

HOMELESS SERVICES OVERSIGHT COUNCIL

HSOC Meeting

May 19, 2021 1:00 p.m.

Members and the public were able to participate by Zoom call.

MEMBERS PRESENT	MEMBERS ABSENT	STAFF & GUESTS
Anna Miller Bettina Swigger Bill Crewe Brenda Mack Carlyn Christianson Caroline Hall Dawn Addis Dawn Ortiz-Legg Devin Drake Grace McIntosh Janna Nichols Jessica Thomas Kathy McClenathen Kristen Barneich Mark Lamore Mary Ann Reiss Nicole Bennett Rick Gulino Scott Smith Shay Stewart Steve Martin Susan Funk Susan Lamont	Amelia Grover Anne Robin Jeff Smith	Abby Lassen Anne Wyatt Brandy Graham Cara Vereschagin Carolyn Berg Christina Trezza-Horn Daniela Garcia Elaine Archer Elaine Mansoor George Solis Jan Maitzen Jeff Al-Mashat Jessica Lorange Joanna Kelsey Nocket Laurel Weir Leon Shordon Lisa Howe Lori Hoffman Mimi Rodriguez Rita Holland Russ Francis Sue Warren Theresa Harpin

		Tom Sherman Wendy Lewis Yael Korin
AGENDA ITEM		CONCLUSIONS/ACTIONS
1. Call to Order and Introductions	Susan Funk called the meeting to order at 1pm.	
2. Public Comment	<p>Kelsey introduced herself as the new Homelessness Response Manager for the City of San Luis Obispo.</p> <p>Daniela Garcia introduced herself as Classified Coordinator-Homeless & Foster Youth Services with the San Luis Obispo County Office of Education.</p>	
3. Consent: Approval of Minutes		Devin made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Kristen. The minutes were approved with all in favor, none opposed and no abstentions.
4. Action/Information/Discussion		
4.1. Discussion Item: Update on Rent Relief Program Implementation	Janna reported on the status of the California COVID-19 Rent Relief Program. There are 178 applications currently in progress in SLO county, and 246 which have been completed. This means that 42% of applications have been started and not completed, which is a concern. 5Cities Homeless	

	<p>Coalition (5CHC) works with anyone who requests assistance with the application; the 42% of people who have started but not completed an application are people who have not requested assistance. Janna has asked the State for people's names so 5CHC can reach out and offer assistance. Janna confirmed that the high proportion of people not completing an application is being seen throughout California. Abby confirmed that many communities are experiencing the same issues, and the County is talking to the State about the issues with the program. There are some differences, in that SLO County's program is part of the State's program, while some other communities have opted to run their programs independently, and so are able to do their own marketing and outreach.</p> <p>More than \$2 million has been requested, and \$30,000 had been paid out as of May 12th. Progress has been very slow, as getting people to apply to the program has been a major challenge. 5CHC has found that people have often been paying their rent, at the cost of other debts such as utility bills, which are not eligible expenses under the program. Governor Newsom has introduced a change to the program in which landlords will receive 100% rather than 80% of payment arrears. This may have an effect on the number of people who apply to the program, as landlords will have more incentive to participate.</p> <p>Elaine Mansoor shared that the biggest concern for</p>	
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	<p>the Salvation Army, who are also administering the program, is the unknown timeline. The Salvation Army has not been able to do much outreach so far, as they have not yet received the contract from the State.</p> <p>Janna shared that 5CHC is also experiencing difficulties with outreach, as the program keeps changing. Dawn Ortiz-Legg and Abby are working on ways to improve communications, e.g. through setting up pop up tents or information fairs. The Committee discussed the possibility of pushing a message out on social media. Abby noted that SLO County's publicity must be consistent with the State's, so there may be limitations on what can be done here. County staff will look into this and send a follow up to the full HSOC.</p>	<p>County staff to look into what can be done regarding social media messaging about the Rent Relief program, and send a follow up to the full HSOC.</p>
<p>4.2. Discussion Item: May Update on Homelessness to the Board of Supervisors</p>	<p>Laurel provided some background on the May 4th meeting of the Board of Supervisors. County staff provided a report on the homelessness situation in the county, including updates on regional framework, the process for updating the Ten-Year Plan, and the HSOC Encampment Committee's recommendations.</p> <p>Carolyn reported that the Board unanimously supported moving forward with the regional framework and communications strategy. The Homeless Action Team is currently focused on near term actions, e.g. developing safe parking and blue</p>	

