



## Cloverdale Homelessness Community Advisory Group Meeting No. 2

**Meeting: January 14, 2019**

**Tuesday, 1:00-3:30 pm**

Cloverdale Fire District Meeting Room

451 S. Cloverdale Blvd.

Cloverdale, CA 95425

### AGENDA

**Meeting Convener: City of Cloverdale**

TIME	Topics
1:00-1:15	Welcome from Mayor Wolter and Councilmember Brigham <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introductions of Community Advisory Group Members</li> </ul>
1:15-1:30	Overview of Meeting No. 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Advisory Group's scope of work</li> <li>• Anticipated outcomes</li> </ul>
1:30-1:50	Discuss Vision for Success – What is Cloverdale striving to achieve in addressing homelessness?
1:50-2:10	Discussion and Review of Guiding Principles, Goals and Performance Measures in the Framework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The goals are the basis for the Action Plans that will lead to success in addressing homelessness.</li> </ul>
2:10-3:15	Discuss how to measure the success of each action steps.
3:15-3:25	Next steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Next Meeting: February 11, 2020 - 5:00-7:30 pm Cloverdale Fire District – Meeting Room</li> </ul>
3:25-3:30	Concluding remarks (David Kelley, City Manager)



## Cloverdale Homelessness Community Advisory Group

**Meeting: November 26, 2019**  
**Tuesday, 1:00-3:30 pm**  
 Cloverdale Fire District Meeting Room  
 451 S. Cloverdale Blvd.  
 Cloverdale, CA 95425

### DRAFT MINUTES

City Manager Kelley commenced the meeting at 1:00 p.m.

**Introductions** were made. City Council members Brigham and Cruz welcomed the attendees. The following attendees and contact information follow:

Name	Organization	Email
Michael Velasquez	St Vincent de Paul	<a href="mailto:DFCZOA@yahoo.com">DFCZOA@yahoo.com</a>
Colleen Halbohm	Wallace House	<a href="mailto:halbohm@sbcglobal.net">halbohm@sbcglobal.net</a>
Deborah Howell	Alexander Valley Health Care	<a href="mailto:dhowell@alexandervalleyhealthcare.org">dhowell@alexandervalleyhealthcare.org</a>
Blake Manning	Alexander Valley Health Care	<a href="mailto:Bmanning@alexandervalleyhealthcare.org">Bmanning@alexandervalleyhealthcare.org</a>
Tim Duke	Lieutenant, Sheriff Department	<a href="mailto:tim.duke@sonoma-county.org">tim.duke@sonoma-county.org</a>
Carrie Kronberg	Sonoma County Community Development Commission	<a href="mailto:Carrie.kronberg@sonoma-county.org">Carrie.kronberg@sonoma-county.org</a>
Kanssa White	Sonoma County Community Development Commission	<a href="mailto:Kanssa.white@sonoma-county.org">Kanssa.white@sonoma-county.org</a>
Patricia Ruiz	Reach for Home	<a href="mailto:patricr@reachforhome.org">patricr@reachforhome.org</a>
Ana Rangel	Reach for Home	<a href="mailto:ana@reachforhome.org">ana@reachforhome.org</a>
Kevin Thompson	City of Cloverdale	<a href="mailto:kthompson@ci.cloverdale.ca.us">kthompson@ci.cloverdale.ca.us</a>
David Kelley	City of Cloverdale	<a href="mailto:dkelley@ci.cloverdale.ca.us">dkelley@ci.cloverdale.ca.us</a>
Susie Holmes	City of Cloverdale	<a href="mailto:sholmes@ci.cloverdale.ca.us">sholmes@ci.cloverdale.ca.us</a>
Mary Ann Brigham	City Councilmember	<a href="mailto:mbrigham@ci.cloverdale.ca.us">mbrigham@ci.cloverdale.ca.us</a>
Marta Cruz	City Councilmember	<a href="mailto:mcruz@ci.cloverdale.ca.us">mcruz@ci.cloverdale.ca.us</a>
Todd Lands	Cloverdale School Board member	<a href="mailto:tlands@csud.org">tlands@csud.org</a>
Neena Hanchett	Cloverdale Chamber of Commerce	<a href="mailto:neena@cloverdalechamber.org">neena@cloverdalechamber.org</a>

Mr. Kelley explained that the purpose of the group is to develop a regional plan that addresses the homeless issue. He hopes to expand the plan to include the cities of Windsor, Healdsburg, and Cloverdale and the unincorporated county areas in between. Future meeting dates have been scheduled on Tuesdays. The initial kick off meeting scheduled for October 29<sup>th</sup> had to be cancelled due to the fires. Councilmember Brigham asked for evening meetings as requested by the working public. The third meeting date will be changed to 6:00 p.m.

## Overview of CAG Scope of Work

### Overview of state of homelessness in Northern Sonoma County

### Status of homelessness services being provided in Cloverdale

### Strategies/services/supports

### Challenges/Opportunities for Cloverdale

### Define “successful outcome”

Councilmember Bringham hopes to end confusion, to clarify the roles and duties of the various groups, to identify what services are available, to identify problems, to fill in the gaps and to update outreach contacts. Councilmember Cruz concurred and wants and want to engage the Chamber to participate and local businesses. The City needs to provide public showers and bathrooms to help alleviate the impact on the river, local businesses, and law enforcement. She wants the Hispanic community to be included in the discussion.

Michael Velasquez, St. Vincent de Paul, wants the outcome to result in safer communities, and safety for the volunteers. Seniors and families need a safe place to come. Since there is no navigation center in Cloverdale, the closest thing is the church. St Vincent de Paul provides food, clothing, some financial help, and help with utility bills. Other service agencies assist with behavioral health, housing, referrals, etc. They serve meals on Tuesdays, and the budget is supplemented by donations. Mental Health and addiction of the homeless population have impacted the local community and public services. The lack of public bathrooms in town exacerbate the problem. More violence from drug related activities is taking place. The distance of Cloverdale from other areas of the County where services are provided impacts the community. People are unable or unwilling to travel to Santa Rosa and this places more burden on the community.

Ana Rangel, Reach for Home, provides assistance with utility bills, and has funds set up with funding from the community foundation at Umpqua Bank. This helps keep people off the street, and they hope to expand it. North Bay Assistance Fund also helps Reach for Home. They have a subsidized rental assistance program that resets quarterly for those coming out of treatment.

Deborah Howell, Alexander Valley Wellness, runs a referral-based system with resources. The absence of a psychiatrist in Cloverdale exacerbates the problem. Psychiatrists are necessary for medication management. Often there are addiction and mental health issues involved. The local area is lacking in places to refer clients to and there is little to offer those in need. Blake Manning is their addiction specialist.

Colleen Halbohm, Wallace House, commented that sober living facilities such as Wallace House can't participate in Housing First. There is a shortage of beds in sober living facilities, and many of her clients are from outside Cloverdale. She supports reinstatement of the conservatorship program, as many homeless are simply unable to take care of themselves.

Tim Duke, Sonoma County Sheriff, opined that law enforcement is not the answer – both a both short-term and long-term solutions need to be identified and implemented. The County supplies resources for dealing with the homeless.

Neena Hanchett, Cloverdale Chamber of Commerce, represents local businesses, who are often impacted by homeless activities and feel helpless to deal with them. The business community needs to know the available resources and want more visible law enforcement presence downtown.

Carrie Kronberg, Sonoma County Community Development Commission, explained Coordinated Entry: The CE process ensures that people with the most severe service needs and levels of vulnerability are prioritized for housing and homeless assistance. Seniors and disabled persons get priority and are served first. It is a county-wide system for housing (there are different forms of housing throughout the county) but is not for homelessness. Applicants need to have an address, and as such, many homeless do not qualify. Services for rental assistance, transitional housing, emergency housing, navigation services, and housing vouchers can be included in CE. Referrals are done by word-of-mouth, fliers, community education and messaging. There is a lottery for Section 8 Housing. Being on a list does not guarantee that clients will receive housing. Many clients around Cloverdale are not aware of the CE scoring process. Councilmember Brigham commented that the training of the person doing initial intake is essential to the process and, if denied, the client often does not understand why. She encourages homeless people to have an address that they can use when applying for services; otherwise they may be overlooked. Councilmember Brigham asked what the City can do to assist, such as installing public bathrooms downtown.

