Contra Costa County Homeless System of Care Quarterly Report for Quarter 1, 2023 (January-March)

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

Dear Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors,

The first quarter of this year brought significant challenges for our system of care as providers across the County mobilized to respond to the devastating storms that lashed our communities in January and March. While we responded and met the need with our partners, the storms continue to highlight how vulnerable a lack of stable housing makes members of our community. We are excited to have applied for a few different sources of funding in Q1 (spoiler alert, we were awarded some already!) and really happy to have some Council members returning for another term and welcoming some new members this year.

On a personal note, I [Jo Bruno] want to remind the Board of Supervisors that those of us that have formerly experienced homelessness or who have unstable housing need partners in other systems to keep trying to do better too. While I currently have housing, in this last quarter, I have struggled with not having enough food and had major transportation issues. I also really want to see us be able to go back to virtual attendance for our Council meetings. The travel and needing to be in person is hard for all of us but especially hard for those of us who are living on the edge.

Sincerely,

and

Juno Hedrick, Chair of the Council on Homelessness

Jo Bruno, Vice Chair of the Council on Homelessness

INTRODUCTION

The Contra Costa Council on Homelessness (CoH) is the governing and oversight body for the County homeless Continuum of Care (CoC) and is appointed by the Board of Supervisors. The Council provides advice and input to the Board of Supervisors on the operations of homeless services, program operations, and program development efforts in Contra Costa County. The Contra Costa Council on Homelessness is the governing body for the Contra Costa County Continuum of Care (CoC).

The Contra Costa CoC is comprised of multiple partners, including service providers, members of faith communities, local businesses, private and public funders, community members, education systems and law enforcement, and others who are working collaboratively to end homelessness. The COH and COC are supported by Contra Costa Health Services Health, Housing & Homeless Services (H3) Division. H3 functions as the CoC administrative entity and collaborative applicant, CoC Lead Agency and Homeless Management Information System (HMIS database) Lead Agency.

The purpose of this report is to share information about the CoC and COH activities with the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors and to provide recommendations from the COH to the County Board of Supervisors on long range planning and policy formulation that would support the county homeless CoC. This report includes information on system data, funding and policy activities, and CoC initiatives. All information will reflect activities and data for the prior quarter.

This report was produced on behalf of the CoH by H3 in collaboration with the CoH and CoC partners.

SYSTEM FUNDING

This quarter the CoC continued to evaluate the system of care and pursued funding opportunities to address the gaps in Contra Costa's homeless system, including our largest source of funding, the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Continuum of Care (CoC) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO).

FEDERAL

HUD Unsheltered NOFO: In June 2022, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) released a first-of-its-kind package of resources to address unsheltered homelessness and homeless encampments, including funds set aside specifically to address homelessness in rural communities. In February 2023, it was announced that Contra Costa was not awarded funding in this round. [Note: Contra Costa did receive notice in April that during a second round of awards, the Contra Costa Coc was awarded $5.3m in the form of a one-time, 3-

year grant to bring people who are currently unsheltered in our community into permanent housing.]

Housing Stability Voucher Program: In October, Housing Authority of the County of Contra Costa, with support from the CoC, submitted a Letter of Intent to HUD to request Housing Stability Vouchers. These vouchers will be prioritized for Public Housing Agencies and CoCs who are awarded through the HUD Unsheltered NOFO. These vouchers are highly sought after and are competitively awarded. Contra Costa submitted an application. [Note: The Housing Authority of the County of Contra Costa was notified in April that 41 vouchers were awarded to Contra Costa.]

STATE

Bringing Families Home: The Bringing Families Home Program, funded by the State of California Department of Social Services (CDSS), will provide housing supports and services to referred families receiving Contra Costa County child welfare services who are experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness, thereby increasing family reunification and preventing foster care placement. Caminar began providing services February 2023.

Homeless, Housing and Assistance Program (HHAP): HHAP grant through the California Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal-ICH) that provides local jurisdictions, including federally recognized tribal governments, with flexible funding to continue efforts to end and prevent homelessness in their communities. In January 2023, H3 released a request for proposals to obligate funding from the HHAP program. Services funded through HHAP include Interim Housing, homelessness prevention, permanent supportive housing, rapid rehousing, and technical assistance.

Homekey 3: The RFP was released in March 2023 and H3 will apply to acquire a 54 unit micro-housing building in San Pablo.

LOCAL

Measure X: The Council heard updates from Health, Housing and Homeless Services about the RFP process for Measure X funding allocated for housing/homeless services.

