



Legislation Text

File #: 2022-0288, **Version:** 1

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, Sonoma County Community Development Commission

Staff Name and Phone Number: Tina Rivera, 707-565-4774, Dave Kiff, 707-565-7504

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisorial District(s): Countywide

Title:

Housing and Homelessness Update, CARE Court, Los Guilicos Village and Related Agreements and Authorizations

Recommended Action:

- A) Receive Homelessness Update, offer guidance to staff as to strategies;
- B) Provide guidance to, accept the recommendations of, and direct the Director of the Department of Health Services and the interim Executive Director of the Community Development Commission to return to the Board with Results-Based Accountability metrics for the proposed uses of \$4 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds previously designated by the Board for homelessness programs and solutions;
- C) Authorize the interim Executive Director of the Community Development Commission, or their designee, to execute the professional services agreement with St Vincent de Paul for the operations of Los Guilicos Village for Fiscal Year 2022-2023, as well as authorize the Interim Executive Director of the Sonoma County Community Development Commission to file Notices of Exemption in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act;
- D) Direct staff to prepare a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the future operations of Los Guilicos Village for FY 23-24;
- E) Authorize the Interim Executive Director of the Community Development Commission to donate or otherwise dispose of the temporary housing trailers at the Sonoma County Fairgrounds with a preference towards assigning them to non-profits in service to our unhoused neighbors; and
- F) Authorize the Board Chair to send a letter to the Governor and California state legislators advocating for a phased-in approach regarding SB 1338 and the CARE Court program (CARE Act).

Executive Summary:

- This agenda item updates the Board and public about recent Board and other actions relating to our Sonoma County neighbors who are homeless. Much of the relevant information is within Attachment 1, which includes information about "Functional Zero," our encampment approaches, Los Guilicos Village, our Interdepartmental Multi-Disciplinary Team (IMDT) cohorts, the 2021 Safe Parking funding, the 2022 Point in Time Count, Project Homekey efforts, the Continuum of Care's work, and more.
- Key takeaways include:
- Homeless numbers are slightly up from the 2020 Point in Time Count. Some populations saw

significant increases (such as youth - 68%) but some saw significant decreases (such as families - 40%). Fully solving family homelessness will take time and continued focus.

- Interim Housing improved inventory is progressing towards having enough interim housing in the region to create system flow.
- Regional success depends on the collaboration with our cities, at the Continuum of Care, and with service providers is improving.
- Significant new funding has come to the region from State, Federal, and local sources, including funding from the Board of Supervisors. While much of that came to curb the spread of COVID-19 during the pandemic, other sources will continue in the short-term.
- Significant funding over the next several years will be needed to add interim and permanent supportive housing units to further strengthen the 1-2-4 All Home Model and to reach Functional Zero.
- In the medium and long-term, more funding is needed to improve the system and sustain it, especially for supportive services.

Discussion:

As noted in the Executive Summary, readers should review **Attachment 1 - A Homelessness Update**. The Update, among other things, frames these Board decision points:

1. Receive the Homeless Update (Attachment 1). The update includes information about the current state of homelessness in Sonoma County (using the Point-in-Time Count data), the Sonoma County Continuum of Care's (CoC) actions (including the CoC's preliminary expense and revenue information as Attachment 4), and then focuses on how to get to Functional Zero homelessness in the region via, among other things, prioritizing:
 - Housing (with specific assisted projects in **Attachment 3**);
 - Supports - Supportive Services;
 - Collaborating within a "no silos" system;
 - Listening to those persons who are marginalized; and
 - Using real-time data and analysis.

The update is linked too with a Programs Update (**Attachment 2**) that briefly gives an update on various programs and projects that are more recent - from Los Guilicos Village to Safe Parking to Homekey. The update also includes how a proposed \$4 million in ARPA funds might address the issues above by supporting key initiatives within the system.

2. **The ARPA Recommendations.** These should be read in the context of the Homelessness Update, which has more details and alignment (on pages 18 & 19 of Attachment 1). As a reminder, the Board assigned \$4 million of the County's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to homelessness solutions, in the spirit of efforts that might improve the system of care versus providing short-term funding for the system's existing pacing. We note that these funds and uses are proposed as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic's impacts on households and communities. The proposed uses are reflective of the US Treasury [Final Rule <https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/SLFRF-Final-Rule.pdf>](https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/SLFRF-Final-Rule.pdf) that includes projects addressing homelessness and emergency programs or services for homeless individuals, including temporary residences for people experiencing homelessness.

