



# SAN FRANCISCO YOUTH HOMELESS COUNT AND SURVEY

2022 COMPREHENSIVE REPORT



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The San Francisco Local Homeless Coordinating Board (LHCB), the coordinating body for the San Francisco Continuum of Care, provided oversight for the 2022 Homeless Count project. We thank the members of the LHCB for their valued input and guidance. Meetings of the LHCB also served as a forum for stakeholder and community input on the project.

We thank Mayor London Breed and Shireen McSpadden, Executive Director of the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH), for their leadership in this effort. We thank the staff of HSH for providing feedback and assistance throughout the project on many aspects, including project methodology, survey development, participation in the count, data entry coordination, review of this report, and the presentation of findings.

Thank you to the youth service providers who facilitated the process of homeless peer enumeration by recruiting youth count workers, assisting in the administration of surveys, and opening the doors of their facilities to host training sessions, deploy count workers, and distribute surveys. They include:

- Five Keys Charter Schools and Programs
- Homeless Youth Alliance
- Larkin Street Youth Services
- San Francisco LGBT Community Center
- Third Street Youth Center and Clinic

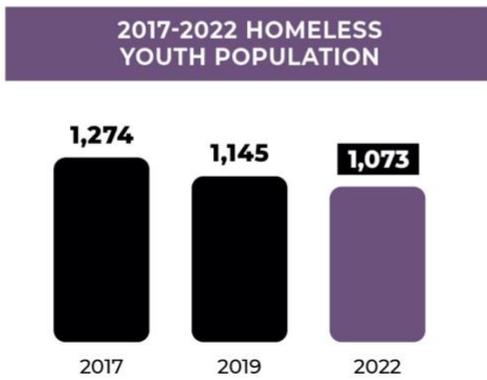
Most importantly, we would like to thank the team of current and formerly homeless youth count and survey workers, as well as the survey respondents, whose efforts are reflected throughout the findings of this report.

# SAN FRANCISCO

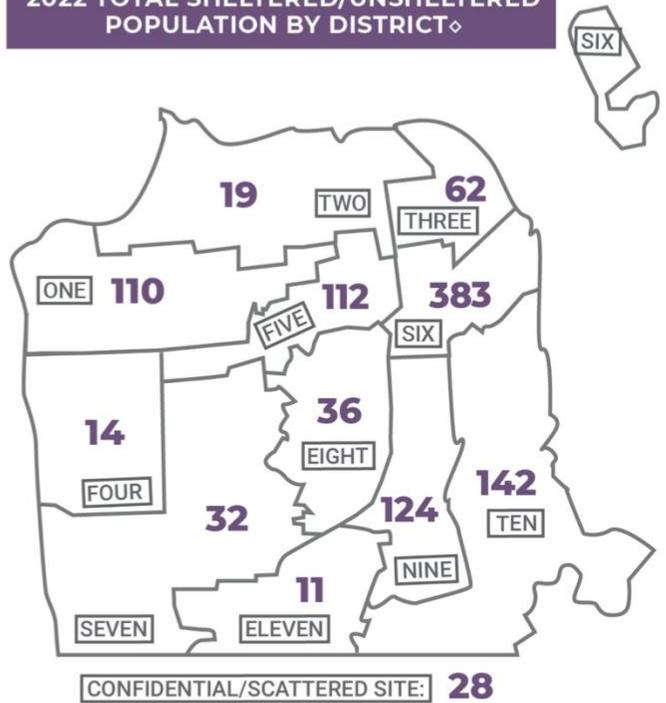
## 2022 HOMELESS YOUTH POINT-IN-TIME COUNT & SURVEY

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

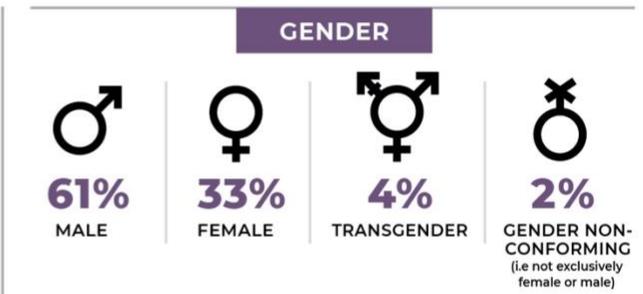
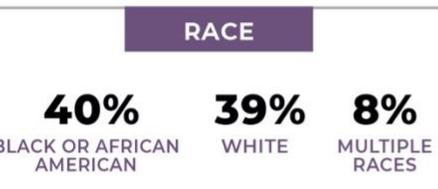
The 2022 City and County of San Francisco Point-in-Time Count was a community-wide effort conducted on February 23rd, 2022. While the entire county was canvassed by teams of volunteers, teams led by young people with lived experience of homelessness conducted a supplemental count of youth under the age of 25. In the weeks following the street count, a survey was administered to 159 unsheltered and sheltered unaccompanied youth in order to profile their experiences and characteristics.



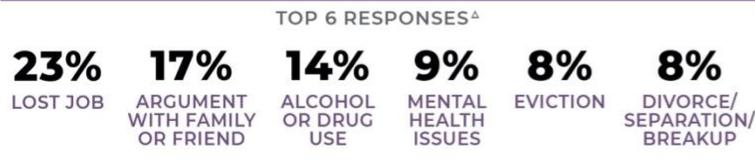
### 2022 TOTAL SHELTERED/UNSHELTERED POPULATION BY DISTRICT



### LENGTH OF TIME IN SAN FRANCISCO



### PRIMARY CAUSE OF HOMELESSNESS+



### EXPERIENCE WITH VIOLENCE IN THE PAST YEAR



### RESIDENCE AT TIME OF HOMELESSNESS



### FIRST EPISODE OF HOMELESSNESS

**19%** of youth survey respondents reported currently experiencing homelessness for the first time

### HOUSEHOLD BREAKDOWN

UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN (under 18 years)

**5%** Sheltered | **95%** Unsheltered  
86 Individuals

TRANSITIONAL-AGE YOUTH (18-24 years)

**17%** Sheltered | **83%** Unsheltered  
987 Individuals

### CONTRIBUTING CAUSES TO YOUTH HOMELESSNESS+

TOP 5 RESPONSES<sup>Δ</sup>

**38%**  
EMOTIONAL ABUSE

**28%**  
ADDICTION

**27%**  
FINANCIAL ISSUES

**26%**  
MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

**20%**  
FIGHT OR CONFLICT WITH PARENTS/GUARDIANS

### DURATION OF CURRENT EPISODE OF HOMELESSNESS



**13%**  
30 DAYS OR LESS

**42%**  
1-11 MONTHS

**45%**  
A YEAR OR MORE

### OBSTACLES TO PERMANENT HOUSING+

TOP 5 RESPONSES<sup>Δ</sup>

**45%**  
CAN'T AFFORD RENT

**27%**  
NO JOB/NOT ENOUGH INCOME

**27%**  
NO HOUSING AVAILABLE

**21%**  
NO MONEY FOR MOVING COSTS

**11%**  
CRIMINAL RECORD

### SELF-REPORTED HEALTH+

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



**37%**  
PTSD



**32%**  
PSYCHIATRIC OR EMOTIONAL CONDITIONS



**30%**  
DRUG OR ALCOHOL ABUSE



**17%**  
PHYSICAL DISABILITY



**15%**  
CHRONIC HEALTH CONDITION



**10%**  
TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY



**6%**  
HIV/AIDS RELATED ILLNESS

### DISABLING CONDITIONS



**28%** OF YOUTH SURVEY RESPONDENTS REPORTED HAVING AT LEAST ONE DISABLING CONDITION

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

### SUPPORTIVE ADULT IN THE BAY AREA

**40%** of youth survey respondents stated that they have a supportive adult in the Bay Area

### JUSTICE SYSTEM INVOLVEMENT

**25%** of youth survey respondents reported involvement in the justice system before age 18

### GOVERNMENT SERVICES AND ASSISTANCE



**69%** of youth survey respondents reported receiving government benefits

### EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT



**50%** of youth survey respondents were either currently in school or employed

### BENEFITS CURRENTLY ACCESSING+ TOP 5 RESPONSES<sup>Δ</sup>

**47%**

Food Stamps/ SNAP/WIC/ CalFresh

**19%**

GA/CAAP/ CAPI

**17%**

Medi-Cal/ Medicare/ Covered California

**7%**

SSI/SSDI/ Disability

**7%**

Unemployment

### \*SELECT POPULATION DEFINITIONS

#### CHRONICALLY HOMELESS

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

- » Has been continuously homeless for 1 year or more and/or;
- » Has experienced 4 or more episodes of homelessness within the past 3 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

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

+ Multiple response question, results may not add up to 100%.

Δ Only displaying top responses, all response data are available in the full report.

◊ The map displays data per 2012 Supervisorial District lines.

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

Note: Information on population counts, household breakdowns, age, select populations, gender, race, and ethnicity combine information from the PIT Survey and administrative data systems. All other data points reflect PIT Survey results.

For more information about the San Francisco Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing and the efforts to address homelessness in San Francisco, please visit [HSH.SFGov.org](http://HSH.SFGov.org)

Source: Applied Survey Research, 2022, San Francisco Youth Homeless Count & Survey, Watsonville, CA.

# INTRODUCTION

Per requirements from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Continuums of Care (CoC) across the country report the findings of their local Point-in-Time (PIT) Count in their annual funding application to HUD. Currently, the San Francisco CoC receives approximately \$51 million dollars annually in federal funding.

The 2022 Homeless Youth PIT Count was conducted as part of the broader PIT Count of all unsheltered and sheltered homeless persons living in San Francisco. This dedicated count 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 count in specific areas where young people experiencing homelessness were known to congregate.<sup>1</sup>

For the purposes of this report, “homeless youth” refers to unaccompanied children under the age of 18 and unaccompanied transitional-age youth, or young adults, age 18 to 24. These youth are reported to HUD within the “households without children” and “households with only children” household types. Transitional-age youth and children that are part of families, categorized by HUD as “households with at least one adult and one child” are excluded from this analysis.

This research effort in 2022 was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic and is the only full sheltered and unsheltered count conducted since 2019. Like many communities, San Francisco sought an exception from HUD to postpone the 2021 unsheltered PIT Count until 2022 due to COVID-19 health and safety concerns. In addition, the 2022 count took place at the end of February 2022 rather than the standard requirement to conduct the count at the end of January 2022. San Francisco was granted permission from HUD to postpone the count in January 2022 due to low staff capacity and public health concerns resulting from the COVID-19 Omicron variant surge.

San Francisco has partnered with Applied Survey Research (ASR) to conduct its Point-in-Time Census since 2009. The reports maintain a similar methodology, ensuring as much consistency as possible from one year 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 homeless counts and surveys throughout California and across the nation. Their 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

The 2022 Youth Planning Team identified several important project goals:

- To measure changes in the numbers and characteristics of the homeless population since the 2019 San Francisco Homeless Youth Count and Survey, and to track progress toward ending youth homelessness;
- To define the extent of homelessness among homeless youth in San Francisco; and
- To identify the primary causes of homelessness, patterns of service usage, and programming needs among homeless youth.

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<sup>1</sup> Significant deduplication efforts were made in 2022 to ensure unaccompanied children and youth were not captured in both the youth and general street count efforts. For more information on these efforts and the overall count methodology, please see Appendix A.

The results of this research will help service providers, policy makers, funders, and local and federal government entities better understand and serve the population of young people experiencing homelessness.

### **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 a 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); 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.

# YOUTH POINT-IN-TIME COUNT

Due to the often-hidden nature of youth homelessness, there are limited data available on unaccompanied children and transitional-age youth experiencing homelessness. Although largely considered an undercount, current federal estimates suggest there are approximately 34,000 homeless youth on the streets and in public shelters across the country.<sup>2</sup> Young people experiencing homelessness have a harder time accessing services, including shelter, medical care, and employment due to the stigma of their housing situation, lack of knowledge of available resources, and a dearth of services directed towards young people.<sup>3</sup>

The 2022 San Francisco Youth Point-in-Time Count and Survey represents a complete enumeration of all sheltered and unsheltered unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness. It consists of two primary components:

- **Targeted Street Count of Unaccompanied Children and Young Adults<sup>4</sup>:** A nighttime count of unsheltered unaccompanied children under 18 and unaccompanied youth 18-24 years old on February 23, 2022 from approximately 8:00 p.m. to midnight. The youth count was conducted at the same time as the general street count and data from both efforts were compared and de-duplicated by examining location, gender, and age.
- **General Shelter Count:** A count of homeless individuals and families staying at publicly and privately operated shelters on the night of February 23, 2022. This included youth staying in emergency shelters, transitional housing, and domestic violence shelters. Shelter-in-Place (SIP) hotel and trailer sites launched as part of San Francisco's COVID-19 response were included.

The Youth Point-in-Time Count and Survey also included a supplemental survey component:

- **Homeless Survey:** An in-person interview of sheltered and unsheltered homeless youth under the age of 25 conducted by youth outreach surveyors in the weeks following the youth street count. The homeless survey consisted of the general survey and supplemental youth questions. Data from the survey were used to refine the Point-in-Time Count youth estimates.

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

For more information regarding the dedicated youth count methodology, please see *Appendix A: Methodology*.

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<sup>2</sup> Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2019). Annual Assessment Report to Congress. Retrieved from <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/2019-AHAR-Part-1.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> National Coalition for the Homeless. (2011). Homeless Youth Fact Sheet. Retrieved from <http://www.nationalhomeless.org>.

<sup>4</sup> For safety reasons, Golden Gate Park, Buena Vista Park, Ocean Beach, Lake Merced, and Park Merced/Lakeside were counted on the morning of February 23<sup>rd</sup>. See Appendix A: Methodology for details.

# NUMBER AND CHARACTERISTICS OF YOUNG PERSONS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS IN SAN FRANCISCO

On the night of February 23, 2022, a total of 7,754 homeless individuals were counted in San Francisco. Among those persons, 1,073 were homeless youth.

While the overall number of people counted in the Point-in-Time Count decreased by 3.5% between 2019 and 2022, the number of homeless youth decreased by 6% over the same period. Unaccompanied children and transitional-age youth accounted for approximately 14% of the individuals counted in the 2022 Point-in-Time Count, which is similar to the 2019 Point-in-Time Count.

The majority (92%) of youth experiencing homelessness were transitional-age youth between 18 and 24 years old. Homeless youth were frequently unsheltered with over three-quarters (83%) of transitional-age youth and 95% of unaccompanied children sleeping on the streets or in tents, vehicles, or abandoned properties.

Figure 1. TOTAL NUMBER OF UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN AND TRANSITIONAL-AGE YOUTH, 2017-2022

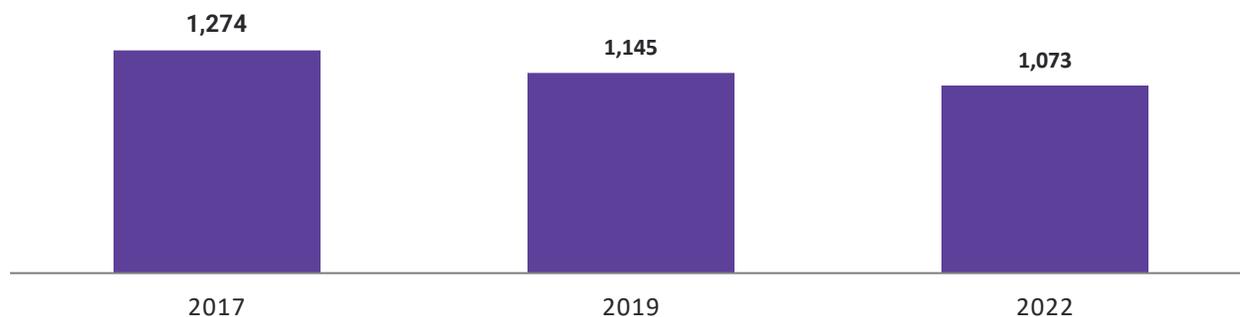


Figure 2. UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN BY SHELTER STATUS

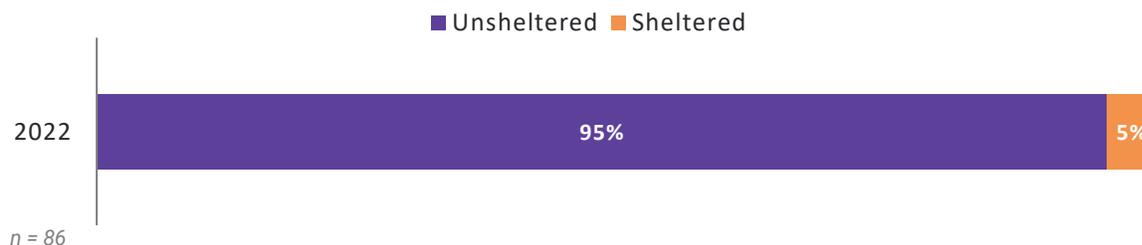
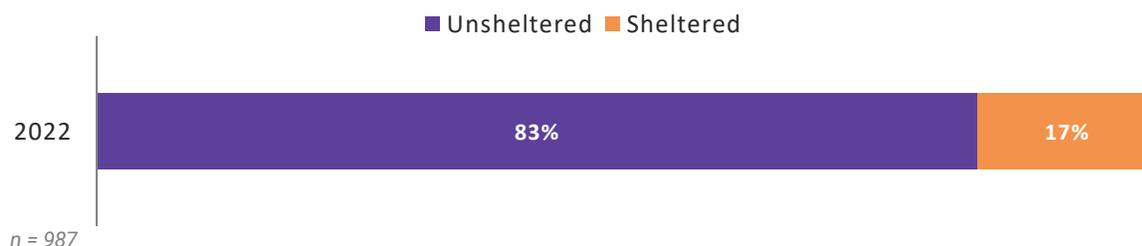


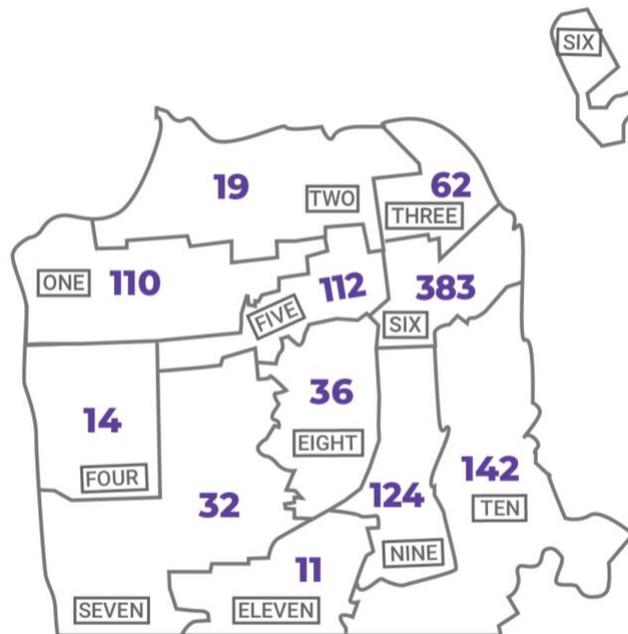
Figure 3. TRANSITIONAL-AGE YOUTH BY SHELTER STATUS



# TOTAL NUMBER OF UNSHELTERED AND SHELTERED YOUNG PERSONS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS BY DISTRICT

While the general Point-in-Time Count effort covers the entire City, the supplemental youth count focuses on specific neighborhoods of San Francisco where homeless youth are known to congregate. These areas were identified by youth with current or recent experience of homelessness and by knowledgeable youth service providers. While the supplemental youth count focused on districts 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and Golden Gate Park, Buena Vista Park, Ocean Beach, Lake Merced and Park Merced/Lakeside, homeless youth were identified in all districts. Of 902 unsheltered youth counted in 2022, the supplemental youth count identified 210 youth.

Figure 4. NUMBER OF UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN AND TRANSITIONAL-AGE YOUTH BY DISTRICT



Note: An additional 28 sheltered youth were residing in confidential or scattered site sheltered locations in San Francisco on the night of the Point-in-Time Count.

Note: The map displays data per 2012 Supervisorial District lines.

The table below displays data on all unaccompanied children and transitional-age youth counted across both the general street count and youth count efforts. The largest number of unaccompanied children and transitional-age youth were identified in District 6, followed by Districts 10 and 9.

Figure 5. TOTAL UNSHELTERED AND SHELTERED SAN FRANCISCO POINT-IN-TIME COUNT UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH UNDER 25 POPULATION BY DISTRICT

District	2017 Unaccompanied Youth	2019 Unaccompanied Youth	2022 Unaccompanied Youth
1	35	28	110
2*	5	32	19
3*	30	49	62
4*	7	8	14
5*	67	66	112
6*	437	439	383
7*	7	9	32
8*	87	129	36
9*	96	67	124
10*	359	253	142
11	6	23	11
Confidential/ Scattered Site Locations in San Francisco	6	6	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,274</b>	<b>1,145</b>	<b>1,073</b>

\* Denotes areas where the 2022 supplemental youth count took place.

Note: The table displays data per 2012 Supervisorial District lines.

Note: All of Golden Gate Park is included in the District 1 reporting for 2017 and 2019.

Figure 6. TOTAL UNSHELTERED YOUTH HOMELESS POPULATION IN GOLDEN GATE PARK, 2017-2022

	2017 Unaccompanied Youth	2019 Unaccompanied Youth	2022 Unaccompanied Youth
<b>Golden Gate Park</b>	132	36	91

# YOUTH SURVEY FINDINGS

This section provides an overview of the findings generated from the youth survey component of the 2022 San Francisco Homeless Youth Point-in-Time Count and Survey. Surveys were administered between March 4 and March 25, 2022 to a randomized sample of individuals experiencing homelessness. This effort resulted in 159 complete and unique surveys, a subset of the total 768 general surveys conducted with people experiencing homelessness in San Francisco.

Based on a Point-in-Time Count of 1,073 young persons experiencing homelessness, with a randomized survey sampling process, these 159 valid surveys represent a confidence interval of +/- 7.8% with a 95% confidence level when generalizing the results of the survey to the estimated population of young people experiencing homelessness in San Francisco. In other words, if the survey were conducted again, we can be 95% confident that the results would be within 7.8 percentage points of the current results. For the sheltered population, data from direct surveys to homelessness providers and data from San Francisco's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) were combined to meet the HUD reporting requirements of the sheltered population. The count, demographic information and household compositions of unsheltered persons were primarily reported from survey data and basic observational data.

To respect respondent privacy and to ensure the safety and comfort of those who participated, respondents were not required to answer all survey questions. Missing values are intentionally omitted from the survey analysis. Therefore, the total number of responses for each question do not always equal the total number of surveys conducted.

