Homelessness: Big Problem, Little Progress

It's Time To Think Outside The Box

Summary

It is no secret homelessness is a significant issue for Santa Cruz County (SCCO). What may not be fully understood is the amount of time, money, and energy that has been devoted to the search for solutions. Even with all the efforts, very little progress has been made in reducing the number of individuals and families affected by homelessness. Why? The Grand Jury identified five main reasons the homeless problem persists.

First, the community views homelessness as a problem that should be addressed by elected officials; however, whatever "political will" that exists to propose housing solutions is often overcome by community resistance. Second, the County lacks an effective governance structure with the authority to manage the complexity and size of the homeless problem. Third, there are insufficient resources to support those affected by homelessness. Fourth, there is an under utilization of existing resources in the County. And fifth, the County lacks comprehensive and effective data collection and analysis systems.

Solutions to these problems are complex. However, steps can be taken to enable Santa Cruz County to more effectively manage the homeless crisis, which has become even more of a challenge due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This report illuminates local barriers to homelessness relief, and proposes potential solutions. Ending homelessness will provide significant benefits to the entire community far beyond the relief to the individuals receiving services. Together we can care for and restore dignity to some of the most vulnerable in our community, but it will take a renewed commitment on the part of all stakeholders in our County.

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Background

Santa Cruz County has long struggled with managing its homeless population. There has been a seemingly endless number of action plans and ideas developed for shelter and housing of the homeless. The County and City agencies, faith-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, homeless advocates, local law enforcement, and even the County Probation Department have all been a part of the discussion and effort to end homelessness. You could construct the alphabet with all the acronyms that make up the organizations and County agencies that account for the millions of dollars dedicated each year to finding a solution. Each year's new solutions and ideas seem to be variations of the same old ideas that have been reworked and usually include expanding shelter hours/days, and looking for more ways to provide resources to the homeless (e.g. the new housing Navigation Centers).[01] Currently, the "best practice" is a "Housing First" approach, which contends the priority is to provide a roof over a homeless person's head and then work to address the individual's specific needs.

The Point-in-Time Count (PIT Count) homeless survey, mandated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), is conducted every two years, generally on a single night in January, and provides a "snapshot" of people experiencing homelessness. The PIT Count is important as it is used to determine federal funding for homeless relief. According to the January 2019 PIT Count[02] there are 2,167 homeless individuals in Santa Cruz County of which 1,700 are unsheltered.[03] The PIT Count states the causes of homelessness are difficult to determine, but it does identify the top six events that lead to homelessness: Loss of Job (26%), Eviction (18%), Increased Rent (10%), Drug and Alcohol Abuse (13%), Family/Domestic Violence (10%), and Divorce/Separation/Break-up (9%).[04] It is worth noting that the accuracy of the PIT Count is frequently questioned,[05] and community agencies and government officials believe the numbers are significantly underreported.

Despite all the money, effort, activity and planning, it has been extremely challenging to find effective and acceptable solutions. The County's homeless are ignored by many until the issue dominates the news headlines. Typically, this occurs when the homeless become more visible and cannot be ignored at parks, beaches, and business locations; and/or their presence has created a potential health hazard to the community. The homeless are then usually encouraged to "move along," without regard to where they might go, the cost to their dignity, health, financial resources, or the fiscal and societal costs to the surrounding community.[06]

Scope and Methodology

The Grand Jury investigation involved conducting interviews with 16 individuals, including members of the SCCO Board of Supervisors (BOS) and the Santa Cruz City Council, and officials from County and City homeless services providers, the Housing Authority, law enforcement, nonprofit and faith-based organizations. In addition, the Grand Jury reviewed a wide variety of local, state and national reports, as well as other county grand jury reports, to help understand the depth and breadth of homelessness

and the impact it has on our County. Additional interviews desired by the Grand Jury, such as those with homeless individuals, were not possible due to the occurrence of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The focus of the investigation centered on understanding why, after spending tens of millions of dollars, the number of homeless remains high. In addition, the Grand Jury sought to understand the extent of the homeless problem, and identify areas needing improvement. Extensive research was conducted on housing solutions that have been deployed elsewhere, including the use of tiny homes, converted shipping containers, and the maximization of underutilized buildings and parking lots to provide shelter and safe overnight parking. The investigation examined current data collection and reporting systems used to track the cost of homelessness and program results. These results are used to shape policy decisions, legislation and to make funding decisions at multiple levels. In addition, research was done on effective services that could be utilized to provide support to homeless individuals with mental health and substance abuse issues.

Investigation

Community Engagement and Political Will

"Santa Cruz, We Have A Problem"

There is a wide spectrum of views about homelessness in Santa Cruz County, all the way from a strong feeling that homeless people are all lazy drug addicts, to the other end where there is incredible compassion for those affected by homelessness. In order for politicians to be able to "move the needle" on the problem of homelessness, local leaders need to take the initiative to better educate residents, and help them understand the extent of the community wide problem.

If the only images the public has of the homeless issue are those created in the media, on the streets, and by the lack of an effective, coordinated response in SCCO, then their opposition to having homeless individuals and projects in their neighborhoods might seem reasonable.

The image that has been projected is chaotic and it often appears no one is in charge of the response. City and County projects are often funded temporarily and shelter sites secured on a temporary basis. As a result, uncertainty is created as shelters open and close, and homeless individuals are forced back out onto the street to spread out across the County's parks and other areas[07] as they seek out parcels of land for a place to create a community. Examples of positive and negative homeless encampments illustrate the challenge in changing public perceptions.

A Dark Example - The Ross Camp

In 2019, Santa Cruz County watched the legal, political, and public health and safety battles unfold surrounding the unsanctioned homeless encampment that developed behind the Gateway Plaza shopping center in the City of Santa Cruz. The encampment, known as the "Ross Camp," became home to approximately 200 homeless individuals.

The Grand Jury read media reporting and heard testimony from City and County officials, law enforcement, and nonprofit personnel regarding the conditions inside the Ross Camp. Testimony stated the community was established by local homeless residents, but was infiltrated by a criminal element that introduced theft, drugs, and sexual assault into the camp.[08] The primary inhabitants in the Ross Camp became individuals from outside of the County, which was unexpected as, according to the PIT Count, 74% of the homeless in Santa Cruz County were residents of the County prior to becoming homeless.[09] The Camp became a fire hazard and a public health risk, receiving an unusual number of public safety calls (76). In the 6 months the encampment was open, there were three tent fires, five fatalities and 59 medical-related emergency response calls.[10]

After multiple local and federal court actions the court deemed the Ross Camp a "nuisance" and it was ordered closed.[11] [12] The cost to the City of Santa Cruz for cleanup and very basic services to the camp, for that 6 month period, was $266,000.[13] This amount does not include legal fees and staff expenses incurred during that time.

A Brighter Example - 1220 River Street

Grand Jury witnesses stated that if the criminal elements were kept out, rules and boundaries established, and the numbers of individuals kept at reasonable levels, homeless encampments could be part of a viable solution. The encampments could be peer monitored and maintained by the residents, and would provide a sense of community, belonging and safety, and they would help to restore the dignity that is often stripped from homeless individuals.[14]

In 2018, when the City of Santa Cruz was examining the idea of tent encampments as a solution to homelessness, one City official described the program as:

> *a temporary phase of a longer term plan to get people off the streets. The model we are working on is a closed campus, fully staffed, high level of accountability, so really we are setting this up not just as a place for people to be, but rather a place where they can stabilize and start their journey out of homelessness.*[15]

In February of 2018 the City of Santa Cruz and the Salvation Army opened the 1220 River Street homeless tent encampment ("River Street Camp"), and by all accounts it was a well run and functioning facility. Many who had not previously accessed County services, began receiving services while at the encampment. The shelter was a quiet facility with many residents keeping to themselves, but coming together to play Cornhole and board games. Residents stated the shelter provided a sense of community and family, something that is often lacking when living on the streets.[16]

Unfortunately, the shelter was plagued with issues, but not the stereotypes and prejudice that drive "Not in my back yard," (NIMBY) issues which bring neighbors out in droves to protest homeless projects. The issues were logistical in nature belonging to the City and County of Santa Cruz, and mostly focused on funding.[17]

The River Street Camp which was originally funded for three months, but received multiple extensions, closed for the first time in November 2018, right at the start of the winter months,[18] but then reopened in May of 2019[19] as the City of Santa Cruz moved to shut down the Ross Camp.

On June 12, 2019 the County's Homeless Action Partnership (HAP) issued a public statement[20] committing to keep the River Street Camp open until March 15, 2020, which, according to research, cost $75,000 per month to operate.[21] However, by January 2020, the River Street Camp had been closed due to a necessary pipe repair.[22] The encampment tents and residents were moved to the National Guard Armory which was previously used as a winter shelter, but closed to the homeless in 2016. The official statement in 2016 was that the Armory was being closed for a year-long renovation, but media reports state it was closed amid "community concerns."[23] As of January 2020, witness testimony indicated that no renovations had been performed on the Armory.

A majority of the River Street Camp residents participated in the Downtown Street Teams (discussed later in the report), and earned a stipend for cleaning up the streets of Santa Cruz. One resident described his experience after 4 weeks; praising the program for helping him to build his resume, secure job interviews, and get his life in order, "you've got to start somewhere. I just call this a grooming ground for better things to come."[24]

Although the River Street Camp was closed, it serves as an example of how a well run encampment can be an asset in the effort to manage and ultimately reduce homelessness.

"Not In My Backyard" (NIMBYism) and Political Will

While well run encampments help to manage the immediate homeless problem, they are obviously not a long term solution. Multiple witnesses testified that two of the major components needed to end homelessness are creating housing and the political will to do so. They also testified to the intersection between political will and NIMBYism. Lack of political will, on the part of elected officials, is frequently tied to a desire to please constituents. Attempts to approve and build homeless and affordable housing projects are often stymied by NIMBYism.[25] When there is strong public opposition to projects, political will to approve those projects often evaporates.

Bending to Pressure

Bending to the pressure of voters is something all politicians do; after all, they were voted into office to represent their constituents. However, the question is: how far to bend in accommodating the needs of some groups over those of other groups?

The Grand Jury heard testimony from multiple witnesses, including elected officials, about the pervasive lack of political will to build homeless and affordable housing projects and its direct link to NIMBYism. However, given the COVID-19 pandemic, and the current efforts by the County of Santa Cruz and Cities in Santa Cruz County (Santa Cruz, Scotts Valley, Watsonville, Capitola) (hereinafter "Cities") to enact solutions, even

if only on a temporary basis, the Grand Jury decided now was not the time to point fingers. Instead, the Grand Jury encourages all elected officials to look beyond these temporary measures to more permanent ones in each of their jurisdictions. Elected officials should look for ways to create more political will within themselves and their governing bodies, and work to reduce NIMBYism through public outreach, effective education, and community engagement. Ending homelessness is a goal that should unite our leaders and community members because solving the problem has the potential to benefit all of Santa Cruz County.

Polarizing Terms

It is worth noting that Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) encourages engaging with those who may have opposing views, and argues that "NIMBY" is a polarizing term that does not contribute positively to the solution:

> *We may depict the NIMBY crowd as narrow-minded, self interested, sometimes violent home owners who are resistant to reason and uncaring about those less fortunate. While this may be true about some people in some struggles, more often what underlies resistance to supportive housing are fears — some legitimate, some not. You should try to understand those fears so that you can respond to them appropriately.*[26]

In CSH's publication, "*Family Matters: A Guide to Developing Family Supportive Housing*," CSH offers methods for addressing the most common community fears.[27] It would be beneficial for the leadership of Santa Cruz County and Santa Cruz Cities to reference documents such as this when encountering housing opposition in their communities.

Public Outreach

In early 2019 the Santa Cruz City Council worked through the research, planning, and approval process for a safe parking program in the Santa Cruz City-owned parking lots.[28] The City worked with a "small neighborhood group." Notices were sent to neighboring property owners to notify them of the proposed project, which was set to run from July through the end of August, and "Temporary, no parking" signs were placed in the selected lot to inform the community the lot would be closed during safe parking hours. Despite these measures, in September 2019, when the City Council voted unanimously to approve the project, there was pushback from the neighbors.[29] The community's immediate reaction was "How come we weren't informed?" The Santa Cruz Sentinel quoted the Assistant to the Santa Cruz City Manager:

> *The challenge is because there are existing RVs that park there, people thought that the program had started and were reacting strongly to the fact that (they believed) it had started already and outreach had not happened. I think it went on a few social media outlets and then there were a lot of questions and concerns about how we're engaging the community on this. Unfortunately, sometimes that happens, where information that is not exactly accurate gets out and then we're trying to catch up a little bit.*[30]

The County and Santa Cruz Cities would benefit from a more robust County-wide public outreach to engage and build trust with residents. Regular community meetings focused on the issue of homelessness could provide the opportunity for open communication. The goal of these meetings should be to provide a forum for sharing ideas and discussing potential neighborhood projects, in order for neighbors to not feel blindsided, be able to air their concerns, and for the County and City Officials to respond to questions.

Community meetings and outreach projects would be an ideal space to introduce residents to the good work already being done by nonprofit entities such as Housing Matters,[31] Downtown Streets,[32] and various Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs),[33] as well as private groups, who have established records of success. It is essential to not only keep residents informed, but to share positive outcomes and successes.

While these actions do not guarantee a positive outcome, community buy-in on homeless and low income projects is imperative, and failure to conduct community outreach has resulted in negative outcomes by allowing "rumors" and "concerns" to circulate, fueling opposition among "blindsided" residents.[34]

Calling Community Members to the Table

The Homeless Services Coordinator for Santa Cruz County stated, *"Community is a really big part of what we can and can't do—what are people willing to accept in their community."*[35]

As discussed, engaging the community to alleviate fears, and to earn support for proposed homeless facilities and developments is essential. Community members should be helped to understand the realities of homelessness and the homeless individuals, who would be served by these projects and services. Creating a community task force that brings everyday community members to the table with frontline workers and homeless individuals could help shift the conversation away from community opposition and toward community solutions. Bringing the community to the table would also provide a space where the false narratives and mythologies surrounding the homeless[36] could be dispelled and addressed. These false narratives and myths include:

- Homelessness is a choice, and many who live on the streets are there by choice.[37]
- Homeless people move to the Bay Area for the weather.
- Homeless people don't need cell phones. Cell phones are a luxury.
- Why don't they just get a job? Sleep in a shelter? And more.[38]

The Grand Jury heard testimony from multiple witnesses about the importance of community buy-in on homeless and affordable housing projects and the necessity of engagement and education prior to, and as part of the planning process.

Building Compassion through Education

Some realities discovered through research and testimony which the County and the Cities of Santa Cruz should introduce to the community include:

● Many homeless individuals look just like everyone else in the community.

● Approximately one third of the homeless are employed.[39]

● Approximately one third have mental health or addiction problems for which there are inadequate treatment options (See Table 1).

● Jails have become the last resort for dealing with the most serious mental health problems of the homeless, but the jail is not adequately equipped to provide treatment.[40]

● Thousands of children in the County, who do not have secure housing, were not counted in the 2019 PIT Count because they do not meet the HUD's limited definition of homelessness.[41]

● The cost of failing to effectively cope with homelessness is greater than the cost of the solutions.[42]

Table 1**: 2019 Homeless Subpopulations**

2019 Homeless Subpopulations[3]				
	Sheltered	Unsheltered	TOTAL	Percent of Total Population
Chronically Homeless Individuals	123	280	403	18.6%
Persons in CH Families	32	17	49	2.3%
Veterans	23	128	151	7%
Severely Mentally Ill	71	249	320	14.8%
Chronic Substance Abuse	32	249	281	13%
Persons with HIV/AIDS	5	24	29	1.3%
Victims of Domestic Violence	20	59	79	3.6%

(3) Subpopulation categories are not mutually exclusive, so these figures do not sum to the total homeless population. People may be represented in multiple categories.

Source: Focus Strategies Report, page 4[43]

In order to make advancements in the effort to end homelessness, community involvement and education are paramount. With increased community support, politicians will have more ability to move forward with housing solutions which are so desperately needed in Santa Cruz County.

Effective Governance Structure Needed

Effective governance is vital when attempting to solve a problem as complex, vast and challenging as homelessness. Leadership, programs, data, funding, and accountability are just a few of the elements required in order to move the needle. According to

witness testimony, Santa Cruz County does not have the data collection mechanisms necessary to answer the most basic question, "What is the cost to our county due to homelessness?"

