



PERFORMANCE AUDIT OF THE CITY OF OAKLAND'S HOMELESSNESS SERVICES:

Better strategy and data are needed for more effective and accountable service delivery and positive outcomes for Oakland's homeless residents

CITY AUDITOR

Courtney Ruby, CPA, CFE

AUDIT TEAM

Assistant City Auditor, Michael Houston, MPP, CIA

Senior Performance Auditor, Jennifer Lim, CIA

Senior Performance Auditor, Daniel Williams

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CITY HALL · ONE FRANK H. OGAWA PLAZA 4TH FLOOR · OAKLAND CALIFORNIA · 94612

Courtney Ruby CPA, CFE
City Auditor

(510) 238-3378
FAX (510) 238-7640
TDD (510) 238-3254
www.oaklandauditor.com

September 19, 2022

HONORABLE MAYOR
HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL
HONORABLE CITY ATTORNEY
HONORABLE COMMISSIONERS
CITY ADMINISTRATOR
OAKLAND RESIDENTS

RE: PERFORMANCE AUDIT OF THE CITY OF OAKLAND'S HOMELESSNESS SERVICES

Dear Mayor Schaaf, City Council President Bas, Members of the City Council, City Attorney Parker, Members of the Commission on Homelessness, City Administrator Reiskin, and Oakland Residents:

For several years, the residents of Oakland have identified homelessness as the most pressing issue facing our City. As such, this audit was a priority for both the City Auditor's Office and the City Council. I want to acknowledge City Council President Bas for her leadership on this issue, and her collaboration in defining the audit objectives with my office.

This audit report is the second of two audit reports on homeless services. The first report, released in April 2021, focused on the City's Homeless Encampment Management Interventions and Activities. This report aims to provide critical information to City policymakers, leaders and staff to assist them in overseeing and managing the City's delivery of homelessness services.

The audit focuses on the City's performance in delivering crisis response, longer-term housing, and other supportive services. Specifically, the audit objectives were to:

1. Quantify the number of people receiving short-term, long-term, and permanent housing and their lengths of stay.
2. Evaluate the performance of contracted service providers against intended program outcomes.
3. Identify disparities in how the City's short-term, long-term, and permanent housing are provided to various subpopulations.
4. Assess the coordination and partnerships between City departments, other governmental agencies, and select service providers.

The audit scope was fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21. The audit report outlines key audit results across six sections.

Overall, the City's housing programs, which are primarily managed by third-party service providers, served a total of 8,683 participants during the three years audited. In these three years, the City spent nearly \$69 million on contracts for service providers to provide various homelessness services.

The report reveals the City's had mixed results in placing the homeless into permanent housing and better information is needed to determine whether they remain housed. The report also reveals mixed results in the City's ability to facilitate enrollment of the homeless in various income and health benefit programs, a proven first step in increasing a participants' ability to improve life circumstances and housing stability.

Underlying these mixed results is the City's access to timely, accurate, and complete data and its ability to use this data to adequately evaluate its own performance and the performance of the service providers contracted to provide direct homelessness services. This was compounded by the fact that the City's contract monitoring activities were incomplete, inadequately documented, and did not sufficiently address service delivery concerns. The audit did however find the City was delivering homelessness services in proportion to the racial make-up of the City's homelessness population per the latest Point-in-Time Counts

The report includes 30 recommendations, including 27 recommendations for the Administration to move the City's homelessness services forward with a strategic plan, increased public reporting and greater oversight. The Administration is in agreement with all 27 recommendations. The remaining three recommendations include two that are addressed to the City Council and one that is addressed to the Commission on Homelessness for their consideration.

In April 2022, Alameda County released a draft of the Home Together 2026 Community Plan (Plan) that stated every year new people experience homelessness in Alameda County, but the homelessness response system does not currently have enough capacity to keep up with annual inflow. The Plan predicts that by 2026, Alameda County will need an inventory of approximately 26,000 permanent housing units. As of 2021, there were 3,215 existing units, meaning the permanent housing inventory must increase eightfold by 2026. Knowing that Oakland's homeless population is roughly half of the County's homeless population, this is a staggering reality to consider, and it places an urgency on the City to implement the audit's recommendations to ensure people, plans, strategies, and oversight are in place to permanently house our homeless over the long-term, and to make certain they are in safe, clean and secure temporary housing arrangements until then.

Sincerely,



COURTNEY A. RUBY, CPA, CFE
City Auditor

Oakland's City Auditor is an elected official and works for, and reports to, the residents of Oakland. The Auditor's job is to provide oversight to the City's activities. The Auditor has the authority to access and audit City financial and administrative records, plus the policies and procedures of all City agencies and departments.

To make sure this work is done objectively and without bias, the City Auditor is not connected to any other City departments and has no day-to-day financial or accounting duties for the City of Oakland. This autonomy allows for independent analyses, ensuring tax dollars and other resources serve the public interest.

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Contact

Phone: (510) 238-3378

Email: CityAuditor@OaklandCA.gov

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OVERVIEW

Homelessness is among the biggest issues facing Oakland. Accordingly, both the City Auditor and City Council placed a high priority on audits related to homelessness services and partnered together to establish several audit objectives. These objectives culminated in the April 2021 *Performance Audit of the City of Oakland's Homeless Encampment Management and Interventions and Activities*, and this audit, *Performance Audit of the City of Oakland's Homelessness Services: Better Strategy and Data are Needed for More Effective and Accountable Service Delivery and Positive Outcomes for Oakland's Homeless Residents*.

BACKGROUND

Homelessness in Alameda County and Oakland has grown over the years. Between 2015 and 2022, observed homelessness increased 131 percent and 141 percent in Oakland and Alameda County, respectively. The February 2022 Point-in-Time Count (PIT Count) identified 5,055 people experiencing homelessness in Oakland and 9,747 in Alameda County. It identified 1,718 or 34 percent of people experiencing homelessness in Oakland were sheltered, meaning they were residing in supervised shelters designed to provide temporary living arrangements and were receiving some services. The remaining 3,337, or 66 percent, were living on the street or other places not meant for human habitation.

The City of Oakland's Human Services Department has a Community Homelessness Services Division (CHS), which is primarily responsible for implementing the City's homelessness services. CHS expenditures grew significantly from \$21.7 million to \$28.9 million between fiscal years 2018-19 and 2020-21. The effects of increased funding related to COVID began in the last quarter of fiscal year 2019-20 and into fiscal year 2020-21 and beyond. Over 85 percent of this funding is for contracting with outside service providers, who directly provide the range of homelessness services including crisis response programs, longer-term housing programs, and other supportive services. This audit focuses on the City's performance in delivering crisis response, longer-term housing, and other supportive services.

Agencies from all levels of government and the private and nonprofit sectors are addressing homelessness through various programs and services. Effectively serving people experiencing

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homelessness requires significant coordination among these agencies and stakeholders. Therefore, this audit also focuses on the critical coordination and partnership with the City's contracted service providers, and the Oakland/Berkeley/Alameda County Continuum of Care (CoC) that is responsible for maintaining both the Coordinated Entry System that provides the entry point for many people to access homelessness services, and the required federal *Homeless Management Information System* (HMIS) that tracks clients and the services provided to them. Funding of various homelessness services comes from federal, state, local, and private funds.

AUDIT OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this audit were to:

1. Quantify the number of people receiving short-term, long-term, and permanent housing and their lengths of stay.
2. Evaluate the performance of contracted service providers against intended program outcomes.
3. Identify disparities in how the City's short-term, long-term, and permanent housing are provided to various subpopulations.
4. Assess the coordination and partnerships between City departments, other governmental agencies, and select service providers.

The audit scope was fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21. The audit report outlines key audit results across six sections.

WHY THIS AUDIT MATTERS

This audit report provides critical information to City policymakers, leaders and staff to assist them in overseeing and managing the City's delivery of homelessness services and permanently house our homeless.

In April 2022, Alameda County released a draft of the Home Together 2026 Community Plan (Plan) that stated every year new people experience homelessness in Alameda County, but the homelessness response system does not currently have enough capacity to keep up with annual inflow. The Plan predicts that by 2026, Alameda County will need an inventory of approximately 26,000 permanent housing units. As of 2021, there were 3,215 existing units, meaning the permanent housing inventory must increase eightfold by 2026. Knowing that Oakland's homeless population is roughly half of the County's homeless population, this is a

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staggering reality to consider, and it places an urgency on the City to implement the audit's recommendations to ensure people, plans, strategies, and oversight are in place to permanently house our homeless over the long-term, and to make certain they are in safe, clean and secure temporary housing arrangements until then.

KEY FINDINGS

Section 1: The City had mixed results in helping program participants exit to permanent housing, many crisis response and longer-term housing participants' long-term outcomes are unknown, and lengths of stay need more analysis.

The City provides various types of homelessness services housing programs to serve the City's homeless population. Shorter-term crisis response programs include Community Cabins, Emergency Shelters, Transitional Housing, and RV Safe Parking. Longer-term programs include Rapid Re-Housing, the Oakland Path Rehousing Initiative (OPRI), and Permanent Housing Services.

In fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21, the City's homelessness services housing programs served a total of 8,683 participants (6,697 in crisis response programs and 1,986 in longer-term housing programs). During this time, a total of 4,839 participants exited the City's homelessness services housing programs (4,110 in crisis response programs and 729 in longer-term housing programs).

The City's crisis response programs for single adults generally did not meet established performance targets for exits to permanent housing or exits to homelessness, or the City's target for exits to positive destinations, except for single adult Transitional Housing, which met the target for exits to homelessness in one fiscal year. Family crisis response programs had better performance with family Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing programs, meeting the targets for exits to permanent housing in all three fiscal years audited. Family Transitional Housing met the targets for exits to permanent housing and exits to homelessness in all three fiscal years. Transitional Housing for transition-aged youth did not meet the targets for exits to permanent housing or exits to homelessness in any of the three fiscal years. We found that the City had not adopted exits to homelessness, exits to positive destinations, and exits to streets or unknown destinations metrics and corresponding targets for the Emergency Shelter program. The City also has not established metrics or targets for the RV Safe Parking program.

Longer-term housing programs, which serve far fewer people than crisis response programs and commit to providing more intensive services over longer periods of time, were more successful in meeting performance targets. For example, family Rapid Re-Housing programs met exits to permanent housing targets and exits to homelessness target in all three fiscal

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years. We also noted steady improvement in Rapid Re-Housing exits to permanent housing among single adult and transition-aged youth Rapid Re-Housing participants. Similarly, OPRI and Permanent Housing Services met their target to have 95 percent of participants remain housed for one year or longer in all three fiscal years. OPRI also met its target to have less than 5 percent of its participants exit to homelessness in two of the three fiscal years and Permanent Housing Services met this target in one of the three fiscal years.

Lastly, provider contracts and participant agreements specify goals on the maximum number of days participants can initially stay in various housing programs. Some participants stayed longer than terms outlined in provider contracts and participant agreements. The City should collect data to analyze this more closely.

Section 2: The City had mixed results in facilitating enrollments in benefit programs critical to improving homelessness services participants' life circumstances and housing stability.

Financial and mainstream public benefits have proven to be the first step in increasing a participant's ability to improve life circumstances and maintain permanent housing.

Based on our analysis of HMIS data, in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21, participants' success in maintaining or increasing incomes varied across the different crisis response and longer-term housing programs. This metric is limited in its usefulness because many participants do not have incomes. Furthermore, it is important to recognize the limited value of "maintaining" incomes for people whose incomes are too low to afford housing.

Enrollment in non-cash mainstream benefits like state and federal financial resources, disability benefits, food assistance, and other assistance is an important metric for gauging the prospects of program participants' ability to achieve permanent housing. In fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21, the City's homelessness services programs missed targets for enrollments in mainstream benefits.

On the other hand, the majority of homelessness services programs achieved targets for enrolling participants in health insurance benefits, though results varied by program category and by fiscal year. The City should continuously review performance data to identify effective and ineffective programs and service providers. In addition, the City should continuously review the viability of the performance metrics and related performance targets and consider revising them and adopting new ones as needed, such as CHS did with some of the exit metrics discussed in Section 1. This is especially needed in the RV Safe Parking program, for which the City had not implemented any performance metrics or targets related to participant incomes and enrollment in mainstream benefits.

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Section 3: The City lacked access to timely, accurate, and complete data to fully understand service provider performance, bed utilization, and participants' returns to homelessness.

HMIS data entered by service providers need to be timely, accurate, and complete for the City to effectively monitor, manage, and evaluate homelessness services programs. However, the City's service providers have not been timely in entering participant data into HMIS and have also had challenges in entering accurate and complete data. The City should provide training on HMIS, monitor data quality issues, and hold service providers accountable to data quality standards. Timely, accurate, and complete data would enable the City to identify at any time, the use and capacity of its different programs which informs management of available resources and helps with planning for the future.

Additionally, for years, the Community Homelessness Services Division has been challenged by a lack of responsiveness from the County HMIS Lead and the system's inability to provide critical data reports and tools. The City should continue to work with the County HMIS Lead to access HMIS reports and tools. If necessary, the City should consider obtaining an outside contractor on how to use these reports and tools, which are necessary to determine whether program participants return to homelessness. A dedicated City staff member with analytical and technical skills can run these reports to consistently track, monitor, analyze, and present HMIS data for management. Once the City has access to the necessary data and tools to determine the success of its program performance, the City needs to have the ability to report on its programs publicly, thus fulfilling the need for transparency and public accountability.

Section 4: The City provided homelessness services to participants of different races roughly proportionately to their share of Oakland's homeless population, except for the RV Safe Parking program. More data is needed to ensure the City is meeting racial equity goals and identifying disparities affecting groups underserved or underrepresented by the City's homelessness services.

The City has established a goal to reach, serve, and improve outcomes for African Americans who are severely over-represented in the homeless population. The audit found that African American participants are proportionately represented in all but one of the City-funded homelessness services programs, the RV Safe Parking program. In addition, we found no major disparities across the races of program participants and their share of Oakland's homeless population. We also found no racial disparities among people exiting from homelessness services programs to permanent housing during the three-year audit scope. It appears this desired outcome was achieved roughly proportionately among participants of different races.

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To identify racial disparities and assess the City's homelessness services programs' progress toward the City's racial equity goals, the City has committed to breaking out program outcomes by race. The County HMIS Lead, however, is unable to break out these data by race. The City must continue working with the County HMIS Lead to overcome technical challenges so it can analyze all outcomes by race including exits to positive destinations, exits to streets or unknown destinations, maintaining or increasing incomes, and enrollments in mainstream benefits and health insurance.

Lastly, demographic data from PIT Counts, HMIS, and the U.S. Census can identify groups underserved or underrepresented by the City's homelessness services, compared to their estimated share of the overall population of Oaklanders experiencing homelessness. The City should review data to identify and quantify communities particularly vulnerable to or impacted by homelessness to inform the City's homelessness services.

Section 5: Improvements are needed in the monitoring, oversight, and administration of the City's homelessness services contracts

The City primarily contracts out its homelessness services to third-party service providers. Between fiscal years 2018-19 and 2020-21, expenditures for homelessness services contracts increased from \$19.7 million to \$25 million, or 27 percent.

CHS' current approach to contract monitoring is impractical to apply appropriate coverage and address increased risks. Instead, the City should adopt a comprehensive risk-based approach. Additionally, contract monitoring activities were incomplete, inadequately documented, and did not sufficiently address service delivery concerns. Finally, service providers often began work prior to contracts being fully executed.

Section 6: The City needs to move homelessness services forward by adopting an actionable strategic plan and increasing oversight

The City lacks a strategic plan to provide an overall strategy, and inform spending decisions, organizational structure, and homelessness services. The City developed its initial Permanent Access to Housing framework (PATH) in 2006 and made significant updates in 2019, but it is not a strategic plan. Rather, it is a broad framework to align the City's efforts with national best practices. To achieve measurable, impactful, and lasting results, the City needs to formally adopt a strategic plan with goals and objectives, corresponding strategies, and annual workplans. The strategic plan needs to ensure meaningful program outcomes are defined for Oakland. To increase public accountability, periodic reporting on elements of this strategic plan should also include reporting on the funding of homelessness services, as well as general

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updates concerning the City's homelessness response, service delivery, work plans, and performance results. Reporting on the strategic plan should be directed to a public body in a public forum – perhaps the City's Commission on Homelessness. Furthermore, despite increases in dedicated resources for homelessness response, a significant number of vacancies within CHS endanger the successful delivery of homelessness services, as does the recent departures of key management and department leadership. The City needs to determine appropriate staffing levels, composition, and roles for its homelessness response. A staffing review will be key to the City's ability to achieve a vision, mission, goals, and objectives for its homelessness response.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The audit includes 30 recommendations, 27 recommendations are directed to the City Administration to address the issues raised in the report, and the City Administration has committed to implementing all 27 recommendations. Two recommendations are directed to the City Council and include designating the Commission on Homelessness as the entity to oversee the development of, and ongoing monitoring of City's Homelessness Services strategic plan, and for the City Council to formally adopt the strategic plan once it is finalized. One recommendation is directed to the Commission on Homelessness to ensure, if it is designated by the City Council, that it has the additional resources needed to fulfill its responsibilities.

Introduction and Background

Introduction

Homelessness, homeless encampments, and housing affordability are among the biggest issues facing the City of Oakland (City). Accordingly, the City Auditor and City Council placed a high priority on audits related to homelessness services and partnered together to outline a series of audit objectives addressing the City's management of homeless encampments and the City's performance in delivering crisis response, longer-term housing, and other supportive services.

In April 2021, the City Auditor's Office issued the first in a series of two audits focused on homelessness. The first audit evaluated the City's homeless encampment management interventions and activities and found that the City was not adequately prepared to shoulder such a massive project and the City's Encampment Management Team (EMT) was overwhelmed by the undertaking of closing and cleaning encampments throughout Oakland.

Specifically, the audit found the City lacked an effective strategy for dealing with the growth in encampments and did not provide adequate policy direction or funding at the onset of the homelessness crisis. Additionally, the EMT lacked sufficient resources, including a budget. The *April 2021 Performance Audit of the City of Oakland's Homeless Encampment Management and Interventions and Activities* can be found [here](#).

Audit Objectives and Scope

This second audit focuses on the City's performance in delivering crisis response, longer-term housing, and other supportive services. The audit objectives were to:

1. Quantify the number of people receiving short-term, long-term, and permanent housing and their lengths of stay.
2. Evaluate the performance of contracted service providers against intended program outcomes.
3. Identify disparities in how the City's short-term, long-term, and permanent housing are provided to various subpopulations
4. Assess the coordination and partnerships between City departments, other governmental agencies, and select service providers.

This audit was not intended to address all aspects of homelessness. For example, this audit did not assess the contract award process, administration of homelessness prevention programs, affordable housing production and operations, and the effectiveness of regional, County, and federal homelessness response strategies with which the City is involved.

The scope of the audit includes Oakland's homelessness services in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21.

Introduction and Background

This report has six sections and outlines key audit results:

Section 1: The City’s Homelessness Services Housing Programs: Participants Served, Exit Destinations, and Lengths of Stay

This section quantifies the number of people served by the City’s various homelessness services housing programs and discusses the City’s performance against established performance metrics and targets including how successful the City was at exiting participants to permanent destinations versus back to homelessness. *The City had mixed results in helping program participants exit to permanent housing, many crisis response and longer-term housing participants’ long-term outcomes are unknown, and lengths of stay need more analysis.*

Section 2: Maintaining and Increasing Incomes and Enrolling Participants in Benefit Programs

This section addresses the City’s performance in maintaining or increasing participants’ incomes and enrolling participants in non-cash benefits and health insurance programs as a critical step to ending homelessness. *The City had mixed results in facilitating enrollments in benefit programs critical to improving homelessness services participants’ life circumstances and housing stability.*

Section 3: Data on Programs, Outcomes, Service Providers, and Participants

This section discusses data quality, timeliness, and usefulness. *The City lacked access to timely, accurate, and complete data to fully understand service provider performance, bed utilization, and participants’ returns to homelessness.*

Section 4: Proportionate Service Delivery and Racial Equity

This section evaluates the City’s efforts to eliminate racial disparities in homelessness services. *The City provided homelessness services to participants of different races roughly proportionately to their share of Oakland’s homeless population except for the RV Safe Parking program. More data is needed to ensure the City is meeting its racial equity goals and finding disparities that affect some communities.*

Section 5: Contracting with Service Providers

This section reviews the effectiveness of contract monitoring and oversight procedures. *Improvements are needed in the monitoring, oversight, and administration of the City’s homelessness services contracts.*

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Section 6: Strategy, Public Reporting, and Oversight

This section provides guidance for the City Administration on how to more effectively manage homelessness services while optimizing the City's limited resources to ensure our most vulnerable residents are receiving timely services to improve their living situations and secure and maintain permanent housing. *The City needs to move homelessness services forward by adopting an actionable strategic plan and increasing oversight.*

Background

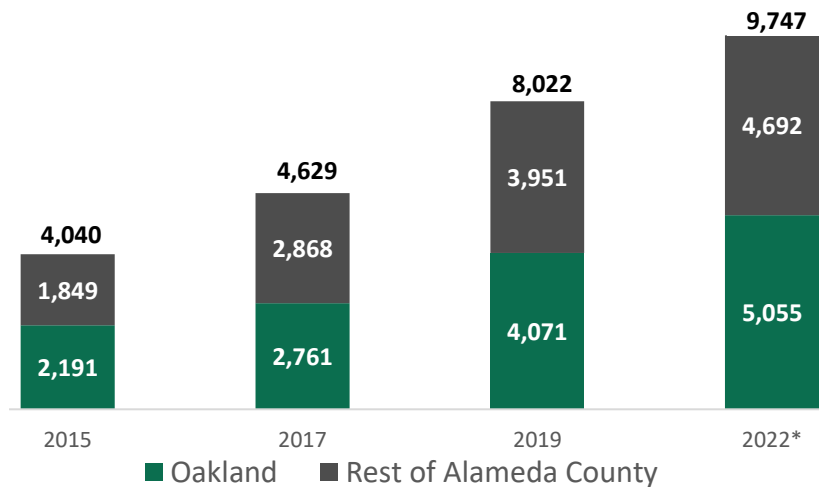
Homelessness increased in Oakland and Alameda County over the last seven years

Every two years, communities across the country conduct counts of the local homeless population, known as the Point-in-Time (PIT) Count. The results are used for local strategic planning, investment, capacity building, and advocacy campaigns to prevent and end homelessness. The PIT Count scheduled for January 2021 was postponed due to the COVID-19 Pandemic (COVID) and was rescheduled for February 2022. The preliminary results are shown below.

Homelessness in Alameda County and Oakland has grown over the years. Between 2015 and 2022, observed homelessness increased 131 percent and 141 percent in Oakland and Alameda County, respectively. In 2022, 5,055 people were identified as experiencing homelessness in Oakland and 9,747 in Alameda County.

Introduction and Background

Exhibit 1: The total number of individuals experiencing homelessness in Oakland and the rest of Alameda County in calendar years 2015, 2017, 2019, and 2022



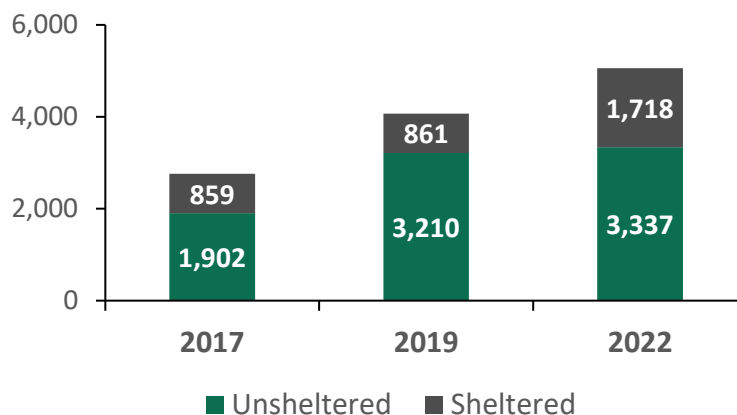
Source: Point-In-Time Count Survey for 2015, 2017, 2019, and 2022.

Note: the PIT Count scheduled for 2021 was rescheduled for 2022 due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

While homelessness in Oakland continues to grow, it has slowed, growing only 24 percent between 2019 and 2022 compared to 47 percent between 2017 and 2019. The 2022 PIT Count estimated 1,718, or 34 percent, of people experiencing homelessness in Oakland were sheltered, meaning they resided in supervised shelters designed to provide temporary living arrangements and were receiving some services. Additionally, the number of sheltered individuals grew almost 100 percent since the 2019 PIT Count.

Since the time of the 2017 PIT Count, the City has made significant investments in new beds and RV spaces to provide Emergency Shelter to people experiencing homelessness.

Exhibit 2: Sheltered vs. unsheltered individuals in Oakland, 2017, 2019, and 2022








Source: 2017, 2019 and 2022 PIT Counts

Introduction and Background

The remaining 3,337, or 66 percent of people experiencing homelessness in Oakland, were unsheltered meaning they resided in places not meant for human habitation such as cars, parks, sidewalks, and abandoned buildings.

Exhibit 3: Living arrangements of unsheltered individuals in Oakland, 2019 and 2022

					
	Tent	Car/Van	RV	Street/ Outside	Abandoned Building
Oakland 2022	1,063 (32%)	1,031 (31%)	907 (27%)	308 (9%)	28 (1%)
Oakland 2019	1,320 (41%)	727 (23%)	703 (22%)	420 (13%)	40 (1%)
Alameda County 2022	2,216 (31%)	2,318 (32%)	1,600 (22%)	958 (13%)	43 (1%)
Alameda County 2019	2,172 (34%)	1,431 (23%)	1,386 (22%)	1,239 (20%)	84 (1%)

Source: 2019 and 2022 PIT Counts

Obtaining a precise count of people experiencing homelessness is extremely challenging. The National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) states that the PIT Count has its limitations and flaws, and likely undercounts the population. For example, the following populations are likely undercounted in the PIT Count:

- **Women:** a leading cause for women experiencing homelessness is gender-based violence. Many women tend to remain hidden due to the high risk of violence and abuse while experiencing homelessness and will consequently be undercounted by PIT Counts. The 2022 PIT Count recorded only 36 percent of those experiencing homelessness in Oakland as female even though females account for roughly 50 percent of the overall population.
- **Children and transition-aged youth:** The Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) serves Oakland students and families who are unhoused, insecurely housed, or living in inadequate housing.¹ In the 2020-21 school year, OUSD served 1,056 students pursuant to the McKinney-Vento Act versus the 2022 PIT Count, which recorded 409 children experiencing homelessness at that time.

