

RIC STATEMENT OF EMERGENCY: A REGION IN CRISIS



REGIONAL ACTION PLAN

A Call to Action from the Regional Impact Council

February 2021 | All Home

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EMERGENCY STATEMENT

A PROBLEM WE CAN SOLVE

The Bay Area's homelessness crisis is a chronic problem, arguably the region's greatest and most serious challenge. The scale and complexity of this challenge is undeniably daunting. As a region we have fought to solve this crisis for decades, to limited avail. However, the problem can and will be solved. We need a new approach to homelessness, marked by new levels of regional cooperation. The Regional Impact Council (RIC) envisions a Bay Area that is united and coordinated against homelessness: a Bay Area that is organized to seamlessly share best practices, data systems, advocacy efforts, and resources. In the Bay Area we envision homelessness is a rare, brief, and non-recurring situation for those who experience it. In this future vision, we have closed racial and economic disparities and created an equitable, stable, and prosperous region. The path to this future will not be easy. It will require action and commitment from all levels of government and community. The RIC believes that we can and must do the work to make this vision real. The first step is to acknowledge that homelessness is an emergency requiring immediate action.

A REGION IN CRISIS

The longstanding homelessness crisis in the Bay Area— described by a global expert as “systemic cruelty”¹— is particularly tragic because the crisis expanded during an economic boom in the wealthiest region in North America. In 2020, the homelessness crisis further deepened as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic: without sizable, coordinated action and investment, it will continue to destabilize our region as time, and the pandemic, goes on.

In our nine-county Bay Area today, **more than 35,000² of our neighbors, a population larger than many of the region's suburban cities and towns**, lack housing or even the prospect of securing it - despite many working full-time. Seniors, people with disabilities and many people working demanding jobs live out of their vehicles, in tents, and in other situations not fit for human habitation because they simply cannot afford housing in the region that they call home. For some, this problem continues for generations. Many “essential” workers (e.g., home health aides, grocery store clerks, cleaning staff at medical facilities) are literally homeless, with tens of thousands more of these workers at-risk of becoming homeless. In particular, extremely low income (ELI) renters face significant housing insecurity: 50% receive neither housing subsidies nor rent protection, and another 34% have controlled rents which are still unaffordable without subsidy.

Doing nothing to address the Bay Area homelessness crisis is enormously costly, in economic as well as moral terms. Many of these costs to our society are in plain sight, and many are hidden. Confronted by human suffering on a daily basis, residents and businesses are leaving the region. In a recent Silicon Valley Leadership survey, 47% of respondents said that they had considered leaving the region as a result of the homelessness situation. As a result of the impacts that homelessness has on individuals and the community as a whole, the indirect costs of homelessness on healthcare, criminal justice, and social services are nearly \$2 billion annually, based on estimates using real costs from Santa Clara county. We must think holistically as a region about our response to this crisis, and

¹ Leilani Farha, United Nations Special Rapporteur, 2018.

² Given the lack of PIT count in 2021, we created an estimate of the total unsheltered homelessness in the Bay Area. If we apply the unsheltered homelessness growth rate from 2017-2019 in the Bay Area (~17%) to the unsheltered population in 2019, we estimate unsheltered homelessness to be ~30K. However, given the known impacts of COVID-19 on shelter capacity in the Bay Area and early evidence supporting a growth in homelessness, we estimated that unsheltered homelessness is likely closer to 35K in the Bay Area.

recognize that the investment required to address unsheltered homelessness is small compared to the long-term social and economic costs of our current course.

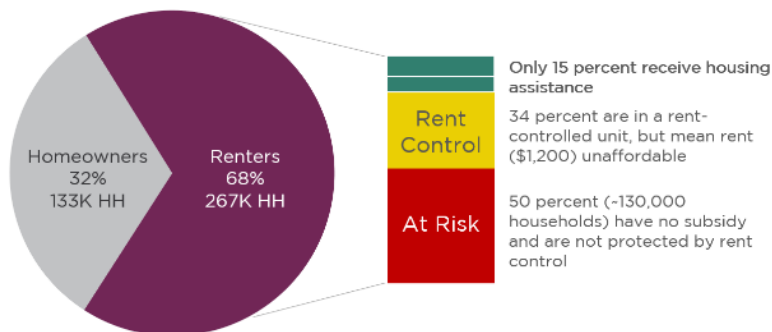


Figure 1: Breakdown of ELI Renter Households; Source: Turner Center for Housing Innovation

COVID-19 has made the region’s limited supply of congregate shelter unusable due to its primarily communal living arrangements, placing our most vulnerable neighbors at heightened risk of exposure. Housing is healthcare, a fact further underscored by the COVID pandemic. A person is unable to “shelter in place” when there is an inadequate supply of shelter and housing. The homelessness and COVID crises disproportionately harm Black, brown and Indigenous people of color (BIPOC). For example, African Americans comprise only 6% of San Francisco’s general population but make up 37% of the city’s homeless population. As these groups are also more vulnerable to becoming seriously ill or dying from COVID-19, the current situation puts our region’s low-income BIPOC population at ‘double jeopardy’ of becoming homeless and gravely ill as COVID cases surge across California and job losses continue to mount, disproportionately for BIPOC communities.

In our region of unparalleled ingenuity, creativity, and affluence for many, a failure to address the **homelessness crisis – a crisis that existed years before the COVID pandemic**, will weaken our communities, drive people and business away from the region, exacerbate existing labor market instabilities, and altogether undermine the prospects for a vibrant, prosperous future for the Bay Area.

Homelessness is no longer a challenge faced by a handful of Bay Area cities, it’s a regional crisis. Similar to our pandemic response, we must act together as a region. We must lift up what works. We’ve witnessed communities rapidly and creatively providing interim and permanent housing options for unsheltered households in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. We know given the will and coordinated action displayed by County Public Health Directors in response to the pandemic, that rapid and meaningful regional action is possible, and we must harness that momentum to fix our systems—systems that are clearly broken and that have failed to stop the tidal wave of people who have had no option but to live on the streets.

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED MEMBERS OF THE REGIONAL IMPACT COUNCIL (RIC), URGE IMMEDIATE ACTION. THE BAY AREA’S EPIDEMIC OF UNSHELTERED HOMELESSNESS MUST BE ADDRESSED AS AN EMERGENCY.

WE CALL UPON THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA, OUR CITIES AND COUNTIES, THE REGION’S BUSINESS AND PHILANTHROPIC COMMUNITIES, AND OUR FEDERAL PARTNERS TO ACT WITH UNPRECEDENTED URGENCY AND COORDINATED ACTION, AS IF LIVES ARE AT STAKE – BECAUSE THEY ARE.

