

CALIFORNIA HOMELESS HOUSING ASSISTANCE AND PREVENTION PROGRAM

SUMMARY OF HOMELESSNESS IN VENTURA COUNTY

- A. *Submission of Ventura County Continuum of Care’s HUD Longitudinal System Assessment (LSA) from June 2018-June 2019 (zip file)*

DEMONSTRATION OF REGIONAL COORDINATION

- A. *County of Ventura—Ventura County Pathways to Home Coordinated Entry System*

The County of Ventura provides staff support for the Continuum of Care with the County Executive Office serving as the Continuum of Care lead agency and the Human Services Agency serving as the lead HMIS/CES agency. The County is financially supporting the CoC by staffing the infrastructure of the organization without much grant funding and support. There are some challenges associated with limited staffing. The CoC is supported by two staff that manage all State and Federal homeless assistance grants, provide support to the CoC Board and committees, work closely with the HMIS/CES lead to implement coordinated entry, complete reports for all the grant programs, lead the annual homeless count and lead additional initiatives. We plan to use some HHAP funding to increase staff capacity and are looking for other opportunities to increase our HMIS/CES capacity. Our County Executive Officer serves on the CoC Board and our county agencies and programs are represented in all workgroups and committees.

We have good cooperation among our 10 city partner jurisdictions. The County led an initiative to execute a countywide memorandum of understanding (MOU) with all ten cities and the county in efforts to address homelessness. This MOU agrees that each jurisdiction will contribute to countywide efforts by establishing a crisis response system within the respective jurisdiction, commit to consulting with the CoC on funding programs and services and requiring all locally funded programs to participate in the coordinated entry system and utilize the Homeless Management Information System.

The Coordinated Entry System, “Pathways to Home” is led by the County Human Services Agency in partnership with the CoC Lead agency with the County Executive Office. Challenges include staffing capacity for a rapidly growing system; geographic coverage throughout the county and lacking adequate emergency housing and permanent housing opportunities for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. The County is seeking additional funding to build capacity among the CoC and CES teams to adequately support the full homeless services system. The CES team has provided onboarding training to partner agencies throughout the

County for the system to have full geographic coverage and entry points countywide. The CoC has provided limited funding to the local 2-1-1 system to provide 24/7 access to the coordinated entry system. The CoC has funded new and expanded outreach services to ensure all persons experiencing homelessness have access to and are aware of the coordinated entry system assessment and referral process. Outreach includes informational flyers available at services sites and public locations, direct outreach to people on the street, announcements at public meetings, updated CoC website with resource materials and a contract with 2-1-1, which provides multilingual support. The coordinated entry process is linked to street outreach efforts to prioritize people in the same manner as any other person seeking services through other means.

B. Prioritization Criteria

The Ventura County Continuum of Care's Prioritization Policy and Procedures are attached (**Attachment A**). The coordinated entry process requires recipients of Federal, State and local funds to comply with applicable civil rights and fair housing laws and requirements. Recipients and subrecipients of CoC and ESG program funded projects must comply with nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of Federal civil rights laws as specified at 24 CFR 5.105(a) including, but not limited to the following:

- Fair Housing Act prohibits discriminatory housing practices based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability or familial status;
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability under and program or activity receiving Federal assistance;
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance; and
- Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act prohibits public entities, which includes state and local governments, and special purpose districts from discriminating against individuals with disabilities in all their services, programs and activities which include housing, and housing related services such as housing search and referral.
- Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act prohibits private entities that own, lease and operate places of public accommodation, which include emergency shelters, social service establishments, and other public accommodations providing housing, from discriminating on the basis of disability.

In addition, HUD's Equal Access Rule at 24 CFR 5.105(a)(2) prohibits discriminatory eligibility determinations in HUD-assisted or HUD-insured housing programs based on actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity or marital status including any projects funded by the CoC Program, ESG program or HOPWA program. The CoC Program interim rule also contains a fair housing provision at 24 CFR 578.93.