¹ The McKinney-Vento Act requires schools to enroll students experiencing homelessness immediately, even if the student is unable to provide documents that are typically required for enrollment. OUSD has a program to serve these students, which provides enrollment assistance, school supplies, tutoring, backpacks, advocacy, housing referrals, and assistance with transportation.

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Despite the limitations in the PIT Counts, it is the most reliable estimate of people experiencing homelessness.

The demand for housing far exceeds supply

In April 2022, Alameda County released a draft of the Home Together 2026 Community Plan (Plan). The Plan outlines the goals, strategies, and investments needed to dramatically reduce homelessness in Alameda County by 2026 and combat racial disparities in homelessness by fully centering equity.

The Plan states:

Every year new people experience homelessness in Alameda County, but the homelessness response system does not currently have enough capacity to keep up with annual inflow. This means that the increasing homeless population includes newly homeless people along with many people who became homeless in a prior year but could not get the assistance they needed to end their homelessness. In 2020 to 2021, just 36% (4,358) of adult only households experiencing homelessness exited homeless services, and 64% (7,647) remained in the homelessness response system. For households with minor children, 33% (321) of households exited the system in 2020-2021, while 67% (664) households remained.

The Plan goes on to state that without significant changes in both approach and rate of investment, homelessness will likely grow dramatically.

The Plan predicts that by 2026, Alameda County will need an inventory of approximately 26,000 permanent housing units in addition to subsidies to serve all the current and projected needs of homeless households. As of 2021, there were 3,215 existing units, meaning the permanent housing inventory must increase eightfold by 2026.

Permanent supportive housing

Permanent supportive housing provides long-term, affordable housing and support services to people with disabilities or other special needs, who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. In 2021, Alameda County had an inventory of 3,215 permanent supportive housing units and projected a total need of 7,410 units by 2026 to meet the current and projected need, an increase of 130 percent.

The County operates the housing queue for permanent supportive housing placements. As of May 2022, there were 1,793 people waiting for permanent supportive housing placements countywide. Of those waiting for permanent supporting housing, 832 or 46 percent, were from Oakland.

Introduction and Background

While the region continues to struggle with the increasing demand for permanent supportive housing, new investments are being made. For example, in 2020 the State of California awarded the City \$37.5 million (includes one project that was eventually dropped) in Project Homekey funding, which allowed the City to turn existing buildings into permanent supportive housing. Additionally, as of May 2022, the City was awarded an additional \$25.9 million in Homekey funds. Since receiving this funding, the City has invested in the following 253 deeply affordable² housing units:

- 110 units across scattered sites
- 42 units at Clifton Hall
- 21 units at the Inn at Temescal
- 44 units at Piedmont Place hotel (Spring 2022 funding)
- 36 units at the Inn by the Coliseum (Spring 2022 funding)

Despite new funding, and as the County's plan projects, the region will continue to struggle to keep up with the increasing demand for permanent supportive housing, and homelessness services in general.

Multiple jurisdictions and stakeholders respond to homelessness

Agencies from all levels of government and within the private and nonprofit sectors are addressing homelessness through various programs and services. Effectively serving people experiencing homelessness requires significant coordination among these agencies and stakeholders. Each agency outlined below is responsible for a key component of the response system; the most critical responsibilities are described below.

Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) - provides funding to states, local governments, Continuums of Care, and nonprofit service providers to serve individuals and families across the country who are affected by homelessness.

State of California - provides funding for homelessness services through multiple state programs and agencies, including the Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP) and Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) grant program administered by the Business, Consumer Services, and Housing Agency. Other state departments administer a variety of service programs including, but not limited to the Department of Social Services and the Department of Housing and Community Development.

² Deeply Affordable Housing is affordable to extremely low-income (ELI) people who have incomes below 30 percent of Area Median Income (AMI).

Introduction and Background

Continuum of Care (CoC) - Spearheaded by HUD, a CoC is a group of organizations and individuals that plan and coordinate funding for services and housing. The CoC is made up of a leadership board and various committees. The City of Oakland is part of the Oakland/Berkeley/Alameda County CoC called EveryOne Home.

Alameda County - provides many of the services to address homelessness including health care, social services, and behavioral health care. These services are provided by the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), the Health Care Services Agency (HCSA), and the Social Services Agency (SSA) of Alameda County. The County is a member of the CoC and manages two critical components of the region's response to homelessness, the Coordinated Entry System and the Homeless Management Information System:

- ***Coordinated Entry System (CES)***: standard process used to assess, prioritize, and match persons experiencing homelessness to housing and other resources. Those in need of services can receive a Coordinated Entry assessment by calling 2-1-1, or through designated Housing Resource Centers and select outreach service providers. Beginning January 2021, the County launched and began operating Coordinated Entry 2.0. Prior to this, the City of Oakland administered this operation. Alameda County's Health Care Services Agency (HCSA) administers CES.
- ***Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)***: a database system used to collect required client-level data and data on service delivery for individuals and families experiencing, or at risk of experiencing homelessness. The CoC has designated the County as the HMIS Lead. Agencies that receive HUD and state funding for its programs are mandated to use HMIS and report data annually. Data collected are used for reporting, decision-making, performance evaluation, public policy, and advocacy related to the region's overall response to homelessness. Alameda County's HCD administers HMIS for the CoC, a committee through EveryOne Home provides oversight, and service providers enter client data into the system.

City of Oakland

- ***City Administrator's Office*** – the Homelessness Administrator serves as liaison to both internal City staff and external agencies, leads the City's Encampment Management Team, supports broad policy development, coordinates homelessness services across relevant City departments, and facilitates

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transition of the City's unsheltered population into shelter and housing programs.

- ***Department of Human Services*** - The Community Homelessness Services Division (CHS) of the City's Human Services Department (Human Services) is primarily responsible for implementing the City's homelessness services including crisis response programs, longer-term housing, and other supportive services. The Division has also led the City's efforts in identifying and securing funding. In addition, CHS represents the City in the regional homelessness response. CHS staff sit on EveryOne Home committees, and meet regularly with Alameda County, Oakland Housing Authority, and other agencies to coordinate the CoC's response to homelessness.
- ***Commission on Homelessness*** - makes recommends strategies to the City Council to remedy homelessness. The Commission also reviews and responds annually to the Permanent Access to Housing framework (PATH), and hears reports on housing, programs, and services for people experiencing homelessness in the City. This body also provides oversight of the Oakland vacant property tax funds and Measure Q homelessness funds received by the City for homelessness services and recommends strategies to remedy homelessness to the City Council.
- ***Service Providers*** – contracted nonprofit service providers carry out a range of services including, but not limited to, managing Emergency Shelters, Transitional Housing, Community Cabins, RV Safe Parking sites, Rapid Re-Housing, Street Outreach, and other supportive services.

Exhibit 4 below shows the key players in the region that respond to homelessness.

Introduction and Background

Exhibit 4: The regional homelessness response system has multiple entities



Source: Auditor exhibit based on the understanding of HUD's CoC program.

In addition to homelessness services, various entities are involved in preventing homelessness. For example, the City's Housing and Community Development Department engages in anti-displacement and resident stabilization. The inter-agency Keep Oakland Housed campaign is a coordinated strategy and partnership to help Oakland residents at risk of losing their homes by providing a three-prong emergency response including legal representation, financial assistance, and supportive services to help them remain in their homes. The scope of this audit did not include homelessness prevention.

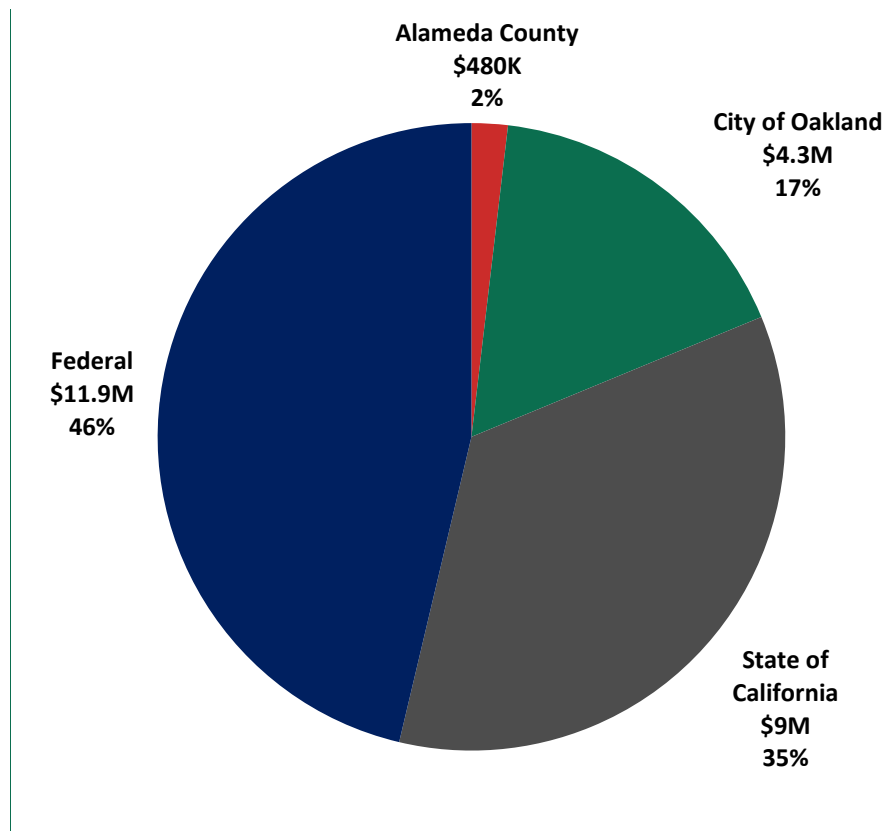
The City of Oakland is funded by federal, state, local, and private funds

The City's homelessness response depends upon federal, state, local, and private funding, and as Exhibit 5 below shows, a significant portion of the funds for fiscal year 2020-21 came from

Introduction and Background

federal and state grant funding. These governmental funding sources typically have prescriptive requirements defining the services that can be funded and the eligible populations that can be served. Thus, these funding sources can directly or indirectly prioritize the homelessness services a local jurisdiction provides.

Exhibit 5: Budgeted funds for homelessness for fiscal year 2020-21



Source: City of Oakland's financial reporting system

Navigating funding priorities can be challenging and COVID added another level of complexity. Federal and state funding levels increased to get individuals off the street and immediately into housing with appropriate, and in many cases, more expensive health, and safety protocols to guard against rapid COVID transmission. For example, congregate shelters had to reduce capacity immediately, and programs like the State's RoomKey were enacted, which leased hotels to serve as long-term COVID shelters for older people or those with medical vulnerabilities, or to quarantine people who tested positive for the virus.

Lastly, City staff was impacted as well by the added responsibility of managing more funds, on tighter timelines, with new requirements, while many learned to work remotely.

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Exhibit 6 below shows the Community Homelessness Services Division's expenditures in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21.

Exhibit 6: Community Homelessness Services Division expenditures in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21

Expenditure Category	FY 2018-19	FY 2019-20	FY 2020-21
Contract Service Expenditures	\$ 19,653,092	\$ 23,821,831	\$ 25,039,728
Employee Personnel Service	\$ 1,468,234	\$ 1,758,421	\$ 2,314,506
Service Expenditures	\$ 42,389	\$ 30,672	\$ 564,276
Other Expenditures	\$ 234,777	\$ 319,354	\$ 323,360
Capital Acquisitions	\$ 121,196	\$ 1,510,985	\$ 305,599
Supply and Material	\$ 74,868	\$ 71,742	\$ 201,534
Internal Service / Work Order	\$ 55,836	\$ 131,427	\$ 126,115
Travel and Education	\$ 61,643	\$ 74,777	\$ 35,415
Total	\$ 21,712,034	\$ 27,719,209	\$ 28,910,533

Source: City of Oakland's financial reporting system

Exhibit 6 above shows Human Services' Community Homelessness Services Division's expenditures grew significantly from \$21.7 million to \$28.9 million between fiscal years 2018-19 and 2020-21. The effects of increased funding related to COVID began in the last quarter of fiscal year 2019-20 and into fiscal year 2020-21 and beyond. Exhibit 6 above also shows the overwhelming majority of expenditures were linked to contract services.

Exhibit 7 below outlines CHS' contract services expenditures by funding source in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21. The exhibit does not include spending on encampment-related activities. For spending on encampment-related activities, refer to the April 2021 *Performance Audit of the City of Oakland's Homeless Encampment Management and Interventions and Activities*.

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Exhibit 7: Sources of funding for Human Services' Community Homelessness Services Division contract services expenditures in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21

Funding Source	FY 2018-19	FY 2019-20	FY 2020-21
Federal Government	\$ 9,851,633	\$ 9,086,358	\$ 12,369,480
State of California	\$ 1,916,643	\$ 7,390,040	\$ 5,315,480
City of Oakland	\$ 1,931,129	\$ 1,851,336	\$ 4,003,935
Alameda County	\$ 4,399,448	\$ 4,169,602	\$ 2,189,781
Private Grants	\$ 723,604	\$ 851,397	\$ 1,075,110
Social Services Grants	\$ 434,309	\$ 225,597	\$ 57,724
Total	\$ 19,256,767	\$ 23,574,331	\$ 25,011,509

Source: City of Oakland's financial reporting system. Note: The amounts exclude encampment-related contract expenditures.

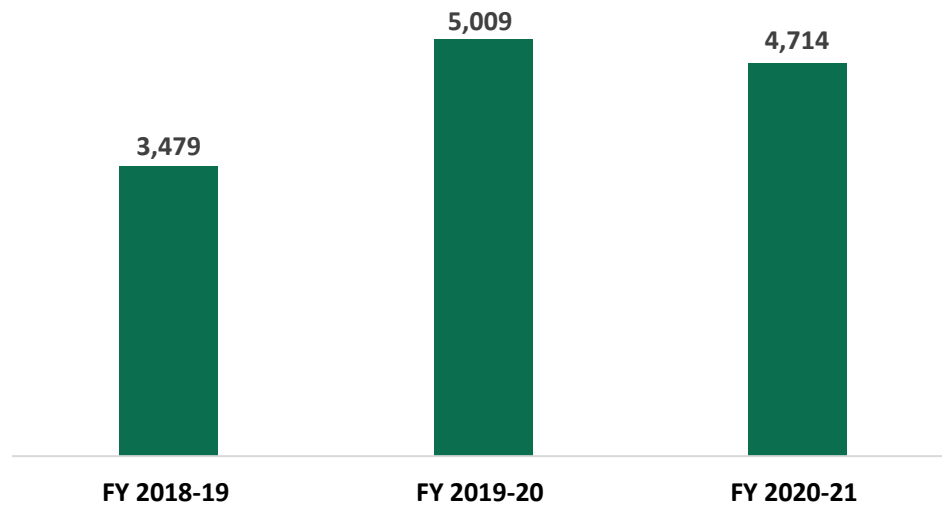
As shown in Exhibit 7 above, the City spent about \$19.3 million, \$23.6 million, and \$25 million respectively during fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21, totaling nearly \$68 million in contracted homelessness services for the three fiscal years audited. The contracts were funded by the federal government, the State of California, the City of Oakland, Alameda County, private grants, and social services grants.

Oakland served an average of 4,400 people experiencing homelessness each year

In fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21, City programs served roughly 3,500 to 5,000 unique participants each year. Exhibit 8 below shows the total number of persons served by fiscal year. This includes participation in the City's crisis response programs, longer-term housing, and supportive services, all of which are described below.

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Exhibit 8: Total number of persons served in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21



Source: Homeless Management Information System

The City of Oakland offers a range of services to people experiencing homelessness

The City primarily contracts out its range of services offered to people experiencing homelessness. The homelessness services discussed in this report fall into three categories: 1) crisis response programs, 2) longer-term housing, and 3) supportive services.

Crisis response programs

Crisis response programs include Community Cabins, Emergency Shelters, Transitional Housing, and RV Safe Parking. In addition, during COVID, the City implemented shelters specifically for people vulnerable to the virus.

Introduction and Background

Exhibit 9: Descriptions of the City's crisis response programs

Program Type	Description
Community Cabins	Community Cabins are groupings of small shelters that house up to two people. The program has fewer restrictions than some other programs, as participants are allowed partners, pets, and possessions. Program participants generally get into the program through street outreach or by walk-ins. Program participants can also receive support services, including but not limited to housing navigation, hygiene services, and meals. The Community Cabin program is not intended to be a long-term housing solution; rather, it is a temporary program to support participants in securing permanent housing.
Emergency Shelters	<p>Emergency Shelters are facilities with the primary purpose of providing temporary shelter for people experiencing homelessness. Emergency Shelters for single adults are traditionally meant to serve people on a first come-first served basis. Once individuals are assigned a bed, they can have that bed as long as they want it. Participants do not need to sign an occupancy agreement or lease to stay. Spots are filled through referrals from the Coordinated Entry System, agencies, outreach providers, or from walk-ins.</p> <p>The City has two types of shelters. One is a shelter with limited storage for clients that provides a cot in a congregate room that is set up in the evening and taken down in the morning. The second type is a dormitory style format with storage next to each bed. The shelter provides meals, showers, and case management. Family shelters also provide shelter that is temporary in nature, but unlike single adult shelters, participants are required to sign a participant agreement. Family shelter spots are mostly filled through the family Coordinated Entry System (Family Front Door).</p>
RV Safe Parking	The RV Safe Parking program provides safe parking sites for participants to park RVs or other vehicles and includes drinking water, hygiene services, security, and low voltage electricity. The program has few participant restrictions with minimal rules designed to maintain a healthy and safe community.
Transitional Housing	Transitional Housing is a residential facility or scattered site units that are designed to provide time-limited housing and supportive services to individuals experiencing homelessness, with the goal of transitioning them to permanent housing.
COVID response programs	As a response to COVID, the City set up programs specifically targeted to those particularly vulnerable to the virus.

Introduction and Background

Longer-term housing programs

In addition to crisis response beds, the City also has longer-term housing programs which include Rapid Re-Housing, Oakland Path Rehousing Initiative (OPRI), and Permanent Housing Services.

Exhibit 10: Descriptions of the City's longer-term housing programs

Program type	Description
Rapid Re-Housing	Move-in assistance, short-term rental subsidies, and connections to support services to quickly transition homeless households to permanent housing solutions.
Oakland Path Rehousing Initiative (OPRI)	Multi-jurisdictional partnership with the Oakland Housing Authority (OHA). OHA provides funding for housing subsidies and the City provides funding for housing placement and ongoing supportive services. OPRI is sponsor-based rental assistance for target populations including people living in encampments, youth exiting the foster care system, young adults at risk of being perpetrators or victims of violence, families experiencing homelessness, and people exiting the Community Cabins with a workforce focus.
Permanent Housing Services	Permanent Housing Services are on-site supportive services that include assisting tenants in achieving and maintaining housing stability, improving their overall health and wellbeing, acquiring income and other public benefits, pursuing activities (educational, recreational, and vocational), and increasing opportunities for social connection.

Many of the crisis response and longer-term housing programs include housing navigation services. Housing navigation assists people experiencing homelessness develop a housing plan, address any barriers in achieving the plan, and complete documentation required for housing. It also involves searching and securing housing, completing inspections, utility startups, and moving into housing.

Supportive services

In addition to providing crisis response and longer-term housing, the City also provides supportive services for people experiencing homelessness, both sheltered and unsheltered.

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Exhibit 11: Descriptions of supportive services the City provides

Program type	Description
Hygiene Services	Portable toilets, hand-washing stations, mobile showers, and garbage service to protect the health and safety of those experiencing homelessness.
Street Outreach	A process to seek out and offer basic services to people experiencing homelessness who might otherwise be overlooked or underserved. This includes recording assessments in HMIS, distributing harm reduction supplies such as food, hygiene kits, and rain ponchos, assisting in compiling documents needed to obtain housing, and more.
Workforce programs	Provides job training, including a work experience program, life skills classes, and referrals to other employment programs.

The COVID Pandemic impacts homelessness services

The City issued a Proclamation of a Local Emergency in response to the growing threat of COVID in March 2020. Shortly thereafter, the City partnered with the County, the lead public health agency, to prevent the spread of COVID among unsheltered residents. These efforts included:

- Referrals to hotel rooms and trailers donated by the State,
- Increased direct outreach to distribute small hand sanitizers, hygiene packets, masks, and informational handouts from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC),
- Added hand sanitizers to encampments with hygiene services,
- Toilets, hand sanitizer, and wash stations to additional encampment sites,
- Increased hygiene services to Community Cabins and RV Safe Parking sites,
- Increased cleaning and supplies at indoor shelters, and
- Service to over 300 individuals in the emergency COVID housing programs, Operation HomeBase and Lake Merritt Lodge.

In addition, service providers decreased capacity to minimize the transmission of the virus, increased lengths of stay for some programs, faced impacts in the intake and exits due to outbreaks at congregate living sites, experienced clients losing employment, and struggled to connect clients with benefits due to office closures and limited hours of operation.

Section 1

The City's Homelessness Services Housing Programs: Participants Served, Exit Destinations, and Lengths of Stay

Finding: The City had mixed results in helping program participants exit to permanent housing, many crisis response and longer-term housing participants' long-term outcomes are unknown, and lengths of stay need more analysis.

Summary

The City provides various types of homelessness services housing programs. Crisis response programs include Community Cabins, Emergency Shelters, Transitional Housing, and RV Safe Parking. Longer-term programs include Rapid Re-Housing, the Oakland Path Rehousing Initiative (OPRI), and Permanent Housing Services.

Performance metrics establish what is important for a specific program to accomplish while performance targets are quantifiable goals that define successful performance. Examples of metrics include participants leaving the City's housing programs for permanent housing. Corresponding targets would be specific percentages of participants leaving the City's housing programs for permanent housing. In addition, for some programs, contracts and participant agreements specify other terms like the length of time that participants can stay in various programs.

This section includes information on the number of participants who were served by and left each of the various housing programs during our audit scope (fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21). In addition, this section includes analyses of the various programs' performance against performance metrics and targets defined and established by the Oakland/Berkeley/Alameda County Continuum of Care (CoC) and the Human Services Department's Community Homelessness Services Division (CHS). Finally, this section analyzes program participants' lengths of stay, and identifies whether they stayed longer than terms outlined in service provider contracts or participant agreements.

Audit Results

Summary of select results and the information detailed in this section:

- In fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21, the City's homelessness services housing programs served a total of 8,683 participants (6,697 in crisis response programs and 1,986 in longer-term housing programs).³
- In fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21, a total of 4,839 participants exited the City's homelessness services housing programs (4,110 in crisis response programs and 729 in longer-term housing programs).
- In fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21, the City's crisis response programs for single adults generally did not meet performance targets for exits to permanent housing or exits to homelessness, or the City's target for exits to positive destinations, except for single adult Transitional Housing, which met the target for exits to homelessness in one fiscal year. Family crisis response programs had better performance with family Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing programs, meeting the targets for exits to permanent housing in all three fiscal years. Family Transitional Housing met the targets for exits to permanent housing and exits to homelessness in all three fiscal years. Transitional Housing for transition-aged youth did not meet the targets for exits to permanent housing or exits to homelessness in any of the three fiscal years. We found that the City had not adopted exits to homelessness, exits to positive destinations and exits to streets or unknown destinations metrics and corresponding targets for the Emergency Shelter program. The City has not established metrics or targets for the RV Safe Parking program.
- Longer-term housing programs, which serve far fewer people than crisis response programs and commit to providing more intensive services over longer periods of time, were more successful in meeting performance targets. For example, family Rapid Re-Housing programs met its exit to permanent housing targets and exits to homelessness target in all three fiscal years. We also noted steady improvement in Rapid Re-Housing exits to permanent housing among single adult and transition-aged youth Rapid Re-Housing participants. Similarly, OPRI and Permanent Housing Services met their target to have 95 percent of participants remain housed for one-year or longer in all three fiscal years. OPRI also met its target to have less than 5 percent of its participants exit to homelessness in two of the three fiscal years and Permanent Housing Services met this target in one of the three fiscal years.
- Provider contracts and participant agreements specify goals on the maximum number of days participants can initially stay in various housing programs. Some

³ These numbers are aggregated across program types, so they may include duplicate participants. For example, a Community Cabin participant could also have been a participant of an Emergency Shelter in a given fiscal year.

Audit Results

participants stayed longer than terms outlined in provider contracts and participant agreements. There are various reasons for this, and the City should collect data to analyze this more closely.

HMIS data facilitated an extensive analysis of the City's crisis response and longer-term housing programs

In keeping with the audit objectives of quantifying the number of people placed in housing and evaluating the delivery of homelessness services, this section provides information on the performance of crisis response and longer-term housing programs for fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21. For the various programs, this section provides the following information, auditor analysis, and key observations:

- The description of the programs, the service providers who deliver the programs, and the estimated fiscal year 2020-21 capacities of the different programs.
- The number of participants served during fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21. This information from HMIS identifies the scale of the various services to the community.
- The number of participants who exited in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21. This information from HMIS indicates participant turnover and/or progression through the City's programs.
- The lengths of stay of program participants in programs before leaving during fiscal years 2018-19 through 2020-21. Several programs have specific goals for participants' lengths of stay.
- Data on the number of participants who exited the City's homelessness services programs. This section provides data on exits to homelessness and to permanent housing. In addition, crisis response programs include two additional City-developed metrics, participants who exited to the streets or unknown destinations and positive destinations. Exit destinations are listed and defined in Appendix C.
- Summaries of performance data within HMIS against defined metrics and targets. Performance metrics and targets are important to establish because metrics establish what is important for a specific program to accomplish while the targets are quantifiable goals that define successful performance based on performance metrics set by the CoC and/or the Community Homelessness Services Division (CHS).

