Racial Equity (REQ) Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, June 16th, 2021 ║ 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM

[Recording of Zoom Meeting](#). The chat and materials discussed at the meeting (not provided before the meeting) are below the minutes.

Attendance:

Member	Area of Representation	Present
Aimee Zenzele Barnes	City of Sacramento	Yes
Alicia Gonzales	Greater Sacramento	Yes
Angela Upshaw (Co-Chair)	Veterans	Yes
Anira Khlok	Sacramento, Health System	Yes
April Marie Dawson	People with Disabilities	Yes
Ardy Akhzari (Co-Chair)	Sacramento	Yes
Brina Sylve	Greater Sacramento Area	Yes
Dawn Basciano	Sacramento	Yes
Fatemah Martinez	South Sacramento, Unsheltered / Non-Profit / Outreach	Yes
Henry Ortiz	Communities Impacted by Incarceration, Systemic Oppression, Community Violence	Yes
Koby Rodriguez	Central City, Non-Profit, BIQTPOC	Yes
Mike Nguy	Government Agency in the Public Health Division	No
Patricia Jones	Sacramento	No
Shalinee Hunter	Sacramento and Statewide	Yes
Stephanie D Thompson	Oak Park and Marina Vista	Yes

Stephen Hernandez	Sacramento, Veterans	Yes
Steven Seeley	Mental Health Services, Sacramento County	No
Tiffany Glass	Elk Grove, Sacramento County	No
Tiffany Gold	Youth with Lived Experience	No
Vanessa Johnson	Sacramento County	Yes

SSF Staff	SSF Title
Christina Heredia	Referral Specialist
Glenn Marker	Referral Specialist
Lisa Bates	CEO
Michele Watts	Chief Planning Officer
Michelle Charlton	CoC Coordinator
Peter Bell	CES Manager
Scott Clark	Systems Performance Analyst
Stacey Fong	CE Analyst
Tamu Green	Systems Performance Advisor

Guests
A-Juh-Row-SHA, Aliyah Middleton, Antoinette Carter, Bo Cassell, Cheyenne Caraway, Danielle Foster, Deisy Madrigal, Ebony SB, Monica Rocha-Wyatt, Nadia Rains, Pixie Pearl, Regina Vasquez, Shaunda Davis, and Tiffany Rayford.

Agenda Item	Presenter(s):	Time	Item Type
I. Welcome & Introductions	Angela Upshaw, BFHP-Roads Home, Associate Director (Co-Chair)	9:00 AM (5 minutes)	Informational
Meeting started around 9:09 AM. Attendance of 29 participants.			
II. Approval 05/19/21 Meeting Minutes	Angela Upshaw	9:05 AM (5 minutes)	Action
Motioned for approval with the month correction to present the REQ Action Plan at the August CoC Board meeting: 1st - Anira Khlok, 2nd - Ardy Akhzari. Motion approved.			
III. Approval of BIPOC Interviews Report	Ardy Akhzari	9:10 AM (20 minutes)	Action
Ardy described the BIPOC Interview progress and shared a **presentation** that included the process summary, demographics summary, and the findings from the interviews. Please see the recording link above for more details. Motioned for approval: 1st - Brina Sylve, 2nd - Shalinee Hunter. Motion approved.			
IV. Draft Racial Equity Action Plan	Angela Upshaw & Ardy Akhzari	9:30 AM (60 minutes)	Informational and Discussion

Angela presented the **draft REQ Action Plan** that included details about the draft action plan vision, the process, the findings, and the recommendations on the following: REQC, Data with a Racial Equity Lens, Training and Education/Normalizing Conversations, Staff and Leadership Diversity, Assessment and Prioritization, Language Access, Equitable Funding, Partnerships, and the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Questions/comments were asked during the meeting, please see the recording link above.

V. Plan for the June 21st Stakeholder Forum	Tamu Green, SSF Systems Performance Advisor	10:30 AM (10 minutes)	Discussion

Tamu provided details about the Racial Equity Stakeholder Forum #2 which is next week, Monday, June 21st from 11am to 1pm via Zoom. RSVP to attend the Racial Equity Stakeholder Forum #2 **here**. The deadline to RSVP is this Friday, June 18th at 1pm. For more details about our work, explore the **REQ webpage** and **REQ Stakeholder Forums webpage**.

VI. Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHV) Plan	Michele Watts, SSF Chief Planning Officer	10:40 AM (20 minutes)	Informational and Discussion

Michele described the HUD Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHVs), sharing a presentation that included Eligible Populations, CoC Partnership, Key Questions, Prioritization Targeting within Eligible Categories, Prioritization Factors across Eligible Categories, Prioritization Factors for Chronically Homeless & Move-On, Next Steps, and EHV Key Dates. Questions/comments were asked during the meeting, please see the recording link above.

VII. Announcements:
- Stay informed by visiting the **SSF REQ Stakeholder Forum webpage** for more details on previous and upcoming Stakeholder Forums.

VIII. Meeting Adjourned at 10:48 AM. Attendance of 31 participants.

Next REQ Committee Meeting: Wednesday, July 21st, 2021 from 9:00AM to 11:00 AM

Meeting Chat

00:15:27   SH: Shalinee Hunter

00:15:28   Aimee Z. Barnes (She/They):   Aimee Z. Barnes

00:15:29   Anira Khlok: Anira Khlok

00:15:33   SHernandez: Stephen Hernandez

00:15:33   April Marie Dawson: April Dawson RIL she/hers member

00:15:34   Stephanie Thompson: Stephanie Thompson

00:15:38   angela upshaw: Angela

00:15:44   Brina Sylve: Brina Sylve, CalHFA

00:15:47   Shaunda Davis, LSS (She, Her, Hers):   I think I am a just an attendee

00:15:55   Christina Heredia: Christina H Sub-Committee

00:15:55   Henry Ortiz Community Organizer:Henry Ortiz

00:16:20   Koby Rodríguez (he/him/his):   Koby Rodríguez, he/him/his, Sac LGBT Center

00:17:41   angela upshaw: Meeting Minutes 5/19/21

00:17:52   Brina Sylve: Approve

00:17:55   April Marie Dawson: Approve

00:17:56   angela upshaw: yes

00:17:58   SHernandez: Approve

00:18:00   Stephanie Thompson: Approve

00:18:01   SH: Approve

00:18:03   Aimee Z. Barnes (She/They):   Yes, approve the minutes with the correction. Thanks!

