

Every night, over 3/4 million Americans sleep in shelters or on the street, under freeway bridges, in canyons or fields¹. Some time during the next year, about 3 1/2 million people will experience homelessness of some kind². These persons lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence or they live in a welfare hotel, transitional housing program or a place not ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations, such as cars, movie theatres, abandoned buildings, in parks or on the street³. People in jail or prison are not considered homeless. Homelessness takes different forms. Some will seek out emergency housing only for a short time because of a temporary crisis like a job loss, eviction or violence in their home⁴. Others may spend years on the street. Still others suffer from severe substance abuse, mental illness, physical disabilities or simply choose to live on the street.



REGIONAL TASKFORCE ON THE HOMELESS

First in a series of brief, informative reports on homelessness in San Diego

One Day Homeless Count January 31, 2008

HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE HOMELESS IN THE SAN DIEGO REGION?

At least **7,582** persons were homeless in the San Diego region on the morning of January 31, 2008.

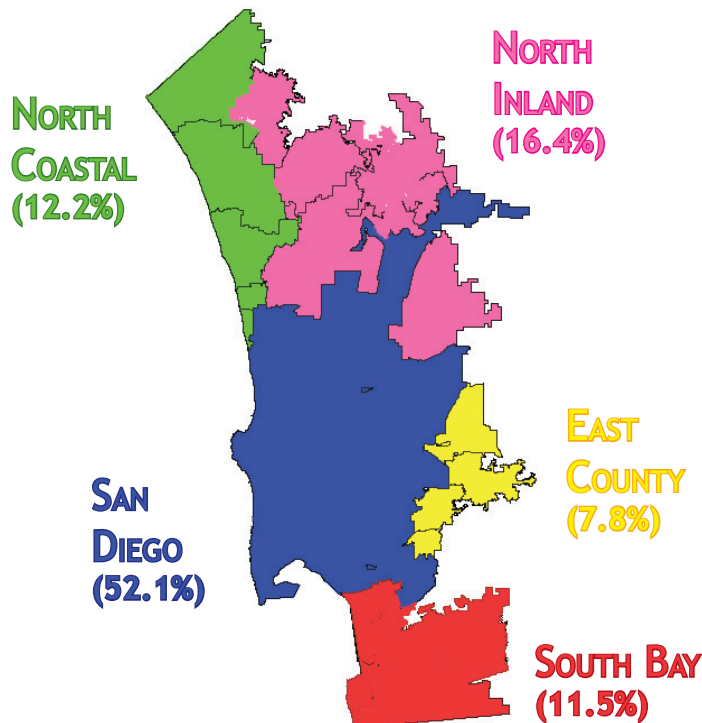
This estimate represents a minimum number. Calculating the number of people who are homeless can vary due in part to methodological variables such as differing definitions of homelessness or the timeframe used, not to mention the difficulty

of locating homeless individuals, weather conditions, and the number of persons conducting the count⁵.

In the San Diego region, a “point-in-time” or “one day” count of homeless individuals was conducted in the early morning of January 31, 2008. Over 320 enumerators fanned out across the San Diego region to take the most comprehensive census of homeless persons ever

attempted for our region. A well-established method to count those who live on the street was followed. They also conducted 190 in-depth survey interviews. In addition to the street count, over 90 agencies provided detailed information about homeless who spent the night in their emergency shelter or transitional program. The combined results are discussed on page 2.

WHERE DO THEY LIVE?



County of San Diego

Homeless individuals and families can be found throughout the San Diego region, although there are significantly different regional distribution patterns for those in shelters and those who live on the street.

More than half (52.1%) of all homeless individuals live in central San Diego which includes the city of San Diego. Whereas, more than 16% of homeless lives in the north county region.

We believe most homeless individuals live in urban rather than rural areas. Since enumerators focused on urban areas the exact proportions are not known.

More than half (54%) of the County's homeless reside in the City of San Diego*. Much smaller numbers can be found in the north county areas.

The highest counts of visible street homeless persons are found in Encinitas, in the Pacific Beach, Ocean Beach and Downtown area of the City of San Diego, and in Escondido. By far, the highest concentration of homeless in emergency shelters and those in programs specifically designed for homeless persons is located in the Downtown area of the City of San Diego.

In addition to those included in the count, it is estimated that there are approximately 1,000 farm workers or day laborers who were not counted due to the inaccessibility of their location.

