



ACT

On Homelessness

3-YEAR REPORT

2020-2023

The ACT on Homelessness Collaborative is committed to reducing and preventing homelessness and its impacts in the City of Santa Barbara by working in partnership using a variety of innovative solutions.

A PARTNERSHIP OF



ACT On Homelessness Collaborative

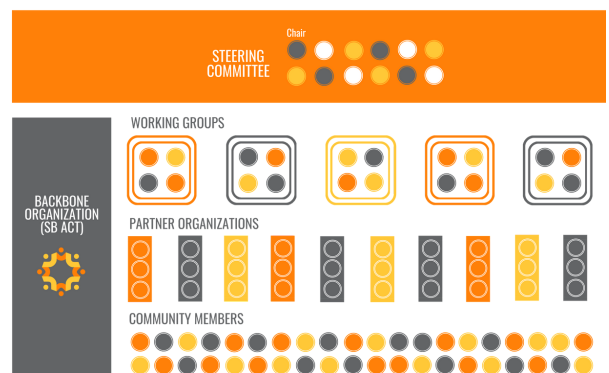
History

The ACT On Homelessness (AOH) Collaborative was founded in 2019 in response to the growing impacts of homelessness and the simultaneous proliferation of shelter and service providers in the City of Santa Barbara. Initially formed as a public-private partnership between the City of Santa Barbara and the Santa Barbara Foundation, the AOH Collaborative was designed as a localized, coordinated approach to addressing the impacts of homelessness in the City of Santa Barbara.



About the Collaborative

The ACT On Homelessness (AOH) Collaborative was designed using the Collective Impact Model of partnership* (see diagram). The Collective Impact Model entails a neutral "backbone organization" (SB ACT) convening cross-sector stakeholders (government, business, nonprofit, community members) to address a large-scale social issue through a common agenda (shared strategic plan), mutually-reinforcing activities, shared measurement systems, and continuous communication.



*Kania, J., Kramer, M., & John Kania is a managing director at FSG. (2011, January). Collective impact. Stanford Social Innovation Review: Informing and Inspiring Leaders of Social Change. Retrieved May 6, 2023, from https://ssir.org/articles/entry/collective_impact

Common Agenda : 2021 - 2023

Utilizing data from 3 months of community stakeholder interviews as well as the County of Santa Barbara's Community Action Plan, the AOH Collaborative developed a Common Agenda with four (4) 3-year strategic plan goals. The Steering Committee ratified the Common Agenda in October 2020.

- 1. Increase the number of affordable housing units by 20% in the City of Santa Barbara**
- 2. Strengthen the capacity of organizations that provide permanent housing placement services to increase the rate of housing retention by 5%**
- 3. Create a culture of diversion and prevention among collaborative partners to reduce the percentage of individuals, youth, and families entering homelessness by 10%**
- 4. Strengthen the coordination and availability of outreach and case management services for individuals, youth, and families experiencing homelessness by 25%**

2020: Adaptation and Coordination

The ACT On Homelessness (AOH) Collaborative had hosted two (2) open community forums and two (2) steering committee meetings before stay-at-home orders went into effect throughout the state of California in March 2020. Recognizing the risks inherent to people experiencing homelessness and the community challenges presented by the pandemic, the AOH Collaborative immediately took action.

COVID-19 Regional Action Plan (RAP)

In March 2020, the AOH Collaborative formed a COVID-19 Regional Action Plan (RAP) to address emergent needs of people experiencing homelessness. This RAP met twice weekly with several important contributions: worked with the City of Santa Barbara to assess the need and identify sites for portable restrooms throughout the downtown corridor; worked with City Net and outreach partners to assist individuals to exit a public safety



Photo Courtesy of the Santa Barbara Independent

hazard in the Cacique Street underpass and move into emergency and transitional housing; and offered coordination between local service providers and the County Department of Public Health.

Community Food Collaborative

Recognizing the lack of access to food options for vulnerable populations as a result of the

pandemic, SB ACT partnered with ACME Hospitality, the Community Environmental Council, City Net, Doctors Without Walls, SB County Food Action Network, the Julia Child Foundation, and more to employ furloughed local chefs to prepare more than 4,900 meals to individuals experiencing homelessness over the course of 18 weeks.

