

# ENDING HOMELESSNESS IN RIVERSIDE COUNTY

The Riverside County Executive Oversight Committee on Homelessness (EOCH) includes the following partner agencies:

Code Enforcement Department

Department of Animal Services

Department of Public Social Services

Economic Development Agency

Office of County Counsel

Housing Authority

Probation Department

Riverside County Executive Office

Riverside County Sheriff

Riverside University Health System (RUHS)

RUHS-Department of Behavioral Health

RUHS-Population Health

RUHS-Public Health

The 2017 Point-in-Time Homeless County and Survey identified over 2,400 homeless individuals in Riverside County. To more effectively address the needs of the homeless, the Riverside County Executive Oversight Committee on Homelessness (EOCH) developed this action plan to provide a comprehensive set of 23 recommendations to end homelessness through:

- ✚ **PREVENTION**
- ✚ **COLLABORATION and COORDINATION**
- ✚ **RAPID HOUSING PLACEMENT**



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# An Action Plan to Address Homelessness in Riverside County

## Executive Summary

The 2017 Point-In-Time Homeless Count and Survey (PIT Count) identified a total of 2,406 homeless individuals in Riverside County, an increase of 11% from 2016 (2,165). In addition, the total unsheltered homeless population increased by 21.2% from 2016 (1,351) to 2017 (1,638). According to the 2017 PIT Count, among the unsheltered homeless population counted, 12% (193) were under the age of 24, 6% (91) were Veterans, while 21% (341) were classified as chronically homeless.

The Executive Oversight Committee on Homelessness (EOCH)--with the support of staff from numerous county agencies, cities, and community-based organizations--has developed an action plan to address homelessness by applying evidence-based strategies and best practices to effectively meet the needs of specific geographic areas and sub-populations. The action plan is intended to be a *living document* that requires ongoing development and updates based on the changing environment, community demands, and emerging opportunities.

The action plan focuses on three primary goals for addressing homelessness in the following Riverside County populations: youth, veterans, families, and chronically homeless individuals and families.

➤ ***Goal 1 – Prevent homelessness among individuals and families at-risk of becoming homeless.***

Design and implement a coordinated prevention system to provide limited cash assistance, a wide range of free or low-cost supportive services, and/or supplies to those most likely to become homeless.

➤ ***Goal 2 – End homelessness of single individuals and families who are living on the streets and in shelter and transitional housing programs.***

Design and implement a coordinated system of evidence-based Housing First, low barrier, and rapid rehousing (RRH) approaches to obtaining and maintaining housing of specified subpopulations in geographic areas with the greatest need.

➤ ***Goal 3 – Ensure funding for a coordinated system to end and prevent homelessness among individuals and families.***

Identify a wide range of public and private funding opportunities to carry out the design and implementation of the coordinated system to prevent and end homelessness.

To achieve these three goals, the action plan calls for the implementation of four primary strategies, listed below, and establishes 23 recommendations.

- ❖ Strategy 1 - Improve System Coordination
- ❖ Strategy 2 - Increase Housing Resources
- ❖ Strategy 3 - Increase Outreach & Navigation
- ❖ Strategy 4 - Increase Supportive Services

It is acknowledged that additional measures and tracking tools will need to be developed to further measure the effectiveness of this plan toward ending homelessness in Riverside County. As a starting point, the EOCH will partner with the County of Riverside Continuum of Care (CoC) to initially assess the system performance outcomes using existing reporting tools (including dashboards) in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), as required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

# AN ACTION PLAN TO ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS IN RIVERSIDE COUNTY

## GOAL 1

### Prevent Homelessness

#### System Coordination

- A1. Design and Implement a Homeless Prevention System
- A2. Develop a Coordinated Discharge Planning System
- A3. Develop and Implement a Homeless Prevention and Awareness Campaign

#### Housing Resources

- A4. Create a Shelter Diversion System
- A5. Develop Affordable Housing and Improve Affordability

## GOAL 2

### End Homelessness

#### System Coordination

- B1. Create a Fully Functional Home Connect (Coordinated Entry) System
- B2. Implement a Community-Wide Housing First and Low Barrier Approach
- B3. Establish a Countywide Homeless Court Program
- B4. Develop a Protocol Focused on Proactive Strategies to End the Cycle of Homelessness
- B5. Develop a First Responders Training Program

#### Housing Resources

- B6. Increase the Supply of Bridge Housing
- B7. Increase the Supply of Permanent Supportive Housing
- B8. Increase Rapid Rehousing Assistance

#### Outreach and Navigation

- B9. Create a Housing Search and Capacity Building Team
- B10. Expand Street Outreach within the Housing Crisis Response System (HCRS)
- B11. Expand Housing Navigation within the HCRS

#### Supportive Services

- B12. Increase the Number of Home-Based Care Managers
- B13. Increase Supportive Services
- B14. Enhance Community Partnerships to Increase Employment Opportunities
- B15. Enhance CalWORKs Subsidized Employment Program for Homeless Families
- B16. Improve Access to Health Care and Mainstream Benefits

## GOAL 3

### Ensure Funding for a Coordinated System

#### System Coordination

- C1. Conduct Funding Analysis
- C2. Create a Regional Funders' Collaborative

# Prevent Homelessness

## System Coordination

### A1: Design and Implement a Homeless Prevention System (HPS)

#### Recommendation

Design and implement an effective Homeless Prevention System (HPS) to identify individuals and families who are most likely to become homeless and ensure they receive the necessary resources to prevent homelessness.

