

EveryOne Counts

A Report on the 2015 Alameda County Point In Time Count

A Collaboration Between

EveryOne Home

And

Community Assessment, Planning, and Evaluation (CAPE) Unit
Alameda County Public Health Department
Health Care Services Agency

March 2016

Acknowledgments

This report was produced by:
The Alameda County Public Health Department
Community Assessment, Planning, and Evaluation (CAPE) Unit

Authors

Roxanna Guide
Damon Francis
Jane Martin
Kathie Barkow

Reviewers

Elaine de Coligny
Robert Ratner
Riley Wilkerson
Tracy Bennett

With input from
Lara Tannenbaum
Kristen Lee
Jennifer Vasquez

Comments and questions about the report can be directed to:

Community Assessment, Planning, and Evaluation (CAPE) Unit
Alameda County Public Health Department, Health Care Services Agency
1000 Broadway, Suite 500, Oakland, CA 94607
(510) 267-8020

Chuck McKetney
Director, CAPE

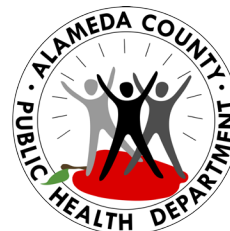
Muntu Davis, MD, MPH
Health Officer, Director, Alameda County Public Health Department

Rebecca Gebhart
Acting Director, Health Care Services Agency

Comments and questions about the work to reduce and end homelessness can be directed to:

EveryOne Home
224 W. Winton Avenue, Room 108, Hayward, CA 94544
(510) 670-5944

Elaine de Coligny
Executive Director, EveryOne Home



Introduction

EveryOne Counts is Alameda County's Point in Time Count (PITC) of persons experiencing homelessness on a single night in January. The purpose of the PITC is two-fold. First, it is federally mandated by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). HUD uses the data to allocate resources to communities around the country in order to address homelessness. Next, local governments and service providers use the PITC data to inform planning for housing and services and advocacy for policies that reduce, and end, homelessness.

HUD reporting requirements were satisfied in May 2015 with the submission of the PITC data, methodology, housing inventory, and unmet need analysis. The purpose of this report is to highlight additional information relevant to local Alameda County stakeholders and policy makers. The report contains an overview of data on both sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons. The data has also been published in the 2014 Progress Report on Ending Homelessness In Alameda County, CA, available at www.everyonehome.org.

The estimated number of sheltered and unsheltered people who were homeless in Alameda County on January 28, 2015 was 4,040, essentially unchanged from 2013 when the total was 4,264.

Methods

Definition of Homeless

This report uses the definitions of “sheltered homeless” and “unsheltered homeless” that are required by HUD for the PITC (24 CFR 578.7(c)(2)):

“Persons living in emergency shelters and transitional housing projects must be counted as sheltered homeless persons.”

“Homeless persons who are living in a place not designed or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for humans must be counted as unsheltered homeless persons.”

The HUD definition of homeless is narrower than some other definitions. For example, the United States Department of Education definition includes “children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason...[McKinney-Vento, Title VII, Subtitle B, Sec. 725(B)(i)]”; and the United States Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) definition includes individuals who “are forced to stay with a series of friends and/or extended family members... [HRSA Bureau of Primary Health Care Program Assistance Letter 99-12].” Alameda County agencies and programs, such as the Office of Education and the Health Care for the Homeless Program are required to use these alternate definitions, which can make it challenging to coordinate the planning and evaluation of programs addressing homelessness.

Data Collection and Analysis

This report compiles data about sheltered homeless persons and unsheltered homeless persons on the night of January 28, 2015, with separate methods and data sources for each group. To describe the sheltered homeless population, administrative records for occupants of emergency shelters and transitional housing sites on the night of January 28,

2015 were reviewed and analyzed. To describe the unsheltered homeless population, a survey study was conducted at a sample of service sites around Alameda County on January 29, 2015, with questions referring to living situation on the previous night. Together, these analyses provide the required data points reportable to HUD (the largest funder of homeless services in Alameda County), and create a picture of homelessness on a single night, which is somewhat comparable to PITCs from other communities.

Sheltered Data

The Alameda County Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is in place at nearly all shelter and transitional housing programs within Alameda County that are funded by HUD or local homeless assistance grants. HMIS was the source of administrative records for people residing in 46 shelters or transitional housing sites on January 28, 2015. Data were cleaned and validated by the individual projects prior to being extracted from HMIS. Sixteen other sites not included within HMIS provided their own administrative data identical to the data points extracted from HMIS. Finally, using HUD-compliant methods, data were imputed for four additional non-HMIS sites (67 people) that were unable to provide their administrative data. The imputation method assumed that occupancy and demographics were the same for these four sites as averages for similar programs. Combined, these records yielded the overall count and demographics of sheltered persons residing in 34 emergency and inclement weather shelters and 32 transitional housing programs.

Unsheltered Data

The target population for the survey of unsheltered homeless persons was all English-speaking or Spanish-speaking adults (aged 18 or over) who were served by meal service sites, food pantries, drop-in centers, and mobile street outreach programs in Alameda County that provide services to at least some individuals experiencing homelessness. Two stages of sampling were done to capture data on this target population (see Appendix E: Methodology Report for full methods). The first stage of sampling was a selection of facilities serving homeless persons (and usually other extremely low-income people). Within each facility selected, the second stage of sampling involved randomly selecting a fraction of individuals receiving services to be surveyed.

As a result of these two stages of sampling, survey respondents in the final sample represented varying numbers of individuals in the overall homeless population. To account for these differences, a weight was calculated for each survey respondent, which compensated for differences in the probability of selection, for various levels of non-response to particular questions, and for multiple opportunities of selection due to respondents' use of multiple services on a given day. The result for each respondent is a number that corresponds to the estimated number of persons in the unsheltered homeless population represented by that respondent.

Over 2,300 people were approached for participation at 38 sites throughout Alameda County. 1,500 people agreed to participate in the survey, from which 610 unsheltered homeless persons were surveyed. These primary respondents answered questions for an additional 191 household members (secondary respondents). Taken together, the 801 primary and secondary respondents were weighted to represent about three unsheltered homeless persons each on average, adding up to the estimated 2,397 unsheltered homeless persons. Some respondents were weighted much more (as much as 31 times), and some much less (as small as 0.06 times). Because the number of unsheltered homeless persons (and as a result, the total number of homeless person) are estimates based on statistical methods applied to a sample of individuals from the target population, some estimates presented include confidence intervals, reflecting the range of possible true values (see Technical Appendix for more details on how confidence intervals were calculated). Confidence intervals are similar to the concept of margins of error, as reported in polls, for example.

Results

Total Numbers of Homeless Individuals and Families

The estimated number of sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons in Alameda County on January 28, 2015 was 4,040 (95% confidence interval 3,301-4,769 persons). 1,643 were sheltered, and an estimated 2,397 (95% confidence interval 1,658-3,126) were unsheltered. Among those who were sheltered, 754 (45.9%) were part of households with at least one child, and 889 (54.1%) were those living in adult only households. Among those who were unsheltered, an estimated 244 were part of families with at least one child (10.2%) and 2,153 (89.8%) were in adult only households (Table 1).

