



# ENDING HOMELESSNESS

2019-2020

The State of the  
Supportive Housing System  
in Santa Clara County



### Acknowledgements

This report was compiled by Homebase, the Center for Common Concerns, on behalf of the County of Santa Clara Office of Supportive Housing.

Special thanks to Destination: Home for their review and contributions to the report, to the Supportive Housing System clients who shared their stories, and to the many community partners whose tireless work to end homelessness in our community is highlighted in this report.

# Letter from the County Executive

Challenging times call for gratitude and reflection. It is in this spirit that we are pleased to release our third report on the State of the Supportive Housing System, which highlights Santa Clara County's advancements towards our goal of ending homelessness.

This report begins with the progress that the County and our many partners have made since releasing our 2015 Community Plan to End Homelessness, starting with an acknowledgement of the role that the Housing First philosophy has played in our system's growth. Through our commitment to Housing First, and our collaborations with our city, nonprofit, business, and philanthropic partners, we have built new affordable housing, created a robust homelessness prevention system, improved access to behavioral health services, moved toward greater system equity and inclusiveness, and raised the voices of people with lived experience in critical decision-making processes. These are just some of the accomplishments you will read about in these pages.

This report also shines a light on our community's heroic efforts to help prevent the spread of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst our most vulnerable community members, including those experiencing homelessness. We owe a debt of gratitude to our providers and community partners for responding quickly and effectively to raise and distribute emergency funds for homelessness prevention; for delivering meals, supplies and hygiene services to encampments; for providing safe shelter to people at risk of COVID-19 complications; and for creating new interim and permanent housing developments.

We face an uncertain future, as the COVID-19 crisis has only amplified the longstanding systemic causes of homelessness that continue pushing more of our neighbors into homelessness, including our region's income inequalities and severe lack of affordable housing. For this reason, strengthening the supportive housing system is more important than ever. We are fortunate to have developed the 2020-2025 Community Plan to End Homelessness with these challenges in mind. In our first year of implementation, we rose to the occasion by permanently housing over 2,700 people and expanding the homelessness prevention system's capacity by 50%.

In the coming years, we will continue to use this Plan as a roadmap to help guide us in the monumental task of making homelessness a thing of the past. As daunting as this task may seem right now, we are hopeful that the same determination that carried us through the past six years will lead to positive change as we move forward into the future.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey V. Smith, M.D., J.D.  
County Executive Officer  
County of Santa Clara

Miguel Marquez, M.P.P., J.D.  
Chief Operating Officer  
County of Santa Clara

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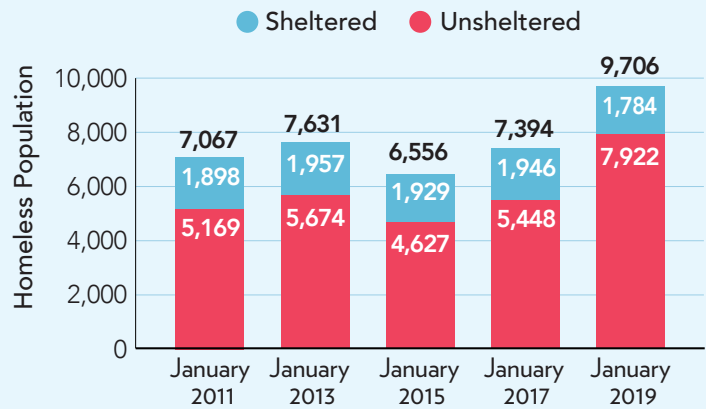
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# Introduction

Santa Clara County is the heart of Silicon Valley, and a hub of wealth, progress, and invention. However, with these economic gains have come societal and humanitarian costs. While some residents have prospered, others have been left behind. Income disparities and sharp rises in housing costs have caused thousands of Santa Clara County residents to become homeless each year, forcing them to double up with friends and relatives or to sleep in shelters, on streets, in vehicles, and other places where people are not meant to live. Recently, we have seen that the COVID-19 pandemic has only increased these disparities, with low-income neighborhoods and people of color bearing the brunt of the crisis.

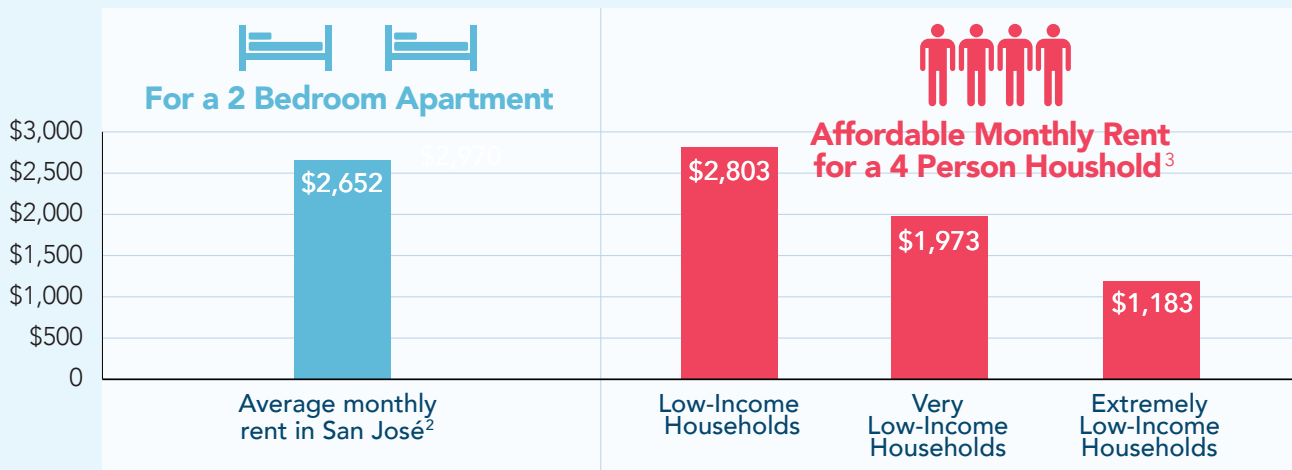
## Santa Clara County Homeless Census & Survey<sup>1</sup>



While our region’s housing affordability gap remains a major concern, the community is making progress. Every day, the County and its many partners are working hard to end homelessness and provide safe and affordable housing for our most vulnerable residents. This report shines a light on some of that work, including how the community committed to taking a “Housing First” approach to ending homelessness.