#### Lead Agency

- Department of Public Social Services (DPSS)
- Community Action Partnership (CAP)

#### Status

- In Development

#### Target Populations

- Chronically Homeless
- Veterans
- Families
- Youth

#### Potential Funding Sources

- Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG):
  - Allocations directly to entitlement jurisdictions; Balance of state allocation to non-entitlement jurisdictions
- Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP)
- Community Action Partnership (CAP)

#### Description

An effective HPS will ensure that individuals and families most likely to become homeless do not become homeless. The approach focuses on early identification of high risk families using existing resources and immediately providing them with assistance to ensure they maintain their current housing whenever possible. The HPS will provide limited cash assistance and a wide range of free and/or low-cost supportive services and supplies to at-risk households.

Households with the *highest risk* of becoming homeless will receive the following types of services:

- Rental and utility assistance directly provided to vendors or providers (utility deposits, security deposits, and move-in costs); legal fee assistance; transportation assistance; credit repair assistance

Households with *moderate risk* of becoming homeless will receive the following types of services as needed:

- Clothing, food, and household equipment, furniture, supplies; utility assistance (energy saving/weatherization improvements); public assistance; educational assistance and school supplies; dispute resolution services; savings match assistance; mental health assistance; employment services; free tax preparation; substance use counseling and treatment; health care assistance; hygienic supplies

#### Next Steps

- Establish a Homeless Prevention Team to design and implement a countywide HPS to include DPSS, CAP and RUHS-BH (CES), 211 Community Connect, and other key stakeholders to: 1) Conduct an assessment and system mapping of current prevention resources and services in the county; and 2) Develop a system focused on connecting individuals and families at-risk of homelessness to services and resources to ensure they remain stably housed and be assisted in developing an individual plan to prevent future homelessness or housing instability.
- Evaluate key indicators and the availability of data that can accurately identify high or moderate risk characteristics for homelessness (e.g., HMIS, characteristics of local sheltered population).
- Identify or develop a screening and identification tool that accurately identifies individuals and families to benefit from emergency, low-cost assistance to prevent individuals from losing their homes.

# Prevent Homelessness

## System Coordination

### A2: Develop a Coordinated Discharge Planning System

#### Recommendation

Develop a coordinated discharge planning system between all county departments for persons transitioning from one department's care/case management services into another.

#### Lead Agency

- Riverside University Health System– Population Health (RUHS-PH)

#### Status

- Ongoing

#### Target Populations

- Chronically Homeless
- Veterans
- Families
- Youth

#### Potential Funding Sources

- California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) – Whole Person Care Program

#### Description

A coordinated discharge planning system will allow for continuity of care and service provision for clients receiving services from multiple service providers. An effective discharge planning process will prepare a homeless person with psychiatric and/or substance abuse disorders for return or re-entry to the community and the linkage of the individual to essential community services as supports. Discharge planning between departments and service providers will seek to encompass all case management transitions, including clients transitioning from:

- RUHS Medical Center (RUHS-MC) to RUHS Clinics
- Foster Care to Adult Programs
- Jail to Probation
- Detention Health (DH) to RUHS-MC (and vice versa)
- DH to Department of Behavioral Health (DBH)
- DH to RUHS Clinics (behavioral health or medical)
- Probation to RUHS Clinics (behavioral health or medical)
- Probation to RUHS-MC (and vice versa)
- RUHS Behavioral Health to RUHS Medical Clinics
- RUHS-MC Arlington Campus to RUHS Behavioral Health
- RUHS Public Health to RUHS-MC or RUHS Clinics

#### Next Steps

- Review, update, and expand the existing interagency Cooperative Agreement (signed in 2011) between DPSS, RUHS-BH, Sheriff's Department, Department of Veterans' Services, Community Connect, and Hospital Association of Southern California, to support and participate in the CoC Discharge Planning Committee. This committee is to: (1) develop and implement a countywide homeless prevention policy for persons leaving publicly funded institutions or systems of care; and (2) have a key role in coordinating after-care planning and/or directly providing community-based services that serve to prevent homelessness for individuals with severe mental health or substance abuse disorders.
- Identify an electronic database solution to contain the necessary data and information from the relevant departments to assist with discharge planning.
- Assess and expand data sharing agreements between city/county departments and other community-based service providers providing services to common clients being discharged from institutional care, hospitals, and acute or long-term facilities.
- Evaluate and identify best practices, protocols, and staff training for housing-focused discharge planning, including direct linkage to the county's Coordinated Entry System and "zero-tolerance" discharge policies.

# Prevent Homelessness

## System Coordination

### A3: Develop and Implement a Homeless Prevention and Awareness Campaign

#### Recommendation

*Develop and implement a multi-media homeless prevention and awareness campaign focused on homeless prevention resources available to at-risk individuals, at-risk families, and to community groups who seek to help them.*

#### Lead Agency

- Riverside County Executive Office (CEO)
- Department of Public Social Services (DPSS)

#### Status

- In Development

#### Target Populations

- Chronically Homeless
- Families
- Veterans
- Youth

#### Potential Funding Sources

- To be determined

#### Description

It is important that households and individuals at-risk of becoming homeless are aware of the resources available to help prevent homelessness. Homeless prevention awareness will involve making individuals and families aware of supportive services available in the community and how to access them.

It is also important that community groups including faith-based organizations, local government agencies, and non-profit organizations are engaged in homeless prevention education. When engaged community partners are made aware of the spectrum of services needed, they can be more effective in assisting and linking individuals to community resources that can prevent homelessness.

The homeless prevention and awareness campaign will also develop a “Homeless Prevention Guide” for the public that is electronically available on various community websites, as well as available in hard-copy at various locations across the county including:

- Social Service Agencies
- Libraries
- Sheriff, Police, and Fire Stations
- Community Centers
- Hospitals, Clinics
- Animal Shelters
- Schools
- Municipalities
- Non-profit Organizations

#### Next Steps

- Identify existing homeless campaigns used by cities, faith-based and business sectors that can be replicated as a countywide campaign.
- Partner with CVAG and WRCOG to implement campaign to cities.
- Identify opportunities to market and distribute the campaign throughout the county, including but not limited to: electronic signs; newspapers and newsletters; community calendars; local cable TV; billboards, bus stops; public service announcements on radio; agency and community websites; social media; movie theatre ads.

