

Alameda County Homelessness Prevention Framework



CoC Community Meeting Presentation | April 24, 2024

Agenda

- Background and Context
- Existing Programs
- Components of a Coordinated Prevention Response
- Objectives, Strategies and Critical Action Steps
- Investment and Infrastructure Needs
- Conclusion

Purpose and Goals

“The human cost of continued widespread homelessness, and the vast racial disparities among those most impacted, are not acceptable. These challenges require us to unify and to build an aligned response system.”

-Home Together 2026 Community Plan



Home Together 2026 Community Plan



1 Prevent homelessness for our residents

1. Address racial disparities in mainstream/upstream systems to prevent racially disproportionate inflow into homelessness
2. Focus resources for prevention on people most likely to lose their homes
3. Rapidly resolve episodes of homelessness through Housing Problem Solving
4. Prevent racially disproportionate returns to homelessness

2 Connect people to shelter and needed resources

1. Expand access in key neighborhoods and continue improvements to Coordinated Entry
2. Lower programmatic barriers to crisis services such as prevention, problem solving, and shelter
3. Prevent discharge from mainstream systems to homelessness
4. Significantly increase the availability of shelter, especially non-congregate models, to serve vulnerable adults and families with children and to reduce unsheltered homelessness
5. Provide accessible behavioral health services to people with serious mental illness or substance use needs and who are unsheltered, in shelter, or in supportive housing programs



3 Increase housing solutions

1. Add units and subsidies for supportive housing, including new models for frail/older adults
2. Create dedicated affordable housing subsidies for people who do not need intensive services
3. Create shallow subsidies for those who can exit or avoid homelessness with more limited assistance
4. Add new slots of rapid rehousing for those who can pay full rent over time
5. Ensure new housing funding is distributed across the county according to need
6. Reduce entry barriers to housing and ensure racial equity in referrals and placements

4 Strengthen coordination, communication and capacity

1. Use data to improve outcomes and track racial equity impacts
2. Improve messaging and information availability
3. Build infrastructure to support and monitor new and expanded programs

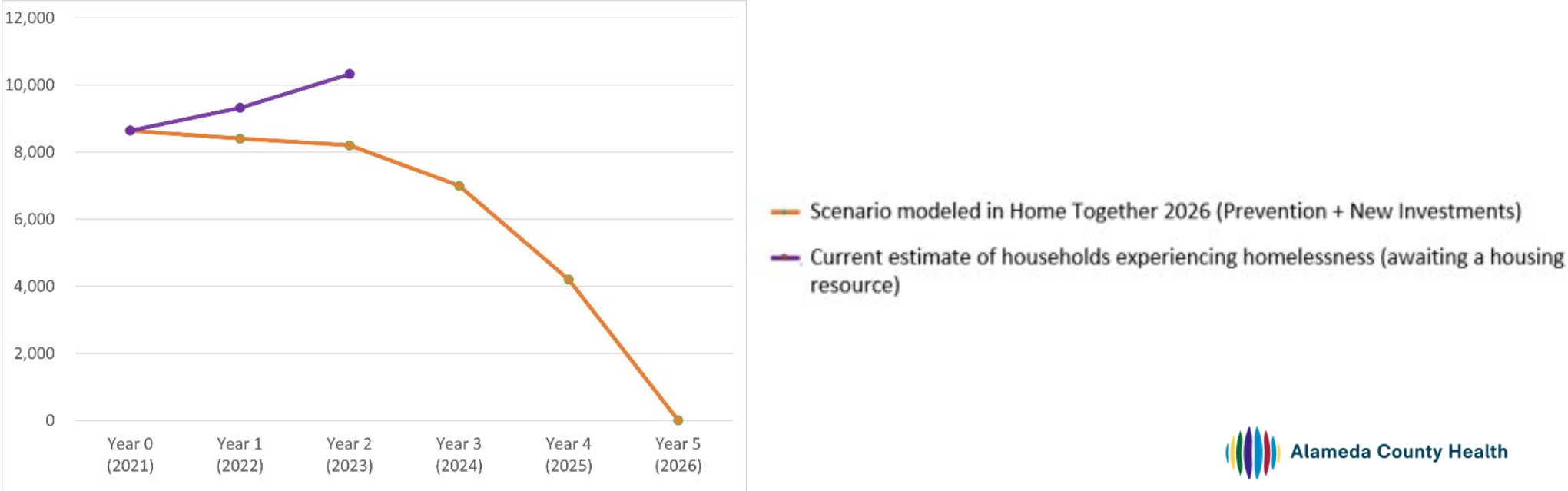
Without addressing the impact of racism in our society, homelessness will continue to disproportionately impact African Americans and other people of color. Creating a mix of housing and services in order to reduce these enormous racial disparities is a major focus of this Plan.

