



Resolving
Homelessness
Together

Learn the Lingo

Are you ready to better understand homelessness and the solutions available for our unhoused friends and neighbors?

We've got you covered.



BASICS

Homelessness

Santa Cruz County is a community experiencing homelessness and we talk about it a lot. So, let's make sure we're all on the same page about what it means.

Homelessness means, at its most basic level, being without a home; however, it's a bit more nuanced than that. It's really the experience of lacking fixed, regular, and — here's the key — adequate housing. A Cabrillo College student sleeping in their car is homeless, just like the Desert Storm veteran camping in the woods. Two hard-working Pajaro Valley families living in a one-bedroom apartment are homeless, just like a former foster youth who lives in an urban encampment. The local artist who fled domestic violence and is staying at their sister's house is homeless, just like the hospitality worker who got their hours cut and sleeps at Seabright beach.

Shelter does not equal housing.

People staying in shelters are still homeless.

Shelters are temporary. Housing is permanent.

Homelessness is as diverse as the people living in our community. At Housing Matters we believe everyone deserves a permanent, stable place of their own to call home.

Housing First

Housing First is a national best practice for ending homelessness, prioritizing housing over everything else. People in permanent housing can more effectively attend to matters of job training, substance abuse, behavioral health, and more. Housing Matters practices Housing First; housing is a foundation from which to tackle all life's other challenges.

HOUSING

Transitional Housing

Transitional housing is temporary housing for people that allows households to work on overcoming barriers they face in attaining permanent housing, such as saving money, building credit or rental history, and establishing a support network. Along with shared housing, transitional housing participants also receive support services to help them address the issues that may have led to homelessness in the first place. Transitional housing residents often pay a portion of their income toward rent.



Permanent Supportive Housing

Permanent supportive housing, or PSH, combines affordable housing with support services to people who need support — without a time limit — in order to maintain their housing. Participants in PSH often struggle with physical disabilities or issues of behavioral health that affect their ability to live independently. PSH often includes access to on-site services.

Rapid Re-housing

Rapid re-housing is for people who don't need long-term support to get back into permanent housing. For example, some employed individuals have limited cash resources. Sometimes, we may just need to pay their security deposit and other move-in costs while they take over paying their rent. The goals of rapid re-housing are to help people get permanent housing and to maintain long-term self-sufficiency.

SERVICES

Case Management

Case Managers are the dedicated, hands-on coaches who help clients resolve their homelessness. Case Managers partner with their clients to understand and solve the barriers they face in getting housing. Case Managers are problem solvers who know the nuances of social services and housing in Santa Cruz County, and ensure clients are connected to all the services they need. They help clients find better jobs and be better tenants. They even support landlords.

Housing Navigators

Housing Navigators are specialists who source housing opportunities throughout Santa Cruz County. While Case Managers work with clients on a holistic level, Housing Navigators specialize in the housing market.



Housing navigation is the service of helping someone through the process of finding housing. It includes helping a client identify and overcome any barriers to housing they may have, and then working hand-in-hand with clients and landlords to find a permanent housing solution for the client.

Supportive Services

Supportive Services is a catch-all term for any service that may help an unhoused person or family with their transition from homelessness into permanent housing. This can include goal setting, counseling, contacting landlords, rental subsidies, and connecting households to other resources. Supportive services can also help people retain their housing, if needed.

Navigation Center

Navigation centers are one-stop-shops for someone experiencing homelessness. People can find shelter and access the supportive services they need to get back on their feet. Housing Matters already acts like an early-stage navigation center, with shelter and supportive services on campus.

Bednight

A bednight is one person in one bed for one night. Housing Matters provides more than 63,000 bednights each year.

Shelter

Shelter is a temporary place to sleep indoors. It is a stepping stone along the path to find permanent housing. Those living in shelters are still unhoused.



A shelter is a calm, stable place for someone to begin the journey to find permanent housing. At Housing Matters, we operate all our shelters as pathways to housing. All our shelter residents must be working on a housing plan. We welcome them with open arms and celebrate the day they leave us for a place of their own.

Shelter residents live in shared spaces. At Housing Matters, we offer bedroom suites with shared common areas and bunk beds in a dormitory-style room.

Diversion

Diversion is helping an unhoused person avoid a formal shelter program by exploring housing options that they haven't tried yet. Commonly, that's staying with a family member or friend here in Santa Cruz County and beyond. We offer diversion programs that provide services and financial assistance so an unhoused person return to permanent housing.

Coordinated Entry and SmartPath

Agencies in Santa Cruz County that work with people experiencing homelessness use a common assessment and centralized database, called coordinated entry. A person is connected with the right services no matter where, how, or with whom they first made contact. As a result, clients get focused, prioritized, and efficient help without bouncing from agency to agency. SmartPath is the name of our county's coordinated entry system.

Day Services

At Housing Matters, we offer drop-in showers, restrooms, and mail services to the general public. We host a dental clinic, a medical clinic, support groups, and more on our two-acre campus. When someone drops in for a shower we have an opportunity to say hello and we're always available to have a conversation with them about getting permanent housing.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Chronically Homeless

The term chronically homeless is used to describe people who have experienced homelessness many times, or for at least a year. They also struggle with a disabling condition that affects their ability to get or retain housing.

Transition-Age Youth

Transition-Age Youth are young adults between the ages of 18 and 24.

Families

At Housing Matters, a family is any household with an adult and a dependent minor.