



Contra Costa Council on Homelessness
Contra Costa Board of Supervisors Advisory Board
c/o Council on Homelessness Staff
2400 Bisso Lane, Second Floor, Suite D
Concord, CA 94591

TO: Measure X Community Advisory Board Members

From: Contra Costa Council on Homelessness

June 10, 2021

Dear Measure X Community Advisory Board Members,

The Contra Costa Council on Homelessness (Council) is appointed by the County Board of Supervisors (BOS). The Council functions as the governing and oversight body for Contra Costa County's Homeless Continuum of Care (CoC). The Council provides advice and input to the BOS on homeless services policy, funding and planning, and program operations and development efforts in Contra Costa County.

The Council, in its capacity as an Advisory Body to the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors, is writing to make recommendations on the use of the Measure X funding for the Measure X Community Advisory Board's consideration. The Council recommends the Measure X Committee:

1. Prioritize using Measure X funding to support capacity building innovations such as seed funding for land trusts and flexible pools, which can support *short and long term* affordable housing development opportunities, including acquisition, renovation, and ongoing supportive housing operations. Capacity tools like these allow the community to quickly and effectively leverage other state and federal funding dedicated to housing development for underserved populations.
2. Ensure immediate funding specific to homelessness prevention and permanent housing for people experiencing homelessness. This can significantly reduce homelessness across the County by decreasing the number of people entering the system (inflow) and increasing the number moving into stable permanent housing (outflow). In 2019 there were 7,897 people who were homeless in Contra Costa and more than 2,300 were identified as unsheltered. Inflow (6,428 individuals) into the system of care outpaced outflow (5,794), meaning unsheltered and temporarily sheltered individuals and families faced long waits (546 days average length of time homeless) or could not access permanent housing at all.
3. Make recommendations that promote permanent housing and prioritize *permanent supportive housing* (PSH) opportunities. PSH includes intensive supportive services such as behavioral health supports. In 2019 33% of all clients served were chronically homeless with a disabling condition. It is important to acknowledge that effective access to services for mental health and substance use are fundamental to addressing chronic homelessness. If we are not addressing mental health, we are not ensuring greater chances of remaining in permanent and stable housing for our most vulnerable residents.
4. Prioritize immediate and ongoing funding for affordable housing options, including permanent and permanent supportive housing, to address the inequities produced by systemic and institutional biases and racism. Each year, the homeless system of care is called on to house



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increasing numbers of low income and vulnerable people of color. In 2019, the CoC recorded a 30% increase in clients identifying as Latinx/Hispanic, 25% increase for multi-racial clients, 22% for Asians, and 15% for Black/African American since 2017.

We know that housing solves homelessness. As housing is a primary indicator of health, housing also ensures a healthy and stable community. These options must be readily and equitably available. Measure X funding can ensure we stably house *all* of our neighbors if we take bold immediate action.

For more information on the Contra Costa homeless system and data on the people it serves and the needs the system must meet, please visit <https://cchealth.org/h3/coc/reports.php>. The data cited above is from the CoC's 2019 Annual Report available online.

Sincerely,

Lindy Lavender, Chair of the Council on Homelessness