Audit Results

- Observations that include noteworthy contract terms, data anomalies, and other implications for the City’s homelessness services.

This section’s data analysis was completed by the City Auditor’s Office and relies on data entered in HMIS directly from the service providers. Our conclusions and analyses rely on timely, accurate, and complete data entry and maintenance of HMIS. Section 3 of this report addresses HMIS data validity issues and the importance of reliable and relevant data to evaluate services.

Community Cabins

Community Cabins are groupings of small shelters that house up to two people. The program has fewer restrictions than some other programs, as participants are allowed partners, pets, and possessions. Program participants generally get into the program through street outreach or by walk-ins. Program participants can also receive support services, including but not limited to housing navigation, hygiene services, and meals. The Community Cabin program is not intended to be a long-term housing solution; rather, it is a temporary program to support participants in securing permanent housing.

The following service providers operated Community Cabins in fiscal year 2020-21: Family Bridges, Housing Consortium of the East Bay, Operation Dignity, and Roots Community Health Center. The maximum bed capacity for all four service providers operating Community Cabins, was 192.

Exhibit 12 below shows the number of participants the Community Cabins served, as well as the number of participants who exited the Community Cabins in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21.

Exhibit 12: The number of participants served by and exited from Community Cabins during fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21

Program Type	Fiscal Year	Participants served	Participants who exited
Community Cabins	2018-19	164	80
	2019-20	505	321
	2020-21	441	298
	Total	1,110	699

Source: City Auditor summary based on HMIS data

Audit Results

Exhibit 12 above shows a total of 1,110 people were served by the Community Cabins during fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21. Participation increased from 164 participants in fiscal year 2018-19, to 441 in fiscal year 2020-21, a significant growth of 169 percent over the audit period, due largely to the opening of additional Community Cabin sites.

Exhibit 12 also shows 699 total participants exited the program in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21. Exits increased from 80 in 2018-19 to 298 in 2020-21, a growth of approximately 273 percent over the same three-year period.

The numbers in Exhibit 12 above reflect unique participants specific to that fiscal year. That means a unique participant in one year could exit and then return and be included in another year's data. If this same participant remained in the program, they would appear as a participant served in the following year. This also applies to the remaining exhibits in the report.

Performance metrics and performance targets are important to establishing program expectations and evaluating performance

The CoC has defined metrics for measuring success in participants exiting programs. Those metrics are exits to permanent housing and exits to homelessness. Community Cabins is a program unique to Oakland and the CoC does not have targets specific to this program. However, CHS has outlined the following targets in the Community Cabin service provider contracts:

- at least 50 percent of participants who leave will leave for permanent housing.
- less than 10 percent of participants who leave will return to homelessness.

In addition to the two metrics and targets above, the City developed its own metrics and targets for Community Cabins. Specifically, the City established a performance target that 70 percent of the participants exiting the cabins will have a “positive exit,” which is an exit to:

- a permanent destination,
- most temporary destinations such as Emergency Shelters,
- institutional destinations such as a substance abuse treatment facility, or
- other destinations such as halfway houses.

The City developed this metric because HUD's definition of exits to homelessness included exits to Emergency Shelters and Transitional Housing. CHS considers these as positive exits from Community Cabins because they are considered temporary housing and are more preferred destinations than the streets. Appendix D lists all the exits that CHS considers positive.

Audit Results

The City also developed the metric of “exits to streets or unknown destinations,” but the City has not defined a target for this metric.

Exhibit 13 below shows the performance of the Community Cabins against performance targets.

For Exhibit 13 and others throughout this report, colors show how performance data compared against performance targets. **Green** shows performance that met or exceeded performance targets. **Yellow** shows performance that was within 10 percent of targets. **Red** shows performance that missed targets by more than 10 percent.

Exhibit 13: Analysis of the Community Cabins’ exits to permanent housing, homelessness, positive destinations, and streets or unknown destinations

Fiscal Year	CoC-Defined Metrics		City-Defined Metrics	
	Exits to Permanent Housing	Exits to Homelessness	Exits to Positive Destinations	Exits to Streets or Unknown Destinations
	TARGET: 50%	TARGET: <10%	TARGET: 70%	TARGET: N/A
2018-19	31%	58%	50%	44%
2019-20	29%	42%	51%	40%
2020-21	27%	44%	63%	22%

Source: City Auditor summary based on HMIS data and service contracts

Note: Percentages do not add up to 100 because there are other destinations not reflected in this exhibit. For example, the CoC does not include any institutional destinations or other destinations among exits to permanent housing or homelessness. For City-defined metrics, some institutional and other destinations are not included in exits to positive destinations, or in exits to streets or unknown destinations.

Community Cabins did not meet exits to permanent housing and exits to homelessness targets which come from CoC metrics

As Exhibit 13 above shows, the Community Cabins did not achieve its targets for exits to permanent housing and exits to homelessness. Exhibit 13 shows that in all three fiscal years, exits to permanent housing ranged from 27 to 31 percent, compared to the target of 50 percent. Exits to homelessness ranged from 42 to 58 percent, significantly more than the target of less than 10 percent.

Audit Results

Community Cabins did not achieve targets for exits to positive destinations and has not defined targets for exits to streets or unknown destinations, which are City-defined metrics

Additionally, Exhibit 13 shows that in all three fiscal years audited, exits to positive destinations ranged from 50 to 63 percent, compared to the target of 70 percent. Our analysis revealed a range of 22 to 44 percent of Community Cabin exits were to streets or unknown destinations in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21. The City has not defined targets for this metric.

The numbers of participants served also needs to be considered

Performance targets are important, but it is also important to consider the raw numbers (primary data that has not been organized, cleaned, or analyzed). For example, a program that places five participants into permanent housing out of a total of 10 people who exited the program in that year, technically meets its 50 percent performance target, while another program places 499 participants in permanent housing out of a total of 1,000 people who exited the program (49 percent), did not. Performance targets notwithstanding, the latter scenario is better because more people were placed into permanent housing. Context matters and raw numbers provide context.

Exhibit 14 below shows the raw numbers of Community Cabin participants who exited the program across the three fiscal years audited, as well as their exits to positive destinations and exits to the streets or unknown destinations.

Exhibit 14: Numbers of participants who exited the Community Cabins and those who exited to positive destinations and to streets or unknown destinations

Fiscal Year	Participants who exited	Participants who exited to positive destinations	Participants who exited to the streets or unknown destinations
FY 2018-19	80	40	35
FY 2019-20	321	163	129
FY 2020-21	298	189	67
Total	699	392	231

Source: City Auditor summary based on HMIS data

Audit Results

In fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21 more Community Cabin participants exited to positive destinations than exited to streets or unknown destinations

Exhibit 14 above shows the Community Cabins were successful at exiting more participants to positive destinations than they exited to the streets or unknown destinations. For all three fiscal years, a total of 699 participants exited, of which 392 exited to positive destinations. A total of 231 participants exited to streets or unknown destinations during the same time period. The numbers exiting to positive destinations compared to those exiting to the streets or unknown destinations improved during our review period. While the number of exits grew 273 percent from 80 to 298 from fiscal year 2018-19 to 2020-21, the number of exits to positive destinations grew 373 percent from 40 to 189, while the number of participants who exited to streets or unknown destinations grew only 92 percent from 35 to 67.

Longer-term participant outcomes and program effectiveness are unknown

HMIS data reports currently only allow “returns to homelessness” to be reviewed on a CoC level and not on the City level or an individual program level. In addition, there is no systemic way that individual participants of any homelessness services programs in Alameda County can be tracked in the HMIS system after they exit programs. Without the ability to easily see if program participants reappear in HMIS after exiting a program to permanent housing, the only way to track whether housing is maintained is by contacting participants directly. Due to those limitations, CHS is unable to effectively track participants after they secure some form of permanent housing.

In 2020, CHS added “housing sustainability” as a new area of its regular monitoring. That monitoring was supposed to evaluate the appropriateness and the sustainability of participants’ housing placements by reviewing client files and placing follow-up calls to exited clients. We sampled six monitoring files and although we saw evidence that CHS reviewed service providers’ client files, we did not see evidence that CHS contacted exited participants.

In February 2021, CHS completed a survey of one of its Transitional Housing program service providers’ permanent housing placements. The work included interviews of seven exited participants from a sample of 88 participants. Out of the seven interviewed, one had fallen back into homelessness, three were at some risk of returning to homelessness, and three were in stable housing situations. From this work, CHS identified key issues to review in future surveys, such as collecting information about levels of rent burden, housing quality, services used, and participants’ barriers to housing.

Although the February 2021 survey did not interview a large number of participants, it did glean some useful insights. By following through with this new area of monitoring for all its programs,

Audit Results

CHS will have more complete information on the success of its programs, as well as information it needs to obtain in the future.

In addition, as we discuss above and further in Section 3 of this report, CHS is unable to identify how many of those participants in each of its programs who exit to permanent housing eventually return to homelessness 6, 12, or 24 months later due to limitations in HMIS.

In order to understand whether exits are truly positive or permanent, CHS needs to determine whether participants remain housed after they exit to permanent housing. Until the City can obtain this information, it cannot adequately assess the long-term effectiveness of its programs.

An increasing number of participants had extended stays

Upon entering the Community Cabins, participants sign agreements with the service providers operating the cabins, to stay up to 180 days (six months) with the possibility of extensions after that time.

We reviewed whether participants stayed longer than the six-month length of stay that the agreements specify. Exhibit 15 below shows the number of participants who exited, the initial maximum length of stay (without considering extensions), the percentage of participants who stayed longer than the maximum length of stay, and the average stay of those participants who exited the Community Cabins in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21.

Exhibit 15: Number of participants who exited, maximum lengths of stay, percentage of participants who stayed longer than 180 days, and average lengths of stay for those participants who exited Community Cabins in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21

Fiscal year	Participants who exited	Maximum stay	Exits with stays longer than 180 days	Average stay of those who exited (in days)
2018-19	80	180 days	8%	82
2019-20	321		28%	124
2020-21	298		44%	183
Total	699			

Source: City Auditor summary based on HMIS data and service contracts

As Exhibit 15 above shows, during fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21, a total of 699 individuals exited the Community Cabins. The average length of stay for those who exited was between 82 and 183 days – this is the average, so some participants stayed for shorter terms,

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while others stayed for longer. Moreover, the average length of stay is calculated only on those exited within the year; some participants who did not exit during the year may have also stayed longer than the 180 days.

The audit found participants stayed longer than 180 days in all three fiscal years. Of those participants who exited, 8 to 44 percent stayed longer than 180 days. The percentage of participants staying longer than 180 days increased over time.

The increase in the lengths of stay at Community Cabins may be attributed to various factors including COVID (in March 2020 the 6-month length of stay goal was paused), extensions granted to participants who were unable to exit to a stable destination, and challenges in exiting participants to more permanent programs.

Contract terms for Community Cabin providers should be strengthened

The contract language for providers should be strengthened to provide more consistency across the service providers' contracts. For example, CHS has not included a performance target for exits to streets or unknown destinations in the contracts with the Community Cabin providers. Additionally, as noted above, CHS has established a target of 70 percent exiting to positive destinations from the Community Cabins, but one service provider had a lower target of 50 percent exiting to positive destinations. Lastly, although the service providers require participants agree to an initial 180-day goal on their stays at the Community Cabins, the City has not included this provision in its contracts with Community Cabin providers.

Emergency Shelters (families and single adults)

Emergency Shelters are facilities with the primary purpose of providing a temporary shelter for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Emergency Shelters for single adults are traditionally meant to serve individuals on a first come-first served basis. Once individuals are assigned a bed, they can have that bed as long as they want it. Participants do not need to sign an occupancy agreement or lease to stay. Spots are filled through referrals from the Coordinated Entry System, agencies, outreach providers, or from walk-ins. The City has two types of shelters. One is a shelter with limited storage for clients that provides a cot in a congregate room that is set up in the evening and taken down in the morning. The second type is a dormitory style format with storage next to each bed. The shelter provides meals, showers, and case management. Family shelters also provide shelter that is temporary in nature, but unlike single adult shelters, participants are required to sign a participant agreement. Family shelter spots are filled through the family Coordinated Entry System (Family Front Door).

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The following service providers operated Emergency Shelters for families and single adults in fiscal year 2020-21: Building Futures for Women and Children, East Oakland Community Project, St. Mary's Center, and St. Vincent de Paul. The total maximum daily bed capacity across the emergency shelters was 325.⁴

Exhibit 16 below shows the number of participants served in shelters serving families and single adults in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21.

Exhibit 16: The number of participants served and exited from Emergency Shelters in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21

Program Type	Fiscal Year	Participants served	Participants who exited
Family Emergency Shelters	2018-19	46	30
	2019-20	35	21
	2020-21	162	97
	Total	243	148
Single Adult Emergency Shelters	2018-19	1,092	380
	2019-20	1,583	1,430
	2020-21	626	481
	Total	3,301	2,291

Source: City Auditor summary based on HMIS data

As Exhibit 16 above shows, family and single adult Emergency Shelters collectively served 3,544 participants in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21 (243 family participants and 3,301 single adult participants). During this time period, 2,439 participants exited (148 from family shelters and 2,291 from single adult shelters). The number of participants served by both types of shelters decreased from 1,138 participants in fiscal year 2018-19 to 788 in fiscal year 2020-21, a decrease of 31 percent over the three-year audit period.

Exhibit 16 also shows the number of participants who exited Emergency Shelters increased between fiscal years 2018-19 and 2020-21, from 410 to 578 participants, a growth of approximately 41 percent over the three-year audit period.

⁴ Daily capacity does not include seasonal shelter beds at the St. Mary's Center.

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Participation in family Emergency Shelters increased between fiscal years 2018-19 and 2020-21

Exhibit 16 above also shows the number of participants served in the family Emergency Shelters totaled 243 in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21. Participation ranged from a low of 35 participants in fiscal year 2019-20, to a high of 162 participants in fiscal year 2020-21. Over the three-year audit period, participants served increased from 46 to 162, an increase of 252 percent.

Exhibit 16 above also shows the number of participants who exited family Emergency Shelters totaled 148 in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21. These exiting participants increased from 30 to 97 participants between fiscal years 2018-19 and 2020-21, a 223 percent growth rate, almost proportionate to the rate of participation growth.

Participation in single adult Emergency Shelters

Finally, Exhibit 16 above shows the number of participants served in the single adult Emergency Shelters totaled 3,301 in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21, ranging from 626 participants in fiscal year 2020-21 to 1,583 participants in fiscal year 2019-20. The numbers served decreased from 1,092 participants in fiscal year 2018-19, to 626 in fiscal year 2020-21, a decrease of 43 percent over the three-year audit period. The single adult Emergency Shelters significantly reduced the number of beds in fiscal years 2019-20 and 2020-21 in order to more safely serve participants during COVID.

Exhibit 16 above also shows 2,291 participants exited single adult Emergency Shelters in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21. The number of participants who exited single adult Emergency Shelters increased from 380 participants in fiscal year 2018-19 to 481 in fiscal year 2020-21, a 27 percent increase.

Issues with the single adult Emergency Shelter data

The single adult Emergency Shelter exit data was likely inaccurate because of two significant data issues. In fiscal year 2018-19, one shelter provider did not accurately enter data into HMIS, affecting both that specific program's data, but also the systemwide data that quantifies performance across all of Oakland's programs. Specifically, the service provider indicated that it exited only 10 participants from its program throughout the year, when in fact it exited many more participants. Then in fiscal year 2019-20, the vast majority of exits were classified as exits to unknown destinations because the provider did not document the reasons participants left. As we progress through this section, it is important to keep in mind these large data issues that affected fiscal years 2018-19 and 2019-20.

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Performance metrics and targets for Emergency Shelters

We compiled HMIS data from the Emergency Shelters and compared them against CoC metrics and targets. The City's target for the CoC metric of exits to permanent housing was 30 percent. The CoC has a 15 percent target for exits to homelessness, but the City does not have a target for that metric in any of its Emergency Shelter contracts. We also used Emergency Shelter data to measure performance against the aforementioned City-defined metrics adopted for the Community Cabins (exits to positive destinations and exits to streets or unknown destinations) to provide greater insight into these programs' performance. However, the City is not currently using this metric, and we recommend the City consider using it since it provides more useful information than the CoC-defined metric. Exhibit 17 below shows the CoC and City-defined metrics, targets, and performance by shelter type and fiscal year.

Exhibit 17: Analysis of the Emergency Shelter exits to permanent housing, homelessness, positive destinations and streets or unknown destinations

Program Type	Fiscal Year	CoC-Defined Metrics		City-Defined Metrics	
		Exits to Permanent Housing	Exits to Homelessness	Exits to Positive Destinations	Exits to Streets or Unknown Destinations
		TARGET: 30%	TARGET: N/A	TARGET: N/A	TARGET: N/A
Family Emergency Shelters	2018-19	77%	20%	83%	17%
	2019-20	52%	33%	67%	33%
	2020-21	34%	42%	82%	11%
Single Adult Emergency Shelters	2018-19	24%	39%	62%	25%
	2019-20	7%	14%	22%	74%
	2020-21	15%	53%	47%	43%

Source: City Auditor summary based on HMIS data and service contracts

Family Emergency Shelter performance data on exits to permanent housing exceeded the performance target

As Exhibit 17 above illustrates, family Emergency Shelters met the target for exits to permanent housing in all three fiscal years. Among family Emergency Shelters, between 34 and 77 percent of participants who left, exited to permanent housing, meeting the target of 30 percent in all three fiscal years. On the other hand, single adult Emergency Shelters did not meet the targets in any of the three fiscal years. Among single adult Emergency Shelter participants who exited,

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according to the HMIS data, between 7 and 24 percent exited to permanent housing, missing the target of 30 percent in the same three fiscal years.

Exhibit 17 also shows that in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21, between 20 and 42 percent of people who exited family Emergency Shelters, exited to homelessness. The data for single adult Emergency Shelters showed that between 14 and 53 percent of exits were to homelessness in the same fiscal years.

The data may suggest improvements are needed to ensure shelter participants avoid homelessness upon exiting. Alternatively, the data may reflect that exits to permanent housing and exits to homelessness performance targets are unrealistic for Emergency Shelters.

It is important to note the CoC-defined metrics count temporary shelter placements as exits to homelessness, which diminishes the usefulness of the exits to homelessness metric to evaluate Emergency Shelters.

Like in Community Cabins it would be useful to set targets for exits to positive destinations and exits to streets or unknown destinations for Emergency Shelters

As was the case with the Community Cabins, positive exits and exits to the streets or unknown destinations may provide a better measure of the effectiveness of the Emergency Shelter programs than the CoC metrics of exits to permanent housing and exits to homelessness.

Exhibit 17 above shows how family and single adult shelters performed using the City-defined metrics of positive exits and exits to streets or unknown destinations used for Community Cabins. As Exhibit 17 shows, 67 to 83 percent of family Emergency Shelter participants who left, exited to positive destinations in the three fiscal years audited, while 11 to 33 percent of participants who left, exited to streets or unknown destinations.

Among the participants who left single adult Emergency Shelters, between 22 and 62 percent exited to positive destinations. Between 25 and 74 percent exited to the streets or unknown destinations. This large variance is attributed to the data entry error discussed earlier. These City-defined metrics, which were used to evaluate the Community Cabins, have not been adopted for Emergency Shelters.

The City should adopt the City-defined metrics of positive exits and exits to street or unknown destinations and set realistic targets for its Emergency Shelter providers.

Numbers of participants who exited Emergency Shelters and their exit destinations

Exhibit 18 below shows the total participants who exited to positive destinations, and to streets or unknown destinations during fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21.

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Exhibit 18: Number of Emergency Shelter participants who exited, and those who exited to positive destinations and streets or unknown destinations in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21

Program Type	Fiscal Year	Participants who exited	Participants who exited to positive destinations	Participants who exited to the streets or unknown destinations
Family Emergency Shelters	2018-19	30	25	5
	2019-20	21	14	7
	2020-21	97	80	11
	Total	148	119	23
Single Adult Emergency Shelters	2018-19	380	236	96
	2019-20	1,430	312	1,059
	2020-21	481	228	207
	Total	2,291	776	1,362

Source: City Auditor summary based on HMIS data

Family Emergency Shelters' exits to positive destinations far exceeded exits to streets or unknown destinations

Exhibit 18 above shows that in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21, a total of 148 participants left family Emergency Shelters. For the three-year audit period, a total of 119 of these participants exited to positive destinations while 23 participants exited to streets or unknown destinations. Exits to positive destinations increased between fiscal year 2018-19 and 2020-21 from 25 to 80, an increase of 220 percent. Exits to streets or unknown destinations in family shelters also increased during the same time period, from 5 to 11, but at a lower rate of 120 percent. Exits to positive destinations grew almost twice the rate of exits to streets or unknown destinations.

Available data for the single adult Emergency Shelters show stagnant growth in exits to positive destinations

Exhibit 18 above shows that in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21, a total of 2,291 participants left single adult Emergency Shelters. For the three-year audit period, a total of 776 of these participants exited to positive destinations while 1,362 participants were recorded as exiting to streets or unknown destinations. Excluding the fiscal year 2019-20 when single adult

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shelters had a huge increase in exits, single adult shelters had an increase in the number of exits to streets or unknown destinations - 96 to 207, or a 116 percent increase - and a decrease in the exits to positive destinations - 236 to 228, a 3 percent decrease - between fiscal years 2018-19 and 2020-21. As we noted earlier, there were two data errors that affected fiscal years 2018-19 and 2019-20.

The available data suggest overall exits to positive destinations slightly decreased between fiscal years 2018-19 and 2020-21, when the rate of exits to streets or unknown destinations increased. However, as stated earlier, single adult Emergency Shelter data were affected by two data input issues in 2018-19 and 2019-20, which undermines the ability to precisely identify exit trends.

Emergency Shelter lengths of stay

Another important metric for the City to track is length of stay. Family Emergency Shelters require participants to sign program agreements and have a goal of having families stay between 6 and 9 months. Providers also have a contractual goal of limiting 80 percent of their participants to a length of stay of 9 months or less. On the other hand, single adult Emergency Shelters do not have any length of stay goals.

Exhibit 19 below shows the number of participants who exited and the average length of stay for those participants who exited family and single adult Emergency Shelters in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21.

Exhibit 19: Number of Emergency Shelter participants who exited and average lengths of stay for those participants who exited in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21

Program Type	Fiscal Year	Exits	Average Stay of those exiting
Family Shelters	FY 2018-19	30	174 days
	FY 2019-20	21	151 days
	FY 2020-21	97	143 days
	Total	148	
Single Adult Shelters	FY 2018-19	380	74 days
	FY 2019-20	1,430	190 days
	FY 2020-21	481	79 days
	Total	2,291	

Source: City Auditor summary based on HMIS data and service contracts

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In fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21, a total of 148 participants exited the family Emergency Shelters. The range of average lengths of stay among these participants was between 143 days (fiscal year 2020-21) and 174 days (fiscal year 2018-19), which was within the maximum stay of 270 days.

In fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21, a total of 2,291 participants exited the single adult Emergency Shelters. The range of average lengths of stay was between 74 days (fiscal year 2018-19) and 190 days (fiscal year 2019-20). Again, these are average lengths of stay which means some participants had shorter stays, while others stayed longer. As discussed earlier, length of stay data were affected by the data errors in fiscal years 2018-19 and 2019-20.

Contract terms for Emergency Shelter providers should be strengthened

The contract terms for Emergency Shelter providers should be strengthened to provide more consistency in the service providers' contracts. First, CHS should develop performance targets for positive exits and exits to streets or unknown destinations, as those metrics may be more meaningful than the exits to permanent housing and exits to homelessness metrics. Second, the City has a standard that its housing programs maintain at least a 90 percent occupancy rate. The City should require all service providers to maintain at least a 90 percent daily occupancy rate. The audit found that CHS did not include this requirement in one of its contracts with a single adult Emergency Shelter service provider.

RV Safe Parking

The RV Safe Parking program provides parking sites for participants to park their RV or vehicle and includes drinking water, hygiene services, security, and low voltage electricity. The program has few participant restrictions with minimal rules designed to maintain a healthy and safe community.

The following service providers operated RV Safe Parking sites in fiscal year 2020-21: Building Opportunities for Self Sufficiency, Housing Consortium of the East Bay, and Operation Dignity. In fiscal year 2020-21 the City had capacity for 147 RV Safe Parking vehicles, or 294 beds (2 estimated per vehicle).

RV Safe Parking lacks metrics, targets, and housing navigation resources

Unlike the other programs previously described, the City has not established targets for exits to permanent housing, exits to homelessness, exits to positive destinations, or exits to streets or unknown destinations for the RV Safe Parking program. Without establishing program goals, it

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is unclear how program participation is intended to lead to permanent housing and other positive outcomes.

If it is to establish targets for exits, the RV Safe Parking program would need to reconsider its service delivery model. The RV Safe Parking service providers within our audit scope had limited dedicated resources specifically for housing navigation and other supportive services. In particular, housing navigation can help match participants with more permanent housing options.

The City cannot expect participants to improve their living situations without offering housing navigation and other services.

Exhibit 20 below shows the number of participants served by and exited from the RV Safe Parking program in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21.

Exhibit 20: The number of RV Safe Parking participants served by and exited from Emergency Shelters in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21

Program Type	Fiscal Year	Participants served	Participants who exited
RV Safe Parking	2018-19	11	0
	2019-20	162	21
	2020-21	173	40
	Total	346	61

Source: HMIS data

Exhibit 20 above shows 346 participants were served in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21. Participants served in the RV Safe Parking program increased from 11 to 173 participants between fiscal year 2018-19 (the year the program was initiated) and fiscal year 2020-21. Across all three audited years, 61 participants exited, with exits increasing from 0 participants in fiscal year 2018-19 to 40 participants in fiscal year 2020-21.

