

California Cohort 2: 100-Day Challenge Summary

Santa Barbara County

100-Day Challenge Goal

In 100 days, we will connect 75 Veterans experiencing homelessness to safe and stable housing, with 100% being offered supportive services. We will exercise special sensitivity to female Veterans and Veterans with families.

100-DAY CHALLENGE CONTEXT & FOCUS AREAS

ACCEPTING THE 100-DAY CHALLENGE: WHY AND WHY NOW?

Santa Barbara County has a robust network of Veteran-serving organizations that are dedicated to preventing and ending homelessness among Veteran populations. Yet despite the community's longstanding commitment to addressing the needs of Veterans experiencing homelessness, Santa Barbara has recently experienced an 83% increase in Veteran homelessness - from 118 Veterans in 2018 to 210 Veterans in 2019.¹ Santa Barbara County has also faced significant challenges to connecting Veterans experiencing homelessness to permanent housing solutions, including a lack of affordable housing units, lack of landlord engagement, and underutilization of HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) vouchers.

Veteran-serving organizations from across Santa Barbara agreed that a focused effort on addressing Veteran homelessness could help overcome existing housing barriers and reinvigorate cross-sector relationships throughout the community. Santa Barbara identified the 100-Day Challenge as a unique and timely opportunity to convene cross-sector stakeholders and foster a renewed communitywide commitment to collaboration and innovative thinking to prevent and end Veteran homelessness.

100-DAY CHALLENGE FOCUS AREAS

System leaders from across Santa Barbara County came together to help identify the following areas of focus for their 100-Day Challenge:

- Significantly advance the county's efforts to ensure Veterans who are currently unsheltered or temporarily sheltered are safely and stably housed;
- Dedicate particular attention to female Veterans and those with disabilities or complex medical conditions; and
- Develop innovative ways to address racial disparities in our system.

¹ County of Santa Barbara, Housing and Community Development Division, "Press Release: 2020 Point in Time Homelessness County Results Released," March 10, 2020, <https://countyofsb.org/asset.c/5234>

100-DAY CHALLENGE SUCCESSES, ACCOMPLISHMENTS & INNOVATIONS

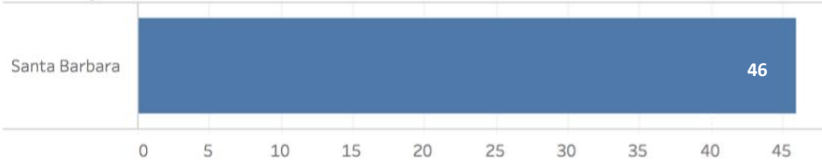
SNAPSHOT OF 100-DAY CHALLENGE PROGRESS

100-Day Challenge Goal: In 100 days, we will connect 75 Veterans experiencing homelessness to safe and stable housing, with 100% being offered supportive services. We will exercise special sensitivity to female Veterans and Veterans with families.

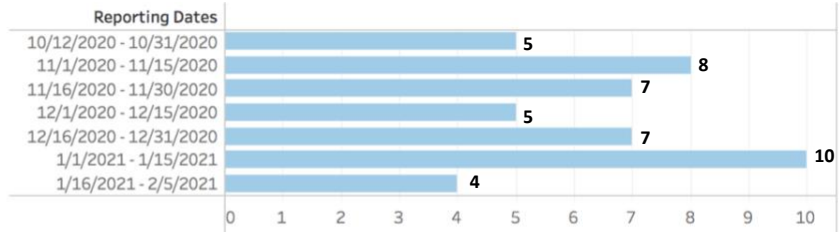
Total Exits to Safe and Stable Housing

Santa Barbara Goal: 75 Veterans Housed; Sonoma Goal: 65 Transition Age Youth Housed
San Francisco Goal: 175 SIP Single Adult Guests Housed

