



Memorandum

TO: NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES
AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

FROM: Jacky Morales-Ferrand

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: June 1, 2018

Approved

Date

6/6/18

**SUBJECT: UPDATE ON LOCAL RESPONSES, INITIATIVES, AND PROGRAMMING
FOR HOMELESS FAMILIES**

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Neighborhood Services and Education Committee (NSE) accept the report on local and regional responses to address family homelessness.

BACKGROUND

On August 10, 2017, staff presented the Annual Homeless Report to the Neighborhood Services and Education Committee with a recommendation to accept the report on the 2017 Homeless Census and Survey and discuss the implications of the results. During the presentation, Councilmember Arenas raised concerns about the plight of homeless families. The concerns pertained to the notion that these families are largely unseen and, therefore, may not be accurately counted, which could impact future funding to this homeless population. At a City Council meeting that followed, Councilmember Arenas requested that the Housing Department return to the Neighborhood Services and Education Committee to discuss family homelessness in San José.

Assessing the Effectiveness of the Continuum of Care's Efforts to Address Homelessness:

The Continuum of Care (CoC) is a broad group of stakeholders dedicated to ending and preventing homelessness in Santa Clara County. The CoC coordinates community-wide implementation of efforts to end homelessness ensures programmatic and systemic effectiveness. Every two years, communities across the country conduct comprehensive counts of the local homeless populations in order to measure the prevalence of homelessness in each County to assess the efforts of its CoC.

In January 2017, the biennial point-in-time homeless census counted 294 families with children experiencing homelessness in Santa Clara County with 1,075 individuals living in these families.

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This represents a 14% decrease in the number of individuals in homeless families county-wide. The 294 families include 104 homeless families in San José, which comprised of 340 individuals living in those families. This represents approximately 8% of the total homeless population counted in the census in San José.

While the census data reflects an overall decrease in family homelessness in the region, staff recognizes that the census tends to yield an undercount for this vulnerable and hard to reach population. Families with children experiencing homelessness often seek opportunities to stay on private property. The majority of homeless families are in over-crowded or “doubled up” housing situations. Further, it is difficult to identify homeless families with children, as they tend to avoid detection for safety and fear of interaction with law enforcement, child protection services, and other government entities that might separate their families.

According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) 2017 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR), Santa Clara County CoC had the highest rate of unsheltered families with children. Twenty-eight percent of families countywide were unsheltered. This represents an increase from 2015 when the unsheltered family count was at 7%. In San José, 15% of families were unsheltered.

Homelessness under the HUD definition includes individuals and families who are:

- Sheltered – a primary nighttime residence that is a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide a temporary living arrangement; or
- Unsheltered – a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including the street, a car, RV, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground.

The HUD definition, which is used for the biennial homeless count, does not include people living in unstable housing situations such as living in an over-crowded unit, “couch surfing” or staying in motels or hotels. Homeless families are most likely undercounted due to the current methodology and definition used for the census.

The Importance of Coordination with the County of Santa Clara:

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act is a federal law requiring each state to ensure that every homeless child or child of a homeless individual has access to the same education as other children. It also requires that there are liaisons to ensure that homeless children and youth are identified by school personnel and through coordination with other entities and agencies. McKinney-Vento liaisons have access to families experiencing homelessness, which is a population that is difficult to enumerate.

The 2017 biennial homeless census in Santa Clara County recorded the largest increase in participation from local school districts in the history of the census. This is due to the engagement between the City of San José Housing Department and the County of Santa Clara

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Office of Supportive Housing and Office of Education. Staff from the County Office of Education strongly recommended that the McKinney-Vento liaisons get involved in the count by providing accurate numbers of homeless children in their school districts.

