



SAN DIEGO  
HOUSING  
COMMISSION

## INFORMATIONAL REPORT

**DATE ISSUED:** June 4, 2020

**REPORT NO:** HCR20-054

**ATTENTION:** Chair and Members of the San Diego Housing Commission  
For the Agenda of June 12, 2020

**SUBJECT:** April 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 authorizes 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 – APRIL 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

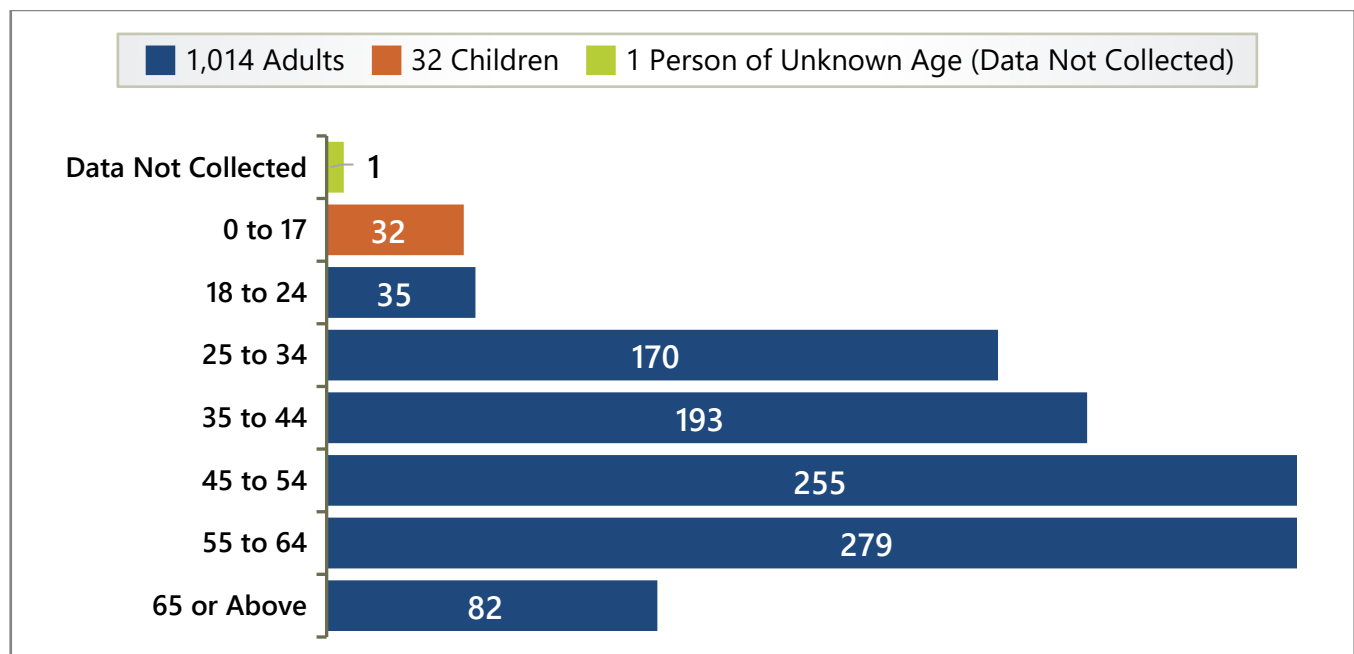
applications. Data included in this report summarizes services delivered on-site and in the field via street outreach efforts. It also provides both a longer-term picture of the population served since operations began and a summary of activities specifically conducted during the reporting month of April 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 April 30, 2020, including services delivered via outreach efforts since they began in April 2019 and services delivered on-site since it opened in December.

