

2024

State of Homelessness Report



close to
home
san antonio | bexar county

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ABOUT CLOSE TO HOME

Close to Home (CTH) is the lead agency for San Antonio's and Bexar County's Continuum of Care (CoC) since being designated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in 2016. As the regional coordinating body addressing homelessness, CTH secures and distributes funding for direct service providers in the housing and homelessness sectors and provides guidance to improve local policies and programs. CTH is responsible for conducting the annual Point-in-Time (PIT) Count and submitting the collected information to the HUD Homelessness Data Exchange 2.0 (HDX) for national reporting, along with other federal reports on homelessness.

In addition, Close to Home supports the delivery of services to people experiencing homelessness through San Antonio and Bexar County's Coordinated Entry System, Homelink. Families and individuals needing diversion, homelessness prevention, rental assistance, transitional or supportive housing, or housing vouchers are assessed through Homelink and prioritized based on their unique circumstances and needs. Homelink is community-led and includes direction from individuals who have experienced homelessness.

OUR MISSION

We exist to ensure everyone has a place to call home in San Antonio and Bexar County.

KEY FUNCTIONS

- Facilitate the funding process for over \$22 Million in Housing & Urban Development (HUD) CoC Program funds into San Antonio/Bexar County.
- Produce federal and community reports on homelessness gaps and trends.
- Set policies and standards to improve our Homeless Response System.
- Manage the local coordinated entry system, Homelink.
- Provide technical assistance and coordination with 60+ partnering agencies, the Alliance to House Everyone.
- Support direct service providers by coordinating housing vouchers and managing flexible funds for homelessness diversion.

OUR VALUES



*We believe in the dignity and value of every human being.
We work intentionally to create equitable outcomes for everyone.*

We are **Empowering Partners**. We see the potential in people, lead with trust, embrace differences, and elevate strengths.

We are **Relentless Learners**. We strive to be subject matter experts and recognize setbacks as opportunities for growth.

We are **Resourceful Problem Solvers**. We embrace optimism, innovation, and excellence as we face adversity and tackle problems.

We are **Systems Leaders**. We cultivate collaboration and nurture the health of the whole.

We are **All In**. We go “all in” to end homelessness while supporting each other and our community.

LETTER FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

To Our Beloved Community,

Many of you reading this report might remember those early PIT Counts from a decade ago. Homeless service providers and community members gathered on the night of the count for a quick huddle on the



process. After receiving a team assignment and a paper map, we marched into the evening with clipboards and paper surveys to interview people experiencing homelessness. Following the count, the surveys were delivered to talented Trinity University students for tabulation, and then we presented our findings to the community, revealing the trends and changing demographics of our neighbors who experienced homelessness.

Over the past decade, we have come a long way and significantly increased our methods' sophistication, with a major shift occurring when SARAH, now Close to Home, hired its first team members in 2015. With the help of our staff and partners, we now conduct the PIT Count using a mobile app and our Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). This year, training was conducted virtually using our new Learning Management System, and every team was led by either a seasoned outreach professional or a well-trained volunteer.

Over time, we saw growing involvement from the business community, government, and elected officials. This year, during our formal program on the night of the count, the mayor of San Antonio and the county judge of Bexar County, side-by-side, shared their commitment not only to the PIT Count but to compassionate, integral responses to homelessness in our community. How incredible!

The Point-in-Time Count will always be critical for collecting data and building relationships with partner agencies, community members, and people experiencing homelessness. However, we recognize at Close to Home that the PIT Count is meant to provide a “snapshot,” or contextual data, which requires further information from our strategic, year-round work to be most useful.

As we began to collect data on homelessness with greater finesse and as more partners came to the table, we found the need to gather and report data more comprehensively. Therefore, we reformatted our typical PIT Count Report to present the results as a facet of our overall strategic planning work throughout the year.

This year's inaugural State of Homelessness Report provides an update on our collective progress since the launch of our community's 2020 Strategic Plan to Respond to Homelessness in San Antonio and Bexar County. The report also provides recommendations that can be utilized for strategic planning and advocacy among partner agencies, government officials, and funders.

We hope that this new format reveals our progress, challenges, and focus areas as we enter the final year of the five-year Strategic Plan to Respond to Homelessness, and we aim to make this report an annual milestone to celebrate the progress and alignment of our partners, the Alliance to House Everyone, with priorities accomplished and new challenges identified. It takes all of us working together to ensure everyone in our community has a place to call home.

Thank you for your continued support!
Katie Wilson
Executive Director, Close to Home

LETTER FROM COC BOARD PRESIDENT



Dear Close to Home Members, Partners and Supporters,

I write to introduce myself and, hopefully, inspire you to deepen your engagement and support of Close to Home in your own unique capacity(ies). Many have come to know Close to Home, formerly South Alamo Regional Alliance for the Homeless (SARAH), as the nonprofit agency tasked with coordinating San Antonio and Bexar County's homelessness response system. In truth, Close to Home is the connective tissue that coordinates federal/state/local/private funding, reporting, data collection, and advocacy for housing service providers and relevant service agencies across our region to make progress toward our community goals to end homelessness.

My passion for accessible and affordable housing options and generational wealth building attracted me to Close to Home as a donor (in-kind and sponsorship) and then later as a member of the Board of Directors. I have served as Board President of Close to Home since Thursday, December 14, 2023. Previously, I served as Board Vice President.

My team at Close to Home, specifically our exceptional Executive Director, Mrs. Katie Wilson, Staff, and Board, keep me uplifted and optimistic as we work to strengthen our community's response to homelessness in an informed, focused, and responsive manner. The City of San Antonio's latest Status of Poverty Report found that nearly half of San Antonians are living at or below the poverty line, with more than half under the age of 18 (Dimmick, San Antonio Report; 2024). One of my goals is to increase the flow of resources to front-line communities that disproportionately experience poverty, e.g., African American/Black San Antonians, children, older adults, and people with disabilities. Through more inclusive collaboration and coordination between public and private partners, I endeavor to increase support to front-line communities through multi-year contracts and grants to trusted, neighborhood-led nonprofits and local minority and women-owned businesses for greater retention and sustainability for and with our most vulnerable neighborhoods. This goal is fundamental to my second goal of advocating for creating more accessible and affordable options for homeownership.

Close to Home serves as a bridge builder for resource and service providers across myriad federal, state, local, and private entities looking to support our aim of ensuring everyone has a safe place to call home in San Antonio and Bexar County. Volunteering benefits everyone involved. Volunteering increases one's resourcefulness. Volunteering improves business (nonprofit and for-profit, that is). As I conclude this letter, I hope that you are encouraged to learn more about Close to Home and join us in this challenging yet necessary work.

Yours for progress,
La Juana (LJ) Chambers Lawson Board President, Close to Home
Founder & CEO at Tacit Growth Strategies



The Alliance to House Everyone is a group of 60+ organizations collaborating to address and advocate for those experiencing homelessness in San Antonio & Bexar County.

With the support and facilitation of Close to Home, the Alliance to House Everyone (“The Alliance”) convenes to share information, provide training opportunities, align resources, address service gaps, recommend coordination strategies, and improve services within the Homeless Response System. As the Continuum of Care (CoC) lead agency, Close to Home supports The Alliance by securing funding, providing guidance, and improving local policies and programs. Together, Close to Home and the Alliance work to ensure homelessness is rare, brief, and nonrecurring. Everyone should have a place to call home.

The Alliance comprises service providers, the CoC Board of Directors, the City of San Antonio, Bexar County, local community leaders, and people who have experienced homelessness. This cohort unites community wide planning efforts, the strategic allocation of resources, and data-informed change.

The Alliance to House Everyone cannot prevent and end homelessness without the impact of all community partners and agencies working together toward systemic change by driving the decisions and policies for the local Homeless Response System. The Alliance’s governance structure allows everyone to collaborate on sustainable policy change and decisions.



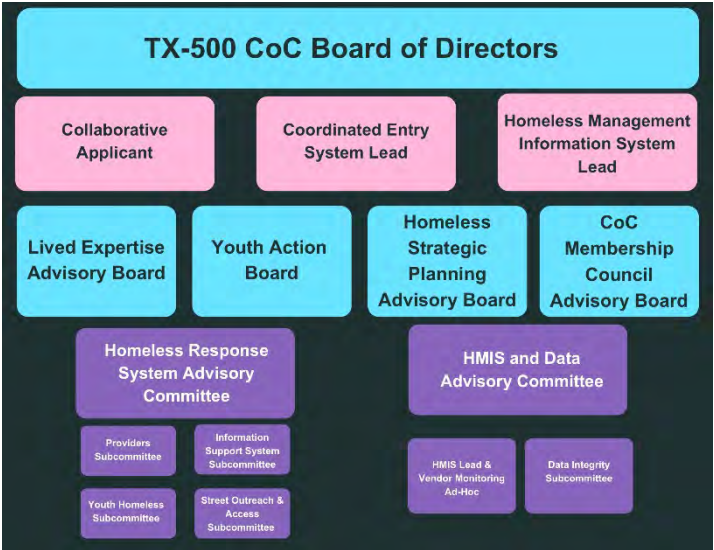
THE ALLIANCE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Governance is how the CoC’s system-wide conversations and decisions happen. Every week, our partnering agencies collaborate in any of the twelve standing bodies that address policies, procedures, system barriers, and gaps in services—all of which is performed voluntarily by dozens of professionals who steer the homeless response system toward equitable and ever-improving outcomes for people experiencing homelessness.

The Alliance’s governance structure comprises the CoC Board of Directors, people with lived expertise of homelessness or housing insecurity, and myriad homeless service professionals. The CoC Board of Directors oversees and directs the advisory boards, committees, subcommittees, and ad-hoc committees. Close to Home supports The Alliance’s governance as organizer, facilitator, host, and implementer.

Governance is meant to create, regulate, and maintain policies, procedures, and decisions for the Homeless Response System (HRS). The CoC Board of Directors are pillared by four advisory boards: the Lived Expertise Advisory Board (LEAB), the Youth Action Board (YAB), the Homeless Strategic Planning Advisory Board (HSPAB), and the Membership Council Advisory Board.

Two committees, the Homeless Response System Advisory Committee (HRSAC) and the HMIS & Data Advisory Committee, steward the CoC’s community-led functions and recommend policy to the CoC Board of Directors. Supporting the two committees are several subcommittees in which experts—who represent the scope of work in the CoC—resolve specific committee priorities to develop thoughtful and equitable solutions.



We invite any housing agency, service provider, or other supporter of ending homelessness to connect to the San Antonio/Bexar County homeless response system by engaging in and applying for the Alliance to House Everyone’s Membership Council Advisory Board.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2024 State of Homelessness Report aggregates progress from the last four years of strategic work, the initiatives launched within the last twelve months, and the 2024 Point-in-Time (PIT) Count data. Recent efforts have focused on reducing chronic homelessness, decreasing and preventing family homelessness, coordinating domestic violence initiatives, and broadening the response to youth and young adult homelessness.

From the years 2020 to 2023, our community response and federal assistance reduced homelessness, especially for families. The City of San Antonio (COSA) and Bexar County received \$16.4 million dollars and \$2.4 million dollars for Emergency Shelter, Outreach, Homelessness Prevention, and Rapid Rehousing in time-limited CARES funding. COSA's Neighborhood & Housing Department also provided over \$200 million in eviction prevention funds that kept over 100,000 San Antonians housed during the pandemic.

Still, our successes are challenged by inflation, waning federal resources, and increasing housing costs. In the face of today's challenges, the Alliance must continue to improve coordination and expand services while advocating for housing resources. We need additional funding to continue to see progress—the recommendations for which are included in this report.

Following this report's presentation to the Alliance, the Homeless Strategic Planning Advisory Board will adopt a final, one-year strategic implementation plan to successfully close out the five-year Strategic Plan to Address Homelessness launched in 2020, which runs through the end of 2025.

Highlights of Major System Changes 2023–2024:

- The CoC was awarded \$14.3 million in a HUD Special Notice of Funding Opportunity (SNOFO) for unsheltered homelessness. Programs were launched shortly after the 2024 PIT Count.
- A centralized shelter coordinator was identified to improve access between street outreach teams and shelters.
- A skilled nursing pilot program was funded to serve people who cannot meet Activities of Daily Living (ADLs). Programming began shortly after the 2024 PIT Count.
- COSA's Housing Bond funded Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH).
- Street Outreach Training and Written Standards for Service Delivery were updated and expanded.
- Homelink, the community's Coordinated Entry System, improved in efficiency of referrals and housing placements.
- SAMM's Low Barrier Shelter program expanded, and Haven's Unsheltered Placement Program was developed to serve more people experiencing unsheltered homelessness.
- The COSA Dashboard was launched to provide the public and city council with outcome data.
- Data accuracy for chronic homelessness was enhanced by initiatives in data cleaning and management.

2024 Point-in-Time (PIT) Count Results:

- The unsheltered count increased by 1.6% from the 2023 unsheltered count, representing 14 additional people counted. The PIT Count data shows an 8.8% increase in the shelter count from 2023 to 2024. This finding may be taken to indicate an increase in family homelessness and our community's efforts to increase shelter capacity (the capacity for emergency shelter beds increased by 10.4% in the same period).
- The overall count of individuals experiencing homelessness, both sheltered and unsheltered, increased by 6.8% from 2023 to 2024, or just a 0.01% increase in homelessness as a percentage of San Antonio/Bexar County's total population. However, unsheltered homelessness has decreased by 25% over the past five years (2019 to 2024).
- In the San Antonio city limits, 7% fewer unsheltered individuals were counted in the 2024 PIT Count than in the 2023 PIT Count.
- The PIT Count data shows an 18% decrease in unsheltered veterans from 2023 to 2024 (the lowest number to date), and the annual Longitudinal Systems Analysis found a 42% decrease in veterans experiencing chronic homelessness. This success is owed to an effective veteran case conferencing team and working system of Alliance partnering agencies.

The “Recommendations and Key Findings” in this report are based on results from our annual progress and initiatives, progress on the initial 2020 strategic plan recommendations, and trends from our 2024 PIT Count results.



