

REGIONAL ACTION PLAN 2024

Strategies for an effective
homelessness response
system in the Bay Area



**ALL
HOME**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The Regional Impact Council Steering Committee provided valuable feedback and guidance throughout this process, and ultimately approved the overall goal and strategies in this updated Regional Action Plan.

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INTRODUCTION

Overview

In the spring of 2021, All Home and the Regional Impact Council published the first Regional Action Plan (RAP), a set of strategies for the Bay Area to reduce unsheltered homelessness by 75 percent in three years. Three years have passed, and there are still more than 25,000 people sleeping outdoors on any given night around our region. **But three years of work to implement the RAP's strategies have yielded important progress and lessons, and reinforced our conviction that homelessness is solvable.**

This new Regional Action Plan builds on that progress and can set the Bay Area on a path to make homelessness rare, brief, and one-time. It is a plan to make our homelessness response system—which is actually the sum total of each of the nine Bay Area counties' homelessness response systems—truly effective to meet the challenge before us. **This is the moral challenge of our time, and with all of our region's wealth and ingenuity, we should be able to meet it.**

An effective homelessness response system in the Bay Area will require greater investment in the concurrent solutions All Home identified in the original RAP's 1-2-4 Framework for Homelessness Solutions.



Targeted Homelessness Prevention to keep people at high risk of becoming unhoused in their homes, reducing the number of people in need to at least what our system can serve. **We'll never get homelessness under control if we don't slow it down.**



Permanent Housing includes a variety of options, including but not limited to Permanent Supportive Housing, that are affordable and accessible to people with very low incomes who are recovering from homelessness. **Ultimately, homes solve homelessness, and sometimes supportive services are necessary too.**



Interim Housing that features a basic level of individual privacy, supportive services, security, and space to keep belongings, can help people stabilize and heal from being unhoused, while they get connected to a permanent home. **The sidewalk should not be the waiting room for a proper place to live.**

The original RAP offered a rough estimate of what it would cost to drastically reduce homelessness. **This new RAP goes much further. It includes a detailed RAP Solutions Dashboard,** which interactively shows what interventions are needed right now, how they relate to each other, and how much they will cost for each county and the region at large. It also includes recommendations for accountability and tracking progress over time that are in line with recommendations from a recent State audit of homelessness programs, though we call on the State to provide more guidance to local jurisdictions striving to meet the mark.¹

To get this done, our region needs more than just an influx of funding. **We also have to transform our systems to improve coordination** within and across counties while bringing more urgency and flexibility to housing production and homelessness response. No single department can possibly address such a complex problem that touches nearly every aspect of public life. Collaboration (when it occurs at all) is often ad hoc and informal, lacking the structure and consistency that could improve outcomes.

While this plan calls for systemic change, it's important to acknowledge the herculean efforts of thousands of dedicated people who work in the homelessness response system every day. They provide profound hope and healing to others, often under stress and with insufficient resources to do what they know ought to be done. In exchange, they are often underpaid and underappreciated for the vital work they do.² **Everyone in our region owes these workers a debt of gratitude—homelessness would be far worse without their efforts.** They will also be instrumental in strengthening our systems, since they know the ins and outs. Several leading service providers advised us on the development of this updated Regional Action Plan, as they did with the original RAP.

This report provides an update on the state of homelessness in the Bay Area and our region's response to it. It explains some of the barriers and challenges local governments and service providers face to effectively address homelessness, and offers recommendations, backed by All Home's pro bono technical assistance, to achieve the drastic and sustained reduction in homelessness that everyone in our region is eager to see.

Homelessness Response Systems Are Not Working Effectively

Across the Bay Area more than 44,000 people will become homeless in a given year.³ Even more of our neighbors, having already lost stable housing, will seek housing or temporary shelter and find nothing available. The fact is that here in the wealthiest region in North America, a global innovation capital, **virtually none of our region's communities have enough housing and shelter options to serve even a majority of their residents who have been pushed into homelessness.** As a result, more

than 25,000 people in the Bay Area who are unsheltered, having nowhere else to go, are trying to survive outdoors until housing becomes available. Many of them don't make it—mortality rates among people experiencing homelessness in the region have risen dramatically in recent years.⁴

At some point, most of those who do survive will eventually gain access to housing and services. But because our homelessness response systems do not have enough resources to serve everyone, they prioritize people with the highest level of need. While this is a rational approach, it also perpetuates the problem. Every day, homelessness service providers, who do heroic work in challenging circumstances, must turn away newly unhoused people who do not yet have severe mental health challenges, physical disabilities, or substance abuse issues. Fast forward and the same person, having been homeless for many months or sometimes years, is so damaged from the experience that they require more care and supportive services when they are finally eligible for assistance—sometimes more than may be available to them.

Due to a lack of resources, homelessness response systems often help only the most dire cases, leaving others to languish until they also reach a crisis level. The problem is not that people in need refuse housing or services (most don't), but that we don't have enough of the housing or services they actually need, when they need it.

The damage that homelessness does to the San Francisco Bay Area cannot be overstated. It degrades the quality of life for everyone, the vitality of our communities, our sense of pride as a place and as neighbors. The toll it takes on those most impacted is plain to see, though only the tip of the iceberg is visible as we walk by. We do not have to accept so much unrealized human potential, suffering, and needless death in our midst.



Homelessness is a Policy Choice

Homelessness in the Bay Area is not a natural phenomenon—it has not always been this way. As voters, elected leaders, neighbors, public servants, landlords, home buyers and sellers, employers, and more, we collectively made choices over the last few decades that contributed to the current crisis. And we can make choices to fix it.

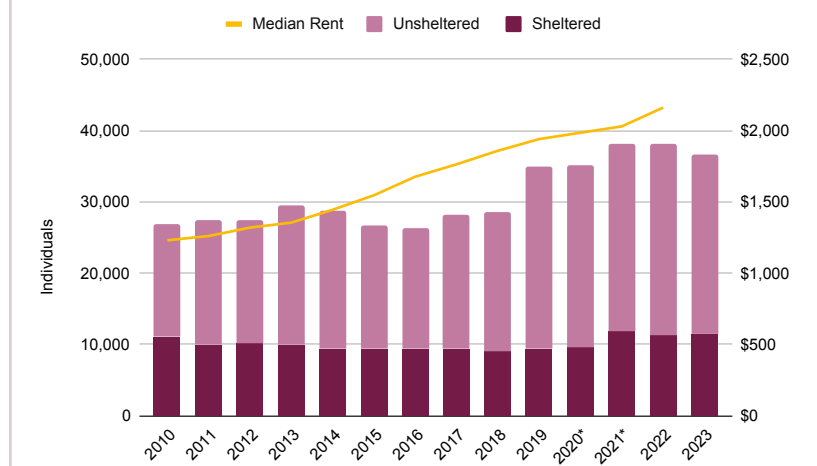
Homelessness is correlated with high housing costs—not high poverty or drug use, or the supposed generosity of public benefits.⁵ For more than four decades, our communities have perpetuated a housing shortage in the Bay Area. **Especially since 2010, as the region experienced rapid high-income job growth, but only built one new home for every eight jobs created.⁶** During this period, landlords increased rents precipitously, displacing many extremely low-income households from once-affordable neighborhoods. Governor Jerry Brown's elimination of redevelopment agencies in 2012—the primary source of affordable housing funding in most Bay Area communities—made matters even worse.