RV Safe Parking Lengths of Stay

The RV Safe Parking program had a goal for length of stay. That goal, like the Community Cabins, is in the form of a program agreement with its participants. The maximum length of stay for the program is 180 days, or 6 months, with the possibility of extensions following that initial length of stay.

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Exhibit 21 below shows the number of participants who exited each year, the maximum initial length of stay, the percentage of participants who stayed longer than 180 days, and the average stay of those who exited each year for fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21.

Exhibit 21: Number of RV Safe Parking participants who exited, maximum lengths of stay, percentage of participants who stayed longer than 180 days, and average lengths of stay for those participants who exited in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21

Fiscal year	Participants who exited	Maximum stay	Exits with stays longer than 180 days	Average stay of those who exited (in days)
2018-19	0	180 days	N/A	N/A
2019-20	21		38%	132
2020-21	40		85%	308
Total	61			

Source: City Auditor summary based on HMIS data and service contracts

The length of stay data shown in Exhibit 21 above show that lengths of stay have increased between fiscal year 2019-20 and 2020-21. In fiscal year 2020-21, 85 percent of participants who exited stayed longer than the maximum of 180 days.

Transitional Housing (families, single adults, transition-aged youth)

Transitional Housing is a residential facility or scattered site units that are designed to provide time-limited housing and supportive services to individuals experiencing homelessness, with the goal of transitioning them to permanent housing.

The following service providers operated transitional housing facilities for families, single adults, and transition-aged youth (people 18 to 24 years of age) in fiscal year 2020-21: Bay Area Community Services, Covenant House, East Oakland Community Project, First Place for Youth, and Youth Spirit Artworks. The maximum bed capacity for the service providers operating transitional housing was 353.

Exhibit 22 below shows the number of participants served by and exited from family, single adult, and transition-aged youth Transitional Housing in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21.

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Exhibit 22: The number of participants served by and exiting Transitional Housing in fiscal years 2018-19 through 2020-21

Program Type	Fiscal Year	Participants served	Participants who exited
Family Transitional Housing	2018-19	121	41
	2019-20	149	89
	2020-21	115	59
	Total	385	189
Single Adult Transitional Housing	2018-19	309	163
	2019-20	350	204
	2020-21	349	197
	Total	1,008	564
Transition-Aged Youth Transitional Housing (Ages 18-24)	2018-19	116	64
	2019-20	92	60
	2020-21	96	34
	Total	304	158

Source: City Auditor summary based on HMIS data

Participation in Transitional Housing programs for families, single adults, and transition-aged youth remained relatively flat between fiscal years 2018-19 and 2020-21

Exhibit 22 above shows family, single adult, and transition-aged youth Transitional Housing collectively served 1,697 participants in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21. During this time, 911 participants exited the Transitional Housing programs. Across the three program types, the number of participants served increased from 546 participants in fiscal year 2018-19 to 560 in fiscal year 2020-21, an increase of 3 percent. The number of participants who exited increased from 268 in fiscal year 2018-19 to 290 in fiscal year 2020-21, or 8 percent during the same three-year period.

Family Transitional Housing

Exhibit 22 above shows 385 participants were served by Family Transitional Housing providers for the three-year audit period. The number of participants served in family Transitional Housing ranged from 115 in fiscal year 2020-21 to 149 participants in fiscal year 2019-20. The numbers served decreased from 121 participants in fiscal year 2018-19 to 115 in fiscal year 2020-21, a decrease of five percent over the three-year period.

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Exhibit 22 above also shows a total of 189 participants exited family Transitional Housing in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21, and the number of participants who exited family Transitional Housing increased from 41 to 59 participants between fiscal years 2018-19 and 2020-21, or an increase of 44 percent.

Single adult Transitional Housing

Exhibit 22 above shows 1,008 total participants were served in single adult Transitional Housing in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21, and participation ranged from 309 to 350 per fiscal year. The numbers served increased from 309 participants in fiscal year 2018-19 to 349 in fiscal year 2020-21, an increase of 13 percent over the three-year period.

Exhibit 22 above also shows a total of 564 participants exited single adult Transitional Housing in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21, and the number of participants who exited single adult Transitional Housing increased from 163 to 197 participants between fiscal years 2018-19 and 2020-21, a 21 percent increase.

Transition-aged youth Transitional Housing

Exhibit 22 above shows 304 participants were served by transition-aged youth Transitional Housing for the three-year audit period, and the number of participants served in transition-aged youth Transitional Housing ranged from 92 to 116 participants in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21. The numbers served decreased from 116 participants in fiscal year 2018-19 to 96 in fiscal year 2020-21, a decrease of 17 percent over the three fiscal years audited.

Exhibit 22 above also shows a total of 158 participants exited transition-aged youth Transitional Housing, and the number of exits decreased from 64 to 34 participants between fiscal years 2018-19 and 2020-21, a decrease of 47 percent. CHS attributed the decrease in the number of participants to COVID.

Performance metrics and targets for Transitional Housing

All the Transition Housing programs have a target that 80 percent of participants who exit should exit to permanent housing, and a target that no more than 10 percent of those exiting should exit to homelessness. Exhibit 23 below shows whether the Transitional Housing programs achieved the CoC-defined performance targets.

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Exhibit 23: Transitional Housing programs performance against targets for exits to permanent housing and exits to homelessness

Program Type	Fiscal Year	Exits to Permanent Housing	Exits to Homelessness
		TARGET: 80%	TARGET: <10%
Family Transitional Housing	2018-19	100%	0%
	2019-20	97%	3%
	2020-21	83%	5%
Single Adult Transitional Housing	2018-19	76%	6%
	2019-20	61%	17%
	2020-21	57%	22%
Transition-Aged Youth Transitional Housing	2018-19	72%	13%
	2019-20	62%	17%
	2020-21	71%	24%

Source: City Auditor summary based on HMIS data and service contracts

As Exhibit 23 shows, family Transitional Housing programs achieved both performance targets during all three fiscal years. On the other hand, single adult and transition-aged youth Transitional Housing programs frequently did not achieve defined targets.

Exhibit 23 shows that in all three fiscal years, single adult and transition-aged youth Transitional Housing programs placed no more than 76 percent of those exiting into permanent housing, compared to the target of 80 percent. Moreover, in the same three fiscal years, between 6 and 22 percent of single adult and transition-aged youth Transitional Housing participants exited to homelessness, compared to the target of less than ten percent. The exception was single adult Transitional Housing in fiscal year 2018-19, when 6 percent of exiting participants exited to homelessness.

COVID had a significant effect on the exits to permanent housing and homelessness in Transitional Housing (especially for single adults). For example, some individuals stayed longer as a result of COVID, and some program's capacity was restricted due to unforeseen outbreaks, quarantines, and the necessity to reduce capacity to safeguard against transmission. Additionally, Transitional Housing participants considered to be at high risk of developing complications from COVID, were exited to a County-operated non-congregate emergency shelter hotel program. Due to the CoC definition of "homelessness," these exits counted as

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exits to homelessness. One provider referred about 40 residents to the County-run hotel shelter during the 2020-21 contract year (slightly different than the City's fiscal year).

Transitional Housing lengths of stay vary between family, single adults, and transition-aged youth

Transitional Housing programs have varied maximum lengths of stay written into their contracts. Family Transitional Housing has a maximum length of stay of six months with options to extend that stay in one-month intervals. Single adult Transitional Housing has a length of stay goal of four to six months for program participants but has a maximum length of stay of 24 months. Transition-aged youth Transitional Housing programs have a maximum length of stay of 24 months.

CHS explained that it is the program's goal to keep transition-aged youth in the program as close to the 24-month maximum as possible. The City's Transitional Housing programs are primarily funded by the U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), which requires a maximum length of stay of 24 months for Transitional Housing program participants.⁵

Exhibit 24 below shows the number of participants who exited by program type, maximum stay, the average stay of those participants who exited, and the percentage of those exited who stayed longer than the maximum length of stay in fiscal years 2018-19 through 2020-21.

⁵ A homeless individual or family may remain in transitional housing for a period longer than 24 months, if permanent housing for the individual or family has not been located or if the individual or family requires additional time to prepare for independent living.

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Exhibit 24: Length of stay for Transitional Housing participants exiting in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21, compared to maximum lengths of stay

Program Type	Fiscal Year	Exits	Maximum stay	Exits with stays longer than max	Average stay of those who exited (in days)
Family Transitional Housing	2018-19	41	180 days (6 months)	100%	527 days
	2019-20	89		85%	432 days
	2020-21	59		76%	274 days
	Total	189			
Single Adult Transitional Housing	2018-19	163	730 days (24 months)	12%	290 days
	2019-20	204		4%	249 days
	2020-21	197		7%	282 days
	Total	564			
Transition-Aged Youth Transitional Housing	2018-19	64	730 days (24 months)	2%	298 days
	2019-20	60		5%	298 days
	2020-21	34		12%	306 days
	Total	158			

Source: City Auditor summary based on HMIS data and service contracts

As Exhibit 24 above shows, from fiscal year 2018-19 through 2020-21, a total of 911 individuals exited the family (189), single adult (564), and transition-aged youth (158) Transitional Housing programs.

Lengths of stay among family Transitional Housing participants declined over time but continued to exceed the standard six-month term

As shown on Exhibit 24 above, the average length of stay for participants exiting family Transitional Housing programs exceeded the maximum length of stay of six months in all three fiscal years and was over a year in fiscal years 2018-19 and 2019-20. Furthermore, in fiscal year 2018-19, 100 percent of those who exited were in the program for longer than six months. By fiscal year 2020-21, 76 percent of those who exited were in the program for longer than six months. It is important to keep in mind that while the program defines a six-month maximum, but extensions are granted, and ultimately, per HUD guidelines, participants can stay 24 months or longer under certain circumstances.

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Average length of stay among single adult and transition-aged youth Transitional Housing were consistently shorter than the standard 24-month terms

For single adult and transition-aged youth Transitional Housing programs, the average length of stay for those exiting the program was significantly lower than the maximum length of stay of 24 months. In fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21, between 2 and 12 percent of those who left those programs, stayed longer than 24 months.

Additional analysis of lengths of stay would be beneficial

Additional analysis of the reasons why crisis response participants exit programs when they do, could inform programmatic decisions that may improve participants' outcomes.

Shorter lengths of stay could indicate that participants do not feel comfortable in the crisis response programs, or that participants are ready to move on relatively soon. Longer lengths of stay could indicate participants' stagnant progress, the City's inability to quickly prepare participants to exit to permanent housing or other positive destinations, a shortage in available permanent housing, or some other factors.

It is important to analyze lengths of stay because ultimately, the more that beds turn over, the more people the City can serve.

The extended stays among crisis response participants we identified and discussed above may suggest that existing maximum length of stay targets are not practical and realistic. Additional analysis could identify practical and realistic lengths of stay targets, which should be clearly reflected in service provider contracts.

Rapid Re-Housing (families, single adults, transition-aged youth)

Rapid Re-Housing is move-in assistance, short-term rental subsidies, and connections to support services to quickly transition homeless households to permanent housing solutions.

The following service providers operated Rapid Re-Housing programs for families, single adults, and transition-aged youth in fiscal year 2020-21: Abode Services, Bay Area Community Services, Building Futures with Women and Children, Covenant House, East Oakland Community Project, and St. Mary's Center.

Exhibit 25 below shows the number of participants served in Rapid Re-Housing programs, and the number of participants who left the programs in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21.

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Exhibit 25: The number of participants served in and exited from Rapid Re-Housing programs in fiscal years 2018-19 through 2020-21

Program Type	Fiscal Year	Participants served	Participants who exited
Family Rapid Re-Housing	2018-19	135	94
	2019-20	253	137
	2020-21	210	141
	Total	598	372
Single Adult Rapid Re-Housing	2018-19	36	17
	2019-20	84	49
	2020-21	119	69
	Total	239	135
Transition-Aged Youth Rapid Re-Housing	2018-19	69	16
	2019-20	100	41
	2020-21	72	35
	Total	241	92

Source: City Auditor summary based on HMIS data

Rapid Re-Housing participation trends varied across family, single adult, and transition-aged youth programs in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21

Exhibit 25 above shows family, single adult, and transition-aged youth Rapid Re-Housing collectively served 1,078 participants in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21 (598 family, 239 single adults, and 241 transition-aged youth). Additionally, during this three-year audit period, 599 participants exited the Rapid Re-Housing programs (372 family, 135 single adults, and 92 transition-aged youth). Across the three program types, the number of participants served increased from 240 participants in fiscal year 2018-19, to 401 in fiscal year 2020-21, an increase of 67 percent. The number of participants who exited increased from 127 in fiscal year 2018-19, to 245 in fiscal year 2020-21, or 93 percent during the same three-year period.

Family Rapid Re-Housing

As shown on Exhibit 25 above, 598 participants were served by family Rapid Re-Housing in fiscal years 2018-19 and 2020-21. The number of participants served Re-Housing ranged from 135 to

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253 participants. The numbers served increased from 135 participants in fiscal year 2018-19 to 210 in fiscal year 2020-21, an increase of 56 percent over the three-year period.

Exhibit 25 above also shows a total of 372 participants exited family Rapid Re-Housing in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21, and the number of participants who exited family Rapid Re-Housing increased from 94 to 141 participants between fiscal years 2018-19 and 2020-21, or an increase of 50 percent.

Single Adult Rapid Re-Housing

Exhibit 25 above shows 239 participants were served by single adult Rapid Re-Housing in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21. The number of participants served in single adult Rapid Re-Housing ranged from 36 to 119 participants in fiscal years 2018-19 through 2020-21, an increase of 231 percent over the three-year period.

Exhibit 25 above also shows a total of 135 participants exited single adult Rapid Re-Housing in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21, and the number of participants who exited single adult Rapid Re-Housing increased from 17 to 69 participants during the three-year period, or an increase of 306 percent.

Transition-Aged Youth Rapid Re-Housing

Exhibit 25 above shows 241 participants were served by transition-aged youth Rapid Re-Housing in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21. The number of participants served in transition-aged youth Rapid Re-Housing ranged from 69 to 100 participants during the three-year audit period, a difference of 45 percent.

Exhibit 25 above also shows a total of 92 participants exited transition-aged youth Rapid Re-Housing in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21, and the number of participants who exited single adult Rapid Re-Housing ranged from 16 participants in fiscal year 2018-19 to 35 participants in 2020-21, or an increase of 119 percent.

Performance metrics and targets for Rapid Re-Housing

Rapid Re-Housing is subject to the CoC-defined performance metrics of exits to permanent housing and exits to homelessness. The target for exits to permanent housing was 80 percent and the target for exits to homelessness was less than 5 percent for family, single adult, and transitional-aged youth programs.

Exhibit 26 below shows the Rapid Re-Housing programs by type, the percentage of exits to permanent housing compared to target, and the percentage of exits to homelessness compared to the target.

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Exhibit 26: Rapid Re-Housing programs performance against targets

Program Type	Fiscal Year	Exits to Permanent Housing	Exits to Homelessness
		TARGET: 80%	TARGET: <5%
Family Rapid Re-Housing	2018-19	98%	0%
	2019-20	95%	4%
	2020-21	99%	0%
Single Adult Rapid Re-Housing	2018-19	69%	19%
	2019-20	86%	10%
	2020-21	98%	0%
Transition Aged Youth Rapid Re-Housing	2018-19	63%	6%
	2019-20	76%	20%
	2020-21	89%	11%

Source: City Auditor summary based on HMIS data and service contracts

Family Rapid Re-Housing consistently achieved performance targets while single adult and transition-aged youth Rapid Re-Housing improved over time

As Exhibit 26 above shows, family Rapid Re-Housing exiting participants who exited to permanent housing ranged from 95 percent to 99 percent, achieving their targets for exits to permanent housing in all three fiscal years. Moreover, family Rapid Re-Housing participants exiting to homelessness ranged from 0 to 4 percent, meeting the target for exits to homelessness in all three fiscal years.

Exhibit 26 also shows single adult Rapid Re-Housing programs steadily improved performance over the three fiscal years as the exiting participants who exited to permanent housing ranged from 69 percent in fiscal year 2018-19 to 86 percent in 2019-20, to 98 percent in fiscal year 2020-21, thus meeting their target for exits to permanent housing in fiscal years 2019-20 and 2020-21. Moreover, the single adult Rapid Re-Housing participants who left and exited to homelessness dropped from 19 percent in fiscal year 2018-19, to 10 percent in fiscal year 2019-20, to 0 percent in fiscal year 2020-21, meeting the exits to homelessness target in fiscal year 2020-21.

Exit data for transition-aged youth Rapid Re-Housing programs also improved with respect to exits to permanent housing. The transition-aged Youth Rapid Re-Housing exiting participants who exited to permanent housing ranged from 63 percent to 89 percent, thus meeting the

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target in fiscal year 2020-21. On the other hand, transition-aged youth Rapid Re-Housing participants who left and exited to homelessness ranged from 6 percent to 20 percent, thus not meeting the target of less than 5 percent or less for any of the fiscal years in our audit scope.

Length of stay terms are different for Rapid Re-Housing programs

Because Rapid Re-Housing is not providing a unit of housing like the previous housing programs, length of stay is a bit different. Only Rapid Re-Housing for transition-aged youth provides a contractual end of rental assistance benefits. Transition-aged youth Rapid Re-Housing programs provide a maximum 24 months of rental assistance benefits, plus 6 months of supportive services after a housing placement. Both family and single adult Rapid Re-Housing service providers do not terminate benefits in their contracts but have clauses that commit to supportive services being provided for 6 months after the housing placement. Because they do not have contractual or program goals for length of participation, we did not analyze the length of stay for these programs.

Oakland Path Re-Housing Initiative (OPRI) for single adults

OPRI is a multi-jurisdictional partnership with the Oakland Housing Authority (OHA). OHA provides funding for housing subsidies and the City provides funding for housing placement and ongoing supportive services. OPRI is sponsor-based rental assistance for target populations including people living in encampments, youth exiting the foster care system, young adults at risk of being perpetrators or victims of violence, families experiencing homelessness, and people exiting the community cabins with a workforce focus.

In fiscal year 2020-21, Abode Services operated the OPRI program for adults.

Exhibit 27 below shows the number of participants served by and exited from OPRI in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21.

Exhibit 27: The number of participants served by and exited from OPRI in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21

Program Type	Fiscal Year	Participants served	Participants who exited
Single Adult OPRI	2018-19	146	42
	2019-20	120	21
	2020-21	102	19
	Total	368	82

Source: City Auditor summary based on HMIS data

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Exhibit 27 above shows participation in the OPRI program decreased from 146 participants in fiscal year 2018-19 to 102 in fiscal year 2020-21, a decrease of 30 percent over the three-year period.

Exhibit 27 above also shows the number of participants who exited from the OPRI program decreased from 42 to 19 participants in the three fiscal years audited. The program's goal is to assist people in maintaining their housing, so a decrease in exits could be positive.

OPRI for single adults' performance metrics and targets

A key performance metric for OPRI is remaining housed, and the program's target is that 95 percent of participants will remain housed for longer than one year. Another metric for OPRI is exits to homelessness. The program's target is that less than 5 percent of participants will exit to homelessness. Exhibit 28 below shows OPRI's performance against the targets for fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21.

Exhibit 28: OPRI program performance against targets for fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21

Program Type	Fiscal Year	Remain Housed for One Year or Longer	Exits to Homelessness
		TARGET: 95%	TARGET: <5%
Single Adult OPRI	2018-19	99%	3%
	2019-20	97%	15%
	2020-21	99%	0%

Source: City Auditor summary based on HMIS data and service contracts

Most OPRI single adult participants remained housed for years

As Exhibit 28 shows, nearly all OPRI program single adult participants remained housed for one year or longer in all three fiscal years, meeting the performance target of 95 percent.

In fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21, between 3 percent and 0 percent of participants exited to homelessness, which met the exits to homelessness target. However, in fiscal year 2019-20, OPRI did not meet the target as 15 percent of those who exited, exited to homelessness. Even though the OPRI programs did not meet its target in fiscal year 2019-20, the raw number of participants exiting to homelessness is low because the number of

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participants exiting the program was low, ranging from 19 to 42 participants, as shown in Exhibit 27 above.

According to CHS, the combination of time unlimited housing subsidies (from the Oakland Housing Authority) and supportive services provided by the OPRI program is an effective way of keeping people housed. Additionally, it is a program that leverages funding across jurisdictions with ambitions of doing more. As a result, according to CHS, this program was able to expand after fiscal year 2020-21.

Exhibit 29 below shows the percentage of OPRI single adult participants who remained in permanent housing for over one year to over five years after finding permanent housing.

Exhibit 29: Percentages of OPRI single adult participants who remained housed for 1+, 2+, 3+, 4+, and 5+ years after permanent housing placement

Number of years remaining housed	FY 2018-19	FY 2019-20	FY 2020-21
1+	99%	97%	99%
2+	96%	92%	95%
3+	81%	76%	83%
4+	80%	60%	71%
5+	65%	57%	59%

Source: City Auditor summary based on HMIS data

As Exhibit 29 above shows, OPRI was able to keep participants housed for longer periods of time. Specifically, as Exhibit 29 shows, for all three fiscal years in our audit period, nearly all participants remained housed for a year, more than 90 percent of participants remained housed for at least two years, and between 57 percent to 65 percent of participants stayed for five years or more.

The two contracts for OPRI programs for single adults had different outcome targets in each contract. For example, one contract had a target that less than 10 percent of those leaving the program would exit to homelessness, while the other had a five percent target. One contract only had targets for keeping participants housed for one year or longer, while the other contract had a target for keeping participants housed for three years (65 percent).

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Permanent Housing Services

Permanent Housing Services are on-site supportive services that include assisting tenants in achieving and maintaining housing stability, improving their overall health and well-being, acquiring income and other public benefits, pursuing activities (education, recreational, and vocational), and increasing opportunities for social connection.

In fiscal year 2020-21, Abode Services and Lifelong Medical Care operated permanent housing services.

Exhibit 30 below shows the number of participants served and exited in Permanent Housing Services in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21.

Exhibit 30: The number of participants served in Permanent Housing Services in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21

Program Type	Fiscal Year	Participants served	Participants who exited
Permanent Housing Services	2018-19	173	19
	2019-20	176	18
	2020-21	191	11
	Total	540	48

Source: City Auditor summary based on HMIS data

Exhibit 30 above shows the number of participants served in the Permanent Housing Services program increased from 173 participants in fiscal year 2018-19, to 191 in fiscal year 2020-21 – an increase of ten percent over the three fiscal years audited.

Exhibit 30 above also shows the number of participants who exited within the year from attaining Permanent Housing Services, decreased from 19 to 11 participants between fiscal years 2018-19 and 2020-21. Since the program’s goal is to assist people in maintaining their housing, this decrease in exits could be positive.

Performance metrics and targets for Permanent Housing Services

The performance target for Permanent Housing Services is that 95 percent of all participants will remain housed for one year or longer. Another target is that less than 5 percent of Permanent Housing Services participants who exit will exit to homelessness.

Exhibit 31 below shows Permanent Housing Services’ targets and the performance against the targets for fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21.

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Exhibit 31: Permanent Housing Services performance against targets

Program Type	Fiscal Year	Remain Housed for One Year or Longer	Exits to Homelessness
		TARGET: 95%	TARGET: <5%
Permanent Housing Services	2018-19	98%	25%
	2019-20	98%	0%
	2020-21	99%	10%

Source: City Auditor summary based on HMIS data and service contracts

Once placed, most Permanent Housing Services program participants remained housed for years

As Exhibit 31 above shows, more than 95 percent of Permanent Housing Services program participants remained housed for one year or longer in all three fiscal years, thereby meeting the performance target.

Exhibit 31 also shows that in fiscal year 2019-20, Permanent Housing Services exited 0 percent to homelessness, meeting the target of less than 5 percent. However, in fiscal years 2018-19 and 2020-21, 25 and 10 percent, respectively, exited to homelessness and did not meet the target.

Exhibit 32 below shows the percentage of Permanent Housing Services participants who remained housed for over one year to over five years after finding permanent housing.

Exhibit 32: Percentages of Permanent Housing Services participants who remained housed for 1+, 2+, 3+, 4+, and 5+ years after permanent housing placement

Number of years remaining housed	FY 2018-19	FY 2019-20	FY 2020-21
1+	98%	98%	99%
2+	97%	95%	97%
3+	94%	90%	95%
4+	93%	87%	92%
5+	84%	85%	88%

Source: City Auditor summary based on HMIS data

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As Exhibit 32 above shows, like the OPRI program discussed earlier, the overwhelming majority of Permanent Housing Services participants remained housed for longer than one year. In fact, more than 84 percent of the participants remained housed for at least five years after securing permanent housing.

Conclusion

Strong performance management rests on the principle that “what gets measured gets done.” Accordingly, the City should continue measuring different exit destinations for people leaving the City’s homelessness services programs and pursuing improved performance on these metrics because exit destinations are the most important metrics for a homelessness response strategy. In addition to evaluating exit data by program type, the City should evaluate them by service provider to identify effective and ineffective programs and service providers.

Furthermore, the City should continue to consider adopting new performance metrics and targets to align with the intent of its various homelessness services programs, as it did with the Community Cabins program. To ensure ongoing commitment to key performance metrics, the City should outline these metrics in service provider contracts along with related performance targets. These may be related to exit destinations or other service delivery elements such as lengths of stay. A focus on performance measurement with metrics and targets, will be essential for the City’s efforts to identifying and improving outcomes among the people served in various homelessness services programs.

Recommendations

To increase the likelihood that clients secure permanent housing and other key outcomes from the City’s homelessness services, we recommend the City:

1. Work with the County HMIS Lead or otherwise identify a way to access data on “returns to homelessness,” by program type and service provider in order to identify how many participants who exited to permanent housing, return to homelessness 6, 12, or 24 months later.
2. Adopt exits to positive destinations and exits to streets or unknown destinations as metrics for Emergency Shelters and set performance targets.
3. Continuously review existing performance metrics and corresponding performance targets across all program types and consider adjusting and developing new ones as needed.