This report also provides a retrospective on the County of Santa Clara Office of Supportive Housing’s efforts to address homelessness through its implementation of the 2015-2020 Community Plan to End Homelessness, as well as an overview of the progress the supportive housing system made in 2019 and 2020. Lastly, this report will take a look into the future with highlights from the recently adopted 2020-2025 Community Plan to End Homelessness, focusing on the community’s ambitious goals, and the strategies we are using to achieve them.

## 2020 Housing Costs in Santa Clara County



<sup>1</sup> The County did not carry out an unsheltered homeless census and survey in 2021 due to COVID-19 health and safety risks and statewide public health orders to shelter in place.

<sup>2</sup> Source: <https://www.sanjoseca.gov/home/showpublisheddocument?id=67724>

<sup>3</sup> Source: <https://www.sanjoseca.gov/home/showpublisheddocument?id=61061> (affordable rent calculated based on 30% of annual income).

# Where We've Been: Celebrating Success

In 2014, the County of Santa Clara and Destination: Home brought together community stakeholders to develop a coordinated strategy to address homelessness across the county. The resulting 2015-2020 Community Plan to End Homelessness and the coordinated community effort to implement it led to many system successes, including more than 8,800 households being housed.

Additional highlights since implementation of the first community-wide plan include:

## County of Santa Clara Office of Supportive Housing Created


- The Office of Supportive Housing (OSH) was created to expand the County's leadership role in the effort to end homelessness. Until 2011, the County had one position dedicated to addressing "housing and homeless concerns," located within the Mental Health Department and an Office of Affordable Housing located in the planning department.
- OSH developed through the merging of these efforts and is now responsible for operating and spearheading the now-coordinated county-wide systems that help prevent and end homelessness.
- Since its creation, OSH has grown from having 20 employees to having a staff of 121. OSH also more than doubled its resources since FY 2016, with a current operating budget of \$87.6 million.

## Coordinated Assessment System Established

OSH established the Coordinated Assessment System to provide a more streamlined, centralized system for matching the community's most vulnerable households to the right housing resources.<sup>4</sup>

## 2016 Measure A Affordable Housing Bond Passed

2016 Measure A provides \$950 million in funding to create 120 new affordable housing developments over 10 years, including:

 **4,800 units of affordable housing for households with extremely low and very low incomes**

2016 Measure A also helps create rental and home ownership opportunities for households with moderate incomes.

For more information on 2016 Measure A, see page 17.

2015

## 2015-2020 Community Plan to End Homelessness Released

The Community Plan to End Homelessness in Santa Clara County, developed through a series of community summits in 2014, outlined a coordinated strategy to address homelessness using a "Housing First" approach.

**Key goals from the Plan included creating 6,000 new affordable housing opportunities and developing systems to target client-centered solutions to homelessness.**



2016

## All The Way Home Campaign Launched

In 2015, San José Mayor Sam Liccardo and Santa Clara County Supervisor Dave Cortese launched the "All The Way Home" campaign seeking to end veteran homelessness across the county by providing rental assistance, supportive services, and incentives for landlords to house homeless veterans.



**As of December 31, 2020, 2,000 veterans have been housed since the beginning of the campaign.**

<sup>4</sup> For more information, please visit <https://www.sccgov.org/sites/osh/ContinuumofCare/coordinated-assessment/Pages/home.aspx>

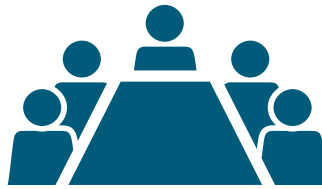
### Homelessness Prevention System Pilot Began

Initially started as a pilot in 2017, the Homelessness Prevention System brings together a network of community partners to provide flexible financial assistance and resources for households at risk of losing their housing, including streamlined access to eviction defense legal services offered by the Silicon Valley Law Foundation.

### Lived Experience Advisory Board Created

Together with Destination: Home, OSH supported the formation of the Lived Experience Advisory Board, a 17-member body comprised of currently and formerly homeless individuals with diverse life experiences.

The Board provides input on new countywide policies, makes recommendations for grant spending, and provides leadership development opportunities for members.



### Cisco Announced \$50 Million Supportive Housing and Innovation Fund

In March 2018, Cisco announced that they would provide \$50 million in funding over five years to support Destination: Home's work toward ending homelessness. Funding has gone toward building supportive housing, conducting research, starting pilot programs utilizing emerging best practices, and pioneering technological solutions.

2017

2018

### Destination: Work Program Launched

Destination: Work is a joint initiative by Destination: Home, the County of Santa Clara OSH, and the City of San José that provides opportunities for living-wage employment for individuals and families experiencing homelessness.



