

WHY HOUSING IS CENTRAL TO SOLVING HOMELESSNESS

Homelessness is Driven by High Housing Costs

While much attention is placed on the individual circumstances that lead a person into homelessness, research shows the root causes of our homelessness crisis lie in deep, long-standing societal failures. In particular, a growing body of evidence proves that high rates of homelessness are primarily the result of high housing costs in a community.

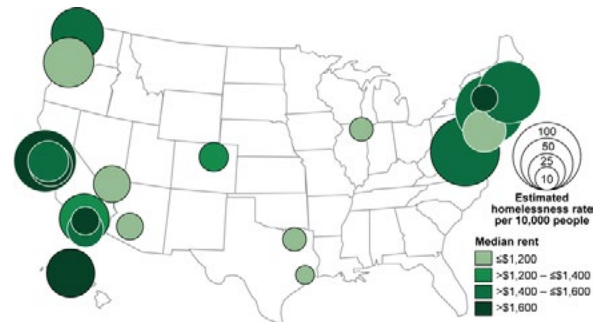
Thus it should come as no surprise that in Santa Clara County - where you need to make \$55/hour to afford the average asking rent and there are only 30 available and affordable apartments for every 100 extremely low income households - we are home to one of the largest homeless population in the entire country.



A community's **homeless population climbs** when the average person spends **more than 32% of their income on rent.**¹

Just a **\$100 increase in median rent** is associated with a **9% increase** in estimated homelessness rates.²

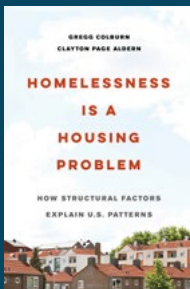
Estimated Homelessness Rates and Household Median Rent in the 20 Largest Continuums of Care (CoC), 2018



Source: GAO analysis of Department of Housing and Urban Development and U.S. Census Bureau data. | GAO-20-433

UNDERSTANDING HOMELESSNESS

Digging into the many other explanations for homelessness



But what about the many other factors we commonly hear cited as a root cause of our homelessness crisis - like mental illness and substance abuse? In their book, "Homelessness is a Housing Problem", researchers Gregg Colburn and Clayton Page Aldern analyzed data from communities across the country and found a strong correlation between homelessness and high housing costs, but not for any other factor they studied:

Is there a correlation between high rates of homelessness and...

- ✓ High Housing Costs?
- ✗ High Poverty Rates?
- ✗ High Rates of Serious Mental Illness?
- ✗ Generous Public Assistance?
- ✗ High Rates of Substance Abuse?
- ✗ Low Average Temperature?

"We investigate numerous - and popular - individual explanations for homelessness. In a strikingly consistent fashion, none of these explanations (poverty, unemployment, mental illness, drug use, and race) explains regional variation in homelessness."

¹ 2021 Zillow report. https://www.zillow.com/research/homelessness-rent-affordability-22247/?orgid=305&utm_att1=money

² U.S. Government Accountability Office. <https://www.gao.gov/blog/how-covid-19-could-aggravate-homelessness-crisis>

³ Homelessness is a Housing Problem. <https://homelessnesshousingproblem.com>





DESTINATION: HOME

WHY HOUSING IS CENTRAL TO SOLVING HOMELESSNESS

The Evidence is Clear: Housing Ends Homelessness!

Connect a person to housing and they're literally no longer homeless. It's not only an elegantly simple concept, there is ample research that shows that the vast majority of homeless individuals remain stably housed once connected to housing and key support services. Housing programs here in Santa Clara County have produced similarly impressive results (see below) - which have been confirmed by several independent evaluations, including a UCSF⁴ study of our county's Permanent Supportive Housing program and a randomized control trial of our local Homelessness Prevention System conducted by Notre Dame University researchers.⁵

What Kind of Housing Programs Have Proven Successful?



Permanent Supportive Housing

Permanent Supportive Housing provide long-term rental subsidies combined with case management, medical and behavioral healthcare, and other supportive services to homeless individuals with disabilities and extensive histories of homelessness

94% Success Rate
in Santa Clara County



Rapid Rehousing

Rapid Rehousing provides a time-limited rental subsidy; as well as case management and supportive services to help a household find and stabilize in permanent housing.

73% Success Rate
in Santa Clara County



Homelessness Prevention

Homelessness Prevention programs provides short-term financial assistance and other services to keep at-risk families and individuals from losing their housing.

94% Success Rate
in Santa Clara County

UNDERSTANDING HOMELESSNESS

We Must Continue Expanding Housing-based Solutions

Addressing our homelessness crisis requires an urgent and multi-faceted response, but we will only be successful if our strategy is centered on housing solutions. This is the approach embodied in the 2020-2025 Community Plan to End Homelessness,⁶ and thanks to the efforts of many partners, we've housed more than 10,000 of our homeless neighbors in the past few years AND we're now starting to see rates of homelessness slowly beginning to decline. However, we are still not scaling these programs at the level needed to respond to the magnitude of the crisis.

We know that a commitment to affordable housing can both end a person's homelessness and attack the root cause of our crisis. **Let's summon the will to invest in these solutions at the scale we need to truly end homelessness in our community.**

In order to solve our homelessness crisis, we must:



BUILD much more deeply affordable housing



EXPAND rental assistance and subsidies for our lowest-income residents



ADOPT NEW POLICIES to improve housing affordability and relieve the severe rent burdens in our community

Advance these housing solutions. Join our Housing Ready Communities Action Network.

VISIT: HOUSINGREADY.ORG

⁴ UCSF Study. <https://www.ucsf.edu/news/2020/09/418546/study-finds-permanent-supportive-housing-effective-highest-risk-chronically>

⁵ Notre Dame Study. <https://news.nd.edu/news/targeted-prevention-helps-stop-homelessness-before-it-starts>

⁶ Community Plan to End Homelessness. <https://destinationhomesv.org/community-plan>

