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SANTA CRUZ COUNTY SYSTEM PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

Prepared for Santa Cruz County by Focus Strategies

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BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The County of Santa Cruz, led by the Homeless Services Coordination Office (HSCO), engaged Focus Strategies to assist community leadership and key stakeholders to evaluate, align, and improve the countywide response to the local crisis of homelessness. In the first phase of the project, Focus Strategies conducted a qualitative Baseline System Assessment, which was completed in August 2019. In the second phase, Focus Strategies conducted a quantitative analysis of the community's response to homelessness by analyzing project and system project performance. This report presents our approach to the quantitative analysis, the methodology used, and the system performance results. The final phase of this project will be the development of a Strategic Action Plan that includes measurable goals and objectives informed by this analysis of system performance and projections of what will be needed to improve the community's response to homelessness.

APPROACH TO QUANTITATIVE ANALYSES

To conduct the quantitative analysis, Focus Strategies used our System-Wide Analytics and Projection (SWAP) tools, a joint project of Focus Strategies and the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH). SWAP is designed to help communities use local data to understand what their current system is accomplishing and to plan and prioritize changes to bring about the greatest possible reduction in homelessness.

SWAP is comprised of two primary tools: (1) the Base Year Calculator (BYC) which helps users assess whether their Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data is of sufficient quality and accuracy to support meaningful performance measurement and produces current system performance results, and (2) the System Performance Predictor (SPP) which allows communities to model the results of changes to individual projects or groups of projects, including such strategies as re-allocation of funding from transitional to rapid rehousing, serving more literally homeless people in existing projects, or increasing the rate of exit to permanent housing. The SPP uses the results generated by the BYC as input to model system changes. This report focuses on the results of the BYC analysis.

A. Base Year Calculator (BYC) Overview

The BYC produces an assessment of HMIS data quality as well as an analysis of system performance. The data quality assessment generates an easy-to-digest analysis of data quality for each project in the system, allowing the CoC and community leadership to assess: (1) whether there are systemic data quality problems, such as a widespread level of

incomplete data entry for particular data elements; and/or (2) data quality issues limited to particular projects or project types.

Current system performance is assessed at a project-by-project level, which is then summarized by project type. Five dimensions of project performance are produced: (1) the extent to which project resources (beds) are fully utilized; (2) the proportion of people entering homeless projects that are homeless when they enroll; (3) the length of time people remain in each type of project; (4) the rate that people leave projects with stable housing; and (5) the estimated cost of projects to help people obtain stable housing.

Successful implementation of the BYC requires coordination across the system to access and understand the data necessary for the analysis. For this project, Focus Strategies coordinated with several entities and administrators with responsibilities in administration, the Continuum of Care, and the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Specific entities included: the Santa Cruz County Homeless Services Coordination Office (HSCO) – the CoC Lead Agency, Community Technology Alliance (CTA) – the HMIS Lead Agency for the CoC, and Tony Gardner Consulting (CoC Consultant). The primary sources of information for the BYC included:

- The community's inventory of emergency shelter, transitional housing, rapid rehousing, and permanent supportive housing beds and units as documented in the 2019 *Housing Inventory Count (HIC)* submitted to HUD;
- Client data exported from the community's *Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)* for the period from July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019. The HMIS system is operated by CTA on behalf of the CoC; and
- *Project budget data* collected by HSCO staff directly from homeless program providers, including the total annual operating cost of each project, revenue sources, and amounts.

B. Projects and Households Included in the BYC Analysis

The BYC analysis incorporates projects in Santa Cruz County that provide housing and shelter to people experiencing homelessness to better understand performance at the project and project type level. There are four project types analyzed: (1) emergency shelter (ES), (2) transitional housing (TH), (3) rapid rehousing (RRH), and (4) permanent supportive housing (PSH). The scope of the analysis is limited only to these four project types and does not include homelessness prevention assistance for people at-risk of homelessness, or other

types of safety net assistance or mainstream system services provided to people who are homeless. In order to conduct a valid BYC analysis, each project had to meet three criteria to be included:

1. Be on the community's Housing Inventory Count (HIC);
2. Enter data in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS); and
3. Have at least one full year of data available.

Appendix A provides a list of the projects included in this analysis.

The HMIS system gathers data on households that access beds in homeless system programs in the community. It does not include data on people who are experiencing homelessness but who do not enter shelter, transitional housing, rapid rehousing, or permanent supportive housing. HMIS data is therefore a much different type of data than the bi-annual Point in Time Count, which gathers data on all people experiencing homelessness (whether or not they are currently accessing a homeless program) on a given day. The HMIS data provides rich information on the subset of people who access homeless system programs and is gathered on an ongoing basis. However, there are likely many households that experience homelessness whose information is not captured.

C. Methodology

HMIS, HIC, and budget data were uploaded into the Base Year Calculator (BYC), a customized web-based application developed by Focus Strategies. The BYC provides summary information on HMIS data quality as well as each project's performance across a range of measures. Focus Strategies produced individual project reports presenting results at the project level. Each project level report was accompanied by a series of graphs illustrating de-identified results of all projects of that same type. For example, each shelter saw their own performance as well as the performance of other shelters in the system, although they could not identify the other shelters.

In October and November 2019, the HSCO, CTA, Tony Gardner Consulting, and Focus Strategies jointly met with each service provider to discuss the performance of their projects. The purpose of the individual meetings was to understand project operations and workflow, surface and answer provider questions about their data, and provide guidance useful for cleaning up data quality. During these meetings, both providers and Focus Strategies staff identified concerns about data quality, including: inaccurate/missing client entries and exits,

inaccurate/missing prior living/destination, incorrect project type set-up in HMIS, incorrect bed/unit information on the HIC, and potential duplicated entries by multiple providers. Following these meetings, the HSCO facilitated a data cleanup process so that prior to the final data extract, providers could take steps to address the HMIS data quality problems that were identified in their individual meetings with Focus Strategies. Appendix B contains the pre-data clean-up system performance results and Appendix C describes the highlights from the conversations with service providers related to data cleaning, training, and HMIS system set-up that may still be needed for data quality enhancement.

Following the data clean-up process, concluded in January 2020, CTA re-extracted HMIS data for Focus Strategies to analyze again. The results summarized in this report reflect findings from the second set of analyses at the level of project type: emergency shelter, transitional housing, rapid rehousing, and permanent supportive housing.

RESULTS

The sections below present the results of our analysis of homeless system performance using the BYC. We first address the HMIS data quality findings and then introduce the number of people served in homeless system programs between July 1, 2018 and June 30, 2019 to provide context and descriptive information about the system and the people who are accessing it. Following these two sections is a discussion of performance results by project type.

A. HMIS Data Quality

A key precondition to a successful system performance assessment is the availability of high-quality data. In particular, it is important to have robust data for prior living situations and exit destinations for each household served in any homeless system project. The data element for prior living situation documents where the household was staying upon entry to a homeless project (e.g. outside, in a car, in their own apartment), while the data element for exit destination shows where the household went when they left a project (e.g. back to being unsheltered, to stay with friends, to a housing unit, etc.). Taken together these two data elements are crucial to understanding how people enter and exit the homeless system and whether the system is effective at helping people secure housing.

The BYC produces assessments of data quality for each project type (emergency shelter, transitional housing, rapid rehousing, and permanent supportive housing), including the

amount of "missing" data and the amount of "unknown" data (see Table 1). Focus Strategies found that the quality of the prior living situation HMIS data is good for all project types except year-round emergency shelters, where 11% of entries are from "unknown" prior living situations. For the exit destination data element, the data quality is concerning, with a large number of "unknown" destinations for all project types except seasonal shelters.

Understanding the difference between "missing" and "unknown" data is key in supporting data quality improvement efforts. "Missing" data is information that is simply not recorded in HMIS, which usually means that project staff are not entering these elements into the data system. Seasonal shelters are the only project type missing prior living or destination data, and at only 2%, which is not cause for concern.

