STAFF REPORT FROM THE CONTRA COSTA COUNCIL ON HOMELESSNESS

Contra Costa County Homeless System of Care Quarterly Report for Quarter 4, 2024 (October – December)

INTRODUCTION

The Contra Costa Council on Homelessness (CoH) is the governing and oversight body for the County homeless Continuum of Care (CoC) and is appointed by the Board of Supervisors. The Council provides advice and input to the Board of Supervisors on the operations of homeless services, program operations, and program development efforts in Contra Costa County. The Contra Costa Council on Homelessness is the governing body for the Contra Costa County Continuum of Care (CoC).

The Contra Costa CoC is comprised of multiple partners, including service providers, members of faith communities, local businesses, private and public funders, community members, education systems and law enforcement, and others who are working collaboratively to end homelessness. The COH and COC are supported by Contra Costa Health - Health, Housing & Homeless Services (H3) Division. H3 functions as the CoC administrative entity and collaborative applicant, CoC Lead Agency and Homeless Management Information System (HMIS database) Lead Agency.

The purpose of this report is to share information about the CoC and COH activities with the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors and to provide recommendations from the COH to the County Board of Supervisors on long range planning and policy formulation that would support the county homeless CoC. This report includes information on system data, funding and policy activities, and CoC initiatives. All information will reflect activities and data for the prior quarter.

This report was produced on behalf of the CoH by H3 in collaboration with the CoH and CoC partners.

SYSTEM FUNDING

This quarter the CoC continued to evaluate the system of care and pursued funding opportunities to address the gaps in Contra Costa's homeless system, including our largest source of funding, the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Continuum of Care (CoC) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO).

FEDERAL

HUD NOFO: In this quarter, the CoC completed on-time submission to the FY 2024 Continuum of Care competition. Providers worked collaboratively with the CoC to ensure an on-time submission. Council on Homelessness members served as the CoC's Review and Rank panel to create and approve the Priority Listing that was approved by the Council on October 3,

2024. (See Appendix C for 2024 CoC Priority Listing). HUD released the first round of award decisions in early 2025.

CoCBuilds NOFO: On July 19, 2024, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) released the Continuum of Care Builds (CoCBuilds) NOFO to fund acquisition, rehab, or new construction of permanent supportive housing. After conducting a letter of interest, the CoC worked collaboratively with Hope Solutions to submit an application for $5 million in funding to develop 15 units of permanent supportive housing for transition aged youth called Hope Village in Pittsburg. It is unclear if or when HUD will announce awards under this NOFO.

SYSTEM INITIATIVES

The CoC regularly engages in multiple activities, partnerships, evaluations, and improvement that are designed to improve services to clients and achieve various system goals.

Equity: Progress this quarter included developing and approving a Work Plan for 2025 with the following priorities:

1. Monitor metrics related to equity in the CoC
2. Provide input to CoC policies and procedures
3. Learn about topics and programs impacting equity in homelessness response program
4. Develop equity dashboard
5. Leverage partnerships to increase participation in Equity Committee, particularly PWLE.
6. Develop projects and recommend priorities within CoC to address root causes of racial disparities in homeless system of care

Engagement of People with Lived Experience of Homelessness (PWLE):

- Of the 31 applications we received for open seats on the Council on Homelessness, 19 had a lived experience of homelessness.
- The Youth Action Board, a group of transition aged youth with a lived experience of homelessness, spoke at a panel discussion for Homelessness Awareness month.
- PWLE were deeply involved in planning for Homelessness Awareness Month activities.
- Housing Needs Assessment Process: hosted input session with Youth Action Board and group of system utilizers, HNA reDesign Steering Committee includes 3 PWLE

Homelessness Awareness Month: Recognitions: Hosted a well-attended reception to honor those nominated for outstanding work to address homelessness. Panel: Successful panel discussion on youth and young adult homelessness co-hosted by Contra Costa College, Youth Action Board and Council. Video of the event can be seen here: https://youtu.be/U6_AquHLHpM. Presentation: The Council Chair presented to the Board of Supervisors, and solicited 2 resolutions of support, on November 12th. Memorial: A memorial

event, cohosted by the Contra Costa Crisis Center, SoS Richmond, NAMI Contra Costa, Loves and Fishes and the Council on Homelessness was held on 12/20 at the Walnut Creek Library.

