



CITY OF OAKLAND

DRAFT

**Homelessness Strategic Action Plan Racial Equity
Impact Analysis**

Updated: Winter 2026

Table of Contents

Introduction..... 3

1. Focus on Racial Equity 3

2. Desired Racial Equity Outcome 3

3. Data on Racial Disparities and Impacts 4

A. Root Causes of Extreme Disparities at the Population Level 4

4. Homelessness in Oakland..... 5

5. Income, Rent Burden, and Poverty 8

6. New Entries into Homelessness11

7. Exits From Homelessness to Permanent Housing13

8. Returns to Homelessness from a Permanent Housing Situation.15

9. Mortality Rates18

10. Engaging Impacted Community Members18

A. Feedback on Current Homeless Housing Interventions and Services 18

i. Outreach, System Access, and Service Coordination..... 18

ii. Encampment Engagement & Neighborhood Health..... 19

iii. Interim Housing Programs..... 21

iv. Vehicular Homelessness..... 22

v. Shortages and Bottlenecks for Permanent Housing..... 22

vi. Transitional/Short-term Solutions..... 23

vii. Permanent Supportive Housing 24

viii. Culturally Sensitive, Trusted Service Providers..... 24

ix. Inclusion of Lived Experience in Governance 25

x. Additional Feedback on the Root Causes of Homelessness..... 25

xi. Identifying Equity Gaps..... 26

a. Targeted Prevention 26

c. Encampment Management 27

d. Interim Housing 28

e. Permanent Housing 29

11. Proposal to Address Equity Gaps30

A. Targeted Homelessness Prevention.....31

B. Access and Coordination31

C. Encampment Engagement and Operations.....31

D.	Interim Housing Solutions.....	32
E.	Permanent Housing Solutions	32
12.	Ongoing Monitoring and Accountability.....	33
13.	Summary	34

Introduction

1. Focus on Racial Equity

The following language is taken from the City of Oakland’s Racial Equity Impact Analysis worksheet:

“Unlike the blatantly discriminatory policies of the past, most policies today are not designed to intentionally exclude or to create additional barriers for people of color. But unfortunately, many policies still have real consequences that adversely affect how people of color experience and are impacted by systems. These policies seem to be ‘race neutral’ or ‘race silent’ but their repeated application led to outcomes that, over time, cause disparities that are predictable by race.

“For these conditions to change, government staff and policymakers must grow the capacity to assess and design explicitly for racial equity. **Racial Equity Impact Analysis** is a template to guide this process of change. By applying an equity focus and analysis to key deliberations, government can work with their community to create conditions where everyone has access to the opportunities necessary to meet their essential needs, advance their well-being and achieve their full potential.”

This document is organized by the steps of the REIA process which include:

- State the desired racial equity outcome(s).
- Gather information/data about impacts and racial disparities.
- Identify and engage with stakeholders and impacted communities.
- Identify equity gaps.
- Fill in equity gaps.
- Implementation; and
- Evaluation and accountability.

This approach has the built-in advantage of driving concrete, data-driven, outcome-oriented problem-solving actions. It educates about racial disparities, informs about root causes, engages impacted communities, and ultimately provides a set of specific recommendations to work with and a framework to evaluate the impacts of decisions on equity.

2. Desired Racial Equity Outcome

Homelessness is a rare, brief, and one-time experience when it occurs for residents of Oakland, including residents most impacted by racial disparities.

3. Data on Racial Disparities and Impacts

A. Root Causes of Extreme Disparities at the Population Level

As a result of historical redlining, exclusionary zoning and land covenants, and discriminatory lending implemented across the U.S. and in Alameda County; Black, Indigenous, Latino and Asian people have been segregated into urban areas such as Oakland. Subsequently, the redlined areas to which these populations were relegated were subjected to multi-generational disinvestment that resulted in restricted access to critical resources such as quality education that affect opportunities for economic security and stability, safety from environmental hazards that derogate the health and well-being, and safe neighborhoods conditions.

As the Bay Area population grew, economically advantaged incoming populations priced up available housing; affordable housing supply did not increase and those with lower earning capacity were pushed out of the housing market. These low-income residents were disproportionately Black and impacted by a myriad of other forms of racial marginalization. Additional momentum was added to the spiral during the “2008 housing crisis” when many legacy homeowners lost their properties to predatory lending schemes, lost the stability of ownership and were forced into the constantly inflating rental market, housing instability and/or ultimately into homelessness.

“... Oakland found that, between 2004 and 2013, African American and Latino borrowers were 2.583 and 3.312 times more likely, respectively, to receive loans with discriminatory terms than similarly situated white borrowers.”¹

The collapse of housing values also led to a significant decline in the City’s revenues, resulting in budget shortfalls that totaled \$318 million over six years.² In the face of imbedded and persistent inequality and concentration of poverty in Oakland communities the State discontinued the City’s redevelopment funding, the most reliable local source of funding stream for affordable housing while HUD investments were also dramatically being reduced.³

The following population-level indicators are discussed in the following section:

- Homelessness in Oakland
- New Entries into Homelessness
- Income, Rent Burden, and Poverty
- Exits From Homelessness to Permanent Housing
- Returns to Homelessness
- Mortality Rates

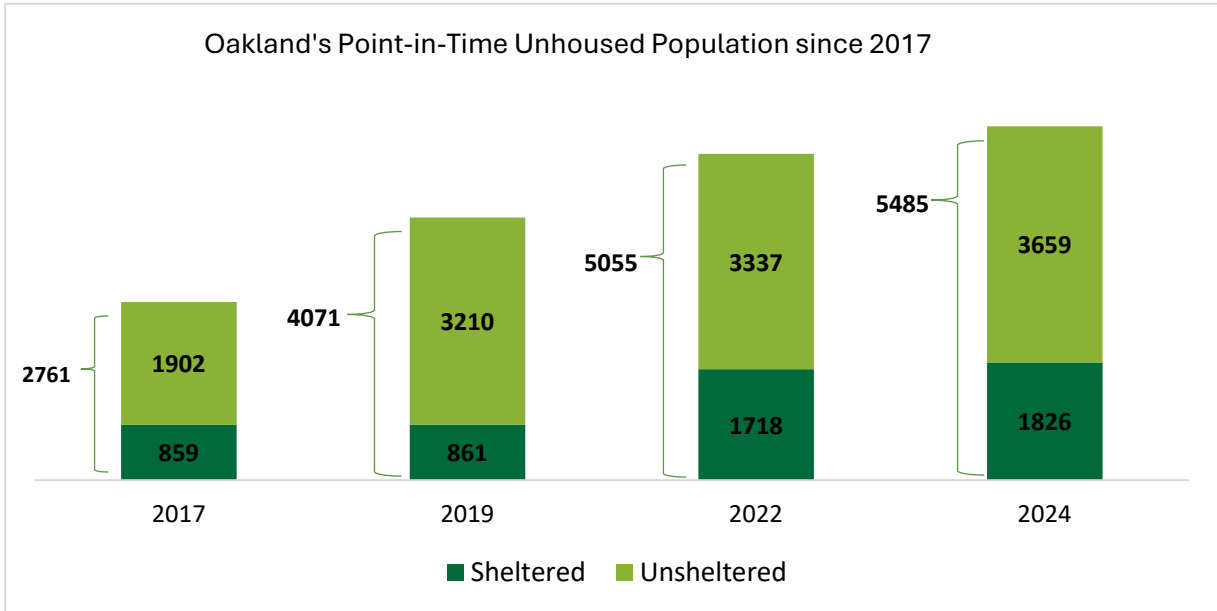
¹ [City of Oakland v. Wells Fargo & Co.](#) pg. 7 Filed on September 28, 2021

² Balancing Oakland’s Budget [SPUR Report May 2025](#)

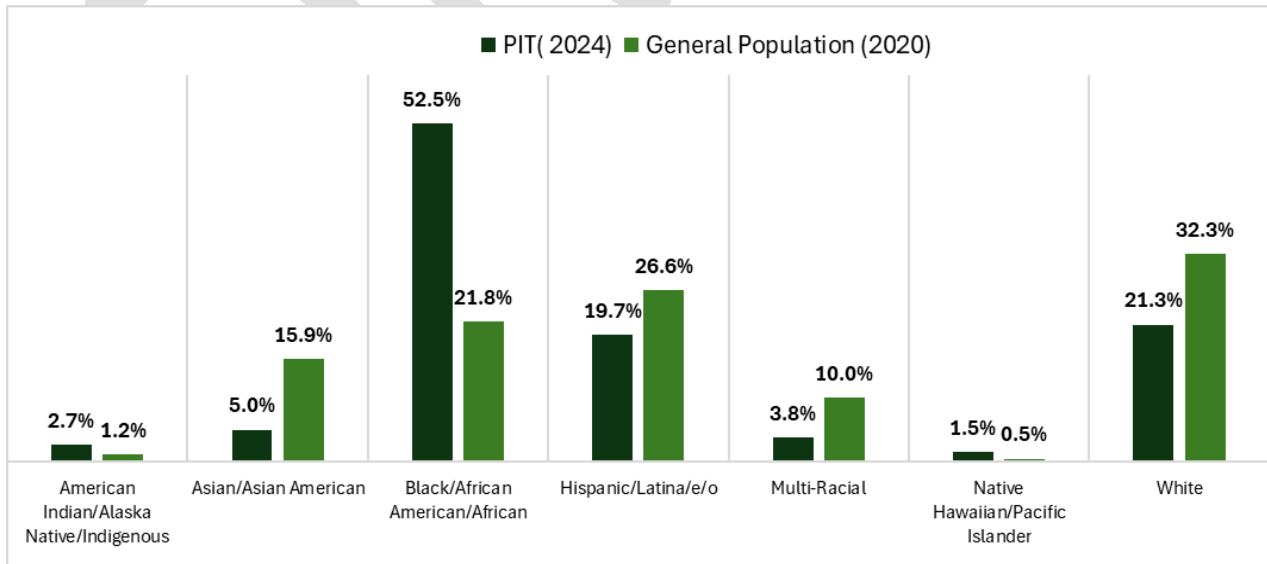
³ All redevelopment agencies were dissolved effective February 1, 2012, [Archive Page for Oakland Redevelopment Agency](#)

4. Homelessness in Oakland

The graph below illustrates a continued rise in Oakland's unhoused population over the years. Most recently, from 2022 to 2024, as the County saw a 3% decrease in overall homelessness, Oakland's unhoused population increased by 9%, with a 10% increase in people experiencing unsheltered homelessness.⁴



In 2024, **52.5%** of Oakland's unhoused population identified as Black/African American as compared to **21.8%** of its general population. American Indian/Native Alaskan (**2.7%**), Middle Eastern/North African (**.4%**), Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (**1.5%**) identities were also

