



County of Monterey

Board of Supervisors
Chambers
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

Board Report

File #: 15-1263, **Version:** 1

- a. Consider authorizing the Department of Social Services to negotiate a contract with the Coalition of Homeless Services Providers for implementation of the Coordinated Assessment and Referral System (CARS) for homeless services;
- b. Receive an update from the Department of Social Services and the Coalition of Homeless Services Providers on the status of the Lead Me Home Plan to House the Homeless;
- c. Receive an update from the Department of Social Services on emergency shelter resources available to address inclement weather conditions in light of forecasted heavy rain;
- d. Approve an increase in appropriations of \$198,500 in the FY 2015-16 Adopted Budget for Department of Social Services Homeless, Fund 001-5010-SOC004-8258, where the financing sources are Social Services' Assigned Fund Balance, Fund 001, Balance Sheet Account 3121 (4/5ths Vote Required); and
- e. Authorize the Auditor-Controller to incorporate approved modifications in the FY 2015-16 Adopted Budget.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors:

- a. Consider authorizing the Department of Social Services to negotiate a contract with the Coalition of Homeless Services Providers for implementation of the Coordinated Assessment and Referral System (CARS) for homeless services; and
- b. Receive an update from the Department of Social Services and the Coalition of Homeless Services Providers on the status of the Lead Me Home Plan to House the Homeless; and
- c. Receive an update from the Department of Social Services on emergency shelter resources available to address inclement weather conditions in light of forecasted heavy rain; and
- d. Approve an increase in appropriations of \$198,500 in the FY 2015-16 Adopted Budget for Department of Social Services Homeless, Fund 001-5010-SOC004-8258, where the financing sources are Social Services' Assigned Fund Balance, Fund 001, Balance Sheet Account 3121 (4/5ths Vote Required); and
- e. Authorize the Auditor-Controller to incorporate approved modifications in the FY 2015-16 Adopted Budget.

SUMMARY/DISCUSSION:

On October 15th, the Department of Social Services made a presentation to the Board of Supervisors Health and Social Services Committee on a proposal from the Coalition of Homeless Services Providers (CHSP) to fund and establish a Coordinated Assessment and Referral System (CARS) for homeless services. The Department was asked to bring the proposal to the full Board for consideration in 30 days. In addition the Department was asked to provide a brief update on the status of the Lead Me Home Plan to House the Homeless and an update on the County's inclement weather shelter capacity. Additionally, referral 2015.10 requested that County staff prepare an update in response to the homeless crisis and implementation of the Lead Me Home Plan.

Coordinated Assessment and Referral System (CARS):

One key strategy of Lead Me Home is system level services integration. As the designated Continuum of Care Coordinator, the CHSP has been developing and working to implement a Coordinated Assessment and Referral System (CARS) which is integral to the coordination of services across providers. CARS is responsive to the need for better coordination and prioritization of services for people experiencing homelessness in that it puts in place the countywide framework and technology necessary for providers to work together. It is also a new unfunded requirement for continued receipt of Continuum of Care grants through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (currently \$2.1 million), housing vouchers through the Department of Veterans Affairs (currently \$1.5 million) and Emergency Solutions Grants (currently \$200,000). This system provides homeless service providers with the required tool to perform vulnerability assessments and individualized coordination of services, but augmentations to the agency and field-based homeless services workforce are not part of the current proposal.

CHSP estimates an annual cost of \$217,000 for implementing the project, which is built off of the Coalition's existing Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Estimated costs include one-time expenses of \$72,500 to implement the necessary systems changes and training. Ongoing expenses that include: a) two (2) staff positions to maintain and support the data system, to assure that resource availability and shelter capacity information in the system is constantly kept up to date, and to support service providers in conducting individual assessments of need; b) expansion of HMIS capacity to allow homeless service providers in the field, and providers who are not currently using HMIS to use the system to help homeless individuals wherever they are access services; and, c) necessary operational expenses to support these positions. This system will be the foundation for coordinating services among providers and will establish the necessary tool for caseworkers to work with people experiencing homelessness.

Currently, CHSP staffing consists only of the Executive Director and an administrative support position. Ongoing maintenance of the data in CARS and support for homeless services providers using CARS requires additional professional level. Required support includes assuring data in CARS is always up-to-date, help desk support for users, and supporting users with the tools for assessing individual needs and coordinating case management among the community of homeless services providers. The staff augmentations necessary to implement CARS can be leveraged to enhance the capacity of CHSP to meet several other identified needs:

- Support to the county and local jurisdictions for assisting residents of homeless encampments when the encampment cannot continue. This support includes coordinating a 72-hour response by Coalition members and other service providers to help residents access services and housing.
- Outreach and education to both property owners and the community at-large. Outreach to property owners to grow the availability of housing units available to people experiencing homelessness and those at-risk of homelessness is a need which has recently become even more acute.
- Support for our community in developing affordable housing policies and options.

