

Homeless Strategy and Implementation Plan – Phase 1

**Joint Meeting of
Humboldt County Board of Supervisors
& Eureka City Council
1/25/16**

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Homeless Strategy and Implementation Plan – Phase 1

WHAT WE ALL WANT...



WHAT THIS PLAN PROVIDES...



How this plan came about...

Eureka GPU Homeless Policy Paper



City of Eureka Homelessness Policy Paper

FINAL
September 5, 2014

Executive Summary

1. Introduction

The City of Eureka has engaged Focus Strategies to study the issue of homelessness and recommend strategies to address the problem. According to the most recently available data, the City is home to approximately 600 homeless people at any given point in time. At 2.2% of the total population, the community has a higher rate of homelessness than national averages or than in surrounding Humboldt County. The sizeable and highly visible population of homeless people and their impact on the community has been a subject of much discussion and debate. This report summarizes what we have learned about homeless people in Eureka, the effectiveness of existing efforts to deal with the issue, and concrete steps the City can take to more strategically reduce the number of homeless people in the community.

2. Findings

There is a large and visible group of people living in encampments in the vicinity of downtown Eureka and the Broadway corridor and/or spending daylight hours on the streets downtown. While little data is available on the composition and characteristics of this population, our information gathering suggests there are both "transient" people who have recently arrived in the community as well as many people who are long-term residents of Humboldt County. The vast majority are adults without children and many have chronic substance abuse and co-occurring mental health issues. The reasons for the larger than typical numbers are not known, but it is not uncommon in rural areas for homeless people to cluster in transit-accessible population centers where services and housing are more available.

The City of Eureka, Humboldt County agencies, non-profit housing and service providers, the business community and involved citizens have all worked together to create a range of services, shelter and housing to assist people who are homeless in the community. Most of this work is being led at the County level by the Humboldt County Housing and Homeless Coalition (HHHC), the collaborative body that is developing and implementing a coordinated county-wide approach to addressing homelessness. As the designated Continuum of Care (CoC) planning body, the HHHC coordinates the development of strategies to address homelessness county-wide. Their work is supported by the Humboldt County Department of Health and Human Services (H&HS), the designated lead agency for the CoC. Most of the federal and state funding for homeless programs flows to non-profit providers and some County agencies based on plans and priorities developed by the CoC. The City of Eureka is an active participant in these planning efforts and has also implemented some of its own initiatives, such as by assigning a homeless liaison to the Police Department.

In keeping with federal policy priorities and national best practices, over the past several years the HHHC has been emphasizing the creation of housing as the key to ending homelessness, with funding shifting

Sept 2014

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Commissioned by the City of Eureka and Humboldt County



January 2016

Mobile Intervention Services Team

1. As of November, 337 unduplicated contacts
2. 40 people have been transitioned off the streets
3. 37.5% decrease in Sempervirens hospitalizations
4. 24% decrease in arrests

Multiple Assistance Center

1. 108 Admissions thru December, 103 unduplicated participants
2. 38 have been housed thru 12/31/15
3. 14 gained employment
4. 62% scored high on the Vulnerability Index and Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (recommending Permanent Supportive Housing)

Accomplishments

- City and County Leadership Meetings
- MIST – Mobile Engagement Services Team
- CHIP – Community Homeless Improvement Program
- Humboldt Housing and Homeless HUD 2015
Application for \$854,555
- MAC – Multiple Assistance Center
- HMIS – Homeless Management Information System
- VI-SPDAT - Vulnerability Index Tool
- Arcata Bay Crossing Permanent Supportive Housing
- CALWorks Family Housing Program
- PACT -Parents and Children Together
- TAP – Transportation Assistance Program

Homeless Strategy and Implementation Plan

Presentation to
Eureka City Council and
Humboldt County Board of Supervisors

Megan Kurteff Schatz
January 26, 2016

www.focusstrategies.net

We believe the HEARTH Act and Opening Doors lead the way to finally ending homelessness.

