Lisa H: 00:00:06 Thank you so much for being here. I'm Lisa Halverstadt, a reporter at Voice of San Diego. I write a lot about homelessness. Um, those of you who attended our last panel probably have a lot of questions about the solutions after that. Um, um, and, and this panel and our next panel are all about solutions. So get ready. We're going to get through a lot of material here. Um, but I'm very excited. Um, so let me start by introducing our panelists. Um, first to my right, we have, um, Amanda SICO in URI, um, from funders together to end homelessness nationally.

Lisa H: 00:01:30 Um, one of the largest philanthropic organizations in the nation focused on this issue. Um, we also, uh, here on the far right here we have Mark, I can bow, um, who is the special assistant to the mayor for homeless initiatives in the city of Houston, um, which we'll talk about a bit more, uh, the work that Houston's been doing. Um, and we also have Lynn Schneider, who's the regional coordinator of us in our agency council on homelessness who also, um, spent some time as mayor in a Barbara, California. Um, so, um, quickly, um, just to kind of give you a little background, um, on the organizations here in particular, Colleen's, I know she had wanted to just very briefly kind of explain what the interview does. The council does.

Helene S.: 00:02:19 Well, let me just then thank you. First off for having me here today, how many of you even heard of USICH? It's more than usual and that wasn't a lot. And so a USICH was put together by Congress in 1987. It's a very small federal interagency that coordinates the 19 different federal departments that deal with the issue of homelessness. And so USICH is working on the federal response to homelessness. I like to call it the 19 spoke wheel to keep things moving forward. And uh, so you can see, right? Yeah, there you go. Right above. Um, you think HHS and HUD but also the VA social security department of labor, department of justice, all of them connected. Um have a member that is part of the council and they comprise of the policy and then the staff is only, it's less than 20 people. We're very tiny. I'm one of five regional coordinators around the country that connect local communities to what's happening on a state and federal level and vice versa. Most of the staff are policy makers who see a lot of information that you see on our website and I encourage you to go there at USICH dot Gov.

Lisa H: 00:03:24 That was a lot in a short time. There you go. Um, so, um, one just kind of programming note is if you have questions, um,

Helene S.: 00:03:33 you can text me actually directly as this number that is up on the screen here.
Lisa H: 00:03:38 We also have some great volunteers walking around with note cards if you have a question. So if a question comes up, raise your hand and one of the volunteers will come find you and give you a pen if you need one and a note card. Um, and we will try to leave time at the end for questions. Um, as I said, we have a lot to cover. So just to quickly give you an idea of the topics we want to try to cover today, the topics we want to try to talk about. Everything from how do we significantly reduce homelessness here in San Diego. Um, how do we deal with some of the equity issues here in San Diego that don't get discussed perhaps as much as they should about the challenges some particular populations have. Um, and also how do we produce that housing? But you know, a lot of folks are saying in our last panel, we need to produce more housing. How have other communities done that? So we'll try to get to as many as we can, but hang on for the ride. We're gonna go through a lot. So let's start with the big question and that is how can we make a significant dent in this problem in San Diego? And what I'd like to start with is by asking Helene and Amanda to talk about what's kind of like bound together communities that have managed to have significant success in this area. Okay,

Helene S.: 00:04:58 I'll start again. Thanks. You know what I'm going to say sounds like, well duh, of course you're going to do this, but sometimes making it happen, it can be really difficult. So the first is therefore set up there. Yes. Um, political will and of course political will, meaning amongst your elected officials to take it on and be proactive and you know, pass budgets and care about the issue. But that's not just limited to elected officials. Every one of you here has some role authority, some jurisdictions, some level of influence with others that you can insert that kind of political will to make things happen. The second is a good coordinated effort with the resources that you have on hand. People all this time saying, well, if we just had more money, we could do more. But there's so much money sometimes left on the table or you're not blending things together or leveraging or maximizing the resources that you have, which leads to the third one being talking about coordination and collaboration.

Helene S.: 00:05:52 Uh, so much as we heard in the first panel, there's so many different agencies and different connections that people have who experience homelessness and what it takes for them to get to housing. And each of them have their own role. They have their own authorities, they have their own jurisdiction, they have their own budgets and they need to know whatever, what everyone is doing and they need to coordinate and collaborate together and make sure and trust that everyone in their role is doing their job to the best of their ability as you are working in
your best abilities. And then finally, I never give up attitude. This does not happen overnight. Success is invisible sometimes after months and months of working with an individual to finally get them to help with them, work with them to make the, make feed people feel more sustainable and how it's been safe. Um, but to make that happen can take a lot of time to make it work. So that never give up attitudes. It crucial.

Speaker 3: 00:06:45 Um,

Amanda Andrere: 00:06:46 speaking a lot from the funder's perspective and I want to make clear that funders together to end homelessness, we don't do funding. The work that we do is bring funders together across the country to learn, connect and act and think about what does it mean to do effective grant making to end homelessness in their community. At a lot of that is focused on things like thinking about the system, not thinking about funding individual programs. Thinking about it from a racial equity lens. We know that disproportionately people experiencing homelessness around the country, including in San Diego, uh, are people of color. And also thinking about what does it take to bring true public private partnership together 10 homelessness. So there is no special sauce. I want to say something that struck me about this event and as the kids say, this is not shade, but it's just the reality of what I think is happening in communities that are, that are making progress and those who are not.

Amanda Andrere: 00:07:41 There's a panel on, there's a track on homelessness and there's a track on housing. Those things are not separate. They're instructively linked. And in a lot of communities we are not building the capacity for folks to, to, to build a political wealth, to think about them together. And even within public government to think about them together. Everyone should be thinking about housing stability from the health department to the criminal justice department. We can't educate our children if they don't have housing. And so the communities we see that are working really well in ending homelessness, housing stability is a mandate of everyone and every public department and every sector, number one and funders are building the capacity for a central body that's really thinking about what is it the leadership going to take political will mixed with leadership. And that leadership can't be just on the homelessness system.

