



HOMELESSNESS AD HOC COMMITTEE HOUSING GUIDELINES

Background:

On October 3, 2023, the Board of Supervisors (Board) established a Homelessness Ad Hoc Committee (Committee) consisting of Supervisor Curt Hagman and Supervisor Joe Baca, Jr. The purpose of the Committee is to delve deeper into the root causes of homelessness in San Bernardino County (County) and to provide recommendations to the full Board on policies that could be adopted to address the issue.

Per the 2023 Point-In-Time Count (PITC), 4,195 adults and children were counted as homeless in the County. This represents an increase of 25.9% compared to 2022. The County recognizes that, while interventions to interrupt and end homelessness may vary across groups, ending homelessness permanently requires a strategic and data-driven approach. Such an approach includes housing combined with a wide range of comprehensive services supported by programs operated by the County and its partners both in government and in the community.

While the Committee is still in its early stages of development and plans to incorporate a broader network of stakeholders to develop a robust framework with direction guided by the Committee and the Board, preliminary work has been undertaken to establish a vision and philosophy, priorities for immediate funding and support, and a framework to guide the evaluation of shelter and/or housing projects for funding in the community. This document is intended to aid the Board's decision-making process by providing guidelines that will ensure consistency and expeditious processing of funding requests, as well as demonstrate the County's commitment to supporting cities and community stakeholders in solving the homelessness crisis.

The Board's Vision and Value System for Homelessness:

The Board's vision stemming from the Committee is to support individuals and community partners in the County to address the needs of individuals struggling with homelessness. The Board wishes to provide resources to steer members of the community towards housing and economic stability. The Board values personal responsibility and wishes to build a framework for homelessness that leads to a greater chance of self-actualization and self-sufficiency. The Board also wishes to create a strategy for the County that connects communities to existing resources that would allow for the greatest success of the homeless population to obtain and maintain a sustainable future with safe housing. For community partners, the County will provide best practices, education, and limited financial resources to work towards solving the problem of homelessness.

The Board believes it takes a regional approach anchored by a strong network of partnerships, which includes local government, the private sector, and the not-for-profit community, to provide solutions to homelessness. The County desires to assist in strengthening those partnerships and the information and education available to them to effect change.

- Within this framework, the County will look to have buy-in by cities and ensure a sense of ownership. It will tailor funding and support to focus primarily on the needs of specific geographical areas and certain types of shelters, to ensure the best coverage of homeless services across regions that are struggling with this challenge the most and to ensure a level of success when addressing the immediacy of poverty relief for at-risk individuals in this County.
- The County will support models that best suit the needs of the community and region, not dictating a single process or model, yet providing research and education on best practices and supporting models that have the best return on investment.
- The County will help to build a network of referral sources and partners that can be shared with cities and other partnerships.
- The County will facilitate technical assistance to build capacity and increase service integration.
- The County will leverage funding sources and non-targeted systems and programs (such as the Housing Authority of the County of San Bernardino and other affordable housing agencies, as well as healthcare funding) to assist communities with addressing the homeless crisis.
- When applicable, the County will ensure regional approaches have access to a robust behavioral health system to support individuals with mild to severe behavioral health and substance use disorders, which may be critical to prevent a return to homelessness.
- The County will foster and strengthen relationships with faith-based partners to serve as a referral source, to sponsor events and fundraisers, and provide other support.
- The County will build relationships with nontraditional community partners, such as, but not limited to, law enforcement, libraries, local medical providers, hospital discharge planning staff, postal workers, housing providers, employment agencies, the faith-based community, the park services and rangers, code enforcement, tribal agencies, and local businesses.
- The County will support a coordinated entry process that promotes access across the County to critical services and resources specific to addressing sustainability with housing in a manner that is easier than traditional navigation (access, assessment, prioritization, referral).
- The County will connect key stakeholders (cities, service providers, mainstream partners, and persons with lived experience) to increase housing capacity and improve service coordination.

It is the goal of the County, in addition to the pursuit of strategic County-led projects, to support city-led efforts to combat homelessness by providing startup funding for pre-development, capital development, initial shelter operations, technical assistance, and/or integrated service

delivery. Financial support will be focused on cities and communities with the largest homeless populations, as well as projects targeting the specific needs of this population in the respective region. Funding for operational support is intended to be time limited and serve as gap funding. The County will, if appropriate, provide onsite services and in-kind support. As a top priority, the County will work together with city leaders, non-profit organizations, and other providers to establish agreements to pay for a share of the startup and operational costs of newly established navigation centers or other services that support filling a gap in support to the community. The County will offer behavioral health, healthcare, and other supportive services to individuals exiting navigation centers to aid their transition out of the system into interim or permanent housing when available, either directly or through contracted service providers and/or County departments. The County will also establish a model and technical support for outreach teams led by County operated and/or contracted providers to connect unsheltered homeless individuals to services. The County will be available to guide cities and providers by providing resources and education regarding best practices and programs, as well as limited funding sources, to ensure a successful project from start to finish.

The County will establish an ongoing work group that includes, but is not limited to, representatives from the following County departments: Community Development and Housing, Office of Homelessness, Behavioral Health, Public Health, Arrowhead Regional Medical Center, Probation, Children and Family Services, Transitional Assistance, and Sheriff. Other agencies will be added as further strengthening of the partnership develops. The work group will be initiated by the County Administrative Office. The goal of this work group is to inventory and share resources, as well as to build a comprehensive network of services to address the needs of the homeless population.

