



Improving Coordinated Entry Systems

**Homelessness Policy Research Institute Symposium
January 23, 2024**

**Lahela Mattox
RTFH Chief Operations Officer**



Objective



For the audience to understand

- how **RTFH** and the San Diego Continuum of Care is addressing disparities within our system, by taking a comprehensive look at data and obtaining black people's feedback on our system
- how **RTFH** is partnering with **Equity in Action** to implement the CoC Action Plan to Address Homelessness Among Black San Diegans.
- how **RTFH** is partnering with **Equity in Action** is focusing on system impact through a cultural shift to better support implementation of things such as tools, standards, and practices.



Who we are



RTFH is:

- A 501c3 Non-profit organization
- We are the lead agency identified as the San Diego City and County **Continuum of Care**

We believe:

- Homelessness is solvable
- Ending homelessness begins with a home
- All people can be successful in housing with the right support and opportunities.
- Housing is a basic human need and right.
- Homelessness is an experience, not a label.
- All people deserve compassion, respect and to be treated with dignity.

We exist to make homelessness rare, brief and non-recurring in the San Diego region



In July 2020, RTFH CoC Board approved the recommendation to create an Ad Hoc Committee

The purpose of the Committee

- ✓ **explore** the factors contributing to disparities among Black persons experiencing homelessness;
- ✓ **listen and engage** to in extensive public dialogue with community stakeholders;
- ✓ **develop** a series of recommendations that the CoC can take to better address the impacts of systemic racism and its effects within the homeless crisis response system.

2020 Point in Time Count

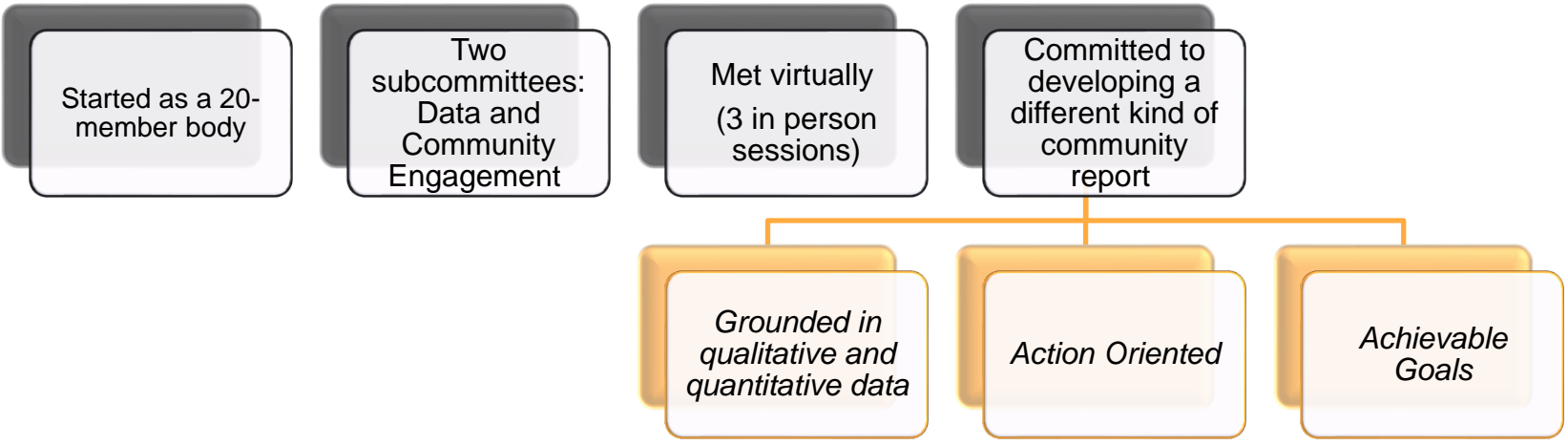
Despite being only 5.5% of the San Diego population, Black people accounted for:

- 21% of the unsheltered population
- 30% of the sheltered population

**Data at the time Committee was established.



Ad Hoc Committee Formation





Objectives of the Committee



Be grounded in the voices of those with lived experience in the system

Be community driven and action oriented

Educate the larger public and key stakeholders on the issues, barriers, and systemic injustice that Black San Diegans who are at-risk of homelessness or currently homeless face. Needs to be a call to action.

