



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & GAPS ANALYSIS

## SUMMARY REPORT

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## Background & Purpose

For the past 25 years, the Pasadena Continuum of Care (CoC) has served as the primary community planning entity for housing and services for people experiencing homelessness. Collectively, the CoC administers over \$10 million in grant funding across more than ten different sources.

The Pasadena CoC is one of three city CoC's located within the Los Angeles County CoC and is comprised of more than 50 public and private agencies that provide support services and resources to people experiencing homelessness in Pasadena. As one of the 400+ HUD-designated CoCs nationally, the Pasadena CoC is dedicated to promoting and implementing evidence-based strategies to effectively make homelessness a rare, brief, and non-recurring experience.

The Homelessness Planning process began as an effort to further reduce homelessness in Pasadena. While there was a significant decline in the number of people experiencing homelessness between 2011 to 2016, there has been a leveling off over the past three years, with 512 people experiencing homelessness on the night of the 2022 Homeless Count. The intention of this process is to develop clear goals and strategies grounded in evidence-based best practices to help reduce homelessness in the City.

## Methods

Findings from this report came from extensive community engagement that took place during the summer of 2022, supported by a quantitative gaps analysis.

People with lived experience of homelessness were engaged through eight focus groups. These groups included people who have experienced chronic homelessness; veterans; transitional-aged youth (TAY); domestic violence survivors; older adults ages 55+; Black, Indigenous, and people of color (including Latinx English speakers); and Latinx Spanish speakers.

Feedback from regional and system partners was collected in nine targeted interviews. Partners included the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments, Pasadena Community College, the Pasadena Unified School District, leaders in healthcare and mental healthcare, the local probation office, leaders in foster care, and the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS).

Key stakeholders offered feedback in eight listening sessions. These groups included the CoC Board, the CoC at-large, the CoC Healthcare Committee, the CoC Faith Community Committee, and Citywide Commissions including the Human Services Commission, the Northwest Commission, the Accessibility & Disability Commission, and the Status of Women Commission.

Feedback from the community at-large was received through an online survey. This survey received 216 responses, the majority of which were from service providers or advocates (43%) and community members (30%).

Finally, a quantitative gaps analysis was conducted that included an analysis of systemwide performance, program outcomes, current and projected capacity, current and projected funding, and a racial disparity analysis.

A complete overview of the methodology, survey tools, and community survey results can be found in the appendix.

# Overview

## Focus Areas

- 1 **Equity & Respect**
- 2 **Emergency Support System**
- 3 **Pathways to Permanent Housing**
- 4 **Inflows to Homelessness**
- 5 **Systemwide Planning**

*This report explores critical insights about the experiences and needs of people experiencing homelessness in Pasadena related to five focus areas. These insights were gathered through an extensive community engagement process and a quantitative gaps analysis carried out by CityWise and Public Policy Associates.*

The Community Engagement & Gaps Analysis Report offers a summary of findings from community engagement sessions and the gaps analysis. It is organized by focus area, with findings followed by recommendations for each section. Areas of focus include equity and respect, the emergency support system, pathways to permanent housing, inflows to homelessness, and systemwide planning.

People with lived experience of homelessness, service providers, regional and system partners, and community members all articulated a similar sentiment: meaningful progress depends upon an adequate supply of permanent, affordable housing in Pasadena.

## 1 | Equity & Respect

Homelessness is the most visible manifestation of systemic racism and inequity in the housing sector. People of color, particularly those who are Black and Latinx, continue to be disproportionately represented among people experiencing homelessness in Pasadena and across the country. Despite accessing services at comparable rates, Black people exit to permanent housing at lower rates than other participants, pointing to racism in the private housing market. At the same time, people who identify as Latinx are accessing services at lower rates but have similar housing outcomes, pointing to a need for additional outreach.

Many people with lived experience of homelessness feel discriminated against or treated unfairly. They voiced concern that the criminalization of homelessness in Pasadena hinders progress toward permanent housing. People with lived experience of homelessness, service providers, advocates and the community at-large agreed that formalized input from people with lived experience of homelessness, particularly Black, Indigenous, and people of color, can help address racial disparities. In addition, service provider internal practices, training, and support could improve equitable treatment for people that are experiencing homelessness.

## **2 | Emergency Support System**

Pasadena's limited supply of permanent, affordable housing has resulted in people remaining homeless for longer lengths of time. In 2021, people were unhoused for an average of 1,185 days compared to 675 days in 2018—an increase of 76%. Community engagement and gaps analysis findings highlighted the critical role that shelter, essential services, and street outreach play during this time. It also revealed the need for an improved response and referral system complemented by additional shelter beds, improvements in shelter quality, a diversity of shelter options, and more robust essential services.

## **3 | Pathways to Permanent Housing**

Complementing the emergency support system are programs that work to end homelessness through permanent housing; these include the coordinated entry system, housing navigation, and permanent housing programs. Together, these programs helped 277 people who experienced homelessness in Pasadena enter permanent housing in 2021. While Permanent housing programs in Pasadena yield strong results with a 99% success rate, people with lived experience of homelessness voiced a deep dissatisfaction with the process by which they are selected or prioritized for housing services. They also faced many challenges in finding a home, including discrimination, rental requirements, and costs. Housing navigation services have expanded significantly over the last several years to help address some of these barriers, however, outcomes for these programs have fallen, likely impacted by the tight rental market. To combat this, proactive and quality, in-person housing navigation is desired to help people obtain housing. Once in housing, ongoing case management is essential to ensure housing retention and there is a desire for more support in moving from permanent supportive housing to other affordable housing options. Lastly, further reductions in homelessness will depend upon additional funding for permanent housing programs, including rapid rehousing, permanent supportive housing, and other permanent housing, as well as the continued creation of site-based permanent supportive housing.

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## 4 | Inflows to Homelessness

Over the last four years, the number of people who became homeless for the first time fell by 25%, suggesting prevention measures are reaching people who are most likely to become homeless. Even so, people who were formerly homeless feared falling back into homelessness. Community engagement results indicate that tenant rights education and tenant protections play a critical role in preventing homelessness. Community members and participants in the several listening sessions also highlighted the crucial role that cross-system partners could play in addressing system inflows.

## 5 | Systemwide Planning

Since 2018, an influx of federal, state, and local funding to address homelessness has been allocated to the Pasadena CoC and is being used to support a diverse range of programs and interventions for people experiencing homelessness in Pasadena. While increased funding has allowed the CoC to invest more heavily than ever in the homelessness response system, it continues to bear the challenges of rising housing costs, wages that cannot keep up with these costs, and low housing availability. At the same time, there is also a desire to expand support for people with special needs, particularly those with mental health and substance use disorders. Many community members and people with lived experience of homelessness advocated for outward-focused community education and advocacy to help strengthen support for affordable, permanent housing. In addition, there is a desire for improved cross-system alignment and coordination.

RACIAL & ETHNIC  
DISPARITIES

UNFAIR  
TREATMENT

DISABILITY STATUS

# Equity & Respect

## Focus Area 1

Homelessness is the most visible manifestation of systemic racism and inequity in the housing sector. People of color, particularly Black and Latinx, continue to be disproportionately represented among people experiencing homelessness in Pasadena and across the country.

While a shortage of affordable housing is at the core of this crisis, growing income inequality, systemic racism, lack of access to affordable healthcare, and inequity in education and housing also play a critical role:

- » **Systematic Racism.** In 2020, the median income for Black households in Pasadena was just 57% of earnings for non-Hispanic white households, and Latinx households earned just over half (52%).<sup>1</sup> Black people also have higher unemployment rates—16% compared to a 7% unemployment rate for people who are white and are not of Hispanic or Latino heritage (i.e., NH White people).<sup>2</sup>
- » **Inequity in Education.** Systemic racism is apparent in educational attainment as well; while 68% of NH White residents (age 26+) have earned a bachelor's degree or higher compared, 47% of Black residents and 25% of Latinx residents have a bachelor's degree.<sup>3</sup>
- » **Inequity in Healthcare.** While 97.4% of NH White residents have health insurance, only 90.6% of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (including Latinx; i.e., BIPOC) residents are insured. This divide is even greater when educational attainment is factored in; while 97% of people over 26 with a bachelor's degree or higher have health insurance, only 87% without a bachelor's degree are insured.<sup>4</sup>

These inequities drive deep disparities among people experiencing homelessness. People of color, particularly Black and Latinx, continue to be disproportionately represented among people experiencing homelessness in Pasadena. Addressing these inequities will require a community-wide, multi-sector approach with active cross-system collaboration to prevent and end homelessness.

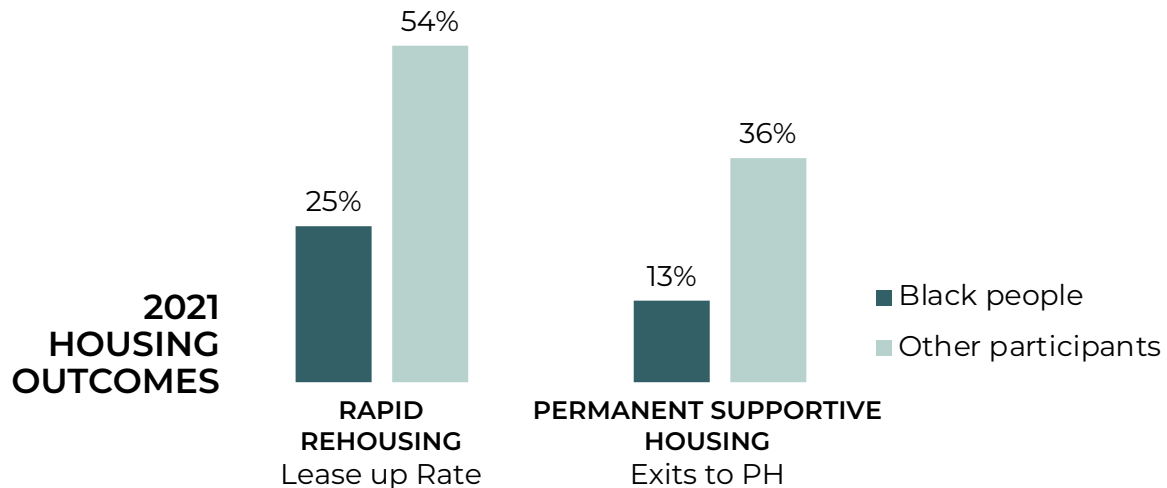
1. 5-Year American Community Survey, 2020 (Tables B19013H, B19013B, and B19013I).

