

Housing for Health Partnership – Community Meeting
Updating Action Plans Community Input Session
Santa Cruz, CA
Meeting Notes - February 6, 2024

Number of Community Member Attendees = 50

The information contained below includes a summary of information gathered on specific topics during the input session. Attendees rotated among tables to provide input on each topic. Ideas that other participants supported received supportive votes as part of the planning process. The number of votes in support of a suggestion are noted with each item listed.

Table 1: Access and Connections

How can we do a better job of helping unsheltered people access available housing and service resources?

How can we do a better job of addressing the impacts of people living in vehicles and in encampments on those with and without housing?

- More safe parking with zero barriers, especially for large vehicles, showers, bathrooms, community room/kitchen (11 additional votes).
- Create a village concept – smaller sites, 30 pallet homes, electricity, porta potties, community space, case management/housing navigation, food, self-organized/empowerment; use state encampment resolution funding to help setup (10 additional votes).
- More Housing for Health connectors and housing navigation outside of a specific program, e.g., someone with a voucher (4 additional votes).
- Mentorship – those that have been housed mentor those that are unhoused, paid, lived experience connectors (4 additional votes).
- More 24-hour emergency shelters, transitional housing with county, state funding, operated by nonprofits (4 additional votes).
- Better education to change the stigma, negative perception of the homeless population (4 additional votes).
- Use vacant homes to house people. Train those unhoused to fix up these vacant homes in exchange for subsidized housing (3 additional votes).
- Better communication between Housing Authority and Connectors (2 additional votes).
- Scattered, publicly accessible restrooms scattered throughout the county with showers, include laundry? (2 additional votes).
- More partnering with non-homeless service providers, centralized, coordinated system (2 additional votes).
- Live document to highlight all open shelter/safe parking beds/units/spots. In addition, record data to highlight quality of services, for example, why did an individual leave shelter, violence, accessibility (2 additional votes).
- Resource kit for those who are homeless – large info packet of services including senior services, food resources, etc. (1 additional vote).

- Centralized homeless resource center (navigation center) – all organizations in this field included, north and south locations (1 additional vote).
- Outreach to food not bombs, food pantries, st. francis (1 additional vote).
- Standards of care for service providers (1 additional vote).

Table 2: Keep Housing and Prevent Homelessness

How can we do a better job of helping more people keep stable, healthy, and safe living situations and prevent homelessness?

- Know your rights for tenants/renters training and media campaign advertising it (18 additional votes).
- 100 hotel vouchers for people entering homelessness with case management and marketing (10 additional votes).
- Legal services/eviction defense (4 additional votes)
- Community gardens (3 additional votes).
- Social programs, community centers, day centers, drop-in centers to help people feel connected (2 additional votes).
- Pre-housing classes with housing basics – how to pay rent, PG&E, etc. (2 additional votes).
- Security deposit assistance/streamline process (2 additional votes).
- Grow funding – replenish funds where there is a lifetime cap; revolving tenant loan fund (2 additional votes).
- Single point of entry for folks who are at risk/have lost housing for north and south county (2 additional votes).
- Rapid action “strike teams” of multidisciplinary providers for emergency housing/employment support (2 additional votes).
- Roommate matching services (1 additional vote).
- Upstream interventions for at-risk of homelessness (1 additional vote).
- Mediation services via housing authority (1 additional vote).
- Small, flexible subsidies to help folks make rent (1 additional vote).
- Universal basic income (1 additional vote).
- Integration of community supports into CalAIM managed care (1 additional vote).
- Landlord loan program to fix habitability issues (1 additional vote).
- Landlord requested tenant support.
- Increase amount of money people can earn while maintaining benefits.
- Same day court services for unlawful detainers.
- Explore shared housing with voucher holders.
- Geographically coordinated rental assistance programs.
- Cell phones and internet service for renters.
- PG&E needs lower cost programs.
- “Light touch” case management for homelessness prevention.
- Countywide rent control and just cause evictions.
- Tenant advisory bodies.

Table 3: More People Temporary and Permanent Housing Quickly

How can we do a better job of helping more people experiencing homelessness get into temporary and permanent living situations more quickly?