McKinney-Vento liaisons gathered data on all homeless families including those who did not meet the HUD definition of homelessness. While the data collected on those families meeting the HUD definition of homeless was included in the appropriate census tract for the count, much of the data was not. Liaisons found several homeless families residing in areas which were inaccessible to census volunteers. These living spaces include unconverted garages, hotels or motels, or private property. Throughout the school year, the California Department of Education collects information on the location of families that reside in these areas. During the 2016 – 2017 school year, the County Office of Education determined that in the 32 school districts in Santa Clara County, 4,714 students were identified as homeless.

Having a better understanding of how many families experience homelessness and where they reside can result in better outcomes and lower instances of homeless episodes. According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, when compared to low-income and homeless families, children experiencing homelessness have been shown to:

- Have higher levels of emotional and behavioral problems;
- Have increased risk of serious health problems;
- Are more likely to experience separations from their families; and
- Experience more school mobility, repeat a grade, be expelled or drop out of school, and have lower academic performance.

ANALYSIS

The Housing Department has identified and funded several key strategies to address family homelessness more effectively. These include Emergency Shelter, Prevention, Rapid Rehousing, Affordable Housing, and Permanent Supportive Housing. Each strategy is defined below.

Emergency Shelter: A Temporary Residence

Emergency shelter provides a temporary residence for homeless individuals and families for a period of no more than 90 days. San José has two emergency shelters for families, with a total of 158 beds.

Council District	Organization	Family Shelter	Shelter Beds
3	Family Supportive Housing	San José Family Shelter	122
3	LifeMoves	Georgia Travis House	36

In addition, there are three domestic violence shelters that provide 48 beds for single females and families with children. The locations of domestic violence shelters are kept confidential to protect the safety of survivors.

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The Housing Department has seasonal overnight warming locations that are activated City-owned facilities during inclement weather. In the 2017 – 2018 cold weather season, one warming location at Alum Rock Branch Library, which provided up to 30 nightly beds, was designated for families with children. Also, since 2015, about 20 faith-based organizations participated in the City's Temporary and Incidental Shelter Program. While these sites typically target single individuals, there is potential to designate one or more of the locations for families with children.

In the upcoming year, the Housing Department is expecting coordination between the emergency shelter and prevention programs to improve, as resources have been invested to enhance the service delivery. Through this investment, the existing waiting-list hotline for family emergency shelter will soon have the capacity to divert at-risk callers to the prevention programs so as to avoid homeless episodes altogether.

Prevention: Keeps Families in their Homes

The need to coordinate resources for homeless families was also highlighted in Destination: Home's report, *Home Not Found: The Cost of Homelessness in Silicon Valley*. The report found that 32% of the homeless population were homeless for 2 – 6 months and 20% were homeless for only one month. This shows that families experiencing homelessness need interventions which will prevent them from becoming homeless and/or exit them quickly from the homeless system.

Families at-risk of homelessness can access prevention services through the County of Santa Clara's CALWORKS program and/or through the Emergency Assistance Network (EAN). The EAN is a collection of seven local nonprofit organizations that assist with rent and other housing costs to avoid eviction and homelessness. In addition, Destination: Home implemented a pilot program in 2017 to expand the ability of families to quickly connect to prevention services throughout the community.

The goal of Destination: Home's \$3.45M pilot program was to implement a countywide homelessness prevention system to avert all instances of homelessness for families. Funding from the City provides homelessness prevention support to approximately 100 families. Destination: Home re-granted the funds to Sacred Heart Community Services and their partner network of homeless service providers. The overarching system goal is to eliminate all instances of family homelessness. From implementation in July 2017 through the end of March 2018, the pilot program prevented 103 families from becoming homeless.

Efforts have already begun to expand the reach of the homelessness prevention system. Beginning January 2018, the pilot program added a dedicated outreach team, linkages to the family and domestic violence shelter system, and additional points of entry through school districts, childcare providers, neighborhood community centers, and Family Resource Centers throughout Santa Clara County.