	<p>bag programs, but also has longer term plans to build trust with individuals in encampments, to move them towards resources. The County is hoping to recruit a consultant for the Ten-Year Plan update by the end of June.</p> <p>Susan Funk thanked the HSOC members who took the time to call in to the May 4th Board of Supervisors meeting with comments in support of the County and HSOC's recommendations on homelessness. Susan noted that the challenge will be how to get all constituencies on board, as no initiative can be successful unless all are involved.</p> <p>In response to a question from Yael about where the Encampment Committee's recommendations are now sitting, Carolyn clarified that the recommendations were incorporated into the report to the Board of Supervisors. The reason the County is focusing only on the safe parking and blue bag programs at present is because these have buy-in from all incorporated Cities and the County. The other recommendations are still options for consideration, but the Cities had concerns with the potential implications of some recommendations, and so more time is needed to explore this. Some of the recommendations will be incorporated into the Ten-Year Plan and Regional Action Plan work.</p> <p>Yael reported that Los Osos Community Advisory</p>	
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	Council (LOCAC) has put together a committee to look into solutions for unhoused residents, and are moving ahead with plans for a tiny house village.	
4.2.1. Ten-Year Plan and Regional Framework Update	Susan Funk reported that County staff have been working on a strategy for the Ten-Year Plan Review Committee, which recommends a relatively small working group to be the core of the work, and which would reach out to the various constituencies including the HSOC, city managers, and the Board of Supervisors. The recommendation is to include an elected official, a representative from a provider agency, County government staff, a representative from the housing community, someone with lived experience of homelessness, and a representative from one of the City governments. The recommendation is to incorporate regional diversity and different perspectives.	
4.3. Discussion Item: American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)	Laurel shared that the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) authorized additional funding for housing programs. One of the upcoming opportunities is Emergency Housing Vouchers. 156 of these vouchers which will be distributed by the Housing Authority of San Luis Obispo (HASLO). The Emergency Housing Vouchers will function like regular housing vouchers, but with an expiration date of 2030. If vouchers are issued then returned, they can only be reissued until September 2023. Referrals will come through the Coordinated Entry system rather than the standard	

	<p>waiting list.</p> <p>Elaine Archer clarified that vouchers will most likely need to be distributed by early 2022. Scott stated that it will be a challenge to find this many rental units, but this is always a challenge that HASLO meets.</p>	
<p>4.3.1. Emergency Homeless Vouchers and Need for Special HSOC Meeting in June</p>	<p>Laurel reported that there is a relatively short turnaround time to get all the Emergency Housing Vouchers leased up. The first step is to draw up a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Continuum of Care (CoC) and HASLO, so that referrals can be made from the Coordinated Entry system to HASLO. Because of this, there will need to be a special meeting of HSOC in June, to get the MoU approved and sent to the Board of Supervisors in time for HASLO to begin issuing vouchers in July.</p> <p>The Special meeting will most likely be held in the week of June 7th. County staff will send out a Doodle poll.</p>	
<p>4.3.2. Supplemental HOME Program Funds</p>	<p>Lori shared that the County will be receiving supplemental HOME program funding of around \$3.3 million through ARPA. This additional funding can be used for eligible activities that go beyond the usual HOME program activities, including tenant based rental assistance, supportive services, and the development and purchase of home units for permanent housing. The County anticipates this</p>	

	funding will form part of the 2022 Action Plan NOFA (Notice of Funding Availability), which will be issued at the beginning of fall.	
4.4. Discussion Item: Upcoming State and Federal Funding Opportunities		
4.4.1. California Emergency Solutions Grant Continuum of Care Allocation	Laurel shared that the State will be issuing its annual ESG (Emergency Solutions Grant) NOFA at the end of May. Once this is released, the County will issue its own RFP (Request for Proposals). The ESG program typically has a very tight turnaround period, but the same eligible activities and will most likely provide the same amount of funding. Given the short windows for applications, agencies considering applying to this program should look at what has been funded in previous years and begin preparing for applications now.	
4.4.2. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Continuum of Care Program	Laurel shared that the County is expecting the NOFA for HUD's (US Department of Housing & Urban Development) annual CoC (Continuum of Care) funding program in June-July.	
4.4.3. Governor's Proposed Budget	Laurel shared that the Governor is proposing to provide funding for a second round of the Homekey program. This would release around \$1 billion for the acquisition of motels and other properties to be	

