



Mission: Build partnerships and promote strong collaborative action to ensure all residents within the County have stable, safe, and healthy places to live.

**Santa Cruz County
Housing for Health Partnership (H4HP) Policy Board
Regular Meeting Agenda
April 20, 2026; 11am-1pm
420 Capitola Ave., Capitola – Capitola City Hall - Community Room**

Zoom Conference Link: <https://santacruzcounty-us.zoomgov.com/j/1602491372>

Call-In Number: +16692545252 Webinar ID#: 1602491372

**Call to Order/Welcome/Introductions
Non-Agenda Public Comment**

Brief Action Items {11:05 – 11:15 pm}

1. Review and Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes: February 9, 2026

Discussion/Action Items (11:15 – 12:30 pm)

2. CoC Gaps and Needs Analysis
3. Strategic Plans and Goals Alignment
4. HUD CoC Funding Update

Lived Expertise Workgroup Updates {12:30 – 12:45 pm}

5. Status Update

Information/Potential Action Items {12:45 – 1:00 pm}

6. Policy Board Co-Chairs - Seeking Interest/Nominations

Future Agenda Topics

- CoC Funding NOFO
- CoC Policy Updates
- Update on Brown Act changes/procedures for additions to agenda

**Board Member Announcements
Adjournment**

Next Meeting: June 8, 2026, 11am – 1 pm

The County of Santa Cruz does not discriminate based on disability, and no person shall, by reason of a disability, be denied the benefit of the services, programs, or activities. This meeting is in an accessible facility. If you are a person with a disability and require special assistance to participate in the meeting, please call (831) 763-8900 (TDD/TTY- 711) at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting to make arrangements. Persons with disabilities may request a copy of the agenda in an alternative format. As a courtesy to those affected, please attend the meeting smoke and scent free.



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Housing for Health Partnership (H4HP) Policy Board Regular Meeting Minutes February 9, 2026; 11 am

Call to Order/Welcome

Present: Connie Moreno-Peraza, Courtney Lindberg, Eric Krebs, Marni Sandoval, Monica Martinez, Radovan Radich, Serg Kagno, Shebreh Kalantari-Johnson, Susie O' Hara

Absent: Dr. Faris Sabbah, Heather Rogers, Justin Cummings, Mali LaGoe, Manuel Caceres, Kyrolos Saad, Mars Nored, Rosie Garcia, Terence Concannon

Additions and Deletions to the Agenda: None

Non-Agenda Public Comment

Action Items (vote required)

1. Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes: December 17, 2025

Discussion: None

Public Comment: None

Motion: Move to approve Regular Meeting Minutes: December 17, 2025

Motion to Approve: Radovan Radich

Motion Seconded: Courtney Lindberg

Abstentions: Susie O' Hara

Board Action: Motion passed

2. Approval to amend the Santa Cruz County Housing for Health Partnership Governance Charter, updated on December 17, 2025

Discussion: The H4HP Board reviewed proposed language changes to the Governance Charter related to the Operations Workgroup. The proposed changes sought to broaden participation in the Operations Workgroup by allowing additional housing and service provider organizations, including non-Continuum of Care (CoC) and non-Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) agencies, to participate. Board members discussed the intent of the proposal: to address service coordination challenges and reduce silos among organizations serving individuals experiencing homelessness. The discussion highlighted that many systems, including behavioral



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health, healthcare, food assistance providers, and CalAIM programs, interact with individuals experiencing homelessness but may not always be connected to the coordinated entry system or the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Suggestions included expanding training opportunities for organizations outside of the CES connector collaborative, improving information sharing between agencies, and exploring mechanisms such as memoranda of understanding to support collaboration. Staff explained that the Operations Workgroup is intentionally structured as a smaller group of organizations that receive HUD CoC or related funding and that are directly involved in implementing policies and procedures required under federal and state programs. Maintaining a focused membership allows for consistent participation, policy discussion, and operational decision-making. Staff also noted resource limitations related to staffing, HMIS administration, meeting capacity, and program requirements. Board members acknowledged the broader coordination challenges and discussed other venues for collaboration across systems, including partnerships related to CalAIM and the Health Improvement Partnership, which convenes healthcare and community providers to coordinate services for Medi-Cal members experiencing homelessness. Members also discussed procedural considerations for bringing forward policy proposals that affect governance documents. Comments emphasized the importance of ensuring sufficient board input and coordination with staff prior to agendaizing proposed bylaw or governance changes. The Board also identified a future agenda item to review updates to the Brown Act and clarify board procedures for bringing forward agenda items.

Public Comment: None

Motion: Move to not amend the Santa Cruz County Housing for Health Partnership Governance Charter, updated on December 17, 2025, and direct staff to explore opportunities to improve coordination with community partners, including through collaboration with the Health Improvement Partnership and other relevant groups.

Motion to Approve: Susie O’Hara

Motion Seconded: Monica Martinez

Abstentions: None

Board Action: Motion passed; Serg Kagno, Eric Krebs (opposed)

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Discussion/Action Items

3. Coordinated Entry and Resource Collaborative – Discussion with United Way/211

Discussion: The H4HP Board received a presentation from Housing for Health and United Way/211. The presentation included an overview of their partnership and the services provided through the 2-1-1 resource and referral system. The 2-1-1 call center receives approximately 8,500 calls annually, with about 40 percent related to housing. The service operates 24 hours a day and provides information and referral for housing, food, utilities, transportation, and other community resources, with language interpretation available. Staff explained that the partnership supports individuals and families experiencing or at risk of homelessness through a telephonic Coordinated Entry access point. Individuals may submit a Connection Services Request (CSR) form online, after which 2-1-1 staff review the request, check the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to determine whether the individual is already connected to services, and conduct follow-up outreach to provide referrals and resource navigation. 2-1-1 also maintains regularly updated charts showing availability of shelter beds, safe parking, and affordable housing opportunities. Single adults represent the largest group seeking housing assistance, followed by families and transitional youth. Wait times vary by population, with longer waits for single individuals due to limited available resources. Board members asked questions about call center operations, contract funding, and waitlist timelines, and discussed opportunities to improve coordination of community resource guides, increase outreach, and strengthen connections with other service systems. Staff noted ongoing efforts to improve data integration, update resource information, and enhance coordination with community partners.

Lived Expertise Workgroup Updates

4. General Updates and Report Back

Discussion: Staff reported that the previous partner organization supporting the Lived Expertise groups, Goodwill Industries, notified the Continuum of Care that it would no longer continue in that role. As a result, the groups are currently paused while staff identify alternative partners and develop a plan to reestablish the groups, including ensuring appropriate support and compensation for participants. Staff anticipate being able to address these issues prior to the next Policy Board meeting.

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Information/Potential Action Items

5. 2026 Point-in-Time (PIT) Count Update

Discussion: H4HP Staff reported that the January Point-in-Time (PIT) Count saw a record level of participation, with 275 volunteers, reflecting continued growth over recent years. Changes to this year's approach included conducting all trainings via Zoom, which increased accessibility, and implementing a revised youth engagement strategy in partnership with community organizations. This included targeted outreach, use of compensated peer guides, designated count locations, and incentives to encourage participation. Approximately 450 surveys are currently in progress, and a final report will be issued upon completion. Members discussed community perceptions of encampment activity and clarified that outreach and enforcement efforts are conducted on a regular schedule and are not coordinated with the PIT Count. A potential future discussion on encampment management in relation to data accuracy was suggested. Staff expressed appreciation to key contributors for their leadership and coordination efforts.

6. Basic Needs and Connection Services Survey

Discussion: H4HP staff reported that Housing Matters previously announced the closure of its day services program effective at the end of March 2026, following the earlier closure of the Mental Health Client Action Network (MHCAN) site in August 2025. Both programs provided critical daytime services, including access to basic needs and support for individuals. In response to these service gaps, and at the request of county and state leadership, a community survey was developed to gather input on potential solutions and to solicit informal proposals regarding service models and associated costs. Staff noted that the survey has received early engagement, with approximately 30 responses submitted to date, and that responses will continue to be collected through the end of the week. Preliminary findings and next steps are expected to be presented at an upcoming City of Santa Cruz council meeting and a County Board of Supervisors meeting. Board member, Serg Kagno, shared that Stepping Up Santa Cruz is downtown and invites interested parties to participate in site tours to explore potential use opportunities.

7. Status of HHAP-6 and HUD CoC Funding

Discussion: H4HP Staff reported that the County's Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) Round 6 application has received state approval. The County is among the earlier jurisdictions to be approved and will now proceed with contracting to access funds. Staff also provided an update on HHAP Round 7, noting that funding is currently tied to the State budget process. The Governor has proposed reserving

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\$500 million for the next round; however, release of funds is contingent upon legislative action to define accountability requirements. Ongoing legal and administrative actions have delayed the release of the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). Federal court has directed the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to prioritize renewal of existing grants while complying with proper procedures for future funding announcements. The CoC has submitted a request to prioritize local grant renewals, though no response has been received to date. Staff noted that providers remain in a state of uncertainty pending HUD action. The local concern is the MATCH program, which provides rental assistance for individuals with disabilities living in master-leased housing. This program is funded at approximately \$1.3 million and is set to expire at the end of February 2026. Current funding is expected to sustain the program through March 2026; however, its continuation beyond that timeframe is uncertain without grant renewal or alternative funding. Staff indicated that contingency planning is underway. It is anticipated that a new NOFO will be released in the coming months in alignment with federal requirements.

Staff provided updates on potential future risks related to federal Continuum of Care (CoC) funding. It was noted that recent federal appropriations set a lower funding threshold for Tier 1 projects, which may result in reduced funding levels for permanent housing programs compared to prior years. Additionally, federal guidance regarding a potential cap on permanent housing funding remains unclear, as it was not addressed in the recently approved federal appropriations bill. Due to the uncertainty surrounding the forthcoming Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), staff emphasized the need to plan for possible reductions in funding for permanent housing programs beginning in 2026.

8. Updates on New Shelter/ Transitional Housing Capacity

Discussion: Staff shared updates on new shelter and transitional housing projects. While some projects have experienced delays due to construction-related issues, the Hope Village modular shelter in Watsonville has opened and is operational, with minor facility issues still being addressed. Other projects are anticipated to become operational between mid-March and early April.

9. City of Watsonville Multi-Disciplinary Team Street Outreach Pilot

Discussion: Staff provided an update on a collaborative pilot program with the City of Watsonville aimed at improving coordination between law enforcement, behavioral health, and human services. The pilot builds on a prior community policing effort that paired a Watsonville Police Department resource and



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information specialist with Community Action Board (CAB) staff to connect individuals experiencing homelessness to services. Based on lessons learned, a revised team model is being implemented, separating intensive follow-up case management from rapid referral functions to improve efficiency and outcomes. The program will also explore the formation of a multidisciplinary team under state law to enhance coordination, data sharing, and service delivery for individuals experiencing homelessness. Early outcomes from the initial pilot phase included more than 100 documented positive contacts, ranging from resource connections to transportation assistance. The program primarily targets individuals with lower levels of law enforcement interaction who require support accessing services and housing, as well as a smaller group of high-need individuals with frequent system involvement. Staff noted that the program is in its early implementation phase and will continue to be evaluated. Potential connections to shelter and transitional housing resources, including Hope Village in Watsonville, were also discussed.

Board Member Announcements

Board member Courtney Lindberg announced their departure to accept a new position and expressed appreciation for the group's collaboration and work.

Adjournment

Next Meeting: Monday, April 20, 2026, 11:00 am

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Discussion / Action Item 2: CoC Gaps and Needs Analysis

Proposed Action Item from:

Robert Ratner, Director, Housing for Health Division

Materials Prepared by:

Focus Strategies and Housing for Health Division Staff

Proposed Action(s)/Feedback Requested:

- 1) What information or data points stand out?
- 2) How did you feel after reviewing / hearing this information?
- 3) What clarification questions do board members have about the information in the packet or the presentation?
- 4) What additional or different information is needed to better understand local needs and gaps and inform decision-making and prioritization?
- 5) How should this information be used?
- 6) Where are the biggest needs and gaps in our area?
- 7) Based on the information, what activities/goals should the CoC focus on in the next six months?

Background

One of the responsibilities of Continuum of Care (CoC) entities outlined in Title 24 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Section 578.7 includes “Conducting an annual gaps analysis of the homeless needs and services available within the geographic area.” The Santa Cruz County CoC has used a variety of different approaches for conducting this analysis work in the past including: conducting PIT counts *with* surveys on an annual basis rather than every two years; working with outside consulting firms to analyze available data and gather feedback through focus groups and community meetings; developing standardized data reports and dashboards; and supporting and conducting community input sessions.

Housing for Health Division staff would like to establish a more consistent approach for conducting this analysis and sharing this information. Staff from Focus Strategies and Housing for Health compiled data from our local Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and multiple other sources to generate the information included in this Board packet. Raw data tables from the analysis work are available upon request.

Attachment

- Santa Cruz County Housing for Health Response System HUD Needs and Gaps Analysis



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SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

H4H RESPONSE SYSTEM HUD NEEDS AND GAPS ANALYSIS

Overview of System Assessment Insights



In 2025, an estimated **1 out of every 167** residents of Santa Cruz County experienced homelessness.



The Housing for Health (H4H) Response System has **demonstrated success in combatting homelessness** in the community, despite **exceedingly high barriers**.



