

# **Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention Program**

## **Lassen County - Application Narrative**

Lassen County's Community Social Services Department is pleased to submit for review the following application for funding to the California Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council (HCFC) for the Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention Program (HHAP). The County is proposing to fund a Rapid Rehousing Program that will assist families or individuals experiencing homelessness in Lassen County obtain permanent housing.

### **1. Summary of Homelessness**

#### **A. HUD Longitudinal System Assessment (LSA)**

Lassen County is a member of the NorCal Continuum of Care (CoC). The NorCal CoC's HUD LSA from October 1, 2017 – September 30, 2018 is included with this narrative as Attachment A.

#### **B. Specifically Requested LSA Data:**

1. Total number of households served in:
  - 1) Emergency Shelter, Safe Haven, and Transitional Housing: **0**
  - 2) Rapid Rehousing: **133**
  - 3) Permanent Supportive Housing: **14**
2. Total number of disabled households served across all interventions: **66**
3. Total number of households experiencing chronic homelessness served across all interventions: **51**
4. Total number of 55+ households served across all interventions: **59**
5. Total number of unaccompanied youth served across all interventions: **0**
6. Total number of veteran households served across all interventions: **30**
7. Number of individuals served across all interventions who were:
  - 1) Female: **73**
  - 2) Male: **84**
  - 3) Transgender or Gender Non-Conforming: **1**
8. Total number individuals served across all interventions who were:
  - 1) White, Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino (only): **121**
  - 2) White, Hispanic/Latino (only): **5**
  - 3) Black or African American (only): **9**
  - 4) Asian (only): **0**
  - 5) American Indian or Alaskan Native (only): **8**
  - 6) Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander (only): **1**
  - 7) Multiple races: **3**

### **C. Additional Information:**

1. Lassen County is one of seven counties in the NorCal CoC, and is made up of a geographically large, rural region. The following is data on homelessness, specific to Lassen County.
  - 1) In 2017, 102 total people were counted as homeless in the Lassen Count Point in Time (PIT) Count. 29 of these individuals were unsheltered.
  - 2) In 2018, 82 total people were counted as homeless in the Lassen PIT Count. 39 of these individuals were unsheltered.
  - 3) In 2019, 46 total people were counted as homeless in the Lassen Count Point in Time (PIT) Count. 11 of these individuals were unsheltered. Due to a staff shortage in 2019, the PIT Count was not as comprehensive in the areas surveyed as the previous two years.
  - 4) This year, 2020, 121 total people were counted as homeless in the PIT Count. 49 of these individuals were unsheltered. *(These are unofficial numbers).*
    - 57 of these individuals reported to be chronically homeless
  - 5) From January 1, 2019 to June 30, 2019, Crossroads Ministries, served 111 unduplicated homeless individuals. Crossroads Ministries is a nonprofit organization in Lassen County that provides transitional housing and emergency shelter.

## **2. Demonstration of Regional Coordination**

### **A. Coordinated Entry System (CES) Information**

#### **1. Coordination with the CoC:**

The NorCal CoC is currently developing a Coordinated Entry System and is in the process of creating CES Policies and Procedures. Lassen County has a voting member on the NorCal CoC HMIS/CEP Committee, which is the committee responsible for establishing the CES policies and procedures.

#### **2. Challenges:**

The NorCal CoC serves a large region that consists of seven counties. The cities, towns, and communities in this region vary in size and are spread over a large geographical region. It can be challenging to come up with policies and procedures that serve the needs of all of the different communities within the CoC. The NorCal CoC HMIS/CEP Committee, which is made up of members of multiple counties within the CoC, is working on creating a system that meets the needs of all jurisdictions.

#### **3. Promoting Utilization of CES:**

At this time, although a formal CES is not being used, Lassen County does take steps to ensure that individuals experiencing homelessness, including those with multiple barriers, have access to services and programs that are available

within the area. For example, Lassen County has a housing team that does regular outreach with workers from Lassen County Behavioral Health throughout the county including to the emergency shelter and to places that are not meant for human habitation, such as parks, vehicles, and encampments.

## **B. Prioritization Criteria**

### **1. Criteria for Prioritization for Assistance**

The Lassen County Housing Team completes intakes and assessments with anyone interested in accessing housing services and then refers the families and individuals to the programs that they may qualify for. Currently, with the existing programs, anyone who qualifies for the program(s) receives assistance. This however includes a limited number of people as the current rental assistance programs only serve a narrow range of families and individuals. As Lassen County develops more programs and services to serve individuals and families experiencing homelessness, staff will use the Vulnerability Index – Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT) to prioritize assistance for people experiencing homelessness. The VI-SPDAT will be used to assess which persons are the most vulnerable and those people will receive assistance first.