2. Civilian labor force employment rate, American Community Survey, 2021 (Tables C23002I, C23002H, and C23002B).

3. American Community Survey, 2021 (Table S1501)

4. American Community Survey, 2021 (Table S2701)





**Despite accessing services at comparable rates, Black people exit to permanent housing at lower rates than other participants, pointing to racism in the private housing market.**

Black people make up 8% of the population of Pasadena, but almost a third (32%) of people experiencing homelessness—an overrepresentation that is consistent demographically across other jurisdictions in the United States. While Black people are overrepresented in the population experiencing homelessness, they access services at comparable rates to their overall share of the population experiencing homelessness (38% served v. 32% homeless population).<sup>5</sup> Despite accessing services at comparable rates, their outcomes in exiting to permanent housing are lower when compared to non-Black program participants, pointing to racism in the private housing market:

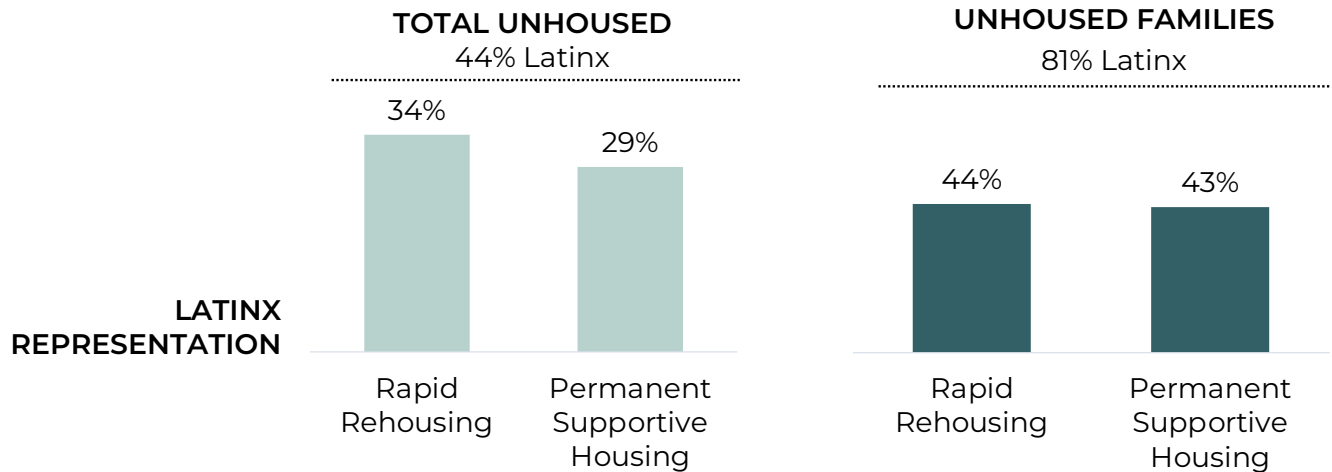
- » Black people were less likely to lease-up in rapid rehousing (25% vs. 54%)<sup>6</sup>
- » Black people remain homeless longer than any racial or ethnic group (446 days vs. 284 for NH White and 170 for Latinx).<sup>7</sup>
- » Black people were less likely to exit to permanent housing from permanent supportive housing programs (13% vs. 36%).<sup>8</sup>

5. 2022 Pasadena Homeless Count & 2022 HMIS racial disparity analysis

6. 2022 HMIS Racial Disparity Analysis.

7. 2022 HUD Stella P Analysis Tool

8. 2022 HMIS Racial Disparity Analysis.



### Latinos are accessing services at lower rates but have similar housing outcomes, pointing to a need for additional outreach.

Contrasting these trends are trends in the Latinx population, which is also overrepresented in the population experiencing homelessness but accessing homeless services at lower rates. In 2022, Latinx people experiencing homelessness comprised 44% of the unhoused population but just 33% of the City's population. This divide has grown since the pandemic, with 15% more Latinx people experiencing homelessness in 2022 compared to 2020.<sup>10</sup>

While Black people are accessing services at comparable rates, Latinos are underrepresented across all CoC program types, with the exception of coordinated entry and transitional housing. Disparities are greatest in permanent housing

programs where Latinos comprise 34% of rapid rehousing participants and 29% of permanent supportive housing participants.<sup>11</sup> Particularly impacted are Latinx families, which comprise 81% of all families experiencing homelessness yet only 44% and 43% of families in the CoC's rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing programs respectively.<sup>12</sup>

Despite challenges in accessing services, program outcomes for Latinos are strong. When in rapid rehousing, Latino's lease up at higher rates than the overall population served (67% vs. 43%) and have only slightly lower outcome rates for permanent supportive housing outcomes (96% vs. 98%).<sup>13</sup>

10. 2022 Pasadena Homeless Count & 2020 5-Year American Community Survey.

11. 2022 HMIS Racial disparity analysis.

12. 2022 Pasadena Homeless Count & 2022 HMIS racial disparity analysis 8. 2022 HUD Stella P Analysis Tool.

13. 2022 HMIS Racial disparity analysis.



It's not enough to just issue a voucher and tell someone to go find an apartment; that [doesn't] work. [We need] the kinds of supports [that] get people into housing, assuming we've acquired that housing and [helped] stabilize them.

LAHSA interviewee

I will say, what [would] be easier is...having someone to talk to with regards to the housing process. It can be a little vague.

Older adults focus group participant

### **Many people with lived experience of homelessness feel discriminated against or treated unfairly.**

Discrimination and unfair treatment were major themes throughout focus group discussions. Reports of discrimination or unfair treatment were reported across the homeless service system and housing search process, particularly discrimination due to being unhoused, race, and ethnicity. People also reported discrimination or unfair treatment due to having children, their age, identifying as LGBTQIA+, having a mental illness, or being neurodivergent.

Reports of unfair treatment or discrimination were especially prevalent in the coordinated entry system (i.e., prioritization for housing) and in the private housing market (e.g., discrimination by landlords). There were also a few reports of unfair, discriminatory, or undignified treatment at food banks or meal sites. Some people who have experienced

homelessness perceived homeless service providers as having too much discretion or leeway in the types of services offered or the quality of services, leading to unfair treatment or favoritism. Participants in the older adults and youth focus group were more likely to feel that they had been treated fairly.

Issues of equity as they relate to disabilities were also a focus of the Accessibility and Disability Commission listening session. In particular, commission members voiced the need to ensure accessibility and disability are not an afterthought but addressed upfront.



*Do not criminalize homeless people. Change the policing tactics, strategies, outlook, and perceptions about that...we must stop attacking our homeless brothers and sisters, and address them quickly.*

*Focus group participant with lived experience of chronic homelessness*

### **The criminalization of homelessness in Pasadena hinders progress toward permanent housing.**

People that had or were experiencing chronic homelessness reported challenges with Pasadena policies, strategies, and policing tactics. The participants communicated a need to use tents and maintain their possessions, which city policies were making more difficult. One focus group participant specifically called out the importance of stopping the criminalization of homeless people.

The CoC Board, too, felt that the criminalization of homelessness was a direct challenge for the CoC. Board members voiced the desire to see a reduction in the criminalization of homelessness in Pasadena.

### **Formalized input from people with lived experience of homelessness, particularly Black, Indigenous, and people of color, can help address racial disparities.**

The CoC Board recognized structural and institutional racism's role in homelessness in Pasadena and aspired to improve equity in service provision and outcomes by creating a CoC Lived Experience Advisory Panel. Only one cross-sector or regional partner interviewee strongly believed that the CoC system is equitable, whereas seven of the nine interviewees were unsure if the system is equitable.

People with lived experience of homelessness recommended having more people with lived experience working within the homeless system. In particular, domestic violence survivors and veterans communicated the importance that people assisting them understand their experiences.

Survey response suggestions included promoting hiring people with lived experience in service organizations, ensuring full representation on the board, and regular feedback from people experiencing homelessness. Survey responses also suggested including BIPOC people with lived experience of homelessness in all aspects of program and policy design, implementation, evaluation, and service delivery. Members of the faith community felt that the voices of people with lived experiences should be elevated and integrated into the CoC. This representation is critical to ensuring that programs and services effectively meet the needs of those they are intended to serve.



*For me, any social worker has to see any homeless person as a human being, first.*

*Latinx Spanish speaker focus group participant*

### **Service provider internal practices, training, and support could improve equitable treatment for people who are experiencing homelessness.**

Focus group participants with lived experience of homelessness recommended more robust training for service providers to build understanding and empathy for people experiencing homelessness. Survey respondents also voiced the need for trauma-informed care (as did domestic violence survivors in the focus group), cultural competency, and implicit bias training.

In addition to training, several focus group participants felt that more day-to-day support for homeless service staff could reduce turnover and help retain high-quality staff (e.g., more pay, lower

caseload, and more recognition). People with lived experience of homelessness also communicated a need for more qualified staff with a desire to help the people that they serve. In their survey responses, several service providers noted that wages were also a barrier.

Interviewees offered several suggestions for ensuring service providers across the continuum of care practice equity. These included examining and increasing staff diversity, examining internal policies and practices for systemic bias, and forming an equity department or other formal structure to ensure organizational equity.



*I wish I was paid more. I make \$21/hr and I struggle to make ends meet on this wage. If I was at risk of homelessness, I would qualify for the programs I work in. \$21/hr is not enough to support myself with. I really wish I made \$25/hr, because then at least I could save money each month and not live paycheck to paycheck (I'm currently in credit card debt).*

*Homeless service provider, community survey*

## Recommendations



### **Respond to reports of unfair or discriminatory treatment within the homeless service system.**

Ideally, addressing discrimination and unfair treatment should start with an assessment or audit of claims of favoritism and discrimination by people accessing services. Creating a system for CoC program participants to safely provide feedback on the services they receive and the people they are working with could help create accountability. This work should be supported by a review of written policies and practices with an equity lens to identify areas for revision/improvement and develop prescriptive contract language.

Some reports of unfair treatment, such as through the coordinated entry system, may be due to a lack of understanding of how the system works. Greater transparency in the system including the process for accessing services, who receives what services, and how these decisions are made could help address this. In addition, targeted support to address discrimination in the housing market could be helpful.

Lastly, offering CoC-wide training or accreditation programs for program staff related to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) could help address some concerns. The CoC could facilitate the development and implementation of training. Topics could include trauma-informed care and client-centered service provision.



### **Develop client-centered models of care for housing and service provision and support organizations with implementation.**

Client-centered, flexible models of care for housing and service provision should be tailored to meet the diverse and unique needs of participants. Client-centered models were especially vital for people with mental illness or substance use disorders, domestic violence survivors, and families to ensure their safety and emotional well-being. Families had unique needs and preferences with regard to shelter and “moving on” from site-based permanent supportive housing. In addition, participants in the Latinx Spanish speaker focus group with lived experience voiced a preference for working with providers with whom they already have relationships.



### **Ensure people with lived experience play a leadership role in overseeing program and policymaking in the CoC.**

People with lived experience participate on the CoC Board and as CoC members. The CoC could expand this representation by establishing a formal committee of people with lived experience of homelessness, especially Black, Indigenous, and people of color (including Latinx). The focus of this committee could be to oversee program and policy design, implementation, and evaluation of the homeless system. An example is [Santa Clara County's Lived Experience Advisory Board \(LEAB\)](#), supported by Destination: Home. LEAB is a leadership development body consisting of members with current or past experience of homelessness. Members use this platform to learn about and evaluate the system of care and to make recommendations for improvement. The LEAB website offers resources for other communities interested in starting their own advisory board.