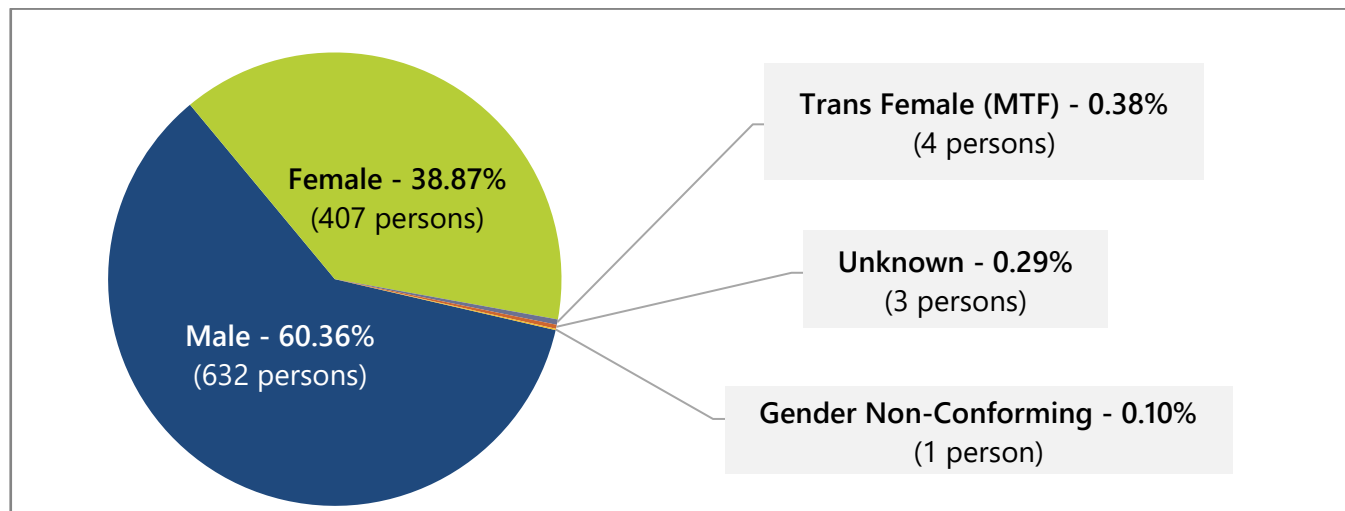
A total of 1,047 individuals have accessed on-site or outreach services through the HNC program as of April 30, 2020.

Tables one and two include additional demographics of the population served through all program services as of April 30, 2020.

**Table One: Age Distribution of All Persons Served by HNC Outreach (April 1, 2019 – April 30, 2020) and HNC On-Site Services (December 3, 2019 – April 30, 2020)**

