

HOMELESSNESS IN RIVERSIDE WORKSHOP

OCTOBER 11, 2016

Community Response Team

The City and our partners have made positive strides toward collaborating and addressing the barriers that cause homelessness but gaps in service continue.

To meet these identified needs, staff recommends that the Shelter Resistant Task Force, first formed in 2013, evolve into a Community Response Team and implement a Housing First Model of service delivery.

The Team's membership would be expanded to include Homeless Outreach Specialists, Police Officers, Certified Substance Abuse Counselor, Licensed Mental Health Clinician, Psychiatrist and a Registered Nurse. The Team will be empowered to engage and respond to encampments in the river-bottom and on public properties. Continued partnerships with the City's Code Enforcement and Public Works Departments are critical to continued success. The Team will work with these Departments to develop protocols to facilitate readiness to identify and remove trash or debris when their services are requested by the Community Response Team.

The Team will build relationships and coordinate communications among existing City and County Departments and potential main-stream service providers, non-profits, faith-based communities, private business partners, residents, and homeless clients. These collaborations will result in the ability to offer tailored interventions that connect people with housing first, followed by services to meet the community's goal of reducing homelessness and improve the quality of life for all residents by reducing the number of people inhabiting public spaces.

The Team will be available to assist community members, businesses and homeless individuals daily from 6AM to 4PM Monday through Friday, throughout the City. The Community Response Team will be able to provide an immediate and prioritized response to the homeless concerns of local businesses. This mobile team will be available as early as 6AM, to engage individuals and resolve concerns before the businesses opens to the public. The Team will also be responsible for engaging at least 15 businesses per month to educate them on the Team's services and how to deter individuals from loitering on their property.

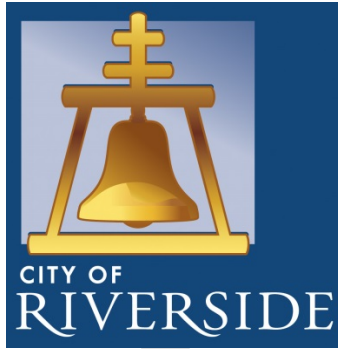
The Team will engage with individuals experiencing homelessness, conduct field assessments of the their needs, enter the individual into a database system and offer an appropriate and immediate housing intervention (e.g. motel voucher, emergency shelter bed, transitional or permanent unit) consistent with the Housing First Model of service delivery, in an attempt to eliminate their homeless condition, allow them to be receptive of additional services. Once an individual's immediate need for shelter is met, the Team will begin to address other barriers.

At the programmatic level, the Team will be responsible for collecting all data related to homelessness within the City and will work with the City's Emergency Operations Center to implement and track the costs associated with homeless individuals utilizing emergency services in lieu of participating in the services and resources provided by the City and the Team.

By implementing HOUSE TO HOME, a housing first model of homeless service delivery, supported by targeted resources provided by the Community Response Team, the formerly homeless individual will have reached a point of stability. The individual will be invited to participate in the Riverside at Work Program, a job-readiness and training program overseen by

the City's Homeless Services Division and working in concert with the Community Response Team.

Draft program guidelines for the proposed Community Response Team on following pages.



Community Response Team

Homelessness in Riverside 2016:

Homelessness is a complex social issue that impacts quality of life throughout the City of Riverside. Cross collaboration between public, private and government sectors is required to form and implement effective solutions.

First, it is critical that the Community recognize that the condition of homelessness can occur when an individual is impacted by both internal (e.g. mental health and substance abuse disorders) and external (e.g. housing, job loss) factors some, beyond their control. Each of these factors can be successfully addressed, through specific and coordinated efforts.

Second, the Community must also recognize that the condition of homelessness is not a criminal behavior. However, an individual, experiencing homelessness may engage in criminal behavior (e.g. theft, trespassing, substance abuse), and therefore a law enforcement response is the appropriate response. Dispersement and citation/arrest does not offer solutions or in any way address the underlying causes such as substance abuse disorders and mental health issues. In addition, they are draining precious law enforcement resources and expose the city to civil liability. On the contrary, to be constructive a goal should be to reduce homeless person's involvement with the criminal justice system. The presence of individuals experiencing homelessness in public spaces can result in friction with other members of the community who may view the circumstances of homelessness as a threat to public safety, business, or the general enjoyment of public areas.

Only through cross collaboration between local jurisdictions, law enforcement, mental health, private organizations and housing providers can the necessary funding and staffing resources come together to offer appropriate assistance to individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

In 2015, the City increased the occurrence of weekly field engagements to twice per week in addition to participating in coordinated engagements with County staff. The increased frequency and consistency of these engagements resulted in the perception of an increase in the population of homeless individuals, when in reality, the individuals engaged came out of the shadows.

