



CITY OF  
**Oakland**

# Addressing Homelessness in OAKLAND

2021





## BACKGROUND

# Our Values

### **Treat Homelessness As the Crisis It Is.**

We don't accept that Oaklanders are forced to live on the streets. We're taking an action-first approach, innovating and learning.

### **Be a Solutions Leader.**

Oakland is committed to developing and incorporating best practices, creating efficient, effective, and scalable solutions, and advocating for what cities need to confront the homelessness crisis.

### **One Oakland.**

Rising homelessness is driven by vulnerable Oaklanders—including long-term residents with deep roots—losing housing. These are our neighbors.



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BACKGROUND

# Our Values

## **Racial Justice.**

Racial injustice and inequality are root causes of homelessness. 68% of Oakland's unhoused population is Black, but only 28% of the city's population is. Oakland can only be truly racially just if we tackle our homelessness crisis.

## **No Criminalization.**

We do not and we will not criminalize homelessness in Oakland. And we will always prioritize the health and safety of our unhoused community.

## **Transparency.**

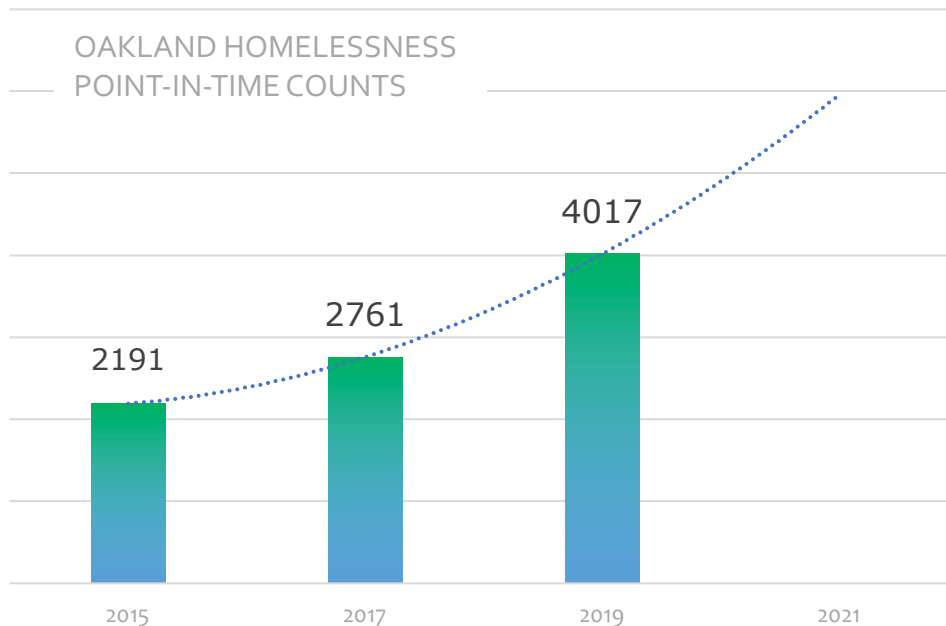
Clearly communicate successes, shortcomings.