Table1: 2015 Point In Time Count, Alameda County

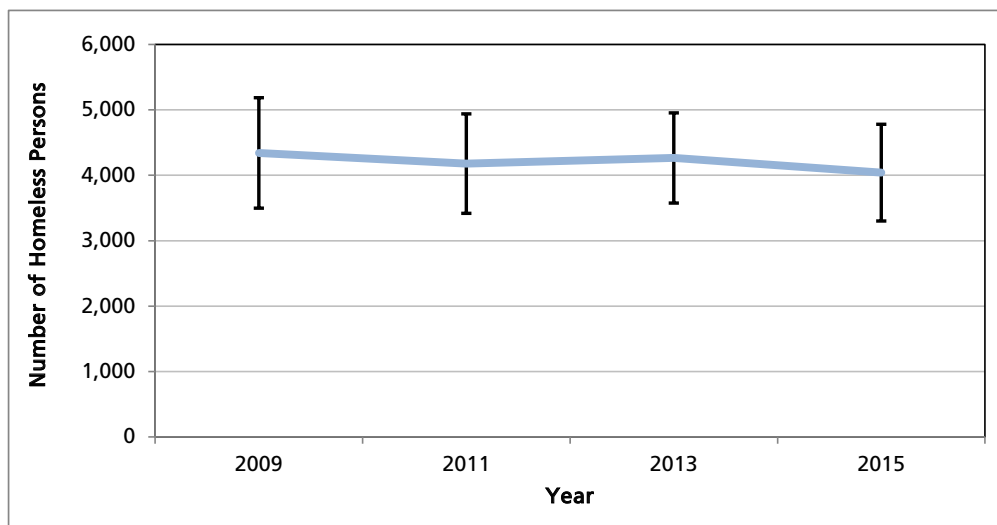
Count by Household Type and Sheltered vs. Unsheltered	Sheltered Count	Unsheltered Estimate	Total Homeless Estimate
Persons in Households with at Least One Adult and One Child	741	244	985
Persons in Households with Children Only	13	0	13
Persons in Households with Adults Only	889	2,153	3,042
Total	1,643	2,397	4,040

Source: Alameda County Homeless Count and Survey, 2015.

Point In Time Trends Since 2009

Data from recent PITCs show that the estimated number of homeless persons in Alameda County has stayed about the same from 4,341 in 2009 (95% confidence interval 3,497-5,186) to 4,040 in 2015 (95% confidence interval 3,301-4,769) (Figure 1).

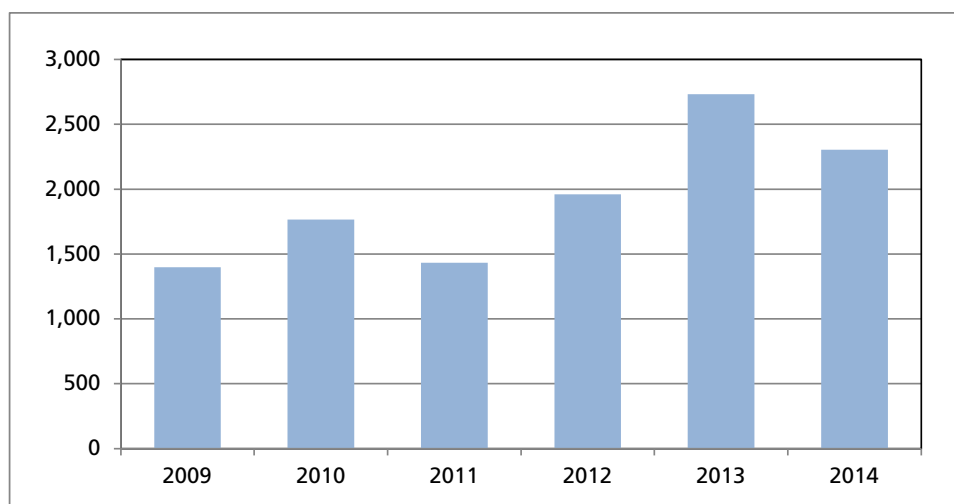
Figure 1: Trends in Homelessness Based on Point In Time Counts, 2009-2015.



Source: Alameda County Homeless Count and Survey, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015.

Over this same period of time, homeless providers in Alameda County have reported assisting over 11,500 individuals to move into permanent housing, with increasing numbers over time (Figure 2). The stable estimate of homeless individuals over time in spite of this success suggests that roughly the same number of people have become homeless as the

Figure 2: Trends in Number of People Permanently Housed by Homeless Assistance Programs



Source: EveryOne Home Annual Performance Reports.

number of homeless individuals that have moved into permanent housing over the last 6 years. More concerning, because the numbers of people moving out of homeless has been increasing annually and almost doubling since 2009, the stability of the overall PITC number also suggests that the rate of people becoming newly homeless is increasing over time. Indeed, other jurisdictions, such as Los Angeles¹ and Seattle², have seen large increases in homelessness over this same time period. This trend is also consistent with worsening trends in the underlying causes of homelessness including rapidly increasing rents in many parts of the East Bay.³

Select County Comparisons

Relationships between homeless rates and several economic indicators were examined among the nine Bay Area counties and three large metropolitan counties in California (Sacramento, San Diego, and Los Angeles counties) (see Table 2). Among poverty, rent burden, and the other indicators that were examined, two indicators appear to have stronger correlations with the homelessness rate. They are the Gini index and the rental unit vacancy rate (Figures 3 and 4).

The Gini index is a measure of income distribution that ranges from 0 (meaning all income is perfectly evenly distributed) to 1 (meaning one household has all of the income). The measure by itself is not meaningful except in relative terms. For instance San Francisco, Marin, and Los Angeles counties can be said to have greater income inequality than Alameda County, and Alameda County has greater income inequality than Solano or Sacramento Counties. Where the income inequality is higher, the percentage homeless among the population is also higher (Figure 3). It is also known that income inequality has been increasing over time. For instance, the Alameda County Gini index increased from 0.396 in 1980 to 0.427 in 1990 to 0.448 in 2000 to 0.464 in 2014.⁴

A prior study of factors related to PITCs in California also showed a similar consistent relationship between income distribution and homelessness.⁵ The authors suggest that as more people move to the extremes of income, demand for very inexpensive housing increases relative to demand for more moderately priced housing, worsening the mismatch between supply and demand at the low end of the market.

The vacancy rate for rental units is negatively correlated with the homeless rate (Figure 4). This means that on average, as the vacancy rate for rental units decreases, the percentage homeless increases. As a community's market becomes

Table 2: Socioeconomic Characteristics of Selected California Counties

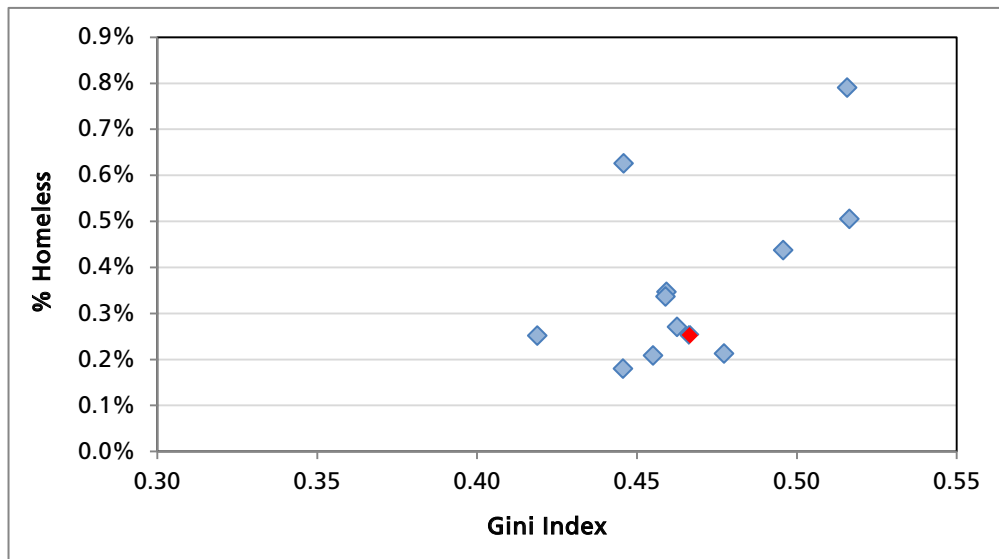
County	PIT Homeless Estimates	Resident Population	Homeless Rate (%)	Poverty Rate (%) (r = 0.00)	Households Paying 30% or More of Income in Rent (%) (r = -0.34)	Households Paying 50% or More of Income in Rent (%) (r = -0.24)	Unemployment Rate (%) (r = -0.32)	Gini Index (r = +0.58)	Vacancy Rate for Rental Units (%) (r = -0.55)
San Francisco	6,686	845,602	0.79%	13.5%	44.0%	21.9%	4.1%	0.516	2.5%
Sonoma	3,107	496,253	0.63%	11.9%	53.8%	27.4%	5.2%	0.446	2.3%
Marin	1,309	258,972	0.51%	7.7%	53.6%	27.7%	3.9%	0.516	1.8%
Los Angeles	44,359	10,136,559	0.44%	17.8%	56.5%	30.7%	8.2%	0.496	3.3%
Santa Clara	6,556	1,889,638	0.35%	10.2%	45.7%	23.5%	4.7%	0.459	3.0%
Contra Costa	3,715	1,102,871	0.34%	10.5%	52.9%	26.9%	5.6%	0.459	3.3%
San Diego	8,742	3,227,496	0.27%	14.4%	55.1%	27.4%	5.8%	0.463	3.6%
Alameda	4,040	1,594,569	0.25%	12.5%	50.1%	26.2%	5.4%	0.466	2.7%
Solano	1,082	429,552	0.25%	13.0%	55.5%	29.5%	6.9%	0.419	5.1%
San Mateo	1,604	753,123	0.21%	7.6%	48.7%	23.2%	3.8%	0.477	2.5%
Napa	293	140,362	0.21%	10.1%	52.1%	25.4%	5.7%	0.455	3.4%
Sacramento	2,650	1,470,912	0.18%	17.6%	55.0%	28.5%	6.8%	0.446	6.1%