Another contributing factor to the increase in visible homeless individuals is the introduction of the AB 109 Re-Alignment Program, an unfunded mandate from the State of California aimed at reducing the prison population. AB 109 releases low-risk offenders back into the community, prior to their sentences being completed. When considering the geographical impacts of homelessness in the City, it is important to acknowledge that the City of Riverside is also the County seat, home to the Robert Presley Detention Center and a hub of main transportation lines. Further, the City, as a tourist destination and a robust calendar of community events makes Riverside, especially downtown, a targeted destination for panhandlers.

Current City Systems:

The City of Riverside Homeless Outreach Team is comprised of four professional service providers who conduct daily mobile outreach and client service engagement for homeless individuals and families on the streets and places not meant for human habitation. The Outreach Team responds to the issues and concerns of people in need of assistance, as well as requests for services by residents, and businesses. The team operates Monday through Friday from 8 am to 5 pm.

In 2013, the Shelter Resistant Task Force (SRTF) was formed. The team includes both City and County agencies: City of Riverside Public Works, Code Enforcement, Police Department, and the City's Homeless Outreach Team and the County of Riverside Department of Mental Health, Probation Department and the County's Homeless Outreach Team. The Team's engages and address areas throughout the City which have become "hot spots" or areas that generate frequent requests for service. With a City of 86 square miles, the Task Force divides the City into two sections, East and West and engages individuals every Wednesday, alternating between the East and West sections.

The Shelter Resistant Task Force faces the challenge typical in multi-jurisdictional efforts, schedule coordination. Consistent coordinated efforts result in the homeless individual's anticipation of engagement, causing them to relocate prior to the engagement. Rescheduling of the coordinated effort, is impractical, as scheduling conflicts between jurisdictions is common. This rigidity, coupled with the fact that homeless individuals with one or more significant barriers (e.g. a homeless individual with untreated mental health concerns who is self-medicating with a legal or illegal substance) often requires multiple engagements with qualified professionals, typically 60, to accept services has made it apparent that these coordinated engagement sessions need to occur on a daily basis, not a bi-weekly basis. The team should also be expanded to include additional mental health and substance professionals.

Community Response Team:

Although the City and our partners have made positive strides toward collaborating and addressing the barriers that cause homelessness, coordinated weekly efforts, for a limited amount of time, is simply not enough. To meet these identified needs, it is recommended that the Shelter Resistant Task Force evolve into a Community Response Team and employ the Housing First Method of providing services possible.

The Team's membership would be expanded to include Homeless Outreach Specialists, Police Officers, Certified Substance Abuse Counselor, Licensed Mental Health Clinician, Psychiatrist and a Registered Nurse. The Team will be available to assist community members, businesses and homeless individuals daily from 6AM to 4PM Monday through Friday, throughout the City. The Team will engage with individuals experiencing homelessness, conduct field assessments of the individual's needs, enter the individual into a database system and offer an appropriate and immediate housing intervention (Housing First) in an attempt to eliminate their homeless

condition, allowing them to stabilize and receive additional services as quickly as possible.

Once an individual's immediate need for shelter is met, through the offer of an appropriate emergency housing intervention (e.g. motel voucher, emergency shelter) the team will connect the formerly homeless individual to appropriate services. While working with individuals to resolve the barriers causing their homelessness one-on-one, the Team will be able to build a rapport with the larger community of homeless individuals, allowing the team to obtain a broader view of the long-term needs of the population being served.

At the programmatic level, the team will be responsible for collecting all data related to homelessness within the City and will be tasked with working with the Emergency Operations Center to implement and track the costs associated with homeless individuals utilizing emergency services in lieu of participating in the services and resources provided by the City and the Team. The team will build relationships and coordinate communications among existing City and County Departments and potential main-stream service providers, non-profits, faith-based communities, private business partners, residents, and homeless clients. This will result in tailored interventions that connect people with housing first, followed by services and treatment to meet the community's goal of reducing homelessness and improve the quality of life for all residents by reducing the number of people inhabiting public spaces.

Best practices show that homelessness is resolved on an individual basis through sustained intervention, with a singular focus on the person in need and a persistent and consistent civic response via repeated engagement and focus on the overall well-being of the individual and improve the quality of life for all residents.

Continued partnerships with the City's Code Enforcement and Public Works Departments are critical to continued success. The Team will work with these Departments to develop protocols to facilitate readiness to tag and remove trash or debris when their services are requested by the response team. In addition, the Riverside at Work Program participants will work in conjunction with the Community Response Team to coordinate encampment clean-up efforts and on community beautification projects throughout Riverside, benefitting the community at large.

Benefits to the Business Community

The Community Response Team will be able to provide an immediate and prioritized response to the homeless concerns of local businesses. This mobile team will be available as early as 6AM, to engage individuals and resolve concerns before the business opens to the public.

The Community Response Team will make an effort to proactively engage 15 businesses per month to build relationships and offer information, in the form of a Homeless Resource Guide for Local Businesses. The Homeless Resource Guide for Local Business and other educational materials will focusing on effective ways to protect their businesses, and effective ways to assist individuals experiencing homelessness.

