

# Framework for Community-Wide Collaboration to End Homelessness

January 2021

TO

January 2024



## Housing For a Healthy Santa Cruz County

Homelessness severely impacts the health and quality of life of those living without homes and the entire community. The County of Santa Cruz, cities within the County, and community members recognize the need for strong collaborative action to ensure all residents within the County have stable, safe, and healthy places to live.

The County and its partners drafted Housing for a Healthy Santa Cruz County through a

collaborative process drawing on the experience, expertise, and engagement of a broad set of community stakeholders.

The County has developed a three-year framework from 2021 to 2024 designed to address homelessness in Santa Cruz County through collaboration with cities, non-profit organizations, other County Departments, and people with lived experiences of homelessness.

## Vision and Guiding Principles

### Housing for a Healthy Santa Cruz County Vision

To align and develop the array of resources, stakeholders, and collective wisdom across the greater Santa Cruz community to promote public health and make significant impacts on the crisis of homelessness, benefiting all residents, particularly those without homes.

### Guiding Principles

Actionable

Person Centered

Equity & Inclusion Lens

Countywide Scope

Data Driven

System Approach

## Goals: Targeted Results & Measuring Success

### OVERARCHING GOAL

Substantially reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness at a point in time in January.

The combined result of improving system performance and adding inventory will be a measurable reduction in the numbers of people in Santa Cruz County who are unhoused.

Unsheltered homelessness will be decreased by 50%.

All homelessness will be decreased by 30%.

### CORE GOAL #1

Improve the effectiveness of all programs in helping people secure housing.

By the end of 2023, the following system performance measurement improvements will be achieved, resulting in significantly increased effectiveness of all programs:

Measure	Emergency Shelter		Transitional Housing		Rapid Rehousing		Permanent Supportive Housing	
	FROM	TO	FROM	TO	FROM	TO	FROM	TO
Reduce Length of Stay	76	60	413	250	281	180	N/A	
Increase Rehousing Rate	21%	40%	66%	80%	62%	85%	N/A	
Increase Program Entries from Homelessness*	44%	75%	78%	90%	50%	85%	81%	95%

\*In this measure, homelessness means people who are unsheltered or living in emergency shelter

### CORE GOAL #2

Expand capacity within the homelessness response system.

During the three year time frame of this plan, we will work collaboratively to implement a targeted expansion in system inventory.

160 year-round emergency shelter beds

140 single units  
5 family units

450 housing slots

300 rapid rehousing slots  
100 permanent supportive housing slots

## Strategy 1 Enhance and effectively target outreach, engagement, and temporary shelter resources.



1

Continue to ensure shelters are safe and supportive environments that protect the health of their residents.

2

Reduce barriers to shelter, particularly for people with disabling conditions and/or those with a history of not accessing the existing shelter system.

3

Ensure all shelter residents are provided care management, housing navigation and other financial supports that bolster their ability to secure housing.

4

Develop capacity for health and housing-focused street outreach to connect all people experiencing unsheltered homelessness throughout the county with the crisis support services they need.

## Strategy 2 Expand permanent housing exit resources and pathways.



1

Develop or purchase units to expand housing specifically targeted to people experiencing homelessness.

2

Expand and improve the effectiveness of rapid re-housing rental assistance programs to quickly return people to housing.

3

Develop landlord engagement strategy for property owner/manager recruitment.

4

Implement changes to Coordinated Entry to support improved pace and effectiveness of housing exits.

## Strategy 3 Implement targeted prevention, diversion, and problem solving interventions to reduce the number of new people becoming homeless.



1

Implement systemwide problem solving for those seeking housing crisis response and support services by integrating this practice into Smart Path - Coordinated Entry.

2

Coordinate with other community and public entities to provide well-designed and targeted prevention assistance throughout the community.

3

Prioritize prevention assistance offered by the homelessness response system for those at most severe risk of homelessness.

## Strategy 4 Implement new governance, planning, evaluation, communication, and collaborative action structures.



1

Finalize design, launch, and operate a new regional governance entity.

2

Authentically and meaningfully involve people with lived experience of homelessness in system design and oversight.

3

Fully staff the Housing for Health (H4H) division within the Human Services Department (HSD).

4

Develop and maintain commitment and capacity to become fully data-informed at all levels of the H4H response system.

## Addressing Homelessness Together

Housing for a Healthy Santa Cruz County calls for the entire community to join in being part of the solution to homelessness. No single individual, organization, city, or County Department can do this alone. This plan shares a framework that all stakeholders can use to align, coordinate, and collaborate to accomplish the shared goal of helping unhoused residents in Santa Cruz County to secure housing.

In a community where housing is severely limited in supply and homelessness is at a crisis level, it is necessary to implement nationally recognized best practices to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of our system, and to increase our success rate at finding permanent solutions for each person experiencing homelessness.

By involving those with histories of homelessness and housing instability in our efforts, setting measurable goals, working collaboratively across sectors on implementing proven strategies, using data to assess progress, and continually improving and refining the work, Santa Cruz County can and will create a future in which housing and health are a reality for everyone.