



SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 9/12/2023

To: County of Sonoma Board of Supervisors and Board of Commissioners of the Community Development Commission

Department or Agency Name(s): Department of Health Services and Sonoma County Community Development Commission

Staff Name and Phone Number: Tina Rivera, 707-565-4774, Michelle Whitman, 707-565-7504

Vote Requirement: 4/5th

Supervisory District(s): Countywide

Title:

Homelessness Program Updates, Including Replacing the Emergency Shelter Site at the County Campus and Los Guilicos Village, Transfer of Grant Agreements, and Results of 2023 “Point in Time” Count of Persons Experiencing Homelessness

Recommended Action:

- A) Receive a report on the January 27, 2023, Point in Time Count in Sonoma County.
- B) Adopt a resolution for the transfer of current grant agreements and any amendments thereto of State of California Emergency Solutions Grants, State of California Emergency Solutions Grants-Coronavirus from the Sonoma County Community Development Commission to the Sonoma County Department of Health Services as the new Continuum of Care Lead Agency.
- C) Adopt a resolution authorizing budgetary adjustments to the Department of Health Services fiscal year 2023 2024 adopted budget, increasing appropriations to reflect additional revenue in the amount of \$13,740,657, transferred from the Sonoma County Community Development Commission, and additional expenditures in the amount of \$13,456,409 to support the Department of Health Services Homelessness Division, Ending Homelessness Program.
- D) Approve initiating the replacement of the Emergency Shelter Site at the County Campus with a Safe RV Parking and Tiny Homes at a Russell Avenue Site and improving dormitories at Los Guilicos to replace the Los Guilicos Village.

Executive Summary:

The Sonoma County Department of Health Services (hereinafter, “DHS” or “the Department”) is presenting a Homelessness Update that includes the following:

First, jurisdictions across the United States conduct Point in Time (PIT) Counts typically annually at the direction of the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The PIT Count is an attempt to determine who is homeless and either sheltered or unsheltered in that certain jurisdiction at any one point in time, usually in the last week of January each year. In 2023, the PIT Count took place on Friday, January 27, 2023.

The count of unsheltered persons is conducted from 5 a.m. to 9 a.m. across all census tracts in Sonoma County. The count of sheltered persons consists of data pulled from shelters and transitional housing during that point in time. In 2023, 2,266 individuals were counted, a decrease of 22% from 2,893 individuals in 2022.

Most notably, the number of individuals in unsheltered circumstances decreased by 38% while the number of individuals in sheltered circumstances increased by 21%, reflecting an increase in shelter and housing capacity.

The 21% decrease is due to a variety of factors including increased housing and shelter inventory (almost 400 new beds of all types in 2023), increased housing and shelter resources from Project Homekey, increased utilization of Housing Choice Vouchers, and greater collaboration between the County, cities, Continuum of Care, and other stakeholders.

Second, this item authorizes the transfer of all grant agreements and any amendments for State of California Emergency Solutions Grants, State of California Emergency Solutions Grants-Coronavirus (ESG-CV), from the Sonoma County Community Development Commission (CDC) to DHS which now serves as the Lead Agency for the Continuum of Care (CoC). These grants primarily support rapid rehousing and emergency shelter.

Third, this item authorizes an increase to the Department's revenue and expenditure appropriations of \$13,446,003 for funds transferred from CDC fund reserves and \$294,654 for ESG-CV and ESG grants that will transfer to Health Services; these are reimbursement grants, and the Department will draw down funds as expended.

Fourth, this item asks for Board approval for the initiation of the demobilization of the Emergency Shelter Site at the County Campus and renovating the dormitories at Los Guilicos. DHS staff suggests closing the Emergency Shelter Site (ideally before the start of the rainy season) and adding a Safe RV Parking site and additional housing to two locations: (1) a Safe RV Parking and Tiny Home project site near end of Russell Avenue at the north side of the County Campus; and (2) to reconfigure our housing approach at Los Guilicos in east Santa Rosa, in a manner that relies less on temporary structures and more on two existing dormitories in need of refurbishment, creating more permanent structures with longer-term housing.