**Destination: Work helps clients increase their incomes and obtain long-term career opportunities.**

The initiative is designed to connect clients to programs offering job training, professional certifications, and paid work experience in high-growth industries.

### LGBTQ-Focused Shelter Opened

In 2018, OSH, the Office of LGBTQ Affairs, and the City of San José came together to create the county's first temporary housing program dedicated to serving LGBTQ-identified residents, a population that is significantly overrepresented in the county's homeless population.

### City of San José Awarded Nearly \$100 Million in Affordable Housing Funding

In 2019, the City of San José awarded nearly \$100 million to 11 developments to create 1,144 units of new affordable housing to low-income groups including people experiencing homelessness.



### Apple Pledged \$2.5 Billion to Address California's Housing Crisis

In November 2019, Apple committed \$2.5 billion to addressing housing affordability issues in California, including \$50 million to support Destination: Home's work increasing supportive housing units and implementing homelessness prevention strategies.

### Villas on the Park Completed

In October 2019, construction was completed on Villas on the Park, a brand new 83-unit Permanent Supportive Housing project in San José, funded by the City of San José, Housing Trust Silicon Valley, and 2016 Measure A. For more information on the Villas, see page 9.

### 2020-2025 Community Plan to End Homelessness Released

- The second Community Plan to End Homelessness in Santa Clara County was released in August 2020. The Plan is based on the input of over 8,000 community members, including people with lived experience of homelessness, service providers, and advocates.
- The plan focuses on three strategies to end homelessness: addressing root causes of homelessness through system and policy change, expanding homelessness prevention and housing programs, and improving quality of life for unsheltered populations and creating healthy neighborhoods for all. For more information on the Community Plan to End Homelessness, see page 18.

### Monterey Gateway Apartments Opened

- In May 2020, Monterey Gateway Apartments opened as the first 2016 Measure A-funded project in Gilroy. The 75-unit project provides affordable housing for seniors. Half of the apartments are dedicated supportive housing units for seniors who have experienced homelessness.
- For more information on Monterey Gateway Apartments, see page 13.

2019

2020

2021

### Second Street Studios Opened



In May 2019, Second Street Studios became home to **134 new tenants** who had experienced long periods of homelessness.

Second Street Studios was the first project in the county to be 100% dedicated to providing supportive housing. Its radically collaborative approach, bringing together developers, property managers, and service providers, offers a model of coordinated support for the community's most vulnerable members.

### City of San José Establishes First Emergency Interim Housing Program

- In Fall 2020, the City of San José and Habitat for Humanity created four semi-permanent modular housing developments in response to the need for socially-distanced shelter during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- These developments increased the system's capacity by over 400 beds which were prioritized for medically vulnerable people and those at high risk of developing COVID-19 complications.





## Supportive Housing Highlight:

# Villas on the Park

Ericka recalls, quite literally, soaking it all in during her first night in her new home. After the door closed behind her and she got settled in her new studio apartment, she took a relaxing, warm bath. As she sat there in comfort, she could not help but be overcome with emotion.

“It felt so good to be in my own place. Every day I am grateful to have a home,” Ericka says. This moment of Zen was the culmination of her journey to Villas on the Park, a new permanent supportive housing development in San José. For more than two years, Ericka was homeless after escaping a toxic relationship. She slept in her car, often in a library parking lot, and showered and did laundry when mobile services were accessible.

A chance encounter with an outreach worker led to her connecting to the County of Santa Clara’s Coordinated Assessment System, which matched her with a supportive housing unit at the Villas in November 2019.

Ericka says life improved dramatically after she moved into the Villas. Beyond the comfort of having a roof over her head, Ericka says the community spirit and social services support at the Villas has been transformative for her and others. Many residents were mere strangers to one another at first, but The Villas has fostered community through classes in nutrition, cooking, gardening, general life skills, walking groups, and more. Some classes are on-site and others are offered through partnerships with non-profits and faith-based organizations.

Ericka has noticed that the community has grown even stronger during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although residents needed to socially distance themselves from one another during shelter-in-place orders, many events were moved online. Some assistance was also made contactless, such as grocery deliveries, she says. “It has triggered a lot of memories about isolation,” Ericka says about the pandemic, but she has strong praise for staff for keeping the fun community vibe going during a stressful period. “This place is just awesome. I value every single day that I’m here.”





## COVID-19 in our County: Responding to the Crisis within the Crisis

Ending and preventing homelessness became more urgent than ever with the arrival of the new Coronavirus (COVID-19) in our community. People without stable housing are often unable to self-isolate or access basic sanitation services to help avoid infection. Further, these realities have exposed deep gaps in our social safety net systems, demanding that the County respond rapidly to prevent disproportionate impacts on low-income residents.

Since the first COVID-19 cases in Santa Clara County emerged in early 2020, the County and its many nonprofit and business sector partners leveraged existing relationships and mobilized a massive crisis response system to lessen these impacts. In a matter of days, providers including the Valley Homeless Healthcare Program (VHHP) and Gardner Health Services, assessed and relocated the most vulnerable people experiencing homelessness into hotels and new emergency shelters to prevent the virus' spread.

Among these new shelters were four modular, semi-permanent developments built by the City of San José and Habitat for Humanity. These developments provided the system with 400 additional units of emergency interim housing for medically fragile people in need of living space to isolate and social distance.

As of February 2021, the County and its partners had placed over 4,600 households in shelter, including people at risk of COVID-19 complications, people with positive COVID-19 tests, and those exposed to the virus. A new hotline made it possible to rapidly screen and place people in shelter according to need. The City of San José, members of the Lived Experience Advisory Board, nonprofit partners, and volunteer groups also rapidly ramped up street outreach efforts, created new networks to distribute food and supplies, offered access to free COVID-19 testing, distributed masks, and created mobile showers, hand-washing stations, and laundry facilities for unsheltered households.

