

TURNING THE TIDES

In 1987, a small team of scruffy activists, homeless folks, and people working in shelters banded together. With no funding but a lot of heart they envisioned a San Francisco that offered housing to every person, and for thirty years we have been working to make that vision real. We still have a long way to go, but thanks to our tireless volunteers and tenacious staff we have won victory after victory alongside homeless communities fighting for a place, fighting for homes.

As we move into another decade of building power within homeless communities, we look fondly back on the years of organizing and movement building that got us to this point. From the birth of the Street Sheet newspaper, the first homeless paper in the nation, to the expansion of housing and shelter infrastructure across the city, to the incredible coalition we have built to advocate for a budget that reflects the needs of all San Franciscans, we have made so much progress toward the future that our founders envisioned.

Yes, 2017 has been a trying year. With a new president actively antagonizing our constituents, with natural disasters pushing more and more people onto the streets, with new politicized attacks on homeless San Franciscans we are battered from the storm. But we've bucked the tide for thirty years working to support our community and our course is set to a future in which every homeless San Franciscan has a place to call home.





2017 AT A GLANCE

Won, alongside our incredible community partners, **732 housing subsidies** for homeless households and also reinstated a homeless preference for HUD housing.

Implemented a number of **improvements to Navigation Centers** including extending length of stay for some, and winning due process rights for residents.

Helped pass a **progressive Use of Force** order for SFPD and reformed a similar order for BART police through the BART advisory board.

Secured **funding** for a new homeless family emergency shelter with showers, and beds.

Continued our fight to prevent SFPD from adopting Tasers, a dangerous and unreliable weapon.

Won amnesty for homeless people facing warrants for so-called "Quality of Life" crimes and decreased the number of such citations issued by another 51%.

Removed more hurtful components of an antihomeless chop shop legislation by taking it out of police department and created pathway to get property back without paying impound fees.

Dialogued with hundreds of homeless people during at least **7 weekly outreaches** – ensuring homeless people's voices are driving our agenda and holding us accountable.

MAIDEN VOYAGE OF OUR HOMELESS PEOPLE'S POPULAR PROJECT

This year we expanded a project that has supported the growth and organizing power of our homeless community by building the skills of folks in encampments, shelters and SROs to speak publicly, write their stories, and facilitate organizing meetings. We hosted our first Homeless Speakers Bureau event and packed the house with hundreds of attentive listeners excited to hear firsthand the stories and political strategies of our homeless members, who are at the forefront of our work here.



WE SET A COURSE TO DECRIMINALIZE POVERTY IN SAN FRANCISCO

Building on our success decreasing so-called "Quality of Life" citations by 30% in 2016, this year we were able to push SFPD to decrease citations by 51%. We also fought back an attempt to target and criminalize homeless people for having bike parts, a policy that would have effectively created a separate set of standards that would only apply to homeless people and would give police further protection for profiling poor people. Lastly, we are working with allies to reduce the level of fines and fees impoverished people are burdened with, in part by creating an easy way for homeless people to resolve camping tickets.



HELPING FOLKS DROP ANCHOR IN HOUSING

This year through the budget process we were able to win subsidies that will move 332 homeless households off the streets and into stable housing. We were also able to reinstate the preference for homeless families (including those living in SROs) for public housing units. Additionally we got the Housing Authority to set aside 50 federal housing choice vouchers for families in residential hotels and 350 vouchers for homeless and formerly homeless households while also reinstating the preference for homeless people including families living in residential hotels for HUD housing.





WEATHERING THE STORM

As those left unhoused struggle to survive life on the streets we have successfully fought to expand access to shelters and Navigation Centers. Through our budget advocacy we were able to secure funding for due process and shelter advocate services in the Navigation Centers. As SF families in crisis are forced to sleep on mats on the floor without regular shower access in a crowded room with dozens of other families today, we garnered funding after leading a campaign for a new family emergency shelter tomorrow. We were also able to implement mediation procedures in publicly funded housing, keeping folks from going through the eviction process and keeping people in their homes. We also successfully pushed the Homeless Department to revise city contracts with non-profit housing providers to include plans for eviction prevention.

30 YEARS OF BUCKING THE CURRENT

1987-1990

• A ragtag group of community activists and homeless folks, fed up with the lack of a response to homelessness that addressed the root causes, formed the Coalition on Homelessness.

• The Coalition established the most progressive welfare income disregard programs in the country, whereby cash aid recipients could retain funds to move into permanent housing.

• Founded the Street Sheet, now holding the double distiction of being both the oldest continuously published street newspaper in North America, and the paper with the largest circulation.