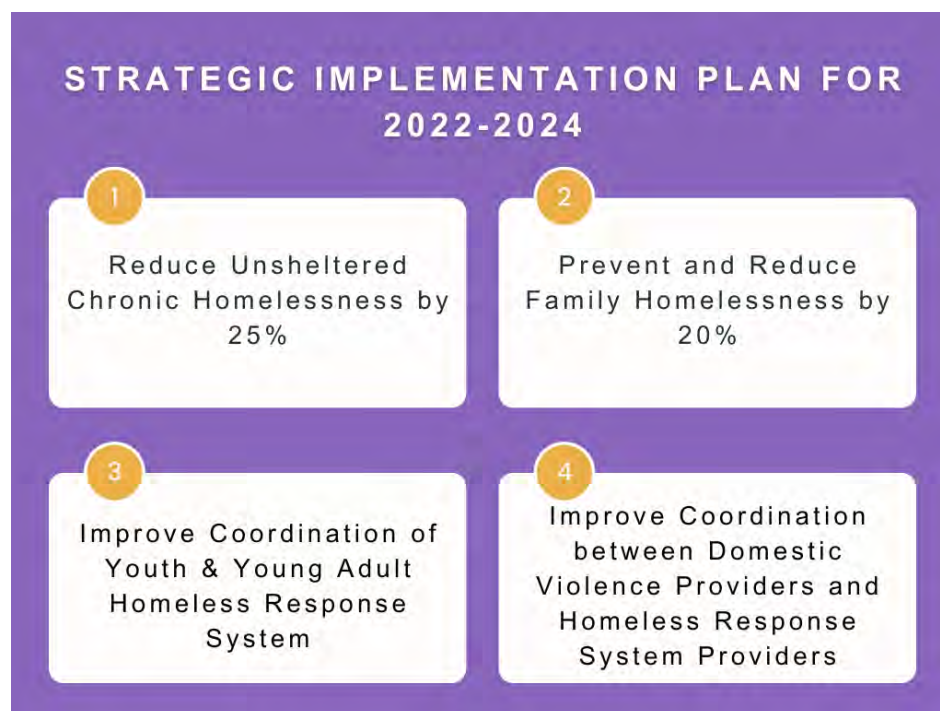
5 YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN TO ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS (2020)

Background

The San Antonio–Bexar County Strategic Plan to Respond to Homelessness was developed in 2019 when Homebase, a homelessness technical assistance firm, was hired to review local data and work with community partners in a six-month planning process. The work culminated as a five-year plan, which was adopted by the San Antonio City Council in 2020 and the Close to Home CoC Board of Directors in 2021. A tremendous amount of work has followed the plan’s implementation, bringing about much-needed system improvements. Four years into the plan, we are continuing to make progress and will use the 2024 PIT Count data to close out the final year, 2025.

Establishing the Homeless Strategic Plan Advisory Board and Implementation Plan for 2022 – 2024

The Close to Home Board of Directors launched the Homeless Strategic Plan Advisory Board (HSPAB) in 2022, which comprised representatives from the City of San Antonio, Bexar County, the Texas Department of Housing & Community Affairs, and Close to Home. The objective of the HSPAB is to strategize the plan by analyzing the plan’s progress and coordinating the plan’s updates. With community input and data, the HSPAB developed four priorities for fiscal years 2022–2023 and 2023–2024:



The HSPAB monitors progress on these four priorities and aligns funding with coordinated strategies to address these priorities. This year’s State of Homelessness Report provides updates on these four priorities, including the Point-in-Time Count snapshot data associated with each.

Throughout the remainder of 2024, the Homeless Strategic Plan Advisory Board will conduct a community input process to provide a 2025 implementation update to the original Homeless Strategic Plan launched in 2020. This process will include:



Throughout 2025, the HSPAB will lead the process for a new, five-year Strategic Plan to address homelessness while offering recommendations for the 2020 plan’s final year.

“Opportunity Areas” Identified for San Antonio/Bexar County in 2020

In the 2020 Strategic Plan to Address Homelessness, San Antonio’s and Bexar County’s strengths were discovered and described. Our community is rich with a “can-do” attitude, a spirit of innovation, a culture of compassion and empathy, strong partnerships between the public and private sectors, an established network of homeless service providers, engagement of outside partners, an ethos of continuous improvement, and robust data systems with vast participation.

Since 2020, while building upon our community’s strengths, we witnessed considerable growth in the “Opportunity Areas” described in the initial plan. These Opportunity Areas were based on feedback from partners across the system and region and categorized into six key themes. The following table shows, side-by-side, the progress we made.

Need for More Permanent, Affordable Housing Options and Services	
2020 Feedback	2024 Update
Stakeholders noted the need for expanded permanent, affordable options and services that reflect local realities, such as rising rents, limited affordable housing stock, and a scarcity of mental health and substance use treatment options.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval of a \$150 million housing bond, with \$25 million allocated to Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) • The award of a \$14.3 million “Special Notice of Funding for Unsheltered Homelessness” (SNOFO) pilot which includes benefit and housing navigation. • Launch of Corazon San Antonio’s Harm Reduction program for people experiencing unsheltered homelessness. • COSA contracted with River City Rehab to provide opioid treatment for people who are unsheltered and hired three street outreach clinicians. • Haven for Hope founded the HOPE program in 2022, in partnership with Pay It Forward, Lifetime Recovery, and Bexar County to offer women a ninety-day therapeutic alternative to incarceration for substance use recovery. • Christian Assistance Ministry (CAM) launched their “One Life at a Time” program for clients in crisis and a crisis training program for the San Antonio Police Department (SAPD). • New challenges include the loss of mental health treatment beds and the Integrated Treatment Program (ITP) operated by the Center for Healthcare services.
Large Unsheltered Homeless Population	
2020 Feedback	2024 Update
Unsheltered homelessness has increased steadily in the past five years and has raised concerns around health and safety for both those living in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The San Antonio/Bexar County Homeless Response System now boasts comprehensive street outreach supported by both city

<p>unsheltered situations as well as for community members. This includes questions about how to balance public safety alongside the priority to connect unsheltered persons to available shelter and services and how to best utilize outreach to achieve positive outcomes for persons experiencing unsheltered homelessness.</p>	<p>and county, new outreach written standards for consistent service delivery, tools for tracking work in the field, and new encampment and abatement policies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COSA funded two additional years and expansion of SAMM’s Non-Congregate Shelter, and \$25 million was allocated to PSH in the 2022 housing bond. • Haven for Hope created the Unsheltered Placement Program (UPP). • Close to Home received \$14.3 million dollars over three years for partner agencies to implement unsheltered strategies through HUD’s “SNOFO”. • Centro, a referral partner to outreach, launched their “Quality of Life” Ambassador program in 2021, which has grown from a team of 7 to 24, and employs many people who have previously experienced homelessness. • Unsheltered Homelessness was the #1 Outcome Area for the implementation of the Homeless Strategic Plan for 2022–2024, as detailed in this report. • The Outreach & Access subcommittee was established to oversee progress and enhance coordination efforts.
<p>Limited Coordination & Communication</p>	
<p>2020 Feedback</p>	<p>2024 Update</p>
<p>There is a need for increased coordination and communication at the community, provider, and systems levels. Also, the COVID-19 crisis in 2020 has shown the need for organizations to respond quickly and coordinate to address the urgent needs of persons experiencing homelessness.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COSA, through its creation and development of its “Homeless Administrator” role, now takes the lead in emergency coordination among partners in the homeless response system and the broader community to ensure the safety of people experiencing homelessness. Policies have been established to recruit new community partners to provide emergency shelter during

	<p>extreme heat, flash flooding, or low temperatures. The success of enhanced coordination was demonstrated during Winter Storm Uri in 2021 when the plan was activated successfully.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The launch of COSA’s “Homeless Connections Hotline” created a new front-door response and access point to services for people in crisis.
Need for Cross System Partnerships	
2020 Feedback	2024 Update
<p>While many organizations outside the homeless response system have begun to engage, increased involvement will enhance opportunities for response (e.g. discharge from criminal justice or health care) and identification of clients engaged in multiple systems of care. In addition to collaborating with partners to expand access to homeless services by making them accessible throughout the community and not primarily concentrated in the downtown area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination has grown with the criminal justice system through the District Attorney’s office participation in the Homeless Response System Advisory Committee (HRSAC) and CoC Board. San Antonio’s Municipal Court holds monthly Community Courts for individuals with current or recent experiences of homelessness who have Class C municipal tickets or active municipal warrants. This coordination has included the expungement of records through an efficient process for people experiencing homelessness. • Haven for Hope continues to heavily coordinate discharge planning with the criminal justice system and through a partnership with University Health. • Close to Home has a signed agreement in place with San Pedro Manor, a skilled nursing facility to connect people who can’t meet “Activities of Daily Living” with a medical necessity to long-term care. • Collaboration with healthcare systems is taking place with major Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) partners, such as Towne Twin Village, that now have onsite medical care.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corazon San Antonio launched health and wellness services, free to unsheltered residents, including basic medical screenings and STD/STI testing. • Close to Home will continue to coordinate with Southwest Texas Regional Advisory Council (STRAC) for greater coordination on hospital discharge planning.
Additional Funding with More Flexibility	
2020 Feedback	2024 Update
More funding will be needed to support the development of housing and services. Additionally, stakeholders expressed concern that there is a lack of flexible funding available to develop new, innovative interventions that reflect the reality of homelessness and housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2020, Close to Home requested “Homelessness Diversion” funding through a USAA grant to provide flexible assistance for people seeking shelter to reconnect to housing opportunities. The initial award was \$200,000, and due to its success and demonstrated need, COSA continued to fund and increase Diversion over the next two years. • As of 2024, the current Diversion fund is \$400,000. Homelessness Diversion has successfully diverted 731 households, or 1,531 individuals from homelessness for an average of \$1,500 per family since inception. • Additionally, Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) funded through COSA is being utilized to “bridge” clients in Rapid Rehousing (RRH) until PSH units funded by the housing bond come online.
Adjusting Responses for Unique Groups Experiencing Homelessness	
2020 Feedback	2024 Update
Stakeholders expressed the need for distinct trauma-informed, culturally responsive interventions and strategies to address the needs of specific subpopulations experiencing homelessness, including youth, older adults, survivors of domestic violence, and persons with histories of criminal justice involvement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding has expanded and new programming launched for Youth & Young Adults (YYA) through the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) grant including YYA-focused street outreach, housing services, and a drop-in center downtown managed by SAMMinistries, the “Young Adult Stability and

	<p>Support (YASS) Center”.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Haven for Hope created a youth dorm, in addition to programming operated by Thrive Youth Center on the campus, to address the specific needs of youth. • COSA created a youth case manager position within the Homeless Connections Hotline to address youth accessing help over the phone. • Close to Home now has a Domestic Violence (DV) & Training Coordinator position focused on enhancing DV coordination and funding specifically for DV housing programs. • DV funding has increased by 380% since 2020 through CoC funding. • The community-led Training Framework Subcommittee is rolling out a “Training Framework” and a new Learning Management System funded by COSA to enhance community training at all levels. The framework includes specific training on topics like trauma-informed care and specific training pathways for youth & domestic violence provider agencies.
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Six Priorities from the 2020 Homeless Strategic Plan and 2024

In addition to these outlined Opportunity Areas based on partner feedback, the initial Community Strategic Plan to Address Homelessness established six priority areas based on a combination of feedback, data, and best practices, all of which have seen significant progress over the last four years. These areas included:

1. Implementation of a Single Collective-Impact Leadership Group for San Antonio.

In 2020, there were several large system partners, such as Close to Home (then SARAH), the City of San Antonio (COSA), and Haven for Hope, meeting to discuss efforts but without clear alignment of strategic plans and priorities. There was also no established infrastructure to bring partner agencies together in times of crisis, which would later play out and become official out of necessity during the pandemic and Winter Storm Uri.

This collaboration improved significantly over subsequent years. For example, Close to Home established a regular call with the City of San Antonio and Bexar County to begin the alignment of plans and funding, resulting in the very first collaborative funding process between Close to Home, City of San Antonio, and Bexar County in 2020. Since then, this collaboration has only grown stronger, with Bexar County continuing to allocate funds in coordination with other funders, including the city's housing bond dollars for Permanent Supportive Housing.

This priority is now officially complete, with the development of a Homeless Strategic Plan Advisory Board (HSPAB) and the Alliance to House Everyone. The purpose of the HSPAB, composed of key funders, COSA, Bexar County, Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA), and Close to Home, is to create Alliance priorities based on data, listening sessions, and input from Alliance partners, as well as to monitor progress and align performance measures and funding priorities across the community.

COSA also coordinates a bi-weekly "Homeless Huddle", a group of homeless service provider CEOs focused on collective impact, that is ready for activation in times of crisis or for ongoing problem-solving as needed.

2. Increase Investment in Community-Based Housing & Service Options.

Over the past four years, investments in community-based housing options and services have increased significantly throughout the city and county.

Examples Include:

- ➔ Close to Home received over \$6 million from HUD's Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) Grant to create additional housing and service options.
- ➔ Close to Home also received \$14.3 million from HUD's Special Notice of Funding Opportunity (SNOFO) competition to expand options for people experiencing unsheltered homelessness.
- ➔ Through a combination of special competitions, such as YHDP and SNOFO, as well as strong performance in the annual CoC funding competition managed by Close to Home, Annual Renewal Demand (ARD) funding levels have reached over \$22 million, up from \$10 million in 2020. This funding from HUD through the CoC Program expands Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), Rapid Re-Housing (RRH), Transitional Housing (TH), and the infrastructure of HMIS and Coordinated Entry.
- ➔ In 2020, all Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) and ESG-CV funds were coordinated through Homelink, the community's Coordinated Entry System. During 2021 – 2023, ESG funds increased by over \$20 million through CARES and COSA's Neighborhood & Housing Department (NHSD) allocated \$200 million to homelessness prevention, causing temporary reductions in homelessness.
- ➔ COSA designated HOME ARP funds for homelessness prevention in winter 2023, adding \$2.5 million annually. Additionally, COSA aligned funding to create "Bridge" Rapid Rehousing (RRH) to help people needing PSH, which will serve over 100 people per year experiencing chronic homelessness over the next two years.
- ➔ The city launched the "Homeless Connections Hotline" in 2020 to serve as a community-wide front door access point for people experiencing or at-risk of homelessness. This continues to serve as a pivotal project for the coordination of homelessness prevention resources, youth and young adult support, connecting the community to housing options, and coordinating with street outreach. COSA has invested annual, general funds to support this initiative.

- Since 2020, Opportunity Home SA, formerly San Antonio Housing Authority, has allocated 534 additional vouchers through Close to Home and the Homelink System including 100 COVID-19 Vouchers, 150 General Homelessness Vouchers, and 284 Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHVs). The Housing Authority of Bexar County also allocated 31 EHV's through Homelink. Homeless Stability Vouchers (HSVs) were also allocated through the SNOFO.
- The 2022 Housing Bond funded \$25 million for additional PSH development, leveraged by the county to eventually total \$42 million, with over 300 units anticipated in the next two years.
- Bexar County and the City of Leon Valley funded two new Street Outreach positions, in addition to COSA's large expansion of outreach, to serve smaller municipalities outside of city limits.

