

**CITY OF SEBASTOPOL
CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA ITEM REPORT**

Meeting February 6, 2024
 To: Honorable City Councilmembers
 From: Mayor Rich, Planning Director Svanstrom
 Subject: Quarterly Report on the Unhoused
 Recommendation: Receive the Report
 Funding: Currently Budgeted: Yes No Not Applicable
Account Code: N/A

INTRODUCTION/PURPOSE:

This quarterly report on the unhoused is submitted by Vice Mayor Diana Rich, as City Council Liaison to Service Providers for the Unhoused, and by Planning Director Kari Svanstrom, as Staff Liaison to Oversee Issues Related to the Unhoused.

SUMMARY: Services to the Unhoused are on-going, with a focus on the upcoming transition of the SAVS Horizon Shine site and preparation by St Vincent de Paul for permanent construction at the site. Additionally, the City opened a warming center during a recent cold spell with funding provided by the County/Supervisor Hopkins. Lastly, the building permit for Elderberry Commons has been issued, with construction ready to start.

BACKGROUND

This quarterly report is submitted pursuant to the direction of the City Council, which directed the two appointed liaisons to provide quarterly reports on the unhoused to the City Council. This report is the report for the 4th quarter of 2023.

INFORMATION UPDATED AS OF THE LAST REPORT:

Elderberry Commons

The Elderberry Commons property is owned by the Sonoma County Community Development Commission. The Commission is working with non-profit partners West County Community Services and Burbank Housing Development Corporation, to complete the work needed to convert the site to permanent supportive housing. Construction plans include the addition of kitchenettes and plumbing and electrical changes and accessibility improvements. The following update was provided by Sonoma County:

- Transfer-Staff Report scheduled to go to the Board of Supervisors on February 27, 2024, to authorize transfer of property to Burbank Housing Development Corporation for ownership.
- Current Tentative Schedule-
 - Project building permit issued 12/28/2023, project is shovel ready.
 - Transfer to Burbank anticipated to be completed by March 30, 2024
 - Construction commences April 1, 2024
 - Construction substantially complete July 31, 2024
 - Occupancy begins August 1, 2024
 - Final occupancy projected mid-October 2024

WCCS Homeless Outreach Coordinator

- The City of Sebastopol contracts with West County Community Services to provide a full time Homeless Outreach Coordinator to serve the needs of the unhoused population. Maria Rico, the Sebastopol Outreach Worker, continues to serve as the city's main connector between our homeless residents and the services they need to gain housing and build healthier lives. Statistics on her work are attached to this report.

Warming/Cooling Center

The October 2023 Report out included substantial detail about warming center efforts in Sebastopol. Since then, the City once again “stood up” an impromptu grass-roots warming center in response to an extreme weather event on the weekend of January 6 and 7. This was a result of the combined efforts of the Sebastopol Community Cultural Center, our Homeless Outreach Coordinator, local advocates, and FS Global Solutions, a company that stepped in to operate the warming center as a courtesy to the City of Sebastopol.

The final steps are now moving forward to formalize key pieces for future warming and cooling center needs. An agreement is being finalized with the Sebastopol Community Cultural Center to allow use of the Annex for this purpose. The use of the Annex will be at no charge, a courtesy SCCC is offering because of the City’s fiscal crisis and also because they see the need to offer shelter in times of extreme weather events. FS Global Solutions has offered a heavily discounted contract to operate warming and cooling centers for the City, for the same reasons that motivated SCCC’s very generous support. Sebastopol’s Homeless Outreach Coordinator (an employee of West County Community Services) will provide outreach services to make sure that our local unhoused are fully aware of warming and cooling centers any time they are opened.

The City had very limited funding for this effort, but that has been buttressed by a \$10,000 grant facilitated by Supervisor Lynda Hopkins. As a result, the City has a total of \$16,600 available to cover remaining warming and cooling center needs. The hope is that with a discounted arrangement with FS Global Solutions and the free use of the Annex, that amount will cover our remaining warming and cooling center needs.

A formal written policy is not expected in the immediate future, but with venue and operation agreements in place, its expected that the City Manager will have what is needed to meet upcoming needs for the foreseeable future.

GOALS:

This action supports the following 2019 City Council Goals and General Plan Actions:

Goal 5: Provide Open and Responsive Municipal Government Leadership

5.3.3. Encourage and increase public awareness of City Policies, decisions, programs and all public processes and meetings, by investigating effective methods of communication and obtaining feedback from the community.

General Plan Goals

Policy D-6 – Work to prevent homelessness and support housing services to the homeless.

Action CHW 5c: Practice an open-door policy in City programs, and actively engage and encourage participation from all individuals regardless of ethnicity, race, religion, class, disability, sexual orientation, and gender.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

As of the writing of this staff report, the City has not received any public comment. However, if staff receives public comment from interested parties following the publication and distribution of this staff report, such comments will

be provided to the City Council as supplemental materials before or at the meeting. In addition, public comments may be offered during the public comment portion of the agenda item.

PUBLIC NOTICE:

This item was noticed in accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act and was available for public viewing and review at least 72 hours prior to the scheduled meeting date.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with the report tonight.

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive the report.