CALL TO ACTION: SUMMARY

<i>RIC Statement of Emergency Signatories</i>	
Name	<i>Signature</i>
Andreas Cluver (Secretary-Treasurer, Alameda County Building Trades Council)	
David Chiu (Cal)	
Diana Reddy (City Co City)	
Erin Connor (Manager, Cisco response)	
Hydra Mendoza (Chief of Strategic Relationships, Salesforce)	

Signatures in progress

THE UNDERSIGNED MEMBERS OF THE REGIONAL IMPACT COUNCIL CALL FOR THE FOLLOWING EMERGENCY ACTIONS:

ADDRESS THE UNSHELTERED CRISIS

We must accelerate work to bring 75% of the unsheltered indoors by 2024 by improving existing systems & investing in the 1-2-4 system flow model, described below (see the sidebar on page 9 for details):

- (1) Fund the interim housing needed to bring unsheltered people indoors immediately and ensure that those who were temporarily housed during COVID-19 have a safe permanent housing option
- (2) Fund 2 housing solutions for every interim housing unit added to the homelessness system
- (4) Fund 4 preventative interventions for every interim housing unit added to the homelessness system

To deliver on this ambitious goal, we will need to improve our existing systems and policies and secure more funding. This model is underpinned by our strategic pillars, which will guide our implementation of the 1-2-4 system flow model

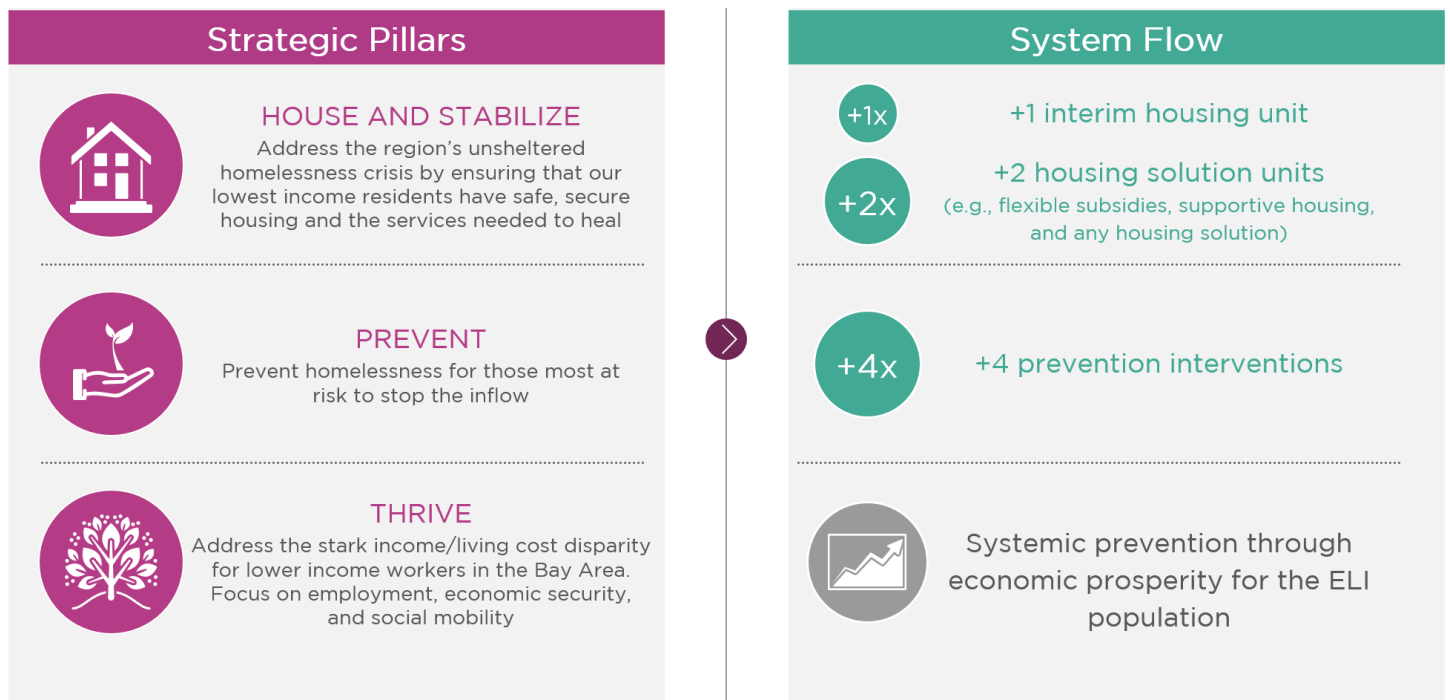


Figure 2: RIC strategic pillars underpins the 1-2-4 system flow model

LEAD WITH RACIAL EQUITY

This plan and its proposed actions - including the priorities for implementation outlined below - must be grounded in closing racial disparities - currently reflected by the disproportionately high percentage of Black, brown, and Indigenous peoples who are homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless. In particular:

- The **State of California** should establish standards and best practices for measuring current racial equity levels and for demonstrating progress; the **State** should increase accountability for outcomes by tying funding to demonstrated progress toward closing racial disparities.
- **Private and philanthropic partners** should actively prioritize funding interventions targeted to BIPOC experiencing homelessness or at risk of becoming homeless.
- **All Counties** should operationalize equity-based prioritization schemes, service provision, and rental assistance programs in the most vulnerable communities. Geographic targeting based on area deprivation index, high rates of poverty, lack of home ownership, high rates of eviction, rental burden, zip codes or some combination could be considered as possible ways to operationalize prioritized services.

CALL FOR FEDERAL PARTNERSHIP

These actions will require expanded Federal funding and partnership. The \$1.9 trillion Biden-Harris Administration “American Rescue Act” coronavirus relief package was a positive first step. We call upon Congress to act immediately on the following:

- Pass the Biden-Harris “American Jobs Plan,” an approximately \$2 trillion infrastructure and recovery package that includes \$213 billion “to produce, preserve, and retrofit more than two million affordable and sustainable places to live
- Provide HUD-Housing Choice Vouchers to every eligible household, prioritizing people who are experiencing or are at-risk of homelessness. Currently, only 1 out of 4 eligible households receive a Housing Choice Vouchers
- **Allocate \$44 billion annually** to the Housing Trust Fund to help states and localities, which responded quickly and creatively to move individuals experiencing homelessness into non-congregate settings, to now acquire and convert available properties, including hotels, motels, and other opportunity sites, into permanent housing solutions so that no one is returned to living outdoors
- Invest \$70 billion to repair and rehabilitate existing public housing
- Create innovative new funding strategies that facilitate cross-discipline investment and cross-jurisdictional collaboration
- Expand Medicaid funding to include stable housing as part of holistic treatment plans

In addition to these immediate actions, we call on the Federal government, in close coordination with the State, to provide **new funding needed to ensure all local jurisdictions are able to implement plans to house 75% of our unsheltered population by 2024 by implementing a full range of prevention and housing options.**

We commit to working with Congress and the Biden-Harris Administration to identify and develop innovative, scalable solutions to homelessness and poverty. We look forward to quickly turning our attention to “Housing as Infrastructure” and working with our California Congressional delegation to achieve the requisite scale of federal investment in affordable housing to truly make homelessness in the United States an experience that is rare and brief, not one that persists for decades.