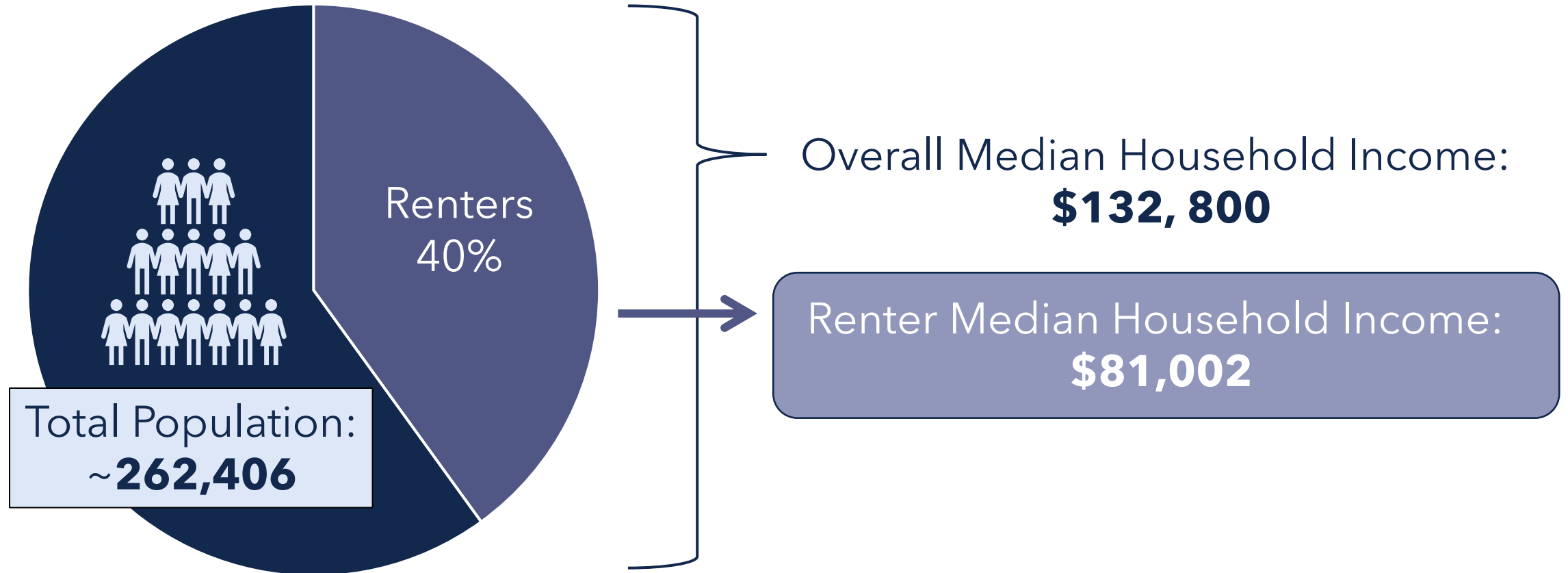
More **affordable places to live** and more **stable funding** for all program types and target populations are needed to make more substantial reductions in homelessness.



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Housing Affordability


Overall County Landscape



Housing Affordability for Renters

Renter Median Household Income:
\$81,002

2.1x Fair Market Rate (FMR)
for a 1-bedroom unit
in Santa Cruz County

 The median renter household in Santa Cruz County would spend **~48%** of their income on rent alone for a 1-bedroom unit, not inclusive of other housing costs such as utilities.

HUD considers spending 50% or more of gross household income on housing costs (including utilities) **severely cost burdened**.

Housing Costs for Minimum Wage Earners

To afford a 1-bedroom unit in Santa Cruz County at FMR with a **severe cost burden** (50%), a minimum wage earner would need to work **90 hours/week**.



\$16.50
per hour

X



90 hours
per week

=



1-bedroom unit
at FMR with
severe cost burden

Housing Costs for Social Security Income Recipients



The average rent for a 1-bedroom unit in Santa Cruz County is **over 5x** the average amount received in monthly SSI payments (\$1,207).

\$362

Affordable
Rent for SSI Recipient
(30%)

\$604

Severely Cost Burdened
Rent for SSI Recipient
(50%)

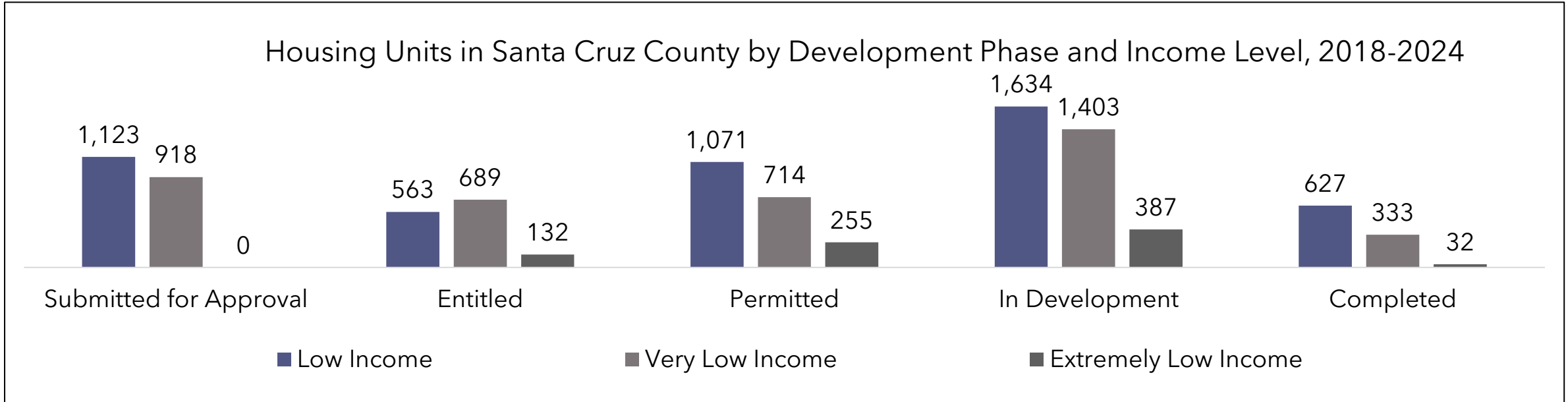
\$3,056

1-Bedroom Unit Rent¹⁵

Affordable Housing Availability

~**16,000** households in Santa Cruz County (16%) are *extremely low income*.

Only 32 (1%) of housing units completed between 2018 and 2024 in the Santa Cruz County were for *extremely low income* households.



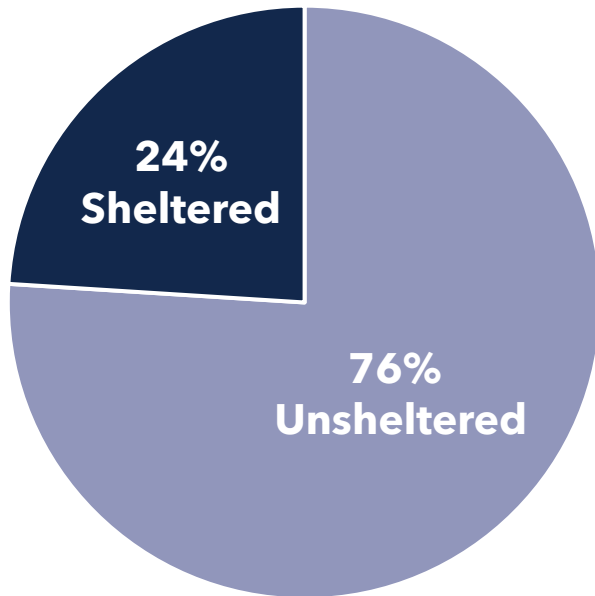


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Homelessness in Santa Cruz County

Point in Time Count Insights

In 2025, 1,473 people were counted in the Santa Cruz County Point in Time Count, a one-night count of people experiencing homelessness in the community.

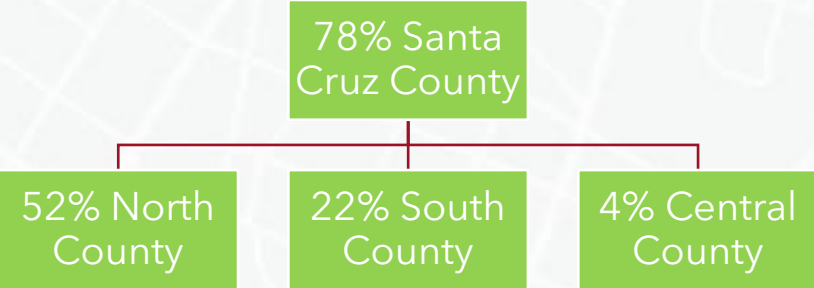


1,122 (76%) of the people counted were unsheltered, and 351 (24%) were living in shelter or transitional housing.

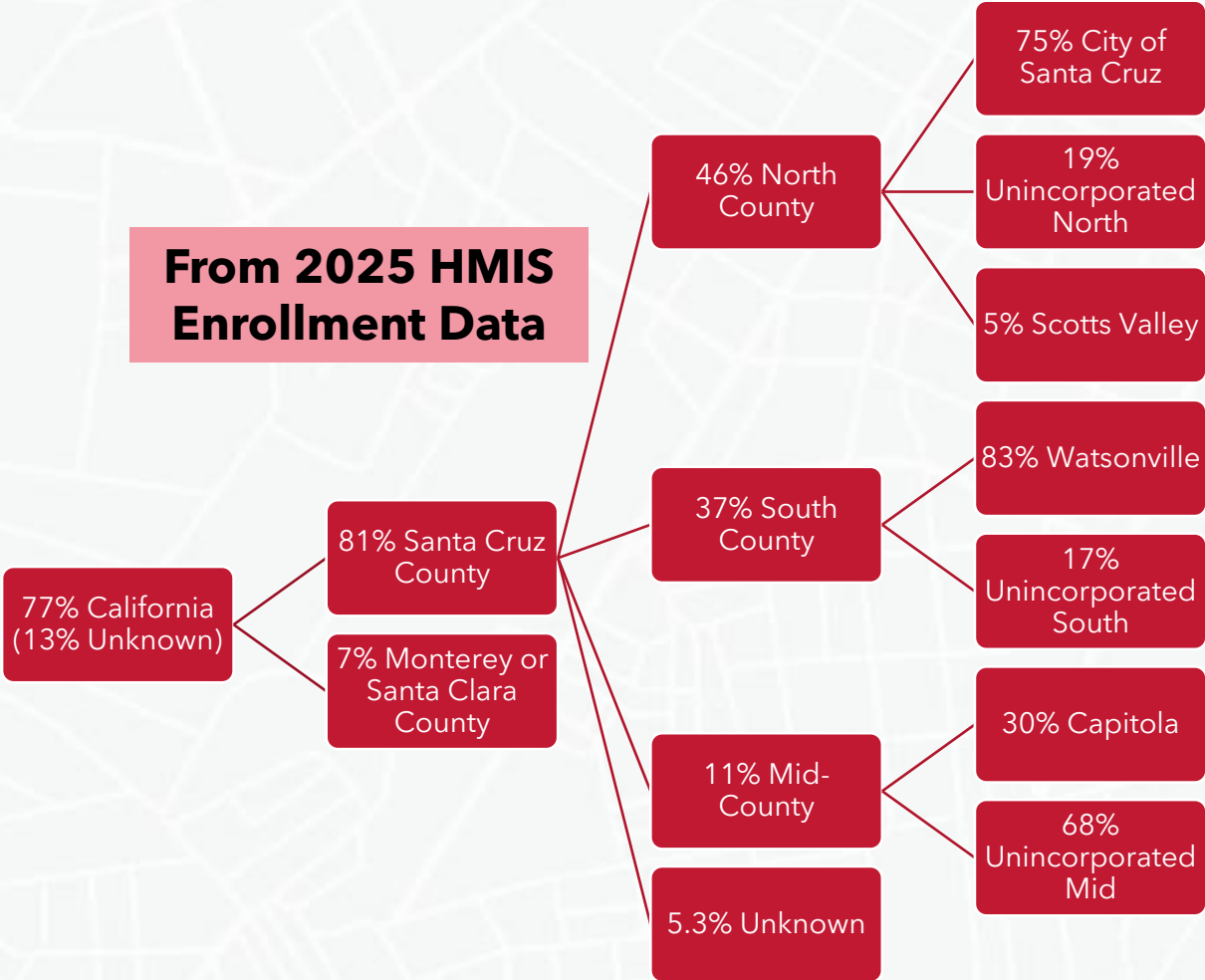
Geographic Distribution - Last Permanent Housing



From 2025 PIT Survey Data

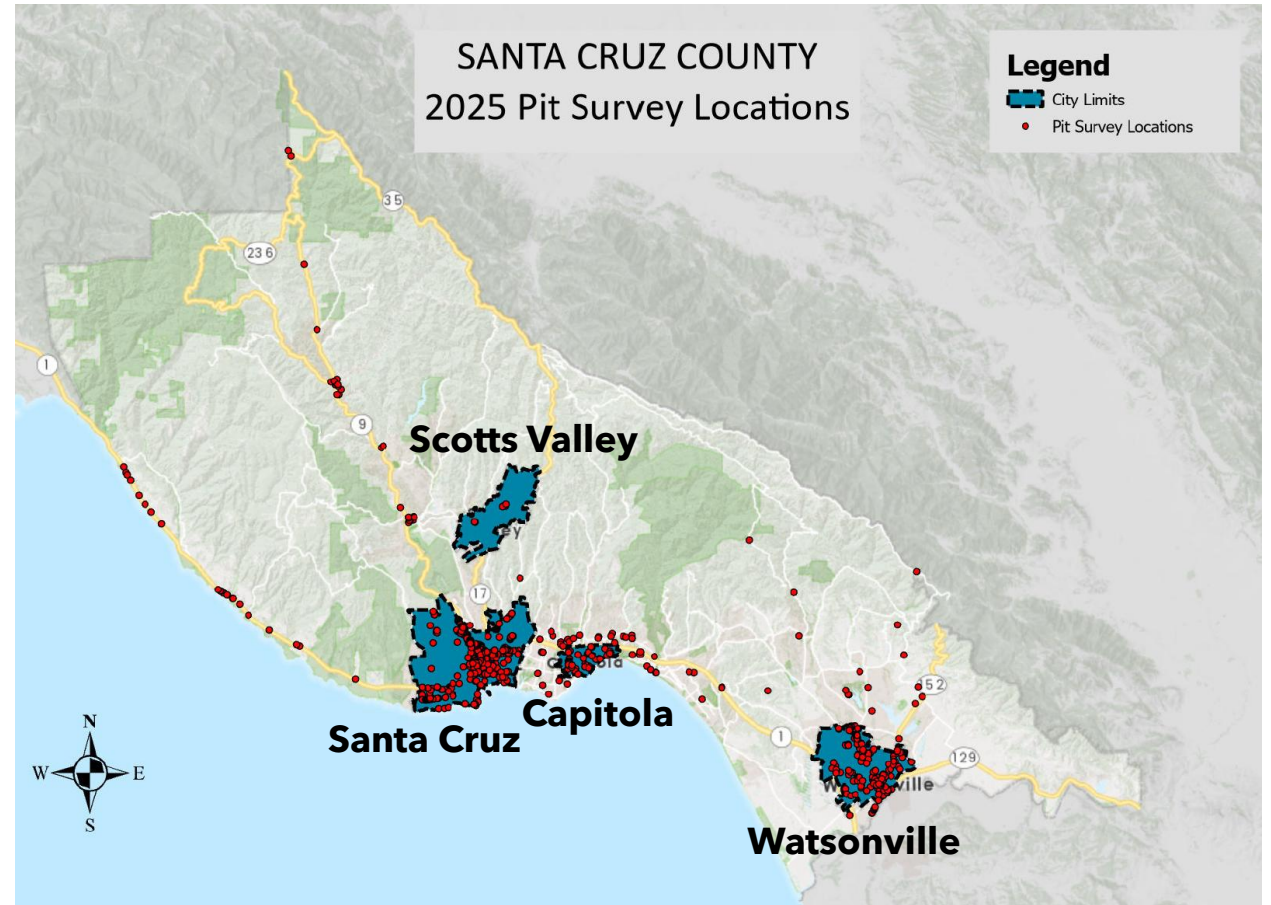


From 2025 HMIS Enrollment Data



Geographic Distribution of Housing Instability

Per the 2025 Point in Time Count, unsheltered homelessness is concentrated in city boundaries, especially Santa Cruz and Watsonville.



