

# ADVANCING JUSTICE

## ANNUAL REPORT 2022

**COALITION ON  
HOMELESSNESS**

**35  
YEARS**

**UPLIFTING  
OUR  
COMMUNITY**



Poster  
Syndicate  
San Francisco



1987:

A RAGTAG GROUP OF UNHOUSED LEADERS AND ALLIES, FED UP WITH HOMELESSNESS POLICY THAT FAILED TO ADDRESS THE ROOT CAUSES, FORMED THE COALITION ON HOMELESSNESS.

1990:

THE COALITION CREATED THE COMMUNITY HOUSING PARTNERSHIP (NOW KNOWN AS HOMERISE), A UNIQUE HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT PROJECT WHICH NOW PROVIDES OVER 1,000 UNITS OF PERMANENTLY AFFORDABLE SUPPORTIVE HOUSING FOR THE CITY'S POOREST RESIDENTS AND EMPLOYS HOMELESS PEOPLE IN THE CONSTRUCTION, MAINTENANCE, AND SUPPORT SERVICES AT THOSE HOUSING LOCATIONS. THIS WAS THE CITY'S FIRST "SUPPORTIVE HOUSING" FOR HOMELESS PEOPLE, A MODEL NOW USED TO HOUSE THOUSANDS OF FORMERLY HOMELESS SAN FRANCISCANS.

1989:

THE COALITION FOUNDED THE STREET SHEET, NOW THE OLDEST CONTINUOUSLY PUBLISHED STREET NEWSPAPER IN NORTH AMERICA.

# ABOUT THE COALITION ON HOMELESSNESS

The Coalition on Homelessness grew out of the lack of government responsiveness to the homeless crisis in the 1980s. A ragtag group of homeless people and community activists, tired of emergency responses to what was a systemic crisis stemming from economic and racial inequities, joined together to form an organization that focused on the real causes of and long-term solutions to homelessness.

We are firmly dedicated to the elimination of homelessness – as directed by homeless people themselves. We organize poor and homeless people to create permanent solutions to poverty and homelessness while protecting the civil and human rights of those forced to remain on the streets.

Since our formation in 1987, we have won many sustainable and landmark changes in homeless policy affecting all areas of anti-poverty work, from welfare rights to housing development to economic justice. Our homeless and poor members have been able to effect the most notable changes in the history of San Francisco homeless policy. Whole organizations and programs were birthed as a result of our struggle. With integrity, determination, love in our hearts, and sweat on our brows, we take on one of the most pressing issues facing San Francisco. While we have a long road ahead of us, countless victories as well as painful losses trail behind us, more often than not, we persevere. In this special anniversary issue of our annual report, travel with us through the last 35 years of advancing justice and the important campaigns we're still working on today!

## 2022 WINS

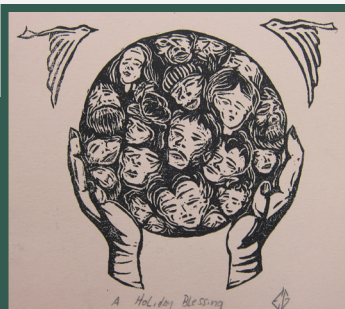
- Codified Due Process Rights for shelter residents in San Francisco
- Reached the goal of expanding shelter for 1,000 people funded and operated
- Funding for 1,247 new Supportive Housing Units
- Funding for 1,836 additional rental subsidies
- Funding for 343 new treatment beds
- Three new permanent drinking fountains installed and six more funded over next two years
- Lawsuit and small claims cases filed against the City's sweeps

1996:

THE COALITION LED THE FIGHT AGAINST MAYOR FRANK JORDAN'S ANTI-HOMELESS MATRIX PROGRAM, IMPLEMENTED IN 1993, WHICH BROADLY PERSECUTED HOMELESS PEOPLE WHO WERE FORCED TO LIVE ON THE STREETS THROUGH TICKETING, PROPERTY CONFISCATION AND POLICE SWEEPS. IN 1996, WE FORCED THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY TO DISMISS 39,000 MATRIX CITATIONS AGAINST HOMELESS PEOPLE, AND EVENTUALLY PUT AN END TO THE PROGRAM.