Everyday life circumstances can tip the balance between stable housing and homelessness. A job loss, sudden illness or injury, substance use, or a discriminatory landlord, may be the last straw for an individual or family with no social or financial safety net, **but the fundamental problem is the lack of affordable homes.**

Many of the roughly one million Bay Area residents who have extremely low incomes (ELI) are on the brink of homelessness. The majority of ELI renters are severely cost-burdened, meaning they spend more than 50 percent of their income on housing. Those who receive no housing assistance pay an average of 76 percent of their income in rent, leaving little for other needs, let alone for a rainy day.

The Bay Area is a diverse place where people of color make immeasurable contributions as leaders, entrepreneurs, culture-makers, and community members. **But due to generations of discrimination in employment, education, housing, and policing, Black, Latino, and Indigenous people struggle more than others to make ends meet.** These identities are also greatly overrepresented in those experiencing homelessness, particularly for Black residents. Just six percent of Bay Area residents are Black, compared to 25 percent of unhoused residents.⁷

Figure 1. Median Rents and Rates of Homelessness in the Bay Area, 2010-2023



Source: Point-in-Time (PIT) count data from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; Census American Community Survey (ACS) 1-year estimates for SF-Oakland-Fremont Metropolitan Area, 2010-2022, Table B25058.
Note: Missing data for 2020 (ACS) and 2021 (PIT) interpolated to follow trends.

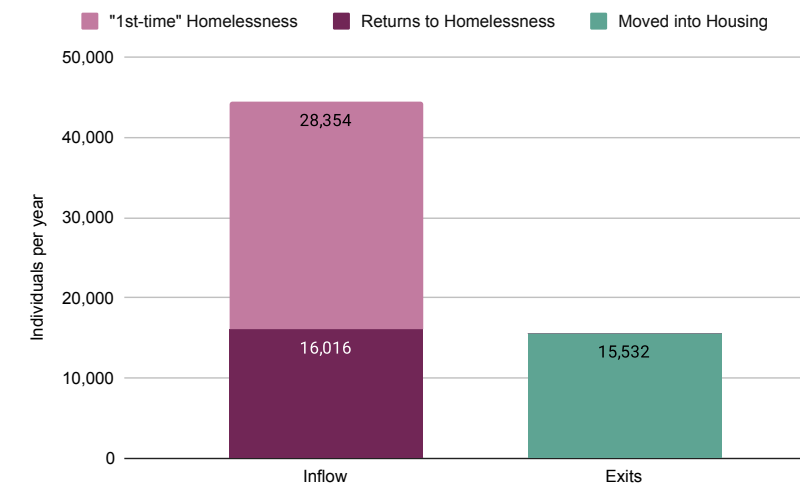
The foreclosure crisis from 2007 through 2011 was just one recent example of this. Banks intentionally targeted lower-income homeowners of color to purchase subprime variable-rate mortgages, and then foreclosed on thousands of Bay Area homes, effectively cheating residents—disproportionately people of color—out of both wealth and home.⁸ **In this case as in most others, racism didn't only harm people of color, its impacts rippled across systems and did more widespread damage.**⁹

Institutionalized racism and a lack of affordable housing are structural problems driving the homelessness crisis. The results are captured in Figure 2, which shows that across the region, **about three people become homeless for every one who moves from homelessness into housing.** Homelessness will not decline until we are able to address this imbalance.

Unfortunately when it comes to creating more housing that most people can afford, we build far too little, too slowly to meet our region's needs. Figure 3 shows the [Region Housing Needs Allocation \(RHNA\) targets](#) for the Bay Area (how many housing units affordable to people with very low incomes the region needs to build each year), compared to the number of units actually completed. The target is 14,000 units, but we haven't built more than 2,500 in a recent year.

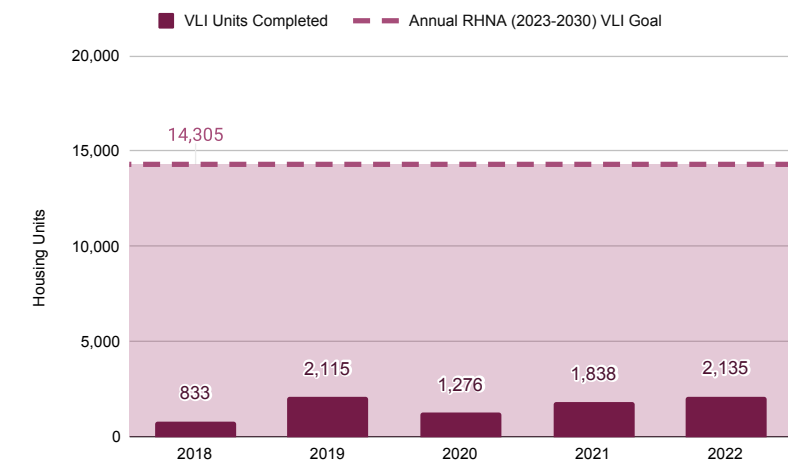
These problems are decades in the making and have begun to feel entrenched, but we need not continue along this path. The pandemic recently proved that we, collectively and as individuals, can make drastic changes when there is sufficient urgency and political will. It's time we muster the will to address homelessness with the urgency and resources it will take to finally get the problem under control.

Figure 2. Annual New Homelessness and Exits to Housing across the Bay Area Region



Source: Homeless Data Integration System (HDIS) data, provided by the California Interagency Council on Homelessness.
 Note: Based on average of records from 2020-2022. "Moved into Housing" includes both system exits to permanent housing destinations and individuals enrolled in permanent housing programs at the end of a year.

Figure 3. Very-low income (VLI) housing RHNA target and homes completed, 2018-2022



Source: California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) Housing Element & Annual Progress Report Dashboard; ABAG Final Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) Plan: San Francisco Bay Area, 2023-2031.

PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES SINCE 2021

The original Regional Action Plan was a call to action and statement of emergency, released at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since then, All Home and the Regional Impact Council have built support for the plan across the region and partnered with local governments and other stakeholders to implement its recommendations.

Yet clearly, there is more work to be done. While timely government investments and interventions during the pandemic prevented a more drastic increase in homelessness, decision-makers did not sustain those efforts, nor the sense of urgency that enabled them. **There are still more than 25,000 people sleeping outdoors on any given night around our region, a modest increase since 2019.**

The Regional Action Plan introduced the 1-2-4 Framework for Homelessness Solutions, which calls for concurrent investments in targeted homelessness prevention, interim housing and permanent housing solutions. This concept has taken hold across the region, providing a foundation to build on as it remains the backbone of this updated plan.



Regional Action Plan Endorsements

Since 2021, the legislative bodies of several jurisdictions have endorsed the RAP.

- Counties of Contra Costa, San Mateo, Solano, and Sonoma
- Cities of Berkeley, Hayward, and Vallejo
- Continuums of Care in San Francisco, Solano, and Sonoma
- Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART)

Several other counties and cities have incorporated the concept of concurrent investments in targeted homelessness prevention, interim housing, and permanent housing solutions, and adapted the framework for their local context.

- City and County of San Francisco: *Home by the Bay: An Equity-Driven Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness in San Francisco, 2023-2028*
- City of Richmond: *Homelessness Strategic Plan, 2023*
- City of Oakland, Housing and Community Development Department: *2023-2027 Strategic Action Plan*
- County of Alameda: *Home Together 2026 Community Plan*
- County of Sonoma: *5 Year Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness 2023-2027*

Technical Assistance for Systems Planning and Coordination





As cities and counties have endorsed the RAP and integrated it into their policy frameworks, several have requested All Home's pro bono technical assistance to advance concurrent solutions and improve planning and coordination.

