

News Literacy: Understanding solutions journalism
Day Two Assessment and key

Instructions: Read "[Solution to SF's homeless problem starts with supportive housing](#)," June 29, 2016 from the San Francisco Chronicle. Then answer the questions below.

Evaluate the story:

1. How did the lede catch your interest? What about the question posed in the deck?
2. Read/analyze the first three paragraphs of the story. What will a solution require and what must it be?
3. The article mentions other cities that have "surmounted" barriers to helping the homeless. Name three.
4. What is the "core problem" facing San Francisco?
 - a. Chronically homeless people living on the street
 - b. Chronically homeless people with severe disabilities, e.g., substance abuse or mental illness
 - c. 450 new chronically homeless people who show up every year
 - d. All of the above
5. What are "master lease" units and how could they help solve San Francisco's homeless problem?
6. What are "Lego-style stacking units" and what cost savings would they offer over other types of construction?
7. What is "pay for performance" and how could it bring investors and city government together?
8. Match key numbers in column 1 with definitions from the story in column 2:

Terms	Definitions
1) 2,500	a) Number of street people in San Francisco who are "chronically homeless"
2) \$20,000/year	b) 2 percent of San Francisco's annual city budget
3) 1,500	c) Amount of money per year that a homeless person in supportive housing costs the city
4) \$200 million to build new housing for the homeless plus \$50 million annually for supportive services	d) Number of supportive housing units San Francisco would have to create to pull "every hard-core homeless" person off the street
5) \$80,000/year	e) Cost per year in police, ambulance and hospital emergency care for a chronically homeless person living on the street

Bonus Question: “Success Elsewhere,” the final section of the story, mentions three more solutions that could help San Francisco with its homeless problem. Describe one of these solutions.

KEY

Evaluate the story:

1. How did the headline catch your interest? “Fixing San Francisco's homelessness problem is possible” is both the lede and the challenge; in one short sentence, it emphasizes a solutions-oriented approach. The deck suggests a possible “how to” — a two-year goal to increase the number of the housing units for the city’s hard-core homeless.

2. Read/analyze the first three paragraphs of the story. What will a solution require and what must it be?

- 1) it will require “the addition of thousands of housing units for the hardest-core homeless people”
- 2) it must be “compassionate” with “counselors on the sites of those thousands of new housing units, to help the hard-core homeless with their mental problems and drug addictions”
- 3) it must be “open-ended” with taxpayer-funded housing for many people “for the rest of their lives”

3. The article mentions other cities that have “surmounted” barriers to helping the homeless. Name three. Answers can include: Salt Lake City, Houston, St. Louis, Long Beach and Glendale in Los Angeles County.

4. What is the “core problem” facing San Francisco?

Answer: all of the above

5. What are “master lease” units and what benefit do they provide for owners as well as the tenants?

“Master lease” units are created when the city contracts with the owners of existing buildings to have them renovated at the owners' cost. The city then rents them and pays nonprofits to provide supportive services. The advantage for the owners is they get steady, reliable rent checks.

6. What are “Lego-style stacking units” and what cost savings would they offer over other types of construction?

“Lego” units are metal shipping containers that are prefabricated and can be constructed in months for \$200,000 apiece. Developer Patrick Kennedy has told San Francisco that he would create and lease the units to the city for \$1,000 per month each in exchange for using vacant land or parking lots.

7. What is “pay for performance” and how could it bring investors and city government together?

A financing approach in which investors “put up millions of dollars to fund government housing or services. Then, if the projects save money, the government pays investors back, with interest, in large part with the savings.”

8. Match key numbers in column 1 with definitions from the story in column 2:

Correct answers are: 1) d, 2) c, 3) a, 4) b, 5) e

Bonus Question: “Success Elsewhere,” the final section of the story, mentions three more solutions that could help San Francisco with its homeless problem. Describe one of these solutions.

Answers will vary but can include:

"Moving On," a program being used in New York, Los Angeles, Atlanta and other cities, has been able to shift as many as 25 percent of supportive housing residents annually into less-intensive, more independent housing.

After they get assistance in getting off the street, transition people out of supportive housing and into affordable housing or even out of the region

Track homeless people "to assess their specific troubles and needs" and get them into housing and connected to social services more quickly so that they don't become chronically homeless