Homelessness Crisis Response System

2020 Data and Performance

San Diego City and County
Continuum of Care

Prepared by:

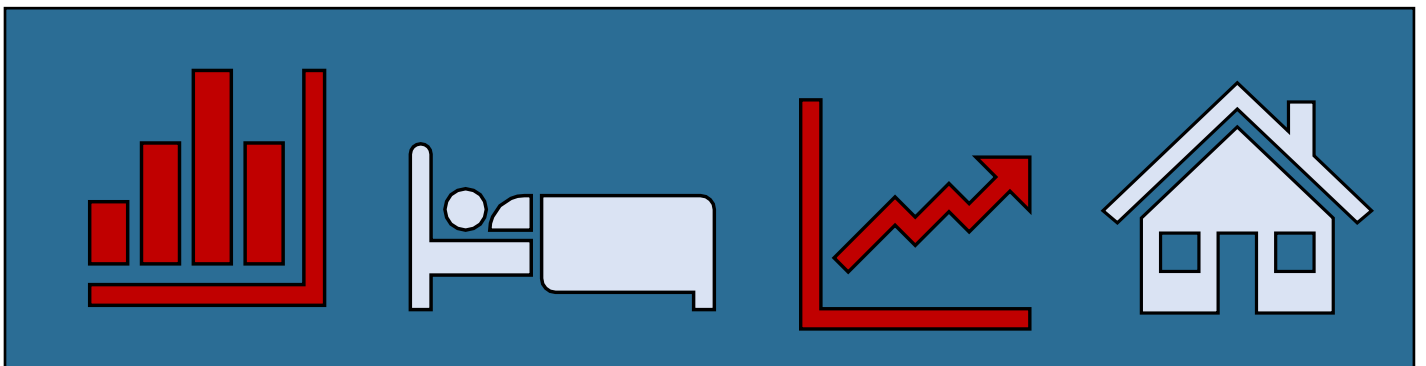The Regional Task Force on the Homeless

April 2021

SAN DIEGO
**Regional Task Force
on the Homeless**

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Executive Summary

2020 was a challenging year for communities across the country working to end homelessness, and in San Diego, it was no different. From learning of COVID-19 in February to a shelter in place order starting in March, San Diego's homelessness crisis response system had to quickly pivot to protect the safety of people experiencing homelessness, to adapt program models to meet evolving safety protocols, and to transition many agency staff and services to remote operations as well as account for decreased staff capacity.

The pandemic required an urgent critical focus in the homeless response system from providing housing and services to additionally protecting public health. San Diego's homeless response system met the challenge. According to the County of San Diego, there were only 760 positive cases among people experiencing homelessness in 2020 with 119 hospitalizations, and sadly, 10 deaths.[1] Although 10 people experiencing homelessness tragically lost their lives to COVID-19 in 2020, the rates of infection remained relatively low. For example, of positive cases, 212 were people living in shelter, which is only 1.7% of the nearly 13,000 persons served in temporary housing programs region-wide in 2020. However, the hospitalization rate for positive cases among persons experiencing homelessness was much higher than the general population, indicating the vulnerability of the population.

This report summarizes key performance indicators for the homeless system in 2020. Many of the indicators align with the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) System Performance Measures.[2] It is important to note that while the report compares 2020 performance to prior years, drawing conclusions is difficult as 2020 was a year unlike any in our history.

All of the data in this report comes from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), the region's database used by the strong network of homeless services providers to document information on people receiving housing and services through their programs. The Regional Task Force on the Homeless (RTFH) serves as the lead agency for the San Diego City and County Continuum of Care (CoC) and is responsible for administration and oversite of the HMIS database as well as reporting performance on the homeless system.

While this report presents key data points from 2020, it is not a comprehensive analysis. As a result, much of the data needs further exploration. Some key findings include:

- More individuals and households received services than ever before. A total of 38,023 people received some form of housing and services from the homeless system that spans services such as homelessness prevention through permanent supportive housing. This is in contrast to the 7,658 people that were counted during the annual Point-In-Time count **on a single night** in January 2020, which only counts those living on the streets or in shelters.

- A total of 2,530 Veterans, 2,201 unaccompanied youth, 882 families, and 2,963 individuals aged 62 and up received emergency homeless assistance services such as shelter, outreach, or day center services.

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[1] County of San Diego Daily COVID-19 Summary of Cases Among People Experiencing Homelessness through 12/31/20
[2] https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/coc/system-performance-measures/#guidance

- Despite a challenging year, 6,028 persons making up 4,049 households exited to permanent housing setting or remained stable in permanent housing across the system. This includes people who were provided prevention assistance to remain in their home, people exiting homeless programs such as shelter, and people exiting permanent housing interventions such as rapid re-housing and permanent supportive housing to stable housing settings. This is inclusive of 2,518 persons who exited to permanent housing from street outreach, temporary housing including emergency shelter, and rapid-rehousing programs.

- The percentage of permanent housing exits from projects types varied. While rates of successful exits from homelessness prevention, street outreach, rapid re-housing and permanent supportive housing remained relatively consistent from 2019, the percentage of permanent exits from shelter programs decreased.

- Rapid re-housing was the only intervention that served fewer people in 2020 compared to other years, however, the length of time in rapid re-housing programs increased among participants. Thus, while fewer people were served overall, the time receiving rapid re-housing assistance was longer, which is something the RTFH has promoted through the Rapid Re-Housing Learning Collaborative for enhanced stability. Additionally, the goal of rapid re-housing is to transition people to take over the full rent over time, and most will do that through gaining employment, which was extremely difficult due to COVID-19.

- Length of time in permanent supportive housing also increased, which is positive. Length of time in emergency shelter remained relatively flat while days in transitional housing increased from prior years.

- Black people continue to be overrepresented in the homeless population, however, access to services appears to be proportional. The only intervention that appeared somewhat disproportional was rapid re-housing, which had higher rates of Black people compared to rates within the homeless population in general. The CoC established an Ad Hoc Committee on Addressing Homelessness Among Black San Diegans that will further explore these findings.

- The number of elderly persons served in street outreach programs is increasing and in 2020, there was a spike in the use of emergency shelter by individuals age 55+ during the height of the pandemic in late spring and summer. This is likely due to shelter programs prioritizing elderly persons and people with chronic health conditions.

- Incomes of households served in shelter programs were at the lowest levels in the past few years, with significantly more households with no income. There was also an increase in the percentage of households reporting income from unemployment compared to prior years. The pandemic likely impacted income in 2020, and incomes levels also likely impacted permanent housing exits.

- The rates of people returning to homelessness, who previously exited to permanent housing remained relatively the same compared to prior years. The rates of people who returned to homelessness in 2020 when looking back 24 months was 26%, compared to 24% in both 2019 and 2018.

- The number of people entering homelessness for the first time nearly doubled from 2019 and peaked from April through June 2020. This is likely due to COVID-19 but may also be a result of collecting better data and reaching more people in 2020 who may not have previously interacted with the homeless system.

