



SAN DIEGO  
HOUSING  
COMMISSION

## INFORMATIONAL REPORT

**DATE ISSUED:** April 23, 2020

**REPORT NO:** HCR20-037

**ATTENTION:** Chair and Members of the San Diego Housing Commission  
For the Agenda of May 1, 2020

**SUBJECT:** February and March 2020 Reporting Update for City of San Diego's Housing  
Navigation Center

**NO ACTION IS REQUIRED ON THE PART OF THE HOUSING COMMISSION**

### **SUMMARY**

The Housing Authority of the City of San Diego (Housing Authority) and San Diego City Council (City Council) require the San Diego Housing Commission (Housing Commission) to provide "regular reports on the performance of the Housing Navigation Center" (Housing Authority Resolution HA-1793), which will be provided in a monthly Informational Report at regularly scheduled Housing Commission Board meetings.

### **BACKGROUND**

As part of the City of San Diego's (City) comprehensive approach to addressing homelessness and the Mayor's vision to increase the resources within the City's Homeless Crisis Response System and support regional efforts to ensure instances of homelessness are rare, brief and non-recurring, the City's Housing Navigation Center (HNC) was envisioned to serve as an entry point for the Coordinated Entry System (CES), provide core services to address housing crises, and help participants access a range of mainstream services that impact housing stability.

As the HNC operator, Family Health Centers of San Diego provides on-site intake, assessment, triage and referrals for permanent and longer-term housing opportunities. They assist individuals experiencing homelessness to identify immediate housing solutions, provide crisis management, access mainstream benefits important to addressing issues impacting housing stability, and work with partnering agencies to link individuals to permanent housing and supportive service programs. On January 14, 2020, the Housing Authority approved Resolution HA-1849 to extend the initial contract term of the operating agreement with Family Health Centers of San Diego to June 30, 2020, to align the contract term with the Housing Commission's and City of San Diego's Fiscal Year. The resolution also authorized the first option to extend the term of the agreement with Family Health Centers of San Diego for a six-month term, from July 1, 2020, through December 31, 2020, to provide a continuation of services under the agreement and allow for the completion of an evaluation by a third-party consultant, contingent on the City making funds available for such purpose during the City of San Diego Fiscal Year 2021 budgeting process and approval.

**MONTHLY REPORTING SUMMARY – FEBRUARY AND MARCH 2020**

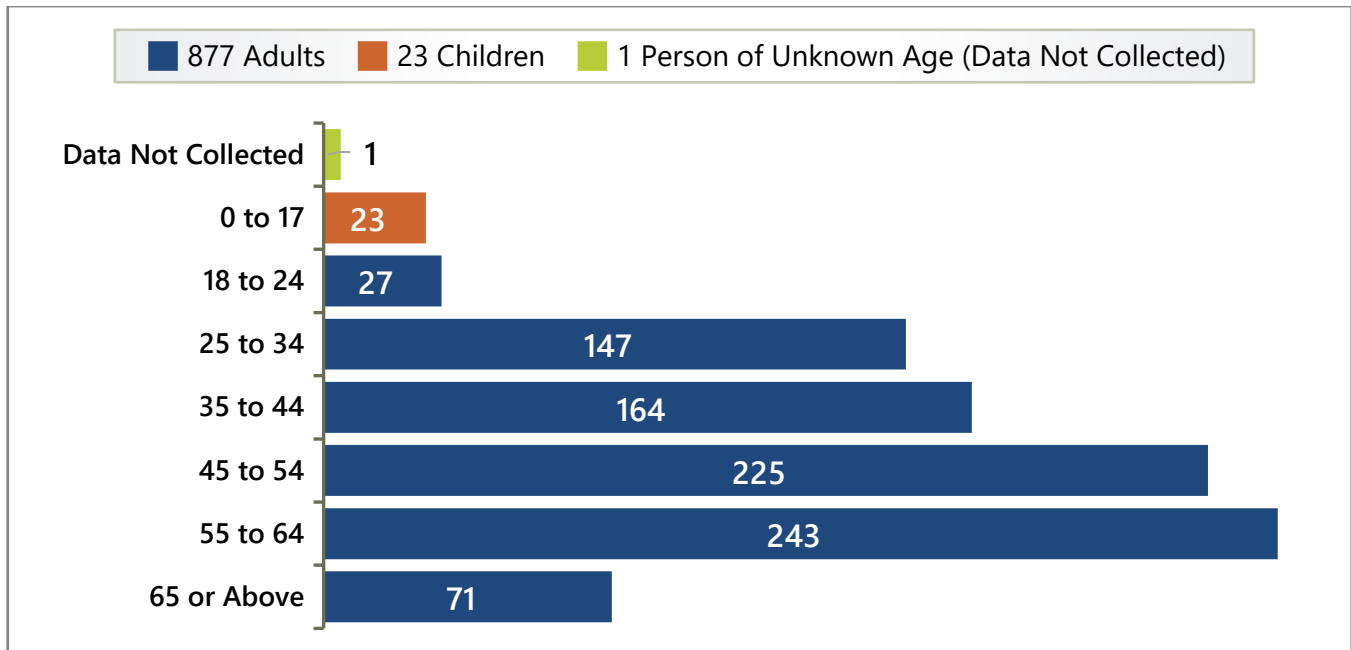
The information below provides an overview of data reported by Family Health Centers of San Diego to the Housing Commission and captured in both the San Diego Regional Continuum of Care’s Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and Family Health Centers’ internal database applications. Data included in this report summarizes services delivered on-site and in the field via street outreach efforts. It also provides both a longer-term picture of the population served since operations began and a summary of activities specifically conducted during the reporting months of February and March 2020.