3. Increase the capacity and effectiveness of outreach through improved structure for coordinating diverse outreach efforts across San Antonio/Bexar County and expand the homeless outreach clinician pilot program.

To increase the capacity and effectiveness of outreach efforts across San Antonio/Bexar County, several initiatives have been implemented:

COSA has established a street outreach team tailored to all ten city council districts within the city, complemented by clinicians and specialized outreach teams from homeless service provider agencies. These teams collaborate with partner organizations to address diverse needs, engage in joint problem-solving, and manage encampment abatements. The team grew from 2 positions in 2019 to 20 positions in 2024. In 2023, Bexar County also funded two additional positions to serve smaller municipalities outside of city limits.

In 2021, the Homeless Response System Advisory Committee (HRSAC) initiated a dedicated group for Street Outreach (SO) Managers, facilitating coordination and collaboration among all community street outreach managers. This group underwent expansion and rebranding in 2022, evolving into the "Outreach & Access Subcommittee" under CoC governance. It now includes all front-door partners facilitating access to the homeless response system, encompassing emergency shelters and other entry points. The group has since approved community-wide outreach standards and a comprehensive training program created by street outreach teams and facilitated by COSA.

The subcommittee offers recommendations for updating community policies and procedures, written standards of care, and training specific to street outreach needs. Additionally, it serves as a platform for problem-solving and proposing new policies and procedures to address community-identified challenges and barriers.

Finally, a COSA-funded pilot launched in 2024, facilitated by Haven for Hope, to enhance street outreach coordination and access to emergency shelters. A Centralized Shelter Coordinator now communicates open beds daily with street outreach and offers real-time updates on capacity changes.

4. Conduct a Frequent User System Engagement (FUSE) analysis to identify high utilizers of public resources among persons experiencing homelessness and connect them to appropriate housing and resources.

Although an official “FUSE” analysis has not been prioritized, there has been significant work in defining prioritization of resources for people experiencing homelessness, and several initiatives based on the utilization of public resources are currently underway.

COSA is leading a study with the University of Texas-San Antonio to analyze the cost associated with experiencing homelessness on public resources. For example, COSA will analyze the cost of emergency services and the cost savings associated with housing people experiencing homelessness in this study.

Additionally, the Outreach & Access Subcommittee is prioritizing improving hospital discharge planning to connect people leaving hospital care with resources or shelter.

People experiencing chronic homelessness, meaning those who have experienced over one year of homelessness or episodic homelessness, who also have a disabling condition, continue to be a top priority across the Alliance. People who meet the definition of chronic homelessness strongly overlap with high utilizers of emergency services due to their medical fragility and intensive service needs. Close to Home will prioritize coordination with Southwest Texas Regional Advisory Council (STRAC) over the next year to improve discharge planning and healthcare and housing system alignment.

5. Develop detailed prioritization policies and targeted interventions to connect persons experiencing unsheltered homelessness most effectively to stable housing.

The Alliance collaborated across multiple governing subcommittees of the Homeless Response System Advisory Committee (HRSAC) to overhaul Homelink, the local coordinated entry system, to pilot a new process in 2022. The pilot, supported by researchers from Notre Dame’s Wilson Sheehan Lab of Economic Opportunity (LEO), ensures academic rigor in studying the pilot results and will support the launch a new prioritization tool for homelessness resources at the end of the study. The pilot tool was developed based on three years of local HMIS data and community listening sessions to capture qualitative and quantitative input.

This comprehensive effort, initiated by the CoC Board, with lived expertise and community input, involved addressing multiple components of the process and making recommendations for identified barriers and gaps. Detailed implementation and launch plans, with clear performance indicators, were developed by community partners, leading to the successful launch of the Homelink pilot in December 2022.

The access model transitioned from a multi-site hub approach to a “no-wrong-door” approach, streamlining enrollment into Homelink for anyone accessing services through Street Outreach or Emergency Shelter. Additionally, several hubs for access, including the Homeless Connections Hotline, enroll people in Homelink to gain access to housing services. The pilot, initially set for one year of analysis, was voted for an extension through 2024 by the HRSAC to continue collecting data. Part of the new process was the launch of a “Priority Pool”, which is a list of people “up next” for housing resources and refreshed weekly. This process continues to be adjusted as needed but has the intended effect of notifying partners when their clients will be imminently housed. Partner agencies can also run a report in HMIS and pull a referral when they have an opening. Part of the new process is also a “Community Case Conferencing” (CCC) meeting, which has improved client referrals and successful enrollments into housing projects.

While the new pilot prioritization tool does not explicitly prioritize clients experiencing unsheltered homelessness, to avoid inadvertently disincentivizing shelter access, it considers factors such as nights spent unsheltered, developmental disabilities, mental health conditions, substance use disorders, physical disabilities, chronic health conditions, length of time homeless, and number of homeless episodes.

6. Increase focus on consumer engagement and equity throughout the homelessness response system.

Consumer engagement and equity are now centered in the work of homelessness coordination and policy development within Close to Home and the Alliance through CoC governance. By actively involving individuals with lived experiences of homelessness in decision-making policies, processes, and services, our system is more responsive to diverse needs and the realities of those we aim to serve.

For example, Close to Home launched a Youth Action Board, to gather people who have experienced homelessness between the ages of 18–24, to develop the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Grant (YHDP) in 2019. The YAB continues to operate and contributes its perspectives and insights for homelessness initiatives and funding opportunities.

Additionally, in 2022, Close to Home launched the Lived Expertise Advisory Board, further amplifying the voices and expertise of those who have experienced homelessness. The YAB and LEAB are compensated for their time, vote on the CoC Board, and are involved in all key funding and policy decisions. Additionally, listening sessions are held regularly with people who have experienced homelessness across the system for input on new initiatives or community procedures, and most recently to develop an Equity Framework for both Close to Home and the Alliance, which will launch later in 2024.

Additional Context Setting for 2020 – 2024

Since the adoption of the Strategic Plan to Respond to Homelessness developed in 2019, several environmental factors and system changes have impacted the current state of homelessness in San Antonio/Bexar County:

- **COVID-19:** The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated challenges with addressing homelessness in San Antonio, leading to increased efforts to provide shelter and support services to those affected by the economic downturn. The moratorium on evictions and CARES Act funding provided a reprieve during the pandemic, but homelessness, especially for families, has soared since the end of the moratorium and the wind down of additional pandemic relief funding. CARES Act funding also had special provisions for funding, such as allowing use of funding for landlord incentives, which helped with housing placements during the pandemic, but the provisions were temporary and have ended.
- **Inflation and Poverty:** Almost 18% of the population in San Antonio live in poverty, higher than the national average of 11.5%. And according to COSA's 2024 Status of Poverty Report, this figure hasn't changed much in more than a decade. High rates of poverty, combined

with national challenges with inflation since the pandemic, compound to create entries into homelessness when emergencies occur.

- **Population Growth:** Over the past five years, San Antonio/Bexar County has seen a 3% increase in the total population averaging about a 1% increase per year according to census data. Growth in population can impact homelessness by putting pressure on the availability and affordability of housing options in the community, making it difficult for vulnerable individuals and families to secure housing. This may emphasize the need for holistic approaches that would consider both supportive services and the supply of affordable housing.
- **Rising Rent:** The cost of housing and rising rent prices directly contributes to homelessness by displacing individuals and families from housing in their local community. From 2020–2024, the rent cost for one-bedroom apartments in San Antonio/Bexar County increased by 14.8%, two-bedroom apartments saw increases up to 14.9% from 2020–2024. As rent increases and outpaces income growth, many low-income community members are forced to allocate most of their earnings towards rent, often leaving them vulnerable to eviction and/or homelessness. Therefore, addressing homelessness also requires effort to stabilize rent prices and increase access to affordable housing options. (Rent estimates are monthly estimates of the median rent paid for new leases in a given market–San Antonio/Bexar County.)
- **Alignment of Key Homelessness Partner Agencies:** Agencies working to address homelessness have aligned and collaborated more closely since the start of the plan. This includes the launch of the city’s Homeless Huddle bi-weekly coordination call, improved coordination between Close to Home and key partners, and the enhancement of decision-making processes among the CoC’s governing bodies.
- **Alignment of Housing and Homelessness Plans:** In addition to the greater alignment among the Alliance and homeless response system partners, there is also greater alignment between housing and homelessness strategic plans. This includes input for recommendations on the community’s Strategic Housing Implementation Plan (SHIP) from homelessness partners, the creation of a Chief Housing Officer within the City of San Antonio, alignment between City and County planning through the Homeless Strategic Plan Advisory Board (HSPAB), and a collective effort to integrate homelessness gaps into broader housing strategies.
- **Historic Housing Bond:** San Antonio passed a historic housing bond in 2022 to fund affordable housing initiatives, which has helped increase access to stable housing for low-income individuals and families. The total bond was \$150 million with \$25 million dedicated specifically to the creation of additional Permanent Supportive Housing units for people experiencing chronic homelessness.
- **Increased HUD Funding:** San Antonio has received increased funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), allowing for expanded services and support for individuals experiencing homelessness. This includes increases in the annual Continuum of Care funding allocation and the additional \$14.3 million three-year “Special NOFO” funding to address unsheltered homelessness. This will provide opportunities to

develop more housing options and expand supportive services such as housing navigation and SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) positions to connect people to benefit income.

- **Legislative Coordination for Housing and Homelessness:** Legislative coordination efforts to educate on homelessness and housing insecurity have been established. This includes establishing a “Homelessness and Housing” group for the Chamber of Commerce’s annual “SA to DC” trip.
- **Family Homelessness:** Efforts in San Antonio have been directed towards preventing and reducing family homelessness, with a focus on providing stable housing and support services. This includes the allocation of additional vouchers for families and the launch of a “90 in 90 challenge” to house 90 families in 90 days in 2023.
- **Continuum of Care Governance:** Close to Home has implemented improved governance structures for its Continuum of Care, ensuring better coordination and effectiveness in addressing homelessness. This includes processes like submitting “issues for committee consideration” when barriers or gaps are identified and establishing additional subcommittees chaired by community experts.
- **Homelink/Coordinated Entry System Changes:** Alliance partners have made changes to its Coordinated Entry System, Homelink, including how people are connected to the right resources, the launch of a new prioritization tool to connect people to housing, and improving the efficiency of access to housing and services for individuals experiencing homelessness.
- **Alignment of HMIS Strategic Plan:** Close to Home’s Board of Directors has aligned its Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Strategic Plan with broader housing and homelessness strategies, improving data collection and analysis to inform decision-making.

Additional Recommendations & Progress Since 2020

Recommendation & Progress Update	<p>Assess Racial & Gender Equity of Access into Different Project Types</p> <p>Using HMIS data, qualitative interviews, and a review of written policies, analyze whether all programs are enrolling individuals equitably.</p> <p>For example, assess why Black individuals enroll in sober living programs at rates much lower than their overall share of the homeless population.</p> <p>Due to the large data set in HMIS, multiple regression or an alternative quantitative analysis model would be a highly reliable method to identify unbiased conclusions.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demographic information for all clients housed through Homelink projects is now analyzed and published monthly. • Demographic information for Homelink skilled assessors is being analyzed in the Homelink pilot to determine if an assessor’s race or gender impacts the client’s referral outcomes. • The community’s training framework plan includes equity training requirements internally at Close to Home and externally for Alliance partners.

