

ENDING HOMELESSNESS IN SAN MATEO COUNTY

JULY 2016



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY



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Letter from the Human Services Agency Director

The strength and resiliency of San Mateo County lies in a healthy and productive community. Our Agency assists individuals and families to achieve economic self-sufficiency, and ensures that our county's children are safe and well. This foundation ultimately serves to strengthen all aspects of our community.

While this report focuses on homelessness, the County is conducting related and complementary efforts in housing, mental health services, jobs, transportation, and all the other disciplines that, along with our homeless efforts, combine to create a thoughtful and sustainable vision of the future of our community.

This report builds upon the groundwork laid in the 10-year HOPE Plan, published in 2006, which was followed by a homeless system assessment in 2014, and commitment in 2015 by County leadership to end homelessness by 2020. Our Agency is committed to a culture of continuous improvement, client experience, employee engagement, innovation, and a focus on results, among others. The new strategies described in the report are borne from combining national best practices with our local context. Over the next 5 years, we will restructure our system to include individualized assessments, rely strongly on data for prioritization and in tracking progress, and favor long-term housing options whenever possible, including homelessness prevention.

I want to recognize our community partners, including the homeless and safety net providers, city leaders, law enforcement, U.S. Veterans Affairs, and community-based organizations for their input to this plan and their dedication to providing shelter and safety net services to some of the most vulnerable County residents. They know the opportunities and intricate challenges of this issue best, and we value their partnership. This plan also benefited greatly from broad county agency input, including the County Manager's Office, legislative staff, the Health System and the Department of Housing. I would also like to thank the many partners who participated in the redesign process. Finally, I would like to thank our Board of Supervisors for their vision, direction, and support as we tackle this critical and complex issue.



Iliana Rodriguez
Agency Director

I. BACKGROUND

A. Purpose of this Plan

The San Mateo County Board of Supervisors has made a commitment to end homelessness in the community by 2020. This plan articulates a path to achieve that goal over the next five years using strategies that are informed by an analysis of the existing system in San Mateo County, lessons learned from the HOPE (Housing Our People Effectively) Plan, and recent developments in the field. The plan is data-driven and results-oriented. It sets a strategic direction that will lead to measurable reductions in the number of people in the community experiencing homelessness and ensure the community has systems in place to respond swiftly and effectively when housing crises occur.

B. History

In 2005-2006, San Mateo County developed a 10-Year Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness. The HOPE Plan, adopted in 2006, set forth an ambitious agenda for ending homelessness by 2016. Over the past ten years, significant strides forward have been made to address homelessness. Key accomplishments have included the creation and expansion of Homeless Outreach Teams (HOT), new funding sources for homelessness prevention, Homeless Connect events, and various other initiatives. The Department of Housing (DOH) has helped to create 994 new affordable housing units, of which 350 are targeted to serving people earning less than 30% of the Area Median Income (AMI). DOH has also supported the creation of 96 new units of permanent supportive housing, including projects developed by the Mental Health Association and units in projects developed by Mid-Pen Housing. The Department has also incentivized the development of units for homeless households through its Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) processes.

While much has been accomplished, homelessness in San Mateo County remains a persistent problem. The most recent point-in-time count found there are still an estimated 1,700 people experiencing homelessness on any given night. With the HOPE plan coming to a close, the County has made a decision to re-visit the plan in light of new best practices and new federal priorities, and informed by local lessons learned. In particular, this plan focuses on creating a Housing Crisis Resolution System that is organized around the goal of helping all people who are unsheltered quickly return to housing. The HOPE Plan focused on creation of new housing inventory as a key strategy to reduce homelessness, but these goals were not achievable given the local housing market. This plan draws on best practices that point the way to reducing homelessness given the existing supply of housing, and ensuring that available short- and long-term housing assistance is prioritized for people who are unsheltered or most vulnerable to becoming unsheltered. Expansion of the affordable housing supply remains a key priority for the community, but this work is being spearheaded by the Department of Housing along with other stakeholders and workgroups, including the Jobs/Housing Gap Task Force, Housing Leadership Council of San Mateo County, HEART of San Mateo and other efforts.

C. Methodology

The Human Services Agency (HSA) has developed this plan with technical assistance from Focus Strategies, a national consulting firm dedicated to helping communities develop data-driven solutions to ending homelessness. HSA engaged Focus Strategies to gather and analyze information to inform the development of the strategies presented in Section V. This included facilitation of a community input process as well as collection and analysis of homeless system data.

1. Community Input Process

The community input process took place between August 2015 and January 2016 and consisted of two main components:

- **Key Stakeholder Interviews:** Focus Strategies conducted a series of stakeholder interviews by telephone. The 20 interviewees included members of the Board of Supervisors, County Department heads and other executive level staff, City managers, funders and representatives from key housing and service providers. The purpose of these interviews was to learn more about the existing programs and identify opportunities and challenges to creating a system to end homelessness in San Mateo County by 2020.
- **Learning Collaborative:** HSA staff and Focus Strategies facilitated a series of five Learning Collaborative meetings designed to provide information and solicit input from stakeholders about specific strategies for system redesign. Typically with between 30 and 40 individuals were present for each meeting. Participants included non-profit agency staff, City staff, County staff and other interested individuals.

Appendix B provides a list of the individuals who participated in the process and Appendix C presents a detailed summary of the input received.

2. Data Analysis

Focus Strategies analyzed available data on homelessness in the community, and assessed the performance of existing programs and projects designed to serve homeless people. The purpose of this work was to understand who is being served in the system and what results are being generated in relation to invested funds. The initial round of data analysis used information from 2012-2014 and was presented in a separate report entitled Analysis of Homeless System Performance. As part of this strategic plan development, Focus Strategies updated the analysis of system performance to include 2014-2015 data.

The data analysis work was conducted using the System-Wide Analytics and Projection (SWAP) suite of tools, which Focus Strategies has designed for the National Alliance to End Homelessness to help communities plan and prioritize changes to bring about the greatest possible reduction in homelessness. To conduct this analysis, data was collected from three main sources: (1) the community's inventory of emergency shelter, transitional housing, rapid re-housing and permanent supportive housing units as documented in the 2015 Housing Inventory Count (HIC) prepared by HSA; (2) client data exported from the community's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) for the two year period from July 2013 to June 2015; and (3) program budget data collected directly from homeless program providers. The data was inputted into the SWAP Base Year Calculator tool, which generated an analysis of the performance of each project and the system as a whole across a range of measures. The results of this analysis are summarized in Appendix D.

The SWAP results not only helped inform the strategies in this plan, but also provided an opportunity to further solicit stakeholder input. Focus Strategies held individual meetings with each provider agency included in the analysis to review and discuss their individual performance results. Meetings were attended by staff from the Center on Homelessness. During these meetings, providers had an opportunity to review their program performance and the underlying data, surface questions and concerns, and discuss where they saw opportunities to improve performance.

3. Strategic Direction

To develop the goals and strategies presented in this plan, HSA worked in collaboration with a Leadership Team which included representatives from HSA, Health System, Department of Housing, County Manager's Office, staff from several members of the Board of Supervisors, as well as the chair of the Continuum of Care (CoC) and a representative from the Core Service Agencies (both representing nonprofit provider agencies). The HOPE Interagency Council (IAC) and the Continuum of Care Steering Committee also provided their input throughout the process. The IAC is the advisory body convened by the Board of Supervisors to oversee the implementation of the HOPE Plan. The CoC Steering Committee oversees the planning process and applications related to the community's federal homelessness funding (see Section III.A.5 for additional details).

II. Vision and Guiding Principles

This plan lays out a roadmap to ending homelessness in San Mateo County by 2020. The vision is that within the next five years, homelessness will be a rare, brief, and one-time occurrence:

- **Rare:** Whenever possible, the system will prevent vulnerable individuals and families from falling into homelessness.
- **Brief:** A system will be in place to ensure that any household experiencing a crisis of homelessness returns to housing within 30 days.
- **One-time:** Individuals and families that secure housing through the crisis response system will not return to homelessness.

This plan is based on some key guiding principles:

Systems Orientation: The goal is to create a system that responds effectively and rapidly to the crisis of homelessness. In a system, all stakeholders, programs, and organizations work together in coordination to accomplish a clear set of shared objectives. The objective of the housing crisis resolution system is to ensure that anyone who is homeless quickly returns to stable housing.

Housing First: People experiencing homelessness need housing above all else. Strategies and interventions must focus on returning households to safe, secure housing that they can use as a starting place to address other issues.

Data Driven: The system is data driven. Plans are based on an analysis of the current system and the best assessment of what is and what is not working. System and program-level performance is measured, then results are used for continuous quality improvement. Funders of the system view their role as stewards of community resource who are responsible for understanding what results their investments are achieving and ensuring resources are used in a way that maximizes impact.

Client Centered: Clients – people experiencing homelessness – are at the center of the system design. The system is designed to ensure easy and streamlined access for everyone, particularly those who experience the greatest challenge navigating the complexities of publicly-funded services and programs. Programs within the system adopt fair, transparent, and understandable policies in regards to how assistance is accessed and how these policies respect client choice and self-determination.

Context-Specific and Aligned with Best Practices: The plan is specific to the local context and priorities. It is tailored to reflect the specific strengths and challenges of San Mateo County. At the same time, it is aligned with evidence-based practices and lessons learned from the field, as well as federal policy direction. This report includes available research and national results, and how they apply to local conditions.

III. Context for the Plan

A. San Mateo County Current System

1. Overview of San Mateo County

According to the most recently available Census estimates (2014), the County has a total population of 758,581 people living in 258,863 households. A majority of the population live in the urbanized corridor along Highway 101. Median income in the community is \$91,421, significantly higher than the state-wide median of \$61,489. Although overall county income remains relatively high, many people are not faring well. An estimated 55,272 people, or 7.3% of the community's total population, live below the poverty level. About 28,000 households (11%) earn under \$25,000 per year.

San Mateo County is characterized by extraordinarily high housing costs, which tend to escalate dramatically during booms in the technology sector, such as the one that has taken place in the past several years. Housing has become acutely unaffordable in the community, which led the Board of Supervisors to convene a special study session on affordable housing on March 17, 2015. According to data published by the Department of Housing in February 2016, the average rent for a two-bedroom apartment is \$2,856 and for a one-bedroom is \$2,562. The average apartment vacancy rate is 5.2%. Housing market conditions have created unprecedented obstacles for households with federal tenant-based housing subsidies through the San Mateo County Housing Authority's Moving to Work Program (also known as the Housing Choice Voucher Program or Section 8). Increasingly, voucher holders face challenges in finding a landlord that will accept their subsidies. The Housing Authority's utilization rate for HCV vouchers has plummeted from 99% in 2012 to 90% in 2016, an unprecedented drop.

2. Numbers and Characteristics of People Experiencing Homelessness

The most recent count of homeless people in San Mateo County was conducted in January 2015. This count found a total of 1,772 people experiencing homelessness on a single night, of whom 775 (43%) were unsheltered (living outdoors or in vehicles) and 997 (56%) were living in emergency shelters, transitional housing or institutional settings (jails, hospitals, drug treatment programs). These 1,772 people comprise 1,386 households, of whom 147 (11%) were households with minor children and 1,240 (89%) were single adults or households with only adults in them. Using data on lengths of stay and utilization rate for the programs included in the count, Focus Strategies estimates there are approximately 3,500 households in San Mateo County that experience homelessness over the course of a year.

The homeless count data shows that the majority of people who experience homelessness in San Mateo County are single adults. Of the homeless single adults counted, 35% are chronically homeless, defined as being: (1) currently unsheltered or in emergency shelter; (2) having been continually homeless for at least a year or for four or more times within the last three years; and (3) having a disability that significantly impairs ability to secure and sustain housing. Unlike many urban areas where unsheltered homeless people are often seen on the streets or clustered in large encampments, the majority of unsheltered homeless people in San Mateo County in locations less visible to the broader community, such as hidden outdoor locations or in vehicles.

The table below presents summary data from the point in time count. Additional information may be found in the 2015 San Mateo County Homeless Census and Survey.

PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS	LOCATION	ADULT ONLY HOUSE-HOLDS	PEOPLE IN ADULT ONLY HOUSE-HOLDS	FAMILY HOUSE-HOLDS	PEOPLE IN FAMILY HOUSE-HOLDS	TOTAL HOUSE-HOLDS	TOTAL PEOPLE
	Unsheltered Count						
	Streets	327	331	0	0	327	331
	Cars	92	98	18	59	110	157
	RVs	89	95	17	56	106	151
	Encampments	136	136	0	0	136	136
	Subtotal Unsheltered	644	660	35	115	679	775
Shelter Count							
	Emergency Shelters	152	152	12	35	164	187
	Motel Voucher Programs	0	0	22	67	22	67
	Transitional Housing	155	155	78	299	233	454
	Institutions	289	289	0	0	289	289
	Subtotal Sheltered	596	596	112	401	708	997
	TOTAL	1,240	1,256	147	516	1,387	1,772

3. Available Interventions for People Experiencing Homelessness

San Mateo County has put in place a broad range of service, shelter, and housing options for homeless people, representing all types of primary interventions typical in most communities. These include programs and projects offering temporary and permanent housing, as well as a variety of services. This section briefly describes available resources – a detailed program inventory is provided in Appendix E.

OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

Over the last decade, San Mateo County has partnered with cities and non-profit providers to implement multi-disciplinary Homeless Outreach Teams (HOT). These teams cover the whole county geography, with a focus on areas where there are a large number of unsheltered, chronically homeless adults (including downtown San Mateo, Redwood City, East Palo Alto, South San Francisco and parts of the Coastsides). The HOT program includes outreach specialists employed by LifeMoves – who conduct outreach, engage with unsheltered homeless people, work to identify their individual service needs, then develop and execute a person-centered housing plans. Many are then connected to permanent supportive housing offered by the Housing Authority. Multidisciplinary HOT teams meet regularly in communities throughout the County and include key partners such as law enforcement, behavioral health staff from the Health System, Core Service Agencies, and other partners.

EMERGENCY SHELTERS

Shelters offer very short lengths of stay, connections to a range of services and, in some cases, assistance developing a plan to secure permanent housing. Most of San Mateo County's emergency shelters are congregate facilities (particularly those for single adults) or offer shared living arrangements (for families with children). This category of program also includes the County's motel voucher program which pays for short term motel stays for homeless families who are waiting to access shelter or transitional housing. Providers of shelter in the community include: LifeMoves, Samaritan House, Project WeHOPE, CORA (Community Overcoming Relationship Abuse), Hope and Home, the Mental Health Association, and StarVista.

TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

San Mateo County has a relatively large inventory of transitional housing programs for both single adults and families with children. These programs are designed to offer longer stays and intensive case management to help residents make the transition to permanent housing upon exit. HUD-funded transitional housing programs are allowed to have stays of up to two years, but the majority of programs in San Mateo County are designed to be much shorter. Many of the emergency shelter programs are designed as “feeder” programs into transitional housing, with residents moving directly from emergency to transitional, sometimes within the same building. Transitional Housing providers include: LifeMoves, Samaritan House, CORA, the Mental Health Association, and StarVista.

RAPID RE-HOUSING

Rapid re-housing is a relatively new program type that provides homeless individuals and families with a short term rental subsidy (usually up to about six months) after which they take over responsibility for paying their own rent. Services include help with locating housing, as well as time-limited case management focused on maintaining stability in housing. Currently, there are only a handful of rapid re-housing programs operating in the community, mostly overseen by LifeMoves.

PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

Permanent supportive housing (PSH) is housing that is not time-limited, which provide deeply affordable rent and intensive ongoing support services. It is designed for those homeless people with the most acute needs, particularly those who are chronically homeless and/or have significant behavioral disabilities. Much of the San Mateo County inventory consists of Shelter Plus Care vouchers operated by the Housing Authority in which tenants rent units in the private market and receive a rent subsidy. There are also dedicated units in site-based PSH projects, including units owned and operated by LifeMoves, the Mental Health Association, and others.

HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION PROGRAMS

The San Mateo County homeless system also includes an array of homelessness prevention programs, which provide financial assistance to households at-risk of losing their housing. Most of the homelessness prevention work is conducted by the Core Service Agencies using various funding sources.

A snapshot of the San Mateo County homeless system bed capacity is provided in the table below. This data is drawn from the most recent Housing Inventory Count (HIC) completed in January 2015. The HIC only encompasses residential programs and projects, and thus does not include data on outreach or homelessness prevention.

HOMELESS SYSTEM BED CAPACITY	PROGRAM TYPE	NUMBER OF PROVIDERS	NUMBER OF PROGRAMS	NUMBER OF BEDS
	Emergency Shelter	9	11	325
	Transitional Housing	7	13	477
	Rapid Re-Housing	1	2	94
	Permanent Supportive Housing	5	19	689
	Total	13	45	1,585

4. Funding Sources Invested

Funding for homeless programs and services in San Mateo County come from a range of local, State and Federal sources. As part of the SWAP data analysis, Focus Strategies collected data on program budgets for the majority of shelter, transitional housing, rapid re-housing, and permanent supportive housing in the community. The table below presents a summary of the total dollars invested in the programs that were analyzed. This is not intended to be a complete picture of all funds invested in addressing homelessness in the community, but to provide an estimate of the investment level and how it is distributed amongst program types.

DOLLARS INVESTED IN PROGRAMS	PROGRAM TYPE	TOTAL	% TOTAL INVESTMENT
	Emergency Shelter	\$4,288,771	25%
	Transitional Housing	\$3,560,627	21%
	Rapid Re-Housing	\$957,888	6%
	Permanent Supportive Housing	\$8,550,076	49%
	Total	\$17,357,362	100%

5. Homeless System Planning and Governance Bodies

A. PLANNING BODIES

San Mateo County has several planning bodies that share responsibility for overseeing efforts to address homelessness. These include:

HOPE Interagency Council (IAC): Oversees implementation of the 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness in close coordination with the CoC Steering Committee, which has a representative on the IAC. The IAC is responsible for setting policy, establishing priorities, and guiding implementation of the 10 Year Plan and strategies for meeting objectives identified in Opening Doors, the Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness. The IAC is chaired by two members of the Board of Supervisors and representatives, including County and City Department heads, federal partners (VA and HUD), service providers, and funders.

Continuum of Care (CoC) Steering Committee: The CoC Steering Committee is the planning and decision-making group that provides local oversight of the community's federal target homeless assistance funding. The Steering Committee is responsible for oversight of the community's annual application for HUD CoC funding, as well as a range of planning and evaluation functions, including establishing performance standards and evaluating project performance and overseeing the bi-annual point in time count of homeless people. Membership includes City and County staff and non-profit providers of housing and services for homeless people.

County Committees: San Mateo County has recently established a group called Housing Our Clients, which is made up of Department Directors from the main systems of care (Health System, Health Plan of San Mateo, Human Services Agency, Department of Housing, Probation Department and the Sheriff's Office) to work on inter-departmental coordination to better meet needs of clients who frequently use multiple systems. This group is working to develop strategies to better assist county clients who are facing homelessness.

B. COUNTY DEPARTMENTS AND THEIR ROLES

Each of the County Departments has an important role in the work of addressing homelessness in San Mateo County:

- **County Manager's Office (CMO):** Provides general oversight and direction for all County activities, directs resource allocation and system-wide performance assessment;
- **Human Services Agency (HSA):** Oversees the Center on Homelessness, which leads the development of homeless system planning and staffs the Continuum of Care planning bodies and the HOPE Interagency Council (IAC). HSA also ensure its homeless system work is strongly aligned with and supported by other departmental activities, including operation of the CalWORKs program, child welfare, veterans services and workforce/employment services.
- **Health System:** The Health Systems include a number of departments involved with the work of ending homelessness, including the San Mateo Medical Center, Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (BHRS), Correctional Health, the Health Care for the Homeless/Farmworker Health Program; and the Public Health, Policy and Planning. Key initiatives and programs for homeless people include: permanent supportive housing for households who are clients of BHRS, with services provided by BHRS and housing assistance by DOH (e.g. the Shelter Plus Care Program); participation the Homeless Outreach Teams; using MHSA housing dollars to create dedicated PSH units.
- **Department of Housing (DOH):** Oversees the community's mainstream affordable housing resources, including the Moving to Work (MTW) housing choice voucher program (formerly known as Section 8). DOH partners with HSA and the CoC to operate the majority of the community's permanent supportive housing (PSH) units, and with the VA to provide PSH for veterans through the VASH program.
- **Sheriff's Office and Probation Department:** Participates in the HOT program, along with local police departments. Both departments are participating in the Housing Our Clients group to identify additional opportunities for collaboration and additional support for individuals with criminal justice system involvement who are also in need of housing assistance.

6. Data Systems

HUD requires that all communities receiving federal homelessness funding must establish a dedicated Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to collect and analyze data on homeless people in the community, what housing and services they access, and results of the assistance they receive. In San Mateo County the HMIS system is managed by the Human Services Agency with support from participating provider partners. In 2015, the County transitioned from an older, locally developed HMIS to a new system Clarity Human Services System developed by a national vendor, Bitfocus. This new, more robust system provides essential infrastructure for the County and partners to support data-driven system planning and evaluation. The table below provides a summary of the number of programs in the community that participate in HMIS. County staff are continuing to engage with service providers to further increase the rate of participation in the system. As a domestic violence services provider, CORA is prohibited from entering data into HMIS but instead uses a compatible data system that is maintained separately from HMIS.

NUMBER OF PROGRAMS PARTICIPATING IN HMIS	PROGRAM TYPE	NUMBER OF BEDS	% OF BEDS PARTICIPATING IN HMIS
	Emergency Shelter	325	65%
Transitional Housing	477	91%	
Rapid Re-Housing	94	100%	
Permanent Supportive Housing	689	77%	
Total	1,585	80%	

B. National and State Policy Context

1. Federal and State Goals for Ending Homelessness

In recent years, federal homelessness policy has shifted increasingly towards a data-driven approach that seeks to hold communities accountable for measurable reductions in homelessness. The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) has set specific goals and timelines for ending homelessness that include:

- Prevent and end homelessness among Veterans in 2015;
- Finish the job of ending chronic homelessness in 2017;
- Prevent and end homelessness for families with children and youth in 2020;
- Set a path to ending all types of homelessness.

The USICH's Federal Strategic Plan to End Homelessness, *Opening Doors*, articulates a definition of what it means to end homelessness:

“An end to homelessness means that every community will have a systematic response in place that ensures homelessness is prevented whenever possible, or if it can't be prevented, it is a rare, brief, and non-recurring experience. Specifically, every community will have the capacity to:

- Quickly identify and engage people at risk of and experiencing homelessness.
- Intervene to prevent the loss of housing and divert people from entering the homelessness services system.
- When homelessness does occur, provide immediate access to shelter and crisis services, without barriers to entry, while permanent stable housing and appropriate supports are being secured, and quickly connect people to housing assistance and services—tailored to their unique needs and strengths – to help them achieve and maintain stable housing.”

Federal funding for homelessness assistance is increasingly allocated and prioritized to communities that are able to demonstrate their progress in meeting these goals. At the State level, California does not yet have an overarching policy approach to ending homelessness, and there are much fewer resources for targeted homelessness assistance. However, California is beginning efforts to align with the federal approach, re-structuring the State's Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) program and expanding the availability of rapid re-housing funds for CalWORKS participants through the Housing Support Program (HSP). After years of reductions in funding for affordable housing at the State level (including the dissolution of RDAs), the State legislature is considering significant new, one-time investments.

2. Strategies and Best Practices for Ending Homelessness – Housing Crisis Resolution

Over the past several years, HUD and the USICH have articulated a new approach to ending homelessness that is grounded in a strong base of evidence for what strategies are most effective. Opening Doors, as well as many policy directives coming from HUD, all point to communities developing a Housing Crisis Resolution System. Opening Doors calls for communities to “transform homeless services into crisis response systems” that prevent homelessness when possible and quickly respond to homelessness when it occurs. HUD’s newly established system performance measures call for each community to monitor the performance of their entire homeless crisis response system (and thus the programs that comprise it) on factors including:

- Number of new entries to homelessness;
- Rates at which people leave the system to permanent housing;
- Time that people spend being homeless;
- Frequency of subsequent returns to homeless.

To be effective, the Housing Crisis Resolution System must provide an appropriate response to everyone who needs it, especially those with the greatest needs. It must not screen out from assistance anyone experiencing literal homelessness – that is, living outside, on the streets, or in shelter. This also means limited system resources must not be used to serve people who would be more appropriately served elsewhere. In other words, the system must target and prioritize.

In a Housing Crisis Resolution System (HCRS), all of the parts of the system work together toward a common goal. Every actor in the system, regardless of the role they play, views each person who is literally homeless as someone with a housing need that can be addressed within 30 days. There are no people who are not “housing ready.” When a person becomes homeless, a system is in place to figure out where they can live and provide the appropriate amount of assistance to help them re-enter housing. Data systems are used to continuously collect and analyze information regarding who remains housed and who does not. If patterns emerge, these are analyzed and adjustments are made accordingly.