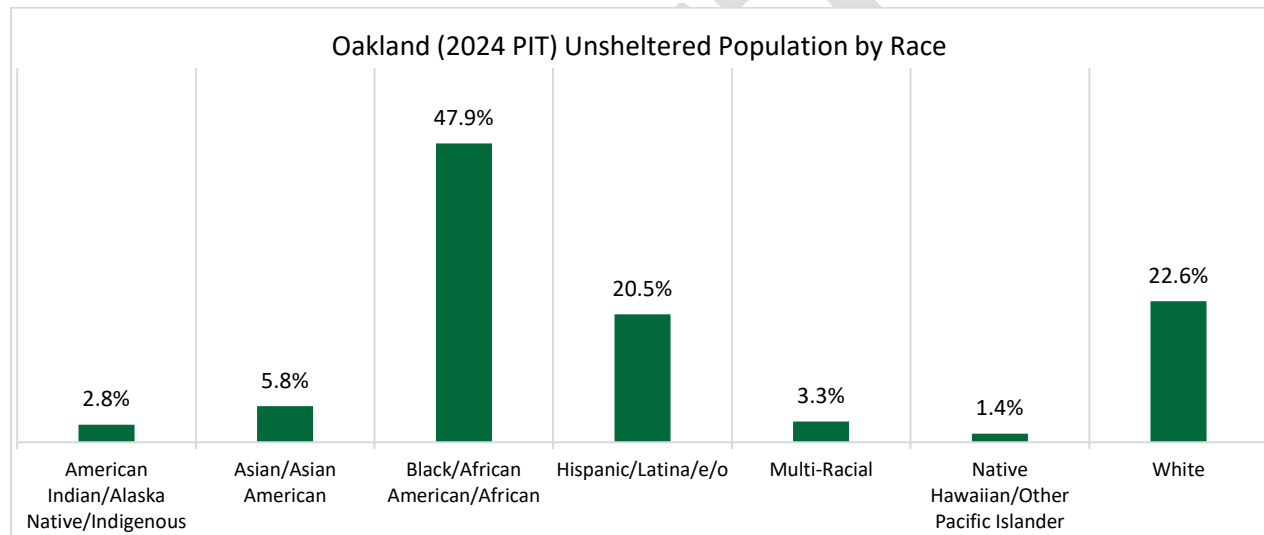


⁴ **Sheltered homelessness** is defined as living situations in a publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements such as emergency or transitional shelters or Safe Haven facilities. **Unsheltered homelessness** is defined as a place not meant for habitation (e.g., a vehicle/RV, an abandoned building, tent/makeshift structure, bus/train/subway station/airport or anywhere outside)

overrepresented as compared to representation in the general Oakland population.⁵ The largest sheer numbers of unhoused people in Oakland at a Point in Time in 2024 identified as Black/African American (**2,857**), White (**1,130**), Hispanic/Latina/e/o (**693**), Asian or Asian American (**293**), or Multiracial (**298**).

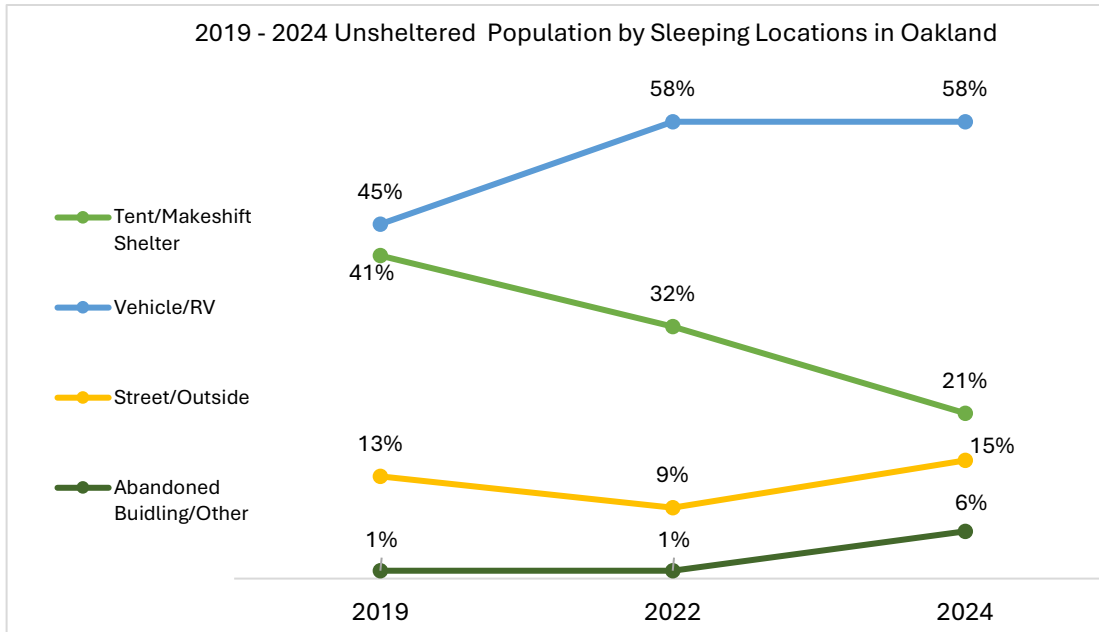
According to the 2024 PIT Count, people experiencing homelessness in **Oakland** represent the majority (**58%**) of the Countywide unhoused population. Three quarters (**74%**) of Alameda County’s Black unhoused population experiences homelessness in Oakland.

Overrepresentation of homelessness is also evident in Oakland’s unsheltered population where the vast majority (**47.9%**) of unsheltered Oaklanders are Black/African American.



Although the 2024 PIT Count does not provide a breakdown of Race by unsheltered sleeping location, the majority of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness in Oakland do so in a Recreation Vehicle (RV) or car.⁴ Since 2019, there has been a widespread shift in unsheltered homelessness from tents and makeshift structures to vehicles and RVs. San Francisco reported 13% fewer unsheltered people sleeping on the streets or tents and a 38% increase in people living in vehicles/RVs, since 2022.⁶ In 2024, San Mateo County reported a 20% increase in vehicular homelessness.⁷ Vehicles offer advantages over sleeping in tents, makeshift shelter, and public spaces such as safety (possibly driving the higher rate of women in and seniors’ vehicles and RVs) a secure place to protect and store personal belongings, medications, and protection from weather conditions.⁸

⁵ [2024 City of Oakland Point in Time Count Executive Summary](#)
⁶ [2024 San Francisco PIT Data Summary](#)
⁷ [2024 One Day Homeless Count and Survey](#) County of San Mateo
⁸ National Alliance to End Homelessness 2025



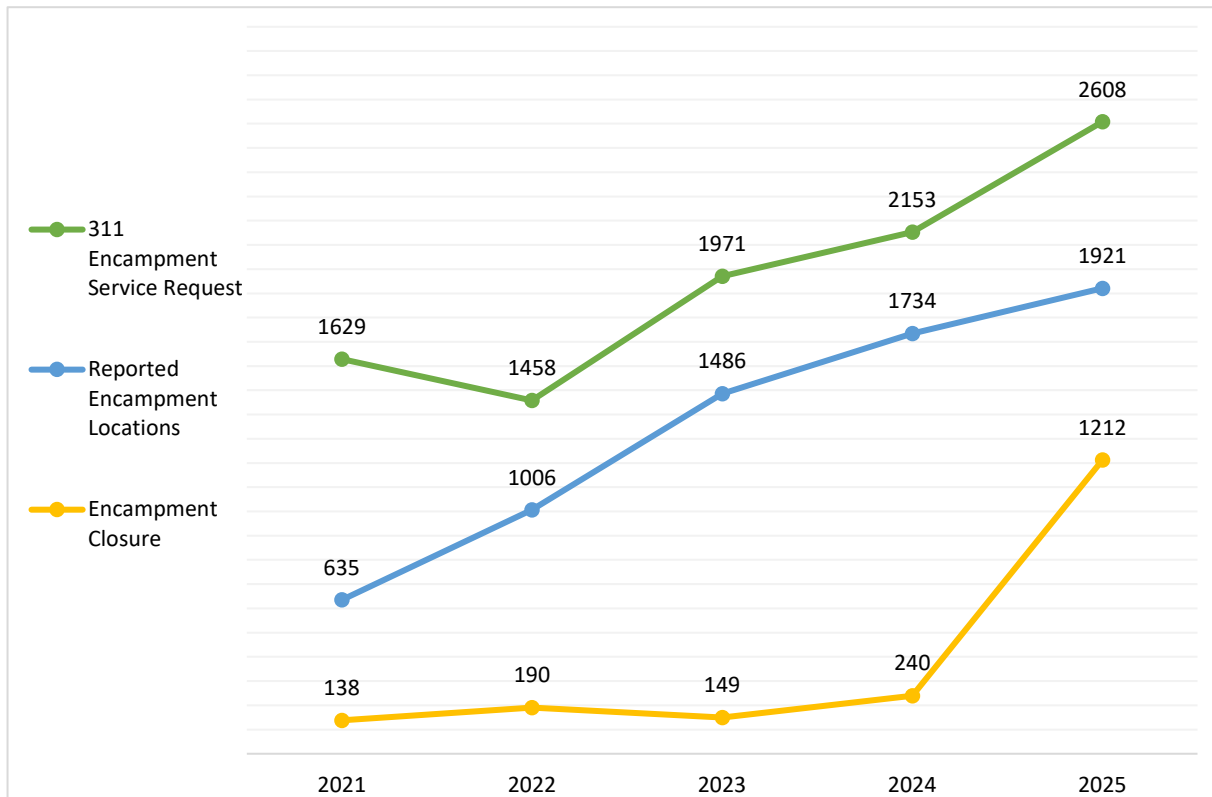
Unsheltered people living in vehicles appear to be even more likely to be local – with 82% of unsheltered Oaklanders having resided in Alameda County for at least 10 years.

Survey of Unsheltered Oakland Residents per 2024 PIT Count ⁹		
Length of time living in Alameda County	All Unsheltered	Living in Vehicles
Less than 6 months	2.8%	1.9%
6 months-1 year	3.3%	1.6%
1-4 years	8.5%	7.3%
5-9 years	7.6%	7.0%
10+ years	77.9%	82.3%

Reported encampment locations, captured through calls or reported online for service from the 311 non-emergency call line, have risen alongside unsheltered homelessness. While reported locations shift, the total number of reported encampment locations has not declined. Reported encampment locations continued to rise from 2024-2025 despite the City’s efforts to contain unsheltered homelessness by quadrupling the pace of encampment closures.

⁹ Survey results do not provide where/what City in Alameda County respondent resided or the duration of residency.

