



Legislation Text

File #: 2024-0591, **Version:** 1

To: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors
Department or Agency Name(s): Department of Health Services
Staff Name and Phone Number: Tina Rivera 707-565-4774
Vote Requirement: Majority
Supervisorial District(s): Countywide

Title:

Sonoma County Homeless Coalition (Previously Continuum of Care) Notice of Funding Availability Awards

Recommended Action:

- A) Authorize the Director of Health Services, or designee, to execute state and federal agreements on behalf of the Homeless Coalition
- B) Authorize the Director of Health Services, or designee, to execute contracts with local partners for a total not to exceed \$8,495,736 for FY 2024-2025.
- C) Authorize the Director of Health Services, or designee, to execute a funding agreement in the amount of \$500,000 with the City of Santa Rosa in FY 2024-2025 using State Homelessness Housing Incentive Program funding to support a regional homelessness prevention pilot project.

Executive Summary:

The Sonoma County Department of Health Services (hereinafter, "DHS" or "the Department") is requesting Board approval to execute contracts. If approved, DHS would accept on behalf of the Homeless Coalition the State and Federal funds listed below available to our region.

- US Housing and Urban Development (HUD) annual Continuum of Care (CoC) competitive allocation;
- The California Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH's) allocation of Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) funds allocated to the County and to the Coalition;
- State Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG); and
- State Partnership HealthPlan (PHP) Homelessness Housing Incentive Program (HHIP) funds.

Along with the Board's \$1 million discretionary funds contribution, the aforesaid funding sources are being recommended for contracts with partners for FY 2024-2025 totaling \$8,495,736, which are listed in the Attachment 2.

This item also includes an overview of a new homelessness prevention pilot project in partnership with the Cities of Santa Rosa and Petaluma, and All Home, a local Bay Area nonprofit providing free technical assistance and strategic support for the nine Bay Area counties. The pilot, with the City of Santa Rosa as the primary contractor, is scheduled to begin by October of 2024. DHS is requesting authority to execute a funding agreement in the amount of \$500,000 using HHIP funding to support this pilot project.

Discussion:

The Department proposes to accept and allocate about \$8.5 million in funds towards various programs/projects including funding from State, Federal (HUD), and local sources, the majority of which are assigned to the Sonoma County Homeless Coalition.

The Homeless Coalition is Sonoma County's collaborative effort representing the homeless services system of care. Governed by a 17-member Coalition Board, the countywide effort is responsible for oversight of funds designated to the Coalition and planning/policy development for addressing homelessness. The Coalition Board consists of local elected officials, nonprofit representatives, tribal representatives, subject matter experts, and individuals with lived homeless experience. The Department of Health Services is the Lead Agency and fiscal agent for the Coalition.

Part 1 - Federal Funding: 2023 HUD Continuum of Care Awards

Continuum of Care federal funding awards are made through a competition of CoCs across the nation. For Sonoma County's CoC, the submittal in response to the 2024 Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) included 16 local homeless services projects as shown in Attachment 2. Please note that the use of 2023 is accurate, these specific HUD grant expenditures are part of the 2023 competition, but expenditures occur starting in September 2024.

Some of the HUD CoC awards go directly to support Sonoma County and regional non-profit agencies' work to support the CoC system, as listed on Attachment 2. As Lead Agency to the Coalition Board, DHS in addition to rental assistance and related programming at the Sonoma County Community Development Commission--will receive the following CoC-supportive awards from the 2023 Competition for expenditure in our FY 24-25:

- An award supporting the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), a HUD-mandated web-based client database that reports quality statistical information regarding the extent and nature of homelessness to HUD officials and to the US Congress and provides invaluable information for local systems planning. The award is \$327,157.
- A renewal award for \$549,993 for the Coordinated Entry System, \$538,546 is part of the NOFA awarded to HomeFirst Services. More information on the Coordinated Entry System can be found at: <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/health-and-human-services/health-services/divisions/homelessness->
- The annual Planning award of \$207,734 is calculated at a fraction of the total \$4.2 million award to Sonoma County agencies to partially defray the cost of staffing the Continuum of Care.