# Prevent Homelessness

## Housing Resources

### A4: Create a Shelter Diversion System

#### Recommendation

*Divert households from entering emergency shelter through rapid rehousing assistance and aiding in obtaining and maintaining permanent housing.*

#### Lead Agency

- Department of Public Social Services (DPSS)
- Department of Behavioral Health (DBH)

#### Status

- In Progress

#### Target Populations

- Chronically Homeless
- Veterans
- Families
- Youth

#### Potential Funding Sources

- Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG):
  - Allocations directly to entitlement jurisdictions; Balance of state allocation to non-entitlement jurisdictions
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Continuum of Care (CoC) funding for rapid rehousing programs
- HUD HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME)
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Supportive Services for Veterans Families (SSVF)

#### Description

The shelter diversion program consists of the following:

- 1) household assessment
- 2) use of bridge housing
- 3) assistance with obtaining permanent and affordable housing

Once it has been determined that a household will lose their housing, an assessment will be conducted to determine when housing will cease, and the availability of family, friends, or other support network who may be able to shelter the household upon exiting their current housing. Housing search activities will be simultaneously be conducted.

If permanent housing was not obtained prior to the household's loss of housing, bridge housing rather than emergency shelter will be explored next. Bridge housing has no preconditions and provides safe, temporary housing while households await permanent housing placement. While in bridge housing, households work with a housing navigator to secure permanent and affordable housing as soon as possible. Assistance provided by the housing navigator may include:

- Housing location services
- Financial assistance for rent, utilities, and moving costs
- Case management and supportive services

#### Next Steps

- The CoC Coordinated Entry System Oversight Committee will finalize a diversion screening tool to be used in CES, along with a process and protocols to quickly determine whether a family and/or individual is eligible to be diverted. This screening tool and process will also be used at each county-funded emergency shelter.
- Conduct training for emergency shelter staff on how to implement a diversion program at the "front door" before a family/individual can enter the shelter.



# Prevent Homelessness

## Housing Resources

### A5: Develop Affordable Housing and Improve Affordability

#### Recommendation

Identify additional funding for subsidized housing, providing developer incentives to create additional affordable housing, along with developing and identifying funding sources for a permanent supportive housing model to address case management, employment services, and other key supportive services households need to maintain and thrive in stable housing.

#### Lead Agency

- Economic Development Agency (EDA)
- Transportation & Land Management Agency (TMLA)

#### Status

- In Progress

#### Target Populations

- Chronically Homeless
- Veterans
- Families
- Youth

#### Potential Funding Sources

- HOME Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) Housing Authority and the City of Riverside have TBRA funding
- Public Housing (Housing Choice Voucher and Section 8) - Housing Authority
- Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) - offers homeless prevention and rapid-rehousing
- VASH vouchers

#### Description

The County of Riverside, as with many other California counties, has a shortage of affordable housing. The creation of new affordable housing units and/or rehabilitation of existing units for chronic homeless and those who are under-housed must be prioritized. New affordable housing projects should be required to set aside a minimum of 20% of the units for chronically homeless individuals/families.

The Economic Development Agency (EDA) will lead the effort to create a supply of new affordable housing units through partnerships with developers, by purchasing properties to rehabilitate using federal or state funding, tax subsidies, or tax credits. New affordable housing for homeless individuals and families can be created through new construction, acquisition and rehab, master leasing, set-asides in existing buildings/developments, and through dedicated units in new developments (through inclusionary zoning and other strategies).

#### Next Steps

- Assess the need for, and feasibility of, new construction, acquisition and rehab, master leasing, set-asides in existing buildings/developments, and dedicated units in new developments (through inclusionary zoning and other strategies).
- Identify properties (land, retail or commercial space, motels, apartments, housing units, mobile home parks) in the county that can be acquired and converted into affordable permanent housing and permanent supportive housing for homeless people.
- Identify additional funding sources, incentives, and partners (e.g., developers) that will improve housing affordability.

# End Homelessness

## System Coordination

### *B1: Create a Fully Functional Home Connect (Coordinated Entry) System*

#### **Recommendation**

*Create a fully functional Home Connect System (HCS) that will serve as Riverside County’s Coordinated Entry System (CES) to centrally coordinate intake assessment and service referrals.*

#### **Lead Agency**

- Riverside University Health System – Behavioral Health (RUHS-BH)

#### **Status**

- In Progress/Ongoing

#### **Target Populations**

- Chronically homeless households
- Veterans
- Families with children under age 18
- Non-chronically homeless youth aged 18-24
- Homeless youth unaccompanied under age 18

#### **Potential Funding Sources**

- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Continuum of Care (CoC) funding for coordinated entry systems

#### **Description**

RUHS-BH, in conjunction with the Riverside County Continuum of Care and other community partners, will develop a plan to create a fully functional Home Connect System that will serve as Riverside County’s Coordinated Entry System (CES).

The system will include:

- As many community access points as possible
- A strong data entry component for reporting, tracking, and housing linkage
- A comprehensive and standardized assessment tool to aid in determining those homeless individuals with the most severe needs, prioritizing them for appropriate housing and supportive services

#### **Next Steps**

- Ensure full utilization and widespread county access to the Home Connect System (HCS).
- Stabilize HCS data completeness and accuracy.
- Ensure countywide monitoring and access to housing and resource referrals.
- Coordinate assignment of housing navigation staff to those determined most at-risk.
- Provide a system education/training plan.
- Include a system advertising campaign.
- Provide landlord supports and inclusions.
- Ensure linkage and connection through outreach efforts with the Homeless Prevention Specialist Program.