Estimates of People Experiencing Homelessness



The PIT Count is widely understood to be an undercount of people experiencing homelessness with **estimates ranging between a 15% to 35% undercount.**

With this assumption, the 2025 PIT Count of 1,473 people would indicate the true number of people experiencing homelessness on a single night in Santa Cruz County could be as high as **1,700 - 2,000.**

Sources:

Abramson, L., Ward, J.M., Hunter, S.B., & Garvey, R. (2025). *Growing Inaccuracies in Official Counts Jeopardize LA Homelessness Wins*. RAND Corporation, RR-A4438-1.
Hopper, K., et al. (2008). Estimating Numbers of Unsheltered Homeless People Through Plant-Capture and Postcount Survey Methods. *American Journal of Public Health*, 98(8), 1438-1442.

Estimates of People Experiencing Homelessness

The number of people experiencing homelessness over the course of a year is much higher than single-night estimates. The HUD Office of Community Planning and Development estimates that **annual counts** are approximately **2.5 times to 10.2 times** PIT Count estimates.

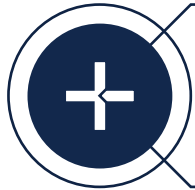
In Santa Cruz County, an annual estimate based on the 2025 PIT Count using this multiplier would range from **3,700-15,000 people**.



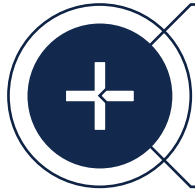
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Needs and Gaps Analysis Results

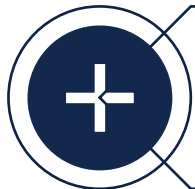
System Strengths



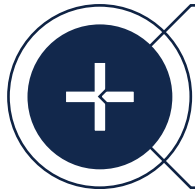
The H4H Response System exited 1,521 people to permanent housing destinations in just one year (2025)



Even with limited housing resources, the system exits 40% of shelter, 36% of CE, and 27% of street outreach participants to permanent housing



The system does a good job at reaching youth, seniors, families, and veterans experiencing homelessness



Quantitative analysis did not find disparities in access or exits to permanent housing by race

System Gaps



Street outreach services do not reach all people experiencing unsheltered homelessness in the community



Access to H4H system services and housing resources is especially limited **for adult-only** households and chronically homeless individuals



Approximately one third of clients are not connected to income and/or benefits by the time they exit from H4H system services



Although the system does a good job at exiting people to permanent housing, the rate of **returns to homelessness** is high **compared to other CoCs**, ranging from 24% returns from shelter exits to 16% from housing programs

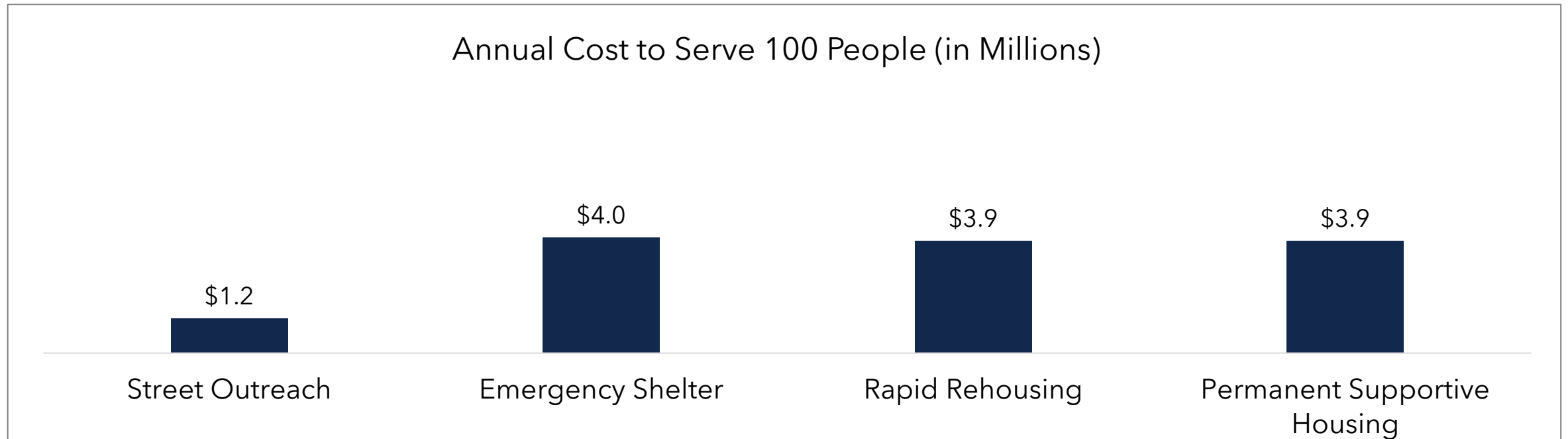


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Cost Analysis

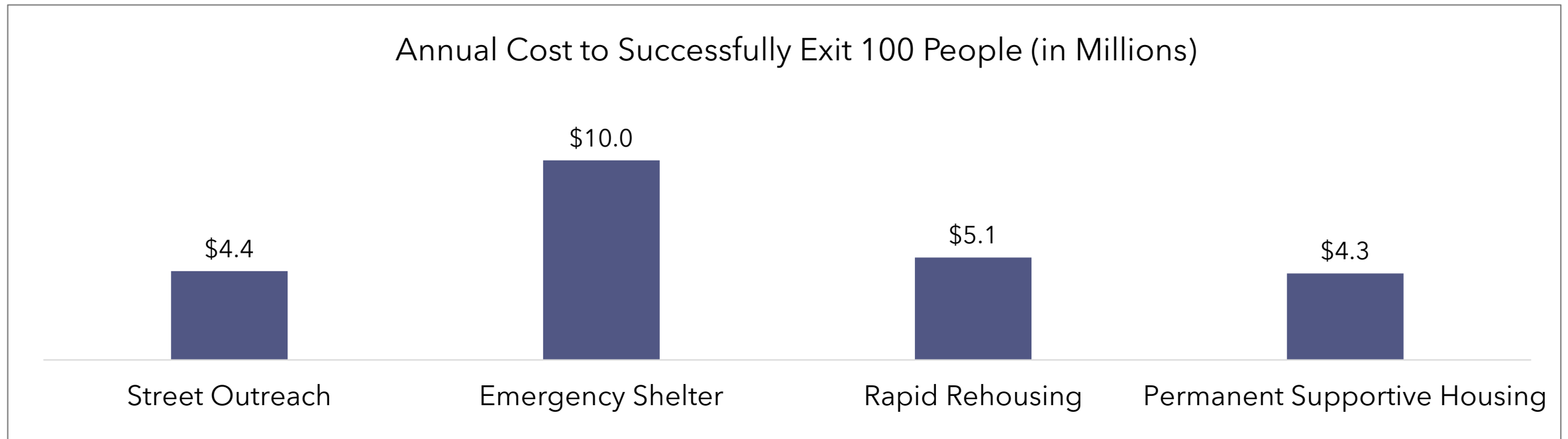
Average Costs by Program Type

To serve 100 people per year, Street Outreach is associated with the lowest total cost and **Emergency Shelter** the **highest total cost**.



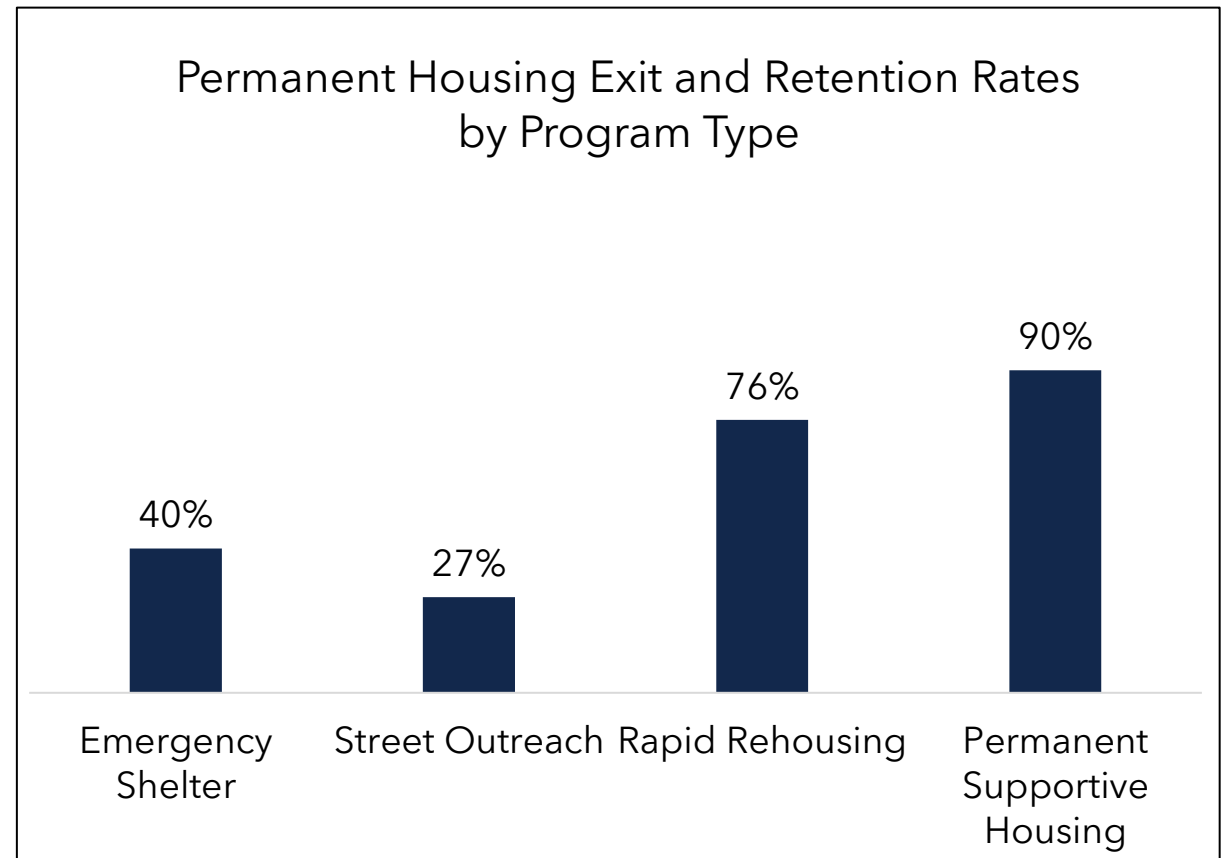
Average Costs by Program Type

However, to permanently house 100 people per year, **Permanent Supportive Housing** is associated with the **lowest total cost**.



Average Costs by Program Type

This can be explained by the substantial difference in **permanent housing outcomes** between the program types.



Cost to Close the Permanent Supportive Housing Gap



An estimated **115 chronically homeless people** with enrollments into Coordinated Entry in 2025 did not enroll in Permanent Supportive Housing.

To serve 115 additional clients in **Permanent Supportive Housing**, the H4H Response System would need to **invest** an additional **\$4.5m** in the program.



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APPENDIX

System Need: Housing Maintenance and Support

In 2025, of the 895 times 211 was contacted for housing resources:

- An estimated **349** contacts were from people that were housed and seeking support with **maintaining housing**
- An estimated **546** people were **unhoused** at the time of their contact



Minimal support available to offer that could prevent these households from entering homelessness

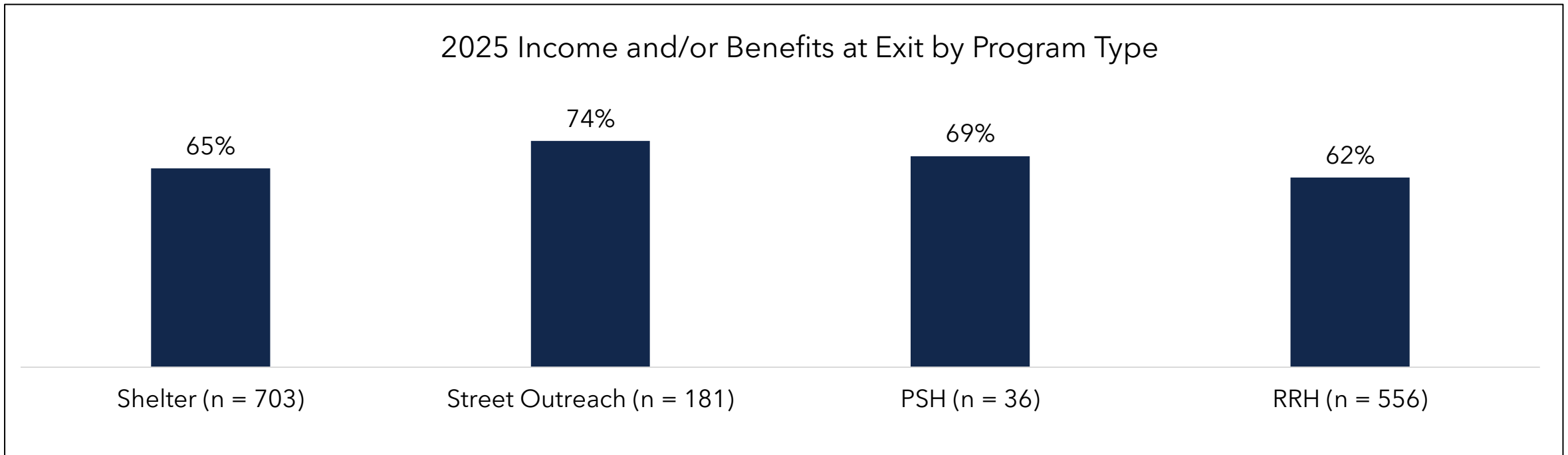


Of the 208 not already enrolled in HRS programs, **87% were placed on the Connector waitlist***

System Gap: Income and/or Benefits at Exit

Approximately **two thirds** of clients exiting from programs in the system have **income or connections to benefits** at exit.