Rapid Rehousing: Reduces the Amount of Time on the Street

Rapid rehousing programs are viewed as a national best practice, especially for homeless families. They connect working or employable households experiencing homelessness to permanent housing by providing time limited rental subsidies and targeted supportive services. Rapid rehousing programs solve the immediate challenges of obtaining permanent housing and reduce the amount of time the household is homeless. Rapid rehousing then provides households with individualized services and connects them to community resources that assist in achieving long-term housing stability. A study of 14 communities conducted by the National Alliance to End Homelessness, found that only 9% of families and 7% of individuals return to homelessness after graduating from a rapid rehousing program.

The City's Rapid Rehousing Program contracts with The Health Trust, PATH and Bill Wilson Center. These agencies target employed or employable households with moderate service needs, who have the ability to earn sufficient income but have experienced events, such as the sudden loss of a job or unanticipated expenses, that have led to their homelessness. Up to 200 households, primarily families with children, are served through the City's Rapid Rehousing Program at any given time. Other populations served through the Program are homeless individuals, youth, and survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking.

The new contract agreements with the City's Rapid Rehousing Program partners began on August 8, 2017. From this date to the end of April 2018, 29 out of the 37 households that exited the Program, went into a permanent housing destination. This represents a 78% success rate (the majority of clients are families) in fiscal year 2017 – 2018. Of note, one participant had an exit destination of "deceased" and are not included in the households exiting to a permanent destination.

Affordable Housing: Providing Access for Formally Homeless Families

There is a critical need to increase access to affordable housing for homeless households, especially families with children. Due to the challenges in identifying suitable and affordable housing for homeless and formerly homeless participants, the Housing Department developed a Transition in Place (TIP) Housing Program. The TIP concept is that homeless families that find housing can be "transitioned" off of services and subsidies in their new residence without the need to relocate to a new home. By providing access to Extremely Low, Very Low and Low-Income units, it is likely that program participants, who are largely working poor households, will be able to transition in place and remain permanently housed.

The Housing Department has utilized a variety of strategies to gain access to affordable apartments, including paying for rehabilitation costs on existing units and subsidizing the development costs of new construction. TIP provides access to apartments that are in the City's portfolio of deed-restricted affordable housing. The current portfolio of 74 units (and growing) is primarily studios for 1 to 2 people or shared housing units for individuals. In the upcoming year, the goal will be to secure larger units for families with children and ensure that affordable

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units are prioritized for those with the most need. Additionally, there are 229 apartments in the development pipeline that will accept rapid rehousing participants.

Permanent Supportive Housing: Affordable Housing with on-site Services

Permanent supportive housing is a long term affordable housing with on-site services for households with disabilities and high levels of need, such as those who have experienced homelessness repeatedly or are frequent users of other systems of care.

The Housing Department has committed significant resources to create a pipeline of 589 permanent supportive housing apartments which are now in predevelopment or are under construction). One of these developments, Quetzal Gardens, will house 20 formerly homeless families with children. Measure A, a general obligation bond, will allocate \$750 million to develop affordable and supportive housing opportunities for thousands of formerly homeless households, including families with children.

Between July 1, 2017 and April 30, 2018, a total of 280 homeless families from San José were permanently housed. The Housing Department funded several of the agencies that have assisted these households.

Next Steps

The Department's goal is to collaborate with organizations that have safe and direct access to homeless families, such as the County Office of Education and the various McKinney-Vento homeless liaisons in the school districts, so as to get a better picture of the need. This information creates an opportunity for improved assessment, education and service connections to prevent homelessness and/or to ensure families are housed quickly through rapid rehousing and other permanent housing options. Some of the specific actions that will be taken are listed below.

New and Enhanced Programs for Families

The Housing Department recently released two Requests for Proposals (RFPs) prioritizing Outreach and Engagement, and Prevention, as well as a Safe Parking Pilot Program. The aforementioned services will total approximately \$2 million. Besides serving the broader homeless population, they will serve homeless families with children. Additional information on these programs is provided below. Agreements will be executed no later than September 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019, with the possibility of renewing the contracts for an additional two years, subject to annual City and Federal appropriations.