### Homekey: More than \$60 million in State Funding Awarded for Housing in Santa Clara County

In 2020, as part of the state's efforts to respond to COVID-19 and protect people experiencing homelessness who are at high risk for serious illness, the California Department of Housing and Community Development launched the Homekey program. Homekey provides funding to cities, counties, and other public entities to purchase and rehabilitate existing hotels, motels, and vacant apartment buildings to convert into interim or permanent housing for people at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

In total, the state awarded \$600 million in funding with more than \$60 million awarded for the following projects located in Santa Clara County:

- The City of Mountain View and LifeMoves were awarded \$11.95 million to acquire a 100 unit building to be used for emergency shelter.
- The City of San José was awarded \$14.5 million to acquire a 76 unit building to be used for permanent supportive housing.
- The County of Santa Clara and Jamboree Housing Corporation were awarded \$29.2 million to acquire a 146 unit building in Milpitas to be used for permanent supportive housing.
- The County of Santa Clara and Allied Housing were awarded \$8.9 million to acquire a 54 unit building in San Jose to be used for permanent supportive housing.

In addition to funding awarded by the state, projects may include philanthropic or local government support for additional capital expenses and for operating expenses.

The beating heart of these operations was the County's Joint Department Operations Center (JDOC), where staff from different County agencies worked closely with city delegates and nonprofit collaborators including Abode Services, LifeMoves, and HomeFirst to make sure the supportive housing system continued to function in spite of the pandemic.

One way in which the system has continued to improve during this challenging time is through establishing new permanent housing programs for people at higher risk of COVID-19 complications. The County received more than \$24 million in federal CARES Act funding, \$10 million of which is being used to create a program to rapidly rehouse this population. The state also provided more than \$60 million in funding for four projects located in the county to acquire and convert hotels and motels into permanent and interim housing through the Homekey program.

The homelessness prevention system has also expanded in response to the pandemic. With the help of Sacred Heart Community Service and over 70 different non-profit and community partners, Destination: Home has raised tens-of-millions of dollars in public and private funding to support low-income community members who are at risk of becoming homeless due to economic impacts of the pandemic. From March to December 2020, this collaborative effort had deployed approximately \$31 million in assistance to more than 14,000 households.

The lesson of COVID-19 is that, in spite of all obstacles, Santa Clara County comes together when called upon to respond to a new challenge. We innovate, build new partnerships, and break new ground. These strengths will continue to benefit our community long after the pandemic is over. It is with this sense of optimism and collaborative spirit that our community moves forward to the next challenge, which is returning to address the pre-existing crisis of homelessness in our county.

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*"The support we received relieved a lot of my stress and anxiety, and it made me realize that I am not alone. I am proud to be a part of a community that takes care of one another."*

*- Rosa, a recipient of COVID-19 financial assistance who fell behind on rent after being furloughed without pay from her position as a janitor.*

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## Homelessness Prevention Partner Highlight:

### Carry the Vision

One positive side effect of the pandemic has been the way in which new community relationships have formed. One such example is the connections that Gilroy nonprofit Carry the Vision has made with community members while distributing COVID-19 financial assistance directly to families in need. Many of the families who received assistance from Carry the Vision are Spanish-speaking and wary of receiving help from the government or nonprofit organizations.

To ensure that financial assistance was reaching households in need, Carry the Vision hired several local community liaisons to engage in outreach and encourage people to ask for help. What did this look like? Bringing food to people's doorsteps when they tested positive for COVID-19. Listening to young mothers who had just lost their jobs. Being patient and reliable when no one else was.

"A lot of people are scared and don't speak English," says Lilia Gopar, one of the community liaisons. "They are afraid that they will have to pay funds back. Knowing that we've come from similar hardships and backgrounds builds trust."

"People were choosing not to eat so that they could pay their rent," adds community liaison Rosa Arrazola. "There is so much need right now."

So far Carry the Vision has helped prevent homelessness for about 100 families during the pandemic. Now, having connected through the COVID-19 financial assistance program, many clients keep in touch with Lilia and Rosa. Some have even returned to Carry the Vision for connections to their other services, such as reentry support programs, life skills courses, and supports for parents.