Discussion:

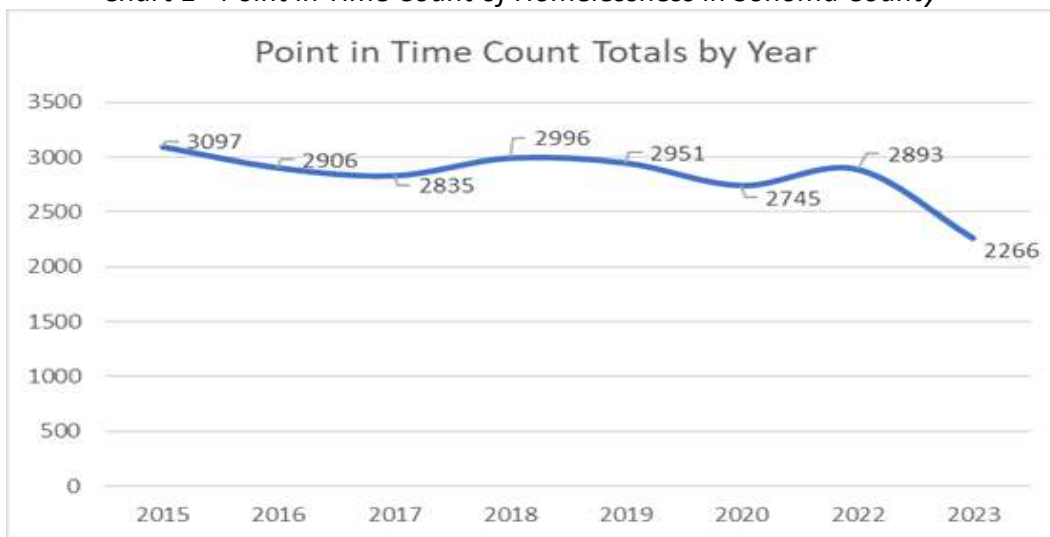
Part 1 - 2023 PIT Count Results

As Lead Agency to the Sonoma County Continuum of Care (CoC), the Sonoma County Community Development Commission (CDC) conducts the annual PIT Count to track progress towards ending homelessness in Sonoma County. US HUD requires a local PIT Count of any CoC to enable participating agencies to access HUD's CoC funding (in 2023, this is approximately \$4.1 million). Additionally, some State agencies use PIT Count data to formulate funding allocations. Further, when combined with data from our Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), the Count informs the County's homeless housing needs.

The 2023 PIT Count of the number of individuals experiencing homelessness in one night suggest that the number of people experiencing homelessness in Sonoma County has decreased significantly from 2022 by approximately 21% from 2,893 in 2022 to 2,266 in 2023. The number of individuals in unsheltered circumstances decreased from 2,088 in 2022 to 1,291 in 2023. Conversely, the number of previously unsheltered individuals adapted to sheltered circumstances increased from 805 in 2022 to 975 in 2023. This reduction in unsheltered individuals reflects increased shelter capacity from Project Homekey and other non-congregate shelters as well as increased housing placements across the spectrum, including 219 formerly homeless individuals who were able to obtain permanent housing utilizing the Sonoma County Housing Authority's Emergency Housing Voucher program, Mainstream voucher program, homeless-dedicated project based vouchers, Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing program or Housing Choice Vouchers awarded as part of the homeless-dedicated preference programs. In addition, there has been better coordination

between the County, nine jurisdictions, and the Continuum of Care as a whole. Chart 1 shows the trend over time for Sonoma County.

Chart 1 - Point in Time Count of Homelessness in Sonoma County



Each year, following the PIT Count, surveys are conducted with individuals and families experiencing homelessness (both sheltered and unsheltered). This is done to gain insight on demographics and experience of single adults, families, and transition-age youth experiencing homelessness. These surveys, over 400 in total, are conducted in a peer-to-peer fashion in the two weeks after the PIT Count and include key information on homeless subpopulations, which HUD has identified as key to ending homelessness overall, as well as underlying causes of homelessness. Subpopulations of individuals experiencing homelessness include individuals experiencing chronic homelessness (defined generally as at least one year continuous of homelessness with a disability), transition age youth ages 18-24, homeless families with children, and veterans. Within these subpopulations:

- 550 individuals experienced chronic homelessness, a 24% decrease from 726 in 2022.
- 62 families (having at least one adult over 18 and at least one child under 18) totaling 207 individuals were almost all found in sheltered settings. This an increase of 22% from 48 families in 2022, likely due to the increase in shelter capacity for families at Caritas Center (a Project Homekey site) with more families in unstable living conditions able to avail themselves of temporary shelter.
- Four unaccompanied children (persons under 18 without parents) and 290 transition-age youth were counted, for a total of 294 youth and a decrease of 45% from 530 youth in 2022.
- 110 veterans, a decrease from 191 veterans in 2022.

