



# Support Card Overview

All Home created the Support Card to help guide and evaluate local governments' efforts to make their homelessness response systems as effective as possible. As detailed in the [Regional Action Plan](#), cities and counties navigate incredibly complex administrative processes to coordinate federal, state, and local homelessness programs and funding. Using the Support Card will improve coordination between jurisdictions, across relevant departments, and among stakeholders. This tool is designed to foster mutual accountability, ensure efficient use of resources, and improve outcomes for people experiencing homelessness.

Core Elements	Guiding Principles	Evaluative Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership</li> <li>• Coordination</li> <li>• Accountability</li> <li>• Resources</li> </ul>	<p>Effective public administration principles that describe policies, programs, and practices that should be implemented under each of the Core Elements.</p>	<p>Each guiding principle also has one or more evaluative questions associated with it—yes or no questions to help local governments assess their progress.</p>

## **About the Core Elements**

**Leadership** and political will are necessary to establish homelessness as a top priority for funding and policy-making. The next step is to develop an actionable strategic plan and wield or delegate authority to implement and update that plan over time. This requires commitment and courage from elected and administrative leaders, as certain necessary decisions and tradeoffs may be unpopular with some who are accustomed to the status quo.

**Coordination** involves developing the organizational structures within government that are necessary to align policies, funding, and programs across jurisdictions and departments. As much as possible, decision-making processes should involve nongovernmental stakeholders, such as service providers and individuals with lived experience of homelessness.

**Accountability** means creating and implementing a strategic plan with meaningful outcomes and clear oversight roles to monitor progress. Those with an oversight role should have the access and ability to track results, and the authority to trigger a course correction if meaningful outcomes are not being achieved. To the extent possible, local governments should align their plans with federal and state policy objectives.

**Resources** means deploying public resources with maximum efficiency to reduce homelessness. That includes leveraging funding, budgets, and real estate property holdings to strengthen the homelessness response system, improve program outcomes, and address housing and supportive service needs.

## **All Home partners with local governments to put the Support Card into action**

All Home offers pro bono technical assistance to Bay Area counties and cities seeking to strengthen their homelessness planning and coordination efforts. Our team meets your jurisdiction where you are, assesses relevant policies and practices, and works alongside your team to implement the Support Card principles. A county or city might be starting in one of these three situations:

- **Limited Structure** (policies, funding, and programming are uncoordinated and often siloed within a county);
- **Developing Structure** (informal structure with some policy direction, but significant gaps exist); or,
- **Established Structure** (robust structure for coordinating policies, funding, and programming within a county)

Regardless of where your jurisdiction begins, we commit to diligently working with your team to fully implement all four Core Elements, so that you can improve your homelessness response system for the benefit of your residents—both housed and unhoused.

## **Looking Ahead**

We will update the Support Card periodically, and welcome input from local government partners about ways to strengthen the tool or improve policies around planning and coordination. Next steps may include adding model policies and practices in place around the region, and building out an evaluative assessment of the region using this framework.

Contact mail to: [technicalassistance@allhomeca.org](mailto:technicalassistance@allhomeca.org) with any questions or suggestions.

**Core Element: Leadership**

Guiding Principles	Descriptions	Evaluative Questions
<p><b>Establish legislative policy priorities</b></p>	<p>Legislative bodies set the "tone at the top" in their organizations. When housing and homelessness are established as top priorities, such commitments will be reflected in the budgeting process. A budget is an expression of commitments if reducing homelessness is an agreed-upon priority, then budget tradeoffs, even if politically unpopular, should be considered.</p>	<p>Has the Board of Supervisors or City Council incorporated housing and homelessness into its annual budgeting/priority-setting process?</p> <p>Has the Board of Supervisors or City Council made tradeoff considerations related to homelessness and housing and other core budget needs?</p> <p>Does the Board of Supervisors or County have evaluative criteria to consider the budget impacts of homelessness on core jurisdictional services including fire, police, public works, and parks?</p>
<p><b>Adopt a strategic plan</b></p>	<p>Legislative leaders should provide formal direction to administrative staff to develop and adopt homelessness policy plans with measurable objectives that indicate meaningful reductions in homelessness.</p>	<p>Has the City Council or Board of Supervisors adopted a strategic plan to increase housing opportunities for people with extremely low incomes and to reduce homelessness?</p> <p>Has the City Council or Board of Supervisors identified the programs, practices, and policies required to achieve meaningful, measurable outcomes?</p> <p>Has the Board of Supervisors or City Council adopted performance targets and established metrics to assess progress toward attaining goals and tracking the impact of homelessness solutions over time?</p>

