

Special HEAP Meeting for Seniors

November 15, 2018

1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Marina Library

1. WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS

Introductions were made.

Four participants that attended the previous HEAP meeting attended this meeting. There were 21 people in attendance at today's meeting.

2. PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

Homeless Emergency Assistance Program (HEAP) is a Grant opportunity afforded by the State of California with a specific goal to provide immediate emergency assistance to people experiencing homelessness. The Grant is approximately 12.5million to be distributed between San Benito and Monterey Counties.

3. REVIEW OF 2017 CENSUS DATA

Allison Yant provided copies of the Monterey County Homeless Point in Time Census and Survey to all participants for their reference and review. Important to note that the data is reflective of those that were surveyed and may not represent the homeless community as a whole. Individuals in the group cautioned others to clarify data points that may be missing from the information sheet.

One of the participants stated that The Fund for Homeless Women did a survey of women who were homeless on the Peninsula. It showed in that report that of 400 women, 34% were 51-60 years of age, and 14% were 61 years and over. There is huge growth in the older, homeless senior population.

Monterey and San Benito Counties combined is #20 by homeless count in the Country.

4. INPUT GATHERING EXERCISE

Potential Funding Areas were listed on flip chart. The eligible activities listed on the chart were intentionally broad to allow the community to respond, be creative and craft new ideas.

HEAP is not intended to solve the affordable housing crisis that exists in our community, but to focus on services and projects that can help get homeless people off the streets as quick as possible. Community voice and suggestions are critical in this process.

HEAP is a one-time funding program. It is a potential opportunity for capital one-time expenditures (i.e. building permanent shelters).

Participant from Peninsula stated that the non-profits lack capacity to build buildings and to buy things. They believe the cities should go after the money, and the non-profit staff can provide programs, as that is their expertise.

Interim, Inc. has been successful at locating housing for their participants, and work really well with DSS and Behavioral Health.

Community Homeless Solutions is also looking to doing some capital projects, and building some housing. There are some that do the services and others that do the development.

REVIEWED QUESTIONS:

1. Describe the impact of homeless to you and your community?

- In Monterey, the impact is downtown, in the Wharf area and with the merchants, as they say it impacts tourism. Merchants feel if there are more shelters, there will be fewer homeless people out around the business.
- Downtown Salinas has the same problem. Merchants complain.
- In Monterey, by Whole Foods, there are a lot of hidden trails for homeless. Neighbors complain that their garages get broken into. Some residents echo the idea that if there was a 24-hour shelter, with activities and services in the daytime, it would help neighborhoods and community.
- Fear of fire because of big encampments that have outdoor fire pits, cooking items, etc.
- Public health – going to the bathroom next to streams.
- In such a wealthy community, having such high homeless rates degrades everything in the community because, we are not treating people with basic humanity.
- Studies show that healthcare outcomes are significantly worse for unhoused seniors. It would be interesting to get perspective from ER's at CHOMP, Natividad, and SVMH. What are they seeing?
 - Studies indicate costs of healthcare for seniors are so much higher than if we were to pay for housing.
 - Data from coroner's office showing how many people die while homeless. In L.A., 17 individuals per week die on the streets. Homeless seniors may have a higher rate - something to research in our county.
- Individuals who are renting, and, for whatever reason, are evicted. They have no place to go and become homeless.
- In some cases, people are paying low cost rent. When the landlord dies, they cannot afford rent from the new landlord and wait list for low income housing takes years.
- Need supportive services for the homeless. This is not fully covered by insurance or other means.
- Some seniors lose their housing because of an extended illness. If building more senior housing, supportive services are also needed.
- For HEAP funds, necessary to look at the sustainability of the programs being suggested. Support services for seniors are labor intensive, need to have staff.
- While it is great to have capital money, sustainable funding is needed.
- Financial abuse is becoming more prevalent, especially scams towards seniors. Scams and other financial abuse can result in eviction and/or homelessness.
- There are many warning signs of impending homelessness. If there is some intervention, it could be prevented before the situation becomes worse.

