

HOMELESS ENUMERATION REPORT

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

SPRING 2006
(Revised April 21, 2006)

A PROJECT OF
THE HOMELESS SERVICES
COORDINATING COUNCIL

Sponsored by the

San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors

and

California Polytechnic State University



Preface

The Homeless Services Coordinating Council (HSCC) is responsible for coordination of all homeless services in the county, and is tasked with overseeing and assessing the services that make up the countywide homeless Continuum of Care system. In 2005, the HSCC Steering Committee determined that it needed more accurate data on the county's homeless population, and set about developing the resources and partnerships necessary to plan and conduct a Homeless Enumeration Project. The County Board of Supervisors agreed to contribute \$5,000 of discretionary funding to carry out the project.

The project was a partnership with the County Board of Supervisors, California Polytechnic State University (Cal Poly), and numerous supporting agencies. Dr. Jean Williams, an Associate Professor of Political Science at Cal Poly, was instrumental in the overall design of the enumeration methodology and tools. Dr. Williams, in turn, hired a graduate student, Philip Alonso, to organize, manage and analyze the data.

The HSCC Steering Committee wishes to acknowledge the financial and In-Kind resources contributed by the County Board of Supervisors and Cal Poly. Without their support, this important project would not have been possible.

This Homeless Enumeration Report does not contain all the data collected during the Enumeration Project; for example, the survey component of the Project collected data on 50 variables, five of which are presented in this report. This report will be available in PDF format on host websites by April 25, 2006. Additional data will be made available on the host websites at a later date. Please see the Appendix for more information about accessing this data.

Report Revisions:

In the initial Homeless Enumeration Report released on April 4, 2006, the number of homeless persons observed at the County Jail was incorrect. On April 21, 2006 the Report was revised to correct Pages 13-14 (Locations of Observation), as well as Page 7 where the locations are referenced in Key Findings.

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Introduction

On October 26, 2005 members of the homeless services provider community came together in a collaborative effort to count the number of homeless persons living in the county. During the count 2,408 individuals were identified as homeless, including 817 children under the age of 21. There is some controversy as to what percentage of the county's total homeless population these persons represent, but certainly it is not all of them. However, no one disputes that, on that day, there were 2,408 persons counted as homeless.

San Luis Obispo County covers 3,304 square miles and has a population of more than 254,000. It is 60 miles from the southern end of Nipomo to the northern edge of Paso Robles. The county is largely rural and has only seven cities. The largest cities are San Luis Obispo with 44,225 residents, Atascadero with 27,691 residents and Paso Robles with 27,216 residents. The smallest city is Pismo Beach with 8,861 residents (January 2004 population figures).

The county's economy and workforce are a mix of agriculture, tourism, service jobs, utilities, and state/local government employment. Many of the cities and the County have adopted policies that result in slower growth in housing construction, especially in the past 10 years. Much of the housing that has been built is large, single family dwellings. Land is very expensive throughout the county.

As a result, the cost of housing is extremely high. In 2005, the median sales price of a house in the county hit \$600,000, pushing home ownership beyond the reach of 93% of the population. In the past, the homeless and working poor competed with college students for affordable housing; now they compete with college professors. The shortage of affordable housing across all income levels has created "compaction" in entry-level housing; middle-income households stay in entry-level housing, thereby seriously limiting the housing options of lower-income households.

There have been numerous studies attempting to understand the reasons for homelessness in the United States. In 1998, James Wright, et al. published *Beside the Golden Door: Policy, Politics, and the Homeless*. Not only do the authors discredit many of the stereotypes attached to the homeless population, they also put forth a very simple argument for the causes of homelessness: the poor are getting poorer and the cost of housing is increasing. Homelessness is the logical outcome. A discussion of the causes of homelessness is beyond the scope of this analysis, but collecting statistical evidence to support such discussions locally is one of the many goals of this Homeless Enumeration Project.

Wright reflects that prior to the 1970s-80s, most homeless persons were single, adult men, such as transient laborers moving with seasonal job opportunities. While this type of homeless person still exists, today's homeless population includes more women and children. At the same time, the magnitude of the homeless population has continued to increase. The stereotypical "face of homelessness" has changed from male to female, and from adult to child. With more single mothers and children falling into

homelessness, the seriousness of the problem is registering on the “radar screens” of our communities.

Over the past 5-10 years, local homeless services providers anecdotally reported that the number of homeless persons in the county had been steadily increasing, though an accurate count of homeless persons was not known. In 2000, local service providers collaborated with Census workers to educate and motivate the county’s homeless to come to Census events and be counted. More than 1,000 homeless persons were surveyed by Census workers at “Be Counted” events, held simultaneously throughout the county to avoid duplicative counts.

Despite our county’s labor-intensive local effort, the Census Bureau issued only one report of these Census figures and does not intend to release additional data. According to that October 2001 report (*Emergency and Transitional Shelter Populations: 2000, Census 2000 Special Reports*), 188 homeless persons were residing in emergency shelters in the San Luis Obispo-Atascadero-Paso Robles Metropolitan Area. The report does not mention the number of unsheltered persons counted in that effort. For a variety of reasons the report cautions “when reviewing data from the emergency and transitional shelter enumeration, the Census Bureau encourages data users not to use it as a count of the population experiencing homelessness...”

Since the Census Bureau chose to report only 188 *sheltered* homeless (less than 19% of the 1,000 homeless persons who came to be counted) we might assume the other 812 persons were *unsheltered* homeless. This undercount of the homeless has serious long-term impacts because Census figures are used to make funding decisions for a range of essential social programs. Local service providers have wanted to conduct a field count since the Census undercount occurred. The need for current, accurate data has become critical because important service planning, program development, grant writing, and advocacy are all based on old data. In addition, the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), which controls many resources needed to support homeless services, requires local communities to conduct a homeless count to demonstrate local need. Without more reliable data, HUD’s Supportive Housing Grant funding to the county (which supports homeless case management and transitional housing countywide) is in jeopardy.

This Homeless Enumeration Report will explain the methodology of the count, the lessons learned in the process of the count, and an analysis of the key findings in the data.

Who Conducted the Enumeration?

The Homeless Services Coordinating Council (HSCC) is responsible for coordination of all homeless services in the county, and is tasked with overseeing and assessing the services that make up the countywide homeless Continuum of Care system. In order to better manage the Continuum of Care system, the HSCC has a Steering Committee. Members of the Steering Committee represent homeless advocates and service providers, local funders, mainstream service providers, and the countywide planning and

development entities responsible for health, human services and housing programs for adults and seniors, children and families, and persons with special needs.

The HSCC Steering Committee is comprised of these key organizations:

- San Luis Obispo County Department of Social Services
- San Luis Obispo County Planning Department
- California Polytechnic State University
- Interfaith Coalition for the Homeless
- Friends of Prado Day Center
- Community Health Centers of the Central Coast
- Transitions-Mental Health Association
- Homeless Outreach Program
- Economic Opportunity Commission of San Luis Obispo County (EOC)

The HSCC Steering Committee determined in 2005 that it would be important to develop more accurate data on the county's homeless population by the end of the year. The Committee set out to develop the resources and partnerships necessary to plan and conduct a Homeless Enumeration Project. The County Board of Supervisors agreed to contribute \$5,000 of discretionary funding to carry out the project. The project was a partnership with the County Board of Supervisors, California Polytechnic State University (Cal Poly), and numerous supporting agencies. Dr. Jean Williams, an Associate Professor of Political Science and Public Policy at Cal Poly, was instrumental in the overall design of the enumeration methodology and tools. Dr. Williams, in turn, hired a graduate student, Philip Alonso, to organize, manage and analyze the data. As co-chairs of the HSCC, Stephan Lamb (Director, The Community CENTER at Cal Poly) and Suzanne Heitzman (County Homeless Services Coordinator) served as Homeless Enumeration Project leaders.

As the project gained momentum, many additional partners were invited to the meetings to design and plan for the actual count. Once the HSCC Steering Committee decided the type of methodology, all partners were involved with the overall design of the project. These partners included, but are not limited to the following agencies/organizations: professional staff from all emergency and transitional facilities; health care providers; County Department of Social Services (DSS); County Office of Education; Head Start programs; San Luis Obispo Police Department; City, County and State Parks; students and community volunteers; and formerly homeless people. Each partner engaged additional partners in their respective regions of the county.

Though it was challenging to pull together such a diverse community collaboration, it clearly demonstrated the community's commitment to both the enumeration project and the homeless population.

Enumeration Methodology

Planning: The Homeless Enumeration Project team began meeting in July 2005 to plan the project and prepare for the count. HSCC members laid out a map of the county and circled regions where the homeless were known to frequent or live. As planning progressed, various experts, including service providers and park rangers, were called in

to participate in the process and advise on how to count homeless persons in their area. The following four geographic regions were identified and team captains were assigned for each region: North Coast, North County, San Luis Obispo City, and South County.

The Homeless Enumeration Project was comprised of two elements: a *count* of every homeless adult and child and a *survey* of every fifth homeless adult. The HSCC and Team Captains led trainings to instruct service providers and volunteer enumerators how to complete the count and survey forms. Enumerators were instructed to count and record only those people they actually saw during the counting time period. Sheltered and unsheltered homeless people were counted during specific time periods.

Based on HUD's recommended methodology, enumerators did not personally speak to every person counted. Given the short timeframe for the count to take place, enumerators did not have time to personally ask each person whether he/she was homeless. Rather, they used "enumerator judgment" to ascertain whether a person was homeless or not. For this reason, the HSCC carefully built regional teams made up of service providers, outreach workers and homeless volunteers, all of whom had specialized knowledge about the regions in which they were counting. Thus, they were able to use their knowledge of the populations and areas to ensure that they were actually counting homeless people. Additionally, enumerators were instructed to count a person if the person was found in an encampment or area frequented by homeless people, was in the company of other homeless people known to the enumerator, or verbally indicated that he/she was homeless.

The Homeless Enumeration Project used the following definitions of homelessness:

1. People who are living in a place not meant for human habitation such as cars, parks, sidewalks, on the street, or in RVs.
2. People staying in emergency shelters (homeless or domestic violence).
3. People in transitional housing for homeless persons, who originally came from the streets or emergency shelters.
4. People who have unstable housing, for example "couch surfing" or doubled up with friends or another family.

For the survey component of the project, enumerators surveyed every fifth adult that they counted. The survey contained eleven questions and took 5-10 minutes to complete. Answers were confidential and anonymous. Respondents were assured that there would be no retribution for the information they provided in their survey answers, for declining to complete the survey, or for declining to answer particular questions.

Fieldwork: Over a two day period in late October 2005, members of the community conducted "point-in-time" counts of the sheltered and unsheltered homeless in San Luis Obispo County.