OPERATIONALIZING THIS WORK

The total 5-year cost of sheltering 75% of the Bay Area's unsheltered population, while investing in the comprehensive system flow outlined by the 1-2-4 framework, is estimated at \$6.5 billion, with \$1.6 billion needed in 2021. Existing resources can (and are) being used to fund this approach. New resources may be required in jurisdictions where current plans are not consistent with the 1-2-4 approach; that is, where resources are insufficient to fund prevention, interim housing, and permanent housing solutions simultaneously and at scale.

- **The State of California should condition existing and new funds on implementing the three-pronged 1-2-4 framework**, starting with a pilot project in the Bay Area in 2021
- **The State should provide expanded technical assistance** to local jurisdictions, to enable seamless implementation of the 1-2-4 framework in our region
- **Local jurisdictions will be provided with assistance** from All Home that recognizes the unique local circumstances as they work to activate the 1-2-4 framework. All Home will also provide support for inter-jurisdictional coordination within and between the region's counties
- **If new funds are required**, this coalition will work to raise the necessary resources from the state and federal governments

Our funding estimates reflect the cost of adding intervention capacity in a 1:2:4 ratio across interim housing, permanent housing solutions, and homelessness prevention interventions over time. Based on our high-level analysis, approximately \$6.5 billion in total investment is required over 5 years, split roughly evenly between capital and operating costs. The cost estimates are designed using Bay Area (9-county) averages, and assume limited interim capacity is available to shelter the currently 35,000 unhoused individuals living in the region. We put forward the estimate with an understanding that the number of unsheltered people— and the costs to serve them— will continue to grow until we significantly reduce the inflow of individuals and households to homelessness.

PRIORITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

We have identified eight priorities for focus as we implement this work, expanded on in the Additional Detail section:

House & Stabilize

Strategic Priority #1: Secure Shelter-In-Place (SIP) housing locations

Strategic Priority #2: Streamline State funds and applications for housing and homeless services

Strategic Priority #3: Prioritize extremely low income (ELI) households for housing resources

Strategic Priority #4: Extend covenants of affordability to preserve affordable housing supply and fund ELI tenancy

Prevent

Strategic Priority #5: Extend eviction moratoriums

Strategic Priority #6: Accelerate cash payments to people impacted by COVID-19

Strategic Priority #7: Provide targeted rental assistance to those impacted by COVID-19, who are most vulnerable to homelessness

Strategic Priority #8: Accelerate targeted, data-informed regional homelessness prevention model

PLAN DETAILS

THE COMPREHENSIVE 1-2-4 FRAMEWORK

To ensure we can realize on our ambitions to reduce unsheltered homelessness, we need a model to operationalize across the Bay Area. The model outlined below will enable the region to move expeditiously toward disrupting homelessness and reducing the current level of unsheltered homelessness by 75% before 2024. We call for actions that accelerate progress toward this goal, which includes an interim target of housing 30% of today's unsheltered population in 2021.

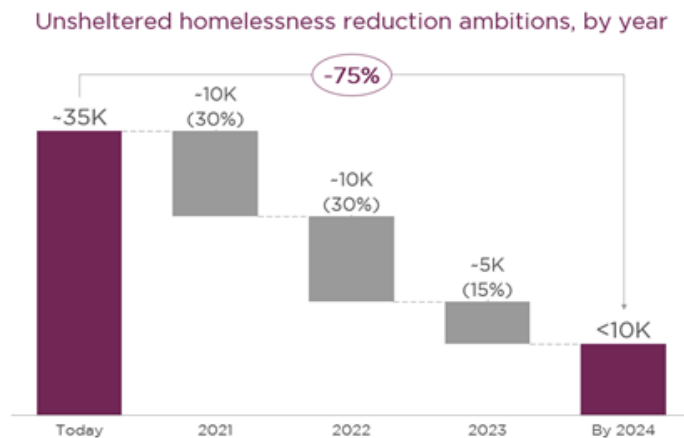


Figure 3: Unsheltered homelessness reduction ambitions by year, '21- '24

Successfully housing the unsheltered population and bringing them to a permanent exit from homelessness requires designing and investing commensurately in an expansion of permanent affordable housing or housing subsidy options to create “system flow,” which is the movement of people off the streets and into stable housing (in particular, housing with requisite, needs-based services attached). A comprehensive “system flow” includes:

- homelessness prevention,
- interim housing options (as needed),
- supportive housing,
- and a broad set of flexible subsidies or deeply affordable housing options for those who do not need permanent supportive housing.

We propose a flow that calls for capacity additions in the following ratio: 1 additional interim housing unit, 2 permanent housing solutions, and 4 prevention interventions. This model will add the capacity necessary to address the crisis in the near term.

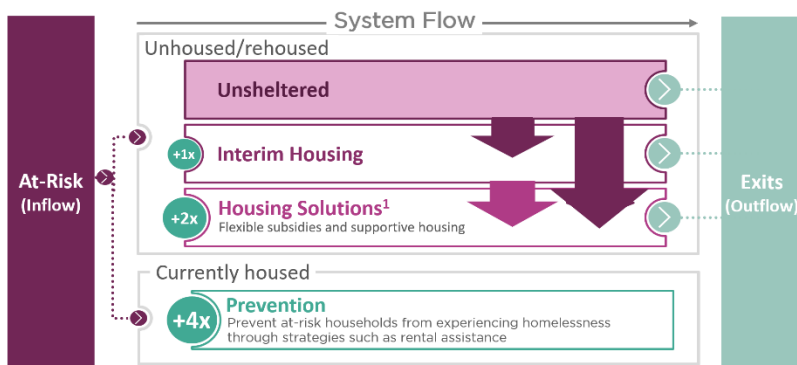
1-2-4 FRAMEWORK

Before the current pandemic conditions, several Bay Area counties were already exhibiting dramatic increases in their unsheltered homeless PIT counts from 2017-2019. Continuing on that trajectory is unacceptable. Our communities must do better at providing the dignity of a safe housing option, interim or permanent, for those who are living outdoors. The 1-2-4 Framework is an acknowledgement that an effective and sustainable plan to do better requires investment in multiple strategies at once – homelessness prevention, interim or emergency housing, permanent deeply affordable or permanent supportive housing, and housing subsidies. It is not enough to simply provide emergency shelter if there are (a) insufficient long-term housing options (“exits”) to provide outflow, and (b) insufficient focus on reducing inflow.

We live in a region with a large population of highly rent-burdened low-income households, who lack access to an available supply of more affordable housing. We will never break the cycle of unsheltered homelessness without a significant investment in homelessness prevention (short-term interventions to assist households experiencing a crisis that may cause them to lose housing).

“1-2-4” is not a prescription or a one-size-fits-all solution. It’s a ratio that illustrates proportionate investment in three strategies simultaneously. In order to reduce unsheltered homelessness rapidly, most cities or counties will need to frontload investment into interim housing options, such as leasing or purchasing motels, tiny homes, mobile homes or other temporary housing options.

