

Glossary

Key Terms and Definitions

Access Point: Access Points are the virtual or physical places or programs where an individual or family experiencing homelessness or at imminent risk of homelessness seeks and receives assistance to connect to resources from the Housing Crisis Response System that are available through Coordinated Entry.

Adult Only Household: Represents one or more adult(s) experiencing homelessness together without minor children.

BIPOC: Black, Indigenous and People of Color

Continuum of Care (CoC) (geography): Designated geographic area which receives State and federal funding including funding from the Continuum of Care program (see CoC program) and is responsible for certain required activities including HMIS, Coordinated Entry, conducting Point-in-Time counts and applying for federal funding. In California, a CoC generally covers a county or group of counties, though some cities have their own CoC.

Continuum of Care (CoC) Board: A geographically-based group of representatives that carries out the planning responsibilities of the Continuum of Care program pursuant to HUD regulations. This body usually includes services providers, local government representatives, people with lived experience and other business, civic and community representatives.

Coordinated Entry (CE or CES): The coordinated method and process by which people experiencing homelessness gain access to housing and program resources and are prioritized based on an assessment of their needs and vulnerabilities and matched to housing resources for which they are eligible. HUD requires every CoC operate a Coordinated Entry process which must at minimum allocate all CoC-funded housing resources.

Disabled: The head of household has a disabling health condition(s) that is expected to be of long-continued and indefinite duration and substantially impedes the persons' ability to live independently, such as a diagnosable substance use disorder, serious mental illness, developmental disability, or chronic physical illness or disability.

Diversion: Diversion (also sometimes call Problem Solving) is a strategy that seeks to prevent homelessness for people seeking shelter by helping them identify immediate alternate housing arrangements, including staying with family and friends, and if necessary, connecting them with services and financial assistance to help them return to permanent housing.

Emergency Shelter: A facility with overnight sleeping accommodations, the primary purpose of which is to provide a temporary shelter for people experiencing homeless in general or for specific populations of people who are homeless, and which does not require occupants to sign leases or occupancy agreements.

Emergency Solutions Grant: A federal formula grant program that provides funds to States and certain localities to address homelessness through Outreach, Shelter, Rapid Rehousing, and Prevention.

First time homelessness (or new homelessness): A person or household who has lost housing and become homeless for the first time.

Homeless: People who are residing in emergency shelter, transitional housing, on the street, or in another place not meant for human habitation.

Homeless Management Information System (HMIS): A Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is a web-based local information technology system used to collect client-level data and data on the provision of housing and services to homeless individuals and families and persons at risk of homelessness. The operation of an HMIS and much of the data that is collected are federally mandated, but each community operates its own HMIS system.

Homelessness Response System: The overall system of programs, housing, and services to address homelessness within a given community or region, usually within a Continuum of Care.

Homelessness Response System Model: A model for the optimal homelessness response system that effectively and equitably allocates resources and prioritizes investments to end homelessness.

Homelessness Prevention: Any of a number of programs that provide short-term financial, legal and/or support services assistance intended to prevent at-risk households from losing their housing and becoming homeless.

Housing Resource Centers: Housing Resource Centers are Access Points at physical sites located across the County offering in-person and virtual services. Housing Resource Centers must offer the full range of Coordinated Entry activities including outreach, triage, Housing Problem Solving, assessment and matching to regional resources. HRCs may be targeted to specific populations and geography but must be open to all eligible persons.

Household with minor children: Represents one or more adult(s) experiencing homelessness together with minor children.

Housing Inventory Count (HIC): Required by HUD, the HIC is a point-in-time inventory of all of the dedicated beds and units within a Continuum of Care's homeless services system, categorized by type of project and population served.

Housing Choice Vouchers: Funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Housing Choice Vouchers assist low-income families, or those with disabilities, in finding safe and affordable housing in the private market. Local Public Housing Agencies issue Housing Choice Vouchers to qualified families.

Housing Navigation: Housing Navigation involves helping a household that is homeless develop a housing plan, address the barriers identified during the plan, and acquire documentation and complete forms required for housing.

Housing Pathway: The set of programs and resources expected to be used by a household experiencing homelessness in order to be temporarily sheltered and to become permanently housed. The modeling for the Home Together 2026 Community Plan uses assumptions about a variety of different housing pathways to determine the resource needs and gaps.

Housing Problem Solving: Housing Problem Solving is an approach to help homeless households use their strengths, support networks, and community resources to find housing; a person-centered, housing-focused approach to explore creative, safe, and cost-effective solutions to quickly resolve a housing crisis.

