



JIM DESMOND
SUPERVISOR, FIFTH DISTRICT
SAN DIEGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

AGENDA ITEM

DATE: December 5, 2023

24

TO: Board of Supervisors

**SUBJECT: HOUSING EVERY HOMELESS PERSON IN ADDICTION RECOVERY
(DISTRICTS: ALL)**

OVERVIEW

On November 7, 2023 (28) the Board of Supervisors (Board) unanimously passed “Bridging the Gap for Those in Addiction Recovery: from Homelessness to Housing” that directed staff to identify funding to house the 909 homeless individuals in San Diego County who are currently in outpatient treatment for substance use disorder.

The measures taken to address COVID-19 had a profound impact on addiction. The widespread social and economic disruptions exacerbated existing vulnerabilities and created new challenges for individuals struggling with addiction. Lockdowns, social isolation, and heightened stress levels have intensified feelings of loneliness and despair, contributing to an increased risk of substance abuse and relapse. The economic fallout of the pandemic has added financial strain to individuals and families, hindering access to treatment resources.

The pandemic also significantly affected homelessness, resulting in an increase in our homeless population. Lockdowns and economic disruptions have contributed to a rise in unemployment, making it harder for individuals to maintain stable housing. At the intersection of addiction and homelessness is a segment of the population who have managed to achieve and maintain sobriety, however due to the shortage of recovery residences, remain homeless.

The Board approved the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) framework that prioritizes housing, homelessness, and behavioral health services. Today’s action aligns with that framework and this population should be prioritized for the remaining ARPA-leveraged funding.

On October 10, 2023 (14), the Board allocated \$3 million from the ARPA framework for supportive services for migrants. These services are not included in the ARPA framework. There is no end in sight for the migrant crisis, therefore we are anticipating additional requests for

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funding. If we are going to allocate funds from the ARPA framework for migrants, we should, at the very least, also allocate funds for our San Diego homeless population.

Today's action would reallocate and leverage funds from the ARPA framework to make funding available to increase access to recovery residences for the 909 individuals who are homeless and in outpatient treatment for substance use disorder. This population was disproportionately affected by the pandemic and should be prioritized above the migrants currently crossing our border.

This reallocation would fund recovery residences for the 909 individuals for two years. This one-time allocation would bridge the gap until anticipated new Mental Health Services Act dollars become available to fund these critical services on an ongoing basis. The Federal government should take responsibility for aiding the migrants and the County should focus on our constituents who are in recovery for addiction and are in desperate need for housing.

**RECOMMENDATIONS
SUPERVISOR JIM DESMOND**

1. Revise the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Framework to reallocate \$8.0 million of amounts anticipated to be allocated to the Evergreen element of the ARPA Framework to make funding available for the expansion of recovery residence access for all homeless persons participating in County-funded outpatient substance use treatment or recovery services in San Diego County.
2. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to utilize a lost revenue strategy under the final ARPA guidance based on previously allocated General Purpose Revenue in the Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) General Relief Program and transfer revenue of \$8.0 million from Finance Other, Intergovernmental Revenue to HHSA, based on ARPA revenue to replace previously allocated General Purpose Revenue for the General Relief Program and transfer appropriations of \$8.0 million from Finance Other, Other Charges, to the HHSA Behavioral Health Services, Services and Supplies, to fund the expansion of recovery residences.
3. Pursuant to Government Code Section 26227, find that the expansion of access to recovery residences in San Diego County is necessary to meet the social needs of the population in the areas of health, rehabilitation, welfare, and the needs of physically, mentally, and financially handicapped persons.
4. Pursuant to Government Code Section 26227, authorize the Director, Department of Purchasing and Contracting, upon successful negotiations and determination of fair and reasonable price, to award contracts in furtherance of the goal to house every homeless

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person in San Diego County who is in outpatient treatment for substance use disorder in sober living residences.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

By increasing the number of recovery residence beds through enhanced investments, the County of San Diego would be expanding services to a currently underserved population. The County of San Diego is committed to providing equal access to services and housing. There is a severe lack of sober living opportunities in the County of San Diego. By supplying stable housing in a sober environment, the County of San Diego can provide housing to a segment of our homeless population.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT

This proposed action contributes to the County of San Diego's Sustainability Goal of protecting the health and well-being of all San Diegan residents. Enhancing recovery residence access will help facilitate self-sufficiency and rehabilitation of some of the County's more vulnerable residents.