## BACKGROUND

# Oakland's Homelessness Crisis

**Homelessness has doubled over the last five years.**

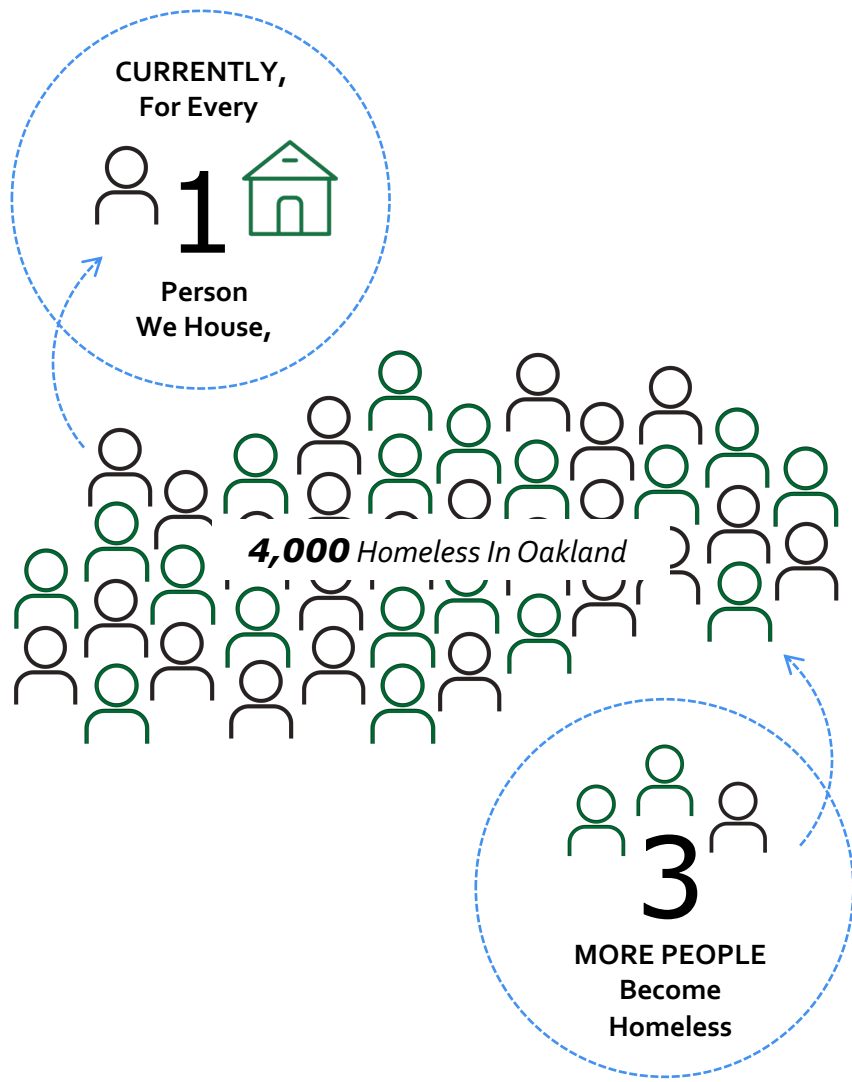
Driven by a housing crisis and continuing economic inequality that hits Oakland's most vulnerable.



## BACKGROUND

# Oakland's Homelessness Crisis

To reduce homelessness, we must slow its growth and keep more people in their homes.



## BACKGROUND

# By the Numbers

## The Population of Those Experiencing Homelessness

[Source: City of Oakland 2017 Homeless Census Survey]

APPROX.  
**4,000**  
Oaklanders  
experiencing  
homelessness



**71%** are unsheltered



**29%** are sheltered

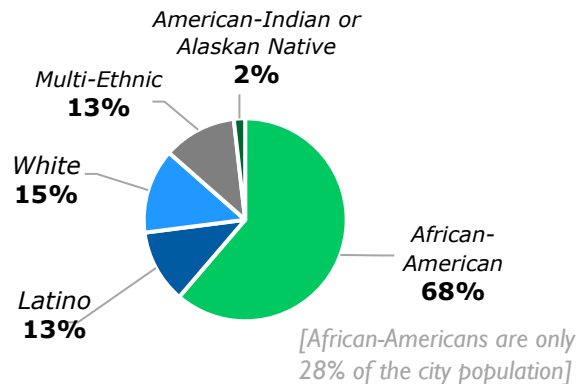


**45%** are living in cars or RVs  
(part of unsheltered population)

### PRIMARY CAUSE OF HOMELESSNESS:

Money issues: **58%**  
Personal relationships: **14%**  
Mental health: **14%**  
Physical health: **12%**  
Substance abuse: **10%**  
Incarceration: **6%**

### ETHNICITY:





# What We've Done

- > **Oakland has responded to the crisis level surge in homelessness** with emergency measures like community cabins.
- > **We've created a system of effective strategies** that address homelessness at every step in the cycle.
- > **Oakland is ready to scale up for reductions in homelessness**, although new state and federal funds and more intergovernmental coordination are needed.

