



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Department Name: Community Services
Department No.: 057
For Agenda Of: December 12, 2023
Placement: Administrative
Estimated Time:
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Department George Chapjian, Community Services Director 805-568-2467
Director(s)
Contact Info: Joseph Dzvonik, Deputy Director 805-568-3523

SUBJECT: Authorize Submission of Encampment Resolution Funding Application to State of California Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal ICH)

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form:

Other Concurrence: Risk Management

As to form: Yes

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form:

Recommended Actions:

- a) Authorize the Community Services Director, or designee, acting on behalf of the County of Santa Barbara, to submit an application for up to \$8 Million and all certifications, standard forms, and other related documents to the California Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal ICH) for the countywide collaborative to be selected for participation in the third round of the California Encampment Resolution Funding Round 3 (CERF-3) program; and
- b) Authorize the Community Services Director, or designee, to execute all certifications, standard forms, and a grant agreement in a form substantially similar to the CA Encampment Resolution Funding grant agreement, and other related documents required for the acceptance and administration of CERF-3 State funds; and
- c) Determine the above recommended actions are not the approval of a project that is subject to environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(5), finding that the actions are organizational or administrative activities of government that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes to the environment.

Summary Text:

Over 50% (611) of the unsheltered persons counted (1,202) in the 2023 Point-In-Time Count were living in their vehicles. Jurisdictions throughout Santa Barbara County report large groupings/encampments comprised of vehicles and RVs impacting neighborhoods. To resolve these vehicular encampments, the

Community Services Department (CSD) seeks to apply for California Encampment Resolution Funding Round 3 (CERF-3) to address the safety and wellness of people within encampments and critical encampment concerns. If the County's application is awarded, the CERF-3 funding will bolster existing, successful models and will support new approaches that transition individuals experiencing homelessness in vehicular encampments into interim shelter with clear pathways to permanent housing, or directly into permanent housing.

This Board Letter recommends the Board authorize the Community Services Director to submit an application for \$8 Million in CERF-3 to the California Interagency Council on Homelessness, execute a grant agreement in a form substantially similar to Attachment A, and other related documents required for the acceptance and administration of CERF-3.

Background:

Encampment Resolution Strategy

On August 31, 2021, the Board of Supervisors approved an Encampment Resolution Strategy, including an Encampment Response Protocol using American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding for COVID-19 Recovery in Housing and Homelessness funds to close gaps in housing shelter and services. To date, implementation of the strategy and protocol has included vehicular/recreational vehicle (RV) encampments. The Board directed resources for implementation of the strategy, including funding to provide the outreach services and operations of three interim housing projects. On October 19, 2021, the encampment resolution strategy line items were included as part of the Health and Human Services - Housing and Homelessness COVID-19 Recovery Plan. ARPA is funding countywide street outreach through Behavioral Wellness (BeWell), Good Samaritan Shelter (GSS), and New Beginnings Safe Parking Program. In addition to ARPA, the County administers CERF through the service provider City Net for support outreach and engagement along the transit corridor, and through GSS for in and near waterways. The proposed application before the Board today will address pathways to permanent housing for persons experiencing vehicular homelessness.

Robust outreach and engagement services connect people experiencing homelessness with shelter and housing opportunities. A key best practice in encampment response is consistent outreach and engagement with targeted populations that includes individual case management and housing navigation. This best practice also includes outreach and engagement to those experiencing vehicular homelessness. The annual census of persons experiencing homelessness, known as the Point-In-Time Count, shows a rise in persons living in vehicles in recent years. Over 50% (611) of the unsheltered persons counted (1,202) in the 2023 Point-In-Time Count were living in their vehicles. The New Beginnings Safe Parking Shelter and Rapid Re-Housing Program, which serves as the national model for safe parking programs, provides safe overnight shelter for vehicular homeless persons countywide. This program provides case management, street outreach, housing navigation and retention services, and financial assistance to program clients and homeless individuals referred through the Coordinated Entry System (CES), and helps clients transition into and maintain permanent housing. In the -past fiscal year ending June 30, 2023, New Beginnings served 647 unduplicated clients through the Safe Parking Program (a 15% increase from the previous fiscal year) and housed 105 clients (an 88% increase from the previous fiscal year). Of the unduplicated clients served, 20% were seniors over 63 years of age, 57% of clients were over 55 years of age, 20% had three or more disabling conditions, and 34% were chronically homeless.

