



CONTRA COSTA HEALTH

Health, Housing, and Homeless Services

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Date: September 25, 2023
To: Family and Human Services Committee
Supervisor Ken Carlson, District IV, Co-Chair
Supervisor Candace Anderson, District II, Co-Chair
From: Christy Saxton, Director, Health, Housing and Homeless Services Division
CC: Anna Roth, RN, MS, MPH Health Services Director
Subject: Annual Update on Homeless Continuum of Care

The homeless Continuum of Care, which Contra Costa Health: Health, Housing and Homeless Services (H3) staffs and also provides direct services in, was able to achieve significant progress since the last presentation by Health, Housing and Homeless Services to the Family and Human Services Committee in June, 2022.

ADDING AND IMPROVING CAPACITY

Vouchers: H3 and the Coordinated Entry System supports the Housing Authority of Contra Costa County with the identification and matching of clients for a subset of their housing vouchers. Since the last report, the Coordinated Entry system completed leasing up the 201 homeless households who received Emergency Housing Vouchers. In addition, in April, Contra Costa was awarded 41 highly sought after and competitively awarded Housing Stability Vouchers for individuals and families experiencing literal homelessness.

Permanent Supportive Housing: Contra Costa was awarded \$5.3m in the form of a one-time, 3-year grant through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Special Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) to add 29 units of Permanent Supportive Housing operated by SHELTER, Inc.

Rapid Rehousing: Under the 2022 HUD NOFO, Contra Costa's CoC was awarded \$536,883 for a new Rapid Rehousing project (Pelancha RRH operated by SHELTER, Inc.) to support families fleeing domestic violence.

HMIS: Part of the Special NOFO funding award provides increased funding to support the HUD-required Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) which contributes to improved system efficiency and more robust reporting.

CalAIM: In 2022, H3 launched our new California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (Cal-AIM) expansion program. Cal-AIM is a state-funded program utilizing federal Medicaid dollars to enhance and expand the scope of Medi-Cal in California to include housing support as a health insurance benefit. Managed Care Providers can now contract housing providers to assess housing needs while providing care. H3 exponentially enhanced our service delivery model by contracting with the Contra Costa Health Plan (CCHP) to provide a menu of Community Supports Services under CalAIM that includes post-hospitalization shelter, respite/recuperative care, housing navigation and tenancy sustaining services. H3 began staffing the program in Spring 2023, adding two care coordinators, a supportive housing manager, and administrative staff as well as a team of Housing Navigators to support outside referrals. Since April 2023, 8 participants receiving CalAIM Housing Navigation services have been placed in permanent housing. Four of those participants requested additional housing tenancy support, and will receive follow up stabilization services for at least six months and 4 also received support through the Coordinated Entry System, both with Prevention & Rapid Exit support, as well as placement into Permanent Supportive Housing.

Crisis Response Services: H3 expanded capacity for direct services it provides including an expansion of the Concord Service Center hours to 7 days a week from 8 am – 4 pm and an increase in Warming Center beds from 9 beds to 12 beds. In addition, CORE mobile outreach program expanded hours to 8 am – Midnight 7 days a week and increased the number of teams.

COLLABORATIONS

Storm response: The homeless system of care responded quickly and efficiently to the heavy storms in January and March of 2023. H3 activated as a Branch in the Emergency Response Structure and, in partnership with Employment and Human Services Department (EHSD), Office of Emergency Services (OES), and city partners, helped coordinate expanded shelter and warming center capacity by over 75 beds for individuals and nearly 20 beds for families. H3 ordered and received donations and expanded CORE outreach hours and capacity to support shelter placements and deliver supplies to people experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

Tipping Point Community of Practice: Contra Costa County is one of the six Bay Area counties invited to participate in Tipping Point's Youth Homelessness Project, a new three-year program that will strengthen and sustain systems that serve transitional-aged youth who are currently homeless or experiencing housing instability. H3 is the anchor organization and will provide leadership and in-depth knowledge of the local landscape in Contra Costa County. The current Community of Practice includes H3's Contra Costa Youth Continuum of Services (CCYCS), Hope Solutions, Rainbow Community Center, and RYSE Center.

