

Central Intake Facility

Need

San Diego's approach to ending homelessness is clearly not working. In the City of San Diego it is estimated that there are 4,200 homeless persons and this number has not decreased in over a decade. Furthermore, from 2001 through 2005, San Diego County experienced 447 homeless deaths - tragically the oldest was 80-year old Guilford and shockingly the youngest homeless death was newborn Violet. Essentially, it is deadly to be homeless in San Diego as homeless persons are 3.5 times more likely to die prematurely than the general population. Since Alpha Project's initial presentation, almost two years ago to PS & NS sub-committee, Alpha Project recommended creating a comprehensive Central Intake Facility. Not only is it morally appropriate, but it would save San Diego tens of millions of dollars in direct and indirect costs associated with San Diego's homeless problem.

- UCSD followed 15 chronically homeless people for 18 months. Collectively, they had 300 emergency room visits, ambulance and EMT services, had multiple day stays at the hospital, costs substance abuse and mental health costs, as well as law enforcement involvement. Total cost to the taxpayers - \$3 million over 18 months, or an average of \$200,000 per person.
- In the November 2004 report, commissioned by California Supportive Housing, by the Lewin Group which compares the costs associated with homelessness from nine US cities. The findings overwhelmingly concluded that the cost of providing services is far less costly than not providing services. Specifically, the average cost per person, per day for:
 - Shelter is \$27.41 (in San Diego, it's a mere \$17 – the City pays \$12 and Alpha pays \$5),
 - Supportive housing is \$30.87.
 - Prisons cost \$66.05,
 - Jails cost \$81.18,
 - Psychiatric facilities cost \$512.89,
 - and hospitals cost \$1,456.21.

Project Description

Currently, the City of San Diego issues illegal lodging tickets to homeless persons without having an alternate option; in essence we have criminalized homelessness. For the past three years Alpha Project has researched various methods used by numerous cities across the country to determine an appropriate and cost effective way of approaching San Diego's homeless dilemma. Our research has led us to conclude that San Diego is in need of a comprehensive Central Intake Facility. The program will have the following components:

- Potential location – 19th and B, site of the City's maintenance yard.
 - A permanent site and structure will save tax-payer's money from indirect costs associated with homelessness, as well as save money from redirecting funds from the Neil Good Day Center (\$400k annually), and from the Winter Shelter Program (\$240k), these monies will significantly contribute to the operational funding of the program.
- Work in partnership with other homeless agencies, SDPD, healthcare providers, and others to provide comprehensive services on-site to place people quickly and effectively into long-term solutions. The Central Intake Facility will have housing, restrooms, showers, and office space for dozens of agencies as not to duplicate services; the key is to leverage existing services in a comprehensive manner – allowing each agency to offer its unique and specialized services:
 - Housing and case management,
 - Substance abuse treatment,
 - Health, dental, and mental health assistance,
 - Employment assistance, training, and placement,
 - Clothing, Hygiene items, blankets, etc.
 - Legal assistance
 - As well as dozens of other services (domestic violence, veterans, etc.)

Again, creating a comprehensive solution to homelessness will save the City of San Diego literally millions of San Diego's precious dollars.