"Unknown" data, on the other hand, reflects the percent of entries and exits that are not meaningful or useful responses for assessing performance. Unknown data includes: "data not collected," "client doesn't know," "client refused," "no exit interview conducted," and "unknown." Higher percentages of unknown responses, therefore, suggest that data is not reflected in HMIS in a useful manner (responses not useful to performance measurement and system improvement). Santa Cruz County's unknown prior living situations upon entry to year-round emergency shelters is 11% and therefore considered high (over 10%).[1]

With respect to exit destination, most project types have high rates of unknown exits. Regarding the year-round emergency shelter rate of 27%, it is commonly difficult to capture valid exit information for those who leave emergency shelter. People may leave and just not come back, making it impossible for staff to know where they have gone. Regardless, the percentages of unknown destination in the programs in Santa Cruz County are a significant problem; capturing accurate destination data is crucial for measuring permanent housing outcomes.

[1] The 10% benchmark applied to the maximum acceptable "unknown" destination is based on Focus Strategies' experience with multiple high-performing communities.

Table 1. Missing and Unknown Prior Living and Exit Destination by Project Type

Missing/Unknown (% of all Households)						
Project Type	**Total Entries**	**% Missing Prior Living**	**% Unknown Prior Living**	**Total Exits**	**% Missing Destination**	**% Unknown Destination**
Emergency Shelter – Yr Round	571	0%	11%	570	0%	27%
Emergency Shelter – Seasonal	2,074	2%	3%	1,868	2%	0%
Transitional Housing	68	0%	3%	59	0%	17%
Rapid Rehousing	278	0%	<1%	235	0%	12%
PSH – Single Site	2	0%	0%	0	No exits	No exits
PSH – Scattered Site	43	0%	0%	46	0%	37%
Total	3,036	1%	4%	2,774	1%	7%

B. Heads of Households Included in the Performance Analysis

Table 2 shows the total number of unduplicated heads of households served in projects included in the analysis in Santa Cruz County between July 1, 2018 and June 30, 2019. Over the course of one year, the projects served 2,352 unique households. Of these heads of households, 90% were adults 25 and older, 6% were transition age youth (TAY) ages 18 to 24, and 1% were children.

Table 2. Unduplicated Heads of Households Included in the Performance Analysis

Total Unduplicated Heads of Households		2,352	
		#	%
Age	Adults 25+	2,123	90%
	TAY 18 - 24	138	6%
	Children	27	1%
	Missing	64	3%

Tables 3 and 4 show the unduplicated number of head of households served in the same timeframe by project type. Households who received services from more than one project type are reflected more than once (i.e., in each of the service types they received). Project types with short lengths of stay tend to serve a larger number of households than those with longer or unlimited lengths of stay, which explains why the majority of the people served

were in emergency shelter. Of the two types of PSH, the scattered site model has the most units and therefore served the largest number of households.[2]

Table 3. Unduplicated Heads of Households Included in the Performance Analysis of ES, TH and RRH

		ES		TH		RRH	
Total Unduplicated Heads of Households		1,712		175		588	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
Age	Adults 25+	1,530	89	171	98	540	92
	TAY 18 - 24	93	6	4	2	46	8
	Children	25	2	0	0	2	<1
	Missing	64	4	0	0	0	0

Table 4. Unduplicated Heads of Households Included in the Performance Analysis of PSH

		PSH – Single Site		PSH – Scattered Site	
Total Unduplicated Heads of Households		19		202	
		#	%	#	%
Age	Adults 25+	19	100	198	98
	TAY 18 - 24	0	0	4	2
	Children	0	0	0	0
	Missing	0	0	0	0

C. System Performance

The primary output of the BYC is an assessment of project and system performance on a series of measures that are designed to help communities understand how effectively they are assisting people experiencing homelessness to secure housing. The goal is to identify areas of strong performance as well as areas where targeted improvement is needed.

In recent years, federal homelessness policy has shifted to look at how well communities are performing in their efforts to reduce homelessness. To further these objectives, HUD has strongly encouraged communities to evaluate the effectiveness both of individual projects, as well as the overall system, in meeting specific performance measures. Focus Strategies utilizes a set of performance metrics that build upon HUD's system performance measures and policies as articulated in the HEARTH Act and Home, Together: The Federal Strategic

[2] HUD defines scattered-site PSH projects as utilizing "private market apartments, where rental assistance is provided, and tenants have access to mobile and site-based supportive services."

Plan to End Homelessness. While the measures we use are aligned with HUD's goals and system performance measures, we also incorporate cost effectiveness so that communities can understand performance in relation to the level of investment.

This section presents our analysis of Santa Cruz County homeless system performance on five measures:

1. Bed and Unit Utilization Rate (UR)
2. Project Entries from Homelessness
3. Lengths of Stay in Projects
4. Rate of Exit to Permanent Housing
5. Cost per Permanent Housing Exit

Performance measure results are often presented by population (i.e., single adults, families, transition aged youth) to understand differing dynamics of homeless system use seen in the populations. For example, transition aged youth often have longer lengths of stay in projects than single adults due to their stage of development and resources needed for housing stability. Combining data across populations may mask key elements for interpretation of findings.

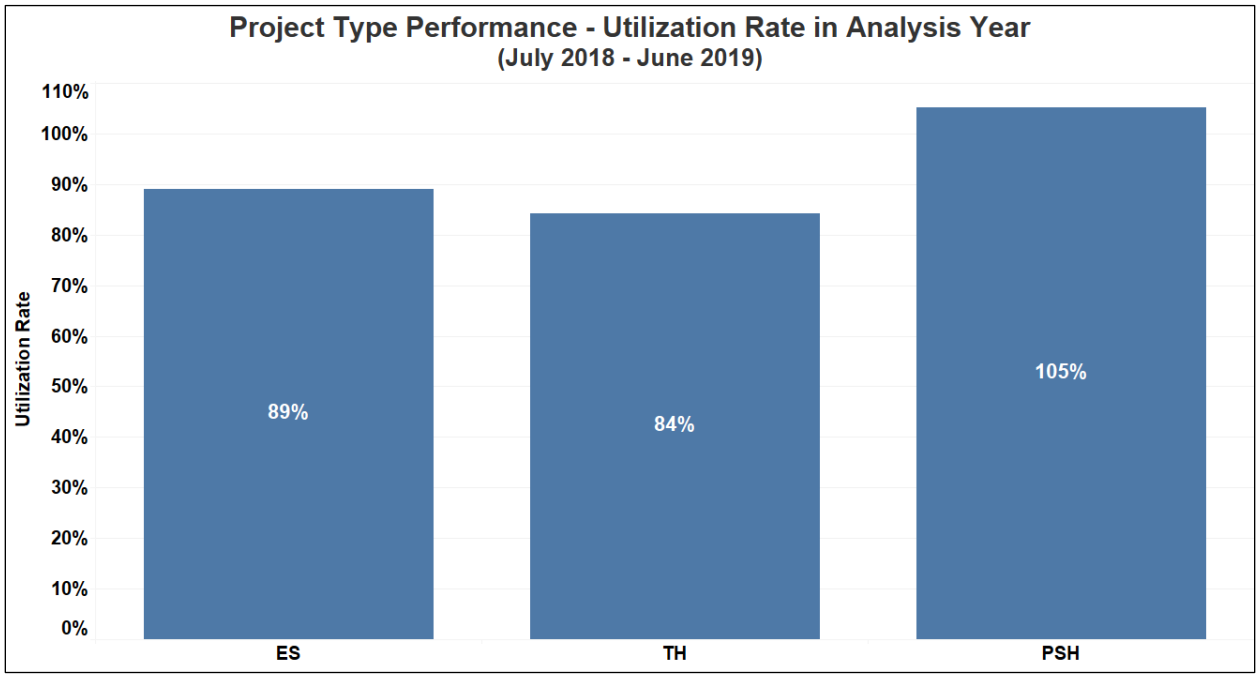
These results presented in this section are provided at the project-type level and do not differentiate projects serving different populations. Two primary issues prevented Focus Strategies from providing population specific results. First, as noted, there were some errors in the bed/unit information on the HIC, resulting in incorrect counts of populations served and we suspect that there were more of these issues than were brought to light in the first BYC analysis. Second, depending on specific project type, there were very few projects serving each population, which makes it difficult to protect anonymity of individual projects when presenting data at the population level.