Amanda Andrere: 00:08:37 It has to be about all those systems that I mentioned and that leadership needs to understand the role, the role of the public government and the role of philanthropy. Philanthropy is not a checkbook out way out of this crisis. And, uh, I heard earlier someone say like, uh, that resources are finite. I, I don't know
that I necessarily agree with that. I think that we, uh, have resources and directing them the right way and building the political will to think about what will it take to build the capacity of organizations in your community to really be able to, uh, to think about, uh, uh, what are the things that we can take to scale? What is the innovation that's lacking in communities, uh, that we can take to scale. And that role is through a public private partnership of, I'll get into that a little bit more, but I just want to, when you, when we think about what communities are doing that's working, it's when they're building those public private partnerships and everyone again is thinking about housing stability.

Lisa H: 00:09:42 Oh, give it to the 0.2 on. Um, why, and we'll hear more from Mark about this later, but one community in our country that has had to stay there, success in this area, public private partnership, even addressing homelessness is Houston. And as you can see, they have sustained a significant drop in homelessness and we'll hear more from Martin about how they did that later. Um, but it certainly can be done. Um, so let's kind of start, we're going to start going through some challenges really quickly, um, or talk to the panelists in advance a bit about some of these things. So we did, should be able to talk are some good suggestions here. So I'm going to start with a question that I would say as a reporter I get more than just about any, and that is how do we house those people who seem like they are most vulnerable in our communities and who may even seem like they're resistant to help. They may be refusing offers of help. So one key solution in that realm. But I know our panelist will want to talk about is permanent supportive housing. So why don't we start with Amanda to just explain what permanent supportive housing is and then we'll kind of talk more about some of those solutions there.

Amanda Andrere: 00:10:58 So I'm also gonna push back a little bit on that. I'm going to push back a little bit on that question because if you were in the last panel, what we heard from people with lived expertise and again that that's another part of this special sauce is uh, no system can change without the people closest to the problem being a part of that change. And they need to be a part of that change, uh, as, as paid experts, uh, in the work, not just paying them with pizza and soda, but having a, a living wage, a consulting wage to, to be a part of this work and what we heard from the last panel, but with people with lived expertise, they pushed back on the idea that there are people that are hard to house. There's lack of trust that makes a coming into communities that can help them, that that is a central problem
and that housing is a solution that they want, but they want to be able to have housing in their own way.

Amanda Andrere: 00:11:50

So I was reluctant to define permanent supportive housing because, um, all of us have housing. If you are living in a house right now, uh, you have housing that is permanent. Hopefully if you're paying your mortgage and you have support. I just bought a house in DC in a really expensive community, uh, and I've lived there most of my life and I couldn't, uh, maintain my housing without support. Now that might look different from me, that might look like coordinating childcare for my husband's son. It might look like, uh, relying on my faith community to help in different situations. Uh, so I want to get away from technical terms and get us to think about, uh, housing as a human right and that people sometimes need different supports to stay and access in housing. So when we talk about permanent supportive housing, we're not talking about anything different than what you have.

Amanda Andrere: 00:12:50

Um, they, when we talk about it in a way that offers dignity, when we talk about a model that actually works in our country, we're talking about housing first. And that just means housing without required services. But if there, if people want to access services, they can. And I think that's much like you live in your home, you have a home. If you want to access resources you do. And you know, whether that is your community or not, you know where to go for those resources, hopefully. And you access them. So I'm gonna, I'm gonna define permanent supportive housing that way and not get into technical terms, but have us really think about what does it mean for our community to have housing for people who need it and housing in a way that offers dignity.

Marc Eichenbaum: 00:13:40

So, uh, good afternoon. It is always sunny here. It is true. Um, so, uh, you know, Houston started in 2011 when we had the sixth largest homeless community in the country. Uh, and uh, it, we said we, our population was around 8,500 individuals and it took strong political leadership with the support of the community saying we needed to change and that no longer were you just going to try to manage homeless and no longer was it going to be the new shiny object to try to reduce homelessness. But we were gonna make data-driven decisions and we were going to focus on housing and collaboration. And so one of the key parts of that is the permanent supportive housing that you mentioned. We just like your plan that was released by CSH. Uh, we did the same thing. We, we look to see what our current housing stock was, how many units of this
permanent supportive housing we had, what was the need, and then what did we need to create to match, to meet that need.

Marc Eichenbaum: 00:14:42 And so we found that we needed about 2,500 additional units of supportive housing back in 2012 and we had a, we brought the community together. Public and private partnerships is key with the mayor at the, at the helm of that. But the mayor needs that support. And sometimes that pressure from the public, from the philanthropic, from the business community to really stay focused. A key here is homelessness can not be one of the top 10 or top five issues of your mayor or, and city. It needs to be the number one to get major traction because that's when you're gonna pull all the major players for those needed public private partnerships together. And so we started on this path of really focusing dollars from the city and the County and creating these units, getting the private support also create these units. And then making sure that we had the subsidies to provide those wraparound supportive services.

Marc Eichenbaum: 00:15:36 It's what's helped us house 17,000 homeless individuals since 2012 in permanently house. Uh, and that has been a huge key to our success. Uh, you can see right here on this graph to you're right, I mean this is not a correlation. This is direct causation here. The green line is the blue line is the number of units that we were creating. And the green line is our, uh, chronically homeless, uh, count a population count. So you can see as we're creating units, the population count is going down and that is, that's key. We look at several different data points to drive and make sure that there is that causation there. And it's a really, uh, important, important that if you build to scale. And so when you're looking at solutions, scale is huge. Um, if it cannot be brought to scale and it's not gonna move that needle, it might not be that best solution. And so that's one thing that we really focused on, not just permanent supportive housing, not just housing, but also bringing it to scale.

