



# **HOMELESSNESS COORDINATION: EXPANDING OUTREACH, STRENGTHENING GRANT OVERSIGHT, AND ALIGNING PERFORMANCE GOALS CAN IMPROVE THE CITY'S RESPONSE**

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A Report from the City Auditor

Issued October 2025

<http://www.sanjoseca.gov/auditor>

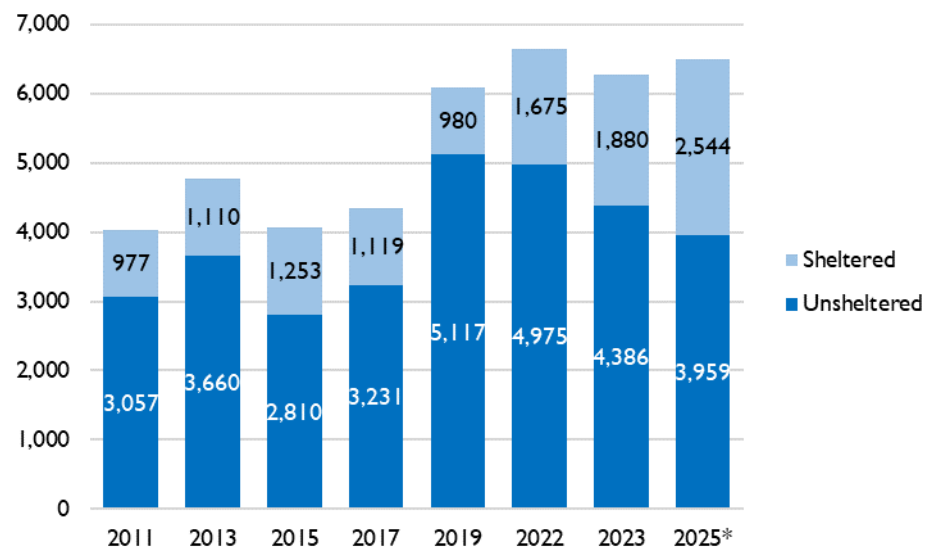
Presenters:      Joe Rois, City Auditor  
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October 28, 2025 City Council Agenda Item 3.3

## Background

- Homelessness continues to be a top concern for San José residents
- Preliminary results from the 2025 Point-in-Time (PIT) Count placed San José's total homeless population at 6,503
- There are limited resources across the housing continuum, from outreach workers to interim housing to affordable housing opportunities

**Point-in-Time Counts for San José's Homeless Population**



Source: Auditor summary of city point-in-time counts

\*2025 point-in time counts based on preliminary results

## Background

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In June 2024, Council directed our office to conduct an audit related to the City's efforts around homelessness

*Explore San José's internal departmental structure related to homelessness response including but not limited to cleanups, abatements, lived-in vehicles, biowaste, jurisdictional issues pertaining to land ownership, access to County/State services, etc.*

- i. Assess coordination of activities across City departments, the County, and the City's service providers*
- ii. Benchmark how other jurisdictions and municipalities are addressing homelessness outside of the housing first/permanent supportive housing models*

## Background

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- Many departments are involved directly or indirectly with the City's homelessness response
- For FY 2025-26, the City budgeted \$151.5 million for homelessness programs
- City maintains agreements with multiple regional partners to coordinate responses to homelessness
- The regional Continuum of Care is primarily administered by the County Office of Supportive Housing

### *City priorities in its homelessness response:*

- *Increasing shelter production*
- *Maintaining high interim shelter utilization*
- *Abating and enforcing no encampment zones in waterways*
- *Reducing Tier 3 encampments*
- *Managing oversized and lived-in vehicles*

## Background

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- The City's structure mirrors other jurisdictions, with one central department/agency overseeing their homeless response
- All jurisdictions reported following the Housing First Model, with most making investments in shorter-term housing like transitional housing and safe parking
- While all jurisdictions had a Continuum of Care, the organizational structure varied
- Some jurisdictions have restrictions on camping in public and private spaces

### **Benchmarked Jurisdictions:**

City of San Diego  
City of Oakland  
City and County of San Francisco  
City of Portland  
City and County of Denver  
City of San Antonio  
City of Houston

## Finding I: The City Can Improve Interdepartmental Coordination and Communication

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- Because of limited resources, the City prioritizes outreach in pre-selected areas
- Unhoused residents outside of those areas may not receive services, even if subject to an abatement or when complying with the City's encampment policies
- SJ311 data was not used to inform Housing's outreach strategy

### **Recommendations:**

- Develop protocols to provide timely outreach for areas impacted by abatements and tow-away zones and reevaluate outreach prioritization.

## Finding I: The City Can Improve Interdepartmental Coordination and Communication (cont.)

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- Staff from many departments regularly engage with unhoused residents
- The City has not consistently responded to outreach requests from City staff or the public
- The City can better communicate expectations regarding its response to lived-in vehicles, including timelines for recovering personal belongings after towing

### **Recommendations (cont.):**

- Develop guidelines around information provided to unhoused residents by non-Housing staff.
- Provide SJ311 updates to residents even when a response is not possible.
- Improve communication around lived-in vehicles.

## Finding 2: Improved Monitoring and Defined Responsibilities Can Strengthen Homelessness Service Delivery

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- Housing can strengthen its grant oversight by developing clear protocols for site visits, desk reviews, and other activities
- Housing can also ensure consistent service provider performance evaluation by aligning individual agreement expectations with broader program goals
- Public Works provided maintenance at interim housing and safe parking sites, some of which may have been the responsibility of site operators

### **Recommendations:**

- Update grant oversight procedures to improve grant monitoring.
- Ensure consistency of performance targets in service provider agreements with City goals.
- Clarify maintenance responsibilities at the interim shelters and other facilities.



## Conclusion

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This report has nine recommendations to improve homelessness coordination and service delivery across the City.

We would like to thank all City departments that assisted in the audit.  
The audit report is available at [www.sanjoseca.gov/auditor](http://www.sanjoseca.gov/auditor).

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