1. Bed and Unit Utilization Rate (UR)

This metric uses HMIS data to assess the average daily occupancy of projects in the system. Maximizing the use of available bed capacity is essential to ensuring that system resources are being put to their best use and as many people experiencing homelessness as possible are being served with the existing inventory. Figure 1 presents the utilization rate (UR) for

emergency shelter, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing.[3] The measure uses bed utilization for single adult projects and unit utilization for family projects (sometimes a unit in a family project might have unfilled beds simply due to housing a smaller sized family than the unit is designed to accommodate).[4] The data indicate that the UR for emergency shelter and transitional housing projects appear somewhat low at 89% and 84% respectively; typically, UR of more than 90% is desired.

Figure 1. Utilization Rate by Project Type



2. Project Entries from Homelessness

This measure assesses the degree to which projects are serving people with the most acute housing needs, namely those who are literally homeless (i.e., are living outdoors, in a vehicle, or in an emergency shelter). While certain funding sources (local, state, federal) may allow projects to serve people who are living in other situations (i.e., those at risk of homelessness), successfully reducing homelessness depends on prioritizing those with the highest need for available units. This measure reflects the federal policy goals of ending chronic homelessness and prioritizing literally homeless people for permanent housing. To create a "right sized"

[3] Note: Rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing scattered site projects are not included in this analysis because the project types do not have a fixed bed capacity; the methodology applied to the other project types does not generate a comparable result.
[4] The formula used for calculating Utilization Rate (UR) is: number of beds nights used in HMIS data/number of bed nights available per HIC capacity ((beds for single adults + units for families) x 365).

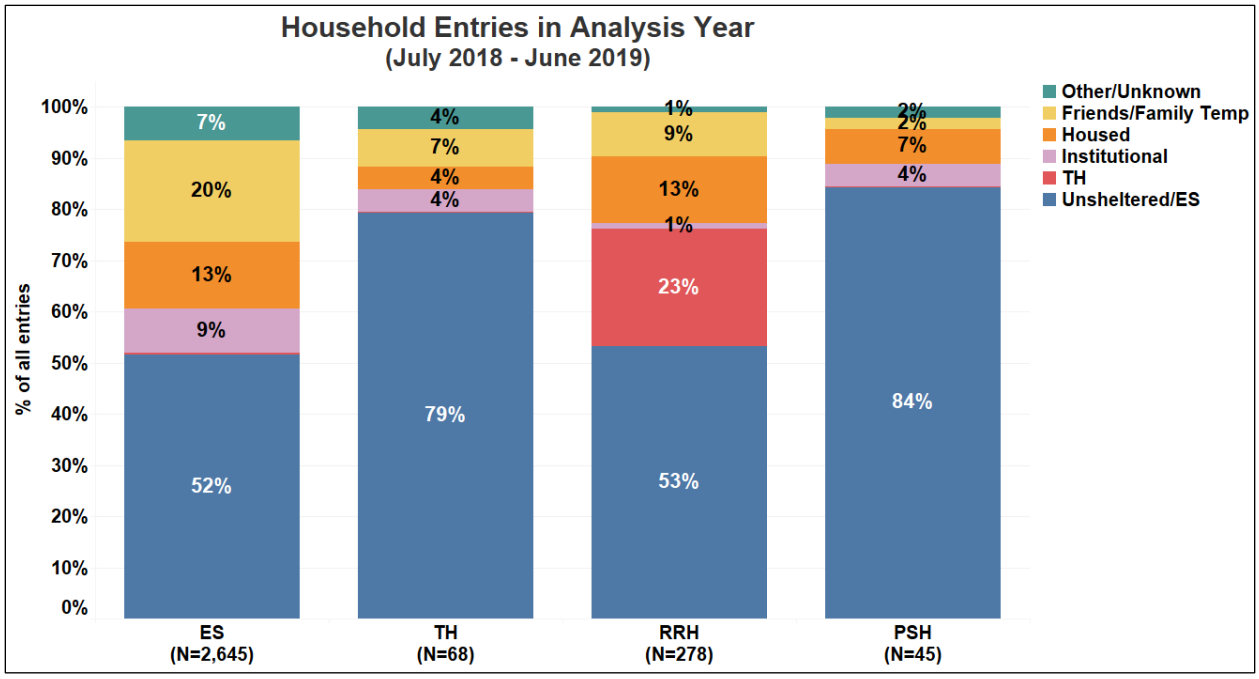
system in which there is an appropriate housing intervention for all people experiencing homelessness, those who are not literally homeless should be diverted[5] from entering the homeless system to begin with, thereby making resources available for those with nowhere to live.

Figure 2 shows prior living situation for households entering emergency shelter, transitional housing, rapid rehousing, and permanent supportive housing between July 2018 and June 2019. The shelter and rapid rehousing data indicate that a significant number of households are entering from non-homeless situations and suggest a need for system-wide and/or shelter diversion. Emergency shelters admitted about a third of households from housed situations (33%) while rapid rehousing admitted nearly a quarter of households (22%) from housed situations. Although benchmarks for the proportion of housed households entering the system should be community driven and based on local context, one goal for Santa Cruz might be to reduce the proportion to fewer than 10%. Transitional housing, for example enrolled the majority of households, 79%, from literal homelessness (unsheltered and emergency shelter) and only 11% from housed situations.

Rapid rehousing data also suggest poor performance in two other ways: only half of households enrolled from literal homelessness (53%) and almost a quarter (23%) of households enrolled from transitional housing. Typically, in a system with well implemented coordinated entry, more than 85% of rapid rehousing enrollments will be from literal homelessness).

[5] Diversion includes problem solving conversations with a trained Diversion Specialist or Case Manager to collaboratively brainstorm and consider housing solutions outside of the homeless system and within the client's natural pool of resources and/or social network. To assist households in achieving an alternative housing solution, diversion assistance may include conflict resolution or mediation with landlords or friends/family members; help accessing mainstream benefits; and light-touch financial assistance to keep a client in their existing housing situation or pay for utilities or move in costs.