Part 2 - State Funding (HHAP, HHIP, ESG) and Approval for HHAP Contract Authority

The State of California Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH) oversees the Homelessness Housing Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) program for both the Coalition and County of Sonoma (DHS). HHAP is issued in rounds and is a block grant program (i.e., a region is awarded a block of funds with some local discretion). HHAP has become the primary source of funding for local projects over the past four years and spending must be informed by best practices focused on moving homeless individuals and families into permanent housing and ensuring those individuals and families maintain their permanent housing.

HHAP funds closely follow a Local Homelessness Action Plan submitted to the State of California in 2022. In 2024, the fifth round of HHAP required a Regional Action Plan coordinated between the DHS and the Homeless Coalition, including representatives from all 5 regions of the County as part of the State's requirement of regional coordination. That Regional Action Plan was submitted to the State on March 29, 2024 and is under review. Once approved, 50% of funding is available this fiscal year, reflected in the initial

Coalition HHAP funding for local projects. A total of \$6,655,056.70 is available via HHAP in this fiscal year with residual amounts of previous HHAP allocations included in the funding awards. This item seeks approval for both Coalition and County HHAP Round 5 contract authority for the 2024-2025 fiscal year.

The State Homeless Housing Incentive Program (HHIP) is a source of one-time funding from the State Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) via Partnership HealthPlan of California (PHC). A portion of funding is dedicated to support local homeless programs following consultation and involvement with the Coalition, particularly in terms of keeping well-performing projects funded with a focus on ensuring individuals experiencing homelessness are connected to healthcare and benefits. \$2 million in HHIP funding is dedicated to local projects in these awards.

State Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) are a state funding source of approximately \$161,000 and can be used for emergency shelter and rapid rehousing services.

Part 3 - Combining State and Local Dollars: 2024 Homeless Program Contract Awards

Funds for existing projects were put out in a new NOFA in December 2023 with new projects also eligible to apply.

Projects were scored by Homeless Coalition appointed scoring panelists, based on performance and alignment with the Strategic Plan. After several rounds of review by the Funding and Evaluation Committee, projects recommended for funding were sent to the Coalition Board for final approval in March 2024 (See Attachment 2).

Included in these funds are \$887,480 in local funds that support projects and provide key administrative funds for agencies to administer projects. Local funds include County General Fund and Reinvestment and Revitalization funds already allocated to DHS.

Local projects will be funded for a full fiscal year and evaluated in early 2025 by the Funding and Evaluation Committee for performance, including a special focus on how projects address racial inequities.

Finally, as part of the Strategic Plan, funds for homelessness prevention were not included in the NOFA in order to better coordinate as a region and system, and to provide funding for a pilot project to address homelessness prevention County-wide, detailed in Part 4.

Part 4 - Local Homelessness Prevention Pilot Project

A primary goal of the Sonoma County Homeless Coalition Strategic Plan is to “operate as one coordinated system.” The Regional Action Plan (RAP), submitted to the State of California Interagency Council on Homelessness, also requires the Continuum of Care and County of Sonoma (along with other jurisdictions) to coordinate as a region to address homelessness. A core unmet need in Sonoma County has been lack of a unified approach to homelessness prevention to address inflow to homelessness. Homelessness prevention programs have been siloed in different areas of the County aside from Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) during the COVID-19 pandemic.

To address this issue, [All Home](https://www.allhomeca.org/regionalactionplan/), <<https://www.allhomeca.org/regionalactionplan/>> a nonprofit agency advancing regional solutions to address homelessness in the Bay Area, has developed and tested a regionally coordinated homelessness prevention program for households with income below 50% of Area Median income in multiple counties. The system 1) pairs rapid, flexible financial assistance with housing stabilization services and legal aid referrals for people facing eviction, and 2) prioritizes households using an online platform developed and maintained by Bay Area Community Services (BACS). In the Oakland program alone,

BACS has already helped over 7,000 households keep their housing and 92% retained that housing long-term as reported by an independent evaluator.