In light of the needs identified in this staff report, the DHS and CDC teams propose the following uses for

these funds:

- **\$2,165,000** for a regional Centralized Housing Location (CHL) Service over at least an 18-month period (this amount includes \$100,000 previously allocated for housing location services via the County's Strategic Planning efforts). Assuming the program follows staff's program design, which includes additional staff for the Sonoma County Housing Authority, this funding amount covers 3.0 FTEs via either limited term or extra help positions (up to 18 months). Staff will return to the Board to add the positions and funding allocations if approved. See **HOUSING** section (page 1) within Attachment 1 for the need for this program.
- **\$620,000** to supplement an 18-month Peer Housing Support program, "Transitions to Housing" from West County Community Services that received partial funding within the larger ARPA awards. See the **SUPPORTIVE SERVICES** section (page 12) within Attachment 1 for the need for this program.
- **\$250,000** to improve Sonoma County's 2-1-1 System so that it provides stronger information and assistance to persons at risk of homelessness. 2-1-1 may be an important part of prevention and diversion efforts; as it is a free service that connects community members to information about a wide range of critical health and human services available in their community. See the **SUPPORTIVE SERVICES** section within Attachment 1 for the need for this program.
- **\$200,000** to implement improvements from the CoC's 2022 Q1 - Q2 assessment of the "Front Door" to the homeless system of care (including case conferencing, coordinated entry, By Names Listings, and more. See the section on the Continuum of Care - this ARPA allocation also reflects back on the **COLLABORATION** and **"NO SILOS"** section (page 14) within Attachment 1; and
- **\$865,000** in Flexible Funds to expand housing units and rapid support.
 - \$200,000 to continue the Flexible Funding program started by the Board of Supervisors in FY 21-22 that enables outreach and other teams to quickly help those in need of solutions that may involve small amounts of funds or short-term services. County staff is discussing how or if these funds could be allocated regionally via case conferencing; and
 - \$665,000 for flexible support (on a competitive basis) that fills portions of housing unit shortfalls (possibly viewed through the All Home 1-2-4 model) that will be identified in the current Homebase/CoC/County strategic planning effort. See **SUPPORTIVE SERVICES** and **COLLABORATION** sections within Attachment 1 for explanations and greater detail.

Staff brought our proposal before the CoC Board on June 22, 2022, and comments were generally positive - here's a paraphrased summary of their comments:

- Excited to see 211 component. Could it assist with a Coordinated Entry access point? Could 211 funnel people to appropriate services? Have 211 make placements?
- There is a need to strike a balance between spending funds on housing preparation (such as supportive services) and housing construction - if we don't have the latter, what are we preparing people for?
- Regarding the Centralized Housing Location service: It's important to know how many housing placements come out of this. Do we have enough market rate housing available in Sonoma County? If not, housing locator is not going to work. Might be good to think of this as a pilot.
- We should set tentative goals around centralized housing locator.
- Appreciate the proposed investment in front end system

- It would be ideal if outreach funds and Interdepartmental Multi-Disciplinary Team (IMDT) were accessible beyond just the County areas. IMDT needs to become more available to cities, as there is never enough staffing locally.
- Regarding the Emergency Flexible Funds (EFF): It would be ideal to have the EFF administered in part by outreach staff versus having to go back to case conferencing. It should be used by folks making the first contacts with people experiencing homelessness.
- Regarding the EFF: Would like these funds to also be put towards keeping people housed - to support the back end.
- Supportive services' funding is critical, and might not be well-addressed by this ARPA proposal. Safe parking programs are seeing some funding cliffs coming and the timeline is not far away.
- Remember the need for supportive services. "We don't want to lose traction" there.

This Board item authorizes staff to pursue these allocations further, reporting back to the Board with results-based accountability metrics for the items.

3. Approval for an execution of a new contract with St Vincent de Paul for the operations of **Los Guilicos Village** (LG Village) in eastern Santa Rosa, along with direction to prepare a Request for Proposals (RFP) to consider retaining the same operator or moving to another one.

LG Village houses about 60 persons using a non-congregate shelter (NCS) model, and has been in operation since early 2020. It costs about \$2.2 million a year to run, including indirect expenses. It has on-site security, medical assistance, supervision, and restrooms and showers. More information is in **Attachment 2 - Programs Summary**.

Staff seeks the Board's authorization to enter into a contract with the current operator (**Attachment 5**) for another year (July 2022 - June 30, 2023). During this time period, staff will prepare an RFP for LG Village operations, allowing the same or a new provider to start or continue service with some transition time.

