Growing homelessness in California:
The role of affordable housing

California State University, Sacramento
Division of Social Work
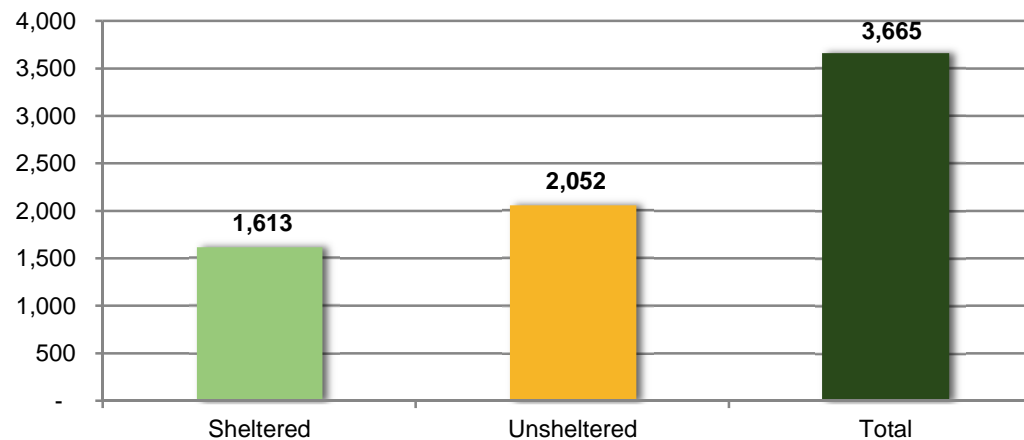Institute for Social Research

Arturo Baiocchi, PhD

SACRAMENTO STATE
Redefine the Possible

2017 Sacramento Point in time count

- On a single night in January 2017 …
    - 3,365 individuals experienced homelessness in Sacramento Co,
    - 1,613 individuals were in shelters (44%)
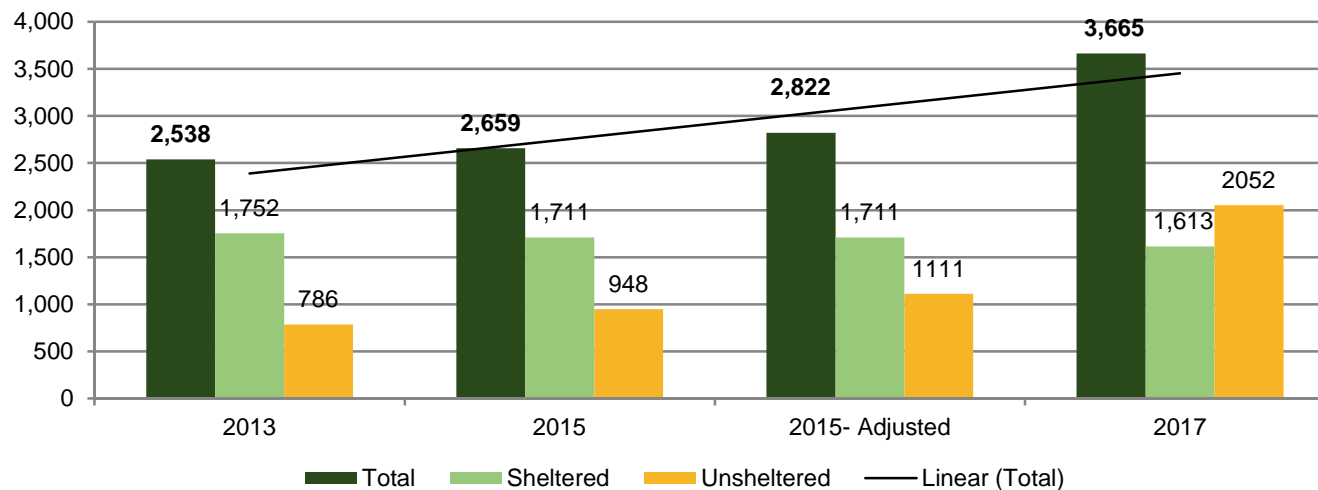   - 2,052 individuals were found sleeping outdoors (56%)

Figure 1:
2017 PIT Estimates of Total Homeless

Changes Over Time

- Overall, 38% increase compared to 2015 PIT
  - Large change in unsheltered homelessness (110%)