Point in Time Count (PIT): Methods for the PIT were approved by the Council and planning and volunteer recruitment took place throughout the whole quarter. More than 150 volunteers and staff will be trained in Q1, 2025 to support the community observational count portion of the PIT that will be held on the morning of Thursday, January 30, 2025.

Youth and Young Adult Homelessness

On October 29th, HUD announced the recipients of the FY 2023 Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP). While our CoC was not selected, H3 and the Youth Action Board (YAB) remained actively engaged in advancing our youth and young adult homelessness response.

- On Oct. 30th, a total of 23 partners, including 8 YAB members, convened to review and plan for the Youth and Young Adult 6 Month Priority Strategies 2024.docx, a roadmap for action in 2025.
- On November 14th, as part of Homeless Awareness Month and in collaboration with the Council on Homelessness and Contra Costa College, the YAB hosted the Youth and Young Adult Panel on Homelessness. The hybrid event brought together 47 community members and was featured in the Contra Costa Pulse article, Youth Affected by Homelessness Want to Help Solve 'Crisis.' The full recording of the event is available here: Youth and Young Adult Panel Discussion (11/14/24).
- On November 22nd, 5 YAB members participated in a regional convening hosted by Tipping Point Community, bringing together YABs from Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Clara Counties. The event featured workshops on Understanding the Federal Funding and Policy Landscape and Working with Local Government and a Youth Panel Developing Actionable Strategies.
- Throughout Q4, YAB members participated in multiple CoC initiatives including the Housing Needs Assessment Redesign Steering Committee, Consolidated Housing and Homelessness Funding RFP Panel, and the PIT Committee Meetings. Additionally, the YAB held eight meetings focused on developing YAB bylaws, electing core leadership, and planning for Homeless Awareness Month.

GOVERNANCE/REPORTING

- The Brown Act requirement for in person attendance continues to create barriers to participation for a number of members in seats that require lived experience.
- In November, the Family and Human Services Committee approved 9 proposed member recommendations, expiration date adjustment and received the Council's Q3 report. They were approved by the Board of Supervisors in December.

- Polls conducted at the beginning of each Council on Homelessness regular meetings capture data on # of Council meetings previously attended, lived experience of homelessness and race/ethnicity of attendees. Overall, since Quarter 1, we've seen an increase in first time attendance (from 7% to 12%), an increase in people attending who are currently experiencing homelessness (from 4% to 9% of attendees), and increase in Black/African American attendees (16% to 19%) and Multi-racial attendees (7% to 11%) (See Appendix B for Q4 averages.)

MEETINGS, TRAININGS AND EVENTS

Council on Homelessness (COH) Meetings: The Council on Homelessness held three (3) regular business meetings this quarter. In addition to the regular Council on Homelessness meetings, the following committees met:

Committee	Purpose
Equity Committee	Create accessible information, outreach, and educational materials to engage hard to reach or previously unreached communities in Contra Costa County.
Homelessness Awareness Month Committee	Plans activities and materials for Homelessness Awareness Month (November).
HMIS Policy Committee	Develops and shares updates on Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) policies & practices, compliance, & troubleshooting. Plans technical assistance & training.
Nominating Committee	Reviews application tools and process for potential new CoH members.
Oversight Committee	Reviewing and assessing the development, implementation, and improvement of the CoC, Coordinated Entry System, HMIS database, and system outcomes
PATH Innovation Committee	Work towards the goal of reducing unsheltered homeless in Contra Costa County by 75% .
Point in Time Count Committee	Plan and implement the annual Point-in-Time Count, an annual HUD-required count of sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness

Trainings

- Equal Access Rule (10.21.24)
- Creating a More Inclusive and Equitable System of Care: Combating Implicit Bias in Contra Costa (11.18.24)
- Connecting Clients to Mainstream Benefits (12.9.24)
- The Council received a presentation about the local impact of the Grants Pass Supreme Court Decision and California Executive Order N-1-2 n at the October 3, 2024 meeting.