The RIC workgroups have established a high-level cost assessment of the resources required to meet our goal of sheltering 75% of unsheltered people by 2024. We put forward the estimate with an understanding that the number of unsheltered people will continue to grow until we significantly reduce the inflow and increase the outflow, or exits. The estimate draws on cost and flow assumptions triangulated from various county-level sources and are taken as Bay Area (9-county) averages. These estimates reflect the cost of adding intervention capacity in a 1:2:4 ratio across interim shelter, permanent housing solutions, and homelessness prevention interventions over time. Based on these assumptions and analyses, approximately \$6.5 billion in total investment is required across five years, split roughly evenly between capital and operating costs.



1. Includes Permanent Supportive Housing, rapid re-housing, flexible subsidy pools and shallow subsidies, Section 8, group housing, and any other housing solution

Figure 4: Comprehensive System Flow Model

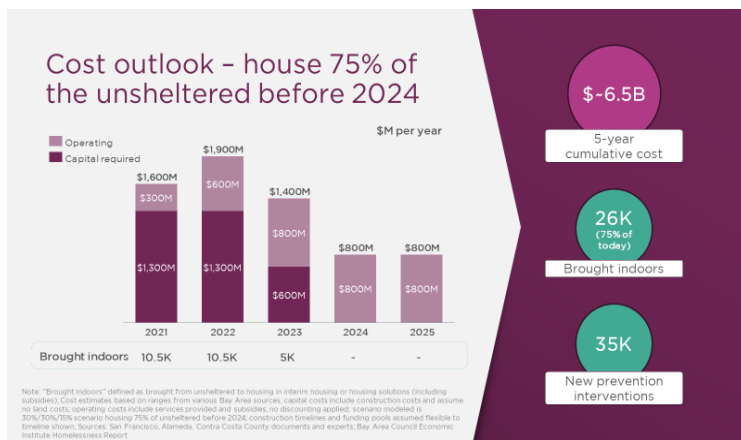


Figure 5: 1-2-4 Framework Cost Outlook (30%/30%/15% scenario shown)

Our recommendation is that for every unit of interim housing that is created (“1”), two permanent housing options (“2”) such as a housing subsidy that can write down the cost of a market rate apartment or a newly acquired or created affordable unit must be planned, so that people don’t linger for extended periods of time in interim housing. It is critical that people move from interim to permanent housing quickly, so that the interim options can be made available to others who still remain unsheltered. Simultaneously, we recommend that each unit of interim housing should be matched with sufficient homelessness prevention investment to serve four households (“4”).

Again, while we are rapidly moving people who are unsheltered either directly to permanent housing, perhaps with a subsidy, or first to interim and then as quickly as possible to permanent housing, the prevention investment will slow down the rate at which people are becoming homeless, and over time reach equilibrium once the correct balance of interim and permanent housing options is available in the community.

Some cities or counties, may need very little investment in interim housing, e.g., if their unsheltered population is relatively small or if they have already made marked investment in emergency housing options. Those communities could choose to focus on rental subsidies and permanent housing to house people quickly and homelessness prevention to stop people from becoming homeless. The bottom line is that each community can right-size the ratio to reach equilibrium, but investing in only one option will not be sufficient to reduce homelessness in any community in the short-term given the high cost of rental housing and the time and cost of construction and acquisition of affordable housing in the Bay Area.

STRATEGIC PILLARS FOR A COMPREHENSIVE RESPONSE

These efforts are grounded in the RIC's strategic pillars: to **House and Stabilize, Prevent**, and enable the region's most vulnerable populations to **Thrive** (see figure 2). COVID-19 has only highlighted the urgency and action needed to address this widening gap. The process of convening the RIC has already yielded results, forging connections and building alliances among our members. We will work to identify, recognize, and scale best practices and successful models across the region, and propose bold regional solutions. These priorities work in concert with the 1-2-4 framework to improve the foundations of a healthy, responsive Bay Area homeless services system—one that will continue to evolve after addressing the urgent crisis of more than 35,000 Bay Area residents living outdoors.

PRIORITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION: HOUSE & STABILIZE



Strategic Priority #1: Secure Shelter-In-Place (SIP) housing locations

Counties across the Bay Area have put in place measures for temporarily housing their at-risk and unhoused populations in Shelter-in-Place (SIP) housing, to provide shelter and safety during the COVID-19 pandemic. There is broad agreement that individuals who found shelter through these programs should remain housed, be entered into Coordinated Entry Systems (CES), and guided first to non-congregate interim and then to permanent housing (in some cases these individuals may go directly from SIP hotels to permanent housing if it is available and situationally appropriate). Some counties have already begun this process, but others lack a plan for these residents to remain housed. In many counties, the lack of interim and permanent housing options will pose a major barrier in achieving this goal, pointing to the need to expand housing voucher availability.

Priority #1 aims to develop a framework for all Bay Area counties that provides a pathway for those who moved indoors during the pandemic to transition from interim housing into a range of suitable permanent housing solutions.

Detailed call to action

- The **State of California** and the region's **Cities and Counties**, with **Federal funding and partnership**, should seek to retain as much of the Shelter-in-Place (SIP) housing (established in response to COVID-19) as possible, to be converted post-pandemic into interim housing for unsheltered individuals/households, while assisting people to transition quickly to permanent housing (Immediate, Ongoing).
- The **State** must recognize that for Project Homekey (acquisition and conversion of hotels to house vulnerable populations) to be successful, bond financing for acquisition and rehabilitation projects is essential. Therefore, we call for a \$10 billion state investment in affordable housing through passage of a new bond (SB 5).
- **All Home**, in collaboration with regional partners and local jurisdictions, will identify and advocate for funding for housing vouchers or other housing solutions at all levels of government, ensuring funds meet the demand from each county for interim housing options, flexible rental subsidies, and permanent housing solutions needed to prevent people from returning to the streets.
- **Counties** should identify locations or acquisition sites and make plans to implement interim housing options for individuals who cannot move directly into permanent housing, leveraging recent CEQA exemptions for emergency shelters and navigation centers, albeit non-congregate models.



Strategic Priority #2: Streamline State funds & applications for housing & homeless services

Four key state agencies contribute to the State's basic housing efforts, but there is not a well-coordinated plan to effectively use their collective financial resources to support affordable housing acquisition and development. Applicants for state funds for housing and homeless services are overburdened by duplicative application processes with varying timelines, eligibility criteria, and application requirements. The State Auditor commented on this complexity in November 2020, calling for the State to simplify its funding pools and award processes.

