



DEPARTMENT OF
HOMELESSNESS AND
SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

Encampment Resolution Team San Francisco's Approach to Homeless Encampments

Jeff Kositsky

Director, Department of Homelessness and Supportive
Housing

Jeff.Kositsky@sfgov.org



Encampments in San Francisco: June 2016

2

- An encampment is defined as 1 or more tents or structure; a large encampment is 6 or more tents
- Encampments in San Francisco on 6/2016
 - 1 tent ~ 200
 - 2-5 tents ~ 40
 - 6-20 people ~ 30
 - 20+ people ~ 10
- Up to 1,200 people in tents/structures each night
 - 15% of homeless population
 - 25% of unsheltered population





Demographics:

Length of Homelessness

	Sheltered		Unsheltered	
	Count	% of Whole	Count	% of Whole
7 days or less	11	3%	19	3%
8-30 days	19	5%	33	5%
1-3 months	26	7%	44	6%
4-6 months	73	19%	92	13%
7-11 months	58	15%	76	11%
1 year	59	15%	74	10%
More than 1 year	142	37%	369	52%

Residency Prior to Homelessness

	Sheltered		Unsheltered	
	Count	% of Whole	Count	% of Whole
San Francisco	273	70%	476	67%
Alameda County	25	6%	34	5%
Contra Costa County	18	5%	15	2%
Marin County	7	2%	23	3%
Santa Clara County	2	1%	11	2%
San Mateo County	16	4%	22	3%
Other County in CA	23	6%	32	4%
Out of State	20	5%	92	13%
Data not collected	5	1%	10	1%

Race

	Sheltered		Unsheltered	
	Count	% of Whole	Count	% of Whole
American Indian or Alaska Native	10	3%	23	3%
Asian	19	5%	30	4%
Black or African American	152	41%	234	34%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	10	3%	7	1%
White	133	36%	310	45%
Other	49	13%	78	11%

Gender

	Sheltered		Unsheltered	
	Count	% of Whole	Count	% of Whole
Male	187	48%	471	66%
Female	167	43%	188	26%
Trans Male	9	2%	15	2%
Trans Female	17	4%	12	2%
Genderqueer/Gender Non-Binary	3	1%	6	1%



Why Resolve Large Encampments:

4

PROBLEM

- Higher levels of substance abuse and communicable disease in large encampments
- Increase in public health and public safety concerns in and around encampments
- Public outrage impacts City's ability to address homelessness
- Previous attempts to address encampments failed and led to lawsuits, reducing confidence in the City.

GOAL

- Assist as many people as possible by connecting them to shelter, services and housing
- Address quality of life issues for housed and unhoused individuals
- Change culture on streets to permanently eliminate large, long term encampments
- Focus on effectiveness, legality and compassion while not redirecting entire service delivery system



Principles for Resolving Encampments

5

- Evidence-based: Strive to follow the USICH guidelines for addressing encampments
- Legal: Ensure that the legal and civil rights of those in encampments are not violated
- Compassionate: Lead with a persistent and loving offer of services and shelter
- Effective: Do not simply move encampments or individuals from one place to another
- Collaborative: Involve residents (housed and unhoused) and other agencies



Encampment Resolution Team (ERT)

6

- Special section within the city's homeless outreach team
- LCSW and 2 outreach workers focus on large encampments
- Working at 2 sites at a time in different stages of resolution
- ERT leads efforts but collaborates with other city agencies





Resolving Encampments: Selection

7

- Coordinated through citywide working group
- Focus on encampments with 6 or more tents/structures
- Evaluation of community impacts with partners to develop a quarterly resolution schedule





Resolving Encampments: Process

8

- 1st week: Encampment Resolution Team (ERT) focuses on engagement, relationship building, noticing, community meetings
- 2nd week: Residents logged to coordinated entry system; lookups in data sets to assess needs; develop action plan for service needs (individual and encampment); inform public health department of need for special services
- 3rd week: Service provision and engagement; begin relocation to shelter/housing and/or special services (behavioral health, substance abuse treatment)
- 4th week: Increased connection with residents. Begin to emphasize alternatives and remind of resolution date.