The HNC on-site program opened on December 3, 2019. Months in advance of the physical site’s opening, the HNC’s team of Navigators began conducting street outreach efforts to engage unsheltered individuals in the field, starting in April 2019. Tables one through eight below include demographics and other data that describe the population served through all program services as of March 31, 2020, including services delivered via outreach efforts since they began in April 2019 and services delivered on-site since it opened in December.

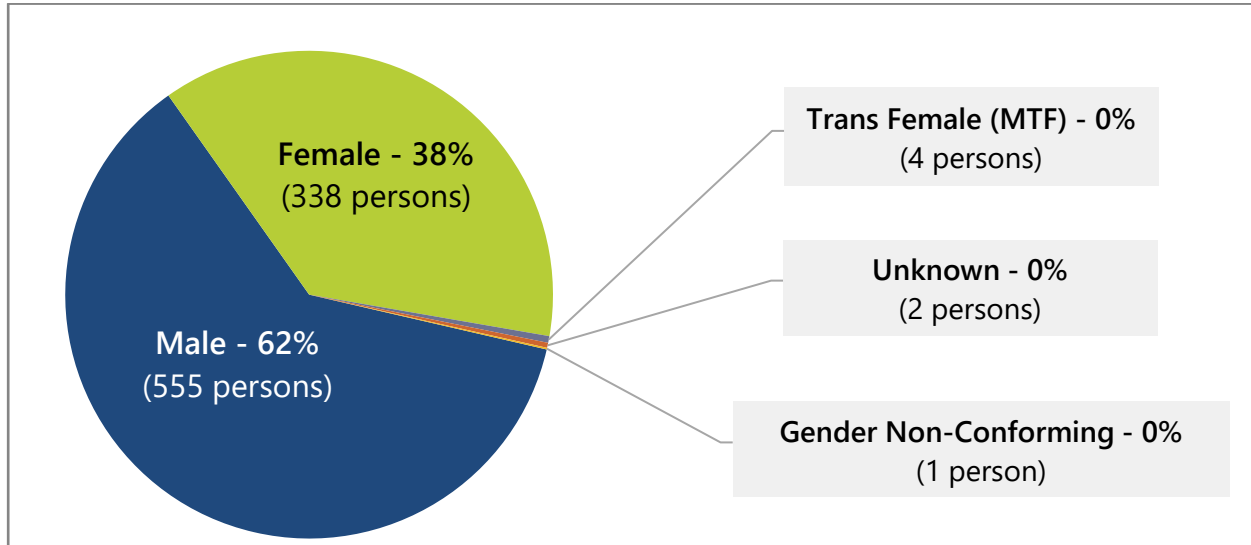
A total of 901 individuals have accessed on-site or outreach services through the HNC program as of March 31, 2020.

Tables one and two include additional demographics of the population served through all program services as of March 31, 2020.

**Table One: Age Distribution of All Persons Served by HNC Outreach (April 1, 2019 – March 31, 2020) and HNC On-Site Services (December 3, 2019 – March 31, 2020)**

