



Board of Supervisors

Nathan A. Miley

PRESIDENT

Supervisor, District 4

September 19, 2023

Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Alameda
1221 Oak Street, Suite 536
Oakland, Ca. 94612

Dear Board Members:

SUBJECT: ADOPT A COUNTYWIDE STATE OF EMERGENCY ON HOMELESSNESS

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve a Countywide State of Emergency on Homelessness and direct the Health Care Services Agency (HCSA) Office of Homeless Care and Coordination (OHCC) to lead the development of an emergency response to homelessness and report back to the Board of Supervisors with recommendations within 60 days.

DISCUSSION:

As of early 2022, Alameda County had at least 9,747 unhoused residents on a single night, including 73% (7,135) who were unsheltered. This crisis has significantly accelerated over the last decade. Since 2017, the number of unhoused individuals in Alameda County has increased from 5,629 to 9,747 (73% increase) and will likely continue to increase dramatically should we fail to take urgent action. Alameda County is in the midst of a homelessness crisis.

In Alameda County, more than 40% of people experiencing homelessness surveyed during the 2022 Point-in-Time count said they have at least one permanent disability, and 64% of unsheltered respondents were chronically homeless. For people receiving Social Security Disability benefits in California, the maximum grant is \$1,033, far less than the market rent for a studio apartment, at \$1,583. This gap has resulted in a disproportionate number of disabled individuals being forced into homelessness, with no means to remedy the situations.

A recent Stanford University study titled Homelessness in California: Causes and Policy Considerations highlighted rent barriers in the Bay Area:

The median rent for a two-bedroom apartment is well over \$3,000 in the Bay Area; more than twice as much as the national average of \$1,200. In more than two-thirds of California's ZIP codes, families are "rent-burdened" as they spend more than 30 percent of their income on rent (ABC 2021). High housing costs and a low stock of affordable housing create a precarious situation, especially for lower-income families and individuals who are at higher risk of becoming homeless.

Because of the acutely high rent burden in the Bay Area, one-time events such as disputes with roommates or family members, job loss, medical events or conditions often lead individuals to become unhoused.

The impacts of homelessness on an individual are devastating, due to increased exposure to trauma, narcotics, violence, and more. According to the Alameda County 2021 Homeless Mortality Report, the number of annual homeless deaths grew considerably larger between 2018 and 2020 and remained at a very high level in 2021. Between 2018 and 2021, 1,157 Alameda County residents died while experiencing homelessness.

In 2021, the age-adjusted mortality rate for people experiencing homelessness in Alameda County was 5.8 times that of the general population of Alameda County. For all causes of death, mortality rates are many times higher for people experiencing homelessness than the general population. In 2021:

- Sixty-six percent (229 out of 346) of all homeless deaths took place outside of a medical setting (i.e., hospital or nursing facility), occurring on streets/sidewalks, outdoors, in vehicles, encampments, shelters, other's residences and other locations.
- Half of homeless acute/chronic disease-related deaths (77 out of 153) occurred in "unattended" settings.
- African American/Black persons represent 41% of total homeless deaths, compared to 19% of general population deaths and 11% of the general population.
- Men represent 75.6% of homeless deaths, compared to 52.7% of general population deaths.

The reasons people enter homelessness are complex and pervasive, and the impacts on individuals and communities are devastating and profound. Therefore, the approach to resolving homelessness must be robust and multifaceted. An emergency response will require the County and all cities within the County to join forces as each entity is responsible for different aspects of the solution. The County is primarily responsible for coordinating the response and for health and social services. The Cities are responsible for land use, planning and basic City services such as public works. In Alameda County, the roles of the cities vary, with Oakland and Fremont providing additional social services and Berkeley hosting its own health jurisdiction. To coordinate services and resources, the County and City representatives meet frequently. While the jointly adopted Home Together 2026 Community Plan, a \$2.5 billion investment strategy focused on shelter, housing and rental assistance, outlined a variety of urgent recommendations, including strengthening coordination and capacity to deliver housing and other resources more efficiently, an Emergency Declaration is necessary to expedite and focus resources on implementation and scaling of the response.