Home Together Progress Update

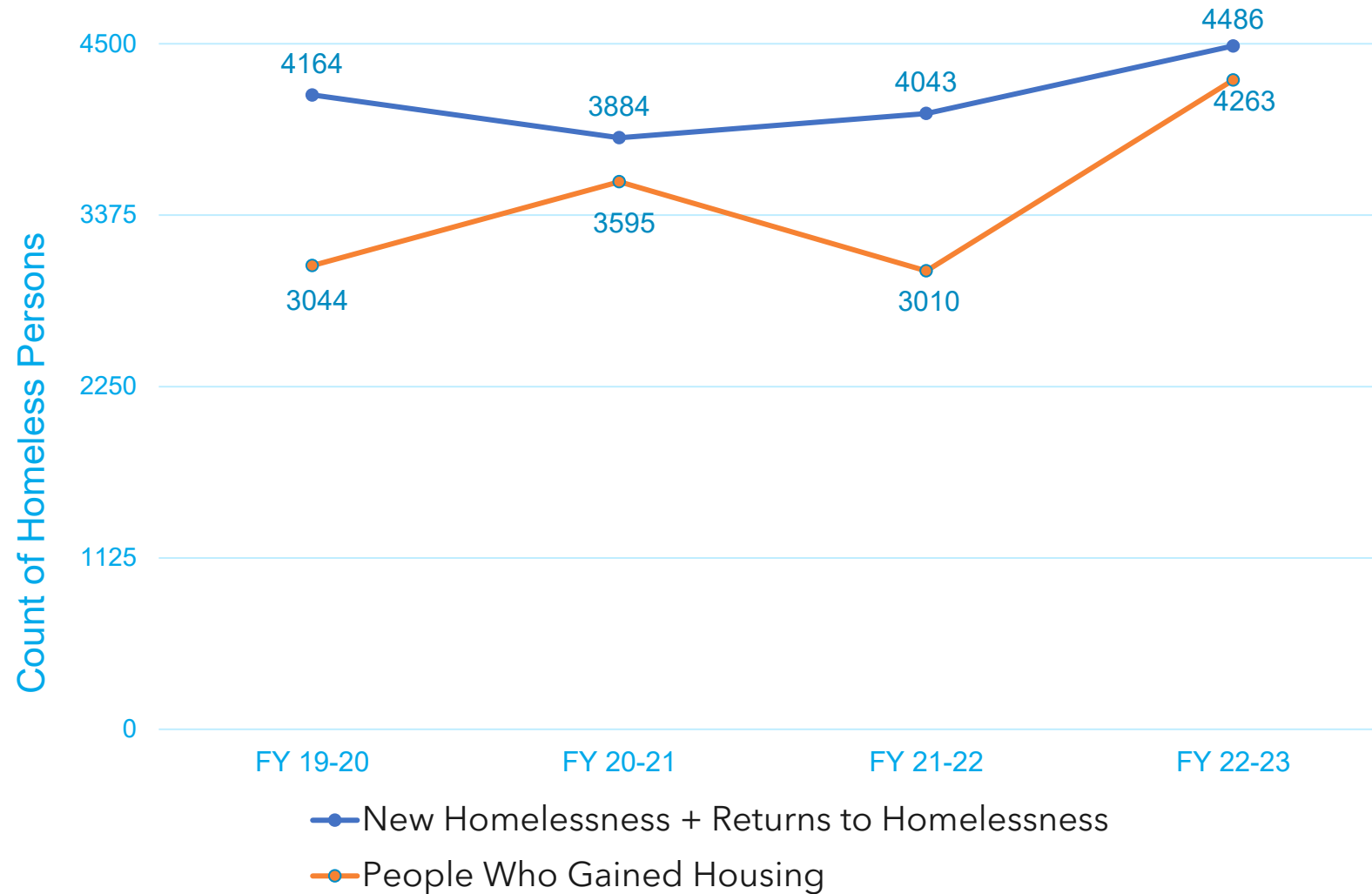
Our homelessness response system is not currently allocating sufficient resources towards **prevention** or new housing placements. Therefore, we are not seeing progress towards reducing the number of households experiencing homelessness.