Encampments Service Request, Reported Locations, and Operations 2021-2025^{10,11,12}



5. Income, Rent Burden, and Poverty

The rapid increase in homelessness over the past decade has primarily impacted the lowest-income populations, who are often the first to be pushed out of the housing market and experience displacement. Although averages can mask the extremes within each group, the distribution of household income by race aligns closely with the representation of those experiencing homelessness in Oakland.

Annual Income by Race/Ethnicity – City of Oakland

American Community Survey 1-year Estimate – City of Oakland ¹³	2020	2023
Asian	\$ 69,857.00	\$ 84,167.00
Black or African American	\$ 49,102.00	\$ 61,221.00
Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)	\$ 67,928.00	\$ 83,867.00
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	\$ 123,717.00	\$ 133,949.00
Total Average	\$ 80,143.00	\$ 96,828.00

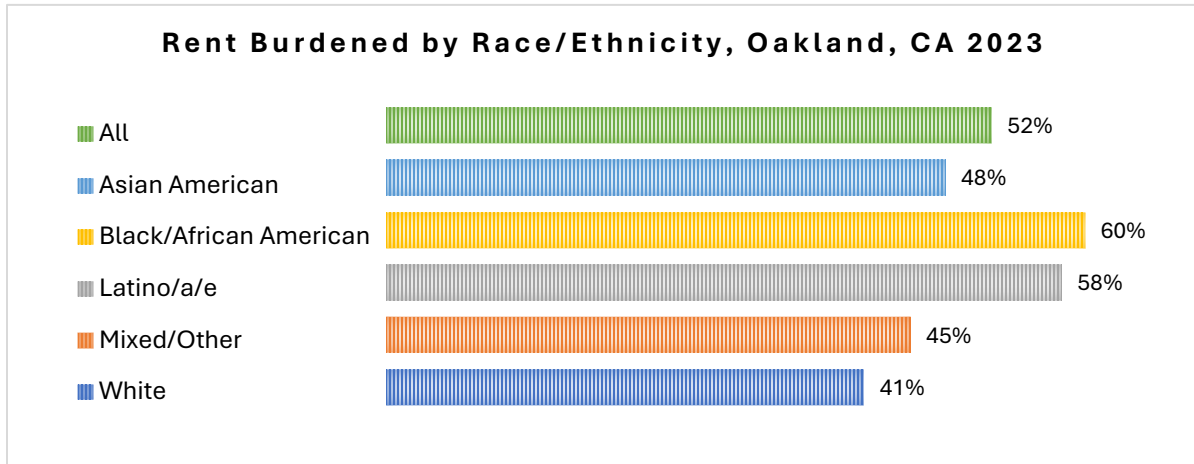
¹⁰ “Reported Encampment Location” for 2021, 2022, 2023 according to the Life Enrichment Committee [Encampment Management Policy Update Agenda Report April 2024](#)

¹¹ 311 data from 11/16/2022 – 04/18/2023 not available due to the ransomware attack resulting in an undercount for “311 Encampment Service Request” and “Reported Encampment Locations” in 2022 & 2023

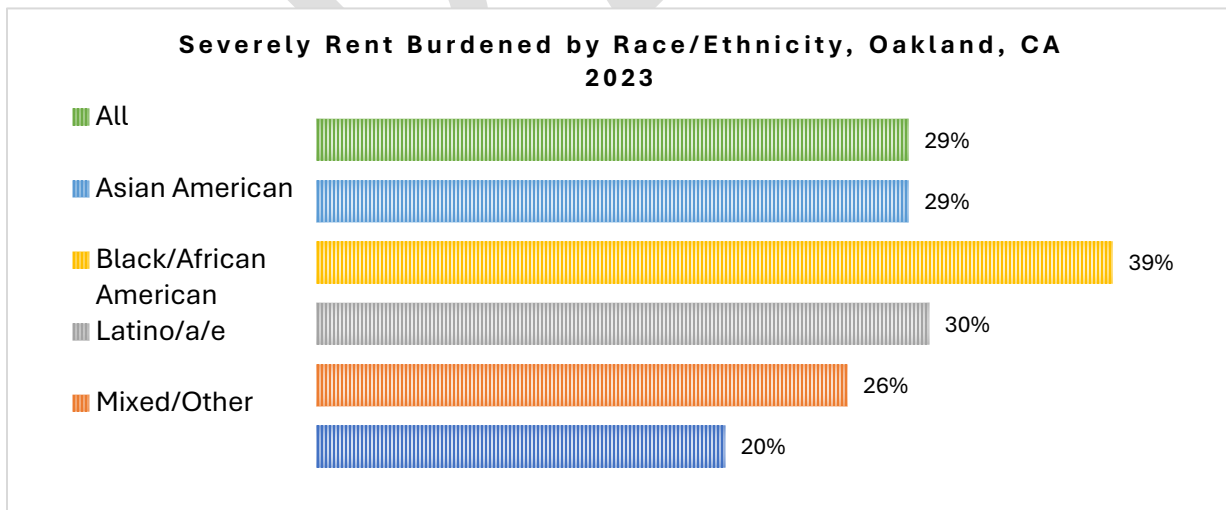
¹² 2025 data for Encampment Closure Operations available through 12/18/2025

¹³ U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) - City of Oakland

As the housing market becomes less affordable, the cost of housing not only impacts the lowest-income residents but also disproportionately impacts racial groups who are rent burdened. According to the Bay Area Equity Atlas, **60% of Black renters were rent-burdened**, compared to 52% of all renters in Oakland. Rent burden is defined by HUD as paying more than 30% of income on rent. Additionally, **39% of Black Oakland renters were severely rent-burdened**, compared to 28% of all renters and 18% of white renters.¹⁴ Severely rent burden is defined as paying more than 50% of income on rent.



When a household is both severely rent burdened and low-income, they are more likely to face difficult choices and trade-offs amongst necessities of life such as food, medical needs, childcare, transportation, and more.



Income levels for those experiencing homelessness in Oakland – local data on those in Oakland Programs

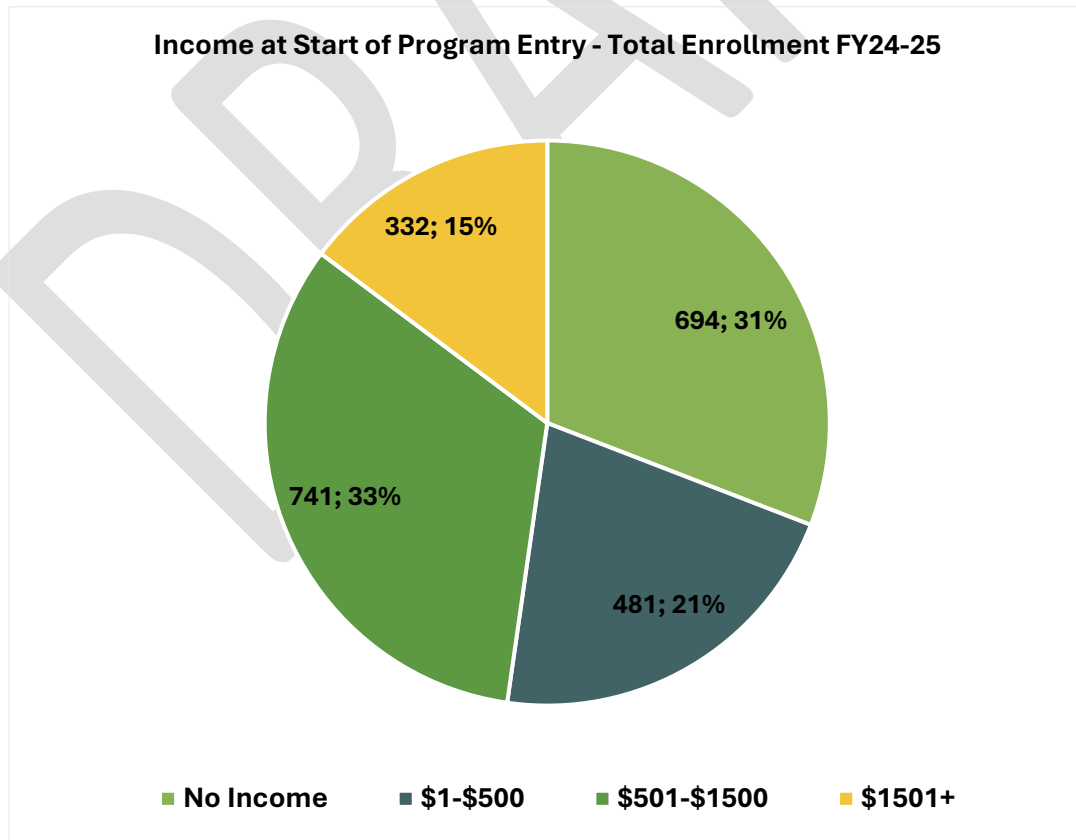
There is a significant gap between market rents and the incomes of individuals experiencing homelessness, which includes both earned income and government assistance programs like

¹⁴ [Bay Area Equity Atlas](#). Housing burden by tenure, severity, and race/ethnicity: Oakland City, CA 2023.

Social Security and disability insurance. Over half of the residents in the City funded interim housing programs have incomes below \$500 per month, and 85% earn less than \$1,500 per month. Many of these residents are seniors or people with disabilities who are unable to work full-time.

Income at Start of City-funded Program Enrollment for Interim Shelter, Emergency Shelter, and Transitional Housing¹⁵

	American Indian/Alaska Native or Indigenous	Asian / Asian American	Black, African American or African	Hispanic/ Latina/o	Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	White	Total
No Income	8	43	409	101	20	113	694
\$1-\$500	10	20	316	32	5	98	481
\$501-\$1500	8	14	582	28	10	99	741
\$1501+	2	8	263	21	7	31	332
Total	28	85	1570	182	42	341	2248

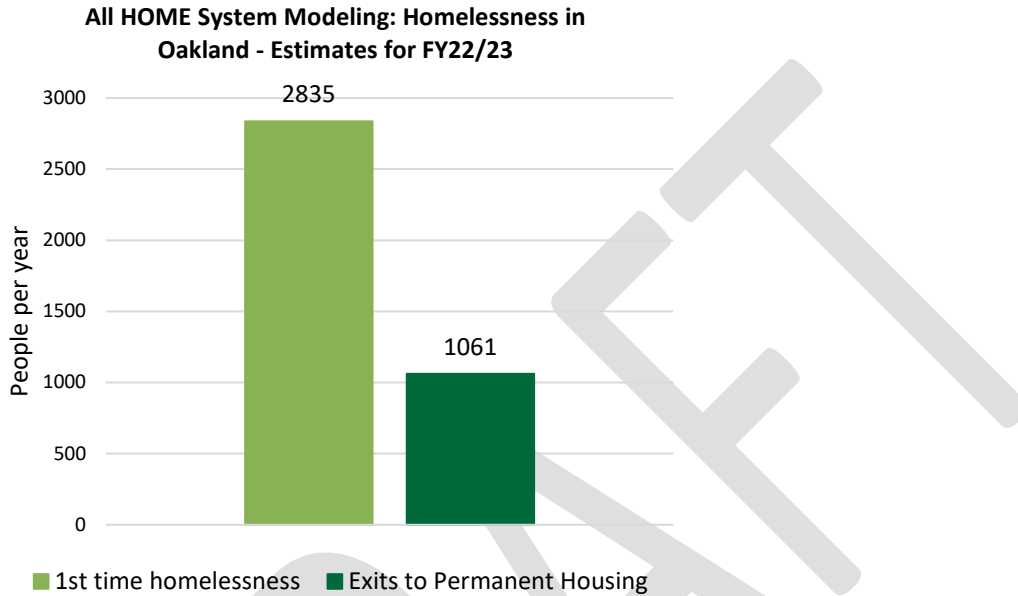


¹⁵ FY24-25 City-funded emergency, interim shelter and transitional housing programs.

