

Recipe for Failure: Shrinking Budgets and Increasing Needs for Emergency Homeless Shelters

Summary

Santa Cruz County has the dubious distinction of ranking in the top ten small cities in the nation in terms of the largest number of homeless individuals, including chronically homeless people.^[1] Recent Santa Cruz County data show that the population of homeless persons is increasing, reaching a peak of 3,536 total homeless individuals per the last published census in 2013, an increase of 56% since 2009.^[2]

Despite increased demand and the importance of emergency shelters, funding and resources for such shelters is inadequate, and diminishing. National funding policies reflect a shift toward permanent supportive housing for the chronically homeless, thus restricting available funding for temporary shelters.

The Grand Jury evaluated the city of Santa Cruz emergency shelters, the North County Emergency Winter Shelter, and the funding for these shelters. Emergency temporary shelters, though not a long-term solution to ending homelessness, serve an acute need. Demand for the county's emergency shelters exceeds capacity with long wait-lists, and many are turned away. The existing emergency shelters are unable to meet the needs of the local homeless population, providing temporary housing to only 18%, leaving 82% unsheltered per 2013 data.^[2] They are also short-staffed, lacking enough case managers to help transition the homeless population to stable housing.

The North County Emergency Winter Shelter (EWS), located at the Armory in Delaveaga Park in Santa Cruz, is an expensive yearly arrangement. It has reduced effectiveness due to limited hours of operation, geographical location, and the conditions, rules and regulations imposed by the owner, The National Guard. The future of the existing EWS is uncertain, with no backup plans or alternative location despite ongoing winter demand.

The Grand Jury recommends that facilities, funding and staffing of all emergency shelters in the city of Santa Cruz be reassessed to adequately meet the acute needs of the persistently high homeless population. Additional case managers are needed to facilitate the transition of homeless individuals out of shelters. More grant writers are needed to access untapped funding opportunities.

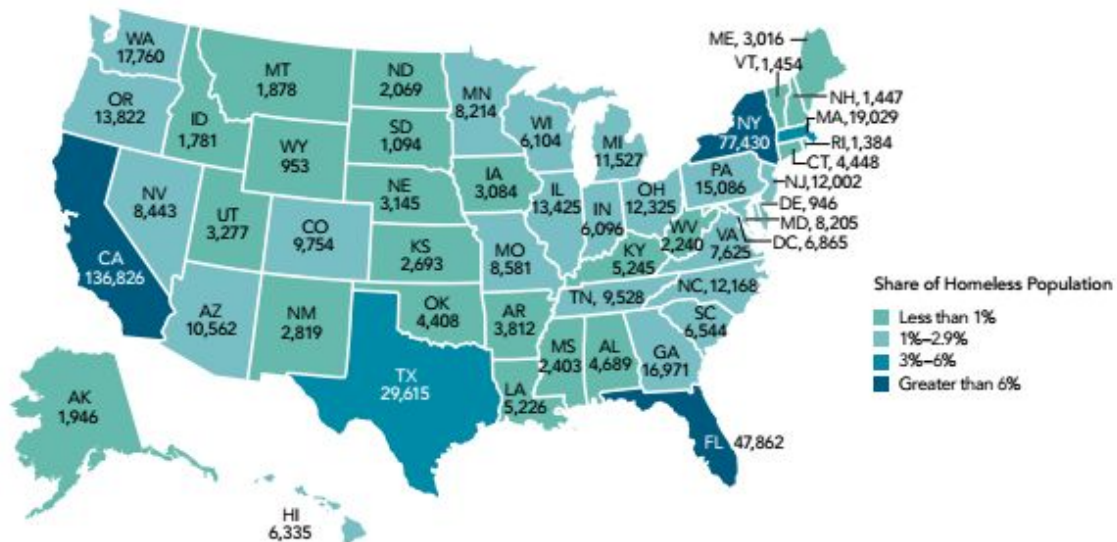
Background

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines emergency shelter as a facility with the primary purpose of providing temporary shelter for homeless persons. Emergency shelters can be an important entry point for the homeless in beginning or continuing the process of rebuilding their lives and accessing services which may lead to stable housing. For a summary history of Santa Cruz County homeless services see [Appendix A](#).

Homeless Population in Santa Cruz County Is Significant and On The Rise

While California houses 9% of the total population of the United States, it is home to 22% of the nation's homeless population (136,826 people). According to the most recent Point-in-Time (PIT) census survey provided for HUD, on a single night in January 2013, California ranked Number 1 in the nation's homeless population, almost twice as many people as the next largest population: New York, at 13% (77,430 people).^[1]

EXHIBIT 1.4: Estimates of Homeless People
By State 2013



These data are collected by local planning bodies designated by HUD as Continuums of Care (CoC), which are responsible for coordinating the full range of homeless services in a geographic area, such as our county. The 2013 HUD report also ranked Santa Cruz County among smaller city, county, and regional Continuums of Care (CoC)[1] as 10th highest in the nation in number of homeless individuals. Nationally, our county also ranked 10th highest in number of chronically homeless people. Chronically homeless is defined as remaining homeless for more than one year or experiencing a minimum of four episodes of homelessness over a three-year period.^[1]

The most recently reported county survey, performed January 22, 2013 by Applied Survey Research (ASR),^[2] documented a total of 3,536 homeless individuals in Santa

Cruz County. This represents an increase from the 2,771 individuals counted in the 2011 census survey. Of these individuals, only 18% were sheltered, either in emergency shelters or transitional housing. The remaining 82% were living in places such as streets, parks, vehicles, and ad hoc encampments. The highest concentration of these individuals was located in the city of Santa Cruz, at a total of 892 persons (31%), followed by the city of Watsonville at 497 persons (17%); the majority of the remaining 1,372 persons were scattered throughout the unincorporated area of the county.

“If all the 2,895 unsheltered homeless persons in Santa Cruz County were to line up for a shelter bed, the line would stretch for one mile.”^[3]

In addition, the ASR report also indicated that 53% of the homeless respondents had lived in Santa Cruz County for the past three or more years, and 31% for ten or more years, both indicators of the chronic nature of this problem in our community.^[2]

Numerous federal and state funding streams rely on PIT census survey statistics. However, it is important to acknowledge the inherent limitations of these data. In our county the data are collected during only one day “point-in-time”, and only on a biennial basis. This snapshot survey of the homeless population may incorrectly estimate the extent of this systemic problem. It is difficult to account for the flux of the homeless population, as they are mobile, with uncertain living situations, from vehicle to shelter to a friend’s residence, etc. Potential underestimation might be the case in certain subpopulations, such as:

- homeless youths
- agricultural workers
- families
- those living in places not ordinarily designed for human habitation
- some employed homeless individuals who might not be seen during the survey, and
- those who live in extremely rural areas.^[4]

Homelessness Impacts Our Community

Cost analyses clearly indicate homelessness overtaxes local agencies, such as health services and law enforcement, resulting in the inefficient use of funding.^[5] The state level report, “*The Annual Cost of Chronic Homeless in California*” summarizes most, though not all of the estimated costs to communities. Costs incurred by chronic homelessness are estimated to be \$25,726-\$36,388 (avg. \$31,057) per person per year ([Appendix B](#)).