Recommendation & Progress Update	<p>Community Education</p> <p>Develop community-wide training and educational opportunities, including Homelessness 101 and Coordinated Entry 101 for the general public and cross-system/non-homeless service providers (e.g. education system partners, hospitals)</p> <p>Build and expand on Membership Council meetings to support regular communication and information sharing with key stakeholders, such as City Departments.</p> <p>Provide more regular updates at neighborhood forums to share information on current homelessness progress and initiatives and how individuals can help their neighbors experiencing homelessness.</p> <p>Offer free educational classes for citizens to be trained on how to help people experiencing homelessness (ex: how to be an advocate, knowledge of local resources, compassionate communication, how to deal with situations without creating or escalating conflict).</p> <p>Increase community-wide awareness and education around SACRD.org as a central directory for homeless resources in San Antonio.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The community’s training framework and learning management system launched in 2024. • Training in the framework includes Homelessness 101 and Coordinated Entry 101. • The Membership Council Advisory Board, a quarterly meeting of Alliance partners, now focuses on sharing information with all stakeholders on training and new programming. • The city’s Homeless Huddle, comprised of Alliance partners, regularly presents collaboratively to neighborhood organizations and the city council. • Close to Home offers free educational classes on how to access homeless resources with external audiences such as McKinney-Vento liaisons and the San Antonio Police Department (SAPD). • SACRD launched a housing portal in collaboration with COSA NHSD to promote access to housing resources.
Recommendation & Progress Update	<p>Enhance Data Sharing & Data-Driven Decision-Making</p> <p>Create public dashboards that are accessible to all service providers to easily produce reports. Since CaseWorthy requires a certain level of technical expertise to pull reports (e.g. understanding SQL), it is difficult for providers to pull their reports quickly and independently. Therefore, a public-facing 5-Year Strategic Plan to Respond to Homelessness in San Antonio and Bexar County 81 dashboards that are periodically updated would allow for increased transparency and utility of homelessness data at the provider and community levels.</p> <p>Conduct training on data sharing and how it can improve outcomes for vulnerable populations including those experiencing homelessness with cross-systems partners (e.g. education, health/hospital systems, behavioral health, criminal justice)</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COSA launched a monthly homelessness dashboard in collaboration with Close to Home and HMIS to inform the city council and the public on the progress with homelessness. • HUD’s Special NOFO funding included the creation of a new HMIS Data Analyst position and funding for Power: BI to develop communitywide dashboards. • Several communitywide data definitions have been approved by the CoC Board to ensure common data definitions. • The HMIS Committee expanded to the “HMIS & Data Advisory Committee” with a new structure to both monitor HMIS and review community data.
Recommendation & Progress Update	<p>Improve Precision of Project Type Codes in HMIS</p> <p>Currently, several project types unique to San Antonio are tagged in HMIS as “Supportive Services Only” or “Emergency Shelter”, even if they do not match these project types. Because HUD prescribes the options for the Project Type Code field in its Universal Data Elements, consider adding a new, custom field (e.g. “Project Type Code-Custom”) and inputting custom project types for each project to more easily and accurately analyze data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HMIS has begun a thorough review of project types with agencies during HMIS Annual Site Visits to ensure all projects are actively in use and have the correct project type assigned. • HMIS will continue to work through this challenge in the coming year to ensure projects are set up to collect the proper information and accurately pull data into federal reports.
Recommendation & Progress Update	<p>Encampment Outreach</p> <p>Provide a longer notice of abatement to encampments (currently 48 hours) to allow for more intensive outreach and engagement to persons residing in the encampment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3-1-1 serves as the gateway and the reporting system for Encampment Abatement. A constituent calls 3-1-1 to report an encampment. • The site is then assessed by the COSA Encampment and Abatement team and if deemed necessary, the street outreach teams (COSA, SAMMinistries, Haven for Hope, Corazon San Antonio) meet with the clients in the encampment prior to the scheduled clean-up to provide shelter or other housing options to the residents. • An Encampment Abatement Health and Safety Sign Notification is posted (usually within a week of the initial assessment), which informs the camp’s residents of the date and time of the scheduled cleanup. The sign is posted with a 48-hour notification.
Recommendation & Progress Update	<p>Landlord Engagement</p> <p>Increase marketing and awareness of the Provider Liability Assurance for Community Empowerment (PLACE) landlord risk mitigation fund through the Housing Strategies Workgroup.</p> <p>Develop a community-wide strategy for identifying and recruiting landlords through the Housing Strategies Workgroup.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Provider Liability Assurance for Community Empowerment (PLACE) program funds are fully allocated but the program will likely expand in 2025. • Close to Home hired a consultant to assist the community in the development of a centralized landlord engagement plan to improve efficiency and placement rates for high-barrier clients experiencing homelessness.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The centralized landlord engagement plan, expected to launch in 2025, will include a strategy for identifying and recruiting landlords.
Recommendation & Progress Update	<p>Prevention & Diversion Utilize SACRD.org with low-acuity clients who would not be prioritized for resources in the homeless response system.</p> <p>Build diversion into HMIS and Coordinated Entry to allow tracking of utilization and outcomes (ex: additional touches with the homeless response system after diversion efforts).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SACRD is built into the Homelink process after the assessment is complete. Diversion is fully integrated into the Homelink process and COSA allocates \$400,000 annually to serve the program. Homelessness Prevention is a priority for the Mayor's Housing Commission and is offered through the Homeless Connections Hotline. This Fiscal Year, over 2,000 households have been referred to NHSD for rental assistance. LISC, in partnership with COSA NHSD, created a comprehensive assessment of recommendations to make homelessness prevention a sustainable strategy in San Antonio/Bexar County.
Recommendation & Progress Update	<p>Rapid Rehousing Develop community-wide, standardized policies and procedures for Rapid Re-Housing programs applicable across programs and funding streams (ex: length of assistance).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ESG, CoC, and Local Written Standards of Care were developed by the community, approved by all ESG and CoC-funded entities, and approved by the CoC Board, including the city and the county. The standards include Homelessness Prevention (HP), Rapid Rehousing (RRH), Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), and Street Outreach (SO) services. The standards launched in early 2022 and have become the foundation for training and support.
Recommendation & Progress Update	<p>Coordinated Entry "Homelink" Improve education and marketing of Coordinated Entry as the entry point for homeless housing and resources among clients, providers, and other systems of care (ex: hospitals).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One of the objectives of the newly formed Homeless Response System Advisory Committee (HRSAC) was to create a better understanding amongst funded organizations and funders on the intent and process behind Homelink and how it improved the Homeless Response System. Since the start of the committee, additional tools have been created such as luggage tags to hand out with assessment locations, community presentations on how to access resources, and pamphlets explaining the process.
Recommendation & Progress Update	<p>Strengthening Partnerships with Businesses/Private Sector Develop a Business Resource Guide to help San Antonio business owners, executive leaders, human resources directors, staff supervisors, and team members unite in a collective effort to end homelessness. Look to Tulsa, OK's Business Resource Guide, and webpage as a model: https://csctulsa.org/businessresources/</p> <p><i>Work with local businesses to promote the "Change the Way We Give" campaign and other homeless initiatives as they arise.</i></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although a specific resource guide has not been developed, alliance partners continue to present to neighborhoods and downtown businesses on the work of the homeless response system. Close to Home and other key stakeholders presented on the first housing panel at SA to DC to better explain the state of homelessness and housing. United Way hosted a homelessness session with homeless service providers in 2023 to improve their understanding of current issues and offered support in engaging businesses. Centro, COSA, and Close to Home are currently planning a “Humanizing Homelessness” luncheon with the business community set for summer 2024.
Recommendation & Progress Update	<p>Strengthening Partnerships with Faith-Based Organizations</p> <p>Continue to build rapport with faith-based leaders through regular meetings and coordination between the city, SARA, and the San Antonio Faith-Based Initiative.</p> <p>Work with faith-based organizations to understand and come into compliance with local and federal regulations and to navigate bureaucratic processes for operating homeless assistance programs.</p> <p>Provide access to training for faith-based organizations on best practices for working with persons experiencing homelessness and navigating the homeless system of care, including safety considerations and working with persons experiencing serious mental illness, a substance use disorder, or a co-occurring disorder.</p> <p>Offer training on key principles of working with youth experiencing homelessness including Positive Youth Development (PYD), trauma-informed care, and LGBTQ+ competency to help build competencies and address concerns among youth about working with faith-based organizations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Since 2021, the City of San Antonio has collaborated with the Faith Based Initiative and partnered with 2 local churches in vulnerable communities. On the west side, Harper’s Chapel, and on the east side, Jacob’s Chapel, serve as Resource Hubs for the community. Services at Resource Hubs include outreach, showers, housing resources, referrals, veterinarian services, and meals to the unsheltered community.
Recommendation & Progress Update	<p>Vehicular Homelessness</p> <p>Conduct a census and create a taxonomy of persons experiencing vehicular homelessness in San Antonio, including demographics/ household characteristics, common locations, and immediate, short-term, and long-term housing and service needs. Work with persons with lived experience of vehicular homelessness to assist in this effort.</p> <p>Establish a Safe Parking Program for persons residing in their vehicles. Collaborate with faith-based organizations and higher education campuses as potential partners to provide safe parking lots.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vehicular homelessness remains a challenge to track. The approach to vehicular homelessness is handled similarly to others experiencing unsheltered homelessness. Services are available through street outreach and the Homeless Connections Hotline.

Recommendation & Progress Update	Marketing & Public Relations Work with marketing professionals to help craft and execute marketing targeted at people experiencing homelessness to change their perceptions about existing homeless service options.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The South Alamo Regional Alliance for the Homeless rebranded to Close to Home and created a separate brand for partners, the “Alliance to House Everyone” in October 2023.• The newly formed Alliance now has a communications group focused on key goals and messaging to enhance the work of the community collaboration and change perceptions about homelessness in the broader community.• San Antonio Area Foundation launched the “Reframing Housing” cohort to change public perception of homelessness and housing affordability issues in 2023.• COSA NHSD is launching a public information campaign in 2024 to further enhance support of homelessness and housing efforts ahead of a potential 2027 housing bond.• Efforts to change “homeless people” to “people experiencing homelessness” have been largely successful among media telling stories about homelessness, providing a frame that reduces harm and stigma.• COSA launched a Homeless Response System dashboard as part of its marketing work to convey the homeless system’s impact. The dashboard is updated monthly.

This section of the report covered the launch of the 2020 Strategic Plan to Address Homelessness, Opportunity Areas, Updates on the Six Initial Priorities, and additional context for what has occurred and changed in the community over the last four years. The “Additional Recommendations” cover other areas of improvement named in the original strategic plan and progress.

The Recommendations and Key Findings in this report will address progress on the Four Priorities of focus for 2022-2024, established by the Homeless Strategic Planning Advisory Board (HSPAB) and the CoC Board. Progress updates are based on collaborative work and snapshots from the Point-in-Time Count.

Alliance partners should be proud of the collective systems changes made in a relatively short amount of time while dealing with difficult environmental challenges, such as the pandemic and rising costs.



This information not only helps us better serve our community but also shapes national priorities on homelessness and critical funding decisions.

WHAT IS THE POINT-IN-TIME COUNT?

The Point-in-Time (PIT) Count is a **one-night snapshot** that provides information about those experiencing homelessness in our communities. Nationwide, Continuums of Care (CoCs) are **required by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)** to conduct an annual PIT Count to collect and report essential data on the numbers and demographics of those experiencing homelessness.

CoCs utilize the local Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and comparable databases to report on those experiencing **sheltered homelessness**, while hundreds of volunteers assist with gathering data on those experiencing **unsheltered homelessness**. The PIT Count attempts to include all individuals experiencing homelessness, whether unsheltered (sleeping outdoors, in encampments, abandoned buildings, etc.) or in a shelter. This information not only helps us better serve our community but also shapes national priorities on homelessness and critical funding decisions.

Through a continued partnership with **Outreach Grid**, a mobile data-collection tool, and the dedication of our community's street outreach workers, we were able to run a successful campaign in the weeks leading up to the PIT count to update and capture new known locations in the application. This effort ensured that locations shown to volunteers were up-to-date and as accurate as possible for the night of the count.

HUD requires that communities nationwide conduct the PIT Count on a **single night in the last ten days of January**, the coldest month of the year. The reason for this requirement is that people experiencing unsheltered homelessness are more likely to seek shelter, therefore, lessening the reliance on outreach and volunteer efforts to provide an accurate snapshot of those experiencing homelessness nationwide.

This report analyzes the PIT Count data captured on **Tuesday, January 23, 2024**, in San Antonio/Bexar County.

DATA LIMITATIONS



This data empowers our community with the insight to make critical decisions in responding to the needs of those experiencing homelessness. However, data alone cannot give us a complete picture – it must be interpreted carefully. There are a few factors to keep in mind as we take these insights and act upon them.

The Point-in-Time (PIT) Count is a one-night snapshot. As a result, the data does not tell the complete story of homelessness in San Antonio and Bexar County. For this reason, in an attempt to

create a more complete community report, PIT data is shared alongside housing inventory count (HIC) data, Homelink data, HUD reports, and comprehensive updates on progress throughout the last four years.

Like the 2023 count, scheduling the usual date for the 2024 PIT Count during the last 10 days of January as required by HUD was accomplished on schedule.

Notable limitations include:

- Precipitation was heavy on January 23, 2024, leading to difficulties with completing all survey questions for the late-night count and a delay in the morning encampment count, which may have caused additional people to be identified in the unsheltered count.
- There was a higher number of observational surveys this year, possibly due to factors like the level of comfort for volunteers and the weather.
- Shifting numbers of people being counted may also be the result of expanding emergency shelter and street outreach capacity leading to higher numbers of people counted.

Despite these factors, this data provides critical information for our community as we work to ensure everyone in San Antonio and Bexar County has a place to call home.



2024 KEY FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

This section of the report focuses on key findings related to the four priority areas of the 2022 to 2024 implementation of the Strategic Plan to Respond to Homelessness: Chronic, Unsheltered Homelessness, Families with Children, People Fleeing Domestic Violence, and Youth & Young Adults.

Additionally, this report will cover other key demographic areas and trend updates based on the Annual Point-in-Time Count data, which serves as a snapshot of overall progress. The key findings in this report, along with annual data, programming, and community feedback, will inform the Priorities & Recommendations for the 2025 Alliance Strategic Plan to Address Homelessness.

Outcome Area # 1 – Reduce Unsheltered Chronic Homelessness by 25%

Chronic homelessness, or households with a disabling condition and over 12 months experiencing homelessness, continues to be an area of focus for the community and a major challenge to address. With complex and co-occurring needs, various medical, case management services, and subsidies are needed to help this population access and maintain safe, stable housing.

Chronic homelessness was prioritized during the launch of the 2020 Strategic Plan to Respond to Homelessness, as this population is often unsheltered or cycling in and out of institutions, shelter programs, and the streets. Unsheltered, chronic homelessness was named the #1 Priority by the Homeless Strategic Plan Advisory Board (HSPAB) for the 2022-2024 implementation timeframe.

Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), or housing with ongoing services and subsidy support, continues to be a leading solution to address this population's needs. PSH boasts a 96-98% housing retention rate based on San Antonio-Bexar County's annual system performance measures reporting, but more PSH units are needed to address everyone experiencing chronic homelessness.

Some of the efforts to address unsheltered, chronic homelessness included:

- Funding for three new Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) projects: Towne Twin Village, SAMM's Hudson Apartments, and SAMM's Commons project (future development).
- Launch of new Rapid Rehousing (RRH) "Bridge" programs to house chronically homeless clients waiting for Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) units.
- Launch of SAMM's low barrier, non-congregate shelter, focused on extremely vulnerable clients on the Priority Pool for PSH.
- Launch of Haven for Hope's Centralized Shelter Coordination Pilot, which serves as a streamlined, front-door access point to shelter for street outreach providers.
- Data quality efforts focused on chronic homelessness data clean-up and new methods to update assessments in HMIS.
- Creation of a Permanent Supportive Housing Officer position at Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) to address PSH development challenges.

Chronic Homelessness PIT Count

Total	Sheltered	Unsheltered
467	342 (13.8% of the sheltered count are experiencing chronic homelessness)	125 (14.1% of the unsheltered count are experiencing chronic homelessness)

2024 PIT Count data shows that chronic homelessness increased by 35% from 2023. This increase can be attributed to improved data collection techniques and street outreach strategies. Additionally, Haven for Hope, which makes up 65% of the shelter beds in our community, undertook significant efforts to enroll more people experiencing unsheltered homelessness. As a result, 69% of the people in the sheltered chronic homelessness count reside at Haven for Hope. It is also significant to note that 342 people, or 70% of our chronic homelessness population, are currently residing in safe shelters. Last year, 278 people were considered chronically homeless and counted in shelters. This year should be considered a baseline for future chronic homelessness counts and will be monitored monthly.

For additional context on PIT findings, the Longitudinal Systems Analysis (LSA) showed that 94 people experiencing chronic homelessness were placed in PSH in FY 2022 and 114 people served by PSH in FY 2023. As of May 1, 2024, 608 households were experiencing chronic homelessness that were on the Homelink Resource Eligibility List (REL), representing 25% of the REL, while at the same time in 2023, there were 624 households experiencing chronic homelessness, representing 22% of the REL. The number of units is increasing but still does not meet current needs. PSH unit development will continue to be an area of focus in the coming year, and we are already seeing reductions in chronic homelessness in 2024 as PSH units continue to come online.