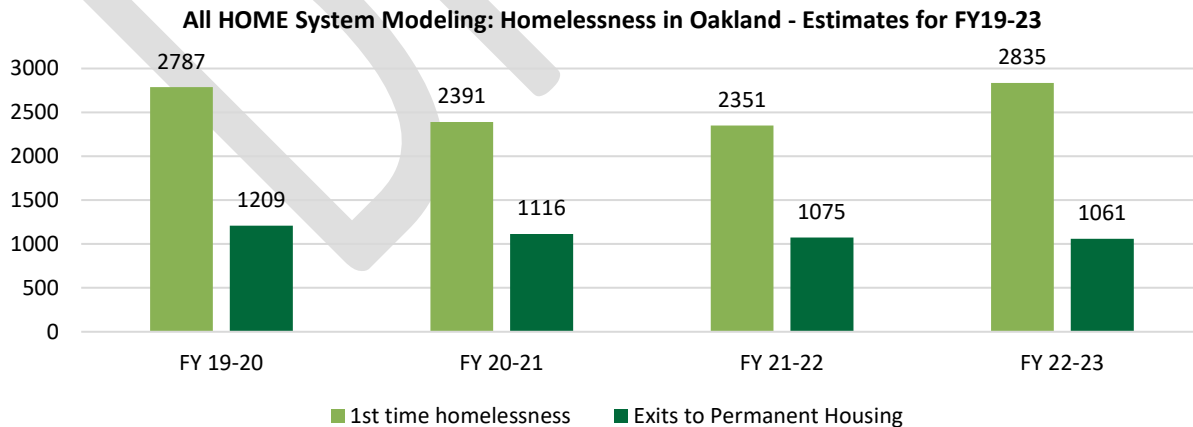
6. New Entries into Homelessness

Oakland's Flow Into Homelessness

In FY 2022-2023, HMIS data indicated that 2,835 people became newly unhoused in Oakland, while 1,061 exited from homelessness.¹⁶



New entries into homelessness remained relatively stable between 2019 and 2023 – with about 2,550 people experiencing first-time homelessness each year.¹⁷



¹⁶ Data undercount new homelessness. Only people served by interim or permanent housing are counted - those who do not interact with the homeless service system or who only receive a light-touch contact, such as a Problem-Solving service, are not captured.

¹⁷ Alameda County HMIS System Performance Measure (SPM) for All Oakland Programs FY19-23

The causes of homelessness, reported by individuals during the 2024 Point in Time Count, tie to economic and housing insecurity.



Compounding factors like lower incomes, lower assets, economically distressed family networks, severe rent burden, and high displacement risk disproportionately impact Black Oaklanders. Those most likely to experience homelessness have some combination of the following identities and experiences:

- a. Black men between the ages of 35 and 65
- b. Prior experience of homelessness or prior contact with the criminal justice system
- c. Unleased and/or living in overcrowded units
- d. Limited resources and expertise needed to challenge illegal and/or discriminatory treatment that often results in eviction/homelessness; makes them more vulnerable to aggressive landlord action
- e. Seniors on low fixed incomes: one of fastest growing populations per Toward Dignity: Understanding Older Adult Homelessness
 - a. In 2023, **19.6% of Oaklanders** were **60 years or older**, **27.4% were Black**, 22.2% Asian, 13.6% Latinx (any race) followed by 32.9% White¹⁸

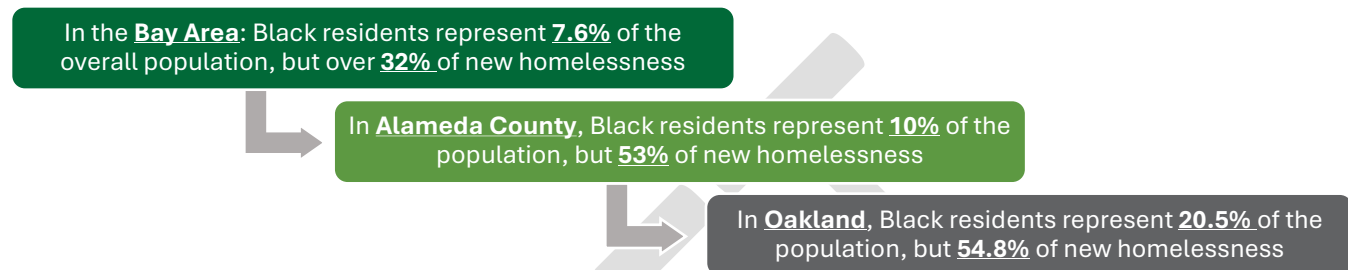
In FY19-23, more than Oakland had **2,550 individuals** become unhoused for the first time.¹⁹ Black Oaklanders represented **59%** of all new entries into homelessness but represented about **19%** of Oakland’s total general population by 2024.²⁰

¹⁸ United States Census Bureau. (2023). American Community Survey (ACS) (5-year estimates). Retrieved from [S0102: Population 60 Years and Over ... - Census Bureau Table](#).

¹⁹ Alameda County HMIS System Performance Measure (SPM) for All Oakland Programs FY19-23

²⁰ United States Census Bureau. (2024). American Community Survey (ACS) (1-year estimates). Retrieved from [K200201: Race - Census Bureau Table](#)

Similar racial disproportionality exists across Alameda County and the Bay Area. In the Bay Area, **Black residents represent 7.6% of the general population, but over 32% of those becoming homeless** for the first time.



Length of Homelessness

According to a statewide study: Black Californians reported recurring episodes of homelessness. Although the **median length of homelessness for all Black Californians was 17 months, shorter than that of white Californians (27 months) or non-Black non-white Californians (24 months), Black Californians were more likely to have had multiple episodes of homelessness.** Prior to the current episode, **71%** of Black Californians experienced homelessness compared to **62%** of white and **54%** of non-Black non-white Californians.²¹

The City of Oakland is analyzing HMIS data to examine length of homelessness locally by race and will update this REIA when findings are available.

7. Exits From Homelessness to Permanent Housing

Exits from homelessness to permanent housing include 4 different types of placements considered to be “**permanent situations.**”

- a. Rental with on-going subsidy (*includes Affordable Housing, PSH, Public Housing, short-term rental subsidy*)
- b. Rental without on-going subsidy
- c. Living with family
- d. Living with friends

Due to economic conditions, short term rental subsidy, rental without subsidy, living with family, living with friends can be unstable for low-income people, and have higher returns to homelessness.²²

²¹ Young Ponder, K., Moore, T., Adhiningrat, S., Sakoda, R., Kushel, M. (2024). Toward Equity: Understanding Black Californians’ Experiences of Homelessness in the California Statewide Study of People Experiencing Homelessness.

²² HMIS Annual Performance Report (APR) Reporting Period: FY22-25 - Data represents exits to a Permanent Housing situation from a City-funded Interim Shelter, Emergency Shelter, Community Cabins, RV Safe Parking, and Transitional Housing program. Excluded from the data are City-funded Street Outreach, Supportive Services, Rapid-Rehousing and OPRI programs

In terms of the type of permanent exit from Oakland-funded programs, Black/African American clients are slightly more likely to receive an ongoing subsidy than other racial identities. There is no known reason for this slight overrepresentation, and it warrants further investigation. There are no racial preferences for subsidy programs. Ongoing subsidies include an affordable housing placement such as PSH or Public Housing, a permanent rental voucher such as Housing Choice voucher or VASH, or a short-term rental subsidy such as Rapid Rehousing program. **20.7%** (1/5) of total clients and **24.5%** (1/4) of Black/African American clients exit with an ongoing housing subsidy.

Exit Description for people who exit to a HUD-defined “Permanent Situation” from City-funded Interim Housing, Emergency Shelter, RVSP programs.	# Total Clients	% Total Clients	Black/African American Clients *non-Hispanic	
			#	%
Permanent Situations:	781	38%	538	42.0%
Staying or living with family	153	7.4%	87	6.8%
Staying or living with friends	53	2.6%	37	2.9%
Rental by client, no ongoing housing subsidy	131	6.3%	89	7.0%
Rental by client, with ongoing housing subsidy	429	20.7%	314	24.5%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PSH & Other PH dedicated for formerly homeless persons 	105	5%	80	6.3%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HCV voucher (TB or PB) (not dedicated) & Public housing unit 	143	7%	101	7.9%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VASH housing subsidy 	11	1%	7	0.5%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RRH/equivalent subsidy or Rental by client, with other ongoing housing subsidy 	165	8%	124	9.7%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing Stability Voucher or GPD TIP housing subsidy 	5	0.2%	2	0.2%
Other: Moved to HOPWA, Owner by client on-going, or no on-going	15	0.7%	11	0.9%

Homelessness Response System Shortages

At a single point in time in 2024, **3,659** people experienced unsheltered homelessness in Oakland. In FY25-26, the City will have a total of **1,262** interim beds and Safe RV parking slots of the following types:

City-funded Program Inventory for FY25-26²³

Interim Housing Programs	Total Number of City-funded Programs	Total Capacity
--------------------------	--------------------------------------	----------------

²³ FY 25-26 Community Homelessness Services (CHS) Program Directory - City funded interim housing programs as of 1/1/2026.

