

# A Blueprint for Hope

15 Years of Community  
Impact and Outcomes at  
Haven for Hope





# ***Executive Summary***

## **A Blueprint for Hope**

15 Years of Community Impact and  
Outcomes at Haven for Hope

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*Our mission is to offer a place of hope, love, and new beginnings by providing, delivering, or coordinating impactful care for people experiencing homelessness in our community.*

### **About Haven for Hope**

The individual is at the center of all our services. We meet clients where they are in their journey.

**We are Trauma Informed.** We recognize and understand the role trauma plays in the lives of those we serve.

**We are Recovery Oriented.** We work with our clients to help them recover from conditions associated with mental health, substance use, and trauma.

**We are Peer Supported.** We recognize the importance of lived experience in those we serve and actively hire peers to work at Haven.

**We Collaborate.** We work with more than 80 partner organizations to provide over 300 comprehensive services for clients on our 22-acre campus.

**We are Housing Focused.** We offer a variety of housing solutions and work with our clients on person-centered housing plans.





Photo Courtesy of Marie Langmore

# Executive Summary

Haven for Hope of Bexar County is a purpose-built, one-stop campus designed to serve individuals and families experiencing homelessness in San Antonio and Bexar County. Haven for Hope is located adjacent to downtown, in the near west side of San Antonio, Texas. Opened in 2010, Haven operates a 22-acre transformational campus, a kind of community campus which was designed to operate like a small town dedicated to addressing homelessness rather than a traditional shelter. This system of care provides resources essential to resolving the most common causes of homelessness.

By providing a centralized location where clients receive services from Haven for Hope staff and from dozens of partner agencies, the Haven system has transformed the way homelessness is addressed in San Antonio and Bexar County.

## Report Scope

- Describe Haven for Hope and how it functions
- Detail how the Haven for Hope campus became the catalyst that redesigned San Antonio and Bexar County’s response to homelessness
- Evaluate the person-level impacts for 52,108 clients served in the 15 years from Haven’s opening from fiscal years 2010-2024
- Articulate the various components of San Antonio’s Community Social System
- Provide the fiscal and economic impacts of Haven, including cross-sector cost avoidance and cost benefit from community investments



# Section Overview

**Section 1** introduces the Haven for Hope campus and explains the history from 2010 – 2024

**Sections 2 and 3** evaluate the findings from analyzing these 15 years of client data including key characteristics, demographics, client trajectories, and long-term outcomes.

**Section 4** describes the San Antonio and Bexar County integrated community system model that intersects on the Haven for Hope campus.

**Section 5** provides an analysis of the fiscal and economic impacts of the Haven system on the community.

## Summary of Findings

Over the last 15 years (2010 to 2024), Haven served 52,108 people on the campus. After evaluating 15 years of data, there were meaningful differences in demographics, characteristics, and outcomes between people who stay at Haven a single time vs. those who stay two or more times. Comparing single stay clients vs. multiple stay clients highlights insights more noteworthy than comparing outcomes by demographics, program type, service engagement, and most surprisingly, even if clients move out of Haven directly into housing or not.

It is important to note two operational practices that add context to the number of times a client may stay at Haven.

- 1. There is no policy that limits the maximum number of times a client can stay or enroll at Haven for Hope. This means the number of single-stay clients is not inflated by operational practices.
- 2. There is no policy that establishes a time limit on how long people can remain at Haven. This is helpful because a time limit could influence clients to leave before they are ready, leading to an increased likelihood of a subsequent episode of homelessness, including returning to Haven for multiple stays. Clients enroll at Haven voluntarily, leave when they determine, and can re-enroll voluntarily based on their needs and circumstances.

# Research Questions

- 1. How many clients did Haven serve?
- 2. What services and support did people receive while they were at Haven?
- 3. How long did people stay at Haven?
- 4. Did clients return to homelessness after their stay at Haven?





# 52,108

people served from 2010-2024

65%

## Single Stay Clients

65% (34,059) of all clients came to Haven *only once* in 15 years

35%

## Multiple Stay Clients

35% (18,049) of all clients came to Haven *at least twice* in 15 years



## Single Stay Findings

### Client Outcomes

- 65% of all people who came to Haven only came once in 15 years
- 65.4% of the people who only came once stayed at Haven for less than 90 days (3 months)
- After leaving Haven, clients did not return to homelessness at rates over 90%. This was consistent at the 1-, 5-, and 10-year intervals.

### Client Characteristics

- There were 585 different pathways and service combinations that they used while on the campus
- People who stayed only one time at Haven in 15 years are almost twice as likely to be in a family unit and report lower rates of mental health challenges, substance use disorder, and disability
- After leaving Haven, clients did not return to homelessness at rates over 90%. This was consistent at the 1-, 5-, and 10-year intervals.