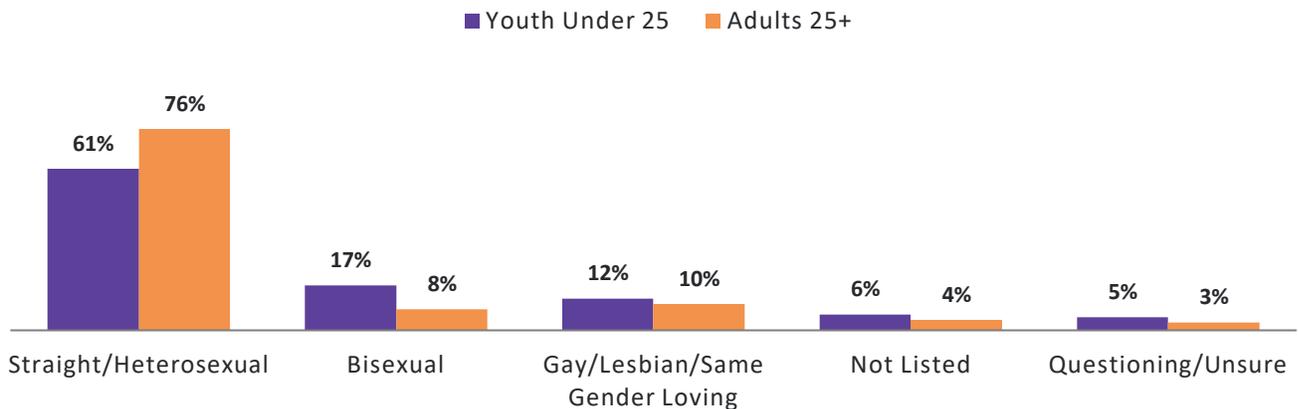
For more information regarding the survey methodology, please see *Appendix A: Methodology*.

# SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

## Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Sixty-one percent (61%) of youth respondents under the age of 25 identified as male, compared to 76% of respondents ages 25 and older. Seventeen percent (17%) identified as bisexual, and 12% as gay, lesbian, or same gender loving. Six percent (6%) identified with a sexual orientation not listed in the survey, while 5% reported that they were questioning or unsure of their sexual orientation at the time of the survey.

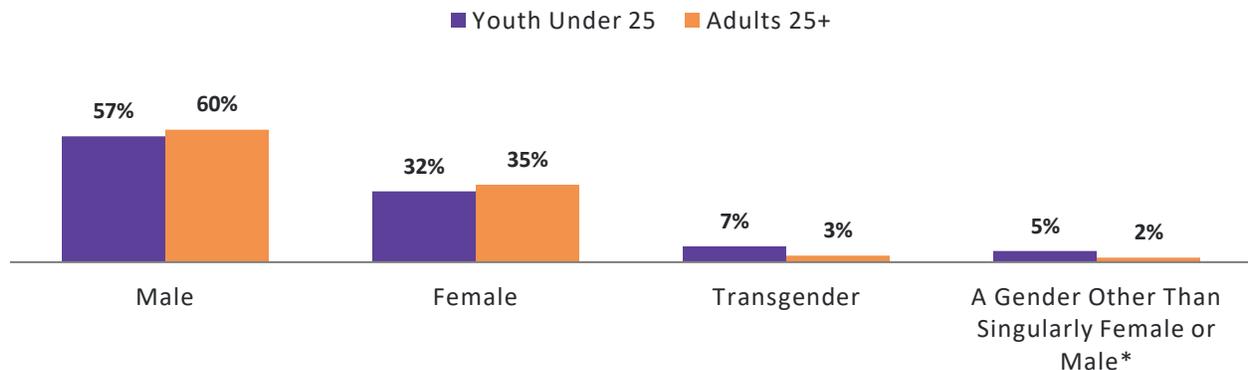
Figure 7. SEXUAL ORIENTATION



Under 25 n = 141; Over 25 n = 575  
 Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

When asked about their gender identity, the majority (57%) of youth respondents under the age of 25 identified as male, compared to 60% of respondents ages 25 and older. Nearly one-third (32%) identified as female, 7% as transgender, and 5% as a gender other than singularly female or male (e.g., non-binary, gender fluid, agender, culturally specific gender). Youth survey respondents were more likely to identify as transgender or a gender other than singularly male or female than adult survey respondents.

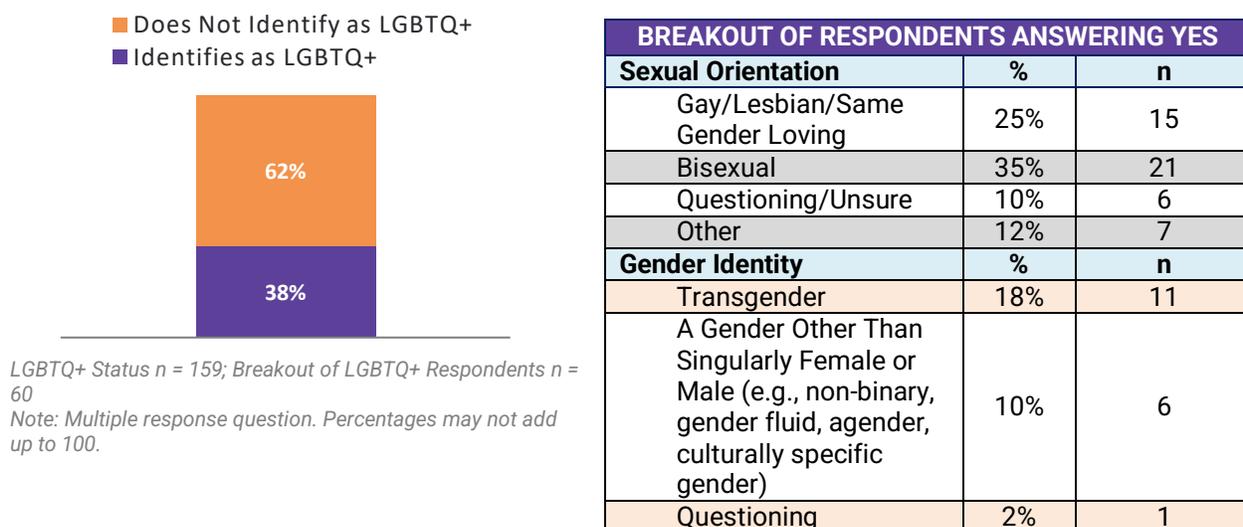
Figure 8. GENDER IDENTITY



Under 25 n = 138; Over 25 n = 590  
 \*(e.g., non-binary, gender fluid, agender, culturally specific gender)  
 Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100.

Available survey data reveal that young people who identify as LGBTQ+ represent up to 40% of the approximately 4.2 million youth and young adults experiencing homelessness in the United States. LGBTQ+ young people also face higher levels of adversity than their non-LGBTQ+ peers, including discrimination and physical violence.<sup>5</sup> Thirty-eight percent (38%) of youth survey respondents in San Francisco identified as LGBTQ+, compared to 26% of the adult population. Among youth survey respondents identifying as LGBTQ+, 35% identified as bisexual; 25% as gay, lesbian, or same gender loving; 18% as transgender; 10% as questioning or unsure; 10% as a gender other than singularly female or male (e.g., non-binary, gender fluid, agender, culturally specific gender); and 2% as questioning.

Figure 9. SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY

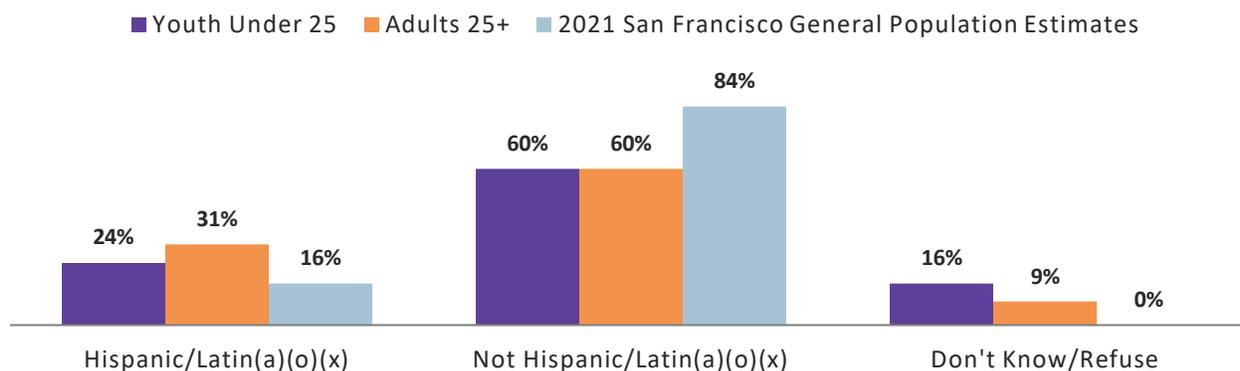


<sup>5</sup> Morton, M.H., Samuels, G. M., Dworsky, A., & Patel, S. (2018). Missed Opportunities: LGBTQ Youth Homelessness in America. Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.

## Ethnicity and Race

Similar to the U.S. Census, HUD gathers data on race and ethnicity via two separate questions. Though a lesser percent (24%) of youth survey respondents identified as Hispanic or Latin(a)(o)(x), compared to respondents 25 years and older (31%), Hispanics/Latin(a)(o)(x) are still overrepresented among homeless youth respondents when compared to the general population of San Francisco (16%)<sup>6</sup>.

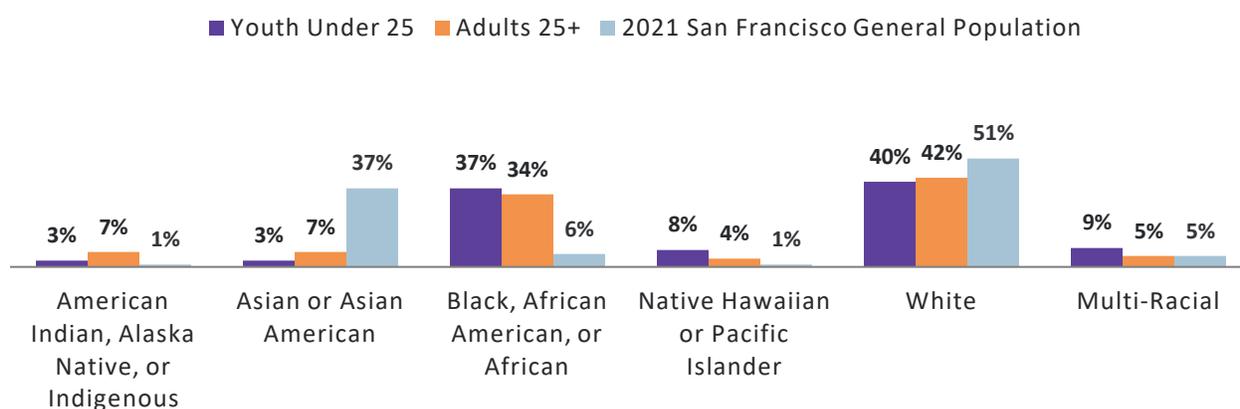
Figure 10. HISPANIC OR LATIN(A)(O)(X) ETHNICITY



Under 25 n = 131; Over 25 n = 472

When asked about their racial identity, greater differences emerged between young people experiencing homelessness in San Francisco and the city's population estimates from the U.S. Census.<sup>7</sup> A much higher proportion of youth survey respondents identified as Black, African American, or African (37% compared to 6%), a much lower proportion of survey respondents identified as Asian or Asian American (3% compared to 37%), and a lower percentage identified as White (40% compared to 51%). Most youth survey respondents identified as either White (40%) or Black, African American, or African (37%).