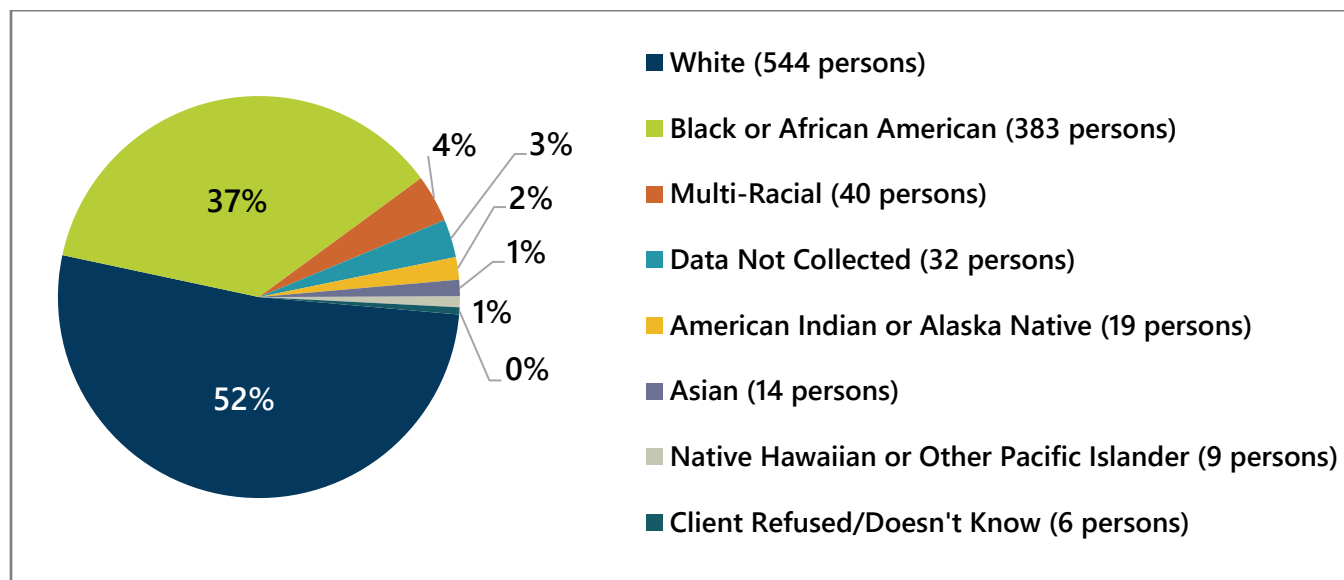


**Table Two: Gender of All Persons Served by HNC Outreach (April 1, 2019 – April 30, 2020) and HNC On-Site Services (December 3, 2019 – April 30, 2020)**



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 – April 30, 2020) and HNC On-Site Services (December 3, 2019 – April 30, 2020)**



**Table Four: Ethnic Demographics of All Persons Served by HNC Outreach (April 1, 2019 – April 30, 2020) and HNC On-Site Services (December 3, 2019 – April 30, 2020)**

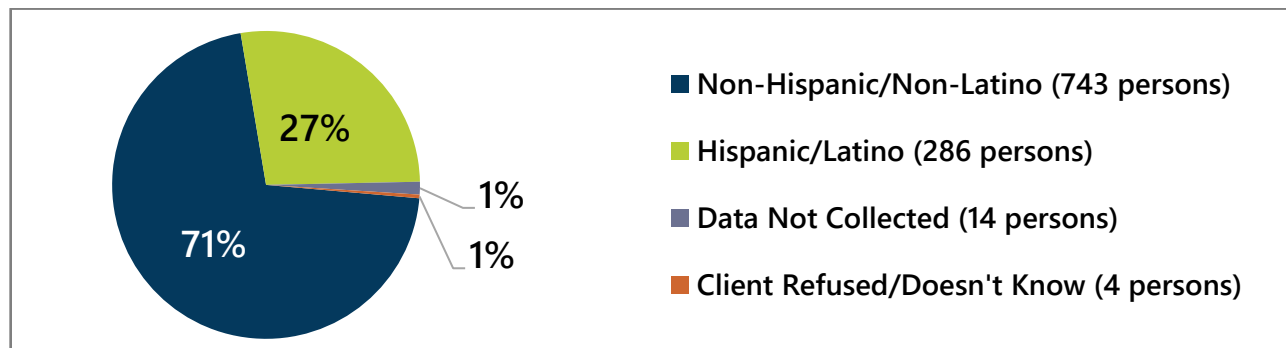


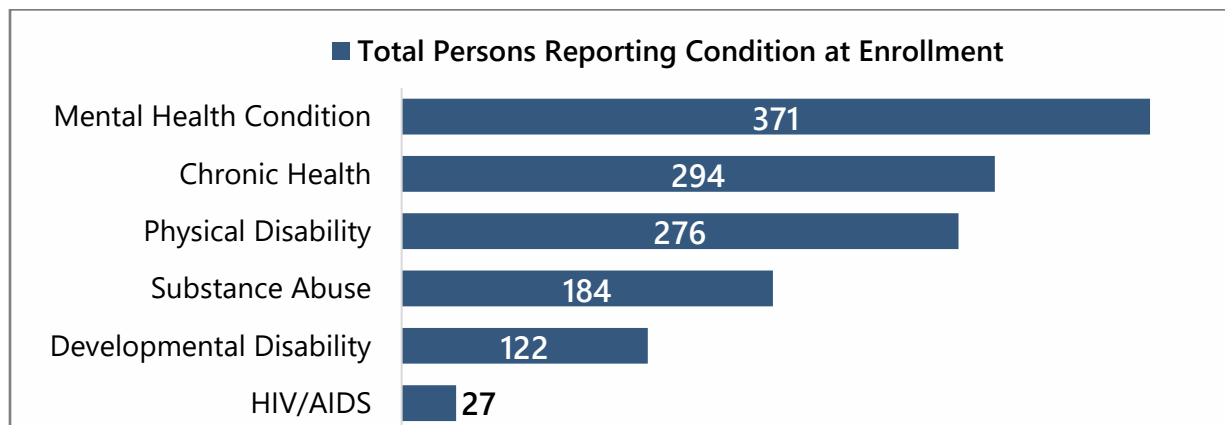
Table five describes the disabilities and health conditions that persons served on-site and via outreach reported upon enrollment. This data is based only on self-reported responses to a standard set of questions required as part of enrollment in HMIS, which includes six questions that ask participants 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 569 persons, or 54 percent of all persons served, reported one or more current disabilities or health conditions. Of those who reported a disability or health condition, 97 percent (554 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>.” A total of 289 persons (or 28 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 – April 30, 2020) and HNC On-Site Services (December 3, 2019 – April 30, 2020)**