Goal

Improve quality of life for all businesses and residents of the City of Riverside, by:

- maintaining clean and sanitary streets, public areas, and parks free of debris and human waste;
- guiding all businesses and residents to economic sustainability and prosperity
- connect residents, especially those most vulnerable and living without shelter and with a large number of barriers, to success to sustainable and affordable housing opportunities.
- Educate the community about effective ways to assist individuals and families experiencing homelessness through a connection to volunteer opportunities with effective service providers

Hours of Operation:

The shift will operate from 6 am - 4 pm Monday through Friday. The main goal will be to identify and encounter homeless in their encampments and other places not meant for human habitation before they begin their day. This will make them most vulnerable and more willing to accept services.

Office Space:

To be most effective the Community Response Team headquarters should co-exist with housing units. This allows residents the ability to conveniently access members of the Team and participate in on-going case management, meet with referred service providers, and receive the support they need to obtain the highest level of self-sufficiency possible.

Formation of Community Response Team:

(2) Homeless Outreach Specialists

Purpose: SOAR training connect disabled homeless to get approved for Social Security, Housing Navigation-conduct a Vi-SDAT assessments, access of social services)

(2) Police Officers

Purpose: Address Criminal Behaviors and handle accordingly.

(1) Psychiatrist

Purpose: To assist with diagnosing and prescribing psychiatric medications to untreated homeless individuals. Will take the lead on severely mentally ill clients who are a harm to themselves.

(1) Nurse (H2H Clinic)

Purpose: To provide on-site minor medical treatment and facilitate medical treatment.

(1) Mental Health Clinician

Purpose: Assist with engagement of severe mentally ill homeless individuals and link to appropriate mental health services.

(1) Substance Abuse Counselor

Purpose: understanding and Identifying contributing factors and understanding addiction.

The team will have immediate access to Code Enforcement and Public Works assistance for tagging and pick-up.

What (Physical Assets)

(7) Cell phones (smart phones with internet and photograph technology)

(2) Tablets (with internet access)

(2) Vehicles

Motel Vouchers:

It has been the Outreach Team's experience in which they encounter situations that require rapid, temporary placement of vulnerable individuals and families into safe and appropriate housing. Quite often, the family and community shelters are at full-capacity. Path of Life Ministries continues to work in collaboration with the City, however, quite often the need is too large for one agency to fulfill. The long-term goal of the Homeless Services Coordinator is to identify resources such as faith-based communities to supply the team with motel vouchers routed through the nonprofit status. This service will only be utilized as a last resort.

Database/Case Management System:

Implement a shared informational database system which tracks all clients assisted including services offered, received, case management hours, notes, etc. Data system will be able to provide trend and hot spot tracking as well as analysis, mapping panhandling and homeless trends.

Cost

\$ <u>120,000</u>	(2) Homeless Outreach workers
\$ <u>348,000</u>	(2) Police Officers <i>* Salary & benefits for a top step police officer with advanced certificate and speaks Spanish is \$174,000</i> <i>* This does not include uniforms, vest, duty belt, and misc. supplies</i>
\$ <u>0</u>	(1) Nurse <i>* This will be a free member of the team provided by Health to Hope</i>
\$ <u>150,000</u>	(1) Mental Health Clinician
\$ <u>60,000</u>	(1) Substance Abuse Counselor <i>* This would be a new position for a City of Riverside employee</i>
\$ <u>208,000</u>	(1) Psychiatrist <i>* This would be a part-time, contract psychiatrist who would work with the team two or three days a week to help the team examine homeless for severe mental needs and assessment of potential civil commitments</i> <i>* Online research says the cost might vary anywhere from \$100 to \$300 an hour. Taking a conservative estimate of \$200 per hour for 20 hours a week produces a \$208,000 yearly estimate, although this figure could vary greatly depending on the results of a competitive RFP process</i>
\$ <u>4,284</u>	(7) Cell phones (smart phones with internet and photograph technology) <i>* \$40 initial purchase (we only pay taxes) and then approx. \$51/mo. per phone (for unlimited text) for a total of \$280 initial cost and then \$4,284 per year</i>
\$ <u>672.00</u>	(2) Tablets (with internet access) <i>* \$980 initial purchase (Surface Pro w/keyboard) and then approx. \$28/mo. for a \$1,960 initial cost and then \$672 per year</i>
\$ <u>96,000</u>	Vehicles <i>* (1) Fully outfitted police patrol car is approx. \$42,000;</i> <i>* (1) Ford Fusion (for mental health worker and/or substance abuse counselor) is approx. \$22,000;</i> <i>* (1) Ford Transit passenger van (for team members and/or transient transportation) is approx. \$32,000;</i>
\$ <u>TBD</u>	Database / Case Management software <i>* Document contacts & arrests, photos, tracking progress ...</i> <i>* This might require an RFP</i>
\$ <u>5,000</u>	Motel Vouchers for emergency housing when all other options have been exhausted.

This plan has an approximate \$989,240.00 startup cost with an additional \$991,956.00 yearly cost.