Figure 2. Project Entries from Homelessness



3. Lengths of Stay in Projects

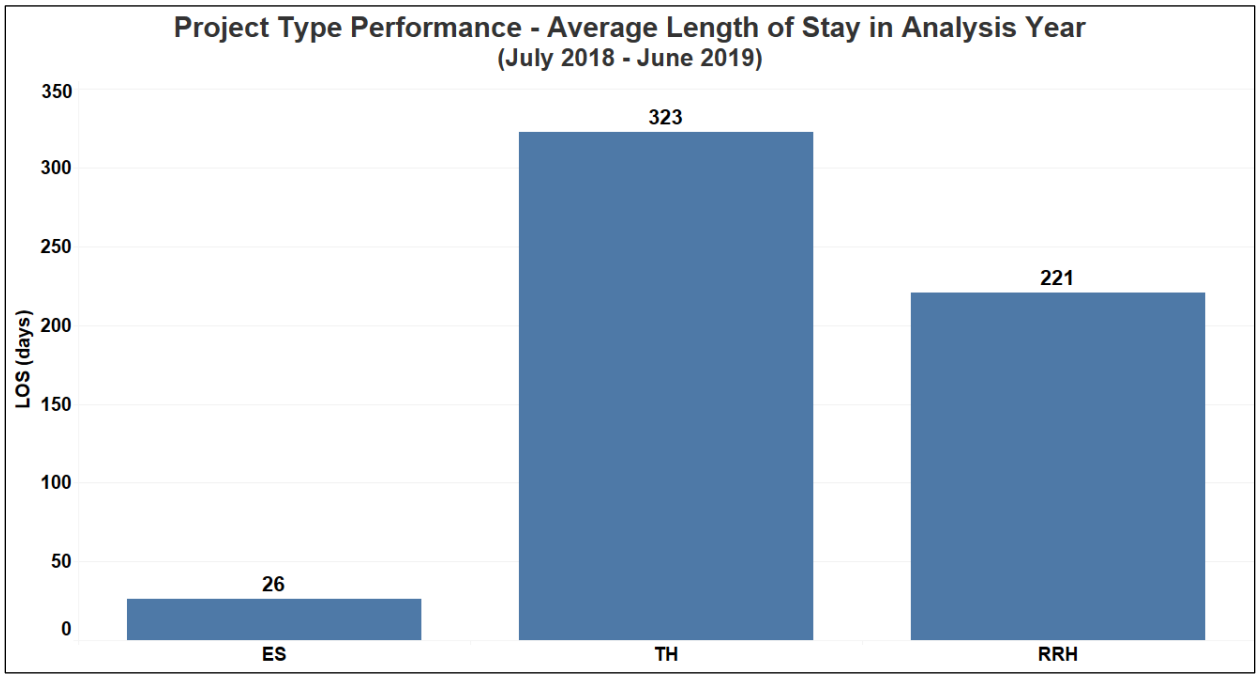
Achieving relatively short lengths of stay in emergency shelter, transitional housing, and rapid rehousing projects is essential to ending homelessness. Every day a person is homeless has an associated cost and reducing lengths of stay results in a higher rate of exit and a lower cost per exit, which in turn allows more people to be served. The HEARTH Act established a goal that no one is homeless longer than 30 days, although this aspiration has not been codified in any HUD requirements. To increase effectiveness and reduce homelessness, the entire system must strive for the shortest stays needed to reach this goal.

Length of stay in Santa Cruz County homeless projects was calculated based on the entry and exit dates for each project stay recorded in HMIS. Data in Figure 3 show that emergency shelters have an average length of stay below 30 days, which is optimal for system functioning. One caveat to this finding is that one large shelter records their data daily rather than using the more typical entry and exit method. Although Focus Strategies recoded the data to approximate begin and end dates for an episode, this might have led to shorter lengths of stay than actually happened (e.g., if a client missed a night in shelter, the data would show two shorter episodes rather one longer episode). Therefore, the overall average may be longer than the data suggest.

Transitional housing stays are the longest, with an average of 323 days. Rapid rehousing stays fare better at an average of 221 days. However, both project types show stays that are somewhat longer than the 120 to 180 days we typically recommend for communities striving to become a high performing system. Transitional housing projects are often designed with relatively long lengths of stay based on the assumption that longer stays allow households to develop the skills and resources they need to successfully secure housing upon exit. However, data from many communities shows that longer stays in transitional housing do not typically yield stronger outcomes.

The rapid rehousing length of stay is slightly long in relation to recommended best practices and may suggest that projects are not using a progressive engagement approach, in which participants receive an initial subsidy of 3 months, and then only receive additional assistance as needed, based on quarterly assessments. RRH that provides a longer initial period of assistance and does not use progressive engagement tends to have a longer average length of stay and does not necessarily have better rates of exit to permanent housing or lower returns to homelessness.

Figure 3. Length of Stay in Projects



4. Rate of Exit to Permanent Housing

While helping households exit shelter and transitional housing quickly is a key strategy to end homelessness, it also important to establish that they exit to stable, permanent housing rather than back to homelessness. The rate of exit to permanent housing is a very important metric and one that HUD has asked communities to report on for several years. The rate of exit to permanent housing measures the percentage of clients the project successfully moved into to a housed situation.

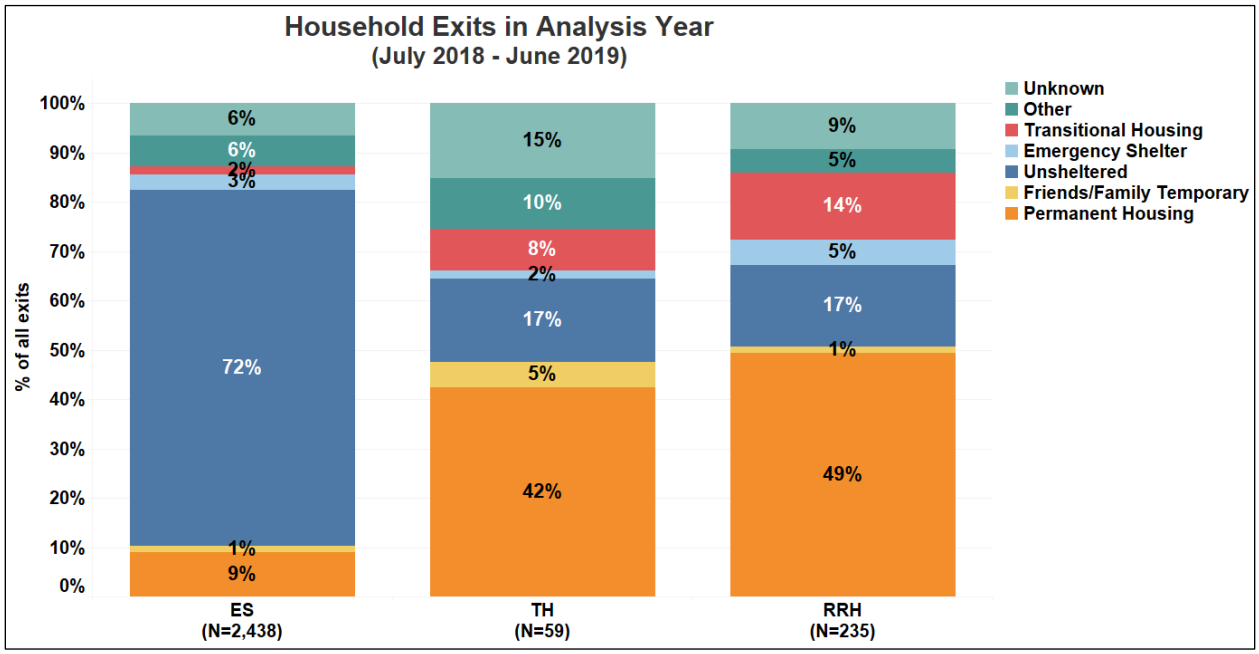
Figure 4 shows the rate of exit to permanent housing for all emergency shelter, transitional housing, and rapid rehousing projects in Santa Cruz County.[6] For this measure, "permanent housing" includes any housed situation that is not time-limited, such as a market rate apartment, a subsidized housing unit, shared housing with a roommate, or staying permanently with family or friends. The graph shows that the rate of exit to permanent housing for emergency shelters is 9%. This reflects fairly poor performance, particularly when considered in relationship to prior living situation at shelter entry. As noted in the data presented above, about 23% of people who enter shelters are coming from housed situations. Yet only 9% are leaving to permanent housing. This means that, as a system, shelters are effectively creating more homelessness. This again points to a need for strong shelter diversion practice, since it appears households entering shelter who have some sort of housing situation (including staying temporarily with families and friends) might have better outcomes if they received support to stay in place or move directly to alternative housing, rather than entering shelter where their chances of exiting to permanent housing are very low.

The results for transitional housing are better at 42% exiting to permanent housing, but still well below what would be expected in a high performing system or in relation to the 80% benchmark originally established by HUD. As discussed in the next section, emergency shelters and transitional housing are not cost-effective strategies to reduce homelessness in general, and low performance on the rate of exit further reduces cost effectiveness. We also note that the rapid rehousing rate is extremely low in relation to best practices in the field. The NAEH's standards for RRH suggest that an 80% rate of exit should be a target, but RRH in Santa Cruz County is only achieving a 49% rate of permanent housing exit.

[6] We do not include permanent supportive housing projects in this measure, since PSH is not intended as a time-limited intervention and is designed for people to stay as long as they require support. Participant exits from this housing type are frequently attributable to significant health occurrences requiring institutionalization or could reflect the death of the tenant.