### **2. Use of CES**

Although, the NorCal CoC is currently still developing a CES, the Lassen County Housing Team uses key principles of the Coordinated Entry Process to guide services provided to people who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness. For example, the Lassen County Housing Team utilizes HMIS to manage participant information, works to ensure that individuals and families experiencing homelessness quickly receive access to the most appropriate services/resources, and coordinates with other area service providers to ensure that assessments and referrals take place smoothly between agencies.

## **C. Coordination of Regional Needs**

- 1.** Lassen County is an active member of the NorCal CoC and county staff attends regular Executive Board Meetings. The director of Lassen County Health and Social Services is a voting member of the NorCal CoC Executive Board. The NorCal CoC has reviewed and approved Lassen County's plan for HHAP funds. A letter of support from the CoC is included with this narrative as Attachment B.
- 2.** Lassen County is a geographically large county and the communities within the county are separated by significant distance from many other communities within the CoC. Therefore, Lassen County's identified share of

the regional need is primarily residents of Lassen County. With the requested funds, Lassen County will provide needed rapid rehousing assistance to families and individuals experiencing homelessness within Lassen County.

#### **D. Creating Sustainable, Long Term Housing Solutions**

Lassen County is involved in the following efforts to create sustainable, long-term housing solutions for people experiencing homelessness in Lassen County.

1. Lassen County is a member of a Housing Committee, which includes a wide variety of community agencies. The Housing Committee is in the process of working with a contractor, Housing Tools, to develop a formal strategy to decrease homelessness in Lassen County.
2. Lassen County is working on developing and strengthening data and information sharing across and within jurisdictions. In November of 2019, Lassen County began using an HMIS system and is working with other homeless services agencies within the community to assist them in also using HMIS so that data and information can be shared more smoothly in order to allow for more effective homeless services.
3. Lassen County departments, including Community Social Services, the Sheriff Office and Behavioral Health Services are collaborating together to improve how the different county departments can better partner to serve individuals and families experiencing homelessness.
4. Lassen County is conducting community meetings to obtain additional feedback from members of the community in order to improve services and further efforts create solutions to homelessness.

### **3. Resources Addressing Homelessness**

#### **A. Existing Programs and Resources**

##### **1. Lassen County Resources Addressing Homelessness:**

A list of Lassen County Community Social Services resources that address homelessness is included with this narrative as Attachment C.

##### **2. Coordination of Resources with Overlapping Jurisdictions:**

Because Lassen County communities are separated by significant distance from many other communities within the CoC, it is sometimes difficult to share resources. Lassen County does however share resources with bordering counties within the CoC. For example, the Plumas County Community Development Commission and Housing Authority runs a Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Rental Assistance Program for multiple counties within the CoC, including, Lassen County.

### **3. Gaps in Resources:**

In Lassen County, there is a limited amount of rental assistance and affordable housing. While doing outreach, the Lassen County Housing team has found that many homeless individuals have a small income, often disability benefits. These individuals are often single adults that do not qualify for any of the existing rental assistance programs and often have multiple barriers to obtaining housing.

## **B. HHAP Funding Plans**

### **1. HHAP Plan:**

Lassen County is proposing to use HHAP grant funds for a Rapid Rehousing Program. The program will help families and individuals experiencing homelessness obtain permanent housing. If awarded funds for this program, Lassen County will use at least 8% of the program funds to assist unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness secure permanent housing. A proposed program budget is included with this narrative as Attachment D.

The program will consist of three core components: housing identification, rent and move-in assistance (financial), and case management and services.

#### **1) Housing Identification:**

- The Program will recruit and support landlords who are willing to rent to families and individuals experiencing homelessness.
- The Program will identify and address potential barriers to landlords participating such as concern about tenant qualifications and the short-term nature of rental assistance.
- The Program will assist households in finding and securing rental housing that meets their specific needs.

#### **2) Rent and Move-In Assistance:**

- The Program will provide financial assistance to cover costs such as application fees, deposits, rental/utility assistance, rental/utility arrears, furniture, household products and other expenses necessary to allow households to move immediately out of homelessness into stable, permanent housing.

#### **3) Rapid Rehousing Case Management and Services:**

- The program will implement trauma informed practices and case management.
- The program will help individuals and families experiencing homelessness identify and select among the available permanent housing options based on their unique needs, preferences and financial resources.

- The program will help households experiencing homelessness address issues that make it difficult to access housing (such as credit history, rent/utility arrears, and legal issues).
- The program will help individuals and families understand their rights and responsibilities as tenants and to negotiate appropriate lease agreements with landlords.
- The program will provide access to services that will assist households in stabilizing quickly in permanent housing.
- The program will assist households in connecting to resources that help them achieve their long-term goals.