Lisa H: 00:16:39 And we'll talk more about how you get the funding and, um, so, you know, financial support to produce that housing and community support in a moment. But another key component that I know of me would like to talk about is some integrated programs, outreach programs can be really impactful as well and addressing those most vulnerable communities.

Helene S.: 00:16:58 Right? And so is, uh, right Marin counties up there. So, uh, well, and let me just, let me just sort of echo first that, uh, dealing with permanent supportive housing is trying to reduce the number of barriers possible and not have all these hoops to go through to, for people to get what they need and then provide
them what they actually need. And so that's part of also talking to the people who need the services, not just assuming that there's one thing after another. The other component I think that Houston did very well also was um, know your data and, and I think that's where to start here is what is the scope of the problem? What is the, where, where are the barriers, where, how do people get from point A to point B and that, you know, kind of wiggly line and where the gaps are.

Helene S.: 00:17:40 So in Marin County is one particular example, smaller area obviously, but, um, again, you can scale things big or small depending on, uh, on your size and a lot of the same components. It's an, it's the opportunity to reach out to people who are experiencing unsheltered homelessness with both a, um, connection to housing, but with a very strong focus on the health their healthcare needs. And to make sure that to connect with medical reimbursements that also connect to housing. So you don't have those two different pillars of health care and housing. And the other big component with Marin County is working with the criminal justice system that they are part of finding the solution as opposed to just finding what the problem is in dealing with a, um, infraction or a misdemeanor or that kind of down that road as we heard about in the first panel.

Helene S.: 00:18:31 Uh, so, so law enforcement is very much trained to understand mental illness, um, things about public health. They have coordinated with them public health professionals who go out into the community and find people who are unsheltered and then connect with them. That combination, uh, to get people into housing. The other thing that happens, and I mentioned the coordination piece regularly basis, they have a by-name list of who is out there, what kind of issues do they need, who are, who and what are all the different agencies that they interact with and touch and then get those people in a room on a consistent basis and say, well, what exactly does this person need? Who's in charge? How are we going to make that happen? And then to hold each other accountable, um, over time to have both policy leaders and service providers at the same time, around the same table on a consistent basis, making those things happen with the focus being on what the need of that particular individual. And it's working extremely well in Marin County.

Lisa H: 00:19:28 So one thing that you know, often, and this came up in our last panel is that community members might complain about an encampment in their area. Um, so in both Houston and also at Philadelphia, um, they have actually gone in and made some big efforts to target larger candidates. So why don't we just, we'll
start with Helene. Can you talk a little bit about what Philadelphia did try to, um,

Helene S.: 00:19:54 yeah, and I want to get the, yeah, I don't want to get the, I'm looking back to get the exact report. So a few years ago, Philadelphia experienced the rise in unsheltered areas and intense areas. I'm underneath highways, they call them freeways right, not freeways? Um, they don't say before the five, all that kinda stuff. Um, but, and so, so they had some certain areas. And they were in, in certain neighborhoods and obviously it was creating a concern, not only with the people living in tents and encampments, but, um, around communities, around the communities. And so the, there was a concerted effort with the city of Philadelphia and, uh, the County, other social service agencies to focus on the full, the full encampment area, not just, um, not just people who had acute concerns, but everyone there and, and look and talking to the people in the encampments about what it would take to help them move into housing.

Helene S.: 00:20:45 Uh, what are the connections to the health care services? What are the connections related to issues like we heard earlier on expunging records and getting people, um, sustain more sustainable. Um, they found that, so there was this, there was this, um, evaluation done in partnership with Penn state and looking at the details here and in one particular area. And, um, they found that, as was mentioned earlier, you can't work on connecting with people and helping for success if you don't have housing on the other side of it. And they, uh, one of the report findings was that they could have done better in getting more people even into housing, permanent housing, um, if, if they, if they had more places for people to go. Um, but at the same time, as you can see, they had this, um, after six months using the BNL, the by name list, right?

Helene S.: 00:21:35 So they knew them by name exactly what they needed, connected with them, talked with them and figured out what they needed to, um, maintain ongoing contact, getting them into either drug rehab if they needed that or behavioral wellness or whatever it was. Um, and, and the other thing I think also with the data, which is important in terms of political will amongst your community and community support is knowing who, what their stories are. And the point that 84% of the people in those encampments lived in Philadelphia in some capacity before they became homeless. These are your own neighbors. These are people who didn't come from all over the place to become homeless in Philadelphia. They, they were already here. This is the place that they knew. Um, I think those
are the main coordinator. But again, it's, it's that coordination piece, but the, but the key component also had to do with the entire encampment area. Um, obviously ranked by acuity what was needed, but not just focus on those who had high risk needs, of course focused on them, but focused with everyone and what they needed and how they connected with each other. And Houston also has focused on and Camden smart. Can you talk quickly about how that's worked there?

Marc Eichenbaum: 00:22:43 Yeah, so we said, um, you know, even with a 60% decrease in homelessness in Houston, we still have encampments and my office gets flooded with complaints every day. We care about it because it's a public health concern. And so, and you can see in the numbers over here that the behavioral health issues are doubled, uh, what they are and the Indian camp means from what they are in the general homeless population. So we said, can we go to one of our larger encampments and can we effectively close it down by housing everybody? And so on the day that we started, there were 73 individuals in the encampment, about 16 of them self resolved or they left. And although this says 42 up there, it's actually now 50. We housed 50 folks from that encampment in uh, in about four months, which left around seven original residents there at the end of the day.

