



# THE CITY OF RICHMOND HOMELESSNESS STRATEGIC PLAN



2023

Prepared by



## Acknowledgements

This Strategic Plan was drafted by Homebase on behalf of the City of Richmond. Homebase would like to thank the membership of the Strategic Planning Steering Committee for their partnership in developing this Plan. Special thanks to the City of Richmond and Richmond City Council for their assistance with gathering information and providing feedback, and the service providers, local government staff, business partners and other community members who participated in interviews, focus groups, and community meetings and shared their experiences and invaluable insight. We are especially grateful to the Richmond residents experiencing homelessness who shared their time and expertise.

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## Executive Summary

Homelessness is an urgent crisis in the City of Richmond, and it has increased in scope and visibility since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Homelessness Strategic Plan provides a community-wide roadmap to address unsheltered homelessness.

### Guiding Principles

The Strategic Plan is driven by a set of Guiding Principles collectively developed by the Strategic Plan Steering Committee:



**Honor humanity and respect the rights of others**



**Recognize that housing is a human right**



**Center the perspectives of those most impacted**



**Approach the work with an equity lens**



**Promote a coordinated community of care**



**Pursue accountability and systems follow-through**



**Seek to be efficient, transformative, and results-oriented**



**Strive for empathetic efficiency**

These guiding principles anchored a robust community engagement process, data analysis, and the creation of the set of recommendations outlined in the Strategic Plan. Stakeholder engagement included monthly Steering Committee meetings, interviews with people experiencing homelessness, stakeholder focus groups and interviews, a community forum and workshop, a survey of youth impacted by homelessness, and a landscape analysis of available services and resource gaps.

## A Community Approach

Grounded in the guiding principles and centering the voices of people experiencing homelessness in Richmond, the Strategic Plan identifies five goals:

### Goal 1



Improve quality of life for unsheltered individuals and communities

### Goal 2



Create temporary supportive housing (such as transitional villages and safe parking sites) and expand and sustain permanent supportive and affordable long-term housing

### Goal 3



Expand homelessness prevention and crisis programming

### Goal 4



Improve economic pathways for unhoused and recently housed individuals

### Goal 5



Build capacity, collaboration, and accountability within agencies working to address homelessness and the system of care as a whole

This Strategic Plan seeks to build on current efforts and harness the collective commitment to create a meaningful and sustainable impact on homelessness in Richmond. The Homelessness Strategic Plan can be used to establish citywide goals to address homelessness and establish a system to track outcomes and celebrate achievements.

The Plan identifies six immediate priority action steps:

**Priority Action Step 1** – Create and fund a dedicated city staff position to specifically address homelessness. (Action Step 5.3).

**Priority Action Step 2** – Identify funding and development partners for converting hotels and motels to service as Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) units. (Action Step 2.1)

**Priority Action Step 3** – Leverage and expand the Richmond guaranteed income pilot program launched by the Richmond Rapid Response Fund (R3F). (Action Step 4.2).

**Priority Action Step 4** – Ensure that essential living amenities such as water, sanitation, hygiene, and electricity are provided at least weekly to all encampments. (Action Step 1.1).

**Priority Action Step 5** – Secure commitment from a faith-based community partner to pilot the first Safe Parking Site in the Richmond Safe Parking Program. (Action Step 3.4).

**Priority Action Step 6** - Strengthen collaboration between the City, County and community-based organizations to improve data collection, implement this Strategic Plan, provide services in the city, and apply for funding opportunities. The dedicated City staff person would determine frequency and format of interagency collaboration, which could include systems level partner meetings, a local data workgroup, or direct service coordination. (Action Step 5.2).

## Introduction

### Background

On a single night in 2022, roughly 582,500 people were experiencing homelessness in the United States. Six in ten (60%) were staying in sheltered locations—emergency shelters, safe havens, or transitional housing programs—and four in ten (40%) were in unsheltered locations such as on the street, in abandoned buildings, or in other places not suitable for human habitation.<sup>1</sup> According to the 2020 Contra Costa County Point-in-Time (PIT) Count, there are 280 individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness on any given night in the City of Richmond – sleeping outside, in vehicles, in tents, or in other places not meant for human habitation.<sup>2</sup> The PIT Count is largely considered an undercount of the total number of people experiencing homelessness in any given community. Despite a concerted crisis response and increase in emergency housing funding, the crisis of unsheltered homelessness deepened during the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>3</sup> Most people who lose their housing in Richmond stay in Richmond; according to the Contra Costa County Homeless Continuum of Care 2021 Annual Report, 30% of County residents who lost their housing did so in west county, including the City of Richmond, and 26% of unsheltered people slept and lived in West Contra Costa County after becoming homeless.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The 2022 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report to Congress. Available at: [https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/2022-AHAR-Part-1.pdf?utm\\_source=NLIHC+All+Subscribers&utm\\_campaign=19c916a8b4-memo\\_010923&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_e090383b5e-19c916a8b4-293474287&ct=t\(memo\\_010923\)](https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/2022-AHAR-Part-1.pdf?utm_source=NLIHC+All+Subscribers&utm_campaign=19c916a8b4-memo_010923&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_e090383b5e-19c916a8b4-293474287&ct=t(memo_010923)).

<sup>2</sup> Contra Costa County. Contra Costa County: Annual Point in Time Count Report 2020. Available at: <https://cchealth.org/h3/coc/pdf/PIT-report-2020.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> A count of unsheltered people was not conducted in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of significant inconsistencies discovered in the data, Contra Costa Health is currently unable to verify the accuracy of the 2022 PIT count. <https://cchealth.org/h3/coc/reports.php#PIT>. Therefore, this report refers to data published in the 2021 Annual Report, available at <https://cchealth.org/h3/coc/pdf/Annual-Report-2021.pdf>, the 2020 PIT Count, and Contra Costa County Health, Housing, and Homelessness Data Summary for Homebase, 9/8/22.

<sup>4</sup> Contra Costa County Continuum of Care (CoC). Contra Costa CoC 2021 Annual Report. Available at: <https://cchealth.org/h3/coc/pdf/Annual-Report-2021.pdf>.

This crisis is not new. The City of Richmond **declared a shelter crisis** in 2018,<sup>5</sup> finding that the health and safety of unhoused people is threatened by a lack of shelter and the City **passed a resolution declaring homelessness a public health emergency**.<sup>6</sup> These two resolutions allow the City an expanded range of options when looking towards both long term and temporary solutions for homelessness.

In August 2021, the City of Richmond issued a Request for Proposals to facilitate the development of a **City of Richmond Homelessness Strategic Plan** and contracted with Homebase, a national technical assistance provider helping communities prevent and address homelessness. The Strategic Plan provides a community-wide roadmap to addressing unsheltered homelessness that supports County and regional efforts and leverages resources for a collective response to homelessness. It is designed to guide the City of Richmond, community-based organizations, and other community stakeholders as they make decisions about funding, programs, and priorities to address unsheltered homelessness in the city. It recognizes and seeks to complement existing efforts underway on a local, county, and regional basis to prevent and address homelessness.

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### Initiatives, Programs, and Services in the City of Richmond

The following is a sampling of the many strong community efforts and achievements in the city to address unsheltered homelessness.

The **Regional Impact Council**, convened by All Home, developed the Regional Action Plan (RAP),<sup>7</sup> a strategy to reduce unsheltered homelessness in the nine-county Bay Area by 75% in three years. The RAP created the 1-2-4 framework to promote strategic investment in interim housing (+1 unit), permanent housing (+2 units) and homelessness prevention (+4 units). All Home advances regional solutions that disrupt the cycles of poverty and homelessness, redress racial disparities, and create more economic mobility opportunities for people with extremely low incomes.

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<sup>5</sup> City of Richmond. Resolution No. 79-18. Available at: <https://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/9064>.

<sup>6</sup> City of Richmond. Resolution No. 48-18. Available at: <https://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/8880>.

<sup>7</sup> All Home. Regional Action Plan: A Call to Action from the Regional Impact Council, February 2021. Available at: <https://www.allhomeca.org/regionalactionplan/>.

The draft City of **Richmond Housing Element** update,<sup>8</sup> issued in October 2022 for public review and input, is the City’s proposed approach to meeting its fair share of regional housing needs from 2023-2031, including housing for special needs populations, such as the unhoused.

The Richmond City Council convened the **Reimagining Public Safety Community Taskforce**<sup>9</sup> in October 2020 to create a transition from the city’s community policing model to a redesigned public safety system that prioritizes community investments in services and housing.

The Richmond City Council established **The Homeless Taskforce** in 2017 to focus on the identification and implementation of annual policy priorities to impact homelessness in Richmond.<sup>10</sup>

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### **Housing and Services Serving Unhoused Richmond Residents**

While homelessness continues to be a challenge in the city of Richmond and across the Bay Area, local and regional efforts have established an invaluable foundation for continued progress in addressing homelessness, including:

**Supportive housing** – Supportive housing — including affordable housing, case management, and supportive services — forms the core of the City’s strategy to make homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring. Supportive housing programs embrace a Housing First philosophy with the understanding that housing alone is insufficient and a support system is absolutely necessary so each client receives the appropriate level of support to achieve their goals. These programs consider every household ready for and deserving of safe and stable housing.

**Crisis Response and Unhoused Interventions** - While affordable and supportive housing are central to ending homelessness, the reality remains that individuals at risk of homelessness and those currently experiencing homelessness need programs and

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<sup>8</sup> City of Richmond. Public Review Draft 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle Housing Element Update (2023-2031), October 2022. Available at:  
[https://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/63306/LWC\\_Richmond\\_HEU\\_PRD\\_102122?bidId=](https://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/63306/LWC_Richmond_HEU_PRD_102122?bidId=).

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/4011/Reimagining-Public-Safety>.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/faq.aspx?TID=60>.

services that address their immediate needs. These crisis response strategies are, for many, the first step to maintaining or regaining housing stability. They involve supporting people where they currently live in unstable and unsafe encampments, helping with their essential needs, and mitigating the vulnerabilities of unhoused individuals who live unsafely outdoors and are at high risk of dying on the streets lacking these responses. Emergency shelters, drop-in centers, and street outreach and encampment-centered programs provide support to unhoused residents as well as those at risk of losing their housing.

The section below describes permanent housing, supportive services, and crisis response initiatives available to people experiencing homelessness in Richmond that receive funding from the City of Richmond and are supported by Contra Costa County.

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## Programs Supported by the City of Richmond

### Crisis Response and Unhoused Interventions

People experiencing unsheltered homelessness live in a wide range of settings, including a large vehicle encampment near Castro Street. The City received a \$4.8 million grant of **Encampment Resolution Funding** (ERF) from the California Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal ICH) for the Castro Encampment Resolution Project (CERP). The CERP is a two-year plan to improve living conditions at the Castro encampment, provide services to residents, create a path to safe and stable housing and restore the site to its original use by June 2024. The City contracted with Way2Love, Inc. to oversee the project implementation and the Castro Site Care Team, which includes a Site Manager, Rapid Rehousing Navigator, and dedicated County Coordinated Outreach Referral Engagement (CORE) team.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/4370/Vanessa-A-Calloway-dba-Way2Love-Inc>.