# End Homelessness

## System Coordination

### B2: Implement a Community-Wide Housing First and Low Barrier Approach

#### Recommendation

Implement a community-wide Housing First and low barrier approach to help homeless persons obtain and maintain permanent affordable housing regardless of their service needs or challenges.

#### Lead Agency

- Department of Public Social Services (DPSS)

#### Status

- In Progress

#### Target Populations

- Chronically Homeless
- Veterans
- Families
- Youth

#### Potential Funding Sources

- Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG):
  - Allocations directly to entitlement jurisdictions; balance of state allocation to non-entitlement jurisdictions
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Continuum of Care (CoC) funding for rapid rehousing programs

#### Description

Housing First is a community-wide approach that enables access to permanent housing without the typical prerequisites or conditions of other programs. The underlying philosophy of Housing First is that individuals experiencing homelessness can achieve stability, regardless of their needs or challenges, if provided with the appropriate services. Implementing a Housing First and low barrier approach to help homeless individuals obtain and maintain permanent affordable housing involves removing barriers that hinder homeless persons from securing such housing.

Barriers to be addressed that hinder homeless individuals from *obtaining* housing include:

- Little or no income
- Substance abuse (either active or a history of)
- Criminal records
- Domestic violence victimization

Barriers to be addressed that hinder homeless individuals from *maintaining* housing include:

- Failure to participate in supportive services
- Failure to make progress on a service plan
- Loss of, or failure to improve, income
- Domestic violence victimization (e.g., fleeing a domestic violence situation)

#### Next Steps

- The EOCH will facilitate the creation of a strong collaborative partnership in conjunction with the COC, with the following partners to address these barriers to reducing homelessness:
  - Housing navigators
  - Home-based case managers
  - Housing providers
  - City & County Departments with homeless services
  - Home Connect System
  - Policy makers
  - Street outreach workers
  - Public and private funders

# End Homelessness

## System Coordination

### B3: Establish a Countywide Homeless Court Program

#### Recommendation

*Establish a countywide Homeless Court program allowing homeless individuals to resolve outstanding misdemeanor and infraction cases against them under a progressive plea-bargaining system.*

#### Lead Agency

- District Attorney

#### Status

- In Progress

#### Target Populations

- Chronically Homeless
- Veterans
- Families
- Youth

#### Potential Funding Sources

- To be determined

#### Description

Pending misdemeanor or infraction cases, and outstanding fines/fees associated with previously adjudicated cases, often serve as impediments to overcoming homelessness. The proposed Homeless Court program will provide options for resolving these issues. Participation in the Homeless Court program will be voluntary.

The Homeless Court program will use an incentive-based alternative plea and sentencing system. This system will acknowledge and give “credit” for a participant’s pre-appearance and acceptance of, and participation in, provider-based activities aimed at self-improvement. A court approved service provider will establish a specialized treatment plan for each participant. Upon completion of the required activities outlined in the treatment plan, the participant will be “sentenced” to those activities in lieu of other traditional court sanctions.

Activities/treatments which may be required of participants include:

- Counseling
- Medical care
- Life-skills program participation
- Chemical dependency meeting attendance
- Employment search and training participation
- Housing search efforts

#### Next Steps

- Establish a network of approved local agency service providers for the Homeless Court Program.
- Create a Homeless Court Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) establishing: the program’s objectives; the roles and responsibilities of each party; the participant and case eligibility criteria; and how eligibility will be determined.
- Establish a Homeless Court Team consisting of the relevant lead and collaborative agencies responsible for the oversight and administration of the Homeless Court program.
- Develop a protocol for processing the criminal case outcomes.

# End Homelessness

## System Coordination

### *B4: Develop a Protocol Focused on Proactive Strategies to End the Cycle of Homelessness*

#### **Recommendation**

*Work in coordination with all local law enforcement agencies and city attorneys to develop a protocol focused on proactive strategies to end the cycle of homelessness.*

#### **Lead Agency**

- County Counsel

#### **Status**

- In Development

#### **Target Populations**

- Chronically Homeless
- Veterans
- Families
- Youth

#### **Potential Funding Sources**

- Costs are NCC and allocation is subject to competition with other obligations of Code Enforcement, DPSS, Housing Authority, County Counsel, and the Sheriff's Department.

#### **Description**

Prioritize proactive strategies to address underlying causes of homelessness. Providing pathways to end and prevent homelessness can positively impact criminal behavior and recidivism within the homeless community. A growing body of research suggests shelter and housing programs are more cost-effective methods for addressing the causes of homelessness and public concerns.

#### **Next Steps**

- Develop a Homeless Encampment Protocol prioritizing relocation to housing and shelters over enforcement of ordinances and other laws and regulations, where underlying factors which result in homeless encampments can be remedied.
- Develop a collaborative process with the court system to enable homeless individuals an avenue to effectively address fines and penalties for new and old violations.
- Support statewide legislative efforts through the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) to prioritize homeless ending and proactive problem-solving strategies over reactive legislation and law enforcement which perpetuate homelessness.

# End Homelessness

## System Coordination

### B5: Develop a First Responders Training Program

#### Recommendation

Develop and implement a first responders training to facilitate the relationship between social services, law enforcement, and homeless individuals.

