



MEMORANDUM

To: City Council President Jennifer Campbell and Members of the San Diego City Council

From: The Implementation Team for the City of San Diego Community Action Plan on Homelessness: Keely Halsey, Lisa Jones, Tamera Kohler, and Nancy Sa

Date: July 16, 2021

Subject: Supplemental Information for July 20, 2021, City Council Agenda Item #331

An informational report will be presented on the [City of San Diego Community Action Plan on Homelessness](https://www.sdhc.org/homelessness-solutions/community-action-plan/) (Action Plan) at the July 20, 2021, City Council meeting. The presentation will provide a mid-year update on the plan and related homelessness initiatives. However, due to time constraints, the verbal presentation will not include all of the activity undertaken since the previous update in October 2020 and accomplishments achieved to date. This memorandum provides an overview of new activities accomplished or underway, which are organized by the foundational strategy that applies to each activity. Information on progress toward the Action Plan goals, including additional details on the activities listed below, is available on the Action Plan dashboards, which are anticipated to be published on August 1, 2021, and can be found at <https://www.sdhc.org/homelessness-solutions/community-action-plan/>.

Implementing Structure

The Action Plan recommended the creation of a governance structure that supports cross-agency collaboration, systems-level thinking and accountability.

The Leadership Council regularly reviews progress on the Action Plan and provides direction to the Interagency Implementation Team. The Leadership Council includes agency leaders and community representatives, including a person with lived experience, business and philanthropic leaders.

The Interagency Implementation Team is a group of senior level staff from the main funding agencies and oversight structures in the City related to homelessness. The team provides recommendations to the Leadership Council and carries out actions and activities to achieve the goals in the Action Plan based on priorities within the framework of the five foundational strategies.

Leadership Council

City of San Diego	Mayor	Mayor Todd Gloria
San Diego City Council	Council President	Council President Jennifer Campbell
County of San Diego	Chair, County Board of Supervisors	Supervisor Nathan Fletcher
San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC)	President and Chief Executive Officer	Richard C. Gentry
Regional Task Force on the Homeless (RTFH)	Chief Executive Officer	Tamera Kohler
Philanthropic Organization	Lucky Duck Foundation	Peter Seidler
Individual with Lived Experience	Voices of Our City Choir	John Brady
Business Representative	SDG&E	Mitch Mitchell

Implementation Team

City of San Diego	Chief of Homelessness Strategies & Housing Liaison	Keely Halsey
San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC)	Executive Vice President of Strategic Initiatives	Lisa Jones
Regional Task Force on the Homeless (RTFH)	Chief Executive Officer	Tamera Kohler
San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC)	Project Manager for the Community Action Plan	Nancy Sa

Policy Liaisons

San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC)	Vice President of Policy	Molly Chase
County of San Diego	Policy Advisor for Supervisor Nathan Fletcher	Sarah Dawe
Regional Task Force on the Homeless (RTFH)	Chief Operations Officer	Lahela Mattox

The five foundational strategies are:

1. Implement a Systems-Level Approach to Homelessness Planning
2. Create a Client-Centered Homeless Assistance System
3. Decrease Inflow Through Increase of Prevention and Diversion
4. Improve the Performance of the Existing System
5. Increase the Production of/Access to Permanent Solutions

1. Implement a Systems-Level Approach to Homelessness Planning

SDHC to Publish New System Performance Dashboard

In August 2021, SDHC will launch a new publicly available System Performance Dashboard. SDHC's Homeless Housing Innovations Division oversees SDHC- and City of San Diego-funded homeless shelters and housing and services contracts, which include extensive monthly data collection and analysis of key performance metrics and demographics. The goal of this new dashboard is to provide information to the public about how the City of San Diego- and SDHC-funded programs are performing as a system. The dashboard will be available on SDHC's website for policy makers, community stakeholders and the general public to have access to information that details how the different types of homelessness interventions are performing compared to industry-standard, best-practice metrics. One of the guiding principles detailed in the Action Plan is to make data-driven decisions and create transparency. These dashboards support that principle. The System Performance Dashboard will be available in August on SDHC's website at <https://www.sdhc.org/homelessness-solutions/>.