Detailed call to action

- The **State of California** should consolidate and streamline all affordable housing funding and application processes, coordinating between the California Debt Limit Allocation Committee (CDLAC), the Tax Credit Allocation Committee (TCAC), the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), and the California Housing Finance Authority (CalHFA) to eliminate waste and inefficiencies and to reduce the time needed to access funding (no later than July 2021).
- Existing state programs that fund services for people experiencing homelessness should, where possible, be consolidated into a joint funding pool with a single application process. This process should be jointly administered by California's Departments of Housing and Community Development (HCD) and Social Services (DSS). In cases where consolidation into a single pool is not possible, agencies should align standards and funding processes as much as possible, in coordination with HCD and DSS.
- CDLAC should avoid over-emphasizing cost containment in formulas affecting new construction projects especially through its inclusion in both the tiebreaker and as its own category, as it disadvantages Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) housing projects, ELI housing projects, and projects located in areas with higher construction costs, such as the Bay Area. While we fully support cost-containment and urge the State to creatively incentivize lower cost construction, this formula disadvantages housing production in parts of the state with some of the highest rates of homelessness.
- The State should revise the opportunity map methodology to ensure that it does not de-prioritize BIPOC communities which tend to be overwhelmingly represented as "low resource" in HCD's opportunity maps, that map high opportunity communities, defined by income, school performance and other factors. While we support the concept of encouraging new development in high opportunity areas, communities that have suffered historic underinvestment should not be left behind as there are longstanding housing needs that must be met.



Strategic Priority #3: Prioritize ELI for housing resources

In its well-intended efforts to serve all Californians, the state's agencies, with increasing momentum, are targeting higher AMI categories, resulting in less funding for housing that is desperately needed to house ELI households. As a state and a region where all housing has been under-produced for decades, we must stop pitting the needs of one income group against another. What we do know is this – our 9-county Bay Area has produced only 9% of the housing units needed for very low income (VLI) households (below 50% AMI) based upon the current Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA). This coalition calls for a reversal of this trend and a prioritization of ELI households (below 30%

AMI) in funding for housing. We support appropriate market reforms to increase production at other affordability levels including expanding the supply of “missing middle” housing.

Detailed call to action

- The **State of California** should ensure that a significant portion of all publicly funded affordable housing projects are inclusive of people with extremely low incomes given that they are at the highest risk of becoming homeless, particularly in the San Francisco Bay Area. The State should reverse its trend emphasizing an average of 60% of AMI in projects using State funds and ensure that at least 20% of new units are reserved for 30% of AMI or below and 20% are reserved for 50% of AMI or below. (Ongoing).
- In particular, **CDLAC** should make new housing construction for extremely (ELI) and very-low income (VLI) households a priority. It should adjust its current stated preference of 60% of AMI and instead require that at least 20% of the units are 30% of AMI or below and 20% are at 50% of AMI or below.
- Within the Homeless Set-Aside (provision of allocated units) - **CDLAC** should require that 25% of total units (minimum of 15) meet the homeless definition, not just the tax credit units.



Strategic Priority #4: Extend covenants of affordability to preserve affordable housing supply and fund ELI tenancy

A significant portion of the Bay Area’s affordable housing units are not permanently affordable. Instead these units have covenants, that if not extended, expire and the housing resets to market rate. This phenomenon displaces lower income tenants and puts them at risk of homelessness. Thousands of once affordable units have been lost in the Bay Area because affordable covenants were not renewed.

In addition to the loss of existing affordable housing units, most affordable housing is not designed to be affordable by Bay Area residents with extremely low incomes (below 30% AMI). Given our region’s exorbitant housing costs, affordable housing developments typically house tenants with household incomes at higher levels (e.g. a development’s tenants have incomes that average 60% AMI). Because their incomes are lower, households at or below 30% of AMI require deeper subsidies. Similarly, formerly homeless individuals or families may have extremely low incomes and may also need supportive services (either short-term or longer-term) to remain housed and successfully thrive after having endured the hardship of being homeless for an extended time.

Detailed call to action

- The **State of California** should, with **Federal funding and partnership**, provide funding to secure affordable housing properties for which covenants of affordability are expiring and provide funding for existing complexes to more deeply subsidize rents and fund supportive services to serve ELI and formerly homeless individuals and families (no later than July 2021).

PRIORITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION: PREVENT



Strategic Priority #5: Extend eviction protections

In 2020, the COVID-19 crisis devastated the region, with a disproportionate impact on the lowest income individuals and families, particularly BIPOC households. The rent burden – already high – on the low income (< 50% AMI) and extremely low income (<30% AMI) populations was exacerbated by COVID-related job losses and financial hardship this year. To prevent a massive eviction crisis, eviction moratoriums were enacted at the local and state levels, including California’s AB 3088 in September 2020. In late January 2021, the California Legislature passed SB 91 to extend the state-wide eviction protection until June 30, 2021. Keeping people in their existing homes is critical to reducing spread of the coronavirus. Research led by Dr. Kathryn Leifheit of UCLA estimates that **our current statewide emergency eviction protection law has already prevented 186,000 COVID-19 cases and 6,000 deaths**, so we recommend minimally that eviction protections remain in place until at least 60 days after the end of the public health emergency is lifted. However, we also know that higher rates of COVID-19 related income and job loss have disproportionately impacted ELI households, particularly African American and Latinx households. These impacts are likely to linger for some time after the pandemic subsides and the economy begins to stabilize. If history is an example, homelessness began to increase three years after the 2008 Great Recession “ended” as unemployment remained stubbornly high for Blacks and Latinos.

Detailed call to action

- **The State extended eviction protections for California’s renters and enacted a framework for its rental assistance program with SB 91.** The State Legislature should monitor COVID-19 infection rates and rates of unemployment for the highest impacted groups. If both remain high that should be taken into account before allowing the current state-wide eviction protection to expire on June 30, 2021. The State should also take action to close loopholes in the current eviction protections and prevent landlords from evicting tenants for lease expirations or minor lease violations until the pandemic health emergency ends.
- **The Biden-Harris Administration** acted by Executive Order to direct the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to extend the national eviction moratorium, which it did until March 31, 2021. The CDC later extended that eviction protection until June 30, 2021. We call on the CDC to further extend and improve the national eviction moratorium. The moratorium must be extended through the duration of the public health emergency, and it should be improved to address the shortcomings that have prevented some renters from making use of its protections. The moratorium should provide an automatic, universal protection to keep more renters throughout the U.S. in their homes and it should apply to all stages of eviction. Federal agencies must also actively enforce its protections. An extension to the CDC order could prove to be vital to Californians if the CA Legislature fails to extend the state-enacted eviction protections beyond June 30, 2021.
- **All Counties** should enact a universal eviction protections that last until at least 60 days after the County lifts its COVID-19 public health emergency (Immediate). Tenants should not be evicted during the pandemic for any reason, except for the protection of health and safety. Evictions for lease expirations, minor lease violations, move-in or Ellis Act evictions, or anything short of personal safety should not be permitted during the pandemic.
- **Counties and cities** should consider imposing fines or penalties on property owners that continue to send Notices to Pay or Quit or 3-Day eviction notices to tenants for non-payment of rent, if the property owner

is knowingly using notices to intimidate or confuse tenants in an effort to encourage them to move out, despite the fact that non-payment of rent is not currently permissible as a grounds for eviction at this time.



