

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT – CORONAVIRUS (CDBG-CV)

STAFF REPORT

Organization Name: West County Community Services (WCCS)

Project Name: West County Navigation Center/Emergency Shelter

Project Description (*Applicant-Provided Summary Description*):

“WCCS Navigation Site Shelter serves as a critical intervention point for individuals experiencing homelessness in West Sonoma County, offering a low-barrier, trauma-informed environment that supports both safety and public health. Upon entry, all participants are screened for COVID-19 symptoms, PPE available at the entrance, and given information on prevention. The site follows enhanced sanitation protocols, maintains physical distancing in shared spaces, and coordinates access to testing, vaccination, and medical care. Participants receive intensive case management and housing navigation to expedite transitions to permanent housing, reducing time spent in congregate settings. Integrated supports, behavioral health, substance use resources, peer mentoring, and workforce development.”

Amount Requested: \$113,296

Project Type: Emergency Shelter and Homeless Services

Proposed Use of Funds: Shelter Staff –Aids, Supervisor, Homeless Services Manager, Director of Housing and Homeless Services. Operations, Shelter/client supplies, Food, Mileage, Laundry COVID screening tests and supplies.

List the total number of beneficiaries served for each population type below:

	<u>Proposed</u> number to be served by project during CDBG-CV Funding Period	Current number served as of the filing of this application (if project is currently in operation)	Number served by project last Fiscal Year
	Jan. 1, 2026 – June 30, 2026	July 1, 2024 to Date of Application Submission	July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024
Number of <u>households</u> served	0	0	129
Number of <u>adults</u> served	27	103	131
Number of <u>children</u> served	0	0	2

	<u>Proposed</u> number to be served by project during CDBG-CV Funding Period	Current number served as of the filing of this application (if project is currently in operation)	Number served by project last Fiscal Year
Number of <u>persons</u> served	27	103	133

Total percentage of beneficiaries served for each of the income categories below:

Household Income	List the total estimated percentage of the households served in each of the income categories below	<u>Considering only Urban County residents</u>, list the estimated percentage of households served in each of the income categories below
Extremely Low (Below 30% AMI)	90%	90%
Very Low (Between 31% - 50% AMI)	3%	3%
Low (Between 51% -80% AMI)	2%	2%
Moderate (Over 80% AMI)	5%	5%

If there are substantial changes to the past, current, or proposed number of households to be served, does the applicant provide an explanation for the changes?

The shelter offers a maximum capacity of 27 beds. WCCS had previously expanded their capacity without any additional funding, but they recently had to reduce the nightly maximum capacity due to limited financial resources.

All CDBG-funded projects must primarily benefit low-income households. Does the applicant describe the method that will be used to verify income eligibility?

WCCS staff will provide intensive, personalized case management services to all clients, which includes gathering the necessary documentation to verify income and current place of residency. Furthermore, the organization is located within Guerneville, which is an area that is

included in the Urban County of Sonoma. Any clients that reside in this area are eligible for CDBG-CV funds.

Federal regulations require that 51% of participants are located within the Urban County of Sonoma (excluding the cities of Petaluma and Santa Rosa). Does the applicant describe the method that will be used to track the required demographic and quantitative data?

WCCS Navigation Site and Emergency Shelter is located and provides services in the rural Lower Russian River region of West Sonoma County. Currently, WCCS' shelter request form asks which town/area the person has been staying in for the last 2 weeks. WCCS is the lead agency for West County's BLN, which can be used to verify where beneficiaries have been served, indicating which regions of the county they are staying in. If awarded funds, they will establish a verification and documentation process to meet this requirement.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Does the applicant describe the primary outcome/s of the activity?

The primary outcome for the proposed project includes providing shelter or transitional housing for clients until they are ready to exit the program and enter permanent housing.

How do the proposed outcomes of the project/activity align with the goals of the Five-Year Consolidated Plan?

The proposed outcomes of the project are aligned with the Five-Year Consolidated Plan because they promote effective and proven strategies for homelessness prevention and intervention countywide.

Does the applicant demonstrate capacity to effectively deliver the proposed project? Does the applicant have experience providing the proposed services?

Yes, WCCS has demonstrated success in managing a variety of funding sources, and the agency has been awarded funding by the Commission multiple times during previous funding cycles. The applicant states that shelter staff are trained in housing navigation and have connected hundreds of clients to various types of housing, including permanent supportive housing, transitional housing, and fair-market rentals.