Homelessness could be dramatically reduced if significant new investments were allocated towards **prevention to reduce inflow**, and new housing opportunities for those already homeless.

Homeless Growth Trajectory vs Home Together Scenario



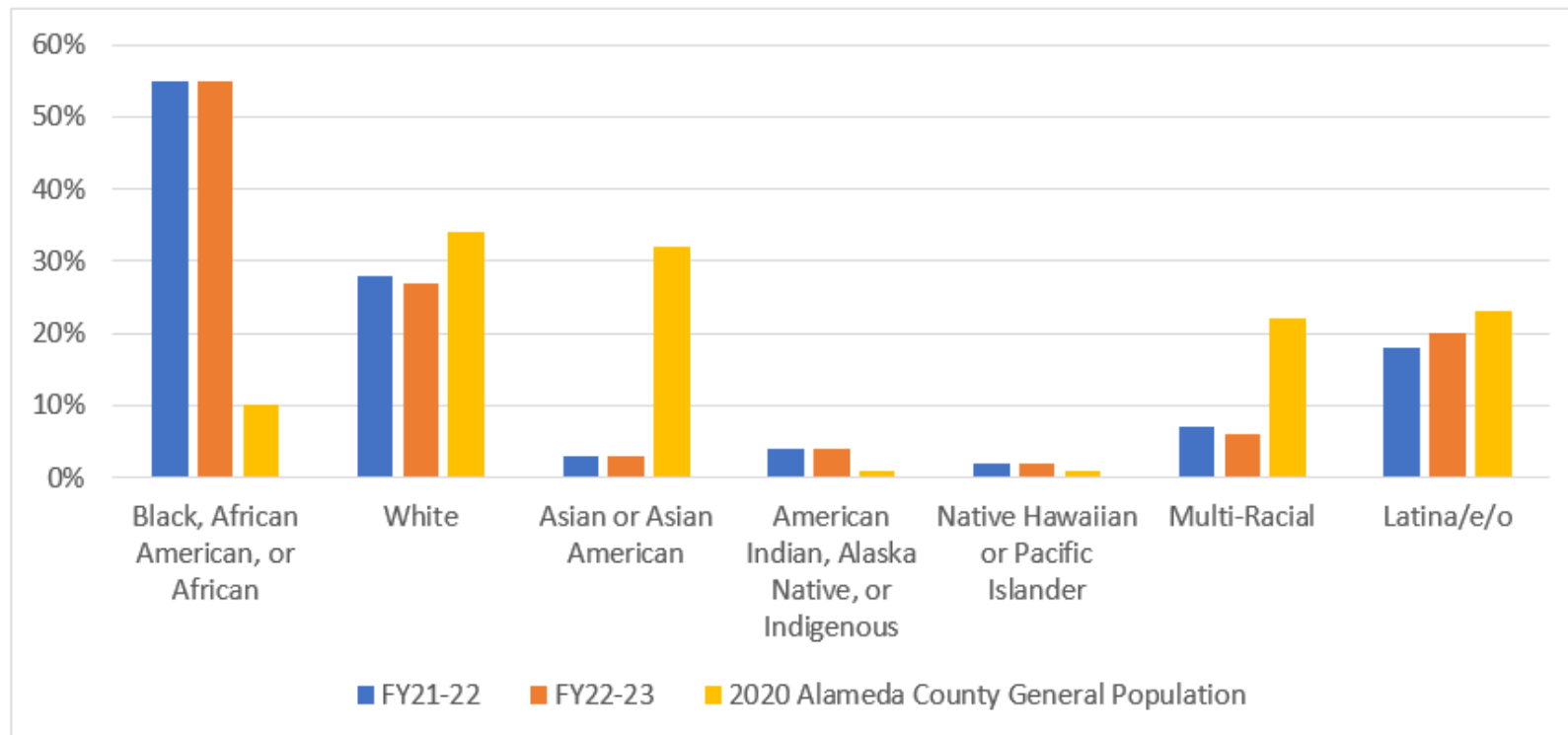
Inflow Into and Outflow From Homelessness



Racial Disparities in New Homelessness

People who are Black/ African American, people who are American Indian, Alaska Native or Indigenous, and people who are Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander are **disproportionately** represented among those experiencing homelessness for the first time compared to their representation in the general population of Alameda County.