Marc Eichenbaum: 00:23:35 But that last day there wasn't seven people there. There was 41. And the reason is, is that we had a small recidivism rate. Our recidivism is about, um, a 10% in permanent supportive housing, which is a so 90% of the folks stay housed a year after being placed in that housing. We used to celebrate when it was 50. Um, and so, but we had 20 was I say 29 new folks moved in. And so this is the concept here is that the first thing is the housing worked for 80% of the folks in that encampment. Permanent housing, first permanent supportive housing is the key. You are going to have a small percentage that their behavioral health is so acute, uh, that you're gonna need. Other measures than just housing to really be able to engage with those individuals. But the spicket into homelessness is always on. So you have to house more people in a given month than are gonna become homeless to have that net decrease that you're looking for. And that's why the housing numbers are so big and they're to scale. So you can actually see that decrease just to keep the numbers static. You have to house people. Um, if you want to decrease it, you gotta house a lot more. And so we saw housing was the major key. It wasn't the golden solution for everything, but it was the main key, uh, to allowing us to respond to that encampment.
Helene S.: 00:25:03 Can I just add something really? I think this is a key point because when people hear all we need is X number of beds and we've solved homelessness, that's not accurate, right? If you're looking at what's shelter beds or things, it's the flow through of getting people who may be experiencing homelessness if they need emergency shelter and into housing, but also looking upstream of people who are at risk of homelessness. So that's, you know, so I think that is sometimes, um, a miscommunication or something that doesn't quite connect with folks saying, Oh, we have 500 beds in the community. We should be done. How come I'm still seeing people experiencing homelessness. It's the whole systems approach that is needed. And so that if someone is X, it has risk of experiencing homelessness. There's a system in place so that they don't become unsheltered in particular and that they can get the housing.

Lisa H: 00:25:48 Well, and that's a good point to bring up as we talk about you. One of the big challenges that San Diego has had and addressing homelessness is that we've had a lot of different folks rowing in different directions who all care a lot about the issue, but maybe taking different strategies. And this is an area where I'll kind of just very quickly go through slides that'd be Houston was in this situation is Marc has talked about. Um, back in 2011, they had a lot of different players. Um, they had a system where it was confusing for homeless individuals to seek services. I hear this constantly from homeless individuals here in San Diego as well. And the funding for those services was not very efficient either. But here's where Houston is now. There is a clear system. So Mark, how did you get to that?

Marc Eichenbaum: 00:26:35 well, it starts with political will and it really helps when you have a mayor and a city council that is going to stay focused on this and have patience to stay focused. Um, there's always so many times that constituents are calling and emailing and tapping them on the shoulders. There's this want to go back to just triaging, uh, in a knee jerk reaction and you're going back to managing the situation. What they need is to be told if you're going to do longterm permanent solutions, then we're going to be, have your back and we're going to have patience, uh, and support you into doing that, give you some breathing room so that you can do those longterm games. At the end of the day, we had just like every other community in the country, everybody was doing their own thing, their own way with their own methods, their own goals.

Marc Eichenbaum: 00:27:19 And we embraced a single set of strategies. We embraced one set of goals that all of our 100 plus community partners all
embrace. And it also helped to have all the purse strings kind of rally around it. So if you want money from the city, if you want money from the County, if you want money from the federal dollars that come in or from our major philanthropic foundations, you have to be part of this coordinated system or else you're not going to get that funding and you can continue doing what you ever you want to do. And that's fine. You're just not going to get these precious dollars because we're going to invest in where ever we're going to get the biggest rate of our return. It's like ROI, our rate of investment. Okay. And so where are we going to invest those dollars where the data says in the data for us, probably like you guys was permanent solutions of housing.

Marc Eichenbaum: 00:28:09 Um, and you know, there were some agencies that, you know, they might have some different feelings and thoughts about what our strategy was going to be. Uh, but that didn't keep them from still, you know, jumping in the pool with us and being there and supporting it. Um, you might not get 100% of everything that you believe should be in that plan or should be the plan going forward, but if it's better than what you got and it's 90% being there and working with the others is really, really important. We were able to go to agencies and say, you don't have to be everything to everybody. What do you do really well? And then we'll get other agencies to do the other pieces. And so we, if you go to our housing communities, we have one agency that might just develop the housing, another agency that manages it, another that brings the supportive services there, another one that does the case management, but it's all coordinated so that we can increase that impact.

Lisa H: 00:29:06 So, um, I've seen some questions already rolling in and that touch on this topic. So glad that there's interest, um, obviously there is a struggle here to build low income housing for homeless individuals. Um, and we have struggled with this. It, San Diego. Um, there was an analysis by the city of San Francisco that found that San Diego of 18 metros large metros like it, we had the lowest per capita number of supportive housing units. So there's a lot of work to be done. Um, and a lot of fear also about homeless housing. Um, I guess I would start actually, we'll start with, um, Amanda and Helene and, you know, have more chime in. What does homeless housing look like? It goes communities and how do you sell that?

Amanda Andrere: 00:29:55 So I think I touched on this earlier, that housing for people who are experiencing homelessness or people who might have be about experiencing home homelessness doesn't look any different, uh, than housing anywhere else. Uh, and I think there
is some understandable fear. Uh, but what's interesting at
which you mentioned in most communities, the people
experiencing homelessness have already lived there. So they've
already been your neighbors. Uh, so they probably already lived
next door to you. And so it's really interesting to me that there's
any fear around that because what we're talking about is
housing options for people. And so that can look like a lot of
things. It could look like building one unit. It could look like
scattered site housing. It can look like, um, where I live in, in the
DC area. Um, it can look like, um, several people being in one
home together. The, the idea is not about what it looks like, it's
what it offers. And that is, um, for some people, uh, a
permanent solution to ending their homelessness. Um, and I
think that,

Amanda Andrere: 00:31:03 I think that some of the fears are about not understanding who
people are. Um, not understanding that housing is a human
rights and that, uh, that is the only solution that's gonna get us
out of this, this problem. And so I, I, I guess I'm just challenged
by that question. I'm going to push back on. Like, it doesn't look
any different than any, any other housing. I love to have a
dialogue about what people think it looks like. Um, okay, so
people are referring to low income housing, um, projects. Um, if
you've ever been to a low income housing community, which I
worked in for several years, and, uh, actually one of the
wealthiest counties in the country, Fairfax County, right outside
of DC. Uh, it looks like community to me. The housing looked
like community to me. It looked like people who helped each
other get their kids to school and get to work.

