



Legislation Text

File #: 2019-1071, **Version:** 1

To: Sonoma County Board of Commissioners

Department or Agency Name(s): Sonoma County Community Development Commission

Staff Name and Phone Number: Jenny Abramson, 565-7548

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisorial District(s): All

Title:

Homeless Services Contracts

Recommended Actions:

- A) Authorize the Executive Director of the Community Development Commission (Commission) to execute a contract with the City of Santa Rosa to provide \$165,000 in previously budgeted General Fund for funding operations at the Samuel L. Jones Hall Homeless Shelter and to provide \$90,000 in previously allocated Reinvestment & Revitalization (R&R) funds for rapid re-housing to expedite placements in permanent housing for program participants, for a one-year period beginning July 1, 2019 and ending June 30, 2020. Total contract: \$255,000.
- B) Authorize the Executive Director of the Commission execute a contract with Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Santa Rosa to provide \$338,544 in previously budgeted federal Continuum of Care (CoC) grant funds, \$49,954 in previously budgeted Low- and Moderate-Income Housing Asset Funds (LMIHAF), \$237,552 in previously budgeted State Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP) funds, and \$474,223 in previously budgeted General Fund, Transient Occupancy Tax and Reinvestment & Revitalization funds (including \$304,223 awarded through the FY 2019-20 Consolidated Homeless Services Funding Competition), for continued operations of the Sonoma County Coordinated Entry System including Homelessness Diversion efforts, and the Homeless Outreach Service Team (HOST) Field Work Team for a one-year period beginning July 1, 2019 and ending June 30, 2020. Total contract: \$1,100,273.

Executive Summary:

The contracts with the City of Santa Rosa and Catholic Charities contain direct awards of funds that were approved by the Board as part of the FY 2019-20 Budget hearings. Contract awards will also be financed by unused FY 2018-19 county discretionary funds previously allocated. The Community Development Commission (Commission) is seeking authority to enter into contract for directly-awarded funds. Approval of this item will authorize the Executive Director of the Commission to execute contracts with the City of Santa Rosa and with Catholic Charities for continued operations of two critical homeless service programs in FY 2019-2020. The direct awards in these contracts represent ongoing commitments that are in the process of full discussion and planned renegotiation over the coming twelve months, in order to be brought into full compliance with the Board's contracting principles for Safety Net programs.

Discussion:

Shared Funding of the Samuel L. Jones Hall Homeless Shelter

On October 25, 2004, the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors entered into an agreement with the City of Santa Rosa to provide \$100,000 annually in operating support to the Samuel Jones Hall homeless shelter, and extended that agreement several times, through June 30, 2017. In FY 2014-15, the Board added \$65,000 in Transient Occupancy Tax funding to provide operating support for a winter shelter expansion, and renewed this agreement in FY 2015-16 and FY 2016-17. In FY 2017-18, the City initiated a Homeless Encampment Assistance Pilot and made a programmatic change, opening the same Winter Expansion beds year-round, to accommodate people coming from City-prioritized encampments. The Board of Supervisors agreed to provide \$90,000 in Reinvestment & Revitalization dollars to create Rapid Re-Housing resources for participants in the pilot in FY 2017-18 and FY 2018-19.

For FY 2019-20 Samuel Jones Hall will operate on a \$1,349,331 budget, of which the County of Sonoma’s \$255,000 contribution is now 19%. The Community Foundation Sonoma County will provide \$71,600 (5%) and the City has appropriated \$1,022,731 (76% of the total budget). The County of Sonoma FY 2019-20 Budget appropriated funds for this purpose, as shown in the table below. Funds previously sourced from Transient Occupancy Tax have been shifted to General Fund.

	Samuel L. Jones Hall Homeless Shelter operations	Samuel L. Jones Hall Encampment Expansion	Rapid Rehousing for participants at Samuel L. Jones Hall	TOTAL
Reinvestment & Revitalization			\$90,000	\$90,000
General Fund	\$100,000	\$65,000		\$165,000
TOTAL	\$100,000	\$65,000	\$90,000	\$255,000

The \$65,000 in General Fund originally allocated for a Winter Expansion is now for “Encampment Expansion” as these beds are now used year-round. For FY 2017-18, the County provided \$90,000 of Reinvestment & Revitalization funding to help persons served through the City’s Encampment Program to exit homelessness. Funds were allocated for this purpose by the County both for FY 2018-19, and again in FY 2019-20.