Outcome Area # 2 – Decrease and Prevent Family Homelessness

Families with children continue to be a concern for Close to Home and Alliance partners. For context, in the 2021 Point-in-Time Count, San Antonio-Bexar County saw historic lows of families in shelters due to the moratorium on evictions and ample rental assistance available for households at risk of eviction. Fast forward to 2023 and 2024, with drivers like inflation, rising rents, enhanced evictions, and dwindling federal resources, a perfect storm has led to a national “cascade of evictions,” and San Antonio-Bexar County is experiencing the same trend. For the 2024 PIT count, there was an 11% increase in families, with Children ages 0-17 making up a majority of the combined homelessness counts at 18.2%. It should also be noted that among Emergency Shelters (ES), Safe Havens (SH), and Transitional Housing (TH) projects, there was roughly a 5.2% increase in clients ages 0-17 based on Longitudinal Systems Analysis (LSA) comparisons.

These trends have been felt year-round, perhaps most pronounced at Haven for Hope, the community’s largest emergency shelter for families. Haven for Hope, seeing historic highs in families accessing shelter, expressed the need to prioritize urgent solutions for families. As a result, Close to Home worked with the Providers Subcommittee, housed under the Homeless Response

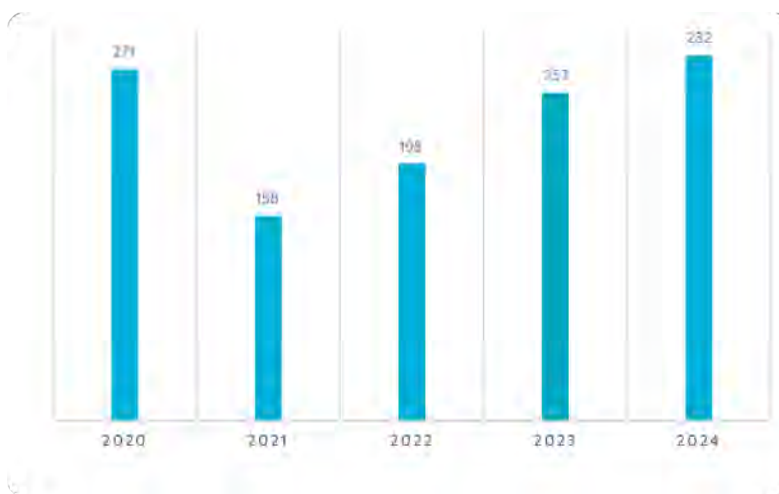
System Advisory Committee (HRSAC), to discuss potential solutions. These discussions culminated in the “90 in 90 Challenge” to house 90 families in 90 days. This initiative launched on December 1, 2023.

Some of the system enhancements during the challenge included a streamlined process to apply for housing vouchers, expansion of diversion funds, alignment with COSA’s Neighborhood Housing and Services Department’s (NHSD) relocation program, and prioritization of families for Rapid Rehousing (RRH) openings.

As a result, 90 families were housed in 95 days, but most importantly, new partnerships and processes were created to house families entering homeless services more efficiently through shelter. The Family Referral Program (FRP) vouchers were also expanded to help more families, and Opportunity Home dedicated an additional 150 vouchers for Close to Home to disperse to partner agencies.

However, reducing the number of families experiencing homelessness will take more than enhancing coordination efforts. Key strategies will be enhancing relationships with landlords (possibly through an incentive program) and funding more homelessness prevention programs to keep families stably housed and out of emergency shelters.

Family PIT Count



282 sheltered families were reported, an 11% increase from 2023. Families in the sheltered count include households with at least one child.

Due to these trends, Close to Home recommends that families with children continue to be a high-priority area for Alliance Partners through 2025.

Note: Families come in all forms and can also include chosen families. Among households experiencing unsheltered homelessness, 74 self-reported as families, none of which had children.

Outcome Area # 3 – Connect Domestic Violence Efforts to the Homeless Response System

Connecting domestic violence service providers and the homeless response system while maintaining safety was a priority area for 2022 – 2024.

In 2023, Domestic Violence-specific case conferencing was implemented to strengthen the relationship between Victim Service Providers (VSP) and other system partners. This allows for additional safety precautions for clients when accessing services. Safety and Emergency planning for when a scenario arises requires the client to relocate immediately due to an impending threat from the partner from whom they fled. An expansion of housing grants through HUD's Domestic Violence (DV) Bonus grants created more Transitional Housing (TH) and Rapid Rehousing (RRH) opportunities, an accomplishment owed to coordination with Family Violence Protection Services (FVPS), the largest VSP in the area.

Close to Home's Training and Domestic Violence (DV) coordinator launched the Domestic Violence Homelink Skilled Assessor training series. DV Skilled Assessors are trained Homelink users who are available to assist clients fleeing or attempting to flee DV in getting connected to the Homeless Response System. A DV Skilled Assessor takes extra measures to prioritize safety, understand the complexities of domestic violence, and maintain confidentiality when assisting clients. DV Skilled Assessors are knowledgeable in safety planning and can provide tailored assistance that considers the client's unique needs to find and maintain secure, stable housing. The training pathway includes 20 hours of online trauma-informed care, survivor sensitivity training, safety planning training, and serving domestic violence survivors.

Additional funding, increased collaboration, and additional education across the community all contribute to the 51% increase in individuals reporting fleeing domestic violence.

Domestic Violence PIT Count

524 individuals counted were experiencing homelessness and were fleeing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

The overall count from 2023 (347) increased by 51%. The sheltered count increased by 40%. 95 individuals in sheltered conditions were currently fleeing a domestic violence situation, while 18 individuals in unsheltered conditions were currently fleeing a domestic violence situation. 39% of unsheltered DV survivors reported that their DV situation contributed to their homelessness.

This drastic increase may also be attributed to the number of observational surveys emphasizing the weight of the sheltered data for this metric (sheltered represented 76%, unsheltered represented 24%). There is also a correlation between additional families in shelters and higher rates of DV in the count. When staff conducted a survey onsite at Haven for Hope, The Salvation Army, and Family Violence Prevention Services before launching the 90 in 90 challenge to gain feedback, almost 40% of the families interviewed were fleeing DV.

Outcome Area #4 – Enhance Homeless Response System for Youth & Young Adults

Youth and Young Adults (YYA) ages 18-24 have been a priority area for the Alliance to House Everyone as a subpopulation through the help of being awarded the HUD Youth Homeless Demonstration Program (YHDP) funding in 2019. The community came together to write and implement the WE SAY Coordinated Community plan to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness as required by HUD.

The Youth Action Board (YAB) was created, comprised of individuals aged 18–24 with past and current homelessness experiences, to inform the WE SAY plan and implementation of YHDP. Since the launch of YHDP funding, 384 YYA individuals have enrolled in the Young Adult Stability and Support Center (YASS) Drop-in Center since April 2022. 357 YYA households were enrolled in specific YHDP projects, with 290 of the YYA reported moving into housing.

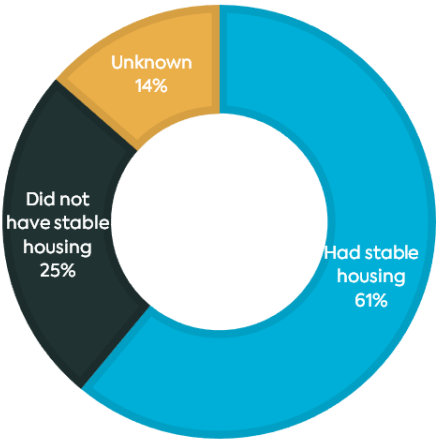
In 2023, the Youth Homeless Subcommittee hosted a resource fair to bring together 18 agencies in the area that serve YYA. The subcommittee surveyed all available resources to identify all YYAs who needed access to the system, as stated in the WE SAY plan to prevent and end youth homelessness. Then, the subcommittee worked with CTH to create a Youth and Young Adult Systems map that showcases the available resources and access points for YYA experiencing homelessness, continuing to align all resources for YYA to be a part of the Homeless Response System in 2024. In addition to these efforts, Haven for Hope collaborated with the Youth Action Board to create a space on campus dedicated to 18 to 24-year-olds who were previously sleeping in the courtyard.

While YYA individuals make up 4.7% of the combined (sheltered and unsheltered) count, there was a reported 10.3% increase from 2023 for the combined count. It should be noted that there was a 25% decrease in YYA for the unsheltered count and a 16% increase in YYA for the sheltered count. This promising finding is likely a result of more YYAs residing in safe shelters, which indicates success in targeted YYA interventions and one of the community’s priorities to connect YYAs with individualized resources.

In Fall 2024, the City of San Antonio will host a Youth Summit to gain perspectives on gaps identified by the community for 18 to 24-year-olds experiencing homelessness. The summit will concentrate on behavioral and health issues, LGBTQ+, justice-involved youth, and youth with foster care experience. Close to Home recommends continuing efforts with YYA in 2025 and the next Homeless Strategic Plan by implementing the recommendations from the Youth Summit and expanding mental health care options for YYA, which was a top reported issue in listening sessions’

Foster Care Experience PIT Count

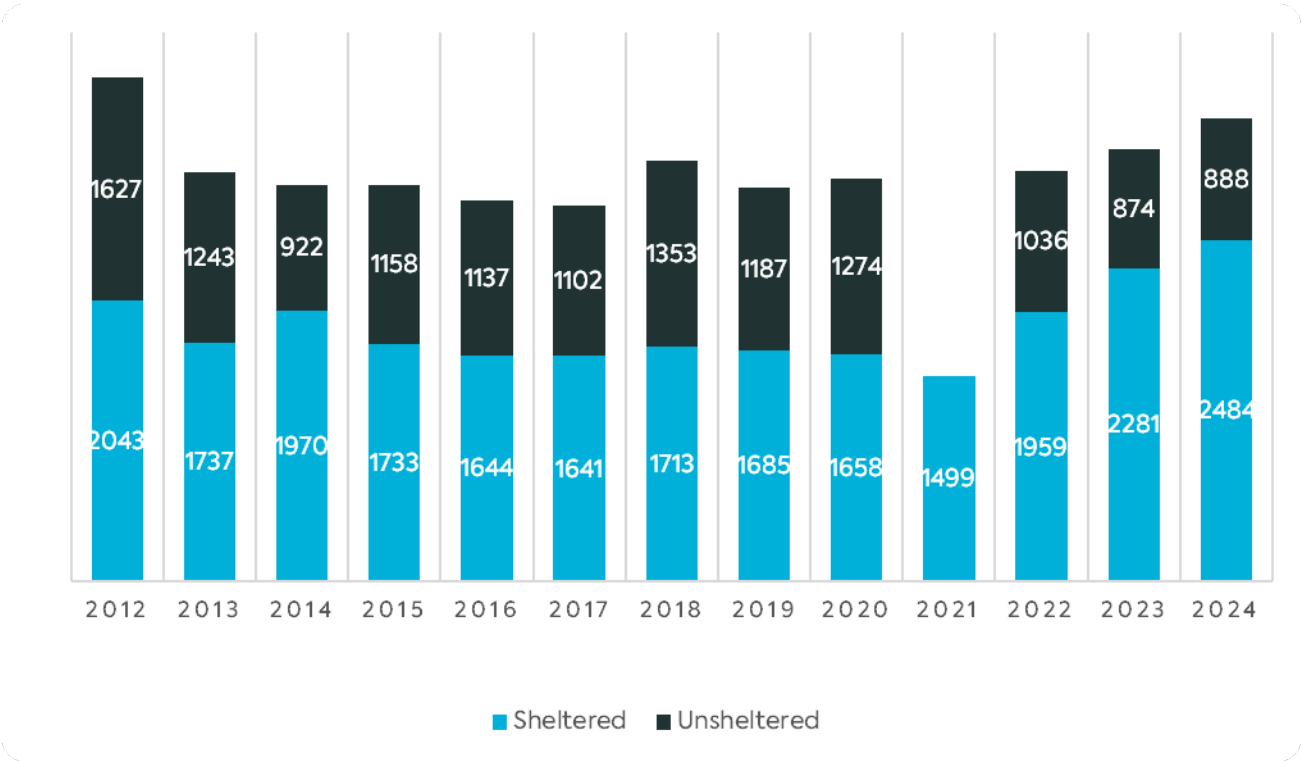
59 (6.6%) of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness had been previously placed in foster care, a 24% decrease from 2023. 25% of respondents reported not having a stable place to live upon exiting foster care



Note: “Unknown” represents those individuals who prefer not to answer the conditional follow-up question about having stable housing exiting foster care.

Change Over Time (PIT & Percentage of Overall Pop)

For the 2024 count, 3,372 individuals were counted as experiencing homelessness. Of that, 888 individuals were unsheltered, and 2,484 were sheltered.

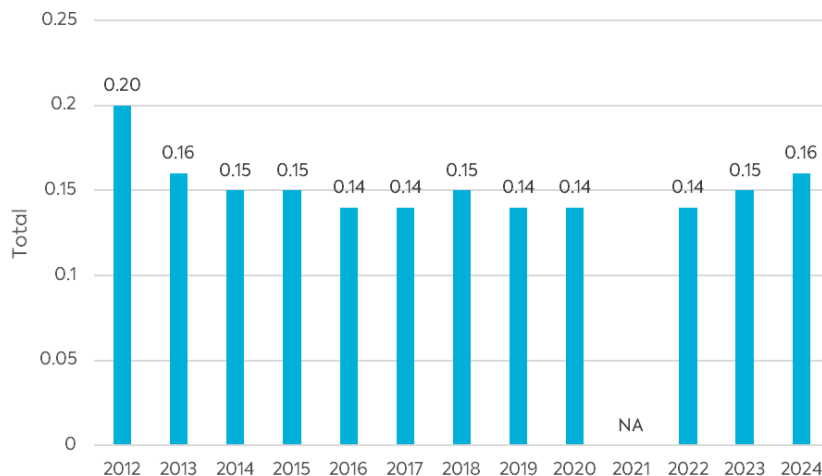


The unsheltered count increased by 1.6% from the 2023 unsheltered count. The sheltered count increased by 8.8% from the 2023 sheltered count. The overall count of individuals experiencing homelessness, both sheltered and unsheltered, increased by 6.8% from 2023 to 2024, or just a 0.01% increase in homelessness as a percentage of San Antonio/Bexar County’s total population. While the overall increase year by year remains a fact, it should be noted that unsheltered homelessness has decreased over the past five years by 25% (2019 to 2024).

Many different factors can shape fluctuations in the number of people experiencing homelessness. During 2023, the continued efforts to implement new strategies of intake and updated street outreach standards may have impacted the number of individuals able to gain access to resources in the community. Also, the continued increases and decreases in specific types of funding affect counts year over year.

