered

2024   **100%**
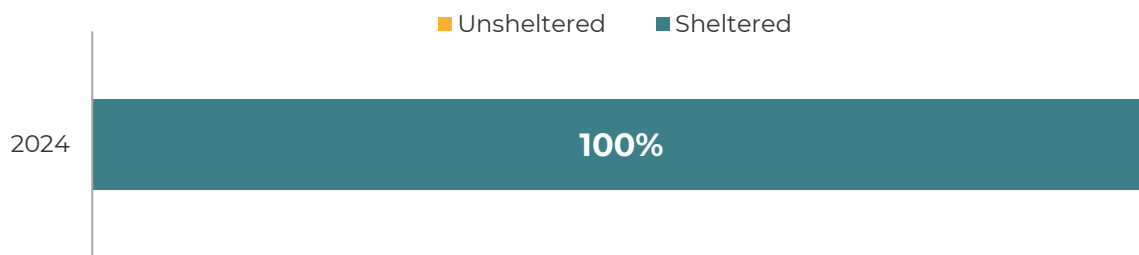
2024 N=225

CONCLUSION

The 2024 San Benito County Homeless Count and Survey was performed using HUD-recommended practices for counting and surveying the homeless population. Data summarized in this report provide many valuable insights about the unique and diverse experiences of homelessness in San Benito County. A few data highlights include:

- The Point-in-Time Homeless Count identified a total of 621 persons experiencing homelessness in San Benito County in 2024, a 74% increase from 2022 (357).

- Four-fifths (80%) persons experiencing homelessness in San Benito County were unsheltered, living outdoors or in places not intended for human habitation.

- Twenty-two percent (22%) of homeless survey respondents indicated they were experiencing homelessness for the first time, while 68% had been homeless for one year or longer.

- The biggest obstacles to obtaining permanent housing were: inability to afford rent (67%), lack of a job/income (56%), and lack of money for moving costs (43%).

- Respondents reported significant health conditions: depression (60%), drug/alcohol abuse (37%), Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) (36%), and other psychiatric or emotional conditions (34%).

- Results for the four HUD select populations in San Benito County were: chronically homeless individuals (287 persons), homeless veterans (21 persons), members of homeless families with children (89 persons), and unaccompanied children and youth under age 25 years (2 persons).

In summary, the 2024 San Benito County Homeless Count and Survey provides valid and useful data that help create a more comprehensive profile of those experiencing homelessness. Data presented in this report fulfill federal reporting requirements for the CoC, and will continue to inform outreach, service planning, and policy decision-making by local planning bodies over the years to come.

There are still many challenges to overcome in achieving the goal of eliminating homelessness in San Benito County and helping homeless individuals and families access necessary services and support. The dissemination and evaluation of this effort will help the CoC, and all San Benito County stakeholders continue to produce and refine constructive and innovative solutions to end homelessness and make it a rare, brief, and one-time occurrence. Through innovative and effective housing programs and services, San Benito County remains committed to moving homeless persons into permanent housing.

APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY

OVERVIEW

The San Benito County Point-in-Time Homeless Count and Survey was designed and implemented through a collaborative CoC-wide effort that included County, city, and community-based organizations.

The 2024 San Benito County Homeless Count and Survey was performed using HUD-recommended practices and using HUD's PIT Count definition of homelessness. The goal was to produce a point-in-time estimate of individuals and families experiencing homelessness in San Benito County, a region which covers approximately 1,389 square miles. Several primary data collection components were integrated to produce the total estimated number of persons experiencing homelessness on a given night. A detailed description of these components follows.

COMPONENTS OF THE HOMELESS CENSUS & SURVEY

The methodology used in the 2024 Point-in-Time Count and Survey had several main components:

- **General Street Count:** A morning count of unsheltered homeless individuals and families on January 31, 2024. This occurred from approximately 5:30 AM to 11:00 AM and included those sleeping outdoors on the street; at transit stations; in parks, tents, and other makeshift shelters; and in vehicles and abandoned or public properties, like parking garages and related locations. The general street count was designed to take place before shelter occupants were released. In areas with shelters, the immediate area surrounding the shelter was prioritized to eliminate potential double counting of individuals.

- **General Shelter Count:** A nighttime count of homeless individuals and families staying at publicly and privately operated shelters on January 30, 2024. This included those who occupied emergency shelters and transitional housing units.

