



**NORA VARGAS**  
**CHAIRWOMAN**  
SUPERVISOR, FIRST DISTRICT  
SAN DIEGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
**AGENDA ITEM**

**DATE:** May 23, 2023

**30**

**TO:** Board of Supervisors

**SUBJECT**

**ENDORSE THE CALIFORNIA STATE ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES (CSAC), AT HOME PLAN TO REDUCE HOMELESSNESS (DISTRICTS: ALL)**

**OVERVIEW**

Homelessness is an urgent humanitarian crisis with an estimated 172,000 unsheltered individuals across California and 8,427 individuals in San Diego County. Despite the seriousness of this issue, California lacks a comprehensive plan to address homelessness effectively and equitably. Current federal, state, and county funded efforts create a patchwork of programs and responses that often do not work well together.

The California State Association of Counties proposed the AT HOME plan which encourages counties to work with federal, state, and local partners to implement a comprehensive plan aimed at helping those who are unhoused or at risk of becoming unhoused. The AT HOME plan seeks to make meaningful progress in reducing homelessness by implementing solutions that address the complex and multifaceted nature of the homelessness crisis.

AT HOME stands for accountability, transparency, housing, outreach, mitigation, and economic opportunity. The AT HOME plan ensures clear lines of responsibility to authority, resources, and flexibility for all levels of government. This plan will also integrate and expand data to improve program effectiveness. There is a significant shortage of affordable housing to support aged, disabled, justice involved, or very low-income residents. This plan will increase and maintain new housing units across the spectrum.

The AT HOME plan will develop sustainable outreach systems and increase workforce to support these systems. State support and initiatives are essential for effective health and human services programs. This plan will strengthen safety net programs, ensuring that counties have sufficient resources to administer these key programs to help individuals maintain their health, self-sufficiency, and housing. Lastly, this plan will create employment and education pathways, as well as supports for basic needs.

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**RECOMMENDATION(S)**

**CHAIRWOMAN NORA VARGAS**

1. Adopt a Resolution entitled A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO APPROVING THE ENDORSEMENT OF THE CALIFORNIA STATE ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES AT HOME PLAN
2. Authorize the support of legislation needed for the implementation of the AT HOME plan consistent with Board Policy M2.

**EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT**

More San Diego County residents are falling into homelessness than becoming housed, an alarming trend growing within the past year. On average, 10 individuals find housing for every 13 people who experience homelessness for the first time in San Diego County. In 2022, the We All Count Point-in-Time Count identified 8,427 individuals as living in the streets or in shelters throughout San Diego County. This is a 10% increase from the 2020 count and only represents a minimum value of our unhoused population count. People of color are also disproportionately impacted among those experiencing homelessness. Despite making up 5% of the San Diego County population, Black residents make up 24% of the unhoused population. Similarly, American Indian or Alaskan Native residents make up 3% of the unhoused population despite making up 1% of the total county population.

San Diego's growing homelessness parallels a rapid increase in costs of living. Addressing the needs of residents at risk of homelessness requires solutions that promote accountability, affordable housing, and economic opportunities in a dignified and equitable manner. It is important to work with state and local partners in implementing this comprehensive plan to help those who are unhoused or at risk of becoming unhoused.

**SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT**

The proposed action to endorse AT HOME would contribute to the County of San Diego Sustainability Goal #1 to engage the community; Sustainability Goal #2 to provide just and equitable access; and Sustainability Goal #3 to protect health and well-being. The AT HOME plan will engage the community by encouraging State-County cooperation and collaboration with local organizations and service providers. This will allow the County to provide just and equitable access to housing options, employment pathways, and social support services. Increasing access to housing will improve the health and well-being of San Diego's unhoused population.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no fiscal impact associated with these recommendations. There will be no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

**BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT**

N/A

**ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT**

N/A

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## **BACKGROUND**

Homelessness is an urgent humanitarian crisis with an estimated 172,000 unsheltered individuals across California and 8,427 individuals in San Diego County. Despite the seriousness of this issue, California lacks a comprehensive plan to address homelessness effectively and equitably. Current federal, state, and county funded efforts create a patchwork of programs and responses that often do not work well together.

The California State Association of Counties (CSAC) proposed the AT HOME plan which encourages counties to work with federal, State, and local partners to implement a comprehensive plan aimed at helping those who are unhoused or at risk of becoming unhoused. The AT HOME plan seeks to make meaningful progress in reducing homelessness by implementing solutions that address the complex and multifaceted nature of the homelessness crisis.

