



The Eviction Defense Collaborative (EDC) is dismayed by recent reports that San Francisco's Healthy Streets Operations Center (HSOC) for months have been seeking the removal of portable toilets throughout San Francisco as a response to tenant encampments. Jeff Kositsky (head of HSOC) has stated that he believes, "San Francisco attracts unsheltered people to our City due to a lack of real enforcement and the many amenities we provide to folks, I also think some of the porta potties do lead to encampment. That said, plenty of them do not have encampment issues so I know we can have them in the City without large tent encampments."

EDC urges the City to promote policies addressing the causes of the housing and homelessness crisis. "Enforcement" of laws prohibiting people from sheltering on our streets only serves to criminalize the most vulnerable members of our community. Removing portable toilets denies our unsheltered neighbors much-needed access to hygiene - during a global pandemic.

Furthermore, the City's own data has unequivocally established that most of the people experiencing homelessness in our city were previously housed in San Francisco. According to the City's own [data](#), over half of people experiencing homelessness have lived here for over 10 years. Over 70% were housed in San Francisco prior to becoming unhoused. Nonetheless, HSOC continues to perpetuate bias against the unhoused community as outsiders coming here for the great amenities offered them -such as bathrooms.

Furthermore, EDC takes issue with the notion that portable toilets are an "amenity." They are not. Portable toilets in San Francisco are resources provided to our unsheltered community. Access to sanitation and bathrooms is a basic human right. Portable toilets are a step in the direction of enabling everyone in San Francisco to live with basic human rights and dignity. EDC joins others in the community in voicing the common sense position that our streets need more public restrooms, not less.

People without access to housing should not be treated as a problem to be solved. People experiencing homelessness are part of our communities and our body politic. Too much of the time, responses to homelessness target the visibility of poverty in our city rather than alleviating the causes and conditions of homelessness. The approach and attitude evidenced by the City's emails are one such example. EDC calls upon the City to take a compassionate approach. Public "amenities" such as providing spaces for members of the public, housed or unhoused, to use the



bathroom should be encouraged and expanded. Furthermore, the coincidence of people living near the few places available to use the toilet suggest not only the need for additional restrooms, but also a need to look inwardly at the City's shelter system. If a person chooses to live in tents outside and rely on portable toilets instead of accessing shelter services, the problem would be the shelter services, not the person. Finally, the reality right now is that shelter services are essentially inaccessible if you aren't currently being sheltered.

EDC calls upon HSOC and the City to reflect upon the public concern over the efforts to remove desperately needed resources and reassess their methods and objectives in working with our unhoused community members.

For inquiries please email [Tyler Rougeau](mailto:Tyler.Rougeau@cityofsf.org), Shelter Client Advocate Directing Attorney.

Eviction Defense Collaborative

1338 Mission Street, 4th Floor | San Francisco, CA 94103 | Phone: (415) 947-0797 | Fax: (415) 947-0331

www.evictiondefense.org