



Executive Directive 24-02

Journey Home: Providing Relocation Assistance Services

August 1, 2024

San Francisco allocates significant resources toward shelter, housing, and services for people experiencing homelessness and struggling with substance use disorders. However, we know that some individuals come here from other parts of the state and country and our data shows the volume is increasing. This impacts the ability of our first responders, service providers, and city employees to provide permanent solutions to those most in need, specifically long-term residents. As a result, many individuals cycle in and out of city-funded programs without accountability and a clear path to securing stabilized housing and care. We must be more aggressive and intentional with our approach.

San Francisco will always lead with compassion, but we cannot allow our compassion to be taken advantage of. We will not be a city with a reputation for being able to solve the housing and behavioral health needs of people across our country. We have invested significantly in permanent supportive housing, providing more units than any other Bay Area county. Nationally, only Washington DC provides more permanent supportive housing per capita. Despite being immensely proud of our work over the past five years—expanding shelter beds by over 60%, increasing housing slots for formerly homeless individuals by over 50%, adding 400 behavioral health treatment beds, and seeing our average tent counts fall to their lowest levels since before I took office—we cannot continue to ask San Francisco residents to support the needs of those who travel here simply for care.

To be clear, the data shows we have made significant progress in reducing long-term homelessness among San Francisco residents – in our most recent Point in Time count only 14% of those surveyed said they had been housed for 10+ years in San Francisco before becoming homeless. In 2019 that number was 43%. This is progress.

However, this progress is balanced by an increase in new arrivals. These are the facts: our most recent Point in Time count found that 40% of unsheltered people in San Francisco did not live here before arriving, and 37% of people who had been previously housed had been living in San Francisco for less than a year before becoming homeless. I am committed to ensuring that



we sustain our progress to house and support long-term residents of San Francisco, families, and those most in need, but we must leverage all of our resources to provide alternative solutions to address the conditions we see on our streets.

San Francisco has taken proactive measures to support individuals experiencing homelessness and/or struggling with substance abuse to reconnect them with their home communities. Our investments in relocation assistance programs ensure that those who have found their way to our city can return home and receive the support and services our systems cannot provide. Journey Home encapsulates numerous programs that provide relocation assistance, including our Problem Solving Relocation Assistance and County Adult Assistance Program (CAAP) Relocation Assistance programs. These have proven to be effective in delivering necessary resources and support services for individuals to return to the location of their choice.

Today, I am requiring that all relevant departments and service providers offer and incentivize the Journey Home program to individuals on our streets before any other service or shelter is offered. This directive will ensure that relocation services will be the first response to our homelessness and substance use crises, allowing individuals the choice to reunite with support networks before accessing other City services or facing the consequences of refusing care. This approach, while firm, is rooted in our commitment to compassionate care by delivering the support that so many desperately need.

Directives:

Through this Executive Directive, I hereby direct the following, to be completed by September 1, 2024:

- I. **Mandate to Offer Relocation Services Before Offering Shelter, Housing, or Additional Services.** The Human Services Agency, the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing, and the Department of Public Health shall amend internal procedures to require all staff who provide direct engagement with homeless individuals to offer Journey Home, Problem Solving Relocation Assistance, and CAAP Relocation Assistance, or alternate relocation assistance programs before offering any other City services, including housing and shelter. Staff shall be appropriately trained on how to offer this information, and how to provide appropriate referrals to other City staff or City contractors who can facilitate a path home. In addition, the above Departments shall also exercise their contracting authority to require all contracts providing direct services to homeless individuals to also offer relocation assistance as a standard element of the



engagement process, and that such offer shall occur prior to offering or providing any other services.

II. Equip San Francisco First Responders with Information on Journey Home.

San Francisco first responders shall be equipped with a handout, translated as required by the Language Access Ordinance, providing information on Journey Home and a contact number that can be offered, as appropriate, during the course of their law enforcement or other response duties.

III. Establish a Tracking System for Individuals who Accept and Refuse Relocation

Services: The Controller's Office shall work with departments offering relocation assistance to develop and publish aggregated data tracking engaged individuals, measuring the effectiveness of the program, and whether they elect to accept relocation services.

This Executive Directive takes effect immediately and will remain in place until rescinded by future written communication.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "London N. Breed".

London N. Breed
Mayor, City and County of San Francisco