WHAT WE'VE DONE

# Recent Milestones



**1,800+** households

*kept in homes through  
**Keep Oakland Housed**  
in Fiscal Year 19-20*



**880** people

*moved from **homelessness**  
to **permanent housing**  
in Fiscal Year 19-20*



**2x**

*Oakland doubled  
**transitional housing**  
**capacity** from 2018-2020*



**2x**

*Oakland doubled our  
**affordable housing production**  
over the past 4 years*



**700+** unsheltered  
residents

*benefited from community  
cabins over the first 20 months*





An aerial photograph of a homeless encampment in Oakland. The scene is filled with numerous RVs, trailers, and makeshift structures. There is a large amount of debris, including cardboard boxes, plastic, and other trash scattered throughout the area. A road with cars is visible in the upper right corner. The overall tone is somber and highlights the scale of the homelessness issue.

WHAT WE'VE DONE

*The New York Times* Dec. 17, 2019

“... you could easily call it a refugee camp.”

*By Thomas Fuller and Josh Haner*

Home Depot homelessness encampment before clearing and transfer to Safe RV sites and community cabins





## WHAT WE'VE DONE

**Home Depot homelessness  
encampment** after clearing and  
transfer to Safe RV sites and  
community cabins



# WHAT WE'VE DONE

# COVID-19

# Response

**Oakland took major steps to address COVID's immediate impacts on our homeless population.**

## **STREET AND ENCAMPMENT RESPONSE:**

- 18,000+ meals handed out per week on the street.
- Outreach teams distributing PPE, identifying people in need of hotel stay.
- Doubled (to 40) the number of sites receiving porta-potties, handwashing stations, garbage pick up.

## **SAFETY RESPONSE:**

- State-provided trailers for medically vulnerable, 65+.
- Social distancing and hygiene at all shelters.
- Testing shelter population and screening all new intakes.
- Hotels for those who're older, medically vulnerable, or test positive.

## **NEW FACILITIES:**

- Seeking leases of new buildings from hotel owners with option to purchase.
- Exploring converting units to permanent housing post-COVID-19.

**Oakland installed 66 trailers,**  
sewer and water lines  
on a site near the Coliseum.





## OUR APPROACH

# Key Strategies

The City of Oakland has developed an innovative system to address homelessness at every step in the cycle.

## PREVENT

**Keep Oakland Housed:** Innovative intervention program to prevent homelessness

## STABILIZE

- Community cabins and Safe RV parking
- Encampment management and street clean up
- Transitional housing

## HOUSE

- Permanent supportive and deeply affordable housing
- Innovative initiatives like Flex Funding, Homekey, OPRI





# PREVENT

## Keeping Oakland Housed

*Keep Oakland Housed* is an innovative prevention and intervention program and public/private partnership initiated by the Mayor's Office and currently funded through private donations.





PREVENT

# Keeping Oakland Housed



## LEGAL REPRESENTATION:

Legal assistance, counseling, eviction defense

*1,100+ households received services since Oct. 2018*



## EMERGENCY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE:

Targeted prevention for those on the brink

*\$2.5 million to tenants since Oct. 2018*



## SUPPORTIVE SERVICES:

Targeted interventions to keep people in their homes

*1,800 households kept in homes every year*





# STABILIZE

Oakland's proactive stabilization strategy is moving people from the streets and encampments to innovative programs like community cabins and Safe RV parking sites, and from the traditional shelter model to more effective rapid re-housing programs.