Figure 2:
PIT Estimates over Time

	2013	2015	2015- Adjusted	2017
Total	2,538	2,659	2,822	3,665
Sheltered	1,752	1,711	1,711	1,613
Unsheltered	786	948	1111	2052

■ Total ■ Sheltered ■ Unsheltered —— Linear (Total)

3 points about homelessness

1. CA has largest homeless population in the US and it is growing

2. Complex drivers of homelessness: individual + community

3. Affordable housing is the strongest predictor of homeless rates across communities

CA has largest homeless population in the US and it is growing

- 118K homeless in one night in 2016
  - ¼ of all homeless in the US
  - ½ of all unsheltered homeless in the US

- Largest % of unsheltered population in US (66%)

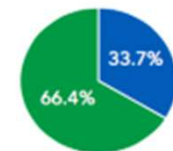- Largest % of chronic homeless in US (25%)

CALIFORNIA

+2.1%
change from 2015

-4.3%
change from 2010

Total Homeless, 2016
118,142

33.7%

66.4%

■ Unsheltered (78,390)
■ Sheltered (39,752)

Estimates of Homelessness

97,660 individuals

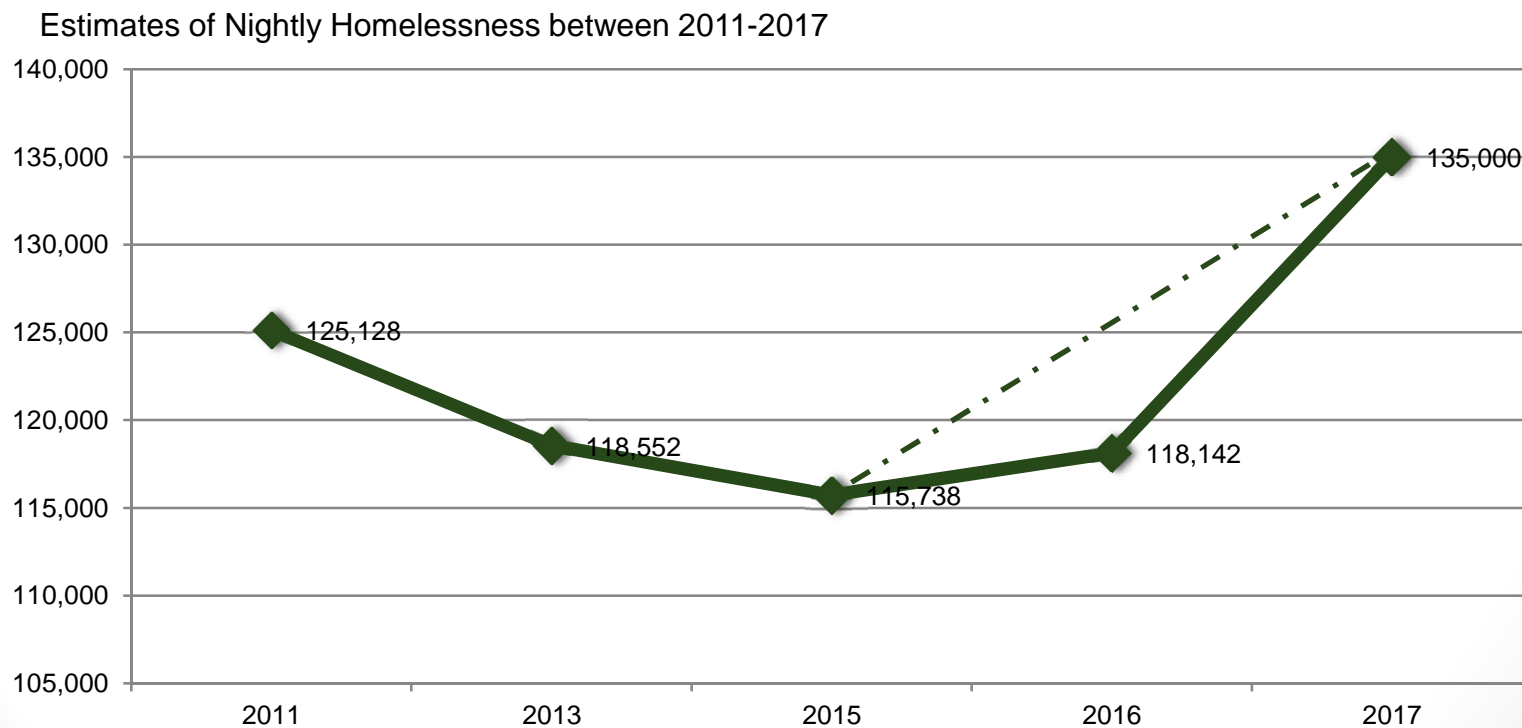**20,482** people in families with children

