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# SF-HSA Vulnerable Population Data Book: Methodology

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## AUTHOR

San Francisco Human Services Agency (SF-HSA) Planning Team

## OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE

The SF-HSA Vulnerable Populations Data Book provides comprehensive data on low-income adults (ages 18+) in San Francisco, by specific vulnerable population, zip code, and census tract. The specific vulnerable populations included in this data book were determined in collaboration with the Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD), and consist of the following: individuals with limited English proficiency, individuals with disabilities, public benefit recipients, public and subsidized housing recipients, individuals experiencing homelessness, foster youth, transitional aged youth, and older adults.

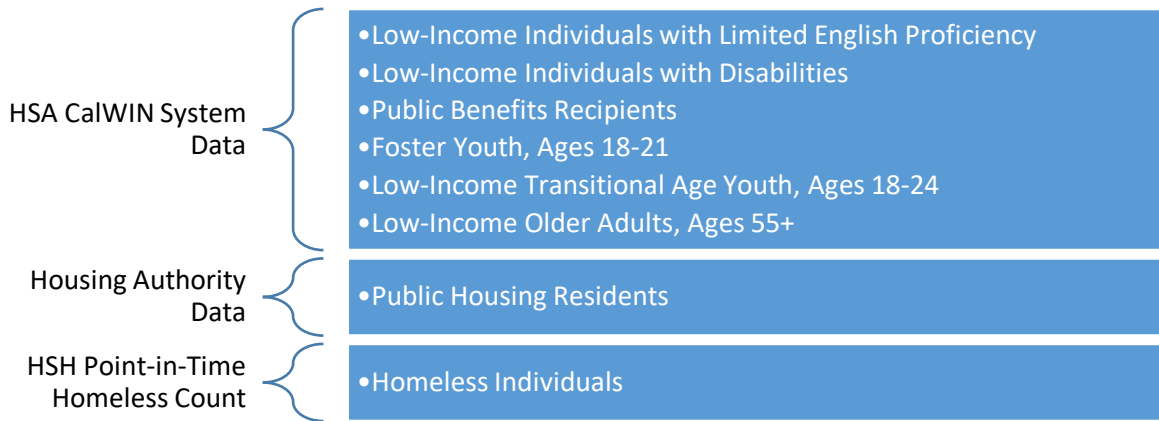
This resource is intended to provide publicly available, comprehensive, and detailed descriptive data regarding low-income individuals within San Francisco. These data can be used to help inform strategic planning, program planning, and targeted outreach and engagement. However, because these data are included at an aggregate level, this resource cannot be used to identify individuals for these purposes. Additionally, this resource should not be used as a primary data source to assess the impact of specific programs.

The SF-HSA Vulnerable Populations Data Book will be updated on an annual basis, with data updates completed and available by the month of December in future years.

## DATA SOURCES

The primary source of data for the vulnerable populations included in this data book is SF-HSA's CalWIN system administrative data. The CalWIN system provides for the automated determination of eligibility for public assistance programs and the delivery of program benefits, and its database contains the enrollment and case maintenance data for all individuals receiving public benefits in San Francisco. These public benefits include Medi-Cal, CalFresh (California's version of the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), County Adult Assistance Programs (CAAP), and CalWORKs (California's version of the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program). Data were obtained from the CalWIN database for the following vulnerable populations: individuals with limited English proficiency, individuals with disabilities, public benefit recipients, foster youth, transitional aged youth, and older adults.

When accurate and detailed data for populations of interest were not available in the CalWIN database, other data sources were used. Data on public housing residents were obtained from the Housing Authority administrative data, and data on homeless individuals were obtained from the Point-in-Time Homeless Count report developed by the Department of Housing and Supportive Services (HSH).



## DATA PARAMETERS

Data included in this data book are point-in-time, providing a snapshot of data as they appeared at a specific time point. For all populations except homeless individuals, data were extracted from September 2019 data. Data on homeless individuals were collected in January 2019 for the HSH Point-in-Time Homeless Count.

Low-income individuals are defined as those who participate in at least one of SF-HSA’s Economic Support & Self-Sufficiency (ESSS) programs: Medi-Cal, CalFresh, County Adult Assistance Programs (CAAP), and CalWORKs. The approximate income thresholds for these programs are as follows:

- Medi-Cal: 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL)<sup>1</sup>
- CalFresh: 138% of the FPL
- CAAP: 50% of the FPL
- CalWORKs: 100% of the FPL

Foster youth are defined as individuals actively enrolled in SF-HSA’s Foster Care program. Foster youth in both in-county and out-of-county placements are included. Public housing residents are defined as individuals residing in any publicly subsidized housing site, including veteran, senior, and family housing. Residents subsidized through Section 8 vouchers are not included in these data. Homeless individuals are defined as individuals either housed in a shelter or on the streets and were counted and surveyed during the HSH Point-in-Time Homeless Count.