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4. Ensure that requirements within service provider contracts reflect adopted performance metrics and targets and ensure such requirements are consistent across different service provider contracts within the same program type.
5. Collect and analyze HMIS data on lengths of stay at crisis response and longer-term housing programs to identify why and when participants exit and identify trends across different program types and service providers and use this information to inform programmatic decisions that may help the City promote better program performance and improve participants' outcomes.

Section 2

Maintaining and Increasing Incomes and Enrolling Participants in Benefit Programs

Finding: The City had mixed results in facilitating enrollments in benefit programs critical to improving homelessness services participants' life circumstances and housing stability.

Summary

The preceding section discussed exit destinations, which may be the most important metrics for ending homelessness. This section focuses on metrics for enrolling participants in financial and mainstream public benefits because such benefits have proven to be the first step in increasing a participant's ability to improve life circumstances and maintain permanent housing.

Based on our analysis of HMIS data, in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21, participants' success in maintaining or increasing incomes varied across the crisis response and longer-term housing programs. This metric is limited in its usefulness because many participants do not have incomes. Furthermore, it is important to recognize the limited value of "maintaining" incomes for people whose incomes are too low to afford housing.

Enrollment in non-cash mainstream benefits like state and federal financial resources, disability benefits, food assistance, and other assistance is an important metric for gauging the prospects of program participants' ability to achieve permanent housing. In fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21, the City's homelessness services programs missed targets for enrollments in mainstream benefits.

On the other hand, the majority of homelessness programs achieved targets for enrolling participants in health insurance benefits, though results varied by program category and by fiscal year. The City should continuously review performance data to identify effective and ineffective programs and service providers. In addition, the City should continuously review the viability of the performance metrics and related performance targets and consider revising them and adopting new ones as needed, such as CHS did with some of the exit metrics discussed in section 1. This is especially needed in the RV Safe Parking program, for which the City had not implemented any performance metrics or targets related to participant incomes and enrollment in mainstream benefits.

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Maintaining and increasing incomes and enrolling in benefits is critical for people experiencing homelessness

For those who are eligible, public assistance programs like federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI), federal Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), and state CalWORKs benefits (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) provide cash, financial resources for housing, access to employment assistance programs, and facilitates Medicare eligibility.

A 2017 study sponsored by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) included 2,282 families with children who entered shelters between September 2010 and January 2012. The study included twelve communities across the country and found participation in publicly funded health insurance and the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or (SNAP) improved housing stability. Alameda County was one of the communities included in the study.

The study suggested that agencies at all levels of government responsible for benefit programs should consider ways to assist families with unstable housing to maintain their benefits and to target families with repeat episodes of homelessness for special assistance in obtaining or maintaining benefits for which they are eligible.

The pervasiveness of disabilities and tenuous living situations among those experiencing homelessness, however, are barriers to applying to public aid and services. Homelessness services help people secure earned income, as well as public aid and services that are essential to finding permanent housing.

The Community Homelessness Services Division promotes income maintenance and enrollment in essential benefits

The Community Homelessness Services Division (CHS) has adopted the following CoC performance metrics and incorporated them into its service provider contracts:

- Maintaining or increasing incomes
- Enrolling in mainstream benefits
- Enrolling in health insurance benefits

This section describes these three metrics, the associated performance targets, and whether the various crisis response and longer-term housing programs were successful in meeting the targets.

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Maintaining or increasing incomes

The CoC performance metric of maintaining or increasing incomes entails counting participants who maintained or increased their incomes at the time of their exits from programs, or during annual assessments. Notably, the metric excludes participants under 18 years old.

Varying levels of success in maintaining or increasing incomes

The City set targets for maintaining or increasing incomes between 75 and 80 percent depending on the program type.

Exhibit 33 below shows the number and percentage of participants that maintained or increased incomes compared to their targets for each of the program types for 2018-19 through 2020-21.

Exhibit 33: Performance data and targets for maintaining or increasing income by program type and fiscal year

Program Type	FY 2018-19		FY 2019-20		FY 2020-21		Target
	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Crisis Response Programs							
Community Cabins	49	61%	218	66%	214	66%	80%
Emergency Shelter - Family	11	79%	9	82%	38	81%	75%
Emergency Shelter - Single Adult	298	78%	911	63%	304	61%	75%
Transitional Housing - Family	12	39%	27	77%	27	79%	80%
Transitional Housing - Single Adult	165	83%	201	87%	207	90%	80%
Transitional Housing - Transition Aged Youth	51	73%	40	61%	28	68%	80%
Longer-Term Housing Programs							
Permanent Housing Services	94	80%	112	82%	116	82%	75%
OPRI	49	52%	58	66%	59	69%	75%

Source: HMIS

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As Exhibit 33 above shows, Community Cabins and Transitional Housing for transition-aged youth fell short of targets for all three fiscal years audited. Transitional Housing for families also fell short for all fiscal years but showed dramatic improvement in fiscal years 2019-20 and 2020-21, when that program type nearly met the target.

Single adult Emergency Shelters showed the opposite trend, with declining performance over the three fiscal years. OPRI programs also fell short of targets in all three fiscal years audited.

On the other hand, performance data from the family Emergency Shelters, Transitional Housing for single adults, and Permanent Housing Services, show participants' rates of maintaining or increasing incomes met or exceeded targets for all fiscal years audited.

Rapid Re-Housing programs focus on increasing incomes which few participants achieved

Rapid Re-Housing programs focus on eliminating barriers to moving families quickly into permanent housing by providing housing location services and financial assistance for housing-related expenses (e.g., rent arrears, ongoing rent assistance, moving costs). Participants' ability to increase their incomes is integral to success. Accordingly, the Rapid Re-Housing programs for single adults, families, and transition-aged youth, which serve participants more likely to have higher incomes, are held to a modified metric, which is increasing incomes. This metric measures improvement – not just stability – among program participants.

The performance target for increasing income was 50 percent for Rapid Re-Housing programs for single adults, families, and transition-aged youth.

Exhibit 34 below shows the various Rapid Re-Housing programs' performance in increasing participants' incomes against the target for fiscal years 2018-19 through 2020-21.

Exhibit 34: Performance data and targets for increasing income among Rapid Re-Housing program participants by fiscal year

Program Type	FY 2018-19		FY 2019-20		FY 2020-21		Target
	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Family	9	23%	7	12%	13	22%	50%
Single Adult	3	13%	5	9%	2	3%	50%
Transition Aged Youth	8	25%	18	31%	20	33%	50%

Source: HMIS

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As Exhibit 34 shows, all of the Rapid Re-Housing programs fell far short of their 50 percent targets and did not record more than 20 adult participants who increased incomes in any of the three fiscal years audited.

Further review could determine contributing factors to under-performance

The data on participants' incomes suggest improvements are needed to help participants maintain and increase their incomes. Some of the more successful crisis response service providers are within the family Emergency Shelter and single adult Transitional Housing programs. Alternatively, the data could reflect the performance targets for some of the program types, such as the Community Cabins, may be unrealistic or that different approaches are needed to maintain and increase incomes for these participants. While the data are presented by program type, the City would benefit from reviewing these data on the service provider-level which could reveal the effectiveness of each of the providers.

Existing income-related performance metrics are limited

Lastly, and more substantively, the City should be cautious about relying on the maintaining and/or increasing income metrics. Maintaining and/or increasing incomes is not entirely useful if participants' incomes are not high enough to afford permanent housing, which is the case for the overwhelming majority of participants in the City's homelessness service providers. Based on HUD affordability standards, an affordable rent for people making \$2,000 per month is \$600. Majorities of participants in the City's homelessness response programs have incomes lower than \$2,000 per month, and local rents far exceed \$600 per month. Furthermore, 26 percent of all the participants in City homelessness services programs in fiscal year 2020-21, did not have any sources of income.

A deeper review of participants' income data can reveal the range of incomes, and whether incomes are high enough to sustain a reasonable quality of life. According to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Living Wage Calculator, the living wage for Alameda County is \$24.26 per hour. Working full-time, this would equal roughly \$4,000 per month in wages. Many of the participants in the City's programs make considerably less than this.

The City's strategic planning process discussed in Section 6 of this report needs to take housing affordability into account. If a majority of participants have little to no income, then the City must determine strategically how to provide enough deeply affordable housing to move these individuals successfully into permanent housing. Until this occurs, the City will continue to face a growing crisis.

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Enrollment in mainstream benefits

Enrolling and keeping participants in mainstream non-cash benefits, such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs (SNAP or formerly Food Stamps) and California CalWORKS (TANF), is a measure of how successful a service provider is in removing non-income barriers to achieving permanent housing.

The performance metric of enrollment in mainstream non-cash benefits counts adult participants who were enrolled in non-cash benefits either upon exiting programs or during their end-of-year-assessments.⁶ Notably, the metric excludes participants under 18 years old. Nonetheless, using the metric could provide insight on programs' effectiveness in delivering mainstream benefits to adult program participants and heads-of-household.

Performance data show the City consistently fell short on targets for enrollment in mainstream benefits

The crisis response programs' targets are between 80 and 83 percent and the targets for longer-term housing programs are between 78 and 85 percent.

Exhibit 35 below shows the number of and percentage of participants that enrolled in mainstream benefits for the different program types compared to their targets for fiscal years 2018-19 through 2020-21.

⁶ HUD requires annual assessments within 30 days after participants' one-year anniversaries. Incomes and enrollments in benefits are only a few of the many informational elements collected during annual assessments.

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Exhibit 35: Performance data and targets for enrollment in mainstream benefits by program type and fiscal year

Program Type	FY 2018-19		FY 2019-20		FY 2020-21		Target
	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Crisis Response Programs							
Community Cabins	33	41%	162	49%	172	53%	83%
Emergency Shelter - Family	8	57%	8	73%	27	57%	80%
Emergency Shelter - Single Adult	120	31%	450	31%	202	41%	80%
Transitional Housing - Family	17	55%	18	51%	18	53%	83%
Transitional Housing - Single Adult	80	40%	96	42%	89	39%	83%
Transitional Housing - Transition Aged Youth	26	37%	24	36%	15	37%	83%
Longer-Term Housing Programs							
Rapid Re-Housing - Family	20	51%	35	61%	33	57%	85%
Rapid Re-Housing - Single Adult	4	17%	17	32%	33	47%	85%
Rapid Re-Housing - Transition Aged Youth	10	31%	23	40%	16	26%	85%
Permanent Housing Services	51	44%	66	49%	96	68%	78%
OPRI	41	44%	31	35%	26	30%	78%

Source: HMIS

As Exhibit 35 above shows, none of the housing programs met the target for enrolling participants in mainstream benefits for any of the three years of the audit. The data suggest that enrolling clients in mainstream benefits may be challenging and may warrant problem-solving to increase such enrollments. The City should work with its service providers to identify barriers to enrolling clients into mainstream benefits.

Beginning in fiscal year 2022-23, CHS stopped requiring service providers to report on enrollments in mainstream benefits because most mainstream benefits are for families, making the metric irrelevant for single adults, who comprise the majority of homelessness services program participants. That said, in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21, enrollment in mainstream benefits was an established metric, and for this reason, we included the performance data in Exhibit 35 above.

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Enrollments in health insurance benefits

According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH), “An acute physical or behavioral health crisis or any long-term disabling condition may lead to homelessness; homelessness itself can exacerbate chronic medical conditions.” Helping participants enroll and maintain enrollment in health insurance is important in improving health and financial outcomes and stabilizing clients. Health insurance benefits are available through Medicaid, Medicare, State Children's Health Insurance Program, the Veterans Administration (VA), Employer-provided insurance, and other sources.

The performance metric of enrollments in mainstream health insurance benefits includes participants who were enrolled in health insurance benefits either upon exiting programs or during their end-of-year assessments. The target for this metric varies between 80 percent to 90 percent depending on the program type.

The majority of participants across all program types enrolled in health insurance benefits

Exhibit 36 also shows the number and percentage of participants who were enrolled in health insurance benefits compared to the targets for all program types for fiscal years 2018-19 through 2020-21.

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Exhibit 36: Performance data and targets for enrollment in health insurance benefits by program type and fiscal year

Program Type	FY 2018-19		FY 2019-20		FY 2020-21		Target
	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Crisis Response Programs							
Community Cabins	64	80%	257	78%	268	82%	80%
Emergency Shelter - Family	25	69%	22	85%	89	92%	90%
Emergency Shelter - Single Adult	356	92%	1,172	81%	414	81%	90%
Transitional Housing - Family	47	55%	93	98%	73	91%	80%
Transitional Housing - Single Adult	174	87%	207	90%	205	89%	80%
Transitional Housing - Transition Aged Youth	69	87%	65	93%	42	98%	80%
Longer-term housing Programs							
Rapid Re-Housing - Family	90	96%	136	89%	141	99%	85%
Rapid Re-Housing - Single Adult	18	75%	47	89%	64	91%	85%
Rapid Re-Housing - Transition Aged Youth	24	67%	54	89%	57	92%	85%
Permanent Housing Services	112	90%	148	96%	157	99%	90%
OPRI	80	68%	82	80%	81	83%	90%

Source: HMIS.

As Exhibit 36 above shows, programs generally met or exceeded the target for enrolling participants in health insurance benefits. Transitional Housing, Rapid Re-Housing, and Permanent Housing Services consistently exceeded the target in the three fiscal years audited. Providers did not meet the targets for Transitional Housing for families, Rapid Re-Housing for single adults and transition-aged youth in fiscal year 2018-19.

OPRI did not meet the target in all three fiscal years, but enrollments improved each year.

The performance data suggest service providers are more successful in enrolling participants in health insurance benefits than they were in enrolling participants in income assistance and mainstream benefits.

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The RV Safe Parking program did not establish performance targets consistent with other programs

The RV Safe Parking program started as a pilot program and unlike the other programs described in this section, the City did not establish targets for maintaining or increasing incomes, or enrollments in mainstream or health insurance benefits for three fiscal years audited. Without establishing program goals, it is unclear how program participation is intended to lead to permanent housing and other positive outcomes.

Even though the City did not establish targets for the RV Safe Parking program, we analyzed HMIS performance data on RV Safe Parking participants maintaining or increasing income, enrollment in mainstream benefits, and enrollment in health insurance.

The performance data are summarized below in Exhibit 37.

Exhibit 37: Performance data for maintaining or increasing income, enrollment in mainstream benefits, and enrollment in health insurance benefits among RV Safe Parking program participants by fiscal year

Metric	FY 2018-19		FY 2019-20		FY 2020-21	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Maintaining or Increasing Income	N/A	N/A	17	61%	76	54%
Enrollment in Mainstream Benefits	N/A	N/A	8	29%	45	32%
Enrollment in Health Insurance Benefits	N/A	N/A	19	68%	91	64%

Source: HMIS

As shown in Exhibit 37 above, RV Safe Parking participants' percentages of maintaining or increasing income, enrollments in mainstream benefits and enrollments in health insurance benefits, were generally lower in fiscal years 2019-20 and 2020-21 than those of the other crisis response programs discussed above and summarized in Exhibits 33, 35, and 36. This program is the only crisis response program without established targets for income and benefits metrics and had among the worst results in these areas.

Moreover, if it is to establish targets, the RV Safe Parking needs to re-consider its service delivery model. Every RV Safe Parking program site within our audit scope had limited resources specifically for housing navigation and other supportive services that include assisting participants to secure income, mainstream benefits, and health insurance.

The City cannot expect participants to improve their living situations without offering housing navigation and other services.

Audit Results

Conclusion

Maintaining and increasing incomes and enrolling participants in mainstream and health insurance benefits are critical to ending homelessness and securing permanent housing. As such, every effort should be made to preserve and/or improve these metrics and related outcomes. In addition to evaluating outcomes by program type as we did in this section, the City should evaluate outcomes by service provider to identify effective and ineffective programs and service providers. Furthermore, the City should continue adjusting and implementing new performance metrics and targets to align with the intent of the various homelessness services programs. In the case of the RV Safe Parking program, the City should clarify what the program is intended to accomplish in terms of outcomes for its participants and accordingly include services in the program.

Recommendations

To promote maintaining and increasing incomes, enrollments in benefits, and other desired outcomes for participants in the City's homelessness services programs, we recommend the City:

6. Evaluate the maintaining/increasing income metric and enrollments in mainstream and health insurance benefits metrics by program type and service provider to identify successes and failures related to participant enrollment. This information should then be used to implement improvements in enrolling participants in benefits programs and to hold service providers accountable.
7. Review participants' income data across programs to reveal the range of incomes and use this information to inform the development and adaptation of City programs to provide deeply affordable housing.
8. Clarify what the RV Safe Parking program is intended to accomplish in terms of outcomes for its participants. Once these outcomes are determined, decide what metrics are important and set realistic targets for those metrics.

Section 3

Data on Programs, Outcomes, Service Providers, and Participants

Finding: The City lacked access to timely, accurate, and complete data to fully understand service provider performance, bed utilization, and participants' returns to homelessness.

Summary

The earlier sections about program outcomes draw heavily on performance data the service providers enter into HMIS. The data need to be timely, accurate, and complete for the City to effectively monitor, manage, and evaluate homelessness services programs. As described in this section, however, the City's service providers have not been timely in entering participant data into HMIS and have also had challenges in entering accurate and complete data. The City should hold service providers accountable to data quality standards and provide training on HMIS. Timely, accurate, and complete data would enable the City to identify at any time, the use and capacity of its different programs which informs management of available resources and helps with planning for the future.

Additionally, for years, the Community Homelessness Services Division has been challenged by a lack of responsiveness from the County HMIS Lead and the system's inability to provide critical data reports and tools. The City should continue to work with the County HMIS Lead to access HMIS reports and tools. If necessary, the City should consider obtaining an outside contractor on how to use these reports and tools which are necessary to determine whether program participants return to homelessness. A dedicated City staff member with analytical and technical skills can run these reports to consistently track, monitor, analyze, and present HMIS data for management. Once the City has access to the necessary data and tools to determine the success of its program performance, the City needs to have the ability to report on its programs publicly, thus fulfilling the need for transparency and public accountability.

Audit Results

The CoC has a target of getting data into HMIS within three days

According to an April 2017 HUD briefing, “entering data in a timely manner can reduce human error when too much time has elapsed between data collection and entry.” Accordingly, the CoC has a target of getting 100 percent of data into HMIS within three days. The City on the other hand, has not formalized a target for timely input of client data into HMIS for many of its contracts.

Our audit sampled 10 service providers to determine whether the contracts had targets to enter data within three days, as well as whether providers actually entered the data within three days as the CoC requires. Only one of the ten service provider contracts had a target for entering data within three days. Street Outreach was the only program type that had outcome targets for timely data input. In fact, its target was more ambitious than the CoC target, requiring data be entered within two days.

Exhibit 38 below shows the percentage of data entered within three days, as the CoC requires, for all program types for fiscal year 2018-19 through 2020-21.

Audit Results

Exhibit 38: Percentage of data entered within three days by program type and fiscal year

Program Type	FY2018-19	FY2019-20	FY2020-21	Target
Crisis Response Programs				
Community Cabins	13%	54%	63%	
Emergency Shelter – Family	24%	60%	38%	
Emergency Shelter - Single Adult	39%	46%	63%	
Transitional Housing - Family	8%	2%	9%	
Transitional Housing - Single Adult	46%	57%	64%	
Transitional Housing - Transition Aged Youth	21%	21%	23%	
COVID Response	N/A	50%	45%	
RV Safe Parking	N/A	42%	57%	
Longer-term Housing Programs				
Rapid Re-Housing – Family	12%	12%	21%	
Rapid Re-Housing - Single Adult	31%	9%	7%	
Rapid Re-Housing - Transition Aged Youth	14%	18%	23%	
Permanent Housing Services	10%	15%	7%	
OPRI	29%	18%	41%	
Supportive Services				
Street Outreach	83%	91%	90%	100%
Workforce programs	N/A	N/A	38%	

Source: City Auditor summary based on HMIS data

As Exhibit 38 above shows, if 100 percent was the target for all City program types to enter data within three days, most of the City’s programs would have fallen well short. The performance data suggests entering data into HMIS within three days of program participants entering or exiting, may be a challenge, especially without an established outcome target.

Regardless, the City should incorporate this 3-day requirement into all its service provider contracts. The sooner the data is entered, the higher the likelihood the data will benefit participants more immediately. Additionally, entering data in a timely manner improves the reliability of reports and data visualizations and the ability for the City to effectively manage its programs for results.

Audit Results

The need for more accurate data within the County's HMIS has long been established

The CoC and County are tasked with maintaining current, quality data in HMIS. The audit, however, found the City has had problems with inaccurate data during the three fiscal years audited.

For example, as discussed in Section 1 of this report, a shelter provider exited only 10 program participants in fiscal year 2018-19, when it actually exited far more. Additionally, the majority of the exits recorded by this provider in fiscal year 2019-20 were classified as “unknown.”

Another example occurred in fiscal year 2020-21 when none of the COVID Response programs entered any data related to benefits, making it appear as though program participants had no income data and were not enrolled in mainstream or health insurance benefits for that fiscal year. The result is that CHS did not have benefit enrollment information for COVID Response program participants.

Additionally, a 2019 review of the CoC noted the lack of a monitoring process and a data quality plan, highlighting the risk of bad data. This review, along with the other data errors in the City's programs, suggest the need for more frequent data reviews, as well as staff and service provider HMIS trainings. Service providers told us they want more training on HMIS, but such training has not been available. According to the County HMIS Lead, the agency does not have sufficient capacity to provide substantive training to all users working for the various CoC agencies and service providers.

In January 2020, the CoC approved and implemented a data quality plan. The Alameda County Data Quality Plan states, “The goal of our community members should be to regularly review data quality and consistently make improvements in their data quality measures.” In addition, the 2017 HUD briefing mentioned above states that participating agencies, such as the City, are responsible for setting the tone of the commitment to data quality, monitoring a project's data quality, and resolving any data quality findings as quickly as possible.

Alameda County's data quality plan and the HUD briefing identify indicators (such as the above timeliness of data input), for when there may be problems with the timeliness, accuracy, completeness, consistency, and coverage of data.

The City should use these indicators to analyze data quality and assist service providers in remediating any data concerns if needed. The City should also develop procedures to regularly monitor data quality and work with the County to ensure that service providers are adequately trained on how to use HMIS. If necessary, an outside contractor should be considered if the County HMIS Lead cannot provide adequate or timely training.

Audit Results

The City lacks quality bed utilization data, a key performance metric for efficiently placing participants with available services

The bed utilization rate is the percentage of total beds in use. It is calculated by dividing the number of beds used by the number of beds available at a given time.

Accurately tracking bed utilization would allow the City to:

1. Identify current occupancy and turnover rates.
2. Assess data quality – the aforementioned HUD briefing on data quality states tracking utilization rates are an excellent barometer for data quality. A low utilization rate in HMIS could reflect low occupancy, but it could also indicate that data are not being entered timely, or at all. On the other hand, high utilization rate could suggest that a project is over capacity or filled up, or it could also indicate that clients have not been properly discharged from a project.
3. Determine whether certain programs are maintaining 90 percent occupancy, as required by some contracts.
4. Develop and inform long-term strategies by analyzing trends in bed utilization rates.
5. Access real-time data, which provides the opportunity to “check-in” on operations at any given time, or to continuously monitor service delivery and make changes if necessary.

Community Homelessness Services uses two deficient methods to calculate bed utilization

Currently, the Community Homelessness Services Division (CHS) relies on two methods to calculate utilization rates across the different programs, however both methods have deficiencies.

- The first method relies on service providers updating online spreadsheets on a daily basis. According to CHS, ensuring these spreadsheets are timely, complete, and accurate requires staff to regularly follow up with service providers to ensure data is logged. Despite these efforts, however, CHS is challenged to ensure all service providers enter this data, thus this method does not provide the City with timely and accurate bed utilization information. Furthermore, because information in the spreadsheets is not entered into HMIS, they are not tied directly to individual clients and rely on the word of the City’s service providers. While both methods require service providers to enter the data, doing so in HMIS outweighs the benefits of using the online spreadsheets because all other data is housed in HMIS and the system links participants to the occupancy data recorded.

Audit Results

- The second method uses the HMIS Annual Performance Report (APR) to determine the number of participants at program sites on the last Wednesday of January, April, July, and October. The City uses this report and compares it against the known capacity on the same days to determine the utilization rate. However, this method calculates prior utilization on a quarterly basis and is not useful for determining the number of beds available on a daily basis.

We calculated utilization rates for one program type using both methods. The results were vastly different. For example, using the online spreadsheet, the Community Cabins showed a bed utilization rate of 97 percent for the second quarter of fiscal year 2020-21. On the other hand, the second method (HMIS quarterly) yielded a 75-percent utilization rate during the same period. The difference could be due to erroneous, late, or incomplete data entry for either or both methods.

As noted above, both methods used for identifying daily bed utilizations have deficiencies which makes it harder for the City to effectively manage the day-to-day operations of the various programs or inform their long-term strategies with its current methods of determining bed utilization.