Discussion and Next Steps

The above key findings highlight some positive aspects of the homeless system in 2020 – the homeless system responded with urgency and assisted over 38,000 people with a range of services from prevention and diversion, shelter, and permanent housing resources including rental assistance and supportive services despite a public health pandemic. Additionally, the majority of homeless programs such as prevention, outreach, rapid re-housing, and permanent supportive housing had similar housing placement rates compared to 2019, demonstrating a focused commitment to helping individuals and families access permanent housing while also working hard to keep people safe from COVID-19.

There are also some data points that are cause for concern – Black people continue to be overrepresented in homelessness. The CoC and partners are actively addressing this through an Ad Hoc Committee on Addressing Homelessness Among Black San Diegans formed in the Summer of 2020. It is critical that the committee and the larger CoC pursue an action-oriented path for racial equity within the homeless crisis response system and advocate for policy and a systemic change to dismantle structural racism in housing, employment, criminal justice systems, healthcare, education, and others that have caused the overrepresentation of Black people ending up on our streets and in shelter.

Another major concern is the number of people entering homelessness for the first time. In 2020, people who entered homelessness for the first time county-wide increased by 79%. While eviction moratoriums were in place and the region launched ambitious rent relief efforts, people still found their way to the front steps of the homeless system who had not been there before. This staggering statistic continues to underscore the reality that homelessness is for the most part a symptom of larger economic and housing market problems that existed before COVID-19 but made more difficult because of the pandemic. While the rental market did fluctuate in 2020 and some rents in the county dropped, much of those decreases came from luxury rentals, with rents increasing in lower end rental units.[3] On average in San Diego rents remained largely unchanged, and San Diego did not see rent decreases that other high cost California cities saw including San Francisco, San Jose, Oakland, and Los Angeles.[4] And it is well-known that San Diego, like the rest of the country suffered record rates of unemployment in 2020 with peaks in the spring and summer, and it

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[3] San Diego Union Tribune (August 2020) San Diego Rents Down for the First Time Since Great Recession
[4] CalMatters (April 2021) Californian's: Here's Why Your Housing Costs are so High

is estimated that in 2020 a person would have had to make $30 an hour to afford a one-bedroom apartment in San Diego.[5] These challenges, that existed prior to 2020, will continue to push San Diegans into homelessness, and force the homeless response system to always be fighting an uphill battle.

Although there were some bright spots as well as many challenges in 2020, the data should not be seen as final answers, but rather points for further exploration. It goes without saying that 2020 was a year unlike any in history and it will take some time to unpack the data and dig into the details to truly understand the implications. It is critical that the data summarized in this report promote further discussion and analysis, not just to understand what happened in 2020, but to better inform future performance and decisions among policymakers.

For example, a simple question to start with is how and why did the homeless crisis response system serve nearly 8,000 more people in 2020 than in 2019? It is extremely important to note that these figures include all people who accessed any services across a broad range of housing, homelessness, or social services assistance. So, while there were nearly 8,000 more San Diegans who received some form of support, it does not necessarily mean there were more people experiencing homelessness on our streets or in shelters as many of those individuals were either at risk of homelessness or were in housing but nonetheless accessing services. Nevertheless, as a community we should be asking additional questions such as will this trend continue in 2021 and subsequent years? Or was it simply that the homeless system did a better job of capturing data on those they served? Did we launch new programs? Were there data quality issues? A combination of all of these? Or something else?

To answer these questions, a further analysis of the data needs to be undertaken as well as contextualizing the data within evolving policy and program changes. For example, when considering the question of serving more people, at first glance we know there was increased capacity with emergency shelter given the Convention Center and multiple hotel programs stood up across the county. This can potentially account for a portion of the increased numbers. However, the biggest increase in persons served was in street outreach programs.

From a policy perspective, over the last few years San Diego has increasingly shifted away from using law enforcement personnel as the primary strategy for engaging individuals living unsheltered to deploying non-law enforcement social service outreach staff to build rapport and focus on housing resolutions. While this is aligned with best practices and the CoC Board adopted policy guidelines for addressing unsheltered homelessness and encampments, a critical difference in this approach is that social services outreach programs use HMIS to capture data on persons they serve, while law enforcement historically has not. In 2020, there was also new programs launched that focused on outreach. We know that a collaborative partnership formed during the pandemic to ensure those living outside had regular access to meals, personal protective equipment, and other supplies to keep people safe. It is unknown if this new effort reached new people

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[5] National Low-Income Housing Coalition: Outreach of Reach 2020

that traditional outreach services had not in prior years. Again, more analysis is needed to understand this trend.

Lastly, data quality always needs to be taken into account. Street outreach programs pose challenges for data quality given the population served. For example, in 2020 a significant number of persons served in street outreach programs had long lengths of stay in outreach programs – many a year or more. This means that either it is taking longer to engage people on the streets or outreach staff are not exiting people from their program in HMIS which increases the number of persons that are considered "served" in the reporting.

These are the type of questions that system leadership and policymakers need to quickly dive into to understand what happened and determine if we did in fact serve more people, and if so do we think it is a trend that will continue into future years? It is absolutely acceptable that the data in this report may pose more questions than answers. The RTFH is committed to diving into the data to unveil deeper understandings that can help shape policy and program decision making. Over the next year, the RTFH staff will be increasing its capacity for data analysis and working with key stakeholders, community partners, and the CoC Board and committees to better understand the needs of people experiencing homelessness, system impacts and performance, and critical gaps and challenges for decreasing homelessness in San Diego.

About This Report

The network of organizations providing housing and services to end homelessness (known as the homelessness crisis response system), entered 2020 not knowing what was on the horizon. With the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdowns starting in March 2020, San Diego's homeless system had to quickly adapt program delivery to keep people experiencing homelessness and the staff serving them safe and to transition many staff and services to remote operations. Housing and shelter programs transformed overnight. Many shelters were reconfigured to meet social distancing protocols, which decreased beds in those shelters, while other shelters, such as the City of San Diego Bridge Shelters, transitioned residents to a single site at the San Diego Convention Center. The pandemic also offered new opportunities such as using hotels as non-congregate shelter, which led to the purchase of two hotels in the City of San Diego for permanent housing in late 2020.

Street outreach teams altered their approaches and took on the heavy lift of ensuring those living unsheltered were kept informed of the COVID-19 pandemic, had essential supplies such as hand sanitizer and masks, and had access to food given traditional food resources such as churches, community meal programs, and restaurants were mostly shut down.

Similarly, permanent housing programs, such as rapid re-housing and permanent supportive housing, grappled with providing services in person and remotely, addressed issues of isolation among tenants, and especially in rapid re-housing, supported people differently given that the pandemic wreaked havoc on the economy and employment, a critical component for people to successfully take on the rent.

While 2020 was unlike any year in modern history, it is important to review data to understand what happened within the homeless response system, to continue to improve services to support as many people as possible to successfully exit homelessness and remain stably housed, and to prevent people from becoming homeless in the first place.

This report summarizes various performance indicators for the San Diego region and is not intended to be a thorough analysis of 2020. The performance indicators align with HUD's System Performance Measures and the report provides data on the following:

- Total persons and households served by the homeless crisis response system
- Length of time persons participate in homeless projects
- Total persons and households exiting to permanent housing and percentages of housing exits
- Income levels among households
- The extent that people who previously exited to permanent housing, return to homelessness
- The number of persons and households who became homeless for the first time

Data for this report comes from the HMIS, the regions database used by homeless services providers to track information on those served in their programs. The data was pulled between mid-February through mid-March 2021 to allow homeless services providers time to ensure accurate and complete data entry. It should be noted that because HMIS data is dynamic and client records can always be updated, data presented in this report may change slightly as time goes on.

