DESTINATION: **HOME**

UNDERSTANDING HOMELESSNESS

DEBUNKING COMMON MYTHS ABOUT HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS

As our community's housing and homelessness crisis has become a frequent topic of conversation, we've seen several common myths gain traction in the public dialogue. But in order to truly solve this crisis, we must separate fact from fiction and ensure we are tackling this challenge from a common understanding based on data, research and the real experiences of people with lived experience.

MYTH ✗

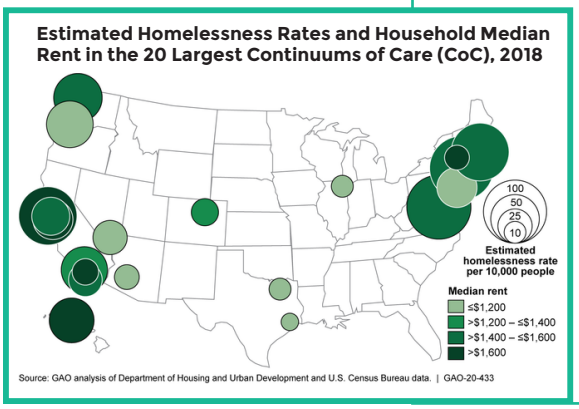
Mental illness and addiction are the root causes of our homelessness crisis.

FACT ✓

High housing costs are the true cause of our homelessness crisis.

RISING HOUSING COSTS

Recent research published in the book, Homelessness is a Housing Problem[1], found a strong correlation between communities with high housing costs and homelessness, but no such correlation in communities with high levels of mental illness or substance abuse. This finding was supported by a 2020 U.S GAO report[2] found that rental prices in a community were associated with levels of homelessness:



Yes, many people experiencing homelessness also suffer from mental health and addiction challenges. However, data from our community's biannual homelessness census and survey[3] shows this represents a minority of people experiencing homelessness – and it's important to remember that these conditions are just as often a result of living on the streets rather than the cause of one's homelessness.

MYTH ✗

Many homeless individuals moved here because of warm weather & public benefits.

FACT ✓

The overwhelming majority of people experiencing homelessness are from our community.

MYTH ✗

Many homeless individuals don't want housing and prefer to live outside.

FACT ✓

The vast majority of people experiencing homelessness would accept housing if offered[4].

9 out of 10 People

You can view our full **Myth vs Fact** resource, and learn more about our homelessness crisis, please visit our Understanding Homelessness website (*see QR code to left*).

[1] *Homelessness is a Housing Problem.* https://homelessnesshousingproblem.com
[2] *U.S. GAO report:* https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-20-433
[3] *Santa Clara County Homeless Census and Survey Reports:* https://bit.ly/scchcsr
[4] *California Statewide Study of People Experiencing Homelessness:* https://homelessness.ucsf.edu/sites/default/files/2023-06/CASPEH_Report_62023.pdf

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MYTH

Housing programs, particularly those that employ the "Housing FIrst" approach, are ineffective at addressing homelessness.

FACT

The evidence is clear: housing ends homelessness.

A large body of scientific studies[4] have shown that when people are connected to affordable housing and services, the vast majority remain stably housed. And we have seen impressive results in many of our own local housing programs:

What Kind of Housing Programs Have Proven Successful?

Permanent Supportive Housing	96% SUCCESS RATE
Rapid Rehousing	79% SUCCESS RATE
Homelessness Prevention	94% SUCCESS RATE

These outcomes hold true even for 'harder to serve' individuals, and studies show Housing First programs have even higher success rates than programs mandating treatment or sobriety first.[5]

By embracing these proven housing strategies here in Santa Clara County, we've helped tens-of-thousands of homeless individuals become stably housed, prevented homelessness for tens-of-thousands more, and are now seeing our overall rates of homelessness begin to decline.

Together We Can End Homelessness

Perhaps the most troubling myth involves a sentiment that we hear everyday: *there is nothing we can do about homelessness*. However, just like all of the myths listed in this document, the facts point to a very different truth.

We can end homelessness - and we all have a role to play. By focusing on proven housing solutions, we're beginning to see signs of progress here in our community. Now, we need to summon the collective public will to scale these efforts to meet the size of our crisis. **And that's where we need you!**

Join our mailing list to find opportunities to educate yourself and your friends, family and neighbors about homelessness, speak out about solutions to our crisis, and advocate when key decisions come before our elected officials for a vote.

Visit DestinationHomeSV.org to get involved today!

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[4] *The Evidence on Housing First:* https://endhomelessness.org/resource/data-visualization-the-evidence-on-housing-first
[5] *The Case for Housing First:* https://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/Housing-First-Research.pdf