



MEMORANDUM

Date: February 3, 2023

To: The Honorable Chair and Members
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: Jan Leshor 
County Administrator

Re: **Update on County Initiatives to address Homelessness and Public Safety**

Background

The issues associate with street living homelessness and public safety in our community continue to be an area of great concern. Much of the County's recent work in this space has been primarily focused on addressing the public safety and crime concerns echoed by our community. To this end, we have and will continue to collaborate with leadership within our judicial court systems, local law enforcement agencies, social service providers, the City of Tucson, and the Tucson Crime Free Coalition to design and implement a more effective system of accountability and support.

As we proceed with these efforts, the County's Community and Workforce Development (CWD) Homeless Services Division has concurrently been working on providing direct and contracted services to individuals, families, youth and veterans experiencing homelessness throughout Pima County. The purpose of this memorandum, is to provide an overview of the additional housing services currently provided by Pima County departments for individuals experiencing homelessness.

Homeless Services Division, Community & Workforce Development

For over three decades, the Homeless Services Division of CWD has served as a trusted community partner for people experiencing homelessness. The Division delivers street outreach, housing assessment, shelter and resource navigation, employment and training opportunities, intake/eligibility for programs, and case management. Direct programing includes:

- Rapid Rehousing - Rapidly connects families and individuals experiencing homelessness to permanent housing with rental assistance and supportive services, such as employment training, for a period of 3 to 24 months.
- Transitional Housing - Provides temporary housing and supportive services for no longer than 24 months to individuals and families experiencing homelessness with the goal of interim stability and support to successfully move to and maintain permanent housing.

FEB 03 23 PM 01:00 PC CLK OF BD

- Emergency Solutions Grants - Assists homeless households and households at risk of homelessness with supporting services such as street outreach, emergency shelter, homeless prevention, and rapid re-housing.
- Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS (HOPWA) - This is the Federal program dedicated to the housing needs of low-income persons living with HIV/AIDS and their families.

There are four (4) categories of homelessness as defined by HUD:

Category 1: Literally Homeless: Individual/family is living in shelter or places not meant for human habitation or an individual exiting an institution after 90 days or less and was homeless prior to entering institution.

Category 2: Imminent Risk of Homelessness: Individual/family will lose residence within 14 days and lacks resources and/or support to obtain housing by their own means.

Category 3: Homeless Under other Federal Statutes: Individual is an unaccompanied youth under the age of 25 or a family with children who do not qualify as homeless, but lack a permanent fixed place of residence and defined as homeless under other federal programs.

Category 4: Fleeing Domestic Violence: Individual/family who is fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence and has no other resources or support network to obtain housing.

Individual and family households served in Rapid Rehousing, Transitional housing, and Emergency Solutions Grant funded programs contracted and administered by the Homeless Services Division of CWD must meet Category 1, 2 and 4 definition of homelessness. Additionally, HUD requires eligible households go through a centralized assessment process known as Coordinated Entry. HUD requires the local Continuum of Care, the Tucson Pima Collaboration to End Homelessness (TPCH)¹, to establish policies and procedures to govern the community's Coordinated Entry process, including determining the local prioritization of households for housing openings. Prioritization factors include high service needs and/or risk factors, such as the length of time homeless, chronicity or frequency of returns to homelessness, as well as health and other lifestyle risk factors.

Pima County also serves as the Lead Agency for the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) for the local continuum of care, the Tucson Pima Collaboration to End Homelessness (TPCH). HMIS lead are responsible for managing data from households at-risk of or experiencing homelessness, preparing and submitting various reports, as well as providing ongoing training and technical assistance for over 305 HMIS users and 40 housing

¹ TPCH is a coalition of community organization, governmental entities, businesses, and individuals that serves as the local Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Continuum of Care (CoC). The CoC is a community planning process to organize and deliver housing and services to meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness.

The Honorable Chair and Members, Pima County Board of Supervisors
Re: **Update on County Initiatives to Address Homelessness and Public Safety**
February 3, 2023
Page 3

and health and human service agencies throughout Pima County (including incorporated cities and towns).

The majority of CWD's housing programs for those experiencing homelessness are classified as Rapid Rehousing, which follows a housing first model and is a time-limited housing intervention designed for families experiencing homelessness. In Rapid Rehousing, families are provided rental assistance for up to 24 months. During this 24-month period, intensive case management is provided to link families to resources and services that lead toward self-reliance, including job training, child care, and other mainstream benefits, such as SNAP and Social Security.

