



Homeless Census and Homeless Youth / Foster Teen Study

Monterey County 2002



HOMELESS CENSUS AND HOMELESS YOUTH / FOSTER TEEN STUDY

MONTEREY COUNTY 2002

Funded by the County of Monterey

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 1999, when the last major study of homelessness in Monterey County was conducted, the United States was in a period of unprecedented economic boom. Now, in the wake of a sharp downturn in the economy marked by increasing unemployment rates, increasing housing costs, and a decrease in the local tourist industry further exacerbated by the events of September 11, 2001, the economic landscape of Monterey County has changed dramatically. Only 9% of county homes are affordable to median income families, making Monterey County the second least affordable place to live in the nation (National Association of Homebuilders, 4th Quarter 2001). More than half of the local jobs with greatest projected growth pay less than a livable wage (Tellus / Diganos, 1999).

It is in this distinct economic climate in which the County of Monterey, under the auspices of the Department of Social Services, decided to undertake an update of the 1999 Homeless Census. This study was also expanded to include a series of surveys focusing on the fastest growing segment of the homeless population, youth. Additionally, in response to a growing body of research that demonstrates a disturbing link between placement into foster care and homelessness, a series of surveys was also conducted among youth preparing for their departure from foster care, and among foster care providers. To supplement data collected in these surveys, focus groups were also conducted with teens preparing to emancipate from foster care, youth who have already emancipated from foster care, and foster care caseworkers.

Methodology

The methodology used in this study was successfully implemented in Monterey County in 1999, further refined in Santa Cruz County in 2000, and touted as an example of “best practice” research by a statewide coalition of homeless advocacy and service provider organizations. A cornerstone of this methodology is the point-in-time count of street and sheltered homeless. The street count was accomplished through systematic canvassing of all census tract grids throughout the county. To supplement the point-in-time figure, an annualized estimate was also produced. Further, a survey was conducted of homeless youth between the ages of 14 – 21, as well as a survey of youth in foster care, and foster care providers.

Despite the major similarities between the two census counts, important methodological innovations complicate direct comparisons between the results of the two studies. The most significant of these differences was the use of US Census Tracts as organizational tools during the count. In 1999, enumeration teams were sent out to all of the urban areas of Monterey County, as well as directed canvassing of the county’s rural areas including vehicular counts conducted from the major roads, and an aerial reconnaissance of county riverbeds. However, in the 2002 Homeless Census, these

teams were sent to canvas every single census tract in Monterey County, resulting in more comprehensive county coverage. The tally sheet used during the 2002 Homeless Census resulted in a more detailed breakdown of homeless, which distinguished individual homeless from homeless families.

How Many Homeless People are There?

The estimated point-in-time daily number of homeless people in Monterey County has increased from a range of 1,157 - 2,917 individuals in 1999 to a range of 2,681 - 3,461 in 2002. These ranges indicate an increase of anywhere between 19% (using range maximums) or 51% (using range midpoints). Further, using a combination of point-in-time census data and homeless survey data, this equates to a projected annual range of between 8,686 and 11,214 (with midpoint of 9,950) people experiencing homelessness in Monterey County in 2002, nearly 46% more than had been projected for 1999. It is important to note that while it appears that the homeless population has increased greatly, this may be partially due to the methodological innovations discussed above.

Figure 1 – Estimated Increase in Homelessness in Monterey County

CATEGORY	1999	2002	% INCREASE
Point-in-time population range midpoint	2,037	3,071	50.8%
Point-in-time population range maximum	2,917	3,461	18.6%
Annual projection range midpoint	6,835*	9,950	45.6%

* In 1999, a range of annual homelessness was not calculated. For the purposes of this comparison, the annual projection developed in 1999 is being compared to the midpoint of the range calculated in 2002.

Almost 65% of the homeless persons counted in the census enumeration were unsheltered, and were found during the street count. Only 21% were sheltered, with most of those (14%) in transitional housing facilities, and the remaining 6% in emergency shelters. Additionally, 13% of those counted were found during the course of “informant” interviews, where service providers reported on their clients who were homeless, but would not have been counted in other components of the census. Finally, the last 1% were found in “miscellaneous” locations including hospitals, jail, drug and alcohol treatment facilities, and in motels that accept vouchers.

Most of the homeless counted in this enumeration (68%) were individuals, but 32% were in homeless families. Of these homeless families, most were found in transitional housing facilities, but 103 homeless families representing 339 individuals were found unsheltered, in the street count component of the census. More than one fifth of the homeless counted (21%) were youth under 18 years. Most of these youth were in homeless families, but 4% (104 youth) were counted on their own. Much variation was found in the geographic distribution of those counted in the homeless

census. Overall, the most homeless residents were counted in the Monterey Peninsula area, accounting for nearly 60% of the point-in-time count. The greater Salinas area had the second most homeless residents, with 25% of the county's homeless population. The rural areas of the county yielded the lowest counts, with 9% in South County and the remaining 7% in North County.

Figure 2 – Overall Homeless Census Actual Count by Area

AREA	HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS				HOMELESS FAMILIES					TOTAL
	MEN	WOMEN	YOUTH	TOTAL	FAMILY UNITS	MEN	WOMEN	KIDS	TOTAL	
Salinas	407	78	13	498	52	31	49	97	177	675
South Co.	167	33	15	215	8	5	6	13	24	239
Peninsula	566	328	69	963	201	108	189	327	624	1,587
North Co.	106	22	7	135	12	11	14	20	45	180
Total	1,246	461	104	1,811	273	155	258	457	870	2,681

It should be noted that the numbers of homeless persons referenced above are likely to be conservative. This is because many homeless sub-populations – families, agricultural workers, and those who are housed in precarious or overcrowded housing situations – are traditionally subject to an undercount. The findings of this Homeless Census suggest that there have been significant increases in the prevalence of homelessness in Monterey County. These findings, while disturbing, are in line with current national trends that suggest homelessness is rising sharply in American cities, and are consistent with the intuitions of the many service providers who assisted in the implementation of this research study.

Who are the Homeless Youth?

Current research indicates that homeless children are the fastest growing segment of the homeless population (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2001), with as many as 1.3 million homeless children in the United States (Kristen Clements, 1997). Considering the magnitude of youth homelessness, relatively little is known about this population. For the purposes of this research, homeless youth were defined as youth between the ages of 14 – 21, who are homeless with their families, or on their own.

Demographics

In Monterey County, homeless youth were most commonly Hispanic / Latino males, 18 years old, living in either the Monterey Peninsula, or greater Salinas area. Overall, the basic demographics of homeless youth in Monterey County mirror those of the general youth population. This similarity validates national findings that indicate that most homeless youth come from within a 50-mile radius of their prior home (Baggett G., et al., 1998). More than half of the respondents (53%) were

Hispanic / Latino, while 35% were Caucasian, 6% were African American, and 4% were Asian / Pacific Islander. Homeless youth survey respondents were evenly distributed between the two major urban areas of the county, with 39% in Salinas, and 37% on the Monterey Peninsula. Homeless youth respondents varied greatly in age, with nearly one-fourth (22%) 16 years or younger, and more than half (57%) between 17 and 19 years. Males were disproportionately represented in the homeless youth community, at nearly two-thirds of respondents (64%).

Nearly one in every three homeless youth interviewed (27%) were living on their own. This group of “unattached” homeless youth was unique from the overall homeless youth population. The majority of these homeless youth were Caucasian (62%) and virtually all took the survey in English (94%). Unattached homeless youth were even more likely to be male (70%) but were not older than homeless youth in general, with the same average age of 18 years. In fact, many unattached homeless youth (38%) were minors under the age of 18. Additionally, these homeless youth were usually encountered on the Monterey Peninsula (58%) where there are many services geared towards runaway and homeless youth.

The Homeless Experience

The experience of homelessness can be personally debilitating for anyone, particularly for youth. Data collected in this study indicates that homeless youth have many very serious challenges. Homeless youth struggle not only with housing issues, but also with school attendance, health problems, and emotional development issues, which often lead to participation in dangerous and illegal activities like substance use and unsafe sex. The following list highlights many important, yet disturbing findings from the homeless youth survey.

- 50% of the homeless female youth were currently or had been pregnant, and nearly one in five homeless youth respondents (19%) have children.
- 20% of homeless youth surveyed had been homeless more than two years.
- 22% of homeless youth were 16 years old or younger.
- 64% did not attend school, and nearly one in every five homeless respondents (18%) had less than an 8th grade education.
- 57% of the homeless youth surveyed were employed at least part time, but nearly one fourth of employed homeless youth respondents (24%) earn less than minimum wage.
- 22% of the homeless youth interviewed were receiving government assistance.
- 17% of homeless youth supplemented their income with theft. Further, many youth supplemented their income in other dangerous and illegal ways including drugs (16%) and sex (7%).

- 80% of homeless youth survey respondents did not have health insurance, and one third (33%) of homeless youth interviewed go to the emergency room when they need health care.
- 51% of homeless youth had drunk alcohol in the past month, 43% had used marijuana, more than a fifth (23%) had used amphetamines, and nearly one in every twenty (4%) had used heroin.

The Link Between Homelessness and Foster Care

Research has indicated a strong relationship between foster care and homelessness, but very little information has been available about that relationship in Monterey County prior to this study. One in every ten homeless youth survey respondents countywide (10%) reported having been placed into foster care at some point in their life. This percentage is lower than that of comparable research around the nation, which ranges from 16% to 41% (National Coalition for the Homeless, 1998.) However, this important survey finding documents a relationship between placement into foster care and eventual homelessness in Monterey County. Youth in foster care represent only 0.3% of the general population ages 14 - 21 (Department of Social Services, 2001; California Department of Finance Population figures 2002), but survey results discussed above show that they represent 10% of the homeless population within those ages, demonstrating a large over-representation. Further, while former foster youth represent a small portion of the entire population of homeless youth, homelessness among former foster youth is high.

The Department of Social Services estimates that there are currently 120 - 130 youth between the ages of 19 and 21 who have emancipated from foster care placement in Monterey County within the past three years and are eligible for Independent Living Program (ILP) Aftercare services. It is likely that many of these emancipated foster youth have since left the county in search of a more hospitable housing market or to live with family or friends. However, even if they all remain in Monterey County, 31 of these approximately 125 former Monterey County foster children were found among the homeless youth, representing at least 25% of emancipated foster youth between 19 and 21 years old. Using this conservative estimate, it is plausible that at least 1 in 4 children who emancipate from the foster care system of Monterey County will end up homeless within 3 years of their departure from foster care. Further, it is important to note that in a focus group conducted among recently emancipated foster teens aged 19 - 25, all had experienced episodes of homelessness in their transition from foster care placement to independent living.

Who are the Foster Care Teens?

Children who are victims of child abuse or neglect can be placed into foster care by the court if their home environment is determined to endanger their safety. Youth who are placed into the foster care system come from a variety of backgrounds, and represent the full diversity of Monterey County.

Demographics

As of October 2001, the Department of Social Services reported that there were approximately 161 children between the ages of 14 - 18 placed by the Social Services or Probation Departments (see Appendix). The majority of foster care teen survey respondents were Hispanic / Latino, 15 years old, living in the greater Salinas area. Gender of teens in foster care was equally distributed, and the overall ethnic breakdown mirrors that of the county's general youth population. More than half (54%) of foster teen respondents were Hispanic / Latino, one fourth (28%) were Caucasian, 7% were African American, and the remaining 9% were Asian / Pacific Islander (2%) and Native American (7%). Foster care survey respondents were heavily represented in Salinas (66%) and were largely between the ages of 14 - 16 years (73%).

The Foster Care Experience

The experience of foster care for teens can often be characterized by placement into and out of multiple homes, particularly for children entering the system at an older age. The trauma of abuse or neglect combined with the difficulty of maintaining stable foster care placements can often negatively impact school performance and physical and mental health, and is disruptive of the youth's overall well-being. Further, data from this research effort indicates that youth in foster care may not be adequately preparing for their inevitable departure from foster care. The following list highlights a number of important findings generated from the foster teen survey.

- 33% of foster teen respondents had been placed in 4 or more homes during their experience in foster care, and nearly one in every twenty (4%) had been placed in more than 10 homes.
- 54% of foster teen respondents had tried alcohol, and many others had tried marijuana (37%) and inhalants (10%).
- 21% of these foster teens worked during the school year, and nearly 40% worked during the summer.
- 25% of teens in foster care had received vocational training, job training, or ROTC, and 38% planned on receiving it in the future.

- 47% did not know about the Independent Living Program (ILP), which is designed to help prepare foster youth for emancipation. Of those who did know about the ILP Program, only 37% had participated in ILP activities, and even fewer (29%) had developed a Transitional Independent Living Plan.
- 23% of foster teens who participated in this study did not know where they were going to live after emancipation, and 4% planned on “couch surfing”.
- 66% of teens in foster care indicated that they would like to continue living in their current placement beyond their 18th birthday if they could. Further, the overwhelming majority of foster care providers (81%) said they would be willing to continue to house their foster child if they received a housing allowance.

Recommendations

The results of this study show that despite the hard work of countless devoted service providers, Monterey County continues to struggle with the growing problem of homelessness. This unfortunate trend is affecting families and youth at a growing pace. The Monterey County Homeless Census and Homeless Youth / Foster Teen Study Research Committee offer the following recommendations to continue the county’s effort towards adequate housing for all residents. These recommendations are not in order of priority or implementation sequence. They are designed to outline some specific actions available to the County Board of Supervisors and the homeless and foster services community to help improve service capability and effectiveness. For more detail about the recommendations listed below, please see the recommendations section of this report.

General Recommendations

- Prioritize Homelessness Prevention and Reduction
- Develop More Affordable Housing
- Expand Outreach of Existing Programs and Services
- Implement Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)
- Promote the Development of Jobs that Pay Livable Wages

Youth-Focused Recommendations

- Develop Transitional Housing for Emancipated Foster Youth
- Expand Transitional Independent Living Resources to Youth Identified as High Risk for Homelessness
- Establish Stronger Links Between the Foster Care System and the Homeless Service Provider Community
- Develop a Comprehensive Network of Services for Homeless and At-Risk Youth

INTRODUCTION

The following report is a presentation of the findings of the *Monterey County Homeless Census and Homeless Youth / Foster Teen Study*. This research effort was conducted by Applied Survey Research (ASR) in February and March of 2002 with the Monterey County Coalition of Homeless Services Providers (CHSP) and the Monterey County Transitional Housing Committee (THC) under the leadership of the Monterey County Department of Social Services (DSS).

The general goals of the study were twofold. The first goal was to update the quantitative data collected in the 1999 Monterey County Homeless Census. The results of the census component of this project will be presented to the County Board of Supervisors, and incorporated into Monterey County's Continuum of Care Document, which is required by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), in order to continue to receive funding for homeless services in Monterey County.

The second goal was to conduct a survey of homeless youth, a sub-population that was identified as under-represented in the 1999 research effort. In response to a growing body of research, which has documented a strong link between youth homelessness and placement in the foster care system, emancipated foster youth received high priority in the *Monterey County Community Based Homeless Services Plan*. Therefore, this homeless youth assessment expanded its scope to investigate the link on a local level. Therefore, the Homeless / Foster Youth Study focused on gathering qualitative data from youth who are currently homeless, as well as from youth who are preparing to emancipate from the foster care system, and therefore are at high risk of experiencing homelessness. Further, data was also collected from foster care providers who are housing youth preparing to emancipate.

The findings from the survey component of this report will also be presented to the County Board of Supervisors, and will be shared with the community of service providers. These results will be critical in understanding the needs of youth who struggle with homelessness, and the relationship between homelessness and foster care in Monterey County. The purpose of this study is not to recommend homeless management policy, but rather to generate quality data that will enlighten homeless management policy and empower all agencies and groups (public, private and community) to more effectively develop services and programs to serve the county's currently homeless and at-risk populations.

The report is divided into two major sections, the Census and the Homeless / Foster Youth Study. Preceding these sections is a review of relevant literature as well as a detailed description of the methodology that was used to carry out the study. This document also includes an appendix section, which contains a complete set of findings, as well as relevant supporting documents.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Literature on homelessness appears in many sources, including academic journals, conference papers, state and federal government studies, and the popular press. The following section reviews existing research pertinent to this study, including research regarding homeless enumeration, homeless youth, and the link between homelessness and foster care.

Homeless Enumeration

Despite the relative abundance of qualitative research on homelessness, few original studies have been conducted which attempt to quantify the prevalence of homelessness. Further, despite numerous attempts by many researchers, there are no universally accepted methodological guidelines for homeless data collection efforts. There are, however, numerous general guidelines that review the major enumeration options available to researchers. *Practical Methods for Counting the Homeless: A Manual for State and Local Jurisdictions* (Martha Burt, 1996) is one guideline of particular relevance. This guide reviews successful cross-urban studies and outlines benefits and challenges of those studies. Also of use is *Homeless Count Methodologies: An Annotated Bibliography* (Institute for the Study of Homelessness and Poverty, 1999).