Figure 11. POPULATION BY RACE AND AGE



Under 25 n = 117; Over 25 n = 496

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

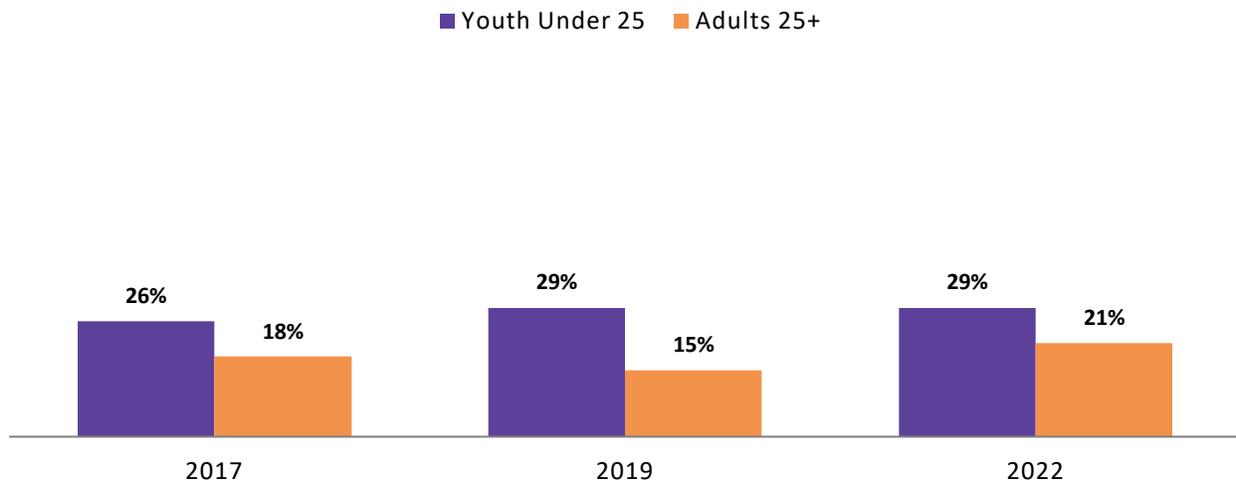
<sup>6</sup> United States Census Bureau. (2022). Population Estimates, July 1, 2021 – San Francisco, CA. Quick Facts.

<sup>7</sup> United States Census Bureau. (2022). Population Estimates, July 1, 2021 – San Francisco, CA. Quick Facts.

## History of Foster Care

Estimates indicated that an average of one in four youth in foster care will experience homelessness within four years of exiting the foster care system.<sup>8</sup> In 2022, 29% of youth respondents reported a history of foster care. Eight percent (8%) of youth with a history of foster care reported living in foster care immediately before becoming homeless and 3% reported aging out of foster care as the primary cause of their homelessness. While respondents were not asked where they were living while they were in care, 65% of youth with a foster care history reported living in San Francisco at the time they became homeless.

Figure 12. EXPERIENCE WITH FOSTER CARE



2017 Under 25 n = 208; 2017 Over 25 n = 817; 2019 Under 25 n = 180; 2019 Over 25 n = 805; 2022 Under 25 n = 130; 2022 Over 25 n = 565

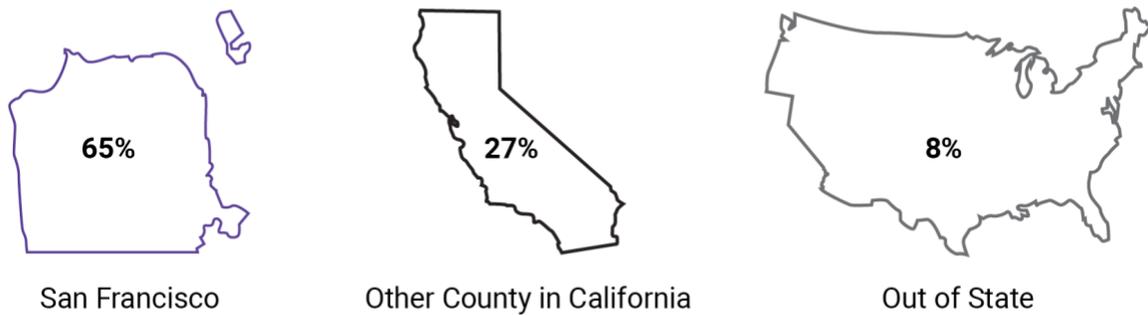
<sup>8</sup> Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System. (2015). The Facts of Foster Care. Retrieved from <https://www.fosterclub.com/article/statistics-foster-care>

# LIVING ACCOMMODATIONS

## Place of Residence

A majority (65%) of youth survey respondents reported living in San Francisco at the time they most recently became homeless. Twenty-seven (27%) reported moving to San Francisco from another county within California, including Alameda (9%) and Marin (5%) counties. Eight percent (8%) moved to San Francisco from out of state, compared to 3% of respondents ages 25 and older. Sixty-one percent (61%) reported living in San Francisco all year long.

Figure 13. PLACE OF RESIDENCE AT TIME OF HOUSING LOSS



*n* = 130

## Prior Living Arrangements

The type of living arrangements maintained by youth before experiencing homelessness provides a look into what types of prevention and intervention services might be offered to help young people maintain their housing. Thirty-one percent (31%) of youth respondents reported living with a friend prior to experiencing homelessness. Twenty-three percent (23%) reported living with both parents; 17% lived with a single mother and 7% with a single father. Five percent (5%) of respondents reported they were living with other family members prior to experiencing homelessness, while 4% were living with roommates, 3% with a foster family, 3% in a group home, 1% with a stepparent, and 1% in juvenile hall or other institution.

# EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

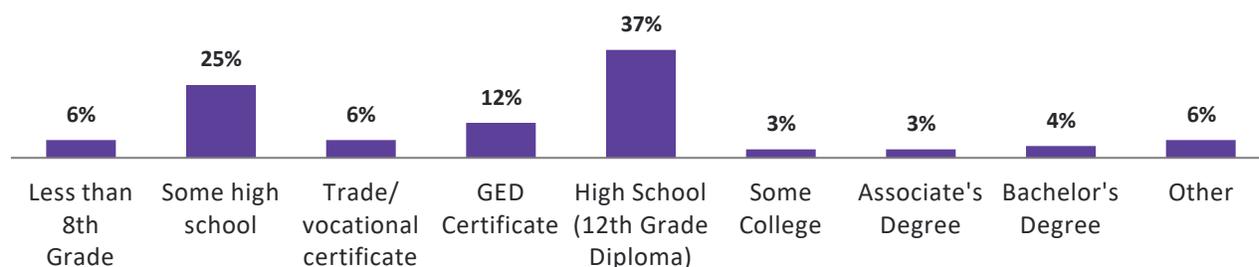
## Educational Attainment of Unaccompanied Children and Transitional-Age Youth

Nationally in 2020, 14% of students reported experiencing homelessness in the past year and 48% reported experiencing housing insecurity.<sup>9</sup> As of October 2021, 171,714 students in California schools were experiencing homelessness or lacked an adequate nighttime residence.<sup>10</sup>

While the majority of youth respondents in this survey were over the age of 18, thirty percent (30%) had not completed high school or received a GED compared to 5% of the general population of youth 18 to 24 in San Francisco.<sup>11</sup> Forty-nine percent (49%) of youth respondents reported completing high school or receiving their GED, 3% attained an associate's degree, and 4% completed college. Forty-five percent (45%) of youth reported being currently enrolled in some form of education or vocation program.

It is important to note that many youth who are sleeping outside are attending school. Among 72 youth respondents who were enrolled in some form of education or vocation program, ninety percent (90%) were unsheltered.

Figure 14. EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT



*n* = 106

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

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Note: Data is collected according to the McKinney-Vento Law definition of homeless children and youth, which includes families doubled-up, youth staying with friends or family, and those living in substandard housing.

<sup>9</sup> The Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice. (2022). #RealCollege2021: Basic Needs Insecurity During the Ongoing Pandemic. Retrieved from <https://hope4college.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/RCReport2021.pdf>

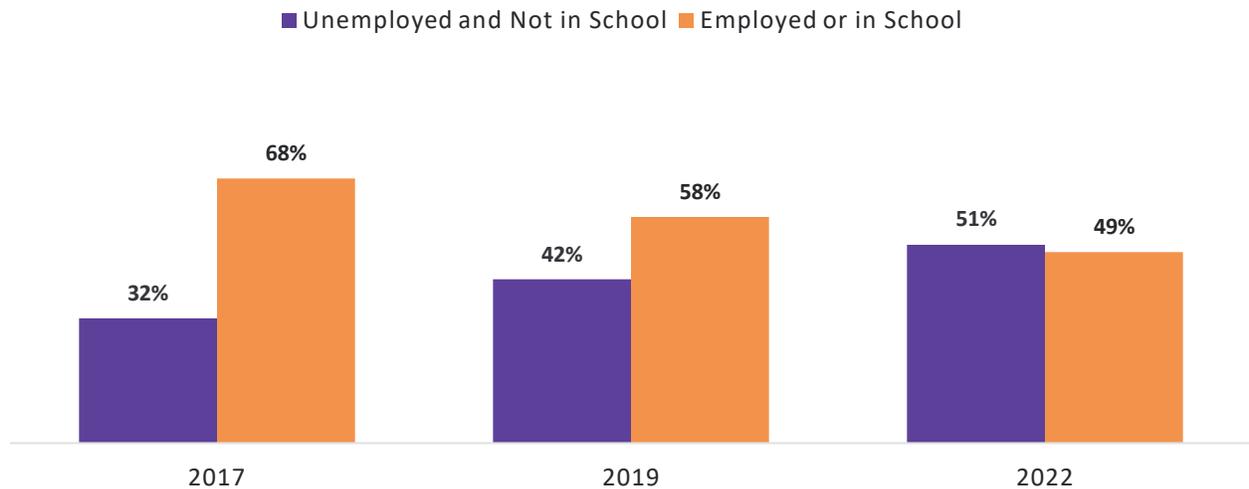
<sup>10</sup> California Department of Education. (2022). Homeless Youth in California Schools. Retrieved from <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sg/homelessyouth.asp>

<sup>11</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). 2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

## Employment

Youth experiencing homelessness are disadvantaged in seeking and obtaining employment due to multiple and overlapping barriers, including being disconnected from educational and vocational settings and not having had the opportunity to gain job skills and training.<sup>12</sup> Nearly half (49%) of youth respondents reported currently being enrolled in some sort of education or vocation program, or having a job, paid internship, or other type of employment.