On Tuesday evening, October 25, persons in overnight shelters and transitional housing were counted and surveyed by shelter staff. The following morning, from 7:00am to 1:00pm, unsheltered persons who live in encampments or on the street were counted

and surveyed. Care was taken to design the methodology and recruit knowledgeable volunteers for the October 26 count, in order to avoid re-counting persons who had been counted in shelters the previous night.

Approximately 50 people comprised the four regional teams that fanned out to service sites and locations throughout the county. Homeless guides and outreach workers, volunteers from the community, and professionals from provider agencies participated on each team. A fifth team staffed “Count Headquarters” where team members and team captains could call in for assistance throughout the day. The Headquarters was remarkably quiet on the day of the count indicating there were few problems in the field and few questions.

Numerous service sites participated in hosting breakfast and food distribution events including locations such as Casa San Miguel, ECHO North County Shelter, Prado Day Center, South County People’s Kitchen, Harvest Bag, both Loaves and Fishes, and the Salvation Army emergency service sites. Enumerators also canvassed streets, parks, campgrounds, beaches, creek beds, rural properties, and agricultural fields to count the homeless. Case managers from DSS and EOC had face-to-face contact with their homeless clients in order to conduct the count and survey.

There were three separate partners who used their own staff to conduct the count; each used the HSCC Steering Committee’s forms and instructions. First, the school districts, in collaboration with the County Office of Education, conducted their own count of homeless children in kindergarten through grade 12. They were extremely cooperative and believe such a project will also benefit their own grant writing processes. Second, EOC conducted a count at each of their Head Start and preschool centers throughout the county. Third, the County Jail administered its own count of homeless persons incarcerated on that date.

Data: In total, 2,408 homeless people were counted and, of those, 269 homeless adults were surveyed. After the data was inputted and analyzed, reports were produced showing frequency tables and graphs for each data variable, from both the count and survey datasets. Data is presented for the whole county, and separately for each of the four regions. SPSS is a statistical analysis software program that is being used to house the data. The SPSS datasets will serve as a mechanism to facilitate the retrieval of information generated from this project in the coming years, and could serve as the springboard for one or more master’s thesis.

Lessons Learned

There is no question that the Homeless Enumeration Project was successful in many aspects.

- The total number of **persons counted** exceeded the hopes and estimates of the planning partners.
- It was conducted with limited **financial resources**.

- It pulled in diverse **community partners** from all over the county who actively participated in the project.

Persons counted: At the Count Team debriefing meeting held after the count, there was much discussion of the homeless “turnout”. There was consistent feedback from participating service providers that the number of clients present at specific service sites on the day of the count was lower than usual. In various locations throughout the county (Maxine Lewis Memorial Shelter, Prado Day Center, both Loaves and Fishes, and the South County People’s Kitchen) there were lower numbers on the day of the count than on the day before and the day after. This was in spite of the fact that there were special breakfasts at the food locations, and there had been tremendous public coverage to educate the community prior to the count.

Even though efforts were made to ensure homeless community members that the ultimate purpose of the project was to increase funding, advocacy and education about homelessness, it appears that many of the homeless were reluctant or uncomfortable to be included because of the negative stigma associated with being identified as homeless. It has consequently been decided that future counts will be unannounced.

The time frame of 7:00am to 1:00pm for the unsheltered count was selected because of the limited volunteer resources, and to reduce the chance of double-counting individuals. However, some homeless people may have been missed because they had already left for work by the count start time of 7:00am. There may be some advantage to starting before 7:00am in future enumerations; however, due to resource limitations and the volunteer nature of the project, it may not be possible to start earlier.

Entire areas of the county were uncounted. For example, because of its distance from the county’s core population areas, California Valley was not counted even though providers know that most of the region’s residents are homeless. One homeless group beach encampment was accessible only during low tide which did not occur during the count timeframe. The daylight count timeframe was not conducive to locating the homeless persons known to sleep in their vehicles along rural roads.

Financial resources: There was limited funding for the count. Many jurisdictions hire a professional research firm to conduct an enumeration, at a cost of many tens of thousands of dollars. It is not unheard of to spend \$100,000-\$150,000 in jurisdictions that are not even as large as San Luis Obispo County. Our Homeless Enumeration Project was dependent on the \$5,000 contribution from the Board of Supervisors, and the hard work and shared commitment of the community partners.

Community partners: It is interesting to note that individual enumerators may have had a bearing on the level of cooperation from each homeless individual. Service providers and caseworkers who were known in the community met little resistance; however, the city park ranger, who often is required to “remove” homeless encampments from the parks and creek beds, encountered some resistance from people about being counted or answering survey questions. For that reason, law enforcement had a limited role, primarily in planning rather than conducting the enumeration. Only one police officer in the City of San Luis Obispo participated in the count because of the

trust she has built as the homeless mental health liaison. This is a difficult situation that will need further consideration in future enumerations, as many of the homeless encampments are considered unsafe for a volunteer to canvass.

Key Findings

On pages 10 through 27 are graphs and tables for some of the key characteristics of the homeless population counted and surveyed during the Homeless Enumeration Project. To see the comprehensive results, it is necessary to examine the graphs and the tables. However, the highlights of the data for selected variables are reported below. There were 2,408 homeless people counted and, of those, 269 homeless adults were surveyed.

Page 10 displays the Primary Results Table, describes which results can be generalized to a larger population, and explains how to read the graphs and the tables. Data is displayed for the Whole County and for each of these geographic regions: North Coast, North County, San Luis Obispo City (SLO City), and South County.

Page 11 displays the Project's geographic regions, and the regional distribution of San Luis Obispo County's general population.

Count variables: Pages 12 through 18 illustrate the following four variables from the count form: Geographic Region, Location of Observation, Age Group, and Gender.

Page 12: Geographic Region. Forty three percent of those counted were in the North County region, while nearly a third were in the South County region. SLO City had just under 20% of the homeless that were counted and the North Coast region had about 5%.

Pages 13 and 14: Locations of Observation. Countywide, about 29% of homeless persons were observed outside (in encampments or on the street); just over 12% in transitional or supportive housing and 25% in schools. Only 6.5% were counted in a shelter. In both the North Coast and South County regions, the largest numbers of homeless were observed outside, about 43% and 39% respectively, while in the North County, the largest number was counted at school (33%). In SLO City about 20% of those counted were observed at each of the following: shelters, transitional housing and school.

Pages 15 and 16: Age Group. For the Whole County, the combined percentage of children and teens counted is a staggering 34%, totaling 817 homeless persons younger than 21 years of age in our county! This number reflects the large percentage of families in our county's homeless population. The data in North Coast, SLO City and South County are fairly consistent, with adults making up approximately 70% to 80% of those counted; seniors making up 3% to 5%; and the remaining 15% to 20% made up of children and teens. The notable exception occurs in North County, where children and teens make up nearly 50% of those counted.

Pages 17 and 18: Gender. For the whole County, 57.5% of the homeless counted were males, while 42.5% were females. The North Coast region has the widest split between males and females, at 72% males and 28% females. The gap is narrowest in the North County where there is almost an even 50/50 split of males to females. SLO City and South County are closer to the trend countywide, with about 64% males to about 36% females in SLO City, while in South County there were close to 60% males compared to just over 40% females.

Survey variables: Pages 19 through 27 illustrate the following five variables from the survey form (only those 18 and older were surveyed): Geographic Region, Location of Observation, Gender, Where Slept the Previous Night, and How Long They Have Lived in SLO County.

Page 19: Geographic Region. South County gathered the most surveys with almost 43%, or 110 homeless adults surveyed, while North County gathered about 30% or 76 surveys, SLO City 24% or 62 surveys and the North Coast just under 4% or 10 surveys.

Pages 20 and 21: Locations of Observation. Almost 38% in the Whole County were living outside. About 16% were surveyed at a meal program site, another 15% in transitional housing, and 12% in shelters. The remaining possible responses each represented less than 5%. In each geographic region, the majority were living outside, except in SLO City where the majority of respondents were interviewed in shelters, followed closely by transitional housing.

Pages 22 and 23: Gender. Across the county, there are more adult homeless males than females. For the Whole County, and the regions of North Coast and South County, the ratio is about 60% males to 40% females. The gap is wider in SLO City with almost 75% males and 25% females, while the gap is narrower in North County with almost an even 50/50 split of males and females.

Pages 24 and 25: Where Slept the Previous Night. For the Whole County, the most frequent responses given were in a vehicle, outside and as a guest in others' homes, each around 22-23%. Other responses included approximately 12% each in transitional housing and shelters, and more than 5% in motels. The lack of any consistent pattern among the four geographic regions demonstrates the diverse environments between the regions. Overcrowding creates substandard conditions, instability and affects one's physical and emotional well-being, for both the host and guest families.

Pages 26 and 27: How Long Lived in SLO County. For the Whole County, the majority surveyed (almost 60%) said they have lived in the county for more than five years, followed by another 20% that have resided in the county for more than one year. This trend continues in the North County, SLO City and South County, with slightly different percentages. In the North Coast region the trend was reversed, that is, 20% said more than five years while 60% answered more than one year. In a related question, most homeless persons said they lived in SLO County because they are from here or they had family or friends living here.

Conclusions

From the Homeless Enumeration Project of October 2005, the Homeless Services Coordinating Council learned there were at least 2,408 homeless individuals present in the county on that date. What percentage of the total homeless population this represents is not known. But this figure is certainly an underestimate, given the fact that some homeless individuals avoided being counted. Even with homeless individuals avoiding being counted, the total number counted surprised the group of community experts that participated in the project. There were 817 children and teenagers counted, comprising 34% of the total homeless. There were more men than women who are homeless but the stereotypical “face of homelessness” has changed from a single male to families.

Homelessness today is a family issue and a children’s issue. We know from numerous studies and reports that persistent poverty and deprivation in the first five years of life will dramatically shape a child’s health, development, social skills, and future. Homeless children often have little or no structure in their lives and have difficulty “bonding” with society or recognizing social conventions and boundaries. Growing up in the company of struggling or troubled adults makes it difficult for homeless children to learn appropriate behaviors, communication and problem-resolution skills, and personal responsibility. **Homeless children are very vulnerable to developing problems that will have life-long negative impacts on their health, education, skill development, employability, earning power, civic participation, and family life.**

Given the wealth of San Luis Obispo County this is nothing less than a tragedy.

We hope that this report, and the information contained herein, will stimulate community discussion, provide data for grants and future planning, and help us to better understand the lives of the homeless in our community.

Report written by Suzanne Heitzman, County Homeless Services Coordinator, in collaboration with Philip Alonso, graduate student, Master of Public Policy Program, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo.

