



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 14, 2021
Placement: Administrative
Estimated Time: N/A
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from: N/A
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)
Kimberlee Albers, Homeless Programs Manager (805-560-1090)
SUBJECT: Authorize Submission of Encampment Resolution Funding Application to State
of California Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence: Risk Management

As to form: Yes

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Authorize the Community Services Director or designee, acting on behalf of the County of Santa Barbara, to submit an application for up to \$2,600,000 and all certifications, standard forms, and other related documents to the State of California Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council for the countywide collaborative to be selected for participation in the Encampment Resolution Funding (ERF) program; and
- b) Determine that the recommended actions are not the acceptance and approval of a project that is subject to environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(4), finding that the projects are a creation of government funding mechanisms or other government fiscal activities, which do not involve any commitment to any specific project which may result in a potentially significant physical impact on the environment.

Summary Text:

The State Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council (HCFC), has made \$47.5M of competitive funding available to resolve encampments. The Request for Applications (RFA) (Attachment A) was released on Friday, October 29, 2021, and the deadline for application submission is December 31, 2021.

The County of Santa Barbara has collaborated with local jurisdictions (cities of Santa Barbara, Goleta, Lompoc, and Santa Maria) and other agencies (CalTrans and Union Pacific Railroad) to develop a coordinated approach to addressing a regional need: resolving encampments along the transit corridor (U.S. Hwy 101 and CA Hwy 1) where railroad tracks parallel and intersect highways. The encampment resolution project will target populations in danger of vehicle/train right-of-way strikes and fires. The County will request \$2,520,000 to resolve 53 encampment sites and transition at least 99 persons to safer sheltered locations.

County staff recommends the Board of Supervisors authorize the Community Services Director or designee, acting on behalf of the County of Santa Barbara, to submit an application and all certifications, standard forms, and other related documents to the State of California Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council for the countywide collaborative to be selected for participation in the Encampment Resolution Funding (ERF) program.

Background:

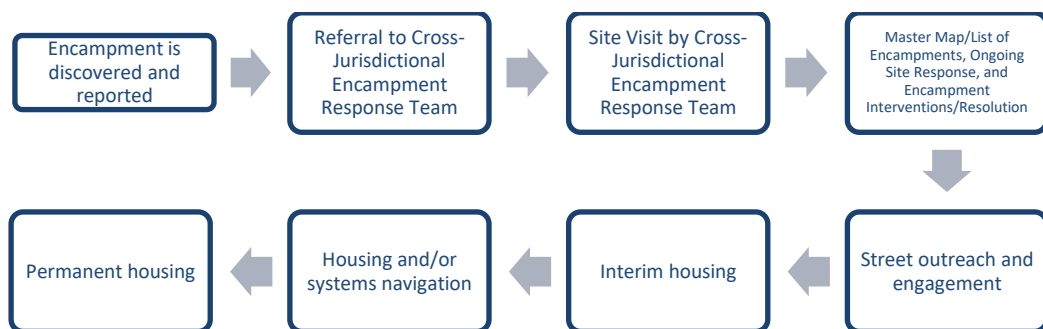
Under the authority of Chapter 7 of Part 1 of Division 31 of the California Health and Safety Code (sections 50250 et seq.), the Encampment Resolution Funding (ERF) Program was established to increase collaboration between the Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council (HCFC), local jurisdictions, and continuums of care to accomplish the following:

- Assist local jurisdictions in ensuring the wellness and safety of people experiencing homelessness in encampments, including their immediate physical and mental wellness and safety needs arising from unsheltered homelessness and their longer-term needs addressed through a path to safe and stable housing.
- Provide encampment resolution grants to local jurisdictions and continuums of care to support innovative and replicable efforts to resolve critical encampment concerns and to support individuals to access safe and stable housing, using Housing First approaches.
- Encourage a data-informed, coordinated approach to address unsheltered homelessness at encampments by establishing, through the encampment resolution grants, effective, scalable, and replicable demonstration projects.