Homeless camp on Cacique Street in Santa Barbara cleaned up



Photo Courtesy of KEYT News



Photo Courtesy of the Santa Barbara Independent

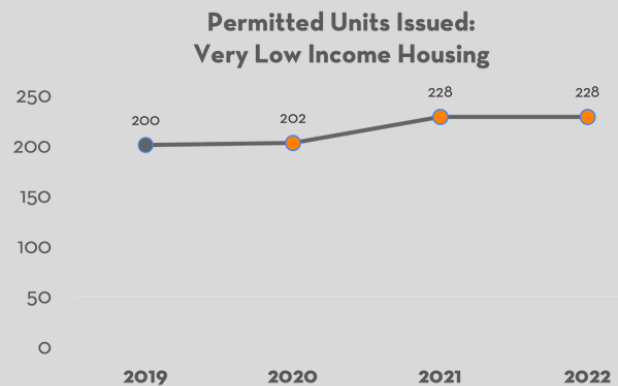
Affordable Housing

Goal #1

Increase the number of affordable housing units by 20% in the City of Santa Barbara

The Collaborative focused on very-low income housing (<50% of Area Median Income) as the primary permanent housing option to address issues of homelessness. In total, the City of Santa Barbara's stock of very-low income housing permitted to date increased by 14% between 2019-2022. Major hurdles included rising housing costs and development delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Collaborative continues to advocate for additional funding streams as well as creative solutions such as motel conversions and the streamlining of approval for low-income housing developments.

The ACT On Homelessness (AOH) Collaborative undertook three (3) key strategies to increase the number of affordable housing units citywide. First, the AOH Collaborative worked with the city to identify vacant and under-utilized lots in each City district. Some of this work is currently being utilized in the City's 2023-2031 Housing Element Draft. Second, the Collaborative engaged community partners to increase advocacy for affordable housing, including the development of the forthcoming Veracruz Village apartments. Third, the Collaborative advocated for the strategic use of ADUs and shared housing opportunities citywide.



Source: City of Santa Barbara Community Development, Housing & Human Services Division; Planning Division



Additional Progress

- In 2022, the City of Santa Barbara established a \$3 Million Housing Opportunities, Preservation, and Equity (HOPE) Fund to provide ongoing support the development of affordable housing
- An additional 90 Very-Low Income units have been approved throughout the South Santa Barbara County between 2019-2023 to serve the entire region

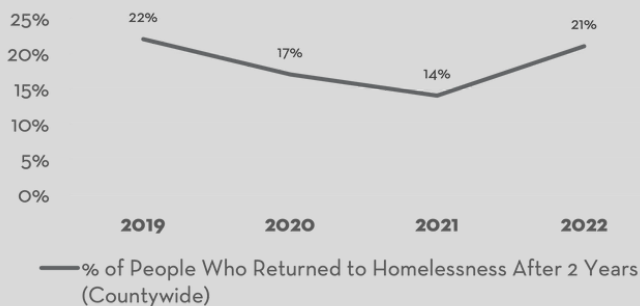
Housing Retention

To address the significant barriers to remaining housed, the ACT On Homelessness (AOH) Collaborative focused on (1) engaging housing providers to explore best practices for retention, (2) creating a "Good Neighbor Handbook" to support residents being placed in permanent housing and offer guidelines for their case managers, and (3) identifying financial resources to build capacity for bridge or transitional housing. On this latter point, SB ACT managed a flexible fund to support more than 15 individuals in need of transitional housing or assistance with key expenses to help them retain their housing.

Goal #2

Strengthen the capacity of organizations that provide permanent housing placement services to increase the rate of housing retention by 5%

**Countywide
% of People Who Returned to Homelessness
After 2 Years (w/ or w/o Supportive Services)**

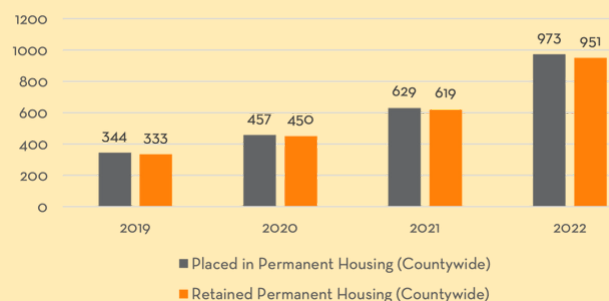


Source: County of Santa Barbara Housing & Community Development Department

Although the rate of individuals who returned to homelessness within 2 years after being housed decreased steadily from 2019-2021, the overall decrease by 2022 was only 1% throughout Santa Barbara County (data is not exclusive to the City of Santa Barbara). There are several key factors contributing to these changes, including the proliferation of a national behavioral health crisis that has disproportionately impacted vulnerable populations as well as the ending of pandemic-era resources such as Project Roomkey non-congregate shelters.