Rebecca Ennis commented that she wants to end the stigma and misinformation about homelessness in Cloverdale, have community support to do so, and see better outreach programs.

Assistant City Manager/CDC Thompson envisions the outcome to be a referral process that directs people in the right direction and that clarifies who provides what.

2019 data from the Sonoma County Homeless Census and Survey was passed out (attached). Cloverdale's portion was 64 homeless in 2019, up from the prior year. Some have applied for coordinated entry, about half want shelter and housing, and about 6 are on the street. Todd Lands, School Board, said there are about four homeless kids attending school.

**Next Steps:**

Date	Time	Location:
January 14, 2020	1:00 – 3:30 p.m.	Cloverdale Fire Department, 451 S. Cloverdale Blvd, Cloverdale
February 11, 2020	6:00 p.m.	Cloverdale Fire Department, 451 S. Cloverdale Blvd, Cloverdale
March 10, 2020		Cloverdale Fire Department, 451 S. Cloverdale Blvd, Cloverdale
April 7, 2020		Cloverdale Fire Department, 451 S. Cloverdale Blvd, Cloverdale

**Concluding Remarks:** Mr. Kelley stated that he will prepare a draft plan to prevent homelessness before the next meeting and review the vision for success, guiding principles, and identify a clear plan of action.

Mr. Kelley adjourned the meeting at 3:30 to the next meeting on Tuesday, January 14<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m.



# **Draft Homelessness Strategic Plan Framework**

**March 4, 2019**

**Prepared by:**

**City of Cloverdale**

# Acknowledgments

## **Cloverdale City Council**

Mayor Melanie Bagby  
Vice-Mayor Gus Wolter,  
Councilmember Jason Turner,  
Councilmember Marta Cruz  
Councilmember Maryann Brigham

**Governmental, Business, Housing and Community Groups and others who can be enlisted to contribute to development of a Homelessness Strategic Plan**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The City of Cloverdale has developed a Draft Homelessness Strategic Plan Framework to help guide and coordinate efforts to prevent and alleviate homelessness within the Cloverdale community. The Framework is developed by the City of Cloverdale and its community partners to address the homelessness crisis.

In order to identify meaningful, substantive and relevant strategies, the City intends to rely on extensive community input. The core of this Plan is intended to be the Strategic Plan Framework, found in Section V on page 13 of the Plan and presented on the following page of this summary. The framework will outline the Vision for Success, Guiding Principles, and seven primary Goals that the Plan intends to achieve. Each goal will be connected to a series of Supporting Actions, with detailed recommendations for successful implementation. The Supporting Actions will be presented in detail in Section VI. Performance measures will be outlined in Section VII will be used to monitor the effectiveness of the Plan.

This Strategic Plan Framework is intended to align with regional efforts led by Sonoma County. The purpose of the document is to provide a framework for categorizing input provided by the people who live and work in Cloverdale and surrounding unincorporated area and is intended to reflect their understanding of the local conditions, challenges, and opportunities for addressing homelessness here in our community.



## Vision of Success

*Homelessness is declining steadily, as people are finding permanent housing with services as needed, while public safety and health concerns are alleviated.*

Many factors have come together to create this **Vision of Success** in Cloverdale:

- ✓ There is a Plan in place with solid support from all sectors.
- ✓ Our Plan is being implemented by a closely coordinated network of local organizations.
- ✓ Our solutions are responsive to the diverse needs of individuals.
- ✓ It is a sustainable initiative that is fully aligned with a larger regional effort.
- ✓ The City is proactively engaged in homelessness advocacy efforts.
- ✓ The services and supports provided are helping to stabilize lives and create hope for the future.

## Guiding Principles

- We believe a **shared framework** with a **clear Plan of action** will ensure all involved are **working together** to address homelessness in Cloverdale.
- We are striving to develop and implement **long-term solutions** using a **field-based model** to help each individual experiencing homelessness find **permanent housing with supportive services**.
- We believe the **safety and well-being of the community is a priority**, including people experiencing homelessness. Any individual (homeless or otherwise) who commits a criminal act will be prosecuted according to the law.
- Our **Plan is flexible** to adapt to changing conditions over time.
- We assess the effectiveness of our Plan to address homelessness by **tracking outcomes** that are meaningful indicators of success.
- We recognize homelessness is not a crime;
- 
- We understand **community awareness and involvement** in our initiative is critical to our success.
- We recognize that those experiencing homelessness are **unique individuals** with diverse needs requiring a **tailored case management approach** founded on **trust and respect** for each individual.

## Goals

1. Reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness in Cloverdale by providing access to temporary and permanent housing solutions within Sonoma County.
2. Prevent and mitigate any public health and public safety impacts on the community stemming from homelessness.
3. Implement programs to prevent homelessness among residents of Cloverdale.
4. Provide coordinated outreach and supportive services to homeless individuals and families that promote self-sufficiency and personal stability.
5. Increase community awareness of the Cloverdale homeless initiative, it's progress, and successes.
6. Advocate for systemic changes at the county, state, and federal levels that will strengthen efforts to prevent and reduce homelessness.
7. Develop governance infrastructure to facilitate collaboration, provide oversight, and support development of this framework and implementation of homelessness strategic Plan.

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## *I. INTRODUCTION*

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### **Purpose of Strategic Plan**

The City of Cloverdale is developing a draft strategic Plan to increase efforts to prevent and alleviate homelessness within the City. The increasing presence of people experiencing homelessness has led to public health and safety concerns, along with a desire to provide compassionate, effective solutions. Community organizations, the City, and residents in Cloverdale have already taken steps to help the homeless living in our community and have provided funding or labor to support these efforts.

Given the complex nature of the homeless challenge, however, a more coordinated, integrated effort is now required. The challenge is bigger than any single public or private entity or local city acting on its own can surmount. The purpose of developing the Plan collaboratively is to leverage existing resources, identify new strategies and resources, and align with a regionwide Homeless Initiative that is being led by the County of Sonoma. Success requires an overarching strategy and shared goals that will tie all our actions together toward a common purpose.

To create this shared framework for action, the City is reaching out to form a Community Advisory Group consisting of community members, business interests, not-for-profits and faith-based organizations who can help address the challenge of homelessness. The Goal of the City is to establish the Cloverdale Homelessness Task Force to hold a series of meetings, wherein advisory group members will share their ideas and views based on their experience working with and interacting with the homeless, and to help input has form the core content of a Homeless Strategic Plan. The Plan should be designed to be a three-five-year Plan

## Overview of the Strategic Plan

Following this introduction, **Section II** of the Strategic Plan provides an overview of the current state of homelessness in Cloverdale and a description of past and current efforts to reach out to and help the homeless members of our community. This section also describes how the Cloverdale Plan relates to and supports the larger regional efforts being undertaken by the County of Sonoma to address homelessness.

**Section III** is an overview of some of the best practices from other cities and counties around the country.

**Section IV** portrays the community outreach and Planning process used to generate information for development of this Plan. Findings from the outreach including stakeholder interviews and a community survey are provided in the appendices, separately

**Section V** contains the strategic Plan framework, which is the core of this Planning document. It consists of a Vision for Success, Guiding Principles, seven primary Goals, and their corresponding Performance Measures.

- The Vision for Success describes the desired impact on homelessness we are striving to achieve in the future through the successful implementation of this strategic Plan.
- Guiding Principles are the long term, underlying beliefs and values that have shaped our approach to the homelessness challenge.
- Goals are broad statements of direction that define the key results we are striving to achieve.
- Performance Measures are the metrics that will be used to monitor the progress of the Plan and to provide feedback if there is a need to modify the Plan to achieve its goals.

**Section VI** presents the Goals with Supporting Actions that will be carried out to achieve each Goal. There is a specific Action Plan for each Goal, which identifies the supporting actions along with:

- An organization that will have lead responsibility for that action
- Supporting partners that will work with the lead agency,
- Required resources, and
- Estimated timeframe for implementation.