3. Elements of a Housing Crisis Resolution System

A Housing Crisis Resolution System has three main components:

1. SYSTEM ENTRY - COORDINATED ENTRY AND DIVERSION: AN HCRS MUST HAVE A COORDINATED ENTRY SYSTEM (CES) DESIGNED TO STREAMLINE ACCESS INTO HOUSING FOR PEOPLE WHO DO NOT HAVE A PLACE TO LIVE. AN EFFECTIVE CES:

- Includes intensive outreach and engagement with people who are unsheltered and do not seek help from the Housing Crisis Resolution System.
- Screens people who approach the front door of the HCRS to identify those who are literally homeless and those who are not.
- Integrates a robust diversion approach at each entry point, so that when people first approach the system, the initial intervention is to problem solve to arrive at a no-cost or low-cost solution to their housing crisis.
- Uses standardized tools and processes to assess housing needs and match people to the most appropriate and least intensive intervention possible.
- Prioritizes people who have the highest housing barriers for assistance from the HCRS.

2. SHELTER AND OTHER INTERIM FORMS OF HOUSING: IN AN HCRS, SHELTERS ARE WHERE PEOPLE GO TO GET HOUSED. AN EFFECTIVE SHELTER AND INTERIM HOUSING COMPONENT:

- Includes a robust diversion approach, so that shelter capacity is preserved for people who have no other place they can safely go.
- Provides people with a safe place to stay while they resolve their housing crisis.
- Has minimal barriers to access and program participation requirements.
- Offers all shelter residents help devising and executing a plan to secure housing quickly, and provides access to trained and knowledgeable housing locators or housing specialists.
- Offers other crisis services and connections to other service systems, but the main focus is on helping residents secure housing.

3. SYSTEM EXITS – HOUSING INTERVENTIONS: AN HCRS HAS AN ARRAY OF INTERVENTIONS AVAILABLE TO HELP PEOPLE EXIT FROM LITERAL HOMELESSNESS OR A SHELTER STAY INTO A SAFE AND PERMANENT HOUSING SITUATION. THESE SHOULD INCLUDE:

- **Rapid Re-Housing:** Data suggests that the vast majority of homeless people can exit homelessness through rapid re-housing: a combination of problem solving, expert housing location and stabilization services, and in many cases, short term or medium term rental assistance. Like diversion, rapid re-housing is a major component of the HCRS – not a standalone “program.” A progressive engagement approach is used so that people do not receive more assistance than they need to end their homelessness. An HCRS should offer rapid re-housing for all population types (families, single adults, youth, etc.) and have minimal barriers to participation.
- **Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH):** PSH is reserved for those chronically homeless people who have very high service needs and high levels of functional impairment. In an HCRS, new and turnover PSH units are targeted to this population and operated using a housing first approach. Chronically homeless people are screened in, not out, and there are low barriers to entry.

Underlying the idea of a Housing Crisis Resolution System is the philosophy of Housing First. A Housing First orientation means that the system is organized around helping people who do not have housing to first secure a safe and stable place to live, without preconditions, which they can use as the foundation to address other needs. In a system organized around Housing First principles, programs have low barriers to entry and do not require clients to first become sober, agree to treatment, or otherwise participate in services as a condition of receiving housing. Services in the system are focused on doing what it takes to rapidly secure housing for each client, with linkages and connections to mainstream systems in order to address other service needs (e.g. employment, health, behavioral health). Housing First “is guided by the belief that people need basic necessities like food and a place to live before attending to anything less critical, such as getting a job, budgeting properly, or attending to substance use issues. Additionally, Housing First is based on the theory that client choice is valuable in housing selection and supportive service participation, and that exercising that choice is likely to make a client more successful in remaining housed and improving their life.”

IV. Environmental Scan: Local Strengths, Opportunities and Challenges

This section summarizes Focus Strategies' analysis of San Mateo County's current approach to addressing homelessness, which include the county's strengths, challenges, and opportunities. It incorporates results of the system and program performance assessment, interviews with key stakeholders, discussion with the Learning Collaborative and conversations with the County's leadership team.

A. System Strengths: Leadership, Collaboration and Resources

Committed Leadership: The County has the benefit of very strong commitment from the elected leadership to make greater progress towards ending homelessness. There has been a long-standing commitment to investing local funds to address this problem, as reflected in the development of the HOPE Plan in 2006 and investment in strategies such as the Homeless Outreach Teams, motel voucher program, new permanent supportive housing units, and many other initiatives. Given the increasingly difficult housing market conditions in the community, the Board of Supervisors has continued to take a great interest in the problem and has affirmed a commitment to making changes that will make the community's response even more effective. At the same time, the County-level Department heads are also all on board with undertaking the difficult work needed to shift the system to do things differently, and have been meeting regularly to identify ways to better coordinate and align resources towards a common goal of reducing homelessness. HSA has invested in an upgraded HMIS system and is working with other County systems to further understand the needs of homeless individuals who most frequently utilize county services and who need the greatest support to secure stable housing.

Strong History of Collaboration: San Mateo County non-profit and governmental agencies have excellent collaborative relationships and a willingness to work together collectively to improve service delivery for homeless people. There is a collaborative approach to problem solving in which all stakeholders have an ability to contribute in the decision-making process.

Availability of Resources: San Mateo County is fortunate in that it is relatively resource rich. Currently, there are several major funding streams that can be leveraged and aligned to support a system re-design effort, including Measure A funds that have been earmarked for housing and homeless activities. The Department of Housing also has a supply of permanent housing tenant-based subsidies (Housing Choice Vouchers and Shelter Plus Care) that, if paired more effectively with mainstream services dollars such as Health (Medi-Cal/Health Plan) and Behavioral Health resources, can provide an avenue to expand housing opportunities for chronically homeless people.

Programmatic Building Blocks: The community already has in place the main building blocks for a Housing Crisis Resolution System:

- **System Entries:** The Core Service Agencies and the Homeless Outreach Teams (HOT) currently serve as the main front doors into homeless services and present a framework within which to develop coordinated entry and diversion.
- **Interim Housing:** The existing emergency shelters and transitional housing programs to a large degree have already embraced the concept of short lengths of stay and providing housing-focused services with the goal of maximizing exits to permanent housing.
- **Exits:** The supply of rapid re-housing and permanent supportive housing has been steadily increasing. Rapid re-housing is a relatively new model in the community that is currently still relatively small in scale, but growing. The Housing Authority recently received a new bonus CoC grant for 34 new permanent housing vouchers targeted to the highest need chronically homeless households, and efforts are already underway to implement strategies to ensure these resources are targeted to those who are the hardest to house.

The building blocks are in place for San Mateo County to create an effective Housing Crisis Resolution System. This plan sets out the roadmap that will help the community turn the curve from having a collection of homeless programs to a system that ends homelessness.

B. System Challenges

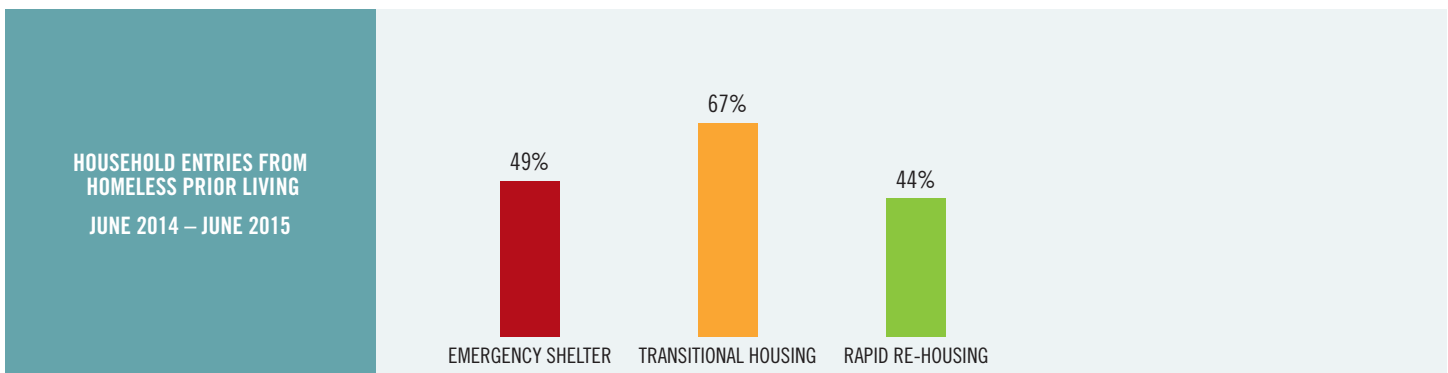
Focus Strategies has identified three key areas where the existing system is not performing as effectively as it could and that will need to be addressed moving forward.

1. Need for Greater Targeting and Prioritization of Unsheltered Individuals and Families

Elected leadership has made strong commitment that no San Mateo County families with young children will be unsheltered (living outdoors or in vehicles), which has resulted in there being very few unsheltered families in the community. Most families in the community experiencing housing crises

are able to access shelter or transitional housing. However, unsheltered homelessness among single adults continues to be an ongoing challenge in San Mateo County, with an estimated 649 unsheltered single adults counted in the last point-in-time count. Due to the County's priorities around families with children, there have been significant resources focused on services to prevent and address family homelessness. In the existing system, proportionally more resources are invested for serving families with children who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness than for single adults. While single adults make up the majority of homeless people in the community, there are drastically fewer avenues into housing for this population than families. To make progress in reducing homelessness, there need to be proportionally greater resources for single adults, while maintaining the commitment to families and ending family homelessness.

In addition to the lack of targeted assistance for single adults, there are also challenges relating to program access in both family and adult programs. Focus Strategies analyzed the prior living situation of people entering shelters, transitional housing, and rapid re-housing programs and found that significant numbers of people were not actually unsheltered upon entry. While programs may be allowed by their funders to serve people who are living in other situations (for example, people who are housed but at risk of homelessness), successfully reducing homelessness depends on communities prioritizing those with the highest needs for available units, particularly people who are unsheltered. The table below shows the percentage of people entering programs from homeless situations.



Focus Strategies also found a similar pattern in an analysis conducted of the County's Motel Voucher Program, which provides short term assistance for families with young children to stay in motel rooms when no shelter beds are available. In looking at the prior entry location data, Focus Strategies determined that many of these families were not actually unsheltered at the time of entry into the MVP.

During the community input process, stakeholders also expressed they would like to see greater prioritization based on housing need/vulnerability. There was also an interest in working to remove barriers to program entry, such as rules related to use of substances or "banned" lists. The CoC Steering Committee is convening a Housing First working group that will be exploring how to maximize access to shelter and housing programs for clients who have high barriers to securing stable housing.

During the community input process, stakeholders also discussed two other key mechanisms for improved targeting and prioritization: coordinated entry and shelter diversion.