Additional key findings from the PIT Count and survey included:

- 85% of those experiencing homelessness became homeless while living in Sonoma County. This is comparable to all previous Counts aside from 2022. In 2022, 68% of people reported becoming homeless in Sonoma County; all other years have been between 80%-89%.
- 19% of individuals cited job loss as the primary cause of their homelessness, and 63% of individuals cited unaffordable rent as an obstacle in securing permanent housing. Another 44% cited no job or not

enough income as an obstacle.

- 86% of individuals who were unsheltered or staying in emergency shelter/interim housing would move into permanent housing if it were available. 62% preferred housing without preconditions (Housing First).
- 47% of individuals experienced homelessness for the first time before age 25. 10% reported experiencing homelessness for the first time at age 50 or older.
- 29% of individuals identified as Latino/a/x, 9% identified as Black, and 9% identified as American Indian or Alaskan Native. This continues to reflect racial and ethnic disparities that exist in Sonoma County's homeless population.

The comprehensive report (Attachment 1) has more information about the people who are living in a place not meant for human habitation or in a shelter for homeless persons in Sonoma County, as well as those who experienced unstable housing in Sonoma County.

How does the PIT Count guide future actions? While progress has been made, there are still over 2,200 individuals experiencing homelessness in Sonoma County. Moving forward:

- Continued full embrace of Project Homekey efforts, including the Gold Coin in Santa Rosa, George's Hideaway in Guerneville, as well as Encampment Resolution Fund projects for the County of Sonoma and City of Santa Rosa.
- Though COVID funding is winding down, additional State funding for individuals with behavioral health conditions and experiencing homelessness is becoming available, as well as continued Homeless Housing Advocacy and Prevention (HHAP) funds that will focus even more on permanent housing and non-congregate shelter.
- Continued alignment and relationships between the region's two housing authorities, between our CoC and our cities and County government, and the County's own service delivery function (i.e., consolidating homeless services within the Department of Health Services) all make reaching "Functional Zero" in homelessness a more attainable goal. With the CoC Lead Agency now part of the County Homelessness Services Division at the Department of Health Services, even more coordination is taking place between the Ending Homelessness Team and the Interdepartmental Multidisciplinary Team (IMDT)/Homeless Encampment Assistance & Resource Team (HEART).
- Continued implementation on the Strategic Plan that was adopted in 2023 by both the CoC and County.
- Communication efforts (website, social media, etc.) to convey key messages and outcomes for homelessness.

Information from the 2023 PIT Count will be used in each of these activities and strategies to refine the end product and actions.

Part 2 - Replacing the ESS and its Capacity

This Board Item seeks approval of site locations for the replacement of the County Campus' Emergency Shelter Site and Los Guilicos Village with more permanent, durable, long-lasting housing solutions. In the months since the Emergency Shelter Site (ESS) opened in late March 2023, this tent-based shelter, that is classified as non-congregate, has housed over 100 persons counting inflow and outflow. Its start-up costs were significant,

as the site needed new utilities (water and electricity) as well as the set-up and installation of 82 tents, including an ADA compliant platform for persons with disabilities. The site includes four entrance and exits, one of which is the main entrance, but each of which requires supervision and security. The ESS was constructed after Board direction in late February 2023, to help house persons coming from the significant encampment at the Joe Rodota Trail (JRT).

Also in late February, the County Homelessness team applied to the State of California for an Encampment Resolution Fund (ERF) grant, help provide long-term housing to persons coming off of the JRT, many of whom are sheltered either in the 35 “Ballfields Trailers” at the Sonoma County Fairgrounds or at the ESS. The State notified the County that the ERF grant was successful in June 2023, awarding about \$4.57 million to the County for programs and staffing relating to housing former JRT clients. Much of the funding is set up for groups like SHARE Sonoma County, [sharesonomacounty.org](https://www.sharesonomacounty.org), that provide shared housing via master leased housing. The County has two years to expend the funds from the ERF grant.