Total Persons and Households Served

In 2020, the entirety of the homeless system served 38,023 people comprising 32,277 households, an increase from prior years (See figure 1).

**Figure 1. Total Persons and Households Served by the Homeless Crisis Response System[6]**
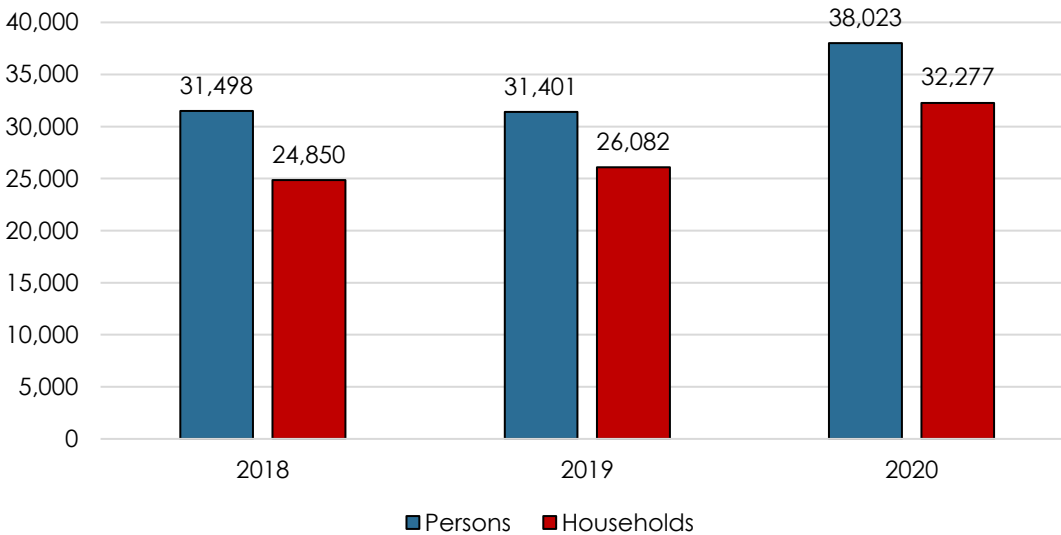
The homeless system served more people in 2020 than ever before. The increase in persons served can largely be attributed to increased persons served in street outreach programs, emergency shelter, and homelessness prevention programs. Increased funding from the federal government through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, state funds, and philanthropic funding helped provide new resources for shelter and other assistance during the pandemic. For example, in 2020 emergency shelters served a total of 8,687 single adults and 643 families which is compared to only serving 6,300 single adults and 555 families in 2019. Regarding outreach increases, it should be noted that many of the individuals served in street outreach programs were already enrolled in those services going into 2020 meaning that either programs are serving those in street outreach longer or there are potential data quality issues – regardless this is something that needs to be further explored. However, the region has been increasing the funding for homeless outreach services over the last two years which needs to be considered.

Additionally, persons served in Services Only projects increased by about 4,000 people. Transitional housing, rapid re-housing, and permanent supportive housing remained relatively stable with a slight increase in transitional housing and permanent supportive housing programs (See figure 2).

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[6] Total persons and households served includes all programs and project types that enter data into HMIS including permanent housing projects, non-permanent housing projects, and supportive services only projects.

Figure 2. Total Persons Served by Homeless Project types

Legend: 2018 (dark blue), 2019 (red), 2020 (light blue)
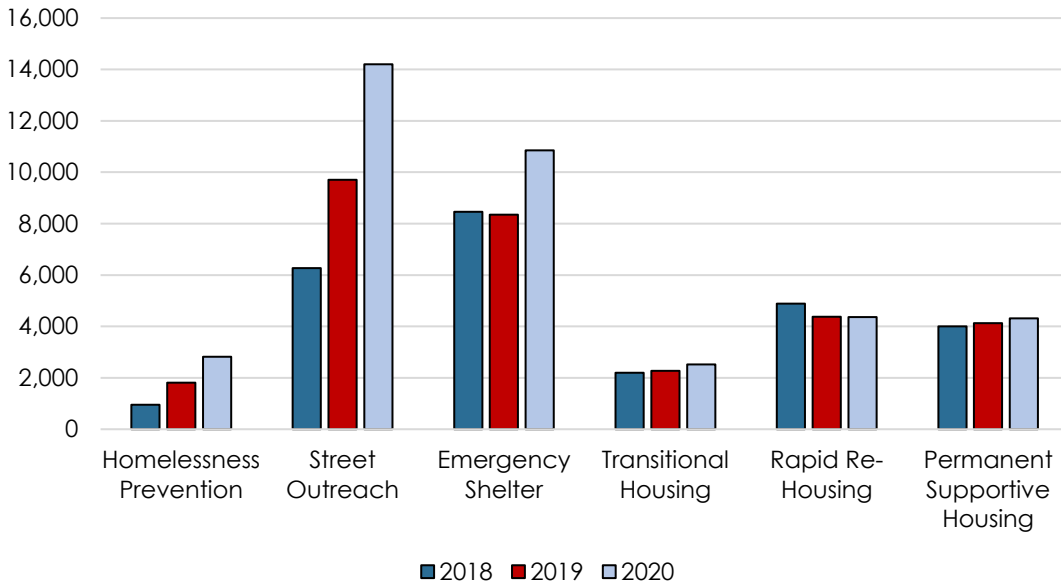
Sub-Populations Served

When looking at subpopulations, the system served over 2,500 Veterans, over 2,200 unaccompanied youth (individuals aged 18-24 who are not part of a family), nearly 3,000 persons in families representing a total of 891 families, and almost 3,000 individuals age 62 and up (See figure 3). These figures only include people in outreach, day shelters, and other temporary housing programs.

Figure 3. Total Persons Served in 2020 within Sub-Populations in Non-Permanent Housing Projects[7]