1998:

AFTER PRODUCING A GROUNDBREAKING REPORT ENTITLED "LOCKED OUT," BASED ON INTERVIEWS WITH HUNDREDS OF HOMELESS PEOPLE EXPERIENCING MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES, IT BECAME CLEAR THAT THE MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM NEEDED A LOT OF CHANGE. ONE FINDING WAS THAT THE LACK OF INSURANCE CREATED A BARRIER TO CARE. WE ALONG WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERS ORGANIZED FOR AND WROTE LEGISLATION TO CREATE A SINGLE STANDARD OF CARE WHEREBY UNINSURED MENTALLY ILL PEOPLE ARE AFFORDED EQUAL MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT AS THOSE WHO ARE INSURED.



1997:

THE SUBSTANCE USE AND MENTAL HEALTH WORKING GROUP (SAMH), WORKING OUT OF THE COALITION, SPEARHEADED A CAMPAIGN FOR SUBSTANCE USE TREATMENT ON DEMAND, WHICH RESULTED IN OVER \$12 MILLION IN NEW TREATMENT FUNDS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF A GRASSROOTS COMMUNITY PLANNING PROCESS FOR FUNDING PRIORITIES AND CONTRACT AWARDS. THE FIGHT FOR TREATMENT ON DEMAND CONTINUES TO THIS DAY.

## STREET SHEET

Street Sheet has been *the* San Francisco newspaper with an ear to the street, reporting on homelessness for over thirty years. We've been a platform for unhoused people to share their reporting, artwork, poetry, and stories since 1989, and our paper continues to hold City leaders accountable for the ongoing crisis of homelessness. Our vendors earn an income slinging the sheets on street corners and bus stops around San Francisco, and we've worked hard to rebuild the vendor program as we move through the ongoing pandemic. In 2022, we published hard-hitting editions focused on the struggles and resilience of unhoused immigrants and the shocking abuses of the City highlighted by the Stolen Belonging project, and we also celebrated the creativity of our creators with our Ghost Stories Halloween issue and our beloved poetry edition. You can also check out our podcast Street Speak wherever you get your podcasts.



## SHELTER ACCESS

In 1992, we fought for San Francisco to become the first city in the nation with due process rights for shelter residents. This year, after the right was dropped during the pandemic, and with the support of Board President Walton, we codified the Shelter Grievance Policy to ensure that every person in every shelter in the city still enjoys those rights. We also pushed the City to commit to reinstating a shelter self-referral system, and have secured funding for 1,000 new shelter beds since the passage of Prop. C. These wins will help ensure that unhoused San Franciscans who want shelter can access it.



**2000:**

LED BY COLEMAN ADVOCATES, THE “PEOPLE’S BUDGET COLLABORATIVE” WAS FOUNDED BY A COALITION OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS INCLUDING THE COALITION ON HOMELESSNESS TO IDENTIFY ALTERNATIVE CITY BUDGET SAVINGS AND REVENUES TO REDISTRIBUTE TO PROGRAMS FOR MARGINALIZED AND POOR SAN FRANCISCANS. IN THE FOLLOWING YEARS, THE COALITION PLAYED A HUGE ROLE IN THE PEOPLE’S BUDGET COLLABORATIVE’S ANNUAL BUDGET ADVOCACY, AND CONTINUE TO BE ACTIVE MEMBERS IN ITS SUCCESSOR, THE BUDGET JUSTICE COALITION. THROUGH THESE TWO GROUPS, WE HAVE FOUGHT FOR AND WON MILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN ADDITIONAL HOMELESSNESS FUNDING EVERY YEAR SINCE.

