



**SRCEH FACT CHECK ON CITY RESPONSE
TO HOMELESS PROTESTERS**

City Response-“Facts from City Hall Regarding Homelessness”
<http://www.cityofsacramento.org/City-Manager/Homeless-Coordination/Facts-from-City-Hall>
& SRCEH Response

City Response	SRCEH Facts
No moratorium – due to “public health & public safety” concerns	MISLEADING: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ City locks public bathrooms forcing homeless people to use alleys and streets as urinals ✓ City annually spends \$700,000 for bathroom cleanup; trash removal and homeless camp cleanup
A. There are shelter options to accommodate couples; people with pets etc. B. There are permanent housing opportunities	FALSE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ SSF has over 2,000 people in their community queue- to date they place less than 5% into housing; ✓ 36% of homeless people [about 1,000] are forced to live outside due to lack of shelter capacity; ✓ Shelters routinely ask couples to separate and WIND is the only shelter takes people with pets
A. With documentation support many homeless people are able to secure a rental in open market B. Wait list for emergency shelter and housing is short	FALSE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The current rental vacancy rate is 2% - which means a very tight market – “many” is a total exaggeration ✓ In Sept 2015 50,000 people applies for a Housing Choice Voucher- only 8,000 or 16% received ✓ WIND Youth Services has a wait list of over 100 youth for their emergency shelter ✓ Current shelter system runs at 100% capacity
There are 240 homeless youth according to SSF’s 2015 Homeless Count	FALSE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The Homeless Count severely undercounts homeless youth and families ✓ WIND saw 918 unduplicated youth at their drop-in center in 2015- almost 4 times the Homeless Count ✓ There are over 12,000 homeless students in the Sacramento Unified School system
A. City spent 29% of budget dedicated to homelessness for services to prevent & end homelessness; B. City spent 19%for services while they were homeless C. 50% spent on homeless encampment D. City is investing in long-term housing solutions; E. Administrative costs- protesters claim 81% spent on administrative costs	FALSE; TRUE, MISLEADING & UNANSWERED: <p>A. FALSE: According to the City report- the City spent \$2.8 million on “investments- to end & prevent homelessness”- or 23.6% not 29% of the \$13.66 homeless expenditures</p> <p>B. TRUE: The City spent 19% on “services” – of which \$5.2 million was the Fire Dept. [EMS transportation]</p> <p>C. TRUE & FALSE: The City spent over half – 54.5% on “mitigating the impacts of homelessness” – this included bathroom cleanup; trash removal; camp cleanup; security and the Fire & Police Depts. Only 2% was spent on homeless camp cleanup</p> <p>C. MISLEADING: According to the City report- the city invested \$1,335,849 into housing – <u>but</u> all was state or federal funds - \$0.00 of city general fund investments</p> <p>D. UNANSWERED: 66% [not 81%]or \$9 million of the \$13.66 million was spent on staff costs</p>
City locks the bathroom due to public health and safety concerns	TRUE & UNANSWERED: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The city bathrooms are filthy and unsanitary ✓ SRCEH proposed a Homeless Employment Project as a pilot project in Caesar Chavez Park- hire homeless people to staff the bathrooms to keep them open, safe and sanitary- to date the city has not responded to our proposal



The City response to not implementing either a moratorium or repeal of the anti-camping ordinance is “for the protection of public health and safety.”



FACTS:

1. The anti-camping ordinance does not protect the public health of homeless people nor the community. In fact, due to the lack of emergency shelter and housing options and closing public bathrooms creates public health issues. Additionally, since homeless people are forced to live outside, neither the city nor the county pay for additional trash receptacles for campers. The City pays over \$700,000 annually for bathroom cleanup, trash removal and homeless camp cleanup.

- A. **Public Health:** The anti-camping ordinance does not prohibit sleeping or preparing meals outside, simple essential tasks of living. To do so would clearly violate the state and federal constitution. It says, instead and rather cruelly, that if you must sleep outside you cannot use a tent, a sleeping bag a blanket or any camping gear to keep you warm and protect you from the elements. Instead, those who have fallen on hard times are told that when you sleep you must endure the full impact of foul weather or you become a criminal subject to fine and potential incarceration.