Work with the County and other funders to anticipate shifts in funding and ensure partner agencies are prepared for those changes

Regular work groups and planning meetings consisting of key staff from lead agencies are occurring. They work to anticipate shifts in funding and ensure that agencies are collaborating and preparing for funding opportunities to support efforts to address homelessness within the City and the region. Work groups consist of representatives from the City of San Diego, County of San Diego, Regional Task Force on the Homeless (RTFH) and the San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC).

New accomplishments in 2021 include:

- A Work Group has been developed among the County, City, RTFH and SDHC to align funding priorities as appropriate and leverage existing and future funding to advance the Action Plan's goals. This also includes a new collaborative effort to focus resources on persons experiencing Substance Use Disorder challenges and develop innovative programs specifically to serve this population more effectively.

Previous accomplishments can be viewed online in the Action Plan dashboard.

Implement the Neighborhood-Based Coordinated Street Outreach Program

The Housing Authority of the City of San Diego and the City Council approved the Neighborhood-Based Coordinated Street Outreach Program on October 27, 2020. The initiative aligns with one of the Key Items for Consideration identified in the Action Plan, as well as the

foundational strategies to implement a systems-level approach and create a client-centered homeless assistance system.

The City of San Diego's Fiscal Year 2022 budget, which Mayor Todd Gloria proposed and the City Council approved on June 14, 2021, includes \$1 million to expand the City of San Diego Neighborhood-Based Coordinated Street Outreach Program. This expansion will support more than 13 additional full-time equivalent staff positions to supplement the work being done by the 17 positions added last year and the outreach resources funded through other service provider contracts.

City of San Diego Homelessness Response Center

The Homelessness Response Center (HRC) implements a streamlined, coordinated, client-centric City of San Diego Homelessness Crisis Response System. The program's objective is to provide system navigation services that coordinate all activities to move someone from homelessness to housed. The program is aligned with the five foundational strategies of the Action Plan and is informed by lessons learned and successes of Operation Shelter to Home.

The HRC opened in May 2021 following the conclusion of Operation Shelter to Home.

Create a Communications Work Group and Plan

The Action Plan encourages transparent communication to the public and community stakeholders about the successes, challenges and progress toward the Action Plan's goals. A communications work group consisting of members of each of the Action Plan's implementing agencies has been tasked with developing a communications strategy for the Leadership Council's and Implementation Team's consideration that would support transparency, accountability and public engagement and raise awareness of the Action Plan and homelessness issues in the City of San Diego.

Shared Housing Learning Collaborative

Shared Housing is an effective tool in areas, such as San Diego, that have extremely limited vacancies and unit availability. The expansion of Shared Housing is one critical pathway to finding a home for the thousands of individuals experiencing homelessness in San Diego. RTFH promoted and participated in community trainings on Shared Housing, supported by Funders Together to End Homelessness San Diego (FTEHSD), and hosted a Shared Housing Forum with approximately 150 attendees, representing housing and service providers, including the youth system.

RTFH is coordinating efforts in San Diego to increase system capacity and promote the use of the Shared Housing model. Critical to this work is partnering with individuals with lived experience to participate in a leadership role with the RTFH and other partners. RTFH has worked with John Brady and Voices of Our City Choir to include individuals with lived experience.

In addition, RTFH has funded the participation of San Diego service providers in a national Shared Housing learning collaborative with the Shared Housing Institute. The learning collaborative is 12 weeks, spanning May 2021 through August 2021.

The RTFH also published a [Shared Housing white paper](#) that can serve as a foundation for local understanding of what Shared Housing is and further explain key components.