Resolving Encampments: Services

9

- Health and Wellness Fair
- Incentives (gift cards) successful
- Testing/treatment for disease
- Urgent care
- Suboxone starts
- Prevention medications for HIV
- Access to basic hygiene
- Case management
- Problem solving
- **Referrals to shelter and services**





Resolving Encampments: Completion

10

- 72 hour notice is posted advising residents they will need to depart
- Reservation of shelter beds as needed
- Addressing needs of high acuity Individuals
- Remaining individual offered available options and then asked to leave
- Mobilization of police, public works and ERT during final 2 days



Preventing Re-Encampment

11

- Walk through with Public Works to assess safety and access
- Coordinate with neighbors on prevention (fencing, lighting, security)
- Providing neighbors contact information for key city staff
- Ongoing re-encampment prevention team (outreach workers, police and public works); note that re-encampment prevention outreach worker wear different uniforms as their roles are different
- Education of clients

Health Streets Operations Center

12



- Activated the City's Emergency Operations Center to better address street behavior
- Police, Public Works, Public Health and Homelessness Departments are lead agencies
- Coordinating all efforts related to encampments, etc.



Preventing Re-Encampment


**PLEASE RESPECT THIS NEIGHBORHOOD:
DO NOT SET UP TENTS IN THE VICINITY.**

NO LODGING ZONE

Lodging on public property without permission is unlawful. Cal. Penal Code § 647(e).

The City and County of San Francisco recently worked to resolve illegal encampments in this area.

If you need shelter or if you see tents in this area, please contact **311**.

HEALTHY STREETS

WE VALUE AND RESPECT EACH OTHER AND OUR COMMUNITY

PASSABLE STREETS

- Please do not set up permanent tents or structures
- Please limit your belongings, do not block doorways or driveways
- Please keep streets and sidewalks clear so people, wheelchairs, strollers, bikes and cars may pass

SAFE STREETS

- No fires, candles, stoves or heaters—they are very dangerous! Battery operated lights are safer.
- Safely dispose of used syringes in sharps containers
- Protect your pets, keep them on leash and safe

CLEAN STREETS

- Please keep your surroundings neat and clean
- Please move your belongings when the City comes to clean or make repairs
- Please throw away trash in garbage containers and clean up after pets

IF YOU NEED ASSISTANCE OR A NEIGHBOR NEEDS HELP

- For a medical or mental health emergency, call 911
- For shelter information, call 311
- For information about services, call SF HOT, 415.355.7580
- Be prepared and carry Narcan in case of accidental overdose

RESOURCE CENTERS

MSC South
525 Fifth Street
Open daily, 24 hours
Shelter reservations, showers, information, snacks

United Council of Human Services
2111 Jennings Street
Open daily, 7pm-9am
Shelter reservations, showers, laundry, lockers, breakfast and dinner

MNRC
165 Capp Street
Open Monday-Friday, 7am to 7pm, closed 12pm-2pm.
Shelter reservations, showers, laundry, lockers

Glide
330 Ellis Street
Open Monday-Friday, 12pm-9pm
Shelter reservations

A Woman's Place
211 13th Street
Open daily, 24 hours
Showers, laundry

6th Street Harm Reduction Center (welcoming folks who inject)
117 6th Street
Open Monday-Friday 9am-5pm
Saturday 7pm-11pm
Syringe access + disposal, Suboxone tx, narcan, testing, harm reduction groups, counseling, and lounge



Outcomes: August 2016 – May 2018

14

- ERT has resolved 32 encampments
- 1,219 people were camping at these sites; 100% were offered shelter & services
- 792 accepted a place of safety off the streets (65%)
- Approximately 300 people received permanent housing (25%)
- 28 of the 32 encampments have remained clear (85%)



Current Status: June 2018

15

- Currently 568 tents/structures city wide (50% reduction citywide)
- 17 large (over 5 tents) encampments remain (50% reduction)
- No encampments of greater than 20 tents/structures (100% reduction)



Next Steps: Adding Capacity

16

- Doubling size of ERT (3 to 6 outreach workers)
- Expanding medical/behavioral health shelter system (40 beds added with 40 in the pipeline)
- Expanding temporary shelter system (200 beds added with 170 in the pipeline)
- Expanding diversion, job training and temporary rent subsidy and supportive housing



Lessons Learned

17

- Expanding our shelter capacity has been critical to our success
- Ongoing outreach to encampment residents is also a critical component
- Providing medical and other services at the encampments assists with the transition
- Educating encampment and shelter residents on being good neighbors is helping to change culture on the streets



Lessons Learned

18

- Partnerships with other agencies and systems to manage these partnerships are critical but workers need to have distinct roles and work separately from other agencies
- Equity issues can arise when shelter and housing resources to address encampments and street homelessness
- Encampment resolutions should not drive the entire service deliver system
- Focus on the needs of unhoused people because no matter what you do, people will complain!

Date	Number of Tents	Number of 311 Call
June 2017	285	619
October 2017	40	907
December 2017	84	1,014