Veterans	Unaccompanied Youth	Persons in Families	Age 62+
2,530	2,201	2,979	2,963

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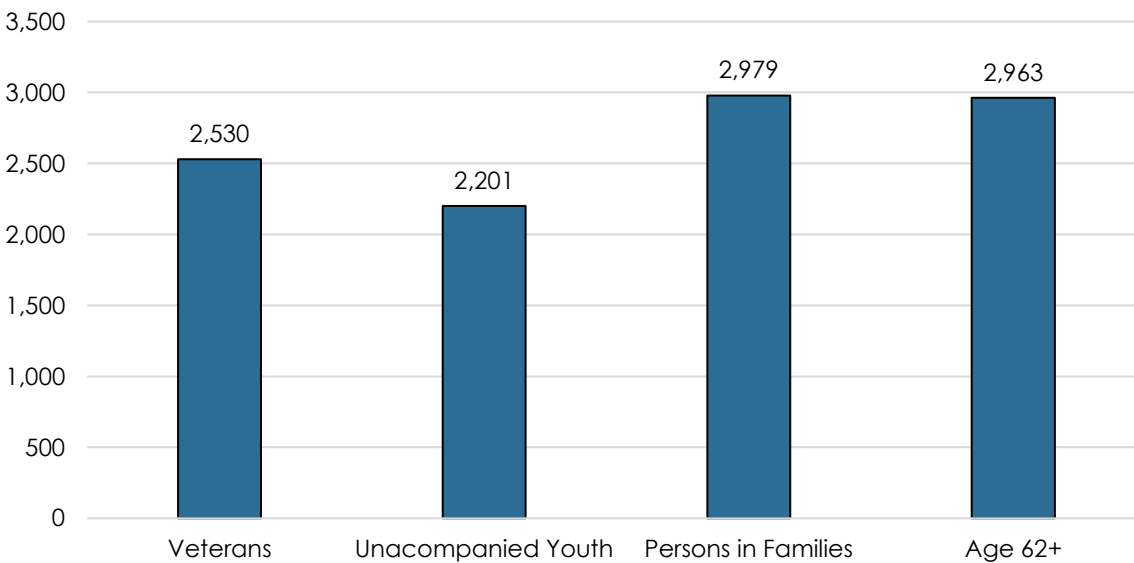
[7] This includes persons served in street outreach, day shelters, emergency shelter, transitional housing, and safe havens

Older Adults Served

COVID-19 renewed attention on addressing the needs of older adults, as elderly persons and those with chronic health conditions were at increased risk for severe illness. As a result, programs, particularly emergency shelters, prioritized services for older adults.

In 2020, 2,963 individuals aged 62 and over received non-permanent housing services. About one quarter of the population was age 55 and up (see figure 4).

Figure 4. Age Percentages of those Served in in Non-Permanent Housing Projects[8]
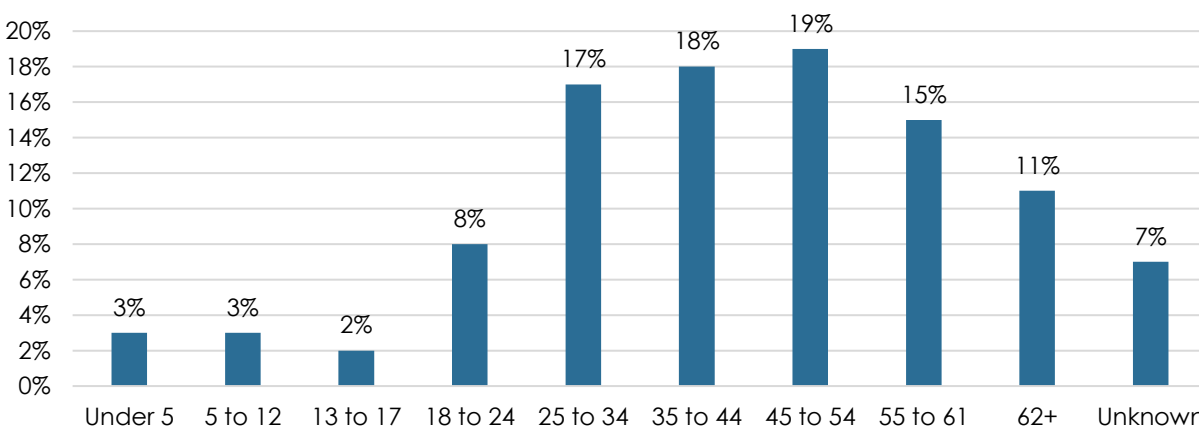
The number of older adults in emergency shelter spiked in the spring and summer during the height of the pandemic, indicating that the homeless system was prioritizing congregate and non-congregate shelter for older adults at increased risk. Street outreach programs also saw a steady increase in the number of older adults served (consistent with increases in street outreach overall). Figure 5 identifies the number of persons age 55 and up who received street outreach and emergency shelter services on a monthly basis.

**Figure 5. Number of Persons Age 55+ Served Monthly in Street Outreach and Emergency Shelter in 2020**

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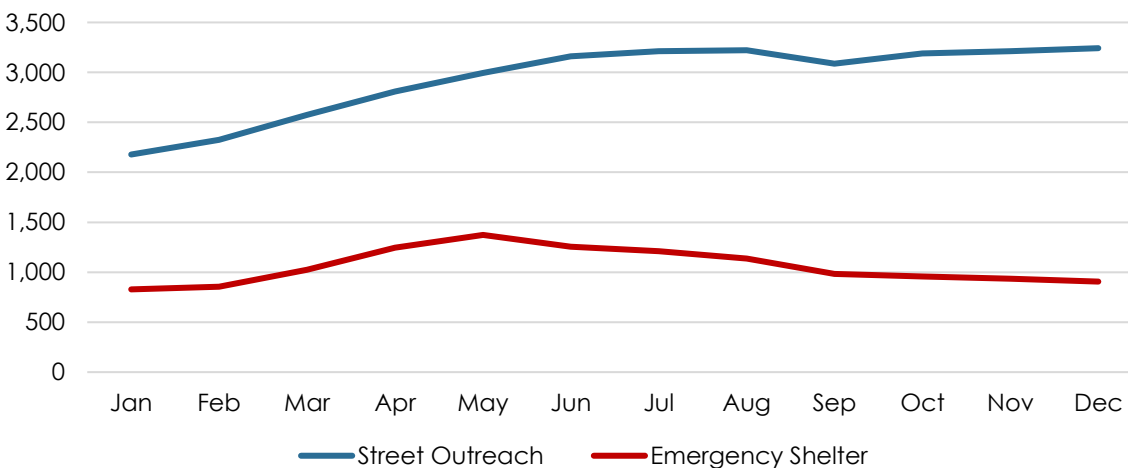
[8] This includes persons served in street outreach, day shelters, emergency shelter, transitional housing, and safe havens

Racial Disparities

Examining the racial makeup of people experiencing homelessness, Black people continue to be overrepresented. Black people represent an estimated 5.5% of the general population in the County but make up between 20-30% of the homeless population depending on different metrics. When looking at persons who received non-permanent housing services, Black people represented 22% of the population (See figure 6). According to the 2020 PIT Count, Black people represented 21% of the unsheltered population and 30% of those living in shelters on the night of the count.

Latinos, on the other hand, appear to be slightly underrepresented in homelessness in San Diego. In 2020, among persons receiving non-permanent housing assistance, 27% identified as Latino, while Latinos make up 34% of the general population in San Diego County.

