Sheltering from the Ground Up:

Santa Cruz County's experience mobilizing care and shelter for people experiencing homelessness in a pandemic

Presenters:

- *Leslie Goodfriend*
- *Deborah Bresnick*
- *Monica Lippi*
- *Jessica Scheiner*

Why choose to take on sheltering?

Existing vendors stretched to capacity

Able to mobilize quickly

Believed we would only be sheltering for a few months

Achievements

- Quickly opened 6 Project Roomkey hotels, 2 semi-congregate shelters, one outdoor encampment and one transitional age youth trailer shelter
- Developed new relationships and strengthened existing relationships
  - CBOs, Public Health, County General Services, IT, Personnel
- Mobilization of sheltering staff allowed for expedited launch of Great Plates
- Employed hundreds of community members who would have otherwise been unemployed during the pandemic

Achievements continued

- A new County Housing for Health Division launched and will carry work forward
- Increased and focused housing case management and rehousing support
- Limited COVID outbreaks among people experiencing homelessness (PEH)
- Built capacity among COVID shelter staff who:
  - Altered career directions
  - Are being hired by other agencies
  - Available for fire evacuation site deployment
- Increased understanding of the epidemic of homelessness

Sheltering Our Homeless Population:
A look at the numbers

COVID Shelter Type	Individuals	Households
All COVID Shelters (total)	**1,079**	**928**
Congregate Shelters	221	204
Project Roomkey/Isolation (P1-P3)	474	407
Project Roomkey/Shelters	476	390
TAY Shelters	37	32

Exit Destinations	Households
Exits to Housing	152
Unhoused Exits	383
Unknown	290
Total	**825**

Quickly Mobilized Staff

Deploying Disaster Service Workers

A Collaborative Process

RECRUITMENT (PERSONNEL)	1	• RECIEVE AND PROCESS APPLICATIONS • ADD TO "PIPELINE"
INTERVIEW/JOB OFFER (HSD - INTERVIEW TEAMS)	2	• INTERVIEW APPLICANTS AND MAKE RECOMMENDATION FOR HIRE • ADD TO "PIPELINE"
ONBOARDING (PERSONNEL)	3	• ONBOARD RECOMMENDED HIRES; INPUT INTO SYSTEMS • UPDATE "PIPELINE"
JOB ASSIGNMENTS (HSD - DEPLOYMENT TEAM)	4	• COORDINATE NEEDS AT SHELTERS AND OTHER JOBS - WORK WITH MANAGERS/LEADS
	5	• REACH OUT TO POTENTIAL EH DSWS FOR UPDATED AVAILABILITY/INTEREST IN SPECIFIC ASSIGNEMENTS
	6	• ASSIGN STAFF TO SITE/JOB AND UPDATE MANAGERS/LEADS

Staffing Numbers

COVID RESPONSE STAFFING

MARCH 2020 - JULY 2021

690 Total Staff On Boarded
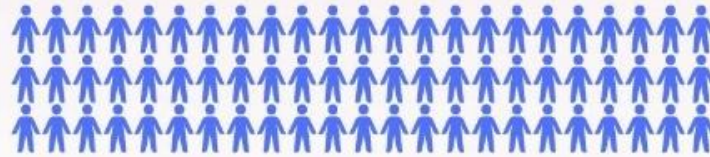
585 Staff Placed
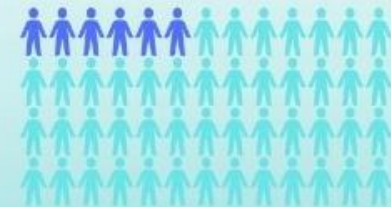Placement Rate: 85%
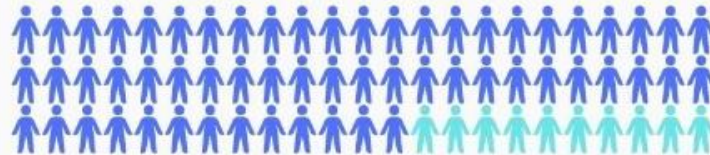
Of the 585 Staff Placed