County staff have always envisioned replacing the ESS, since its presence is considered temporary at the 400 Administration Drive / Permit Sonoma parking lot site. Determining and establishing another location before the rainy season starts is the goal as the tents are not durable or designed for long term housing. The tents and structures at the facility might not last another wet, windy winter and would require additional costs to maintain them. DHS team looked at the locations for a replacement site:

1. **Continuing on at the same site.** Pros: Easy to maintain, good access to transit and jobs for clients. Cons: Neighborhood impacts and impacts to Permit Sonoma and other staff parking, limited permit (180 day) and physical life of tent structures as habitable structures, not ideal for inclement weather of any duration. The City of Santa Rosa is working with the County on extending the permit for the site; however, the fire risks associated with tents mean this site should not be continued much longer.
2. New longer-term site on the **County Campus**. We looked at both the Probation/Supervised Adult Crews (SAC) lot and the vacant lot at the western end of Russell Avenue.
 - a. **Probation/SAC Yard.** Cons: This site is about to be involved in a larger construction effort associated with the Public Health Lab/Morgue, which likely makes using the site for housing infeasible.
 - b. **Russell Avenue.** This site may be a good candidate for a longer-term site, as it is adequate in size (2.4+ acres) and could accommodate a mix of Safe Parking (40 RVs) as well as 12 “duplex” style tiny homes that could accommodate former ESS residents who do not have RVs. Pros: generally flat site, still on County campus for easy access to client jobs and transportation, a bit more private than current ESS, could provide an additional RV safe parking solution for RV encampments throughout the county. Cons: surface preparation required, adjacency to Main Adult Detention Facility (MADF) may suggest new jail employee parking infrastructure, some clients will not want to be close to the MADF.
 - c. **Mendocino x Admin Drive Lot.** This site may also be a candidate for a longer-term site, as it is about two acres and is available for use for about two years. Pros: It could accommodate Safe RV parking, some tiny homes, and is, like the Russell Avenue site, proximate to transit, jobs, County safety net services, and more. Cons: The Santa Rosa Fire Department has noted concerns about this site, as it could lead to EMS and Fire vehicles responding to the site when positioned on a busy thoroughfare. It also draws from one of SRFD’s busiest stations (where Russell Avenue does not).
3. **North Adult Detention Facility (NADF)** near the Airport. We discussed with Sheriff Engram this option

and he noted the strong possibility that this site will be needed for additional jail capacity in the near future.

4. The **Probation Camp** on Steve Olson Lane (off of Eastside Road) near SRJC's Shone Farm. This site is fairly remote and has active uses onsite now. The Probation Department, when asked, stressed to DHS staff how many other uses are occurring there that would conflict with interim housing. There is no transit access.
5. Modifying current space at **Los Guilicos** in eastern Santa Rosa. Today, 60 pallet shelters can accommodate up to 70 persons at "LG Village." As of the date of this report, about 50-53 people are housed there. The site has generally worked well as an emergency shelter site, but at 3.5 years old, the site infrastructure and shelters have wear and tear. A proposed concept would:
 - a. Utilize two of the four unused (and in need of refurbishment) Los Guilicos dormitories to serve as longer-term housing.
 - b. Eliminate the space of the current Pallet Shelter footprint.

This recommendation would eliminate the need for a costly shower trailer, outside washer and dryer, as well as the bathroom trailer. This recommendation would also eliminate the expensive site improvements needed to bring the LG Village site up to code. These code requirements are estimated at approximately \$250K.

If staff were to move forward with a plan here, DHS would need to both review and plan evacuation procedures and staff would examine any transportation needs as bus routes 30 and 34 regularly go in or by LG Village.

About our Recommendation. DHS staff recommends that the Board consider moving forward with two locations:

1. **The Russell Avenue site.** This recommendation is to combine a mix of Safe RV Parking and Tiny Homes with the goal of having a site provider. This site would add 50 beds through Safe Parking and 24 beds with Tiny Homes. Although not exclusive, the goal would be to create a community that is more welcoming for unhoused LatinX clients. The capital cost for initiating the development of the site include:
 - a. Grading, gravel, and site utilities (estimated at \$284,000);
 - b. The purchase and installation of 12 Tiny Homes (estimated at \$450,000 installed).
2. **Improvements to Los Guilicos Village.** Our second recommendation is to change the uses and infrastructure at LG Village to eliminate the pallet shelter village and instead move the housing to:
 - a. The refurbishment of two of the vacant dormitories adding 140 beds at double occupancy (estimated to cost \$1 million apiece), with \$200,000 allocated towards furnishings and some contingencies;
 - b. Elimination of the existing Pallet Shelter homes (once the new improvements are completed to the dorms and new Tiny Home area).

