

UNDERSTANDING HOMELESSNESS IN SANTA CLARA COUNTY



Who's Homeless in Our Community?

Today, homelessness represents a full-blown crisis in Santa Clara County. While our region is known as a global hub of technology and economic prosperity, several thousands of our residents are living on the streets, with tens-of-thousands more on the brink of homelessness every day.

9,903
people experienced
homelessness in
Santa Clara County
in 2023

Source: 2023 Homeless Census & Survey



25%
Sheltered

75%
Unsheltered

FICTION vs FACT

One misperception is that homelessness in Santa Clara County is driven by a migration of people experiencing homelessness elsewhere.

The truth is:

85% of homeless individuals lived in Santa Clara County when they became homeless



85% of people experiencing homelessness are interested in housing

You don't know how important a home is until you don't have one. Actually having a place for me and my daughter to come home to makes everything we have to deal with in this crazy life a little bit easier every day. We've never had a home to come to until now, so it's affected our lives in every possible way you could imagine. It's everything and only for the better.

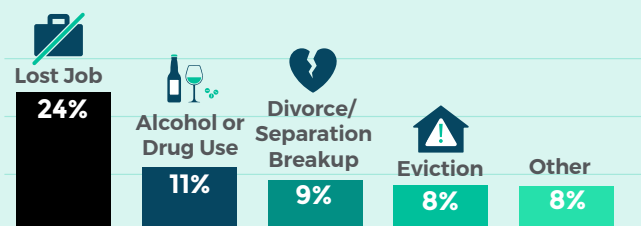
- Amy G., a mother who experienced homelessness with her two-year-old daughter

Why Do People Fall Into Homelessness?

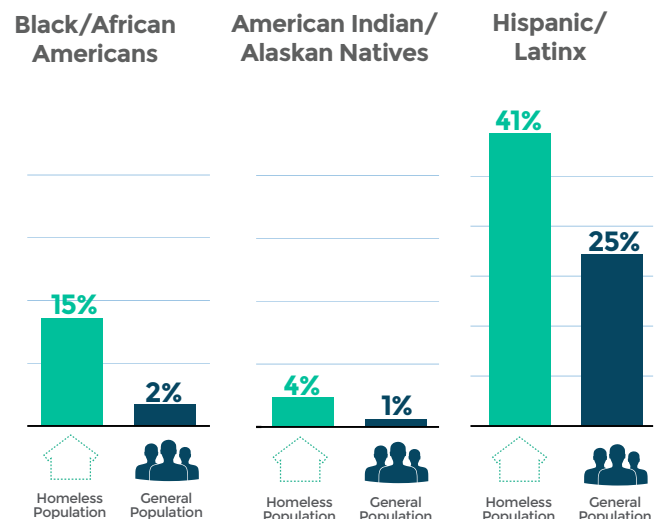
In surveys conducted during the biannual Santa Clara County Point-in-Time Count, homeless individuals report a wide-range of "primary causes" for their homelessness - none of which came close to representing a majority of individuals.

PRIMARY EVENT OR CONDITION THAT LED TO HOMELESSNESS:

Top Responses from the 2023
Homeless Census & Survey



People of Color are Disproportionately Impacted by Homelessness



Source: 2023 Homeless Census & Survey

To learn more visit: DestinationHomeSV.org/understanding-homelessness

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How Did We Get Here?

Our current homelessness crisis is decades in the making. Despite stereotypes that oversimplify the nature of homelessness, the experience is typically the result of several compounding factors rooted in entrenched social inequities.

In our community, we can point to a few key systemic forces that are pushing even more of our neighbors into homelessness every day:



A Lack of Affordable Housing



Rising Economic Inequality



Underinvestment in Programs Serving our Most Vulnerable Residents



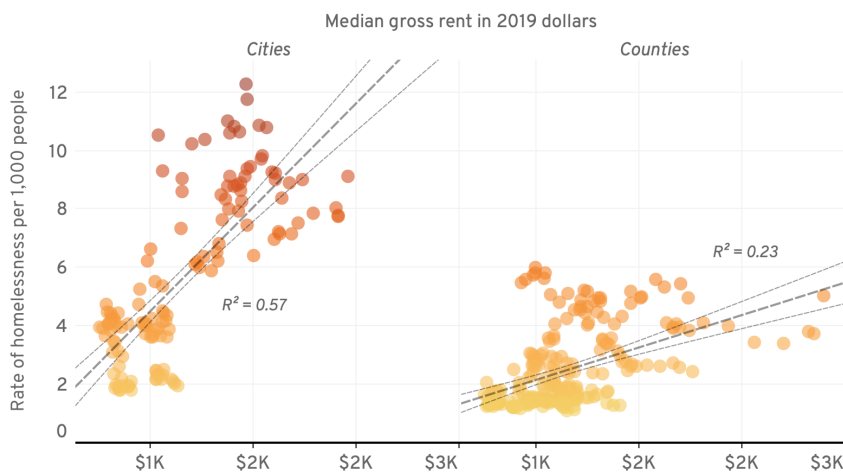
Systemic & Structural Racism

The single greatest systemic cause of homelessness is a lack of affordable housing.

For decades, Santa Clara County (and the larger Bay Area) has failed to produce enough housing to match the needs of our growing population – particularly when it comes to units dedicated to Extremely Low Income residents. With so few affordable housing options available, the vast majority of our lowest-income families and individuals are left severely rent burdened (spending more than 50% of their income on rent and utilities) and often just one crisis away from homelessness.