- Identify buildings not currently used but owned by local jurisdictions to use for housing (13 additional votes).
- Incentive program for landlords similar to smarthire – get incentive for helping household (7 additional votes).
- Expansion of mobile home parks (7 additional votes).
- Better access and navigation of available services (7 additional votes).
- More shelters with services, 24/7 operations, allow pets (6 additional votes).
- Redefinition of what housing is, tiny homes, etc. to open up funding (6 additional votes).
- Mentorship from persons with lived experience – help navigating system, document ready (5 additional votes).
- More transition age youth housing that goes to age 30 (5 additional votes).
- Clear, updated, easily accessible public information on resources available (4 additional votes).
- Attach housing vouchers to receipt of SSI (4 additional votes).
- Increasing the number of housing vouchers (4 additional votes).
- Rental subsidies, security deposits, flexible funding for move-in costs (4 additional votes).
- Coalition of landlords to market that housing programs, vouchers, etc. work – public relations, clear communications about available programs (4 additional votes).
- Purchase RVs for housing with access points for graywater, etc. (3 additional votes).
- Work cooperatively with community volunteers and groups already doing this work, e.g., welcome group (3 additional votes).
- Public housing for all (no private landlords) (3 additional votes).
- More collective housing especially for seniors with tenants in charge, self-governance (3 additional votes).
- More 24/7 safe parking, e.g., KOA camp (3 additional votes).
- Increase quality and quantity of case management services (2 additional votes).
- Limit Airbnb/vacation rentals, e.g., Palm Springs (2 additional votes).
- Subsidized workforce housing, e.g., for county/city staff (1 additional vote).
- State provided housing (1 additional vote).
- Shared housing models (1 additional vote).
- Provide support services for families (1 additional vote).
- Support housing developments to provide units (prioritize, subsidize) for unhoused (1 additional vote).
- Address unequal distribution of dollars countywide (1 additional vote).
- Guarantee of ongoing rent payments (1 additional vote).
- Performance based contracts for existing contractors (1 additional vote).
- Drop-in center – showers, laundry, meals (1 additional vote).
- Ongoing, stable funding (1 additional vote).
- Decrease paperwork to get into housing.
- Increase transitional housing.

- Single case manager while person secures housing, etc.
- Smaller caseloads and higher pay for case managers.
- Allow people to stay in empty retail spaces.
- Reduction in barriers to serving people.
- Expansion of where we develop housing – partnerships with other counties.
- Trailers.
- Stop encampment clean-ups.
- Rent control.
- Funding for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) or similar.
- Community land trust.

Table 4: Fewer Exits Into Homelessness from Institutions

How can we do a better job of reducing the number of people exiting institutional settings - foster care, hospitals, jails/prisons, mental health or substance use residential treatment and others – into homelessness (shelters and streets)?

- Safe Families for Children Program can prevent entering foster care (12 additional votes).
- More day programs and social programs to engage and support people coming out of telecare and other institutions (8 additional votes).
- Pair institutions with CalAIM enhanced care manager and community supports from a nonprofit (6 additional votes).
- Allocating specific bucket of funding for former foster youth mentoring and action plan (6 additional votes).
- Need more service connection while in custody (5 additional votes).
- Action/service care plan for post-hospitalization (3 additional votes).
- Create a workgroup of institutions (hospitals, jails, etc.) within Housing for Health for providers to also attend and identify and solve problems together (2 additional votes).
- Partnering coordinated entry with institutions, e.g., jails to support connection upon release (2 additional votes).
- Housing units and vouchers set aside specifically for former foster youth to live in independent and permanent housing (2 additional votes).
- More recuperative care and short-term post hospitalization beds (2 additional votes).
- Employment support prioritized preferably prior to release from institutions (1 additional vote).
- More temporary housing for people exiting jail (shelter, mental health beds, substance use treatment programs, halfway houses) to get support to move into permanent housing, e.g., Gemma House, New Life (1 additional vote).
- More collaboration/coordination between different entities serving/working with people experiencing homelessness, explore coalition of homeless in City of Houston (CoC) (1 additional vote).
- Connect Housing for Health to monthly jail resource events.
- Lived experience recognized in employment opportunities.
- Action/service care plan for foster youth aging out.
- End cash bail.
- End jail while awaiting trial.
- Decriminalize substance use.

- Education/training programs specifically for people exiting institutions, support existing programs.
- Case management services, referral linkages at sobering centers.
- Comprehensive resource book/guides for caseworkers, people in need of services, e.g., Root & Rebound in Oakland.
- Model youth program in Monterey County – Rancho Cielo (sky ranch).

Table 5: Increasing Incomes and Assets

How can we do a better job of helping people at-risk of or experiencing homelessness to increase their income and economic assets (public benefits, education, employment, etc.)?

