



Homelessness & Safety in California Talking Points JULY 2022

GLOBAL HOMELESSNESS CRISIS WAS EXACERBATED BY COVID-19

- Homelessness is a global issue that affects people of all ages and walks of life in both developed and developing countries.
- [According](#) to Habitat for Humanity, 1 in 5 people lack adequate housing around the world.
 - One in four people live in harmful conditions to their health, safety and prosperity.
 - About 40% of the world's population – 3 billion people – will need access to adequate housing by 2030.
- The pre-existing crisis was worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic that upended economies, closed businesses, cut jobs and shut down schools, leaving many people with nowhere else to turn.
- As the world began to recover from the COVID-19 crisis, the first months of 2022 brought new challenges – elevated global inflation, lingering supply-chain disruption and soaring fuel prices – that continue to widen equity gaps and disadvantage our most vulnerable.
- The complex causes and experiences of homelessness require complex, multifaceted care, responses and solutions.

CALIFORNIA TAKING AN ALL-HANDS APPROACH TO CHALLENGES

- California is doing more than ever before to address street conditions in the state, focusing on helping those in need while improving the experience for visitors and residents.
- The state has invested billions in Project Homekey, Project Roomkey and other initiatives.
- Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Diego, Sacramento and other urban areas are building programs to increase mental health care and address other root causes of homelessness.

- Addressing the issues of housing costs, housing instability and homelessness continues to be a [key priority](#) for the state of California.
 - [Project Roomkey](#), established during the pandemic to allow hotels to provide immediate housing to individuals experiencing homelessness, has created 8,000 units and served 50,000 individuals.
 - Project Homekey, which allows permanent acquisition of lodging properties for long-term housing for those without shelter, has created 10,000 permanent units across the state.
 - Most recently, a \$308 billion state budget includes historic funding for services and supports for individuals who are experiencing homelessness. The budget includes:
 - \$1.5 billion to expand behavioral health housing for individuals with complex behavioral needs;
 - \$34 million to provide transitional housing and services to youth who were formerly in the foster care system or on probation;
 - \$1 billion for cities, counties, and local entities to create plans to address their homelessness challenges in ways that best meet local needs.

TRAVEL RESPONSIBLY AND SAFELY IN CALIFORNIA

- California is no exception to the homelessness and housing crisis facing our society today.
- Although elected officials, community organizations, law enforcement and other entities across the state are committed to making California a safe place for all, visitors may see and encounter homeless individuals and encampments in California, particularly in urban areas.
- California is a safe destination for all tourists, and the hospitality industry is committed to creating a safe and memorable experience for all visitors.
- Regardless of where and when visitors are traveling, it's always advised to exercise common-sense safety precautions:
 - Research local conditions and neighborhoods to plan for travel.
 - Ask hotel, restaurant or accommodations staff for guidance, including where it's safest to walk, the best transportation options and after-dark precautions.
 - Remain vigilant and keep belongings close.
 - Practice the buddy system – stay with friends, family and other travelers – when possible.
 - Save local emergency numbers and lodging contact information in case of emergencies.
 - Avoid carrying and displaying large sums of money or valuables.
 - Take a taxi/Uber/Lyft when traveling far distances after dark.

CALIFORNIA COMMUNITIES STEP UP SOLUTIONS AND BEST PRACTICES

- Cities, counties and critical allies across the state are coming together to address homelessness, housing and economic insecurity.
- Many county and city leaders have launched their own plans to address homelessness.

Sacramento

- In July 2022, construction began on 644 units of affordable housing in Sacramento.
- The city also will [soon open](#) the West Coast's first hospice to house terminally ill people experiencing homelessness.

San Francisco Bay Area

- San Francisco's Homelessness Recovery Plan has committed to acquiring or leasing 1,500 new units of permanent supportive housing and expanding shelter options for people living outdoors.
- Alongside the city's recovery plan, the San Francisco Homeless Outreach Team works to engage and stabilize the most vulnerable individuals by voluntarily placing them into shelter and housing while connecting them with relevant resources.
- Various initiatives are addressing street conditions – CleanCorridorsSF, Shine on SF, Connected Worker Program, Downtown Streets Teams and more.

Los Angeles

- The [Los Angeles County Homeless Initiative](#) is Los Angeles County's ongoing effort to expand and enhance services for people experiencing homelessness or at risk of losing their homes.
 - Since 2017, the initiative has permanently housed over 78,000 people and over 100,000 people were sheltered in interim housing.
- In March 2018, the City of Los Angeles [launched](#) its first Homeless Help Desk – a permanent, welcoming space where Angelenos experiencing homelessness can access information on nearby shelters, hygiene stations, free meals and medical assistance.

San Diego

- San Diego has recently opened [new shelters](#), [hired a national expert to aid in focusing the City's homeless policy](#) and [housed hundreds](#).
- The “Bridge to Home” [program](#) has allocated \$32 million to build affordable housing.
- The new People Assisting the Homeless (PATH) program sends a coordinated team of caseworkers assigned to neighborhoods to build rapport and trust with the homeless community and provide relevant care.