Alameda County may proclaim a local emergency when there are conditions of disaster or of extreme peril to the safety of persons and property within the territorial limits of the County, and when these conditions are, or are likely to be, beyond the control of the services, personnel, equipment, and facilities of the County and require the combined forces of other political subdivisions to combat. Homelessness meets these requirements for a local emergency. Conditions of extreme peril to the safety of persons exist based on the extreme conditions of homelessness in Alameda County.

Homelessness is a complicated and a multifaceted issue that requires coordination, collaboration, and the combined forces of different jurisdictions to alleviate the current state of homelessness. Thus, it is necessary for Alameda County to proclaim a local emergency regarding homelessness.

The County provides critical services to unhoused individuals, including housing navigation, coordinated entry services, general health, behavioral health, and substance abuse treatment services. All of these services are an important part of the overall response to homelessness. Many of these services, provided by the Office of Homeless Care and Coordination (OHCC) and other County partners, have been working effectively. Even so, the scale and speed at which the crisis is spreading demands an expedited expansion of services and scaling up of the response as resources allow.

CONCLUSION:

Proclaiming a local State of Emergency on Homelessness, pursuant to the California Emergency Services Act (Gov. Code §§ 8550 et seq.), to address this crisis will provide the County with additional tools to accelerate and expand its response through Home Together and in collaboration with our city and non-profit partners.

These additional tools could include, but are not limited to:

- accelerated hiring of additional employees to address homelessness and behavioral health needs,
- more effective and efficient use of funds,
- expedited procurement of critical items,
- faster and more streamlined creation of housing,
- expanded services,
- the ability to request additional resources from the State and Federal governments.

The Health Care Services Agency Office of Homeless Care and Coordination (OHCC) is the central coordinating body for Alameda County's efforts to expand and enhance the homelessness response system. The response to other declared emergencies, such as natural disasters, would typically be led by the Alameda County Office of Emergency Services however, the OHCC is best suited to lead the overall coordination of the emergency response for this declaration based on subject matter expertise and existing resource management.

BUDGET:

The action taken today will have no impact on the budget.

FINANCING:

No financing is necessary to support today's action.

VISION 2026:

The declaration of a State of Emergency on Homelessness is essential to the Vision 2026 10X Goal of Eliminating Homelessness and supports the Elimination of Poverty and Hunger and Healthcare for All.

Respectfully submitted,



NATE MILEY
President
Alameda County Board of Supervisors

Cc:

Susan Muranishi, County Administrator
Donna Ziegler, County Counsel
Melissa Wilk, Auditor-Controller

**THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF ALAMEDA,
STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

RESOLUTION NUMBER R- 2023-499

**A RESOLUTION DECLARING A STATE OF EMERGENCY ON
HOMELESSNESS IN ALAMEDA COUNTY**

WHEREAS, as of early 2022, Alameda County had at least 9,747 unhoused residents on a single night, including 73% (7,135) that were unsheltered; and

WHEREAS, the homeless crisis has significantly accelerated over the last decade. Since 2017, the number of unhoused individuals in Alameda County has increased from 5,629 to 9,747 (73% increase) and will likely continue to increase dramatically should we fail to take urgent action; and

WHEREAS, in Alameda County more than 40% of people experiencing homelessness surveyed during the 2022 Point-in-Time count said they have at least one permanent disability, and people receiving Social Security Disability benefits in California receive a maximum of \$1,033 per month, far less than the market rent for a studio apartment, which is \$1,583; and

WHEREAS, this gap has resulted in a disproportionate number of disabled individuals being forced into homelessness, with no means to remedy or improve their situations; and

WHEREAS, the acutely high rent burden in the Bay Area makes one-time events such as disputes with roommates or family members, job loss, medical events or conditions more likely to lead individuals to become unhoused; and

WHEREAS, the trauma associated with becoming homeless, not having a stable place to live, sleep, eat or feel safe, results in an increased likelihood of unhoused persons experiencing mental health crisis, which are exacerbated by their increased exposure to unsafe and inhumane circumstances, including access to narcotics and exposure to crime and violence; and

WHEREAS, between 2018 and 2021, 1,157 Alameda County residents died while experiencing homelessness and, for all causes of death, mortality rates are many times higher for people experiencing homelessness than the general population; and