Graphs and Tables of the Key Findings

Primary Results Table

Geographic Region	Number Counted (frequency)	Number Surveyed (frequency)
North Coast	119	10
North County	1034	76
San Luis Obispo City	473	62
South County	781	110
Region Data Missing	1	11
Total – Whole County	2408	269

During the Homeless Enumeration Project of San Luis Obispo County, 2,408 homeless people were *counted* and, of those, 269 homeless adults were *surveyed*. It is important to make the distinction between the two methodologies because this is what determines the population that can be described by each dataset. **In the count component**, trained enumerators recorded the location and basic demographic information of homeless individuals they observed. There was no verbal interaction with the homeless individuals as the enumerators used their judgment to record the appropriate response for each variable. The numbers and percentages from the *count* form (presented below) cannot be generalized to a larger population; they only describe the 2,408 homeless individuals who were observed during the enumeration. **In the survey component**, on the other hand, every fifth homeless adult was surveyed. A random sample with a sufficient sample size (N=269) was attained, thus yielding results that can be generalized to the entire adult homeless population in the county. This also applies to each respective region within the county, except in the North Coast region because a sample size of 10 people surveyed is not sufficient to extrapolate to a larger population. To summarize, data from the count form cannot be generalized to a larger population, while data from the survey form can be extrapolated to describe the whole population of homeless *adults* in the county and in each region *except* in the North Coast.

For each variable, a table and a bar graph are displayed on one page showing the numbers and percentages describing the Whole County. In the tables, the frequencies (the raw number) and the percentages are shown in the right columns. In the columns to the left, the possible responses are given as well as whether data is valid or missing. It is important to note that the valid percentages take this into account and drop the missing data from the percentage calculation. On the page following the table and graph for the Whole County, bar graphs for each of the four geographic regions are displayed to allow for easy comparison. All bar graphs are labeled with the percentage of individuals that gave that particular response. If a possible response, as shown in the table, does not appear on the graph, then zero individuals gave that response. The sample size, or N, is given for each region to show the raw number of homeless counted or surveyed that responded to that particular variable. It is also important to remember that this is only a glimpse into the data. These eight variables are simply the highlights from each of the datasets.

Map of the County by Geographic Region



Source: San Luis Obispo County Government (www.co.slo.ca.us)

The dark black borders were created by the author to distinguish the four Geographic Regions of the Homeless Enumeration Project.

Population of the County by Geographic Region

Geographic Region	General Population	Percent
North Coast	33,000	13.8
North County	81,000	33.9
San Luis Obispo City	45,000	18.8
South County	80,000	33.5
Total	239,000	100.0

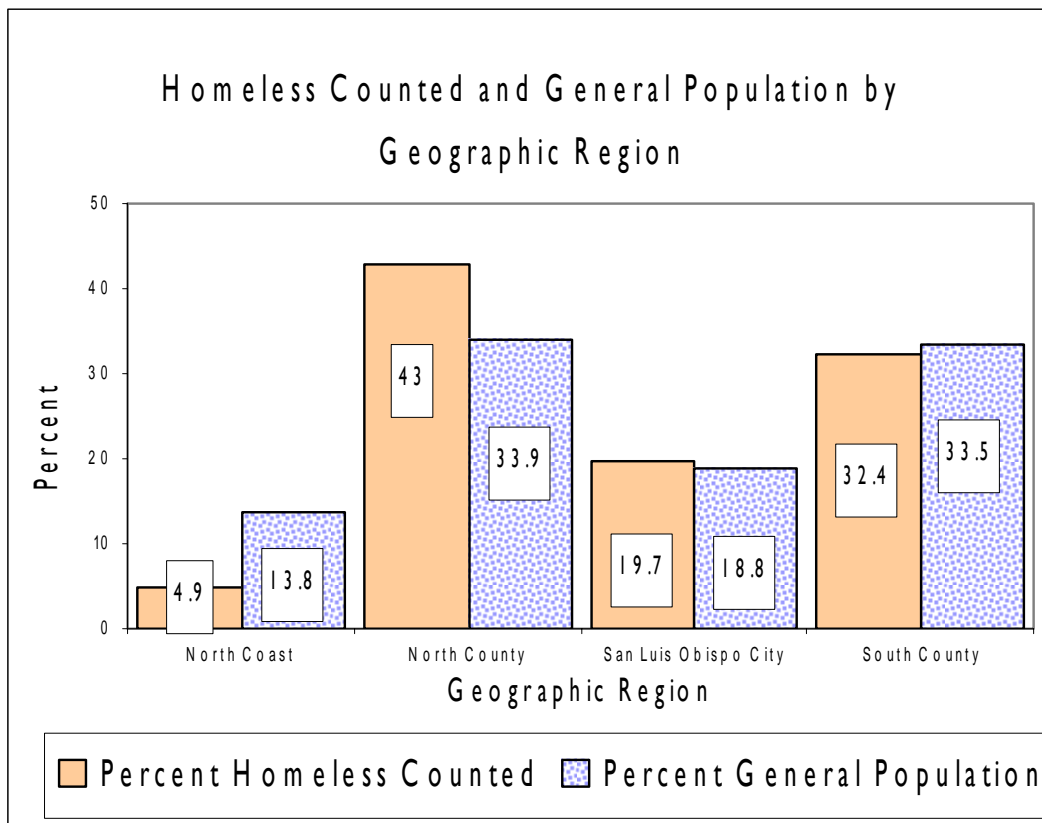
Source: San Luis Obispo County Government (www.co.slo.ca.us)

Count Form

The following four variables: geographic region, location of observation, age group, and gender were taken from the count form. The responses were recorded by trained enumerators.

Geographic Region - Whole County

Geographic Region		Frequency	Valid Percent	General Population	Percent
Valid Data	North Coast	119	4.9	33,000	13.8
	North County	1034	43.0	81,000	33.9
	San Luis Obispo City	473	19.7	45,000	18.8
	South County	781	32.4	80,000	33.5
	Subtotal	2407	100.0		
Region unknown		1			
Total		2408		239,000	100.0

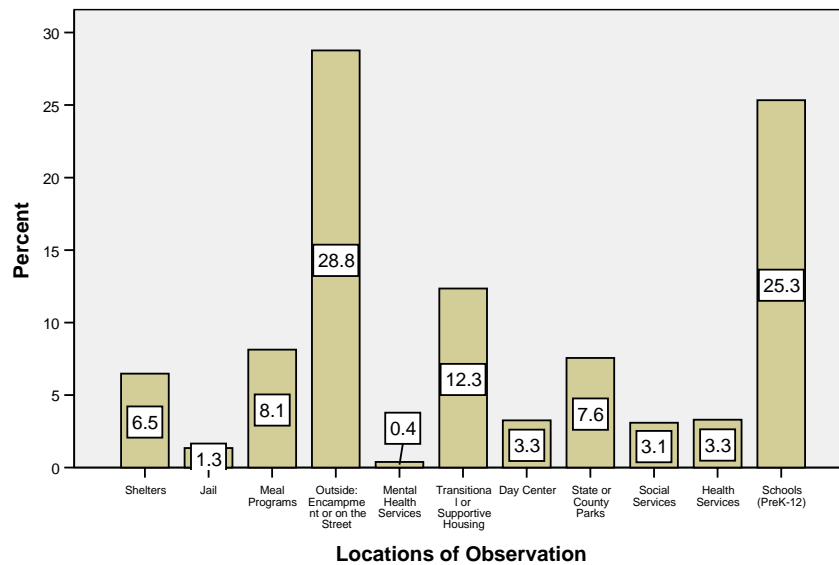


Forty three percent of those counted were in the North County region (which represents almost 34% of the County's general population), while nearly a third were in the South County region (which represents 33.5% of the County's population). SLO City (where about 19% of the County's population lives) had just under 20% of the homeless that were counted. The North Coast region (which represents close to 14% of the County's total population) had about 5% of the homeless that were counted.

Count Form: Locations of Observation - Whole County

Locations of Observation		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid Data	Shelters	149	6.5
	Jail	31	1.3
	Meal Programs	187	8.1
	Living outside: encampments or on the streets	662	28.8
	Mental Health Services	9	.4
	Transitional or Supportive Housing	284	12.3
	Day Center	75	3.3
	State or County Parks	174	7.6
	Social Services	71	3.1
	Health Services	76	3.3
	Schools (PreK-12)	583	25.3
	Subtotal	2301	100.0
Location unknown		107	
Total		2408	

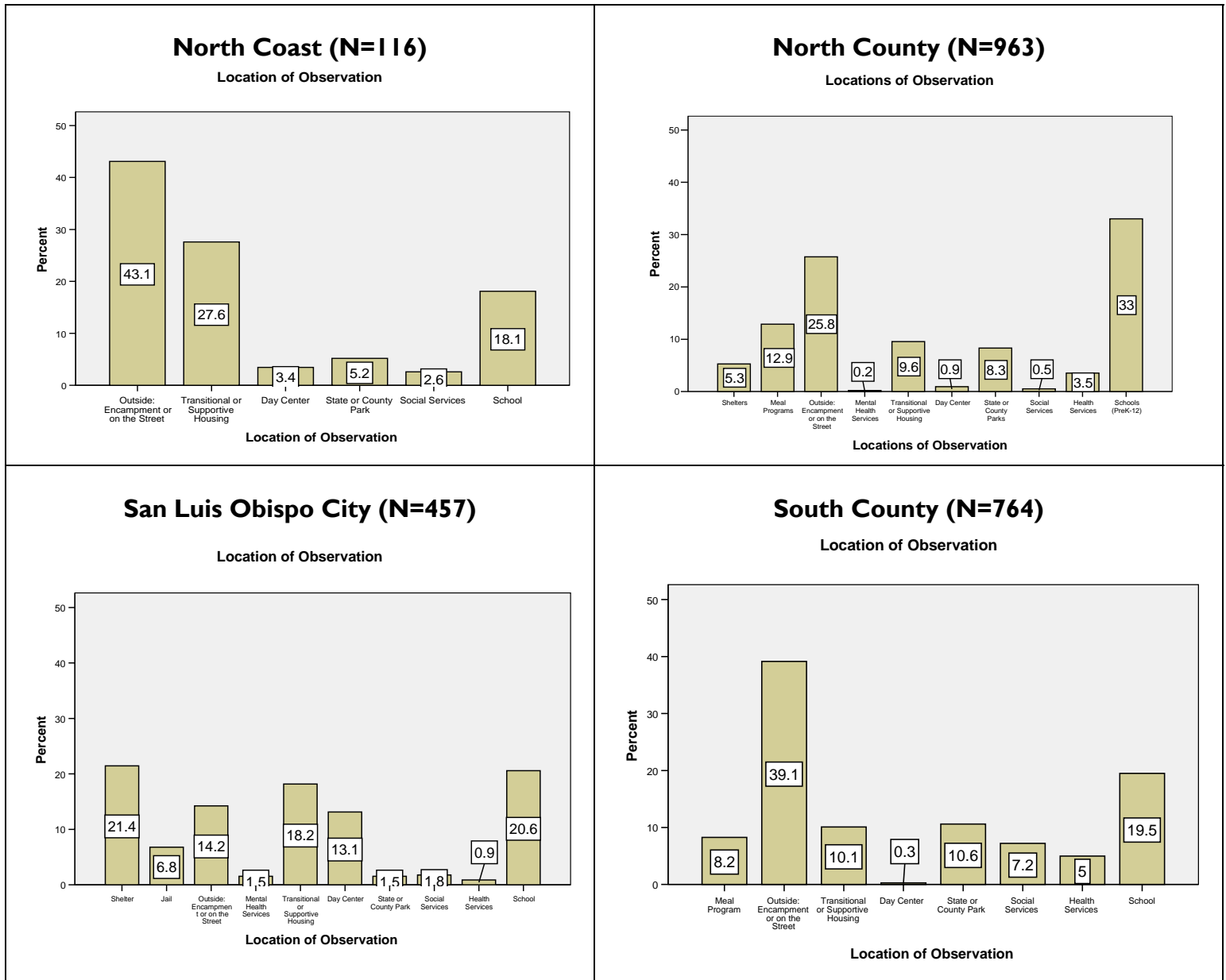
Locations of Observation



For the Whole County, note the high percentage of homeless persons counted outside, almost 29%, and in schools, just above 25%, and the very low percentage that were in a shelter, only 6.5%.