11,222 unaccompanied youth

9,612 veterans

29,802 chronically homeless individuals

Gradual decrease between 2007-2015; however, more recent trends suggest a reverse

- HUD has not published most recent 2017 estimates for CA
- Compiling findings across CA suggests HUD will report a significant rise
- I estimate a rise of approximately 13%-16% since 2015

Estimates of Nightly Homelessness between 2011-2017

Complex drivers of homelessness: individual + community

Individual risk-factors:

-Poverty

-Substance use

-Health and Disability

-Lack of social and family support

-Mental Health

-Time in foster care

Community risk factors:

-Poverty & Inequality
-Housing market conditions
-Employment Rates
-Welfare supports and programs
-Crime rates

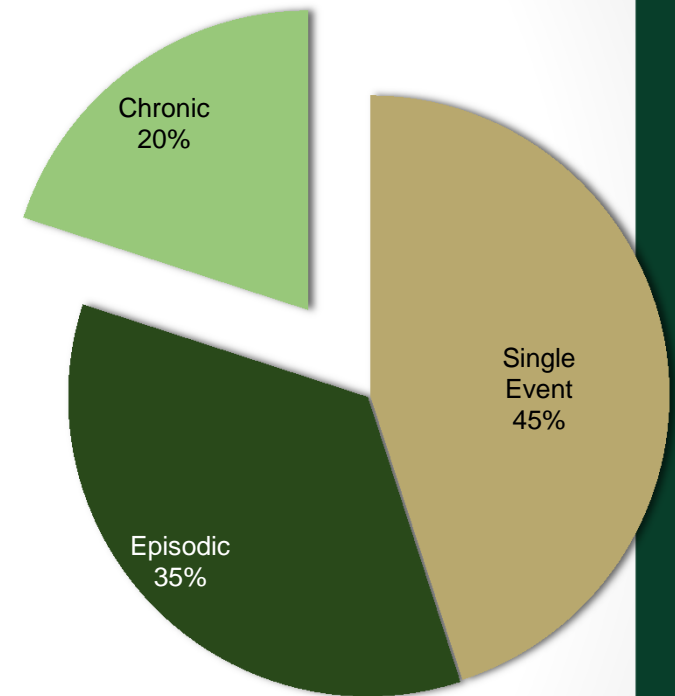But pathways to homelessness are diverse and complex; risk factors affect different people differently

There is no single profile of a homeless person

Homelessness is less an individual attribute, but more of a situation

Complex drivers of homelessness: individual + community

Homeless Situations:

- Chronic Homeless (20%)
  - Episode longer than a year
  - 4+ Episodes in past three years
  - More challenges

- Episodic Homelessness (35%)
  - 2-3 periods of housing instability
  - May transition to chronic homelessness

- Single Event Homelessness (45)
  - Lost housing once but quickly transition toward a permanent residence

(Gould & Williams, 2010)

Chronic 20%

Single Event 45%

Episodic 35%

Are housing costs irrelevant to chronic homeless? Maybe, but not
To the 80% of individuals that experience other forms of homelessness

Affordable housing is the strongest predictor of homeless rates across communities

Research exploring community-level factors and varying rates of homelessness (Quigley & Raphael, 2001; Lee et al 2003; Byrne et. al 2012; Fargo et al. 2013)

-Weather

-Poverty & Inequality

-Housing market

-Employment Rates

-Welfare supports and programs

-Crime rates

-Community-Level Drug Use

- These factors explain between 30%-60% of homelessness

- Housing market conditions consistently predicts various types of homelessness
  - Median rent strong predictor
  - % of "burdened renters" in a community r

Affordable housing is the strongest predictor of homeless rates across communities

Cost of Living

- 44% of Sacramento residents spend over 50% of their income on rent (Sacramento Housing Alliance, 2016)

Poverty & Inequality

- Strong effect of poverty rate/low-wage work (Lee et al 2003; Byrne et. al 2013)
- CA Poverty rate of 16.7% (nationally 14.8%) (US Census, 2016)
- 4 out of 10 Californians live in or near poverty (PPIC, 2016)

Conclusion

- Homelessness is a localized and community issue but nonetheless affected by statewide trends.