Source: CAPE, with data from American Community Survey 2013 5-year files; Alameda County Homeless Count and Survey, 2015; homeless count reports from selected CA counties .

imbalanced with a lack of available rental units, the rate of homelessness increases. Five percent vacancy is often used as a target vacancy rate for policy-makers, and the specific rate that suggests a rental market with a good balance of supply and demand may even be higher in some situations.⁶ The vacancy rate among Bay Area and selected counties ranged from 1.8% to 6.1%. Alameda County’s vacancy rate was 2.7%.

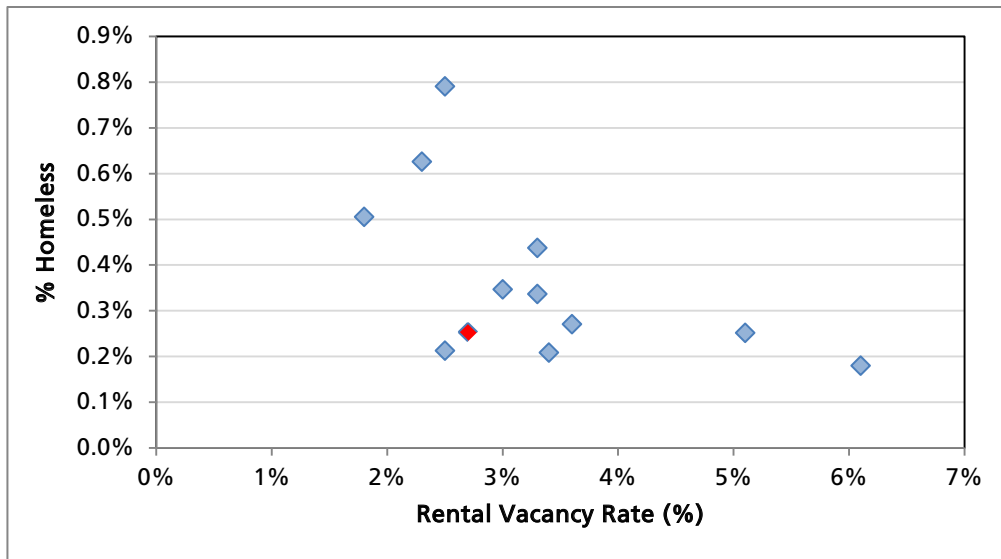
Poverty rate, rent burdens, and unemployment do not appear to correlate to rates of homelessness in these communities. Other factors not examined here may also influence the trends in homelessness, such as the average market rental cost, the average proportion of income going to rent, and ease of relocation to neighboring communities.

Figure 3: Percentage Homeless by Gini Index for Select Bay Area and Metropolitan Counties



Source: CAPE, with data from American Community Survey 2013 5-year files; Alameda County Homeless Count and Survey, 2015; homeless count reports from selected CA counties. Note: Alameda County is represented by the red diamond.

Figure 4: Percentage Homeless by Rental Vacancy Rate for Select Bay Area and Metropolitan Counties



Source: CAPE, with data from American Community Survey 2013 5-year files; Alameda County Homeless Count and Survey, 2015; homeless count reports from selected CA counties. Note: Alameda County is represented by the red diamond.

Demographic Profile of 2015 Sheltered and Unsheltered Populations

Table 3 shows detailed demographic characteristics of the counts of sheltered homeless persons and estimates of unsheltered homeless persons. (Additional tables are included in Appendix A.) Just under half (44.2%) of sheltered individuals were minor children (under age 18) and young adults aged 18 to 24 (25.8% and 18.4%, respectively), compared to about 10% in the unsheltered population (4.9% under age 18 and 4.6% aged 18 to 24) (Figure 5). About half of the sheltered persons were women, compared to less than one-third (29.0%) of the unsheltered population (Figure 6). Less than one percent of the sheltered and unsheltered homeless identified as transgender, and most of these were male-to-female.

The higher proportion of females and children in the sheltered population is likely due to several factors. In part, it reflects a successful policy emphasis on sheltering homeless families, many of whom are single mothers with children.

Racial/ethnic distribution of the sheltered population is similar across household type: both households with children and adult only households are slightly over 59% African American. Households with children have more Latinos than adult-only households (23.6% compared to 12.6%) and fewer whites (8.6% compared to 17.0%) (Table 3). Whites make up the largest portion of the unsheltered adult-only population (41.9%), along with African Americans (38.4%), whereas the unsheltered households with children have many more Latinos than whites (34.5% compared to 20.2%). (Note that missing values were removed from graphics so they do not exactly match Table 3.)

Although racial disparities affecting African Americans are common across many indicators and in many places around the country, the fact that African Americans are 13% of the population in Alameda County, but remain the majority among people experiencing homelessness is striking, and reflects a legacy of policies that excluded and segregated African Americans locally and nationally.^{7,8} This unfortunate legacy is also seen in the related phenomenon of displacement.⁹

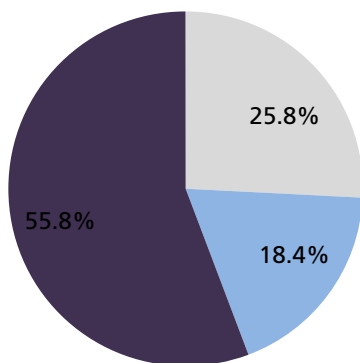
Table 3: Demographic Characteristics of Homeless Population, 2015

			Sheltered		Unsheltered		Total Estimated Homeless	
			Count	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Age Group	Persons in All Household Types	Persons <18	424	25.8%	117	4.9%	541	13.4%
		Persons 18-24	303	18.4%	111	4.6%	414	10.2%
		Persons 25+	916	55.8%	2,169	90.5%	3,085	76.4%
		Total Persons	1,643	100.0%	2,397	100.0%	4,040	100.0%
Gender	Persons in All Household Types	Male	804	48.9%	1,681	70.1%	2,485	61.5%
		Female	833	50.7%	696	29.0%	1,529	37.8%
		Transgender Male to Female	5	0.3%	21	0.9%	26	0.6%
		Transgender Female to Male	1	0.1%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%
		Total Persons	1,643	100.0%	2,397	100.0%	4,040	100.0%
Race/Ethnicity	Persons in Households with at least One Adult and One Child	African American/Black	283	59.2%	105	43.7%	388	54.0%
		Asian	9	1.9%	2	0.8%	11	1.5%
		Latino	113	23.6%	83	34.5%	196	27.3%
		Pacific Islander	11	2.3%	0	0.0%	11	1.5%
		Multiracial	21	4.4%	2	0.7%	23	3.2%
		White	41	8.6%	48	20.2%	89	12.5%
		Total	478	100.0%	240	100.0%	718	100.0%
		Persons in Adult-Only Households	African American/Black	443	59.5%	827	38.4%	1,270
	American Indian		8	1.1%	37	1.7%	45	1.6%
	Asian		22	3.0%	41	1.9%	63	2.2%
	Latino		94	12.6%	154	7.1%	248	8.5%
	Pacific Islander		5	0.7%	15	0.7%	20	0.7%
	Multiracial		42	5.6%	92	4.3%	134	4.6%
White	127		17.0%	903	41.9%	1,030	35.5%	
Missing	4	0.5%	83	3.9%	87	3.0%		
Total	745	100.0%	2,152	100.0%	2,897	100.0%		

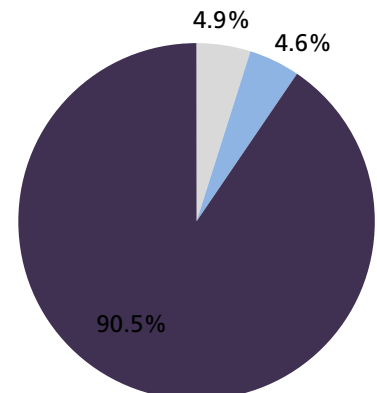
Source: Alameda County Homeless Count and Survey, 2015.
 Notes: Combined race/ethnicity values utilized instead of separate variables collected in the survey and data. Numbers do not add to total due to missing data from non-HMIS shelters and transitional housing programs.