**2. Housing First Alignment:**

Lassen County’s Rapid Rehousing Program will align and comply with the core components of Housing First.

- 1) Clients will not be required to demonstrate that they are “ready” for housing. Entry in the program will not be conditional on sobriety or abstinence.
- 2) Clients in the program will be able to exercise choice regarding the location and type of housing they receive, although choice might be constrained by availability and affordability.
- 3) Clients in the program will have choices in terms of what services (if any) they receive and when to start using services.

**4. Partners Addressing Homelessness**

**A. Collaborating Partner Efforts**

Lassen County currently collaborates with a variety of partners in the community and will continue to do so for the HHAP project.

**1. Homeless Service Providers**

- 1) Crossroads Ministries is a non-profit organization that assists the community with transitional housing, emergency shelter, food services and other limited emergency assistance. The Lassen County Housing Team will refer clients to Crossroads Ministries as well as conduct outreach to clients accessing Crossroads Ministries’ services to ensure access to the HHAP project.
- 2) Judy’s House is a drop-in center that is open from 4:00 pm to 12:00 am. Many individuals experiencing homelessness access Judy’s House. The Lassen County Housing Team will refer clients to Judy’s House as well as conduct outreach to clients accessing Judy’s House services to ensure access to the HHAP project.

3) Lassen Family Services is a nonprofit organization with a mission of ending abuse in Lassen County. Lassen Family Services serves the community by providing services including shelter/transitional housing for victims of domestic violence. The Lassen County Housing Team will refer clients to Lassen Family Services as well as conduct outreach to clients accessing Lassen Family Services to ensure access to the HHAP project.

**2. Homeless Youth Programs:**

Lassen County does not have any organizations focused only on serving youth experiencing homelessness. The Lassen County Housing Team is currently working with schools, including the local community college, to connect with youth who are need of homeless services and will continue to do so in order to connect these youth to the HHAP project. A barrier to connecting with youth through the schools, is often that young adults don't want to admit they are homeless and are mistrustful of social services. The Lassen County Housing Team is working to address this by building relationships within the school and working to build trust within the youth community.

**3. Law Enforcement:**

The Lassen County Housing Team has created resources cards that law enforcement can hand out that include information on housing services. The team also is exploring the idea of conducting outreach with members from law enforcement.

**4. Lassen County Behavioral Health:**

The Lassen County Housing team regularly partners with Lassen County Behavioral Health to conduct outreach to people experiencing homelessness. The team will use this outreach to connect clients to the HHAP program. Additionally, the team will refer clients to Lassen County Behavioral Health if a need for services is identified.

**5. County Welfare Department:**

Lassen Works is the county's welfare department. The Lassen County Housing team meets regularly with the housing social workers at Lassen Works to make referrals and staff cases.

**6. City and County Public Officials:** City and County officials currently are members of the Housing Committee and are updated regularly on programs like HHAP. A barrier faced when working with both city and county officials is that not all officials share the same view on the best way to support those experiencing homelessness. The team works to address this by having regular discussions and meetings to discuss the issues at hand.

**7. Educators:**

The Lassen County Housing Team is working to build relationships with the schools within Lassen County in order to support the connection of needed services to students experiencing homelessness.

**8. Workforce Development:**

The HHAP project will partner with the Lassen County Career Network to connect clients to employment services. The Lassen County Career Network is a one-stop career center that provides education, training, employment and referral and support service.

**9. Community Clinics/Health Care Providers:**

The Lassen County Housing Team partners with many health care providers and community clinics within Lassen County. The team is a part of the Lassen County Healthcare Collaborative, which is a group that meets regularly to discuss community healthcare needs. The Housing Team has a positive relationship with the social worker at Banner Lassen Medical Center, the largest medical center in Lassen County. The hospital social worker regularly makes referrals to the Housing Team.

**10. Public Housing Authorities**

The Plumas County Community Development Commission and Housing Authority runs a Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Rental Assistance Program for multiple counties within the CoC, including, Lassen County. The Housing Team currently assists clients with the Section 8 applications and housing search. A common barrier that the Housing Team experiences when assisting clients with housing search is that not many landlords are willing to take Section 8 vouchers. Through the HHAP project, the Housing Team hopes to build better relationships with landlords.

**11. People with Lived Experience**

One of the Housing Team's best sources of referrals for housing services are the people with lived experience of homelessness. The Housing Team has found that as trust is built with individuals and families experiencing homelessness those people will assist the Housing Team in making connections with other people who are experiencing homelessness and assistance.