**Section VII** concludes with a directory of resources for addressing homelessness, including ways for members of Cloverdale community to join this effort and for individuals experiencing homelessness to seek help.

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## II. BACKGROUND

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### State of Homelessness in Sonoma County Cloverdale

The biennial homeless count for Sonoma County conducted on January 23, 2015 found 3,107 people who were homeless on a single night: 4 • 1,037 (33%) were “sheltered”, sleeping in emergency shelters or transitional housing • 2,070 (67%) were “unsheltered”, sleeping in encampments, abandoned buildings, vehicles, and other outdoor areas An annualization formula using count demographics estimates that 5,574 people – more than 1% of the County’s population – experience homelessness over the course of a year

### State of Homelessness in Sonoma County Cloverdale

In recent years, Cloverdale has seen a substantial increase in the number of homeless living in our community. Homelessness in Cloverdale is not a recent phenomenon, but the homeless surge is. According to the most recently available data (Source: 2015 Sonoma Homeless Count by Jurisdiction Homeless Unsheltered and Sheltered Persons by Region and Jurisdiction- Applied Survey Research, 2015, p. 17), the number of homeless in Cloverdale consist of 43 unsheltered and 6 sheltered individuals for a total of 49 homeless.

Based on anecdotal evidence the number of unsheltered homeless individuals in Cloverdale has grown from 2015 to the present. In order to be effective, it is recommended that the following categories of homeless be categorized:

- \_\_\_\_ persons living on the Street / Russian River
- \_\_\_\_ persons living in Makeshift Shelters
- \_\_\_\_ persons living in Cars
- \_\_\_\_ persons living in RVs/Campers
- \_\_\_\_ persons living in Tents
- \_\_\_\_ persons living in Vans

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<sup>1</sup> A new homeless count will be conducted on <date, 2018>. Data from that count has not yet been released at the time of this writing.

## **Community Efforts to Address Homelessness**

Efforts to help the homeless in Cloverdale have been underway for many years, including several community-led initiatives. It is extremely likely that the number of homeless in Cloverdale would be even higher than it is today were it not for the dedicated efforts of these groups, most of whom collaborate with each other while receiving financial support from the City of Cloverdale.

*Wallace House Homeless Services Emergency, Transitional & Supportive Housing*

*Reach for Home*

*Alexander Valley Healthcare*

*St. Vincent de Paul @ St. Peter's Church*

*Catholic Charities*

# City of Cloverdale and Sonoma County Homeless Programs

## ***City of Cloverdale***

The City of Cloverdale works to address issues regarding affordable housing and homelessness on many fronts including providing funding and/or staff support to the community-based initiatives described in the previous pages.

## ***Sonoma County***

Sonoma County works together with other local jurisdictions to reduce homelessness through a variety of planning and funding processes. Sonoma County's Coordinated Intake Project offers a single access point for intake into all homeless services. Beginning in February 2015, families with children who are currently experiencing homelessness may enroll in the Coordinated Intake project by dialing 2-1-1 during business hours.

The Sonoma is staffed by volunteers who provide the link between people who have needs with the services that can alleviate those needs. Click on the link above or simply dial 2-1-1 on your phone.

The Sonoma County Taskforce for the Homeless publishes the [Homeless Resource Guide](#) listing many governmental agencies, housing authorities and non-profit organizations that provide housing and supportive services to homeless people throughout Sonoma.

## ***Sonoma County Sheriff County***

The Sonoma County Sheriff's Office (SCSO) is responsible for providing law enforcement services in Sonoma County. The SCSO is a critical partner for addressing crime in the unincorporated area around Sonoma County.

# Cloverdale Homelessness Program and Sonoma County Building HOMES: A Policy Maker’s Toolbox for Ending Homeless

Many cities in Sonoma County including the City of Cloverdale are broadening the collective impact by undertaking local Planning initiatives to combat homelessness.

## [A Policy Maker’s Toolbox for ending homelessness by 2025.](#)

On August 25th, 2015, the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors in their role as the Sonoma County Community Development Commission, embraced the Toolbox as the focus for a vast ten year effort to end homelessness in all communities of Sonoma County. Built upon best practices and demonstrating the depth of the challenges before cities and the County, the Toolbox is a comprehensive set of options (or “tools”) for use to provide safe, secure and sustainable homes for those most in need. This effort will begin with the development of an Implementation Plan which will be brought back to the Board and the launching of a robust effort to build new collaboration among all interest working to end the tragedy of homelessness.”

The Sonoma County Toolbox is focused on three strategic objectives. The objectives to support the Toolbox prime Goal to reduce the number of homeless persons to zero is to focus on 1.) Housing, 2.) Income, and 3.) Health as identified by the Continuum of Care’s 10-Year Homeless Action Plan 2014 Update.

Many of the regional strategies that support these key areas are beyond the capabilities of a city the size of Cloverdale with no housing authority or dedicated homeless services infrastructure. However, the City of Cloverdale is actively working with Sonoma County to support the regional effort and Cloverdale’s Homelessness Strategic Plan includes meaningful contributions, as follows:

### ***Prevent Homelessness***

Cloverdale Goal 3: Implement programs to prevent homelessness among residents of Cloverdale.

### ***Provide Case Management and Services***

Cloverdale Goal 4, Supporting Action 4a: Provide field-based outreach to connect homeless individuals with services and permanent housing options.

### ***Create a Coordinated System***

Cloverdale Goal 4, Supporting Action 4c: Establish regular communication among all who regularly interact with the homeless in order to share information.

Cloverdale Goal 7c. Align the Cloverdale program with the Sonoma County Housing Toolbox and coordinate with nearby cities on shared strategies.

The City of Cloverdale Homelessness Strategic Plan Framework provides a framework to coordinate and leverage the local community-initiated efforts undertaken in recent years by organizations such as the Wallace House, and the faith-based community. A Homelessness Community Advisory Group that will be appointed by the City Council (Goal 7, Supporting Action 7a) will serve as the primary forum for this coordination.



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### III. BEST PRACTICES FOR ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS

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Communities throughout the nation and California are engaged in efforts to address and alleviate homelessness. While some strategies have proven more effective than others in practice, the process of learning what works best continues. The “best practice” model for identifying effective approaches has proven effective through rigorous scientific research in other fields and can be adapted and applied to other contexts such as this. The *Homelessness Task Force Report* recently released by the League of California Cities and the California State Association of Counties features numerous case studies of current best practices applied by cities and counties throughout California. The following paragraphs offer a brief overview of current best practices specifically applied to address homelessness.

#### **Housing First**

The Housing First strategy provides homeless persons safe and secure housing with few or any preconditions and includes needed supportive services with that housing. This approach reverses the traditional shelter model that requires people without homes to demonstrate they are “housing ready” by undergoing treatment for issues such as drug and alcohol addictions or mental health problems. The Housing First model first removes or reduces financial barriers for those with substance use issues, poor credit or financial history, or past involvement with the criminal justice system. This model is used successfully in communities across the nation and provides homeless individuals with a stable environment in which to improve their mental and physical health, as well as their future employability and capacity to live independently.

“Housing First” is a proven strategy for ending all types of homelessness and has been demonstrated to be the most effective overall approach to ending chronic homelessness. Housing First offers people immediate access to permanent housing and provides any needed services after they are in a safe and stable living environment. The Housing First model yields higher success in treatment outcomes, higher housing retention rates, lower returns to homelessness, and significant reductions in the use of crisis services, hospitals, jails, and other institutions. (Source: National Alliance to End Homelessness)

#### **Rapid Rehousing**

The Rapid Rehousing approach is designed to help homeless individuals and families entering the emergency shelter and transitional housing system to quickly exit homelessness and return to permanent housing. It is a version of the Housing First strategy that is particularly effective for those who have only recently become homeless and remain open and willing to receive assistance. This assistance is typically in the form of temporary rental assistance and case management to stabilize and maintain their housing once it has been established.

#### **Supportive Housing**

Supportive Housing is a variation of the Housing First strategy designed for people experiencing chronic homelessness, or those leaving institutional and restrictive settings. It provides affordable housing in combination with an array of on-site services such as case management, substance abuse

or mental health counseling, advocacy, independent living skills, child care, and employment services. It is “permanent” in that it is not time limited and is not transitional. Housing tenants are not expected to pay more than 30 percent of their income toward rent and utilities.

