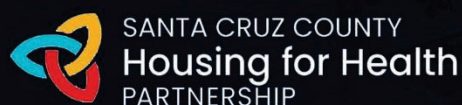


SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

2026 POINT-IN-TIME COUNT & SURVEY

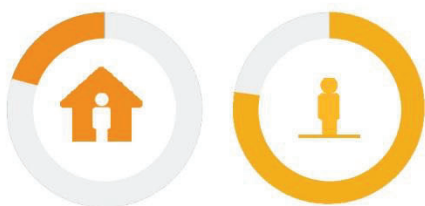
Every year, typically during the last 10 days of January, communities across the country conduct comprehensive counts of the local homeless populations to measure the prevalence of homelessness in each local Continuum of Care.

The 2026 Santa Cruz County Point-in-Time Count was a community-wide effort conducted on Thursday, January 29th, 2026. In the weeks following the street count, a survey was administered to 374 unsheltered and sheltered individuals experiencing homelessness in order to profile their experience and characteristics.



TOTAL PERSONS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

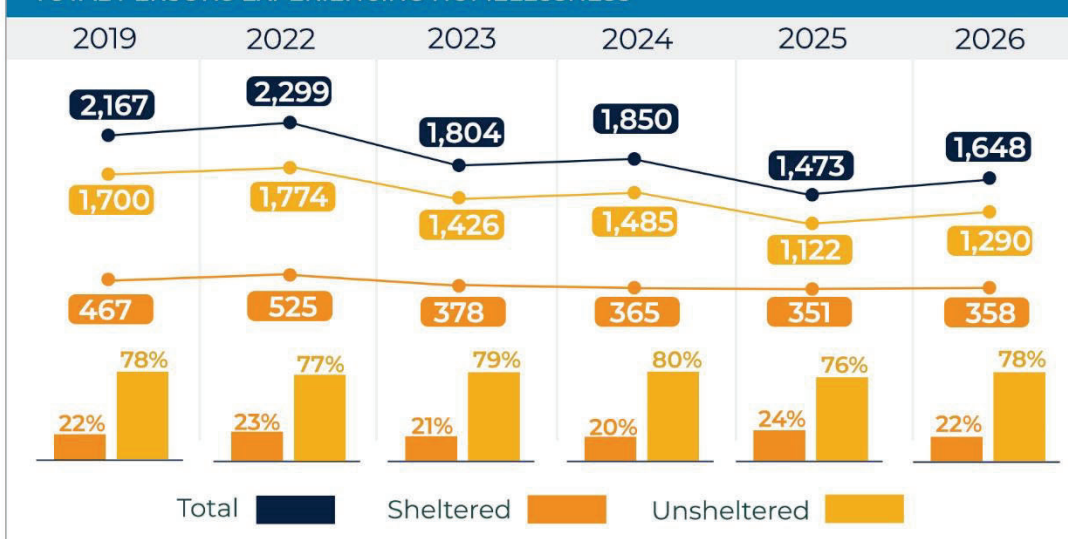
1,648



22%
Sheltered
n=358

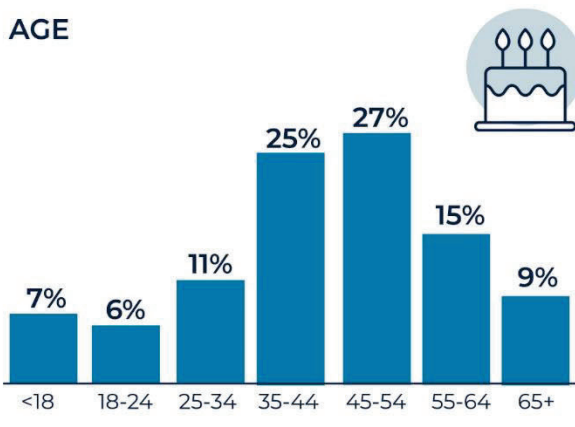
78%
Unsheltered
n=1,290

TOTAL PERSONS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

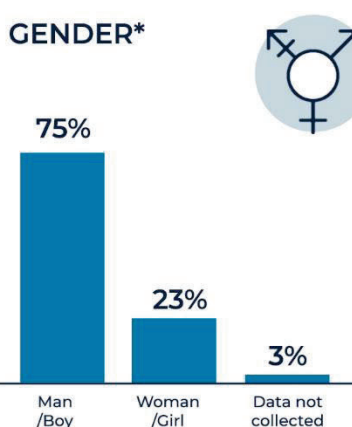


DEMOGRAPHICS

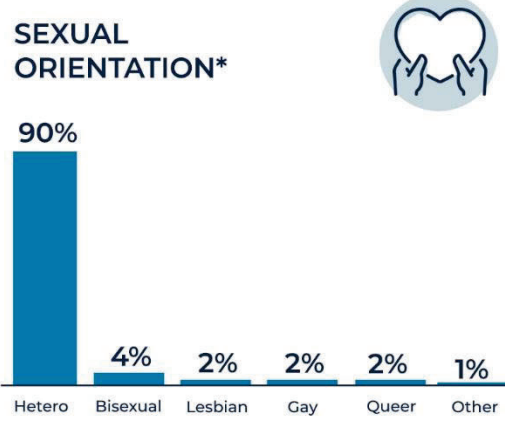
AGE