2. What gaps do you see in homeless services?

- Current shelters require individuals to lift, set up and sleep on mats on floor, get up/down easily. Seniors often do not utilize shelters because they are not accessible.
- Need to address the areas of animals and storage and plausible solutions are needed. Very important to homeless people that they keep their animals and belongings with them. Other cities have been creative around this. Kennels or locked storage/safe storage for belongings. Without safe storage, many homeless individuals do not wish to leave their belongings or take transportation to food, shelter, showers, because they're afraid of theft.
- There needs to be a decontamination process for homeless items to avoid issues of bed bugs, lice, etc. We need professional shelters that understand health and safety for people and animals.
- Services needed that are specific to seniors as current shelters are not equipped to handle seniors. Consider a refrigerator for medications, outlets to plug in medical devices, provision of ADL assistance.
- We need services with continuity of funding, not just operational money. INTERIM is a great model to look at for senior homelessness. If you want to move them from being homeless to being housed, there must be some sort of service underpinning all of it and that takes continuity of funding.
- This grant money should not be spent on operational money. If you are going to spend money on organizations, then spend on helping the existing organizations to expand what they are already providing and do more of what they do on an ongoing basis. Need to create a plan to continue the funding by finding new money to keep things going past 2020.
- Need to support projects or programs that prevent homelessness.
- Lack of transportations to shelters, in some cases they are too far. Need transportation to access appointments to work on benefits etc.
- Need subsidized RV and Mobile Home parks to be a stable environment.
- Connection between private and public working together.
- Collaboration can be a major gap. Bringing together police, Adult Protective Services, hospitals and agencies serving homeless. Consider how they can better share information and work together so that when police are contacting the homeless, they are not just approaching it from a punitive stand point, but from what services can be provided.
- How can we engage with healthcare entities in this area to have them be longer-term solutions?
- Supplementing those that are successful with new ideas would be much better than reinventing the wheel.

3. What kinds of projects/services/programs do you feel would help homeless people as quickly as possible?

Participants reviewed the questions below and provided feedback and rated the importance of each area.

a. Programs for youth or youth at risk of homelessness. (Unaccompanied youth ages 18-24)

- Already a set aside of funding for youth. Could there be a 5%-20% set aside for seniors/disabled*?

b. Expand current homeless bed inventory through new emergency shelter beds

- Professional, year round 24-hour shelter in Salinas and on Peninsula, senior and disabled accessible, animal friendly, with activities
- Include senior/disabled accessibility to meet the needs of older adults, a shelter would need allowance for ADL assistance, plugs for medical equipment, accessible cots
- Transportation services for seniors/disabled

c. Expanding current homeless bed inventory through transitional or other sorts of housing

- Permanent supportive housing for seniors and the disabled
- Neighborhood shelter model accessible to seniors
- Transportation services for seniors/disabled

d. Operating support for expanding homeless beds

- Unless it's supporting agencies to further what they are doing, more important find sustainable funding
- Bring back Save Our Seniors

e. Targeted street outreach, health and safety education programs, criminal justice diversion programs

- Eviction prevention/homelessness for older adults to allow them to age in place

f. Enhanced client services through housing navigation, landlord mitigation programs, targeted case management

- Wrap around ancillary services for older adults, especially for those with cognitive issues
- Landlord meetings/incentives
- Fiduciary assistance (such as for those with cognitive issues or trouble managing funds) – money management can be a form of eviction prevention
- Financial assistance to make repairs for red-tagged homes so that they become habitable for the senior home owner

g. Rental assistance and rapid rehousing programs

- Will need housing locator

h. Other activities not otherwise described

- Allocating 5% - 20% of HEAP for seniors, as it is set aside for youth
- Develop storage units

- Consider YIMBY outreach
- Distressed housing – redo to become a neighborhood shelter
- Program with elements like “Monterey Bay Village”
- Share-housed model
- Subsidized RV and mobile home parks
- Engage healthcare entities
- Fund a study projecting housing challenges in the next 5-10 years for older adults

BREAKDOWN THE POINTS/RANKING/VOTING

Participants were given three stickers with point numbers on them. Blue (1 point), Yellow (2 points), and Red (3 points). When totaled, the following activities were most important:

Ranking in 1st Place with 40 Points:

Expanding current homeless bed inventory through transitional or other sorts of housing

- Professional, year-round 24-hour shelter, senior and disabled accessible, with available storage, pet friendly, with activities in Salinas and on Peninsula
- Include senior/disabled accessibility to meet the needs of older adults, a shelter would need allowance for ADL assistance, plugs for medical equipment, accessible cots
- Transportation services for older adults/disabled

Ranking in 2nd Place with 29 Points:

Enhanced client services through housing navigation, landlord mitigation programs, targeted case management

- Wrap around ancillary services for older adults, especially for those with cognitive issues
- Landlord meetings/incentives
- Fiduciary assistance (such as for those with cognitive issues or trouble managing funds) – money management can be a form of eviction prevention
- Financial assistance to make repairs for red-tagged homes so that they become habitable for the senior home owner

Ranking in 3rd Place with 18 Points:

Allocate 5% - 20% of HEAP funding for older adults*

4. What commitment are you willing to make to solve homelessness?

Folks indicated they would attend another meeting focused on senior housing and homelessness issues.

*By 2020, according to the US Census, it is estimated 1 in 5 Monterey County residents will be 60 or older.