

HOMELESS SERVICES OVERSIGHT COUNCIL

HSOC Meeting

September 16, 2020 1:00 p.m.

Members and the public were able to participate by Zoom call.

MEMBERS PRESENT	MEMBERS ABSENT	STAFF & GUESTS
Anne Robin Bettina Swigger Bill Crewe (alt for Paul Worsham) Caro Hall Devin Drake Grace McIntosh Janna Nichols Jessica Thomas Kristen Barneich Marianne Kennedy Mariam Shah Marlys McPherson Nicole Bennett (alt for Theresa Scott) Rick Gulino (alt for Joe Thompson) Scott Smith Shay Stewart Steve Martin Susan Funk	Amelia Grover Carlyn Christianson Deanna Cantrell Marcia Guthrie Mark Lamore Tim Waag	Abby Lassen Angela Smith Brandy Graham Cara Vereschagin Carrie Collins Elaine Mansoor Jan Maitzen Jeff Al-Mashat Jessica Lorange Jill Bolster-White Joanna Balsamo-Lillien John DiNunzio Kathy McClenathen Laurel Weir Leon Shordon Lisa Howe Lucy Sue Riley Smith Russ Francis Tom Sherman Tony Navarro Wendy Lewis

AGENDA ITEM		CONCLUSIONS/ACTIONS
1. Call to Order and Introductions	<p>Mariam called the meeting to order at 1pm.</p> <p>Carrie Collins introduced herself as the new Program Manager at Transitional Food & Shelter.</p> <p>John DiNunzio introduced himself as Transportation Planner at SLOCOG (San Luis Obispo Council of Governments).</p>	
2. Public Comment		
3. Consent: Approval of Minutes		<p>Janna made a motion to approve the minutes, second by Shay. The minutes were approved with none opposed. Marlys abstained.</p>
4. Action/Information/Discussion		
4.1. Discussion Item: COVID-19 Impacts		
4.1.1. Discussion Item: Impacts on Homeless Programs and Exits to Housing	<p>Laurel shared that HASLO (Housing Authority of San Luis Obispo) has reported significant impacts on their Housing Choice Voucher program. Scott from HASLO explained that many clients have seen a change to their employment situation due to COVID, and so have requested more money towards their rent from</p>	

	<p>this program. However, HASLO does not get funded per client, so they are having to reduce the number of clients they are helping. HASLO are not terminating vouchers of existing clients, but are not able to issue vouchers to new clients.</p> <p>Wendy from ECHO (El Camino Homeless Organization) shared that complying with social distancing has been one of the biggest challenges, as it has led to a decrease in the number of shelter beds available, meaning they have had to turn people away. The volunteer pool, which was mostly seniors and Cal Poly students, has declined by around 65%.</p> <p>Grace from CAPSLO (Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo) shared that the funding made available through the CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security) Act has enabled them to pay for individuals to get into housing for a limited time. There are questions about how these people can still be supported once the CARES Act funding is gone, as this will be more difficult without subsidized housing vouchers. The biggest issue is the affordability of housing in the area, as most of their clients will not ever be able to afford housing at the current rate.</p> <p>Janna from 5CHC (5Cities Homeless Coalition) shared that some people who had been renting a room are now being displaced, as family members are moving in instead. A number of clients who had been close to</p>	
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	<p>affording their own place are now no longer able to, and also do not have vouchers, leaving them in a precarious position. 5CHC saw twice the number of requests for assistance in July compared to January. Another concern is the impact of the eviction moratorium on independent landlords, who may be at financial risk themselves. The majority of landlords that 5CHC work with own a single home – in some cases, the mortgage repayments exceed the rent they collect. The long term impact on landlords will affect the housing stock.</p>	
<p>4.1.2. Discussion Item: Eviction Prevention Issues</p>	<p>Laurel shared that, at the last full HSOC meeting, the Council authorized the Executive Committee to write to the Board of Supervisors. At the time, it appeared that California’s eviction moratorium would end on September 1, so there was urgency in making recommendations to the Board to prevent an eviction crisis. Since that time, the State has established a new eviction moratorium which extends into February 2021. This moratorium does allow evictions to proceed in certain circumstances and where non-payment of rent is not related to COVID. From October, landlords who have tenants that owe back rent will be able to notify tenants that they will be evicted unless they respond to the letter to confirm they have been impacted financially by COVID, and are requesting to not pay rent. Rent owed from March to August 2020 is now considered commercial debt, and cannot be grounds for future</p>	

	<p>eviction at any time. This rent is still owed, but the recourse for landlords would be to take tenants to court to sue them. Rent owed after August can still be grounds for eviction once the new moratorium ends in February.</p> <p>The Federal government has also suspended evictions through the end of the year. The protections offered by the State are greater, so it is important that tenants respond to the letter from their landlords in order to benefit from this.</p> <p>In addition, the State has adopted a property tax postponement program for senior homeowners who are blind or have another disability. This program allows them to defer the current year's taxes if they meet certain criteria.</p>	<p>County staff to send a copy of the letter from the State Controller about the property tax postponement program to the HSOC distribution list</p>
<p>4.1.2.1. Discussion Item: Letter to the Board of Supervisors Regarding Eviction Moratoriums</p>	<p>Mariam submitted the letter referenced above to the Board of Supervisors in August (a copy is attached to the agenda packet).</p> <p>Mariam proposed publishing information on the HSOC website to provide clarity about the current situation regarding State and Federal action to prevent evictions. Nicole offered to share this through CenCal Health's communication channels. Abby shared that Stephanie Barclay from SLOLAF (San Luis Obispo Legal Assistance Foundation) has posted a video that provides current information.</p>	