- A Coordinated Entry System (CES) is a community-wide, standardized approach that governs access into homeless services and housing. A CES can use a single entry point or multiple coordinated entry points, but in either case all people who contact the system in search of homelessness assistance receive a standardized screening and assessment. There is also a standardized and community-wide policy that determine how people are referred to housing programs, ensuring that people are matched to available interventions based on their level of need and priority for assistance. A high quality CES is an essential system element that ensures that people who are unsheltered and those with highest vulnerabilities have priority access to assistance. The San Mateo County Housing Authority is piloting the use of a standardized assessment tool (the VI-SPDAT) to coordinate entry into its newest PSH program. Results from this pilot will help inform the design of coordinated entry.
- Shelter diversion typically is conducted in conjunction with coordinated entry. While people with high needs are prioritized for assistance, people who are still housed but at-risk of homelessness and those who have lower barriers to securing stable housing are "diverted" from entering the homeless system. Generally, this intervention is targeted to households that do not have their own rental unit but are living informally with friends or family or in a motel. Shelter diversion programs provide problem solving, mediation, and small amounts of flexible financial assistance to help "divert" these households from entering shelter by helping maintain their current housing or identifying alternative housing options. The purpose of diversion is to

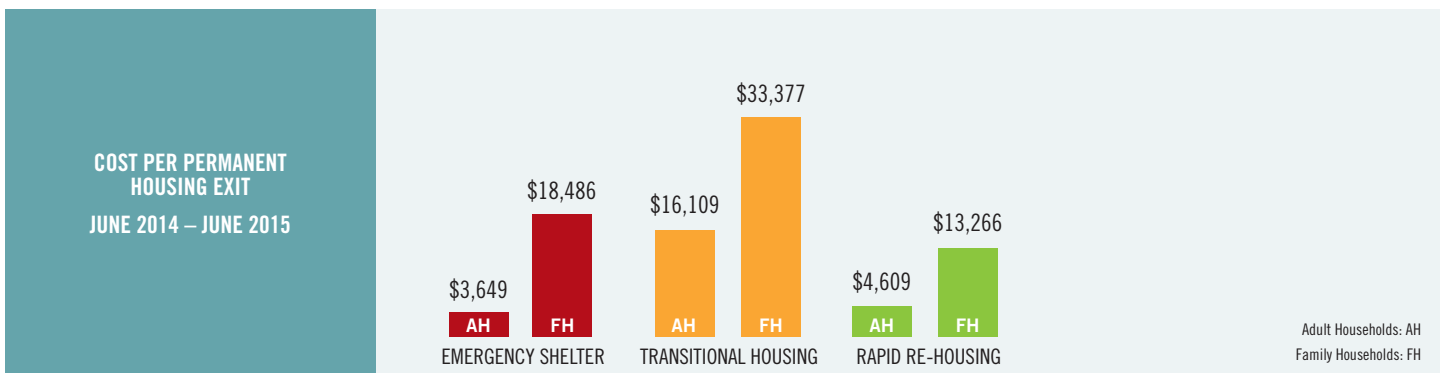
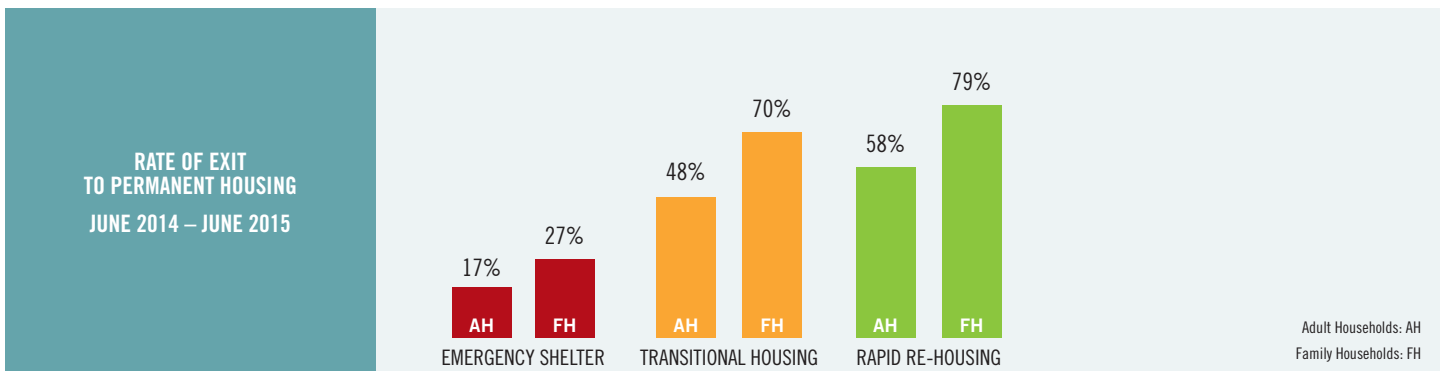
prevent unnecessary entries into emergency shelter, thus freeing up capacity in the shelter system for those who are unsheltered or have no other place to go. Diversion differs from traditional homelessness prevention, which generally provides assistance with back rent for those who are living in their own rental unit and facing a potential eviction. While traditional prevention programs may be effective at preventing evictions, data suggests that few of the households assisted would ever enter the shelter system even if they did not receive prevention help.

2. Existing System Is Not Right Sized to Speed Movement from Homelessness to Housing

Another key challenge for San Mateo County is that the existing inventory of short-term housing interventions is not “right sized” to help people move from homelessness to housing as rapidly as possible. As part of the performance analysis, Focus Strategies calculated several measures that help illustrate how effectively the system helps individuals experiencing homelessness resolve their housing crisis. These included the bed utilization rate, length of stay in programs, the rate at which people exited programs into housing, and the cost per permanent housing exit.

The findings shows that San Mateo County has many high quality emergency shelter and transitional housing programs that, as a whole, have relatively short lengths of stay. However, relatively few people actually exit these programs into permanent housing and in many cases the cost per permanent housing exit is very high. At the same time, the performance data analyzed demonstrated that the existing rapid re-housing programs had higher rates of people exiting to permanent housing at a much lower cost. Yet, rapid re-housing is only a small portion of the overall inventory of interventions.

The table below shows the rate of exit to permanent housing and cost per permanent housing exit for all programs analyzed. For the purpose of this measure, “permanent housing” includes any housed situation that is not time-limited, such as a market rate apartment, a subsidized housing unit, shared housing with a roommate, or staying with family and friends (as long as the arrangement is not temporary). Currently, the system is designed to have clients progress from shelter to transitional housing, rather than exiting directly from shelter to housing which partially explains the low rate of exit from shelter to permanent housing.



The data analysis strongly suggests that San Mateo County can make much quicker progress in reducing homelessness by investing in rapid re-housing. Targeting this intervention to people living in emergency shelter will help increase their rate of exit to permanent housing and quicken the flow of households through the system.

During the Learning Collaborative meetings, stakeholders had an opportunity to learn more about the rapid re-housing model and discuss their views about the opportunities and challenges of bringing this intervention to scale in San Mateo County. There was cautiously optimism about this approach. A main concern involved the limited availability of rental units in San Mateo County that may be affordable for rapid re-housing clients. There was also discomfort with the idea that people offered rapid re-housing assistance might have to relocate out of the county in order to make use of the assistance offered, due to the extremely difficult housing market. At the same time, stakeholders recognize need to find strategies to improve the system's ability to help people move from shelter into housing and exit a cycle of homelessness.

Another right sizing consideration for San Mateo County is that the federal funders of the system (including HUD, the VA, and H&HS) have begun dis-investing in transitional housing, due to its higher costs and relatively less effective performance compared to rapid re-housing. Given that there are a number of federally funded transitional housing programs in the system, the community will have to develop a plan to adjust to new federal funding priorities. During the stakeholder input process, there was agreement that some of the existing transitional housing already has many features of emergency shelters, thus converting those beds to emergency shelter appears to be an important strategy to pursue.

3. Expanding Permanent Housing Options in a High Cost Rental Market

To ensure housing interventions are available to all homeless people who need them, San Mateo County will need to expand access to both rapid re-housing and permanent supportive housing for homeless people, particularly those with high service needs and housing barriers. To accomplish this goal will be challenging, given the high costs of rental housing in the community. During the community input process, stakeholders were unanimous in their concerns about the usefulness of expanding rental subsidies in the current market environment, where many existing voucher holders already cannot secure units. There notion of using subsidies to help families relocate to communities outside of San Mateo County where housing is cheaper brought up significant concerns, including the implications for diversity and racial justice, the lack of services in outlying communities, and vulnerable households having to leave communities where their support systems reside.

Experience from other communities suggests that this problem can be mitigated through expending system resources on staff who are dedicated to cultivating relationships with landlords and helping clients in searching for and securing housing. Some providers in the community have already developed some of this expertise in-house, but it is fragmented and not available to all clients. A community-wide landlord outreach/liaison or housing navigator program would be a more effective solution, also allowing for these resources to be accessed in a fair and transparent manner and used to best target help to those who need it most. The County has started a pilot effort to address the housing market and location issues by contracting with Abode Services to conduct landlord outreach and housing navigation – targeting current voucher holders who need help securing units. Results of these efforts are not yet known, but will be evaluated to determine whether this strategy is effective and whether modifications to this approach are needed.

Focus Strategies also identified some additional challenges relating specifically to permanent supportive housing. San Mateo County has a large number of chronically homeless single adults, yet only about 29% of the people currently being served in permanent supportive housing are chronically homeless. The CoC recently adopted a policy to prioritize units for people who are chronically homeless as units turn over. However, the existing supply of units (particularly Shelter Plus Care) is difficult to access for chronically homeless people who have been living outdoors the longest and have the most intensive service needs. These clients are very challenging to engage into housing, so there is a need for additional system capacity to provide assistance along the way. The HOT teams have begun conducting outreach to this population, working to obtain documentation needed for permanent supportive housing applications, and more consistently working to develop a housing plan with each person. As part of its new PSH program (SP16), the Housing Authority is also piloting a program that provides dedicated case management staff employed by MHA to support clients during the process of transitioning from homelessness to housing. Additionally, the Abode Services contract will provided dedicated housing search assistance. Some additional work is needed to identify ways to better align mainstream services (health, behavioral health) to ensure that these clients have an ongoing source of supportive services once they become housed.

Another option to further expand the number of chronically homeless accessing permanent supportive housing is to implement a “move on” strategy, an approach discussed during the Learning Collaborative meetings that received a positive response from stakeholders. Moving on programs target existing tenants in permanent supportive housing who are stable and require only minimal supportive services. These tenants are assisted to transition to a mainstream rent subsidy (typically the Housing Choice Voucher program) or an affordable housing unit, which frees up their subsidy for someone who is chronically homeless and needs the intensive services and long-term subsidies offered in permanent supportive housing.

V. Strategic Plan: Goals, Strategies and Desired Results

Based on the community input process and data analysis summarized above, San Mateo County has developed the following approach to end homelessness in San Mateo County by 2020. The premise of the new Strategic Plan to End Homelessness by 2020 is to create a unified system, invest in best practices, and reorient the current homeless system towards housing crisis response. The new plan addresses homelessness as a housing crisis and sets the path to develop a systematic approach targeted at helping people maintain their housing, returning unsheltered homeless people to housing as quickly as possible, and prioritizing existing system capacity for those who face the highest barriers and longest history of homelessness.

The plan is organized around five key goals:

Goal 1: Create a Housing Crisis Resolution System to End Homelessness in San Mateo County By 2020

The overarching goal of the plan is to transition from a collection of homeless programs to a system that ends homelessness, in which all people experiencing homelessness in San Mateo County are able to rapidly return to housing. The objective is to reach “functionally zero” homelessness in the community by 2020. Functional zero means there is a system in place to ensure all households experiencing homelessness are offered immediate shelter and rapid access to permanent housing.

To accomplish this goal, San Mateo County will adopt several inter-related strategies:

- a. Transforming the existing set of programs into a housing crisis resolution system. Planning and governance bodies will orient their work with a focus on performance, accountability, and continuous quality improvement in the service of reaching a functional end of homelessness by 2020.
- b. Shifting the county-wide system to a Housing First approach in which all people are “housing ready” and the system is charged with identifying a housing solution for each individual or family experiencing homelessness. Providers will receive training to support learning and capacity building to implement Housing First practices; Housing First will be integrated into County policies.
- c. Developing and implementing a robust shelter diversion Program to prevent households from entering shelter who have other housing options and help them move directly to alternative housing. This strategy is designed to decrease the numbers of housed people who enter shelter and ensure there are beds available for people who are unsheltered and have nowhere to go.
- d. Developing and implementing a Coordinated Entry System (CES) providing a clear and standardized entry way into the Housing Crisis Resolution System. Building upon the existing coordinated access processes already taking place through the Core Service Agencies and Homeless Outreach Teams (HOT), there will be multiple, coordinated access points throughout the county, all using a standardized screening, triage, assessment, and prioritization process and tools. These entry points will be designed to ensure that households with lower housing barriers and those that are still housed are diverted from entering the homeless system, while those with long histories of homelessness and high barriers are prioritized for assistance. CES will reduce the need for clients to go through duplicative assessment processes and ensure a better match between client need and services/housing offered.
- e. Right-Sizing Interim Housing Programs. There will be a phased process over two to five years to right size the inventory of shelter, transitional housing, and rapid re-housing beds to ensure it aligns with population needs (single adults, families, youth) and that it is optimally sized and structured to ensure rapid exit from homelessness to permanent housing. Shelter will be available for any individual or family that has fallen into homelessness.
- f. Expanding rapid re-housing capacity. Local, state and federal resources will be leveraged to significantly expand the availability of rapid re-housing assistance for single adults and families with children. All rapid re-housing programs will be aligned with a set of consistent policies and standards based on evidence and best practices, and will be available to households who have high housing barriers.
- g. Maximizing Permanent Supportive Housing programs. Expanded capacity in permanent supportive housing will be created by maximizing existing voucher capacity. Housing locator services and landlord outreach will be implemented, and the effectiveness of this approach evaluated to determine if it is successful in increasing the number of units available to voucher holders. To ensure permanent supportive housing is accessible to chronically homeless people, attention will be given to ensuring the effectiveness of outreach, engagement, case management and ongoing service, and ensuring health and behavioral health funding is aligned with housing resources to maximize tenant access to needed services. The Housing Authority will explore implementing a “moving on” strategy to free up permanent supportive housing vouchers and units.

h. Using Data for Continuous Quality Improvement. To ensure HSA has the ability to analyze the results of its investments to end homelessness, the Clarity HMIS system will be used to track system performance and implement coordinated entry. Regular program performance monitoring and a quality improvement process will be implemented. HSA will shift to performance based contracting for all homeless system providers.