Photo Courtesy of Marie Langmore



## Multiple Stay Findings

### Client Outcomes

- 35% of people came to Haven at least twice in 15 years
- 48% of these multiple stay clients had only two visits to Haven across all 15 years. Of these two-stay-only clients, the average time between episodes of homelessness (either returning to Haven or any other provider in the community) was 3.1 years
- Clients returning to Haven three or more times make up 52% of all multiple stay clients, and the average time between homelessness episodes was 1.45 years
- 66.9% of the people that came multiple times stayed at Haven for less than 90 days (3 months)

### Client Characteristics

- People who came to Haven at least twice in 15 years report significantly higher rates of disabling conditions, justice involvement, mental health challenges, substance use disorder, and average 5 years older than people with only one stay
- There were 1,205 different pathways and service combinations that they used while on the campus
- Definitionally, the people who stayed at Haven at least twice in 15 years demonstrated a higher need for services. Trauma and overcoming homelessness is not always linear. This population does face higher cyclicity, but what matters is Haven being able to provide them with a place to sleep safely, support, and services to avoid decompensating and facing higher risks living unsheltered and on the streets

Photo Courtesy of Marie Langmore

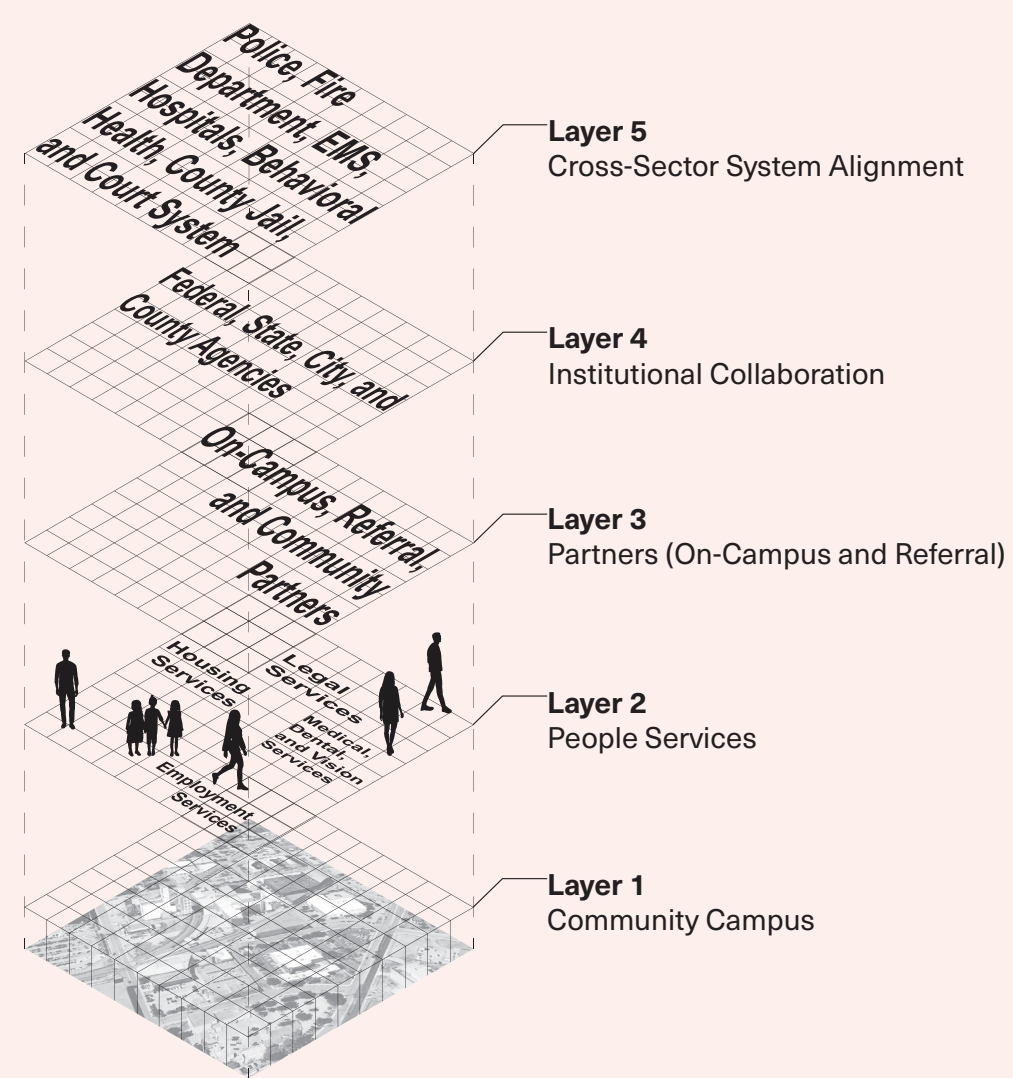




# Creating an Integrated Community System<sup>1</sup>

San Antonio created alternatives to the traditional interventions across the crisis response systems that provide additional options beyond emergency rooms, county jail, and/or psychiatric units. While the traditional options are still available, these programs expand the system’s capacity to support people in alternative settings more suitable to recovery and integration into the community. Many of these options intersect on the Haven for Hope campus, not only because of the number of people served but because Haven provides a single address for the system response to coordinate alternative interventions at scale.

There are five layers that sustain the complex services and relationships across San Antonio’s Community System model provide the framework for other communities to develop their own version of a community campus. Each layer is a critical component that is needed to shift the response from individual interventions to community-wide interventions to better serve people and improve the system response.



