

THE COALITION
OF HOMELESS SERVICES PROVIDERS

**MONTEREY COUNTY 2026
HOMELESSNESS**
POINT-IN-TIME COUNT & REPORT

Prepared by
Applied Survey Research



ABOUT THE RESEARCHER

Applied Survey Research (ASR) is a social research firm dedicated to helping people build better communities by collecting meaningful data, facilitating information-based planning, and developing custom strategies. The firm was founded in 1980 on the principle that community improvement, initiative sustainability, and program success are closely tied to assessment needs, evaluation of community goals, and development of appropriate responses.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The 2026 Monterey County Homelessness Count and Survey planning team would like to thank the many individuals and agencies who contributed to this project. The participation of community volunteers, partner agencies, and people with lived experience is critical to the success of both the count and survey efforts. Hundreds of community volunteers, city and county employees, and local community-based organizations assisted with all aspects of the count, from the initial planning meetings to the night of the count and the publication of this report.

COUNT COORDINATION AGENCY

Coalition of Homeless Services Providers

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Monterey County Department of Social Services	San Benito County Health and Human Services
Monterey County Health Department	Coalition of Homeless Services Providers

Thank you to all volunteers who came to count with us! Thank you to all Coalition of Homeless Services Providers member agencies that participated in the 2026 Point in Time Count. Without your support this report would not have been possible.

SPECIAL THANKS TO

City of Salinas / SORT Team ^{1,2,3}	CSUMB Community Health Engagement ^{1,2,3}
San Benito County Community Services and Workforce Development ^{1,2,3}	All Law Enforcement Agencies that participated in the Point in Time Count ²
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Downtown Streets Team ^{1,2}	Interim ^{1,2}
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City of King ²	City of Pacific Grove ²
City of Seaside ²	Monterey County Office of Education ³
Access Support Network ^{1,2}	
Everyone with Lived Experience who served as guides, volunteers, and/or surveyors ^{1,2,3}	
¹ These Volunteers/Organizations/Outreach Teams were instrumental in the pre-deployment preparation of the 2026 PIT Count.	
² These Volunteers/Organizations/Outreach Teams were instrumental in overseeing the implementation of the 2026 PIT Count	
³ These Volunteers/Organizations/Outreach Teams were instrumental in collecting the survey data needed for this report	

INTRODUCTION

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

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

As the Continuum of Care lead agency, the Coalition of Homeless Services Providers partnered with ASR to conduct its Point-in-Time (PIT) Count since 1999, maintaining a similar yet continually improving data collection methodology. This helps ensure consistency from one count to the next. ASR is a locally based social research firm that has over 25 years of experience in homeless enumeration and needs assessments, having conducted over 100 comprehensive homeless counts and surveys throughout California and across the nation. Our work is featured as a best practice in the standard process HUD publication, *A Guide to Counting Unsheltered Homeless People*, as well as in the Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago publication, *Conducting a Youth Count: A Toolkit*.

Project Overview and Goals

In order for the Homelessness Count and Survey to best reflect the experience and expertise of the community, ASR held planning meetings with local community members. These community members were drawn from City and County departments, community-based service providers, people with lived experience, and other interested and informed stakeholders. These individuals comprised the 2026 Planning Committee and were instrumental to ensuring the 2026 Monterey County Homelessness Point-in-Time Count and Survey reflected the needs and concerns of the community.



The 2026 Planning Committee identified several important project goals:

- To preserve current federal funding for homeless services and to enhance the ability to raise new funds;
- To improve the ability of policy makers and service providers to plan and implement services that meet the needs of the local homeless population;
- To measure changes in the numbers and characteristics of the homeless population and track the community's progress toward ending homelessness;
- To increase public awareness of overall homeless issues and generate support for constructive solutions; and
- To assess the status of specific subpopulations, including veterans, families, youth, young adults, and those who are chronically homeless;
- To conduct the PIT count in such a manner that the health and safety of all participants was a primary operational consideration, and all County Public Health recommended practices were followed in field work associated with the PIT count.

Federal Definition of Homelessness for Point-in-Time Counts

In this study, the HUD definition of homelessness for the Point-in-Time Count was used. This definition includes individuals and families:

- Living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements; or
- With a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground.

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



MONTEREY COUNTY

2026 POINT-IN-TIME COUNT & SURVEY

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

The 2026 Monterey County Point-in-Time Count was a community-wide effort conducted on January 29, 2024. In the weeks following the street count, a survey was administered to 384 unsheltered and sheltered individuals experiencing homelessness in order to profile their experience and characteristics.

THE COALITION
OF HOMELESS SERVICES PROVIDERS



TOTAL PERSONS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

2,073

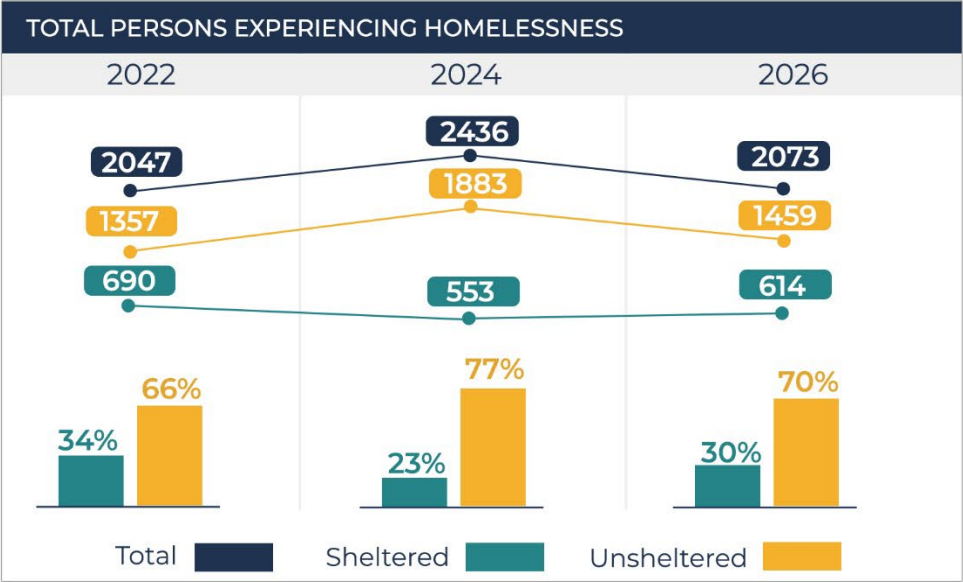


30%
Sheltered
n=614



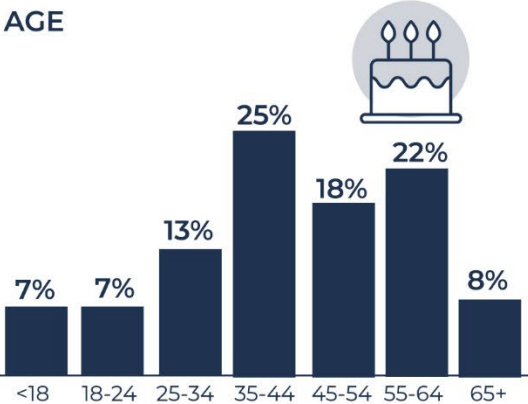
70%
Unsheltered
n=1,459

TOTAL PERSONS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

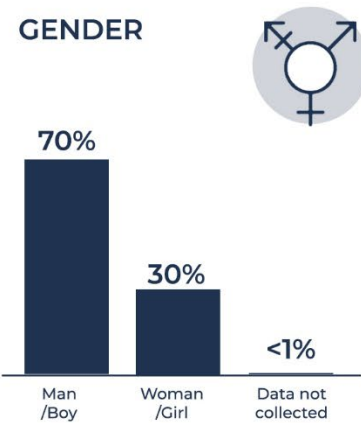


DEMOGRAPHICS

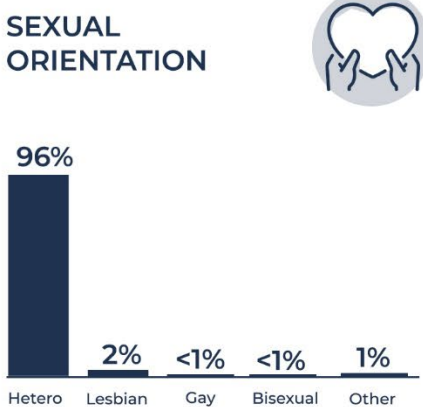
AGE



GENDER



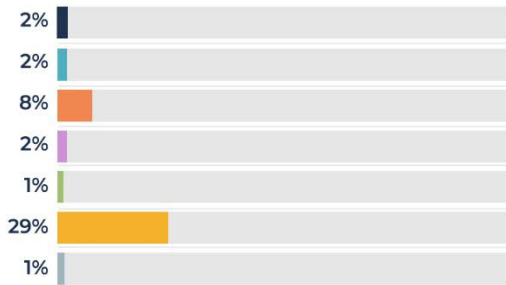
SEXUAL ORIENTATION



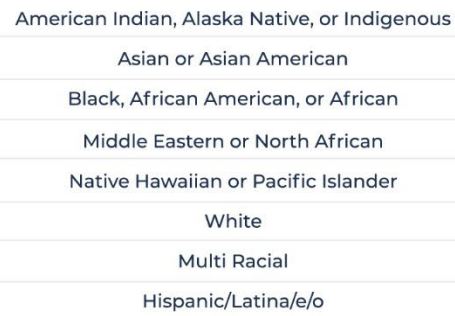


RACE/ ETHNICITY

NOT HISPANIC/LATINA/E/O

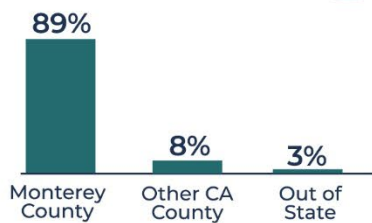


HISPANIC/LATINA/E/O



DATA PORTRAITS [□]

RESIDENCE AT TIME OF HOMELESSNESS



DURATION OF CURRENT HOMELESSNESS



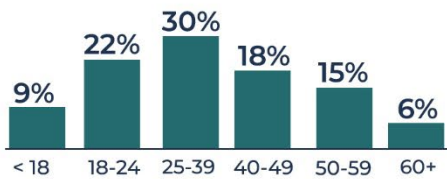
FIRST EPISODE OF HOMELESSNESS



60%

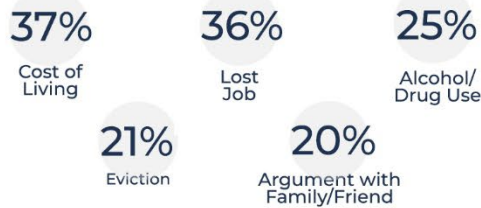
Reported their current episode of homelessness as being their first

AGE AT FIRST EPISODE OF HOMELESSNESS



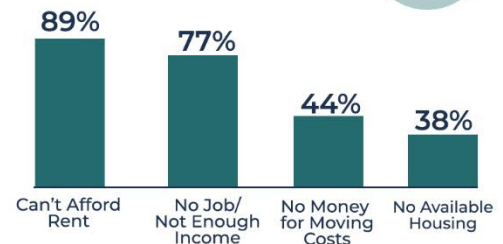
PRIMARY CONDITION THAT LEAD TO HOMELESSNESS*

(Top 5 Responses)



OBSTACLES TO OBTAINING PERMANENT HOUSING*

(Top 4 Responses)



