



# COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

## AGENDA ITEM

### BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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First District

JOEL ANDERSON  
Second District

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Third District

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Fourth District

JIM DESMOND  
Fifth District

**DATE:** May 23, 2023

**24**

**TO:** Board of Supervisors

### **SUBJECT**

**APPROVE ACTIONS RELATED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF A HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION PROGRAM (DISTRICTS: ALL)**

### **OVERVIEW**

Over the last few years, the San Diego County Board of Supervisors (Board) has made significant investments to address the regional homelessness crisis and prevent individuals from entering the homeless system. On November 2, 2021 (4), the Board adopted the Framework for Ending Homelessness to align efforts throughout the region to assist people at-risk of, or experiencing homelessness, with the goal of ending this crisis. Subsequently on October 25, 2022 (21), the Board directed the Chief Administrative Officer to develop a comprehensive integrated data system that can link and centralize multiple data points into one system; research and develop an implementation strategy for the creation of a Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP); create a Homelessness Prevention Unit within the County of San Diego (County) Health and Human Services Agency, Department of Homeless Solutions and Equitable Communities (HSEC); and assess the costs associated with and potential funding sources for these actions.

In response, HSEC in partnership with the County Office of Evaluation, Performance, and Analytics, assembled a multi-disciplinary, cross-department workgroup to develop the HPP Implementation Strategy that outlines the strategies and steps for establishing the HPP. Today's actions request the Board approve the HPP Implementation Strategy. The elements of this strategy are designed to prevent at-risk households from becoming homeless by utilizing a Predictive Analytics Model to identify households at risk of homelessness. Today's action also requests the Board authorize applications for future funding opportunities related to addressing homelessness throughout the region.

This item supports the County's 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. This will be accomplished through improving the lives of our most vulnerable residents by reducing homelessness and increasing self-sufficiency. Today's actions also align with the County's Framework for Ending Homelessness by addressing the Root Cause and Upstream Prevention Strategic Domain.

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**RECOMMENDATION(S)**

**CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER**

1. Approve the Homelessness Prevention Program Implementation Strategy which would be fully operationalized once sustainable funding is identified.
2. Authorize the Agency Director, Health and Human Services Agency, or designee, to apply for future funding opportunities related to addressing homelessness throughout the region in the current and future fiscal years.

**EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT**

According to the Regional Task Force on Homelessness, the 2022 Point-in-Time Count identified a minimum of 8,427 individuals who were unsheltered or in shelters throughout San Diego County. Of those who were unsheltered, 58% reported having a disability and 25% were 55 years of age or older. Additionally, data shows that people of color are disproportionately represented among those experiencing homelessness, with 27% identifying as Black or African American, roughly five times the proportion of African American population in the region, and 3% identifying as American Indian or Alaska Native, which is nearly three times the proportion of American Indian or Alaska Native population in the region. Through the Homelessness Prevention Program, the County of San Diego will work with those at-risk of or experiencing homelessness, impacted residents, community partners, and other key stakeholders to ensure racial and social equity is front and center in all aspects of homelessness prevention activities.

**SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT**

Today's proposed actions support the County of San Diego's (County) Sustainability Goal #1 to engage the community; Sustainability Goal #2 to provide just and equitable access; and Sustainability Goal #4 to protect health and well-being. By utilizing a predictive risk assessment model and using combined data from County departments and other partners, today's item will help to identify households at risk of homelessness. Using this information, the County will be able to engage with these individuals within our community, provide just and equitable access to resources and housing supports to help prevent homelessness, and protect their health and well-being by connecting them with services they need.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no fiscal impact associated with today's recommendations. There may be future fiscal impacts based on recommendations from today's action. If sustainable funding is identified, it is estimated that ongoing annual costs for the establishment of the Homelessness Prevention Unit would be up to \$3.8 million. This estimate includes funding for 12 County staff and associated operating costs and indirect costs, inclusive of up to \$1.5 million in participant funding for housing and related expenses supporting housing stability for an estimated 280 households. The participant funding amount could vary depending on need. Additionally, the initial year of start-up would include \$0.3 million in one-time costs for the implementation of an evaluation framework for the program. Funding for the one-time and start-up costs will need to be identified by the County of San Diego (County) Health and Human Services Agency prior to further action. The County's Department of Homeless Solutions and Equitable Communities will monitor its budget and return to the San Diego County Board of Supervisors with mid-year action to adjust the budget if necessary and/or incorporate in future operational plans if funding becomes available. At this time, there is no impact to net General Fund costs, and there will be no additional staff years.