### **Provide job satisfaction and retention support for homeless service providers.**

People with lived experience of homelessness report that turnover in homeless service provider staff is a significant challenge. The CoC should consider its role in best supporting homeless service provider staff. A recent study published by USC's Homelessness Policy Research Institute on [Homelessness Service Worker Retention Strategies](#) suggests that offering group and individual therapy services for homeless service employees could help improve retention. This could be part of a broader effort to offer mental health support for employees in homeless services.



### **Conduct a racial disparity analysis on a quarterly basis to inform strategies.**

Regular racial disparity analyses would help ensure that inequities linked to changing trends in system-wide performance are quickly addressed. These could include a comparison of the demographic composition of people experiencing homelessness with the City's population, an analysis of disparities among racial and ethnic groups in accessing services, and an analysis of outcomes in the homeless system, including exits to permanent housing and recidivism. In addition, it may be helpful to collect data on and monitor the diversity of homeless service staff and recruit more diverse staff.

RESPONSE  
COORDINATION &  
REFERRALS

# Emergency

EMERGENCY  
SHELTER

# Support

ESSENTIAL  
SERVICES

# System

STREET  
OUTREACH

## Focus Area 2

In 2021, 1,046 people experienced homelessness in Pasadena, with similar numbers in 2020 (1,058 people).<sup>14</sup> While the number of people experiencing homelessness year over year is relatively flat, when people do fall into homelessness, it takes considerable time to return to permanent housing. In 2021, people experiencing homelessness in Pasadena remained unhoused for an average of 1,185 day.<sup>15</sup> The emergency support system offers critical support during this time, providing shelter, essential services, and street outreach.

14. Custom HMIS Looker Report

15. HUD System Performance Measure 1.2b (average length of time homeless for people in Emergency Shelter, Safe Haven, Transitional Housing, and Permanent Housing (prior to "housing move in"), 2018-2021. This measure includes data from each client's Living Situation (Data Standards element 3.917) response as well as time spent in permanent housing projects between Project Start and Housing Move-In. This information is added to the client's entry date, effectively extending the client's entry date backward in time. This "adjusted entry date" is then used in the calculations just as if it were the client's actual entry date.



## RESPONSE COORDINATION & REFERRAL SYSTEM

*People experiencing homelessness can connect with emergency support services and permanent housing through street outreach teams, 211 LA County, Pasadena's Citizen Service Center (311), their immediate support network, and direct referrals. Community members can also help with response coordination for people experiencing unsheltered homelessness through Pasadena's citizen service app or the LA-HOP website, which is supported by the City's six street outreach teams.*

### **People experiencing homelessness often first learn about and attempt to connect to services through 211, with mixed results.**

Focus group participants with lived experience of homelessness most often reported calling 211 to first learn about and attempt to connect with homeless services. This was particularly true for families with children under 18, domestic violence survivors, and older adults. While some people felt that it was easy to connect and get information from 211, others did not know how to adequately navigate the system or reported that the information they received was inaccurate.

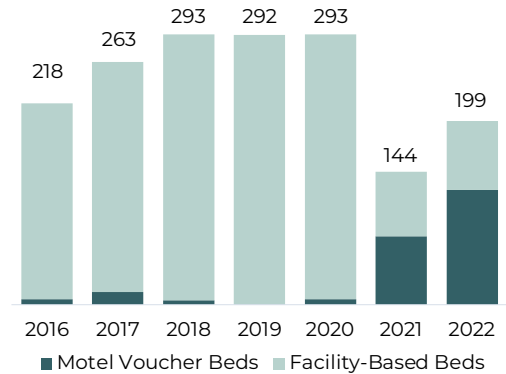
Other focus group participants were first referred to services through systems of care that intersect with homelessness. Informal networks and communication between people that are experiencing homelessness or have experienced homelessness were also a major source of information for learning about which services are available and how best to gain access to these services (e.g., advice on when to call, where to go, or what to say).

### **The existing response and referral system has room for improved coordination, accessibility, and transparency.**

Community survey respondents and key stakeholders felt that the current referral system had room for improvement:

- » During the CoC listening session, service providers shared that they often felt overwhelmed by the level of need and their capacity to serve. Providers expressed the desire for real-time data on who is responding to service requests to ensure a more timely response.
- » Community members voiced the desire for a more coordinated response system to improve accountability. Survey responses suggested extending the reach of the referral system by marketing services at resource fairs and to at-risk communities. They also noted the need for more transparency in what services are available to increase accessibility and equity.
- » Members of the faith community and healthcare committees felt that a more accessible referral system would allow systems of care that touch homeless services to aid in the referral process. Ideally, such a system would be accessible not only to people experiencing homelessness but also to residents, service providers, faith-based organizations, businesses, government agencies, hospitals, and police.

**Emergency Shelter Inventory**



Source: HUD Housing Inventory Count

**EMERGENCY SHELTER & TRANSITIONAL HOUSING**

Emergency shelters and transitional housing offer temporary respite while people work towards permanent housing. Currently, Pasadena has 199 emergency shelter beds and 40 transitional housing beds, which house approximately 45% of people experiencing homelessness on any given night.<sup>16</sup>

Over the last 3 years, the CoC has received an influx of new one-time federal and state funding that has supported the expansion of motel-based non-congregate shelters. As a result, while emergency shelter funding accounted for an estimated 10% of the CoC’s overall program budget before the pandemic, it now accounts for nearly 21% of the CoC’s funding, second only to permanent housing. Since these are one-time block grants, however, the CoC is coming to the end of expanded shelter funding, despite the sustained need for these investments.

**There is a need for quantity, quality, and diversity of shelter options.**

People experiencing homelessness who participated in the focus groups reported that emergency shelter was one of the most valuable services the CoC could provide. Community survey respondents agreed, listing emergency shelter as a top service provided by the CoC. People experiencing homelessness, particularly families and domestic violence survivors with young children, found that temporary shelters offered them the ability to rest, regroup, and figure out next steps.

**Quantity**

Over the last three years, the Pasadena CoC has seen a significant reduction in the number of shelter beds, fueled by necessary reductions to ensure the health of high-risk participants in facility-based shelters during the pandemic. As a result, the number of beds fell from 293 in 2020 to 199 in 2022, a reduction of 32%.<sup>17</sup> One of the largest drivers of this decrease was the loss of the Bad Weather Shelter, which has typically offered shelter to 150 people in Pasadena during inclement weather.

16. 2022 Housing Inventory and Point in Time Counts

17. Housing Inventory Count, 2018-2022



*It didn't seem too, quite frankly, sanitary, welcoming, or comforting. We understand it's a temporary shelter, but we can still make it feel a little bit more like home.*

*Older adults focus group participant*

To increase capacity, the Pasadena CoC, along with cities and counties throughout the state, turned to motel voucher programs. Funding to support these programs came largely from special allocations for local responses to the pandemic. These motel voucher programs were instrumental in reducing the loss of shelter beds, particularly year-round beds; while there was a 39% reduction in seasonal beds between 2020 and 2022, the number of year-round beds fell by just 25%.

Despite these achievements during a challenging period of time, people with lived experience of homelessness reported challenges due to long wait times or otherwise indicating a supply that does not meet the demand, including the lack of bad weather shelters in Pasadena. In their interviews, three regional and system partners noted the supply of emergency shelter beds was lacking. The community-at-large also voiced the need for additional shelter beds, listing the expansion of emergency shelter and interim housing as a top priority for the CoC in their survey responses.

## Quality

Some focus group participants, particularly older adults, BIPOC, and veterans with lived experience of homelessness, reported being placed in emergency shelters or motels with

unsafe or unsanitary conditions. Families and domestic violence survivors with young children had fewer complaints of unsafe and unsanitary temporary housing conditions. Improving the existing shelter system was also a top priority in the listening sessions. During the Northwest Commission and Human Services Commission listening session, several comments focused on the advantages of the tiny home model over motel vouchers.

Members of the CoC Committee agreed that the interim housing model used in tiny homes is critical for ensuring continuity of services and building trust. In addition, members of the Faith Community Committee and the Human Services Commission voiced concern that many motels that accept vouchers are located outside the city.

## Diversity of shelter options

Family and domestic violence survivor focus group participants reported that emergency shelter and transitional housing options did not always meet their needs or the needs of their families. For example, two focus group participants mentioned rules and restrictions at certain emergency shelters that would not have allowed them to remain together with their children. While Pasadena shelter programs targeted towards families do allow children to stay with their families, these experiences point

to the fact that people with unique needs in experience challenges in accessing the most appropriate resources.

While some domestic violence survivors felt positive about the rules and regulations in transitional housing, others thought they needed more flexibility. Challenges included having to arrive in a certain window of time or maintaining a schedule that would not have allowed them to continue their current employment. In some cases, these challenges resulted in families and domestic violence survivors with young children turning down or not being able to access shelter or transitional housing available to them.

One interviewee expressed a desire for systems to be more accommodating of

individual needs for autonomy, dignity, and self-determination in the provision of temporary housing services. For example, many shelters do not allow pets, restrict the number of bags an individual can bring, or impose a curfew.

Community survey responses called attention to the role diverse shelter options play in ensuring everyone receives equal and equitable access to homeless services. The CoC Board agreed, underscoring the importance of focusing on each subpopulation's specific needs. Specific shelter suggestions included easily accessible motel vouchers and a tiny homes shelter.

### **New emergency shelter models that offer extended stays and additional support services yield strong results.**

Over the last three years, there has been a fundamental shift in emergency shelter programs in Pasadena. While shelter programs have traditionally offered temporary respite, there has been a concerted effort to support year-round shelter programs, particularly through motel voucher programs.

Although the primary purpose of new motel voucher programs was to protect people from contracting COVID-19, these programs have had the added benefit of allowing for longer shelter stays. As a result, while the

average length of stay in emergency shelter programs was 74 days in 2019, the average stay more than doubled by 2021, increasing to 150 days.<sup>18</sup> Those longer stays gave people time to stabilize and regroup while also allowing service providers to offer more case management and housing navigation services. This was instrumental in helping to support exits to permanent housing in 2021; while 13% of people who stayed in emergency shelter less than 100 days exited to permanent housing, 31% of people who stayed in shelter for 100 days or more exited to permanent housing.<sup>19</sup>

*18. Custom HMIS Looker Report*

*19. Custom HMIS Looker Report*

## Essential Services

In Pasadena, many service providers offer essential services to meet the basic needs of people experiencing unsheltered and sheltered homelessness. These services include food, clothing, toiletries, laundry, and showers.

### Essential services help people experiencing homelessness meet their basic needs, and there is room for improvement.

Focus group participants with lived experience of homelessness valued the essential services provided to them, including showers, hygiene (toiletries, tampons, diapers, soap, detergent), laundry services, and food. While many of these services are privately funded, the Pasadena CoC supports two mobile shower programs in three locations and a laundry program. These services are widely used in Pasadena, with 2,031 showers provided so far in 2022 and 575 laundry services (as of Fall 2022).

Essential services can increase morale and, by taking care of basic needs, may allow people experiencing homelessness to focus on finding shelter. When asked about the support needed to find housing, many focus group participants experiencing homelessness communicated their need for basic necessities.