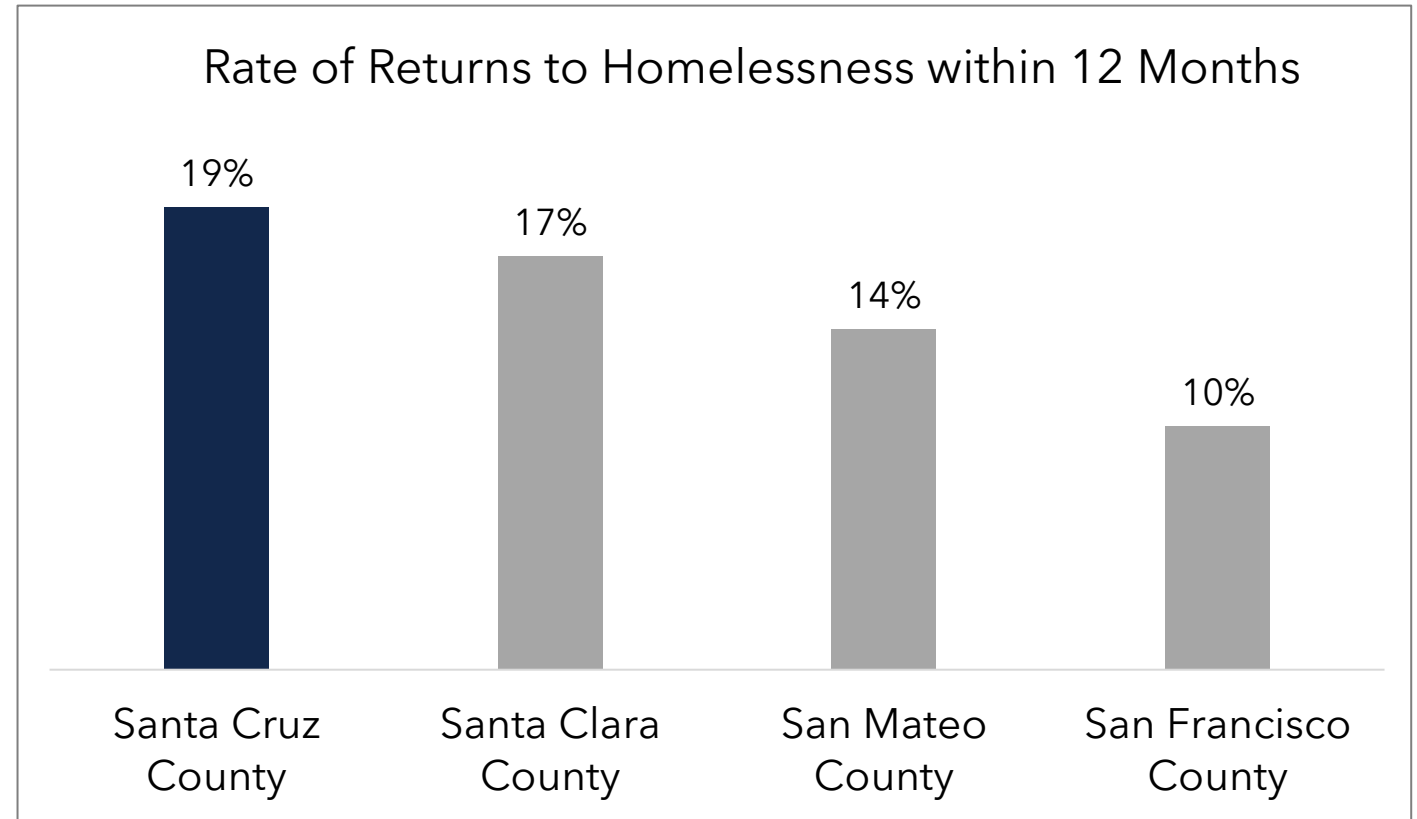
2025 Income and/or Benefits at Exit by Program Type



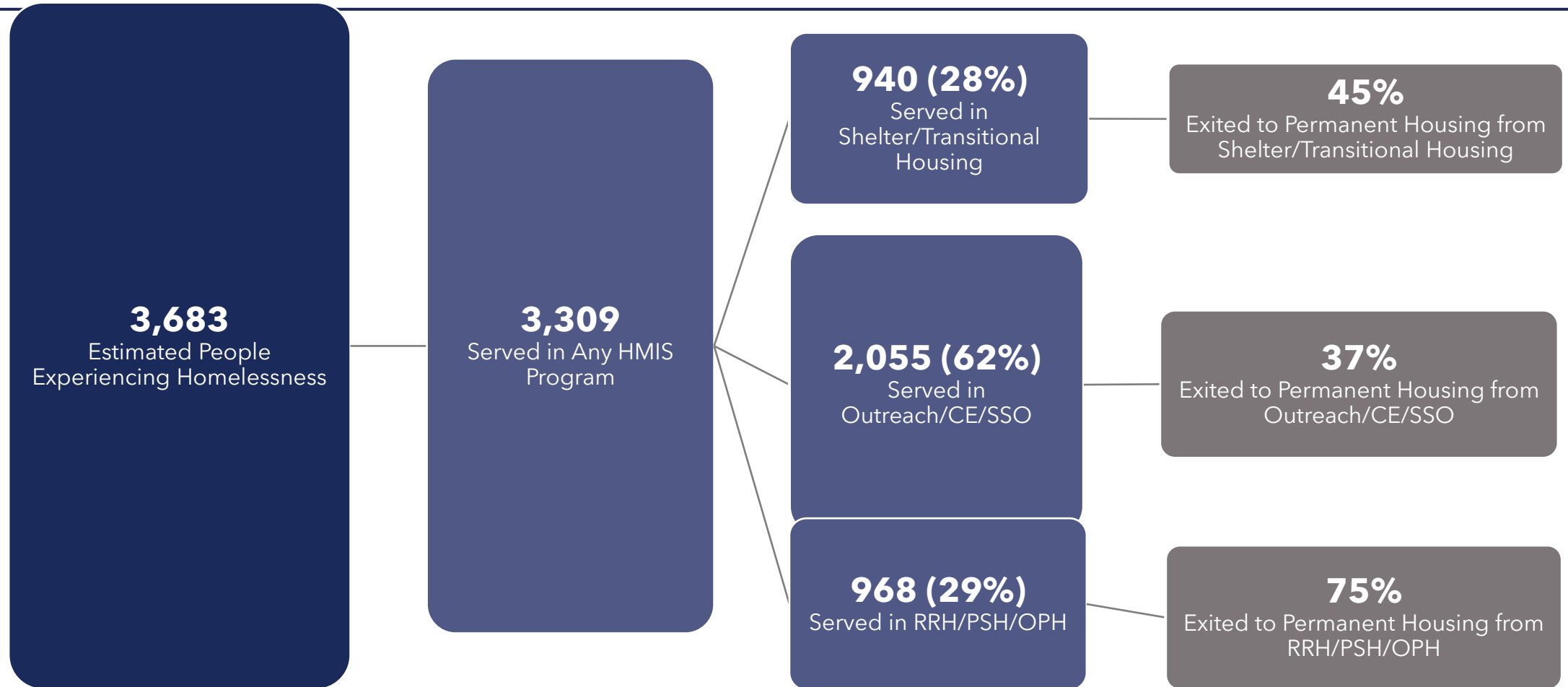
System Gap: Returns to Homelessness Within 12 Months



Santa Cruz County has a relatively **high 12-mo. return rate** compared to other counties in California.



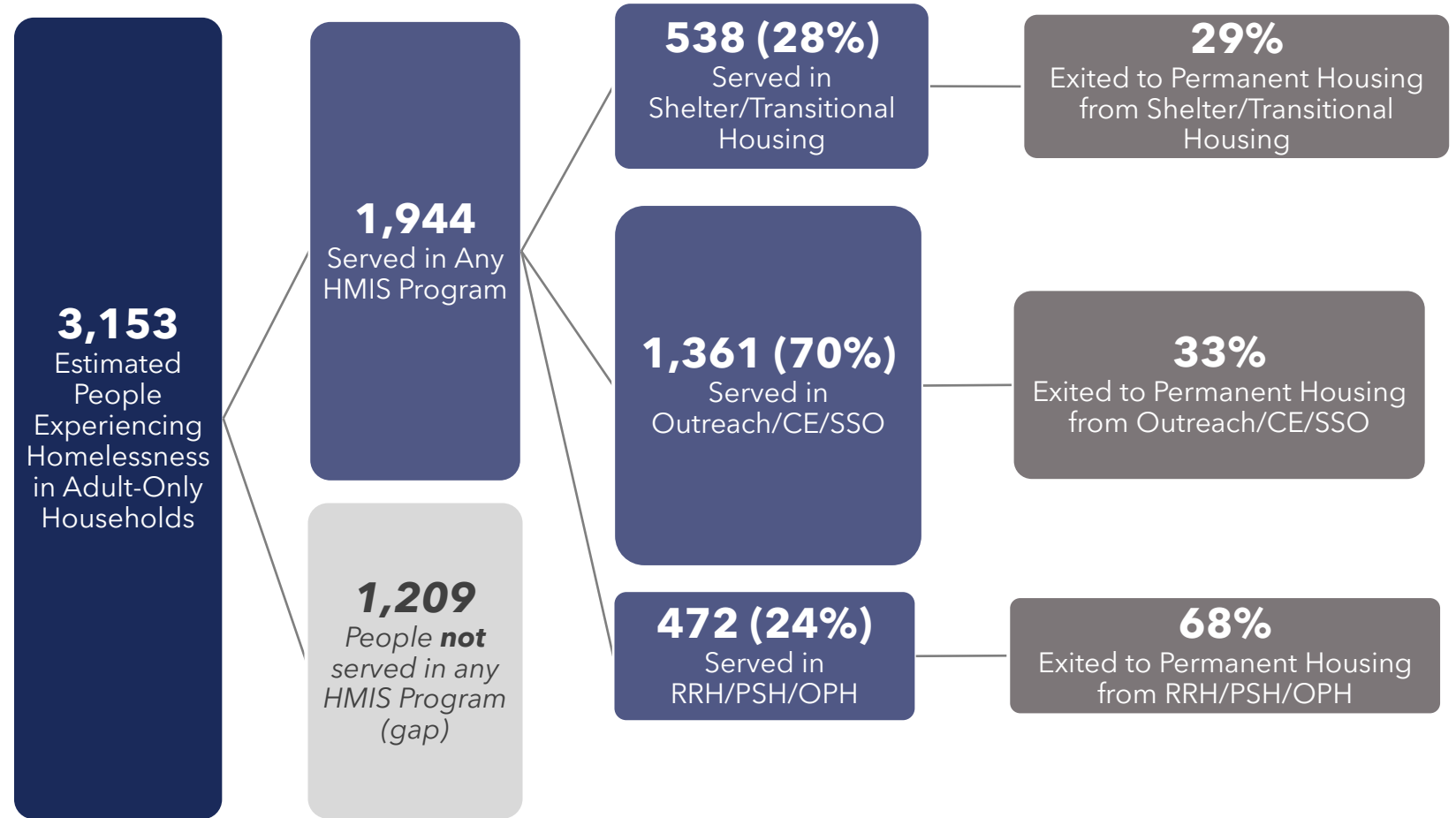
Overall System Flow



Note: People served in each program type may sum to greater than the total served in any HMIS program, as households may be served across multiple program types.

System Flow for Adult-Only Households

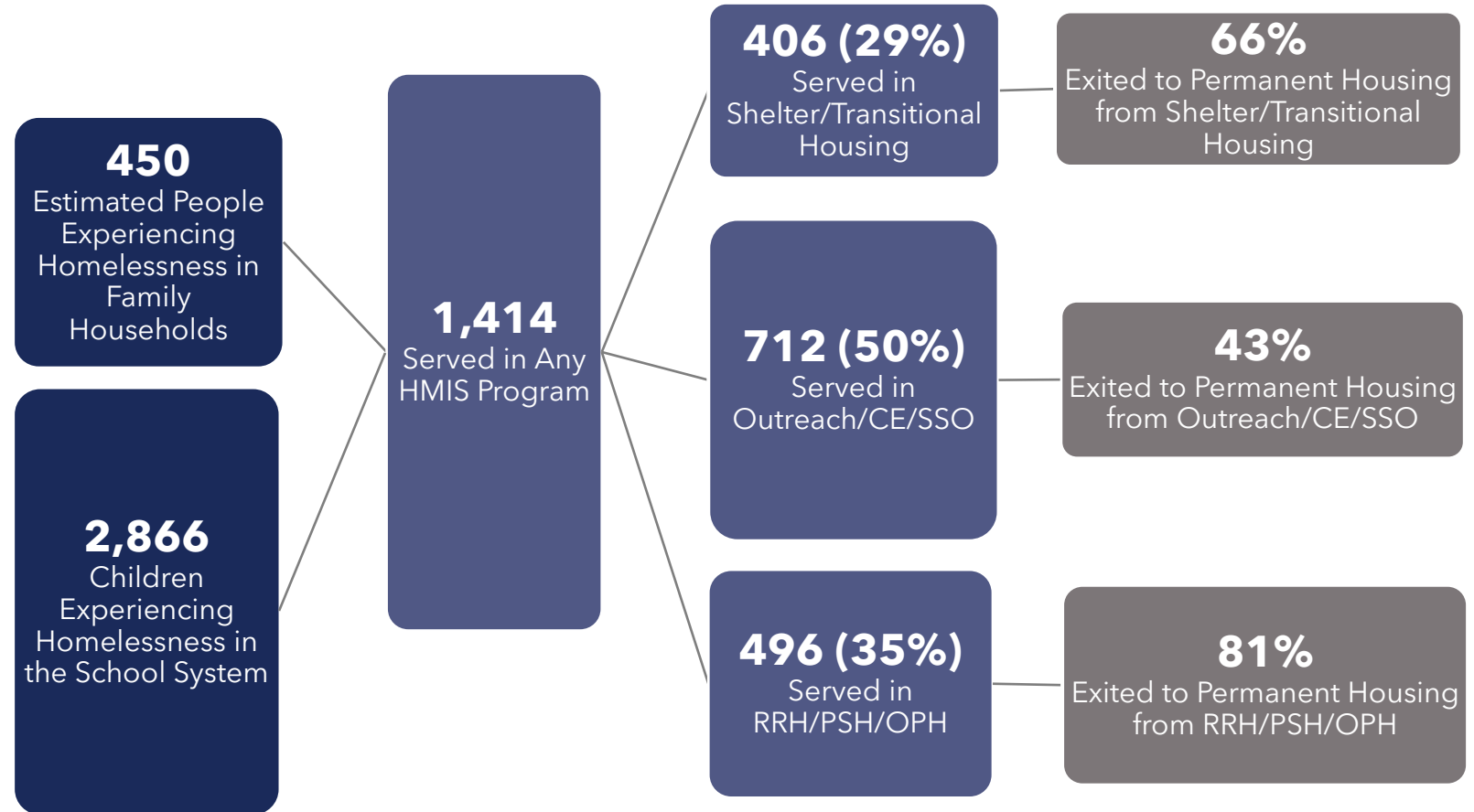
Adult-only households are served by the system at a lower rate than other groups overall, and an especially lower rate in housing programs.