The Samuel Jones Hall Shelter is now the largest shelter in Sonoma County, with 213 year-round beds serving 500 single adults every year. Samuel Jones Hall was the first shelter in the County to revamp its program and staffing to serve the most vulnerable homeless persons first. Participants largely come from the streets of Santa Rosa, but hail from all parts of Sonoma County.

As the effort launched to redesign the homeless system of care and the establishment of HOME Sonoma County, the City and the Commission agreed future funding of Samuel Jones Hall operations should be evaluated along with the entire county’s needs before a new multi-year contract was developed. Thus recent operations have been funded under single-year contracts. County funds are still needed to operate this critical

system infrastructure, but the cost-sharing arrangement that persisted for more than a decade is in the process of being fully discussed and renegotiated in light of the many changes over this period. During FY 2019-20, the City and Commission will review the role of this core infrastructure with the goal of developing a multi-year agreement again beginning July 1, 2020 that is fully consistent with the Board's contracting principles for Safety Net Departments.

Contract with Catholic Charities for "Front Door" Infrastructure

Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Santa Rosa has been the recipient of numerous competitive funding awards, in this case underwriting the multi-year development of a federally-mandated system infrastructure addressing homelessness county-wide. Funding for three interrelated system development projects is included in a single contract: 1) the federally-mandated Coordinated Entry System, 2) the Homelessness Diversion Project, and 3) the Homeless Outreach Service Field Work Team (HOST). Coordinated Entry provides a county-wide, "no wrong door" entry into homeless services for individuals and families seeking assistance with housing. The Homelessness Diversion Project provides assistance to people seeking to avoid imminent homelessness, when they contact the Coordinated Entry System. HOST provides direct street outreach and linkage into Coordinated Entry.

Consistent with the Homeless System Redesign that the Board approved on October 9, 2018, these interconnected efforts address the multi-year development of a comprehensive "front door" to homeless services, with pilot projects launching in 2015, and full implementation beginning in September 2017. When a combined request for qualifications was issued for the initial pilot projects in 2014, Catholic Charities was the sole fully responsive applicant. Catholic Charities has continued as the sole non-profit agency capable of delivering these mandated services on the required county-wide basis.

Coordinated Entry System

The Coordinated Entry System is a streamlined system for accessing housing and shelter to end homelessness and is required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for all Continuums of Care as stated in CFR 578.7 (a) (8) of the Continuum of Care Program Interim Rule. Coordinated Entry in Sonoma County follows a Housing First approach for all funded homeless service providers, and prioritizes the use of limited permanent supportive housing for those with the highest vulnerability and longest time homeless.

The Sonoma County Coordinated Entry System provides a standardized, evidence-based needs assessment and ensures that people can receive assistance in an equitable fashion, to the extent resources are available to serve them. The Coordinated Entry System provides a single assessment process and a single referral system housed in the Commission's Homeless Management Information System. It is a "No Wrong Door" system in that it provides access points in all regions of Sonoma County, both rural and urban, to assist individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Coordinated Entry is the primary access for referrals into permanent supportive housing and rapid re-housing as well as into emergency shelter. Coordinated Entry promotes the participant's choice of the housing available across Sonoma County, and has historically reduced the average

length of time people remain homeless.

Catholic Charities was selected in 2014 through an open and fair request for qualifications, to develop the Coordinated Entry System. Prior to FY 2017-18, the Coordinated Entry System operated as a pilot project serving families with children. On September 18, 2017, services for single adults and transition-aged youth opened, expanding as access points were added and federally compliant policies and procedures were introduced throughout the rest of the fiscal year. During the period 4/1/2018-3/31/2019, the Coordinated Entry System assessed 164 homeless families, 1,138 single adults, and 133 transition-aged youth, for a total of 1,535 households. More than 1,100 households received one or more referrals. Of the persons assessed, 30% (472 households) exited to a permanent housing destination, and 92% of them remain housed. Additionally, 519 highly vulnerable persons were referred to emergency shelter. Due to the continuing housing shortage and increased rents following the October 2017 fire disaster, the average number of days that participants remained homeless remained at 120 days. Despite these continuing challenges, during this reporting period the Coordinated Entry System offered a 35% improvement over prior to its implementation, when the number of days that persons remained homeless averaged 186.

