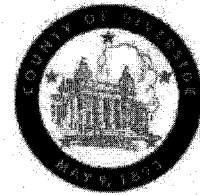


**SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA**



ITEM
2.17
(ID # 8513)

MEETING DATE:

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

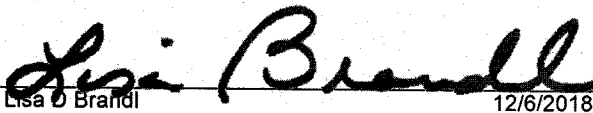
FROM : EXECUTIVE OFFICE:

SUBJECT: EXECUTIVE OFFICE: 90 day report on the Response to Homelessness in
Riverside County

RECOMMENDED MOTION: That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Receive and File 90 Day Report from Deputy CEO for Homelessness Solutions

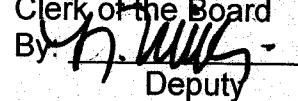
ACTION:


Lisa D Brandl 12/6/2018

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

On motion of Supervisor Perez, seconded by Supervisor Washington and duly carried by unanimous vote, IT WAS ORDERED that the above matter is received and filed as recommended.

Ayes: Jeffries, Tavaglione, Washington, Perez and Ashley
Nays: None
Absent: None
Date: December 11, 2018
xc: E.O.

Kecia Harper-Ihem
Clerk of the Board
By: 
Deputy

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FINANCIAL DATA	Current Fiscal Year:	Next Fiscal Year:	Total Cost:	Ongoing Cost
COST	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
NET COUNTY COST	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
SOURCE OF FUNDS: Not applicable			Budget Adjustment:	No
			For Fiscal Year:	18/19

C.E.O. RECOMMENDATION: [CEO use]

BACKGROUND:

Summary

This report provides the preliminary findings and recommendations of the Deputy County Executive Officer – Homelessness Solutions’ first 90 days.

On January 30, 2018 the Board of Supervisors received the draft Homeless Action Plan to the address homelessness in Riverside County. Additionally, the Board approved the creation of the Deputy County Executive Officer for Homelessness Solutions. Funded by the Department of Public Social Services, Economic Development Agency, Riverside University Health Systems - Behavioral Health, and the Executive Office, this position reports to the Chief Operating Officer.

Natalie Komuro started in this position in late July. This report covers the initial impressions, gathered from over 90 meetings with more than 100 people across the County, and from reviews of reports and data gathered by County departments. This report is not a status report of the Action Plan, nor is it intended to be an exhaustive treatment of all homeless-related activities. A more detailed report on the Action Plan will be provided to the Board within the next 90 days.

Homelessness in Riverside County

Riverside County’s point in time number, 2,316 reported in 2018, is relatively low compared to Orange and Los Angeles counties. However, nearly three quarters of homeless people found in Riverside County were unsheltered, highlighting a critical need for immediate response and the safety afforded by emergency shelter. Many of those unsheltered reside in encampments across the county, in riverbeds, canyons and the open desert. High rates of mental illness, drug use, and disability underscore the vulnerability of many homeless people and create additional barriers to their obtaining housing.

Funding for Homeless Programs

Previously the Executive Office reported that in 2016, county departments administered over \$99,500,000 in programs to address and prevent homelessness. The Executive Office recently updated the survey and found a slight increase in funding overall, including \$3 million more for the Housing Authority’s Housing Choice Voucher Program and new funding for additional vouchers which provide critically needed subsidies for low income residents. Just under a third of the \$100 million identified includes federal and state funding specifically targeted to literally

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and imminently homeless families and individuals. The Department of Public Social Services Self-Sufficiency Division administers \$7.5 million to provide families temporary housing, and assistance to prevent eviction or move into other permanent housing. DPSS should be commended for managing these resources so effectively, as only 4 families with children were found literally unsheltered countywide during the 2018 homeless count. (It should be noted that this number uses the HUD definition of homelessness; local school districts report far higher numbers of families doubling up or otherwise meeting the federal Department of Education definition of homelessness.)

Additionally, the County spends \$1.2 million in general funding for emergency housing, including seasonal shelter. Those programs collectively served 3,062 people in FY2017/2018.

Not included in these figures are the costs estimated by departments not specifically charged with serving homeless people, but which incur costs remedying the consequences of homeless encampments. This includes, but is not limited to, Flood Control, Parks and Open Space, and Code Enforcement. The Executive Office is continuing to gather this information.

The Sheriff's Department (RSO) and Probation have begun to integrate homeless response into their regular operations. Thus, while RSO spent \$711,638 on outreach last year, and Probation spent \$487,319, this does not count unassigned staff who nonetheless interact with and assist homeless individuals. Costs borne by the Fire Department related to homeless response are not included in these figures.

In addition to further analyzing the impact of current funding, establishing a baseline of all county costs related to homelessness will be a key metric moving forward.

Homeless Action Plan and Vision 2030

The Homeless Action Plan provides a sound framework for addressing the multifaceted challenges the county faces in addressing homelessness. The county's overall direction guided by Vision 2030 provides powerful momentum to support the level of collaboration and communication essential to preventing new homelessness and reducing the number of people now homeless in the county.