## Core Element: Leadership

Guiding Principles	Descriptions	Evaluative Questions
<b>Minimize restrictive policies and procedures</b>	<p>Governments need to act with urgency to eliminate inefficiencies because the human toll caused by homelessness is tragic. Legislative leaders should direct county or city managers to undertake a thorough evaluation of internal policies and procedures, and identify any that impede efficiency in procurement, contracting, hiring, and housing development. Eliminating or reducing such policies and procedures will enable agencies to expeditiously acquire and deploy the resources and assets needed to prevent and end homelessness.</p>	<p>Has the City Council or Board of Supervisors taken action to identify and reduce administrative hurdles and expedite procedures associated with the homelessness reduction strategy (e.g. Emergency Declarations or other actions that waive certain procurement or hiring policies)?</p>
<b>Appoint administrative authority</b>	<p>Legislative leaders should provide direction and designate specific staff responsible for coordination, regular oversight, and implementation of homelessness policy plans. These staff should have the authority to hold people accountable for results across departments, e.g., crosscutting, rather than the vertical, hierarchical authority more common in government structures.</p>	<p>Has the City Council or Board of Supervisors designated an administrative staff leader to implement their policy direction, report results back to the legislative body, and hold others accountable for both adherence to the plan and desired outcomes?</p>

## Core Element: Coordination

Guiding Principles	Descriptions	Evaluative Questions
<b>Designate an executive leader accountable for coordination</b>	Multiple departments in a city or county can be involved in administering housing and homelessness programs. The city or county manager, or an appointee with sufficient authority, should play a direct role in overseeing the coordination of policy, funding, and programming across departments.	<p>Has the executive office designated an executive-level position to manage city or county-wide homelessness planning and programming?</p> <p>Does the executive leading the jurisdiction's homelessness response have a clearly defined role and responsibilities, with the authority to both direct and hold other executives accountable to agreed-upon objectives?</p> <p>If there is a history of preexisting, overlapping authorities amongst departments, have sufficient steps been taken to resolve potential conflicts?</p>
<b>Establish an interdepartmental coordination structure</b>	City and county managers should establish internal committees, such as interdepartmental task forces, that focus on the goal of reducing homelessness and improving coordination between departments. Every department that has a role to play should be represented, e.g., not just housing and services, but health, libraries, law enforcement, and animal services. All of these departments have been impacted and can play a role in advancing solutions.	<p>Is there a formal structure for convening key departments involved in administering housing and homeless services?</p> <p>Is the interdepartmental team convened by an executive-level manager with authority to provide direction across departments?</p>
<b>Engage service providers to inform policy</b>	Nonprofit service providers typically provide homelessness services to residents in need through city and county contracts. Cities and counties should be willing, collaborative partners with the providers who offer the services to residents. Providers' expertise and experience should be relied upon to shape policy planning, funding, and program administration.	<p>Is there a formal process or structure for the service provider community to inform budgeting, policy planning, and program coordination?</p>

