

# The Story We Need to Tell About Homelessness

Thursday, June 8, 2023



shift   
the bay



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HOME

# Agenda

1. Conversation role play
2. The guide, and more messaging ideas
  - a. Q & A
3. Breakout discussions
4. Toolkit and next steps

## How to Talk About Homelessness

*A messaging guide from*



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# How to Talk About Homelessness

*A messaging guide from*



## Important Principles

**Establish shared values and benefits.** Lead and close with inclusive, values-based language that reaches across race and class to remind your audience what we all have in common. Show how addressing homelessness benefits our entire community.

**Explain that structural forces push people into homelessness.** "Pushed into" evokes the systemic and economic forces at play: decades of underbuilding and underfunding affordable housing, and generations of systemic injustice and discrimination.

**Center homelessness as an experience, not an identity.** Connect with the humanity of your audience and the people who are suffering.

**Focus on solutions.** Everyone knows there's a problem, they want to know more about how to solve it.

**Include a call to action.** Give your audience something to do, a next step to take to be part of the solution.



# Center lived experience

## **Personal stories can be transformative**

- From people who have experienced homelessness
- and from frontline staff providing direct service

## **Let's hear from Zak Franet**

- Director, Ground Floor Public Affairs
- Member, All Home's Community Advisory Council



## Chronic homelessness: Shared values/benefits

- When we meet people in distress with **homes, care, dignity, and respect**, everyone is safer and better off.
- Everyone needs a safe, dignified place to call home.
- We all have a time in our lives where we need care to get by. When we care for the members of our community who need it, our **whole community is stronger** for it.



## Chronic homelessness: Explain root causes

- **The biggest drivers of homelessness** are housing and economic forces.
- **But obviously there's a very visible minority** who are struggling with complex health issues including mental illness and substance use.
- These are our neighbors. **Fellow human beings in need of care.**
- **But our health care and legal systems are not designed** to provide the care they actually need.

# Chronic homelessness: Solutions and action

- **There is a solution that works** to stabilize people with complex needs, or whose health has deteriorated from being unsheltered for years: **permanent supportive housing**.
- But we don't have enough PSH **units, money to operate** them, or expert **staff** to meet the need.
  - Those are problems we can fix.
- When we meet people in distress with **homes, care, dignity, and respect, everyone will be safer and better off**.

Lean into  
abundance

## Reject a scarcity mindset

- Govt has resources, we're choosing to spend them on other things (Prop 13, mortgage tax deduction, etc.)





Lean into  
abundance

## Reject a scarcity mindset

- Don't allow solutions to be pit against each other. Grow the pie.
- We need interim AND permanent housing AND prevention.



Real solutions are worth the cost

The bill for **decades of bad policy** is coming due with compounded interest.



Real solutions are  
worth the cost

**“All this spending isn’t fixing things!”**

- Don’t blame solutions, blame the depth of the problem.

**Like taking an aspirin to cure a broken leg and then demanding answers for why our leg still hurts.**



We can do this!

## We have the solutions, they work.

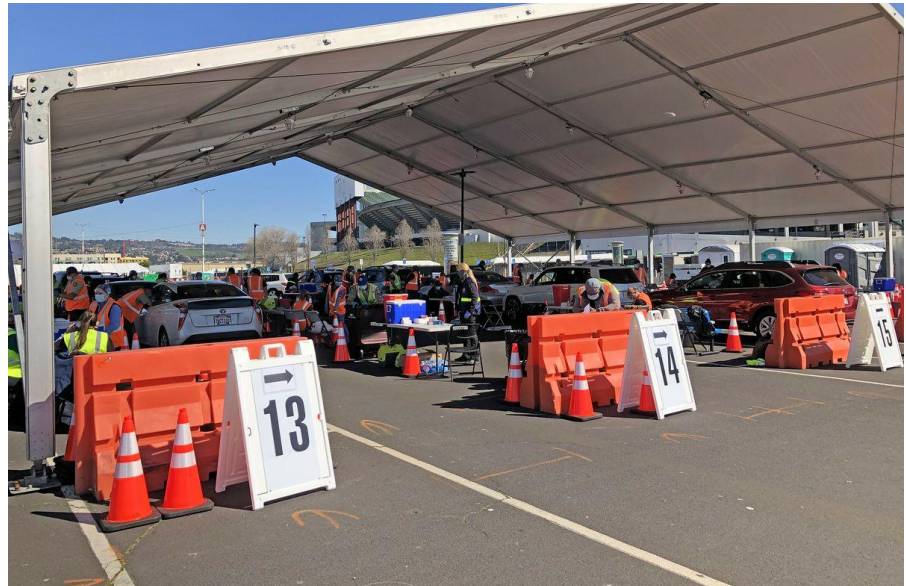
- All Home's 1-2-4 Framework for Homelessness Solutions (interim, permanent, prevention)
- Permanent/ongoing funding for operations and services (at permanent supportive housing)
- Ensure solutions reach BIPOC communities



We just did it!

**Pandemic relief programs** prove we can do big things, act with urgency, spend money to make people's lives better

- Homekey
- Emergency rental assistance, eviction moratoria
- Expanded Child Tax Credit







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