#### Lead Agency

- Riverside Sheriff's Office (RSO)

#### Status

- In Progress

#### Target Populations

- Chronically Homeless
- Veterans
- Families
- Youth

#### Potential Funding Sources

- To be determined

#### Description

This training will teach peace officers outreach strategies for addressing homelessness. Officers will be trained to offer and divert individuals to a pathway of assistance, recovery and housing. The training will reinforce the recognition of civil rights and property rights in the homeless environment

#### Next Steps

- Link first responders with available social service agencies, private and social service entities, and local hospitals and medical staff to develop a network of resources and pathways tailored to end homelessness.
- Implement the first responders training in three phases:

##### PHASE I

- Establish a training group (Sheriff's Homeless Outreach TEAM (HOT) & members from other disciplines)
- Obtain buy-in from participating agencies
- Determine and document curriculum
- Create a training format

##### PHASE II

- Identify needed funding sources
- Determine needed training locations
- Obtain buy-in from first responder agencies
- Schedule and present training

##### PHASE III

- Develop feedback process to improve future training
- Develop assessment methods to quantify "success" of training

- The first responders training will be of sufficient length to address the following topics:
  - The duties and responsibilities of first responders
  - The meaning and causation of homelessness
  - The public safety value of proactive problem-solving strategies
  - Property rights of the homeless
  - Civil rights of the homeless
  - The needs of homeless: i.e. mental health, drug dependence, physical disability, etc.
  - Immediate and long-term services for the homeless
  - Housing transition processes
  - Housing options
  - Safe interaction with the homeless community
  - The duties and responsibilities of first responders

# End Homelessness

## Housing Resources

### *B6: Increase the Supply of Bridge Housing*

#### **Recommendation**

*Increase the supply of bridge housing to provide temporary housing for individuals and families who have accepted an offer of a permanent supportive housing or permanent affordable housing unit and are willing to work with a housing navigator to obtain the permanent unit.*

#### **Lead Agency**

- Riverside University Health System-Behavioral Health (RUHS-BH)
- Housing Authority
- Department of Public Social Services (DPSS)

#### **Status**

- In Progress/Ongoing

#### **Target Populations**

- Chronically homeless households
- Veteran families and chronically homeless individuals
- Families with children under age 18

#### **Potential Funding Sources**

- Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG):
  - Allocations directly to entitlement jurisdictions; balance of state allocation to non-entitlement jurisdictions
- Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP)
- California Department of Finance (DOF) Community-Based Transitional Housing Program (CTHP)
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Health Care for Homeless Veterans Program and Grant Per Diem (GPD) Housing

#### **Description**

Since HUD began to shift funding away from transitional housing to permanent housing, the supply of transitional housing beds has decreased to almost none. Interim or transitional housing beds are still needed, however, to bridge a homeless individual or family who has been accepted for permanent housing but may wait weeks or months to find a permanent unit. As a remedy, bridge housing can offer short stays in transitional housing and/or motels/hotels during the waiting period.

While in bridge housing, housing navigators will focus on assisting households with:

- Increasing their income
- Acquiring/completing the documentation, forms, and paperwork necessary to secure permanent housing
- Attending property owner meetings and/or setting appointments as necessary
- The actual move into permanent housing

#### **Next Steps**

- Assess the number of bridge housing beds that currently exist in the county and the demand for bridge housing based on the Coordinated Entry System (CES) data.
- Identify and pursue new funding opportunities for additional bridge housing for the county.
- Prioritize existing funding that can be used for bridge housing, such as ESG funding, county general funds.

# End Homelessness

## Housing Resources

### *B7: Increase the Supply of Supportive Permanent Housing*

#### **Recommendation**

*Develop a plan to increase permanent supportive housing (PSH) in Riverside County through an evidence-based intervention model which includes case management, employment services, and other key supports that households need to maintain and thrive in stable housing.*

#### **Lead Agency**

- Riverside County Economic Development Agency (EDA)
- Housing Authority of the County of Riverside (HACR)

#### **Status**

- In Progress/Ongoing

#### **Target Populations**

- Chronically homeless households
- Veteran chronically homeless households

#### **Potential Funding Sources**

- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD):
  - Continuum of Care (CoC) funding for PSH programs; Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program; Family Unification program
- California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD):
  - No Place Like Home Program; Home Investment Partnership Program (HOME)
- Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA)

#### **Description**

Permanent supportive housing (PSH) is an evidence-based housing intervention for individuals with a disabling condition who need subsidized housing (for which they pay no more than 30% of their adjusted monthly income).

#### **Next Steps**

- Identify additional funding for subsidized housing.
- Prioritize all reallocated and bonus CoC Program funding to be used to create new Permanent Supportive Housing beds.
- Implement a countywide effort to graduate current clients in PSH, who do not need the intensive level of services, to affordable housing.
- Provide developer incentives for creating additional affordable housing.
- Provide supportive services (through housing navigators) until a permanent housing case manager takes over and the individual is residing in a permanent supportive housing unit.
- Focus home-based case management on helping individuals maintain their housing, minimizing penalties for lack of participation in supportive services, with the following supportive services available on- or off-site:
  - education and employment services; emergency assistance; health services; substance use counseling and treatment; in-home visits; training on daily living activities, homemaking, and budgeting



# End Homelessness

## Housing Resources

### *B8: Increase Rapid Rehousing (RRH) Assistance*

#### **Recommendation**

*Expand the number of rapid rehousing (RRH) programs throughout Riverside County aimed at assisting households experiencing transitional homelessness, to stabilize in permanent housing as quickly as possible.*

#### **Lead Agency**

- Riverside County Economic Development Agency (EDA)
- Housing Authority of the County of Riverside (HACR)

#### **Status**

- In Progress/Ongoing

#### **Target Populations**

- Veteran non-chronically homeless households
- Families with children under age 18
- Non-chronically homeless youth aged 18-24

#### **Potential Funding Sources**

- Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) (Allocations directly to entitlement jurisdictions; Balance of state allocation to non-entitlement jurisdictions)
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Continuum of Care (CoC) funding for RRH programs
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program
- California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) Housing Support Program
- Community Services Block Grant
- Community Development Block Grant (Allocation to Riverside County; Allocation to entitlement jurisdictions)

#### **Description**

A majority of the homeless population is transitionally homeless, entering homelessness due to a housing crisis, and could successfully exit homelessness within thirty days with minimal support. RRH programs focus on housing identification, case management, and move-in assistance as intervention mechanisms for supporting this population. While existing RRH programs are in place, additional RRH assistance is necessary to meet the demands of households pending placement identified through Riverside County's Coordinated Entry System (CES).