- The counties of **Contra Costa, Solano, and Sonoma** have collaborated with All Home to produce **analytics** that help them understand and analyze their programs and expenditures. The **County of Alameda and City and County of San Francisco** have also consulted with All Home as they conduct their own systems planning.
- The counties of **Contra Costa and Sonoma** have invited All Home to facilitate **county-wide policy planning to evaluate and improve coordination** within their homelessness response systems.
- Several jurisdictions have partnered with All Home and Bay Area Community Services to provide **targeted homelessness prevention**, including the cities of **Fremont, Oakland, and San Francisco**; and the **counties of Contra Costa, Napa, Solano, and Sonoma**.





The Original RAP's Strategic Priorities

The original RAP identified eight strategic priorities to help advance the 1-2-4 Framework. The Regional Impact Council (RIC), local government partners, and other stakeholders aligned with All Home and acted with urgency on many of these priorities, including several focused on strengthening programs and financial support for people impacted by the pandemic.

House & Stabilize

-  Ensure Shelter-in-Place (SIP) residents remain housed
-  Streamline State funds and applications for housing
-  Prioritize ELI for housing resources
-  Extend covenants of affordability

Prevent

-  Extend eviction moratoria
-  Accelerate cash payments to people impacted by COVID-19
-  Provide income-targeted rental assistance to those impacted by COVID-19
-  Accelerate targeted, data-informed regional prevention model



Strategic priorities 1, 5, 6, and 7 aimed to house and keep people housed in the midst of the pandemic.

The RIC and our partners successfully advocated for a series of bills to extend statewide eviction protections, and pressed local governments to enact protections that went farther than the state moratorium. We also helped coordinate nearly 50 organizations to develop [Eight Essential Actions](#) that local governments could take to prepare for the end of pandemic-era eviction and foreclosure protections.

Priorities 2, 3, and 4 are longer term and ongoing efforts to house and stabilize people with extremely low incomes.

All Home and the RIC supported and sponsored successful legislation to streamline affordable housing production ([AB 2011](#), [SB 423](#), [SB 4](#), [AB 1449](#)) and elevate the need for ELI housing ([AB 2094](#)). All Home partnered with UC Berkeley's Turner Center on Housing Innovation to [publish research](#) about the housing and economic challenges ELI households face, which has been widely cited and has helped make the case to prioritize available housing for ELI households.

In November 2022 All Home released [The Big Moves for Housing and Economic Security](#), a long-term policy agenda to address the root causes of homelessness and poverty that underscores these priorities.

Employment as Homelessness Prevention

One way to prevent homelessness is to create more living-wage jobs for people with extremely low incomes, especially those overcoming barriers to employment, like a history of homelessness or incarceration. In [UCSF's Statewide Study of People Experiencing Homelessness](#), 28 percent cited "economic reasons" for losing their last housing and 22 percent specifically cited "job loss."¹⁴

All Home is piloting a project to better connect the housing and workforce development systems.

The pilot matches participants with local property management employers, who have a strong demand to fill jobs as desk clerks, technicians, and property managers at affordable and supportive housing sites. This project will launch in Alameda County late 2024, creating pathways to employment in the property management sector for people in Rapid Re-Housing programs.

By enabling people to increase their incomes while they have short-term housing support (e.g. Rapid Re-Housing subsidies), the **program helps to set people up for long-term housing and economic stability**.

Lessons Learned and Challenges

Over the last three years and in the process of updating the Regional Action Plan, All Home, the Regional Impact Council, and homelessness service providers who advised on the development of this plan identified key challenges to creating the more effective response system that our region needs.

- **Targeted prevention is a high impact solution that has not been implemented to the degree needed**, allowing many more people to be pushed into homelessness than the homelessness response systems can help;
- **Insufficient funding** for concurrent solutions to meet the level of need in communities. Federal, state, and local governments have not yet appropriated the amount of funding needed (outlined in the RAP Solutions Dashboard section below) to effectively prevent and reduce homelessness;
- **Lack of guidance from the federal and state governments on improving oversight and coordination** of homelessness response within and across jurisdictions (e.g. about how counties, cities, service providers, and other stakeholders could combine funding sources and plan together for a more interconnected and efficient response system);
- **Restrictive land use, zoning, and development rules** make it hard to quickly produce both permanent and interim housing; and,
- **Public frustration and negative narratives** are a barrier to building the political will to sufficiently fund and scale homelessness response systems and housing production.



Challenge spotlight: Serving Higher Needs Populations

Another thorny and important challenge comes up repeatedly in conversations with service providers, housers, and government administrators. Like many of the challenges listed above, lack of resources and coordination are at the heart of it.

For people with higher needs, such as behavioral and mental health challenges, substance use disorders, or serious medical conditions that could be co-occurring conditions, **housing alone is not enough to keep them healthy and housed long-term**. Supportive services and appropriate treatment to serve their distinct needs are necessary.

One promising solution is [Assertive Community Treatment \(ACT\)](#), which brings together integrated teams to provide comprehensive support to people with complex behavioral health needs. Extensive research has demonstrated that **models of care like ACT can enable even those with higher needs to remain stably housed in their communities**.¹⁰

Despite the existence of solutions, lack of resources and coordination once again stand in the way:

- **Insufficient funding is the first major challenge**. Models like ACT, with low caseloads and high staffing and resource demands, are expensive. While [CalAIM](#) offers new opportunities to reimburse for some tenancy-sustaining and other housing support services, many providers of permanent supportive housing are unfamiliar with the complicated requirements and Medi-Cal billing process and not “certified” as Medi-Cal billing providers. **The fragmentation of the medical, housing, and crisis response systems further inhibits effective coordination of diverse funding streams**.¹¹ If we could use all these streams to cover costs in a flexible way that actually treated the “whole person,” we would be much better off.
- **The failure of efficient systems coordination makes it difficult to match residents' needs with the right housing options**. An effective homelessness response system requires flexibility and mobility, which can only be achieved with close coordination among all the players.
 - **Even when individuals with the highest needs are prioritized for assistance, they are frequently given insufficient wrap-around support**. A mismatch between the services a person needs and what is actually provided reduces the odds they'll remain stably housed.¹²
 - Meanwhile—and tragically (as discussed on [page 6](#))—**those with lower or no support needs are often offered no help, so they remain unsheltered longer**, exposing them to more trauma and adverse health impacts, and perpetuating a vicious cycle in which people aren't housed or helped until they require a higher level of support.
 - **As residents' need for services decrease, it's difficult to move them into more independent-living situations and programs**. For example, many young people aging out of the foster care system benefit greatly from the services provided by supportive housing, but are eventually able to pursue more independent living arrangements (perhaps with the assistance of a housing voucher or by increasing their income as they become more stably employed).¹³ If the system does not enable or incentivize these transitions, efficiency suffers—as do people who wait on the streets until a unit is available.