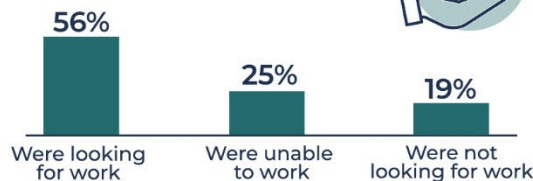
EMPLOYMENT STATUS



8%

had some form of employment

AMONG UNEMPLOYED RESPONDENTS



FOSTER CARE



9%

of survey respondents have been in the foster care system

JUSTICE SYSTEM INVOLVED



19%

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

10%

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

SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY SLEEPING ACCOMMODATION



Outdoors/
Streets



Vehicle



Shelter



Motel/
Hotel



Structure or indoor
area not normally
used for sleeping

SELF-REPORTED HEALTH [▫]

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

SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER



46%

Report having a substance use disorder

DEPRESSION



43%

Report having depression

PTSD



36%

Report having Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

PHYSICAL DISABILITY



30%

Report having a physical disability

CHRONIC HEALTH CONDITION



27%

Report having a chronic health condition

PSYCHIATRIC OR EMOTIONAL CONDITIONS



26%

Report having a psychiatric or emotional condition

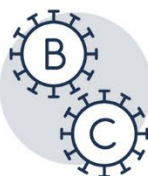
TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY



20%

Report having had a TBI

CHRONIC INFECTION with HEPATITIS B or C



4%

Report having a chronic infection

HIV/AIDS RELATED ILLNESS



1%

Report having an HIV/AIDS related illness

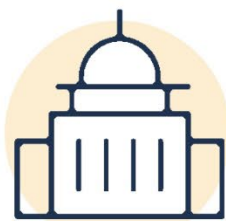
DISABLING CONDITION

65%



of survey respondents report having at least one disabling condition

GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE [▫]



74%

Of survey respondents reported receiving government benefits.

SERVICES CURRENTLY ACCESSING* (TOP 3 RESPONSES)

23%



Contact with Outreach Worker

10%



Transitional Housing

8%



Shelter Day Services

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

26%

Immigration Issues

18%

Never Applied

17%

Benefits Were Cut Off

15%

Paperwork Too Difficult

12%

Don't Have ID

12%

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 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 Monterey County Homeless Survey, N=384

* Multiple response question, percentages may not add up to 100%

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

POINT-IN-TIME COUNT

The 2026 Monterey County Point-in-Time Homeless Count represents a complete enumeration of all sheltered and unsheltered persons experiencing homelessness at a specified date and time. It consisted of two primary components:

- **General Street Count:** An early morning count of unsheltered individuals and families experiencing homelessness on January 29th, 2026. Teams focused on those sleeping outdoors on the street; at bus and train stations; in parks, tents, and makeshift shelters; and in vehicles and abandoned properties.
- **General Shelter Count:** A nighttime count of individuals and families experiencing homelessness staying at publicly and privately-operated shelters on January 28, 2026. This included those who occupied emergency shelters, transitional housing, and safe havens.

The Point-in-Time Count also included the following supplemental and important components:

- **Targeted Street Count of Unaccompanied Children and Young Adults:** An afternoon count of unsheltered unaccompanied children under 18 and unaccompanied youth 18-24 years old on January 29, 2026. This is considered a best practice in order to better profile this age group who are more challenging to enumerate in the traditional PIT count process.
- **County Office of Education Count:** Information pulled from the Student Information System (SIS) Unsheltered Homeless Report for K-12 Students was used to provide an estimate of students experiencing homelessness in the County. SIS is a database managed by every school district in Monterey County. One of the measures recorded in this database is homelessness status. District/school representatives then contacted families likely to be experiencing homelessness according to the SIS system to ascertain their sleeping status on the night of the count.

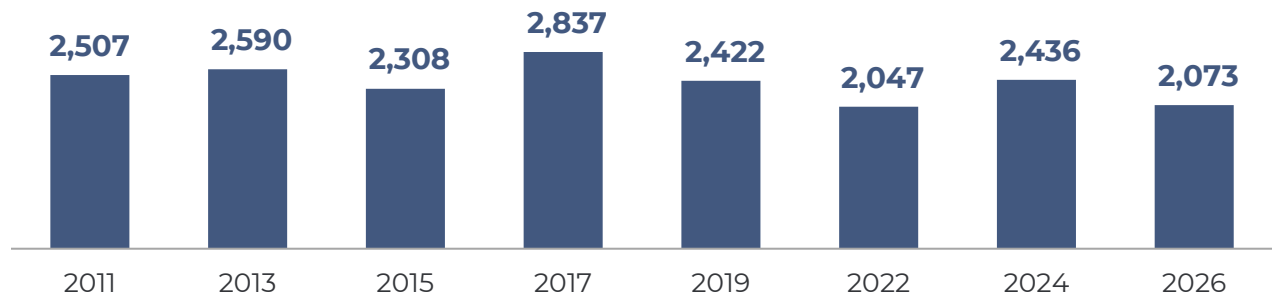
This section of the report provides a summary of the results of the Point-in-Time Count. For comparison, results from prior years are provided to better understand the trends and characteristics of homelessness over time.

For more information regarding the research methodology, please see [**Appendix A: Methodology.**](#)



NUMBER AND CHARACTERISTICS OF PERSONS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS IN MONTEREY COUNTY

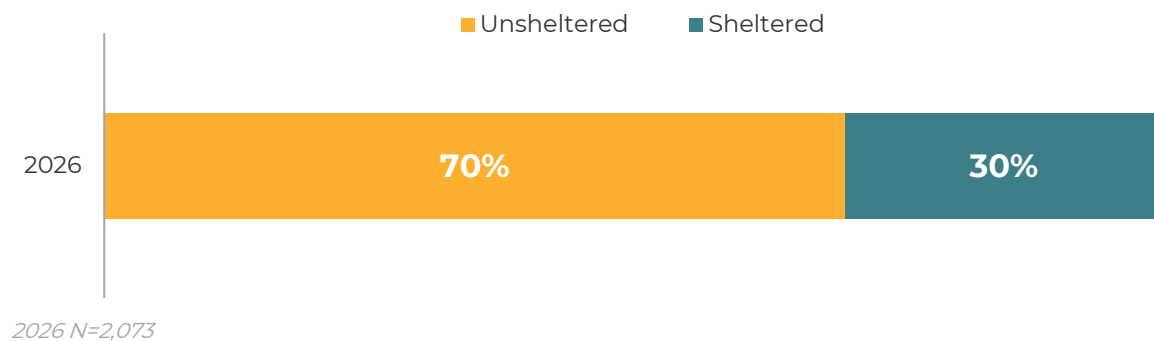
Figure 1: Total Point-in-Time Count of Persons Experiencing Homelessness



Shelter Status

The majority (68%) of individuals experiencing homelessness in Monterey County were unsheltered, sleeping on the streets, in abandoned buildings, vehicles, and encampment areas and in other places deemed unfit for human habitation. The remaining 32% of the population resided in shelters, either emergency shelters or transitional housing. Permanent supportive housing and rapid rehousing programs data are not included in the PIT data reporting per HUD.

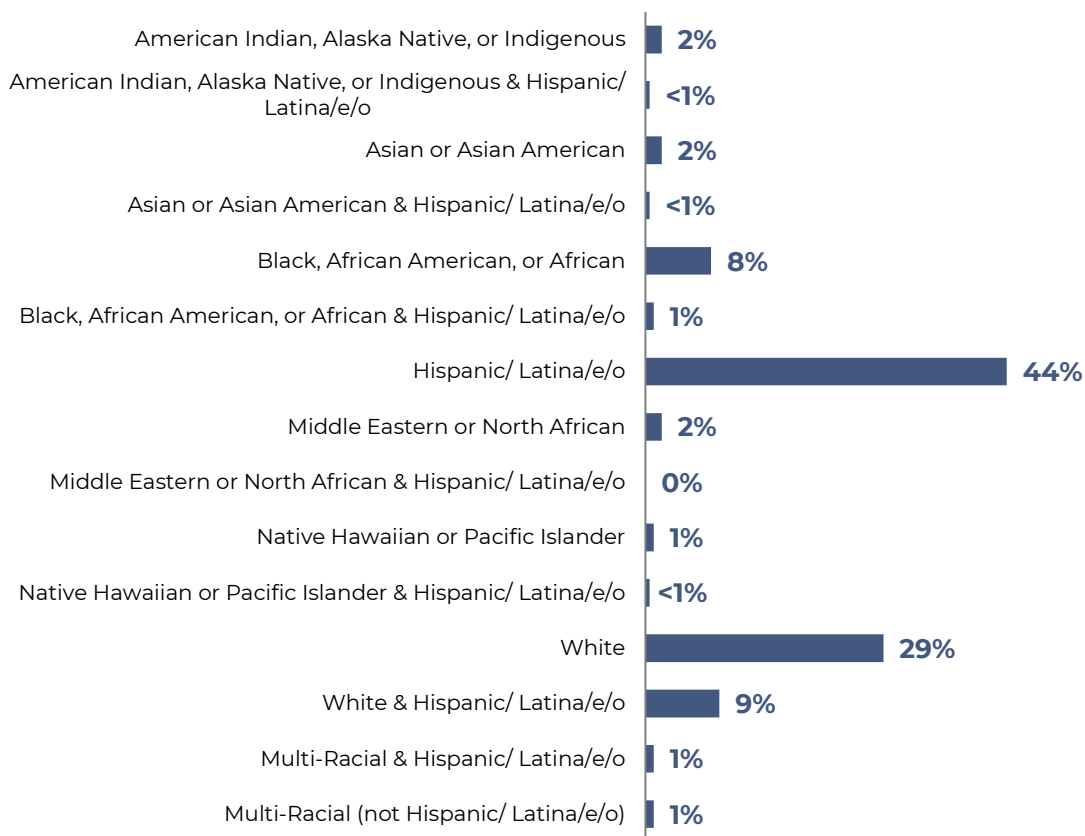
Figure 2: Homeless Count Population Experiencing Homelessness by Shelter Status



Characteristics of Persons Experiencing Homelessness

Forty-four percent (44%) indicated that they were of Hispanic/Latinx origin only. In terms of racial identity, 28% identified as White only, 9% identified as White and Hispanic/Latina/e/o, and 8% identified as Black/African American/African only.

Figure 3: Total Census Population Experiencing Homelessness by Race



Homeless Count Population: 2026 N=2,073

Jurisdictional Breakdown

Of the jurisdictions in the county, the city of Seaside saw the largest decrease of 84 persons from 2024 to 2026.

Figure 4: Population Experiencing Homelessness by Jurisdiction

JURISDICTION	UNSHELTERED			SHELTERED			TOTAL			'24 - '26 % Change
	2022	2024	2026	2022	2024	2026	2022	2024	2026	
Total Incorporated	1,089	1,440	1,336	652	553	614	1,741	1,993		
Monterey	74	141	164	27	80	72	101	221	236	7%
Salinas	777	949	967	288	267	282	1,065	1,216	1,249	3%
Marina	81	65	38	275	97	149	356	162	187	15%
Seaside	90	140	66	62	79	69	152	219	135	-38%
Sand City	3	2	4	0	0	0	3	2	4	100%
Gonzales	0	1	6	0	0	0	0	1	6	500%
Pacific Grove	29	52	33	0	0	0	29	52	33	-37%
King City	18	8	28	0	30	29	18	38	57	50%
Greenfield	2	21	19	0	0	0	2	21	19	10%
Del Rey Oaks	2	14	3	0	0	0	2	14	3	79%
Carmel	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	-100%
Soledad	12	45	8	0	0	13	12	45	21	53%
Total Unincorporated	268	443	123	38	0	0	306	443	123	-72%
Total	1,357	1,883	1,459	690	553	614	2,047	2,436	2,073	-15%

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



HOMELESS SURVEY FINDINGS

This section provides an overview of the findings generated from the 2026 Monterey County Point-in-Time Homelessness Count Survey component. As previously mentioned, an in-depth geographically representative survey was administered in the weeks following the Point-in-Time Count to collect basic demographic details as well as information including service needs and utilization. Surveys were administered between January 29 and March 10, 2026, to a randomized sample of individuals and families currently experiencing homelessness.