Provide a series of recommendations that will promote systemic changes in local government, homeless services organizations, public/private funders, and other key stakeholders

Lay out concrete action steps to realize system recommendations





Workgroup 1: Community Engagement Process



Black people with lived experience

- Focus group discussion
- In-depth interviews
- Informed consent



Mainstream partners, homeless service leaders, frontline staff & decision makers

- In-depth interviews
- Focus groups
- Online survey



Themes:

- Being Black negatively impacts access to crisis response system
- Mainstream services are discriminatory & not designed effectively for Black people to access.
- Black people have few opportunities to influence and grow within homeless service organizations
- Need for increased assessment of policies, practices and organizational culture across the CoC



Workgroup 2: In depth data analysis



from the HMIS-Specific to the Homeless Response System

People who are black are more likely to receive referrals to Rapid Rehousing which is a time limited permanent housing subsidy

People who are black represented on the by name list for housing receive fewer referrals to permanent housing resource compared to other racial groups.

People who are black are referred to CES at a lower rate than other races

People who are black are more likely to return to homelessness than any other racial group

Individuals and/or families who are Black exit to positive destinations at lower/higher rates than White individuals and/or families.



Guiding Statements



RACE is the largest predictive factor for homelessness in the United States. And today in the San Diego region, where Black people make up only five percent of the population,

Black people are:

- **6 times more likely than non-Black people to experience homelessness**
- **5 times more likely than non-Black people to experience unsheltered homelessness.**
- **7 times more likely than non-Black people to experience sheltered homelessness.**



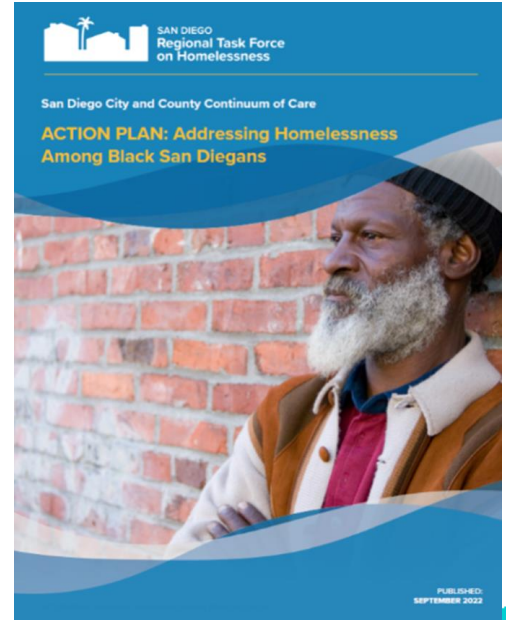
Advancing Racial Equity



The CoC Ad Hoc Committee Addressing Homelessness Amongst Black San Diegans developed the **“San Diego CoC Action Plan: Addressing Homelessness Among Black San Diegans”**, this report outlines the first meaningful steps that we must take to create a more equitable homeless service system.

ACTION PLAN GOALS:

- #1: Develop an HMIS Data Dashboard to track our Progress on Equity Goals
- #2: Inclusive Procurement
- #3: Training and Education
- #4: Mentorship of Black-led Organizations
- #5: Center the Voices of People with Lived Experience Who Are Black
- #6: Transform the Crisis Response System





Commitment to ACT



RTFH, the CoC, and the Committee wanted to establish an action plan that was actionable.