Three major enumeration methodologies exist for counting the homeless in a community. By far the easiest approach is the development of a projection, which can be applied to the general population. Utilizing this approach, a municipality would conduct a search of existing homeless research on a regional or state level, and apply those findings to their community. Clearly, although this approach is inexpensive and easy to conduct, the local accuracy of these projections is unsubstantiated.

The most common methodology for homeless enumerations is a technique called service based enumeration (SBE). This strategy uses homeless service provider data to determine the population size and characteristics of a given homeless community. Excellent research using the SBE methodology has been performed by Dennis Culhane, et al in *Public Shelter Admission Rates in Philadelphia and New York City: Implication of Turnover for Sheltered Population Counts* (1994). This shelter-based methodology has many advantages including ease of access into the homeless community, and the ability to couple qualitative data collection efforts with a physical enumeration. Though a vast improvement over a simple population projection, the SBE methodology has major limitations. For example, a significant proportion of the homeless population does not access homeless services for a variety of reasons. This population would be totally excluded from inclusion in a shelter-based enumeration.

Based on the success of the *1999 Monterey County Homeless Census and Needs Assessment*, the Research Committee opted for a comprehensive, point-in-time, observation-based methodology despite the time, effort, and considerable expense required for such an approach. This strategy is unique in homeless research, in that it identifies homeless individuals in a variety of settings including the street, emergency shelters, transitional housing, motels that accept vouchers, and other non-traditional locations such as hospitals, drug treatment facilities, and the county jail. This methodology was first executed in the 1999 Monterey County Census, and has been successfully duplicated in Santa Cruz, Fresno, and Madera Counties. Further, regional experts on homelessness have cited it as an example of “best practices research”.

Homeless Youth

Current research indicates that homeless children are the fastest growing segment of the homeless population (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2001), with as many as 1.3 million homeless children in the United States (Kristen Clements, 1997). Considering the magnitude of youth homelessness, relatively little is known about this population. Overall, homeless youth in a community are thought to mirror many of the demographic characteristics of youth in the general population, as most homeless youth come from within a 50-mile radius of their prior home (Baggett G, et al. 1998).

Many sub-populations exist within the community of homeless youth, including youth in families, runaways, and systems youth. Each of these populations have distinct characteristics and needs. Perhaps the most is known about runaway youth, which includes situational runaways who return to their homes after a few “homeless” nights, and street youth, who are usually totally in charge of their survival without any assistance from family members (Farrow, J. et al., 1992). These youth are very commonly the victims of physical or sexual violence and often engage in numerous risky behaviors including substance use and unsafe sex (Home Base Youth Services, 2000). The final subgroup, systems youth, are characterized as having been in and out of a number of governmental placements, including juvenile hall, out of home mental health placements, and foster or group homes.

The Link Between Homelessness and Teens in Foster Care

A relationship between emancipation from foster care and eventual homelessness has been well established. National studies have estimated that between 16% and 41% of homeless youth have been placed into foster care at one point in their life (National Coalition for the Homeless, 1998). Further, similar studies have projected that somewhere between 12% and 45% of teens in foster care emancipate into a period of homelessness (LA Shelter Partnership, 1997).

The relationship between homelessness and foster care reflects merely one stage of a cycle, which holds the potential to repeat in future generations. Foster care placement results from a breakdown or catastrophe in the family unit, generally as a result of child abuse or neglect, which has become so severe, that the child must be removed from the home. National research has demonstrated that homeless parents who have been in foster care in their childhood are more than twice as likely to have their children placed into foster care as compared to homeless parents who have never been in the child welfare system (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2002). The situation of homelessness can lead to placement into foster care, which in turn, increases the likelihood of experiencing homelessness again.

Although these disturbing findings demonstrate a strong link between out of home placement and homelessness, many important questions remain unanswered. Prior to this research effort, no local data regarding the co-occurrence of foster care and homelessness existed. Building on a foundation of knowledge regarding national trends, this study will attempt to promote a greater understanding of the relationship between homelessness and foster care in Monterey County.

METHODOLOGY

A mixed-method research design was used to conduct the *Monterey County Homeless Census and Homeless Youth / Foster Teen Study*. The design consisted of several components: a point-in-time census of homeless individuals; interviews with homeless youth, youth in foster care and foster care providers; and a series of focus groups with foster care case workers, youth in foster care, and youth who have recently emancipated from the foster care system. The specific methods used to conduct each of these components are described below.

For the purposes of this study, the federal McKinney Act definition of homelessness was used. This states the operational definition of homelessness as:

1. An individual who lacks a fixed, regular and adequate night time residence and
2. An individual who has a primary night time residence that is:
 - a. A publicly supervised or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional shelter for the mentally ill),
 - b. An institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized, or
 - c. A public or private place not designated for, or ordinarily used, as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

Like any definition of homelessness, the McKinney Act definition is often problematic. For example, criterion 2c is extremely difficult to quantify, and severe undercounting of this group is known to occur in any enumeration of homeless individuals and families.

Research Committee

Prior to contracting ASR, a Transitional Housing Committee (THC) was formed in Monterey County to address the unique needs of youth in foster care who are preparing for emancipation, as well as the needs of those who have recently emancipated from the foster care system. The THC is a joint effort between Department of Social Services / Family and Children's Services and Hartnell College's Independent Living Program Advisory Board. The purpose of this committee has been to raise awareness and stimulate a community response to the housing needs of emancipating foster youth. The efforts of this committee have been successful in achieving priority for emancipating foster youth the *Monterey County Community Based Homeless Services Plan* adopted by the Board of

Supervisors in February 2002. However, the lack of information related to this need led to the recommendation that it collaborate on examining the housing needs of foster teens in the Homeless Census update. Together, the THC and CHSP, under the overall umbrella of the Department of Social Services, formed the Research Committee for the two major components of this study: the Homeless Census update and the Homeless Youth and Foster Teen Survey. This Research Committee met weekly during the process of coordinating and conducting data collection, and monthly thereafter to ensure that the project reflected the unique needs of Monterey County's diverse homeless population as well as to ensure that the service provider community was informed and participated in data collection efforts. This Research Committee was comprised of representatives from Hartnell College, Community Human Services (CHS), Community Housing Improvement Systems and Planning Association (CHISPA), the Coalition of Homeless Service Providers (CHSP), and the Department of Social Services: Family and Children's Services and Community Action Agency.

Community Outreach

Critical to the research effort was the involvement of service providers and their clients. Service providers were helpful in introducing the researchers to the homeless community and legitimizing project activities. This was very important due to the high degree of mistrust that exists within the homeless population. The research team conducted several training sessions that doubled as mutual education opportunities. Trusted opinion leaders among the service providers and from the homeless community helped give direct insight into the conditions present among the homeless population. Homeless people were encouraged to share experiences and suggestions for a successful research effort.

Homeless Census

The 2002 Monterey County Homeless Census was designed to update the census conducted in 1999. Both enumerations represent a conservative, empirical, non-intrusive observation based point-in-time approach to counting the county's homeless. However, the Research Committee decided to make an organizational change to the format of the count by incorporating the use of United States Census Tracts in the 2002 Monterey County Homeless Census. These census tracts provided a structure by which a small group of enumerators could thoroughly cover each individual area within the short time frame required of a point-in-time enumeration. Further, the use of census tracts provided a geographically comprehensive approach that assured complete county coverage.

Census Team Recruitment and Training

The street count component of the census enumeration effort required extensive recruitment efforts. Census activities were promoted in the orientation of every project component (see Homeless / Foster Youth Study methodology) as well as individually with some volunteers who could not attend the trainings. Every effort was made to contact any party who expressed a desire to participate in the street count. Of special interest were homeless individuals, as they possess an intimate knowledge of places homeless individuals are likely to be found, as well as a familiarity with many persons in the homeless community. Because of the outstanding efforts of the Community Action Agency and the Coalition of Homeless Service Providers, as well as the devotion of countless service providers, research staff, and community volunteers, every census tract in Monterey County was covered in the allotted time, and every census enumeration team included at least one trained homeless individual.

All census team members were mandated to attend a training session to learn about the project and protocol associated with the enumeration process. Enumerators were also given guideline sheets in English or Spanish summarizing information from the trainings. Census team members were given explicit instructions to count individuals who were homeless or appeared to be homeless (utilizing the McKinney definition). In order to abide by the strict non-intrusive observation policy, enumerators were instructed not to approach, question, or interact with individuals in any way. Census team members were trained to record counts on a tally sheet, which included a census tract map and a more detailed field map of the area to be covered. Safety was emphasized during all training sessions. Enumerators were instructed never to leave their group, nor to go anywhere they felt might be unsafe. The County Sheriff's Department and all police departments were notified of census activities in advance of the enumeration for safety purposes.

Street Count

The street count component of the census enumeration covered all areas of Monterey County. Seven deployment locations were established: three in the Southeast County area, which were covered on February 27, and four in the Northwest County area, which were covered on February 28. Both enumerations were conducted between the hours of 5:00 and 10:00 am. For the purposes of this census, the Southeast County area consisted of Salinas, Chualar, Gonzales, Soledad, Greenfield, King City, San Lucas, San Ardo, Lockwood, Bradley, and Parkfield, and the Northwest County area consisted of Pajaro, Aromas, Prunedale, Moss Landing, Castroville, Marina, Seaside, Monterey, Carmel, Pacific Grove, Pebble Beach, Carmel Valley, and Big Sur. Each deployment location had an individually trained team captain. These captains were responsible for reviewing training materials with the census workers, assigning specific census tracts to teams, and collecting the completed tally sheets.

Areas were assigned based on the team's ability to cover an area by foot or vehicle, team members' knowledge of the specific census tract, and in some cases, the number of homeless people expected to be encountered. All census tally sheets were assigned to enumerators only on the morning of the enumeration. Team captains were instructed to call in to a dispatch coordinator, stationed at Applied Survey Research. The dispatch coordinator was in contact with all team captains via cellular telephones, and was able to reallocate human resources among the groups as necessary. All census activities undertaken near shelter locations were prioritized for early canvassing to avoid possible count duplication of shelter inhabitants.

Census tally sheets were collected and verified upon return to ensure that all areas had been adequately canvassed. Qualitative data about the census effort was noted, and border-area teams conferred to ensure that they did not duplicate counts on common streets. All captains reported a high level of confidence that their areas had been covered thoroughly, with integrity, and without duplication. Many reports of abandoned sleeping areas and overcrowded housing were noted, yet were not included in the count.

Homeless individuals were very challenging to find in some of the more rural areas, especially in North and South County. Special care was taken to ensure that enumerators assigned to rural areas were familiar with the areas they covered, had a Spanish speaker in the team, and had some knowledge of the indigenous communities in these areas. In the Big Sur area, campgrounds, makeshift housing and other probable homeless sites were investigated in great detail by an enumeration team that was extremely familiar with the area and its residents. With the assistance and verification of park rangers, law enforcement and local merchants, researchers were able to quantify the number of individuals living in this area with a high degree of accuracy. Further, a homeless enumerator who had been a long time resident of an encampment in the Del Monte Forest volunteered to conduct the count of this census tract from his encampment, ensuring that the entire area was thoroughly covered.

Shelter Count

The shelter count was conducted using a list of all shelter operators in Monterey County provided by the Coalition of Homeless Service Providers. This list was reviewed and checked for accuracy by the Research Committee to ensure that all possible shelter sites were included. In addition to defined homeless emergency shelters and transitional housing facilities, the list was expanded to include motel voucher programs, county jail, drug and alcohol treatment centers, and local hospitals.

Shelter occupancy data was gathered by conducting telephone interviews with all shelter locations on the day of the count. The research staff experienced a high level of cooperation from shelter staff, and was able to collect all of the shelter count data in a timely manner.

Key Informant Interviews

In addition to conducting interviews with staff at all formal shelter locations, many service providers who do not provide shelter for their clients were interviewed about their client databases. Although these service providers did not always have knowledge regarding the primary night time accommodation of their clients, in many cases they were able to determine this information. If a service provider could guarantee the research staff that a particular client was homeless and could not have been counted in any other component of the census, that client was counted. For example, if a client was “couch surfing”, they could not have been found in the street or shelter component of the census, yet they were still included through key informant interviews.

Homeless Youth / Foster Teen Study

As mentioned previously, homeless youth were identified as having been under-represented in the *1999 Monterey County Homeless Census and Needs Assessment*. Further, very little is known about homeless youth at the local level. For these reasons, youth were targeted as the principal population studied in this project. For the purposes of this research, homeless youth needed to conform to the McKinney Act definition of homelessness (see above) and be between the ages of 14 and 21 in order to be eligible for survey participation.

In order to achieve the highest level of trust and candor between the interviewer and the respondent, the Research Committee decided to employ the “peer interview” approach that was so crucial to the success of the research effort conducted in 1999. Whenever possible, homeless youth were interviewed by other homeless youth. Recruiting homeless youth interviewers was a challenge. However, interviewers were not limited to the strict age criterion that determined survey eligibility. If an individual was a young service provider, or a young homeless individual who was trusted within the homeless community, that individual would be permitted to conduct interviews even if they were past the age of 21. The “peer interview” approach yielded a high level of trust in the survey process, and dramatically increased both the breadth and depth of the interviews conducted.

National research has demonstrated a strong link between youth in foster care and homeless youth (see literature review). To gain a better understanding of the relationship between foster care and homelessness in Monterey County, an effort was made to collect additional primary survey data among youth currently in foster care and foster care providers. This information was then supplemented with focus groups conducted with foster care caseworkers, youth currently in foster care, and youth who have recently emancipated from the foster care system. The primary data collected in this effort was designed to answer many questions emerging about homeless youth, including:

- Who are the homeless youth?
- What services do homeless youth need?
- What is the highest level of education attained by homeless youth?
- How many homeless youth are working or going to school?
- How many homeless youth have ever been placed into foster care?
- How many emancipated foster youth experience homelessness?
- How can youth in foster care avoid experiencing homelessness following emancipation?

Survey Instruments

The development of the survey instruments was an inclusive process with the participation of many stakeholders. Members of the Transitional Housing Committee (THC) held a brainstorming session to kick-off the survey development, after which the THC, Coalition of Homeless Service Providers, and Community Action Agency each reviewed multiple versions of the draft surveys until a consensus was reached. Surveys were then pre-tested within the target groups to assure that the questions were understandable and appropriate. After slight modifications, the surveys were finalized and translated into Spanish. The final survey instruments included both closed-ended, open-ended, and multiple-response questions.

Recruitment and Training

Potential survey interviewers were recruited in a variety of ways, including word of mouth, distribution of flyers, and email reminders to community volunteer groups including student activists, county eligibility workers, service providers, and representatives of the spiritual community. Ultimately, each component of the study required a distinct recruitment and training strategy, in order to ensure that the peer interviewer approach so important to this methodology was maintained.

HOMELESS YOUTH SURVEY

Homeless youth interviewers were recruited primarily by members of the Coalition of Homeless Service Providers (CHSP) and Community Human Services (CHS) via word of mouth, telephone, email, and flyer distribution. Several lengthy trainings were held in both the Salinas and Monterey Peninsula areas, including one bilingual training, which targeted Spanish speakers recruited from the Salinas and South County areas, as well as within the indigenous Oaxacan communities.

Topics covered at the training sessions included project background information, detailed instructions on survey eligibility, interviewing protocol, prompting for detailed responses,

confidentiality, and safety tips. Information regarding the census component of this project was also presented.

FOSTER CARE TEEN SURVEY

Foster care teen interviewers were recruited through Family and Children's Services and through the Peacock Acres group home, as well as through telephone recruitment and by word of mouth. Only youth currently in foster care between the ages of 14 and 18 years were eligible to participate in the foster care survey. All foster teen interviewers met these eligibility criteria, and therefore participated as both interviewers and respondents. One training was held in Salinas, covering project background information, survey eligibility, interviewing protocol, prompting for detailed responses, confidentiality, and safety tips.

FOSTER CARE PROVIDER SURVEY

Foster care provider surveys were conducted by ASR staff interviewers rather than by peers for the purpose of expediting the process. Staff interviewers were briefed on the project background, as well as confidentiality issues.

