

COALITION ON HOMELESSNESS 2021

BEHIND THE HEALTHY STREET OPERATION CURTAIN

The True Story of San Francisco's Abusive Encampment Response

The Problem With HSOC

- **HSOC prioritizes decreasing the visibility of homelessness, not permanent solutions:**
 - Since its inception, HSOC has been driven by the goal of reducing the number of tents in San Francisco, and used the dehumanizing practice of defining success by their regular tent count
 - Unhoused people and advocates have routinely criticized this, because tents are not people, and SF needs to prioritize connecting people with permanent ends to homelessness: housing
- **Our report shows that prioritizing tents leads to ineffective and harmful outcomes, specifically:**
 - People are being continually displaced without an adequate supply of shelter beds
 - HSOC is failing to make appropriate and lasting placements
 - Unhoused people are having their belongings illegally trashed by HSOC workers

Abysmal Placement Rates

"In the three periods of 2021 presented on by Director Carroll, HSOC never surpassed a "service acceptance" rate higher than 35%" - HSOC Report P. 10

Placement Rates

| End of the Period | Operating Days in the Period | Tents from HSOC Count* | Reduction in Tents | Percent Reduction in Tents | Client Placements | Placements /Day | Acceptance Rate | Placements /Tents Reduced** |
|-------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| 4/22/2020 | | 1108 | | | | | | |
| 6/9/2020 | | 1400 | | | | | | |
| 7/28/2020 | 34.00 | 1003 | -397 | -28.36% | 677 | 19.91 | 83% | 1.71 |
| 10/7/2020 | 51.00 | 703 | -300 | -29.91% | 441 | 8.65 | 60% | 1.47 |
| 12/14/2020 | 43.00 | 565 | -138 | -19.63% | 265 | 6.16 | 31% | 1.92 |
| 2/15/2021 | 40.00 | 501 | -64 | -11.33% | 197 | 4.93 | 35% | 3.08 |
| 4/26/2021 | 53.00 | 383 | -118 | -23.55% | 277 | 5.23 | 30% | 2.35 |
| 6/21/2021 | 38.00 | 387 | 4 | 1.04% | 179 | 4.71 | 29% | 0.00 |
| | 259.00 | | -1013 | -72.36% | 2036 | 7.86 | 45% | 2.23 |

*Number of tents on 6/9 is an estimate, other data is from the regular count conducted by HSOC

**The number of placements needed to reduce one tent

The Data

"WHILE MUCH OF THE INFORMATION PRESENTED IN THIS REPORT DRAWS ON THE **EXPERIENCES AND FIRSTHAND KNOWLEDGE OF UNHOUSED SAN FRANCISCANS AND ADVOCATES**, A SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF IT COMES FROM THE **CITY'S INTERNAL DATA AND RECORDS**. THIS DATA WAS MADE PUBLIC, AND BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE COALITION ON HOMELESSNESS, THROUGH AN EXTENSIVE SERIES OF PUBLIC RECORDS REQUESTS MADE BY TWITTER USER @DIZZ_H...N ORDER TO COMPILE THIS INFORMATION INTO A MANAGEABLE SET OF DATA THAT GIVES A FULL PICTURE OF HSOC'S OPERATIONS AND THEIR OUTCOMES, THIS REPORT NARROWLY ANALYZES THE PERIOD OF TIME BETWEEN JANUARY 5, 2021 AND FEBRUARY 26, 2021" - HSOC REPORT P. 19