On October 1, 2022, the City closed the Rydin Road RV encampment with the goal of connecting residents with housing. The City Council allocated \$250,000 (\$200,00 for housing transitions and \$50,000 in flex funds for other personal expenses) to assist Rydin Road residents with transitioning to stable housing. Several former Rydin Road residents moved from the encampment into housing options, but some ended up in another unsheltered situation. On October 26, 2022, City staff presented the following update to the Reimagining Public Safety Task Force on the status of 29 Rydin Road residents, representing 23 households<sup>12</sup>:

- 6 transitions completed and people placed in housing
- 14 transition plans approved by City
- 3 transition plans under development, residents placed in motel
- 5 residents with no transition plan are living in interim housing, including shelters and motels
- 1 resident passed away

The city will provide rental assistance to residents for up to six months as they transition to their housing choice. The lessons learned from these efforts offer an opportunity to pivot in approach.

**Housing First and Short-Term Emergency Housing programs** –The City of Richmond contracted with the Richmond Community Foundation (RCF) to develop and implement a Housing First Program, which is designed to connect unhoused Richmond residents with stable housing and necessary services. The Housing First Program, which prioritizes former Rydin Road residents, includes needs assessments, housing transition planning, housing identification, rent and move-in assistance, service referrals, and care management. The total program funding amount is \$425,000. The City of Richmond also contracted with RCF to development and implement a Short-Term Emergency Housing Program to provide rental subsidies or hotel and motel vouchers on an emergency and short-term basis to support individuals and families experiencing homelessness. This total program funding amount is \$100,000.

**Pilot Interim Sheltering Project** – In 2021, the Richmond City Council voted to establish a two-year Safe Parking Pilot Program, which allows private property owners to host up to four vehicle households for a limited duration.<sup>13</sup> Safe Parking programs

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<sup>12</sup> Information provided by City of Richmond Housing Division.

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/4027/Safe-Parking-Pilot-Program>.

have gained traction nationwide as an emerging practice for providing emergency interim housing. However, due to neighborhood opposition, concern over liability, and lack of funding, this pilot has not yet resulted in the establishment of a safe parking pilot site in the City and the Ordinance is set to expire in June 2023.

**Streets Team and Showers** – The City contracts with Safe Organized Space Richmond (SOS), a program of Rebuilding Together East Bay-North, to spearhead a Streets Team and mobile shower and hygiene programs.<sup>14</sup> SOS employs unsheltered individuals to provide encampment cleanup services, deliver mobile showers, and provide additional amenities such as trash pickup, portable toilets, and drinking water.

**Richmond Rapid Response Fund (R3F)** – The City launched R3F as a wraparound initiative to provide immediate relief to Richmond residents affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Through American Response Protection Act (ARPA) funds, the City allocated \$600,000 to provide rental and mortgage assistance, provide assistance to people experiencing homelessness to prepare them for stable housing, help residents facing eviction, and provide financial disbursements to residents impacted by COVID-19.<sup>15</sup> After disbursing funds to residents and service providers, R3F is launching a community design process and building its capacity to pilot a guaranteed income program.

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### Programs Serving Richmond Residents Supported by Contra Costa County

The **Contra Costa Continuum of Care (CoC)** is designated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to receive federal funding and coordinate local resources for Contra Costa County. The Contra Costa County Continuum of Care (CoC) is administered by Contra Costa County Health Services' Health, Housing and Homeless Services Division (H3),<sup>16</sup> which supports the CoC in obtaining federal funding, identifying local priorities, and carrying out the duties of a CoC, as determined by HUD. The Strategic Plan was developed in alignment with the CoC's system-level efforts. H3 has invested \$3.5 million in Richmond-based programs, and Richmond residents are served in every program in the CoC.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/4214/Rebuilding-Together-East-Bay-North-RTEBN>.

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/4335/West-Contra-Costa-Public-Education-Fund->.

<sup>16</sup> <https://cchealth.org/h3/coc/>.

<sup>17</sup> Data provided by H3.

The City of Richmond contracts with H3 through the Castro Encampment Resolution Project (CERP) and a designated Coordinated Outreach Referral Engagement (CORE) team in Richmond to connect unsheltered people to the County's Continuum of Care. Services include intake, housing and shelter placement, health care referrals, and mental health referrals. The following programs support the housing needs of Richmond residents:

**Supportive Housing**

Destination Home

Permanent Connections

**Transitional Housing/Rapid Rehousing**

Hope Solutions TAY Rapid Rehousing

Mary McGovern Transitional Housing for TAY

Pomona Street Apartments

Trinity CARE Center

**Crisis Response and Unhoused Interventions**

Bay Area Rescue Mission

Brookside Shelter

Calli House Youth Shelter

Concord Shelter

Contra Costa Coordinated Entry System

Contra Costa Crisis Center - 211

Delta Landing

GRIP CARE Center

GRIP Family Shelter

Health Care for the Homeless

The Hume Center Rapid Resolution

Mountain View Family Shelter

Philip Dorn Respite Center

Richmond/San Pablo CORE Team

## Guiding Principles

The Steering Committee collectively developed the following Guiding Principles designed to shape the development of the Strategic Plan:

 <p><b>Honor humanity and respect the rights of others</b></p> <p>Individuals and communities who are unhoused should be treated with dignity and deserve the same access to resources as housed individuals. Access to resources is a right and not something to be earned.</p>	 <p><b>Approach the work with an equity lens</b></p> <p>Ending homelessness should take into account the myriad of ways that marginalization has occurred and actively intervene to disrupt the conditions that cause inequities, including racism.</p>
 <p><b>Promote a coordinated community of care</b></p> <p>Relevant parties should work together, not in silos, to address homelessness.</p>	 <p><b>Pursue accountability and systems follow-through</b></p> <p>There should be mechanisms put into place to hold systems and all relevant parties accountable to doing the work to end homelessness with impact and time sensitivity.</p>
 <p><b>Center the perspectives of those most impacted</b></p> <p>People with lived experience, as the experts in their own lives, should guide both the understanding and solutions for addressing homelessness.</p>	 <p><b>Recognize that housing is a human right</b></p> <p>Interventions and supports should be built on the assumption that everyone deserves safe and stable housing without conditions.</p>
 <p><b>Seek to be efficient, transformative, and results-oriented</b></p> <p>Efforts to end homelessness should have real impact and not simply modify the existing landscape of policies and services.</p>	 <p><b>Strive for empathetic efficiency</b></p> <p>Solutions to addressing homelessness should be rooted in urgency, while holding in mind that interventions and supports should be built with intentionality and rooted in the experiences of unhoused communities.</p>

These guiding principles were used to guide the community engagement methodology, data analysis, and recommendations.

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## Community Engagement Methodology

The Richmond Homelessness Strategic Plan was developed with input from more than 30 people with lived experience of homelessness and more than 40 local organizations, as well as extensive data collection and background research.

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## Stakeholder Engagement

The Strategic Plan reflects considerable community engagement, including monthly Steering Committee meetings, interviews with residents experiencing homelessness, stakeholder focus groups and interviews, a community forum and workshop, a survey of youth impacted by homelessness, and a landscape analysis of available services and resource gaps. The community process was iterative – during each focus group, interview, survey, and engagement, participants identified additional community members for consultation and input. The process involved the following:

**City Webpage** – A designated City webpage and email notification signup allowed members of the public to access timely information online.

**Strategic Plan Steering Committee** – The Steering Committee is a 19-member group of racially diverse stakeholders representing a wide range of sectors. The Committee included people with lived experience of homelessness, advocates, community activists, the faith community, homeless service providers, business leaders, local and county government, and City Council members. To complement and collaborate with existing homelessness intervention strategies, the Steering Committee also included participants from the Contra Costa Council on Homelessness, the Richmond Homeless Task Force, and the Regional Impact Council.

- ✓ **30 Lived Experience Interviews & Focus Groups**
- ✓ **40 Local Organizations**
- ✓ **City Website Signup**
- ✓ **19-Member Group Steering Committee**
- ✓ **Stakeholder Interviews**
- ✓ **Youth Online Surveys**
- ✓ **Interdepartmental City Staff Working Group**
- ✓ **Community Outreach**
- ✓ **City Council Study Session**

The Steering Committee convened monthly from May to November 2022, provided strategic direction and expertise in the development and implementation of the community engagement plan, and identified stakeholders during the community engagement process. The Steering Committee also played a key role in the development and prioritization of implementation strategies.

**Lived Experience Interviews and Focus Groups** – Homebase conducted individual interviews and focus groups with people currently living in two tent encampments, one vehicle encampment, and an emergency shelter.

Nineteen people currently or formerly living in encampments participated in interviews, with questions focused on contributors to homelessness, available services, and ideas for improvement. Seven people living in emergency shelter participated in two focus groups. In recognition of the disproportionate impact of homelessness on communities of color, interview and focus group participants were also asked about their experiences of discrimination in accessing housing and services. The residents in one encampment were primarily undocumented immigrants who spoke Spanish and interviews were conducted with the interpretation assistance of an unhoused resident. People experiencing homelessness received a gift card for their participation in interviews, focus groups, or for completing surveys.

**Community Stakeholder Focus Groups** – Homebase convened a series of focus groups for facilitated conversations around challenges and solutions to addressing homelessness in Richmond. Focus groups were organized by sector.

- The **Public Sector focus** group included representatives from city and county government, educational representatives, and criminal legal system partners.
- The **Community focus** group included community-based and faith-based organizations and neighborhood groups.
- The **Business focus group** included local business leaders and workforce and economic development representatives.
- The **Providers focus group** included organizations that provide housing, services, and healthcare.
- The **Steering Committee focus** group included the 19-member Steering Committee.

**Stakeholder Interviews** – Homebase conducted individual interviews with representatives of homeless service providers, the CORE county outreach team, county leadership and City of Richmond Councilmembers. These interviews provided an opportunity to drill down into more detailed action steps and complement the data collected in other community engagement efforts.

**Youth Survey** – Homebase and the RYSE Center conducted an online survey that was completed by 48 youth ages 13 to 22 whose communities are impacted by homelessness, including 14 youth with lived experience of homelessness. The survey included questions seeking input on their experiences of homelessness and their ideas for preventing and more adequately addressing homelessness among youth and young adults.

**Community Outreach** – In September 2022, Homebase conducted a virtual community forum in English and Spanish to share information about the community plan and gather input from the public.

**City Council Study Session** – The City of Richmond City Council will conduct a Study Session in the winter of 2023 to review and provide further direction on the strategic plan. The Study Session will be open to the public.