The Homeless Survey effort resulted in 384 unique, complete, and valid surveys. Based on the Point-in-Time count of 2,073 persons experiencing homelessness, with a randomized survey sampling process employed, these surveys should represent a confidence interval of $\pm 4.5\%$ with a 95% confidence level when generalizing the results of the survey to the entire Point-in-Time population in Monterey County. In other words, if the survey were conducted again, we can be 95% certain that the results would be within 4.5% of the current results.

In order to respect respondent privacy and to ensure the safety and comfort of those who participated, respondents were not required to complete all survey questions. Therefore, any missing values were intentionally omitted from the survey results and the total number of respondents for each question will not always equal the total number of surveys conducted. Don't know and refusals were omitted from the response percentage calculations.

For more information regarding the research methodology, please see [Appendix A: Methodology](#).



DEMOGRAPHICS OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Age

Five percent (5%) of survey respondents were under the age of 25 at the time of the 2026 survey. Forty-one percent (41%) were between the ages of 25 and 44, and 54% were 45 years or older.

Figure 5: Survey Respondents by Age*

AGE GROUP	2026
Less than 18 Years	0%
18-24 Years	5%
25-34 Years	13%
35-44 Years	28%
45-54 Years	20%
55-64 Years	26%
65 Years or More	8%

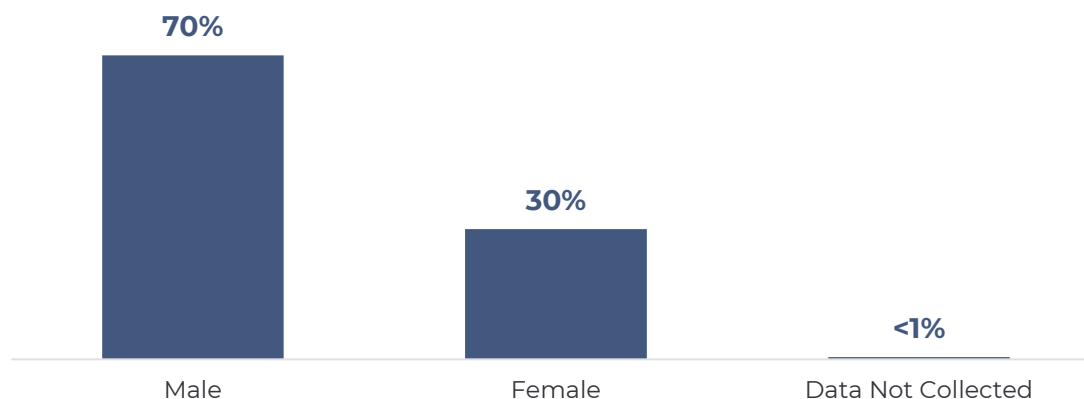
2026 N=358

* Note: Age categories were updated to align with HUD reporting requirements.

Gender and LGBTQ+ Identity

Over half (70%) of survey respondents identified as male, and 30% identified as female. Among female respondents, two survey respondents indicated that they were currently pregnant.

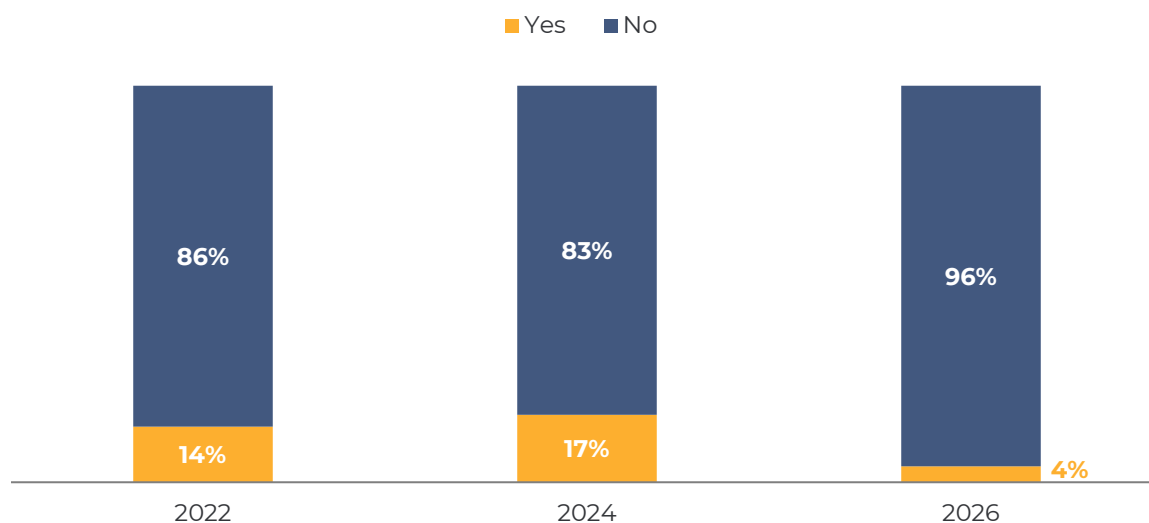
Figure 6: Survey Respondents by Gender



2026 N=384

Four percent (4%) of homeless survey respondents identified as LGBTQ+ in 2026, down from 17% in 2024. Of these respondents, half (50%) identified as lesbian.

Figure 7: Survey Respondents Who Identify as LGBTQ+

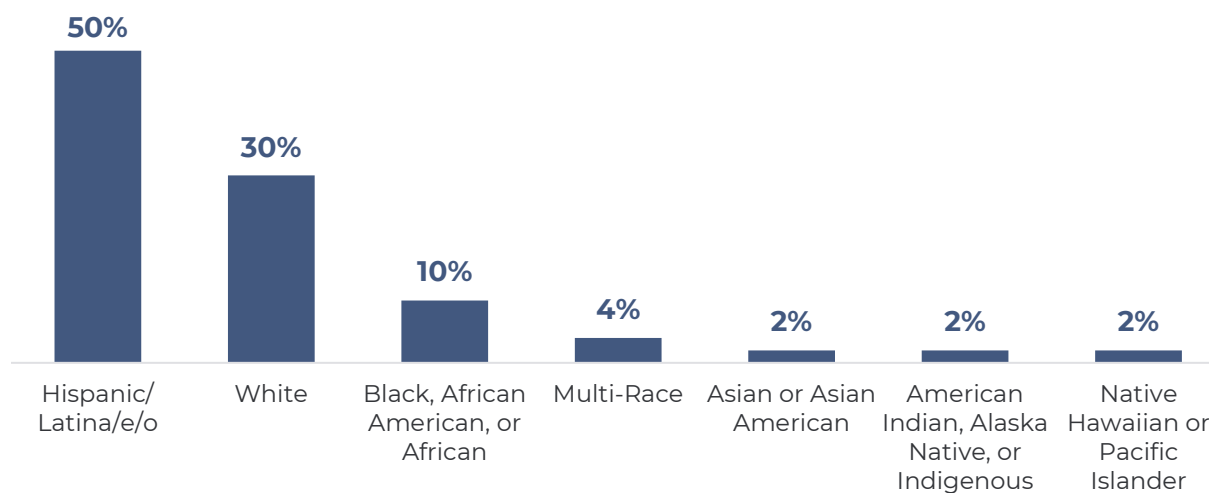


LGBTQ+ Identity: 2022 N=275; 2024 N=367; 2026 N=379

Race/Ethnicity

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) now gathers data on race and ethnicity in one question, a change from years past. Half (50%) of survey respondents identified as Hispanic/Latina/e/o only, 30% identified as White only, and 10% of respondents identified as Black, African American, or African only.

Figure 8: Survey Respondents by Race



Homeless Survey Population: 2026 N=379

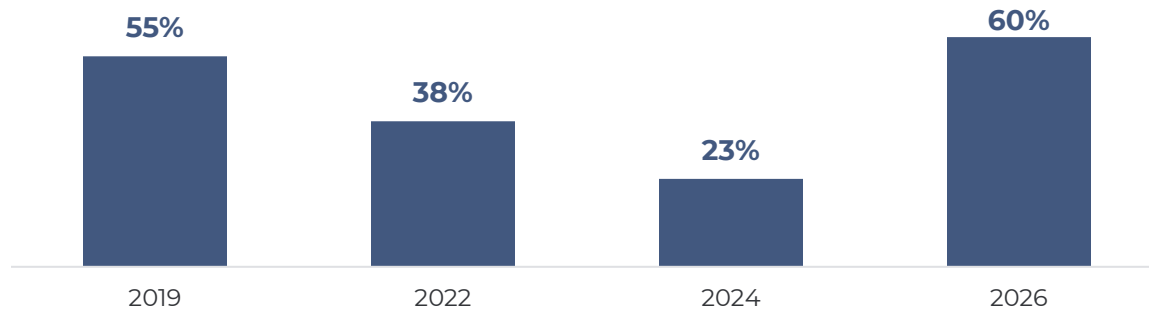
Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100.

INCIDENCE AND DURATION OF HOMELESSNESS

First Incidence of Homelessness

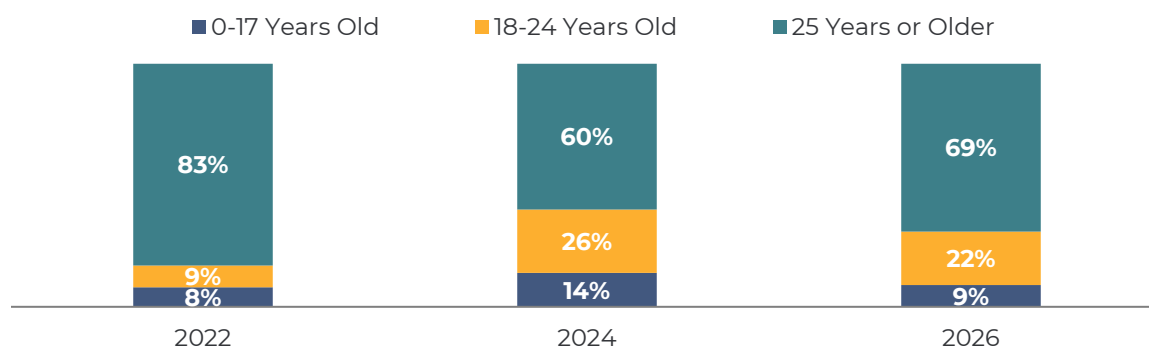
Of those surveyed in 2026, over half (60%) reported that the current episode of homelessness was their first-time experiencing homelessness, representing an increase from 2024. Respondents were also asked their age at the time they experienced homelessness for the first time. In response, the majority (69%) reported they were 25 years or older, while 22% reported they were between the ages of 18 and 24 years and 9% reported they were under the age of 18.