The HNC serves as an access point for the Coordinated Entry System (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 April 30, 2020, that also have VI-SPDAT assessment scores, including clients served via street outreach efforts and clients served via on-site services.

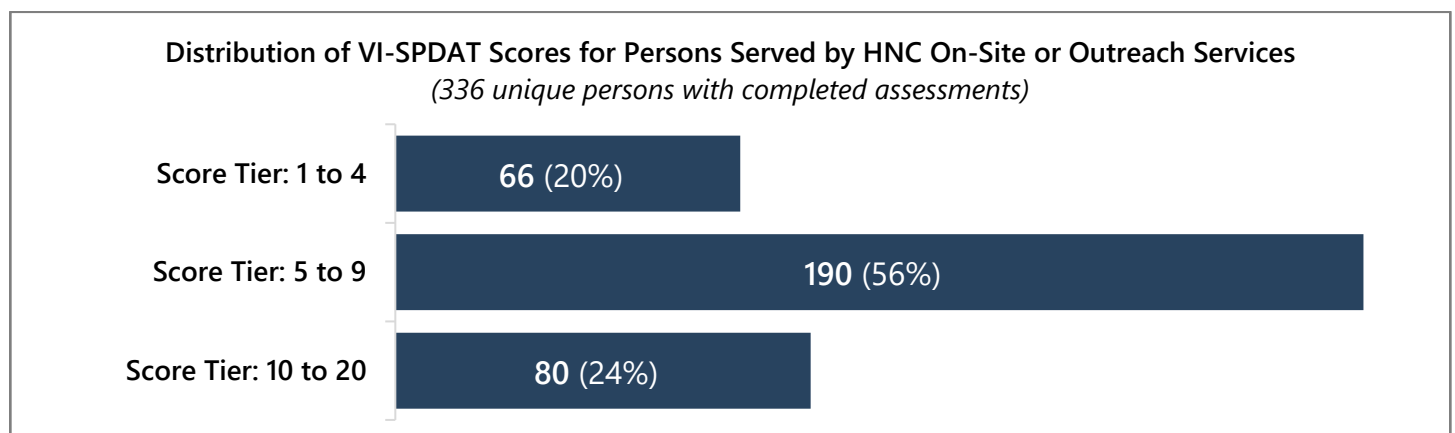
Please note, the regional approach to triage assessments for coordinated entry no longer recommends that all persons engaging in homeless services and entered into HMIS should immediately be administered the VI-SPDAT. Therefore, the number of persons receiving services at the HNC will not match the number 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.