Amanda Andrere: 00:31:57 Um, and it looked like people who sat in a community center
and ate meals together. Um, it looked like people who tried to
work on the skills that they needed to get a better job, but
guess what? Sometimes that better job, uh, gave them a little
bit more money. Uh, and then that means that they didn't
qualify for that housing. So it looked like people trying to figure
out how to maintain their housing and better themselves at the
same time and not face some of the, uh, ridiculous barriers that
we put, uh, on people who experienced poverty and even make
them more poor by, by some of the ridiculous barriers. So I
understand that fear. I would just say that, uh, actually I don't
understand it because I think they're just people. People, uh, if
you spent time in community, uh, you would know that housing
looks just like that. It looks like people in community.

Helene S.: 00:32:49 So I'm going to put on my former mayor and I was a city housing
authority commissioner as well in Santa Barbara and I'm sure I
know other communities do this, but there are a supportive
housing or subsidized housing projects throughout the country that you would never know was, um, subsidized in some way by a government agency or through section eight vouchers unless you, you know, looked up, looked it up. Um, there, even Santa Barbara just last weekend had they had an affordable housing tour. They do this every weekend, every year, once a year they go around to place saying, I always thought that was a bed and breakfast and, and actually it’s the supportive housing, um, um, place for 93 seniors with a community center. I think the, it’s the community component to it. Um, and it’s a, an I would, I would offer that there’s probably people who are receiving a voucher or some other kinds of support right. Within a quarter mile for most of us that we just don’t know because there’s so many scattered sites as well. Um, so it looks like, right. It looks like, uh, just looks like housing. Yeah.

Amanda Andrere: 00:33:54 Well I just want to say, cause some, some people on the front row said that they fear that, uh, the housing will look to lap annotated.

Amanda Andrere: 00:34:06 So the, the question is they're not keeping up housing. Well, whose responsibility is that? You know, I think that's the question and the dialogue that needs to happen, uh, on the outset. Investing in housing through a public private partnership model that is housing that is integrated in the community and looks like all the other housing in the community. Uh, so if you don't want it to look dilapidated, if you want it to be maintained, um, then how do you invest the resources for that to happen? And that's investing public resources in your nonprofit partners and getting a private philanthropy also at the table. So I, I think we have to vision for what we want it to be and, and invest in that vision.

Marc Eichenbaum: 00:34:48 You know, in, in Houston, the, the multifamily dilapidated complex are privately owned. Um, and the nice thing about it is with the city's putting money in it, if the county's putting money in it, if it's getting federal tax credits, it has to be, um, [inaudible] there's accountability level built into it and it has to be a certain standards. And we take great pride in the projects that we, um, invest in. They're usually the nicest, um, you know, multifamily communities in the city, let alone their communities. We wanted to add to the neighborhood. Um, and we take, we want really wanna make sure that it is a place where people want to live at and people will be proud to have that as, as their neighbors. And so, uh, the often the unknown is scary. I get it, I understand that. But the reality is, is that, uh, it can be beautiful, beautiful, and held it very, very high standards
that your council members, your mayor, the city and others can make sure that it is held at for, you know, 10, 20 years.

Lisa H: **00:35:51** So the next big question is how do we pay for this housing, whatever form it comes in. Um, and we do, we will actually have a discussion here shortly about the homelessness plan that we received that just said that, you know, essentially just for the supportive housing that should be built associated with this plan would cost about one point $5 billion. So what are some strategies for funding? Um, I'll start with the lead and then I'd love to have Amanda talked to you about, um, some of the ...

Helene S.: **00:36:22** Well, this is a real jigsaw puzzle, right? And I think that's part of the challenge and why the coordination and collaboration is so important. So, um, you know, there's, there's that, there's, there's for supportive housing. It's not just the bricks and mortar, it's the services that also go around it. And so there are different kinds of funding opportunities that are for one time funds for construction for example, and then ongoing funding for whatever supportive services are needed and that, that combination needs to be figured out ahead of time. So certainly there are home funds through HUD. There are a number of different, um, opportunities with the philanthropic, you know, there's, there's city and County general funds they could put into their state funding. There's the prop two funding in California. There has been a lot of, uh, there's the new hap funds. I mean there's all these acronyms that you also have to learn the alphabet soup around tax credits and get tax credits for big construction projects, which is really leveraging quite a bit.

Helene S.: **00:37:20** It's very, very competitive, especially in California that you need to show as many different, um, sources of revenue and funding as in order to be competitive enough even to apply. Uh, so, so there, so there's philanthropic groups, there's faith based organizations. Um, one example, um, I'll just say up again in Santa Barbara was grace Lutheran church had had a church and of parking lot that the congregation really wasn't using as much. Every Sunday they actually donated the land to the housing authority to create, um, what's now grace cottages. I think that's the name of, of housing. Um, supportive housing for people that, and then they are also part of the programming and connecting with them. I'm on their level. So I mean there's a variety of areas, but it's like every little nook and cranny and it's the jigsaw puzzle you need to figure out.
Amanda Andrere: 00:38:10 So I think the communities where it's working is where they have dedicated dollars to address housing and the services that people may or may not need. Uh, and so your neighbors up the street in LA have done that through a bond measure. We're seeing that all across the country, that people are thinking about ways to, if we have the bill, the political will to say we need a dedicated source of funding that might come from, uh, you know, they voted to increase their taxes to in order to have a bond measure for supportive services and housing. Other communities like in Miami, use their hotel in their meal tax to debt to have that be a dedicated funding to housing and hurt and services. So I think that's really important. I think we also need to think about, um, within current resources. So also in communities like LA and Chicago and Atlanta, they're looking at, so a lot of different departments are using money to provide services to people experiencing homelessness, whether that's the health department and the criminal justice department, uh, and even in education.