WHEREAS, in 2021, the age-adjusted mortality rate for people experiencing homelessness in Alameda County was 5.8 times that of the general population of Alameda County. For all causes of death, mortality rates are many times higher for people experiencing homelessness than the general population, and

WHEREAS, sixty-six percent (229 out of 346) of all Alameda County homeless deaths in 2021 took place outside of a medical setting (i.e., hospital or nursing facility), occurring on streets/sidewalks, outdoors, in vehicles, encampments, shelters, other's residences and other locations, and

WHEREAS, half of homeless acute/chronic disease-related deaths (77 out of 153) occurred in "unattended" settings, and

WHEREAS, African-American/Black persons represent 41% of total homeless deaths, compared to 19% of general population deaths and 11% of the general population, and

WHEREAS, these factors combine to create significant barriers to becoming housed after a person enters homelessness; and

WHEREAS, exposure to homelessness, especially at the scale seen in Alameda County, significantly reduces the quality of life for all residents, especially those experiencing displacement; and

WHEREAS, homelessness is a complicated and multifaceted issue that requires, coordination, collaboration, and the combined forces of numerous jurisdictions to adequately address;

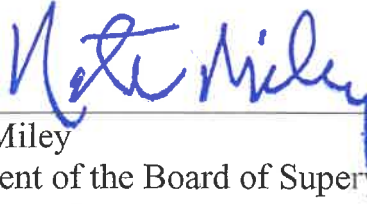
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that this Board of Supervisors of the County of Alameda, State of California formally declare a State of Emergency on Homelessness, pursuant to the California Emergency Services Act (Gov. Code §§ 8550 et seq.), and direct the Alameda County Health Care Services Agency Office of Homeless Care and Coordination to lead the development of an emergency response to homelessness and report back to the Board of Supervisors with recommendations in 60 days.

Adopted by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Alameda, State of California, on September 19th, 2023 by the following called vote:

AYES: Supervisors Carson, Haubert, Marquez & President Miley - 4

NOES: None

EXCUSED: Supervisor Tam - 1



Nate Miley
President of the Board of Supervisors of the
County of Alameda, State of California

ATTEST:
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors,
County of Alameda, State of California

APPROVED AS TO FORM:
Donna Ziegler, County Counsel

By: RBailey, Deputy
—

By: 

