

# PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS IN SANTA CLARA COUNTY



The County of Santa Clara manages a robust and growing suite of Homelessness Prevention programs that are transforming our community's approach to ending homelessness and delivering lasting stability for residents.

The largest of these programs, known as the Homelessness Prevention System, launched as a pilot in 2017 by Destination: Home. In 2024, the County fully integrated this model into the broader public safety net, charting a course for expansion to reach more households at imminent risk of homelessness.



**The County now provides homelessness prevention services to over 2,500 households annually, reaching more than 33,000 people since 2020.**

## HOW IT WORKS

The system identifies households at risk of experiencing homelessness and provides a range of financial assistance, legal support and case management services to help them remain housed. A standardized pre-screening interview and questionnaire is used to assess each household's needs and determine the level and type of assistance required. More than 20 community-serving nonprofits help administer the programs and connect households to essential services throughout the county.

Notre Dame's Lab for Economic Opportunities found that direct financial assistance not only delayed homelessness but prevented it altogether, resulting in an 81% reduction in the risk of participants becoming homeless.

## Three unique programs currently deliver the majority of the County's prevention services:

### Homelessness Prevention System

Rapid and flexible financial assistance, legal support and case management typically provided over a period of time

### Wellness and Housing Stabilization Program

Referral-based support in partnership with the Behavioral Health Services Department and Substance Use Treatment Services

### Short Term Intervention

Cash assistance and case management provided by the Emergency Assistance Network

## PARTNER AGENCIES



## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ADVOCACY CONSORTIUM



## LEGAL SUPPORT



# WHY PREVENTION?

Homelessness prevention is proven to be a more cost-effective and compassionate approach than addressing homelessness once a family or individual has already been pushed onto the streets. At an average of \$7,000 provided to each household, it is a pragmatic way to keep people housed, with just **7% of families** becoming homeless two years after receiving Homelessness Prevention System services.

## Prevention is more critical than ever.

A recent Harvard study found that rising rents and stagnant wages have left half of Americans unable to afford housing, while an increasing number of our neighbors are being pushed into homelessness.

## In Santa Clara County:

- **73% of extremely low-income households and 29% of very low-income households are severely rent-burdened**—devoting the majority of their income to rent—and are often just one unexpected expense away from being unable to pay rent and losing their homes.<sup>1</sup>
- **54% percent of families** in the Homelessness Prevention System are considered **100% rent burdened** – all of their income goes to paying the rent.
- In San Jose, an individual making minimum wage would have to **work 3.8 jobs to afford** the average cost of a two bedroom apartment.<sup>2</sup>



<sup>1</sup>National Low Income Housing Coalition - [The Gap Study](#) <sup>2</sup>National Low Income Housing Coalition - [Out of Reach Study](#)

## Our Homelessness Prevention System, A Proven Model



**95% of families** remained stably housed while receiving prevention services.



**TWO YEARS LATER**  
Only **9% of households** became homeless.

\*data for Homelessness Prevention System & Wellness and Housing Stabilization Program

# HOUSEHOLDS SERVED

Since 2020

## WE HAVE HELPED



at imminent risk of homelessness

\*Total people assisted includes those served via temporary COVID-related financial assistance.

In the last year

## Top Reason for Assistance



**56% of participants** listed loss or reduction of income as the main reason for requesting assistance



**84%**  
ELI at  
enrollment



**85%**  
People  
of Color



**73%**  
Women-led  
Households



**57%**  
Included  
Children

## STRATEGIC FUNDERS



For more information visit: [preventhomelessness.org](http://preventhomelessness.org)