



**CITY OF SANTA ANA  
BRIEF SYNOPSIS AND  
STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADDRESS  
HOMELESSNESS**

March 17, 2018

**Abstract**

This document serves as a brief draft plan of action that Santa Ana staff has prepared to address homelessness, and staff driven recommendations for the County of Orange region (Unincorporated areas and cities) to collectively address homelessness.

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**SANTA ANA’S CURRENT PLAN ..... 1**

- ADDRESSING HOUSING NEEDS ..... 1
- OUTREACH AND SUPPORT SERVICES ..... 1
- STRATEGIC PLANNING AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT ..... 2
- ACTIVE COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION ..... 3
- CAPACITY BUILDING..... 4

**RECOMMENDATIONS MOVING FORWARD ..... 5**

- ADDRESSING HOUSING NEEDS ..... 5
- ADDRESS SANTA ANA’S UNDUE BURDEN ..... 6
- IMPLEMENT FAIR AND EQUITABLE SOLUTIONS ..... 6
- IMPROVE TRANSPARENCY AND ACCESS TO COUNTY INFORMATION ..... 6

DRAFT

## **Santa Ana's Current Plan**

Santa Ana recognizes the importance of permanent supportive housing and affordable housing as one of the solutions to reduce homelessness. While as a short-term measure, the City endeavors to address health and safety conditions in public places related to homelessness (such as the Civic Center), it more firmly supports a permanent long-term solution. As such, Santa Ana staff has prepared the following plan of action:

### **Addressing Housing Needs:**

Santa Ana has embraced the model of permanent supportive housing as an effective means to eradicate homelessness. Permanent Supportive housing is nationally recognized as a leading best practice. Among our various housing related activities:

- Santa Ana will assist with permitting of additional beds at WISEPlace, a transitional housing center for women located in Santa Ana.
- Santa Ana will see assistance from the County to address homelessness in the Plaza of the Flags and the Civic Center Campus.
- Santa Ana recently celebrated the grand opening of the Orchard project. This project includes 71 units of permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless individuals using the Housing First model with wrap-around supportive services provided by Mercy House.
- Santa Ana has a total of 139 additional units of permanent supportive housing in the pipeline for development over the next two years, including 56 units for chronically homeless individuals and 75 units for homeless veterans.
- Santa Ana has recently been awarded 100 HUD-VASH (Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing) project-based vouchers that will be used to develop an additional one hundred new units of permanent supportive housing.
- Santa Ana has a total of 237 additional units of affordable housing for low-income and extremely low-income families in the development pipeline.
- Santa Ana currently has a total of 2,990 affordable housing units in the City.
- Santa Ana's Inclusionary Housing Ordinance has generated over \$10 million in affordable housing funding to date and continues to be an effective tool to develop new affordable housing as well as homeownership opportunities.
- Santa Ana has implemented a requirement where 50% of the Section 8 housing vouchers that become available, must be assigned to individuals that are homeless.

### **Outreach and Support Services:**

Santa Ana recognizes the importance of outreach and engagement as a best practice to place the most vulnerable individuals off the streets and into emergency shelters and permanent supportive housing. Santa Ana has utilized a multidisciplinary approach in street outreach engaging both City Law Enforcement and Outreach Funded agencies. Among these efforts include the following:

- Implemented the Quality of Life Team (QOLT) pilot in January 2018, a best practice utilizing a multidisciplinary team inclusive of members from Santa Ana Police Department, Parks and Recreation, Public Works, Community Development and Code Enforcement. QOLT seeks to alleviate homelessness concerns City-wide and conduct outreach to connect homeless individuals to services.
  - In the first week of operation, QOLT successfully registered contact with 126 homeless individuals, 8 of which were removed from homelessness.
  - By the seventh week of operation, QOLT has contacted and offered services to well over 350 individuals experiencing homelessness throughout the city.
- Continuation of the Homeless Evaluation Assessment Response Team (HEART). A team of twelve Santa Ana Police Department Officers are trained to interact and provide services to the homeless population throughout the City, with an emphasis on safety, security, and mental health awareness.
- Continue Emergency Solutions Grant Funding (ESG) for homeless service providers who implement the following programs and services: Outreach, Homeless Shelter, Rapid Rehousing and Homeless Prevention.
- Continue leading the ESG Orange County Collaborative to ensure fair and equitable distribution of funding and awards.
- Continue to provide technical assistance in the execution of programs to ESG grantees, to ensure strategic delivery of services and to maximize the use of funds (i.e. Housing Navigation and Micro-Communities).
- Continue to plan additional Outreach & Engagement fairs with numerous community partners to offer assistance with housing referrals, job placement, legal assistance, behavioral health services and veterinary pet services for homeless individuals in the Civic Center.
- Continue to offer Civic Center awareness and personal safety training to City employees and Civic Center partners (Federal, Courts, Counties, State, etc.).