One caveat about the rate of exit to permanent housing across all project types is that they have a high percentage of unknown destinations. If data were available for those exits, it would help to understand the full picture of where people go when leaving projects (e.g., Do more people exit to permanent housing than we think? Do more people exit to homelessness than we think?). The conclusion for efforts to increase permanent housing exits, however, would remain the same.

Figure 4. Rate of Exit to Permanent Housing

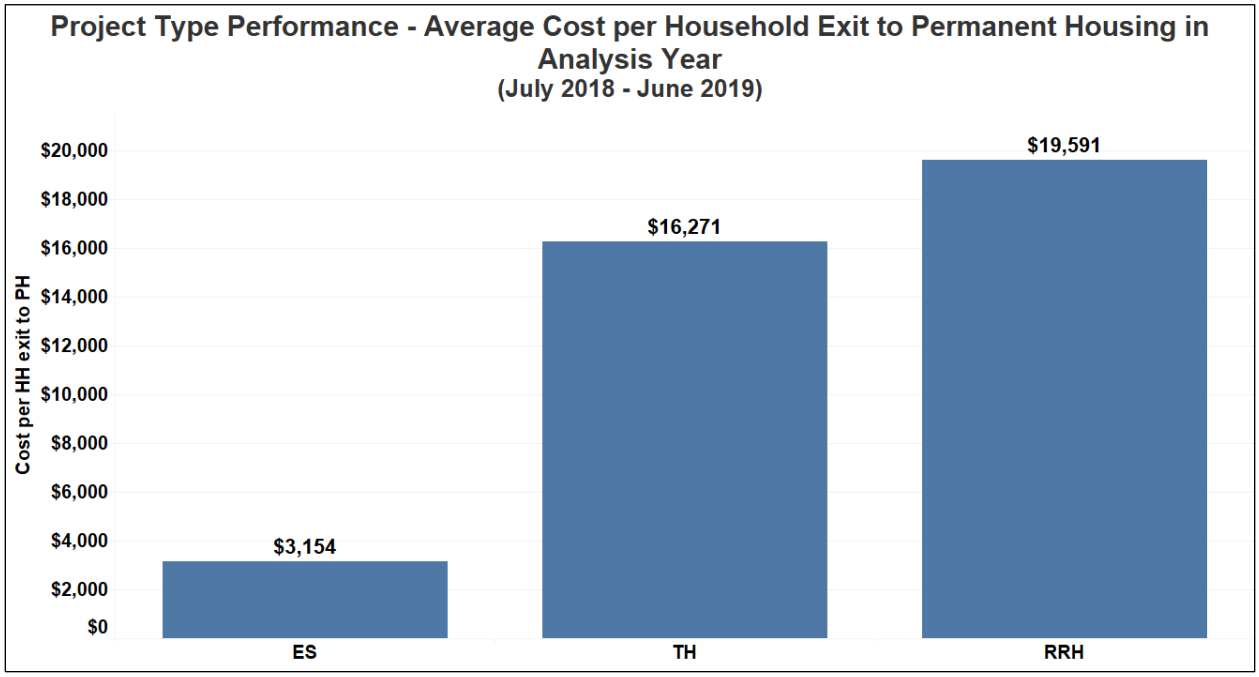


5. Cost Per Permanent Housing Exit

To create a more efficient system, it is essential that investments are aligned with the strategies and outcomes that are shown to meet the objective of ending homelessness. Cost per permanent housing exit is a key performance measure because it assesses whether a project is successful in helping clients move to permanent housing, in a cost-effective manner. As funds are shifted from expensive projects (that are not achieving the same rate of exits to permanent housing) to those that are more cost effective per household served, system capacity will increase and the numbers of people experiencing homelessness will be reduced.

Figure 5 shows the average cost per permanent housing exit for all project types. These calculations use the total project cost, utilization of beds/units, and household length of stay.[7] The average cost per permanent housing exit for transitional housing projects ($16,271) is lower than the average cost for rapid rehousing projects ($19,591). This is inconsistent with national averages, in which RRH typically is significantly less expensive per housing exit than transitional housing due to RRH's shorter lengths of stay and less intensive service model. The data also show emergency shelters are the least expensive, although the difference in magnitude may reflect our earlier comment that average lengths of stay in emergency shelters may be longer than the data indicate. Of course, cost is not the only critical performance measure and should be considered in relation to performance on all other measures.

Figure 5. Cost Per Permanent Housing Exit



NEXT STEPS

A summary of this data was presented to the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors in March 2020 as the initial step in the process of developing a Strategic Action Plan for a more coordinated and effective response to homelessness in Santa Cruz County. Immediately after

[7] The formula used to calculate Cost Per PH Exit is: (1) Calculate cost per bed night = total budget divided by number of bed nights used in HMIS data; (2) Multiply cost per bed night and length of stay to get household stay cost; (3) Average household stay cost for all households that exited to permanent housing.

that presentation, work on the Strategic Action Plan was paused as the community moved to focusing with urgency on responding to the impact of COVID-19 on people experiencing homelessness. When the Strategic Action Plan process resumes, this baseline performance data will be used to inform the development of strategies to improve the community's homelessness response. Taken in conjunction with the qualitative Baseline Assessment Report, this data points to a number of possible priorities for the Strategic Action Plan, such as the implementation of systemwide diversion to prevent unnecessary entries into homeless programs. This baseline data set also provides a foundation from which to conduct predictive modeling to measure the likely impact of a range of different strategies. For example, this data can help the community weigh the relative impacts of adding new emergency shelter beds versus adding more robust services to existing shelters to improve their ability to help people exit to permanent housing (or some combination of the two strategies). This data also provides a baseline from which the community can set targets for improved performance, taking into consideration local context and resources. These targets can be integrated into the Strategic Plan, along with specific action steps for meeting them.

APPENDIX A: PROJECTS INCLUDED IN THE PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

Table 1 shows all projects included in the analysis with their organization name and project type as represented on the 2019 HIC.

Appendix A Table 1. Projects Included in the Performance Analysis

Organization Name	Project Name (from HIC)	Project Type
Association of Faith Communities	Rotating Shelter	Emergency Shelter
Encompass Community Services	Housing for Health 2	Permanent Supportive Housing
	Housing for Health 3	Permanent Supportive Housing
	River Street Shelter	Emergency Shelter
	Perlman House (SCAP TH)	Transitional Housing
	Freedom Cottage	Permanent Supportive Housing
Families in Transition	WTW/HSP Training	Rapid Rehousing
	Santa Cruz County Planning	Rapid Rehousing
	Leaps and Bounds	Rapid Rehousing
	HOME TBRA Rapid Rehousing	Rapid Rehousing
	WTW/HSP Short Term	Rapid Rehousing
	ESG Rapid Rehousing - FIT	Rapid Rehousing
	First Step-Scattered Site Housing - Families w Children Exp.	Rapid Rehousing
	CHAMP HSC	Rapid Rehousing
	CHAMP FIT	Rapid Rehousing
	CHAMP	Rapid Rehousing
	Welfare-to-Work Short Term/Scholarship	Rapid Rehousing
Front Street, Inc.	HCHV/EH - Paget Center	Emergency Shelter
Homeless Persons Health Project	Bonus - Permanent Supportive Housing	Permanent Supportive Housing
	MATCH Housing	Permanent Supportive Housing
	Nuevo Sol	Permanent Supportive Housing
Homeless Services Center	Bringing Families Home	Rapid Rehousing
	SSVF - HSC	Rapid Rehousing
	Page Smith Community House	Transitional Housing
	Rebele Family Shelter	Emergency Shelter
	Recuperative Care Center	Emergency Shelter
	Paul Lee Loft Shelter	Emergency Shelter
Pajaro Valley Shelter Services	Sudden Street TH & Family TH	Transitional Housing
	Transitional Housing Annex	Transitional Housing
	Pajaro Valley Shelter	Emergency Shelter
Salvation Army	North County AFC Winter Shelter	Emergency Shelter
	South County Winter Shelter	Emergency Shelter
Santa Cruz County Housing Authority	Brommer St. TH	Transitional Housing
	S+C Program	Permanent Supportive Housing
	DMV voucher program	Permanent Supportive Housing

	New Roots YHDP	Permanent Supportive Housing
	VASH - Santa Cruz County Program	Permanent Supportive Housing
Santa Cruz VRC	SSVF - Veterans Resource Center Program	Rapid Rehousing

APPENDIX B: PRE-DATA CLEAN-UP SYSTEM PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT RESULTS

As explained in the body of the report, Focus Strategies used the Base Year Calculator (BYC) to analyze project, project level, and system performance two times – once prior to provider data clean-up efforts and once following those efforts. This appendix presents the data prior to clean up. Although the data cleaning did not significantly impact performance results, we indicate those places where some differences were found.