Figure 15. EMPLOYMENT STATUS



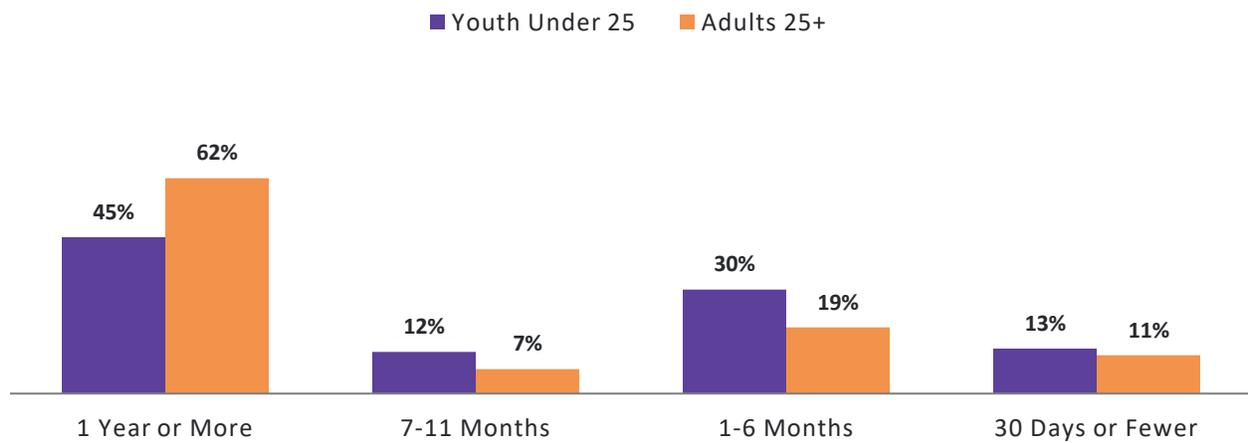
2017 n = 173; 2019 n = 184; 2022 n = 155

<sup>12</sup>Slesnick, N., Zhang, J., and Yilmazer, T. (2018). Employment and Other Income Sources Among Homeless Youth. *The Journal of Primary Prevention*, 39(3), 247-262

# DURATION AND RECURRENCE OF HOMELESSNESS

Unstable living conditions, poverty, housing scarcity, and many other issues lead to individuals falling in and out of homelessness. For many youth, the experience of homelessness is part of a long and recurring history of housing instability. Despite their young age, 81% of youth respondents reported experiencing multiple episodes of homelessness. Nineteen percent (19%) of youth respondents reported experiencing homelessness for the first time, compared to 24% of adult respondents. Forty-five percent (45%) of youth reported their current episode of homelessness has lasted at least one year.

Figure 16. LENGTH OF CURRENT EPISODE OF HOMELESSNESS



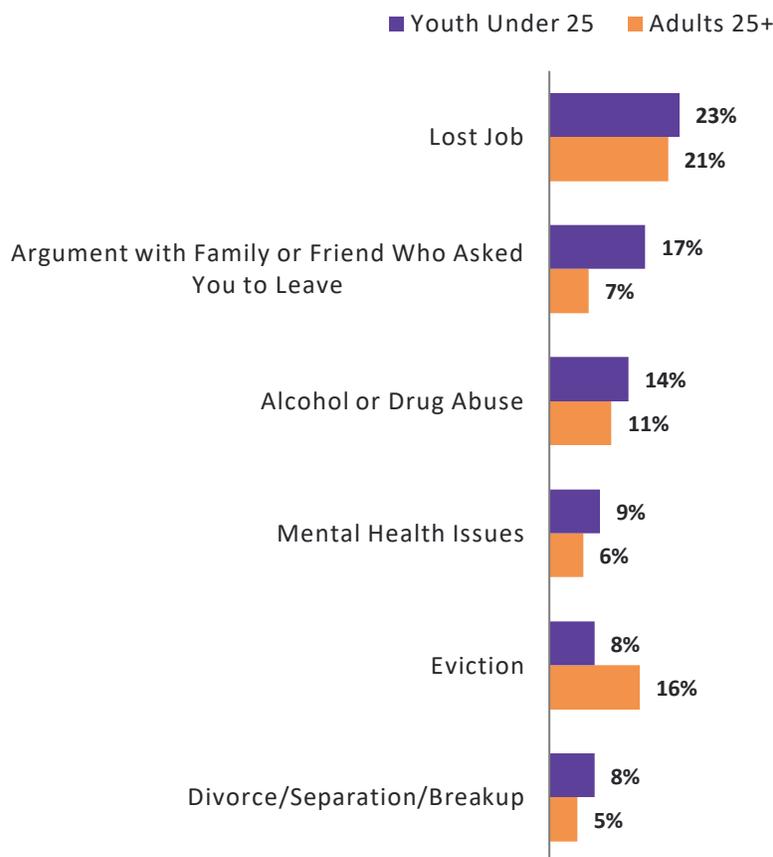
Under 25 n = 139; Over 25 n = 568  
Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

# PRIMARY CAUSE OF HOMELESSNESS

Youth survey respondents had a few notable differences in the rates at which they identified causes of homelessness compared to respondents ages 25 and over. Seventeen percent (17%) of youth respondents cited an argument with a friend or family member who asked them to leave, compared to 7% of all other respondents. Youth were also slightly more likely to cite job loss (23%), alcohol or drug use (14%), mental health issues (9%), and a divorce, separation, or breakup (8%) than adult respondents. Youth were less likely to cite eviction as a cause of homelessness at a rate of 8% compared to 16% of adults 25 and over.

In an effort to better understand recent drivers of homelessness, youth survey respondents were asked an additional question to identify if the primary cause of their homelessness was related to the COVID-19 pandemic or a California wildfire. Twenty-one percent (21%) of respondents attributed their homelessness to the COVID-19 pandemic and 3% to a California wildfire.

Figure 17. PRIMARY CAUSE OF YOUTH HOMELESSNESS (TOP SIX RESPONSES)

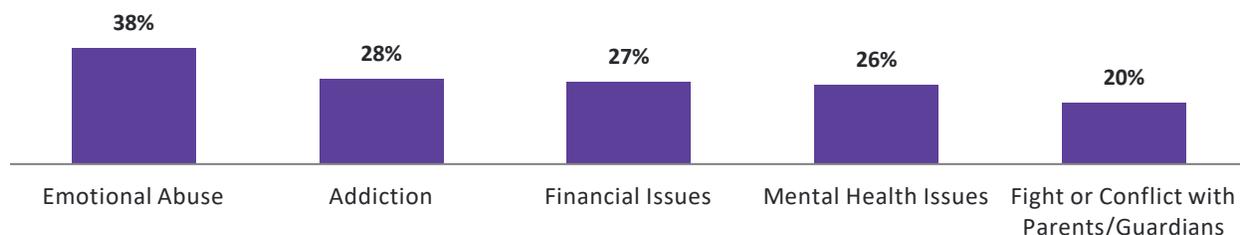


Under 25 n = 132; Over 25 n = 574

Note: Not all response options are displayed above. Survey offers 18 response options. Percentages may not add up to 100.

Additionally, youth respondents were asked to identify other factors contributing to their homelessness. Young people most frequently cited emotional abuse (38%), followed by addiction (28%), financial issues (27%), mental health issues (26%), and a fight or conflict with parents or guardians (20%).

Figure 18. CONTRIBUTING CAUSES TO YOUTH HOMELESSNESS (TOP FIVE RESPONSES)



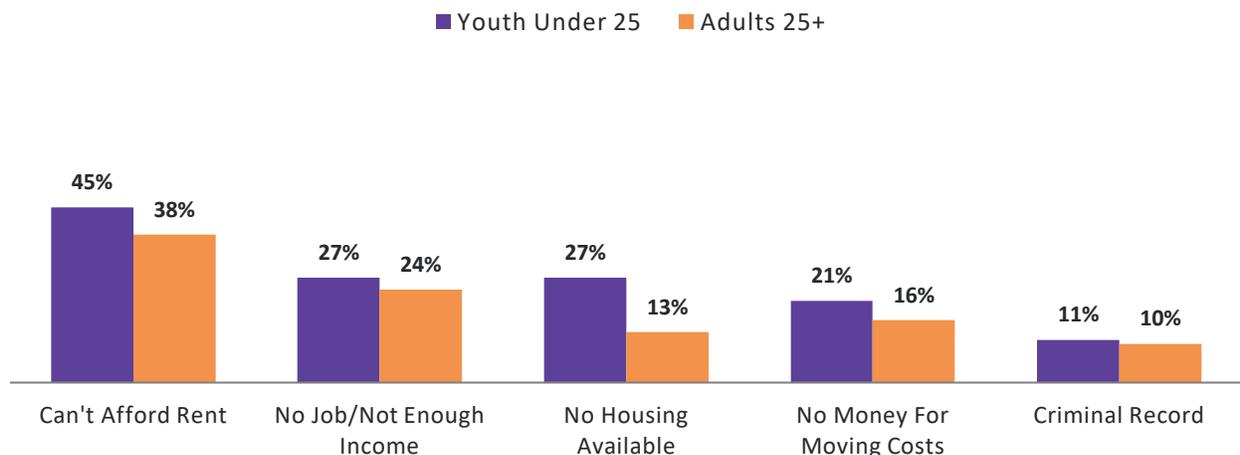
n = 115

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

### Obstacles to Obtaining Permanent Housing

Forty-six percent (46%) of youth reported no expectation of obtaining stable housing within the 12 months following the survey. When asked about barriers to permanent housing, 45% reported that they could not afford rent, followed by 27% who cited not having a job or enough income. Twenty-seven percent (27%) reported that not enough housing was available, followed by 21% who could not afford moving costs and 11% who had a criminal record.

Figure 19. OBSTACLES TO OBTAINING PERMANENT HOUSING (TOP FIVE RESPONSES)



Under 25 n = 131; Over 25 n = 558

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

# SERVICES AND ASSISTANCE

San Francisco benefits from a number of agencies dedicated to serving unaccompanied children and youth experiencing homelessness. While youth have access to services in San Francisco and many are eligible for assistance, it is young people’s perception of the service system that may matter most. If youth believe that they cannot access services or are ineligible, they will be less likely to seek assistance or support.

Twenty-three percent (23%) of youth respondents reported accessing youth specific services “often” or “always” in the 12 months prior to the survey, while 27% reported that they never accessed youth specific services.

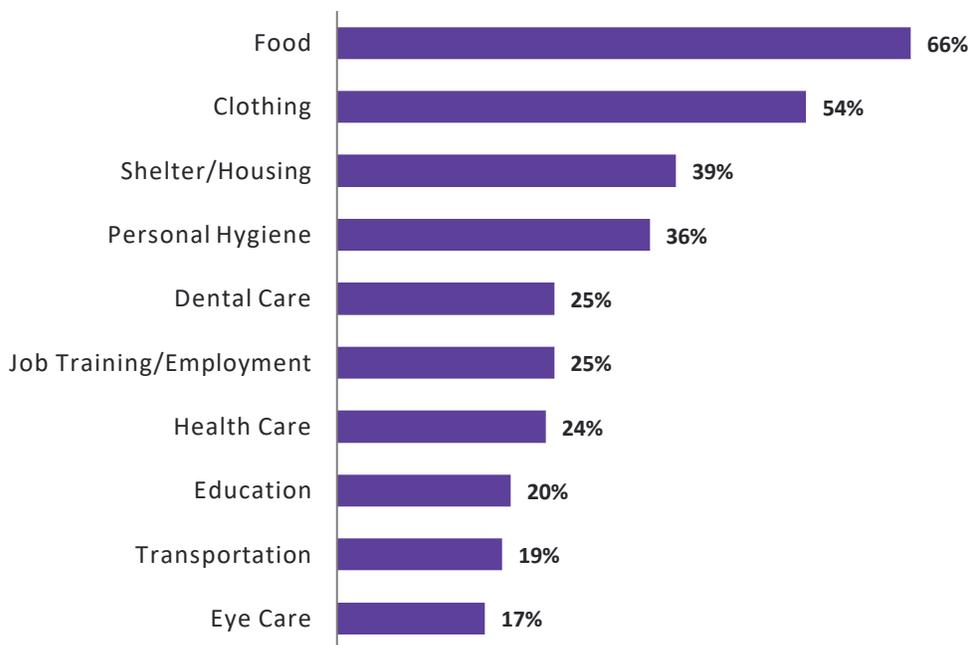
When asked about barriers encountered trying to access services and housing, 39% of youth reported a lack of an ID or personal documentation and 36% cited transportation barriers. Twenty-seven percent (27%) of youth reported that they did not know where to go for help, and 21% did not qualify for the services they wanted.