The ordinance does not say that you cannot eat outside, it provides that you cannot store your food or heat your food before you eat it, and cannot use camping gear to carry potable water. Since public rest rooms are the only facilities available to those displaced from housing by illness, loss of job, abandonment, violence in the home or family neglect, those suffering homelessness must relieve themselves in the way our leaders, who lock the public facilities at night, must have intended. They do so in public. To those who would provide chemical toilets to people without homes at no cost to the city, they are told that they too are subject to arrest.

- B. **Public Safety:** According to the SRCEH *Homeless Deaths Report: 2002 – 2014 and 2014 Update*: 25% of people experiencing homelessness die violent deaths: blunt force head injuries, gun shots, stabbings and hangings.

Additionally, 50% die on the weekend, Friday, Saturday and Sunday since program are closed and people are more vulnerable.

Despite this, both the City Council & Board of Supervisors have ignored SRCEH's common sense recommendations to address both their public health and safety concerns:

SRCEH Recommendations:

Shelter & Transitional Community:

- A. Open up a 24 hour Homeless Weekend Drop In Center
- B. Create Camping Safe Zones
- C. Expand funding for Year Round Shelter: Low barriers/harm reduction model
- D. Fund and site First Steps Communities
- E. Funding for shelter and transitional housing for homeless transitional aged youth [TAY]

Health, Sanitation & Public Health:

- A. Expand city and county funding for a Homeless Respite Program
- B. Remove barriers to homeless mental health & substance abuse programs: Expedite SSI
- C. Expand Needle Exchange Program with city funding
- D. Create access to bathrooms & create Bathrooms Jobs Program
- E. Fund a downtown Mobile showers program
- F. Fund Portable Water Stations
- G. Expand the number Trash cans in downtown



Protestors have said they cannot be accommodated in the current shelter system because they are a part of a couple and would have to split up; or they would have to submit to a drug test; or they would have to leave their pet. Is it true that our shelter system cannot accommodate them?

All protestors and campers have been approached and offered an assessment to get into the community queue for housing assistance. There are shelter options to accommodate each of the situations above, primarily through the Winter Sanctuary Program. Winter Sanctuary can serve both men and women in the same facility and does not require a drug test. If a person arrives at Winter Sanctuary clearly intoxicated, they are not allowed to enter, but are invited back the next night. They can be accommodated at the Comprehensive Alcohol Treatment Center (CATC or "Detox") in the interim. While only one shelter currently allows a person to stay at the shelter with their pet(s), the City has the ability to arrange temporary sheltering of a pet at the Front Street Animal Shelter, should a person with a pet seek shelter at Winter Sanctuary.

More importantly, there are permanent housing opportunities organized through Sacramento Steps Forward that are not dependent on family size or composition at all.



FACTS:

- Community Queue:** SSF’s Common Cents program has assessed approximately 2,500 people experiencing homelessness and thus their queue is at least 2,000 people, since people are dropped from the queue if they had not communicated with them in 90 days.
- Availability of shelter beds:** The Table below details the number of shelter beds currently [year round; seasonal; overflow and total] for families [households with children] and single individuals by bed type. There are a total of 1,033 emergency shelter, of which 665 are year-round [322 for families and 343 for singles], however, 235 or 22.7% of the emergency shelter bed capacity are seasonal beds [November 1 – March 31].

Thus, for 5 months there are 1,033 emergency shelter beds and for the remaining 7 months of the year there are 798 emergency shelter beds. [Source: Sacramento Steps Forward, Sacramento County Continuum of Care].

