



Navigating Housing and Benefits: Support, Tools and Resources for Santa Clara County

www.theunitedeffort.org

2025



Agenda

Our Clients

Complex Pathways to Housing

Who We Are: Mission & Values

What Makes Us Different

Impact

Unique Strategies

Approach

Service Process

UEO Tools, Resources, Training

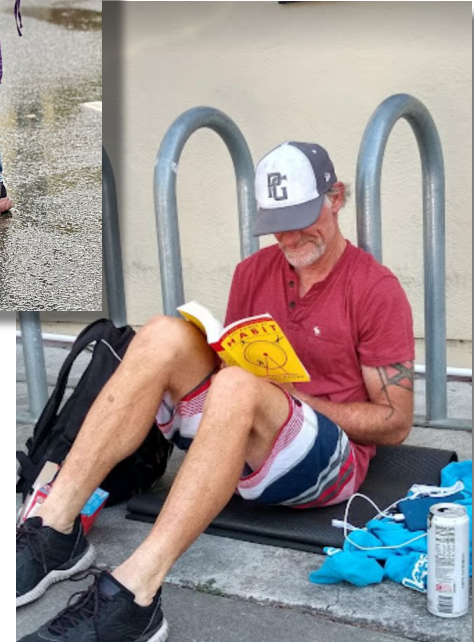


Our clients are **neighbors** facing **extreme financial hardship**.

Most worked for many years before experiencing a single bad event which forced them to live in their cars or on the streets.

Our clients are **resilient** and work hard to **overcome** these **challenges** to get back on their feet and become self-sufficient again.

But they need help and support from their community.





Our clients **deserve** the chance to have a **normal life like everybody else.**



They **deserve** to be treated with **dignity, respect, and compassion.**



The pathways to housing are complex

Getting from here  To here ...



... requires **navigating an intricate array of processes, applications and deadlines!**

Success involves building a trusting relationship with each client, through patience, persistence, and **intense collaboration and follow-up** with clients as well as with government and non-government agencies.



Who We Are: Volunteer-driven Non-profit.

We are a diverse team of volunteers who are passionate about helping our unhoused community members, – **our neighbors** – and our community. We bring different skills to help, on-site and behind the scenes,



always seeking the ideal solution for each client.



We are teachers, lawyers, engineers, finance and business professionals, clinicians, home-makers, university and high school students *as well as former or current clients!*



Founded July 1, 2020.
We serve Santa Clara County, and are proud to be recognized by the City of Mountain View as one of the key community organizations that provides homeless services and outreach.

Mission: To help people experiencing or at risk of homelessness move towards self-sufficiency and find a safe home in our community (Santa Clara County).

Values: Dignity, Collaboration and Persistence lead to Empowerment

What makes us **different** from other non-profits helping unhoused people?

1. Core values of **Dignity, Collaboration** and **Persistence** lead to **Empowerment**
2. Three publicly-shared **self-service** tools.
3. Experience and follow-up.

Solving problems in the context of long-term relationships builds the trust needed to empower self-sufficiency, which is why some of our volunteers were once clients!

2024 Impact Summary

Our mission is to help people experiencing or at risk of homelessness move towards self-sufficiency and find a safe home in our community. Our core values of Dignity, Privacy, Collaboration and Persistence lead to Empowerment.

2024: A Year of Growth and Impact

Our volunteer-driven team achieved record-breaking results, helping more new clients than ever (**595**), and nearly doubling housing placements (**69**), compared to 2023!

Key milestones:

- Inaugurating our first Lived Experience Advisory Board¹ of current and former clients who were empowered to advocate for others while helping us enhance our services.
- Mentoring over 40 clients in job searches.
- Piloting our first Customer Service Trainings.
- Launching a Self-Sufficiency Program² that is empowering clients on their journey to stability through one-on-one coaching.
- Contracted a team of six former and current clients – our own “Charlie’s Angels” – to sign up their peers for MyConnectSV³ (learn more on our website).
- Broad exposure: For the first time, the Mercury News featured our work in their annual [Wish Book](#) campaign.



595

New clients⁴ helped.



90+

Clients helped with Affordable Housing Waitlist applications.



69

Clients found stable housing⁵:

61% PSH,
23% HUD-VASH,
7% RRH.