K. Scott Dickey, Assistant County Counsel

Declaring a State of Emergency on Homelessness in Alameda County

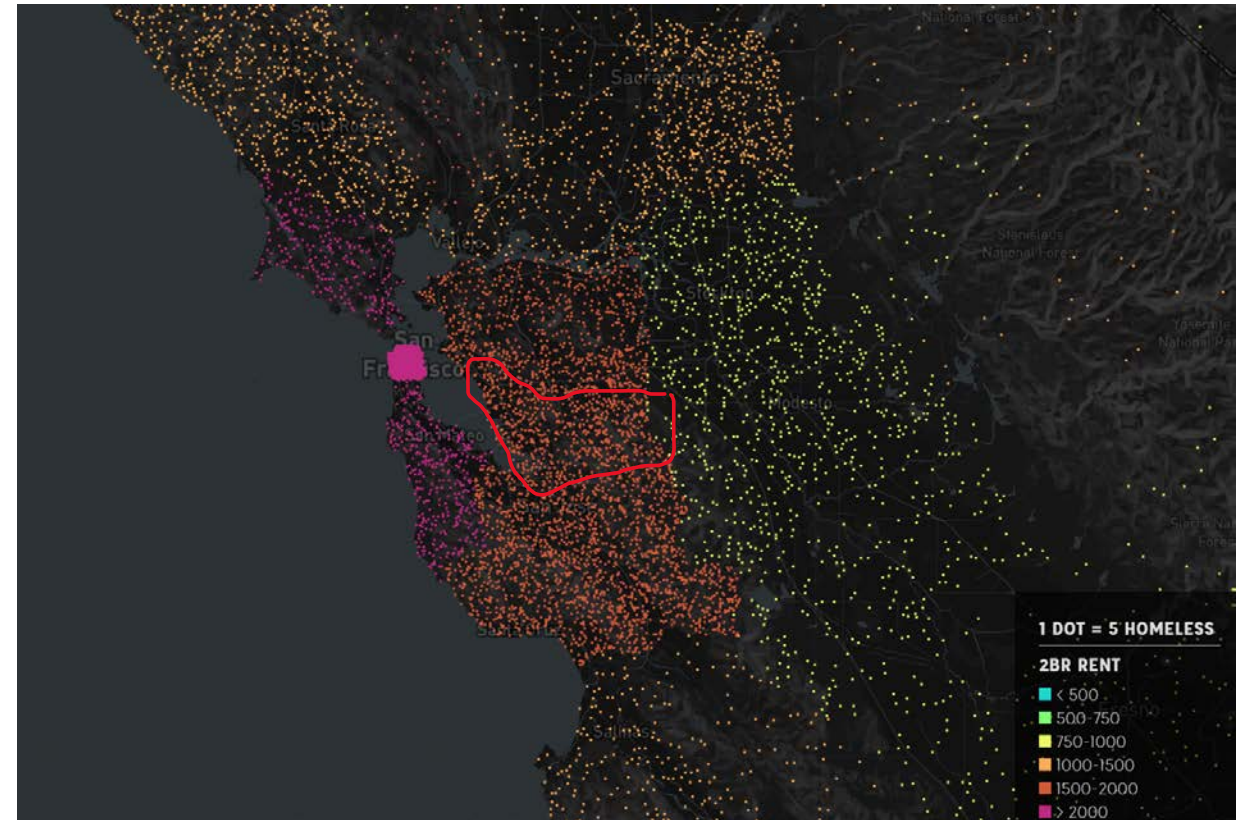
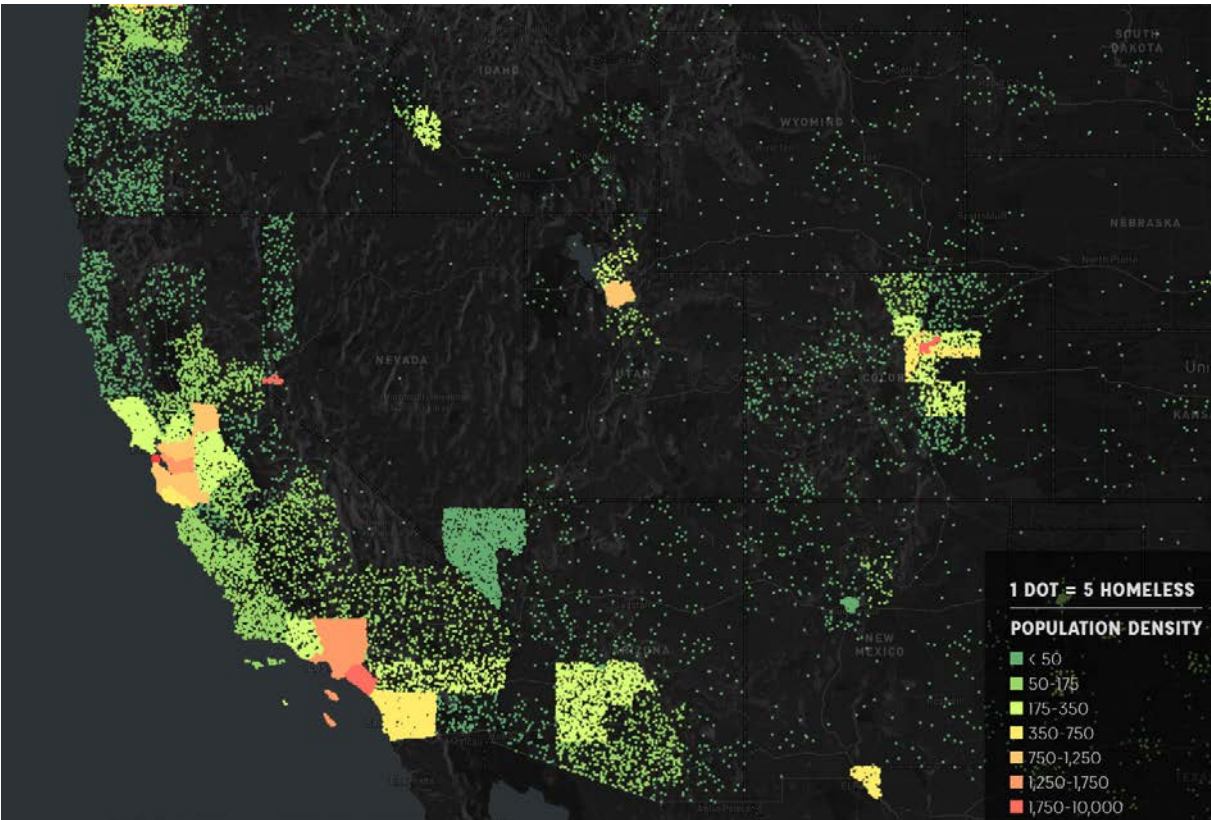
Alameda County Supervisor Nate Miley, District 4