Median gross rent versus PIT count (per capita)

Dashed lines indicate a linear regression of per capita PIT counts onto median gross rent between 2007 and 2019 for a sample of U.S. regions.



Bands indicate 95% confidence intervals for the slope of the regression line. Figure forthcoming in Colburn & Aldern (2022).

It's a Fact: Homelessness is a Housing Problem

In their book, "Homelessness is a Housing Problem," researchers and authors Clayton Page Aldern and Gregg Colburn **correlate rent levels and vacancy rates to regional rates of homelessness**, further driving the point that homelessness is rooted in a housing problem and more specifically - a lack of affordable housing for lowest-income households.

"Many other common explanations—drug use, mental illness, poverty, or local political context—fail to account for regional variation."

Source: *Homelessness is a Housing Problem* (2022)

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Ending Homelessness in Our Community

Housing Ends Homelessness

We can end homelessness in Silicon Valley. Despite the enormity of the challenge before us, we have proven strategies for reducing and preventing homelessness in our community.

In fact, the most effective strategy for combatting homelessness is connecting vulnerable individuals to housing and helping them stay housed. This is the central tenet behind the Housing First approach – a nationally recognized, evidence-based approach to addressing homelessness that's been adopted in Santa Clara County and countless other communities across the country.

94% of people in Permanent Supportive Housing programs in Santa Clara County have remained stably housed for more than 12 months.

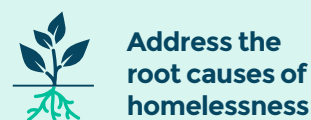


THE WORK UNDERWAY

Community Plan to End Homelessness

The 2020-2025 Community Plan to End Homelessness serves as our roadmap for addressing our homelessness crisis and is built upon input from more than 8,000 community members, people with lived experience of homelessness, service providers, and advocates.

Grounded in evidence-based practices and lessons learned, the plan is organized around three main strategies:



Address the root causes of homelessness



Expand homelessness prevention and housing programs

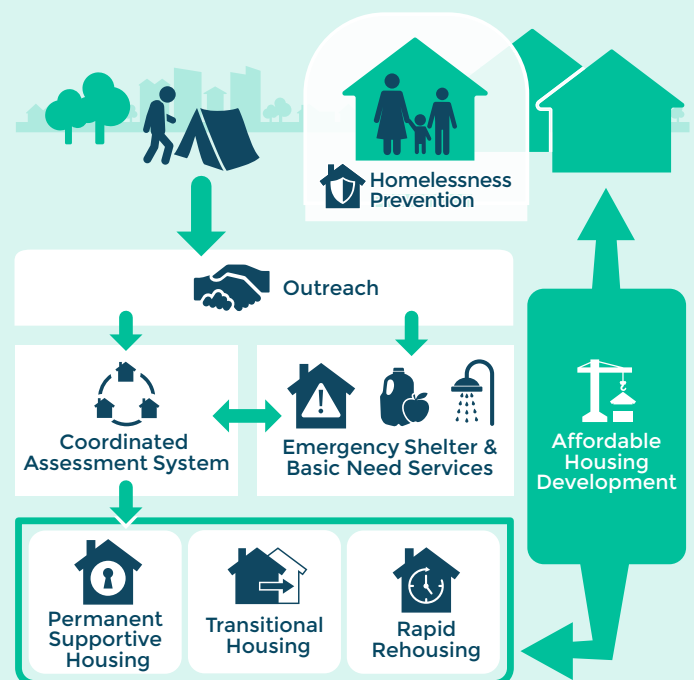


Improve the quality of life for people who are unsheltered



Our Supportive Housing System

Guided by the strategies of the Community Plan to End Homelessness, Santa Clara County's Supportive Housing System provides a continuum of programs and services to meet the needs of those either experiencing or at-risk of homelessness.



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We All Have A Role to Play



Educate Yourself

Help spread facts not myths.

Visit **DestinationHomeSV.org** to access our Understanding Homelessness page as well as other information about our homelessness crisis.

LEARN MORE



Grow The Movement With Us

Join our Housing Ready Communities Action Network and advance real solutions.



Talk with your
friends, family
and neighbors



Invite us to speak
to other groups
& convenings



Advocate the City
Council & Board
of Supervisors

Sign Up Today at HousingReady.org

Resources for Families Experiencing or At Risk of Homelessness in Santa Clara County



Receive Assistance to Stay Housed:

The Santa Clara County Homelessness Prevention System has assistance available for low-income families or individuals who are at risk of losing their housing. Visit **PreventHomelessness.org** or call (408) 926-8885 to learn more and schedule a pre-screening appointment to determine if you qualify for assistance.



Get Connected to Emergency Shelter & Temporary Housing Programs:

The Here4You Shelter Hotline call center helps match people seeking available emergency shelter and temporary housing programs, and also makes referrals and linkages to other community resources. **Call the Here4You Shelter Hotline at (408) 385-2400 (Call Center Hours 9 a.m - 7 p.m.).**



Get Assessed for Long-Term Housing Programs:

Santa Clara County has many programs to help connect people experiencing homelessness to long-term housing, utilizing a coordinated entry process to assess needs and identify the best type of housing intervention. **To learn more and find your nearest Santa Clara County access point, please visit: osh.sccgov.org/continuum-care/coordinated-entry**

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