Amanda Andrere: 00:39:14 And how do if we flip that and created what some communities are calling flexible housing subsidy pools where departments are thinking about how can we use that money to house people instead of providing them services that might not keep them in housing and use those dollars to help, uh, to be flexible, uh, not only just with people who are experiencing homelessness, but some of the landlords who might be renting to folks. So funds to, uh, mitigate what it might cost to, uh, help get someone into housing or thinking about security deposits. Or if a landlord commits to, uh, working with people who are experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity, what are some mitigation funds that they can provide folks to, to do that? And Atlanta specifically that fund was seeded by private philanthropy. And then, uh, the, the landlords realized that they were actually saving money by having access to that fund.

Amanda Andrere: 00:40:12 So they put in their own dollars, um, to keep that fun going to deal with like the lapse in, in maybe housing, people who are experiencing homelessness or housing insecure. Uh, so the real key is how do you get flexible dollars to help people get into housing and to stay in the housing. And some of those dollars may already be being spent in your community in ways that are actually not working. Um, so evaluating that, but also know that you're gonna probably need new dedicated funding, um, for housing. And the benefit is that's more cost effective and then to continue to provide services or continue to provide tents or parking lots to folks. Um, and so thinking about it that way is really important.
Lisa H: 00:40:56 So I want to move on to our next challenge just because we have limited time here. Unfortunately. Um, one thing that doesn't get talked about a lot here, but it is certainly an issue if you look at our homelessness numbers here, is that we do have certain populations in our community that are disproportionately affected by homelessness. Um, I have a couple of quick stats to take a look at here. Um, but I know that, um, you know, both Amanda and Helene had been engaged in some discussions, um, in other communities about this. Um, we'll start with Amanda because they know she's been involved in discussions in LA. What are other communities doing about some of inequities

Speaker 3: 00:41:34 and are they turning the dial at any point at this point?

Amanda Andrere: 00:41:38 So I get asked this a lot. Uh, housing is rooted in structural racism. If you look at the history of red lining across our country, um, the way people gain wealth through housing is rooted in structural racism. I know some people might not want to hear that, but it's the truth. And we can talk about afterwards why that is true. Uh, so, and the disparities that we see in housing have to do deal with structural racism, uh, structural racism. And we, we are marking 400 years of slavery in our country, so we're not gonna solve this problem overnight. Um, and, uh, I know people want quick fixes to things. Um, we put a lot of work in creating disparities and all of our systems in our country and it's going to take a lot of work to undo them. What's happening in the homelessness movement is people are, are dis-aggregating that data recognizing they, they, they have structural equities that people of color and LGBTQ youth disproportionately experienced homelessness and they're just starting to name that and talk about that and, and do some deep digging and evaluation to why and talk to people about why.

Amanda Andrere: 00:42:39 And that is actually a big step in our movement. Um, some communities are, are looking at things like the tools and the resources that we use to evaluate things like are people vulnerable? What, what, how we get them into housing might have bias within them. Um, that we have bias within our own system. And so to start they're starting to unpack and uncover some of that. Um, so I always say like there's not one solution to dealing with structural racism. It's naming it, calling it out and start to slowly unpack why and how we got there. Some of that is looking at going upstream and, and thinking about some of the systems that have caused homelessness, like the child welfare system, the criminal justice system, and looking at some
of the disparities there and how we can think about prevention into homelessness.

Helene S.: 00:43:26 I mean that, that was great. I will say at USICH we are now, when we do our strategic planning for the year, when we’re looking at all different types of policies, we are very consciously looking at that particular issue and thinking about what may be unintended consequences, going a certain direction that maybe we have not thought about before. So acknowledging that there is an issue, knowing your data again is so important and so you can recognize it and talk about it, um, very quantitatively and qualitatively so we can make impactful decisions moving forward.

Amanda Andrere: 00:43:58 Can I just say one thing though about knowing your data and the earlier session, this is why it’s so important to engage people with lived expertise. Someone mentioned a solution like the, well I’ll call it out, um, the homelessness courts here and the people with lived expertise in the audience visibly sighed or roll their eyes because they know that just that getting to that place, you know, whatever that is has a lot of barriers and some of those barriers are often rooted in some empathy biases that are just embedded in the watery swimming cause. Water we swim in has structural surrounded by structural racism and biases. And so looking at data is really important. But talking to people about what actually is happening with their experience, my uncover some things that data won’t tell you and if you’re not putting concentrated efforts into that within your community plan, you will not be successful.

Lisa H: 00:44:52 So let’s hit on one more challenge quickly before we move to questions. And this is a good segue from our last one is you know, Mark had mentioned before, it’s not enough to just serve those people who are now homeless. You have to be thinking about the people who are becoming homeless. And in our community we have a lot of people every year who are becoming homeless. And this headline that I included, um, was based off of a report a couple of years back where the regional task force found that actually half of the population for that given year was newly homeless. So what strategies, um, Marc and Helene have you seen in other communities to prevent homelessness? And what is Houston?

Marc Eichenbaum: 00:45:31 Well, and you know, I’ll be honest, Houston is behind on the prevention. Uh, we have been historically focused on triaging the issue of the folks we have unsheltered and sheltered right now. And because of that, um, we’re not getting as big decreases as we would like to see reductions. And that’s why I
love seeing in the plan that was developed here is that prevention and diversion is mentioned in that plan. It's part of that plan. What's exciting to me about San Diego is you guys are exactly where Houston was back in 2011 back when we brought the community together. We said we needed to change things. We got the political will, we even hired the same consultants at CSH to help us with the plan and, and, and the community will was there. And that's what makes me so exciting that you guys are on the cusp.