* includes Nestor, Otay mesa & San Ysidro

CITY	STREET COUNT*	EMERGENCY SHELTERS	TRANSITIONAL HOUSING	TOTAL HOMELESS PERSONS
Carlsbad	22	17	0	39
Chula Vista	205	1	254	460
Coronado	30	0	0	30
Del Mar	2	0	0	2
El Cajon	209	70	82	361
Encinitas	530	6	10	546
Escondido	466	101	242	809
Imperial Beach	53	0	0	53
La Mesa	57	0	0	57
Lemon Grove	30	0	0	30
National City	175	24	0	199
Oceanside	115	70	151	336
Poway	28	0	0	28
San Diego	1658	696	1728	4082
San Marcos	19	0	0	19
Santee	13	0	0	13
Solana Beach	1	0	0	1
Vista	112	24	250	386
Spring Valley	101	0	0	101
REGIONAL TOTAL	3856	1009	2717	7582

* Includes both urban and rural homeless

ONE DAY HOMELESS COUNT SURVEY RESULTS

GENDER

Although the region's general population is divided evenly between males and females, two-thirds of all homeless persons surveyed were males. Females made up only one-third of the total homeless population surveyed and only 20% of those living on the street. In striking contrast, those living in transitional programs were divided nearly evenly between males and females.

RACE/ETHNICITY

About 60% of the homeless population surveyed in the San Diego region were White. However, African-Americans were disproportionately represented on the street, in emergency shelters and in transitional programs when compared to the region's overall Black population. More than one-third of all transitional housing residents were Latino.

AGE

The largest proportion of all homeless persons were adults in their 30s and 40s (44.8%). According to the agency census, children and teens - with or without their parents - made up the largest proportion of those who lived in transitional housing - about 40%.

VETERANS

There are five military bases in San Diego. Accordingly, veterans comprise a significant proportion of the region's homeless population - nearly 17%. Countywide, nearly one-third of all emergency shelter residents were veterans⁶.

DID YOU KNOW... SD homeless demographics?

- 2 of 3 are male
- 3 of 5 are White
- 1 of 3 uses alcohol
- 1 of 4 reports mental illness
- 1 of 4 uses drugs
- 1 of 4 is Latino
- 1 of 5 is African American
- 1 of 5 is a victim of domestic violence
- 1 of 6 is a veteran
- 1 of 6 is a child or teen
- 1 of 4 is age 51 or older

MENTAL HEALTH

Chronic homelessness has long been associated with mental illness⁷. Based on survey results, nearly 30% of homeless adults in the San Diego region reported mental illness. Except for permanent supportive housing units specifically reserved for the "dually-diagnosed," participants in emergency shelter programs reported the highest incidence of mental illness.

SUBSTANCE USE

Combined rates of alcohol and drug use among the region's homeless adults ranged from 29.9% for substance use to 36.9% for alcohol use. The proportion of homeless persons recovering from substance abuse is significantly higher (between 51% and 72%) among those residing in transitional housing. In fact, residential settings are often associated with treatment programs for alcohol and drug dependency⁸.

FAMILIES

During the PIT count, there were 523 homeless families comprising a total of 1282 persons in the San Diego region. Of these, 250 (48%) families were found in shelters in the City of San Diego, representing a total of 557 family members living in emergency or transitional shelters. Single mothers made up 89% of the homeless families in the county region, and 86% of families in the City of San Diego. Of the total homeless households living in county shelters, 56% (713) were comprised of children under 18 years old.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

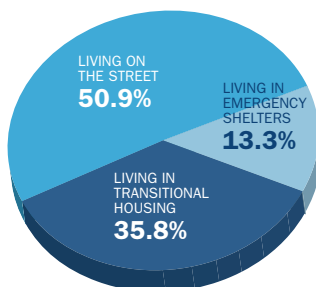
Physical or mental assault among family members can lead to sudden changes in housing options - making someone homeless virtually overnight⁹. A significant proportion of those living in emergency shelters and transitional programs report that they are victims of domestic violence. In emergency shelters and transitional housing, domestic violence was reported by 20% of the residents.

SHELTERED OR UNSHELTERED IN THE SAN DIEGO REGION

As defined, homeless San Diegans can live on the street, in emergency shelters or in transitional housing.

The San Diego region's sheltered homeless was significantly lower than the national average, 36% and 56%¹⁰ respectively. Although life on the streets is precarious, uncomfortable, violent and insecure, more than half of the region's homeless were found there (3,856). Emergency shelters, many of which will closed soon after this one day count, housed 13% of the region's counted homeless.