AN UPDATED REGIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR FUNCTIONAL ZERO HOMELESSNESS

Homelessness is solvable and remains at the top of the list of public concerns in every poll in the Bay Area and across California, **so it's time we make proven solutions our top priority.**

The ultimate goal of this updated Regional Action Plan (RAP) is functional zero homelessness. Functional zero does not mean homelessness disappears forever. It means that the cities and counties of our region have developed effective response systems that can serve people in a timely way to stabilize their specific situation—whether they are at risk of eviction from their home, newly unhoused, or they have experienced homelessness for a long time. **A truly effective response system is one that makes homelessness a rare, brief and one-time experience.**

As we work towards functional zero homelessness, **we must also diminish the stark racial disparities in who experiences homelessness.** These inequities are not mere symptoms, but drivers of homelessness. If we succeed in reducing homelessness but continue to see the same level of racial disparities, our work will not be done.

To bring our systems up to this level, each county needs to advance **three solutions simultaneously with enough funding to meet the need, and improve coordination among the stakeholders** who play a role in those systems.

Expand Three Concurrent Solutions

Increase Funding for Targeted Homelessness Prevention

WHAT IT IS

Targeted homelessness prevention identifies households with multiple evidence-based risk factors for homelessness, and provides a combination of emergency financial assistance, housing-focused case management, and individualized referrals to service providers and programs to help keep them in their homes.

WHY IT IS IMPORTANT

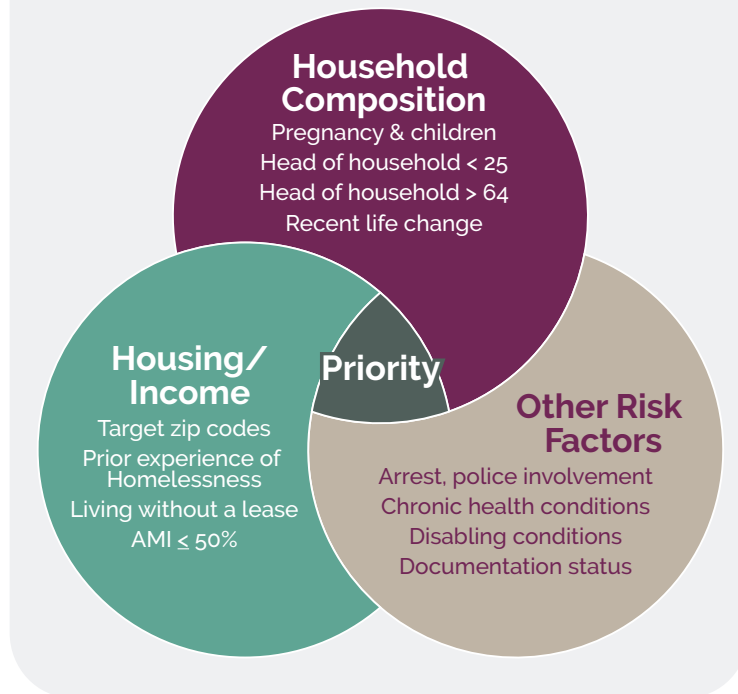
Across the Bay Area, at least three people are becoming homeless for every one that secures housing through local homeless response systems. As long as this is true, we'll never make progress on the issue. Targeting high-risk households for assistance is an efficient use of limited resources, since not everyone who seeks help will actually be pushed into homelessness without it.

WHERE WE ARE NOW

Support for targeted prevention is growing across the region and the country, in part due to the success of short-term rental assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, many counties and cities have struggled to grow or sustain funding for local prevention programs after the loss of federal pandemic funding.

Many of the prevention-oriented programs that do exist are not targeting resources efficiently. They often provide assistance based on demographics (e.g., families, people with disabilities, veterans) and income level, but do not take into account well-researched risk factors, so the help may not be reaching those who are the most likely to actually become homeless.

Risk Factors for Homelessness



WHAT ALL HOME IS DOING

All Home works with local governments, philanthropy and other partners to advance a regional prevention strategy to keep people in their homes and stop homelessness before it starts. So far we have partnered with several jurisdictions to launch or pilot this program, including in the cities of Fremont, Oakland, and San Francisco; and the counties of Contra Costa, Napa, Solano, and Sonoma.

See a detailed explanation of [All Home's targeted homelessness prevention program](#).

WHAT ELSE IS NEEDED

The State of California, local government partners, and service providers must better integrate targeted prevention into homelessness response systems. To significantly reduce the number of our neighbors who become unhoused every year, they must identify flexible funding to increase targeted assistance to meet the level of need.



WHAT'S WORKING AROUND THE REGION

Targeted Homelessness Prevention Kept Patricia's Family Housed in Alameda County

For Patricia, receiving **tenant rights counseling and financial assistance from All Home's homelessness prevention partnership with Keep Oakland Housed** meant the difference between her family staying in their home and being evicted. After leaving El Salvador with her son and partner as a result of gang violence, Patricia settled in Oakland. Following advice from her son's doctor, Patricia adopted an emotional support animal for him. As a result, her landlord attempted to increase her rent by \$500 a month or threatened to evict them—all at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Patricia was referred to Bay Area Community Services (BACS), which implements Oakland's prevention program, by a local community organization. BACS staff **informed her of her rights and negotiated directly with her landlord**. BACS also provided Patricia with **financial assistance to pay her overdue rent balance**—a huge relief after her employment was impacted by the pandemic.



"Nos sentimos muy aliviados porque pasamos unos meses bien difíciles con la duda, la incertidumbre de dónde nos íbamos a ir...Nos ayudó mucho—tanto a mi hijo emocionalmente y a nosotros también."

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

"We feel so relieved now. It was a really tough couple of months with all the uncertainty... not knowing where we were going to end up. This was such a help—both emotionally for my son and for us as well."



Build More Permanent Housing - Connect People with the Right Solution

WHAT IT IS

Permanent housing for people in our region that are unhoused or are at risk of becoming homeless encompasses a range of solutions—from a home they can afford with no need for additional services, to permanent supportive housing with comprehensive wrap-around services. Ongoing rental subsidies, such as Housing Choice Vouchers or the shorter term Rapid Re-Housing Program, are permanent housing solutions that leverage existing units.

WHY IT IS IMPORTANT

The Bay Area's lack of deeply affordable housing is a root cause of our homelessness crisis, and building much more of it is critical to achieve functional zero. More permanent housing that is affordable to extremely low-income and formerly unhoused individuals and families must be part of an effective homelessness response system in our region.¹⁵

WHERE ARE WE NOW

The process for securing funding, obtaining planning approvals, receiving building permits, and completing construction for multi-family affordable housing is painfully slow and expensive. This is exacerbated by resident opposition to new rental or multi-family housing in many neighborhoods and cities, and on some planning committees and elected boards. Exclusionary zoning and land-use policies with racist roots are still barriers around the region, though some cities have made welcome reforms. Construction costs are extremely high, partly because of the high cost of living in the Bay Area. As noted in Figure 3, the region's production of low-income housing has lagged far behind the need in recent years.

WHAT ALL HOME IS DOING

All Home is deeply engaged in policy and budget advocacy to increase affordable housing solutions at the federal, state and local levels. We have sponsored successful state legislation to advance the production of housing affordable to people with extremely low incomes, fought for flexible state homelessness funding, and advocated at the federal level to win more Housing Choice Vouchers and reform the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit so it better services ELI households. Our team has also been a leading voice advancing a regional affordable housing bond measure in the Bay Area and a statewide constitutional amendment to lower the voter threshold to approve bonds for affordable housing across California.

WHAT ELSE IS NEEDED

Many of the policy campaigns mentioned above are long-term efforts that are ongoing. It will take significantly increased resources from all levels of government to fund the new affordable housing and the rental subsidies necessary, and further state-level policy change to streamline production and funding programs in California.