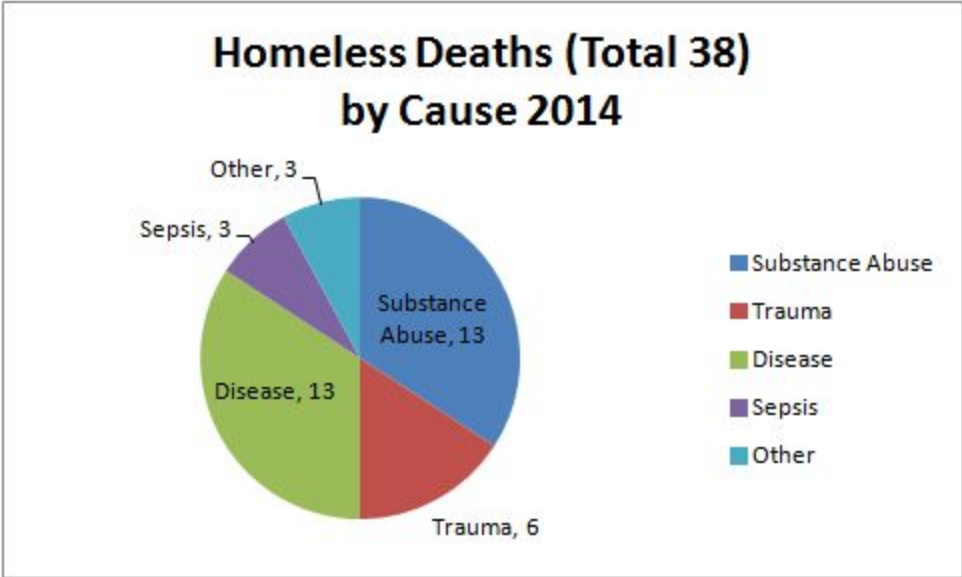
Additional impacts to our county include safety, environmental, financial, and quality of life issues. These impacts were highlighted in the “Research, Findings and Recommendations: Santa Cruz City Public Safety Citizen Task Force”^[6] and the 2013 Special Session of the Santa Cruz City Council which focused on Homelessness.^[7]

Vagrancy Laws Penalize and Perpetuate Homelessness

A recent report by the University of California Berkeley Law Policy Advocacy Clinic addressing California’s new vagrancy laws found that California cities have enacted a large number of anti-homeless laws to address the escalating homeless population. The report concluded that “criminalization harms homeless people and perpetuates poverty by restricting access to the social safety net, affordable housing, and employment opportunities” and that “enforcement of such laws is expensive, directing limited resources away from efforts that would effectively and humanely reduce homelessness.”^[8]

Homelessness and Premature Death

The Annual Report on Homeless Deaths in Santa Cruz County enumerated 38 homeless person deaths in 2014. This annual report is prepared by the Homeless Persons’ Health Project, a program of the Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency, and has enumerated over 600 deaths since its inception in 1999. The graph below is a distribution of homeless deaths by cause in 2014.



Source: [Appendix C](#)

Of these deaths 29 were male and 9 were female. The average age at death was 51.4 years, over 25 years shorter than the current 78.7 years average American life expectancy.

Although specific housing status at the time of death was difficult to determine (i.e. outside, vehicle, hospital, etc.), having access to shelter may reduce this mortality rate. It is well documented that, “the mortality rate for those experiencing chronic homelessness is four to nine times higher than the general population.”^[2]

Lack of Affordable Housing Contributes to Homelessness

Santa Cruz-Watsonville ranked 6th in the nation’s most expensive metropolitan areas for housing. The average renter would have to earn over \$30 an hour in order to afford a 2-bedroom rental unit at fair market rent.^[9]

Assistance for low income earners has decreased. From 1976-2007, the federal housing assistance budget was reduced by 50% (\$28.1 billion), according to an analysis published by The National Low Income Housing Coalition.^[10]

The Santa Cruz County Homeless Action Partnership (HAP) Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness 2003-2013 Report declared: “It is not surprising, then, that homeless people have become more and more visible in all parts of the county, urban, suburban, and rural. Shelters, once home to people without incomes, are increasingly filling with working people who just cannot find or afford housing; transitional housing programs, meant to facilitate a person’s ability to transition into permanent housing, are left without exits.”^[4]

Santa Cruz County “Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness, 2003-2013”: No Substantive Improvement in Homeless Numbers

As the following table demonstrates, the PIT census counts have shown no real reduction in homelessness.

A Comparison of The Point In Time Census Survey in Santa Cruz County

Homeless	2005 PIT Census	2013 PIT Census
Total Homeless Individuals	3,371	3,536
Sheltered	21%	18%
Unsheltered	79%	82%

Source:^{[2][4]}

The Ten-Year Plan was written by the Homeless Action Partnership ([Appendix D](#)) and sponsored by all of the local jurisdictions. It provided a “common blueprint to guide the County, the Cities, service providers, the business sector, philanthropy, and the broader community in realizing the vision of a community in which all residents have stable housing and services they need to live in dignity...”^[4]

While the main emphasis of this plan was to broaden our community stock of affordable housing, it listed clear objectives and action steps for emergency shelters, including:

- 50% more families and individuals without shelter will receive emergency shelter
- Support emergency shelters as an important component of the CoC as, for many homeless individuals, they are the point of entry to the homeless services system
- Continue development of new homeless family shelters in North and South County, seek funding for development, and encourage participation by all jurisdictions

- Develop a new permanent (year-round) adult shelter facility to replace the winter armory shelter
- Increase the availability and accessibility of all health and human services and case management for homeless people at the emergency level.^[4]

The Next Ten-Year Plan: “All In - Toward a Home for Every County Resident”

The County Board of Supervisors (BOS) approved an agreement with United Way of Santa Cruz County in early 2014 to complete a new coordinated long range strategic plan to address homelessness in our county. The recently adopted ten year plan, “All In - Toward a Home for Every County Resident,” highlights “action to prevent, reduce, and eventually end homelessness in Santa Cruz County, and ameliorate the impact of homelessness on all people.”^[11] It recommends a “strategic priority of transforming the crisis response system” through implementation of the “coordinated entry system.”

The following are the plan’s most important recommendations (not in order of priority):

- Establish a coordinated entry system using the Vulnerability Index and Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT)
- Implement the Housing First initiative
- Expand Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)
- Add more affordable housing for the lowest income households
- Increase homelessness prevention and rapid rehousing programs.^[11]

The new ten-year recommendations no longer include any stated plans to improve the funding, capacity, or staffing inadequacies for emergency shelters or to develop a permanent, year-round emergency shelter to replace the EWS. In the Grand Jury’s opinion this shift in emphasis was not due to a diminishing of the importance of emergency shelter, but was instead a pragmatic response to maintain and secure more federal funding.

Scope

The Grand Jury chose to study emergency shelters for the homeless in the city of Santa Cruz, including the provisional North County Emergency Winter Shelter (EWS) located at The National Guard Armory. We evaluated the programs provided by Homeless Services Center (HSC) and Encompass Community Services, the two main non-profit organizations that receive funding from the county and city of Santa Cruz for emergency shelters. We reviewed the agency Homeless Action Partnership (HAP), attended HAP meetings, Public Forum Meetings, and presentations regarding the volunteer-led organizations. In addition, we interviewed individuals with personal experience of homelessness. The Grand Jury recognizes the issue of emergency shelters in the City of Watsonville and south county but were not included in this report because of time constraints.