## **Coordinated Outreach Teams**

Coordinated Outreach Teams identify and engage with people experiencing chronic homelessness and link them to housing and services. The outreach is person-centered and intended to build rapport and trust over time to help them accept the assistance they need. Outreach teams may include Sonoma Law enforcement officers as well as health and human service representatives and clinicians.

## **Landlord Outreach**

Landlords are provided financial incentives to encourage them to rent units to homeless individuals or families. Incentives can include payments to hold the rental unit while a tenant is being referred, money for the security deposit, and financial assistance to the landlord to mitigate any potential damage caused by tenants.

## **Homeless Prevention**

Prevention assistance can help individuals and families preserve their current housing situation and avoid becoming homeless in the first place. This may take the form of short-term rental assistance to prevent evictions or more long-term support through vocational and job training to increase self-reliance and earning potential.

## **Coordinated Entry System (CES)**

CES is an assessment process designed to quickly identify, assess, refer and connect people in crisis to housing and assistance no matter where they initially ask for help. It is a shared tool that is used by homeless programs working collaboratively within a community to match people experiencing homelessness to the most appropriate housing and services. CES is meant to help people move through the system faster by reducing the amount of time they spend moving from one program to another before finding the right match. It can also reduce homelessness by offering prevention and diversion services upfront when that is the most appropriate solution, rather than entering the homelessness system.

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## IV. PLANNING PROCESS

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Homelessness is an issue that affects everyone, and any strategies designed to prevent and alleviate homelessness should have community involvement. The City intends to reach out to the community for its help to help develop a Homelessness Strategic Plan, understanding that if it were to be an effective guide for the work to come, the Plan must be based on public knowledge of local conditions, challenges, and opportunities for addressing homelessness. With this goal in mind, the City designed a process centered on public participation and input to help address homelessness.

Community participation will encompass the following

1. Direct interviews of community groups with knowledge about homelessness,
2. an on-line survey, and
3. an advisory group composed of 20-30 community members, who have prior extensive experience with the homeless.

The process will begin with stakeholder interviews held with five – ten community leaders who will share their insights based on their experience with the homeless. Complementing these in-person interviews will be a questionnaire sent out to all members of the Community Advisory Group (CAG) that will explore many of the same topics covered in the interviews.

Information generated by the interviews and the questionnaire responses will be utilized to develop an online survey posted on the City of Cloverdale’s public website. Results from all outreach (including survey results received to date) will be shared with the CAG during its first meeting in 2019. A summary of the community outreach results will be made available on the City’s website.

The CAG shall meet three times to generate the overall structure, content and substance of the Strategic Plan.

### Meeting One

During the first meeting the CAG will utilize their own expertise to clarify homeless issues, challenges, and opportunities facing Cloverdale and define what “success” would look like—what the Plan should aspire to and what they believed the community would support.

### Meeting Two

At the second meeting, the CAG shall be presented with a draft vision for success and an initial set of goals and proposed actions for achieving these goals, derived from input provided during the prior meeting. CAG members will review and refine the draft materials and refine the draft vision and goals of the Strategic Plan Framework and to craft the actions that would be carried out to implement them effectively.

### Meeting Three

During the third and final meeting, the CAG shall determine the need for additional goals, continue to refine action Plans, and considered potential performance measures that would be used to monitor the progress of the Plan once implementation begins. A Draft Strategic Plan will be finalized after it is shared with the public in a community meeting to be held in 2019, after which it will be presented to the Cloverdale City Council.

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## V. STRATEGIC PLAN FRAMEWORK

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The core of the Homelessness Strategic Plan is expressed by the strategic Plan framework, which is defined by the following elements:

**Vision for Success:** The preferred future that the City and community of Cloverdale are striving to achieve through their efforts to address homelessness.

**Guiding Principles:** The beliefs, principles and values that guided the development of the Plan and its implementation.

**Goals:** The key outcomes that must be accomplished to achieve the vision and around which all actions are organized

**Performance Measures:** The indicators that will be used to monitor the progress of the Homelessness Strategic Plan and to provide feedback to modify the Plan if needed to achieve its goals.

### Our Vision of Success

*Homelessness is declining steadily, as people are finding permanent housing with services as needed, while public safety and health concerns are alleviated.*

Many factors have come together to create this **Vision of Success** in Cloverdale:

- ✓ There is a Plan in place with solid support from all sectors.
- ✓ Our Plan is being implemented by a closely coordinated network of local organizations.
- ✓ Our solutions are responsive to the diverse needs of individuals.
- ✓ It is a sustainable initiative that is fully aligned with a larger regional effort.
- ✓ The City is proactively engaged in homelessness advocacy efforts.
- ✓ The services and supports provided are helping to stabilize lives and create hope for the future.

## Guiding Principles

- We believe a **shared framework** with a **clear Plan of action** will ensure all involved are **working together** to address homelessness in Cloverdale.
- We are striving to develop and implement **long-term solutions** using a **field-based model** to help each individual experiencing homelessness find **permanent housing with supportive services**.
- We believe the **safety and well-being of the community is a priority**, including people experiencing homelessness.
- Our **Plan is flexible** to adapt to changing conditions over time.
- We assess the effectiveness of our Plan to address homelessness by **tracking outcomes** that are meaningful indicators of success.
- **We recognize homelessness is not a crime.**
- We understand **community awareness and involvement** in our initiative is critical to our success.
- We recognize that those experiencing homelessness are **unique individuals** with diverse needs requiring a **tailored case management approach** founded on **trust and respect** for everyone.

## Goals

1. Reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness in Cloverdale by providing access to temporary and permanent housing solutions within Sonoma County.
2. Prevent and mitigate any public health and public safety impacts on the community stemming from homelessness.
3. Implement programs to prevent homelessness among residents of Cloverdale.
4. Provide coordinated outreach and supportive services to homeless individuals and families that promote self-sufficiency and personal stability.
5. Increase community awareness of the Cloverdale homeless initiative, its progress, and successes.
6. Advocate for systemic changes at the county, state, and federal levels that will strengthen efforts to prevent and reduce homelessness.
7. Develop governance infrastructure to facilitate collaboration, provide oversight, and support implementation of the homelessness strategic Plan.

## Performance Measures

Measure	Data Source	Goal
Number of people experiencing homelessness in Cloverdale	Annual Homeless Count/Sonoma County	Goal 1 Homelessness Reduction
Number of homeless that are off the streets, i.e. housed in interim housing or stable permanent housing	Not-For Profits Sonoma County	Goal 1 Homelessness Reduction
Number of calls for service regarding homeless individuals	Cloverdale Police Dept. Sonoma County Sheriff	Goal 2 Public Safety
Number of known encampments	City of Cloverdale	Goal 2 Public Safety
Number of Cloverdale residents at risk of becoming homeless that were able to retain housing due to local efforts	City of Cloverdale	Goal 3 Homelessness Prevention
Number of homeless who have consented to receive homeless services		Goal 4 Outreach/Support
Increased community awareness and support for services provided to the homeless in Cloverdale	Options – complaint log, media coverage, social media counts, community survey	Goal 5 Community Awareness

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## *VI. ACTION PLANS*

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This section will present the detailed Action Plans identified by the Community Advisory Group as the means for achieving the goals of the strategic Plan. There is one action Plan for each of the seven goals.

**Goal 1:** Reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness in Cloverdale by providing access to temporary and permanent housing solutions within Sonoma County.

Supporting Actions		Lead	Partner(s)	Resources	Timeline
<b>1a.</b>	Conduct outreach to encourage landlords to accept housing and rental subsidies for the homeless.	Sonoma County City	TBD		Mid-term
<b>1b.</b>	Establish a flexible spending account funded by donations and City grants which helps fund rapid rehousing and other related services for homeless individuals.	Community Organization	Homeless Service Providers Community Stakeholders	City and Private Grants	Mid-term
<b>1c.</b>	Explore the feasibility of developing a new building or converting an existing building to provide bridge/permanent housing.	Community Organization City	City County Non-Profit or For-Profit Developers		Long-term
<b>1d.</b>	Explore creative housing solutions to create more affordable housing.	Community Organization	City County Non-Profit or For-Profit Developers		Long-term



**Goal 2:** Prevent and mitigate any public health and public safety impacts on the community stemming from homelessness.

