



Do Homeless Persons Living in Merced County Have Geographical and Relational Ties to Cities within the County?

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The primary purpose of this paper is to gain perspective regarding transiency among today's homeless population in Merced County, California. Homelessness has assumed a variety of characteristics over time in the United States. One such characteristic is transiency which, for the purpose of this paper, is defined as not having geographical or relational community ties to cities within Merced County.

This report, however, notes that a large majority of homeless persons in Merced County have geographical and relational ties to cities in Merced County.

During the Merced County 2016 Homeless Count and Survey, 104 unsheltered homeless persons representing 30% of the 350 unsheltered adults were asked a series of questions that included those that focused on geographical and relational ties to cities in Merced County.

Establishing geographical community ties for each survey respondent was based on answers to the following two questions:

- In what city did you first become homeless?
- What city do you consider to be your home?

Approximately 80% of survey respondents answered "yes" to both of the questions.

Establishing relational ties for each survey respondent was based on answers to the following four questions:

- Do you have family who live in Merced County?
- Do you have friends who live in Merced County?
- Have you ever worked or are you currently working in Merced County?
- Have you ever attended school or are you attending school in Merced County?

Two-thirds (69%) of survey respondents answered "yes" to three or more of the questions.

Another report compiled by the Institute for Urban Initiatives revealed similar findings for Merced County.

The report was based on answers provided by homeless persons who obtained shelter at one of the year-round shelters and transitional housing programs in Merced County between 2013 and 2015. They were asked the following question--what was the zip code of your last permanent address? Their answers were entered into the CoC's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).

Of the 547 unduplicated homeless persons who entered a year-round shelter or transitional housing program in Merced County during the period of 2013 - 2015, more than two-thirds (69.6%) of homeless persons provided a zip code for their last permanent address that matched the City of Merced. Approximately 10% provided a zip code in Atwater (10.2%) and Los Banos (9.5%). Nearly 11% (10.8%) provided a different city or an unincorporated area in Merced County.

Urban Initiatives is a non-profit organization that consists of several community-based and faith-based institutes that respond to the economic, housing, and social needs of neighborhoods, cities, and counties from local community, regional, national, international, and faith-based perspectives.

Visit our web site at www.urban-initiatives.org.

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