

City of Carlsbad Homeless Response Plan



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Mission Statement

Enhance the quality of life for all who live in Carlsbad by actively leveraging and deploying city resources in a compassionate and effective manner, and by facilitating access to resources provided by others.

Purpose

The Homeless Response Plan establishes key principles and system responses that the city will employ to address the community impacts of homelessness. The plan identifies the role of the City of Carlsbad in addressing homelessness and defines its function as distinct from other tiers of government and community partnerships.

The plan provides strategies aimed at:

1. Preventing, reducing and managing homelessness in Carlsbad;
2. Supporting and building capacity within the city and community to address homelessness;
3. Encouraging collaboration within the city, community partnerships and residents.
4. Retaining, protecting and increasing the supply of housing.

Impact Statement

The Homeless Response Plan commits to reduce the impact of homelessness on city resources and the Carlsbad community while working to meet the complex needs of the homeless.

Background

In the past couple of years, the City of Carlsbad has experienced an increase in issues caused by homelessness, including increased calls for emergency and police services and citizen complaints. Residents and other community members, including business owners, are requesting a response from the city to address the increasing impacts associated with this challenging issue, both to the homeless individuals themselves and to the surrounding community.

The reasons for homelessness are many and often complicated and time consuming to resolve. To better understand the specific needs and the impacts of the homeless on the Carlsbad community, Housing & Neighborhood Services convened a working group of staff from several city departments, including Police, Fire, Library, Parks & Recreation, Public Works, and the City Attorney's Office to share experiences and collaborate on potential strategies. This informal working group, known internally as the Homeless Response Team (HRT), met several times with the goal of developing a proactive, solution-oriented program to address the challenge. While we will coordinate with other cities and other regional service organizations to meet the needs of the homeless, the Carlsbad HRT intends to start with a full assessment of our challenge in Carlsbad and stay focused on addressing the needs of our homeless residents as a first priority.

We intend to work more closely with other cities to expand the model out to help other cities through an ongoing collaborative approach. There is potential negative impact to surrounding cities when one city begins putting pressure on their homeless residents to make changes. We

hope to resolve the crisis to the greatest degree possible for Carlsbad, and not just relocate it to another city.

As part of this working group effort, a decision was made to participate actively in the annual Regional Task Force on the Homeless Point-In-Time Count which occurred on January 27, 2017. City staff and volunteers that know the city well went into the field and took the counts, and subsequently conducted interviews of a sample of the homeless as prescribed by the Task Force. It was very important to get a more accurate count of the homeless to allow staff to better understand the homeless population in Carlsbad specifically. With a more accurate count, it is anticipated that the City will have much better access to state and federal funding to help us to address the needs of the homeless in our community.

The Regional Task Force on the Homeless released the 2017 *WeAllCount/Point-in-Time* Count results in late April, 2017. The total homeless count for Carlsbad is 160; 59 sheltered and 101 unsheltered. In addition to receiving the final counts from the Regional Task Force on the Homeless, the following tasks have also been completed since January, 2017:

- Survey of local service, community and faith-based organizations to identify the resources and services currently being provided to Carlsbad homeless residents, and beginning to identify the gaps.
- Developed a resource guide for city departments to help provide referrals and information to the homeless community.
- Began effort to identify local social service agencies, churches, service groups, businesses and residents serving the homeless population and what each can do to help.
- Ongoing research for alternative affordable housing and homeless shelter opportunities.
- Learning from the City of Oceanside Homeless Outreach Team on its model for how to assess the homeless population and identify how to assist them from a range of solutions, and from the City of San Diego, through its City Attorney's Office.