SYSTEM INITIATIVES

The CoC regularly engages in multiple activities, partnerships, evaluations, and improvement that are designed to improve services to clients and achieve various system goals.

Point in Time Count: The observational portion of the Point in Time (PIT) count, held on January 25, 2023, was a tremendous success and couldn't have been possible without the 160+ volunteers and staff, including County staff, who participated. Initial analysis of the data shows

2,372 people were experiencing homelessness in Contra Costa County on January 24th, 2023, 70% of which were unsheltered. Trend data shows a 4% increase in the total homeless population in Contra Costa since 2020, including a 5% increase among unsheltered and 2% among sheltered. A more complete report will be available later in the summer.

Equity: The Equity Committee made progress towards achieving the 2023 goal: *Create accessible information, outreach, and educational materials to engage hard to reach or previously unreached communities in Contra Costa County.* Two different surveys, one for "Amplifiers" and one for "People With Lived Experience" were distributed to find out what people already know about how to access services, what kinds of information and tools people need and identify who may be able to help signal boost the final materials out into the community. The next quarter will focus on materials development, with the support of the CCH Community Education and Information (CEI) unit.

Engagement of People with Lived Experience of Homelessness:

1) Recruitment: The CoC continued to recruit people with lived experience to participate in a variety of activities, including the work of the Equity Committee.
2) Policies and Procedures: This quarter, with the support of an intern working at H3, our CoC developed a policy and process for providing compensation and travel resources to support the participation of People with Lived Experience in CoC work.

Monitoring: Homebase is leading the 2023 monitoring process for 19 Continuum of Care-funded projects and will ensure grant activities are following the Department of Housing and Urban Development rules and regulations; improve individual program performance; and increase provider capacity regarding Continuum of Care compliance and financial management. An update on the Monitoring process was provided to the Oversight committee in February.

Performance Based Contracting: Providers have submitted two quarters of performance data and began quarterly meetings with H3 to discuss progress and identify goals for the next quarter. An update on this process was provided at the Oversight Committee meeting in February.

COLLABORATIONS

Homeless Services-Workforce Development Integration (H-WIN)- These quarterly provide an opportunity for people working in Homeless Services and Workforce Development in Contra Costa to connect with and understand each other's resources and services. One meeting was held this quarter (2/8/23), with 30 partners in attendance.

Storm Response: The homeless system of care responded quickly and efficiently to the heavy storms in January and March. H3 activated as a Branch in the Emergency Response Structure and helped coordinate expanded shelter and warming center capacity by over 75 beds for

individuals and nearly 20 beds for families. H3 ordered and received donations of hundreds of pieces of essential supplies including tarps, blankets, sleeping bag, gloves and beanies for unsheltered homeless people who remain outdoors. H3 CORE Mobile outreach program expanded hours and capacity to support shelter placements and deliver supplies to people experiencing unsheltered homelessness. In partnership with Employment and Human Services Department (EHSD), Office of Emergency Services (OES), and city partners, H3 worked to assess needs and deliver supplies to community shelter providers.

REGIONAL ACTION PLAN

Contra Costa is committed to the Regional Action plan which aims to reduce unsheltered homelessness by 75% by 2024. The Regional Action Plan proposes a 1-2-4 framework which posits that to accomplish this reduction, for every 1 additional interim housing unit funded, 2 permanent housing solutions, and 4 prevention interventions are needed.

PATH Innovations Committee: In this quarter, the Committee:

- reviewed the quarterly data dashboard and data focused on prevention services;
- received information about the Housing Stabilization Learning Cohort, a collaborative learning opportunity focused on co-creating local models that coordinate and target prevention to reduce inflow into homelessness and advance racial equity; and
- received an overview of prevention services funded by the Department of Conservation and Development and how they complement services available through providers in the CoC.

The Committee will serve as thought partners as the work of developing a coordinated approach to prevention at the community-level continues.

Funding Opportunities: All of the funding opportunities mentioned earlier in the report would support Contra Costa's efforts to achieve the Regional Action Plan goal of reducing unsheltered homelessness by 75% by 2024.