**2007:**

TOGETHER WITH ALLIED ORGANIZATIONS IN BERKELEY, OAKLAND, LOS ANGELES, PORTLAND, AND SEATTLE, WE COLLECTIVELY FOUNDED THE WESTERN REGIONAL ADVOCACY PROJECT (WRAP) VIA COALITION FOUNDER PAUL BODEN.

**2005:**

THE COALITION IDENTIFIED HUNDREDS OF SAN FRANCISCO HOUSING AUTHORITY VACANT UNITS AND DEMANDED THAT HOMELESS FAMILIES BE PLACED IN THOSE UNITS. IN A GREAT VICTORY FOR HOMELESS FAMILIES, THE SFHA AGREED TO OUR DEMANDS AND 300 HOMELESS FAMILIES FILLED THOSE UNITS. THIS CREATED THE GROUNDWORK FOR SFHA TO LATER INCLUDE A PREFERENCE FOR HOMELESS HOUSEHOLDS ON THEIR WAITLIST, ENSURING THOSE WITHOUT HOUSING DON’T HAVE TO WAIT AS LONG FOR A UNIT.



## ORGANIZING VEHICULARLY UNHOUSED PEOPLE

Over the last two years, we’ve made a strong effort to organize San Franciscans living in their vehicles. This year, we worked with vehicularly housed folks to advocate against the City’s practice of towing their homes by meeting with SFMTA board members and routinely applying pressure in public meetings. We also supported residents of the Bayview safe parking site in their demands for better conditions, resulting in several meetings between residents and the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH). Additionally, we continued to hold community meetings with unhoused neighbors in the Lake Merced area to demand a safe parking site and other resources in their neighborhood. This group successfully garnered commitments from Supervisor Melgar and HSH to build a new parking site, and to be included in designing the program and rules for the site.

## FIXING HOUSING ACCESS

For years, our unhoused members have derided the coordinated entry process: the system used by the City to determine how housing resources will be distributed to whom. Many who have attempted to access housing through coordinated entry find the assessment invasive and offensive, the process confusing and unfair, and the housing resources offered inappropriate. This year, we gathered currently and formerly unhoused families, youth, and single adults together to give input on their experience with coordinated entry through listening sessions and popular assemblies. We used this feedback to write and release “A New Coordinated Entry,” our report detailing the findings and recommendations for the coordinated entry system that were most important to unhoused San Franciscans. Through a year-long campaign of meetings, public hearings, and direct action, we have pushed the City to embark on a process to reform coordinated entry and remain involved in that process.

2008:

FOLLOWING UP ON OUR EARLIER SUCCESS ESTABLISHING DUE PROCESS RIGHTS AND SHELTER GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES, THE COALITION PASSED LEGISLATION FORMING THE SHELTER MONITORING COMMITTEE. THIS ESTABLISHED STANDARDS OF CARE IN THE SHELTER SYSTEM AROUND HEALTH, HYGIENE, AND HUMAN RIGHTS AND A COMMITTEE TO TRACK CONDITIONS IN SHELTERS. IF SHELTERS DO NOT FOLLOW THE STANDARDS, THEY MAY BE FINED, AND THE COMMITTEE REPORTS TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AND THE MAYOR, RESULTING IN THE EXPOSURE AND CORRECTION OF COUNTLESS PROBLEMS IN THE SHELTER SYSTEM OVER THE YEARS.

2014:

WITH NOWHERE TO GO, MANY UNHOUSED PEOPLE SEEK SHELTER IN TRANSPORTATION HUBS, INCLUDING BART. IN 2014, BART ANNOUNCED A NEW POLICY TO CITE AND ARREST ANYONE SITTING OR SLEEPING IN THEIR HALLWAYS, OR STATIONS, WITH AN EXPLICIT GOAL OF RIDDING THE STATIONS OF UNHOUSED PEOPLE. WE FOUGHT BACK, HELD A SLEEP-IN AT POWELL STREET STATION AND SUCCESSFULLY HALTED THIS BART PRACTICE OF ARRESTING HOMELESS PEOPLE.