The Department of Social Services recommends that the Board of Supervisors direct the Department to negotiate a contract with CHSP for the implementation of CARS and associated performance measures for utilization (including assessment and placement metrics), requests for assistance in addressing encampments, outreach activities, support for the development of housing options for people with incomes under 30% of the average median income. If the Department is able to negotiate a favorable contract with CHSP for the implementation of CARS, the Department of Social Services will return to the Board of Supervisors for approval of the final contract.

Lead Me Home Plan for Housing the Homeless

In December 2011, Lead Me Home, the 10 Year Plan for Housing Homeless People in Monterey and San Benito Counties was approved by the Board of Supervisors. Since that time, Monterey County has seen shifts in where homeless residents congregate and the number of homeless encampments has grown in urban areas. These shifts and growths have led to a startling increase in the visibility of homeless residents and concerns for public and human safety have become high priority. Efforts that move the Lead Me Home plan forward are guided by the Leadership Council, staffed by The Coalition of Homeless Services Providers (CHSP). The Lead Me Home Update (attachment 1) was prepared to bring attention to key efforts made to date and continued strides being taken to move these strategies forward.

Progress in the Lead Me Home plan has been hindered by a shortage of housing that is affordable to families and individuals with incomes under 30% of the average median income and a shortage of rental units with property owners willing to accept housing subsidies. The November 4th edition of the *Monterey Herald* noted that the *Apartment Rent List Report* for October 2014 ranked Salinas as the city with the fourth fastest growing rental prices in California. The report noted that “the average rent for a one-bedroom grew 17.2 percent year-over-year,” and that the “average price for a one-bedroom in Salinas is \$1,180 while the price for a two-bedroom averages \$1,500.”

The shortage of housing options available for low-income and very low-income households has resulted in the numbers of homeless on the streets staying stable even as progress continues with the Lead Me Home Plan. In addition to ongoing maintenance of existing homeless services and HUD Continuum of Care funding, direct and indirect progress in moving the plan forward includes:

- Support for the development of 280 permanent supportive housing units in Monterey County and construction of 96 new project-based housing units, rehabilitation of 51 project-based housing units and anticipated development of 77 units.
- Establishment of the Salinas Winter Warming Shelter and the One Starfish Safe Parking Program.
- Expansion of housing subsidy programs through the Supportive Services for Veteran Families Grant, HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Vouchers, CalWORKs Housing Support, and the Community Corrections Partnership. Additionally, the extension of foster care support for youth aging out of foster care until age 21 allows emancipating foster youth to sustain housing subsidies.
- Delivery of coordinated training and resource sharing programs for homeless services case managers.
- Expansion of resource and job fairs directed to individuals experiencing homelessness including the Homeless Veterans Stand Down program, the Biggest Little Job Fairs, and Chinatown BBQs.
- Expansion of Medi-Cal eligibility to all income eligible people and expansion of outreach services for mainstream public assistance benefits throughout the County (including areas where homeless congregate), and implementation of the SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) program.

Inclement Weather Shelter Capacity

Each winter season, CHSP and the Department of Social Services work with shelter providers and other partners to support expanded capacity. The current Inclement Weather shelter plan includes shelter capacity of 431 individuals (attachment 2). This includes the Salinas Winter Warming Shelter that houses up to 68 individuals and opened on November 9th.

Additionally, the Department of Social Services activates an inclement weather Motel Voucher program. The program provides motel vouchers to shelter providers for use when rain is forecast and temperatures are expected to drop to 45° F or colder. Shelter providers can use these vouchers to assure that homeless residents seeking shelter are not left outside due to facilities reaching capacity in conditions where risk of hypothermia is heightened. In preparation of forecasted heavy rain this winter, DSS has worked to refresh the listing of approved lodging vendors throughout Monterey County ensuring that access to safety during times of inclement weather is accessible in all regions.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

The Department of Social Services, the Health Department, the County Administrative Office, and the Resource Management Agency have been partnering with the Coalition and local jurisdictions impacted by homelessness to prepare this report.

FINANCING:

Estimated one-time costs and six (6) months of operational costs for CARS in FY 2015/16 are \$198,500. Ongoing annual costs are \$217,000.

	<u>FY 2015/16</u>	<u>FY 2016/17</u>
Staffing (salaries and benefits).....	\$66,000	\$132,000
Operational expenses (space, technology, supplies and indirect).....	\$25,000	\$50,000
Expanded HMIS.....	\$74,500	\$35,000
One-time costs (development and training).....	<u>\$33,000</u>	<u>\$0</u>
Total	\$198,500	\$217,000

The Department of Social Services recommends utilizing Social Services' Assigned Fund balance to fund costs in the current fiscal year. Future year funding will be incorporated into the Department of Social Services FY 2016/17 budget request.

Approved by: Elliott Robinson, Director of Social Services, x4434

Attachments: Lead Me Home Plan Update, Attachment #1
Inclement Weather Capacity, Attachment #2

Attachments are on file with the Clerk of the Board.