A. Heads of Households Served in HMIS Participating Projects

Table 1 shows the original total number of unduplicated heads of households served in projects included in the analysis in Santa Cruz County between July 1, 2018 and June 30, 2019. ***The total number of households served in the reanalysis increased by 29% to 2,352***. The increase was driven primarily by an increased number of households reflected as being served in the winter shelter. The proportions of each age group remained essentially the same.

Appendix B Table 1. Unduplicated Heads of HHs Included in the Performance Analysis

Total Unduplicated Heads of Households		1,823	
		#	%
Age	Adults 25+	1,633	90%
	TAY 18 - 24	119	7%
	Children	10	<1%
	Missing	61	3%

Tables 2 and 3 show the unduplicated number of head of households served in the same timeframe by project type. ***The total number of households served in shelter in the reanalysis increased by 35% to 1,712,*** again driven primarily by an increased number of households reflected as being served in the winter shelter. The proportions of each age group remained essentially the same.

Appendix B Table 2. Unduplicated Heads of HHs Performance Analysis of ES, TH, and RRH

Total Unduplicated Heads of Households		ES		TH		RRH	
		1,270		183		594	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
Age	Adults 25+	1,134	89	177	97	538	90
	TAY 18 - 24	68	5	6	3	53	9
	Children	7	<1	0	0	3	<1
	Missing	61	5	0	0	0	0

Appendix B Table 3. Unduplicated Heads of Households Included in the Performance Analysis of PSH

		PSH – Single Site		PSH – Scattered Site	
Total Unduplicated Heads of Households		18		201	
		#	%	#	%
Age	Adults 25+	18	100	198	99
	TAY 18 - 24	0	0	3	1
	Children	0	0	0	0
	Missing	0	0	0	0

B. HMIS Data Quality

As in the main body of the report, the pre-clean-up quality of the prior living situation HMIS data element is good for all project types except emergency shelters where 11% of entries are "unknown". Similarly, with respect to exit destination, exits from many project types are unknown, with year-round shelters at 27%. ***The single element where data clean-up efforts resulted in a significant data quality impact is in the 22% rate of missing exit destinations for seasonal shelters; after data clean up, the rate decreased by 91% to 2%.***

Appendix B Table 4. Missing and Unknown Prior Living and Exit Destination by Project Type

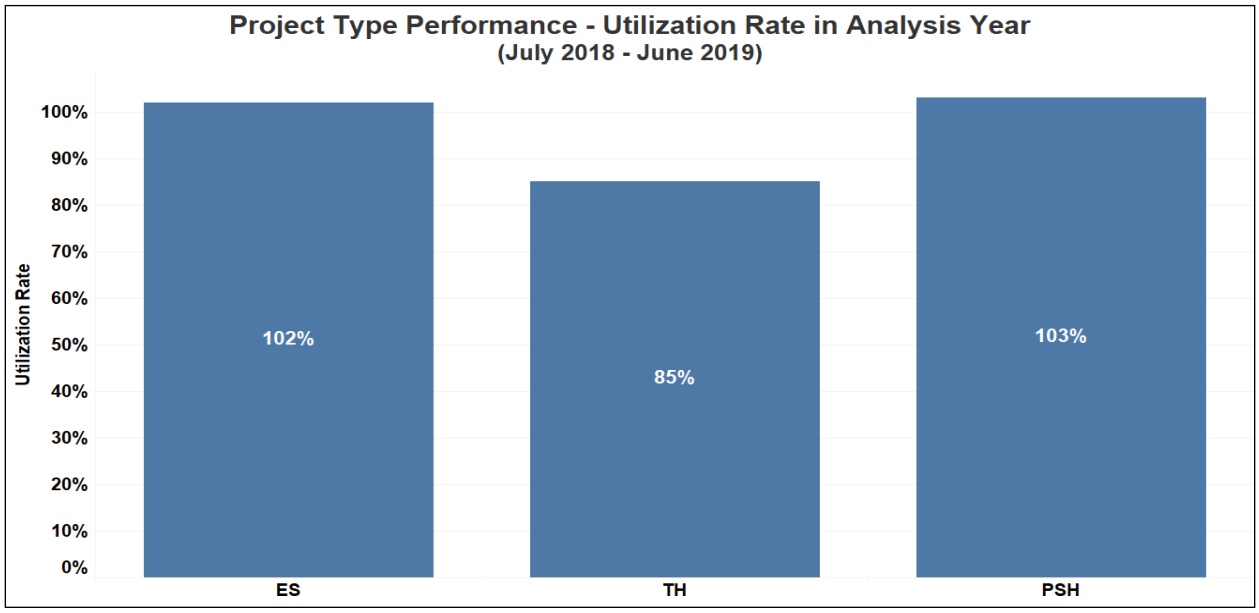
Missing/Unknown (% of all Households)						
Project Type	**Total Entries**	**% Missing Prior Living**	**% Unkn. Prior Living**	**Total Exits**	**% Missing Destination**	**% Unkn. Destination**
Emergency Shelter – Yr Round	566	0%	11%	558	0%	27%
Emergency Shelter – Seasonal	1,927	2%	3%	1722	22%	0%
Transitional Housing	66	0%	3%	54	0%	19%
Rapid Rehousing	261	0%	1%	210	0%	12%
PSH – Single Site	1	0%	0%	0	No exits	No exits
PSH – Scattered Site	41	0%	0%	43	0%	35%
Total	2,862	1%	5%	2,587	14%	8%

C. System Performance

1. Bed and Unit Utilization Rate (UR)

Figure 1 illustrates that the UR for transitional housing projects appears somewhat low at 85%. While emergency shelter and permanent supportive housing (single site) are fully utilized. Utilization rates over 100% are likely related to data quality issues. ***In the reanalysis of these data, the UR for shelters showed a significant decline (down 13% for a UR of 89%).***