Proportion of People Experiencing Homelessness for the First Time, by Race and Ethnicity, FY21-22 and FY22-23



Development of the Homelessness Prevention Framework

Preventing homelessness is Goal 1 of the Home Together 2026 Community Plan, which also outlines critical objectives to realize this goal.

1 Prevent homelessness for our residents

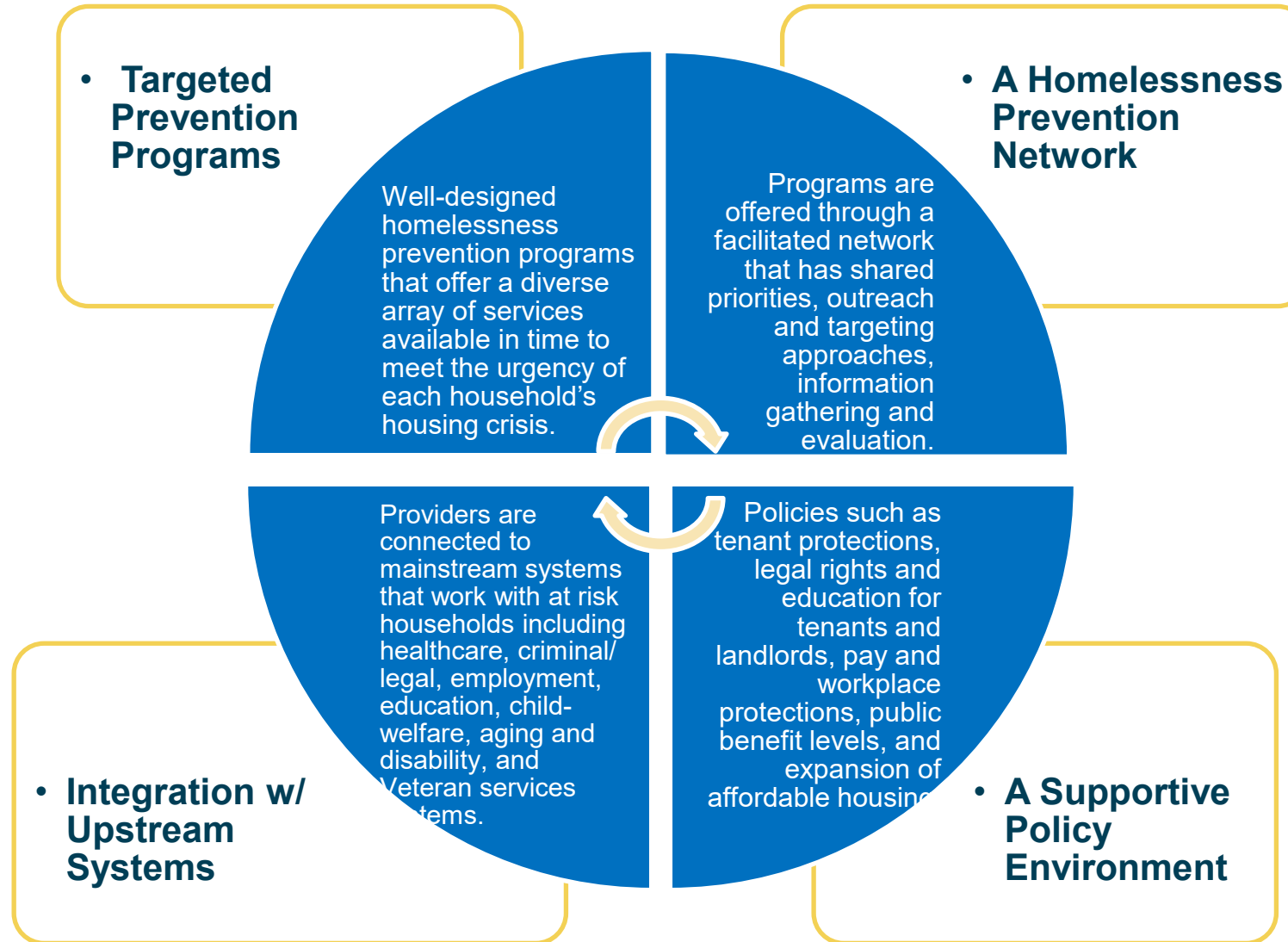
1. Address racial disparities in mainstream/upstream systems to prevent racially disproportionate inflow into homelessness
2. Focus resources for prevention on people most likely to lose their homes
3. Rapidly resolve episodes of homelessness through Housing Problem Solving
4. Prevent racially disproportionate returns to homelessness

- The Homelessness Prevention Framework was developed using evidence from national research, key informant interviews with local government and nonprofit leaders, and input from local stakeholders with lived and professional expertise.
- Stakeholders met as the **Homelessness Prevention Strategy Team** (HPST) eight times in 2023 to draft the Framework.