GOVERNANCE/REPORTING

- Significant staff and Council agenda time was spent researching, discussing and managing the transition from remote-only to hybrid/in person meetings as mandated to changes in the Brown Act at the state level. The Council is hopeful that, as a non-decision-making body, members may have the option to participate remotely full time if pending legislation proposing that change is approved at the state level.
- The revised bylaws, approved by the Board of Supervisors in December 2022, came into effect this quarter. Changes included:
  - conversion of Public Safety #1 Seat to Lived Experience Advisor #2 Seat;

- o refined transparency and equitable practices section with emphasis on engagement of people with a lived experience of homelessness in Committee and Working Group activities;
  - o revised terms of Chair and Vice Chair from 2 years to 1 year to account for staggered expiration of seats; and
  - o revised/Clarified Committees and Working Group names and descriptions.
- Governance Committee convened in Q1, 2023 and discussed seat composition, including possible addition of new seats, such as a Landlord Representative seat, as suggested by this Committee during our last Quarterly report presentation.
- The proposed new Council members, approved by the BOS on 12/13/22, began their term in January. (See Appendix B for Roster with District information included, as requested).
  - o The newly appointed member who held the Youth Representative seat unfortunately resigned in March due to competing demands as they focused on stabilizing housing and employment. The Council will consider additional supports needed to support members in the Youth Representative seat as this population tends to have unique challenges and needs. Recruitment is ongoing and will be a focus on the Nominating Committee in Fall 2023.
- Polls conducted at the beginning of each Council on Homelessness regular meetings capture data on # of Council meetings previously attended, lived experience of homelessness and race/ethnicity of attendees. See Appendix C for Q1 averages.
- Submitted the annual Advisory Committee report to Clerk of the Board in December 2022.

MEETINGS, TRAININGS AND EVENTS

Council on Homelessness (COH) Meetings: The Council on Homelessness held three (3) regular business meetings in addition to an Orientation this quarter. In addition to the regular Council on Homelessness meetings, the following committees met:

Committee	Purpose
Equity Committee	Create accessible information, outreach, and educational materials to engage hard to reach or previously unreached communities in Contra Costa County.
HMIS Policy Committee	Develops and shares updates on HMIS policies and practices, compliance, and troubleshooting; Plans technical assistance and training; Informs standards of practice and monitoring
Funding Committee	Direct the community input process for several time-sensitive federal and state funding streams. NOFO prep work that previously happened at the CoC/ESG Committee will now happen at the Funding Committee.

Governance Committee	Review and revise the Governance Charter and Bylaws to increase CoH efficiency and impact.
Oversight Committee	Reviewing and assessing the development, implementation, and improvement of the CoC, Coordinated Entry System, HMIS database, and system outcomes
PATH Innovation Committee	Work towards the goal of reducing unsheltered homeless in Contra Costa County by 75% by 2024
Point in Time Count Committee	Plan and implement the annual Point-in-Time Count, an annual HUD-required count of sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness

Trainings

- How to Support Families with Children or Unaccompanied Minors (1/09/23)
- Supporting Clients With Criminal Justice Involvement (2/13/23)
- Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) Compliance and Strategies for Serving Survivors (3/13/23)

Events
- CoC Provider Meetings (3)
- CoC Community Meeting: Centering People With Lived Experience (3/7)
- H-WIN meeting (2/8)

The recordings, minutes and materials for trainings and meetings can be found on the H3 website[1] and on the County agenda center[2], and a calendar of upcoming meetings and events can be found on the H3 website.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Board of Supervisors will amplify community events marking Affordable Housing Month in May.

[1] https://cchealth.org/h3/coc/partners.php#Training
[2] https://www.contracosta.ca.gov/agendacenter

Appendix A

Commonly Used Acronyms and Terms

Acronym	Definition
APR	Annual Performance Report (for HUD homeless programs)
BIPOC	Black and Indigenous People of Color
CARE	Coordinated Assessment and Resource
CCYCS	Contra Costa Youth Continuum of Services
CDBG, CDBG-CV	Community Development Block Grant (federal and state programs) and the federal Community Development Block Grant CARES Act coronavirus allocation.
CESH	California Emergency Solutions and Housing program (state funding)
Continuum of Care (CoC)	Continuum of Care approach to assistance to the homeless. Federal grant program promoting and funding permanent solutions to homelessness.
Con Plan	Consolidated Plan, a locally developed plan for housing assistance and urban development under CDBG.
CORE	Coordinated Outreach Referral, Engagement program
COVID-19	Coronavirus
DCD	(Contra Costa County) Department of Conservation and Development
DOC	Department Operations Center
EHSD	(Contra Costa County) Employment and Human Services Division
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
ESG and ESG-CV	Emergency Solutions Grant (federal and state program) and the federal Emergency Solutions Grant CARES Act coronavirus allocation.
ESG-CV	Emergency Solutions Grant CARES
FMR	Fair Market Rent (maximum rent for Section 8 rental assistance/CoC grants)
HCD	Housing and Community Development (State office)
HEAP	Homeless Emergency Aid Program (State funding)
HEARTH	Homeless Emergency and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act of 2009
HHAP	Homeless Housing and Assistance Program
HMIS	Homeless Management Information System
HOME	Home Investment Partnerships (CPD program)
HUD	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (federal)
MHSA	Mental Health Services Act
NOFA/NOFO	Notice of Funding Availability/ Notice of Funding Opportunity
PHA	Public Housing Authority
PUI	Persons Under Investigation
PWLE	People With Lived Experience of Homelessness
SAMHSA	Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration
SRO	Single-Room Occupancy housing units
SSDI	Social Security Disability Income
SSI	Supplemental Security Income
TA	Technical Assistance
TAY	Transition Age Youth (usually ages 18-24)