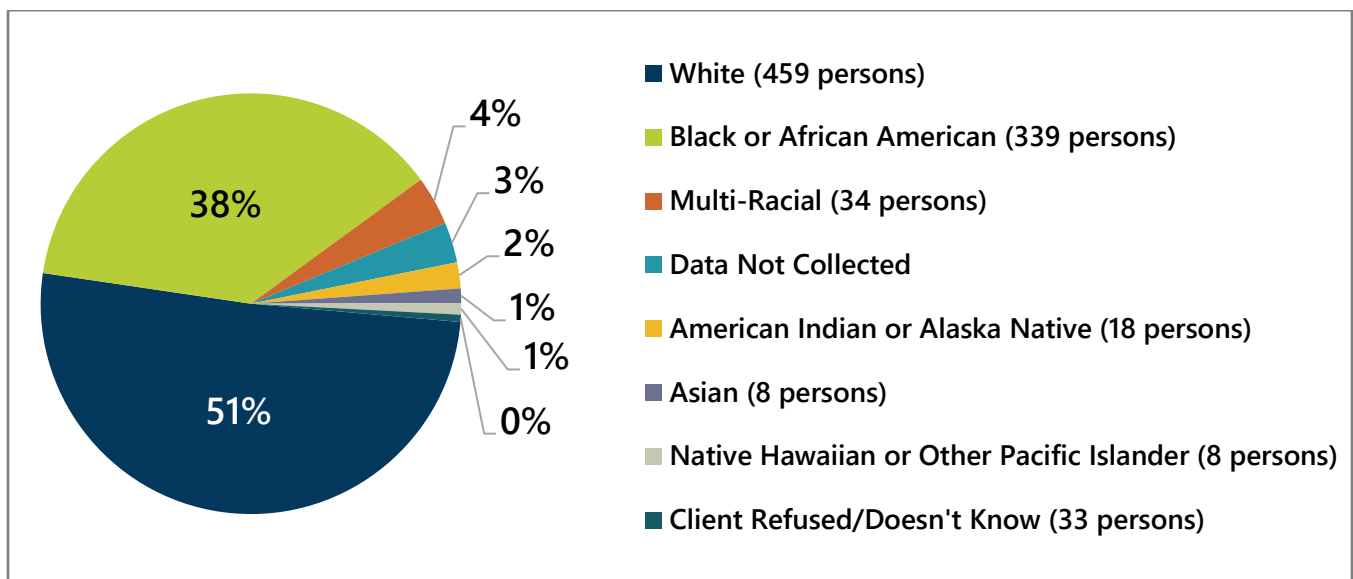


**Table Two: Gender of All Persons Served by HNC Outreach (April 1, 2019 – March 31, 2020) and HNC On-Site Services (December 3, 2019 – March 31, 2020)**



Tables three and four summarize information on the race and ethnicity of persons who accessed the HNC’s outreach and on-site services. This information was collected through two questions required as part of data collection in HMIS, which asks respondents to report their race from a list of five standardized responses and their ethnicity from a list of two standardized responses. The table below summarizes responses to both of those questions for persons served by the HNC.

**Table Three: Racial Demographics of All Persons Served by HNC Outreach (April 1, 2019 – March 31, 2020) and HNC On-Site Services (December 3, 2019 – March 31, 2020)**



**Table Four: Ethnic Demographics of All Persons Served by HNC Outreach (April 1, 2019 – March 31, 2020) and HNC On-Site Services (December 3, 2019 – March 31, 2020)**

