



TO: Family and Human Services Committee, Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors
FROM: Lavonna Martin, MPH, MPA, Chief, Homeless Services
RE: Annual Report on Homeless Continuum of Care
DATE: April 30, 2015

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Accept this report from the Health Services Department; and
2. Forward this report to the Board of Supervisors for acceptance; and,
3. Direct Staff to continue to report on an annual basis to the FHS Committee regarding progress of the effort to end homelessness and the activities of Contra Costa Inter-Jurisdictional Council on Homelessness (Homeless Advisory Board).

BACKGROUND

In November 2014, the Board approved "Forging Ahead Towards Preventing and Ending Homelessness: An Update to Contra Costa's 2004 Strategic Plan", that renewed our 2004 plan with the latest data, best practices, and community feedback and reaffirmed our commitment to the Housing First approach. As such, "Forging Ahead" establishes this guiding principle: *"Homelessness is first a housing issue, and necessary supports and services are critical to help people remain housed. Our system must be nimble and flexible enough to respond through shared responsibility, accountability, and transparency of the community."* The Strategic Plan Update identifies two goals: 1) Decrease the length of time people experience homelessness by focusing on providing **Permanent Housing and Services** and; 2) Decrease the percentage of people who become homeless by providing **Prevention** activities. To achieve these goals, three strategies emerged:

- 1) Implement a coordinated entry/assessment system to streamline access to housing and services while addressing barriers, getting the right resources to the right people at the right time;
- 2) Use best, promising, and most effective practices to give the consumer the best possible experience through the strategic use of resources; and
- 3) Develop the most effective platforms to provide access, support advocacy, and connect to the community about homelessness and available resources.

The Homeless Program partners with the Homeless Advisory Board and Continuum of Care to develop and carryout an annual action plan that identifies the objectives and benchmarks related to each of the goals and strategies of Forging Ahead. Further, the Homeless Program incorporates the strategic plan goals into its own delivery system of comprehensive services, interim housing and permanent supportive housing as well as contracting with community agencies to provide additional homeless services and housing with the goal of ending homelessness in our community.

Attached is a summary of Key Activities and Accomplishments of the Homeless Continuum of Care for fiscal year 13-14/14-15, as well as the Contra Costa Homeless Continuum of Care Annual Report that provides a summary of program services, outcomes, and consumer demographics for Fiscal Year 2013-2014. Additionally, information about Contra Costa Zero:2016 Campaign to end veteran homelessness by December 2015 and chronic homelessness by the end of 2016 is included.

HOMELESS PROGRAMS KEY ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

FY 13-14 / 14-15

The Homeless Program, partnered/s with the Homeless Continuum of Care Advisory Board, service providers, and other community stakeholders, to implement the following key activities and achieve the following outcomes.

1. Housing and Services

- Forty additional rental assistance vouchers were added to the Continuum of Care. Overall, 1451 homeless consumers obtained permanent housing during FY 13-14.
- Work continues towards the development of permanent supportive housing units for homeless individuals and families on the Concord Naval Weapons Station. The Homeless Program, in concert with the Interagency Council on Homelessness, continues to work with the City of Concord to develop a timeline to bring the units on-line.

2. System Design and Delivery

- Work is in progress to develop a coordinated assessment system to streamline and coordinate program participant intake, assessment and prioritization for housing. The Contra Costa Homeless Continuum of Care has selected the Vulnerability Index – Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT) as the comprehensive and standardized assessment tool. Training for all Homeless Service providers was completed 1/15/15. The administration of the VI-SPDAT continuum-wide began February 2015.
- The Strategic Plan Update was approved by the County Board of Supervisors November 2014. The updated plan emphasizes that the only solutions to homelessness are permanent housing and homeless prevention services.

3. Outreach/Engagement/Community Awareness

- Project Homeless Connect was held in Richmond August 6, 2014. Over 750 participants had access to free services including health care, vision screenings, homeless court, benefits enrollment, and pet vaccinations and also received summer hygiene kits and free transportation to-and-from the event.
- The point-in-time count of homeless individuals living on the streets and in shelters was conducted over a three day period in January 2015. Nearly 3,700 individuals were identified as homeless the night of January 27, 2015 in Contra Costa.

4. Funding and Special Initiatives

- Successfully competed for HUD McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance funds which brought more than \$10M to Contra Costa homeless service providers.
- Contra Costa was selected to join Zero: 2016, a national campaign coordinated by Community Solutions, to end homelessness for veterans by the end of 2015, and all chronically homeless individuals by 2016.

