

FACES OF HOMELESS IN SAN LUIS OBISPO CITY

As many as 3,800 people are homeless on any given day in San Luis Obispo County; an estimated one-third are children. An estimated thirty-five percent are adults caring for children; 5% are seniors, 11% are veterans. These were some of the findings of a January 2009 snapshot survey of homeless in the County. The City of San Luis Obispo homeless have their own story to tell.

Demographics of Homelessness

- 36% of County's homeless are in the city of San Luis Obispo
- 75% were men; 17% veterans; 20% had children with them
- This is not a transient group:
 - 25% of the respondents were originally from the County; another 24% had friends or family in the County
 - 25% had been in the county over 1 year; 48% over five years
- 30% completed high school; another 35% completed or had some college.



Falling into Homelessness

- 49% were first time homeless
- Those who had been homeless before:
 - Experienced homelessness an average of 4 times
 - Had had a home approximately 5 years before falling into homelessness again
 - Remained homeless for approximately 29 months
- 53% lost their home due to financial reasons
- 31% lost their home due to health reasons
- A majority accessed services in the past year:
 - 73% day center
 - 53% shelter
 - 53% health care
 - 26% case management services



Economics of Homelessness

- 7% had a paying job
- 56% were too disabled to find work
- 36% were unsuccessful when trying to get hired
- 30% had used job training services
- Most received other mainstream assistance:
 - 43% food stamps
 - 20% SSI
 - 15% general assistance



Health and Homelessness

- Many homeless have health challenges:
 - 43% reported a physical disability
 - 33% reported a mental disability
 - 23% reported substance abuse issues
 - 42% reported depression, anxiety or PTSD
- 52% had MediCal, Medicare or Veterans Administration coverage
- For health services:
 - 60% had used Community Health Centers
 - 44% had used emergency rooms
 - 16% had used mental health