**Strategic Planning and Policy Development:**

It is imperative for cities to develop a coordinated plan to address homelessness that also aligns with the cities Organizational Strategic Plan. Santa Ana has aligned strategies to address homelessness around the City’s goals to enhance community safety, and community health, livability, engagement and sustainability. As such, Santa Ana will engage in strategic planning and policy development in the following areas:

- Implement Civic Center ordinances to address public health and safety protocols for unattended property in addition to a permitting process for services provided in the Civic Center.
- Develop and implement a Citywide strategic plan to address and reduce homelessness. The plan will incorporate both short-term and long-term strategies.
- Work collectively with the County and other Civic Center partners in the development and implementation of a Civic Center Master Plan.

## **Active Coordination and Collaboration with Agencies, Neighboring Communities and Faith Based**

### **Organizations:**

Santa Ana continues to participate in collaborative efforts with the County, cities and stakeholders to address homelessness.

- Santa Ana emerged in leadership roles to implement change in the following commissions and committees:
  - Santa Ana was nominated and approved as the Continuum of Care (CoC) Board Chair, the local designated primary decision making group whose purpose is to utilize HUD funds to end homelessness through the Coordinated Entry System.
  - Santa Ana staff is seeking appointment to the Commission to End Homelessness, to participate in regional policy implementation and cross-sector stakeholder engagement.
  - Santa Ana staff is participating in the County's Procedural Review Committee to review the Coordinated Entry System and processes throughout the Continuum of Care.
- Santa Ana partakes in additional regional participation such as the following:
  - Association of California Cities of Orange County (ACC-OC) is leading a countywide collaborative to develop 2,700 units of permanent supportive housing in the next 3 years.
  - United Way (UW) has requested Santa Ana's participation in the "United to End Homelessness" Leadership Council, a community-wide initiative led by UW OC to ensure integrated and sustainable solutions for persons experiencing homelessness.
  - Will actively participate in the Orange County City Managers Association Homeless Committee.
  - Continue to participate in the No Place Like Home Committee, with diverse stakeholder groups throughout the County to discuss strategies and actions relevant to development of affordable and permanent supportive housing. This provides a platform to engage key representatives from the CA Department of Housing and Community Development.
- Santa Ana consistently communicates, coordinates and engages with our local HUD field office to receive technical assistance and pursue opportunities for additional funding.

### **Improve Communication and Promote Transparency:**

Santa Ana recognizes that communication and transparency are best practices, critical to yielding results, helps to inform and educate, and fosters collaborations. In that respect, Santa Ana has undertaken the following efforts to build communication and transparency:

- Santa Ana created a website to promote transparency of City programs, services, and current city efforts undertaken to address and reduce homelessness.
- Santa Ana staff is developing a newsletter and dashboard to share success stories, recent efforts, and the gathering of data to strategically reduce homelessness.
- Conduct a Point-In-Time count and a demographic survey for the Civic Center to address population specific housing, employment, mental health, substance abuse and needed medical services.
- Initiate discussions with the County and surrounding cities to develop a coordinated communication process in the transportation and transfer of homeless individuals seeking County homeless services and resources.

**Capacity Building:**

With the understanding that the issue of homelessness is a priority and that commitment and dedication is needed, Santa Ana has prioritized the following to address both immediate and long term impact of homelessness:

- Santa Ana built capacity to address the homeless issue by hiring a full time Homeless Services Manager, who brings expertise from the Los Angeles Continuum of Care on best practices in addressed programs, service delivery and the Coordinated Entry System of care.
- Santa Ana has created a Homeless Interdepartmental Team, with experienced professional staff from the SAPD, City Attorney's office, Parks and Recreation, Public Works, Community Development, Code Enforcement and the City Manager's Office to coordinate a holistic approach in addressing homelessness.
- Santa Ana will partner with the County on housing navigation programs and will seek County funding to leverage capacity.