Events

- CoC Provider Meetings (3)
- Homelessness Awareness Month presentation to the Board of Supervisors
- Homelessness Awareness Month Reception to honor outstanding volunteers and projects (11/12)
- Homeless-Workforce Integration Network/ Workforce Integration Network Joint meeting (11/13)
- Panel on Youth Homelessness (11/14)
- Homeless Persons' Memorial Event (12/20)

The recordings, minutes and materials for trainings and meetings can be found on the H3 website[1] and on the County agenda center[2], and a calendar of upcoming meetings and events can be found on the H3 website.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- In alignment with the California State Association of Counties, support ongoing funding for the Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) Program and other critical safety net services that support people experiencing homelessness in Contra Costa County.

[1] Trainings | Contra Costa Health (cchealth.org)
[2] https://www.contracosta.ca.gov/agendacenter

APPENDIX A

Commonly Used Acronyms and Terms

Acronym	Definition
APR	Annual Performance Report (for HUD homeless programs)
BIPOC	Black and Indigenous People of Color
CARE	Coordinated Assessment and Resource
CCYCS	Contra Costa Youth Continuum of Services
CDBG, CDBG-CV	Community Development Block Grant (federal and state programs) and the federal Community Development Block Grant CARES Act coronavirus allocation.
CESH	California Emergency Solutions and Housing program (state funding)
Continuum of Care (CoC)	Continuum of Care approach to assistance to the homeless. Federal grant program promoting and funding permanent solutions to homelessness.
Con Plan	Consolidated Plan, a locally developed plan for housing assistance and urban development under CDBG.
CORE	Coordinated Outreach Referral, Engagement program
COVID-19	Coronavirus
DCD	(Contra Costa County) Department of Conservation and Development
DOC	Department Operations Center
EHSD	(Contra Costa County) Employment and Human Services Division
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
ESG and ESG-CV	Emergency Solutions Grant (federal and state program) and the federal Emergency Solutions Grant CARES Act coronavirus allocation.
ESG-CV	Emergency Solutions Grant CARES
FMR	Fair Market Rent (maximum rent for Section 8 rental assistance/CoC grants)
HCD	Housing and Community Development (State office)
HEAP	Homeless Emergency Aid Program (State funding)
HEARTH	Homeless Emergency and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act of 2009
HHAP	Homeless Housing and Assistance Program
HMIS	Homeless Management Information System
HOME	Home Investment Partnerships (CPD program)
HUD	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (federal)
MHSA	Mental Health Services Act
NOFA/NOFO	Notice of Funding Availability/ Notice of Funding Opportunity
PHA	Public Housing Authority
PUI	Persons Under Investigation
PWLE	People With Lived Experience of Homelessness
SAMHSA	Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration
SRO	Single-Room Occupancy housing units
SSDI	Social Security Disability Income
SSI	Supplemental Security Income
TA	Technical Assistance

TAY	Transition Age Youth (usually ages 18-24)
VA	Veterans Affairs (U.S. Department of)
VASH	Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing
VI-SPDAT	Vulnerability Index – Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool

APPENDIX B

Poll Question Answers Q4

How many Council on Homelessness meetings have you attended?	Q4 avg
This is my first meeting	12%
I've attended some meetings	31%
I've attended a lot of meetings	57%
I prefer not to answer	0%

Do you have lived experience of homelessness?	
Yes, currently	9%
Yes, within the past 7 years	8%
Yes, more than 7 years ago	17%
No	66%
I prefer not to answer	0%

What best describes your racial identity?*	
African American/Black	19%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	6%
Asian/Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian	8%
Hispanic/Latinx	21%
White	32%
Multi-racial	11%
I prefer not to answer	2%
I describe myself in another way	2%

*This category allows people to select multiple options