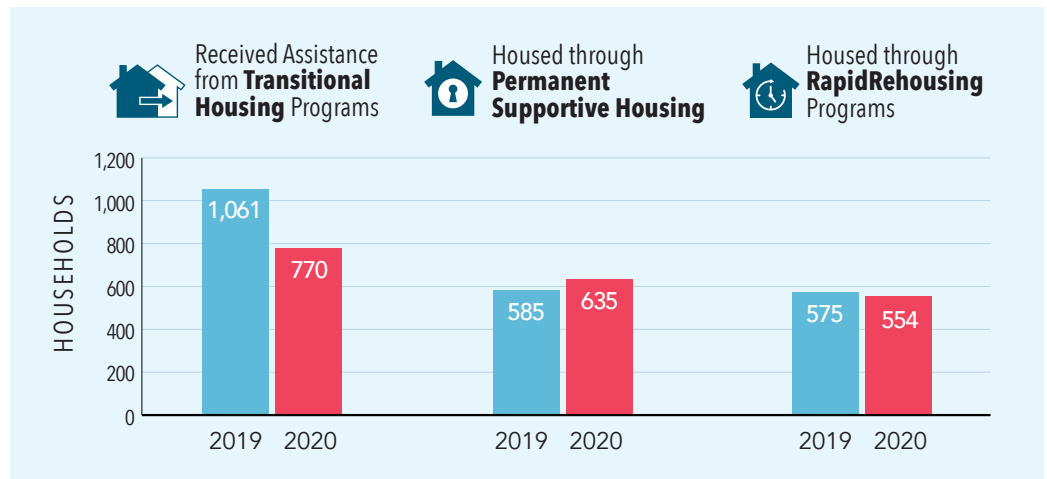
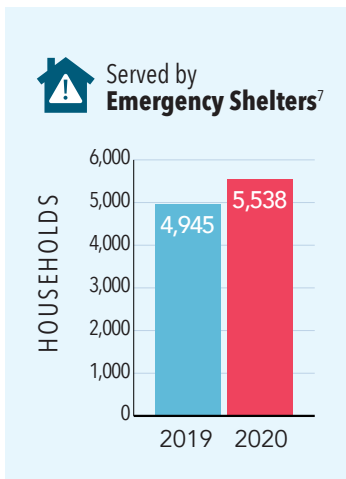
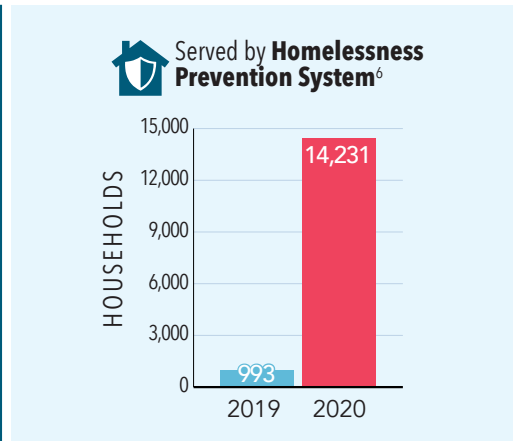
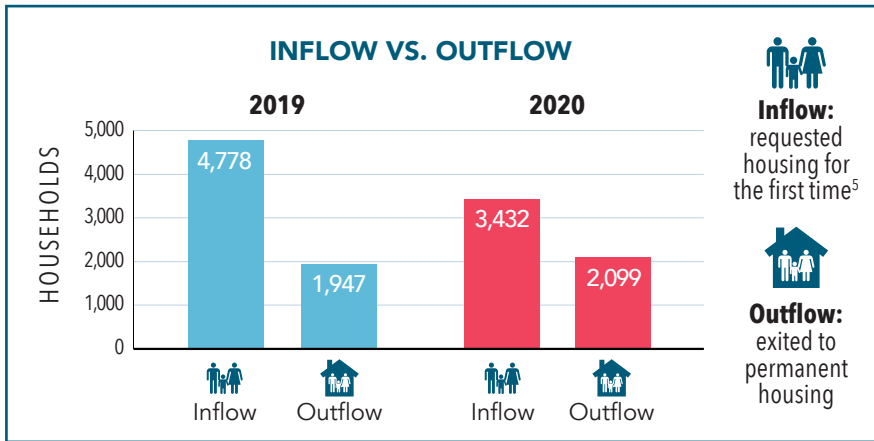
Some have also reached out for help with sensitive issues such as escaping domestic violence. In this way, COVID-19 financial assistance and the dedication of the community liaisons provided a much needed bridge to help that might not have existed otherwise.

"I expect that these relationships will last beyond the pandemic," says Rosa. "We provide a space to let people express themselves. It's important for them."

The feeling is mutual, agrees Lilia: "It's the best job I have ever had."

# 2020: A Year Like No Other

The supportive housing system didn't slow down in 2020, continuing to respond to the pre-existing systemic causes of homelessness as well as new needs arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.



<sup>5</sup> This metric shows the total number of people assessed by the Vulnerability Index – Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool for the first time. This number likely decreased from 2019 to 2020 because of barriers to people being assessed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

<sup>6</sup> This increase between 2019-2020 reflects the prevention system's influx of funding for people in need of COVID-19 related financial assistance.

<sup>7</sup> This increase reflects the temporary increase in the emergency shelter capacity in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Supportive Housing Highlight:

# Monterey Gateway Apartments

Steve may be a self-described “wandering soul,” but he found a place to call home at the Monterey Gateway Apartments, a 75-unit affordable housing project for seniors that opened in Gilroy in May 2020. Funded in part through 2016 Measure A, the Gateway Apartments offer onsite supportive services through the County, as well as opportunities to connect with other residents, a community computer room, and a pool.

Before settling into one of the project’s supportive housing units, Steve struggled to find his footing after being released from prison and reentering a world he didn’t recognize – a world where everyone had a computer in their phone and millionaires populated the valley he once called home with his mother and siblings.

managers at the Monterey Gateway Apartments, Steve is beginning to readjust to life on the outside. “If it wasn’t for them, I would be lost,” Steve says of his team at the Monterey Gateway. They help him navigate his new life by doing things like teaching him how to pay bills online, ensuring he gets the medical treatment he needs, and providing moral support and companionship on a day-to-day basis.

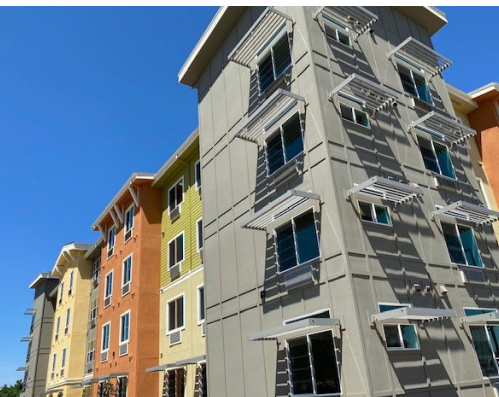


After 20 years in prison, Steve was released at age 64. Barely able to walk and unable to find a place to live, Steve went to rehab and stayed in various shelters, all the while striving to “be the good guy again.”