We examined the following areas:

- 1) Current sources and levels of funding for emergency homeless shelter services in the city of Santa Cruz from all available funding streams.
- 2) Current and planned future programs/shelters in the city for emergency housing of the homeless.
- 3) Available emergency shelter beds in the city, year-round and seasonal.
- 4) The city's current emergency shelter capacity, the number of people turned away, as well as expected wait list times.
- 5) Potential restrictions that prevent access to emergency shelter.

Investigation

Emergency Shelters Meet the Temporary Acute Need

Emergency sheltering is a temporary solution that aids individuals with short-term housing need. Seventy-two percent of the homeless population in Santa Cruz County may only require temporary shelters, rapid re-housing, or transitional housing based on their temporary acute needs,^[2] such as those created by seriously inclement weather.

Although Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) has proven to be an effective strategy, especially for the smaller percentage of chronically homeless individuals, addressing the needs of the homeless population may require a variety of solutions, including emergency shelters for those with less chronic needs.

Emergency Shelters in City of Santa Cruz

Emergency shelters in the city of Santa Cruz which operate year-round with the assistance of county and local jurisdictional funding include the River Street Shelter, operated by Encompass Community Services, as well as Paul Lee Loft, Rebele Family Shelter, and Page Smith Community House (transitional housing), which are operated by Homeless Services Center. ([Appendix E](#)) Additional beds for winter months are discussed in more detail below under Emergency Winter Shelter (EWS) at the National Guard Armory.

Santa Cruz County's emergency shelters are at capacity, and many homeless persons have been turned away due to lack of space and long wait lists. It is estimated that there is one available shelter bed per every 10 homeless persons. The average wait list is 6 weeks for men, 2 weeks for women, and 6 months for families. The total number of emergency shelter beds in Santa Cruz County was 481 per the January 2014 Housing Inventory Chart. ([Appendix E](#))

Santa Cruz County 2014 Emergency Shelter Capacity

Year-Round Beds	Seasonal Beds	Total Beds
Family Beds/Family Units Individual/Veteran Beds	Emergency Winter Shelters North and South County	
353	128	481

EWS operates November 15th through April 15th

Source: [Appendix E](#)

This bed count of 481 for the month of January, 2014, when compared to the 2,895 total unsheltered individuals identified during the January 2013 PIT census survey, yields a shortage of 2,419 beds during the coldest month of the year, despite the addition of 128 seasonal winter beds. Even if one assumes that not all of those homeless individuals desired shelter, the need still far exceeds the availability of all emergency shelter beds. Despite HAP's 10-year plan (2003-2013) to "end homelessness," the 2013 PIT census survey indicates that little has changed since 2005, with a steady 80% of the homeless population without shelter.

Emergency Winter Shelter at The National Guard Armory is an Expensive and Uncertain Yearly Arrangement

Local jurisdictions ([Appendix F](#)) have managed to piece together funding that provides seasonal emergency shelter services.^[12] The Grand Jury evaluated the North County Emergency Winter Shelter (EWS), which is provided through a collaboration between the Homeless Services Center and the National Guard Armory. The 2013-2014 budget was approximately \$225,000, for 152 nights per season of winter/cold/wet weather.^[12] This equates to a cost of \$1,480 per night of operation, with the entire cost allocated specifically toward temporary night-time shelter, classified as "an emergency response operation in order to prevent the 'loss of life' of homeless persons during winter weather conditions."^[12]

The North County EWS goal is to provide temporary seasonal shelter for an average of 75 homeless individuals per night, about 2% of the census. Clients must sign up by 3 pm at the HSC each day for that night and are transported from the HSC by bus at a designated time. There are no daytime hours at the EWS, forcing clients to inhabit public areas. No rehabilitation services are offered at the EWS; none are planned.

The Armory's availability for winter shelter has been uncertain for years. All previous efforts to find a more permanent site for North County EWS have failed, as local jurisdictions have been unable to agree on a location. There are no plans in place for alternatives should the Armory suddenly become unavailable. This state of uncertainty has persisted despite objectives to locate a more permanent, year-round shelter in the "2003-2013 HAP 10-year Plan to End Homelessness," and the 1989 Grand Jury report recommendations.

Warming Center

A newly formed volunteer-led grassroots organization, the Warming Center, was assembled in late 2014 with the mission to help provide shelter when weather conditions become dangerously inclement. Their first two nights of operation were at Calvary Episcopal Church in downtown Santa Cruz, which provided shelter to approximately 100 homeless individuals who sought shelter during the rain storms in December 2014. The Warming Center was at 75% capacity during these two nights, helping to shelter the overflow of homeless persons from emergency shelters in the city of Santa Cruz.

The Warming Center slightly increased emergency sheltering capacity to approximately 3% of the homeless for the two nights of predicted freezing temperatures. The number of homeless individuals served underscored the need for sufficient winter shelter capacity.

Shifts in National Trends and Policies Toward Permanent Supportive Housing Affect Funding Streams For Emergency Shelters

The shift in national trends and policies toward Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) has come from decades of failure to end our national homelessness problem. Short-term FEMA-style shelters have proven to be inadequate. Federal agencies responsible for these policies and associated funding include the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Interagency Council on Homelessness.

Santa Cruz County's Homeless Action Partnership (HAP)^[13] has functioned as the local conduit to state and federal grants, and helps coordinate grant funding. Santa Cruz County was an early adopter of the new policies emphasizing Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), with our first unit built in 2000.

Since 2000, Santa Cruz County has been awarded approximately \$20 million of Continuum of Care (CoC) funding. CoC funding represents HUD's largest and most broadly targeted program. It provides infrastructure to implement a comprehensive planning approach, data collection/analysis, and performance measures. This is the largest source of funding Santa Cruz County has received toward ending homelessness.

Ongoing funding awards are tied to the national policy shift toward Permanent Supportive Housing. Bonus funding awarded through HUD is tied to PSH, leading to our local jurisdictional strategy that allocates very little funding toward emergency shelters. Agency personnel interviewed stated that HUD funding for Santa Cruz County would cease if we were to change our priorities to allocate funds only for emergency shelters.

These changes have dramatically reduced funding for local emergency shelters. For example, HAP's 2014 rankings out of a total award of \$2,274,747 were as follows:

- 69% (\$1,573,125) to permanent housing
- 26% (\$586,801) to transitional housing
- 5% (\$114,821) to Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and planning^[14]

There are no funds allocated to emergency shelters from HAP's rankings.

Additional Funding Sources Could Help Support the Homeless Population

Funding designated for permanent support solutions benefits people in emergency shelters by allowing more homeless people to move through the Continuum of Care (CoC).

Significant grant monies pursued by HAP include Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), HUD's HOME Investment Partnership Program, and Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Program (HUD-VASH).