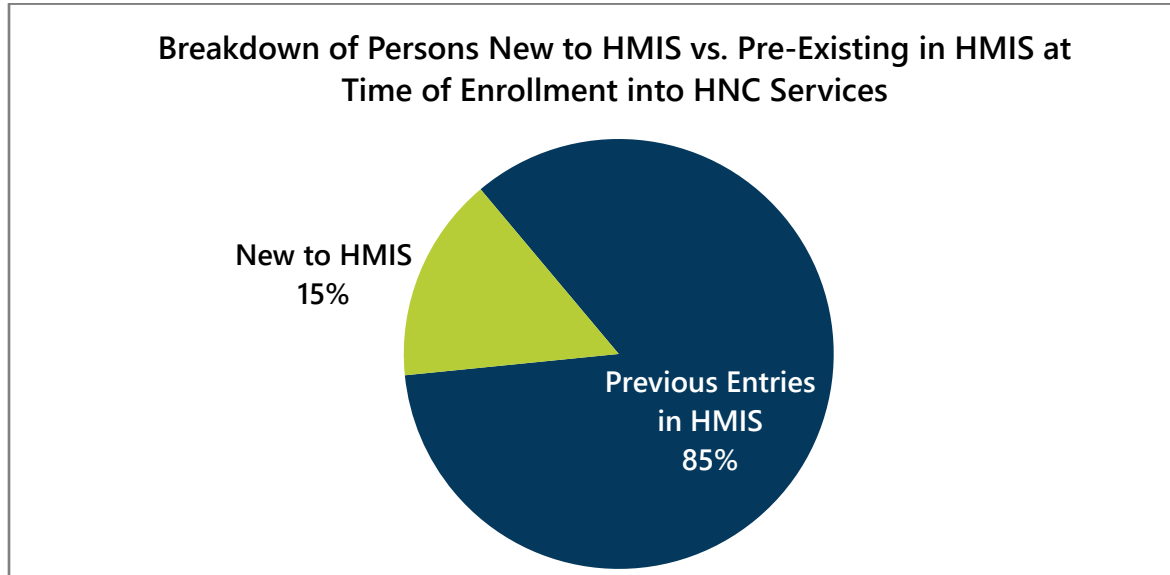
**Table Six: Distribution of VI-SPDAT Assessment Scores for All Persons Served by HNC Outreach (April 1, 2019 – April 30, 2020) and HNC On-Site Services (December 3, 2019 – April 30, 2020)**



As part of Family Health Centers’ agreement to operate the HNC, they are required to collect and record data on persons they serve in 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 HMIS is needed for a person experiencing homelessness to be considered to receive a potential referral to housing through the CES.

Among the 1,047 participants who have been served through HNC outreach or on-site services since services began, 15 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’s standard operating schedule was Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. However, on April 2, 2020, the Housing Commission approved a modified schedule and operating procedure, proposed by Family Health Centers in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which reduced operating hours to Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

In addition to modifying the program’s operating schedule, Family Health Centers implemented a number of measures to minimize the potential for transmission of COVID-19 among program participants and HNC staff while continuing to maximize access to program services.

Measures taken in April included (but were not limited to):

- Restricting access to the program site to staff only and temporarily halting the on-site presence of all but two service provider partners (while still facilitating referrals of participants to providers);
- Screening all clients upon entry to the site for symptoms of COVID-19 and referring symptomatic clients to appropriate medical care;
- Ensuring appropriate use of Personal Protective Equipment for staff and program participants;
- Ensuring social distancing guidelines were complied with during any in-person interactions;
- Converting in-person interactions between HNC staff and program participants to telephone encounters when possible and providing participants access to an on-site phone in the lobby of the site to facilitate telephone encounters; and
- Working with the County of San Diego to distribute information and hygiene kits to HNC participants and unsheltered clients residing near the HNC program site.

While service delivery was significantly impacted by the pandemic, the HNC continued to serve participants during the reporting month. During April 2020, 314 persons were actively enrolled in HNC on-site services.<sup>2</sup> A total of 284 persons, 90 percent of those actively enrolled, have been connected to a Housing Navigator. Thirty persons were still actively enrolled but have not yet been connected to a Housing Navigator. Persons not yet connected to a Housing Navigator accessed the site to learn more about services provided, seek information about specific partners or referrals available, or inquire about other basic services provided. The intention of the program is to continue to engage persons accessing the site until they are willing to connect with Housing Navigation and Case Management services.

The following table summarizes data on services provided during April 2020.