Attachments:

WCCS Homeless Outreach Coordinator Report

Sonoma County Homeless Coalition Update

Approvals:

Department Head Approval: Approval Date: January 30, 2024

CEQA Determination (Planning): Approval Date: January 17, 2024

The proposed action is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

Administrative Services/Financial Approval:

Costs authorized in City Approved Budget: Yes No N/A

City Attorney Approval: Approval Date: 1/31/24

City Manager Approval: Approval Date: 1/31/24

City of Sebastopol
Homeless Services Outreach Coordinator (HSOC)
December 2023 Report
Submitted: January 5, 2023 by Maria Rico

Refer people without homes to Coordinated Entry as proper:

Introduction

As HSOC, my primary responsibility is to identify and aid homeless individuals in our community. This report outlines the referrals and services provided to homeless individuals over the past month.

Referrals to Coordinated Entry and CNS Shelter in Guerneville

In December, the homeless outreach efforts yielded significant results. **Two** more individual were successfully enrolled into Coordinated Entry, the cumulative number of individuals and families in my case load who are in Coordinated Entry is now **49** although my case load is now 50. Additionally, I have been offering referrals to the CNS shelter in Guerneville and COTS in Petaluma. During the month of December, I did not have any referrals to our Guerneville shelter, especially after there was an outbreak of RSV from 12/13/2023 until the end of December. During my outreach efforts, I've been offering shelter referrals although most shelter were full by the beginning of December.

This successful outcome exemplifies the effectiveness of Coordinated Entry efforts and the importance of collaboration between different organizations and specialist. It reaffirms the significance of providing housing and support to those experiencing chronic homelessness, enabling them to achieve positive and transformative changes in their lives.

Represent WCCS at relevant meetings:

As part of my role as HSOC, I have been representing West County Community Services (WCCS) at relevant meetings in the community. This report outlines the meetings I have attended and the information shared on behalf of WCCS.

Coordinated Entry Meetings, Every Friday 11am-12:30 or 1pm

Throughout the month of December, I actively represented my agency in various relevant meetings, particularly in the Coordinated Entry (CE) gatherings. I am happy to inform you that **1** young female, was offered Rapid Re-Housing services and is scheduled to receive those services at the end of January to help her find a place to live. For the referrals I have mentioned in the past, there is two women waiting to be placed at St. Vincent De Paul's Commons in Santa Rosa as soon as construction is complete.

Sebastopol Homeless Support Meeting 12/21/2023 11am-12:30 pm

This meeting did not happen to my knowledge. I will be attending this meeting on the month of January if it's not cancelled. I am in communication with Lisa McIntyre, the homeless outreach manager for Sonoma Applied Villages (SAVS) who has been going to Horizon Shine Village to assist with case management services. WCCS continues to be supportive to the efforts by SAVS.

Leadership coordination of services:

In my role, I've continued to lead the coordination of services, addressing the pressing needs of our community members. This month, I was also effective in providing food assistance through meals and assist with CalFresh issues for **3** individuals this month. I was also successful at re-referring **1** individual to Whole Person Care's Enhanced Case Management Services which was accepted and in process of starting to provide services in the month of January 2024.

Develop relationships with clients and connect them to services:

My capacity to build meaningful relationships with clients has yielded positive outcomes, particularly in connecting our unsheltered veterans to crucial housing and supportive services. I'm pleased to report that **one** individual was housed in his own one bedroom, fully furnished apartment with basic items included such as pots, pans, coffee maker, a bed and bedding, a couch, a big screen smart TV with internet and utilities included and covered by the HUDVASH Voucher. This would success would not have been possible without the involvement of WCCS Homeless Outreach services provided to the veterans in this area to assist with navigating VA services they qualify for.

These successes underscore the importance of personalized connections in navigating and accessing vital resources for those who have served our country.

Develop a citywide services matrix, including relevant county services, to inform housed and unhoused communities about the type and availability of services:

As HSOC, I continue to distribute the updated Sebastopol Resource Guide to unhoused individuals and other providers in the community.

The response to my inaugural outreach newsletter is the community has been overwhelmingly positive. I've noticed that during times of crisis, having information in a tangible format proves invaluable, particularly for individuals facing memory challenges alongside other issues. The inclusion of a calendar in the back has proven particularly helpful, allowing individuals to fold it easily and keep it in their pocket for quick reference. This visual aid has significantly improved my ability to guide and assist those in need, with the condensed information addressing common queries. I will be updating the newsletter next week and sending it out as soon as it's ready to share.

Increase citywide understanding of rules and laws:

In a concentrated effort to increase citywide understanding of rules and laws, I effectively collaborated with law enforcement throughout the month. I have been constantly communicating with Sargent Cameron Fenske regarding calls they are getting about our unhoused community. Together we were able to do appropriate interventions that provided the best outcome possible. At this time our collaboration is helping us find the individuals who qualify and are willing to accept services to obtain and maintain permanent housing that have been living in and out of Joe Rodata Trail. This opportunity was just communicated with me and I immediately communicated with Sargent Fenske in regards to confirming that some of the unhoused are living in and out of the Joe Rodata Trail. I have also offered a space in my newsletter if they ever need to make an announcement to the unhoused community in a platform that they trust.