WHAT'S WORKING AROUND THE REGION

Expanding Deeply Affordable Housing – Santa Clara County's Measure A

In 2016, residents in [Santa Clara County](#) approved Measure A, which raised **\$950 million to build and preserve affordable housing throughout the County** over the course of 10 years.

- **More than 5,500 units of multi-family rental affordable and supportive housing** are committed for development using Measure A, surpassing the program goal by almost 1,000 units.
- **More than 2,200 new units** of affordable housing have already been completed.
- Measure A will help about **235 families secure loans to finance their first home purchase**.
- The program has already helped finance **more than 200 percent of its goal for very low-income housing**.





Build More Interim Housing - A Bridge to a Stable Home

WHAT IT IS

"Interim housing" describes dwellings that provide a short-term place in which to stabilize and heal after living on the streets, on the way to a permanent home. It should offer a basic level of supportive services, individual privacy, security, freedom to come and go, and space to keep belongings.

WHY IT IS IMPORTANT

An effective homelessness response system should move at a speed that recognizes lives are at stake. It is unconscionable to have 25,000 people living on the streets in the Bay Area. Unsheltered homelessness negatively impacts everyone in the region, including those who are stably housed. Interim housing appears to be much more popular and attractive to people who are unhoused than traditional congregate shelter, because of the privacy, stability, flexibility, and dignity it provides.¹⁶

WHERE WE ARE NOW

The COVID-19 pandemic caused a number of innovations in shelter policy and availability, including transforming existing buildings—often hotels or motels—into interim and then permanent housing for previously unhoused individuals. [Project Homekey](#) is a successful statewide program that has accelerated this development. Homekey is notable for its funding flexibility and the speed with which it enables local communities to complete projects. Across the region, from new tiny home communities in Santa Clara County to former motels in Sonoma County, interim housing sites are providing dignified places for people to come in off the street and out of encampments.

However, many communities still have traditional shorter term congregate shelters, and the beds in those facilities remain more numerous than interim housing units.



WHAT ALL HOME IS DOING

All Home and the Regional Impact Council have developed a set of [Interim Housing Principles](#) to help establish a common understanding of interim housing models and practices. We believe these principles should set the standard for quality non-congregate shelter that meets residents' needs and is an asset to the surrounding community. We advocate to build more interim housing, but not at the expense of permanent housing or homelessness prevention.

WHAT ELSE IS NEEDED

Given the current scarcity of affordable housing, we must quickly develop and provide decent temporary housing options, with appropriate services for those who need them. This will be necessary until local governments and service providers can reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness. This means expanding funding from all levels of government, to build more interim housing. Streamlining approvals and finding more suitable sites is also necessary to bring this solution up to the level of need.



WHAT'S WORKING AROUND THE REGION

Interim Housing - Homekey, Mountain View
[LifeMoves](#) operates a Project Homekey interim housing site for individuals and families in Mountain View, serving about 120 people (88 individual units, 12 units for families). LifeMoves, a homeless services agency in Silicon Valley, manages the site and provides clients with mental health care and intensive case management.

A case manager helps client access benefits, connect to employment services, and provides classes on financial literacy, among other services. The site provides private rooms with doors that lock as well as shared common spaces such as laundry, dining, bathrooms and recreational activities. This site tripled the existing number of interim housing beds available in Mountain View.



Improve Systems Planning and Coordination

WHAT IT IS

Counties must have data-driven plans that estimate program needs in their communities, project the infrastructure needed to close service gaps, and use that information to inform resource allocation and coordination among local governments, service providers, and other stakeholders. Proactive systems planning makes our homelessness response system more effective by ensuring policy priorities, funding, and program coordination are aligned.

WHY IT IS IMPORTANT

Strong planning and coordination is the foundation that enables counties, continuums of care, cities, and other stakeholders to effectively respond to homelessness. Planning and coordination will put local jurisdictions in a stronger position to strategically and expeditiously deploy funding and resources as they become available.

WHERE WE ARE NOW

A homelessness response system is not a singular agency, but a network of housing, health, and social services agencies, service providers, and other stakeholders navigating incredibly complex administrative processes to coordinate federal, state, and local homelessness programs and funding. State and federal policy plans are often not clearly aligned, they frequently change, and lack the dedicated resources needed to effectively respond to homelessness. Consequently, local governments bear the burden of braiding these programs with minimal guidance from the federal or state government and limited resources to support administrative coordination among local stakeholders.



WHAT ALL HOME IS DOING

All Home's technical assistance team works directly with counties and their stakeholders to facilitate effective systems planning and coordination. With this updated Regional Action Plan, All Home is sharing the "[Support Card](#)," a new tool to guide jurisdictions in evaluating and improving their homelessness planning and coordination efforts.

WHAT ELSE IS NEEDED

Local jurisdictions must use consistent, data-informed methods to align their strategic plans, funding priorities, and programming and hold all parties accountable for meaningful results (such as those discussed in the section below, "Tracking Whether Our Solutions Are Working"). The state and federal governments also have a crucial role incentivizing this paradigm shift by providing clear guidance on how local governments should coordinate roles and responsibilities, offering robust technical assistance, consolidating and simplifying grant requirements, and dedicating ongoing funding to enable local governments and providers to reach their homelessness reduction goals.



WHAT'S WORKING AROUND THE REGION

Systems Alignment and Good Governance - Solano County

The County of Solano and the cities within Solano County have joined together to create a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) specifically to address homelessness. The JPA is the first of its kind in the Bay Area, and since the City of Dixon joined and the entity restructured in 2022, **Solano County is one of very few communities in California that have every city at the table.**

Community Action Partnership of Solano (CAP Solano JPA) has worked to maximize federal, state and local funding that would not have been available to any one jurisdiction alone. The JPA leverages existing resources within the County, each jurisdiction contributes to solutions, and **it works with the local Continuum of Care to develop consistent policies and practices to serve individuals and families experiencing homelessness.**



REGIONAL ACTION PLAN SOLUTIONS DASHBOARD

All Home has created an interactive [RAP Solutions Dashboard](#) to demonstrate the mix of concurrent solutions (targeted prevention, interim housing, and permanent housing) needed to drastically reduce homelessness in the Bay Area and each of the region's nine counties. The dashboard also includes an estimate of the associated costs.

This new tool is informed by All Home's Solutions Modeling and draws on a variety of local data sources on homelessness and housing production to estimate the number of households that will need assistance over time, and to project the impact of simultaneously implementing these three solutions.

It is important to emphasize that **the dashboard's homelessness reduction estimates depend upon concurrent expansion of targeted prevention, permanent housing solutions and new interim housing.** This means that the estimates provided for each of these solutions are dependent upon each other. For example, if a jurisdiction fails to invest sufficiently in homelessness prevention, considerably more permanent and interim housing will be required to meet homelessness reduction goals, which would incur a considerably greater cost.

All Home will update the RAP Solutions Dashboard at least once a year, as new data becomes available from counties and continuums of care. **The dashboard is intended to give local governments, other stakeholders, and interested members of the public a clearer sense of what it will take to reduce homelessness** by investing in prevention, interim, and permanent housing.

Milestones on the Road to Functional Zero

Although the new goal of the RAP is focused on building an effective response system so our region can achieve functional zero homelessness, our Solutions Modeling and Dashboard provide a roadmap to help jurisdictions achieve milestones of reducing unsheltered homelessness by 25 percent, 50 percent, and 75 percent.

