



Mission: *Build partnerships and promote strong collaborative action to ensure all residents within the County have stable, safe, and healthy places to live.*

Housing for Health Partnership (H4HP) Policy Board Regular Meeting Minutes December 13, 2023; 3 pm

Call to Order/Welcome

Present: Heather Rodgers, Lisa Murphy, Mariah Lyons, Susan True, Suzi Merriam, Tom Stagg

Absent: Jamie Goldstein, Judy Hutchison, Justin Cummings, Kate Nester, Manu Koenig, Tamara Vides, Martine Watkins, Tiffany Cantrell-Warren

Additions and Deletions to the Agenda: None

Non-Agenda Public Comment

No public comment received.

Action Items (vote required)

1. Approval of Minutes: October 18, 2023, Regular Meeting

Discussion: None

Public Comment: None

Board Action: Deferred due to lack of quorum.

2. Approval of Housing for Health Partnership Emergency Shelter Standards

Discussion: Monica Lippi, from the Housing for Health Division (H4H), discussed the updated draft emergency shelter standards and how the development of the standards came from shelter workgroups, surveying the practices of other existing county-funded shelters, reviewing public funding requirements, operations workgroup discussions, and Housing for Health Policy Board feedback. Mentioned that the standards have gone through many drafted versions and now indicates if federal or state regulations require a standard. Concerns were raised regarding Santa Cruz City's inability to provide the required support services. Staff noted that if the City of Santa Cruz receives funding from the HUD Emergency Solution Grant (ESG), the Housing for Health Partnership Continuum of Care (CoC), or the Human Services Department, they must abide by the written standards. H4H staff noted that any emergency shelter can request a waiver of a standard by contacting Santa Cruz County's Human Services Department's H4H. Questions were raised on how to identify available beds in different shelters. H4H staff are still exploring the shelter bed feature called the Bed and Unit Inventory feature in HMIS. Discussed how H4H is working with United Way/2-1-1 to provide connection services support to the community with more resources.



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Public Comment: *Serg Kagno highlighted the significance of improving the standards of shelters and the need for a fair policy. He shared that adopting a client-centered approach to practice, not assuming that behaviors were based solely on the client, is essential. Mentioned the availability of beds should be extended beyond the hours of 9 am to 5 pm.*

Board Action: *Deferred due to lack of quorum.*

Information Items (no vote required):

3. 2024 Point-in-Time (PIT) Count Volunteer Recruitment

Discussion: *Sheryl Norteye, from the Housing for Health Division, announced that the Point-in-Time count is scheduled for January 25th, starting at 5am and ending around 10am. There have been 2 community meetings so far and there will be one youth specific meeting December 22 from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at Capitola Public Library, 2005 Wharf Road, Capitola. Mentioned that to ensure enough volunteers to complete the count, we need 150 volunteers, and currently have 35% of our goal. Volunteers will form teams of no more than 4 members and cover the entire county by walking or driving their assigned route sections. Volunteers will conduct a visual count of people experiencing homelessness in the county. Guides with experiences of homelessness in the County can get paid \$20 an hour to help guide volunteers in the count. For some county employees, participation in the count is part of their work schedule, if approved by their supervisor. Tracking of the count will be done on an app called Survey 123. Mentioned that physical resources and a map will also be available to guide volunteers on day of count. Training available in-person and via online videos.*

4. Miracle Messages- Volunteer and Participant Recruitment

Discussion: *Miracle Messages outreach specialist Debra Sun shared how the 1440 Foundation is funding a one-year pilot project to incorporate Miracle Messages' work into Santa Cruz County. Debra Sun shared that 8 years ago, Kevin F. Adler, the founder of Miracle Messages, recorded a video of homeless individuals asking them if they have any loved ones they want to reconnect with. Through video messages, Miracle Messages has been able to reconnect 800 homeless individuals with their loved ones. Mentioned the Miracle friend program was created for individuals who prefer a phone-based companion for emotional support, rather than reconnecting with family members. Miracle Messages is seeking volunteers for their Reunion Services and Miracle Friends programs. The Reunion Services program needs digital detective volunteers who can help locate missing loved ones. Monthly orientations are conducted for new volunteers. Miracle Friends program needs phone buddy volunteers who can be matched with someone who is unhoused. A 30-minute orientation is held every Wednesday for new volunteers. Mentioned that the organization needs Spanish-*



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speaking volunteers as well as volunteers who can actively look for missing people. Discussed the possibility of involving minors in broadcasting Miracle Messages on social media. Discussed that Miracle Messages main goal is to help individuals experiencing homelessness rebuild their social networks and connections to secure proper housing.