Community Cabin	5	186
Emergency Shelter (congregate & non-congregate)	7	679
RV Safe Parking	2	136
Transitional Housing	10	261
Total	24	1,262

There is also a shortage of deeply affordable units²⁴ compared to the number of extremely low-income unhoused people. This results in a backlog of individuals “stuck” in interim housing programs that should be turning over beds, units, and program slots to accommodate inflow and reduce the number of persons experiencing unsheltered homelessness. The City of Oakland has funded and created **834** units that are now providing permanent housing to formerly homeless households. **837** Oakland-funded homeless units are underway and will come online by 2027. Oakland needs an additional **3,650** permanent affordable housing options (or permanent rental vouchers) to be added to the local inventory in the next 5 years to reduce unsheltered homelessness by 50%.

8. Returns to Homelessness from a Permanent Housing Situation.

Between FY20/21 to FY23/24, of the 14,067 people who gained any type of permanent housing, **1,690** individuals (**12%**) return to homelessness in Alameda County.²⁵ Within the same period, Black/African American individuals in Alameda County represented **60%** (1,010) of those who return to homelessness within 2 years after having gained housing.²⁶ As illustrated in the bar graph below, Black residents return to homelessness after gaining permanent housing at a higher proportion of the full unhoused population.²⁷ In FY24-25, **55.7%** of Black residents returned homelessness within two years of exiting into a permanent housing situation.²⁸

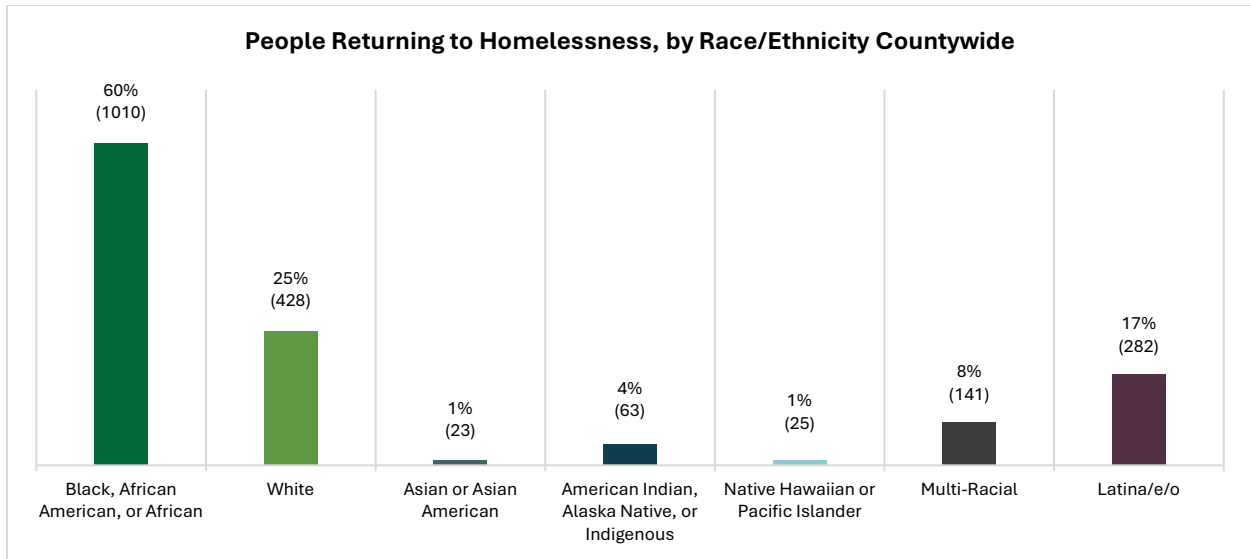
²⁴ Deeply Affordable Housing: Affordable housing for households with very low incomes, typically earning at or below 30 % of Area Median Income (AMI).

²⁵ Home Together 2026 — Year 3 Progress Update Returns to Homelessness Pg. 2 **Returns to Homelessness** are defined as those who become homeless within 2 years of having gained a “permanent housing situation”. Thus, returns to homelessness from participation in an emergency shelter, safe parking program, or interim housing program are invisible in most reports. Individuals are still considered homeless while living in interim solutions. Exits to places unfit for human habitation from shelter and interim housing programs will be explored in the below section on equity gaps by program type.

²⁶ Home Together 2026 — Year 3 Progress Update Returns to Homelessness Pg. 35 **Gained housing** includes situations such as staying with friends or family and rental units without an ongoing subsidy. Importantly, the term “gained housing” includes situations that may not be truly permanent or sustainable, such as staying with friends or family and rental units without an ongoing subsidy.

²⁷ Home Together 2026 — Year 3 Progress Update Returns to Homelessness

²⁸ Alameda County HMIS System Performance Measures (SPM) 2a & 2b Reporting Period 7/1/2024 - 6/30/2025



Different exit types tend to be more successful, or durable. Housing exits that include an ongoing subsidy - including time-limited Rapid Rehousing rental subsidies - are more durable. At least 90% of those who exit homelessness with an ongoing housing subsidy remain housed. Staying with family and friends is the least durable permanent housing situation, with 30% of those who exit to family and friends returning to homelessness within 2 years. Success rates appear to be similar across racial identities.

Countywide - Rate of Return to Homelessness (RTH) from a Permanent Housing (PH) Situation					
7/1/2024 - 6/30/2025	Total # of Exited to a PH Destination (2 Years Prior)	# of RTH in 2 Years	% of RTH in 2 Years	# Did NOT RTH in 2 Years	% of Did NOT RTH in 2 Years
Rental by client, no ongoing housing subsidy	680	103	15%	577	85%
Rental by client, with ongoing housing subsidy (total)	1803	152	8%	1651	92%
PSH & Other PH dedicated for formerly homeless persons	326	25	8%	301	92%
HCV voucher (TB or PB) (not dedicated) & Public housing unit	668	48	7%	620	93%
VASH housing subsidy	95	6	6%	89	94%
RRH/equivalent subsidy or Rental by client, with other ongoing housing subsidy	714	73	10%	641	90%
Staying or living with family/friends, permanent tenure	417	125	30%	292	70%
Owned by client, with or without ongoing housing subsidy	45	8	18%	37	82%
Other Permanent Housing Situation*	15	5	33%	10	67%
Total	2960	393	13%	2567	87%

*Moved from one HOPWA funded project to HOPWA PH, Housing Stability Voucher or GPD TIP housing subsidy or Family Unification Program Voucher

Countywide - Rate of Return to Homelessness (RTH) from a Permanent Housing Situation by Race										
7/1/2024 - 6/30/2025	Black, African American/African (Non-Hispanic)					White (Non-Hispanic)				
	Total Exits to a PH Destination (2 Years Prior)	Total # Did NOT RTH in 2 Years	% of Did NOT RTH in 2 Years	# of RTH in 2 Years	% of RTH in 2 Years	Total Exits to a PH Destination (2 Years Prior)	Total # Did NOT RTH in 2 Years	% of Did NOT RTH in 2 Years	# of RTH in 2 Years	% of RTH in 2 Years
Rental by client, no ongoing housing subsidy	401	345	86%	56	14%	68	53	78%	15	22%
Rental by client, with ongoing housing subsidy	1015	934	92%	81	8%	349	308	88%	41	12%
PSH & Other PH dedicated for formerly homeless persons	141	133	94%	8	6%	96	87	91%	9	9%
HCV voucher (TB or PB) (not dedicated) & Public housing unit	362	339	94%	23	6%	132	117	89%	15	11%
VASH housing subsidy	55	50	91%	5	9%	25	25	100%	0	0%
RRH/equivalent subsidy or Rental by client, with other ongoing housing subsidy	457	412	90%	45	10%	96	79	82%	17	18%
Staying or living with family/friends, permanent tenure	216	145	67%	71	33%	47	31	66%	16	34%
Owned by client, with or without ongoing housing subsidy	28	21	75%	7	25%	8	8	100%	0	0%
Other Permanent Housing Situation*	7	3	43%	4	57%	3	2	67%	1	33%
Total	1667	1448	87%	219	13%	475	402	85%	73	15%
*Moved from one HOPWA funded project to HOPWA PH, Housing Stability Voucher or GPD TIP housing subsidy or Family Unification Program Voucher										

9. Mortality Rates

From 2018 to 2023, 1,845 unhoused individuals in Alameda County passed away. **58%** (1,062) of **all deaths** among people experiencing homelessness in Alameda County were Oakland residents.²⁹ In Oakland, 77% of all decedents were male (2018-2023). The median age at time of death for people experiencing homelessness was 52 years old compared to 74 years old in the County's general population, a difference of 22 years. **African American/Black unhoused residents** represented **55% of all homeless deaths** (white unhoused deaths were 20%, followed by Hispanic/Latinx at 15%).

10. Engaging Impacted Community Members

This REIA centers learnings from the 2021 report, Centering Racial Equity in Homeless System Design, from the Berkeley-Oakland-Alameda County Continuum of Care. To develop the report, nine 90-minute focus groups were conducted in English and one in Spanish, with facilitators who shared the participants' racial/ethnic backgrounds. A total of 57 people shared their lived experiences to inform homeless system modeling.³⁰ Analysis of qualitative data from nine focus groups deepened understanding of how structural racism plays out across multiple systems and intersects with lived experiences of homelessness.

To build on the work from the 2021 Centering Racial Equity in Homeless System Design report, the City hosted **10 community feedback sessions** from July to August 2025, 6 HUD-TA led focus groups in summer of 2024, for a total of 53 participants with lived experience, and **15 individual interviews** in 2024. These efforts aimed to gather perspectives from people involved in the homelessness response system as well as those with lived experience (PWLE).

The primary goal of these sessions was to deepen the City's understanding of systemic problems and potential solutions, as well as to identify system gaps that continue to perpetuate racial disparities among people who experience homelessness in Oakland.

Additional information from impacted community members come from several research and planning efforts, including:

- Stanford's Changing Cities Research Lab: 80 interviews with ELI/VLI residents (2023)³¹ (informed Oakland's targeted prevention program)
- Harvard Bloomberg Innovation Project on Addressing Homelessness in Oakland. 15 Interviews with Oakland City and Alameda County leaders, stakeholders, and people with lived experience (2024)

A. Feedback on Current Homeless Housing Interventions and Services

i. Outreach, System Access, and Service Coordination

Key Take-Aways

²⁹Mortality Data available on the [Alameda County Homeless Mortality Data Dashboard](#)

³⁰ [Centering Racial Equity in Homeless System Design Final Report](#) | January 2021 Pg. 15

³¹ Changing Cities Research Lab at Stanford University. The State of Housing Insecurity in Oakland February 2023.