1991-1995

• The Coalition created the first supportive housing for homeless people in San Francisco in the form of Community Housing Partnership, which now provides over 1,000 units of permanent affordable supportive housing, and employs homeless people in the construction, maintenance, and support services at those housing locations.

• The Coalition designed and advocated for the McMillan Center, an innovative 24-hour drop-in facility for substance users, as an innovative strategy to reduce the number of street deaths.

• We developed the Uniform Grievance Procedure with other organizations to ensure shelter residents have due process rights and are not unfairly evicted from shelters.

• The Coalition advocated for and designed A Woman's Place, a dropin center, shelter, and transitional housing program now assisting mentally disabled women, through the convening of the Homeless Women's Task Force.

• Fought back another electoral attempt to deduct rent from welfare recipients checks.

• Succeeded in passing a resolution at the Board of Supervisors to demand an end to the Matrix program, which broadly persecuted homeless people who were forced to live on the streets through ticketing, property confiscation and police sweeps.

1996-2000

• Thanks to Coalition pressure, the District Attorney dismissed 39,000 tickets issued by the anti-homeless Matrix program.

• The Coalition's General Assistance Rights Union became an independent organization: People Organized to Win Employment Rights (POWER). This eventually led to single adult welfare recipients earning a living wage and winning free Muni for youth in SF.

• We spearheaded the campaign for substance abuse treatment on demand, which resulted in over \$12 million dollars in new treatment funds.

• Low-income mothers organized by the Coalition designed the concept and garnered funding for a community-based 24-hour dropin treatment center for families with children living in the Tenderloin, called Oshun, after the Yoruba Orisha of healing.

• The Coalition wrote and successfully campaigned for adoption of a "No Turn Away" policy for families seeking emergency shelter in San Francisco.

• We organized for and wrote legislation to create a single standard of care, whereby uninsured mentally ill people are afforded equal access to mental health treatment as those who are insured, saving 1,700 from losing treatment.

2001-2005

• Together with community partner organizations, we formed, and later staffed, the People's Budget Collaborative, which identified alternative City budget savings and revenues and over the years has staved off tens of millions in cuts to poverty abatement programs.

• The Coalition led the work that created the Mission Neighborhood Resource Center (MNRC)—the first resource center in the Mission District. Everyday, the MNRC provides critical services to over 100 clients, most of them Latino. the Mission District. Everyday, the MNRC provides critical services to over 100 clients, most of them Latino.

 The Coalition identified hundreds of San Francisco Housing Authority vacant units and successfully pushed the Housing Authority to place 300 homeless families in those units.

THE COALITION ON HOMELESSNESS IS FOUNDED

1989 THE STREET SHEET IS CREATED

2006-2010

• Our work led to the creation of the Shelter Monitoring Committee, which tracks conditions in shelters and resulted in exposure and correction of countless problems in the shelter system.

• The Coalition passed legislation that ensures vacant publicly owned surplus City property be turned over for the use of housing for homeless people. This has led to two large affordable housing projects targeting homeless veterans and families.

 Together with organizations in the East Bay, Los Angeles, Portland, and Seattle, we collectively founded the Western Regional Advocacy Project (WRAP).

• Homeless families organized by the Coalition on Homelessness campaigned for a local rental housing subsidy and increased eviction prevention funding, protecting hundreds of families from homelessness and enabling hundreds more to exit homelessness.

• We released Shelter Shock—a report on human rights violations in the shelter system, revealing that 55% of all shelter clients reported experiencing some form of abuse, and bringing media light and legislative action to these problems.

• The Coalition pushed through legislation to mandate minimum standards in the shelters. For the first time, our shelters have enforceable minimum standards around health, hygiene, and the human rights of shelter residents.

• Halted the practice by the City of spraying homeless people with high powered hoses in the middle of the night.

• The Coalition handled more than 3,000 civil rights cases per year, connecting homeless folks who have received "quality of life" citations to pro bono legal representation through the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights.

2010-PRESENT

• We passed legislation to still the runaround associated with accessing shelter, by lengthening shelter stays and reducing wait times.

• Settled a lawsuit that led to greatly improved access and conditions for people with disabilities.

• We initiated a working group to move away from a system that requires individuals to stand in line for up to 17 hours. This led to a new very successful call-in system.

• We beat back the implementation of Tasers three times, which are known to increase fatalities at the hands of the police, and instead worked to get the police to implement a crisis intervention model to address people in psychiatric crisis.

• We won a local stimulus package of \$3,000,000 for new jobs in shelters and resource centers.

• Ensured all homeless people in San Francisco would receive preferences for HUD housing.