Priorities, Funding, and Return on Investment

The County will establish priorities and performance goals for those projects the County may invest in. The County's immediate priority lies in developing congregate style navigation centers. However, the County may consider other models that are cost effective, operationally sustainable, innovative, and/or leverage unique assets available within a specific city, community, or region and are deemed advantageous to the community. Cities and other partners submitting applications for funding are encouraged to have conducted a study session, including outreaching to and engaging with the County, to identify the needs of their respective populations to enhance the return on investment (ROI). The County may assist in providing this type of technical support. Contractual agreements are to include performance metrics to safeguard ROI.

The County's goal will be to contribute up to 50% of the startup and operational costs towards a project. Should the County contribute more than 50%, staff shall highlight in their report the rationale for an increased contribution percentage.

The County will focus its initial support on sheltering projects that strengthen and expand the crisis response system to address the issue of homelessness in this County. Projects of this nature

will provide immediate, low-barrier emergency housing that will prioritize navigation and services and will facilitate rapid transitions to transitional and permanent housing options.

The highest priority will be placed on the creation of low-barrier shelters that meet the following criteria:

- Immediate and low-barrier access: open 24/7, without sobriety or income requirements, pets allowed, and the elimination of policies that will hinder access.
- Housing-focused with a strong emphasis on rapid exit services: staffing will include trained housing navigators to link individuals to transitional and permanent housing options as quickly as possible.
- Operations will be data driven with routine evaluation of data and performance metrics to evaluate effectiveness of programming and staffing.
- Strong staff to individual relationships should be in place to aid delivery of services. Staff should be experienced and trained in working with the homeless population.

Amongst others, the following emergency shelter models may be considered for funding:

➤ **Navigation Centers**

Converting existing warehouses or light-industrial buildings into congregate shelters reduces build-out and operational costs. Other facility types can be considered, though warehousing or light-industrial conversions are preferred. Services in this model are tailored to navigation/short term housing services. The per bed cost of this shelter model ranges from \$54-105 per day. Examples of this model are the Illumination Foundation (Fullerton) and Volunteers of America (El Monte).

<https://www.ifhomeless.org/>

<https://voala.org/>

➤ **Sobering Centers**

Emergency rooms and first responders are often tasked with addressing the behavioral health and/or physical needs of the chronically homeless population. Many of these individuals may be better served by crisis stabilization and sobering centers tailored to these unique needs. This model also offers immediate support to front-line responders. Sobering centers offer services and housing navigation to facilitate a more seamless transition to longer term care and support and have demonstrated successful outcomes for the homeless population. The Arlington Recovery Center in Riverside is a local example of this model. Additional information on sobering centers as a front line intervention for the homeless population can be found at <https://www.chcf.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/SoberingCentersExplainedInnovativeSolutionAcuteIntoxication.pdf>.

➤ **Service-Enriched Housing Campuses**

Service-enriched housing campuses offer a full continuum of care, including emergency shelter, transitional housing, recuperative care services, and permanent supportive housing that include supportive services. Strong providers who utilize this model integrate a wide array of services along with workforce development services to

emphasize employment as the primary path to stable housing. US VETS is an example of this model, which the agency has replicated nationwide.

<https://usvets.org/>

➤ **Faith-Based Models of Care**

Many homeless continuums of care (CoC) are anchored by large-scale faith-based providers that leverage significant private funding to address the immediate and ongoing needs of the homeless population. Los Angeles, San Diego and Riverside CoC's are anchored by large-scale shelters led by a faith-based agency. This model reduces dependency on public funding and support. Father Joe's Villages is an example of this model and scale.

<https://my.neighbor.org/>

If funding permits, the County may also consider funding for transitional and permanent supportive housing projects that provide viable housing options for individuals experiencing homelessness. The County defines these forms of housing as follows:

- Transitional Housing is interim housing that often includes supportive services for individuals and/or families experiencing homelessness with the goal of offering stability and support to successfully move to permanent housing. Individuals can stay from 3-24 months in this form of housing, which is usually targeted to specific high-risk populations for homelessness, such as persons with behavioral health needs, older adults, transition age youth, domestic violence victims, justice involved individuals, families with minor children, and veterans. Funding for transitional housing programs is limited under the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) programs. However, opportunities exist to fund these programs from non-housing sources targeted towards serving specific populations as noted above. Housing models used to deliver transitional housing include scattered site rental and facility-based housing. Transitional housing can take many forms and is most often tailored to the unique needs of the homeless population.
- Permanent Supportive Housing combines affordable housing assistance with voluntary supportive services to address the needs of chronically homeless people. The services are designed to provide individuals with independent living and tenancy skills and connection to community-based healthcare services and resources and employment services. Like transitional housing, permanent supportive housing can take many forms and may be scattered or facility-based sites.

To ensure ROI is achieved, each proposed project will be thoroughly vetted. The County will aid cities and other stakeholders to meet and/or exceed benchmarks. Each funded project will be monitored and audited to ensure respective performance metrics outlined in the contractual

agreement are being met. Projects should aim to stabilize and/or reduce the homeless population in said city and/or region.

The following criteria may be used as potential target benchmarks for staff to evaluate projects:

Criteria	Benchmarks
Project Proforma	Standard project proforma submitted that clearly identifies all capital funding sources and includes a 5-year operational plan.
Operational Plan	Detailed operational plan that identifies supportive services and property costs and identification of all revenue sources to support operations.
Need (based on most recent PITC; city and district level)	Funding targeted to cities and districts disproportionately impacted by homelessness.
Type of Facility	Priority given to low-barrier, navigation facilities; facilities that will serve as regional hubs.
Bed Capacity	Priority given to navigation center projects providing 100 or more beds. Other projects with specialty beds will be considered on their own merit.

Projects will additionally be evaluated with regard to the proposed price per door and the bed night rate based on the operational plan and proforma. Lastly, priority will be given to projects that only require gap funding.