Now, with the help and guidance of his case

managers at the Monterey Gateway Apartments, Steve is beginning to readjust to life on the outside. “If it wasn’t for them, I would be lost,” Steve says of his team at the Monterey Gateway. They help him navigate his new life by doing things like teaching him how to pay bills online, ensuring he gets the medical treatment he needs, and providing moral support and companionship on a day-to-day basis.

Steve’s new home has also provided much needed space and stability for him to begin to deal with the trauma of his incarceration. He says he’s “calmed down a lot” now that he doesn’t have to worry every day about meeting his needs for shelter, food, and medical care. It also means the world to him that he can lock his own door. That may not seem like much, but to Steve that’s the difference between fear and true freedom.



*“Lincoln said that the strength of the nation is within the strength of the household. If you don’t have a home, what’s your foundation? You can find peace within a busy, chaotic world if you have a home you can return to.”*

- Samuel F., a veteran who experienced homelessness



## Housing First Success Story: Project Welcome Home

Provide housing as a first step to helping people experiencing homelessness. Offer that housing without preconditions or barriers. House people quickly, and offer tailored, voluntary services to support them. Once you provide a safe and stable home, then recovery, treatment, and economic security can follow. This is “Housing First.” And it works.

Project Welcome Home, an innovative supportive housing program created through a partnership between the County, private funders,<sup>8</sup> and nonprofit housing provider Abode Services, demonstrates that Housing First can end homelessness for even the most vulnerable county residents – those who have experienced long-term homelessness and rely heavily upon emergency medical and psychiatric services to treat chronic health conditions.

Between 2015 and 2019, independent evaluators from the University of California San Francisco (UCSF) assessed Project Welcome Home’s Housing First supportive housing program, which provides clients with long-term rental subsidies and intensive voluntary case management and clinical treatment. Project Welcome Home clients are the highest utilizers of crisis medical services with experience of long-term homelessness, as identified through data matching between the County’s medical and behavioral health records and Homeless Management Information System.

<sup>8</sup> Project Welcome Home is the first permanent supportive housing program to use a Pay for Success model, directly connecting program funding to results.



**86% of chronically homeless individuals** housed by Project Welcome Home were **successfully housed** for an average of **2.5 years** without any gaps

### Project Welcome Home’s clients



required **fewer psychiatric emergency services**



and spent **fewer days in emergency shelter**

In assessing the effectiveness of the program, researchers looked at improvements in resident health, resident's use of social services, successful housing placements, and the economic benefit to the County. The study concluded that Project Welcome Home successfully placed and retained a high proportion of individuals experiencing chronic homelessness in housing, reaffirming that Housing First works.

The UCSF study found that 86%<sup>9</sup> of the chronically homeless individuals who were housed by Project Welcome Home's supportive housing program<sup>10</sup> were successfully housed for an average of 2.5 years<sup>11</sup> without any gaps.<sup>12</sup> In addition, Project Welcome Home's permanent supportive housing clients required fewer psychiatric emergency services and spent fewer days in emergency shelter.<sup>13</sup>

Project Welcome Home's success reflects the county's broader success with Housing First. As of December 31, 2020, the supportive housing system has permanently housed nearly 10,983 households since 2015 taking a Housing First approach. In 2020 alone, 77.2% of rapid rehousing participants obtained permanent housing, and the retention rate for households in permanent supportive housing was at 96.8%.

In the coming years, our community will continue to evolve and employ proven strategies such as Housing First in order to meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness. We know that Housing First will be a central strategy for ending homelessness in Santa Clara County, and remain steadfast in our dedication to Housing First's tenets: that housing is a fundamental human right, and that everyone is "housing ready."

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*"Even for people who we think have the greatest challenges, the needs are simple: safe, affordable housing and appropriate services. We believe housing is foundational to recovery; if stable, safe, decent housing is provided, people can overcome the harshest of circumstances and experiences."*

*– Ky Le, Deputy County Executive,  
County of Santa Clara*

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<sup>9</sup> 86% of participants who received permanent supportive housing through Project Welcome Home were housed during the study period, compared to 36% in the control group who were not enrolled with Project Welcome Home.

<sup>10</sup> Participants who did not receive housing through Project Welcome and were instead assigned to the control group were still eligible for supportive housing provided through other County-funded programs.

<sup>11</sup> The project's target impact was for more than 80% of participants to achieve 12 months of continuous stable tenancy.

<sup>12</sup> Raven, et. Al. A Randomized Trial of Permanent Supportive Housing for Chronically Homeless Persons with High Use of Publicly Funded Services.

<sup>13</sup> Id

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*"Don't tell me you can't house people, and don't tell me people with mental health disabilities or substance use disabilities can't be housed. You can and you must."*

*– Dr. Margot Kushel, Director of the UCSF Center for Vulnerable Populations.*

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The supportive housing system **has permanently housed nearly 10,983** households since 2015



In 2020, **77.2%** of rapid rehousing participants **obtained permanent housing**



The **retention rate** for households in permanent supportive housing was at **96.8%**

# Opening Doors to Health and Home: Behavioral Health Services and Supportive Housing

Access to housing and behavioral healthcare, including mental health and substance use treatment, are inextricably linked. It is extremely difficult to treat behavioral health conditions for people without stable homes, and unhoused and newly housed individuals benefit greatly from the stabilizing support that behavioral healthcare provides.

