



May 10, 2023

TO: Lisa Bates, CEO, Sacramento Steps Forward [SSF]
Ashley Brand, SSF Board Chair
Erin Johansen, SSF Board member
Angela Upshaw, CoC Board Chair
Pixie Popplewell, CoC Board Vice-Chair
Chevon Kotari, County Deputy Executive for Social Services
Emily Halcon, Director, DSHS, Sacramento County
LaShelle Dozier, Executive Director SHRA
Nick Golling, Acting Director, DCR

From: Bob Erlenbusch Executive Director

RE: All In Sacramento: SRCEH Critique & Recommendations

Preface: While the Sacramento Regional Coalition to End Homelessness [SRCEH] sees the Local Homeless Action Plan [LHAP] developed by the partners including Sacramento Steps Forward, SHRA, the City and County as an important first step in collaboration and generally headed in the right direction, we nevertheless see several important issues that need to be addressed. Below is our critique and recommendations:

I. **Vision: “Person-Centered, trauma-informed response system.”**

The City and County continued criminalization of people experiencing homelessness is antithetical to a “trauma-informed response”:

SRCEH has advocated a trauma-informed approach for years, but the City and County have continued to move in the opposite direction, re-traumatizing our unhoused neighbors through the actions of City Police; County Sheriffs; County Park Rangers; City Code Enforcement and Transit police. These actions include sweeps or raids of encampments; taking and destroying people's possessions and the towing of their vehicles; the passage of Measure O that will enforce the anti-camping ordinance once the city reaches a threshold number of “shelter spaces;” and both the City and County passing ordinances that ban our unhoused neighbors from being within 500 feet of “critical infrastructure,” even though 70% are outside due to lack of shelter and affordable housing.

SRCEH does support the activities in Strategy 6: “Ensure Adequate Behavioral Health Services” as being in the spirit of a trauma-informed approach.

Recommendations:

- The partners immediately begin to engage law enforcement as defined above on how they plan to be engaged in developing and implementing a “person-centered, trauma-informed response system” that aligns with the vision of LHAP;
- The partners engage Public Health Advocate’s First Response Transformation Campaign, the goal of which is to focus on prevention by championing systemic changes to make emergency response systems more responsive to community needs, and less racially-biased;
- The LHAP needs to identify the role of the City’s Department of Community Response in ensuring that responses to homelessness in Sacramento are trauma-informed. The department is not mentioned at all in the plan.

II. Racial Equity:

SRCEH supports the activities in Strategy 5: “Invest in community and service delivery capacity-building and training,” particularly the sub-strategy of “creating an inclusive and supportive working environment and attract new staff from historically under-resourced communities and partners with lived experience.”

However, the LHAP is silent on the strategy of tracking outcomes to ensure equity, both racial and gender-identity equity in the shelter and housing placements of service providers as well as the services provided to our unhoused neighbors, both by nonprofits and the city and county.

Recommendation:

- The LHAP needs to add how the partners will track outcomes and make those publicly available on SSF’s dashboard so that the community can hold the partners accountable to ensure equity is being achieved in the both the delivery of services and shelter and housing placements.
- Additionally, the LHAP needs to adopt a larger equity lens beyond racial equity and include gender identity equity as well

III. 3 times as many people entering homelessness than exit – in order to have an effective homeless prevention and diversion strategy we need to understand why: The LHAP clearly lays out the issue: “for every one individual housed – another 3.2 was newly identified as homeless,” however the LHAP gives no reason[s] as to the systemic drivers [for example, increased evictions, loss of work etc] leading to this crisis. While it is important to have Strategy 4: “Expand prevention and diversion resources” in the LHAP, SRCEH feels that without understanding the causes of the crisis, Strategy 4 is without focus and targeted sub-strategies that address this crisis.

Recommendation:

- SSF researches why three times as many people are entering homelessness than exiting so the partners can develop a targeted and effective prevention and diversion set of strategies.