#### **Next Steps**

- Identify current RRH service gaps in specific regions.
- Coordinate with cities to discuss funding opportunities for creating local RRH programs.
- Connect cities with credible agencies to assist with the implementation of local RRH programs.
- Advocate for additional funding to support existing and new RRH projects and programs.
- Support and expand the number of permanent housing placements made through CES.

# End Homelessness

## Outreach & Navigation

### B9: Create a Housing Search & Capacity Building Team (HSCBT)

#### Recommendation

Create a Housing Search and Capacity Building Team (HSCBT) comprised of housing locators who, with support from a wide-range of community members, focus on identifying various affordable housing options for homeless individuals.

#### Lead Agency

- Riverside University Health System Behavioral Health (RUHS-BH)
- Riverside County Economic Development Agency (EDA)

#### Status

- In Progress

#### Target Populations

- Chronically homeless households
- Veterans
- Families with children under age 18
- Non-chronically homeless youth aged 18-24

#### Potential Funding Sources

- Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG): Allocations directly to entitlement jurisdictions; Balance of state allocation to non-entitlement jurisdictions
- Community Development Block Grant: Allocation to Riverside County and to entitlement jurisdictions

#### Description

The HSCBT will provide affordable housing options to street outreach workers who will encourage those in need to work with a housing navigator to pursue, obtain, and maintain an appropriate affordable housing placement.

Increasing affordable housing opportunities through the efforts of the HSCBT will allow street outreach workers to focus on developing relationships with homeless individuals, including the chronically homeless, and increase their motivation to pursue appropriate and affordable housing opportunities.

The creation of a HSCBT will:

- Engage a wide-range of community representatives in housing search and capacity building activities.
- Result in an increase of affordable housing opportunities.
- Allow street outreach workers to effectively engage homeless individuals and present affordable and/or temporary housing opportunities when needed.

#### Next Steps

- Train existing housing locators funded with State ESG funds to identify available housing for clients being referred through CES.
- Request the CoC Housing Committee to update an existing assessment of affordable housing conducted by the committee in 2013-14.
- Engage and partner with cities to identify affordable housing in their jurisdictions.

# End Homelessness

## Outreach & Navigation

### *B10: Expand Street Outreach within the Housing Crisis Response System*

#### **Recommendation**

*Expand street outreach within the Housing Crisis Response Team in all areas of the County ensuring outreach workers effectively and efficiently engage persons living on the streets.*

#### **Lead Agency**

- Riverside University Health System Behavioral Health (RUHS-BH)

#### **Status**

- In Progress/Ongoing

#### **Target Populations**

- Chronically homeless households
- Veterans
- Families with children under age 18
- Non-chronically homeless youth aged 18-24
- Homeless youth unaccompanied under age 18

#### **Potential Funding Sources**

- Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG): Allocations directly to entitlement jurisdictions; Balance of state allocation to non-entitlement jurisdictions)
- U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS)
  - Administration for Children and Families – Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs: Street Outreach Program
  - Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration – Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH)

#### **Description**

Expanding street outreach within the Housing Crisis Response System will ensure street outreach workers are able to effectively engage individuals and families experiencing housing crises throughout the County, including those residing in highly visible homeless encampments. Outreach workers play the critical role of executing the initial steps leading to effective engagements with homeless individuals, including:

- building a personal connection
- assessing of immediate needs
- identifying individual barriers

These initial steps to be performed by street outreach workers allow them to:

- Offer the appropriate support services and/or referrals.
- Assist homeless individuals in addressing and overcoming barriers to permanent and affordable housing.
- Improve homeless individuals' social support network.

#### **Next Steps**

- Identify existing outreach workers in the county and map the geographic regions each covers.
- Ensure coordination among existing outreach workers through the Coordinated Entry System, including assignments based on geographical regions, sub-population, and funding limitations.
- Assess existing gaps in outreach coverage based on completion of the first two steps.

# End Homelessness

## Outreach & Navigation

### *B11: Expand Housing Navigation within the Housing Crisis Response System*

#### **Recommendation**

*Expand housing navigation within the Housing Crisis Response System to ensure housing navigators can effectively engage with homeless individuals living on the streets.*

#### **Lead Agency**

- Riverside University Health System Behavioral Health (RUHS-BH)
- Housing Authority

#### **Status**

- In Progress/Ongoing

#### **Target Populations**

- Chronically homeless households
- Veterans
- Families with children under age 18
- Non-chronically homeless youth aged 18-24
- Homeless youth unaccompanied under age 18

#### **Potential Funding Sources**

- Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG): Allocations directly to entitlement jurisdictions; Balance of state allocation to non-entitlement jurisdictions
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Continuum of Care (CoC) funding for Rapid Rehousing (RRH) programs; Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) programs

#### **Description**

Expanding housing navigation within the Housing Crisis Response System will ensure housing navigators effectively provide housing navigation services to homeless individuals who have been successfully engaged by street outreach workers, including those living in highly visible homeless encampments.

Housing navigators will provide services until a long-term case manager takes over once the individual is residing in permanent housing. The expanded housing navigation services include:

- Assisting homeless persons in developing a housing plan
- Addressing barriers identified in the plan or during other navigation activities
- Assisting with acquiring and completing any documentation/forms required for housing (including housing applications)
- Housing search assistance (including attending property owner meetings or setting appointments)
- Securing housing (including inspections, utility startups, and the actual move into housing)

#### **Next Steps**

- Identify existing housing navigators in the county and map the geographic regions each covers.
- Ensure coordination among existing housing navigators through the Coordinated Entry System, including assignments based on geographical regions, sub-population and funding limitations.
- Assess existing gaps in navigator coverage based on completion of the first two steps.