However, Santa Clara County performed a six-year study, the results of which were referenced by this Grand Jury to aid in understanding the scope of the homeless problem.[44]

The Santa Clara County report identified the primary areas where the costs to the county are borne, shown in Figure 1.
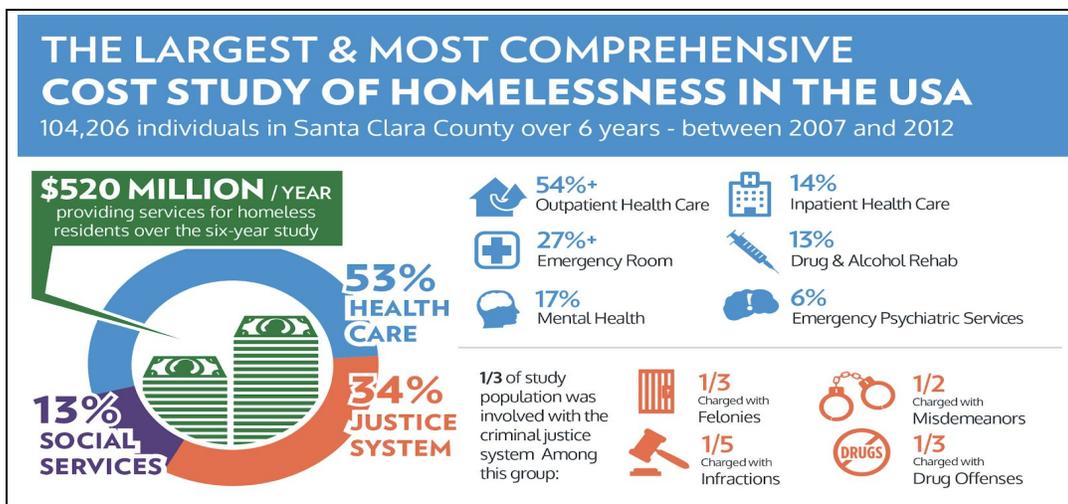
Figure 1. **Homelessness Cost Study**[45]

It is significant to note in the graphic that 87% of the expenditures were for healthcare and the justice systems, with only 13% spent on social services. Although not stated, one can imagine if more funding was placed on social services upfront, these back-end expenditures would be reduced.

Interestingly, the report states:

> Homeless costs are heavily skewed toward a comparatively small number of frequent users of public and medical services. For example, for all county residents experiencing homelessness in 2012, the average annual cost per person was $5,148. However, individuals with costs in the top 5% accounted for 47 percent of all costs and had average costs of over $100,000 per year.[46]

Public perception often assumes a majority of homeless individuals are "chronically homeless," (defined as "a person with a disability who lives in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter; and has been homeless continuously for at least 12 months or on at least 4 separate occasions in the last 3 years.").[47] Although this segment of the population accounts for a significant portion of the costs, they are a relatively small percentage of the homeless population.[48] Therefore, identifying and prioritizing ways to assist these individuals is an important element of this report.

Funding Today, Gone Tomorrow

A frequent problem identified during witness testimony, is the ongoing inconsistent funding sources and processes. With regard to funding for Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine states:

> *Funding streams and policy regulations for PSH are siloed and often impose substantive restrictions on how the funds may be used. This lack of coordination creates complications for combining or blending funds from different sources, and works against efforts to most efficiently use available funding.*[49]

A lack of consistent funding makes it extremely challenging for organizations to plan more than a year in advance, nor does it allow for agencies to fund projects that may require many years to implement. As a result, a myriad of temporary fixes tend to receive emergency funding, inhibiting the effective implementation of long term planning solutions leading to reactive and tactical rather than strategic planning. As stated by CalMatters with regard to funding of shelters,

> *The untold dollars spent on these failed shelters and policies would have been better invested in permanent housing.*[50]

Improved governance and leadership has the potential to improve the funding and planning processes. For an example of an inefficient use of funding, one can look to the opening and closing of various homeless encampments and shelters in Santa Cruz over the last few years shown in Figure 2.
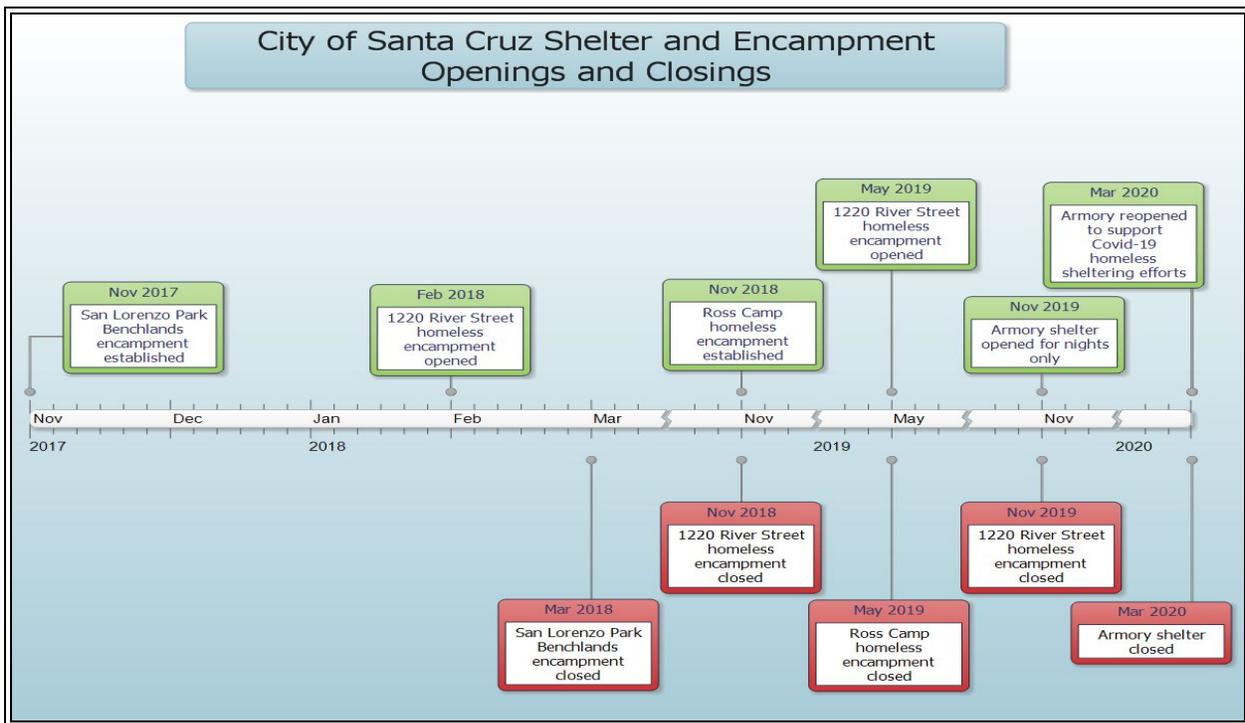

Figure 2. **Encampment Openings and Closings**[51] [52] [53] [54]

Managing the myriad of service providers and inconsistent available funding is a challenging task which is the responsibility of a County-wide organization, the Homeless Action Partnership, or HAP.[55]

Homeless Action Partnership (HAP)

HUD requires that each county assign an organization to be its Continuum of Care (CoC) organization, the agency that receives federal homeless funding and manages the allocation of funds. HAP is Santa Cruz County's CoC, and is a collaboration of the five jurisdictions in Santa Cruz County: the County and the Cities of Watsonville, Capitola, Scotts Valley and Santa Cruz, along with a number of homeless housing and services providers.[56] It is notable that "HAP is a collaborative planning body that does not hold legal status as an entity (i.e. it is not a nonprofit organization or formally seated governmental Board)."[57] HAP receives roughly $2.3 million from the state each year for housing subsidies and supportive services.[58]

In 2018, HAP received a one-time $10 million grant from the state of California's HEAP (Homeless Emergency Aid Program) and CESH (California Emergency Solutions and Housing) programs.[59] These funds were to be allocated throughout the County to organizations and agencies working to reduce homelessness. According to documents received, "a highly comprehensive, countywide, collaborative process was followed in order to identify priorities and estimated budget amounts for HEAP and CESH eligible activities."[60] However, according to witness testimony, HAP was not organizationally equipped with the appropriate structure, staff, or training to develop an effective strategic plan, or process for allocating and tracking funding performance. The $10 million was distributed by HAP among 26 projects countywide (Appendix A) and witnesses stated that selecting fewer projects with bigger grant amounts would have resulted in a better "bang for the buck."

So, What Bang Did The County Get For Ten Million Bucks?

Analyzing the effectiveness of the $10 million in funding is challenging due to the lack of consistency in the entities reporting and the accuracy of the reported data. In addition, grant money was to be spent over a two year period, and from documents provided it was stated some projects that were funded in June 2019 had not been started as of early 2020. A summary of the status reports (Table 2) provided by the funded agencies shows what services had been provided as of January 2020.

Table 2. **Summary of Outcome Responses Provided by Grant Recipients – 2019**

Number of homeless persons served	**376**
Number of persons at imminent risk of homelessness served	**223**
Number of persons served with a prior living situation of "place not meant for habitation"	**122**
Number of persons exiting to a permanent housing destination	**46**
Number of persons exiting to a safe exit, other than permanent housing	**145**
Instances of services	**593**
Instances of services - showers & toilets (Watsonville Navigation Center)	**6811**

Source: Santa Cruz County Office of Administration via document request[61]

The status reports consisted of spreadsheets with quantitative and qualitative information which was challenging to comprehend and lacked a signature of the reporting party. There is no clear and concise way to measure the information provided to track progress toward goals and objectives of the funded agency. The significance of this ineffective data reporting method speaks to the inability of HAP to effectively disperse and manage the funding received, and is further addressed in the data analysis section of this report.

Gaining an Outside Perspective

Focus Strategies, a consulting firm hired by Santa Cruz County to analyze the manner in which the County manages its homeless population, published the "Santa Cruz County Homeless System Baseline Assessment Report" in August 2019, summarizing the issues with HAP:

> *At the system level, well-informed members of the community actively participate in efforts to reduce homelessness and many examples of successful coordination exist. However, robust system-wide alignment around priorities and goals, capacity for data-driven decision making, and a more refined and empowered governance and implementation structure are needed. This aligned system will also need increased staffing capacity to support the system structure and see goals to fruition. Without these elements in place Santa Cruz cannot be said to have a fully realized homeless crisis response system in which all the parts work together toward a common set of measurable goals. **And without such a system, progress on reducing homelessness will remain elusive** (emphasis added).*[62]

All for one, one for all

Homelessness requires a countywide solution, but not all key stakeholders are actively engaged on the HAP Board and therefore countywide solutions are more challenging. Witness testimony stated the cities of Capitola and Scotts Valley take a minimal participatory role in HAP, and are not present when strategic planning for addressing homeless solutions occurs. To the Grand Jury's knowledge, neither city offers homeless shelter to its residents.

As can be seen by Table 3, the vast majority of homeless individuals reside in the cities of Santa Cruz and Watsonville, and in the unincorporated areas of Santa Cruz County. Capitola and Scotts Valley, which each have roughly 1% of the homeless population, send or refer their residents to the homeless service providers in Santa Cruz or Watsonville.

Table 3. **Total Unsheltered Persons by Jurisdiction**

Jurisdiction	Unsheltered in 2017	Percent of Unsheltered Population
Total Incorporated	1,314	73%
City of Capitola	21	1.1%
City of Santa Cruz	934	51.9%
City of Scotts Valley	19	1%
City of Watsonville	340	18.9%
Total Unincorporated Confidential Scattered Site	485	27%

Source: Focus Strategies Report[63]

The majority of homeless service providers and low income housing exists in two districts within the County, District 1 and District 4, which is understandable as they include the two largest cities in the County. (See Appendix B.) Identifying ways for the other three districts in the County to share in the responsibility to address homelessness is paramount and more equitable (See Figure 3 for district boundaries).
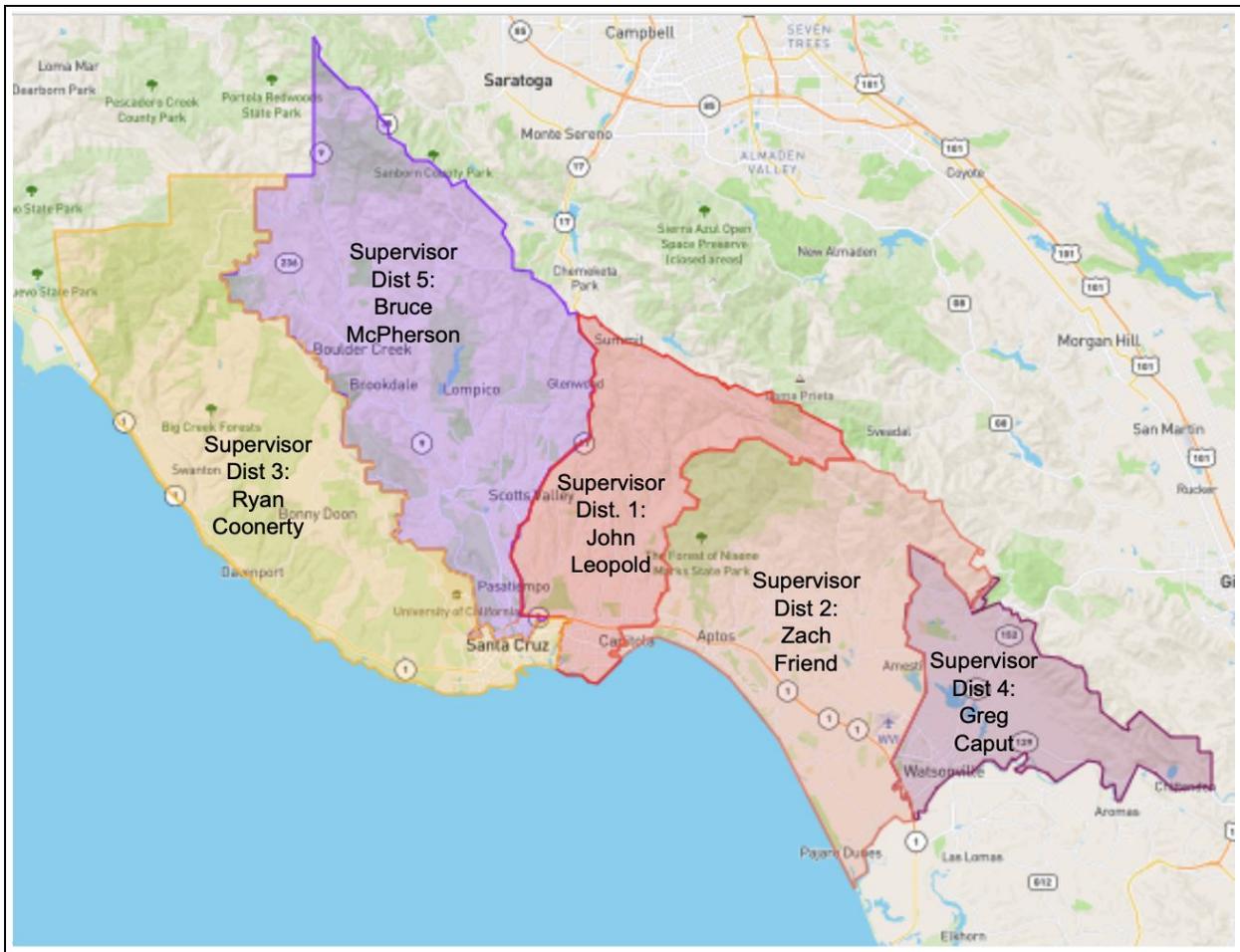

Figure 3. **Santa Cruz County District Map as of January 2020**[64]

Access to Funding

HAP published an application policy and guidelines document for homeless service providers to utilize when requesting funds from the $10million grant.[65] However, several witnesses emphasized a lack of a clear decision making and ranking process, stating HAP did not appear to provide equal access or opportunity to each applicant group seeking funding. This contention is further supported by the following statement in the Focus Strategies report:

> *In general, our information gathering revealed concerns among stakeholders about a perceived lack of transparency in decision-making relating to homelessness. In our view, the problem is not primarily a lack of transparency per se on the part of decision-makers, but rather that there are many fragmented and uncoordinated planning and decision-making processes in Santa Cruz County. The absence of a well-understood and clear decision-making process generates a sense among some stakeholders that the process is mysterious or intentionally obscured.[66]*

Accidental Adversaries

Ideally, nonprofit and faith-based groups should be working together. However, competition for funding among these groups can result in them becoming Accidental Adversaries.[67] Accidental Adversaries develop when groups working toward a common goal unintentionally obstruct each others' goals in the competition for funding. A perceived opaqueness of the process, and adversarial relationships could lead to an environment of distrust and disable the effective implementation of homelessness solutions.

