



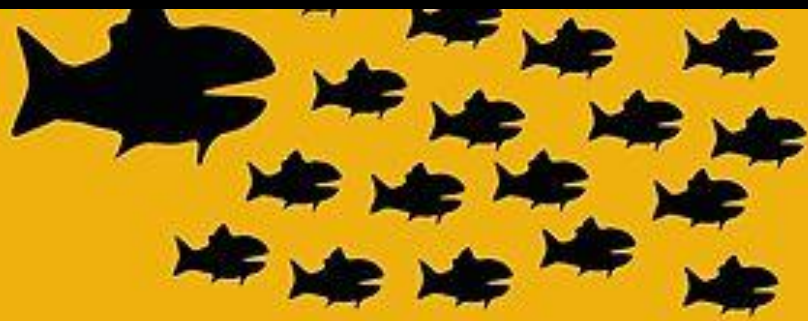
# St. Joseph Center

## **Employment Pathways for Black People Experiencing Homelessness**

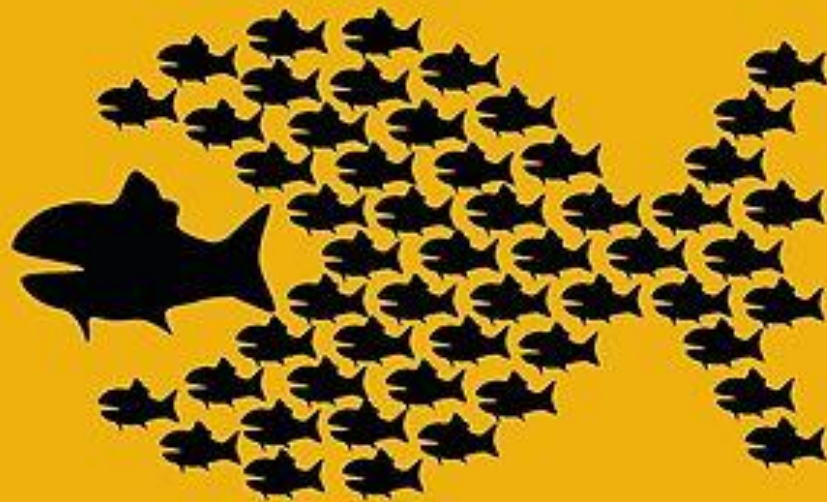
**Dr. Ryan J. Smith**  
**President and CEO, St. Joseph Center**

**Given the shifting federal landscape, including potential cuts and backlash to DEI efforts, how should we strategically support Black people experiencing homelessness? What key challenges and concerns should we anticipate, and what opportunities can we leverage to sustain and expand critical programs?**





DO NOT PANIC



# ST. JOSEPH CENTER OVERVIEW

**St. Joseph Center's mission is to provide working poor families, as well as homeless, men, women and children of all ages, with the inner resources and tools to become productive, stable and self-supporting members of the community.**



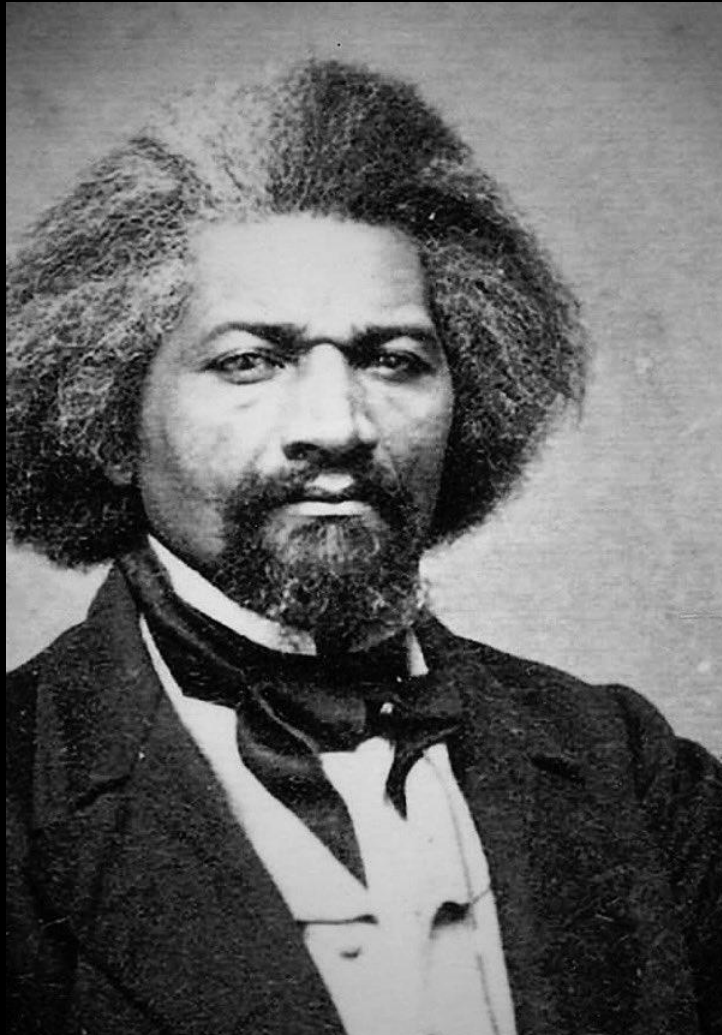
St. Joseph Center (SJC) was founded on July 8, 1976 by two Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet. We are celebrating our 47th year anniversary and the 35th anniversary of the Bread and Roses Cafe.





