



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

AGENDA ITEM

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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Fourth District

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Fifth District

DATE: November 18, 2025

23

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT

RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE HOMELESSNESS OUTREACH AND SERVICES PILOT PROGRAM IN LEMON GROVE (DISTRICT: 4)

OVERVIEW

On August 27, 2024 (17), the San Diego County Board of Supervisors (Board) directed staff to develop and implement a pilot program to expand homeless outreach and services to assist people at-risk of or experiencing homelessness in incorporated City of Lemon Grove. In addition, the Board directed staff to collect data and assess the program's effectiveness in assisting unhoused people, report back in six months with an update, and return in 12 months for consideration with this information.

In October 2024, the County of San Diego (County) Health and Human Services Agency, Housing and Community Development Services, Office of Homeless Solutions (HCDS-OHS) initiated the Homelessness Outreach and Services Pilot Program in Lemon Grove (Pilot Program). On March 31, 2025, a memorandum was submitted to the Board to provide a status update on the progress made, preliminary outcomes, and next steps for the Pilot Program.

Today's action requests the Board receive an update on the assessment of the effectiveness of the Pilot Program in assisting unhoused people in Lemon Grove, and the recommended next steps.

This item supports the County vision of a just, sustainable, and resilient future for all, specifically those communities and populations in San Diego County that have been historically left behind, as well as our ongoing commitment to the regional *Live Well San Diego* vision of healthy, safe, and thriving communities.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Receive an update on the Homelessness Outreach and Services Pilot Program in Lemon Grove.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

According to the Regional Taskforce on Homelessness, the 2025 Point-in-Time Count identified 9,905 individuals living on the streets or in shelters; of those, 110 individuals were counted in

SUBJECT: RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE HOMELESSNESS OUTREACH AND SERVICES PILOT PROGRAM IN LEMON GROVE (DISTRICT: 4)

Lemon Grove. Regionwide, there was a decrease of 7% from the previous year. Of those experiencing unsheltered homelessness, 1% are families, 7% are veterans, 7% are youth (ages 18-24), and 46% are chronically homeless. The Homelessness Outreach and Services Pilot Program expanded access to homelessness services to marginalized populations and assisted them in attaining support to secure and retain permanent housing.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The Homelessness Outreach and Services Pilot Program in Lemon Grove (Pilot Program) supports Sustainability Goal #2 to provide just and equitable access to services and resources, and Sustainability Goal #4 to protect the health and well-being of everyone in the region. The Pilot Program improves access to critical homelessness services, including housing navigation, public assistance programs, employment services, and behavioral healthcare. Access to this array of services will help address the needs of unhoused individuals and improve public health across the region.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this action. There will be no change in net General Fund costs and no additional staff years.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT

N/A

BACKGROUND

On August 27, 2024 (17), the San Diego County Board of Supervisors (Board) directed staff to develop and implement a pilot program to expand homeless outreach and services to assist people at-risk of or experiencing homelessness in Lemon Grove. In addition, the Board directed staff to collect data and assess the program's effectiveness in assisting unhoused people, report back in six months with an update, and return in 12 months for consideration with this information.

In October 2024, the County of San Diego (County) Health and Human Services Agency, Housing and Community Development Services, Office of Homeless Solutions (HCDS-OHS) initiated the Homelessness Outreach and Services Pilot Program in Lemon Grove (Pilot Program). On March 31, 2025, a memorandum was submitted to the Board to provide a six-month status update on the progress made, preliminary outcomes, and next steps for the Pilot Program.

The Pilot Program was modeled based on current County homeless outreach efforts in the unincorporated communities. In partnership with the City of Lemon Grove, community-based organizations, non-profits, and faith-based organizations, the Pilot Program provided linkage to community services and resources to individuals and families who were at-risk of or experiencing homelessness in Lemon Grove. The Pilot Program included coordinated homeless outreach, ongoing case management services, housing navigation, and access to self-sufficiency

SUBJECT: RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE HOMELESSNESS OUTREACH AND SERVICES PILOT PROGRAM IN LEMON GROVE (DISTRICT: 4)

programs (e.g., General Relief, CalFresh, Medi-Cal, CalWORKs) in the field. Additionally, the Pilot Program offered access to other County services such as referrals to Behavioral Health Services (BHS), the distribution of public health information and vaccine administration through Public Health Services' Nurse Foot Teams, and access to self-sufficiency programs through the Live Well on Wheels mobile units.

Data Collection and Pilot Program Outcomes

The HCDS-OHS Outreach Team (Outreach Team) collected data from the people experiencing homelessness during outreach in Lemon Grove through a By-Name List (BNL). The BNL was used as part of the Pilot Program to identify needs, prioritize resources, tailor interventions, and track outcomes based on the specific jurisdiction. During the 12 months, from October 1, 2024, through October 1, 2025, the Pilot Program:

- Conducted 603 total duplicated encounters with people experiencing homelessness in Lemon Grove.
- Added 181 unduplicated individuals to the BNL, which assisted the Outreach Team in assessing their individual needs, and tailoring interventions to address homelessness based on those needs.
- Approved 92 new applications to self-sufficiency programs such as General Relief, CalFresh, Medi-Cal and/or CalWORKs, and connected individuals to essential resources such as food, medical care, and financial support as they work toward housing solutions.
- Completed an additional 237 actions related to self-sufficiency programs such as General Relief, CalFresh, Medi-Cal and/or CalWORKs, to ensure individuals with active benefits continue to receive them; these actions may include processing annual benefit renewals and collecting other required documentation to ensure benefits are not interrupted.
- Processed 99 referrals to community and social services to address their identified needs and help them remove barriers to housing. This includes 45 referrals to County BHS to address their mental health and substance use disorder needs; of the 45 BHS referrals, 10 individuals are currently in treatment programs.
- Distributed 341 hygiene kits to individuals to prevent the spread of communicable diseases.
- Referred 159 individuals to housing resources through the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Coordinated Entry System (CES), nine of whom were permanently housed through Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing vouchers and other permanent placements.