Measure X: In partnership with the Department of Conservation and Development (DCD), H3 conducted a collaborative community input process to create a Request for Proposal to solicit projects for the first round of Measure X funding. This process included stakeholder interviews, in-person focus groups for people with lived experience of homelessness, and virtual town halls to determine funding priorities and providers needs during the RFP process. Additionally, to efficiently competitively bid out multiple funding streams, H3 worked with Employment and

Human Services and other funders to award nearly \$14 million. Throughout the response period, H3 and DCD offered multiple technical assistance opportunities including an initial information session, biweekly office hours, and a dedicated inbox for questions monitored by Focus Strategies, a neutral technical assistance provider.

County/City Collaborations: H3 has been participating in homeless and housing strategic planning for a variety of cities, participates in multiple city-led Homeless Task Forces, regularly shares data with cities and has built strong relationships with police departments and city leaders, which is evidenced by the recent decisions of multiple cities to adopt 3-year contracts, versus previous one-year contracts, for CORE outreach services.

Built for Zero: H3 as the data and CoC lead, is collaborating with providers and people with lived experience of homelessness to create and implement coordinated homelessness prevention systems in Contra Costa through a project funded by Built for Zero. This project will target new funding to increase staff capacity to implement coordinated homeless prevention, increase outreach to underserved communities and ensure consistent training across all service providers and partners.

SYSTEM INITIATIVES

Equity: In December 2022, the Council on Homelessness created an official Equity Committee with the 2023 goal to “Create accessible information, outreach, and educational materials to engage hard to reach or previously unreached communities in Contra Costa County.” Work is underway to get redesigned materials to the public by the end of 2023.

Engagement with People with Lived Experience of Homelessness: During last year’s recruitment process, staff added two “Office Hours” (one remote and one in person) to support people with the application process and the Council received 10 qualified applications (plus 3 more that did not complete the application process) for the Lived Experience Advisor seat and one for the Youth Representative seat which also requires lived experience of homelessness. A number of people with lived experience of homelessness were deeply involved in Homelessness Awareness Month activities, including helping develop the toolkit; conducting and being the subject of interviews for the short video; participating in the panel discussion; nominating and being nominated for candidates for the Thriving in the Face of Homelessness recognition category; and the Chair and Vice Chair, both who have a lived experience of homelessness, led the presentation to the Board of Supervisors. With the support of an intern working at H3, our CoC developed a policy and process for providing compensation and travel resources to support the participation of People with Lived Experience in CoC work.

Brown Act: Changes to the Brown Act in March, 2023 that required in-person attendance again for regular COH and Committee meetings created additional work for staff to educate the Council about the changes, drive and manage culture change, and identify hybrid-equipped physical locations. This new requirement also has had a chilling effect on Committee participation and created hardships for our members with lived experience who face transportation and other personal challenges in attending in person.

Homelessness Awareness Month: To mark Homelessness Awareness Month (November), the Council on Homelessness supported development of a 100+ page toolkit (<https://cchealth.org/h3/coc/pdf/HomelessAwarenes-Toolkit-2022.pdf>); creation of a short video amplifying the voices of people with lived experience of homelessness (<https://express.adobe.com/video/kP6MsvYeoN4te>); recognition of over 40 outstanding individuals and agencies impacting homelessness (<https://cchealth.org/h3/coc/advocate.php>); a presentation about Homelessness Awareness Month and adoption of a Resolution Declaring November Homelessness Awareness Month to the Board of Supervisors on 11/8; hosting of a CoC Learning Hub on 11/14 called "R.O.O.T.S: Reflecting On Our Truth And Stories", a panel discussion featuring people with lived experience in our community (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-CeQjhH7ggk>) and the first Homeless Person's Memorial Event sponsored by the CoC on 12/21 with a number of community and faith leaders (<https://youtu.be/7Cyv9pAbCkc>) and finally, requested the Board of Supervisors adopt a resolution declaring 12/21 Homeless Person's Memorial Day. Work for the 2023 Homelessness Awareness Month activities is well underway.