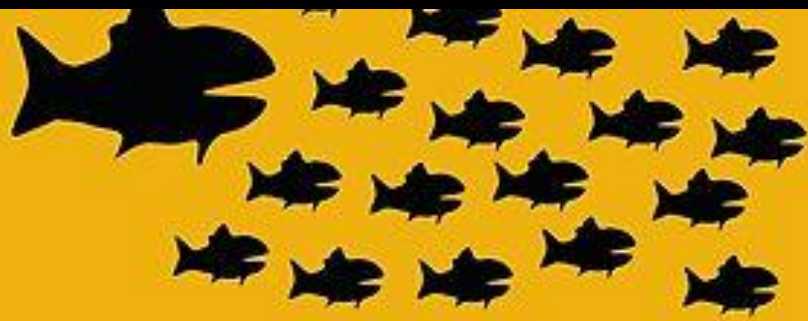
## Beloved Community



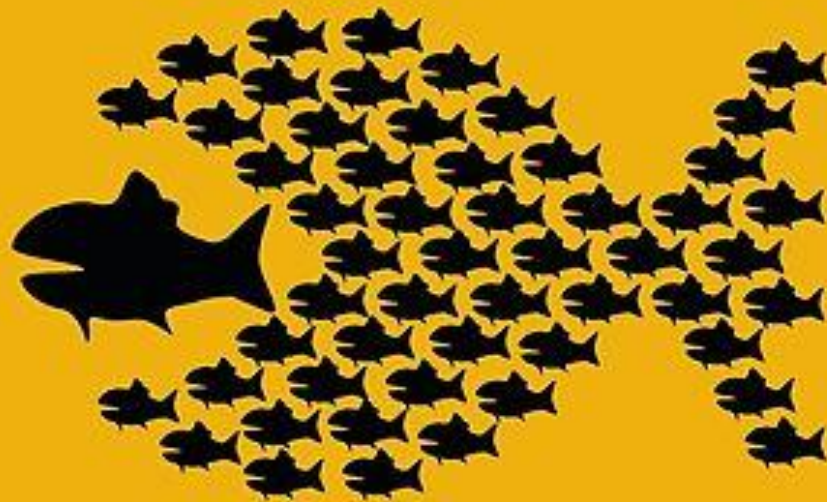


“Without a  
struggle, there  
can be no  
progress.”

– *Frederick  
Douglass*



DO NOT PANIC





# What We Can Do Now – Sustaining the Work

- **DO NOT PANIC!**
- **Advocate for Policy Protection:** Push for continued investment in Black-led homelessness initiatives despite funding uncertainties.
- **Strengthen Partnerships & Philanthropic Support:** Engage foundations, corporate partners, and community stakeholders to sustain critical programs.
- **Maximize Existing Resources:** Expand cost-effective, high-impact programs

**Los Angeles**

- In Los Angeles County, Black residents represent nearly 30% of the homeless population, despite being only 8-9% of the general population.
- Made progress in supporting Black communities and people but vast disparities still exist

# County of Los Angeles CEO - ARDI Department

- **Established the BPEH Implementation Steering Committee** to operationalize and implement key recommendations from LAHSA's 2018 Ad Hoc Committee report, focusing on racial equity in housing and homelessness services.
- **Secured funding allocations and policy commitments** from County departments and community partners to drive racial equity initiatives, including workforce development, tenant protections, and culturally responsive homelessness interventions.
- **Developed “The Road May Be Long, But the Journey is Just” Report**, providing an update on progress, lessons learned, and an action plan for addressing systemic racial disparities in homelessness across Los Angeles County.