On July 8, 2019, the HOME Sonoma County Leadership Council received a mandated first annual evaluation of the Coordinated Entry System, provided by the Technical Assistance Collaborative, Inc. under the auspices of the California Department of Housing and Community Development. Over the coming year, Home Sonoma County and its Coordinated Entry/Housing First Task Group will determine responses to recommendations to achieve full compliance with the federal mandate, formalize decision-making procedures, and ensure fair and equal access to services throughout the county. This effort will consider options presented by the evaluator for possible restructuring of the program. While these determinations are undertaken, provision for ongoing mandated services must be made. Therefore Board approval is sought to enter into a one-year contract to maintain mandated services until any changes are determined. At that time, should Home Sonoma County determine that Coordinated Entry services remain in a subcontract with a nonprofit partner, a new competitive process will be conducted to bring procurement into full compliance with the Board’s contracting principles for Safety Net Departments.

Funding for FY 2019-20 operations of the Coordinated Entry project includes \$220,884 in new competitively-awarded dollars to expand Coordinated Entry Access Points in regions outside Santa Rosa, ensuring equal access to services in underserved areas of Sonoma County.

Continuum of Care (CoC) Grant	Transient Occupancy Tax (required match to CoC Grant)	Reinvestment & Revitalization (Sonoma Valley competitive award)	General Fund (Community Services Fund competitive award)	Total
\$ 338,544	\$40,000	\$50,000	\$170,844	\$599,388

Homelessness Diversion Project

The HUD Continuum of Care grants limit the project to serving persons who are experiencing *literal* homelessness. Yet many people seek out Coordinated Entry services who are at imminent risk of losing their homes, living in a motel, or staying doubled up with family or friends, and thus are not eligible for Coordinated Entry under federal rules. They too may identify as homeless. In order to assist people in these “at risk” situations, the Coordinated Entry operator provides brief interventions that assist households that are experiencing a housing crisis to identify a short-term (or even long-term) solution without entering the homeless service system.

In FY 2018-19, it is estimated that the Homelessness Diversion effort will assist a total of 404 households to avoid entering homeless services. Based on past performance, fewer than 30% of persons diverted seek homeless services again during the year, suggesting that the solutions identified through this brief intervention are workable for over 70% of “at risk” people.

All Homelessness Diversion funds were awarded competitively through the FY 2019-20 Consolidated Homeless Services Funding Competition and approved by the Board of Supervisors on April 30, 2018. Increased funds awarded for FY 2019-20 will support the expansion of the Diversion protocol to all Coordinated Entry locations, supplemented by new flexible assistance dollars. These funds are restated here only because of their inclusion in the larger contract with Catholic Charities.

State Homeless Emergency Aid Program	General Fund (Community Services Fund)	Low- and Moderate Income Housing Asset Fund	TOTAL
\$34,338	\$65,708	\$49,954	\$150,000

Homeless Outreach Service Field Work Team (HOST)

The Homeless Outreach Service Team Project launched in 2015 to provide a humane response to the impact of homeless encampments on parks, creeks, waterways, and public safety. At the Board’s request in 2014, a multi-departmental group of County staff designed this multidisciplinary project under the leadership of the Commission, to be carried out in partnership with a nonprofit Field Work Team. Following a competitive process, Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Santa Rosa was selected to lead the Field Work Team in collaboration with Social Advocates for Youth, Buckelew Programs, and numerous other partners. Contributions were made to the project by the County of Sonoma, Sonoma County Water Agency, Human Services Department, Department of Health Services, Probation, Sheriff’s Office, and Regional Parks. Over time, support for HOST was added through agreements with the City of Santa Rosa, the District Attorney’s Victim Assistance Program, and the Petaluma Sober Circle project. For FY 2019-20, HOME Sonoma County recommended expansions of street outreach in underserved areas of Sonoma County-using competitive State Homeless Emergency Aid Program funds to expand HOST as well as outreach provided by Reach for Home in the North County, and Social Advocates for Youth county-wide.

