



Homeless Count 2009 Design

The 2009 Alameda Countywide Homeless Count was designed to produce **point-in-time estimates** of the prevalence of three mutually exclusive groups of households and persons in Alameda County:

- (1) **Literally Homeless**--those residing in shelters, transitional housing, on the street, or other places not meant for human habitation
- (2) **Hidden Homeless**—those residing on a temporary basis with friends or relatives (couch surfers), or in motels, or within 7 days of being evicted, and
- (3) **Housed**--but relying on services such as hot meal sites, food pantries, and drop-in centers.

The Count also yields an estimate of the number of people defined as chronically homeless as well as those restricted by one or more disabilities.

Two types of data comprise the 2009 count estimates:

(1) data from the InHOUSE Homeless Management Information System and program administrative data enumerating the number and characteristics of persons residing in shelters and transitional housing programs the night of January 26, 2009, and

(2) survey-based population estimates of the number and characteristics of unsheltered persons, persons in temporary situations, and housed persons relying on services.

Administrative data and survey results are deduplicated and combined in many tables and reweighted to generate countywide and regional population estimates.

The survey is based on a stratified, two-stage cluster sample of 1251 individuals at service sites. Survey sites were selected randomly from a sampling frame (list) of facilities known to provide services to homeless adults and youth, categorized by service type and region of the county. On January 27, 2009, all customers being served at 27 meal service sites, food pantries, drop-in centers, and outreach programs throughout Alameda County were asked to participate in the survey.*

Trained volunteers interviewed English-speaking adults or emancipated youth about housing status, duration of homelessness, disabilities, and what would help most. Responses were recorded anonymously. Interviews lasted about ten minutes per respondent. The response rate overall was 65 percent and 71 percent for English-speaking customers. Over 90 percent of non-responses other than because of language barrier were for one of three reasons: refused, not enough time, or not available when an interviewer became free.

Data is presented by service sites in seven regions of the county:

- Oakland
- Berkeley
- Other North (cities of Alameda, Emeryville, Piedmont, and Albany)
- Mid (cities of San Leandro, Hayward, Castro Valley, & mid-County unincorporated areas)
- South (cities of Fremont, Newark, Union City, Sunol, and related unincorporated areas)
- East (cities of Pleasanton, Dublin, and Livermore)
- Countywide (all cities and regions)

*(In one large service site, selection of individual clients for interview was carried out by systematic random selection, applying a fixed interval to the queue of persons being served, after a random start.)