520 Staff at Shelters
Shelter Placements: 89%
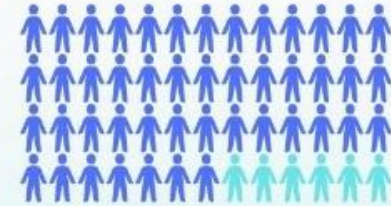
65 Staff in Other Support Roles
Support Role Placements: 11%

Staff Testimonials

https://youtu.be/NtRhrPjjrqo

https://youtu.be/8DhAlo1IHGo

Used Continuous Process Improvement to keep systems and processes running effectively and efficiently

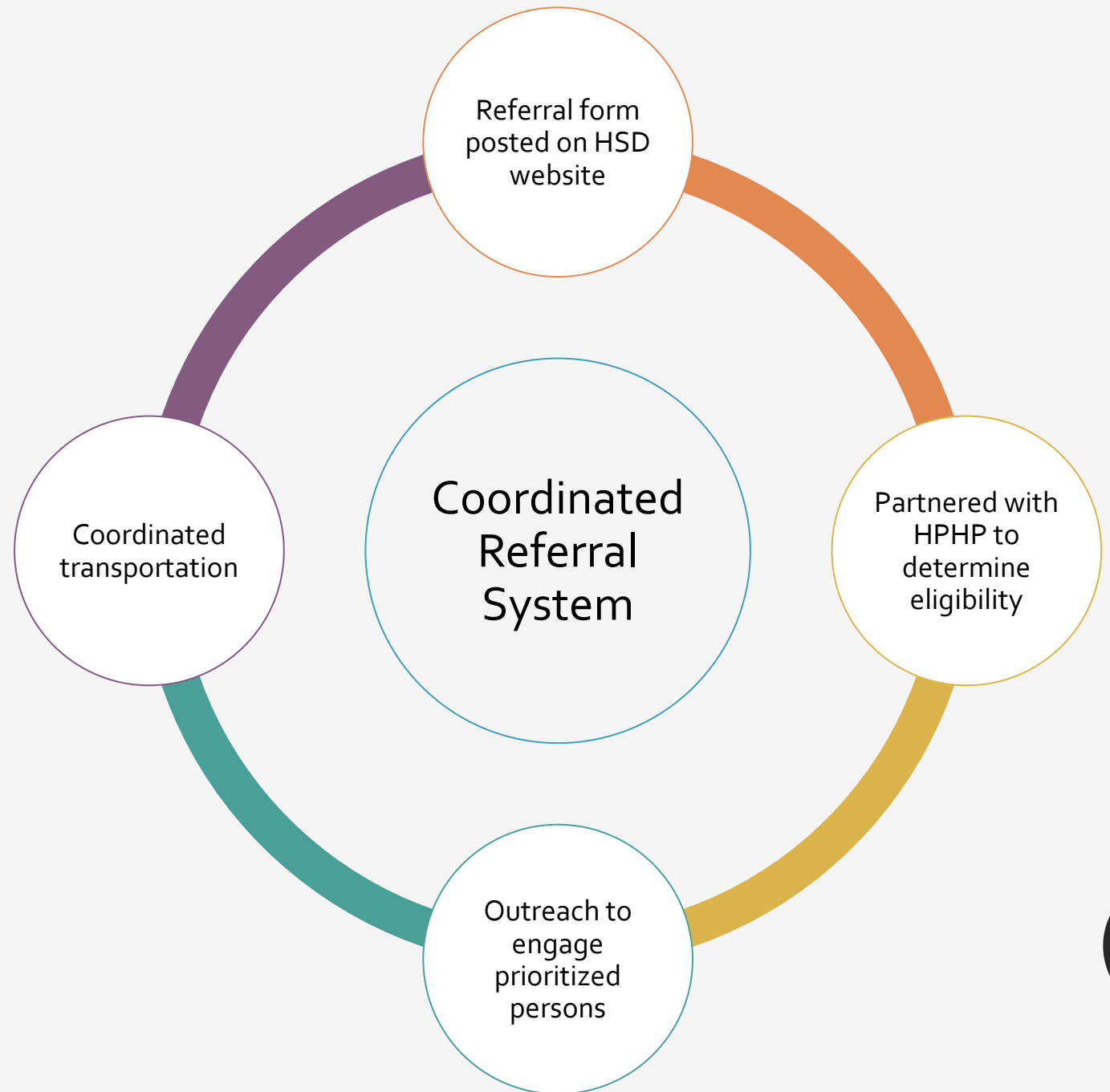## Consistent, ongoing communication strategies