## **Organizations, Groups & Community Members Consulted During the Development of the Strategic Plan**

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### **City of Richmond residents experiencing homelessness**

#### **Business, Economic, and Workforce Development**

Chevron

City of Richmond – Employment and Training

Council of Business and Industry

Contra Costa County Employment and Human Services

NAACP

Richmond Main Street

Richmond Pacific Railroad

Rubicon Programs

Wareham Property Group

## **Community, Faith-based, and Neighborhood Organizations**

All Home  
Faith in Action East Bay  
Family Justice Center  
Richmond Community Foundation  
Richmond Neighborhood Coordinating Council  
Richmond Public Library  
Richmond Rapid Response Fund  
Richmond Rotary  
West Contra Costa Public Education Fund

## **City, County, Education, and Criminal Legal System Representatives**

City of Richmond City Manager's Office  
City of Richmond Councilmembers  
City of Richmond Housing Division  
City of Richmond Planning Division  
City of Richmond Police Department  
Community Education Partnerships  
Contra Costa County Department of Conservation Development  
Contra Costa County Health Services' Health, Housing and Homeless Services Division (H3)  
Coordinated Outreach Referral Engagement (CORE) team  
Housing Authority of Contra Costa County  
Office of Reentry and Justice  
West Contra Costa School District

## **Housing, Health, and Service Providers**

Bay Area Rescue Mission  
Collaborising  
Contra Costa County Behavioral Health  
Contra Costa County Public Health  
Greater Richmond Interfaith Program (GRIP)  
Housing Consortium of the East Bay  
Lifelong Medical Care  
RYSE Center  
Safe Organized Spaces Richmond (SOS)  
Way2Love  
West County Adult Mental Health

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**Data Collection and Background Research**

This report reflects an in-depth review of existing reports and data about the City of Richmond and Contra Costa County, including:

- City of Richmond State of the City (2020-2022)<sup>18</sup>
- City of Richmond Unhoused Interventions RFPs/RFQs and Contracts<sup>19</sup>
- City of Richmond’s Housing Element 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle Public Review Draft<sup>20</sup>
- Contra Costa CoC 2021 Annual Report, edited August 2022<sup>21</sup>
- Contra Costa CoC Point in Time Count<sup>22</sup>
- Contra Costa County: 2020 Point in Time Count Report<sup>23</sup>
- Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Data<sup>24</sup>
- Housing Policy and Belonging in Richmond, Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society Research Report<sup>25</sup>
- Implementation of the Reimagining Public Safety Task Force Recommendations<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> City of Richmond. State of the City annual report presented by Mayor Tom Butts to the City Council. Available at: <https://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/3539/State-of-the-City>.

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/4212/Unhoused-Interventions>.

<sup>20</sup> City of Richmond. 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle Housing Element Public Review Draft – October 21, 2022. Available at: <https://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/4372/Resources>.

<sup>21</sup> <https://cchealth.org/h3/coc/pdf/Annual-Report-2021.pdf>.

<sup>22</sup> <https://cchealth.org/h3/coc/reports.php#PIT>.

<sup>23</sup> <https://cchealth.org/h3/coc/pdf/PIT-report-2020.pdf>.

<sup>24</sup> Contra Costa County. Contra Costa County Health, Housing, and Homelessness Data Summary for Homebase, 9/8/22.

<sup>25</sup> Available at:

[https://haasinstitute.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/haasinstitute\\_housingandbelongingrichmond\\_psprint\\_jan11.pdf](https://haasinstitute.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/haasinstitute_housingandbelongingrichmond_psprint_jan11.pdf).

<sup>26</sup> [Implementation of the Reimagining Public Safety Task Force Recommendations - June 1, 2021](#).

- Regional Action Plan: A Call to Action from the Regional Impact Council<sup>27</sup>
- Richmond, California Health in All Policies Progress Report 2020<sup>28</sup>
- Richmond, California The National Community Survey Report of Results 2021<sup>29</sup>
- Richmond Department of Children and Youth 2020 Community Needs Assessment Report<sup>30</sup>
- Richmond Fund for Children and Youth Strategic Investment Plan Fiscal Years 2021-2024<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> All Home. Regional Action Plan: A Call to Action from the Regional Impact Council. February 2021. Available at: <https://www.allhomeca.org/regionalactionplan/>.

<sup>28</sup> Available at: <https://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/59800/The-NCS-Report---Richmond-CA-2021>

<sup>29</sup> National Research Center. The National Community Survey Report of Results. 2021. Available at: <https://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/59800/The-NCS-Report---Richmond-CA-2021>.

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/56599/2020-Community-Needs-Assessment-Report>.

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/56831/RFCY-2021-2024-Strategic-Investment-Plan>.

## Scope of Homelessness in Richmond

*“Richmond costs have quadrupled but my income hasn’t. So many people are living in cars, and you wouldn’t guess.”*

**-Resident, Brookside Shelter**

Although challenging to quantify, homelessness in Richmond increased in scope and visibility during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the 2020 Point-in-Time Count, Richmond reported 280 persons experiencing unsheltered homelessness.<sup>32</sup>

### Who is Experiencing Homelessness in Richmond?

Homelessness disproportionately impacts Black and Indigenous people, undocumented immigrants, people with disabilities, and people with criminal histories. In Richmond, although people who identify as Black/African American make up 18% of the general population, they make up 57% of the population experiencing homelessness. People who identify as American Indian/Alaska Native population make up 1% of the general population but 11% of the population experiencing homelessness in Richmond.

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<sup>32</sup> A count of unsheltered people was not conducted in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of significant inconsistencies discovered in the data, Contra Costa Health is currently unable to verify the accuracy of the 2022 PIT count. <https://cchealth.org/h3/coc/reports.php#PIT>. Therefore, this report refers to data published in the 2021 Annual Report, available at <https://cchealth.org/h3/coc/pdf/Annual-Report-2021.pdf>, the 2020 PIT Count, and Contra Costa County Health, Housing, and Homelessness Data Summary for Homebase, 9/8/22.

## Household Type

The vast majority (85%) of people experiencing homelessness in Richmond are adults-only households (Figure A).<sup>33</sup> They are disproportionately Black/African American, and 67% of people experiencing homelessness have a disabling condition, compared to 12% of the general population in Richmond.<sup>34</sup> Fifty-eight percent (58%) of people experiencing homelessness in Richmond are men, and 42% are women; less than ten individuals identified as transgender or gender non-conforming.<sup>35</sup> Intersecting identities (for example, a Black woman with a disabling condition) layer on vulnerabilities for homelessness. As noted in Figure A, 85% of people experiencing homelessness in Richmond live in adult-only households, and 15% live in families with children.

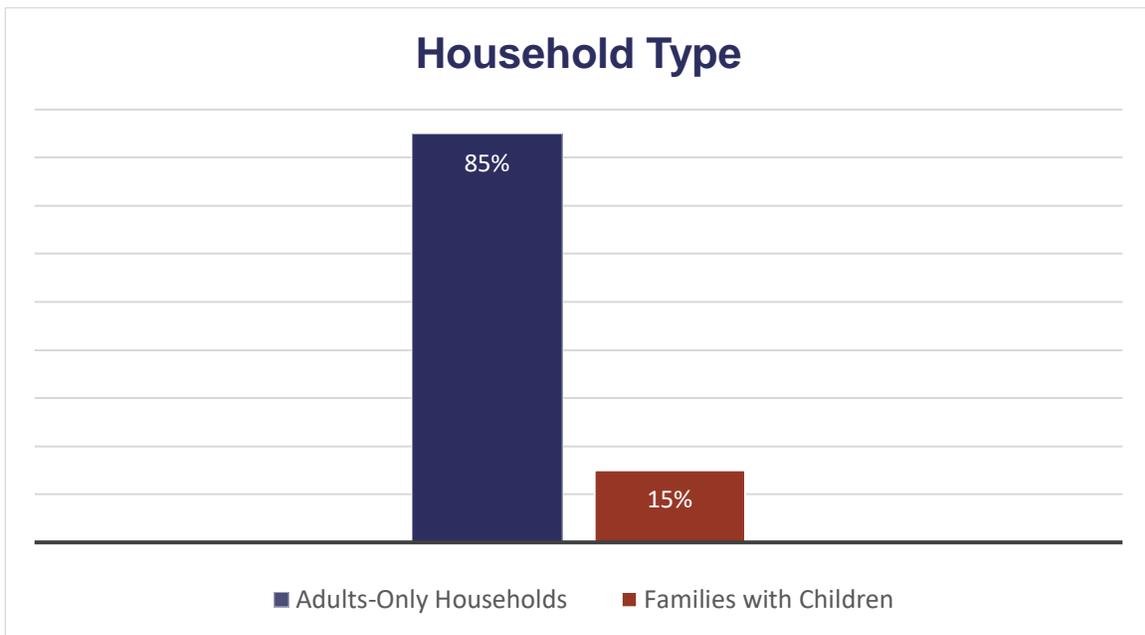


Figure A: Household Type

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<sup>33</sup> Contra Costa County. Contra Costa County Health, Housing, and Homelessness Data Summary for Homebase. 9/8/22.

<sup>34</sup> Contra Costa County. Homeless population data: Contra Costa County Health, Housing, and Homelessness Data Summary for Homebase. 9/8/22. General population data source: [www.policymap.com](http://www.policymap.com).

<sup>35</sup> Contra Costa County. Contra Costa County Health, Housing, and Homelessness Data Summary for Homebase. 9/8/22.

## Age Groups

Fifty six percent (56%) of people experiencing homelessness in Richmond were adults ages 25-54, compared to 44% in the general Richmond population.<sup>36</sup> Children under age 18 are underrepresented in the homeless population, comprising 21.6% of the general population and 8% of the homeless population (Figure B).<sup>37</sup>

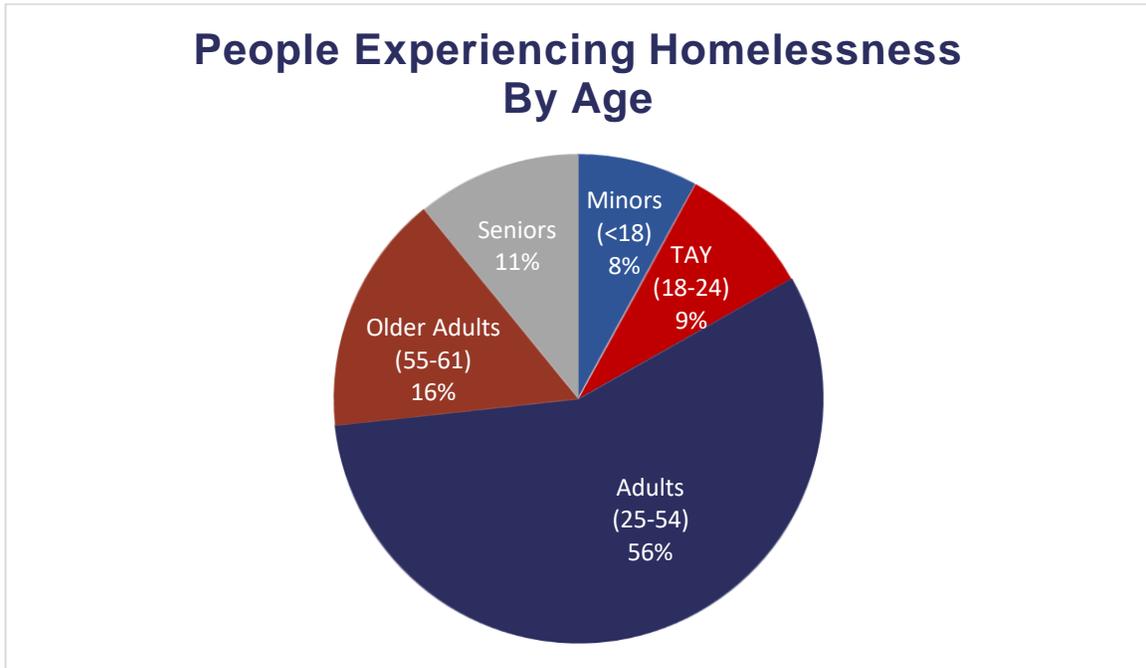


Figure B: People Experiencing Homelessness by Age

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<sup>36</sup> Homeless population data: Contra Costa County Health, Housing, and Homelessness Data Summary for Homebase, 9/8/22; General Richmond population data source: [https://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/8348/COR-Fact-Sheet?bidId=.](https://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/8348/COR-Fact-Sheet?bidId=)

<sup>37</sup> Contra Costa County. Contra Costa County Health, Housing, and Homelessness Data Summary for Homebase. 9/8/22. General population data source: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/richmondcitycalifornia>.