Partner with City staff and first responders in homeless response:

In strengthening my partnership with citywide responders, I recently received many calls from individuals that where told about my services. The Sebastopol Police Department's patrol officers are doing an excellent job getting my business cards and contact information to those in need. I am also grateful for their support in helping locate two individuals that I am actively attempting to house now that one of them was diagnosed with a terminal illness and requires immediate treatment that is being delayed due to being chronically homeless. The SPD will also continue to receive updated Newsletters as they come out. This collaborative approach ensures that outreach efforts continue,

even when direct engagement is challenging, and provides an additional avenue for those in need to access crucial information and support.

Develop volunteer/civic engagement opportunities around homelessness:

As part of my ongoing efforts to provide support and assistance to individuals experiencing homelessness, I actively participate in the Sebastopol Library's Social Worker Day, which takes place every third Tuesday of the month from 1:30 pm to 3 pm.

During these monthly sessions, I have been able to address critical documentation needs by providing birth certificate affidavits and ID Vouchers. This month was slow since it was raining on and off throughout the month of December, which keeps our unhoused from leaving the shelter they have found to stay out of the rain.

My ongoing participation in this initiative reinforces our commitment to working collaboratively with community partners to provide comprehensive and compassionate support to individuals experiencing homelessness. By leveraging these opportunities, we can continue making a positive impact on the lives of those in need, fostering an inclusive and caring environment for all members of our community.

Safe Parking:

The Safe Parking program at the Sebastopol Community Church has one opening after one of the other Safe Parkers was unable to comply with the program rules and expectation due to her vehicle braking down. I was successful at placing 1 new individual yesterday at the Safe Parking site that I have been trying to convince to accept the help. This individual is an elderly woman that is grateful for the opportunity to park her van and not have to worry about the residents of Sebastopol calling the police on her for parking in other areas of the city. I still have 1 more spot available that may be filled within the next week with the next person on the waitlist. In the HUT's program, I now have one vacancy after successfully housing our homeless Honorable Discharged Veteran in his own apartment in Guerneville. This veteran was sleeping on the square for a long time and he was struggling with finding a place to implement his HUDVASH Voucher. With my hands-on assistance and, "go getter" attitude as he described me, I was able to successfully place him right before the New Year. WCCS Outreach and Vet Connect VSO Richard Jones and his wife Pat Jones will continue to assist this individual with obtaining income and getting the medical treatment that he needs to continue on his uphill journey to stability and a continue increasing his quality of life. This individual continues to access the Sebastopol Christian Church's Barnabas program for meals. The second individual, is actively applying to apartments and I recently assisted with getting him the application for the Rosenberg Building in Santa Rosa for a Project Based Voucher. These successes exemplify the positive impact of our safe parking initiatives, fostering stability and pathways toward long-term housing solutions for those in need.

January 2024 Goals

- * Enroll/Update the homeless individuals/families in Coordinated Entry for the housing prioritization list.
- * Attend Coordinated Entry meetings every Friday
- * Continue Outreach Efforts in Collaboration with SPD.
- * Continue updating and distributing the Outreach Newsletter.
- * Outreach at the Sebastopol Christian Church Mondays and Thursdays from 8:30am-Noon.
- * Attend by-weekly meetings for Veterans on Coordinated Entry.
- * Attend Sebastopol Homeless Services Meeting once a month.
- * Attend Social Worker Day on Tuesday December 19, 2023 from 1:30pm-3pm
- * Attend Meetings with Verity regarding Human Trafficking services and Domestic Violence
- * Connect a Mobile Clinic to the Barnabas program for weekly or by-weekly services to the unhoused or low-income.
- * This month my shifts will be Monday through Friday from 7:30 am-4:00 pm but may vary from there depending on client's needs. I can be reached at (707) 888-3804 or maria.rico@westcountyservices.org

DATA POINTS	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Cumulative/Non-Cumulative
# Of new people contacted (un-duplicated number)	26	14	6	5	8	4	7	8	11	3	non-cumulative	
# Of camps citywide	4	13	16	10	4	2	3	3	2	3	non-cumulative	
# Of camps pre sweep	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	4	NA	NA	non-cumulative
# Of RVs on Morris St , Laguna Pkwy & Palm St., or other areas in seb	7	14	11	2	3	2	2	3	1	2	non-cumulative	
# of other vehicles Morris St, Laguna Pkwy & Greater seb. area	16	21	23	4	5	2	3	4	4	2	non-cumulative	
# Of people housed by WCCS (shelters, ACS/NCS, family)	51	54	55	56	57	61	63	65	68	70	cumulative	
# Of people displaced (returning to Morris)	2	4	1	3	2	2	1	1	1	1	non-cumulative	
# Referrals/requests for outreach service (Seb.City, SPD, and community)	15	6	3	4	8	4	6	1	4	4	non-cumulative	
# Of Housing referrals	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	2	8	2	non-cumulative	
# Food Assistance/referrals	10	5	7	2	2	5	5	3	3	3	non-cumulative	
# of people accessing benefits (SNAP, Cal-Fresh,UI Benefits, SSI, GA,)	5	12	8	2	2	2	3	2	1	5	non-cumulative	
# Of healthcare referrals (includes IMDT refs)	1	10	2	1	1	2	1	2	2	1	non-cumulative	
# Expired Registrations (Morris and Laguna, & Greater Seb. Area)	3	0	6	4	1	1	3	1	2	3	non-cumulative	
# Registration Renewals (WCCS fund req. submitted)	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	non-cumulative	
other types of assistance (Zoom appts, other programs/services) ie taking people to court, etc	5	2	2	2	5	2	1	1	2	1	non-cumulative	
# Of Volunteers hours (6 vol. x 9 wks. x 4hr shifts)	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	non-cumulative	
Community Engagement Mtgs (SAVS, WCHA, City Council, neighborhood meetings)	4	3	2	2	3	2	5	1	1	3	non-cumulative	
# of people who became un-housed in sebastopol	4	6	1	1	1	3	0	1	3	1	non-cumulative	
# of people who became un-housed in cities other than sebastopol	4	2	2	3	2	1	2	3	0	1	non-cumulative	
# of people enrolled in Coordinated Entry	12	9	6	8	6	4	5	1	5	2	non-cumulative	