The outcomes highlight the extensive efforts of the Outreach Team and demonstrate how engagement and rapport building with individuals experiencing homelessness are fundamental to supporting people on their journey towards self-sufficiency.

Pilot Program Assessment

Since its inception, County staff completed a 12-month assessment of the Pilot Program using data collected by the Outreach Team and communications with key stakeholders such as the City of Lemon Grove (City), local homelessness service providers, and the Regional Taskforce on Homelessness (RTFH). The outcomes highlighted above demonstrate the success of the Pilot

SUBJECT: RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE HOMELESSNESS OUTREACH AND SERVICES PILOT PROGRAM IN LEMON GROVE (DISTRICT: 4)

Program; particularly in the areas of the engagement with people experiencing homelessness and ongoing collaboration with key stakeholders. However, the limited availability in resources for emergency and permanent housing options remained a barrier to individuals achieving long-term and sustained self-sufficiency.

Engagement with People Experiencing Homelessness

During the Pilot Program, HCDS-OHS and Lemon Grove partners identified areas of focus based on encampment information provided by the City's Department of Public Works. This information assisted the Outreach Team in strategizing engagement efforts based on identified locations.

The Outreach Team initiated ongoing engagement with people experiencing homelessness by offering available services as well as enrollment into the HMIS CES to aid service coordination and connections to housing resources. HMIS CES is administered by RTFH, which serves as the lead agency for San Diego region's Continuum of Care. Through this Pilot Program, the Outreach Team established trust with people experiencing homelessness in Lemon Grove, initiated the assessments of their unique situations, and began guiding them toward self-sufficiency and housing stability through case management and housing navigation services. The Pilot Program created a coordinated pathway for support by connecting nearly 200 individuals previously disconnected from care to self-sufficiency programs (e.g., General Relief, CalFresh, Medi-Cal, CalWORKs), essential services, and critical resources.

While the Outreach Team completed assessments and entered all engaged participants into HMIS CES to be matched with housing, this process takes time due to limited available resources. Although only nine people in the Pilot Program have been matched to permanent housing, there are many currently in HMIS CES waiting to be matched to housing as resources become available through the ongoing process. The Outreach Team continues to engage with the individuals through ongoing case management.

Collaboration in Emergency and Permanent Housing Options

Over the course of the Pilot Program, staff identified the greatest barrier to housing stability for individuals was limited emergency and permanent housing options within Lemon Grove. However, in Spring 2025, the City and RTFH were awarded \$8,388,375 by the California Department of Housing and Community Development Encampment Resolution Funding (ERF) program.

Subsequently in August 2025, the City and RTFH jointly initiated a phased approach to Encampment Resolution Funding efforts and implemented their own outreach services to connect individuals experiencing homelessness in Lemon Grove to emergency and permanent housing. Leading up to this collaboration, the Outreach Team worked closely with the City and RTFH in planning efforts to maximize the ERF grant to connect individuals to services and ensure there is no duplication of effort between the two outreach teams.

As of October 2025, phase one of the ERF effort has been completed. This phase included the permanent housing of over 30 individuals and successful closure and abatement of a long-standing encampment in Lemon Grove. The additional ERF funding secured supplemented the gap in housing resources to transition people into permanent housing options.

SUBJECT: RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE HOMELESSNESS OUTREACH AND SERVICES PILOT PROGRAM IN LEMON GROVE (DISTRICT: 4)

Phase two began in early November 2025 and will go through February 2026. This phase will focus on another area of Lemon Grove. There will be subsequent phases planned after a second phase concludes. At the end of this phased approach, this ERF effort is anticipated to permanently house 102 individuals.

Pilot Program Next Steps

As the City and RTFH are now leading outreach efforts and providing housing resources for people experiencing homelessness in their jurisdiction, they are positioned to continue leading these efforts. While the Pilot Program formally concluded in October 2025, the County continues its partnership with the City and RTFH in a supporting role by connecting people experiencing homelessness to vital County services and sharing the BNL data gathered with the new service provider. The County, City, and RTFH teams continue to work closely in an efficient transition to ensure the continuity of services. Going forward, the next recommended step is to continue this partnership with the County in a supporting role to provide the Lemon Grove community with links to vital County services.

Today's action requests the Board receive an update on the data collection and outcomes, an assessment of the effectiveness in assisting unhoused people in Lemon Grove, and the recommended next steps for the Pilot Program.

LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

Today's proposed actions support the County of San Diego 2025-2030 Strategic Plan initiatives of Sustainability (Resiliency), Equity (Economic Opportunity), and Community (Quality of Life) by expanding access to homelessness services for individuals experiencing or at-risk of experiencing homelessness.

Respectfully submitted,



FOR

EBONY N. SHELTON
Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENT(S)

N/A