



Monterey County Board of Supervisors

Response to the

2015-2016 Monterey County Civil Grand Jury Interim Final Report

HOUSING HOMELESS WOMEN

July 19, 2016

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HOUSING HOMELESS WOMEN

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REPORT TITLE: Housing Homeless Women
RESPONSE BY: Monterey County Board of Supervisors
RESPONSE TO: Findings F-1, F-2, F-4, F-5, F-6 and F-7

Finding F-1: *Monterey County's Lead Me Home Plan has stalled due to factors including recession, loss of redevelopment funds, lack of identified leadership and political will.*

Response F-1: The Board of Supervisors partially disagrees with this finding.

The Coalition of Homeless Services Providers (CHSP) is the designated homeless Continuum of Care (CoC) Coordinator for Monterey County and has remained steadfast in their mission of ending homelessness in Monterey County. The CHSP has shown ample leadership in supporting the *Lead Me Home* Plan despite the mentioned challenges of the recession and loss of redevelopment funds. As the CoC Coordinator, the CHSP is the administrator of the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) mandated by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and utilized by homeless service providers county-wide. CHSP supports these providers by leading the activities related to the annual national competition for funding which requires a high level of coordination, analysis and detailed reporting. In February 2016, HUD announced funding approvals for the local region of approximately \$1,870,000. The approval of these funds has been vital to all levels of progress on the *Lead Me Home Plan*. *In addition, the Monterey County Board of Supervisors has provided leadership in supporting the Lead Me Home Plan; most recently, in November 2015, the Board of Supervisors approved annual funding in the amount \$217,000 for CHSP to implement a key element of the plan - the Coordinated Assessment and Referral System (CARS). This funding includes resources for two additional staff at CHSP to finalize system development and policies, support system maintenance and data management, and ensure that shelter capacity information is kept up to date. These added staff will also support overall implementation of the Lead Me Home Plan.*

Finding F-2: *The creation of the Housing Pipeline Committee, the first and primary step of the Lead Me Home Plan, did not occur.*

Response F-2: The Board of Supervisors partially disagrees with this finding.

The Department of Social Services (DSS) convened key stakeholders on September 29, 2015 to impress on partner jurisdictions the importance of public jurisdictions participating in the Housing Pipeline Committee work. The Housing Pipeline Committee began its work on March 22, 2016 and they are now holding on-going meetings on a monthly basis. These meetings are co-chaired by DSS and the Economic Development/Housing Department with support from the CHSP staffing. The implementation of this Committee was hindered by the recession and loss of redevelopment funds in recent years and the CHSP's limited capacity. The Board approved funding to augment the CHSP's capacity by two FTEs in November 2015. As of February 2016 the CHSP has expanded its activities as their workforce has increased.

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RESPONSE TO: Findings F-1, F-2, F-4, F-5, F-6 and F-7

Finding F-4: *Funding is provided by Monterey County and cities to build low cost housing most of which is unaffordable for homeless women.*

Response F-4: The Board of Supervisors agrees with this finding. Monterey County receives Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to build affordable housing only and not shelter housing. However, the County is allowed to use up to 50% of the Urban County CDBG dollars to fund service providers who may choose to be the provider of Homeless Shelter for women. We partially disagree with this finding because Monterey County cannot provide CDBG funding in the Cities of Salinas, Seaside or Monterey because these cities are “Entitlement Cities” and they receive their own funding directly from Housing and Urban Development (HUD)-CDBG funds to provide housing programs and projects.

Finding F-5: *There are insufficient resources to house the homeless, evidenced by the increasing number of encampments and people living on the street.*

Response F-5: The Board of Supervisors agrees with this finding.

Current estimates indicate there are approximately 244 (plus an additional 57 during inclement weather season) emergency shelter beds, 500 transitional housing beds, and 380 permanent supportive housing beds in the county inventory. This number is inadequate for our community where the most recent homeless census count identifies 2308 homeless residents in Monterey County and only a minimal number of these beds being designated for women only.

Finding F-6: *The cities of Monterey, Salinas, Marina, and Monterey County have identified property owned by them that could be used for low cost and transitional housing, but it is currently not being utilized.*

Response F-6: The Board of Supervisors agrees with this finding for the following reasons. Several parcels have been identified in the cities of Monterey, Salinas, Marina and unincorporated portions of Monterey County that could be re-zoned, provided infrastructure (water and sewer) and utilized for affordable, low income and transitional housing. The most suitable sites including Marina, where we completed the Interim Transitional Housing project, has been utilized while the other sites listed in our inventory still require additional resources and planning in order to bring them to the market place. We will endeavor to bring more sites to the market as resource become available and as grant funds allow.