Note: People served in each program type may sum to greater than the total served in any HMIS program, as households may be served across multiple program types.

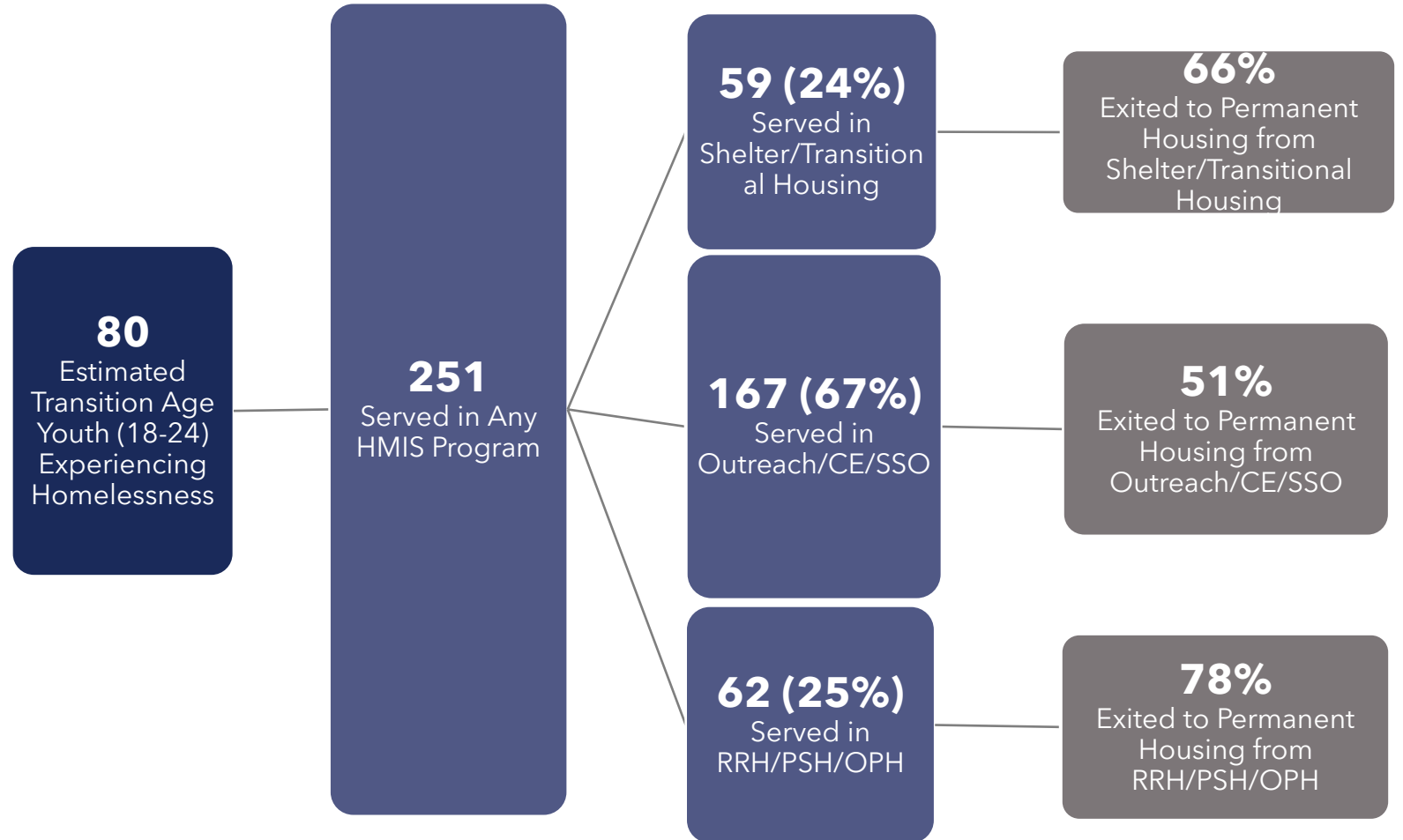
System Flow for Family Households

Families access housing programs at a relatively high rate and have high permanent housing exit rates from housing programs.



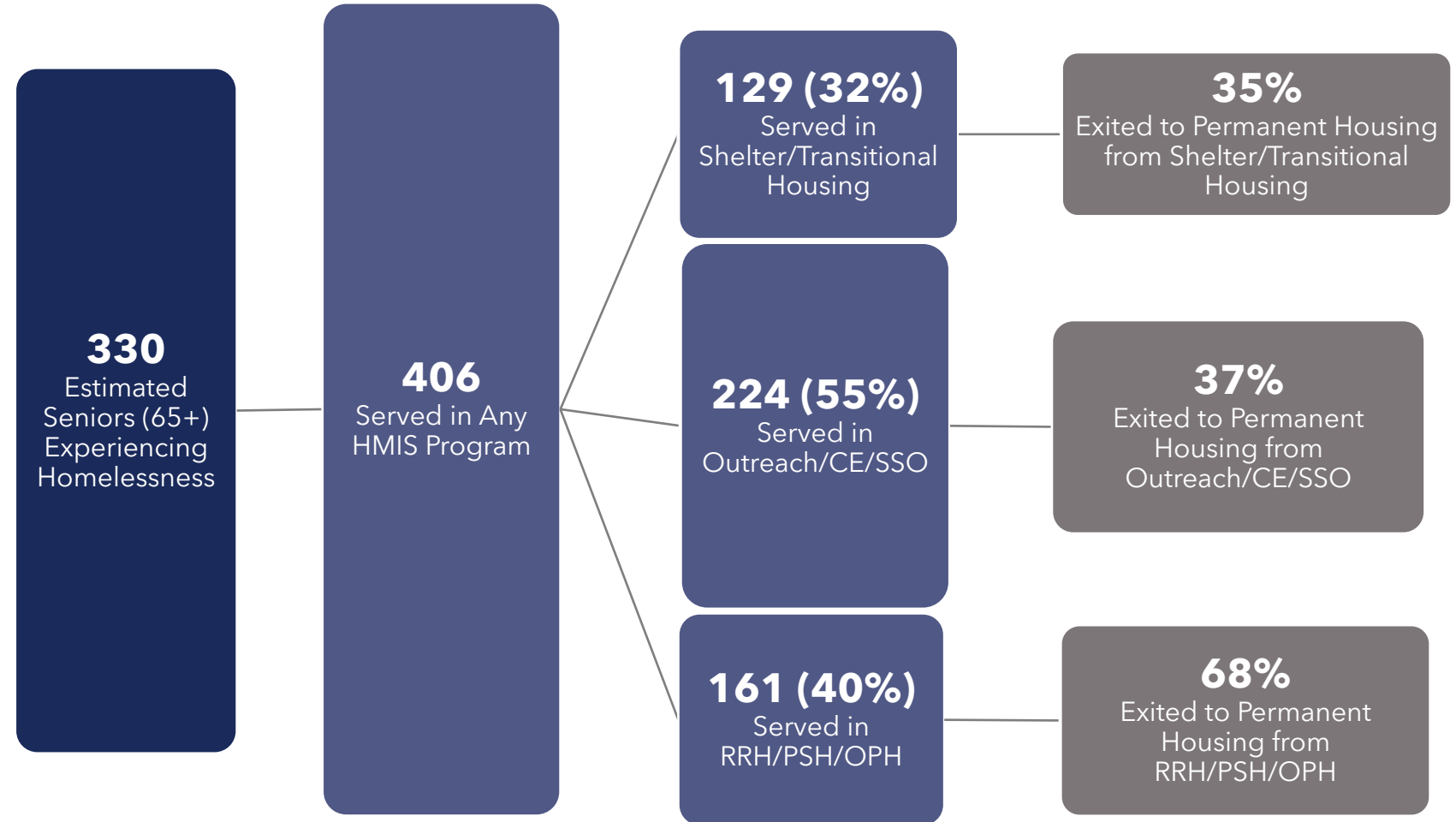
System Flow for Transition Age Youth

Transition age youth access HMIS programs at an even higher rate than estimated to be experiencing homelessness in the community.



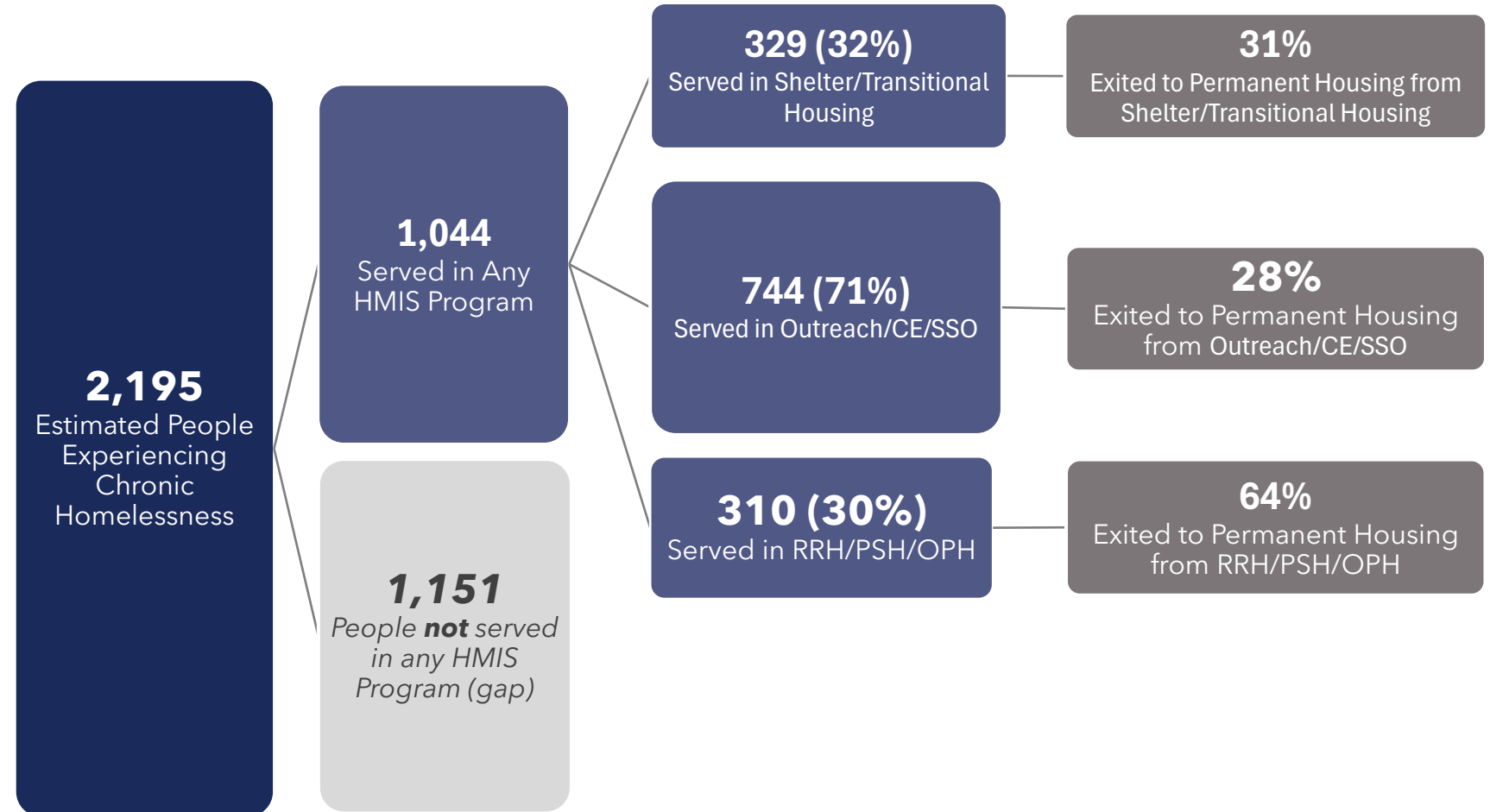
System Flow for Seniors

Seniors access housing programs at a higher rate than other groups.



System Flow for Chronically Homeless People

Chronically homeless households are underserved overall in the H4H response system.

