

COALITION ON HOMELESSNESS, SF

ANNUAL REPORT 2019



CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF STREET SHEET

ABOUT OUR WORK

The Coalition on Homelessness was formed in 1987 by homeless people and front-line social service workers to address the crisis of homelessness in San Francisco. For over thirty years, we have centered the wisdom and tenacity of currently and formerly homeless San Franciscans in the fight to end homelessness.

We fight for creative, systemic solutions. We fight for permanently affordable housing. We fight for eviction prevention to keep San Franciscans housed. We fight for behavioral health treatment for those in need. We fight to uphold the fundamental human rights of those forced to live on the street.

We conduct outreach every week on the streets, in shelters and at other places homeless people congregate, and this is where our campaigns are formed. Through outreach, we regularly receive input on our work as we activate people to join our struggle. This input is brought to our weekly open workgroup meetings that homeless people and their allies are welcome to attend. At these workgroups we fine-tune our campaigns and choose our tactics. All decisions we make follow a democratic and radically inclusive decision making process.

2019 AT A GLANCE

SERVICES NOT SWEEPS

- We forced the city to invest in funding for 1,075 community members to receive mental health and/or substance abuse services.
- We removed wasteful \$163,610 in funding for HSOC – the team that confiscates tents and gives citations to homeless people for being poor.
- We also got local legislators to cut \$1,000,000 from SFPD to eliminate the introduction of Tasers (again).
- We pushed through 24-hour public restrooms which will result in 10,000 fewer instances of people forced into the indignity of toileting on the street.
- We won funding for employment services for 100 homeless individuals.
- We drew attention to illegal property confiscation through our Stolen Belonging project in collaboration with artist-activist Leslie Dreyer. We now have striking oral testimony from all over the city, and public records verifying the allegations detailed in our oral testimonies.
- We passed legislation allowing for safe parking spaces for the vehicularly housed.



OUR CITY OUR HOME

- Since our last report, we brought Our City - Our Home Proposition C to victory— truly the boldest measure to address homelessness in San Francisco, and we only could have won after decades of non-stop struggle by so many people (many of whom are in the room, and many of whom we dearly miss) with the ongoing crisis in our city.
- We hired hundreds of homeless people to help us with the campaign, we called almost 70,000 voters and knocked on almost 25,000 doors and we moved San Franciscans from despair to believing change is possible.
- While it is held up in a legal battle, we anticipate winning that and literally doubling our homeless efforts here in SF with broad sweeping expansion of prevention, housing and treatment. We will continue to fight tooth and nail until we win the 4,000 units of housing, 1,700 treatment slots, homeless prevention for thousands and an elimination of the shelter waitlist through expanded beds that Our City Our Home will fund.
- In the meantime, we are conducting a peer needs assessment survey to gather data on how existing City programs can be improved. This will ensure that we're ready to responsibly build out infrastructure when Prop C funding is released. We'll publish our findings by the end of the year.



HOUSING IS A HUMAN RIGHT

We believe that every child, youth, and adult deserves a place to call home. We work tirelessly to ensure that San Francisco provides safe, dignified housing for all.

- This year, our organizing work has led to the city funding the creation of 473 new housing units or subsidies that will support hundreds of individuals and families in exiting homelessness.
- We got the city to commit to emergency housing for 110 community members.
- We fought for and won eviction prevention services that will keep 1,355 households in their homes or in shelter.
- As a result of these investments, by the end of this fiscal year, almost 1,509 households will exit homelessness, and thousands of households will maintain their housing.



30 YEARS OF STREET SHEET

For three decades, the Street Sheet has been the voice of homeless San Franciscans, bringing the word on the street into the living rooms of those with housing and putting income into the hands of those without. Our stories come directly from those with lived experience because we know that we are the true experts on our own lives, on our own struggles. Thank you for 30 years of dedicated support!

ABOUT US

Wherever you are in San Francisco, you don't have to look too far to find someone in the BART station, outside the grocery store, or on the street corner selling a scrappy print publication called *Street Sheet*. The Street Sheet is the oldest continuously published street newspaper in the country, reaching over 30,000 readers every month and putting money into the pockets of more than 200 homeless vendors. This year we are celebrating our 30th year as the most reliable source for news relating to poverty, featuring stories that come directly from those with lived experience of homelessness.