## Subpopulations

Veterans and people with disabilities are overrepresented among people experiencing homelessness. While 3.2% of Richmond residents are veterans, 5% of Richmond residents experiencing homelessness are veterans.<sup>38</sup> As noted below, while 12% of Richmond residents overall identify as having a disability, 67% of people experiencing homelessness have a disabling condition, which includes physical and mental health disabilities, substance use disorders, and chronic health conditions.<sup>39</sup> Specific disabling conditions among people experiencing homelessness in Richmond are described below (Figure C).<sup>40</sup>

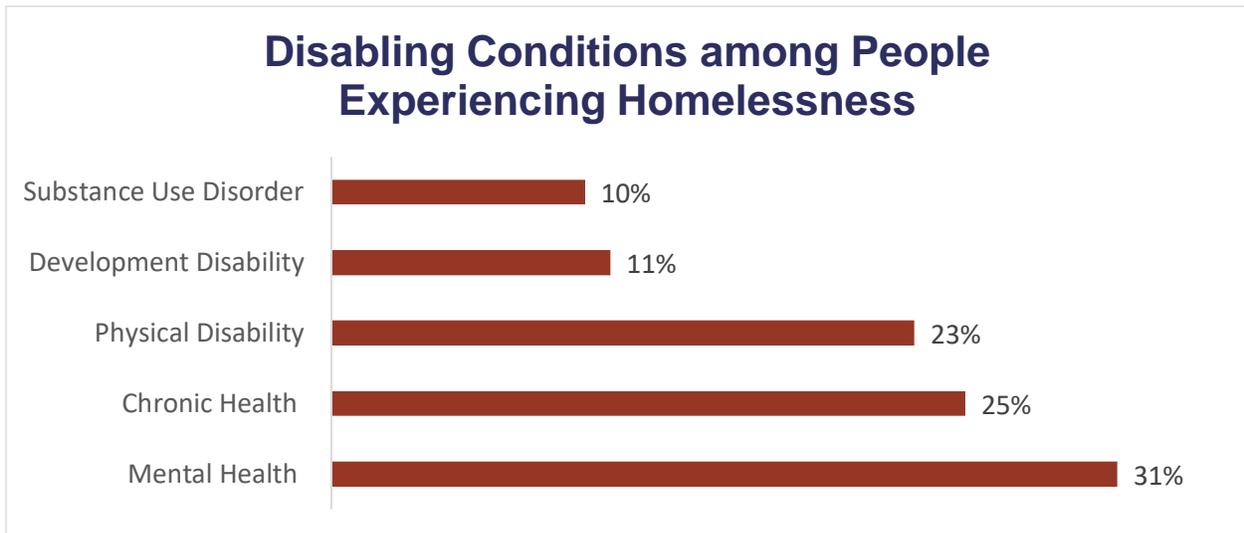


Figure C: Disabling conditions among people experiencing homelessness.

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<sup>38</sup> Homeless population data: Contra Costa County Health, Housing, and Homelessness Data Summary for Homebase. 9/8/22; General population data source: [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

<sup>39</sup> Contra Costa County. Homeless population data: Contra Costa County Health, Housing, and Homelessness Data Summary for Homebase. 9/8/22; General population data source: [www.policymap.com](http://www.policymap.com).

<sup>40</sup> Contra Costa County. Homeless population data: Contra Costa County Health, Housing, and Homelessness Data Summary for Homebase. 9/8/22.

## Criminal Legal System and Homelessness

The intersection between the criminal legal system and homelessness is a crisis at the local, statewide, and national level. According to the Prison Policy Initiative, formerly incarcerated people are nearly ten times as likely to experience homelessness as the general population.<sup>41</sup> In Contra Costa County, more than two-thirds of people surveyed during the 2020 PIT count had been previously incarcerated in jail or prison and 25% were on probation or parole on the night of the count.<sup>42</sup> The intersections of systemic racism and criminal justice involvement also compound and facilitate racial disparities that are present.

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### Youth Homelessness-Reflections of Youth

As stated above, nearly 20% of people experiencing homelessness in Richmond are under the age of 24, a group that is often overlooked when examining the issue. To uplift the voices of youth experiencing homelessness, Homebase collaborated with RYSE Center, a youth-serving organization based in Richmond whose mission is to:

*“Create safe spaces grounded in social justice that build youth power for young people to love, learn, educate, heal and transform lives and communities.”*

Homebase and RYSE surveyed 48 youth ages 13-22 about their experiences of housing and homelessness. Of the youth surveyed, a combined majority either lost their housing (31%) or worried they’d lose their housing (21%). Thirteen of the fourteen youth who identified themselves in this way also identified as Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) or non-white. This reflects the trend described above related to racial disparities in homelessness in Richmond and also reflects the trend of causes of homelessness; like the general population of those experiencing homelessness, more than half of the youth surveyed became homeless for financial reasons.

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<sup>41</sup> Prison Policy Initiative. Nowhere to Go: Homelessness among formerly incarcerated people. Available at: <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/housing.html>.

<sup>42</sup> Contra Costa County. Annual Point in Time Count Report 2020. Available at: <https://cchealth.org/h3/coc/pdf/PIT-report-2020.pdf>.

The youth survey also included questions regarding where young people stayed while they were unhoused:

- Nearly two-thirds (65%) of the youth surveyed indicated that they stayed with someone in their support circle (friends, partner, or relative), and 50% indicated that they were currently staying in a vehicle (there may be intersections between the two groups).
- Sixty percent (60%) of youth surveyed had experienced homelessness for a duration of between 1 and 6 months, while 25% experienced homelessness for more time and 15% had experienced homelessness for less time.

Many of these youth were disconnected from supports. One third of youth became homeless on their own and half did not tell anyone about losing their housing. Common themes emerged regarding barriers to sharing this information or asking for help, including feeling “embarrassed” or “weird,” pointing to the larger need to reframe the issue so young people can access services and supports without fear of judgment.

Of those who received support for their situation, 65% relied on natural supports (including family and friends), while 40% felt supported by their school. The preexisting supports that youth have in their lives represent an opportunity for interventions to build upon and enhance these natural forms of community.

Youth with lived experiences of homelessness cited three major needs: food, shelter, and stable home environments.

Unconditional access to these resources was also reflected in other interviews with people experiencing homelessness.



94% of the youth surveyed believe that housing is a human right.

***“I would love for people to start acknowledging others. I often see unhoused individuals brazenly ignored by people walking by when they are reaching out and/or simply asking a question – and this breaks my heart. I think it is so very dehumanizing to not even acknowledge someone saying something directly to you, deeming them unworthy of a simple “no, thank you” or “I’m sorry I don’t have any cash.” I think the very least one can do is acknowledge their fellow person.”***

***-Youth survey respondent, 19 years old***

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## Structural Causes of Homelessness in Richmond

The root causes of homelessness in Richmond including systemic factors such as housing market conditions, income and a lack of living-wage jobs, and a history of inequitable housing and environmental policies rooted in racism.

- **Discriminatory Housing Policy** – The City of Richmond has a history of structural housing discrimination and racism which impacts housing in Richmond today. The population of Richmond quadrupled from 24,000 to over 100,000 between 1940 and 1943 during World War II after people from the South were recruited by the Kaiser Shipyards to build ships for the war efforts. Black residents, pushed out of the South by experiences of racism, moved to Richmond in a wave with a population increase of 270 to 14,000. In seeking to address the huge need for housing, public housing authorities segregated Black residents to poorly constructed war housing designed to be temporary that was later torn down, displacing Black residents, largely to public housing projects previously vacated by white residents. They also moved to North Richmond, which lacked services and the capacity for affordable construction, and later, South Richmond.<sup>43</sup>
- **Historic Exclusion from Homeownership** – Access to private housing was also discriminatory, with Black residents prohibited from accessing loans to purchase newly built homes for several decades. Racially restrictive covenants were written into legal deeds, which barred the sale of homes to Black residents. Later on, “blockbusting” took place, in which realtors stoked the racial anxieties of white homeowners, who were encouraged to sell their homes at or below market price, which were in turn sold to Black people and other people of color that could finance their homes with subprime loans and higher interest rates. This predatory lending eventually led to foreclosures and displacement of longtime BIPOC residents during the foreclosure crisis in the 2000s.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>Rothstein, Richard. A History of Exclusion. Oakland Magazine. Available at: <https://www.oaklandmagazine.com/a-history-of-exclusion>.

<sup>44</sup> City of Richmond. Housing Element, Appendix F: Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing. Available at: [https://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/63304/LWC\\_Richmond\\_HEU\\_AppF\\_AFFH\\_PRD\\_102122?bidId=](https://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/63304/LWC_Richmond_HEU_AppF_AFFH_PRD_102122?bidId=).

- **Housing Affordability and Rental Market Conditions** – Structural housing market conditions include the supply and cost of rental housing. As noted in *Homelessness is a Housing Problem*, “High rental costs and low vacancy rates create a challenging market for many residents in a city, and those challenges are compounded for people with low incomes and/or physical or mental health concerns.”<sup>45</sup> With a low vacancy rate of 2.8%,<sup>46</sup> Richmond also has some of the highest rental costs in the country: in 2020, the median gross rent in Richmond was \$1,574.<sup>47</sup> More than half (58%) of Richmond renters and two-thirds (67%) of Richmond homeowners are cost-burdened, meaning they spend more than a third of their monthly income on housing expenses.<sup>48</sup> With so many cost-burdened renters and homeowners, the impact of discreet financial events can push someone into homelessness, including an unexpected hospital visit or car repair.
- **Income** – A number of people in interviews and focus groups mentioned a lack of living wage jobs in Richmond. With a lack of living wage jobs, income has not kept up with rising housing cost. Despite working multiple jobs, people may still be unable to afford housing. There are a variety of systemic barriers to obtaining and maintaining employment, including the experience of homelessness itself. Maintaining employment may also be disrupted by a medical emergency, incarceration, mental health and substance use challenges, or domestic violence.

