SANTA MARIA/SANTA BARBARA COUNTY CONTINUUM OF CARE

2023 Point in Time Count

Acknowledgements

The considerable talents and efforts of many individuals helped ensure the success of this endeavor. The Santa Maria/Santa Barbara County Continuum of Care (CoC) and the County of Santa Barbara would like to thank Santa Barbara Alliance for Community Transformation and the many service providers who facilitated the process by recruiting count volunteers and encouraging staff to participate. Thank you to the over 400 people who participated in the Point in Time Count on Wednesday, January 25, 2023. Finally, without the willingness of our unhoused neighbors to participate, the Point in Time survey would not yield the meaningful information that informs our work. Their contribution is reflected throughout the findings of this report.

Thank you to CenCal Health for their financial contribution.

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Santa Maria/Santa Barbara County Continuum of Care

The Continuum of Care (CoC) is the regional planning body that coordinates the community's policies, strategies, resources, and activities to prevent and end homelessness, including the Point in Time count. Through the CoC, providers, individuals with lived experience, and community stakeholders engage in discussions and develop strategies to address the issues facing Santa Barbara County's low-income population, homeless individuals and families, and other at-risk populations, and become part of the solutions being offered to address those challenges.
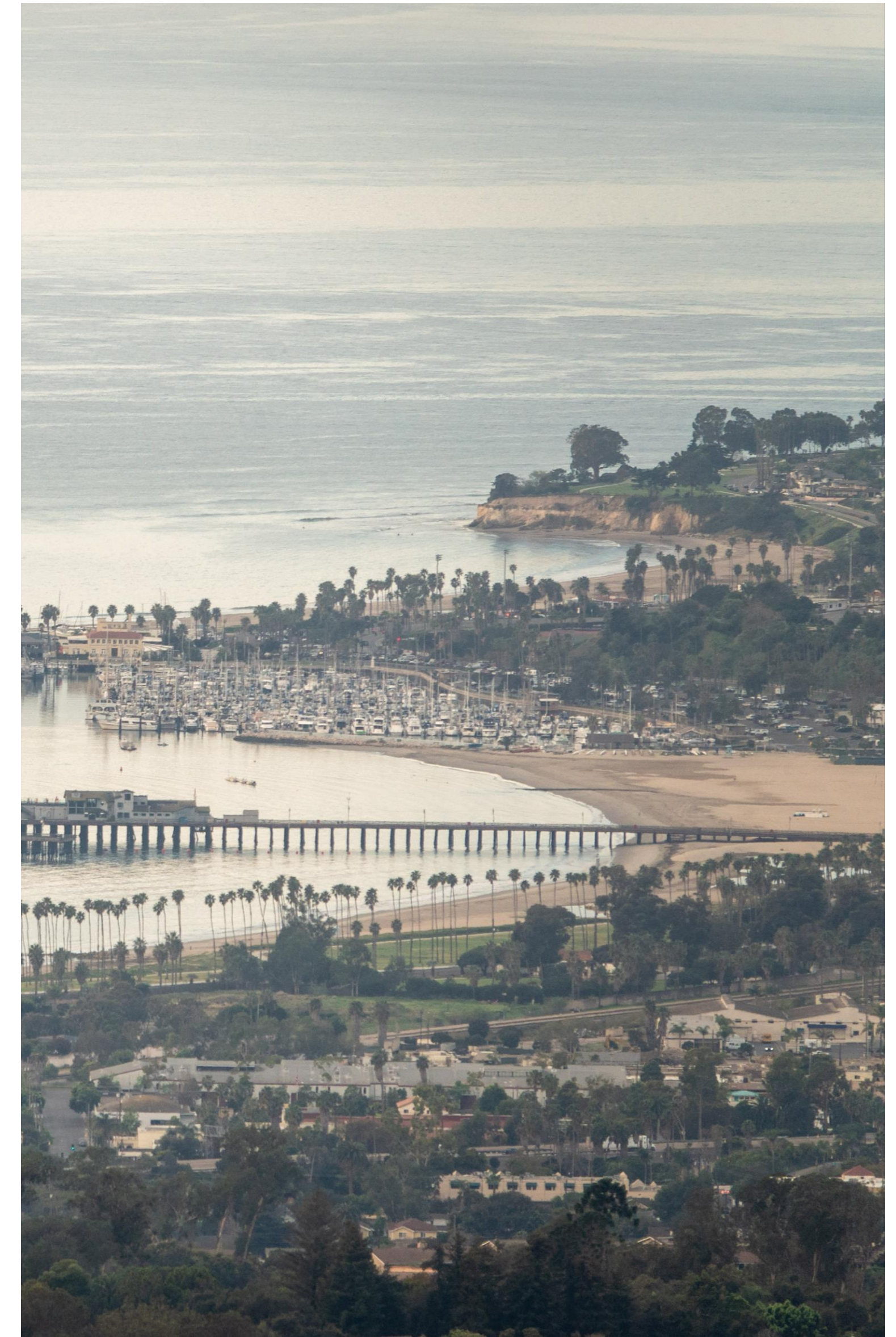
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Elizabeth Snyder *Dignity Health*

Deanna Vallejo *Santa Barbara Foundation*

Youth Action Board *Youth with Lived Experience*

Logistic Centers

Thank you to all the organizations and municipalities who generously allowed us to use their facilities for the 2023 count.

Carpinteria: Carpinteria Veterans Memorial Building

Goleta Area: Goleta City Hall

Isla Vista: Isla Vista Community Service District

Lompoc: Veterans Memorial Building (VFW)

Solvang: People Helping People

Santa Barbara East: Franklin Community Center

Santa Barbara West: Christ Presbyterian Church

Santa Maria: Veterans Memorial Center

Introduction

During the last ten days of January, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires communities across the country conduct comprehensive counts of the local population experiencing homelessness. These Point-in-Time Counts measure the prevalence of homelessness in each community and collect information about individuals and families residing in emergency shelters and transitional housing, as well as about people sleeping on the streets, in vehicles, abandoned properties, or other places not meant for human habitation on a given night.

The Santa Maria/Santa Barbara County CoC made the decision in 2019 to conduct an unsheltered PIT annually in order to more closely track shifts in population, demographics, and areas of occupation.

The Point in Time Count is a single piece of a larger puzzle. The information gathered is informative, but should be considered within the context of all of the data available within our community, including: The Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), data gathered from individual service providers, Fulcrum mapping software, the Coordinated Entry System, among others.

The County Housing and Community Development division of the Community Services Department provided oversight of the PIT Count working with Simtech Solutions and more than 400 community members.

This report is intended to assist service providers, policy makers, funders, and local, state, and federal governments in gaining a better understanding of the population currently experiencing homelessness, measuring the impact of current policies and programming, and planning for the future.

Introduction (cont.)

Continuums of Care report the findings of their local Point-in-Time Count annually to HUD. This information ultimately helps the federal government to better understand the nature and extent of homelessness nationwide. Point-in-Time Count and survey data also help inform communities' local strategic planning, capacity building, and advocacy campaigns to prevent and end homelessness.

A specialized count of both unaccompanied children and transition-age youth aged 24 and younger was conducted the afternoon of the same day. This dedicated count was designed to improve the understanding of the scope of youth homelessness. The Youth Action Board and trained youth enumerators conducted the count and administered surveys in specific areas where homeless youth were known to congregate. The results of this effort contributed to HUD's initiative to measure progress toward ending youth homelessness.

Project Overview and Goals

The Santa Maria/Santa Barbara County CoC decided in 2019 to conduct a full Point in Time Count annually using an identical strategy to control for methodological anomalies in the data. In 2019, a local, consistent methodology based on best practices was established. Santa Barbara County worked in conjunction with the CoC and Santa Barbara Alliance for Community Transformation (SB ACT) to conduct the 2023 Santa Barbara County Homeless Point-in- Time Count and Survey. The Housing Inventory Chart (HIC), which is a count of all beds dedicated to people experiencing homelessness was conducted on the same night.

Homelessness is nuanced and very individual. However, we must follow the department of Housing and Urban Development's definition of homelessness. One of the survey questions asks where the individual slept last night. Their answer will dictate whether the survey continues or not.

The Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has a strict definition of homelessness which dictates who can and cannot be counted in the Point in Time Count.

The HUD definition of homelessness was used for the Point-in-Time Count. This definition includes:

Sheltered individuals and families: "living in a supervised publicly or privately- operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state, or local government programs for low-income individuals)"; or,

Unsheltered individuals and families: "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."

Included in the count

- Makeshift shelters
- Streets
- Vehicles
- Parks
- Abandoned buildings
- Bus or train stations
- Airports
- Camping grounds

NOT included in the count

- Couch surfers
- Double-ups
- Rehabilitation or mental health facilities
- Most in jail or prisons
- Awaiting eviction or foreclosure
- Hospitalized

The 2023 Santa Barbara County Homeless Point-in-Time was supported by numerous community volunteers, agency staff, and staff from various city and county departments who used census maps to canvass the entire county (with the exception of the Channel Islands) between the hours of 5:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. on January 25, 2023. An encampment specific count was conducted between 9am and 12pm, and a youth specific count was conducted between 2:30 and 5:30.

The count of persons residing in vehicles was extension of the unsheltered, general street count. With the help of the New Beginnings Safe Parking Program, known parking locations were specifically visited and counted. When observing vehicles, volunteers were trained looked for certain indications to determine if the vehicle was occupied:

- The view through the front or rear windows is blocked

- Condensation on the windows

- The side windows are blocked by sheeting, panels, or curtains

- There are items associated with residency, such as generators, bikes, or storage containers

- There are a large number of items around the vehicle.

- Volunteers noted the make, model, and last 4 digits of the license plate. They also noted why they believed the vehicle to be occupied. This was used for deduplication. It was estimated that 1 person on average occupy a car, while an average of 1.2 people would occupy an RV.

Executive Summary

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires communities across the country conduct comprehensive counts of the local population experiencing homelessness. These Point-in- Time Counts measure the prevalence of homelessness in each community and collect information on individuals and families residing in emergency shelters and transitional housing, as well as on people sleeping on the streets, in cars, abandoned properties, or other places not meant for human habitation.

This section provides an overview of the findings generated from 2023 Point-in-Time Count and Survey. Surveys were administered using SimTech's Counting Us app to a sample of unhoused individuals on January 25, 2023.

The 2023 methodology was similar to the methods used to conduct the 2020 and 2022 Point in Time counts (due to the Coronavirus pandemic, an unsheltered count was not conducted in 2021). All the percentages are rounded to the nearest integer.

In order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the experiences of individuals and families experiencing homelessness in Santa Barbara County, respondents were asked basic demographic questions including age, gender, race, and ethnicity. 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. Missing values were intentionally omitted from the survey results.

Executive Summary (cont.)

The count revealed a 3.7% decrease in people experiencing homelessness countywide between the 2022 and 2023 Point in Time Counts. This represented a 12% decrease in the number of persons living unsheltered and a 15% increase in the number of persons sheltered. While we are seeing a modest decrease in the Point in Time Count, the Homeless Management Information System (client level data from programs addressing homelessness) shows a steady increase in the number of persons accessing services and shelter. Black, African American or African persons and American Indian, Indigenous persons were over represented in comparison to the general population.

Families of Hispanic ethnicity are also over represented in comparison to the general population.

For more information regarding the survey methodology, please see Appendix A.

Other notable shifts include:
- **The number of veterans counted decreased, 117 in 2022, 82 in 2023 (-30%);**
- **The number of households with minor children counted has increased, 63 in 2022 to 93 in 2023 (47%);**
- **Persons living in vehicles represented 51% of the unsheltered count.**

Santa Barbara County Homeless Point in Time Count & Survey

During the last ten days of January, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires communities across the country conduct comprehensive counts of the local population experiencing homelessness. These Point-in-Time Counts measure the prevalence of homelessness in each community and collect information about individuals and families residing in emergency shelters and transitional housing, as well as about people sleeping on the streets, in vehicles, abandoned properties, or other places not meant for human habitation on a given night.

TOTAL HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS COUNTED IN SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

TOTAL **1,887**

= **36%** SHELTERED

= **64%** UNSHELTERED

GENDER BREAKDOWN

37% FEMALE

1% TRANSGENDER, GENDER NON-CONFORMING

62% MALE

FIRST TIME HOMELESS

YES **45%**

NO **55%**

UNSHELTERED* REPORTING HOMELESSNESS IS DUE TO IMPACTS OF COVID-19

15%

*Respondents were living unsheltered, outdoors on the night of the count.

SUBPOPULATION DATA

82
VETERANS

618
CHRONICALLY HOMELESS

91
UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH

93
FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS

AGE

10%
UNDER 18
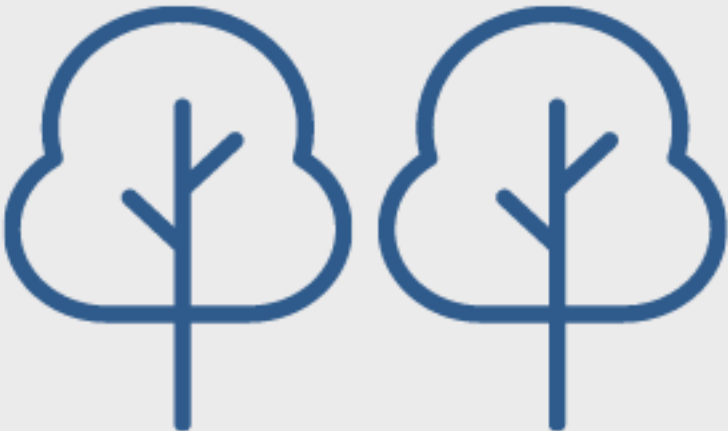
5%
18-24

52%
25-54

33%
55+

SLEEPING LOCATION ON THE NIGHT OF THE COUNT

31%
OUTSIDE

32%
VEHICLE

36%
SHELTER

NUMBER OF BEDS ON NIGHT OF COUNT

855
INTERIM

285
RAPID RE-HOUSING

1,627
PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING OR OTHER PERMANENT HOUSING

RACE

WHITE	BLACK	MULTIPLE RACES	AMERICAN INDIAN/ ALASKA NATIVE	ASIAN	NATIVE HAWAIIAN/ PACIFIC ISLANDER
83%	7%	4%	4%	1%	1%

DISABLING CONDITIONS*

30%

ADULTS WITH SERIOUS MENTAL ILLNESS

26%

ADULTS WITH SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER*

26%

CHRONIC HEALTH CONDITION

10%

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY

9%

ADULT SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

1%

ADULTS WITH HIV/AIDS

*Not using the HUD long term qualifier.