Improving access to bed utilization data

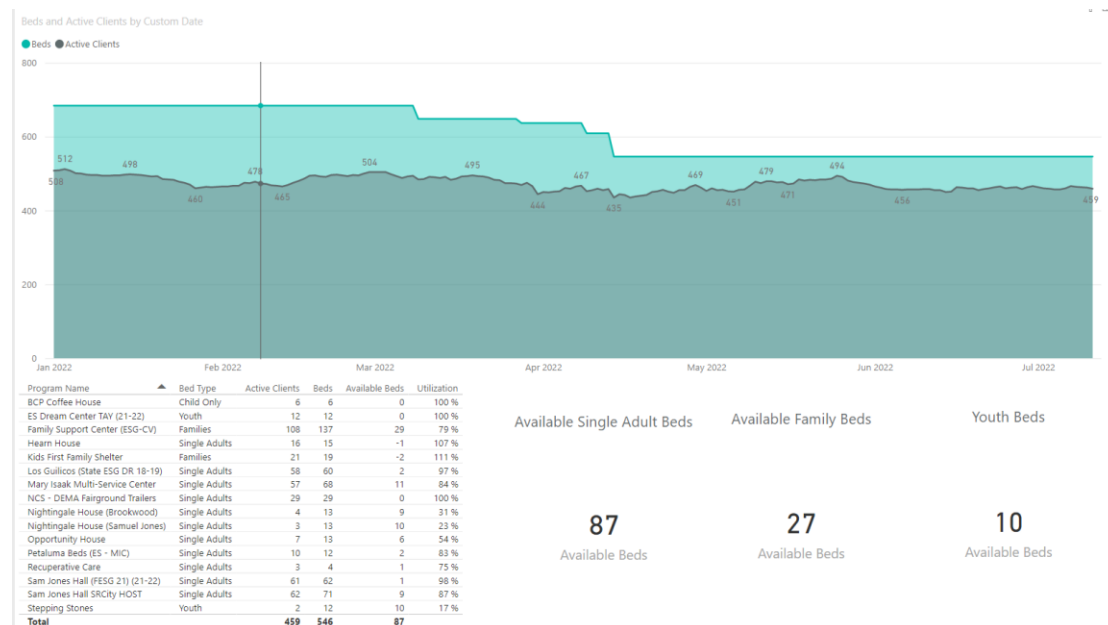
HMIS can produce a report showing daily bed utilization rates, however this function is not currently being used by the County HMIS Lead. The City should work with the County HMIS Lead to develop an easily accessible report showing daily bed utilization rates in HMIS. This would allow the City to more regularly monitor this metric and evaluate whether desired utilization rates are being met.

Once it has access to a tool like this, the City could turn to a model in use in Sonoma County, which displays its shelter utilization on an online dashboard, as the below exhibit shows.

Exhibit 39 below shows that the daily bed utilization rate is also available by individual program and service provider.

Audit Results

Exhibit 39: Sonoma County CoC shelter utilization dashboard



Source: Auditor snapshot from Sonoma County Continuum of Care System Performance Dashboard

Source Link: <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/development-services/community-development-commission/divisions/homeless-services/continuum-of-care/what-we-know-about-homelessness/homeless-data#esDashboard>.

The City needs data on returns to homelessness

Returns to homelessness is a metric indicating how many people return to homelessness at intervals of 6 months, 12 months, or 24 months after exiting to permanent housing. Although issues with the data exist – such as, a person re-entering services under a different name or returning to homelessness outside of the local jurisdiction – this information is still important for determining whether housing options are working, and whether people are returning to homelessness.

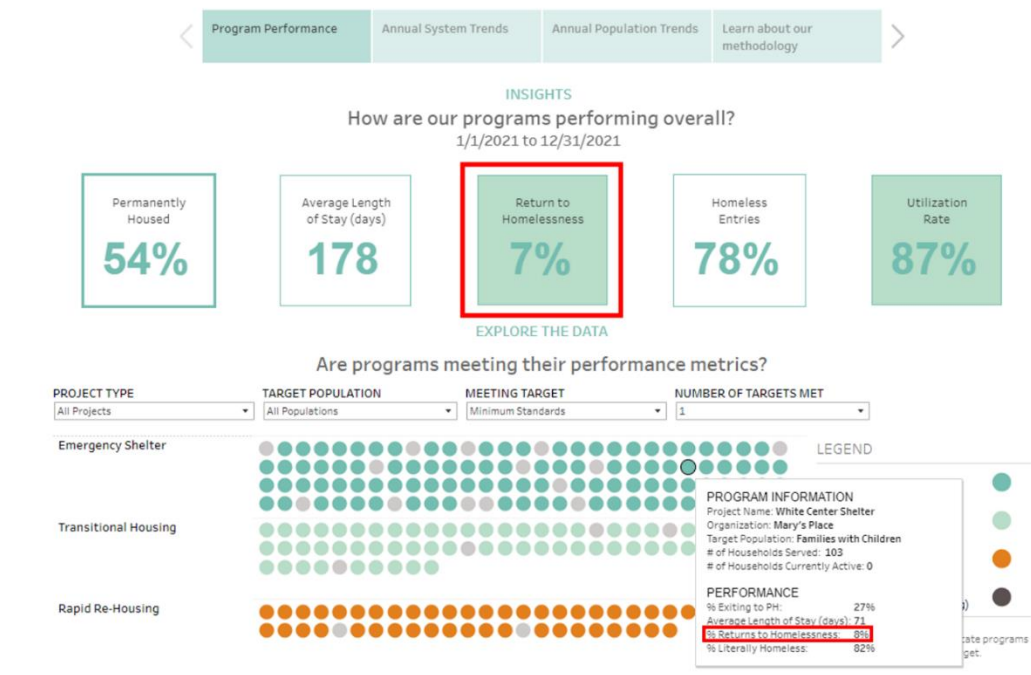
During our audit, CHS explained the County was not able to provide a return to homelessness report on a citywide or program level. Pursuant to the terms of the CoC, the City relies on the County HMIS Lead for the data, but the HMIS lead is not able to provide it.

The City should continue to work with the County to make sure that it has access to the data, so it can truly determine whether its programs are effective in reducing returns to homelessness. Once it has the data to use the metric, the City could turn to King County, Washington's Regional Homelessness Authority as a model to give more visibility to the data. That agency reports on several key metrics in a public dashboard including the returns to homelessness metric (on both a systemwide and program level).

Audit Results

Exhibit 40 below is a snapshot of the public dashboard by King County, Washington's Regional Homelessness Authority. The dashboard below shows that King County reports on their returns to homelessness by program type and provider.

Exhibit 40: King County, Washington regional homelessness authority system performance dashboard



Source: Snapshot of [King County Regional Homelessness Authority dashboard](#)

Robust analysis of collected HMIS data can provide valuable insights into program and service provider performance

Service providers collect an array of data from program participants which are then entered into HMIS, however, the information collected is not always fully utilized by the City. Collecting timely, accurate, and complete data alone is not sufficient in managing and overseeing homelessness services.

Once the data are collected, the City needs to analyze, continuously monitor, and report on the performance data. While CHS has analyzed select performance data, it has not analyzed available information as in depth as previously presented in this report. The City benefits from analyzing data by program type and service provider.

Audit Results

Without robust analysis of program data, the City cannot adequately analyze how programs are performing, participants' needs and history, and progress towards meeting the City's overall homelessness goals. To ultimately get people into permanent housing and achieve other positive outcomes, the City must fully analyze its available data.

Intermittently, through the date of this report CHS contracted with a data analytics consultant, but this position is contract-based and not a full-time permanent position.

Because of the ongoing demand for information about the City's homelessness services programs, the City needs a dedicated analytical staff member who can establish the infrastructure and process for collecting, monitoring, analyzing, and reporting on performance data.

Dashboards can improve transparency and accountability

Public dashboards are data visualization and analysis tools that display key program data. Many of the exhibits used throughout this report highlight the kind of data that would be displayed in dashboards.

The City has attempted to use a public dashboard as a way of publicly reporting data and performance. However, that dashboard was limited in the data presented and has not been updated since June 2021. When we inquired about the dashboard, CHS told us there were data reliability concerns that have not yet been worked out with the County HMIS team and, for this reason, CHS discontinued the dashboard.

As presented earlier, numerous cities and CoCs have deployed dashboards to publicly present client and performance data specifically focused on homelessness response. Such dashboards publicly provide the type of sought-after performance data outlined throughout this audit report.

We recommend that the City continue to advocate for the County to improve its HMIS data and reporting capabilities, including disaggregating program outcomes by race (as discussed in Section 4). Additionally, the City should implement the use of the dashboards to promote access, transparency, and public accountability. The dashboard, at a minimum, should include bed utilization and returns to homelessness data, as well as the metrics listed in sections 1 and 2, such as exits to permanent housing, homelessness, positive destinations, streets or unknown destinations, maintaining or increasing incomes, and enrollments in mainstream benefits and health insurance.

Audit Results

Conclusion

Timely, accurate, and complete data are essential to successful homelessness services. Not only does good data shed light on how effective or ineffective the City is in serving program participants, but it also enables the City to efficiently place participants with available services, and plan for the future delivery of those services. The City needs to take appropriate steps to ensure that its HMIS data are timely, accurate, and complete. Many needed data reports are currently unavailable to the City due to the configuration of the County's HMIS system. Continuing to urge the County HMIS Lead to overcome technical challenges and provide training to the City and service providers who are HMIS users would be key. In addition, the City should secure the technical skill sets to standardize valuable reports, analyze them and HMIS data as a whole, and provide accessible dashboards for reference by employees, policymakers, and the general public.

Recommendations

To provide the City with access to timely, accurate, and complete data for fully understanding its programs and managing homelessness services, we recommend the City:

9. Add a dedicated staff member with requisite analytical and technical skills to consistently track and monitor HMIS data, analyze data, and present results for management to review and adjust operations and strategies, as needed. Such a staff member could facilitate better use of and training on HMIS.
10. Work with the County HMIS Lead to identify and develop standard and custom reports within HMIS, including reports for real-time bed utilization and returns to homelessness at 6 months, 12 months, or 24 months after exiting to permanent housing.
11. Secure training on HMIS data entry and how to produce various reports, including customized reports. If necessary, an outside contractor should be considered if the County HMIS Lead cannot provide adequate or timely training.
12. Adopt and negotiate with service providers, a performance metric and benchmark for timely input of client data into HMIS, preferably in alignment with the CoC's three-day target. Once implemented and negotiated into contracts, the City should continuously track and monitor performance. Additionally, the City should assist service providers in remediating any data concerns quickly.
13. Advocate for the County to improve its HMIS data and reporting capabilities, including disaggregating program outcomes by race.

Audit Results

14. Implement the use of the dashboards to promote access, transparency, and public accountability. The dashboard at a minimum should include bed utilization and returns to homelessness data, as well as the metrics listed in sections 1 and 2 (i.e., exits to permanent housing, homelessness, positive destinations, streets or unknown destinations, maintaining or increasing incomes, and enrollments in mainstream benefits and health insurance).

Section 4

Proportionate Service Delivery and Racial Equity

Finding: The City provided homelessness services to participants of different races roughly proportionately to their share of Oakland’s homeless population, except for the RV Safe Parking program. More data is needed to ensure the City is meeting racial equity goals and finding disparities that affect some communities.

Summary

The City has established a goal to reach, serve, and improve outcomes for African Americans who are severely over-represented in the homeless population.

African American participants are proportionately represented in all but one of the City-funded homelessness services programs, the RV Safe Parking program. In addition, we found no major disparities across the races of program participants and their share of Oakland’s homeless population. We also found no racial disparities among people exiting from homelessness services programs to permanent housing in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21. It appears this desired outcome was achieved roughly proportionately among participants of different races.

To identify racial disparities and assess the City’s homelessness services programs’ progress toward the City’s racial equity goals, the City has committed to breaking out program outcomes by race. The County HMIS Lead, however, is unable to break out these data by race. The City must continue working with the County HMIS Lead to overcome technical challenges so it can analyze all outcomes by race including exits to positive destinations, exits to streets or unknown destinations, maintaining or increasing incomes, and enrollments in mainstream benefits and health insurance.

Lastly, demographic data from PIT Counts, HMIS, and the U.S. Census can identify groups underserved or underrepresented by the City’s homelessness services, compared to their estimated share of the overall population of Oaklanders experiencing homelessness. The City should review data to identify and quantify communities particularly vulnerable to or impacted by homelessness to inform the City’s homelessness services.

Audit Results

Homelessness in Oakland has disproportionately affected African Americans

Exhibit 41 below compares the racial breakdown of Oakland's homeless population against the citywide population. The 2019 and 2022 PIT Counts detail the estimated racial breakdown of Oakland's homeless population in those respective years, and the U.S. Census details the racial breakdown of Oakland as a whole.

Exhibit 41: The racial composition of Oakland's homeless population in the 2019 and 2022 PIT Counts compared to the racial composition of the City in the 2020 US Census.

Racial Demographic	2019 PIT Count	2022 PIT Count	2020 Census
Black, African American, or African	70%	59%	21%
White	11%	20%	30%
Asian or Asian American	1%	5%	16%
Multiple Races	13%	11%	12%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	1%	2%	1%
American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous	4%	4%	2%
Other and Unknown			18%

Source: Program APRs, 2019 and 2022 PIT Counts and 2020 Oakland Census numbers

As Exhibit 41 highlights, African Americans experienced homelessness at disproportionately high rates. Specifically, even though African Americans accounted for 21 percent of Oakland's population in the 2020 Census, they accounted for 70 to 59 percent of the homeless population based on the 2019 and 2022 PIT Counts.

On the other hand, Whites accounted for 30 percent of Oakland's population based on the 2020 Census but accounted for 11 to 20 percent of the homeless population based on the 2019 and 2022 PIT Counts. Similarly, Asian or Asian Americans accounted for 16 percent of Oakland's population based on the 2020 Census, but only accounted for 1 to 5 percent of the homeless population based on the 2019 and 2022 PIT Counts.

Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islanders accounted for 1 percent of Oakland's population based on the 2020 Census and accounted for 1 to 2 percent of the homeless population based on the 2019 and 2022 PIT Counts. American Indian, Alaska Native, and Indigenous accounted for 2

Audit Results

percent of Oakland's population based on the 2020 Census and accounted for 4 percent of the homeless population based on the 2019 and 2022 PIT Counts.

The City declared a priority to reach, serve, and improve outcomes for African Americans experiencing homelessness

In December 2019, Oakland updated its PATH Framework to address the racial disparities in the homeless population. The Introduction to Oakland's updated PATH Framework stated:

In Oakland, the drivers of homelessness fall most squarely on the backs of the African American community who, due to long standing structurally racist practices such as red lining and employment discrimination, are most vulnerable to losing their homes. Over 70 percent of individuals who are homeless in Oakland are African American, while they only represent 24 percent of the City's population. The work must be defined by what works for African Americans first and foremost in order to reduce the racial disparities in homelessness in Oakland. -The framework commits to using data in a transparent and public way to evaluate outcomes such that racial disparities in homelessness are eliminated.

Participation in City homelessness services programs by various racial groups appeared generally in line with racial groups' share of the population experiencing homelessness

We analyzed HMIS data to identify the racial makeup of the participants of all the City's homelessness services programs to determine whether the City served participants of different races proportionately to Oakland's homeless population.

Exhibit 42 below shows the breakdown of program participants by race for fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21, compared to the percentages reported in the 2019 and 2022 PIT Counts.

Audit Results

Exhibit 42: The racial make-up of homelessness services program participants vs. the racial make-up of the overall homeless population

Racial Demographic	Homelessness Services Program Participants			PIT Counts	
	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2019	2022
Black, African American, or African	71%	68%	69%	70%	59%
White	16%	19%	18%	11%	20%
Asian or Asian American	2%	2%	2%	1%	5%
Multiple Races	6%	5%	5%	4%	11%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%
American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous	3%	2%	3%	13%	4%
Other/Unknown	2%	2%	2%		

Source: Program APRs and 2019 and 2022 PIT Count

As shown in the above exhibit, the racial demographics in the City's homelessness services programs in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21 appears roughly representative of the overall population experiencing homelessness in Oakland. About 70 percent of the City's homelessness services participants were African American across all three fiscal years, which aligns with the fact that African Americans were the majority of people experiencing homelessness in Oakland according to the 2019 and 2022 PIT Counts (70 and 59 percent respectively).

The percentage of the homeless population that was White, Asian, or Multi-racial notably increased between the 2019 and 2022 PIT Counts. However, considering the varying methodologies and error rates, it is unclear if any of these populations are over- or under-represented in the City's homelessness services programs.

To ensure it is proportionately and equitably serving people experiencing homelessness of all races, the City needs to periodically monitor the racial make-up of its homelessness services participants against PIT Count data and citywide population data.

Audit Results

The RV Safe Parking program does not reflect the overall racial make-up of Oaklanders experiencing homelessness

In contrast to the above results, the RV Safe Parking program did not serve participants of all races proportionately to their share of the population experiencing homelessness.

Exhibit 43 below shows the RV Safe Parking program participation by race for fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21.

Exhibit 43: RV Safe Parking program participation by race by fiscal year

Racial Demographic	FY 2018-19		FY 2019-20		FY 2020-21	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Black, African American, or African	6	55%	46	28%	50	29%
White	4	36%	96	59%	99	57%
Other	1	9%	20	12%	25	14%

Source: City Auditor summary based on HMIS data

As Exhibit 43 above shows, the RV Safe Parking program disproportionately served White participants in fiscal years 2019-20 and 2020-21. As stated above, the most recent PIT Count revealed African Americans were the majority of Oakland's homeless population. However, as Exhibit 43 above shows, only 28 and 29 percent of RV Safe Parking's participants were African American in fiscal years 2019-20 and 2020-21. On the other hand, in fiscal years 2019-20 and 2020-21, respectively 59 and 57 percent of the RV Safe Parking program's participants were White, even though they account for approximately 20 percent of Oakland's homeless population according to the 2022 PIT Count.

The RV Safe Parking program serves residents who reside in RVs or other vehicles. There are inherent racial inequities for qualifying for this program because it is the only crisis response program for which participants are required to have such assets.

If a specific program is found to be under-serving a priority population, modifications should be considered. Every program requires scarce City resources. As such, resources need to be allocated in accordance with City priorities and established commitments, which will be addressed in the last section of the audit.

Audit Results

The City needs the ability to break down program outcomes by race

To identify racial disparities, service provider contracts in fiscal year 2020-21 required service providers to break down program outcomes by race when that functionality became available in HMIS. Program outcomes refer to the metrics described in sections 1 and 2 of the report, and include exits to permanent housing, exits to homelessness, exits to positive destinations, exits to streets or unknown destinations, maintaining or increasing incomes, and enrollments in mainstream benefits and health insurance. Breaking out these outcomes by race will assist in determining whether all the City's homeless services are being provided proportionately and equitably.

CHS can currently analyze exits to permanent housing by race. When we reviewed these exit data, we confirmed that exits to permanent housing across all programs by race in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21, appeared generally proportionate to the populations served by the City's homelessness services programs.

Due to the limitations of the County-run HMIS, CHS cannot access other outcome data by race, including exits to positive destinations, exits to streets or unknown destinations, maintaining or increasing incomes, and enrollments in mainstream benefits and health insurance. CHS relied on the County HMIS Lead to develop reports using HMIS data. In 2020, upon the urging of CHS, the County developed reports that presumably could be used to analyze outcomes by race. In 2022, however, the County informed CHS that the reports were not working correctly, and the data were unreliable.

The City cannot evaluate its progress towards meeting the goal of eliminating racial disparities in service delivery until all outcomes can be reliably analyzed by race. The City must continue working with the County HMIS Lead to address technical difficulties, obtain the needed reports, and train staff how to use these reports to evaluate program outcomes by race.

The City should identify other communities' representation within Oakland's homelessness services

In addition to race, there may be other communities warranting analysis. According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, *"collecting, analyzing and using data to examine disparities and consider whether a proper level of assistance is being provided to over-represented and/or under-served groups may result in a better balance and a more equitable community system."* Consistent with this, the City should use data to identify other groups warranting focused attention and consider specific strategies on how to best serve these groups.

Audit Results

For example, domestic violence survivors are one group that warrants targeted services. The audit compared program participant demographic data against PIT Count demographic data. We found that individuals who identified as domestic violence survivors were served by the City at potentially lower rates than they were observed in the 2019 PIT Count.

According to the averages of fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21 HMIS Annual Performance Reports, 3 percent of Oakland clients were actively fleeing domestic violence, and 13 percent had a history of domestic violence. The 2019 PIT Count, however, observed 7 percent of people experiencing homelessness at that time were actively fleeing domestic violence, and 22 percent had histories of domestic violence. This is just one example of a group that may be potentially underrepresented in Oakland's homelessness services.

According to CHS, the County offers specific services to domestic violence survivors. Further, when people first access the coordinated entry system and identify as a domestic violence survivor, they are usually referred to that specific system of care. For safety reasons, those providers do not enter data in HMIS.

Given the challenges specific to identifying domestic violence survivors, and other communities that are particularly vulnerable to and affected by homelessness, the City should develop strategies to identify and quantify these communities within the City's homelessness services programs and to assess whether the City is reaching and serving these communities proportionately and equitably.

Conclusion

Participation in City homelessness services programs by various racial groups appeared generally in line with racial groups' share of population experiencing homelessness in 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21. The exception was the RV Safe Parking program which disproportionately served White participants. To ensure it is proportionately and equitably serving the Oaklanders experiencing homelessness of all races, the City needs to periodically monitor the racial make-up of its homelessness services participants against PIT Count data, HMIS data, and citywide population data. Furthermore, to ensure that successful outcomes are achieved by participants of all races, the City and County must find a way to breakdown HMIS data by race for key program outcomes. This may require the County HMIS Lead to develop reports within HMIS. Lastly, the City needs to use available data to ensure it is adequately serving communities particularly vulnerable to and affected by homelessness.

Audit Results

Recommendations

To ensure homelessness services achieve established equity goals and reach subpopulations of concern, we recommend the City:

15. Work with the County HMIS Lead to identify and develop standard and custom reports within HMIS that break down data by race. Reports should be reviewed on a regular basis to track progress. This information should be incorporated in regular progress reports to the City Council and the Commission on Homelessness. (The establishment of regular progress reports is included in the last section of the report).
16. Continuously review racial and other demographic data from HMIS, PIT Counts, and the U.S. Census to ensure the City is identifying and serving communities particularly vulnerable to, or impacted by, homelessness.

Section 5

Contracting with Service Providers

Finding: Improvements are needed in the monitoring, oversight, and administration of the City's homelessness services contracts.

Summary

The City primarily contracts out its homelessness services to third-party service providers. Between fiscal years 2018-19 and 2020-21, expenditures for homelessness services contracts increased from \$19.7 million to \$25 million, or 27 percent.

CHS' current approach to contract monitoring is impractical to apply appropriate coverage and address increased risks. Instead, the City should adopt a comprehensive risk-based approach. Additionally, contract monitoring activities were incomplete, inadequately documented, and did not sufficiently address service delivery concerns. Finally, service providers often began work prior to contracts being fully executed.

CHS is responsible for monitoring homelessness services contracts

The City primarily contracts out its homelessness services to third-party service providers. As shown in Section 1, these services include managing crisis response, longer-term housing programs, and various supportive services. Between fiscal years 2018-19 and 2020-21, expenditures for these homelessness services contracts increased from \$19.7 million to \$25 million, or 27 percent.

Given the importance of these services, the increase in spending, and limited staffing and resources, the City must design and implement a strong and effective contract monitoring system to ensure services are delivered as intended. Doing so informs the City on how service providers are delivering services, identifies concerns that need to be addressed, and leads to improvements in service delivery.

To monitor service providers, CHS uses its own staff and a consultant. CHS' monitoring activities include reviewing organizational charts, conflicts of interest, and policies and procedures. CHS also reviews grievance handling procedures, compliance with HMIS requirements, caseload

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management, and file documentation. In some instances, CHS' provides recommendations and corrective action plans, based on the results of its monitoring. These elements are summarized in monitoring files.

Contract monitoring activities were incomplete, inadequately documented, and did not sufficiently address service delivery concerns

Although the primary focus of monitoring includes the items listed above, CHS' monitoring activities also include assessing whether service providers met their contracted performance targets. To determine whether CHS' monitoring activities are addressing performance targets, we sampled six service providers' monitoring files. All six of the files reviewed were incomplete. Five of the files were incomplete because they did not indicate whether the providers met their targets. The remaining file stated that the targets were met but the file did not include evidence to support this conclusion. Despite the incomplete files, the monitoring results sent to providers concluded that all six service providers met performance targets, even without evidence for this assertion.

Additionally, as discussed in the first section of the report, CHS added a new monitoring activity in 2020 to evaluate the effectiveness of permanent housing placements. In our review of six monitoring files, the files did not include any evidence that CHS assessed the effectiveness of housing placements.

In another example, the audit identified inadequate monitoring on an outreach contract. Specifically, an outreach contract required the service provider to distribute at least 1,200 units of supplies, such as rain ponchos and hygiene kits, per month and submit spreadsheets to CHS on a quarterly basis to show it met this output target. Our review of the monitoring files for this contract revealed that the service provider did not meet the target in 5 out of the 12 months and did not provide data for 3 out of the 12 months in fiscal year 2020-21.

CHS could not provide an explanation for why the service provider distributed fewer than the minimum number of supplies for multiple months. Moreover, CHS could not provide us with any actions taken to explain the three months of missing spreadsheets.

These findings, combined with the performance data presented in the first two sections of this report, which showed that contracted performance targets are frequently not met, suggest that CHS needs to improve its monitoring activities. Furthermore, it is unclear how CHS identifies program and service provider deficiencies, and whether a corrective action process exists for potentially under-performing service providers. We recommend CHS improve its identification and documentation of deficiencies and develop corrective action plans.

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Contract monitoring procedures do not effectively identify and consider risks

CHS is not following its own policy that requires a risk-based approach to contract monitoring. A risk-based approach prioritizes service providers to monitor. Instead, CHS reviews every contract using a limited risk assessment tool, however it does not incorporate all relevant risks as described below.

For example, a larger value contract of \$2 million should require more in-depth oversight compared to a smaller contract of \$50,000. Based on our reviews of monitoring documents, we found no indication that CHS considers the value of contracts to inform them on which service providers to monitor. By not taking a thorough risk-based approach to contract monitoring, CHS cannot provide adequate assurance that it is spending its limited monitoring resources on the highest risk providers.