Additional sources of funding may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Medicaid-funded health services, with expanded eligibility due to the Affordable Care Act^[15]
- Grants awarded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to provide services and treatment needed to assist the chronically homeless to stay housed in permanent settings^[16]
- The Rural Housing Stability Assistance Program through HUD, where applicable^[14]

A key method of accessing Medicaid funding involves qualification for SSI (Supplemental Security Income), which can be especially difficult for the chronically homeless individuals who lack adequate documentation of their disabilities. Since most chronically homeless persons are neither receiving SSI nor covered by Medi-Cal, local governments bear most of the healthcare cost burden. This funding is especially useful as it helps to keep chronically homeless individuals in permanent supportive housing, and can include:

- coverage of community mental health services through the Medicaid Rehabilitation Option
- case management services
- employment-related skills and supported employment
- Federally Qualified Health Centers to provide needed services reimbursed by Medicaid
- home and community-based waiver services
- personal services^[15]

The Los Angeles Skid Row Homeless Healthcare initiative, begun in 2005, implemented strategies to improve SSI applications and secure funding. By assigning two highly experienced registered nurses to retrieve necessary documentation from multiple county public health care facilities, each with its own data management system and

software, they succeeded in obtaining SSI funding for 62% of first-time applicants. They then designed a multi-agency collaborative team to help out with all aspects of the application process, which achieved 91% approval success in accessing SSI for their most vulnerable chronically homeless persons.^[15]

In the Santa Cruz County 2013 PIT census survey, 25% of the respondents were ineligible for governmental services due to lack of a permanent address, and 24% simply did not think they were eligible.^[3] Of 69% total respondents per 2013 PIT census survey, who reported receiving government benefits, only 17% were identified as Medi-Cal/Medicare beneficiaries.^{[2][3]} As demonstrated by the Los Angeles example above, case workers and a team approach could help locate and access additional support for these homeless individuals. Using all of these tools to assist homeless individuals would free emergency shelter beds for emergency use.

Coordinated Entry: Emergency Shelter as a Point of Entry

Santa Cruz County, in partnership with local agencies, is working to implement a “coordinated entry system” to help streamline the process of connecting the homeless individual to housing and services. This process will help programs to shift from the common question of “should we accept this family/individual into our program?” to the more efficient and targeted approach of “what housing and service strategy is best for this family/individual out of the several housing/service options available?”^[17] If there are insufficient housing options, this becomes a moot point.

National strategies have been developed and proven to be effective in other communities to manage shelter wait times, and to identify and prioritize homeless individuals for housing according to the fragility of their health.^[18] Santa Cruz County is transitioning to these best practice strategies and tools to “ensure that all service providers are collecting the same demographic, client history and housing barrier information at the time of intake.”^[19] This coordinated entry system is especially efficient when emergency shelters are a point of entry and are available.^[11]

Case Managers

Skilled case managers serve as the bridge between a particular homeless individual, with his/her specific needs, and the tailored support system that can help the individual to achieve stability and long-term tenancy. The presence of a case manager and the size of each manager’s caseload are major determinants to the success of stable tenancy among homeless populations. For example, the HUD-VASH program views case management as a key component, requiring each veteran to be assigned a case manager prior to enrollment in this program. Their goal is a ratio of 1 case manager to 25 veterans.^[20]

Currently, Santa Cruz County budgets for two case managers, staffed at HSC, with a ratio of approximately 1 case manager to 40 clients. Despite their high caseloads, the two case managers have already proven their effectiveness. The Grand Jury learned from administrators that the approximately \$40,000 annual salary per case manager translates into sheltering 20-25 homeless individuals. With costs of approximately

\$31,000 per person per year of chronic homelessness, investing in additional case managers could result in considerable savings to the Santa Cruz County community ([Appendix B](#)).

Case manager coordination is particularly cost-effective with the chronically homeless subpopulation, which incurs the most cost to the public, or for those individuals who make frequent use of the emergency room or violate municipal codes. As previously referenced, estimated yearly costs to California communities are approximately \$31,000 per person per year of chronic homelessness, vs. \$4,952 when supported in Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH).^[21]

The 2013 PIT census found 989 chronically homeless individuals (28% of total 3,536 homeless individuals surveyed in the county). The optimal number of case managers required to serve them would be about 40, using best practices standard of 15-25 individuals per case manager.^[21] With even a few additional case managers to help bridge this unmet need, cost savings to the public could far exceed the cost of the additional case managers. The Grand Jury recognizes that success of the utilization of case management depends on adequate housing and the availability of other resources.

Solutions Come Slowly - Still a Need for Emergency Shelters

The Grand Jury concludes that the following factors demonstrate the continuing and increasing need for emergency shelters in Santa Cruz County:

- the persistently high number of homeless persons, with diverse needs
- the high costs of housing and low availability of supportive housing
- limitations of funding sources
- staffing costs
- insufficient emergency shelter capacity
- length of time needed to develop Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) for chronic homeless individuals

PSH cannot be implemented quickly enough to avoid the need for emergency shelters for the foreseeable future. For the 72% of the homeless individuals (non-chronic) in Santa Cruz County, emergency housing serves a crucial need. Emergency shelter needs to be available for the most vulnerable, without a wait list. Our shortage of emergency shelter supply must be addressed.

Findings

- F1.** Local jurisdictions have not provided adequate emergency shelter to accommodate the vast majority (80%) of the more than 3,500 total homeless persons in Santa Cruz County (using 2013 PIT data).
- F2.** Despite persistent unmet need, local jurisdictions have neither increased nor planned to increase the number of emergency shelter beds and services.
- F3.** The effectiveness of the North County Emergency Winter Shelter is limited by its reliance on the National Guard Armory facility.

- F4.** The absence of a back-up plan to replace the National Guard Armory threatens the continuing existence of the North County Emergency Winter Shelter program.
- F5.** Insufficient capacity of emergency shelters limits their potential use as an entry point to the planned coordinated entry system.
- F6.** Insufficient numbers of personnel and case managers at the emergency shelters limit the services that can be provided to homeless individuals.
- F7.** Insufficient number of staff dedicated to grant writing results in missed grant funding opportunities.

Recommendations

- R1.** Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors and the cities of Santa Cruz, Capitola and Scotts Valley should develop plans to provide increased emergency shelter on a priority basis to the most vulnerable populations first, including families, youth, women, and the elderly. (F1-F6)
- R2.** Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors and the cities of Santa Cruz, Capitola and Scotts Valley should seek a more permanent, accessible and expandable site for the North County Emergency Winter Shelter program. (F3, F4)
- R3.** Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors and the cities of Santa Cruz, Capitola and Scotts Valley should allocate more funds for additional case managers for the local emergency shelters. (F6)
- R4.** Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors and the cities of Santa Cruz, Capitola and Scotts Valley should allocate additional staff to seek more grant funding for emergency shelters. (F7)

Commendations

- C1.** The Grand Jury commends Santa Cruz County, the Homeless Action Partnership, local jurisdictions, and non-profit organizations for their collaborative efforts to implement evidence-based programs and solutions, including the coordinated entry system, to relieve homelessness.
- C2.** The Grand Jury commends local jurisdictions and non-profit organizations for their on-going collaborative efforts to fund and operate local emergency shelters.