Several regional or cross-system partners that were interviewed felt that the Pasadena CoC needs to provide more robust and proactive essential services. One interviewee expressed interest in tailoring services to

specific populations –e.g., showers and food banks for transition-aged youth.

Key stakeholder groups also felt the CoC could strengthen essential services. In particular, members of the faith community voiced the desire for a multi-service center, explaining that it is hard for people to get the services they need when they are spread out. Survey responses and participants in several other listening sessions echoed this sentiment: “A one-stop shop would be ideal.”

Similarly, a few people with lived experience of homelessness communicated that they found coordinated or multiple services offered at one location to be helpful. Other survey respondent suggestions for improved essential services included a monthly mobile medical clinic, a 24-hour crisis response team funded with ARPA funds, mobile mental health services with a psychiatrist and nurse practitioner similar to [Exodus' Mobile Crisis Response Team \(MCRT\)](#), and laundry services.



*You feel better when you can shower, wash your clothes, charge your phone and you could do all the business transactions and whatever you needed to do in order to try and get shelter.*

*Veteran focus group participant*

## Street Outreach

Coordinated street outreach that identifies and engages people living in unsheltered locations plays critical roles in systems for ending homelessness. In Pasadena, over half of people experiencing homelessness (55%) are considered unsheltered.<sup>20</sup> Pasadena's six street outreach teams work to support these people, connecting them to support services and permanent, sustainable housing. Currently, street outreach programs are funded through the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) program and the Continuum of Care (CoC) program.

**Key stakeholders and partners, viewed street outreach teams as a critical service, but more information is needed to understand their role in people's path toward permanent housing.**

In 2021, 292 people were enrolled in Pasadena-based street outreach programs, pointing to widespread coverage. Community members, particularly service providers, advocates, and commission members, highlighted the crucial role outreach teams play in the existing homeless response system, listing it as a top service area.

A few focus group participants in the BIPOC and chronically homeless focus groups, which had higher rates of unsheltered homelessness, found street outreach teams to be instrumental in providing case management services and connecting them to housing. Focus group participants were not directly asked about the value of street outreach services.

Analysis of Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data revealed that the process for entering people in HMIS is not uniform across street outreach

programs, with some programs entering participants upon initial engagement, while others enter participants when key services occur such as a CES assessment. Similarly, the process for exiting participants is not uniform across street outreach programs. While some programs exit participants when they engage with housing navigators, others wait to exit people until they move on to housing. As a result, outcomes are artificially low for programs that exit participants to housing navigation programs that continue efforts to place people in permanent housing. Consequently, more information, apart from HMIS data, is needed to fully understand the impact of street outreach services.

# Recommendations



## **Develop a more accessible, transparent, and timely response coordination and referral system.**

Ideally, the response coordination and referral system should extend beyond street outreach and support all people experiencing homelessness in navigating the CoC's emergency support services. This system should include an up-to-date list of emergency support services available, information on the Coordinated Entry System (CES) process and CES access points, and be available in multiple languages. This system could be as simple as strengthening the existing 311 system, developing a drop-in center, or a more robust public-facing virtual response and referral system. Key components of a virtual system include back-end access for service providers that offers real-time information on who is responding to service requests. Complementing these efforts could be a communications plan to connect people experiencing homelessness, service providers, advocates, and the community at large with the system.



## **Investigate options to maintain and expand the supply of shelters, particularly those with extended shelter stays and support services.**

While emergency shelter programs with additional support have higher success rates, the CoC's low vacancy rates, declining inventory of shelter beds, and reports of challenges accessing shelter due to long wait times all point to the need for additional shelter beds. With one-time funding for emergency shelter beds ending, however, initial focus could be placed on maintaining the current supply of emergency beds with a long-term goal of expanding the number of beds as more funding is made available. One option for new funding is California Health & Human Services (CalHHS) Behavioral Health Bridge Housing program, which offers funding to purchase and install tiny homes and provides time-limited operational support for tiny homes or in other bridge housing settings.

Shelter program models that offer longer stays and case management can help maximize these programs' impact with the limited funding available. Population-specific models, such as transitional housing for TAY, are another way to ensure effectiveness. Offering a diverse range of shelter options allows for a more client-driven response with tailored, responsive, and flexible support. At the same time, participants recover from the trauma of unsheltered housing and work towards permanent housing. In addition, focus should be placed on looking for alternative funding sources that allow for the expansion of shelter beds, possibly through program models with services on-site such as tiny homes, or through master-leased motels with on-site case management and supportive services.





### **Promote dignity and respect in shelter programs by ensuring shelter programs' safety, security, and cleanliness.**

Emergency shelter is often the first point of contact with the homeless response system and can shape people's impression of the community's response to homelessness. To improve trust and curtail the trauma of being unhoused, it is critical to treat people with dignity and respect by ensuring shelter programs' safety, security, and cleanliness. Examples of how to ensure a commitment to promoting dignity and respect in emergency shelters at the CoC level include:

- » Santa Clara County's [quality assurance standards](#) that aim to provide quality, standardized services to persons who have become homeless to facilitate their successful re-entry back into their communities.
- » King County's [emergency shelter sanitation and hygiene guide](#) for staff, volunteers, clients, and residents involved in the day-to-day operations of shelters, tiny home villages, day centers, and other communities that serve people experiencing homelessness.
- » Pierce County's [habitability standards for emergency shelters](#), which are an element of their emergency shelter program policy and operations manual.



### **Continue to fund essential services such as showers and investigate options to add a multi-service center.**

Additional services could include population-specific services, such as the suggested showers and food banks for transition-aged youth, a mobile medical clinic with mental health services, a 24-hour crisis response team, or a drop-in or multi-service center similar to Long Beach's model.



### **Develop a better understanding of the role of street outreach in unsheltered homelessness.**

During their listening session, the CoC Board and Housing Department staff voiced the desire to reduce unsheltered homelessness. As street outreach teams play a crucial role in this, it would be helpful to develop a better understanding of the depth of services currently provided and the role these services play in people's pathways toward permanent housing.



COORDINATED  
ENTRY SYSTEM

HOUSING  
NAVIGATION

PERMANENT  
HOUSING  
PROGRAMS

# Pathways to Permanent Housing

## Focus Area 3

Pasadena's limited supply of affordable housing has resulted in people remaining homeless for longer lengths of time. In 2021, people were unhoused for an average of 1,185 days compared to 675 days in 2018—an increase of 76%.<sup>21</sup>

This increased duration of homelessness makes the coordinated entry system, housing navigation, and permanent housing programs even more crucial in shortening people's experience of homelessness. Together, these programs helped 277 people who experienced homelessness in Pasadena enter permanent housing in 2021.<sup>22</sup>

Just over a third (35%) of people who leave homelessness annually are housed through the CoC's permanent housing programs, which include permanent supportive housing (PSH), rapid rehousing (RRH), and other permanent housing.<sup>23</sup> Currently, there are nine permanent supportive housing programs and three rapid rehousing programs in Pasadena. The permanent supportive housing programs include four site-based permanent supportive housing programs at specific apartment buildings and five scattered-site programs that offer rental assistance to participants who lease apartments throughout the community. All rapid rehousing programs follow a scattered-site model.

21. HUD System Performance Measure 1.2b, 2018-2021

22. 2022 Homeless Count Report

23. Custom HMIS Looker Report

## Coordinated Entry

*The Pasadena CoC participates in the LA County Coordinated Entry System (CES), prioritizing the most vulnerable people experiencing homelessness and matching them to permanent housing. Currently, the system relies on the Vulnerability Index and Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT). However, the CES Triage Tool Research and Refinement (CESTTRR) team has created a new tool that is being piloted. This new tool uses a narrowed set of questions and modified wording to predict vulnerability more accurately without racial bias.*

### **There is deep dissatisfaction with the process by which people experiencing homelessness are selected or prioritized for housing services.**

Many people with lived experience of homelessness that participated in the focus group felt that the process for prioritizing people for housing services is unfair, opaque, or challenging to navigate. People mentioned seeing others housed or provided with services and not understanding or agreeing with the prioritization process. Some participants felt that because they were doing things “right” or had a less severe situation, they were getting passed over for housing services. For example, several voiced frustrations that

drug users or families who had children removed from them were prioritized. One focus group participant believed they were not helped because they were not in a prioritized age group.

In addition, system and regional partners shared that the accuracy of assessments depends heavily on the person conducting the assessment. Faith community committee members felt counseling or CES advisors could help people navigate the complex system.

# Housing Navigation

Housing navigation programs provide housing-focused supportive services for people experiencing homelessness, helping them identify, apply for, secure, and move into permanent housing. Currently, four programs are funded through Continuum of Care; Measure H; and Homeless Housing, Assistance, and Prevention funding.

**People experiencing homelessness face many challenges in finding a home, including discrimination, rental requirements, and costs.**

## Discrimination

Focus group participants with lived experience of homelessness recounted having experienced many forms of discrimination that have made it more challenging to obtain housing. Many focus group participants reported having experienced discrimination because they were homeless, using a housing voucher, or due to race or ethnicity. Focus group participants also reported landlord discrimination because they have children, are LGBTQIA+, or have prior evictions. One focus group participant mentioned a helpful book their provider gave them with information on how to explain their situation and other information to support them in finding housing. The CoC board recognized the challenges people face in finding housing and expressed a desire to ensure everyone prioritized for housing is fully supported in their path to housing.

## Rules and Requirements

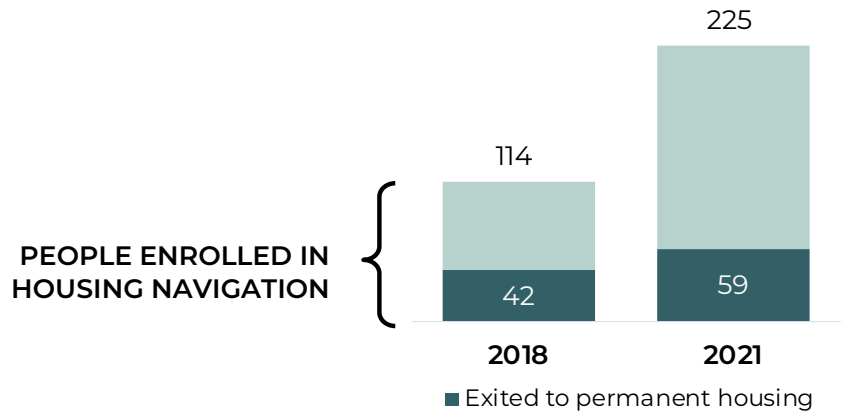
Rules and requirements put in place by landlords make it difficult for people experiencing homelessness to obtain housing. For example, several people with lived experience of homelessness spoke about landlords having requirements for high credit scores. Other challenging requirements are those that impose additional or high costs on rental applicants.

A cross-sector interviewee noted that while programs support a harm-reduction model, private landlords and other housing providers often operate under an abstinence model with regard to drug use. This conflicts with the harm-reduction focus of many mental health and recovery centers, which seek to help people gradually reduce their substance use over time. They indicated a need for system alignment around a common definition of harm reduction to keep people housed while they recover.