Count Form: Locations of Observation - Comparative Graphs by Region

For the comparative graphs below, if the bar for a particular location is missing, then 0% of the respondents were observed in that location.

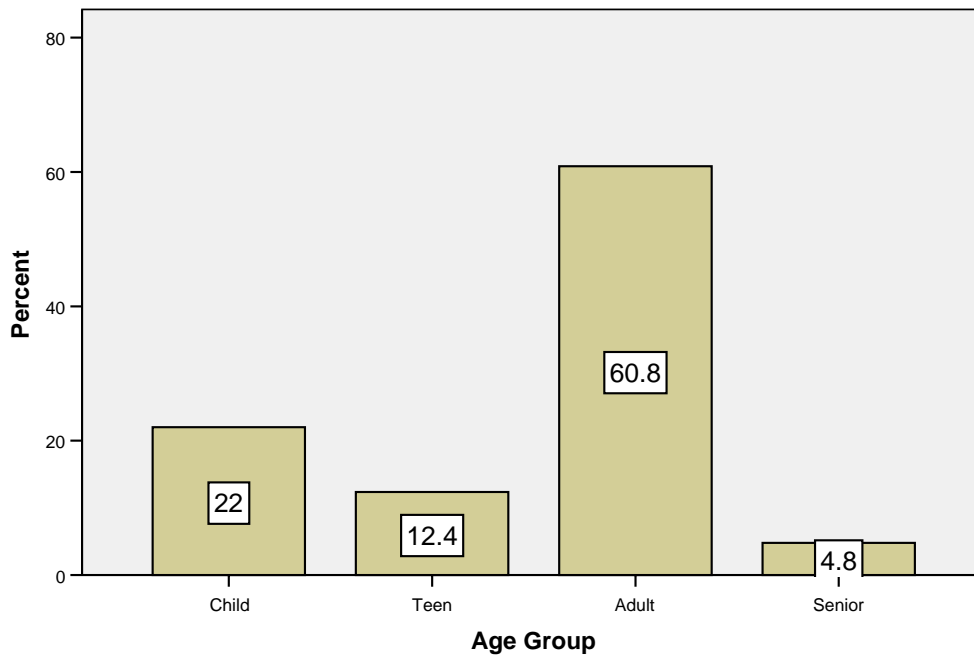


In both the North Coast and South County regions, the largest numbers of homeless were observed outside, about 43% and 39% respectively, while in the North County, the largest number was counted at school (33%). In SLO City about 20% of those counted were observed at each of the following: shelters, transitional housing and school.

Count Form: Age Group - Whole County

Age Group		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid Data	Child (<12)	523	22.0
	Teen (13-21)	294	12.4
	Adult (22-64)	1447	60.8
	Senior (>65)	114	4.8
	Subtotal	2378	100.0
Age unknown		30	
Total		2408	

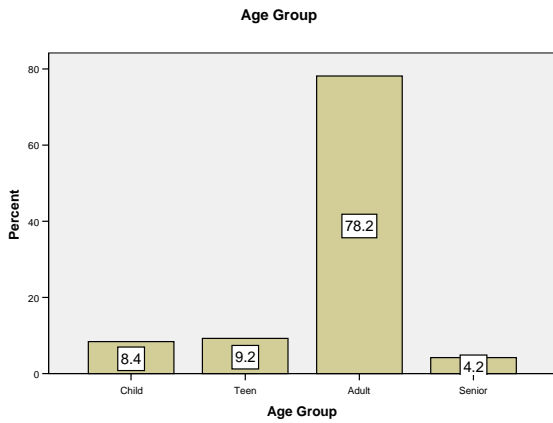
Age Group



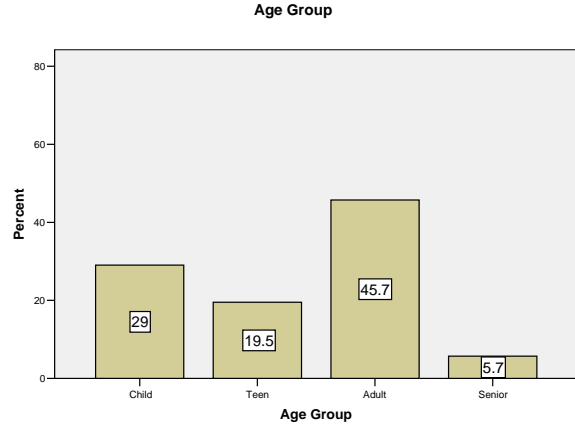
For the Whole County, note that the combined percentage of children and teens counted is a staggering 34%, totaling 817 homeless persons younger than 21 years of age in our county!

Count Form: Age Group - Comparative Graphs by Region

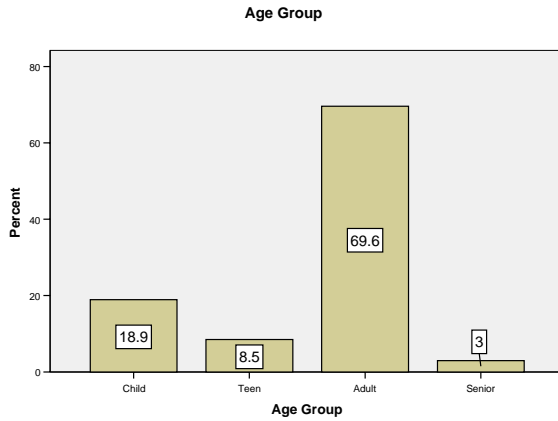
North Coast (N=119)



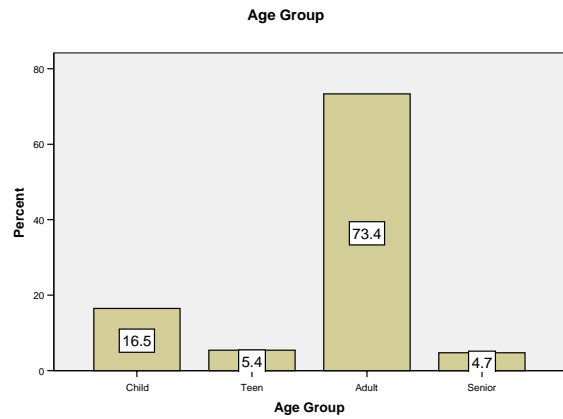
North County (N=1030)



San Luis Obispo City (N=470)



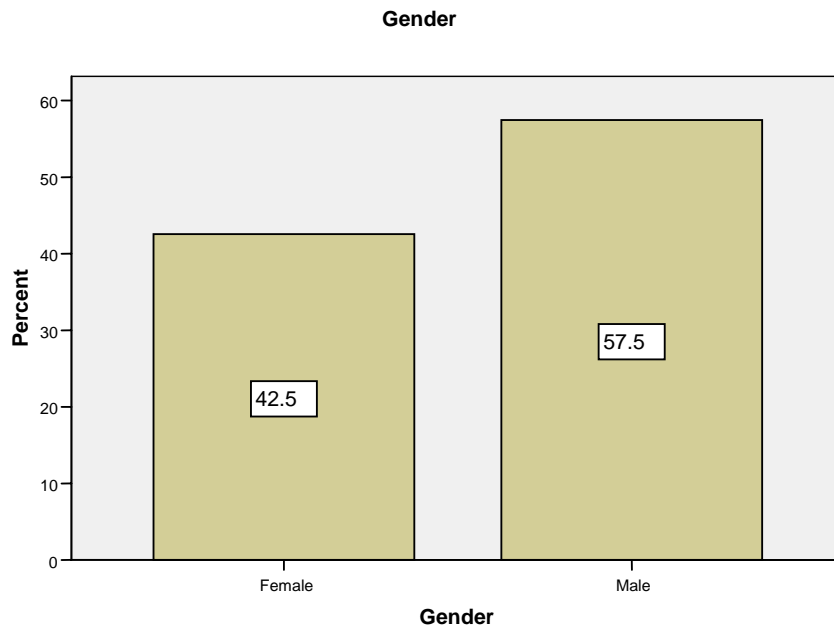
South County (N=758)



The data in North Coast, SLO City and South County are fairly consistent, with adults making up 70% to 80% of those counted; seniors making up 3% to 5%; and the remaining 15% to 20% made up of children and teens. The notable exception occurs in North County, where children and teens make up nearly 50% of those counted.