00:18:05   Ardy Akhzari: Approve

00:18:09   Koby Rodríguez (he/him/his):   Approve with correction

00:18:29   Regina Vasquez: Tegina Vasquez

00:18:39   Regina Vasquez: Regina Vasquez

00:26:18   Ebony SB: Thank you Ardy:)

00:26:24   Shalinee Hunter: can we share this with our other stakeholders?

00:26:46   Deisy Madrigal, She/Her: How many youth were part of this process?

00:27:00   Shalinee Hunter: great thank you

00:28:10   Christina Heredia: I announced it at the TAY Case Conference

00:28:44   Shalinee Hunter: such great work --- thank you

00:29:01   angela upshaw: BIPOC Interview Report

00:29:41   Ardy Akhzari: Approve

00:29:43   Aimee Z. Barnes (She/They):   Yes, approve the BIPOC Interview Report.

00:29:43   Stephanie Thompson: Approve

00:29:45   angela upshaw: approve

00:29:47   Anira Khlok, She/her/Hers, Dignity Health: Approve

00:29:48   SHernandez: Approve

00:29:49   Shalinee Hunter: approve

00:30:01   April Marie Dawson: approve

00:30:12   Koby Rodríguez (he/him/his):   Approve

00:30:20   Fatemah Martinez (she/hers)- South Sac HART: approve

00:30:34   Regina Vasquez: approve

00:33:09   Dr. Tamu Green (she/her), SSF, Systems Performance Advisor:
There were 66 applicants

00:42:18   Ebony SB: normalizing BIPOCs

00:58:54   Dawn Basciano: Why isnt ione miwok identified as a tribe that can identify
CoC assessment/needs/dev?

01:01:25   Koby Rodríguez (he/him/his):   Can you share the process for authoring
the recommendations?

01:01:49   Anira Khlok, She/her/Hers, Dignity Health: Great question,
Koby!

01:08:12   Aimee Z. Barnes (She/They):   Based on Dr. Tamu suggested, there
can be a "phased -step by step" approach to achieving the
goals and implementing the strategies in the draft action plan. This could help with
monitoring progress and refine where needed.

01:08:27   Ebony SB: Good question Pixie:)

01:12:32   Anira Khlok, She/her/Hers, Dignity Health: Another way that we can frame the recommendations is within the visual of the types of racial inequity: structural, institutional, individual

01:13:31   Shalinee Hunter: Thank you again so much everyone.

01:17:55   Michelle Charlton (She/Her/Hers) SSF, CoC Coordinator: The Racial Equity Stakeholder Forum #2 is next week, Monday, June 21st from 11am to 1pm via Zoom.

01:18:09   Michelle Charlton (She/Her/Hers) SSF, CoC Coordinator: RSVP to attend the Racial Equity Stakeholder Forum #2 here: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScX-0WFw-8pug8sIVSB9PuB-EogxxE4usfysa8uUKB6jflu9Q/viewform

01:18:24   Michelle Charlton (She/Her/Hers) SSF, CoC Coordinator: Deadline to RSVP is this Friday, June 18th by 1pm.

01:18:28   Pixie Pearl (they/them):   If you're interested in attending the grand challenge or seeing the work/conversations we've been having. Here is our ongoing agenda that also includes the zoom link. https://docs.google.com/document/d/1G37WPVBf0uRExDNvZpOEImKtpFTCL01xcWzZib17Atc/edit?usp=sharing

01:19:28   Michelle Charlton (She/Her/Hers) SSF, CoC Coordinator: More details about the Forums here: https://sacramentostepsforward.org/racial-equity-stakeholder-forums/

01:20:41   Shalinee Hunter: Can we attend for a portion?

01:21:33   Shalinee Hunter: I can't attend the whole time, just want to make sure it wouldn't be disruptive to drop in …..

01:21:43   Antoinette Carter: My apologies. I was transitioning to participating via desktop and my mic was automatically engaged :(

01:23:21   Antoinette Carter: Would you please re-submit the links to the chat? I am unable to access them now that I re-entered the meeting.

01:26:04   Dr. Tamu Green (she/her), SSF, Systems Performance Advisor: The links were sent privately to Antoinette. We're glad you were able to re-join!

01:39:40   Michelle Charlton (She/Her/Hers) SSF, CoC Coordinator: More details about EHVs, review the SHRA presentation from the CESC meeting last week: https://sacramentostepsforward.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/EHV_slides-6.10.21.pdf

01:40:34   Ardy Akhzari: Thank you Michele and Peter!

01:51:07   Dawn Basciano: i Approve minutes

01:51:23   Dawn Basciano: i approve the report

01:54:08   Christina Heredia: Thank you

01:54:10   Aimee Z. Barnes (She/They):   Thank you! Great work!

01:54:10   Regina Vasquez: yes ma'am thank y'all

01:54:15   Dawn Basciano: Thank you

BIPOC Interviews Summary

June 16, 2021

SACRAMENTO
STEPS FORWARD

Voices Shaping Our Racial Equity Action Plan

Sacramento Steps Forward

Maurice Harge shared his perspective with Racial Equity Committee Co-Chair Ardy Akhzari.

The **Racial Equity Committee** has a vision for a more equitable future for people experiencing homelessness in Sacramento. Building this future starts with listening to and learning from Black, Indigenous, and Other People of Color (BIPOC) who have lived experiences of homelessness.

To elevate their voices, this diverse committee has conducted a series of listening sessions with BIPOC with current and past experience of homelessness. This work helps us understand the nature of the barriers they have faced and take definitive steps to eliminate them.

Process Summary

- REQC members recommended 19 people for interview.

- Based on the ability to connect, 14 people were surveyed.

- Participants were provided with a gift card.

- Field interviews were transcribed by a REQC Co-Chair.

- Themes were identified through a descriptive coding process by Sacramento Steps Forward (SSF) staff.

- The draft summary document was compiled by SSF staff and reviewed by the REQC Chairs.