<p>4.2. Discussion Item: State and Federal Homeless Assistance Grants</p>		
<p>4.2.1. Discussion Item: Homeless Housing, Assistance & Prevention (HHAP) Update</p>	<p>Laurel shared that there will be a second round of HHAP (Homeless Housing, Assistance & Prevention) funding. The RFP is expected by November 30. The eligible activities will be the same as for the first round, although the application will be much more complicated. In particular, the State will be looking closely at outcomes and outcome-driven decision making for awarding the grants locally. The application will require HSOC to establish outcomes for the overall HHAP program, and to justify how the particular grants recommended will support these outcomes. These outcomes should be more systemic and less related to individual programs, for example, reducing the average number of days people are homeless within the Continuum of Care. The State is providing more information and additional training over the next two months. Laurel will follow up on this item with the Executive Committee.</p>	
<p>4.2.2. Discussion Item: Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP) Update</p>	<p>Laurel provided an update on HEAP (Homeless Emergency Aid Program) funding. The City of Paso Robles has now identified an alternate location. Homekey funding will help with the acquisition of this property. As the North County project now has a way forward, the County is not now looking at reallocating of the HEAP funding.</p>	

	Janna requested a discussion on reallocating HHAP and HEAP money. Laurel will follow up.	
4.2.3. Discussion Item: Continuum of Care Grant	Laurel shared that the County is still waiting to hear from HUD (Department of Housing & Urban Development) as to whether there will be a 2020 CoC (Continuum of Care) competition. HUD has received many requests from CoCs around the country to not carry out the competition this year, so they may decide to award at last year's levels instead. Laurel will update HSOC as more information becomes available.	
4.2.3.1. Discussion Item: 2021 Homeless Point in Time Count	Laurel shared that the County has selected a vendor for the 2021 PIT (Point In Time) Count, and are in the process of contracting with them. HUD has now indicated they may not require a 2021 PIT Count, due to concerns about COVID. They will confirm in October-November whether CoCs will need to move forward. Staff recommend not going forward with the PIT Count if HUD do not require it.	
4.3. Discussion Item: Update on Winter Warming Season	Laurel shared that the County has awarded funding to support warming centers addressing COVID. Shelters will be housing fewer people than in previous years. The County is setting up a meeting between Public Health and agencies running warming centers about how to address COVID concerns within warming centers.	

	<p>Janna shared that 5CHC are holding their warming center in the same location as last year, and are in partnership with the City of Grover Beach for CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) funding to offset expenses not covered by the County's grant.</p> <p>Jan from TFS (Transitional Food & Shelter) shared that their warming center will be in a different location. They worked with ECHO to secure another site.</p> <p>Grace from CAPSLO shared that their warming center will be at 40 Prado as in previous years, though capacity will be reduced based on social distancing requirements.</p> <p>Caro from Los Osos Cares shared that they anticipate holding their warming center at South Bay Community Center as in previous years, but this depends on volunteer numbers.</p> <p>Wendy from ECHO shared that they will be holding their warming center at a location in Atascadero. With social distancing in place, they will be able to support around 25 people.</p>	
<p>4.4. Discussion Item: HSOC Expiring and Vacant Seats</p>	<p>Laurel shared that a number of member terms are set to expire in January 2021:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devin Drake (County Department of Social Services) • Grace McIntosh (Non-profit Service Provider) 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jessica Thomas (Local K-12 Academic Institution) • Amelia Grover (Local Hospital) • Shay Stewart (Local Faith Community) • Tim Waag (Interested Community) <p>In addition, there are vacant seats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local University or School of Higher Education • Currently or Formerly Homeless <p>HSOC has approved changes to the bylaws that will remove term limits and add an additional three seats. This will be going to the Board of Supervisors for approval before January, so members whose terms are expiring are encouraged to reapply even if they have reached their term limit.</p> <p>An announcement about membership and details on how to apply will be posted on the website and sent to the full HSOC distribution list.</p>	
<p>4.5. Action Item: Approve the Updated HMIS (Homeless Management Information System) Documents</p>	<p>Laurel provided some background. The County and nonprofit agencies are required to use a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to collect client data for programs that receive HUD funding and some State grants. The County serves as the lead HMIS agency. HUD TA (Technical Assistance) has reviewed the HMIS policies and procedures and recommended updates. Staff worked with TA and brought updated versions of the documents to the</p>	

	Finance & Data Committee. The Committee and County Counsel have reviewed and approved the updated versions. They now must be approved by the full HSOC before they can be adopted.	
4.5.1. Action Item: Approve the Updated San Luis Obispo County HMIS Agency Participation Agreement		Janna made a motion to approve the updated San Luis Obispo County HMIS Agency Participation Agreement, seconded by Caro. The motion passed with none opposed and no abstentions.
4.5.2. Action Item: Approve the Updated San Luis Obispo County HMIS User Agreement		Janna made a motion to approve the updated San Luis Obispo County HMIS Agency Participation Agreement, seconded by Caro. The motion passed with none opposed and no abstentions.
5. Committee Updates	<p>Janna shared that all issues from the last Finance & Data Committee meeting were addressed already in this meeting.</p> <p>Nicole reported on the Alternatives to Encampment working group of the Encampment Committee, which so far has held two meetings and is working on five</p>	

	<p>recommendations.</p> <p>Devin shared that the next Homeless Services Coordinating Committee meeting is on Monday 21.</p>	
6. Future Discussion/Report Items	None	
7. Next Regularly Scheduled Meeting Date: November 18, 2020		
8. Adjournment	Mariam adjourned the meeting at 2:30pm.	