Marc Eichenbaum: 00:46:20 You know, I talked about patients and I'm gonna sound like I'm contradicting myself. You know, how patients, because there's nothing, there's no solution that's get show results tomorrow. However, don't have patience to start. You have a plan. You need to start. And I understand that, you know, politics can get in the way it happens in Houston and community issues and you know, left and right, there's 1,000,001 issues that can, you know, almost kicked the can down the road, but at the end of the day, you got to start and once you start, you can modify down the road and you're, you're going to constantly modify that plan as you, as you initiate it. Uh, but, but you got to start in to start as quickly as possible because the reality is you can't afford to wait every single day, every single week, every single month that you wait. It's more people becoming homeless. And that's why it's so imperative to start as quickly as possible.

Lisa H: 00:47:18 Yeah.

Amanda Andrere: 00:47:19 Waiting or status quo is a decision point and that has consequences just as acting on something or changing the way you're doing your things every day. It's another decision point. I, so at USI C H

Helene S.: 00:47:30 we have a, a federal strategic plan. I should have said that way at the beginning. Um, that kind of looks at how to define and prevent homelessness when you can, but when it does occur to try to make it a rare brief in one time experience. And that's, so the plan is also very much looking at what preventative activities, uh, and policies and coordination can we look at that is frankly something not as prevalent in the past as it is now looking upstream as another term that's being used. Um, talking about employment opportunities. Uh, there's a new state law now that requires every single hospital here to have a hospital discharge plan for people experiencing homelessness. So they're not dumping patients on this, you know, onto the streets that there's a coordination effort. They're talking about jail discharge programs, talking about the issues that got people to, that they had to go to jail. And there's to begin with and
trying to deal with those upstream issues and the racial biases that might occur with the policies that are already in place. Um, so this is a newer, uh, uh, component that is much, much more, much important, very, very important. Especially I think in California and the West coast where we're seeing rents just skyrocket so high that people fall into homelessness much more quickly. And I think you're seeing that in San Diego. You're certainly seeing that up and down the coast on the West coast.

Lisa H: 00:48:47 So let's move to your question. I'd love to talk more about some of these solutions, but I know many of you have great questions too. Um, if you wrote a question down on a note card or do you just know card, raise your hand or feel free to send me a text message as well. Um, I'll start with a question I think would be great. Or Amanda and the marketing answer. And that is, how do you sell this idea of a public private partnership to the business community? Start with abandoned property perspective. Oh, I hate,

Amanda Andrere: 00:49:19 I hate the idea of having to sell anything, uh, to a community to house the people that are, that they're seeing on the streets. I'll, I'll say that. Um, I think the business community, so I think of some business leaders that I know in this community who think of it as a business issue, right? Um, I think about, uh, the business community in LA and Seattle who understand that the success of their business means investing in a solution. Um, so I see a lot of community where their business communities are stepping up and they're investing large dollars to actually just get rid of the problem. That means just sending people away or warehousing people. And, um, that is not a solution. It's not a strategy, uh, to permanently ending homelessness. So if you care about, if you think that people experiencing homelessness are affecting your business, if you're a business person who's supposed to be really savvy, then you should then you should know that we should be, we should be thinking about strategic and longterm solutions to that.

Amanda Andrere: 00:50:21 So it's hard for me to think about selling it. I just can say that I think in a lot of communities, the business communities have come along, uh, business leaders are stepping up and investing in dollars, um, because the, this means, uh, it's their employees who are, are facing housing insecurity. It's their future employees that are facing housing insecurity, um, that permanent housing and people off the streets means that their businesses will do better. Uh, and so it, it just, it seems so logical to me that the business community would step up, but they have to be at the table with everyone understanding what the issue is in the solution.
Marc Eichenbaum: 00:50:56 Yeah, I agree. Having the business community at the table is really important. My first year, my salary is actually paid for by Chevron. Um, and we continue to have great relationships with JP Morgan. Chase and Wells Fargo, uh, the Houston Texans, a whole vast array of our business community. Having them at the table, it helps when the mayor is the one pulling those individuals, those communities around that table saying it is the issue for me. It's the issue for our community. And then you talk about it, sometimes you have to talk in the lingo for the business community to really, you know, understand and be in, take interest in and that is letting them know what the costs are of not doing anything. Laying them know that all the other ideas they might have is just going to continue the cycle of homelessness or just manage it and then it's to give them an a, an exciting solution.

Marc Eichenbaum: 00:51:49 And for us that was housing and we talked about the a return on the investment. We talked about how it's a permanent solution. We talked about what we can do, but we just needed their support. They were the missing piece of the pie. You know, every group I talk to, they are the missing piece in that puzzle. Okay. There that final, a wedge of the pie. And by doing that, I'll go around and get all the pieces of the pie together. But it's really letting them know it's really important that they are there and that they invest in a big way. It's a, it demonstrates who we are as a city besides just quality of life for everybody. It demonstrates who we are as a compassionate city. Uh, and building that excitement, letting, uh, uh, the, uh, it was also helpful to have some of the main kind of umbrella organizations, whether it's your chamber of commerce or your downtown business districts or whatever, have them at the table too investing their own dollars and bringing in their partners. It's how you make that circle bigger and get the more, uh, that funding and that political will too.

Lisa H: 00:52:50 So one question that came in was referencing, you know, our formerly homeless panelist in the last panel who brought up the fact that from his perspective, there's a need for kind of a one stop shop where people can get aid of various sorts and not have to go all over the place. Um, so I would ask you, Helene, um, are there communities that have been successful with this sort of model? We do have, um, downtown navigation center that will be opening up at some point here, but have other communities had success with that model?