# Career Pathways



# St. Joseph Center's Work on Black People Experiencing Homelessness

- **Commitment to Workforce Equity:** 55% of SJC's workforce is Black, and over 50% of graduates from our workforce development programs are Black.
- **Culturally Responsive Workforce Programs:** Initiatives like Bread & Roses Culinary Institute and Codetalk create pathways to economic mobility.
- **Housing & Supportive Services:** We provide permanent supportive housing, mental health resources, and employment support tailored to Black Angelenos experiencing homelessness.
- **Advocacy & Systems Change:** SJC partners with policymakers and community groups to address racial disparities in homelessness and push for equitable housing policies.

# USC HPRI Findings on Pathways for Black People Experiencing

- **The Power of Lived Experience:** Hiring individuals with lived experience fosters services and improves trust between service providers and clients.
- **Workforce Development as a Solution:** Programs tailored to Black individuals, such as transitional jobs and reentry programs, provide stability and break cycles of homelessness.
- **Policy Gaps:** Many housing and workforce initiatives fail to prioritize Black communities, leading to continued disparities in access to resources and opportunities.

# Key Recommendations for Addressing Black Homelessness

- Expand training and certification and apprenticeship programs tailored for roles in homeless services
- Scale up transitional jobs, supported employment, and customized employment models to provide career stability.
- Fund wraparound support services (e.g., childcare, transportation, mental health resources) to ensure long-term job retention.
- Establish leadership pathways for Black individuals and individuals with lived experience





# Discussion



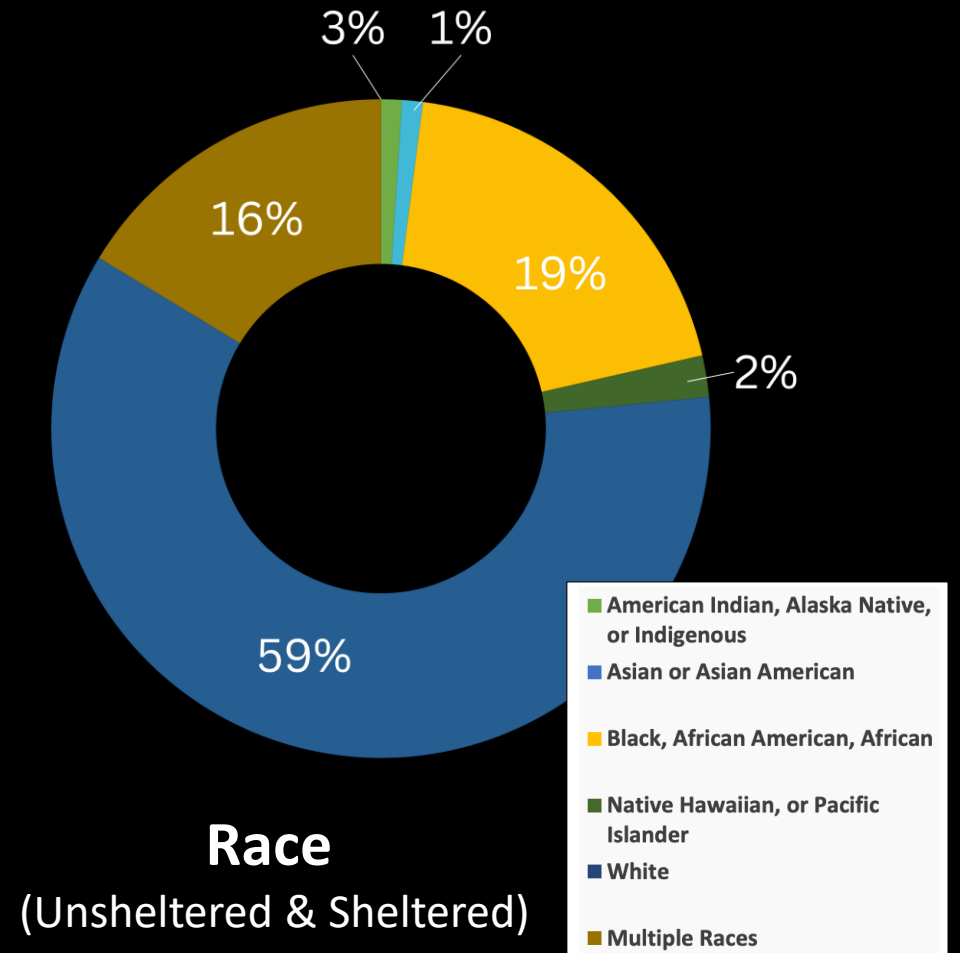


# Black People and Homelessness

*Hanan Scrapper, PATH San Diego Regional Director*

# ADDRESSING RACIAL DISPARITIES

- ◆ The 2023 Point-In-Time data showed the racial disparities that exist among Black San Diegans experiencing homelessness in the San Diego region.
  - Black people account for 5.5% of the general population in San Diego County.
  - However, **they represent 19% of the unsheltered/sheltered population experiencing homelessness.**