Table: Emergency Shelter Beds - 2015

Household Type	Bed Type	Year Round	Seasonal	Overflow	Total	% Total [of household type]
Homeless Families						
	Voucher	0	98	26	124	27.8%
	Facility-based	308	0	0	308	69%
	Other	14	0	0	14	3.1%
Total Families		322	98	26	446	
% Total		72.2%	21.9%	5.8%		100%
Single Individuals						
	Single women	32	0	0	32	5.4%
	Single women-Domestic Violence	18	0	0	18	3%
	Single men	136	0	0	136	23.2%
	Single women + men	119	137	107	363	61.8%
	Single Veterans [men & women]	20	0	0	20	3.4%
	HIV+ [men & women]	12	0	0	12	2%
	Youth	6	0	0	6	1%
Total Singles		343	137	107	587	100%
% Total		58.4%	23.3%	18.2%		
Total: Families + Singles		665	235	133	1,033	
% Total		64.4%	22.7%	12.8%		

- Winter Shelter:** In 2014-2015 SSF’s Winter Shelter program served an average of 85 homeless people per night for a total of 446 over the 133 nights of operation.

3. **Pets:** According to SSF 2015 Strategic Action Plan, “Additionally, many people who are homeless keep pets for companionship; policies adopted by many landlords and homeless housing providers prohibit pets for reasons of safety and potential property damage.” An important strategy of the Action Plan is to “Improve pet-friendly housing options for homeless people with pets.” WIND Youth Services is the only emergency shelter that takes pets.
4. **Couples:** It is very common for couples to have to split up in order to access emergency shelter. This is especially true of gay and lesbian and transgender couples.



People have suggested that the waitlists for shelter and housing are years long. What is the typical time from homelessness to housing for an unsheltered person?

For many people experiencing homelessness, a major obstacle in securing permanent housing is gathering all the documentation necessary for benefits and housing. With the resources of Sacramento Steps Forward, the community has reduced the timeframes to secure many of these important documents:

Step	Past	Current
Verification of military service	30 days	1 day
Disability certification for veterans	30-60 days	1 day
Obtaining DD214 discharge status documentation	30 days	10 days
Compiling housing eligibility documents	120 days	14 days
Verification of homeless history	N/A	5 minutes

With this support, many people experiencing homelessness are able to secure a rental unit in the open market. Additionally, there are new housing resources available, such that those that need rental subsidy and support for a brief period of time, should be able to be housed much quicker than in the past. The City, along with partners from the County and SHRA are supporting these efforts and continue to look for ways to shorten the length of time anyone experiences homelessness in our community.



FACTS:

1. **Housing Choice Vouchers [HCV, formerly known as Section 8]: 16%:** In 2015, when the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency [SHRA] opened the HCV waitlist, 50,000 people applied and only 8,000 received vouchers – or 16%. The wait to receive a HCV can be years long.
2. **36% or 957 unsheltered people experiencing homelessness:** According to the 2015 Point-In-Time Count performed by Sacramento Steps Forward, there are 2,659 people experiencing homelessness in Sacramento County. 36% or 957 are unsheltered due to lack of emergency shelter capacity.

3. WIND Youth Waiting list: WIND states that there youth emergency shelter as more than 100 transitional age youth on the wait list
4. St, Johns: St. Johns has said that their emergency shelter wait list for women and children can be over 325 families.

Thus, while the City is correct that the timeframe to secure many documents for housing has been reduced, the current emergency shelter system lacks capacity to serve the growing number of people [both youth and adults] experiencing homelessness in our community.



At the January 12 council meeting, a speaker indicated that there are 600+ homeless youth (via the official count) or up to 3,000 (via an unofficial count). Is this true?

The City is not aware of any official or unofficial count of 600 or 3,000 homeless youth. According to the most recent count (January 2015), there were 240 unaccompanied transition age youth (18-24) and an additional 51 transition age youth in households, for a total of 291 transition age youth. This is a significant increase from the previous count in 2013. Sacramento Steps Forward made a concerted effort to reach this population, and partnered with organizations which provide services to homeless youth. The most recent count is the community's best way to estimate the number of people experiencing homelessness, including those in certain subpopulations, such as transition age youth.