Supporting Actions		Lead	Partner(s)	Resources	Timeline
<b>2a.</b>	Expand public safety enforcement and surveillance capacity by organizing and training volunteers to support the Police Department, Sonoma County Sheriff and Cloverdale Fire Departments.	City Sonoma County Sherriff Cloverdale Fire	Private property owners Arson Watch		Short-term
<b>2b.</b>	Provide access to temporary housing during red flag warnings or local flooding incidents through vouchers that can be used at motels and local shelters.	County	City		Short-term
<b>2c.</b>	Reduce fire risk through an encampment management initiative designed to ensure that fire restricted zones are not used by the homeless or other community members for illegal camping.	Cloverdale Fire City	Sheriff Fire Faith-based Institutions Arson Watch	Sheriff	Ongoing
<b>2d.</b>	Develop strategies for increasing access to sanitation facilities (showers and bathrooms) for the homeless.	County City	City, Stakeholders	County Parks	Short-term
<b>2e.</b>	Develop a Plan to prevent and mitigate potential safety impacts on private property residential neighborhoods and travel ways near encampments.	City	Stakeholders County	Sheriff	Short-term
<b>2f.</b>	Seek opportunities to improve coordinated outreach to homeless in congregating in the Downtown Business District.	Reach for Home Catholic Charities Sonoma County	City Faith-based Institutions		Mid-term
<b>2g.</b>	Request help from a peer-advocate group of the homeless (see action 4h) to improve cooperation between Police, Sheriff deputies and the homeless community.	TBD	St. Josephs Center Sonoma County Sheriff		Short-term

**Goal 3:** Implement programs to prevent homelessness among residents of Cloverdale.

Supporting Actions		Lead	Partner(s)	Resources	Timeline
<b>3a.</b>	Create a mechanism to identify and assist individuals or families at imminent risk of becoming homeless (such as receiving an eviction notice).	Community Organization County	City		Short-term
<b>3b.</b>	Implement an emergency housing fund to assist Cloverdale residents who are at risk of becoming homeless. (complements action 1b.	Community Organization	City Foundations United Way Donors	City Grants	Short-term
<b>3c.</b>	Establish a pilot inter-generational affordable housing program for single moms and their children, students, and seniors modeled after Home4Veterans that uses “sweat equity” to empower individuals and build community.	Community Organization Wallace House	City		Long-term
<b>3d.</b>	Support establishment of new revenue sources for funding programs for the homeless and implementation of a Homelessness Strategic Plan.	City	Chamber of Commerce		Mid-term
<b>3e.</b>	Explore strategies to encourage developers to provide more affordable housing by allowing increased density for projects that set aside a minimum percentage for affordable units.	City	Chamber of Commerce		Long-term

**Goal 4:** Provide coordinated outreach and supportive services to homeless individuals and families that promote self-sufficiency and personal stability.

Supporting Actions		Lead	Partner(s)	Resources	Timeline
4a.	Provide field-based outreach to connect homeless individual with services and permanent housing options.	Not for Profit	City St. Joseph Catholic Charities	City St. Joseph	Ongoing
4b.	Use the {Name of Facility or location} as a centrally located facility for providing meals and services to the homeless.	County of Sonoma	County City Faith-Based Organizations	TBD	Short-term
4c.	Establish regular communication among all who regularly interact with the homeless to share information.	City Reach for Home Community Organization	Sheriff Faith-Based Organizations	Technology	Short-term
4d.	Expand outreach to homeless individuals by using trained volunteer teams to remain in touch with the homeless population.	Community Organization	Non-profits Faith-Based Organizations	Community members	Ongoing
4e.	Establish partnership with Sonoma State University social work students and faculty to strengthen local outreach capacity.	City		Sonoma State Univserity	Short-term
4f.	Expand availability and access to case management services in Cloverdale.	City/County	Alexander Valley Health	St. Josephs	Short-term
4g.	Incorporate best practices for addressing homelessness from other municipalities which are applicable to Cloverdale.	City	Chamber Faith-Based Organizations Non-profits		Short-term and Ongoing
4h.	Create a peer-advocate group to self-regulate the homeless community.	Not-for-Profit	Non-profits Faith-Based Organizations		Short Term
4i	Partner with local businesses and not-for-profits to identify jobs for the homeless.	Community Organization	City Chamber of Commerce		On-going

**Goal 5:** Increase community awareness of the Cloverdale homeless initiative, it's progress, and successes.

Supporting Actions		Lead	Partner(s)	Resources	Timeline
<b>5a</b>	Implement strategies to change the public perception of affordable housing by demonstrating it meets the real need of members of the Cloverdale community (e.g. seniors).	City	County Future Stakeholders	TBD	Short Term & Ongoing
<b>5b.</b>	Host regular community meetings and educational workshops to improve community understanding of homelessness and progress in implementing the Homelessness Strategic Plan.	City	Faith-Based Organizations	City Hall Library Cloverdale High School	Short Term & Ongoing
<b>5c.</b>	Create and disseminate FAQs.	City	Chamber Service providers Non-profits		Short Term & Ongoing
<b>5d.</b>	Create a website.	City	Community Stakeholders	Volunteer / Staff Time	Short Term & Ongoing
<b>5e.</b>	Develop a social media strategy for the Community to keep them informed about Homelessness.	City	Community Stakeholders	Local Press	Short Term & Ongoing
<b>5f.</b>	Promote hotlines for the homeless living in Cloverdale.	City	County	Sonoma County 2-1-1 SONOMA County Homeless Outreach	Short Term & Ongoing

**Goal 6:** Advocate for systemic change at the county, state, and federal levels that will strengthen efforts to prevent and reduce homelessness.

Supporting Actions		Lead	Partner(s)	Resources	Timeline
<b>6a.</b>	Work with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to reform housing voucher rules and restrictions that will broaden housing opportunities for the homeless.	County of Sonoma	City of Cloverdale		
<b>6b.</b>	Collaborate with other local agencies to lobby for policy changes in the criminal justice system to help prevent and reduce homelessness.	County of Sonoma	City of Cloverdale		
<b>6c.</b>	Collaborate with other local agencies to lobby at a state and national level to expand and improve mental health services to reduce the number of mentally ill individuals who are living on the street.	County of Sonoma	City of Cloverdale		
<b>6d.</b>	Advocate for a system-wide assessment of the capacity and effectiveness of homelessness programs and services available in Sonoma County.	County of Sonoma	City of Cloverdale		
<b>6e.</b>	Advocate for budget allocations at the city, county, state, and federal levels to increase funding for programs that prevent and end homelessness.	County of Sonoma	City of Cloverdale		

**Goal 7:** Develop governance infrastructure to facilitate collaboration, provide oversight, and support implementation of the homelessness strategic Plan.

Supporting Actions		Lead	Partner(s)	Resources	Timeline
<b>7a.</b>	Establish a 10 to 20-member Working Group on homelessness to oversee the implementation of the homeless initiatives in Cloverdale.	City	Homeless Service Providers Community Stakeholders County	Community Advisory Group for Homelessness	Short term
<b>7b.</b>	Increase the City's capacity to manage all matters related to homelessness in Cloverdale.	City			Short-term
<b>7c.</b>	Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Homelessness Strategic Plan through the Performance Measures (page 17).	City	County Sheriff's Department		Short Term & Ongoing
<b>7d.</b>	Align the Cloverdale program with other Sonoma County Homeless Initiatives and coordinate with nearby cities on shared strategies.	City	Homeless Service Providers Community Stakeholders		Ongoing

## VII. CLOVERDALE HOMELESSNESS RESOURCES

The following are organizations and resources available in Cloverdale to assist the homeless, to respond to concerns and questions about the homeless, and that offer volunteer opportunities for those who wish to be more involved in responding to the needs in our community.