**Core Element: Coordination**

Guiding Principles	Descriptions	Evaluative Questions
<p><b>Center the knowledge of people with lived experience</b></p>	<p>Local governments and service providers should be open to constructive feedback directly from residents who are attempting to or who have used city and county services. People with lived experience have an essential perspective to offer and cities and counties should formalize ways to incorporate the information that they bring to the table. Cities and counties should enact policies to ensure that people with lived experience are in decision-making positions, whether that be through appointed advisory boards or full-time policy and program management positions.</p>	<p>Are individuals with lived experience in decision-making roles with respect to policy, funding, and program administration?</p> <p>Has the jurisdiction established a process to train and support people with lived experience of homelessness or poverty to become part of the community's decision-making structure related to homelessness and housing?</p>
<p><b>Coordinate across city and county boundaries</b></p>	<p>Homelessness crosses geographic borders and requires coordination between counties and the cities within their jurisdiction. Much like intra-county or city coordination, similar structures need to be in place that enable program coordination, resource sharing, and alignment in strategic planning across jurisdictions.</p>	<p>Is there a formal committee that convenes representatives from the county and all cities to focus on the goal of reducing homelessness?</p> <p>Is there a regular convening of county and city staff responsible for homelessness policy, funding, and program administration?</p> <p>Is there a countywide homelessness strategic plan adopted by the county and all cities in the county?</p>

## Core Element: Accountability

Guiding Principles	Descriptions	Evaluative Questions
<b>Establish measurable goals</b>	While most federal and state grant programs include performance measures, most local governments do not use these metrics as a form of accountability. Local governments should adopt a set of high-level measures that are regularly monitored, reported publicly, and evaluated to ensure continuous quality or improvement of service delivery. Metrics should be reviewed and occasionally adjusted to optimize outcomes.	<p>Does the city or county's homelessness strategic plan include measurable goals for reducing homelessness and increasing exits to housing within an established time?</p> <p>Is there a performance tracking system in place to assess strategic plan implementation and system outcomes?</p> <p>Are local governments tracking data about outcomes (e.g., housing retention) and not just outputs (e.g., clients served)?</p>
<b>Clearly identify roles and responsibilities</b>	Multiple agencies and departments bear responsibility for administering homelessness programs. Jurisdictions should have a plan that identifies the role each agency and department plays within the response system. Specific coordination requirements among agencies and departments should be clearly identified (e.g., outreach and site coordination, housing development, coordination and delivery of services, etc.).	<p>Does the strategic plan identify specific roles and responsibilities for all participating departments?</p> <p>Does the strategic plan establish oversight roles with countywide authority to take corrective action and assign roles and responsibilities among departments?</p>
<b>Regularly evaluate and share progress</b>	A homelessness response system should assess its success based on progress toward strategic goals, especially reductions in homelessness. By establishing clear system performance measures, a jurisdiction can evaluate its investments and outcomes consistently and in real-time.	<p>Is there a formal structure for periodic reporting on system performance measures (e.g. a standing agenda report to the Board of Supervisors or City Council)?</p> <p>Is there a publicly available dashboard that illustrates progress on goals?</p> <p>Are county or city staff required to take corrective action or revise policies and resource decisions when there is insufficient progress in meeting homelessness goals?</p>

## Core Element: Accountability

Guiding Principles	Descriptions	Evaluative Questions
<b>Reduce racial disparities</b>	Decades of systemic racism and exclusionary policies have led to a disproportionate representation of certain populations in the unhoused population. An equitable reduction in homelessness will necessarily target those who are currently underserved by existing services. A homelessness response system should identify these disparities both in the unsheltered population and in the program outcomes, and develop targeted policies to eliminate them.	<p>Does the strategic plan describe the jurisdiction's population of Extremely Low Income (ELI) households, and the racial composition of the ELI and unhoused population relative to the general population?</p> <p>Does the strategic plan identify how programming and resources will be targeted to reduce racial disparities among people who are unhoused or at risk of becoming homeless?</p>
<b>Develop cultural competency</b>	People experiencing homelessness have diverse identities, backgrounds, and challenges. The situation that leads a person down a path that results in homelessness is unique to that individual. A culturally competent homelessness response system should be equipped to deal with these differences, ensure that services are accessible and equitable for people from all backgrounds, and investigate how to best accommodate the needs of those individuals and the specific barriers they face.	<p>Are translation and interpretation services available that reflect the community's language needs?</p> <p>Do city or county policies require cultural competency and trauma-informed care training for staff involved in the homelessness response system?</p> <p>Are there hiring policies to ensure that staff reflect the communities served by the system?</p>