HOMELESSNESS IS FIRST A HOUSING ISSUE

Fiscal Year 2013-2014 was a critical year for the Contra Costa Interagency Council on Homelessness (CCICH) in addressing issues specific to the homeless population in the County. As a council, we continue to reaffirm that homelessness is *first a housing issue*. This means that rapidly placing homeless individuals and families in healthy and permanent living environments results in greater success in addressing the social, developmental, and physical challenges that attributed to their homelessness in the first place.

Over the last fiscal year, we focused on five core strategies:

1. Facilitating greater communication across the Contra Costa Continuum of Care (CoC)*;
1. Updating the Strategic Plan;
2. Seeking insights from consumers and stakeholders;
3. Analyzing programmatic and outcome data; and,
4. Identifying best practices to better serve our community.

We have already embarked on a great new year and look forward to working collaboratively in the months to come.

Teri House

Teri House, Chair
Contra Costa Interagency Council on Homelessness

For more information email homelessprogram@hsd.cccounty.us.



PROGRAMS AND CONSUMER DEMOGRAPHICS

8,409 men, women, and children received shelter, support services, or housing assistance.
23% of homeless households are families.

YOUTH



34% of consumers are children and youth

2,013 were under 17 years of age
820 were between the ages of 18 and 24

ADULTS



48% of consumers are between ages 25 and 54

56% had a disabling condition
6% were veterans
36% were chronically homeless*

SENIORS



18% of consumers are above 55 years of age

78% had a disabling condition
22% were veterans
46% were chronically homeless

* The Contra Costa CoC is a local planning body that organizes and delivers housing and support services for homeless individuals across the county.

* A chronically homeless individual or family has experienced homelessness for a year or longer, or who has experienced at least four episodes of homelessness in the last three years, and has a disability.

Contra Costa County Homelessness Continuum of Care

SYSTEM-WIDE MEASURES

PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR FY 2013-2014

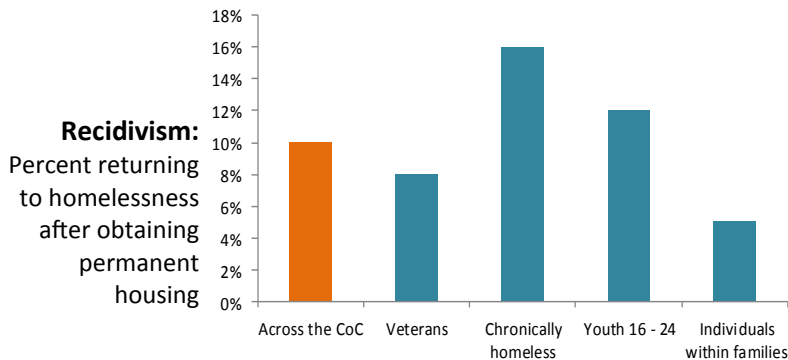
Contra Costa CoC documents success using a variety of measures to identify service utilization and consumer outcomes across the continuum.

Performance Measure 1: Retention rate for those living in Permanent Supportive Housing

97% of those placed in Permanent Supportive Housing, retain housing for over a year.

Performance Measure 2: Recidivism rate back into homelessness once discharged into permanent housing

90% of consumers that obtain permanent housing do not return to our system of care.



Performance Measure 3: Number of consumers obtaining permanent housing

1,451 consumers obtained permanent housing

72 Chronically homeless families

237 Chronically homeless single adults

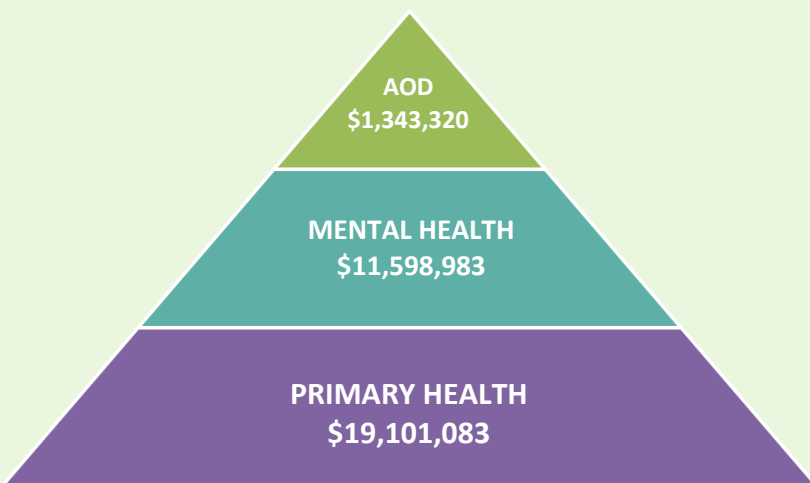
142 Veterans

73 Unaccompanied youth and young adults



COUNTY HEALTH SERVICES UTILIZATION COSTS FOR CONSUMERS USING HOMELESS SERVICES

Contra Costa County continues to integrate services across Behavioral Health and Primary Health providing a comprehensive array of services and programs for homeless consumers. During FY 2013-2014, CoC consumers utilized over **\$32 Million** in behavioral and primary health services at County facilities while also receiving homeless services from CoC providers.