Count Form: Gender - Whole County

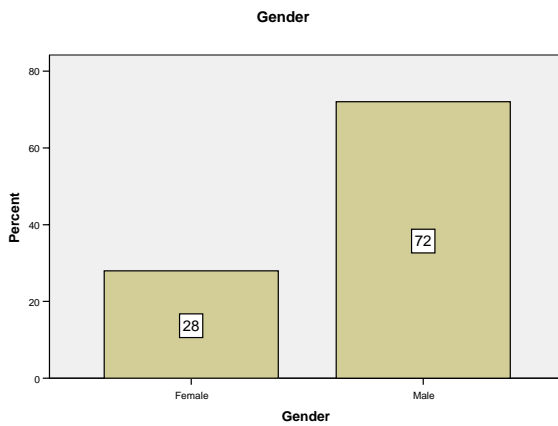
Gender		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid Data	Female	1015	42.5
	Male	1371	57.5
	Subtotal	2386	100.0
Gender unknown		22	
Total		2408	



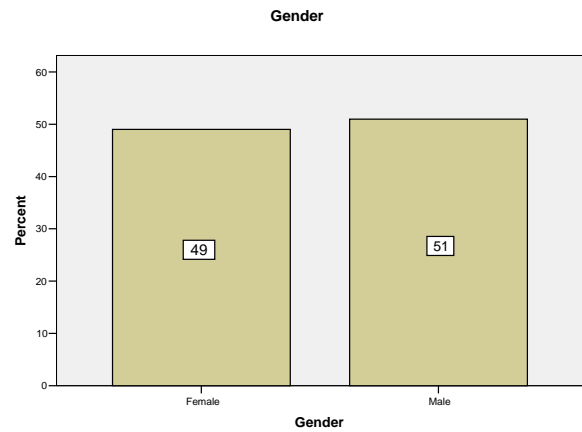
For the whole County, 57.5% of the homeless counted were males, while 42.5% were females.

Count Form: Gender - Comparative Graphs by Region

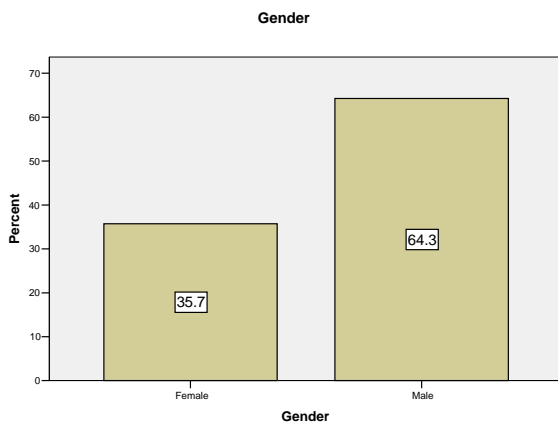
North Coast (N=118)



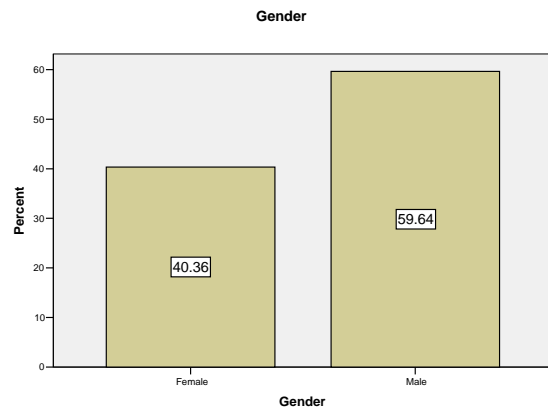
North County (N=1026)



San Luis Obispo City (N=473)



South County (N=768)



The North Coast region has the widest split between males and females, at 72% males and 28% females. The gap is narrowest in the North County where there is almost an even 50/50 split of males to females. SLO City and South County are closer to the trend countywide, with about 64% males to about 36% females in SLO City, while in South County there were close to 60% males compared to just over 40% females.

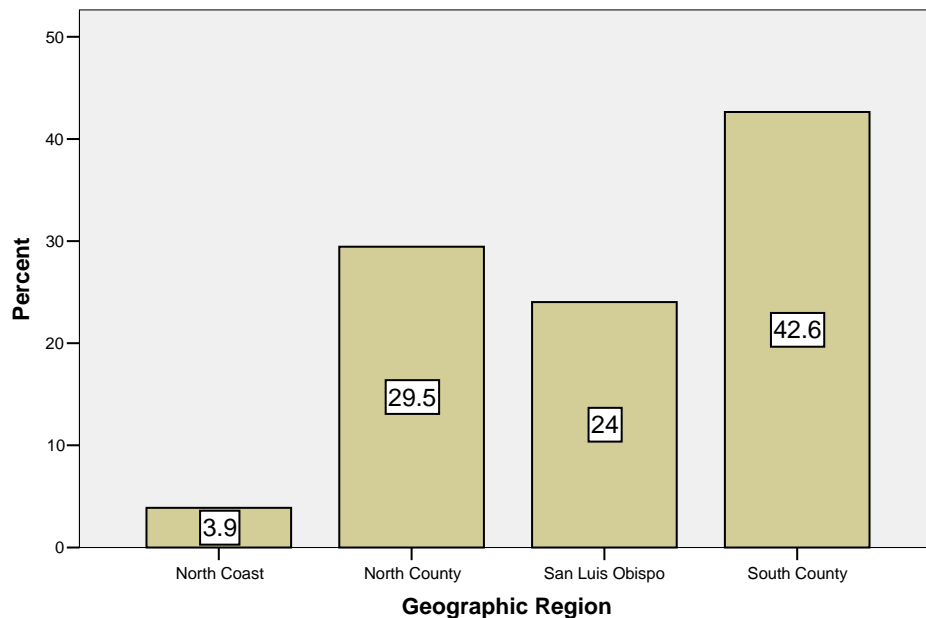
Survey Form

The following five variables: geographic region, location of observation, gender, where slept the previous night, and how long they have lived in the County, were taken from the survey form. Remember that all survey results can be generalized to describe the larger population of homeless adults, *except in the North Coast region* because its sample size is too small. Responses to the first three variables were recorded by the trained surveyors and responses to the last two were given by the homeless respondents.

Geographic Region - Whole County

Geographic Region		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid Data	North Coast	10	3.9
	North County	76	29.5
	San Luis Obispo	62	24.0
	South County	110	42.6
	Subtotal	258	100.0
no answer on survey form		11	
Total		269	

Geographic Region

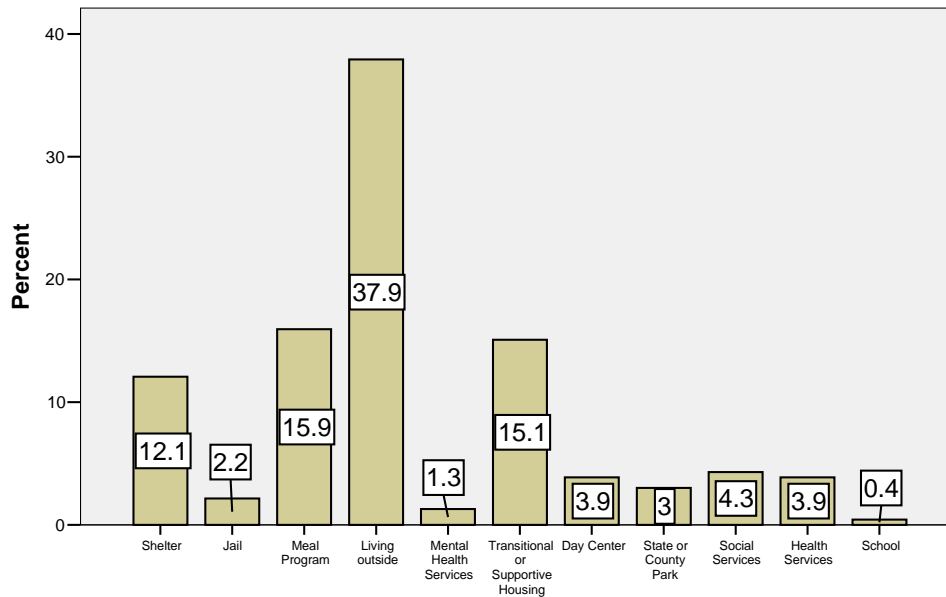


South County gathered the most surveys with about 43%, while North County gathered about 30%, SLO City 24%, and the North Coast region just under 4%.

Survey Form: Locations of Observation - Whole County

Locations of Observation		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid Data	Shelters	28	12.1
	Jail	5	2.2
	Meal Programs	37	15.9
	Living outside: encampments or on the streets	88	37.9
	Mental Health Services	3	1.3
	Transitional or Supportive Housing	35	15.1
	Day Center	9	3.9
	State or County Parks	7	3.0
	Social Services	10	4.3
	Health Services	9	3.9
	Schools (PreK-12)	1	.4
	Subtotal	232	100.0
	no answer on survey form		37
Total		269	

Location of Observation



Location of Observation

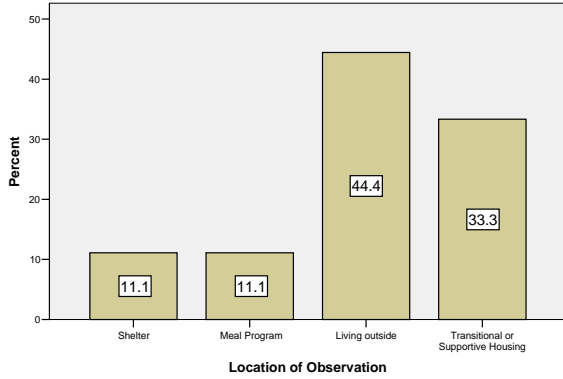
In the Whole County, about 38% of those surveyed were living outside. About 16% were surveyed at a meal program site, another 15% at transitional housing, and 12% in shelters. The remaining possible responses each represented less than 5%.

Survey Form: Locations of Observation - Comparative Graphs by Region

For the comparative graphs below, if the bar for a particular location is missing, then 0% of the respondents were surveyed in that location.