[RTFH SD Region PIT Data 2023](#)

[US Census SD County 2023](#)



# CREATION OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE

- ◆ In July 2020, the RTFH CoC Board approved the recommendation to create an Ad Hoc Committee on Addressing Homelessness Among Black San Diegans.
- ◆ Then in April 2021, RTFH contracted w/ National Experts Darlene Mathews and Michele Williams to support the Committee's work.
- ◆ The Ad Hoc Committee's goals are to:
  - Explore the factors contributing to the disparities among Black people experiencing homelessness.
  - Listen and engage in public dialogue with community stakeholders and those with lived experience.
  - Develop a series of recommendations that the CoC can take to better address the impacts of systemic racism and its effects within the homeless crisis response system.

# WORK OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE

## The Committee formed two subcommittees

### ◆ Community Engagement

- Conducted in-depth listening sessions with Blacks who have lived experience.
- Focus groups, interviews, and surveys with mainstream partners and stakeholders.

### ◆ Data Workgroup

- Began analyzing homeless data on race.
- Worked with Center for Budget Policy Priorities.
- Developed key metrics.



# FINDINGS OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- ◆ Cycle of foster care to homelessness for parents.
- ◆ RRH is not enough time to get families stabilized in housing.
- ◆ Need for supportive services after families have entered housing.
- ◆ Representation is important in shelter staff who help families.
- ◆ Vulnerability of children in unsheltered/shelter settings.



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

**Themes from the community engagement sessions include:**

- ◆ Mainstream services are discriminatory and not designed effectively to serve Black people.
- ◆ Black people do not understand how to get into housing.
- ◆ Lack of fair and equal treatment across the homeless services system deeply impacts Black people.
- ◆ Assessment of existing policies and practices of organizations across the CoC.



"Behavior by black people is seen as dangerous from the time they enter school to the time they leave the convalescent home."

"There is a lot of hidden help in San Diego."

"If you're black, you have to beat the door down and be persistent in getting benefits, those cats that don't beat the door down aren't going to get into housing."

"case managers hold our people to a different standard. They make assumptions about how a black person will act and what they need."

"people think it's okay to sleep outside here because it's nice outside. I had to sleep outside in a tent. I let my kids use my body as a pillow so they wouldn't feel the cold concrete."



# DATA WORKGROUP

Race is the largest predictive factor for homelessness in the united states. In San Diego, while Blacks make up only 5.6% of the population, they are:

- ◆ 6 times more likely than non-Black people to experience homelessness
- ◆ 5 times more likely than non-Black people to experience *unsheltered* homelessness
- ◆ 7 times more likely than non-Black people to experience *sheltered* homelessness



# SIX ACTION ITEMS

1. Develop an HMIS Data Dashboard to track our progress on equity goals
2. Inclusive procurement process
3. Training and education
4. Mentorship of Black-led organizations
5. Center the voices of people with lived experience who are Black
6. Transform the crisis response system



# WHAT'S NEXT

- ◆ Implement achievable action that will positively impact Black San Diegans experiencing homelessness.
- ◆ Recruitment of new Ad Hoc Committee members.
  - Implementation phase
- ◆ Work with providers on implementation opportunities within our homeless response system to decrease these inequities.



# IMPACTS

- ◆ Fiscal Year 2022
  - 700 individuals on shelter suspension list
  - 13% Suspension Rate
  - Reduced to 349 individuals after completion of review of suspensions greater than 30 days and the removal of individuals that were no longer homeless, were deceased or suspended for activities not conducted while in the shelter program.
- ◆ Fiscal Year 2023
  - 103 individuals on shelter suspension list
  - 8% Suspension rate
- ◆ Fiscal Year 2024
  - 30 individuals on the shelter suspension list
  - 5% Suspension Rate
- ◆ Fiscal Year 2025
  - 21 individuals on the shelter suspension list
  - 1% Suspension Rate

**97% Decrease in Active  
Shelter Suspensions**



Thank You