Figure 5: Homeless Population Estimates by Age Group, 2015

Sheltered Homeless Persons

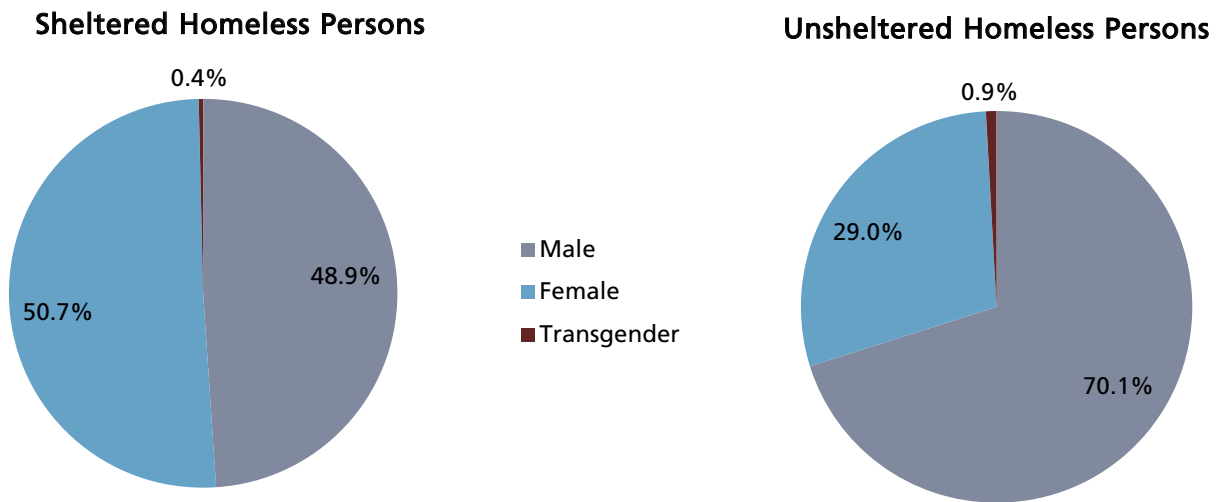


Unsheltered Homeless Persons



Source: Alameda County Homeless Count and Survey, 2015.

Figure 6: Homeless Population Population Estimates by Gender, 2015



Source: Alameda County Homeless Count and Survey, 2015.

Subpopulations of Interest

Table 4 reflects homeless subpopulations limited to adults 18 years of age and older, and this total number is shown in the top row. (Additional subpopulation tables are in appendices B, C, and D.) The table further shows numbers of people in special populations (counts for sheltered and estimates for unsheltered) for both 2013 and 2015 and the percentage they comprise of the total.

Table 4: Homeless Subpopulations, 2013 and 2015, Sheltered and Unsheltered Homeless

	Sheltered Count				Unsheltered Estimate			
	2013		2015		2013		2015	
	Count	%	Count	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Total Number Adults ≥18 Years	1,280	100.0%	1,219	100.0%	2,231	100.0%	2,280	100.0%
Subpopulations								
Transition Age Youth	292	22.8%	303	24.9%	143	6.4%	111	4.9%
History of Domestic Violence	381	29.8%	292	24.0%	665	29.8%	658	28.9%
Veterans	139	10.9%	157	12.9%	353	15.8%	231	10.1%
Adults with HIV/AIDS	25	2.0%	22	1.8%	72	3.2%	46	2.0%

Source: Alameda County Homeless Count and Survey, 2013, 2015.

Transition Age Youth (TAY): Young adults aged 18 to 24 comprised approximately one-quarter of the sheltered adult population in both 2013 and 2015. They made up a much smaller percentage of the unsheltered population, about 5%.

History of Domestic Violence: 28.9% of unsheltered adults in 2015 reported being victims of family violence at some point in their lives, a number comparable to the 29.8% reported in 2013 by both sheltered and unsheltered individuals. The number was slightly lower in 2015 among sheltered adults (24.0%).

Veterans: In 2015, 10.1% of unsheltered adults reported being military veterans, an estimate that was down from 15.8% in 2013. Among sheltered adults the percentage of veterans was roughly the same, 10.9% in 2013 to 12.9% in 2015. The downward trend in the number of unsheltered veterans is in part due to significant investment by the Veterans Admin-

istration, and new and expanded programs to reduce veterans’ homelessness in Alameda County. Alameda County mirrors the trend in many communities nationally of a 33% reduction in the number of homeless veterans.¹⁰

HIV/AIDS: The prevalence of HIV/AIDS among the sheltered homeless was about 2% in both 2013 and 2015, and about the same in the unsheltered population (3.2% in 2013 and 2.0% in 2015).

Tables 5 and 6 show data on additional subpopulations of interest including adults with serious mental illness, adults with substance use disorder, and chronically homeless individuals. Among sheltered adults, the percentages of adults with serious mental illness and adults with substance use disorder declined slightly between 2013 and 2015, while the percentage of chronically homeless individuals remained the same.

Table 5: Homeless Subpopulations, 2013 and 2015, Sheltered Homeless

	Sheltered Count			
	2013		2015	
	Count	%	Count	%
Total Number Adults ≥18 Years	1,280	100.0%	1,219	100.0%
Subpopulations				
Adults with Serious Mental Illness	477	37.3%	407	33.4%
Adults with Substance Use Disorder	354	27.7%	210	17.2%
Chronically Homeless Individuals	171	13.4%	159	13.0%

Source: Alameda County Homeless Count and Survey, 2013, 2015.

Table 6: Subpopulations, 2015, Unsheltered Homeless

	Unsheltered Estimate	
	Estimate	%
Total Number Adults ≥ 18 Years	2,280	100.0%
Subpopulations		
Adults with Serious Mental Illness	307	13.5%
Adults with Substance Use Disorder	205	9.0%
Chronically Homeless Individuals	501	22.0%

Source: Alameda County Homeless Count and Survey, 2015.

Other Subgroups of Interest

The survey data also provide additional insight to the history and experiences of the unsheltered homeless population.

Table 7 provides the weighted estimate of the number of unsheltered adults, 25 years and older and 18 to 24 years of age, along with percentage that reported having certain experiences. Unsheltered adults 25 years and older were more likely than unsheltered younger adults ages 18-24 to report a history of physical disability (34.2%), having a chronic medical condition (26.0%), and receiving disability benefits (23.4%). Younger adults, on the other hand, were more likely than older adults to report a history of post-traumatic stress disorder (50.1%), developmental disability (35.3%), foster care (34.4%), traumatic brain injury (26.8%), and special education (24.3%).

Table 7: Self-Reported Experiences of the Unsheltered Adult Population, 2015

	Weighted, Ages 25+		Weighted, Ages 18-24	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Physical Disability	743	34.2%	33	29.7%
PTSD	603	27.8%	56	50.1%
Chronic Medical Condition	564	26.0%	17	15.5%
Foster Care <18 Yrs	544	25.1%	38	34.4%
Disability Benefits	507	23.4%	12	11.2%
Developmental Disability	475	21.9%	39	35.3%
Traumatic Brain Injury	462	21.3%	30	26.8%
Special Ed in School	435	20.1%	27	24.3%

Source: Alameda County Homeless Count and Survey, 2015.