President, Alameda county Board of Supervisors

A Homelessness Crisis In Alameda County

Source: The E'ville Eye 2022,
Crews Battling Another Wood Street Homeless Encampment Fire

Homelessness is concentrated in areas with large populations and high cost of housing.



These factors are driving the crisis in Alameda County.

The Homelessness Crisis in Alameda County is Growing

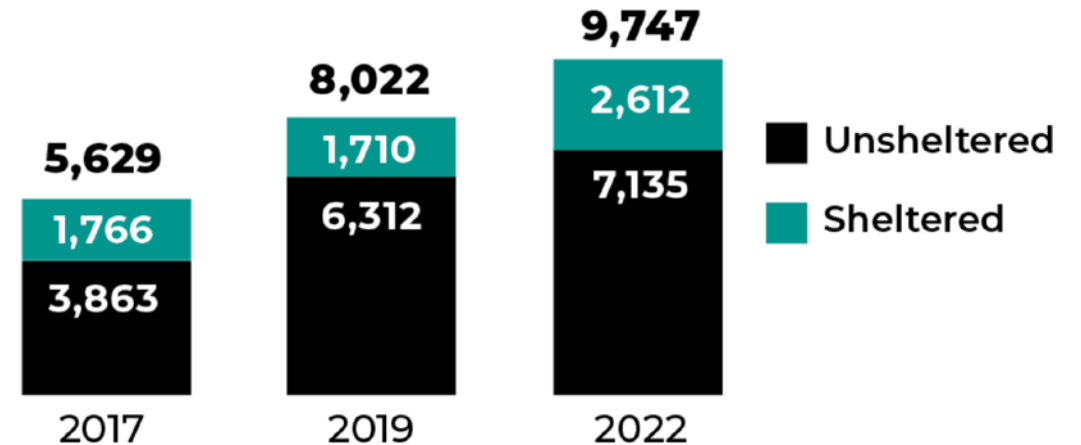
The 2020 Point In Time (PIT) Count interviewed 1,517 and counted **9,747 people experiencing homelessness**, across all of Alameda County and in a variety of living situations.

- *82% Lived in Alameda County at the time they became homeless.*
- *68% had lived in Alameda County for at least 10 years when they became homeless.*

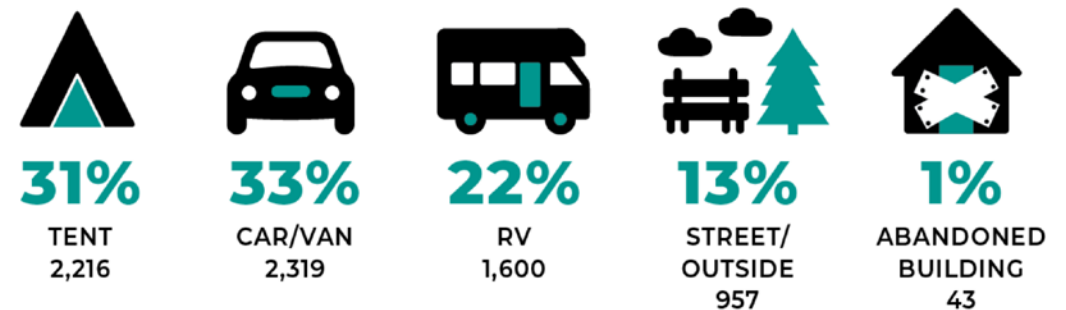
Every year the scale of the Homelessness Crisis increases.