Emergency Housing Vouchers

On May 5, 2021, as part of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) issued a [PIH Notice 2021-15](#) Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHV)-Operating Requirements. The vouchers are intended to help San Diegans who are experiencing homelessness; are at risk of experiencing homelessness; are fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking or human trafficking; or who recently experienced homelessness and for whom rental assistance will help prevent their homelessness or a high risk of housing instability. SDHC received 480 federal Emergency Housing Vouchers, which took effect on July 1, 2021.

SDHC is collaborating with the RTFH, as the lead agency for the regional Continuum of Care, to identify qualifying households for these vouchers and to administer the vouchers, in accordance with HUD requirements.

SDHC and the RTFH are working together on the appropriate referral pathways through the Coordinated Entry System (CES) to refer eligible households and to identify support resources available to households who are enrolled and utilize an Emergency Housing Voucher through SDHC.

2. Create a Client-Centered Homeless Assistance System

Homelessness Program for Engaged Educational Resources (PEER)

Homelessness PEER is an existing collaboration between SDHC and San Diego City College, funded by SDHC, which started in October 2020. It provides homelessness services-specific education through a two-unit course, “Human Services 75,” to develop the local workforce needed for programs and services that help individuals experiencing homelessness. The program also provides an academic counselor and career coach to work with the students on securing volunteer, internship or employment opportunities in organizations that work with people experiencing homelessness.

Using ARPA funds as set forth in the Mayor’s budget proposal, in Fiscal Year 2022, the program will be expanded to offer the course twice per semester and increase staffing to broaden the scope and reach of the program.

Students learn about national and regional policy, local programming and practical application, including having opportunities to engage with national experts, local front-line staff and service provider leadership. Students will also receive assistance from dedicated career counselors to work with students on career planning and job placement opportunities within local homelessness services.

Engage with Advisory Groups

The Action Plan recommends creating feedback mechanisms and seeking input from stakeholders by utilizing Advisory Groups to convene on specific issues. Participation is informal and voluntary, and frequency is determined on an ad hoc basis to achieve Action Plan goals and solicit input and expertise across a broad sector of service users and stakeholders.

The RTFH makes regular effort to engage with youth through the Youth Action Board, and RTFH and SDHC participate in the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project (YHDP) committee meetings. Engagement with Advisory Groups of Persons with Lived Experience is also an ongoing focus, and members of the Implementation Team communicate with members of the HEAL network and Voices of Dignity and attend meetings when invited and deemed appropriate by existing advocacy groups.

A Provider Advisory Group and a Front-Line Staff Advisory Group were formed to create further opportunities for feedback specific to the activities and efforts that support the Action Plan's goals. The groups are scheduled to meet quarterly.

Reduce negative impacts of enforcement and criminal history on people experiencing homelessness and any barrier that may come up toward obtaining housing

The City has examined some of its practices and policies regarding the intersection of law enforcement and homelessness, resulting in increased focus on treatment and diversion programs – which provide officers the opportunity to link individuals with treatment and shelter in lieu of citation or arrest – and efforts to increase service-provider-led outreach, for example. Further, in March 2021, Mayor Gloria also directed changes to policies regarding the City's response to homeless encampments and the belongings of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness. These changes provide a more person-centered approach to environmental services cleanups. Some of the changes include suspension of cleanups and enforcement during inclement weather, suspension of cleanups at night, and easier means to retrieve personal items removed during cleanups.

For more information on these and additional changes, visit

<https://www.sandiego.gov/mayor/mayor-gloria-directs-broad-changes-addressing-homeless-encampments>.

Analyze data and identify potential opportunities to impact the contributing factors related to disproportionate representation of certain populations regarding entry into homelessness

According to the 2020 Point-in-Time Count, Black persons accounted for 21 percent of the unsheltered population and 30 percent of the sheltered population, while only accounting for 5.5 percent of the general population in San Diego County. The Leadership Council and Implementation Team identified this activity as an area of focus for 2021. Below are activities that related to this item.