4. **Fairgrounds Trailers.** Also as discussed within **Attachment 2 (Program Summary)**, the DHS and CDC team are working to maximize the post-COVID use of the trailers at the Sonoma County Fairgrounds. The trailers came to us from the State of California to accommodate emergency housing needs as the COVID-19 Pandemic began.

Our goal is to provide the trailers to appropriate homeless service providers (such as West County Community Services and Sonoma Village Applied Services) who may be able to continue to use them for housing. County Counsel has worked with DHS, CDC and the Department of General Services to determine the appropriate and legal process to re-allocate or re-purpose the 34 trailers.

This item asks the Board to authorize the disposition of up to 34 trailers in an appropriate manner, with first priority being provision to other homeless service providers and guidance that the trailers be used or disposed of in a safe manner that does not result in them being placed contrary to law or public safety in an encampment.

5. **Governor Newsom's CARE Courts Proposal.** As proposed within Senate Bill 1338 (Umberg, Eggman, 2022), California would begin a new "Community Assistance, Recovery, and Empowerment (CARE) court

program. The bill “would authorize specified persons to petition a civil court to create a voluntary CARE agreement or a court-ordered CARE plan and implement services, to be provided by county behavioral health agencies, including stabilization medication, housing, and other enumerated services to adults who are suffering from schizophrenia spectrum and psychotic disorders and who meet other specified criteria.”

CARE Court is aimed at helping individuals who are suffering from untreated mental health and substance use disorders leading to homelessness, incarceration, or even worse outcomes. This approach seeks to act early and get people the support and services they need to address underlying needs. The CARE Court Act intends to connect a person who is struggling with an untreated mental illness and/or substance use challenge, with a court-ordered Care Plan for up to 24 months. Each plan would be managed by a care team within the community and can include clinically prescribed, individualized interventions with a number of supportive services, medication, as well as a housing plan.

All counties across California will be required to participate in the CARE Court under the proposal. If local governments do not meet their specified duties under court-ordered Care Plans, the court will have the ability to order daily monetary sanctions to Counties.

Public Defender and the Department of Health Services will require additional capacity in order to implement the requirements of this program. Staff will develop and implement a CARE Cohort the ways in which this new state mandate can be implemented within our community.

We will return to your board with further program details and a timeline for implementation as additional information is provided regarding the implementation requirements from the state. In the meantime, under the coordination of the County Administrator’s Legislative Affairs manager, staff asks for authorization to send a proposed letter reflecting the interests of the County and the California State Association of Counties (CSAC). Our position is supportive of a tiered or phased-in implementation and requests consideration of additional resources to ensure success of the program (letter request is **Attachment 6**).

Strategic Plan:

This item directly supports the County’s Five-year Strategic Plan by further improving the local homelessness system of care via new strategies and funding. It 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.

Prior Board Actions:

- June 18, 2021: FY 2021-22 Budget Adoption
- October 26, 2021: Project Homekey-2 Authorization
- December 7, 2021: 24/7 Safe Parking and NCS program authorization (allocating \$2 million)
- March 22, 2022: Update on Homekey-2, Allocation of Early Capital Match
- June 17, 2022: FY 2022-23 Budget Adoption

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 22-23 Adopted	FY 23-24 Projected	FY 24-25 Projected
Budgeted Expenses	\$2,460,000	\$1,640,000	
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures	\$2,460,000	\$1,640,000	
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal (ARPA)	\$2,460,000	\$1,640,000	
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
Total Sources	\$2,460,000	\$1,640,000	

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

The above reflects the \$4,000,000 allocated over two fiscal years of the American Rescue Plan Act funding, as well as the allocation of previously-budgeted \$100,000 for housing navigation/location services via the Countywide Strategic Planning effort. This summary assumes that 60% of the program funds are spent in FY 22-23 and the remaining 40% in FY 23-24. Appropriations will be added to the FY22-23 Adopted Budget during the 1st Quarter Consolidated Budget Hearings.

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

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

Staff will return to the Board with an approach to either internal staffing or other staffing alternatives in the near future. Housing Locators and Coordinators.

Attachments:

Attachment 1 - Homelessness Update - July 2022
Attachment 2 - Programs Summary
Attachment 3 - Assisted Housing Summary
Attachment 4 - CoC's Revenue and Expense Summary
Attachment 5 - Proposed FY 2022-23 LG Village agreement with St Vincent de Paul
Attachment 6 - CSAC information regarding California's CARE Court legislation
Attachment 7 - Presentation

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

None