Limitations

The results presented in this report are subject to several important limitations. Perhaps most importantly, all homeless counts, regardless of methodology, are understood to be undercounts (Fazel, Lancet, 2014) especially as some unsheltered people do not wish to be identified and/or do not seek services. Nonetheless, when PITCs in a single community use relatively stable methods over several years, as have those in Alameda County, they may still shed light on changes in homelessness over time.

A second limitation is that the methods used by PITCs in other communities are different than those used in Alameda County, which may mean that PITC results from those communities are not directly comparable.

Third, although data about ethnicity and race were available for all sheltered and unsheltered persons as reported to HUD, data for the combined race/ethnicity categories (used here and generally more reflective of how people self-identify) were available for just the 74% of the sheltered population served by shelter or transitional housing organizations using HMIS (1,223 of 1,643).

Fourth, the survey questions regarding Substance Use Disorder and Serious Mental Illness were different between unsheltered estimates in 2013 and 2015, making it impossible to identify trends in these characteristics. These different questions also resulted in differences in the classification of individuals as chronically homeless (which depends on having a disability), meaning measures of chronic homelessness in the unsheltered population are also not comparable between 2013 and 2015, and not comparable to sheltered counts.

Conclusion

Overall, the size of the homeless population in Alameda County has remained about the same since 2009. This stability masks two significant underlying trends. Encouragingly, homeless assistance programs have been able to help more and more people experiencing homelessness find homes. More troubling, the number of people becoming newly homeless has increased as the economic recovery has failed to improve incomes for most individuals and families, vacancy rates have decreased, rents have increased significantly, and public resources to ensure adequate housing for all are diminishing.¹¹

Targeted investments in homeless assistance have resulted in lower numbers of homeless veterans and consistently low numbers of homeless families, representing important successes in Alameda County on the path to ending homelessness. Unfortunately, higher rents and lower vacancy rates are rapidly growing challenges for rental assistance programs, which have been a major factor in reducing the numbers of homeless veterans and families. Given these changes to the rental market, continuing to achieve positive results for these populations will require increasing investment in rental assistance and other strategies.

Changes in survey questions between 2013 and 2015 resulted in differences in how the numbers of chronically homeless individuals were estimated. The lack of precision in PITC estimates also makes it difficult to track trends in this important subpopulation using this data source. Fortunately, Alameda County is developing a registry of homeless persons with disabilities through Home Stretch, a collaboration of EveryOne Home, County agencies, and many housing and service providers. The Home Stretch registry will allow more precise tracking of chronic homelessness and enable targeted strategies that have been successful in reducing homelessness in other areas of the country.¹² Several cities within Alameda County are also using registries to support similar strategies to address homelessness within their boundaries.

Increasing investments, improved strategies, and improved coordination among homeless assistance programs have been central to containing the spread of homelessness in Alameda County. Over the past 6 years, more than 11,000 individuals have received critical support to find homes, and many of the approximately 4,000 people who remain homeless today will find homes over the next year with the help of homeless assistance programs. As we expand and improve those programs, we must also remember that new people are becoming homeless every day, and that helping them will require a broad and coordinated effort to address the poverty, inequity, and shortages of affordable housing that are at the root of this epidemic.

References

1. Jamison P, Zahniser D, and Hamilton M. “L.A. to declare ‘state of emergency’ on homelessness, commit \$100 million.” Los Angeles Times. September 22, 2015. <http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-homeless-funding-proposals-los-angeles-20150921-story.html>. Accessed January 6, 2016.
2. KUOW. “Amid Seattle’s Affluence, Homelessness Also Flourishes.” April 7, 2015. <http://www.npr.org/2015/04/07/398075834/amid-seattles-affluence-homelessness-also-flourishes>. Accessed January 6, 2016.
3. Carey P. “Bay Area apartment rents continue relentless rise on tight supply.” San Jose Mercury News. July 15, 2014. http://www.mercurynews.com/business/ci_26152150/bay-area-apartment-rents-continue-relentless-rise. Accessed January 6, 2016.
4. CAPE, with data from Census 1980, 1990, and 2000; 2014 American Community Survey 1-year estimates.
5. Quigley J. and Raphael S. “The Economics of Homelessness: The Evidence from North America.” European Journal of Housing Policy 1, no 3, 323-326, 2001. http://urbanpolicy.berkeley.edu/pdf/OR_EJHP01PB.pdf. Accessed January 11, 2016.
6. Belsky E., “Rental Vacancy Rates: A Policy Primer.” Housing Policy Debate, vol. 3, no. 3, 793-814, 1992. <http://content.knowledgeplex.org/kp2/img/cache/kp/2627.pdf>. Accessed January 11, 2016.

7. The Fair Housing Center. “Historical Shift from Explicit to Implicit Policies Affecting Housing Segregation in Eastern Massachusetts.” <http://www.bostonfairhousing.org/timeline/1934-1968-FHA-Redlining.html>. Accessed January 6, 2016.
8. Geen M. “How Redlining Maps Encouraged Segregation in California’s Cities.” KQED. July 13, 2015. <http://ww2.kqed.org/lowdown/2015/07/13/redlining/>. Accessed January 6, 2016.
9. Phillips D, Flores L, and Henderson J. *Development without Displacement: Resisting Gentrification in the Bay Area*. Causa Justa::Just Cause. 2014.
10. National Alliance to End Homelessness. *Veterans—Overview*. <http://www.endhomelessness.org/pages/veterans-overview>. Accessed January 6, 2016.
11. California Housing Partnership Corporation (CHPC). “How California’s Housing Market is Failing to Meet the Needs of Low Income Families.” February 2014. <http://chpc.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/9-CHPCHousingNeedReport020814FINAL.pdf>. Accessed January 11, 2016.
12. 100,000 Homes. *Our Manifesto*. <http://100khomes.org/read-the-manifesto>. Accessed January 6, 2016.

Appendix A: Populations Report

Point-in-Time Count CA-502 Oakland/Alameda County CoC

Inventory Count Date: 1/28/2015

Population: Sheltered and Unsheltered Count

Persons in Households with at least one Adult and one Child

	Sheltered		Unsheltered	Total
	Emergency	Transitional		
Total Number of Households	132	145	47	324
Total Number of persons (Adults & Children)	346	395	244	985
Number of Persons (under age 18)	193	218	117	528
Number of Persons (18 - 24)	15	70	11	96
Number of Persons (over age 24)	138	107	116	361

Gender (adults and children)	Sheltered		Unsheltered	Total
	Emergency	Transitional		
Female	224	251	133	608
Male	120	144	111	375
Transgender (male to female)	2	0	0	2
Transgender (female to male)	0	0	0	0

Ethnicity (adults and children)	Sheltered		Unsheltered	Total
	Emergency	Transitional		
Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino	246	303	148	697
Hispanic/Latino	100	92	96	288

Point-in-Time Count CA-502 Oakland/Alameda County CoC

Race (adults and children)	Sheltered	
	Emergency	Transitional
White	107	70
Black or African-American	173	262
Asian	11	8
American Indian or Alaska Native	10	2
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	15	8
Multiple Races	30	45

Unsheltered	Total
56	233
153	588
0	19
35	47
0	23
0	75

Inventory Count Date: 1/28/2015
 Population: Sheltered and Unsheltered Count

Persons in Households with only Children

	Sheltered		Unsheltered	Total
	Emergency	Transitional		
Total Number of Households	13	0	0	13
Total Number of children (under age 18)	13	0	0	13

Gender (adults and children)	Sheltered		Unsheltered	Total
	Emergency	Transitional		
Female	9	0	0	9
Male	4	0	0	4
Transgender (male to female)	0	0	0	0
Transgender (female to male)	0	0	0	0

Ethnicity (adults and children)	Sheltered		Unsheltered	Total
	Emergency	Transitional		
Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino	8	0	0	8
Hispanic/Latino	5	0	0	5

