Bring Them Home: Reuniting People With Family

Updated October 28, 2026. Every phone number was checked against an official page.

Many people on Santa Monica's streets have family somewhere who would take them in, and many families cannot find out whether their son or sister is safe. This initiative builds on a City program that already works: one desk for families, a lawful way to learn a loved one is safe, and real tickets home with family waiting at the other end.

What is Project Homecoming?

Project Homecoming is Santa Monica's family reunification program, run with the Police Department. It has reunited more than 3,200 people with family since 2006, according to the City (Jul. 24, 2026). It helps a person who wants to go home get there, once a family member or friend at the other end agrees to receive them.

Call **(310) 458-8953**.

How do I connect a loved one with Project Homecoming?

Call (310) 458-8953 and explain who you are, who you are looking for and where you can receive them. If your loved one is on the street in Santa Monica and you know where, an outreach request through Santa Monica 311 can help the City find them. If they are in crisis, call 988, or 911 if anyone is in danger.

If your loved one is too sick to agree to help, reunification may not be the first step. See the five lawful paths for families.

How is this different from "bus tickets"?

A ticket alone is not reunification. San Francisco's Homeward Bound sent about 11,000 people between 2005 and 2023, then stopped tracking where they went, the SF Standard reported in April 2024. Without follow-up, nobody knows whether a person arrived or ended up on another city's streets.

Our plan sets four safeguards on every trip: a verified receiving family, a warrant check, follow-up at 30 and 90 days, and a public outcome log of trips, verified arrivals, people still housed at 90 days and people who returned to Santa Monica.

Does reunification work?

It works when someone is waiting at the other end and someone checks. That is why the plan measures results instead of counting tickets. Reunification has drawn real debate in Santa Monica (Santa Monica Lookout, Oct. 2025); published outcomes are the way to settle it with facts.

Can families find out if a loved one is safe?

Sometimes, and the law allows more than most programs do. California's Welfare and Institutions Code section 5328.1 lets a facility tell a spouse, parent, child or sibling that a patient is present when the patient cannot authorize it, and federal HIPAA guidance allows sharing with family when the patient does not object. Addiction treatment programs need written consent or a court order (42 CFR 2.13).

Our "Find My Person" ask: every City-funded program keeps a family contact on file from intake, which a person can decline only while able to decide. When the person cannot decide, staff notify that contact, and family inquiries get an answer within 48 hours where the law allows. Addiction-only programs say plainly when they cannot confirm.

What would we add?

1. One desk for families. A City staff navigator and a plain-English path that tells a family exactly what the law lets them do, and walks them through it: the hold evaluation, CARE Court, Laura's Law, conservatorship and treatment through the courts.
2. Find My Person. The family-contact and notification rules above, in every City-funded program's contract.
3. Homecoming at scale, with receipts. One intake for every ticket home, combining Project Homecoming with community reunification efforts and volunteer family-finders such as Miracle Messages, under the same safeguards and one public outcome log.

Where does this initiative stand?

It is a resident draft. Nothing has been submitted to the City Council. The first steps we propose: Housing and Human Services names one staff navigator for families and links a family path from the City's homelessness page, and the next contract amendments for SaMo Bridge and the Palm Motel add the family-contact field. Members plan to ask for a Council sponsor after the Nov. 3, 2026 election.

Sources

1. City of Santa Monica: Unsheltered homelessness in Santa Monica falls (Project Homecoming, Jul 24, 2026)
2. City of Santa Monica: Connect with homelessness services
3. SF Standard: San Francisco lost track of homeless people it bused out (Apr 4, 2024)
4. Santa Monica Lookout: Homeless reunification program stirs debate (Oct 1, 2025)
5. Welfare and Institutions Code 5328.1
6. HHS: HIPAA and sharing mental health information with family
7. 42 CFR 2.13
8. Miracle Messages

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