



Five-Point Racial and Economic Justice Agenda

Equity for the Unhoused Community

- **Eliminating Racial Disparities.** By every metric, people of color make up a larger share of the unhoused community than the overall population, and often the disparity is extreme: for example, Black communities make up at least 40% of San Francisco’s unhoused community but only 6% of its general population. Because structural racism is making people of color homeless, we must center communities of color in our homeless response and housing systems. We must prioritize people of color for housing; we must provide and fund tenant supports so that people of color in particular are not evicted from publicly funded housing; we must partner with communities of color in the design and development of new programs and models. We must use our data with accountability and transparency to communities of color (e.g., public dashboards, including statistics on demographics and disparities), and we must reassess our data systems with the knowledge that algorithmic decision-making embeds and amplifies racial bias. We must be willing to let go of tools that perpetuate racial bias and collaborate to develop better tools that promote equity in access and outcomes.
- **Moving from Resource Scarcity to Resource Equity.** Our data systems are a modernized, digital reflection of service systems rooted in anti-poverty and racial bias, including historical attitudes about deserving and undeserving poor. The coordinated entry system (CES) uses eligibility criteria and other non-neutral tools to restrict access to resources on the basis of prioritization; at the same time, for a variety of reasons, the system consistently fails to prioritize people who clearly should be prioritized for housing and other supports. This operationalizes a resource scarcity model, in direct opposition to racial equity and other core values of the human services field. Resource scarcity must give way to resource equity, which demands tools and systems that see the true scope of needs and challenge us to mobilize the political will to meet them.
- **Ending Criminalization of Unhoused People.** The City must prioritize a compassionate, nonviolent response to street-based homelessness that connects people with resources they need and want rather than criminalizing them and perpetuating cycles of racism, poverty, and state-sanctioned violence. We must divest from the carceral system and reinvest in community-based programs like CARTSF, which envision a more just and meaningful response to unsheltered homelessness.
- **Promoting Due Process.** We must reinstate due process in our shelter grievance policies and procedures, and we must expand those rights across all shelter and temporary housing programs, now and in the future.

Wage Equity for Frontline Nonprofit Workers

- **Wage Equity and Hazard Pay.** Wage equity—including retroactive hazard pay for the duration of the pandemic—must be a fully, publicly funded mandate across the essential services system, with a wage floor of \$[24]/hour for the case managers, shelter counselors, desk clerks, janitors, and other frontline workers. A publicly funded mandate for wage equity, which includes hazard pay, and health and safety standards that protect frontline workers, are critical for racial equity in our homeless response system.
- **Employee Resources and Support.** We must implement and fund a citywide standard of care for staff experiencing trauma and secondary trauma as they work daily with people who are suffering. We must provide as-soon-as-possible access to COVID-19 vaccinations for frontline staff and all people of color, and until vaccinations are widely available, we must provide supports like hotel rooms for staff bringing COVID-19 risks home to medically vulnerable family members.
- **Professional Advancement.** Within organizations, we must perform an equity review of job descriptions and, among other things, replace advanced-degree requirements with equivalent experience, including and especially lived experience. Within City agencies, we must advocate for civil service system reform, working with the City’s Department of Human Resources to address access and equity in hiring. Reforms should include neighborhood preferences as well as replacing educational/degree requirements with lived and relevant experience (including work history).

Contracting Equity and Resource (Re-)Distribution

- **Equity in Bidding.** The RFP process should award points to organizations whose leadership truly reflects the diversity of the communities served, including management, executive leadership, and boards of directors. To this end, the RFP process should require applicants to provide the demographics of clients, staff (broken down by frontline, administrative/management/executive), and the board of directors. Demographics should include race/ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, neighborhood residence, and lived experience with homelessness.
- **Equity in Resource Distribution.** We must create equitable baselines and funding parity across the system, redistributing resources if and as necessary to achieve racial, ethnic, SOGI, geographic, etc., equity. To this end, the City must perform a comparison of contract budgets across like programs, analyzing salary and operating differentials. The City must redress funding differentials in personnel and operating budgets (including underfunded subcontracts) to ensure both livable wages (which will lower turnover and help maintain adequate staffing in frontline programs) and sufficient capacity-building resources at BIPOC-lead organizations. Contract awards and renewal budgets must include an operating line-item for capacity building in BIPOC-lead, grassroots organizations. The line-item should be flexible enough to support a range of functions within and across an organization’s contracts, from technology to grant-writing support.

Capacity Building and Leadership Development

- **Capacity Building and Access.** Continuing from the previous section, institutional funders who are serious about ending homelessness must resource capacity building and leadership development within BIPOC-lead, grassroots organizations. Institutional funders must pave the way for grassroots organizations lead by people of color to access institutions and funding sources from which they have been historically excluded.
- **Operationalizing Racial Justice.** Institutional funders must also support racial and economic justice work happening within BIPOC-lead organizations and their networks. Many human services providers find themselves at a critical moment of self-examination, unpacking the many-layered impacts of structural racism on communities served, including staff who identify with those communities. Leaders must have appropriate funding, support, incentives, and training/consulting opportunities to adapt their structures, policies, practices, and cultures to their racial justice work.
- **BIPOC Leadership Development.** BIPOC-lead, grassroots organizations must have funding and support to build a culture of leadership development that values lived experience and representation of communities served at the highest levels of leadership and governance.

Community Engagement in Policy- and Decision-Making

- **Participatory Decision-Making and Equitable Representation.** People must have participation and voice in the decision-making that impacts their lives, from public budgeting to departmental policymaking—before, not after, decisions and plans are made. Advisory bodies, boards, and commissions (and officials charged with making appointments) must center representation from people with lived experience and those who come from impacted communities.
- **Data Transparency and Human Decision-Making.** Human services cannot rely on algorithmic decision-making, which has been widely proven to embed and amplify biases rooted in systemic racism and oppression. And the community should have transparent access to system-level data (e.g., public dashboards updated monthly with numbers of people assessed, numbers of beds by type (and vacancies), numbers of housing offers made, and housing placements broken down by race, LGBTQ status, and disability status, and other like metrics). Racial equity data analysis should be embedded in all departmental decision-making, including budgeting.
- **Placement Authority.** We must center people, not inventory, in strategic planning and day-to-day decision-making, and decision-makers must have deep roots in the communities most impacted by homelessness. BIPOC-lead and embedded providers serving BIPOC communities must have direct placement authority across program models, from safe sleep and shelter to navigation and housing programs.

Catholic Charities
Causa Justa :: Just Cause
Coalition on Homelessness, San Francisco
Community Forward
Compass Family Services
Curry Senior Center
Dolores Street Community Services
Episcopal Community Services
Eviction Defense Collaborative
GLIDE Foundation
The Gubbio Project
Hamilton Families
Harbor House
Homeless Advocacy Project | Justice & Diversity Center

Hospitality House
Larkin Street Youth Services
Lava Mae
MNHC/Mission Neighborhood Resource Center
Project Homeless Connect
Providence Foundation of San Francisco
Q Foundation
Raphael House
Saint Vincent de Paul
St. Anthony Foundation
San Francisco AIDS Foundation
San Francisco SafeHouse
Swords to Plowshares
United Council of Human Services