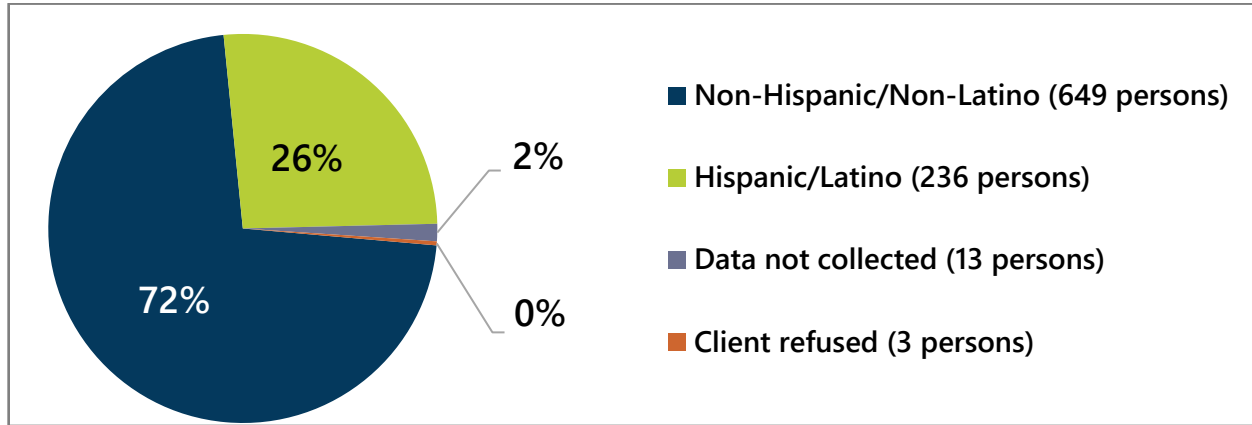


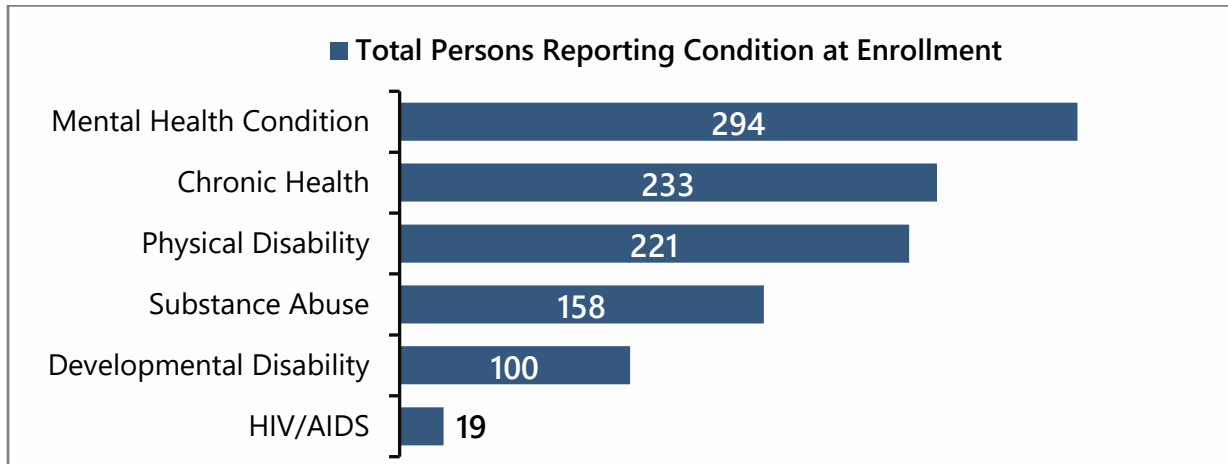
Table five describes the disabilities and health conditions that persons served on-site and via outreach reported upon enrollment. This data is based only on self-reported responses to a standard set of questions required as part of enrollment in HMIS, which includes six questions that ask participants to identify whether they experience specific disabilities and health conditions. Responses are not representative of the diagnosed conditions of all persons served by the HNC, given the specific set of potential responses and the self-reported nature of the information.

A total of 460 persons, or 51 percent of all persons served, reported one or more current disabilities or health conditions. Of those who reported a disability or health condition, 71 percent (328 persons) expected one or more of those conditions to be of “long-continuing or indefinite duration” and reported that they “substantially impair their ability to live independently<sup>1</sup>.” 192 total persons (or 21 percent of all persons served) met the criteria to be considered chronically homeless (based on available HMIS data history).

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<sup>1</sup> This language is included among HMIS intake questions regarding disabilities and health conditions and references this sample intake form provided by BitFocus (the vendor that distributes Clarity, San Diego’s HMIS software) and found here: <https://bitfocus.app.box.com/v/CoC-Intake-HMIS-2020>

**Table Five: Disabilities and Health Conditions Reported by All Persons Served by HNC Outreach (April 1, 2019 – March 31, 2020) and HNC On-Site Services (December 3, 2019 – March 31, 2020)**



The HNC serves as an access point for the CES, the coordinated process through which housing resources dedicated to persons experiencing homelessness in San Diego County’s Continuum of Care are prioritized and referred to housing resources. Navigators follow the Continuum of Care’s guidance and complete necessary steps to connect clients with the CES process. Those steps include - when deemed appropriate - completing the CES Triage Tool with clients.

The Triage Tool includes the Vulnerability Index-Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT) assessment, which evaluates vulnerability in a number of key domains related to a client’s physical and mental health, housing needs and identified risks. The client’s VI-SPDAT assessment score provides information on vulnerability that informs the prioritization for housing resources provided through CES.

The table below summarizes the distribution of VI-SPDAT assessment scores for all participants who have received HNC services as of March 31, 2020, including clients served via street outreach efforts and clients served via on-site services.

