



WORKING GROUP: SHIFT TO “HOUSING FIRST”

INITIATIVE: WRAP-AROUND SERVICES

Provide an array of services to the homeless with a commitment to provide “whatever it takes” to get a homeless person into permanent housing and stabilized.

The Situation

Wrap-around services provide homeless individuals and families with a number of services they may need to stabilize their lives. Doing “whatever it takes” is considered the most successful approach to ending homelessness. The most successful approach to ending homelessness is to combine wrap-around services with permanent housing.

Progress to Date

Numerous governmental and non-profit entities provide services to the homeless and those at risk of becoming homeless. For example, the Housing Services Partnership is a collaborative of non-profits in the City of San Jose that links people to housing resources, health care, job opportunities, and transportation. The Housing Authority provides Shelter Plus Care in conjunction with supportive services such as child care, education, job training, substance abuse treatment, counseling, parenting skills, and money management. The federally funded “Off the Streets to Permanent Housing” in Palo Alto serves chronically unhoused individuals with substance abuse and mental health problems.

The County Food Stamp Pilot Project in collaboration with social Services and five agencies has successfully shortened the time it takes to receive Food Stamps to three days. The County works with the Emergency Assistance network (EAN) to help families avoid evictions by providing one-time assistance with rent and utility bills. EAN agencies also provide training in personal finances, life skills, and tenant-landlord relations.



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Proposed Strategies

1. Facilitate the collaboration among employment agencies and programs (e.g. Work2Future) to create job training and employment opportunities for this population.
2. Apply for future funding from the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMSHA) to continue and expand the “Hardest Hundred Program” where intensive support is given to clients who need help navigating the social service system.
3. Expand the Homeless Management Information system (HMIS) to improve delivery of services to the homeless and measure outcomes for success.
4. Streamline access to benefits by unhoused people to get them the help they need quicker.
5. Expand needed health, mental health, and substance abuse treatment programs.
6. Increase number of employers who will hire formerly homeless individuals.
7. Establish central locations where information on all homeless assistance can be made available to avoid duplication and better serve the clients.
8. Fund security deposit guarantees and increased rental assistance programs to help people get into housing and avoid evictions.