Provider	Services	Contact Information
Alexander Valley Healthcare 6 Tarman Drive Cloverdale, CA 95425  <a href="http://www.alexandervalleyhealthcare.org">www.alexandervalleyhealthcare.org</a>	Intensive case care management/Whole Person Care for homeless Housing vouchers Mental & physical Health care. Substance abuse treatment. Application assistance for CalFresh (food stamps) & MediCal	Call front desk to schedule appointment <b>(707) 894-4229</b>
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH Community Mental Health Center	Mental health & psychiatric services for homeless	Sky Ashley (707) 271-2532 Mental Health Clinician
Crisis Stabilization Unit/Sonoma County Behavioral Health	Psychiatric services for homeless in crisis	(707) 576-8181 <u>Please also call 911</u>
<b>HOST</b> (homeless outreach services team) Catholic Charities	Homeless street outreach and onsite services into the camps.	Giselle Lafayette <a href="mailto:glafayette@srcharities.org">glafayette@srcharities.org</a> (707) 867-6187 (707) 525-0226 x224
Coordinated Entry/Intake Catholic Charities  SONOMA COUNTY ONE-STOP	Performs assessments using vulnerability Index Survey (Vi-SPDAT). Chronically homeless with high scores are prioritized for shelter & housing. Service navigation	Kaitlyn Carney Service Navigator <a href="mailto:kcarney@srcharities.org">kcarney@srcharities.org</a> (707) 791-8968 - cell (866) 542-5480 – main #
Reach for Home <a href="http://www.reachforhome.org">www.reachforhome.org</a> 443 Hudson Street Healdsburg, CA 95448	Street Outreach (camps) Transportation for homeless to appointments Housing-First (no sobriety requirements) for their transitional & supportive housing	Colleen Carmichael <a href="mailto:colleen@reachforhome.org">colleen@reachforhome.org</a> (707) 433-6161 Office (707) 331-0694 cell Rick Caferatta (707) 889-5496
St. Vincent de Paul @ St. Peter's Church 491 South Franklin Cloverdale, CA 95425 Tuesday mornings 9:30 to 11:00 a.m.	Service navigation for homeless for shelter & Housing referrals Food & clothing distribution Financial assistance Bus tickets	Michael Velasquez (650) 867-4465 <a href="mailto:Dfc20a@yahoo.com">Dfc20a@yahoo.com</a>
<b>Wallace House</b> <a href="http://www.wallacehouse.org">www.wallacehouse.org</a>	Clean & sober transitional & supportive housing Referrals & service navigation	Colleen Halbohm Executive Director <a href="mailto:halbohm@sbcglobal.net">halbohm@sbcglobal.net</a> (707) 292-4785
<b>National Suicide Prevention hotline</b>  <b>North Bay Suicide Hotline</b>	For anyone struggling, trained, compassionate people ready to listen	1 (800) 273-8255  1 (855) 587-6373



# Sonoma County

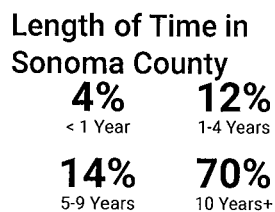
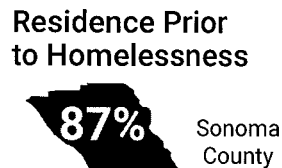
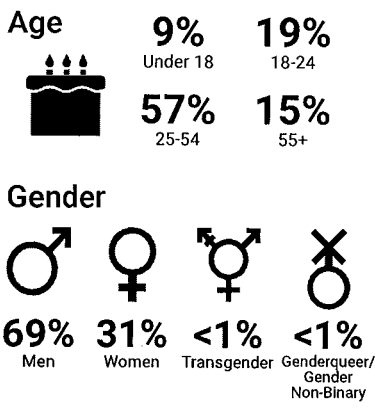
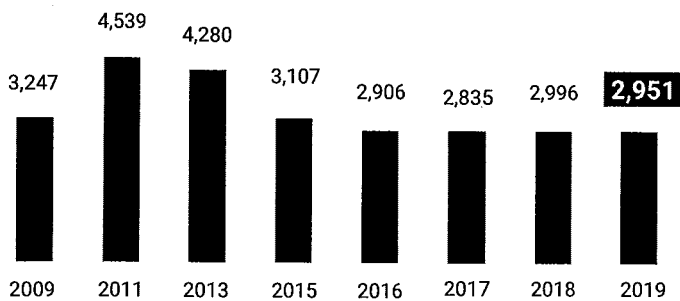
## Homeless Census & Survey

### 2019 Executive Summary

Every two years during the last 10 days of January, communities across the country conduct comprehensive counts of the local homeless populations in order to measure the prevalence of homelessness in each local Continuum of Care.

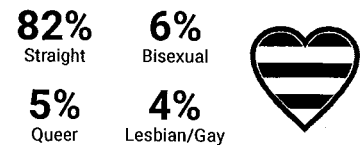
The 2019 Sonoma County Point-in-Time Count was a community-wide effort conducted on January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2019. In the weeks following the street count, a survey was administered to 2,951 unsheltered and sheltered individuals experiencing homelessness in order to profile their experience and characteristics.

#### Census Population: Longitudinal Trend



#### Sexual Orientation

Top Responses\*

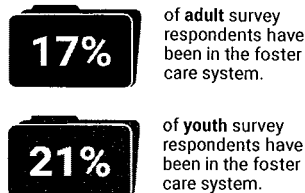


#### Race

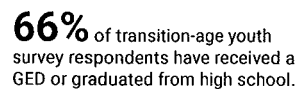
Top Responses\*



#### Foster Care



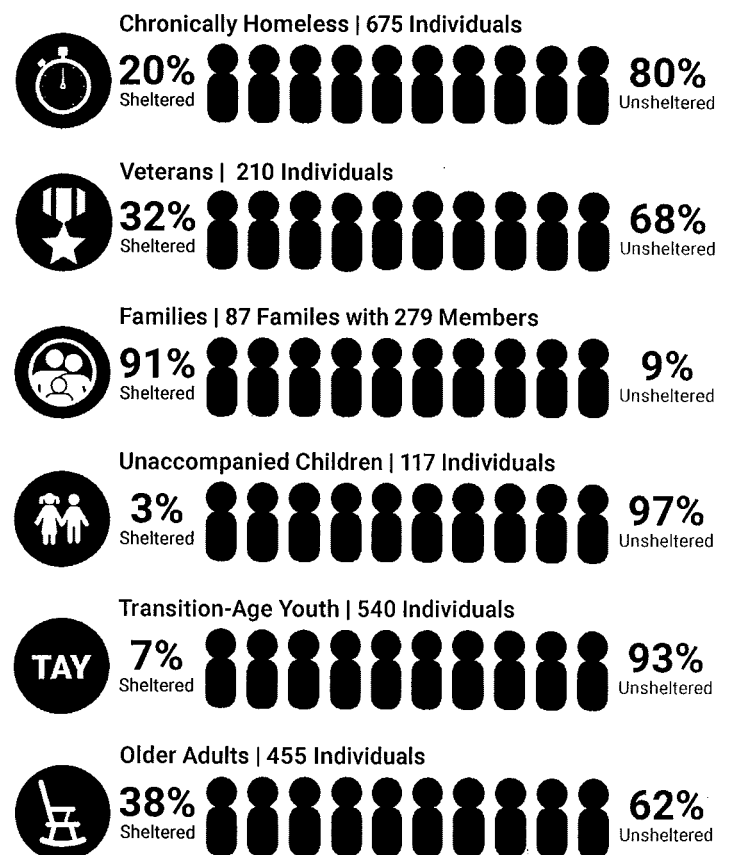
#### Educational Attainment



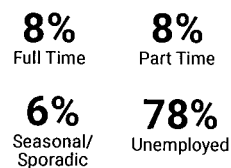
#### 2019 Sheltered/ Unsheltered Population



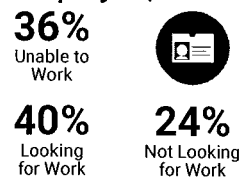
#### Subpopulation\* Data



#### Employment Status



#### If Unemployed, Currently...



## First Episode of Homelessness

**30%** indicated their current episode of homelessness was their first.

**44%** of those respondents were homeless for one year or more.

## History of Domestic Violence

**34%** reported they had experienced domestic violence.



## Sex Trade Involvement

**16%** traded sex for money or a place to stay.

**7%** have a history of being trafficked.

## Primary Event or Condition That Led to Homelessness\*

Top 4 Responses\*

**19%** Lost Job   **18%** Argument with Family/Friend   **16%** Alcohol or Drug Use   **12%** Eviction

## Age at First Episode of Homelessness



**17%** 0-17   **33%** 18-24   **36%** 25-49   **14%** 50+

## Obstacles to Permanent Housing\*

Top 4 Responses\*

**68%** Can't Afford Rent   **48%** No Job/Not Enough Income   **25%** No Money for Moving Costs   **24%** No Housing Available

## Duration of Current Episode of Homelessness

**9%** 30 Days or Less   **34%** 1-11 Months   **57%** 1 Year or More



## Self-Reported Health\*

Current health conditions that may affect the housing stability or employment of those experiencing homelessness.