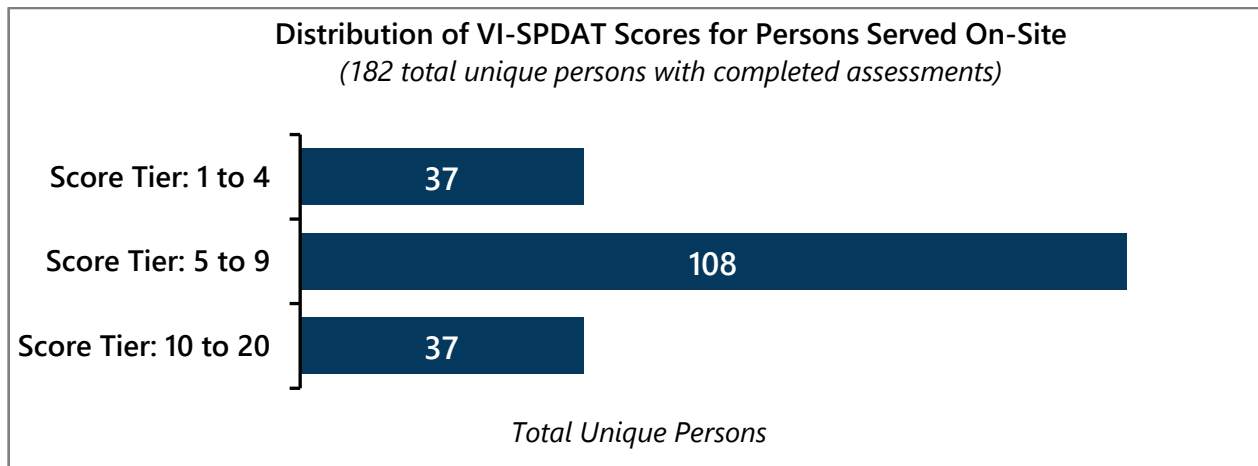
Please note, the regional approach to triage assessments for coordinated entry no longer recommends that all persons engaging in homeless services and entered into HMIS should immediately be administered the VI-SPDAT. Therefore, the number of persons receiving services at the HNC will not match the number of persons with a VI-SPDAT score. As the regional approach to coordinated entry continues to evolve, Housing Commission staff will determine the most appropriate data points to report on to reflect participant demographics in relation to level of need, therefore reported data points may change over time.

The tiers of VI-SPDAT scores included in the chart below are intended to indicate general acuity and needs of persons assessed using the assessment tool:

- Individuals scoring within tier one to four are anticipated to need minimal to no intervention to transition into permanent housing independently.

- Individuals scoring within tier five to nine are anticipated to need moderate supportive services and short- to longer-term housing subsidy resources to successfully transition to permanent housing.
- Individuals scoring within tier 10 or above may need longer-term or permanent supportive housing with wraparound services to achieve long-term housing stability.

**Table Six: Distribution of VI-SPDAT Assessment Scores for All Persons Served by HNC Outreach (April 1, 2019 – March 31, 2020) and HNC On-Site Services (December 3, 2019 – March 31, 2020)**

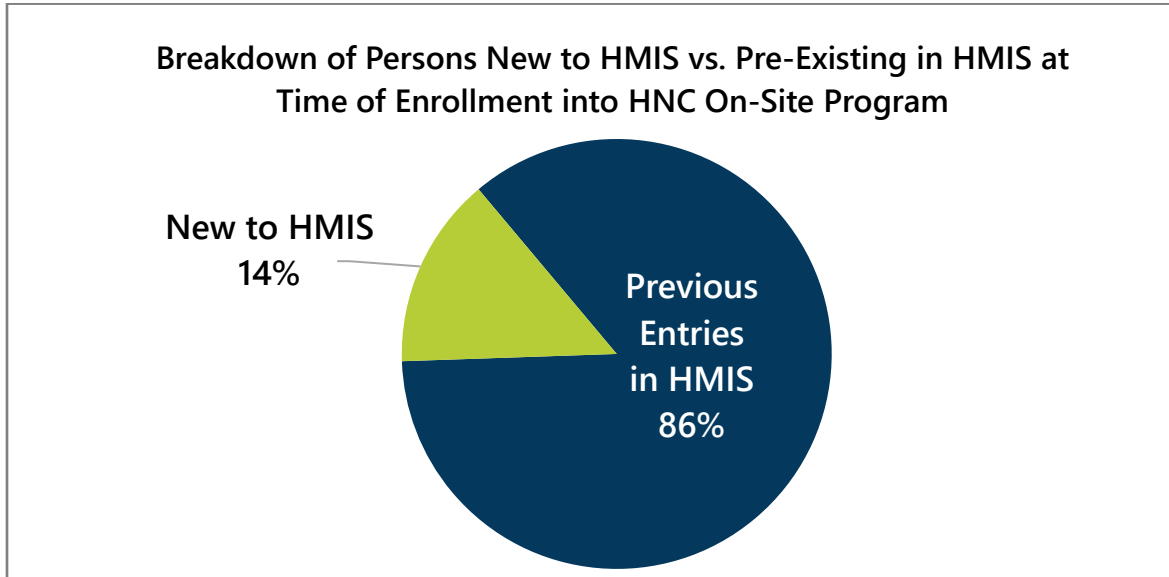


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As part of Family Health Centers’ agreement to operate the HNC, they are required to collect and record data on persons they serve in the HMIS. HMIS data helps inform the City’s and County’s system-wide understanding of San Diego’s homeless population and homeless service system. It also serves as a historical record of a client’s needs and services, facilitating coordination between San Diego’s homeless service providers and informing a client-centered approach. Additionally, having an assigned unique identifier in the HMIS system is needed for a person experiencing homelessness to be considered to receive a potential referral to housing through the CES.