Intensive case management comes with an expectation to do warm referrals for behavioral health, substance use, and employment services. For example, CWD programs are interwoven with employment services. Since employment services are located within the CWD, we are able to co-enroll participants in One Stop services and track progress/outcomes.

Although we follow a housing first approach, we emphasize that it is not a housing only approach. Since our programs have a time limitation, it is imperative that provide intensive case management to ensure our participants are set to live on their own. Outcomes are tracked and measured in HMIS. Each program funded by HUD, be it Pima County's, the City's, or directly with a non-profit, has its performance measured on a quarterly and annual basis. Performance outcomes often drive project renewal.

CWD Collaboration with City of Tucson

City of Tucson Housing and Community Development (HCD) provides direct and contracted services to individuals, families, youth and veterans experiencing homelessness throughout the City of Tucson. HCD also receives HUD grants to deliver street outreach, housing assessment, and shelter. Most of HCD's HUD housing programs are Permanent Supportive Housing, which also follows a housing first approach, but does not have a maximum length of stay. Permanent supportive housing is designed for people experiencing chronic homelessness, which is defined by HUD as being homeless for more than 24 months and also having a disabling condition. Similar to Rapid Rehousing, Permanent Supportive Housing provides intensive case management to link participants to resources and services the lead toward self-reliance.

CWD and HCD both provide leadership to the local community, but serve in defined roles to the local Continuum of Care board; the Tucson Pima Collaboration to End Homelessness (TPCH). CWD serves as the Lead Agency for the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and HCD serves as the Collaborative Applicant. CWD staff are responsible for managing data from individuals and households, preparing and submitting reports, and providing ongoing training and technical assistance. HCD as the Collaborative applicant is responsible for collecting data and submitting TPCH's Consolidated Application to HUD and for applying for HUD planning funds on behalf of the community.

CWD and HCD also collaborate on outreach through the City of Tucson's Homeless Protocol. CWD outreach workers team with HCD outreach workers to find and provide navigation

The Honorable Chair and Members, Pima County Board of Supervisors
Re: **Update on County Initiatives to Address Homelessness and Public Safety**
February 3, 2023
Page 4

services to people living on the streets on homeless encampments in areas where jurisdictions overlap. Through this encampment cleanup protocol process, CWD and HCD coordinate shelter availability between County and City-run low-barrier shelters. Most of CWD's shelter capacity is dedicated for families, while HCD has greater capacity for individuals. CWD and HCD shelter staff will facilitate and coordinate both populations in order to maximize bed utilization.

Pima County's Department of Justice Services Collaborative Pilot

In conjunction with its partners, Pima County launched a pilot program in 2019 with a goal of providing permanent supportive housing with wrap-around services to 200 homeless individuals who have frequent involvement in the community's justice system, and mental health and/or substance use issues. The program consists of two main components – rapid placement in transitional or “bridge” housing (provided by Old Pueblo Community Services), and then into permanent supportive housing (via Section 8 housing vouchers distributed by the City of Tucson on behalf of HUD). The City's housing department has also played a valuable role in providing technical assistance and guidance, as well as reducing obstacles in the housing voucher process. At each step of the program, Old Pueblo Community Services supplements housing vouchers and Medicaid funding with dedicated and highly trained staff who provide case management, supplemental resources (for example, “apartment kits”), and the integration with treatment services (medical, substance use, and mental health).

The pilot program was determined, through external evaluation, to not only be viable but also highly successful. The program has positively impacted the lives of individuals experiencing chronic homelessness, as well as improving community safety and quantifiably reducing costs to the justice system by 40 percent for Pima County, the City of Tucson, and other partners. As a result, the Board supported continuing this program with a \$1,303,000 budget last fiscal year that included both grant funds and continued general funds.

Next Steps: Strategic Collaboration

Although there are existing systems and structures in place that have been successful in addressing homelessness, it is clear that more needs to be done. Reducing homelessness in the County is highly complex and requires even greater collaboration between multiple jurisdictions, service agencies, and community partners. Moving forward it is our intent to drive the development of a collaborative strategic blueprint with the City of Tucson that will facilitate a collective approach of new ideas to address this critical issue. I will regularly provide updates to the Board of Supervisors on the development of this blueprint along with our ongoing efforts within the justice system.

JKL/je

c: Carmine DeBonis, Jr., Deputy County Administrator
Francisco García, MD, MPH, Deputy County Administrator & Chief Medical Officer
Steve Holmes, Deputy County Administrator
Dan Sullivan, Director, Community Workforce Development
Kate Vesely, Director, Justice Service