- *There has been a 17% increase since 2019.*
- *There has been a 41% increase since 2017.*

PIT Count of Alameda County Homeless Population:



Where they live:



What's Driving the Rise in Homelessness?

The lead indicator associated with homelessness is Cost of Housing.

- As the cost of housing goes up, homelessness increases.

The median rent for a two-bedroom apartment in the Bay Area is well over \$3,000 per month.

- More than 2.5X the national average: \$1,200.

The medium rent for a studio in Alameda County is \$1,583 per month.

- SSDI maximum payment is \$1,033 per month.



Homelessness is easy to fall into, and difficult to leave.

Because the cost of housing is so high, even minor events can send someone on a path towards homelessness.

- 27% reported a dispute with family or friends.
- 22% reported a job loss.
- 11% reported domestic violence.

Once a person enters homelessness it is difficult to leave.

- 75% of PIT Count participants have been unhoused for more than a year.
- Many are seniors and/or disabled, with fixed incomes too low to afford housing.

Primary Cause of Homelessness:

TOP 6 RESPONSES*



27% Dispute with Family/Friend/Roommate	25% Eviction/Foreclosure	22% Job Loss
13% Other Money Issues	13% Substance Use	11% Family/Domestic Violence

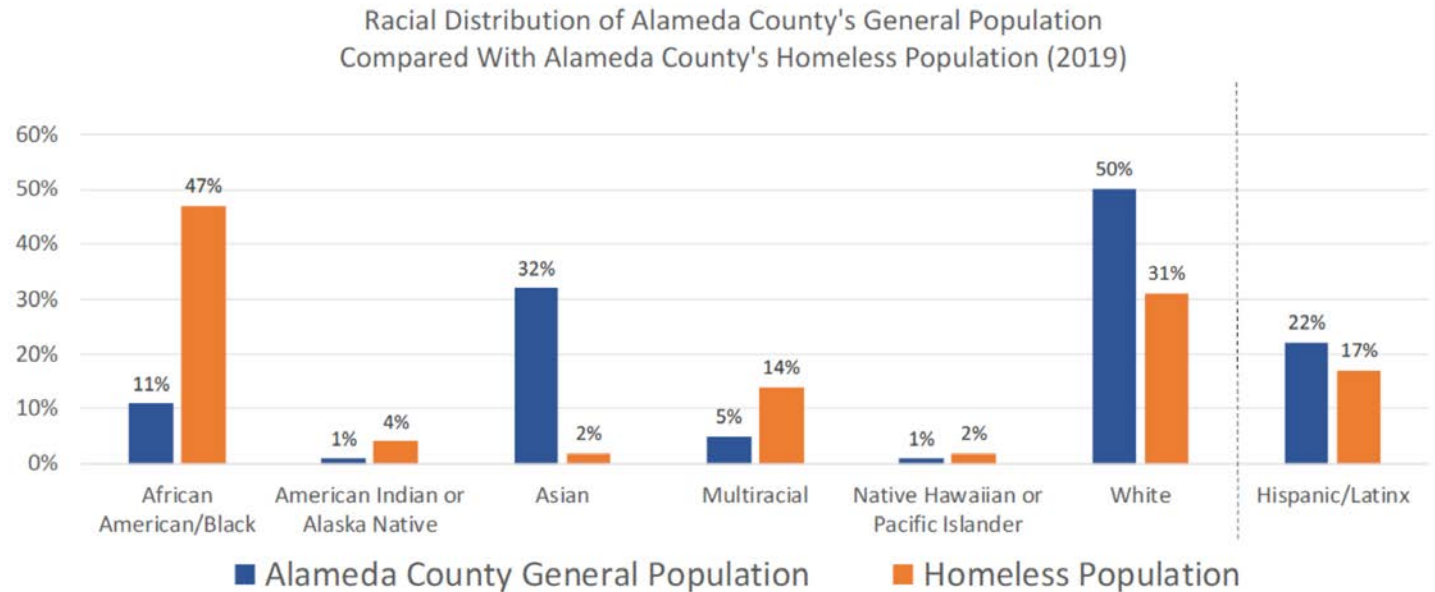
Duration of Homelessness:



4% 1-30 DAYS	21% 1-11 MONTHS	75% A YEAR OR MORE
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Racial Disparities are Prominent in Alameda County Homelessness

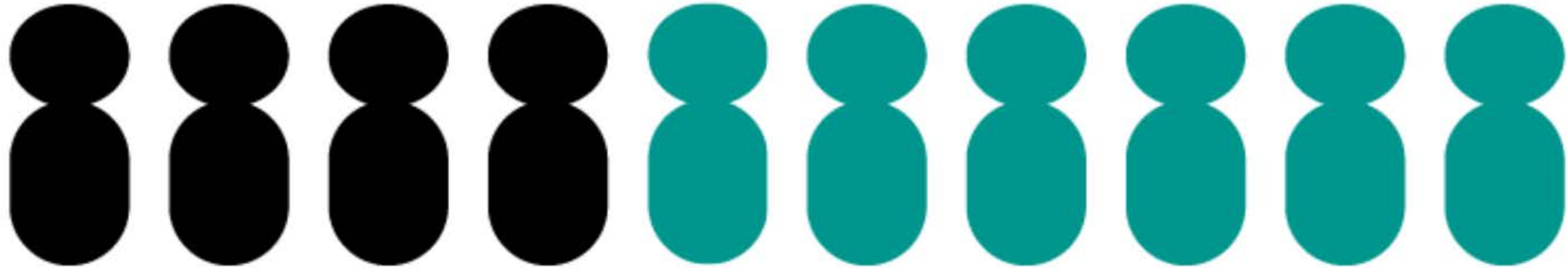
Racial Distribution of General Population and Homeless Population



Marginalized groups, including African-Americans, multi-racial, Transgender and LGBTQ+ individuals, are each overrepresented in the homeless population, and are several times more likely to become homeless.

Exposure to Homelessness is Traumatic

40%



OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS REPORTED HAVING AT LEAST ONE DISABLING CONDITION



49%

PSYCHIATRIC OR EMOTIONAL CONDITIONS



42%

PTSD



34%

CHRONIC HEALTH CONDITION



33%

PHYSICAL DISABILITY



30%

DRUG OR ALCOHOL ABUSE



14%

TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY



2%

HIV/ AIDS RELATED ILLNESS

Source: Alameda County Point-In-Time Count, 2022

People Experiencing Homelessness Die Earlier

Across all causes of death, people experiencing homelessness are dying younger and more often.

Cause Category	Average Age at Death	
	Homeless	General Population
All Cause	51.7	72.7
Homicide	43.2	33.9
Suicide	34.2	47.2
Accidental injury	52.0	56.3
Acute/chronic disease	58.0	75.6
Substance abuse and overdose	48.0	46.8
Unknown/Undermined	41.1	37.6

This Is A County-Wide Crisis

Homeless deaths remain high in every region of Alameda County.

Homeless Deaths by Region of Last Residence

Year	Berkeley/ Albany	Oakland/ Emeryville	Mid-County: Hayward, Alameda, San Leandro, San Lorenzo, Castro Valley	South County: Fremont, Newark, Union City	Tri-Valley: Dublin, Pleasanton, Livermore
2018	19	102	49	16	9
2019	18	141	55	18	14
2020	25	215	84	26	17
2021	24	208	55	31	15
Total	86	666	243	91	55

**This is an
Emergency!**

Pursuant to the California Emergency Services Act

(Gov. Code §§ 8550 et seq.)

Office of Homeless Care and Coordination (OHCC)

- OHCC was created to support efforts:
 - to build a coordinated system for housing and homeless services; and
 - to strengthen coordination with other County agencies and departments, cities, community-based organizations, and other external partners.
- Coordination, consolidation, and expansion of services:
 - County lead for strategic planning efforts around homelessness
- OHCC Programs
 - Coordinated Entry: Home Stretch, Access Points, Regional Coordination
 - Housing Services: Supportive Housing, Interim and Bridge Housing
 - Health Care for the Homeless
 - Policy and Planning



