

Let's Come Together to Learn, Share and Collaborate on Homelessness

By Supervisor Dave Cortese

Last year, our community came together for a daylong discussion on firearms safety that was civil, meaningful and productive.

Because of the success of the Community Summit on Firearms Safety, we are holding a similar dialogue on homelessness. We anticipate over 300 participants, including the unhoused, homeowners, community leaders and agencies.

Please join me, the American Leadership Forum and other community partners at the County's first Community Summit on Homelessness from 8:15 to 3 p.m. on Saturday, September 21, in the Fiesta Hall at the Santa Clara County Fairgrounds. Lunch, snacks and beverages will be provided, and parking will be free at the fairgrounds, 344 Tully Road, San Jose, 95111.

The lack of affordable housing and how we care for our homeless population are the most significant challenges we face in Santa Clara County and the region. The County's homeless count and survey taken earlier this year showed an increase in people who are without permanent housing from 7,394 to 9,706, and 82 percent have no shelter at all. While we make progress with affordable housing projects through Measure A, which voters approved in 2016, our attention also needs to be focused on interim housing and shelter.

I know that by facing the housing crisis together, we can also develop creative solutions to caring for the most vulnerable in our community.

The Summit will provide roundtable discussions led by trained facilitators, and will bring together a diverse group of participants to share experiences, enhance participants' knowledge, and discuss ideas about how to address homelessness and provide housing for the unhoused in our communities.

We are bringing to the table homeless and recently housed individuals, affordable housing and homeless advocates, community and neighborhood leaders, service providers, public health representatives, educators, government representatives, law enforcement and others. It is only by sharing differing viewpoints in a civil

environment that we can create solutions and engage community involvement to face the crisis that we see every day on our streets and in our neighborhoods.

The Firearms Summit produced some ideas that have turned into action. The County launched that allows owners of unwanted guns to turn them in 24/7 into the Sheriff's Offices without having to wait for a gun "buy back" event. Since the program launched in May, 68 firearms have been turned in. Also, I recently called for an ordinance that would require safe storage of firearms in homes in unincorporated Santa Clara County to reduce the risk of accidents, injuries and deaths.

Please RSVP by visiting the [Community Summit on Homelessness](#) page on the District 3 website. Seating is limited, and registration is required.

For questions, please call my office at 408-299-5030 or email Enrique Flores at enrique.flores01@bos.sccgov.org.