



JOINT MEDIA ADVISORY

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Alameda County Partners Create 'Racial Equity Strategy' to End Homelessness

By prioritizing racial equity, new report says \$824 million will dramatically reduce homelessness in Alameda County over three years

Oakland, CA -- A new report that prioritizes racial equity as the key framework to reduce homelessness says Alameda County could see a dramatic reduction in all homelessness in just three years with an \$824 million investment.

The report, "[Centering Racial Equity in Homeless System Design](#)," was created by a consortium of Alameda County homelessness advocates, policy experts, and service providers, and published by EveryOne Home, Alameda County's collective impact initiative to end homelessness.

The key findings show that if actions are intentionally designed to prevent Black and Native American residents from falling into homelessness, then dramatic reductions in all homelessness countywide can be made. Black and Native American residents are disproportionately represented in Alameda County's homeless population at a rate four times higher than in the general population, the report said.

"Our quantitative and qualitative research demonstrates that structural racism is at the root of poverty and housing insecurity. The systemic causes of homelessness exceedingly affect Black and Native Americans and these citizens are disproportionately impacted," said Chelsea Andrews, Executive Director of EveryOne Home.

"With this research in hand, we came together as a community to develop a groundbreaking model of how Continuums of Care can act intentionally to create a system that is equitable. The strategies, programs, and pathways we developed will ensure that disparities are not perpetuated and that the needs of all citizens of Alameda County are reflected."

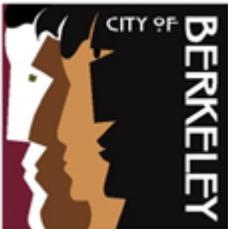
The report also sketched out an estimate for how much it would cost to overhaul today's status-quo response to homelessness and design a new system that prioritizes racial equity and prevents homelessness from occurring in the first place. That estimate, \$824 million, would be enough to dramatically reduce all homelessness within three years and bring it to "functional zero" — the capability of responding and solving homelessness as it happens — within five years.

"We applaud EveryOne Home, Alameda County, City of Oakland, and City of Berkeley for announcing the final report on Centering Racial Equity in Homeless System Design," said Jemine Bryon, HUD's Deputy Assistant Secretary for Special Needs Assistance Programs. "Know that HUD is working alongside of you to ensure that we continue to prevent and end homelessness equitably for all. We thank you for your commitment to making homelessness rare, brief and one time."

The report's authors say the overhaul is necessary to address the key driver of systemic homelessness: systemic racism. The County's Office of Homeless Care and Coordination



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has already taken steps to begin implementing the recommendations, allocating new resources in a targeted manner to reverse the impacts of structural racism.

“To end homelessness, we must end the systems that perpetuate it, and those begin with structural and systemic racism,” said Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf, who co-chaired the body that created the report. “This report provides a clear path forward to undo those injustices, and make an immediate impact right now and for the long-term.”

The City of Oakland recently announced the results from a report on [Keep Oakland Housed](#), a unique prevention model that stopped 5,000 households from falling into homeless in the last two years.

Some of the initial recommendations to begin systemic overhaul include from EveryOne Home’s report:

- Create homelessness prevention and re-housing supports that are ongoing (rather than time limited or one time) to close racial disparities in returns to homelessness.
- Link housing supports to extremely low incomes (rather than requiring a disability) to address the economic barriers that disproportionately impact homeless people of color.
- Create housing for formerly homeless people throughout Alameda County to strengthen existing social and economic supports.
- Create housing options with very low or no support services in recognition that people who have been homeless and are low income can live independently.

The report’s analysis also finds Alameda County and its cities are in a strong position to capitalize on emerging opportunities for homelessness funding at the state and federal levels, demonstrating a clear local blueprint for using those funds in the most effective way, the authors say. The report complements the [All Home Regional Action Plan](#), released earlier this month, by demonstrating the appropriate balance of homelessness prevention, shelter, and housing resources needed in Alameda County

“As Alameda County works towards ending homelessness, let us ensure that everyone has the opportunity to live a healthy life, taking into account all of their needs,” said Board Supervisor Keith Carson. “In order to make a significant change in outcomes, we must acknowledge that an overwhelming number of Black, brown and people of color are homeless. With this important lens, Alameda County is prioritizing investments to improve our systems and ultimately bend the curve on homelessness.”

“The findings in this report can further inform the Home Together plan our board adopted in July 2020, setting the strategic framework to guide County investments toward ending homelessness,” said Colleen Chawla, Agency Director, Alameda County Health Care Services Agency, who co-chaired the effort. “Our homelessness crisis cannot be solved by one entity alone. We look forward to moving the unprecedented collaboration forward from report findings to the development of shared resources needed to address racial inequities in Alameda County’s homelessness system.”

Roughly 8,000 residents experience homelessness in Alameda County on a given night, and 44% are Black and 4% Native American residents. In Oakland, the County’s largest city, an

estimated 70 percent of those experiencing homelessness are Black, according to the Point in Time Count from 2019.

But the numbers of residents who become homeless are expected to increase unless intentional actions are taken to redesign Alameda County's response to homelessness, the EveryOne Home report found.

Berkeley Mayor Jesse Arreguin emphasized that, "Centuries of systemic racism have led to people of color experiencing homelessness at a significantly higher rate than whites. Addressing homelessness must be done through a racial equity lens as the recent work completed by EveryOne Home has confirmed. Lifting up the most vulnerable members of our society will help those who are homeless today and those that could be homeless tomorrow."

A link to the report can be found here: <https://everyonehome.org/centering-racial-equity/>

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