OUR MISSION

REDUCE AND END HOMELESSNESS IN SAN DIEGO, ENSURING THAT IF THIS SITUATION DOES HAPPEN FOR ANYONE, IT REMAINS A RARE, BRIEF AND NON-RECURRING INSTANCE; NOT AN OUTCOME.
Regional Task Force on the Homelessness

THE HOMELESS SOUNDS LIKE AN IDENTITY.

HOMELESSNESS IS A CIRCUMSTANCE.

“...This small, almost unnoticeable change we made in our name is very deep, very powerful, particularly for the people we work to serve, those we work with and who’s dignity we hold dear. It is important for our name to truly reflect that homelessness is most often a brief situation in someone’s life, it’s not an identity it’s something people are experiencing.”

Tamera Kohler
CEO of the RTFH
WELCOME FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR

Dear Friends & Colleagues,

Our 2021 Fiscal Year ended June 30th. It certainly has been a challenging and eventful year for the Regional Task Force on Homelessness (RTFH) especially with the impact of Covid-19. I am very proud of the way our staff continued to step up during these unprecedented times, under the skillful leadership of our CEO, Tamera Kohler. In spite of the challenges, there have been significant changes to the RTFH that lay the foundation for the organization to continue to address homelessness in the San Diego region.

The Continuum of Care (CoC) Advisory Board voted to separate from the RTFH effective October 1, 2020. This was done after 18 months of careful evaluation, reviewing best practices, and gaining unanimous Board support. The new RTFH Board of Directors is comprised of 13 volunteers including several past CoC Advisory Board Members and a diverse group of other talented individuals working in partnership with Tamera Kohler and her gifted Executive Team. This important governance change allows the RTFH Board to focus on operational, financial, and strategic issues facing the non-profit organization.

Some keys areas of focus this last year have been:

- Ongoing and strategic outreach to all communities within San Diego County to be a resource and convener to address homelessness.
- Changing our name to reflect the fact that homelessness is an experience and not a label that defines someone.
- Developing a Regional Community Plan to end homelessness in San Diego County. The plan will most likely be adopted in the Fall and implementation in 2022.
- Creating user-friendly Dashboards using our Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data to measure outcomes and system performance.
- Establishing a robust Finance Committee to work with staff to strengthen our financial position.
- Building strong relationships with regional elected officials.
- Supporting the efforts of the CoC and providing important information, best practices, technical support, training, and funding to service providers.
- Bringing more attention to the housing crisis in our region. Housing is without a doubt the key to reducing and ending homelessness.

Obviously, there is tremendous work ahead, but I’m confident that with the progress we’ve made this year, we can build on this work and continue to improve. If you have any questions or suggestions, please feel free to reach out to me.

Sincerely,

Ray Ellis, Board Chair
Regional Task Force on Homelessness
WHO WE ARE

RTFH began its work nearly 40 years ago as a City of San Diego Mayor’s Task Force to examine emerging issues of homelessness, primarily in Downtown. The RTFH has since evolved into a robust nonprofit organization with a community of partners committed to preventing and ending homelessness across all of San Diego County.

RTFH leads, coordinates, promotes and advocates for solutions to prevent and end homelessness. One of our primary roles is to serve as the lead agency and backbone support for San Diego County’s United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) homelessness Continuum of Care (CoC) program. In this role, RTFH administers federally required activities such as the HMIS, Coordinated Entry System (CES), Point-In-Time (PIT) Count, serves as the CoC Collaborative Applicant, creates and oversees standards for homelessness assistance, and staffs the CoC Advisory Board, committees, and membership. The CoC work accounts for roughly 80% of the RTFH’s staffing and time throughout the year, with the focus of moving the CoC towards becoming a HUD designated High Performing Community.

In addition to serving as the CoC lead agency, RTFH facilitates a community vision and goals for ending homelessness, coordinates with local jurisdictions, promotes and funds best practices and innovative strategies, supports and trains community agencies, plans for and monitors the area’s homeless response system, and advocates for effective policies at federal, state, and local levels.

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BUILD CAPACITY TO DRIVE PERFORMANCE

Strengthen governance, staffing, program delivery, management practices, financial stability, IT Systems, and HR systems to support development of new capabilities and make RTFH a desired place to work.