Point-in-Time Count CA-502 Oakland/Alameda County CoC

Race (adults and children)	Sheltered	
	Emergency	Transitional
White	4	0
Black or African-American	7	0
Asian	1	0
American Indian or Alaska Native	1	0
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0	0
Multiple Races	0	0

Unsheltered	Total
0	4
0	7
0	1
0	1
0	0
0	0

Inventory Count Date: 1/28/2015
 Population: Sheltered and Unsheltered Count

Persons in Households without Children

	Sheltered			Unsheltered	Total
	Emergency	Transitional	Safe Haven		
Total Number of Households	430	432	0	1,645	2,507
Total Number of persons (Adults)	435	454	0	2,153	3,042
Number of Persons (18 - 24)	47	171	0	100	318
Number of Persons (over age 24)	388	283	0	2,053	2,724

Gender (adults and children)	Sheltered			Unsheltered	Total
	Emergency	Transitional	Safe Haven		
Female	165	184	0	563	912
Male	269	267	0	1,569	2,105
Transgender (male to female)	1	2	0	21	24
Transgender (female to male)	0	1	0	0	1

Ethnicity (adults and children)	Sheltered			Unsheltered	Total
	Emergency	Transitional	Safe Haven		
Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino	359	407	0	1,809	2,575
Hispanic/Latino	76	47	0	344	467

Point-in-Time Count CA-502 Oakland/Alameda County CoC

Race (adults and children)	Sheltered			Unsheltered	Total
	Emergency	Transitional	Safe Haven		
White	124	76	0	842	1,042
Black or African-American	244	309	0	995	1,548
Asian	10	12	0	64	86
American Indian or Alaska Native	7	8	0	41	56
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	4	5	0	11	20
Multiple Races	46	44	0	200	290

Date of PIT Count: 1/28/2015

Population: Sheltered and Unsheltered Count

Total Households and Persons

	Sheltered			Unsheltered	Total
	Emergency	Transitional	Safe Haven		
Total Number of Households	575	577	0	1,692	2,844
Total Number of Persons	794	849	0	2,397	4,040
Number of Children (under age 18)	206	218		117	541
Number of Persons (18 to 24)	62	241	0	111	414
Number of Persons (over age 24)	526	390	0	2169	3,085

Gender

	Sheltered			Unsheltered	Total
	Emergency	Transitional	Safe Haven		
Female	398	435	0	696	1,529
Male	393	411	0	1680	2,484
Transgender (male to female)	3	2	0	21	26
Transgender (female to male)	0	1	0	0	1

Ethnicity

	Sheltered			Unsheltered	Total
	Emergency	Transitional	Safe Haven		
Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino	613	710	0	1957	3,280
Hispanic/Latino	181	139	0	440	760

Race

Sheltered			Unsheltered	Total
Emergency	Transitional	Safe Haven		

Point In Time Summary for CA-502 - Oakland/Alameda County CoC

White	235	146	0	898	1,279
Black or African-American	424	571	0	1148	2,143
Asian	22	20	0	64	106
American Indian or Alaska Native	18	10	0	76	104
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	19	13	0	11	43
Multiple Races	76	89	0	200	365

Appendix B: Subpopulations Report

Point-in-Time Subpopulations Summary for CA-502 - Oakland/Alameda County CoC

Date of PIT Count: 1/28/2015

Population: Sheltered and Unsheltered Count

Chronically Homeless Subpopulations

	Sheltered		Unsheltered	Total
	Emergency Shelters	Safe Haven		
Chronically Homeless Individuals	159	0	501	660
Chronically Homeless Families (Total Number of Families)	19		10	29
Chronically Homeless Families (Total Persons in Household)	52		38	90

Chronically Homeless Veterans

	Sheltered		Unsheltered	Total
	Emergency Shelters	Safe Haven		
Chronically Homeless Individuals	18	0	116	134
Chronically Homeless Families (Total Number of Families)	2		0	2
Chronically Homeless Families (Total Persons in Household)	8		0	8

Other Homeless Subpopulations

	Sheltered		Unsheltered	Total
	Persons in emergency shelters, transitional housing and safe havens			
Adults with a Serious Mental Illness	407		307	714
Adults with a Substance Use Disorder	210		205	415
Adults with HIV/AIDS	22		46	68
Victims of Domestic Violence	292		658	950

Appendix C: Veterans Count Report

Point-in-Time Count Veterans CA-502 Oakland/Alameda County CoC

Inventory Count Date: 1/28/2015

Population: Sheltered and Unsheltered Count

Persons in Households with at least one Adult and one Child

	Sheltered		Unsheltered	Total
	Emergency	Transitional		
Total Number of Households	3	6	0	9
Total Number of Persons	12	19	0	31
Total Number of Veterans	3	6	0	9

Gender (veterans only)	Sheltered		Unsheltered	Total
	Emergency	Transitional		
Female	0	4	0	4
Male	3	2	0	5
Transgender (male to female)	0	0	0	0
Transgender (female to male)	0	0	0	0

Ethnicity (veterans only)	Sheltered		Unsheltered	Total
	Emergency	Transitional		
Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino	2	4	0	6
Hispanic/Latino	1	2	0	3

Point-in-Time Count Veterans CA-502 Oakland/Alameda County CoC

Race (veterans only)	Sheltered	
	Emergency	Transitional
White	1	1
Black or African-American	0	3
Asian	0	0
American Indian or Alaska Native	0	1
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1	1
Multiple Races	1	0

Unsheltered	Total
0	2
0	3
0	0
0	1
0	2
0	1

Inventory Count Date: 1/28/2015
 Population: Sheltered and Unsheltered Count

Persons in Households without Children

	Sheltered			Unsheltered	Total
	Emergency	Transitional	Safe Haven		
Total Number of Households	39	108	0	219	366
Total Number of Persons	39	109	0	236	384
Total Number of Veterans	39	109	0	231	379

Gender (veterans only)

	Sheltered			Unsheltered	Total
	Emergency	Transitional	Safe Haven		
Female	4	11	0	37	52
Male	35	98	0	194	327
Transgender (male to female)	0	0	0	0	0
Transgender (female to male)	0	0	0	0	0

Ethnicity (veterans only)

	Sheltered			Unsheltered	Total
	Emergency	Transitional	Safe Haven		
Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino	34	101	0	208	343
Hispanic/Latino	5	8	0	23	36

Point-in-Time Count CA-502 Oakland/Alameda County CoC

Race (veterans only)	Sheltered			Unsheltered	Total
	Emergency	Transitional	Safe Haven		
White	5	19	0	91	115
Black or African-American	29	81	0	103	213
Asian	0	1	0	3	4
American Indian or Alaska Native	0	1	0	0	1
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0	2	0	2	4
Multiple Races	5	5	0	32	42

Point-in-Time Summary Veterans for CA-502 - Oakland/Alameda County CoC

Date of PIT Count: 1/28/2015

Population: Sheltered and Unsheltered Count

Total Households and Persons

	Sheltered			Unsheltered	Total
	Emergency	Transitional	Safe Haven		
Total Number of Households	42	114	0	219	375
Total Number of Persons	51	128	0	236	415
Total Number of Veterans	42	115	0	231	388

Gender

	Sheltered			Unsheltered	Total
	Emergency	Transitional	Safe Haven		
Female	4	15	0	37	56
Male	38	100	0	194	332
Transgender (male to female)	0	0	0	0	0
Transgender (female to male)	0	0	0	0	0

Ethnicity

	Sheltered			Unsheltered	Total
	Emergency	Transitional	Safe Haven		
Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino	36	105	0	208	349
Hispanic/Latino	6	10	0	23	39

Race

	Sheltered			Unsheltered	Total
	Emergency	Transitional	Safe Haven		

Point In Time Summary for CA-502 - Oakland/Alameda County CoC

White	6	20	0	91	117
Black or African-American	29	84	0	103	216
Asian	0	1	0	3	4
American Indian or Alaska Native	0	2	0	0	2
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1	3	0	2	6
Multiple Races	6	5	0	32	43

