

Towards Accountability & Transparency: Hearing on the Budget & Appropriations Committee's 2021-2023 Spending Plan



HESPA: Our Purpose & Work in the Community

- The Homeless Emergency Service Providers Association (HESPA) is a coalition of 30 community-based agencies with deep roots in unhoused communities.



- HESPA lifts up the needs of unhoused people with a collective voice, with the goal of increasing resources and improving systems that help people exit homelessness.
- HESPA's budget advocacy has resulted in multi-year investments in housing and emergency services that have helped nearly 2400 households exit homelessness since 2012.

HESPA agencies interconnect to operate life-saving programs in the City's homeless response system.

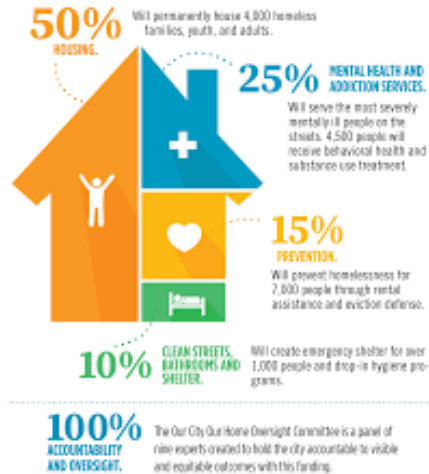
We Have An Opportunity to Act Now

- Deaths among unhoused people have surged during the pandemic.
- People are growing older and sicker on the streets and in their vehicles.
- COVID-19 has exacerbated an overdose epidemic, with record numbers of accidental deaths.



City departments MUST act with urgency to provide housing and life-saving services for vulnerable San Franciscans, particularly given unprecedented recent investments in housing, employment, and behavioral health.

The Status of the Prop C Spending Plan



- The Budget & Appropriations Committee’s 2021-2023 spending plan made unprecedented and urgently needed investments in housing and services for unhoused adults, youth, and families.
- Almost halfway through this fiscal year, **essential funds have not yet been released**. Funds appropriated last fiscal year remain unspent.

Funds MUST be released NOW to meet the crisis in the streets. We can get people off the streets and into housing NOW. We need to get folks on the streets inside!

The Need for Accountability & Responsibility

- **HOUSING**

- We have 800+ vacancies in supportive housing, 600+ units to acquire for families and youth, and **tens of millions** in subsidies to release for the flexible housing subsidy pool.

- **SHELTER**

- We have closed adult shelters to self-referral; we have nearly 100 families on the shelter waitlist, and hundreds of thousands in hotel vouchers have not yet been released.

- **BEHAVIORAL HEALTH**

- We have **waitlists** to get into treatment; we have **tens of millions of unspent funds** for treatment beds; and we have crisis response teams that cannot connect people to beds if we don't have beds.

- **PREVENTION**

- We have **tens of millions** for prevention, problem-solving, and workforce supports; there is no clear plan for how and when funds will be released; and access points are running out of money.

A View from the Streets: Shelter Access

- Prop C added 1,000 shelter beds, including a variety of alternative shelter interventions such as safe sleep sites, safe parking sites (the Candlestick safe parking program is in active procurement), trailers, and navigation centers.
 - **Yet there is no way for folks on the streets to access most beds. Access is institutional—centralized within HSOC, SFGH, and HOT.**
- Prop C also expanded shelter for families and youth: it funded a family shelter operating at the Oasis Inn (and 15 additional emergency beds for 14-day stays) and a navigation center for young people.
 - **Yet shelter beds have been full, and vouchers for overflow rooms have not been released. There are nearly 100 families on the shelter waitlist.**

A View from the Streets: Housing Access

- Prop C and City General Funds have provided permanent rental assistance for more than 1,075 adults, families, and youth.
 - **The Bayview flexible housing subsidy pool is in active procurement, but none of the other permanent housing subsidies have been released.**
- Prop C and City General Funds will provide 1,187 units of supportive housing for adults, families, and youth.
 - **So far, five buildings with 575 units have been acquired—but only 40 units for families (out of 350-450) and 77 for youth (out of 225).**
- Due to pandemic prioritization of SIP hotel residents, folks on the streets do not have priority for housing, and there are 800+ vacancies in existing PSH.

A View from the Streets: Behavioral Health

- Street-based teams have been rolled out, including SCRTs (Street Crisis Response Teams), SORTs (Street Overdose Response Teams), and street medicine support.
 - **But only 101 beds are open (out of 399). Of those, 31 are out-of-county locked beds - the most expensive, ineffective intervention for the fewest number of people.**
- The City's budget for this fiscal year and last allocated \$82.8 million for acquisitions for behavioral health beds and treatment.
 - **None of this funding has been released, and no plan has been presented for making acquisitions or releasing funds.**
- Other system improvements, such as expansion of case management, care coordination, and pharmacy expansions, are in progress.

A View from the Streets: Prevention

- Prop C funded \$20 million for targeted prevention and problem-solving but there is no coordinated plan for releasing funds.
 - **Family providers increased problem-solving success rate from 3% to 15% by increasing the amount of financial assistance available, but total contract amounts remained flat. Addition through subtraction is still subtraction.**
 - **No plan has been presented to pilot a direct cash transfer program for youth.**
- Without a broad release of funds across community programs, access points and prevention programs will not be able to keep up with the demand.
 - **Problem-solving is the major intervention for unhoused people who are not prioritized for housing, and direct cash transfer is an exciting new intervention. We must release the funding to maximize its effectiveness.**

What's at Stake for San Francisco



- We asked for more resources - and SF voters responded with a resounding Yes on C.
- We have a historic investment plan, and we must act now—every day, every delay, lives are at stake.
- SF voters invested in our homeless response system so we could make real progress in reducing homelessness.
- **Bottom line:** If we fail to seize this opportunity - we may never have a second chance or another Prop C.
- Accountability means doing better, acting bolder and thinking bigger. Nearly 400K San Franciscans applied for UI benefits in an 18-month period. Tens of thousands of SF renters face eviction.
- The crisis is real. The responsibility is ours. The moral obligation is ours. The time to act is NOW.

We cannot lose public confidence in progressive solutions to the homelessness crisis.

Thank You & Questions