Figure 9: Current Episode Is the First Time Experiencing Homelessness

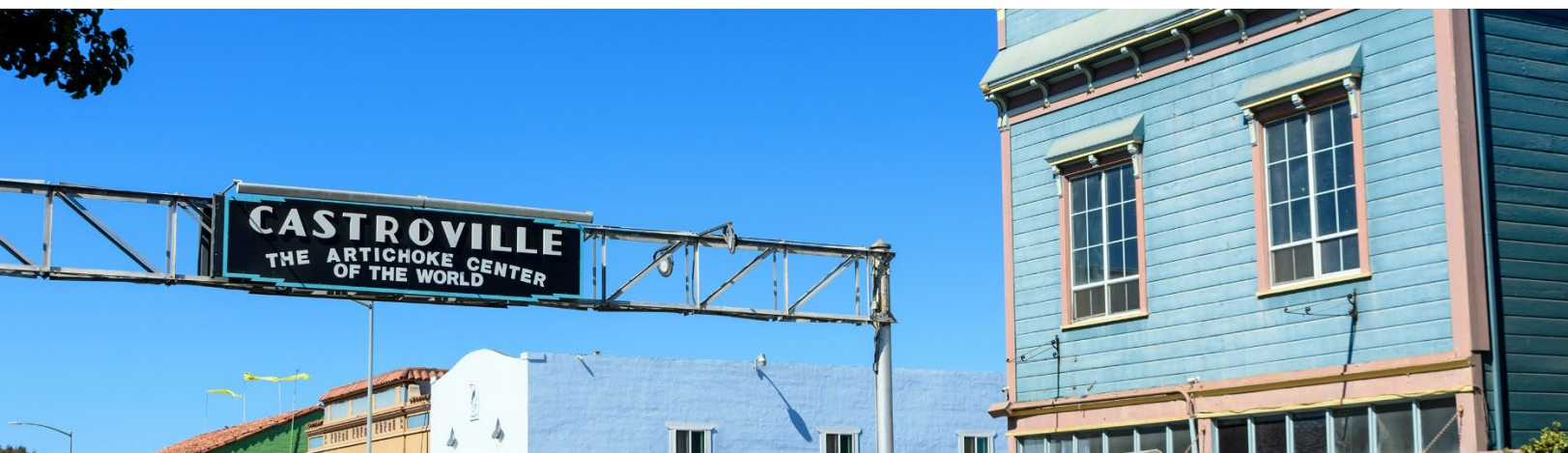


2019 N=444; 2022 N=284; 2024 N=374; 2026 N=380

Figure 10: Age When Experienced Homelessness for the First Time



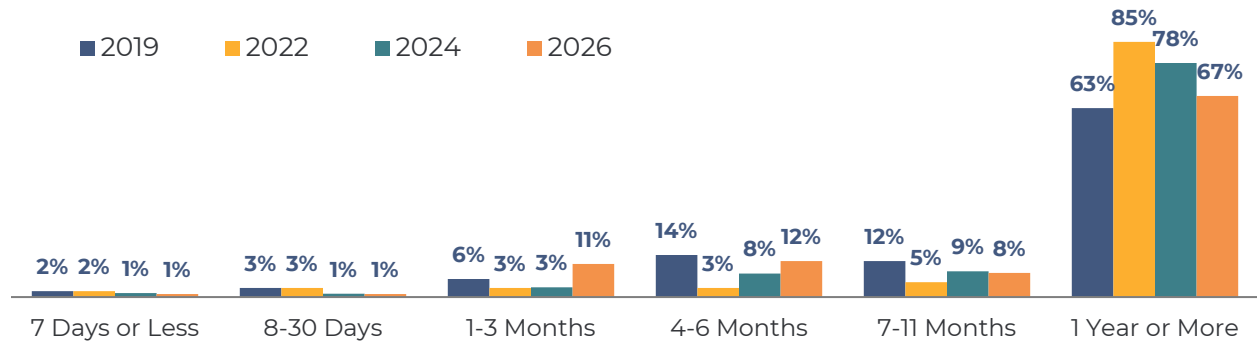
2022 N=285; 2024 N=367; 2026 N=380



Duration of Homelessness

When asked about the duration of their current episode of homelessness, the majority (67%) of survey respondents reported they had been homeless for a year or longer, representing a decrease from 78% in 2024.

Figure 11: Duration of Current Episode of Homelessness



2019 N=447; 2022 N=284; 2024 N=372; 2026 N=382



LIVING ACCOMMODATIONS

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

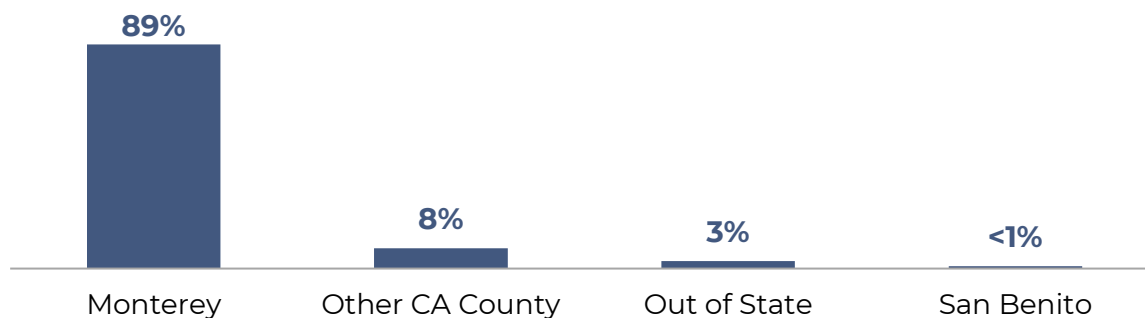
Place of Residence

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

The 2026 survey revealed that the majority (89%) of respondents reported they were living in Monterey County at the most recent time they began experiencing homelessness, similar to 2024 (81%). Eight percent (8%) of respondents reported they were living in another county in California, and 3% reported they were living out of state.

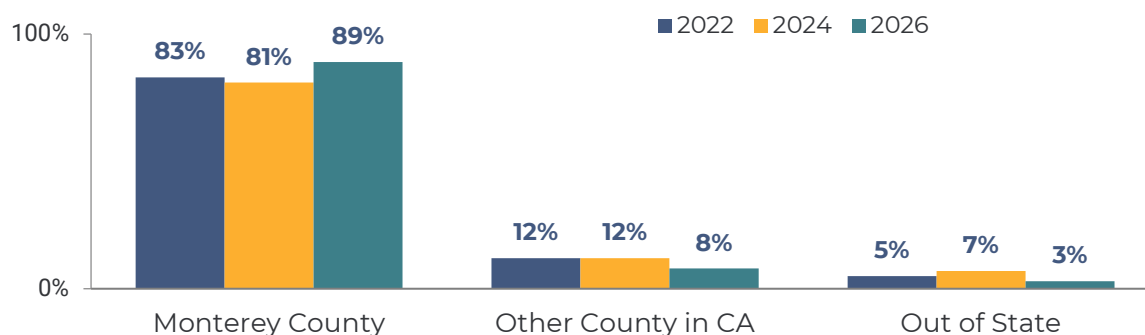
When asked how long they had lived in Monterey County, over three-quarters (81%) responded 5 years or longer, while 6% indicated they had resided in Monterey County for less than one year.

Figure 12: Place of Residence at Recent Episode of Homelessness



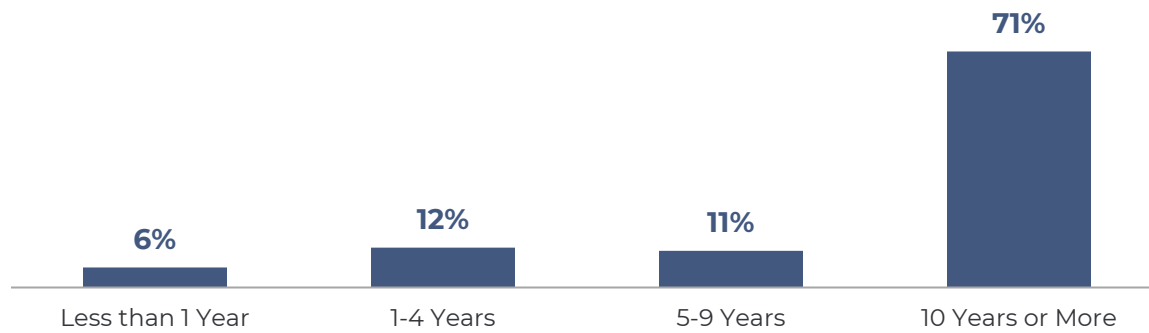
2026 N=383

Figure 13: Place of Residence at Episode of Homelessness



2022 N=286; 2024 N=361; 2026 N=383

Figure 14: Length of Time Living in Monterey County

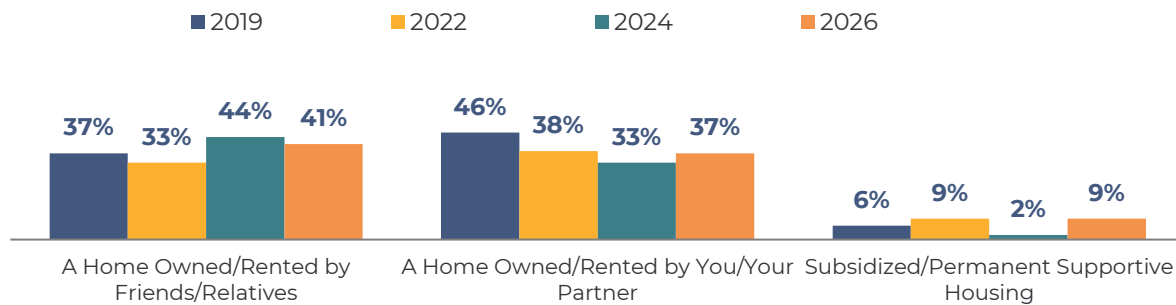


2026 N=387

Prior Living Arrangements

Forty-one percent (41%) reported they were living with friends or relatives, a decrease from 2024. Over one-third (37%) of survey respondents reported they were living in a home owned or rented by them or their partner prior to experiencing homelessness and 9% reported they were staying in Subsidized housing or permanent supportive housing.

Figure 15: Prior Living Arrangements (Top Responses)



2019 N=439; 2022 N=266; 2024 N=354; 2026 N=374

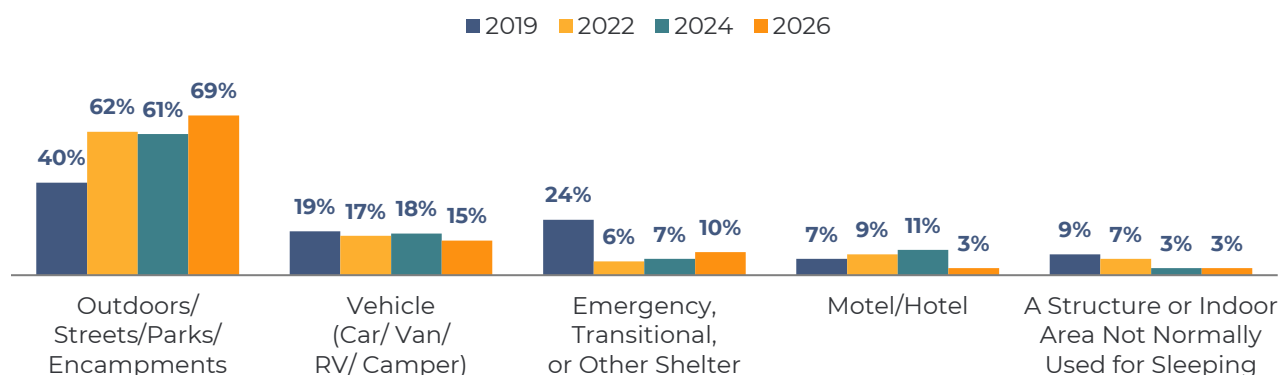


Current Sleeping Accommodation

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

Sixty-one percent (69%) of survey respondents reported currently living outdoors, either on the streets, in parks, or in encampment areas, an increase from 2024. Fifteen percent (15%) reported currently staying in a vehicle, and 10% reported staying in a shelter program.