Strategic Priority #6: Accelerate cash payments to people impacted by COVID-19

While high-wage workers have experienced a 4.3 percent decrease in employment during the pandemic, low-wage workers have suffered a 26.9 percent decrease, a historically unprecedented divide during a recession. With the pandemic wearing on and economic recovery slow, ELI and minority households are being hit hardest, many with insufficient income to cover their basic needs as a result of pandemic-related job loss. Substantial evidence shows that direct cash assistance is the most effective, responsive, and targeted way to support ELI households and prevent them from becoming homeless. Priority #6 advocates for recurring cash payments and enhanced unemployment benefits for ELI households at the federal level. In the absence of further federal intervention, Priority #6 intends to highlight a path for California to expand and enhance refundable tax credits to provide additional income to ELI households. This priority also acknowledges the major intersection between ELI households and the unbanked population (individuals not served by banks due to financial or identity barriers) in California and aspires to address barriers to households claiming their benefits, so they have the resources needed to weather the pandemic.

Detailed call to action

- RIC Coalition joins income security advocates, in coalition with the Economic Security Project (initiative aimed at bolstering economic security for all Americans), calling for federal recurring cash payments of \$2,000 quarterly through 2021 or until the employment rate stabilizes.
- The State of California should approve the Governor's proposed Golden Gate Stimulus of \$600 for California residents who qualify for the state Earned Income Tax Credit on their 2019 tax returns.
- Federal government should extend emergency unemployment insurance programs through September 2021 while providing a \$600 per week unemployment insurance supplement.
- If the Federal effort described above is unsuccessful, state legislators should pass legislation to extend and expand refundable tax programs to maximize income for ELI households. Refundable tax programs are specifically highlighted because they do not impact household income eligibility for public benefit programs. This may include:
 - Removing the earnings requirement and age parameters for the Child Tax Credit (tax credit for parents with dependent children)
 - Doubling the California Earned Income Tax Credit (refundable cash back credit for qualified low-to-moderate income working Californians) for workers without children
- Address the barriers faced by under- and un-banked populations in accessing benefits by offering no-fee checking accounts or other distribution methods.



Strategic Priority #7: Provide targeted rental assistance to those impacted by COVID-19, who are most vulnerable to homelessness

Priority #7 aims to prevent the impending wave of evictions that could occur when the moratoriums eventually are lifted. We must ensure that the number of people becoming homeless in the Bay Area does not accelerate due to pandemic-related income loss and the inability to keep up with rent. SB 91 averted an immediate crisis by extending eviction protections until June 30, 2021. California also received \$2.6 billion in federal rental assistance from the in the form of U.S. Treasury Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) funds. Counties and cities with populations of >200,000 received roughly \$1.1 billion and the State received roughly \$1.5 billion. But still, millions of California renters will be burdened by amassed rental arrearages, small claims court judgments and lingering unemployment that will hobble them financially for an extended period of time.

Detailed call to action

- The State of California created a block grant program to distribute its \$1.5 billion portion in new COVID-response rental assistance. Although the framework for the State's program is complex, for tenants who have cooperative landlords it offers an opportunity not only to have the program pay the landlord 80% of the rent arrearage, but to have the other 20% forgiven if the landlord wishes to participate. However, for tenants whose landlords refuse to participate, it permits only 25% of their arrearage to be paid. The State has made an effort to prioritize based on equity and to households earning at or below 50% AMI. The recent Biden-Harris "American Rescue Act" package included an additional \$30 billion in ERAP funds. We urge the State to improve upon its current framework for rental assistance (enacted in SB 91) to ensure equal outcomes for all tenants and to implement the targeting strategies outlined below.
- The statutory language that authorized the ERAP allocation allows assistance to be provided to households earning up to 80%AMI, but indicates that households at or below 50% of AMI as well as those which have a household member who has been unemployed for 90 days or more should be prioritized. With hundreds of thousands of Californians behind on rent, there will be a gravitational pull to assist people at the full range of allowable income levels. However, in order to prevent a massive surge in homelessness later in 2021-2022, rental assistance must be targeted to those most at risk of homelessness. Local rental assistance programs should prioritize the following:
 - ELI households (<30% AMI)
 - Households with severe rent burden (>50% of income spent on rent)
 - Households or individuals who have had a previous experience of homelessness
 - Census tracts or zip codes with high rates of housing insecurity or homelessness, high rates of eviction, high rates of COVID-19 infection, high rates of poverty and/or a high area deprivation index
 - Hard to reach communities (e.g., those who have language barriers and people who are in informal living arrangements); and
 - Groups that don't have access to other benefit programs (e.g., undocumented immigrants)
- Any new or expanded rental assistance program should include the following elements:
 - Low-barrier flexible cash assistance, including acceptance of self-certifications regarding income, housing and, employment status. Programs should permit payment directly to the household if the

landlord refuses to accept rental payment from the program or fails to respond within the prescribed time period

- Access to landlord mediation or legal services as needed
- Effective and culturally relevant outreach:
 - Partner with, and build capacity of, BIPOC led community organizations located in and serving impacted communities while expanding the ecosystem of organizations providing program services
 - Co-design outreach processes with CBOs that serve the hardest hit communities and offer access at common intersections with people at-risk of homelessness including food pantries, schools/day care, housing court, community health clinics, institutional discharging or correctional system release. Coordinate with COVID-19 vaccination outreach efforts to maximize efficiency.
 - Work with community groups representing tenants and people who have experienced homelessness, to inform prioritization and policies.
- Tackle racial disparity
 - Collect and publicly report disaggregated data on households served by race, ethnicity, and zip code.
 - Remove barriers that disproportionately impact BIPOC: accept applications by all methods - online, phone, in-person; do not limit assistance to one-time only; be explicit on all materials that information regarding immigration status will not be asked for nor shared at any time during the process.
- Fill gaps caused by ERAP funding constraints with other sources of public (e.g., CDBG-CV or ESG-CV) or private funds to offer more holistic housing stabilization plans to families and individuals.

See [“Local Strategies to Protect Tenants and Prevent Homelessness in Bay Area COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance Programs\(ERAPs\)”](#) for more detailed recommendations.



Strategic Priority #8: Accelerate targeted, data-informed regional prevention model

Prior to the pandemic, the Bay Area had the distinction of having more than 35,000 people who were homeless. With massive job and income loss among low wage workers due to the pandemic, many of whom were severely rent-burdened, we can expect that poverty and homelessness will rise in 2021. In 2019, two to three people were becoming homeless for every one person who was successfully assisted to move from homelessness to housing in the Bay Area. We desperately need a regional homelessness prevention system to slow down the rate at which people are becoming homeless; this starts by coordinating resources and services within the region. Priority #8 aims to build upon prevention efforts and infrastructure that already exist and to create a program for coordinated service delivery. All Home has launched a pilot in three cities - Oakland, Fremont and San Francisco - to facilitate a research and data-informed approach that focuses on using new federal ERAP funding to target those who are most vulnerable to homelessness. The pilot is intended to extend into Contra Costa County later in 2021, in advance of full implementation and coverage of all nine Bay Area counties within three years. Ultimately, the goal is to blend public and private funds and bring about a higher degree of coordination among anti-eviction/displacement, rental subsidy, homelessness prevention, diversion, and rapid-rehousing programs in the region.