Appendix D: Youth Count Report

Youth Households

	Sheltered			Unsheltered	Total
	Emergency	Transitional	Safe Haven ^a		
Total number of households	65	230	0	53	348
Number of parenting youth households	7	61	0	0	68
Number of unaccompanied youth households	58	169	0	53	280
Total number of persons	73	305	0	71	449
Total number of persons in parenting youth households	15	135	0	0	150
Number of parenting youth (youth parents only)	7	63	0	0	70
Number of parenting youth (under age 18)	0	0	0	0	0
Number of parenting youth (age 18 to 24)	7	63	0	0	70
Number of children with parenting youth (children under age 18 with parents under age 25)	8	72	0	0	80
Total number of unaccompanied youth	58	170	0	71	299
Number of unaccompanied children (youth under age 18)	13	0	0	0	13
Number of unaccompanied youth between ages 18 and 24	45	170	0	71	286
Gender (parenting youth and unaccompanied youth only)	Sheltered			Unsheltered	Total
	Emergency	Transitional	Safe Haven ^a		
Female	28	157	0	25	210
Male	37	75	0	45	157
Transgender (male to female)	0	1	0	1	2
Transgender (female to male)	0	0	0	0	0
Ethnicity (parenting youth and unaccompanied youth only)	Sheltered			Unsheltered	Total
	Emergency	Transitional	Safe Haven ^a		
Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino	50	197	0	34	281
Hispanic/Latino	15	36	0	37	88
Race (parenting youth and unaccompanied youth only)	Sheltered			Unsheltered	Total
	Emergency	Transitional	Safe Haven ^a		
White	16	22	0	31	69
Black or African-American	41	178	0	18	237
Asian	1	3	0	16	20
American Indian or Alaska Native	2	5	0	1	8
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0	2	0	0	2
Multiple Races	5	23	0	5	33

Appendix E: Methodology Report

Sampling Methods and Construction of Weights
for the
2015 Alameda County Homeless Survey

by

Yuteh Cheng

and

Thomas Piazza

June 2015

Table of Contents

1. Overview	
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.2 Definition of the Target Population	2
1.3 General Design of the Sample	2
2. Sampling Procedures	
2.1 Constructing the Sampling Frame	3
2.2 Selection of Facilities	3
2.3 Selection of Individual Clients	4
3. Calculation of Weights	
3.1 Selection Probability	6
3.2 Response Rate Adjustments	6
3.3 Service Usage Factor	9
3.4 Creation of the Final Weight	10
4. Defining Strata and Clusters for Standard Errors	
4.1 Strata for Standard Errors	11
4.2 Clusters for Standard Errors	11

1. OVERVIEW

1.1 Background of the Study

The 2015 Alameda County Homeless Count and Survey were designed to provide an estimate of the number of unsheltered homeless persons in Alameda County and to study the characteristics of such persons. This information was desired for purposes of planning and for reporting to funding agencies. The 2015 survey was intended to complement data available on the Alameda County-wide population of residents of shelter and transitional housing services. These data have been recorded in a homelessness management information system (HMIS) in place at shelter and transitional housing services operating under contract with public agencies within Alameda County. Administrative data for other program sites were acquired on a one-time basis for the night of January 27, 2015. Survey estimates were considered adequate to generate information about **unsheltered** persons. These data can then be added to data from HMIS and other administrative records (representing **sheltered** homeless persons), to get a full perspective on homeless persons in the county.

The survey was organized and directed by EveryOne Home, including the training of field workers in data collection procedures. The fieldwork was carried out by employees of the county, of various cities within the county, and of homeless housing and service providers. Community volunteers also assisted in the fieldwork. Aspire Consulting LLC provided overall project management. Focus Strategies and its subcontractors, Jean Norris, Yuteh Cheng and Thomas Piazza were contracted to design and select the survey sample, to clean and analyze the data, to create weights, and to report on the number and characteristics of the homeless population of Alameda County.

Thomas Piazza and Yuteh Cheng of the University of California, Berkeley, drew a sample of facilities that provided non-residential services to the homeless and gave to Focus Strategies a target sampling fraction for each selected site. They also created site-

level weights, to compensate for differences in selection probabilities and for differential non-response within sites. The final individual-level weights were created by Jean Norris and Tracy Bennett.

1.2 Definition of the Target Population

The target population for the survey was all English-speaking or Spanish-speaking adults (aged 18 or over) who were served by meal service sites, food pantries, drop-in centers, and outreach programs in Alameda County that provide services to the homeless. The survey was focused on the housing status of people during the night of Tuesday, January 27, 2015. The interviews were conducted the following day, January 28, 2015.

1.3 General Design of the Sample

The sample was a stratified two-stage cluster sample. The first stage of the sample was a selection of facilities serving the homeless (and others). Prior to selection, facilities were stratified by location within the county and by type of service provided. Facilities were then selected from each stratum list with probability proportional to the estimated number of client contacts in a week.

Facilities selected at the first stage were assigned a target sampling fraction for the second stage of selection. Field workers were then sent to the facility to interview that proportion of the clients served that day. However, these sampling fractions could be, and were, changed. The fraction actually used (the number attempted divided by the number served that day) was recorded and was used for the construction of weights.

2. SAMPLING PROCEDURES

2.1 Constructing the Sampling Frame

Aspire Consulting LLC and EveryOne Home worked together to assemble a list of most of the facilities in the county that provided services to the homeless. Facilities known to be closed on the target date for the survey were set aside, for purposes of selection. The facilities were categorized by service type (meal service, food pantry, outreach, or drop-in program) and by location in the county (Oakland, Berkeley, or the rest of the county). This information was used to stratify the list of facilities prior to selection, so that a stratified selection could be made.

For each facility, information was also gathered about the number of client contacts per week. This latter number was then used as a measure of size for the first stage of selection, which was carried out with probability proportional to size. A few sites with less than 15 client contacts per week were excluded from the frame. The total number of estimated client contacts per week at all sites in the frame was 23,629 (excluding those set aside because they were known to be closed that day).

2.2 Selection of Facilities

Seven facilities were included with certainty in the sample either because of their large size or their distinctive characteristics. In addition, all of the soup kitchens, and all of the outreach programs except in Berkeley were selected with certainty because there were so few of them.

The remaining facilities were selected in the following manner: The list of facilities was first divided into three strata for the non-certainty food pantry, outreach, and drop-in program service types. Then the facilities were substratified into three major geographic areas (Oakland, Berkeley, and the rest of the county). We then proceeded to select

facilities from the list in each stratum with probability proportionate to size (PPS), where the measure of size was the estimated number of client contacts per week. For food pantries, drop-in programs, and outreach programs, the number of client contacts per week was estimated from lists of clients served in the past. A total of 28 sites were selected in this manner from all of the strata. With the addition of 25 certainty sites (of which 20 were meal services), a total of 53 sites were selected.

After the 53 facilities had been selected, the order of the selected sites in each stratum was randomized. The first few sites in each stratum were designated as the initial sample, and the remaining selected sites were set as a reserve sample to be used as needed. Field work began with an initial 40 facilities. Some of the sites refused to allow interviews or were closed, so they were replaced by taking the next site on the randomized list for that stratum. In some strata all of the reserve sites were exhausted, and no more sites were available. Interviews were therefore conducted at only 38 sites.

2.3 Selection of Individual Clients

For each selected site, an initial selection interval was set. For most sites, the initial interval was set to 1 – meaning that all clients that day were to be selected. The actual selection intervals were modified on-site by the project supervisor to account for the number of clients that day and the number of available interviewers. The actual sampling fraction for each site is calculated by dividing the number of clients selected and approached by the total number of clients served that day.

Field workers were sent to each selected facility, with instructions to interview the target proportion or number of clients. Selection of individuals was carried out by systematic random selection, applying a fixed interval to the queue of persons being served, after a random start. The selection interval actually used was recorded, and that information was used to construct the weights.

For the sites selected with certainty, the probability of selecting the site was 1. And therefore the overall probability of selection is the same as the probability of selecting individuals at each site:

$$P_{\text{cert}} = 1 / I_i \quad (1)$$

where I_i is the sampling interval at that site.