Goal 2: End Veteran Homelessness by 2017

San Mateo County will take additional steps to end veteran homelessness, in keeping with the federal goal of “functional zero” for veterans by 2017. To accomplish this goal, HSA will expand staffing to coordinate initiatives for homeless veterans. This will include developing a “by name” registry of homeless veterans in San Mateo County and prioritizing veterans for access to available housing assistance.

Goal 3: End Family Homelessness by 2020

To align with the Board of Supervisors priority that no family will be unsheltered in San Mateo County, HSA will oversee the re-design of existing interim housing programs for homeless families (motel vouchers, shelter, transitional housing) to ensure that unsheltered families are identified and have priority access to assistance. Shelter diversion will be implemented for those who are still housed; rapid re-housing assistance will be targeted to unsheltered and high need families.

Goal 4: End Youth Homelessness by 2020

To ensure that the Housing Crisis Resolution System is responsive to the needs of homeless youth, San Mateo County will prioritize homeless youth, including former foster youth through the Coordinated Entry System. HSA and DOH will explore strategies to fully use existing voucher capacity in the FUP program and support new housing opportunities for youth. HSA will also coordinate with foster youth services to ensure available mainstream resources are aligned with goal of homeless crisis response.

Goal 5: Individuals Exiting Institutions Will Not Discharge Into Homelessness

No one in San Mateo County should be discharged from an institution into homelessness. HSA will continue to work collaboratively with system partners (foster care, hospitals, treatment programs, jail) to integrate the Housing Crisis Resolution system into discharge policies and protocols so that clients leaving these systems have assistance to identify housing solutions and enter shelter only as a last resort. All individuals exiting an institution will have access to interim housing if needed and a permanent housing plan prior to discharge. This will include coordination with discharge units to support reunification with the client's home community and expansion or repurposing of dedicated interim housing for clients exiting institutions.

The following table provides additional details on these goals, strategies, action steps and desired results. A Year One Implementation Plan, including a specific action plan and measurable objectives, is being developed.

1. CREATE SYSTEM TO END HOMELESSNESS IN SAN MATEO COUNTY

STRATEGY	ACTION STEPS	DESIRED OUTCOME
Shift County System to a Housing First Approach	<p>Create a Housing First Workgroup with providers to support system-wide learning and capacity building</p> <p>Integrate Housing First principles into all components of the system, County policies and funding priorities.</p> <p>Programs lower barriers to entry and re-tool services to speed exit to permanent housing</p>	<p>Homeless households are understood to be “housing ready”</p> <p>The system is oriented to helping all unsheltered people return to housing as quickly as possible, with appropriate services provided to sustain housing</p>
Transform existing set of programs into a housing crisis resolution system	<p>Implement County governance structure focused on performance, accountability, and continuous quality improvement</p>	<p>Reach functional zero by 2020; any homeless individual or family who enters through the new Coordinated Entry System will be offered interim housing and quick access to permanent housing</p>
Develop and implement a robust shelter diversion program to prevent households from entering shelter who have other housing options and help them retain housing or move directly to alternative housing.	<p>Diversion training (starting March 2016)</p> <p>Release RFP - Target Date June 2016</p>	<p>Decrease in percentage of housed people entering shelter</p> <p>Decreased demand on motel voucher program</p> <p>Increase capacity of shelter programs to serve unsheltered people who have no other housing options</p>
Develop and implement a Coordinated Entry System (CES) for Homeless Services to help identify and prioritize households with highest needs for assistance	<p>Release RFP for Contractor or Hire County staff - Target date June 2016</p> <p>System features to include: multiple coordinated access points; standardized screening, triage, assessment, prioritization process and tools; generate centralized process to match households to shelter and housing</p>	<p>Increase in percentage of unsheltered people who enter shelter and housing programs</p> <p>Reduction in duplicative assessment and screening processes</p> <p>Better match between client need and services/housing offered</p>
Right-Size Interim Housing Programs	<p>Implement phased process over 2 to 5 years to right-size bed inventory of emergency shelter and transitional housing; align with population needs (single adults, families, youth); ensure rapid exit to permanent housing</p>	<p>System has capacity to provide shelter to more unsheltered households and speed their exit to permanent housing</p>
A. Expand Rapid Re-Housing Capacity	<p>Release RFP for RRH - Target date May 2016</p> <p>Align new and existing RRH programs to consistent policies and standards based on best practices</p>	<p>Expand availability of housing assistance for unsheltered families and single adults</p> <p>Decrease length of time households are homeless and speed entry into housing</p>
B. Maximize Permanent Supportive Housing Programs	<p>Evaluate effectiveness of housing locator services, expand if needed</p> <p>Improve access to permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless people (outreach, engagement, case management, document readiness)</p> <p>Align housing, health and behavioral health funding to ensure permanent supportive housing tenants have access to needed services;</p> <p>Increase supply of permanent supportive housing</p> <p>Explore “moving on” strategy to free up permanent supportive housing vouchers and units</p>	<p>Decrease in number of chronically homeless people</p> <p>Increase in percentage of high need chronically homeless households entering permanent supportive housing</p>
C. Use Data for Continuous Quality Improvement	<p>Use Clarity to track system performance; implement CES</p> <p>Continue expanding provider participation in Clarity</p> <p>Secure ongoing technical assistance/training for new system, release RFP for provider</p> <p>Implement regular program performance monitoring and quality improvement process</p> <p>Shift to performance based contracting</p>	<p>County analyzes results of its investments to end homelessness and uses results to achieve greatest possible reduction in homelessness year over year</p>

2. END VETERAN HOMELESSNESS BY 2017

STRATEGY	ACTION STEPS	DESIRED OUTCOME
Create and implement optimal structure and process to end veteran homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hire Contractor or Extra Help staff Develop “by name” registry of homeless veterans in San Mateo County Prioritize veterans for access to available housing assistance Ensure case management for homeless veterans is focused on housing 	Number of homeless veterans is “functionally zero” by 2017

3. END FAMILY HOMELESSNESS BY 2020

STRATEGY	ACTION STEPS	DESIRED OUTCOME
Redesign existing interim housing programs for homeless families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement shelter diversion Target rapid re-housing assistance to unsheltered and high need families May expand housing locator pilot and case management services Redesign motel voucher program Explore micro-housing for families 	Number of homeless families is “functionally zero” by 2020

4. END YOUTH HOMELESSNESS BY 2020

STRATEGY	ACTION STEPS	DESIRED OUTCOME
Prioritize homeless youth, including former foster youth, through the Coordinated Entry System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better assess rate of homelessness among youth/former foster youth (after age 21) Fully utilize existing voucher capacity and support new housing opportunities for youth Coordinate with foster youth system to ensure available mainstream resources are aligned with goal of housing crisis response 	Number of homeless youth is “functionally zero” by 2020

5. INDIVIDUALS EXITING INSTITUTIONS WILL NOT DISCHARGE INTO HOMELESSNESS

STRATEGY	ACTION STEPS	DESIRED OUTCOME
Align housing crisis system with institutions (foster care, jails, hospitals, treatment programs) to ensure that homeless people have interim housing and a permanent housing plan prior to discharge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate with Discharge Units to support reunification with home community Through Housing Our Clients workgroup, develop comprehensive list of needs; use to prioritize expansion of/repurposing of dedicated interim housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No clients are discharged from institutions to unsheltered homelessness Clients discharged enter shelter only as destination of last resort Increase in clients exiting institutions directly to housing

Appendix



Appendix A: Glossary of Terms and Concepts

CalWORKs – California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids. California’s implementation of the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF, formerly known as “welfare”). Eligible households with minor children may receive cash aid and other forms of assistance through the CalWORKs program.

CoC – Continuum of Care. A federal grant program for targeted homeless activities, including transitional housing, rapid re-housing and permanent supportive housing. Administered locally by a non-profit or governmental lead agency and overseen by CoC governing body or board. In San Mateo County, HSA is the lead agency and the CoC Steering Committee is the CoC governing body. A Continuum of Care (CoC) also refers to the overall system of shelter, housing and services available in a community to assist homeless people.

ESG – Emergency Solutions Grant. A federal block grant program for targeted homeless activities, including outreach to homeless people, emergency shelter operations and rapid re-housing. Awarded by HUD to cities and counties on a formula basis. San Mateo County receives a direct ESG funding allocation that is administered by the Department of Housing (DOH). The CoC and HSA work in close collaboration with DOH to determine funding priorities and evaluate the performance of ESG-funded projects.

HCV – Housing Choice Voucher. Otherwise known as the Section 8 Program, the HCV Program is a federal housing assistance program overseen by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), providing tenant-based rental assistance to eligible households. The household generally pays 30%-40% of their monthly income towards rent and through a Housing Assistance Payment contract with the owner, the Housing Authority pays a rental subsidy directly to the owner for the remaining monthly rent portion. In San Mateo County, the HCV program is operated by the Housing Authority of San Mateo County (HACSM). The Housing Authority has a Moving-to-Work (MTW) Agreement with HUD which allows it to develop policies that are outside the limitations of certain HUD regulations and provides flexibility in how the HCV program is administered. The three major goals for the MTW program are implementing program efficiencies that result in Federal cost savings, promoting activities and services that increase the economic self-sufficiency of program participants, and expanding housing options that lead to greater housing choice.

HMIS – Homeless Management Information System. HUD requires that all communities receiving CoC funding must establish a dedicated database system to collect and analyze data on homeless people in the community, what housing and services they access, and the results of the assistance they receive. In San Mateo County the HMIS is managed by HSA, with oversight from the CoC Steering Committee.

Household. A person or group of people who live together in a dwelling unit. In the affordable housing field, a household refers to the group of people who occupy a housing unit. In the homelessness field, a “homeless household” refers to a single person or group of people who are staying together in the same location and, if housed, would occupy a housing unit. A homeless household can consist of a single homeless adult, two or more homeless adults, or a group including at least one adult and at least one minor child (also known as a “homeless family”).

Housing First. Housing First is an approach to ending homelessness that centers on providing people experiencing homelessness with housing as quickly as possible – and then providing services as needed. Housing First programs:

- Focus on helping individuals and families access and sustain permanent rental housing as quickly as possible without time limits;
- Provide services to promote housing stability and individual well-being on a voluntary and as-needed basis;
- Do not require that clients agree to participate in services or become clean and sober as a condition of occupancy;
- Adopt a “low barriers” approach to screening such that there are minimal entry requirements (e.g. no sobriety requirements, minimum income requirements, service participation requirements, etc.)

HUD – Department of Housing and Urban Development. The federal department responsible for housing and community development policy and funding.

Low Barriers. See “Housing First.”

PIT – Point in Time Count. HUD requires every CoC to conduct a point in time count of homeless people a minimum of once every two years.

PSH – Permanent Supportive Housing. Subsidized rental housing without time limits and with intensive supportive services offered on-site to assist tenants to maintain housing and meet their desired goals. In PSH, services are offered on a voluntary basis. Clients are not required to participate in services as a condition of being housed, but services are offered to them through a process of engagement. PSH is designed to house those individuals with the greatest housing barriers and highest service needs – typically people who have severe and persistent mental illness or other disabilities and who have long histories of homelessness.

RRH – Rapid Re-Housing. A program model that assists individuals and families who are homeless move quickly into permanent housing, usually to housing in the private market. It does so by offering time-limited, targeted services and short-term rental assistance to help participants make the move from homelessness to housing.

TH – Transitional Housing. A program model, sometimes known as transitional shelter, that provides clients with a shared or private housing unit for a time limited period, usually between 6 and 24 months, during which the client receives supportive services to help with the transition to permanent housing.

USICH – United States Interagency Council on Homelessness. A federal policy body tasked with coordinating the Federal response to homelessness. USICH includes representation from 19 Federal member agencies, including HUD, HHS, and the VA. In 2010, USICH published Opening Doors, the Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness. USICH is one of major policy setting entities at the federal level.