Outreach and Engagement Program

The enhanced Outreach and Engagement Program will serve unsheltered individuals and households, and will include a new street-based on-call mobile case management component. The case management team will work to connect at-risk and literally homeless persons with the most appropriate services and housing. There will be both reactive (responding to homeless

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concerns hotline calls) and proactive (repeating visits to encampments to build relationships) teams thus enhancing services and increasing capacity. Another new strategy will be implementing a homelessness diversion program. Diversion programs help families obtain housing outside of the homeless assistance system while connecting them to the resources they need to secure stable permanent housing. A successful diversion program will help families avoid a traumatic and stressful homeless episode.

Safe Parking Pilot Program

The Safe Parking Pilot Program is designed to serve individuals and families who use their cars and recreation vehicles as their primary residence in San José. This is an interim housing solution for participating households to “park” or reside at authorized, safe locations as they search for permanent housing. The program will operate on City-owned land. It will offer basic necessities, while also providing individualized case management, employment development, and housing placement services.

In the upcoming year, the Housing Department will work with the Department of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement to develop a safe parking ordinance to allow local property owners, including faith-based organizations and businesses, to host a safe parking facility. The ordinance will provide those in vehicles with a legal place to temporarily park overnight with some level of supportive services assistance to obtain permanent housing. Any agency/organization participating in the Safe Parking Program must ensure that the standards and requirements in the ordinance are followed.

Improve Collaboration with School Districts Could Result in a Greater Outcome

Understanding the needs of homeless families through improved coordination with systems that have greater access to the families may result in better outcomes. Identifying families that are at risk of homelessness could decrease the potential impacts on children.

Under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, every Santa Clara County school district has an appointed liaison. The families, however, are not connected to housing programs. There may be a disconnect between the schools and the service providers. Increased education, communication and collaboration between the homeless service providers, Santa Clara County CoC, school district staff and McKinney-Vento liaisons could divert families from homelessness and improve access to housing opportunities for homeless families with children.

Additional Housing Solutions Needed

The Housing Department and other stakeholders are attempting to create housing opportunities for vulnerable populations. However, more interim housing solutions need to be evaluated and secured in order for families to have a safe place to stay while they search for more permanent housing solutions. Housing stability can lead to an uninterrupted school year for students and can prevent fewer school changes that often leave children behind academically. All of the services described require collaboration with the County of Santa Clara

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and other stakeholders in order to increase affordable housing options. Our community must collaboratively support homeless and unstably housed families with children.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

The Housing Department will return to the City Council with separate items for several homelessness and housing initiatives in the coming months. Specific outcome measures will be included in any of the agreements considered by Council. Housing staff will work with data collected by all contracted agencies to develop an outcomes report that can be shared with the public through the City's Open Data Portal.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

This item has been posted on the Neighborhood Services and Education Committee website for June 14, 2018.

COST SUMMARY/IMPLICATIONS

Funding for the Outreach and Engagement Program will be provided by the federal funds and brought to the City Council for approval on June 19 as part of the FY 2018/2019 Annual Action Plan. The Safe Parking Pilot Program is anticipated to cost \$250,000 for its first year of operation. After the program is operating, staff will evaluate its effectiveness prior to making a recommendation regarding on-going funding.

COORDINATION

This item has been coordinated with the City Attorney's Office and the City Manager's Budget Office.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION/INPUT

This memorandum will be shared with the Housing and Community Development Commission at its regularly scheduled June 14, 2018 evening meeting.

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CEQA

Not a Project, File No. PP10-069 (a), Staff Report.

/s/

JACKY MORALES-FERRAND

Director of Housing

For questions, please contact Kelly Hemphill, Acting Manager of the Homelessness Response Team, at 408-975-4483.