

# **West Valley Homeless Services**

## **Needs Analysis Report**

**Cities of Campbell, Cupertino, Monte Sereno,  
and Saratoga, and Town of Los Gatos**

July 24, 2025

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### Cities of Campbell, Cupertino, Monte Sereno Saratoga, and Town of Los Gatos

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#### Executive Summary

The West Valley Homeless Services Needs Analysis Report analyzes the state of homelessness and homeless services in 2025 in the five West Valley cities of Santa Clara County: Campbell, Cupertino, Los Gatos, Monte Sereno, and Saratoga and identifies gaps in the services provided.

#### Key findings

- **Homelessness is a Serious Problem:** At least 524 individuals across 322 households were counted as homeless in the West Valley area in 2024. About 214 new homeless households sought shelter or services for the first time in 2024 and 51 percent have been homeless for two or more years.
- **Homelessness is Not One-Size-Fits-All:** While there are many homeless individuals who visibly live on the street, there is also a large population who are more hidden. Matching appropriate services to specific individuals is critical.
- **Impacts on Children:** Nineteen percent of homeless households are unaccompanied youth and 19 percent are families with children. In addition, homelessness is associated with significant negative health and child development outcomes.
- **Homelessness Affects Us All:** Homelessness impacts all members of the community, not just those who are homeless. The effects on housed residents, the economy, and local government services are substantial.
- **Services and Housing Work:** Permanent housing is critical, even if it is expensive and time-consuming. Immediate services are sometimes as important as housing.

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## Introduction

The West Valley cities are located in the heart of Silicon Valley, known for innovation and myriad globally recognized companies. While some of the highest median income zip codes in the state and country are in the area, it is also home to many people facing significant economic challenges. In 2023, Santa Clara County ranked sixth in the US for the prevalence of unsheltered individuals among major population centers, with 412 unsheltered people per 100,000 residents. This data is based on a point-in-time count conducted in January 2023. The County saw a 5 percent increase in homelessness in 2023 compared to 2019<sup>1</sup> and another 8.2 percent increase between 2023 and 2025<sup>2</sup>.

In July 2024, the City of Campbell allocated \$100,000 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to conduct a homeless needs analysis and feasibility study. In December 2024, the City contracted with Good City Company to conduct a needs assessment and feasibility study. Good City Company is a local government consulting firm based in Redwood City. The firm offers support to local government agencies in the fields of planning, economic development, housing, and city manager's office services.

The first phase of analysis is reflected in this needs analysis report, which includes an analysis of available quantitative data, existing background material and research, and the results of interviews with key stakeholders, including service providers and currently homeless individuals in the area. The needs

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***"I care about the homeless here, but I have young kids and the quality-of-life impact on families also matters. The status quo doesn't work, and I know we can do better than this."***

**Local Community Member**

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<sup>1</sup> Love, Hanna, and Tracy Hadden Loh. "Homelessness in US Cities and Downtowns: The Perception, the Reality, and How to Address Both." *Brookings Institution*. Accessed May 10, 2025. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/homelessness-in-us-cities-and-downtowns/>.

<sup>2</sup> County of Santa Clara, California. "County of Santa Clara Releases Preliminary Results of 2025 Point-in-Time Homeless Count." County News Center, June 20, 2025. Accessed July 17, 2025. <https://news.santaclaracounty.gov/county-santa-clara-releases-preliminary-results-2025-point-time-homeless-count>

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assessment describes existing services and identifies gaps in services impacting homelessness in the West Valley area. This analysis is intended to establish a baseline of existing conditions regarding homelessness in the West Valley and provide a foundation of information for a subsequent feasibility study for improved services.

Following the completion of this needs analysis, the project team will also conduct a feasibility analysis. A list of items likely to be analyzed in the feasibility study are included in the conclusions section of this needs analysis document.

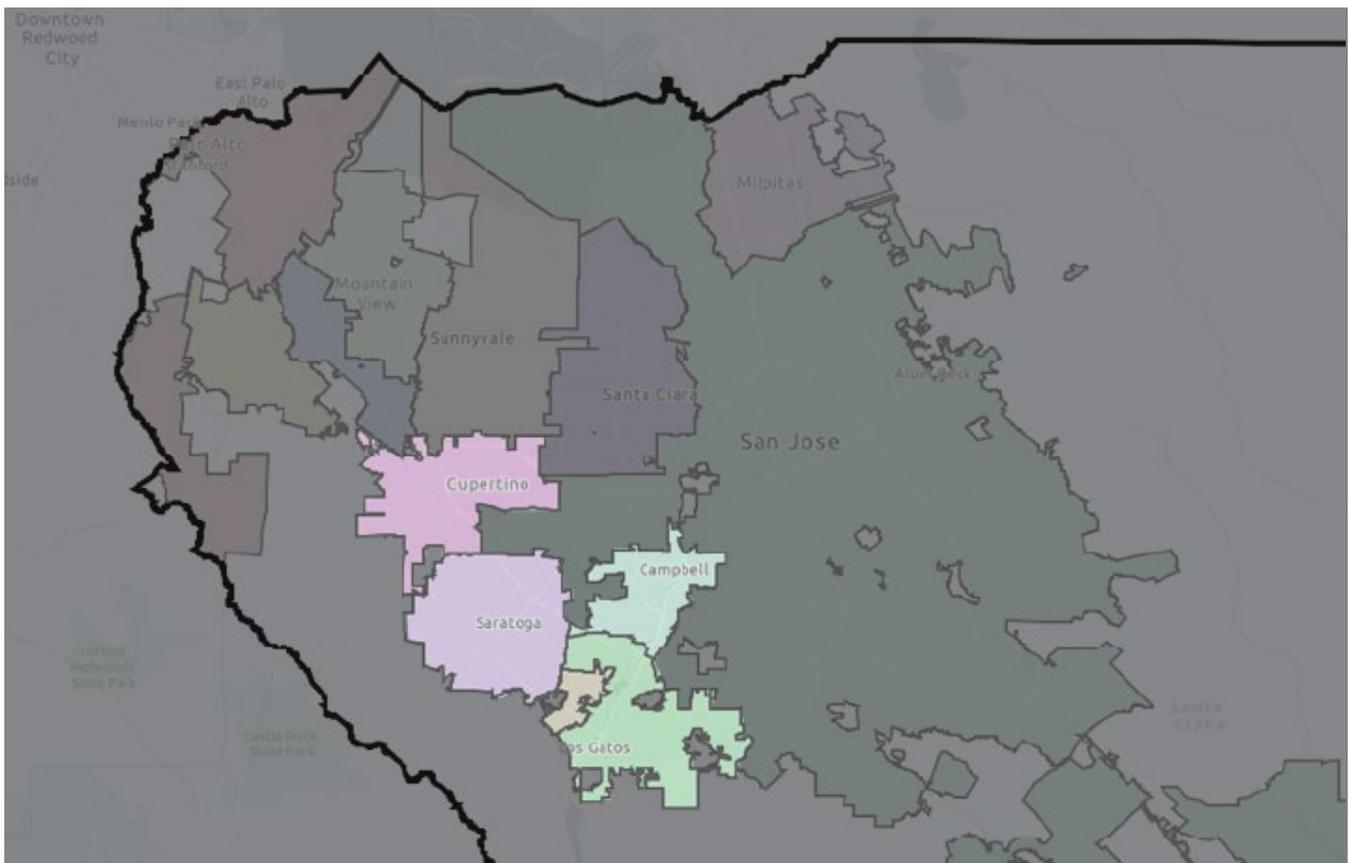


Figure 1. The five West Valley Jurisdictions (Image credit: Santa Clara County LAFCO, Good City Company)

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# Background

## Understanding Homelessness Today

Homelessness is a complex problem, impacting different segments of the community in different ways. Individuals and families at risk of homelessness face constant pressure from forces that ultimately push many into homelessness. These forces are magnified by the housing crisis and felt most acutely where the cost of housing is highest, such as the West Valley.

Addressing homelessness has been an increasing priority in the region, and there are social, public health, economic, and quality of life reasons that motivate this. However, there is also a broadly held moral belief that human beings should live with a level of dignity that is not possible to achieve while being homeless. While the problem can feel nearly impossible to solve, immediate services and long-term housing can substantially reduce homelessness and its negative impacts.

The first image of a homeless person that comes to mind for many is a single male with significant substance abuse and mental health issues. While this characterization represents a visible phenomenon, the data paints a more complex picture. There is also a large hidden population of homeless individuals and families. Across the West Valley cities, 37 percent of homeless households are unaccompanied youth or families with children, and 50 percent are male. Many homeless women and families with children are less visible. A recent study of homeless adults in California showed that a significant portion of homeless people reported not having used drugs regularly in the prior six months<sup>3</sup>. Homeless people come from a wide range of backgrounds, and while some come from outside the community, many were raised or were previously housed in the local community.

California's housing challenges are well-documented and acutely felt across the entire West Valley of Santa Clara County. Statewide, nearly one-third of California renters pay more than 50

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<sup>3</sup> Baggett, Travis P., James J. O'Connell, Jesse M. Yedinak, and Thomas J. Stopka. "Illicit Substance Use and Treatment Access Among Adults Experiencing Homelessness." *JAMA* 331, no. 12 (2024): 987–997. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2024.27922>.

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percent of their income toward rent<sup>4</sup>. California is also home to a disproportionate number of homeless residents. While the state is home to 12 percent of the nation's population, the homeless population makes up 22 percent of the nation's homeless population<sup>5</sup>. In 2023, Santa Clara County had approximately 10,028 people experiencing homelessness<sup>6</sup>. This translates to roughly 2.3 people per 1,000 residents. The West Valley ratio of homeless people translates to 1.28 people per 1,000.

The high cost of housing is a central cause of homelessness and is driven not only by demand but also by the policy decisions and other factors that have resulted in so few homes being built relative to jobs. Job growth in the Bay Area has far exceeded the production of housing for decades<sup>7</sup>.

Homelessness is also a health issue. Health and medical issues are both an effect *and* cause of homelessness. Living on the street, in a car, RV, shelter, or couch surfing can be extraordinarily difficult and result in tremendous adverse social, medical, economic, and safety consequences<sup>8</sup>.

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***“We want to end homelessness forever. Even for people who have a nice house here now, what about their kids? What if life throws their kids a curveball? Not addressing homelessness in a serious way now may come back to haunt them later.”***

**Local Homeless Resident**

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<sup>4</sup> California Department of Housing & Community Development. Addressing a Variety of Housing Challenges. Accessed May 10, 2025. <https://www.hcd.ca.gov/policy-and-research/addressing-variety-housing-challenges>. California Department of Housing & Community Development. Addressing a Variety of Housing Challenges. Accessed May 10, 2025. <https://www.hcd.ca.gov/policy-and-research/addressing-variety-housing-challenges>.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> County of Santa Clara and City of San José, "County of Santa Clara and City of San José Release Preliminary Results of 2023 Point-in-Time Homeless Census," *County News Center*, May 30, 2023, <https://news.santaclaracounty.gov/news-release/county-santa-clara-and-city-san-jose-release-preliminary-results-2023-point-time>.

<sup>7</sup> Kober, Eric. "The Bay Area: The Land of Many Jobs and Too Few Homes." Manhattan Institute. Accessed May 10, 2025. <https://manhattan.institute/article/the-bay-area-the-land-of-many-jobs-and-too-few-homes>.

<sup>8</sup> Community Solutions. "The Costs and Harms of Homelessness: A Learning Brief Examining the Costs Borne by Individuals, Communities, Systems, and Society." Accessed May 10, 2025. <https://community.solutions/research-posts/the-costs-and-harms-of-homelessness/>.

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Some studies have shown the average age of death for homeless individuals to be 44 years of age<sup>9</sup>. The stigma associated with homelessness can impact all aspects of life for those without a home, and research has shown a correlation between stigma and poorer mental and physical health outcomes<sup>10</sup>.

Medical debt and loss of work due to illness are major contributing factors to the economic causes of homelessness. Two-thirds of people who have filed for bankruptcy cite these two factors as the primary reason for their bankruptcy<sup>11</sup>. While most people with medical debt do not become homeless, research indicates that medical debt can significantly prolong periods of homelessness. Studies suggest that medical debt, even for relatively small amounts, can extend the length of time a person experiences homelessness by an additional two years on average. For those whose medical debt goes to collections, the impact on overall homelessness duration can be even more significant<sup>12</sup>.

While single, homeless men are often the most visible in communities, homeless women, families with children, and youth are also prevalent. Women who are homeless or experiencing housing instability are at significantly higher risk for sexual and physical violence<sup>13</sup>.

The impacts of homelessness on children and child development cannot be understated. Homelessness and housing instability expose children to prolonged activation of stress responses, also known as “toxic stress,” which is in turn associated with greater instances of a

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<sup>9</sup> National Health Care for the Homeless Council. “Premature Mortality in Homeless Populations.” Accessed May 10, 2025. <https://sbdww.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/PrematureMortalityFinal.pdf>.

<sup>10</sup> Reilly, Johanna, Angela Greenfield, Rebecca Gillam, and Peter L. H. Barrett. “A Systematic Review of the Effect of Stigma on the Health of People Experiencing Homelessness.” *Health & Social Care in the Community* 30, no. 6 (2022): 2128–2141. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hsc.13884>.

<sup>11</sup> Himmelstein, David U., Robert M. Lawless, Deborah Thorne, Pamela Foohey, and Steffie Woolhandler. “Medical Bankruptcy: Still Common Despite the Affordable Care Act.” *American Journal of Public Health* 109, no. 3 (2019): 431–433. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2018.304901>

<sup>12</sup> Bielenberg, Joseph E., Maren Futrell, Benjamin Stover, and Annette Hagopian. “Presence of Any Medical Debt Associated With Two Additional Years of Homelessness in a Seattle Sample.” *INQUIRY: The Journal of Health Care Organization, Provision, and Financing* 57 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1177/0046958020923535>.

<sup>13</sup> Riley, Elise D., Jennifer Cohen, Kelly Knight, et al. “Violence and Emergency Department Use among Community-Recruited Women Who Experience Homelessness and Housing Instability.” *Journal of Urban Health*. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7010900/#CR5>.

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variety of health, social, and developmental problems<sup>14</sup>. Homeless children are two to four times more likely to have a mental health issue requiring clinical evaluation than low-income children<sup>15</sup>. Homeless infants are known to have poor birth outcomes, and homeless children are more likely to be diagnosed with respiratory infections, fevers, injuries, and nutritional problems than housed children<sup>16</sup>.

Homelessness impacts the entire community, not just those who are homeless. The impact on public services, particularly emergency room visits, is significant, with studies indicating homeless people use the emergency room significantly more than the general population,<sup>17</sup> which are generally much more expensive than preventative care.

Other community and public health concerns include increased spread of communicable diseases due to lack of access to hygiene, healthcare, and shelter, and unsanitary conditions in campsites and improper waste disposal with impacts both to public health and the environment. Economic issues include potential reduction in property values or commercial activity in areas with visible homeless people or campsites. While harder to quantify, impacts on public safety and economic investment are widely perceived by communities at large. In addressing these concerns there is often a conflict between different policy objectives, as discussed below.

## **Policy Context**

Local, State, and Federal housing policies, programs, and funding play a pivotal role in assisting local jurisdictions and service providers in preventing homelessness and addressing the homelessness crisis. Below, we will discuss how the West Valley municipalities, the State of California, and the Federal government all play vital roles in addressing homelessness.

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<sup>14</sup> Shonkoff, Jack P., Andrew S. Garner, et al. "The Lifelong Effects of Early Childhood Adversity and Toxic Stress." *Pediatrics* 129, no. 1 (2012): e232–e246; <https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article/129/1/e232/31628/The-Lifelong-Effects-of-Early-Childhood-Adversity>

<sup>15</sup> Bassuk, Ellen L., M. Beardslee, and J. Bassuk. "The Prevalence of Mental Illness in Homeless Children: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis." *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/271536943>.

<sup>16</sup> Clark, Robin E., Marguerite E. Tracy, William B. Whitmore, et al. "Infants Exposed to Homelessness: Health, Health Care Use, and Health Spending from Birth to Age Six." *Health Affairs* 38, no. 5 (2019): 721–728. <https://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.2019.00090>.

<sup>17</sup> Vohra, Neha, et al. "Homelessness and the use of Emergency Department as a source of healthcare" *International Journal of Emergency Medicine*. <https://intjem.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12245-022-00435-3>

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Each of the West Valley municipalities is mandated by State law to draft a Housing Element and submit the element to the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) for review and approval. The Housing Element is one of seven mandated elements of each jurisdiction's General Plan. The Housing Element process is complicated, but it essentially outlines how a city or county will plan for housing needs across different income levels. It is a policy document that identifies current and future housing needs, establishes goals and policies, and provides programs to address those needs, including affordable housing and housing for special needs populations, including homeless people and householders at risk of homelessness.

The State of California plays a role in enforcing State laws relating to housing development and providing resources to municipalities. HCD is responsible for reviewing and monitoring municipalities' progress in implementing approved housing elements. In addition, State laws, such as Senate Bill 330 (SB 330) and Assembly Bill 1482 (AB 1482), place requirements on cities to streamline the housing development process, uphold renter protections and to comply with no net loss requirements relating to housing redevelopment. AB1482, the California Housing Crisis Act of 2019, provides a form of statewide rent control and just cause eviction protections for residential renters. It limits rent increases to five percent plus the local Consumer Price Index (CPI), or ten percent, whichever is less, and requires landlords to have a valid reason (just cause) to evict a tenant. The law went into effect on January 1, 2020, and is set to expire on January 1, 2030. SB 330, the Housing Crisis Act of 2019, is a California law that aims to address the State's housing shortage by streamlining the housing development process and protecting existing housing. It went into effect in 2020.

The State also provides annual funding allocations for affordable housing and homelessness services. HCD's Super NOFA (Super Notice of Funding Availability) was created to streamline and consolidate funding opportunities for affordable housing by combining previously separate funding streams into a single, streamlined application process for developers, aiming to make funds more accessible and equitable. The Super NOFA is broken down between ownership opportunities and multifamily opportunities. The Multifamily Super NOFA combines affordable development funding and funding opportunities for homeless military veterans. In addition, the State provides HomeKey and Homekey+ funding to provide transitional and permanent supportive housing for the homeless population.

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Santa Clara County's Department of Office of Supportive Housing (OSH) receives Federal McKinney Act funding for homeless and homeless prevention programs. OSH is responsible for the Continuum of Care (COC) by coordinating the County-wide homeless response, allocating funding throughout the County, and coordinating the Point-in-Time (PIT) homeless count.

### **Key Policy Implications**

Several key findings with policy implications can be drawn from an analysis of the literature and practices of surrounding jurisdictions and are listed below. A bibliography is also provided at the end of this report.

#### Funding

The current unpredictability of federal and state funding negatively impacts the fight against homelessness by making it difficult to plan and implement effective programs. This can potentially lead to increased homelessness and setbacks in progress. This funding instability also undermines the ability of service providers to maintain stable staffing and operations and continue to provide service levels.

#### Coordination

Coordination across sectors, jurisdictions, and departments within jurisdictions is critical to developing and implementing lasting impact. As described subsequently, the Continuum of Care model, coordinated entry, the facilitation of coordinated responses by Santa Clara County and the West Valley Cities, the work across departments within cities, and public-private partnerships such as Destination: Home are best practices already underway.

Much of this approach is reflected in the 2020-2025 Community Plan to End Homelessness, which is currently being updated and is also described later in this assessment. Its three goals are to: address the root causes of homelessness through system and policy change, improve the quality of life for unsheltered individuals, and create healthy neighborhoods for all, and expand homelessness prevention and housing programs to meet the need.

#### Conflicting Policy Objectives

In addressing homelessness, there is often a conflict between different policy objectives. Some approaches are tailored toward minimizing immediate negative impacts on the community at large, such as the removal of encampments. These may provide relief from quality-of-life issues in the immediate area but may also exacerbate the difficulties homeless people experience.

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While providing long-term housing solutions and preventing homelessness are broadly shared community goals, this approach may do little to address the immediate impacts of homelessness on either homeless people or the broader community. In practice, such policy choices are rarely an either-or choice, and a suite of approaches deployed together generally work best.

### Challenges of Congregate Shelter

Many unhoused individuals and families prefer not to stay in congregate shelters for logical reasons. A congregate shelter is defined as a type of temporary housing facility that provides shelter for individuals and families in shared, open spaces with limited privacy. These challenges can result in many choosing to live in a car, RV, couch, or on the street<sup>18</sup>. Approximately twice as many homeless people live outside the shelter system as within it<sup>19</sup>. These challenges include:

- Concerns about safety and privacy in shelters. Communal living in homeless shelters can be a source of insecurity and unease for some individuals due to factors like the potential for theft, violence, and lack of privacy, especially for those with past traumatic experiences or vulnerable populations. Furthermore, restrictive rules and schedules, limited access to belongings, and the general feeling of being "dormed up" can contribute to a sense of confinement and disconnection.
- Lack of available shelter space, long waiting lists, or shelters are far or difficult to get to relative to where their social, economic, and health networks are located.
- Shelters may prohibit pets, visitors, or a large volume of belongings.
- While stringent sobriety requirements and the potential for separation of adults or families have been reduced at many facilities, particularly those that are not faith based, these remain concerns among homeless individuals and advocates.

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<sup>18</sup> U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Understanding Encampments of People Experiencing Homelessness and Community Responses: Emerging Evidence as of Late 2018. Accessed May 10, 2025. <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/Understanding-Encampments.pdf>.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid

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Alternatives to the congregate model include safe parking programs, sanctioned camping sites, using hotels as temporary, transitional, or permanent non-congregate shelters, and the “tiny home” model of interim housing<sup>20</sup>.

### Demographics and Disparities

The impacts on child development, families with children, and youth aging out of foster care cannot be understated.<sup>21</sup> According to a report from the Turner Institute, stark racial and ethnic disparities in California’s homelessness rates continue to grow<sup>22</sup>. For instance, despite making up a small percentage of the state's population, Black individuals are disproportionately represented in the homeless population, with a significant increase in their share of the unsheltered population. According to the report, “Black people in California experienced the highest rate of homelessness, about 205 people per 10,000—almost five times higher than the state’s overall homelessness rate of 44 per 10,000. Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, Native American and Indigenous, and multiracial people also experienced disparate homelessness rates compared to the state’s overall population.” Similar disproportionate rate of homelessness of Black, Hispanic, and Native individuals are reflected in Santa Clara County and the West Valley area<sup>23</sup>.

### Importance of Housing

Affordable housing is crucial to addressing homelessness because it directly tackles the core issue: lack of stable, affordable housing. When people struggle to afford housing, they become vulnerable to losing their homes and falling into homelessness. By increasing the supply of affordable housing, the number of people experiencing homelessness decreases, and those currently experiencing homelessness find stable homes. When rents and property prices

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<sup>20</sup> Finnigan, Ryan. “Five Recent Trends in Homelessness in California.” Turner Center for Housing Innovation, UC Berkeley. October 2023. [https://turnercenter.berkeley.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Five-Trends-in-CA-Homelessness\\_Oct-2023-5.pdf](https://turnercenter.berkeley.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Five-Trends-in-CA-Homelessness_Oct-2023-5.pdf).

<sup>21</sup> Murrin, Sarah, and Emma Brady. “How Does Family Homelessness Impact on Children’s Development? A Critical Review of the Literature.” *Child & Family Social Work* 28, no. 2 (2023): 360–371. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cfs.12968>.

<sup>22</sup> Finnigan, Ryan. “Five Recent Trends in Homelessness in California.” Turner Center for Housing Innovation, UC Berkeley. October 2023. [https://turnercenter.berkeley.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Five-Trends-in-CA-Homelessness\\_Oct-2023-5.pdf](https://turnercenter.berkeley.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Five-Trends-in-CA-Homelessness_Oct-2023-5.pdf).

<sup>23</sup> Olivet, Jeff, et al., SPARC/Destination: Home. “Race and Homelessness In Santa Clara County, California.” January 31, 2020. [https://destinationhomesv.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/RacialEquityReport0131020.pdf?mc\\_cid=06a7865957&mc\\_eid=53a9a53ca3](https://destinationhomesv.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/RacialEquityReport0131020.pdf?mc_cid=06a7865957&mc_eid=53a9a53ca3).

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increase and wages polarize or don't keep pace, low-income households are at higher risk of losing their housing and becoming homeless.

Short-term and long-term solutions to homelessness are crucial, with short-term interventions providing immediate relief and a path to long-term stability. Short-term solutions, like emergency shelters, offer shelter and access to immediate support services, including mental health and substance abuse programs and assistance. Long-term solutions, such as low barrier, rapid rehousing programs and permanent supportive housing, address many of the underlying dynamics of homelessness and enable individuals to achieve self-sufficiency.

### Root Causes and Upstream Issues

Homelessness is a complex issue with certain factors being both a cause and impact of homelessness across economic, social, and personal domains. Some of the upstream causes of homelessness reflect broader dynamics in society, such as income inequality and healthcare access. Addressing them completely may be beyond the scope of local government, however, there are actions local governments can take—alone and in partnership—to make a significant positive impact.

Housing affordability relative to income is a key driver of homelessness<sup>24</sup>. The importance of local governments to encourage the production and preservation of housing at all income levels, and especially at the extremely low-income level, is exceedingly important. While local public subsidies for the development of units are important, the local land use regulatory tools of local government, including but not limited to inclusionary housing programs and community benefits agreements, may have even greater potential for impact.

Prevention of homelessness is crucial. Once someone becomes homeless it is significantly more difficult to get them back into permanent housing. The Homelessness Prevention System, piloted by Destination: Home<sup>25</sup> in 2017, is a nationally recognized model for homelessness prevention piloted in Silicon Valley. A six-year randomized control trial showed that immediate financial assistance to at risk families is a proven solution to keeping families from becoming

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<sup>24</sup> Powell, Alvin. "Why It's So Hard to End Homelessness in America." Harvard Gazette. January 2024. <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2024/01/why-its-so-hard-to-end-homelessness-in-america/>.

<sup>25</sup> <https://destinationhomesv.org/>

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homeless<sup>26</sup>. Similarly, home sharing programs can be an important part of the homelessness prevention ecosystem as they can unlock lower cost housing options relatively quickly and serve to reduce social isolation. However, providers underscore that they are usually not practical for the rapid rehousing of people who are currently homeless. Although not ideal for every community, home-sharing programs have proven effective for achieving functional zero homelessness in many communities, such as Redondo Beach, California. Home-sharing programs are also an important part of the overall response to housing and homelessness in nearby counties such as San Mateo County, which operates a program in partnership with HIP Housing.

Another key tool of local government is raising awareness and promoting actions to address homelessness that can be made at the state or federal levels. Regional and subregional efforts to raise awareness and advocate for increased funding can often be a more effective approach than individual communities doing so alone.

## **Methodology**

This research triangulates quantitative analysis, qualitative analysis, and insights from best practices and other research. Quantitative analysis is based on the following core data sources:

*2024 Vulnerability Index - Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT):* A survey and database used to collect data for the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and additional data that allows municipal staff to categorize and prioritize needs in the community.

*2023 Point-in-Time Count (PIT Count):* A count of sheltered and unsheltered homeless people on a single night in January.

Qualitative analysis is based on interviews with stakeholders that included local jurisdiction staff, service providers, and homeless individuals. Meetings and interviews with staff from Santa Clara County, and the cities of Campbell, Cupertino, Los Gatos, Monte Sereno, and Saratoga were conducted between February and April 2025.

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<sup>26</sup> Phillips, David, and James X. Sullivan. "Do Homelessness Prevention Programs Prevent Homelessness? Evidence from a Randomized Controlled Trial." *The Review of Economics and Statistics* (2023). [https://doi.org/10.1162/rest\\_a\\_01344](https://doi.org/10.1162/rest_a_01344).

An initial list of service providers was developed in consultation with staff from Campbell, Santa Clara County, Destination: Home, and the four additional West Valley cities. Additional service providers were interviewed at the recommendation of some of the initial interviews. These stakeholders include service providers active in one or more of the five West Valley cities and are listed below. Service provider interviews were conducted between February and April 2025.

Interviews with currently homeless individuals were conducted in March and April 2025. Interviews were conducted in person in March 2025 and were facilitated by Campbell’s Unhoused Specialist. Additional observational findings were also made in the field, including from individuals who did not wish to be interviewed. An additional interview was conducted via Zoom and email correspondence as a result of outreach made by a homeless advocate and homeless individual to the project team.

The quantitative and qualitative findings are supported by a literature review of relevant research and public documents regarding related topics, best practices understood in the field today. A list of key resources consulted is included as an attachment to this report.

Service Provider Stakeholders Interviewed	
Hope's Corner	Abode Services
Los Gatos United Methodist Shower Ministry	Campbell Unhoused Specialist
HomeFirst	Catholic Charities
LifeMoves	Amigos de Guadalupe
SVILC	St Lukes Pantry Program
WVCS	St Mary's Catholic Church
Silicon Valley Safe Parking	Destination: Home
Saratoga Rotating Safe Car Park	

Table 1. Service Provider Stakeholders Interviewed

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## Quantitative Needs Analysis

Available quantitative data was analyzed across several factors including unduplicated intakes over time, location across each of the five cities, how long they have been homeless, and demographic breakdowns by age, gender, household (family) type, and race and ethnicity.

The number of homeless people by City, with the data from the Point-in-Time count (individuals) in blue and the data extrapolated from the VI-SPDAT entries (households) in green, is shown in Figure 2. While it is not reflected in the data presented, we know from prior VI-SPDAT data and interviews with service providers that some homeless people have recently been associated with Monte Sereno.

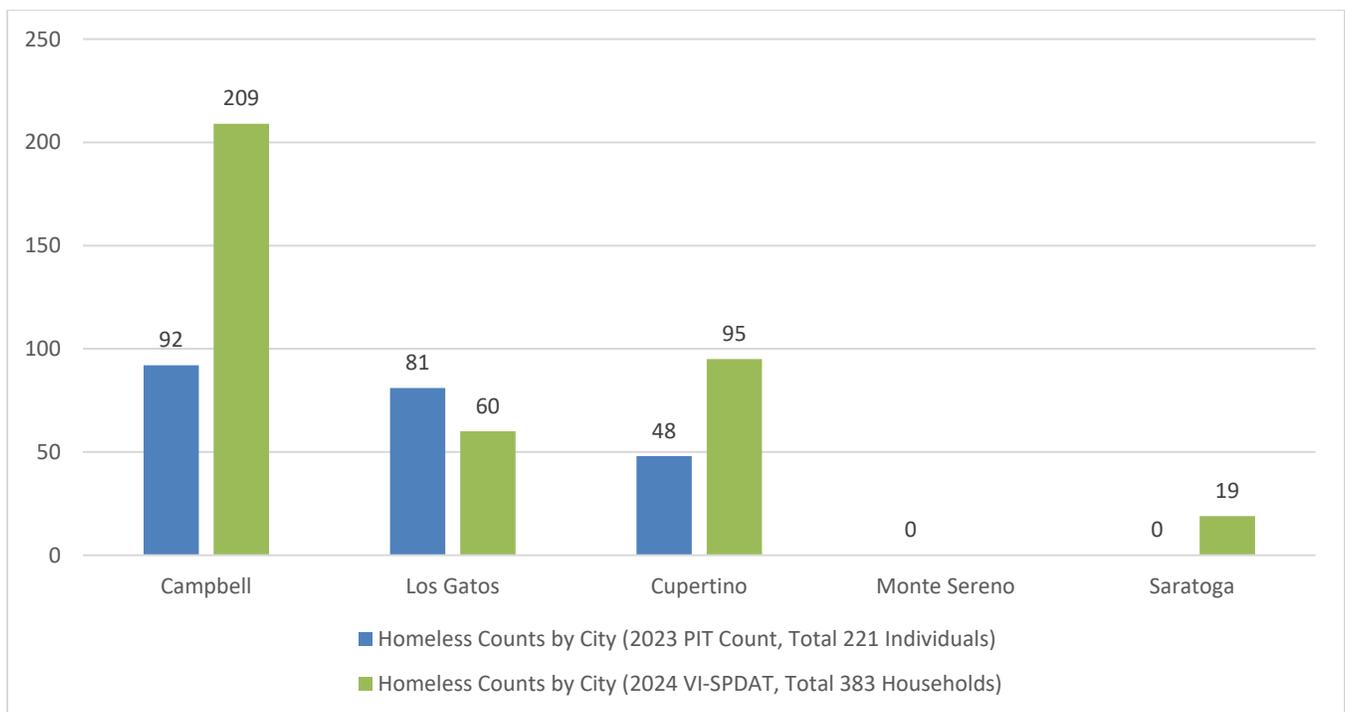


Figure 2. Homeless Counts by City

Each instance reflected in the data was input following a comprehensive methodology. While these numbers are among the best available, they should be understood to be an absolute floor for the instance of homelessness. This data does not attempt to quantify the total number of homeless people in the community. For example, someone would not be counted if they had not completed a VI-SPDAT assessment or were couch surfing or living in an RV on private property and not visible on the night of the Point-in-Time count. The two data sets were also developed using substantially different methodologies; no trend over time can be inferred from

the VI-SPDAT data collected in 2024 relative to the Point-in-Time data collected in 2023. Point-in-Time data for 2025 is only available County-wide as of publication. The 2025 data indicates homelessness has increased by 8.2 percent since the 2023 count<sup>27</sup>.

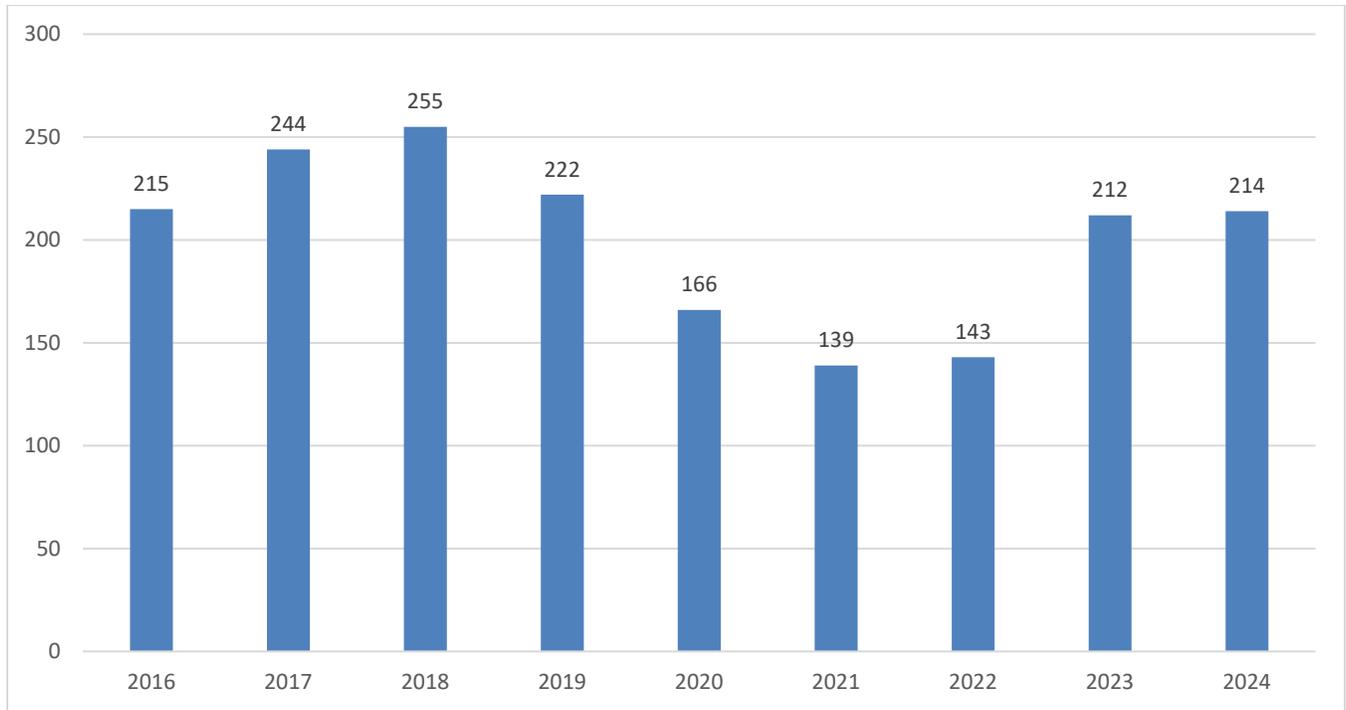


Figure 3. Homeless Inflow - First Time VI-SPDAT Assessment 2016-2024 (VI-SPDAT)

Individuals in the Point-in-Time are included if they are seen on the morning of the count. In the counts, people are associated with a city based on where they are located on a specific night during the count. This involves identifying and counting individuals experiencing homelessness in shelters, transitional housing, or on the streets within the city's designated area. Whereas with the VI-SDAT assessment, the homeless individuals self-identify in which city they last lived, worked, where any children go to school, or where they spend most of their time. While multiple entries were allowed, only six households are counted in more than one West Valley jurisdiction.

<sup>27</sup> County of Santa Clara, California. "County of Santa Clara Releases Preliminary Results of 2025 Point-in-Time Homeless Count." County News Center, June 20, 2025. Accessed July 17, 2025. <https://news.santaclaracounty.gov/county-santa-clara-releases-preliminary-results-2025-point-time-homeless-count>

Figure 3. Homeless Inflow - First Time VI-SPDAT Assessment 2016-2024, illustrates the number of first-time VI-SPDAT assessments during the corresponding years. It can be noted that the number of assessments was lower during the height of the COVID pandemic but sharply increased in 2023 to above the nine-year average of 201.

During the VI-SPDAT assessment, the homeless individuals or families are asked how long they have been homeless. Figure 8., below, shows the West Valley cities saw a higher percentage of individuals who are more recently experiencing homelessness than the remainder of the County. It also shows that 51 percent have been homeless for two years or more. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines chronic homelessness as: "An individual who has been experiencing continuous homelessness for a year or more or has experienced at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years, where each episode is at least 30 days in length"<sup>28</sup>. While the exact percentage may vary slightly depending on the source, 20 percent of the homeless population in the U.S. is a commonly cited figure for those experiencing chronic homelessness. Also of concern is the high percentage of individuals becoming homeless between one week and three months.

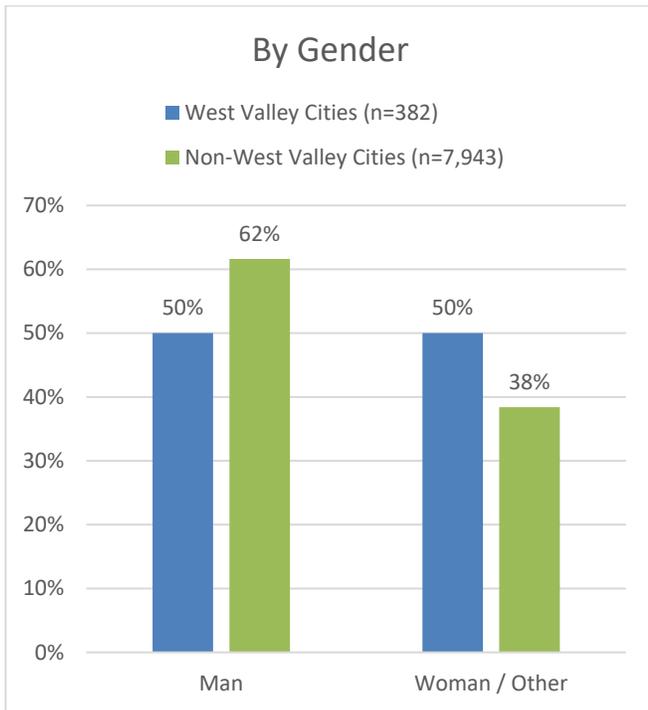


Figure 4. Demographics by Gender in 2024 (VI-SPDAT)

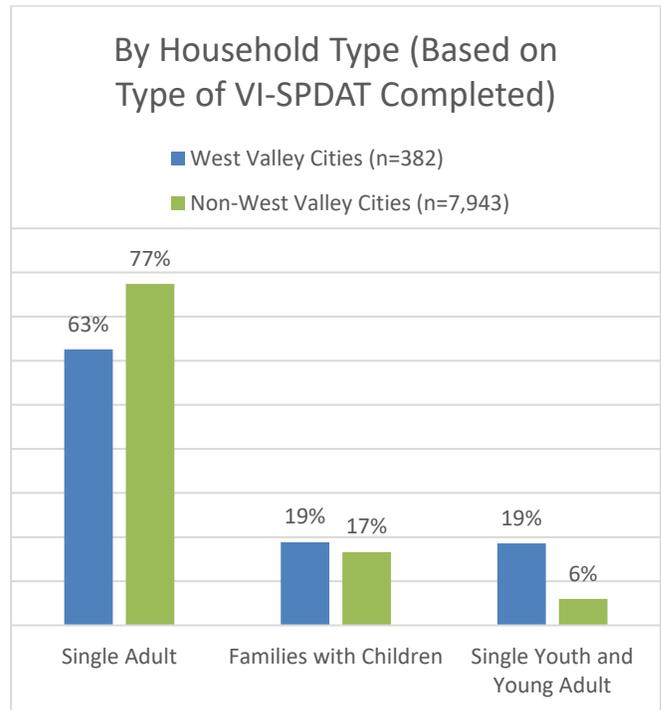


Figure 5. Household Type in 2024 (VI-SPDAT)

<sup>28</sup> U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Accessed May 10, 2025. <https://www.hud.gov/>.

Figure 4. Demographics by Gender in 2024 (VI-SPDAT), indicates a much higher percentage of women clients in the West Valley geography than the remainder of the County (50 percent compared to 38 percent) while Figure 5. Household Type in 2024 (VI-SPDAT), indicates a significantly higher proportion of youth and young adults relative to the remainder of the County (19 percent compared to 6 percent).

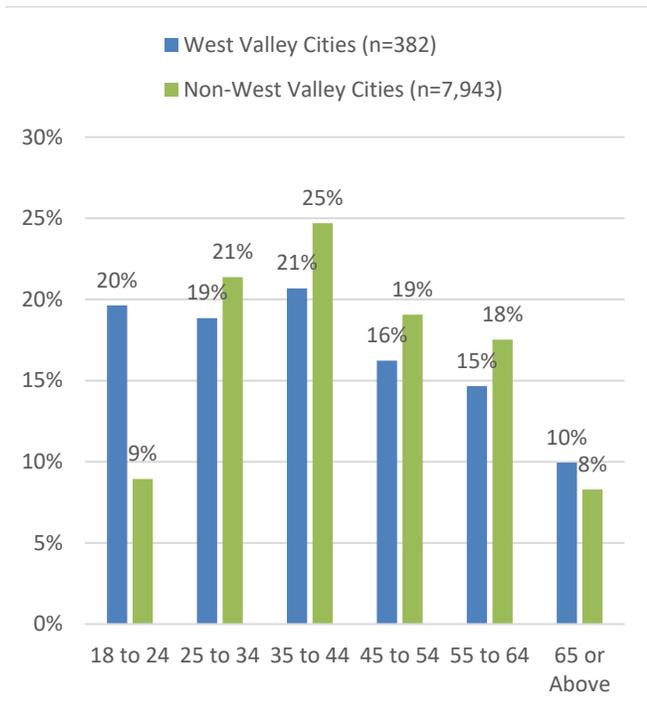


Figure 6. Demographics by Age in 2024 (VI-SPDAT)

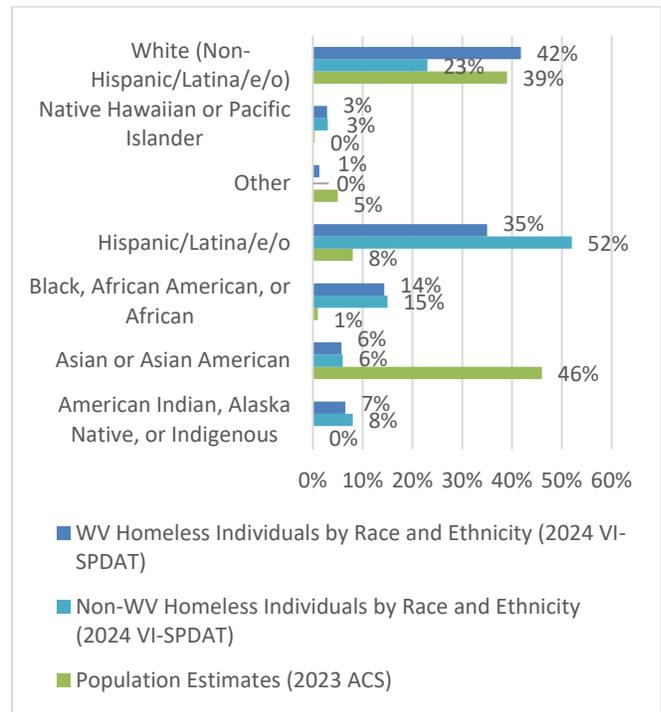


Figure 7. Overall and Homeless Population in West Valley by Race and Ethnicity in 2024 (VI-SPDAT, ACS)

Figure 9. Most Frequent Sleeping Location by Household in 2024, indicates West Valley individuals were more likely to sleep in their car or couch surf than the remainder of the County but less likely to utilize a shelter bed. It also shows 31 percent of households sleep outside and 28 percent in a car compared with 11 percent in shelters and 6 percent in transitional housing. West Valley individuals were also more likely to be White and less likely to be Hispanic/Latino than the remainder of the County. The largest homeless population in the West Valley identifies as White and second largest as Hispanic, however, those who identify as Hispanic or Black are

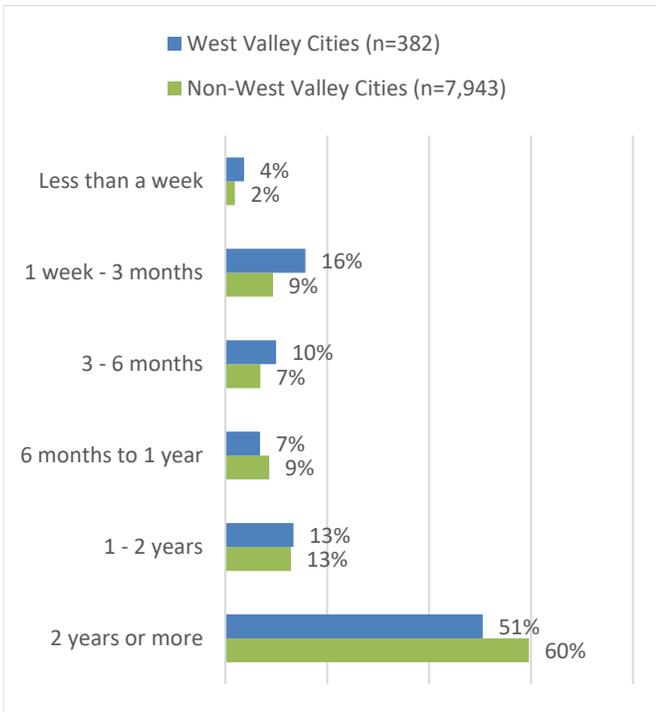


Figure 8. Time Since Lived in Permanent Stable Housing for 2024 First Time VI-SPDAT Assessment Households (VI-SPDAT)

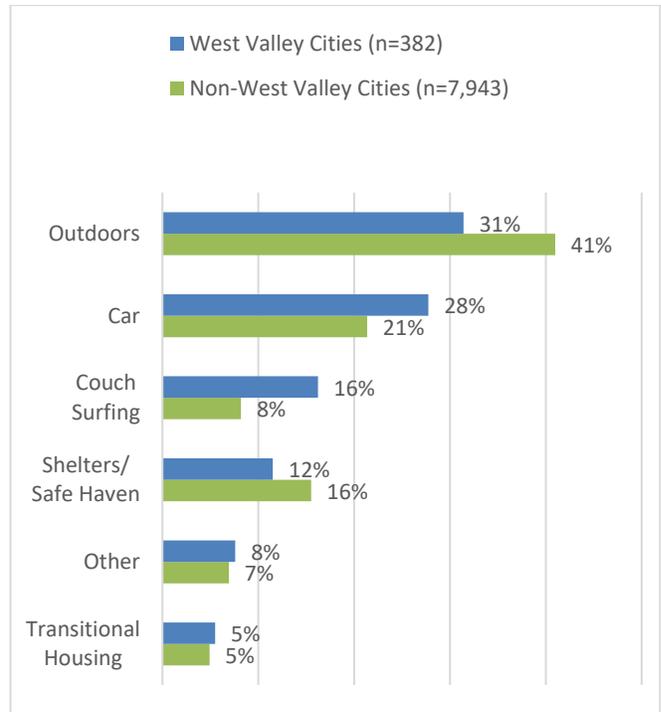


Figure 9. Most Frequent Sleeping Location by Household in 2024 (VI-SPDAT)

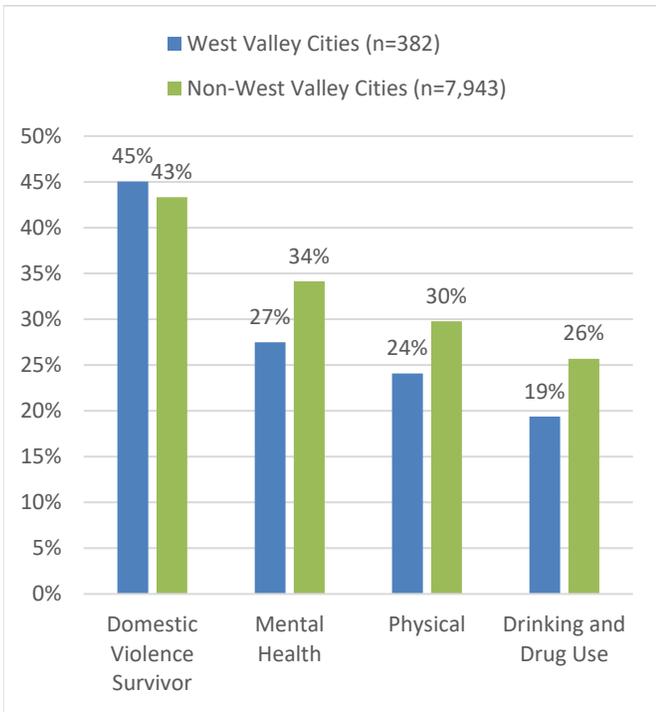


Figure 10. By Self-Reported Disability/Vulnerability (VI-SPDAT)

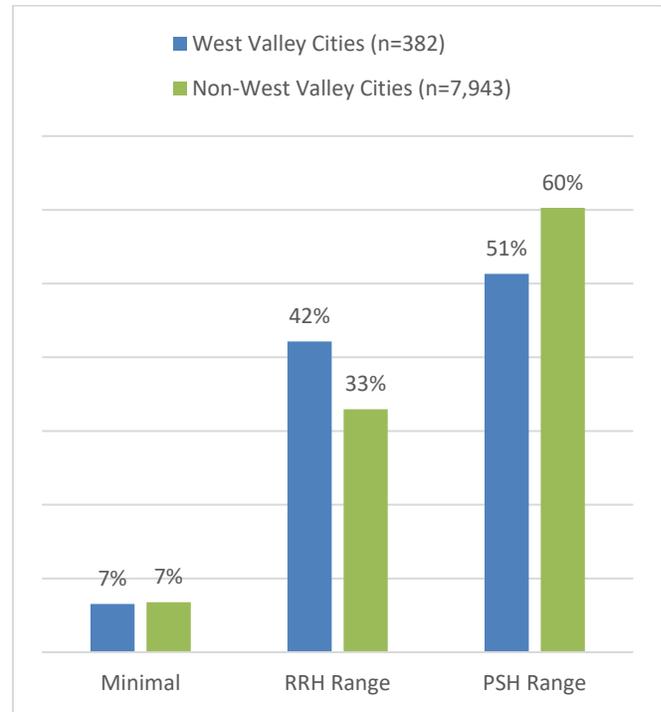


Figure 11. By Level of Housing Intervention (Based on VI-SPDAT Score)

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substantially overrepresented relative to the general population. Overall percentages for each race/ethnicity from the American Community Survey (ACS)<sup>29</sup> are provided for comparison. The race/ethnicity percentage is taken against the overall numbers from the ACS and VI-SPDAT, which rely on different methodologies. The relative percentages should be considered as indicative, but no inferences should be made at a granular level.

Figure 10. By Self-Reported Disability/Vulnerability (VI-SPDAT) indicates a higher domestic violence survivor rate and lower mental, physical, and drinking/drug use rate than the remainder of the County. Figure 11. By Level of Housing Intervention (Based on VI-SPDAT Score) shows a higher share of clients appropriate for Rapid Rehousing and lower for Permanent Supportive Housing than the rest of the County.

The VI-SPDAT data shows the homeless population in the West Valley cities is largely single adults, unaccompanied youth and families with children make up 37 percent of homeless households. An unaccompanied youth is defined as someone under the age of 21 who is living either on the streets, in a youth shelter or “couch surfing” and has no adult relative accompanying them. Also of note is that females make up 48 percent of the population, roughly equivalent to the general population. However, women and families tend to be less visible. Homeless women may be less visible on the local streets because women may be in domestic abuse shelters and families avoid being seen on the street for fear that their children may be taken away from them. Also, during the days, children attend school, and parents are often working and remain less visible.

## Existing Programs, Services, and Systems

Good City Company contacted the five West Valley cities to interview key staff members on services that the cities were funding and providing and services being provided by other community partners. Numerous participants, including service providers, local agencies, data collectors, and strategy and program development support, are striving to address one or more aspects of homelessness. The programs identified through the research to date are described below.

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<sup>29</sup> United States Census Bureau. “2023 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, American Community Survey (ACS).” Accessed May 10, 2025. <https://data.census.gov/table?q=DP05&g=160XX00US0610345,0617610,0644112,0648956,0670280>.

## Programs Identified

Table 2, below, is a brief overview of each of the services. A short narrative on each program being offered is also provided, with information on the number of clients being served. In the feasibility portion of this report, more details on the overall services will be provided, such as hotel vouchers, rotating safe parking, safe parking programs, etc.

Jurisdiction	Clients Served Annually (approx.)	Services Provided	Service Provider	Description
Los Gatos	14	Hotel Voucher Program	City of Los Gatos/Los Gatos Faith based community	The City provides hotel vouchers during inclement weather
Los Gatos	29	Food Pantry/ Clothing/Laundry/Showers	Faith based community	Faith based community provides lunches, laundry vouchers, clothing to homeless people
Campbell	TBD	Hotel Voucher Program	Silicon Valley Independent Living Center	Provides hotel vouchers during inclement weather, phase II will expand to include older adults and disabilities
Campbell	20 (13/night)	Silicon Valley Safe Parking Program, car repair funding and gas cards	Amigos de Guadalupe/Faith based community	Provides safe parking along with case management, workshops, Community Nights, laundry cards, showers, car repair funds, and gas cards
Campbell	133	Unhoused Specialist Staffing Position	Destination: Home Grant	Campbell received a grant to cover the salary for an unhoused specialist for three years.
Monte Sereno	N/A	Funding	Unidentified	The City has set aside \$20,000 in its budget to provide homeless services in the West Valley region. The Council has yet to identify a project to support.

Jurisdiction	Clients Served Annually (approx.)	Services Provided	Service Provider	Description
Saratoga, Cupertino (portions of San Jose)	20 (up to)	Rotating Safe Car Park	Faith based community	Safe parking program operates in Saratoga and West San Jose at local churches. Wi-Fi and food provided.
Cupertino, Saratoga, Campbell, Los Gatos	75 Cupertino; 25 soft check-ins for Saratoga, Campbell, Los Gatos	Ready to eat meals, clothing, vet services, park-it market, Case management	West Valley Community Services	WVCS provides services at its Cupertino location and with its mobile food pantry. Services include case management, ready-to-eat meals, clothing, veterinary services for pets, and dental clinics.
Campbell, Los Gatos, Saratoga	22	Case management	Abode Services	Provides case management in three of the West Valley cities.
Throughout Santa Clara County	TBC	Homeless Healthcare Programs	Santa Clara Valley Healthcare	Mobile clinic and street medicine team
Throughout Santa Clara County	94	Case management, transitional housing, and shelters in the County	LifeMoves	Tiny Homes and transitional shelters serve WV residents outside of those jurisdictions
Throughout Santa Clara County	18	Temporary housing and support services for youth	Bill Wilson Center	Shelters are not located in the WV cities, but services are offered to all WV cities.

Table 2. Existing Programs and Services Overview

### Los Gatos Hotel Voucher Program

In June 2023, the Town of Los Gatos Town Council approved \$50,000 for unhoused services. Of the \$50,000, \$10,000 was allocated to a shower ministry program, \$20,000 towards a temporary

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restroom and \$20,000 for a hotel voucher program.

The program has provided 211 hotel nights booked during emergencies triggered by severe weather conditions like extreme heat (100 degrees Fahrenheit), extreme cold (below 40 degrees Fahrenheit), poor air quality (above 150 on the Air Quality Index), and/or medical situations requiring a short-term stay. The hotel vouchers are only available to known members of the Los Gatos' homeless community. There are currently nineteen people on this known unhoused list (14 have used the vouchers at places like Los Gatos Lodge, the Garden Inn, and the Best Western). There have also been three qualifying "medical stays."

#### Los Gatos Food Pantry, Clothing Closet, Laundry Voucher, and Showers

Los Gatos Methodist Church conducts a weekly outreach program on Thursdays from 2–3:30 PM at the church gym, offering showers, lunch, toiletries, and new socks and undergarments. The program is primarily funded by the congregation and community donations, with the Town of Los Gatos contributing funding to cover cleaning services for the showers. The program serves 8–14 mostly senior, male regulars. St. Vincent de Paul provides laundry vouchers, and gift cards to places like Subway and Togo's are also distributed.

#### Bill Wilson Center

The Bill Wilson Center (BWC) offers a range of services to the West Valley Cities, including temporary housing, mental health care, supportive services, and advocacy, with a focus on ending youth and family homelessness. They provide services to runaway and homeless youth, young adults, and families, helping them develop self-confidence and personal assets. The Bill Wilson Center provided services to 18 households affiliated with the West Valley in 2024.

#### Abode

Abode is a major homeless services provider in the Bay Area and provides a variety of services, including interim housing. Abode provided targeted street outreach services to 22 high vulnerability individuals affiliated with the West Valley in 2024

#### Campbell Hotel Voucher Program

In December 2024, the City of Campbell City Council allocated \$147,500 to the Silicon Valley Independent Living Center (SVILC) to operate a hotel voucher program serving homeless

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people. The two-year pilot program offers up to 30 nights a year in the city's Motel 6 for homeless individuals and families, as well as those on the verge of homelessness. In total, the program could provide up to nine hundred overnight stays over the two-year period. SVILC will provide support services during the stays, including mental health services, job support, case management, referrals to substance abuse programs, and food.

### Silicon Valley Safe Parking Program

The Silicon Valley Safe Parking Program (SVSP) partners with Amigos de Guadalupe, the City of Campbell, and the City of San Jose, and operates in Campbell and Willow Glen/West San Jose. The program provides rotating safe parking sites at local churches. Through a grant from the City of Campbell, Amigos de Guadalupe offers a car repair program and gas cards. In addition, a contract from the Santa Clara County's OSH funds case management, workshops, community meals, laundry cards, and free shower access. In addition to support services, such as referrals to mental health and substance abuse programs, clients may receive assistance to pay for car registration or minor car repairs.

### Campbell Unhoused Specialist

The City of Campbell has a budgeted Unhoused Specialist position that had been filled throughout the first half of 2025 but was recently vacated. The position is funded for the next three years by a grant from Destination: Home. The specialist proactively conducts outreach in the streets and other publicly accessible areas to connect individuals with services and support. Key activities include identifying homeless individuals, engaging in conversations with them, and conducting a VI-SPDAT intake survey to determine eligibility for housing programs such as permanent supportive housing, transitional housing, and rapid rehousing. The specialist provides information about available community resources and services such as food pantries and the shelter hotline phone number. They



Figure 12. Hygiene Kit (Image credit: City of Campbell)

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also distribute hygiene kits (soap, toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant, shampoo, etc.), and has bottles of water and other frequently needed supplies. The specialist also plays an important role in providing feedback to City staff regarding the needs of homeless people in the community.

#### Rotating Safe Car Park (RSCP)

The Rotating Safe Car Park operates in the West Valley, mostly in Cupertino, West San Jose, and Saratoga. The faith-based community commits to serving up to sixteen vehicles for at least one month and up to three months per calendar year. Participants park overnight at the current RSCP location and receive access to additional supportive services. Each location offers a hospitality hour where guests can socialize and enjoy home-cooked meals or snack foods. Personal items (e.g., socks, toothbrushes, sleeping bags) are distributed, as needed. Amigos de Guadalupe also provides case management to some of the program participants.

#### West Valley Community Services Programs

West Valley Community Services (WVCS) offers services to Cupertino, Los Gatos, and Saratoga. WVCS has a mobile market which serves clients living in Los Gatos, Saratoga, and West San Jose with barriers to transportation. The homeless people in these communities can also receive ready-to-eat meals and fresh fruit or vegetables from the mobile market. The organization offers pop-up dental and pet clinics at the WVCS site in Cupertino. WVCS's Haven to Home Program serves the homeless community by providing supportive services and resources. The Haven to Home program offers homeless clients access to food, bus passes, laundry funds, hygiene kits, shelter referrals, safe parking, and employment resources. In addition to the services, the agency also partners with the Rotating Safe Car Park to provide support services.

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***“It is a difficult and time-consuming to recruit new churches and other community organizations to host safe parking sites. Community members have valid concerns. They can be overcome, but it can take a long time.”***

**Brian Link, Silicon Valley Safe Parking**

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## Santa Clara Valley Healthcare Homeless Healthcare Programs

The Valley Homeless Healthcare Program includes fixed location clinics and three mobile health centers<sup>30</sup>. This overall program operates at a much larger geography across Santa Clara County that includes the West Valley cities. The Backpack Homeless Healthcare Program utilizes a “street medicine” program to send trained professionals with medical supplies to provide healthcare services to people where they are located<sup>31</sup>. An after-hours nurse advice hotline is also available.

Other agencies also provided services to households affiliated with the West Valley in 2024, including emergency shelter beds. These include HomeFirst (125 households) LifeMoves (80 households), the Salvation Army (23 households), Family Supportive Housing - San Jose Family Shelter (16 households), People Assisting the Homeless (9 households), and Willow Glen Studios at Pedro Street interim housing (6 households). When available, the vast majority of emergency shelter beds in the County are located within the City of San Jose, with additional shelter locations in Sunnyvale, Mountain View, Gilroy, Santa Clara, and Palo Alto.

## **Systems and Supports**

### Santa Clara County Continuum of Care (CoC)

In 1995, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) introduced a new policy requiring communities to submit a single application for McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants. This streamlined approach aimed at enhancing coordination among housing and service providers on a local level and promotes the development of Continuums of Care (CoCs). By mandating a single application, HUD sought to encourage a more structured and strategic approach to both housing and service provision for homeless individuals. CoCs, in turn, offered a strategic framework by providing homeless households with housing and services tailored to their diverse needs. HUD distributes funding to Santa Clara County through the Continuum of Care Program, and in turn, the Santa Clara County CoC distributes funding to programs serving Santa Clara County.

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<sup>30</sup> Santa Clara Valley Medical Center. “Valley Homeless Healthcare Program (VHHP).” Accessed May 10, 2025. <https://scvmc.scvh.org/hospitals-clinics/valley-homeless-health-care-program-vhhp>.

<sup>31</sup> Santa Clara Valley Medical Center. “Backpack Homeless Healthcare Program.” Accessed May 10, 2025. <https://scvmc.scvh.org/hospitals-clinics/valley-homeless-health-care-program-vhhp/backpack-homeless-healthcare-program>.

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In Santa Clara County, the CoC is made up of a group of stakeholders committed to ending and preventing homelessness in our community. CoC responsibilities include implementing community-wide efforts to end homelessness and ensuring programmatic and systemic effectiveness. Through CoC, the County has implemented a coordinated entry process to match homeless people to community resources. The CoC is also charged with tracking and managing homeless households in its area of coverage. This includes the biannual homeless counts referred to as the Point-in-Time count.

In 2024, the County of Santa Clara received nearly \$48 million in Continuum of Care grants to provide rental subsidies and supportive services to vulnerable populations, including people fleeing domestic violence, youth transitioning out of foster care, and to address homelessness and those at risk of homelessness. These grants are the County's largest source of federal funding to address homelessness, ensuring people are housed and have necessary supportive services. It also helps fund the HMIS system that tracks homelessness data.

### Coordinated Entry

The coordinated entry system is designed to help homeless people find housing and support services more efficiently. It creates a standardized, consistent process for accessing services, assessing needs, prioritizing those most in need, and connecting people with appropriate resources. In the County's coordinated entry system, any homeless individual can complete a standard assessment tool called the Vulnerability Index-Service Prioritization Decision Assessment Tool or VI-SPDAT. This assessment considers a household's situation and identifies the best type of housing program to serve you.

### VI-SPDAT

VI-SPDAT (Vulnerability Index - Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool) is a survey used to assess the needs and vulnerabilities of individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness. It helps prioritize those most in need of available supportive, transitional, or permanent housing. The VI-SPIDAT assessment is organized into steps. First, trained community partners conduct the VI-SPIDAT assessment at shelters, support service locations, or while conducting outreach. The gathered information is entered into the HMIS system, and the households/individuals receive a vulnerability score. After receiving the vulnerability score, clients are placed in the community queue, based on the score, for Rapid Rehousing (RR), Transitional Housing (TH), or Public Housing and Supportive Services (PSH). Eligible households who are the most vulnerable and the most in need will be connected to available housing programs first.

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## HMIS

HMIS is an acronym for Homeless Management Information System. It is a database that collects and tracks data on homeless individuals and families or those at risk of becoming homeless. HMIS coordinated entry gathers information on demographics, housing status, service needs, and other relevant data points about individuals and families served by homeless assistance programs. This database helps agencies coordinate services, track outcomes, and improve the overall effectiveness of programs for homeless households. Participation in HMIS is a federal requirement for agencies to access federal funding.

## 2020-2025 Community Plan to End Homelessness

In 2015, community partners joined forces to create a roadmap for ending homelessness in Santa Clara County. The plan centered around a collaborative response and the Housing First model. The 2020-2025 Community Plan to End Homelessness, which was endorsed by every city in the County, set an ambitious goal to create 6,000 new housing opportunities and identified innovative strategies and programs for reducing homelessness. The 2020–2025 Community Plan to End Homelessness, which serves as a roadmap for ending homelessness in Santa Clara County, is organized around three main strategies:

- 1) Address the root causes of homelessness through system and policy change.
- 2) Improve the quality of life for unsheltered individuals and create healthy neighborhoods for all.
- 3) Expand homelessness prevention and housing programs to meet the need.

An update to the Community Plan is underway, and additional information is expected to be available around the time of publication of this report.

## Destination: Home

Destination: Home, a public-private partnership, aims to end homelessness. Founded in 2008, it emerged from a Blue-Ribbon Commission's recognition of the need for a collaborative approach to achieve collective impact in our community. In 2011, Destination: Home officially became an initiative of the Health Trust and played a pivotal role in launching Housing 1,000, a three-year campaign to house 1,000 of the most vulnerable chronically homeless individuals,

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including men, women, and families. The campaign's success paved the way for the adoption of a Housing First approach in Santa Clara County and laid the foundation for the 2016 voter approval of a historic \$950 million investment in affordable housing in Santa Clara County, Measure A. In 2017, Destination: Home transitioned into a Supporting Organization under the umbrella of the Silicon Valley Community Foundation.

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***“Not having housing is life threatening.”***

**Local Homeless Resident**

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Destination: Home convenes and collaborates with stakeholders across our community to advance strategies that address the root causes of homelessness and help ensure that all community members have a chance for a stable home. The organization advocates policies, develops ideas and programs, and invests in strategies that reduce and prevent homelessness.

#### West Valley Jurisdiction Homeless Services Collaboration

Since 2023, staff from the West Valley city's Community Development and Housing Departments have been meeting monthly to collaborate and share resources in addressing homelessness and housing goals. The cities have collectively sponsored a housing fair, including service providers with unhoused services, and have met with affordable housing developers to discuss opportunities for development.

While there is a lack of dedicated homeless shelters in the vicinity of the five West Valley cities, they have all agreed to collaborate on a feasibility study to explore the feasibility of a shelter and other support services and programs that could be offered. A Memorandum of Understanding among the five cities was developed in Fall of 2024. The cities also continue to work with the County of Santa Clara and other organizations to provide resources and support.

## Interviews and Insights of Homeless Individuals

Central themes from in-depth interviews with three homeless individuals in the West Valley area are described below. Most of the individuals were raised in the West Valley area, while one had moved to the Bay Area approximately three years prior. Note that these themes were all

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consistent with the conversations and interviews separately conducted by the Campbell Unhoused Specialist in their interactions.

### General Themes

- All expressed a notably elevated level of concern for others living on the street.
- All felt that broader community is not bothered by the existence of homeless people within their own community, but that they are bothered when they must see it.

### Needs Identified by Homeless Individuals

A generally consistent set of needs was identified by the homeless individuals we spoke with. Permanent housing was the top need, followed by several other needs, listed in approximate order of priority:

- Permanent Housing (including permanent supportive housing)
- Transportation access (specifically free or discounted transit passes)
- Health care access (including doctors' offices, pharmacy, and OTC meds)
- Lack of somewhere to safely store possessions/things are regularly stolen
- Difficulty charging phones
- Difficulty of moving from one camping site to another camping site
- Difficulty in participating processes to address homelessness

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***“It is the government’s job to overcome the chaos of homelessness and provide real solutions.”***

**Local Homeless Resident**

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## Gap Analysis

A homeless services gap analysis is a tool used to identify unmet needs within a community's system for addressing homelessness. It helps pinpoint areas where services are lacking or insufficient, allowing for better resource allocation and targeted interventions. It assesses the current system and compares it to what is needed to effectively address homelessness.

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## Gaps in Services for Currently Homeless People

The gaps in service described below are informed by service providers and City and County staff and an assessment of research and best practices. Most were also reinforced by conversations held with homeless individuals.

### Housing

Affordable housing, whether temporary or permanent, is a high need not just in the West Valley, but throughout Santa Clara County and California. According to Destination: Home, at least 75 percent of Santa Clara County's homeless population are unsheltered. This means they are living on the streets, in vehicles, tents or other places not suitable for habitation. Although jurisdictions in the West Valley offer safe parking sites and hotel stays, none of these are classified as transitional or permanent housing. Housing to serve homeless households specifically includes the following:

*Permanent affordable housing* includes the construction of 100 percent affordable developments, inclusionary units, the provision of Section 8 vouchers, and the rehabilitation of existing units to serve the extremely low-income. In addition, extremely low-income (ELI) units can be provided in mixed-income housing developments. Permanent supportive housing combines longer-term rental assistance with supportive services and case management for individuals experiencing chronic homelessness. In the West Valley area there are presently six units of permanent supportive housing in Cupertino and 23 that have been approved in Campbell.<sup>32</sup>

*Temporary shelters*, both congregate and non-congregate, include warming centers, cold weather shelters, and shelters associated with navigation centers. Santa Clara County has the largest total population of homeless individuals, the highest rate of unsheltered homeless, and lowest shelter beds relative to individuals needing support of any of the nine Bay Area counties. When shelter beds are available in other parts of the County, barriers to connecting West Valley residents to those beds include transportation challenges and the disruption of existing geographically rooted social, health, and economic networks. Currently, the Town of Los Gatos offers hotel stays for inclement

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<sup>32</sup> County of Santa Clara, Office of Supportive Housing, Supportive Housing Development Update, January 28, 2025, <https://files.santaclaracounty.gov/exjcpb1571/2025-01/housing-bond-report-25.pdf>.

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weather to approximately 29 known unhoused individuals. The program has served 14 individuals over the last year. The City of Campbell recently started a hotel stay program, which will offer up to 30 nights a year for unhoused individuals and families, as well as those on the brink of homelessness. That could amount to as many as 900 overnight stays over the two-year trial period. Silicon Valley Independent Living Center provides support services during the stays, including mental health care, job support, connections to housing programs, case management, substance abuse programs, and food.

### **Physically Coordinated Services**

Service providers believe the homeless community could benefit from multiple service providers being available at one location, whether it is a brick-and-mortar navigation center like the San Mateo County Navigation Center or a mobile navigation center that travels to various locations. Despite outreach workers' best efforts, it is often more effective for service providers to engage with households in their current living location or encampments. Currently, physically coordinated navigation services are not available in any of the West Valley jurisdictions.

### **Safety**

Some people experiencing homelessness may choose to sleep on the street instead of in a shelter due to various factors, including safety concerns, mental health issues, and a preference for their routines and independence. Shelters can feel overwhelming due to crowded environments, rules, and a perceived lack of safety, even though sleeping on the street may leave them more vulnerable.

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***“People steal stuff. They will steal it right out from under you when you are asleep.”***

**Local Homeless Resident**

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### **Transience**

Moving frequently is difficult for homeless people. They try to stay in areas where they are comfortable living but are often asked to move by property owners or law enforcement. This means that they must relocate several times a month or even during a week. Moving can often be additionally destabilizing. This is a problem which will impact

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nearly all unhoused individuals and families.

### **Transportation**

Transportation has been mentioned multiple times by service providers as something that is lacking for the West Valley unhoused. Often, major bus lines are only available along the larger corridors. Transportation options are needed for the mobility-challenged to access health care appointments and to access shelter opportunities. Interviews with stakeholders and support service providers indicate that very few of the unhoused are able to secure transit passes.

### **Healthcare, Mental Health, Substance Use Services**

Many homeless people do not have access to sufficient medical, mental health, or substance use services. Many service providers and homeless people who were interviewed have expressed a need for bringing free dental and health care to homeless people in addition to the mental health services and substance abuse programs offered by support service providers.

### **Outreach and Case Management**

Lighter-touch outreach reaching more individuals and more intensive casework were identified as needs. There is a call for more coordinated case management at some rotating safe parking sites and the faith-based service locations. This would mean a case manager who works with the clients to put together comprehensive goals and plans to secure housing and a job. This can be accomplished through a service provider like Abode or Amigos de Guadalupe, a County Office of Supportive Housing (OSH) assigned caseworker or through the mobile/brick and mortar navigation center. The case manager would be able to provide the VI-SPDAT intake, which would not only provide demographics to the County, but may lead to the individual receiving much-needed services, including housing.

### **Connectivity**

Often, homeless individuals need a means of communication to sign up for support services. It can also be exceedingly difficult for homeless individuals to receive or submit paperwork due to lack of access to a mailbox. Technology also plays an important role in improving health and well-being. It can be used to reach out to loved ones, access resources, and a way to access medical assistance. However, technology can often

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exclude those at the greatest risk. Even for those with a smart phone, using websites to apply for services can be difficult on a phone and some people who have been homeless for an extended period of time may not have strong skills navigating complex websites.

California LifeLine offers low-cost and free monthly telephone services to eligible, low-income California residents. Participants can qualify for the program if they receive public benefits or meet household income limits, however, the phones must often be mailed to a mailbox. Phones are also frequently lost, stolen, or broken. Additionally, access to electricity to charge the phone is difficult and there are data limits on the devices.

### **Funding**

The overall lack of funding to support the programs identified in this report is a central challenge. Experts generally agree that homelessness prevention, extremely low-income housing, and other programs and services have been underfunded for decades. The current public funding context makes it even more challenging to sustain current levels or strengthen such services.

### **Systems Gaps**

Some gaps relate more to the system of services, knowledge, and logistics of connecting people with services. These gaps are described below.

#### **Knowledge Gaps**

Existing available services provided by others are sometimes not known to other providers. Similar gaps between public agencies and departments within a city can also be an issue, e.g., coordination between housing and police departments instead of a “whole of government” approach.

#### **Scaling Impact**

There remain questions regarding how to scale and make existing services more effective and efficient at achieving impact instead of creating something new.

#### **Geography**

Location of available services: many services are located where people would be required to travel long (or difficult) distances or to locations they do not want or

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would have great difficulty in traveling to. This contrasts with an approach of “meeting people where they are at” and offering services in a location where they are more likely to be matched with those who need them.

## Conclusion & Next Steps

### **Feasibility Analysis**

In the next phase of this project, we will analyze the feasibility of programs to prevent homelessness and serve homeless individuals and households. Some services may be appropriate for one segment of the homeless population, but not another segment. Below is a list and a brief explanation of the programs that are likely to be analyzed and discussed in detail in the next phase. Some services respond directly to a need discussed above, while others address multiple needs.

#### **Permanent Affordable Housing**

Permanent affordable housing can come in a multitude of varieties. For this report, we are exploring permanent affordable housing that serves extremely low income households by either construction of the units, provision of Section 8 vouchers, rehabilitation of existing units to serve the extremely low income. In addition, Extremely Low Income (ELI) units can be provided in a mixed-income or 100 percent affordable housing development. These developments are highly subsidized through a combination of municipal, Low Income Housing Tax Credits, and commercial loans.

#### **Interim Housing**

Interim Housing, exemplified by Project Homekey, was a statewide effort to build on the success of the COVID-era success of Project Roomkey, where the State of California rented vacant rooms at hotels to house homeless people or those at risk of homelessness. Homekey was an opportunity for jurisdictions to develop a broad range of housing types by converting hotels, motels, hostels, single-family homes and multifamily apartments, adult residential facilities, manufactured housing, and commercial properties to permanent or interim housing for homeless households. It should be noted that the program is being replaced by Homekey+ which is focused exclusively on Permanent

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Supportive Housing, not interim housing. Tiny home villages are another recognizable form of interim supportive housing to address homelessness, providing a pathway to stable housing and self-sufficiency. They focus on rapid construction of modular units, offering private spaces with support services and case management.

### **Supportive Housing and Transitional Housing**

Supportive housing and transitional housing are both housing options for homeless individuals and families, but they differ in their goals and duration of support. Transitional housing offers temporary housing with support services to help people move to permanent housing within a set timeframe, while supportive housing provides long-term affordable housing with ongoing support to help residents maintain tenancy.

### **Rapid Rehousing**

Rapid rehousing is often part of the low barrier approach which emphasizes providing housing first paired with support services. Rapid rehousing typically provides housing subsidies, heavy case management and support services.

### **Navigation Center**

A Navigation Center for homeless individuals and households is a short-term, low-barrier housing program that provides a safe, temporary place to stay, along with intensive support services, to homeless individuals. It is designed to help people transition to stable, permanent housing by offering resources such as case management, connection to public benefits, health services, and employment opportunities.

### **Shelters**

Homeless shelters offer a range of options, from emergency shelters for immediate needs to more long-term solutions. These include emergency shelters, women's shelters, youth shelters, family shelters, cold weather shelters, and warming centers. There are congregate, non-congregate types of shelters as well. A congregate shelter is a type of emergency shelter that provides communal spaces where individuals sleep in shared areas, offering minimal privacy. These

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shelters are often established in large, open settings like schools, churches, or community centers, designed for emergencies. A non-congregate shelter provides private, individual, or family units for shelter, such as hotel rooms, tiny homes, or apartments, instead of a large, shared space.

### **Safe Parking**

Safe parking sites are sanctioned sites where individuals and families living in their vehicles can register and park overnight. Support services like case management and meals are sometimes offered as well. There are rotating shelters where the location moves every 30 days, and shelters that are more long-term and established.

### **Day Center**

A day center is a facility that provides daytime support services to homeless people, offering a safe space to access resources, receive assistance, and potentially transition out of homelessness. Unlike shelters that offer overnight accommodation, day centers focus on daytime services, such as meals, showers, laundry, counseling, job training, and access to case managers. They serve as drop-in centers and can be tailored to those with additional needs like substance abuse or mental illness, providing a space to connect with services and support.

### **Showers and Laundry**

Homeless households need a convenient location to bathe and do laundry. Often this is a mobile shower and laundry service. Other times a fixed location, or vouchers for laundromats or showers at gyms are provided.

### **Meals**

Warm prepared meals can be provided to serve the unhoused. They are often provided by service providers, community-based organizations, and grassroots initiatives. Food pantries can also provide homeless individuals with packaged food that can be eaten at a later time.

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## **Training for Law Enforcement Agencies**

Many jurisdictions in California have programs that train law enforcement personnel to handle situations involving homeless people. These programs often focus on de-escalation tactics, mental health crisis intervention, and understanding the underlying causes of homelessness. Some agencies have designated officers who specialize in working with the homeless population. These officers often receive specialized training, are familiar with local resources, and aim to connect individuals with appropriate support.

## **Lockers**

Some cities offer storage lockers for homeless individuals specifically in public spaces such as libraries and community centers.

## **Transportation Support**

Homeless individuals often need transportation that is convenient to access and affordable. Free transit passes and vouchers for rides to doctor appointments, etc., can also be provided.

## **Sanctioned Camping Sites**

Sanctioned camping sites, also known as safe sleeping sites or safe stay communities, are designated areas where homeless individuals can stay in tents or other temporary shelters without fear of being arrested or cited for camping. These sites often provide basic services like sanitation, food, and access to case management.

## **Expanded Outreach and Casework**

Broader proactive outreach efforts and more intensive casework have been identified as a need. Outreach workers can identify and engage people over time, which can eventually lead to connecting an individual with a caseworker or other services. Expanding casework for homeless individuals could involve increasing access to personalized, consistent support services that address both immediate and long-term needs. This can be achieved by hiring and deploying trained case managers with specialized knowledge in housing navigation, mental health, and

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substance use treatment. Effective casework requires establishing and maintaining trust which typically takes time and repeated engagement.

**Connectivity**

Additional support to help homeless people have access to phones, Wi-Fi, charging, technology skills, and somewhere to receive physical mail could be explored.

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