BE THE TRUSTED SOURCE FOR DATA ON HOMELESSNESS IN THE SAN DIEGO REGION

Continue to improve ability to gather complete and accurate data on the number of people experiencing homelessness in the San Diego region and to evaluate the performance of the system and programs against HUD metrics.

BUILD RTFH’S REPUTATION AS A LEADER IN ENDING HOMELESSNESS

Increase awareness of homelessness reduction efforts, accelerate discussions of best practices, and strengthen its role as a convening body. Component activities will include initiating an annual Conference on Homelessness, publishing an annual State of Homelessness report with regional metrics, and improving our ability to publicize RTFH successes.

GROW REVENUES TO ACCOMPLISH RTFH STRATEGIC GOALS

Establish revenue sources for operations independent from Federal and State program grants. Flexible funding will allow for expansion of current programs, hiring of experienced staff, and initiating new efforts.

ELEVATE ADVOCACY TO ACTION.

Increase ability to develop evidence-based policy for reducing homelessness at the state, county, and city levels, and advocate for policy implementation and appropriate funding for programs in the region.
A STRONG BOARD OF DIRECTORS

In October 2020, RTFH established its own high impact Board of Directors. Prior to this change, the CoC Board fulfilled both the roles and requirements for the HUD CoC program and the RTFH nonprofit board. With the new structure, a CoC Advisory board fulfills the federal requirements of the CoC program. RTFH serves as the lead agency for the CoC, while a separate nonprofit board guides the impact and sustainability of RTFH.

RTFH also changed its name from “Regional Task Force on the Homeless” to “Regional Task Force on Homelessness” to emphasize that homelessness is the result of system barriers and should not define the people who experience it.

This new structure and name allows RTFH to provide greater regional leadership, to advocate, and to pursue new initiatives to achieve its mission, while ensuring the federal requirements of the CoC are met with excellence.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

RAY ELLIS
Board Chair
Ellis and Associates, LLC

RICK GENTRY
CoC Board Chair
San Diego Housing Commission

STEPHANIE KILKENNY
Secretary
Lucky Duck Foundation

KAREN BRAILEAN
Treasurer
BFT Equity Partners

NANCY SASAKI
United Way of San Diego County

AMY DENHART
Funders Together to End Homelessness San Diego

DAVID BAKER
YMCA of San Diego County

JOEL JOHN ROBERTS
People Assisting the Homeless (PATH)

LINDSEY WRIGHT
Kaiser Permanente

KEN SAUDER
Wakeland Housing and Development Corporation

JANET CARSON
Community Member

VERONICA DELA ROSA
San Ysidro Health

DAVID DENG
J.P. Morgan Private Bank
Regional Leadership in Ending Homelessness

Awarded more than $3.5M in Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) funding to 19 organizations, including four organizations to focus on youth specific programs and services.

Worked with the City of San Diego and the County of San Diego to plan for and coordinate with new departments focused on homelessness solutions.

Successfully administered over $26M in federal and state funding to local partners through the HUD Youth Homeless Demonstration Program (YHDP) and the State’s Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP).

In the last year, 805 youth received assistance through YHDP and HEAP helped over 8,000 people.

Convened the CoC Intergovernmental Council and Roundtable to gather local elected leaders to listen to regional challenges and align efforts.

Met with over 60 federal, state, and local elected officials, as well as individuals who are a part of national associations and leading organizations.
Fully expended $18.8M in HEAP funding that ended June 30, 2021. RTFH was able to enhance service delivery and increase capacity throughout San Diego by funding outreach teams, safe parking programs, provide training and learning collaboratives for providers, and investing in capital projects. This also included purchasing five vans for outreach teams to deliver services more efficiently.

Supported sub-regional planning efforts including the East County Homeless Task Force, South Region Homeless Alliance, the North County Alliance for Regional Solutions, and the City of San Diego’s homeless action plan leadership group.

Joined the Funders Together to End Homelessness San Diego funders collaborative.

Met with every city in the county to listen and understand their challenges, partnerships, and priorities with addressing homelessness in their respective cities.
Provided leadership and policy guidance on Operation Shelter to Home to transition people from shelters, specifically the Convention Center, to permanent housing. Worked with the City of San Diego, the San Diego Housing Commission, and the County of San Diego to transition over 400 people into two new Project Homekey housing sites.