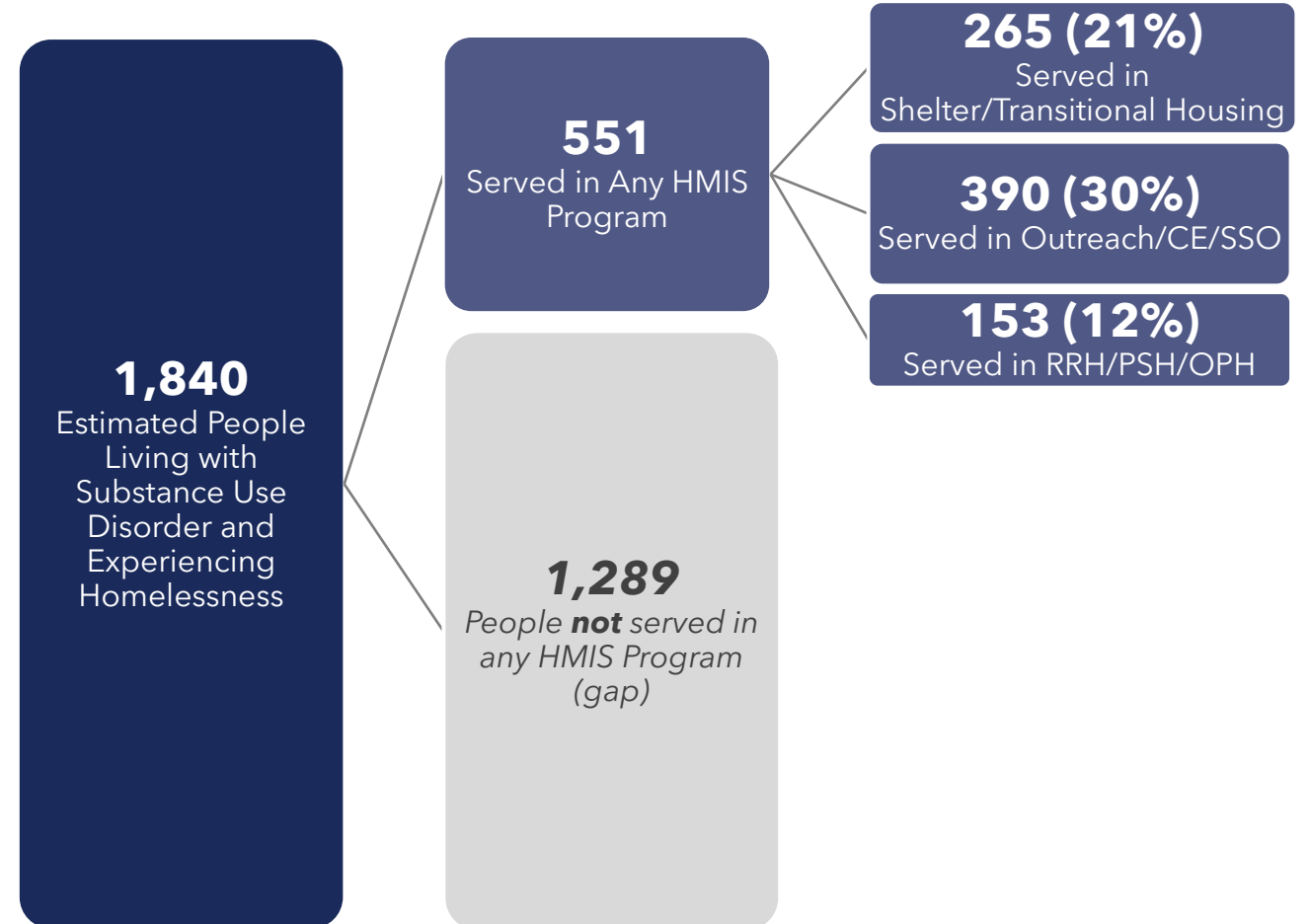


Note: People served in each program type may sum to greater than the total served in any HMIS program, as households may be served across multiple program types.

System Flow for People Living with Substance Use Disorder



People living with substance use disorder are underserved overall in the H4H response system.

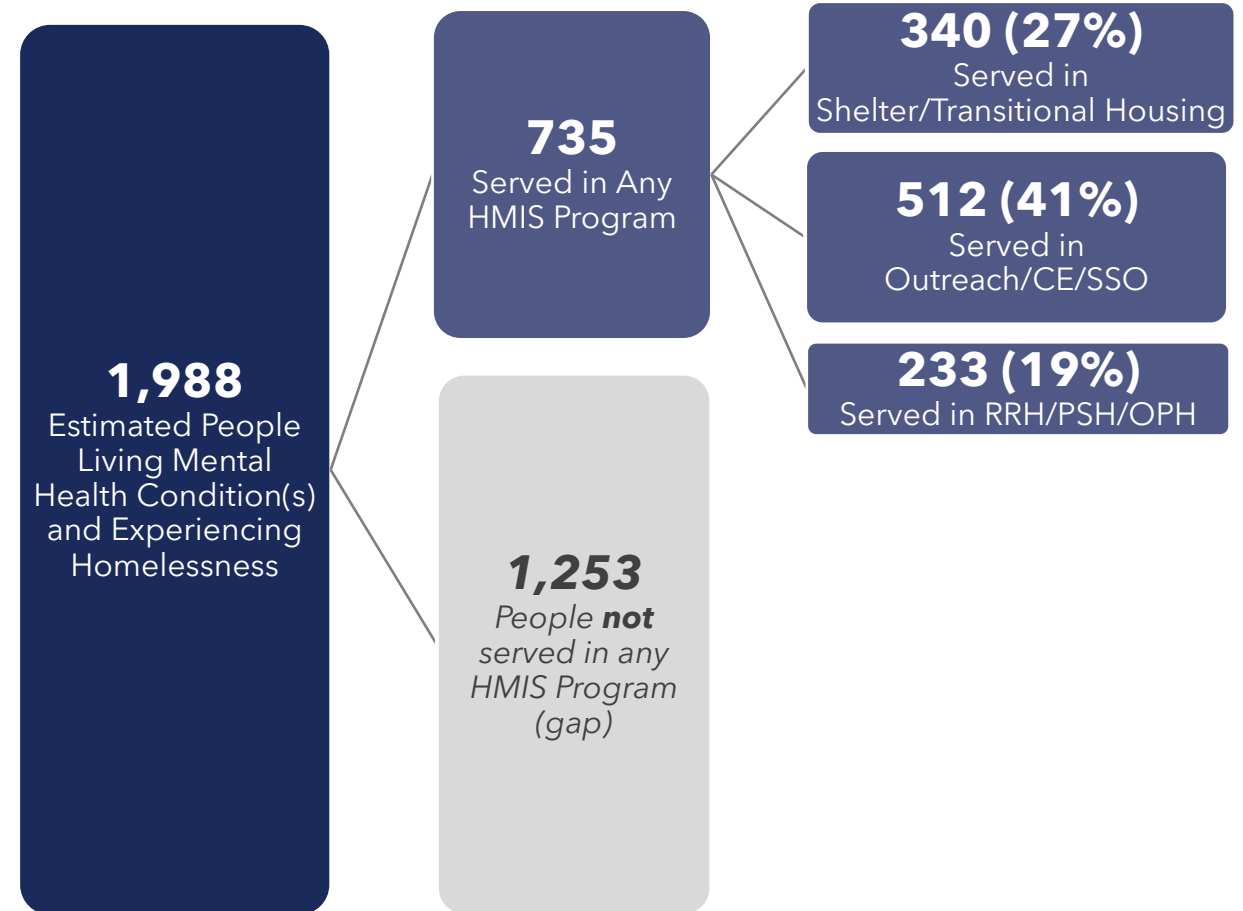


Note: People served in each program type may sum to greater than the total served in any HMIS program, as households may be served across multiple program types. Exits to Permanent Housing for this population were not explored in this analysis and could be a focus of subsequent analysis.

System Flow for People Living with Mental Health Condition(s)

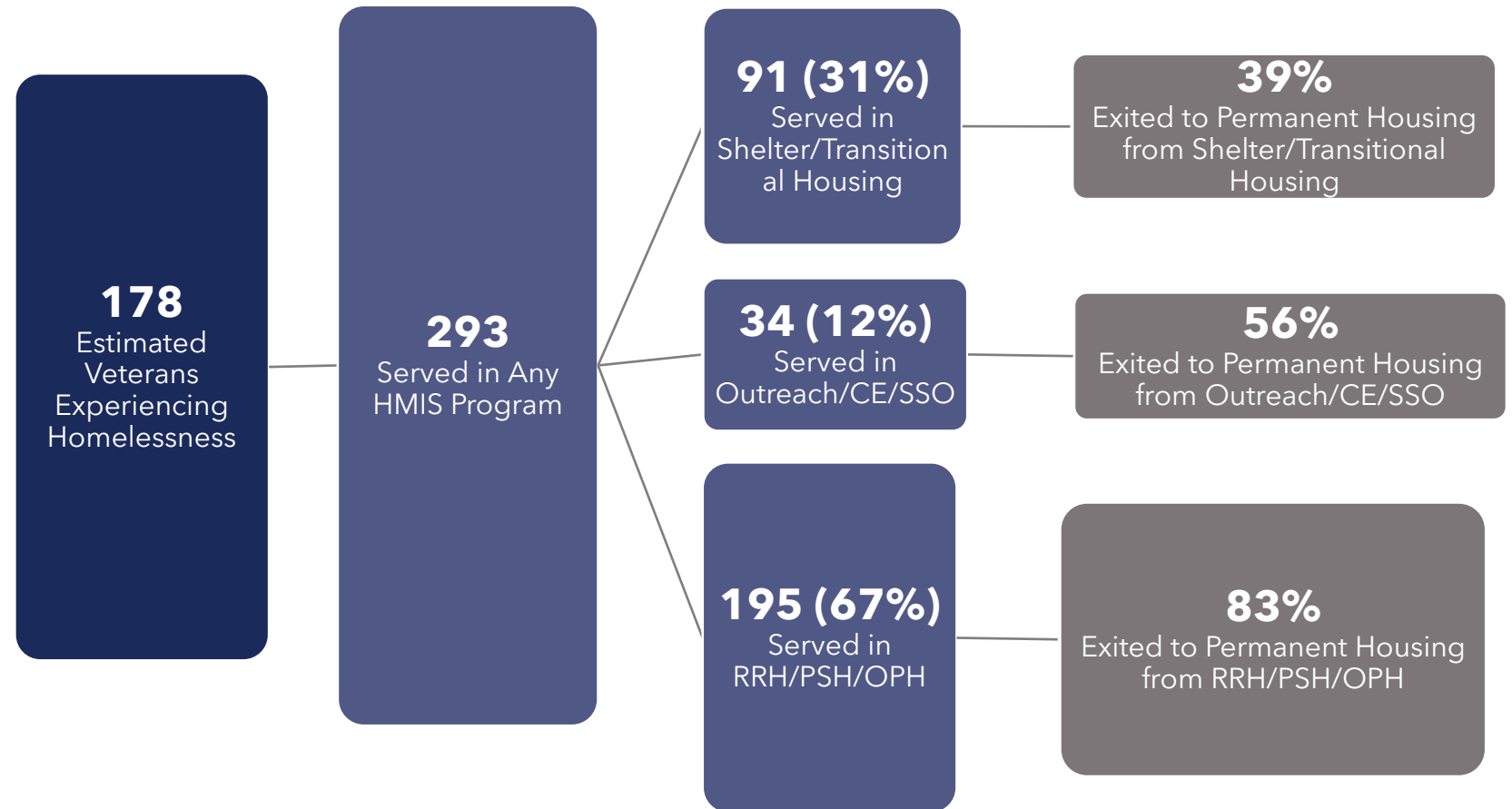


People living with mental health condition(s) are underserved overall in the H4H response system.



System Flow for Veterans

Veterans access housing programs at a higher rate than any other group in the H4H response system.





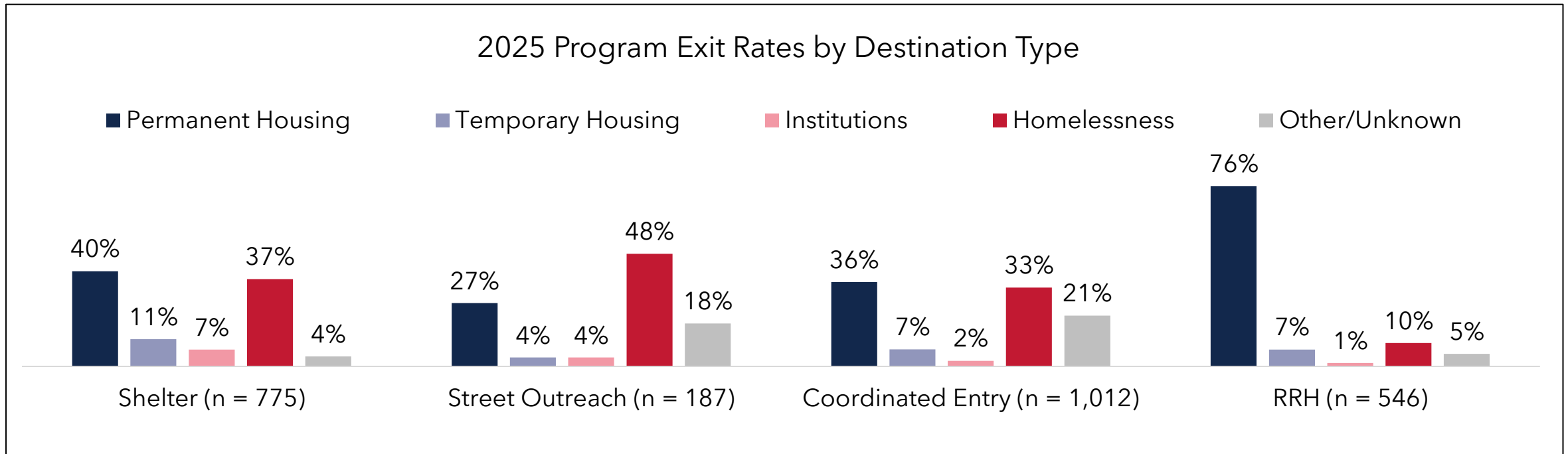
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System Outcomes by Program Type

Exits to Permanent Housing by Program Type

Rapid Rehousing programs exit clients to permanent housing at a higher rate than other service types.