The numbers are starkly different when looking only at the individuals who received documented supportive services when placed in permanent housing. The percentage of these individuals remaining in permanent housing increased from 97% to 98% between 2019-2022. This difference underscores the importance of continued supportive services for individuals after they receive permanent housing placements. This support includes case management, behavioral health support, healthcare, peer support, and more to help individuals successfully make the transition from homelessness to housing.

**Countywide
Persons Who Remained in Permanent Housing
(w/ Supportive Services)**



Source: County of Santa Barbara Housing & Community Development Department

Homelessness Prevention

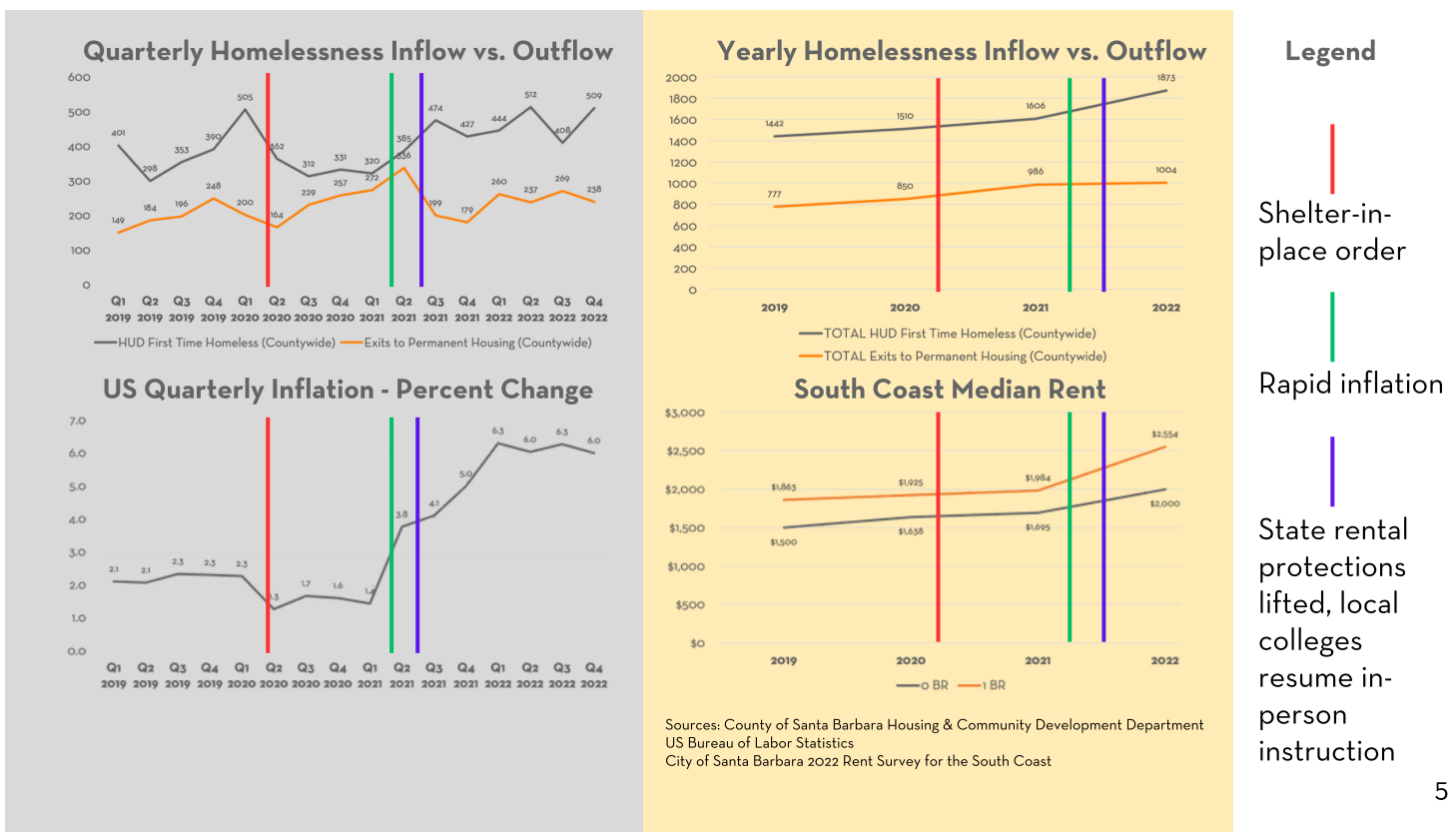
Goal #3

Create a culture of diversion and prevention among collaborative partners to reduce the percentage of individuals, youth and families entering homelessness by 10%

As depicted in the charts below, the most dramatic change in homelessness inflow-to-outflow ratio came between Q2 2021 (1.14 : 1) and Q4 2021 (2.39 : 1), the same period when national inflation rates rapidly grew from 1.4% to 5% and the South Coast median rent for a 1-bedroom apartment rose by nearly 29%.

In an effort to improve homelessness prevention, the AOH Collaborative focused on supporting service providers serving vulnerable households as well as agencies likely to be the first contact for those who have just entered homelessness for the first time. SB ACT was also able to offer flexible funds for individuals/families at risk of losing their housing.