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Finding F-7: *Safe overnight parking for homeless women is scarce in Monterey County.*

Response F-7: The Board of Supervisors agrees with this finding.

Infrastructure necessary to support safe overnight parking (lighting, sanitary facilities) is found in urbanized areas. There are limited such areas within unincorporated Monterey County. As a rural county, the unincorporated areas have limited or no infrastructure such as lighting, water, or restroom facilities. Most of the local roads in the unincorporated areas are private, not managed or maintained by the county.

Because of the rural conditions, Chapter 14.18 Monterey County Code prohibits parking between six p.m. and six a.m. on a public road or public property, except when the public property is expressly designated and posted for overnight camping. This would restrict County from issuing an encroachment permit to camp overnight within the public right of way. Parking along public roads is enforced by law enforcement (Sheriff/CHP). Camping on private property, including but not limited to beaches, vacant lots, parking areas and commercial properties, between the hours of six p.m. and six a.m., is prohibited unless there is permission granted by the owner and sanitary facilities are available and approved by the County's Health Officer.

REPORT TITLE: Housing Homeless Women
RESPONSE BY: Monterey County Board of Supervisors
RESPONSE TO: Recommendations R-1, R-2, R-4 through R-7

Recommendation R-1: *Monterey County Board of Supervisors shall appoint a leader to implement the Lead Me Home Plan by June 2017.*

Response R-1: The recommendation has been implemented.

The Coalition of Homeless Services Providers, as the HUD Continuum of Care Coordinator, is the designated leader of the Lead Me Home Plan. Within the county structure, leadership for homeless initiatives has been lead in partnership by DSS and the Health Department. However, in order to strengthen the county's programmatic leadership, the County Administrator's Office will work to consolidate county direction, promote integration in the work of DSS, the Health Department, and the Economic Development Housing Department in addressing homelessness.

Recommendation R-2: *The appointed leader of the Lead Me Home Plan shall reactivate the Housing Pipeline Committee by June 2017.*

Response R-2: The recommendation has been implemented.

The CHSP, as the HUD Continuum of Care Coordinator, is the designated leader of the Lead Me Home Plan. The Housing Pipeline Committee has been meeting monthly since March 22, 2016. The Committee is staffed by the Coalition of Homeless Services Providers and co-chaired by the Director of DSS and Manager of Housing Programs with Economic Development. It is important to assure the consistent participation of each of Monterey County's incorporated cities in this committee.

Recommendation R-4: *Monterey County and cities within it shall include more very low cost housing in their action and development plans, beginning with their 2017 plans.*

Response R-4: The recommendation has been implemented. The process of identifying more parcels and sites for very low cost housing has been ongoing for several years and is included in the current General Plan. Monterey County cannot dictate to cities how much very low housing they must provide. Therefore, the County Inclusionary Ordinance provides a mechanism to encourage additional low, very low and moderate affordable housing opportunities within the unincorporated portions of Monterey County.

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Recommendation R-5: *Monterey County and cities within it shall cooperate with non-profits on proposals for alternative temporary shelters for the homeless.*

Response R-5: The recommendation has been implemented.

The Board augmented inclement weather shelters in Salinas and Monterey this past winter season. DSS staff is requesting proposals from nonprofit service providers to operate and manage a shelter that would be open beyond the inclement weather season and provide emergency shelter year round. One major ongoing challenge is identifying a location that is available and accessible for this service. The County funds non profits providing shelter services and transitional housing.

Recommendation R-6: *Monterey County and cities within it shall identify which of their owned property could be utilized for very low cost and transitional housing by June 2017.*

Response R-6: The recommendation has been partially implemented. Monterey County held a Regional Housing forum in 2014. The Forum identified parcels owned by cities, schools, utilities and other public and quasi-public agencies that might be converted to affordable housing projects. Continued efforts are necessary to ensure that this project keeps moving forward.

Recommendation R-7: *Monterey County and cities within it shall increase permits for safe overnight parking for homeless women living in their vehicles by June 2017.*

Response R-7: The recommendation requires further study.

Certain County Parks are set up to allow overnight camping with a permit. Permit fees and authority to waive fees are established by the Board of Supervisors. There is no zoning restriction (Titles 20 and 21 MCC) for private property owners (e.g. shopping center) to allow overnight parking provided it is “temporary” and the owner provides permission or does not object.