

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS POLICY

Subject

Comprehensive Homeless Policy

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Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to summarize the County’s comprehensive response to homelessness.

The County partners with other governmental and private entities to provide a continuum of housing and supportive services to individuals and families at-risk or experiencing homelessness throughout the region. Linkages with mainstream housing, physical and behavioral health providers, educational institutions, the business community, religious and philanthropic organizations, social service providers, and the criminal justice system are critical to ending homelessness. Provision of housing and supportive services must be addressed by the entire region, including all cities, and demonstrated through fair share contributions reflected in local municipal budgets.

Key components of the County’s approach to addressing homelessness include:

- Adoption of a Housing First approach;
- Increasing leadership, collaboration, and civic engagement; promoting collaborative leadership;
- Increasing access to affordable housing;
- Increasing economic security;
- Improving health and stability; and
- Developing a Coordinated Assessment and Housing Placement System to immediately and efficiently respond to those experiencing homelessness.

Background

The majority of federal funding for homeless programs is provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), in accordance with the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act. The HEARTH Act mandates that Regional Continuum of Care (CoCs) play a lead role in coordinating regional efforts to end homelessness, including the establishment of local priorities and ensuring the region’s compliance with federal regulations governing homeless services. The CoC includes all the geography within the San Diego Region, including 18 incorporated cities and all unincorporated areas of the county. In San Diego, the local CoC is governed by the Regional Continuum of Care Council (RCCC), comprised of representatives from local government, healthcare, public safety, housing providers, private business, and other stakeholders. The RCCC, a separate entity from the County, has the mission to engage organizations in a community-based process that works to end homelessness for

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all individuals and families throughout the region, to address the underlying causes of homelessness, and to lessen the negative impact of homelessness on individuals, families and communities.

The County of San Diego plays a major role in regional collaboration surrounding homelessness through efforts such as Project One For All and Whole Person Wellness. Project One for All is an extensive effort by the County of San Diego and its partners to provide intensive wraparound services, including mental health counseling and housing, to individuals who are experiencing homelessness and have a serious mental illness. Whole Person Wellness provides intensive wraparound care coordination services for high utilizers of multiple systems who may be homeless or at-risk of homelessness.

An annual Point-in-Time Count (PITC) of homeless is conducted each January in the San Diego region. Data from the PITC is considered by the RCCC in the establishment of local priorities.

Policy

As resources permit, it is the policy of the Board of Supervisors to enter into collaborative partnerships with cities and private entities to provide housing and supportive services to people experiencing homelessness throughout the region, ensuring that all partners fairly contribute to the overall system. The following more explicitly outlines the County's policy:

1. In alignment with Board of Supervisors Policy F-51, County Real Property Asset Management and the County's Live Well San Diego strategic goal to support availability and affordability of housing for all community members, the County shall consider use of County surplus property to meet regional affordable housing needs that may serve the homeless, when appropriate and feasible.
2. The County will collaborate and form public-private partnerships with local business and industry, the private and non-profit sectors, educational and cultural institutions, and/or the religious community to reduce homelessness and its accompanying conditions throughout the County. In order to deliver services to the homeless in the most efficient and cost-effective manner, the County will collaborate with partnering entities through the RCCC to identify gaps in services and to identify resources to address needs.
3. The County will demonstrate its regional responsibility through its membership on the RCCC Board and its promotion of legislative policy changes as deemed necessary and appropriate by the County.
4. The County of San Diego has regional responsibility for the delivery of public assistance benefits, public health services, and treatment for individuals who are seriously mentally ill or

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have substance use issues.

5. The County will actively participate in the annual Point-in-Time Count to assess the scope of homelessness throughout the region and measure the effectiveness of interventions.

6. The County will prioritize services for individuals who are experiencing homelessness and are part of a particularly vulnerable population, including veterans, chronically homeless persons, homeless families with children, youth, victims of domestic violence and special needs groups including people who have a serious mental illness and/or substance abuse disorder, and individuals with HIV/AIDS or tuberculosis.

7. The County supports an increased role in meeting the problems of homelessness from the private sector through funds, in-kind and volunteer support, and will evaluate its funding decisions partially on the basis of other funding sources.

The County will use its resources to leverage support for homeless services from the state and federal government and other funding sources. The County will advise its congressional and state delegates of its determination to achieve fair share funding for the San Diego Region. Agencies utilizing other funding sources will be given priority in funding decisions so as to leverage scarce County resources.

8. The County supports the equitable distribution of facilities and services throughout the region so that no one jurisdiction or community is impacted by providing more than its fair share of facilities and services.

The County recognizes that homelessness is a regional problem and that all jurisdictions must address homeless services and shelter needs. Fair share contributions of individual cities will be an important consideration in determining use of County funds to meet homeless needs within cities. Fair share will be defined as the relationship of a jurisdiction's contributions to its share of the region's homeless population.

The source of funds will also guide the County's investment in homeless services and shelter options. Funding designated for specific communities will be used only in those communities unless substantial regional benefit can be demonstrated.

9. Factors related to program performance, program effectiveness and cost efficiency will be evaluated in making County funding decisions. Outcome measures developed by County departments and/or the Regional Continuum of Care Council will be used to determine program funding. Applicants for County funding will be required to demonstrate achievement of acceptable outcome measures.

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10. The County will continue to collaborate on the Regional Inclement Weather Plan adopted by the RCCC as well as continue to maintain its own Inclement Weather Plan to ensure an integrated approach to providing temporary housing to the homeless during periods of inclement weather will be taken.

Sunset Date

This policy will be reviewed for continuance by 12/31/2023

Board Action

4/8/97 (16)
3/12/2002 (10)
6/21/05 (16)
4/7/09 (7)
12/15/15 (21)
12/13/16 (3)

CAO Reference

1. Health and Human Services Agency