In July 2020, the RTFH Board approved the creation of the Ad Hoc Committee on Addressing Homelessness Among Black San Diegans. The purpose of the Ad Hoc Committee is to explore the factors contributing to disparities among Black persons experiencing homelessness, listen and engage in extensive public dialogue with community stakeholders, and to develop a series of

recommendations that the CoC can take to better address the impacts of systemic racism and its effects within the homelessness crisis response system.

Furthermore, the 2020 Point-in-Time Count found that of those who were 55 and older and completed the unsheltered survey, 43 percent reported being homeless for the first time; 54 percent were sleeping on the street or sidewalk; 55 percent reported a physical disability; and 58 percent have been homeless for less than one year in the past three years. Additionally, 12 percent of those 55 or older are chronically homeless and unsheltered, and nearly 1 in 4 are female. While chronological age demonstrates many older adults are living without a home, the rigors of homelessness also are known to prematurely age people as well.

In April 2021, the RTFH Board approved the establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on Older Adults Experiencing Homelessness. The purpose of the committee is to focus on the needs of older adults experiencing homelessness, specifically reviewing data on the prevalence of homelessness among seniors, best practices to meet older adults' shelter and housing needs, and education to homelessness service providers about the unique needs of older adults. The committee also will make recommendations about how the region's homelessness response system can reduce homelessness among older adults.

Implement an automated client-feedback program to improve system performance

SDHC is implementing an automated client-feedback system that will collect both quantitative and qualitative information that can provide system-level performance feedback. The survey questions are being developed through a community engagement process with people with lived experience to ensure the survey has a client-centered approach. The automated system will encourage honest participation of persons utilizing the City's homelessness response programs because it includes a layer of anonymity in the different ways that a person can provide input. The client-feedback system will be implemented across multiple programs in late summer 2021 and will inform program and system-level trends, service gaps or changes that may be needed.

3. Decrease Inflow Through Increase of Prevention and Diversion

City of San Diego Single-Room Occupancy (SRO) Ordinance Enhancements

SDHC is proposing several important updates to City's SRO Ordinance with the chief purpose to incentivize the preservation or replacement of this important housing source in the City, place long-term covenants on units to ensure affordability to lower income populations, improve relocation assistance to vulnerable residents, and enhance the City's administration of the SRO properties.

SDHC conducted video webinars with stakeholders on September 15, 2020, and May 17, 2021, and updated drafts of the proposed ordinance were posted on SDHC's website. For more information about the proposed updates to the City's SRO ordinance, including links to recordings of the video webinars, please visit <https://www.sdhc.org/housing-opportunities/single-room-occupancy-units/>

COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance Programs

SDHC currently administers the City of San Diego COVID-19 Housing Stability Assistance Program. In March 2021, the program's online application launched. The program helps pay past-due, unpaid rent and utilities for individuals and families with low income in the City of San Diego who experienced a financial hardship due to the pandemic. On June 28, 2021, California Governor Gavin Newsom signed into law Assembly Bill (AB) 832, which allows the COVID-19 Housing Stability Assistance Program and similar programs statewide to now pay 100 percent of the rent obligations for qualifying low-income households. Previous State law limited assistance payments to 80 percent of past-due rent and 25 percent of upcoming rent. SDHC advocated for payments at the 100 percent level in letters and meetings in April, May and June. With this new law, SDHC anticipates fully expending all of the Coronavirus Relief Funds previously allocated to the Housing Stability Assistance Program. As of July 15, 2021, SDHC has disbursed \$46,746,293.88 to help 6,404 qualifying applicants. The application remains open at covidassistance.sdhc.org, and additional applications are submitted each day.