As an example, Figure 4 details the estimated new housing and assistance required to reduce unsheltered homelessness by 75 percent in five years, along with associated costs. That is the same reduction goal of the original RAP, with a slightly longer timeline to reflect the reality that housing development and program implementation take time. The estimates provided are the result of a modeling scenario in which new incidence of homelessness is reduced by 15 percent through significantly expanded homelessness prevention assistance. **Without this reduction in new homelessness, substantially more interim and permanent housing are required to attain the same reduction goal.**

Expanding the capacity of our regional homelessness response systems according to this model would:

- Provide homelessness **prevention assistance to roughly 19,000 households annually.**
- **Develop over 37,000 new permanent housing solutions,** including more than **13,000 new affordable and supportive housing units,** with short-term assistance or ongoing **rental subsidies for an additional 24,000 new households.**
- **Develop approximately 5,200 new interim housing units** to enable people to move off the streets into safe, dignified spaces while they get connected to a permanent home.

The estimated total cost to implement this mix of solutions is about \$9.5 billion over five years, with approximately \$5.2 billion dedicated to one-time construction costs and \$4.3 billion required for operations and services (the majority of which are ongoing). **This estimated cost is in addition to current expenditures to address homelessness across the Bay Area's nine counties.** It's important not to shy away from the fact that these solutions will require much more money than we are currently spending. **The cost of inaction or a continuation of the status quo, however, is also incredibly high in human, moral, and economic terms.**

Figure 4. **RAP Solutions Cost Estimates: New Inventory and Investment Needed to Reduce Unsheltered Homelessness by 75% in Five Years**

Program	New Units or Interventions	Cost
Homelessness Prevention Assistance	94,740	\$821.3M
Interim Housing	5,190	\$1.7B
Permanent Housing Solutions	37,320	\$7.0B
<i>Short-term Assistance</i>	<i>10,080</i>	<i>\$92.5M</i>
<i>Full Rental Subsidies</i>	<i>13,560</i>	<i>\$973.4M</i>
<i>New Affordable Units</i>	<i>6,800</i>	<i>\$2.8B</i>
<i>New PSH Units</i>	<i>6,880</i>	<i>\$3.1B</i>
Total Cost		\$9.5B

TRACKING PROGRESS AND RESULTS

In order to *maintain* the unsheltered reduction targets in the RAP Solutions Dashboard, additional new housing and ongoing operations and services funding would still be required—especially if people continue to be pushed into homelessness at rates similar to today. While no additional interim housing should need to be created after year five, additional permanent housing of all types will need to be added, while maintaining operational costs for the units and subsidies created in the first five years. As a result, the need for new operational and service costs will begin to outpace the need for one-time capital costs beyond the initial five years of this scenario. While projections become more difficult and uncertain the further into the future they look, these longer term estimates help illustrate the significant need for increasing ongoing funding for operations and services. Historically, there have been very few sources of ongoing funding for operations and services, which not only makes long-range planning nearly impossible, it and makes the safety net very precarious.

It's also worth noting that this perpetual need for more affordable and supportive housing is created by structural inequities (starting but not limited to systemic racism) in our economic, health, and education systems. A more just and livable economy, and an *effective social safety* net for those who need it, would stem the tide of people forced into homelessness and reduce the demand for ongoing interventions.

With peoples' lives and our region's livability hanging in the balance, it's important that all stakeholders in the homelessness response system be held accountable for results. That's a simple thing to say, but harder to do in a way that is rigorous, fair, and constructive. Too often, even high-level elected officials assume that what they see tells a full story—that if homelessness is still visible on the street, then our systems must be failing. The fact is that our solutions—housing people and preventing homelessness—are not always visible. **Expectations should also be reasonable and proportional—don't give a nurse a band-aid and expect them to fix a broken arm.**

Ultimately, we absolutely need to see a sustained, visible reduction in unsheltered homelessness. **So as we work toward functional zero, how will we know if we're headed in the right direction?**

This updated Regional Action Plan goes far beyond the original RAP in this regard. **Getting better at tracking our progress also helps us collaborate better with local jurisdictions and other partners**—stakeholders in these systems want to be on the same page, working toward the same goal.

There are three areas to track our progress. This section will briefly describe each of them, some key considerations, and challenges that make it difficult to track progress in some cases.

A recent statewide *audit of five major state homelessness funding programs* found that three of these did not require or support local governments who received the funding to sufficiently track program outputs or results, such that the auditors were unable to determine the effectiveness of those programs. We have found the same thing to be true—the situation also hampers the ability of advocates and local governments themselves to evaluate their own progress. Primary responsibility for this requirement rests on the state bureaucracy that administers these programs to require meaningful outcomes data and provide clearer guidance and technical assistance to local agencies.

Explore the Regional Action Plan Solutions Dashboard and county-level estimates on All Home's website at allhomeca.org/rap-dashboard. A detailed explanation of our Solutions Modeling methodology is available in the companion report, *What it Will Take: Modeling Solutions to Homelessness in the Bay Area*.



Tracking Progress on Prevention, Permanent, and Interim Housing

All Home is committed to simultaneously advancing the three solutions highlighted in this report: targeted homelessness prevention, permanent affordable housing, and interim housing. **Unfortunately, there is virtually no consistent data available on prevention and interim housing across counties. The situation is better for permanent housing, but still not where it should be.** Below is a brief discussion of the “state of the data” for these key solutions.



There are better data sources available for **permanent housing**, but greater detail is needed about housing affordable to people with extremely low incomes or “acutely low incomes” (referring to people who make 0-15 percent of an area’s median income). [AB 2094](#), a law sponsored by All Home that was enacted in 2022, requires jurisdictions to report their ELI housing production numbers to the state Housing and Community Development Agency (HCD) as part of their Regional Housing Needs Allocation annual progress report. That ELI housing data has yet to be incorporated into HCD’s public dashboard, but staff are working to make it available by late 2024. A new bill in the current legislative session, AB 3093 (Ward), would go a step further and require that local jurisdictions comprehensively plan for the housing needs of their homeless and ELI residents through the RHNA process and in developing their local Housing Elements.

Data is available regarding the number of permits issued for units at different depths of affordability, and the number of units completed, since that is reported to HCD. However, even that fails to provide a complete picture of affordable housing stock because it doesn’t shed light on vacancy rates in new and existing buildings, or other important factors such as units lost to the expiration of affordability covenants.