**38%**

Alcohol & Drug Abuse



**35%**

Psychiatric/Emotional Conditions



**25%**

Physical Disability



**25%**

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder



**23%**

Chronic Health Problems



**9%**

Traumatic Brain Injury



**3%**

HIV/ AIDS Related Illness

## Disabling Conditions

**42%** of survey respondents reported having at least one disabling condition.



A disabling condition is defined by HUD as a developmental disability, HIV/AIDS, or a long-term physical or mental impairment that impacts a person's ability to live independently but could be improved with stable housing.

## Interest in Permanent Housing



**89%** of survey respondents said they would like affordable permanent housing if it became available soon.

## Government Services and Assistance

**71%** of survey respondents reported receiving government benefits.



## Reasons for Not Receiving Any Government Assistance\*

Top 6 Responses\*

**31%** Don't Think I'm Eligible   **24%** Don't Want Government Assistance   **15%** No Permanent Address   **12%** Don't Have ID   **11%** Applied and Waiting for Response   **11%** Never Applied

## Non-Government Services Currently Accessing\*

Top 6 Responses\*

**60%** Free Meals   **44%** Bus Passes   **40%** Emergency Shelter   **27%** Shelter Day Services   **26%** Health Services   **18%** Mental Health Services

## \*Subpopulation Definitions

### Chronically Homeless

An individual with one or more disabling conditions or a family with a head of household with a disabling condition who:

- » Has been continuously homeless for 1 year or more and/or;
- » Has experienced 4 or more episodes of homelessness within the past 3 years.

### Veterans

Persons who have served on active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States. This does not include inactive military reserves or the National Guard unless the person was called up to active duty.

### Families

A household with at least one adult member (persons 18 or older) and at least one child member (persons under 18).

### Unaccompanied Youth & Transition-Age Youth (TAY)

Children under the age of 18 and young adults between the ages of 18 and 24 years old (TAY) who are experiencing homelessness and living without a parent or legal guardian.

+ Multiple response question, results may not add up to 100%.

Δ Only displaying top responses.

Note: Some percentages have been rounded so total percentage will equal 100%.

The complete comprehensive report includes a more detailed profile of the characteristics of those experiencing homelessness in Sonoma County. It will be available in summer 2019.

Source: Applied Survey Research, 2019, Sonoma County Homeless Census & Survey, San Jose, CA.

# Sonoma County

## Community-Wide Telephone Survey

### 2019 Executive Summary



In January 2019, Sonoma County and ASR implemented a representative, telephone-based household survey to understand the impacts of the fall 2017 fires. A total of 1,132 valid surveys were conducted in this additional assessment of unstably housed and fire-affected populations.

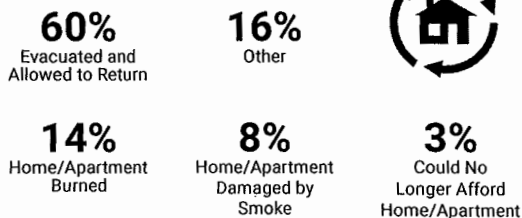
These data are intended to assist service providers, policy makers, funders, and local and state governments in gaining a better understanding of how the 2017 fires affected the county at large and the characteristics of those who are not homeless but lack a residence of their own.

#### Temporarily Housed Population

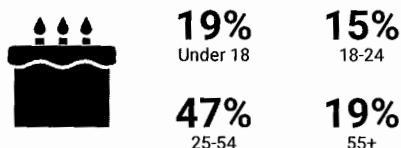
Temporarily Housed | 21,725 Individuals



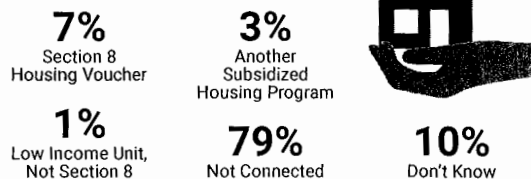
#### How Housing Situations Were Impacted by the Fires



#### Temporary Residents by Age



#### Temporary Residents and Connection to Housing Assistance



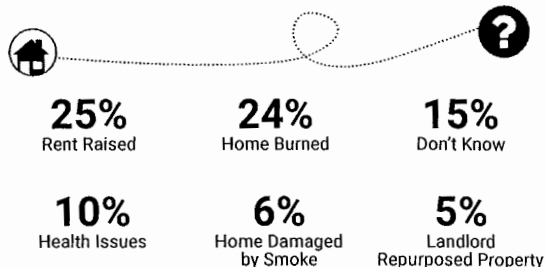
#### Temporary Residents by Gender



28% of households were impacted by the fires.



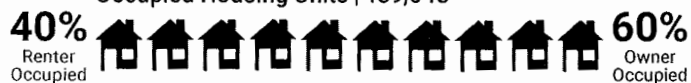
#### Primary Causes of Temporary Residence



#### Sonoma County Housing Supply

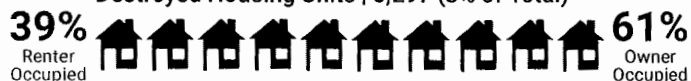
##### Housing Prior to Fires

Occupied Housing Units | 189,043



##### Housing Destroyed in Fires

Destroyed Housing Units | 5,297 (3% of Total)



#### Temporary Residents Access to Homeless Assistance

8% of respondents said they were accessing homeless assistance.

The complete comprehensive report includes a more detailed profile of the characteristics of those experiencing homelessness in Sonoma County. It will be available in late summer 2019.

Source: Applied Survey Research, 2019, Sonoma County Homeless Census & Survey, San Jose, CA.



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HOUSING

ECONOMY

POLITICS

BY MATT LEVIN , JACKIE BOTTS  PUBLISHED: JANUARY 13, 2020

## Cities should act on homelessness or face lawsuits, Newsom task force says



Sacramento Mayor Darrell Steinberg, left, and Los Angeles County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, who are leading Newsom's task force, have been pushing for some legal leverage to force action on homelessness. Photo by Anne Wernikoff for CalMatters

IN SUMMARY

Recommendations by Gov. Gavin Newsom's task force on

homelessness in California propose a legally enforceable 'mandate to end homelessness' on the November ballot, echo the governor's request for more funding and call for a homelessness czar.

Declaring that moral persuasion and economic incentives aren't working to bring people in from the sidewalks, Gov. Gavin Newsom's task force on homelessness called Monday for a "legally enforceable mandate" that would force municipalities and the state to house the growing number of homeless Californians.

The proposal, which came as Newsom kicked off a [weeklong tour](#) of the state aimed at drawing attention to the [homelessness crisis](#), urged the Legislature to put a state constitutional amendment on the November ballot that would force California cities and counties to take steps to provide housing for the [more than 150,000](#) Californians who lack it, or face legal action.

## THE PROPOSAL STOPS SHORT OF A NEW YORK-STYLE 'RIGHT TO SHELTER.' BUT IT WOULD ELEVATE LITIGATION AS A TOOL TO ACCOMPLISH WHAT COMPASSION AND MONEY HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO DO.

Such a measure would require a two-thirds vote of both legislative houses to be brought to voters. California law does not now penalize the state or local governments for failing to reduce their homeless populations, or to make housing sufficiently available to people without it.