**Figure 6. Racial Makeup of those Served in in Non-Permanent Housing Projects[9]**
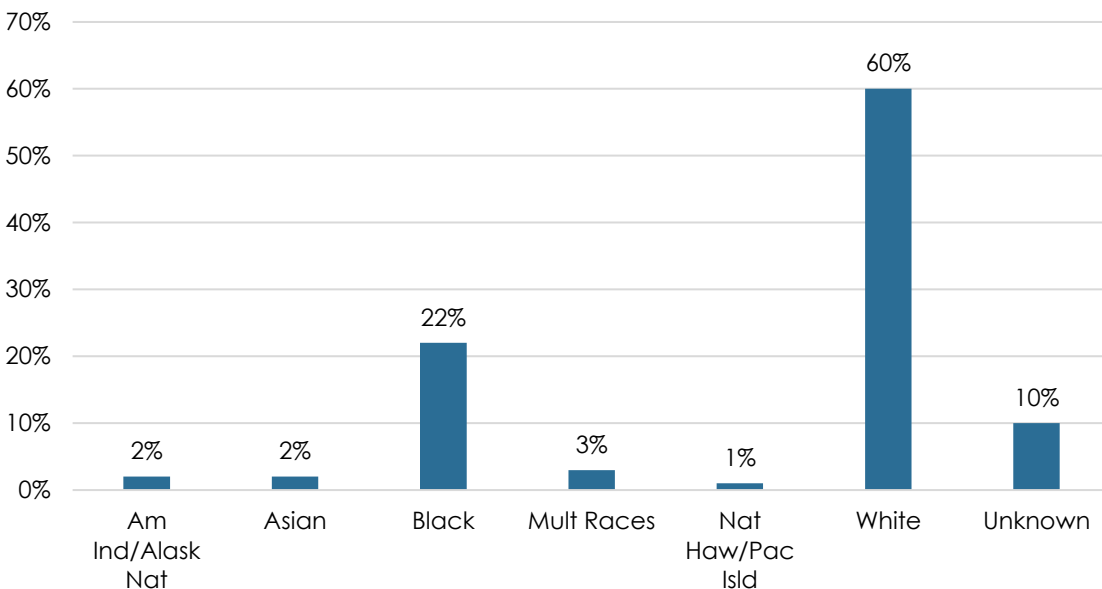
Knowing that Black persons are overrepresented in the homeless population, it is important to understand if there are inequities in access to homeless assistance programs. Figure 7 highlights the percentage of Black persons served in different homeless programs in 2020. In general, Black people made up between 20-30% of people served across all programs, except for rapid re-housing, which saw a higher rate of 35%.

In July 2020, the RTFH CoC Advisory Board established an Ad Hoc Committee on Addressing Homelessness Among Black San Diegans to better understand why Black people are overrepresented in homelessness and to ensure an equitable response within the homeless response system. The Ad Hoc Committee will conduct community listening sessions, review data, and make recommendations to the CoC board for adoption and implementation.

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[9] This includes persons served in street outreach, day shelters, emergency shelter, transitional housing, and safe havens

**Figure 7. Percentage of Persons Served in Programs Who are Black in 2020**
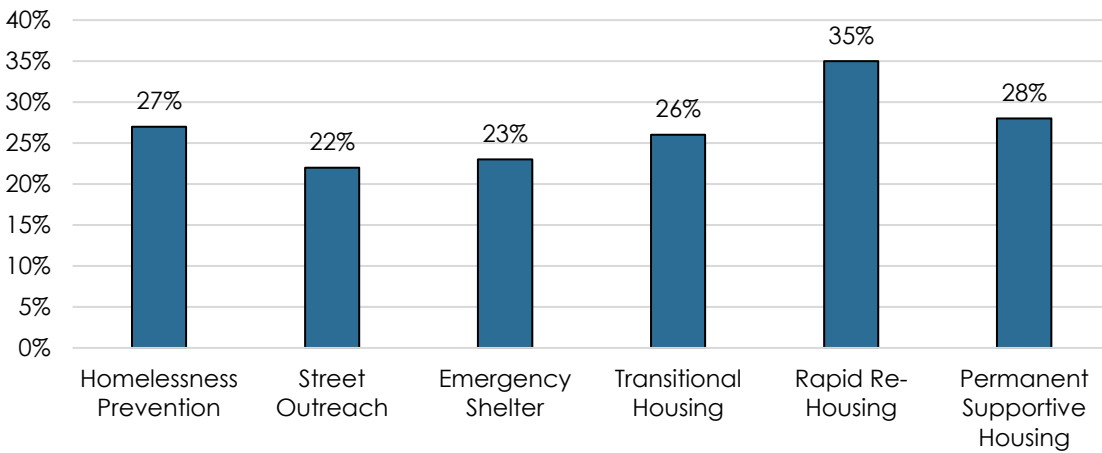
Length of Time in Projects

The length of time people spend in homeless assistance programs is a key indicator of system performance. HUD's System Performance Measure 1 – Length of Time Persons Remain Homeless looks at the length of time in projects such as emergency shelter and transitional housing as well as length of time spent homeless prior to entering programs. Data for these measures comes from homeless program staff tracking dates of entry and exit for people served in their programs and recording in HMIS.

When looking at people who exited programs in 2020, the average number of days spent in emergency shelter was consistent with past years while average number of days in street outreach, transitional housing, rapid re-housing, and permanent supportive housing increased from prior years (See figure 8).

Figure 8. Average Length of Time in Days in Projects[10]

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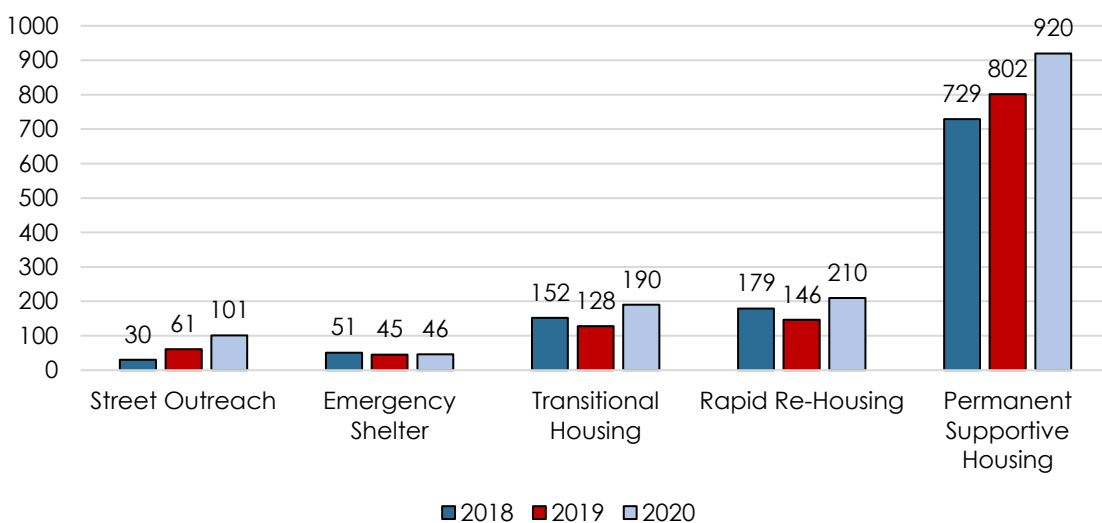
[10] Data in chart is from the RTFH Project Performance Dashboard

In general, HUD seeks shorter stays in temporary housing programs such as emergency shelter and transitional housing, however these should be correlated to other positive outcomes such as exits to permanent housing and decreased returns to homelessness. When looking at the length of time in specific projects, 55% of those who exited emergency shelter stayed for 30 days or less.

The RTFH has been promoting longer stays in rapid re-housing programs to ensure ehanced housing stability. In 2020 people in rapid re-housing programs did remain in the program for longer which is the direction RTFH was pushing for, however this may also be attributed to the pandemic and its impact on the economy and local job market. Rapid re-housing programs support households to take on the full rent in time and this is usually done through gaining employment. Higher unemployment during 2020 most likely affected the time people remained in rapid re-housing programs.