FACTS:

1. The Point-In-Time Count historically undercounts both youth and families. This is due to the fact that there are at least 7 different federal definitions of homelessness, ranging from the more restrictive Housing & Urban Development [HUD] definition to the more expansive definitions by both the Department of Education [DOE] and Department of Health & Human Services [HHS].

The Point-In-Time Count mandates that Continuum of Cares [CoC] use the HUD definition of homelessness, which does not count "doubled up" housing situations – including "couch surfing" as being homeless.

2. Yes - the count of unaccompanied transition age youth [18-24] increased from 41 [2013] to 240 [2015] due to the advocacy and technical assistance of the California Homeless Youth Project's *Homeless Youth Count*, since CoC's in the state [and nation] were dramatically undercounting unaccompanied youth, and homeless children and youth in general.

3. There are over 12,000 homeless students [Preschool – 12th grade] in the Sacramento Unified School District, according to the Sacramento County Office of Education [SCOE]. 4% are on the streets; 4% are in emergency shelters; 4% in motels and 88% live in doubled up living arrangements.
4. **918 unaccompanied homeless youth:** In 2015 WIND Youth Services provided services to 918 unduplicated unaccompanied homeless youth, for a total of 8,022 visits to the Drop-In Center.
5. **100 pregnant, parenting youth:** Between October 2013 and September 2014, Waking the Village turned away for lack of space 100 pregnant and parenting youth between 18-21 who meet the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act definition of homelessness
6. While the number of 291 transitional age youth is too low; the “unofficial” count of 3,000 is too high. The best number to use is in the range of 1,000 unaccompanied youth in Sacramento on an annual basis.



At the January 12 council meeting, a speaker claimed that the City spends 19 percent of the budget dedicated to homelessness for services and the rest (81 percent) for administrative costs. Is this true?

No. The City spent upwards of \$4 million annually, or 29 percent of all expenditures on programs that work to prevent and end homelessness. The City’s Cost of Homelessness Report (which can be read in full [here](#)) indicates that in fiscal year 2014/15, the City spent more than \$13.6 million on addressing homelessness and its impacts to the community. Of this includes:

- 29 percent was for programs and activities directly related to preventing and ending homelessness
- 19 percent was for services for people while they are homeless (primarily EMS transports)
- 50 percent was for community impacts caused by homeless encampments

Since this report, the City has committed an additional \$500,000 for housing and employment, and \$600,000 for additional shelter beds for women and children.

The City is investing in long-term housing solutions for people experiencing homelessness. However, the challenges of addressing homelessness require coordination throughout the region; the City cannot address these issues alone. For example, mental health, public health and other community social services are critical pieces of the solution. The City continues to work collaboratively with the State, County, and community organizations to address the issue.

In 2014, the City Council approved the allocation of general funds to help address some of these concerns, which include:

- The hiring of a Homeless Services Coordinator for the City responsible for coordinating efforts internal to the City and with external partners to help address the immediate and long term issues related to homelessness.
- Investing \$500,000 annually to support the creation of a coordinated assessment, intake and referral system that targets the most vulnerable people in the homeless population. Locally, this effort (called “Common Cents”) is managed and operated by Sacramento Steps Forward.

- Investing an additional one-time \$500,000 to add housing-first rent subsidies and employment opportunities for people exiting homelessness coordinated through Sacramento Steps Forward.
- Providing a forgivable loan of \$600,000 to Saint John's Program For Real Change to help expand their capacity to serve an additional 90 homeless women and children.
- Providing \$100,000 annually to expand winter shelter options for vulnerable populations.
- Dedicating a small team of police officers (the "Impact Team") to outreach and connect homeless people with essential services and providing all patrol officers with resources and provider information at their fingertips in patrol cars. These officers proactively work to try to help divert people experiencing homelessness from the criminal justice system and to provide relief to impacted communities.