Overview

The reasons for homelessness in Carlsbad and other cities throughout the nation are many, and often different for each individual. Some of the causes of homelessness are:

- Poverty
- Unemployment
- Lack of affordable housing
- Poor physical or mental health
- Drug and Alcohol Abuse
- Gambling
- Family and relationship breakdown
- Domestic violence
- Physical and/or sexual abuse
- Victims of financial or identify theft
- Escalating health care costs
- Aging out of foster care system with no support
- Human trafficking
- Lack of transportation or access to services for various reasons

A homeless person could be homeless for one, several or all of the above reasons. These factors not only cause a person to become homeless, but can be the reasons a person remains homeless. The solutions are not easy, and often require a multi-pronged and individualized response.

Regional efforts have been made to present a unified response to homelessness in San Diego County specifically, and considerable funding has been made available to address the needs. Unfortunately, these efforts have had limited success to date and the homeless populations in San Diego County are continuing to grow. Because the reasons are many, the solutions which would allow a homeless person to be housed and remain successfully housed are difficult and complex to resolve; the solutions require a more comprehensive understanding of the individual needs and take considerable time to case manage each person.

It is staff's opinion that the current service environment to address the needs of the homeless has not been more successful because 1) services have not been well-coordinated and there is limited collaboration among service agencies; 2) there is duplication of effort in many services due to overlapping organizational missions; 3) there is competition for available funding to sustain individual organizations rather than to expand services through partnerships; and 4) homeless have difficulty accessing the services for a variety of reasons, including lack of transportation to the service locations.

The 2016 Point-in-Time Count by the Regional Task Force on the Homeless indicated that Carlsbad had 67 homeless in emergency shelters, 16 unsheltered homeless individuals, and 26 homeless living in their vehicles (RV, car, truck, etc.). The 2017 Point-in-Time Count indicates that Carlsbad has homeless in emergency shelters, homeless living in their vehicles or self-made structures, and unsheltered homeless residents. The count indicates that there has been an increase in homeless residents in Carlsbad. Based on Police records, there have been 769 calls for service related to homeless individuals since August of 2016. The Police are averaging 240 calls per month, 10 calls per day. These statistics indicate that the population could be larger in Carlsbad than reported by the Regional Task Force on the Homeless. However, the official count does indicate an increase, even with all of the efforts to date to house the homeless throughout San Diego County.

Based on data from emergency responders and medical service providers throughout the San Diego region, it is estimated that it costs \$45,000 to \$50,000 per year to provide assistance to one homeless resident from a medical emergency response and care standpoint. Typically, the Fire Department responds to health crisis calls for the homeless. When you consider response costs for the Fire Department, transport to the hospital, and related hospital costs for individuals with no insurance, the cost per person adds up fairly fast. If we use the count of 100 unsheltered homeless residents in Carlsbad, this has a related medical response and service cost of \$4,500,000 to \$5,000,000 on an annual basis, which is significant.

The Police Department estimates that it utilizes about 3600 police officer hours per year to respond to calls related to homeless individuals; these calls for service range from suspicious

individual, to disruptive behavior to criminal or threatening activity. When we consider the fully burdened hourly cost of a police officer at \$99.79, the annual cost for police service calls is estimated to be about \$360,000 per year.

The homeless do use free public services and facilities, such as the library, senior center and city parks. Various service groups provide food to the homeless at city parks. There have, however, been some complaints about the behavior and/or “look” of the homeless residents frequenting these public facilities. Unfortunately, over the past few years, the city has also seen an increase in criminal activity associated with some of the homeless residents; this activity is generally drug or alcohol related and/or petty theft or other nuisance crimes (such as smoking in the parks, overnight parking/camping on the public streets).

The city has experienced problems with homeless encampments in open space and habitat preserve areas, as well as in public facilities such as landscape medians or other areas, large storm water pipes or other utility pipes that are pending completion of construction projects, and storm drains and drainage channels. Homeless residents have been responsible for some damage to city properties and have illegally used electric to power RVs and other equipment. The clean-up of trash and debris, fecal matter, and other pollutants by Public Works staff and/or contractors has increased over time. This all has a cost to the city.