CONSUMER INSIGHTS

The Strategic Plan Update incorporated a significant amount of consumer feedback. Focus groups and interviews were conducted with 58 consumers. Some of their quotes are provided below to share some of the challenges and perspectives of those we serve.

"It's like a **domino effect** [into homelessness]."

"Once you hit rock bottom like that, it's **so hard to get out of it.**"

"We're here for more than one reason." How long have you been homeless? "**It's been too long.**"

"I just never pictured myself homeless. No one thinks about it until they're here. Once you're there, you're homeless with everyone else in the world."

"The reason I fight it [being labeled homeless] is not from pride, it's from strategy. **The moment someone labels you as homeless, they assume drugs, alcohol, or laziness.** There's not room [under this term] for people who actually work."

Contra Costa County Homelessness Continuum of Care

2013-2014 ACTIVITIES

PROJECT HOMELESS CONNECT

The 10th annual Project Homeless Connect was very successful thanks to the many service agencies, volunteers, and donations. Participants had access to free services including health care, vision screenings, homeless court, benefits enrollment, and pet vaccines. They also received summer hygiene kits and free transportation to-and-from the event.

639 Adults served

119 Youth served



2014 POINT IN TIME COUNT

Each year, Contra Costa County's Continuum of Care conducts a Point in Time (PIT) Count to provide an estimate of the number of homeless individuals and families and their housing needs. PIT counts are required by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and are important for demonstrating issues of homelessness in the community and across the country. This year the PIT Count identified **2,263 sheltered homeless individuals**.

Gender

51% Female

49% Male

54% had **substance abuse issues**

7% were **veterans**

38% had **mental health issues**

Race

38% Black/African American

28% American Indian/Alaska Native

20% White

8% Asian/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander

6% Multiple Races

Ethnicity

36% Hispanic/Latino



STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

Updating the CoC Strategic Plan required a community-wide effort integrating feedback from a variety of stakeholders. The updated plan emphasizes that the only solutions to homelessness are permanent housing and prevention services. Thus, the CoC established two primary goals: 1) **decrease length of time homeless**, and 2) **decrease the number who become homeless**. These goals may be achieved with three core strategies:

1. Utilize **Coordinated Assessments** to streamline housing and support services and address barriers in obtaining and sustaining housing.
2. Apply **Performance Standards** that utilize evaluation and performance measures to augment best practices in programming and implementation.
3. Develop **Communication** platforms that improve access for consumers, supports advocacy, and connects with the larger community about homelessness and resources.

Permanent Housing and Prevention

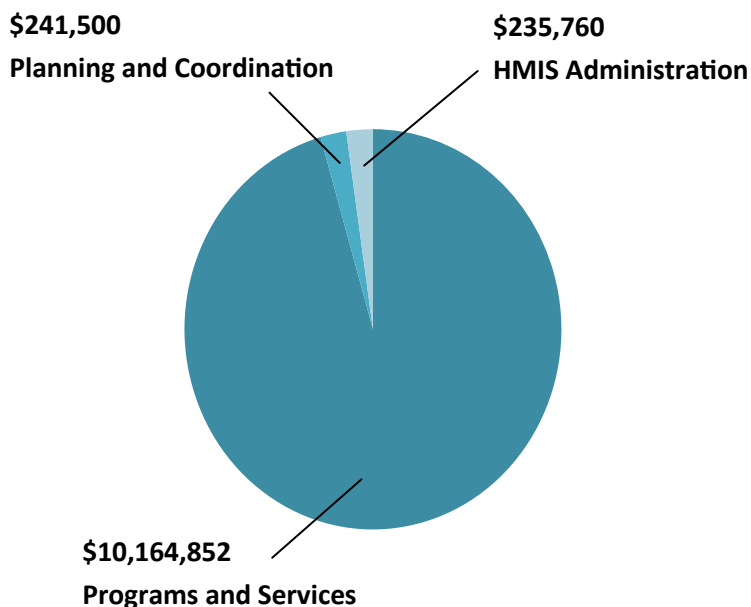


Contra Costa County Homeless Continuum of Care

FUNDING AND PARTNERS

DISTRIBUTION OF FEDERAL FUNDS

Federal funds are distributed to homeless service providers across the CoC to run programs and services, develop and administer the Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS), and facilitate CoC planning and coordination. These federal resources include the Housing and Urban Development CoC funds, Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA), Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), and the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG).