- a. Unhoused people do not find out about resources, do not receive consistent case management, and providers conducting street outreach are often uncoordinated resulting in fewer folks exiting unsheltered homelessness.
- b. Street outreach and CES enrollment activities are conducted by many organizations, however there is room for improvement to better coordinate these efforts, including but not limited to before, during, and after encampment operations, resulting in effectively assisting unsheltered resident move into short-term interim and/or permanent housing.
- c. Black and other People of Color are more likely to be distrustful of service providers and government programs, meaning persistent and culturally sensitive outreach is necessary.
- d. The longer you stay outdoors, the worse your health and mental health becomes. People develop more severe symptoms of mental illness, physical illness, and substance use due to the traumas and hardships of living outdoors.
- e. There are too few access points with not enough staff where people experiencing homelessness can be referred to Coordinated Entry (CE) assessments. Additionally, there are limits in the number of providers that can perform CE assessment.

Selected Quotes

- *“If you called the [resource hotline] or they give you all these resources and other numbers to call. There is none. They put you back in the link of calls and they send you here, they send you there. But nobody has the right information for the right guidance of where you need [to go]– who is the person you need to speak to and how can I get the help... It was ridiculous to a point you give up. You give up.”* 2023 BHHI UCSF CASPEH pg. 76)
- *“The system is designed to exhaust you.”* **PWLE Focus Group Participant**
- *“If you miss one appointment because you’re surviving, you’re back to zero.”* **PWLE Focus Group Participant**
- *“More people are becoming afraid of being targeted because of their legal status so people aren’t engaging with service providers.”* **PWLE Focus Group Participant**
- *“Every person who is living outside needs a case manager or peer worker who has a caseload of 1:20.”* **Oakland Service Provider**
- *“People don’t survive the wait. Every delay costs you something you can’t get back.”* **PWLE Focus Group Participant**

ii. Encampment Engagement & Neighborhood Health Key Take-Aways

- a. We need better coordination between HCD, CHS, Alameda County, CES/COC policies and the Encampment Management Team (EMT), including transparency in cross-collaboration that minimizes duplicative efforts and ensures outreach efforts to connect our unhoused residents to services that will enable them to be rehoused.
- b. Before closures of encampments, concerted and time-intensive outreach (and a diverse set of housing solutions to offer) allows residents to accept interim solutions.
- c. The system must create equitable pathways for unsheltered people to move into housing without the disruption caused by encampment closures.
- d. Repeated relocation leads to loss and destruction of housing documents, medications, mobility aids, and relationships with service providers. The result is worsened physical and mental health, interrupted access to services and housing processes, and increased emergency room use, which exacerbates difficulties in exiting from homelessness.
- e. Collaborative approaches should be explored to allow residents to stay in existing encampments with dignity and basic human rights while waiting for stable, permanent housing.

Selected Quotes

- *“Every time they sweep the camp, you lose your place in line. You lose paperwork, you lose your worker, you start over.”* - **PWLE Focus Group Participant**
- *“Sweeps don’t help anyone get housed. They just make you invisible.”* - **PWLE Focus Group Participant**
- *“If the City helped us manage trash and safety, camps wouldn’t be the problem they say they are.”* - **PWLE Focus Group Participant**
- *“You’re told to wait, but waiting outside is dangerous. People don’t survive the wait.”*- **PWLE Focus Group Participant**
- *“Immediate need to halt encampment sweeps: They are traumatizing and deadly. They waste money that could go to direct services.”* - **PWLE Focus Group Participant**
- *“Encampments should be sanctioned until housing is found.”* - **Community Advocate**
- *“Redirect sweep funds toward: Dumpsters, trash services. On-the-ground organizations already doing the work.”* - **PWLE Focus Group Participant**

- *"Support the development of co-managed encampments: Led by residents with city support. Rules and safety plans created collaboratively."* – **PWLE Focus Group Participant**

iii. Interim Housing Programs

Key Take-Aways

- Programs are chronically underfunded and under-resourced, resulting in high caseloads that impede the ability to provide quality services, unruly and unsafe environments, poor outcomes in placing people into permanent housing and higher returns to homelessness.
- Crisis responses, specifically shelter and transitional housing, have programmatic barriers, including limited hours, lack of privacy, prohibiting visitors and pets, inadequate storage space for personal belongings, and restricting access to certain populations such as seniors and persons with disabilities.
- Participants described negative experiences in shelters, including staff favoritism, conflicts with staff and other occupants that result in having to leave the shelter, and concerns about health and safety in shelters.
- Oakland's interim solutions are widely varying in terms of dignified conditions, supportive community, and positive outcomes.
- Some facilities need substantial capital investment (water, electricity, security, and hygiene).
- The transition from interim settings to permanent housing must be improved by creating a reliable pipeline and providing intensive, long-term case management.
- Oakland providers experience severe contracting delays, invoicing delays, and many-layered contracting/reporting.
- Oakland should evaluate outcomes and prioritize funding successful program models rather than spreading scarce funding thinly across many programs.
- Oakland and Alameda County have only a few high-capacity nonprofits with administrative capacity and experience to serve unhoused people well.

Selected Quotes

- *"Shelter feels like punishment, not help. You can't rest, you can't think, and you're constantly on edge. That's not stabilization."* – **PWLE Focus Group Participant**
- *"They call it a program, but there's no privacy, no safety, and no real services. You're just warehoused."* – **PWLE Focus Group Participant**
- *"The challenge with shelter is that it is so poorly funded. So much in homelessness services is predicated on a volunteer basis. You are basically running an emergency room."* – **Oakland Service Provider**
- *"I previously worked on the cabin communities' program—there wasn't a lot of services, and with the long wait for permanent housing, people were wasting away"*

in those. With the Measure W funds, we need cabin communities 2.0—learn from issues with cabin communities 1.0." - **Permanent Housing Provider/Developer**

- *"The traumatic experience of homelessness does mean that people need some supports and counseling. The scarcity mindset in homeless services means that you will be disrespected, is retraumatizing."* – **Oakland Service Provider**
- *"You get placed somewhere temporary and then forgotten. No plan, no timeline, no follow-up."* - **PWLE Focus Group Participant**
- *"Case managers change so much you end up managing yourself."* - **PWLE Focus Group Participant**

iv. Vehicular Homelessness

Key Take-Aways

- a. RVs and vehicles are homes for a significant portion of the unhoused population.
- b. Currently, we have no effective interim solutions for people living in RVs and cars—these folks are more likely to accept either permanent housing or a permanent place that accommodates their RV/mobile home and most likely turn down temporary shelter or short-term interim housing offers for fear of losing their remaining asset and returning to homelessness.

Selected Quotes

- *"If you tow my RV, you didn't help me—you erased my life."* - **PWLE Focus Group Participant**
- *"Safe parking only works if it's actually safe and not temporary punishment."* - **PWLE Focus Group Participant**
- *"Recognize RVs and vehicles as homes for many."* - **PWLE Focus Group Participant**
- *"For many, their vehicle IS their home—towing it = homelessness."* - **PWLE Focus Group Participant**
- *"RV residents need land options that aren't just tow yards... Consider large parcels (e.g. 22 acres near wastewater plant)."* - **PWLE Focus Group Participant**
- *"Many RV residents are not obtrusive... provide services to RV encampments and a better policy."* - **Permanent Housing Provider/Developer**

v. Shortages and Bottlenecks for Permanent Housing

Key Take-Aways

- a. The Coordinated Entry System creates a waitlist for housing and shelter in the county, prioritizing those on the waitlist who score as the "most vulnerable" or

“highest acuity” on the Coordinated Entry Assessment. In practice, this means individuals without a disability or substance use disorder will not receive a housing referral.

- b. We have shortages and bottlenecks for both very high acuity and low-acuity individuals: too few residential stabilization and treatment beds with higher intensity of care than PSH and too little deeply affordable permanent housing with light supports.
- c. Black/African American people who are unhoused because of underlying poverty and barriers due to involvement with the criminal justice system are underserved in the homelessness response system.

Selected Quotes

- *"This only works if there is a pipeline into permanent housing. Having people sit indefinitely in interim housing is not helpful."* - **Permanent Housing Provider/Developer**
- *"Short term programs ONLY work if you actually have a through-put."* - **Oakland Service Provider**
- *"When we meet with someone who is homeless, we see them as having one of two paths. Either they are going to work, or they are disabled and will be housed through coordinated entry. We do not see the first group as people who are going to be served with coordinated entry"* – **Oakland Service Provider**
- *"The bottleneck - people going from the cabins or St Vincent de Paul... then there is a year to two years from a shelter bed to PSH is the piece that is a major bottle neck."* - **Oakland Service Provider**
- *"The focus in the coordinated entry system on individuals with highest acuity needs can create a bottleneck in the system where the street becomes a waiting room for housing."* - **Oakland Service Provider**

vi. Transitional/Short-term Solutions

Key Take-Aways

- a. Focus groups thought Rapid Re-Housing (short-term rental support) is particularly well-suited for people who just need “some help and some time,” or those who are in a position to “get back on their feet.”
- b. RRH needs to be refined and targeted to households who show potential for increasing their income.
- c. We have too few programs that build-in pathways to self-sufficiency and work.

- a. To stabilize and become self-sufficient, interim programs, case management, and short-term rental support often needs to offer longer durations of service (at minimum 18-25 months).
- d. Many people will need long-term shallow rental subsidies to afford Oakland rents.

vii. Permanent Supportive Housing

Key Take-Aways

- a. At present, the only deeply affordable permanent housing opportunity in the homeless system is Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), which requires an extended length of time being homeless and a disability. Other deeply affordable housing may be reserved for seniors aged 62 and older. Participants in the REIA focus groups described the absence of resources appropriate to their circumstances as profoundly unresponsive.
- b. Dedicated affordable housing was preferred to the other housing interventions because it allowed them to pay rent and live independently.
- c. There is a need to build more dedicated affordable permanent housing specifically targeted at those with the lowest incomes.

Selected Quotes

- *“Affordable to who? I get \$1,100 a month. Anything over that is fake affordability.” - PWLE Focus Group Participant*
- *“How can we build enough housing for acutely low-income people? This is the critical focus.” - Oakland Service Provider*
- *“If the City would focus on expediting the construction of Housing, that is what we should do.” – Oakland Service Provider*
- *“The City really ought to focus on building housing. The City’s role got larger under the previous mayor and I think it was a mistake. It was responding to the business interest pressure.” – Oakland Service Provider*

viii. Culturally Sensitive, Trusted Service Providers

Key Take-Aways

Continuing and strengthening partnerships with trusted, culturally competent providers who are embedded in the community is essential for building trust and ensuring effective outreach.

- *“I only work with people who’ve been through it. They don’t judge you, and they don’t disappear.” PWLE Focus Group Participant*

- *"The majority of the people we employ are black and have lived expertise... every person needs to have their professional peer expertise/worker until they are stably housed."* – **Oakland Service Provider**
- *"Many smaller providers lack the capacity to partner with the City. There is a need to focus on capacity building for these providers, as they are often deeply connected, trusted, and culturally competent."* – **Oakland Service Provider**
- *"When serving the unhoused, it is important to provide culturally-sensitive services, that requires service providers who are sensitive to the needs of the community."* - **Permanent Housing Provider/Developer**

ix. Inclusion of Lived Experience in Governance

Key Take-Aways

Success in program design and management requires the meaningful inclusion and empowerment of individuals with lived experience (PWLE) in decision-making roles.