4. Improve the Performance of the Existing System

Enhance technical resources for providers that incentivizes and supports capacity building

San Diego homelessness service providers experience capacity challenges, including limited staff and training resources. To support the funders, providers and community in successfully implementing services and achieving greater impact, RTFH, SDHC and the County have partnered to fund and support a series of trainings on best practices and emerging models. Additionally, RTFH and its partners have worked with national experts to bring service providers together to better coordinate and establish standards of practice through community Learning Collaboratives focused on outreach, Rapid Rehousing (RRH) and Diversion. This continued support is critical to the success of the providers and their ability to provide services effectively.

Additional ongoing capacity building activities include a Housing-Focused Shelter initiative and a Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) Partnership Collaborative. The Housing-Focused Shelter initiative utilizes the expertise of Iain De Jong, a nationally recognized expert and founder of OrgCode Consulting, to provide intensive training and support on enhancing best practices on operating a housing-focused shelter program.

SDHC launched a PSH Partnership Collaborative in June 2021. The collaborative, implemented by SDHC and facilitated by LeSar Development Consultants, works with SDHC stakeholders—including PSH service providers, property managers, and developers—to obtain feedback and input and review existing processes to inform PSH best practices. The collaborative focuses on reviewing client-centered practices and alignment with the Housing First model, strengthening efforts around knowledge sharing and capacity building, and identifying opportunities for streamlining that benefit all stakeholders.

Please also note that the Homelessness PEER program, described above, contributes toward this goal.

Outreach Standards and Practices

Over the last two years, RTFH has been working with Iain De Jong, a nationally recognized expert and founder of OrgCode Consulting, to develop an enhanced set of standards for street outreach services. Starting in the summer of 2019, OrgCode began working with a diverse set of stakeholders, including SDHC, the City and the County, to understand current outreach practices, listen to key stakeholders, and conduct initial outreach trainings. The Outreach Standards serve as a guiding framework for how coordinated outreach occurs throughout the region. Included in the Outreach Standards is the establishment of regional coordination entities to work with all outreach teams throughout the region, regardless of funding source, to ensure a comprehensive outreach effort. RTFH finalized the Street Outreach Standards in January 2021 and has been working with its key partners to support the implementation of the Street Outreach Standards – including with the existing and new outreach teams referenced above.

The investment in street outreach will assist the region in ensuring the availability of appropriately trained outreach workers whose efforts are dedicated to helping people experiencing homelessness access permanent housing. Mobile outreach technology will enhance coordination of regional outreach efforts and deployment of outreach workers to the areas of highest need.

Standards and Practices around Rapid Rehousing (RRH)

Over the last two years, the RTFH has been working with Michelle Valdez, a nationally recognized expert, on convening an RRH learning collaborative and drafting RRH standards of practice. In fall 2019, RTFH convened a local learning collaborative with various RRH providers, with SDHC as a key partner supporting the effort. Michelle Valdez facilitated the learning collaborative and met with RRH providers to better understand current RRH practices, identify gaps and needs, and for RRH providers to learn from each other and share strategies that are working and address challenges. The RRH learning collaborative was suspended due to COVID-19, and the group reconvened in September 2020 for the first time since the pandemic started. Michelle Valdez has continued to work with RTFH, SDHC, the County and local stakeholders on the RRH standards of practice. RTFH was successful in finalizing the RRH Standards, released in February 2021. Ms. Valdez continues to work with stakeholders to support the community in implementing the RRH Standards.

Harm Reduction Program

The Action Plan's Leadership Council tasked an ad hoc working group composed of City, County, RTFH and SDHC staff to discuss the variety of new funding opportunities coming forward at both a state and local level that could support the City's and region's homelessness efforts, and identify potential opportunities for the Leadership Council's consideration. A new strategy was developed to address the immediate and long-term challenges facing unsheltered individuals that aligns with the Action Plan and is consistent with widely accepted best practices.

A multiphased approach launched in June 2021. Phase 1 consists of a monthlong outreach effort that involves outreach workers, County Public Health nurses, eligibility and social workers from the County Office of Homeless Solutions and Equitable Communities, and Federally Qualified Health Centers in the downtown city core. This outreach campaign is supported by a phased expansion of capacity at four shelters for people experiencing homelessness.

