



24-4307

DATE: February 27, 2024 (Item No. {{item.number}})
TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Consuelo Hernandez, Director, Office of Supportive Housing
SUBJECT: Heading Home Quarterly Update

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Under advisement from October 5, 2021 (Item No. 18) and January 25, 2022 (Item No. 19): Receive quarterly update from the Office of Supportive Housing relating to the Heading Home campaign.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no fiscal implications relating to this informational report.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION AND BACKGROUND

On October 5, 2021 (Item No. 18) and on January 25, 2022 (Item No. 19), the Board of Supervisors approved a referral from Supervisor Ellenberg requesting that Administration provide quarterly progress reports on the Heading Home campaign (Heading Home) including a summary of coordination efforts between the Office of Supportive Housing (OSH) and the Valley Homeless Healthcare Program (VHHP). As part of the 2020-2025 Community Plan to End Homelessness (Community Plan), Heading Home is an effort to establish a system through which homelessness among Santa Clara County families with children, including pregnant women, becomes rare, brief, and non-recurring.

The Heading Home campaign launched on October 5, 2021, with the goal of reaching “functional zero” for unhoused families by 2025, meaning that the number of housing placements for families is greater than the number of families entering homelessness. From October 1, 2021 through December 31, 2023, 1,550 families with children (2,196 adults and 2,997 children) obtained permanent housing and an additional 260 families were issued Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHVs) or enrolled in other housing programs and began the housing search process.

This report serves as the seventh report highlighting progress and trends for the Heading Home campaign to end family homelessness, a community-wide effort led by the County, the Santa Clara County Housing Authority (SCCHA), the City of San José, and Destination:

Home in collaboration with non-profit partners including but not limited to Amigos de Guadalupe, Abode Services, Bill Wilson Center, Carry the Vision, Family Supportive Housing, HomeFirst, St. Joseph's Family Center, the YWCA Golden Gate Silicon Valley, and internal County Departments including the Social Services Agency and VHHP.

As part of its February 27, 2024 agenda (Item No. 20), the Board will consider approval of a delegation of authority that would allow Administration to submit the Family Homelessness Challenge Grant, Round 2 application to the California Interagency Council on Homelessness in the amount of \$5,000,000.

Update on Strategies to Achieve Functional Zero

The Heading Home campaign's focus includes four primary strategies to achieve functional zero for unhoused families: 1) Leveraging EHV's for literally homeless families; 2) Expanding Rapid Rehousing (RRH) programs; 3) Expanding homelessness prevention strategies; and 4) Creating new permanent affordable and supportive housing units. The following section provides an update and progress of the four primary strategies deployed to develop new and expanded strategies to end family homelessness.

1. Leveraging Emergency Housing Vouchers. As of December 31, 2023, 865 households have been housed with EHV's and 141 households are in housing search. OSH and SCCHA continue working to leverage 80 mainstream Section 811 vouchers, which provide housing subsidies for non-elderly people with disabilities, including families. For families housed through the EHV or Section 811 programs, OSH has identified multiple existing sources to provide supportive services.
2. Expanding Rapid Rehousing (RRH) Programs. RRH continues to provide a critical housing option for families that need a subsidy and services for a medium term in order to stabilize their housing situation. Approximately half of all families that become homeless need RRH as their housing intervention. In addition to scattered site RRH, multiple supportive housing projects are including site-based RRH in their unit mix, which provides families with the opportunity to transition in place from a RRH subsidy to an affordable unit, leading to a higher success rate. Of the 1,622 family units in operation, under construction, or in the pipeline, 172 are set aside as RRH.
3. Expanding Prevention Strategies. Ending family homelessness requires multiple strategies, including critical investment in prevention programs to minimize the number of families with children that experience homelessness in the first place. The Homelessness Prevention System Pilot (HPS) served 2,313 families with children between October 1, 2021 and December 31, 2023. Prevention strategies central to the campaign include the expansion of the pilot HPS through Destination: Home, Sacred Heart Community Service, and 19 non-profit agencies throughout the county that comprise the system network of providers. Shoring up and expanding the HPS remains a core focus for the Heading Home campaign with a goal of serving 2,500 households annually by 2025.

4. Creating New Permanent Housing. Given the shortage of available rental housing in Santa Clara County, developing new permanent housing for families is a core strategy of the Heading Home campaign and key to its sustainability. Since launching the campaign, 179 new family units opened and another 595 are currently under construction. Additionally, there are a total of 848 family units in the development pipeline that will open by 2027.