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<sup>45</sup> Colburn, Gregg and Aldern, Clayton Page. *Homelessness is a Housing Problem*. 2022.

<sup>46</sup> Policy Map. Change in Rental Vacancy Rates 2015 to 2020, Available at: [https://www.policymap.com/report\\_widget?type=fur&area=predefined&sid=10192&pid=697005456](https://www.policymap.com/report_widget?type=fur&area=predefined&sid=10192&pid=697005456) (based on Census data, accessed 9 December 2022).

<sup>47</sup> Policy Map. Median Rent By Neighborhood. 2020. Available at: [https://www.policymap.com/report\\_widget?type=fur&area=predefined&sid=10192&pid=697005456](https://www.policymap.com/report_widget?type=fur&area=predefined&sid=10192&pid=697005456) (based on Census data, accessed 9 December 2022).

<sup>48</sup> City of Richmond. Community Needs Assessment Report. 2020. Available at: <https://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/56599/2020-Community-Needs-Assessment-Report>.

- **Environmental Concerns and Health Inequities** – The history of racial residential segregation continues to play a significant role in the overall health profile for Richmond residents.<sup>49</sup> Richmond residents identify the quality of the natural environment, cleanliness, and air quality as much lower than national benchmarks.<sup>50</sup> In recognition of the importance of environmental equity to resolve disproportionate exposure to environmental toxins, including lead paint and mold, Richmond became the first city in California to adopt a Health in All Policies (HiAP) Strategy and Ordinance in 2014.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> City of Richmond. Community Health and Wellness Element. Available at: <https://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/6999/110-Health-and-Wellness-Element?bidId=>.

<sup>50</sup> City of Richmond. The National Community Survey Report of Results. 2021. Available at: <https://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/59800/The-NCS-Report--Richmond-CA-2021>.

<sup>51</sup> City of Richmond. Ordinance No. 27-15 N.S. Available at: <https://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/6999>.

## Advancing Equity

### The Significance of Equity

Equity is fundamental to a fair and just society. Addressing equity in homelessness requires pinpointing where there are disproportionate needs and focusing efforts on removing barriers and strengthening access to housing and services accordingly. The end goal is for full and equal access to opportunities, power and resources so that all people flourish. The process of advancing toward equity demands commitment, investment, and care.

Those most negatively affected by inequities must define what the journey to well-being looks like, as well as defining well-being itself. Key to these efforts is centering the voices of those most impacted, not only to informing our understanding but also to directly shape systemic solutions.

Meaningfully advancing equity requires dismantling deeply entrenched systems of privilege and oppression that have led to inequitable decision-making processes and uneven distribution of benefits and burdens. Similarly, it is necessary to focus attention and resources on those people and places where needs are greatest to ensure that decisions, policies and practices produce gains for all.

While there are a broad range of equity-minded activities in Richmond and the region, there remains a need for increased coordination and cross-sector solutions that match the scale of inequities present. Stakeholders in the City of Richmond from different sectors and common interests must be collectively committed to addressing homelessness with an equity lens. This Strategic Plan has a strong emphasis on both the input from residents with lived experiences of homelessness, as well as on racial equity, to identify disproportionate needs in the community. Considerations to advance equity are also provided in the Goals and Action Steps section.

## Racial Inequalities Reflected in Homelessness Populations

### Racial Disparities in Richmond

Race is a strong correlate of poverty in communities and poverty is a predictor of homelessness, which produces racial disparities in homelessness. As noted above, the racial and ethnic representation of the homeless population in Richmond does not align with the general population of Richmond.<sup>52</sup> For example, although people who identify as Black/African American make up 18% of the general population, they make up 57% of the population experiencing homelessness. People who identify as American Indian/Alaska Native population make up 1% of the general population but 11% of the population experiencing homelessness in Richmond (Figure D).

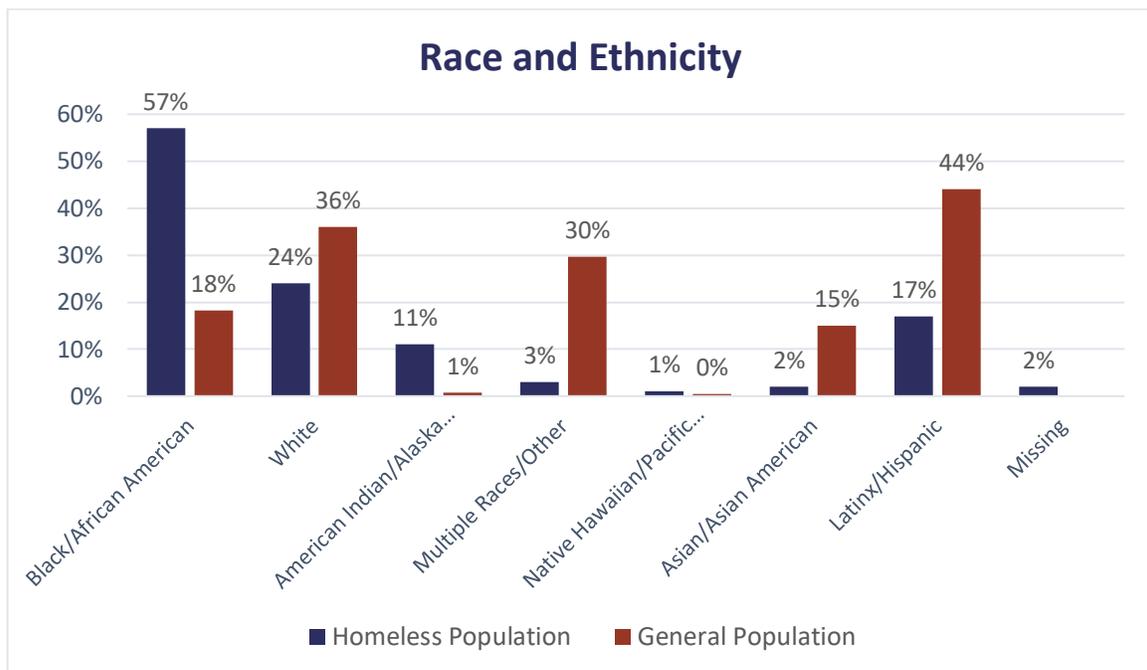


Figure D: Race and Ethnicity

### Racial Disparities in Contra Costa County

<sup>52</sup> Contra Costa County. Homeless population data: Contra Costa County Health, Housing, and Homelessness Data Summary for Homebase. 9/8/22; General population data source: [www.policymap.com](http://www.policymap.com).

The racial inequities present in Richmond are reflected across Contra Costa county: Black people are 9% of the population in Contra Costa county, yet they represent 42% of people experiencing homelessness in the county.<sup>53</sup> The American Indian, Native Alaskan and Indigenous population makes up 1% of the general population but 8% of the homeless population in Contra Costa county.<sup>54</sup>

Underpinning these disparities are historical inequities in housing policies and practices, segregation, discriminatory laws and enforcement, and restricted economic opportunities. Communities of color, low-income households, people with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ individuals, and survivors of violence and trauma all experience homelessness at higher rates and face greater systemic barriers to housing stability. Those with multiple at-risk identities likely face compounding risk for homelessness and other harms.

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<sup>53</sup> Contra Costa Continuum of Care. 2021 Annual Report. Available at: <https://cchealth.org/h3/coc/pdf/Annual-Report-2021.pdf>.

<sup>54</sup> Contra Costa Continuum of Care. 2021 Annual Report. Available at: <https://cchealth.org/h3/coc/pdf/Annual-Report-2021.pdf>.

## Overarching Considerations for Effectively Addressing Homelessness

### Reflections of People with Lived Experience of Homelessness

As a critical part of community engagement to develop this plan, Homebase interviewed people with current lived experience of homelessness in Richmond. Three primary needs from the current system of care emerged from those conversations:



### Guidance from the Steering Committee

The following considerations were generated using the guiding principles developed by the Strategic Plan Steering Committee and best practices in addressing homelessness:

1. **Equity** should be prioritized as a foundational element of addressing homelessness. Interventions to reduce disparities and move towards equity should be shaped by both individual and systemic considerations.
2. Recognizing the **humanity** of individuals was a common thread. Solutions must honor the health and dignity of all members of the community, including those who are unhoused, in a meaningful way.
3. The issue of homelessness should be conceptualized not just from the perspective of individualism, but from a **community** perspective. Those experiencing homelessness are already part of communities that can be strengthened by having access to resources.

4. Solutions for addressing homelessness should be **sustainable**. Ongoing funding, program longevity, and system-wide commitment to approaching the issue from an action-oriented perspective are needed.
5. An important driver of interventions must be **creating space for impacted individuals and communities** to define what it means to be treated with respect and what safe, health, and security look like.

## Goals and Action Steps

The stakeholder engagement process outlined above, in combination with data analysis and the guidance of the Steering Committee, instructed the development of the following goals, recommendations, and short- and long-term action steps. The purpose of this section is to provide guidance to community stakeholders on how to effectively collaborate to address the issue of homelessness in Richmond.

While each goal is important, goals have been ordered to prioritize the immediate needs of unsheltered individuals and communities (Goal 1) with the overarching aim to create and sustain viable housing options (Goal 2). Goals 3 and 4 delve into more detailed recommendations regarding homelessness prevention, crisis response, and enhancing economic pathways. Finally, Goal 5 speaks to systems-level strategies to increase effectiveness and transparency.

1. Improve quality of life for unsheltered individuals and communities.
2. Create temporary supportive housing (such as transitional villages and safe parking sites) and expand and sustain permanent supportive and affordable long-term housing.
3. Expand prevention and crisis programming.
4. Improve economic pathways for unhoused and recently housed individuals.
5. Build capacity, collaboration and accountability within agencies working to address homelessness and the system of care as a whole.

Each goal includes descriptions of short-term and long-term action steps. **Short-term action steps should be completed within 12 to 36 months while long-term action steps should be completed in 3 to 5 years.** There is also a chart under each goal that briefly describes each short-term action step, its purpose, general guidance around funding sources, and community examples to inform the development of Richmond-specific initiatives. Homebase looked across similarly sized communities for investment recommendations.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of various funding sources that could help enable and sustain the action steps provided in this plan.

**Public funding:**

- Local funding, including the City General Fund.
- Contra Costa County funding, including Measure X, Employment and Human Services, Department of Conservation and Development, Office of Reentry and Justice, and Contra Costa Public Defenders.
- California state funding, including the Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP Grant Program), the Encampment Resolution Funding (ERF) Program, Mental Health Services Act, and Homekey.
- Federal funding, including the Continuum of Care (CoC) program, Youth Homeless Demonstration Program (YHDP) program, Emergency Solutions Grant program, and Grants for the Benefit of Homeless Individuals (GBHI) program.