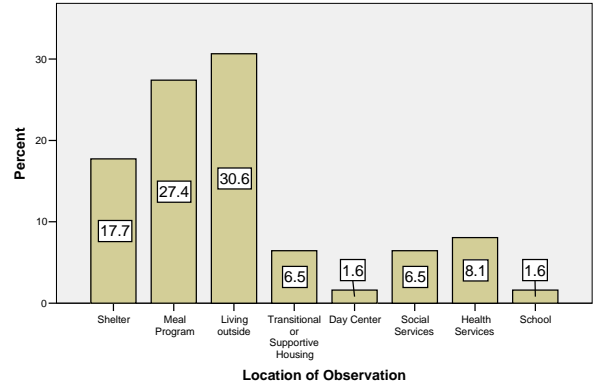
North Coast (N=9; cannot generalize)

Location of Observation



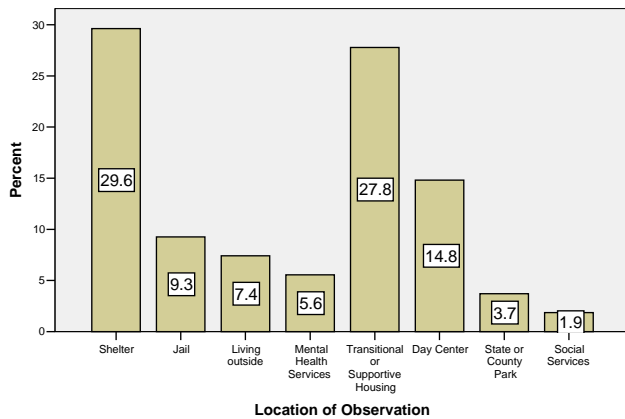
North County (N=62)

Location of Observation



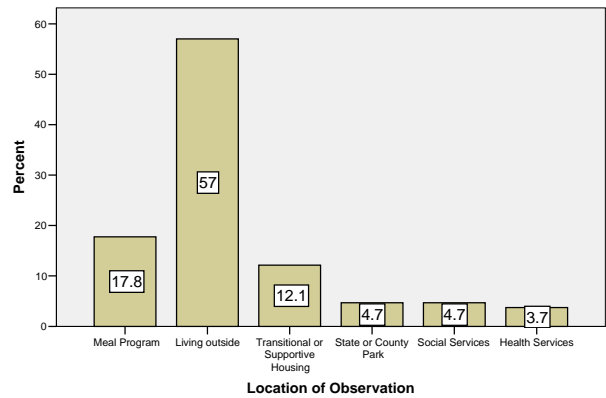
San Luis Obispo City (N=54)

Location of Observation



South County (N=107)

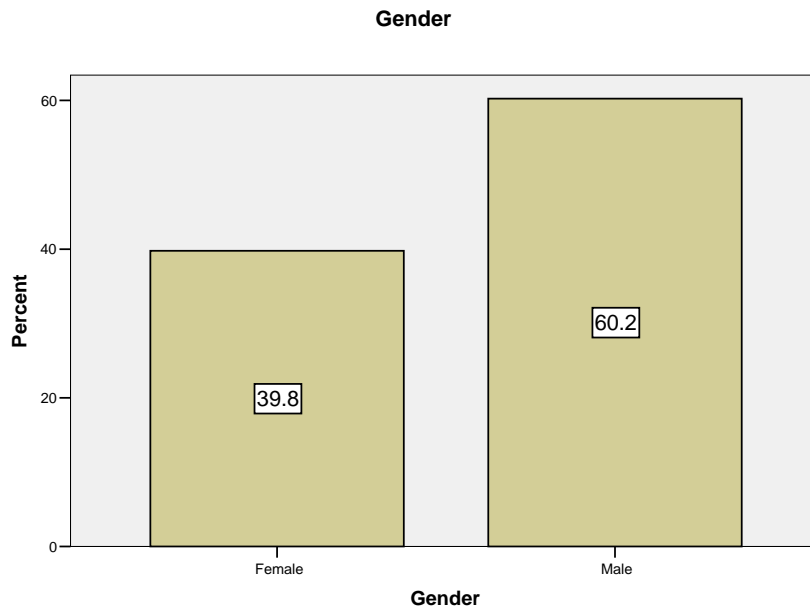
Location of Observation



In each geographic region, the majority were surveyed outside, except in SLO City where the majority of respondents were interviewed in shelters, followed closely by transitional housing.

Survey Form: Gender - Whole County

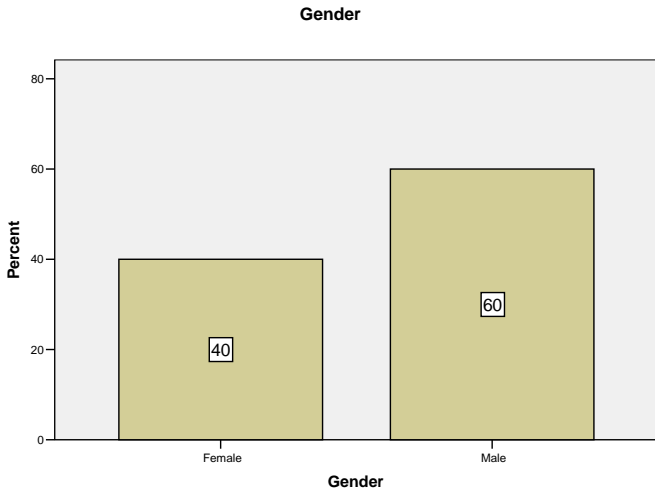
Gender		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid Data	Female	103	39.8
	Male	156	60.2
	Subtotal	259	100.0
no answer on survey form		10	
Total		269	



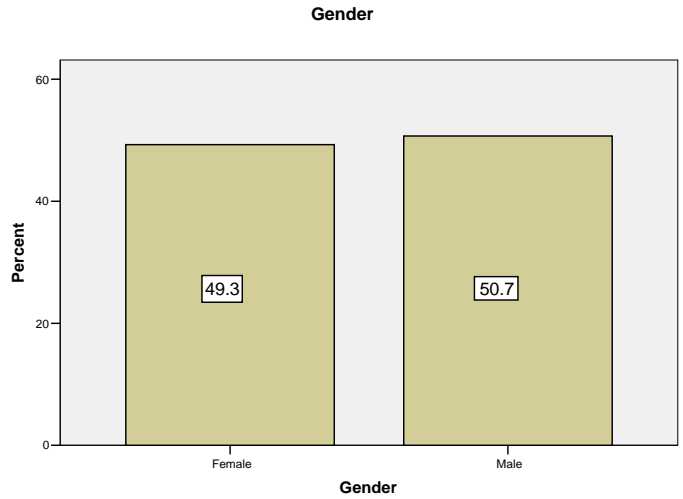
For the Whole County, about 60% of those surveyed were males and 40% females.

Survey Form: Gender - Comparative Graphs by Region

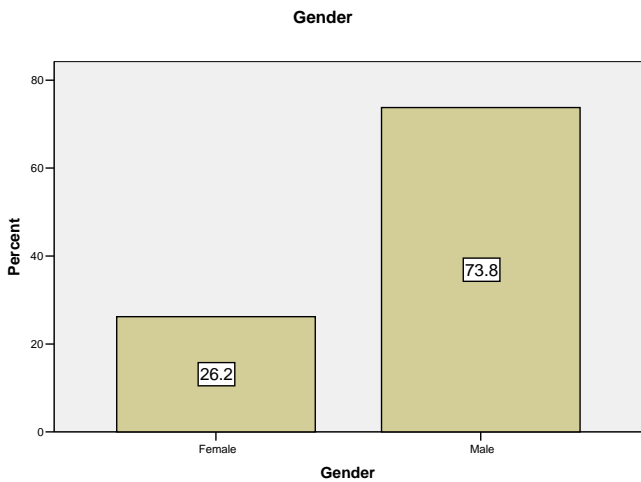
North Coast (N=10; cannot generalize)



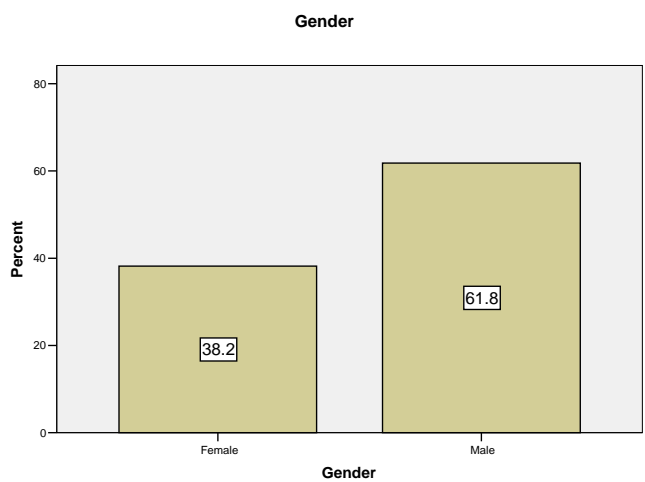
North County (N=71)



San Luis Obispo City (N=61)



South County (N=110)

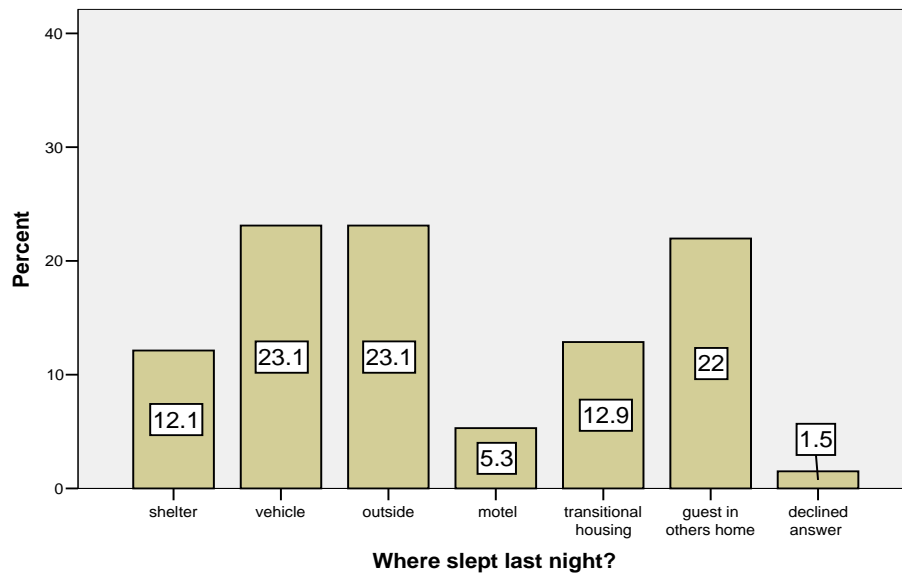


In the regions of North Coast and South County about 60% of those surveyed were males and 40% females. The gap is wider in SLO City with about 75% males and 25% females, while the gap is narrower in North County with almost an even 50/50 split of males and females.

Survey Form: Where slept last night? - Whole County

Where did you sleep last night?		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid Data	shelter	32	12.1
	vehicle	61	23.1
	outside	61	23.1
	motel	14	5.3
	transitional housing	34	12.9
	guest in other's home	58	22.0
	declined to answer	4	1.5
	Subtotal	264	100.0
no answer on survey form		5	
Total		269	

Where slept last night?



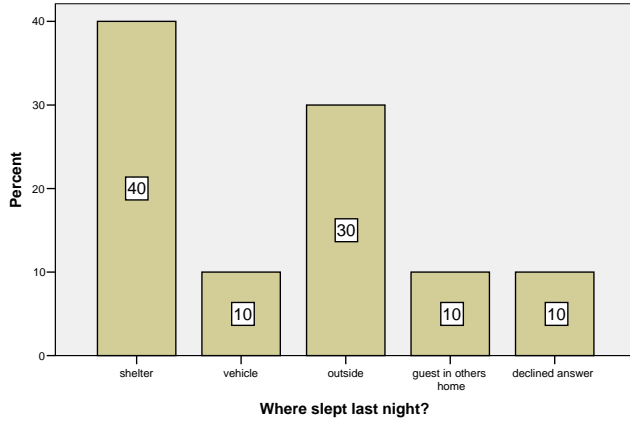
For the Whole County, the most frequent responses given were in a vehicle, outside and as a guest in others' homes, each around 22-23%. Other responses included approximately 12% each in transitional housing and shelters, and more than 5% in motels.