Increasing Investments and Next Steps

Since the launch of Heading Home, the County has seen an increase in the demand for shelter for families, particularly this cold weather season. In addition, recent State Budget reductions to the CalWORKs Housing Support Program (CalWORKs HSP) is resulting in a reduction in overall housing capacity for families. An additional infusion of one-time resources is needed to address the immediate needs of homeless families.

The Administration has identified one-time American Rescue Plan Act funding that is not on track to be spent by 2026 that can be redeployed to serve more families. In addition, OSH has worked with Destination: Home and SCCCHA to help support the expansion of supportive services for families enrolled in Heading Home. A summary of these funding sources can be found in Table 1.

Table 1: One-Time Source of Funds

Source	Amount
Destination: Home	\$1,000,000
American Rescue Plan Act	\$8,000,000
Santa Clara County Housing Authority	\$1,000,000
Totals	\$10,000,000

OSH will be returning to the Board over the next few months with the various implementing actions. For instance, on February 7, 2024, OSH issued a second solicitation to expand temporary shelter and anticipates returning to the Board in March to expand shelter capacity for families. A summary of the proposed use of funds for the one-time resources is summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Use of Funds

Program Area	FY 2023-2024	FY 2024-2025	Totals
CalWORKs HSP Gap	\$1,000,000	\$1,700,000	\$2,700,000
Increase Temporary Shelter for Families with Children	\$1,050,000	\$5,000,000	\$6,050,000
Supportive Services for Heading Home Families	\$0	\$1,250,000	\$1,250,000
Totals	\$2,050,000	\$7,950,000	\$10,000,000

Over the next quarter, the focus of the campaign will be on the expansion of temporary shelter resources for families to meet the need for emergency options while families search for permanent housing.

Background

Developing and implementing an initiative to reach Functional Zero for unhoused families is consistent with all three components of the 2020-2025 Community Plan to End Homelessness (Community Plan), as permanent housing strategies are coupled with strategies to prevent homelessness to ensure all families have access to temporary shelter.

The term “functional zero” refers to a system’s demonstrated ability to:

- Consistently house more unhoused families than the number of families who experience homelessness for the first time each year; and
- Sustain housing placements at a level that can assist all families who are currently experiencing homelessness (i.e., in the Community Queue).

As part of the Community Plan implementation, there is a focus on families in Santa Clara County. This focus refers to people who are experiencing homelessness as part of a household that has at least one adult (age 18 and older) and one child (under age 18), including families with infants and pregnant women.

Between October 1, 2021 and December 31, 2023, 2,029 families (an average of 75 per month) sought housing assistance for the first time. During this same period, 1,550 families (an average of 57 per month) were placed in permanent housing. To achieve functional zero for unhoused families, the Supportive Housing System needs to closely track the inflow of families and increase homelessness prevention resources to ensure family homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

Since the last Heading Home report in November 2023, the Board approved several different actions to support these efforts including, but not limited to:

- Approval of six Housing Bond-funded projects in San José, Mountain View, and Palo Alto adding 323 new units of affordable and supportive housing for families to the development pipeline (December 5, 2023, Item Nos. 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, and 28);
- Approval of second amendment to agreement with Sacred Heart Community Service to provide homelessness prevention services (December 5, 2023, Item No. 72); and
- Delegation of authority to amend agreements for temporary housing programs including a motel program for families with children operated by Amigos de Guadalupe to shelter 98 families nightly (December 12, 2023, Item No. 62).

CHILD IMPACT

The recommended action will have a positive impact on children and youth through the **Safe and Stable Families** indicator. A functional zero campaign focused on families will continue to result in more families with children receiving temporary and permanent housing assistance, increasing the housing stability of children.

SENIOR IMPACT

The recommended action will have no/neutral impact on seniors.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The recommended action will have no/neutral sustainability implications.

STEPS FOLLOWING APPROVAL

Upon approval, the Clerk of the Board is requested to notify Consuelo Hernandez, Kathryn Kaminski, and Hilary Armstrong in the Office of Supportive Housing.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Attachment A - Heading Home Dashboard
- Attachment B - New Supportive and Affordable Housing for Families
- Attachment C - Heading Home Campaign Update Presentation_February 27 2024