With more than a thousand people languishing on the waitlist for a shelter bed, and 21,000 people experiencing homelessness annually in this wealthy city, we know our work is cut out for us. So next time you pick up a copy of Street Sheet, remember that you are not only getting the word on the street, you are also supporting a vendor who is struggling with poverty and helping them survive in a city that has largely abandoned them.



1989: STREET SHEET DEBUTS AS ONE OF THE FIRST STREET NEWSPAPERS IN THE COUNTRY. IT IS PRINTED AS A ONE-PAGE NEWSLETTER.



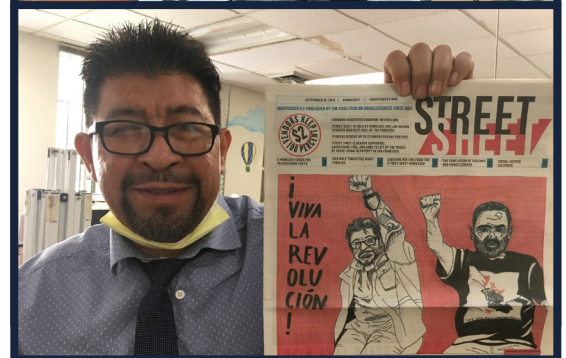
1999: STREET SHEET CELEBRATES 2 MILLION COPIES SOLD! WE ARE STILL THE MOST WIDELY DISTRIBUTED STREET NEWSPAPER IN THE WORLD.



2009: AFTER TWO DECADES OF BEING A MONTHLY NEWSPAPER, STREET SHEET STARTS PRINTING ON THE 1ST AND 15TH OF EVERY MONTH.



2019: AS WE CELEBRATE OUR 30TH ANNIVERSARY WE ALSO START ACCEPTING CASHLESS PAYMENTS, MAKING THE PAPER MORE ACCESSIBLE TO OUR READERS AND PUTTING MORE REVENUE IN THE POCKETS OF OUR HOMELESS VENDORS.



OUR FUTURE

This year we look back at millions of papers sold, hundreds of homeless people earning an income, and countless critical headlines read citywide. At the same time the Street Sheet has managed to stay current, even as we face the decline of print media. Vendors are now able to accept Venmo payments from readers who don't carry cash, and this year will see the launch of Street Speak, our upcoming podcast answering your burning questions about San Francisco's homeless crisis. In the coming year we are also looking forward to having a budget that will allow us to compensate our contributors with lived experience homelessness for their work.



Waverly Walton Street Sheet vendor since 1996

So I let folks know I'm with the Coalition, ask folks to donate to our paper we put out for the sheltered and homeless, because you can't really get real info in the Chronicle and the Examiner, so we have to do it ourselves. People who help themselves will prevail. You go out there and do it yourself, and that's what I do. I go out there and provide for myself every day, I don't beg or steal. I'm a retired vet and I know what it's like, 'cause when I first got out of the army I used to drink a lot and was homeless for a while and this organization helped me out and I appreciate it. So now I'm giving back since my life has come back together.



Quiver Watts (they/them) Street Sheet editor since 2016



I am so grateful to the hundreds of people who have created and sustained this iconic newspaper over the last few decades, and I'm so excited to bring our upcoming podcast, Street Speak, to life in the coming year.

TJ Johnston Street Sheet writer & editor since 2001

I would like Street Sheet to be redundant in 30 years because we have solved the problem of homelessness. If there is homelessness in 30 years I hope it's the kind where you move out of your place at the end of the month, crash with your friend a couple nights, then move into your new place for the next month.



image: Michelle Klug



Emmett House Vendor Coordinator since 2018

In 30 years I hope that the Street Sheet is worldwide, not just citywide. One reason would be so the Street Sheet could be spread around to more people, and another is so we could get some more information on homeless peoples' situations around the world.