## Core Element: Resources

Guiding Principles	Descriptions	Evaluative Questions
<b>Inventory system capacity and estimate unmet housing and service needs</b>	Local governments use strategic plans to assess the current capacity of their homelessness response system, identify opportunities for improvement, and establish measurable program outcomes. Plans should identify unmet housing needs and project the number of targeted prevention, interim housing, and permanent housing solutions, and other core services that need to be funded to meet the goals of the strategic plan.	<p>Does the plan assess the current capacity of the homelessness response system? (e.g. the number of shelter, interim, and permanent housing units in inventory, number of households served through prevention, outreach, etc.)</p> <p>Does the strategic plan identify how many of each type of housing intervention (i.e., units, rental subsidies, etc.) are required to reach established goals?</p>
<b>Identify financial need</b>	Local governments should identify the projected costs associated with the inventory needed to achieve their strategic plan goals. This financial planning can inform the budgeting process and help to develop a funding strategy that can leverage federal, state, and local funding programs.	<p>Does the strategic plan estimate the costs of additional housing and services needed to achieve the strategic plan goals?</p>
<b>Reflect policy priorities in budgeting decisions</b>	<p>A budget is a moral document that reflects how a community is investing in its top priorities. If homelessness is a top priority, local governments may need to reappropriate funding from other public programs into housing and homelessness.</p> <p>In addition, the inventory and financial needs identified in the strategic plan should be used to inform the budgeting process and ensure that financial resources are appropriately mapped to achieve strategic plan goals.</p>	<p>Does the strategic plan include a budget analysis that examines how to braid and optimally leverage all federal, state, and local funding for the array of homelessness interventions?</p> <p>Does the budgeting process consider how funding from other public programs could be reappropriated to advance the goals of the strategic plan?</p> <p>Do the inventory and financial projections for each intervention in the strategic plan inform the budgeting process?</p>

## Core Element: Resources

Guiding Principles	Descriptions	Evaluative Questions
<p><b>Assess the workforce capacity of local governments and service providers</b></p>	<p>Local governments cannot tackle the complex problem of reducing homelessness without an adequately staffed and appropriately trained workforce, including the nonprofits contracted to provide direct services. Local governments should analyze the staffing and financial resources needed to build out the capacity of their homelessness response system and achieve strategic plan objectives. This analysis should evaluate contracting policies to ensure that service providers are being paid in a timely way and receiving appropriate rates to cover administrative overhead and living wages for staff.</p>	<p>Has there been a countywide assessment of workforce and service provider capacity? (e.g. identifying appropriate allocations for living wages and administrative overhead, expanding equitable access to small and minority-led nonprofits, frontloading and expediting contractor payments, etc.)</p> <p>If gaps have been identified, has a plan been developed to adequately address staffing needs?</p>
<p><b>Conduct a comprehensive property assessment</b></p>	<p>A jurisdiction may own a wide array of properties with potential for development to meet housing inventory needs. An assessment of all publicly held properties and their potential uses will help expedite development when funding becomes available.</p>	<p>Is there a countywide homelessness siting plan that identifies surplus, vacant, and underutilized property that can be used toward housing and homelessness? If so:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Does it include city-owned property?</li> <li>- Does it include property owned by other public entities (e.g., transportation agencies, water districts, state agencies, etc.)?</li> <li>- Does it include privately owned land that may be used for housing and homelessness? (e.g. faith-based organizations, nonprofits, philanthropists, business community, etc.)</li> </ul>