Figure 16: Total Homeless Population Surveyed, by Sleeping Accommodation



2019 N=450; 2022 N=276; 2024 N=364; 2026 N=377



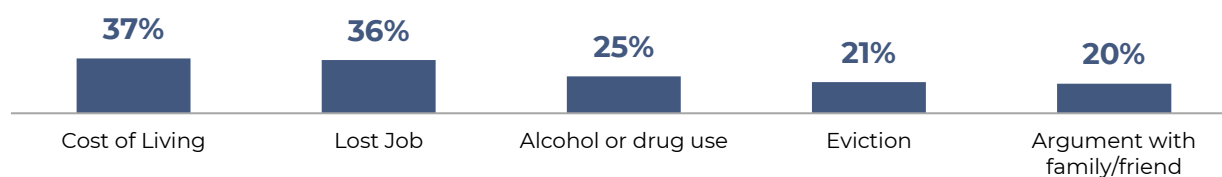
CAUSES AND OBSTACLES OF HOMELESSNESS

Causes of Homelessness

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

Thirty-seven percent (37%) of survey respondents self-reported cost of living as the primary cause of their homelessness. Thirty-six percent (36%) cited a lost job, 25% cited alcohol or drug use, 21% cited eviction, and 20% cited an argument with family or a friend.

Figure 17: Primary Cause of Homelessness



2026 N=384 respondents offering 902 responses

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

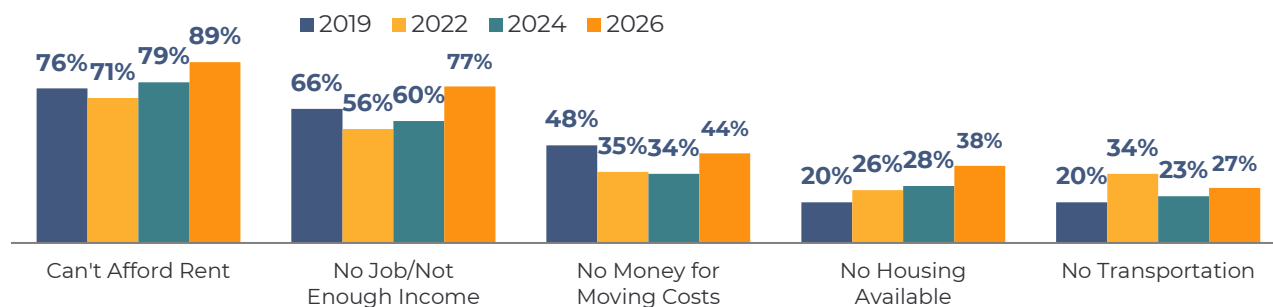
Note: This question was changed from a "select all that apply" format to asking respondents to select their top three responses.

Obstacles to Obtaining Permanent Housing

Many individuals experiencing homelessness face significant barriers to obtaining permanent housing. These barriers can range from housing affordability and availability to accessing the economic and social supports (e.g., increased income, rental assistance, and case management) needed to secure and maintain permanent housing.

When asked what prevented them from obtaining housing, the most common response was "can't afford rent," reported by 89% of survey respondents, suggesting housing affordability and poverty issues as key obstacles. This was followed by 77% who reported a lack of job or not enough income, and 44% who said they had no money for moving costs. Survey respondents were asked if they have received a housing voucher of any kind in the last 12 months, 6% of all respondents revealed they had.

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



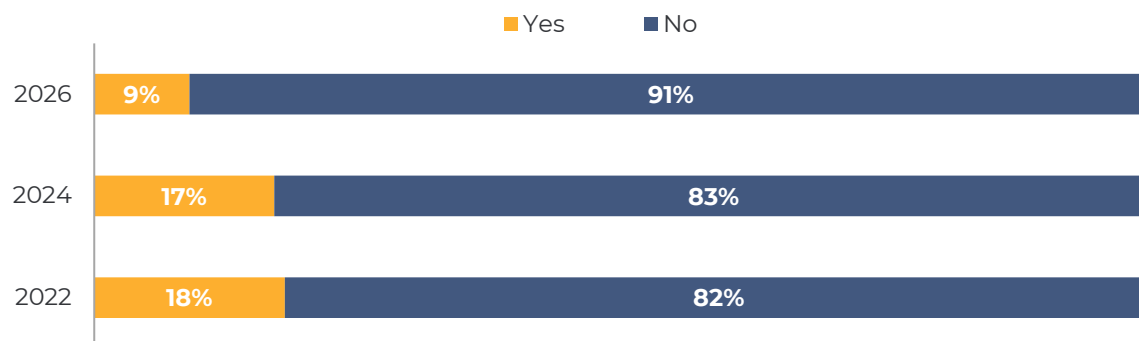
2019 N=445 respondents offering 1,313 responses; 2022 N=275 respondents offering 935 responses; 2024 N=351 respondents offering 1,154 responses; 2026 N=383 respondents offering 1,398 responses

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

HISTORY OF FOSTER CARE

Nine percent (9%) of survey respondents indicated that they had been in foster care sometime in their lifetime, a decrease from 2024 (17%).

Figure 19: History of Foster Care



2022 N=267; 2024 N=365; 2026 N=381

SERVICES AND ASSISTANCE

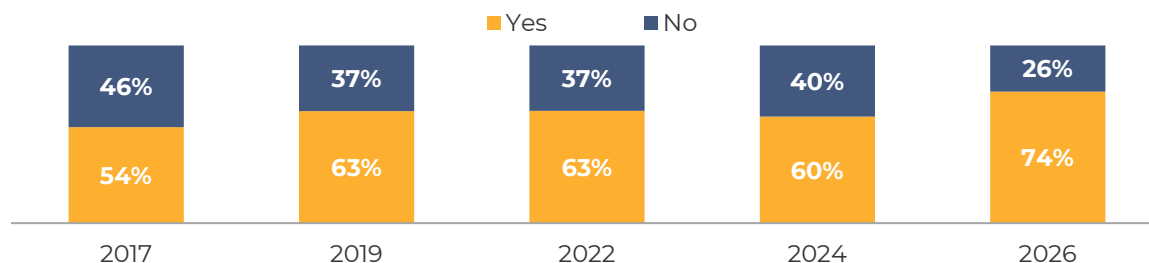
Monterey County provides services and assistance to those currently experiencing homelessness through federal, state, and local programs. Government assistance and homeless services work to enable individuals and families to obtain income and support. However, many individuals and families do not apply for services, as many believe that they are ineligible for assistance. Connecting individuals and families experiencing homelessness to these support services creates a bridge to mainstream support services and can help prevent future housing instability.

Government Assistance

Seventy-four percent (74%) of survey respondents reported in 2026 that they were receiving some form of government assistance (e.g., social security, Food Stamps, Disability, Medi-Cal, CalWorks, VA benefits), an increase from 2024 (60%).

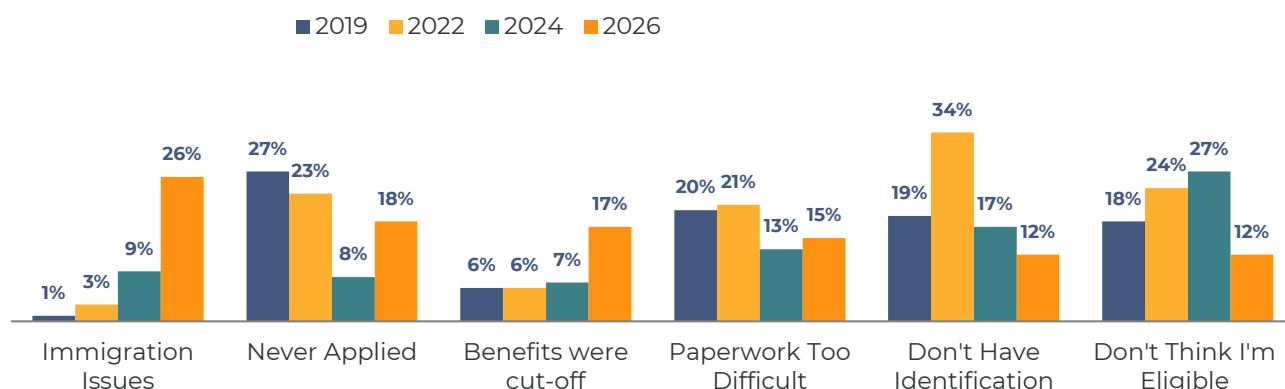
Of those who reported they were not receiving any form of government support, the greatest percentage stated immigration issues (26%) an increase from 9% in 2024. Twelve percent (12%) indicated they didn't think they were eligible

Figure 20: Receipt of Government Assistance



2017 N=615; 2019 N=424; 2022 N=253; 2024 N=313; 2026 N=380

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

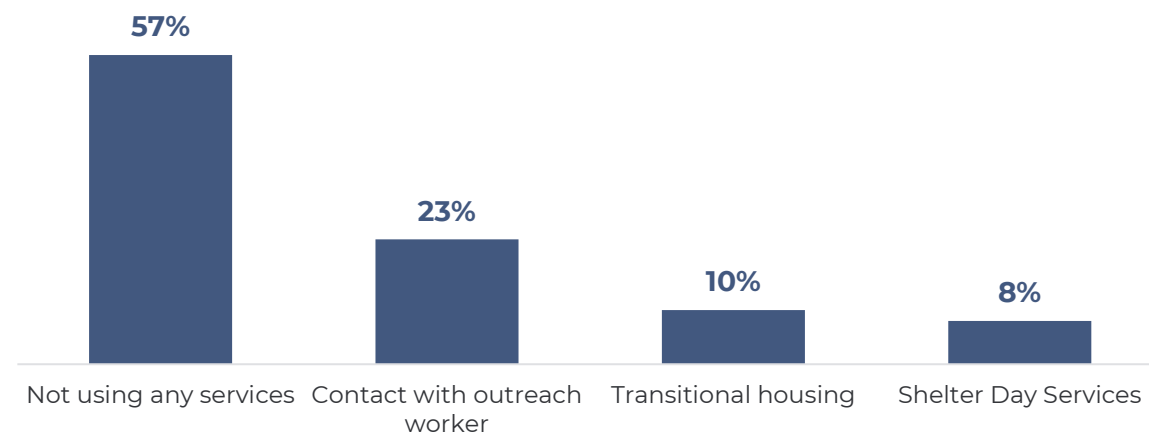


2019 N=158 respondents offering 249 responses; 2022 N=116 respondents offering 206 responses; 2024 N=162 respondents offering 219 responses; 2026 N=98 respondents offering 141 responses
 Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100.

SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

Forty-three percent (43%) of survey respondents in 2026 reported they were accessing non-government forms of services and assistance. The most frequently cited types of assistance respondents reported were contact with an outreach worker (23%), transitional housing (10%), and shelter day services (8%). Having a pet is often viewed as a barrier for individuals to access services. Among survey respondents, 18% indicated they have a pet, and among those with pets 46% identified their pet as a service animal. When asked what services might be beneficial, 34% mentioned dental care, 24% mental health services, 17% medical care, 13% substance abuse treatment, and 12% eye care.

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



2026 N=384 respondents offering 496 responses

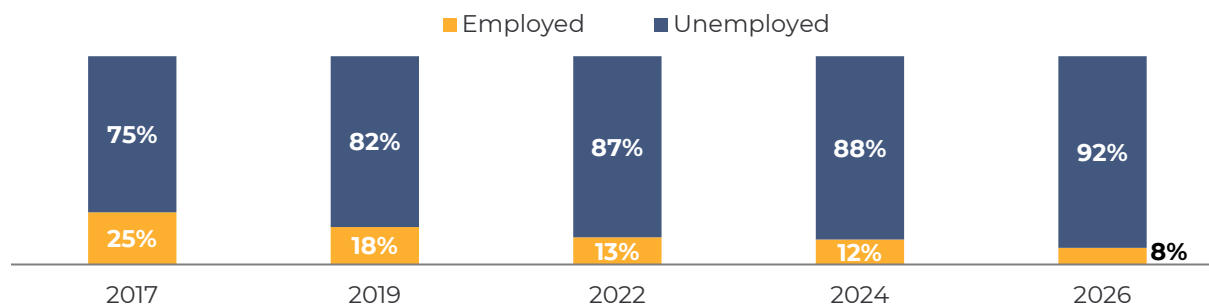
EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME

The unemployment rate in Monterey County in March 2026 was at 10%, down from 11% in January 2024.¹ It is important to recognize that the unemployment rate represents only those who are unemployed and actively seeking employment. It does not represent all joblessness, nor does it address the types of available employment.

The unemployment rate among homeless survey respondents was 92%, an increase from 2024 (88%). Fifty-six percent (56%) of unemployed respondents indicated that they were currently looking for work, 19% indicated they were not, and 25% indicated they were currently unable to work. While the majority (92%) of survey respondents reported being unemployed, a number reported having part-time or seasonal/sporadic employment (7%) and even full-time employment (1%). One respondent indicated they were employed in the agriculture sector and five respondents were employed in the hospitality sector.

Income data is important to help determine affordability thresholds for those seeking housing and the developers of new housing solutions. Although some respondents reported having income, data suggests that employment and income were not enough to meet basic needs. For example, of the employed homeless survey respondents, 82% were making less than \$1,100 monthly, and, unsurprisingly, a strong majority of unemployed survey respondents (93%) were making less than \$1,100 monthly. Typically, income for unemployed individuals experiencing homelessness comes from government benefits, recycling, and panhandling.

Figure 23: Survey Respondents by Employment Status



2017 N=593; 2019 N=441; 2022 N=260; 2024 N=340; 2026 N=369

Figure 24: Monthly Income by Employment Status

	EMPLOYED			UNEMPLOYED		
	2022	2024	2026	2022	2024	2026
Less Than \$750	74%	65%	71%	86%	89%	87%
\$750-\$1,099	21%	20%	11%	13%	5%	6%
\$1,100-\$1,499	0%	10%	11%	1%	3%	6%
\$1,500 or More	6%	5%	7%	0%	3%	1%

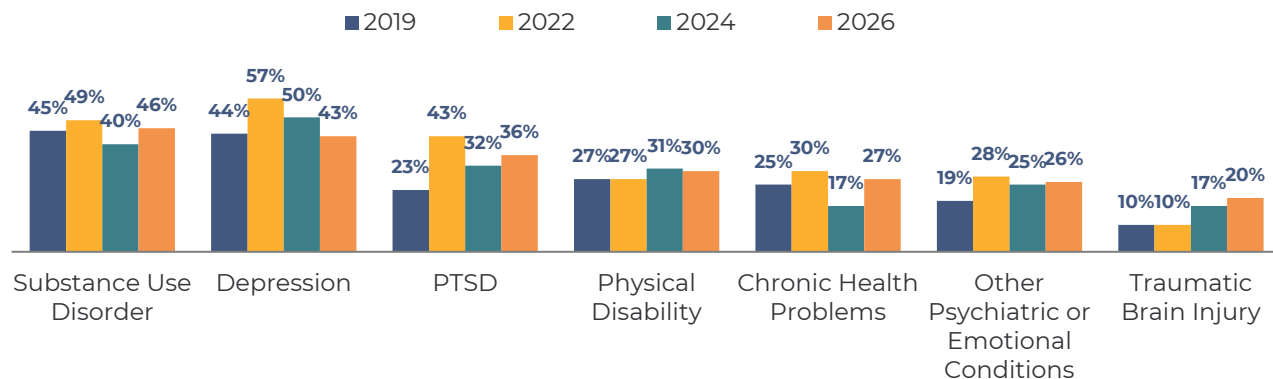
2022 N= 257; 2024 N=337; 2026 N=352

¹State of California Employment Development Department. (202). Unemployment Rates (Labor Force). Retrieved from <http://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov>.

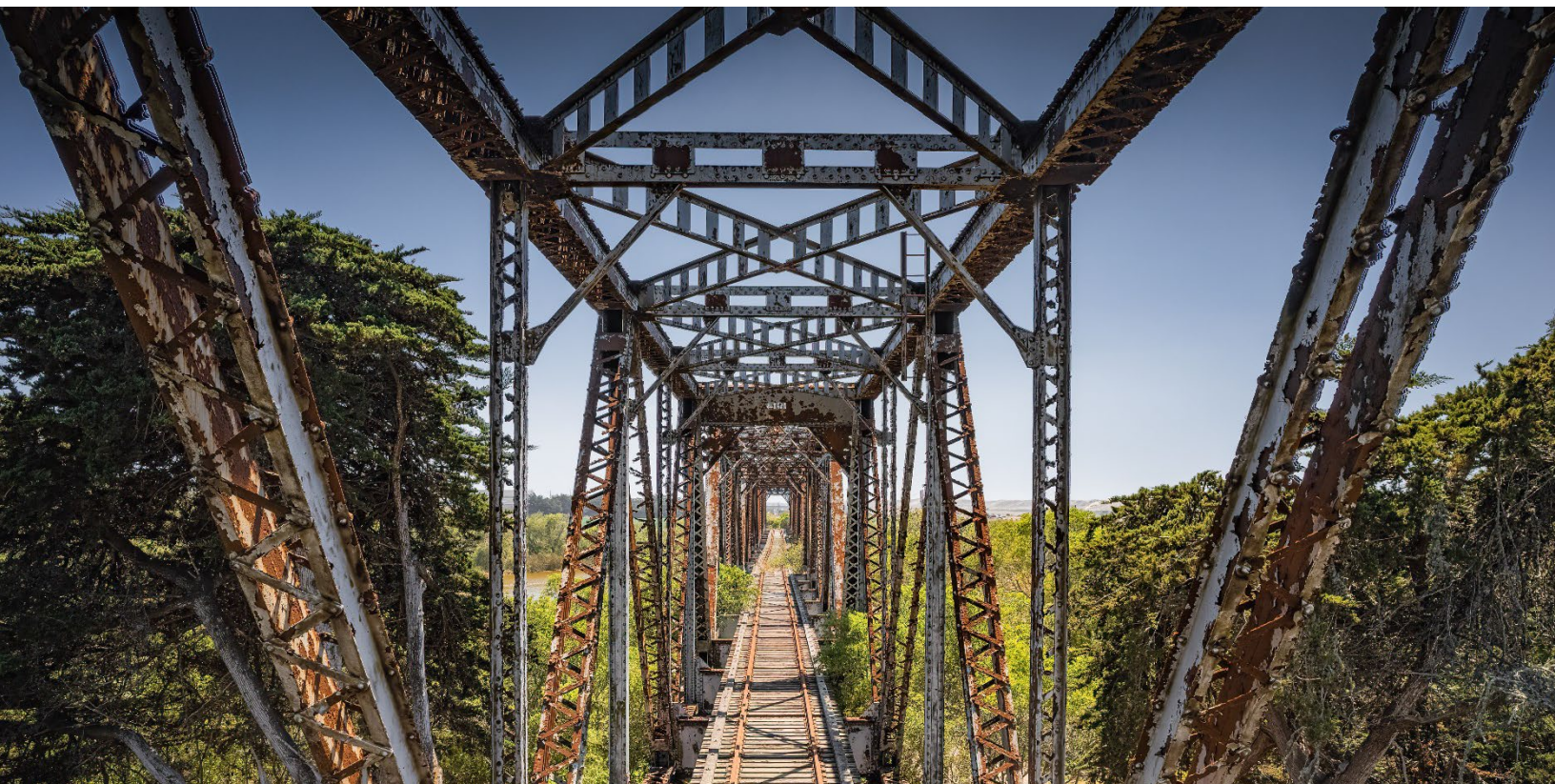
HEALTH CONDITIONS

The top health conditions survey respondents reported experiencing in 2026 was substance use disorder (46%) an increase from 40% in 2024. Depression was the second most cited response in 2026 (43%). Chronic health problems also saw an increase from 17% in 2024 to 27% in 2026.

Figure 25: Health Conditions



2019 N=422-441; 2022 N=253-270; 2024 N=41-343; 2026 N=350-358

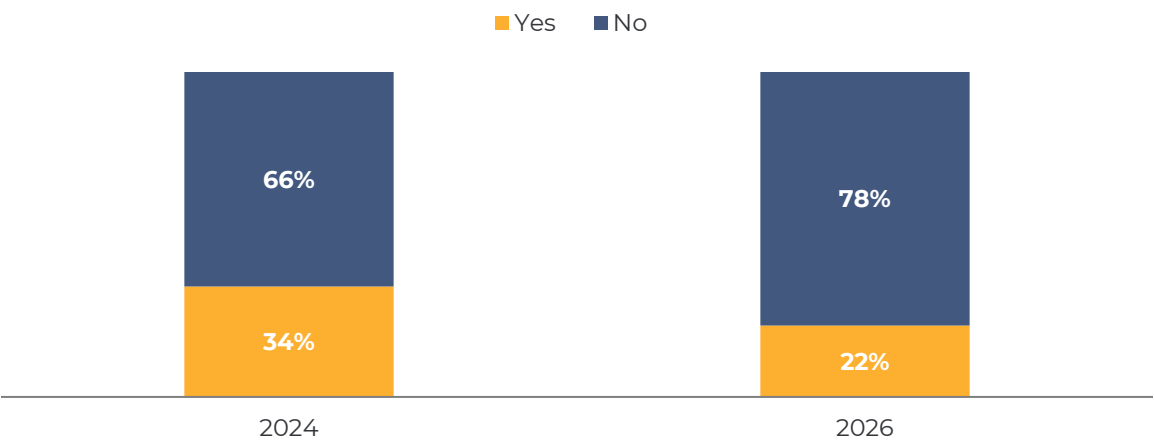


DOMESTIC PARTNER VIOLENCE OR ABUSE

Histories of domestic violence and partner abuse are prevalent among individuals experiencing homelessness and can be the primary cause of homelessness for many. Survivors often lack the financial resources required for housing, as their employment history or dependable income may be limited.

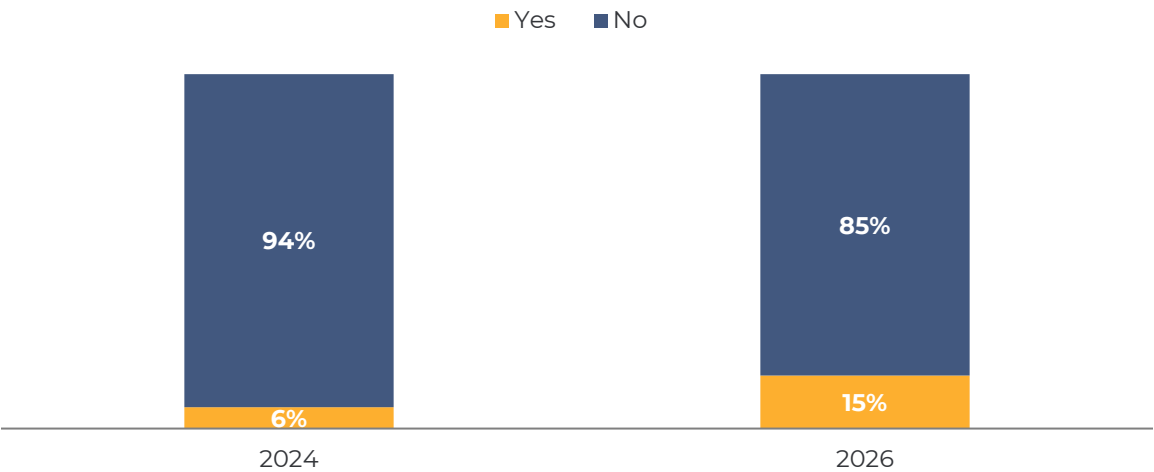
Fifteen percent (15%) of survey respondents reported currently experiencing domestic/partner violence or abuse. When asked about experiences of ever being physically, emotionally, or sexually abused by a relative or another person they had stayed with (spouse, partner, sibling, parent) in their lifetime, 22% indicated that they have.

Figure 26: History of Being Physically, Emotionally or Sexually Abused



2024 N=301; 2026 N=369

Figure 27: Currently Experiencing Physical, Emotional or Sexual Abuse



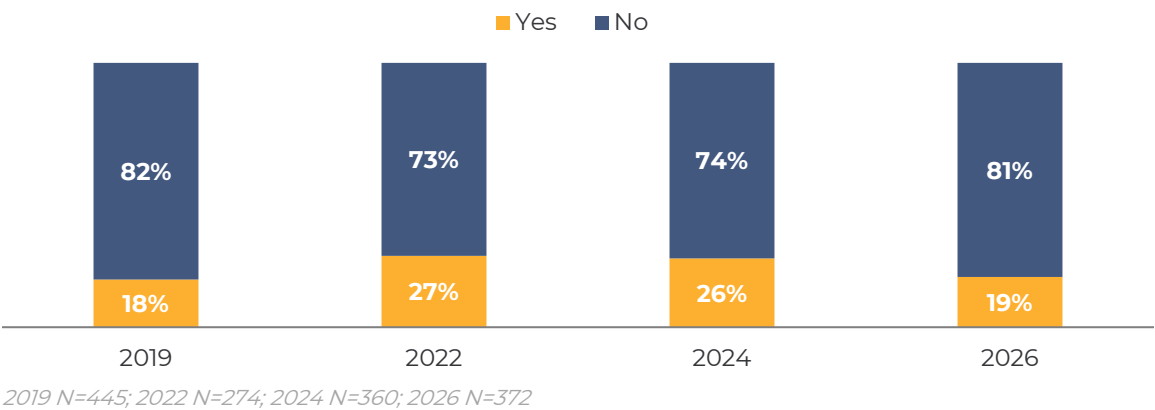
2024 N=315; 2026 N=372

CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

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

Nineteen percent (19%) of survey respondents reported that they had spent a night in jail or prison in the past year, down from 2024 findings (26%). Ten percent (10%) of respondents reported having been on probation/parole at the time they became homeless, and 9% indicated currently being on probation/parole.

Figure 28: Spent a Night in Jail or Prison in the Last 12 Months



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

SELECTED POPULATIONS

Home, Together: The Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness outlines national objectives and evaluative measures for ending homelessness among all populations in the United States. In order to adequately address the diversity within the population experiencing homelessness, the federal government identifies four subpopulations with particular challenges or needs, including:

1. Individuals with disabilities experiencing chronic homelessness;
2. Veterans experiencing homelessness;
3. Families with children experiencing homelessness; and
4. Children and youth under age 25 years experiencing homelessness.

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

INDIVIDUALS EXPERIENCING CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

Figure 29: Population Experiencing Chronically Homelessness

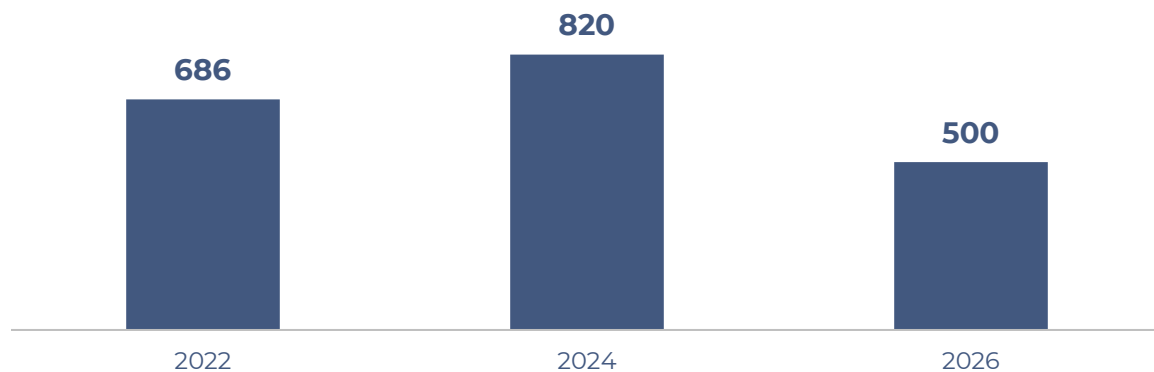


Figure 30: Population Experiencing Chronically Homelessness by Shelter Status

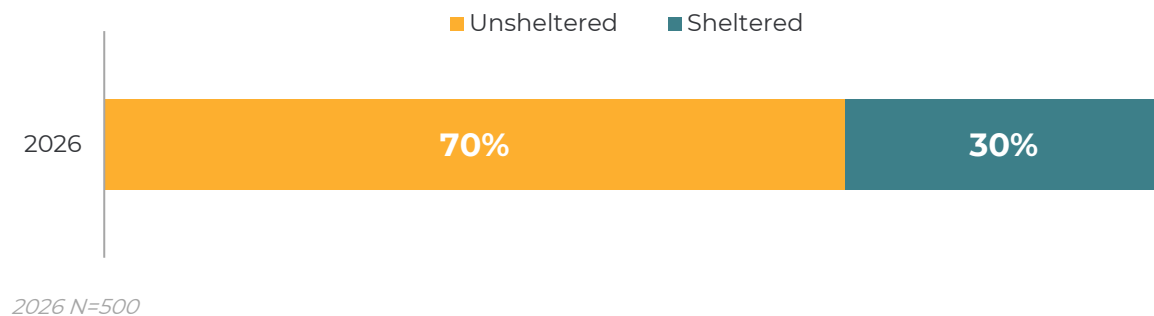
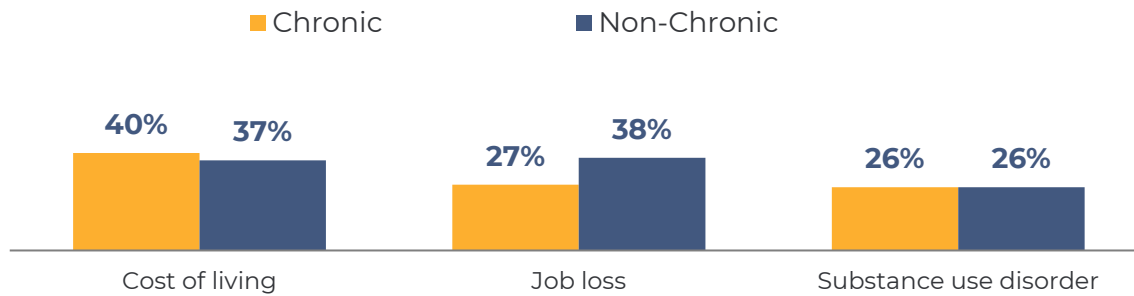


Figure 31: Primary Cause of Homelessness (Top 3 Responses)



2026 Chronic N=68 respondents offering 162 responses; 2026 Non-Chronic N=316 respondents offering 740 responses
Note: Multiple response question. Percentages may not add up to 100.

VETERANS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Figure 32: Total Number of Veterans Experiencing Homelessness

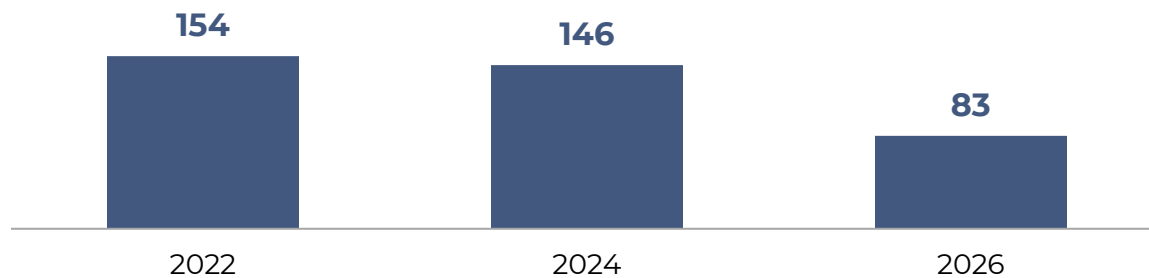
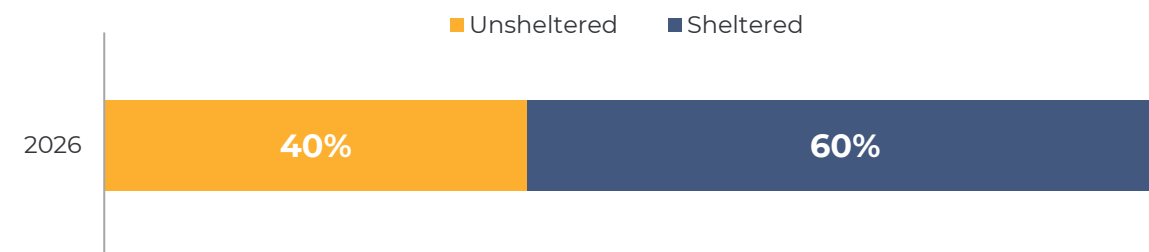


Figure 33: Veterans Experiencing Homelessness by Shelter Status



2026 N=83

ESTIMATES OF INDIVIDUALS IN FAMILIES EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Figure 34: Individuals in Families Experiencing Homelessness Subpopulation

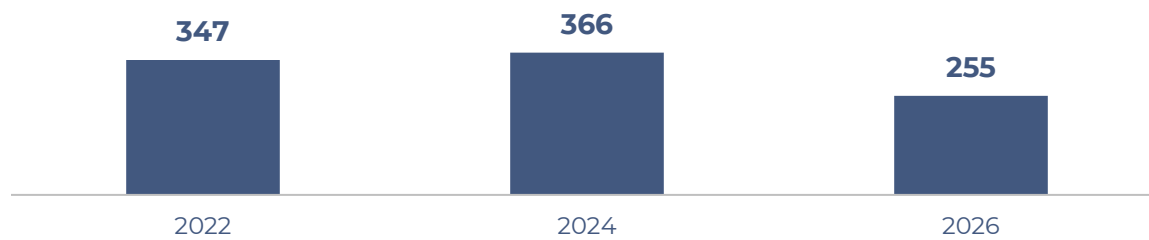
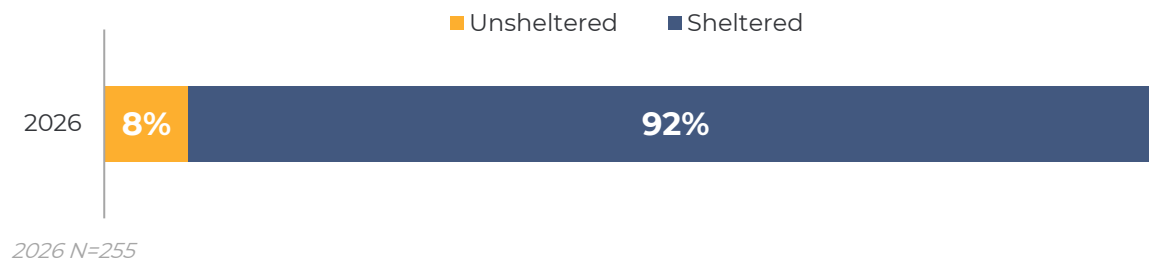


