



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: January 24, 2023
Placement: Departmental
Estimated Time: 60 minutes
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: Dinah Lockhart, Deputy Director 805-568-3523

SUBJECT: **Community Action Plan to Address Homelessness Updates including Homeless Encampment Resolution Strategy Year 1 Progress Report**

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form:

Other Concurrence: Risk Management

As to form:

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Recommended Actions:

- a) Receive and file a presentation on homelessness in Santa Barbara County including:
 - i. Community Action Plan to Address Homelessness 18-month Progress Report (Attachment A)
 - ii. Encampment Resolution Strategy Year 1 Progress Report (Attachment B); and
- b) Authorize the Community Services Director, or designee, acting on behalf of the County of Santa Barbara, to submit an application for up to \$6,000,000 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 second round of the California Encampment Resolution Funding (CERF-2) program; and
- c) 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-2 State funds;
- d) Provide other direction, as appropriate; and
- e) 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:

Community Services (CSD) is providing a report on homelessness in Santa Barbara County. Staff's report includes an 18-month review (2/23/21 – 9/30/22) of progress on the Community Action Plan to Address Homelessness (Attachment A), highlighting key updates since the Year 1 Progress Report, and the Encampment Resolution Strategy Year 1 Progress Report (9/1/2021-8/31/2022) (Attachment B). Staff is recommending the Board of Supervisors receive and file the reports and provide other direction, as appropriate.

In addition, staff is recommending the Board authorize the Community Services Director or designee, acting on behalf of the County of Santa Barbara,

- to submit an application for up to \$6,000,000 in funding and all certifications, standard forms, and other related documents to the California Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal ICH) for a countywide collaborative to be selected for participation in the second round of the California Encampment Resolution Funding (CERF-2) program.
- to execute all certifications, standard forms, and a grant agreement in a form substantially similar to the CA Encampment Resolution Funding grant agreement (Attachment C), and other related documents required for the acceptance and administration of CERF-2 State funds

Background: Community Action Plan to Address Homelessness

The Community Action Plan (CAP) to Address Homelessness was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on February 23, 2021, and a Year 1 Progress Report was received and filed on May 24, 2022. The Community Action Plan outlines key strategies and priorities to address homelessness, which are part of a detailed implementation plan:

- Increase access to safe, affordable housing;
- Use best practices to deliver tailored support services;
- Build a collective action plan;
- Strengthen support system to obtain and maintain housing;
- Build provider capacity to address complex needs.

The CAP also calls out regional system-level goals focusing on specific populations, new resources, and system performance. The system level goals are:

- Prioritize ending/dramatically reducing homelessness for specific populations.
- Increase housing inventory dedicated to homelessness and affordability
- Create a culture of diversion and prevention across the homeless response system.
- Improve overall homeless system performance.
- Achieve Continuum of Care strategies and benchmarks approved in 2019.

Housing and shelter needs identified in the CAP are based on a gaps analysis conducted in 2019 including system modeling using data from the County's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), the Coordinated Entry System, the Point in Time Count, and other data sources (Table 1). These critical components have assisted both the Santa Maria/Santa Barbara County Continuum of Care (CoC) and County to identify resource gaps, key eligible activities and uses, and meet threshold criteria for the CoC and County to apply for federal and state funds.

Following Board approval in 2021, staff presented the CAP to City Councils within the county and other key jurisdictional leadership bodies, which encouraged community awareness and community leader commitment to addressing homelessness in the region. Subsequent to this approval by jurisdictional leadership bodies, staff has coordinated implementation and collaboration via forums, meetings, and presentations which include but are not limited to the: Elected Leaders Forums to Address Homelessness, the CoC Governing Board and related committees, Homeless Inter-Agency Policy Council of County Department Directors, jurisdictional working groups, and periodic regional meetings between the County and city managers. Staff engages in community meetings to present findings, progress, and proposed housing solutions.

Table 1: Community Action Plan 18 Month Progress on Increasing Access to Housing Interventions

	Permanent Housing: new units and long-term rental subsidies paired with supportive services	Interim/Temporary Housing: emergency shelter, low-barrier navigation centers, transitional housing, and/or bridge housing	Rapid Re-Housing: time-limited rental assistance with wraparound case management
Estimated Gap in Beds/Units	1,366 units	563 beds	1,053 openings
Progress	439 units (32%) Secured	140 beds (25%) Developed	436 openings (41%) Funded
Remaining Need	927 (68%) Are still needed	423 (75%) Are still needed	617 (59%) Are still needed

Major updates since the CAP Year 1 Progress Report are summarized as follows:

- The homeless response system re-housed 1,050 persons in 2022 (reported in HMIS) despite soaring rents and an extremely low rental vacancy rate. This significant achievement was accomplished through the tireless efforts of service providers and the coordination efforts of County staff and the Continuum of Care.
- The number of persons experiencing homelessness that are accessing services and interim housing is growing (reported in HMIS). The number of persons served in 2022 was 4,620, up from 3,094 in 2019, this represents a 49% increase. The number of children served increased 87% over the same period.
- The number of persons presenting for services (inflow) is outpacing the number of persons exiting the homeless response system to permanent housing (outflow) by 2 to 1.
- Santa Barbara County is being awarded in competitive funding cycles from both state and federal sources, such as State Homekey, California Encampment Resolution Funding (CERF), and State Emergency Shelter Grant-Corona Virus (ESG-CV).