Does the applicant describe how data and other information will be used as a self-evaluation tool or as an outcome measurement?

The applicant states that staff utilize HMIS data to track demographic and outcome information, and there are also internal systems that help track client participation and success. Furthermore, the organization employs the HUD Housing First Assessment Tool on a yearly basis to better understand the efficacy of the program while gaining a better understanding of

client needs. WCCS uses this data to identify aspects of the program that may need improvement and can respond to developing needs amongst their clientele.

Does the activity require participation in Coordinated Entry? If yes, provide an overview of the organization's ability, knowledge, and potential challenges related to participation in Coordinated Entry.

WCCS has demonstrated extensive participation in the Coordinated Entry system, and the organization hosts four different Coordinated Entry Access Points throughout the West County region. The application notes that limited staffing and funding have presented a challenge, but staff maintain a high level of internal coordination to alleviate these issues as they arise.

FUNDING POLICIES (Funding Goals and Objectives):

Does the project address one of the following funding priorities?

1. Affordable Housing: Increase and preserve housing stock that is affordable, safe, and accessible for low, very low, and extremely low households, including those with special needs and those who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness.

2. Homelessness: Promote effective and proven strategies for homelessness prevention and intervention countywide.

3. Non-Housing Community Development: Support the creation or improvement of infrastructure systems and public facilities that meet the needs of lower income people, people with disabilities, and other special needs subpopulations, support the creation or retention of jobs and provide microenterprise assistance for lower income households/businesses.

4. Non-Homeless Special Needs: Support lower income households with housing retention through public services (eviction defense and tenant landlord services).

This project is aligned with the following funding priority: Promoting effective and proven strategies for homelessness prevention and intervention county-wide that align with Continuum of Care Strategic Plan goals.

THRESHOLD CRITERIA

Does the proposed project or activity meet the eligibility requirements of the program funding source requested? (If not, provide the specific reason)

Yes, WCCS operated a winter shelter for many years until the COVID outbreak in 2020. Out of the emergency, the shelter stayed open twelve months of the year, seven days a week, 24 hours a day and were named the COVID Navigation Site. To this day, WCCS still takes daily temperatures, provide CV testing on site, offer supplies (e.g. masks, gloves, enhanced cleaning and supplies), quarantine people who test positive or have symptoms providing extra sanitation after use of facilities like the restroom/showers. WCCS, also, partners with the West County Health Center to provide health care and guidance as well as reporting to Public Health if and when the threshold is met. This allows sheltering in place for infected individuals, so they are not out in the public areas for extended periods of time potentially spreading the virus.

Does the project Affirmatively Further Fair Housing?

While the proposed activity is not housing related, it supports the principles of Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing by providing services to low-income clients that cannot access services due to financial or geographical barriers. The proposed activity will deliver services to low-income households that can help to improve their lives and promote self-sufficiency.

PROJECT BUDGET

Total Organization Budget	\$5,209,668
Total program budget	\$858,067
Percent of program budget to organization budget	16%
Percent of funds requested to program budget	13%
Total proposed number of households to be served by program	0
Total proposed number of beneficiaries to be served by program	27
Program cost per person	0
Program cost per household	\$31,780.25

Describe the long-term financial sustainability of the proposed project AND the applicant organization.

The application notes that WCCS will continue to solicit funding from the Commission and the Sonoma County Department of Health Services to support the project. The organization will continue to apply for local funding as available, while also securing private grant funds whenever possible, to remain financially stable.

Additional Information:

West County Community Services (WCCS) has faced challenges in fully expending awarded funds over the past three consecutive fiscal years, resulting in unspent funds. This has led to a loss of funding for the CDC.

Potential Impacts Due to Lack of Funding:

If the organization receives less funding than requested, the shelter may need to remain closed on certain days or reduce its operating hours, resulting in fewer clients being served.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff is not recommending funding at this time due to the limited timeline available to expend these funds and the applicant's past performance. WCCS provides essential services to lower-income households, including the homeless, in a predominantly rural area of the county. The Commission has supported their efforts for several years. However, based on WCCS's past performance—particularly over the last three consecutive fiscal years—they were unable to fully expend all funds awarded by the Commission from LMIHAF and ESG sources. Despite this, the Commission did allocate LMIHAF and ESG funding to WCCS in the FY 2025-26 Action Plan, which was approved by the Board of Supervisors in July, and the organization has also received funding from the Department of Health Services.