## Cost and Supply

People with lived experience of homelessness that had received vouchers mentioned challenges with finding someone that would accept the voucher. In addition to discrimination, participants felt this was reflective of the lack of low-income housing, particularly in Pasadena. Up-front costs required to rent an apartment were also mentioned as barriers to obtaining housing. Some reported that their vouchers did not adequately cover the cost if the landlord required several months of up-front rent. Other cost challenges included application and credit check fees, especially since these tended to be non-refundable and required for each application.

In several focus groups, discussions demonstrated the complexities of balancing



which vouchers you could obtain, where you wanted to live, where you were permitted to live with a particular voucher, and whether housing was available in that area. There were often mismatches between where people wanted to live, the voucher they could obtain in a timely manner, and housing availability. For example, several people mentioned wanting to live in Pasadena but not being able to find housing, even if their voucher permitted them to rent in Pasadena.

Listening sessions with key stakeholders had similar sentiments, acknowledging that the current rental market makes it challenging to find housing with a voucher. The CoC Board aspired to increase the inventory of low and no-barrier permanent housing, possibly through an enhanced PSH model that has independent units with 24/7 care.

**Housing navigation services have expanded with mixed results.**

People receiving housing navigation services currently take an average of 295 days to successfully move into permanent housing. Over the last three years, the number of households receiving housing navigation has almost doubled. While in 2018, 114 households received navigation services, 225 households received services in 2021. During this same time, the number of successful exits from housing navigation to permanent

housing increased by only 40%, from 42 in 2018 to 59 in 2021. Lagging outcomes were likely impacted largely by the pandemic and associated limited supply of permanent housing. Even with this challenge, fewer people placed in permanent housing are falling back into homelessness after moving into housing (10% recidivism in 2021 v. 17% in 2018).<sup>24</sup>

24. Custom HMIS Looker Report, 2018-2021



It's not enough to just issue a voucher and tell someone to go find an apartment; that [doesn't] work. [We need] the kinds of supports [that] get people into housing, assuming we've acquired that housing and [helped] stabilize them.

LAHSA interviewee

I will say, what [would] be easier is...having someone to talk to with regards to the housing process. It can be a little vague.

Older adults focus group participant

### **Proactive and quality, in-person housing navigation is desired to help people obtain housing.**

Focus group participants with lived experience of homelessness as well as cross-sector and regional partner interviewees alike expressed a need for more active assistance to help people obtain housing. Two cross-sector or regional partner interviewees noted that people struggling with homelessness, substance abuse, or mental illness have great difficulty navigating the complexities of finding, obtaining assistance, and moving into housing. Two noted that housing navigation staffing levels must increase to meet this need. One felt the available resources were adequate for those who sought them out but would be inadequate if all those in need fully utilized them. Finally, two interviewees noted that some populations—e.g., seniors, LGBTQIA+ people, and families with children—need extra assistance to find housing.

People with lived experience of homelessness commented that the housing navigators did not always seem particularly engaged or informed and were not adequately able to help them find housing. A few people mentioned communication challenges with their housing navigators, such as long delays with their navigator getting back to them, feeling like their navigator was not listening to them, or retaining what their housing navigators had told them.

Some people with lived experience of homelessness mentioned using websites to help them find housing, but many mentioned challenges with websites being up-to-date. A few voiced the desire to see more up-to-date and accurate websites or lists of locations that accept housing vouchers.

## Permanent Housing Programs

*Permanent housing programs, including permanent supportive housing (PSH) and rapid rehousing (RRH), are one of the strongest tools the CoC has in ending homelessness.*

*Participants in these programs receive case management, with additional services offered using a housing first approach. This means that once in housing, participants have access to the support services they need and want but accepting these services is not a condition of housing. While support services are voluntary, providers are encouraged to persistently engage tenants and ensure housing stability.*

### **Permanent housing programs in Pasadena yield strong results.**

In 2021, 393 households were served by Pasadena's permanent housing programs. Of those, 81% were served by PSH programs, and RRH programs served the remaining 19%.<sup>25</sup> Success rates for these programs are incredibly high. In 2021, 99% of people in permanent housing programs retained

or exited to permanent housing. Of those who exited to permanent housing, 96% did not return to homelessness.<sup>26</sup> Both of these outcomes are within the national standards for a high-performing community.

### **Reductions in homelessness depend upon additional funding for permanent housing programs and the continued creation of site-based permanent, supportive housing.**

With a 99% success rate, meaningful reductions in homelessness depend upon permanent housing programs. Low turnover rates and a challenging rental market, however, point to the need for additional permanent housing programs, including the creation of site-based permanent, supportive housing.

In 2021, 1,046 people experienced homelessness in Pasadena, yet only 29 permanent supportive housing and four rapid rehousing slots became available from the existing inventory.<sup>27</sup> All other entries to permanent housing programs are limited to new inventory and programs not funded by or located in the CoC.

The CoC has already made significant strides toward expanding permanent housing beds. While the housing inventory remained relatively flat between 2018-2021 (4% decrease), 30 new PSH beds came online in 2022, and two new voucher programs: an emergency housing vouchers program that will serve 109 additional households and a mainstream voucher program that will serve 75.<sup>28</sup> In addition, two new site-based permanent supportive housing projects are in the pipeline:

- » Heritage Square South, which will come online in December 2023 - January 2024 and have 69 units

25. Custom HMIS Looker Report

26. 2021 HUD System Performance Measures

27. 2021 CAL ICH Baseline data and custom HMIS Looker Report

28. 2022 Housing Inventory Count

» The Salvation Army’s HOPE Center, which will come online in August 2023 and have 65 units

These site-based projects are critical to addressing discrimination and limited housing supply. Currently, half of the permanent housing program inventory is tenant-based projects, meaning successfully housing people depends heavily upon the private rental market. As a result, it currently

takes people an average of 228 days to move in after enrollment in PSH and RRH, illustrating just how challenging it is for people to successfully find an apartment.<sup>29</sup>

The impact of these new projects over the next ten years, along with the expected number of turnover beds, is shown in the table below.

AVAILABLE PERMANENT HOUSING BEDS	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
New Permanent Supportive Housing	0	60	95	8	66	19	22	22	22	22
Turnover for Existing Permanent Supportive Housing*	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36
New Rapid Rehousing	38	12	2	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Turnover for Existing Rapid Rehousing*	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17
Other Permanent Housing	55	44	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>79</b>

*\*Projections based on average turnover rates between 2018-2021.*

**Ongoing case management is essential for housing retention.**

Several cross-sector or regional partner interviewees stressed that the need for case management does not end when an individual or family finds a home but must be continued—often for several years. In some cases, ongoing case management is needed indefinitely—to help them manage the various challenges they may face and prevent their return to homelessness. This need for ongoing case management was echoed in the Accessibility & Disability Commission listening session, which recognized how central this was to successful landlord engagement

People with lived experience of homelessness participating in the focus groups agreed that continued case management is helpful after finding housing. Participants spoke about how beneficial a knowledgeable case manager was to inform them about the services available, such as food, toiletries, and education or training. One participant mentioned that their case managers scheduled their doctor’s visits. Other people shared that it would be helpful if they were receiving or had received ongoing case management.



They need a couple of years having somebody help them figuring out the electricity bill, how to budget, how to get along with neighbors. That is essential to creating permanency. So it’s not just the site, it’s the support that comes with it.

Transitional Aged Youth system interviewee

29. 2021 CAL ICH Baseline data

**There is a desire for more support in moving from PSH to other affordable housing options.**

Several people who formerly experienced homelessness shared the desire to move on from receiving subsidized housing services but felt stuck. This included several families and at least one older adult who wanted to move on from PSH as well as a few veterans who wanted to move on from Section 8 housing and get out of the homelessness system altogether. Families mentioned a fear that if they earned too much, they would have to pay more rent than they could afford and lack the ability to save money

without losing benefits. The families wanted more time to prepare to move from PSH, for example, a more gradual change in benefits or the ability to save more money without losing benefits. The families and the veteran participants mentioned a desire for career support, such as going back to school or a training program.



# Recommendations



## **Support regional efforts to improve CES through collaboration with regional partners while simultaneously increasing system education and transparency.**

While dissatisfaction with the coordinated entry system's prioritization is tightly related to the shortage of permanent housing, additional support in navigating the system could improve accountability and address feelings that the system is unfairly prioritizing certain people. At a minimum, this could include providing more transparency in the CES process (i.e., the prioritization process and timelines for obtaining housing), but additional support could also be provided through CES advisors who provide support in ensuring accurate assessments and transparency in the CES process.



## **Provide more resources and assistance in getting people from the point of having received a voucher to moving into housing.**

The CoC could broaden current housing navigation efforts by developing additional housing search resources. Resources could include:

- » An accurate and up-to-date list of landlords willing to accept vouchers,
- » The development of a housing resource workshop or a toolkit that includes tips on identifying housing preferences, finding an apartment, and talking with landlords, which could be based on [HUD's Housing Search Resources](#).
- » A landlord advisory group to discuss common landlords' challenges with accepting vouchers and specific strategies to address those challenges,
- » Legal support services for housing discrimination occurring in the private market, or
- » Offering additional financial assistance to cover the costs associated with a housing hunt (i.e., application fees, deposits) or securing necessary furnishings.

Finally, developing a better understanding of the geographic limitations that providers place on vouchers and barriers in providing the full cost of housing (rental deposits, fees), as well as a plan for overcoming those barriers, could help address specific challenges to participants' use of rental vouchers.



### Continue to prioritize funding for permanent supportive housing and explore opportunities for new funding.

While current programs play a vital role in ending homelessness for participants, their ability to further reduce homelessness is limited. With this in mind, the CoC should continue to prioritize funding for permanent supportive housing and explore opportunities for new funding. Potential sources for new funding include:

- » California Department of Housing and Community Development’s Homekey program, which provides funding to local entities to acquire and rehabilitate a variety of housing types, including but not limited to hotels, motels, hostels, single-family homes and multifamily apartments, adult residential facilities, and manufactured housing, and to convert commercial properties and other existing buildings to permanent or interim housing.
- » California Department of Housing and Community Development’s HOME American Rescue Plan Program (HOME-ARP), which will provide funding for rental housing, rental assistance, supportive services, and non-congregate shelters (NOFA anticipated March 2023).



### Consider revising written standards and contract language as well as offering training to ensure adequate case management in permanent housing programs.

People with lived experience of homelessness and system partners agreed: regular case management to coordinate client-driven, flexible support services and help people develop community-based support networks is needed to ensure long-term stability in permanent housing. In addition to revising written standards and developing prescriptive contract language, the CoC could provide additional training around best practices for case management. An example of this is Contra Costa CoC’s [training on case management](#).



### Expand support in moving on from PSH.

Several focus group participants with lived experience of homelessness, most of them families, wanted more support in moving out of site-based PSH. While the CoC already has a formal moving-on program, this program could be better advertised and perhaps expanded to offer education and job training support.