Partnered with street outreach teams to distribute more than 220,000 masks and 6,000 hand sanitizers donated and purchased by RTFH, the Muslim Coalition for America, Lucky Duck Foundation, Takeda California, Saint Helen Philoptochos Society of Saints Constantine and Helen Greek Orthodox Church Cardiff by the Sea.

In partnership with the Lucky Duck Foundation and outreach teams, distributed meals, supplies, and other necessary items to people living unsheltered.
Partnered with the San Diego Housing Commission in planning for the Homeless Response Center as the Convention Center was winding down.

Provided a forum at CoC membership and board meetings for the County of San Diego Public Health Department to educate homeless system partners on the pandemic, vaccine distribution, and protocols for housing and shelter programs.

Helped the community secure various HUD waivers to increase flexibility in delivering services in response to COVID-19.

Supported 18 CoC grantees and eight subrecipients with 2020 CoC funding renewals, given there was not a competitive CoC application in 2020.

Worked with partners and supported housing exits for people sheltering at five hotels funded by the County of San Diego.
Housing Focus

Connected 1,805 people to permanent housing programs through the Coordinated Entry System (CES).

Partnered with four Public Housing Authorities – San Diego Housing Commission, County of San Diego, City of Oceanside, and the City of National City - to launch HUD’s Emergency Housing Voucher program that will provide a permanent rental voucher to over 800 households at-risk of or experiencing homelessness.

With national partner Community Solutions and funding through Kaiser Permanente, launched the national Built for Zero initiative in San Diego to drive month over month reductions in Veteran and youth homelessness. RTFH was also awarded $75,000 through the Conrad Prebys Foundation to support the Built for Zero youth initiative.

With Brilliant Corners, successfully launched the regional Flexible Housing Pool (FHP). In its first year, the FHP secured 219 private market rental units and housed 203 people across the region. This included leasing up 80 HUD Veteran Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) vouchers across the county. Partners include the County of San Diego, the VA San Diego Healthcare System, and other housing and services providers.
Convening and Training Homeless System Partners

Staffed and supported the CoC Advisory Board and coordinated with chair Rick Gentry, CEO of the San Diego Housing Commission and co-chair, Nora Vargas, County of San Diego Board of Supervisor.

Convened monthly CoC Membership meetings averaging 100 attendees per meeting.

Convened CES Work Group with community partners for continued improvement of CES. Created updated CES Policies and Procedures and trained the community on new CES processes including the updated CES assessment.

Established and supported four new committees of the CoC focused on racial equity, the connection between healthcare and homelessness, Veterans, and older adults.

Convened youth with lived experience to identify better strategies for centering youth voice in developing a youth service system.
Engaged community partners to create a culture of shared housing. Hosted a shared housing forum, developed a shared housing white paper, and created two system tools for partners to use to message shared housing to clients and landlords. Funded 40 front line staff across 18 organizations to participate in eight weeks of shared housing training through the Shared Housing Institute.

Updated and enhanced the CoC Community Standards to promote best practices for street outreach, rapid re-housing, and the coordinated entry system; and updated the CoC’s community standards with a focus on Housing First, person centered and trauma informed care, and reducing racial disparities.

Provided 10 trainings to CoC members on HUD programming, funding, and reporting requirements.

Brought in national experts to lead learning collaboratives and provide training on street outreach, rapid re-housing, and diversion.
Trusted Source of Data on Homelessness

Supported over 75 organizations, administering over 600 unique programs, with over 1,000 individual staff users.

In total the HMIS supported the records of over 39,000 persons experiencing homelessness throughout the year.

Successfully administered the HMIS in San Diego and Imperial Counties.

Conducted the 2021 sheltered Point-In-Time (PIT) Count and worked with housing and shelter partners to aggregate the annual Housing Inventory Count (HIC).

Released an in-depth data report on 2020 key system performance metrics.
Partnered with 211 San Diego to integrate HMIS data into the Community Information Exchange (CIE) and provided regional data to the State for the Homeless Data Integration System (HDIS).

Met community demand to set up new programs and reporting mechanisms in HMIS as required by new pandemic funding resources.

Improved monitoring systems and increased the number of CoC programs monitored annually from 3 to 15.

Launched three new public dashboards for the community to access both system and program performance data.
Elevating Advocacy to Action

Developed official RTFH policy priorities and process for determining policy and advocacy actions.

Published an op-ed in the San Diego Union Tribune, conducted interviews with various local media outlets, and enhanced the use of social media to convey key policy and advocacy efforts.