Neighboring Cities Response

Many of the neighboring cities in northern San Diego County are experiencing similar increases in their homeless populations, and are working to develop solutions that will be effective for their particular cities. For example, Oceanside is working their Homeless Outreach Team (HOT) primarily from the Police Department. Carlsbad police officers attended a training from the Oceanside HOT to learn more about what is working within their community to address the needs of the homeless, and is continuing to learn from other cities with emerging homeless response teams. As another example, Encinitas hired a Homeless Services Coordinator to work on their challenges associated with the homeless, and many other cities are developing city-specific programs as well. Because of the uniqueness of the needs of each homeless resident and the varying degrees of abilities to access services in each city, it appears that a community focused effort may be more successful than the regional approach at this time. These locally focused efforts may then be able to expand to regional solutions as each of the cities develop a better understanding of the specific needs of their homeless populations and respond accordingly to connect with resources and other longer term solutions to address those needs.

It is also important to note that Vista, Oceanside, Escondido and the City of San Diego have had some success prosecuting illegal encampments – on both public and private property – as a misdemeanor. They have found that an infraction level offense has no impact on the homeless population while a misdemeanor level offense provides a “carrot stick” for individuals to accept resources and services as part of a plea agreement. The City of San Diego also has a very effective program that targets chronic offenders, a large subset of its homeless population.

Community Partnerships

To respond successfully to the challenge of homelessness in Carlsbad, the assistance of community members, service organizations, churches, caring residents, businesses, state and federal agencies and others will be needed to work in coordination to implement the strategies set forth below. This is not a challenge that the city will be able to implement alone. Without the assistance of many others with expertise in a variety of areas of service to the homeless, the strategies and tasks set forth below can't be completed in a way that will allow for a successful response from the city.



Strategic Plan Development

This homeless response plan will serve as a foundation to develop a more comprehensive, longer term strategic plan which will continue to shape the city's efforts to address the impacts of homelessness on the residents, the larger community and the city itself.

The strategic plan will include an analysis of 1) this initial homeless response action plan as well as identify gaps and opportunities within existing homeless programs and services provided by the city, faith-based and community organizations; 2) benchmarks to track program progress; 3) timeline for project action items; and 4) resource and funding requirements to support the strategic plan for the longer term.

Measuring Success

A critical element of any plan involves monitoring progress and measuring success against established objectives. Using indicators to help gauge the impact of actions will also be important, helping the city and community to better understand where success is emerging or where efforts need to be re-evaluated.

While the key measures noted below require more detail and clarification as well as consensus among policy makers as to "how to define success" they outline the expectations of this Homeless Response Plan if implemented in full. It is anticipated that these key indicators will be added to or changed over time based on review of the Homeless Response Plan and development of the longer term strategic homeless plan. The measures would include, but are not limited to:

- Number of homeless residents assessed and action plans developed for each person and/or family.
- Full implementation of a case management system, put into place to effectively collaborate with city departments, service providers and community organizations to address the unique needs of homeless residents.
- Increase in number of community and service partnerships to serve homeless residents.
- Protocol developed and put in place and employees trained on how to impact change in behavior and circumstances of homeless residents.
- Increased housing opportunities for short and long-term housing for homeless residents.

City Departments Coordinated Work

HNS will take the lead in implementing the Homeless Response Plan in coordination with the city’s Homeless Response Team. This multi-department effort to address the needs of the homeless will be more efficient and effective because it builds on the strengths and current work effort of the Homeless Response Team members. In addition to executing the developed protocol for addressing the needs of the homeless at city facilities and within the community, following are the current and anticipated roles for the Homeless Response Team members:

Department	Role on team
Library & Cultural Arts	Develop and maintain a community resource database for all to use in addressing the needs of the homeless; continue to provide insight to challenges and opportunities in meeting the needs of homeless library patrons to the homeless response coordinator.
Parks & Recreation	Evaluate facility and service offerings that can be incorporated into the ongoing plan to meet the needs of the homeless; continue to provide insight to challenges and opportunities in meeting the needs of homeless residents at the senior center, Pine Park and other city recreation facilities and parks.
Public Works	Continue to coordinate with the police department’s Crime Suppression and Homeless Outreach Team on homeless encampment clean-up projects and other relate service needs; continue to provide insight to challenges and opportunities for addressing the impacts of homeless residents and their actions on public facilities.
Fire	Provide life emergency services to homeless residents; acts as subject matter expert for emergency services best practices for homeless residents; continue to assist with interviewing homeless residents and helping the move forward to obtain assistance through the city’s case management program.
Police	Lead the Crime Suppression and Homeless Outreach Team (HOT); Two dedicated officers will make consistent and frequent contact with the homeless and seek opportunities to move homeless residents towards the city’s case management program in coordination with HNS and other Homeless Response Team members. The Crime Suppression and HOT will take the lead on addressing impacts of homeless encampments and working with the general public and regional partners on addressing their concerns and complaints regarding the homeless.
City Attorney	Provides legal guidance, advice and insight around homeless related issues; assists with new policies and ordinances to address and limit, where necessary, homeless impacts on the community; prosecute criminal offenses as appropriate.
HNS	Develop planning documents and take lead on coordination of homeless response project.

Strategies

Strategy #1: Prevent, reduce and manage homelessness in Carlsbad	
a.	Continue to evaluate existing city services and programs that serve homeless residents.
b.	Develop a plan for city departments to coordinate cross-functional homeless responsibilities in a more efficient manner.
c.	Compile homeless and/or transient related data from departments (transient camps cleaned up, number of homeless-related emergency calls) to set a benchmark to track success of plan efforts.
d.	Develop homeless encampment enforcement cleanup plan in coordination with the city’s crime suppression and homeless outreach teams, other city departments and select service providers.
Strategy #2: Support and build capacity within the city and community to address homelessness	
a.	Hire a Homeless Response coordinator to help support the development and implementation of the city’s homeless strategy.
b.	Contract with one or more local service provider(s) for a homeless case manager(s) to work with homeless residents and city staff to develop individualized action plans for homeless residents.
c.	Develop a plan for a mobile office to be used in coordination with the Homeless Outreach Team to provide case management and other support services directly to the homeless within Carlsbad at their locations.
d.	Conduct a community analysis of existing homeless programs and services provided by the city, faith-based and community organizations, and service providers to identify gaps and opportunities. Implement efforts to address gaps in services.
e.	Implement the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) ServicePoint to collect information about homeless residents enabling the city to work collaboratively with service providers and other regional agencies.
f.	Develop a homeless strategic plan to define how the city and Carlsbad community will meet the needs of homeless residents and respond to the impact of homelessness on city resources in future years.
g.	Develop a city protocol to assist staff to serve homeless residents at city facilities or in the community.
h.	Evaluate existing city ordinances: Noise, property maintenance, open container, camping, parking, land use/zoning (e.g. churches – soup kitchens) that impact the community and city response to homeless-related issues
i.	Engage the Housing Commission to serve as an advisory group for homeless services, programs and/or issues; sounding board/information gathering/information sharing for community.

Strategy #3: Encourage collaboration within the city, community partnerships and residents

a.	Coordinate with local services providers, (e.g. mental health, recovery, and housing) to support rapid rehousing and successful connection to needed services.
b.	Develop partnerships with service providers, faith-based and community organizations, residents and businesses to collaborate on homeless related issues and needs, extend the partnerships to the 5 cities which are part of the Innovate 78 Collaborative.
c.	Develop educational materials for residents and businesses on how to address or report homeless related concerns (e.g. homeless resident going through trash in a dumpster on private property-whose responsibility?)
d.	Develop working relationship with local DMV and Social Security Administrative offices to eliminate a barrier to housings or connection to support services, including jobs.
e.	Host a one-day resource fair that provides access to local services and programs, while allowing for a coordinated effort to have attendees assessed by a local service provider or case management team.
f.	Work with faith-based organizations to coordinate community outreach and service plan to reduce duplication of efforts and crime related issues (e.g. providing meals, clothes, bus passes)
g.	Work with service groups and faith-based organizations to provide home items for newly housed homeless.
h.	Develop a plan with Tri-City Medical Center to address the cycling of Carlsbad homeless in and out of the center, which has a negative impact on homeless residents care and a drain on city emergency resources.
i.	Leverage existing Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) or community partnerships to connect homeless residents to appropriate community services or programs