## Service Needs

Youth reported their greatest service needs were food (66%), clothing (54%), shelter or housing (39%), personal hygiene (36%), dental care (25%), and job training or employment (25%).

Figure 20. CURRENT NEEDS OF YOUTH (TOP TEN RESPONSES)



n = 118

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

## Government Assistance

Sixty-nine percent (69%) of youth reported receiving some form of government benefit, compared to 61% of adult respondents. Forty-seven percent (47%) of youth reported receiving food stamps and 19% reported receiving County Adult Assistance Program (CAAP) or General Assistance (GA) benefits.

Among those youth not receiving government benefits, 56% did not want government assistance. Seventeen percent (17%) reported not having the required identification, 14% did not think they were eligible for services, 8% reported no permanent address to use on their application, and 8% had their benefits cut off.

Figure 21. GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE RECEIVED (TOP FIVE RESPONSES EACH YEAR)

2017	%	2019	%	2022	%
Food Stamps/ SNAP/ WIC/ CalFresh	42%	Food Stamps/ SNAP/ WIC/ CalFresh	32%	Food Stamps/ SNAP/ WIC/ CalFresh	47%
General Assistance (GA)/ CAAP/ CAPI	21%	Medi-Cal/ Medicare/ Covered California	20%	General Assistance (GA)/ CAAP/ CAPI	19%
Medi-Cal/ Medicare/ Covered California	20%	General Assistance (GA)/ CAAP/ CAPI	17%	Medi-Cal/ Medicare/ Covered California	17%
SSI/ SSDI/ Disability	8%	SSI/ SSDI/ Disability	4%	SSI/ SSDI/ Disability	7%
CalWORKs/TANF	6%	Social Security	2%	Unemployment	7%
		Unemployment	2%		

2017 n = 196; 2019 n = 173; 2022 n = 122

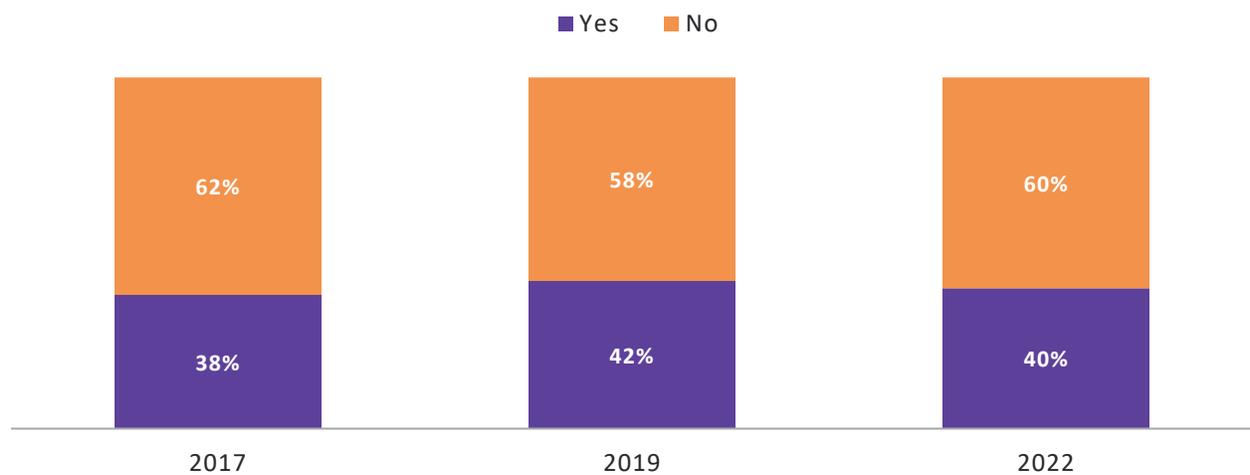
Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100.

# SOCIAL CONNECTIONS AND ASSETS

Responses to youth homelessness have continued to stress the need for connecting young people with family and community members who can support their transition into adulthood.

Twenty-eight percent (28%) of youth respondents reported trying to move back in with their parents or family members. Nine percent (9%) of youth reported being in contact with their parents or family “a couple times a year,” while 25% reported having contact at least “a few times a month.” Three percent (3%) of youth respondents reported that their parents were also currently experiencing homelessness. Forty percent (40%) of youth reported having a supportive adult in the Bay Area.

Figure 22. SUPPORTIVE ADULT IN THE BAY AREA



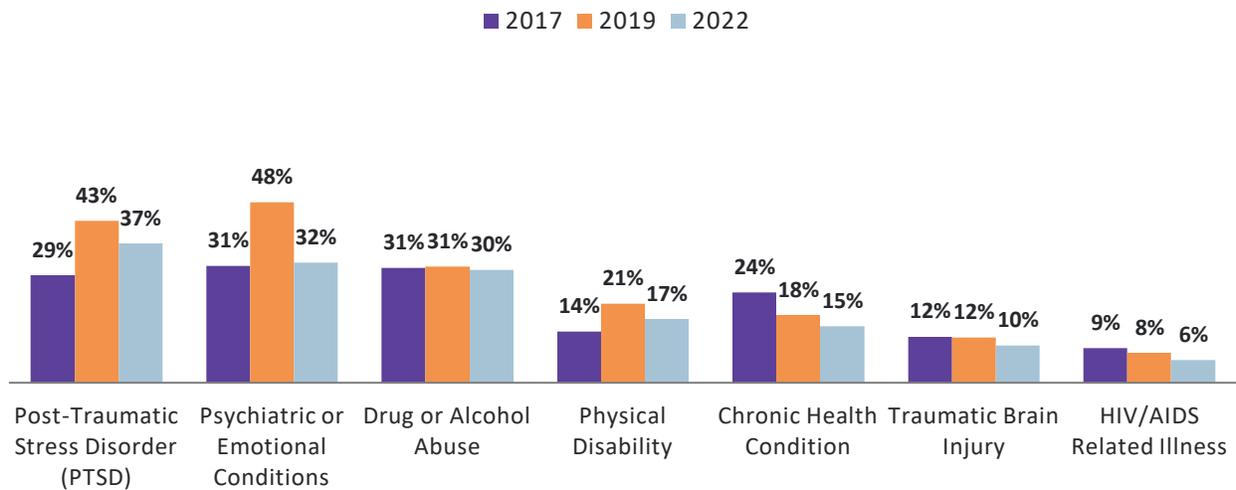
2017 n = 192; 2019 n = 176; 2022 n = 104

# HEALTH

Fifty-two percent (52%) of youth respondents rated their physical health as “good” or “very good.” Twenty percent (20%) of youth rated their physical health as “poor” or “very poor.”

Fifty-six percent (56%) of youth reported living with one or more health conditions, including post-traumatic stress disorder (37%), psychiatric and emotional conditions (32%), and drug or alcohol use (30%). Over one-quarter (28%) of youth reported that their health condition prevented them from holding a job, living in stable housing, or taking care of themselves.

Figure 23. HEALTH CONDITIONS



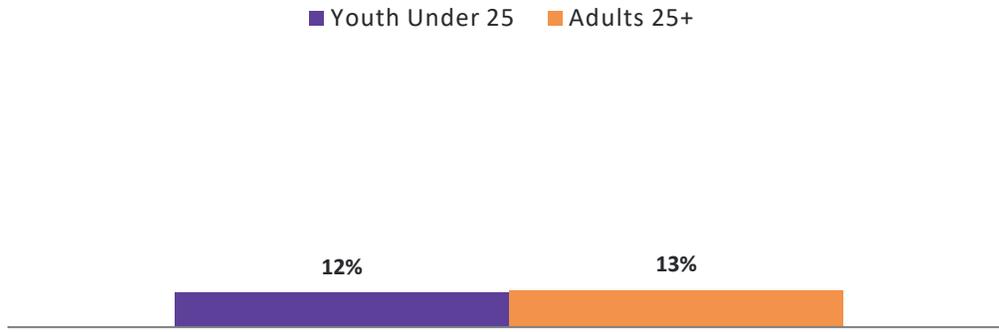
2017 n = 212-217; 2019 n = 184; 2022 n = 154-155  
 Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100.

# CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Due to their experiences on the street, youth experiencing homelessness often interact with law enforcement more frequently than the general population. Some youth experiencing homelessness are involved in the criminal justice system, which creates barriers to employment and housing and places them at greater risk of homelessness.

One-quarter (25%) of youth reported involvement with the justice system before turning 18, and 10% were on probation or parole at the time they most recently became homeless. Twelve percent (12%) reported being on probation or parole at the time of the survey. Three percent (3%) cited incarceration or probation and parole restrictions as the primary cause of their homelessness and 11% reported their criminal record was preventing them from obtaining permanent housing, compared to 7% and 10% of all other survey respondents, respectively.

Figure 24. CURRENTLY ON PROBATION OR PAROLE



*Under 25 n = 119; Over 25 n = 550*

# SAFETY AND WELL-BEING

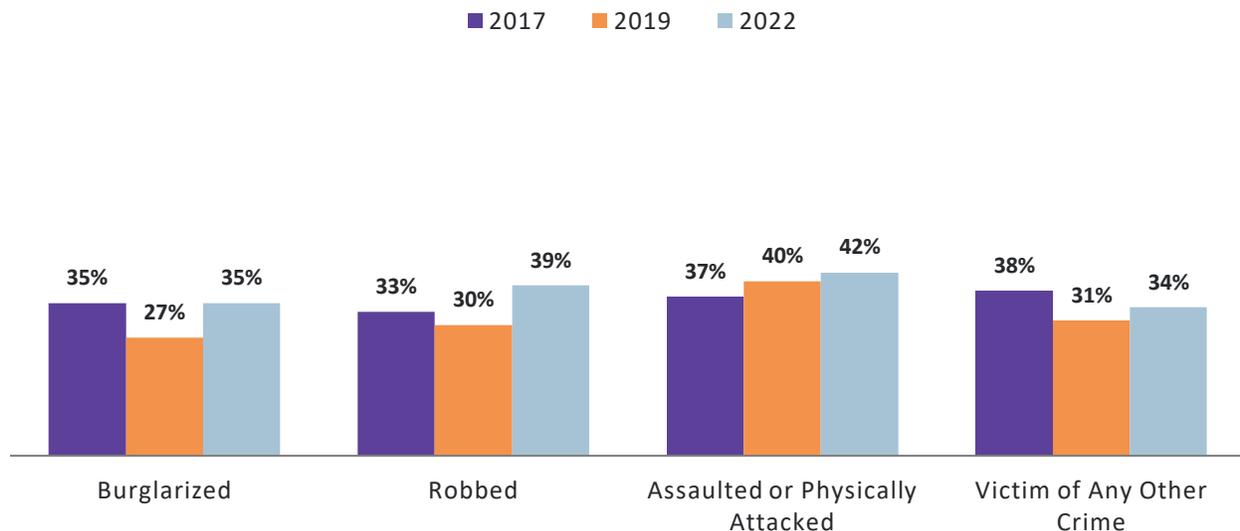
## Victimization

National research suggests that youth experiencing homelessness are more likely to be the victims than perpetrators of crime.<sup>13</sup> In San Francisco, over one-third (38%) of youth respondents reported feeling “a little unsafe” or “very unsafe” in their current living situation, compared to 52% of youth respondents in 2019.