Homeless Governance Study Committee

Challenges facing HAP have been known for some time. In 2017-2018, Santa Cruz County convened a Homeless Governance Study Committee to evaluate three problems that were identified:[68]

1. Lack of a regional decision-making body and structure
2. Lack of overall coordination
3. Insufficient capacity and resources

After 18 months of analysis, the recommendations of the committee were:[69]

   1. *Restructure the existing HAP Board into an Interagency Policy Council (IPC) tasked with being the primary decision-maker for the homeless system and not limited to HUD activities.*

   2. *Retain the Jurisdictional Executive Committee but rename it to "the Jurisdictional Coordinating Committee" and continue to coordinate interjurisdictional budgeting and cost sharing for homeless activities, such as winter shelter.*

   3. *Retain the existing HAP but rename it as the General*

> *Membership/Operations group.*

Their evaluation went on to state:

> *While the recommendations were generally welcomed by most stakeholders, the work of the Committee was paused in 2018 before the recommendations could be finalized and adopted. As new funding streams were rolling out into the community from the State, there were some questions about appropriate membership for the IPC as envisioned, and whether this was the right approach for allocating these or other new resources. Some members of the HAP raised a question as to whether the proposed structure would need refining to ensure compliance with HUD Continuum of Care (CoC) Governance requirements. People involved in the process also became very busy with preparing for the new resources, and lack of adequate staffing capacity made it impossible to proceed on both action areas at the same time.*[70]

It was disheartening to discover this committee, whose recommendations were agreed to in principle, was ultimately disbanded. This is just another example of a study performed with the best of intentions and yet resulted in no useful outcome. **From the Grand Jury's research, it is abundantly clear, the current HAP structure is inadequate and a new structure is desperately needed**.

Of note: On March 10, 2020 the Santa Cruz County BOS received an update from Focus Strategies on their research and recommendations, and a description of a proposed new governing structure was scheduled for June 2020 (albeit this timing was pre-COVID-19).[71] As Focus Strategies are experts in their field, the Grand Jury believes the BOS should give significant consideration to their recommendation; however, they should also consider the new governing body recommendation described in the following section.

Time for a Joint Powers Authority (JPA)

In evaluating the governance structure, the Grand Jury's initial suggestion was for the County to create a "Czar," or single person within the County, with sole responsibility for managing the homeless problem. However, witness testimony pointed to the fact that such a person would not have the authority or buy-in from all agencies necessary to be successful in such a position.

Rather, it is clear from testimony that the governing structure should have legal authority and power to create and execute on a strategic plan to measure, track, fund and hold programs accountable in order to effectively manage the homeless situation.

The Grand Jury researched other communities to identify what types of governing structures have been utilized to manage homeless services. JPAs, or Joint Powers Authorities (also called Joint Powers Agencies), can be an effective structure when dealing with broad complex issues such as homelessness. In 2018, Orange County established a JPA to manage its permanent supportive housing problem and created the Orange County Housing and Finance Trust.[72] In 1999 Solano County established a

JPA to, among other things, provide oversight and coordination of homeless and safety net services.[73] Although the Orange County JPA is relatively new, and therefore it is difficult to measure its success, Figure 4 shows the 2019 achievements from the Solano JPA.
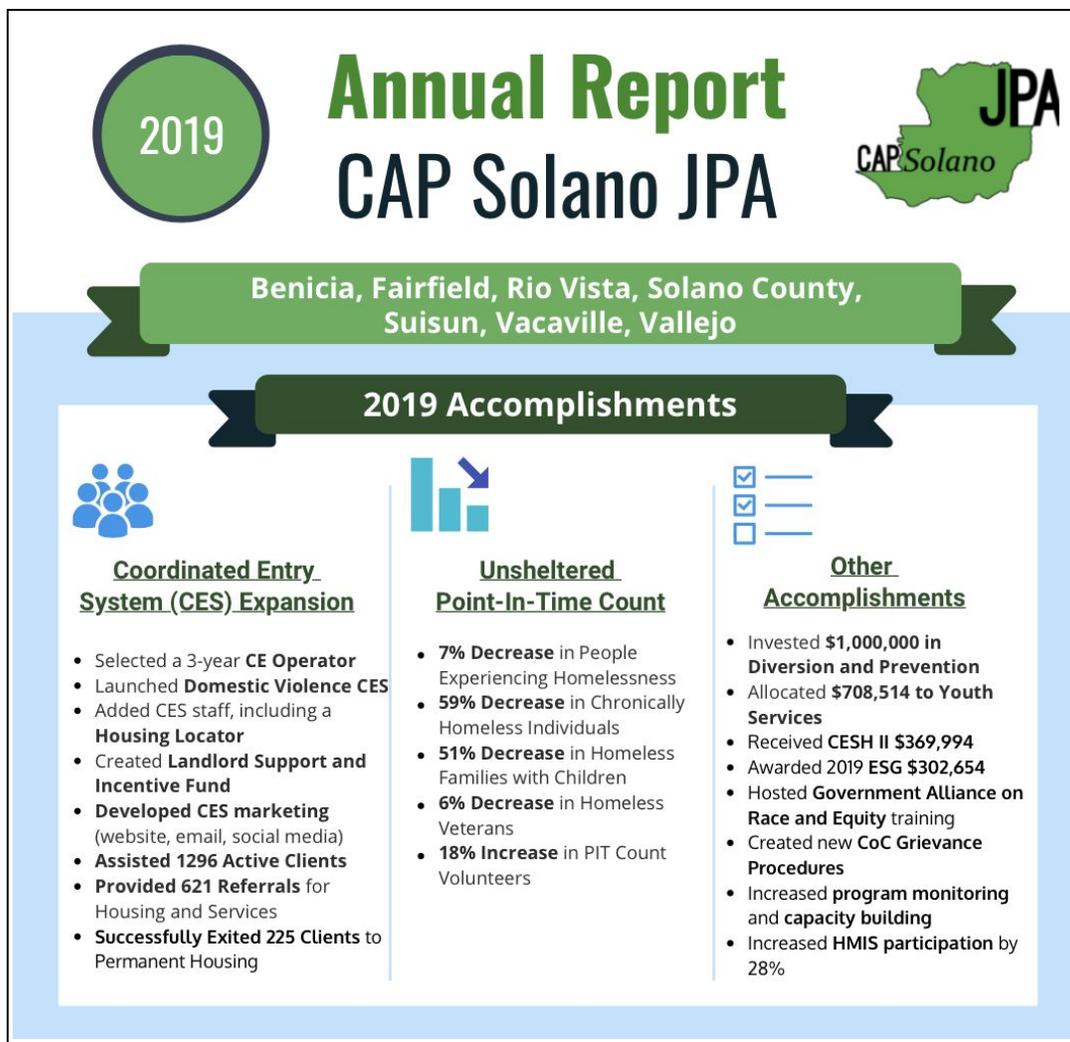
Figure 4. **CAP Solano JPA Annual Report**[74]

An important element of a JPA is that it is a legal entity with clearly defined governing bodies that possess the power to make decisions.[75] Establishing a JPA will require time and a significant coordinated effort between the County and Santa Cruz Cities. Of note, Santa Cruz County has had success with a JPA in the Public Library JPA.[76] **It is the opinion of this Grand Jury that an entity such as a JPA should be seriously considered as a County governance option to move forward and effectively manage the significant homeless problem in Santa Cruz County**.

Insufficient Resources Available

A variety of housing and social services are needed to effectively support the variety of issues that exist in the homeless community. The following section identifies the areas where resources are needed, outlines options to increase resources, and highlights the impact to the community of NOT having sufficient resources to support the homeless.

Mental Health and Substance Abuse Disorder

The mental health and drug and alcohol problems plaguing those living on the streets of Santa Cruz are often on display for the public to view, but how widespread are these issues among the homeless? Homelessness can be the end result of substance abuse and addiction, but it can also be the consequence of it. Studies show that approximately 33% of homeless individuals have struggled with drug and alcohol problems, and of those, 67% have a documented history of lifelong substance use disorder (SUD).[77]

Mental illness is another common thread running through the homeless population. Approximately 33% are suffering from untreated severe mental illness, 60% of chronically homeless have a history of lifelong mental illness, and 50% have a dual diagnosis of SUD and mental illness.[78] According to the nationally recognized Treatment Advocacy Center (TAC) many of these individuals suffer from disorders such as bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, major depression, and schizoaffective disorder, and are subject to "abysmal" lives.[79] They are also 10 to 20 times more likely to be homeless than the general population.[80] Mentally ill homeless individuals are 2.7 times more likely to be the victim of a violent crime such as sexual assault or murder.[81]

The nationally reported numbers are consistent with what is reported in Santa Cruz County. The 2019 PIT Count indicated 32% of homeless individuals self-reported some form of "psychiatric or emotional condition," 30% reported problems with drugs, alcohol, or both, and 30% reported having Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.[82]

Many experts and studies blame the closing of state mental hospitals, beginning in the 1980's, for a rise in homelessness. These closures resulted in an estimated 26-37% of former state mental hospital patients ending up on the street within six months of hospitals closing.[83] This long term, ongoing deficit of mental health treatment continues to have consequences. It is estimated that in the United States there are **383,000** jail and prison inmates living with mental illness, and **169,000** homeless individuals have untreated severe mental illness (SMI).[84] A New York Times article described the situation in Berkeley, CA in the 1990s:

> *...on any given night there are 1,000 to 1,200 people sleeping on the streets. Half of them are deinstitutionalized mentally ill people. It's like a mental ward on the streets.*[85]

Note: The Grand Jury recognizes some of the information referenced above is dated, which is the result of federal funding having been eliminated to federal agencies performing research on mental illness and homelessness. The Grand Jury is making the assumption the data is still relevant today.

In 2014, at the request of the Santa Cruz County BOS, the Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services Division of the County Health Services Agency developed a mental health strategic plan to identify needs and gaps in providing mental health services to the community. This plan was titled "A Community Roadmap to Collective Mental Health Wellness."[86]

The strategic planning group included stakeholders, mental health clients, families, community partners, and other community members. This team worked to identify needs and gaps and to develop priorities. In addition to identifying needs, the plan offered solutions and potential ways to implement them.[87] The five strategic priorities identified included:

- Communication, Collaboration, and Community Education
- Programs and Services
- Program Staffing
- Timely Access to Treatment
- Integrated Models of Care

Many areas of the strategic plan addressed the issue of affordable housing, but it did not specifically address the issue of homelessness. However, the strategic plan identified "Housing First" as a best practice that is effective in ending and preventing homelessness in individuals with a history of SUD, severe mental illness, or both. The plan cited a four year study, conducted by the Journal of Primary Prevention, which concluded that when placed in permanent supportive housing, a majority of those served under the best practice of Housing First, were able to achieve independent living.[88]

Lack of Facilities

The Santa Cruz County Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services Agency's 2015 Strategic Plan, (mentioned in the above section) did not address one issue that was highlighted in Grand Jury interviews and research: the staggering lack of county facilities to treat mental health, substance abuse, and co-occurring disorders.[89]

In 2009 the SCCO BOS and Dominican Hospital administrators came to an agreement to close Dominican Hospital's Behavioral Health Unit (BHU).[90] This decision was made based on reported losses by the hospital, a sum that was not publicly available.[91] During the negotiation, the County looked for alternative ways to allow Dominican Hospital to continue to provide mental health services, including ways to reduce BHU losses. It was determined, by an outside agency, that, "Dominican's losses would increase to $4 million per year ... within 5 years." The outside agency determined none of the alternative options were viable.[92]

The County opted instead to open a 16-bed Psychiatric Health Facility (PHF). The size of a PHF is regulated by federal Medi-Cal funding and limited to 16 beds.[93] Mental health facilities with more than 16 beds must be connected to an acute care treatment hospital.[94]

Telecare, a PHF, opened in 2013 and currently serves the entire County of 273,000 residents with priority given to Medi-Cal patients. Telecare's 16 mental health beds are a steep decline from the 28 beds that were previously provided by Dominican Hospital's BHU in 2013.[95]

In 2013, County Mental Health Services in Santa Cruz County provided services in total to 5,360 individuals for mental illness or thought disorders. Dominican's BHU saw 1,625 individuals in 2012. Of those seen, more than 1300 were placed on involuntary holds (California Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) § 5150) and 266 voluntarily pursued help.[96]

To be involuntarily committed to a psychiatric facility via a WIC § 5150 hold, individuals must meet at least one of three criteria, danger to self, danger to others, or gravely disabled.[97] Gravely disabled is defined as: unable to provide food, shelter or clothing for themselves because of a mental disorder or impairment by chronic alcoholism, per WIC § 5008(h). If a homeless individual has a severe thought disorder, yet they have some access to shelter or food, they do not necessarily meet the criteria for grave disability.[98]

In SCCO, where over 9,100 County residents have been identified as suffering from severe mental illness, 16 beds seems woefully inadequate.[99] To the Grand Jury's knowledge, there is nothing prohibiting the County from building multiple 16 bed PHF facilities. The challenge would be to identify funding and locations to build such facilities.

Advocating for the Mentally III

The National Alliance on Mental Illness Santa Cruz County (NAMISCC) is an advocacy group whose primary focus is advocating for individuals suffering from severe mental health conditions, and providing support to families seeking services and treatment for a loved one.[100] In their role as advocate, NAMISCC heard frequently from families regarding their deep dissatisfaction with the lack of treatment available for the mentally ill in the community.[101]

In 2017, in response to these complaints, NAMISCC developed an Acute Crisis Services Task Force.[102] The Task Force specifically focused on the Crisis Stabilization Program at Telecare. NAMISCC did a deep dive into the history of County and private hospital closures, funding stream changes, and policy changes that shifted care from the State into the hands of the County. Throughout the report NAMISCC points to the severe lack of mental health beds and services, and concludes Santa Cruz County is seen as having "a range of different levels of care, but the capacity is insufficient at most levels of care."[103] The report states the insufficiency is "due to a lack of options for development of new housing beds."[104] This lack of beds creates pressure to move patients out quickly, avoid admissions to the hospital, and to stick to the "prevailing philosophy" that hospitalization should be avoided.[105] This mental health bed deficit leads to one-third of Crisis Stabilization Program patients who are determined to need hospitalization, being sent out of the County to other locked facilities[106] which requires

door to door transportation by ambulance.[107] Placing Santa Cruz County mental health patients outside of the County creates a greater financial burden on the County and exacerbates the burden on the individual's family.

The NAMISCC report stated that:

> One truth that independent analysts, county mental health directors, and others seem to fully agree on is that the funding necessary to provide enough capacity and flexibility to meet individual patient needs from inpatient care to community outpatient services has not been sufficient. This is especially true in regards to housing needs – it is an incredibly difficult process for an individual with a serious mental illness and chronic homelessness to achieve recovery, absent a pathway to affordable and supported housing.[108]

A Step in the Right Direction

Expanding Existing Services

Of note, in December 2019, South County Behavioral Health was opened in Watsonville. This new facility took the place of a much smaller facility and brought expanded services to the community.[109] This 13,500 square-foot facility offers ambulatory (walk-in) services. Some of the services provided by the facility include: "SUD services, walk-in crisis help, occupational therapy services, a team for transition-age youth and older adults, and other health services."[110]

The opening of the new South County Behavioral Health facility is a step in the right direction; however, much more capacity is still needed in the County for mental health services, and specifically in the area of inpatient facilities as detailed above. Santa Cruz County should also look to build strong regional partnerships to create additional mental health and SUD treatment beds outside of the County. And, as detailed in the Under Utilized Resources section of this report, Santa Cruz County should also look at under utilized properties, such as the SCCO Juvenile Hall, to create space for treatment facilities and supportive housing.

Creating Housing

The Santa Cruz County BOS, in November 2019, voted to approve an affordable housing project in Live Oak. This development, which will be located at 17th Avenue and Capitola Road, will have 57 low rent apartments. There will also be an 11,000 square-foot dental clinic operated by low income dental provider Dientes Community Dental, and Santa Cruz Community Health Centers will operate an 18,000 square-foot medical clinic on the property as well. This development will combine low income housing and services.[111]

The Grand Jury commends the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors for these significant steps, but also realizes that neither of the projects directly addresses the immediate problem of homelessness. While these are important steps in the right direction, more needs to be done.

Drain on Emergency Personnel

The lack of services for the homeless has an impact, not only on the homeless, but also on the institutions and the personnel providing emergency and crisis services throughout the community as detailed below and throughout this report.