- **Homeless Survey:** An in-person interview with 74 unique sheltered and unsheltered homeless individuals conducted by peer surveyors between January 31 and February 27, 2024, in San Benito County. Data from the survey were used to refine the Point-in-Time Count estimates, and then used to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the demographics and experiences of homeless individuals.

Community Involvement

Local homeless and housing service providers and advocates were valued partners in the planning and implementation of this count. As a result of significant expansion of outreach services by jurisdictional and local community organizations, the organizing team felt that appropriate, safe, and thorough outreach could be achieved by using outreach staff as the primary enumerators in the field. Lived experience persons were integrated into the effort by outreach staff as in previous PIT count efforts.

STREET COUNT METHODOLOGY

Definition

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

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

Methodological Improvements

The 2024 street count methodology followed an established, HUD approved approach commonly called a blitz method followed by a sample survey. Very significantly, a change was made in the use of a GPS enabled smartphone in data collection using an ESRI Survey 123 application developed and customized by ASR to conform to HUD data collection requirements. Outreach organizations, program staff, county, and city staff along with selected community members were able to select areas for enumeration from an interactive GIS planning map tool that enabled us to plan for complete coverage of the County with prioritization of high-density homeless routes to outreach staff and personnel with direct service experience.

Volunteer and Guide Recruitment

In 2024, approximately 50 outreach workers, community volunteers and homeless guides participated in the general street count.

Outreach and program staff did limited recruitment of persons with lived experience to act as guides in order to conduct the count in 2024. Homeless guides were paid $20 per hour worked on the days of the count.

In order to participate in the count, all volunteers and guides were requested to view a 20-minute training video before the count. Additionally, targeted trainings were held for multiple groups throughout the county who were able to convene a large enough group of attendees. Training covered all aspects of the count:

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

Safety Precautions

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

Logistics of Enumeration

On the morning of the street count, teams of two or more persons were created to enumerate designated areas of the county for the street count. Each team, typically consisted of a combination of outreach workers, lived experience guides, program staff and service experienced community volunteers. Each team had a lead and were provided with their assigned Count tract maps, smart phone access information and training, field observation tips and guidelines, including vehicle identification criteria. Teams were all assigned tract numbers and were instructed to meet at a deployment center before and after the PIT Count to review training, ask last minute questions and validate data was submitted properly.

All accessible streets, roads, parks, and highways in the enumerated tracts were traversed by foot or car. The San Benito County Survey 123 smartphone app was used to record the number of homeless persons observed in addition to basic demographic and location information. Dispatch center volunteers also verified that at least one person on each team had a cell phone available for their use during the count and recorded the number on the volunteer deployment assignment sheet. Teams were asked to cover the entirety of their areas.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Planning and Implementation

The data collected through the survey are used for various funding application and are important for future program development and planning. The survey elicited information such as gender, family status, military service, duration and recurrence of homelessness, nighttime accommodations, causes of homelessness, and access to services through open-ended, closed-ended, and multiple response questions. The survey data bring greater perspective to current issues of homelessness and to the provision and delivery of services.

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

It was determined that survey data would be more easily obtained if an incentive gift was offered to respondents in appreciation for their time and participation. McDonalds gift certificates were provided as an incentive for participating in the 2024 homeless survey. Gift cards were easy to distribute, had broad appeal, and could be provided within the project budget. The incentives proved to be widely accepted among survey respondents.

Survey Sampling

Based on a Point-in-Time Count estimate of 621 homeless persons, with a randomized survey sampling process, the 74 valid surveys represented a confidence interval of +/-9% with a 90% confidence level when generalizing the results of the survey to the estimated population of individuals experiencing homelessness in San Benito County.

The 2024 survey was administered in shelters, and on the street. Strategic attempts were also made to reach individuals in various geographic locations and of various subset

groups such as homeless children and youth, minority ethnic groups, military veterans, domestic violence survivors, and families. One way to increase the participation of these groups was to recruit peer survey workers.

In order to increase randomization of sample respondents, survey workers were trained to employ an "every third encounter" survey approach. 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. In more remote cases where respondents were sparser this survey interval was modified.

Data Collection

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

Data Analysis

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

Survey Challenges and Limitations

The 2024 Homeless Survey did not include an equal representation of all homeless experiences. For example, finding families experiencing homelessness presents a challenge and can lead to underrepresentation in the survey results. The same applies to unaccompanied children and youth, though care is taken to ensure that youth surveyors are involved, to increase the response rate of youth survey respondents.

There may be some variance in the data that individuals experiencing homelessness self-reported, however, using a peer-centric 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. 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.