## THE FIGHT AGAINST CRIMINALIZATION

From Frank Jordan's Matrix program to Gavin Newsom's Sit/Lie laws, unhoused San Franciscans have long had their rights to survival under attack, and the Coalition has always been at the forefront of fighting back. In 2022, after years of documenting and fighting against the City's illegal sweeps, we filed a groundbreaking lawsuit with the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights, ACLU NorCal, and Latham & Watkins against the City of San Francisco. At the same time, we continue the fight to implement a Compassionate Alternative Response Team (CART) to replace the City's current system of displacement and property theft. We also completed our second year of our administrative claim program, helping individual homeless people sue the City and win cash settlements for their stolen possessions. With each campaign win, we get one step closer to ending San Francisco's long history of criminalizing.



2012:

PUBLIC HOUSING, FUNDED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, HAS THE LARGEST NUMBER OF HOUSING UNITS AND RENTAL ASSISTANCE VOUCHERS FOR IMPOVERISHED SAN FRANCISCANS. UNFORTUNATELY, IT TRADITIONALLY HAD THE LONGEST WAITLIST WITH THOUSANDS OF HOUSEHOLDS LANGUISHING FOR YEARS. IN 2012, WE STARTED TO DEMAND AND WIN CHANGES IN THE ELIGIBILITY AND OCCUPANCY GUIDELINES FOR A PREFERENCE FOR UNHOUSED SAN FRANCISCANS SO THEIR WAIT TIME WOULD SHORTEN. THIS IS STILL IN PLACE TODAY.

## WATER FOR ALL

In 2022, we continued our work to expand water access for houseless San Franciscans by working with the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to implement three new water fountains throughout the Tenderloin. We also secured funding for three additional fountains in this year's budget, and are working with the PUC to establish an internal working group to address gaps in water access.



2017:

WORKING WITH ALLIED ORGANIZATIONS, WE SUCCESSFULLY TRANSFORMED THE SFPD USE OF FORCE DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER, SIGNIFICANTLY LIMITING SFPD'S ABILITY TO USE FORCE AGAINST CRIMINALIZED SAN FRANCISCANS, INCLUDING UNHOUSED PEOPLE. THIS FIGHT INCLUDED BANNING THE USE OF TASERS, AND PREVENTING THEIR RE-IMPLEMENTATION THREE TIMES OVER THE YEARS.

2020:

ALONGSIDE MANY ALLIES, WE FOUGHT DURING THE FIRST YEAR OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC TO FORCE THE CITY TO OPEN UP 2,500 SHELTER IN PLACE (SIP) HOTELS FOR UNHOUSED COMMUNITY MEMBERS OTHERWISE UNABLE TO KEEP THEMSELVES AND THEIR COMMUNITIES SAFE. LATER, WHEN THE CITY ATTEMPTED TO CLOSE THE HOTELS BEFORE THE END OF 2020, WE FORCED THEM TO KEEP HOTELS OPEN AND DEVELOP A PLAN TO HOUSE ALL HOTEL RESIDENTS RATHER THAN KICKING THEM BACK ONTO THE STREETS. THROUGH OUR ADVOCACY, WE HAVE ALSO PUSHED THE CITY TO BUY SEVERAL OF THE HOTELS TO BECOME PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING.

2018:

IN AN HISTORIC BALLOT CAMPAIGN, THE COALITION FORMED OUR CITY OUR HOME TO DEVELOP AND PASS PROPOSITION C, RAISING AN ADDITIONAL \$300 MILLION IN TAX REVENUE ANNUALLY TO GO TO HOUSING AND SERVICES FOR UNHOUSED SAN FRANCISCANS. AFTER YEARS OF BEING HELD UP IN COURT, FUNDS FROM PROP. C TODAY HAVE ADDED 25% MORE HOUSING SLOTS, MEANING 2,474 HOUSEHOLDS HAVE LEFT HOMELESSNESS BEHIND. IN TOTAL, 3,591 HOUSING SLOTS HAVE BEEN FUNDED BY PROP. C. IN ADDITION, NOW THERE ARE 132 MORE TREATMENT BEDS OUT OF OVER 700 TO COME, AN ADDITIONAL 1,000 SHELTER SLOTS, AND FUNDING TO PREVENT 3,600 HOUSEHOLDS FROM BECOMING HOMELESS ARE IN PLACE.