Generous individual donors and new grant funding improved our ability to advance our impact. Along with our first in-person fundraiser and Giving Tuesday campaign, we were able to:

- Hire our first independent contractors to support growth: an administrative assistant and a Client Empowerment Director
- Provide temporary hotel stays for dozens of our most vulnerable clients
- Fund client management software



1,000+

Applications⁵ submitted for a range of services: CalFresh, MediCal, GA, SSI/SSDI,, transportation (VTA UPLIFT, Caltrain Clipper Cards, Paratransit passes) and housing.



40+

Clients helped with job searches.



116

Cumulative clients housed since July 1, 2020.

3 Our work depends on our open source collaborative self-service tools, developed and maintained by volunteers, shared freely on our website for use by individuals as well as other service providers in Santa Clara County:

- [Affordable Housing Database](#)
- [Check Benefits Eligibility](#)
- [Searchable Shelter Resource](#)



17

Clients helped with Homelessness Prevention Applications



35

Active Volunteers



100+ Collaborations

across other service providers & government agencies.

What's Next for 2025?

1. Expand Self-Sufficiency Program.
2. Expand volunteer pool; formalize operations.
3. Increase awareness.
4. Increase employment support.
5. Find more low-cost housing options.

1. Shared with Hope's Corner. 2. SSP funded by El Camino Health District restricted grant. 3. MyConnectSV funded through Destination:Home SV grant. 4. New clients who came to us in 2024, not including existing clients.

5. Benefits and housing programs. A client may have a range of applications or searches, from 1 to 20+. We don't count tasks such as applying for free LifeLine phones, eyeglasses, help with YMCA applications.

6. PSH: Permanent Supportive Housing; HUD-VASH: Housing and Urban Development Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing; RRH: Rapid ReHousing.

Unique Strategies for a Stronger Future



General Resources

Explore our programs and check out our website. Choose a category to narrow your search.

Find Affordable Housing
In Santa Clara County

Find Assistance Programs For You
In Santa Clara County

Find Shelter
In Santa Clara County

Showing all 46 shelters

Narrow your search with the filter options below or scroll to the full list of shelters

City

Gilroy Palo Alto Santa Clara Mountain View San Jose Sunnyvale

Populations Served

Adults LGBTQ+ Young Adults Pregnant Women Youth Veterans Domestic Violence Survivors

Group Size

Individual With family

Gender Restriction

Men only Women only

Income

Job wage Disability Unemployed Retirement

Availability

Available Waitlist Open

Filter Categories: Cash Assistance, Disability, Employment, Food, Healthcare, Housing, Important, Free Phone, Public Utility, Shelter, Tax Assistance



Whole Person Advocacy

We get to know each client to understand their needs and goals. We advocate for and help them navigate the complexities of housing and benefits applications, while helping them determine a path towards self-sufficiency.

Tools

To ease the burden of searching for affordable housing, assistance programs and resources, we develop, share and maintain free tools and resource lists for people in need and others in our community.

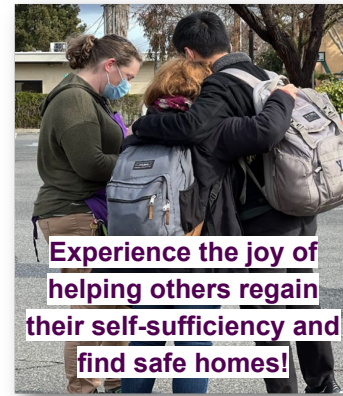
- Search for affordable housing
- Check eligibility for benefits programs
- Resources + Find Shelters
- Volunteer Training Resources

Mentoring

We mentor and work alongside clients, as needed, to help them set goals, find resources, develop job focus, set budgets and manage money. Trust, guidance, motivation, emotional support and role modeling are critical to helping clients achieve self-sufficiency!

In Person Approach

1. **Whole-person advocacy:** Builds trust and a long-term relationship.
2. **Meet clients** in N. Santa Clara County:
 - Parking lot, corner of Hope & Mercy (748 Mercy Street) in Mountain View (complementing Hope's Corner tangible services of food, showers, laundry)
 - Saturdays 8 - 10:30 am
 - Wednesdays 8 - 9 am
 - Field outreach in collaboration with other nonprofits (Sunnyvale, Milpitas, San Jose)
3. **Navigate and assist**, as much or as little as each client needs, with applications for affordable housing and public assistance programs / benefits, and help overcome obstacles in their way.
4. **Follow up** with clients or other volunteers as soon as possible, within 24 hours.



