



## **FACT SHEET: Communities Are Making Progress in Addressing and Reducing Homelessness**

The 2023 Point-in-Count report, published by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), shows that homelessness overall increased by 12% between 2022 and 2023. Beneath this overall rise in national homelessness is a complex set of local trends and dynamics.

A small, but notable number of local communities saw decreases in homelessness from 2022 to 2023 that are attributed to their efforts to improve their local responses to homelessness during 2022, such as increasing housing navigation capacity, improving housing placement processes, increasing interim housing opportunities to engage people experiencing unsheltered homelessness, or scaling homelessness prevention efforts. These communities demonstrate that progress in reducing homelessness is possible even during very challenging circumstances. In addition, many communities implemented new or improved approaches *during* 2023 to address homelessness. The impacts of these and other efforts will be reflected in future homelessness data such as the January 2024 Point-in-Time count.

This fact sheet highlights several examples of communities whose efforts during 2022 resulted in reductions in homelessness in January 2023, as well as examples of promising community actions taken during 2023 to reduce homelessness.

### **Chattanooga/Southeast Region, TN**

After experiencing a significant rise in homelessness during the COVID-19 pandemic of over 400% from 2020 to 2022, the City of Chattanooga and its surrounding region achieved a 49% reduction in overall homelessness from 2022 to 2023. This includes a nearly 88% reduction in the number of families with children experiencing homelessness and a 54% reduction in people in unsheltered settings. Chattanooga/Southeast Tennessee Continuum of Care attribute this reduction to a number of improvements to their homelessness response system, including increased capacity and training around their coordinated entry system to more rapidly connect people to shelter and to permanent housing, as well as increased homelessness prevention and diversion efforts that enabled more people to keep their homes. Chattanooga was also a participant in HUD's [House America Initiative](#), and under this initiative, [set and achieved a goal](#)

to permanently rehouse 240 households experiencing homelessness and create at least 100 new units of affordable housing to address homelessness.

### **Dallas, TX**

Dallas City and County saw a small decrease of 3.8% in overall homelessness as well as a 14% decrease in unsheltered homelessness and 32% decrease in chronic homelessness between 2022 and 2023. This decrease is attributed to [a set of system improvements](#) that Dallas' Continuum of Care lead organization, Housing Forward, made to increase their housing placement rate of people experiencing homelessness. Utilizing the additional federal resources provided by HUD including Emergency Housing Vouchers, Dallas made improvements in their housing matching and placement processes and launched a new landlord engagement campaign. By the end of 2022, Dallas increased the rate of monthly housing placements of people experiencing homelessness by 160% compared with 2019. This improved housing placement rate is what enabled Dallas to achieve their reductions in homelessness, especially unsheltered and chronic homelessness, despite also seeing higher numbers of households becoming newly homeless. In 2023, HUD awarded Dallas with \$22 million in grants and 78 Stability Vouchers through HUD's Special Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) to address unsheltered homelessness.

### **Houston, TX**

The City of Houston has deservedly received [national recognition for their effective system](#) for rapidly connecting people experiencing homelessness to permanent housing, including people in homeless encampments. Centered on the Housing First approach, Houston's housing resolution system is the result of many years of efforts to improve collaboration across multiple non-profit and local government partners to leverage federal and local housing resources to scale both short- and long-term housing assistance linked to housing navigation services, and to efficiently match people experiencing homelessness to those housing interventions. A few years ago, partners in Houston confronted the fact that their rehousing system was effective for people in shelters, but inadequately reaching people in unsheltered settings and encampments. Through additional system improvements, Houston retooled its coordinated entry system to ensure that people in encampments were prioritized for housing interventions, and designed an approach that would link encampment resolution efforts with rapid rehousing and housing placement efforts. The results of these efforts are clear: Houston has helped close numerous homeless encampments across the city and saw a 17% reduction in unsheltered homelessness between 2022 and 2023.

### **Newark/Essex County, NJ**

Newark and Essex County, NJ saw a 16.7% decrease in overall homelessness, as well as decreases in unsheltered homelessness, family homelessness, and chronic homelessness. Leaders and partners in Newark attribute this decrease to implementation of their comprehensive plan to end homelessness, *The Path Home: Collaborating Across Our Community*, which was launched in 2022. The plan includes increasing street outreach capacity, expanding low-barrier housing models, and improving coordination to connect people to housing and supportive services. Under HUD's House America Initiative, [Newark exceeded its goals](#) and rehoused 529 households

experiencing homelessness and added 1,500 units of affordable and supportive housing to the development process between September 2021 and December 2022.

## **San Antonio, TX**

The City of San Antonio, TX continued to implement its strategic plan to end homelessness, *San Antonio, Together to End Homelessness: Strategic Plan Summary and Call to Action*, adopted in 2020, which includes strategies around system improvement around communication and collaboration, outreach, training, and affordable housing development. Through this plan, San Antonio set bold and ambitious goals to reduce unsheltered chronic homelessness by 25%, decrease family first-time homelessness by 20%, connect domestic violence efforts to homelessness response system, and enhance homeless response system for youth and young adults. Strategies include systemwide training, expanding access to housing as well as diversion, prevention and other problem-solving interventions, and deeper collaborations via the Alliance to House Everyone, a group of approximately 50 organizations that collaborate to address homelessness in the Bexar County region. In May 2022, San Antonio voters approved a measure to increase the city's Affordable Housing Bond Program by over \$1.2 billion, enabling San Antonio to use \$150 million to create and improve affordable housing, including permanent supportive housing. From September 2021 to December 2022, San Antonio participated in HUD's House America initiative, in which the city placed 1,880 individuals and families experiencing homelessness into permanent housing and added 897 new units of affordable and supportive housing to the development process. In 2023, HUD awarded San Antonio/Bexar County with approximately \$15 million in grants along with 47 Stability Vouchers to address unsheltered homelessness through HUD's Special NOFO.

## **San Jose/Santa Clara City and County, CA**

The 2023 PIT shows the overall number of homeless individuals decreased by 1.2% in Santa Clara County and dropped by 4.7% in the city limits of San José. Over the past several years, stakeholders throughout Santa Clara County have come together to implement a [comprehensive response to homelessness](#) – which has included building thousands of new units of affordable housing, scaling homelessness prevention assistance, expanding outreach and basic needs services, and piloting new temporary housing and shelter models. In the six years since voters approved the Measure A Affordable Housing Bond in 2016, 4,481 new apartments and 689 renovated units are completed or underway. Since 2020, the Homelessness Prevention System helped more than 24,000 people remain stably housed while receiving services and only 3% of these households became homeless after receiving assistance. There has been a 27% drop in the number of people who become homeless for the first time in a given year. Since the 2022 PIT, temporary and interim shelter capacity has expanded by 15% via support from the County and City of San José, and new partnerships with a County Challenge Grant and Project Homekey to develop new service-enriched interim housing programs across the county. Additionally, there was a 27.3% drop in the number of veterans experiencing homeless in Santa Clara County. Leaders in both [Santa Clara County and the City of San José joined HUD's House America initiative](#) and under this initiative, permanently rehoused 2,772 households experiencing homelessness between September 2021 and December 2022. In 2023, San Jose and Santa Clara County was one of the 62 communities selected by HUD through its Special NOFO to address unsheltered and rural homelessness, receiving \$11 million in grants and 92 Stability Vouchers.



## **Tucson, AZ**

The City of Tucson has continued to make progress in the implementation of its five-year strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness, including expanding its supply of housing interventions, improving its coordinated entry system, and accelerating the pace of housing placements. The city also began improving its efforts to reach people in unsheltered settings, leveraging federal funding to expand low-barrier interim housing options as well as increasing homeless outreach capacity. The Tucson Fire Department's Tucson Collaborative Community Care (TC3) program provides outreach, referrals, and support for community members who frequently use emergency services, including people experiencing homelessness, to reduce demand on the 911 system and connect community members in need of services to appropriate community providers. The city has also established an Unsheltered Homelessness Regional Council that has participation from the city manager's office, urban planning, police department, and others to support implementation of the community's plan. From 2022 to 2023, Tucson saw a 9% reduction in unsheltered homelessness, as well as slight 1% decrease in overall homelessness. Tucson's efforts and progress helped the city to secure a \$7.8 million grant award to address unsheltered homelessness through HUD Special Notice of Funding Opportunity on Unsheltered and Rural Homelessness.

## **Watsonville/Santa Cruz City and County, CA**

The Santa Cruz/Watsonville CoC 2023 PIT count saw a 21.5% decline in the number of people experiencing homelessness, yielding the lowest count of unhoused individuals since 2011. This reduction occurred in part due to a significant influx on resources from federal and state government agencies in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, via Emergency Housing Vouchers; state "Project Homekey" awards, which provides grants to purchase and repurpose hotels and motels into permanent supportive housing; and improved collaboration between the Housing Authority, County, and community partners. Beginning on Oct. 1, 2021, the County's [Rehousing Wave](#) transitioned highly vulnerable adults and families from "Project Roomkey" and other COVID-19 era shelters to permanent housing utilizing the EHV program. These initiatives and programs are part of the CoC's four-year [Strategic Framework for Addressing Homelessness](#), which set goals to reduce the number of households experiencing homelessness, including people in unsheltered settings. In 2023, Watsonville/Santa Cruz City and County was selected by HUD to receive over \$1 million in grants and 41 Stability Vouchers to address unsheltered homelessness through HUD's Special NOFO.

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