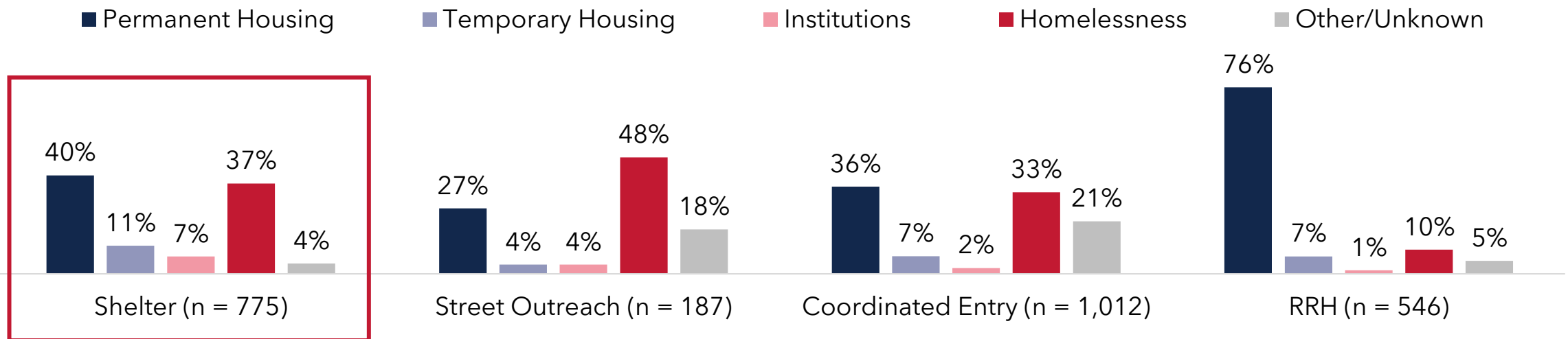
2025 Program Exit Rates by Destination Type



Exits to Permanent Housing by Program Type

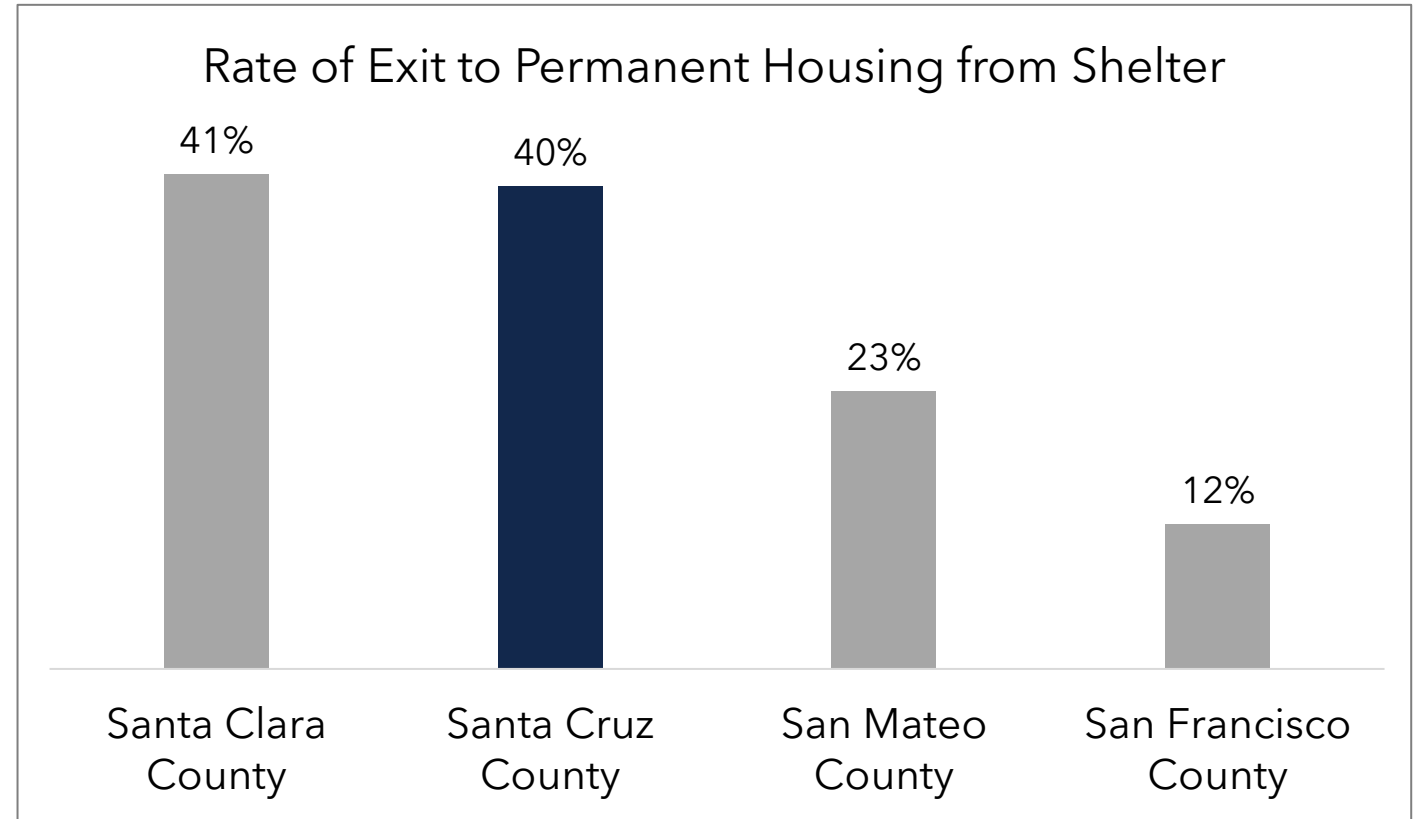
Exits from **shelter** to permanent housing were promising as well, with a higher rate of exit to permanent housing than to homelessness.

2025 Program Exit Rates by Destination Type



System Strength: Successful Exits from Shelter

Santa Cruz County has a relatively **high permanent housing exit rate from shelter** compared to other counties in California.



Sources:

Office of the Controller. Assessment of San Francisco Shelter System. 2025. <https://www.sf.gov/reports--december-2024--assessment-san-francisco-shelter-system>

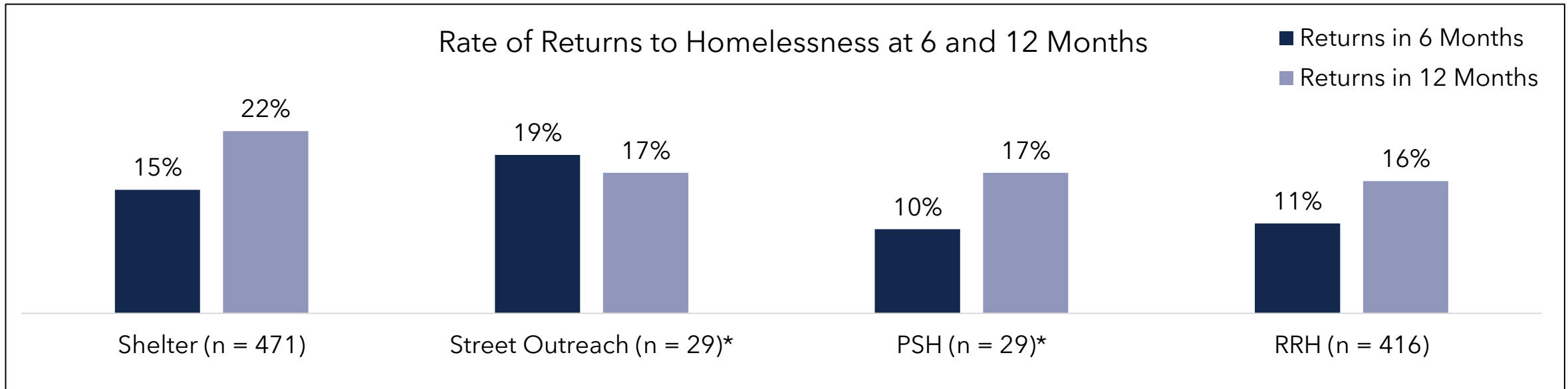
County of San Mateo. San Mateo County Shelter Evaluation Report. 2025. https://smcmeasurek.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/SMC-Shelter-Evaluation-Report_Final_08262025.pdf

Office of Supportive Housing. Memo to the Board of Supervisors Housing, Land Use, Environment and Transportation Committee. 2024.

<https://osh.santaclaracounty.gov/news/homelessness-prevention-reportsupportive-housing-system-report/report-8>

Returns to Homelessness by Program Type

Returns to homelessness are higher for shelter and street outreach than they are for housing services in Santa Cruz County.



*Please note the small sample sizes for Street Outreach and PSH

Discussion / Action Item 3: Strategic Plans and Goals Alignment

Proposed Action Item from:

Robert Ratner, Director, Housing for Health Division

Materials Prepared by:

Robert Ratner, Director, Housing for Health Division

Chat GPT and Microsoft 365 Artificial Intelligence Tools were used to help generate some content in this item.

Proposed Action(s)/Feedback Requested:

- 1) What information or data points stand out?
- 2) How did you feel after reviewing / hearing this information?
- 3) What clarification questions do board members have about the information in the packet or the presentation?
- 4) What additional information is needed to better understand the strategic plans analyzed and current Housing for Health goals?
- 5) What actions can be taken to increase alignment and collaboration across these different plans?
- 6) What activities/goals should the H4HP focus on in the July – December, 2026 period?

Background

In prior Policy Board meetings, the group has discussed a desire to review the similarities, differences, and overlap among four different strategic plans/frameworks for addressing homelessness in the County. For this review, four different plans/frameworks were identified: (1) [Housing for a Healthy Santa Cruz Framework \(County/CoC\)](#); (2) [City of Santa Cruz Homelessness Response Strategic Plan \(City of Santa Cruz\)](#); (3) [City of Watsonville Homelessness Strategic Plan \(City of Watsonville\)](#); (4) [Housing Matters Strategic Plan](#).

Artificial intelligence tools were utilized to conduct an initial comparison of these plans. The results of the report outs from Chat GPT and Microsoft 365 tools are provided below with some edits for clarity and error corrections.

Document Similarities

✔ Shared Goals Across Plans

All four frameworks/strategies aim to **reduce homelessness** and improve stable housing outcomes, often aligned with the broader *Continuum of Care* approach that coordinates housing and services countywide.

- **Emphasis on housing stability:** Each plan focuses on expanding access to housing—whether through prevention, shelter, permanent housing, or supportive services.
- **Collaborative efforts:** They highlight the need for **cross-sector collaboration** among cities, county departments, service providers, and community partners.

✔ Targeting both Prevention and Intervention

Each strategy recognizes that addressing homelessness requires both **preventing people from falling into homelessness** and **intervening once people become unhoused**:

- *Housing for a Healthy Santa Cruz* includes prevention and early intervention as key priorities.
- The *Santa Cruz* and *Watsonville* city plans include outreach, prevention, and emergency support measures as part of their objectives.

✔ Use of Data and Community Input

All the plans were informed by **community engagement and data**:

- Santa Cruz’s strategic plan included surveys and input from people with lived experience, providers, and residents.
 - Housing Matters integrates data to tailor services and evaluate needs.
-

Key Document Differences

Feature	Housing for a Healthy Santa Cruz	City of Santa Cruz Plan	City of Watsonville Plan	Housing Matters Strategic Plan
Type	County-level strategic <i>framework</i>	Municipal homelessness <i>strategic plan</i>	Municipal homelessness <i>strategic plan</i>	Nonprofit <i>strategic plan</i>
Scope	Countywide coordination of all jurisdictions	Focused on City of Santa Cruz’s homelessness response	Focused on City of Watsonville’s homelessness response	Organizational growth & program impact
Primary Focus	Aligns partners’ efforts, systems change, long-term goals	Direct actions for the city (housing, outreach, shelter)	Ending street suffering, policy and enforcement	Operating and scaling services to resolve homelessness
Implementation Model	Strategic framework with rotating work plans every 6 months	Actionable city programs over 3 years	Priority areas including housing, prevention & enforcement	Internal organizational goals (Housing First approach)
Type of Organization	County government/CoC	City government	City government	Nonprofit service provider
Timeframe	Multi-year but reviewed semi-annually	2024–27	2025–30 (five years)	Rolling document tied to organizational strategy

Core Strategic Action Areas Comparison:

Housing for a Healthy Santa Cruz	City of Santa Cruz	City of Watsonville	Housing Matters
Build a Coalition	Build Capacity and Partnerships	Policy & Funding	Community Engagement; System Leadership
Prevent Homelessness		Prevention & Resources	
Increase Connections	Shelter, Care & Support		Shelter & Supportive Housing
Increase Housing Affordability	Affordable and Supportive Housing	Housing	Shelter & Supportive Housing
	Community Safety	Management & Enforcement	
	Environmental Stewardship		Organizational Excellence

Overlap Matrix (Who Owns What)

Strategy Area	H4H Santa Cruz	City of Santa Cruz	City of Watsonville	Housing Matters
Countywide coordination	● Lead	○ Support	○ Support	○ Support
Local policy & ordinances	○ Aligns	● Lead	● Lead	● Informed
Prevention (eviction, diversion)	● Lead	● Implement	● Implement	● Deliver
Emergency shelter	○ Framework	● Fund/Operate	● Fund/Operate	● Operate
Outreach & engagement	○ Aligns	● Lead locally	● Lead locally	● Deliver
Permanent housing	● System goals	● Local pipeline	● Local pipeline	● Develop/Place
Supportive services	○ Coordinate	○ Fund	○ Fund	● Deliver
Public space management	✗	● Core focus	● Core focus	✗
Enforcement	✗	● Limited	● Explicit	✗
Organizational capacity	✗	✗	✗	● Core focus

Legend

- = primary responsibility
- = coordination / alignment role
- = informed by / advisory
- ✗ = not a focus

The information in the table below summarizes current Housing for Health Division and Partnership goals for calendar year 2026 including in our HHAP-6 plan submission. These goals are organized under the four strategic areas outlined in the Housing for a Healthy Santa Cruz Framework. Some goals may relate to more than one strategic area but are listed under only one for simplicity and clarity.

Calendar Year 2026 Goal	Goal Status
<i>Strategic Area: Build a Coalition</i>	
Secure long-term stable funding to sustain regional housing-focused street outreach to people without shelter; partner with cities on funding and implementation approach	City of Santa Cruz continues to support outreach efforts. City of Watsonville is supporting collaborative with County, Watsonville police department, and Community Action Board. Funding for outreach in unincorporated areas of the County with Housing Matters ending in June 2026.
Coordinate/integrate street outreach teams with coordinated entry system (CES) and encampment response funding (Monterey County, City of Santa Cruz)	H4H staff continue to support outreach team linkages with coordinated entry throughout the County, including support of implementation of encampment response grants in the cities of Santa Cruz and Watsonville.
Expand effective use of HMIS outreach module and location tab to improve connections and communications among providers and clients.	These HMIS tools are not widely used at this juncture. Continued support/emphasis/improvements needed to see greater utilization.
Partner with Behavioral Health to establish and stabilize a network of permanent supportive housing sites and services	Housing for Health and Behavioral Health significantly increased their collaborative efforts over the past six months including preparing for implementation of the Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) and Medi-Cal transitional rent.
Training and coaching in supportive housing, strength-based care management, and housing problem solving.	Housing for Health continues to work with supportive housing and strength-based care management training and coaching support. Housing for Health staff have developed a housing problem solving training supported with connector collaborative small group sessions.
Develop cross system data analysis projects to increase access to services and resources and reduce duplicative efforts	Housing for Health is supporting multiple projects in this area including a data sharing pilot with behavioral health and multi-year cross-departmental data integration project.