NUMBER BREAKDOWN BY CITY

GUADALUPE 8

UNINCORPORATED NORTH 122

SANTA MARIA 472

BUELLTON/SOLVANG /SANTA YNEZ 20

UNINCORPORATED SOUTH 73

LOMPOC 158

GOLETA 136

CARPINTERIA 23

ISLA VISTA 88

SANTA BARBARA 787

Santa Barbara County Point in Time Count 2023

18
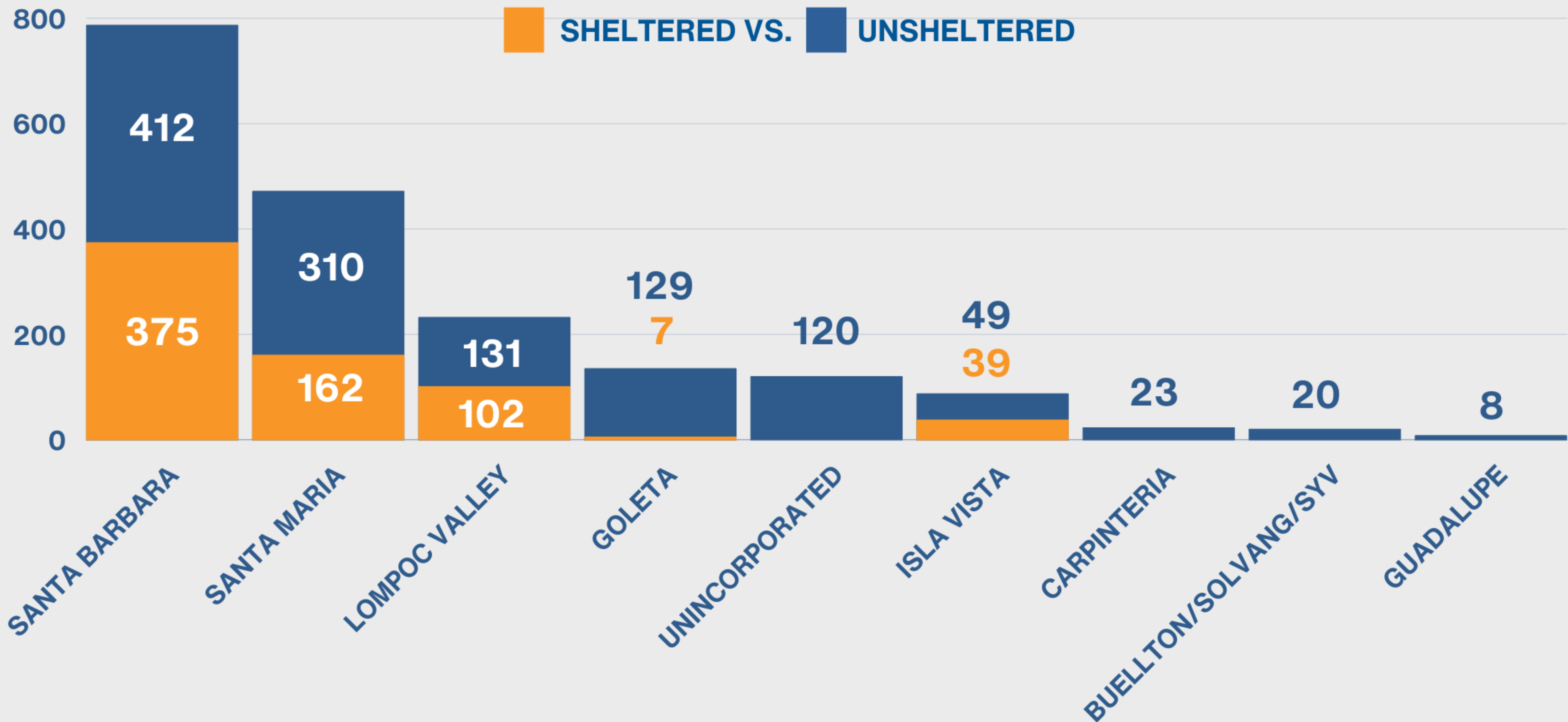
Total Count

The number of individuals counted in the 2023 Point in Time Count was 1,887. This was a slight decrease in the number of individuals counted in 2022 (1,962). Most notable was the increase in the number of persons living in shelters or transitional housing versus a decrease in the number of persons living outdoors.
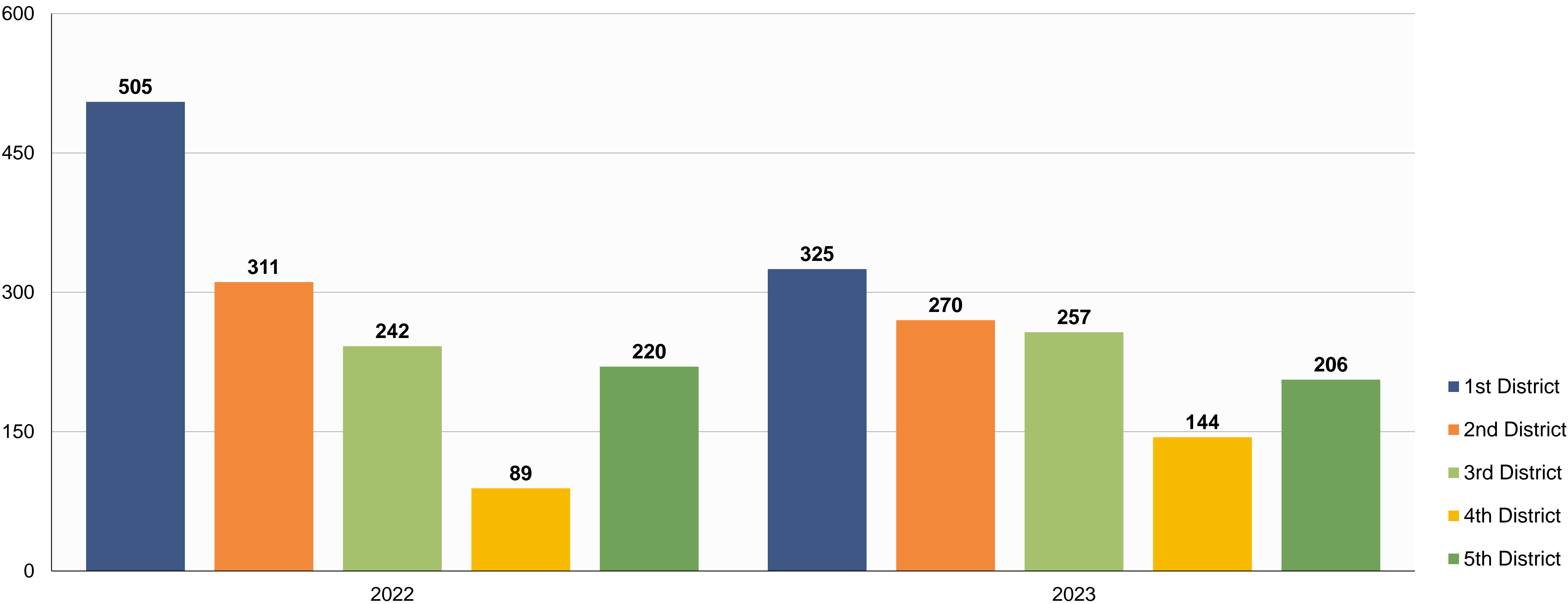
The population experiencing homelessness was distributed throughout the county: 1,107 (59%) persons counted in south county, 780 (41%) persons counted in mid and north county. The homeless population decreased over all, but increased in Carpinteria, Santa Maria, Santa Ynez Valley and Guadalupe. The County of Santa Barbara uses mapping software to assist outreach teams in identifying encampments throughout the region. The robust nature of this tool and data allowed teams to more accurately count those living unsheltered in previously hard to reach locations.
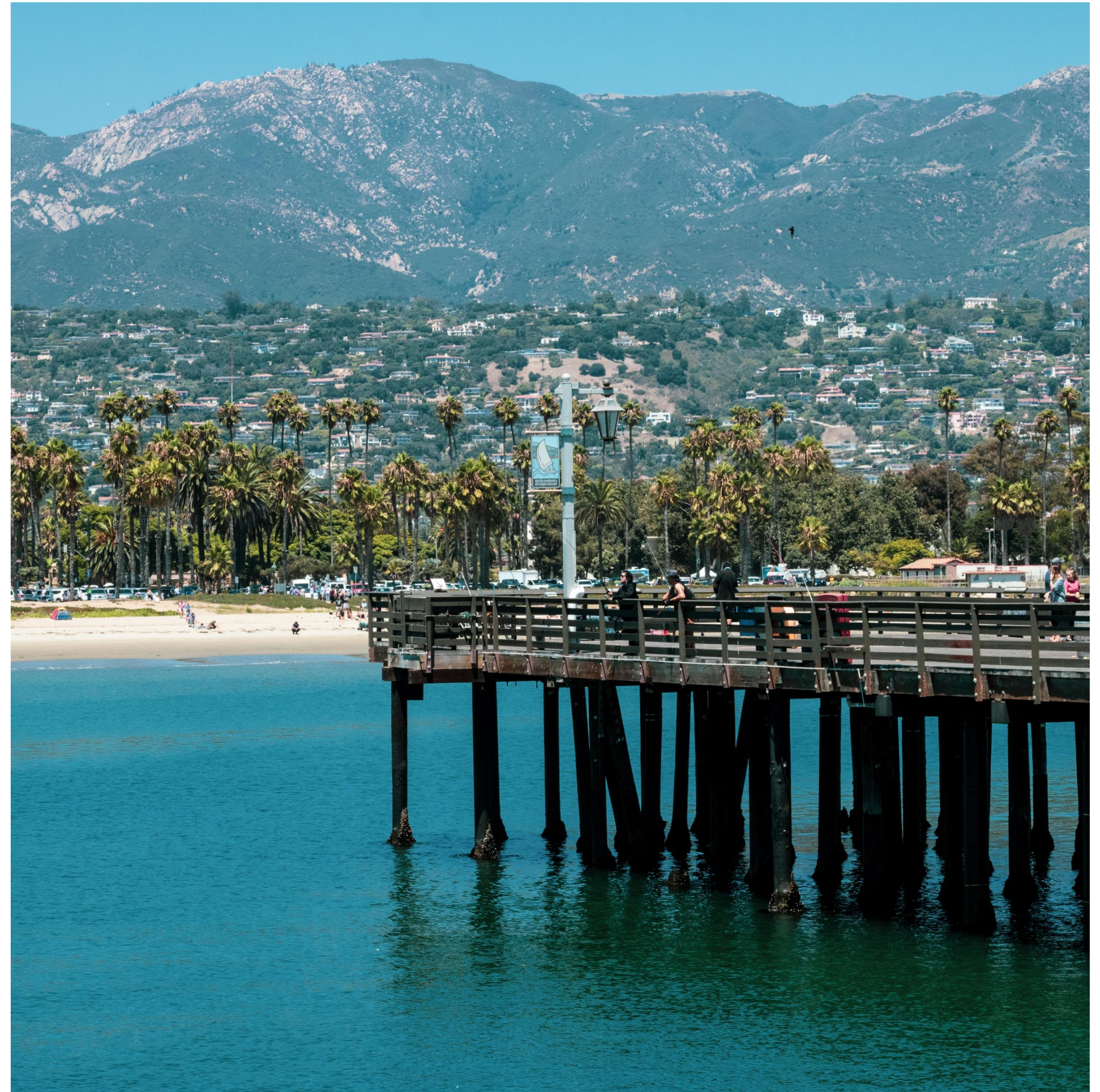
Chart 1 – Number of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness by supervisorial district

The unsheltered population in each of the county supervisorial districts.
Unsheltered homelessness population totals comparing 2022 and 2023.
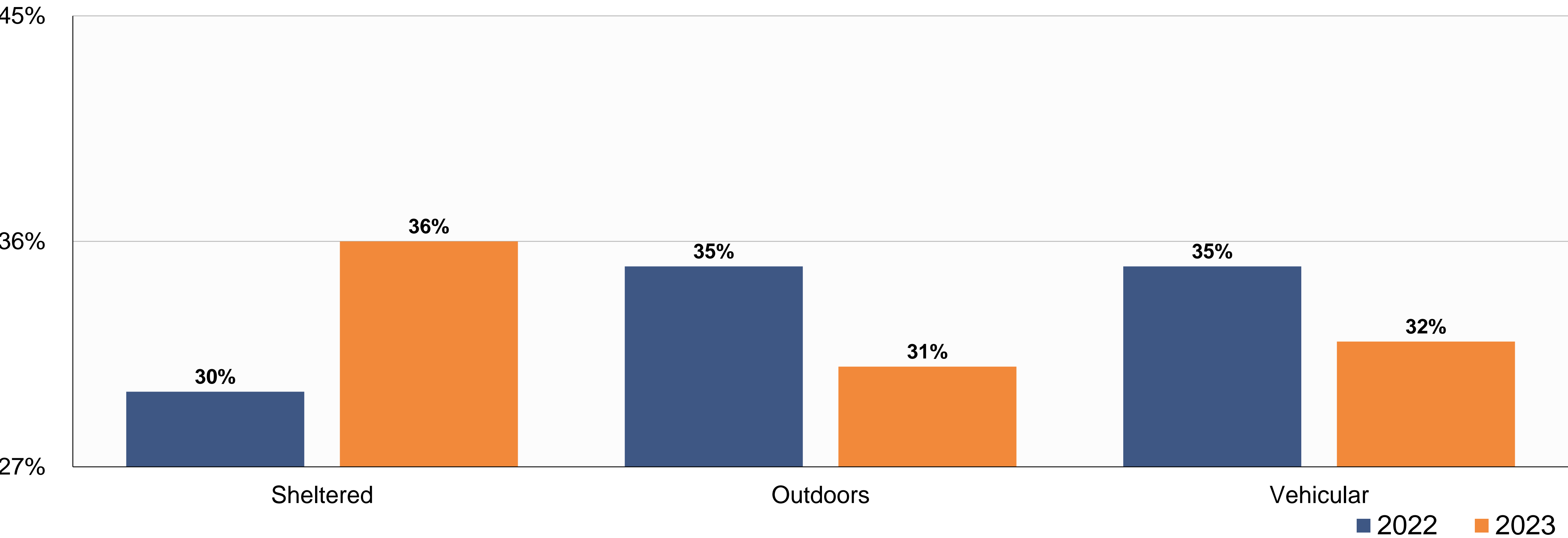

2022
- 1st District: 505
- 2nd District: 311
- 3rd District: 242
- 4th District: 89
- 5th District: 220

2023
- 1st District: 325
- 2nd District: 270
- 3rd District: 257
- 4th District: 144
- 5th District: 206

Sheltered, Unsheltered, and Vehicular Homelessness

64% of those counted were unsheltered, while 36% were sheltered.