There are three areas where Vision 2030 matters with respect to homelessness:

- **Leadership and Governance:** The Executive Oversight Committee on Homelessness reconvened December 4th to assess its progress in implementing the Homeless Action Plan, and to commit to priorities for the coming year. This includes addressing encampment protocols, creating standard processes for procuring and managing client data systems, and improving the capacity of County and partner agency staff to effectively serve homeless people.

The committee includes the original members, including Riverside County Sheriff,

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Probation, Riverside University Health System (RUHS) – Behavioral Health, RUHS – Public Health, RUHS - Medical Center, Department of Public Social Services, Economic Development Agency/Housing Authority, Code Enforcement and Animal Services. Departments added to the committee include County Counsel, Fire, Flood Control, Parks, Information Technology, and Veterans Services. This larger body will address barriers to successfully implementing the Homeless Action Plan and other issues that arise within their respective departments. It will oversee working groups tasked with addressing the identified priorities. The working groups are envisioned to include relevant stakeholders, including Board staff, and city and nonprofit partners.

- **Organizational Capacity Building:** There is no shortage of passion and commitment to addressing homelessness across the county departments, and among our nonprofit partners. Interdepartmental communication and collaboration directly related to homelessness such as the Adult Protective Services' Homeless C.A.R.E. (Curtailling Abuse Related to the Elders) multidisciplinary team meetings provides an excellent example of how staff across departments are regularly coming together to solve some of the most intractable problems facing their clients.

However, county employees charged with addressing homelessness face challenges due to isolated data systems, and a lack of resources such as sufficient affordable housing, and drug treatment services for the people they serve. Moreover, the county relies on nonprofit partners who face their own challenges in securing funding to support their programs. Their wellbeing must also be the county's concern. The county will need to focus on building capacity in the workforce and agencies presently addressing homelessness, and in building long-term capacity to ensure continuity and progressive improvement in our response.

- **City Engagement:** The county's openness to change makes collaboration with cities that much easier. The Deputy CEO – Homelessness Solutions has begun meeting with City Managers to begin this dialog and planning. The Western Riverside Council of Governments has funded homeless services in their region, and expressed an interest in supporting County efforts to address homelessness through their flagship Fellows program. The Coachella Valley Association of Government's Homelessness Impact Working Group has spearheaded a regional response to homelessness through its own Housing First initiative. CVAG members have directly contributed and obtained match from the Desert Healthcare Foundation to provide over \$2 million in funding for local homeless programs and analysis. Most recently, the Desert Healthcare Foundation has accepted the recommendations of nationally recognized consultant Barbara Poppe to focus their efforts to address homelessness in the Coachella Valley.

Near-term Priorities

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Like most strategic plans, the Homeless Action Plan requires some adjustment to ensure the county can properly implement its strategies. Any near term priority not specifically identified in the plan nonetheless aligns with and supports the goals of the Homeless Action Plan. The near term priorities are:

1. Promoting a high functioning Continuum of Care: The majority of funding specifically targeted to homeless programs channels through the Continuum of Care, which is administered by the county's Department of Public Social Services. However, the federal guidelines for that funding require broad community engagement that includes cities, nonprofit organizations and homeless or formerly homeless individuals. Recent changes to the governance structure, as well as staffing reorganization at DPSS, now offer the opportunity to make much needed improvements in data collection and analysis, and in funding decisions that are more closely aligned with Riverside County's regional goals to reduce homelessness. The Deputy CEO – Homelessness Solutions works closely with DPSS Adult Services Director Jennifer Claar and Continuum of Care Board of Governance Chair Tammy Marine to refine meeting agendas, and help shape a more constructive tone for the meetings. As of this writing, the State has released just over \$10 million in funding for homeless programs in Riverside County. The Board of Governance is charged with setting priorities for the use of this funding. DPSS and the Executive Office have been working closely to ensure the Request for Proposals hews as close to the flexible funding goals as possible. As these meetings have become more productive, the next priority will be to analyze more deeply the functioning of the Continuum of Care and Coordinated Entry Systems that prioritize homeless individuals and families for housing and make adjustments to improve program efficacy.

2. Encampments: Thanks to guidance from the First and Fourth Districts, the Sheriff's Department, and Path of Life Ministries, the Deputy CEO – Homelessness Solutions has visited encampments in the Santa Ana riverbed, Mead Valley, Lake Elsinore, Wildomar, and Desert Hot Springs. There are unique circumstances in each area, but all share a need for a coordinated response across departments. In developing a protocol for encampment response, this working group of the EOCH will look at how to prioritize the response given limited resources, how to effectively get the encampment dwellers housed, and what technology tools can be used to facilitate project planning, sharing of client information, and tracking progress of the response. The urgency created by the debris flow threat and potential fire danger of people living in riverbeds makes it imperative that the county has a sound set of policies and procedures to respond to homeless encampments. The experience in Coachella demonstrates that county resources can be mobilized to not merely move people from one site to another, but to move most on track to permanent housing. The challenge will be to translate that experience to a more sustainable approach and will be a top priority over the next 90 days.