Service Process Overview: In Person

Comprehensive Intake

UEO volunteer talks with client, client signs Engagement Letter. Volunteer sets up a client profile, then discuss foundational needs

Volunteers talk with a prospective clients to get to know them, get the basic information so we can check Clarity¹ and Apricot², then try to **triage** their immediate needs. This also helps us to begin building **trust** for a long-term **relationship**.

Check Service History

UEO volunteer checks **Clarity**¹ to find out if the client has a service history.

Six UEO leaders have access to Clarity. They will log in to find out if the client has a service history (meaning to learn what programs they may be enrolled in, and whether their Housing Needs Assessment is current).

Comprehensive Planning

UEO volunteer completes a comprehensive intake on **Apricot**².

Volunteer follows up with client to:

1. Ensure foundational needs are being met
2. Create programs on Apricot²
3. Identify barriers to overcome to achieve the housing goal
4. Plan their housing roadmap
5. Determine what benefits to apply for
6. Collaborate with others for specific projects
7. **Monitor** progress
8. **Stay in touch** with client; respond in 24 hrs.

1. Clarity project management software by Claritysoft is used by Santa Clara HMIS (Homeless Management Information System; bitfocus.com)

2. UEO uses Apricot cloud-based case management system, developed by Social Solutions, to manage our clients' info and documents.

3



Tools uniquely created by United Effort volunteers, shared to help our community!

Find Affordable Housing

In Santa Clara County

Find Assistance Programs For You

In Santa Clara County

Find Shelter

In Santa Clara County



Developed and maintained by UEO for unhoused people, helpers and other service providers

<https://www.theunitedeffort.org/housing/affordable-housing/>

Find Affordable Housing

In Santa Clara County

Showing all 436 properties

Narrow your search with the filter options below or [scroll](#) to the full list of properties

City

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Campbell | <input type="checkbox"/> Milpitas | <input type="checkbox"/> Santa Clara |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cupertino | <input type="checkbox"/> Morgan Hill | <input type="checkbox"/> Saratoga |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gilroy | <input type="checkbox"/> Mountain View | <input type="checkbox"/> Sunnyvale |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Los Altos | <input type="checkbox"/> Palo Alto | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Los Gatos | <input type="checkbox"/> San Jose | |

Type of Unit

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> SRO | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Bedroom | <input type="checkbox"/> 4+ Bedroom |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Studio | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 Bedroom | <input type="checkbox"/> Shared Housing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Bedroom | | |

Availability

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Available | <input type="checkbox"/> Waitlist Closed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waitlist Open | <input type="checkbox"/> Call for Status |

Populations Served

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> General Population | <input type="checkbox"/> Developmentally Disabled |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Seniors | <input type="checkbox"/> Physically Disabled |

Click on this slide to go to our website for the actual tool and # properties!

Check Benefits Eligibility Tool



Developed and maintained by UEO for unhoused people, helpers and other service providers

<https://www.theunitedeffort.org/benefits-eligibility/>

Find Assistance Programs For You

In Santa Clara County

Use this tool to find assistance programs you may qualify for. **The information you enter here is completely private and will not be transmitted or stored in any way.** Some of the assistance programs in this tool only apply to residents of Santa Clara County, CA.

Click on this slide to go to our website for the actual tool



This form will ask you questions about you, your household, and your income. Answer each question to the best of your knowledge. After finishing this form, the results page will display a list of assistance programs you may consider applying for.

[See the list of all 20 programs we check](#)

You can always re-visit a section by clicking on that section in the progress bar, even after you've seen your results. Note that if you use your browser's back button, you will lose your progress.

The data you enter is never stored, transmitted, or shared with any agency and is completely private.

Find Shelter Tool



Developed and maintained by UEO for unhoused people, helpers and other service providers

<https://www.theunitedeffort.org/resources/shelter/>

Click on this slide to go to the website for the address and # shelters

Find Shelter

In Santa Clara County

Showing all 46 shelters

Narrow your search with the filter options below or [scroll](#) to the full list of shelters

City

- Gilroy Palo Alto Santa Clara
 Mountain View San Jose Sunnyvale

Populations Served

- Adults LGBTQ+
 Young Adults Pregnant Women
 Youth Veterans
 Domestic Violence Survivors

Gender Restriction

- Men only Women only

Group Size

- Individual With family

More Filters


Shelter Name

Resources We Develop and Provide To Volunteers and other Service Providers

Volunteer training materials:

Resources -

[External] UE... > Volunteer Training Mater... > [Training] Deposit and 1st Month... > [Training] Finding Housing (overvi... > [Training] VTA Paratransit.docx




Welcome!