Memo

From: Una JM Glass, Board Vice Chair - Sonoma County Homeless Coalition (SCHC, formerly known as the COC)

To: Sebastopol City Council

Date: 01/31/2024

Regarding: Sonoma County Homeless Coalition update

The Sonoma County Homeless Coalition (SCHC) is Sonoma County's collaborative effort at representing the homeless services system of care. This system of care includes local governments, nonprofits, faith-based organizations, and business. Governed by a seventeen-member Board, the countywide effort is responsible for oversight of funds awarded to the Homeless Coalition, primarily by federal and state government, plus, planning/policy development for addressing homelessness countywide, regardless of funding source. Governed by the SCHC's Charter, and mandated to exist by the Federal Government, the Board consists of local elected officials and appointees, nonprofit representatives, and subject matter experts, as well as individuals with lived homeless experience. The Sebastopol City Council is the entity responsible for appointing a representative to the SCHC Board to represent the interests of Sebastopol *and* west county – i.e. the Fifth Supervisorial District. The Sebastopol City Council re-appointed former City Council Member, Una Glass, to the SCHC West County seat in December of 2023.

Recent SCHC Board Activity

Board and Officer Elections

The SCHC unanimously elected Jeni Lynn Homes, Executive Director of Catholic Charities, as Board Chair and Una Glass as Vice Chair, at the January 2024 Board meeting.

The SCHC also held its annual special membership meeting in December and elected three candidates to the “at large” seats on the SCHC Board. This election process was lengthy and difficult. Staff has acknowledged it did not go as smoothly as planned and they will develop a better process for next year. The Sebastopol Council has also directed that in future Membership elections the Sebastopol/West County representative to the SCHC (currently Una Glass) will be the voting agent of the City of Sebastopol, rather than the City Manager.

A Board roster listing all 2024 Board members is attached at the end of this report.

The SCHC has several issue specific committees that include both Board members and members of the public who choose to volunteer to participate. The SCHC will be posting information about openings on these committees on its website at <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/health-and-human-services/health-services/divisions/homelessness-services/sonoma-county-homeless-coalition/committees> Check here for information about each committee and how to apply for membership once the openings are posted.

MOU

The SCHC Board approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in January of 2023, with the County of Sonoma as its “lead agency” (i.e. the organization that provides staffing and implementation to the SCHC Board). This MOU has, however, remained un-approved by the County for a year. Per the Director of Homelessness Services, it is still unclear when the MOU will be approved or commented upon by the County.

Warming Centers

The SCHC Board directed staff to investigate the countywide situation regarding warming centers. At present there is a patchwork of warming center facilities and programs with inconsistent policies scattered throughout the various jurisdictions in the county. Vice Chair Glass has endeavored to advocate for enhanced communication about this issue between jurisdictions. Having more consistent policies between jurisdictions, particularly those that are adjacent to each other, would seem to be better for both homeless constituents and for management of warming center facilities. In response to the Board direction SCHC staff provided a report, appended at the end of this document, detailing the state of warming centers throughout the county. It may be useful to agendize this subject at the Mayors and Councilman's Association and explore how a more consistent approach to both warming and cooling centers could be developed between jurisdictions.

PIT Count

The Sonoma County Point in Time count was held on Friday January 26th. The PIT count is required by the federal government and involves counting all the homeless individuals out on the street on a single morning - January 26th this year. Participants have reported that the training and implementation went well this year. There is a concern however that, for the second year in a row, a sweep of homeless people took place on the day immediately before the PIT count, thereby possibly causing an undercount. It will take several months before homeless services release the actual numbers counted. The number of homeless individuals recorded in the PIT count has an impact on the amount of homelessness related funding that Sonoma County will receive from federal and state agencies.

NOFA

After extensive vetting by the SCHC’s Funding and Evaluation Committee as well as the full Board, the SCHC posted its Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) in December. The NOFA solicits proposals from organizations for grant funding to address various aspects of homelessness. The nature of these proposals are restricted by federal HUD guidelines since the source of these funds is primarily the federal government. Generally, proposals must fall within federal definitions for services related to temporary shelter (homeless shelters), interim housing, permanent supportive housing, homelessness prevention and street outreach. Proposals from providers were due on January 22. Providers are reporting that the process went more smoothly this year although there were still problems. A working group from the Funding and Evaluation committee (including Una Glass) will be reviewing staff scoring and applications to weed out any glaring problems. Then the full funding and evaluation committee will be reviewing the staff’s application scoring and making funding recommendations to the full Board.