## STABILIZE

# Community Cabins

**The City's Community Cabins program provides temporary shelter to meet the crisis.**

- 6 sites, 232 beds, primarily on public property
- Each site has 20 two-person cabins, with a goal of serving 80 residents/year
- Designed for 6 month stay
- Managed by service providers 24-7
- Portable toilets
- Security guards
- Two hot meals/day
- Shower truck visits twice/week



“Oakland’s Cabin Community model is one of the most promising and cost effective homeless shelter innovations I’ve seen. Kudos to Oakland for creating this new model to compassionately and effectively reduce street homelessness.”

—Trent Rhorer, Executive Director,  
San Francisco Human Services Agency



STABILIZE

# Community Cabins

**Community Cabins have moved hundreds off the streets and towards permanent housing.**

- Unsheltered residents volunteer to move to cabins at high rates because sites are established near existing encampments and allow communities to stay together
- 700+ unsheltered residents benefited over first 20 months
- 53% positive exit rate to transitional and permanent housing

“I saw it as an opportunity to get back on my feet. From there I continued to apply for jobs. I persevered and now I’m here and I’m happy.”

—Prince Channer,  
Community Cabin Participant



## STABILIZE

# Safe RV Parking

The Safe RV Parking program is an innovative, compassionate intervention model.

The City is committed to supporting the unsheltered Oaklanders who live in cars and RVs, who make up 45 percent of Oakland's homeless population.

### OUTCOMES:

- 3 sites, 100+ parking spots
- Up to 210 people served



### EACH SITE EQUIPPED WITH:

- Electricity
- Basic sanitation
- Garbage service
- Security



## STABILIZE

# From Shelter to Re-housing

**Oakland has established a successful transitional housing model.**

The Holland and the Henry Robinson are SRO-style buildings with a 252 bed capacity to serve adults with transitional housing and support services.

- *75% success rate in transitioning to permanent housing*
- *Can transition in as little as 6 months*
- *Served 364 people in last year*

The City is looking to equip other shelters like the St. Vincent De Paul with exit and re-housing resources.



## STABILIZE

# Encampment Management

Oakland became the first U.S. city to adopt a comprehensive Encampment Management Policy that puts services, not criminalization, first.

### A BALANCED APPROACH:

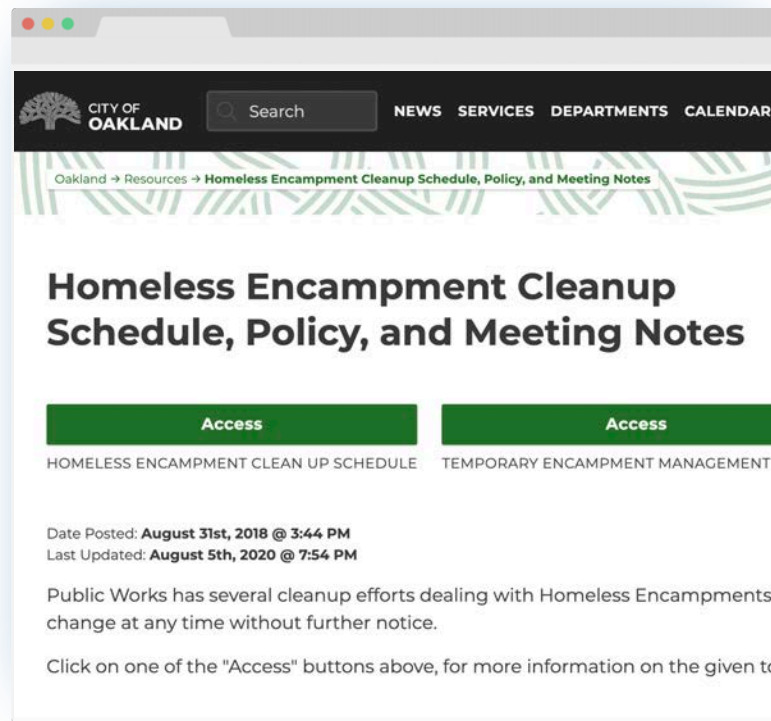
- Balance needs, health, and safety of unsheltered residents, with surrounding residents and businesses
- Make every effort to provide residents with safe, adequate alternative shelter

### PRIORITIZING SANITATION:

- Temporarily clear some large encampments for full cleaning
- Toilets at the 40 largest encampments, regular trash pickup at 72

### ONGOING CHALLENGES:

- Encampments still growing. Rate of new homelessness makes it difficult to address case by case.
- Court rulings hinder closure of camps, even with serious safety issues and relocation options. City sued 5 times.