Survey Form: Where slept last night? - Comparative Graphs by Region

For the graphs below, if the bar for a particular location is missing, then 0% of the respondents had slept in that location the previous night.

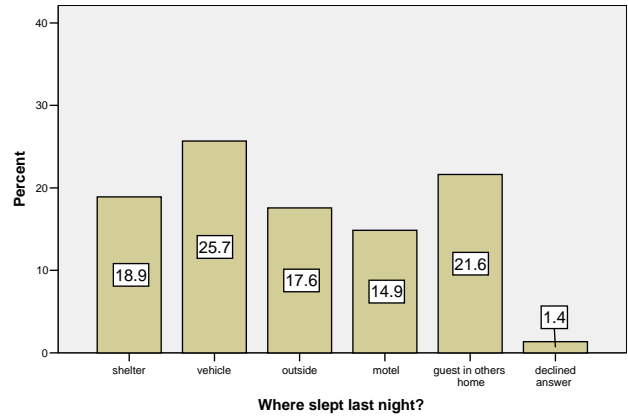
North Coast (N=10; cannot generalize)

Where slept last night?



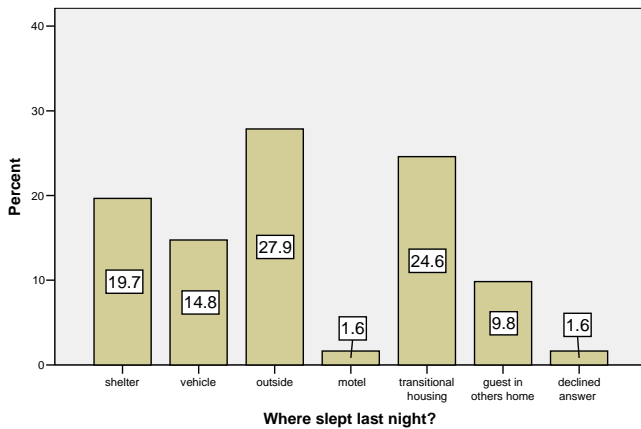
North County (N=74)

Where slept last night?



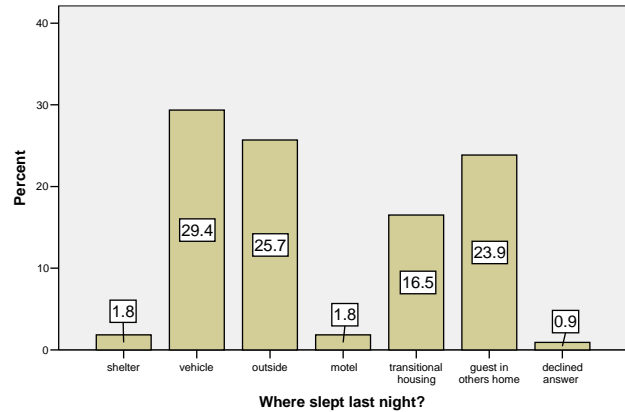
San Luis Obispo City (N=61)

Where slept last night?



South County (N=109)

Where slept last night?

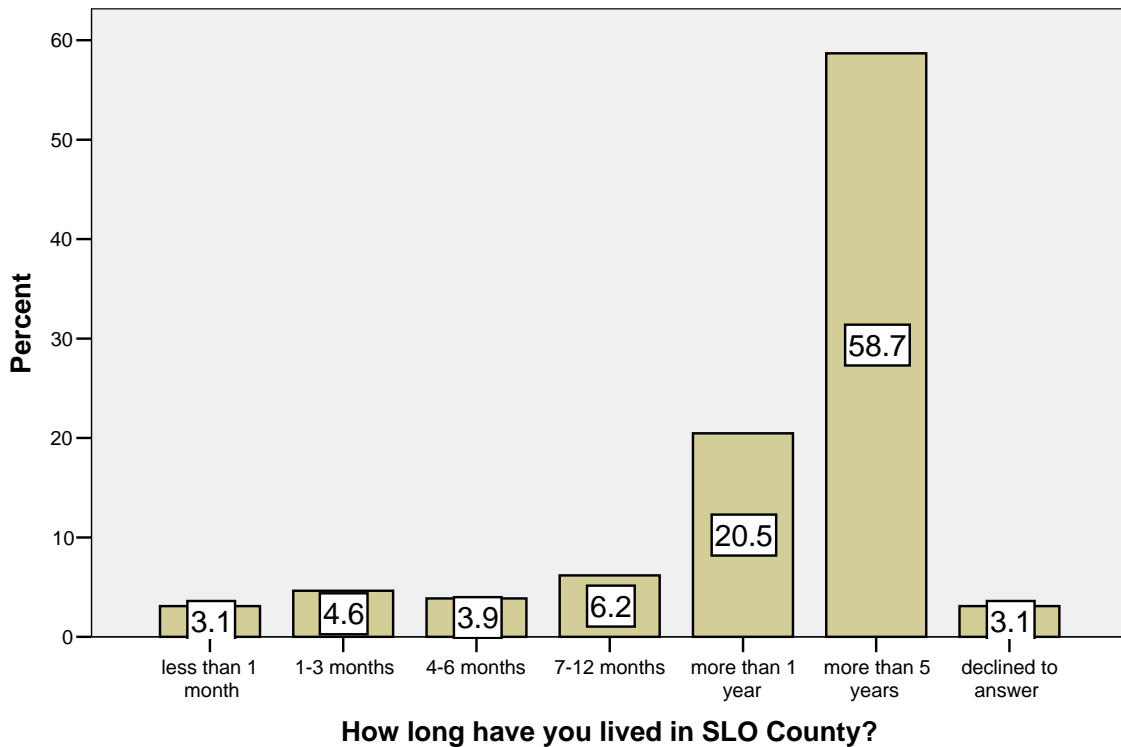


The lack of any consistent pattern among the four geographic regions demonstrates the diverse environments between the regions.

Survey Form: How long have you lived in SLO County? - Whole County

How long have you lived in San Luis Obispo County?		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid Data	less than 1 month	8	3.1
	1-3 months	12	4.6
	4-6 months	10	3.9
	7-12 months	16	6.2
	more than 1 year	53	20.5
	more than 5 years	152	58.7
	declined to answer	8	3.1
	Subtotal	259	100.0
no answer on survey form		10	
Total		269	

How long have you lived in SLO County?



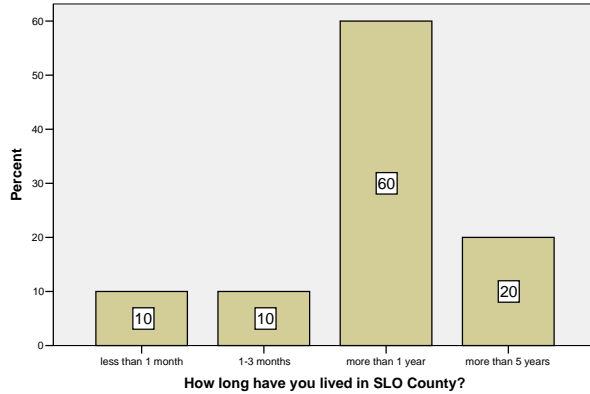
For the Whole County, the majority surveyed (about 60%) said they have lived in the County for more than five years, followed by about 20% that have resided in the County for more than one year.

Survey Form: How long have you lived in SLO County? - Comparative Graphs by Region

For the comparative graphs below, if the bar for a particular response is missing, then 0% of the respondents surveyed gave that response.

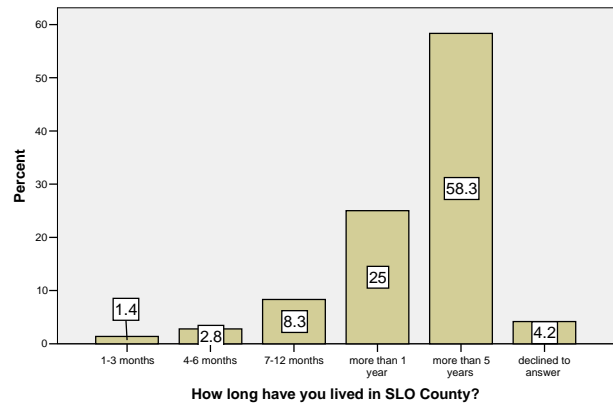
North Coast (N=10; cannot generalize)

How long have you lived in SLO County?



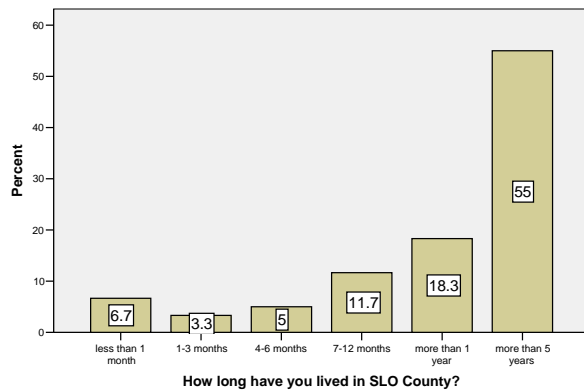
North County (N=72)

How long have you lived in SLO County?



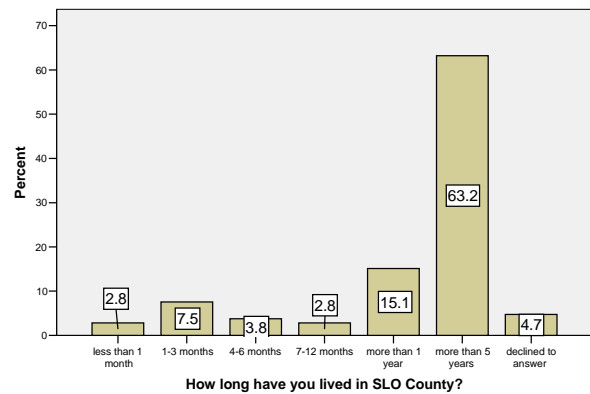
San Luis Obispo City (N=60)

How long have you lived in SLO County?



South County (N=106)

How long have you lived in SLO County?



The Countywide trend continues in the North County, SLO City and South County, with slightly different percentages. In the North Coast region the trend was reversed, that is, 20% said more than five years while 60% answered more than one year.