**12. Wraparound Services:**

Lassen County has a child/youth Wraparound Services program called Family Solutions. The Housing Team hopes to partner closely with the Family Solutions program to provide holistic, person centered services to the youth that are served through the HHAP program.

### **13. Child Welfare**

The Lassen County Housing Team is working to build a positive relationship with the county's Child Welfare Department. The Housing Team has received referrals from Child Welfare and is working with the Department to develop ways to incorporate housing assistance and services, including the HHAP project, into Child Welfare case plans and safety plans.

### **5. Solutions Addressing Homelessness**

Lassen County did not use CESH funds to develop a strategic plan. The following are goals that Lassen County's HHAP Rapid Rehousing Program expects to achieve:

- A.** Serve 30 individuals.
- B.** Place 65% of individuals in permanent housing.
- C.** Assist 10 households (average of two people per household) in obtaining permanent housing. Of these 10 households a minimum of 2 will be homeless youth.
- D.** Build connections with 3 landlords who are willing to rent to families or individuals experiencing homelessness.

### **Attachments**

- **Attachment A:** NorCal CoC's HUD LSA from October 1, 2017 – September 30, 2018
- **Attachment B:** NorCal CoC's Letter of Support
- **Attachment C:** List of Lassen County Resources
- **Attachment D:** Program Budget
- **Attachment E:** Government Agency Taxpayer ID Form
- **Attachment F:** Authorized Signatory Form



**HOMELESS HOUSING, ASSISTANCE AND PREVENTION PROGRAM (HHAP)  
ANNUAL BUDGET TEMPLATE**

**APPLICANT INFORMATION**

CoC / Large City / County Name:	County of Lassen	Receiving Redirected Funds? Y/N	No
Administrative Entity Name:	Community Social Services	Total Redirected Funding	\$ -

**HHAP FUNDING EXPENDITURE PLAN\***

ELIGIBLE USE CATEGORY	FY20/21	FY21/22	FY22/23	FY23/24	FY24/25	TOTAL
Rental Assistance and Rapid Rehousing	\$ 12,600.76	\$ 12,600.77	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 25,201.53
Operating Subsidies and Reserves	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Landlord Incentives	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 20,000.00
Outreach and Coordination (including employment)	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 2,500.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,000.00
Systems Support to Create Regional Partnerships	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Delivery of Permanent Housing	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Prevention and Shelter Diversion to Permanent Housing	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
New Navigation Centers and Emergency Shelters	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Strategic Homelessness Planning, Infrastructure Development, CES, and HMIS (up to 5%)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Administrative (up to 7%)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>TOTAL FUNDING ALLOCATION</b>						\$ 50,201.53
	FY20/21	FY21/22	FY22/23	FY23/24	FY24/25	TOTAL
Youth Set-Aside (at least 8%)	\$ 2,008.06	\$ 2,008.06	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 4,016.12

\*Narrative should reflect details of HHAP funding plan

**COMMENTS:**

FINAL



# NorCal Continuum of Care™

February 11, 2020

To Whom It May Concern,

The NorCal Continuum of Care (NorCal CoC) is writing this letter in support of the County of Lassen (County) applying for the Homeless Housing, Assistance, and Prevention Program (HHAP) funding allocation. We understand that the HHAP funding allocation may fund the following uses:

- Rental assistance and rapid rehousing;
- Operating subsidies in new and existing affordable or supportive housing units, emergency shelters, and navigation centers. Operating subsidies may include operating reserves;
- Incentives to landlords, including, but not limited to, security deposits and holding fees;
- Outreach and coordination, which may include access to job programs, to assist vulnerable populations in accessing permanent housing and to promote housing stability in supportive housing;
- Systems support for activities necessary to create regional partnerships and maintain a homeless services and housing delivery system particularly for vulnerable populations including families and homeless youth;
- Delivery of permanent housing and innovative housing solutions such as hotel and motel conversions;
- Prevention and shelter diversion to permanent housing; and
- New navigation centers and emergency shelters based on demonstrated need.

As a partnering agency, we acknowledge and agree to regional coordination and partnership, per Health and Safety Code 50219(a)(1). In order to support regional coordination and partnership, we will attend regular meetings with County representatives at the NorCal CoC to jointly plan and evaluate HHAP spending and projects. These regularly scheduled meetings will take place on a quarterly basis at the NorCal CoC local Advisory Board meetings and Executive Committee meetings. We have reviewed and agree with how the County intends to spend their HHAP funds. The County's spending plan accurately addresses their share of the regional need to address homelessness.

Understanding the importance of regional coordination, we are dedicated to ensuring this collaboration will supplement the services and efforts provided by the use of HHAP funds.

Sincerely,

Melissa Janulewicz  
Executive Board Chair  
NorCal Continuum of Care