# End Homelessness

## Supportive Services

### B12: Increase the Number of Home-Based Care Managers

#### Recommendation

*Increase the number of home-based care managers to ensure previously homeless individuals and families receive case management services while in permanent supportive housing units, and/or after rapid rehousing assistance ends.*

#### Lead Agency

- Riverside University Health System Behavioral Health (RUHS-BH)

#### Status

- In Progress/Ongoing

#### Target Populations

- Chronically homeless households
- Veterans
- Families with children under age 18
- Non-chronically homeless youth aged 18-24

#### Potential Funding Sources

- U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration – Services in Supportive Housing
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Continuum of Care (CoC) funding for Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) programs

#### Description

Home-based care management positively affects housing stability, employment, school attendance, and mental and physical health. A tiered and progressive engagement model of home-based care management prioritizes services to those with the most complex challenges to achieving independence, stability, and living a lifestyle of their choice with dignity.

Increasing the number of home-based care managers will help stabilize individuals and families with severe needs and multiple past housing crises as identified through the coordinated entry system (CES). Home-based care management with supportive housing services to these households is a proven model that addresses their multiple needs as well as their limited skills to address such needs.

#### Next Steps

- Identify existing home-based care managers in the county and map the geographic regions and sub-population(s) each covers based on funding requirements.
- Ensure coordination among existing home-based care managers through the Coordinated Entry System, including assignments based on geographical regions, sub-population and funding requirements.
- Assess where there are gaps and a need for additional home-based care managers based on completion of the first two steps.

# End Homelessness

## Supportive Services

### B13: Increase Supportive Services

#### Recommendation

To develop and implement a plan to coordinate and enhance community-based homeless case management services among both county and private non-profit agencies countywide.

#### Lead Agency

- Riverside County Executive Office (CEO)
- Department of Public Social Services (DPSS)

#### Status

- In Progress/Ongoing

#### Target Populations

- Chronically homeless households
- Veterans
- Families with children under age 18
- Non-chronically homeless youth aged 18-24

#### Potential Funding Sources

- U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration – Grants for the Benefit of Homeless Individuals
- California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) – Whole Person Care Program
- Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) – Full Service Partnership Funds

#### Description

The Riverside County's EOCH will collaborate with the Continuum of Care (CoC) providers to enhance the quality of existing supportive services and define the standards for high-quality case management approach that is:

- *Client-centered*
- *Accessible*
- *Coordinated*
- *Integrated*

Services/activities meeting the high-quality standards listed above include:

- Connection/linkage to financial benefits, health coverage, and/or treatment-related services
- Linkages to job development/training programs, advocacy groups, self-help support groups, and volunteer opportunities as needed/desired by the client
- Peer support services and community-building activities
- Money management and linkage to payee services
- Transportation and linkage to transportation services
- Connection to specialized services for specific populations

#### Next Steps

- With the support of the EOCH, the CoC will assist case managers by providing housing stabilization/case management training.
- EOCH agencies will support count- and community-based homeless case managers to:
  - Help homeless families/individuals connect to a homeless case manager (e.g., through CoC, the Coordinated Entry System (CES)).
  - Respond efficiently and effectively to homeless case manager's requests for assistance.
  - Participate in CES regional case conferencing and coordinated outreach meetings.
  - Provide space for homeless case managers to co-locate and conduct in-reach with homeless families/individuals seeking services.
  - Implement a standardized protocol for contacting a homeless case manager to engage a homeless family/individual who has come to an EOCH department and requests to see a homeless case manager.

# End Homelessness

## Supportive Services

### B14: Enhance Community Partnerships to Increase Employment Opportunities

#### Recommendation

The Workforce Development Department (WDD), in collaboration with the Continuum of Care (CoC), will establish workforce team and service programming to prevent fragmented employment services with limited connection to traditional homeless services offered by other agencies.

#### Lead Agency

- Employment Development Department (EDD)
- Workforce Development Department (WDD)
- Department of Public Social Services (DPSS)

#### Status

- In Progress

#### Target Populations

- Chronically Homeless
- Veterans
- Families
- Youth

#### Potential Funding Sources

- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

#### Description

Unemployment, underemployment, and low wages are major contributing factors to homelessness, particularly for families. Homelessness often prevents individuals from participating in training, educational, and subsidized employment opportunities/programs due to transportation issues and/or housing instability.

Employment and housing interventions need to happen simultaneously to ensure individuals experiencing homelessness have an opportunity to achieve both housing and economic stability. The WDD and CoC must coordinate their efforts to connect individuals as quickly as possible with workforce services, training programs, and job supports such as subsidized childcare, transportation services, and financial assistance with essential elements of employment (e.g., required uniforms, equipment).

#### Next Steps

- Educate and train case managers and staff from partnering agencies to ensure all providers are informed of the employment services provided by the WDD, EDD, DPSS, and other community providers.
- Establish “Career Resource Areas” using surplus WDD computers, at homeless access centers and other facilities serving a high number of homeless individuals, to provide computer, internet, and software program access to facilitate résumé preparation and employment searches.
- Establish WDD team to exclusively focus on and serve the CoC and homeless jobseekers, including a dedicated job developer who will facilitate job placement and engage employers.
- Provide supportive services addressing the unique needs of homeless jobseekers including job readiness boot camps, soft skill development courses, and career coaching.
- Provide employment retention services, including access to career coaches and other supportive services.