Among the 901 participants who have been served through HNC outreach or on-site services since services began, 14 percent were new to HMIS at the time they enrolled in HNC services.

**Table Seven: Proportion of Persons New to HMIS vs. Pre-Existing in HMIS at Time of Enrollment into HNC On-Site Program or HNC Outreach Program**



**Summary of HNC On-Site Services and Activities**

The HNC began serving clients on-site on December 3, 2019. The site is open Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.

During the months of February and March 2020, HNC served 441 total persons. Of the persons served on-site, 84 percent (371 total persons) were connected to a Housing Navigator. Seventy persons accessed the site to learn more about services provided, seek information about specific partners or referrals available or inquire about other basic services provided but have not yet engaged with a Housing Navigator. The intention of the program is to continue to engage persons accessing the site until they are willing to engage in Housing Navigation and Case Management services.

The following table summarizes data on services provided during February and March 2020.

**Table Seven: Summary of On-Site HNC Services during February and March 2020**

Summary of Services Provided On-Site at the HNC (2/1/2020 – 3/31/2020)	
Total Persons Served	441
Participants connected to a Housing Navigator	371
Number of Participants not yet connected to a Housing Navigator	70
Number of Participants Placed into Permanent or Longer Term Housing	12
Average Time to Permanent Housing Placement for Participants Placed	51 days
Number of Resource Referrals Provided to Participants	549

Number of Participants Linked to Community Support Services	219
Number of Participants who Received On-site Medical Triage Services <sup>2</sup>	90
Number of Participants who Received On-site Public Health and Public Benefits Enrollment Assistance Services	45
Number of Participants who Received On-site Mental Health Services	19
Number of Participants who Received On-site Substance Use Disorder Services	1
Number of Participants who Received On-site Life Skills Classes	30
Number of Participants who Received Mail Services	17
Number of Participants who Received Telephone and Messaging Services	40
Number of Participants who Accessed Computers	16
Number of Participants who Received Transportation Assistance (bus passes or transport to offsite services by HNC shuttle driver)	106
Number of participants who Attended On-site Group Sessions	4

During February and March 2020, the HNC continued to offer an array of services on-site to clients.

Family Health Centers’ clinician provided 90 persons seeking services at the HNC with on-site medical triage services, which included assessment of clients’ needs and referrals to care providers, identification of any health conditions that pose barriers to housing, basic health education and medication refills.

Family Health Centers and the County of San Diego’s Department of Health and Human Services hosted a health fair at the HNC on February 19, 2020. A variety of healthcare services were offered in addition to what is usually scheduled on-site for the one-day event, including vaccinations, testing for infectious disease, referrals to benefits services and health care providers and transportation services to an Urgent Care facility for anyone with urgent medical needs.

Mental health and behavioral health services continued to be offered on-site at the HNC during February and March. Two therapists offer services on-site twice a week, providing services that include psychological evaluations, brief emotional and behavioral health assessments and referrals to support and therapy peer groups. A total of 19 persons accessed mental health services at the HNC during February and March 2020.

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<sup>2</sup> The Family Health Centers’ mobile medical clinician met health-related needs of participants on the site, providing a tailored suite of healthcare-related services due to restrictions posed by pending clinic licensure, which included basic health education, medication refills, assessment of medical needs for purposes of referral to care, and transports to urgent care, clinic sites or emergency care to meet identified needs.



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The HNC offers a computer lab for clients' access and use on the third floor of the site. Computer services were accessed by 16 total persons in February and March for reasons such as looking for benefits applications, searching for and applying for job postings, searching for housing, and contacting family/friends via email or social media.

During February and March 2020, 57 clients accessed communication services through the mail, telephone and messaging services available at the HNC.

A total of 40 clients accessed telephone and messaging services for purposes such as to connect with family and friends, pay bills, contact their bank and contact public benefits agencies regarding applying for benefits. Seventeen total clients accessed mail services through the HNC during February and March 2020.

The volume of transportation services utilized by HNC clients doubled between January and February, with 62 total clients accessing transportation through the HNC's driver during February 2020. In March, 44 more clients accessed transportation services, totaling 106 clients who utilized transportation during February and March to visit other service organizations, assist them in moving into shelter and housing, and visit off-site medical care, benefits offices, employment opportunities and the Housing Commission. Clients were also provided Metropolitan Transit System bus passes for the purposes of attending healthcare appointments, job interviews, and accessing other service providers to assist them in obtaining shelter and housing.