Detailed call to action

- Since September 2021, All Home in partnership with RIC members and others has embarked on a consensus-building design process to launch its homelessness prevention pilot. In order to maximize the opportunity to align federal ERAP funding with homelessness prevention efforts, All Home accelerated its regional homelessness prevention efforts to launch by April 2021. The pilot is a work in progress to build consistency in best practices for risk assessment and service delivery, using a common data platform and evaluation framework. Initially the regional homelessness prevention program model will include the following services:
 - Financial assistance – flexible cash assistance, rental arrears, rental assistance, security deposit, move-in expenses, reunification or relocation expenses, transportation expenses
 - Eviction prevention/legal assistance
 - Utility assistance
 - Housing problem-solving
 - Landlord mediation and connecting residents to advocacy organizations
 - Linkages to other community resources and public benefit programs
- As the program reaches its full implementation, the following services will also be provided:
 - Assistance with housing search, placement, and stabilization, including limited term rental subsidies and case management
 - Financial counseling
 - Income stabilization through workforce development partnerships
- Implement a three-county pilot regional homelessness prevention system that is rolled out with an eye toward regional expansion to all nine Bay Area counties. The pilot offers the following elements:
 - Emphasis on reducing racial and ethnic disparities among households that are experiencing homelessness for the first time through targeted financial assistance and program design:
 - Targeting resources to racial/ethnic groups facing high rates of homelessness (in the Bay Area, Black, Indigenous, Latinx and Pacific Islander communities) and groups that don't have access to other benefit programs.
 - Meeting non-traditional needs, for instance offering interventions that stabilize support networks or kinship networks, as defined by marginalized communities, to include chosen families.
 - Addressing funding/program gaps that exist for undocumented immigrants.
 - Ensure effective and culturally relevant outreach as described above in Strategic Priority #7.
 - Reducing barriers to long-term success by connecting households to economic mobility programs and eliminating limitations on "one-time only" assistance because an ELI household may encounter one or more periods of economic shock on the way to getting back on their feet.
 - Common program elements as discussed above.
 - New, web-based data platform for applicants and service providers which includes:
 - Online financial assistance application portal

- Evidence-based risk assessment tool that promotes effective and efficient targeting of services to those who are at highest risk³ of homelessness.
 - Back-end service provider module for case management, management approvals and fund disbursements.
 - Consistency in staff training in housing problem-solving/diversion techniques and learning collaboratives to promote cross- county collaboration and sharing of useful resolution ideas.
- Evaluate program efficacy of the initial three-county level programs and adapt as necessary to expand to the regional scale within three years.
- All Home, in collaboration with regional partners and local jurisdictions, will work to identify and collaborate with a regional entity with the capacity to manage a regional homelessness prevention system for the long-term. In 2020, the Bay Area Housing and Financing Authority (BAHFA) was established by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC). BAHFA is positioned to provide a powerful new set of financing and policy tools to improve housing affordability and may be well suited to play this role in the future.
- Combine public and private funding streams to maximize the prevention system’s function and flexibility At the federal, state and local levels, there are many programs that support homelessness prevention, each having slightly different eligibility and other requirements – Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG and ESG-CV), Community Development Block Grants (CDBG and CDBG-CV), new U.S. Treasury Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP), State Homeless, Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP), CalWorks Homeless Assistance Program, local tax measure funds that are required to be spent on homelessness prevention. These funding streams should be streamlined so that they can be used more flexibly and holistically to keep people housed. Currently, private and philanthropic funds are used to fill gaps and provide the flexibility for the program to meet each household’s needs. The goal of a regional homelessness prevention program is to leverage these funds in the creation of a public-private partnership that weaves together a stronger, more viable safety net that is truly available and capable of preventing a household from becoming homeless or quickly assisting with the resources necessary to find alternative housing, regardless of where one lives in the Bay Area.

³ Female Head of Household, pregnancy, child younger than two, history of public assistance, eviction threat, high mobility in last year, history of protective services, high conflict in household, disruptions as a child (e.g. foster care, shelter history as youth), shelter history as an adult, recent shelter application, seeking to reintegrate into community from an institution, high number of shelter applications.

IMPACT METRICS & TRACKING

We have developed a series of impact metrics to track progress against our 8 strategic priorities, while systematically advancing All Home's vision and informing forthcoming work. These metrics will be reviewed on a regular cadence and progress will be shared back to counties, stakeholders, and RIC members.

- **Overall**- Reduce unsheltered homelessness by 75% by 2024, overall homelessness by 75% by 2030
- **System flow**- % of new episodes, PIT count, eviction rate, # of days between shelter and permanent exits
- **Availability**- # of interim housing units, # of permanent housing solution units, # of prevention interventions by 2024 and 2030, utilization rate over time (match of resources available to interventions needed in each category)
- **Diversity**- Homelessness population segmentation and population comparison by race/gender/age to reduce disparity
- **Employment**- ELI unemployment rate, income levels
- **Data**- Consistency in format and metrics across region, clear indicators of coordinated efforts among Bay Area counties
- **Revenue**- Match of funding available with needs to implement priorities

Furthermore, we will track stakeholder perceptions of progress through an annual survey to RIC members to measure the extent to which they believe goals are being met. We will also convene counties on a quarterly basis, and other stakeholder groups on an ad hoc basis, to review progress and identify barriers to be mitigated. We will also draw on those with lived experience to understand their perceptions of system efficacy (access to resources, employment opportunities, etc.) and provide real-time tracking.

HomeBase research finds that a regional data sharing system would enhance the ability of jurisdictions and care providers to conduct local planning, measure outcomes and investment impacts, and support care and support coordination. Data enrichment options that allow identifiable client-level data sharing across jurisdictions would have an even greater impact by creating opportunities to coordinate across systems of care—ensuring individuals have continuity without having to restart the process of seeking help every time they transition to a new location.

Therefore, it may be helpful to establish a regional data sharing system utilizing existing research and tools developed by Homebase to enhance the ability of jurisdictions and care providers to conduct local planning, measure outcomes and investment impacts, and support care and support coordination across cities and counties.

Cumulatively, advancement across these metrics will enable the broader social change we are committed to enacting: increasing racial equity, inclusivity of all communities, greater economic and social mobility, shifting our paradigm to recognize ELI people's value, and highlighting regionalism as imperative to driving progress.

INTRODUCTION TO THE REGIONAL IMPACT COUNCIL

LETTER FROM THE CO-CHAIRS

The Regional Impact Council (RIC) convened in 2020, when our members – from across the Bay Area – organized around the belief that homelessness can be rare, brief, and non-recurring for those that experience it. We believe a coordinated regional response is needed to advance system level changes to solve poverty, housing insecurity, racial inequity and homelessness crisis facing our region and state.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the already large chasm in economic equality and mobility in the Bay Area, impacting vulnerable communities that are disproportionately Black, brown, Indigenous and low income. As a region our experience of COVID-19 is unequal. For affluent professional workers, the recession’s direct economic impact has been minimal. Indeed, the wealth of some in the professional class has gone up since the pandemic. For Black, brown and Indigenous communities and extremely low-income populations, this recession is worse than the Great Financial Crisis of 2008-2010. The true impact of historic unemployment, racial injustice, and the continued economic pressure on small businesses will be an uphill challenge. The magnitude of these changes has forced us to explore systemic solutions previously deemed too bold. We must seek new solutions and advance them more quickly than what the Bay Area’s jurisdictions have tried before.