In addition to feeling unsafe, 48% of youth reported their safety had been threatened at least once in the 30 days prior to the survey. Forty-two percent (42%) of youth reported they had been assaulted or physically attacked in the year prior to the survey.

Youth experiencing homelessness are at increased risk of exploitation, including trading sex or drugs for basic needs. National research has shown that an estimated 60% of commercially sexually exploited children (CSEC) are homeless.<sup>14</sup> In San Francisco in 2022, one-third (33%) of youth respondents reported trading drugs for a place to stay, similar to 34% in 2019.

Figure 25. EXPERIENCES WITH CRIME IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS



2017 n = 180-185; 2019 n = 174-176; 2022 n = 101-104  
Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100.

<sup>13</sup>Gaetz, S. (2004). Safe Streets for Whom? Homeless Youth, Social Exclusion, and Criminal Victimization. Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice. University of Toronto Press. 46, 4, 423:456.

<sup>14</sup>Gaetz, S. (2004). Safe Streets for Whom? Homeless Youth, Social Exclusion, and Criminal Victimization. Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice. University of Toronto Press. 46, 4, 423:456.

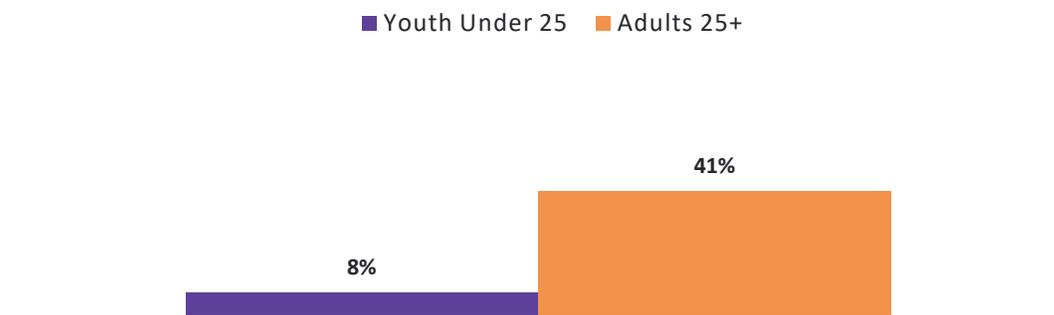
# CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

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

In 2022, eight percent (8%) of unaccompanied youth were experiencing chronic homelessness in San Francisco compared to 41% of single adults ages 25 and older. Unaccompanied youth experiencing chronic homelessness identified as White at a much higher rate than unaccompanied youth experiencing non-chronic homelessness. While chronically homeless youth identified as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander at a similar rate when compared to non-chronically homeless youth, they identified as Black, African American, or African at a lower rate (13% compared to 41%).

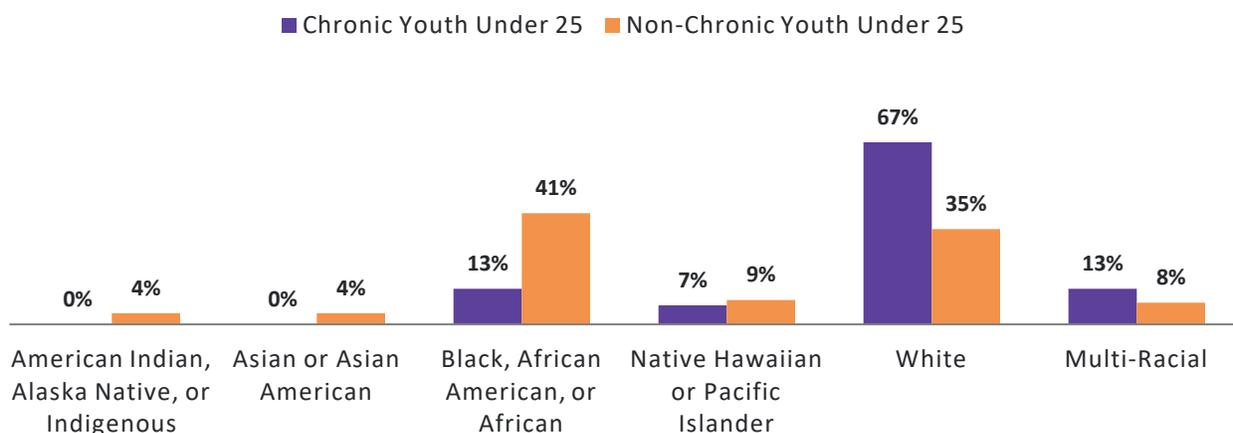
Fifty percent (50%) of young people experiencing chronic homelessness identified as LGBTQ+, compared to 37% of youth survey respondents who were not experiencing chronic homelessness. Over one-third (38%) of chronically homeless youth identified as bisexual and one-quarter (25%) identified as another sexual orientation.

Figure 26. PREVALENCE OF CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS



Under 25 n = 1,452; Over 25 n = 6,302

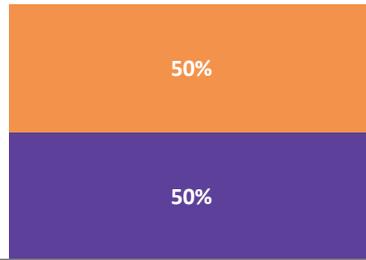
Figure 27. CHRONICALLY HOMELESS YOUTH BY RACE



Chronic Youth Under 25 n = 15; Non-Chronic Youth Under 25 n = 105  
 Notes: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Figure 28. LGBTQ+ IDENTITY AMONG CHRONICALLY HOMELESS YOUTH

■ Identifies as LGBTQ+      ■ Does Not Identify as LGBTQ+



Chronic Youth Under 25 n = 18

# APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY

## OVERVIEW

The purpose of the 2022 San Francisco Homeless Youth Point-in-Time Count and Survey was to produce a point-in-time estimate of unaccompanied young people under the age of 25 experiencing homelessness in San Francisco. The results of the general street count and youth street count were combined with the results from the shelter count to produce the total estimated number of unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness in San Francisco on a given night, using the HUD definition of homelessness for the Point-in-Time Count. The subsequent, in-depth qualitative survey was used to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the experiences and demographics of those counted. A more detailed description of the Homeless Youth Point-in-Time Count and Survey methodology follows.

For additional information regarding the general street count, during which youth were also enumerated, please refer to the *2022 San Francisco Homeless Point-in-Time Count and Survey Comprehensive Report*.

### Components of the Homeless Youth Census and Survey

The methodology used in the 2022 Youth Point-in-Time Count and Survey had three primary components:

- **Targeted Street Count of Unaccompanied Youth and Young Adults:** A nighttime count of unsheltered unaccompanied youth under 18 and young adults 18-24 years old on February 23, 2022 between the hours of 8:00 p.m. and midnight, and at Golden Gate Park, Buena Vista Park, Ocean Beach, Lake Merced and Park Merced/Lakeside between 7:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. on the morning of February 23. This was led by special youth teams who canvassed specific areas where unaccompanied children and youth were known to congregate. Upon completion, data from this targeted count was carefully reviewed against the results from the general street count to ensure that any possible duplicate counts were removed.
- **General Shelter Count:** A count of homeless individuals and families staying at publicly and privately operated shelters on the night of February 23, 2022. This included youth staying in emergency shelters, transitional housing, and domestic violence shelters. Shelter-in-Place (SIP) hotel and trailer sites launched as part of San Francisco's COVID-19 response were included.
- **Homeless Survey:** An in-person interview with 159 unique sheltered and unsheltered unaccompanied youth conducted by youth outreach surveyors between March 4 and March 25, 2022 throughout San Francisco. Data from the survey were used to refine the Point-in-Time Census youth estimates, and then used to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the demographics and experiences of unaccompanied youth.

### The Planning Process

To ensure the success and integrity of the count, many City departments and community agencies collaborated on community outreach, volunteer recruitment, logistical plans, methodological decisions, and interagency coordination efforts. ASR provided technical assistance for these aspects of the planning process. ASR has over 23 years of experience conducting homeless counts and surveys throughout California and across the nation. Their work is featured as a best practice in the HUD

publication, *A Guide to Counting Unsheltered Homeless People*, as well as in the Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago publication, *Conducting a Youth Count: A Toolkit*.

## Community Involvement

Local homeless and housing service providers and advocates were valued partners in the planning and implementation of this count. The Local Homeless Coordinating Board (LHCB), the lead entity of San Francisco's Continuum of Care, was invited to comment on the methodology and subsequently approved it. The planning team was comprised of staff from the HSH and consultants from ASR. Throughout the planning process, the planning team also requested the collaboration, cooperation, and participation of several government agencies and nonprofit providers that regularly interact with homeless youth and possess considerable expertise relevant to the youth count. Young people with lived experience of homelessness also served as collaborators during the planning process.

## COVID-19 Adjustments

The planning team remained in close consultation with the San Francisco Department of Public Health and monitored guidance from HUD and the CDC throughout the PIT youth count planning process in order to prioritize the safety of young people experiencing homelessness, staff, and volunteers during the continued COVID-19 pandemic. HSH further coordinated with other Bay Area CoCs to develop and follow best practices to ensure both a safe and accurate count. Several adjustments were made, and new protocols adopted to adapt to the new circumstances.

In prior PIT count years, the street count was conducted primarily by hundreds of volunteers from the general public. PIT count teams were often assigned on-site during an in-person kick-off training on the night of the count. In 2022, the planning team made the decision, in consultation with the San Francisco Department of Public Health, to minimize the risks of COVID-19 transmission by limiting the team size and number of enumerators used. Teams were also asked to self-identify teammates they would work in close contact with to reduce interaction across households.

Additionally, a strategic goal of HSH and the LHCB was to integrate more skilled homeless outreach workers and more persons with lived experience of homelessness into the street count effort. The planning team worked with the City and County of San Francisco and various nonprofit outreach partners to recruit homeless outreach workers as enumerators. People with lived experience were also recruited by outreach workers to join their enumeration teams and received a financial incentive for their participation. This led to a significantly higher rate of skilled and experienced enumerators who were able to canvas the city with fewer participants. A small number of volunteer teams were recruited from the general public, including city staff, to ensure full coverage.

Participation standards stipulated COVID-19 vaccination though proof was not mandated. Local department and agency public health and safety guidelines were followed, and health and safety protocols were distributed to all enumerators and surveyors in advance as part of their training materials. Masks and other PPE were required and made available for all enumerators, surveyors, and survey participants. Finally, in order to reduce the need for physical interaction between participants, a mobile application was used (see "Methodological Improvements" below) to replace paper tally sheets, trainings were conducted virtually, and training materials were disseminated digitally.

# Youth 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.

## Goal

The goal of the 2022 dedicated youth count was to improve representation of unaccompanied homeless children and transitional-age youth under the age of 25 in the Point-in-Time Count. Many homeless children and transitional-age youth do not use homeless services, are unrecognizable to adult street count volunteers, and may be in unsheltered locations that are difficult to find. Therefore, traditional street count efforts are not as effective in reaching youth.