ABOUT FOCUS STRATEGIES

A System to End Homelessness

Ending homelessness means building systems that:

- Divert people from becoming homeless
- Prioritize those with highest needs for housing
- Quickly engage people in the least expensive intervention to end their homelessness
- Have short lengths of stay in programs
- Have high rates of permanent housing exits
- Maximize cost-effectiveness
- Use data to achieve continuous improvement

Homeless Policy Paper

- Completed in September 2014
- Analysis of homeless population in Eureka
- Assessment of existing programs and strategies
- Recommendations to achieve a greater reduction in homelessness using a Housing First approach

Phase One: Implementation Plan

- Building upon Homeless Policy Paper
- Collaborative project City of Eureka and Humboldt County DHHS
- Additional information gathering in 2015
- Plan completed in January 2016

Plan Overview

- Methodology
- Federal Policy Context
- Updates to 2014 Policy Paper – Accomplishments by City and County in 2015
- Focus Strategies Recommendations – Key Strategies to Reduce Homelessness
- Implementation Work Plan
- Funding Source Inventory
- Housing Market Analysis

Updates

- January 2015 Point in Time Count found 844 unsheltered homeless people in Humboldt County; of whom 469 are in Eureka
- Unsheltered homeless people, particularly illegal encampments, continue to create significant community impacts

Accomplishments

City, County and HHC collaboration to reduce homelessness in 2015:

- Monthly Leadership meetings
- MIST Team, SOS, and other outreach work
- Use of standardized prioritization tool (VI-SPDAT)
- Re-purposing of MAC for single adults
- Housing Specialists at MAC

Focus Strategies Recommendations Summary

1. Adopt Housing First Approach County-Wide
2. Strengthen MIST and Increase Focus on Housing Solutions
3. Create Direct and Low Barrier Pathways to Housing
4. Use Data Systems to Track Progress

1. Housing First Orientation

- Housing is the solution to homelessness
- City and County adopt policy statement endorsing a Housing First approach as the framework for reducing homelessness in the community;
- Convene a Housing First summit and provide training and coaching for providers and other stakeholders

2. Strengthen MIST

- MIST is a huge success and points the way to ending homelessness. MIST is:
- Engaging with unsheltered homeless people about their housing needs
- Prioritizing those with greatest need for help
- Problem solving to develop housing plans
- Referring to MAC

2. MIST (Continued)

MIST needs:

- More staff, including Alcohol and Drug specialists
- Access to more housing resources (rental assistance, financial assistance, housing search assistance)

3. Create Direct and Low Barrier Pathways to Housing

Need expanded capacity to offer housing options to homeless people, through:

- a. Diversion
- b. Interim Housing
- c. Rapid Re-Housing
- d. Permanent Supportive Housing

Diversion

- Problem solving
- Mediation
- Low cost or no-cost housing solutions
- Examples: move in with family member; restore relationship with former landlord; return to home community

Interim Housing

- Shelter and transitional housing
- Low barriers to entry
- Minimal rules, no service participation requirements
- Focus on rapid exit to permanent housing
- Example: MAC is already implementing this new model

Rapid Re-Housing

- A type of housing program or housing intervention
- Short-term, time limited assistance to secure and sustain rental housing in the private market
- Can include shared situations
- Effective for homeless families and single adults, including those with high housing barriers

Rapid Re-Housing

Core components:

- Housing search assistance
- Housing-focused case management
- Short-term financial assistance (deposits, rent subsidies)
- Linkages to other needed systems and services

Permanent Supportive Housing

- A type of housing program or intervention
- Long-term, not time limited
- Permanently subsidized housing units
- Intensive on-site services
- Needed for chronically homeless people with severe behavioral health disabilities

Bringing Rapid Re-Housing to Scale

- Availability of rapid re-housing in Humboldt County is limited;
- To make faster progress, invest in rapid re-housing for the majority of homeless people
- Target more expensive permanent supportive housing for those with greatest needs

4. Use Data to Track Progress

- Use existing HMIS system to track progress as people move from homelessness to housing
- Evaluate effectiveness: numbers who enter permanent housing and do not return to homelessness
- Use data for continuous improvement

Implementation Plan

- Leadership Group to oversee implementation
- Includes representation from City and County
- Launch “30/60 campaign” to house 30 chronically homeless people in first 60 days
- Resources will include private fundraising plus re-alignment of public funding sources
- Strong community and landlord outreach and engagement