

Proposed 2017 County Homeless Initiatives

Homelessness has been increasing in recent years, with visible signs of its impact on individuals and families and in our neighborhoods. According to bi-annual count of persons experiencing homelessness on a single night, Sacramento County's total homeless population increased from 2,358 individuals in 2011 to 2,659 persons in 2015. As the largest provider of social services and a major funder of a variety of homeless services, Sacramento County remains committed to working with stakeholders, including cities, Sacramento Steps Forward, Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency, service providers and community members to develop and deliver the most impactful solutions to homelessness. Following several public workshops in 2016 and 2017, the Board of Supervisors endorsed the following initiatives for full consideration within the FY 2017-18 County budget.

County Initiative #1: Improve Family Crisis Response and Shelters

The County currently provides over \$2 million to support three family shelters serving about 52 families on a nightly basis. In light of significant new CalWORKs re-housing resources, this initiative seeks to shelter more families annually by helping them connect to that assistance and return to housing more quickly. The new shelter system will prioritize literally homeless families and improve access to all homeless families through reduced entry requirements and greater accommodation of families with complex needs. By using more flexible County general fund dollars, diversion services will be funded to help some families keep their existing housing and avoid a shelter stay altogether. When families cannot avoid the crisis of homelessness, a new bed reservation system will help families more easily find the safety that a shelter provides. Recognizing that some families may benefit from more long-term support, the County will also fund a small transitional housing program offering employment and recovery supports for 19 families experiencing homelessness. Transitional housing would also prioritize literally homeless families and accommodate families with complex needs.

On an annual basis, the County estimates 268 families will be served in emergency shelter and 19 families in transitional housing.

County Initiative #2: Preserve Mather Community Campus

Operating on a unique County-owned property, Mather Community Campus (MCC) has played an important role providing transitional housing, employment services, and recovery support for individuals and families experiencing homelessness in Sacramento since 1996. In 2016, the Volunteers of America (VOA) served over 885 individuals, families, former foster youth, and veterans through eight residential (267 units) and nonresidential programs. In addition to offering life skills, employment preparation and vocational training, VOA currently engages with over 200 businesses in its job placement services. Facing the loss of significant federal Continuum of Care support for 211 residential units serving individuals and families in its Residential and Employment Program, this initiative identifies replacement funding, including new County general fund support, to continue operations at MCC. With this funding, MCC will continue to focus on transitioning residents to stable employment and permanent housing in an environment supportive of recovery. The County seeks to maximize the impact of MCC in addressing homelessness in our community by lowering barriers to program participating and measuring impact on employment, housing, and recovery. VOA will work to identify new resources for ongoing support of MCC programs.

County Initiative #3: Full Service Re- housing Shelter

To reach persons who are difficult to engage in services or serve in traditional shelters, the County seeks to collaborate with a provider to open an innovative low-barrier shelter with re-housing services. The shelter would include 24-hour dormitory accommodations for up to 75 guests at a time, with consideration for partners, pets and possessions, and include meals, showers and laundry facilities. Employing a welcoming environment of encouragement and support, the shelter would accommodate people with complex behavioral and/or physical health issues that often prevent them from engaging in shelter services. On-site case management would focus from day one on connecting participants to stable income, public benefits and permanent housing as well as to essential health services. Entry into this shelter will be by referral only, using designated referral agencies who are in regular contact with persons not engaging in services (such as law enforcement and outreach workers). County staff is currently exploring appropriate sites in the unincorporated area, but sites may also be proposed anywhere in the County.

As proposed, the Full Service Rehousing Shelter would serve up to 250 to 300 persons annually.

County Initiative 4: Flexible Supportive Re-Housing program

The County proposes a new Flexible Supportive Re-housing Program (FSRP) that would provide highly flexible re-housing and stabilization services to persons who have experienced long-term homelessness, typically persons with complex health and behavioral health conditions. The primary program target would be individuals and families experiencing long-term homelessness who are also high utilizers of costly County services and who require intensive services to exit homelessness into stable permanent housing. The program would fund two kinds of services to assist the target population secure and maintain quality affordable housing: 1) Intensive case management services offering “whatever it takes” services to proactively engage and stability rehouse participants; and 2) Housing-related property services responsible for securing housing in a variety of settings and for ongoing relationships with owners. In addition to services, housing assistance would be provided through a Limited Allocation of Housing Choice Vouchers from Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency and through more flexible local rental assistance.

As proposed, FSRP would re-house up to 250 individual and family households in the first year of the program.

Public Housing Authority Resources

In addition to these initiatives, the Board of Supervisors (acting as the Housing Authority of the County of Sacramento) directed SHRA to initiate the process to increase Public Housing resources for homelessness. Initiatives include 1) Limited Preference Allocation for 150 “turnover vouchers” annually (see FSRP above); 2) up to 375 project-based vouchers over three years; 3) 100 “move on” vouchers over three years; and 4) 100 vouchers for homeless youth participating in a new federal grant called “P3”).

For full details on the proposed initiatives, see the March 21, 2017 Board of Supervisors report linked on this webpage. <http://www.saccounty.net/Homelessness/Pages/default.aspx>