Provided input to the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness federal strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness and to the State’s Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council on the State’s homeless action plan.

Signed on to and endorsed AB-71 focused on creating an ongoing state revenue source to address homelessness. While AB-71 fell short, advocated successfully with state and local partners for $2 billion in new state funding to address homelessness.
With Father Joe’s Villages, participated in a statewide healthcare and homelessness learning collaborative funded by the California Health Care Foundation. Lessons from the learning collaborative were shared with San Diego stakeholders through the Health and Homelessness Committee.

Provided input to HUD on engagement best practices with the PIT Count.

Presented at the National Alliance to End Homelessness conference, the National Human Services Data Consortium conference, Housing California conference, Forensic Mental Health Association Words to Deeds Conference, and the San Diego Housing Federation conference.

Signed on to the National Low-Income Housing Coalition’s HoUSed Campaign focused on achieving large-scale, sustained investments and reforms necessary to ensure that renters with the lowest incomes, especially those experiencing homelessness, have an affordable place to call home.
Building Organizational Capacity

Hired 360 Public Strategies to enhance public and government relations and increase social media presence.

Created new Senior Program Manager position focused on CES and Housing Strategies.

Seated an influential and diverse Board of Directors and created several board committees focused on finances, governance, and external relations.

Created new leadership position to engage with local government partners.
Continued to support staff working remotely.

Expanded HMIS team to meet the growing demand for high quality data, reporting, and analytics.

Conducted diversity analysis of the RTFH staff.

Continued to work with the Impact Center to strengthen organizational leadership and create strong culture of communication and planning.

Received grant funding from three large private entities to expand the work of the RTFH beyond federal and state grants.
FINANCIALS
JULY 2020 - JUNE 2021

TOTAL REVENUE $4,200,165.81

- HUD COC GRANTS $2,798,518
- FOUNDATION GRANTS $163,921
- PRIVATE DONATIONS $18,182
- OTHER INCOME $420,011
- LOCAL GOVERNMENT GRANTS $428,727
- STATE GRANTS $370,808
- OTHER $420,011

TOTAL EXPENSES $3,759,149.91

- SALARIES AND WAGES $1,906,536
- TAXES AND FRINGE BENEFITS $342,061
- CONTRACT SERVICES $366,753
- HMIS $557,524
- RENT $64,116
- PROGRAM EXPENSES $377,433
- OTHER $144,726

TOTAL NET REVENUE $441,015.90
The last 12 months have been another challenging year with addressing homelessness given COVID-19. While we are working hard as a system to help individuals, families, and youth access stable affordable housing, we know that more and more people need help. The work remains difficult, however the RTFH staff are tirelessly committed and dedicated to reduce and end homelessness in the region and coordinate with our network of partners to do so.

I want to thank the RTFH team for their determination to continue to perform at a high level while the pandemic remains. We have continued to work remotely in our homes and balance work, family, and other responsibilities ongoing.

I am very grateful to the new board members who have joined the organization this past year. Some board members I have worked with closely for quite some time, while others I have only recently had the pleasure of getting to know. All are contributing to making the RTFH a trusted organization in the community and ensuring that we support the community on an issue that we care deeply about. I appreciate all of the elected officials across the county who have stepped up and made addressing homelessness a critical part of the day-to-day work in their communities. Your bold leadership is critical to future success.

We must also thank the region’s homeless services providers. Ending homelessness will not happen without a committed network of organizations providing direct services to people at risk of or experiencing homelessness. As the pandemic persists, these partners continue to show up day in and day out to support the most vulnerable members of our community. Thank you.

Lastly, a special thank you and deepest gratitude to Greg Block of ThreeSixty Strategies, who recently passed away from an ongoing battle with cancer. Greg was a huge champion for our organization and this work, a thoughtful and constant influence in our direction, and importantly crafting our message over the last year. He had a gift to make introductions and connections in a powerful way that have benefited and accelerated our organization for the future. Finally, Greg’s understanding of the challenging issues that are both public and political as well as deeply personal for San Diegans experiencing homelessness helped navigate, balance and elevate our voice at one of the most critical times in this work. We will continue to honor his wisdom and guidance.

With deepest appreciation,

Tamer Kohler
CEO
Regional Task Force on Homelessness

Our sincere gratitude and thanks to our partners who provided many of the inspiring images featured throughout this report.