



# MONICA MONTGOMERY STEPPE

SUPERVISOR, FOURTH DISTRICT  
SAN DIEGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

## AGENDA ITEM

**DATE:** August 27, 2024

**17**

**TO:** Board of Supervisors

**SUBJECT**

**DEVELOPMENT OF A HOMELESSNESS OUTREACH AND SERVICES PILOT PROGRAM IN THE CITY OF LEMON GROVE (DISTRICT 4)**

### OVERVIEW

On July 18, 2023, the City of Lemon Grove (Lemon Grove) passed a resolution declaring an emergency shelter crisis. This resolution was in response to the growing number of unhoused people without the ability to obtain shelter and facing a real threat to their health and safety in Lemon Grove. The most recent Point-in-Time Count (PITC) in 2024 identified 111 unsheltered individuals in Lemon Grove. This included 4 youths, 30 seniors, 12 veterans, and 50 chronically homeless individuals. Historically, Lemon Grove led their own homeless outreach efforts with support from the County of San Diego (County) and other partners. However, Lemon Grove is no longer conducting homeless outreach efforts. Unfortunately, there are limited homelessness services available in Lemon Grove for unhoused individuals.

The County's Homeless Solutions and Equitable Communities Department (HSEC) currently provides homeless outreach efforts in the unincorporated area, including areas near Lemon Grove. In order to provide greatly needed emergency shelter and other homelessness services to Lemon Grove, the County should establish a pilot program that builds off the success of HSEC's homeless outreach efforts in the unincorporated area. Under HSEC's leadership and in partnership with the City of Lemon Grove and community partners, this pilot program could provide homeless outreach, case management, field access to self-sufficiency public assistance programs (e.g., General Relief, CalFresh, Medi-Cal, CalWORKs), housing navigation, and links to community services and resources. By collaborating with the County's Housing Authority, the City of Lemon Grove, community-based organizations, non-profits, and faith-based organizations, the pilot program team will be able to deliver streamlined services to individuals and families who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness in Lemon Grove.

In addition to expanding the reach of HSEC's homeless outreach efforts to Lemon Grove, other County departments such as Live Well on Wheels, Behavioral Health Services, and the Public Health Nurse Foot Team, as well as other community-based organizations who participate in regular coordinated homeless outreach could play a crucial role in this initiative.

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The County has already demonstrated that it is more than capable of expanding its homeless outreach efforts when needed. HSEC currently operates homeless outreach services in the City of Santee through a partnership formed in 2023 between HSEC, the City of Santee, the City of San Diego, and Caltrans. This partnership was made possible through State Encampment Resolution Grant funding. This program provides homeless outreach, emergency housing (i.e., hotel/motel rooms), and a 24-month rental subsidy program for unhoused individuals in the City of Santee.

Today's proposed action directs the Chief Administrative Officer to develop a Pilot Program to expand HSEC homeless outreach services in the City of Lemon Grove. Today's action also directs the Chief Administrative Officer to evaluate the Pilot Program's effectiveness in assisting unhoused people in the City of Lemon Grove.

**RECOMMENDATION(S)**

**SUPERVISOR MONICA MONTGOMERY STEPPE**

1. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to develop and launch a Pilot Program to expand HSEC homeless outreach services in the City of Lemon Grove.
2. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to collect data and assess the Pilot Program's effectiveness in assisting unhoused people in the City of Lemon Grove. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to report back in 6 months and return back for Board consideration in 12 months with this information.

**EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT**

San Diego County data consistently shows that homelessness disproportionately impacts BIPOC populations. The 2024 County of San Diego Point-in-Time Count identified 10,605 individuals experiencing unsheltered or sheltered homelessness. 16% of unhoused individuals identified as Black, African, or African American while less than 5% of San Diego County residents identify as Black, African, or African American. Individuals with a disability are also significantly more likely to be unhoused than non-disabled individuals. According to the United States Interagency on Homelessness, nearly 47% of unhoused individuals report having a disability and with seniors being the fastest growing population falling into homelessness in San Diego County, the proportion of unhoused people with a physical and/or intellectual disability is likely to continue rising for the foreseeable future. By implementing this Pilot Program, the County of San Diego will be expanding access to homelessness services to marginalized populations and assisting them in attaining the support they need to secure and retain permanent housing.

**SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT**

With the adoption of this recommendation, the County of San Diego will support 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. This action will improve access to critical homelessness services, including housing navigation, financial support, 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**

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Funds for this request are included in the Fiscal Year 2024-25 Operational Plan in the Health and Human Services Agency (HHS). There is no new fiscal impact associated with this recommendation as existing staff and resources within HHS will be leveraged to align with the proposed pilot. 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 July 18, 2023, the City of Lemon Grove passed Resolution No. 2023-3965 titled “RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LEMON GROVE, CALIFORNIA ADOPTING A DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY HOUSING SHELTER CRISIS IN ACCORDANCE WITH GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 8698-8698.2”. The Lemon Grove City Council knew that there was a significant and growing number of unhoused individuals without the ability to find shelter and facing a threat to their health and safety in the City of Lemon Grove.

In 2024, the Point-in-Time Count (PITC) in the City of Lemon Grove (Lemon Grove) identified 111 unsheltered individuals, which was more than the last year. This included 4 youths, 30 seniors, 12 veterans and 50 chronically homeless individuals. The number of unhoused individuals in Lemon Grove is likely much higher as many experts, including the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, have continuously pointed out flaws in the PITC methodology. For example, the fact that PITCs are visual street counts conducted over a single night is problematic because many unhoused individuals stay in places where they are not visible. PITCs also exclude people who are currently staying in hospitals and jails.

Lemon Grove used to lead their own homeless outreach efforts with support from the County of San Diego (County) and other partners. However, Lemon Grove stopped conducting homeless outreach efforts, likely due to having very limited homelessness services to offer their unhoused individuals.

In order to provide greatly needed emergency shelter and homelessness services to Lemon Grove, the County can establish a pilot program that builds off the success of HSEC’s homeless outreach efforts in the unincorporated area. HSEC would establish this pilot program and coordinate the homeless outreach efforts in Lemon Grove, in partnership with staff from the City of Lemon Grove and community partners.

Regional Homeless Services under HSEC would provide homeless outreach, case management, field access to self-sufficiency public assistance programs (e.g., General Relief, CalFresh, Medi-Cal, CalWorks), housing navigation, and links to community services and resources. By collaborating with the County’s Housing Authority, the City of Lemon Grove, community-based organizations, non-profits, and faith-based organizations, the pilot program team will be able to deliver streamlined services to individuals and families who are experiencing or at risk of

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homelessness in Lemon Grove. The pilot program team will consist of homeless outreach staff who can help fill out public assistance applications as a first step to connecting unsheltered people to essential resources such as food, medical care, and cash assistance. HSEC also has social workers who can provide case management and housing navigation services. The pilot program team would also have a licensed clinical social worker to assist with the engagement of higher acuity clients and connect them to Behavioral Health Services.

This pilot program could also expand access to the following support services provided by the County of San Diego:

- Live Well on Wheels: a mobile office which allows staff to issue EBT cards, print key documents, secure and refrigerate vaccinations, and provide office space for interviews and assessments.
- Behavioral Health Services: a contractor participates in homeless outreach to coordinate access to Behavioral Health Services.
- Public Health Nurse Foot Team: provide vaccinations and public health awareness and education in the field.

The Mobile Homeless Court (MHC) could also be utilized periodically. MHC is a pop-up event that rotates regionwide and is offered twice per month in various locations in the County. This event is focused on removing legal barriers, such as clearing certain misdemeanor offenses, to housing for people experiencing homelessness. MHC partners include HSEC, the District Attorney CARE Center, the Public Defender, Self-Sufficiency Services, Live Well on Wheels, the County Assessor, the DMV, Legal Aid Society, and other community-based providers.

Today's proposed action directs the Chief Administrative Officer to develop a Pilot Program to expand HSEC homeless outreach services in the City of Lemon Grove. Today's action also directs the Chief Administrative Officer to have HSEC collect data and assess the Pilot Program's effectiveness in assisting unhoused people in the City of Lemon Grove.

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

Today's proposed actions support the County of San Diego 2024-2029 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,



MONICA MONTGOMERY STEPPE  
Supervisor, Fourth District

**ATTACHMENT(S)**

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N/A