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH HOMELESS PROGRAM

Destination Home

Meet Douglas, one of the *formally* chronically homeless individuals served by the newest Permanent Supportive Housing Program in the CoC. Destination Home uses a Housing First approach by establishing low-threshold enrollment criteria. Participants in the 12 units receive extensive case management from the County's Homeless Program staff and are connected with a wide variety of behavioral and primary health services.



SHELTER, INC.

Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF)

Over 665 veteran households have received support through the SSVF program at Shelter, Inc. since its inception in 2012. The SSVF program provides emergency assistance to veterans who are at risk of losing their housing as well as rapid re-housing for veterans who are homeless. Comprehensive case management helps veterans and their families to be stably housed within 90 days of program entry.



CONTRA COSTA CONTINUUM OF CARE



Anka Behavioral Health, Inc.



- ◆ Berkeley Food and Housing
- ◆ Bi Bett Corp
- ◆ East Bay Community Recovery Project

- ◆ Monument Crisis Center
- ◆ West Contra Costa Unified School District

Contra Costa CoC consists of local service providers that offer an array of programs and services for the homeless community. Together, CoC partners work with consumers to improve their quality of life and sustain permanent housing.

Contra Costa **ZERO**:2016

PARTNERS

Contra Costa Council
on Homelessness

Multi-Faith ACTION
Coalition

Richmond Community
Foundation

Shelter, Inc.

Contra Costa Health
Services

Housing Authority of
Contra Costa County

U.S. Department of
Veterans Affairs

Contra Costa County
Probation Department

Martinez Police
Department

Homeless is first a housing issue, and it is solvable.

There were 122 veterans living on Contra Costa County's streets in January 2015. Another 483 people were chronically homeless – without housing for years, and struggling with disabilities.

With your help we can end veteran and chronic homelessness over the next two years.

JOIN THE MOVEMENT

Zero: 2016 is a national campaign coordinated by Community Solutions to house all homeless veterans by the end of 2015, and all people who are chronically homeless by 2016.

Contra Costa has joined 70 other communities across the U.S., all working to quickly and efficiently reduce the number of veterans and chronically homeless people in need of permanent housing solutions.

WHAT ZERO MEANS

Zero means that, on an average night, there will be no veterans or chronically homeless people without housing in our county. We can reach zero by connecting the right people to the right housing, right now.

We cannot always prevent people from becoming homeless, but we can build a way to immediately address the need for permanent housing when it arises in our communities.

HOW TO MAKE IT HAPPEN

If we concentrate on housing solutions, rather than short-term housing or aid without housing, zero is realistic. Only 3% of permanent supportive housing residents become homeless again in Contra Costa.

But we need strategic partners with skills, experience and knowledge of the resources in their own communities to help find permanent housing solutions – people like you.

With your help, we can increase local housing opportunities to achieve zero veteran and chronic homelessness in your community.

To learn more, visit cchomelesscouncil.org.

Contra Costa



PLEDGE Form

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I pledge to join the Contra Costa Zero: 2016 campaign, and to do my part to end veteran homelessness in my community by December 2015, and chronic homelessness by December 2016.

I commit to working with the campaign and encouraging others to do so, lending my experience, knowledge and expertise about the resources within my own community that could be used to find permanent housing solutions. Additionally, I will work regionally with the Contra Costa Zero: 2016 campaign to further our goals.

I understand that homelessness affects every community in Contra Costa County, and that as community members, we all have a role in finding permanent housing solutions for residents in need.

By supporting the Zero: 2016 campaign, I also endorse a Housing First model for Contra Costa County. Using this approach provides people experiencing homelessness with housing as quickly as possible with few barriers, and then providing services as needed.

By focusing on housing opportunities and helping to build strategic partnerships, I believe that we can quickly provide homes to all of the homeless veterans and chronically homeless people in our county, and provide the services they need to remain housed.

I agree to help build a system that meets the housing need in Contra Costa County, and specifically within my own city and community.

Signed on this day, _____
Date

Name _____

Title _____

Organization _____