C. Coordination of Regional Needs

The County of Ventura has jurisdiction over the unincorporated portions of Ventura County. In 2019, the homeless count within the unincorporated portions of the county was 114 persons or 14% of the countywide homeless count (1669). The County provides services to all residents of Ventura County and partners with cities on emergency housing as well as supportive and affordable housing. The County Board of Supervisors has established a policy to match funding for capital and operational expenses of any city partner that wants to establish a housing-focused emergency shelter/navigation center. The cities of Ventura and Oxnard are working with the County to establish programs within their communities. The three jurisdictions worked together to select a service provider as the operator for the programs. These are the first permanent, year-round, low barrier navigation centers supported by local government funds.

Efforts such as the earlier mentioned, countywide MOU on homelessness are aligning efforts among jurisdictions and focusing on building up the crisis response system, aligning around best practice interventions, funding programs based on performance and need and creating new housing opportunities to house more individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

The California Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention funds will help address the county's share of the regional need by doing the following:

- Increasing capacity for providing emergency housing to families with minor children;
- Providing supportive services to individuals and families in supportive housing programs including those households with Mainstream Vouchers. These services will help stabilize households, provide services tailored toward individual goals around maintaining housing including connection to behavioral health, health, benefits and income/employment;
- Provide housing navigation and rental subsidies to persons exiting emergency shelter programs;
- Provide emergency housing for transitional-aged-youth through a host homes program

D. Creating Sustainable, Long-Term Housing Solutions

The County of Ventura has jurisdiction over the unincorporated portions of Ventura County. The County has a series of voter initiatives called SOAR (Save Open Space & Agricultural Resources) that requires a vote of the people before agricultural land or open space areas can be rezoned for development. The first SOAR initiative was approved by the City of Ventura in 1995. Since then, seven others have been enacted around cities in Ventura County as well as in the unincorporated areas. All SOAR initiatives were renewed by voters in 2016, extending their expiration date to 2050. SOAR is intended to prevent urban sprawl and keep development

contained within city boundaries. SOAR limits the locations in the unincorporated portions of the county that can be developed for housing.

The County of Ventura understands that meeting the housing needs of the residents of the county will require partnerships with the ten cities and other responsible agencies. This is noted in the County's Strategic Plan under Focus Area #3: Environment, Land Use and Infrastructure. This collaborative effort is key to ensure adequate housing inventory and economic vitality of the region. The lack of affordable housing inventory is noted as a key threat to economic progress in the County's Economic Vitality Plan. A collaborative group of stakeholders is working with County leadership to formulate plans to address these challenges including 1) addressing housing affordability; 2) addressing homelessness as a social and economic issue.

The County's Community Development division administers Federal, State and local funding for affordable housing development. In the last year, the County partnered with cities to establish a HOME consortium to increase the amount of federal funding coming to the community. This funding is awarded through a competitive process and proposals that commit to having units dedicated to households experiencing homelessness receive additional points to emphasize the need in the community. The County of Ventura is prioritizing use of the California Permanent Local Housing Allocation funding for affordable housing development and is encouraging city partners in the HOME consortium to consider a regional partnership. The County is committed to leveraging federal and state resources and prioritizing them for housing development. The County is receiving an allocation of CDBG-DR funding following wildfires that destroyed and damaged a significant number of housing units within the City of Ventura and the unincorporated parts of the County.

The County supports regional efforts to increase housing resources, committing funding for farmworker housing, making county land available for supportive and affordable housing and partnering with cities on emergency shelter and housing programs.

RESOURCES ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS

A. Existing Programs and Resources **(Attachment B)**

B. HHAP Funding Plans

The County of Ventura plans to allocate HHAP funds for the following activities:

- 1) Supportive Services for Permanent Supportive Housing: 4 years of funding (\$848,209) for expansion of two dedicated social workers within the County's Human Services Agency Homeless Services Division to support tenants of supportive housing programs including Mainstream vouchers and Section 8 vouchers dedicated to homeless households. Increased staffing capacity for supportive services will assist approximately 50 households per year with housing sustainability services. Social workers will link program participants to mainstream services, facilitate linkages to health and behavioral health services, assist with landlord/tenant relations, connect tenants to sustainable income and employment resources.
- 2) Family Emergency Shelter: Provide shelter to families within two leased housing units while working with family on a housing plan. Ventura County has limited emergency housing options for families with minor children. This proposal of the County Human Services Agency proposes to lease housing units and contract with a nonprofit service provider to provide services to families. The proposal supports best practices of keeping families together and provides a home-like environment while working with families on a housing plan. Families are currently sheltered in motel rooms which is less than ideal for families with minor children. This program will aim to transition families into housing within 30 days or as quickly as a sustainable housing option can be identified. This pilot project will receive \$396,600.
- 3) Mercy House: Street to Home : Mercy House is operating navigation centers within the cities of Oxnard and Ventura. This proposal adds housing navigation services and flexible rental assistance to help transition sheltered individuals into permanent housing. This funding of \$378,000 will build capacity to house persons more quickly and make the navigation centers function more efficiently.
- 4) Interface Children & Family Services: Host Homes for TAY: Interface Children & Family Services (ICFS) operates a Runaway and Homeless Youth Shelter for minor youth and currently contracts with other shelter providers to offer emergency housing options to transition-aged-youth (TAY). To provide lower-barrier shelter options for TAY, ICFS will operate a host home program through community partnerships. The goal will be to work to permanently house TAY as quickly as possible. This pilot project is funded at \$75,000.

The County of Ventura invests nearly \$55 million annually in pass through funds and local resources to support individuals and families experiencing homelessness. The majority of these funds are used for services including health and behavioral health services. The County has invested in additional emergency housing services by sharing in the cost of constructing and operating navigations centers in the cities of Ventura and Oxnard. The County also operates a family transitional housing facility and homeless prevention and rapid re-housing programs. The HHAP funds will help fill in gaps in supportive services for new housing resources, provide

emergency housing capacity for families and TAY and increase housing opportunities for single adults and TAY.

The HHAP funds through the CoC will provide additional street outreach connecting persons to the coordinated entry system, fund emergency housing beds that would otherwise not be available and provide landlord incentives to help utilize housing voucher resources in our challenging rental market.

All HHAP funded programs will be aligned with Housing First practices. The Ventura County Continuum of Care has embraced the Housing First approach including providing technical assistance for all service providers and prioritizing funding for programs that implement low barrier/housing-focused programs. The CoC's written standards include policies and procedures that include housing first practices aligned with California Welfare and Institutions Code 8255 (b).

PARTNERS ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS

A. Collaborating Partner Efforts

The County of Ventura is partnering with the following partners on HHAP funded projects:

- The Cities of Ventura and Oxnard: sharing in funding of Mercy House operated navigation centers and Street to Home initiative.
- Oxnard Housing Department, Housing Authority of City of Ventura, and Area Housing Authority of Ventura County on Mainstream Voucher Program and other Section 8 set-aside vouchers: partnering in providing supportive services to those households prioritized through coordinated entry for these housing subsidies.
- Ventura County Human Services Agency: supportive service agency for supportive housing programs.
- United Way of Ventura County—Landlord Engagement Program: partnering in identifying landlord partners to accept housing vouchers.
- Ventura County Homeless Information Management Systems (HMIS) and Coordinated Entry System (CES): supporting the matching process through coordinated entry, supporting service providers through training initiatives and capacity building.
- Mercy House: operator of low barrier navigation centers in Oxnard and Ventura. Providing housing navigation services for residents of Oxnard and Ventura
- Interface Children & Family Services: providing emergency housing to minor youth and transition-aged-youth.

- Ventura County Continuum of Care network of service providers and committees (see *CoC Governance Charter and VC Plan to Prevent & End Homelessness*): linking homeless and at-risk households to Pathways to Home services and programs; assisting with housing navigation and housing retention services throughout the system including referrals to HHAP funded programs.

SOLUTIONS TO ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS

The Ventura County Continuum of Care adopted a regional plan to address homelessness in 2019 “The Ventura County Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness” This plan establishes seven strategic priorities:

- 1) Develop a Comprehensive Crisis Response System;
- 2) Increase affordable housing opportunities;
- 3) Create and provide wrap-around support services;
- 4) Create opportunities to obtain sustainable income;
- 5) Community outreach & education;
- 6) Cross-system integration;
- 7) Capacity Building

The plan recommendations include the following:

- 1) Implement a homeless prevention approach that will ensure that individuals and families most at-risk do not become homeless;
- 2) Expand street outreach and engagement;
- 3) Promote housing search;
- 4) Advance a homelessness diversion strategy;
- 5) Augment Housing Navigation;
- 6) Increase the number of low-barrier emergency shelter beds;
- 7) Augment Rapid Re-Housing Assistance;
- 8) Increase the number of permanent supportive housing units;
- 9) Ensure home-based case management

Systemwide Performance Benchmarks include the following in serving 830 beneficiaries including single adults, TAY and families with children:

- 1) Reduce the length of time persons remain homeless;
- 2) Reduce length of stay in emergency shelter (40 days)/transitional housing programs (180 days);
- 3) 85% of persons served by funded programs will be placed in permanent housing;
- 4) Reduction in the number of persons experiencing homelessness;
- 5) 20% of persons served by funded programs will obtain earned income;
- 6) 55% of persons served by funded programs will have increased total income;

- 7) 90% of persons served by funded program will be connected to mainstream benefits including food assistance, cash assistance, health benefits, housing assistance;
- 8) Less than 5% of persons assisted with housing will return to homelessness within 2 years;
- 9) 95% of funded emergency beds and housing programs will be utilized at any given time



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

APPLICANT INFORMATION

CoC / Large City / County Name:

County of Ventura
County Executive Office

Receiving Redirected Funds? Y/N

No
\$ -

Administrative Entity Name:

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	\$ 193,914.00	\$ 193,914.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 387,828.00
Operating Subsidies and Reserves	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Landlord Incentives	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Outreach and Coordination (including employment)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Systems Support to Create Regional Partnerships	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Delivery of Permanent Housing	\$ 209,041.11	\$ 209,041.11	\$ 209,041.11	\$ 209,041.11	\$ -	\$ 836,164.44
Prevention and Shelter Diversion to Permanent Housing	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
New Navigation Centers and Emergency Shelters	\$ 157,200.00	\$ 157,200.00	\$ 157,200.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 471,600.00
Strategic Homelessness Planning, Infrastructure Development, CES, and HMIS (up to 5%)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Administrative (up to 7%)	\$ 41,949.99	\$ 41,949.99	\$ 41,949.98	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 125,849.96
TOTAL FUNDING ALLOCATION						\$ 1,821,442.40
	FY20/21	FY21/22	FY22/23	FY23/24	FY24/25	TOTAL
Youth Set-Aside (at least 8%)	\$ 51,196.51	\$ 51,196.51	\$ 51,196.51	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 153,589.53

*Narrative should reflect details of HHAP funding plan

COMMENTS:

FINAL



February 12, 2020

California Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council

To Whom It May Concern,

The undersigned, in accordance with requirements of Health and Safety Code 50219(a)(1), have and will continue to collaborate and coordinate with the Ventura County Continuum of Care (County of Ventura) regarding implementation of projects supported by Homeless Housing Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) funding.

Regular meetings between the Ventura County Continuum of Care (CoC)'s Data and Evaluation Subcommittee and staff overseeing regional coordination of homeless programs and services for the County of Ventura will occur monthly, or as needed to jointly plan and evaluate HHAP spending on projects supported with HHAP funds. The County Executive Officer sits on the CoC Board, and employees from the County Executive Office provide staff report to the CoC. This arrangement ensures consistent, timely communication between both entities and has proven effective in facilitating strategic selection of projects to avoid duplicating recommendations that exceed project needs, helps to fill system gaps, and funds high-priority projects.

The CoC has reviewed and agree with how the County plans to allocate HHAP funds, and that this spending plan accurately addresses the County's share of the regional need to address homelessness. If you have questions please contact Tara Carruth at (805) 654-3838 or via e-mail at Tara.Carruth@ventura.org.

Sincerely,

Kevin Clerici, Chair

Ventura County Continuum of Care

Kevin Clerici
Downtown Ventura Partners
Chair of the Board

Dawn Dyer
Dyer Sheehan Group, Inc.
Vice-Chair of the Board

Carolyn Briggs
Community Advocate

Susan Englund
United Way

Mara Malch
City of Simi Valley

Pam Marshall
Community Advocate

Manuel Minjares
City of Fillmore

Michael Nigh
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Drew Powers
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Carmen Ramirez
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Nancy Wharfield
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