Sampling

HOMELESS YOUTH SURVEY

One of the biggest challenges in homeless survey research is determining an appropriate sampling framework. In a typical research scenario, there is enough preliminary data about the target research population (in this case Monterey County homeless youth) to enable a scientifically valid sample of respondents. Since there was no such information available at the time of this study, creating a sampling framework that was truly representative of the general population of homeless youth in Monterey County was a challenge. In the absence of hard data regarding the number of homeless youth that exist within Monterey County, the Research Committee established a goal of 266 surveys based on the following data. The most recent telephone survey of Monterey County's general population (the Tellus / Diganos Report, conducted by ASR in 1999) indicated that 1.7% of the general population had experienced homelessness in the last year. Given that the nation's economy has experienced a period of decline in the ensuing years, assuming that this proportion has remained the same is a conservative approach. ASR then applied this percentage to the number of youth between 14 and 21 in the general population to yield a potential universe of 862 homeless youth. In order to achieve 95% confidence that the data collected in our sample would reflect the responses of the actual community of homeless youth (+/-5%), a sample of 266 surveys would be needed. Due to the overwhelmingly enthusiastic support of the service providers and the homeless community, this ambitious goal was exceeded, with a grand total of 316 completed surveys.

Additionally, care was taken to ensure that the homeless individuals recruited for this study represented the diversity and socio-economic characteristics of the area. Efforts were made to encourage survey outreach throughout all regions of the county, as well as within the indigenous Oaxacan communities, which have grown significantly in the Salinas Valley and Monterey Peninsula.

FOSTER CARE TEEN AND FOSTER CARE PROVIDER SURVEYS

Telephone contact information was gleaned from a database of all foster teens referred to the Independent Living Program (ILP). The ILP Program, administered by DSS, had historically been delivered through a private provider. Following changes in the program, the county assumed overall coordination of the program in fiscal year 2001/02, and expect many of the ILP issues raised in this study to be addressed. The database used to support the telephone survey process was derived from all eligible youth at the time of their initial referral into foster care placement. Because the data was based on the teen's placement status at their initial referral to ILP, subsequent changes in placement were not reflected. Due to the limitations of the database, available information was insufficient to generate a sample with 95% confidence in either the foster youth or foster provider survey. Modifications to the data system have been implemented as a result of the identification of this problem during the course of this study. The research team conducted focus groups with foster teens, providers, and caseworkers to supplement the survey results with qualitative information.

Data Collection

Interviews of homeless youth, foster teens, and foster care providers began on February 15, 2002 and lasted through March 22, 2002. In all components of the survey effort, trained interviewers made every effort to ensure that interview respondents felt comfortable regardless of the location or situation. During the interviews, respondents were asked to be candid in their responses and were informed that their responses would be integrated into the general findings of the study, and not attributed to any one individual. Respondents were also informed that they could skip any question they did not feel comfortable answering, and that they were free to discontinue the survey at any time to ensure quality and to encourage accountability. This is demonstrated in the survey response tables that will occasionally indicate an inconsistent number of respondents from question to question.

HOMELESS YOUTH SURVEY

Interviews of homeless youth typically lasted from 20 to 30 minutes and were conducted by trained "peer" interviewers or homeless service providers. These surveys were conducted in various street and service provider locations countywide. Overall, there was excellent cooperation from the

respondents, largely because nearly all of the interviewers were also members of the homeless community.

Enthusiastic cooperation in the process was generated by the use of incentives for interviewers and respondents. As an incentive or reward for participation, survey respondents were given either a phone card, bus pass, or fast food gift certificates upon completion of the interview. Further, homeless interviewers were compensated on the spot for remitting completed surveys at the rate of \$5.00 per survey. Generally, no more than five surveys were given to an interviewer at a single time.

FOSTER CARE TEEN SURVEY

Interviews of foster teens typically lasted from 15 to 20 minutes. These surveys were conducted in various street and group home locations, as well as by telephone. All foster care interviewers were provided with a list of first names and phone numbers of a group of youth currently in foster care, after being trained in confidentiality protocols and signing a confidentiality agreement with the Department of Social Services. Street surveys were conducted primarily at the school or group home of the interviewers. Telephone surveys were conducted from the foster child's home. Overall, there was excellent cooperation from the respondents, largely due to the fact that all of the interviewers were also youth currently in foster care.

Cooperation in the survey process was enhanced by the use of incentives for interviewers and respondents. As an incentive or reward for participation, survey respondents were given the same incentives offered to the homeless youth; either a phone card, bus pass, or fast food gift certificates upon completion of the interview. Further, foster teen interviewers, like the homeless interviewers, were compensated on the spot for remitting completed surveys at the rate of \$5.00 per survey.

FOSTER CARE PROVIDER SURVEY

Interviews of foster care providers typically lasted from 25 to 35 minutes and were conducted by trained ASR staff interviewers. These surveys were conducted by telephone. ASR staff interviewers were provided with a list of first names and phone numbers of a group of foster care providers after being trained in the confidentiality protocols. Telephone surveys were conducted from the interviewer's home. Overall, there was excellent cooperation from the respondents. Although they were not being interviewed by other foster care providers and did not receive an incentive for participation, the vast majority of those contacted were more than willing to participate in the survey.

FOCUS GROUPS

To supplement the data collected in the homeless youth, foster teen, and foster care provider surveys, the Research Committee conducted a series of focus groups. Two focus groups were

conducted with youth in foster care between the ages of 14 and 18. One focus group was conducted with youth who had recently emancipated from the foster care system and were between the ages of 18 and 25. Finally, one focus group was conducted with foster care caseworkers who shared their insights into the needs of foster children as they age through the child welfare system. In all focus groups, ASR staff researchers led an informal discussion revolving around 5 – 8 questions that were germane to the goals of this research. Focus groups lasted between 60 and 90 minutes, and all participants were guaranteed confidentiality. In order to increase the number of current foster care and emancipated foster teen participants, these individuals were provided with an incentive of \$20 for their time.

Data Analysis

The *Monterey County Homeless Census and Homeless Youth / Foster Teen Study* represents an important quantitative and qualitative research effort. As such, the data collection and analysis associated with this effort were executed sensitively and systematically. ASR is committed to tabulating and analyzing quantitative data in meaningful ways. ASR's experienced research staff used standard methods of content analysis, grouping similar responses into like categories and assigning a numeric code. All codes were compiled into a codebook. To eliminate any inconsistencies in the coding process, a single research analyst was then responsible for coding all of the completed surveys.

Data integrity was improved by performing a check for duplicate records. Although names of the respondents were not collected due to confidentiality requirements, the birth date of the respondent, as well as their initials, was collected. Birth date, initials, and gender were used to screen for duplicate records in the sample. All duplicate records were eliminated from the sample. Coded survey data were then entered and analyzed using Statistical Program for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Base 9.0 and SPSS Tables 9.0. All results were published with 95% confidence levels where possible (see Sampling). Statistical tools were used based on specific variables being reviewed.

Study Limitations and Challenges

Census Undercount

No homeless enumeration methodology is without challenges. In fact, the non-intrusive, point-in-time, physical enumeration methods employed, while academically sound, have inherent biases and shortcomings. Even homeless census workers were bound to miss some locations where homeless people were sleeping. For the employed homeless, there was frequently pre-dawn movement to get to jobs, especially among the county's farmworker population. Inclusion of many other homeless individuals who were living in unfit structures was beyond the scope of this study.

In conclusion, both of the major components of this project reflect a conservative methodology with inherent undercounting or under-representation of many groups, especially homeless without citizenship, indigenous homeless, agricultural workers, families, individuals living in sub-standard or overcrowded housing, individuals who do not access services, and individuals who reside in extremely rural areas of Monterey County. This conservative approach is necessary to preserve the integrity of the data collected. It is noteworthy that even though the census is clearly an undercount of the homeless population, the methodology employed is the most comprehensive approach available. The outreach efforts concurrent with this enumeration, as well as the use of United States Census tracts to ensure complete county coverage, represent a major improvement on the 1999 study.

Homeless / Foster Youth Study Under-representation

Homeless research indicates that the greatest number of homeless people in the country cannot easily be recognized as such. Many homeless are employed and / or own cars or campers and are fully functioning members of society who, for one reason or another, are unable to secure affordable housing in Monterey County, one of the most expensive housing markets in the nation. Consequently, the Homeless Youth Study does not include an equal representation of all homeless experiences, but tends to focus more on the abjectly poor or street homeless, resulting in under-representation of a potentially large population with unique needs. Further, although youth in transitional housing and street youth were interviewed, the researchers were informed regularly of the reluctance of some youth to participate due to concerns about Child Protective Services intervention or a return to an unpleasant home situation.

CENSUS FINDINGS

The following results of the 2002 Monterey County Homeless Census are the most comprehensive findings for Monterey County to date. With the success of the 1999 Homeless Census, the Research Committee had the motivation and experience to improve upon the prior methodology by using US Census Tracts as organizational tools, and taking special steps to ensure greater outreach to homeless subgroups including the rural homeless, and the vehicularly housed. As discussed in the methodology section, the use of census tracts helped assure comprehensive county coverage, as well as providing a structure by which a small team could cover a well-defined area of land in the short time frame required of a point-in-time enumeration. For the purposes of this enumeration, census tracts were clustered in the following areas: the Salinas area, the Monterey Peninsula area, North County, and South County. Other than the use of census tracts, the methodology was not substantially changed. As in 1999, this enumeration effort combines a street count with information from shelters, transitional housing facilities, the county jail, hospitals, and many other non-traditional locations where homeless individuals may have been found on the evening of the census.

Point-in-time Homeless Census Results

The 2002 Monterey County Homeless Census had five major components: a street count, emergency shelter count, transitional housing count, miscellaneous count, and informant count. The results of the census are organized according to these components.

Street Count Results

The following section provides an overview of the results of the street count component of the 2002 Homeless Census. As can be seen in the following table, a total of 1,737 individuals were physically witnessed and counted in the street enumeration over a two-day period (February 27 – February 28, 2002). Most of the homeless counted in the street enumeration (80%) were found on their own, while 20% were in families. Of the homeless individuals, the majority (70%) were men, while 27% were women, and 4% (representing 49 individuals) were youth under the age of 18. During the course of the homeless street count, a total of 103 family units with 339 family members were also observed. Within these homeless families, 32% were men, 31% were women, and 37% were children under the age of 18.

Figure 3 – Homeless Street Count Summary

AREA	HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS				FAMILY UNITS	HOMELESS FAMILIES				TOTAL
	MEN	WOMEN	YOUTH	TOTAL		MEN	WOMEN	KIDS	TOTAL	
Salinas	257	48	13	318	13	16	13	25	54	372
South Co.	167	33	15	215	8	5	6	13	24	239
Peninsula	471	272	14	757	75	78	77	80	235	992
North Co.	79	22	7	108	7	8	9	9	26	134
Total	974	375	49	1,398	103	107	105	127	339	1,737

Regionally, the majority of the street homeless encountered (57%) were in the Monterey Peninsula area, while 21% were found in the Salinas area, 14% were found in South County, and 8% were found in North County.

Emergency Shelter Count Results

This section provides an overview of the results of the emergency shelter count component of the enumeration. As the following table shows, a total of 173 individuals were counted by shelter providers over the same two-day period (February 27 – February 28, 2002) in which the street count was conducted. Most of the homeless counted in the emergency shelter enumeration (73%) were found on their own, while 27% were in families. Of the homeless individuals, the overwhelming majority (94%) were men, while 6% were women. No individual youth under the age of 18 were counted in emergency shelters during the census. In addition to the homeless individuals found in Monterey County emergency shelters, 14 family units with 46 family members were also present in shelters. Within these homeless families, 30% were women and 70% were children under the age of 18. No men were counted in these families. The composition of homeless within shelters is largely a reflection on eligibility and capacity.

Figure 4 – Homeless Emergency Shelter Count Summary

AREA	HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS				FAMILY UNITS	HOMELESS FAMILIES				TOTAL
	MEN	WOMEN	YOUTH	TOTAL		MEN	WOMEN	KIDS	TOTAL	
Salinas	71	2	-	73	8	-	8	23	31	104
South Co.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Peninsula	22	5	-	27	6	-	6	9	15	42
North Co.	27	-	-	27	-	-	-	-	-	27
Total	120	7	-	127	14	-	14	32	46	173

Regionally, the distribution of homeless persons found in shelters is driven by the locations of those shelters. At the time of the census, no emergency shelters existed in South Monterey County. Most (60%) homeless counted in emergency shelters were in the Salinas area, while 24% were in the

Monterey Peninsula area, and the remaining 16% were found in North County. It is important to note that in an effort to avoid duplication between the street count and the emergency shelters, areas surrounding shelters were canvassed before these shelters opened their doors.

Transitional Housing Count Results

While transitional housing did not exist in all areas of Monterey County at the time of this report, a total of 381 individuals were living in such facilities during the two-day period of the homeless census (February 27 - February 28, 2002). As opposed to the street count and emergency shelter counts where most homeless found were individuals, most of the homeless counted in the transitional housing facilities (72%) were in families, while the remaining 28% were individuals. Of these 85 homeless families consisting of 273 family members, most (66%) were children under 18 years old, while 28% were women, and 5% were men. Homeless individuals living in transitional housing facilities, however, were mostly male (73%).

Figure 5 – Homeless Transitional Housing Count Summary

AREA	HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS				HOMELESS FAMILIES					TOTAL
	MEN	WOMEN	YOUTH	TOTAL	FAMILY UNITS	MEN	WOMEN	KIDS	TOTAL	
Salinas	33	-	-	33	-	-	-	-	-	33
South Co.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Peninsula	46	29	-	75	85	15	77	181	273	348
North Co.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	79	29	-	108	85	15	77	181	273	381

Like emergency shelters, the regional distribution of homeless persons found in transitional housing facilities is driven by the locations of those facilities. As shown in the table above, at the time of the 2002 Homeless Census, transitional housing facilities were found in the Salinas and Monterey Peninsula areas only, with most inhabitants (91%) in the Monterey Peninsula area. This is largely because the closure of Fort Ord in the early 1990's created an extraordinary opportunity for developing transitional housing. Most of the county's transitional housing at the former Fort Ord is intended to serve the entire county.

Miscellaneous Count Results

In addition to counting homeless on the street, in emergency shelters, and in transitional housing facilities, the Research Committee extended the scope of the census to include many other non-traditional locations where homeless individuals might have spent the night on the evenings of the enumeration. These locations included hospitals, mental health facilities, jail, motels that accept vouchers, and many others. The following table summarizes the results of this component of the enumeration.

Figure 6 – Homeless Miscellaneous Count Summary

AREA	HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS				FAMILY UNITS	HOMELESS FAMILIES				TOTAL
	MEN	WOMEN	YOUTH	TOTAL		MEN	WOMEN	KIDS	TOTAL	
Salinas	9	3	-	12	1	1	1	3	5	17
South Co.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Peninsula	2	4	-	6	6	2	5	8	15	21
North Co.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	11	7	0	18	7	3	6	11	20	38

As shown in the table above, 38 persons were counted in miscellaneous locations during the homeless census. Persons found in these locations were split fairly evenly between homeless individuals (47%) and homeless families (53%). Further, homeless persons in this category were also fairly evenly split between the Salinas area (45%) and the Monterey Peninsula area (55%).

Informant Count Results

Due to the conservative methodology employed in this research, as well as the numerous limitations that prevent a physical observation based enumeration within structures, many individuals who are housed temporarily with family and friends or living in structures unfit for human habitation, could not be counted in this research effort. In an attempt to count as many Mc Kinney Act defined homeless as possible, service providers who do not provide shelter but possess an intimate knowledge of the population they serve were interviewed regarding the nighttime sleeping accommodation of their active cases. Although many service providers were unsure where their clients were sleeping, some providers did have this knowledge and were able to share it with the researchers. If a service provider could guarantee that their client was homeless on the days of the census enumeration and could not have been counted in any other component of the homeless enumeration, that client was counted in the census. The majority of those counted in the informant interviews were currently living in a temporary arrangement with family or friends, or were living in motels.

Figure 7 – Homeless Informant Count Summary

AREA	HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS				FAMILY UNITS	HOMELESS FAMILIES				TOTAL
	MEN	WOMEN	YOUTH	TOTAL		MEN	WOMEN	KIDS	TOTAL	
Salinas	37	25	-	62	30	14	27	46	87	149
South Co.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Peninsula	25	18	55	98	29	13	24	49	86	184
North Co.	-	-	-	-	5	3	5	11	19	19
Total	62	43	55	160	64	30	56	106	192	352

A total of 352 homeless persons were counted in the homeless informant interviews. These persons were more often in families (55%) than individuals (45%). Of the individuals, the greatest proportion were men (39%), slightly more than one-fourth (27%) were women, and more than one third (34%) were youth under the age of 18 years old. Additionally, 64 families consisting of 192 family members were also counted. Within these families, most persons (55%) were youth under the age of 18.