For the sites selected with PPS, the probability of selecting site i in stratum h was $a_h M_{hi} / T_h$, where a_h is the number of sites selected in that stratum (including reserve sites that were actually used), and M_{hi} is the estimated number of client contacts per week at site i in that stratum, and T_h is the total number of estimated client contacts in that stratum. The probability of selecting individuals at each site was $1 / I_{hi}$, where I_{hi} is the sampling interval at that site. The overall probability of selection for the PPS sites, therefore, was:

$$P_{hi} = a_h M_{hi} / T_h * 1 / I_{hi} \quad (2)$$

For the sites selected with Simple Random Sampling, (for example, the meal service programs selected within the various geographic areas for release to the field work), the probability of selecting site i in stratum h was a_h / N_h , where a_h is the number of sites selected in that stratum (including reserve sites that were actually used), and N_h is the number of sites in that stratum. The probability of selecting individuals at each site was $1 / I_{hi}$, where I_{hi} is the sampling interval at that site. The overall probability of selection for the SRS sites, therefore, was:

$$P_{\text{srs}} = a_h / N_h * 1 / I_{hi} \quad (3)$$

The selection probability for all types of sites was used in the construction of the weights.

3. CALCULATION OF WEIGHTS

A weight was calculated for each case in the data file. This weight compensated for differences in the probability of selection and for various levels of non-response. Each of the weighting factors will now be described.

3.1 Selection Probability

There are two factors accounting for differences in selection probability – the probability of selecting the particular facility, and the probability of selecting individuals served by that facility.

For the certainty sites, the probability of selection is given above in Equation 1. For the PPS sites, the probability of selection is given above in Equation 2. For the SRS (meal service) sites, the probability of selection is given above in Equation 3.

The basic sampling weight is obtained by taking the inverse of the appropriate equation (either #1 or #2 or #3) for probability of selection. A few of the weights were trimmed, to exclude extreme differences between facilities. Some of the original estimates of clients served turned out to be erroneous, and the resulting weights needed to be adjusted to compensate for those errors.

3.2 Response Rate Adjustments

There were four levels of non-response that required weighting adjustments – non-response of entire sites, non-response of individuals within selected sites, sites closed on the survey day, and a final adjustment for missing service types within a geographic area.

Site-level non-response was due to the refusal of some facilities to allow the project interviewers to have access to their clients or because they were not available on the target data collection day. Among the sites selected with PPS, the non-response varied by stratum. Response rates of the sites within strata varied from 66.7% to 100%. The respondents in strata with less than 100% site-level response rates were weighted up, to compensate for the non-responding sites. The weighting factor for each stratum was the inverse of the site-level response rate. For example, a response rate of 80% produced a weighting factor equal to $1 / .80 = 1.25$. The site-level weighting factor was applied to the weight of every respondent who was interviewed in that stratum.

The second level of non-response was that of individuals within the selected sites. The field staff at each site selected a pre-defined proportion of the clients being served on that day, at that facility. Some of the persons selected refused to be interviewed. Others left the facility before the interviewers could carry out the interview. The response rates within each site varied from 12.3% to 85%. To compensate for non-responders, the respondents at each site were weighted up. Once again, the weighting factor was the inverse of the proportion responding. This individual-level weighting factor was applied to the weight of every respondent who was interviewed at that site.

The third level of non-response was due to fact that some sites happened to be closed on the one day designated for the survey and were not available. The proportion of estimated service contacts available on the survey day varied by stratum from 30.8% to 100%. Once again, the weighting factor was the inverse of the proportion available. This stratum-level weighting factor was applied to the weight of every respondent who was interviewed in that stratum.

The fourth level of non-response was due to a missing service type (such as an outreach facility) within one of the three geographic areas. Since the weights were designed to be expanded to the estimated number of clients in each geographic area, the occasional lack of one entire service type among the completed sites in a specific geographic area had to be compensated for by weighting up (slightly) the number of clients sampled and

completed within the remaining service types. This augmentation of the remaining weights did not exceed 1.2232.

After the above factors were applied to the weight of every respondent, we compared the sum of the weights with the original estimates of weekly client contacts. The total of the originally estimated number of weekly service contacts for all the sites in the sampling frame was 43,663. The sum of the weights after adjusting for probability of selection and non-response was 33,865, a decrease of 22.4 percent. After adjusting for this level of weighting, therefore, we found that the number of service contacts per week had decreased substantially compared to the original estimates. However, in comparison with the previous Homeless Survey in 2013, the weighted sum of 33,865 is 12.2% higher than the weighted figure of 30,194 in that year.

The next level of weighting, described in the following section, is designed to convert the number of service contacts into the number of discrete individuals served.

3.3 Service Usage Factor

Some clients of the services provided by these sites use the services more frequently than other clients and consequently had more opportunities to be selected for an interview. For example, a person who eats four meals every week at one or another of the meal service sites included in the sampling frame had a four-times greater chance to be selected into the sample on the interviewing day than a person who eats only one meal a week at such a site. An additional weighting factor, referred to as the “service usage factor,” was designed to compensate for multiple opportunities of selection.

As part of the interview, each respondent provided information on the number of times per week he or she could have been selected for an interview during the week before the target day. This information included the number of days that a respondent ate a meal in the preceding week at a site in the County that serves the homeless population, and it included additional data on the number of times a respondent used food pantries, drop-in centers, and outreach programs during the week before the target day.

The responses to all of those questions were combined, in order to calculate an overall estimate of the relative availability of each respondent to have been selected into the sample. The number of contacts in the previous week were added together to get the overall estimate. The minimum value of this factor was 1.0, since everyone interviewed obviously had at least one chance to be selected into the sample.

This service usage factor is an indicator of the relative chance of each respondent to have been included in the sample. A respondent with a value of 4.0, for example, had double the chance of being included, compared to another respondent with a value of 2.0.

3.4 Creation of the Final Weight

The final weight for each case was the product of the weighting factors described above. The process can be summarized as follows.

- Start with a weight of 1.0
- Divide by the probability of selection (trimmed if necessary)
- Divide by the site-level response rate (expressed as a proportion)
- Divide by the response rate within the site (expressed as a proportion)
- Divide by the proportion of service contacts available on the survey day (within each stratum)
- Multiply by the augmentation factor to compensate for missing service types
- Divide by the service usage factor

The result for each case is a number that corresponds to the estimated number of persons in the population represented by that case. For example, a final weight of 10 for a case would mean that there were 10 persons in the population estimated to have the characteristics of this particular case. The sum of the weights is an estimate of the total size of the population from which the sample was drawn.

4. DEFINING STRATA AND CLUSTERS FOR STANDARD ERRORS

The sample for this study was a stratified cluster sample, not a simple random sample of individuals. Special procedures are therefore required to calculate standard errors and confidence intervals. Those procedures require that each respondent's stratum and cluster membership be known. We describe here how those fields in the data file were produced. The standard error calculations themselves were carried out by Jean Norris and Tracy Bennett, using appropriate computer programs.

4.1 Strata for Standard Errors

Separate samples of sites were drawn within each of the three major parts of the county (Oakland, Berkeley, and the rest of the county) for each of the four types of services, resulting in twelve major strata. The certainty sites are also treated as separate strata. There were 15 separate strata in all.

Each record on the data file has a code to indicate which of the 15 strata it was selected from. This is the variable to be used for the calculation of standard errors.

4.2 Clusters for Standard Errors

Each service facility or site was a primary sampling unit (PSU) or cluster, for purposes of sampling, and interviewing was successfully carried out at 38 sites. However, the largest sites were divided up into random parts for purposes of calculating standard errors, in order to control the cluster sizes within strata. The Taylor series method of calculating standard errors requires that the cluster sizes within each stratum be of roughly the same size (such that the coefficient of variation of the size is less than .20). Those units created at random were used as the PSU's for purposes of calculating standard errors. The final division of sites into randomized units was carried out by Yuteh Cheng.

The data record for each respondent contains a value (1, 2, 3, etc.) for the final PSU (cluster). The PSU codes are unique when combined with the stratum values that range from 1 to 15. The final stratum and PSU variables were merged with the questionnaire data and the weights, to construct the final data file. They are available to analysts wishing to calculate standard errors and confidence intervals that take into account the design of the sample. The 2015 Homeless Count and Survey Report lists some confidence intervals in the Appendix.