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3. **Data Sharing & Technology:** The county needs robust technological solutions to facilitate interdepartmental collaboration, improved and more timely response to client needs, and reports to support performance analysis. Thanks to AB 2821, the county departments now have legal authority to share client data. Having cleared this legal hurdle, the county is now poised to find the technological solution that will permit social workers, probation officers, and other service personnel to view relevant client information. Dave Rogers of Riverside County Information Technology has been instrumental in advising processes to guide data sharing and technology planning. In addition to sharing client information across departments, the county's Esri agreement supports critically needed applications track the geographic location of homeless people. The Esri app tested in last year's homeless count will be expanded countywide for the 2019 count, providing real-time updates of the count. The Riverside Sheriff's Department is currently piloting an Esri-based application used by San Bernardino Sheriff's Department to track homeless outreach. Finally, DPSS will be upgrading the Homeless Management Information System used by all Continuum of Care agencies, which will be important to ensuring better data quality and efficiencies in data management. The EOCH will be coordinating HMIS planning and procurement with DPSS and stakeholders.

4. **Data Analysis:** county departments collect copious amounts of data related to families and individuals who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. We do not yet have a consistent practice for analyzing that data to make policy and organizational decisions. Desert Healthcare Foundation's recent assessment raises questions about county data collection practices. Having better data analysis will enable the county to move from a reactive to position to more proactive response that supports transparency and accountability.

Impact of Homelessness Across the County

The Continuum of Care and its associated Coordinated Entry System does not use subregions for planning or funding allocations. For a county of over 7,000 square miles, with extraordinary geographic diversity, this is important in terms of providing better service to homeless people, as well as to ensure geographic equity in the allocation of resources. One key challenge for Riverside County is that funding formulas have not kept pace with regional growth patterns, and communities historically free of homelessness now see people living on their streets. The established programs, such as those in the City of Riverside and the Coachella Valley, are spread thin by the demand and lack of commensurate funding, while other regions, such as southwest Riverside County, face the significant challenge of launching and developing new services. A key task for the Continuum of Care Board for Governance will be to ensure program funding can stay ahead of trends in service needs.

Regardless of the location within the county, the ultimate issue is housing. As one of the fastest growing counties in the country, there is a concerning lag in production of housing for low-income and lower wage earners in the region. Eighteen of Riverside County's 28 cities are

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subject to SB 35 streamlining for developments with at least 10% affordability.¹The remaining ten cities, and the county's unincorporated areas, are subject to streamlining proposed developments with 50% or more affordable units.

Though we need to work to improve the effectiveness of the Continuum of Care, the county cannot escape the reality that the region is not keeping pace with the need for lower cost housing. Not just homeless housing, but housing for low-wage workers, seniors, and people with disabilities. The recently released "State of Work in the Inland Empire" by UC Riverside's Center for Social Innovation underscores the regional challenge of ensuring housing development meets current and future needs. If this is not addressed aggressively now, we will see a growing number of economically vulnerable people falling into homelessness. The county response to this needs to be long-term and visionary. We have tremendous opportunities to experiment and innovate on the housing front, but progress will depend on our ability to rally far-reaching support for these initiatives.

¹ "SB 35 Statewide Determination Summary", Southern California Association of Governments, June 2018.

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In addition to having in-depth meetings with each County Supervisor and their staff, the Deputy CEO – Homelessness Solutions met with the directors and management of the following County Departments and Stakeholders:

County Departments and Agencies

Public Social Services (DPSS)

Economic Development Agency (EDA)/Housing Authority

Riverside University Health Systems – Behavioral Health, Public Health, and Population Health
- Whole Person Care

Sheriff, including Leadership Team, Command Staff, and Homeless Outreach Team

Probation

Flood Control

Regional Park and Open-Space District

TLMA Planning and Code Enforcement

Information Technology

Library

District Attorney

Public Defender

Additional Stakeholders:

BNSF Railway Company

Coachella Valley Council of Governments

Coachella Valley Rescue Mission

Coachella Valley Housing Coalition

City of Riverside Mayor and Housing staff

City of Eastvale

City of Lake Elsinore

City of Moreno Valley

City of Murietta

City of Temecula

City of Hemet Police Department

Desert Healthcare Foundation

Family Service Agency

Senator Dianne Feinstein (staff)

Inland Empire Health Plan

Martha's Village

Assemblymember Jose Medina

National CORE

Path of Life Ministries

Riverside Continuum of Care Board of Governance

Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority (SAWPA)

Step Up on Second

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U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness Regional Coordinator
University of California, Riverside Blum Initiative on Global & Regional Poverty
Valley Restart Shelter
Western Riverside Council of Governments

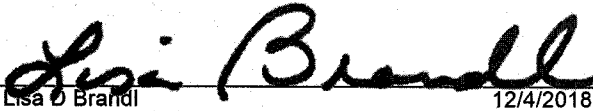
Subject matter experts:

Philip Mangano

Susan Price

Joe Colletti

Barbara Poppe


Lisa D Brandl 12/4/2018