Chart 2 – The Sleeping location of those enumerated in 2023 versus 2022
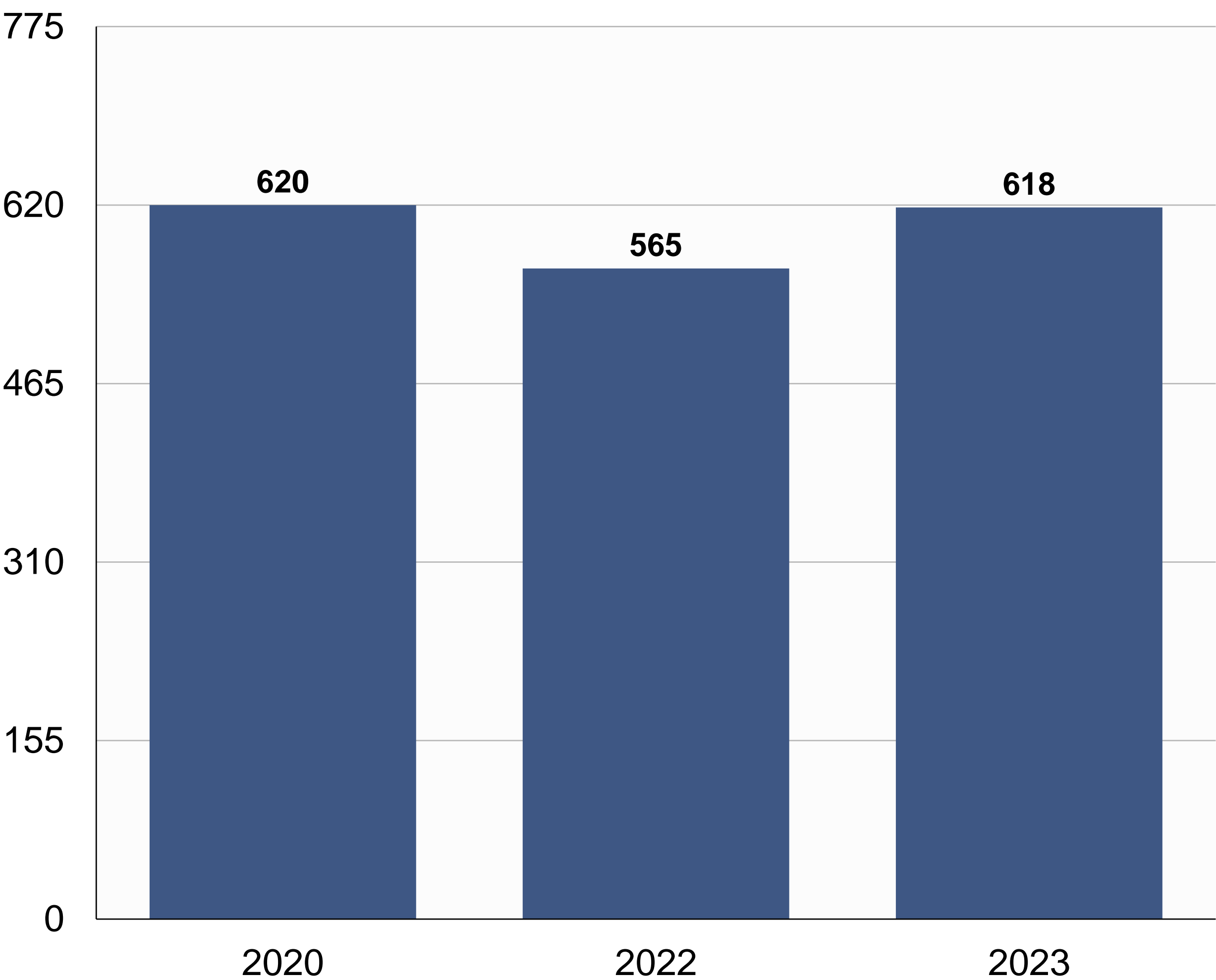
Chronic Homelessness

There were 618 chronically homeless individuals in Santa Barbara County in 2023. In 2020 there were 620 individuals counted as chronic, remaining basically unchanged.

Chronic Homelessness is defined as an individual or family that is homeless and resides in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter, and has been homeless and residing in such a place for at least 1 year or on at least four separate occasions in the last 3 years. The statutory definition also requires that the individual or family has a head of household with a diagnosable substance use disorder, serious mental illness, developmental disability, posttraumatic stress disorder, cognitive impairments resulting from a brain injury, or chronic physical illness or disability (24 CFR § 576.2)

Age

Five percent (5%) were transitional age youth between the ages of 18 and 24 and 10% were youth under the age of 18, while 33% of those experiencing homelessness were over the age of 55.

Chart 4 – Ages of those experiencing homelessness on the night of the Point in Time count
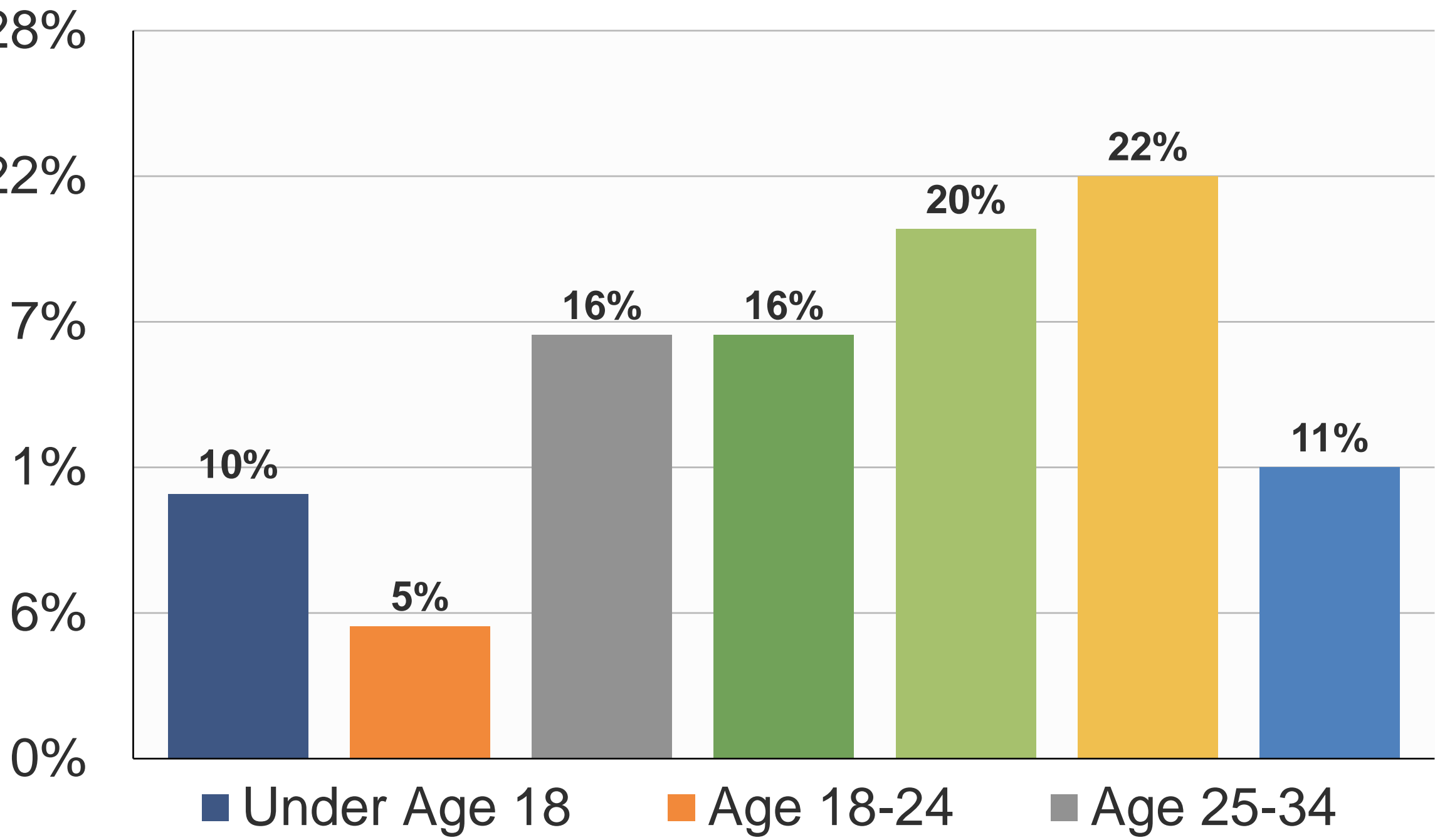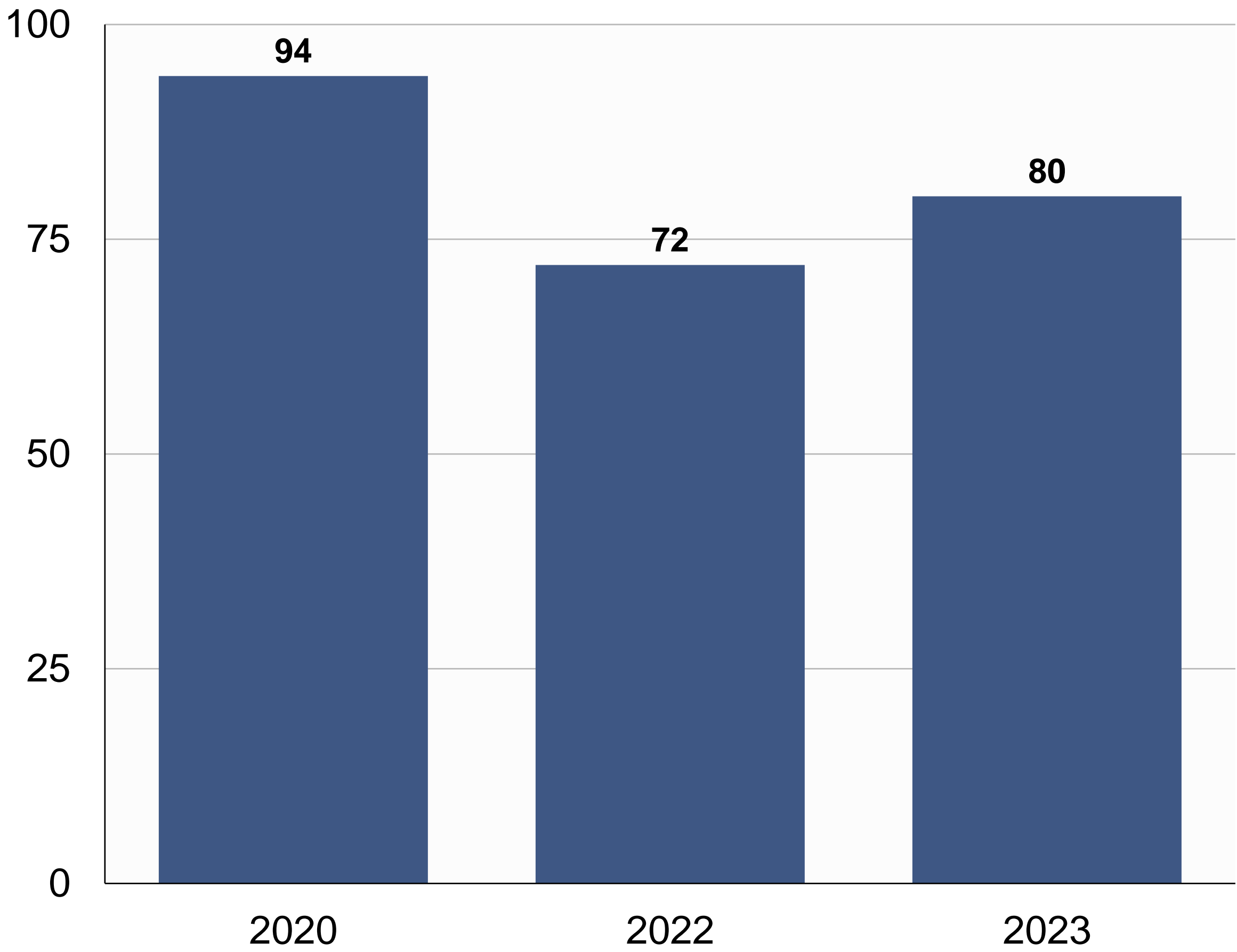

Chart 5 – Number of Unaccompanied Youth

Children (under 18) and Transitional Aged Youth (18-24 years old)

Race

A majority of homeless individuals enumerated identified as White (83%), which is higher than the general population at 78%. Seven percent (7%) selected Black or African-American which is higher than the general population at two percent (2%). Four percent (4%) selected American Indian or Alaska Native which is higher than the general population at one percent (1%). One percent (1%) identified as Asian, and one percent (1%) identified as Native Hawaiian or another Pacific Islander. Four percent (4%) of persons selected multi-racial.