Phase 2 consists of a transformative approach to addressing homelessness that pairs outreach and engagement with care-coordination services and low-barrier access to housing with the goal of improving client wellness and stability. Community Harm Reduction Teams (C-HRT) will use evidence-based practices to engage people with highly complex and acute needs who are experiencing homelessness and are at increased risk of harm due to substance use and mental health conditions.

The program incorporates two components:

1. C-HRT will engage individuals experiencing homelessness with substance use and co-occurring conditions in a concentrate geographic area. They will provide ongoing care-coordination services, low-barrier harm-reduction services, referrals to primary care and behavioral health services, medication management, transportation, and bridge housing that includes on-site wraparound services with links to permanent supportive housing.
2. Bridge housing, including short-term beds and Safe Haven housing, will be available consistent with harm-reduction practices, where clients can be connected to permanent supportive housing.

The County of San Diego and the City of San Diego will dedicate American Rescue Plan Act funds to this critical effort.

Built for Zero Initiative

The RTFH and its partners, including SDHC, have signed onto a national initiative known as Built for Zero, led by Community Solutions. The action boosts the City's Action Plan and supports the momentum to end veteran and youth homelessness.

Built for Zero is a proven method that uses data to change how local homelessness response systems work and the impact they can achieve. The data provide a real-time number of veterans experiencing homelessness, help craft strategies to connect all veterans with proper support, prioritize community resources, and regularly measure progress. The result is more tailored solutions for individuals and a clearer picture of the system as a whole.

A Leadership Team and Improvement Team have been developed. The Leadership Team is tasked with providing leadership and policy guidance on the Built for Zero initiative. The Improvement Team is tasked with supporting the Built for Zero model. This team meets regularly to review data and system needs to reach and end veteran homelessness.

5. Increase the Production of/Access to Permanent Solutions

Identify currently funded projects in pipeline and occupancy timeline

A pipeline and occupancy timeline was developed to identify currently funded permanent supportive housing (PSH) units. The pipeline reporting includes information on PSH that has completed and been occupied since the Action Plan analysis was conducted; PSH that is newly under construction/financing; and the number of PSH units still needed to meet the Action Plan goals. This reporting will help inform decisions around development goals outlined in the Action

Plan. The pipeline data can be found on the Action Plan dashboard at <https://www.sdhc.org/homelessness-solutions/community-action-plan/>.

Identify funding opportunities for additional projects

SDHC's Policy Department closely monitors legislative activities, including upcoming funding opportunities, and provides updates to the SDHC Board of Commissioners at the Board's regular meetings. The City's Government Affairs Department also advocates on the State and Federal level for funding resources.

A joint working group consisting of members from the RTFH, County, City and SDHC also coordinate on a regular basis to track funding opportunities for the region.

Work with community partners to identify potential land/property for development

San Diego has an extremely expensive and competitive housing market. The ability to provide landlord incentives to secure units is critical and will help the region achieve goals of addressing veteran and youth homelessness. The Action Plan identified that the private rental market needed to provide 20 percent of the necessary housing inventory. As part of SDHC's HOUSING FIRST – SAN DIEGO initiative, SDHC implemented a robust Landlord Engagement and Assistance Program (LEAP) to meet this need within the City of San Diego. LEAP has experienced strong success securing private-market units and building strong relationships with landlords in the City of San Diego.

Recognizing this is still a need for the rest of the San Diego region, RTFH included the creation of a regional Flexible Housing Pool (FHP) to operate within the broader region as part of the 2019 and 2020 Work Plan. RTFH partnered with Funders Together to End Homelessness San Diego and the County to establish the FHP and in July 2020 entered into a contract with Brilliant Corners to operate a Flexible Housing Pool. The first-year goal was to place 140 households into permanent housing through the FHP.