



DESTINATION: **HOME**

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Destination: Home and the County of Santa Clara Announce The Silicon Valley Triage Tool

**New tool will allow counties to predict costs and set priorities for
supportive housing**

SAN JOSE, Calif. - February 17, 2016 – Today Destination: Home and the County of Santa Clara release a new report, The Silicon Valley Triage Tool. The Triage Tool was developed using data from *Home Not Found: The Cost of Homelessness in Silicon Valley*, the largest and most comprehensive study on the cost of homelessness in the United States. The Silicon Valley Triage Tool uses the same type of county case records that were used for *Home Not Found* to forecast the public costs of homeless persons. The most

costly and thereby the most vulnerable may then be targeted for permanent supportive housing, efficiently allocating limited public resources.

Permanent supportive housing is an effective intervention for addressing the costly social problem of chronic homelessness. It provides stability through permanent housing with supportive services. As a result, housed individuals are in the hospital or jail much less frequently and their costs decrease by two-thirds. Targeting high cost users has the added benefit of serving the most distressed and vulnerable members of our community. Therefore, the Triage Tool allows government agencies to be more efficient with their public dollars, while also helping those who are in the direst situations.

What makes The Triage Tool invaluable is being able to accurately distinguish between different types of homelessness to accurately predict outcomes. Homelessness is not “one size fits all.” Some individuals are more likely to have prolonged periods of homelessness that require extensive use of public services, while others have shorter stints, requiring less services.

The Triage Tool is a predictive analytic statistical algorithm that uses 38 pieces of information to calculate the probability that a homeless individual will have ongoing high costs. The information includes age, gender, emergency psychiatric visits, hospital inpatient days, emergency room visits, periods of incarceration and medical diagnoses. For each individual screened, the tool produces a probability from 0.01 to 0.99 that the individual will have continuing high public costs. The tool can be used to screen people individually or to screen a large database of people who are experiencing homelessness. When a large group of people are screened, they can be ranked by their probability scores. This is a very effective way of matching people with the highest costs with the available supply of housing.

The Triage Tool was made possible by the County of Santa Clara records linkage process during the development of *Home Not Found*. Linking detailed department service cost records permits a comprehensive view of all public expenses accrued by people who experience homelessness and allows specific needs to be compared against those of others. These individual attributes may then be used to calculate next year’s outcomes, so housing interventions may be targeted.

The potential cost avoidance is not inconsequential. The 1,000 Santa Clara County homeless residents with the highest probability of being long-term high-cost service users have public costs of approximately \$56 million a year. When the costs of housing and supportive services are accounted for, there could potentially be a \$19,282 savings per person and \$19,282,345 overall cost reduction each year.

Other key factors relevant in the overall success of a supportive housing program include wrap-around supportive services. The County of Santa Clara is dedicated to providing supportive services to improve supportive housing retention outcomes. Once an individual has been identified as a “high cost user” in Santa Clara County, the client is connected to an Intensive Case Manager who assists the individual in enrolling in a permanent supportive housing program. The case manager then proactively monitors the individual’s progress and works with the client on a path to stabilization. The County plans to use the

lessons learned from these efforts to improve public services, creating a better experience for those going through the process and more accountably within the system.

Supervisor Wasserman was the catalyst for *Home Not Found* and the subsequent Triage Tool. In commenting about the implications of the report, Wasserman said “This is a great example of us doing the right thing for the right reasons. Housing people who are suffering the most means everyone wins.”

For nearly nine years, Destination: Home has been committed to ending homelessness in Santa Clara County. Since 2013, our County has seen a 14% decline in homelessness, the lowest trend in 10 years. Today’s report provides a new tool to Santa Clara County, and to all jurisdictions in America, a mechanism to increase efficiencies, while better serving the homeless population.

“I applaud the work of Santa Clara County in not only identifying the true costs of homelessness, but then immediately putting that learning into action by housing the most vulnerable,” stated Jennifer Loving, Executive Director of Destination: Home.

Dan Flaming, President of the Economic Roundtable, the public policy research organization that developed the triage tool and published this report added, “This tool has implications beyond Santa Clara County. We are excited to share this tool with counties across America that are interested in using more accurate and objective tools to target scarce housing and service resources to make the greatest possible headway in ending homelessness in their communities.”

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About Destination: Home

Destination: Home, a program of The Health Trust, is a public-private partnership implementing collective impact strategies to end homelessness in Santa Clara County. Destination: Home drives and aligns resources to create permanent housing and sustainable support systems built for the long term. The organization is improving how systems work together to end homelessness, as well as protect individuals and families at risk of becoming homeless. In this role, Destination: Home’s Board also serves as the HUD Continuum of Care Board for the San Jose /Santa Clara City and County Metropolitan area and works with the Santa Clara County Office of Supportive Housing as a Collaborative Applicant to expand local allocations of federal funding. Their website is <http://destinationhomesv.org>.

About the County of Santa Clara

The County of Santa Clara is a major employment center for the region, providing more than a quarter of all jobs in the Bay Area. Its population constitutes about one fourth of the Bay Area's total population and it is the largest of the nine Bay Area counties. The County has one of the highest standards of living and median incomes in the country, with a wide diversity of cultures, backgrounds and talents. Over 100 languages and dialects are spoken among the County’s 1.8 million residents. There are 15 cities ranging from Palo Alto in the north, to Gilroy in the south. San Jose is the largest city in the County, with a

population of nearly one million, and is the administrative site of County Government. Their website is <https://www.sccgov.org>.

About Economic Roundtable

The Economic Roundtable is a nonprofit public policy research organization, based in Los Angeles, California that provides research for economic, social, and environmental conditions. Their services include creating, integrating, analyzing, and communicating highly detailed demographic, economic and property development datasets to provide operationally relevant information for public sector economic strategies. They synthesize complex information into clear and objective analyses that are widely credible to a broad cross section of public officials and community stakeholders, and operationally relevant for public agencies. All of the Roundtable's work is linked to strengthening the sustainable. Their website is <http://economicrt.org/>.