Housing Resource Center: Dedicated Housing Resource Centers (also referred to as "Access Points") are located throughout Alameda County and are locations where people experiencing homelessness can connect with available resources and services.

Inflow: The number of people entering the homeless services system each year. Inflow is not synonymous with the number of people newly experiencing homelessness, as it also captures people with previous episodes of homelessness and homeless people with unmet needs carrying over from the previous year.

Long-Term Subsidy: A housing subsidy of long-term (more than five years) or unlimited duration that continues typically as long as the receiving household remains eligible based on income.

Non-congregate Shelter: Locations where each individual or household has living space that offers some level of privacy such as hotels, motels, or dormitories.

Older Adults: Adults aged 55 and older; also referred to as Seniors.

Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH): A form of subsidized housing designed for individuals with very low incomes and chronic, disabling physical and/or mental health conditions. This housing provides voluntary access to a flexible and comprehensive array of supportive services and places no limits on length of tenancy as long as the terms and conditions of the lease agreement are met.

Person with Lived Experience: A person who is experiencing or has in the past experienced homelessness or has experience with other circumstances or conditions that are frequently present in people who experience homelessness or can lead to homelessness such as poverty, mental health disabilities, incarceration, or addiction/recovery.

Point-in-Time (PIT) Count: The Point-in-Time (PIT) count is a count of sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness on a single night in January. HUD requires that Continuums of Care conduct an annual count of people experiencing homelessness who are sheltered and a count of unsheltered people experiencing homelessness at least every other year. Each count is planned, coordinated, and carried out locally.

Project Homekey: Through Project Homekey the state awards funding that allows municipalities to purchase and rehabilitate hotels, motels, vacant apartment buildings and other properties, and convert them into permanent, long-term housing.

Project Roomkey: Established in March 2020 as part of the state response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the purpose of Project Roomkey is to provide non-congregate shelter options for people experiencing homelessness, protect human life, and minimize strain on health care system capacity.

Racial Equity: The systemic fair treatment of people of all races that results in equitable opportunities and outcomes for everyone. All people are able to achieve their full potential in life, regardless of race, ethnicity, or the community in which they live.

Racism: A belief that race is a fundamental determinant of human traits and capacities and that racial differences produce an inherent superiority or inferiority of a particular race; behavior or attitudes that reflect and foster this belief.

Rapid Re-housing (RRH): Rapid Rehousing is an intervention, informed by a Housing First approach, that rapidly connects families and individuals experiencing homelessness to permanent housing through a tailored package of assistance that may include the use of time limited financial assistance and targeted supportive services.

Rental Subsidy: Financial assistance provided within a housing program that supplements rent paid by a tenant. Specific program or resource guidelines determine eligibility, length, and amount of rental subsidies that can be provided.

Sheltered homelessness: A person experiencing homelessness who is living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangement.

Results Based Accountability: A framework that uses a data-driven, decision-making process to help communities and organizations identify population level results and monitor their programs' performance in order to determine how to improve their impact on the clients they serve.

Returns to homelessness: The rate at which people who have been homeless and become rehoused lose that housing and return to the homelessness response system.

Shallow Subsidy: A housing subsidy that is typically less than the amount of a full or deep subsidy such as a Housing Choice Voucher, and which is usually calculated at a flat monthly amount or a specific percent of rent. Shallow subsidies can be time limited or can be indefinite.

Street Health Outreach: Street Health Outreach teams provide access to care that meets the unique needs of people experiencing homelessness through regularly scheduled outreach services offered to unsheltered people living in homeless encampments, vehicles, and RVs. Street Health Outreach teams engage people living on the streets with highly accessible, patient-centered care. They strive to build relationships that lead to long-term health through connections to primary care, social services, housing, and other resources.

Structural Racism: A system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial group inequity.

System Performance Measure: Measures defined by HUD to evaluate and improve homeless assistance programs by understanding how programs are functioning as a whole and identifying where improvements are necessary.

Transitional Housing (TH): An interim housing project or program that is designed to provide housing and appropriate supportive services to homeless persons to facilitate movement to independent living. The housing is time-limited, typically between six and 24 months.

Transition Age Youth (TAY): Transition Age Youth are young people between the ages of 18 and 24. Some TAY-targeted programs are specifically for youth who are in transition from state custody or foster care and may serve youth as young as 16.

Unsheltered homelessness: A person with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground.