

DATE ISSUED: January 31, 2001

REPORT NO. 01-012

ATTENTION: Honorable Mayor and City Council
Docket of February 5, 2001

SUBJECT: Update on Program to Assist Special Needs Homeless Population

REFERENCE: Manager's Report No. 99-241 dated December 1, 1999 and Manager's
Report No. 00-254 dated November 15, 2000

SUMMARY

Issues - Should the City Council direct staff to continue implementation of the Special Needs Homeless Program through (1) continuing to collaborate with the County of San Diego in locating outside funding to provide programs and housing for the special needs homeless population; and (2) continuing to locate outside funding, identify sites and work with developers and non-profits to develop facilities for this program;

Manager's Recommendation - Direct staff to continue working with the County of San Diego, the Centre City Development Corporation, the Housing Commission,, developers and non-profit service providers to implement the Special Needs Homeless Program.

Rules Committee Recommendation - Direct staff to continue working with the above partners to implement this program.

Fiscal Impact - Some local CDBG funding may be requested as matching funds to leverage other state and federal monies for this program. All other funding will come from outside sources or agencies.

BACKGROUND

The City of San Diego City Council has been proactive in providing homeless services over the last seven years. The Council established the first inclement weather homeless shelter in 1993, approved a Comprehensive Homeless Policy (000-51) in 1995, and began an emergency winter shelter program in 1996. The winter shelters served 1105 unduplicated persons in 1996. Last year, in 1999-2000, that number had increased to 4,630. Funding added in 1999 assisted with case management and transitional housing for 12 homeless mentally ill persons. On November 14, 2000, the City Council approved the purchase of the Days Inn motel building on Cortez Hill downtown for use as temporary year-round housing for up to 50 families. On December 15, the 2000-2001 Winter Shelter program opened, with numbers expected to be similar to last year.

The city's Homeless Outreach Team (HOT) was established on October 1, 1998, and has been very effective in reaching the homeless in downtown and the nearby areas over the last year. A second HOT Team was added by the City Council in October 1999. These teams are comprised

of two police officers, a County social worker and a psychiatric clinician, and are paid for jointly by the City Police Department, County Health and Human Services Agency, the Downtown Partnership and the Centre City Development Corporation (CCDC). The teams contact the homeless on the street, assess them, and refer them to appropriate services.

Estimates of the homeless population in downtown San Diego and the immediately surrounding communities vary widely, but, based on data developed by the Regional Task Force on the Homeless and the City's Homeless Outreach Team, range from approximately 2,200 to 3,700. Of these, approximately 25% (roughly 550-925) suffer from severe mental illness, and approximately 40% (roughly 880-1,480) are chronic inebriates or are addicted to drugs. Many from these populations are actually "dually-diagnosed," meaning they are mentally ill and have a drug or alcohol addiction. This special needs population is often the most visible and troublesome of the homeless population.

Despite the efforts of many homeless service agencies, a severe shortage of both short-term and long-term beds and permanent housing for the mentally ill, dually-diagnosed, and drug and alcohol addicted homeless persists. The HOT Teams have identified this lack of beds and programs as a major issue in effectively dealing with this population. In surveys conducted in 1999, homeless service providers consistently identified short- and long-term beds, programs and housing for this population as one of the top unmet needs. Although there are approximately 1,900 permanent (not seasonal) beds for the homeless in downtown and surrounding communities, only about 90 of these beds are in housing/treatment programs for the severely mentally ill homeless, and only 440 beds are in programs for drug and alcohol abusers.

On December 6, 1999, the City Council approved a five-part program to assist the special needs homeless population in the downtown area, and then adopted an amendment regarding location of facilities on January 31, 2000. This unique collaborative program between the City of San Diego, County of San Diego, CCDC, and the Housing Commission, in partnership with the private and non-profit homeless service providers, is part of the continuum of care to address the severely mentally ill, chronic inebriate, drug addicted and dually-diagnosed homeless.

The five elements of the Special Needs Homeless Program as approved by the City Council are:

1. Create Centralized Intake and Referral System and locate a facility
2. Build or Rehabilitate 100 Transitional Housing beds for severely mentally ill
3. Build or Rehabilitate 100 Permanent Supportive Housing units for severely mentally ill
4. Expand Residential Alcohol and Drug Treatment Programs for chronic inebriates, drug addicted and dually diagnosed by 80 beds
5. Evaluate and Expand Serial (Chronic) Inebriate Program

DISCUSSION

This report is a one year update on progress made toward meeting the goals set forth in the Special Needs Homeless Program. The following discussion addresses funding issues, which are central to all aspects of the program, and then summarizes progress in four of the five elements of the program. The fifth element--serial inebriate evaluation and expansion--is discussed in a

separate Manager's Report entitled "Expansion of Serial Inebriate Program into Downtown."

Funding Summary

Staff has aggressively pursued state and federal funding sources to implement this program, leveraged with significant local funds from CDBG, the Housing Commission, and CCDC. Some results were discouraging, but expectations are high for the 2001 legislative sessions:

State

AB 2034 - Mentally Ill Homeless Treatment Program funding requested from State Department of Mental Health via joint application of City, County, CCDC, Housing Commission, non-profit service providers submitted in October 2000. *Status: Awarded \$10.1 million for a 3-year program on November 2, 2000.*

Budget/Special Legislation requested through Senators Peace and Alpert, and Governor's Office for \$6.25 million in FY 2000-2001. *Status: Not successful this year.*

Federal

Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) budget earmark request through Congressmen Bilbray and Cunningham for \$2.5 million for facilities and services for the dually-diagnosed homeless. *Status: Not successful this year.*