VA – Veterans Administration. The federal cabinet agency tasked with addressing veterans affairs.

Appendix B: List of Stakeholders Who Participated in Community Input Process

1. Stakeholder Interviews

The following individuals participating in interviews with Focus Strategies.

DATE	STAKEHOLDER/LEADER	ORGANIZATION	ROLE
9/14/15	Supervisor Carole Groom	San Mateo County Board of Supervisors	Supervisor
9/10/15	Supervisor Warren Slocum	San Mateo County Board of Supervisors	Supervisor
9/3/15	Supervisor Don Horsley	San Mateo County Board of Supervisors	Supervisor
9/17/15	Supervisor Adrienne Tissier	San Mateo County Board of Supervisors	Supervisor
9/25/15	Supervisor Dave Pine	San Mateo County Board of Supervisors	Supervisor
7/30/15	Iliana Rodriguez	San Mateo County Human Services Agency	Agency Director
7/30/15	Bill Lowell	San Mateo County Department of Housing	Director
7/30/15	Reyna Farrales	San Mateo County Manager's Office	Deputy County Manager
8/28/15	Peggy Jensen	San Mateo County Manager's Office	Deputy County Manager
8/28/15	Michael Callagy	San Mateo County Manager's Office	Deputy County Manager
9/11/15	Louise Rogers	San Mateo County Health System	Chief
8/20/15	Teri Chin	City of Redwood City Fair Oaks Community Center	Manager
10/8/15	Kerry Lobel	Puente de la Costa Sur	Executive Director
10/22/15	Bruce Ives Marc Sabin Brian Greenberg	LifeMoves (formerly InnVision Shelter Network)	Chief Executive Officer Senior Director Vice President of Programs and Services
8/25/15	Melissa Platte	Mental Health Association	Executive Director
9/2/15	Bart Charlow Laura Bent	Samaritan House	Chief Executive Officer Chief Operating Officer
8/20/15	Manuel Santamaria Palak M. Joshi Rafael Morales	Silicon Valley Community Foundation	Vice President Philanthropy Advisor Program Officer
8/25/15	Magda Gonzalez	City of Half Moon Bay	City Manager

All interviews were conducted by Megan Kurteff Schatz, Principal, Focus Strategies.

2. Learning Collaborative Participants

The following individuals participated in some or all of the five Learning Collaborative meetings.

NAME	ORGANIZATION	DATES ATTENDED
Rosa Acosta	City of South San Francisco	10/29, 11/30
Norman Aleman	Human Services Agency (HSA)	10/29, 11/30
Laura Bent	Samaritan House	11/30, 01/07
Craig Billman	LifeMoves (formerly InnVision Shelter Network)	1/7
Pat Bohm	Daly City Community Services Center	11/30, 01/07, 01/28
Eric Brown	Samaritan House	11/30
Antoine Brooks	Veterans Resource Center (VRC)	10/29, 11/30, 01/07
Preston Burnes	Health Plan of San Mateo (HPSM)	10/29, 01/07
Mike Callagy	County Manager's Office (CMO)	11/30
Janice Carter	San Mateo County Office of Emergency Services (SMC OES)	10/29, 11/30
Cindy Chan	Department of Housing (DOH)	10/29, 11/30, 01/28
Teri Chin	City of Redwood City / Fair Oaks Community Center	10/29, 11/30, 01/07, 01/28
Meg Clark	Home & Hope	11/30, 01/07
Lisa Collins	St. Vincent de Paul	10/29, 11/30
Michelle Daher	City of East Palo Alto	11/30, 01/07
Maria De Anda	Human Services Agency (HSA)	1/7, 01/28
Sue Digre	City of Pacifica	10/29, 11/30
Diane Dworkin	Behavioral Health & Recovery Services (BHRS)	10/29, 11/30, 01/28
Peter Ehrhorn	StarVista	10/29, 11/30, 01/07, 01/28
Laura Escobar	United Way of the Bay Area (UWBA)	11/30, 01/07, 01/28
Beth Falls	Human Services Agency (HSA)	11/30
Laura Fanucchi	HIP Housing	10/29, 11/30
Reyna Farrales	County Manager's Office (CMO)	1/7
Anita Farrell	Housing Authority of the County of San Mateo (HACSM)	10/29, 11/30
Christine Ferry	Human Services Agency (HSA)	11/30
Gloria Flore-Garcia	El Concilio	11/30
Remy Goldsmith	Silicon Valley Community Foundation (SVCF)	10/29
Magda Gonzalez	City of Half Moon Bay	10/29, 1/7
Brian Greenberg	LifeMoves (formerly InnVision Shelter Network)	10/29, 11/30
Airtra Harbor-Robinson	Next Step Veterans Resource Center	1/28
Marquisa Hawkins	LifeMoves (formerly InnVision Shelter Network)	1/7
Ray Hodges	Department of Housing (DOH)	10/29
Dawn Holley	Daly City CSC	11/30
Peggy Jensen	County Manager's Office (CMO)	11/30
David Johnson	City of San Mateo Police Department	10/29, 01/28
Elizabeth Lam	City of East Palo Alto Police Department	11/30, 01/07, 01/28
Elli Lo	Health Care for the Homeless & Farmworker Health (HCH/FH)	10/29
Susan Manheimer	City of San Mateo Police Department	10/29, 11/30
Cori Manthorne	Community Overcoming Relationship Abuse (CORA)	11/30, 01/07, 01/28
Dr. Faye McNair-Knox	One East Palo Alto	10/29, 11/30
Sara Mitchell	StarVista	10/29
John Munsey	San Mateo Sheriff's Office	11/30
Stacey Murphy	Abode Services	10/29, 11/30
Linda Nguyen	Health Care for the Homeless & Farmworker Health (HCH/FH)	10/29, 11/30, 01/28

NAME	ORGANIZATION	DATES ATTENDED
Mike Otte	San Mateo County Sheriff's Office	11/30
Maya Perkins	Board of Supervisors – Supervisor Slocum's office	1/7
Melissa Platte	Mental Health Association	11/30, 01/07, 01/28
Nicole Pollack	Human Services Agency	11/30
Jennifer Rainwater	Department of Housing	11/30
Danae Ramirez	County Manager's Office (CMO)	10/29, 11/30, 01/07
Anita Rees	Pacifica Resource Center	10/29, 11/30, 01/28
Natali Rodriguez	HIP Housing	1/7
Louise Rogers	Health System	10/29
Sarah Rosendahl	Don Horsley's Office / Board of Supervisors	10/29, 11/30, 1/7
Marc Sabin	LifeMoves (formerly InnVision Shelter Network)	10/29, 11/30, 01/28
David Shearin	Street Life Ministries	10/29
Grace Siliezar	Community Overcoming Relationship Abuse (CORA)	1/28
Fatima Soares	Coastside Hope	10/29, 1/7/16, 01/28
Robert Stebbins	Health Care for the Homeless & Farm Worker Health (HFH/FH)	11/30
Janet Stone	Department of Housing	1/28/2016
Lenelle Suliguin	City of Daly City	10/29, 11/30, 01/07, 01/28
La Trice Taylor	Samaritan House	10/29, 11/30, 01/07, 01/28
Juda Tolmasoff	Board of Supervisors – Supervisor Groom's office	11/30
Randy Torrijos	Board of Supervisors – Supervisor Pine's office	10/29, 11/30, 01/07, 01/28
Allison Ulrich	Ulrich Consulting (VA)	10/29, 11/30
Robert Williamson	LifeMoves (formerly InnVision Shelter Network)	1/7

Appendix C: Summary of Community Input

As part of the process for assisting San Mateo County to develop a new strategic plan to end homelessness by 2020, Focus Strategies gathered input from the community through several distinct processes. This document summarizes the input received from the following sources:

1. Key Stakeholder Interviews
2. Learning Collaborative Meetings
3. Individual Provider Meetings
4. Meetings with project Leadership Team

1. Stakeholder Interviews

Focus Strategies conducted a series of stakeholder interviews between August and October 2015. The 20 interviewees included members of the Board of Supervisors, County Department heads and other executive level staff, City managers, funders and representatives from key housing and service providers. The purpose of these interviews was to learn more about the existing programs and identify opportunities and challenges to creating a system to end homelessness in San Mateo County by 2020. Below is a brief summary of the stakeholder input.

A. Strengths/Opportunities

Committed Leadership. Stakeholders generally agreed that the County has the benefit of very strong commitment from the elected leadership to make greater progress towards ending homelessness. There has been a long-standing commitment to investing local funds to address this problem, as reflected in the development of the HOPE Plan in 2006 and investment in strategies such as the Homeless Outreach Teams, motel voucher program, new permanent supportive housing units, and many other initiatives. The Board of Supervisors has made a particularly strong commitment to ensuring no San Mateo County families with children are unsheltered. Given the increasingly difficult housing market conditions in the community, the Board of Supervisors has taken an even greater interest in the problem and has affirmed a commitment to making changes that will make the community's response even more effective. At the same time, the County-level Department heads are also all on board with undertaking the difficult work needed to shift the system to do things differently, and have been meeting regularly to identify ways to better coordinate and align resources towards a common goal of reducing homelessness.

Strong History of Collaboration. A strong recurring theme in the interviews was that San Mateo County non-profit and governmental agencies have excellent collaborative relationships and a willingness to work together collectively to improve service delivery for homeless people. There is a collaborative approach to problem solving in which all stakeholders have an ability to have a voice in the decision-making process.

Availability of Resources: Some stakeholders noted that San Mateo County is fortunate in that it is relatively resource rich. Currently there are several major funding streams that can be leveraged and aligned to support a system redesign effort, including Measure A funds that have been earmarked for housing and homeless activities. The Department of Housing also has a supply of permanent housing tenant-based subsidies (Housing Choice Vouchers and Shelter Plus Care) that are being paired with mainstream services dollars, such as Health (Medi-Cal/Health Plan) and Behavioral Health resources, to provide housing opportunities for chronically homeless people.

Programmatic Building Blocks: While most stakeholders who were interviewed were not familiar with the concept of a Housing Crisis Resolution System, there were references to many building blocks that are already in place:

- **System Entries:** The Core Service Agencies and the Homeless Outreach Teams (HOT) currently serve as the main front doors into homeless services and present a framework within which to develop coordinated entry and diversion.
- **Interim Housing:** The existing emergency shelters and transitional housing programs to a large degree have already embraced the concept of short lengths of stay and providing housing-focused services with the goal of maximizing exits to permanent housing.
- **Exits:** The supply of rapid re-housing and permanent supportive housing in the community has been steadily increasing. The Housing Authority recently received a new bonus grant for 34 new permanent housing vouchers targeted to the highest need chronically homeless households, and efforts are already underway to implement strategies to ensure these resources are targeted to those who are the hardest to house.

B. Challenges

Housing Market. Stakeholders were unanimous that the single greatest challenge to system redesign in San Mateo County is the incredibly challenging housing market. The latest economic boom and lack of housing production have resulted in historically low vacancy rates and extraordinarily high rents. In this environment, it is even more challenging than ever to recruit landlords to rent to homeless and low income people, resulting in a historically low lease-up rate for tenant-based housing programs. The Housing Authority is facing tremendous difficulty in using all its tenant based voucher authority (HCVs and S+C) simply because households cannot find anyone to rent to them. The high cost of housing in creating increasing levels of housing instability, with more households doubled up and living in substandard conditions and/or with ongoing stressors to pay the rent. In this context, there is a strong impulse to focus on strategies to prevent or address housing instability rather than literal homelessness. The rate of production of affordable housing has increased slightly in recent years, but is not coming close to keeping up with demand. NIMBYism was also noted by several interviewees as a significant obstacle to increasing affordable housing supply.

Skepticism about Rapid Re-Housing. During the interviews there was great skepticism among community leadership and providers about interventions that depend on use of the existing rental market, particularly rapid re-housing. This includes a concern about the difficulty of locating vacant units that are sufficiently affordable that households will be able to sustain the rent after the rent subsidy period ends.

Concerns about Housing First Model. Many of the individuals interviewed spoke about the numbers of chronically homeless, disabled people who are living outdoors and are difficult to engage into drug treatment or emergency shelter and might be better served with direct access to permanent supportive housing. Yet there is also some concern that a Housing First approach is not feasible and will only lead to a cycle of eviction and “burning” of landlords. There were also several respondents who indicated that some providers in the community impose too many barriers to program access and that it can be very difficult for high need clients to access services, shelter or housing.