Strategy #4: Retain, protect and increase the supply of housing in Carlsbad

a.	Work with existing housing developments to consider voluntarily set-aside units for the homeless. Possibly provide incentive to pay person's rent for a period of time or pay the deposit.
b.	Inclusionary housing policy: 10% set-aside units to serve the homeless residents and/or extremely low income for new developments.
c.	Evaluate alternate housing options to address high rent rates and limited housing inventory: Tiny homes, motel or apartment conversion, shared housing and shelters for women and families.
d.	Request authorization from City Council to pursue the purchase of existing housing units to rehouse homeless families, veterans and/or seniors as a priority, or to purchase beds in sober living facilities as may be appropriate and necessary.

Action Items & Status

Strategy #1: Prevent, reduce and manage homelessness in Carlsbad	
Action	Status
Continue to evaluate existing city services and programs that serve homeless residents.	Active
Develop a plan for city departments to coordinate cross-functional homeless responsibilities in a more efficient manner.	Active
Compile homeless and/or transient related data from departments (transient camps cleaned up, number of homeless-related emergency calls) to set a benchmark to track success of plan efforts.	Active
Develop homeless encampment enforcement plan in coordination with the city’s crime suppression and homeless outreach teams, other city departments and select service providers.	Active
Strategy #2: Support and build capacity within the city and community to address homelessness	
Action	Status
Hire a Homeless Response coordinator to help support the development and implementation of the city’s homeless strategy	Pending
Contract with one or more local service provider(s) for a homeless case manager(s) to work with homeless residents and city staff to develop individualized action plans for homeless residents.	Pending
Develop a plan for a mobile office to be used in coordination with the Homeless Outreach Team to provide case management and other support services directly to the homeless within Carlsbad.	Pending
Conduct a community analysis of existing homeless programs and services provided by the city, faith-based and community organizations, and service providers to identify gaps and opportunities. Implement efforts to address gaps.	Active
Implement the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) ServicePoint to collect information about homeless residents enabling the city to work collaboratively with service providers and other regional agencies.	Pending
Develop a homeless strategic plan to define how the city and Carlsbad community will meet the needs of homeless residents and respond to the impact of homelessness on city resources in future years.	Active
Develop a city protocol to assist staff to serve homeless residents at city facilities or in the community.	Active
Engage the Housing Commission to serve as an advisory group for homeless services, programs and/or issues.	Pending
Evaluate existing city ordinances: Noise, property maintenance, open container, camping, parking, land use/zoning (e.g. churches – soup kitchens) that impact the community and city response to homeless-related issues	Pending

Strategy #3: Encourage collaboration within the city, community partnerships and residents	
Action	Status
Coordinate with services providers, (e.g. mental health, recovery, and housing) to support rapid rehousing and successful connection to needed services.	Active
Develop partnerships with service providers, faith-based and community organizations, residents and businesses to collaborate on homeless related issues and needs.	Active
Develop educational materials for residents and businesses on how to address or report homeless related concerns (e.g. homeless resident going through trash in a dumpster on private property-whose responsibility?)	Pending
Develop working relationship with local DMV and Social Security Administrative offices to eliminate a barrier to housings or connection to support services.	Pending
Host a one-day resource fair that provides access to local services and programs, while allowing for a coordinated effort to have attendees assessed by a local service provider or case management team.	Pending
Work with faith-based organizations to coordinate community outreach and service plan to reduce duplication of efforts and crime related issues (e.g. providing meals, clothes, bus passes)	Active
Work with service groups and faith-based organizations to provide home items for newly housed homeless.	Pending
Develop a plan with Tri-City Medical Center to address the cycling of Carlsbad homeless in and out of the center, which has a negative impact on homeless residents' care and a drain on city emergency resources.	Pending
Leverage existing Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) or community partnerships to connect homeless residents to appropriate community services or programs	Pending