## Research Design

Since 2013, planning for the 2022 supplemental youth count included homeless youth service providers and youth with lived experience of homelessness. Local service providers identified locations where youth experiencing homelessness were known to congregate and recruited youth currently experiencing homelessness with knowledge of where to locate homeless youth to serve as guides for the count.

As in past counts, the locations corresponded to areas in the neighborhoods of the Haight, Mission, Tenderloin, Union Square, Castro, the Panhandle, Golden Gate Park, Buena Vista Park, Ocean Beach, Lake Merced, Park Merced/Lakeside areas, the Bayview, and the Embarcadero. Service providers familiar with the map areas identified in each neighborhood were asked to recruit currently homeless youth to participate in the count.

## Data Collection

Youth worked in teams of two to three, with teams coordinated by youth street outreach workers. The youth count was conducted at the same time as the general street count, from 8:00 p.m. to midnight on February 23, 2022. Golden Gate Park, Buena Vista Park, Ocean Beach, Lake Merced, and Park Merced/Lakeside were also covered by youth count teams between 7:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. on February 23.

## Street Count De-Duplication

Data from the supplemental youth count and general street count were compared and de-duplicated by examining location, gender, and age.

## Enumeration Team Recruitment and Training

As noted above, there was a planned effort to reduce the number of persons directly involved in field work and outreach in the 2022 PIT count due to COVID-19 safety concerns. In 2022, Homeless Youth Alliance, Larkin Street Youth Services, San Francisco LGBT Community Center, and the Third Street Youth Center and Clinic recruited approximately 50 youth to work as peer enumerators, counting youth experiencing homelessness in the identified areas of San Francisco on February 23, 2022.

Youth outreach and program staff did limited recruitment of persons with lived experience to act as guides for the count in 2022. Guides experiencing homelessness were paid \$20 for online training as well as \$20 per hour worked on the day 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; and
- other tips to help ensure an accurate and safe count.

### **Safety Precautions**

Every effort was made to minimize potentially hazardous situations. Parks considered too big or densely wooded to inspect safely and accurately in the dark on the night of the count were enumerated by dedicated youth outreach teams on the morning of February 23, including Golden Gate Park, Buena Vista Park, Ocean Beach, Lake Merced and Park Merced/Lakeside. The majority of parks, however, were deemed safe and counted on the night of the count. Law enforcement agencies were notified of pending street count activity in their jurisdictions. In census tracts with a high concentration of homeless encampments, specialized teams with knowledge of those encampments were identified and assigned to those areas. Enumeration teams were advised to take every safety precaution possible, including bringing flashlights and maintaining a respectful distance from those they were counting.

### **Logistics of Enumeration**

On the morning of the street count, teams of two persons and no more than three people were created to enumerate designated areas of San Francisco for the street count. Each team had a lead and were provided with their assigned census tract maps, smart phone access information and training, field observation tips and guidelines, including vehicle identification criteria. Teams were all assigned a unique team number and were instructed to text a central PIT count dispatch center to confirm they were on route and on task for enumeration of their route assignments.

All accessible streets, roads, parks, and highways in the enumerated routes were traversed by foot or car. The San Francisco Survey 123 smartphone app was used to record the number of homeless persons observed in addition to basic demographic and location information. Dispatch center staff also verified that teams had started their route assignments and checked out as soon as their routes were completed, and all data had been entered in the Survey 123 smartphone app. Teams covered the entirety of their assigned areas.

### **Methodological Improvements**

In 2022, a significant change was made in the transition from paper tally sheets to a mobile application to complete the general street count and youth street count. Enumerators used GPS-enabled smartphones to submit data in a mobile application called ESRI Survey 123 developed and customized by ASR. This new process limited the need to exchange physical materials, met HUD's data collection requirements, and met HUD's COVID-19 safety recommendation.

## Point-in-Time Challenges and Limitations

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

Youth in particular are among the most difficult to identify during homeless enumerations. It can be challenging to visually identify the age of unsheltered homeless persons and accurately distinguish between adults, transitional-age youth, and minors. For this reason, it is critical to leverage the expertise of homeless youth providers and lived experience guides when conducting the count.

For a variety of reasons, young people experiencing homelessness generally do not wish to be seen and make concerted efforts to avoid detection. Regardless of how successful outreach efforts are, an undercount of youth experiencing homelessness will inevitably result. The methods employed in a non-intrusive visual homeless enumeration, while academically sound, have inherent biases and shortcomings. Even with the assistance of dedicated homeless service providers, the methodology cannot guarantee 100% accuracy. Many factors may contribute to missed opportunities, including the difficulty in identifying and enumerating persons who may be sleeping in vans, cars, recreational vehicles, abandoned buildings, or structures unfit for human habitation.

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

# SHELTER COUNT METHODOLOGY

## Goal

The goal of the shelter count is to gain an accurate count of youth temporarily housed in shelters and other institutions across San Francisco. These data are vital to gaining an accurate, overall count of the homeless population and understanding where youth experiencing homelessness receive shelter.

## Definition

For the purposes of this study, the HUD definition of sheltered homelessness for Point-in-Time Counts was used. This definition includes youth living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelters designated to provide temporary living arrangement, such as emergency shelters, transitional housing, or Safe Haven facilities.

## Research Design

The occupancy of emergency shelters, transitional housing programs, and safe haven programs with beds dedicated to individuals experiencing homelessness was documented for the night of February 23, 2022. Information was collected for programs operating in San Francisco and reportable per HUD guidance. Data was collected on household type, age, gender, race and ethnicity, veteran status, chronic status, and if individuals had certain health conditions.

## Data Collection

To collect data on individuals staying in shelters, ASR worked with HSH staff. HSH collected data on all emergency shelters, transitional housing programs, and Safe Havens operating in San Francisco. Where possible, data on clients served in temporary housing situations was pulled from HSH’s administrative

data systems: the Online Navigation and Entry (ONE) System, San Francisco’s HUD-compliant Homeless Management Information System (HMIS); and the SF COVID-19 Placement Tool, a database developed by RTZ Systems for SIP hotel shelter bed management.

Shelter programs that do not maintain client enrollment data in either the ONE system or the SF COVID-19 Placement Tool were asked to submit data. A dedicated staff person from each facility submitted their data for clients served on the night of February 23, 2022, via a web-based Shelter Count Survey administered by HSH. A designated staff person provided the count for each of these facilities; clients were not interviewed. For these programs, all persons experiencing homelessness were included in the Point-in-Time Count per HUD reporting requirements.

## SURVEY METHODOLOGY

### Planning and Implementation

The data collected through the survey 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, duration and recurrence of homelessness, nighttime accommodations, causes of homelessness, and access to services through open-ended, closed-ended, and multiple response questions. The survey data bring greater perspective to current issues of homelessness and to the provision and delivery of services.

Surveys were conducted by peer survey workers with lived homeless experience who were referred by local service providers. Training sessions were facilitated by ASR 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. In 2022, training materials and instructions included health and safety protocols to limit the risk of COVID-19 transmission, and face masks and hand sanitizers were provided to survey workers and surveyors as needed. Survey workers were compensated at a rate of \$10 per completed survey.

Consistent with prior years, 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. Socks and in some cases McDonalds gift certificates were provided as an incentive for participating in the 2022 Homeless Survey. The socks and 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 1,073 unaccompanied homeless children and transitional-age youth, with a randomized survey sampling process, the 159 valid surveys represented a confidence interval of +/- 7.8% with a 95% confidence level when generalizing the results of the survey to the estimated population of unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness in San Francisco.

The 2022 survey was administered in shelters, transitional housing facilities, 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. The planning team worked closely with local service providers to identify their places of expertise and had survey locations correspond to the neighborhoods of peer survey workers.

As in past counts, the locations corresponded to areas in the neighborhoods of the Haight, Mission, Tenderloin, Union Square, Castro, the Panhandle, Golden Gate Park, Buena Vista Park, Ocean Beach,

Lake Merced, Park Merced/Lakeside areas, the Bayview, and the Embarcadero. Service providers familiar with the map areas identified in each neighborhood were asked to recruit currently homeless youth to participate in the count. This was especially successful this year with the greater number of lived experience surveyors that were employed in 2022.

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. This left 159 valid youth surveys for analysis. Due to the sensitive nature of the survey, respondents were not required to answer every survey question, and respondents were asked to skip questions that were not applicable. For this reason, the number of respondents for each survey question may not total 159.

## Survey Methodology Changes

To align with the new HUD FY2022 HMIS data standards, the race, ethnicity, and gender questions and the response options were updated, ensuring comparability with HMIS data. The following updates were made to the Point-in-Time Count Survey:

- **Race:** Changed question to “What race or races do you identify with?” in 2022. Respondents were able to self-identify with one or more of five different racial categories – Asian or Asian American; American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous; Black, African American, or African; Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander; and White. Previous versions asked, “Which racial group do you identify with most?” and required respondents to select one answer from six options – Asian; American Indian or Alaska Native; Black or African American; Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander; White; and Other.
- **Ethnicity:** Changed question to “What ethnicity do you identify with?” in 2022. Respondents were asked to identify themselves as Hispanic/Latin(a)(o)(x) or non-Hispanic/Latin(a)(o)(x). Previous versions asked, “Are you Hispanic or Latino?”.
- **Gender:** Changed question to “What gender do you identify with?” in 2022. Respondents were able to self-identify with one or more of five different gender categories – A gender other than singularly female or male (e.g., non-binary, gender fluid, agender, culturally specific gender); female; male; transgender; and questioning. Previous versions asked, “What is your gender?”

and required respondents to select one answer from five options – female; genderqueer/gender non-binary; male; transgender; and not listed.

Additionally, in an effort to better understand recent drivers of homelessness, survey respondents were asked if the primary cause of their homelessness was related to the COVID-19 pandemic or a California wildfire.

### **Survey Challenges and Limitations**

The 2022 San Francisco Homeless Survey methodology relies heavily on self-reported data collected from peer surveyors. While self-reporting allows individuals to represent their own experiences, self-reported data are often more variable than clinically reported data. However, using a peer-to-peer interviewing methodology is believed to allow respondents to be more candid with their answers and to help reduce the uneasiness of revealing personal information. Furthermore, service providers recommended young people who would be the best suited to conducting interviews and these youth received comprehensive training about how to conduct interviews. Service providers also reviewed the surveys to ensure quality responses. Surveys that were considered incomplete or containing false responses were not accepted; the process included reviewing individual surveys submitted by surveyors and assessing patterns in survey responses for inconsistencies.

In 2022, COVID-19 presented additional challenges in recruiting and staffing survey efforts. As a result, the total number of valid survey responses collected was slightly lower than prior years. However, this only slightly reduced the margin of error of responses from +/-7% in 2019 to +/-7.8% in 2022 with a 95% confidence interval.

It is important to recognize that variations between survey years may result from shifts in the demographic profiles of surveyors and accessibility to certain populations. Survey confidence intervals presented indicate the level of variability that may occur from year to year when interpreting findings. While every effort was made to collect surveys from a random and diverse sample of sheltered and unsheltered individuals, the hard-to-reach nature of youth experiencing homelessness prevents a true random sampling. Recruitment of diverse and geographically dispersed surveyors was prioritized. However, equal survey participation across all populations may be limited by the participation and adequate representation of subpopulations in planning and implementation processes. This includes persons living in vehicles, who are historically difficult to enumerate and survey.

Consequently, survey data and data derived from survey responses may shift from year to year. It is for this reason Point-in-Time Count data should be used in conjunction with other community sources of data on youth experiencing homelessness to gather a comprehensive understanding of the community.