Although the Homeless Services Department was moved last year from the Sonoma County Community Development Commission (CDC) to the Department of Health Services (DHS), some of the funding

streams for homelessness have remained under the CDC's purview. This means that providers have to respond to two entirely separate NOFA processes. There is still some lack of coordination in funding strategies because of these separate processes. This is an issue that Vice Chair Glass would like to explore with homeless services staff and her board colleagues over the next year with an eye to ensuring that there is coordination with the County Homelessness Strategic Plan.

The work that staff and the SCHC Board have done in the past year on developing a more data informed strategy for decision making will be at least be partially implemented in this year's SCHC NOFA awards process. The SCHC Board has also directed that some services be regionalized. This means, for example, street outreach will be performed by *one* provider in each region rather than having providers competing with each other for clients.

See the link below to a document that explains SCHC progress in becoming more data informed in its decision making.

Link: https://share.sonoma-county.org/link/rnahM0_Wcnw/

Bay Area Housing Finance Authority (BAHFA) November 2024 Bond Measure:

The SCHC Board was provided with information about an upcoming State bond measure that will help to finance low-income housing throughout California. The Sebastopol City Council may want to be briefed on this measure since it could have an impact on housing supply that may help to alleviate homelessness.

Conclusion

The SCHC has made considerable progress this past year in becoming a more data informed organization, providing a more transparent process for funding awards, educating the community on the homelessness system in Sonoma County, and strategically coordinating its efforts toward ending homelessness. However, despite this progress as a county we fall far short of ending homelessness. The SCHC itself still needs to improve its operations. Additionally, there are not nearly enough low-income housing units, vouchers to supplement rents for low-income individuals, permanent supportive housing units for the disabled, and beds for homeless individuals suffering from serious mental illness. Despite spending over \$90 million over the past year we still have a significant problem with homelessness. Building housing units for 2000 unhoused individuals at \$600,000 per unit (a lowball estimate of how much it costs to build one apartment) comes to 1,200,000,000. Innovative and systemic policy solutions are required to solve homelessness. All aspects of the causes of homelessness need to be addressed to make significant progress. The system that homeless individuals and providers must navigate is ridiculously complex and dysfunctional and the origins of that complexity start at the federal level. We cannot solve these system problems locally, but we can be more creative about how we deploy funding locally, regulate housing and land use, and advocate for livable wages.

Sonoma County Regional Homelessness Coordination Update - NEWS December 13, 2023

Sonoma and the Sonoma Valley

The City of Sonoma and its partners (including Home First, Homeless Action Sonoma and Sonoma Overnight Support) have been working collaboratively with a Measure O-funded effort to implement a By Names List (BNL) approach to homelessness in the Valley. The City believes that the strategy is “solid and working” with the help of HomeFirst and BNL Coordinator Hunter Scott. The City also funds case management (under contract with HAS) at the \$100K level for a case manager specific to the area.

The Home and Safe Village is now open, and housing about 20 people. Final touches are going on for the shower and laundry facility. Annie Falandes of HAS produces a [monthly newsletter](#) that’s worth reading for those who want to know the nuts and bolts of the HAS project. The newsletter also identifies recent progress with placing clients in permanent housing.

Another change in Sonoma is the transitioning of day services away from The Haven (close to central Sonoma). The Haven’s building will, after January 2024, be transitioned back to the City of Sonoma to be used (in the near term) as a spot for extreme temperature events.

Petaluma / COTS / South Sonoma County

A concern identified in Petaluma involves rapid rehousing, and how some persons more vulnerable are being referred to RRH who may not have the ability to increase earnings in the long-term. “It takes a lot longer for people to make 50% of rent - getting a single mom with four kids, in a 2 BD, whose income is about \$1,000 / mo, when the rent is closer to \$3K a month” means that agencies are “paying a lot of money to make sure these folks stay housed. We can serve them, but it’s going to affect outcomes”. Change in Coordinated Entry ends up placing folks in RRH who can’t come up to income levels - either there needs to be more money allocated to RRH or folks assigned there should have lower vulnerabilities.

In terms of PSH, “some of the referrals are too high for PSH, and if that person declines, they get bumped off the list.” Folks can have both behavioral health and disabling conditions, multiple seizures every day, being referred to shared housing (this is not an appropriate placement, as the person can’t be housed with a live-in caregiver). There should be more flexibility in the program, or more options in the community that are set up specifically for live-in IHSS resources.”

COTS is starting to work on a capital project for the second floor at MIC that will expend \$750K to expand recuperative care beds. Construction is expected during January and February, with a late Spring opening – this will expand beds from six (currently) to 20 beds. Referral will be through Partnership Health Plan and Kaiser.

City of Petaluma with HomeFirst “is doing a great job with the landlord recruitment program. HomeFirst has been doing some unconventional outreach in different spaces, including at a Los Cien event. The first handful of houses have been identified.” There’s an interest by Petaluma in getting

more into homelessness prevention, including funds for more case management for persons who are at risk of homelessness.