In addition, it might be helpful to gauge interest in a “move-on” program that transitions people from site-based PSH to tenant-based PSH. Such a program would offer people more autonomy and independence while providing the same level of financial support and case management. In addition, people who have lived in site-based PSH for several years would have a more established rental history that would likely increase their success in finding a unit in the private rental market while allowing others to establish their own rental history.

HOMELESSNESS  
PREVENTION  
PROGRAMSLEGAL  
SERVICES

# Inflows to Homelessness

## Focus Area 4

Homelessness prevention efforts in Pasadena fall within three intervention areas to help people at risk find and maintain stable housing and avoid homelessness. Primary strategies include creating a system with adequate, affordable housing and boosting the social safety net. Secondary strategies, which include prevention and diversion, focus on working directly with households experiencing a housing crisis. This is where the CoC is most active, providing financial assistance, case management, and legal services. Tertiary strategies are focused on housing stability, connecting people to community resources for long-term support.

### **Reductions in the number of people experiencing homelessness for the first time suggest prevention measures are reaching people who are most likely to become homeless.**

Over the last four years, the Pasadena CoC has significantly reduced the number of people who became homeless for the first time. While 632 people were newly homeless in HUD FY 2018, only 473 fell into homelessness for the first time in HUD FY 2020, representing a 25% reduction.<sup>30</sup>

However, some of the progress in 2020 and 2021 can be attributed to the now sunsetted eviction moratorium. With the lifting of this moratorium, the number of people experiencing homelessness for the first time may rise in 2022.

### **Tenant rights education and tenant protections play a critical role in preventing homelessness.**

During the Northwest Commission listening session, discussions underlined the crucial role that tenant rights education plays in preventing evictions of people at risk of homelessness. Service providers highlighted the need to expand these services in their survey responses:

“Our staff teaches families about tenant rights. We have taken landlords to court, however, we do not have any funding for this critical work.” ~ Family support organization, community survey

### **Cross-system partnerships could address inflows.**

Community members and participants in the several listening sessions highlighted the crucial role that cross-system partners

could play in addressing system inflows. Several system partners suggested specific collaborations:



Have a sustained partnership and presence with the college. The city does not have adequate housing support for our student demographic, particularly adults with AND without children, those experiencing domestic violence, those with mental health issues, safe locations for LGBTQIA, and other students from marginalized populations.

System partner in education, community survey

Make resources available to District attorneys, prosecutors, and Public defenders. Coordinate with non profit agencies who are doing re entry work. see which diversion programs are in the area and ask them what resources they see is a big need for their constituents.

Criminal justice service provider, community survey

The Faith Community needs tools of who to call and what to do when someone comes to them with homeless and housing needs like eviction.

Member of the faith community, community survey

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**Even with subsidized rent, people that were formerly homeless fear falling back into homelessness.**

Not being able to afford rent or falling behind on rent continues to be a concern for people that were formerly homeless, even those receiving subsidized rent. Participants mentioned challenges with how their

rent amount is calculated, which creates anxieties that their rent is higher than they can afford or that they cannot move up in their situation.

## Recommendation

**Reduce inflow into homelessness through targeted prevention, diversion, and cross-systems collaboration.**

The CoC could use recently expanded prevention funding to support targeted prevention strategies to reduce inflows into the system. These could include funding for tenant rights education, community-based system partners that are a place of first resort for people at risk of homelessness, and prevention funding for traditional permanent housing programs to help people at the highest risk of falling back into homelessness.

HOUSING  
SUPPLY

SUPPORTIVE  
SERVICES

CROSS-SYSTEM  
ALIGNMENT

DATA-DRIVEN  
DECISION MAKING

# Systemwide Planning

## Focus Area 5

Since 2018, an influx of federal, state, and local funding to address homelessness has been allocated to the Pasadena CoC and is being used to support a diverse range of programs and interventions for people experiencing homelessness in Pasadena. Presently, the CoC administers over \$10 million in grant funding across more than ten different sources.

While increased funding has allowed the CoC to invest more heavily than ever in the homelessness response system, it continues to bear the challenges of rising housing costs, wages that cannot keep up with these costs, and low housing availability. To amplify its efforts, the CoC coordinates citywide and regional partners including systems of care that intersect with homelessness.

## Housing supply and cost are key barriers for the CoC.

The homelessness crisis continues because of Pasadena's high cost of living, wages that cannot keep up, and a shortage of affordable housing:

### High Housing Costs

Pasadena's housing prices have soared during the pandemic. As of November 2022, the average rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Pasadena is \$2,850 per month, two percent higher than the previous year.<sup>31</sup> The income required to afford this rent is above moderate household incomes.<sup>32</sup>

### Housing Overpayment

As housing prices have increased faster than household income, the affordability crisis continues to worsen. In 2021, over half (56%) of Pasadena renters experienced a housing cost burden, meaning more than 30 percent of household income was spent on rent. Thirty percent of tenants are severely rent-burdened, paying over 50% of their income in rent. This degree of overpayment means that many people face having to cut back severely—or forego—spending on healthcare, education, and other life needs.<sup>33</sup>

### Income inequality

The Gini index, which measures income inequality ranging from 0 to 1 reflecting the amount that any two incomes differ, on average, relative to mean income, is far higher in Pasadena than the US at large

(0.5116 v. 0.494).<sup>34</sup> This indicates significant inequality, with high-income individuals receiving much larger percentages of the population's total income.

Many barriers to becoming housed cited by people with lived experience of homelessness pointed to a lack of affordable housing. These barriers include long waitlists, a perception that others were considered a higher priority for housing, or being forced to choose housing far from one's community of choice.

Six regional and cross-sector partner interviewees agreed that housing supply and affordability are key areas of need, resulting in low vacancy rates and a scarcity of affordable units for people exiting or seeking to avoid homelessness. One interviewee noted that people with criminal records have particular difficulty finding housing. Another cited the Not in My Backyard (NIMBY) issue—i.e., vocal opposition to low-income housing among affluent residents who have an outsized influence on local development decisions. Another expressed interest in flexible vouchers without geographic limitations.

31. Zumper Rent Research, *Pasadena Rent Prices*, updated 11/9/2022

32. *City of Pasadena Housing Element, 2021-2029*, pg 11

33. *American Community Survey, 2021 (Table B25070)*

34. *American Community Survey, 2021 (Table B19083)*

### **There is a desire for expanded support for people with special needs, particularly those with mental health and substance use disorders.**

Survey respondents and listening session participants highlighted the need for expanded and improved mental health and substance use services. People with lived experience of homelessness also spoke of the importance of mental health services for themselves or others.

Members of the healthcare committee shared specific recommendations on addressing the growing need for mental health and substance use services. This included things like a permanent bricks and mortar mental health care emergency room for psychiatric and inpatient/outpatient

beds (similar to Portland's model), a bus with mobile psychiatric care, mobile mental health care services with a pharmacist, and closer collaboration with healthcare providers receiving more resources to manage mental health needs, possibly supported by the co-location of services.

The CoC Board aspired to provide additional support to people with co-occurring mental health conditions and substance use disorders through a formalized harm reduction policy and an enhanced PSH model that offers independent units with 24/7 care.



It's not just problems with systems as a whole. It's how complex it is, relies on a lot of things from the county, and that coordination can be challenging.

System and regional partner interviewee

### **There is a desire for improved cross-system alignment and coordination.**

Several interviewees expressed a need for increased cross-system alignment to improve efficiency, share resources, and avoid duplication of effort. This alignment could range in scope from regular meetings to shared programming or working with city and county officials to increase housing production.

Interviewees mentioned several specific stakeholder groups to involve in partnership efforts, including community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, higher education, K-12 schools, the council

of governments, and the police. Three interviewees expressed interest in being a part of an advisory group or other body that helps to coordinate decision-making across organizations. One suggested that the Pasadena CoC have a liaison or other easily identifiable point of contact to facilitate communication.

Challenges with cross-system coordination named by partners that participated in the interviews include system complexity, lack of accountability, and staff turnover. When asked about the most and least effective



characteristics of the Pasadena CoC, four interviewees praised its general creativity and resourcefulness. Still, an equal number offered critiques about a lack of coordination across systems and providers, leading to inconsistencies in the quality of referral and service delivery.

Community survey respondents and partners who participated in listening sessions also voiced the need for cross-system coordination with service-based agencies in areas that touch homelessness,

like education, healthcare, re-entry, public defenders, the VA, and LGBTQIA+ centers. Other suggestions during listening sessions included:

- » Improving CES's connection to the faith community,
- » Increasing data-sharing between the CoC and Medicare health plans, and
- » Extending community outreach through system partners' existing infrastructure, such as ChapCare's marketing director.



We need to get the people that live in this community to be on the same page as us and to understand this is a problem that requires collective action.

Healthcare committee member, listening session

Publicize efforts to create more housing; work to convince homeowners that supporting housing construction and conversion benefits them.

Community member survey response

### **Outward-focused community education and advocacy could help strengthen support for affordable, permanent housing.**

Community education and advocacy were central to strengthening partnerships for survey respondents in nearly every group. Responses stressed the importance of education on the state of homelessness in Pasadena, how the city is responding, the positive impacts of permanent housing, and how to help connect people to services.

Participants in the CoC, CoC Board, Healthcare Committee, and Faith Community Committee listening sessions agreed; there is a clear need to improve communications around homelessness in Pasadena to strengthen community support. There was also a clear desire to

learn more about the CoC in the Northwest, Human Services, and the Status of Women's Commission listening sessions.

Members of the faith community committee and the CoC board suggested developing a specific plan for community education and support. Survey responses suggested regular CoC updates and open city forums to educate and engage people. In addition, survey respondents and listening session participants suggested targeted campaigns on permanent supportive housing, ADUs, and section 8 for landlords, areas with high opposition, and the community at large.

**Inconsistent state and federal metrics give an incomplete and sometimes inaccurate picture of systemwide performance.**

Recent expansions in funding have resulted in new reporting requirements, with federal and state agencies defining similar metrics in significantly different ways. These inconsistent state and federal metrics give an incomplete and sometimes inaccurate picture of systemwide performance.

For example, while HUD's systemwide performance metrics include an estimate of annual homelessness, it fails to account for people experiencing unsheltered homelessness, measuring only those in emergency shelters, transitional housing, or safe haven programs. While the California Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal ICH) attempts to account for people experiencing unsheltered homelessness

by including people in street outreach, coordinated entry, and support service-only programs that serve people experiencing homelessness, it too undercounts homelessness as not all people in these programs are counted.<sup>35</sup>

These confusing, inaccurate measures make it difficult for the CoC and community-at-large to understand the state of homelessness in Pasadena. During their listening session the CoC Board emphasized the importance of systemwide performance metrics, voicing the desire to make more data-driven decisions to increase effectiveness.