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### **BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT**

Investing in initiatives that prevent homelessness will have multiple benefits for individuals and families, and for local communities and businesses, with clear benefits for our economy. Keeping more working families in their homes stands to benefit them and our regional economy long term.

### **ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT**

N/A

### **BACKGROUND**

On November 2, 2021 (4), the San Diego County Board of Supervisors (Board) approved the Framework for Ending Homelessness to align efforts throughout the region to assist people at-risk of or experiencing homelessness, with the goal of ending this crisis. The Framework for Ending Homelessness is anchored in five strategic domains: Root Cause and Upstream Prevention, Diversion and Mitigation, Services, Treatment and Outreach, Emergency/Interim Housing and Resources, Permanent Housing and Support. Additionally, each of the five strategic domains are driven by five key commitments that guide the County of San Diego's (County) approach: Person-Centered, Data, Regional Collaboration, Sustainability, and Equity.

Subsequently on October 25, 2022 (21), the Board directed the Chief Administrative Officer to: (1) develop a comprehensive integrated data system that can link and centralize multiple data points, both internal and external, into one system in which individual-level data would be linked; (2) research and develop an implementation strategy for the creation of a Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP); (3) create a Homelessness Prevention Unit (HPU) within the County of San Diego (County) Health and Human Services Agency, Department of Homeless Solutions and Equitable Communities (HSEC) to assist with internal communication and coordination among departments as well as conduct direct outreach to individuals and families, determined by the model to be at-risk of homelessness; (4) assess the costs associated with these actions; and (5) identify potential funding sources for these actions. Today's item provides an update on efforts that followed in response to the October 25, 2022 (21) Board actions.

#### *Develop a Comprehensive Integrated Data System*

The County Office of Evaluation, Performance, and Analytics (OEPA) is leading efforts to establish an enterprise-wide integrated data system that will have capacity to support the needs of the HPP. In order to develop a comprehensive integrated data system that can serve enterprise-wide needs, OEPA and the County Technology Office (CTO) have engaged a technology research and consulting firm. The focus of this effort was to develop a roadmap for OEPA to build the necessary technical capacity to operationalize its various projects, including an integrated data platform for predictive analytics. It is anticipated that the integrated data system will be operational by December 2023. As part of these efforts and in addition to technology investments, OEPA will need to establish partnerships and/or official agreements with County and community stakeholders to collect data on factors that can be utilized to assess a household's risk of experiencing homelessness. OEPA's initial focus will be on accessing data from departments within the HHSA. Additionally, HESC will engage with the Regional Taskforce on Homelessness (RTFH) to discuss future data-sharing agreements for this research. The initial version of the predictive model is expected to be completed by June 2024. OEPA will continue to establish additional partnerships

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with other County and external stakeholders to further enrich the data in the integrated data system and improve the quality of the predictive model.

*Research and Develop an Implementation Strategy for a Homelessness Prevention Program*

In response to the October 25, 2022 (21) Board action, HSEC and OEPA assembled a multi-disciplinary, cross-department workgroup to develop the HPP Implementation Strategy (Attachment A), which outlines the action steps and timeline for this effort. This multi-disciplinary group undertook a preliminary review of risk factors for homelessness that will help identify at-risk households. These risk factors will be built into the predictive analytics model for this effort.

The proposed HPP Implementation Strategy considered current data, such as the recently published monthly data reports from RTFH, which show the in-/outflow statistics of individuals experiencing homelessness. This data shows that over the past year, on average 10 people found housing for every 13 people who experienced homelessness for the first time. These statistics indicate that in order to end homelessness, there is a need to undertake proactive screening of populations at heightened risk, to offer services and specialized supports, ensuring that they remain stably housed and do not enter the homeless system. Additionally, the HPP Implementation Strategy was modeled after the pilot program developed by the County of Los Angeles, in which Departments of Health Services and Mental Health, entered into a partnership with the University of California Los Angeles to design a Homelessness Prevention Unit Pilot Program. Similarly, that pilot program uses predictive analytics to identify those with high utilization of health care and other social safety net services and who are at the highest risk of experiencing homelessness. Participants in this program are provided financial assistance and are connected to health care, mental health services, employment and training, legal and other ongoing supportive services. In designing the County's HPP, HSEC frequently engaged the County of Los Angeles pilot program management to discuss best practices.