VA	Veterans Affairs (U.S. Department of)
VASH	Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing
VI-SPDAT	Vulnerability Index – Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool

Contra Costa County COVID-19 Resources:

Please see below for additional resources on COVID-19.

- *Health Services COVID Data Dashboard-* https://www.coronavirus.cchealth.org/dashboard
- *Health Services Homeless Specific Data Dashboard- https://www.coronavirus.cchealth.org/homeless-dashboard*
- *Health Services COVID Updates-* https://www.coronavirus.cchealth.org/health-services-updates
- *Health Services Homeless-Specific COVID Resources* -https://www.coronavirus.cchealth.org/for-the-homeless

Council on Homelessness 2023 Members

	Seat Name	Appointee	Affiliation	District Live	District Work	Term Ends
1.	Affordable Housing Developer Representative	Iman Novin	Novin Development Consulting	4	All	12.31.24
2.	Behavioral Health Representative	Margaret Schlitz	Portia Bell HumeCenter's West County FSP program	N/A	1	12.31.24
3.	City Government Representative	Teri House	CDBG Consultant, City of Antioch	5	3 & 5	12.31.24
4.	CoC/ESG Program Grantee Representative	Leslie Gleason	Executive Director, Trinity Center	N/A	4	12.31.23
5.	Community Member Representative	Keva Dean		1	5	12.31.23
6.	Education and Vocational Services Representative	Alejandra Chamberlain	Homeless Education Liaison, Contra Costa Office of Education	3	All	12.31.24
7.	Emergency Solutions Grants Representative	Gabriel Lemus	Contra Costa Department of Conservation and Development	5	All	12.31.24
8.	Employment and Human Services (EHSD) Representative	Angela Bullock-Hayes	Division Manager, EHSD	3	4	12.31.23
9.	Faith Community Representative	Wayne Earl	Pastor, Rock Harbor Christian Fellowship	1	1	12.31.23
10.	Health Care Representative	Mia Fairbanks	Healthcare for the Homeless	5	All	12.31.24
11.	Homeless Service Provider Representative	Deanne Pearn	Executive Director, Hope Solutions	2	All	12.31.24
12	Lived Experience Advisor #1	Juno Hedrick		1	N/A	12.31.24
13.	Lived Experience Advisor #2	Jo Bruno	Peer Specialist, Delta Peers	3	3	12.31.24
14.	Public Housing Authority Representative	Tony Ucciferri	Special Assistant to the Executive Director, Housing Authority of County of Contra Costa	4	5	12.31.23

15.	Public Safety Representative #2	Shawn Ray	Lieutenant, San Pablo Police Department	2	1	12.31.23
16.	Reentry Services Representative	Pat Mims	Director, Reentry Success Center	1	1	12.31.23
17.	Veterans Administration Representative	Jai De Lotto	Northern California VA Healthcare System	N/A	All	12.31.24
18.	Workforce Development Representative	Janae Thomas	Swords to Plowshares	N/A	All	12.31.24
19.	Youth Representative	Anastasia Flores[3]	TAY with Lived Experience	1	N/A	12.31.24

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[3] This representative was seated and then needed to resign, as noted earlier in the report.

APPENDIX C

Poll Question Answers Q1

How many Council on Homelessness meetings have you attended?	Q1 avg
This is my first meeting	8%
I've attended some meetings	28%
I've attended a lot of meetings	65%
I prefer not to answer	0%

Do you have lived experience of homelessness?	
Yes, currently	3%
Yes, within the past 7 years	11%
Yes, more than 7 years ago	23%
No	63%
I prefer not to answer	2%

What best describes your racial identity?*	
African American/Black	20%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	5%
Asian/Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian	4%
Hispanic/Latinx	19%
White	50%
I prefer not to answer	4%
I describe myself in another way	4%

*This category allows people to select multiple options