The Grand Jury heard from witnesses that one of the most impacted providers of emergency services, by the homeless crisis, is law enforcement, and in the City of Santa Cruz, a majority of the calls that the police department responds to, are related to homelessness. One witness in law enforcement described the impact as a "drip, drip, drip that leads to a PTSD effect" on officers which leads to an impact on moral and officer recruitment and retention.

In 2019, mental health cases accounted for one third of the bookings into the Santa Cruz Main Jail and contributed significantly to the overcrowding.[112]

The 2017 NAMISCC report acknowledged the large role law enforcement plays in crisis management for some mentally ill individuals and their families. They noted:

> *They are active participants in assisting our families, and have shared that they experience similar difficulties with shortage of crisis services, lack of beds, etc.*[113]

SCCO Sheriff Jim Hart has shared his concerns publicly. In January 2019, his deputies responded to 293 calls regarding "emotionally distressed" individuals in the unincorporated areas of Santa Cruz County, (this does not include cities), and most of those calls involved substance abuse. As Sheriff Hart describes it, "drug and alcohol abuse are so interwoven with behavioral health cases, there is no easy distinction for deputies."[114] Mental health, substance abuse, and the criminal justice system go hand in hand. The Grand Jury heard testimony from other law enforcement, City, and County officials, and County stakeholders, confirming mental illness, drug addiction, and homelessness are being criminalized because there is a lack of resources to treat these individuals appropriately. Families often call 911 as a last resort to seek help for a family member who is in crisis, and 911 is often called for those on the street who are in a crisis mode. The lack of resources, and the utilization of the emergency response system as the alternative, has required law enforcement and correction officers to step into the role of social worker. This is a nationwide problem that has led to local and national law enforcement agencies requiring officers to undergo training to learn how to deescalate tense situations that might involve mentally ill or intoxicated individuals.[115] [116]

The Grand Jury has concluded that the County should seek ways to take this burden off the County's law enforcement and corrections officers. Even if officers have been provided de-escalation training, they are not professional mental health workers; thus they lack the resources to assist individuals who are in crisis due to homelessness, addiction, mental health issues, or at times all three. These issues should be treated like the social, psychiatric, and medical conditions they are. The Grand Jury believes the County should look to our neighbors in the North for a solution.

CAHOOTS (Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Streets)[117] is a mobile crisis intervention team that operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in Springfield and Eugene, Oregon (the two largest cities in Lane County, Oregon). The crisis team is dispatched "through the Eugene police-fire-ambulance communication center" as well as through a non-emergency number. The CAHOOTS team consists of a "medic" or nurse and a crisis worker who is an experienced mental health worker. "This team responds to calls that do not appear to be related to legal issues or threats of violence. CAHOOTS provides immediate stabilization in case of urgent medical need or psychological crisis."[118] Services include: crisis counseling, suicide prevention, substance abuse services, housing crisis services, resource connection and referrals, advocacy and "(in some cases) transportation to the next step in treatment."[119]

CAHOOTS costs Lane County $2.1 million annually. But crisis workers estimate there is "over $15 million a year in cost savings, both through our ER diversion, through picking up calls that would otherwise have to be handled by law enforcement or EMS - a more expensive response." CAHOOTS' crisis workers stated that out of roughly 24,000 calls in the last year (2019) they only had to escalate and call in law enforcement 150 times.[120]

The Grand Jury believes a program in our county, such as CAHOOTS, would be beneficial to those receiving its services, as well as the County's law enforcement and medical personnel. The BOS should work with City and the County law enforcement agencies to identify funding in their budgets, and launch a program similar to CAHOOTS to reduce the overall costs of homelessness to the County.

Mental health, substance abuse, incarceration, and chronic homelessness have a large impact on public cost. (See Figure 5.) When homeless individuals are discharged from jails and hospitals, they are usually not provided with the care and services needed to prevent another series of medical, psychiatric, or social crises. They are also not given the resources needed to make the changes that would interrupt the use of acute care services and detention facilities as primary care providers.[121] The County does not collect similar information as provided in Figure 5, but the Grand Jury assumes a similar usage of our EMS, healthcare facilities, and County jail creates a significant financial burden on the County of Santa Cruz and the Cities. And, as mentioned above, it takes a significant toll on our emergency personnel.

Attempting to track the expenses to the County for emergency services related to homelessness is challenging because, as mentioned, this data is not collected in the County. Research from Santa Clara County indicates that among their homeless population over 25% used the emergency room; 17% used mental health services; 14% were hospital inpatients; 13% used drug and alcohol rehabilitation services; and 6% used emergency psychiatric services.[122] Outpatient healthcare services were the most commonly used services by the homeless as shown in the research conducted in Santa Clara County.[123] The Economic Roundtable chart below breaks down the annual financial cost of homelessness in Santa Clara County (2007-2012).[124]
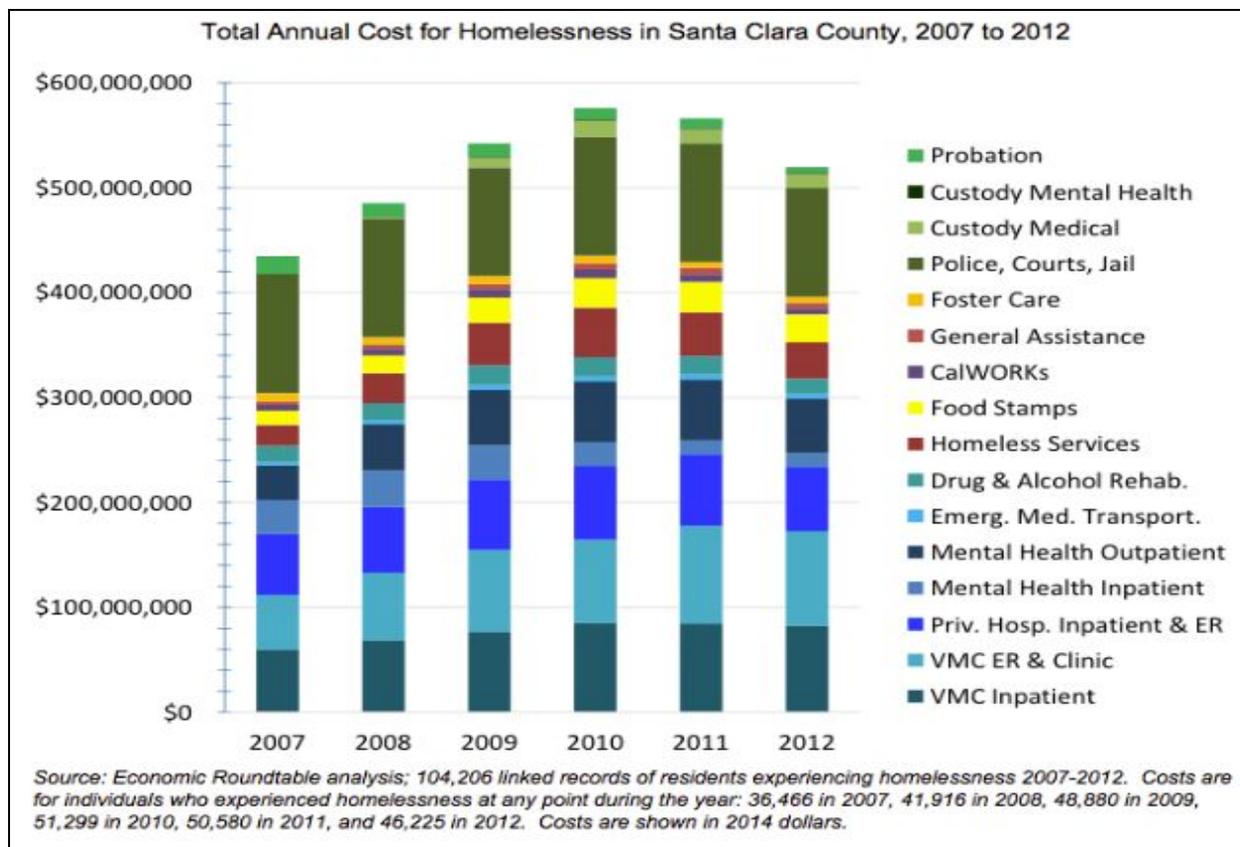
Figure 5. **Santa Clara County Cost of Homelessness, 2007–2012**[125]

It is reasonable to assume that Santa Cruz County expenses would be relatively similar, and that a large financial burden is placed on a variety of County agencies and stakeholders. When Santa Cruz County has the ability to effectively track this financial burden, the County will be better able to allocate resources more efficiently, and measure progress.

Providing Assistance When and Where Needed

The Grand Jury heard testimony about individuals who sought treatment but were unable to receive it when they were ready. One such example was a homeless woman seeking treatment on a Thursday, and being told to come back on Monday because the County did not have the resources available at the time. By Monday the opportunity to get her treatment was lost because she could not be located. We heard the frustration from the agencies seeking to help individuals, but often finding there were no services available.

The Grand Jury believes if the County broke down the silos between Santa Cruz and other counties, and expanded contracts to allow more individuals to be treated outside of our county, more services would be available when needed. Ideally, there would be an emergency case manager or team to respond to emergency calls from individuals on the street who wanted help getting into a mental health or SUD treatment facility, and there would actually be someplace for them to go.

Surrounding the Vulnerable with Support

Case Management

Case managers assist homeless individuals, and families at risk of becoming homeless. They provide assistance in acquiring the skills and resources necessary to access medical, mental health, housing, employment, and educational resources. Case managers can assist with accessing County services and obtaining critical documents such as a Social Security card, drivers license, or birth certificate. Case managers also assist with preventative services. These resources are an essential element in preventing homelessness and helping the existing homeless, especially the chronically homeless, to achieve and maintain stability.[126]

Santa Cruz County should allocate the funding and resources necessary to ensure case managers are available to help all individuals in need, and to provide extended services to those identified by the County as high needs individuals. Case managers providing long term supportive services can help identify issues and implement problem-solving solutions, before housing becomes at risk. Based on testimony and research cited throughout this report, the Grand Jury believes the investment in case managers would not only benefit the homeless individuals, but would minimize the chance the County would need to spend resources on re-housing.

Permanent Supportive Housing

The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness defines Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) as housing that:

> *links decent, safe, affordable, community-based housing with flexible, voluntary support services designed to help the individual or family stay housed and live a more dignified and productive life in the community. There is no time limitation, and tenants may live in their homes as long as they meet the basic requirements of tenancy. While participation in services is encouraged, it is not a condition of living in housing. Housing affordability is ensured either through a rent subsidy or by setting rents at affordable levels.*[127]

Unfortunately, witness testimony and research indicates that in SCCO there is a severe shortage of PSH and case managers. Witnesses also stated that oftentimes case managers were unavailable at shelters and navigation centers when needed to assist with housing needs.

In 2012, the Homeless Services Center (now Housing Matters) began the 180/180 initiative[128] in collaboration with other nonprofits and the County. The goal was to house 180 of the most vulnerable homeless individuals and assist them in creating a 180 degree change in their lives. By July, 2014, the successful initiative led to 200 people housed and the creation of the 180/2020 initiative.[129] According to witness testimony and research, as of April 2020, this program had housed 950 people, with at least 350 individuals permanently housed.

The 180/2020 initiative was also instrumental in working with the Santa Cruz Housing Authority to create the Disabled and Medically Vulnerable (DMC) Program, a program meant to rapidly house the most vulnerable homeless population using housing vouchers.[130] This program provides up to 120 vouchers on a rolling basis and allows those who are eligible to bypass the usual Section 8 waiting list.[131]

The Grand Jury received testimony, from multiple witnesses, that described housing and service programs that were working successfully, but were lacking in number and supportive services. In addition to a limited number of vouchers, housing options, and case managers, witnesses testified to problems related to supportive services that ended after a year. For some individuals, terminating services too soon allows problems, such as drug and alcohol relapses, to go unnoticed until housing is at risk or lost, and leads to individuals having to be rehoused multiple times. This results in an ineffective use of resources.

Shelter Shortage

Shelters are temporary emergency solutions for families and individuals that are intended to provide relief from an immediate crisis. Shelters provide protection and safety from the elements of living outdoors and on the streets. The 2019 Focus Strategies report identified a total of 439 shelter beds currently available in the County, down from 481 in 2015 (Figure 6).[132] Of the 439 beds identified, only 279 have year round capacity. The other 160 beds are seasonal beds, thus only available during the winter months.[133]

	Total Capacity 2019 HIC (Beds)	Total Capacity 2018 HIC (Beds)	Total Capacity 2017 HIC (Beds)	Total Capacity 2016 HIC (Beds)	Total Capacity 2015 HIC (Beds)
Emergency Shelter	439	435	387	475	481

Figure 6. **Emergency shelter capacity**[134]

The Grand Jury heard testimony and reviewed evidence that confirms SCCO has a significant lack of shelter beds. On January 31, 2019, when the PIT Count was conducted, only 22% of homeless individuals were sheltered.[135] Given the sheltered population in 2009 was 32% and in 2019 it was 22%, it is clear that in 10 years no significant progress has been made in increasing the number of homeless individuals residing in shelters.[136] (See Figure 7.)

2009 n= 2,265; 2011 n= 2,771; 2013 n= 3,536; 2015 n= 1,964; 2017 n=2,249; 2019 n=2,167

Note: The Grand Jury noticed that the 2009 bar does not sum to 100%.
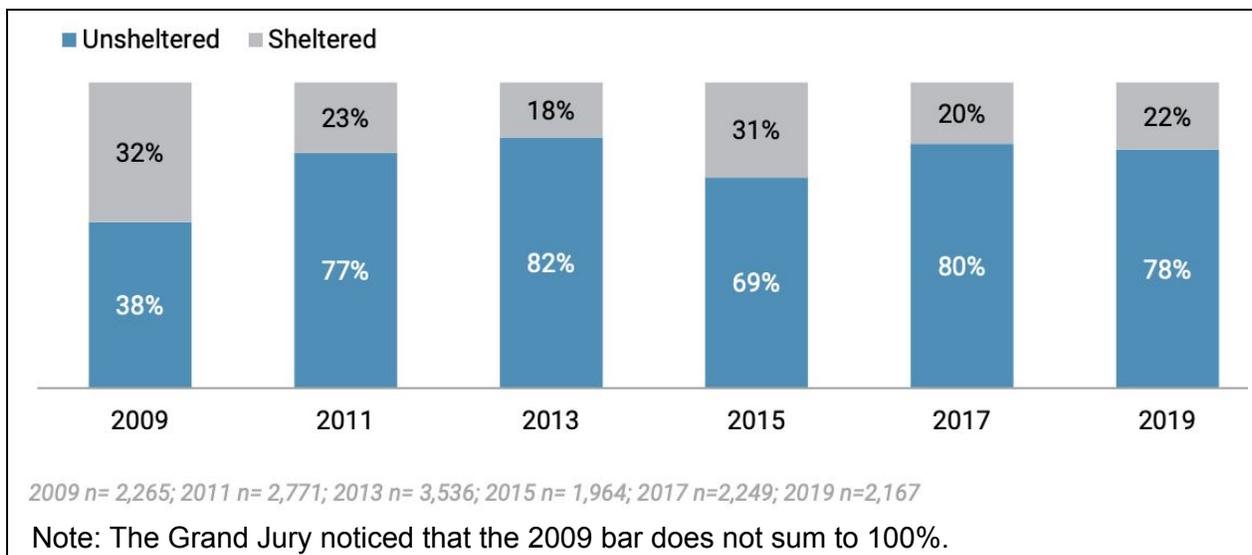
Figure 7. **Total Homeless Population by Shelter Status**[137]

Asking the Question

If Santa Cruz County has only enough shelter beds to house 22% of the homeless population (Figure 7), where are these individuals supposed to go? This becomes an even more pressing question when the emergency winter shelters are closed and the capacity to shelter the homeless drops even further.

Diversion and Prevention Programs

Diversion and prevention programs can be local, state, federal, and/or nonprofit programs designed to help individuals who are at risk of falling into homelessness. These programs offer assistance with emergency rental payments, eviction defense, rental deposits, and utility bill payments for those at risk of losing housing, and rapid re-housing for those newly homeless.[138]

The Focus Strategies Report assessed the County's prevention and diversions options:

> *The community lacks a strong and fully integrated diversion/problem-solving practice that deploys problem-solving as an important tool to be used at multiple touchpoints in the community. Diversion/problem-solving is an intervention that can work with people seeking assistance to help some identify immediate alternatives and reduce the inflow of people into homelessness.*[139]

The research performed by this Grand Jury supports the findings of Focus Strategies and agrees that more emphasis should be placed on increasing the resources allocated to diversion programs.