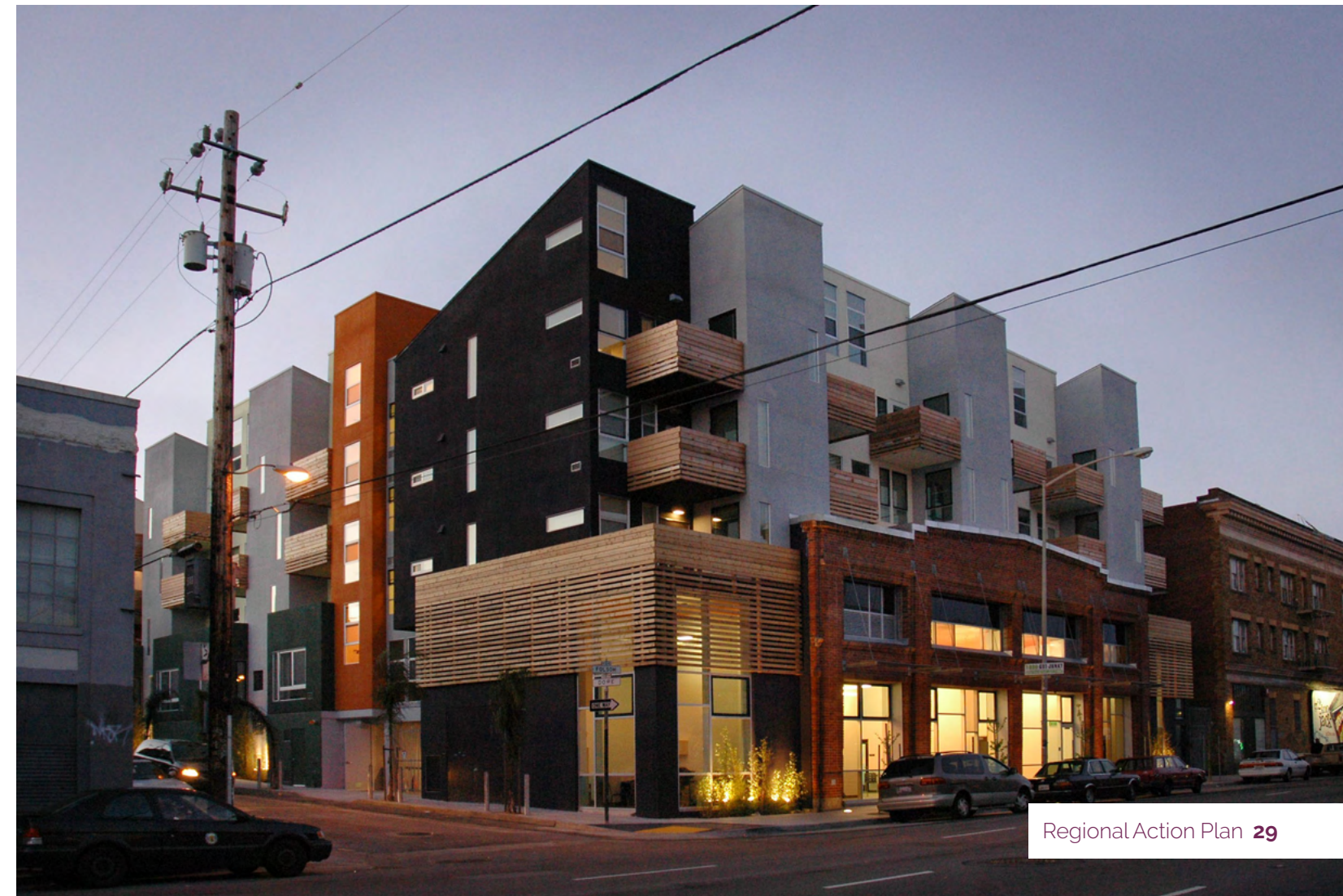
Where **prevention** programs exist, there is no requirement to track program outputs or results, and no standard agreed-upon way to do so (a lapse that is not unique to prevention, as discussed above). Individual counties or cities with prevention programs may track their activity, but only a rare few consistently track outcomes (especially beyond the time that the household is actively engaged with the program), so it is nearly impossible to draw conclusions about whether and where prevention assistance leads to anything beyond short-term housing stabilization. Most jurisdictions are only tracking outputs—how many people are being served and demographics of who is served—and not in a systematic way that is easy to compare across counties. The program models—elements and how the services are delivered—also differ from place to place.

All Home’s targeted prevention program provides consistent services and tracks data so that trends can be analyzed and compared across the region, and used to improve the program’s effectiveness. While All Home continues to successfully build this infrastructure, the amount of funding available for the program regionwide is not yet large enough to have a significant impact on the number of people being pushed into homelessness each year across the Bay Area.

University of Notre Dame researchers have evaluated the effectiveness of Santa Clara County’s Homelessness Prevention Program and found it quite successful.¹⁷ Independent researchers are also evaluating All Home’s programs, with findings expected in the next few years.



Interim housing is still a relatively new concept, and is often lumped together with congregate shelter in the limited federal datasets that track shelter. All Home has [principles that we recommend should define interim housing](#), but there’s no widely agreed upon definition. It is extremely difficult to gather consistent data about the number of interim units in a jurisdiction, the types of dwellings, the services they provide, or even the success of clients in retaining housing after they leave the interim facility.



Introducing All Home's Support Card

All Home created the Support Card to help guide and evaluate jurisdictions' efforts to make their homelessness response systems as effective as possible. Using the Support Card principles will improve coordination between jurisdictions, across relevant departments, and among key stakeholders. This tool is designed to foster mutual accountability, ensure that resources are used as efficiently as possible, and improve outcomes for people experiencing homelessness.

The Support Card is organized around **four core elements**, each of which includes a number of **guiding principles** that describe policies, programs, and practices to strengthen planning and coordination within a homelessness response system. Each guiding principle also has one or more **evaluative questions** associated with it—yes or no questions to help local governments assess their progress.

See the full Support Card framework on All Home's website at allhomeca.org/support-card.



Leadership and political will are necessary to establish homelessness as a top priority for funding and policy-making. The next step is to develop an actionable strategic plan, and wield or delegate authority to implement and update that plan over time. This requires commitment and courage from elected and administrative leaders, as certain necessary decisions and tradeoffs may be unpopular with some who are accustomed to the status quo.



Coordination involves developing the organizational structures within government that are necessary to align policies, funding, and programs across jurisdictions and departments. As much as possible, decision-making processes should involve non-governmental stakeholders, such as service providers and individuals with lived experience of homelessness.



Accountability means creating and implementing a strategic plan with meaningful outcomes and clear oversight roles to monitor progress. Those with an oversight role must have the access and ability to track results, and the authority to trigger a course correction if meaningful outcomes are not being achieved. To the extent possible, local governments should align their plans with federal and state policy objectives.



Resources means deploying public resources with maximum efficiency to reduce homelessness. That includes leveraging funding, budgets, and real estate property holdings to strengthen the homelessness response system, improve program outcomes, and address housing and supportive service needs.

All Home works in partnership with counties to apply this framework to their unique context and offer qualitative assessments through technical assistance. Over time, we will add examples of actual policies and practices that demonstrate how to operationalize the Support Card's principles.

Tracking Whether Our Solutions are Working

Several key metrics are particularly useful for tracking our progress in preventing and ending homelessness. Together, these data points—reported publicly each year—can help us understand the extent to which we are disrupting the factors that perpetuate homelessness: reducing the number of people who experience homelessness, enabling people to quickly move off the streets, creating as many opportunities as possible for people to move into permanent housing, and helping them do so.

Returns to homelessness

One of the biggest predictors of the risk of homelessness is having experienced homelessness before, so a sustained reduction in this number would be a strong indicator of progress.