**Table Eight: Summary of On-Site HNC Services during April 2020**

<b>Summary of Services Provided On-Site at the HNC (4/1/2020 – 4/30/2020)</b>	
Total Persons Actively Enrolled in HNC On-Site Services during April 2020	314
Participants Connected to a Housing Navigator (among total active in April 2020)	284
Number of Participants not yet connected to a Housing Navigator (among total active in April 2020)	30
Participants Connected to a Housing Navigator – Since Program Opening	552 <sup>3</sup>
Number of Participants Placed into Permanent or Longer-Term Housing in April	7
Average Time to Permanent or Longer-Term Housing Placement for Participants Placed in April	91 days
Number of Participants Placed into Permanent or Longer-Term Housing – Since Program Opening	21
Number of Resource Referrals Provided to Participants	188
Number of Participants Linked to Community Support Services	90
Number of Participants who Received On-Site Medical Triage Services <sup>4</sup>	20
Number of Participants who Received On-Site Public Health and Public Benefits Enrollment Assistance Services	14
Number of Participants who Received On-Site Mental Health Services	16

<sup>2</sup> “Actively enrolled” signifies that the client had been enrolled in the program during or prior to the reporting month of April 2020 and that they had not yet been exited from services as of the end of the reporting month.

<sup>3</sup> This number includes all clients that have been active during the reporting year, even if they have since exited.

<sup>4</sup> The Family Health Center’s 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.



Number of Participants who Received On-Site Substance Use Disorder Services	1
Number of Participants who Received On-Site Life Skills Classes	0
Number of Participants who Received Mail Services	58
Number of Participants who Received Telephone and Messaging Services	16
Number of Participants who Accessed Computers	10
Number of Participants who Received Transportation Assistance (Bus Passes or Transport to Off-Site Services by HNC Shuttle Driver)	45
Number of Participants who Attended On-Site Group Sessions	0

During April 2020, the HNC continued to offer services to clients while taking steps to reduce the potential for transmission of COVID-19.

Family Health Centers’ medical clinician provided 20 unique persons with basic health education, medication refills and assessment of medical need for purposes of referral to care.

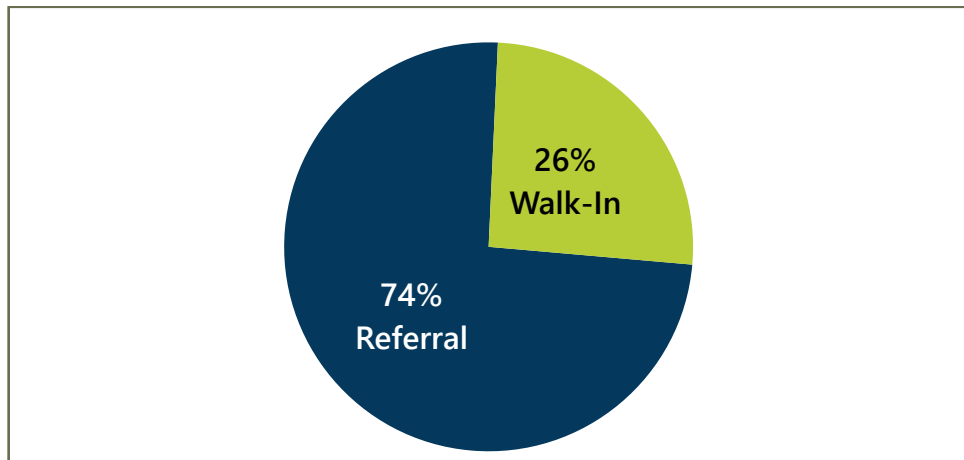
Mental health and behavioral health services continued to be offered twice a week but transitioned to primarily telehealth visits. Sixteen unique participants attended a total of 23 mental health sessions during April, for purposes that included psychological evaluations, brief emotional/behavioral assessments and referral to appropriate groups.

During April 2020, 74 total persons accessed communication services through the mail, telephone and messaging services available at the HNC. Purposes for using communication services included to connect with family/friends, pay bills and contact parole officers, financial institutions and public benefit agencies.

Thirty-five total persons were transported via the HNC on-site shuttle in April to destinations including other service providers, drop-offs to shelter or housing, medical providers for appointments or pharmacy services, and benefits agency offices, among others. Ten bus passes were provided to participants traveling to appointments, employment, shelter and housing.