### **Summary of HNC Outreach Services and Activities**

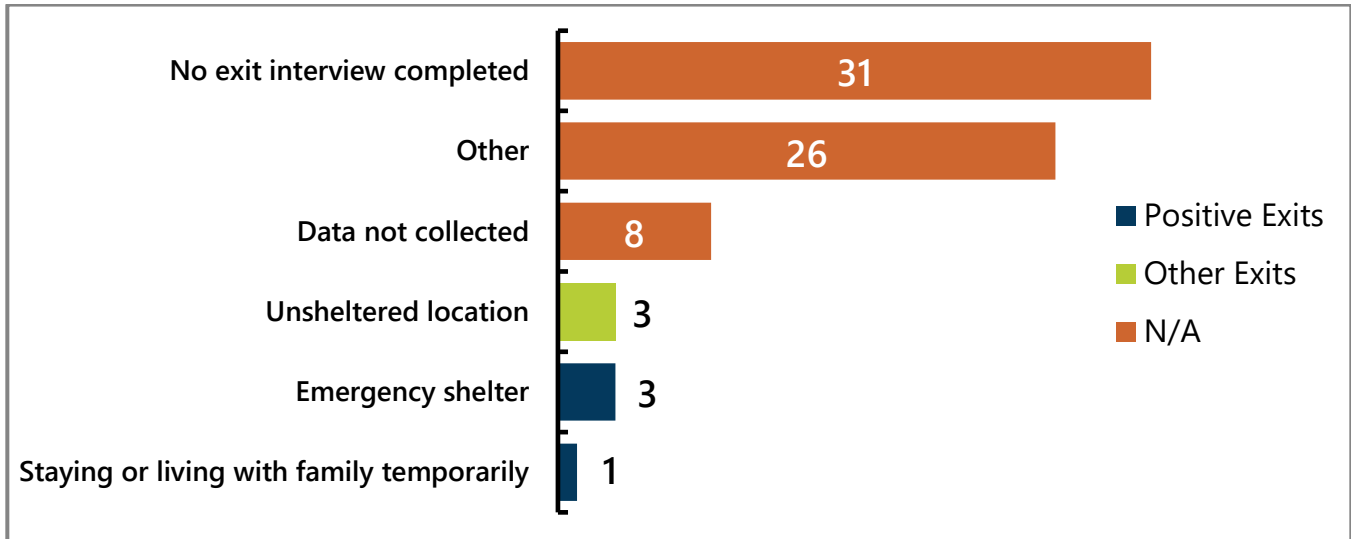
The information below provides an overview of data captured on services provided through the HNC's outreach efforts.

The HNC's team of Navigators conducted significant street outreach efforts in the months leading up to the HNC opening in the neighborhoods surrounding the site. In the months following opening, Navigators' efforts naturally shifted significantly toward supporting the opening of the site and serving clients visiting the site. In the fourth and fifth months of operations, outreach continues on a regular basis but is still reduced in frequency to ensure staff have sufficient time to meet the needs of the site.

During February and March 2020, the HNC outreach team enrolled seven new clients through outreach efforts and contacted 18 clients already enrolled in the HNC outreach program to offer a variety of services. Navigators referred seven clients to medical, mental health or substance use disorder services, provided four hygiene kits, brought food and water to one client and made contact with six others throughout the course of conducting street outreach.

During February and March 2020, 72 total clients were exited from HNC outreach services. The majority of clients who exited during February or March were clients Navigators had been unable to contact for several months and so were exited due to loss of contact, following standard HMIS data entry protocols for outreach programs. Four clients were exited to positive locations, including moving from the street into a shelter and moving in with family on a temporary basis.

**Table Nine: Exit Destinations for All Persons Exited from HNC Outreach Services during February and March 2020.**



**Community Engagement**

Prior to the opening of the HNC, Family Health Centers of San Diego, sought the input of residents in the East Village neighborhood surrounding the site to ensure a successful partnership with the community.

A Neighborhood Advisory Committee (NAC) was formed, and meetings are held with representatives from the East Village Community, including the East Village Residents Association, and representatives from Family Health Centers of San Diego, the Housing Commission, the San Diego Police Department, the City’s Environmental Services Department, the Mayor’s office, the Office of Councilmember Chris Ward, the Office of County Supervisor Nathan Fletcher and the County of San Diego Department of Health and Human Services.

The most recent meeting was held on February 18, and included an update from Family Health Centers on services delivered since the site opened, a presentation on data capabilities and insights so far, and a discussion of what data community members are interested in seeing included in data tools.

The NAC meeting scheduled for March 17 was cancelled due to developments related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Future NAC meetings will be held via teleconference to continue to provide a venue for community members to share input on program operations within the East Village to Family Health Centers, the Housing Commission and the City and allow the program’s partners to share information and provide updates to the community.

**Commitment of Partner Service Providers to Provide On-Site Services**

In addition to engaging the community around the HNC, Family Health Centers has engaged more than 30 partner service providers in discussions about service partnerships at the HNC. Family Health

Centers has executed 28 partnership agreements and two other partners have agreed to provide services regularly with informal commitments, as needs determine.

