



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

DATE ISSUED: June 12, 2006 REPORT NO.: 06-072

ATTENTION: Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee
Agenda of June 14, 2006

SUBJECT: Plan to End Chronic Homelessness in the San Diego Region

REFERENCE:

REQUESTED ACTION:

To accept the Draft Plan to End Chronic Homelessness in the San Diego Region and forward it to the full Council with the recommendation to accept the Draft Plan; request United Way as the Convener along with the Leadership Council to continue its work to develop an Implementation Plan; and return to Council with the Implementation Plan as the part of the Final Chronic Plan for adoption.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Accept the Draft Plan and requested action.

SUMMARY:

The San Diego Regional Task Force on Homelessness estimates that San Diego County has more than 9,600 homeless people. A subgroup that tends to be the most visible and utilize a disproportionate amount of resources is a group of approximately 1,400 people who experience homelessness on a protracted or repeated basis. This subgroup, the chronically homeless, consists primarily of single male and female adults frequently experiencing schizophrenia or bipolar disorder, substance abuse, physical disabilities, and frequent prolonged homelessness. The chronic homeless routinely sleep in non-housing environments such as streets, canyons, doorways and parks. They have an extremely high death rate. Approximately 100 San Diego homeless died in 2004.

San Diego County is one of 100 communities encouraged by the Bush administration to address the issue of chronic homelessness. As part of this national effort, San Diego homeless advocates have taken the lead in developing a local plan to end chronic homelessness by 2012. In 2004, the City and County officially launched a local endeavor with unanimous resolutions to collaborate in developing a "Plan to End Chronic Homelessness in the San Diego Region." The United Way was requested to join the effort in the role of convener. All three partners signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA).

A steering committee known as the Leadership Council was formed to provide oversight and executive leadership for the plan. Six committees and four sub-committees composed of service providers, business representatives, academia, legal experts, philanthropy, government participants and interested individuals met regularly for seven months to develop the core of the chronic plan. The San Diego Plan focuses on two key elements, Housing First/Housing Plus and Prevention.

Housing First/Housing Plus Model: In cities across the United States, permanent supportive housing has been shown to be an effective and efficient means to take the chronically homeless off the streets. Early research has shown that providing independent supportive housing, as the first step for the chronically homeless, may have a greater impact on reducing homelessness and improving quality of life than the more traditional sequence of placements from emergency shelters through transitional housing, and then on to supervised independent living.

The Plan recommends permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless individuals and families as the most productive means to end chronic homelessness in the San Diego region. In order to provide the number of units needed to accomplish this goal, it will be necessary to build permanent supportive housing, rehabilitate existing housing, maximize master leasing opportunities, adapt other buildings for use as permanent supportive housing, and address permitting requirements for each type of housing.

The Housing Plus (wraparound services and support) dimension of this program will provide for the multiplicity of needs of the chronically homeless. The Plan recommends linkage to community resources (mental health, health care, judicial services, and case management) and increasing the availability and awareness of formal community supports to promote housing stability and self-sufficiency.

Prevention Plan: The second focus of the Plan is prevention. In order to end chronic homelessness, the Plan strongly urges renewed efforts be directed at preventing chronic homelessness. San Diego has approximately 200 agencies and programs that service the homeless. More often than not services are initiated after the state of homelessness is reached. It is recommended that a prevention plan be implemented in tandem with the Housing First/Housing Plus model. Both initiatives overlap in many areas and should be viewed as complimentary endeavors to ending chronic homelessness. San Diego's prevention efforts should focus on the following five areas:

1. Strengthen programs that serve at-risk populations.
2. Improve discharge planning.
3. Address employment issues.
4. Address tenant-landlord issues.
5. Develop Mental Health Courts.

The goal of the implementation plan will be to forestall and prevent homelessness for those at imminent risk by expanding the range and availability of prevention strategies, increasing their immediate accessibility, and improving their long-term effectiveness.

Implementation: The United Way and the Leadership Council will form an Implementation Working Team. Conceptually, this team will be comprised of appointed staff representatives from at least four to five cities in the county, members of the L/C, four to five service providers representing different geographical areas and a variety of service deliveries, representatives from the business sector, law enforcement, legal sector, academia, medical, philanthropy and other housing oriented groups.

The two tasks for which the Team will be responsible are:

1. To develop an Implementation Plan for the Plan to End Chronic Homelessness in the San Diego Region
2. To research governance structures and recommend the most appropriate governance form to carry out the Implementation Plan as part of The Plan to End Chronic Homelessness

It is anticipated that this Implementation Working Team will complete its task in 120 working days. We will then come back to city council for its approval of the Implementation Plan and recommended governance structure. After approval from the City of San Diego, the Implementation Plan will be presented to the other cities and ask them to approve and participate in the recommended plan and governance structure.

Ideally, the Leadership Council, as written in the draft Plan, would like for the Implementation Plan as part of the final Chronic Homeless Plan to include:

1. Annual reduction in the number of chronically homeless people.
2. The number of new housing opportunities created.
3. Progress in implementing a comprehensive Housing Plus wrap-around model.
4. Progress in establishing a centralized web-based data system that can be used to strengthen intervention, outreach, case management, and evaluation activities.
5. Increase the number of outreach teams.
6. Increase the number of individuals within each geographic region that are able to access appropriate services.
7. Progress in establishing institutional discharge planning protocols.

8. Increase the number of chronically homeless that find and maintain employment.
9. Progress in establishing Mental Health Courts.
10. Increase in amount of available State, Federal, Private, and corporate funding.

FISCAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Nearly \$70 million in public funds were awarded to homelessness in San Diego County in 2005. These funds include more than \$6.3 million in cash assistance/food stamps and more than \$63 million allocated to homelessness through several major program categories. These costs do not capture the hidden costs of law enforcement, emergency departments, paramedics, and hospital costs. Once chronically homeless people are in permanent supportive housing, success is achieved by providing services that enable them to stay off the streets and out of hospitals and jails. This approach is very cost effective. A 1999 study in New York City found that once placed into service-enriched housing, a homeless, mentally ill individual reduces his or her use of publicly funded services by several thousand dollars per year.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no direct cost to the City in accepting this plan.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL and/or COMMITTEE ACTION:

- City of San Diego Resolution R-2004-721 adopted January 25, 2004.
- Memorandum of Agreement Between United Way of San Diego County, the City of San Diego, and the County of San Diego (September 8, 2004).

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND PUBLIC OUTREACH EFFORTS:

- “Plan to End Chronic Homelessness in the San Diego Region” (Draft Report) September 2005.
- Regional Task Force on the Homeless, “Regional Homeless Profile,” July 2004.
- San Diego County Medical Examiner 2004 statistics.
- The Urban Institute (2004), “Strategies for Reducing Chronic Street Homelessness.”

- United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (2004), “The 10-Year Planning Process to End Chronic Homelessness in your Community, A Step-by-Step Guide.”
- National Alliance to End Homelessness (2003) “Toolkit for Ending Homelessness.”
- San Diego Housing Commission (2005), “San Diego’s Housing Crisis – Statistics and Quotes.”
- National Coalition of the Homeless (February 1999) “Employment and Homelessness, NCH Fact Sheet #4.”

KEY STAKEHOLDERS:

United Way of San Diego County, City of San Diego, County of San Diego, healthcare agencies, social service agencies, educational institutions, civic organizations and faith-based agencies.

CONCLUSION

Achieving the long-term goals outlined in this plan require additional organizing, research, and analysis prior to implementation. One of the underlying principles is the need for recent, yet proven creative programs that will result in new and/or expanded systems of care along with the development of new housing solutions. These worthy goals require ongoing planning, community building, and consensus building. The ultimate goal of the plan is to end chronic homelessness in San Diego County. Moreover, the plan must also integrate with ongoing strategic planning efforts of the Regional Continuum of Care Council (RCCC), comprising representatives of the city and county housing authorities, government staff members, and nonprofit operations throughout the County of San Diego, in developing a comprehensive blueprint for all homeless services in the San Diego region.

Originating Department

Deputy Chief/Chief Operating Officer

Attachments:

1. [2004 MOU between United Way, City of San Diego, County of San Diego](#)
2. [2004 Council Resolution 298797](#)
3. [Appendix C1 thru C4 of Draft Plan to End Chronic Homelessness](#)
4. Draft plan to End Chronic Homelessness (Attachment 4 is available at the City Clerk’s Office)
5. [Background Report](#)

6. [Agency Representation](#)
7. [Committee Lists and Meeting Dates](#)
8. [Community Presentations](#)
9. [List of County Supervisors](#)
10. [List of Local Assembly Members](#)
11. [List of Local State Senators](#)
12. [List of City Mayors](#)
13. [List of Cities that have Signed the PTECH Partnership Covenant](#)