Over the last several months, HNC staff have updated data on how participants came to enroll in the program, including distinguishing between clients who were referred to the program versus those who walked in. The following table summarizes the mode of entry for all 339 on-site participants who this data has been collected for since the program opened.

**Table Nine: Mode of Entry for Persons by HNC On-Site Services since Program Opening**



Since the HNC’s on-site program opened in December 2019, 401 total persons have been exited from HNC on-site services. The majority of these persons (59 percent overall) were exited due to a failure to return for services or respond to repeated attempts by HNC staff to contact them. Among the 164 persons who exited to known destinations, 40 percent exited to either permanent or longer term housing, emergency shelter or to a family/friend temporarily. Destinations for all 164 persons who exited to known destinations are summarized in the following table.

**Table Ten: Exit Destinations for All Persons Exited from HNC On-Site Services to Known Destinations since Program Opening.**

Other	91
Emergency shelter	41
Permanent or other longer term housing	21
Unsheltered destination	4
Staying or living with family temporarily	3
Hotel or motel paid for without voucher	2
Jail, prison or juvenile detention facility	1
Deceased	1

### **April 2020 Success Story**

During April 2020, one of the success stories reported by participants in HNC services was that of the “James” family<sup>5</sup>. Ms. “James” and her three young-adult sons had been homeless and living out of their car for two years when they came to the HNC seeking services. The HNC team was able to connect the family to the Interfaith Shelter Network, where they were given two weeks of temporary shelter while working toward a more permanent solution. HNC staff worked with the family to identify housing opportunities. By the end of April, the family had obtained long-term housing, and the adult children had secured employment and entered a program to obtain their General Educational Diplomas (GED).

### **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.

During April 2020, outreach efforts were largely halted due to both the needs of persons seeking on-site services and the service delivery modifications needed to address the COVID-19 pandemic. With staff resources needed to carry out the screening of all persons seeking on-site services, the measures taken to ensure staff safety by converting in-person interactions to tele-case management whenever possible and the focus on providing unsheltered clients basic information about COVID-19 and hygiene kits, street outreach efforts were limited in scope.

One person was enrolled in HNC outreach services in April 2020. This decrease in persons reflects the shift to HNC street-based services focusing on providing information, health and hygiene supplies and encouraging clients to seek services on-site rather than engaging them in intensive case management on the street given the limited outreach resources.

### **Community Engagement**

Prior to the opening of the HNC, Family Health Centers, 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, 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.

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<sup>5</sup> Client names have been changed to protect confidentiality.

NAC meetings scheduled for March and April were cancelled in light of developments related to the COVID-19 pandemic. HNC staff continued to engage with local partners, including San Diego County Health and Human Services, to support local efforts regarding the response to the local health crisis. This coordination included joining the County in distributing information and hygiene kits to unsheltered persons in the area surrounding the HNC site.

During April 2020, Family Health Centers’ staff also prepared for the resumption of NAC meetings via web conference, which began with the first online NAC meeting scheduled for and held in May 2020. Online NAC meetings 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 April 2020, HNC partners largely did not provide services on-site due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Home Start, Inc. and San Diego County Health and Human Services continued to provide some on-site services. Despite the shift in available on-site services due to program modifications necessary to ensure the safety of program participants and staff, HNC staff continued to refer clients to partners for services via other methods, such as phone calls and email.

The second HNC partner meeting, which had been planned for April of 2020, was cancelled due to the local health crisis. HNC staff began to plan in April for holding the next partner meeting in May of 2020 via web conference.

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	U.S. 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	California Department of Motor Vehicles

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

Beginning in early March, the Housing Commission began sending out regular updates to homeless shelters and service providers on ongoing activities of the Regional Task Force on the Homeless, 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, including 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 administered by the Housing Commission, 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 County of San Diego and the CDC.

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, the County and 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.

The City of San Diego, RTFH and Housing Commission staff continue to provide guidance to service providers during this time to support alignment with County Public Health and CDC guidance to protect the health and safety of staff and clients.

Respectfully submitted,



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Homeless Housing Innovations

Approved by,



Jeff Davis  
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San Diego Housing Commission

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).