Alameda County: Existing Prevention Programs

- Keep People Housed Network (Oakland)
- Alameda County Housing Secure
(legal assistance and emergency rent assistance to households facing eviction)
- Alameda County's child welfare system's support for youth exiting foster care to transition to stable housing
- Probation Department's support for people exiting institutional settings to access transitional and permanent housing
- AC Health's programs aimed at supporting housing stability
 - CalAIM Housing Community Supports - Tenancy Sustaining Services

Components of a Coordinated Prevention Response



Centering Racial Equity Across Objective Areas

Risk of homelessness is not evenly distributed across the population and the racial disparities reported in Home Together are even more pronounced in rates of new homelessness and returns.

- Of those people who entered the homelessness response system for the first time in FY22, nearly 54% identified as Black/African American, **five times** the proportion of Black/African Americans in the overall county population – a stark representation of the way structural racism operates across historically Black and Brown communities throughout Alameda County.

Centering racial equity in homelessness prevention is critical to addressing the interlocking pressures of systemic racism in the housing market, rising rents combined with insufficient wages, and displacement pressures exacerbated by the persistent underproduction of affordable housing – all forces most directly affecting and pushing BIPOC communities out of their homes

Objectives, Strategies and Critical Action Steps

Objective 1: Address racial disparities in mainstream/upstream systems to prevent racially disproportionate inflow into homelessness

Partner with school districts, social services agencies, child welfare, community health organizations and others to connect people to prevention and economic supports in a timely manner and through trusted sources.

Work with institutions in the criminal legal system to create housing planning and homelessness prevention resources.

Ensure that workforce services are accessible to and structured to support people whose housing is unstable.

Target resources to assist children and vulnerable transition-aged youth leaving their homes or foster care.



Highlighted Action Steps:

Convene public entities * Implement screening questions in mainstream systems and make warm hand-offs to prevention programs * Build prevention assessments into discharge planning * Align homelessness prevention services for the reentry population with current criminal legal system reform efforts * Deepen partnerships between workforce services, eviction prevention, homelessness prevention, and homelessness response systems * Build on the work of the child welfare/foster care system to support successful transitions to permanent housing for vulnerable youth at risk of homelessness.

Objectives, Strategies and Critical Action Steps

Objective 2: Focus resources for prevention on people most likely to lose their homes

Work with government and private funders to increase targeted prevention for people most likely to become homeless.

Tailor outreach and prioritization to reach those at highest risk and coordinate these efforts in all areas of the county.

Implement and expand shallow subsidy availability for people on fixed or limited incomes with housing insecurity to relieve rent burden and reduce the risk of becoming homeless.

Highlighted Action Steps:

Invest in programs that use proven methods to reach and target households most likely to experience homelessness * Develop a homelessness prevention services network that coordinates efforts across Alameda County * Use data to identify and prioritize outreach to the highest need neighborhoods and geographic areas * Make prevention services easier to access using physical and virtual access points and streamline application processes * Use a shared information system, agreed-upon data standards and workflows * Advocate for the shallow subsidy model and for local, state, and federal funding to meet these needs.

Objectives, Strategies and Critical Action Steps

Objective 3: Rapidly resolve episodes of homelessness through Housing Problem Solving

Add resources to flexible funding pools for Housing Problem Solving, a practice of helping people newly homeless or on the verge of homelessness to identify rapid solutions to their situation with light financial support.

Offer Housing Problem Solving training and funding throughout the system so that providers can quickly assist people when and where they seek help.

Provide Housing Problem Solving training and funding to mainstream systems and to organizations in the homelessness prevention network.



Highlighted Action Steps:

Evaluate Housing Problem Solving impact and work with current and prospective providers to develop system improvements * Create an easily accessible pool of flexible funds that trained employees in mainstream systems and community-based organizations can use to problem solve with households * Use a shared information platform, or information sharing protocol, to track Housing Problem Services outcomes.