*Create a Homelessness Prevention Unit within County HHSA, HSEC*

The goal of the HPU would be to provide assistance tailored to the needs and choices of each at-risk individual or household. Prior to establishing the HPU, an evaluation framework will need to be developed in partnership with OEPA, which will focus on assessing the short and long-term effectiveness of the HPP, as well as identify opportunities for improvement. Additionally, it is critical to identify funding that would support the sustainable implementation of this new unit. At this time, no funding has been identified to support the significant and ongoing costs of establishing the HPU within HSEC. HHSA will continue to explore funding opportunities that could support this effort in the future. In the meantime and in alignment with the Framework for Ending Homelessness, HSEC in partnership with other County departments will continue to support at-risk households through programs under the Framework's Root Causes and Upstream Prevention Domain (i.e. Self-Sufficiency Pilot Shallow Rental Subsidy Program and Landlord Incentive Program) as well as those under the Diversion and Mitigation Domain (i.e. Tenant Legal Services, Specialized Funding for Imminent Needs and Eviction Prevention Programs).

*Assess the Costs Associated with these Actions and Identify Potential Funding Sources*

The cost of developing the integrated data system, starting in Fiscal Year (FY) 2022-23 and continuing into FY 2023-24, is estimated to be up to \$2.2 million. OEPA has identified funding for these costs and is working with CTO and a consultant to begin the development of the system.

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Led by OEPA, the integrated data system will be an enterprise-wide solution that will serve departments across the County, thus the HPP would not be solely responsible for ongoing maintenance and operational costs. Any appropriate allocation of costs to the HPP would be determined once more information is available. Estimates of recurring costs in future fiscal years are not yet available. OEPA is building internal capacity to develop the predictive analytics model and does not expect any additional costs related to the development of the model.

If sustainable funding is identified, the estimated costs for establishing and operating the HPU, to serve a minimum of 280 households (236 individuals and 44 families) per year are approximately \$3.8 million annually, excluding costs associated with the integrated data system. In addition, there would be a one-time cost of \$0.3 million for the implementation of the HPP evaluation framework in the initial year. The HPU budget would need to include 12 County staff. Once established, HPU staff would review the at-risk list provided by OEPA to confirm eligibility, then provide outreach, housing navigation, housing stability services including flexible funding to prevent their housing crises. Currently, no funding has been identified to support costs of this unit as noted. Sustainable funding to cover associated costs will need to be identified to support the implementation of this unit prior to taking further action. HSEC will monitor its budget and return to the Board with mid-year action to adjust the budget if necessary and/or incorporate in future operational plans if funding becomes available.

Today's actions request the Board approve the HPP Implementation Strategy and authorize applications for future funding opportunities related to addressing homelessness in the region.

**LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN**

Today's actions support the County of San Diego's (County) 2023-2028 Strategic Plan Initiatives of Sustainability (Resiliency), Equity (Economic Opportunity), and Community (Quality of Life). This will be accomplished by developing a comprehensive integrated data system and adding a Homelessness Prevention Unit within the County Health and Human Services Agency, Department of Homeless Solutions and Equitable Communities to respond to the immediate housing needs of individuals and families at-risk of experiencing homelessness through increased availability of housing and resources, with a focus on reducing disparities and disproportionality and ensuring access for all by utilizing upstream prevention strategies. Today's actions are also aligned with the County's Framework for Ending Homelessness as it seeks to connect individuals at risk of or experiencing homelessness to available services.

Respectfully submitted,



HELEN N. ROBBINS-MEYER  
Interim Chief Administrative Officer

**ATTACHMENT(S)**

Attachment A - Homelessness Prevention Program Implementation Strategy