The AT HOME plan focuses on:

### *Accountability*

The AT HOME plan ensures clear lines of responsibility to authority, resources, and flexibility for all levels of government. This will involve cities and counties coming together to build a comprehensive and accountable system. The plan will:

- Clearly define city and county roles for siting and supporting shelters, siting permanent supportive housing, encampment outreach, and encampment clean-up.
- Commit ongoing funding – one-time funding is neither sustainable nor conducive to maintaining programs.
- Work with the State and cities from start to finish, require the submission of countywide or regional plans with established, clear goals and responsibilities.
- Allocate funding commensurate with the responsibilities each entity has within the plan and provide for maximum local flexibility to be used in accordance with established goals and outcomes.

### *Transparency*

This plan will integrate and expand data to improve program effectiveness. Current data systems and data sharing do not support an integrated case management approach to helping those who are currently unhoused or at risk of becoming unhoused. The plan will:

- Integrate and expand data systems to enhance transparency and allow for data-driven decision making.
- Enhance existing health, social services and State and local criminal justice data systems to provide more robust data on the immediate and long-term needs of individuals and better manage institutional discharges.

### *Housing*

This plan will increase and maintain housing units across the spectrum. There is a significant shortage of affordable housing to support aged, disabled, justice involved, or very low-income residents. Local governments do not have the tools and funding needed to develop these units to scale. The plan will:

- Increase resources needed to acquire, build and operate housing solutions across the full housing continuum, especially permanent supportive housing for individuals with complex needs.

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- Increase flexibility and streamlining to generate more affordable housing developments.
- Create flexible housing subsidies and modify federal Housing Choice Vouchers to help more individuals utilize rental assistance to maintain housing.

*Outreach*

This plan will develop sustainable outreach systems and increase workforce to support these systems. There is a significant shortage of Health and Human Services (HHS) workers to manage the programs and services that assist with addressing homelessness in California. In addition to identifying ways to support and build this workforce, new classifications that leverage lived experience and support housing navigation are also needed. The plan will:

- Recruit, train and retain a robust HHS workforce and consider new certifications for workers in housing and other fields.
- Leverage additional federal funding for outreach and rapid response.
- Expand training and quality improvement incentives for law enforcement and probation responding to unhoused individuals.

*Mitigation*

This plan will strengthen safety net programs. State support and initiatives are essential for effective health and human services programs. Ensuring counties have sufficient resources to administer these key programs will help individuals maintain their health, self-sufficiency, and housing. We must strengthen these programs to prevent individuals from becoming homeless. The plan will:

- Provide adequate funding for county administration of safety net programs to ensure eligible individuals can be enrolled and receive the services they need timely.
- Increase the availability of and access to programs and services that provide screening, treatment, and recovery services for substance use disorder.
- Increase flexibility for county behavioral health funding to maximize federal Medi-Cal funds and expand the reach of county behavioral health investments for the unsheltered population.

Support State and federal actions to increase revenue for board and care facilities accepting clients with behavioral health conditions who are Medi-Cal eligible, including inclusion as a Medicaid reimbursable expense, to ensure parity, and preserve and expand existing infrastructure and services.

*Economic Opportunity*

This plan will create employment and education pathways, as well as supports for basic needs. Specialized education and career programs and services are needed to support the economic opportunity and long-term self-sufficiency of those who are formerly homeless or at risk of experiencing homelessness, including justice-involved individuals, veterans, older Californians, and former foster youth. The plan will:

- Update local workforce development and investment boards to address employment for unhoused populations and work with California Community Colleges to develop programs that support the formerly unhoused.
- Increase accessible programs for justice-involved individuals to receive training and overcome employment barriers.

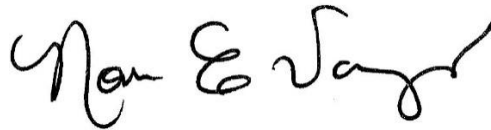
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- Continue and expand efforts to assist more qualifying aged, blind, and disabled persons to obtain SSI/SSP benefits and expand subsidized housing placements for these populations.

**LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN**

Today's requested actions supports the Equity (Housing) Initiative of the County of San Diego's 2023-2028 Strategic Plan by utilizing policies, facilities, infrastructure, and finance to provide housing opportunities that meet the needs of our communities.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nora E. Vargas".

NORA VARGAS  
Supervisor, First District

**ATTACHMENT(S)**

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO APPROVING THE ENDORSEMENT OF THE CALIFORNIA STATE ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES AT HOME PLAN