



OUR VISION

is to end homelessness in Sonoma County.

OUR MISSION

is to assist people to transition from homelessness to a permanent home.

STRATEGIC PLAN GUIDELINES

These guidelines inform and support the strategic plan and our work

MINIMIZE BARRIERS

Quickly and successfully connect individuals and families experiencing homelessness to permanent housing without barriers to entry • Focus on client expectations and natural consequences

REACH THE MOST VULNERABLE

Establish outcomes, implement services, and report on specific goals and strategies to reduce length of stay at the shelter and transition chronically homeless into permanent housing (including PSH).

BUILD PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

Build strong partnerships with human services organizations, government, nonprofits, healthcare sector, and businesses that share our vision to end homelessness in Sonoma County

EXPAND PHYSICAL PRESENCE

Expand our presence throughout Sonoma County as critical way to achieve our vision

PRIORITIZE TRAINING

Provide training for staff on how to deliver services to perform in a low-barrier, housing-focused environment • Provide tools and training to enable efficient data entry and access to housing and service availability in the County

MEET CLIENT NEED

Explore ways to provide for the unique housing needs of clients, such as Sober Living Environments, gender-specific housing, family-friendly housing, and/or LGBTQI-friendly housing



Read our full Strategic Plan Summary 2018-23 and learn more about our work at cots.org



Committee on the Shelterless STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE Year One



Pursuing our vision to end homelessness in Sonoma County



FROM THE CEO

In 2017, COTS launched a five-year strategic plan to guide our organization into the next phase of its history. We focused on four cornerstones of our work - Housing, Services, Community, and Sustainability - to ensure that COTS will be able to serve our clients as long as there is need in Sonoma County.

Since joining COTS last October, I have been so proud to see the remarkable progress we have made thanks to the hard work and collaborative efforts of our

board, staff, and community. COTS has pursued bold ideas, launched innovative programs, and expanded our services to those experiencing homelessness. Our organization's unique balance of head and heart allow us to meet our clients wherever they are at with dignity, care, and compassion.

Today, COTS is another year closer to realizing our vision to end homelessness, thanks to the dedication of our staff, the resilience of our clients, and the embrace of our community. We are so grateful for your partnership in this work and for sharing some of this year's accomplishments with us.

Until we end homelessness,

Chuck Fernandez, CEO

2018-19 HIGHLIGHTS



Kids First

COTS' Kids and Families need special care, and we are grateful to the many donors and volunteers who support our youngest clients. Across all our programs, we helped 135 families with 204 children find shelter, housing, and stability. Thank you for investing in Sonoma County's next generation!



Welcome to the Neighborhood

In March 2019, we welcomed the first permanent resident to the Mary Isaak Center as part of a new Permanent Supportive Housing program. Residents are referred to us by St. Joseph Health and, due to a chronic disability or other health concern, would not be able to remain housed without support. The program is a resounding success so far, and our new neighbors are making the Mary Isaak Center feel more like home for everyone.



Goal 1: HOUSING

Provide housing and services that assist clients to obtain and keep housing and improve their quality of life

- In total, **COTS served 815 people between July 1, 2018 and June 30, 2019** in our shelter and housing programs, **including 184 children and 40 veterans.**



- Our Outreach Specialist for Rohnert Park and Cotati, Cecily Kagy, **engaged with 257 people living on the streets or in encampments** since January 2019. Of these, she has **successfully moved 87 of these individuals (or 34%) into shelter or housing.**

- In 2018-19, COTS piloted a new Coordinated Care program to help residents of our Mary Isak Center shelter **create housing-focused care plans with the support of a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW).** The pilot has been so successful that it will become a permanent part of our model in the upcoming year.



Goal 2: SERVICES

Meet the unique service needs of our clients and community

- In 2019, COTS has revolutionized our meal program and revitalized partnerships with local providers, including Trader Joe's, Whole Foods, and organic farms in Petaluma and beyond. This transformation inspired a local grantmaker whose support enabled us to expand dinner service to our community – meaning that, **now, both lunch and dinner at the Mary Isak Center are available to anyone in need.**
- In Summer 2019, **we launched a weekly shower program for those living on the streets,** both through COTS' facilities at MIC and in partnership with Redwood Gospel Mission. This improves health outcomes for our homeless population and the entire community.
- In 2018-19, **COTS expanded its staff in most departments to create more efficient workflows and improve our services to our clients across the board.** New roles have been added in Income Development (to help clients access benefits and pursue employment opportunities), Engagement (to strengthen our volunteer program and add services in partnership with our community), and Diversion (to prevent people from falling into homelessness in the first place).



Goal 3: COMMUNITY

Strengthen our internal company culture and external community relations

- In Fall 2019, **COTS management staff will partner with Catholic Charities on a 12-month Management and Leadership Cohort Program.** Our aim is to provide staff with a common, long-term leadership education process that will drive organizational results, create high performing cultures, and give managers the tools they need to build their programs and teams.



- In 2019, **COTS staff received a 3% Cost of Living raise across the board** – in addition to significant increases in salary for many employees. We hope this will strengthen our staff retention as the cost of living in Sonoma County continues to rise.
- COTS' Board of Directors recruited members from Kaiser Permanente, Exchange Bank, Petaluma Valley Hospital, and the Petaluma Downtown Association this year, **reinforcing our relationships with important community partners and bringing new levels of expertise to our governing body.**



Goal 4: SUSTAINABILITY

Ensure financial sustainability and adequate resources

- COTS is committed to partnering with local government. In July 2019, **the City of Rohnert Park invested \$250,000** in our Rapid Re-Housing program **and placed another \$75,000 in reserve** after seeing COTS' success firsthand. In August, they expanded our partnership by funding an additional 12 beds at our Mary Isak Center for homeless individuals.
- This year, **COTS applied for nearly \$1.7 million in funding** from the Sonoma County



- Community Development Commission – **and received 80% of what we asked for.** This is an unprecedented achievement and will help sustain many of COTS' programs **including the return of our Winter Shelter and a mental health pilot program** in partnership with Catholic Charities.
- This year, COTS began work with a software developer to pilot a HOMES – **a new program to simplify data collection and reduce errors** as we track clients from entry into our programs through exit. Once HOMES has been through beta-testing and we can demonstrate its impact on our programs and services, COTS hopes to market the software for use by other homeless services nonprofits.