CalMatters describes the problem of homelessnes as complex and difficult "with options that range, at best, from imperfect to limited."[140] Many of the options identified were described as being expensive to build, taking a long time to implement, and lacking in

political will.[141] Prevention did **not** suffer from any of those shortcomings. Rather, prevention was rated as an inexpensive option that could be implemented quickly, and one that enjoys strong political will.[142] Santa Cruz County currently provides funding to nonprofits such as the Community Action Board (CAB),[143] Families in Transition (FIT), and the Housing Authority (HA).[144]

The HA offers rental deposit assistance equal to one month's rent in the cities of Santa Cruz and Capitola where the assistance is considered a loan, and in unincorporated Santa Cruz County where it is provided via a grant.[145] All HA assistance is income dependent and is based on area median income (AMI). In Santa Cruz County AMI is $98,000 (2019). To qualify for HA rental deposit assistance in Capitola, the applicant's AMI must be at or below 80% ($78,400), and in the City of Santa Cruz, AMI must be at or below 60% ($58,800). In unincorporated Santa Cruz County, AMI must be at or below 50% ($49,000), and applicants must also be homeless, or in danger of becoming homeless.[146]

Rapid Rehousing

Rapid rehousing is a targeted intervention and rent subsidy program that assists newly homeless individuals and families. The program provides short term case management services, assistance in the procurement of housing in the community, and rent subsidies. This program can help prevent individuals and families from falling into long term homelessness, needing shelter beds, or becoming unsheltered. Although SCCO increased the number of rapid rehousing beds from 131 in 2015 to 204 in 2019, witnesses stated that this amount is still insufficient. Without data to understand the extent of the need, it is difficult to propose the needed number of additional beds.[147]

Based on the 2019 PIT Count,[148] 40% of homeless individuals self-identified as being homeless for the first time, suggesting Santa Cruz County could do more in the area of Diversion and Prevention and Rapid Rehousing.

Barriers to Providing Support

Case managers can only do so much without adequate housing for those they support. It is evident from research and witness testimony that the County of Santa Cruz and Cities must provide more shelter, housing, and services for the homeless. Many interviewees spoke to the challenge of housing the homeless, and specifically the chronically homeless.

No to Shelter, Yes to Housing

The Grand Jury asked multiple witnesses about the chronically homeless, and those we often read and hear about who are unwilling to go to shelters. We were told that while these individuals would say "no" to a shelter bed, most would say "yes" to housing. Witnesses identified the "3 P's" – possessions, pets, and partners, and not being able to bring them into a shelter, as the most common reason given for not wanting to enter a homeless shelter.[149] Sadly, for women, it is often a fear of violence that prevents them from accepting a bed in a shelter. Domestic violence is the leading cause of

homelessness for women, and homeless women are more likely to be, or have been, victims of violent physical and sexual assaults than women who are housed.[150]

Creating Space

The often cited barrier to building housing and creating space for homeless projects are the lack of space and land. Many homeless people congregate on and around Coral Street in Santa Cruz, where Housing Matters and the County offer many of the County's homeless services. The Grand Jury believes that Coral Street is an ideal location for the City and County of Santa Cruz to collaborate with Housing Matters to create additional housing and services. This could be accomplished by permanently closing Coral Street to through traffic and building structures that are relatively inexpensive and easy to construct, for example, tiny homes (which are typically 600 square feet or less).

Thinking Outside of the Box to Build Homes - Innovative Housing Alternatives

CalMatters rated tiny home communities and cabin communities, built using "tough shed structures," as being relatively inexpensive and quick to build.[151]

Oakland has created 4 such communities containing 20 cabins, each capable of housing two individuals. Each cabin has an estimated building cost of $5,000 per unit and annual operational cost of $21,250.[152] In addition to housing, these communities provide meals, case managers, and supportive services.[153]

Many Grand Jury witnesses agreed that tiny home communities would be an innovative and creative idea. Such a community could be useful in serving those who are more challenging to house and need more intensive support. Tiny home communities vary in size and population, e.g., Hope Village[154] in Oregon, Betty's Blue Angel Village[155] in Eureka, California, and Community First Village[156] in Texas. These tiny home communities can also be used as transitional programs that bridge into permanent housing.

Sacramento Mayor Darrell Steinberg, who leads the California state commission focused on the state's homeless crisis has stated that, "*cities will never produce the volume of affordable housing needed by subsidizing only standard-sized apartments*."[157] The Mayor is calling on the City of Sacramento to make a $30 million investment into the rapid expansion of tiny homes.[158]

In February 2020 the City of San Jose opened the doors to their first tiny home community. The forty-unit transitional housing community will house up to 80 individuals.[159] Residents comply with stringent criteria and a thorough background check. They are expected to work toward meeting the goal of permanent housing, and must pay a percentage of their income toward rent.[160] San Jose has another 40 unit tiny home community slated to open in the summer of 2020, and in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic has committed to building an additional 500 units to house the homeless in their community.[161] Tiny homes can be an attractive housing option as they tend to be less expensive and faster to build than multi story facilities.

CalMatters puts the upfront cost for building apartment structures at hundreds of thousands of dollars.[162] Cabin communities (total building cost of $5,000/unit), like tiny homes, trailers, and low cost projects are a very reasonable alternative.[163] Two features that make these alternatives great options for our County are their small size, and the fact that some are built on wheels and can be moved from location to location as needed. (See Figure 8.)

Conestoga Huts, Walla Walla, WA[164]

Whittier Heights Village, Seattle, WA[165]

Georgetown Tiny House Village, WA[166]

Betty's Blue Angel Village, Eureka, CA[167]

Tuff Shed community, Oakland, CA[168]

Tiny Home Community, San Jose, CA[169]

Figure 8. **Tiny House Examples**

It Takes a Village and a Community

Santa Cruz County and Cities' agencies and our community members should look to Humboldt resident and homeless advocate Betty Chinn for inspiration when tackling the issue of homlessness. Ms. Chinn immigrated to the United States as an orphaned child from China after surviving the Cultural Revolution, living homeless on the streets and having to search for food in a local dump. After immigrating she eventually found herself married, with children, and living in Humboldt County. Spotting signs of homelessness within her children's school, she started providing services in the form of blankets and meals to the students and families at the school, but she did not stop there. Recognizing community-wide issues she built her services up one step at a time using her own money and community donations. Ms. Chinn credits the community with the success of her mission and makes the case that it really does take a village to solve the issue of homelessness. As stated on the nonprofit's website:

> As Betty likes to say, she is the 'middle man,' simply helping people realize the joy of giving and making sure everyone gets what they need. At a time of increasing need, the community is coming together to sustain Betty's growing endeavor. When Betty takes on a new project, contractors volunteer their services, businesses donate supplies and people line up to help. Community members offer their time to help cook, while others sort clothes, pick up donations, organize events, and more. Over the last decade, Betty's mission has become a community mission.[170]

The Betty Kwan Chinn Foundation now consists of many services and programs: showers, a day center, a 32-bed family shelter, and a tiny home village.[171]

Betty's Blue Angel Village is a tiny home transitional living community. The tiny homes were constructed from Conex shipping containers that were retrofitted into double bedrooms,[172] and the Village now houses up to 40 people.[173] This 90-day program helps to restore self-worth, dignity, and offer a sense of community, while providing supportive services and helping homeless individuals save money, get into stable housing, and receive other services needed to stabilize their lives.[174]

The Grand Jury believes that SCCO needs a "Betty Chinn." It is our hope that Santa Cruz County will step up or engage someone who is capable of being that person. In addition, we believe, and heard from many witnesses, that SCCO would benefit from small permanent and transition communities similar to Betty's Blue Angel Village, located throughout the County. We also heard testimony that, much like safe parking programs which are peer managed, PSH communities could be quite successful if they too were peer managed.

ADUs (Accessory Dwelling Units)

The Urban Institute found that in the United States for every 100 very low income households there are only 29 affordable housing units, and for a family of 4, where both parents are earning minimum wage, it could take years to get into an affordable home.[175]

The lack of affordable housing in Santa Cruz County significantly affects the homeless.[176] With the extreme need for more affordable housing, increasing the number of ADUs would add to the housing inventory and potentially provide more low income housing, keeping more individuals from entering homelessness.

There are new financial building incentives from the County of Santa Cruz, such as reduced or waived permit fees and the Forgivable Loan Program for homeowners to build ADUs.[177] Homeowners with ADUs should be encouraged to participate in the rental program offered by the Santa Cruz County Housing Authority. Under this program, landlords are paid a market rate amount of rent if their property is part of the Section 8 Program housing pool.[178]

In January 2020 California housing law AB 68 passed calling for changes to the Building Codes of ADUs.[179] These changes include faster approval processing times and the relaxing of certain building restrictions or requirements. Cities such as San Jose have embraced the need for the development of ADUs for affordable housing by rethinking their approach and system. Their Planning Department streamlined their systems and services,[180] which is showcased in their user-friendly Planning, Building and Code Enforcement website.(See Figure 9.)
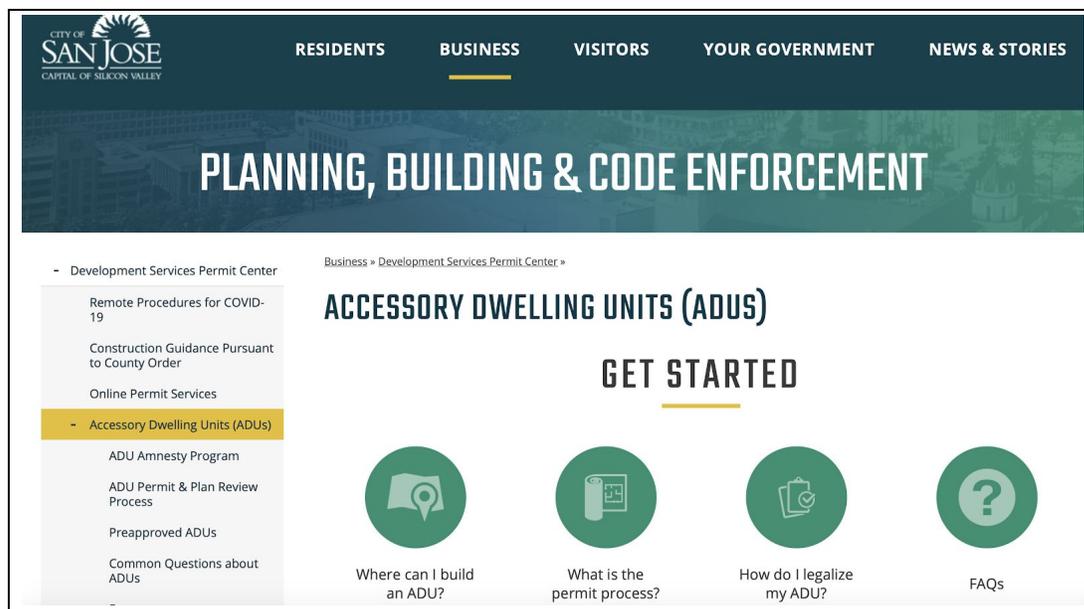
Figure 9. **San Jose City ADU Website**[181]

San Jose's approach is to provide financial incentives and support to those persons interested in building affordable housing on their private property. Their website lists pre-approved vendors for faster plan approval, financial incentives such as forgivable loans and "ADU Tuesdays" to help prospective owners fast track through the permit process.[182]

The SCCO Planning Department ADU website also highlights many changes to the building requirements to comply with AB 68, along with waived or reduced fees and forgivable loans of up to $40,000 for owners agreeing to rent to low income renters.[183]

However, the website is not user friendly,[184] and would benefit from a redesign to clarify services and resources. (See Figure 10.) The County of Santa Cruz Planning Department should consider offering a version of San Jose's "ADU Tuesdays"[185] to help prospective owners fast track through the permit process.
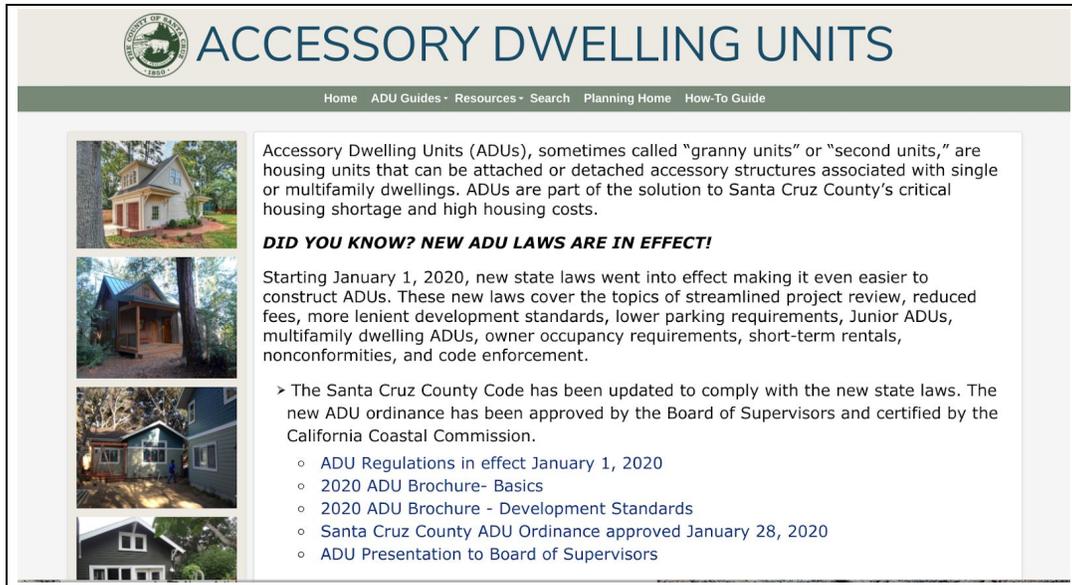

Figure 10. **Santa Cruz County ADU Website**[186]

It's A Win-Win

Rountree Detention Facility in Santa Cruz County offers a variety of skills classes to inmates.[187] On a recent Grand Jury tour of the facility, jurors learned that inmates assemble small home-like structures in one of these classes. As an option, to create more housing and possibly ADUs, the Grand Jury suggests the SCCO Sheriff utilize the Rountree Jail's skills classes to build structures that could assist in housing the homeless population. Such a program could be a win-win by improving the skills of inmates and building much needed housing for the county.

It Can Be Done

While some Santa Cruz County and City officials were quick to throw out the standard, "It can't be done," "There is nowhere to build," and other excuses, many were in favor of these outside of the box solutions and several identified land where PSH and tiny home communities could be built if there was the political and community will to support these solutions. Interviewees from nonprofit organizations and FBOs were very enthusiastic and the Grand Jury heard testimony that some nonprofit organizations in SCCO have either looked at and/or have implemented some variation of some of these options. From the FBOs and nonprofits, the Grand Jury heard a willingness to partner with the County on these projects.

As outlined above, other communities have been able to implement successful alternative housing options. The Grand Jury believes some of these could be viable options for SCCO, and should be implemented in scales that are appropriate.

Utilization of Existing Resources

The County of Santa Cruz is rich with resources; the key is to more effectively utilize what is available.

Underutilized Parking Lots

Looking around Santa Cruz County, one cannot help but notice there are many parking lots that sit almost entirely empty overnight, with parking forbidden. These lots could provide a safe place to sleep for people living in their vehicles, offering an alternative to parking in residential neighborhoods, where there are no accommodations for security or sanitary facilities. Overnight parking in neighborhoods generates antagonism and opposition to the homeless when what is needed is understanding and community support for programs designed to resolve problems related to homelessness.[188]

Select County and City owned parking lots would be logical locations for safe parking programs for homeless individuals living in their vehicles. Portable toilets, hand washing stations, and showers could be made available and safely provided. Success of such arrangements, like those run by the Association of Faith Communities (AFC), involve vetting of participants and providing supervision.[189] In addition to the AFC Safe Spaces, witness testimony stated the Santa Cruz City Police Department provides an overnight parking program for three vehicles on a nightly basis in their downtown parking area. Increased flexibility in the planning and permitting process by Cities and the County could assist FBOs to more effectively utilize parking resources available to them. Limits imposed on the numbers of vehicles allowed to park overnight in parking lots, should be reasonable and not so restrictive as to be prohibitive.

College campus parking

The impact and costs to Santa Cruz caused by UCSC on-campus housing shortages is widely acknowledged and is part of the ongoing crisis of local homelessness.[190] Providing appropriate accommodation for students living in vehicles would address a small part of the University's burden on the community at large.