	<p>converted into housing for families experiencing homelessness and families at risk of homelessness. The proposed budget includes increases for other programs that assist homeless people, such as CalWorks, Bringing Families Home, and the Housing Disability and Advocacy Program. The proposed budget also sets aside \$50 million for encampment focused funding, although this will not be a block grant and the State is focusing on very large encampments, so it is not clear if SLO County would receive any of this money.</p>	
<p>4.5. Discussion Item: Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP) Update</p>	<p>Janna provided a report on 5CHC's youth project, funded through HEAP (Homeless Emergency Aid Program). 5CHC are working in partnership with People's Self Help Housing to build transitional housing units in Pismo Beach, known as the Pismo Terrace project. This work is expected to be completed in June 2023. On the case management side of this project, 5CHC have had contact with 82 homeless youth, and have reunified 6 youth with family members. Research shows particular youth vulnerabilities within SLO county: youth with low household income are at 162% increased risk of homelessness; LGBT youth are at 120% increased risk; unmarried parenting youth are at 200% increased risk; and youth with less than a high school diploma or GED are at 346% increased risk of homelessness.</p>	

<p>4.6. Discussion Item: Preventing, Preparing for and Responding to the Impacts of COVID-19</p>	<p>Laurel reported that County Public Health will be closing its mass vaccination clinics on June 4th, and will be providing mobile clinics instead. These can be organized with agencies serving people who are homeless, via this link: https://www.recover slo.org/en/mobile-clinics.aspx</p>	
<p>4.6.1. Update on Efforts to Vaccinate People Experiencing Homelessness</p>	<p>Janna reported that the vaccination rate is lagging at around 50% of the county. The Vaccine Task Force is working with Public Health to encourage people in the homeless community to get vaccinated. The one-shot Johnson & Johnson vaccine is now available again, making it easier for people to become vaccinated. Wendy reported that ECHO (El Camino Homeless Organization) has distributed around one hundred vaccines and are in the process of organizing another vaccination drive, but it has taken a lot of work to convince homeless people to get vaccinated.</p>	
<p>4.7. Discussion Item: Winter Warming Centers Recap</p>	<p>Laurel shared that the HSOC Executive Committee received an update on Winter Warming Centers at its April meeting, and asked for the updates to be shared with the full HSOC.</p> <p>Wendy reported that ECHO ran its center from November to the end of March. This center was open every day and provided safe overnight shelter for 141 people, averaging around 15 people per night. Eighteen people who attended have moved into other</p>	

	<p>ECHO facilities, eight of whom are now permanently housed. There was initially some resistance from the local community, but this abated.</p> <p>Grace reported that CAPSLO's (Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo) warming center was open from November to March, but only opened if there was a 50% chance of rain or the temperature dropped under 38 degrees. As such, the shelter was only open for 19 nights, but in that time served 79 people, a little under half of whom have since started using CAPSLO's other services.</p> <p>Janna reported that 5CHC operated a warming center on the same parameters as CAPSLO, so this center was also open for 19 nights. They experienced challenges with a location due to sites being closed due to COVID or needed as a vaccination center. A couple of people who attended the warming center have since been housed, and several have engaged in 5CHC's case management program.</p> <p>Caro reported that Los Osos Cares also operated a warming center for 19 nights, providing safe shelter for around 8 people per night. This represents fewer people than in past years, and is most likely due to the breaking up of the encampment at Los Osos some months prior.</p>	
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<p>4.8. Discussion Item: Situational Update/Roundtable</p>	<p>Susan Funk shared that in its April meeting, the HSOC Executive Committee discussed the situation in SLO county. People are becoming homeless faster than agencies can move them into housing, and due to public pressure, the law enforcement response has been to focus on clearing out encampments. There are a lot of efforts to help people at present which are not strategically connected to each other.</p> <p>The Council discussed this and confirmed this is an accurate assessment of the situation. Agencies are now seeing more people approaching for help.</p>	
<p>5. Committee Updates</p>	<p>Scott reported that the Housing Committee's May meeting was canceled due to a clash with the Board of Supervisors meeting.</p> <p>Janna reported that the Finance & Data Committee met, and looked at the new statewide data collection system. Janna has asked County staff to prepare a data report for an upcoming HSOC meeting.</p> <p>Devin reported that the Services Coordinating Committee met, and all discussion items were covered in this full HSOC meeting, except for an item on coastal outreach events, which the County and agencies are looking into starting back up again in a COVID-safe way.</p> <p>The Encampment Committee did not meet, as its recommendations were going to the Board of</p>	

	Supervisors for review at the time.	
6. Future Discussion/Report Items	None	
7. Next Regular Meeting: Wednesday 21st July at 1pm		
8. Adjournment	Susan adjourned the meeting at 3:15pm.	