Recognizing this link, the County of Santa Clara’s Behavioral Health Services Department (BHSD) and OSH work hand in hand to serve currently and formerly unhoused individuals holistically: OSH connects people experiencing homelessness to subsidized housing and provides support to keep them there, while BHSD’s services are there to help supportive housing residents overcome substance use and mental health issues that may have contributed to housing instability in the past.

Thanks to the recent growth of both systems and the County’s ability to leverage diverse funding streams – including federal Medi-Cal dollars, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development funding, California state funding, and local tax revenues – OSH and BHSD have been able to offer expanded services to their shared clients.

These programs include the newly created Homeless Engagement and Access Team (HEAT), which is funded by the Mental Health Services Act. The HEAT is staffed by outreach specialists and clinicians who can treat unsheltered, uninsured people, engaging people where they are to build trust as a bridge to housing and long-term services. The program has been immensely successful thus far.

## In FY19-20 the HEAT team



Outreached to **1,595 people**



Assessed **482 unsheltered individuals**

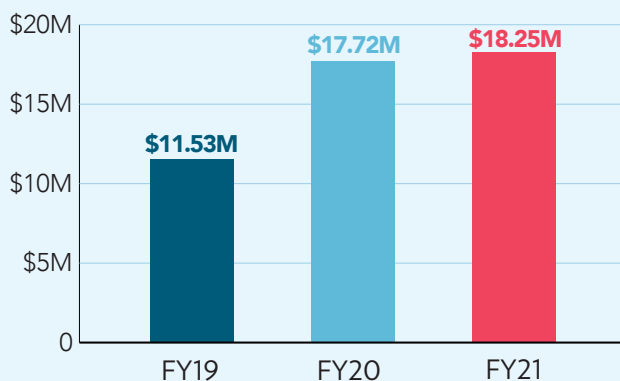


Made **117 referrals for clinical behavioral health services**



**24%** of people moved into permanent supportive housing

## BHSD Total Funding: 2019-2021



In 2019-20, the County also expanded existing mental health services, such as the Mobile Crisis Services Team, which trains and supports police departments in effectively interacting with community members who may be in crisis and experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

These resources have also made it possible for more supportive housing residents to receive mental health treatment directly from the Supportive Housing Division of BHSD rather than having to seek assistance from outside providers who may not specialize in working with people who have experienced homelessness. An example of this is the Hope Clinic, a collaborative effort of the County and the Santa Clara Valley Medical Center - which opened in 2019 and provides tailored, comprehensive primary and behavioral health care designed to stabilize supportive housing residents. Efforts such as these have led to better coordination between housing providers and treating clinicians, resulting in seamless wraparound care for the people who need it most.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> In FY20, 81% of permanent supportive housing participants who were receiving mental health services received their treatment through the Supportive Housing Division of BHSD, up from 36% in 2018.



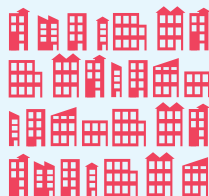
# 2016 Measure A Affordable Housing Bond Progress

A key driver of homelessness in Santa Clara County is the severe shortage of housing that is affordable for low-income households. Addressing this gap has been a crucial strategy in the County's efforts to prevent and end homelessness. In November 2016, voters approved a \$950 million Affordable Housing Bond to fund 4,800 units of affordable housing for households with extremely low and very low incomes. 2016 Measure A also helps create rental and home ownership opportunities for households with moderate incomes.

Since 2016 Measure A passed, local cities, affordable housing developers, service providers, and the County of Santa Clara have made significant progress towards our ten-year goals. As of December 2020:



**3,032** New Apartments Funded

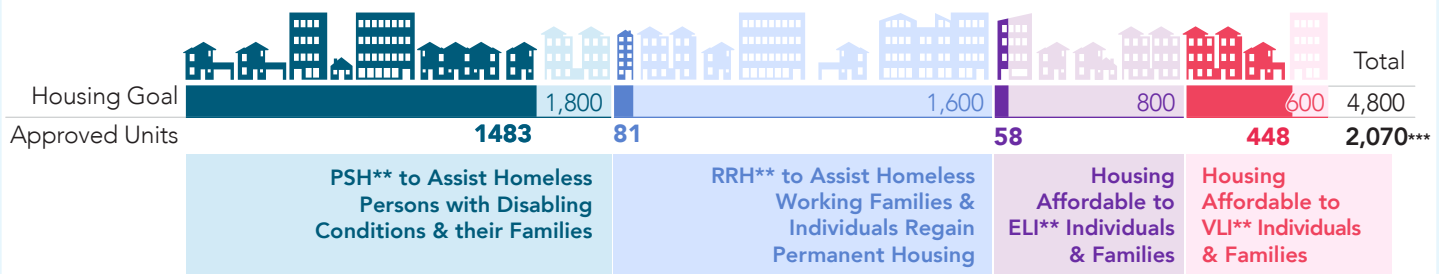


**28** Housing Developments Funded



**\$377,134,646** in Multi-Family Housing Developments Approved

## 2016 Measure A Production Goals & Progress



\*\*PSH (Permanent Supportive Housing), RRH (Rapid Rehousing), ELI (Extremely Low Income), VLI (Very Low Income)

\*\*\*440 additional units of affordable housing and apartments for building managers brings the total to 3,032 apartments approved in the last three years.