Selected Quotes

- *"They ask for our stories but not our decisions."* **PWLE Focus Group Participant**
- *"Pay us. Train us. Let us lead. Otherwise it's just optics."* **PWLE Focus Group Participant**
- *"Creating interim shelters requires the involvement of Persons with Lived Experience in all programming, from selecting providers to leading self-governed programs."* **Policy/Community Leader**
- *"Need more professional development for people with lived expertise—both in the homelessness field and other jobs."* **PWLE Focus Group Participant**

x. Additional Feedback on the Root Causes of Homelessness

Key Take-Aways

- Focus group participants described how **incarceration** impacted their ability to find and keep housing.
- Poor health** was a root cause and a consequence of homelessness for many people in the racial equity focus groups.
- Education outcomes** were named by participants as related to housing instability are interconnected. Participants talked about the ways housing instability made it difficult to take advantage of educational opportunities, which created another barrier to employment and housing.

- d. **Immigration.** Homeless Hispanic/Latinx participants talked about multiple stressors they experience, including fear of deportation, barriers to accessing help, distance from family, grief for lost family members, and discrimination.
- e. **Inability to increase income;** homeless participants described their ongoing struggles to earn enough to pay for housing, transportation, and other basic living costs. Many described trade-offs; needing to choose between paying for housing, food, or transportation.
- f. **Displacement.** participants [described] the pressure to leave the city or county to find affordable housing, including housing opportunities offered by the current homeless response system. For many, displacement means leaving places where they grew up, had/have family, community connection, and employment.
- g. **Distressed Networks and Supports.** focus group participants described how familial instability, or the death of a family member resulted in homelessness. Several informants in the racial equity focus groups experienced familial instability as children.
- h. **Barriers in the Housing Market.** While race-neutral at face value, credit checks, income requirements, and background checks form barriers to the housing market that disproportionately affect people of color and effectively produce housing discrimination.

Selected Quotes

- *“My family lost their home during foreclosure. I never recovered from that.”* **PWLE Focus Group Participant**
- *“As a Black man, everything follows you—tickets, records, denials. Housing isn’t neutral.”* **PWLE Focus Group Participant**
- *“You can’t get housed when you’re running from citations.”* **PWLE Focus Group Participant**
- *“For Black homeless individuals, they are often connected with their family, but the family is very stressed and lacks capacity to help.”* - **Researcher/Policy Leader**
- *“When considering gentrification, redlining, and foreclosure crisis, important to be mindful of what caused people to be vulnerable.”* - **Permanent Housing Provider/Developer**

xi. Identifying Equity Gaps

a. Targeted Prevention

Effective homelessness prevention is achieved by subpopulation targeting those most at-risk and includes program components such as flexible financial assistance to meet several needs determined by specific conditions. Applicants for Targeted Homelessness Prevention are prioritized using indicators that identify households at imminent risk of homelessness. These indicators include prior experiences of homelessness, eviction risk, justice-system involvement, severe rent burden, living without a lease or in overcrowded housing, disability or fixed income,

recent financial shocks, and the presence of children in the household³². Together, these factors help ensure limited prevention resources are directed to households facing the most immediate housing instability. More people become unhoused each year than those who exit homelessness to permanent housing, and the proportion of newly unhoused residents that are Black is far larger than other racial/ethnic groups. The inability to increase income, coupled with rising housing costs, are root causes of homelessness. 39% of all Black renter households are severely rent burdened, meaning they pay 50% or more of their monthly income on rent. Targeted homelessness prevention is critical not only for reducing the overall number of individuals in the homelessness system but also for reducing racially disproportionate first-time and repeated homelessness. **Without scaling-up targeted homelessness prevention efforts, inflow will continue to outpace exits to permanent housing** and it will be significantly more difficult – and costly – to reduce homelessness in Oakland and Alameda County.

b. Street Outreach

People with lived experience consistently report frustration with navigating the homeless services system. The network of homeless services is provided by dozens of organizations and stretched to capacity. Each program has a unique application process and its own qualifying criteria, many with extensive documentation requirements and waitlists. To successfully navigate to shelter, housing, income supports, or employment, most unhoused Oaklanders need a case manager or equivalent service navigator, but these services are in short supply, especially for unsheltered individuals. The shortage of culturally competent outreach and service coordination in Oakland contributes to racial disparities among those experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

c. Encampment Management

Due to the shortage of outreach, shelter and permanent housing options, the majority of Oakland's homelessness is unsheltered. Those living outdoors are subject to the City's Encampment Management Policy. This policy calls for outreach, offers of shelter, and encampment closures in "High Sensitivity" areas and for public health and safety reasons.

While Encampment Closures are necessary to maintain usability of Oakland's parks, schools, businesses, etc., forced relocation of unsheltered people also contributes to racial disparities. The 2024 PIT County found that forty-eight (48%) of unsheltered Oaklanders are Black/African American. Numerous research efforts have found that encampment closures can have detrimental impacts on the health of unsheltered people and delay progress toward stable housing. When encampments are closed without sufficient outreach and offers of shelter/housing appropriate to individual needs, then the closures can:

- Force residents into more dangerous locations
- Reduce access to healthcare and social services - such as by losing paperwork or contacting case managers
- Result in loss of mobility aids and loss of medications

³² 2025 Changing Cities Research Lab at Stanford & Housing Initiative at Penn [Keep People Housed: Oakland's Targeted Homelessness Prevention Pilot](#)

- Increase risk of overdose death.³³

d. Interim Housing

There are too few interim housing solutions for the number of people currently experiencing homelessness. At a single point in time, 3,659 people experience unsheltered homelessness in Oakland (2024 PIT). In FY25-26, the City will have funded a total of 1,262 interim beds and Safe RV parking slots of the following types:

City-funded Program Inventory for FY25-26³⁴

Interim Housing Programs	Total Number of City-funded Programs	Total Capacity
Community Cabin	5	186
Emergency Shelter (congregate & non-congregate)	7	679
RV Safe Parking	2	136
Transitional Housing	10	261
Total	24	1,262

Because of the lack of shelter and interim program capacity, Oakland’s programs are functioning at full capacity. As a result, 67% of people experiencing homelessness remain unsheltered, **48% of Oakland’s unsheltered are Black/African American.**³⁵ Adding to the scarcity of beds is the issue of “flow”. Those in interim housing solutions and Safe RV parking programs typically stay for long durations with **average length of 330 days** and **only 54%** wind up with a truly stable permanent housing exit, such as with an ongoing rental housing subsidy. 46% of all clients and 41.9% of Black/African American clients exit to homeless and temporary situations.³⁶

Shortages of effective emergency and transitional housing solutions, combined with scarcity of permanent affordable housing, have created bottlenecks where the street becomes a waiting room, and shelter becomes a long-term home. Unsheltered individuals often cannot access short-term housing appropriate for their needs because there are no vacancies, but so too, residents in short-term housing programs are stuck without exit options, resulting in very long lengths of stay in programs that were not designed to provide permanent homes.

Compounding bottlenecks due to scarcity of beds and units, is a shortage of skilled housing navigators who can work with both unsheltered and temporarily sheltered people. Housing navigators or case managers are critical to help people access the Coordinated Entry queue for housing, and to support those same individuals to become “document ready” – i.e. compile the many documents needed to be eligible to move-in to affordable housing. Housing navigators also help those who do not qualify for Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) find alternative permanent housing situations, such as shared housing.

³³ National Association of County and City Health Officials, Public Health Impacts of Encampment “Sweeps”, July 2025: <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.naccho.org/uploads/downloadable-resources/FINAL-ES-Brief-Combined-7.28.2025.pdf>

³⁴ FY 25-26 Community Homelessness Services (CHS) Program Directory - City funded interim housing programs as of 1/1/2026.

³⁵ Simtech Solutions Point-in-Time Count (2024) Unsheltered Insights Dashboard

³⁶ All City-funded interim housing, RRH/OPRI, street outreach, and supportive services programs- HMIS Annual Performance Report (APR) Q12, Q22b, Q23. Reporting Period 7/1/2023-6/30/2025

There is a critical need to level-up availability of high-quality interim housing. This level-up process includes improving the conditions of facilities, adding a range of flexible types of services and facilities, and increasing quantity of trained staff that provide high-quality navigation and case management services.

However, at this time, the City of Oakland lacks resources to even continue programs at the current investment level. Without new resources a portion of Oakland's interim housing beds are at risk for closure in the next 6-24 months. Program closures will likely be unavoidable due to reductions in State HHAP funding, local Measure Q and the Oakland General Fund. The budget required to maintain existing programs at bare-bones level is approximately **\$35,347,600** and the City currently has **\$22,297,343** approved in the FY 25-26 budget. The City anticipates a growing shortfall moving into FY 26-27 and FY 27-28.

The County has, to date, minimally funded interim solutions in Oakland, about \$946,000 of the \$30,453,378 total cost annually for interim solutions are from the County.

As we continue to face an inadequate supply of short-term interim housing and permanent housing solutions, unhoused community members continue to experience severe impacts to health and well-being.

Disturbing mortality rates underscore the need for quality interim housing to prevent health impacts and early death. Alameda County Health Care for the Homeless reports the number of people who passed away while experiencing homelessness each year. From 2018 to 2023 of **all deaths** (1,845) among people experiencing homelessness in Alameda County, **1,062 (58%) were Oakland residents**, the **median age** at time of death for people experiencing homelessness was **52 years old** compared to 54 years old in the County's overall unhoused population, a difference of 2 years. **77%** of all death among unhoused **Oakland residents were men**. Although 8% of deaths were reported to have occurred in a homeless shelter, the majority (92%) of lives lost occurred elsewhere; **45%** were reported to **occur** on the **street/sidewalk, outdoors/park, vehicle, or encampment** and **70% were unattended**.

African Americans/Blacks residents made up **21.5%** of Oakland's general population in 2020 and **53%** of Oakland's unhoused population in the 2024 PIT count. From 2018-2023, Black/African American residents accounted for **55%** of deaths in Oakland among people experiencing homelessness.

e. Permanent Housing

There is an ongoing severe shortage of deeply affordable units for unhoused people in Oakland living below 30% of Area Median Income (AMI). This results in a backlog of individuals "stuck" in interim housing programs that should be turning over beds, units, and program slots to accommodate inflow.