• Led a powerful coalition to garner over \$6,000,000 in city funding for a right to counsel for tenants facing displacement, which will result in over 2,500 additional low-income households having a fighting chance of staying in their homes.

• The Coalition won 1,306 housing subsidies for homeless families with children, elderly, youth, single adults and disabled adults over five years.

• Secured \$2.7 million to fix up vacant public housing and turn them over to nearly 200 homeless households, and got both public housing and section 8 wait lists opened back up

• We released The Roadmap: A Five Year Plan to End the Crisis of Family Homelessness in San Francisco: a practical plan that the Mayor publicly endorsed and garnered \$1.5 million match of private funding for new housing subsidies.

• We collaborated with UC Berkeley Center for Human Rights to release Punishing the Poorest: How the Criminalization of Homelessness Perpetuates Poverty in San Francisco.

• Released in collaboration with SRO Families United ally organization an SRO Families report entitled Living in the Margins: An analysis and Census of San Francisco Families Living in SROs.

• Worked with ally organizations to bring "Right to Rest" legislation to the California legislature.

• Brought international attention to the city's inhumane homeless sweeps and launched a campaign to organize and cultivate leaders in our homeless encampments.

• Secured funding for a new emergency family shelter.

• Transformed the SFPD Use of Force Department General Order, which greatly limits justified use of force.

• Succeeded in getting the city to fund an emergency hotel voucher program for those families that are turned away from emergency shelter.

· Worked with community allies to halt the building of a new jail

• Garnered 550 additional federal housing subsidies for homeless households.

• Helped get the courts to provide amnesty for homeless tickets, and drop issuing warrants on unpaid homeless tickets, which led to cutting down the number of tickets homeless people get by half.

CHARTING A COURSE FOR 2018

STREET SHEET

We believe you will agree that our paper looks even better than ever. With a new editor at the helm, we have a lot ahead of us this coming year. We will be working to increase the participation of our homeless contributors by providing stipends to our writers, offering Writer's Workshops, coordinating better integration of our vendors into the broader community, and running articles that keep readers coming back for more information. We will also be working on expanding the Homeless Speakers Bureau to ensure that those who have experienced homelessness are being represented in mainstream discourse around homelessness.

HUMAN RIGHTS

In order to continue our strong work against the criminalization of homelessness we will be doing a lot of work to develop our Sweeps Watch crew, a group of housed people who show up to document any sweeps or encampment resolutions and ensure that homeless folks belongings are accounted for. We will also be expanding our work within the encampments, hosting Homeless People's Popular Assemblies to build the leadership and organizing skills of our constituents. In addition, we are looking to decrease the city's reliance on a police response to homelessness – and we will examine and fight for changed dispatch protocols and other areas of the police homeless response to do just that.

HOUSING JUSTICE

We are working hard and fast to ensure a fundamental change to our homeless system where homeless people are not forced to sleep on the streets for years on end. We are looking to expand places for people to sleep from opening a shelter in the underserved community of the Bayview to safe and dignified sleep spaces organized by homeless people to navigation centers to a massive expansion of housing available to homeless households. We will also work on simplified access and removing the many barriers to housing and shelter our people face. We are hoping to bring two key ballot initiatives that will shrink down the time households are forced to remain homeless – one in June 2018 for families, and one in November of 2018 for housing more broadly. We will fight hard for housing in 2018!









STAY INVOLVED WITH US!

By giving as little as \$20 a month, you can ensure the Coalition retains an independent voice unrestricted by government funding. Visit www.cohsf.org and click "Donate Now" to become a sustainer!

SPREAD THE WORD

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Invite our Homeless Speakers Bureau to come speak at your house party, birthday party, or community event! The proceeds benefit our speakers as well as the work of the Coalition on Homelessness. Contact our Development Coordinator at development@cohsf.org for more details.

DONATE GOODS

Donate your old car through Vehicles for Charity in the name of the COH. Call 1-800-574-0888 for more information. Donate items to Community Thrift store and pick COH as your charity of choice. Call (415) 861-4910 for more information.

JOIN THE STRUGGLE

We always need more people to join our campaigns, conduct outreach, contribute content to the Street Sheet, or help out in the office. You can also join a workgroup: Housing Justice meets on Tuesdays at noon and Human Rights on Wednesdays at 12:30, both at our office.

STAY INFORMED

Keep up to date on homeless issues and policy in San Francisco by purchasing the Street Sheet and visiting streetsheet.org. Educate your friends, family, and co-workers on poverty issues in San Francisco. You can also sign up for our mailing list at www.cohsf.org.

THANK YOU TO OUR 2017 SUPPORTERS!



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