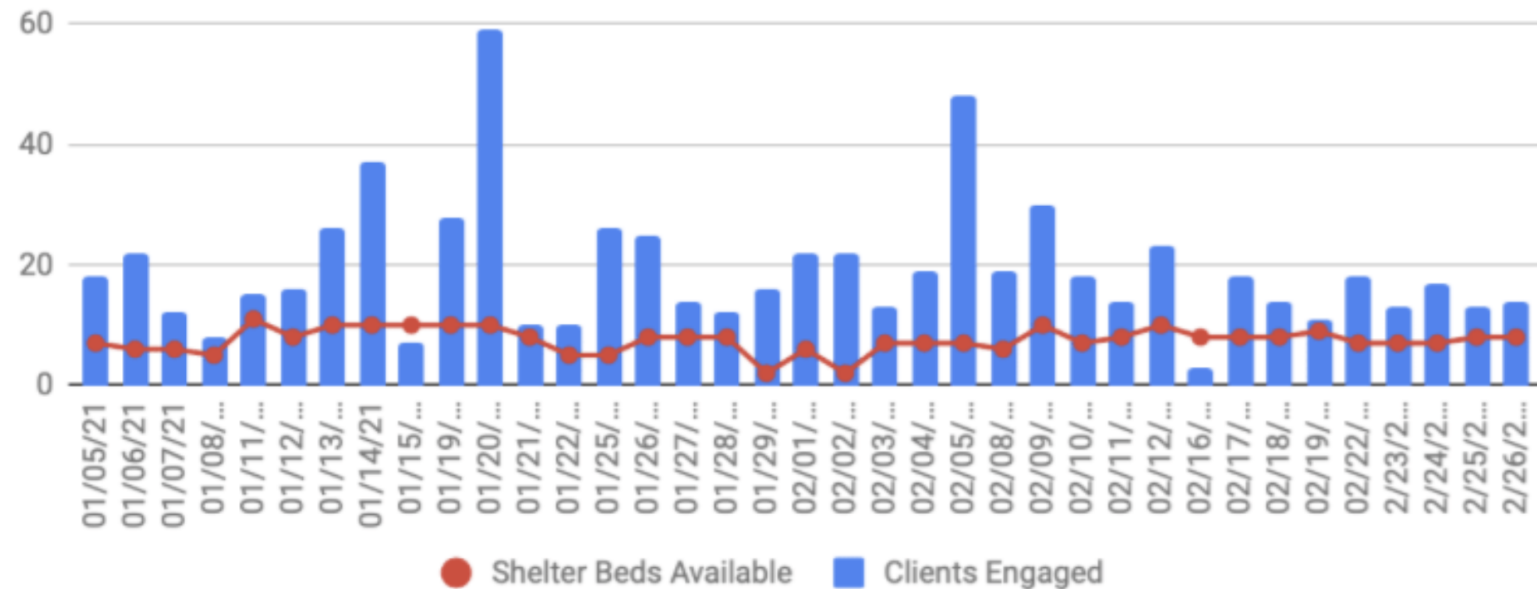
Standard HSOC Resolution

- Before 7:30AM: HOT workers wake up encampment residents, inform them that a resolution is happening, and collect their information. Typically, no definitive offers of service are made at this time.
- 7:30AM-9AM: Once information is collected, HOT workers stand aside as DPW conducts street cleaning and residents are told to pack their belonging and move. People who do not move quickly enough for DPW workers are often harassed and threatened with citation by SFPD. Residents who are not presently attending their belongings often have them destroyed and/or thrown away by DPW workers.
- 9AM-9:30AM: The days shelter beds are allocated to the HSOC team, and offers of service can begin. Cleaning is ongoing at this time, and often times residents who are working on moving their belongings cannot connect with outreach workers. There is routinely not enough beds available for all residents, and by 9 many have already left the area.
- 9:30AM-11AM: Cleaning and displacement continues, with the goal of moving everyone by 11AM, only 4 hours after the operation started. Residents are told they will not be allowed to return to the area after the operation concludes.

Not Enough Beds

"Across a 37-day period from January to February of this year, HSOC had enough shelter beds to offer a bed to everyone at that day's operations only twice. On average, they had access to only 52% of the beds they would need to do so." -HSOC Report P. 11

Shelter Beds Available vs Clients Engaged at HSOC Resolutions, Jan-Feb 2021



Not Enough Beds

| Week of Year | First Sweep | Tents Removed | Vehicles Removed | Total Clients | Clients Served | Declined Services | Percent Served | Available Shelter Beds | Percent of available Shelter Beds Filled |
|--------------|-------------|---------------|------------------|---------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------|------------------------|--|
| 2 | 1/5/2021 | 53 | 1 | 60 | 25 | 31 | 42% | 24 | 104% |
| 3 | 1/11/2021 | 106 | 4 | 101 | 32 | 59 | 32% | 49 | 65% |
| 4 | 1/19/2021 | 84 | 0 | 107 | 34 | 61 | 32% | 33 | 103% |
| 5 | 1/25/2021 | 80 | 8 | 93 | 22 | 52 | 24% | 31 | 71% |
| 6 | 2/1/2021 | 82 | 0 | 126 | 29 | 84 | 23% | 29 | 100% |
| 7 | 2/8/2021 | 86 | 3 | 104 | 33 | 53 | 32% | 41 | 80% |
| 8 | 2/16/2021 | 39 | 1 | 46 | 12 | 30 | 26% | 33 | 36% |
| 9 | 2/22/2021 | 63 | 7 | 75 | 23 | 44 | 31% | 37 | 62% |
| Total | | 593 | 24 | 712 | 210 | 414 | 29% | 277 | 76% |

"In those 37 days, despite a 29% overall service acceptance rate, 75% of the beds HSOC had available were filled." - HSOC Report P. 11

Conclusion

- Structure Leads to Low Placement Rates
- Not Enough Beds for Encampment Residents
- Inappropriate Service Offers
- Leading with Cleaning
- Left Without Shelter
- Zero compliance with bag & tag policy
- Sidewalk shuffle is trauma-inducing and ineffective

Our Recommendations

1. Halt the policy and practice of focusing on tents instead have street teams identify, assess, and place humans in need.
2. Eliminate barriers to services to existing homeless programs. This includes ensuring shelter options are barrier-free, such as ensuring pets, partners and property are allowed, and minimize rules.
3. Invest in permanent solutions to homelessness including housing, living-wage jobs, on-going treatment and medical care.
4. Halt practices that criminalize individuals for their economic and housing status, such as police responses to homelessness.
5. Ensure shelters during the surge are safe, such as fully utilizing SIP hotels rooms and pausing the shut down of these hotels.
6. Have regular cleanings at set times.

Our Recommendations

7. Fully implement CART — Compassionate Alternative Response to Homelessness by having a deeply trained, well paid peer- based street team respond to and solve “C” level 911 calls connected to homelessness.
8. Once CART is fully implemented, ensure the Homeless Outreach Team can fully focus on case management and connecting individuals to care, as opposed to responding to complaints.
9. Halt the enforcement of anti- homeless laws, including the enforcement against individuals residing in areas that have already been swept.
10. Ensure full transparency and reporting of all street responses, including numbers of people who are connected with care, as is occurring with Street Crisis Response Team and Street Overdose ResponseTeam.

Link to Our Full Report:

<https://www.cohsf.org/behind-the-healthy-street-operation-curtain/>



Behind the Healthy Street Operation Curtain

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Coalition on Homelessness / Ruth Wong / Oct 4