State funding initiatives to address homelessness continue to increase resources for housing, shelter and services. However, the funding is coming in heavily prescribed, restrictive programs from multiple State agencies with detailed requirements, and a significant administrative burden.

Increase access to safe, affordable housing

Buena Tierra (Goleta Homekey Project at 6021 Hollister Ave.) and Vera Cruz Village (Low-Income Housing Tax Credit development at 116 E. Cota St.) are scheduled open in 2023, adding 87 permanent housing units to the continuum of care for persons experiencing homelessness. An additional 234 permanent supportive housing units are in the development pipeline assisted through State funding initiatives including but not limited to No Place Like Home, Housing for a Healthy California and Low-Income Housing Tax Credits.

The Housing Authority of the County of Santa Barbara and the Housing Authority of the City of Santa Barbara led the nation in the expedited utilization of Emergency Housing Vouchers through collaboration, landlord incentives, process streamlining, and housing navigators. The EHV utilization success resulted in an additional 57 (included in the 439 units in Table 1) vouchers being allocated by HUD on May 1, 2022.

The Board of Supervisors has reviewed a list of potential County-owned sites and provided direction to staff to move forward with four locations for community engagement, site planning, establishment and operation of interim housing projects. The term ‘interim housing’ is inclusive of emergency shelter, low-barrier navigation centers, transitional housing and/or bridge housing beds. Interim housing to address unsheltered homelessness and encampments is critical while additional permanent housing opportunities are developed. The use of County sites is necessary to expedite the development process. The proposed sites leverage existing services in the immediate area. The four site locations are:

- Intersection of Centerpointe and Southpoint Parkways in Santa Maria
- 4500 Hollister Ave. in unincorporated area between Goleta and Santa Barbara
- Calle Real campus in unincorporated area between Goleta and Santa Barbara
- 2025 Sweeney Rd. in Lompoc Valley

Build a collective action plan, Improve data sharing

Major advancement in data collection and visualizations have taken place. Community Services now maintains a detailed Community Data Dashboard to provide transparent information about demographics, outcomes, and programs on the Housing and Community Development (HCD) Division website. Mapping software now has over 1,000 encampment sites identified to enhance effective service delivery and resolution. The State provides visualization of HMIS data at [Homeless Data Integration System - California Interagency Council on Homelessness](#). This allows continuums to compare data to better assess strengths and weaknesses of the local homeless response system.

There are now 250 HMIS end users in Santa Barbara County across a wide variety of organizations. Two of the newest organizations to execute an HMIS Memorandum of Understanding are CenCal Health and the University of California Santa Barbara for their State funded initiatives to address homelessness.

Strengthen support system to obtain and maintain housing

California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM) provides community supports that will greatly benefit service delivery for persons experiencing homelessness and provide sustainable, on-going funding for eligible CenCal Health members. The County Executive Office, Community Services Department, and the CoC are coordinating with CenCal Health to prioritize community support for persons experiencing homelessness as part of CalAIM and the Housing and Homelessness Incentive Program (HHIP). The Community supports component of CalAIM and HHIP will fund critical services including enhanced case management, housing transition navigation services, housing deposits, housing tenancy

and sustaining services, sobering centers, respite services, short term post hospitalization housing and day habilitation programs.

Build provider capacity to address complex needs

A major challenge continues to be service providers recruiting staffing for new programs and retaining existing staff. This has limited case-loads among direct service providers, and capacity in the sector.

Returns to homelessness after placement in permanent housing are increasing (14% in 2021 to 19% in 2022). Returns for persons with behavioral health challenges are happening at a higher rate, suggesting that more robust supportive services are needed post-placement to achieve housing stability.

Encampment Resolution Strategy, Response Protocol, and State of California Encampment Resolution Funding

In the first year of Encampment Resolution Strategy and the Encampment Response Protocol implementation, County-coordinated efforts resolved 154 individual encampment sites in 22 clusters. Encampments were resolved by people moving into shelter or housing or by moving to another unsheltered location, creating a new encampment site. Santa Barbara County has defined an ‘encampment’ as a set location that does not move day-to-day; an individual or group sleeps in the space each night, and the footprint is comprised of more belongings than one person could carry. Other Performance Measures for Year 1 are found below in the Performance Measures section. Expanded data collection efforts have given a clear picture of the extent of encampments throughout the county. County-funded street outreach providers have mapped 961 sites.