System Improvement

Performance Based Contracting/ Monitoring/ Implement Program Models: The Continuum of Care Program Models and Performance Standards were approved by the Council on Homelessness in July 2022. The Program Models and Performance Standards were incorporated into 2022-2023 provider contracts. With the assistance of the Research, Evaluation and Data (RED) team, performance dashboards were created in the Homeless Management and Information System (HMIS) for H3 and providers to monitor their progress towards the performance outcomes in their contracts. Providers were trained on how to use their performance dashboards in September 2022 and required to submit their dashboard reports to H3 on a quarterly basis. H3 monitored progress towards the performance standards and the implementation of the program models through quarterly check ins with providers. Regular updates and data was shared at the PATH committee and Oversight Committee as well as the full Council on Homelessness. After year one of implementation, changes to improve the program models were brought to the Oversight Committee with final approval at the September 2023 Council on Homelessness meeting. The CoC Program Models and Performance Standards committed the CoC to creating and implementing a CoC-wide Participant Satisfaction Survey. January through March of 2023, a People with Lived Experience (PWLE) work group convened with H3 to develop a Participant Satisfaction Survey. The survey was distributed across CoC programs in July 2023, with analysis to be completed in October 2023.

Implementation of CES Evaluation: The Coordinated Entry Team worked with a third party consultant, Focus Strategies, to conduct an in-depth evaluation of the Coordinated Entry System. The evaluation synthesized input from consumer and service provider focus groups, a survey of service providers, and data from the Homeless Management Information System from October 2020 to September 2021. The primary objective of the evaluation is to identify opportunities to improve the system's effectiveness in connecting consumers with permanent housing. Findings from the evaluation identified numerous strengths in the system; as well as

recommended improvements in four key areas: Access, Assessment, Case Conferencing, and training. The Coordinated Entry Team is currently working on implementing the recommendations from the evaluation- such as launching the CE Assessment Replacement project, hosting Coordinated Entry related trainings, utilizing CE related dashboards in HMIS.

Implement HMIS Evaluation: The HMIS RED Team worked with a third party consultant, Focus Strategies, to conduct an in-depth evaluation of the HMIS System. The purpose of the evaluation was to ensure that HMIS workflows, data, and reporting are adequately supporting providers to be effective and successful in their implementation of program models and performance-based contracting. The evaluation was completed in December of 2022 and RED Team is currently working on implementing the recommendations brought about by the findings – namely, changes to paper and electronic forms, new workflows, and the deployment of a Learning Management System allowing for self-paced trainings.

Data Quality Monitoring Plan: The Data Quality Monitoring Plan serves as the community’s overall framework for data quality, including data monitoring and quality control. It provides the community’s benchmarks for completeness, accuracy, timeliness, and consistency. The plan was approved by the Council on Homelessness in September of 2022 and several tools were developed by the RED Team to monitor compliance. We have seen improvements in program-level data quality of up to 67% since the implementation of these new tools.

FUNDING

The Continuum of Care continues to focus on utilizing one time/short term funding first, while developing strategies to use longer term funding for things like building infrastructure. The state and federal government continue to release funding to address housing and homelessness through multiple channels and into multiple entities at the County level, including directly to cities, through the Behavioral Health Division, Employment and Human Services Department, the Department of Conservation and Development, reentry programs and more. Stronger collaboration and coordination between these entities is needed to maximize the effectiveness of this funding.

Federal

Unsheltered NOFO: As mentioned above, Contra Costa CoC was awarded \$5.3m in the form of a one-time, 3- year grant to bring people who are currently unsheltered in our community into permanent housing.

Stability Voucher Program: As mentioned above Contra Costa applied for and received 41 highly sought after and competitively awarded Housing Stability Vouchers which were prioritized for Public Housing Agencies and CoCs that received awards through the HUD Unsheltered NOFO.