Objectives, Strategies and Critical Action Steps

Objective 4: Prevent racially disproportionate returns to homelessness

Target time-limited Rapid Rehousing resources to serve households with an ability to increase income.

Partner with educational, vocational and employment services to ensure that people moving toward employment have strong support in obtaining and maintaining employment.

Establish a flexible funding pool for preventing homelessness, including a shallow subsidy option.

Review and evaluate methods for determining types of housing placements to ensure high rates of success and avoid unsustainable housing placements.

Provide additional support services, such as behavioral health care and case management, in existing sites and programs for people who have transitioned from homelessness to permanent housing.

Highlighted Action Steps:

Prioritize rapid rehousing to households engaged in workforce training and employment programs, or in benefit acquisition processes * Explore using rapid rehousing as a bridge to an expected shallow or deep long-term subsidy * Expand supported employment programs to serve formerly homeless people with mental health and/or substance use disorder needs * Allocate long-term shallow subsidies for formerly homeless people with limited fixed incomes * Using a racial equity lens and available research, expand existing program standards to develop housing plans * Use data to evaluate equity impacts.

Objectives, Strategies and Critical Action Steps

 Objective 5: Create a policy environment supporting homelessness prevention

City and county legislators advocate collectively with state and federal leaders for needed policy changes and ongoing funding.

Increase the supply of deeply affordable housing.

Strengthen and enforce local tenant protections.

Increase enforcement of federal, state, and local anti-discrimination laws.

Reduce barriers to housing stability for people who have been convicted of crimes.

Highlighted Action Steps:

Develop a shared legislative platform for increases in ongoing funding and policy changes to reduce the risk of experiencing homelessness * Implement recommended enhancements to tenant protections * Extend code compliance and relocation programs * Evaluate guaranteeing legal representation to all tenants in eviction court, while expanding court-based homelessness prevention services * Support increased enforcement and strengthening of non-discrimination laws * Pursue strengthened "Ban the Box" and "Fair Chance" protections against use of past criminal history in housing.

Investment Needs

To achieve significant reductions in new homelessness through targeted prevention strategies requires significant new investment. There are currently no large, recurring sources from the Federal or State government that can be dedicated to targeted prevention efforts. Local and ongoing resources are needed.

An estimated \$10 million is needed annually to reduce Returns to Homelessness, from 16% to 9% per year.

An estimated \$43 million is needed to reduce new entries into homelessness.

This investment would lead to an estimated reduction of 1,070 people becoming homeless for the first time.

Infrastructure Needs

A community-wide homelessness prevention response will require the support of an engaged leadership and administrative structure able to oversee continued planning, ensure ongoing oversight and accountability, and support implementation.

- **Fund and develop administrative capacity that ensures implementation, ongoing accountability to goals, and continuous quality improvement.**
- Designate the Continuum of Care's Housing Stability and Homelessness Prevention Committee (HSHP) as the public body responsible for ongoing public information and recommendations for implementing the homelessness prevention response.
- Identify and fund an agency or office within Alameda County to serve as the administrative hub for the homelessness prevention response. Convene Alameda County agencies, departments, and divisions to guide implementation.
- Establish a shared data system.
- Streamline access to homelessness prevention financial assistance.
- Establish a learning collaborative to provide ongoing training, peer to peer learning, and information sharing.

Prevention Framework Leadership and Administrative Structure

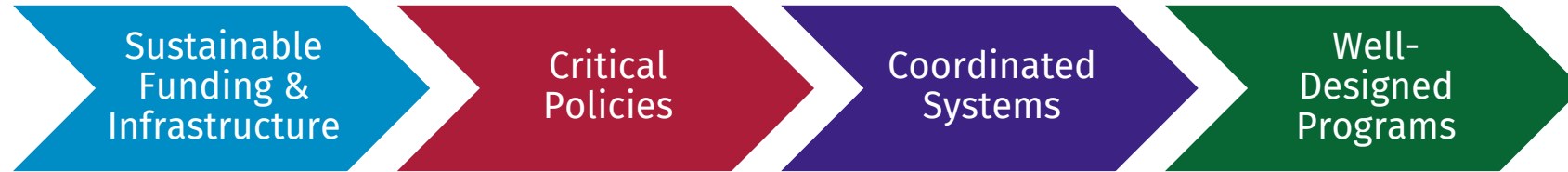
**COC: Housing Stability and
Homelessness Prevention
Committee (HSHP)**