Helene S.: 00:53:24 I would say, Houston's, it's not, I don't think it's necessarily a place, it's knowledge and experience of connecting where people need to connect and to go to where people are and
work with them and what they need and let them know how to get or, and work with them on how to get those services. So I go back to where we started is that that collaboration piece of it, that people know what their community looks like, who the people are, what their needs are and how to connect them to services and that each of those inter, each of those agencies are also connected with each other and they meet with each other on a regular basis. So the Marin County example again every week, it's not a monthly meeting and it's a working weekly meeting, looking at every single individual that they can and what they need and connect with them and include them as part of the solution and what they need. So, so cause, and so, you know, is there some one place where people go and magically something will happen. I think if that message goes out, sometimes that may seem like it's a false promise into the future because you feel like, Oh, if I just show up here, I'll get my housing soon. And that's not necessarily gonna be the case because their situation might be a whole different scenario. It's that coordination piece that is so, um, it's the process and a system as opposed to a location that I've seen work best.

Marc Eichenbaum: 00:54:50 I challenge. Do you have people on the streets because they don't know how to access services and support that exists? Or do you have a problem of you don't have that solution to even offer them in the first place? And so you know, I think a big thing is is how do people access, so if you, if you create the housing and you have the housing, how do people access that? And what we really do is there's a concept of coordinated access. It's a requirement for every jurisdiction, but each jurisdiction kind of uses that different levels. In Houston we are all about coordinated access and think of it as it's a Priceline, Expedia type, real time electronic database of all of your housing stock. And you can assess individuals you have. So instead of having every organization with different assessment tools, you have one consistent assessment tool and then you can real time refer them and put them on wait list for the right type of housing that fits their needs.

Marc Eichenbaum: 00:55:46 The reality is in the past, if you are homeless individual, you needed to talk to the right person with the right agency on the right day with the right knowledge of some magical unit that might be available. When you use coordinated access, it is your primary, it's your only front door to homeless housing. And so what that does is, is that if all your agencies use coordinated access, there's no wrong door for them to go to, no matter who they go to, they're going have a that same, that agency is gonna have that same knowledge of all the units that are open and can really, really, really, uh, you make sure that not just that person
gets housed, but they get housed in the right intervention. That right housing, if you're an agency in here, I just want to tell you, you know, starting on coordinated access can sometimes not be as smooth as we would like.

Marc Eichenbaum: 00:56:38 Once again, really, really being patient on it. Because at the end of the day, it's so important that every single agency, it's important that the city's pushing it and that you're, you know, every homeless, you know, you're coordinated, uh, your S your accord, your continuum of care is pushing it. But just be patient because there will be bumps in the road. We, you will learn from that. But if everybody's not using it, it won't succeed. And it's huge too. Uh, and it also pulls in such great utilization data. You can see vacancy, you can see how many units you have, how many are being utilized, you can track are people staying house six months, eight months, 12 months. It brings in a wealth of data too.

Lisa H: 00:57:17 So I'm going to squeeze in one last question. Wish we had more time for this one. Um, I've gotten a few questions about how in other places, including Houston, they have gotten the city and the County coordinated working together. So Mark, would you like to speak about how this has worked in other communities?

I would imagine in a lot of places there are tensions between cities.

Helene S.: 00:57:41 So you're not, you're not alone. Okay. Everyone says, Oh, my plan is so unique. This is the only way we're now, uh, you know, it's, it's inherent that you have different governmental agencies who have different ways of looking at their budgets. They are, they have some authority for some things and not for others. So there's inherent conflict in that. But knowing that and knowing who the players are, everyone coming to the table, everyone realizing the, the places where it works is that you know what you do well and you're gonna, you're gonna put your best foot forward and, and make sure you do your job well and you have to trust that everyone else is going to do their job well and to communicate that with each other. And then of course to include the people who you are serving and they are part of the solution as well.

Helene S.: 00:58:27 And hearing their stories. Um, I'll, I'll also, I'll also just end here with, with me about as a former elected official, you get that pressure and I'm, Mark mentioned it as well as the constant, like just get it done tomorrow and if I just pass this one ordinance or if I just pay this one thing, you think it's gonna happen, everything will be solved. That's not necessarily the case, but the pressure is there. So it's so important to tell the
stories of success, um, successes is invisible, when someone is housed, how much work went into that to get someone housed and sustained and getting them back into doing whatever they can to their best potential. That's not your, that's not very visible to folks. And, and yet you forget, people tend to forget that, that all that work that it occurred to get those individuals housed, you need to tell those stories because that keeps the momentum going in the Goodwill, going to keep that momentum going because you have to have patience and not have patience at the same time, right? You have to have accountability and to have and keep moving. But if you don't know what it is that you're, you don't see the end product, you need to tell those stories and have an, of course, having people tell their own stories is so, so, so powerful.

Marc Eichenbaum: 00:59:36 I just pitched a nine figure, a nine digit figure plan to the mayor. And his first question was how much was the County going to put in? Um, and so, you know, I’ll say for us, we're in the same boat. Um, and, um, you know, the city has no money. The County says they have no money. Uh, we don't trust each other. Uh, but at the end of the day, we started first on the, on, on kind of like a small pilot. And we joined up, we use preexisting funds. We were already each doling out for housing, but we said, let's work together and let's have this program and issue an RFP jointly to develop supportive housing. Uh, and we started with just, this was a small $40 million, uh, program, uh, and that, and then politicians starts saying, Hey, my constituents, like when I say, you know, the County and the city don’t work together and all things, but homelessness is one thing. We're working together. And they said, I kinda like that positive feedback. You know, we're, uh, we’re playing against what the storyline normally is and now it's getting even bigger. I'll also say there has been some political changes, especially in the County that can also help as well. Uh, at least in, in Houston, uh, that, uh, we're more aligned. We're more focused. Um, and we're trying not to duplicate. When we had voids, we had duplication of efforts to, and now really trying to be coordinated to, you know, increase, uh, that collective impact.

Helene S.: 01:01:01 Please join me in thanking our panel.

Speaker 3: 01:01:10 [inaudible]

Helene S.: 01:01:12 you have just so many more questions because [inaudible].