Request for proposal was released on August 8, 2023, soliciting site providers for the transition of the Emergency Shelter Site (ESS) at PRMD. Should the Board choose not to pursue both recommendations, one could be selected. Should the Board choose to move forward with the Russell Avenue recommendation, staff recommends continuing LG Village as is, and returning with recommendations for

improvements and upgrades to the existing site in order to address any applicable code standards.

About Costs. The total one-time cost to refurbish the two dormitories is estimated at \$1 million per dorm, with about \$100,000 per dorm to provide furnishings. The adopted Fiscal Year 2023-2024 budget includes \$1.7 million to operate LG Village. Additional operational expenses are being examined for the dormitory proposal.

One-time start-up costs for the Russell Avenue site are estimated to be \$750,000, which includes site grading and the purchase and installation of up to 12 Tiny Homes.

There will be cost reductions due to the elimination of the Ballfield and ESS sites, however, they are currently funded with the onetime funding source of IGT. Table 2 below outlines current known cost estimates:

Table 2 - Cost Estimates

Site - One-Time Cost

One-Time
Capital Costs

Russell Avenue site

Safe Parking Program 300,000

Tiny Home Program 450,000

Total Russell Ave One Time Cost 750,000

Los Guilicos Program

Dorm Proposal 2,200,000

Total LG Campus 2,200,000

Total One Time Costs 2,950,000

Site - Operational Cost

Operational Cost Estimated Total
FY23/24 July- Operational
December Cost FY23/24
Jan-Jun

Emergency Shelter Site @ 400 Admin 1,400,000 - 1,400,000

Drive*

Total ESS Operational Costs 1,400,000 - 1,400,000

Los Guilicos Program

Current Pallet Shelter Program 850,000

850,000

Dorm Proposal* - 850,000 850,000

Total LG Campus 850,000 850,000 1,700,000

850,000

Total Operational Costs 2,250,000 850,000 3,100,000

*Future FY23/24 Costs under examination

Funding:

Russell Avenue Program. We are proposing to fund the one-time start-up costs for Russell Ave Safe Parking and Tiny Home programs using \$300,000 in remaining Measure O Transitional and Permanent Supportive Housing Fund Balance, \$400,000 of funding from the Encampment Resolution grant funding, and \$50,000 of Intergovernmental Transfer funds (already included in FY23/24 adopted budget). Operational support costs for the Russell Avenue program will be funded and leveraged with FY 2022-23 Year End ARPA fund savings.

Los Guilicos Program. One Time Costs to refurbish and furnish the two dorms at the LG Campus of \$2.2 million will be funded via current budget appropriations within the Homelessness Division (Intergovernmental Transfer Funds). The Department will leverage Mental Health Services Act funding and Federal Financial Participation (Cal-AIM) funding as appropriate for expenditures at the proposed LG Village Program.

The department will return to request appropriations for operational costs and funding and a recommendation for a service provider at the two sites before the capital improvements are completed.

See Attachment 3 for diagrams of possible changes to Russell Avenue and Los Guilicos Village.

Table 3 - Proposed Changes to County Interim Beds

Site	Beds Today	Beds Future
Emergency Shelter Site	90	0
Ballfield Trailers	35	0
Russell Avenue Safe Parking	0	50
Russel Avenue Tiny Homes	0	24
LG Village Pallet Shelter	65	0
LG Village Dorms double occupancy	0	140
Totals	190	214

How this reflects the 2023-2027 Homelessness Strategic Plan needs. The plan recommended an additional 200 interim beds countywide by 2027 to meet system capacity (and 1,000 permanent supportive housing beds, which is the larger lift). The system has already created the additional 200 interim beds as shown in Table 4. The proposed changes in County beds does not decrease the capacity even as some County beds phase out and new beds come online.

Table 4 - Strategic Plan Interim Beds Added

Location/Program	Interim Beds Late 2022	Interim Beds August 2023	Interim Beds End of 2023
Emergency Shelter Site	0	90	0
Labath Landing	60	60	60
Ballfield Trailers	35	35	0
LG Village Pallet Shelter	65	65	0
L&M Village	21	21	21
LG Village Dorms double occupancy	0	0	140
Russel Avenue Safe Parking	0	0	50
Russel Avenue Tiny Homes	0	0	24
Totals	181	271	295

Part 3 -- Resolution for Transfer of Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG)

The CoC Lead Agency transferred from the Community Development Commission (Commission) to the Department of Health Services (DHS) in early 2023. Post-transfer, a resolution is needed to officially transfer the contract for Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funding from the Commission to DHS. ESG funds are administered by the State of California Department of Housing and Community Development and are under the authority of local Continuums of Care. ESG funding is small, approximately \$175,000 annually and provides support for emergency shelter and rapid rehousing programs. Additionally, this transfer will include existing contracts for one-time ESG Coronavirus (CV) funds (119,654) that will expire in March 2024. The total grant transfer from ESG and ESG-CV is \$294,654.