Overnight parking is prohibited on both UCSC and Cabrillo College campuses. Students attempting to sleep in their vehicles on the UCSC campus are rousted and forced to move off campus to sleep in residential and business neighborhoods. The situation has become so dire a group of students calling themselves the "Snail Movement" have been in discussion with UCSC officials to design a safe parking program on campus.[191] In addition, in an attempt to mandate safe parking programs on community colleges such as Cabrillo, a bill introduced in the California legislature, AB 302, states:

> *If a community college campus has parking facilities on campus, the governing board of the community college district shall grant overnight access to those facilities to any homeless student for the purpose of sleeping in the student's vehicle overnight, provided that the student is enrolled in coursework, has paid enrollment fees if not waived, and is in good standing with the community college district without requiring the student to enroll in additional courses.*[192]

Note: A number of amendments were added to the bill as it was being reviewed by the California legislators, and as of the printing of this report, AB 302 was, "Ordered to inactive file at the request of Senator Hill."[193] However, should AB 302 pass at some point, more parking for students on community college campuses would go far in helping alleviate the problem, at least temporarily.

College campuses spend funding on enforcement personnel to remove students who are sleeping in their vehicles. A better utilization of these resources might be to create a peer monitored safe parking program that provides sanitation facilities such as showers and portable restrooms. Although a temporary and hopefully short term solution, and no substitution for true housing, safe parking is preferable to no safe overnight parking when those are the only two choices.

Santa Cruz County and Cities should work in cooperation with our local colleges, emphasizing the need for them to commit to participating in creating solutions such as safe parking programs for the short term and more affordable student housing in the longer term.

"Land, They're Not Making Any More Of It"

The lack of land on which to place shelters or permanent housing for the homeless was stated as a problem by multiple witnesses. It is true that land is scarce; however, the Grand Jury, through a document request, obtained a listing of several hundred County owned vacant or undeveloped parcels (not including City owned parcels). Attempting to identify parcels that might be utilized for building tiny home communities, temporary housing or more permanent supportive housing is outside the expertise of this Grand Jury.

The parcel shown in Figure 11 was utilized following the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake.[194] This lot held 43 3-bedroom trailers that were supplied to the County by FEMA (Federal Emergency Response Agency) for a term of sixteen months.[195] Families lived in the trailers until they found housing, or until FEMA reclaimed the trailers. Those living in trailers when they were reclaimed were given temporary housing and housing vouchers.[196]

This is one example of open land that the Grand Jury believes should be considered for a tiny home community or other temporary or permanent housing. It should be noted, multiple "FEMA parks" were opened following the Loma Prieta Earthquake, but the Grand Jury only evaluated this one location.

The Grand Jury encourages all city and county planning departments to analyze vacant and/or undeveloped land within their jurisdictions to identify parcels that could be utilized to build shelter for the homeless.

Figure 11. **Google Map showing vacant land adjacent to the County Government Mental Health Building, at 1430 Freedom Blvd, Watsonville.**[197]

Who's Not Sleeping In Those Beds?

Every year the Grand Jury is required to inspect the detention facilities in Santa Cruz County, and in January 2020, the Grand Jury inspected the Santa Cruz County Juvenile Hall in Felton. During that inspection the Grand Jury discovered the SCCO Juvenile Hall is following the state wide trend of lower youth incarceration rates.[198] In California the youth crime rate has decreased so dramatically that from the first quarter of 2018 to the first quarter of 2019 the bookings in California Juvenile Halls decreased by 11%.[199] In March 2019, 70% of California juvenile detention beds were unoccupied.[200] This has led to other counties consolidating, closing, and reconsidering the future of their juvenile facilities.[201] [202] [203]

On the day the Grand Jury inspected the SCCO Juvenile Hall, the staff provided the Grand Jury with details about the facility, staff, and inmates. The Grand Jury learned that at the time of the inspection, there were 10 youth incarcerated, with 22 full time staff and 16 additional on-call staff to support the facility. The Grand Jury also learned the average number of youth incarceration at the SCCO Juvenile Hall is 15 per day, and in addition, the facility supports roughly 300 youth receiving probation services.[204]

With a budget of nearly $5,000,000,[205] a large facility with very low usage, and the trend toward consolidating juvenile halls and even closing them down, the Grand Jury suggests the County consider transitioning the use of SCCO Juvenile Hall and the surrounding property into a treatment and multi-faceted supportive services center for homeless individuals (Figure 12). The Grand Jury believes this would be a better use of resources and more appropriate than using the County Jail to house addicted and mentally ill individuals.
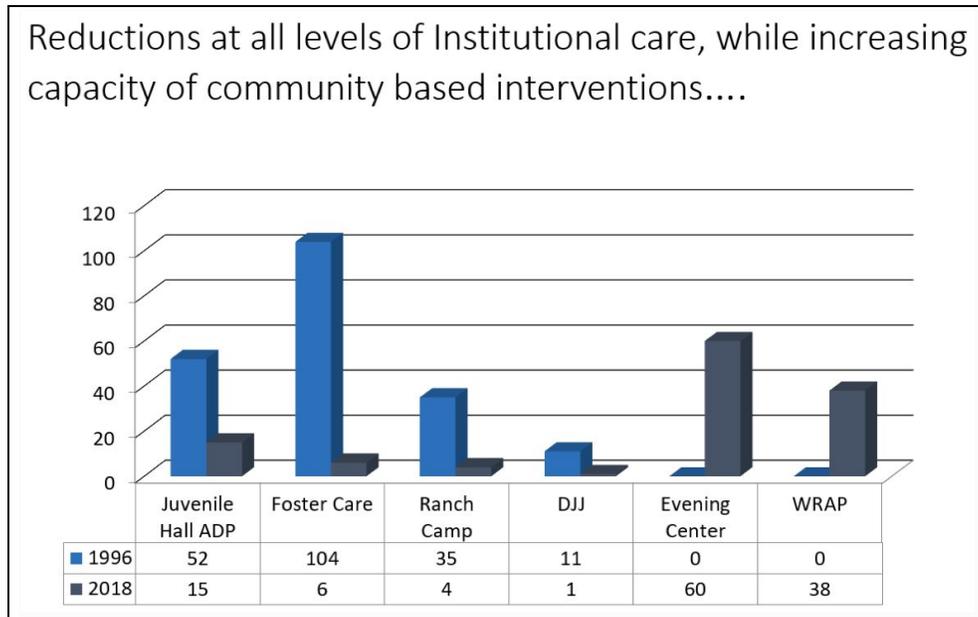
Figure 12. **SCCO 2018 Juvenile Probation Report, page 5**[206]

Engaging the Business Community

Santa Cruz County is filled with creative, talented people who should be invited to help develop successful solutions to homelessness. Witness testimony stated there is virtually no outreach performed to encourage local businesses to engage in solving the homeless problem. Outreach to the Santa Cruz County Chamber of Commerce, and the Santa Cruz Cities' Chambers of Commerce, would be a good place to start as many of the County's innovative thinkers are not currently seated at the table. There are a variety of businesses, such as those in construction, marketing, and data sciences that should be encouraged to add to or increase their participation in homeless solutions in the community. In failing to engage with local businesses, our City and County leaders squander the opportunity to learn from and leverage this valuable local resource.

Faith-based Organizations

SCCO has a large faith-based community and many of the FBO are doing admirable work to help the homeless in their communities, but testimony from witnesses made it clear that the County's FBOs are an underutilized resource in the community. Witnesses also testified to the power of the church in the community and the impact and influence faith leaders can have on their congregations. When members of the faith community were asked if that influence could include garnering support for local homeless projects and getting congregants onboard to donate time, services, land, and money to build projects such as tiny homes to house the homeless, the answer was a resounding yes. The Grand Jury was surprised to learn, through witness testimony, that one of the County's largest FBOs allocates only 17% of their outreach funding for local outreach projects. However, an official from this FBO stated more support could and would be provided if asked.

The Grand Jury was further surprised to discover the one organization that is trying to bring together the FBOs in an organized fashion is a small nonprofit operating with limited resources and support. According to witness testimony, the AFC is an organization with a small staff and base of volunteers.[207]

AFC was awarded grants totaling $685,642 from HAP in 2019 and did the best they could with the resources they had at the time. (See Appendix A.) The Grand Jury heard testimony that AFC felt ill prepared to receive the large grant because they did not have the infrastructure in place to support the large grant, and they did not feel adequately supported by the County. It is worth noting the similar testimony, mentioned earlier in this report, that HAP also felt ill-prepared to receive the 2019 $10 million grant because of a lack of organizational infrastructure.

The Grand Jury also heard testimony that if given adequate resources and funding, AFC possesses the knowledge and skills to help the County establish the foundation of permanent supportive housing communities throughout the County.

Other California cities and counties, recognizing the value of the FBOs, have formed collaborations. The City of Riverside in Southern California, held a Faith Summit to bring together many of their community FBOs and created the "Love Thy Neighbor" Initiative.[208] San Diego formed the Interfaith Shelter Network: 70 FBOs that provide shelter and services to homeless individuals utilizing 4,000 volunteers per year to provide those services, working in partnership with San Diego County.[209]

FBOs services complement those of governmental agencies and having a group of faith leaders to help guide solutions will be a valuable resource at the table and in the community.

Santa Cruz County and Cities should include FBOs in homeless solutions by creating a Countywide team to reach out to the leaders in our faith-based communities. Outreach to these organizations should include planning a retreat where ideas for solutions and

collaboration can be shared, and the work on building a partnership between the County, Cities, and FBOs can begin.

Ashley Fischer said it best in her 2017 article:

> *FBO homeless ministries are at the forefront of program innovation and organizational transformation for improving positive outcomes for the homeless individuals and families served. Partnering with their local communities and sometimes government, faith-based organizations are often able to work toward effectively treating the issue of homelessness because they recognize humans as spiritual and relational beings, in addition to beings with material needs. According to this case study,[210] faith-based organizations provide 60% of the emergency shelter beds for the homeless population in America. Faith-based organizations' unique capacity to identify the interdependence of spiritual, physical, relational, mental-health, and vocational well-being has, sadly, often been overlooked.[211]*

Data Collection and Analysis Tools Required

Challenges to Accurate Data and Reporting

As mentioned, based on the PIT Count Survey, Santa Cruz County has 2,167 homeless individuals.[212] Multiple witnesses testified that these counts are not accurate and only reflect a percentage of the homeless population, and that the extent of the homeless population in our County remains difficult to verify.

The high cost of rent in Santa Cruz County leads to a severe shortage of affordable housing. As a result, many homeless families and individuals end up:
- "Doubled up"
- "Couch surfing"
- Living in their vehicles
- Camping in remote areas
- Living in motels or hotels

These individuals are under-counted in the PIT Count as they do not technically qualify as homeless due to HUDs limited definition of homelessness, as described earlier.

Counting the Students

Another significantly under-counted population appears to be homeless students. While the SCCO 2019 PIT Count states 303 (14%) of the homeless counted were under the age of 18, data from the Santa Cruz County Office of Education tells a different story.[213] (See Table 4.)

Under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, schools in the United States identify homeless students based on a broader definition of homelessness than the definition used by HUD.[214] This federal law requires each state to come up with a plan on how to give homeless children the same access and opportunity as housed children

to achieve the state's academic standards.[215] As can be seen in the chart below, the number of homeless students, especially those "doubled-up," is significant, far more than the 303 homeless youth identified in the PIT Count survey.

The McKinney-Vento Act does provide some federal funding to states. The funds are targeted for homeless students "for the purpose of facilitating the identification, enrollment, attendance, and success in school of homeless children and youths."[216] Funds may only be used to benefit homeless students and for very specific purposes such as extra-curricular activities, academic enrichment classes, and school uniforms.

Table 4. **Santa Cruz County Homeless Student Count 2018-2019 School Year**

School District	Living Situation				
	Shelters	Doubled-up	Unsheltered	Hotel/ Motel	Total
*Independent Schools	1	49	3	0	**53**
Live Oak School District	17	286	3	12	**318**
San Lorenzo Valley Unified School District	2	23	2	1	**28**
Santa Cruz City School District	27	43	1	5	**76**
Scotts Valley Unified School District	8	18	4	13	**43**
Soquel Union Elementary School District	1	5	1	1	**8**
Pajaro Valley Unified School District	120	3855	14	23	**4012**
Santa Cruz County Office of Education Alternative Education Schools	0	21	0	0	**21**
Pre-Schools	53	123	14	0	**190**
TOTALS:	**229**	**4423**	**42**	**55**	**4749**
*Independent Schools include: Mountain School, Bonny Doon Elementary, Pacific Elementary, and Happy Valley Elementary					

Source: Santa Cruz County Office of Education Document request[217]

The United States Homelessness Institute for Children, Poverty, and Homelessness, explains this discrepancy best:

> *...the United States lacks a unified federal definition of homelessness, leading to discrepancies in how families experiencing homelessness are counted, as well as what types of assistance they can qualify for. While the U.S. Department of Education (ED) uses an inclusive definition of homelessness to guide the annual count of students experiencing homelessness, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), which funds most programs and services available to families that experience homelessness, limits its definition to those living in shelter or*

unsheltered on the street. This means that the majority of these families, including more than 80% of students experiencing homelessness—those living doubled-up and those staying in paid out-of-pocket hotels or motels—are excluded from the annual HUD homeless counts.[218]

The impact on the 80% of students that are excluded from the annual HUD homeless count is that their needs go unmet, they do not receive targeted resources, and they are not considered eligible for all homeless services.[219]

Fragmented Data Management

Currently in our county information tracking of homeless services provided is recorded/tracked by using the HMIS (Homeless Management Information System).[220] HUD requires the use of the HMIS system in order for organizations to receive federal funding for homeless programs. According to witness testimony, the HMIS program is not available or used by all of the various organizations providing homeless services in the County, nor does it include a dashboard with up to date data. The system is fragmented with some agencies collecting only select data and then having only limited access to information. The inaccuracy of the data makes it virtually impossible for city and county agencies, nonprofits and FBOs focused on homeless issues to coordinate and collaborate. As a result, effective decision making is severely hampered.

Data Matters

In order to measure the effectiveness of various programs, a dashboard is needed to enable providers to easily see what services are available at any given time. There are a number of tools available, but none fit the needs of the service providers. In February 2020, the County of Santa Cruz launched "Vision Santa Cruz," a dashboard that documents the Attainable Housing objectives, goals, and progress.[221] Designed as an informational tool for the public, and updated every six months, this dashboard represents a significant improvement in educating the public. However, it is not the dashboard needed by homeless service providers. **The providers need a more robust dashboard that contains up to date, accurate Countywide information with all providers inputting their respective data to enable service providers to operate more efficiently, and to enable the generation of meaningful metrics to measure progress**. Currently the primary data entry tool utilized in the County is Smart Path.[222]

Smart Path to Housing and Health

HUD mandates that Continuum of Care (CoC) service providers such as the Homeless Action Partnership (HAP) create a Coordinated Entry System (CES) to help streamline access to housing and housing assistance.[223] These entry systems must "be easily accessible no matter where or how people present," (i.e. no matter the location, whether in person, virtually, or on the phone),[224] and the same tool be used in all CES locations where an individual or family is assessed. In Santa Cruz County this community wide CES is called the Smart Path to Housing and Health (Smart Path).

Smart Path was launched in Santa Cruz County in 2018 and uses the Smart Path Assessment, which is also known as the Vulnerability Index Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT),[225] to assess the needs of homeless individuals. Those in need of services can go to homeless services providers throughout the County, or call 2-1-1, to access Smart Path and have their needs assessed. The assessment is used to prioritize decision making and to determine how best to deploy and target scarce resources.[226] Those who have the highest needs and vulnerabilities are prioritized to receive services. The Smart Path assessment includes four main categories: A History of Housing and Homelessness, Risks, Socialization and Daily Functioning, and Wellness.[227]

Although Smart Path has improved the ability to identify those with the greatest needs and get them services, Focus Strategies highlighted some significant issues with the system. First, it lacks a diversion component. Second, emergency shelter bed availability is not included. Third, there is no ability to recategorize an individual's needs once they have been assessed. These shortcomings reinforce the need for a more robust management system.[228]

Silicon Valley Triage Tool

The California League of Cities maintains that collecting data and understanding the cost of homeless are critical in addressing the issue of homelessness and in targeting resources.[229] The Grand Jury believes SCCO should be tracking the impacts on Santa Cruz County and Cities and its stakeholders more effectively. The Silicon Valley Triage Tool, used in Santa Clara County, could be a resource to help Santa Cruz County achieve that goal.