20 REQC members and 6 SSF staff contributed to the process.

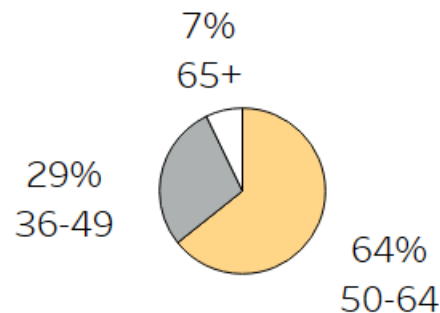Thank you!

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STEPS FORWARD

Demographics Summary

14 people interviewed

"How do you identify racially and ethnically?"

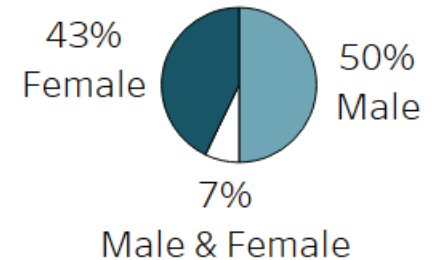|	
African American	5
African American/Black	2
Black	1
Native American /Black	1
Native/Black	1
Indigenous/Haitian/ Native American	1
Native American	1
Hispanic/Indian	1
Anglo/Asian/Latin	1

Current homelessness situation

Experiencing/connected to services	6
Experiencing/not connected to services	4
Resolved	4

Gender

43% Female
50% Male
7% Male & Female

Age group

7% 65+
29% 36-49
64% 50-64

Sexual orientation

14% Bi-sexual
21% Unknown
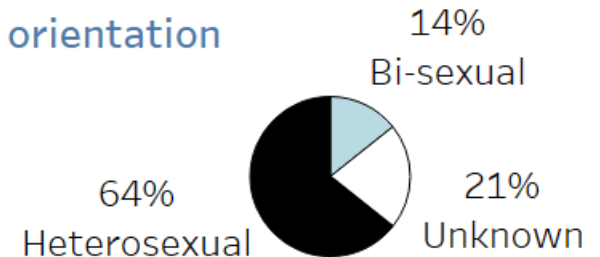64% Heterosexual

62% of persons had spent all of their time homeless in Sacramento.

The reported length of time homeless ranged from "about one year" to 30 years

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Demographics Summary

"Which of these descriptions best describe you?"

Head of Household: 93%

Living with a Disability: 71%

Domestic Violence Survivor: 29%

Formerly Incarcerated: 29%

Veteran: 14%

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Findings from the Interviews

54% thought there was a difference by race in applying for and accessing services

Comments included:

- "Being black puts you at the bottom of the totem pole."

- Frustrated and upset that his word isn't taken at face value, he wants to be treated equally when requesting resources.

- "There were different services and groups come out. Groups would have you write down your name and social and were going to call you. White females got calls and spoke highly of them; I couldn't get a call back. And I was pregnant at the time...people who got the help were white."

- Not fair that the only time she has access to services is when she is being taken to jail.

54% thought there was a difference by race in applying for and accessing services

Comments continued:

- Given a "not up to par" feeling by a particular provider who wound up not providing the sought-after service to him, but providing to two others.

- Did not think race was a factor and mentioned that because he used a phone line that may have helped since they "didn't know what color he was."

- "It's a certain look...they're not hiding it."

- "Man, I don't know why they hate us, what did we ever do?...I'm at this stand, grabbing coffee, he'll just look up and move away like I'm going to do something to him or something, that hurts more than anything."

36% said they were delayed or denied services due to labels more readily assigned to BIPOC individuals

Comments included:

- Was called a "lazy son of a bitch" and told "It's just like you people."

- Despises the "angry black man" moniker that has been assigned to him in the past.

- Labeled as "service resistant."

- "I try to keep myself as calm as possible because I know this; I'm a black female and of course seen as aggressive especially coming off of drug addiction, coming off the river all stacked up against me, so I try to be as pleasant as possible."

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What does a more racially just system look like?

Comments included:

- We should be judged by the content of our character, not the color of our skin.

- Zero tolerance on both sides, both the provider and the participant.

- Leadership needs to set a proper example.

- People who care and listen, show compassion, and understand the system are key

- We should challenge each other on how to better ourselves, society, and the world.

- We just need a break like everybody else.

- It shouldn't matter what race you are but based on the situation you are in and the desire to get out of your situation.

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Racial Equity Committee Interviews Summary   June 2021

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STEPS FORWARD

The Sacramento Continuum of Care Racial Equity Committee (REQC) established a goal to better understand the local Black Indigenous & Persons of Color (BIPOC) homelessness experience through an interview process.

REQC members were encouraged to contribute names of persons with current or recent past experience with homelessness, who might be willing to be interviewed. 19 people were recommended for interview.

Based on the ability to connect, 20 REQC members were involved in surveying 14 people. Participants were provided with a gift card.

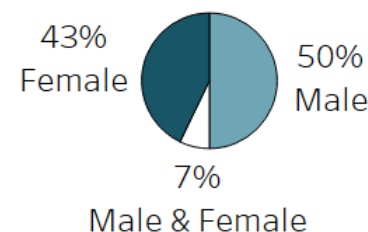**Participant Demographics Summary**

14 people interviewed

"How do you identify racially and ethnically?"

African American	5
African American/Black	2
Black	1
Native American /Black	1
Native/Black	1
Indigenous/Haitian/ Native American	1
Native American	1
Hispanic/Indian	1
Anglo/Asian/Latin	1

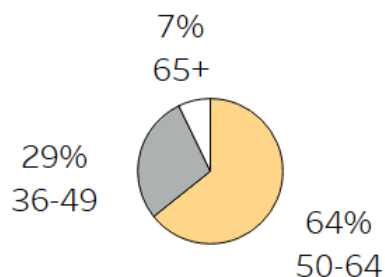### Current homelessness situation

Experiencing/connected to services	6
Experiencing/not connected to services	4
Resolved	4

Age group

7% 65+

29% 36-49

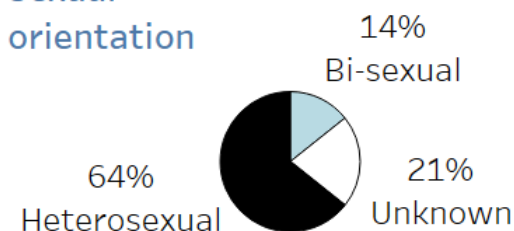64% 50-64

Gender

43% Female

50% Male

7% Male & Female

Sexual orientation

14% Bi-sexual

64% Heterosexual

21% Unknown

Participant Demographics Detail:

Person ID	Race/Ethnicity	Gender	Sexual Orientation	Head of Household	Living w/ Disability	DV Survivor	Formerly Incarcerated	Veteran	Age Group	Current Situation
1	Black	Male	Straight	Yes	Yes	-	-	-	36-49	Experiencing/not connected to services
2	Indigenous & Haitian/ Native American	Male	Straight	Yes	Yes	-	-	-	50-64	Experiencing/connected to services
3	Native American	Female	Straight	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	-	50-64	Resolved
4	Black/African American	Female	Bi-sexual	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	36-49	Experiencing/connected to services
5	Native American & Black	Female	Not answered	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	50-64	Experiencing/not connected to services
6	African American Black	Male	Straight	-	-	-	-	Yes	50-64	Resolved
7	African American	Male	Heterosexual	Yes	Yes	-	-	Yes	50-64	Resolved
8	African American	Female	Not answered	Yes	Yes	-	-	-	65+	Experiencing/connected to services
9	Hispanic/Indian	Female	Not answered	Yes	-	-	Yes	-	50-64	Experiencing/connected to services
10	Anglo Asian Latin	Male/Female/ Hesperus	Bi-sexual	Yes	-	-	-	-	50-64	Experiencing/not connected to services
11	African American	Male	Straight	Yes	-	-	Yes	-	36-49	Experiencing/connected to services
12	Native & Black	Male	Straight	Yes	Yes	-	-	-	50-64	Experiencing/connected to services
13	African American	Male	Straight	Yes	Yes	-	-	-	50-64	Experiencing/not connected to services
14	African American	Female	Straight	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	-	36-49	Resolved

- For Race/Ethnicity, Gender, and Sexual Orientation, the participant self-identified and was not limited to any categories.
- For Head of Household, Living with a Disability, Domestic Violence (DV) Survivor, Formerly Incarcerated, and Veteran categories, participants were asked "Which of these descriptions best describe you?"
- For Current Situation, participants chose from three options.

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Length of time homeless

Of the 12 persons who responded, all indicated a length of one year or longer. It was in some cases difficult to tell if lengths were continuous or represented multiple cases of homelessness. The range reported spanned "about one year" to 30 years.

Those who had resolved their homelessness, reported shorter lengths of time homeless.

Current homelessness situation	Average years homeless
Experiencing/connected to services	9.2
Experiencing/not connected to services	10.3
Resolved	2.0
Overall average years homeless	**8.3**

Location of homelessness

The majority of persons had spent all of their time homeless in Sacramento.

Other locations mentioned were Los Angeles (experience was better in Sacramento) and Texas (experience was better in Sacramento).

Location of homelessness	Count
All Sacramento	8
Not just Sacramento	5
Total	**13**

Events leading to homelessness

All 14 persons identified events contributing to their homelessness.

8 people reported multiple events leading to homelessness, and each event was counted.

The most common themes were related to:

- Employment, including loss of job or inability to find work
- Health-related challenges, including illness or injury that prevented them from working, as well as related bills
- Family changes, including death of family member and separation from partner

Event type	Count
Multiple reasons	8
Employment	7
Health	7
Family change	6
Not enough money	5
Other	3
Drug addiction	1
Eviction	1
Total	**38**

Personal impact of homelessness

10 people answered a question on how homelessness affected them. 4 people focused on challenges (1 had resolved their homelessness). 5 people focused more on things they had learned (1 person had resolved their homelessness). 1 person spoke to both challenges and growth.

Challenges identified in response to this question included:

- bad weather
- no bathroom or shower
- health issues got worse
- addicted to living outside
- realize people look down on you
- things get stolen
- getting the "run around" from providers

Changes that reflect new understanding included:

- increased empathy
- more aware of world
- helped resolve personal issues
- increased understanding of self
- realized you need others to survive

Resources accessed

13 people indicated a wide variety of services and agencies accessed or attempted to access, including navigation, housing services, shelter, and drug-related programs. 2 persons (both not connected to services) indicated that they "haven't really tried." Sometimes resources were referred to generally, but specific programs were also mentioned.

Sacramento programs and providers mentioned

- 2-1-1
- Covered Sacramento
- Loaves & Fishes
- Sacramento Covered navigator
- Sacramento Self Help Housing
- Salvation Army
- Volunteers of America
- Union Gospel Mission
- Sacramento Housing & Redevelopment Agency (SHRA)
- Sacramento Native American Health Center (SNAHC)

Veteran programs mentioned

- Roads Home
- VASH vouchers
- Veterans advocate program

Other programs mentioned

- Section 8
- SSI

4

Housing Choice Vouchers

A little more than half (8 out of 14) indicated they had received Housing Choice Vouchers, 3 of whom reported that they received denials for vouchers or from apartments or landlords. An additional 2 people who did not receive Housing Choice Vouchers reported other housing-related denials. No reasons for denials were provided in response to this question, but related issues emerged for other questions, as captured elsewhere in this report.

Time to services

Of the 11 people who responded, 5 reported they were quick to get services ("immediate"/"daily"/"not long"). 2 people indicated months (1 of which was specific to housing), and 1 person indicated years (specific to housing). 1 person said it depends. 2 people said they had not yet received services.

Barriers to accessing services

11 out of 13 people indicated barriers to accessing services at some point in the interview. 2 people stated that they did not experience any barriers.

The most common barrier identified was transportation to appointments and/or to access services with 8 mentions, followed by health-related issues, and documentation issues.

Barriers identified	Count
Transportation	8
Health condition	4
Documentation	3
Hard to connect with providers	2
Men-only program	1
Locating housing	1
Politics	1
Long wait for housing/shelter	1
Drug use	1
Domestic Violence	1
Lack of opportunity	1
Lack of resources	1
Being a woman	1
Insurance changes	1

Reasons rejected or denied resources

Of the people who responded, half (6 out of 12) said they had been rejected or denied services. In some cases, details were provided.

