



The Road Home with Mill Street Center

Homeward Bound is rebuilding Mill Street Center in San Rafael. Operated for more than 30 years, Mill Street Center is the year-round entry emergency shelter for adults facing a crisis of homelessness in Marin, offering a critical lifeline for hundreds of people each year to begin their journeys back home.

Constructed in the 1960s, Mill Street Center was originally an office space before becoming a homeless shelter in 1986. Our vision for the future Mill Street Center will have four floors, including a 60-bed emergency shelter and two upper floors with 32 units of permanent supportive housing. The new facility will offer a more purpose-built and safe environment, including rooms for youth, gender-neutral spaces, a computer lab, and a vastly improved kitchen.

THE NEED FOR SHELTER AND HOUSING IN MARIN

The most recent homeless census counted 1,117 unhoused people in Marin, with 63% living on the streets, in abandoned buildings, encampments, vehicles, or boats. This includes 257 chronically homeless individuals who have spent a year, or in many cases, far longer, living without housing while also trying to manage one or more disabilities.

Marin is among the least affordable rental markets in the U.S., with the 2020 Fair Market Rent for a basic studio priced at \$2,197 per month.* The current need for affordable housing in Marin is greater than ever, especially for people bearing the hardships of homelessness combined with medical problems and pressing poverty.

SOLVING THE CRISIS

The new Mill Street Center will provide a type of housing not currently available in Marin, offering services designed to help people who struggle to find stability and maintain independence, with round-the-clock staff for added support. Researchers add up the expense of serving one individual on the streets at over \$80,000 a year, owing to police interactions, hospitalizations, and emergency room visits. Providing these same individuals with a permanent supportive home costs less than half as much.** Tenants in these 32 small apartments will pay affordable rents, and each floor will have a shared kitchen and community room.

In the shelter component, improvements will boost efficiency and continue providing people in crisis with a safe place to sleep, eat, do laundry, receive counseling, conduct housing searches, secure an income source, and stabilize.

COSTS AND NEXT STEPS:

To rebuild Mill Street Center with added housing units will cost \$15.8 million. We have already raised over \$14.5 million, including \$4.5 million from the California Homeless Emergency Aid Program, \$1.5 million from Partnership HealthPlan, \$4.5 million from the State's No Place Like Home program, \$1.5 million from Marin Community Foundation, and \$1 million from the Nancy H. and James Kelso Fund.



Jim lived along a Novato creekside before arriving at Mill Street Center. He now has his own apartment and is able to regularly see his grandson.

Our goal is to complete construction by the fall of 2021. Having managed several major capital projects—including Oma Village, the Next Key Center, and King Street Senior Housing—Homeward Bound has the experience and ability to rebuild Mill Street Center. At the same time, we will also ensure the continuation of shelter and services in Marin at a temporary location during construction.

HOW YOU CAN HELP: INVEST IN THE NEW MILL STREET CENTER

We are currently seeking investments to close our funding gap and help people move home for good. Your gift can help provide specific items needed to bring the vision of a new Mill Street Center to reality:

\$150,000 – The new shelter kitchen to serve meals for up to 60 people a night – that’s 21,900 dinners a year!

\$100,000 – Welcome all guests to Mill Street Center with a welcoming reception area and lobby.

\$50,000 (4) – Outdoor terrace retreat with patio, railing, potted plants, and seating.

\$20,000 (3) – “Clean and Green” laundry room with energy-efficient washers and dryers.

\$10,000 – Lockers for shelter guests to store personal items during their stay.

\$5,000 – Computer lab for residents to look for jobs, fill out housing applications, and make appointments.

\$1,000 (32) – Furnish a housing unit for a formerly homeless resident, including a bed and dresser.

To make a donation, checks can be made to Homeward Bound of Marin, 1385 N. Hamilton Parkway, Novato, CA 94949, with “Mill Street Center Capital Campaign” in the notes or visit <https://hbofm.org/donate/> with “Mill Street Center Capital Campaign” in the comments. You can also call us at 415-382-3363, ext. 213, and we’ll be happy to speak with you over the phone. We hope you will help us open doors for people beginning their journeys out of homelessness!

Sources:

* The National Low Income Housing Coalition, “Out of Reach” 2020: <https://reports.nlihc.org/oor/>

* “Home Not Found,” Destination: Home and County of Santa Clara, May 2015.



Architectural rendering of Mill Street Center west elevation. The new shelter will be built on the 1st floor. The 2nd and 3rd floors will each have 16 affordably priced single-room units. A parking structure will be at ground level.