Responses Required

<i>Respondent</i>	<i>Findings</i>	<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Respond Within/ Respond By</i>
Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors	F1-F7	R1-R4	90 Days 9/10/2015
Santa Cruz City Council	F1-F7	R1-R4	90 Days 9/10/2015
Capitola City Council	F1-F7	R1-R4	90 Days 9/10/2015
Scotts Valley City Council	F1-F7	R1-R4	90 Days 9/10/2015

Responses Requested

<i>Respondent</i>	<i>Findings</i>	<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Respond Within/ Respond By</i>
Homeless Services Center, Executive Director	F1-F7	R1-R4	90 Days 9/10/2015
Encompass, Chief Executive Officer	F1-F7	R1-R4	90 Days 9/10/2015

Definitions

- **AHAR:** *Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress*
- **ASR:** *Applied Survey Research* - Conducts the biennial homeless PIT census and survey as mandated by HUD. www.appliedsurveyresearch.org
- **BOS:** *Board of Supervisors* - The legislative governing body of the County of Santa Cruz.
- **Chronically homeless individual:** Unaccompanied individual with a disabling condition who has either been continuously homeless for 1 year or more or has experienced at least four episodes of homelessness in the past 3 years.
- **Chronically homeless people in families:** People in families in which the head of the household has a disabling condition, and that has either been continuously homeless for 1 year or more or has experienced at least four episodes of homelessness in the past 3 years.
- **CoC:** *Continuum of Care* - Local planning bodies responsible for coordinating the full range of homelessness services in a geographic area, which may cover a city, county, metropolitan area, or even an entire state.

- **Coordinated entry system:** A process that ensures that all service providers are collecting the same demographic, client history and housing barrier information at the time of intake. The intake sheet collects information to be entered into HMIS and is aimed at increasing the efficiency of providing homeless assistance via access to accurate data.
- **Emergency Shelter:** "A facility with the primary purpose of providing temporary shelter for homeless persons," per HUD definition.
- **EWS: *Emergency Winter Shelter*** - Program to provide shelter to homeless individuals and families during the cold and rainy months, operating Nov. 15 through April 15. For the purposes of this Grand Jury Report, EWS refers only to the North County program, provided through collaboration between HSC and the National Guard Armory under the auspices of HAP. The Armory provides sheltered housing and HSC manages the program under County contract, approved by the County BOS.
- **FEMA: *Federal Emergency Management Agency*** - Created by Presidential Reorganization Plan in 1978 and implemented in 1979, with the primary task of coordinating the response to a disaster in the US that overwhelms the resources of local and state authorities. www.FEMA.gov
- **HMIS: *Homeless Management Information System*** - A secure database of the homeless and housing mandated by HUD and administered by HAP that allows authorized staff at partner agencies to share client information and follow trends and service patterns over time
- **HUD: *US Department of Housing and Urban Development*** - The federal department that is in charge of releasing the Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress
- **HUD-VASH: *HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Program*** - A collaborative initiative between HUD and VA intended to target the most vulnerable, needy, and chronically homeless veterans.
- **PSH: *Permanent Supportive Housing***- Designed to provide housing (project- and tenant-based) and supportive services on a long-term basis for homeless people with a disability.
- **Point-in-Time Counts:** Unduplicated 1-night estimates of both sheltered and unsheltered homeless populations. The 1-night counts are conducted by Continuums of Care nationwide and occur during the last week in January of each year, although in Santa Cruz County, they are done biennially.
- **PSCTF: *Public Safety Citizen Task Force*** - A 14-member task force charged by Santa Cruz City Council April 9, 2013 that published its completed Report December 2013.
- **County: *Santa Cruz County***
- **Sepsis:** The presence in the blood or other tissues of pathogenic microorganisms or their toxins.
- **Sheltered homeless people:** People who are staying in emergency shelters, transitional housing programs, or safe havens.

- **Transitional Housing Program:** housing where homeless people may stay and receive supportive services for up to 24 months, and which are designed to enable them to move into permanent housing
- **Unsheltered homeless people:** People 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 buildings, bus or tram station, airport, or camping ground.
- **VI-SPADT:** *Vulnerability Index & Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool* - A tool for identifying and prioritizing the street homeless population for housing according to the fragility of their health. It is administered in a form of a survey which captures a homeless person's individual health and social status, identifying the most vulnerable through a ranking system which take into account the risk factors and chronicity of homelessness. The goal is to highlight those with the most severe health risks to be prioritized for housing and support services.

Sources

References

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Site Visits

Homeless Services Center
Encompass Community Services
Rebele Family Shelter
Project Homeless Connect in Watsonville

Web Sites

www.hud.gov

www.usich.gov

www.scsshelter.org

www.emcompasscs.org

www.smartsolutionstohomelessness.org

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www.hhs.gov

www.economicrt.org

www.csh.org

<http://www.lampcommunity.org/>

Appendix A

History of Emergency Shelters for the Homeless in Santa Cruz

The establishment of the Homeless Services Center in 1986, with its shelters and array of daytime services, along with the River Street Shelter, were the results of efforts by prominent advocates for the homeless population, formerly known as the Santa Cruz Citizen's Committee for the Homeless. In the 1970s, Santa Cruz County commissioned a report to examine the "undesirable transient element," followed in the 1980s by studies of the "street people." As a result of these commissioned reports, community-based shelter, food, and service programs began to aid the homeless.^[22]

Collaborative efforts of numerous faith-based and religious organizations led to the Interfaith Satellite Program in the 1980s that later dissolved, due to lack of adequate support.^[17]

In 1989 the Santa Cruz County Civil Grand Jury examined the Homeless Services Center, remarking that "this is one of the most cost effective programs in the state."^[23] The report also reviewed an additional winter shelter provided at the National Guard Armory, from November 15 to March 30, provided at a cost of \$500 per night for rent and cleaning of the Armory. Recommendations from the report included locating a permanent emergency shelter as an alternative to the expensive use of the National Guard Armory.

In 1990, the Short-Term Housing Coalition released the "Assessment of Shelter and Housing Needs of the Homeless Population of Santa Cruz County." This report paved the way for the local jurisdictions to adopt a joint resolution titled "Coordinated Community Effort to Assist the Homeless."^[4] Don Lane, who is now Mayor of the City of Santa Cruz, chaired a task force on homelessness in the late 1990s, and later, as a member of the board of HSC, led the efforts to expand services to their present day programs, including:^{[22][17]}

- Paul Lee Loft shelter, housing 46 adults year-round
- Rebele Family Shelter, housing up to 28 families for up to 6 months
- Page Smith Community House, a transitional housing program for 40 single male and female adults for up to 18 months
- Daytime essential services, providing on-site services such as meals, laundry, mail, showers, and social service referrals.

Encompass Community Services, formerly known as Santa Cruz Community Counseling Center, was formed in 1973, also by the Santa Cruz Citizen's Committee for the Homeless, and currently operates the River Street Shelter, a 32-bed emergency shelter for homeless adult men and women, of which 60% of the beds are reserved for county Mental Health patients.^[24]

Mr. Lane later founded the nonprofit advocacy organization Smart Solutions, with the goal of changing the mindset of communities to commit to ending homelessness, rather than just keeping the homeless alive, and managing this problem.^[25] This organization, a project of the United Way of Santa Cruz County, is currently actively engaged with local jurisdictions and stakeholders in advancing the County's mission "to improve the way Santa Cruz County works collaboratively to reduce and ultimately end homelessness."^[25]

Appendix B

Annual State Costs of Chronic Homelessness in California

State Cost	Incurring This Cost	Amount Per Person Per Year of Homelessness
Prison	Over 50% of homeless people report a history of incarceration. People with histories of homelessness and mental illness are 23% more likely to face incarceration, usually for drug related offences, sleeping on public streets, defecating in public, and other quality of life crimes. Parolees who are homeless are seven times more likely to recidivate than parolees in stable housing.	\$40,000-\$110,000
Medi-Cal	While actual costs to Medi-Cal are difficult to assess because homelessness is not tracked in Medi-Cal claims data, frequent users of emergency departments who are Medicaid beneficiaries, many of whom are homeless, incur Medi-Cal costs of approximately \$16,000 over one year.	\$8,000-\$16,000
Foster Care Costs	Homelessness is not a basis for placing children into foster care, but it is often linked to foster care placement. In fact, almost half of foster children's birth parents have been homeless.	\$6,000
Shelter	About one-third of people who are homeless sleep in a shelter bed created by state bond funding	\$47,000