The ERF Program will fund: local demonstration projects for innovative service delivery models and cross systems collaborations that support individuals experiencing homelessness in encampments towards a meaningful path to safe and stable housing, using non-punitive, low-barrier, person-centered, Housing First approaches. HCFC will analyze awarded demonstration projects to evaluate activities and outcomes for the purpose of sharing *scalable and replicable* encampment resolution models that may be implemented across the state. Additional requirements: Comply with the principles of Housing First as defined in Welfare and Institutions Code section 8255; Serve a specific encampment site; and be designed to achieve sustainable outcomes for both recipients of services and the encampment site to be resolved.

The Encampment Resolution Fund (ERF) Request for Applications (RFA) was released on October 29, 2021. The County Board of Supervisors approved an Encampment Resolution Strategy and Encampment Response Protocol (August 31, 2021) which is currently being implemented. Local cities have taken action to address encampments in areas deemed at high-risk of fire, and partner agencies such as CalTrans and Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) have also taken action to mitigate safety concerns along vehicle and train corridors. However, there remains a need for a countywide coordinated approach among agencies identified, in order to avoid duplication of efforts, and to better share limited resources to address homelessness. During the November 5, 2021 Elected Leaders Forum to Address Homelessness, jurisdictions were invited to join efforts to submit a collaborative application in response to the State’s competitive Encampment Resolution Fund Request for Applications. On November 10, cities and partners met to review the RFA and to determine the proposed project details to be implemented by a cross-jurisdictional Encampment Response Team. The following program elements are addressed in the proposed application:

- **Implementation Unit Structure and Capacity (who will implement the grant, mission, structure):** County lead (application, reporting, coordination), with Cities, Caltrans, UPRR, and community partners
- **Prioritized Encampment Site and Population to be Served (area, population, size, impacts):** Transit corridor (along U.S. Hwy 101 and CA Hwy 1, where railroad parallels and intersects highways), targeting population in documented danger of vehicle/train right-of-way pedestrian strikes and fires
- **Core Service Delivery and Provision of Housing Options (proposed services and interim and permanent housing options, including outcomes):** Intensive outreach; Non-congregate shelter/interim housing; Housing navigation paired with landlord incentives; Interim housing/Permanent housing based on regional site inventory
- **Coordination of Services and Housing Options (how we will coordinate with other systems and establish new partnerships):** Formal MOUs with cities, CalTrans, UPRR, and community partners will be developed in order to execute the cross-jurisdictional encampment response
- **Ensuring Dignity, Safety, and Wellness (consultation with lived expertise groups, HF, non-punitive, trauma-informed, culturally appropriate):** Consultation with lived expertise groups in Santa Barbara and Lompoc (former Riverbed clients)
- **Personnel (all positions integral to project):** County Encampment Response Coordinator and regional staff as designated by jurisdictions
- **Proposed Budget and Fiscal Planning:** County as fiscal agent and administrative/reporting entity



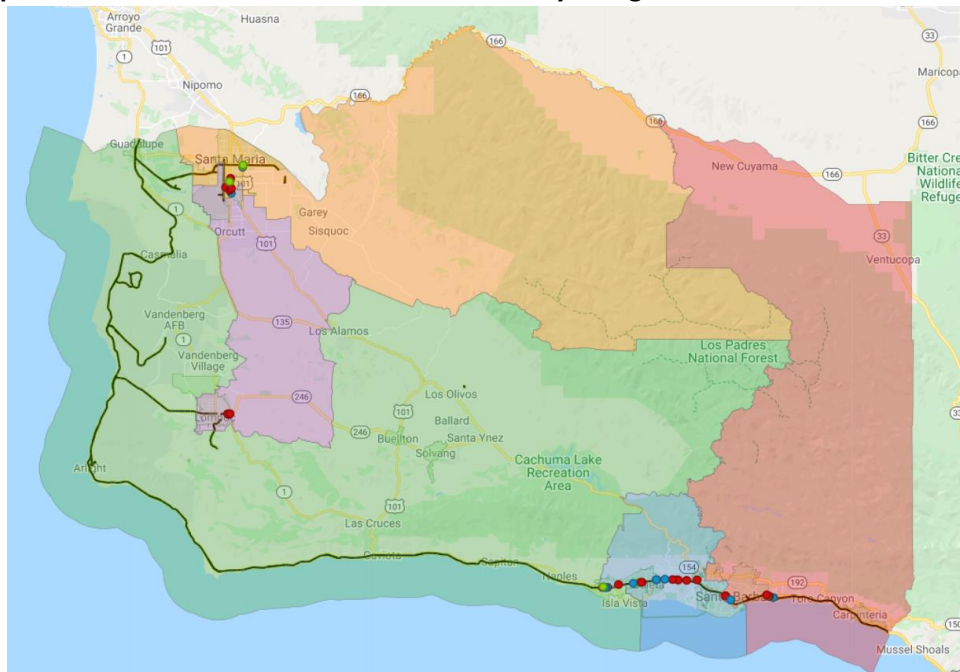
Discussion:

The Prioritized Encampment Site and Population to be Served in Santa Barbara County is: Transit corridor (along U.S. Hwy 101 and CA Hwy 1, where railroad parallels and intersects highways), targeting population in documented danger of fires and vehicle/train right-of-way pedestrian strikes. The specific encampment site, section of an encampment, or closely linked community of encampments, being resolved crosses cities in each County district, for a total of 53 camps and 99 persons based on current mapping software data. The locations, number of camps and approximate number of persons per site are listed as a chart in Table 1 and mapped as Table 2.

Table 1. Sites and persons identified for resolution in each district and city along the transit corridor.

County	City/Area	Camps		Persons	
D1	Unincorporated (Montecito)	6	14	10	25
D1	Santa Barbara	8		15	
D2	Santa Barbara	1		1	
D2	Unincorporated <i>between Santa Barbara and Goleta</i>	5	16	8	29
D2	Goleta	10		20	
D3	Goleta	7	7	15	15
D4	Lompoc <i>East end of town, where RR and 1 end</i>	5	5	10	10
D5	Santa Maria <i>7 along 101/135, one block from RR 4 at intersection of 101 and RR</i>	11	11	20	20
		53		99	
		<i>camps</i>		<i>persons</i>	

Table 2. Mapped sites for resolution in each district and city along the transit corridor.



Significant numbers of persons experiencing homelessness reside in encampments along the transit corridors in Santa Barbara County. Encampments are clearly visible from U.S. Hwy 101 and along the UPRR tracks in County Districts 1, 2, 3, and 5, and from CA Hwy 1 and UPRR tracks in County District 4; portions of the corridor have extensive areas where scrub brush and trees grow, providing natural shelter. As detailed below, the proximity to railroad tracks, highways, and trees has led to a number of fatalities caused by vehicle or train strike, as well as numerous fires jeopardizing the natural environment as well as the safety of persons residing in encampments and in nearby neighborhoods.

The number of the individuals living in each selected site was 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). 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 executed for resolution.

There are several reasons these specific encampment areas are being prioritized for resolution support:

- Concerns related to public health, safety, and environmental hazards that pose a particular risk to the people living in the target area as compared to other encampments, based on the significant number of persons injured/killed in vehicle/train right-of-way strikes (the 2018-2019 Grand Jury found that "during the four-year period from 2015 to 2018, 20 railroad-related fatalities occurred along the County railroad corridor") and medical and fire risks (in 2020, County Fire reported impacts included 401 non-fire emergency medical services calls, and 47 fire-related calls to encampments); and
- Demographic factors related to addressing racial equity or serving populations disproportionately impacted by homelessness, especially among populations with limited English-speaking and literacy skills; and
- The environmental, health, and safety impact of the encampment site to the community at large, specifically the risk of fire spreading to densely built communities along the transit corridor.