- Person 2 was told that he was verbally abusive and an "angry black man" and doesn't meet the criteria because of his attitude.
- Person 5 said the Sheriff's Department denied her resources when they were around, and she noticed someone else of another race get vouchers, but she didn't receive any.
- 3 people mentioned that the call-back process is an issue, and some programs do not return calls.
- Person 14 said no call-backs leaves people feeling lost. In addition, she said "So many places have denied me along the way for having a voucher and some take advantage that you do in all type of ways – profiling, indecent behavior, or just not helping at all."

Alternatives that played a part in resolution of homelessness

Alternatives to the homeless-related services and programs were not cited by most. Person 2 indicated an alternative, which was making relationships with people who had housing. Persons 5 and 11 referenced jail-based programs.

Ability to meet basic needs

1 person not connected to services said they were not able to meet their needs. 3 people clearly stated that their needs were met. In total 12 people listed different ways they were able to meet at least some of their needs. In general, people spoke positively about the services available to meet their basic needs, but 2 people indicated it was difficult to meet their needs.

General ways meeting needs

- Resourcefulness
- Car sharing
- Doctor service
- Food closets
- Food/supplies delivery
- Navigator
- Shelter/housing
- Wellness center

Specific programs meeting needs

- Citrus Heights Food Closet
- Loaves & Fishes
- Maryhouse
- One Community Health
- Salvation Army
- Section 8
- SHRA

- SNAHC
- St Francis house
- VA health care
- Volunteers of America
- Roads Home

6

History of homelessness or other social or economic challenges related to race in family

The majority of the 8 people who responded did not indicate that there was a family history of homelessness or other family challenges related to race.

Of those who indicated there was a history, Person 2 indicated it was job-related ("you're not getting the job because you are a black guy with dreads"), and the Person 13 mentioned challenges of growing up in "the South."

History related to race	Count
No	6
Yes	2
Total	**8**

Is there a difference compared to other races in the factors that played a part in becoming homeless?

3 people indicated there was a difference.

- Person 1 said being black in America is hard. He doesn't blame his skin color, but he clarified that it does make it a little tougher.
- Person 10 said he gets rejected because of the way he looks.
- Person 13 said he has been "undercut" on construction jobs by other races who are willing to do the job cheaper.

Is there a difference compared to other races in applying for or accessing services?

A little more than half (8 out of 14) thought there was a difference by race in applying for and accessing services. Some people provided specific examples.

- Person 1 says sometimes people look to help certain other people faster than they help you. He feels that being black "puts you at the bottom of the totem pole."
- Person 2 said he was frustrated and upset that his word isn't taken at face value, he wants to be treated equally when requesting resources.
- Person 4 said "When I was at the river, Discovery, there were different services and groups come out; groups would have you write down your name and social and were going to call you. White females got calls and spoke highly of them; I couldn't get a call back. And, I was pregnant at the time. Yes, like I was saying early a couple of people swear by these services; there was a pastor that got hotel, people who got the help were white. Never saw anybody who wasn't get much help. Not until where I work now."
- Person 5 said it is not fair that the only time she has access to services is when she is being taken to jail.

- Person 6 mentioned being given a "not up to par" feeling by a particular provider who wound up not providing the sought-after service to him, but providing to two others.
- Person 7 did not think race was a factor and mentioned that because he used a phone line that may have helped since they didn't know what color he was.
- Person 12 said "It's a certain look…they're not hiding it."
- Person 13 said "Man I don't know why they hate us, what did we ever do?...I'm at this stand, grabbing coffee, he'll just look up and move away like I'm going to do something to him or something, that hurts more than anything." He says he is not a threat to anyone, and it is sad for him to go through things like that.
- Person 14 said "I see many pick-and-choose situations with races."

Were services denied or delayed due to labels such as "service resistant", "aggressive", "violent"?

Of the 11 people who answered the question, 4 said they were delayed or denied services due to labels more readily assigned to BIPOC individuals. Specific labels were mentioned by 3 people.

- Person 1 says he was called a "lazy son of a bitch" and told "it's just like you people."
- Person 2 despises the "angry black man" moniker that has been assigned to him in the past.
- Person 12 has been labeled "service resistant."

An additional person answered no, but said she had observed others get labelled as "aggressive" and "service resistant."

Person 4 said they had not been labelled, but is impacted by the possibility of being labelled. "I try to keep myself as calm as possible because I know this; I'm a black female and of course seen as aggressive especially coming off of drug addiction, coming off the river all stacked up against me, so I try to be as pleasant as possible.

What would a more racially just system look like?

All 14 people responded, with a general call for equal access and treatment echoed by almost all. In addition, there were a wide variety of other recommendations.

Changes

- Remove program limitations (e.g., one bag limit at shelter)
- Better leadership
- Learn more about people served
- Provide mailing addresses
- More mental health staff
- More communication
- More funding
- More housing
- Expand Roads Home program
- Allow more time in programs
- More promotion of programs

- More training for providers
- Equality
- Compassion
- Accept imperfections
- Challenge each other
- Individual role
- Stop killing each other
- God's judgment
- Accept authority

Person 1 wishes everyone would realize that we all bleed the same blood. We should be judged by the content of our character, not the color of our skin. We need to treat each other better instead of pulling each other down. They need to realize that we are all the same.

Person 2 says equality across the board is the start. Zero tolerance on both sides, both the provider and the participant. Organization leadership needs to set a proper example. The individual coming in for help needs to be open and put their biases aside as well. Funds, more money needs to be poured into this. This is a state of emergency and needs to be addressed as such.

Person 3 says God is the only one that can judge us. She wishes everyone would just get along because we are all children of God regardless of the race.

Person 4 says the professionals in the industry of helping along with education need some training with who they are dealing with. Every staff should have one person on staff for mental health, staff for drugs and alcohol and mental health for sure, it should be required. Need people who are compassionate or do understand that mindset. Need to know if there's mental issues. A training course once a month for the staff because they can be the breaking point for a person being homeless

9

Person 5 says equal access to services for all, color of skin shouldn't matter. Start handing out vouchers for everyone who is living on the street. Help those that want to be helped, shouldn't discriminate beyond that. Remove limitations, such as "you can only take one bag with you" Don't place time constraints for individuals, such as showering in 10 minutes, taking only one bag. Also, mailing addresses are needed and often times identification cards are stolen and other things like that.