Housing Location of Homeless Population for the San Diego region



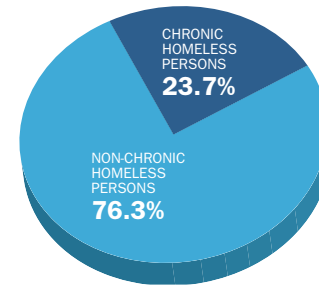
CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

Hud defines a person as being chronically homeless if they have some kind of physical or mental disabling condition and have been homeless for a year or more and are not part of a family; or they have a disability and have had at least 4 episodes of homelessness during any three year period, and are not part of a family. (A disabling condition includes substance abuse, serious mental illness, chronic physical

illness, and/or developmental disability.¹¹)

Nearly 25% of the 190 individuals completing the survey reported being chronically homeless. If the percentage were applied to the total number of homeless, at least 1,800 people would be considered chronically homeless.

Proportion of Chronic and Non-Chronic Homeless, for the San Diego region
January 31, 2008



This group of homeless individuals spend long periods of time - often years - either living in shelters and on the streets, or cycling between hospitals, emergency rooms, jails, prisons, and mental health and substance abuse treatment facilities¹². Furthermore, this population is very costly to these institutions and to the public.

Nearly 50% of those who participate in our region's winter emergency shelters reported being "chronic homeless." Seasonal or Winter shelters were designed to provide short-term relief for people who had experienced a crisis and who, with some assistance, could move back into a home of their own. They were not designed to address the extensive needs of people with serious mental illness or other disabilities¹³. Without the proper assistance such people tend to stay homeless for long periods of time, making them chronically homeless, while utilizing a disproportionate amount of shelter resources¹⁴. Chronically homeless people use more than 50% of services provided to the general homeless population¹⁵.

WHAT IS THE UNMET NEED FOR HOMELESS SERVICES IN THE SAN DIEGO REGION?

On any given night, agencies serving San Diego's homeless can provide emergency or transitional housing for about 2,700 individuals - only about one-third of the total need - based on the bare minimum estimate of the one day count of 7,582. When winter shelters are opened, a further 1,000 people can be assisted. At the most, then, only half of those experiencing homelessness can be sheltered on any given night.

During San Diego's winter about 46% of men and 48% of women can meet their shelter needs. When winter shelters close, however, the percentages fall to 37% for men and 41% for women.

Strategies to End Homelessness in San Diego County

THE PLAN TO END CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

The Plan to End Chronic Homelessness in the San Diego Region (PTECH) is an initiative led by the United Way of San Diego County. More than 100 volunteers, including social service providers, city and county officials and homeless advocates, participate in the Plan's implementation. The Plan's key strategy is permanent supportive housing, which will provide chronically homeless individuals with safe, decent and affordable housing along with the supportive services necessary to maintain this housing. For more information, see the following link: <http://www.uwsd.org/our-focus/homeless-outreach-prevention-1>

PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) as a strategy for homeless persons operates on the premise that if you provide housing first, it is easier to provide critical wrap-around supportive services that improve longterm outcomes for these individuals. Supportive housing services include mental and physical health, and other social services (e.g., job training, substance abuse and case management) that help stabilize previously homeless individuals. Currently, there is an estimated 644 PSH units in the San Diego County region. Many more units are in development. The Corporation for Supportive Housing - a national nonprofit with a regional presence - helps communities create PSH solutions, and is spearheading the planning and implementation of the PSH strategy in the San Diego region. For more information, see the following link: <http://www.csh.org>

SUPPORTIVE HOUSING PROGRAM

Supportive Housing Program (SHP), is a HUD-based program that is authorized by Title IV, Subtitle C of the McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 1987. SHP is designed to promote, as part of a local Continuum of Care strategy, the development of supportive housing and supportive services to assist homeless persons and to enable them to live as independently as possible.

The County of San Diego is divided into two Continuums of Care (CoC). Each CoC applies separately for SHP funding. The aggregate funding for the region is estimated at \$13 million in 2006 and is contingent on a rigorous HUD-directed data monitoring protocol. Data from this point-in-time count report is a required data element for the SHP SuperNOFA application. More than 45 agencies in the San Diego region receive SHP grants annually, which supports a wide range of homeless services.

In general, housing issues fall within the purview of housing departments in all 18 municipal jurisdictions while supportive services needed to stabilize homeless persons fall within the County's jurisdiction.