The race categories are set by the department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). It should be noted that the over representation of "white" could be a result of a lack of other option for those who do not fit into other racial categories, such as latinx or middle eastern individuals.

Chart 6 – a comparison of the racial identity of the population experiencing homelessness and the entire population of Santa Barbara County.

|	White	Black	Asian	American Indian/ Indigenous
Those Experiencing Homelessness in Santa Barbara County	83%	7%	1%	4%
All Population of Santa Barbara County	78%	2%	6%	1%
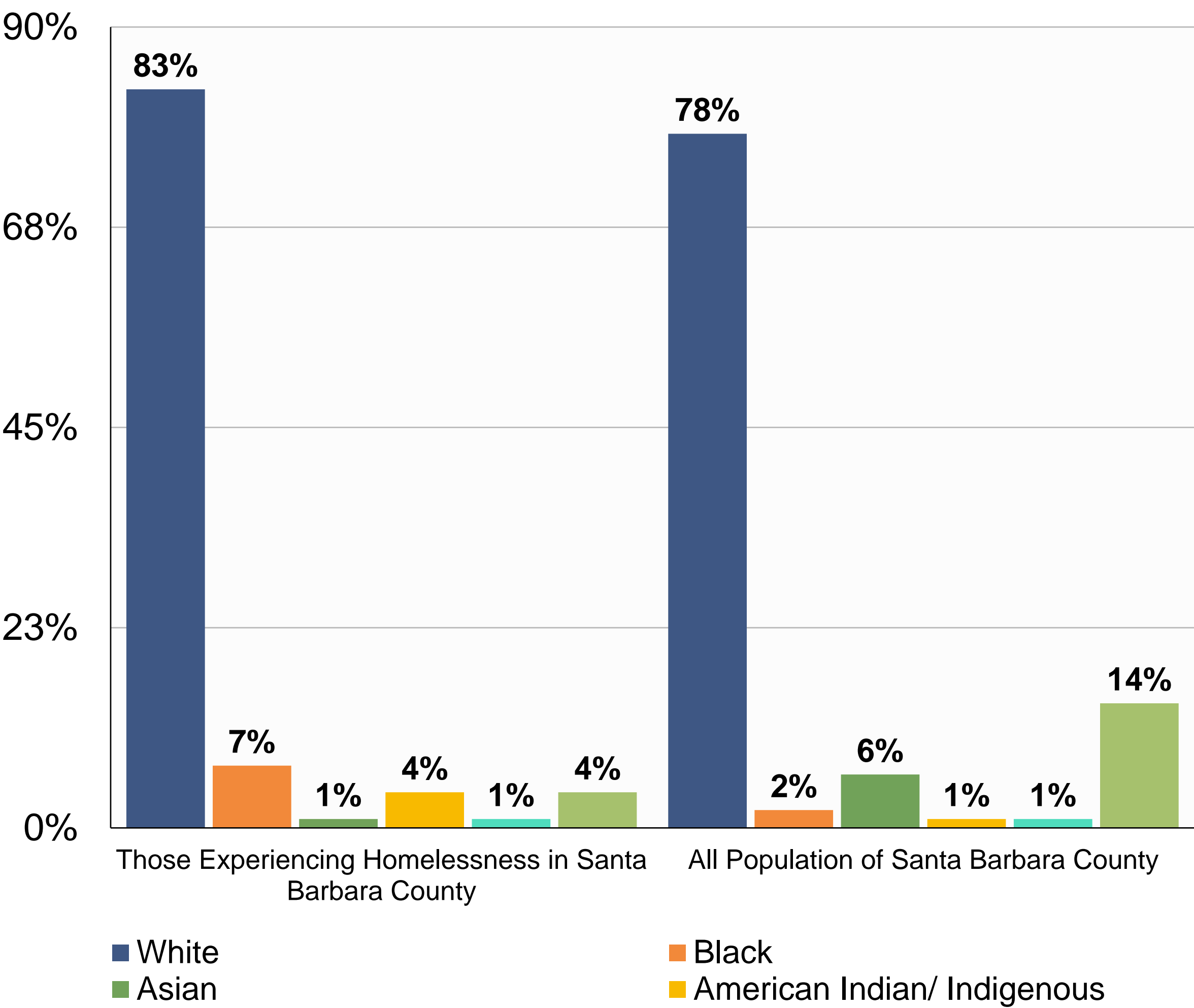
Ethnicity

A majority of individual survey respondents, 64%, identified as Non-Hispanic, while 36% of individuals identified as Hispanic.

A notable discrepancy is the over representation of Hispanic families. 21% of families in Santa Barbara county responded non-Hispanic, while 79% of families experiencing homelessness responded as Hispanic.

Families

Individuals
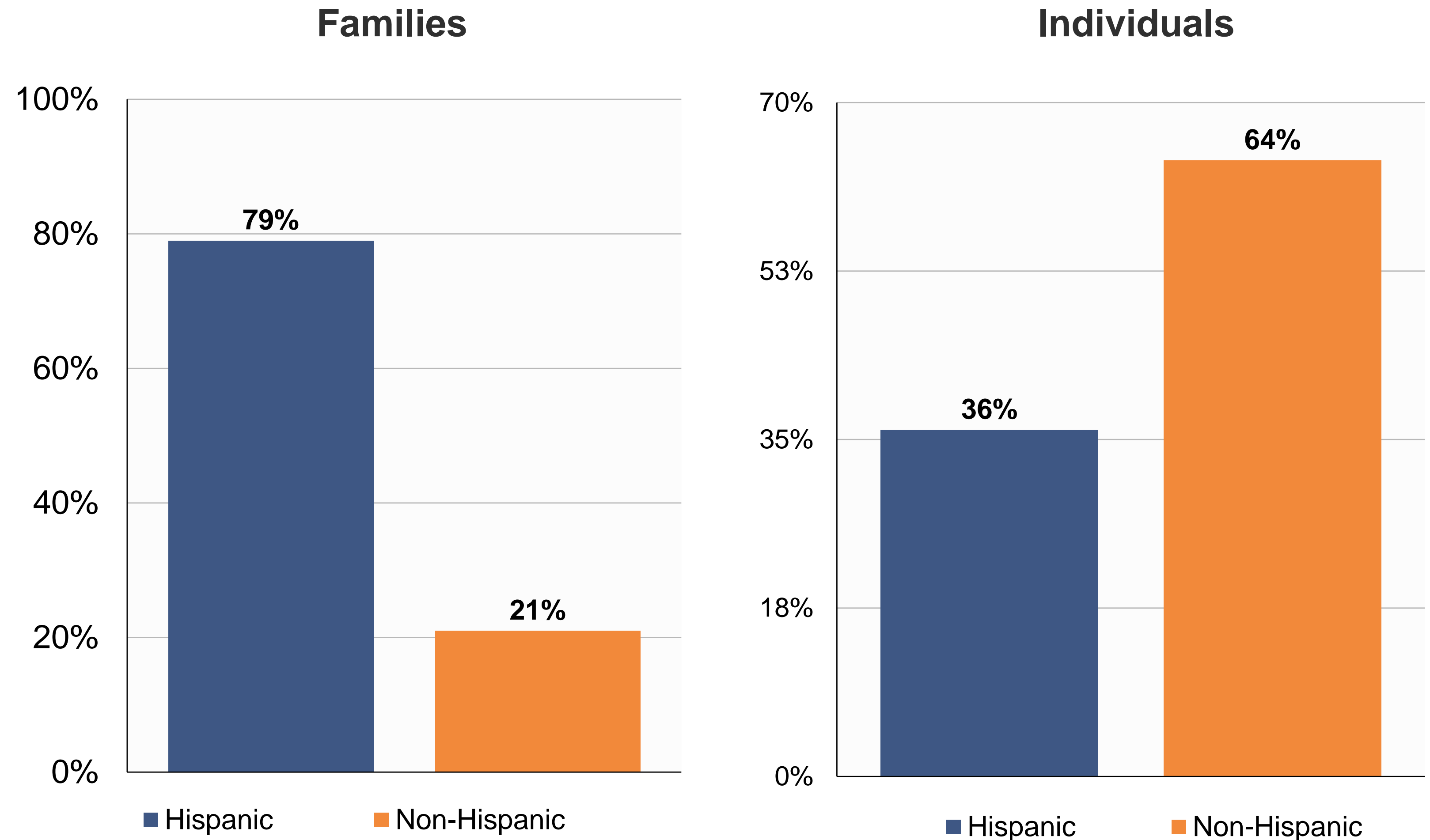
First Time Experiencing Homelessness

Approximately 45% of survey respondents indicated this was their first-time experiencing homelessness. This is less than the 55% who indicated this was not their first-time experiencing homelessness.

Chart 8 – Is this your first time experiencing homelessness?

Legend:
- No, I have been Homeless Before — 55%
- Yes, This is my first experience of Homelessness — 45%
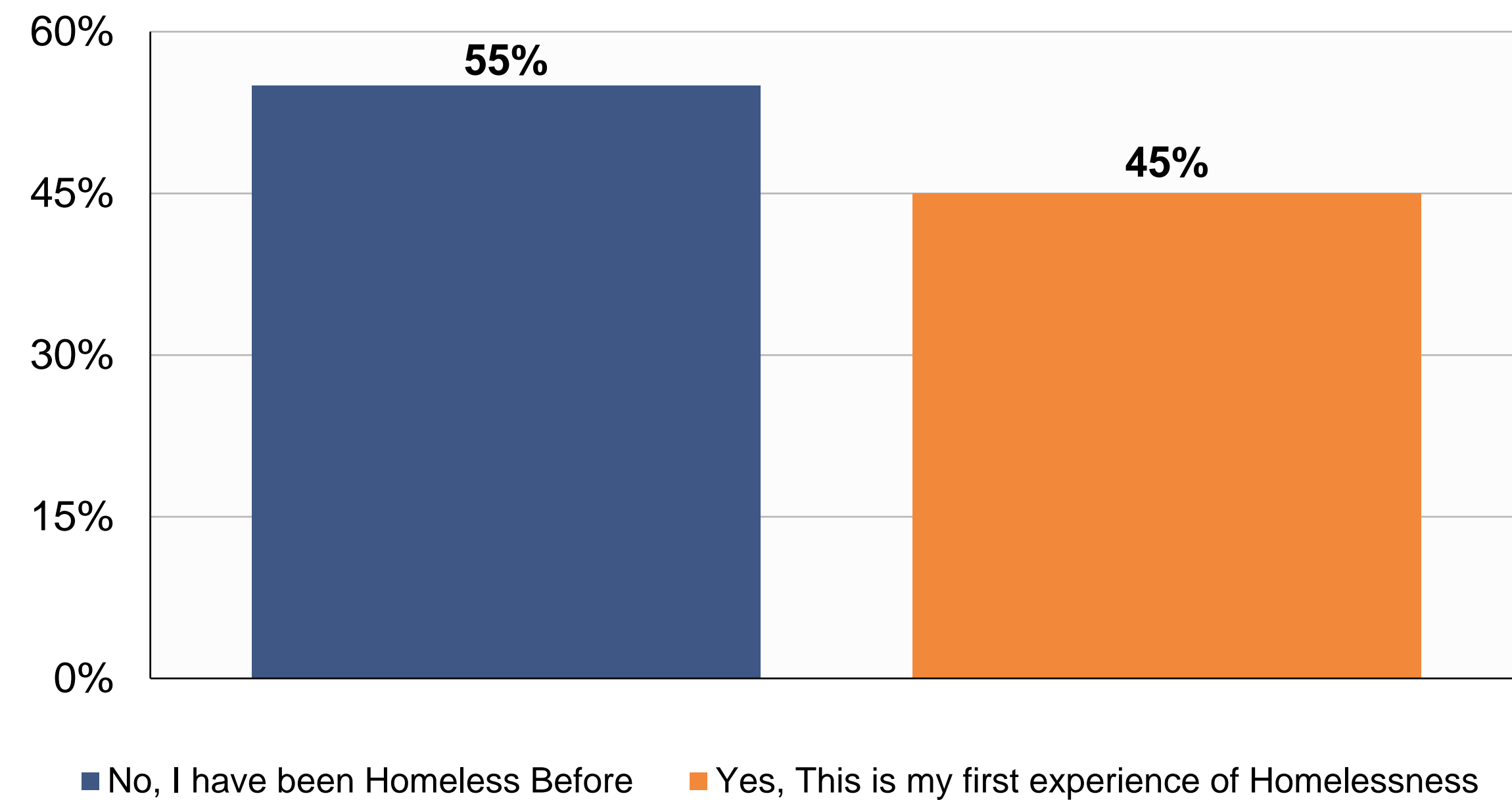
Residential History

One of the many myth surrounding people experiencing homelessness is that people are drawn to certain areas because of the services offered. In order to test the veracity of this assumption, a series of questions were developed to discern the residential history of those interviewed for the Point in Time Count. 77% of the unsheltered individual surveys reported they were living in Santa Barbara County when they first became unhoused, 74% reported that their last permanent address was in Santa Barbara County, and 62% reported that they had lived in Santa Barbara County for 10 years or more. It should be noted that the data below was collected only from individual living outdoors on the night of the count.