## CITY FUNDING FOR SOLUTIONS

After initially passing in 2018, and finally having funds released in 2020, Prop. C continues to pay dividends in solutions for homeless people in San Francisco. These past two years, we successfully lobbied for Prop. C funds to be spent on about 3,000 new housing units and rental subsidies for homeless families, youth, and adults. We also secured funding to expand the City's substance use and mental health treatment system with 343 new treatment beds, behavioral health programs in supportive housing and shelter programs, and continued funding for drop-in and outreach services. Additionally, Prop. C has helped prevent homelessness for thousands of households through eviction prevention services, back rent support, and rental subsidies for seniors and people with disabilities.



# ADVANCING JUSTICE IN 2023 AND BEYOND...



## STAY INVOLVED

None of the work we do is possible without the support of all of our incredible volunteers, allies, and supporters. To keep advancing justice next year, we need your help! Here's how you can stay involved:

### READ THE STREET SHEET

Street Sheet is the only newspaper in San Francisco made by and for people impacted by homelessness! Buying and reading Street Sheet is the best way for you to stay up to date on what's new with San Francisco homelessness, and the money from your purchase goes directly to one of our vendors. Reach out to our editor at [qwatts@cohfsf.org](mailto:qwatts@cohfsf.org) to become a vendor, or to submit writing, poetry or artwork, or to volunteer skills such as graphic design or teaching a workshop.

### JOIN A WORKGROUP

Our weekly workgroups are where all the magic happens! Our staff and members work together to coordinate outreach, develop campaigns, and carry out the actions that advance our cause week by week. Reach out to our organizing staff at [www.cohfsf.org/who-we-are](http://www.cohfsf.org/who-we-are) to get information on how to join a meeting!

### BECOME A SUSTAINER

As a grassroots organization, we pride ourselves in receiving most of our funding from individual donors like you! We don't take government funding of any kind, nor any other funding sources which would compromise our fight for justice. The easiest way for you to give us a boost is by visiting our website at [cohfsf.org](http://cohfsf.org) and becoming a one-time donor or a monthly sustainer. Otherwise, reach out to our Development Director Carlos Wadkins at [cwadkins@cohfsf.org](mailto:cwadkins@cohfsf.org) to discuss all things fundraising.

## THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES...

IN THE LAST 35 YEARS, WE'VE COME A LOT FURTHER THAN MANY WOULD HAVE EXPECTED WHEN A FEW HOMELESS PEOPLE DECIDED TO TAKE THE FIGHT INTO THEIR OWN HANDS. WITH EVERY CAMPAIGN, WIN OR LOSE, THE COALITION ON HOMELESSNESS HAS CONTINUED TO ADVANCE JUSTICE AT THE DIRECTION OF HOMELESS PEOPLE! IN 2023, WE'LL KEEP FIGHTING TO STOP THE SWEEPS, TO FIX COORDINATED ENTRY, TO ENSURE HUMAN RIGHTS FOR UNHOUSED SAN FRANCISCANS AND, MOST IMPORTANTLY, TO WIN HOUSING FOR ALL!

### OUR STAFF:

Javier Bremond, Miguel Carrera, Solange Cuba, Jennifer Friedenbach, Yessica Hernandez, Emmett House, Ian James, TJ Johnston, Tyler Kyser, Jason Law, Tracey Mixon, LaKetha Pierce, Carlos Wadkins, Quiver Watts

### OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

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