The Silicon Valley Triage Tool collects a variety of types of information including demographics, criminal history, medical and behavioral health information, etc. and calculates the probability a homeless individual will have high ongoing costs.[230] This allows for in-depth engagement with these individuals via a case manager who enrolls them into a permanent supportive housing program, regularly monitors their progress, and arranges additional services as needed.[231] The result has been a dramatic improvement in outcomes, and a reduction in costs from a pre-housing cost of $56,366 to a post-housing cost of $37,083 representing a cost reduction of $19,282 per person per year (after accounting for the costs of housing and services).[232] Of note, 10% of the homeless individuals accounted for 61% of the expenses. When those high needs individuals were supplied with permanent supportive housing and supportive services, the cost savings to Santa Clara County were significant, dropping from an annual average of $62,475 to $19,767.[233]

Conclusion

The issue of homelessness in Santa Cruz County is not new, nor is it going to be solved overnight. Santa Cruz County has a lot of challenging work ahead. There are five key areas this Grand Jury has identified that are in need of attention.

First and foremost is the need for the community and the elected leadership to work more closely together to come up with solutions to address the multitude of issues faced by the County. Education of the community to the realities of the homeless problem, and engaging the community more into the process would allow elected officials to exercise the political will needed to provide additional housing and services throughout the County.

Second, there is a need for a new governance structure to be accountable for managing the complexity of the homeless problem, and it is recommended the County consider the formation of a JPA, a legal entity with representation from all the Cities in the County. The JPA would need strong leadership to oversee the allocation of funding, take responsibility for measuring and tracking effectiveness, and hold organizations accountable for non-performance.

Third, additional funding must be allocated to improve services and increase case managers available to homeless individuals. To minimize the cycling in and out of the judicial and medical systems due to illnesses such as mental health and substance abuse, and to reduce burden on law enforcement, the county should adopt a 24-hour crisis response team similar to Oregon's CAHOOTS team. Funding is also needed to increase the number of shelter beds and permanent supportive housing if Santa Cruz County is ever to make a dent in the overall number of homeless persons in the County. The promotion of ADUs to increase the supply of affordable housing would reduce the strain on the housing market which is forcing so many to live on the streets, in their cars, or on someone's couch.

Fourth, Santa Cruz County and Santa Cruz Cities should be more effective in utilizing existing resources. County and City owned land should be made available to provide safe parking, and to build easily constructed homeless communities, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing using a variety of shelter options such as tiny homes and trailers. In addition, there is a need for closer engagement with local businesses and faith-based organizations who can be significant assets in providing solutions to the homeless crisis.

And finally, all participants in the homelessness effort must be rowing in the same direction. New data gathering and measuring mechanisms need to be adopted by all agencies supporting the homeless. Consistent and accurate data is vital to enable the entire system to work effectively for all.

Findings

F1. The inaccuracy of the HUD PIT Count results in significant numbers of homeless adults and children not being counted and therefore not receiving needed services.

F2. The lack of coordination between key stakeholders is a significant barrier to the efficient and capable implementation of homelessness solutions.

F3. The public opposition to homeless solutions is partially due to a lack of education, engagement and political will by City and County leadership.

F4. Santa Cruz County elected officials have been unable to combat NIMBYism, which is a significant barrier to getting projects approved and built to support the homeless.

F5. Inconsistent and unclear funding sources and processes inhibit the effective implementation of solutions that require long term planning and sustained operations.

F6. The Homeless Action Partnership (HAP) is not organizationally equipped with the appropriate authority, structure, leadership, staff, training or processes and as a result is ineffective in its mission of reducing homelessness.

F7. An insufficient number of treatment facilities in Santa Cruz County for mental health and substance use disorders leaves homeless individuals without necessary treatment options.

F8. Because Santa Cruz County lacks adequate prevention and diversion programs, individuals who could remain in their homes with minimal cash assistance are ending up homeless.

F9. The lack of Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) results in the significant compounding of the homeless issue.

F10. Supportive services are limited to one year; this limitation can contribute to instability, a loss of housing, and a return to homelessness.

F11. A lack of case managers and outreach results in homeless individuals not having timely access to necessary supportive services.

F12. There are parcels of land throughout the county that appear to be unused or underutilized, and could possibly be used to build housing for the homeless.

F13. Santa Cruz County law enforcement response to homeless, addiction, and mental health issues has the potential to criminalize social, medical, and psychological conditions. This requires law enforcement to perform the role of social worker; a role for which they lack the resources and mental health training.

F14. There is a lack of leadership from County and City officials to engage the business community in exploring potential solutions to homelessness.

F15. The Rountree Detention Center provides inmates with construction skills training. This training could be effectively applied to the building of tiny homes or other structures that could provide much needed housing.

F16. Santa Cruz County and Cities, despite owning numerous parking lots, choose not to utilize their parking lots for safe parking programs, which results in an underutilization of resources that could help reduce homeless parking in neighborhoods and business districts.

F17. Faith-Based Organizations are an underutilized resource in the effort to end homelessness.

F18. Due to the inconsistent collection of Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data, the accuracy of funding decisions for service providers is negatively impacted.

F19. Santa Cruz County lacks an organization that is accountable for tracking the cost of homelessness, allocating funding, and measuring the effectiveness of funding which results in the inability to make progress toward solving the homeless problem.

F20. There are tools available, such as Santa Clara County's "Silicon Valley Triage Tool," that could be applied to Santa Cruz County to allow the County to better understand the true cost of homelessness enabling the County to use public resources more efficiently.

F21. If underutilized parcels of land throughout Santa Cruz County were identified, such as the area near Coral Street in Santa Cruz, and the parcel adjacent to the County Government Mental Health Building in Watsonville, these parcels could potentially be used to increase the number of beds and services to support the homeless.

F22. The information provided in the ADU section of the Santa Cruz County Planning Department's website is not user friendly, and therefore not as encouraging as it could be to homeowners looking to build much needed housing for the County.

Recommendations

R1. Santa Cruz County and Cities should coordinate to perform a count of the number of homeless individuals in the County annually, and use that contact opportunity to encourage individuals to enroll in the Smart Path system. (F1)

R2. The Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors and City Councils should jointly develop programs, services, and housing equitably distributed throughout each district and city in the County, communicating to the public an itemized list of such and broken down by supervisorial district by July 1, 2021. (F2)

R3. By December 31, 2020, the Santa Cruz Administrative Officer (CAO) and Cities should create a Community Task Force that includes City Managers, nonprofit leaders, former homeless individuals, media personnel, community members, and political leaders to create good will, and encourage collaboration in solving homeless issues. (F3, F4)

R4. Santa Cruz County and Cities should collaborate to develop a JPA that would be responsible for setting short and long term goals to reduce homelessness, measuring the cost of homelessness, allocating funding, and tracking the effectiveness of funding, by July 1, 2021. (F5, F6, F19)

R5. The Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency should expand relationships with regional psychiatric hospitals to identify more beds and treatment options when they are unavailable in Santa Cruz County by December 31, 2020. (F7)

R6. The Santa Cruz County Administrative Officer (CAO) and the County's City Managers should identify parcels of land within their jurisdictions that could be utilized to supply homeless services and/or temporary or permanent housing, and report such sites to their governing bodies by December 31, 2020. (F9, F21)

R7. In the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 budget, the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors should direct the agencies that provide grant funding for homeless services to prioritize more funding for case managers, diversion and prevention programs, and the extension of supportive services to more than one year when appropriate. (F8, F10, F11)

R8. Santa Cruz County should redesign their Planning Department's ADU web page to showcase and direct interested visitors to begin the ADU process online, using the San Jose or Santa Clara Planning Department's web sites as a model by December 31, 2020. (F22)

R9. By December 31, 2020, the City of Santa Cruz should evaluate whether closing Coral Street permanently to thru traffic, to make more space available for additional housing and services for the homeless, would be a viable option. (F13)

R10. Beginning in December of 2020, the Santa Cruz County Administrative Officer and the County's City Managers should direct their agencies involved with homelessness to engage with local business leaders including Chambers of Commerce, to collaborate on innovative solutions that could reduce the number of homeless. (F14)

R11. The Santa Cruz County Sheriff should assess the viability of instituting a program at the Rountree Detention Center to train inmates to build small housing structures such as tiny homes or ADUs, to increase the amount of homeless housing. The results of this should be reported to the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors by December 31, 2020. (F15)

R12. By December 31, 2020, the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors and the County's City Managers should direct appropriate agencies and staff to implement a city and county wide safe parking program using the successful model of the Association of Faith Communities (AFC). This should include investigating whether college campus parking lots could be incorporated into this program. (F16)

R13. Santa Cruz County and Cities should coordinate a retreat for all Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) in the County to collaborate on how to work cohesively on the issue of homelessness. (F17)

R14. Effective with fiscal year 2021-2022, the Santa Cruz County Administrative Office should work with the Homeless Action Partnership (HAP) to ensure that grants awarded to homeless service providers require a contract that mandates the use of the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). (F18)

R15. By the beginning of fiscal year 2021-2022, Santa Cruz County Administrative Officer should develop and implement a system for tracking the cost of homeless, fashioned after the Silicon Valley Triage Tool, and require it be utilized by all agencies receiving funding for homeless services of any kind. (F20)

R16. Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors should request the Santa Cruz County Administrative Officer investigate and report on the viability of converting the underutilized County Juvenile Hall campus, located at 3650 Graham Hill Rd, Felton, CA into a facility focused on fulfilling crucial homeless, mental health and substance abuse needs by December 31, 2020. (F7)

R17. By December 31, 2020, Santa Cruz County Planning Department should evaluate whether using the parcel of land adjacent to the County Mental Health Building to provide more temporary or permanent housing for the homeless would be a viable option, and report the results to the Board of Supervisors by December 31, 2020. (F21)

R18. Santa Cruz County should create a 24-hour mobile crisis response unit that includes medical staff and an experienced crisis worker to respond to emergency 911 calls and non-emergency police calls that do not involve legal issues or threats of violence. The Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors should work with the County's law enforcement agencies to identify funds in their budgets that could be allocated to this program. The Grand Jury recommends the County consider using CAHOOTS (Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Streets) in Eugene, Oregon as a model. (F13)

Commendations

C1. The Grand Jury would like to commend the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors and the Santa Cruz County Human Services Agency for building the South County Behavioral Health facility, thereby expanding behavioral health services in the South County.

C2. The Grand Jury would like to commend the vast number of individuals, non-profits, faith-based organizations and County agencies, who are dedicated and working hard to support and reduce the homeless population in Santa Cruz County.

Required Responses

Respondent	Findings	Recommendations	Respond Within/ Respond By
Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors	F1–F22	R1–R18	90 Days September 28, 2020
Santa Cruz County Sheriff	F13, F15	R11	60 Days August 31, 2020
Capitola City Council	F1–F6, F12–F14, F16–F17, F19, F21	R1–R4, R9, R12–R13	90 Days September 28, 2020
Santa Cruz City Council	F1–F6, F12–F14, F16–F17, F19, F21	R1–R4, R9, R12–R13	90 Days September 28, 2020
Scotts Valley City Council	F1–F6, F12–F14, F16–F17, F19, F21	R1–R4, R9, R12–R13	90 Days September 28, 2020
Watsonville City Council	F1–F6, F12–F14, F16–F17, F19, F21	R1–R4, R9, R12–R13, R17	90 Days September 28, 2020

Requested Responses

Respondent	Findings	Recommendations	Respond Within/ Respond By
Santa Cruz County Administrative Officer	F7–F11, F14, F16–F18, F20–F21	R5–R7, R13–R16	90 Days September 28, 2020
Santa Cruz County Human Services Agency	F7–F8, F10–F11, F21	R5–R7, R15, R17–R18	90 Days September 28, 2020
Santa Cruz County Information Services Department	F22	R8	90 Days September 28, 2020
Santa Cruz County Planning Department	F21–F22	R8, R17	90 Days September 28, 2020
Capitola City Manager	F3–F6, F9, F12–F14, F16–F17, F19, F21	R3–R4, R6, R9–R10, R12–R13	90 Days September 28, 2020
Santa Cruz City Manager	F3–F6, F9, F12–F14, F16–F17, F19, F21	R3–R4, R6, R9–R10, R12–R13	90 Days September 28, 2020
Scotts Valley City Manager	F3–F6, F9, F12–F14, F16–F17, F19, F21	R3–R4, R6, R9–R10, R12–R13	90 Days September 28, 2020
Watsonville City Manager	F3–F6, F9, F12–F14, F16–F17, F19, F21	R3–R4, R6, R9–R10, R12–R13	90 Days September 28, 2020
City of Capitola Chief of Police	F13	R18	60 Days August 31, 2020
City of Santa Cruz Chief of Police	F13	R18	60 Days August 31, 2020
City of Scotts Valley Chief of Police	F13	R18	60 Days August 31, 2020
City of Watsonville Chief of Police	F13	R18	60 Days August 31, 2020

Definitions

- **Accidental Adversaries:** When groups of people who ought to be in partnership with each other become enemies. This can occur when each group is competing for the same vital resources.

- **Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU):** sometimes called "granny units" or "second units," are housing units that can be attached or detached accessory structures associated with single or multifamily dwellings.

- **Association of Faith Communities (AFC):** is an incorporated association of local faith communities in Northern Santa Cruz County banding together to alleviate suffering through interfaith action.

- **California Welfare and Institutions Code** (WIC) § 5150): an individual can be placed involuntarily in a locked psychiatric facility, for an evaluation for up to 72 hours. Any peace officer or specific individuals authorized by a county government may place the hold. Three criteria apply – the individual is assessed to be: a danger to themselves, a danger to others, or "gravely disabled". Defined by an individual's lack of ability, due to their mental illness, to provide for their food, clothing, or shelter. In the case of children, it is the inability to use food, clothing, or shelter even if it is supplied.

- **California Welfare and Institutions Code** (WIC) § 5008(h): defines the term "gravely disabled" an individual's lack of ability, due to their mental illness, to provide for their food, clothing, or shelter. In the case of children, it is the inability to use food, clothing, or shelter even if it is supplied.

- **California Emergency Solutions and Housing (CESH):** A state-funded block grant program to address the needs of homeless individuals and families and assist them in regaining stable housing.

- **Chronically Homeless:** A "homeless individual with a disability," as defined in the Act, who:
  1. Lives in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter; and has been homeless (as described above) continuously for at least 12 months or on at least 4 separate occasions in the last 3 years where the combined occasions must total at least 12 months.
     a. Occasions separated by a break of at least seven nights.
     b. Stays in institution of fewer than 90 days do not constitute a break.
  2. An individual who has been residing in an institutional care facility for fewer than 90 days and met all of the criteria in paragraph (1) of this definition, before entering that facility; or
  3. A family with an adult head of household (or if there is no adult in the family, a minor head of household) who meets all of the criteria in paragraphs (1) or (2) of this definition, including a family whose composition has fluctuated while the head of household has been homeless.

- **Continuum of Care (COC):** A system to reduce the incidence of homelessness in CoC communities by assisting homeless individuals and families in quickly transitioning to self-sufficiency and permanent housing.

- **Coordinated Entry System (CES)**: A community-wide system that seeks to effectively and efficiently match people experiencing homelessness to available housing and services that best fit their specific needs and situation. An emerging best practice for conducting assessments and referrals that provides a "no wrong door" approach to addressing homelessness.

- **Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH):** A corporation with the mission to advance solutions that use housing as a platform for services to improve the lives of the most vulnerable people, maximize public resources and build healthy communities.

- **Crisis Stabilization Program:** A direct service that assists with deescalating the severity of a person's level of distress and/or need for urgent care associated with a substance use or mental health disorder.

- **Disabled and Medically Vulnerable (DMC):** a housing voucher program with a limited waiting list preference for disabled and medically vulnerable homeless persons.

- **Diversion Program:** A strategy that prevents homelessness for people seeking shelter by helping them identify immediate alternate housing arrangements and, if necessary, connecting them with services and financial assistance to help them return to permanent housing.

- **Doubled-up:** The informal wording used to describe a concept included in the McKinney-Vento Act's definition of homeless. It refers to shared living arrangements, some of which may be considered homeless, while others may not be, depending on various factors.

- **Emergency Shelter:** Any facility, the primary purpose of which is to provide a temporary shelter for the homeless in general or for specific populations of the homeless and which does not require occupants to sign leases or occupancy agreements.

- **Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA):** an agency of the United States Department of Homeland Security. The agency's primary purpose is to coordinate the response to a disaster that has occurred in the United States and that overwhelms the resources of local and state authorities

- **Faith-based Organization (FBO):** An organization whose values are based on faith and/or beliefs, which has a mission based on social values of the particular faith, and which most often draws its activists (leaders, staff, volunteers) from a particular faith group.

- **Families in Transition (FIT):** Provides housing, education programs and services created specifically to help South County families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

- **Homeless Emergency Assistance Program (HEAP):** A $500 million block grant program designed to provide direct assistance to cities, counties and Continuums of Care (CoCs) to address the homelessness crisis throughout California.