Person 6 says people should just be treated as people. People who care and listed, showed compassion, understood the system are key to his/and everyone's success. Not everyone is "Cinderella." The attitudes of the employees of non-profits and legislators who are hired/and elected needs to change. They are there to serve the homeless population and he feels that they don't really follow through sometimes. When he was in the service, his job was to protect and serve the country. As a provider of services, they need to do the same. They need to care, that is paramount. You are in the public services to care and empathize with whatever your role entails that is what needs to happen.

Person 7 says if Roads Home could expand their services beyond veterans, it could be very helpful in getting more people off the street.

Person 8 says build more apartments and buildings. More funding to keep more homeless people off the street all the time.

Person 11 says try to love each other more. We got to stop killing each other before we worry about police killing us. As a whole, my race needs to take authority. We don't take authority that well, we don't like other people telling us what to do, that's what we have to get past, until we can do that, then nothing will change. Everyone's perception has to change and in order to do that, we have to look out for each other more. It falls back on that four-letter word, love.

Person 12 says a just system has no barriers holding specific races back. We should be challenging each other on how to better ourselves, society, and the world. We should come together as one, get back into the lawbooks to represent the people as one.

Person 13 says help everyone and everyone get along. Be more communicative, learn about people, don't go about old sayings and what you were you were taught in your household. Things have changed, and I hope so, we're not bad people man, we just need a break like everybody else. Everyone needs to learn how to let it flow and be good human beings. Equality is the goal, doesn't believe it'll happen in his lifetime, but he mentioned that even a little bit of change in his lifetime would be positive.

Person 14 says the reach out should be genuine to where it doesn't matter what race you are but based on the situation you are in and the desire to get out of your situation.

Draft Action Plan: Findings and Recommendations from the CoC Racial Equity Committee

June 16, 2021

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STEPS FORWARD

Vision

Uncover the scope, causes, and potential solutions of race serving as a predictor for homelessness in Sacramento.

The **20-member committee** is comprised primarily of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), many with lived experience of homelessness.

The committee is tasked with developing an action plan to guide the decision-making process of the CoC Board over the next three to five years. This plan will be fully informed by BIPOC with lived experience of homelessness, as well as input and recommendations from stakeholders, studies, pilots, local systems evaluations, and the learnings of other communities.

The ultimate vision is to create an equitable, accountable, and transparent homelessness system that catalyzes structural change both inside and outside of our current sphere of influence.

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Process

- Racial Equity Committee (REQC) Approval, Recruitment, and Formation
- Subcommittee as Working Group
- Activities and Inputs:
  - REQ 3-Part Training Series
  - BIPOC Interviews
  - Listening Sessions with Other Communities
  - Stakeholder Forum
  - Annual CoC Meeting
  - Presentations on System Performance
    - Local Race and Ethnicity Data
    - VI-SPDAT
    - Coordinated Entry
    - Gaps Analysis
  - Presentations on Best Practices
    - Native American
    - Latinx Intersectionality
    - BIPOC with Disabilities

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Racial Equity Committee

Findings

- The REQC was established in November 2020 to develop an action plan for the CoC board's consideration.
- The initial REQC commitment extended through July 2021 for members and staff.
- The REQC has become a valuable resource in the community, serving to give voice to BIPOC with lived experience of homelessness, to provide input on matters beyond the action plan, to foster trust and accountability, and to raise questions, concerns, and solutions in a brave space.
- Its members believe that an equitable homelessness response system in Sacramento is more likely to be achieved with an extended commitment to dedicated racial equity work.

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Recommendations

Secure funding to staff the REQC, supporting the members with committee logistics as well as meeting the liaison, training, and advocacy needs of the committee with other organizations in the community.

Expand the term of the REQC as a standing committee of the CoC Board, which would primarily provide support for implementation of the action plan and the racial equity work of the other committees.

Incorporate racial equity goals and tools into each of the CoC Board's committees when they develop their annual work plans. Have the REQC advise on the development and implementation of these goals and tools.

Data with a Racial Equity Lens

Findings

- The vast majority of our data is quantitative.
- Quantitative categories do not always capture true identities or make all communities visible. This is particularly true of those that are not community-defined, as is the case for our HUD-designated racial and ethnic categories.
- Data is generally most useful and actionable when it is disaggregated. Disaggregation can be challenging when there are small numbers of a subpopulation.
- Qualitative data can provide meaningful context to understanding quantitative data.
- Racial inequities can be compounded by other demographic factors such as disability, gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation, creating a multiplier effect.
- Outside of the official HUD definition of homelessness, there are many who are housing insecure and ineligible for services.

Recommendations

To include a clearer picture of the BIPOC homelessness experience:

- Explore intersectionality data to understand multiplier effects of demographics outside of race and targeted universalism solutions
- Collect, analyze, and report qualitative data when exploring issues related to equity.
  - *Note: qualitative data report summarizing REQC interviews in production for June 2021 REQC review.*

To make data on racial equity more meaningful:

- Provide contextual information prepared with REQC input when presenting quantitative data.
  - *Note: Contextual information for REQC website prepared and reviewed by REQC in May 2021.*
- Disaggregate data on race/ethnicity identity as much as possible when presented.
  - *Note: Disaggregated information for REQC website prepared and reviewed by REQC in May 2021.*
- Develop and provide input to HUD on mandated race and ethnicity data process.
  - Explore opportunity to collaborate with other CoCs.
- If HUD presents an opportunity for community input on the definition of homelessness, advocate for a broader definition.

To incorporate more BIPOC voices :

- Discuss racial equity data initiatives with the REQC and other racial equity advocates to get input on key aspects such as data definitions, data collection, analysis, and findings.
- Work with the REQC to identify racial equity key performance measures.

