



HomeFirst™
Where Homelessness Ends



Agency Strategic Plan 2017-2020

Executive Summary

For over 35 years, HomeFirst has been the first point of contact for many people who struggle with homelessness.

We are the largest provider of emergency shelter and veterans' services, serving over 4,000 individuals and families a year. HomeFirst is a long-term partner with local government and has operated Santa Clara County's Cold Weather Shelter Programs for more than 20 years.

Homelessness is at crisis levels in our county with over 6,500 people homeless every night. As a result, the Board of Directors and Executive Leadership Team of HomeFirst evaluated our organization, the services we provide and the critical issues in the community to determine where HomeFirst could have the largest impact.

Our business model identifies three areas that encompass the scope of our work:

Emergency Shelter: Year-round shelters, seasonal cold weather shelters and emergency services

Supportive Services: Case management services, vocational and housing services, as well as outreach, mental health and veterans' care

Transitional and permanent housing: Including property management of four locations totaling 95 units

Matching our expertise to urgent County needs, we outlined the following goals:

To support Santa Clara County in ending homelessness and to provide more coordinated services, HomeFirst will be the preferred provider of outreach and emergency services as an onramp to permanent housing and stability.

To address the call to action by the Veterans' Administration, HomeFirst will expand our work with the VA and other groups to help end—and then prevent—veteran homelessness in our community.

To house the approximately 2,300 chronically homeless individuals and keep them housed, HomeFirst will build on our supportive services and utilize a best practice model to help people who struggle to stay housed.

To ensure that we accomplish these goals and maintain our role as a leader in emergency housing services, HomeFirst will build the agency's capabilities to meet the urgent need for shelter and services in our community.



The HomeFirst Strategic Plan 2018-2021

Our Vision

HomeFirst envisions a community where everyone has a home.

We believe in

- the power of community and the support that it brings,
- the strength of the people we serve,
- and that there will be an end to homelessness.

Our Mission

To confront homelessness by cultivating people's potential to get housed and stay housed.

Our Goals

- 1** Be the preferred provider of outreach and emergency housing as an onramp to permanent housing and stability.
- 2** Expand our work with the Veterans' Administration and other groups to help end—and then prevent—veteran homelessness in our community.
- 3** Build on our Supportive Services and utilize best practices to help people who struggle to stay housed..
- 4** Build HomeFirst's capabilities to meet the urgent need for shelter and services in our community.

Our executive team has relied on the guiding principles and goals in this strategy document to create a specific action plan aimed at accomplishing this.

Our Action Plan

HomeFirst serves almost 80% of the people enrolled in emergency housing programs in Santa Clara County.¹

GOAL

1

Be the preferred provider of outreach and emergency housing as an onramp to permanent housing and stability.

Annual Goals

- Y1** Incorporate best practice procedures and protocols based on research of model emergency shelters around the country.
- Y2** Increase efficiency and reduce our environmental footprint by ensuring that the Boccardo Reception Center is a green facility.
- Y2** Expand shelter-based supportive services to increase the number of clients exiting to permanent housing.
- Y3** Integrate Mental Health Support Services into existing services.

Santa Clara County has one of the highest rates of unsheltered veterans in the U.S.² Of the identified 700 homeless veterans, HomeFirst serves 35%—more than any other organization.

GOAL

2

Expand on our work with the VA and other groups to help end—and then prevent—veteran homelessness in our community.

Annual Goals

- Y1** Utilize and monitor best practices to decrease the time required to house a veteran.
- Y1** Establish a veteran homelessness prevention program to meet veterans' needs.
- Y2** Research the requirements and options to serve female veterans in a shelter environment.

¹ Santa Clara County HMIS data as of Oct. 2016

² Community Plan to End Homelessness, 2015-2020

In a 2013 census and survey of the homeless population in Santa Clara County, 64% of the people surveyed reported a mental illness diagnosis such as PTSD or bipolar disorder.³

GOAL

3

Build on our Supportive Services and utilize a best practice model to help people who struggle to stay housed.

Annual Goals

- Y1** Revamp current Case Management model by integrating current evidence-based practices to ensure long-term housing solutions.
- Y2** Create a comprehensive **Housing** Services model utilizing evidence-based practices and monitoring progress.
- Y3** Create a comprehensive **Employment** Services model utilizing evidence-based practices and monitoring progress.

GOAL

4

Build HomeFirst's capabilities to meet the urgent need for shelter and services in our community.

Annual Goals

- Y1** Expand on our Medi-Cal certification to enrich programs and expand contract services to serve more clients.
- Y1** Grow awareness of the agency in philanthropic, nonprofit and corporate volunteer communities to support the long-term financial goals of HomeFirst.
- Y2** Create a cohesive property management business segment to build financial capacity with enhanced Client Services.
- Y2** Develop our key leadership roles and staffing.

³ Applied Survey Research, 2013 Santa Clara County Homeless Census and Survey



Assumptions

Our strategic plan is based on the following key assumptions:

- 1 There will continue to be need and funding for emergency
- 2 A broader base of financial support (e.g., Medi-Cal reimbursements, greater charitable giving) will allow us to hire staff at a living wage in Silicon Valley.
- 3 We will continue to invest in our staff to ensure they are trained in evidence-based best practices.

Strategic Plan Oversight

As we move forward in implementing this plan, the HomeFirst Board of Directors will be kept informed on progress and challenges; be invited to provide ideas and suggestions; ensure accountability to the goals; and assist in communicating progress, successes and challenges to the larger community.

The HomeFirst management team, including the CEO, COO, CFO and CDO, will focus on the details of implementing the action steps in the strategic plan. We will report progress to the agency's Board of Directors on a regular basis.

Concluding Thoughts

It has been a time of great change in the homelessness sector that has resulted in new services and funding opportunities. The team at HomeFirst has stepped up to this challenge as reflected in our goals, as well as new roles and responsibilities within the agency.

We believe in the power of community and the support that it brings. The HomeFirst executive team thanks our Board of Directors and particularly the Strategic Planning Task Force for their leadership and vision throughout this process.

We also thank the County of Santa Clara, City of San Jose and the VA Health Care System for continuing to partner with us to serve the most vulnerable in our community.

Together We Will End Homelessness



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