Home Together Review

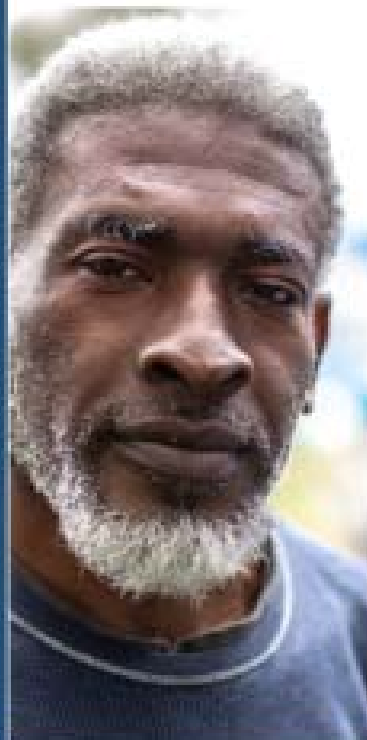
1 Prevent homelessness for our residents

1. Address racial disparities in mainstream/upstream systems to prevent racially disproportionate inflow into homelessness
2. Focus resources for prevention on people most likely to lose their homes
3. Rapidly resolve episodes of homelessness through Housing Problem Solving
4. Prevent racially disproportionate returns to homelessness



2 Connect people to shelter and needed resources

1. Expand access in key neighborhoods and continue improvements to Coordinated Entry
2. Lower programmatic barriers to crisis services such as prevention, problem solving, and shelter
3. Prevent discharge from mainstream systems to homelessness
4. Significantly increase the availability of shelter, especially non-congregate models, to serve vulnerable adults and families with children and to reduce unsheltered homelessness
5. Provide accessible behavioral health services to people with serious mental illness or substance use needs and who are unsheltered, in shelter, or in supportive housing programs



3 Increase housing solutions

1. Add units and subsidies for supportive housing, including new models for frail/older adults
2. Create dedicated affordable housing subsidies for people who do not need intensive services
3. Create shallow subsidies for those who can exit or avoid homelessness with more limited assistance
4. Add new slots of rapid rehousing for those who can pay full rent over time
5. Ensure new housing funding is distributed across the county according to need
6. Reduce entry barriers to housing and ensure racial equity in referrals and placements

4 Strengthen coordination, communication and capacity

1. Use data to improve outcomes and track racial equity impacts
2. Improve messaging and information availability
3. Build infrastructure to support and monitor new and expanded programs

Without addressing the impact of racism in our society, homelessness will continue to disproportionately impact African Americans and other people of color. Creating a mix of housing and services in order to reduce these enormous racial disparities is a major focus of this Plan.

County Expenditures 21-22

Expenditure Area	Total Funding	% investments (minus capital)
Activity	\$101,713,364	
Diversion/Rapid Resolution	\$2,539,564	2%
Crisis Response (ES, TH, SH) - Operations & Services	\$22,701,171	14%
RRH - Rental Assistance	\$13,341,501	8%
RRH - Services	\$4,375,531	3%
PSH - Operations (Project-Based)	\$15,714,053	10%
PSH - Rental Assistance (Tenant-Based)	\$26,991,798	17%
PSH - Services	\$16,049,746	10%
Operations	\$56,357,681	
Eviction Prevention/Emergency Rental Assistance	\$4,522,600	3%
Street Outreach	\$10,997,054	7%
Administrative Activities	\$9,539,343	6%
System Infrastructure	\$13,481,166	9%
Unknown	\$17,817,517	11%
Total Non-Capital		100%
Capital Investments	\$49,071,311	
Crisis Response (ES, TH, SH) - Development	\$6,500,000	
PSH - Development	\$42,571,311	
Grand Total	\$207,142,356	

Why Declare a State of Emergency?

Declaring a local emergency could unlock additional tools in helping to expedite a sufficient response to the crisis.

These additional tools could include, but are not limited to:

- **Accelerated hiring** to address homelessness and behavioral health needs
- More **effective and efficient use of funds**
- **Expedited procurement** of critical items
- Faster and more **streamlined creation of housing**
- **Expanded services**, and
- The ability to request resources from the **State and Federal governments**.

Declaring a Countywide State of Emergency on Homelessness

The action today declares a local emergency to address the homelessness crisis.

It also direct the Health Care Services Agency (HCSA) Office of Homeless Care and Coordination (OHCC) to lead the development of an emergency response to homelessness and report back to the Board of Supervisors within 60 days.