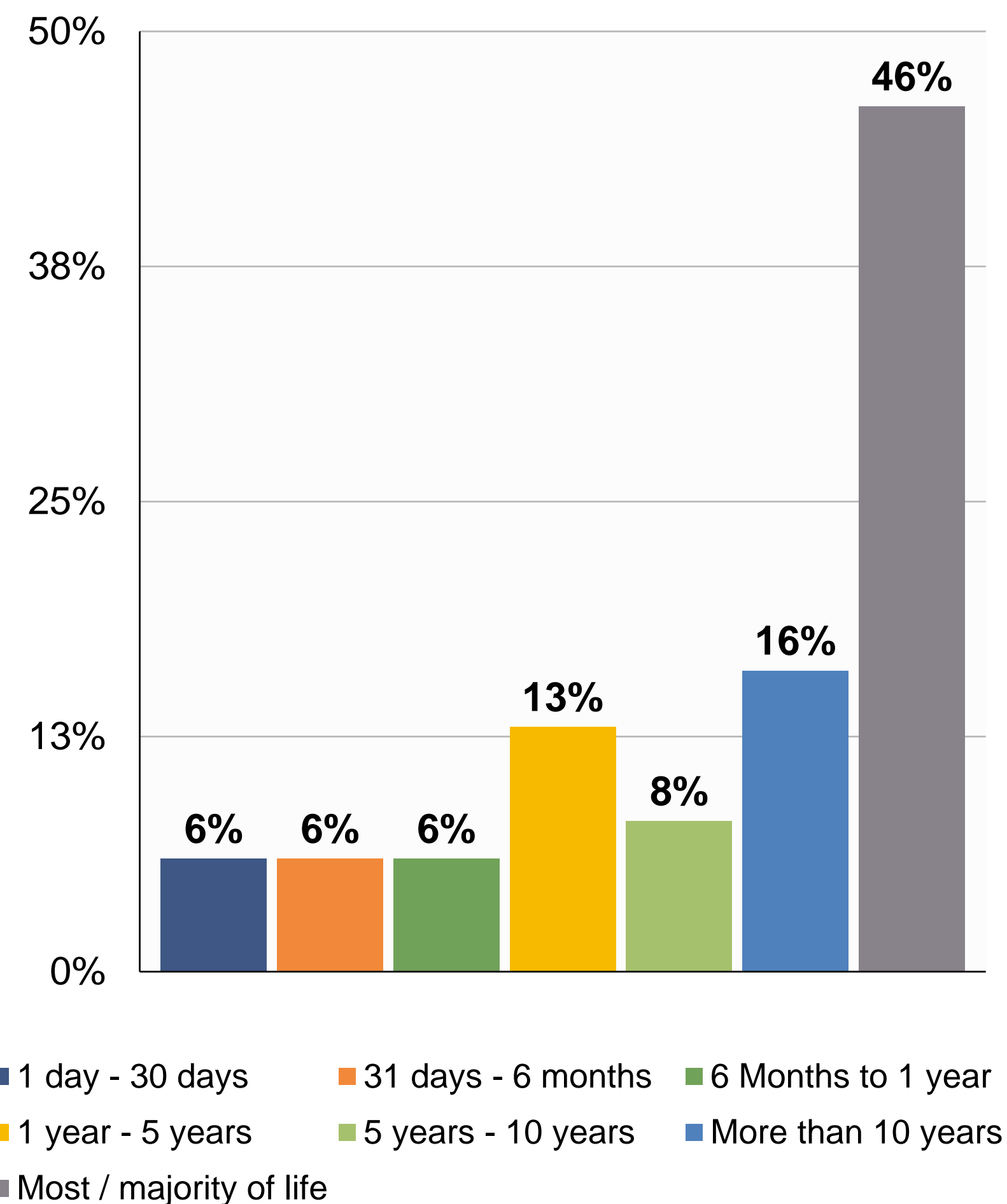Chart 9 – How long have you lived in Santa Barbara County?

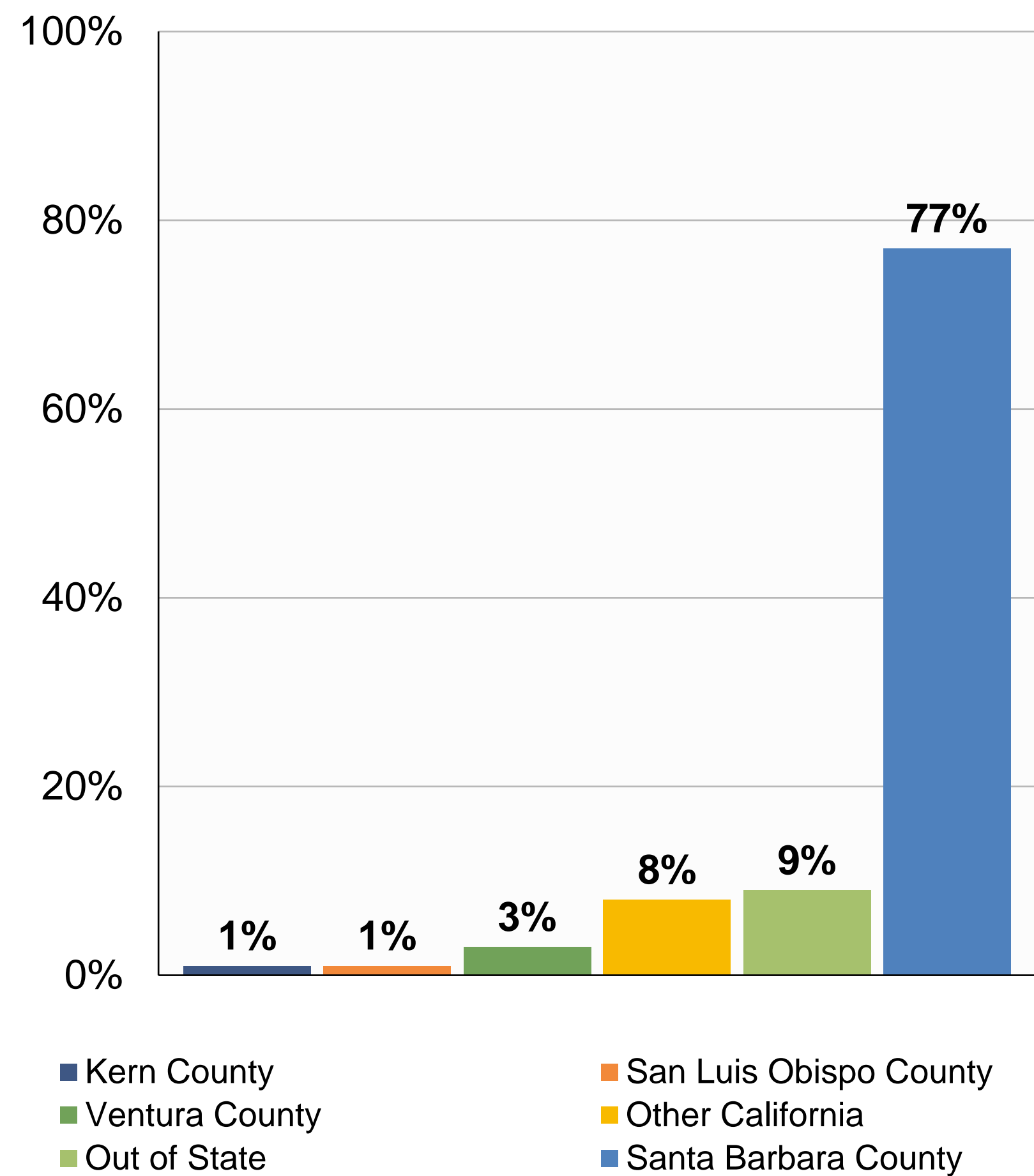Chart 10 – Where were you living when you first became homeless?

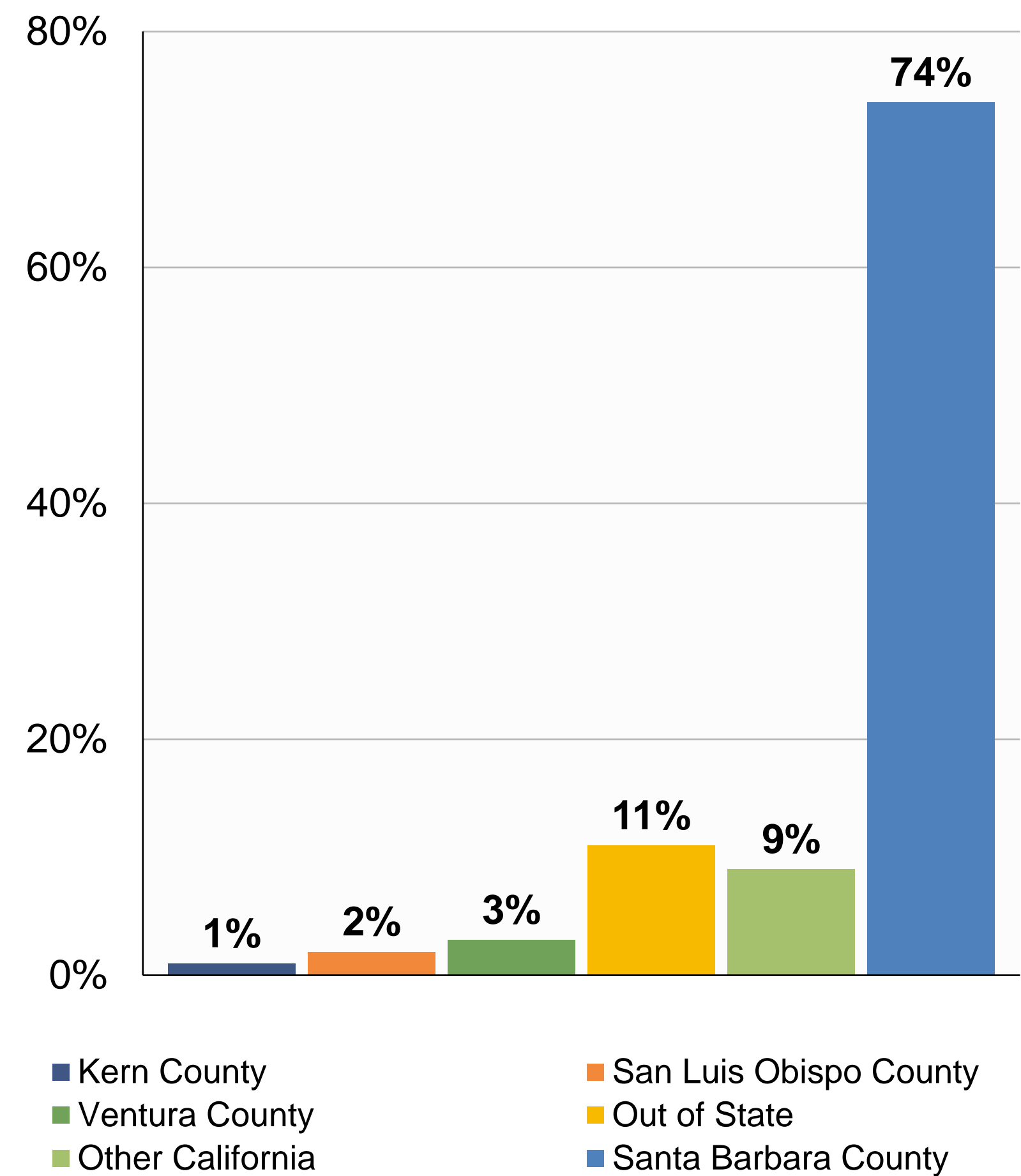Chart 11 – Where was your most recent permanent address?