All these factors, combined with the dedicated efforts of street outreach workers, shelters, housing programs, and coordinated efforts from the city and county, contributed to our unsheltered numbers remaining relatively flat in the midst of economic challenges for the entire community.

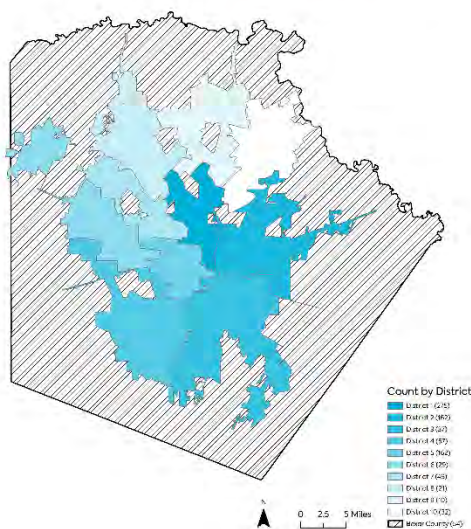
The figure shown should be considered alongside the city and county’s total population. According to census data, an estimated 2,087,679 people live in San Antonio and Bexar County (As of July 1, 2023, since estimates for 2024 were not publicly available when this report was written).



This 1.3% increase in the total population from 2023 results in the continued trend locally of about 0.16% of the total population experiencing homelessness or a slight 0.01% increase from 2023.

Spatial Analysis (GIS)

San Antonio/ Bexar County 2024 PIT:
Unsheltered Count by City Council District

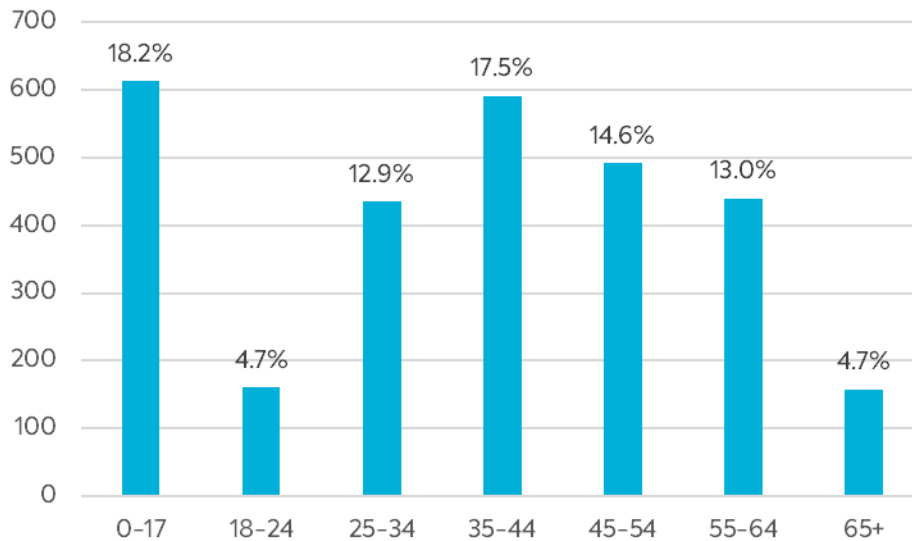


94% of unsheltered surveys were conducted within the 504 square miles of San Antonio's ten City Council Districts, a 4% decrease from the count within those districts from 2023. The majority (about 67%) of individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness in Bexar County on the night of the PIT Count were surveyed in Districts 1, 2, or 5 (District 1-31%, District 2-18%, District 5-18%). This shift may be due to increased Street Outreach presence within city council districts over the last year.

Demographics

The following pages detail key demographic breakdowns. These numbers comprise both the sheltered and unsheltered populations unless otherwise noted. Additionally, these counts only include the data we were able to collect, so there is missing data, especially among those experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

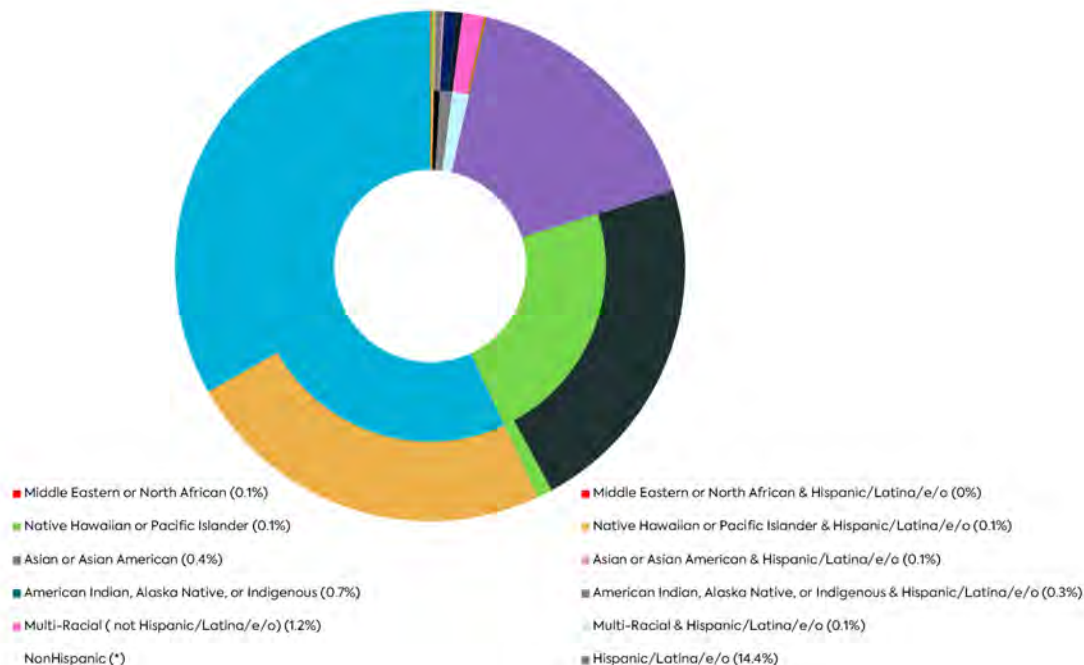
Age



At 18.2%, the 0–17-year-old age range represents the largest group, followed by the 35–44-year-old (17.6%), and then by the 45–54-year-old range 45–54 age range (14.6%) in the combined Unsheltered and Sheltered totals.

Race/Ethnicity

Hispanic/Latina/e/o individuals represent about 45% of people experiencing homelessness (50% in 2023), which is about 16% lower than the total community population (61%) according to census data, a shift possibly due to the changes in this year's data collection methods around race/ethnicity. Black/African American individuals represent about 20% of people experiencing homelessness (21% in 2023), a continued trend of overrepresentation proportional to the community population by about two times.



Note: People may choose to report more than one race to indicate their racial mixture, such as "American Indian" and "White." People who identify their origin as Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish may be of any race. Respondents may report more than one race. The concept of race is separate from the concept of Hispanic origin. U.S. Census Bureau

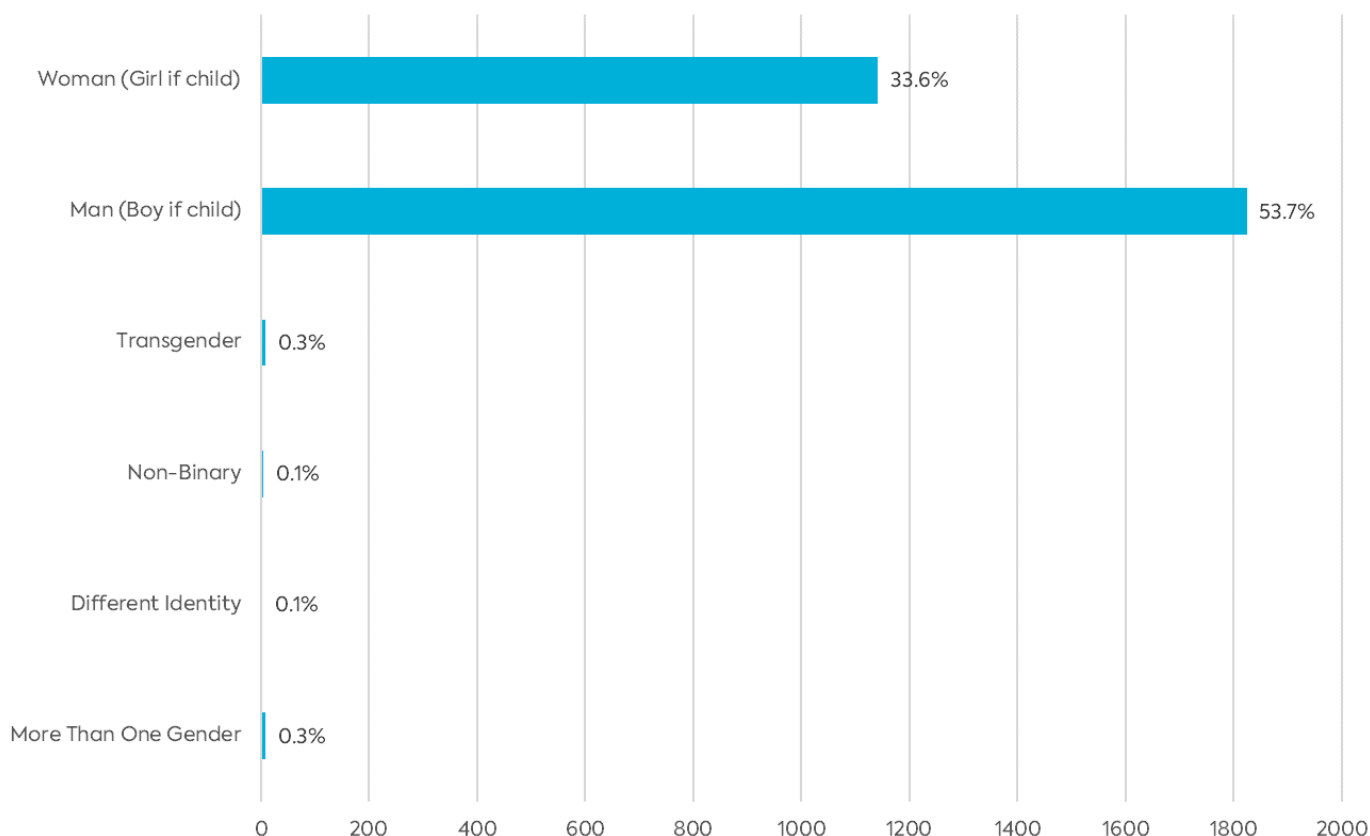
**-Included for reporting purposes, but no additional data was added*

Gender

There were slight fluctuations in the representation of gender in the 2024 counts. Of those who reported, individuals who identified as a Man (boy if child) represented about 54% of the combined sheltered and unsheltered counts, roughly an 8% decrease from 2023. There was also a decrease of individuals who identified as a Women (girl if child) by about 5% from 2023 at 33% of those who reported for the combined total.

There was a .1% increase in the number of individuals who identified as Transgender for the combined count and a decrease of .1% of individuals identifying as non-binary for the combined count. With equity at the forefront of everyday work, we anticipate these numbers to increase over time to be inclusive of all individuals and capture their preferred gender identities, but these current numbers may be an undercount due to stigma or fear of violence shaping the ways people choose to conceal or disclose their gender identity.

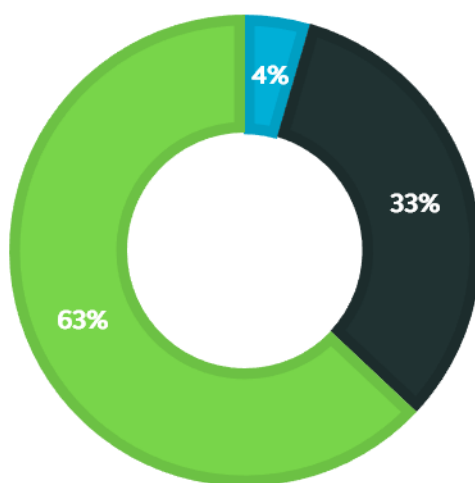
Additional identities were added this year as possible selections and make up the following proportions. Individuals who selected 'different identity' made up .1%, and individuals who selected 'more than one gender' made up .3% of respondents answered.



Sexual Orientation

35.4% of unsheltered individuals who were surveyed identified as heterosexual, .5% identified as gay, 0.6% identified as lesbian, 1.1% identified as bisexual, and .2% identified as other, and .6% were questioning or unsure. 61.7% of responses were clients who preferred not to answer or where data was not collected.

We asked those experiencing unsheltered homelessness if their gender identity or sexual orientation affected their current experience of homelessness. 4% of respondents said their gender identity does affect their current experience of homelessness.

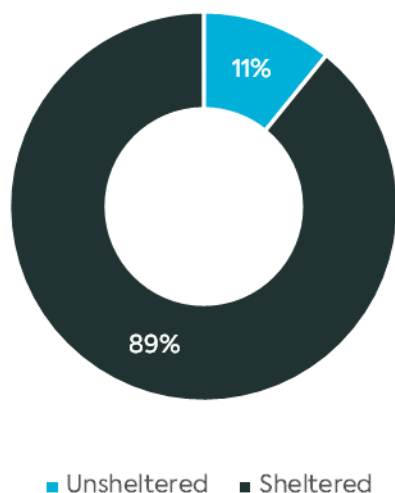


- Has your gender identity or sexual orientation affected your current experience of homelessness? YES
- Has your gender identity or sexual orientation affected your current experience of homelessness? NO
- Data not collected

Note: "Data not collected" represents those not willing to answer the conditional follow-up question about their gender identity affecting their current experience of homelessness.

Veteran Status

For the 2024 PIT Count, we reported 27 unsheltered veterans, an 18% decrease from 2023, and 222 sheltered veterans, a 5% increase from 2023. With a total of 249 veterans for the combined counts, a 2% overall increase from 2023. The 2024 reported count of unsheltered veterans has surpassed the record for the lowest number since we began closely monitoring this population for the Mayor's Challenge to Effectively End Veteran Homelessness in 2016.



Health Conditions

Among individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness, there was a low response rate for answering more in-depth questions. For example, on average, roughly 38% of people surveyed answered the following questions about their health and disabling conditions. Data collected from our shelters is updated throughout the year by case managers and thus is more robust than the unsheltered survey conducted by volunteers the night of the PIT Count for questions about health conditions.