## **Recommendations Going Forward**

In addition to the activities and initiatives that the City is undertaking to address homelessness issues, Santa Ana has the following recommendations for the County and our partner cities to ensure our collective efforts to reduce homelessness:

### **Addressing Housing Needs:**

- Request the County to prioritize housing and supportive services to homeless individuals residing in the Civic Center Plaza of the Flags and to address immediate needs similar to the Santa Ana River Bed and the Flood Control Channel project.
  - Request the County to extend the expiring motel vouchers for an additional 60 calendar days.
  - Request the County to place a Permanent Supportive Housing bond on the ballot in November similar to Measure HHH in Los Angeles, to provide a source of local funding for housing.
  - Require regional coordination between the County's four Housing Authorities for the annual allocation of project based vouchers for permanent supportive housing.
  - Request the County to utilize the "Move up Strategy" for Section 8 voucher holders thereby opening up lower threshold forms of rental assistance (e.g. Shelter Plus Care, HUD-VASH).
  - Request the County and local cities to provide landlord incentives so that landlords are more willing to accept and house homeless individuals (e.g. security deposit assistance, move-in bonus payments, and a pool of insurance funds for repairs).
  - Request cities to target their available mainstream affordable housing resources (HOME, CDBG, etc.) to serve homeless individuals, including the forthcoming SB 2 funds.
  - Request the County to prioritize chronically homeless individuals (e.g. the highest cost users) with the forthcoming No Place Like Home funds, SB2 funds, and project-based vouchers.
  - Recommend that MHSA funds be allocated more effectively to affordable housing projects.
- Request the County and local cities to approve an inclusionary housing ordinance based on Santa Ana's ordinance as a template.

### **Address Undue Burden to Santa Ana's Downtown, Civic Center and Surrounding Communities:**

- Relocate the Courtyard Transitional Center to a more suitable location
- Request detention facilities to automatically transport and release inmates in the respective city that the inmate resides (do not automatically release in Santa Ana).

- Request the County Sheriff to take lead responsibility when responding to County facility related calls for service (i.e. Courtyard Transitional Center, Mental Health Association, etc.).
- Seek County funding to cover medical service response when responding to County facility related calls for service (i.e. Courtyard Transitional Center, Mental Health Association, etc.).
- Request the County to fund, program and identify specific hospitals where homeless individuals may be transported for treatment.
- Request that the County and surrounding cities that bring individuals into Santa Ana to receive services at a County treatment facility/service center/shelter or non-profit location, be transported back to the city from which the person resides.
- Request the Courts, State and Federal administrations that reside in the Civic Center to provide resources for maintenance and public safety. Currently, only the County and City of Santa Ana provide funding via Joint Powers Authority (JPA), for maintenance and public safety in the Civic Center Campus.

**Implement Fair and Equitable Solutions to Serve the Homeless Population:**

- Seek equitable distribution of:
  - Emergency shelter beds throughout the County and Service Planning Areas (South, North and Central).
  - Use of County owned parcels to address homelessness (i.e. 100 acres in Irvine, etc.)
  - Equitable distribution of mental health, substance abuse, and homeless services throughout the County
- Require that all County-funded homeless shelters (temporary or permanent) transition to regional low-barrier shelters, or that accessibility is SPA specific shelters.
- Seek accountable regional coordination with other cities including full transparency in each city's plans and actions to reduce homelessness with timelines and deliverables.

**Improve Transparency and Access to County Information:**

- Request the County Healthcare Agency to share assessments of homeless individuals in the motels with the Homeless Management Information System.
- Request the County to conduct Vulnerability Index Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT) surveys in the County's homeless shelters.
- Request the County to make available to all cities:
  - Real time emergency shelter bed information
  - A map of encampments throughout the County and in local cities
- Require all cities to participate in regional coordinated efforts to reduce homelessness and develop a mechanism to hold the County and cities accountable.

- Request the Continuum of Care to conduct annual Point-in-Time Counts rather than bi-annual counts to ensure accurate data for each city and meet the needs of the evolving landscape of the homeless population
- Request the County to hold a Homeless Summit convening all city, County, public and private stakeholders to reduce homelessness with assignments and funding allocations.
- Require the implementation and proper use of the County's Coordinated Entry System and the Homeless Management Information System by the County, all cities and nonprofit partners.
- Request the County to complete an update to the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness that was prepared in 2012.

**Closing Comments:**

In conclusion, staff hopes the forgoing is helpful to understand the extent of the Santa Ana's efforts to address homelessness. Santa Ana recognizes that there is no one complete solution to end homelessness and believes that the recommendations provided herein, if employed, can meaningfully improve the lives of others and break the cycle of homelessness. Santa Ana is actively involved in the spirit of collaboration with the County, cities and other stakeholders, and believes that only through a coordinated and collective front, we can reduce and end homelessness in the County of Orange.

Thank you,

City of Santa Ana

DRAFT