The RIC complements existing efforts around homelessness and housing by bringing together key stakeholders, and policymakers across a diversity of communities and sectors including representatives from the state legislature, local government, non-profit organizations, the business community and private philanthropy with their collective assets to achieve population-level regional outcomes.

The urgency has never been greater, and we are eager to get to work. We view the Bay Area’s regional response to the COVID-19 pandemic as an example of what our region can accomplish when we join together to address a shared challenge. After the current public health crisis, we will remain committed to our goals: house and stabilize those experiencing or at risk of homelessness, prevent future episodes of homelessness, and create economic prosperity across the region so that ELI individuals and families can thrive in the Bay Area.



Derecka Mehrens
Chief Executive Officer,
Working Partnerships USA



Jonathan Fearn
Senior Development Director,
Greystar



Joshua Simon
Chief Executive Officer, East
Bay Asian Location
Development Corporation



Sherilyn Adams
Executive Director
Larkin Street Youth Services

RIC MEMBERS

REGIONAL IMPACT COUNCIL MEMBERS

The RIC is a coalition across the nine-county Bay Area. The council includes 85 leaders that work in state and local legislation, direct service provision, affordable housing, labor, economic mobility, racial equity and private sector businesses.

Our collective goal: Share, develop and mobilize against regional solutions to House and Stabilize, Prevent, and enable our most vulnerable populations to Thrive.

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Joshua Simon, Chief Executive Officer, EBALDC

Sherilyn Adams, Executive Director, Larkin Street Youth Services

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GLOSSARY

AB – 15 – COVID-19 relief: Tenancy: Tenant Stabilization Act of 2021

This bill would extend the definition of “COVID-19 rental debt” as unpaid rent or any other unpaid financial obligation of a tenant that came due between March 1, 2020, and December 31, 2021. The bill would also extend the repeal date of the act to January 1, 2026. The bill would make other conforming changes to align with these extended dates. By extending the repeal date of the act, the bill would expand the crime of perjury and create a state-mandated local program. (CA legislature)

AB – 16 – Tenant, Small Landlord, and Affordable Housing Provider Stabilization Act of 2021

This bill would state the intent of the Legislature to enact the Tenant, Small Landlord, and Affordable Housing Provider Stabilization Act of 2021 to address the long-term financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on renters, small landlords, and affordable housing providers, ensure ongoing housing stability for tenants at risk of eviction, and stabilize rental properties at risk of foreclosure. This bill would include legislative findings and declarations in support of the intended legislation. (CA legislature)

AB – 3088 – Tenancy: rental payment default: Mortgage forbearance: state of emergency: COVID-19

This bill, the Tenant, Homeowner, and Small Landlord Relief and Stabilization Act of 2020, would, among other things, until January 1, 2023, additionally apply those protections to a first lien mortgage or deed of trust that is secured by residential real property that is occupied by a tenant, contains no more than four dwelling units, and meets certain criteria, including that a tenant occupying the property is unable to pay rent due to a reduction in income resulting from the novel coronavirus. (CA legislature)

AMI – Average Monthly Income

Most federal and State housing assistance programs set maximum incomes for eligibility to live in assisted housing, and maximum rents and housing costs that may be charged to eligible residents, usually based on their incomes. HUD’s limits are based on surveys of local area median income (AMI)

CA BCSHA – California Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency

The Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency assists and educates consumers regarding the licensing, regulation, and enforcement of professionals and businesses in California.

CalHFA – California Housing Finance Agency

Established in 1975, CalHFA was chartered as the state’s affordable housing lender. The Agency’s Multifamily Division finances affordable rental housing through partnerships with jurisdictions, developers and more, while its Single Family Division provides first mortgage loans and down payment assistance to first-time homebuyers.

CEQA – CEQA – California Env. Quality Act

CEQA, or the California Environmental Quality Act, is a statute that requires state and local agencies to identify the significant environmental impacts of their actions and to avoid or mitigate those impacts, if feasible.

The purpose of CEQA is to: Disclose to the public the significant environmental effects of a proposed discretionary project, through the preparation of an Initial Study (IS), Negative Declaration (ND), or Environmental Impact Report (EIR). (CA Office of Planning and Research)

CDBG-CV – CARES Relief Community Development Block Grants

Congress provided \$5 billion in the CARES Act for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program to states, metropolitan cities, urban counties, and insular areas. (HUD)

CDLAC – California Debt Limit Allocation Committee

CDLAC's programs are used to finance affordable housing developments for low-income Californians, build solid waste disposal and waste recycling facilities, and to finance industrial development projects (CA State Treasurer's Office)

ESG-CV – CARES Relief Emergency Solutions Grants

These special ESG-CV funds are to be used to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) among individuals and families who are homeless or receiving homeless assistance. The funds will also support additional homeless assistance and homelessness prevention activities to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19. (HUD)

HCD – California Department of Housing and Community Development

The California Department of Housing and Community Development awards loans and grants to public and private housing developers, nonprofit agencies, cities, counties, state and federal partners. This money supports the construction, acquisition, rehabilitation, and preservation of affordable rental and ownership homes, provides permanent supportive housing options as well as stable, safe shelter for those experiencing homelessness. (HCD)

HUD – US Department of Housing and Urban Development

LI, VLI, ELI – Low Income, Very Low Income and Extremely Low Income

Low-income applicants earn less than 80% of the area median

Very low-income applicants earn less than 50% of the area median

Extremely low-income earn less than 30% of the area median

NGO – Non-government Organization

PHA – Public Housing Authority

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) administers Federal aid to local housing agencies (HAs) that manage the housing for low-income residents at rents they can afford. HUD furnishes technical and professional assistance in planning, developing and managing these developments. (HUD)

PSH – Permanent Supportive Housing

Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) is a model that combines low-barrier affordable housing, health care, and supportive services to help individuals and families lead more stable lives. PSH typically targets people who are

homeless or otherwise unstably housed, experience multiple barriers to housing, and are unable to maintain housing stability without supportive services. (National Health Care for the Homeless Center)

TCAC – California Tax Credit Allocation Committee

The California Tax Credit Allocation Committee (CTCAC) administers the federal and state Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Programs. Both programs were created to promote private investment in affordable rental housing for low-income Californians. (CA State Treasurer’s Office)

Section 8 / HCV – Section 8 Housing Vouchers

The housing choice voucher program is the federal government’s major program for assisting very low-income families, the elderly, and the disabled to afford decent, safe, and sanitary housing in the private market. Since housing assistance is provided on behalf of the family or individual, participants are able to find their own housing, including single-family homes, townhouses and apartments. Expanded rental assistance like the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program is a substantial component of any strategy to address the severe housing shortage and instability faced by ELI renters. Seventy-three percent of current HCV recipients are extremely low-income (HUD, 2018).