### ▲ Tracking and Transparency

Updates on all encampments at:

<https://www.oaklandca.gov/documents/homeless-encampment-clean-up-schedule>

# STABILIZE Encampment Management

## BEFORE

## AFTER

Northgate homelessness  
encampment before and  
after clearing and transfer  
to community cabins





# HOUSE

An increase in deeply affordable, permanent supportive, and subsidized housing is critical to reducing homelessness.



## HOUSE

# Affordable Housing

These forms of long term and supportive housing are critical to reducing homelessness over time. Much of this is implemented with federal, state, and county funds.

### PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING:

Housing with support services (job training and retention, mental health, substance abuse recovery) either on site or brought in

### DEEPLY AFFORDABLE HOUSING:

Housing serving those who are on very low incomes but who don't necessarily require other services for recovery

### RENT SUBSIDIES:

Rental support for people who can pay some but not all of their rent

### RAPID RE-HOUSING:

Short term rental assistance and services to help people exit homelessness and access housing quickly





## HOUSE

# Oakland's Housing Initiatives

Oakland is exploring a number of strategic housing initiatives.

### FLEX FUNDING:

A strategic use of funds to make each of the City's sheltering and emergency response programs more housing-oriented and enable program guests to overcome some financial barriers to getting re-housed, like security deposits and move-in costs.

### HOMEKEY:

A major shift for the City, the Homekey initiative sees the City taking an ownership role in permanent housing projects for the formerly homeless.

### OPRI:

Under this flagship effort, Oakland is leveraging HUD funding for housing subsidies by providing the costs for services associated with it.





LEADERSHIP

# Oakland Is Committed to Leading on Homelessness

LEADERSHIP

# City Leadership on Homelessness



**Oakland leaders are taking aggressive action to reduce homelessness.**

## **RAISING PRIVATE FUNDS:**

Mayor Schaaf and City leaders secured significant funding from private sources to augment public revenue.

## **REGIONAL AND STATE LEADERSHIP:**

Mayor Schaaf is Co-Chair of Mayors and CEOs for U.S. Housing Investment, a member of the Governor's Council of Regional Homeless Advisors, and on the Steering Committee for the All Home Regional Impact Council.

## **INNOVATIVE PILOT PROGRAMS:**

The Mayor's Office is launching shallow subsidy pilot programs for teachers and housing-insecure Oaklanders and guaranteed income pilot programs for local families.

KTVU | Sept. 22, 2020

**Oakland awarded \$20M for two housing developments under 'Project Homekey'**







FUNDING

# Present and Future Investments

Oakland has developed effective strategies to reduce homelessness that can scale with new funding.

County, State, and Federal investments will be critical going forward.



