



REPORT TO COUNCIL
City of Sacramento
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Receive and File
November 5, 2013

Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

Title: Homeless Services Overview

Location/Council District: Citywide

Issue: This report provides an update on homeless programs in the City of Sacramento.

Recommendation: Receive and File

Contact: Shamus Roller, Interim Executive Director – Sacramento Steps Forward, 993-7702, LaShelle Dozier, Executive Director – SHRA, 440-1319

Presenters: Shamus Roller, Interim Executive Director, Sacramento Steps Forward
Steve Cantelme, Interim Chief, Sacramento Office of Emergency Services

Department: Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency

Description/Analysis

Issue: This report will provide information to Council on homeless programs and activities including the Motel Voucher Program, Winter Sanctuary, Warming and Cooling Centers, Emergency Shelters, and update on Sacramento Steps Forward.

Policy Considerations: The actions recommended in this report are consistent with adopted Consolidated Plan goals and adopted Agency policies.

Economic Impacts: Not applicable.

Environmental Considerations:

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)/National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Not applicable

Sustainability Considerations: Not applicable

Other: Not applicable

Committee/Commission Action: Not applicable

Rationale for Recommendation: As requested by Vice-Mayor Ashby, this report will provide an update on homeless programs in the City of Sacramento.

Financial Considerations: not applicable

Emerging Small Business Development (ESBD): not applicable

M/WBE and Section 3 Considerations: not applicable

Respectfully Submitted by:



LA SHELLE DOZIER
Executive Director

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Background

Homeless policy changes at the national level, coupled with recent research, are leading to local improvements in system design, repurposing of existing resources, and the development of reallocation strategies. The Sacramento Continuum of Care (CoC) has made significant headway in the past few years and has strong models and approaches to build on. However, changes imbedded in the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (*HEARTH*) Act of 2009 and the new federal plan to end homelessness will challenge the CoC to rethink current investments and develop a more integrated response system with clear performance expectations for all the local partners.

For the past two and half decades federal grant funding has been directed to thousands of programs across the country. While agencies were expected to coordinate their efforts locally for planning purposes, federal grants went directly to individual programs and were allocated based on numbers of people served or services offered, rather than being based on the ultimate outcomes of the programs. This funding approach is changing. Coinciding with this change, SHRA, the City and County, Sutter Health Foundation, the Sacramento Regional Community Foundation, Legal Services of Northern California and other entities collaborated to create Sacramento Steps Forward (SSF), to act as the lead entity in our response to end homelessness. Over the past two years SSF has emerged to assume the role of grantee for the CoC.

Over the coming year, Sacramento will navigate the new regulatory requirements and seek to overcome significant challenges impeding the implementation of new system-wide strategies that recognize the need for tighter linkages to other programs and resources in the human services and health care arenas as well as system-wide accountability for outcomes. The goal is to begin to transform homeless services into a crisis response system that prevents homelessness and rapidly returns people who experience homelessness to stable housing.

Motel Voucher Program

The Motel Voucher Program is intended to serve individuals and families who are unable to access emergency shelters due to family configuration or other conditions and to serve as an 'overflow' when emergency shelters within Sacramento County are at capacity. Motel Voucher Program participants must be able to live with little supervision within the standard of conduct and obtain meals and other necessities of daily living. Populations that are prioritized to receive motel vouchers are:

- Elderly individuals over age 60 years, or households with an elderly individual;
- Families with children who cannot access emergency shelter due to family configuration (for example, a father and child, a mother with a male child 14 years old or older, or couples with children);
- Referrals from County emergency shelters of clients that are appropriate but not able to stay in a shelter, due to a contagious illness, medical fragility, or a disability; and
- Referrals from County-funded emergency shelters if there are no beds available within the emergency shelter system.

The contractor for the Motel Voucher program works with the County-funded emergency shelters to coordinate appropriate client referrals. Referrals may also be accepted from staff at Francis House, Mary House, Loaves and Fishes, and from 2-1-1 Sacramento, when bed reservation is operational.