Vehicle-focused street outreach efforts and activities are housing-focused and designed to reach people who might not otherwise seek assistance or gain access to homeless services. Outreach teams collaborate and coordinate efforts with the broader network of the Continuum of Care (CoC) and CES, as well as non-CoC partners providing services to underserved population countywide. Collaboration helps providers serving vehicular homeless community use resources more efficiently and strategically. Once engaged and enrolled in permanent housing efforts such as Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) projects, street outreach clients receive the same RRH case management and temporary financial assistance.

State of California Encampment Resolution Funding

The California Encampment Resolution Funding program was established to fund actionable, person-centered local proposals that resolve the experience of unsheltered homelessness for people residing in encampments. Resolving these experiences of homelessness will necessarily address the safety and wellness of people within encampments, resolve critical encampment concerns, and transition individuals into interim shelter with clear pathways to permanent housing or directly into permanent housing, using data-informed, non-punitive, low-barrier, person-centered, Housing First, and coordinated approaches. Proposals may bolster existing, successful models and/or support new approaches that provide safe stable, and ultimately permanent housing for people experiencing homelessness in encampments.

Existing, planned, and potential projects funded by County and other sources (e.g. mapping software, interim housing sites, and administrative capacity) will be leveraged to support the needs outlined in this request to the State. Santa Barbara County's proposed project will bolster existing, successful models by: expanding vehicular-specific street outreach teams and housing navigation/retention staff, and expanding daytime and overnight Safe Parking program lots; and will provide safe stable, and ultimately permanent housing for persons moving from vehicular encampments to new interim housing and providing availability of flexible permanent housing funds.

New Beginnings has operated the Safe Parking Program since 2004 and their program is a proven strategy to engage persons living in vehicles. The program is the first of its kind and has served as a model for dozens of communities throughout the country. In the past 19 years, the Safe Parking Program has housed hundreds of individuals and sheltered thousands of homeless individuals and families. New Beginnings consistently meets program goals, and continues to expand services to further support clients and the community. The (CERF-3) Notice of Funding Availability was released by December 1, 2023. CSD is seeking the Board's approval to apply for CERF-3 to address vehicular encampments throughout Santa Barbara County.

For CERF-3 application purposes, the number of the individuals living in vehicles is determined based on Point-in-Time Count mapping and data from CES and the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and CES. Mapping software and HMIS data indicate a low rate of reported substance abuse in persons living in vehicles, and a high rate of employment and benefits income when compared to the homeless population throughout Santa Barbara County. The application and budget will detail specific interventions to be implemented for resolution.

Approval of this Board action authorizes staff to apply for CERF-3 grant funds and execute all standard forms and the grant agreement, if awarded. While the actual application has not been released, it is anticipated to be in a form substantially similar to previous applications (Attachment A). If awarded, staff

would return to the Board for approval of subrecipient agreements utilizing CERF-3 for agencies to provide services (e.g. interim housing, outreach).

Performance Measure:

While the actual application has not been released, it is anticipated to be in a form substantially similar to previous applications. The proposed goals and performance measures for the application are included below.

Outreach and Engagement

Goals

	Goal
Unduplicated number of homeless persons or persons at imminent or at risk of homelessness to be served	250
Number of homeless persons entering permanent housing (placed into units)	150

Performance Measures

	Goal
% of adult participants gaining new or increasing cash income at project exit	50%
% of adult participants increasing non-cash benefits at project exit	20%
% of project participants who move into permanent housing remaining housed for 1 year	90%

Key Contract Risks:

The County assumes responsibility for the administration of funding in accordance with all State and federal requirements governing their use. No subrecipient agreements or contracts are included in this Board Letter. CSD administers federal and State funding programs on behalf of the County and the CoC. As the recipient of State and federal funds, the County is responsible for ensuring that funds are used in accordance with all applicable requirements. CERF-3 program guidelines indicate that failure to comply with program requirements may result in the County being required to repay funds. Subrecipients selected will have prior experience operating homeless assistance projects.

Staffing Impacts:

Legal Positions:

N/A

FTEs:

N/A

Special Instructions:

After Board action, please email an electronic copy of the Minute Order to Lucille Boss at LBoss@countyofsb.org.

Attachments:

A. California Encampment Resolution Fund – 2 Standard Agreement

Authored by:

Lucille Boss, Encampment Response Coordinator