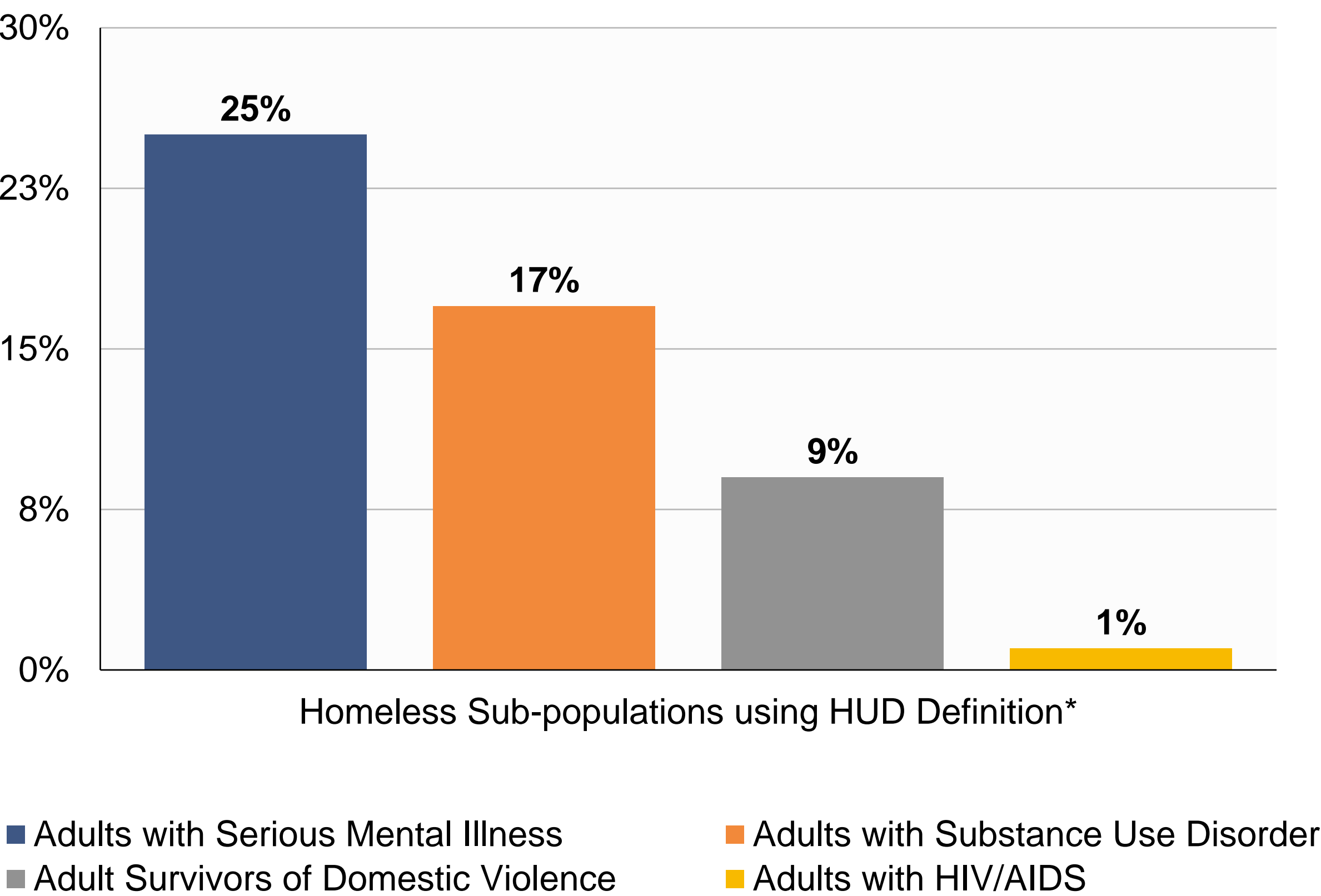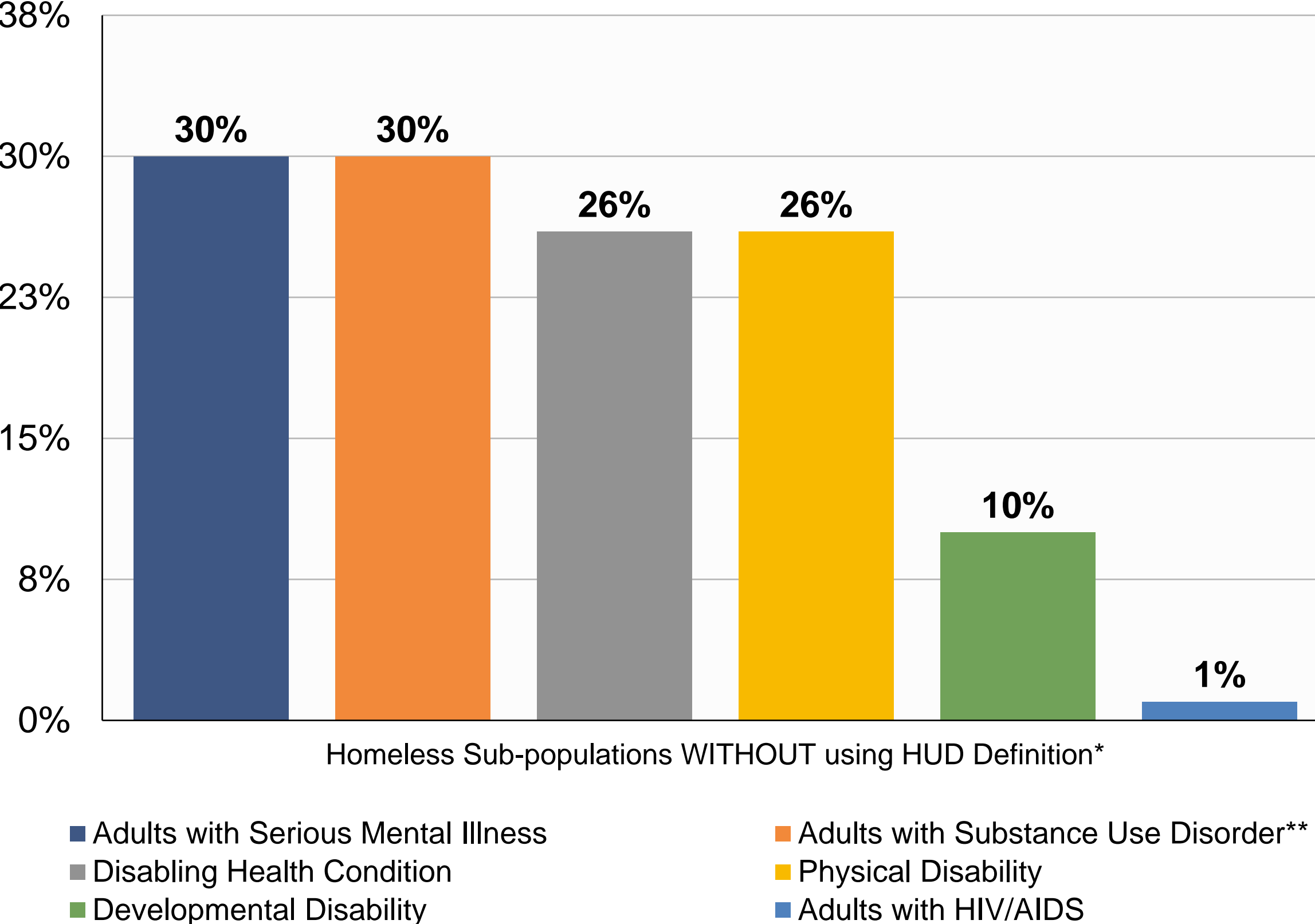# Chart 12 – Sub-populations included in the submission of the Point in Time count to HUD.*

Homeless Sub-populations using HUD Definition*

- ■ Adults with Serious Mental Illness
- ■ Adults with Substance Use Disorder
- ■ Adult Survivors of Domestic Violence
- ■ Adults with HIV/AIDS

Chart 13 – Disabling conditions without the HUD long term condition qualifier.

Homeless Sub-populations WITHOUT using HUD Definition*

- ■ Adults with Serious Mental Illness
- ■ Adults with Substance Use Disorder**
- ■ Disabling Health Condition
- ■ Physical Disability
- ■ Developmental Disability
- ■ Adults with HIV/AIDS

*For HUD reporting, mental illness and substance use disorder require that the condition is "expected to be long-term or of indefinite duration" in order to qualify. This typically results in a lower count. Because of this, the chart at right shows those reporting a disabling condition without the long-term qualifier.

**A low rate of reported substance abuse in persons living in vehicles impacted the over all percentage when factored into the substance use data as a whole. 51% of those living unsheltered outdoors reported a substance use disorder (SUD), while 33% living in shelters reported a SUD and 5% of those living in vehicles reported a SUD.

Veterans

The 2023 Point in Time Count showed a continue decrease in veterans experiencing homelessness – a 60% drop from 2020 to 2023.

Chart 14 – Veterans experiencing homelessness year over year.

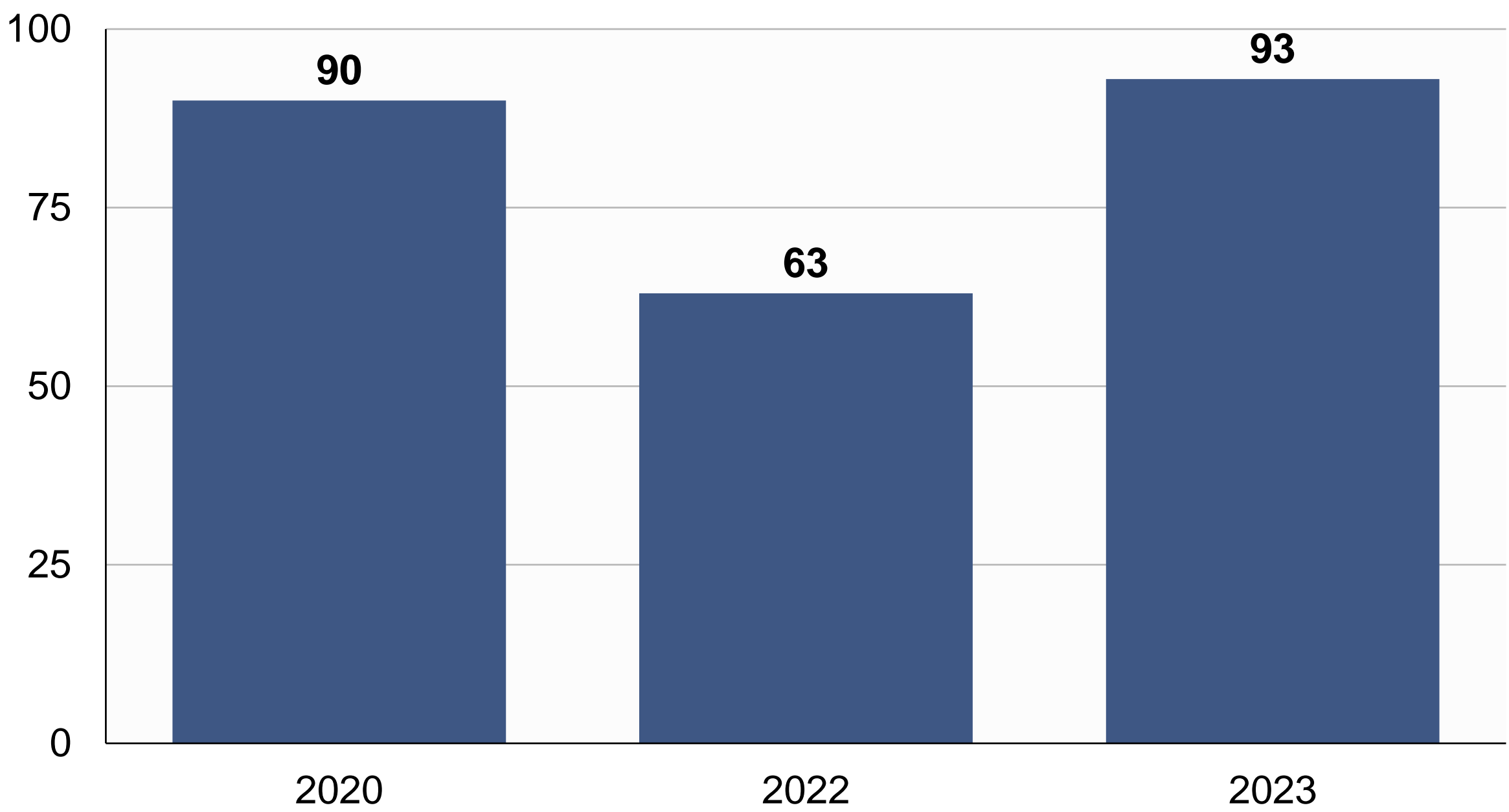| Year	Count
2020	210
2022	117
2023	82
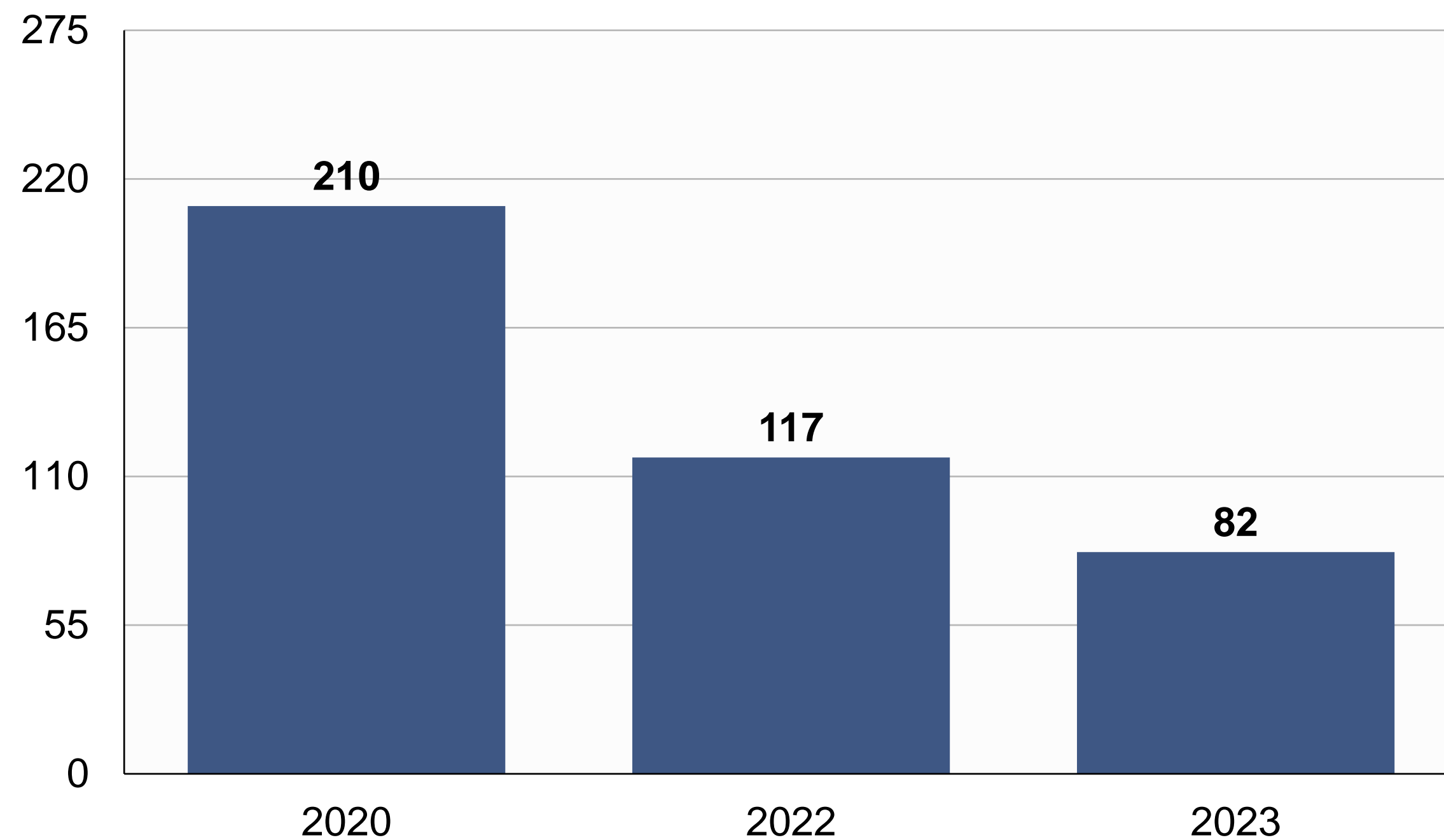
Families

The number of households in families with children experiencing homelessness remained virtually unchanged from 2020 to 2023. There is a noticeable downturn in 2022 during the COVID 19 pandemic.