Motel Voucher Program participants are expected to sign and adhere to a code of conduct, incorporated into the program. The Contractor shall work with clients to ensure understanding and to promote adherence to such standards. Clients who do violate the code shall be terminated from the program.

The Contractor shall be available to motel staff 24 hours a day for situations that may arise and shall check in on a weekly basis with motel management to resolve potential issues. In addition, the Contractor shall meet with clients onsite at least monthly and shall offer to meet offsite at least monthly to discuss community services and provide referrals accordingly.

The maximum length of stay shall not exceed a period of one month, unless extenuating circumstances exist or if program demand is so low that there is no waiting list. Such conditions must be documented and to encourage a rapid transition to housing, the Contractor shall work with other homeless service providers to assess clients for eligible services.

Sanctuary

Winter Sanctuary is a seasonal emergency-shelter program for homeless men and women provided by SSF, and members of the faith-based community. Currently, the goal is to launch Winter Sanctuary in November 2013 and SSF and the faith based groups are exploring a year-round Sanctuary program.

Per SSF's 2012-2013 Community Report on Winter Sanctuary, each winter, cold and wet weather conditions threaten the lives of nearly 1,000 homeless men and women who live on Sacramento-area streets. The Winter Sanctuary Program was founded to meet the needs of these individuals with nowhere to go. Comprised of a network of religious congregations under the leadership of Sacramento Steps Forward, Winter Sanctuary is the only winter shelter option for single, homeless adults. The purpose of this privately funded program is to help these individuals, who all too often fall through the cracks, have basic shelter.

Program Basics *(data from the Homeless Management Information System)*

- 133 nights of shelter, hot meals, and simple breakfasts provided *(November 19, 2012 to March 31, 2013)*
- An average of 89 guests sheltered nightly
- 536 unduplicated guests served
- Average length of stay: 24 days
- Median length of stay: 10 days

To help convert Winter Sanctuary into a year-round sanctuary, SSF in conjunction with the faith-based community launched the Give One Day Campaign. "Give One Day" is a fund raising campaign aimed to end homelessness in Sacramento. Between September 1 and

December 31, 2013 SSF challenges every Sacramentan to “Give One Day”, donating the amount they spend on one day’s mortgage or rent to end homelessness in our community. Under the campaign, “Give One Day”, the Sacramento community will have the opportunity to mobilize resources for families and individuals experiencing homelessness in the region. Funds raised will provide a pathway to permanent housing and services needed to end homelessness in Sacramento.

Funds raised by “Give One Day” will support programs to:

- Provide permanent housing for homeless individuals and families, moving people to housing as rapidly as they are ready.
- Support programs targeted to help youth ages 14-24.
- Transition the Winter Sanctuary into a year-round emergency shelter to provide a safe haven every night of the year.
- Provide training and job placement services to individuals to not only obtain, but maintain, employment.

Warming/Cooling Centers

Coordinated through the Sacramento Office of Emergency Services (Sac OES), the City and County of Sacramento have protocols in place to guide the activation of warming and cooling centers in response to severe/extreme weather conditions. These protocols are articulated in the Sac OES Severe Weather Guidance document.

As part of its seasonal readiness efforts, Sac OES reviews existing plans and procedures with key stakeholders, and verifies the availability of specific facilities to utilize as potential activation sites. A significant part of these efforts include establishing a plan for the initial notification, and ongoing communication with partnering agencies to coordinate efforts during an activation.

Should an activation of warming and/or cooling centers become necessary, Sac OES has exercised and is fully prepared to mobilize resources with its partners and be the primary source for disseminating information during an event.

Emergency Shelters

In January 2013, SHRA assumed the administration of the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Program from the Sacramento County Department of Human Assistance (DHA). Over the course of 2013, SHRA staff worked with DHA staff to reconcile program funding and accomplishments.

A key piece towards implementing new system-wide strategies for the homeless is the full roll-out of the ESG Program that provides, for the first time, ongoing entitlement funding in support of homeless prevention and rapid re-housing activities. The first homeless prevention and rapid re-housing program established in Sacramento was linked to the one-time funding of the Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing (HPRP) Program under the American Recovery

and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The lessons learned and infrastructure created from HPRP will serve as a starting point for the new ESG Program.