However, there were several key challenges to improving homelessness prevention during this period. Rapid inflation beginning in mid-2021 virtually simultaneously with the ending of pandemic-era rental protections led to greater challenges for households that were already struggling to pay pre-pandemic rent prices. Additionally, the resuming of in-person instruction at local colleges and universities contributed to a decrease in the available housing supply. These challenges are reflected in the countywide increases in family homelessness (+3.3%) and vehicular homelessness (+53%) between the 2020 and 2023 Point In Time Counts, as more households have been displaced.



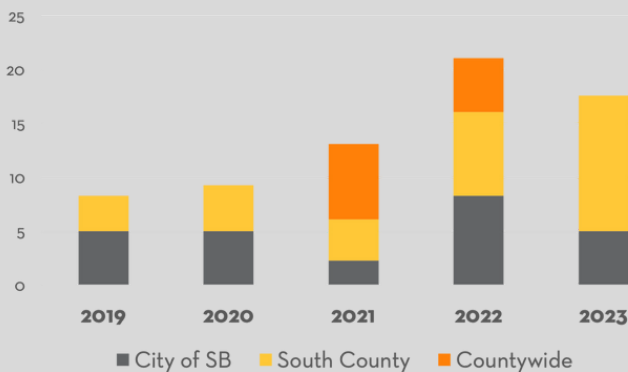
Outreach & Case Management

The ACT On Homelessness (AOH) Collaborative made significant progress in increasing the availability and efficacy of outreach and case management services throughout the City of Santa Barbara through three key strategies. First, the development of neighborhood-specific Regional Action Plans improved outreach coordination at a parochial level. Second, the AOH Collaborative leaned on three Neighborhood Navigation Centers (NNCs) to provide hubs for outreach workers to access their clients. Third, the Collaborative engaged the community to advocate for increased outreach and case management services.

Goal #4

Strengthen the coordination and availability of outreach and case management services for individuals, youth and families experiencing homelessness by 25%

Total Outreach / Case Management Services



Source: City Net, Good Samaritan Shelter, PATH SB, New Beginnings Counseling Center

The more than 112% growth in case management services began with the City's investment in increased outreach through City Net in 2020. Additionally, pandemic-era funding such as the American Rescue Plan and Statewide initiatives allowed for increased services throughout high-impact neighborhoods and high fire-risk transit corridors with providers such as Good Samaritan and New Beginnings Counseling Center. Monthly/bi-monthly RAP meetings have allowed community members to assist in identifying "hot spots" for outreach while allowing providers to coordinate outreach to specific clients.

