

## C. INCOME

<b>Importance</b>	Poverty and ill health are intertwined. In general, poor countries tend to have worse health outcomes than wealthier countries. In addition, within a given country, poor people tend to have worse health outcomes than wealthier people. This association reflects causality running in both directions: poverty breeds ill health, and ill health keeps poor people poor. <sup>1</sup>
<b>Definitions</b>	<p><u>Poverty</u>: To determine a person's poverty status, the Census Bureau compares the person's total family income in the last 12 months with the poverty threshold (updated monthly) for that person's family size and composition.</p> <p><u>Homeless person</u>: (as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development) An individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, and who has a primary nighttime residence that is either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill), or</li> <li>▪ An institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized, or</li> <li>▪ A public or private place not designated for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.</li> </ul>

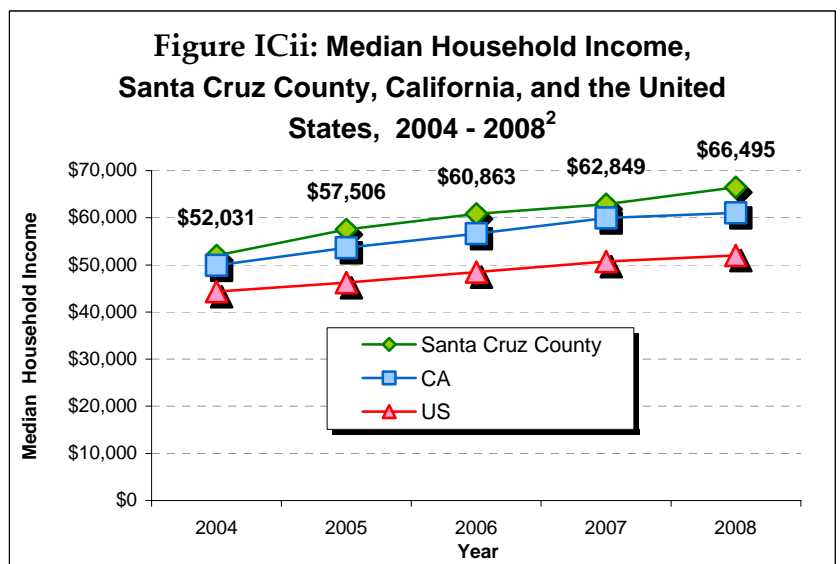
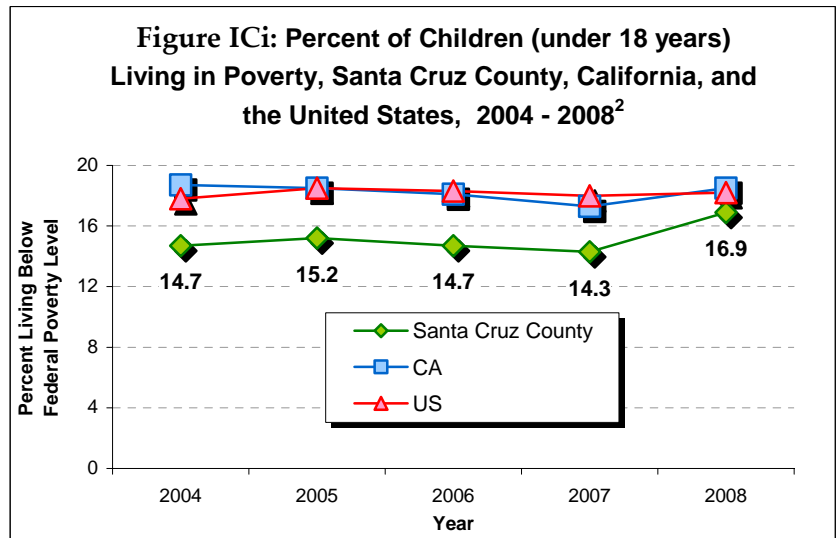
### i. CHILDREN IN POVERTY

In 2008, an estimated **16.9%** of Santa Cruz County children (or **9,035** people under age 18) were living in families with incomes below federal poverty level—up from previous years and approaching the state and national rates of 18.5% and 18.2% respectively (Figure ICi).<sup>2</sup>

Estimates are also available for the cities of Santa Cruz and Watsonville, since there are more than 20,000 residents in each city. For the combined years of 2006 through 2008, the rate of children living in poverty in Santa Cruz was 11%, while *in Watsonville, the rate was 25%, or 1 in 4 children.*

### ii. INCOME

In 2008, the median household income in Santa Cruz County was \$66,495, compared to \$61,017 statewide and \$52,029 nationally (Figure ICii). Santa Cruz County's per capita income in 2008 was \$51,140, ranking 107<sup>th</sup> highest (down from 95<sup>th</sup> in 2006) among the 3,112 national metropolitan statistical areas with data.<sup>2</sup>