Overall Homeless Census Summary Results

The following table provides a summary of the results of each component of the homeless census previously discussed: street count, emergency count, transitional housing count, miscellaneous count, and informant count. Only 21% of homeless counted in the enumeration (554 individuals) were currently being housed by local service providers in emergency shelters and transitional housing facilities.

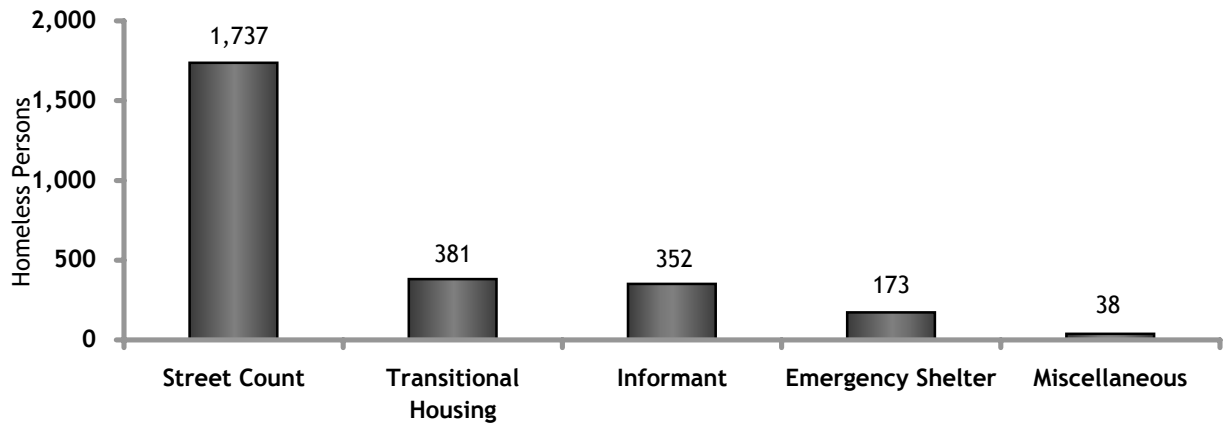
Figure 8 – Overall Homeless Census Summary

AREA	HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS				FAMILY UNITS	HOMELESS FAMILIES				TOTAL
	MEN	WOMEN	YOUTH	TOTAL		MEN	WOMEN	KIDS	TOTAL	
Salinas	407	78	13	498	52	31	49	97	177	675
South Co.	167	33	15	215	8	5	6	13	24	239
Peninsula	566	328	69	963	201	108	189	327	624	1,587
North Co.	106	22	7	135	12	11	14	20	45	180
Total	1,246	461	104	1,811	273	155	258	457	870	2,681

Overall, a total of 2,681 homeless persons were counted in the census. Most (68%) were homeless individuals, while roughly one-third (32%) were in families. This finding is consistent with national research, which indicates that homeless families with children comprise approximately 36% of the nation’s homeless population (US Conference of Mayors, 2001). While the majority of individual homeless were men, homeless families were more evenly distributed among age and gender. Of the 870 homeless persons in 273 homeless families counted, more than half (53%) were youth under the age of 18.

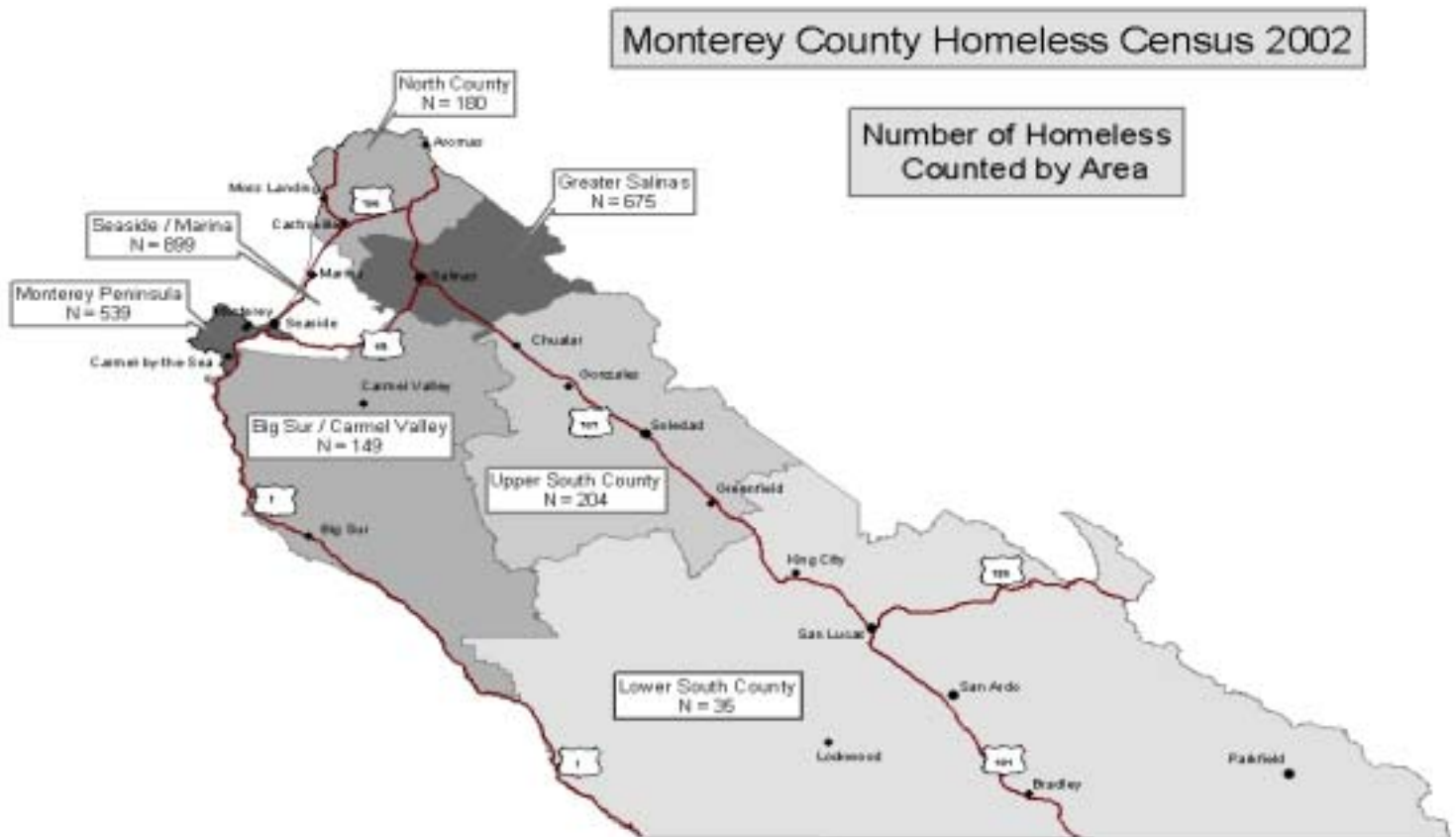
Most of the homeless counted in the enumeration (65%) were observed during the street count. Additionally, large numbers of homeless were counted in transitional housing facilities (14%) and during informant interviews (13%). Fewer homeless were counted in emergency shelters (6%) and in other miscellaneous locations (1%) such as hospitals, jails, and motels that accept vouchers.

Figure 9 – Overall Homeless Census Summary by Category



The following map shows the number of homeless persons counted for each of the following regions of Monterey County: North County, Greater Salinas, Upper South County, Lower South County, Big Sur / Carmel Valley, Monterey Peninsula, and Seaside / Marina area. These figures represent the total number of homeless persons counted in each component of the census. More homeless were found on the Seaside / Marina area (34%) than in any other region of the county. This could be partially due to the number of homeless shelters and services available in these communities. The greater Salinas area had the second greatest proportion of homeless counted in the enumeration (25%), followed by Monterey Peninsula (20%), Upper South County (8%), North County (7%), Big Sur / Carmel Valley (6%) and Lower South County (1%).

Figure 10 – Distribution of Homelessness by Area



Developing a Range of Point-in-Time Homelessness

In any homeless enumeration, undercounting of the street homeless occurs. Although there is no empirical method of determining the number of individuals that are not counted in a homeless census, a recent homeless enumeration in Santa Monica, California (Economic Roundtable, 1999) estimates that a homeless enumeration based on physical observation will yield a “capture rate”, (i.e. a rate to estimate the undercount) of 69% of street homeless. This implies that in any homeless street count, nearly one third (31%) of the street homeless cannot be seen. To develop a range of homelessness, the Research Committee established that an actual point-in-time count of homelessness could not be lower than the conservative minimum observed and documented in the 2002 Homeless Census (2,681). Based on a street homeless capture rate of 69%, the number of

homeless counted in the street enumeration (1,737) could potentially be increased by 31% to 2,517. Shelter and informant census data is not subject to capture rate projections. This increase of 780 street homeless added to the 2,681 homeless actually counted indicates that the number of homeless individuals on any given day in Monterey County in 2002 could range from 2,681 to as many as 3,461 individuals. This range does not include those living in substandard or precarious housing.

Figure 11 – Projection of Point-in-Time Range of Homelessness

2002 HOMELESS CENSUS ACTUAL COUNT	CAPTURE RATE ADJUSTMENT	PROJECTED POINT-IN-TIME RANGE
Street Count - 1,737	Increase for 31% not captured (+780)	2,517
Shelter Count - 592		592
Informant Count - 352		352
Minimum Point-in-Time = 2,681		Maximum Point-in-Time = 3,461

The capture rate projection detailed above does not duplicate the data gathered in the informant count. The capture rate attempts to quantify the number of street homeless that were not observed during the count. However, the informant count is a way to count homeless that are not living on the street, or in shelters. These individuals are homeless, and are accessing homeless services, yet they could not possibly be counted in any other component of the census. Further, it is important to note that the above projection for calculating a range of point in time homelessness represents the most conservative and academically sound method currently available.

Developing an Annual Homeless Estimate

Turnover rates (often called multipliers) are based on the recognition that more people experience homelessness annually than can be counted at any given point in time. In a given year, people will cycle in and out of homelessness. Some people will remain homeless all year long, while others will experience a short bout of homelessness. A turnover rate attempts to quantify how many times in a year the homeless population, as a whole, renews itself. When a turnover rate is applied to a point-in-time count, it produces an annual estimate of the number of individuals who experience homelessness in a given year.

Many communities across the nation have used turnover rates to estimate the annual prevalence of homelessness in their communities. The following table illustrates the point-in-time to annual turnover rates calculated from a variety of homeless enumeration strategies in a number of different communities.

Figure 12 – Point-in-Time to Annual Turnover Rate Comparisons

STUDY YEAR	AREA	TURNOVER RATE	SOURCE
1988	Yolo County	2.3	Vernez, et al.
1988	Alameda County	3.4	Vernez, et al.
1988	Orange County	5.8	Vernez, et al.
1989	United States	2.85*	Rossi
1992	New York City	3.7	Culhane
1992	Philadelphia	4.5	Culhane
1999	Monterey County	4.05*	Applied Survey Research
2000	Santa Cruz County	2.6	Applied Survey Research
	Average	3.65	

* Represents an average calculated from a range of turnover rates

Rather than relying on existing turnover rates of communities around the nation, the Research Committee used local data unique to the County of Monterey to generate a turnover rate that reflects the nature of this community. Additionally, due to the dynamic nature of turnover rates, the most current data is preferred. To achieve this, the committee accessed information regarding the average length of its citizen's homelessness based on the results of the 2002 Homeless Youth Survey conducted in this study, as well as results from the 1999 *Monterey County Homeless Census and Needs Assessment*. Length of homelessness is an important factor in the calculation of a turnover rate. If every homeless person were homeless for the entire year, the turnover rate would be 1.0, and the number of homeless counted in a point-in-time enumeration would equal the number of people experiencing homelessness that year. If every homeless person were homeless for one month, the turnover rate would be 12, and the number of people experiencing homelessness in a year would be twelve times the number counted in a point-in-time enumeration. The following table details the calculation of a turnover rate based on data collected in the 2002 Homeless Youth Survey.

Figure 13 – Calculation of Turnover Rate based on 2002 Homeless Youth Survey Results

LENGTH OF HOMELESSNESS	% OF RESPONDENTS	MINIMUM TURNOVER RATE
Less than one month	17.5%	12
1 - 3 months	13.5%	4
3 - 6 months	16.8%	2
6 - 12 months	18.2%	1
1 - 2 years	14.5%	1
More than 2 years	19.5%	1
Total	100.0%	3.50 weighted average

Three factors were used to determine categorically specific turnover rates: length of homelessness as reported by respondents, percent of respondents indicating each length, and minimum turnover rate for each length. For example, 17.5% of the homeless youth respondents said that they had been homeless for less than one month. For this group, the turnover rate could not be less than 12, as there are 12 months in a year. The result of this approach yielded a homeless youth turnover rate of 3.5, representing an average length of homelessness of 104 days for Monterey County homeless youth.

Clearly, the turnover rate among homeless youth will differ from the rate of the general homeless population. However, a comparison of results from the *1999 Monterey County Homeless Census and Needs Assessment* indicates that this difference may not be substantial. A turnover rate for 1999 was calculated using data from the previous research effort. In 1999, respondents were asked what percentage of the past year they had been without permanent housing. As shown in the table below, using the same calculation previously detailed, the overall turnover rate for the general population of homeless would have been 2.62, or 139 days. This data was cross-tabulated to distinguish the responses of 1999's homeless youth from homeless adults. Surprisingly, the turnover rate for youth was only 7.4% higher, at 2.83, or 129 days. Therefore, to adjust the turnover rate calculated based on current youth survey data, this turnover rate (3.50) was decreased by 7.4% to a rate of 3.24, which represents an average length of 113 days of homelessness. This increase in turnover rate from 1999 to 2002 could reflect the increase in transitional or short-term homelessness, which is frequently the result of personal or macro-economic issues.

Figure 14 – Turnover Rate Age Adjustment

YEAR	POPULATION	TURNOVER RATE		YEAR	POPULATION	TURNOVER RATE
1999	Homeless - All Ages	2.62	→	2002	Homeless Youth	3.50
1999	Homeless Youth	2.83			Adjust 7.4%	-0.26
	Difference	7.4%	→	2002	Homeless - All ages	3.24

The net result of this conservative approach suggests a point-in-time to annual multiplier of 3.24, and further indicates that between 8,686 and 11,214 Monterey County residents (2,681 – 3,461 x 3.24) will experience homelessness in 2002. This annual projection can be supported in a number of ways. For example, the turnover rate calculated for Monterey County using local data is well within the range of turnover rates used nationally, and is nearly identical to the average turnover rate demonstrated previously (3.65). Further, in 1999, a quality of life survey (Tellus / Diganos) was conducted among the general population of Monterey County. Results from the Tellus / Diganos survey showed that 1.7% of the population had been homeless within the past year. This general population survey was conducted via telephone, exclusively among the currently housed population in a period of unprecedented economic boom. Therefore, although 1.7% is a

conservative estimate of the percentage of residents who had been homeless in the past year, it is consistent with the turnover rate calculated above, which represents between 2.2% and 2.8% of the general population.

Assumptions

The above calculations are based on two very important assumptions.

1. The information gathered in the Homeless Youth Survey is representative of responses that would have been given at any other time during the year.
2. The point-in-time census figure is representative of a figure that would have been measured at any other time during the year.

Due to the high level of external data validation, the sheer quantity of homeless youth surveys conducted (316), the undercount inherent in any homeless census, as well as the use of a minimum turnover rate for each category, Applied Survey Research believes that the annual projection of homelessness detailed above is both conservative and sound.

1999 - 2002 Comparative Analysis

Although the 2002 Monterey County Homeless Census is intended as an update to the information gathered in the 1999 Homeless Census, there were many significant differences in the enumeration methodologies. These differences in methodology are important to consider when comparing the results.

Methodological Differences

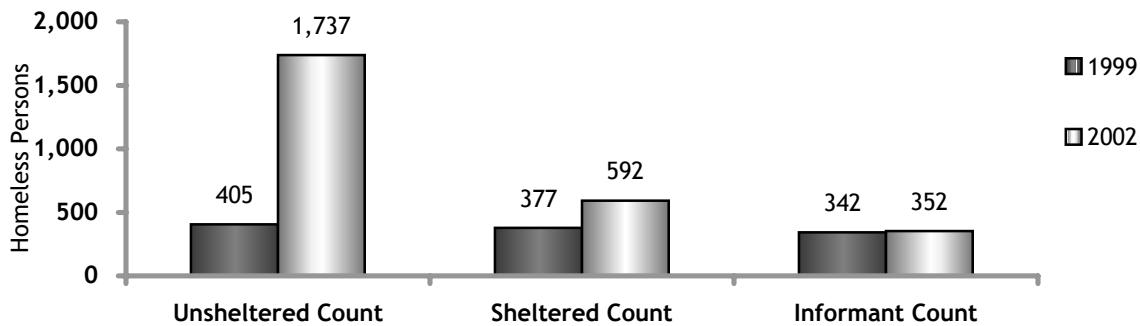
As stated earlier, the 1999 Monterey County Homeless Census was similar in many ways to the effort conducted in this study. Both enumerations were based on point-in-time physical observations by trained enumerators from within the homeless community, as well as the community of homeless service providers. Additionally, both enumerations included a point-in-time count of homeless in a variety of settings, including a street count, shelter count, and the inclusion of non-traditional research settings such as hospitals, jail, drug and alcohol treatment facilities, etc. Finally, both enumerations also included information gleaned by informants, all of whom could guarantee researchers that their homeless clients would not have been found in any other component of the census enumeration.