Rohnert Park w/HomeFirst

Over the past year, Rohnert Park has been working to manage the “Safe Sleeping Program” at Roberts Lake to closure. There are currently 10 residents remaining in the Program and staff plans to close the Program and the park & ride on January 31st, 2024.

The City and HomeFirst are working to connect all residents with interim and permanent housing services before the Program closes. After the Program is closed, the park & ride site will be completely fenced off and closed to the public.

The location of the Roberts Lake Park and Ride was included as a site for affordable housing in the City’s adopted Housing Element 2023-2031. Staff are currently exploring next steps to move forward with a housing project at this site, including identifying possible funding sources to help fund it.

Labath Landing, the 60-unit interim housing Homekey site, has seen some good success in its first year - 40% of all exits are persons who have moved to permanent housing. Some residents have gotten jobs, including for Rohnert Park companies. One person who has been at Labath for almost a year recently secured a job with a construction company.

HomeFirst has been appreciative of the recent collaboration with the County’s Homekey team, which tries to add care and services to clients with more challenging needs, including behavioral health and substance use disorders. Clients who may not have been comfortable in contacting other staff have been comfortable working with the County’s Homekey team, leading to SSI, Cal-Fresh, and other benefits.

The local By Names List (BNL) group continues to case conference, working closely with Thai and Hunter and other county and city staff. City staff are working on a local deployment center for the 2024 PIT Count. Also at Labath, Mary’s Pizza is doing work to educate folks about JobLink - the JobLink corps has “really stepped up, (and we’re) impressed with the increased outreach of JobLink services.”

Santa Rosa / Catholic Charities

The Santa Rosa City Council last week approved two contracts - one with Catholic Charities, and one with COTS to provide supportive services with HOME ARP funds, including an expansion of homelessness prevention. Santa Rosa also approved funding for 2 additional outreach workers in the downtown area. These may start after the first of the year, in the downtown and surrounding areas.

HOME-ARP will fund a Catholic Charities homelessness prevention program that’s been in a pilot phase to date. Funds will be available to all targeted subpopulations. Also within HOME-ARP, Santa Rosa Community Health will provide a dedicated Mental Health clinician who will work out of the Caritas drop-in center. Also through HOME-ARP, a new COTS program in Santa Rosa will bring in more behavioral health services.

Santa Rosa is rolling out its ERF-2 program and may or may not decide to apply for an ERF-3 grant. SR may look for additional funds to address capital needs at Sam Jones Hall which would allow more non-congregate spaces. SR is also working with the County, Petaluma, and All Home for a larger prevention program to begin in FY 24-25.

Santa Rosa has begun work on its By Names List, including the first facilitated meeting in recent days. A goal is to mirror what Rohnert Park is doing, in collaboration with County staff and Home First.

The Safe Parking site is still operating well, with funding extended through June of 2025. Long-term residents there, especially if they have not connected with case managers, will be asked to leave to allow spaces to be freed up for people on the wait list and who will benefit from case management resources.

Santa Rosa's winter warming center is ready for activation at the Caritas Drop-in center as needed.

Santa Rosa housing updates:

- SVDP Commons – wrapping up construction and starting the lease-up process (there have been multiple coordinated entry referrals).
- South Park Commons – Under construction with an estimated completion date late 2024. This project will provide 30 PSH units.
- Burbank Avenue – Closed financing this week and is scheduled to start construction this month. This project will provide 16 units for persons at-risk of homelessness.
- The Cannery – Under construction with an estimated complete date late 2024. This project will provide 33 units for formerly homeless individuals.
- Stony Point Flats construction will be complete soon. This project provides 5 units for formerly homeless individuals.

West County/Sebastopol and Russian River Area

WCCS is actively working on preparing the Guerneville Navigation Center for additional bed space and room to house residents during cold weather events. As of the date of this report, they're at 36 people instead of a more normal 27 and were at 33 a few days prior. WCCS notes that these additional individuals inside mean more costs, including bedding/cots, food, staffing (especially in the evening), and related supplies. This is a "top issue" for WCCS right now.

The Project Homekey effort in Monte Rio called George's Hideaway is moving along - there has been a redesign that might lead to shorter timeline for opening. Strong effort being done by the team at Praxis architects to address hurdles. The plan is still to have 21 units, but with 9 in the main building and 12 in connective manufactured buildings (21 total PSH beds).

In Park Village, the Measure O-funded program to replace some of the older housing units with four new tiny homes is underway, with the first one possibly ready for delivery later in December.

WCCS' Transitions to Housing program - where lived experience peers are trained to work with others experiencing homelessness as peers - is still going well with four peers. Transitions will have its first graduation session December 13th.

North Sonoma County/Healdsburg

Reach for Home (RFH) is working on implementing the pending \$2.67M Encampment Resolution Fund (ERF) grant for the roughly 40 persons who are encamped near the Russian River near where Highway 101 crosses the River. Case management is already occurring with many of the residents there, with efforts ramping up in early 2024 to increase the supply of local housing opportunities, including the purchase of a home by RFH.