5. Lived Expertise Action Board – Recruitment of Participants

Sheryl Norteye, from the Housing for Health Division, shared that the recruitment efforts for two Lived Expertise Action Boards (LEAB), one specifically for youth, launched on December 7th, 2023 ends on January 19th, 2024. Discussed how Housing for Health staff are seeking help with identifying individuals interested in participating in these groups through nominations or self-interest forms. Mentioned that H4H staff received 15 Interest forms in one week. Mentioned there will be 5 individuals selected for the Lived Expertise Action Board and 5 for the Youth Lived Expertise Action Board, out of which 2 members will be chosen for the Housing for Health Policy Board. Mentioned that selected participants will receive \$25/hour for a 20-hour monthly commitment. Consultants will help manage and support participants while providing training and educational opportunities.

6. 25th Santa Cruz County Annual Homeless Memorial

Chief Initiatives Officer at Housing Matters Tom Stagg announced that the 25th Annual Homeless Memorial Service will take place on Tuesday, December 21st from 10am to 11:30am at the Santa Cruz Civic Auditorium located at 307 Church St. in downtown Santa Cruz. The Memorial honors homeless community members who passed away in 2023, as well as those who were homeless before but may have been housed by the time of their passing. During the memorial, the names of these individuals are read aloud. Discussed whether a list of full names or photos will be shared with the public before the memorials. Mentioned that 105 persons experiencing homelessness died on the streets of Santa Cruz County in 2023, the highest number on record. The Housing for Health Partnership will contribute to and support the event more next year.

7. 2024 Housing for Health Partnership Current Meeting Schedule

Housing for Health Director Robert Ratner shared the 2024 Housing for Health Partnership Policy Board meetings will be held at the Capitola Library – 2005 Wharf Road, Capitola, 95010, Ow Family Community Room. Calendar invites will be sent out soon, and the meetings will be held at 3 PM for a duration of no more than three hours.



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Report/Discussion Items (no vote required):

8. Regionally Coordinated Homelessness Action Plan (HHAP-5) & Housing for a Healthy Santa Cruz Framework Update

Discussion:

The Housing for Health Director, Robert Ratner, indicated the state requires a Regional Coordinated Homelessness Action Plan to secure Homeless Housing Assistance and Prevention Round 5 funding (HHAP-5) by March 27, 2024. Mentioned that the County and CoC HHAP-5 allocation amounts are expected to be less than 2024 allocations and around \$5M due to declines in the County's 2023 PIT Count. Discussed H4H staff will update the three-year Housing for a Healthy Santa Cruz Framework in conjunction with HHAP-5. Discussed that H4H staff will work on drafting HHAP-5 & Framework to distribute widely, including public meetings geographically distributed throughout the County between January 23, 2024, and February 7, 2024, for feedback and input. Mentioned that the Housing for Health Policy Board and County Board of Supervisors will need to approve HHAP-5 application before submittal. Questions were raised if the Cities needed to be included in the required HHAP-5 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Staff noted that the CoC and the County Only need to be included in the MOU. Mentioned that the HUD CoC process for federal funding is a separate process that occurs annually.

Board Member Announcements

- *Robert Ratner shared that the Housing Authority will be making available 80-100 vouchers in the next 6 – 12 months for people experiencing homelessness.*
- *Home Key Project Park Haven Plaza is expected to open this summer.*
- *Susan True from the Community Foundation of Santa Cruz announced this will be her last Board meeting.*

Adjournment

Next Meeting: **Wednesday, February 21, 2024, 3 pm**

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