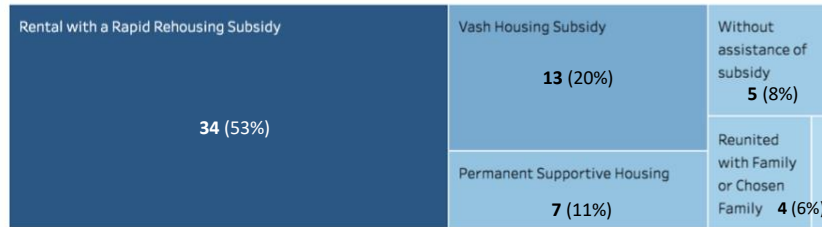
Community



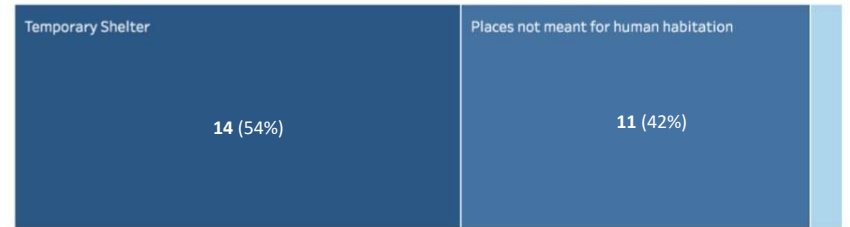
Biweekly Exits to Safe and Stable Housing



Exit Destinations



Other Exits



BNL/SIP Race



White: 58.5%
Black or African American: 13%
Hispanic/Latino: 18.5%
Asian: <1%
American Indian or Alaska Native: 8.5%

Housed Race



White: 61%
Black or African American: 10%
Hispanic/Latino: 27%
Asian: 0%
American Indian or Alaska Native: 2.5%

BNL/SIP Gender



Male: 90%
Female: 9.5%

Housed Gender



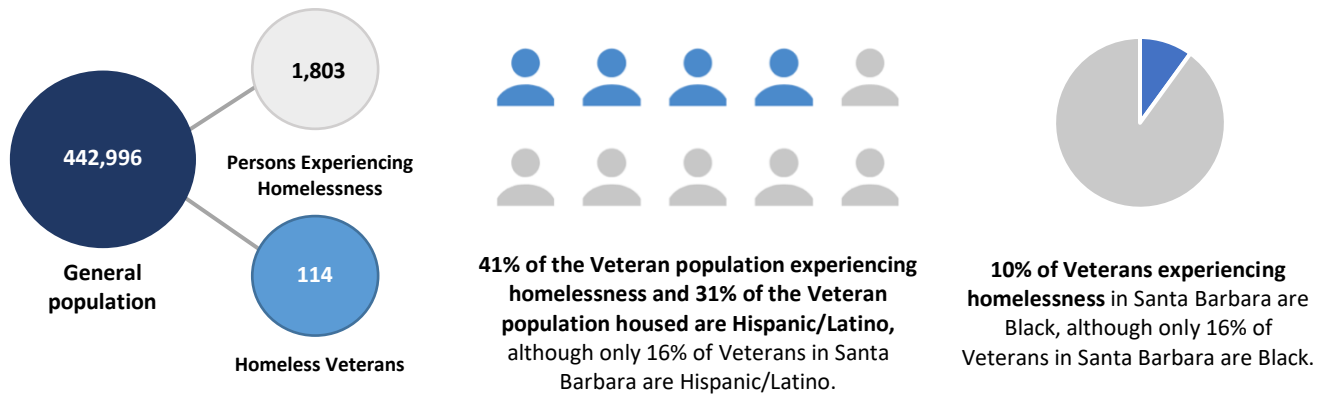
Male: 86%
Female: 14%



Full interactive data dashboard available at: <https://www.rapidresults.org/cac2dash>

RACIAL EQUITY DURING THE 100-DAY CHALLENGE

RACIAL EQUITY ANALYSIS IN SANTA BARBARA



Data obtained from CoC Racial Equity Analysis Tool (version 2.1) and RRI 100-Day Challenge

INTEGRATING RACIAL EQUITY PRINCIPLES AND STRATEGIES INTO THE 100-DAY CHALLENGE

Santa Barbara took a number of key steps to apply an equity-driven approach to their 100-Day Challenge to connect Veterans experiencing homelessness to safe and stable housing, including:

- **The development of a Veterans-specific needs assessment survey.** The process of developing a needs assessment is one way to bring the voices of people with lived experiences of homelessness to the table and amplify their voices. Santa Barbara worked closely with C4 Innovations to receive feedback on the survey to ensure that it is person-centered and equity-focused. The needs assessment survey will help Santa Barbara better understand how to develop targeted strategies specific to the housing and service needs of Veterans, including populations of focus such as Hispanic/Latino persons who are overrepresented among Veterans experiencing homelessness and Veterans housed in the County.
- **A focus on coordinated landlord outreach, education and recruitment.** Santa Barbara’s landlord engagement efforts allowed the Team to address implicit bias in the housing process, educate landlords on the prevalence and experiences of homeless Veterans in the County, and break down assumptions about what it means to house someone who is currently experiencing homelessness. Building strong relationships with landlords can also help break down barriers in the housing search and application process that make it more difficult and less equitable for persons experiencing homelessness, such as background checks or credit history requirements.
- **Local investment in peer support and outreach for Veterans experiencing homelessness.** Peer support and outreach activities serve as a very equitable approach to meeting people experiencing homelessness where they are and engaging them in supports. Peer supports and outreach activities are rooted in empathy and strengthened by shared experiences, often resulting in increased client trust and engagement in services. Expanding peer supports also helps to ensure that people with lived expertise are at the forefront of the work and are authentically engaged in directing service design and delivery in the homeless response system.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN SYSTEMS CHANGE

CROSS-SYSTEMS COLLABORATION

Santa Barbara engaged more than a dozen cross-system stakeholders that work with Veterans experiencing homelessness in the 100-Day Challenge, including the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the Housing Authorities for both the City and the County of Santa Barbara, the Stand Down Homeless Veterans Assistance Project, Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) providers, the Santa Barbara County Public Defender's Office, and local Veterans. The Team also engaged a number of partners that work more informally with Veterans or who utilize networks outside the VA and the homeless response system to help Veterans secure housing and services. The Santa Barbara 100-Day Challenge Team developed and hosted a "Homelessness 101" presentation to help create a baseline understanding among all Team members of how the homeless response system works in Santa Barbara County and how to connect Veterans in need to homeless service providers.

This work to engage diverse Veteran-serving organizations within and outside the homeless response system has helped to break down existing silos and engage new voices in re-thinking and re-framing the work to prevent and end Veteran homelessness in Santa Barbara County. As a result, Santa Barbara has seen an increase in higher-level cross-sector communication, and well as more intensive interagency/interdisciplinary engagement through weekly meetings of the 100-Day Challenge Team. The community has also seen improved coordination and collaboration across partners, including robust coordination between the VA, the Public Defender's Office, and SSVF providers to align their efforts and maximize utilization of their resources to serve shared clients.

IMPROVE COORDINATION WITH VETERANS AFFAIRS SYSTEM

Santa Barbara's 100-Day Challenge helped to strengthen and expand the relationship between the homeless response system and the VA system to better serve Veterans in need of housing and services. The 100-Day Challenge led to improved data-sharing between the two systems, including better coordination and management of information collected by HOMES (the VA's data collection and reporting system) and by the local Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). The 100-Day Challenge Team was able to identify Veterans who were accessing services through both the homeless response system and the VA and improve their cross-system service coordination. The Team also utilized newly available cross-systems data during weekly Veterans By-Name List (BNL) meetings to verify Veteran status for persons on the BNL and quickly connect them to appropriate services through the VA system.

The 100-Day Challenge also helped deepen the understanding between the homeless response system and VA regarding the challenges and opportunities around housing for Veterans, including utilization of HUD- VASH vouchers and SSVF resources. SSVF providers were able to lend important insights to the Team around documentation as a housing barrier for Veterans, especially those who are experiencing chronic homelessness. The Team also worked to build greater understanding among all providers regarding discharge status for Veterans and how different statuses impact eligibility for VA resources and benefits. Improved coordination between the homeless response system and the VA has also helped the community begin to address capacity issues regarding utilization of VASH vouchers and move more VASH voucher holders into permanent housing.

LANDLORD OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

Landlord outreach and engagement was a central focus of the Santa Barbara 100-Day Challenge, helping the community to expand the range of affordable housing units available to Veterans experiencing homelessness and increase housing placements. One of Santa Barbara's 100-Day Challenge sponsors was a local independent landlord, providing the Team with crucial insights into the landlord perspective on housing Veterans experiencing homelessness and facilitating communication with others in the landlord community. The Team conducted outreach to landlords to identify those who are willing to rent to Veterans experiencing homelessness. From this effort, the Team was able to develop a shared spreadsheet of units available for Veteran housing placements that is updated on a regular basis. The Team also created a cross-county landlord list and began facilitating new conversations about regularly sharing information on landlords across providers and breaking down silos around existing landlord relationships.