FYI Vouchers: H3 worked with the Housing Authority of the County of Contra Costa and Children and Family Services to bring in new housing vouchers targeted for foster youth entering adulthood.

STATE

Bringing Families Home: The Bringing Families Home Program, funded by the State of California Department of Social Services (CDSS), will provide housing supports and services to referred families receiving Contra Costa County child welfare services who are experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness, thereby increasing family reunification and preventing foster care placement. Caminar began providing services February 2023.

Encampment Resolution: H3 is partnering with the City of Richmond to provide unsheltered residents encamped in state right of ways with resources and permanent housing as part of the \$8.6 million state encampment resolution grant awarded to the city in June 2023.

Homeless, Housing and Assistance Program (HHAP4): The HHAP grant, through the California Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal-ICH) provides local jurisdictions, including federally recognized tribal governments, with flexible funding to continue efforts to end and prevent homelessness in their communities. In January 2023, H3 released a request for proposals to obligate funding from the HHAP program. Services funded through HHAP include Interim Housing, homelessness prevention, permanent supportive housing, rapid rehousing, and technical assistance.

Homekey 3: H3 applied to the State's 3rd round of Homekey funding to acquire a 54 unit micro-housing building in San Pablo.

FUTURE

Youth Needs Assessment: H3, with support from Tipping Point, will implement a youth needs assessment to understand the barriers, needs, priorities, and resources available to support youth and young adults experiencing or at-risk of homelessness. The first phase will center on information gathering, using quantitative data, and analysis of systems and processes, interviews with key community stakeholders, and community surveys. The second phase will focus on the development of a final needs assessment that meets the criteria to apply for HUD's FY 2024 Youth Homeless Demonstration Program and produce recommendations for preventing and ending youth and young adult homelessness.

Coordinated Entry assessment and prioritization re-design: Over the next 18 months, H3's CoC & Coordinated Entry Team, along with stakeholders, will complete a project to replace the current Coordinated Entry Assessment Tool and Prioritization Process. The Contra Costa Continuum of Care, which includes all of the housing and homeless service providers in Contra Costa County, uses the Coordinated Entry System to engage individuals and families in housing and services, and ensures that the highest need, most vulnerable households in the community are prioritized for services. Currently, the Contra Costa CoC utilizes the VI-SPDAT as the Coordinated Entry Assessment Tool. The VI-SPDAT, the Vulnerability Index – Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool, prioritizes individuals, transition-age youth, and families for available housing through CES based on acuity and chronicity. The VI-SPDAT has since been identified as a tool to be replaced for concerns around objectivity and racial bias. It was also

highlighted in a recent Coordinated Entry Evaluation as needing to be replaced. Determining a more equitable replacement tool or process to the VI-SPDAT is a community priority and the goal is for this project to be completed by the end of 2024.

HHAP-5 Regional Action Plan: As part of the next round of funding offered by the California Interagency on Homelessness (Cal-ICH), H3 will collaborate with stakeholders including Cities, non-profit providers, people experiencing homelessness, and County partners to develop a Regional Action Plan. The plan will identify roles and responsibilities of stakeholders, set metrics for performance, and explain how the region is coordinating funding and services. More specific details will be available upon release of the HHAP-5 funding application by September 30, 2023.

CalAIM community supports: Over the next 6 months, we will hire an additional 8 Care Coordinators to support increased referrals of Contra Costa Health Plan (CCHP) members who need housing supports.

West County Warming Center: H3 is in conversation with providers to secure additional Warming Center beds during winter months to support people experiencing unsheltered homelessness in West County.

Future communications from the Council on Homelessness and the CoC will continue to include:

- Quarterly written reports from the Council on Homelessness (COH) to the Family and Human Services as a way to keep the Committee and Board of Supervisors updated on the activities and priorities of the Council and homeless continuum of care throughout the year.
- An annual presentation from Health, Housing and Homeless Services about the activities and priorities of the homeless continuum of care.

Recommendation(s)/Next Step(s):

1. Accept this report from Contra Costa Health; and
2. Forward this report to the Board of Supervisors for acceptance