- While individual programs and communities are addressing the challenges of chronic homelessness, the sheer number of new individuals experiencing homeless is likely exceeding capacity.

- There is considerable evidence that affordable housing could reduce the number of new homeless; an upstream solution to many forms of homelessness.

Thank you,

Arturo Baiocchi, PhD
arturo.baiocchi@csus.edu

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references

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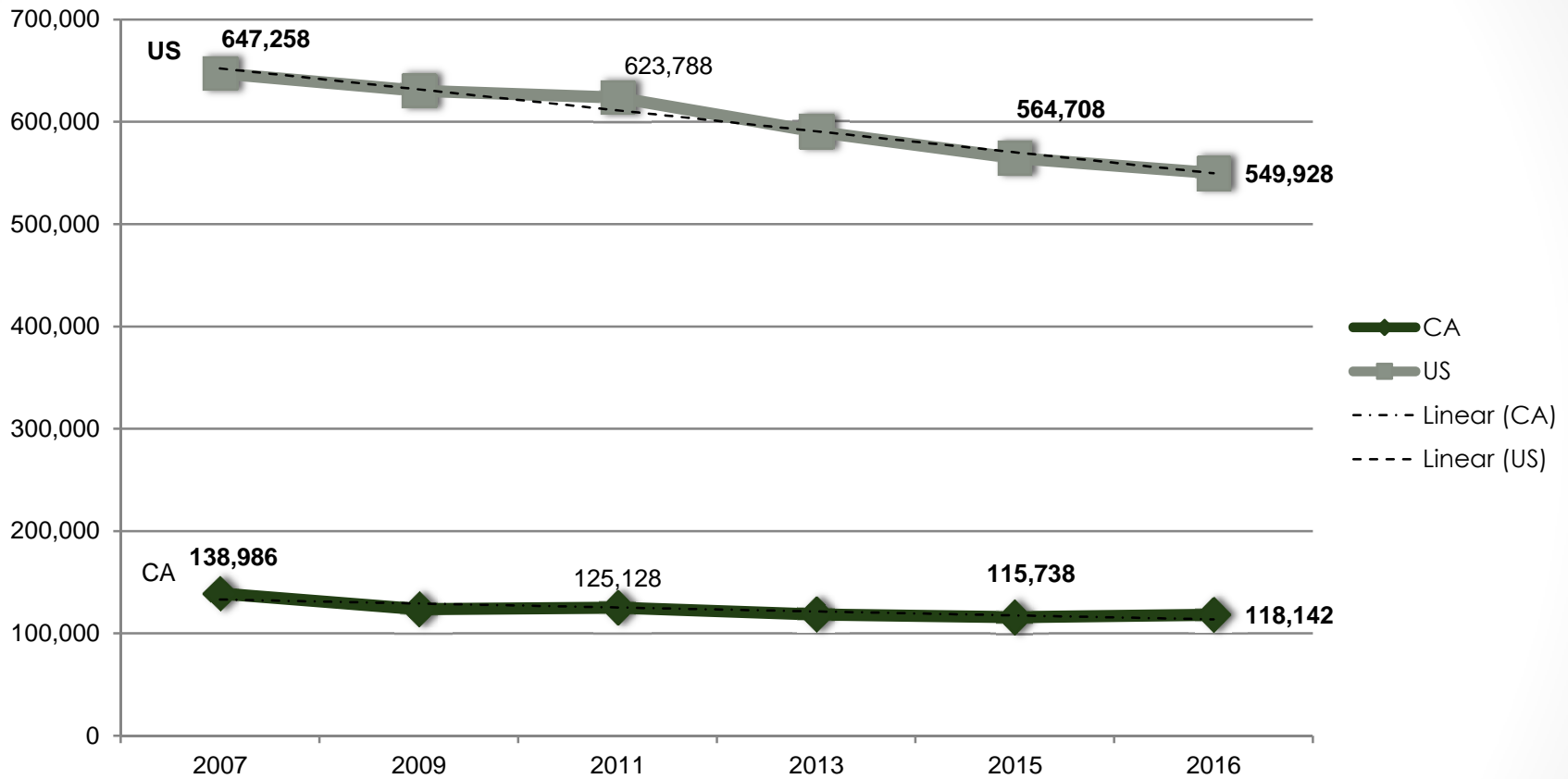
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US and CA Estimates of Nightly Homelessness between 2007-2016
(HUD, 2016)

- 15% decline in nightly homeless in US
- 15% decline in nightly homeless in CA