Despite these major similarities, methodological differences can be found between the two enumerations. The most significant of these differences was the use of US Census Tracts as

organizational tools during the count. In 1999, enumeration teams were sent out to all of the urban areas of Monterey County, as well as directed canvassing of the county's rural areas including vehicular enumerations conducted from the major roads, and an aerial reconnaissance of county riverbeds. However, in the 2002 Homeless Census, these enumeration teams were sent to canvas every single census tract in Monterey County, resulting in more comprehensive county coverage. Additional differences were minor, including a change in the tally sheet used during the enumeration resulting in a more detailed breakdown of homeless found in the census, which distinguished individual homeless from homeless families. This was required for a service gaps analysis and HUD reporting requirements. Each of these methodological differences reflects improvements based on lessons learned during the 1999 Census, as well as innovative methodologies gleaned from other relevant homeless enumerations.

Comparison of Results

Figure 15 – Homeless Census Point-in-Time Actual Count Totals by Category



It is important to note that while it appears that the point-in-time count has more than doubled since 1999, this may be partially due the improvements in methodology detailed above. For example, the category of the enumeration that has benefited the most from these methodological improvements (the street count of unsheltered homeless) is the category that has seen the greatest increase. The table below details the overall proportion of homeless found in each category during the two enumerations. As you can see, the proportion of unsheltered homeless counted has nearly doubled, while the proportion of sheltered homeless and those counted during the informant interviews has decreased. Therefore, a direct comparison of the point-in-time census findings is not the most accurate way to estimate the increase in homelessness.

Figure 16 – Homeless Census Point-in-Time Percentages by Category

CATEGORY	1999	2002
Unsheltered	36.0%	64.7%
Sheltered	33.5%	22.1%
Informant	30.5%	20.2%

The 1999 Homeless Census and Needs Assessment estimated that between 1,157 and 2,917 individuals were homeless at that point-in-time, while the 2002 Census projects a point-in-time homelessness range of between 2,681 and 3,461 individuals. When drawing comparisons between two ranges, it is useful to establish a midpoint. If we assume that the 1999 point-in-time population was at the midpoint of the range established (1,157 – 2,917 midpoint = 2,037) then the actual number of homeless on a given day in 2002 may be 51% higher than in 1999. However, a comparison of range maximums yields an increase only 19%, and a comparison of range minimums yields of increase of over 130%. Therefore, use of the range midpoints likely produces the most accurate and credible estimated increase. Further, based on the annualized projection previously discussed, the number of Monterey County residents who experience homelessness in 2002 may be 46% higher than in 1999.

Figure 17 – Estimated Increase in Homelessness in Monterey County

CATEGORY	1999	2002	% INCREASE
Point-in-time population range midpoint	2,037	3,071	50.8%
Point-in-time population range maximum	2,917	3,461	18.6%
Annual projection range midpoint	6,835*	9,950	45.6%

* In 1999, a range of annual homelessness was not calculated. For the purposes of this comparison, the annual projection developed in 1999 is being compared to the midpoint of the range calculated in 2002.

The findings of this Homeless Census suggest that there have been significant increases in the prevalence of homelessness in Monterey County. These findings, while disturbing, are in line with current national trends illustrated in the *2001 US Mayor's Report on Hunger and Homelessness*, that suggest homelessness is rising sharply in American cities, and are consistent with the intuitions of the many service providers who assisted in the implementation of this research study.

HOMELESS YOUTH / FOSTER TEEN STUDY

The following section provides an overview of the findings that were generated from all components of the 2002 Homeless / Foster Youth Study. These findings are organized by major study component. Survey findings include results from the Homeless Youth, Foster Teen, and Foster Care Provider Surveys. Focus Group findings include the results of focus groups undertaken with the following groups: foster care caseworkers, youth in foster care, and youth who have recently emancipated from the foster care system. Within each major component, findings are organized around key survey questions (in bold). As noted in the Methodology section of this report, there is 95% confidence that the findings generated from the Homeless Youth Survey sample are reflective of the county's overall homeless youth population within a margin of error of 5%. However, due to many missing and outdated entries in the Independent Living Program (ILP) database, this confidence was not achieved for the other survey components. Therefore, to compensate for a small sample size, focus groups were conducted to enrich the survey responses with additional qualitative information.

Survey Findings

The following illustrates the major findings of the Homeless Youth Survey, Foster Teen Survey, and Foster Care Provider Survey. Where applicable, comparisons were drawn between youth who were homeless and youth in foster care. It is important to note that foster youth respondents were limited to 19 years of age, while homeless respondents included respondents up to 21 years. Some issues, however, were unique to the experience of youth homelessness, or to youth preparing to emancipate from foster care. These issues are discussed separately. A copy of the survey instruments, as well as a complete list of survey questions and responses, can be found in the appendix of this report.

Demographics

In order to better understand the full diversity of homeless youth and youth in foster care in Monterey County, the study included demographic questions such as residency, age, gender, and ethnicity.

Residency

Of the 316 homeless youth survey respondents, virtually all (97%) live in Monterey County. Similarly, almost all (97%) of the 59 foster care respondents also live in the county. However, the

foster care respondents were much more highly concentrated in the Salinas area (66%) with just over 10% in the Monterey Peninsula and South County areas, and 13% in North County. The homeless youth survey respondents were more evenly spread out around the county. As the following table illustrates, 39% of these respondents live in the Salinas area, while 37% live in the Monterey Peninsula area. Fifteen percent of homeless youth respondents who live in the county reside in South County, while 8% reside in North County. For an explanation of what jurisdictions fall into these county areas, please see the Street Count methodology section.

Figure 18 – What Area of Monterey County Do You Live In?

RESPONSE	HOMELESS YOUTH (%)	FOSTER CARE TEEN (%)
Salinas	38.9	65.5
Monterey Peninsula	36.5	10.9
South County	15.2	10.9
North County	8.1	12.7
Other	1.4	0.0
Total Respondents	296	55

Age

Of the homeless respondents, roughly one-fourth (22%) were 16 years or younger, while more than half (57%) were between the ages of 17 and 19, with a mean age of 18. In general, the foster care youth respondents were younger, with a mean age of 15. A large majority of foster care respondents (73%) were 16 years or younger, with the remaining one-fourth (27%) between the ages of 17 and 19 years.

Figure 19 – Age of Respondent

RESPONSE	HOMELESS YOUTH (%)	FOSTER CARE TEEN (%)
14	4.7	16.9
15	4.1	27.1
16	12.7	28.8
17	19.3	13.6
18	13.6	11.9
19	24.1	1.7
20	10.8	-
21	10.8	-
Total Respondents	316	59

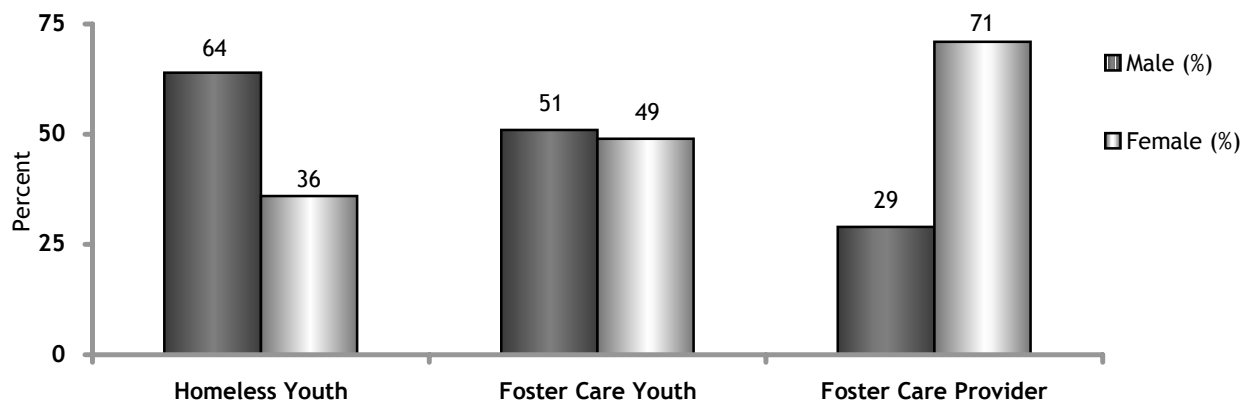
Overall, foster care providers represented a variety of age groups. While half of the providers (53%) were 45 years old or older, a quarter of the providers interviewed were under 35 years old, and more

than one in ten providers (11%) were under 25 years old. This group of young providers likely reflects staff working in a group home environment rather than foster parents.

Gender

The gender distribution of foster teens respondents was fairly equal, while 36% of homeless youth respondents were female, and the gender distribution among foster care providers was overwhelmingly female (71%).

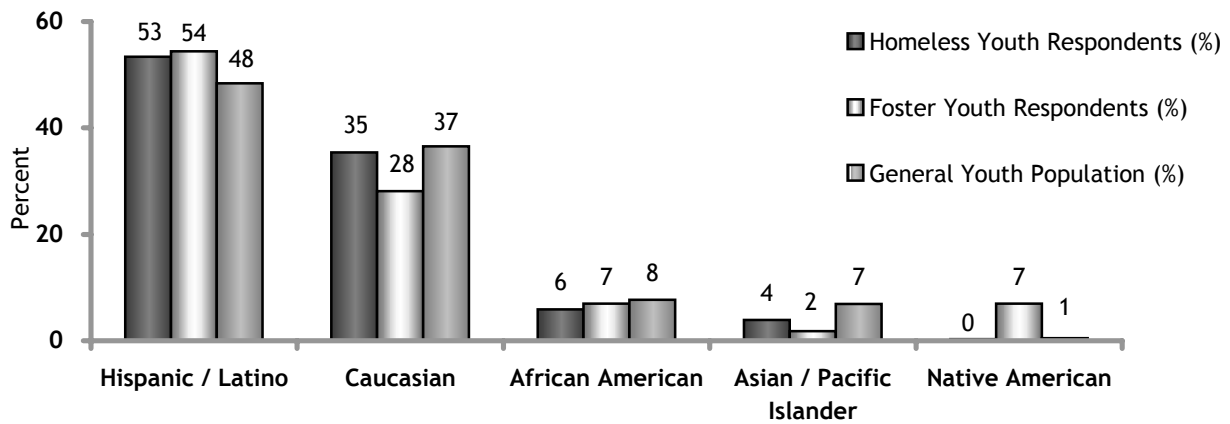
Figure 20 – What is your gender?



Ethnicity

As shown in the following chart, the ethnic distribution of homeless youth and foster youth respondents closely mirrors the ethnic distribution of the general population of youth in Monterey County. Half of the respondents (53% of homeless youth and 54% of foster youth) were Hispanic / Latino, followed by Caucasian (35% of homeless youth and 28% of foster youth), African American (6% of homeless youth and 7% of foster youth). Four percent of the homeless youth were from Oaxaca, Mexico, and thus considered to be a part of an indigenous sub-population. For the purposes of the following chart, Oaxacan respondents were grouped with Hispanic / Latino respondents.

Figure 21 – Which of The Following Best Describes Your Ethnicity?



General youth population source: State of California, Department of Finance, *Race/Ethnic Population with Age and Sex Detail, 2002*.

The distribution of ethnicity among foster care providers was slightly less representative of the population of Monterey County, with half (50%) of the respondents of Caucasian ethnicity, and 40% of Hispanic / Latino ethnicity. Eight percent of the foster care provider respondents were African American, and the remaining foster care provider survey respondents were evenly split between Asian and Native American (1% each).

Over half of the homeless respondents (59%) conducted the survey in English, while 40% conducted the survey in Spanish. Although the survey instrument was not translated into any other languages, three interviews were translated into Misteco (a Oaxacan language) by the interviewer during the course of the survey. Virtually all of the foster teen and foster care provider interviews were conducted in English.

Education Issues

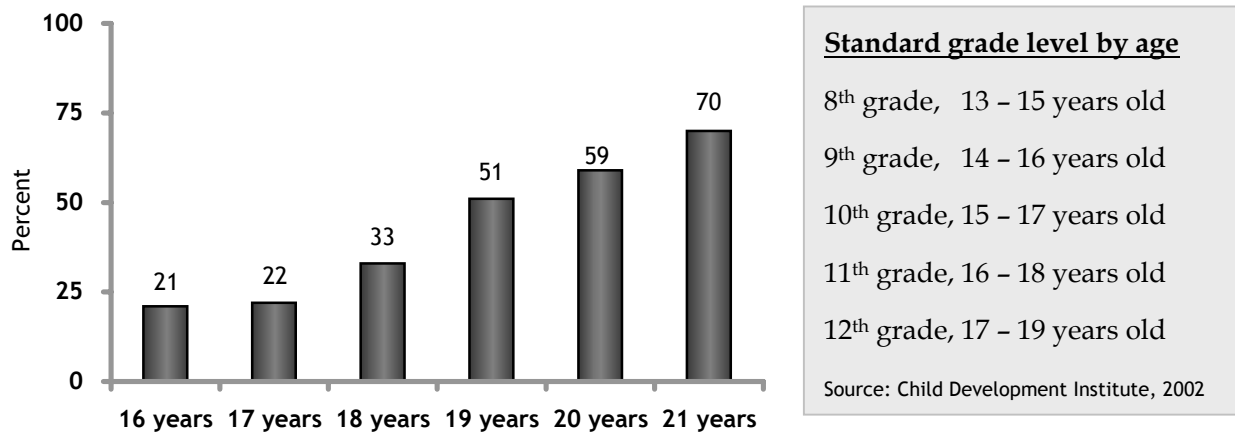
In addition to revealing some of the demographic characteristics of homeless and foster youth, it is also useful to examine issues relevant to their educational development such as school enrollment, attainment level, and goals.

School Enrollment

As could be anticipated, major differences were observed between school enrollment status of youth in foster care and homeless youth. A majority of the homeless youth interviewed (64%) did not currently attend school. This was also even true of homeless youth who were 18 and younger, 52% of which were not enrolled in any school. Of homeless respondents who were still in high school

only 62% reported being on track to graduate by the time they turn 19 years old. Based on the standard age breakdown of grade level shown below, only 4% of youth in foster care were below grade level, while more than a third (38%) of homeless youth were below grade level.

Figure 22 – Percent of homeless youth who are below grade level, by age



As a follow up question, homeless youth respondents who were not enrolled in school were asked why. One-fourth of these respondents (26%) indicated that they were not in school because they have to work. Additionally, 23% did not want to attend school, and 13% had already graduated or received their GED. This question was not asked of foster care youth survey respondents, as all of these respondents were enrolled in school.

Figure 23 – If you are not currently enrolled in school, why aren't you in school? (Homeless respondents only)

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
I am working / have to work	36	26.1
Don't want to be in school	31	22.5
Already graduated	18	13.0
Don't have time	11	8.0
Just moved here	7	5.1
Too old for school	5	3.6
Suspended / expelled	4	2.9
No money	3	2.2
Other	17	12.3
Don't know	6	4.3
Total	138	100.0

Educational Attainment

Educational attainment levels among the respondents were relatively low. Of the 183 homeless youth who were at least 18 years old, only one fourth (27%) had achieved a high school diploma or equivalent. Further, nearly one in five (18.3%) of the entire homeless sample of respondents had not yet completed the 8th grade.

Educational Goals

Homeless and foster teens interviewed had goals to continue their education. Thirty-four percent of homeless youth and 48% of foster youth surveyed wanted to finish high school. Many (20% of homeless youth and 37% of foster teens) wanted to go to a community college or four year university. Further, a sizable minority (7% of homeless youth and 9% of foster teens) wanted to receive a professional degree in order to become a doctor, or a lawyer. Although it is common for youth to be unsure about future educational goals, there was much more uncertainty among the homeless youth than foster teens (37% vs. 14%).

Figure 24 – What are your educational goals?