LOOKING FORWARD TO 2020

KEEPING SAN FRANCISCANS IN THEIR HOMES AND HOUSING SAN FRANCISCANS

- In the coming year, we will continue to fight for an expansion of housing, eviction prevention, and subsidies that ensure homeless San Franciscans have access to deeply affordable housing, while those at risk of homelessness can stay in their homes.
- While Our City, Our Home battles lawsuits from corporate interests, we will be exploring alternative options to realize the measure and the funding as soon as possible. This includes releasing a report with recommendations based on the experience of homeless people on how the new system should be structured, seating the oversight body.
- We are in the process of forming a Vehicularly Housed Residents' Association, "Our Wheels, Our Home", where homeless leaders staying in their vehicles can lead the fight for safe parking and against criminalization. We plan to secure multiple safe parking sites in 2020 as well as a halt to the practice of towing vehicles that are homes to the marginally housed.
- We will be centering community voices in the creation of a chartered oversight commission for the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing, so that the department is held accountable in its spending and policy decisions.



EXPANDING ACCESS TO CARE

- We are working to dramatically expand access to mental health, and substance abuse treatment. We will push for these investments both legislatively and at the ballot, including securing revenue to fund new and expanded programs.
- We will be working to reform the Coordinated Entry system, making it equitable for all homeless San Franciscans seeking access to housing and shelter.

TAKING ON THE CRIMINALIZATION OF HOMELESSNESS

- We will be fighting back against unprecedented criminalization of our community, whether unsheltered, vehicularly housed, or being pushed out of existing housing, and work towards having an alternative to a police response to homelessness.
- We will be strengthening the City's policy on property confiscation and disposal, as we ensure the policy is properly followed by City departments. We will use legal, legislative and creative tactics to bring attention to and remedy the City's violations.





JOIN THE STRUGGLE



STAY INVOLVED!

BUY AND READ THE STREET SHEET:

Our vendors keep 100% of the money they receive from your purchase. Many of our vendors now accept Venmo as a digital alternative to cash. Reach out to our editor, Quiver Watts, to submit writing, artwork, or to volunteer skills such as graphic design or teaching a writing workshop. Street Sheet is the best way for you to tune-in to the latest developments in local policy, and our articles are primarily written by folks impacted by homelessness.

JOIN THE FIGHT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS:

We have simple fact sheets on SF homelessness and best practices for supporting your homeless neighbors on our website, cohsf.org. You can email our Human Rights Organizers, Kelley Cutler and Armando Garcia. Sign up for action alerts on our website, and plug into our social media pages on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Search "Coalition on Homelessness" or "Street Sheet".

FUNDRAISING:

Our support primarily comes from individual donors like you. There are many ways to contribute to our fundraising, which are detailed on our website at www.cohsf.org/ways-to-give. Jay Rice, our Development Director, is always happy to discuss upcoming fundraising opportunities as well as ways to collaborate on fundraising with the Coalition. All staff contact information available at www.cohsf.org/who-we-are.

JOIN THE STRUGGLE:

Workgroups meet weekly at our office at 280 Turk Street, and are open to the public:
Housing Justice meets Tuesdays at 12:00pm
Human Rights meets Wednesdays at 12:30pm

SAVE THE DATE

Don't miss our twentieth annual Art Auction fundraiser, featuring artwork from hundreds of local artists!

Where: SOMArts Cultural Center

WHEN: Thursday September 10, 2020

Local artist Alejandro created the beautiful cover art you see on this issue. The image reflects the hundreds of vendors who have given so many hours of their lives to distributing the stories within these pages, and the history of the paper that has brought you the word on the street for 30 years.

Artwork by Alejandro (they/them)

web: alejandrodelaacosta.net

ig: @alejandro_delacosta

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COALITION ON HOMELESSNESS, SF

OUR STAFF:

Miguel Carrera, Kelley Cutler, Nathaly Frias, Jennifer Friedenbach, Armando Garcia, Olivia Glowacki, Emmett House, TJ Johnston, Jason Law, Sam Lew, Tracey Mixon, Jay Rice (they/them), Quiver Watts (they/them).

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