- Establish a supported employment program – provides case management, transportation, clothing, should be low-barrier entry, soft skills training, trade skills, job preparedness training (8 additional votes).
- Help to overcome barriers to earning – transportation, childcare, training, clear pathways for justice involved (6 additional votes).
- Strengthen partnerships between higher education and employers to tie academic and career pathways, e.g., internships (6 additional votes).
- County should examine requirements and find way to eliminate barriers, requirements, including General Assistance, other public benefit programs (6 additional votes).
- Expansion of prioritization of shelter beds to accommodate folks who are also able-bodied but are experiencing homelessness (5 additional votes).
- Establish a homeless-focused program within workforce development, funding for workforce opportunities, e.g., construction, trucking, living wage jobs (4 additional votes).
- Training and resources for nonprofits on how to successfully hire their clients – get consultants to provide TA, cultural competency training, equity assessments (3 additional votes).
- Tax incentive for small business to take on interns – can be interns from schools (3 additional votes).
- Workforce Investment Opportunity Act (WIOA) expanding coalition of businesses that work specifically with the at-risk or currently experiencing homelessness population (3 additional votes).
- Intervention at an early age including in criminal justice system – teachers, counselors, financial literacy training, fee education (2 additional votes).
- Have providers of CalAIM-funded service embedded in hospitals, jails, to provide support around income and employment (2 additional votes).
- In County contracting, hiring people with lived experience should be added as a qualification (2 additional votes).
- Housing for Health should negotiate higher reimbursement for case management and housing support (2 additional votes).
- County trains and partners with business to funnel opportunities with beneficiaries of these programs (1 additional vote).
- Track numbers of people accessing services, aging out to track disparities (1 additional vote).
- Tracking equity outcomes (1 additional vote).
- Increasing income and in-kind support for SSI and disability (1 additional vote).
- Make it a requirement for organizations receiving funding to have racial/ethnic representation on their workforce (1 additional vote).

- County to have locations where eligibility workers are available or contracts to do this work (1 additional vote).
- Guaranteed income, universal basic income (1 additional vote).
- Colleges to provide subsidized vouchers to pay for classes for people experiencing homelessness (1 additional vote).
- Build a framework on effective communication on these opportunities that exist to the larger population.
- Extension of timelines for state-funded employment programs.
- County to subsidize wage for folks that risk losing benefits when they get employment support through county programs (flexible funding).
- Cultural differences/competencies – hiring practices to be reflective of population served.
- Wage subsidy – County can contribute a portion of the wages for interns, beneficiaries of employment programs.
- How can we avoid the benefit gap?
- Santa Cruz community veterans in Watsonville – continued county support here.
- Policies on throwing away beds, tents, items of unhoused people. Eliminate this policy of preventing entrenchment.
- Expanding safe parking program.
- Paid vocational training, low-barrier entry to those programs, eliminate unnecessary requirements.
- CEOs of organizations should not earn 25X more than their lowest paid employee.
- Raising the income threshold for public benefits.

Table 6: Improving Youth Services

- Developing safe parking programs with UCSC and Cabrillo (4 additional votes).
- Shelter policies and education so youth are not turned away (1 additional vote).
- Acknowledging we have a need.
- Getting the right people in the room.
- Identifying youth before they experience homelessness, prevention.
- Accurate count of youth – couch surfing, youth experiencing DV, labor/sex/human trafficking, bias of youth are identified.
- Building trust and combatting distrust tension between asking for support and staff as mandated reporters.
- Youth access to shelters.
- More communication between service providers.
- Youth who may be placed with extended family but aren't receiving the support they need.
- It's not just housing.
- Educational system connections – outreach in health classes, knowing your options, not all youth want shelter.
- Access to immediate resources like shelters.
- Longer time commitment to do this work than other groups.
- Making it easier for youth to access services.

- Replicate YHDP website, emergency line, public facing info t help access, extended hours, newsletters on available resources.
- Youth specific outreach teams.
- Confidential spaces.
- Length of services – youth need community, people lifelong, safety net.
- Preventing foster care involvement.
- Life skills, opportunities for belonging, mental health.
- Pathways to better jobs and higher income, career ladders – internships to learn specific skills, vocational/skills training.
- Education on what is youth homelessness.

“Small Cost and Big Impact” – Ideas Not Covered Wall

- Raise CalAIM rates and lower caseloads creating better care (1 additional vote).
- Decriminalize being unhoused by repealing oversized vehicle and similar ordinances – no ticketing, towing, camps sweeps or police raids (would save dollars from law enforcement use) (1 additional vote).
- Universal basic income for those experiencing homelessness (1 additional vote).
- Google document to list vacancies for shelters, safe parking (free access) – avoid need to call multiple places and not get updated information (1 additional vote).
- Learn from other communities that are showing positive results, e.g., Coalition for the Homeless, Houston, Harris County, that increase coordination and reduce duplication of services and programs (1 additional vote).
- Trade schools, certifications, and other short-term skill building will be a faster way to increase income than traditional schools.
- Build partnerships with businesses with higher income opportunities to identify skills, training that can funnel into businesses in Santa Cruz.
- Financial literacy, basic living skills training – budget, credit, cook, clean, etc.
- Increase volunteer support around the County- “ride along” opportunity sharing.
- Expand safe parking access to showers, bathrooms, shared kitchen, a place where people can also find available services.
- Tie median or minimum wage to rent prices (index).
- Give unhoused people RVs or tents near access points.
- Create access points with service like grey/black water dumping, mobile showers, restrooms, receptacles.