Sonoma County Pilot

All Home initially presented the model of prevention to the Coalition Board in 2023. After the presentation, staff from the County and Cities of Petaluma and Santa Rosa, engaged All Home in October 2023 to discuss a potential model in Sonoma County. The three jurisdictions identified \$1.3 million (County of Sonoma \$500,000; City of Santa Rosa \$500,000; City of Petaluma \$300,000) for a pilot project pending approval by their respective Boards/Councils. All Home has pledged to match this dollar for dollar with funds from private philanthropy for a total of \$2.6 million over two (2) years.

The City of Santa Rosa offered to be the lead contractor with the County (tentatively scheduled for approval by this Board on July 18, 2024) and City of Petaluma contributions coming via a Memorandum of Understanding (not scheduled yet, but most likely will be brought before this Board for approval sometime in July 2024). A regional administrator (like the role BACS plays) will be identified to coordinate the overall system with local “hubs” providing 1:1 support in different areas of the County.

Proposed Timeline

- March-April 2024: Sonoma Prevention Pilot concept shared with Coalition and feedback sought through All Home outreach surveys with service providers in the County.
- June 2024: County of Sonoma, City of Santa Rosa and City of Petaluma match funding confirmed by Board of Supervisors and City Councils.
- July 2024: Sonoma Prevention Pilot regional supportive service providers selected to contract with City of Santa Rosa.
- October 2024: Sonoma Prevention Pilot launch including county-wide communications and training with Coalition members.
- October 2024-September 2026: Sonoma Prevention Pilot project period.

County staff identified \$500,000 in one-time money from HHIP that can be utilized and matched equally by All Home. Partnership HealthPlan of California has approved and endorsed the use of this funding. Once the funding agreement is signed and submitted to the City of Santa Rosa, the County will initiate the transfer of HHIP funding to the City of Santa Rosa. The County portion of the funding, and matching funding from All Home, will primarily support individuals in unincorporated areas as well as the seven small cities.

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 5: Continue to collaborate with local partners, including Continuum of Care, to advance planning and policies to address homelessness.

Racial Equity:

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

Yes

See Attachment 5 - Racial Equity Analysis.

Prior Board Actions:

August 15, 2023: Contract Awards for Homelessness Programs and Continuum of Care Programs

May 24, 2022: Contract Authorization for the Continuum of Care's 2022 Homelessness Programs, Acceptance

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 23-24 Adopted	FY 24-25 Projected	FY 25-26 Projected
Budgeted Expenses		\$8,495,736	
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures		\$8,495,736	
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF		\$1,017,480	
State/Federal		\$7,478,256	
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
General Fund Contingencies			
Total Sources		\$8,495,736	

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

In FY 2024-2025, the following revenue sources will be utilized to pay for the contracts:

Under the purview of the Sonoma County Homeless Coalition Board

- State ESG: \$332,823
- HHAP-3: \$284,665
- HHAP-4 (balance remaining): \$194,254
- HHAP-5: \$1,830,000
- Federal HUD: \$538,564

Under the purview of the Board of Supervisors

- General Fund: \$440,000
- General Fund HOST set aside: \$130,000
- General Fund: Reinvestment & Revitalization: \$447,480

Under the purview of the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors' DHS as the Lead Agency

- HHIP: \$4,289,902

A list of the contracts totaling \$8,495,736 to be expended in FY 2024-2025 are exhibited in Attachment #2.

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

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

N/A

Attachments:

Attachment 1 - NOFA Draft PSA Template

Attachment 2 - NOFA Awards for Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Funding

Attachment 3 - 2024-2025 HUD Continuum of Care Awards

Attachment 4 - Draft Memorandum of Understanding with City of Santa Rosa for Local Homelessness Prevention Pilot Project

Attachment 5 - Racial Equity Analysis

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

None