RESPONSE	HOMELESS YOUTH (%)	FOSTER CARE TEEN (%)
Finish high school	34.2	47.7
Go to community college	11.0	22.8
Go to four year university	9.0	14.0
Get a professional degree	7.1	8.8
Attend trade school	6.5	3.5
Other	4.5	5.3
Don't know	36.8	14.0

Multiple response question with 310 homeless respondents offering 345 responses, and 57 foster teens respondents offering 68 responses.

Fewer homeless youth respondents had already received vocational training, job training, or ROTC (8% vs. 25% among foster teens), and similarly, fewer homeless youth plan on getting some type of training in the future (25% vs. 42% among foster teens). Future training planned by homeless youth included military training (15%), auto mechanics training (11%), trade skills including welding, electricity, and plumbing (11%), and health professions (9%). A sizable minority (29%) of those who plan on receiving training in the future were unsure about what type of training they would like to receive.

Employment and Income Issues

Earning a livable income in Monterey County is an enormous challenge for anyone, especially youth. This section explores employment, career goals, and income of homeless and foster care youth in Monterey County.

Employment

Among homeless respondents (most of whom were not enrolled in school), there was very little change in employment level between the school year and the summer. Roughly half (53%) of the homeless youth respondents work during the school year, increasing slightly to 57% during the summer. Fewer foster teens were employed (21% during the school year and 38% during the summer) but there was much more seasonal variation among foster teens, all of whom were in school. Further, homeless youth who were employed worked more hours than foster teens, even in the summer. Among foster teen survey respondents, only 11% worked 31 or more hours per week over the summer, while the majority (63%) homeless youth survey respondents worked 31 or more hours per week.

Figure 25 – How many hours per week do you work (during the summer)?

RESPONSE	HOMELESS YOUTH (%)	FOSTER CARE TEEN (%)
Less than 10 hours	11.9	50.0
10 - 20 hours	12.5	22.2
21 - 30 hours	13.1	16.7
31 - 40 hours	30.4	5.6
More than 40 hours	32.1	5.6
Total Respondents	168	18

Career Goals

Career goals of homeless and foster teen survey respondents were as diverse as the population itself. Like many youth in the general population, more than a quarter of homeless youth survey respondents (27%) indicated that they did not know what kind of job or career they would like to pursue in the future. Although this type of uncertainty is very common, as with educational goals discussed in a previous section, foster care teen survey respondents demonstrated much less uncertainty about their career goals, with only 8% indicating that they didn't know what job or career they would like to pursue in the future. Top occupations selected by homeless youth survey respondents included trade occupations (10%), lawyer (6%), and auto mechanic (5%) among many others. Among foster teen survey respondents, top occupations selected included nurse (13%), lawyer (8%), and social service jobs (8%) where they can "help people".

Less than one-fourth of employed homeless respondents (20% during the school year and 17% during the summer) reported that their current job supported their career goals. This differed greatly from foster teen survey respondents, 64% of whom reported that their job during the school year supported their career goals, dropping slightly to 50% over the summer. Interestingly, while a greater proportion of foster teen survey respondents do volunteer work or community service, (34% vs. 12% of homeless youth) fewer foster teen survey respondents reported that this volunteer work or community service supported their career goals (16% vs. 34% of homeless respondents).

Income

While income earned by foster youth is not necessary for survival, it is an important variable in considering teen’s preparation for emancipation. Homeless and foster youth survey respondents reported predictably low earnings overall. According to the *Californians for Family Economic Self-Sufficiency and Equal Rights Advocates (2000)*, a single individual with no children or dependents needs to earn \$8.48 per hour to live in Monterey County without any public assistance. This self-sufficiency standard increases to \$15.15 for an adult who is supporting an infant. The overwhelming majority of survey respondents who were employed (87% of the homeless respondents and 83% of the foster teens) earn less than what it takes for an adult to be self-sufficient in what the *National Association of Home Builders* deems to be the second least-affordable place to live in the nation. Further, nearly one-fourth (24%) of the employed homeless respondents earn less than minimum wage, and only approximately one in ten (11% of employed homeless respondents and 13% of employed foster care respondents) receive benefits such as health, dental, life insurance, or retirement from their job. The following table presents a wage comparison between homeless youth and youth in foster care using data from their summer jobs, as more survey respondents worked during the summer than the school year.

Figure 26 – What is your hourly wage (during the summer)?

RESPONSE	HOMELESS YOUTH (%)	FOSTER CARE TEEN (%)
Less than \$6.75	23.9	16.7
\$6.76 - \$7.00	40.3	50.0
\$7.01 - \$8.00	22.6	16.7
\$8.01 - \$10.00	10.1	16.7
More than \$10.00	3.1	0.0
Total Respondents	159	12

In addition to income earned from a job, many homeless youth survey respondents receive some public assistance, as well as supplementing their income in other ways. Overall, 68 homeless respondents (22%) are receiving government assistance of some form. Nearly one-third (31%) of these individuals receive food stamps, one-fourth (25%) are on welfare, 16% receive services from

Women, Infants and Children (WIC) and 13% received General Assistance. It should be noted that many homeless youth respondents were unaware of how to apply for government assistance, and what types of assistance are available.

Figure 27 – Are you receiving money from any of the following government sources? (Homeless respondents only)

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Food Stamps	21	30.9
County Welfare	17	25.0
Women, Infants and Children (WIC)	11	16.2
General Assistance (GA)	9	13.2
Social Security (SSI/SSA)	7	10.3
Hotel vouchers	3	4.4
Disability insurance	2	2.9
Planned Parenthood	2	2.9
Unemployment insurance	2	2.9
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	0	0.0
Other	14	20.6

Multiple response question with 68 respondents offering 88 responses.

Although most youth survey respondents (82% of homeless youth and 97% of foster teens) indicated that they supplement their earnings in a number of ways, major differences were observed in the methods used. Most foster care survey respondents (60%) receive an allowance, while no homeless youth survey respondents do. A similar proportion of homeless and foster youth respondents (35% of homeless youth vs. 39% of foster teens) receive money from family and friends. Homeless youth were much more likely to make money performing “odd jobs” (38% vs. 12%). Many homeless youth reported supplementing their income in dangerous and illegal ways including shoplifting and petty theft (17%), drugs (16%) and sex (7%), and almost one quarter (24%) engage in begging or panhandling.

Figure 28 – Other than income from a job, where does your money for daily living come from (excluding government sources)?

RESPONSE	HOMELESS YOUTH (%)	FOSTER CARE TEEN (%)
Allowance	0.0	59.6
Odd jobs	38.1	12.3
Family / friends	34.6	38.6
Panhandling / begging	23.8	0.0
Shoplifting / petty theft	16.5	0.0
Drugs	16.2	0.0
Receive no money	15.0	0.0
Picking up / recycling cans	11.2	0.0
Sex	6.9	0.0
Other	4.2	12.3

Multiple response question with 260 homeless respondents offering 433 responses, and 57 foster teens respondents offering 70 responses.

As a follow up question, youth in foster care were asked what they do with their money. Although one-fourth of the respondents (24%) reported that they spend it all, the remaining 76% are saving. In fact, 14% reported saving all of their money. Nearly one-third (32%) of these foster youth have a savings account, however, only 8% indicated that they were saving up for an apartment or living expenses in preparation for emancipation. Most commonly, youth in foster care were saving up for a vehicle (40%), many were saving for school or tuition (28%), and a few were saving for a vacation (3%).

Health and Well-being Issues

Access to health care and health maintenance are vital to general well being. While many Monterey County residents struggle with health issues, homeless youth and youth in foster care have many unique challenges regarding their health and well-being. This section of the report covers their ability to access health care, health maintenance, and behavioral health.

Access to Health Care

Eighty percent of homeless youth survey respondents reported not having health insurance, compared to 29% of the general population of Monterey County, according to the *UCLA Center for Health Policy Research*. Of those who do have insurance, 53% had MediCal, 30% had a private policy, 2% accessed Healthy Families, and 15% reported having some other type of health insurance. Youth in foster care are automatically eligible for MediCal, and therefore were not asked this survey question. However, although most youth in foster care are eligible to continue receiving MediCal

after emancipation, only half of the youth sampled in this research effort (51%) were aware of that prior to the survey.

While virtually all foster teen survey respondents (95%) had been to a doctor in the past year, less than half of the homeless respondents (42%) had been. Similarly, 86% of foster teens surveyed had been to a dentist in the past year, compared to only one-fourth (23%) of the homeless respondents. When asked where respondents go for health care when they need it, homeless and foster youth indicated some similar responses. For example, 44% of homeless and 33% of foster care teens reported going to a health clinic. However, youth in foster care were much more likely to go to a doctor's office (61% vs. 17% of homeless youth) and much less likely to go to the emergency room (2% vs. 33% of homeless youth).

Figure 29 – When you need health care, where do you go?

RESPONSE	HOMELESS YOUTH (%)	FOSTER CARE TEEN (%)
Health clinic	44.4	33.3
Emergency room	32.5	1.8
Doctor's office	17.1	61.4
Other	5.2	3.5

Multiple response question with 286 homeless respondents offering 309 responses, and 57 foster teens respondents offering 57 responses.

Additionally, 14% of homeless youth respondents reported having some unmet health need, including check-ups or dentistry, compared to only 4% of youth in foster care. However, the proportion of homeless and foster care youth with special health needs such as asthma and diabetes was very similar, at roughly 10% of each group.

Health Maintenance

Responses to some survey questions regarding basic health maintenance indicate differences between youth who are homeless and youth who are in foster care. For example, youth in foster care are twice as likely to eat 3 or more meals per day (77% vs. 37% of homeless youth) and generally get more sleep. Homeless youth survey respondents were asked where they got their food. The majority (78%) got their food from the grocery store, while 14% accessed the food bank, 14% ate at a shelter, and 11% got Meals Ready to Eat (MRE's) from the Salvation Army.

Behavioral Health

Both homeless and foster care youth survey respondents are engaging in some dangerous behaviors. As shown in the table below, homeless youth were far more likely to have tried cigarettes, alcohol, and other drugs than youth currently in foster care. When compared to the general population of

Monterey County 11th graders, homeless youth were more likely than in the general population to have tried the following substances. However, youth in foster care were less likely to have tried the following substances than youth in the general population. Three-fourths of homeless youth have tried alcohol and cigarettes, and more than half have tried marijuana. Further, homeless youth survey respondents were far more likely to have tried “harder” drugs as well, including amphetamines, ecstasy, hallucinogens, and heroin.

Figure 30 – Which of the following substances have you ever tried?

RESPONSE	HOMELESS YOUTH (%)	FOSTER CARE TEEN (%)	GENERAL POPULATION 11 TH GRADERS* (%)
Cigarettes	70.6	44.1	58.0
Alcohol	75.2	54.2	70.0
Marijuana	57.6	37.3	44.0
Amphetamines	34.2	8.5	11.0
Ecstasy	24.4	5.1	N/a
Hallucinogens	19.9	6.8	12.0
Heroin	8.9	0.0	7.0
Inhalants	13.6	10.2	18.0
Other drugs	7.6	10.2	16.0

General Population 11th Graders Source: California Healthy Kids Survey, Monterey County Technical Report, 1999/2000.

Perhaps more disturbing than the proportion of homeless and foster teens who have tried tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs, is the number who use these substances frequently, as measured in a follow up question regarding use within the past month. Again, substance use was more prevalent among homeless youth than the general population, while use among foster youth was lower than the general population. Major differences were observed with cigarette use, with frequent smoking being reported by 9% of the general population, 14% of the foster teens, and 54% of homeless youth. Similarly, while only 12% of foster youth and 22% of general population youth had used marijuana in the past month, 43% of homeless youth had reported recent use. Finally, a large difference was also noted in frequent amphetamine use, which was overwhelmingly more common among homeless youth (23%) than foster teens (2%) or the general population (3%).

Figure 31 – Which of the following substances have you used in the past month?

RESPONSE	HOMELESS YOUTH (%)	FOSTER CARE TEEN (%)	GENERAL POPULATION 11 TH GRADERS* (%)
Cigarettes	53.8	13.6	9.0
Alcohol	51.1	11.9	41.0
Marijuana	42.7	11.9	22.0
Amphetamines	22.5	1.7	3.0
Ecstasy	12.3	0.0	N/a
Hallucinogens	6.6	0.0	5.0
Heroin	4.4	0.0	N/a
Inhalants	4.7	3.4	3.0
Other drugs	4.7	6.8	7.0

General Population 11th Graders Source: California Healthy Kids Survey, Monterey County Technical Report, 1999/2000.

In addition to drug use, many homeless teens are engaging in unsafe sexual practices. Although questions regarding sexual activity were beyond the scope of this study, respondents were asked a series of questions regarding pregnancy that yielded some startling results. While only one female foster youth surveyed reported having ever been pregnant, half (50%) of the 112 female homeless youth survey respondents indicated that they were currently, or had in the past been pregnant. Similarly, while only 2 male foster youth surveyed (7%) reported having ever impregnated a woman, 16% of the male homeless youth respondents had gotten someone pregnant and another 13% were unsure. Nearly 1 in 5 homeless youth survey respondents (19%) have children, representing a total of 62 children. More than half of the homeless survey respondents who have children (55%) reported that their children are currently living with them. Of the three foster youth survey respondents (6% of the total sample) who had children, two of them are living with their children, and one is not.

Housing Issues

While the previous sections of these youth survey findings have focused on homeless youth, foster teens, and foster care providers, housing issues that these groups face are very different, and have therefore been separated in the following housing section.

Youth in Foster Care

Youth who are preparing to emancipate from the foster care system and transition into independent living face overwhelming challenges: an expensive and competitive housing market, little or no job experience, and a child welfare system that can no longer provide housing for them. Because of these challenges, many youth experience a period of homelessness after they age out of foster care.

The following section examines placement into foster care, participation in Independent Living Program, and future housing plans of survey respondents.

PLACEMENT INTO FOSTER CARE

The largest proportion of foster teen survey respondents (45%) were currently placed with relatives, while the remaining respondents were evenly split between foster parents and group homes. Therefore, group home environments are more highly represented among providers. These group home providers were most commonly staff counselors (40%), directors / managers (37%), or house parents (3%).

Figure 32 – Level of Foster Care Placement

RESPONSE	FOSTER CARE TEEN (%)	FOSTER CARE PROVIDERS (%)
Foster home	25.9	28.4
Group home	25.9	41.9
Relative home	44.8	21.6
Other	3.4	8.1
Total Respondents	58	74

Overall, youth in foster care lived in fairly large households, which include group homes. Fifty-five percent of respondents lived in households of 6 or more persons, 35% lived in households with 4 – 5 persons, and only 10% lived in households of fewer than 4 persons.

Many foster teens responding to the survey had been in and out of the foster care system for most of their lives. More than one-fourth of them had been placed into care for the first time before their 5th birthday, and an additional 21% were placed into care for the first time before their 10th birthday. Only 6% had their first placement into foster care after they turned 15. During the years these youth have been in the child welfare system, many have experienced multiple placements. Although 36% had been placed in only one home, one-third (33%) had been placed into 4 or more homes. Further, 40% have been in their current placement for a year or less, and many (27%) have never been in any single placement for more than a year.

Figure 33 – How many foster care / group homes have you ever been placed in?

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Only 1 home	20	36.4
2 - 3 homes	17	30.9
4 - 5 homes	8	14.5
6 - 7 homes	7	12.7
8 - 9 homes	1	1.8
More than 10 homes	2	3.6
Total	55	100.0

Like foster care teens, providers have also been involved with the foster care system for many years, and have generally housed several foster children. Only 18% have been foster care providers for 1 year or less, and half (53%) have been foster parents for more than 5 years. In fact, more than 1 in every 10 foster care provider survey respondents (12%) has been a foster parent for more than 15 years.

In general, foster care providers are housing nearly as many children as they have the capacity to house. This is especially true of providers who can house 6 or more children, many of which are group homes. However, while 28% of providers are housing only 1 child, 78% of respondents indicated that they could house 2 or more children.

INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM (ILP) PARTICIPATION

The Independent Living Program (ILP) is a program administered by the Department of Social Services for youth in foster care who are preparing to emancipate from the child welfare or juvenile justice systems. This program had only limited implementation prior to January 2002, and is just now expanding enrollment. Overall, foster teen survey responses indicate that nearly half of the eligible foster teen survey respondents (47%) did not know what the ILP Program was, and were not aware that they may be eligible for participation in ILP Program services. Further, even though half of the foster teen survey respondents were aware of the ILP Program, only 37% had ever participated in ILP, and even fewer (29%) had developed a Transitional Independent Living Plan. As shown in the table below, foster youth placed in group homes were more likely to be aware of the ILP Program, as well as more likely to have participated in the ILP Program.

