



City of Arts & Innovation

# Housing and Homelessness Committee Memorandum

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**TO: HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS COMMITTEE DATE: JULY 24, 2023**

**FROM: OFFICE OF HOMELESS SOLUTIONS WARDS: ALL**

**SUBJECT: HOMELESSNESS ACTION PLAN UPDATE**

**ISSUE:**

Receive a presentation from the Office of Homeless Solutions on the progress of the Homelessness Action Plan.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Housing and Homelessness Committee receive and file a presentation from the Office of Homeless Solutions on the progress of the Homelessness Action Plan.

**BACKGROUND:**

To ensure the Homelessness Action Plan reflected the needs of Riverside’s stakeholders, the City held three hybrid community engagement meetings (simultaneously in-person and on Zoom) to inform the community, obtain feedback on the proposed goals and the activities within the goals and prioritize activities leveraging HHAP-3, HOME-ARP, Measure Z, and other existing funding streams. These community meetings featured Spanish and American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation. The City hosted three Homeless Task Force meetings virtually and one in person, where leaders and front-line staff who work with the unhoused population and extremely low- to low-income residents had an opportunity to provide input on how to craft a feasible and useful Homelessness Action Plan. Additionally, our partners were asked to administer an end-user survey to collect valuable feedback from those experiencing homelessness. People experiencing homelessness and those with lived experience were invited to participate in an in-person discussion to provide input on the Homelessness Action Plan.

The three major themes of these meetings included:

1. The need to prioritize vulnerable groups experiencing homelessness;
2. Supporting creative housing with low-barrier shelter options; and
3. An all-hands-on-deck approach to help with the homelessness crisis.

The meeting attendees also supported the following six goals to address homelessness:

1. Increase housing production with a focus on affordability;

2. Availability of services, with a focus on physical and mental health and substance use disorder treatment;
3. Prevent homelessness;
4. Increase availability and effectiveness of emergency shelters;
5. Expand public awareness; and
6. Build a coordinated regional infrastructure.

The Homelessness Action Plan (Attachment 1) includes each goal and the corresponding program policy deliverables, partnerships, City department leads, leveraged City resources, timelines, and goal alignments. To receive the HHAP-3 grant funds, the City had to submit a local homelessness action plan and HHAP-3 application by June 30, 2022. The HHAP-3 application, a component of the formal Five-Year Plan, required regional collaboration with the County and Continuum of Care (CoC) to complete the eight tables included in the application.

On June 28, 2022, the Office of Homeless Solutions (OHS) presented the draft Homelessness Action Plan, HHAP-3, and HOME-ARP to City Council. Over several months the OHS engaged experts in the field, community members, and end-users to gather quantitative and qualitative data that informed the OHS of the importance of identifying gaps and the focus on addressing subpopulations. Further, the 2022 Point-in-Time Count data weaved into the information collected from stakeholders supported the creation of new goals the City intends to implement intentionally. Recommendations by City Council included coordination between the City and County to provide joint efforts to address homelessness across the City, preventing lawlessness and ensuring safety for all, review of the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program, affordable for sale options, and differentiation between CARE Court and HOME Court. Additionally, Councilmember Edwards requested that the OHS meet in person with the Task Force to receive feedback and to confirm that the plan incorporates the voice of all stakeholders.

On August 17, 2022, the OHS led a meeting with Task Force members to review the draft Homelessness Action Plan problem statement, activities, measurements, and ensure stakeholders' voices were captured throughout the plan. Feedback from the group included:

- Additional measuring tools to strengthen data collection;
- Individuals with lived experience are crucial in implementing the Action Plan;
- Identify what action is being taken toward meeting other goals to contribute to success; and
- The Plan aligns closely with the County's 2022-2027 County of Riverside Homeless Action Plan.

On September 1, 2022, the OHS led a meeting with individuals experiencing homelessness and those with lived experience to discuss the Homelessness Action Plan. Participants shared their struggles with utilizing housing vouchers, the need for compassionate field engagements, clean drinking water, shower utilization, and the importance of frequent safety checks at non-congregate shelters. Those experiencing homelessness and people with lived experience would like to continue meeting with the City throughout the implementation of the Action Plan to share experiences around gaps and success.