Oakland needs **3,650** additional permanent, deeply affordable housing options (or permanent rental vouchers) added to the local inventory over the next 5 years to reduce unsheltered homelessness by 50%.

Such a reduction would serve all Oaklanders – not only the unhoused. It would boost Oakland's economic vitality and lower the City's costs, including sanitation services, impacts on sewer and electrical connections, and encampment management and cleanup. Additionally, expenses incurred by the City and County, such as direct street outreach, hygiene and sanitation services, and healthcare for the unsheltered, would be reduced and tens of millions could be saved.³⁷

11. Proposal to Address Equity Gaps

To reduce unsheltered homelessness by 50% in Oakland would require additional investment of **\$1.06 billion** over the next 5 years. With limited resources, the City and the County must work together to increase the number of temporary housing programs, and increase the flow through interim housing programs by creating more deeply affordable housing. Enhancing outreach and prevention are also critical for stemming the inflow of homelessness and intervening in new unsheltered homelessness quickly.

To achieve a significant reduction in Oakland's unsheltered homelessness will require an “All hands on deck” approach. City State, and Federal resources must be maximized and efficiently leveraged. A racial equity approach requires that both City and County orient investment into successful programs that reduce racial disparities and end Black homelessness.

People experiencing homelessness in **Oakland** represent **58%** of the Countywide homelessness, **74%** of Alameda County’s Black unhoused population experience homelessness in Oakland.³⁸

1. In Alameda County, Black folks represent approximately **11%** of the total population (American Community Survey), but about **55%** of all new entries into homelessness (**All Home/HDIS**)
2. The majority of (**57%**) Black residents of Alameda County reside in Oakland and due to both historical and present-day economic disadvantages impacting this specific group, along with a lack of deeply affordable housing, this is a costly population to permanently exit from homelessness
3. In the 3-year period of FY2020-FY2023, Black/African American individuals in Alameda County represent **61.7%** of all those who return to homelessness after having gained housing.³⁹ **Formerly** unhoused Black people return to homelessness at **DOUBLE** the rate of the full unhoused population.

With increased funding commitments from both City and County sources, programs must include a balance of:

1. Targeted Prevention
2. Access & Coordination
3. Interim Housing
4. Permanent Housing Solutions

³⁷ [Impact of Encampment Sweeps on People Experiencing Homelessness](#) pg. 7 December 2022

³⁸ [2024 City of Oakland Point in Time Count Executive Summary](#)

³⁹ Countywide HMIS from System Modeling Working Group Brief, June 4, 2025

A. Targeted Homelessness Prevention

Keep People Housed (KPH) is an existing program is designed to reduce homelessness for all Oaklanders, including for those most impacted by racial disparities. KPH is a targeted subset of the larger Keep Oakland Housed program, operated by Bay Area Community Services (BACS) in collaboration with several other community-based organizations. The targeted KPH began in 2023 and has consistently received funding from the City of Oakland since.

Over two years the program has served 1,275 people using a mix of City funding and philanthropic support. On average, KPH provides \$10k per household and \$4k per person in support. The program employs race-neutral criteria for those most at-risk of homelessness⁴⁰. Although program priorities are race-neutral, Black/African American individuals are highly represented in at-risk populations. In the period from **July 2023 to October 2024**, 85% of participants were extremely low-income, 58% of participants were paying 70% or more of their monthly income on rent, and 41% had experienced homelessness in the previous two years, and 74% were Black. In a survey, 85% of participants said they would have lost their housing without KPH's assistance. These results demonstrate that KPH's targeting model is effectively reaching the populations most likely to become unhoused and intervening at critical moments.

To reduce unsheltered homelessness by 50%, Oakland's Targeted Homelessness Prevention Program must scale up. \$112 million (\$22.3 million annually) of investment is needed to provide prevention services to 13,070 individuals over the next 5 years (All Home Model).

B. Access and Coordination

Street outreach investments and CES enrollment activities must ensure that all Oaklanders, including those most impacted by racial and health disparities have consistent access to countywide resources available through the Coordinated Entry System. Street outreach, in particular, is crucial to ensure persons who are disproportionately disadvantaged due to mobility and access to transportation receive direct services. Adding outreach and CES enrollment capacity could include increasing the number of Housing Resource Centers located in Oakland, and additional funding for increased staffing of the County's Mobile Access points and Street Health Team. Notably, these additional outreach resources must also be coordinated among one another and with targeted encampment closures. Thus, funding must stipulate roles and responsibilities, including those needed before, during, and after an encampment closure.

C. Encampment Engagement and Operations

Encampment Operations must be better paired with street outreach and services to ensure that individuals who must move also receive the time and support they need. Culturally appropriate outreach will minimize negative health impacts and maximize moves into shelter. When there are minimal shelter vacancies available, the City can still work to improve health and sanitation for unhoused individuals and the surrounding community by cleaning up trash, and maintaining porta-potties and hand-washing stations.

⁴⁰ 2025 Changing Cities Research Lab at Stanford & Housing Initiative at Penn [Keep People Housed: Oakland's Targeted Homelessness Prevention Pilot](#) Pg. 3

D. Interim Housing Solutions

City and County funding must be devoted to sustaining existing programs and supporting targeted encampment resolution activities that are person-centered, and trauma informed.

In today's interim housing solutions, staffing levels are too low to adequately support caseloads, which in turn results in staff turnover and burnout. Funding increases and performance oversight are needed to ensure that existing interim programs can increase flow into sustainable permanent solutions and thus serve more unsheltered individuals and families annually. Programs also need more behavioral health resources and staff to triage and help those with severe needs.

Based on the costs of real programs, the City estimates that sustaining one emergency shelter, one community cabin site, and one transitional housing program – totaling 150 beds - for 5 years of enhanced funding would cost approximately \$53 million and would serve 800 people. This funding level includes the necessary staffing and case management support for faster movement into permanent housing, allowing for more people to be served annually.

In addition to sustaining and improving existing interim housing programs, we must create more opportunities to come indoors to safety by creating more interim housing programs. The City of Oakland vets such proposals ongoingly but lacks resources to fund them.

E. Permanent Housing Solutions

To balance the need for fast solutions that serve a maximum number of unhoused individuals, with the challenges of sustaining programs that serve 100% homeless individuals, the City would invest in a balance of two types of permanent housing solutions: one **mixed-income** model and one **100% homeless** model.

The current lack of comprehensive State or Federal funding for deeply affordable housing requires that the City invest in affordable housing development that is not exclusively devoted to homeless housing. While the State and Federal government significantly invest in construction, **there are virtually no new resources available to support operations and services in deeply affordable or 100% homeless projects**. The severe shortage of operating funds to support basic building maintenance, property management, and supportive services, requires that Oakland and the County invest in models that can be self-sustaining, with higher-income tenants paying rent to help cover operating costs. Without operating and services funding, even some existing 100% homeless permanent housing buildings in Oakland and Alameda County face a “fiscal cliff”. In the next 5 years, these properties will be operating “in the red” and will require a large new infusion of financial resources, or they will close their doors. The City cannot continue to invest primarily in an unsustainable model of 100% homeless housing without having a long-term source of funding for operations and services.

The statewide funding shortage for operations and services in deeply affordable housing has equity consequences. Until regional, state, and federal resources are focused on providing stable homes to people at the very lowest income levels, Oakland will never be able to create enough permanent housing exits for thousands who become homeless annually and the City will not catch-up from a decades-long shortage of investment that has resulted in today's Point in Time count of 5,490 unhoused people.

The City of Oakland advocates for Measure W to be invested in both 100% homeless housing sustainable operating funding, and mixed-income opportunities. Both types must be owned and managed by experienced providers with a track-record of success. Both types must contain homeless units with rents affordable to individuals and households who make less than 15% of the Area Median Income (AMI), as most unhoused Oaklanders earn less than \$1,500 per month.

12. Ongoing Monitoring and Accountability

Effective grant management and accountability for racially equitable outcomes must be incorporated into each program service area. The City must guarantee that these actions are consistently included throughout the initial phases of program planning, contracting, implementation, and evaluation. This approach will foster a culture of transparency and responsibility in achieving equitable results for all Oaklanders. Outcome metrics should be disaggregated by race whenever possible.



Prevention: Targeted prevention programs allocate resources to individuals and households at highest risk of experiencing homelessness and successfully serve the most vulnerable residents by preventing new entries into homelessness.

Measurable outcome: Reduce the number of individuals and households from experiencing first time homelessness by serving approximately 3550 households each year.



Access & Coordination: Street outreach which serve to support encampment operations require coordinate strategies that address the root causes of unsheltered homelessness. Consistent and timely gathering of outreach data is essential to understanding the demographics and needs of Oakland's unsheltered population.

Measurable outcome: 850 unsheltered residents move into interim or permanent housing from increase in direct street outreach services.



Interim Housing: Impact is assessed by the extent to which interim housing provides safe, stable, and dignified short-term shelter while functioning as a true bridge to permanent housing. Metrics include length of stay, exits to permanent housing, and returns to homelessness. Participant feedback on safety, dignity, and cultural responsiveness is also emphasized.

Measurable outcome: An additional 860 units/beds added incrementally over four-years to current inventory.



Permanent Housing: Assess the capacity of permanent housing needs to address a continuous flow from interim housing to permanent housing solutions. Without creating pathways that are durable, bottlenecks in the homeless response system will continue to persist.

Measurable outcome: Between 840-1240 units built annually over four-years to move persons from interim housing into sustainable permanent housing.

13. Summary

Oakland is home to the highest concentrations of Alameda County residents who have been most adversely affected by historic government policies and systemic disadvantages. Population-level data demonstrate that Black, Indigenous, and other people of color are over-represented among those experiencing homelessness in Oakland and Alameda County, and that these populations continue to face the highest levels of housing insecurity and instability. To avoid perpetuating racial disparities, it will continue to be necessary to invest in solutions with proven success for the most impacted individuals and families.

Within the homelessness response system, there exists a tension between short-term and long-term solutions, each offering significant benefits for managing the flow of homelessness. Shelters, interim housing, and safe parking for RVs can provide immediate protection against the harm and trauma associated with unsheltered homelessness. Additionally, it may be easier to enroll fully in the Coordinated Entry System (CES) and become "document ready" for housing while residing in a shelter or interim housing. However, without adequate operating resources, such as sufficient staffing to deliver high-quality housing navigation services, these programs can generally (though not always) be more costly to operate and less effective at reducing homelessness compared to stable, permanent housing solutions.

Therefore, the City proposes to closely collaborate with the County for balanced and holistic investment into homeless services and housing, including targeted prevention, strategies street outreach, interim housing, and permanent housing solutions. Allocation of resources, along with the selection of programs and service providers, must be guided by a racial equity analysis of impact and effectiveness.