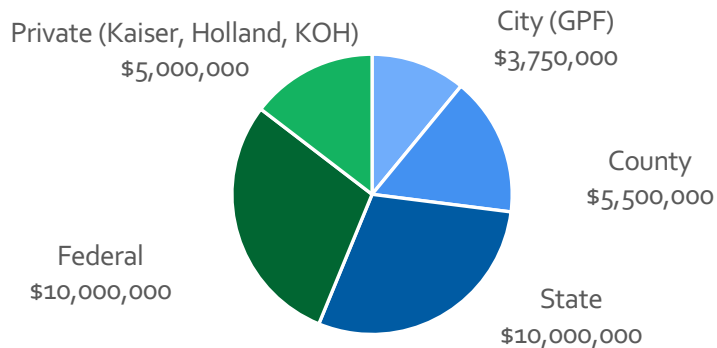
## FUNDING

# Oakland's Annual Homelessness Budget

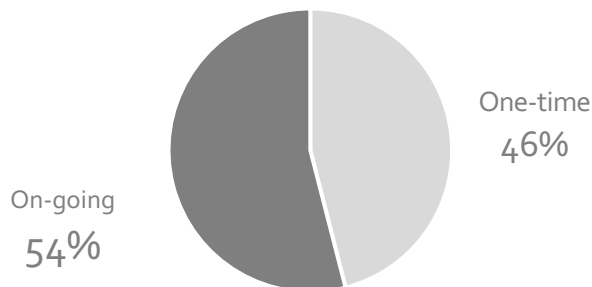
The City's homelessness budget was \$34 million for FYI 2019-2020.

Alameda County administers public health, behavioral, and other homeless related services.

### Federal, State, and County Grants and Restricted Funds



### On-Going Versus One-Time Funds







## ADDITIONAL NEEDS

# Support Needed From County, State, and Federal Governments

### COUNTY:

Utilize major new Measure W sales tax revenue (~\$150 million/year) for public health, mental health, and substance abuse treatment programs to address homelessness. Ensure effectiveness and accountability over time.

### STATE:

Provide permanent multibillion-dollar funding for local governments to address homelessness.

### FEDERAL:

Re-establish its role in funding affordable housing, create a permanent new affordable housing funding source, and ensure housing vouchers cover rent in higher cost areas. More broadly, treat housing subsidies as an entitlement and a lack of housing as a health condition.

Form State partnerships so Medicaid can better fund homeless services.





ADDITIONAL NEEDS

# A Pathway to End Homelessness

**The PATH (Permanent Access To Housing) framework would enable Oakland to reach functional zero homelessness in five years.**

The goal is to make homelessness brief, rare, and one-time. The framework would require significant County, State, and Federal funding.

## **CURRENT FUNDING:**

About \$40 million per year

## **PATH FRAMEWORK:**

- \$123 million per year, ongoing
- One-time \$220 million capital investment



## ADDITIONAL NEEDS

# Priority Investments

These are potential priority investments under the PATH framework.

GOAL	PROGRAM	ANNUAL BUDGET
PREVENT	Maintain funding for Keep Oakland Housed. Program is currently privately funded, so sustained public funding is needed	<b>\$2.5 million</b>
	Maintain ability to shelter about <b>1,000 additional individuals</b>	<b>\$16 million</b>
HOUSE	Increase capacity to re-house <b>1,000 people</b> per year who recently fell into homelessness	<b>\$12 million</b>
	Rent subsidies for <b>5,000 households</b>	<b>\$77 million</b>
	Create <b>3,000 units</b> of deeply affordable housing	<b>\$220 million</b> <i>in capital investments</i>







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**ACTIVISM**

# What You Can Do to Help Reduce Homelessness

## ACTIVISM

# Advocate

**Ask your County, State, and Federal representatives to fund local homelessness programs.**

### COUNTY:

Fund health and safety net services.

### STATE:

Provide permanent funding for local governments.

### FEDERAL:

Permanent funding for affordable housing, plus subsidies, vouchers.



## ACTIVISM

# Donate and Volunteer with Key Organizations

### SUPPORT KEEP OAKLAND HOUSED:

Fund Oakland's innovative program to keep Oaklanders from becoming homeless. [Donate here.](#)

### DELIVERING FOOD:

[Volunteer with City Team](#) to bring food to community cabins.

### HELPING STRUGGLING YOUTH AND FAMILIES:

Organizations like [Building Futures with Women and Children](#), [Covenant House](#), [First Place for Youth](#), and [Operation Dignity](#) are doing incredible work supporting young people, families, and veterans on the brink of or experiencing homelessness.



EAST BAY TIMES Jan. 28, 2020

Oakland opens new cabins for homeless, funded by community donations

About 170 Oaklanders donated more than \$200,000.