IV. The “measurable target goal” of “increasing the number of people exiting into permanent housing to at least 42%” raises false expectations.

This “measurable target goal” does not come anywhere close to reflecting the reality of the past two years. This is reflected in the goal vs the actual number of people housed in the table below:

Year	Number of homeless people	Target Goal - # exiting to permanent housing	Actual % housed
2021	12,168	36% or 4,380 people	21.2% or 2,578 people
2022 [jan-march 2022]	6,052	35% or 2,118 people	11.4% or 691 people
2024	5664 [target goal]	42% or 2,378	???

Source: Sacramento Steps Forward [SSF] Data Dashboard

Based on SSF’s analysis of January – March 31, 2022 above, the reality of housing placements is one third [11.4%] of the target goal of 35%.

The Table below details the 691 housing placements in the first quarter of 2022, and shows that only 21.2% of those finding housing were placed in permanent supportive housing.

Housing Placements by Type	Number of People	% of those finding housing [691]	% pf total homeless [6,052]
Found other housing	197	28.5%	3.2%
Family and friends	179	25.9%	2.9%
Permanent supportive housing	147	21.2%	2.4%
Market rate housing	94	13.6%	1.5%
Other	74	10.7%	1.2%

The community deserves a homeless action plan that is built on a combination of reality and aspiration, not one that is based on over-inflated numbers that are not even remotely grounded in past practice.

Recommendation:

- The partners modify this “measurable target goal” to reflect the reality of past achievements which would be in the range of 25%

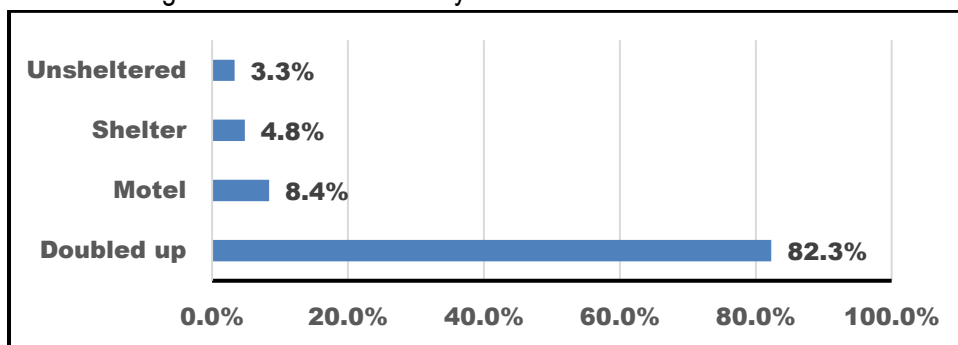
V. Fails to address crisis of homeless children and youth:

The table below documents the crisis of homeless children and youth K-12 in the Sacramento CoC:

Student Homelessness in Sacramento CoC: 2022
Total homeless students enrolled: 10,064 or 3.85% of student body

	California	Sacramento CoC
Suspension rate	4.8%	10%
Chronic Absenteeism	34%	60%
Graduation rate	84%	65%
UC/CSU Ready	46%	19%

Overwhelming homeless children and youth live in over-crowded conditions:



Despite this, the *All in Sacramento* is silent on this issue.

Recommendations:

- The partners immediately engage the Sacramento County Office of Education to be a partner in the implementation of the LHAP
- The partners engage the Sacramento Homeless Youth Coalition to solicit additional recommendations on addressing the crisis of homeless children and youth in our city and county.

VI. Fails to address Income and Employment issues:

Recommendation:

- SRCEH recommends a 7th principle to the Local Homeless Action Plan – the addition of an Income & Employment strategy so that our rehoused neighbors can afford to pay the rent and avoid an eviction on their record.

VII. Affordable Housing Plan:

Recommendation: Before the partners release their Affordable Housing Plan, as draft is circulated to key stakeholders in the community, including people with lived experience, to give their reaction and recommendations to ensure it is a plan embraced by the community.