Additionally, CHS needs to consider operational risks. For example, fires and other incidents have been reported at program locations. CHS needs to consider these life-threatening and recurring situations in prioritizing its monitoring efforts. Other factors to consider in a risk-based approach to contract monitoring include, but are not limited to, whether service providers are first-time providers, performance against contracted targets, the quality and timeliness of data entry, changes to processes, and the nature of complaints and grievances filed.

Comprehensive risks assessments should be documented, and appropriate steps should be taken to manage identified risks. If not, services may not be delivered as the City intended.

Contract terms can promote more accountable service delivery

In addition to the need for more improved monitoring procedures, the City has opportunities to promote more accountable service delivery by negotiating the following provisions in its contracts with homelessness services providers:

- Revised and additional performance targets based on the City's determination of which ones are appropriate (as discussed in the first two sections of the report).
- Contract clauses addressing noncompliance including contract termination if performance targets are not met within certain time periods.
- Contract clauses to provide bonuses for exceeding key performance targets.

Such provisions are just a few leading contracting practices that the City has not yet adopted for its homelessness services contracts. As the City engages more in goal-setting and strategic

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planning, as recommended later in Section 6 of this report, it should consider additional contract terms.

Providers started work before contracts were fully approved

Once service providers are selected, contract approval requires extensive coordination among various City departments including Risk Management, Contracts and Compliance, and the City Attorney's Office. This process includes confirming living wage, benefits, insurance coverage, and other City requirements.

Several factors can contribute to the delays in approving contracts including a cumbersome citywide contracting process that involves several parties and many documents, as well as unclear expectations around key issues such as changing insurance requirements that are not proactively communicated. Additionally, because many of the City contracts are funded by HUD, the timeliness of contract approval depends heavily on when the City receives funding from HUD and other funders. If delays occur when the City receives the grant award, the contract approval between City and service providers will be delayed.

To determine whether the contracts were fully approved before the contract start date, we analyzed 18 contracts valued at \$14.5 million. For all 18 contracts, the providers started work before the contract was fully approved by the City. Contracts were delayed due to the factors stated above. On average, these contracts were approved 121 days after the contract start date. In one instance, a contract was approved nearly one year after the service provider began services.

Contracts should be approved before the service provider begins providing services because the contract formalizes and outlines each party's obligations to one another. For example, service providers are not legally required to provide services the City and clients rely upon, prior to contract approval. Additionally, when services are provided prior to contract approval, both the City and its service providers could be subject to increased liability. And because providers cannot be paid until after contracts are approved, providers may face financial hardship for "fronting" services to the City in advance. This is especially the case for smaller service providers.

While acknowledging the activity is inherently burdensome, City staff and service providers both expressed frustration about the City's ever-expanding and increasingly complicated and time-consuming contracting process. These concerns are not limited to homelessness services providers and are reflected by staff and grantees in other departments as well.

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It is also noteworthy that many of the homelessness services contracts have a one-year term. Executing contracts with two-year terms or longer would immediately decrease administrative burdens for service providers and the City.

Conclusion

Contract monitoring is an essential component of managing homelessness services because it informs the City how service providers are delivering services, identifies concerns that need to be addressed, and leads to improvements in service delivery. We recommend the City design and implement improved contract monitoring. The City must ensure service providers are held accountable to meeting or exceeding contract requirements.

Recommendations

To improve monitoring, oversight, and administration of homelessness services contracts, we recommend the City:

17. Design, document, and implement improved monitoring procedures that comprehensively incorporate risks, ensure enforcement of contract deliverables, and ensure corrective action plans are implemented.
18. Consider the advantages and disadvantages of implementing multi-year contracts to minimize the administrative burdens presented by annual contract renewals.
19. Consider how to design contracts to promote accountability for reaching performance targets, including both incentives and consequences based on level of performance.

Section 6

Strategy, Public Reporting, and Oversight

Finding: The City needs to move homelessness services forward by adopting an actionable strategic plan and increasing oversight.

Summary

The City lacks a strategic plan to provide an overall strategy, and inform spending decisions, organizational structure, and homelessness services. The City developed its initial Permanent Access to Housing framework (PATH) in 2006 and made significant updates in 2019, but it is not a strategic plan. Rather, it is a broad framework to align the City's efforts with national best practices. In order to achieve measurable, impactful, and lasting results, the City needs to formally adopt a strategic plan with goals and objectives, corresponding strategies, and annual workplans. The strategic plan needs to ensure meaningful program outcomes are defined for Oakland. To increase public accountability, periodic reporting on elements of this strategic plan should also include reporting on the funding of homelessness services, as well as general updates concerning the City's homelessness response, service delivery, work plans, and performance results. Reporting on the strategic plan should be directed to a public body in a public forum – perhaps the City's Commission on Homelessness. Furthermore, despite increases in dedicated resources for homelessness response, a significant number of vacancies within the CHS endanger the successful delivery of homelessness services, as does the recent departures of key management and department leadership. The City needs to determine appropriate staffing levels, composition, and roles for its homelessness response. A staffing review will be key to the City's ability to achieve a vision, mission, goals, and objectives for its homelessness response.

The City Council has not adopted a homelessness response strategy

In 2006, the City developed the Permanent Access to Housing (PATH) plan as a roadmap for ending homelessness. In 2019, the City updated the PATH to align the City's efforts with best practices and to focus on homelessness within the City. CHS presented a five-year (fiscal years

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2019-20 through 2023-24) update to PATH to City Council, which outlined a vision to make homelessness in Oakland “rare, brief, and one-time.”

The framework identifies specific strategies goals to reduce homelessness in Oakland:

- Fewer people become homeless each year
- More people return to housing as quickly as possible
- Expand, improve, and maintain crisis response beds
- People who have been homeless have the incomes and supports they need to avoid returning to homelessness
- Expand the supply of deeply affordable and supportive housing for Oakland’s most vulnerable residents
- Address impacts of unsheltered homelessness on sheltered and unsheltered neighbors

Notably, the updated PATH Framework is broad, not significantly funded, and not adopted by the City Council. Furthermore, while the PATH identifies goals, strategies, and investments needed to reduce homelessness in Oakland, it does not provide an authoritative or executable plan to effectively implement Oakland’s response to homelessness.

The City needs to develop formal goals, objectives, strategies, and annual workplans to effectively manage Oakland’s homelessness response

The City lacks a formal policy or document binding the City Administration to a specific plan for the City’s short- and long-term responses to homelessness. The scope and scale of the City’s homelessness services depends on funding by HUD and other federal and state agencies as well as funding from the County and City. Without a strategic plan, federal and state funding is defining Oakland’s homelessness response strategy without significant strategic direction by the City. The City’s response is not adequately defined, tracked, or effective as discussed in the earlier sections of this report addressing performance metrics, targets, and data.

The City needs to establish measurable and achievable goals and objectives for its homelessness services. These goals and measurable objectives should formally communicate what the City hopes to achieve with its services. Measurable goals and objectives would also assist the City in determining whether its efforts are succeeding in achieving intended results and whether its activities are having a positive effect on people experiencing homelessness.

The City also needs to establish a strategic plan for achieving its goals and objectives, specifically related to homelessness services. A strategic plan assists a formal program in providing a sense of direction and defining the activities to achieve stated goals and objectives.

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Additionally, the City needs to establish annual workplans. These workplans should identify annual goals and deadlines for the next year to accomplish the overall goals and objectives of the strategic plan. These workplans should include strategies for achieving annual goals and provide transparency around the work to be accomplished. To ensure its efforts are achieving the desired outcomes, the City should also establish formal systems for tracking progress in implementing strategies and annually report out on progress publicly.

The City should present comprehensive financial reports on funding

It is important for the public and policy makers to be able to follow the money. The Government Finance Officer Association (GFOA) is a professional organization representing public finance officials throughout the United States and Canada. According to GFOA, *“Elected officials and others charged with the management of public funds are responsible for ensuring and demonstrating that those funds are managed efficiently and effectively in the public interest.”*

To help Oakland leaders fulfill this duty, the City should report publicly at least annually on its homelessness services funding by funder, program type, and service provider. These financial reports should be both retrospective and prospective. Additional report information and the time periods to be included, such as 3 years or 5 years, should be determined in consultation with the City Council and the City Commission on Homelessness. This transparency will increase the level of public accountability and help identify funding gaps and financial trends. Such financial reporting, as recommended here, would provide the City leadership and the public with additional insight into the City’s homelessness response.

The City should produce a comprehensive report on its homelessness response activities

CHS reports frequently on their activities to the City Council, the City Council’s Life Enrichment Committee, and the Commission on Homelessness upon request. However, it would be more useful to compile, at least annually, a comprehensive account of all the homelessness services it provides including detailed information on the service providers. Such a report, including the funding report mentioned above, would be useful in clearly answering questions such as:

- What homelessness services does the City of Oakland provide to address homelessness?
- How much money is the City of Oakland spending on homelessness services?
- How much money remains for additional homelessness services?
- What has been accomplished from these investments?

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The City Council has publicly shared numerous concerns about homelessness services and has identified areas of concern regarding homelessness in Oakland. There is also significant demand among members of the public to receive updates. A periodic reporting process would provide a dedicated forum for City staff to provide the City Council, the public, and other stakeholders much-needed status updates on the City's homelessness response and allow for timely public and City Council input on a regular basis.

The Commission on Homelessness may be an ideal body to oversee the development of the City's homelessness response strategic plan and on-going monitoring

The nine-member Commission on Homelessness makes recommendations to the City Council for strategies to remedy homelessness. The Commission also reviews and responds annually to the PATH plan, and hears reports on housing, programs, and services for persons experiencing homelessness in the City. The Commission may be an ideal body to oversee the development of the City's homelessness response strategic plan and ongoing monitoring. The City Council should consider expanding the scope and responsibilities of the Commission to include overseeing the development and ongoing monitoring of the strategic plan for the City's homelessness services. To expand the scope of its responsibilities, the Commission will need adequate staff support to facilitate the creation of the City's initial strategic plan. While the initial strategic plan will be time-consuming and require an investment of staff and resources, this process is critical to shaping Oakland's homelessness response and driving quantifiable results for the City's homeless population, the public, and City leadership.

The Community Homelessness Services Division is impacted by vacancies and turnover in key positions and may not be able to sustain the necessary level of homelessness services

Since fiscal year 2018-19, vacancy rates within CHS have been significant, reaching as high as 36 percent in August 2020. Vacancies can indicate that a greater amount of work is being shouldered by fewer employees, and as a result, some important work may not be performed, or employee burnout may be prompting turnover. As of June 2022, CHS was budgeted for 17 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions of which 4 are currently vacant. See Appendix E to view CHS' organizational chart.

The significant number of vacancies within CHS endanger the successful delivery of homelessness services. Additionally, several key CHS management staff and Human Services

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Department leadership have either retired or left to join other organizations, impacting the institutional knowledge of the department.

These staffing challenges and increased workload may have contributed to performance management issues outlined in this audit. This raises concerns whether the department will be able to successfully provide the necessary level of homelessness services and address this audit's findings. Therefore, we recommend the City conduct a staffing analysis to determine appropriate roles and responsibilities to effectively manage homelessness services. The next paragraph of the report addresses the staffing analysis.

The City needs to determine appropriate staffing levels, roles, and the composition of staff for future activities

The City should identify its staffing needs and the right mix of staffing necessary to effectively manage homelessness services. CHS, as previously stated, has experienced significant staffing changes, increased workload due to increased funding, reduced staffing capacity due to vacancies, increased scrutiny from dissatisfied public officials and the public, and a lack of technical staff to extract and analyze critical program data. These issues have various operational and organizational impacts that must be successfully mitigated.

As part of the staffing analysis, the City should inventory CHS' numerous responsibilities, and clearly define and document the various roles, responsibilities, and authority of current staff. In the past, the role and authority of the Homelessness Administrator has been unclear, both publicly and organizationally. As a new Homelessness Administrator begins his tenure, and with the changes in management at CHS and the Human Services Department in general, now is an opportune time to analyze the staffing structure and how to capitalize on both the Homelessness Administrator's staff and CHS' staff. Teams function more effectively and efficiently when members share a common understanding of their respective roles, responsibilities, authority, and the expectations they hold for one another when working together to accomplish their vision, mission, goals, and objectives.

Conclusion

Establishing and adopting better strategy, management, and staffing will be essential to sustaining a successful homelessness response which entails making the necessary strides outlined throughout this report, including:

- identifying, achieving, and tracking participant, service provider, and program outcomes against meaningful performance metrics and targets,

Audit Results

- ensuring timely, accurate, and complete data for homelessness services programs and participants,
- continuing to identify, and act on possible racial disparities in homelessness response and identifying subpopulations requiring focused attention, and
- monitoring and overseeing contracts and the delivery of homelessness services.

The process of making these strides will require an actionable strategic plan, increased oversight, and input from the City Administration, City leadership, the Commission on Homelessness, and the public.

Recommendations

To establish and adopt better strategy, management, and reporting, we recommend the City:

20. Develop written goals and objectives for the City's homelessness services. These goals and objectives should formally communicate what the City aspires to achieve with its homelessness services. Audit findings and recommendations should be considered in the development of these goals and objectives.
21. In coordination with the Commission on Homelessness, develop a strategic plan that includes written strategies for achieving the City's homelessness services goals and objectives, and establish formal systems for assessing the City's progress in implementing these strategies.
22. Develop annual workplans to accomplish the strategic plan by identifying goals and deadlines for the next year and the strategies for achieving them.
23. Report annually on activities, progress, and results of the strategic plan.
24. Consult with the City Council and the Commission on Homelessness to develop comprehensive financial reports on homelessness services funding that include funder, program type, and service provider. We recommend these financial reports be both retrospective and prospective and cover multiple years.
25. Periodically, at least annually, compile and present a comprehensive report on homelessness services including detailed information on the service providers, such as performance metrics and targets. Staff should consult with the City Council and the Commission on Homelessness about the information needed to provide adequate oversight and use their input to develop a standard report format that can be updated annually and modified as needed.

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26. Perform a staffing analysis to assess the City's staffing requirements for homelessness services. The staffing analysis should not only address the number of staff needed to carry out homelessness service activities, but it should also address the appropriate mix and composition of staff needed to effectively manage homelessness services and address the audit findings.
27. Clearly define and document roles, responsibilities, and authority of all staff working on homelessness services, including the Homelessness Administrator's staff.

We recommend the City Council:

28. Designate the Commission on Homelessness as the entity to oversee the development of the initial strategic plan for the City's homelessness services, and its ongoing monitoring.
29. Adopt the Oakland homelessness response strategic plan once completed.

We recommend the Commission on Homelessness:

30. Determine and request the additional resources needed to develop and monitor the strategic plan for homelessness services

Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

Audit Objectives

The audit had the following objectives:

- Quantify the number of people receiving short-term, long-term, and permanent housing and their lengths of stay.
- Evaluate the performance of contracted service providers against intended program outcomes.
- Identify disparities in how the City's short-term, long-term, and permanent housing are provided to various subpopulations.
- Assess the coordination and partnerships between City departments, other governmental agencies, and select service providers.

This report does not address:

- Homelessness prevention efforts
- Contract award process
- Affordable housing development and operations
- Retention rates for permanent housing
- Alameda County programs

Audit Scope

The scope of the audit includes Oakland's homelessness services in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21.

Audit Methodology

We conducted the following steps to support our audit conclusions:

- Interviewed City staff and management from the Departments of Human Services, Race and Equity, and Human Resources, and the Offices of the City Administrator and City Attorney.
- Interviewed staff and management from Alameda County, EveryOne Home, various service providers, advocacy groups, Oakland Unified School District, and other municipalities performing homelessness services.
- Performed walkthroughs and observations of selected programs.

Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

- Reviewed the City’s PATH plan and Local Action Plan to address homelessness, relevant policies and procedures, and Human Services’ organizational chart.
- Reviewed EveryOne Home’s strategic plan, report on Centering Racial Equity, and Point-In-Time Counts for 2019 and 2022.
- Reviewed homelessness services contracts for fiscal year 2021.
- Obtained and analyzed HMIS’ Annual Performance Reports by program type for fiscal years 2018-19 through 2020-21, aggregated data, and calculated program outcomes. See Appendix D for details about the calculation of program outcomes.
- Tested 18 contracts to determine whether contracts were executed timely.
- Obtained and analyzed Human Services’ expenditure reports for homelessness services for fiscal years 2018-19 through 2020-21.
- Reviewed one year of outreach data to determine if targets for delivery of harm reduction kits were met.
- Performed a racial equity analysis to determine whether homelessness services were provided equitably.
- Reviewed results of the Community Services Division’s monitoring of service providers.

Statement of Compliance

Statement of Compliance with Government Auditing Standards

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Appendix A

Appendix A: Types of funding that the City of Oakland receives to support its programs

Type of Funding	Funding Source	Description
City of Oakland Funding	General Purpose Fund	The General Purpose Fund monies can be spent at the discretion of the City Council. Most City departments receive General Purpose Fund support
	Sugar Sweetened Beverage Tax	This tax funds programs that prevent or reduce the health consequences of consuming sugar-sweetened beverages at the discretion of City Council
	Measure Q	This measure, approved by the voters in 2020, provides funding parks and recreation, litter reduction, and homeless services
Alameda County	Alameda County Social Services Agency (SSA)	The County of Alameda Social Services Agency (SSA) provides basic safety net services to at risk children, families, and adults.
	Other	The City has also received funding from Alameda County to support programs like the winter shelter, and CORE housing resource centers (for the coordinated entry system).
State of California	Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP)	HEAP was established to provide direct assistance to California's homeless Continuums of Care (CoCs) and large cities to address the homelessness crisis throughout the state. The City of Oakland received \$8.6 million directly from the state in HEAP money, and \$3.1 million from Alameda County in State HEAP money.
	Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) Grant Program	HHAP Round 1 was a \$650 million grant from the State of California that provides local jurisdictions with funds to support regional

Appendix A

Type of Funding	Funding Source	Description
		coordination and expand or develop local capacity to address their immediate homelessness challenges. The City of Oakland was granted \$19.7 million from HHAP round 1.
Federal Government	Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)	The City receives CDBG funding, which is distributed to non-profit organizations for housing and community development in low- and moderate-income areas.
	Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG)	Emergency Solutions Grants assist people to quickly regain stability in permanent housing after experiencing a housing crisis and/or homelessness.
	Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS (HOPWA)	Under the HOPWA Program, HUD makes grants to local communities, States, and nonprofit organizations for projects that benefit low-income persons living with HIV/AIDS and their families.
	COVID funds	<p>The CARES Act appropriated \$4 billion through the Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) Program “to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus, among individuals and families who are homeless or receiving homeless assistance and to support additional homeless assistance and homelessness prevention activities to mitigate the impacts created by coronavirus under the Emergency Solutions Grants program (42 U.S.C. 11371).”</p> <p>The City has received FEMA reimbursement for operating the Lake Merritt Lodge, a non-congregate shelter for people</p>

Appendix A

Type of Funding	Funding Source	Description
		experiencing homelessness who are at a high risk of complications from COVID-19.
	Oakland Housing Authority (OHA)	OHA administers the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Section 8 program in Oakland. They also own and oversee the management of hundreds of units of legacy public housing and continue to develop new affordable housing. The City of Oakland partners with the OHA for its Oakland Path Re-Housing Initiative (OPRI) and Local Housing Assistance Program (LHAP).
Private Grants	Kaiser Foundation	In 2019 Kaiser Permanente contributed \$3 million to the City of Oakland to help fund operations at a single adult Transitional Housing center.
Social Services Grants	Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART), City of Emeryville, City of Berkeley, Employee Donations for Hunger Program	Other local jurisdictions contribute to some programs that are administered by the City of Oakland. For example, the City of Berkeley and the City of Emeryville contribute to the operation of Family Front Door (a family shelter provider).

Appendix B

Appendix B: Contracted Service Providers and Services Offered in fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21

Service Provider	Services Offered
Abode Services	Family Rapid Re-Housing Permanent Housing Services Single Adult OPRI
Bay Area Community Services	Coordinated Entry and Housing Navigation for Singles (FY 19 and FY 20) Single Adult Rapid Re-Housing Single Adult Transitional Housing
Building Futures with Women and Children	Coordinated Entry and Housing Navigation for Families (FY 19 and FY 20) Family Rapid Re-Housing
Building Opportunities for Self Sufficiency	Workforce programs
Covenant House	Transitional Aged Youth Transitional Housing
Downtown Streets Team	Workforce programs
East Oakland Community Project	Coordinated Entry and Housing Navigation for Singles (FY 19 and FY 20) Family Rapid Re-Housing Family Shelter Family Transitional Housing Single Adult Emergency Shelter Transitional Aged Youth Rapid Re-Housing Transitional Aged Youth Transitional Housing
Family Bridges	Community Cabin
First Place for Youth	Transitional Aged Youth Transitional Housing
Homeless Action Center	Legal services for Crossroads Emergency Shelter
Housing Consortium of the East Bay	Community Cabin COVID Response RV Safe Parking
Lifelong Medical Care	Coordinated Entry and Housing Navigation for Singles (FY 19 and FY 20) Permanent Housing Services

Appendix B

Service Provider	Services Offered
Operation Dignity	Community Cabin RV Safe Parking Street Outreach
Roots Community Health Center	Community Cabin Street Outreach
St. Mary's Center	Single Adult Emergency Shelter Single Adult Rapid Re-Housing
St. Vincent de Paul	Single Adult Emergency Shelter
Youth Spirit Artworks	Transition Aged Youth Transitional Housing (FY 21 only)

Appendix C: Descriptions of exit destinations

Exit Destination	Description
Permanent Destination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moved from one HOPWA funded project to HOPWA PH Owned by client, no ongoing housing subsidy Owned by client, with ongoing housing subsidy Rental by client, no ongoing housing subsidy Rental by client, with VASH housing subsidy Rental by client, with GPD TIP housing subsidy Rental by client, with other ongoing housing subsidy Permanent housing (other than RRH) for formerly homeless persons Staying or living with family, permanent tenure Staying or living with friends, permanent tenure Rental by client, with RRH or equivalent subsidy Rental by client, with HCV voucher (tenant or project based) Rental by client in a public housing unit
Temporary Destination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergency shelter, including hotel or motel paid for with emergency shelter voucher, or RHY-funded Host Home shelter Moved from one HOPWA funded project to HOPWA TH Transitional housing for homeless persons (including homeless youth) Staying or living with family, temporary tenure (e.g., room, apartment, or house) Staying or living with friends, temporary tenure (e.g., room, apartment, or house) Place not meant for habitation (e.g., a vehicle, an abandoned building, bus/train/subway station/airport or anywhere outside) Safe Haven Hotel or motel paid for without emergency shelter voucher Host Home (non-crisis)

Appendix C

Exit Destination	Description
Institutional Destination	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Foster care home or group foster care home• Psychiatric hospital or other psychiatric facility• Substance abuse treatment facility or detox center• Hospital or other residential non-psychiatric medical facility• Jail, prison, or juvenile detention facility• Long-term care facility or nursing home
Other Destination	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Residential project or halfway house with no homeless criteria• Deceased• Other• Client Doesn't Know/Client Refused• Data Not Collected (no exit interview completed)

Source: HUD and Program APRs

Appendix D

Appendix D: Performance Metric Components and Calculations

PERCENTAGE PERMANENTLY HOUSED			
Field #	Question in APR	Field in APR	Calculation
Field 1	Q23c	Percentage - Permanent Destinations	All Permanent Exits ÷ (Total Exits - Total persons whose destinations excluded them from the calculation)
PERCENTAGE EXITED TO HOMELESSNESS			
Field #	Question in APR	Field in APR	Calculation
Field 1	Q23c	Temporary - Emergency shelter, including hotel or motel paid for with emergency shelter voucher, or RHY-funded Host Home shelter	Sum (Field 1: Field 3) ÷ (Field 4 – Field 5)
Field 2	Q23c	Temporary - Transitional housing for homeless persons (including homeless youth)	
Field 3	Q23c	Temporary - Place not meant for habitation (e.g., a vehicle, an abandoned building, bus/train/subway station/airport or anywhere outside)	
Field 4	Q5a	Number of leavers	
Field 5	Q23c	Total persons whose destinations excluded them from the calculation	
PERCENTAGE POSITIVE EXITS			
Field #	Question in APR	Field in APR	Calculation
Field 1	Q23c	All Permanent destinations	Sum (Field 1: Field 12) ÷ Field 13
Field 2	Q23c	Emergency shelter, including hotel or motel paid for with emergency shelter voucher, or RHY-funded Host Home shelter	
Field 3	Q23c	Moved from one HOPWA funded project to HOPWA TH	
Field 4	Q23c	Transitional housing for homeless persons (including homeless youth)	

Appendix D

Field 5	Q23c	Staying or living with family, temporary tenure (e.g., room, apartment, or house)	
Field 6	Q23c	Staying or living with friends, temporary tenure (e.g., room, apartment, or house)	
Field 7	Q23c	Hotel or motel paid for without emergency shelter voucher	
Field 8	Q23c	Host Home (non-crisis)	
Field 9	Q23c	Foster care home or group foster care home	
Field 10	Q23c	Substance abuse treatment facility or detox center	
Field 11	Q23c	Long-term care facility or nursing home	
Field 12	Q23c	Residential project or halfway house with no homeless criteria	
Field 13	Q23c	Total Exits	
PERCENTAGE EXITS TO STREETS OR UNKNOWN DESTINATION			
Field #	Question in APR	Field in APR	Calculation
Field 1	Q23c	Temporary - Place not meant for habitation (e.g., a vehicle, an abandoned building, bus/train/subway station/airport or anywhere outside)	Sum (Field 1: Field 3) ÷ Field 4
Field 2	Q23c	Other - Client Doesn't Know/Client Refused	
Field 3	Q23c	Other - Data Not Collected (no exit interview completed)	
Field 4	Q5a	Number of leavers	
PERCENTAGE PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS INCREASING OR MAINTAINING INCOME			
Field #	Question in APR	Field in APR	Calculation
Field 1	Q19a1	Number of Adults with Any Income (i.e., Total Income) - Retained Income Category and Same \$ at Annual Assessment as at Start	Sum (Field 1: Field 6) ÷ (Field 7 - Field 8)