On October 11, 2022, City Council approved the Homelessness Action Plan to reduce homelessness. The City is building from the Envision Riverside 2025 Strategic Plan, the Housing & Homelessness Committee's FY 2021/22 goals, and the City's Housing First Policy.

## **DISCUSSION:**

The 2023 Point-In-Time Count data indicates that the number of people experiencing homelessness across the City and County of Riverside has increased. The Point-In-Time Count data tells us that on a single night in the City of Riverside, 605 people (a 17% increase from the 2022 PIT) were reported as unsheltered, while 372 people (a 9% decrease from the 2022 PIT) were sheltered. Overall, there was a 5% increase, as indicated by the 2023 PIT Count data. To stabilize the rise in homelessness for the target population, working toward activities that support successful exits from homelessness into safe, supportive, affordable housing situations is vital. Activities recognized as best practices include intentional connections to care, medical and behavioral health services, expanded outreach efforts, multidisciplinary collaborations, increased emergency shelter beds, and affordable housing opportunities. These efforts and others are realized and implemented through the Homelessness Action Plan.

The Homelessness Action Plan efforts are led by the Housing Authority and the OHS.

During the FY 2022/23, the following housing-related goals were met or exceeded.

- 648 housing units were built
  - 503 rental units and 145 homeownership units
    - 135 affordable housing units (128 rental units and 7 homeownership units)
- 689 affordable housing units in the pipeline for development, 135 were completed during FY 2022/23
- Assisted 30 formerly homeless individuals with housing through the City's Rental Assistance Program
  - 97% retention rate
- Assisted 67 low-income households with homeless prevention through the City's Emergency Rental Assistance Program
- Enrolled six individuals through the Shared Housing Program annually
- Increased newly housed clients through the rental assistance program by 150%, increase of 18 clients

During the FY 2022/23, the following homelessness related goals were met or exceeded.

- Decrease of 12% among "chronically homeless" individuals compared to 2022.
- Decrease of 7% amongst those struggling with substance misuse compared to 2022.
- Expansion of Urban and Wildlands PSET outreach by 67%.
  - In May an officer and two outreach workers joined Wildlands to create a fully functional team.
  - 2 Code Enforcement Officers have recently joined the team.
- Project Connect is operational, providing jail in-reach services, coordinated release, and reentry services.
  - Over three months, 24 referrals have been received.
- Implemented the County and City Memorandum on Understanding on Homeless Initiatives.
  - The City led two successful meetings with all partners to share their activities successes, gaps, and ongoing collaborative efforts.

The Housing Authority and OHS will continue to implement the Plan goals to prevent homelessness, increase housing production and affordability, increase shelter beds and services,

build a regional infrastructure with other jurisdictions and organizations, expand public awareness about homelessness and housing, and identify funding opportunities.

**STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:**

This item contributes to **Strategic Priority 2 – Community Well-Being** and **Goal 2.2**, collaborate with partner agencies to improve household resiliency and reduce the incidence and duration of homelessness.

The item aligns with each of the five Cross-Cutting Threads as follows:

1. **Community Trust** – The City conducted community meetings and reestablished the Homeless Task Force to assist with drafting the Homelessness Action Plan.
2. **Equity** – Riverside residents will have equal access to the programs that will be supported through the Homelessness Action Plan.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility** –The City will ensure that federal, state and local resources used to carry out the goals of the Homelessness Action Plan will adhere to funding resource regulations.
4. **Innovation** – The Homelessness Action Plan provides the City with the ability to support innovative programs that address gaps in our homeless system of care.
5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** – HHAP and HOME-ARP grant funds will provide funding to meet the gaps in our homeless system of care and adapt to the needs of our homeless population and service providers.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact associated with this staff report.

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Approved as to form:	Phaedra A. Norton, City Attorney

Attachments:

1. Homelessness Action Plan
2. Presentation