For permanent supportive housing projects, longer stays are considered positive outcomes because they indicate longer term housing stability. The data shows that the length of time people remain in permanent supportive housing increased in 2020. In permanent supportive housing, 79% of those served stayed for one year or more, including 39% of those residing in permanent supportive housing for five years or more.

Length of stay in street outreach programs increased significantly. This may be due in part to shifts in street outreach practices, however this also may be a data quality issue, as many persons served in street outreach projects in 2020 had been in programs longer than a year, thus pulling up the average. This needs further exploration.
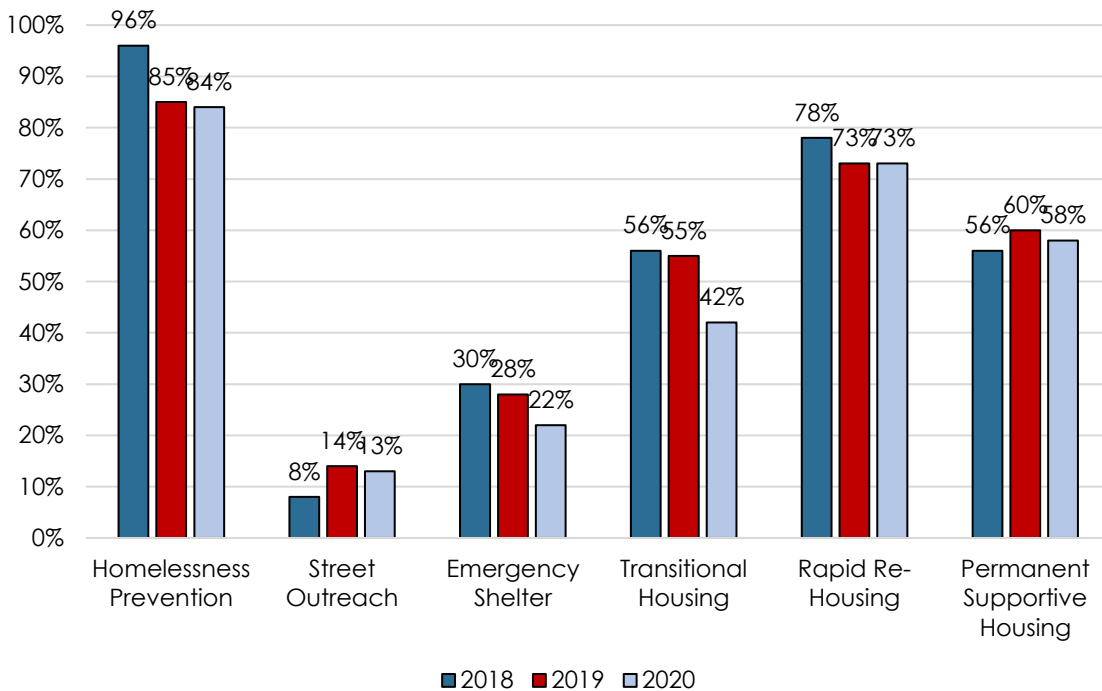
Permanent Housing Exits

Supporting people with exiting to permanent housing that includes their own rental, a subsidized unit, moving in with friends or family on a permanent basis, and other housing settings is a key performance measure for the homeless system. Despite a pandemic, when looking across the entire system, a total of 6,028 total persons making up 4,049 households remained in or exited to a permanent housing setting.[11] These figures include exits from all projects in HMIS in 2020 which range from homelessness prevention through permanent supportive housing. This includes 2,518 households and 1,753 persons who exited to permanent housing from street outreach, shelter programs, and rapid re-housing – the specific projects that HUD incorporates as part of their System Performance Measures.

When looking at rates of permanent housing exits across projects (Figure 9.), in 2020 most projects including homelessness prevention, street outreach, rapid re-housing, and permanent supportive housing saw relatively consistent rates from 2019, while emergency shelter, and transitional housing percentages dropped.

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[11] Figures include all exits from all projects in HMIS: Homelessness Prevention, Street Outreach, Day Shelter, Emergency Shelter, Transitional Housing, Safe Haven, Rapid Re-Housing, Permanent Supportive Housing, Other Permanent Housing, and Services Only.

**Figure 9. Percentage of Permanent Housing Exits by Project Types**

Figure 9. Percentage of Permanent Housing Exits by Project Types

Legend: ■ 2018 ■ 2019 □ 2020

Homelessness Prevention: 96%, 85%, 84%
Street Outreach: 8%, 14%, 13%
Emergency Shelter: 30%, 28%, 22%
Transitional Housing: 56%, 55%, 42%
Rapid Re-Housing: 78%, 73%, 73%
Permanent Supportive Housing: 56%, 60%, 58%

Income Levels

COVID-19 had a significant impact on the economy with the nation experiencing record high unemployment, and finding a job, especially within industries crippled by the pandemic such as food service, hospitality, tourism, and other service-oriented businesses, was difficult. This economic impact also appears to have impacted persons experiencing homelessness.

Figure 10 highlights the incomes of those who were served in emergency shelter, transitional housing, and safe havens during 2020. Households in those programs with no income were the highest in the past two years, and incomes across all levels decreased. It should be noted that more understanding is needed to determine if the levels of those with no income was really that high or given the extreme urgency with implementing new shelter models to keep people safe, that there were some data quality issues.

However, of households reporting income, more than double the number of households reported income from unemployment compared to other income sources, however still relatively small compared to all persons served in shelter. In both 2018 and 2019 the percentage of those reporting income from unemployment was around 2% growing to 5% in 2020.

Figure 10. Monthly Household Income for those Served in Emergency Shelter Programs
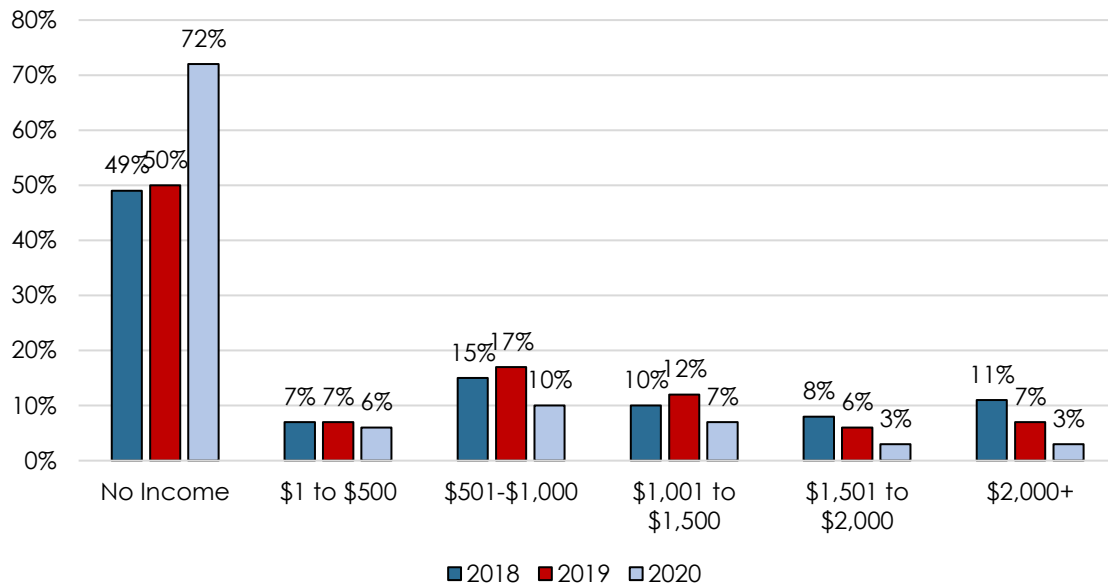
Decreases in income may also shed light on the performance of permanent housing exits for projects such as emergency shelter. With significantly higher numbers of households in shelter with no income in 2020 and job opportunities scarce, the options of households to exit shelter to housing using their own resources were limited.