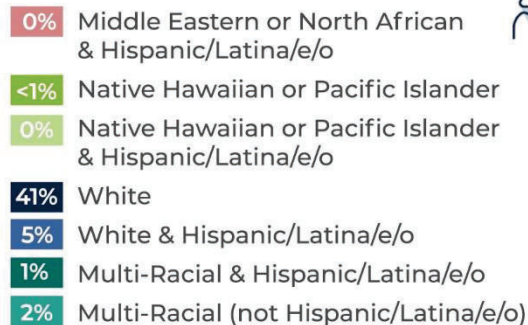
GENDER*



SEXUAL ORIENTATION*

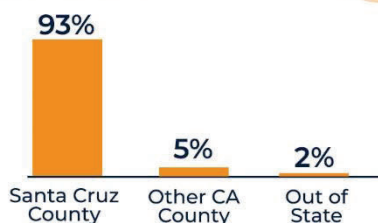


RACE/ ETHNICITY

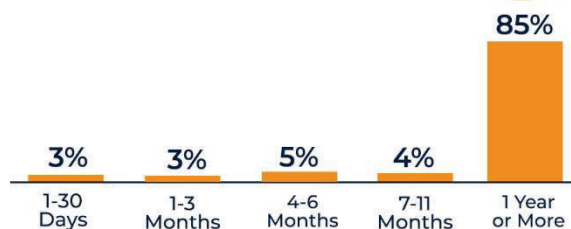


DATA PORTRAITS

RESIDENCE AT THE TIME THEY BECAME HOMELESS



DURATION OF CURRENT EPISODE OF HOMELESSNESS



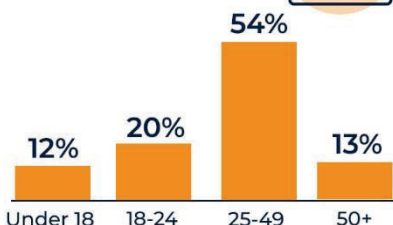
FIRST EPISODE OF HOMELESSNESS



50%

of survey respondents reported their current episode of homelessness as being their first

AGE AT FIRST EPISODE OF HOMELESSNESS



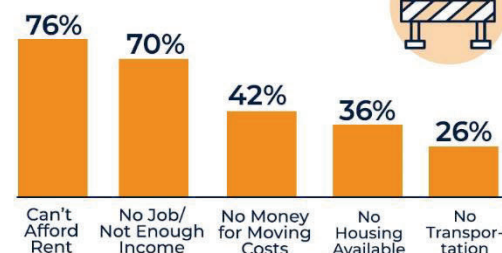
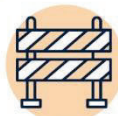
PRIMARY CONDITIONS THAT LEAD TO HOMELESSNESS*

(Top 5 Responses)



BARRIERS TO OBTAINING PERMANENT HOUSING*

(Top 5 Responses)



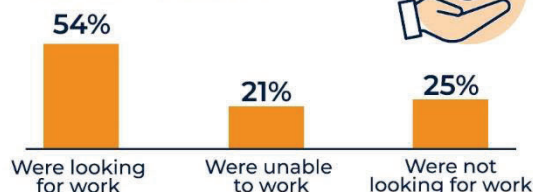
EMPLOYMENT STATUS



12%

of survey respondents had some form of employment

AMONG UNEMPLOYED RESPONDENTS



FOSTER CARE



11%

of survey respondents have foster care involvement

JUSTICE SYSTEM INVOLVED



22%

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

18%

of survey respondents reported being on probation/parole at the start of their most recent episode of homelessness

SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY SLEEPING ACCOMMODATION



SELF-REPORTED HEALTH^a

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

PSYCHIATRIC
OR EMOTIONAL
CONDITIONS



52%

Report having a psychiatric or emotional condition

SUBSTANCE
USE
DISORDER



45%

Report having a substance use disorder

PTSD



42%

Report having Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

PHYSICAL
DISABILITY



30%

Report having a physical disability

CHRONIC
HEALTH
CONDITION



22%

Report having a chronic health condition

TRAUMATIC
BRAIN
INJURY



17%

Report having had a TBI

HIV/AIDS
RELATED
ILLNESS



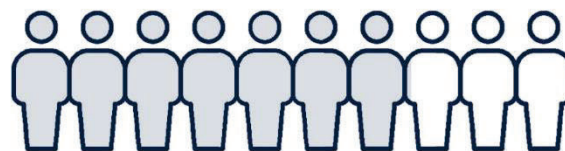
1%

Report having an HIV/AIDS related illness

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.

71%



of survey respondents report having at least one disabling condition

GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE^a



83%

of survey respondents reported receiving government benefits.

SERVICES CURRENTLY ACCESSING* (TOP 6 RESPONSES)

70%



Medi-Cal/
Medicare

55%



Food
Stamps

14%



General
Assistance

7%



Social
Security

6%



SSI/SSDI/
Disability

17%



None

REASONS FOR NOT RECEIVING GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE* (TOP 4 RESPONSES)

21%



Immigration
issues

11%



No permanent
address

11%



Don't have
ID

9%



Don't think
I'm eligible

SPECIAL POPULATIONS

Total ■ Sheltered ■ Unsheltered ■

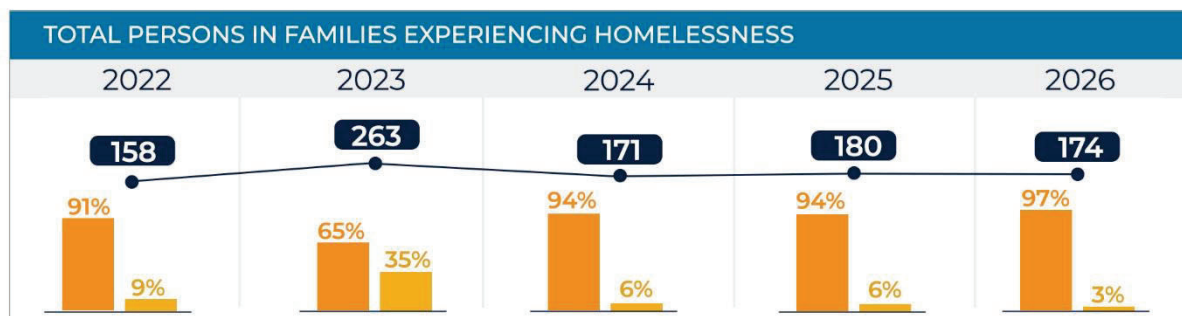
CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS



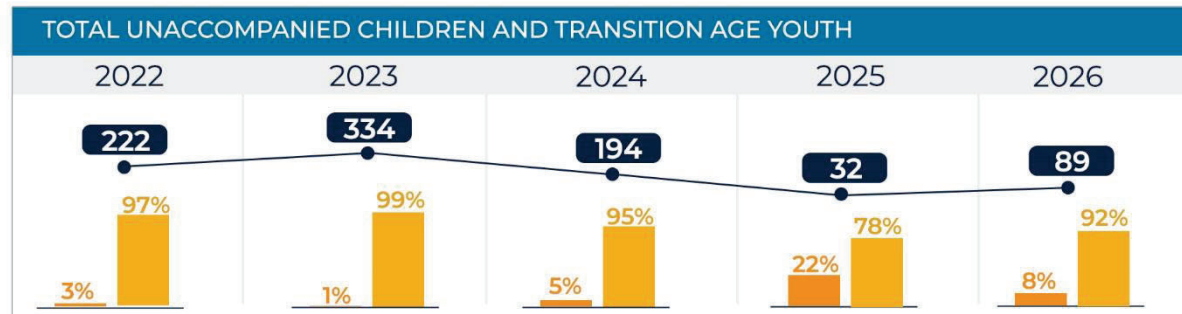
VETERANS



FAMILIES



UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN + TAY



SUBPOPULATION DEFINITIONS

CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

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

- Has been continuously homeless for one year or more and/or;
- Has experienced four or more episodes totaling 12 months or more of homelessness within the past three years

VETERANS

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

FAMILIES

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

UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH YOUNG ADULTS

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

□ Source: 2026 Santa Cruz County Homeless Survey, N=374

* Multiple response question, percentages may not add up to 100%
Source: 2026 Santa Cruz County Point-in-Time Count

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