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Field 2	Q19a1	Number of Adults with Any Income (i.e., Total Income) - Retained Income Category and Increased \$ at Annual Assessment	
Field 3	Q19a1	Number of Adults with Any Income (i.e., Total Income) - Did Not Have the Income Category at Start and Gained the Income Category at Annual Assessment	
Field 4	Q19a2	Number of Adults with Any Income (i.e., Total Income) - Retained Income Category and Same \$ at Exit as at Start	
Field 5	Q19a2	Number of Adults with Any Income (i.e., Total Income) - Retained Income Category and Increased \$ at Exit	
Field 6	Q19a2	Number of Adults with Any Income (i.e., Total Income) - Did Not Have the Income Category at Start and Gained the Income Category at Exit	
Field 7	Q5a	Number of adults (age 18 or over)	
Field 8	Q16	Number of adult stayers not yet required to have an annual assessment	
PERCENTAGE PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS INCREASING INCOME			
Field #	Question in APR	Field in APR	Calculation
Field 1	Q19a1	Number of Adults with Any Income (i.e., Total Income) - Retained Income Category and Increased \$ at Annual Assessment	Sum (Field 1: Field 4) ÷ (Field 5 - Field 6)
Field 2	Q19a1	Number of Adults with Any Income (i.e., Total Income) - Did Not Have the Income Category at Start and Gained the Income Category at Annual Assessment	
Field 3	Q19a2	Number of Adults with Any Income (i.e., Total Income) - Retained Income Category and Increased \$ at Exit	
Field 4	Q19a2	Number of Adults with Any Income (i.e., Total Income) - Did Not Have the	

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		Income Category at Start and Gained the Income Category at Exit	
Field 5	Q5a	Number of adults (age 18 or over)	
Field 6	Q16	Number of adult stayers not yet required to have an annual assessment	
PERCENTAGE PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS ENROLLED IN MAINSTREAM BENEFITS			
Field #	Question in APR	Field in APR	Calculation
Field 1	Q20b	1 + Source(s) - Benefit at Latest Annual Assessment for Stayers	(Field 1 + Field 2) ÷ (Field 3 - Field 4)
Field 2	Q20b	1 + Source(s) - Benefit at Exit for Leavers	
Field 3	Q5a	Number of adults (age 18 or over)	
Field 4	Q16	Number of adult stayers not yet required to have an annual assessment	
PERCENTAGE PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS ENROLLED IN HEALTH INSURANCE BENEFITS			
Field #	Question in APR	Field in APR	Calculation
Field 1	Q21	1 Source of Health Insurance - At Annual Assessment for Stayers	Sum (Field 1: Field 4) ÷ (Field 5 - Field 6)
Field 2	Q21	More than 1 Source of Health Insurance - At Annual Assessment for Stayers	
Field 3	Q21	1 Source of Health Insurance - At Exit for Leavers	
Field 4	Q21	More than 1 Source of Health Insurance - At Exit for Leavers	
Field 5	Q5a	Number of adults (age 18 or over)	
Field 6	Q21	Number of Stayers not yet Required To Have an Annual Assessment	

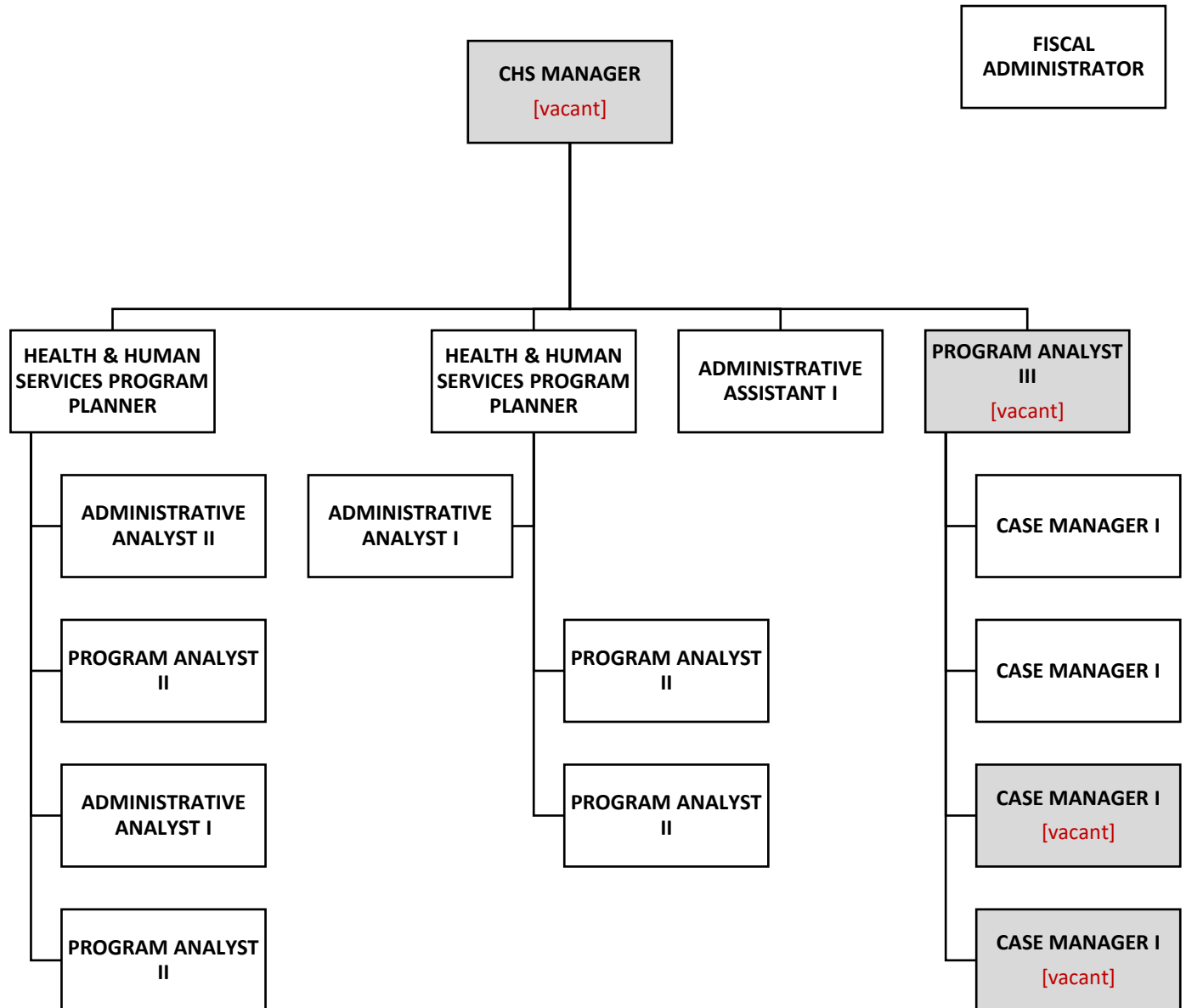
Appendix D

PERCENTAGE PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS REMAINING HOUSED ONE YEAR OR LONGER			
Field #	Question in APR	Field in APR	Calculation
Field 1	Q22a1	366 to 730 days (1-2 Yrs) - Leavers	$\frac{\text{Sum (Field 1: Field 10)}}{[\text{Field 11} - \text{Sum (Field 12: Field 16)}]}$
Field 2	Q22a1	731 to 1,095 days (2-3 Yrs) - Leavers	
Field 3	Q22a1	1,096 to 1,460 days (3-4 Yrs) - Leavers	
Field 4	Q22a1	1,461 to 1,825 days (4-5 Yrs) - Leavers	
Field 5	Q22a1	More than 1,825 days (> 5 Yrs) - Leavers	
Field 6	Q22a1	366 to 730 days (1-2 Yrs) - Stayers	
Field 7	Q22a1	731 to 1,095 days (2-3 Yrs) - Stayers	
Field 8	Q22a1	1,096 to 1,460 days (3-4 Yrs) - Stayers	
Field 9	Q22a1	1,461 to 1,825 days (4-5 Yrs) - Stayers	
Field 10	Q22a1	More than 1,825 days (> 5 Yrs) - Stayers	
Field 11	Q5a	Total number of persons served	
Field 12	Q22a1	30 days or less - Stayers	
Field 13	Q22a1	31 to 60 days - Stayers	
Field 14	Q22a1	61 to 90 days - Stayers	
Field 15	Q22a1	91 to 180 days - Stayers	
Field 16	Q22a1	181 to 365 days - Stayers	

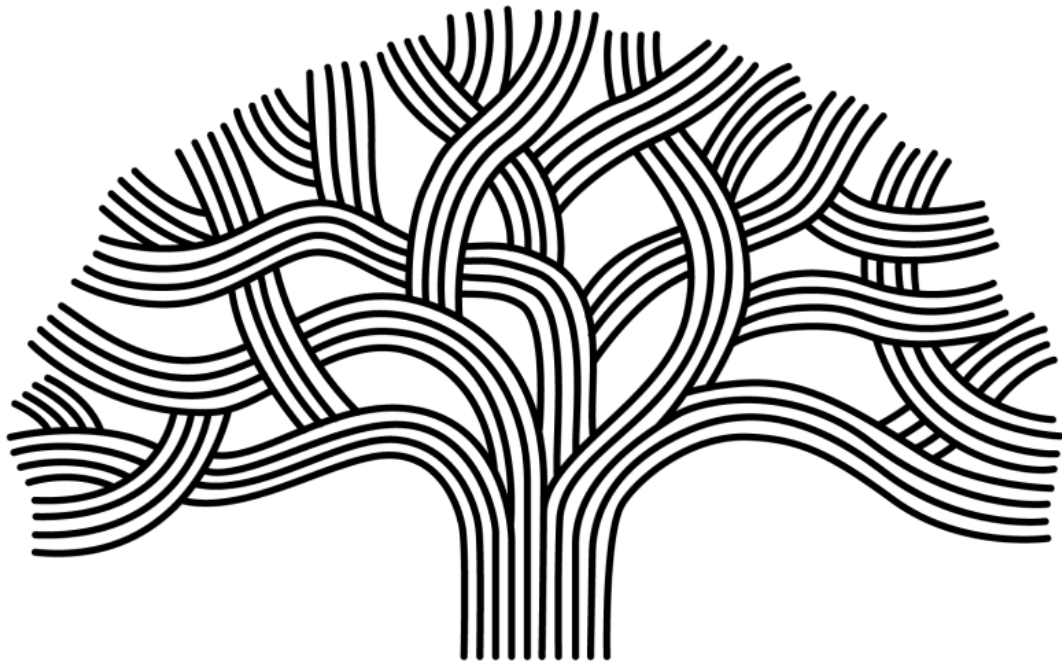
Source: CHS' Outcome Methodology and EveryOne Home Scorecard methodology

Appendix E

Appendix E: Organization Chart for Community Homeless Services Division as of June 2022



Source: CHS (adapted by the Auditor).



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CITY OF OAKLAND



CITY HALL • 1 FRANK H. OGAWA PLAZA • OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA 94612

Office of the City Administrator
Edward D. Reiskin
City Administrator

(510) 238-3301
FAX (510) 238-2223
TDD (510) 238-3254

September 9, 2022

**Courtney Ruby
City Auditor
City of Oakland
1 Frank H. Ogawa Pl, Floor 4
Oakland CA 94612**

Re: Homelessness Services Performance Audit

Dear Auditor Ruby:

The City Administrator's Office appreciates the performance audit of the City of Oakland's homeless services as it relates to delivering crisis response, longer-term housing, and other supportive services, which since March 2020 has been greatly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic as documented in the report.

The information provided in the audit will be used to inform the department's continuous improvement process as it relates to strategic planning, delivery of services (including addressing disparities by race), program management, and data collection/reporting on Oakland's unhoused population.

Attached, please find the Administration's audit recommendation responses.

I want to thank you and your staff for the open communication and continuous dialogue throughout the audit process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. Reiskin', written over a light blue horizontal line.

**Edward D. Reiskin
City Administrator**

cc: Mayor Libby Schaaf

Finding	City Auditor's Recommendations	Management Action Plan	Responsible Party	Target Date to Complete
1	Work with the County HMIS Lead or otherwise identify a way to access data on "returns to homelessness," by program type and service provider, in order to identify how many participants who exited to permanent housing, return to homelessness 6, 12, or 24 months later.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to engage with Alameda County (AC) HMIS Manager and team through regularly scheduled meetings. The Human Services Department (HSD) data team consist of the Community Homelessness Services (CHS) Manager, HSD Planner, a data intern (temp) and a data consultant. Currently, HSD staff are actively working with the AC HMIS team and a HUD technical assistance appointed contractor, APT Associates to help develop Oakland specific data reports. Staff is also working with ICF (@icf.com) and Bitfocus to assess the inclusion/exclusion parameters in producing System Performance Measure (SPM) reports by program type and service provider. 	HSD	FY 22/23

Finding	City Auditor's Recommendations	Management Action Plan	Responsible Party	Target Date to Complete
2	Adopt adopting exits to positive destinations and exits to streets or unknown destinations as metrics for Emergency Shelters, and set performance targets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff instituted these performance outcomes and targets in its FY 22/23 grant agreements/contracts. 	HSD	FY 22/23
3	Continuously review existing performance metrics and corresponding performance targets across all program types, and consider adjusting and developing new ones as needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff (CHS Management, program staff, and the data team) have increased the frequency of reviewing all program data to quarterly. Staff will review performance targets and make adjustments where needed, keeping in alignment with larger mandated Continuum of Care (CoC) and HUD targets and with the City of Oakland strategies to address homelessness. 	HSD/CAO	FY 22/23
4	Ensure that requirements within service provider contracts reflect adopted performance metrics and targets and ensure such requirements are consistent across different service provider contracts within the same program type.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff instituted consistent performance metrics and targets across all program types in its current executed contracts, and per the directive of City Council. 	HSD/CAO	FY 22/23

Finding	City Auditor's Recommendations	Management Action Plan	Responsible Party	Target Date to Complete
5	Collect and analyze HMIS data on lengths of stay at crisis response and longer-term housing programs to identify why and when participants exit, and identify trends across different program types and service providers, and use this information to inform programmatic decisions that may help the City promote better program performance and improve participants' outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff will hire a full-time data consultant to perform detail HMIS and data analysis to help enhance program performance and improve overall outcomes and success for participants. This data analysis will also be included in the strategic planning process. 	HSD/CAO	FY 23/24
6	Evaluate the maintaining/increasing income metric and enrollments in mainstream and health insurance benefits metrics by program type and service provider to identify successes and failures related to participant enrollment. This information should then be used to implement improvements in enrolling participants in benefits programs and to hold service providers accountable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff, Alameda County, and the City of Berkeley, as part of the CoC have evaluated this outcome and has concluded it is not useful. As a result, the mainstream benefit outcome has been removed from the City of Oakland contracts. However, a cross-jurisdictional collaboration is currently evaluating the income outcome. This group continues to explore the best ways to review and utilize income data as a measure of improving housing outcomes for participants. 	HSD	FY 23/24

Finding	City Auditor's Recommendations	Management Action Plan	Responsible Party	Target Date to Complete
7	Review participants' income data across programs to reveal the range of incomes and use this information to inform the development and adaptation of City programs to provide deeply affordable housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See number 6 	HSD	FY 23/24

Finding	City Auditor's Recommendations	Management Action Plan	Responsible Party	Target Date to Complete
8	Clarify what the RV Safe Parking program is intended to accomplish in terms of outcomes for its participants. Once these outcomes are determined, decide what metrics are important and set realistic targets for those metrics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff began updating the outcomes for the RV program at the conclusion of FY 21/22. The development, analysis, and review of the metrics for the RVSP sites are ongoing. • Currently, RVSP sites are meant to be temporary, however, participants often view their RV as their permanent resident. As a result, the launch of the 66th Avenue project will expand the program model to address the need for a short-term and long-term housing solution. The Wood Street RVSP has added a pilot work component to evaluate how this support can help transition participants into permanent long-term housing faster. 	HSD	FY 23/24

Finding	City Auditor's Recommendations	Management Action Plan	Responsible Party	Target Date to Complete
9	Add a dedicated staff member with requisite analytical and technical skills to consistently track and monitor HMIS data, analyze data, and present results for management to review and adjust operations and strategies, as needed. Such a staff member could facilitate better use of and training on HMIS.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding for this position (or consultant) was included in the for FY 22-23 budget Staff will draft job description for this position – looking to hire two positions. Potentially one on HSD and one in CAO with cross-training HR to recruit 	HSD/CAO/HR	FY 23/24
10	Work with the County HMIS Lead to identify and develop standard and custom reports within HMIS, including reports for real-time bed utilization and returns to homelessness at 6 months, 12 months, or 24 months after exiting to permanent housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See number 1 and 6 	HSD	FY 23/24

Finding	City Auditor's Recommendations	Management Action Plan	Responsible Party	Target Date to Complete
11	Secure training on HMIS data entry and how to produce various reports, including customized reports. If necessary, an outside contractor should be considered if the County HMIS Lead cannot provide adequate or timely training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff (CHS Interim Manager and HSD Planner) who are allotted a Looker license have been trained on how to produce and run reports. All CHS staff have access and are currently trained to run the APR and Demographic reports. • HSD will provide for regular refresher HMIS training to all staff and grantees as part of its ongoing professional development. • It is worth noting that the County is working to improve its data validation issue. The HSD data team continues to work with APT Associates and is scheduled to meet with the newly hired AC HMIS Manager to address the issue. 	HSD	FY 22/23

Finding	City Auditor's Recommendations	Management Action Plan	Responsible Party	Target Date to Complete
12	Adopt and negotiate with service providers, a performance metric and benchmark for timely input of client data into HMIS, preferably in alignment with the CoC's three-day target. Once implemented and negotiated into contracts, the City should continuously track and monitor performance. Additionally, the City should assist service providers in remediating any data concerns quickly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff are planning to add timely data entry (72 hours within receipt of information) to contracted scopes of work for FY 23-24 in support of efforts to improve the quality of client data entered. 	HSD	FY 23/24
13	Advocate for the County to improve its HMIS data and reporting capabilities, including disaggregating program outcomes by race.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See number 1 The addition of an HSD data staff person/consultant will be the primary liaison with the County HMIS team to obtain needed data. HSD and the CAO office continues to advocate on the behalf of the City of Oakland through the EveryOne Home Leadership Board and Continuum of Care oversight committee. 	HSD/CAO	FY 22/23

Finding	City Auditor's Recommendations	Management Action Plan	Responsible Party	Target Date to Complete
14	Implement the use of the dashboards to promote access, transparency, and public accountability. The dashboard at a minimum should include bed utilization and returns to homelessness data, as well as the metrics listed in sections 1 and 2 (i.e., exits to permanent housing, homelessness, positive destinations, streets or unknown destinations, maintaining or increasing incomes, and enrollments in mainstream benefits and health insurance).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See number 1 • Staff, in partnership with the data consultant, are working on reimplementing the public facing dashboard. • Staff will hire a HMIS data position who will be responsible for maintaining the dashboard. The staff person will be primary liaison to interface with the County HMIS system and team to obtain and validate data. 	HSD	Summer 2023 (Implementation dependent on data validation)
15	Work with the County HMIS Lead to identify and develop standard and custom reports within HMIS that break down data by race. Reports should be reviewed on a regular basis to track progress. This information should be incorporated in regular progress reports to the City Council and the Commission on Homelessness. (The establishment of regular progress reports is included in the last section of the report).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See number 1 and 13 • Staff is working to ensure quarterly SPM and progress reports include a breakdown of race by service type to ensure that racial disparities in homelessness are addressed and included in reports to council and the Commission on Homelessness. 	HSD/CAO	FY 22/23

Finding	City Auditor's Recommendations	Management Action Plan	Responsible Party	Target Date to Complete
16	Continuously review racial and other demographic data from HMIS, PIT Counts, and the U.S. Census to ensure the City is identifying and serving communities particularly vulnerable to, or impacted by homelessness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff will continue to review demographic reports on the programmatic level as well as PIT count data which includes a comparison to Census data. Staff also looks at Oakland data in comparison to County-wide data. The original public facing dashboard on the city of Oakland's website, that was removed due to data validation errors reported by the county HMIS team, included a comparison between these three data sources. 	HSD	FY 22/23
17	Design, document, and implement improved monitoring procedures that comprehensively incorporate risks, ensure enforcement of contract deliverables, and ensure corrective action plans are implemented.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff will review and update its current contract monitoring processes and bring on a consultant to evaluate the current system to make recommendations for continuous improvements and to minimize risk. 	HSD/CAO	FY 22/23 -FY 23/24

Finding	City Auditor's Recommendations	Management Action Plan	Responsible Party	Target Date to Complete
18	Consider the advantages and disadvantages of implementing multi-year contracts to minimize the administrative burdens presented by annual contract renewals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff has previously recommended utilizing multi-year contracts. Staff is optimistic that this audit recommendation will lead to a re-evaluation of HSD's ability to enter multi-year contracts to increase the capacity of City staff and minimize the administrative burden on providers. 	HSD/CAO/OCA/City Council	FY 23/24
19	Consider how to design contracts to promote accountability for reaching performance targets, including both incentives and consequences based on level of performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff will work with the Department of Workplace and Employment Services, Finance, and the City Attorney's Office to evaluate the feasibility of this recommendation. Staff will research other jurisdictions that use incentives/consequences in homeless services contracting 	HSD/CAOOCA/DWES/Finance Dept	FY 23/24

Finding	City Auditor's Recommendations	Management Action Plan	Responsible Party	Target Date to Complete
20	Develop written goals and objectives for the City's homelessness services. These goals and objectives should formally communicate what the City aspires to achieve with its homelessness services. Audit findings and recommendations should be considered in the development of these goals and objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CAO, in conjunction with HSD staff, is planning to begin an assessment of the City's Homeless services and department as authorized in the city's FY 22/23 budget. HSD is currently recruiting for a new CHS Manager who will be charged with working to develop a strategic plan, with consideration given to the existing PATH framework and the cross-jurisdictional city council endorsed Home Together 2026 plan. 	HSD/CAO	FY 23/24
21	In coordination with the Commission on Homelessness, develop a strategic plan that includes written strategies for achieving the City's homelessness services goals and objectives, and establish formal systems for assessing the City's progress in implementing these strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff is open to partnering with the Commission on Homelessness to develop a comprehensive homeless focused strategic plan, informed by the existing PATH framework, that includes addressing the availability of affordable housing for Oakland's very low-income populations. 	HSD/CAO/HCD	FY 23/24

Finding	City Auditor's Recommendations	Management Action Plan	Responsible Party	Target Date to Complete
22	Develop annual workplans to accomplish the strategic plan by identifying goals and deadlines for the next year and the strategies for achieving them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently, FY 22-23 workplan is included in the FY 22-23 grant based Local Action Plan approved by council (6/30/22). Upon completion of a comprehensive PATH-informed strategic plan, staff will update the annual plan each spring for the following fiscal year. 	HSD/CAO	FY 23/24
23	Report annually on activities, progress, and results of the strategic plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff will continue to report annually on activities, progress, and results of funded programs and services and upon completion of the strategic plan, incorporate revised goals, strategies, and program outcomes/metrics. 	HSD/CAO	Annually

Finding	City Auditor's Recommendations	Management Action Plan	Responsible Party	Target Date to Complete
24	Consult with the City Council and the Commission on Homelessness to develop comprehensive financial reports on homelessness services funding that include funder, program type, and service provider. We recommend these financial reports be both retrospective and prospective, and cover multiple years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a process implemented this FY 22/23 to clearly identify all funds spent toward homeless efforts. Staff will work with the Finance Department to create semi-annual comprehensive reports that capture the department's spending on homeless services. 	HSD/CAO/Finance Dept	FY 22/23
25	Periodically, at least annually, compile and present a comprehensive report on homelessness services including detailed information on the service providers, such as performance metrics and targets. Staff should consult with the City Council and the Commission on Homelessness about the information needed to provide adequate oversight and use their input to develop a standard report format that can be updated annually and modified as needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See questions 21 – 23 	HSD/CAO	Annually

Finding	City Auditor's Recommendations	Management Action Plan	Responsible Party	Target Date to Complete
26	Perform a staffing analysis to assess the City's staffing requirements for homelessness services. The staffing analysis should not only address the number of staff needed to carry out homelessness service activities, but it should also address the appropriate mix and composition of staff needed to effectively manage homelessness services and address the audit findings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff will include a staffing analysis as part of the schedule City Council approved assessment. 	CAO/HSD	FY 22/23
27	Clearly define and document roles, responsibilities, and authority of all staff working on homelessness services, including the Homelessness Administrator's staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See above. 	CAO/HSD	FY 22/23
28	<p>We recommend the City Council:</p> <p>Designate the Commission on Homelessness as the entity to oversee the development of the initial strategic plan for the City's homelessness services, and its ongoing monitoring.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff recommends the Commission on Homelessness <i>collaborates</i> with HSD, HCD and the CAO on the development of a comprehensive strategic planning process to address Oakland's unhoused population, informed by the PATH framework and other existing planning work. 	City Council/CAO/HSD/HCD	FY 22/23

Finding	City Auditor's Recommendations	Management Action Plan	Responsible Party	Target Date to Complete
29	<p>We recommend the City Council:</p> <p>Adopt the Oakland homelessness response strategic plan once completed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff concurs with the recommendation once the comprehensive strategic plan is completed. 	City Council/HSD/CAO	FY 23/24
30	<p>We recommend the Commission on Homelessness:</p> <p>Determine and request the additional resources needed to develop and monitor the strategic plan for homelessness services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff recommends the Commission on Homelessness <i>collaborates</i> with HSD, HCD and the CAO on the development of a comprehensive strategic planning process, informed by existing work, to address Oakland's unhoused population. Planning efforts are led by city staff and staff concurs with the recommendation for the plan to be approved by the commission and City Council. 	CAO/HSD/HCD	FY 23/24