Calendar Year 2026 Goal	Goal Status
Develop a structure and process for care coordination meetings for supportive housing sites	Housing for Health has a social work team leader that supports care coordination conversations in partnership with behavioral health at multiple supportive housing sites. Two additional sites will be added in the next few months.
Support implementation of new Medi-Cal transitional rent benefit and support increased coordination of CalAIM (managed care Medi-Cal) housing and health services	Housing for Health is in the process of contracting with Kaiser Permanente and the Central California Alliance for Health to support transitional rent implementation in the next few months. This effort will include increasing coordination among CalAIM providers.
Facilitate and support regular CoC operations and Coordinated Entry System (CES) connector workgroup meetings with housing and service providers including CalAIM providers in the CoC network	CoC operations and CES connector workgroups continue. Future meetings will focus more on CalAIM related topics.
Setup HMIS to support use for data collection, care coordination, and billing for CalAIM providers	Housing for Health had worked with Focus Strategies and BitFocus to develop specialized assessments and reports within HMIS for use by CalAIM providers. Additional changes will be made to support recuperative care and transitional rent providers in the next few months.
Update CoC policies and procedures – complaints/grievances, shelter standards, rapid rehousing, antidiscrimination/ inclusion, discharge planning, and others	Housing for Health, Focus Strategies, and members of the operations workgroup have helped with the drafting of new CoC policies and procedures that will be presented to the Policy Board at meetings in 2026.
Strategic Area: Prevent Homelessness	
Launch south county homelessness prevention project	County provided funding to support a new south county homelessness prevention project. The Community Action Board (CAB) is implementing this project in partnership with the Watsonville Law Center, serving at least 30 high-risk households per year over the next three years.

Calendar Year 2026 Goal	Goal Status
Maintain centralized housing assistance fund for prevention	Housing for Health continues to maintain a highly utilized centralized housing assistance fund. The Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County helps with private fundraising that supports the fund. Total funds available have been declining as state and other funding levels decline.
Work with the Housing Authority to preserve affordable housing for households currently participating in the Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) program that will sunset December 31, 2026	Strategy being implemented in partnership with the Housing Authority to ensure all current EHV households have opportunities to secure other affordable housing resources before the end of calendar year 2026. Local nonprofit affordable housing developers are also partnering with this process.
Implement HOPWA funded housing retention program for people living with HIV/AIDS	Long-term HOPWA funding was secured for our region with a small amount of dollars set aside to help individuals with HIV/AIDS retain current housing with supportive services and flexible financial assistance.
Support implementation of Home Safe program to prevent homelessness among Adult Protective Services clients	Housing for Health supports the Adult Protective Services (APS) department with implementation of the Home Safe Program that provides housing-related financial assistance and support to APS clients facing housing challenges. Management of this program transitioned to APS staff.
Continue and expand eviction prevention and other housing-related legal assistance contract	Housing for Health continues to contract with Tenant Sanctuary to provide tenant rights education and legal assistance. Funding for this effort increased slightly this year. Tenant Sanctuary currently has its own staff attorney supporting this work.
Expand partnerships with school districts and schools to help identify families and students at-risk prior to them becoming literally homeless	Through the south county homelessness prevention project and the County Office of Education, Housing for Health partners with school district staff working with children,

Calendar Year 2026 Goal	Goal Status
	youth, and families at-risk of or currently experiencing homelessness.
<i>Strategic Area: Increase Connections</i>	
Expand outreach to unincorporated areas of County using Central California Alliance for Health Housing and Homelessness Incentive Program (HHIP) funding Maintain centralized housing assistance fund for rehousing	Housing Matters was selected to operate a street outreach program in unincorporated areas of the County using HHIP and federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. Funding for this effort is coming to an end in June 2026, and alternative funding has not been identified to sustain the program.
Maintain a centralized housing assistance fund for rehousing needs.	Housing for Health continues to maintain a highly utilized centralized housing assistance fund. The Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County helps with private fundraising that supports the fund. Total funds available have been declining as state and other funding levels decline.
Expand shelter and transitional housing capacity in unincorporated areas of the County {Live Oak Landing, Bridge House, Casa Sankofa (Freedom House)}	Over the past few years, Housing for Health and other partners have secured funding to support several new shelter and transitional housing development projects. HOPE Village in Watsonville has already opened. Bridge Housing and Live Oak Landing should be open in May to provide shelter for individuals with behavioral health challenges. Casa Sankofa (Freedom House) should open in the summer/early fall and provide transitional housing for youth. Sustaining these new programs will be a challenge given anticipated significant declines in state funding.
Partner with the City of Santa Cruz on their Behavioral Health Capital Infrastructure Program (BHCIP) grant to develop a 50-bed residential substance use disorder treatment facility at 125 Coral Street	The City of Santa Cruz secured BHCIP funding and has identified an architect to support the development of a 50-bed residential substance use disorder treatment facility at 125 Coral Street. Housing for Health and County Behavioral Health provide support to the planning process.

Calendar Year 2026 Goal	Goal Status
Manage contract with United Way/2-1-1 and support their role in coordinated entry and maintaining centralized updated resources	United Way/2-1-1 and Housing for Health continue to explore ways to improve coordinated entry operations and connections with resources. Both groups will participate in a CoC-supported resource update/networking group.
Increase accessibility, transparency, and coordination of information about affordable housing opportunities and wait list status	United Way/2-1-1 maintains a centralized and updated list of affordable housing opportunities – vacancies and waitlist on their website.
Continue support for Association of Faith Communities (AFC) Safe Parking and Rotating Faith Shelter Program (City of Santa Cruz and Watsonville)	Housing for Health continues to support these AFC programs. AFC has developed new partnerships/resources in south county in support of their programmatic efforts.
Continue support for Housing Matters family and adult shelters (City of Santa Cruz)	Housing for Health continues to support these programs. Both programs may face financial challenges in the next 1-2 years giving rising operational costs, declining private/foundation contributions, and flat or declining public funding sources.
Expand housing partnerships with sober living environments	United Way/2-1-1 maintains an updated list of sober living openings in the County. Housing for Health also supports housing assistance fund payments for some residents.
Provide support for City of Santa Cruz – RV safe parking, safe sleeping, sheltering program at the Armory	Housing for Health supports these programs with links with CES, HMIS, and the centralized housing assistance fund.
Develop and adopt county encampment response guidelines	The County adopted encampment response guidelines for unincorporated areas. County IT developed an online encampment assessment tool that has not been tested/utilized to date due to capacity issues.
Explore innovative housing strategies and policy changes, such as shallow subsidies and extended time limits in rapid rehousing; use of underutilized public land and buildings, vacant homes, and sweat equity; and tiny homes, ADUs, and mobile home parks.	Several of the new shelter projects involve “tiny home” modular construction. With HOPWA funding, we are exploring extended rapid rehousing or shallow subsidy approaches. The new shelter projects are evidenced of utilization of underutilized public land and buildings.

Calendar Year 2026 Goal	Goal Status
Sustain landlord incentive, risk management, and support programs	Housing for Health continues to partnership with the Housing Authority and Abode Services in this area. The capacity of these resources is declining due to funding reductions in subsidy programs and state resources that support these incentives. Housing for Health and the Housing Authority will be hosting the 3 rd annual landlord appreciation during affordable housing month this year.
Explore the possibility of establishing a local flexible housing subsidy pool in partnership with Behavioral Health along with a Medi-Cal transitional rent benefit	Housing for Health, Behavioral Health, and Front Street are working together to combine multiple funding sources to create a flexible housing subsidy pool for behavioral health system clients. This funding pool should begin operating in the first quarter of FY 26-27.
Partner with the Central California Alliance for Health and Housing Accelerator Fund to establish a revolving supportive housing investment loan fund	The loan fund has been created and started supporting projects within the County - MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR FUND LAUNCHED TO EXPAND HOUSING AS HEALTHCARE – Housing Accelerator Fund
Work with Housing Santa Cruz County to support jurisdictional efforts to mee Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) goals, especially for very low-income households and below, e.g., regular cross-jurisdictional convening of staff	This effort has not started yet. Housing for Health and Housing Santa Cruz County has developed an initial draft tracker of existing and planned affordable housing projects within the County that will serve as a focal point for discussion with this group.
Support County of Santa Cruz to make changes necessary to secure a California Prohousing Designation	Housing for Health helped fund legal support for the County’s efforts to secure a prohousing designation. The County submitted its application for this designation. Information can be found here - Prohousing Designation

Calendar Year 2026 Goal	Goal Status
Support completion of the Veterans Village and Park Haven Plaza Homekey Round 2 permanent supportive housing projects	Both housing projects secured tax credit awards. The Vets Village project finalized its financing and will begin construction in May. Park Haven Plaza is still actively seeking tax credit investors. Weatherization of the Park Haven Plaza building will be completed in the next couple of months.
Support lease-up and services connections for Eden Housing's Pacific Station North Apartments and Housing Matters' Harvey West Studios	Pacific Station North is a 128-unit development that includes supportive housing units and Harvey West Studios is a 120-unit development. Both are scheduled to be completed by July 2026, and lease-up efforts have started for both projects. Housing for Health is supporting the lease-up effort and linkages of prospective and future tenants with supportive services.
Support Affordable Housing Month events in partnership with Housing Santa Cruz County, including a faith-based housing event	Housing for Health continues to partner with Housing Santa Cruz County to support May is affordable housing month. Housing for Health is hosting or co-hosting several events including an event with a church in unincorporated south county interested in supporting housing development on their property.
Fully utilize existing set-aside housing voucher/subsidies for people at-risk of or currently experiencing homelessness	Nearly all special population voucher programs managed by the Housing Authority are fully leased. New leasing efforts have paused to ensure that EHV participants have opportunities to transfer to ongoing programs before the end of 2026. VA Supportive Housing units are linked with projects currently under development and will be available when several projects complete construction.
Assist Housing Matters and Monarch Services with implementation of new ESG rapid rehousing programs	Housing for Health has set up these projects in HMIS and supported grant renewal processes for these provider organizations.

Calendar Year 2026 Goal	Goal Status
Implement HOPWA rapid rehousing program for people living with HIV/AIDS	Housing Matters was selected to operate this program. Housing for Health has helped link this program with staff in the county public health department their serve people living with HIV.
Support launch of basic income pilot programs	Housing for Health has provided support to Abode Services and Miracle Messages that are tested basic income pilot programs for people with histories of homelessness within Santa Cruz.
Focus CoC meetings, training, messaging on supporting participants with access to employment and public benefits and help providers with upcoming changes to public benefit eligibility.	Planning to host a CoC event in May with this as a focus area. Encouraging CoC providers to participate in County benefits collaborative. Expanded SSI legal advocacy. Focusing on HMIS data collection and feedback in this area. Cross-matching HMIS data with benefits data to identify areas for improvement.

Discussion / Action Item 4: HUD CoC Funding Update

Proposed Action Item from:

Robert Ratner, Director, Housing for Health Division

Materials Prepared by:

Tony Gardner, CoC Consultant

Robert Ratner, Director, Housing for Health Division

Proposed Action(s)/Feedback Requested:

- Identify a group of individuals to participate in a CoC Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) preparation and rating and ranking workgroup. Staff recommend retaining some consistent participation from previous years and propose the following makeup of this group: Larry Imwalle, Homelessness Response Manager, City of Santa Cruz; Heather Rogers, Public Defender, Lived Expertise Representatives (1-4 people); City of Watsonville representative; Health Services Agency/Behavioral Health Representative.
- Authorize staff to convene the workgroup after HUD issues the FY 2026 NOFO and to prepare recommendations for the local application, rating, ranking and review process.
- Authorize staff to organize a special meeting of the CoC Policy Board, if needed, to accommodate the FY 2026 NOFO timeline.

Background

Historically, on an annual basis the federal Housing and Urban Development Department (HUD) conducts a national Continuum of Care (CoC) funding competition that starts with the release of a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). During the last year of the Biden administration, they released a NOFO that was intended to shift the process to a two-year grant cycle. The Trump administration tried to return the process to an annual cycle and to dramatically change the funding priorities and national competition with the issuance of a federal FY 2025 NOFO. If the FY 2025 NOFO was allowed to proceed it would have resulted in significant reductions in funding for permanent housing in favor of funding outreach, transitional housing, and treatment-required programs.

The NOFO process involves the creation of a system/region-wide application coupled with the submission of individual project proposals or applications. The NOFO requires the CoC to conduct a local application submission, review, rating, and ranking process. The process results in applications being ranked in Tier 1 (highly likely to get funding) and Tier 2 (at-risk of not receiving funding). The Housing for Health Division serves as the Collaborative Application for our CoC

preparing the consolidated application and coordinating the local funding competition. Annual funding for our CoC grew to around \$7.7M last year.

A series of federal court decisions have blocked the Trump administration from proceeding with the FY 2025. In addition, the federal FY 2026 appropriations bill put requirements on HUD related to renewal of projects with FY 2025 funds and on the FY 2026 NOFO. Litigation related to the FY 2025 funding is still ongoing. These court decisions and congressional action are expected to result in all of Santa Cruz County's CoC projects receiving their FY 2025 awards. However, many of the projects are experiencing delays in execution of their renewal contracts with HUD.

The FY 2026 appropriations bill includes \$4.01 billion nationally for CoC grants. The NOFO must be released by June 1, 2026, and awards must be made by December 1, 2026. Tier 1 projects (likely to be renewed) must be at least 60% of a CoC's annual renewal demand, i.e., we are highly likely to get at least 60% of our current funding allocation. This 60% requirement is double the 30% the Trump administration proposed with the FY 2025 NOFO. However, traditionally, this amount has been 90% or more. Nothing in the appropriations bill language precludes the Trump administration of capping permanent housing awards at the 30% level they proposed in the FY 2025 NOFO.

Housing for Health staff and Tony Gardner, our CoC consultant, expect HUD will release a FY 2026 NOFO like its FY 2025 document. Our CoC may have between 30 and 90 days to respond to the NOFO providing minimal time to prepare a local process and consolidated application. We will have limited time to engage in strategic planning related to anticipated policy changes, funding priority shifts, and potential funding reductions. We expect the NOFO to deprioritize supportive housing and housing first in favor of services only and transitional housing projects with a focus on required treatment and recovery.

Many of our current permanent housing projects will not fit under the anticipated 30% cap on funding for permanent housing. We will need alternative funding to sustain existing projects. Some projects may be able to transitional housing, and we may be able to shift funding sources to sustain some projects. Applicants and awardees will need to agree to a range of new conditions such as mandatory services.

Staff are requesting approval from the Board to establish a local NOFO preparation, rating, and ranking work group and to convene the group after the release of the 2026 NOFO. Staff are also requesting approval to proceed with scheduling a special Policy Board meeting, if needed, to accommodate the FY 2026 NOFO schedule.