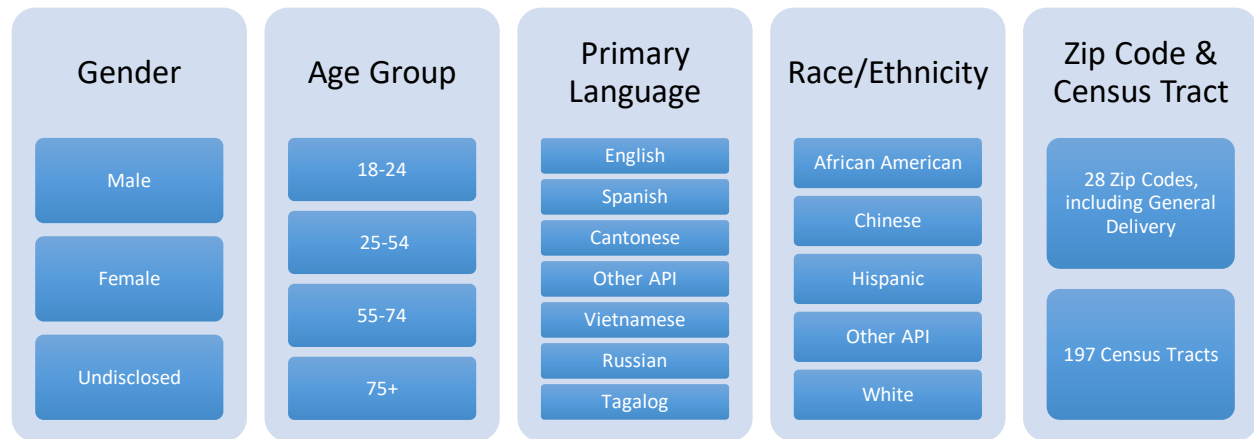
Because this data book is intended to provide data on working-age adults only<sup>2</sup>, only data on individuals ages 18 years and above were included. The following vulnerable populations had additional age restrictions due to program/population definitions:

- Foster youth: ages 18-21
- Transitional age youth: ages 18-24
- Older adults: ages 55-74, ages 75+

<sup>1</sup> In 2019, the Federal Poverty Level for a family of four was \$25,750.

<sup>2</sup> In response to the original data request from OEWD “to identify the number of working age individuals who fall within vulnerable populations, as well as their location and other relevant demographics” for the purpose of “understanding of the scope of workforce development needs in the City.”

Each of the vulnerable populations were categorized by gender, age group, primary language, race and ethnicity, and San Francisco zip codes and census tracts, according to the groupings below:



## LIMITATIONS

As noted earlier, this data book defines low-income individuals as those participating in any of SF-HSA’s ESSS programs, with the majority of these individuals participating in Medi-Cal.<sup>3</sup> Research indicates that the Medi-Cal penetration rate is quite high in San Francisco; specifically, most individuals who are eligible for Medi-Cal are enrolled in the program.<sup>4</sup> This high enrollment rate allows us to use the population of people who are publicly aided individuals as a proxy for all low-income individuals at 200% of the FPL and below in San Francisco.

However, there are some gaps in CalWIN administrative data. SF-HSA CalWIN data historically did not include Medi-Cal data for individuals who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI), because SSI-linked Medi-Cal is administered by the Social Security Administration. However, the SSI expansion to CalFresh in June 2019 had added approximately 20,000 of the 45,000 individuals with SSI to the SF-HSA ESSS caseload by September 2019. Additionally, the data also does not include many undocumented individuals since they often don’t qualify for public benefits. Beginning in 2020, all 18-26 year olds will be eligible to be covered under Medi-Cal regardless of immigration status. Finally, the data does not include low-income working individuals who receive health insurance through their work, though they may be enrolled in CalFresh.

To protect privacy, this data book only includes aggregate-level data and excludes counts equal to or less than 10.

Individuals may be duplicated across vulnerable populations; for example, the same individual may be counted in both the individuals with disabilities population and the public housing population. However, the total count within each vulnerable population is unduplicated.

<sup>3</sup> Approximately 212,000 individuals were enrolled in the Medi-Cal program in September 2019.

<sup>4</sup> Dietz M, Graham-Squire D, Becker T, Chen X, Lucia L, Jacobs K. Preliminary CalSIM v 2.0 regional remaining uninsured projections [Internet]. Berkeley (CA): UC Berkeley Center for Labor Research and Education; 2016 Aug [cited 2020 Jan 16]. Available from: <http://laborcenter.berkeley.edu/pdf/2016/Preliminary-CalSIM-20-RegionalRemaining-Uninsured-2017.pdf>

## CONTACT

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