Social Justice Concerns. Many providers who were interviewed expressed concerns that the high cost rental market is already forcing people who are low income to leave the community to find housing they can afford. And, since these households are disproportionately people of color, there is a related concern about gentrification and loss of diversity. There is a level of discomfort with the idea that strategies to reduce homelessness will inevitably require that some people receive help to re-locate outside of San Mateo County. Yet many interviewees also acknowledged that the homeless system cannot realistically be expected to solve the problem of income inequality and racial disparities.

2. Learning Collaborative Meetings

Focus Strategies facilitated a series of five Learning Collaborative meetings designed to provide information and solicit input from stakeholders about specific strategies for system redesign. Meetings were well attended, typically with between 30 and 40 individuals present. Participants included non-profit agency staff, City staff, County staff and other interested individuals. The meeting topics and summary of input received are described below.

Meeting 1: Introduction to System Performance Measurement (August 26, 2015)

PRESENTATION TOPICS:

- Introduction to housing crisis resolution systems
- Introduction to system performance measurement
- Overview of System-wide Analytics and Projection (SWAP) tools and measures
- How to use system and project performance assessment to improve effectiveness of efforts to end homelessness
- Sample results from other communities

DISCUSSION:

- Stakeholders discussed their views about the pros and cons of becoming more of a housing crisis response system, as opposed to a system that attempts to address poverty more broadly.
- There was discussion about the challenges of securing housing in the current market and the pros and cons of helping families to leave the community to secure more affordable units, in particular how that related to social justice, equity and racial disparities.
- Stakeholders asked questions about the SWAP measures and how they are calculated.

Meeting 2: Shelter Diversion (October 29, 2015)

PRESENTATION TOPICS:

- Review of housing crisis resolution systems
- Presentation of performance data on entries to existing programs from literal homelessness versus housed situations
- Overview of shelter diversion (what it is, how it differs from prevention, elements of diversion, examples from other communities)

DISCUSSION:

- Stakeholders discussed how diversion could work in San Mateo County, using sample case studies of different types of clients.
- There was general consensus that the Core Service Agencies already do a lot of the elements of diversion, but there is interest in making it more standardized and formalized.
- There is a need for staff training to ensure everyone doing diversion has same skill set and access to information about resources; and a need for dedicated staff with time to really do it well.
- Stakeholders felt there would definitely need to be flexible funding as part of the model.
- The group agreed that if appropriately staffed and funded, it can definitely help keep some households from entering shelter.

Meeting 3: Coordinated Entry (November 30, 2015)

PRESENTATION TOPICS:

- Review of housing crisis resolution systems
- Review of performance measures on entries to existing programs from literal homelessness versus housed situations
- Overview of coordinated entry (what it is, key features, why it is important to implement, design considerations and community examples)

DISCUSSION:

- Stakeholders discussed how clients are currently prioritized in the existing set of programs in San Mateo County and the pros and cons of different approaches to prioritization that could yield better results.
- There was agreement that the Cores currently serve as the entry point to much of the homelessness system, however, they are also the doorway into the broader safety net and anti-poverty system, so the design of coordinated entry needs to take into consideration how people will move from the “homeless system” door into the mainstream services doorway, when those doorways are all at the same agency.
- Currently the single adult system works pretty much on a first come first served basis; families are somewhat prioritized.
- Prioritization of highest need people will be challenging due to the larger number of existing entry points.
- All entry points need to have much better information about available resources in the community.
- Police currently drop people off at shelters, which will be difficult if beds are only accessible through coordinated entry.
- Coordinated entry will need to take into account client choice in relation to geography, particularly for those living on the Coastside.
- Need for real-time data is a high priority.
- Need for a specialized DV doorway was identified; and thought must be given to how veterans will access the system.
- There was general agreement that unsheltered people should be prioritized; some felt that vulnerability assessments should be used to prioritize among the unsheltered people.
- Concerns were shared that if assessment, matching and referral to shelter and housing is centralized it might not be fair and transparent. Who will do this function?

Meeting 4: Interim Housing (January 7, 2016)

PRESENTATION TOPICS:

- Review of housing crisis resolution systems
- Review of performance measures on length of stay, exit rates to permanent housing, returns to homelessness
- Overview of the existing inventory of shelter and transitional housing in San Mateo County
- Presentation: role of emergency shelter in a housing crisis resolution system, features of high performing shelters, role of transitional housing

DISCUSSION:

- Stakeholders discussed ways that emergency shelter and transitional housing could be re-configured to result in shorter lengths of stay and greater rate of exit to permanent housing.
- There was also discussion about the households that are served in interim housing and whether the existing system screens out people with the highest needs.
- A main topic of discussion was about people who are “banned” from shelters and how to ensure those with highest needs are able to access shelter. There were concerns expressed that existing policies and rules relating to who is banned are not clear and consistently applied. Providers agreed to have further discussions with Center on Homelessness staff to address these issues.
- Participants discussed whether high barriers and “zero tolerance” rules result in some homeless people not being willing to go to shelter. There was a desire to have more data on this topic.
- There was also discussion about whether shelter rules, such as chores, make it difficult for higher need clients to stay in shelter. Some felt chores were important to shelter operations and it is important for clients to learn life skills. Others felt shelter should have more minimal requirements.
- Participants considered whether requiring participation in services while in shelter posed a barrier to entry and made shelter stays longer (as clients have to compete service requirements before moving to housing). Some thought that services could be more mobile and help clients after they move to housing, but funding is not available for mobile services.

Meeting 5: System Exits - Rapid Re-Housing and Permanent Supportive Housing (January 28, 2016)

PRESENTATION TOPICS:

- Review of housing crisis resolution systems
- Review of performance measures on cost per permanent housing exit
- Overview of the existing inventory of rapid re-housing and permanent supportive housing in San Mateo County
- Presentation: definition of Housing First, rapid re-housing, permanent supportive housing; overview of the core components of rapid re-housing and permanent supportive housing; progressive engagement; moving-on strategies

DISCUSSION:

- Participants had an opportunity to ask questions about the rapid re-housing model and discussed the opportunities and challenges of scaling up this intervention type in San Mateo County.
- Participants also discussed progressive engagement and whether there are elements of this approach already being used in the existing programs.
- Participants noted that progressive engagement is not well aligned with what Core Service Agencies do, since they work comprehensively with people to assess all their issues across many domains, not just housing, and generally don't take the approach of providing a “light touch” as the initial intervention.
- There was a lot of enthusiasm about the new contract for housing location services, and hope that it will help some people with housing subsidies to secure units.
- Generally participants were cautiously optimistic about rapid re-housing as a strategy, but there were questions raised about the challenge of developing a pipeline of willing landlords and need for creative and intensive engagement and incentives.
- There were many concerns expressed that clients who are rapidly re-housed will not be able to sustain housing over the long term. Participants expressed a desire to ensure strong connections with mainstream service systems so that services “follow the client.”

- There was discussion about strategies to assist clients no longer needing intensive services to move from permanent supportive housing to regular affordable housing (“moving on”). There was enthusiasm about this approach, but some caution that before the more stable households leave existing permanent supportive housing units, there needs to be a pipeline of higher need, chronically homeless people who meet HUD criteria and are document-ready.

Final Thoughts:

At the end of the meeting, participants were asked to share a hope or a fear about the redesign of the homeless system. Overall, many participants expressed hope that the new approach will yield positive results, particularly that the system will be more focused on housing people, and that there will be a better match between interventions available and what clients need. Others spoke of the positive results from development of collaborative relationships. Some expressed fears that this will be a large culture shift and concern about tackling system transformation in the current difficult rental market.

3. Individual Provider Meetings

As part of the system redesign process, Focus Strategies gathered data from providers to populate the System-Wide Analytics and Projection (SWAP) tool. This included Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) client data and program budgets. Using this data, Focus Strategies generated an analysis of the performance of the overall system, each system component (shelter, transitional housing, rapid re-housing and permanent supportive housing), and each individual program. Focus Strategies staff held individual meetings with each provider agency to review and discuss their individual data. Meetings were attended by staff from the Center on Homelessness. Providers for whom Focus Strategies analyzed data were: Home and Hope, LifeMoves (formerly InnVision Shelter Network); Mental Health Association of San Mateo County; Project WeHOPE; Samaritan House; StarVista; and the San Mateo County Housing Authority. There was also a meeting between Center on Homelessness staff and CORA regarding CORA's program data.

During these meetings, providers had an opportunity to review their individual program performance and the underlying data, surface questions and concerns, and discuss where they saw opportunities to improve performance. These meetings were invaluable in getting all the providers aligned and oriented to the goals of project and system performance measurement and will form the basis for an ongoing process of performance evaluation and continuous quality improvement that will be implemented by the Center on Homelessness.

4. Leadership Team Meetings

Focus Strategies held a series of meetings with the project Leadership Team, which includes representatives from HSA, Health System, Department of Housing, County Manager's Office, staff of several members of the Board of Supervisors, plus the chair of the Continuum of Care and a representative of the Core Service Agencies (both representing nonprofit provider agencies). During these meetings Focus Strategies and HSA received input to help guide the development of the strategic plan as well as planning for different forums for community input (interviews, learning collaborative, and provider meetings). Meeting dates and topics were:

- June 10, 2015 – Project Kick Off Meeting
- October 20, 2016 – Project status update, review of homeless system redesign framework, review of updated SWAP data, planning for Learning Collaborative meetings
- February 29, 2016 – Review of strategic plan strategies, introduction to system modeling

Appendix D: System Performance Analysis

This appendix presents the results of data analysis conducted by Focus Strategies to inform the development of the Strategic Plan. The system performance measures considered in this analysis build upon HUD measures articulated in the HEARTH Act and Opening Doors: The Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness. The measures align with HUD’s approach and also fold in additional considerations, including cost effectiveness. These measures are important in understanding both individual project performance, and also system performance as a whole.

This appendix provides a summary by project type for the system as a whole.¹ The data used to prepare these reports was collected from the Housing Inventory Count (HIC), Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), and budget information provided by each program. The data analyzed is for the period from July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2015.²

Below is an overview and explanation of each of the performance measures:

- **Utilization Rate** measures whether existing bed capacity is being maximized and can help identify programs with high barriers to entry. Maximizing the use of available bed capacity is essential to ensuring that system resources are being put to their best use and that as many homeless people are being served as possible in the existing inventory.
- **Length of Stay** measures how quickly programs are helping households exit homelessness and can be considered in relation to the rate of return to homelessness.
- **Rate of Return to Homelessness** measures whether people who exited the system to permanent housing return to a homeless program within 12 months. This measure identifies whether programs are helping people into housing placements that “stick”. Assessing this measure can help alleviate concerns that serving higher needs clients and helping them exit to housing more quickly could result in housing placements that are not stable.
- **Household Entries from Homeless Prior Living** measures the effectiveness of program targeting in that programs should be focusing on serving people who are literally homeless: unsheltered or living in emergency shelters. The most effective use of system resources is prioritizing homeless households for beds while diverting those who are still housed. Successfully reducing homelessness depends on communities prioritizing those with the highest needs for available units, so this data allows communities to understand the degree to which each program is serving people with the most acute housing situations.
- **Household Entries from Non-Homeless Prior Living** considers the percentage of entries from housed locations, including institutions, family/friends, subsidized and unsubsidized housing, transitional housing and permanent supportive housing. Again, this measure is important in that it assesses the effectiveness of program targeting. Admitting households into homeless programs from housed situations is not the most effective use of resources. Instead, many of these people could be diverted from entering the homeless system with some assistance to remain in their current housing or move directly to alternative housing.
- **Rate of Exit to Permanent Housing** is a measure that allows programs to think about how best to increase the rate at which homeless people exit programs into housing. This is one of the most important ways a community can reduce homelessness.
- **Cost per Permanent Housing Exit** is a more performance-oriented way of measuring cost than the typical cost per unit or cost per household measure. It illustrates whether system resources are being invested in interventions that are effective in ending homelessness. This measure also helps identify system components or programs that are not cost effective. Cost per permanent housing exit is a key performance measure because it assesses not only whether a program is helping clients to move to permanent housing but also whether they do so in a cost effective manner. This data allows communities to understand whether scarce system resources are being spent in a way that achieves the maximum possible results.

TOTAL UNDUPLICATED PEOPLE (2014 – 2015)		1,943	
		#	%
AGE	ADULTS 25+	1,221	63%
	TAY 18 - 24	142	7%
	CHILDREN	580	30%
	MISSING	0	0%

¹ Each provider that contributed data also received reports summarizing their individual program data.