# End Homelessness

## Supportive Services

### *B15: Enhance CalWORKs Subsidized Employment Program for Homeless Families*

**Recommendation**

*Expand the existing California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) Subsidized Employment program to target CalWORKs families who are homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless.*

**Lead Agency**

- Department of Public Social Services (DPSS)

**Status**

- In Progress

**Target Populations**

- Chronically Homeless
- Veterans
- Families
- Youth

**Potential Funding Sources**

- CalWORKs Subsidized Employment Program
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

**Description**

The CalWORKs Subsidized Employment program is an existing program administered by the Riverside County Workforce Development Department (WDD) through an agreement with the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS). The program leverages federal funds provided to Riverside County through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

The expansion of this program will increase wrap-around services and employer recruitment with the goal of increasing the number of permanent jobs obtained by program participants. An experienced WDD team will provide wrap-around services to high-barrier populations such as disconnected youth, ex-offenders, and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) families. In addition, full-time job developers will be responsible for employer recruitment and management of employer relationships.

**Next Steps**

- Expand WDD's support services offered to program participants to include:
  - Career coaching
  - Mentoring
  - Financial literacy
  - Soft skills development
  - Training
  - Counseling



# End Homelessness

## Supportive Services

### *B16: Improve Access to Health Care and Mainstream Benefits*

#### **Recommendation**

*Develop collaboration strategies between agencies who are members of the Riverside County Executive Oversight Committee on Homelessness (EOCH) and the Continuum of Care (CoC) to improve and increase access to mainstream benefits for all persons experiencing homelessness in Riverside County.*

#### **Lead Agency**

- Department of Public Social Services (DPSS)
- Riverside University Health System Population Health (RUHS-PH)

#### **Status**

- In Progress

#### **Target Populations**

- Chronically Homeless
- Veterans
- Families
- Youth

#### **Potential Funding Sources**

- California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) – Whole Person Care Program
- California Board of State and Community Corrections – Proposition 47 Grant Program

#### **Description**

Collaboration strategies to improve and increase access to mainstream benefits for homeless persons will focus on providing support to CoC homeless providers and all county agencies serving individuals experiencing homelessness.

#### **Next Steps**

- The collaborative agencies in the EOCH and CoC will establish a countywide team to support homeless case managers who will:
  - Identify a benefits specialist lead at each homeless provider agency and educate recipients on how to maintain their benefits and what to do if benefits are lost or denied.
  - Offer training to homeless case managers to establish relationships and educate case managers on completing benefit applications and the appeal process for denied applications.
  - Track applications for benefits and imaging client documents required for benefits applications in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Identify ways to increase access to Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits in collaboration with the Loma Linda VA.
- Create a CoC “Access to Health Care Advisory Committee” to accomplish the following:
  - Provide homeless service providers training on Affordable Care Act (ACA) enrollment and case management services for homeless individuals with complex health needs.
  - Connect individuals to health care and services using information stored in the Home Connect System.
  - Advocate for streamlining and increasing access to Social Security Administration benefits through:
    - a) participation in the federally sponsored Supplemental Security Income (SSI)/Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) Outreach Access and Recovery (SOAR) technical assistance program to expedite access to SSI/SSDI benefits; and
    - b) establishment of a program to assist disabled, incarcerated individuals in completing and submitting their SSI/SSDI application prior to release or in securing re-instatement of their benefits if received prior to incarceration.
- Explore methods of electronic outreach platforms.

# Ensure Funding for a Coordinated System to Prevent & End Homelessness

## System Coordination

### C1: Conduct Funding Analysis

#### Recommendation

Conduct a continuing analysis of current programs, resources, and funding sources to:

- Identify ongoing needs and gaps
- Avoid duplication
- Determine where funding may be used more effectively

#### Lead Agency

- Riverside County Executive Office (CEO)

#### Status

- In Development

#### Target Populations

- Chronically Homeless
- Veterans
- Families
- Youth

#### Potential Funding Sources

- To be determined

#### Description

The county's Continuum of Care (CoC) Board of Governance serves as a key partner with the County Executive Oversight Committee on Homelessness (EOCH) in facilitating and supporting the CoC's efforts to broaden and diversify funding and resources to address homelessness.

A funding analysis effort will seek to:

- Map resources and assess overall coordination of existing systems, specifically in outreach, navigation and supportive services to effectively address the various factors contributing to homelessness.
- Identify potential funding sources for overall system coordination.
- Identify potential funding sources to increase service array (outreach, navigation and supportive services).
- Leverage funding and resources from existing sources.
- Identify and increase funding for housing that provides a pathway to permanent and stable housing for individuals who are experiencing homelessness and have the most challenging and severe barriers to housing.

#### Next Steps

- Identify an entity (e.g., sub-contractor, consultant) to conduct a cost analysis of homelessness in Riverside County.
- Identify funding source for the cost analysis.

# Ensure Funding for a Coordinated System to Prevent & End Homelessness

## System Coordination

### C2: Create a Regional Funder's Collaborative

#### Recommendation

*Facilitate the creation of a regional funders' collaborative of public and private philanthropic organizations who will invest in local initiatives related to ending homelessness in Riverside County.*

#### Lead Agency

- Riverside County Executive Office (CEO)

#### Status

- In Development

#### Target Populations

- Chronically Homeless
- Families
- Veterans
- Youth

#### Potential Funding Sources

- To be determined

#### Description

The Riverside County Continuum of Care (CoC) has been invited to be a part of the Funders' Alliance of the Inland Empire. The Funders' Alliance is a collaborative group of large regional funding agencies that have joined together to increase communication, collaboration, and coordination among a region of funders.

The primary goals of the Funders' Alliance include:

- Regional networking and information sharing among large funders
- Advocacy for the needs of the region
- Leveraging funds to maximize impact
- Increasing the capacity of service providers in the region

#### Next Steps

- Identify a representative and/or agency to attend the Funders' Alliance that serves the Inland Empire.