Another example of income impacting housing outcomes can be seen with homelessness prevention programs. In 2020, rates of success in prevention programs dropped. Figure 11 highlights that in 2020 those reaching out for prevention assistance had higher rates of having no income and lower rates of having income of $1,000 more per month, an amount necessary to be able to maintain a basic apartment in San Diego County.

Figure 11. Monthly Income Levels of Households in Homelessness Prevention Projects
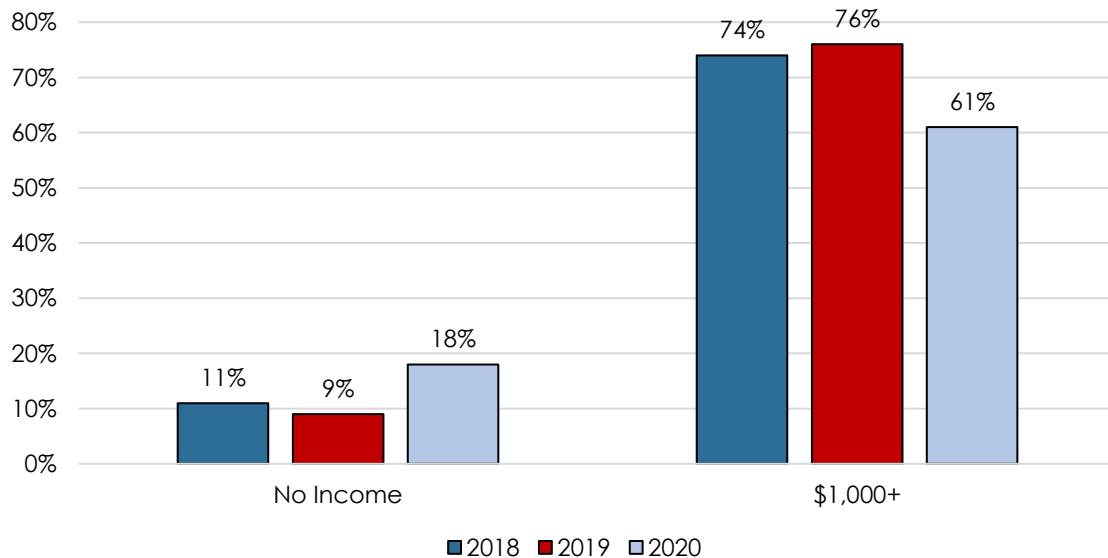
Returns to Homelessness

Decreasing the number of people who return to homelessness is a key HUD System Performance Measure. The intent in measuring this is to understand housing stability for those who have previously exited the homelessness response system to permanent housing. This is measured by looking at the people who had exited to permanent housing in the past, and of those, the numbers who returned to the homeless system within six months, twelve months, and twenty-four months from when they entered permanent housing. Returning to the homelessness system is defined as entering a temporary housing program – emergency shelter, safe haven, and transitional housing or entering a permanent housing program – rapid re-housing or permanent supportive housing.

Figure 12. Percentage of Returns to Homelessness within Twenty-Four Months[12]
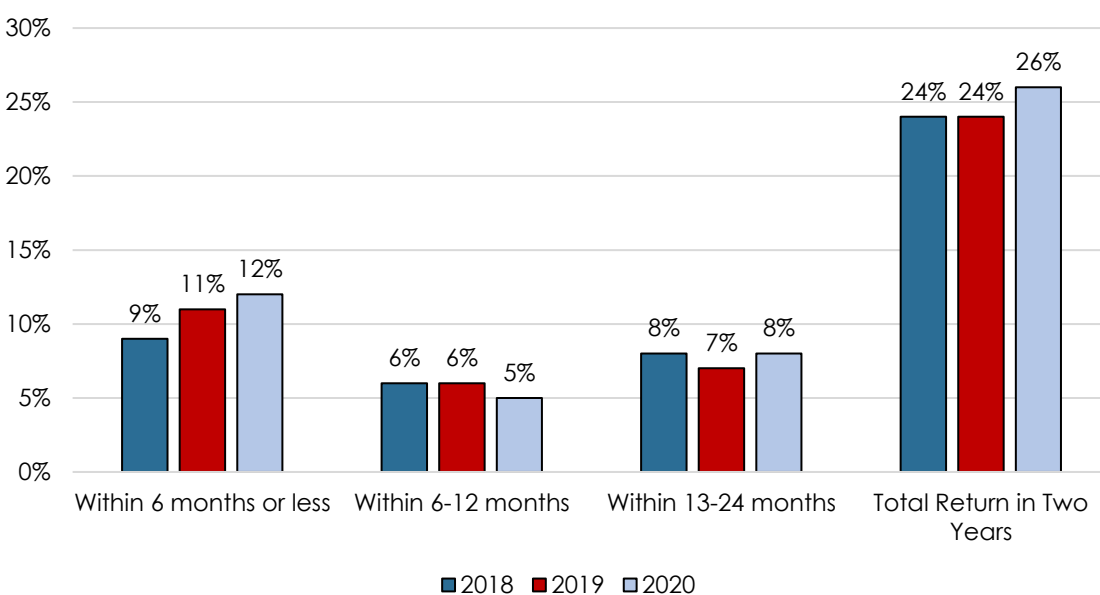

In 2020, there were small increases in the percentages of total returns within two years with fluctuations across the different time intervals (See figure 12). In sheer numbers, the total number of people returning to homelessness within two years was a little over 1,300 people.

Homeless for the First Time

The number of persons and households experiencing homelessness for the first time nearly doubled in 2020 compared to 2019 (See figure 13). HUD defines someone as homeless for the first time if they entered a temporary or permanent housing program and did not have prior entry in those projects in the last two years. It is unknown if COVID-19 is the reason for the increase in 2020 as there have been eviction moratoriums in place at the federal and state levels, but it is well-known that the pandemic strained employment, healthcare, and housing configurations, which may have may have contributed to the increase.