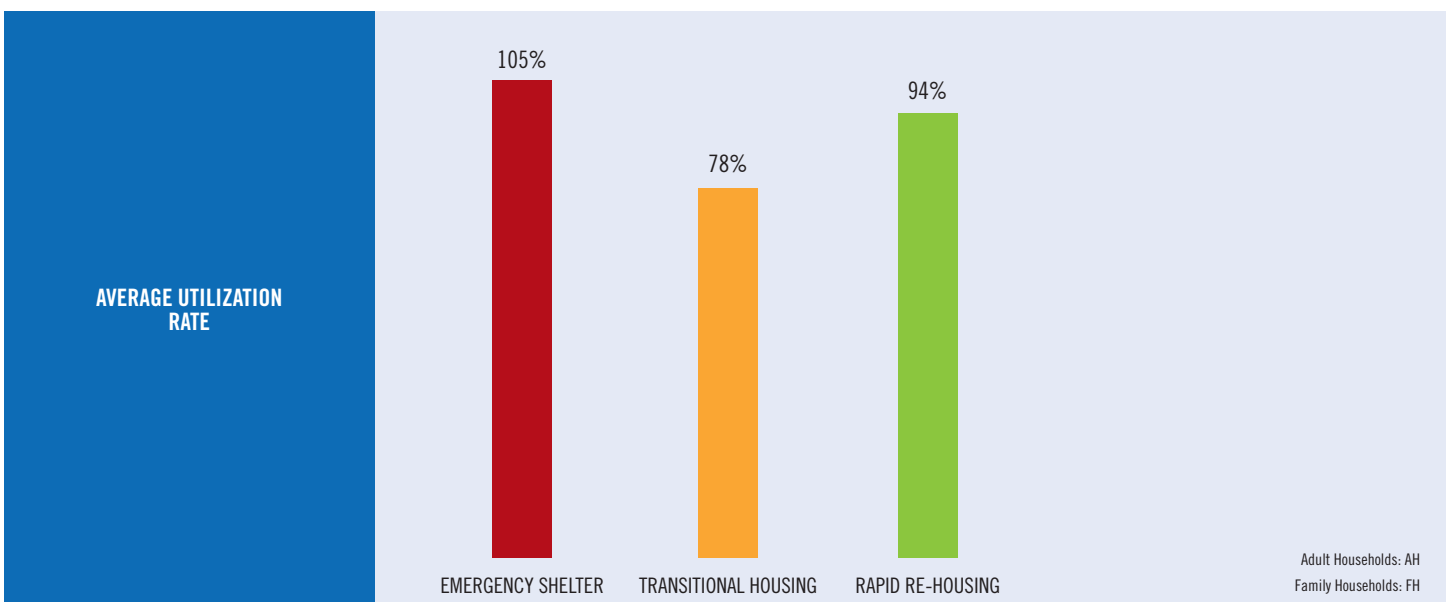
² Daybreak data analysis period is January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2015

		EMERGENCY SHELTER		TRANSITIONAL HOUSING		RAPID RE-HOUSING		PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING	
TOTAL UNDUPLICATED PEOPLE (2014 – 2015) ³		1,431		881		364		513	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
AGE	ADULTS 25+	810	57%	459	52%	230	63%	405	79%
	TAY 18 - 24	129	9%	57	6%	22	6%	14	3%
	CHILDREN	492	34%	365	41%	112	31%	94	18%
	MISSING	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

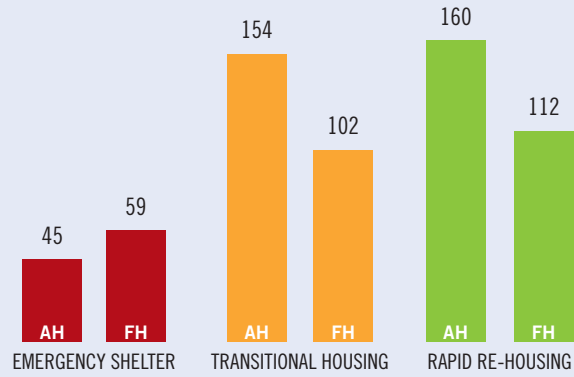
		EMERGENCY SHELTER		TRANSITIONAL HOUSING		RAPID RE-HOUSING		PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING	
TOTAL UNDUPLICATED PEOPLE (2014 – 2015)		939		516		252		419	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
GENDER	MALE	468	50%	267	52%	166	66%	225	54%
	FEMALE	469	50%	249	48%	86	34%	194	46%
	OTHER	2	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
	UNKNOWN	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
DISABLED ⁴		399	42%	286	55%	55	22%	338	81%
VETERAN		38	4%	109	21%	152	60%	84	20%
CHRONICALLY HOMELESS		55	6%	35	7%	23	9%	47	11%
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE		189	20%	103	20%	192	76%	55	13%

³ Table include HMIS data only; do not reflect updated agency data

⁴ Disability as indicated by a “Yes” answer in the universal data element “Disabling Condition”

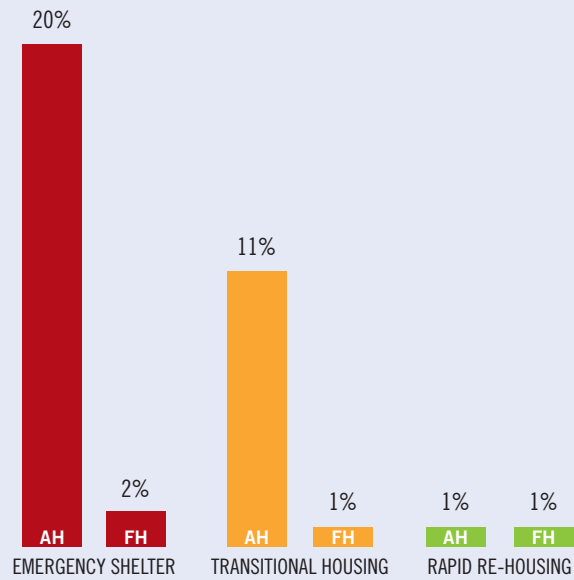


**AVERAGE LENGTH
OF STAY**
JUNE 2014 – JUNE 2015



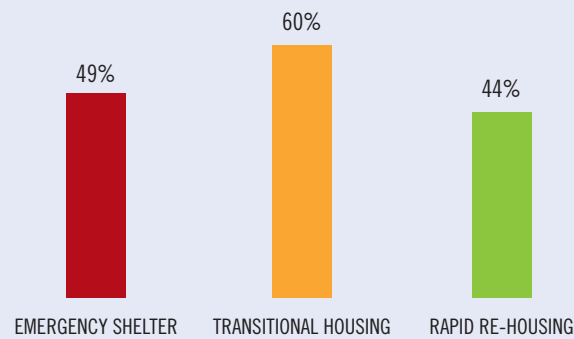
Adult Households: AH
Family Households: FH

**RATE OF RETURN
TO HOMELESSNESS**
JUNE 2014 – JUNE 2015



Adult Households: AH
Family Households: FH

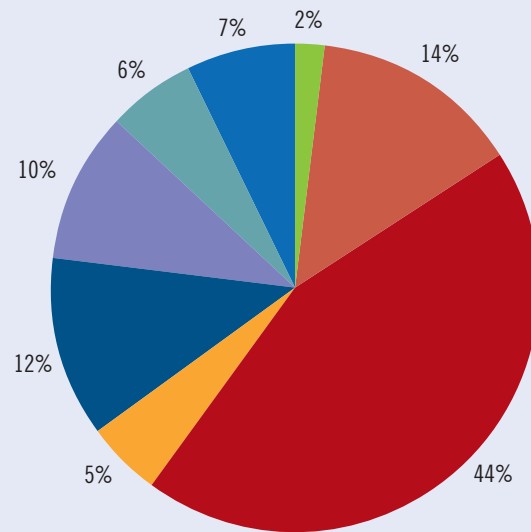
**HOUSEHOLD ENTRIES
FROM HOMELESS PRIOR LIVING**
JUNE 2014 – JUNE 2015



Adult Households: AH
Family Households: FH

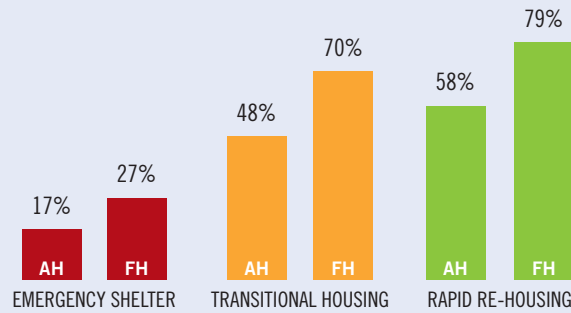
**ALL HOUSEHOLD ENTRIES
IN ANALYSIS YEAR**

35% of entries
from Non-Homeless
Situations



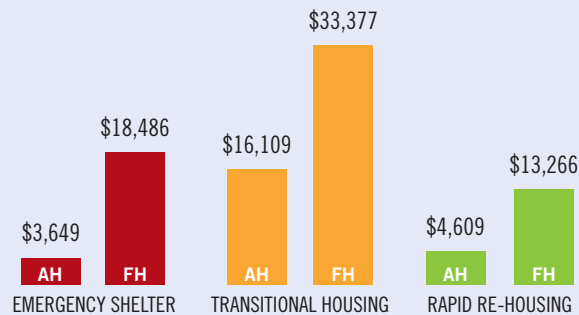
- PROGRAM ENTRIES**
- Unsheltered
 - Emergency Shelter
 - Transitional Housing
 - Family/Friends
 - Unsubsidized Housing
 - Institutional*
 - Other Non-Homeless
 - Unknown

**RATE OF EXIT TO
PERMANENT HOUSING
JUNE 2014 – JUNE 2015**



Adult Households: AH
Family Households: FH

**COST PER PERMANENT
HOUSING EXIT
JUNE 2014 – JUNE 2015**



Adult Households: AH
Family Households: FH

Appendix E: System Inventory

This table summarizes the main homeless system components, providers and programs in San Mateo County.

PROVIDER	PROGRAM	POPULATION
OUTREACH PROGRAMS		
HSA/LifeMoves*	Homeless Outreach Teams	Chronically homeless people
Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (BHRS)	PATH Team	Unsheltered homeless people with mental illness
EMERGENCY SHELTER & MOTEL VOUCHERS		
CORA	Emergency Shelter	DV Survivors
Home and Hope	Rotating Shelter	Families
HSA	CalWORKs Vouchers	Families
LifeMoves	Motel Voucher Program	Families
Mental Health Association	Spring Street Shelter	Single Adults
Project WeHOPE	WeHOPE Shelter	Single Adults
StarVista	Your House South	Youth
EMERGENCY SHELTER AND SHORT-TERM TRANSITIONAL HOUSING		
LifeMoves	First Step for Families	Families
LifeMoves	Maple Street	Single Adults
Samaritan House	Safe Harbor	Single Adults
TRANSITIONAL HOUSING		
CORA	Casa de Sor Juana Ines	DV Survivors
LifeMoves	Family Crossroads	Families
LifeMoves	Redwood Family House	Families
LifeMoves	Haven Family House	Families
Mental Health Association	Spring Street Transitional	Single Adults
StarVista	Daybreak	Youth
RAPID RE-HOUSING		
CORA	Short-Term Housing Assistance	DV Survivors
LifeMoves	Rapid Re-Housing (ESG)	Single Adults & Families
LifeMoves	SAFE Rapid Re-Housing (CoC)	Families
LifeMoves	Rapid Re-Housing (CoC)	Families
LifeMoves	Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF)	Veterans
PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING		
CORA**	Provider-Based Assistance	DV Survivors
Housing Authority	Shelter Plus Care (vouchers)	Single Adults & Families
Housing Authority	VASH (VA Supportive Housing Vouchers)	Veterans
Housing Authority**	Housing Readiness Program (Vouchers)	Single Adults and Families
Mental Health Association	Cedar Street	Single Adults
Mental Health Association	Belmont Apartments	Single Adults
Mid-Pen Housing	2000 Delaware	Single Adults & Families
MidPen Housing	636 El Camino	Single Adults & Families
Telecare	Master Leasing Program	Single Adults
PREVENTION AND GENERAL SAFETY NET SERVICES		
Core Service Agencies	Core Service Agency Network	Single Adults & Families
St. Vincent de Paul	Homeless Help Desk	Single Adults & Families

* LifeMoves is the new name for InnVision Shelter Network

** Time-limited program.

COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

HSA.SMCGOV.ORG