Figure 34 – Percent of Foster Youth ILP Awareness and Participation by Placement Level

RESPONSE	FOSTER HOME (%)	GROUP HOME (%)	RELATIVE HOME (%)
Knows what the ILP Program is	40.0	73.3	46.2
Knows they may be eligible for ILP services	40.0	86.7	36.0
Has participated in ILP activities	33.3	60.0	20.8
Has a Transitional Independent Living Plan	33.3	33.3	20.0
Total Respondents	15	26	15

Of those survey respondents who have never participated in ILP, the most common reason cited for their lack of participation was that they didn't know about it (40%), although a few respondents (15%) simply did not want to go, and many others (35%) were unsure why they haven't yet participated. Only 2 respondents (10% of those who had never participated in ILP) responded that they have been trying to get into the program. Overall, teens who were placed in a group home were more than twice as likely to know they are eligible for ILP services and to participate in those services than teens placed in a foster or relative home.

The low level of participation by foster teen survey respondents was contrasted with a high level of ILP program awareness among foster care providers, with 84% indicating that they know about the program, and 71% of those who know about the program indicating that their foster child participates in the ILP program. Additionally, virtually all of the foster care providers (92%) said that the ILP Program is a necessary part of foster placement, and 85% responded that they encourage their foster child to participate. Most providers do / did participate in their foster child's Transitional Independent Living Plan (82%) and even more feel that they understand their role in the ILP Program (84%). This level of program awareness and participation is likely related to the number of group home providers who responded to the survey.

Lack of participation in the ILP Program is not simply a reflection of slow start-up and awareness. More than one-third of foster care providers indicated that there were barriers that prevented them or their foster children from participating in ILP activities. For example, transportation, location, and time of activities were barriers for many, as shown in the table below.

Figure 35 – Which of the following barriers have prevented you or your foster child from participating in ILP activities?

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Transportation	8	33.3
Location	7	29.2
Time	7	29.2
Mental health	3	12.5
Lack of supervision	2	8.3
Other	6	25.0

Multiple response question with 24 respondents offering 33 responses.

Although the level of ILP participation and awareness was low among foster care youth survey respondents, providers seemed to be taking their own steps to prepare their foster children for emancipation. All providers indicated that they participated in basic self-care activities, and the vast majority were also participating in each of the following: educational planning, cooking and cleaning house, developing short and long term goals, utilizing community resources, job seeking and job skills, shopping and money management, health care and pregnancy prevention, and even preparation for getting a driver's license.

Figure 36 – What activities do you do to help prepare your foster youth for independence?

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Basic self care	74	100.0
Educational planning	72	97.3
Cooking, cleaning house	70	94.6
Developing short and long term goals	69	93.2
Community resources	68	91.9
Job seeking, job skills	68	91.9
Shopping, budget, and money management	68	91.9
Health care, pregnancy prevention	66	89.2
Getting drivers license	51	68.9

Multiple response question with 74 respondents offering a total of 631 responses.

In addition to the above responses which were read to all respondents, many foster care providers also added that they provided general life skills (12%), recovery programs (3%), and spiritual guidance (1%).

FUTURE HOUSING PLANS

Although most foster teen survey respondents did not have a formal Transitional Independent Living Plan, respondents generally had some ideas about where they might live after they turn 18 and emancipate from the foster care system. The most common response offered by respondents was that they would be getting an apartment (27%). However, the odds of making this transition successfully seem difficult considering that most respondents had little or no job experience and were not saving up money for an apartment. Interestingly, one-fourth of the foster care teen respondents indicated that they plan to continue living with their foster parents after they turn 18, and many others (20%) plan on living in a college dormitory. Other options that were echoed throughout many survey responses included joining the military (9%), moving in with relatives (9%), “couch surfing” (4%), and going home to the parents from which they were removed (4%). Further, nearly one-fourth (23%) did not know where they would live. If you consider the 23% who have no plans, as well as the 4% who plan on “couch surfing” (a situation that fits the federal definition of homelessness) and the many others who have high hopes of a living situation which may not be within their immediate reach, it is clear that the foster care teens who participated in this research effort are at a high risk of experiencing homelessness during their transition.

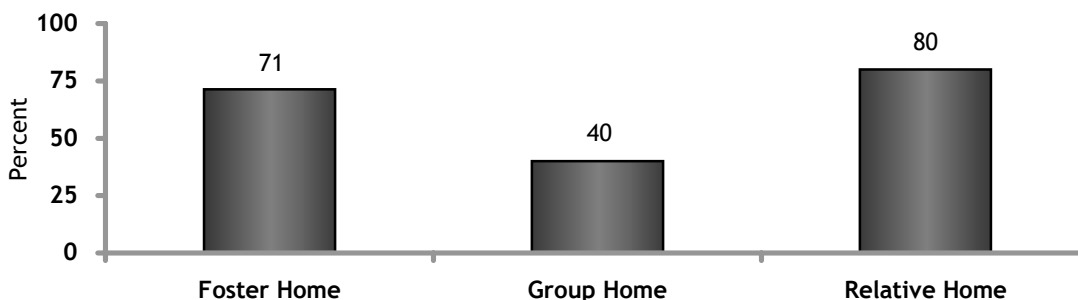
Figure 37 – Where are you planning to live after you turn 18 and leave foster care?

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Getting an apartment	15	26.8
Staying with foster parents	14	25.0
College dormitory	11	19.6
Joining the military	5	8.9
Move in with relatives	5	8.9
Couch surfing	2	3.6
Go home to parents	2	3.6
Other	9	16.1
Don't know	13	23.2

Multiple response question with 56 respondents offering 76 responses.

Of the future housing plans offered by foster care youth survey respondents, perhaps the most viable of the top three responses is staying with foster parents beyond the 18th birthday or emancipation date. In a follow up question, two thirds (66%) of the survey respondents indicated that they would like to continue living with their current foster parents or group home if they could. Foster youth currently placed with relatives or foster parents were much more likely to report wanting to stay in their current placement than youth placed in group homes.

Figure 38 – Percent of Foster Care Youth Who Would Like to Stay in Their Current Placement After They Turn 18 Years Old, by Placement Level



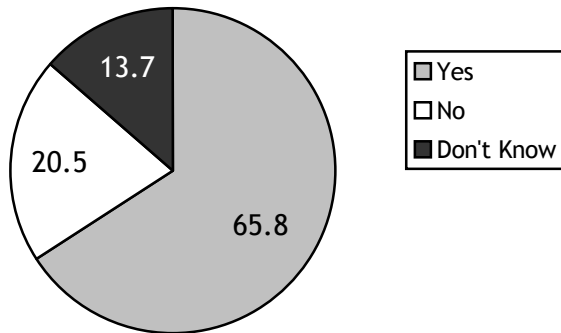
In fact, while some felt that they would only need a brief transition period with their current foster parents of less than 3 months (14%), many others indicated that they would like to stay more than a year (57%).

Figure 39 – How long would you like to continue living with your current foster parents / group home?

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Less than 1 month	3	8.1
1 - 3 months	2	5.4
3 - 6 months	2	5.4
6 - 9 months	3	8.1
9 - 12 months	6	16.2
More than 1 year	21	56.8
Total	37	100.0

Further, while two thirds of the foster teen survey respondents would be willing to stay in their current placement beyond emancipation, nearly all (81%) of the foster care providers responded that they would be willing to continue to provide housing for their foster child beyond their 18th birthday if they were offered a housing allowance. Additionally, the vast majority of those who would be willing to continue to house their foster kids (88%) are willing to house them “as long as necessary”. Finally, respondents were also asked whether or not they would be willing to work out a plan for room and board for their emancipated foster child, even if they didn’t receive a formal housing allowance from the County. As shown in the chart below, two thirds of foster care providers are willing to work out a plan for room and board for their emancipated foster child, while only 21% said no.

Figure 40 – Would you be willing to work out a plan for room and board for your emancipated foster child?



The types of “arrangements” that foster care providers seemed most willing to participate in included accepting whatever their foster child could afford (58%) or a monthly stipend (25%).

The willingness of youth in foster care to continue living in their current placement after their 18th birthday or emancipation is evidence that youth preparing to leave foster care know that they need help with housing and seem very willing to accept that help. In fact, the overwhelming majority of respondents (78%) indicated that they would need help with housing after they turn 18 and leave foster care. The table below outlines the types of housing assistance that respondents felt they would need.

Figure 41 – What type of housing assistance will you need?

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Financial	30	69.8
Housing	27	62.8
Household supplies	24	55.8
Transportation	19	44.2
Living skills	9	20.9
Other	8	18.6

Multiple response question with 43 respondents offering 117 responses.

Homeless Youth

Homeless youth, like youth facing emancipation from the foster care system, experience many barriers in securing a stable housing situation. However, unlike youth in foster care who are preparing to encounter an extremely challenging transition, homeless youth are already living the worst-case scenario.

CURRENT LIVING SITUATION

The homeless youth survey respondents live in a variety of situations with a variety of individuals. The following table presents the “household” size of the homeless youth survey respondents. While reviewing these responses, please keep in mind that a very loose definition of “household” was used in the administration of this survey, and the term does not represent a house, nor a traditional nuclear family. For the purposes of this research, “household” refers to a group of individuals with whom a respondent was living.

Figure 42 – How many people live in your “household”?

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
1 person	82	27.2
2 - 3 people	75	24.9
4 - 5 people	34	11.3
6 - 7 people	54	17.9
8 - 9 people	32	10.6
10 or more people	24	8.0
Total	301	100.0

As shown in the table above, more than one in every four homeless youth interviewed (27%) were living on their own. This group of “unattached” homeless youth was unique from the overall homeless youth population. The majority of these homeless youth were Caucasian (62%) and virtually all took the survey in English (94%). Unattached homeless youth were even more likely to be male (70%) but were not older than homeless youth in general, with the same average age of 18 years. In fact, many unattached homeless youth (38%) were minors under the age of 18. Additionally, these homeless youth were usually encountered on the Monterey Peninsula (58%) where there are many services geared towards runaway and homeless youth.

Although the education and employment issues of unattached homeless youth respondents did not differ from that of the general homeless youth population, differences were observed in the health portion of the survey. Only 4% of homeless youth living alone had health insurance, compared to 36% of homeless youth living with others. Further, unattached homeless youth were less likely to have been to a doctor (only 37%) or a dentist (only 13%) in the past year. Survey responses also show a high level of isolation among unattached homeless youth. Homeless youth respondents living alone were half as likely to be seeing a counselor (5% vs. 11% of homeless youth living with others) and much less likely to have support or guidance from parents, relatives, or teachers.

In addition to living in a broad range of “household” sizes, homeless youth in Monterey County also live in a number of housing situations, all of which comply with the federal definition of homelessness. Nearly two-thirds of those interviewed (61%) turn to family and friends for short-

term housing. Many others (22%) live outdoors, camping on beaches, parks, or rural areas, and an additional 12% are living in an automobile or van. Few homeless youth are staying in a shelter (6%) or transitional housing (3%). Homeless youth living alone were much more likely to be living outdoors (45%) as compared to homeless youth living with others (14%).

Figure 43 – Which of the following best describes your current living situation?

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Staying with family / friends	192	61.3
Outdoors	69	22.0
Automobile / van	36	11.5
Shelter	19	6.1
Garage	17	5.4
Have own place	14	4.5
Transitional housing	8	2.6
Hotel	4	1.3
Other	18	5.8

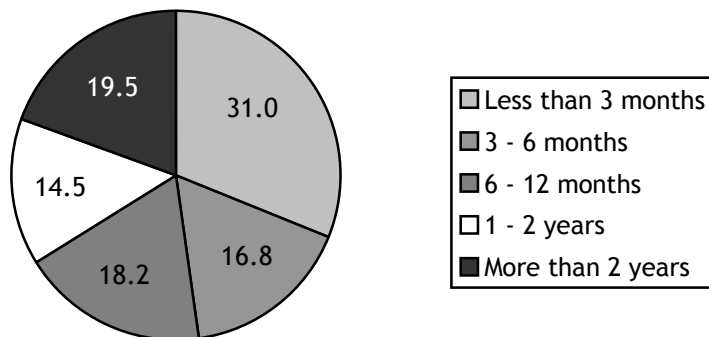
Multiple response question with 313 respondents offering 377 responses.

Homeless youth in Monterey County move around quite a bit. Only one-third of the respondents (36%) have slept in the same place for the last month. Further, more than one-fifth (21%) have slept in more than five places in the last 30 days.

Figure 44 – How many places have you slept in the last month?

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
1	109	36.0
2	54	17.8
3	40	13.2
4	19	6.3
5	17	5.6
More than 5	64	21.1
Total	303	100.0

Considering the age distribution of the homeless youth respondents (14 – 21 years, mean age = 18), these respondents have been homeless for a relatively long period of time. More than a third of the respondents (34%) have been homeless for more than a year, and one in five respondents (20%), had been homeless for more than two years.

Figure 45 – How long have you been homeless?

HISTORY WITH FOSTER CARE

Research at the national level has indicated a strong relationship between foster care and homelessness, but very little information has been available about that relationship in Monterey County prior to this study. One in every ten homeless youth survey respondents countywide (10%) reported having been placed into foster care at some point in their life. Although this percentage is lower than that of comparable research around the nation, which ranges from 16% to 41% (National Coalition for the Homeless, 1998), this important survey finding documents a relationship between placement into foster care and eventual homelessness in Monterey County. Youth in foster care represent only 0.3% of the general population ages 14 - 21 (Department of Social Services, 2002; California Department of Finance Population figures 2002), but survey results discussed above show that they represent 10% of the homeless population within those ages, demonstrating a large over-representation. Further, while former foster youth represent a small portion of the entire population of homeless youth, homelessness among former foster youth is high. The Department of Social Services estimates that there are currently 120 - 130 youth between the ages of 19 and 21 who have recently emancipated from foster care placement in Monterey County and are eligible for ILP Aftercare services. It is likely that many of these emancipated foster youth have since left the county in search of a more hospitable housing market or to live with family and friends. However, 31 of these approximately 125 former Monterey County foster children were found among the homeless youth, representing at least 25% of emancipated foster youth between 19 and 21 years old. Using this conservative estimate, it is plausible that at least 1 in 4 children who emancipate from the foster care system of Monterey County will end up homeless within 3 years of their departure from foster care.

Of the homeless respondents who have been in foster care, 40% were in care at some point after their 16th birthday; however only 15% were aware that they might be eligible for services through the

Independent Living Program. Even fewer, 17%, were in foster care on their 18th birthday. In fact, many respondents left foster care while they were still eligible to stay.

SERVICES ACCESSED

Few homeless youth interviewed in this research effort had participated in any housing program, or utilized other services such as emergency shelter and transitional housing. Fewer than 10% have participated in a housing program of any kind. Of those who had participated in a housing program, the greatest proportion of respondents had accessed a drug and alcohol program (44%) or a transitional housing program (38%). However, the top reason cited for this lack of participation was not knowing of any programs. Seventeen percent of homeless survey respondents had stayed in an emergency shelter at some point, usually for less than one week per year. Despite the relatively low access to existing housing programs and emergency shelters, the majority of homeless youth (79%) acknowledged that they do need assistance with housing.

Focus Group Findings

To supplement the data collected in the homeless youth, foster teen, and foster care provider surveys, a series of focus groups was conducted as the final component of this study. Focus groups were conducted with the following groups: foster care caseworkers, youth in foster care, and youth who have recently emancipated from foster care. The following findings are organized by group, and by research question (in bold).

Foster Care Caseworker Focus Group

On March 14, 2002, a focus group was conducted with eight Monterey County foster care caseworkers. All caseworkers possessed a great deal of knowledge about the foster care system, and participated enthusiastically.

What do you think it takes for youth in foster care to be prepared to successfully leave care and transition into independent living?

Foster care caseworkers listed a variety of assets (see following bulleted list) ranging from placement stability to education, all of which the group deemed to be important components of preparation for emancipation.

- Housing
- Stability in placement
- Employment
- Money
- Education
- Life skills
- Self-esteem
- Transportation

However, results of the foster teen survey indicated that youth in care might not have all of these assets.

Housing – 23% of foster care teen survey respondents didn't know where they were going to live after they emancipate, and an additional 4% were planning on couch surfing, which is considered homelessness by the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Stability in placement – 38% of foster teen survey respondents had been in their current placement for less than one year.

Employment – 79% of foster teen survey respondents did not work during the school year, and 62% did not work during the summer. Further, 75% had not received any vocational training, job training, or ROTC.

Money – While 76% of foster teen survey respondents were saving money, only 32% had a savings account, and only 8% were saving up for an apartment and future living expenses. Foster care caseworkers emphasized that at least \$2,000 is needed for an emancipated foster child to transition into independent living.

What problems / barriers do you feel prevent your clients from being fully prepared to leave foster care?