Grant funds may be used for activities that advance the goal of the proposed project in any one of the following four categories: Direct Services and Housing Options, Capacity Building, Sustainable Outcomes, and Administration.

Performance Measure:

The goals and performance measures (Table 3) based on the Encampment Resolution Strategy (modeled after the County's ERS) 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 will work with partner jurisdictions and agencies to track demographics in camps (persons assessed, persons enrolled in services, and persons in closed/cleared sites) to ensure there are no inequities or disparities in service and outreach. The Coordinator will also convene after-action focus groups, including persons who have experienced homelessness and the cross-

jurisdictional Encampment Response Team (modeled after the County’s ERT, with representatives from jurisdictions as applicable), to assess the processes in place and to improve implementation for persons in camps and experiencing homelessness.

Table 3: Goals and Performance Measures – Encampment Resolution

Goals

	<u>Year 1</u>	<u>Year 2</u>
Number of encampments assessed	30	23
Number of encampments resolved	30	23
Number of persons identified in assessed encampments	60	39

Performance Measures

	<u>Year 1</u>	<u>Year 2</u>
Participants in resolved encampments who accept alternate shelter/housing	60%	60%
Participants who accept alternative shelter or services are permanently housed	60%	60%
Resolved encampments not re-established at 3-months	90%	90%
Resolved encampments not re-established at 6-months	80%	80%
Resolved encampments not re-established at 12-months	75%	75%
Reduce calls for service to encampment locations (incidents leading to service requests, reduce drug-related and criminal activity)	30%	40%

Quarterly and annual reporting to the State HCFC will be required. Staff proposes a 12-month report to the Board of Supervisors and partner jurisdictions, outlining progress made, lessons learned, and recommendations based on months of a comprehensive strategy and response protocol and team.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Santa Barbara County’s proposed project budget is outlined in Table 4. 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.

Table 4. 2-Year Budget for Encampment Resolution along transit corridor

Category	Encampment Resolution Funding	Budget Detail and Measurable Outcomes
Staffing	\$800,000	Staffing to: provide consistent education about fire danger and rail/road risks, engagement in case management with navigation services to interim and permanent housing.
Client Services and Direct Assistance	\$50,000	Self-storage of personal belongings, family reunification, gift cards, hygiene supplies, etc.
Interim Housing	\$1,500,000	75 Interim Housing beds/units utilizing planned non-congregate projects as well as new scattered site projects
Environmental Rehabilitation	\$150,000	This funding will support rehabilitation efforts, such as re-planting and repair to damaged areas, including environmentally sensitive areas such as creeks and ocean outlets.
Transportation	\$20,000	Vehicle lease, Insurance, and Fuel
	\$2,520,000	State Encampment Resolution Funding to support resolution of 53 sites and 99 persons

Approval of this Board action authorizes staff to apply for ERF grant funds. ERF is a two-year grant of one-time funds to be 50% expended by June 30, 2023, and 100% by June 30, 2024, as required in Health and Safety Code Section 50253. If awarded, staff will return to the Board with a request to authorize the Community Services Director, or designee, to take the following actions required for the acceptance and administration of Encampment Resolution Funding if awarded to the County of Santa Barbara: to execute all certifications, standard forms and a grant agreement required for the disbursement Encampment Resolution Funding. Staff may also return to the Board at a later meeting to review recommendations on any subrecipient awards for agencies to provide services as listed in the budget (e.g. interim housing, environmental rehabilitation, etc.).

Fiscal Analysis:

<u>Funding Sources</u>	<u>Current FY Cost:</u>	<u>Annualized On-going Cost:</u>	<u>Total One-Time Project Cost</u>
General Fund			
State			\$ 2,520,000.00
Federal			
Fees			
Other:			
Total	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,520,000.00

Key Contract Risks:

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. ERF 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.

Special Instructions:

Please email an electronic copy of the Minute Order to Kimberlee Albers at kalbers@co.santa-barbara.ca.us

Attachments:

Attachment A: Encampment Resolution Fund (ERF) Request for Applications (RFA)

Authored by:

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