<sup>1</sup> Dillard Gonzalez, K. (2025). Synchronizing Social Systems: Redesigning Community Systems to Serve People. Ladder Logik. <https://ladderlogik.com/featured-projects>

Haven for Hope serves three roles in the community to support the on-going work for the five layers of activities described in Section 4.

- 1. **Operational Role:** Provides the operational support for the day-to-day management of a 22-acre campus that serves a design capacity of 1,450 people.
- 2. **Service Provision Role:** Delivers client services on the campus directly through their organizational staff and engages partners providing client services (on campus and in the community).
- 3. **System Synchronization Role:** Engages in system-level coordination of entities across the community to serve people experiencing homelessness.

As noted by Ramirez, et. al. “Haven for Hope was designed as a small town to improve individual and community outcomes through a systems approach, creating the platform for an innovative policy design to address homelessness...the place served as a site that fostered collaboration, connection, and healing for the larger community in San Antonio, Texas.”<sup>2</sup>

**The unprecedented number of people served on campus became the catalyst that shifted the capacity for testing new approaches and collaborations, at scale.**

**Dozens of leaders reimaged how services could be delivered more effectively. This spurred a network of interventions across systems that continue to be refined on- and off-campus.**

<sup>2</sup> Ramirez, J.S., Dillard Gonzalez, K., Hudson, T., Blanco, W. (2024). Root Shock’s Missing Appendix: Using Situation Analysis for Critical Policy Studies and Beyond. Built Environment, 50(2). 304-315.



# Haven System Fiscal Impact

The fiscal and economic impacts of homelessness cut across nearly every sector and aspect of modern society. As a result, no single entity owns the entire issue of homelessness on their own. As explained by Tsai et al. (2024), “One of the reasons why homelessness remains policy resistant is because communities are already spending their budgets on various initiatives that end up siloed or conflicting” and siloed approaches face system friction when attempting to produce durable, transformative results.<sup>3</sup> Solutions that produce results that are more than the sum of the parts involve systems thinking, as outlined in Section Four: Redesigning Community Social Systems.

The table below calculates the average cost per night, based on the design capacity of 1,450. Average cost per stay is calculated by multiplying the average cost-per-night times the average length of stay for clients across each phase of Haven’s history. This cost-per-stay figure paints a more accurate picture than per-year costs, since average lengths of stay are less than a year, and a single bed will turnover throughout the year, serving multiple clients.

Phase of Haven History	Average cost per diem (not adjusted for inflation)	Average Stay Length	Average Cost per Stay
Phase 1 (2010 – 2014)	\$23.00	175 days	\$4,025
Phase 2 (2015 – 2019)	\$35.73	148 days	\$5,288
Phase 3 (2020 – 2024)	\$54.17	75 days	\$4,063
15 Years (2010 – 2024)	\$37.70	108 days	\$4,072

In 2021, Steve Nivin, Ph.D. conducted an independent Cost-Benefit Analysis of Haven for Hope. This initial study covered 2007 (with Haven’s initial capital investments and formation) through 2019. Dr. Nivin’s work was the first comprehensive cost-benefit analysis about Haven for Hope. In 2025, shortly before the publication of this report, Haven engaged with Dr. Nivin to update the analysis. The following table provides a summary of the findings.

3 Tsai, J., Dillard Gonzalez, K., Orsinger, R., & Jefferies, K. (2025). Haven for Hope: A Transformational Campus Model to Address Homelessness. Community Mental Health Journal, 61(5), 827-833. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10597-024-01419-8>

Net Benefits of Haven for Hope: 2007-2024 <sup>4</sup>	
Economic Impacts of Haven for Hope Operations	\$648,800,789
Economic Impacts of Volunteers	\$6,043,578
Benefits from Reduced Crime	\$164,975,535
Benefits from School Stability	\$583,201,982
Benefits of Medical Care, Housing, & Other Care Services	\$11,603,159,211
Total Benefits	\$13,006,181,095
Total Expenses (including capital)	\$313,360,290
Net Benefits	\$12,692,820,805
Benefit-Cost Ratio (Benefits per dollar of expenses)	\$42

The bottom-line of this analysis is that for every \$1 investment into Haven for Hope, there is a \$42 benefit to the community in cost-avoidance, economic contributions, and lifetime earnings from clients securing employment and exiting homelessness.

Consider the outcomes on the Haven for Hope campus. What would have happened to the 52,108 people experiencing homelessness if they did not have access to this system of care?

## Building for the Future

- Over the last 15 years, the Haven system has:
- Improved its efficiency through reducing lengths of stays
  - Enhanced its effectiveness with higher rates of housing exits and reducing rates of return to homelessness
  - Engaged with cross-sector cost-saving interventions

There remain additional areas for development and opportunities for improvement, moving forward. The next phase in Haven for Hope's development will continue to focus on innovation at the nexus of a systems design approach to addressing homelessness in San Antonio and Bexar County.

4 Nivin, S. R. (2025). Cost-Benefit Analysis of Haven for Hope [Report]. Steven R. Nivin, Ph.D., LLC. <https://stevenivin.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/cost-benefit-analysis-of-haven-for-hope-update-final.pdf>