For the 2024 count, we incorporated community feedback from both our HMIS and Data Advisory Committee and Lived Expertise Advisory Board (LEAB) on how to accurately capture the information we need to make a proper analysis while at the same time being cautious of trauma informed approaches for data collection methodology. The following questions aim to gather essential information that can be used to determine different statuses of disabling conditions within the community.

How would you rate your overall health on a scale of 1-10, 10 being excellent and 1 being very poor?

10% of respondents rated their health at 10-Excellent

4% of respondents rated their health at 1-Very Poor

The high rating at 19% of responses was 7, followed by the rating of 8 at 17.8% and 5 at 17.3%



Do you have psychiatric or emotional conditions such as depression, anxiety, or schizophrenia?

24% of the unsheltered population said yes.

Do you have a physical disability? This may include some things that significantly limit one or more basic physical activities such as walking, climbing stairs, reaching, lifting, or carrying.

16% of the unsheltered population said yes.

Do any of the situations we just discussed keep you from holding a job or living in stable housing? This can be a single situation or combination of the above.

64% of those that responded to the questions above said yes, those situations keep them from holding a job or the ability to live in stable housing.

Note: The question above regarding situations that kept individuals from holding a job or living in stable housing was asked at the end of the of the health conditions section, as such the respondents could have been referring to one, or many of those conditions affecting their ability to hold a job or living in stable housing.

Sheltered Individuals

Disabling Condition	Mental Illness	Physical Disability	Developmental Disability	Chronic Illness
40% (+28% from 2023)	33% (+14% from 2023)	18% (+4% from 2023)	9% (+227% from 2023)	25% (+11% from 2023)

HIV/AIDS

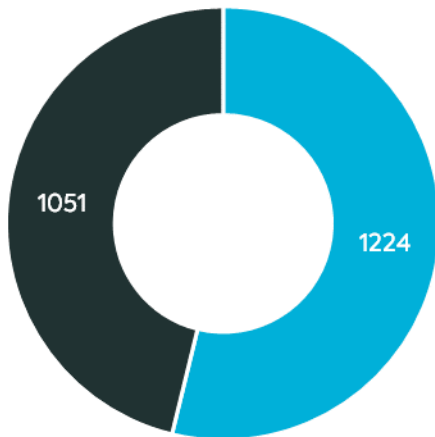
Sheltered	Unsheltered
-29	-6

35 individuals reported being told by a doctor that they have HIV/AIDS, a 16% decrease since 2023. This is another metric that is difficult to accurately report due to stigmas that may lead to an undercount of those identifying as such for this survey, among other reasons such as access, or lack thereof to proper medical care and testing for clients.

Health Insurance / Medical Care

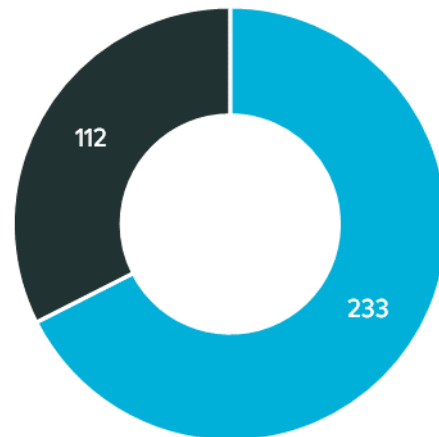
Of sheltered individuals reporting medical insurance status in 2024, about 46% are insured, nearly a 10% increase from 2023. Among individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness who reported, 29% (112) are insured, a 31% increase from those that reported having health insurance in 2023 (85).

2024 Sheltered



■ Uninsured ■ Insured

2024 Unsheltered



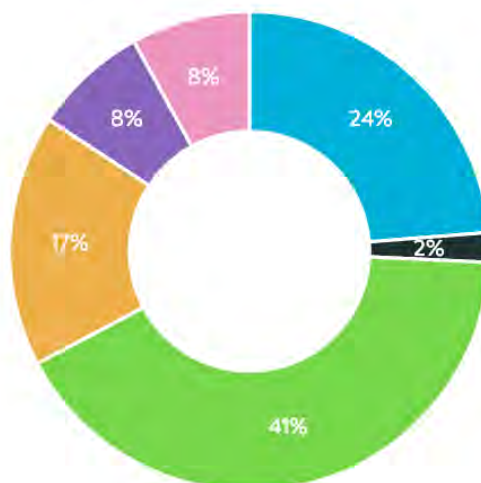
■ Uninsured ■ Insured

Unsheltered Medical Care

41% of unsheltered individuals reported receiving their medical care from an emergency room.

58% reported going without medical care or relying on emergency rooms.

Unsheltered Medical Care



■ A clinic (such as CentroMed, Travis Park Church Clinic, or Robert Green Clinic)
■ Veterans Affairs (VA)
■ Emergency Room
■ Does not receive regular medical care
■ Other
■ Data not collected

Note: "Data not collected" represents those that prefer not to answer

Top 3 Needs Assessment

TOP-RANKED

Shelter or Housing-25%-
Same rank as last year



SECOND-RANKED

Food-24%-Same Rank as last
year



THIRD-RANKED

ID or Document Recovery-
11%-New, replaced 'General
Transportation' which is
Fourth-ranked this year



Unsheltered individuals were asked to rank their top three immediate needs for survival, safety, and well-being from the following list: Shelter or housing, Food, Transportation, Victim Services, Family Reunification, ID or document recovery, Access to benefits such as disability and food stamps, Substance use treatment, Mental health treatment, Navigating Resources, Employment Readiness, Healthcare, Dental care, Other (with a free text response option). The top three options ranked were shelter or housing, food, and ID or document recovery.

Additionally, we asked those in an unsheltered setting on the night of the count what top three needs that they need support with to become stably housed:

- ID or document recovery – 17%
- Shelter – 16%
- Supportive housing or a housing voucher and Employment tied for 3rd – 12%

These insights shed light on the potential ways to address our community's needs, such as expanding permanent supportive housing with comprehensive services, providing access to ID and document recovery services, increasing the availability of low-barrier shelters, and assisting clients in accessing employment and vocational training opportunities. These benefits extend beyond those experiencing homelessness, enhancing the overall quality of life for the entire community due to the interconnected relationship we share with our neighbors, housed or not. This assessment empowers us to prioritize the insights and expertise of those experiencing homelessness, leading our collaborative efforts and solution-building processes.

ALLIANCE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2025

Based on a comprehensive analysis of progress on the community's Strategic Plan to Address Homelessness, progress on implementation goals, HMIS data, and the 2024 Point-in-Time Count to provide a snapshot of progress on key issues, Close to Home is recommending ten priority areas for the Alliance to House Everyone to consider for implementation planning in 2025. All priorities listed in this report will still undergo a thorough review and input process with Alliance partners before incorporation in the final Alliance Homelessness Strategic Plan for 2025.

1. **Prevention:** Increase Homelessness Prevention Funding & Develop a Coordinated Prevention Strategy to slow the inflow of homelessness, particularly for families and older adults.

2. **Healthcare Needs:** Increase healthcare and benefit coordination, including launching SOAR, collaborating with the hospital system on discharge planning, expanding services for people who cannot meet Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) or long-term care needs, and improving access to mental healthcare.
3. **Maximize Housing Placements:** Develop and implement a Centralized Landlord Engagement Strategy to increase housing accessibility and explore a Shared Housing model for pairing roommates to increase stability in housing. Complete the Rapid Rehousing (RRH) Bridge to Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) pilot successfully and continue to coordinate funding to create pathways to housing.
4. **Expand Housing Options:** Continue advocating for and expanding resources to develop Permanent Supportive Housing options to address Chronic Homelessness and support community messaging campaigns that support affordable housing development.
5. **Youth & Young Adult Needs:** Identify solutions to expand mental health care options for YYA experiencing homelessness. Most YYAs do not qualify for PSH but need more intensive mental health support in available housing interventions. Address needs identified in Youth Summit.
6. **Domestic Violence:** Collaborate with local and national DV hotlines to increase awareness of Homelink resources and improve coordination.
7. **Address Equity and Accessibility:** Understand and address systemic inequities identified in the Homelink Pilot study with the Lab of Economic Opportunity (LEO) out of Notre Dame. Explore accessibility issues for services in the homeless response system.
8. **Improve Local Training:** By implementing the training framework, develop confident and trauma-informed system experts in all levels of direct service.
9. **Street Outreach Coordination:** Continue to expand efforts to combat unsheltered homelessness, including the expansion of Centralized Shelter Coordination, outreach in smaller municipalities, and data system capabilities.

San Antonio/Bexar County has experienced a significant drop in federal funding since the conclusion of the COVID-19 CARES Act funds in 2023. This has resulted in a significant loss in annual funding for Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Rehousing as well as a lack of federal incentives for participating landlords. To continue to see progress in reducing homelessness, Close to Home recommends prioritizing 2024-2025 homeless services funding for:

- Maintain current funding levels for the homelessness response system, including emergency shelters.
- Homelessness Prevention for Families and Older Adults at risk of homelessness.
- Rapid Rehousing for individuals and families experiencing homelessness.
- Increasing development and operations funding for Permanent Supportive Housing.

- Exploring funding options to create a temporary shelter for people who are medically fragile and waiting on long-term care options.
- Funding for incentives to continue recruiting participating landlords to house clients with high barriers returning to permanent housing.

Close to Home will also align the 2024 HUD Continuum of Care (CoC) Competition Priorities with these recommendations.



Lived Expertise Advisory Board Members

"The opportunity and outlet to have a voice and to be heard is priceless. It matters and means so much."

- 2024 Lived Expertise Advisory Board Member

SUMMARY OF EQUITY & LIVED EXPERTISE FINDINGS

Equity is the consistent and systematic, fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including those who belong to underserved communities and have been denied such treatment.

The following is a summary of the 2023 Equity Analysis conducted by Close to Home in 2023. The summary includes quantitative data from the HMIS system and qualitative data observed in the format of listening session feedback surveys.

The 2023 Equity Analysis presents a detailed report of homelessness demographics and service utilization, emphasizing equity and system assessment through quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Quantitative findings reveal disparities throughout the community:

Hispanic/Latin(a)(e)(o) individuals make up 56% of the population that is receiving services within San Antonio/Bexar County's Homeless Response System, while White non-Hispanics represent only 18%, Black/African American individuals making up 19%, and Afro-Latin(a)(e)(o) individuals comprise less than 2%. Moreover, Children/Youth account for 32% of the population, with 27% receiving vouchers, primarily among the age group 0-17. Notably, women and Children/Youth are among the highest groups in prevention services compared to other demographic groups.

Qualitative insights gathered from community feedback sessions uncover perceptions of equity, with 51.2% of respondents (Both client and worker level) reporting unfairness in the system. Additionally, survey responses indicate a wide range of perceptions regarding resource distribution, with 17% considering the distribution of resources in the community highly equitable and 12.1% highly inequitable. Integrating both quantitative data, such as demographic breakdowns, and qualitative feedback offers an in-depth understanding of system gaps and informs targeted interventions to enhance equity within the system.

Grounding our work in equity means that our policymaking incorporates qualitative community feedback alongside quantitative data from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), which is crucial for a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by individuals who are experiencing homelessness in our community. While HMIS provides valuable numerical insights, such as demographics and service utilization, qualitative feedback through open-ended responses allows for deeper insights into the personal experiences, needs, and preferences of our community members experiencing homelessness and how they are experiencing the Coordinated Entry System as a whole.

This approach captures information that quantitative data alone might miss, giving insight into underlying issues and potential solutions. By combining both forms of data, service providers and policymakers can develop more effective and equitable strategies to address homelessness and improve overall experiences throughout the system.

Close to Home will continue conducting an annual Equity Analysis and is developing a more comprehensive Equity Framework in 2024 for Alliance partners.

HOUSING ENDS HOMELESSNESS

Housing and Homelessness Alignment

The City of San Antonio (COSA)'s Mayor, Ron Nirenberg, created a Housing Policy Task Force in August 2017 to develop a framework for a comprehensive, compassionate housing strategy for the city. The initial roadmap culminated in a community report, "San Antonio's Housing Policy Framework," in August 2018 and included key recommendations such as creating a Chief Housing Officer position in the city, developing a coordinated housing system, and increasing city investment in a 10-year funding plan.

In 2020, the City of San Antonio began working on a Strategic Housing Implementation Plan (SHIP) to actualize strategies presented in the Housing Policy Framework. The plan determines timelines, partners, specific action steps, and funding for housing strategies. The SHIP was developed with a broad collaboration of partners, including homeless service providers, and is overseen by the Housing Commission. Critically, the SHIP is a plan for the housing sector in San Antonio, Bexar County, the San Antonio Housing Trust, and Opportunity Home—all key partners in SHIP's implementation.

Bexar County has also increased allocations for affordable housing programs, including \$8 million earmarked for the development and maintenance of multi-family rental housing, \$5 million directed towards single-family homeownership initiatives, and \$12 million reserved for critical services, including Permanent Supportive Housing, Emergency Shelters, and a Street Outreach pilot program.

Notably, the identified SHIP priorities, which include goals for housing creation and preservation, informed the work of San Antonio's first Housing Bond Community Committee, responsible for developing recommendations for a historic \$150 million affordable housing bond.

The Housing Bond Community Committee, and subsequently the Housing Commission, are chaired by Close to Home's Executive Director to ensure alignment of homelessness and housing goals. Also, COSA hired the Chief Housing Officer, a former homeless service provider CEO, responsible for oversight of housing and homelessness plans.

This alignment, due to strong leadership from the mayor, council, and city staff, is unprecedented and critical to ensure that the housing needs of people experiencing homelessness are addressed.

In addition to setting Housing Commission goals supportive of both SHIP priorities and homelessness needs in 2023, the commission now has oversight of a public information campaign launching in 2024 to gain community support for housing affordability improvements needed in the city. The San Antonio Area Foundation also launched a "Reframing Housing" initiative, composed of system partners from housing and homelessness, to develop definitions and frames and create a movement to enhance housing affordability goals. The Alliance to House Everyone's

communication partners are reviewing frames, and overlapping areas, such as Permanent Supportive Housing needs, to improve their external messaging.

This State of Homelessness report focuses on housing for people experiencing homelessness. The report cites the “Housing Inventory Count”, in addition to the homelessness Point-in-Time Count – both captured on the same night in January- to show housing availability and need among people experiencing homelessness. The Housing Inventory Count, or HIC, specifically looks at Permanent Supportive Housing, Rapid Rehousing, and Voucher Programs (known as “Other Permanent Housing”) dedicated to people moving out of homelessness. Additionally, although the label is housing, the HIC is used to track temporary shelter beds and capacity for people experiencing homelessness. Temporary shelter beds include Transitional Housing (TH), Emergency Shelter (ES), and Safe Haven (SH).