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Training and Education/ Normalizing Conversations
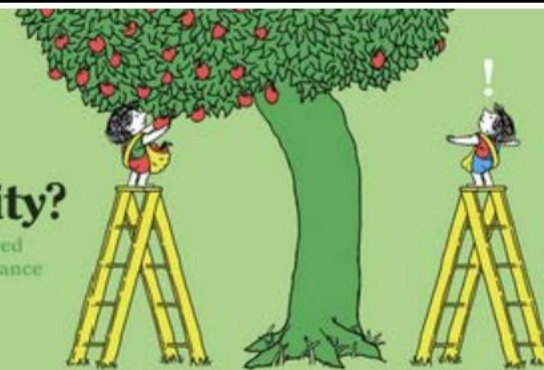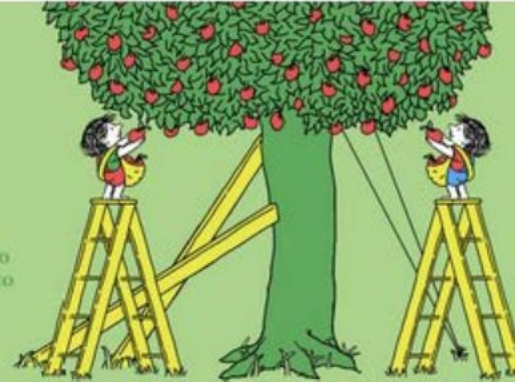
Findings

- The community will participate in workshops, educational presentations, trainings, and courageous conversations when those opportunities are offered. There is strong interest in learning the context for racial disparities in homelessness, as well as how to take personal and organizational action.
- Some community members have requested that providers receive training in Housing First principles and good communication skills, as well as training on the unique history, needs, and best or promising practices for specific racial and ethnic populations that are little understood in relation to homelessness services.
- There is a continuum of expertise within the local community, with some members newly entering these conversations and others who have significant depth of understanding.
- Bringing CoC board members, providers, volunteers, and other members of the CoC community together to learn about and openly discuss the challenges that BIPOC face demonstrates leadership and fosters trust and collaboration.

Recommendations

Provide ongoing training and educational opportunities that are free and open to the entire community. The trainings should be determined by the needs that are demonstrated and expressed to better understand and promote racial equity.

Adapt the national Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) Standards to provide guidance to the homelessness sector, and provide training on how to implement the standards.

Draw on local and national expertise to provide this education, uplifting the experience and voice of BIPOC with lived experience of homelessness in the process.

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Staff and Leadership Diversity

CoC Board Members

Erin Johansen
Chair

Executive Director,
Hope Cooperative

Representing: Mental
Health

Angela Upshaw
Vice Chair

Associate Director of
Programs, Berkeley
Food & Housing
Project

Representing: Veterans

Pixie Pearl
Secretary

California Homeless
Youth Project

Representing: Transition-
Age Youth, LGBTQ
Community

Learn about the CoC Board Members **here.**

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Findings

- While many of the organizations and institutions that comprise the CoC have line staff that reflect the racial and ethnic demographics of Sacramento's population experiencing homelessness, there is less diversity at the leadership level.
- It is often the leadership within these organizations and institutions that are recruited to the CoC board because of their authority and influence.
- As such, the CoC board does not reflect the community's racial and ethnic diversity.

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Recommendations

Among Sacramento's homelessness service providers, encourage social equity -- intentionally hiring management level individuals with lived experience.

When recruiting for the CoC Board and committees, replicate the process of recruitment for the REQC, intentionally seeking overrepresentation of BIPOC, especially those with lived experience.

Explicitly offer stipends for participation for board and committee members with lived experience.

Assessment and Prioritization

Findings

- Version 1 of the VI-SPDAT has been criticized for not properly scoring BIPOC, under-prioritizing them for services.
- Some communities have modified their assessment and prioritization process to account for communities that have experienced gentrification and displacement and/or a history of redlining.
- Many individuals in Sacramento wait for long periods of time in the Coordinated Entry process after their VI-SPDAT data is gathered.
- There is the potential for real and perceived bias on the part of anyone involved in the assessment process.
- There is also the potential for the person being assessed to feel uncomfortable with those involved in the process based on their demographics and lived experience.

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Recommendations

In order to address/prevent potential issues with the VI-SPDAT tool:
- Use a more recent version of the tool.
  - *Note*: *Switched from version 1 to version 2 in February 2021*.
- Involve the REQ Committee in any other planned changes to the Coordinated Entry assessment process before implementation.
- Explore alternative tools and methodologies for potential future use.

In order to better support individuals experiencing homelessness:
- Continue to improve the Coordinated Entry process, so that people do not wait for long periods of time after data is gathered from VI-SPDAT.

In order to address/prevent potential assessment administrator bias:
- Educate those who conduct needs assessments about racial disparities in housing and homelessness.
  - Advocate for racial equity training for anyone who administers an assessment.
  - Define how organizations can meet the requirement .
- Collect race/ethnicity data about those who give tests to understand to what degree administrators represent population they serve.
  - Administer survey or ask organizations to provide information.

Language Access

Findings

- Because the VI-SPDAT is only offered in English, individuals and families without English as their Native language are at a disadvantage from accessing entry, assessment, resources, and housing at an equitable level.
- While there has been a transition from discouraging translation to allowing bilingual service providers to translate, this adjustment is recent, not widespread knowledge, and leaves a heavy burden on those bilingual service providers to adequately understand, interpret, and translate complex assessment tools.
- With the exception of the consent form, vital documents necessary to navigate successfully through the HMIS process are not translated into languages other than English.

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Recommendations

VI-SPDAT Risk Assessment
- Create and provide access to the assessment in multiple languages
- Train service providers on how to access and deliver assessment

Vital Documents
- Consent Form
- Train service providers on navigating access to translated form
  - Additional Documents (e.g., third party verification, self-certification, disability certification, program information, practices and policies)
  - Translate all necessary information and documentation into multiple languages
  - Ensure that all newly implemented tools and documents are offered in multiple languages

Funding for free and ongoing access to realtime translation and interpreting services for providers and programs without bilingual and multilingual staff.

Assess all documents that are provided to clients for readability; as necessary, re-create them to read at a 4th-5th grade level.

Equitable Funding

Findings

- Small, BIPOC-led organizations are at a disadvantage in the NOFA and other competitions for contracts and grants due to infrastructure challenges such as lack of board training and development, liability insurance and other requirements, internal HR processes and procedures, and prior large-scale contract or grant management.
- Small organizations are burdened with data collection, preventing them from playing to their strengths: direct service provision.
- Competition between service providers stifles collaboration, innovation, and new funding streams.
- There is community concern that legacy projects are not effective enough and continually funding them without thorough evaluation of their impact impedes the funding of other projects that may be more effective.

