



Coalition Announces New Goal to House All Homeless Families in Santa Clara County

The Santa Clara County Continuum of Care Announce New “HEADING HOME: No More Families Living on Our Streets,” a campaign to End Family Homelessness by 2025

Santa Clara County - Oct. 4, 2021 -- Aiming to house 1200 families in the next year and 600 annually thereafter, today, Santa Clara County Continuum of Care announced the HEADING HOME campaign.

As part of the Community Plan to End Homelessness, today marks the beginning of a concerted effort to house local families. The goal is to achieve “functional zero” in five years - meaning the number of housing placements for families is greater than the number of families entering homelessness. Key partners for this effort include: the County of Santa Clara, the City of San Jose, the Santa Clara County Housing Authority, Destination: Home and Cisco.

Currently, there are approximately 600 families in Santa Clara County experiencing homelessness, and another 600 new families enter homelessness for the first time every year. Seventy five percent of these families have a female head of household and 62 percent self-reported having children enrolled in school in Santa Clara County.

To achieve this ambitious goal, this coalition will be focusing on four key strategies:

- **Leveraging Emergency Housing Vouchers** - The Santa Clara County Housing Authority has been awarded approximately 1,000 emergency housing vouchers, which will provide rental support to homeless households for up to ten years. The vast majority of these vouchers will be targeted towards homeless families.

- **Expanding Rapid Rehousing** - The coalition will expand its Rapid Rehousing programs - which provide a time-limited rental subsidy along with case management and supportive services - with a goal to serve another 200 homeless families annually.
- **Expanding Homelessness Prevention Strategies** - The coalition will work to expand homelessness prevention services so that fewer families fall into homelessness. This includes plans to expand the Homelessness Prevention System to serve 2,500 households by 2025 as well as new investments in Housing Problem-Solving programs, which quickly house families who recently became homeless and are sleeping on the street or in a place not fit for human habitation.
- **Creating More New Affordable and Supportive Housing** - New affordable housing developments in the Measure A pipeline include approximately 1,000 new family apartments in five years. There is also the potential to expand further by leveraging \$1 billion in Project Homekey funding that is dedicated to families.

In the months ahead, the coalition will engage with elected officials, landlords, private businesses, non-profit partners, people with lived experience and other community members to advance these ambitious objectives.

To connect someone who is currently experiencing homelessness with assistance and resources, please call the Countywide Shelter Hotline: (408) 278-6420. To connect someone whose current housing is unstable or at-risk of becoming homeless, please call the Santa Clara County Homelessness Prevention System at (408) 926-8885.

Quotes from the HEADING HOME Leaders

“Our homelessness crisis is urgent and even more so when it comes to families. A safe, stable place to sleep is fundamental for children’s development. That security – or lack thereof – shapes who they become as adults. This campaign is our message to families that we see them, we understand their struggles, and we have a plan in place to make sure children and parents have a place to call home.” - ***Mike Wasserman, President of the County of Santa Clara Board of Supervisors***

“The level of coordination and momentum from the City of San Jose, the County, Destination:Home and our coalition partners in meeting the crisis of family homelessness is admirable. HEADING HOME's goal of achieving functional zero for family homelessness within five years by leveraging new funding sources is the urgency we need to ensure that fewer families are left behind. The unhoused families in San Jose and Santa Clara County deserve swift action.” - ***San José Mayor Sam Liccardo***

“Every company in Silicon Valley has a responsibility to help create a thriving community for all. As part of that, we must work together to ensure that all families have access to a home. Cisco is proud to support the Heading Home campaign and we invite other business leaders to join us in ending homelessness in Santa Clara County.” - **Chuck Robbins, Chair and CEO, Cisco**

“We need to understand that we have not just a homelessness problem, we have a housing problem. We can absolutely expand our rapid response that keeps people from becoming homeless. We need to build more affordable housing units at a faster rate.” - **Santa Clara County Supervisor Cindy Chavez**

“When we address and provide for the most fundamental needs and supports for children and families, there are endless possibilities for them to thrive in Santa Clara County. The collaborative efforts being made by all the partners to meet this goal is nothing short of awe inspiring, and I look forward to seeing our families transition into safe, stable and welcoming homes.” - **Santa Clara County Supervisor Susan Ellenberg**

“My advocacy for rapid rehousing and homeless prevention for families comes from years of working with families that endure difficult living arrangements. Housing has been a long standing challenge for many, long before the pandemic. For years, we've seen an exodus of families in San José as a result of the housing crisis which has been exacerbated by the pandemic. The ‘HEADING HOME: No More Families Living on our Streets’ campaign is a critical step in the right direction to address the reality, too often faced by our families, particularly Black, Latino, and Indigenous families, that clearly demonstrates that the housing crisis is also a racial equity issue. However, our unhoused families are not only living in our streets, they are also living in non-traditional housing spaces such as living rooms, converted garages, abandoned buildings, and cars. As we search our streets to rehouse families, we must also not forget about the families that are hidden in plain sight.” - **San Jose City Councilwoman Sylvia Arenas**

“The emergency vouchers will allow us to serve hundreds of vulnerable families experiencing homelessness and provide them with support services as they transition from homelessness to housing. EHVs are just one of several strategies the Heading Home campaign is utilizing to connect families to permanent housing opportunities and the Housing Authority is grateful for the opportunity to contribute to this collective impact effort.” - **Santa Clara County Housing Authority Executive Director Preston Prince**

“This effort is significant and extremely necessary. We are talking about families with babies and kids. There is no reason they should be sleeping outside, especially when we have the resources needed to help. We are committed to making sure every child has a warm bed to sleep in at night.” - **Jennifer Loving, CEO, Destination Home**

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