APPENDIX

HOMELESS ENUMERATION COUNT FORM

Name of Homeless Worker: _____

Location of Observation

Program _____

- Shelter Day Center
 Jail State or County Park
 Meal Program School Social Services
 Living outside: encampment or on the street
 Mental Health Services Health Services
 Transitional or Supportive Housing

Geographic Location

- North Coast
 North County
 San Luis Obispo
 South County

Age, Individual or Family Groups (Use One Line Per Person & Circle any Family Groups)	Gender	Notes
<input type="checkbox"/> Child <input type="checkbox"/> Adult <input type="checkbox"/> Teen < 21 <input type="checkbox"/> Senior > 65	<input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> M	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Child <input type="checkbox"/> Adult <input type="checkbox"/> Teen < 21 <input type="checkbox"/> Senior > 65	<input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> M	2
<input type="checkbox"/> Child <input type="checkbox"/> Adult <input type="checkbox"/> Teen < 21 <input type="checkbox"/> Senior > 65	<input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> M	3
<input type="checkbox"/> Child <input type="checkbox"/> Adult <input type="checkbox"/> Teen < 21 <input type="checkbox"/> Senior > 65	<input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> M	4
<input type="checkbox"/> Child <input type="checkbox"/> Adult <input type="checkbox"/> Teen < 21 <input type="checkbox"/> Senior > 65	<input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> M	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Child <input type="checkbox"/> Adult <input type="checkbox"/> Teen < 21 <input type="checkbox"/> Senior > 65	<input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> M	6
<input type="checkbox"/> Child <input type="checkbox"/> Adult <input type="checkbox"/> Teen < 21 <input type="checkbox"/> Senior > 65	<input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> M	7
<input type="checkbox"/> Child <input type="checkbox"/> Adult <input type="checkbox"/> Teen < 21 <input type="checkbox"/> Senior > 65	<input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> M	8
<input type="checkbox"/> Child <input type="checkbox"/> Adult <input type="checkbox"/> Teen < 21 <input type="checkbox"/> Senior > 65	<input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> M	9
<input type="checkbox"/> Child <input type="checkbox"/> Adult <input type="checkbox"/> Teen < 21 <input type="checkbox"/> Senior > 65	<input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> M	10
<input type="checkbox"/> Child <input type="checkbox"/> Adult <input type="checkbox"/> Teen < 21 <input type="checkbox"/> Senior > 65	<input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> M	11
<input type="checkbox"/> Child <input type="checkbox"/> Adult <input type="checkbox"/> Teen < 21 <input type="checkbox"/> Senior > 65	<input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> M	12
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<input type="checkbox"/> Child <input type="checkbox"/> Adult <input type="checkbox"/> Teen < 21 <input type="checkbox"/> Senior > 65	<input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> M	14
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<input type="checkbox"/> Child <input type="checkbox"/> Adult <input type="checkbox"/> Teen < 21 <input type="checkbox"/> Senior > 65	<input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> M	17
<input type="checkbox"/> Child <input type="checkbox"/> Adult <input type="checkbox"/> Teen < 21 <input type="checkbox"/> Senior > 65	<input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> M	18
<input type="checkbox"/> Child <input type="checkbox"/> Adult <input type="checkbox"/> Teen < 21 <input type="checkbox"/> Senior > 65	<input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> M	19
<input type="checkbox"/> Child <input type="checkbox"/> Adult <input type="checkbox"/> Teen < 21 <input type="checkbox"/> Senior > 65	<input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> M	20

Page Totals

_____ Child
 _____ Teen < 21

_____ Adult
 _____ Senior > 65

_____ Families
 _____ M _____ F

HOMELESS ENUMERATION SURVEY – Page 1

Name of Homeless Worker: _____

Program _____

Geographic Location

- North Coast
- North County
- San Luis Obispo
- South County

Location of Observation

- Shelter
- Day Center
- Jail
- State or County Park
- Meal Program
- School
- Social Services
- Living outside: encampment or on the street
- Mental Health Services
- Health Services
- Transitional or Supportive Housing

Thanks for agreeing to complete the survey. I have 11 questions to ask you. The survey should take about 5 minutes. If you don't want to answer a question, or don't know the answer, please let me know. All answers are confidential, and the survey is completely anonymous.

1. Where did you sleep last night?

- a) in a shelter
- b) in a car, camper, or other vehicle
- c) outside (tent, bush, etc.)
- d) in a motel
- e) in housing provided by a transitional program
- f) as a guest with family or friends
- g) in own home (rented/owned)
- h) declined to answer

2. How long has it been since you've had your own apartment/house to live in?

- a) less than one month
- b) 1-3 months
- c) 4-6 months
- d) 7-12 months
- e) more than one year
- f) don't know
- g) declined to answer

3. Was there a period of time that you were homeless before THIS time? Y/N/declined to answer

When was the last time you were homeless (not this current time)? _____

How long were you homeless? _____

How many times has that happened? _____

HOMELESS ENUMERATION SURVEY – Page 2

4. What was the reason you had to leave your last permanent place?

Surveyor: check all that apply.

- a) unemployment
- b) low wages
- c) unable to pay rent/mortgage
- d) eviction/foreclosure
- e) new landlord/higher rent
- f) divorce/breakup
- g) domestic violence
- h) family member illness
- i) alcohol/substance abuse
- j) public assistance/welfare not available
- k) family rejected me/threw me out
- l) mental illness
- m) other (please specify) _____
- n) don't know
- o) declined to answer

5. Do you have a paid job? Y/N/declined to answer

If yes: Occupation _____
Position _____
Hours/week _____
How long? _____

If no: When held last job?

- a) within last month
- b) 1-3 months ago
- c) 4-6 months ago
- d) 7-12 months ago
- e) more than one year ago

If no: Reason not working?

- a) cannot get hired
- b) in school
- c) wages too low
- d) disability
- e) other (please specify) _____

6. Are you aware of any physical illness/disabilities that you have? Y/N/declined to answer

If yes, please specify _____

7. Are you aware of or have you been diagnosed with any mental illness/disabilities? Y/N/ declined to answer

If yes, please specify _____

HOMELESS ENUMERATION SURVEY – Page 3

8. In the past year, which of the following services did you use?

Enumerator: Read list and check all that apply.

- a) temporary shelter (bed)
- b) food (shelter meals, food pantry, etc.)
- c) health care/ mobile health van
- d) clothing
- e) financial assistance
- f) job training
- g) counseling
- h) transportation (bus passes, shelter van, ride from agency)
- i) transitional or supportive housing
- j) case management
- k) mental health services
- l) drug and alcohol services
- m) day center (mail, phone, laundry, showers)
- n) other (please specify) _____
- o) declined to answer

9. How long have you lived in San Luis Obispo County?

- a) less than one month
- b) 1-3 months
- c) 4-6 months
- d) 7-12 months
- e) more than one year
- f) more than five years
- g) don't know
- h) declined to answer

10. Why do you live in San Luis Obispo County?

- a) originally from (grew up in) this area
- b) have family or friends here
- c) job opportunities
- d) vacationed here previously
- e) attended school here
- f) other (please specify) _____
- g) don't know
- h) declined to answer

11. Are you a veteran? Y/N/declined to answer

12. Gender (circle one): Female/Male

13. Age (write in): _____

HOMELESS SERVICES COORDINATING COUNCIL

Homeless Enumeration Project, October 2005

COUNT AND SURVEY INSTRUCTIONS

This is a point-in-time observational count that aims to count sheltered and unsheltered homeless people in our county. Please count and record only those homeless people you actually see during the counting time period. A visual count requires and empowers enumerators to use their own judgment in deciding whether to count someone. Given the short time period of time that the count takes place, you will not have time to ask each person whether he/she is homeless.

If you are uncertain whether a person is homeless and should be counted, you may use “enumerator judgment” to decide whether or not to count him/her. Specifically, if the person is found in an encampment or area frequented by homeless people OR is in the company of other homeless people known to you OR the person indicates to you that he/she is homeless, then count that person.

Confidentiality - The count is confidential and anonymous. Please do not record any identifying information, particularly the names – or any part of a name – of the people you count.

Sheltered - Count all the people you observe in the shelter. Include adults and children.

Unsheltered - Count all the people you observe in the area assigned to you. Include adults and children.

COUNT FORM INSTRUCTIONS

Your Name and Program.

Please fill in your name and your program. If you are a Cal Poly student please fill in your name and the program you are assisting.

Geographic Location.

Check the box that describes the region in which you are counting.

Location of Observation.

Check the box that describes the location where you are counting homeless persons.

Age, Individual or Family Groups. Gender and Notes section.

Please use one horizontal row to count each homeless person you observe.

Please draw a circle around each family group, which is defined for our purposes as children/child with parent(s).

SURVEY FORM INSTRUCTIONS

Your Name and Program.

Please fill in your name and your program. If you are a Cal Poly student please fill in your name and the program you are assisting.

Geographic Location.

Check the box that describes the region in which you are surveying.

Location of Observation.

Check the box that describes the location where you are surveying homeless persons.

The survey contains 11 questions and should take 5-10 minutes to complete. Answers are confidential and the survey is completely anonymous. Please do not record any identifying information about the person you are interviewing such as a name or part of a name. Assure the respondent that answers are confidential and anonymous and that an individual's name will not be written on his/her survey. Assure respondents that there will be no retribution for the information they give you. In particular, information will not result in any change in their current benefits or services.

Survey every 5th person that you count, **excluding children**. If the 5th person declines to be surveyed, indicate that on your count sheet and survey the next person that you count. If there are fewer than five people at a particular site (example: encampment, jail, etc.) then no one will be surveyed at that site. For example, if you count four people at one site, then you will survey the first person you count at the next site, since this is the 5th person you are counting overall.

For all of the questions, except Question 8, please read *ONLY THE QUESTION* to the respondent. Circle the answer given by the respondent. If the answer does not appear, write in the answer in the "other" category. Please write in the respondent's answer using the exact language of the respondent. If more than one answer is given, circle both of them. *Surveyors* should not prompt respondents with answers. A slight re-phrase of the question is acceptable if the respondent does not understand the question.

For Question 8, please read both the question and the list of possible answers. Circle all of the answers that apply.

Respondents may decline to answer a question or state "I don't know." Before beginning the survey, please make sure respondents know that they may decline to answer one or more questions. Circle "decline to answer" or "I don't know" in these cases.

Access to Datasets

The Homeless Services Coordinating Council wishes to acknowledge the generosity and technical assistance of four community entities that have agreed to host the Homeless Enumeration Project datasets on their websites.

By April 25, 2006, this report will be available in PDF format on these websites:

United Way of SLO County
www.unitedwayslo.org

Adult Services Policy Council
www.countyofslo.org/ASPC

Economic Opportunity Commission of San Luis Obispo County
www.eocslo.org (under Homeless Services)

Volunteer SLO
www.volunteerslo.org

Additional data:

This Homeless Enumeration Report does not contain all the data collected during the Enumeration Project; for example, the survey component of the Project collected data on 50 variables, five of which are presented in this Report. Additional data will be made available on the host websites at a later date.