Strategy #4: Retain, protect and increase the supply of housing in Carlsbad	
Action	Status
Work with existing housing developments to consider voluntarily set-aside units for the homeless. Possibly provide incentive to pay person's rent for a period of time or pay the deposit.	Pending
Inclusionary housing policy: 10% set-aside units to serve the homeless residents for new developments	Pending
Evaluate alternate housing options to address high rent rates and limited housing inventory: Tiny homes, motel or apartment conversion, shared housing and shelters for women and families	Pending
Request authorization from City Council to pursue the purchase of existing housing units to rehouse homeless families, veterans and/or seniors as a priority.	Pending

2017 WeALLCount: City Totals

City	Sheltered				Unsheltered				Total	% of Total	Unincorporated	Sheltered		Unsheltered				%
	ES	SH	TH	Total	Indiv	V*	H*	Total				Indiv	V*	H*	Total			
San Diego City	1,240	30	1,118	2,388	1,234	817	1180	3231	5,619	61.6%	Alpine		10	0	9	19	0.2%	
Carlsbad	59	0	0	59	37	48	16	101	160	1.8%	Bonita	6	0	0	0	0	0.1%	
Chula Vista	43	0	62	105	58	174	30	262	367	4.0%	Bonsall		2	15	0	17	0.2%	
Coronado	0	0	0	0	2	3	0	5	5	0.1%	Casa de Oro		15	13	2	30	0.3%	
Del Mar	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	3	3	0.0%	Crest-Dehesa		0	0	0	0	0.0%	
El Cajon	19	0	46	65	221	60	42	323	388	4.3%	Fallbrook		15	2	0	17	0.2%	
Encinitas	11	0	22	33	27	53	4	84	117	1.3%	Hidden Meadows		0	0	0	0	0.0%	
Escondido	82	12	175	269	120	76	58	254	523	5.7%	Jamul/Dulzura		0	0	0	0	0.0%	
Imperial Beach	0	0	0	0	12	10	0	22	22	0.2%	Lakeside		34	38	5	77	0.8%	
La Mesa	0	0	0	0	13	12	0	25	25	0.3%	NC Metro		2	10	2	14	0.2%	
Lemon Grove	0	0	0	0	13	23	0	36	36	0.4%	Otay		0	0	0	0	0.0%	
National City	0	0	18	18	94	70	112	276	294	3.2%	Ramona		0	61	4	65	0.7%	
Oceanside	60	0	110	170	105	156	100	361	531	5.8%	San Dieguito		0	3	0	3	0.0%	
Poway	0	0	0	0	3	5	0	8	8	0.1%	Spring Valley		31	26	4	61	0.7%	
San Marcos	0	0	59	59	24	25	3	52	111	1.2%	Sweetwater		4	8	5	17	0.2%	
Santee	0	0	0	0	15	10	24	49	49	0.5%	TOTAL	6				320	3.6%	
Solana Beach	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	3	0.0%						326		
Vista	45	0	278	323	40	124	42	206	529	5.8%								
TOTAL	1,559	42	1,888	3,489				5,301	8,790	96.4%								

Updated on 4/18/2017

*For the 'Total' columns, vehicles and HBS/tents were multiplied by an occupancy factor between 1.66 and 1.75.

ES - Emergency Shelter
 SH - Safe Haven
 TH - Transitional Housing
 Indiv - Individual
 V - Cars/Trucks/RV/Vans
 H - Hand-Built Structures / Tents

9,116 Total