During year 1, an Encampment Response Coordinator was appointed, a sanitation service contractor was selected for debris removal, the Encampment Response team was launched and deployed, consistent countywide use of mapping software was implemented, outreach teams were expanded through contracts funded by COVID-19 response and recovery dollars, and competitive State funding dedicated to encampments was awarded. The Board of Supervisors invested American Rescue Plan Act funding for outreach and engagement through the County’s Multi-Disciplinary Team (Behavioral Wellness, Public Health, and Public Defender) by increased staffing for Behavioral Wellness and countywide Street Outreach Housing Navigators through Good Samaritan Shelter.

Sites on private, city, and other public parcels have been removed by Caltrans, cities, and other community groups. Most identified encampments in Mid and North County have been located on private property or within city boundaries. County staff continues to work closely with jurisdictions to identify encampments for resolution. The biggest challenge to encampment resolution has been the lack of shelter (congregate and non-congregate). When available, shelter provides an effective path to housing solutions, rather than moving people from one unsheltered location to another.

The goals and performance measures set forth in the Encampment Resolution Strategy are intended to: 1) ensure streets and open spaces are safe and clean; 2) meet the housing, shelter, and service referral needs of individuals experiencing homelessness; 3) improve the medical and behavioral health of individuals experiencing homelessness; and, 4) deliver coordinated services to effectively address and resolve encampments by developing efficient means to manage calls for service and prioritize resources, and effectively share information and coordinate resources countywide. The Encampment Response Coordinator tracks demographics in camps (persons assessed, persons enrolled in services, and persons in closed/cleared sites) to limit inequities or disparities in service and outreach.

A comprehensive Encampment Resolution Year 1 Progress Report (Attachment B) includes implementation details, as well as key challenges and successes.

Performance Measure:

The goals and performance measures (Table 2) based on the Board-adopted Encampment Resolution Strategy are intended to: 1) ensure streets and open spaces are safe and clean; 2) meet the housing, shelter, and service referral needs of individuals experiencing homelessness; 3) improve the medical and behavioral health of individuals experiencing homelessness; and 4) deliver coordinated services to effectively address and resolve encampments by developing efficient means to manage calls for service and prioritize resources, and effectively share information and coordinate resources countywide.

Table 2: Goals and Performance Measures – Encampment Resolution

The mapping software allowed Outreach teams to record individual sites, which were most often found in clusters. Of the 380 sites assessed, 148 sites in 14 clusters were assessed by the full Encampment Response Team. An additional 232 sites were assessed by the Encampment Response Coordinator and removed by the contracted sanitation services provider. Many of the additional sites were observed as inactive or abandoned following movement to shelter, housing or another unsheltered location.

	<u>Year 1 Goal</u>	<u>Year 1 Actual</u>
Number of encampments assessed	20	380
Number of encampments resolved	15	154
Number of persons identified in assessed encampments	50	231
Number of persons identified in resolved encampments	N/A	112

Performance Measures

	<u>Year 1 Goal</u>	<u>Year 1 Actual</u>
Participants in resolved encampments who accept alternate shelter/housing	60%	15%
Participants who accept alternative shelter or services are permanently housed	60%	4%*
Resolved encampments not re-established at 3-months	90%	90%
Resolved encampments not re-established at 6-months	80%	50%
Resolved encampments not re-established at 12-months	75%	N/A**
Reduce calls for service to encampment locations (incidents leading to service requests, reduce drug-related and criminal activity)	30%	13%***

*Individuals from sites not assessed by the Encampment Response Team have been housed.

**Encampments resolved have not yet met the 12-month mark.

***Actual calls for service to County Fire are detailed below:

Timeframe	Transient-related incidents	Medical-related	Fire-related	Unauthorized burning (Cooking/warming fire)
Jul 1, 2020 – Jun 30, 2021	387	265/387	47/387	23/47
Jul 1, 2021 – Jun 30, 2022	337 (13% decrease)	196/337	45/337	32/45

The metrics approved and outlined above have not been as accurate in capturing the work and movement of encampments as initially proposed. The list below shows a more complete picture of the status of the 961 encampment sites throughout Santa Barbara County. It captures all sites recorded in the mapping software maintained by the Encampment Response Coordinator, as data collection is part of the Encampment Resolution Strategy. As mentioned, encampment sites on private, city, and other public parcels, while recorded in the mapping software, have been removed by Caltrans, cities, and other community groups. Working closely with street outreach teams and jurisdictions, the following metrics (as of 8/31/22) have been the most relevant to a complete picture of encampment response and resolution (details in Attachment B Report).