Recommendations

Explore developing the capacity of small, BIPOC-led organizations by offering cohort and individual training and technical assistance annually, in preparation for competitive procurement and successful implementation of the NOFA and other opportunities to diversify Sacramento's network of homelessness providers. Explore paying existing BIPOC-led providers to provide the training and technical assistance as peer mentors.

Incentivize larger organizations to partner with small, BIPOC-led organizations that have a longstanding history of working in the community by providing preference to their funding applications when such partnerships are in place or by requiring complementary collaboration.

Evaluate current funded projects for effectiveness with BIPOC populations.

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Partnerships

You are on Native Land

Sacramento Tribal areas consist of:
- Nisenan
- Foothills and Southern Madiu
- Valley Miwok
- Wilton Miwok
- Me-Wuk people

South of the Sacramento River, are the
- Patwin
- Wintun
- Wintu

SNAHC
Sacramento Native American Health Center

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Findings

- Federally recognized tribes have the authority to create their own CoCs. There is one federally recognized tribe in the Sacramento area, Wilton Rancheria.
- There are many organizations and institutions that provide preventative or supporting services to individuals and families facing homelessness who are not connected to or knowledgeable of the CoC.
- The disproportionate numbers of BIPOC in institutions and systems that are further upstream contribute to the racial inequity found in homelessness. Unsupported exits from the foster care, juvenile and adult incarceration, education, and health care systems increase the likelihood of experiencing homelessness.
- Youth homelessness strongly predicts adult homelessness.

Recommendations

Offer formal support and allyship to Wilton Rancheria in the creation and sustainability of a CoC.

Conduct outreach into the community to develop a more comprehensive database of organizations and institutions that could aid the efforts of the CoC. Include these potential partners in communications about funding opportunities, board and committee meetings and openings for membership, forums, trainings, and other engagement that will strengthen case management/case conferencing, housing development and placement, HMIS utilization, and collaborative program design.

Establish a workgroup to learn from other communities that have established data-sharing agreements among multiple systems and provide case management prior to anticipated exits from overrepresented BIPOC systems, to determine the feasibility of replicating this type of transition coordination in Sacramento.

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Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

Findings

- Not all providers use HMIS, and among those that do, data quality varies - although there is widespread agreement that having a single database or integrated platform would enable better system performance.
- HMIS is considered by some to be too burdensome for data entry and too complicated to navigate.
- Some volunteers of BIPOC-led and BIPOC-serving organizations that are not currently CoC-funded have specifically requested that they be trained to enter data into HMIS.

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Recommendations

Convene leaders and database administrators to discuss opportunities to standardize data collection and reporting, reduce duplicative data entry across systems, and explore potential for future data sharing (*Source: Gaps Analysis*).

Consider funding a diverse team of resource specialists to provide intensive hands-on coaching with current and potential HMIS users to increase their comfort and success with inputting and accessing HMIS data.

Individuals who are serving as volunteers or staff for BIPOC-led and BIPOC-serving organizations should specifically be outreached to receive this HMIS support.

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Questions or Comments?

Please email tgreen@sacstepsforward.org

Emergency Housing Vouchers

CoC Racial Equity Committee Meeting - June 16, 2021

Michele Watts, Chief Planning Officer

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HUD Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHV)

The American Rescue Plan appropriated $5 billion for:
- HCVs targeted to a specific population that will allow individuals and families to choose and lease safe, decent, and affordable housing;
- 70,000 vouchers allocated to 700 Public Housing Agencies (PHAs)
- Sacramento's allocation is 484 EHVs

Eligible Populations

EHVs eligibility is limited to individuals and families who are:

- Homeless;
- At-risk of homelessness;
- Fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking; and
- Recently homeless and for whom providing rental assistance will prevent the family's homelessness or having high risk of housing instability.

For detailed definitions click the link here starting on page 17.

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CoC Partnership

Required partnerships with the Continuum of Care (CoC) and other organizations for direct referrals and services:

- PHAs must work with community partners to determine the best use and targeting for EHVs along with other resources available in the community.
- PHAs must enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with their community's CoC to establish a partnership for the administration of the EHVs.
- All referrals for EHVs must come through the CoC's Coordinated Entry (CE) System or from a Victims Services Provider
- CoCs are responsible for determining whether the family qualifies under one of the four eligibility categories for EHVs.

Key Questions

- Who are we missing?
- Is there any group being prioritized that shouldn't be?
- Are there other prioritization factors we should consider?

Prioritization Targeting within Eligible Categories

- Homeless eligibility category
  - Chronically homeless
- At-Risk eligibility category
  - seniors
- Survivors system eligibility category
- Recently homeless eligibility category
  - Move-On

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Prioritization Factors across Eligible Categories*

- ○
- No or very low income
- Potential indicators of limited income growth
  - ○ disability
  - ○ other indicators?
- History of homelessness (HMIS, other sources?)
- Employment history
- Evictions history
- Does not require long-term supportive services (or Is receiving sufficient supportive services to meet needs)

* except for chronically homeless and move-on targeting

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Prioritization Factors for Chronically Homeless & Move-On

- Chronically homeless
    - current CES COVID-19 prioritization
    - supportive services provider attached
- Move-On
    - PSH program participants that have stabilized and no longer need supportive services

Key Questions

- Who are we missing?
- Is there any group being prioritized that shouldn't be?
- Are there other prioritization factors we should consider?

Next Steps

- Finalize proposed prioritization based on input received
- Present to CoC Coordinated Entry System Committee for approval (special meeting, week of June 21st)
- Present to CoC Board for approval (special meeting, week of June 28th)
- Begin referrals in early July

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EHV Key Dates

- May 5, 2021: EHV Operations Notice published by HUD
- May 10, 2021: EHV Allocation Announced
- May 24, 2021: PHAs inform HUD on # of vouchers the PHA will accept
- July 1, 2021: Annual Contribution Contract Effective Date for all EHVs
- No later than July 31, 2021: PHA and CoC must enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
- EHVs sunset – After 9/30/23, PHAs may not reissue turnover vouchers. An EHV that has never been issued may be initially issued and leased after 9/30/23.

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