Annual City/County Costs of Chronic Homelessness in California

County/City Costs	Incurring This Cost	Amount Per Person Per Year of Homelessness
Jail	People who are homeless are at much greater likelihood of experiencing incarceration.	\$3,824
General Relief	People who are homeless who do not receive Supplemental Security Income often receive payments from county's general relief/general assistance program	\$2, 086
Health Care	Homeless people have much higher incidence of emergency department visits and inpatient hospital admission than people who are stably housed. County hospitals often face the financial burden of both homeless uninsured and Medi-Cal beneficiaries. Those who require medical or mental health services while in jail incur a 56% increase in county costs compared to insured individuals.	\$17,730-\$28,392
Paramedics/ Ambulance	Homeless people have much higher utilization of paramedic and ambulance services than those in stable housing.	\$2,086
Total Annual Community Costs		\$25,726-\$36,388 (avg. \$31,057)

Source: [\[26\]](#)

Appendix C

2014 Annual Report on Homeless Deaths in Santa Cruz County For the Period December 18, 2013 – December 17, 2014

Report Prepared by the Homeless Persons' Health Project (HPHP), A program of the Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency

Background:

In keeping with a tradition established in 1999, once again this year on December 18th homeless individuals, community, family members, and homeless service providers will come together to honor the lives of those who died while homeless. The 2014 Annual Report on Homeless Deaths and our local homeless memorial event represent our community's sixteenth year of collecting data and reporting on homeless deaths across the county. Our memorial is one of many occurring across the nation to coincide with the beginning of winter, a time when the dire consequences of homelessness are most starkly evident.

Discussion of 2014 Homeless Deaths:

Based on all reported deaths, the total number of people who died while homeless this year in Santa Cruz County is 38. The total number of homeless deaths reported in 2013 was 38, and the average number of homeless deaths per year over the preceding ten years (2004-2013) was 33. The average age at death for 2014 was 51.4, which is slightly higher than the average age of death of 50 for homeless individuals in Santa Cruz County during the previous ten-year period. The average age of death for all Americans is 78.7 and this means that people who die while homeless in our community die 28 years earlier than might otherwise be expected.

Eight of the reported deaths (21%) are due to acute overdoses, an increase from the 16% reported in 2013. Five more of the deaths (13%) are attributed to chronic substance use. In addition, at least six of the deaths attributed to other causes had substance use as a significant contributing factor, bringing the total of substance use related fatalities to at least 50%. A total of 6 of the deaths (16%) were due to trauma including one homicide, one suicide, and two homeless pedestrians struck by motor vehicles. Four homeless people (11%) died of cancer. Just over half of those who died homeless were in a hospital or nursing facility at the moment of death, while fourteen of the deaths (37%) occurred out of doors or in a vehicle. Four of the persons who died were known to be veterans.

One fact is well documented – Homelessness causes, complicates and exacerbates serious health problems and it leads to the premature deaths of thousands of people in communities across our nation every year. The longer homelessness is endured, the greater the impact on health. Research in the U.S. has shown that homeless persons have up to a threefold increase in mortality when compared to the general population, (Hibbs, 1994). Studies document an average age of death among homeless populations that ranges from 42 to 52 years, while average life expectancy for most Americans is almost 80 (O'Connell, 2005).

How Data On Homeless Deaths Are Collected:

Throughout the year, a public health nurse at HPHP maintains a log of deaths that occur among people who are homeless in Santa Cruz County. The log includes information on confirmed deaths of HPHP clients, as well as confirmed reports of deaths received from other homeless service organizations, medical providers, the Coroner's office, and friends or family members of those who have died. The log also includes death certificate data compiled by the County Office of Vital Statistics, and data obtained from the County Public Administrator's office.

The data available from this process most likely under-represent the number of homeless deaths in the county. Housing status at the time of death is neither well documented nor always easily determined. Also, information on likely factors leading to death is imprecise, and the cause can be unknown at the time of death. For the sake of summarizing the information, we have assigned a single primary contributing factor to each death, but in many cases, there are multiple, significant factors that have contributed to an individual's death.

For this reason the data provided in this summary should not be interpreted as a definitive accounting of deaths among the homeless population in our county. Instead, this reflects our best effort at this time to collect and analyze accurate data on homeless deaths in a way that is meaningful to our community, to homeless service providers, and to friends and family of those who have died.

About the Memorial:

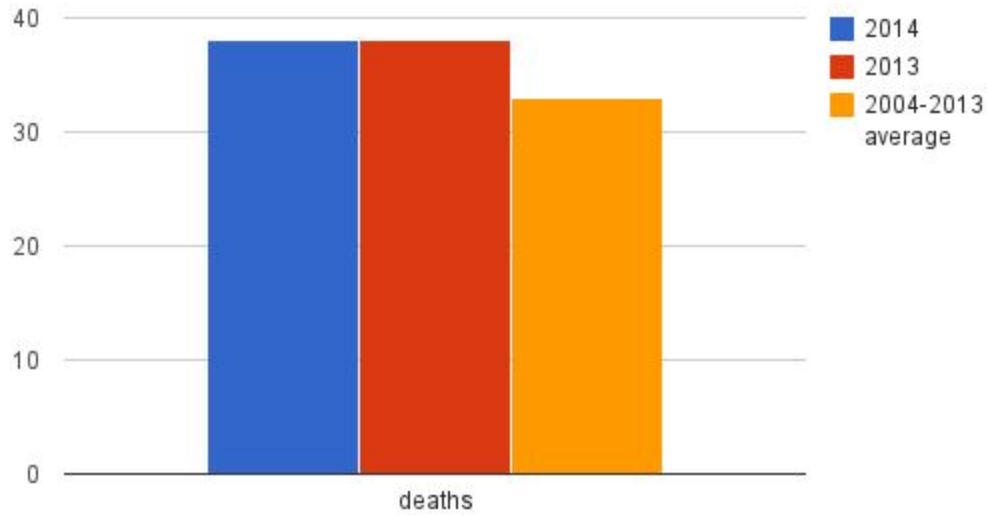
Our purpose in preparing and distributing this report at this time of year is three-fold: first, to honor and mark the passing of all those who died while homeless in our community during the last year; second, to document and increase awareness of the serious and negative impact of homelessness on the lives of our fellow community members; and finally, to reflect on and to recommit ourselves to the work that is left to be done in our community to prevent so many unnecessarily early, and unjustly early deaths each year.

Our memorial service includes a reading of the names of the 38 people who were homeless at death and are reflected in our annual report. We will also read the names of an additional 22 individuals who were previously homeless and died this year, but who were either out of county, or housed at the time of their death. Many of these individuals were homeless for long periods of time before entering housing.