Volunteer PRIMER

Once you review this Primer and sign our Volunteer Agreement, we **welcome** you to help on-site or remotely.

At your first on-site session, we'll provide a 20 minute tour and Day 1 Quick Start Guide. Other training materials are available as needed.

[Training] UEO Primer June 18, 2024
The United Effort Organization, Inc is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization with Federal tax ID number 85-2290026.



Day 1: Quick Start Guide

Volunteer Onboarding

Please review using [Full Screen](#) full screen.

[Underlined links](#) provide access to more detailed training documents.

Once you sign our Volunteer Agreement, we **welcome** you to help on-site!

[Link to Primer](#). Additional Modules offer training for specific and more detailed tasks.


[Training] UEO Onboarding Modules 1-4 v1. EXT1 May 18, 2024
The United Effort Organization, Inc is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization with Federal tax ID number 85-2290026.

[External] UE... > For Volunteers - Resour... > Folders

Folders		Name ↑
Affordable Housing Database	:	Behavioral Health
Computer Lab	:	Criminal Record Clearance
CSA Mountain View	:	Disability Benefits
Employment Services Programs	:	Federal Poverty Li
Financial Assistance	:	Food Assistance
Healthcare	:	Housing
ID Card and Driver's License	:	IHSS
Immigration	:	LifeLine Phones
Resources	:	ROI's

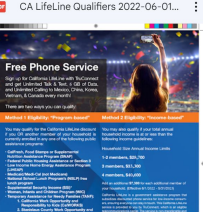
Files

CA LifeLine Qualifiers (Chinese).p...

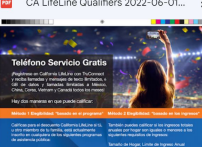


- 全美無限語話
- 全美無限短信
- 可以上網
- 沒有信用檢查
- 沒有年費
- 不需要交押查


CA LifeLine Qualifiers 2022-06-01...



CA LifeLine Qualifiers 2022-06-01...



Volunteer Guide - LifeLine Phones...



Summary of Core Services

3 

Tools covering Santa Clara County, accessible to everyone via our website.

1. Client Intake

Prioritize unhoused people, then those at risk of losing home.

2. Service Planning

Signed CEL to proceed to applications.

Immediate Needs

To overcome the many barriers to becoming and staying housed, we help clients gather the support and tools they need to stabilize and overcome these barriers, *such as* applications for replacement ID if needed, cell phone, as well as CalFresh, Medi-Cal.

Benefits

Applying for the public assistance programs & benefits is complicated. For clients who are capable, we help navigate, sometimes just showing them what to do. For others who can't manage on their own, we offer more intensive help with applications. We 'meet' each client where they are at on their journey back to self-sufficiency & finding a safe home in SCC.

Housing Plan

Finding housing takes the longest and has the most barriers. We build their housing plan with them, and help determine the most likely approach for success. We help with immediate needs / barriers (including doing their VI-SPDAT assessment, or starting Record Clearance).

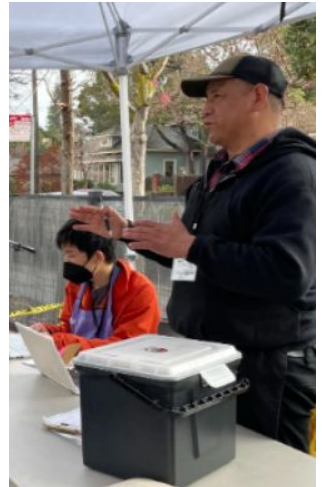
Post-housing Support

Employment Support

To regain self-sufficiency, people need an income. We can suggest job skills training programs, job fairs, and help with technical literacy, ESL practice, resumes or interview skills.



Nothing happens without our amazing volunteers, partners!





TheUnitedEffort.org

How Might We Collaborate to Help
Reduce Homelessness
in 2025 & Beyond?



Thank You!

info@theunitedeffort.org

theunitedeffort.org

shari@theunitedeffort.org