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[12] Data for this chart is from standard reports from the Homeless Management Information System and includes returns to both temporary and permanent housing programs

Figure 13. Number of Persons and Households who Entered Homelessness for the First Time[13]
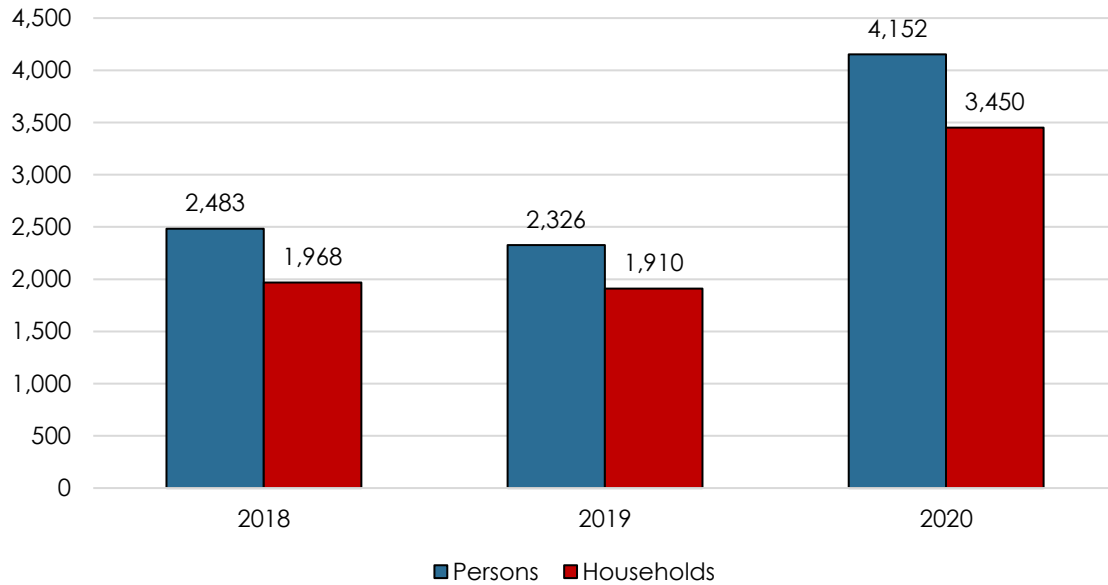

When looking at the number of people entering homeless for the first time over the last few years, the number remains relatively flat until 2020. Most striking is a spike in the numbers in the second quarter of 2020 during the first few months of the pandemic (see figure 14). Increases were seen across all subpopulations (see figure 15).

Figure 14. Number of Persons who Entered Homelessness for the First Time During Prior 3 Years

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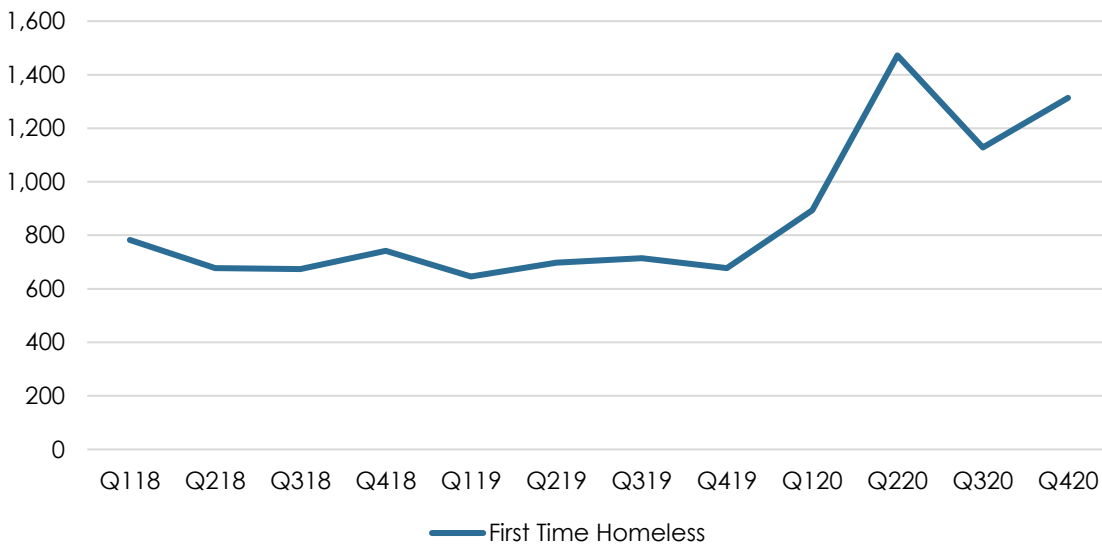
[13] Figures include persons and households who entered emergency shelter, safe havens, or transitional housing

Figure 15. Number of Persons who Entered Homelessness for the First Time Among Sub-Populations in 2020[14]
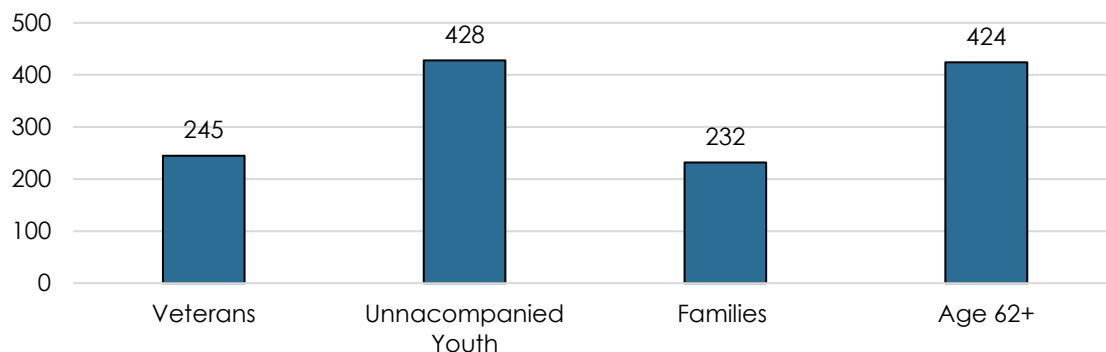
Lastly, it should be noted that while additional funding was invested in the region for Homelessness Prevention programs (Such as the RTFH's investment of state dollars to various organizations) and more people were served in prevention than ever before, it still was not enough to stem the flow of people becoming homeless. Without the increased investment in prevention assistance however, there may have been more people homeless for the first time than we saw in 2020. This will be a critical piece of data that the community will need to keep an eye on in 2021 especially as the eviction moratoriums come to end.

Discussion and Next Steps

2020 was unlike any year in modern history and it will take some time to unpack the data presented in this analysis. The data presented above should not be seen as final answers but rather as a jumping off point for further questions, analysis, and discussion. When looking at the 2020 data there are some bright spots as well as concerns. In 2020, the homeless system provided more assistance to individuals and families than ever before and rates of housing placements remained relatively consistent across programs even during a pandemic. However, 2020 continued to highlight the significant overrepresentation of Black people experiencing homelessness in San Diego as well as the reality that more people entered homelessness for the first time than in prior years.

Moving forward the RTFH is committed to digging into the 2020 data as well as data that we are already starting to see in 2021 to better understand what is happening and implications. Data should help generate questions on why we're seeing different trends, what's happening within homeless programs, and what are new strategies that need to be explored or existing strategies to be scaled? Data also needs to be analyzed within context of policy and program changes as well as larger housing and economic structures in San Diego. The RTFH looks forward to continuing to provide public data to the community to understand the needs of those experiencing homelessness and effectiveness of the entire homeless response system, engaging with stakeholders, partners, and the community for a deeper understanding of how the region is collectively providing assistance, and to always seek to improve our efforts to meet the needs of our unhoused neighbors.

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[14] Figures include persons and households who entered emergency shelter, safe havens, or transitional housing