Additional Progress

- In 2023, the City of Santa Barbara approved an increase of City Net's contract to include night & weekend outreach as well as the creation of an outreach hotline
- Increased non-congregate and transitional housing opportunities (Dignity Moves, Project Roomkey motel rooms) have contributed to the effectiveness of outreach services in assisting individuals off of the streets



Neighborhood Navigation Centers

Starting in 2021, the (AOH) Collaborative formalized the nearly twenty year-old "meal-sharing" program at Alameda Park to provide a hub for homelessness services for the purpose of increasing street exits throughout the City. The program has expanded to three (3) sites:

- Carrillo-Castillo Commuter Lot: Tuesdays 10am-1pm
- Santa Barbara Rescue Mission: Wednesdays 8am-10am
- Alameda Park: Thursdays 5:30pm-7pm



A key element of each NNC is trust. The trust fostered in each NNC setting allows for the development of genuine relationships between providers and clients, accountability among those experiencing homelessness, and warm handoffs when an individual is ready to take the next steps.

In 2022, the NNCs served as a key outreach site for the Dignity Moves transitional housing project. Good Samaritan was able to place more than 25 individuals in Dignity Moves through connections made at the NNCs.

65 individuals served by NNCs exited homelessness in 2022

360+ Unduplicated Individuals Served (2023 Point In Time Count total for the City of Santa Barbara: 787)

60+ Individuals Served Weekly

Services Provided

Adult Education,
Documentation
Services, & Internet
Access

Santa Barbara Public
Library

Behavioral Health

SB County Department
of Behavioral Wellness
Santa Barbara

Response Network
Project Heal SB County

Case Management,
Outreach & Housing
Assistance

City Net

Good Samaritan

PATH SB

YMCA Youth & Family
Services

Clothing

Community volunteers

Meals

Faith communities

Healthcare

Doctors Without Walls
Pacific Pride
Foundation

See International

SB County Department
of Public Health

Hygiene

Showers of Blessing

Pet Care

CARE 4 Paws

Shelter

PATH SB

Salvation Army

SB Rescue Mission

YMCA Youth & Family
Services

Warm Handoffs

Kingdom Causes, Inc.

Regional Action Plans (RAPs)

The ACT On Homelessness (AOH) Collaborative is focused on long-term solutions to the large-scale issue of homelessness, but in the meantime there are emergent impacts of homelessness that require immediate responses. In 2020, an urgent concern emerged as encampments in an underpass on the Eastside of Santa Barbara presented a public health issue during the pandemic while the requirement of "sheltering in place" created a barrier to addressing the issue. In response, the AOH Collaborative formed an Eastside neighborhood coalition to address the concern, and Regional Action Plans (RAPs) were born. As a result of the RAP's efforts, all individuals from the encampment were able to transition safely into shelter.

Regional Action Plans (RAPs) are recurring neighborhood-specific meetings in which community members, business owners, service providers, and City staff can identify immediate concerns and develop solutions together. The meetings also serve as a



Upper State Street Neighborhood Walk, 2022

space for service providers to develop action plans to address concerns related to specific individuals in need.

The RAPs also host monthly walks in high-impact neighborhoods to both facilitate outreach to local businesses and allow community members a chance to get to know service providers and City staff. RAPs have also contribute to the creation of a Citywide

Response Directory specific to homelessness-related concerns.

Current RAP Meetings:

- Eastside
- State St/Waterfront
- All-Call (General)



For meeting schedules and Zoom links, visit sbact.org/raps or scan the QR code

More than 200 street exits have been facilitated Citywide since January 2021. This includes exits to emergency shelter, transitional housing, and permanent housing.



Where Do We Go From Here?



Expansion Across South County

The ACT On Homelessness (AOH) Collaborative has shed light on the true complexity of addressing homelessness; this is an issue that transcends individual organizations and sectors as well as individual municipalities and geographic boundaries. As of June 2023, the AOH Collaborative is expanding into a South County Collaborative (SCC) that includes the Cities of Goleta and Carpinteria as well as the Montecito region. The SCC will expand the work of the AOH Collaborative by addressing immediate homelessness impacts and increase street exits throughout the South County region.

Key Priorities

The local homelessness landscape has changed dramatically since the inception of the AOH Collaborative in 2019, both in terms of increased collaboration and services as well as growing areas of concern. The SCC will develop an updated 2023 priority plan (in concert with Santa Barbara County's 2021 Community Action Plan) during summer 2023. The plan will include strategies to address growing behavioral health concerns and reduce impacts in key regional "hot spots."

Community Education

One of the most important tools to reduce local impacts of homelessness is through community advocacy. One of the only ways that system-wide changes can be implemented is for local residents voice their support for proven solutions. The SCC will focus on spreading education and awareness throughout South Santa Barbara County through media and education events with an emphasis on action and advocacy items.