**Alameda County - Internal
Mainstream Systems
Convening**

**Homelessness Prevention
Services Network Lead
Agency/Partnership**

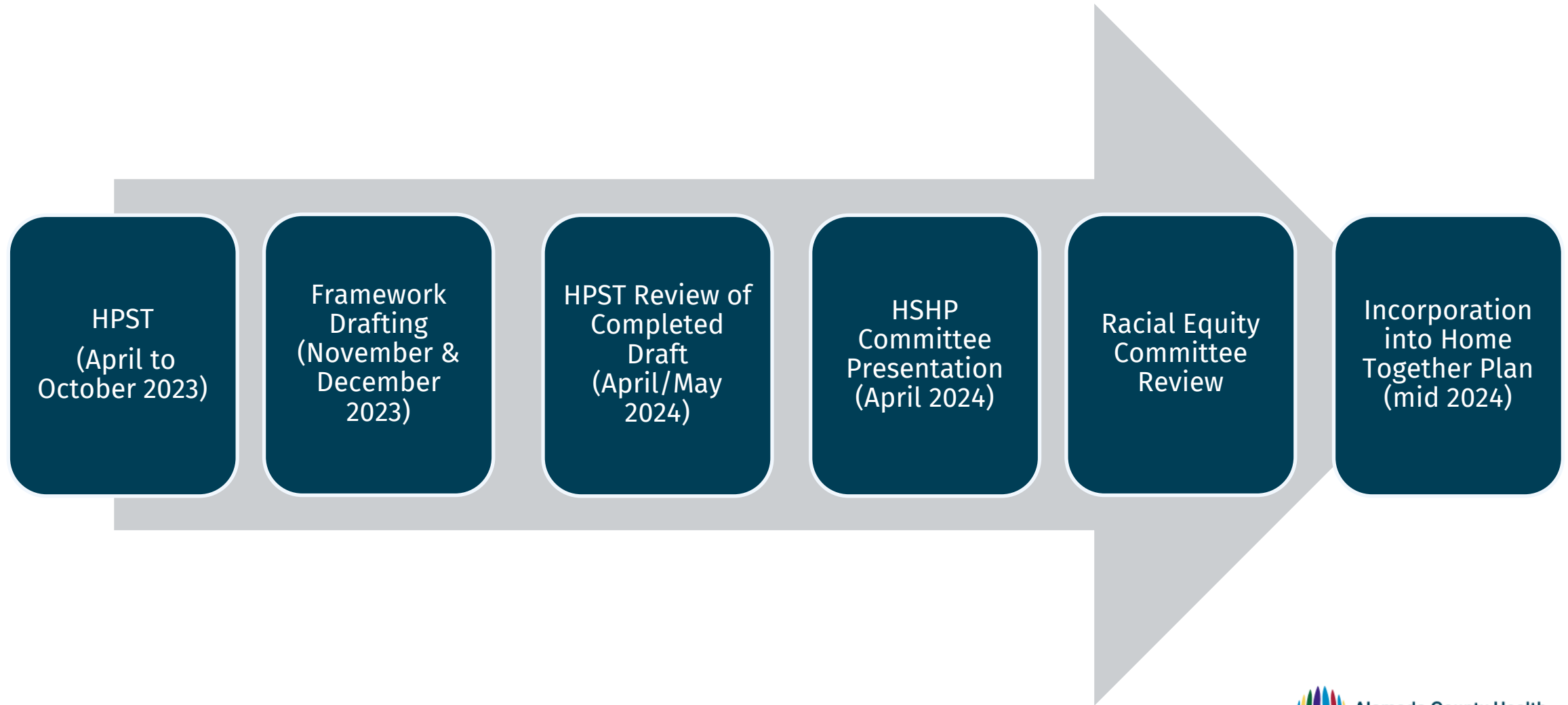
Homelessness Prevention Response Administrative Hub

Framework for Communitywide Prevention Response



- Creating a community-wide homelessness prevention response that is effective, efficient, and equitable is critical to achieving the goal of dramatically reducing homelessness and racial disparities in Alameda County.
- Alameda County already benefits from several very good homelessness prevention programs that informed this Framework, and a growing body of academic research also shaped the objectives and strategies.
- In order to succeed, the Homeless Prevention Framework requires broad support as well as significant new financial investments, and continues federal, state and local policy change.

Where We Go From Here....



Thank you

Questions and Comments



Alameda County Health