In May 2013, HUD issued the Grant Award amounts for the federal entitlement programs, and the ESG Program was reduced from \$452,693 (2012 funding level) to \$302,145 (2013 funding level), resulting in an approximately 30 percent funding reduction. This severe reduction required SHRA to reduce its contracts with Sacramento's emergency shelter providers (Volunteers of America and The Salvation Army). SHRA will coordinate with the CoC and homelessness providers on allocating ESG funds in a manner that best serves its community. A federal requirement places caps on ESG (24 CFR 576.3-General Provisions): 40 percent of the funds are to be made available for prevention and rapid re-housing activities, and 60 percent of the funds for emergency shelters and outreach; in addition, out of the 60 percent, 7.5 percent can be allocated for program administration.

To implement this coordination, SHRA collaborated with SSF to lead the community discussions for implementation of homeless prevention and rapid re-housing activities in conjunction with the wider repositioning of the CoC based upon HEARTH. In late 2013, SHRA will release a Request for Qualifications to seek qualified providers to implement the prevention and rapid re-housing component of ESG in 2014. SHRA, as administrator, will then directly contract with providers based upon the priorities adopted as part of the implementation of HEARTH locally. These actions will prove crucial for the continued competitiveness of the Sacramento CoC when the 2014 competitive funding round is launched by HUD and the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) implements the regulations pertaining to HEARTH.

In September 2013, SHRA contracted with Focus Strategies to develop coordinated entry / assessment system for ESG, Shelter Plus Care and HOPWA Programs administered by SHRA with the Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) Request for Proposals to be issued in November 2013. The RRH system will launch in January 2014 and will serve as a pilot coordinated entry /assessment for the CoC. SHRA will continue to collaborate with SSF on developing a coordinated entry / assessment system throughout the CoC. The core system services will include: assessment, eligibility, calculating assistance, housing search and location, provision of financial assistance, case management / stabilization services, reassessment and exiting.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Continuum of Care Grants (HUD CoC Grants)

The Continuum of Care (CoC) approach helps communities address the problem of homelessness in a coordinated, comprehensive and strategic fashion. The CoC is the community's plan to organize and deliver housing and services that meet the specific needs of homeless individuals and families as they move toward stable housing and maximum self-sufficiency.

HUD's CoC Program funds four types of services in Sacramento to address the problem of homelessness in a comprehensive manner: Shelter Plus Care, Permanent Supportive Housing, Transitional Housing, and Supportive Services. *Shelter Plus Care* provides rental assistance combined with supportive services to ensure housing stability. *Permanent*

Supportive Housing provides a permanent home and voluntary case management to disabled homeless persons. *Transitional Housing* provides up to two years of housing and extensive case management to address issues and move participants to self-sufficiency by the end of their time in the program. *Supportive Services* programs provide case management to address barriers to housing stability. In addition to these grants that provide direct services to end homelessness, the HUD CoC Program also funds HMIS projects for communities to track outcomes for homeless persons accessing our system of care.

The Sacramento CoC currently has a total of 39 HUD CoC Program-funded grants: 36 projects serving homeless individuals and families and three HMIS projects. The total annual value of these grants is \$15,830,484. There are several additional grants from the 2011 award cycle in the final stages of implementation now.

The majority of HUD CoC Program grants are administered by Sacramento Steps Forward, with funds passed through to local organizations providing direct services to the homeless. Four additional agencies in the community also administer CoC Program grants: SHRA, Sacramento County Department of Human Assistance (DHA), Transitional Living and Community Support (TLCS), and Resources for Independent Living (RIL). SHRA, TLCS, and RIL all administer programs on their own; DHA administers funds that are passed through to local agencies in the same fashion as SSF.

Agencies providing CoC Program services are listed below:

- Cottage Housing
- Lutheran Social Services
- Mercy Housing
- Next Move (formerly Sacramento Area Emergency Housing Center)
- Resources for Independent Living
- Transitional Living and Community Support
- Sacramento Children's Home
- Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency
- Sacramento Self Help Housing
- St. John's Shelter
- Travelers Aid
- Volunteers of America