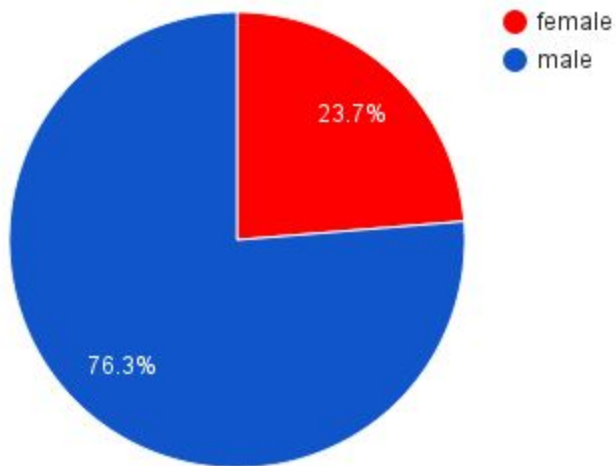
We continue our tradition of creating and displaying homeless memorial flags with the name, age and year of death for each homeless or previously homeless person who has died since December 21, 1998. This year that fifteen-year total will exceed 600 people. The flags will be on display at the memorial at 115 Coral Street in Santa Cruz..

Nearly all of the people who died were personally known to one of us at the River Street Shelter, at the Homeless Services Center, at HPHP or to one of our colleagues at homeless service organizations in Watsonville or in other parts of the county. We are sometimes shocked and always saddened by their deaths. Each person who died will be missed. We hope that this information will serve to honor the memory of each person, to guide us in our ongoing efforts to improve the health and quality of life for all who experience homelessness, and to recommit ourselves as a community to ending homelessness in Santa Cruz County.