*35. CAL ICH only includes people in street outreach, coordinated entry, and support service programs that have a current living situation that meets HUD's definition of homelessness, which is not consistently entered in HMIS.*

# Recommendations



## **Pursue opportunities to expand mental health and substance use services through additional funding, partnerships, and prescriptive contract language.**

Expanded partnerships with mental health providers are crucial to addressing the need for more robust mental health services. In addition, the CoC could explore new funding opportunities to offer some of the mental health services identified in the healthcare committee listening session, such as on-site mental health or addiction support and an enhanced PSH model with 24/7 care. Finally, the development of prescriptive contract language or training on harm reduction could help to ensure clients have equal access to services. For example, a harm reduction policy that distributes Naloxone to all providers and requires all clients to have access to it could be helpful.



## **Consider strengthening regional and system partnerships through cross-system alignment and coordination.**

Increased collaboration is needed to address inflows, strengthen support services, and streamline regional responses to homelessness. The development of an advisory board or committee with representatives from regional partners and systems of care that touch homeless services could be helpful to guide these efforts. In addition to increasing collaboration, this group could focus on:

- » Opportunities to partner with other systems of care, including outreach and direct services
- » Identifying collaborative funding opportunities
- » Strengthening regional partnerships, assigning a representative to attend specific regular partner meetings
- » Data sharing opportunities



## **Establish shared metrics of success to guide efforts for data-driven decision-making.**

Once established, metrics could be reviewed quarterly to better understand system-wide performance, inform board decisions, and support community education and advocacy efforts, possibly through a public-facing dashboard. A re-established data and performance committee could help support these efforts and review federal and state performance metrics. Having a formal committee would allow the CoC and community at large to develop a better understanding of the state of homelessness in Pasadena, how the CoC is responding, how solutions are working, and systemwide gaps



**Increase the supply of permanent housing through continued investment, maximizing existing supply, and a committee-led community education and advocacy campaign.**

While the CoC does not construct affordable housing or control land use policies, it could support the production of affordable housing through continued investment, maximizing existing supply, and education for the community. With a widespread need for education, a specific plan that includes areas of focus and avenues for dissemination would be helpful.

Ideally, a CoC committee would lead community education efforts, mobilizing partners with existing community networks that could help disseminate information. This could potentially be through the CoC's existing faith community committee or the formation of a new committee with the sole purpose of community education and advocacy. The lead committee would then be responsible for developing a community education plan that includes:

**Community education to engage stakeholders and residents** to become part of the solution and create a future where homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring. Elements of this could include education on:

- » The state of homelessness in Pasadena
- » How the CoC is responding
- » The positive impacts of permanent housing
- » Systemwide outcomes
- » How to connect people to services
- » Drivers of homelessness, focusing on the destigmatization of homelessness
- » The landlord incentive program

**Coalition-building and advocacy for public policy** that advances real solutions for addressing the root causes homelessness and ensures that our most vulnerable residents have a stable home. This could include advocacy for policies that:

- » Reduces housing discrimination and other challenges on the private market, such as a local source-of-income ordinance that prohibits discrimination against renters based on the source of their income.
- » Accelerates the production of permanent supportive housing units
- » Helps reduce systemic racial disparities that have caused people of color to be disproportionately impacted by homelessness.
- » Streamline affordable housing development and help prevent homelessness.
- » Prioritizes the development of more Extremely Low Income (ELI) housing units, which serve the lowest-income residents in our community with the greatest risks of homelessness.

Advocacy work should provide clear information on how these policies contribute to enhancing the CoC's ability to prevent and end homelessness.

## Conclusion

Recommendations laid out in this report, supported by the community engagement and gaps analysis findings, outline an aggressive yet achievable approach to addressing homelessness. Through a combination of systems-level thinking, system improvement and expansion, the implementation of innovative practices and stronger partnerships, the Pasadena CoC can make positive change in the lives of people experiencing homelessness, the staff that serves them, and in the community as a whole.

# Appendices

# Summary of Findings & Recommendations



## EQUITY & PLANNING

- » Despite accessing services at comparable rates, Black people exit to permanent housing at lower rates than other participants, pointing to racism in the private housing market.
- » Latinos are accessing services at lower rates but have similar housing outcomes, pointing to a need for additional outreach.
- » Many people with lived experience of homelessness feel discriminated against or treated unfairly.
- » The criminalization of homelessness in Pasadena hinders progress toward permanent housing.
- » Formalized input from people with lived experience of homelessness, particularly Black, Indigenous, and people of color (including Latinx), can help address racial disparities.
- » Service provider internal practices, training, and support could improve equitable treatment for people that are experiencing homelessness.

## Recommendations

Respond to reports of unfair or discriminatory treatment within the homeless service system.

Develop client-centered models of care for housing and service provision and support organizations with implementation.

Conduct a racial disparity analysis on a quarterly basis to inform strategies.

Ensure people with lived experience play a leadership role in overseeing program and policymaking in the CoC.

Provide job satisfaction and retention support for homeless service providers.



## EMERGENCY SUPPORT SYSTEM

### Response Coordination & Referrals

- » People experiencing homelessness often first learn about and attempt to connect to services through 211, with mixed results.
- » The existing system has room for improved coordination, accessibility, and transparency.
- ⤵ **Recommendation:** Develop a more accessible, transparent, and timely response coordination and referral system that connects people to emergency services while they work towards permanent housing.

### Emergency Shelter & Transitional Housing

- » There is a need for quantity, quality, and diversity of shelter options.
- » New emergency shelter models that offer extended stays and additional support services yield strong results.
- ⤵ **Recommendation:** Investigate options to maintain and expand the supply of shelters, particularly those with extended shelter stays and case management services.
- ⤵ **Recommendation:** Promote dignity and respect in shelter programs by ensuring shelter programs' safety, security, and cleanliness.

### Essential Services

- » Essential services are widely used and help people experiencing homelessness meet their basic needs, and there is room for improvement.
- ⤵ **Recommendation:** Continue to fund essential services such as showers and investigate options to add a multi-service center.

### Street Outreach

- » Key stakeholders and partners, viewed street outreach teams as an essential service, but more information is needed to understand their role in people's path toward permanent housing.
- ⤵ **Recommendation:** Develop a better understanding of the role of street outreach in unsheltered homelessness.





## PATHWAYS TO PERMANENT HOUSING

### Coordinated Entry System

- » There is deep dissatisfaction with the process by which people experiencing homelessness are selected or prioritized for housing services.
- **Recommendation:** Support regional efforts to improve CES through collaboration with regional partners while simultaneously increasing system education and transparency

### Housing Navigation

- » People experiencing homelessness face many challenges in finding a home, including discrimination, rental requirements, and costs.
- » Housing navigation services have expanded with mixed results.
- » Proactive and quality, in-person housing navigation is desired to help people obtain housing.
- **Recommendation:** Strengthen support in leasing up through additional resources to reduce housing discrimination and other challenges to leasing up in the private market.

### Permanent Housing Programs

- » Permanent housing programs in Pasadena yield strong results.
- » Reductions in homelessness depend upon additional funding for permanent housing programs and the continued creation of site-based permanent supportive housing.
- » Ongoing case management is essential for housing retention.
- **Recommendation:** Prioritize and expand permanent supportive housing, rapid rehousing and other long-term subsidy programs.
- **Recommendation:** Ensure adequate supportive services in permanent housing programs.
- **Recommendation:** Expand support in moving on from permanent supportive housing.



## INFLOWS TO HOMELESSNESS

- » Reductions in the number of people experiencing homelessness for the first time suggest prevention measures are reaching people who are most likely to become homeless.
- » Tenant rights education and tenant protections play a critical role in preventing homelessness.
- » Community members and participants in the several listening sessions highlighted the crucial role that cross-system partners could play in addressing system inflows.
- » Even with subsidized rent, people that were formerly homeless fear falling back into homelessness.

### Recommendation

- Reduce inflow into homelessness through targeted prevention, diversion, and cross-system collaboration.

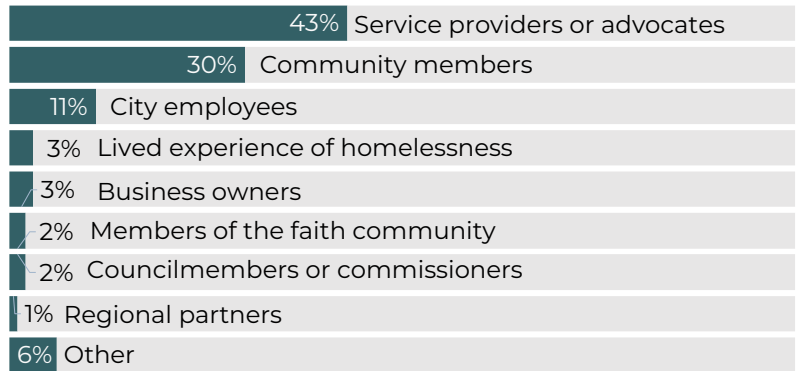


## SYSTEMWIDE PLANNING

- » Housing supply and cost are key barriers for the CoC.
- » Outward-focused community education and advocacy could help strengthen support for affordable, permanent housing.
- » There is a desire for expanded support for people with special needs, particularly those with mental health and substance use disorders.
- » There is a desire for improved cross-system alignment and coordination.
- » Inconsistent state and federal metrics give an incomplete and sometimes inaccurate picture of systemwide performance.

### Recommendations

- Increase the supply of permanent housing through continued investment, maximizing existing supply, and a committee-led community education and advocacy campaign.
- Pursue opportunities to expand mental health and substance use services through additional supportive services, partnerships, and prescriptive contact language.
- Strengthen regional and system partnerships through cross-system alignment and coordination.
- Establish shared metrics of success to guide efforts for data-driven decision-making.

**Community Survey Responses**

## Community Engagement Methods

CityWise and PPA used a variety of survey methods to best engage a broad range of stakeholders. These methods included a communitywide survey, focus groups of people with lived experience of homelessness, listening sessions with key constituents, and targeted interviews with nine regional and system partners.

### Survey

In July 2022, CityWise posted a community-wide survey for feedback on system wide priorities, goals, and potential areas for improvement. Survey questions were drafted by CityWise and revised in consultation with the City of Pasadena. In addition to basic demographic questions, the survey included five closed-ended questions and three open-ended questions, including how the CoC could serve as a better partner and improve equity in its service delivery.

Through targeted emails and social media posts, 216 survey responses were received. The majority of responses were from service providers (43%) and community members (30%). There was good representation among survey respondents, with 62% identifying as Black, Indigenous, or people of color (including Latinx), and 73% of service providers and advocates were in housing and homelessness. Other service areas included mental health (5%), substance use treatment (3%), criminal justice (3%), domestic violence (2%), education (2%), healthcare (2%), disability services (1%), foster care (1%), senior care (1%), and veteran services (1%).

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Survey responses were captured through Typeform, with quantitative analysis of closed-ended questions and qualitative analysis of open-ended questions to identify themes across survey responses.

### **Interviews**

In June and July 2022, PPA conducted nine interviews with ten agencies to gather insights from regional and cross-system stakeholders for feedback on their impressions of the Pasadena CoC and its priorities, as well as opportunities for collaboration and improvements in service delivery. The interviewees represented the following agencies:

- » Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority
- » San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments
- » Pasadena City College
- » Pasadena Unified School District
- » Huntington Hospital/Chap Care
- » Pacific Clinics
- » Los Angeles County Probation Office
- » Sycamores
- » Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services
- » Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services

The list of interviewees was developed by CityWise and the Pasadena Housing Department project team. Interviewees were recruited via an invitation email drafted by PPA and sent by the City of Pasadena, and PPA staff scheduled the interviews. Interview questions were drafted by PPA and revised in consultation with CityWise and the City of Pasadena.