Chart 15 – Number of households in families with children experiencing homelessness

Housing Inventory Chart

Several permanent and interim housing projects have been added to the Continuum of Care since 2020. This has resulted in an increase of 787 beds (+40%) dedicated to persons that are or were experiencing homelessness when housed. There are a number of projects under development. Rapid re-housing openings peaked during the pandemic with coronavirus relief funds dedicated to time limited rental assistance subsidies. These funds are no longer available as they were fully expended during the emergency period.

Definitions

Permanent Supportive Housing – New units and long term rental subsidies paired with supportive services.

Interim Housing – Emergency shelter, low barrier navigation centers, transitional housing, and/or bride housing.

Rapid Re-Housing – time-limited rental assistance with wraparound case management.

Chart 16 – Annual Housing Inventory Chart Totals

Chart showing annual housing inventory totals from 2018 to 2023:

Interim Housing (blue): 2018: 815, 2019: 769, 2020: 810, 2021: 674, 2022: 766, 2023: 855

Rapid ReHousing (orange): 2018: 213, 2019: 127, 2020: 103, 2021: 280, 2022: 355, 2023: 285

Permanent Supportive/Other Permanent Housing (green): 2018: 890, 2019: 962, 2020: 984, 2021: 1,278, 2022: 1,649, 2023: 1,627

Legend: — Interim Housing   — Rapid ReHousing   — Permanent Supportive/Other Permanent Housing
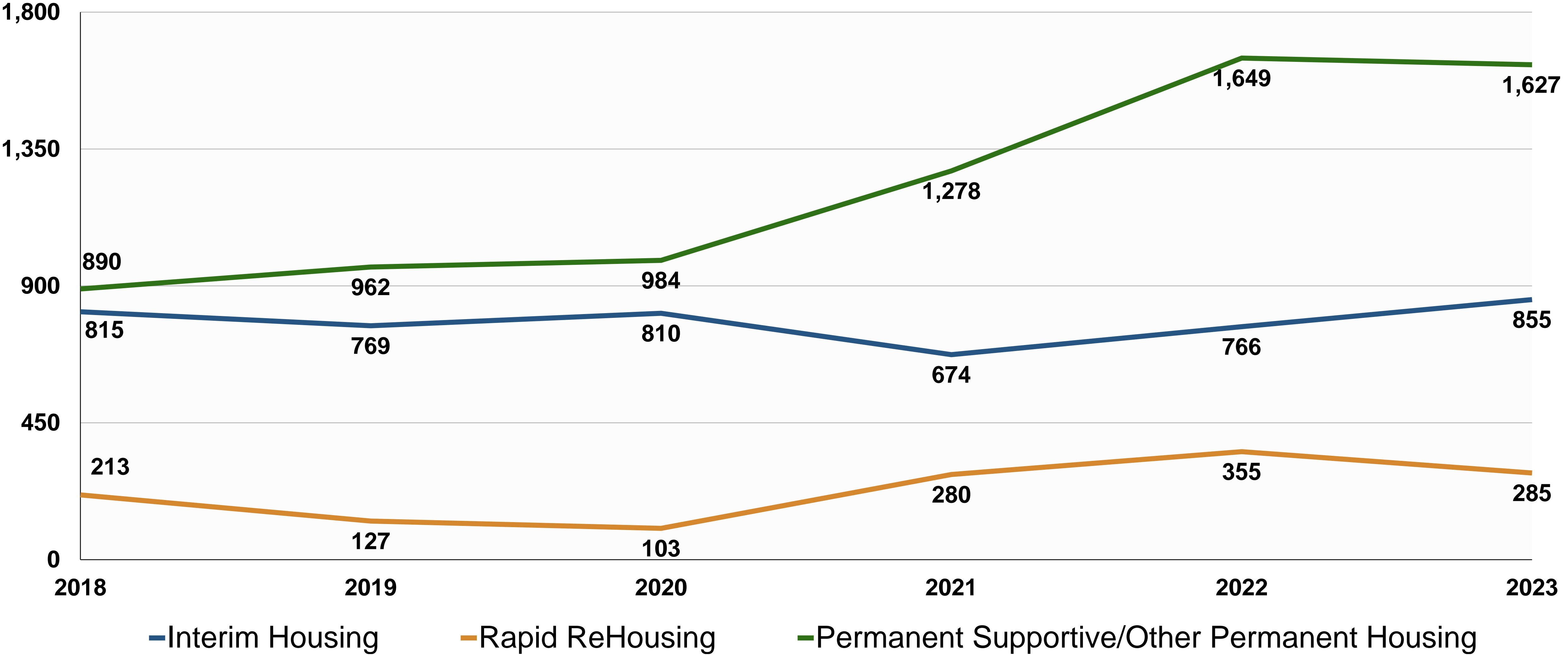
Chart 17 – Year Round Beds Available by Region

City/Area	Interim Housing	Rapid Re-Housing	Permanent Supportive Housing and Other Permanent Housing	Total
Santa Barbara	452	56	469	977
Santa Maria	193	37	394	624
Countywide*	43	135	641	819
Lompoc Valley	118	57	60	235
Isla Vista	42	0	31	73
Goleta**	7	0	25	32
Santa Ynez Valley	0	0	0	0
Carpinteria	0	0	7	7
Total	855	285	1,627	2,767

* Countywide reflects housing programs with multiple locations or rental subsidies that can be utilized throughout the county.
** Goleta contracts for beds located at shelters in other areas.

Appendix A – Methodology

Overview

The purpose of the 2023 Santa Barbara County Homeless Point-in-Time Count and Survey was to produce a point-in-time estimate of people experiencing homelessness in Santa Barbara County, approximately 2,745 square miles. The results of the street surveys were combined with the results from the shelter counts to produce the total estimated number of persons experiencing homelessness on January 25, 2023. The HUD definition of homelessness was used. An in-depth, qualitative survey was used to gain a more comprehensive understanding of those counted. A more detailed description of the methodology follows.

Definition of Homelessness

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

An individual or family with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place neither designed for nor ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including cars, parks, abandoned buildings, bus or train stations, airports, or camping grounds. (24CFR 576.2)

Components of the Method

Santa Barbara County uses a blitz, full canvassing methodology. This is a HUD best practice. In addition to counting persons living on the streets, counters survey encampments and count vehicles. In the afternoon, a youth count occurs. The CoC once again used the Counting Us mobile phone app, which is designed to automate the collection of data for the homeless census Point-in-Time Count and Survey.

The Counting Us app allows volunteers to record both observational and survey data in the field, even without cell phone coverage.

The data collected is available in real time, is easily accessed via the Counting Us website. There was also outreach and contact with those living in encampments by trained outreach workers. Location data from Fulcrum mapping software was used to facilitate coverage.

In 2023, the County contracted with SBACT to assist with county-wide planning and implementation of the South County count. This organizational expertise helped streamline count organization and volunteer recruitment.

The Point in Time Count methodology used in 2023 had these primary components:

- General street count and survey: an enumeration of unsheltered homeless individuals between the hours of 5:00AM to 9:00AM;

- Youth street count: a targeted enumeration of unsheltered homeless youth under the age of 25 between the hours of 2:30 PM and 5:30 PM;

- Sheltered count: an enumeration of sheltered homeless individuals on the night before the street count. This data was pulled from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and reports from non-HMIS participating providers;

- Encampments: an in-person, targeted survey of encampments by trained outreach workers

- Vehicular Count: New Beginnings Counseling Center Safe Parking Program staff conducted a target count and survey of those living in their vehicles. This data was then deduplicated once the count was complete.

The general street count was designed to take place before most shelters released persons who slept at the shelter the previous night. In areas with shelters, the immediate area surrounding the shelter was prioritized to eliminate potential double counting of individuals.

To achieve complete coverage of the county within the allotted timeframe, the planning team identified seven areas for the placement of dispatch centers on the morning of the count: Carpinteria, Goleta, Isla Vista, Lompoc, Solvang, Santa Barbara, and Santa Maria. The planning team determined the enumeration routes and assigned them to the dispatch center closest or most central to the coverage area to facilitate the timely deployment of enumeration teams into the field.

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 was generally composed of at least two trained volunteers and provided with their assigned census tract maps, training guidelines, and other supplies. One person from each team was designated to record entries into the Counting Us app (to avoid duplication), while other team members were designated drivers or observers relaying information to the recorder. All accessible streets, roads, parks, and highways in the enumerated tracts were traversed either by foot or by car. Teams were asked to cover the entirety of their assigned areas.
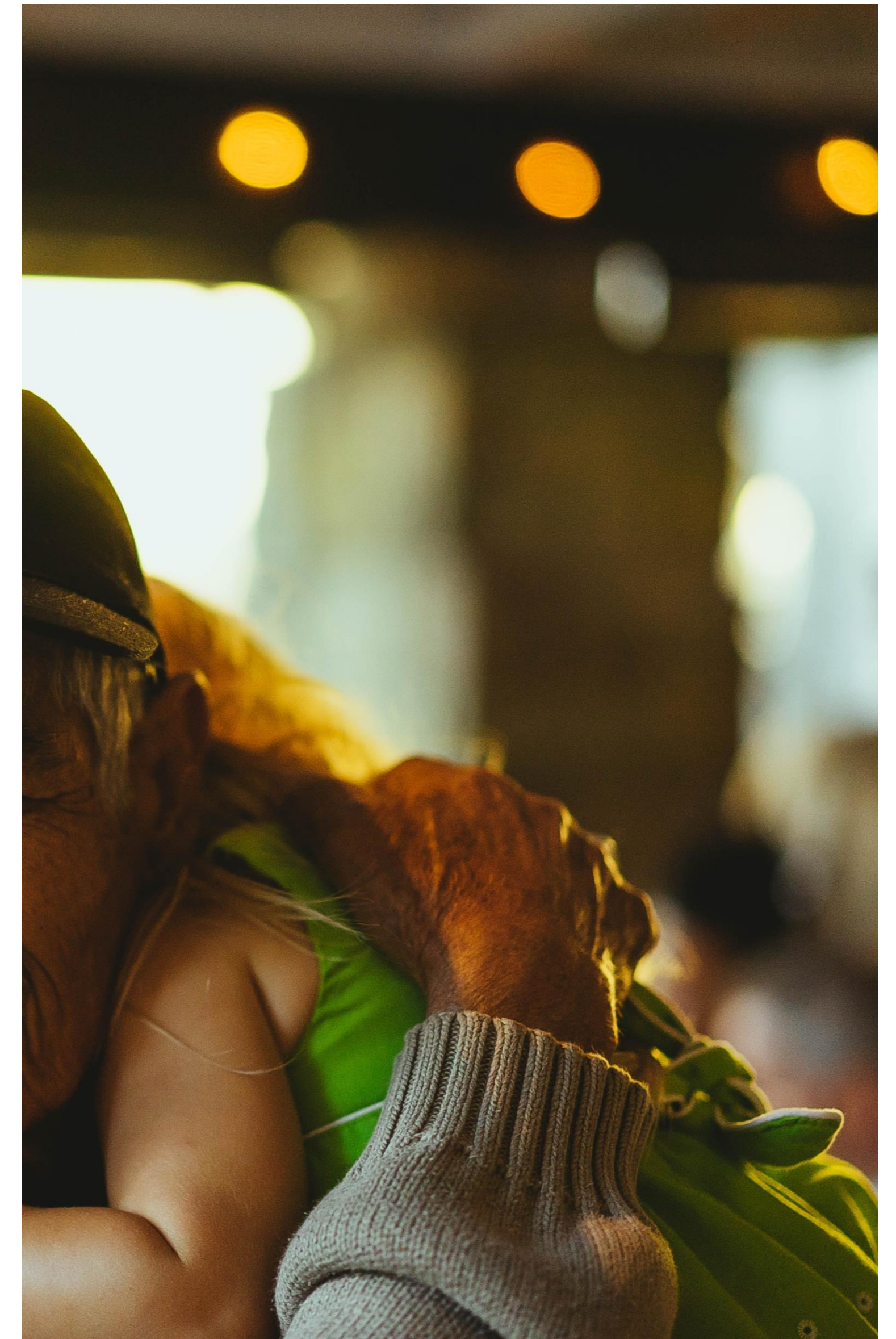
The Planning Process

To ensure the success and integrity of the count, many county and community agencies collaborated on community outreach, volunteer recruitment, logistical plans, methodological decisions, and interagency coordination efforts. Local homeless and housing service providers and advocates were valued partners in the planning and implementation of this count. This year, the lead agency contracted with the Santa Barbara Alliance for Community Transformation (SBACT) to assist in planning and execution of the South County portion of the count. Thanks to local efforts, the count included enumerators with a diverse range of knowledge, including expertise regarding areas frequented by homeless individuals, individuals living in vehicles, and persons residing in encampments. Community partners were also a key component in recruiting individuals with lived experience of homelessness to participate in the street count and survey efforts.