Focus group participants had no shortage of feedback regarding barriers that they felt prevent their clients from being prepared to emancipate. The following bulleted list paints a picture of problems that many teenagers face. However, these “typical” challenges may be intensified by the experience of foster care, and can make the transition into independent living even more difficult.

- Attitude / Depression / Anger
- Mental health
- Drug / Alcohol use
- Self esteem
- Character
- Motivation
- Labels / Stigma of being in foster home
- Reality of Monterey County housing market
- Transportation
- Lack of knowledge regarding community resources

Many of the items on this list of problems and barriers were not measured in this study, such as attitude, self-esteem, character, and motivation. Others, however, were echoed throughout the many components of data collection. For example, drug and alcohol use among foster teen survey respondents was fairly high, and many foster teens, homeless youth, foster care providers, and foster care caseworkers expressed frustration with a lack of knowledge regarding what resources currently available in the community.

As a social worker, what is your role in preparing your clients for turning 18 and leaving foster care?

Focus group participants were clear about what activities were appropriate for their role and what activities were not. For all participants, the extent to which caseworkers can prepare clients for leaving foster care is largely determined by their caseloads. For example, one participant expressed that she already feels like a “surrogate mom”. Caseworkers attempt to monitor many aspects of their client’s lives, including graduating high school, knowledge of medical and mental health needs, and helping to develop life skills. This level of involvement is a huge challenge for caseworkers who average approximately 40 cases each, consistent with current state guidelines. However, a recent study developed by the state (The Workload Study), which has not been funded or implemented, indicates that an “optimal” workload would be 16 – 18 cases, with a maximum of 23 cases. This current workload, coupled with the responsibility of preparing a child for emancipation, is too much for the caseworkers who participated in this focus group. The group suggested either decreasing their existing workload, or hiring staff devoted entirely to preparing youth for emancipation.

How useful do you think the Independent Living Program is in A: preparing youth to leave foster care, and B: supporting their needs once they have already left the foster care system?

Surprisingly, all caseworkers immediately responded to this question with a single voice. “We don’t know!” Social workers represented in this focus group did not feel they were well informed about the services currently being offered, though they have been trying to stay informed. Although no participants had direct knowledge regarding the ILP activities, one caseworker reported that some of her clients who had participated were unhappy with the ILP curriculum, suggesting that it was not tailored to the needs of the youth involved. It is important to note that ILP coordinators have been meeting with caseworkers regularly since the focus group took place. Focus group participants again recommended hiring staff devoted to the needs of youth preparing to emancipate, as well as the needs of those who have already aged out of the system. This need was expressed by all participants with enthusiasm and with urgency, as they were adamant that their caseloads would not enable them to deliver ILP curriculum.

Do you have any suggestions about how to improve caseload management practices as they relate to youth aging out of foster care?

The final question posed to foster care caseworkers opened the door for many suggestions. First and foremost, respondents expressed a desire for fewer cases. However, many other suggestions were offered, as shown in the following bulleted list.

- Hire dedicated social worker to specialize in emancipation
- Begin ILP activities and exposure early
- Develop re-entry program for youth who have aged out
- Spot check all cases on a bi-annual basis
- Work closely with each child
- Mirror other local successful practices including those in Contra Costa, Santa Cruz, Sebastopol, and Arizona

Foster Care Teen Focus Group

Two focus groups were conducted with youth currently in foster care between the ages of 14 and 18 on February 23 and April 1, 2002. Between the two sessions, a total of 18 youth responded to an identical set of questions.

As a teenager facing emancipation from the foster care system, what are your plans and goals after you leave foster care?

The 18 foster care youth who participated in these focus groups had many ideas about what they might do after emancipation. The most common answers were moving back in with parents, living with relatives, and going to college. The following bulleted list includes many plans and goals regarding housing, educational attainment, and career and life goals.

- Live with family
- Transitional housing
- Get house / apartment
- Join the military
- Go to college / university
- Attend trade school
- Get a job
- Get driver's license / car
- Work with other foster kids
- Marriage and children

The plans and goals offered by the foster teens in the context of focus group discussions mirrored many survey responses.

What do you think it takes to be prepared to successfully leave foster care and reach your goals?

Participants in the foster care teen focus groups had a good sense of what it takes to be prepared to emancipate from the foster care system successfully. In fact, some youth suggested that it takes at least \$10 per hour full-time to “make it” in Monterey County. According to the Self-Sufficiency standard in California, the instincts of these foster care kids are very close to the reality of the housing market. It takes \$8.48 per hour for a single adult to be self-sufficient in Monterey County.

- House / apartment / transitional housing
- Basic necessities like food and clothing
- Good, stable job paying \$10 per hour
- On-the-job training
- Bank account / savings account of at least \$2,000
- Money-management skills
- Living skills
- Learn how to apply for admission / scholarships to college
- Good grades in school
- Knowledge of community resources
- Understanding of paperwork / bills / tax returns
- Driver’s license
- Medical coverage
- Sobriety / abstaining from drugs
- Confidence / determination / setting goals
- Respect for your home
- Anger management

What are you doing to prepare yourself for turning 18 and leaving foster care?

Although foster care teens had a clear idea of what it takes to transition out of foster care successfully, few were actually doing much to prepare for their emancipation. Fortunately, most youth in the focus groups were already making housing plans. Generally, these plans involved living with parents, siblings, or other relatives, and often these housing arrangements were conditional, based on school enrollment or full-time employment.

- Making housing plans with relatives
- Saving money, savings account
- Paying for things around the house
- Helping around the house
- Working hard in school
- Job training / currently employed
- Anger management skills
- Researching options with the military

Although the bulleted list above contains a number of encouraging signs, most focus group participants were not doing all these things. In general, it was very common for respondents to be making housing arrangements with relatives and saving money, but it was uncommon for respondents to be employed, receiving job training, working hard in school, or researching options with the military.

How will you support yourself after you turn 18 and leave foster care?

All foster care youth focus group participants planned on supporting themselves by getting a “good” job. However, since few were currently employed or had received job training, a discussion took place regarding how youth were planning on finding a job that pays at least \$10 per hour. Many suggestions were offered by the older foster teens who had already attempted to find employment. These suggestions were helpful to the younger foster youth who had never been in the job market, and who expressed anxiety about finding a job. Suggestions included: classifieds, Career Works, school counselors, youth employment, Job Corps, the internet, Hartnell College, and ROP. Further, many focus group participants reported that their family, friends, or foster family would help them out while they were searching for a job.

How useful has the Independent Living Program been in preparing you to leave foster care?

Between the two focus groups, respondents had very different experiences with ILP activities. The first group expressed frustration with the ILP Program, indicating that they have “heard a lot of talk, but haven’t seen any action”. Further, they expressed that help takes too long to get to them, and much ILP time is wasted just “sitting around doing nothing”. However, the second foster care focus group seemed to be getting much more out of the ILP Program. The group generated a list (see below) of services they have received from the ILP that were very helpful.

- Matching bank deposits
- Job and college application help
- Free computer
- Scavenger hunt - very helpful in understanding the public transportation system and shopping.
- Visit to college campus
- Learning how to cook
- Employment training
- Practice job interview

The major differences observed between the two focus groups of youth in foster care indicates that while those who know how to access services were pleased with the services they received, many others do not know how to access these services, and may not even know these services exist. This

is substantiated by many findings seen in the foster teen survey, in which nearly half of respondents (47%) did not know what the ILP Program was, or that they are eligible for ILP services.

If you could design your own program, what would you like to provide for kids who are preparing to leave foster care?

The following list contains many suggestions offered by foster care youth focus group respondents. Participants were asked to limit their suggestions to services that they believe would be helpful, and that they would actually want to access.

- Transitional housing - dormitory style / foster kids in all units of a large complex with live in ILP manager
- Financial assistance
- Job training - administrative and clerical skills, cash register and retail skills
- Job shadow
- Pay foster kids to attend ILP trainings
- Bring in guest speakers / trainers
- Field trips to colleges and job sites
- Special ILP counselor
- Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) worker / peer counselor for all foster kids
- Regular follow up / counseling
- Guaranteed jobs for emancipated foster youth
- Subsidize auto insurance
- Out of state field trips
- Keep ILP activities optional
- Increase communication with foster care kids via social workers and parents
- Free driver's education

While many of these suggestions are not necessarily practical or realistic, some of these suggestions were similar to suggestions offered by foster care caseworkers, and some of these suggestions exist within the current ILP Program. Like foster teens, foster care caseworkers also suggested a staff ILP / emancipation specialist, as well as more frequent follow up with clients. Further, many suggestions offered by foster teen focus group participants are currently offered through the ILP, including field trips to colleges, and occasional guest speakers.

California Youth Connections is a statewide network of former foster youth who advocate for the needs of youth in foster care. If there was an Aftercare Group, a Foster Care Alumni Association, or a chapter of California Youth Connections in Monterey County, do you think you would participate?

Overall, most focus group participants reported that they would participate in such a group. Only 3 of the 18 participants said that they would "definitely not" participate in a group of this type, and 1 other was unsure. All of the remaining 14 participants were interesting in being involved.

Emancipated Foster Care Teen Focus Group

To supplement the data collected on current foster care teens, and to understand more about the outcomes of foster care in Monterey County, a focus group was conducted of 6 former foster youth; 5 young women, and 1 young man. Prior to recent changes, youth who had already emancipated from care were no longer tracked by Department of Social Services. Therefore, finding former foster youth to participate in this focus group was challenging, and systems are currently being developed to help track foster youth after they emancipate.

What do you think it takes to be prepared to successfully leave foster care and transition into independent living?

Having recently emancipated from the foster care system, these focus group participants had a lot of feedback regarding adequate preparation for leaving foster care. Many of these suggestions were similar to those of youth preparing to emancipate, however a greater level of detail was offered by those who had already experienced this transition. The following list summarizes the responses offered by former foster youth.

- Financial security – at least \$2,000 to get them started
- Good, stable, full time job
- Knowledge of community resources including MediCal and Aftercare services
- Living skills – knowledge of job applications, bank accounts, possession of important documents such as social security card and birth certificate
- Address – if no place to live, important to know how to get a PO Box and temporary phone extension; difficult to apply for a job with no address or phone number
- Someone to co-sign a lease
- Talk to former foster kids – know what to expect
- Transitional housing

When you emancipated from foster care, were you prepared?

None of the former foster care youth who participated in this focus group felt that they had been prepared for emancipation. Respondents indicated that they had no idea what to expect from life outside of their group home or foster home placement, and found themselves in and out of multiple jobs, unable to find landlords willing to rent to young tenants who have no credit, and have no one to co-sign with them.

What did you do after you turned 18 and left foster care?

Every single former foster youth in our focus group had experienced a period of homelessness during their transition from county placement. Most often, respondents did not consider themselves to have experienced homelessness, as they generally reported bouncing around between friends' couches. Of the female focus group participants, all had moved in with older boyfriends whom, in

some cases they hardly knew, in order to secure housing. Further, every respondent indicated that they had moved around frequently between a number of precarious situations, and many were still struggling to find housing.

Have you ever participated in an Independent Living Program while you were in foster care?

Although all respondents had participated in the ILP Program to a certain extent while they were in foster care, the general consensus among the group was that it had not been of great assistance to them in their time of transition. In fact, many reported that they had received very helpful information, but that they received it too early, at a time when they did not yet understand the challenges they would face after emancipation. Now that the group had emancipated, many expressed an interest in going back to ILP. However, respondents in the group did generate a list of ILP services they experienced that were helpful.

- One on one help
- College application / financial aid help
- Jumpstart program

In addition to these ILP services, one focus group respondent had been assigned a CASA worker, and felt that she benefited greatly from that experience. The CASA worker had provided much one on one assistance in a number of areas, including housing. Further, since the CASA worker was a volunteer and not a paid employee of the county, this former foster child felt that the assistance and support offered was genuine. Further, this participant strongly recommended that every foster child placed in Monterey County should be assigned a CASA worker.

However, in addition to discussing what aspects of the ILP Program were helpful, the discussion also included a list of aspects that had not been perceived as helpful to participants.

- High turnover of ILP staff and social workers
- Staff (including counselors) seem “burnt out” – perceive their role as “just a job”

If you could design your own Independent Living Program, what would you like to provide for kids who are preparing to leave foster care, and what services would you like to provide for those who have already emancipated?

First and foremost, focus group participants expressed an interest in extending services to former foster youth up to age 25, since many are not ready or not interested in receiving services prior to emancipation. Additionally, respondents also offered the following suggestions.

- Money (conditional on attendance in school or employment)
- Customized living plan - gradually decrease services and money to avoid dependence
- Transitional housing - not rooms, but apartments
- “Backing” from the county - county to co-sign and “vouch” for former foster youth
- Linkage between programs - collaboration between service providers
- Extend services to all those up to age 25

California Youth Connections is a statewide network of former foster youth who advocate for the needs of youth in foster care. If there was an Aftercare Group, a Foster Care Alumni Association, or a chapter of California Youth Connections in Monterey County, do you think you would participate?

Every single former foster youth participating in this focus group enthusiastically replied that they would “definitely” join such a group if one existed in Monterey County. In fact, two participants already had been involved in such a group, although that group has since disbanded.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to count the number of homeless persons in Monterey County, and to understand the issues of homeless youth as a unique sub-population. Additionally, the experiences of foster teens were highlighted as a group at high risk for future homelessness. The recommendations of this study fall within two categories:

1. General Recommendations that apply to homelessness in Monterey County; and
2. Youth-Focused Recommendations targeted to homeless and at-risk youth, including teens in foster care. Many of the Youth-Focused Recommendations should be regarded as homelessness prevention within the context of the General Recommendations and the homeless Continuum of Care.

The results of this study show that despite the hard work of countless devoted service providers, Monterey County continues to struggle with the growing problem of homelessness. The Monterey County Homeless Census and Homeless Youth / Foster Teen Study Research Committee offer the following recommendations to continue the county's effort towards adequate housing for all residents. These recommendations are not in order of priority or implementation sequence. They are designed to outline some specific actions available to the County Board of Supervisors and the homeless and foster services community to help improve service capability and effectiveness.

General Recommendations

Prioritize Homelessness Prevention and Reduction

- Join Governor Davis in the public campaign to eliminate homelessness by making a proclamation that prevention and reduction of homelessness in the county is a top priority
- Join the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development in his proclamation to end chronic homelessness within 10 years

Develop More Affordable Housing

- Create new mortgage products for new homebuyers
- Provide incentives for the development of multi-family (rental) housing
- Explore Single Room Occupancy (SRO) development opportunities
- Develop seasonal and year round agricultural worker housing

Expand Outreach of Existing Programs and Services

- Expand the outreach of existing programs and services to the rural county areas that currently lack sufficient resources
- Fund research to investigate the availability of services to, and the unique needs of, rural homeless

Implement Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

- Develop and implement a Homeless Management Information System to track county residents as they move in and out of homelessness and access public, private, and faith based services
- Use data generated by the HMIS to support the periodic homeless census initiatives required by HUD
- Integrate related databases into the HMIS, to better track relevant homeless sub-groups, including former foster youth

Promote the Development of Jobs that Pay Livable Wages

- Support efforts to develop jobs paying livable wages for workers in Monterey County
- Promote and develop programs that build employment opportunities and career advancement

Youth Focused Recommendations

Develop Transitional Housing for Emancipated Foster Youth

- Develop transitional housing programs (scattered sites, shared housing, etc.) for emancipating foster youth
- Develop financing strategies for establishing the matching requirements for participating in the Supportive Transitional Emancipation Program (STEP) as provided through Senate Bill AB 427

Expand Transitional Independent Living Resources to Youth Identified as High Risk for Homelessness

- Develop an action plan to identify assets and gaps in services and strategize more effective programs for youth involved in Child Welfare System and Juvenile Justice System to transition into independence
- Expand the availability of Independent Living Program services to systems involved youth throughout Monterey County who are not involved in ILP
- Promote and develop the Independent Living Program through more effective case management practices, developing provider capacity, and more clearly defining policy and program guidelines
- Launch public awareness campaign regarding needs of emancipated foster youth

Establish Stronger Links Between the Foster Care System and the Homeless Service Provider Community

- Establish formal linkages among the homeless and foster care providers, including cross training opportunities and collaborative partnerships leading to a more seamless and integrated service delivery system
- Develop systemic capacity and linkages for the Transitional Housing Committee

Develop a Comprehensive Network of Services for Homeless and At-Risk Youth

- Develop emergency shelters for homeless youth
- Expand homeless and at-risk youth services to include complete countywide coverage
- Develop youth focused services including public and private partnerships and other collaborations, that are comprehensive, providing basic needs such as food and shelter, in addition to counseling, life skills and assistance in the transition from homelessness into self-sufficiency

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