Funding implementation of the Encampment Response Protocol specifically includes staffing, sanitation services, storage of personal property and the mapping software. The cost of sanitation services, which is the actual cleaning and clearing of encampments over 3 years, is \$1,125,000. Combined with personal property storage and contractor costs, a new position (Encampment Response Coordinator), and mapping software, the cost of implementation of the protocol is \$1,935,000. Table 3 reflects expenses in year 1. Staffing challenges impacted the ability for the Encampment Response Coordinator to be fully dedicated to this role. Storage is being provided at a County-owned site.

Table 3: Funding Required for Successful Implementation of Encampment Response Protocol

Key action/Activity	Year 1	Year 1 Expenses	Year 2	Year 3	Estimated 3-year Cost
Encampment Response Coordinator	\$160,000	\$73,663	\$160,000	\$160,000	\$480,000
Encampment Response sanitation services (debris removal)	\$375,000	\$359,148	\$375,000	\$375,000	\$1,125,000
Storage of personal property and staffing for access to property	\$100,000	\$1,600	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$300,000
Fulcrum mapping software	\$10,000	\$16,747	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$30,000
Total	\$645,000	\$451,158	\$645,000	\$645,000	\$1,935,000

Funding for implementation of the Encampment Resolution Strategy does not include necessary funding for the expansion of shelter beds and services to address identified encampment needs. The combined strategies of encampment resolution and expanded shelter beds and services integrates with the guiding principles of the Community Action Plan to address boarder homeless needs.

The California Encampment Resolution Fund Round 2 (CERF-2) Notice of Funding Availability was released on December 1, 2022. Under the authority of Chapter 7 of Part 1 of Division 31 of the California Health and Safety Code (sections 50250 et seq.), the CERF-2 Program was established to increase collaboration between the California Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal ICH), local jurisdictions, and continuums of care to accomplish the following:

- Assist local jurisdictions in ensuring the safety and wellness of people experiencing homelessness in encampments.
- Provide grants to local jurisdictions and continuums of care to resolve critical encampment concerns and transition individuals into safe and stable housing.
- Encourage a data-informed, coordinated approach to address encampment concerns.

The CERF Program will 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.

CSD intends to apply for CERF-2 to address encampments near waterways and highways. Significant numbers of persons experiencing homelessness reside in encampments in waterways throughout Santa Barbara County. This includes creeks and riverbeds and other flood control areas. The number of the individuals living in waterways will be determined based on mapping software currently in use by the County's Encampment Response Team and homeless service providers, as well as client-level data in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and Coordinated Entry System (CES). One early observation is that there is a high number of persons with substance abuse disorders in these areas. Language services will also be critical as a number of persons are mono-lingual Spanish, and some indigenous conversant. Mapping software and HMIS data highlights a number of persons who do not speak English fluently, as well as a high level of substance use disorders. The application and budget will detail specific interventions to be implemented for resolution.

Approval of this Board action authorizes staff to apply for CERF-2 grant funds and execute all standard forms and the grant agreement, if awarded. CERF-2 is a four-year grant program of \$240 million in FY 2022-23 (CERF-2) to provide grants to local jurisdictions and continuums of care to resolve critical encampment concerns and transition individuals into safe and stable housing. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until June 30, 2023, or until all funds are exhausted, whichever comes first. Up to \$150 million will be prioritized for proposals that serve people living in encampments on State rights-of-way. Staff would return to the Board to review recommendations on any subrecipient awards for CERF-2 for agencies to provide services as listed in the budget (e.g. interim housing, outreach).

Santa Barbara County's proposed project budget will be comprised of eligible uses such as: rapid rehousing, operating subsidies, street outreach, services coordination, systems support, delivery of permanent housing, prevention and shelter diversion, interim sheltering, improvements to existing emergency shelters, and administrative costs, focused on resolving encampments in waterways throughout Santa Barbara County. 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.

Key Contract Risks:

The County assumes responsibility for the administration of funding in accordance with all State and federal requirements governing their use. No sub-recipient 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-2 program guidelines indicate that failure to comply with program requirements may result in the County being required to repay funds. Sub-recipients selected will have prior experience operating homeless assistance projects.

Staffing Impacts:

Legal Positions:

N/A

FTEs:

N/A

Special Instructions:

- 1) Please email an electronic copy of the Minute Order to Dinah Lockhart at dlockhart@co.santa-barbara.ca.us.

Attachments:

- A. Community Action Plan to Address Homelessness 18-month Progress Report
- B. Encampment Resolution Year 1 Progress Report
- C. California Encampment Resolution Fund – 1 Standard Agreement
- D. Presentation

Authored by:

Kimberlee Albers and Lucille Boss, Housing and Community Development Division