All interviews were conducted on Zoom by senior researchers at PPA. Each interview lasted between 30 minutes and one hour. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. The transcriptions were then analyzed in a qualitative data analysis software platform to identify key themes across the responses.

### **Focus Groups**

In July 2022, PPA conducted eight focus groups in Pasadena to gather the viewpoints of people who were currently experiencing homelessness or had done so in the past. The focus group allowed for in-person engagement of 57 people with lived experience of homelessness. The number of participants in each focus group ranged from 4 to 10 people.

The focus group format was chosen because it allowed for comprehensive conversations and feedback from a sizable number of people with lived experience of homelessness. This format also allows for interactions between people in groups which can be helpful. An in-person focus group was conducted for each of the following populations:

- » Chronically homeless
- » Veterans
- » Families
- » Transitional aged youth, parenting youth, and former foster youth
- » Domestic violence survivors
- » Older adults
- » Black, Indigenous, and people of color (including Latinx English speakers)
- » Latinx Spanish speakers

Each focus group had a designated homeless service provider who agreed to host the focus group. Several service providers were often involved with recruiting for each focus group. Potential service provider locations were selected by CityWise and City staff based on their familiarity with and ease of access to participants. City staff made initial contact with service providers. CityWise and PPA conducted an outreach webinar to inform providers about the planning effort and the focus group task, and to seek their input to ensure that the groups had full participation and ran smoothly. Focus group questions were drafted by PPA and revised in consultation with CityWise and the City of Pasadena.

On arrival at the focus group location, each participant was asked to fill out a hard-copy participant profile survey to provide the facilitator with their age range, race(s) or ethnicity, current housing status, and how long ago they had most recently been unhoused or faced housing instability. Participants were also provided a snack or light meal.

Seven of the focus groups were conducted in English, of which six were facilitated by a member of the PPA research staff and one by CityWise with the support of PPA. The Spanish-speaking focus group was conducted by a native Spanish speaker who was subcontracted for this purpose. At the outset of each group, participants were told the purpose of the focus group, the amount of time it would take, and confidentiality information. Each group lasted 1.25-1.5 hours. At the conclusion of the group, each participant was given a \$40 gift card. All focus groups were audio-recorded and transcribed. The Spanish-speaking focus group transcription was translated to English by a PPA staff member for analysis. All transcriptions were then analyzed in a qualitative data analysis software platform to identify key themes across the responses.

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## Listening Sessions

Over the summer, CityWise conducted listening sessions with key stakeholders. In total, eight listening sessions were conducted, four with the CoC and four with City Commissions.

CoC listening sessions incorporated a Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results (SOAR) analysis. The SOAR analysis is a strategic planning tool that focuses on a vision for the future and a pathway to get there through the CoC's strengths and opportunities. One-hour listening sessions were conducted for the CoC at-large, the CoC Healthcare Committee, the CoC Faith Community Committee, and the CoC Board. For the CoC at-large and two committees, participants were broken up into smaller groups to allow for discussion. Each group took notes on their feedback and presented it to the larger group at the end of their discussion. Because the CoC Board was a smaller group, Board members did not break out into small groups but instead used Miro, a digital whiteboard tool, to record their feedback, highlighting key components and themes in the group discussion. Group notes for each session were shared with CityWise and analyzed for themes.

In addition to listening sessions with members of the CoC, CityWise conducted four listening sessions with City Commissions. These included the Human Services Commission, the Northwest Commission, the Accessibility & Disability Commission, and the Status of Women Commission. Listening sessions consisted of an overview of the planning process and a presentation on the community survey results. Commission members were then asked to provide input on whether certain pieces resonated with them, if they wanted to lift up certain elements of the findings, and if they'd like other elements considered in the planning processes. All listening sessions were recorded, transcribed, and then analyzed for themes.

## Focus Group Questions

### **Personal Experience of Homelessness**

- 1 To begin, let's do short introductions. As I call your name, please briefly tell us: when have you experienced homelessness, and how did it happen?

### **Initial Access and Connection to Services**

- 2 How did you first get connected to homelessness or housing services after you most recently lost your housing?
- 3 What was most helpful to you in making that initial connection to the services and support you needed?
- 4 What were the challenges to making that initial connection with homeless or housing services? For example, not knowing where to go, not getting helpful referrals, or it taking a long time.

### **Crisis and Emergency Shelter Services**

- 5 What services and supports have been most helpful to you?
- 6 What services and supports have been less helpful to you? Why is that?

### **Obtaining Housing and Supports Once Housed**

- 7 What have been the greatest barriers to you in finding housing?
- 8 What services and supports have been or would be most helpful to you in finding housing?
- 9 What services or assistance have or would help you stay housed?
- 10 If you have been homeless, gotten housing and then lost housing again, what could have kept you from falling into homelessness again?

### **Cultural Competence and Treatment Disparities**

- 11 When you've received housing and support services, have you been treated fairly? Please explain.
- 12 What more should homelessness service providers in Pasadena do to make sure that all unhoused people are treated with dignity, equity, and respect?

### **Closing**

- 13 We are getting close to the end of the session. Is there anything else you think we should know that hasn't already been discussed or do you have any questions for me?



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## Regional & System Partner Interview Questions

- 1 To start, please briefly describe your organization's role in homelessness issues and the ways you currently interact with the Pasadena Continuum of Care (CoC)?
- 2 The Pasadena CoC's goals are to:
  - » Implement a systems-level approach to homeless-services planning.
  - » Increase the production of and access to permanent housing solutions.
  - » Improve the performance of the existing homeless-services system.
  - » Reduce inflow into homelessness through targeted prevention, diversion, and cross-systems collaboration.
  - » Promote equity through the ongoing development of policies and practices informed by regular data analyses.

How well do the Pasadena CoC's goals reflect the priorities you think that they should pursue for the next three to five years? In what ways could their goals be improved?
- 3 What strategies or activities do you think the Pasadena CoC should prioritize to accomplish these goals?
- 4 Where are there gaps in homeless or housing services within Pasadena? Think broadly, including services to support people that are experiencing homelessness such as recuperative care, mental health/substance use programs?
- 5 In what ways is the Pasadena CoC most effective at addressing those key homelessness issues that you just spoke about?
- 6 In what ways is the Pasadena CoC least effective at addressing those key homelessness issues?
- 7 What opportunities do you see for the Pasadena CoC to make its work more successful or impactful?
- 8 To what extent does the Pasadena CoC apply its programs and services equitably so that it provides the greatest benefits to BIPOC and high-need populations? What could the Pasadena CoC do to make its programs and services more equitable?

**REGIONAL & SYSTEM PARTNER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

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- 9 What opportunities do you see for greater collaboration or coordination around homelessness issues in the region/ Pasadena]? This could be with your organization or between other organizations.
- 10 What do you see as the best opportunities for the Pasadena CoC to obtain or leverage resources, such as funding, including funding from other sectors that have shared interests?
- 11 [LAHSA ONLY] How are you allocating your Homeless Housing, Assistance, and Prevention or HHAP-3 funds? How did you decide where to allocate them? Are you making any plans for future HHAP allocations/one-time funding sources from the state?
- 12 Are there any further opportunities the Pasadena CoC should consider that we haven't discussed already or anything else you would like to share with us?
- 13 Would you be interested in being added to the Pasadena CoC's email listserv to receive general updates, RFP opportunities, and notifications of upcoming meetings? Would you be the appropriate person to include?

## Community Survey Results

What is your primary role in the Pasadena community?	#	%
Business owner	7	3%
City employee	23	11%
Community member	64	30%
Councilmember or city commissioner	5	2%
Member of the faith community	4	2%
Regional partner	2	1%
Service provider or advocate	92	43%
Someone with lived experience of homelessness	7	3%
Other	12	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>100%</b>

Race + Ethnicity	#	%
BIPOC	119	62%
Hispanic, Latino/a/x, or Spanish origin	64	33%
American Indian or Alaska Native	10	5%
Asian or Asian American	11	6%
Black or African American	30	16%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0	0%
NH White or Caucasian	73	38%

Gender	#	%
Female	142	67.6%
Male	67	31.9%
Non-Binary	1	0.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Quantitative Responses**

Which three parts of Pasadena's existing homeless response system <b>work best?</b>	<b>Total</b>
Access and connection to services	<b>34%</b>
Domestic violence support services	6%
Emergency shelter and interim housing	<b>28%</b>
Employment services	11%
Health care services	17%
Homelessness prevention and diversion	18%
Mental health services	20%
Permanent housing	21%
Substance use treatment services	15%
Street outreach	<b>35%</b>
Transitional housing	13%

Which three parts of Pasadena's existing homeless response system have the <b>greatest need for expansion?</b>	<b>Total</b>
Access and connection to services	24%
Domestic violence support services	9%
Emergency shelter and interim housing	<b>36%</b>
Employment services	8%
Health care services	6%
Homelessness prevention and diversion	34%
Mental health services	<b>40%</b>
Permanent housing	<b>50%</b>
Substance use treatment services	21%
Street outreach	10%
Transitional housing	23%

Which three parts of Pasadena's existing homeless response system have the greatest need for improvement?	Total
Access and connection to services	18%
Domestic violence support services	6%
Emergency shelter and interim housing	<b>36%</b>
Employment services	13%
Health care services	6%
Homelessness prevention and diversion	35%
Mental health services	<b>40%</b>
Permanent housing	<b>62%</b>
Substance use treatment services	15%
Street outreach	15%
Transitional housing	24%

Which three stakeholders would you like to see play a bigger role in addressing homelessness in Pasadena?	Total
Businesses	14%
City of Pasadena	<b>62%</b>
Faith-based organizations	16%
Hospitals	9%
LA County Departments	<b>32%</b>
Landlords	33%
Mental health providers	<b>39%</b>
Philanthropic foundations	13%
Police Department	12%
Schools and colleges	9%
Substance use treatment centers	22%
State agencies	19%

**COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS**

<b>Which populations need more attention within Pasadena's response to homelessness?</b>	<b>Total</b>
Black people	20%
Children and families	26%
Domestic violence survivors	12%
Ex-offenders	8%
Latino/a/x people	4%
LGBTQIA+ people	0%
Immigrants	7%
Indigenous people	1%
People with disabilities	15%
People at-risk of homelessness	<b>32%</b>
People experiencing chronic homelessness	<b>50%</b>
People with substance use disorders	<b>31%</b>
Seniors	24%
Transitional aged youth (18-24) and parenting youth	0%
Veterans	8%

**Open-Ended Survey Questions**

- 1 How can we partner/collaborate better with (role)?
- 2 In what ways could Pasadena better ensure everyone receives equal and equitable access to homeless services and housing in the community?
- 3 Is there anything else that you'd like us to know?

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