But Los Angeles County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas and Sacramento Mayor Darrell Steinberg,

who co-chair the governor's 13-member Council of Regional Homeless Advisors, have been [advocating](#) some sort of enforceable "right" to sleep indoors since the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit [struck down laws against homeless camping](#). That ruling, which the [U.S. Supreme Court let stand](#) just last month, dramatically limited cities' enforcement options, finding it to be cruel and unusual punishment to prosecute people for sleeping on the street if sufficient shelter isn't available.

"California mandates free public education for all of its children and subsidized health

insurance for its low-income residents. It requires its subdivisions to provide services to people with developmental disabilities and foster children,” the commission wrote in a letter signed by both elected officials.

“Yet everything that state, county and city governments do to alleviate this crisis is voluntary. There is no mandate to ensure people can live indoors, no legal accountability for failing to do so, no enforceable housing production standard and no requirement to consolidate and coordinate funding streams across jurisdictions. The results speak for themselves.”

The council’s recommendation stops short of Steinberg’s and Ridley-Thomas’ initial call for a “right to shelter,” which would not only have required cities to provide immediate beds, but also obligated people experiencing homelessness to come inside. But it adds momentum to the strategy of elevating litigation as a tool to accomplish what compassion and money haven’t been able to do.

Newsom, visiting a homelessness program in Nevada County, [said Monday](#) he “would lean in the direction” of speedily deploying a legal “obligation” to supply sufficient services and housing, adding that “a number of cities and counties” have volunteered to do demonstration projects over the next several months, “not the next few years.” (Ridley-Thomas later said he would propose such a pilot in L.A. County this week.)

“I broadly have been encouraging this debate about obligations,” the governor said, adding that “there’s a distinction between rights and obligations.”

Without elaborating on that distinction, he seconded the task force’s point that many of the state’s responsibilities stem from legal mandates: “We do it in almost every other respect,” Newsom said. “On this issue we don’t and I think that’s missing. The question is how do you do it... This is not black and white. This is tough stuff.”

Municipalities made it clear they would need more clarification.

“A legally enforceable mandate can only work with clarity of who’s obligated to do what and what new sustainable resources will fund it; that’s the ticket for clear expectations and accountability,” said Graham Knaus, executive director of the California State Association of Counties, in a statement.

Steinberg, meanwhile, called Monday’s proposal an improvement on the original “right to shelter” concept, saying a mandate by any name would still have the force of law. The point, the mayor said, is to give the courts a legal “last resort” to address pleas to supersede political gridlock, just as federal laws have in the past armed judges to combat other social crises. “It’s analogous to desegregation,” Steinberg said.





The task force's proposal would let a "designated public official" sue the government for not doing enough to offer emergency and permanent housing to the homeless. A judge could then intervene to force a city to approve an emergency shelter, for example, or redirect budget funds to homelessness services.

The proposal, however, so far lacks specifics on how taxpayers would pay for such a mandate. The letter released by the task force, which includes local elected officials from large and small cities, states that "more state resources will undoubtedly be required" but includes no estimate.

State and local governments in recent years have poured billions into combating homelessness, only to watch the problem worsen as ever-rising rents drive Californians to the streets faster than they can be re-housed. On Friday, for the second straight year, Newsom [proposed more than \\$1 billion in new state funds](#) to fight homelessness, calling it "the issue that defines our times" in California. But the state's "point-in-time" homeless count jumped 17% between 2018 and last year.

San Diego County Supervisor Nathan Fletcher, a task force member, said leverage is needed.

"We do the things we are required to do first... then for everything else we try very hard," said Fletcher. "Absent a legally enforceable obligation, I believe people will continue to try very hard."

But a legal mandate would arm jurisdictions to tackle "the underlying problem which is poverty," rather than appease communities with shelter beds, he said.

### **Putting the onus on government to provide housing.**

Steinberg and Ridley-Thomas [floated the idea](#) of a statewide "right to shelter" law last year. Spurred by decades-old litigation, [New York state](#) has a "right to shelter" policy

that makes its state and local governments legally liable for having emergency shelter beds available for every unhoused person.

While many credit “right to shelter” for New York’s success in reducing the number of people sleeping on the streets, Newsom and advocates for the homeless have balked at the idea. Some advocates fear it would divert finite funding from [permanent supportive housing](#), which experts say is a more long-term, albeit expensive solution; others worry about cost and potential civil liberties violations that might arise from requiring a homeless person to accept shelter if it’s available.

## **ADVOCATES FOR THE HOMELESS SAID MORE SPECIFICS ARE NEEDED, BUT APPLAUDED THE TASK FORCE’S RECOMMENDATIONS AS A PHILOSOPHICAL PUSHBACK, AT LEAST, AGAINST EFFORTS TO CRIMINALIZE LIVING ON THE STREETS.**

“The reason why right to shelter is a mistake is because it diverts resources from the solution, which is housing, not shelter,” said Sharon Rapport, California policy director for the Corporation for Supportive Housing and a member of the task force.

Under the policy proposed by the task force, a local government would be required to develop a plan to house the vast majority of its homeless people within “an aggressive but reasonable period of time.”

“Reasonable” is not defined in the letter.

However Steinberg said that, in the case of Sacramento, “aggressive but reasonable” might mean a 1,500-person annual reduction in the city’s 5,500-plus homeless population, and housing the “the vast majority” within five years.

Advocates on the homelessness issue said more specifics are needed, but applauded the task force’s recommendations as a philosophical pushback, at least, against efforts to criminalize living on the streets.

“Any kind of policies that are promoting locking up people or warehousing people or punishing people for being homeless, the council is saying those policies have been very ineffective in the past,” said Rapport.



The city of Bakersfield recently proposed ramping up enforcement of low-level drug offenses to get people off the streets there, and advocates have expressed concern that the Trump administration's threats to do something about homelessness in California may involve heavier use of law enforcement.

### **A homelessness czar, but little on conservatorships**

The task force also called for a single point-person on homelessness, a Newsom campaign promise that devolved in his first year into confusion over who, at any given point, was his "homelessness czar."



Gov. Gavin Newsom, answering questions on his 2020-21 state budget on January 10, 2020, told reporters: "“You want to know who’s the homeless czar? I’m the homeless czar in the state of California.”  
Photo by Anne Wernikoff for CalMatters

Various administration members, including Steinberg and Ridley Thomas, Secretary of Health and Human Services Mark Ghaly, and advisor Jason Elliott, have filled the role — so many that last week, Newsom headed off press questions by declaring tartly, “You want to know who’s the homeless czar? I’m the homeless czar in the state of California.”

But the issue of who is actually overseeing the state’s disparate homelessness initiatives — across multiple bureaucracies from prisons to healthcare — is still pressing, at least according to the homelessness task force. One of their key recommendations would “create a single point of authority of homelessness in state government,” suggesting a high-level official that reports directly to Newsom. Another calls for a comprehensive accounting of existing funding for homelessness, housing, mental health and substance abuse treatment.

Still other recommendations have already been incorporated into Newsom's proposed homelessness budget, including a "flexible fund" that service providers can tap for uses from emergency rental assistance to building shelters. The task force also proposed revamping the state's health insurance program to draw down more federal dollars for homelessness-related services, a key pillar of the strategy Newsom unveiled last week. Doing so would require a waiver from the federal government.

Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf, a member of the task force, said that Medi-Cal reform proposal is key to the their blueprint.

"Housing is health," she said. "And to recognize that health dollars should appropriately be used to support housing is a very important part of our recommendations."

More controversial proposals included an executive order expanding the state's new rent-gouging law to cover more households and legislation exempting from environmental review any new housing project for people at risk of homelessness.

California has strict laws that make it difficult to detain mentally ill people against their will for a prolonged period of time. Families of homeless loved ones struggling with schizophrenia or other disorders often blame the [Lanterman-Petris-Short Act](#), a late 1960's law intended to curb the overuse of asylums, for precluding necessary care. New York's commitment laws are less stringent.

While Newsom talked vaguely of reforming the law last week, such reforms are conspicuously absent from the task force's report.

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