The Santa Barbara 100-Day Challenge Team greatly expanded the reach of their landlord engagement efforts through a highly successful Prospective Landlord Information Session held in December 2020. The virtual landlord engagement event was attended by approximately 40 participants and engaged a range of panelists – including representatives from the VA, both local Housing Authorities, and local homeless service providers – in an honest conversation about the benefits and potential concerns around serving as a landlord for Veterans who have experienced homelessness. The Team conducted structure follow-up with each landlord who attended the session, as well as additional outreach to individuals who were invited but unable to attend. Santa Barbara plans to host regular information sessions for prospective landlords and landlord engagement training sessions for providers as part of their 100-Day Challenge sustainability efforts.

UNDERSTANDING & RESPONDING TO THE NEEDS OF VETERANS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Santa Barbara took quick action during the 100-Day Challenge to better understand and target resources to meeting the specific needs of Veterans experiencing homelessness. The Team participated in a presentation by their U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) Regional Coordinator on *COVID-19 & Connecting With Veterans: Key Insights*, which helped the Team better understand the needs and experiences of Veterans experiencing homelessness during the current COVID-19 crisis. The Team also leveraged existing resources and experiences from Santa Barbara County's recent 100-Day Challenge on Youth Homelessness to develop a Veteran-specific needs assessment. Santa Barbara worked with the VA, SSVF providers, and a range of Veteran service providers to craft questions specific to the needs and experiences of Veterans. The Team also worked to ensure that all information being collected is pertinent to the mission of effectively serving Veterans experiencing homelessness. Santa Barbara plans to deploy the Veterans needs assessment survey in April 2020, with a goal of reaching all Veterans currently on the By-Name List. Santa Barbara will use the information gathered through the needs assessment to identify current strengths and gaps in Veteran housing and service options and to improve service coordination among providers to best meet Veterans' needs.

MAINTAINING 100-DAY CHALLENGE MOMENTUM

In order to lock in their gains and maintain the momentum around connecting Veterans experiencing homelessness to safe and stable housing options, the Santa Barbara 100-Day Challenge team plans to focus on the following priorities moving forward:

1. Host quarterly landlord information session and conduct follow-up recruitment efforts
 - a. Incorporate implicit bias into training for landlord engagement session

- b. Twice annually engage landlords/landlord associations
- c. Twice annually engage service providers regarding best practices and resource sharing around landlord outreach and engagement
- d. Incorporate the voices of Veterans with lived experience, service providers, and landlords into each engagement effort
2. Continue to engage in Veterans case conferencing with a focus on continuous quality improvement
 - a. Improve collective accountability to clients, especially tough cases
 - b. Utilize assessments to prioritize cases, analyze data, and focus collective efforts
 - c. Prioritize tough cases and share successes
 - d. Prepare providers beforehand so they can be more engaged
3. Support the Santa Barbara County Veterans Collaborative
4. Deploy, analyze, and use needs assessment survey for resourcing and project decisions
 - a. Utilize HUD racial equity tool with disaggregated data
 - b. Consider beginning survey with the Santa Barbara County Veterans Collaborative
5. Create time before or after the case conferencing once a month/as needed to discuss issues such as housing stock and landlord engagement for Veterans experiencing homelessness

Additionally, the team has established the following priority system shifts needed to sustain performance and proposed actions to make those system shifts a reality.

Priority System Shifts	Action Areas for System Shifts & Sustainability
<p>Expand access to resources through provider training and role clarification</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add to provider training (landlord engagement session) scheduled near the end of 2021 calendar year • Train providers on other than honorable discharge status • Clarify roles of providers during/after referrals and handoff to Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Program • Develop a universal way of approaching conversations around race/ethnicity with Veterans and ensure race/ethnicity data is collected the same way across providers
<p>Continue data-informed decision-making</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to use and add to data dashboard • Use document readiness tool in HMIS
<p>Strengthen support for and solidifying relationships with Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) and Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) providers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on document readiness • Ensure that providers maintain client support and ongoing services during and after warm handoffs • Clarify lines of communication when multiple agencies are involved with a single Veteran (landlord communication, document readiness, points of communication, etc.)

<p>Increase and amplify voices of Veterans who have experienced homelessness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a Veterans advisory mechanism via the Santa Barbara County Veterans Collaborative • Amplify the impact of the Client Advisory Board at Good Samaritan Shelter • Include a Veteran on the Phase 2 CoC Advisory Board • Establish a Veterans Collaborative subgroup on housing and homelessness • Keep using dashboards to maintain focus on equity • Involve leadership from Native American populations and Veterans groups to ensure that resources and services are reaching all subpopulations
<p>Shift resources to housing retention for Veterans who have exited homelessness (CoC strategies/ benchmarks: retention/employment)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand access to employment training • Increase investment in peer outreach and support