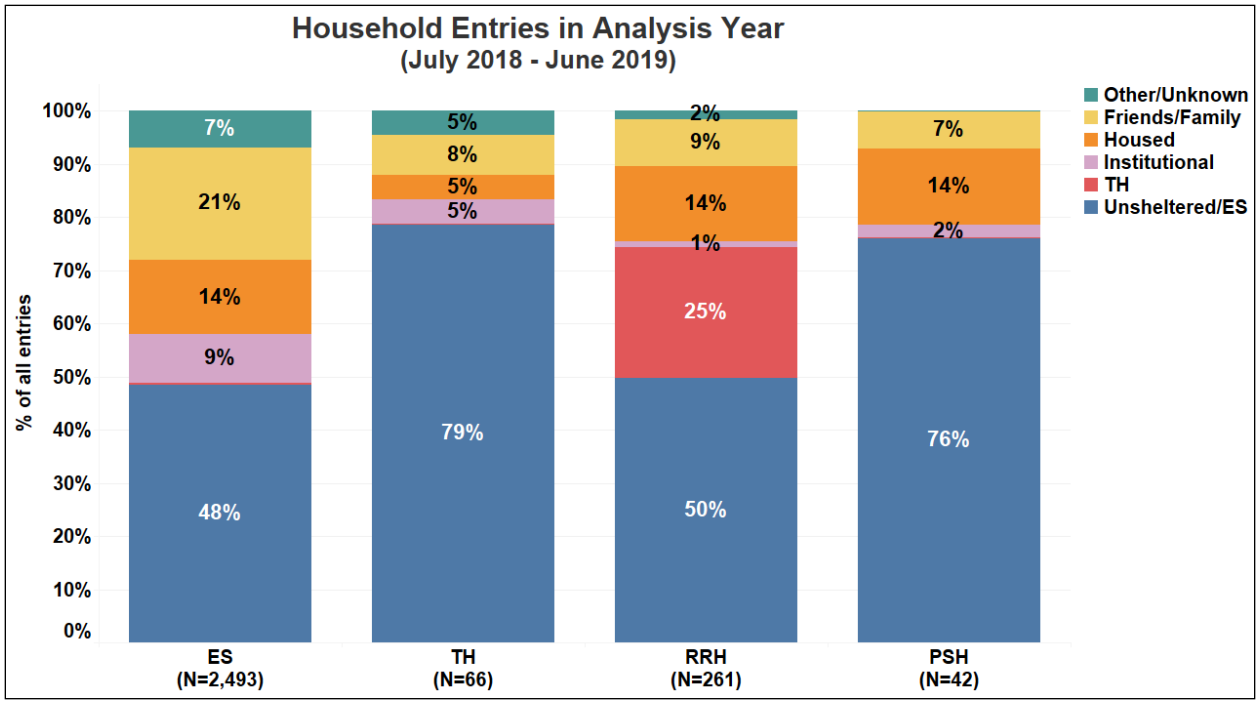
Appendix B Figure 1. Utilization Rate by Project Type



2. Entries from Homelessness

Figure 2 shows prior living situations for households entering emergency shelter, transitional housing, rapid rehousing, and permanent supportive housing from the initial analysis. ***After data clean up, entries from literal homelessness increased somewhat for shelter (up 8% to 52%), rapid rehousing (up 6% to 53%), and permanent supportive housing (up 11% to 84%).***

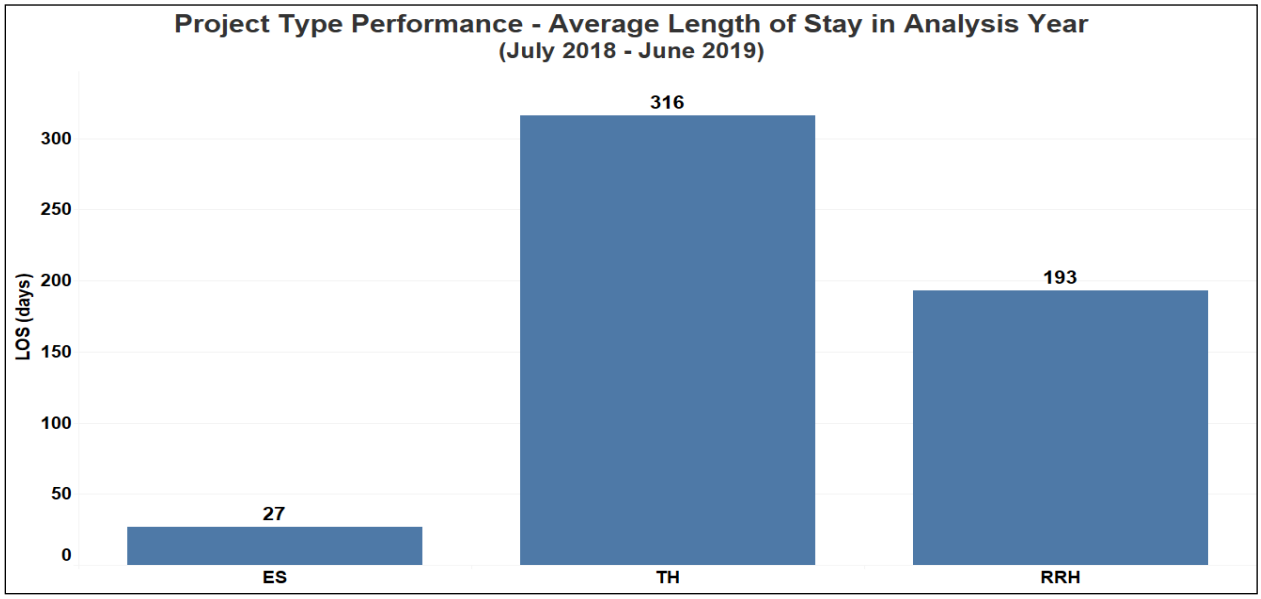
Appendix B Figure 2. Project Entries from Homelessness



3. Lengths of Stay

Figure 3 illustrates length of stay by project type. ***Post-data clean-up analysis for lengths of stay for transitional housing showed a small increase (2% up to 323 days) and length of stay for rapid rehousing showed a 15% increase (up to 221 days).***

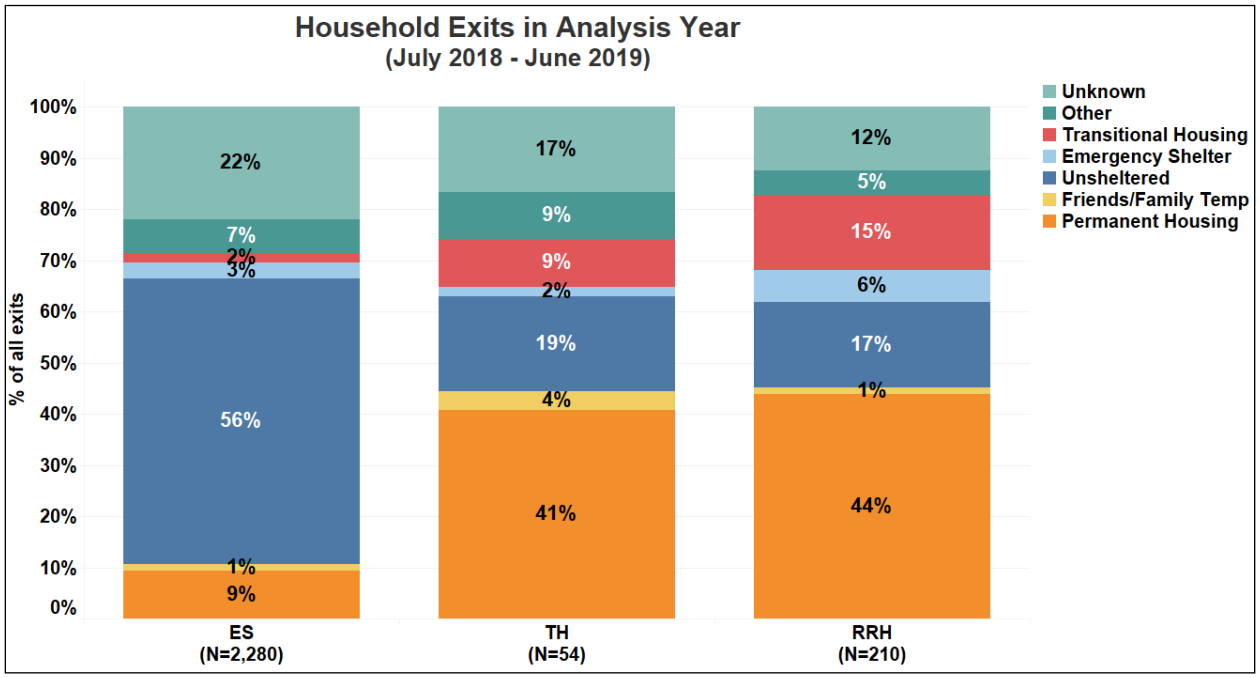
Appendix B Figure 3. Length of Stay in Projects



4. Exits to Permanent Housing

Figure 4 shows the rate of exit to permanent housing for all emergency shelter, transitional housing, and rapid rehousing projects in the original analysis. ***After data clean up, exits to permanent housing from rapid rehousing showed an increase (up 11% to 49%).***