The HOST Field Work team maintains a direct call-in line at 1-855-707-4678 (HOST) that enables service agencies and residents throughout the County to request assistance for unsheltered persons. Reports of encampments that are recorded in the web-based *SoCo Report It* site go directly to the HOST Field Work Team. In addition, Commission staff routinely route requests from constituents who communicate concerns about unsheltered persons in all five supervisorial districts, to the HOST Field Work team.

The HOST Field Work Team responds to these reports and to other hotspots as requested by the Commission, engaging people who are often resistant to receiving services, and performing well checks to assess each person's health status. Using the Coordinated Entry System's standardized vulnerability assessment, outreach workers identify special needs and ensure that persons who are living outside are both prioritized for, and linked to, appropriate housing in partnership with the Coordinated Entry System. Unsheltered persons are additionally assisted to complete applications for health and economic assistance services and offered transportation to shelters, program services, and other points as needed. The contract scope of work includes assisting unsheltered persons who wish to relocate to safe, permanent housing in their home community, to do so.

In the first three quarters of FY 2018-19, the HOST Field Work team has worked with more than 1,450 unsheltered persons located throughout Sonoma County. The multi-cultural and culturally competent Field Work Team possesses broad experience in community health and benefits advocacy, as well as training in motivational interviewing and other street outreach best practices. The vast *majority of the 1,450 contacts are people who were known to the team* from prior contact; 11%, or 156 people, have been engaged for the first time in FY 2018-19. Of the 156 people engaged for the first time, 138 (87%) participated in ongoing services. Of all 1,450 persons enrolled in HOST, 164 (11%) were placed into shelters and 105 people (7%) accessed permanent housing. Also by the end of the third quarter, 40 clean ups were conducted, providing employment opportunities to 148 HOST participants.

In addition to the \$130,000 in previously budgeted Reinvestment & Revitalization funds, the HOST project was awarded \$220,885 in competitive funding to expand street outreach to underserved areas of the County:

Reinvestment & Revitalization (budgeted)	State Homeless Emergency Aid Program (competitive)	General Fund (Community Services Fund - competitive)	TOTAL
\$130,000	\$203,214	\$17,671	\$350,885

Approval of this item will authorize continued operations of these four programs that are critical to the homeless service system's infrastructure, by authorizing two new funding agreements.

Prior Board Actions:

7/10/2018, Item 49 - Authorized funding agreement for continued funding of the City of Santa Rosa's Samuel Jones Hall for FY 2018-19.

10/9/2018, Item 27 - Authorized formation of and appointed representatives to HOME Sonoma County, a regional homeless system of care.

10/16/2018, Item 1 - Authorized funding agreement for continued funding of the Homeless Outreach Service Team, Coordinated Entry Project, and Homelessness Diversion Project.

4/30/2019, Item 45 - Authorized FY 2019-20 funding awards from Consolidated Homeless Services Funding Competition.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 19-20 Adopted	FY 20-21 Projected	FY 21-22 Projected
Budgeted Expenses	\$1,355,273		
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures	\$1,355,273		
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF	\$729,223		
State/Federal	\$576,096		
Fees/Other	\$49,954		
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
Total Sources	\$1,355,273		

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

All revenue and expenditures are included in the FY19-20 Adopted Budget. No additional authority is required.

The General Fund amount of \$729,223 shown above is made up of \$270,000 of Reinvestment & Revitalization (R&R), \$40,000 of Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT), and \$419,223 of unrestricted General Fund.

The State/Federal amount of \$576,096 shown above is made up of \$338,544 of Federal Continuum of Care (CoC) grants from Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and \$237,552 of State Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP) grant funds from California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD).

The Fees/Other amount of \$49,954 shown above is from the Low and Moderate Income Housing Asset Fund (LMIHAF) program income generated from housing loan repayments.

Staffing Impacts:

Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A - I Step)	Additions (number)	Deletions (number)

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

None

Attachments:

Attachment 1 - Contract with City of Santa Rosa

Attachment 2 - Funding agreement with Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Santa Rosa

Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:

None