FISCAL IMPACT

Funds associated with today's request are included in the Fiscal Year 2023-24 Adopted Operational Plan. The funding source for the \$8.0 million allocated to Behavioral Health Services is General Purpose Revenue. Available American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds of \$8.0 million will be recognized as lost revenue and redirected to the General Relief Program. There will be no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT

N/A

BACKGROUND

On November 7, 2023 (28) the Board of Supervisors (Board) unanimously passed "Bridging the Gap for Those in Addiction Recovery: from Homelessness to Housing" that directed staff to identify funding to house the 909 homeless individuals in San Diego County who are currently in outpatient treatment for substance use disorder.

The measures taken to address COVID-19 had a profound impact on addiction. The widespread social and economic disruptions exacerbated existing vulnerabilities and created new challenges for individuals struggling with addiction. Lockdowns, social isolation, and heightened stress levels have intensified feelings of loneliness and despair, contributing to an increased risk of substance abuse and relapse. Treatment and support services have also faced disruptions, with many rehabilitation programs and counseling services moving to virtual platforms or

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experiencing reduced capacities. The economic fallout of the pandemic has added financial strain to individuals and families, hindering access to treatment resources.

The pandemic also significantly affected homelessness, resulting in an increase in our homeless population. Lockdowns and economic disruptions have contributed to a rise in unemployment, making it harder for individuals to maintain stable housing.

At the intersection of addiction and homelessness is a segment of the population who have managed to achieve and maintain sobriety, however due to the shortage of recovery residences, remain homeless.

Recovery residences are privately-owned homes or complexes that provide supportive living designed to provide a safe and structured environment for individuals who are recovering from substance use disorders. These residences offer a supportive and sober living environment where individuals can focus on their recovery journey while being surrounded by peers who share similar goals and experiences.

Homelessness is a multidimensional crisis characterized by the lack of stable housing, often compounded by mental health challenges and substance use disorders. Many individuals experiencing homelessness find themselves caught in a cycle where addiction exacerbates their housing instability, while the absence of stable housing further hampers their efforts to overcome addiction. This cycle perpetuates vulnerability, making it exceedingly difficult for individuals to break free from the grip of substance use and regain a sense of stability.

There are 909 individuals in San Diego County who are homeless and in County-funded outpatient substance use treatment for addiction. These individuals have managed to engage in treatment services and achieve and maintain sobriety while overcoming significant barriers to do so. Their lack of housing is a constant threat to their recovery, and they are a population that we should prioritize as we continue to work towards ending homelessness. By providing housing opportunities, we can help prevent these individuals from falling back into homelessness.

Substance Use Disorder Outpatient Unique Clients FY 22-23

| District Name | Homeless & Connected to Recovery Residence | Homeless & Not Connected to Recovery Residence |
|------------------------|--|--|
| Supervisory District 1 | 140 | 266 |
| Supervisory District 2 | 211 | 171 |
| Supervisory District 3 | 183 | 59 |
| Supervisory District 4 | 398 | 325 |
| Supervisory District 5 | 99 | 88 |
| Total | 1,031 | 909 |

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Recovery residences play a vital role in the recovery process, especially for individuals who may not have a stable home environment conducive to maintaining sobriety. Recovery residences provide a space where individuals can focus on rebuilding their lives, learning essential life skills, and establishing a foundation for a healthy and sustainable recovery journey.

The Board approved the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) framework that prioritizes housing, homelessness, and behavioral health services. Today's action aligns with that framework and this population should be prioritized for the remaining ARPA-leveraged funding.

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LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

Today's proposed action supports the Equity Initiative of the County of San Diego's 2023-2028 Strategic Plan by making health and housing a focus by reducing disparities and disproportionality and ensuring access for all through a fully optimized health and social service delivery system and upstream strategies while utilizing policies, facilities, infrastructure, and finance to provide housing opportunities that meet the needs of the community.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jim Desmond', written in a cursive style.

JIM DESMOND
Supervisor, Fifth District

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ATTACHMENTS

N/A