### iii. HOMELESSNESS

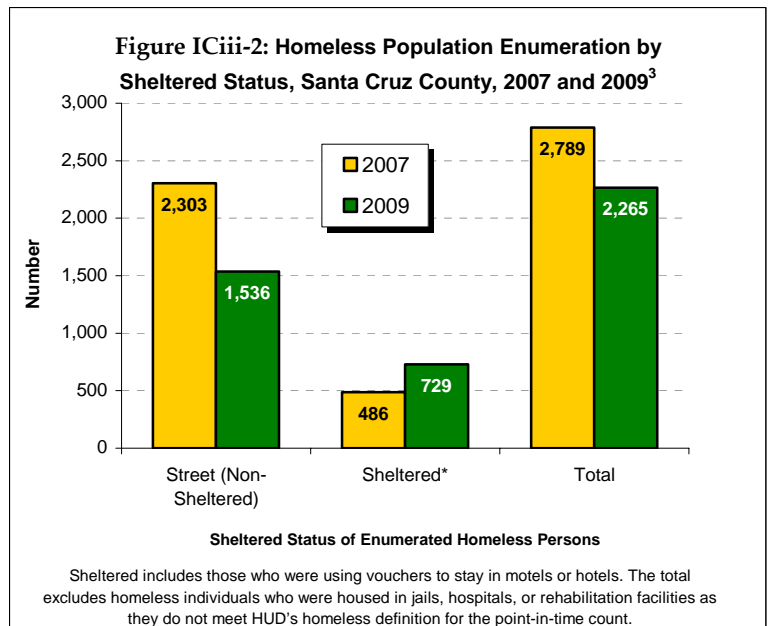
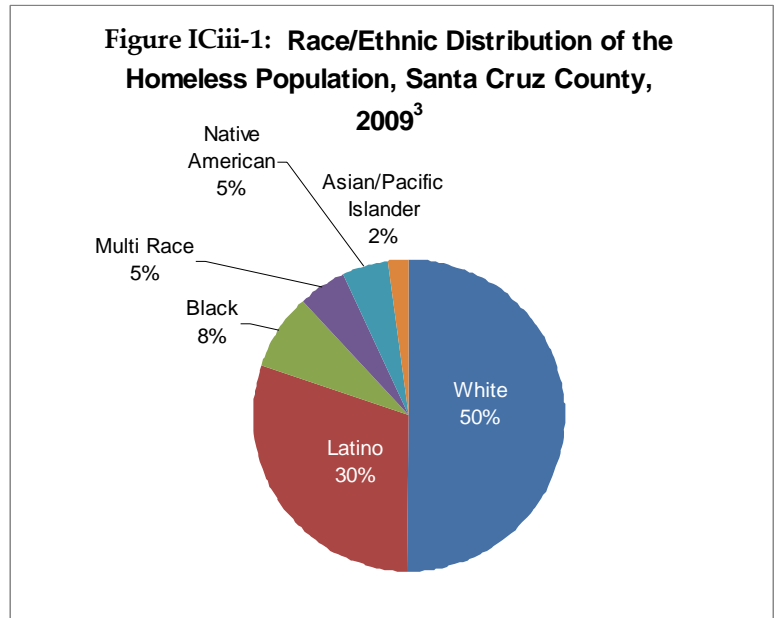
Based on the enumerated homeless population of 2,265 persons in Santa Cruz County in the 2009 point-in-time count, combined with a formula recommended by Applied Survey Research (ASR) and the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the estimated number of persons who were actually homeless in Santa Cruz County in 2009 was **4,624** persons.<sup>3</sup> Fifty-four percent had been homeless for a year or more, and 16% had been continuously homeless for the last three years.

Figure ICiii-1 illustrates the racial/ethnic distribution of the 2,265 point-in-time count homeless survey participants.<sup>3</sup> The largest proportion (48%) were between the ages of 31 and 51 years old, and the majority were male (73%). Thirty-nine percent had a high school diploma or GED as their highest level of education.

Figure ICiii-2 compares the sheltered and non-sheltered homeless population in Santa Cruz County in both 2007 and 2009. During that time, the unsheltered count decreased by 33%, while the sheltered homeless population increased by 50%.<sup>3</sup> In 2009, among the unsheltered adult homeless population, 29% were male, 6% were female, and gender information was not available for the other 65%. Among the sheltered adult homeless population, 49% were men, 17% were women, and information was unavailable for 34%. The increase in the sheltered population can be largely attributed to the increase in countywide shelter capacity since 2007. The Salvation Army in Watsonville increased the number of emergency shelter beds, and both Pajaro Valley Shelter Services and Families in Transition expanded their numbers of transitional housing units.

Findings of interest from the 2009 Homeless Census include<sup>3</sup>:

- **30%** of respondents cited job loss as the primary reason for their current episode of homelessness.
- **54%** had been homeless for more than one year.
- From 2007 to 2009, the percentage of respondents who indicated that this was the first time they had been homeless increased from 34% to **46%**.
- **30%** of survey respondents said they were currently experiencing a substance abuse problem (alcohol and/or other drugs) – of those, 38% cited the use of alcohol or drugs as the primary cause of their homelessness in 2009, compared to 9% in 2007.



- **73%** reported having a disabling condition (defined as a physical disability, mental illness, depression, alcohol or drug abuse, chronic health problems, HIV / AIDS, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), or developmental disability).
- **55%** were experiencing at least one mental health issue.
- **31%** reported they were currently experiencing chronic health problems.

<p><b>Helpful Websites</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ (Children in Poverty) National Center for Children in Poverty, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University. <a href="http://nccp.org">http://nccp.org</a>.</li> <li>▪ (Homelessness) Applied Survey Research / Homeless Census. <a href="http://www.appliedsurveyresearch.org/projects/homeless2009.html">http://www.appliedsurveyresearch.org/projects/homeless2009.html</a>.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Sources</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Wagstaff, Adam. "Poverty and health sector inequalities." <i>Bull. World Health Org.</i> [online]. 2002, vol.80, n.2, pp. 97-105. ISSN 0042-9686.</li> <li>2. U.S. Census Bureau. Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE): [updated 2010 Jan 10; cited 2010 May 5]. Available from <a href="http://www.census.gov/did/www/saipe/">http://www.census.gov/did/www/saipe/</a>.</li> <li>3. Applied Survey Research, 2009, Santa Cruz County Homeless Census and Survey. <a href="http://www.appliedsurveyresearch.org">www.appliedsurveyresearch.org</a>.</li> </ol>
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