

Home Safe Program Evaluation

2022-2025

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Overview

California's Home Safe program aims to prevent and end homelessness among older and dependent adults. Based in counties' Adult Protective Services (APS) agencies, Home Safe allowed APS programs to use a suite of flexible funding and services to respond quickly to clients' housing crises. Leveraging APS staff's expertise with locally tailored interventions, Home Safe preserved clients' housing and supported their exits to permanent housing.

In addition to preventing and ending homelessness, Home Safe strengthened coordination between APS and the homelessness systems, increasing each's capacity. However, limited affordable housing and uncertainty about ongoing funding constrained its impact. Home Safe's effectiveness depends on stable funding, continued flexibility, and broader investments in affordable housing.

What is Home Safe?

Home Safe is a statewide program that supports older and dependent adults who are experiencing or at imminent risk of homelessness, by providing a range of services including eviction prevention, landlord mediation, short-term financial assistance, and intensive case management.

Established by the California Legislature in 2018, Home Safe is administered by the California Department of Social Services and implemented by county Adult Protective Services agencies. Originally operated in 25 pilot counties, Home Safe expanded in 2021 and 22 to all 58 counties and included Tribal set-asides.

The Budget Act of 2025 provided \$8.3 million dollars to support continued operation of Home Safe.

Findings

- **Home Safe filled a critical unmet need in local homeless response systems by enabling APS staff to meet the housing needs of older and dependent adults.**
- **Flexible funding was key to the program's success, enabling staff to respond quickly and tailor interventions to participant needs.**
- **The most common interventions included enhanced case management, rent payment, and housing navigation.**
- **Housing outcomes were strong. Among participants for whom we have housing data, most (93.9%) housed at program entry remained housed at exit; more than half (58.4%) homeless at program entry were housed at exit.**
- **Home Safe preserved naturally occurring affordable housing by interrupting evictions from rent-controlled units.**
- **Home Safe had lasting positive impacts on California's social support infrastructure by breaking down siloes between APS staff and homeless service sector staff.**
- **For most populations, staff did not report specific barriers to accessing Home Safe. However, they identified barriers for rural populations, including spotty cell service and transportation issues. Fear, and stigma limited reach in Latine and undocumented communities.**
- **The high cost and low availability of housing limited the program's effectiveness.**

Recommendations

- **Provide sustained funding and technical support to ensure continuity of Home Safe services and preserve program capacity.** Where uninterrupted funding is not feasible, policymakers should consider providing technical assistance to help programs manage periods of funding uncertainty.
- **Maintain flexible funding structures to allow counties to tailor programs to their needs and meet diverse participant needs.**
- **Leverage CalAIM reimbursement to expand reach and better support Home Safe participants with complex needs.** Many clients' needs exceeded program resources. CalAIM (through California's Medicaid 1115 waiver) can be used to reimburse programs for some Home Safe interventions. This would allow grantees to use existing funding to meet clients' needs better or to expand participation. Programs should further integrate service delivery with health systems. State agencies should work with grantees to find new ways to leverage the 1115 waiver.
- **Use Home Safe providers' experience to train and guide other organizations.** Providers can help guide other organizations that provide homelessness prevention services to different populations using other funding sources, such as CalAIM.
- **Reduce fear and stigma around APS and Home Safe.** To increase reach, Home Safe programs should implement educational campaigns that reduce barriers to engagement, clarifying that it is voluntary and flexible, and that homelessness is a qualifying criterion.
- **Partner with trusted community groups.** To reach eligible populations that Home Safe is not serving, grantees should contract with agencies and non-profit providers who have established expertise and trust within these communities. .
- **Increase the supply and affordability of housing accessible to low-income older adults and people with disabilities.** The lack of deeply affordable housing limits Home Safe's effectiveness to prevent and end homelessness.

To access the full Home Safe Evaluation Report:

- Visit <https://homelessness.ucsf.edu/HomeSafe-Eval>
- Click on the image or QR code below

For more information:

- Email UCSF BHII at homelessness@ucsf.edu