Useful Links:

Regional Task Force on the Homeless San Diego
 Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
 National Coalition for the Homeless
 211 Assistance
 United Way of San Diego
 National Alliance to End Homelessness

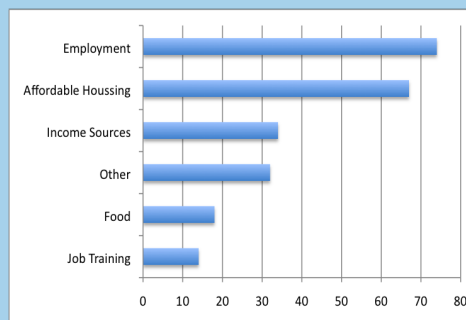
www.rtfhsd.org
www.hud.gov/homeless/index.cfm
www.nationalhomeless.org
www.211sandiego.org
www.uwsd.org/homeless
www.endhomelessness.org

WHAT ARE THE CAUSES OF HOMELESSNESS?

CAUSES OF HOMELESSNESS VARY GREATLY ACROSS COMMUNITIES BUT THE MOST COMMONLY CITED REASONS INCLUDE¹⁶:

- LACK OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING
- LOW-PAYING JOBS AND LABOR MARKET CHANGES
- UNEMPLOYMENT
- MENTAL ILLNESS
- ADDICTION DISORDERS
- CHANGES AND CUTS IN PUBLIC ASSISTANCE
- DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
- CHANGES IN FAMILY STRUCTURE
- PRISON RELEASE
- CHRONIC HEALTH PROBLEMS
- GROWING UP IN THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM
- LACK OF ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE.

THESE CAUSES ARE ECHOED BY THE SAN DIEGO STREET POPULATION WHEN ASKED WHAT WAS THE MAIN THING KEEPING THEM HOMELESS :



References

- 1&2 . National Alliance to End Homelessness, "Homelessness Counts," Research Reports on Homelessness (January, 2007), p. 10; National Coalition for the Homeless, "How Many People Experience Homelessness," Fact Sheet #2 (August, 2007).
3. Martha Burt and Aron Laudan, Aron. "America's Homeless
4. II: Populations and Services." (Presented at the Urban Institute First Tuesdays Forum, Washington, D.C., February, 2000.)
5. United States Code, Title 42, Chapter 119, Subchapter I, §11302.
6. National Coalition for the Homeless, "Homeless Veterans," Fact Sheet #14 (August, 2007); National Coalition for Homeless Veterans, "Homeless Veterans Fact Sheet" (n.d.) http://www.nchv.org/docs/HomelessVeterans_factsheet.pdf
7. National Alliance to End Homelessness, "Chronic Homelessness Brief" (March, 2007).
8. For a discussion of methodological issues in counting homeless persons since 1983, see National Alliance to End Homelessness, "Homelessness

- Counts," Research Reports on Homelessness (January, 2007), p. 6-10 and Martha R. Burt, "Homelessness: Definitions and Counts," in Jim Baumohl (ed.), *Homelessness in America* (Phoenix: Oryx Press, 1996). For an analysis of these issues for one geographic location, see Institute for the Study of Homelessness and Poverty, Weingart Center, "Homelessness in Los Angeles," *Just the Facts* (August, 2004), p. 1.
9. National Coalition for the Homeless, "Mental Illness and Homelessness," Fact Sheet #5 (June, 2006).
10. Regional Taskforce on the Homeless San Diego, listing of homeless services in San Diego County; National Coalition for the Homeless, "Addiction Disorders and Homelessness," Fact Sheet #6 (August, 2007).
11. National Coalition for the Homeless, "Mental Illness and Homelessness," Fact Sheet #7 (August, 2007).
12. National Alliance to End Homelessness, "Homelessness Counts," Research Reports on Homelessness (January, 2007), p. 11.
13. United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office

- of Community Planning and Development and the Office of Special Needs Assistance Programs, *Defining Chronic Homelessness: A Technical Guide for HUD Programs* (September, 2007), p. 3.
14. National Alliance to End Homelessness, "Chronic Homelessness," Fact Checker (March, 2007), p. 1-2; Dennis P. Culhane, Stephen Metraux, and Trevor Hadley, "Public Service Reductions Associated with Placement of Persons with Serious Mental Illness in Supportive Housing," *Housing Policy Debate* 13 (2002), p. 107-163.
15. See Culhane, Metraux and Hadley (2002)
16. National Coalition for the Homeless, "Why Are People Homeless?" Fact Sheet #1 (June, 2007)

(For a more in-depth report, please visit www.rtfhsd.org)