**Private funding:**

- Banks
- Corporations and businesses
- Foundations
- Individual donors

**In kind/non-monetary supports:**

- Clothing
- Collaboration and partnerships
- Food
- Medical supplies
- Office and meeting space
- Office supplies
- Volunteer time

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## Goal 1: Improve quality of life for unsheltered individuals and communities

***“We need clean space, sanitation and sewage services.”***

**-Resident, Castro vehicle encampment**

***“If people have homes in a community setting, they are not homeless. They are living in a neighborhood.”***

**-Former resident, Rydin Road encampment**

Since 2020, the number of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness has increased exponentially, resulting in increased visibility of vehicle and tent encampments. It is critical that individuals and families experiencing unsheltered homelessness (i.e., living in on the street, in cars, and in places not meant for human habitation) have access to services and resources. Ending homelessness for individuals and families who have long been homeless often requires frequent and repeated engagement over time to build trust and connection.

Please see the next page for the short-term action steps.

## Short-Term Action Steps

Action Steps	Purpose	Funding Sources	Community Examples
<p>1.1 Ensure that essential living amenities such as water, sanitation, hygiene, and electricity are provided at least weekly to all encampments.</p>	<p>Improve the quality of life for unsheltered individuals and communities while longer term housing plans and resources are accessed and developed.</p>	<p>Local</p>	<p>The Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing provides a robust set of utilities at its <a href="#">Bayview Vehicle Triage Center</a>, including microwaves, a charging station and laundry, in addition to common supports like showers and toilets, with a goal of getting electric utility services.</p>
<p>1.2 Provide at least 1,000 transportation vouchers or other navigational and transportation services that bridges unhoused individuals to gain greater access to employment, school, community resources, case management, and other essential safety net or personal development services.</p>	<p>Connect individuals to needed community resources that are currently a distance from encampments; improve physical and mental health (including substance use needs); connect with employment resources and jobs; provide flexible transportation support across all times of the day.</p>	<p>Local, County</p>	<p>At various locations across the United States, the United Way operates <a href="#">Ride United</a>, with the goal of reducing transportation barriers that can contribute to poverty and systemic racism. As a public-private partnership, rides and other basic needs are provided from a rights-based perspective.</p>

Action Steps	Purpose	Funding Sources	Community Examples
1.3 Provide veterinary care and other pet supplies like leashes and dog food.	Support folks in caring for their pets and center their humanity; improve sanitation and health of animals.	State	The State of California's Department of Housing and Community Development is funding efforts to <u>support the integration of pets into emergency housing</u> to reduce these barriers to access.
1.4 Expand case management and other care-related individualized services directly in encampments to build connections for unsheltered individuals to have access to an expanded array of opportunities and resources for personal development, wellness and health, financial means to secure and sustain housing, and ongoing supports for long-term stabilization.	Increase access to case management services other supports and resources.	Local, State	The Contra Costa County Coordinated Outreach Referral, Engagement ( <u>CORE</u> ) program engages individuals living outside to help them stabilize and secure permanent housing. Consider building upon these efforts to increase access to ongoing case management.

## **Long-Term Action Steps**

1. Collaborate with Contra Costa County to create a robust street medicine program to address individuals' medical needs, which can become deadly without access to resources. Street medicine refers to providing direct medical care on the streets to unhoused and other hard to reach populations.
2. Improve access to workforce and other income-generating opportunities to afford market rate housing.
3. Create a community education initiative that builds trust and relationships between unhoused residents and other community members by bringing neighbors together and debunking myths about homelessness.

## **Equity Actions**

1. Community education campaigns should center and partner with people with lived experience of homelessness in the development of educational materials, strategy development and implementation, and relationship building. Partnership may include the development of a peer mentorship and training program for people experiencing homelessness.
2. Community-based case management providers should be equipped to provide meaningful, culturally affirming, and quality services. Staff should be linguistically competent and representative of the communities supported, including people with lived experiences and BIPOC staff to meet the cultural needs of unsheltered communities, a group that is overwhelmingly BIPOC. Ongoing capacity building for service providers builds skills and expertise and provides support to allow providers to sustainably engage in the work, especially given vicarious trauma and personal connections to the issue of homelessness.

## **Other Considerations**

The City's planned closures of the Castro and Rydin Road encampments have resulted in numerous challenges for residents and service providers. Interviews with current and former residents revealed a strong sense of community among encampments, and the need for basic services, such as personal hygiene facilities, garbage disposal and sanitation services. Some impacted residents have expressed a lack of alternative housing options available and the severing of community ties due to being relocated to other areas and cities. This underscores the need to center the individuals most affected and utilize a holistic, community-oriented perspective in designing solutions.

Given the impact of these challenges on the realities of the lives of those in the unsheltered community, it is crucial to build trust between these individuals and the City of Richmond in the name of supporting the long-term vision of ending unsheltered homelessness.

**Goal 2: Create temporary supportive housing (such as transitional villages and safe parking sites) and expand and sustain permanent supportive and affordable long-term housing**

***“The lack of affordable housing is a huge issue in Richmond. There are so many unused buildings that should be used to create more housing.”***

**-Participant, Community Focus Group**

The cornerstone of addressing unsheltered homelessness is housing. Permanent supportive housing (PSH) is a proven solution to homelessness for the most vulnerable – pairing housing with case management and supportive services. On the other end of the spectrum, affordable housing targeted toward extremely low income (ELI) individuals, whose incomes do not exceed the greater of either 30% of the Area Median Income (AMI) or the federal poverty line, is more appropriate for high burdened households who do not need substantial services. A spectrum of housing options is needed to meet the varied needs of Richmond residents who are currently experiencing homelessness.

Please see the next page for the short-term action steps.

## Short-Term Action Steps

Action Steps	Purpose	Funding Source	Community Examples
2.1 Identify funding and development partners for converting hotels and motels to serve as PSH units.	Build upon lessons learned from Project Roomkey and Homekey which quickly offered housing for unsheltered individuals.	State	One of the strategies embedded within the State of California’s approach to <a href="#">addressing homelessness through Homekey</a> includes converting hotels and motels into interim and permanent housing. A long-term funding strategy must be developed for operation costs.
2.2 Fund at least one sustainable landlord incentive program of at least \$75,000 to develop and maintain a pool of landlords who will rent to households holding PSH vouchers or other locally funded rental subsidies. <sup>55</sup>	Counter market influences and increase utilization rates of vouchers and rental subsidies.	Local	Various cities have established landlord incentive programs, including <a href="#">Housing Commission of the City of San Diego</a> and the <a href="#">Housing Authority of Los Angeles</a> . In the City of Los Angeles, participating landlords are eligible for incentive payouts such as: a one-time signing bonus for each unit leased or three months’ rent (whichever is less), a one-time reimbursement for new contract inspection repairs, reliable subsidized monthly payments, and free

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<sup>55</sup> Investment recommendations based on successful efforts in similarly-sized communities.

Action Steps	Purpose	Funding Source	Community Examples
			property listing. Sustainability and/or replenishment of funding is a key element of ensuring the continuity of such programming.
2.3 Identify vacant or underutilized properties to create permanent supportive housing or develop other affordable housing for ELI households.	Provide a range of long-term options for individuals experiencing homelessness.	Local, County, State	Recent strategies for addressing homelessness include the State of California's efforts to <u>utilize state-owned properties</u> to address homelessness.
2.4 Explore establishing a land trust that enables development of units that can be used for permanent supportive housing and other units for ELI households.	Protect potential sites for development.	Local, State	<u>Land trusts</u> are increasingly being used by Cities as a means to protect land from private development in favor of developing public land for affordable housing. <u>The City of Oakland has recently used taxpayer-approved local spending to develop affordable units with a racial equity lens through a community land trust.</u>

## Long-Term Action Steps

1. Build relationships and feedback loops with affordable housing developers to understand how best to streamline the development process, including identifying alignment for a master siting plan.
2. Leverage amendments to the City Zoning Code outlined in the Housing Element to increase development of transitional and supportive housing.<sup>56</sup> Provide funding and incentives, including tax breaks and reduced permitting costs, to facilitate the development of permanent supportive housing units and units for ELI households. Note that amendments to development ordinances could be achieved in a shorter timeframe to allow for longer-term development strategies.

## Equity Actions

1. Implement a full array of housing types, such as multifamily developments and accessory dwelling units (ADU), instead of an overemphasis on single family housing, which has an exclusionary history linked to racial segregation. The California Health and Safety Code<sup>57</sup> requires that cities and counties develop a plan that incentivizes and promotes the creation of ADUs that can be offered at affordable rent for very low to moderate-income households.
2. Consider various neighborhoods for developing housing so as not to concentrate housing in low-income areas with the goal of expanding access to resources and economic security.
3. Explore policies that prioritize current or previously displaced Richmond residents for new affordable housing.

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<sup>56</sup> City of Richmond. Public Review Draft 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle Housing Element Update (2023-2031), October 2022. Available at:

[https://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/63306/LWC\\_Richmond\\_HEU\\_PRD\\_102122?bidId=.](https://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/63306/LWC_Richmond_HEU_PRD_102122?bidId=)

<sup>57</sup> California Health (Section 65583(c)(7)), available at:

[https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes\\_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=GOV&sectionNum=65583.](https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=GOV&sectionNum=65583)

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### Goal 3: Expand homelessness prevention and crisis programming

***“One single traumatic event can result in homelessness. Many Richmond residents are one sneeze away from becoming unhoused.”***

**-Participant, Public Sector Focus Group**

Efforts to address homelessness should be multifaceted and include interventions that both prevent homelessness and provide crisis supports when individuals become homeless. Interim housing and other immediate crisis interventions such as flexible financial assistance are critical elements of an effective homelessness response system. The goal of crisis programming is to make feasible the transition of vulnerable unhoused individuals out of homelessness and provide a stable experience that facilitates placement into permanent housing. The bridge into permanent housing must support the stated needs of people with current lived experience of homelessness in Richmond. These interventions should target not just individual needs but also consider needs from a community perspective.

Please see the next page for the short-term action steps.

## Short-Term Action Steps

Action Steps	Purpose	Funding Source	Community Examples
3.1 Establish a flexible fund for financial assistance for diversion and housing focused-problem solving, including time limited or one-off expenses of at least \$100,000. <sup>58</sup> Consider a youth-specific set aside to support youth staying with family and friends (e.g., funds for grocery cards to alleviate financial strain).	Buffer emergency financial considerations that may impact someone’s ability to maintain housing.	Local, County, Private	The <a href="#">Community Health Partnership</a> , based in Colorado, has an expansive “Flex Fund” that provides a continuum of support to those experiencing homelessness and housing instability. The fund is supported by Kaiser Permanente and administered by nonprofits and city agencies.
3.2 Expand upon locally driven crisis tools like eviction moratoriums.	Support individuals in maintaining housing from a systemic policy lens.	Local	The City of Richmond has already <a href="#">utilized eviction moratoriums during the pandemic</a> ; revisiting these strategies is recommended.
3.3 Expand interim housing options for transition-age youth, older adults, and other	Increase crisis housing options to meet immediate, short-term housing and	County, State, Federal	The <a href="#">HUD 100-Day Challenge to Prevent and End Youth and Young Adult Homelessness</a> highlights

<sup>58</sup> Investment recommendations based on successful efforts in similarly sized communities.