As to housing development, several projects are further in the process with the City of Healdsburg, including:

- Saggio Hills, near Parkland Farms, with 117 new units for missing middle and other income levels. Ten of the units may be set aside for persons with developmental disabilities.
- 155 Dry Creek, with 58 total units (including five PSH units). The City and Burbank have applied for a Joe Serna Farmworker Housing grant of \$9M that would allocate 30 units for grant purposes. Estimated time of opening is late 2026.
- The Monte Vina apartments, currently under renovation, will be open in Spring 2024. These will include some coordinated entry referral locations.
- Eden Housing's affordable units are open towards the south end of town (Mill District)

TAY programming (TLC)

[TLC Child and Family Services](#) has recently expanded access to its Drop in Center to any youth experiencing homelessness, versus previously limiting access to TLC's TAY clients. The Center is seeing 10-12 youth per day. This has met a lot of gaps in the homeless youth community, as well as assisting in speeding up and facilitating housing referrals. Youth who participate at the drop-in center have access to an onsite social worker who can provide resources and referrals, CE, as well as basic needs like showers, laundry, and independent living skills.

TLC is also able to provide short-term immediate assistance to clients at the Center, including hotel vouchers, gas cards, food cards, six-month phone plans, educational supplies, credit card payments to clear up credit, utility bills, and similar. This is a small (\$50K) grant program that "meets gaps financially and in the moment" when other places and fund sources don't have that same flexibility. TLC could use more of these types of funds.

TLC points out that one of the challenges of getting the right housing for TAY is that it's hard to document chronic homelessness with many TAY. TLC's wish is that prioritization could be looked at, in part because TLC is seeing individuals more suited towards PSH who are being referred to Rapid rehousing merely because the documentation for CE is hard to secure.

TLC notes that TLC is seeing:

- More TAY with mental health fragility and greater housing challenges.
- Challenges include finding qualified workforce members.
- A need for improved substance use disorder services and more residential treatment beds that are in Sonoma County.
- Parenting TAY is on the uptick - needs for child materials, diapers, formula, etc.

In recent weeks, TLC leadership has agreed to oversee SAY's system on an interim basis. TLC leadership will help SAY address gaps, understand needs, and help them overcome adversities. At this time, there is no intention to merge entities - just temporary collaboration to provide support as needed.

County of Sonoma update

The County is actively working on several projects:

1. Completing renovations of the Los Guilicos dormitories to be able to move residents from the tents at the Emergency Shelter Site there before residents have to experience a full winter outside. Eventually, the LG Village tiny homes will transition over, as infrastructure costs there after nearly 4 years of operations are creeping up.
2. The Ballfields trailers were closed at the end of October, 2023. Many residents there were housed, and some were moved to the ESS or to LG Village.
3. Finding a place for a possible safe parking site. The Russell Avenue site proposed in September ended up having extensive site preparation costs, as stormwater, paving, and ADA requirements pushed up costs beyond what we envisioned earlier.
4. We worked with the HOST team, the City of Santa Rosa, and Caltrans to move an encampment from Caltrans-owned property beneath Highway 12 near the Joe Rodota Trail.
5. The HEART team has been working with residents in small encampments near Windsor and near Guerneville.
6. Coordinating information about cold-weather warming centers, while being cognizant of resources and the County's Extreme Temperature Incidents annex to the Emergency Operations Plan.
7. Determining ways to improve contract and payment processing with our internal DHS teams.

Background - Sonoma County Homeless Coalition (SCHC or “the Coalition”)

The entity formerly known as the Sonoma County Homeless Coalition (SCHC) has been renamed the Sonoma County Homeless Coalition (SCHC) . The SCHC board felt that the new name conveys the organization’s purpose more clearly to the public.

The information below was included in the last report to the Sebastopol City Council but has been updated with new data. It is included again so readers access refreshed information about how the SCHC functions, who participates and what it is.

Background on SCHC Structure and Purpose

The Sonoma County Homeless Coalition SCHC (formerly known as the SCHC) is Sonoma County's collaborative effort representing the homeless services system of care. This system of care includes local governments, nonprofits, faith-based organizations, and businesses. Governed by a seventeen-member Homeless Coalition Board, the countywide effort is responsible for oversight of funds designated to the Homeless Coalition and planning/policy development for addressing homelessness countywide regardless of funding source. The Board consists of local elected officials and appointees, nonprofit representatives, subject matter experts, interested members of the public, and individuals with lived homeless experience.

Every geographic area nationally (these areas are usually counties) is required by HUD/the federal government to establish a “Continuum of Care” structure. The name used by our “continuum of care” structure/organization is the Sonoma County Homeless Coalition. The federal government require that each COC entity includes three things: (1) A Lead Agency to manage the business of the SCHC and support the SCHC Board, (2) an entity to manage an HMIS (Homelessness Management Information System) system and select a federally approved HMIS software system, and (3) an entity/system that tracks unhoused individuals cases and that manages coordinated entry to the homeless system of care between jurisdictions and providers. In Sonoma County these entities are:

- The Lead Agency has been designated by the SCHC Board as the County of Sonoma.
- The HMIS system has been designated by the SCHC Board as the County which also contracts with a software vendor.
- The Coordinated Entry system maintenance and management has been designated by the SCHC Board as nonprofit vendor, HomeFirst.