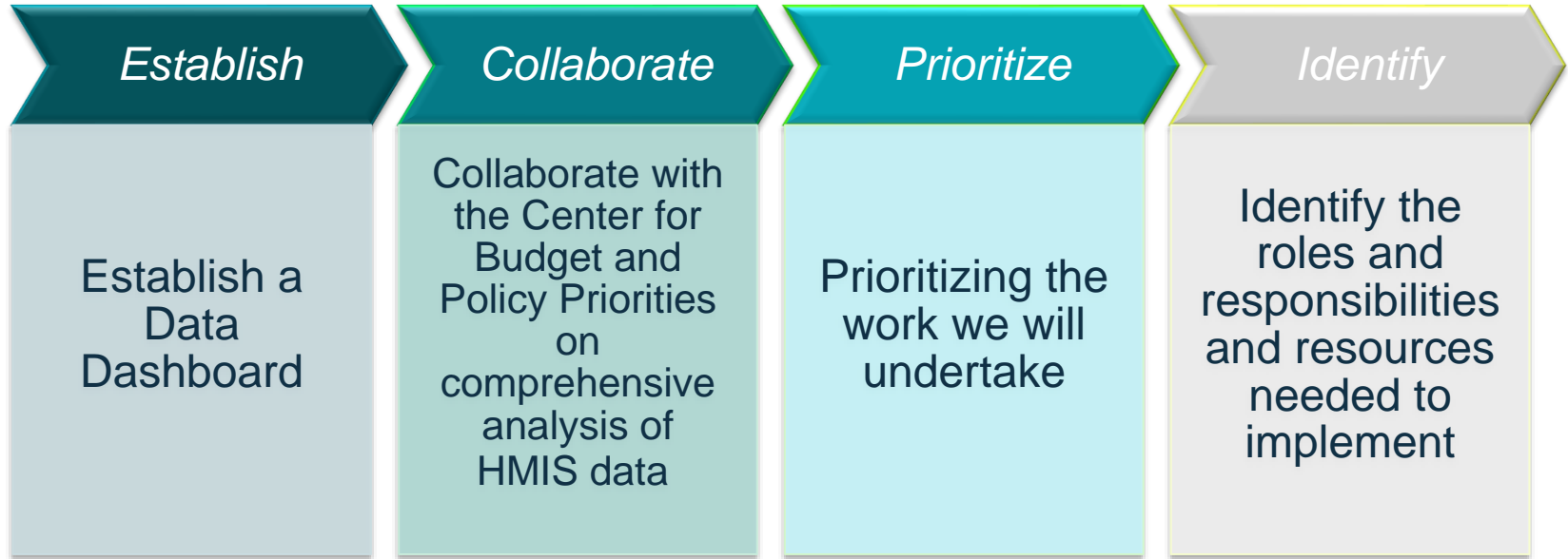
Commitment from both RTFH and the Committee members:

- RTFH continued its commitment to work with Equity in Action to support the work of the committee
- RTFH committed to providing a stipend for the contributions of people with lived experience
- RTFH committed to becoming an anti-racist CoC and is working with Equity in Action
- Members committed to remain focused on Black people, with the belief that if access and services were improved for black people it would improve the entire system.
- Members will provide a voice and advocacy to injustices that systematically impact people who are Black and homeless.
- Member will work toward recommendations for action that the CoC, its members, and the community can make





Work in Year 2





- Reviewing all CoC Standards with an equity lens
- Cultural shift of the system
 - Working with providers, people with lived experience, leadership and other stakeholders
 - Hosting In-person Symposiums
- How and where do black people access services and resources
 - Working with faith-based organizations and other black led organizations to identify where people are accessing services and resources
- Working with Equity in Action to identify proxies for race-families and individuals



Toll of the Work



DEALING WITH
DIFFICULT
SUBJECT
MATTER



VIRTUAL SPACE
MADE IT HARD
TO TRACK
EMOTIONAL
IMPACT OF
DISCUSSION



UNDERSTANDING
THE LIMITS OF OUR
INFLUENCE



ENSURING EVERYONE
PARTICIPATING FEELS
PSYCHOLOGICAL
SAFETY





Thank you



Sign up for our newsletter to stay up to date:

www.rtfhsd.org

<https://www.rtfhsd.org/contact/>

Twitter @RTFHSD

Subscribe to our national partners to stay informed:

HUD: <https://www.hudexchange.info/>

United States Interagency Council on Homelessness: <https://www.usich.gov/>

California Interagency Council on Homelessness: <https://bcsh.ca.gov/calich/>

National Alliance to End Homelessness: <https://endhomelessness.org/>