Summary of the 2024 Housing Inventory Count

Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)

PSH Units 2023	PSH Units 2024	PSH % Change
1,369	1,494	+9%

One of the primary goals of the SHIP is to develop 1,000 PSH units for households making 0% to 30% of the Area Median Income (AMI) experiencing chronic homelessness. The SHIP is in its third year of implementation with an overall PSH progress of 48% (83 completed units and 393 in progress). Recent developments and expansion of funds for PSH programs include Towne Twine Village’s campus serving people experiencing chronic homelessness over the age of 50 and SAMMinistries’ Hudson and Commons at Acequia Trails projects.

Rapid Rehousing (RRH)

RRH Units 2023	RRH Units 2024	RRH % Change
531	519	-2%

Rapid Rehousing units decreased due to the wind-down of CARES Act Funding for Rapid Rehousing through the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) program funded through COSA, Bexar County, and TDHCA in response to COVID-19. Additional Rapid Rehousing programs were created through HOME ARP and the Special NOFO Unsheltered funding; however, HIC calculations for RRH are based on clients housed the night of the HIC/PIT count and don’t include the max capacity to serve throughout the year.

Other Permanent Housing (OPH)

OPH Units 2023	OPH Units 2024	OPH % Change
1,056	1,313	+24%

OPH units increased due to the addition of Opportunity Home and Housing Authority of Bexar County’s (HABC) Stability Vouchers coordinated through the Special NOFO for Unsheltered Homelessness. Opportunity Home also allocated an additional 150 vouchers to Close to Home to coordinate for homeless service providers throughout the community.

Transitional Housing (TH)

TH Units 2023	TH Units 2024	TH % Change
217	200	-8%

TH units decreased overall due to the closing of Providence Places' transitional program for youth and young adults. Haven for Hope expanded TH beds for veterans.

Emergency Shelter (ES)

ES Units 2023	ES Units 2024	ES % Change
2,014	2,116	+5%

ES beds were expanded through Haven for Hope's youth program, the Unsheltered Placement program, and the opening of SAMMinistries' non-congregate shelter.

Safe Haven (SH)

SH Units 2023	SH Units 2024	SH % Change
25	30	+20%

Although the wind-down of CARES Act funds impacted RRH and TH beds negatively, some of the loss of units was compensated for by adding HOME ARP funds for programming through COSA and Bexar County. However, ARP funds are temporary, and units need to continue to be tracked closely over the next several years to ensure adequate capacity and expansion of units for people experiencing homelessness. Overall, our community had a net increase this year of 460 units of permanent housing and shelter due to the allocation of additional vouchers and the expansion of HUD funding.

The following chart shows total counts from the following project types: Emergency Shelter (ES), Safe Haven (SH), Transition Housing (TH), Rapid Re-Housing (RRH), Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), and Other Permanent Housing (OPH).

	HIC 2023 # of Unique Project	HIC 2024 # of Unique Project	Project Count Difference	HIC 2023 # of Total Unit Count	HIC 2024 # of Total Unit Count	Unit Difference	HIC 2023 # of Total Bed Count	HIC 2024 # of Total Bed Count	Bed Difference
Total	93	98	+5 (+5.3%)	5,212	5,672	+460(+8.8%)	7,547	8,451	+904 (+11.9%)

Note: Per HUD data collection standards, the Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) projects in the numbers above from the Housing Inventory Count (HIC) are represented by clients being serviced on the night of the count and not the actual RRH capacity total in the community.

LEAVING A LEGACY

Honoring Billy Mahone III



Sometimes, you come to know people who make an undeniable impact on the world. Our friend and co-worker, Billy Mahone III, was one of these people. If you had the privilege of knowing Billy, you would have seen firsthand his passion for his community. He was proudly born and raised in San Antonio, and he dedicated his time, resources, and love to give back to his home city. Billy worked tirelessly to ensure everyone had a safe place to call home. This, of course, included all the stray dogs he and his wife would take into their care. This man cared so deeply that he couldn't help but be the optimistic voice no matter the challenge. He spent long nights ensuring all Lived Expertise Advisory Board members made it to their destinations safely. He encouraged his team to go on hikes and practice

yoga and always offered an unwavering, unjudgmental, and heartfelt listening ear to anyone who needed it. Billy Mahone III was a dedicated, passionate, creative, caring, helpful neighbor who was always “all in” for his community.

After Billy's passing in 2023, Close to Home staff voted to add “All In” to the organization's core values. Inspired by Billy, it means we go “all in” to end homelessness while supporting each other and our community. We believe in the dignity and value of every human being and work intentionally to create equitable outcomes for everyone. Billy embodied this value to its core, and we will continue to do what it takes to honor his impact and legacy.

TREATING ALL NEIGHBORS AS OUR NEIGHBORS

One of Billy's heartfelt gestures was filling plastic baggies with items he thought would shine a light of hope on our unhoused neighbors and direct them to the appropriate resources in the homeless response system. He kept them in his car and frequently made a point to roll down his window, look people in the eye, and hand them a bag of goodies to make them feel seen, heard, and encouraged. What was once an act of service by our friend has now been coined “Billy Bundles.” Billy's bundle would include a resource card, a snack, and a small water.



This is one way we can all honor Billy’s legacy. We can take the time to understand that our unhoused community members are still our neighbors. They should be treated with the same respect as any other neighbor would be. The assembly of these bags can be done by anyone to spread hope to our unhoused neighbors. Whether it’s a toothbrush, a special snack, or a handwritten note, the assembly of “Billy Bundles” can be personalized in any way you’d like. Even sharing just one resource can make a huge impact on the Homeless Response System.

Maybe you’ve experienced homelessness yourself or have a loved one who is going through a tough time. Regardless, no one is exempt from the hurdles in life that can lead to homelessness. We know that real and lasting change cannot happen overnight, but Billy paved the path and now is the time for our community to take the next step of creating a movement in honor of our beloved friend.

What’s in Your Billy Bundle?

Help us create a movement and break the stigma of homelessness.

We are ALL IN this together.

Tag us on social

#billybundle #makingmybillybundle #allinforbilly #alliancetohouseeveryone



February 12, 2024

In honor of Billy’s Birthday, the Close to Home staff assembled Billy Bundles for our unhoused neighbors.

CONGRATULATIONS!

2024 HOMELESS SERVICE HEROES

During our annual State of Homelessness public presentation to the community, we honor and celebrate individuals in our community who do exemplary work for our neighbors experiencing homelessness.

Criteria for nominations were individuals who provide direct services to those experiencing housing insecurity and homelessness in San Antonio & Bexar County. The number of candidates nominated for 2024 was 28, and 10 were selected.

Close to Home's Board of Directors, the Lived Expertise Advisory Board (LEAB), the Youth Action Board (YAB), and a total of 27 people voted on the 2024 nominees.

Thank you for your service to our community!

Trez Scipio,
City of San Antonio

Kenneth Anderlitch,
Haven for Hope

Evelyn Valportodesa,
Heartwarming Living Solutions

Jake Ledesma,
Alamo Area Resource Center

Chris Perez,
SAMMinistries

Brittney Ackerson,
Corazon San Antonio

Pete Barrera,
Haven for Hope

David Row,
City of San Antonio

Alice Felan,
SAMMinistries

Leilah Powell,
LISC San Antonio

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Design Group

Membership Council Co Chair

Nikisha Baker
President and CEO, SAMMinistries



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The Homeless Strategic Planning Advisory Board (COSA, Bexar County, TDHCA, CTH)

Homeless Huddle Members

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We want to give special recognition to our event sponsor, USAA, for providing the necessary resources for a successful, safe, and accurate PIT Count, in addition to our supporting sponsors, Valero Energy and H-E-B. We would also like to recognize the many organizations and agencies that made our 2024 PIT Count possible: The Lived Expertise Advisory Board (LEAB), The San Antonio Food Bank, Christian Assistance Ministry, The San Antonio Police Department and Bexar County Sheriff's Office, South Texas Planned Parenthood, UT Health San Antonio, The Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), Outreach Grid, The City of San Antonio Department of Human Services, Haven for Hope, Corazón San Antonio, Grace Lutheran Church, First Presbyterian Church, Department of Veteran Affairs, The PIT Count staff, volunteers, team leads, and our homeless service provider partners. This is truly a communitywide effort!



Helping Here.

CALL TO ACTION

San Antonio and Bexar County have long exemplified a dual identity: a spirit of individualism and a spirit of collaboration. We should be proud of both, but we ought to recognize that our spirit of collaboration is garnering nationwide admiration because the pressing demands of homelessness are demanding a broad, unified response.

Even as we confront challenges such as escalating evictions, inflation, increasing rents, and funding and housing unit shortages, let's pause to reflect on the extraordinary strides we've made by banding together as the Alliance to House Everyone.

During the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, both in our personal lives and within our homelessness response system, we witnessed remarkable mobilization and partnerships in our communities. This period was a poignant reminder of the interconnectedness of our lives and the impact of our collective action. Because of our togetherness, the Homeless Response System of San Antonio-Bexar County emerged as the first in the nation to achieve the benchmarks outlined in the national initiative "House America" in 2023, a testament to our city's greatness and our capacity for monumental achievements.

Together, let us align our advocacy efforts, our priorities, and our community messaging. Let us draw upon our collective power and resilience to navigate through unprecedented times and aim as we forge a future in which homelessness is relegated to the annals of history. Let us fulfill the radical belief that everyone in our community deserves the dignity of a place to call home until we can no longer believe it is radical to provide affordable and accessible housing to our neighbors.

Through collaborative action and unwavering determination, we can turn this vision into a reality. Let's continue to work together, recruit community members to our cause, and build a community where homelessness is truly a phenomenon of the past. We call you to join the Alliance to House Everyone.

"There are two things in life people need to survive. Connection and purpose. That is what our Homeless Response System provides for our city!"

- 2024 Lived Expertise Advisory Board Member



"It is immensely helpful and even comforting to be immersed with others who have gone through similar experiences and understand. It makes the world feel less alien to me in many aspects."

- 2024 Lived Expertise Advisory Board Member

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

A

Adults

Individuals who are 18 years or older or minors under the age of 18 who have been emancipated to act on their own behalf, including the ability to execute a contract or lease.

Alliance to House Everyone's Membership Council Advisory Board

The Alliance to House Everyone is the HUD Continuum of Care (CoC) group of approximately 60+ organizations that collaborate to address homelessness in the Bexar County region. With the support and direction of the lead agency, Close to Home San Antonio, the Alliance to House Everyone convenes to share information, provide training opportunities, recommend coordination strategies, and address service gaps, or resource needs. As the CoC lead, Close to Home supports the Alliance to House Everyone by securing funding, providing guidance, and improving local policies and programs. Together, Close to Home and the Alliance work to significantly and efficiently reduce homelessness.

C

Children

Individuals who are 0-17 years old.

Chronic Homelessness

An individual experiencing homelessness with a disability, who:

- Lives in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter; and
- Has lived as described for at least 12 months or on at least 4 separate occasions in the last 3 years, as long as the combined occasions equal at least 12 months.

Continuum of Care (CoC)

A local or regional planning body that coordinates housing and services for those experiencing homelessness.

D

Disability

An individual with one or more of the following conditions: A physical, mental, or emotional impairment, including an impairment caused by alcohol or drug abuse, post-traumatic stress disorder, or brain injury; A developmental disability, as defined by the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000; or The disease of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) or any condition arising from the etiologic agent for acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV).

Domestic Violence Survivor

An individual fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous, life-threatening conditions.



E

Equity

The consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment while also accounting for the needs of the people we serve.

F

Families

This reporting includes sheltered households with at least one child. Families can also include one or more individuals who self-report as a family.

H

Homeless Response System Advisory Committee (HRSAC)

A committee that collaboratively addresses challenges, facilitates communication, and drives strategic initiatives aimed at optimizing the effectiveness and efficiency of the Homeless Response System, ensuring comprehensive support and resources for individuals experiencing homelessness in our community.

HMIS & Data Advisory Committee

The purpose of the HMIS and Data Advisory Committee is to manage the strategic direction, implementation, and administration of the HMIS. Furthermore, this committee will oversee the CoC's strategy to collect, analyze, and report data to HUD and to the community.

Homeless Strategic Planning Advisory Board (HSPAB)

Ensure coordination across funders in executing strategic plans to prevent and end homelessness in San Antonio and Bexar County. This group uses a data-informed approach to ensure consistent alignment with the Strategic Plan to Respond to Homelessness through funding priorities, performance monitoring, and grantee management.

L

Latino (a)(e)

Those of Hispanic or Latino/a descent and/or nationality. A gender-neutral alternative to Latino or Latina.

LGBTQ+

Individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and/or with other historically marginalized sexual or gender identities.

Lived Expertise Advisory Board (LEAB)

The LEAB is a group of individuals with current or past experience of housing instability and/or homelessness, responsible for providing strategy and policy recommendations on homeless systems in San Antonio and Bexar County.



P

Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)

A housing intervention combining affordable housing with indefinite leasing or rental assistance, paired with supportive services to assist those with a disabling condition.

R

Race/Ethnicity

Race refers to one's racial background (White, Black, Asian, Indigenous, etc.), while ethnicity refers to one's ethnic background. In the United States, Latinx is an ethnicity (one can be White Latinx, Indigenous Latinx, Afro-Latinx, etc.). Our reporting presents race and ethnicity together, as Latinx people in the United States are a culturally significant population.

For HUD reporting, race, and ethnicity are reported separately. For this reporting, White Latinx are documented in the Latinx/Hispanic category, and Afro Latinx are documented in the Black/African American category. Indigenous Latinx are included in the Indigenous category. In this report, no other racial categories are included in the Latinx/Hispanic ethnicity.

Indigenous includes those who reported American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous. Black/African American consists of those who reported as Black, African American, or African.

S

Sheltered Homelessness

People living or sleeping in an emergency shelter, safe haven, or transitional housing.

Substance Use

Includes any amount of use of alcoholic beverages or drugs (illegal or prescription for non-medical reasons).

U

Unsheltered Homelessness

People living or sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation, such as the street, sidewalk, park, abandoned building, etc.

V

Veterans

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

Y

Youth Action Board (YAB)

The YAB comprises young adults 18 to 25, the majority of whom have lived experience of homelessness. The YAB is responsible for representing the youth homeless community in San Antonio and Bexar County by focusing on long-term solutions to safely house all youth, centering the youth voice in policy change & program development, and advocating for improvements in the homeless response system.

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