

HOMELESSNESS IN SACRAMENTO COUNTY

2008 Homeless Count Summary Report



On any given night in Sacramento, almost 2,700 people are homeless.

Count Results:

In support of the Sacramento Ten-Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness, and to comply with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Continuum of Care application requirements, the Sacramento County Department of Human Assistance Homeless Programs (DHA) organized a 2008 Point-in-Time Homeless Count. Held during the evening of January 29, 2008 the Homeless Count consisted of three distinct components: unsheltered count (persons living in places not meant for human habitation); sheltered count (persons living in emergency or transitional housing); and, a survey. The 2008 Homeless Count results follow:

2008 Homeless Count Results

	Emergency Shelters	Transitional Housing	Unsheltered	Totals
Chronically Homeless	238	0	442	680
Other Homeless	492	682	824	1,998
Total Homeless	730	682	1,266	2,678

Approximately 53% of the homeless counted were sheltered while 47% were on the streets. Approximately 25% of the homeless population met HUD's definition of a chronically homeless person (an unaccompanied homeless individual with a documented disabling condition who has either been continuously on the street or in an emergency shelter for a year or more, or has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years). It should be noted that 167 of the 682 (24.5%) of those individuals in transitional housing also met the criteria of chronically homeless, however HUD excludes those in transitional housing from the chronic count.

The 2007 Homeless Count corresponded to the launch of the Ten-Year Plan and provided a data baseline to evaluate progress in housing the chronically homeless. The 2007 Homeless Count was also the first year that a statistically reliable research-based method of counting was employed. That same method was used in the 2008 count. Below is a year-to-year comparison of the last four Homeless Counts:

Homeless Count Year-To-Year Comparison

	Chronically Homeless	Other Homeless	Total
2008	680	1,998	2,678
2007	718	1,734	2,452
2005	626	1,603	2,229
2003	740	1,682	2,422

There is a 226 (9.2%) increase of the homeless from the 2007 count. Using a research based formula created by the Corporation for Supportive Housing and the Urban Institute, it is estimated that the number of homeless in Sacramento County over the course of a year is 4,257. This figure is actually 2.5% lower than the 2007 estimate (4,367). This decrease is due in part to the shorter length of stay by persons in emergency shelters and the increase of homeless entering permanent supportive housing.

The chronically homeless figure dropped from 29.3% in 2007 (718 out of 2,452) to 25.4% (680 out of 2,678) a decrease of 3.9%. The First Year Progress Report of the Ten-Year Plan reports that 171 chronically homeless entered housing during 2007. The decrease of the number of chronically homeless may be attributed to the increase of those placed in permanent supportive housing.

This year, information on the homeless population was also gathered from three different institutions in the County: the Mental Health Treatment Center; alcohol and drug residential treatment facilities; and, the jail, including the main jail and Rio Consumnes Correctional Center. This information cannot be included in the homeless count reported to HUD in the Continuum of Care application, so it is not included in the totals in the previous charts. It does, however, provide a more complete picture of the homeless situation in Sacramento:

Sacramento Mental Health Treatment Center:	17
Main Jail/Rio Consumnes Correctional Center:	378
Alcohol and Drug Treatment facilities:	<u>123</u>
Total	518

Population Characteristics:

The characteristics of the 2008 homeless population in Sacramento County include:

Characteristic	Number	Percent of Total
Chronically Homeless	680	25.4%
Mentally Ill	913	34.1%
Substance Abuse	1442	53.8%
Veterans	518	19.3%
Persons with HIV/AIDS	49	1.8%
Victims of Domestic Violence	545	20.4%
Unaccompanied Youth (under 18)	16	0.6%
Female (unsheltered count)	333 out of 1266	26.3%

Event Coordination and Participants:

The 2008 Homeless Count was a collaborative effort between homeless service providers, law enforcement agencies, the County and City park rangers, DHA, and approximately 300 volunteers. The volunteer ranks included over 25 currently homeless persons from the Salvation Army that participated in the count as guides for the count teams. There were two main differences between this year’s and last year’s count: the count was done in the evening, as opposed to in the morning as the previous several counts had been; and, the survey was done on the evening of the count as a component of what each count team did in the field. All counters and survey takers attended a mandatory training in how to conduct the count and administer the survey. Count teams were assigned their count areas between 7:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., and the count occurred between 8:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m. Overall, count teams reported having a good experience during the after-count debriefing.

Future Efforts:

Sacramento County is committed to aiding community planning efforts to end homelessness with continued reliable counts of homeless populations and needs. DHA will again coordinate a Homeless Count in late January of 2009. The DHA Management Team will review the information and results about this year’s count and make recommendations for next year’s event. Future improvements will include count team security, improved mapping methods, and increased survey strategies and techniques.