- Monthly newsletter
- Surveys
- 7Shifts
- Virtual and in person meetings

Communication

Opening Shelters
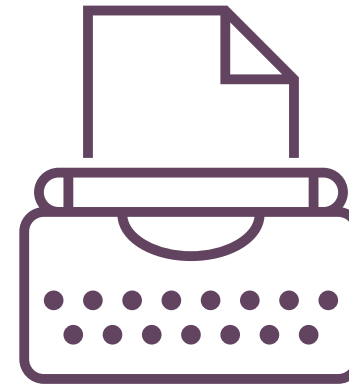
Building a Coordinated Referral System

Coordinated Referral System

- Referral form posted on HSD website
- Partnered with HPHP to determine eligibility
- Outreach to engage prioritized persons
- Coordinated transportation

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Keeping People Safe

Launching COVID Shelters

Public Health partnership

Policies and procedures

Food

Congregate and Non-Congregate Shelters

Operationalizing the Shelter System

Non-Congregate
Project Roomkey offered individual rooms, which attracted PEH who had not been part of the sheltering system before.

Congregate
Two congregate shelters with individual tents or partitions.

An outdoor managed encampment that required relocation.
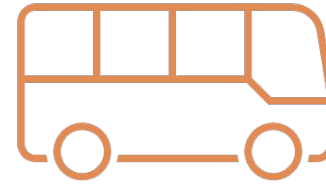
A trailer site for Transition Aged Youth.

Challenges:
- Guests with significant medical vulnerability
- Significant drug/mental health issues that were beyond staff's knowledge base
- Facilities issues
- Providing 24/7 management support
- Feelings of loneliness and isolation

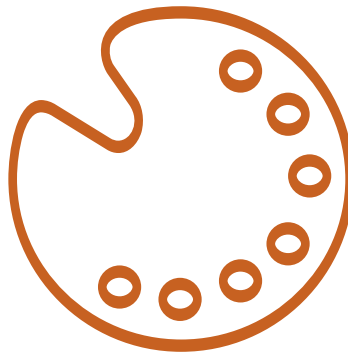# Services and Support Made Sheltering More Successful

Mental Health Team

Transportation and Drivers

Combat Loneliness and Isolation

Art Projects

Benefits, Assessments and Medical Care
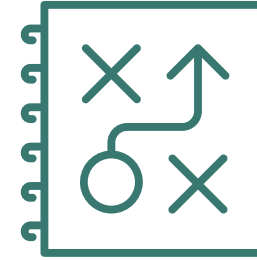
Staff Support Group

Isolation & Quarantine

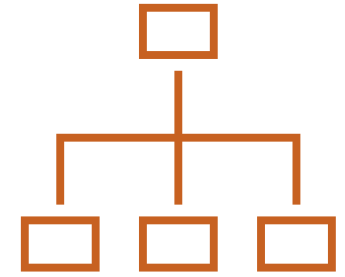Providing a safe and comfortable place to stay

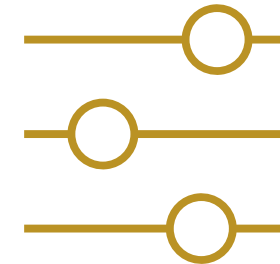# *Demobilizing Shelters and Finding Permanent Housing Solutions*

Rehousing Wave

Problem Solving

Housing Case Managers

Trauma and Stress Management

Options for Staff

Changing People's Lives

An experience that changed all of us

Guest Testimonials

https://youtu.be/_tqva2GWB4s

Questions