Figure 35: Individuals in Families Experiencing Homelessness Subpopulation by Shelter Status



CHILDREN AND YOUTH EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Figure 36: Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness

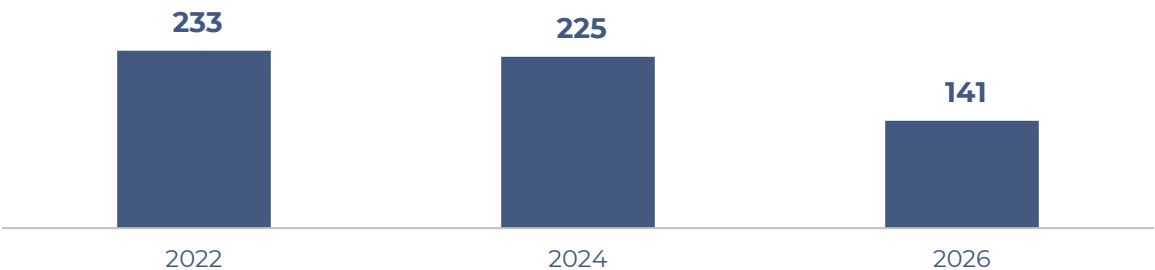
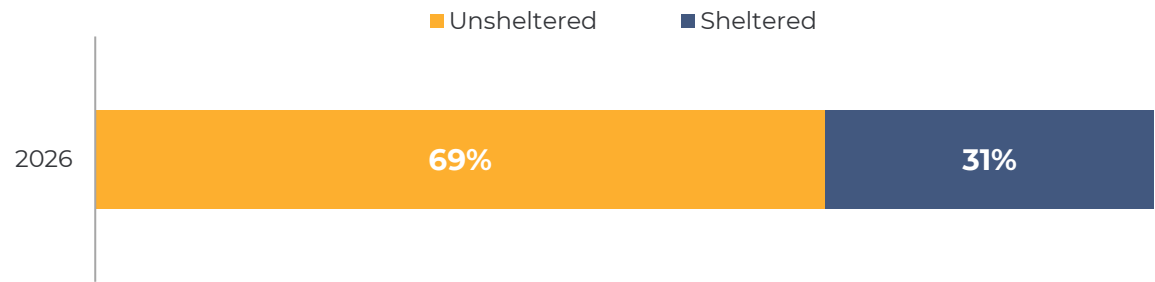


Figure 37: Total Unaccompanied Homeless Children and Transition-Age Youth Count Population



2026 N=141



CONCLUSION

The 2026 Monterey County Homelessness Count and Survey was performed using HUD-recommended practices for counting and surveying the population experiencing homelessness. Data summarized in this report provide many valuable insights about the unique and diverse experiences of homelessness in Monterey County. A few data highlights include:

- The Point-in-Time Homeless Count identified a total of 2,073 persons experiencing homelessness in Monterey County in 2026, an 15% decrease from 2024 (2,436).
- Over two-thirds (70%) of persons experiencing homelessness in Monterey County were unsheltered, living outdoors or in places not intended for human habitation.
- Sixty percent (60%) of homeless survey respondents indicated they were experiencing homelessness for the first time, and 68% had been experiencing homelessness for one year or longer.
- The biggest obstacles to obtaining permanent housing were inability to afford rent (89%), lack of a job/income (77%), and lack of money for moving costs (44%).
- Respondents reported significant health conditions: substance use disorder (46%), depression (43%), and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) (36%).
- Results for the four HUD subpopulations experiencing homelessness in Monterey County were: chronically homeless individuals (500 persons), homeless veterans (83 persons), members of homeless families with children (255 persons), and children and youth under age 25 years (141 persons).

In summary, the 2026 Monterey County Homeless Count and Survey provides valid and useful data that helps create a more comprehensive profile of those experiencing homelessness. Data presented in this report fulfills federal reporting requirements for the CoC, and will continue to inform outreach, service planning, and policy decision-making by local planning bodies over the years to come.

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

APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY

OVERVIEW

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

The 2026 Monterey County Homeless Count and Survey was performed using HUD-recommended practices and using HUD's PIT Count definition of homelessness. The goal was to produce a point-in-time estimate of individuals and families experiencing homelessness in Monterey County, a region which covers approximately 3,281 square miles. Several primary data collection components were integrated to produce the total estimated number of persons experiencing homelessness on a given night. A detailed description of these components follows.

COMPONENTS OF THE HOMELESS CENSUS & SURVEY

The methodology used in the 2026 Point-in-Time Count and Survey had several main components:

- **General Street Count:** A morning count of unsheltered individuals and families experiencing homelessness on January 29, 2026. This occurred from approximately 5:00 AM to 10:00 AM and included those sleeping outdoors on the street; at transit stations; in parks, tents, and other makeshift shelters; and in vehicles and abandoned or public properties, like parking garages and related locations. The general street count was designed to take place before shelter occupants were released. In areas with shelters, the immediate area surrounding the shelter was prioritized to eliminate potential double counting of individuals.
- **General Shelter Count:** A nighttime count of individuals and families experiencing homelessness staying at publicly and privately operated shelters on January 28, 2026. This included those who occupied emergency shelters, transitional housing, and safe havens.
- **Targeted Street Count of Unaccompanied Youth and Young Adults:** An afternoon count of unsheltered unaccompanied youth under 18 and young adults 18-24 years old on January 29, 2026. This occurred from approximately 2:00 PM to 6:00 PM and was led by special youth teams who canvassed specific areas where unaccompanied children and youth were known to congregate. Additionally, youth service providers contacted various clients known to be experiencing homelessness to inquire about their nighttime accommodations on the day of the count. 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.
- **Homeless Survey:** An in-person interview with 384 unique sheltered and unsheltered individuals experiencing homelessness conducted by peer surveyors between January 29 and March 10, 2026, in Monterey County. Data from the survey was used to refine the Point-in-Time Count estimates, and then used to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the demographics and individual experiences of homelessness.

Community Involvement

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

STREET COUNT METHODOLOGY

Definition

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

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

Methodological Improvements

The 2026 street count methodology followed an established, HUD approved approach commonly called a blitz method followed by a sample survey. Similar to last count the use of a GPS enabled smartphone app ESRI Survey 123 application developed and customized by ASR to conform to HUD data collection requirements was used. Also, improvements were made in pre-planning efforts to deploy outreach teams virtually, wherever possible, thereby avoiding the need for centralized deployment centers. Outreach organizations, program staff, county, and city staff along with selected community members were able to select areas for enumeration from an interactive GIS planning map tool that enabled us to plan for complete coverage of the County with prioritization of high-density routes to outreach staff and personnel with direct service experience.

Volunteer and Guide Recruitment

In 2026, over 30 outreach workers, community volunteers and guides with lived experience participated in the general street count.

Outreach and program staff did recruitment of persons with lived experience to act as guides in order to conduct the count in 2026. These guides were paid \$20 per hour worked on the days of the count.

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

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

- other tips to help ensure an accurate and safe count.

Safety Precautions

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

Logistics of Enumeration

On the morning of the street count, teams of two or more persons were created to enumerate designated areas of the county for the street count. Each team typically consisted of a combination of outreach workers, lived experience guides, program staff and service experienced community volunteers. Each team had a lead and were provided with their assigned Count tract maps, smart phone access information and training, field observation tips and guidelines, including vehicle identification criteria. Teams were instructed to text a Central PIT count dispatch center to confirm they were enroute and on task for enumeration of their route assignment.

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

County Office of Education Count

In 2026, we were able to conduct a telephone count of children and families experiencing homelessness using data from the McKinney Vento program. This significant element improves overall representation of children and families in the 2026 PIT count.

Unaccompanied Youth Street Count Methodology

The goal of the 2026 dedicated youth count was to improve representation of unaccompanied homeless children and youth under the age of 25 in the Point-in-Time Count. Many unaccompanied children and youth experiencing homelessness 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

As in all years, planning for the 2026 supplemental youth count included homeless youth service providers. Local service providers identified locations where youth experiencing homelessness were known to congregate and. Late afternoon and early evening enumeration were the ideal times recommended by advocates to conduct the youth count.

In 2026, enhancement to the youth count effort included youth serving agencies being able to contact youth via telephone from drop-in center lists and other sources they had of youth with unstable housing. These youth were contacted and their sleeping status on the night of the count was evaluated for PIT count reporting eligibility.

Youth service provider staff members were trained on where and how to identify youth experiencing homelessness as well as how to record the data.

Data Collection

The youth count was conducted by youth service providers from approximately 2pm to 6pm in the Salinas and Monterey areas. HUD and the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness recognize that youth do not commonly congregate with adults experiencing homelessness and are not easily identified by non-youth. For this reason, these agencies accept and recommend that communities count youth at times when they can be seen rather than during traditional enumeration times.

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

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Planning and Implementation

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

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

It was determined that survey data would be more easily obtained if an incentive gift was offered to respondents in appreciation for their time and participation. McDonalds gift certificates were provided as an incentive for participating in the 2026 homeless survey. The 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 2,073 persons experiencing homelessness, with a randomized survey sampling process, the 384 valid surveys represented a confidence interval of +/-4.5% with a 95% confidence level when generalizing the results of the survey to the estimated population of individuals experiencing homelessness in Monterey County.

The 2026 survey was administered in shelters, transitional housing facilities, and on the street. In order to ensure the representation of transitional housing residents, which can be underrepresented in a street-based survey, survey quotas were created to reach individuals and heads of family households living in these programs.

Strategic attempts were also made to reach individuals in various geographic locations and of various subset groups such as children and youth experiencing homelessness,

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

In order to increase randomization of sample respondents, survey workers were trained to employ an “every third encounter” survey approach. If the person declined to take the survey, the survey worker could approach the next eligible person they encountered. After completing a survey, the randomized approach was resumed. In more remote cases where respondents were sparser this survey interval was modified.

Data Collection

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

Data Analysis

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

Survey Challenges and Limitations

The 2026 Homeless Survey did not include an equal representation of all experiences of homelessness. For example, finding families experiencing homelessness presents a challenge and can lead to underrepresentation in the survey results. The same applies to unaccompanied children and youth, though care is taken to ensure that youth surveyors are involved, to increase the response rate of youth survey respondents.

There may be some variance in the data that individuals experiencing homelessness self-reported, however, using a peer-centric interviewing methodology is believed to allow the respondents to be more candid with their answers and may help reduce the uneasiness of revealing personal information. Service providers and county staff also reviewed the surveys to ensure quality responses. Surveys that were considered incomplete or containing false responses were not accepted.