Action Steps	Purpose	Funding Source	Community Examples
vulnerable populations. These interim housing options may expand on the expected design of how bridge housing can be most effectively provided for targeted populations, including young people.	service needs of vulnerable populations.		emerging and best practices in serving transition-age youth.
3.4 Secure commitment from a faith-based community partner to pilot the first Safe Parking Site in the Richmond Safe Parking Program.	Provide resources to unsheltered residents to meet immediate safety and basic needs.	City	The City of Mountain View implements a <a href="#">safe parking program</a> in private and public lots throughout the City with priority for families with students in Mountain View school districts, those who work/live in Mountain View, seniors, and people with disabilities. The Scattered Sites Subgroup of the Richmond Homeless Taskforce continues to conduct targeted outreach to congregations and other faith organizations.
3.5 Identify property for the development of an interim housing project, which aims to immediately transition	Leverage existing City resources that can serve as a launching pad to	City	The City of Los Angeles conducted an <a href="#">audit</a> of City-owned land, including parking lots and property, with the intention of utilizing it for

Action Steps	Purpose	Funding Source	Community Examples
<p>vulnerable clients out of homelessness and facilitate placement into permanent housing. The property may be vacant or City-owned land. Land slated for permanent development may be used as interim housing during the entitlement process.</p>	<p>permanent, supportive, and affordable housing.</p>		<p>interim housing or support facilities. In 2019, the City of Richmond approved a <a href="#">Tiny Homes on Wheels Pilot Project</a> to evaluate the feasibility of using tiny homes to provide interim housing to people experiencing homelessness.</p>

## Long-Term Action Steps

1. Develop and identify funds for a subsidy program that provides ongoing rental assistance for extremely low income and high rent burdened households. This program can be modeled after the Statewide Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP), which provides short-term rental assistance to low-income households who were unable to pay rent due to COVID-19.
2. Identify the preferred physical design (ex. tiny home, pallet shelter, etc.), number of units, and on-site services to project needed operations costs to fund an interim housing project. Work with Contra Costa County to identify features of existing sites that have high rates of successful permanent housing placement.

## Equity Actions

1. Establish low-barrier crisis response services that can accommodate different types of family configurations to increase racial equity in the homeless system of care. Other equity-building strategies should also be explored so that the people obtaining crisis programming support are representative of the unhoused population.

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### Goal 4: Improve economic pathways for unhoused and recently housed individuals

*“People experiencing homelessness are seen as a burden, but they are actually a potential workforce. If we didn’t have to waste our energy on meeting our basic needs, we would have the energy and resources to revitalize the economy of Richmond.”*

**-Former resident, Rydin Road vehicle encampment**

People experiencing homelessness, service providers, neighborhood groups, and business owners all cited the need for pathways to employment and economic stability for unhoused and recently housed Richmond residents. Workforce development programs play an important role in supporting individuals and communities in moving towards economic stability.

**Guaranteed basic income** was identified throughout the community engagement process as a strategy to combat inequities that spans the first four goals of the Strategic Plan. Richmond as a whole, including those experiencing homelessness, benefits when all individuals have the right to economic security they need to thrive.

Economic supports should provide both person-centered, individual support and be systemic in nature, taking into account the structural factors that impact individuals' abilities to access and maintain employment. To disrupt cycles of generational poverty for youth, supports must also be tailored to youth who are unhoused or at risk of homelessness.

Please see the next page for the short-term action steps.

## Short-Term Action Steps

Action Steps	Purpose	Funding Sources	Community Examples
4.1 Expand workforce development services and employment-focused case management that prioritizes employment of unhoused individuals and increase people accessing these services by 50% annually. <sup>59</sup>	Increase the current capacity of agencies in Richmond supporting individuals throughout the interview process, including preparing them for interviews, as well as supports needed for sustaining employment like transportation and clothing.	County, State, Federal	A local example is RichmondWORKS, which connects workforce opportunities by providing occupational training and job search/placement assistance to the job seeker and staffing and hiring assistance to local businesses.
4.2 Leverage or help fund the Richmond guaranteed income pilot program launched by the Richmond Rapid Response Fund (R3F).	To provide unconditional, consistent cash payments to ensure all residents have the income they need to meet their basic needs.	Local, County, Private	The City of Stockton embarked upon a <u>guaranteed income pilot</u> that saw positive outcomes. The Richmond Rapid Response Fund has launched a community design process for a guaranteed basic income program.
4.3 Create at least three new partnerships with local businesses to build	Collaborate with the business community to provide local job opportunities.	Local, County, Private	The Heartland Alliance published an <u>Employer Engagement Toolkit</u> that guides workforce development

<sup>59</sup> Investment recommendations based on successful efforts in similarly-sized communities.

Action Steps	Purpose	Funding Sources	Community Examples
employment pathways for people experiencing homelessness.			stakeholders in building out relationships with businesses and provides program design support and strategy.
4.4 Pilot at least one new pathway to employment program for individuals who have been incarcerated, including record expungement and employment opportunities developed specifically for reentry.	Reduce barriers to employment and develop opportunities specific to the needs of those leaving institutional settings.	Local, County, State, Federal	<u>Homeboy Industries</u> , a prominent nonprofit organization in Los Angeles, has pioneered a <u>social enterprise</u> model that supports reentry programming and sustainable employment for previously incarcerated individuals.
4.5 Expand youth-friendly employment programs for youth experiencing and at risk of homelessness.	Increase the capacity of established local programs, such as YouthWORKS, to provide subsidized internship and employment opportunities to Richmond youth.	Local, County, State, Federal, Private	<u>YouthWORKS</u> offers a Work Experience Program and Youth Employment Program for Richmond youth, and provides services including internships, apprenticeship training, work readiness and life skills workshops, and support services.

## Long-Term Action Steps

1. Increase digital literacy resources for job seekers experiencing homelessness. Consider partnering with [Literacy for Every Adult \(LEAP\)](#) to focus on the unhoused.
2. Connect and expand access to language courses for English language learners experiencing homelessness.
3. Expand transportation resources for employment-related needs.

## Equity Actions

1. Examine other racial disparities intersecting with homelessness such as system-involvement (juvenile and criminal legal system and foster care involvement), lack of living wage jobs and job availability, housing and employment bias against those who are unhoused or are recently unhoused, and a lack of accessible and supportive services. An emphasis on increasing reentry programming and addressing chronic homelessness with entry-level work and empowerment-based programming should be included in these efforts.
2. Direct economic investments and resources to communities and neighborhoods that have experienced the most significant racial inequities.

**Goal 5: Build capacity, collaboration, and accountability within agencies working to address homelessness and the system of care as a whole**

***“Transparency and communication with the community needs to be improved. We need to know what’s working and what’s not working so that we can come together for a strategic approach.”***

**-Participant, Business Focus Group**

The City of Richmond has a broad network of community-based service providers, as well as local and regional government agencies committed to preventing and addressing homelessness in the city. There remains a community desire for transparency and accountability regarding what services are offered, how organizations work together, and how funding to address homelessness is utilized.

***“I’d like to see a low-barrier innovation fund. Service providers can use the funding to innovate, build best practices and scale up.”***

**-Participant, Providers Focus Group**

Please see the next page for the short-term action steps.

### Short-Term Action Steps

Action Steps	Purpose	Funding Source	Community Examples
<p>5.1 Create ongoing leadership opportunities with compensation for people with lived experience of homelessness to share their stories, provide feedback to the system of care, and participate in designing solutions to address homelessness. To leverage existing efforts, leadership opportunities should be incorporated into existing City Commissions or Advisory Boards to empower individuals with lived experience with the authority to make policy recommendations to the City Council.</p>	<p>To sustainably amplify the voice of people with lived experience of homelessness to determine service gaps, needs, and solutions to homelessness.</p>	<p>Local, State, Federal</p>	<p>The <u>Lived Experience Advisory Board (LEAB)</u> in Santa Clara County is a leadership development body consisting of members with current or past experience of homelessness.</p>

Action Steps	Purpose	Funding Source	Community Examples
<p>5.2 Strengthen collaboration between the city, county and community-based organizations to improve data collection, implement this strategic plan, provide services in the city, and apply for funding opportunities. The dedicated City staff person (see 5.3) would determine frequency and format of interagency collaboration, which could include systems level partner meetings, a local data workgroup, or direct service coordination.</p>	<p>Leverage existing resources, expertise, and capacity to build systemwide capacity and develop mutually beneficial partnerships.</p>	<p>Local, State</p>	<p>Details will be developed by local stakeholders.</p>
<p>5.3 Create and fund a dedicated city staff position to specifically address homelessness.</p>	<p>Centralize efforts to address homelessness to ensure quality, accountability, and sustainability in effort and approach.</p>	<p>Local, State</p>	<p>A variety of cities, including the comparably sized city of Riverside, have a <u>dedicated staff person</u> to address homelessness.</p>

## Long-Term Action Steps

1. Build organizational capacity of city agencies, community-based organizations, and the County CORE team in the form of increased funding, staffing, expertise, planning, and volunteer base.
2. Create a \$1 million innovation fund to encourage new strategies to address homelessness with the goal of providing low-barrier access for organizations to try new strategies, particularly organizations with direct ties to the community who may not have had the capacity to apply for other funding opportunities.

## Equity Actions

1. Create a culture that values racial equity and cultural competence among City staff who engage with residents experiencing homelessness and/or support programs that serve this population, which includes ongoing training and support.
2. Systematically provide resources and support to BIPOC-led community organizations serving people experiencing homelessness to better integrate them into the system of care and create opportunities for them to train other community organizations and members around equity and cultural competence.
3. Create pro-equity contracting processes that are visible and accessible to contractors of varied size and capacity.
4. Develop effective and accountable leadership for advancing equity within the homeless system of care.
5. Create citywide goals to advance equity related to addressing homelessness and establish a system to track outcomes and celebrate achievements.
6. Increase capacity of organizations and their staff to ensure inclusive engagement of people with lived experience in decision-making, including providing funding, training on best practices, and interpretation resources.

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## Immediate Priority Action Steps

The Homelessness Strategic Plan can be used to establish citywide goals to address homelessness and establish a system to track outcomes and celebrate achievements. The Plan identifies six immediate priority action steps:

**Priority Action Step 1** – Create and fund a dedicated city staff position to specifically address homelessness. (Action Step 5.3).

**Priority Action Step 2** – Identify funding and development partners for converting hotels and motels to service as Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) units. (Action Step 2.1)

**Priority Action Step 3** – Leverage and expand the Richmond guaranteed income pilot program launched by the Richmond Rapid Response Fund (R3F). (Action Step 4.2).

**Priority Action Step 4** – Ensure that essential living amenities such as water, sanitation, hygiene, and electricity are provided at least weekly to all encampments. (Action Step 1.1).