LEARN MORE AND TAKE ACTION:



SANTA BARBARA ALLIANCE FOR COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION
Collaborating with and for the marginalized

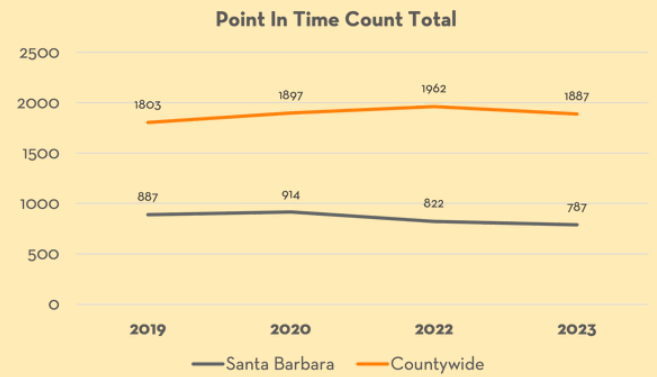
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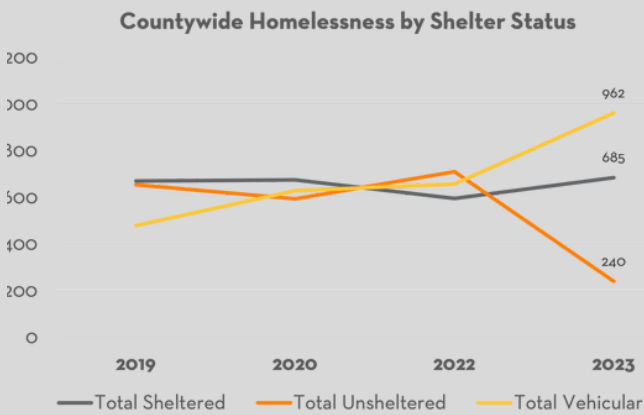


Appendix: Point-In-Time Count Data

The Point In Time Count is an annual one-day count of individuals experiencing homelessness, as required by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. These counts are imperfect measures of homelessness for a variety of reasons, but they give us a general sense of trends in homelessness over time. The Santa Maria/Santa Barbara County Continuum of Care's count takes place in January of each year and enlists hundreds of volunteers Countywide to gather data. Since 2019, the City of Santa Barbara has seen an 11% decrease in homelessness relative to a 4% increase Countywide.



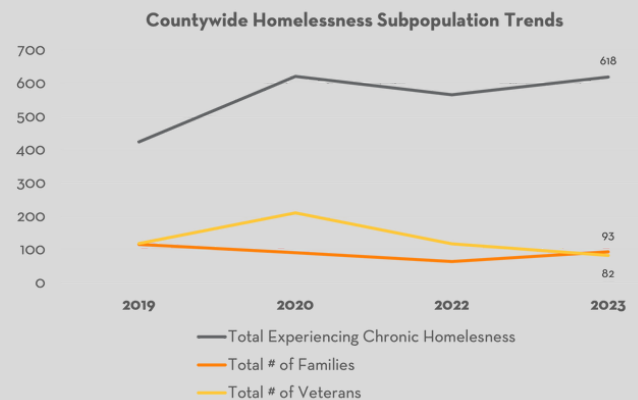
Source: County of Santa Barbara Housing & Community Development Department



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With increased outreach services and new opportunities for emergency, transitional, and permanent housing, Santa Barbara County has seen a 73% reduction in unsheltered homelessness since 2019. Some of the "street exits" contributing to this decrease explain the rise in sheltered homelessness by about 2%. However, factors such as skyrocketing rents and rapid inflation have contributed to a doubling in the amount of vehicular homelessness Countywide.

One of the most visible forms of homelessness is "chronic homelessness," defined as experiencing homelessness for at least 1 year or 4+ separate occasions in the last 3 years while simultaneously dealing with a substance use disorder, serious mental illness, developmental disability, PTSD, cognitive impairments from brain injury, or chronic physical illness or disability (HUD 2009). Similar to statewide trends, chronic homelessness has grown by 46% Countywide. Veteran homelessness has decreased by 31% and family homelessness by 19%, although the latter group has trended upward since 2021.



Source: County of Santa Barbara Housing & Community Development Department