

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

This is a summary of results, pertaining to the older adult homeless population, extracted from a larger survey commissioned by the Coalition on Homelessness using residual funds from the Proposition C campaign. The survey was conducted pre-COVID-19.

The full survey is entitled *Stop the Revolving Door: a street level framework for a new system* and can be found at <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/18w7lXBgLeC0FLVgT7b3BuE9X0elsOil>. It was designed by researchers from UC Berkeley, SFSU, Santa Clara University, and the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, among others. The data specific to older adults was graciously extracted, collated and analyzed by one of those researchers, Andrew Hockman, MSW/MPH (2021) at UC Berkeley.

Of the 584 unduplicated individuals interviewed for the larger survey, 109 (19%) were older adults, not all of whom answered every question. In comparing the larger sample with the smaller 60+ respondents, we found similar results between the two populations, such as current marital status. However, several questions elicited quite different results, and we are mainly highlighting those distinctions in this summary.

For instance, you can see the contrast in the two charts below:

Q128 - What race do you consider yourself?								
	White	Black	Asian	Latino/a/x	Native American	Pacific Islander	Multiracial	Other
60+ Sample (n=107)	21%	57%	3%	10%	3%	0%	6%	1%
Total Sample (n=564)	30%	38%	3%	15%	3%	1%	9%	2%

Q167 - How do you identify your sexual orientation?	Breakout of LGBTQ Participants				
	Overall LGBTQ	Gay/Lesbian	Bisexual	Queer or Other option not listed	Questioning
60+ Sample (n=108)	6% (n=7)	29% (n=2)	29% (n=2)	0% (n=0)	43% (n=3)
Total Sample (n=577)	24%	38%	44%	6%	12%

African Americans are considerably overrepresented (57% for 60+ as opposed to 38% in the total sample), and sexual minorities are underrepresented (6% and 24% respectively) compared to the overall homeless population.

The median age at which older adults became homeless was 49 years old. 51% have been homeless for more than 3 years (similar to the larger survey at 48%), while 40% have been without tenant or ownership rights for all or nearly all of their adult lives (less than those in the full sample: 50%). Overall, the unhoused within San Francisco came from “private housing rented from a landlord” (44%), comparable with the 40% of the 60+ respondents. However, when it came to SROs, 25% of those 60 and over reported an SRO as being their last residence before homelessness as opposed to only 9% in the full report.

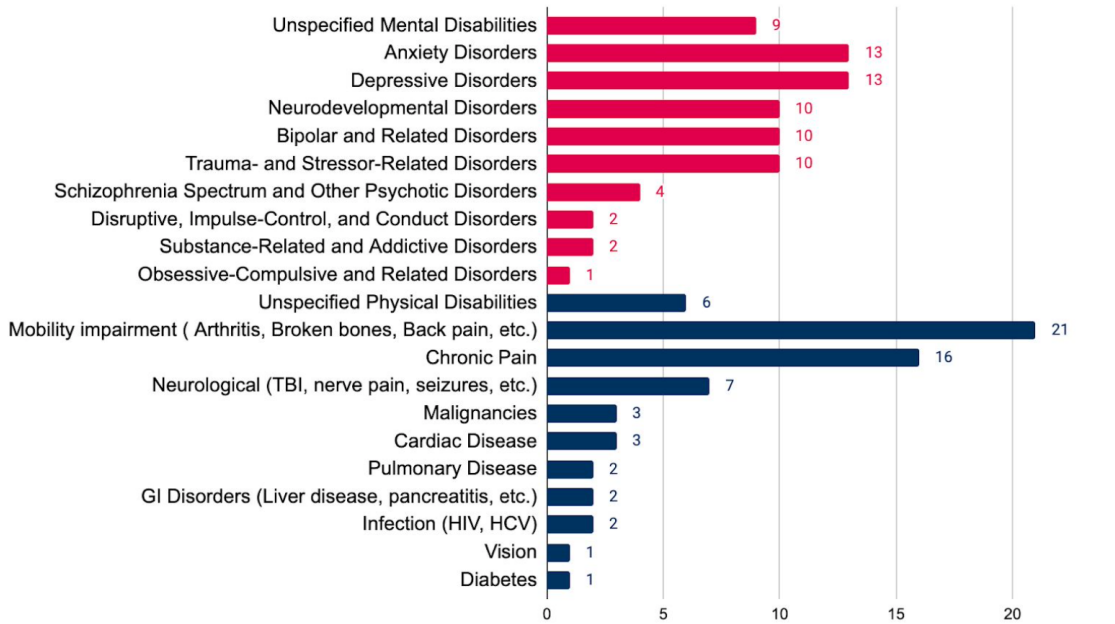
When asked about stays in homeless shelters, 80% of those 60+ have been in a homeless shelter, primarily a traditional year-round one, in the past 5 years. This is a higher percentage than the 73% for the whole sample. When asked about current or recent stays (again pre-COVID), 81% of seniors stayed in traditional shelters, and 14% were in navigation centers. For the larger survey, the figures are 65% and 28%, respectively.

For those living in shelters, *Stop the Revolving Door* researchers also asked about the top service needs of the unhoused. Not surprisingly, case management, and specifically housing case management, were the most frequently mentioned needs among older adults, with about 33% of the group listing each of these as their major need. Assistance obtaining regular food was listed as a need by 28% of the group. For the total sample, housing case management was followed by food and then case management generally. Among the disabled, housing case management topped their list, followed by mental health treatment, case management, anger management, and substance use treatment.

In addition to loss of housing, the survey asked about other factors seen as contributing to homelessness, specifically substance use, mental health and, and disability. The frequency of challenge with substance use was somewhat similar in the overall (22%) and older adult (17%) cohorts, however there were differences in the substances used, many using more than one drug. Respondents in the total sample listed methamphetamine (42%), alcohol (38%), cocaine (38%) and heroin (29%) as the substances most commonly used, while the older adults listed these at 11%, 37%, 58% and 16% respectively. Thus, while the frequency of alcohol use was similar there was less methamphetamine and heroin use and much more cocaine use. These differences could have implications in terms of the services older adults need.

Questions about disability were added late in the survey, and there were only 170 respondents. Both mental health and physical disabilities were described. Of the physical disabilities, mobility and pain were most frequent complaints by a significant margin and present in 16% and 10% of the respondents respectively.

Mental Disorders - Pink | Physical Disabilities - Blue



Perhaps as expected, major mental health disorders were more common in the homeless population than in the American population at large: 2.3% schizophrenia in homeless and 0.7% in the general population and 6% bipolar disorder compared to 2.6%. Other diagnoses, including anxiety and depression, were common, but at a rate commensurate with the general population.

We provide this information in support of our request to allow the Advisory Council to the Commission on Disability and Aging Services to form an ad hoc Committee learn more about the state and needs of the elderly and those with disabilities who are homeless.