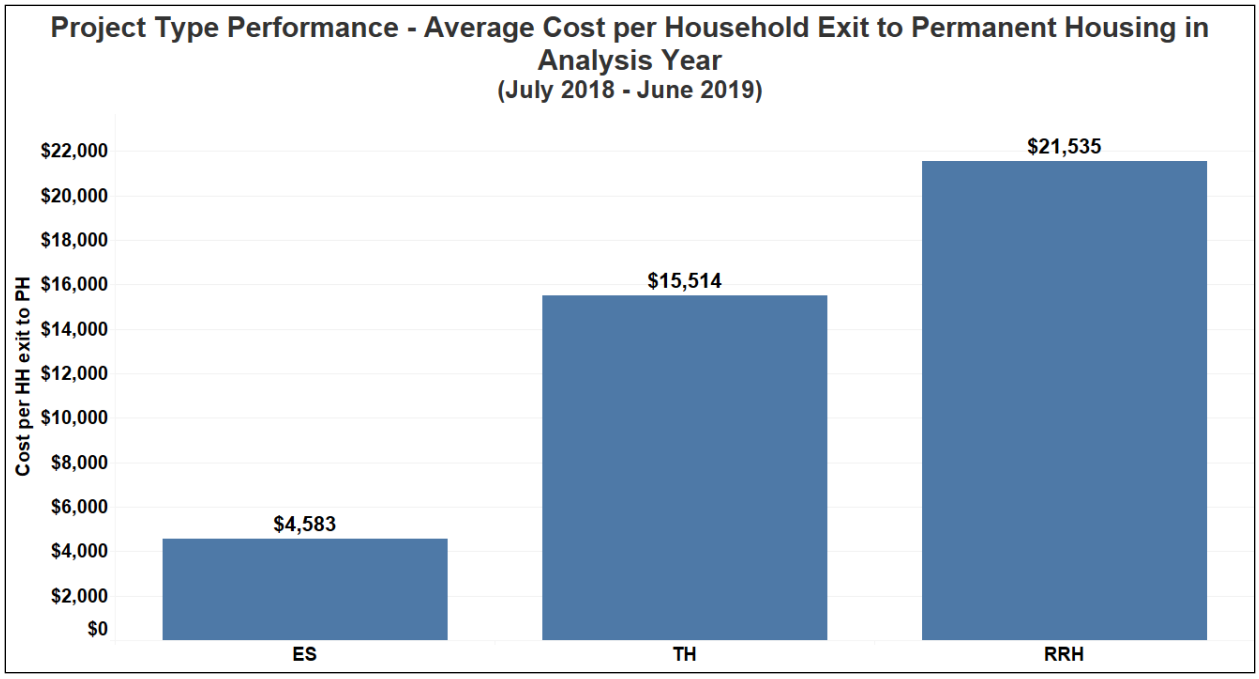
Appendix B Figure 4. Rate of Exit to Permanent Housing



5. Cost Per Exit to Permanent Housing

Figure 5 shows the average cost per permanent housing exit for all project types from the original analysis. We noted that the typical finding is that transitional housing is more expensive per permanent housing exit than rapid rehousing is. This does not appear to be the case in Santa Cruz County. After the data-clean up, the same pattern of cost held, although the difference between the two intervention types was smaller. ***Between the pre- and post-data clean up, cost per permanent housing exit increased for transitional housing (up 5% to $16,271) and decreased for rapid rehousing (down 9% to $19,591).***

Appendix B Figure 5. Cost Per Permanent Housing Exit



APPENDIX C: KEY ISSUES IDENTIFIED IMPACTING DATA AVAILABILITY AND QUALITY

As noted in the main body of the report, in October and November 2019, Focus Strategies produced performance reports presenting results for each individual project included in the BYC analysis, and then met with each service provider to discuss their set of reports. The purpose of the individual meetings was to understand project operations and workflow, surface and answer provider questions about their data, and provide guidance useful for cleaning up data quality. Several data quality concerns were identified during these meetings, including inaccurate/missing client entries and exits, inaccurate/missing prior living/destination data, incorrect project type set-up in HMIS, incorrect bed/unit information on the HIC, and potential duplicated entries by multiple providers. This appendix summarizes the main issues discussed. Some may have begun to be addressed during the data clean-up phase. However, most, if not all, warrant further attention.

HIC Errors and HIC-HMIS Inconsistencies

In the Santa Cruz CoC, the HIC is maintained outside of HMIS by Tony Gardner Consulting. On an annual basis, a request is made for each project to provide all HUD required data elements, which are then transmitted to HUD. In a separate process, the HMIS team sets up new projects in HMIS for data entry at the request of new projects coming on-line. Since these two processes are conducted independently the HIC and HMIS are not consistent with each other. Specific issues resulting from having two separate processes are:

- Projects are set up in HMIS incorrectly (e.g., wrong project type, emergency shelters set up incorrectly - bed night entry vs entry exit)
- Projects are on the HIC but missing from HMIS
- The HIC reflects different project capacity (number of beds and units) than HMIS does

Recommendation: Focus Strategies recommends that CTA begin maintaining the data elements required for the HIC in HMIS and that the HIC be pulled from HMIS on an annual basis for reporting to HUD. Following this recommendation would align the CoC with best practices as suggested by HUD[8] and minimize inconsistencies in information. A process is also needed to ensure all information remains correct and up-to-date.

[8] https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/HMIS-Data-Standards-Manual.pdf; https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/LSA-Commonly-Asked-Questions.pdf

Data Entry Oversights, Errors, and Inconsistencies

Table 1 contains the primary issues we encountered across multiple providers as they pertain to the quality of their data. The table also indicates the performance measure impacted by the issue.

Appendix C Table 1. Reported Data Issues and Impact on Performance Measures

Issue	Performance Measure(s) Impacted
Clients not entered/exited	Number of Households Served Utilization Rate Project Entries from Homelessness Lengths of Stay in Projects Rate of Exit to Permanent Housing Cost per Permanent Housing Exit
Prior living situation – not entered	Project Entries from Homelessness
Prior living situation– response definitions misunderstood	Project Entries from Homelessness
Exit Destinations – not entered	Rate of Exit to Permanent Housing
Exit Destinations – response definitions misunderstood	Rate of Exit to Permanent Housing Cost per Permanent Housing Exit
Housing move in date – not being used consistently/accurately	Lengths of Stay in Projects

As the HMIS administrator, CTA is responsible for ensuring data quality in HMIS. It is important to respond to provider questions and misunderstandings (as they are reflected in questionable data) by providing training and additional assistance to improve the data quality. In meeting with providers, we heard several questions about the meaning of specific data elements and when to code things certain ways (e.g., "What question should you ask to determine the answer to document for "prior living"?" and "How do you know if an exit destination is going to be permanent or temporary?"). It is problematic that we also heard several different interpretations for questions like this, suggesting that the data being entered into HMIS is not consistent across provider entities.

Recommendation: The provider community is in need of common definitions and standards for HMIS that they help to develop and are well trained on. One approach for moving forward with this recommendation is to develop a Data Performance Review and Reporting Workgroup. The purview of this group would be to review data reports on a regular basis and raise questions and solicit input about the meaning of measures and outcomes. This would support the identification of areas that need further explication and training. The

group could also be helpful in defining customized HMIS reports that would help providers monitor key outcomes and data elements.

The Data Performance Review and Reporting Workgroup might also be instrumental in brainstorming, developing, and implementing approaches to reduce the proportion of "unknown" destination data (one of the largest data quality issues found). Some suggested strategies to explore include:

- Training all staff on the importance of entering exit destinations and collecting it when people leave projects.
    - This is particularly true for rapid rehousing, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing, from which clients are less likely to disappear.
- Updating the exit destination in HMIS when it is later learned where a client went.
    - In the case where clients disappear from projects (i.e., emergency shelter) it may be possible to learn from elsewhere in the system where they went (e.g., other case managers or in other projects in HMIS).
    - Clients may also return to the project at which time they can provide their exit destination.
- Identifying projects of the same type that successfully capture exit destination data.
    - Support inter-provider learning whereby successful strategies can be shared and implemented across project types.