During February and March 2020, Family Health Centers continued to engage existing partners and new collaborators regarding providing services on-site at the HNC. One facet of these efforts is their commitment to holding orientation sessions with new partners and their staff, as needed, to provide information on the building’s workflow, safety protocols/exits, and technology systems and ensure partners are comfortable with every aspect of providing services on-site at the HNC.

The first HNC partner meeting was also held on March 5, 2020, which was the first in a series of planned monthly sessions for HNC partners to get to know each other, coordinate, share information and collaborate. Family Health Centers’ staff also reviewed the technological systems in place for partners’ use and how partners could use them, including the system for checking clients in and out of appointments during a partner’s shift and a web-based portal that partners can log into to reserve HNC rooms online. Two partners were also asked to describe what services they are offering on-site for the last portion of the meeting, which was set aside to learn about the services other partners are offering, ask questions and actively coordinate as part of learning about partner services.

During February and March, Family Health Centers continued to utilize the schedule of partners they created detailing shifts for providers who have started service delivery on-site to ensure that partners and persons accessing services are informed and aware of what services are available and when. As of February 2020, the schedule included full-time staffing from Home Start, Inc. and San Diego County Health and Human Services for public health and eligibility benefits. Other partners offering services on-site include Serving Seniors, the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) in San Diego, Dreams for Change, Downtown San Diego Partnership’s Family Reunification Program, the San Diego LGBT Community Center, Urban People Living In Faith & Trust (UPLIFT), Veteran’s Villages of San Diego and Community Research Foundation’s Areta Crowell program. Other partners determine the number of hours on-site as needed and schedule time through the Family Health Centers’ staff and the web-based scheduling system. A new partner was added to the schedule.

Table eleven summarizes partners that have made commitments to provide services on-site at the HNC.

**Table Eleven: Service Provider Partners who Committed to Providing Services at the HNC**

Service Provider Partner Agreements/Commitments		
2-1-1 San Diego	McAlister Institute	The Regional Task Force on the Homeless
Alpha Project for the Homeless	Mental Health Systems	The Salvation Army
Community Research Foundation	National Alliance on Mental Illness	Telecare
Dreams for Change	People Assisting the Homeless	UPLIFT
Downtown San Diego Partnership	Recovery Innovations	Department of Veterans’ Affairs San Diego Healthcare System

Father Joe's Villages & Village Health Clinic	San Diego LGBT Community Center	Volunteers of America
Home Start, Inc.	San Diego Rescue Mission	Veterans Villages of San Diego
Interfaith Shelter Network	San Diego Workforce Partnership	Helen Woodward
Legal Aid Society of San Diego	Serving Seniors	Department of Motor Vehicles

### **Community Events, Training and Resources Provided to Community Partners**

Family Health Centers has prioritized making the HNC a shared and collaborative space where community partners can hold their own meetings, attend community events that Family Health Centers hosts and visit to tour the site and learn more about the program.

An array of community partners have begun holding regular meetings and events at the HNC. Thus far, the Regional Task Force on the Homeless has provided multiple diversion-focused trainings led by Iain DeJong with Org Code, 2-1-1 San Diego and the Homeless Service Provider Alliance have begun holding regular community meetings on-site, and the Housing Commission has moved its monthly outreach case conferencing meetings to the HNC.

### **COVID-19 Mitigation Responses**

Beginning in early March 2020, the Housing Commission began sending regular updates to homeless shelters and services providers on ongoing activities of the Regional Task Force on the Homeless (RTFH), the Housing Commission, City of San Diego and County of San Diego to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 among homeless shelters and services programs and unsheltered populations. This includes providing updated guidance as it is released from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness and the County of San Diego related to serving persons experiencing homelessness.

Housing Commission staff began tracking stock levels of critical cleaning supplies and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) at all City of San Diego homeless shelters and services programs that the Housing Commission administers and began assisting with procuring needed cleaning and PPE supplies to ensure providers could effectively clean and sanitize program spaces in alignment with guidance from the CDC and County of San Diego.

In addition, the City of San Diego print shop started creating bundles of posters and flyers for providers for posting through facilities and delivered material on an ongoing basis to providers as needed.

Communication trees were also reinforced between providers, the Housing Commission, the City of San Diego, the County of San Diego, RTFH, and shelter leadership were encouraged to ensure redundancy is in place at leadership and program management levels (as the Housing Commission carried out internally) in regard to communication and knowledge sharing, in case leadership workforce reduction occurred.

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Respectfully submitted,  
Approved by,

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Docket materials are available online in the “Governance & Legislative Affairs” section of the San Diego Housing Commission website at [www.sdhc.org](http://www.sdhc.org).