- **Homeless Action Partnership, HAP:** A collaboration of the five jurisdictions in Santa Cruz County (the County and the Cities of Santa Cruz, Watsonville, Capitola and Scotts Valley) along with homeless housing and services providers.

- **Homeless Definitions - HUD Exchange**
  - **Category 1 Literally Homeless:** An individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning:
    - (i) Has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not meant for human habitation;
    - (ii) Is living in a publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state and local government programs); or
    - (iii) Is exiting an institution where (s)he has resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution.
  - **Category 2 Imminent Risk of Homelessness:** An individual or family who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence, provided that:
    - (i) Residence will be lost within 14 days of the date of application for homeless assistance;
    - (ii) No subsequent residence has been identified; and
    - (iii) The individual or family lacks the resources or support networks needed to obtain other permanent housing.
  - **Category 3 Homeless under other Federal statutes:** Unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age, or families with Category 3 children and youth, who do not otherwise qualify as homeless under this definition, but who:
    - (i) Are defined as homeless under the other listed federal statutes;
    - (ii) Have not had a lease, ownership interest, or occupancy agreement in permanent housing during the 60 days prior to the homeless assistance application;
    - (iii) Have experienced persistent instability as measured by two moves or more during in the preceding 60 days; and
    - (iv) Can be expected to continue in such status for an extended period of time due to special needs or barriers.

- ○ **Category 4 Fleeing/ Attempting to Flee DV:** Any individual or family who:
  - (i) Is fleeing, or is attempting to flee, domestic violence;
  - (ii) Has no other residence; and
  - (iii) Lacks the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing.

- **Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS):** A local information technology system used to collect client-level data and data on the provision of housing and services to homeless individuals and families and persons at risk of homelessness.

- **Housing First:** An approach that offers permanent, affordable housing as quickly as possible for individuals and families experiencing homelessness, and then provides the supportive services and connections to the community-based supports people need to keep their housing and avoid returning to homelessness.

- **Housing Urban Development (HUD):** A U.S. government agency that supports community development and homeownership. The Fair Housing Act prevents discrimination in housing based on sex, race, color, national origin, and religion.

- **Joint Powers Agreement (JPA):** A formal, legal agreement between two or more public agencies that share a common power and want to jointly implement programs, build facilities, or deliver services. Officials from those public agencies formally approve a cooperative arrangement.

- **Joint Powers Authority or Agency (JPA):** A new, separate government organization created by the member agencies, but is legally independent from them. Like a joint powers agreement (in which one agency administers the terms of the agreement), a joint powers agency shares powers common to the member agencies, and those powers are outlined in the joint powers agreement.

- **Jurisdiction:** The power to exercise authority over persons and things within a defined geographical territory or field of responsibility.

- **National Alliance on Mental Illness Santa Cruz County (NAMISCC):** The Santa Cruz chapter or a national advocacy group that is dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness.

- **Navigation Centers:** Low-threshold, high-service temporary shelter programs for adults experiencing homelessness.

- **Not In My Back Yard (NIMBY):** A person who objects to the siting of something perceived as unpleasant or potentially dangerous in their own neighborhood, such as a landfill or hazardous waste facility, especially while raising no such objections to similar developments elsewhere.

- **Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH):** A proven, effective means of reintegrating chronically homeless and other highly vulnerable homeless families and individuals with psychiatric disabilities or chronic health challenges into the community by addressing their basic needs for housing and providing ongoing support.

- **Point In Time Survey (PIT):** A HUD mandated biannual count of sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness on a single night in January.

- **Political Will:** Political intention or desire (in early use not as a fixed collocation); (later) specifically the firm intention or commitment on the part of a government to carry through a policy, especially one which is not immediately successful or popular.

- **Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD):** A mental health condition that is triggered by a terrifying event — either experiencing it or witnessing it. Symptoms may include flashbacks, nightmares and severe anxiety, as well as uncontrollable thoughts about the event.

- **Prevention Programs**: Provides financial assistance to individuals and families at imminent risk of becoming homeless to maintain their housing or find suitable alternative housing before becoming homeless.

- **Rapid Re-housing:** Permanent housing, but the assistance is meant to be temporary.

- **Request For Proposal (RFP):** A document that solicits proposals, often made through a bidding process, by an agency or company interested in procurement of a commodity, service, or valuable asset, to potential suppliers to submit business proposals.

- **Safe Parking:** A program that gives a temporary, overnight, safe location to park for individuals and families living in a vehicle while providing access to services that will transition them into more stable housing.

- **Section 8 Program:** Allows private landlords to rent apartments and homes at fair market rates to qualified low income tenants, with a rental subsidy administered by Home Forward. "Section 8" is a common name for the Housing Choice Voucher Program, funded by the United States. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

- **Sheltered:** An individual/family living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living arrangement.

- **Shelter:** A building set up to provide for the needs of homeless people; often including shelter, food, sanitation and other forms of support.

- **SMART PATH, Housing and Health: Coordinated Assessment and Referral System:** A coordinated entry system that streamlines access to housing assistance and services for all people experiencing homelessness. Individuals and families will complete uniform assessments at a variety of easy to access locations throughout the county.

- **Stakeholders:** Any person, organization, social group, or society at large that is invested in the success or outcome of an enterprise, project, or endeavor. Thus, stakeholders can be internal or external to the business. A stake is a vital interest in the business or its activities.

- **Substance Use Disorder (SUD):** A disease that affects a person's brain and behavior and leads to an inability to control the use of a legal or illegal drug or medication. Substances such as alcohol, marijuana and nicotine also are considered drugs.

- **Treatment Advocacy Center (TAC):** A non profit organization dedicated to eliminating barriers to the timely and effective treatment of severe mental illness

- **Tiny Home:** a small house, typically sized under 600 square feet. While they can be built on foundations, most tiny homes are built on trailers. This style of tiny house is often referred to as a THOW (tiny house on wheels).

- **Transitional Housing:** Temporary housing for certain segments of the homeless population, including working homeless people who are earning too little money to afford long-term housing. Transitional housing is set up to transition residents into permanent, affordable housing.

- **Unsheltered:** An individual or family whose primary nighttime residence is a public/private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings. These are people living on the street or in makeshift shelters (tents, boxes), motorhomes (RV), vans, or cars.

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Site Visits

Housing Matters, Coral Street, Santa Cruz, CA

Juvenile Hall, Felton, CA

Rountree Detention Center, Watsonville, CA

Land surveys, Watsonville, CA

Websites

Butte County Departments http://www.buttecounty.net/departments

County of San Luis Obispo http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/site4.aspx

Curry TB Center, UCSF https://www.currytbcenter.ucsf.edu/sites/default/files/product_tools/homelessnessandtbtoolkit/general.html

Appendix A
HEAP & CESH 2019 Award Decisions

Table A1. **HEAP & CESH 2019 RFP Award Decisions**

Applicant/Project	Activities Funded	HEAP Amount	CESH Amount	Total
City of Santa Cruz Land Purchase	Land Purchase for: Emergency Shelter, Hygiene Day Services	$1,400,000	$0	$1,400,000
Reservation of Funds for North County Navigation Center/Year Round Shelter Operations	Navigation Center Year-Round Emergency Shelter Day Services Hygiene Services	$1,030,294	$177,888	$1,208,182
Salvation Army South County Navigation Center	Shelter Case management Housing navigation Hygiene services Basic needs services Rental assistance	$822,112	$177,888	$1,000,000
Encompass CS YHDP Youth Resource Center	Youth/young adult day center services Respite beds	$787,003	$0	$787,003
Adobe Services Rapid Rehousing Program	Rapid rehousing Financial assistance Housing navigation	$382,383	$217,617	$600,000
Homeless Services Center Paul Lee Loft Shelter Operations	Shelter Case management Hygiene services	$555,000	$0	$555,000
Community Action Board Watsonville Works!	Case management Transitional work experience	$459,182	$0	$459,182
Community Action Board Rental Assistance Program	Prevention Case Management Rental assistance	$381,985	$69,833	$451,818
Community Action Board YHRT (Youth Homeless Response Team)	Youth and young adult: Case management Housing navigation Employment & education referrals Benefits referrals Emergency vouchers	$422,835	$0	$422,835
Association of Faith Communities (AFC) Faith Community Shelter	Shelter Case management Hygiene services	$402,692	$0	$402,692
Monarch Services DV Emergency Shelter Capital Improvements	Capital improvements Domestic violence shelter Motel vouchers	$350,000	$0	$350,000
Santa Cruz County Housing Authority Landlord Incentives & Move In Costs	Financial assistance Landlord bonuses Unit repair fund	$251,700	$68,315	$320,015

Table A1. **HEAP & CESH 2019 RFP Award Decisions, continued**				
Applicant/Project	**Activities Funded**	**HEAP Amount**	**CESH Amount**	**Total**
Community Bridges Mountain Community Resources	Case management Hygiene services Basic needs services	$240,478	$0	$240,478
Association of Faith Communities (AFC) SafeSpaces Parking	Parking Hygiene services Volunteer meals	$237,950	$0	$237,950
Cabrillo College Emergency Housing Services Program	Rental assistance	$137,724	$0	$137,724
MHCAN Shower	Showers	$110,994	$0	$110,994
Congregational Church, Soquel MCHC Shower the People	Portable showers Hygiene services	$61,270	$0	$61,270
Bill Wilson Center Shared Housing for Youth	Youth/young adults: Shared housing Case management Financial assistance Host incentives	$58,300	$0	$58,300
Santa Cruz County CoC Lead Planning	CoC planning/coordination	$0	$44,471	$44,471
Community Technology Alliance Santa Cruz County HMIS	HMIS services	$0	$44,471	$44,471
Santa Cruz County HSD Smart Path to Housing and Health	Coordinated entry services	$0	$44,471	$44,471
Wings Homeless Advocacy Vital Identification Records	Birth certificates and other ID services	$38,700	$0	$38,700
TOTAL				**$8,975,556**

Source: Santa Cruz County HEAP and CESH Awards 2019[234]

Table A2. **2019 HEAP LOI and Emergency Allocation Award Decisions**

Applicant/Project	Activities Funded	HEAP Amount	CESH Amount	Total
Emergency Sheltering LOI (Letter Of Intent)				
Association of Faith Communities (AFC) SafeSpaces Parking	Parking Hygiene Services Volunteer Meals etc.	$45,000	$0	$45,000
Homeless Services Center Paul Lee Loft and Hygiene Bay	Shelter Case management Hygiene services	$120,000	$0	$120,000
Salvation Army Santa Cruz Emergency Shelter	Shelter Case management Hygiene services Basic needs services	$195,000	$0	$195,000
Salvation Army Watsonville Emergency Shelter	Shelter Case management Hygiene services Basic needs services	$110,000	$0	$110,000
Emergency Allocations - immediate public health & safety hygiene and urgent sheltering needs				
City of Santa Cruz - River Street		$64,677	$0	$64,677
City of Santa Cruz Hygiene at Gateway Plaza		$100,000	$0	$100,000
Homeless Services Center Hygiene Bay		$18,000	$0	$18,000
Salvation Army - River Street Camp		$206,323	$0	$206,323
TOTAL				**$859,000**
TOTAL including EMERGENCY AWARDS				**$9,834,556**
TOTAL including 5% set aside for admin				**$10,362,771**
Balance available from grants of $10,564,307				**$201,536**

Source: Santa Cruz County HEAP and CESH Awards 2019[235]

Appendix B
Homeless Services Information

Table B1. **Partner agencies participating in the HMIS system by District**

District 1	District 3
Association of Faith Communities	Homeless Garden Project
VFW Halls	**District 4**
Encompass	Community Action Board
Front Street	VFW Halls
Homeless Persons Health Project	Pajaro Rescue Mission
Housing Matters	Pajaro Valley Shelter Services
Veterans Resource Center	Salvation Army
Adult Protective Services	Behavioral Health
Behavioral Health	Housing Choices
Downtown Streets Team	Families In Transition
Janus of Santa Cruz	Salud Para La Gente
Mental Health Client Action Network	**District 5**
The Housing Authority	Mountain Community Resources
District 2	Wings Homeless Advocacy
Association of Faith Communities	

Source: Compiled from documents requested of the Human Services Department that covered 2018.

Table B2. **Low income housing comparisons**

| City	Number of Housing Complexes	Webpage with the Information
Capitola	3	https://www.lowincomehousing.us/CA/capitola.html
Santa Cruz	27	https://www.lowincomehousing.us/CA/santa_cruz.html
Scotts Valley	2	https://www.lowincomehousing.us/CA/scotts%20valley
Watsonville	16	https://www.lowincomehousing.us/CA/watsonville.html

Source: The webpage for each city is linked above.
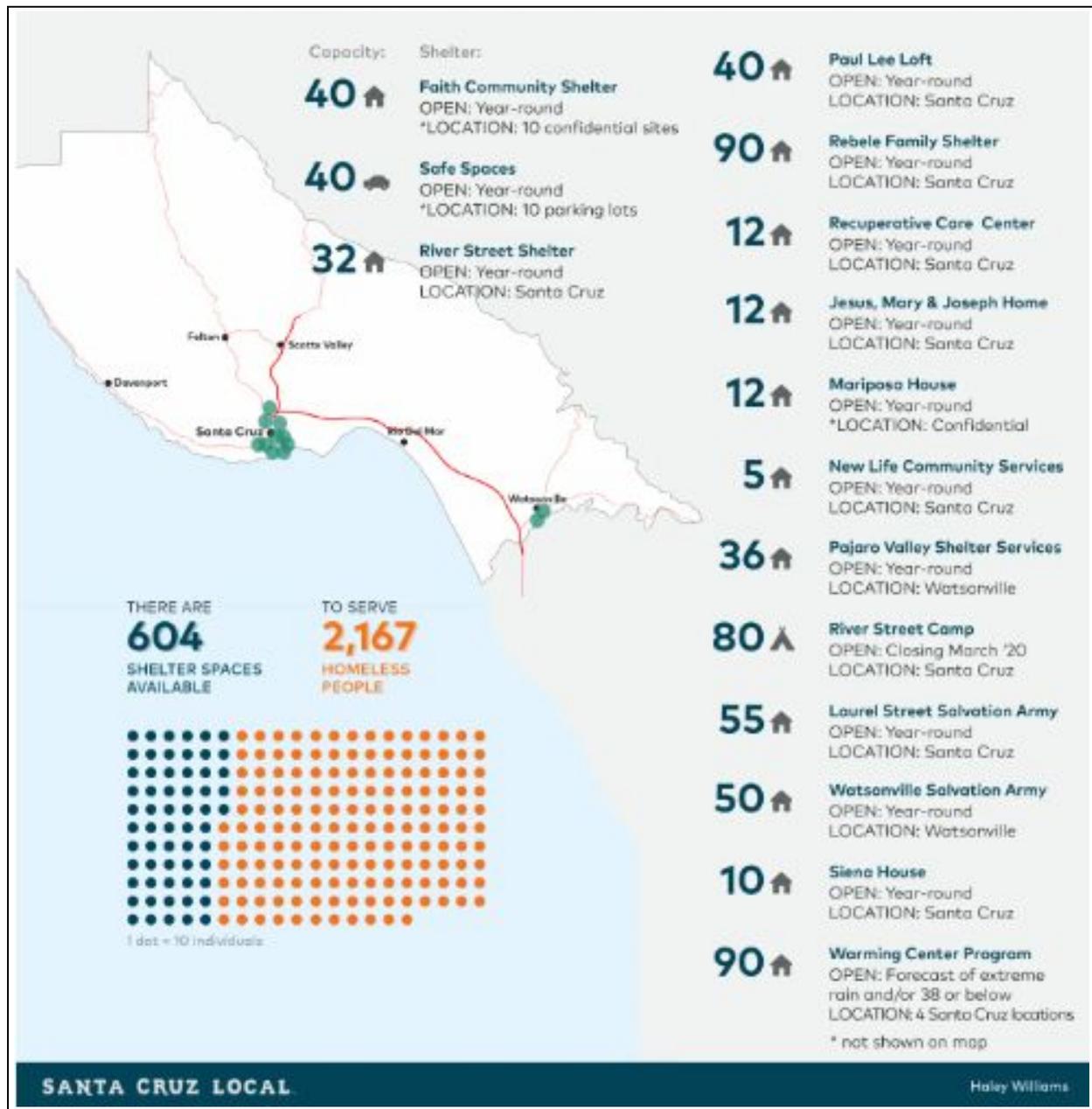
Figure B1. **Homeless Shelters in Santa Cruz County**[236]