For more information about 2016 Measure A, visit:

<https://www.sccgov.org/sites/osh/HousingandCommunityDevelopment/AffordableHousingBond/Pages/home.aspx>

# Where We're Going: The 2020-2025 Community Plan to End Homelessness and Progress to Date

Despite progress in creating a supportive housing system that moves thousands of homeless individuals and families into housing each year, the crisis continues to grow. The systemic factors driving homelessness are stronger than ever and are forcing more community members onto the streets and into shelters every day.

In 2019, as the 5-year period covered by the first community plan came to an end, a broad range of community partners came together to build on this progress and develop a roadmap for future work to end homelessness in 2020 and beyond. This roadmap centers on three strategies:

STRATEGY 1	STRATEGY 2	STRATEGY 3
 <p data-bbox="198 1056 521 1192">Address the root causes of homelessness through system and policy change</p>	 <p data-bbox="659 1056 971 1192">Expand homelessness prevention and housing programs to meet the need</p>	 <p data-bbox="1114 1024 1403 1192">Improve quality of life for unsheltered individuals and create healthy neighborhoods for all</p>

To truly end homelessness in Santa Clara County, collective will and resources must be summoned to not only respond to the current crisis and scale successful housing strategies, but also address and eliminate the root causes of homelessness. Of course, the COVID-19 pandemic has made implementation of these strategies all the more urgent as the number of people experiencing homelessness is expected to grow and our systems must rapidly expand to meet the need.

Alongside the implementation of strategies in this plan, the County and its partners seek to raise the voices of people with lived experience and share power and decision making with our unhoused and recently housed neighbors. Embedded in this work is a focus on policies and programs that reduce racial inequity, in an effort to reverse the disproportionately high rates of people of color who are unhoused.

In order to make this plan a success, the County and its partners also have the goal to have each jurisdiction not only endorse this plan, but to develop implementation strategies that specifically address the concerns in their communities.

## Progress toward goals:

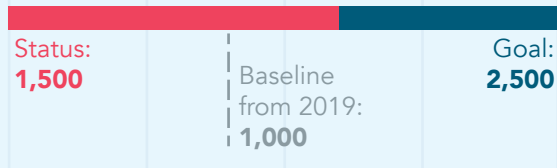
In addition to laying out a roadmap of strategies to prevent and end homelessness, the Community Plan set aggressive targets to achieve by 2025 including:



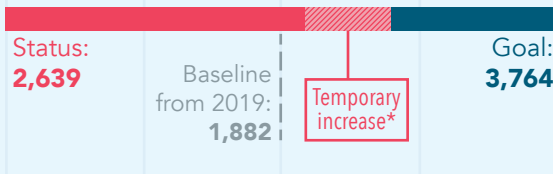
House **20,000 people** through the supportive housing system



Expand the Homelessness Prevention System and other early interventions to serve **2,500 people per year**



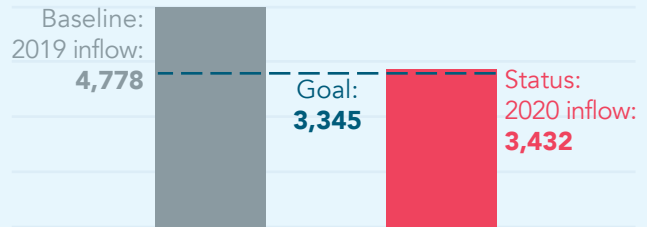
**Double** temporary housing and shelter capacity to reduce the number of people sleeping outside



\* Temporary increase is the result of a temporary capacity increase of 1,123 for COVID-19 and a temporary decrease of 516 for social distancing.



Achieve a **30% reduction** in annual inflow of people becoming homeless



To read the entire 2020-2025 Community Plan to End Homelessness, visit: <https://housingtoolkit.sccgov.org/take-action/santa-clara-county-community-plan-end-homelessness-2020-2025>

For a countywide map of supportive housing developments, visit: [www.supportivehousing.scc.gov/map](http://www.supportivehousing.scc.gov/map)



*"The County's homelessness prevention system is a magnificent program and support. It makes you better and bigger as a person. The biggest thing of all is because of this support, we didn't have to separate our family. We were able to stay together, learn and grow together."*

- Monica M., a mother of five, whose family remained housed through Sacred Heart's Homelessness Prevention Program

# Conclusion

In 2019-20, Santa Clara County's supportive housing system provided shelter, emergency assistance, permanent housing, and supportive services to thousands of currently and formerly homeless individuals and families. Still, with thousands of people experiencing homelessness and tens-of-thousands more on the brink due to high housing costs, a lack of living-wage jobs, and the economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic, there is much progress to be made to achieve the community's goal of making homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring.

Since launching the first Community Plan to End Homelessness in 2015, the supportive housing system has continued to grow and improve its ability to serve the diverse population of people experiencing homelessness in the county. Expanding the reach and capacity of the supportive housing system in 2019-20 was no exception. While forming and implementing the 2020-25 Community Plan to End Homelessness over the past two years, the system moved over 4,000 households from homelessness to housing, bringing the community closer to its goal of ending homelessness.

Despite these accomplishments, COVID-19's full impact on our community and local economy is not yet known. While the future is uncertain for many in our community, we know that our county will continue to work together collaboratively, compassionately, and creatively to meet these challenges – including pursuing the end of homelessness.



*"You don't know how important a home is until you don't have one. Actually having a place for me and my daughter to come home to makes everything we have to deal with in this crazy life a little bit easier every day. We've never had a home to come to until now, so it's affected our lives in every possible way you could imagine. It's everything and only for the better. "*

*- Amy G., a mother who experienced homelessness with her two-year-old daughter*