The SCHC Board meets monthly via Zoom. Its agenda, reports and link to its meetings can be found [here](#). Additionally, the SCHC has subcommittees that include Board members and designated individuals from the community. Sebastopol/West County’s SCHC representative is Una Glass, who is a member of the Funding and Evaluation Committee as well as a member of the governing Board. She was elected to be Vice Chair of the SCHC Board in January ofg 2024.

The SCHC Board adopted a 5 Year Strategic Plan in December of 2022. The plan was also adopted by the County of Sonoma Board of Supervisors The Plan’s three primary objectives are:

1. **Invest in more housing and prevention.** It is imperative to reduce the inflow of people into homelessness and create more pathways to long-term housing stability. Doing so will require investments in both homelessness prevention and housing solutions.
2. **Strengthen supportive services.** The current system of care strains to meet the complex and diverse supportive services needs of people in the community who are experiencing the crisis of homelessness. That strain is felt not only by people experiencing homelessness, but also by homeless service providers, who are overtaxed and under-resourced. Building supportive services capacity is critical to ease this strain and better meet the needs of those in a housing crisis.
3. **Operate as one coordinated system.** Sonoma is a large county with many local governments and a broad array of service providers and other stakeholders whose work directly or indirectly impacts homelessness. To achieve functional zero, partners across the county must work to develop shared priorities, aligned investments, seamless coordination, and equitable solutions to the crisis of homelessness. (note: Functional Zero is that point when a community's homeless services system is able to prevent homelessness whenever possible and ensure that when homelessness does occur, it is rare, brief and one-time.)

These three goals are meant to guide the priorities of all the jurisdictions throughout the County.

The SCHC also includes “memberships”. Some of the seats on the SCHC Board are elected by member organizations. Each of the member organizations below gets one vote toward electing a representative for each of the three “at large” seats on the 17-person board. The other 14 board members are appointed by various bodies that are defined in the SCHC governing charter. The SCHC also holds quarterly membership meetings that provide a venue for information exchange between members.

Voting Members of the Sonoma County Homeless Coalition.

1. St Vincent de Paul
2. Santa Rosa Community Health
3. Interfaith Shelter Network (IFSN)
4. City of Santa Rosa
5. Disability Services and Legal Center (DSLCL)
6. City of Healdsburg
7. City of Petaluma
8. Sonoma County Office of Education, Education for Homeless Children and Youth
9. City of Cotati
10. Community Support Network (CSN)
11. COTS- Committee on the Shelterless
12. Downtown Streets Team
13. West County Health Center
14. Homes 4 The Homeless
15. Face to Face
16. Food for Thought
17. Dry Creek Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians
18. West County Community Services (WCCS)
19. Petaluma Valley Hospital
20. Providence
21. Community Foundation Sonoma County
22. City of Rohnert Park
23. Redwood Gospel Mission

24. Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Santa Rosa (CCDSR)
25. Petaluma Health Center
26. Social Advocates for Youth (SAY)
27. DEMA Consulting and Management
28. City of Sebastopol
29. County of Sonoma
30. Nation's Finest
31. Homeless Action!
32. City of Sonoma
33. Rohnert Park Chamber of Commerce
34. SAFE, Petaluma People Services Center
35. Center Point Drug Abuse Alternatives Center
36. Burbank Housing
37. SAVS (Sonoma Applied Village Services)
38. Reach for Home
39. Homeless Action Sonoma
40. PEP Housing
41. HomeFirst
42. The Living Room
43. NAACP Santa Rosa-Sonoma County Unit#10748
44. Town of Windsor
45. The Progressive Tribal Alliance
46. Ya-Ka-Ama Indian Education and Development Inc.
47. Sonoma County Library
48. Buckelew Programs
49. Community Action Partnership (CAP)
50. Manchester Point Arena Band of Pomo Indians
51. Northern Circle Indian Housing Authority
52. Redemption House of the Bay Area
53. Santa Rosa City Schools-Indian Ed. Community

Attachment A

Sonoma County Continuum of Care Board Roster 2024

	Seat	First Name	Last Name	Organization
1	City of Santa Rosa	Natalie	Rogers	City of Santa Rosa
2	City of Petaluma	Dennis	Pocekay	City of Petaluma
3	Board of Supervisors	Chris	Coursey	BOS County of Sonoma
4	County of Sonoma Safety Net	Martha	Cheever	Community Development Commission
5	Northern Region	Margaret	Sluyk	Reach for Home
6	Sonoma Valley	Ron	Wellander	City of Sonoma
7	Western Region	Una	Glass	City of Sebastopol
8	Rohnert Park and Cotati	Jackie	Elward	City of Rohnert Park
9	Largest Homeless Services Agency	Jennielynn	Holmes	Catholic Charities
10	Homeless Service Provider	Chris	Cabral	Committee on the Shelterless (COTS)
11	Licensed Health Care Organization	Benjamin	Leroi	Santa Rosa Community Health Center
12	Adult Lived Experience	Chessy	Etheridge	Community Member/LEAP
13	TAY Lived Experience	Cheyenne	McConnell	Community Member
14	Homeless advocacy organization	Dannielle	Danforth	West County Community Services
15	At Large	Don	Schwartz	City of Sebastopol
17	At Large	Kristi	Lozinto	Ya-Ka-Ama Indian Education and Development