**Priority Action Step 5** – Secure commitment from a faith-based community partner to pilot the first Safe Parking Site in the Richmond Safe Parking Program. (Action Step 3.4).

**Priority Action Step 6** - Strengthen collaboration between the City, County and community-based organizations to improve data collection, implement this Strategic Plan, provide services in the city, and apply for funding opportunities. The dedicated City staff person would determine frequency and format of interagency collaboration, which could include systems level partner meetings, a local data workgroup, or direct service coordination. (Action Step 5.2).

## Conclusion

Homelessness in the city of Richmond is a pressing issue for the entire community. A range of stakeholders, including the City, service providers, businesses, sheltered and unsheltered residents must remain invested in collaboratively addressing the issue in an urgent, effective, and accountable way.

Given the existence of racial disparities and economic structures that have negative impact on the wellbeing of individuals and communities, the causes and solutions to homelessness must be informed by an understanding of the systemic conditions that underlie homelessness. Solutions must include systemic policy changes and localized interventions that support both individuals and communities.

This Strategic Plan contains recommendations for both specific short-term action steps and long-term action steps to meet the following goals:

1. Improve quality of life for unsheltered individuals and communities;
2. Create temporary supportive housing and expand/sustain permanent supportive and affordable long-term housing;
3. Expand prevention and crisis programming;
4. Improve economic pathways for unhoused and recently housed individuals; and
5. Build capacity, collaboration and accountability within agencies working to address homelessness and the system of care as a whole.

These goals and the related action steps were developed by robust community input and analysis and serve as a starting point to guide communitywide efforts to address homelessness.

As the City and community of Richmond continue to move forward with addressing homelessness, recognizing and acting upon an understanding of the humanity of all residents is a foundational element to provide meaningful change. In building upon current efforts and drawing lessons from what can be done differently, the City of Richmond can collaboratively affect changes to positively impact and build upon the strengths of the whole community.

## Appendix A: Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
<b>Community Land Trust</b>	A nonprofit corporation that holds land on behalf of a community to steward for affordable housing and other community-centered assets.
<b>Continuum of Care (CoC)</b>	A regional or local planning body that coordinates housing and services funding for homeless families and individuals.
<b>Continuum of Care Program Funding</b>	Competitive funding opportunity from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) primarily used for community-wide efforts to end homelessness, including strategies such as <u>permanent supportive housing</u> , <u>rapid re-housing</u> , and infrastructure supports.
<b>Chronically Homeless</b>	Federal designation for when a person has been homeless for at least a year, either 12 months consecutively or over the course of at least 4 separate occasions in the past 3 years. To be chronically homeless, the individual or head of household must also have a disability.
<b>Coordinated Entry</b>	A centralized approach to connect the region's most vulnerable homeless residents to housing through a single community-wide assessment tool and program matching system.
<b>CORE</b>	Contra Costa County's Coordinated Outreach Referral, Engagement program.
<b>Cost Burden</b>	The ratio of housing costs to household income. For renters, housing cost is gross rent (contract rent plus utilities). For owners, housing cost is "select monthly owner costs," which includes mortgage payment, utilities, association fees, insurance, and real estate taxes.
<b>Day Center or Day Services</b>	Offer showers, internet access, case management, housing navigation, and other supportive services during traditional daytime hours. In most cases these services are free.

Term	Definition
<b>Diversion</b>	A strategy that prevents homelessness for people seeking shelter by helping them identify immediate alternate housing arrangements and, if necessary, connecting them with services and financial assistance to help them return to permanent housing.
<b>Emergency Shelter</b>	Any facility with overnight sleeping accommodations, the primary purpose of which is to provide temporary shelter for the homeless in general or for specific populations of the homeless. Shelter may include year-round emergency shelters, winter and warming shelters, navigation centers and transitional housing. These types of shelter have varying hours, lengths of stay, food service, and support services.
<b>Extremely Low Income (ELI)</b>	The category “extremely low-income households” is a subset of “very low-income households,” and is defined as 30% (or less) of the area median income.
<b>General Plan</b>	A statement of goals, objectives, policies, and actions that describe the community’s priorities for the next 20 years. California State law requires that every city adopt and maintain an up to date, internally consistent General Plan.
<b>HMIS</b>	A Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is a local information technology system used to collect client-level data and data on the provision of housing and services to homeless individuals and families and persons at risk of homelessness. Each Continuum of Care (CoC) is responsible for selecting an HMIS software solution that complies with HUD's data collection, management, and reporting standards.
<b>Homeless System of Care (or System of Care)</b>	Another way of describing the Continuum of Care (CoC) and the broader network of partners who come together to work to support people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness.

Term	Definition
<b>Housing Element</b>	The City’s plan to meet the housing needs of everyone in the community. It is incorporated into the City’s General Plan, or blueprint for how the city will grow and develop. <i>Housing Element Updates</i> are required every eight years by the California Department of Housing and Community Development to guide the creation of housing policy in Richmond.
<b>Housing First</b>	A well-accepted, national, evidenced-based best practice that eliminates barriers to housing, ensuring individuals and families can exit homelessness as quickly as possible. Housing First is an approach to quickly and successfully connect households experiencing homelessness to permanent housing without preconditions and barriers to entry, such as sobriety, treatment or service participation requirements. Supportive services are offered on a voluntary basis to maximize housing stability and prevent returns to homelessness as opposed to addressing predetermined treatment goals prior to permanent housing entry. <sup>60</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> *What Housing First Really Means*, National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH), <https://endhomelessness.org/what-housing-first-really-means/>.

Term	Definition
<b>Housing-Focused Shelter (or sometimes called Navigation Center)</b>	Shelters that help people connect with long-term solutions to homelessness and address the barriers that keep them from becoming housed. The goal is to help people exit homelessness as rapidly as possible. Once housed, people can work on the underlying challenges that undermine their stability. Housing-Focused Shelters typically offer: admissions policies that screen-in (not screen out) households, and welcome pets, partners, and possessions; minimal rules and restrictions that focus on safety (e.g., no weapons) and ability for people to come and go, with 24-hour operations; client-centered services tailored to support a household’s ability to exit homelessness (e.g., job training, benefits enrollment); physical layout and aesthetics that include community spaces, outdoor spaces for pets, storage for possessions, mixed-gender dormitories that allow partners to request beds next to one another, and other design elements that promote a welcoming environment; staff with cultural competencies who treat residents with respect and dignity and caseloads that are kept small enough for staff to spend adequate time with each client; and co-location of benefits eligibility workers, health care, Department of Public Health, and other services.
<b>HUD</b>	The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development is the federal agency responsible for national policy and programs that address housing needs, improve and develop communities, and enforce fair housing laws.
<b>Interim Housing</b>	Shorter-term crisis options for temporary accommodation to help unhoused people stabilize on the way to permanent housing. Interim housing can include emergency shelters, navigation centers, and transitional housing, among other housing types. <sup>61</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> *Reimagining Interim Housing Supplement*, The Framework for an Equitable Homelessness Response, [https://endhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/DOC\\_ReimaginingInterimHousing\\_Supplement\\_FINAL.pdf](https://endhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/DOC_ReimaginingInterimHousing_Supplement_FINAL.pdf).

Term	Definition
<b>Landlord Incentive Programs</b>	Programs that provide education and incentives to landlords to make it more likely they will rent to people experiencing homelessness. They can provide funding to support risk mitigation (compensating landlords if tenants harm their premises) and financial incentives that make landlords more likely to rent to people transitioning out of homelessness. Most programs include an education component and address racial inequities in voucher acceptance and access to housing.
<b>Low-Barrier Shelter</b>	Emergency shelters that have removed most requirements/obstacles for entry into the program so that households are more likely go indoors to connect to services rather than stay on the street. For example, unhoused residents are allowed to bring their pets and possessions, to live with their partners, and do not have to exit the shelter each morning. They are not expected to abstain from using alcohol or other drugs, so long as they do not engage in these activities in common areas of the shelter and are respectful of other residents and staff.
<b>People with Lived Experience of Homelessness</b>	Term used to refer to people who have lived through the experience of homelessness and have first-hand knowledge of what it feels like to live unsheltered and/or to move through the homeless system of care.
<b>Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)</b>	Provides long-term housing with intensive supportive services to persons with disabilities. These programs typically target people with extensive experiences of homelessness and multiple vulnerabilities and needs who would not be able to retain housing without significant support.
<b>Point-in-Time Count (PIT)</b>	A count of sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness on a single night required by HUD.
<b>Prevention</b>	A strategy intended to target people who are at imminent risk of homelessness (whereas diversion usually targets people as they are initially trying to gain entry into shelter).
<b>Racial Equity</b>	In the context of homelessness, this speaks to the need for communities to address the overrepresentation of people of color among those experiencing homelessness due to historic and continued systemic discrimination and racism.

Term	Definition
<b>Racial Equity Action Plan</b>	Written document to support the Contra Costa Continuum of Care with analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data to identify racial and ethnic disparities, and opportunities to advance racial equity.
<b>Rapid Re-Housing (RRH)</b>	Provides rental housing subsidies and tailored supportive services for up to 24-months, with the goal of helping people to transition during that time period to more permanent housing.
<b>Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA)</b>	Required under California housing law as part of a City’s General Plan.
<b>Street Outreach</b>	Multi-disciplinary teams who work on the streets or in encampments to engage with people experiencing homelessness who may be disconnected or alienated from services and supports that are offered at an agency.
<b>Subsidy (or Housing Subsidy)</b>	Subsidized housing is government sponsored economic assistance aimed towards alleviating housing costs and expenses for individuals and families with low to moderate incomes.
<b>Supportive Services</b>	Includes assistance applying for benefits, mental health and substance use services, outpatient health services, information and referral services, child care, education, life skills training, employment assistance and job training, housing search and counseling services, legal services, outreach services, transportation, food assistance, risk assessment and safety planning (particularly for individuals and families experiencing domestic violence), and case management services such as counseling, finding and coordinating services, and monitoring and evaluating progress in a program.
<b>Transition Age Youth (TAY)</b>	Persons between age 18 and 24 who are transitioning from childhood to adulthood. TAY can be housed or unhoused.

Term	Definition
<b>Transitional Housing</b>	Provides temporary housing accommodations and supportive services. While many households benefit most from direct connections to permanent housing programs such as RRH or PSH (which are often more cost-effective over the long term), transitional housing can also be an effective support in the intermediary. Certain subpopulations, such as people fleeing domestic violence and transition age youth, can meaningfully benefit from a transitional housing environment.
<b>Universal Basic Income (UBI)</b>	Universal basic income is a government program in which residents, regardless of income or means, are guaranteed a set amount of money regularly with the purpose of addressing economic inequality and promoting economic security.
<b>Voucher (or Housing Voucher)</b>	A voucher or housing voucher that can be spent on rented housing, such as Section 8 public housing in the United States, to help low-income individuals and families secure housing.
<b>Written Standards</b>	Written document that outlines the key elements of HUD’s regulations for projects funded under the Continuum of Care or Emergency Solutions Grant.