FACTS:

1. **\$13.66 million:** yes – according to the City report, *Cost of Homelessness*, the City spent \$13.66 million on homelessness. Below is a breakdown of those expenditures:

Type of Costs:

[Note: \$11,821,383 total is 87% of \$13.6m total]

Type of cost	Amount	General Fund		Cost: Impact, Service or Investment			% Total
		Amount	% total	Impact	Service	Investment	
Bathroom related	\$349,157	\$339,245	97.1%	100%			2.9%
Trash removal	\$127,628	\$75,392	59%	100%			1%
Homeless Camp Cleanup	\$232,617	\$144,705	62%	100%			2%
Security	\$552,754	\$444,454	80%	100%			4.7%
Subtotal	\$1,262,156	\$1,003,796	79.5%	100%			10.6%
Treatment	\$828,351	\$708,351	85.5%			100%	7%
Shelter	\$610,000	\$100,000	16.4%			100%	5.1%
Housing	\$1,335,849	0	0%			100%	11.3%
Subtotal	\$2,774,200	\$808,351	29.1%			100%	23.4%
Fire Department	\$4,956,636	\$4,956,636	100%	47.9% [\$2.37m]	52.1% [\$2.58m]		41.9%
Police Department	\$2,828,391	\$2,828,391	100%	99.3% [\$2.8m]		.07% [\$19,151]	23.9%
Subtotal	\$7,785,027	\$7,785,027	100%	66.5% [\$5.2m]	33.2% [\$2.58m]	.03% [\$19,151]	65.8%
Total	\$11,821,383	\$9,597,174	81.2%	54.5% [\$6.44m]	21.9% [\$2.58m]	23.6% [\$2.8m]	100%

SRCEH's Summary of City Report:

- \$7m or 50% of the costs of homelessness goes to “mitigating the impacts of homelessness” – with 75% of that being either the Fire Department [\$2.3m] & Police Department [\$2.8m];
 - City invests only \$808,351 of general funds, or 5.9% of the \$13.6m total, on mental health and drug treatment services [85.6% of total investment]; \$100,000 on shelter [16.4% of total investments] and \$0.00 on affordable housing;
 - City spends 2.5 times the amount on mitigating the impacts of homelessness [\$6.44m] [[bathroom related; trash; cleanup; security; fire and police departments] than on services to the homeless [\$2.58m] – 100% of these services provided by the Fire Department [ambulance etc];
 - Overall the City spends 2.3 times the amount on mitigating the impacts of homelessness - \$6.44 million -] than on treatment, shelter and affordable housing - \$2.77 million;
 - General funds – the City spends 10.2 times the amount on mitigating the impacts of homelessness - \$8.23 million – than on treatment and shelter \$808,351 and zero general fund on affordable housing;
 - City spends 10 times the amount of general funds on bathroom related issues; trash removal, homeless camp clean up and security [\$1m] compared to emergency shelter [\$100,000]:
 - ✓ 1.5 times the amount on homeless camp cleanup compared to emergency shelter
 - ✓ 3.3 times the amount on bathroom related issues compared to emergency shelter
 - ✓ 4.4 times the amount on security compared to emergency shelter
 - Sacramento spends 8 times as much mitigating the impacts of homelessness per homeless person as on treatment, shelter and housing per homeless person
2. **66% on administration:** The City did not respond to the statement “that 81% was spent on administration. However, as you can see below, that figure is incorrect.

SRCEH analysis of the City's report indicates that the actual number is 66% was spent on staff and 34% was spent on “hard” or program costs.

Staffing vs Hard Costs

Type of cost	Amount	% Total
Staff costs	\$9 million	66%
Hard costs	\$4.6 million	34%

3. **23.4% on direct services to the homeless:** The City response was that 29% of the \$13.66 million was spent on “programs and activities directly related to preventing and ending homelessness.”

Technically the City's response is correct, if you only look at the \$9.6 million of City General Funds spent on homelessness as opposed to the total of \$13.66 million overall. Of City General Funds, the City spent 29.1%, or \$808,351, of the \$2,774,200 spent on drug treatment and emergency shelter. As the table above indicates, the City spent \$0.00 of General Fund on affordable housing.

