

Advisory Council on Aging (ACOA) Housing Work Group Meeting

July 20, 2020, 9:30-11:30 a.m.

Present: Gerald Richards (Chair; ACOA) Annette Balter (Co-Chair; Covia), Victoria Snyder (CC Senior Legal Services), Caitlin Sly (Meals on Wheels Diablo Region), Hector Malvido (Ensuring Opportunity), Taylor Kimber (Office of Congressman DeSaulnier), Lenore McDonald (Center for Elders' Independence), Jim Donnelly (ACOA), Gabriela Perez (Covia – Home Match), Anthony Macias (Area Agency on Aging), Jaime Jenett (Health, Housing & Homeless Services), and Nhang Luong (Staff Support; Area Agency on Aging)

Presentation: Point in Time (PIT) and Project Roomkey – Jaime Jenett, Community Engagement Specialist, Health, Housing, and Homeless Services (H3)

- **PIT** – Snapshot count of homeless population. Not accurate, but important because it guides funding decisions.
- System Data – More accurate count of homeless population based on service providers collecting and entering data. Analysis of 2019 data not yet available.
- 2020 PIT – Found 2,277 people were experiencing homelessness in Contra Costa. 17% were older adults between ages 55 - 61 (23% were 55+ in 2019) and 16 % were 62+. Many of these seniors are priced out and becoming homeless for the first time.
- The County used a different methodology to conduct PIT count in 2020 compared to previous years. The data remains very similar. In 2020, 2,277 people counted and in 2019, it was 2,295.
- Older adults tend to be price-sensitive due to fixed income. Rent increases make them vulnerable. Other factors: death of a spouse, loss of income, falls or events that lead to temporary disability.
- HUD's definition of "homeless" for Continuum of Care is different from schools. For schools, if someone is precariously housed with no fixed address, she/he is considered homeless and can access services. For example, if they are couch surfing. Under HUD, person is "homeless" if they are living in inhabitable conditions such as cars, park benches, abandoned warehouses, or RVs not connected to services like water and sewage. Couch surfing would not qualify as homeless.
- Safe parking program – there is one in Contra Costa that provides security and access to restrooms.

- **Project Roomkey** – California and FEMA funding to counties to prevent spread of COVID-19 amongst high-risk homeless population.
- Contra Costa rebranded Project Roomkey as "Stop the Spread Temporary Unit". The project is a collaboration between H3, Public Health, and Behavioral Health.
- Shelters are only able to serve 28% of people experiencing homelessness in Contra Costa. Strategic to provide shelter beds to most vulnerable. This same strategy is applied to Project Roomkey.
- Who is eligible? Person Under Investigation (PUI) – exhibits symptoms, have a positive result, or exposed to someone who tested positive for COVID-19. Non-PUI also eligible if vulnerability criteria met.
- Phase 1 (March) - secured hotels, closed warming centers, stopped new entries to shelters, and paused encampment abatement (don't force people to move around).

- In April, PUI residents moved from congregate shelters to the hotels.
- Alternative Care Centers set up at the Antioch Fairground and Concord Adult Shelter to serve as mini-hospitals if needed.
- Phase 2 – Placing Non-PUI at the hotels using prioritization:
 - Priority 1 – 70 years of age or older, currently on dialysis, or being treated for cancer/HIV.
 - Priority 2 – 60 years of age or older, with 2 or more FEMA stated chronic conditions, with family member with chronic conditions, or in 3rd trimester of pregnancy.
 - Priority 3 - Lives in encampment (tent or on street)
 - Priority 4 - Lives in inhabitable condition but indoors (car, RV, garage, etc.)
- Referral Process – Hospital, Emergency Department, or CORE (Coordinated Outreach, Referral & Engagement)
- Services provided at hotel:
 - 3 meals daily, snacks, hygiene supplies, and laundry on-site
 - Check-in from Healthcare for Homeless and/or Behavioral Health- Telehealth or in-person
- 549 placed in hotel as of 7-14-2020
 - Over age 55 – 58%
 - Under age 55 – 42%
- Housing navigators available to help find housing, and there are plans to hire more navigators. People are being housed but currently no data on placement rates.
- CORE – outreach program for homeless and can be reached by calling 211.
- Trinity and GRIP still open for showers and other services.
- Folks staying at Phillip Dorn site, how is Roomkey helping to maintain their physical and mental health at the hotels? People still receiving in-home care and some who cannot manage ADLs may move to boarding care.
- In lease agreements with hotels, County included option to buy. The County is looking at this as a way to increase shelter capacity. There is work behind the scenes to secure a building. Congregate shelter will not exist, at least in the next year or more.
- **Historically Marginalized Communities Engagement** – County plan to increase community education to at-risk/marginalized communities. Key messages - prevention, testing, and contact tracing. What are some considerations/suggestions for the County?
 - Use the term “physical distancing” in place of “social distancing” to avoid further exacerbating social isolation amongst older adults.
 - Show people how to have gatherings while being safe.
 - What about when people are grieving? Provide examples on how people can grieve while social distancing.
 - Outreach to Latinx community, disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.
 - Advocate for people not to be alone in the hospital. Find a way to keep it safe so people do not die alone. How to meet emotional need?
- Are there mobile testing sites, particularly for seniors who cannot get out? No.
- Taking longer to get results. Everything is backed-up.

- **Housing Work Group Co- Chair** - Annette Balter is stepping down from the position and the Housing Work Group. She joined Work Group to start home share program and that has been accomplish. Gabriela Perez will represent Covia. The Work Group is grateful for Annette's leadership.
- Gerry Richards nominated Lenore McDonald to be the next Co-Chair and seconded by Victoria Snyder. Lenore unanimously voted Co-Chair.
- **Information sharing**
 - County extended eviction pause until September 30.
 - Courts not processing evictions until 90 days after Governor announces shelter-at-home lifted. Not clear when that will be. A flood of evictions expected when that time comes. Reasonable accommodation requests to appear by phone for restraining orders and unlawful detainers granted. Evictions filed before the pandemic are being carry out. Starting to see allegations of health and safety (meth lab), hoarding issues, or pest infestations (bed bugs, etc.) that might proceed to evictions.