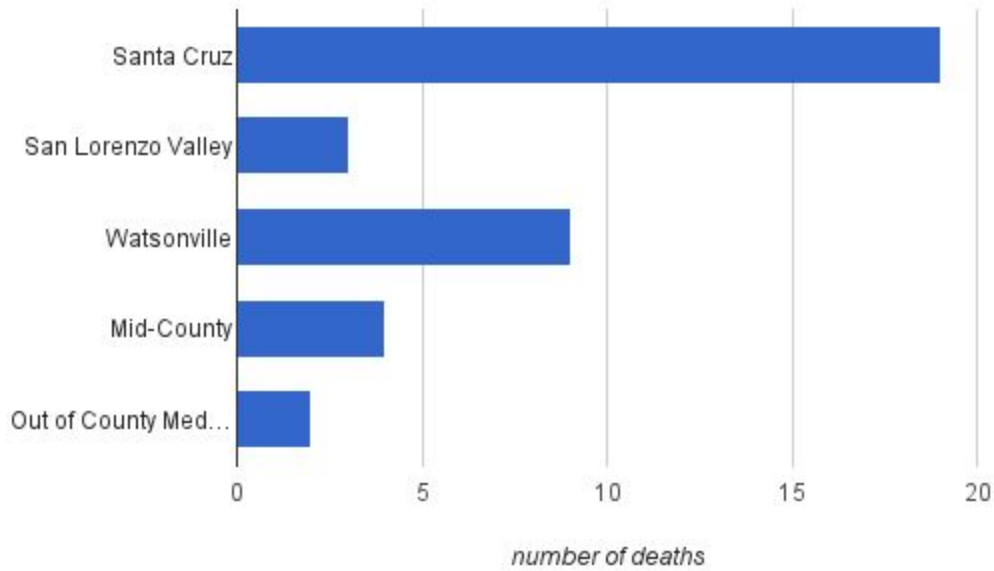
Homeless Deaths By Year



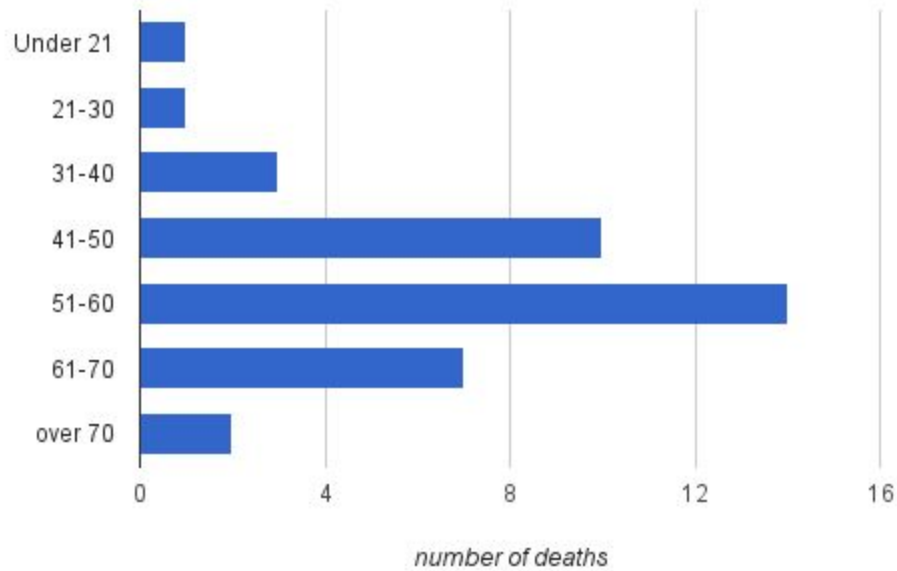
2014 Homeless Deaths by Gender



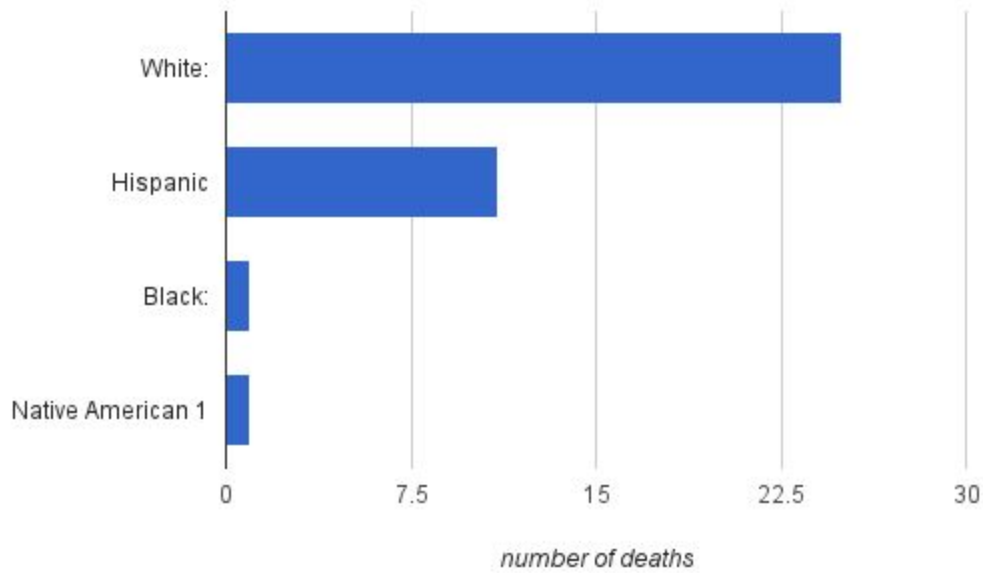
2014 Homeless Deaths By Location



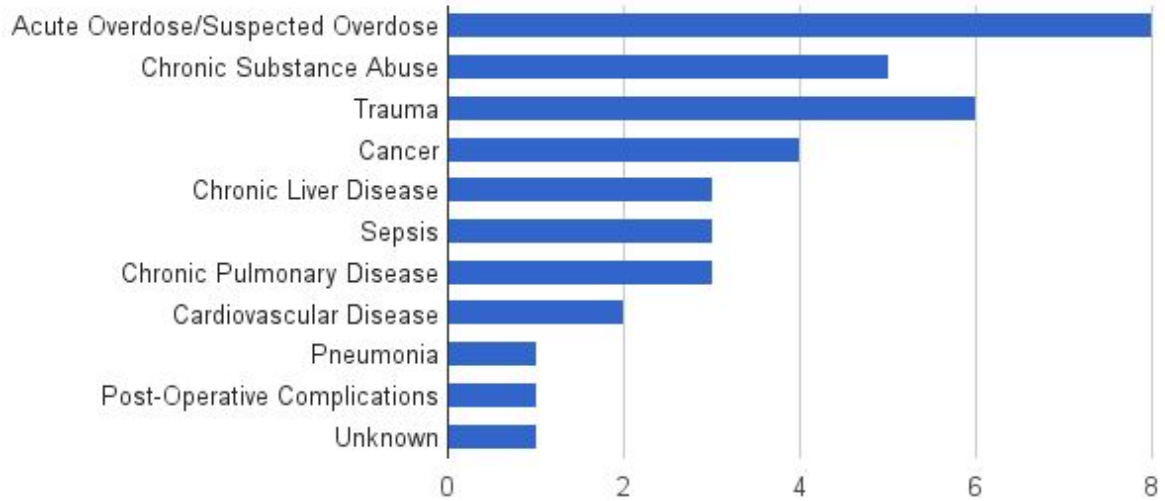
2014 Homeless Deaths by Age (average age at death 51.4yrs)



2014 Homeless Deaths by Ethnicity



2014 Homeless Deaths by Cause



Appendix D

Santa Cruz County Homeless Action Partnership Members

Membership List (as of March 2012)

1. City of Watsonville
2. City of Santa Cruz
3. City of Scotts Valley
4. City of Capitola
5. County of Santa Cruz Human Services Department
6. County of Santa Cruz Health Services Agency/Homeless Persons' Health Project
7. County of Santa Cruz Planning Department
8. County of Santa Cruz Office of Education, Homeless Program
9. Families in Transition
10. Homeless Services Center
11. Salvation Army of Watsonville
12. Pajaro Valley Shelter Services
13. Housing Authority of the County of Santa Cruz
14. Santa Cruz AIDS Project
15. United Way of Santa Cruz County
16. Community Action Board – Shelter Board and GEMMA
17. Santa Cruz Community Counseling Center
18. Front Street Housing, Inc.
19. Mountain Community Resource Center
20. Catholic Charities
21. Veterans Administration--PAHCS-Monterey
22. Community Technology Alliance
23. Walnut Ave. Women's Center
24. Central Coast Independent Living Center
25. Crossover Network
26. Community Bridges
27. New Life Community Services
28. Above the Line
29. Homeless Garden Project
30. Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County
31. Senior Legal Services
32. California Rural Legal Assistance
33. Persons who are experiencing homelessness and formerly homeless persons
34. Interested individuals

Appendix E

Total Emergency Shelter Beds Per January 2014 County Housing Inventory Chart

Emergency Shelter Organizations, Programs & PIT Beds Total: January 2014

(includes motel vouchers)

Organization Name	Program Name	North County Beds	South County Beds	Family Beds	Family Units	Ind. Beds *	Year Round Beds	Vet. Beds*	Total Seasonal Beds	Total Beds
Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County	TSP Motel Vouchers					4	4			4
Defensa de Mujeres	DV Shelter			12	6	6	18			18
Front Street, Inc.	HCH/EH-Paget Center	12				12	12	12		12
Homeless Service Center	Paul Lee Loft Shelter	46				46	46			46
Homeless Service Center	Rebele Family Shelter	96		96	28		96			96
Homeless Service Center	Recuperative Care Center	12				12	12			12
Homeless Service Center	Winter Shelter Program								100	100
Jesus Mary and Joseph Home	Jesus Mary and Joseph Home Shelter	12		7	4	5	12			12
New Life Community Services	NLCS Emergency Shelter	5				5	5			5

Note: Chart continues on following page

Emergency Shelter Organizations, Programs & PIT Beds Total: January 2014 (Continued)

Pajaro Valley Rescue Mission	Grace Harbor Mens and Womens Shelter		68			68	68			68
Pajaro Valley Shelter Services	Pajaro Valley Shelter		36	36	12		36			36
Encompass Community Services	River Street Shelter	32				32	32			32
Salvation Army	Cold Weather Shelter Program		28						28	28
Siena House	ES for Pregnant Women	12		4	2	6	12			12
	Total:	227	132	153	49	169	353	12	128	481

* Ind. Beds - Individual Beds, Vet. Beds - Veterans Beds

Appendix F

Final HAP Budget FY 2014-15, with Individual Contributions from Local Jurisdictions toward EWS

FINAL HAP Budget: FY 2014-2015							
ITEM	TOTAL HAP EXPENDITURES	REVENUES				TOTAL	Comments
		Grants	Contributions	Jurisdictional Funding	County In-Kind		
CoC/HAP Staffing (.25 FTE)	35,000	15,000			20,000	35,000	Staffing provided by Planning with HUD Planning grant off-setting a portion of the cost.
CoC/HAP Consultant	59,981			59,981		59,981	Flat funding this year.
Bi-ennial Census	50,000			50,000		50,000	Increase of \$4,640 over 2013 contract with ASR
HEARTH/ Strategic Plan	5,000	6,840		5,000		11,840	Additional CoC work resulting from HEARTH Act and strategic planning process to be determined.
HMIS/CTA	13,425	89,985	10,000	13,425		113,410	Additional contributions from Partner Agencies and jurisdictions of \$2,000. Jurisdictional costs represent minimum cash-match required for HUD grant.
South County Winter Shelter	57,869			57,869		57,869	Assume funding at level to run full program. Provider uncertain at this time.
North County Winter Shelter	226,207			226,207		226,207	152 day program-Armory cost increased by \$5 to \$440 per night.
Winter Shelter	284,076	0	0	284,076		284,076	
TOTAL	412,482	111,825	10,000	412,482	20,000	554,307	

Jurisdictional Funding: FY 2014-15						
	CoC/HAP Consultant	Biennial Census	HEARTH/ Strategic Plan	HMIS	Winter Shelter	Total
County	32,114	26,768	2,677	7,188	147,147	215,894
Santa Cruz	12,722	10,607	1,061	2,847	79,964	107,201
Watsonville	10,299	8,585	859	2,305	25,590	47,637
Capitola	2,423	2,020	202	542	14,703	19,891
Scotts Valley	2,423	2,020	202	542	16,671	21,859
Total	59,981	50,000	5,000	13,425	284,076	412,482

Approved Jurisdictional Funding: FY 2013-14

	CoC/HAP Consultant	Biennial Census	HEARTH/ Strategic Plan	HMIS	Winter Shelter	Total
County	32,114	0	2,677	6,117	132,196	173,104
Santa Cruz	12,722	0	1,061	2,423	79,704	95,910
Watsonville	10,299	0	859	1,962	14,033	27,152
Capitola	2,423	0	202	462	14,656	17,742
Scotts Valley	2,423	0	202	462	16,617	19,704
Total	59,981	-	5,000	11,425	257,207	333,613