However, overall, the \$808,351 is 23.4% of the \$13.66 million spend on drug treatment and emergency shelter and housing.

4. **65.5% on Fire Department & Police:** SRCEH does not understand how the City arrived at the statement “19 percent was for services for people while they are homeless (primarily EMS transports),” since the City’s report clearly states that the City spent \$4.9 million [41.9% of total] of General Fund on the Fire Department [again mostly for EMS transportation] and \$2.8 million [23.9% of total] on the Police, for a total of 65.8% or \$7.7 million.
5. **54.5% on “mitigating the impacts of homelessness”:** Yes, according to the City’s report, the City spent over 50% - actually 54.5% or \$6.44 million on “mitigating the impacts of homelessness.”
6. **2% on homeless camp clean up:** According to the City report, the City spent \$232,616 of which \$144,705 or 62% was City General Fund, on cleaning up homeless encampments – not 50% as was stated in the city’s response. The City’s report, as noted above, did spend 54.5% on “mitigating the impacts of homeless”- which much more than “community impacts caused by homeless encampments,” of which 65.8% was spent on the Fire Department and Police Department.
7. **IMPACT Team:** Currently the Sacramento Police Department’s IMPACT Team consists of only 2 officers. SRCEH’s recommendation on April 8, 2015 for the City to double the funding for the IMPACT Team to increase to 4 officers has gone unanswered.
8. “Investment in long term housing solutions for people experiencing homelessness.”

No. According to the City’s Report, while the 11.3%, or \$1.33 million of the \$13.66 million was spent on housing, \$0.00 of General Fund was invested in housing.

However, the City and County does have a small Affordable Housing Trust Fund and the Mayor did announce his housing initiative in 2015:

- A. Trust Fund: City/County Affordable Housing Trust Fund: Sacramento City & Sacramento County each have an Affordable Housing Trust Fund. Each currently has one source of funding, a commercial linkage fee.

Currently the City has \$2.4 million in their fund and the County has \$6.5 million for a total of \$8.9 million. [As of December 2014 SHRA report to City Council and Board of Supervisors.

- B. Mayors Downtown Housing Initiative calling for 15% of the 10,000 units to be “rapid rehousing” for homeless people. However, no funding has been identified to move this proposal forward.

**Mayor’s Downtown Housing Initiative
10,000 units of housing by 2025
Types of housing in Downtown Housing Initiative**

<i>Types of Housing</i>	<i>Number of units</i>
Market rate	6,000
Workforce housing – “affordable housing”	2,500
Rapid Rehousing for homeless people	1,500
Total	10,000



Why has the City locked public bathrooms in City Hall and in parks?

The decision was made to lock the bathrooms in an effort to maintain public health and safety. The public bathrooms at City Hall and in City Parks are intended to be available for any member of the public; however, some of the bathrooms have begun to be used for inappropriate activities. Toilets have been backed up with hypodermic needles, janitors have found used “foils” with drug residue in toilets, and soiled underwear has been left on and around the toilets. Overall, the bathrooms have become filthy. Janitorial staff and other members of the public have entered the bathrooms and encountered people engaging in lewd and/or illegal activities and have been accosted. City janitorial staff has had to clean these bathrooms three times a day, and still cannot maintain them to a standard that allows the public to safely use them. Bathrooms at City Hall can still be accessed by anyone by signing in with the security guards.



FACTS:

1. SRCEH agrees that the closing of park bathrooms homeless people, which forces homeless people to use the streets and alleys of our community as their bathroom, is obviously a *public health issue as well as a matter of dignity & decency.*

Recommendation- Made by SRCEH to City Council on April 8, 2015: Work with SSF and the SSF Homeless Employment & Income Committee to create a city public works “Homeless Employment Pilot Project” in Caesar Chavez Park, by hiring homeless people to staff key park bathrooms so that they can be open to homeless people and properly maintained and used for their intended purpose. This seems like a “win-win” for the local residents, businesses and homeless people.

To date the City Council has not responded to our proposal.