Volunteer Recruitment and Training

Many individuals who live and/or work in Santa Barbara County supported the county's effort to enumerate the local homeless population. Twelve volunteer trainings were held throughout Santa Barbara County prior to the count and survey. In total, over 400 community volunteers registered for the general street count on January 25, 2023.

Volunteers and agency staff served as enumerators on the morning of the count, canvassing the county in teams to visually count homeless persons. Volunteers, service providers, and staff supported each of the seven dispatch centers (Carpinteria, Goleta, Isla Vista, Lompoc, Solvang, Santa Barbara, and Santa Maria) greeting volunteers and guides, distributing instructions, maps and supplies to enumeration teams.

In order to participate in the count, all volunteers were required to download the Counting Us mobile application on their phone. Prior to the count, they were encouraged to practice using the app in test mode and to familiarize themselves with the survey questions.

On the morning of the count, staff reviewed how to record observational data into the app, how to access the app while in areas without cell phone coverage, and how to problem solve if needed. Staff also reviewed the definition of homelessness, how to identify homeless individuals, potential locations where homeless individuals may be located, how to safely and respectfully conduct the count, and provided maps to ensure the entirety of the assigned area was covered, as well as other tips to help ensure an accurate count.

Every effort was made to minimize potentially hazardous situations. Law enforcement agencies were notified of pending street count activity in their jurisdictions. Volunteers were deployed in groups of 2 or more and instructed not to separate from their group. Santa Barbara County Department of Behavioral Wellness provided training on safety when interacting with people who may be mentally unstable and how to disengage from a conversation if they felt unsafe. Volunteers were instructed not to enter encampments, tents, or structures. While this activity will stretch the comfort zone of each volunteer, they we instructed to use common sense - their safety is paramount.

Implementation

The surveys were conducted on the morning of January 25, 2023 to yield qualitative data about people experiencing homelessness in Santa Barbara County. These data are used for the McKinney-Vento Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance funding application and are important for both future program development and planning.

The survey collected information such as gender, family status, military service, duration and recurrence of homelessness, nighttime accommodations, 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 by enumeration teams on the evening prior to and the day of the count. The Counting Us mobile phone application was used to collect the survey data. A short training session on the Counting Us app was facilitated by the staff at each dispatch center, which included reviewing survey questions, how to access surveys while out of cell phone range, interviewing protocol, and confidentiality.
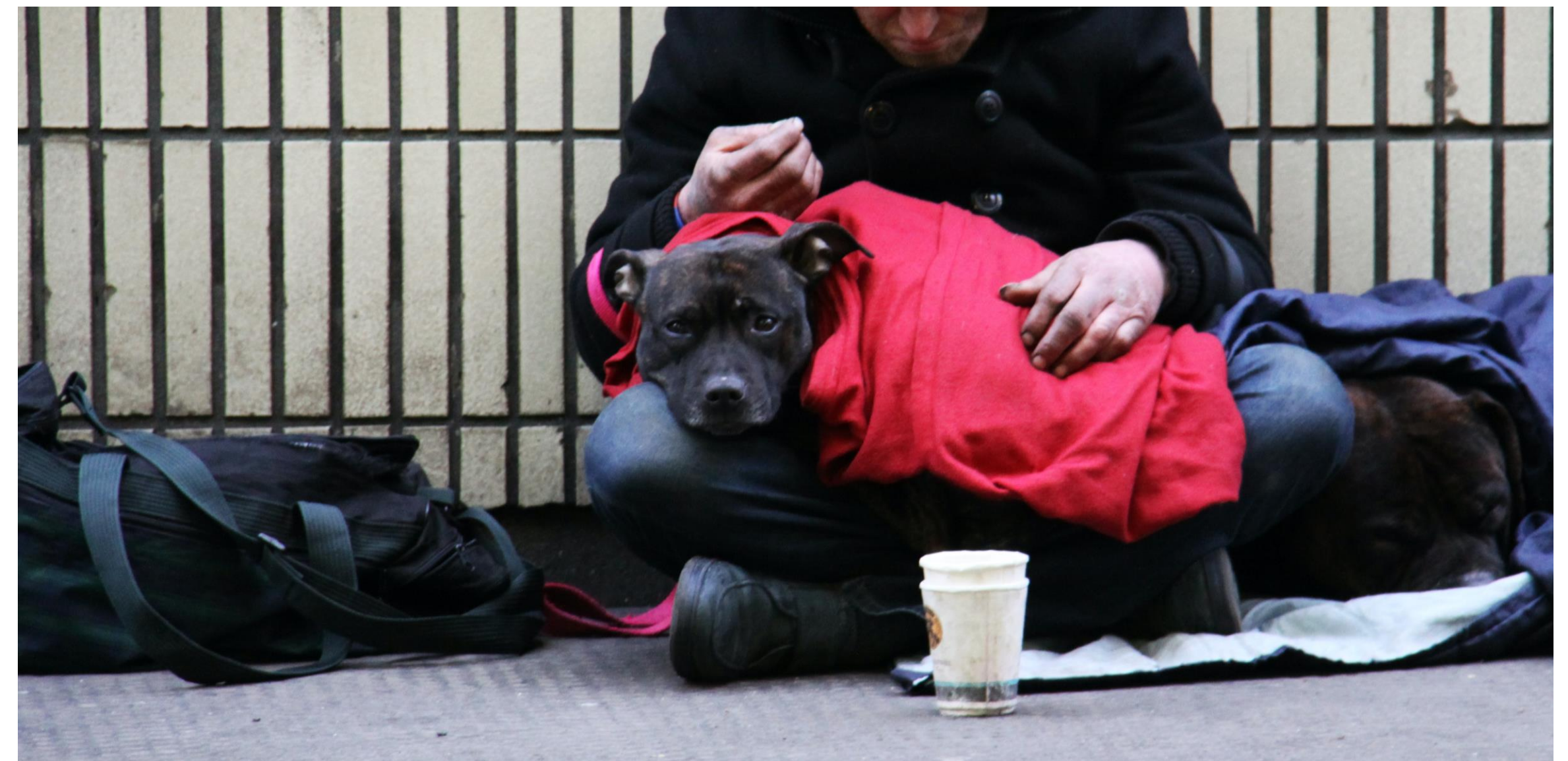
It was determined that survey data would be more easily obtained if an incentive gift was offered to each respondent to show appreciation for their time and participation. A significant number of socks, cereals bars, hygiene kits, $5 McDonald's or Starbucks gift cards and 2-1-1 cards were obtained. These were distributed as part of the Point- in-Time Count and Survey, and they were easy to distribute, had wide appeal, and could be provided within the constraints of the project budget. The incentives were widely accepted among survey respondents.

There may be some variance in the data that individuals experiencing homelessness self-reported. Surveys that were considered incomplete or containing false responses were not accepted. Missing values are intentionally omitted from the survey results. Therefore, the total number of respondents for each question will not always equal the total number of surveys conducted. The Point in Time Count is a single piece of a larger puzzle. The information gathered is informative, but should be considered within the context of all of the data available

within our community, including: The Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), data gathered from individual service providers, Fulcrum mapping software, the Coordinated Entry System, among others. The County Housing and Community Development division of the Community Services Department provided oversight of the PIT Count working with Simtech Solutions and more than 400 community members.

Data Collection and Analysis

Care was taken by interviewers to ensure that respondents felt comfortable regardless of the street or shelter location where they were being surveyed. The interviewers were trained to approach the survey respondents in a trauma-informed way by first introducing themselves and explaining why they were there. 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.

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, location, and consistencies in patterns of responses to other survey questions. The survey data was used in conjunction with HMIS data from the night of the count to create a more complete picture.
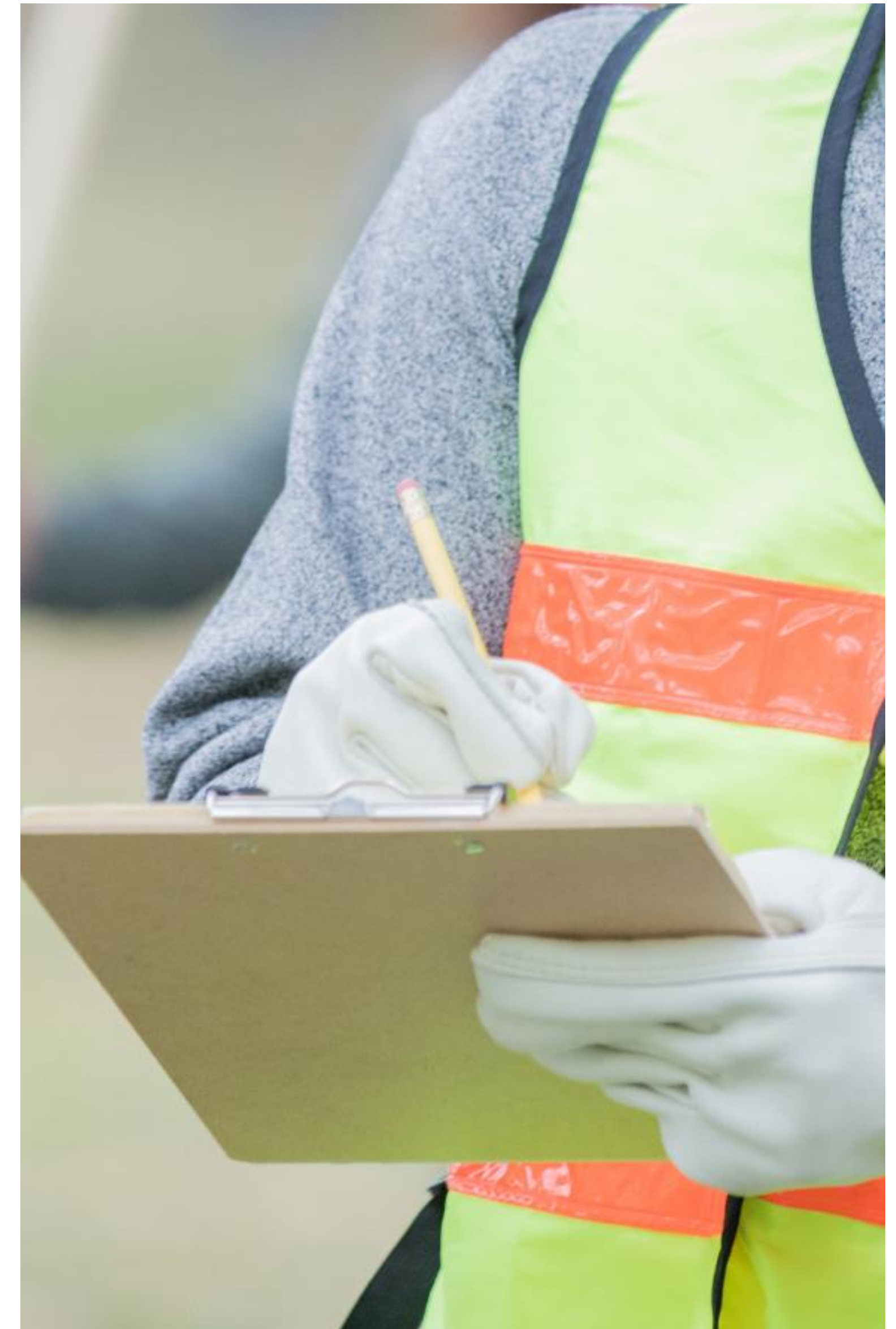
Appendix B – Definitions and Abbreviations

Chronic homelessness – Defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development as an unaccompanied individual or head of a family household with a disabling condition who has either continuously experienced homelessness for a year or more, or has experienced at least four episodes of homelessness totaling 12 months, in the past three years.

Disabling condition – Defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development as a physical, mental, or emotional impairment, including an impairment caused by alcohol or drug abuse, post-traumatic stress disorder, or brain injury that is

expected to be long-term and impacts the individual's ability to live independently; a developmental disability; or HIV/AIDS.

Emergency shelter – The provision of a safe alternative to the streets, either in a shelter facility or through the use of stabilization rooms. Emergency shelter is short-term, usually for 180 days or fewer. Domestic violence shelters are typically considered a type of emergency shelter, as they provide safe, immediate housing for survivors and their children.

Family – A household with at least one adult and one child under the age of 18.

Homeless – Under the Category 1 definition of homelessness in the HEARTH Act, 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.

HUD – Abbreviation for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Sheltered homeless individuals – Individuals who are living in emergency shelters or transitional housing programs.

Transition-age youth – Young people between the ages of 18 and 24 years old who are not accompanied by a parent or guardian and are not a parent presenting with or sleeping in the same place as their own child(ren).

Transitional housing – Housing in which homeless individuals may live up to 24 months and receive supportive services that enable them to live more independently. Supportive services – which help promote residential stability, increased skill level or income, and greater self- determination – may be provided by the organization managing the housing, or coordinated by that organization and provided by other public or private agencies. Transitional housing can be provided in one structure or several structures at one site, or in multiple structures at scattered sites.

Unaccompanied children – Children under the age of 18 who are not accompanied by a parent or guardian and are not a parent presenting with or sleeping in the same place as their own child(ren).

Unsheltered homeless individuals – Individuals who are living on the streets, in abandoned buildings, storage structures, vehicles, encampments, or any other place unfit for human habitation.