Sources:

- System Performance Measures (SPMs) reported annually to HUD
- HDIS data requested from the California Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal ICH)

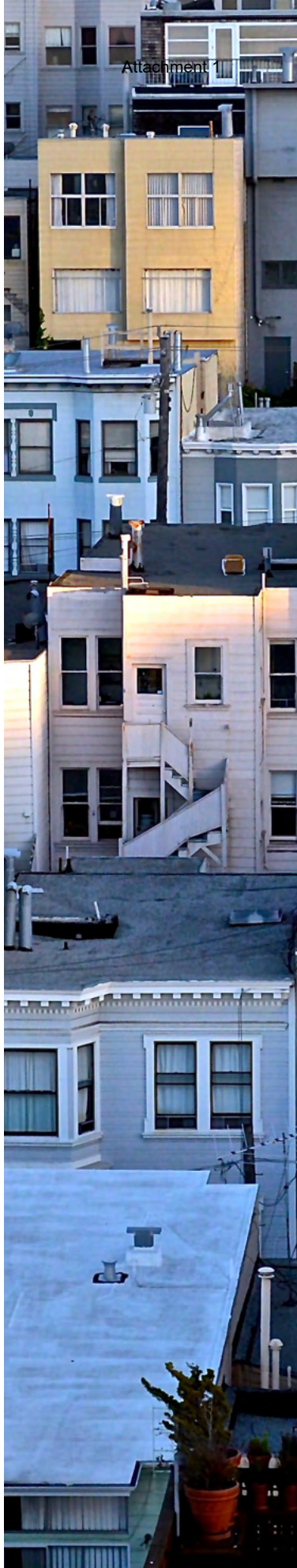
Unsheltered homelessness

It's important to track if unsheltered homelessness is declining, but the data sources that may indicate this are far from perfect. Many stakeholders rely on Point-in-Time (PIT) Count surveys to monitor population changes in homelessness over time. However, the PIT Count only observes unsheltered homelessness on a single day or night once every two years, and is widely considered an undercount. PIT Count data on unsheltered homelessness should always be viewed in relation to sheltered homelessness data, as well as changes in shelter capacity (as reported alongside both numbers in supplemental Housing Inventory Count reports), as these relate closely to each other.

Another option is to monitor data on the number of people accessing temporary or permanent housing through street outreach, a metric that is tracked throughout the year by continuums of care. However, this variable is also imperfect and likely an undercount, as local governments deploy different methods for street outreach and it only counts individuals who have interacted with street outreach programs. Either way, a response system's ability to reduce unsheltered homelessness depends on having shelter, interim housing, and permanent units available for people to move into.

Sources:

- System Performance Measures (SPMs) reported annually to HUD
- HDIS data requested from the California Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal ICH)
- Point-in-Time Count and Housing Inventory Count reports submitted to HUD



Exits to Permanent Housing

Increasing the share of people residing in interim housing sites (or shelter) who exit to permanent housing destinations (as opposed to unsheltered or other temporary destinations) is a key indicator of the success of those sites. Increased exits will likely be the result of increasing the availability of affordable housing options in a community.

Sources:

- System Performance Measures (SPMs) reported annually to HUD
- HDIS data requested from the California Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal ICH)

Permanent Housing Inventory

Increasing the availability of housing affordable to households with extremely low incomes (along with time-limited rental assistance and permanent supportive housing) is the most fundamental solution to homelessness. More affordable homes will enable our homelessness response system to function as it should, strengthen the effectiveness of other solutions (e.g. allow people to quickly move out of interim housing and free up those spaces for others), and provide stable places for people to live so that they can get their lives back on track.

Sources:

- Deeply Affordable New Housing Production - CA Housing & Community Development's "Housing Element Implementation and APR Dashboard"
- Housing Choice Vouchers assigned to formerly homeless individuals - HUD's "Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Data Dashboard"
- Rapid Re-Housing Slots and Permanent Supportive Housing units- Housing Inventory Count (HIC) reported annually to HUD



WHAT'S WORKING AROUND THE REGION

Dramatic Reduction in Homelessness - Sonoma County

Sonoma County saw an overall **22 percent decrease in the county's homeless population in 2023**, according to preliminary results of the 2023 Sonoma County Point-in-Time count. That includes a 24 percent decline in those identified as being chronically homeless and a 38 percent reduction in people living in unsheltered circumstances.

The number of people living in unsheltered circumstances decreased from 2,088 in 2022 to 1,291 in 2023. The dramatic reduction in unsheltered individuals reflects an overall increase in the number of units available at new housing projects in the county.

Initiatives such as **Project Homekey, new safe parking and interim housing sites, housing vouchers, and rental assistance** have all played a role in the decrease across Sonoma County.

GETTING TO FUNCTIONAL ZERO: A CALL TO ACTION

Since the launch of the original Regional Action Plan in 2021, the Bay Area has experienced dramatic changes. The pandemic and its economic disruption income inequality across the globe, and the Bay Area is no exception. Globally, just 10 percent of people hold three quarters of the world's wealth.¹⁷ The pandemic has also changed the nature of the workplace—heaping on hardships for many who were already struggling to get by, while affording many white collar workers more flexibility and comfort, emptying out downtowns, and changing the demands for service work. The extraordinary prosperity that exists alongside stark deprivation in much of our region diminishes our collective humanity and the quality of life for all. **Most Bay Area residents—whether housed or unhoused, comfortable or struggling, Black, white, or brown—know in our bones that this inequity is not only wrong, it is something we should collectively be able to fix.**

Building and sustaining an effective homelessness response system is not only necessary and possible, it is in keeping with the Bay Area's rich history of rising to big challenges. Our region showed the world how to respond to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. We have rebuilt our communities after devastating earthquakes and fires. We are actively restoring the San Francisco Bay itself. **The Bay Area solves big problems and does big things, leading the way for other parts of the country and the world.** We can work together to make homelessness a rare, brief, and one-time experience—and make the Bay Area a more vibrant, safe place to live in the process.

There is good reason for hope. There is growing consensus about effective solutions, and we have seen progress over the past three years. Some cities and counties, such as the City of Berkeley, and the counties of Sonoma, Napa, and Marin saw decreases in homelessness in their recent Point-in-Time Counts. Other places with larger homeless populations, like Oakland and San José, have recently seen slower rates of increase or a slight decrease.

Everyone who calls the Bay Area home has a choice to make. Either we can keep allowing homelessness to be an intractable problem that is part of our regional identity, or we can expand the solutions outlined in this Plan and build a truly effective homelessness response system.

Making the right choice starts with believing in the full humanity of our unhoused neighbors. These are Bay Area residents with extremely low incomes who struggled mightily to make ends meet in our high-cost region before they ran out of options. Many had few options to begin with. Those who struggle with substance use disorders or mental health issues should be able to battle their demons behind closed doors, like the rest of us. People who survive homelessness have aspirations and talents that could make our region even better.

Making the right choice will also require local jurisdictions and the State of California to make tradeoffs to increase funding for solutions. That will take political courage and leadership, which comes from public will. **So every one of us has a role to play in making our wishes known and voting accordingly.**

Bay Area voters may have the opportunity to support a Regional Affordable Housing Bond Measure as soon as November 2024, which would generate \$20 billion for producing and preserving tens of thousands of affordable homes across all nine counties. This measure would be a significant down payment on the funding the region needs to begin to address our deficit of permanent affordable housing.

Homelessness is not the sole responsibility of governments and voters, however. **Philanthropy and the business community can also play important roles**—encouraging innovation, quickly testing promising ideas, evaluating efficacy to prove what works, and filling gaps when public funding falls short. Private funding can be more flexible, which is invaluable when we need to act with speed and urgency. Government—particularly at the state and federal levels—will still be necessary to bring the right solution to the large numbers of people who need it. But undoubtedly more is possible if everyone is working together.



We must seize this moment and take action as if lives are at stake—because they are.

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