The Department is also requesting to add revenue and expenditure appropriations for FY 2023-2024 of \$294,654 for the ESG-CV and ESG funds that will transfer to DHS. Additionally, the Department is requesting to add revenue and expenditure appropriations for \$13,446,002 for fund balance transfers from CDC for Measure O Permanent and Transitional Housing (\$248,247), Kaiser built for Zero (\$68,375), HHAP Rounds 1, 2, and 3 (\$5,320,333), HHIP (\$6,185,568), County Equity programs (\$709,440 General Fund, \$728,040 R&R), and the transfer of \$150,000 in ARPA funds for the 211 United Way contract (approved on 7/12/2022).

Strategic Plan:

This item directly supports the County's Five-year Strategic Plan and is aligned with the following pillar, goal, and objective.

Pillar: Healthy and Safe Communities

Goal: Goal 4: Reduce the County's overall homeless population by 10% each year by enhancing services through improved coordination and collaboration.

Objective: Objective 3: Create a "no wrong door" approach where clients who need services across multiple departments and programs are able to access the array of services needed regardless of where they enter the system.

Racial Equity:

Was this item identified as an opportunity to apply the Racial Equity Toolkit?

No

Prior Board Actions:

January 1, 2023: Homelessness Regional Efforts including Strategic Plan, Funding and Contract Services

July 12, 2022: Housing and Homelessness Update, CARE Court, Los Guilicos Village and Related Agreements and Authorizations

June 17, 2022: FY 2022-23 Budget Adoption

May 24, 2022: Professional Services Agreement with Homebase for Region-wide Homelessness Strategic Planning and Preparation of a Homeless Action Plan (HAP)

April 19, 2022: Professional Services Agreement with Homebase for Region-wide Homelessness Strategic

Planning and Preparation of a Homeless Action Plan (HAP)

March 22, 2022: Update on Homekey-2, Allocation of Early Capital Match

December 7, 2021: 24/7 Safe Parking and NCS program authorization (allocating \$2 million)

October 26, 2021: Project Homekey-2 Authorization

June 18, 2021: FY 2021-22 Budget Adoption

July 7, 2020: Update on County Efforts to Address Homelessness, COVID-19 Homeless Response and Proposal for Future Strategies to End Homelessness

March 10, 2020: Indoor-Outdoor Shelter Sites and Services for Homeless Individuals

December 23, 2019: Emergency Housing, Shelter, and Support Service Options

August 6, 2019: 2019 Homeless Count Presentation

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 23-24 Adopted	FY 24-25 Projected	FY 25-26 Projected
Budgeted Expenses			
Additional Appropriation Requested	\$13,740,656		
Total Expenditures	\$13,740,656	0	0
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF	709,440		
State/Federal	12,234,801		
Fees/Other	796,415		
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
Total Sources	\$13,740,656	0	0

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

Approval of the attached budget resolution will adjust appropriations totaling \$13,740,656 to the Department of Health Services, Community Development Commission, and Non-Departmental budgets, of which \$13,446,002 are cash transfers from CDC and the ARPA fund and \$294,654 in appropriations for the ESG and ESG-CV grants that are being transferred from CDC to DHS.

The appropriations expense request for DHS does not include the Measure O cash transfer of \$284,247 that will go into fund balance. However, the cash transfer must be included in the budget resolution to allow for the transfer to take place.

Staffing Impacts:			
Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)	Additions (Number)	Deletions (Number)

Agenda Date: 9/12/2023

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Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

N/A

Attachments:

Attachment 1 - 2023 Sonoma County Point in Time Count Report

Attachment 2 - Resolution for Transfer of State Emergency Solutions Grant contract from the Community Development Commission to Department of Health Services

Attachment 3 - Site Concepts for Russell Avenue and LG

Attachment 4 - Budget Resolution

Attachment 5 - Presentation

Related Items “On File” with the Clerk of the Board:

None