



MEDIA RELEASE

Collaborative Approach Finds Compromise Innovative Proposal to House City's Unsheltered High Utilizers Reduced by \$4M

SANTA BARBARA, CA – 12/13/2018

Last year's federally mandated Point in Time Count of homeless individuals estimated that as many as 53 percent of the countywide unsheltered population called our City home. A significant portion of those individuals present a dynamic financial challenge to local taxpayers. Those unsheltered high-utilizers of emergency services continually cycle through finite City resources. That challenge was the impetus to form a continuum of care model in which a consortium of City partnerships aligns to tackle Santa Barbara's portion of this statewide challenge.

The initiative, Santa Barbara Connect Home, was formed by the City of Santa Barbara in conjunction with Cottage Health, City Net, Housing Authority of the City of Santa Barbara (HACSB), and People Assisting the Homeless (PATH) to respond to an emergency funding opportunity carved out by the state legislature.

On November 16, 2018, after an extensive preplanning effort by key stakeholders, the Santa Barbara Connect Home proposal was submitted to the Santa Barbara County Continuum of Care (CoC), seeking \$6.5 million in funding from the Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP), a 30-month, one-time grant. The consortium request was directly related to the countywide percentage of homeless within the City's jurisdiction. The approach included a low-barrier housing concept to shelter as many as 40 individuals in temporary cottages ("tiny homes"), expanded street-outreach, an additional Restorative Police Officer paired with a nurse practitioner, additional emergency shelter beds at PATH, a Cottage Health navigator, case management, and other supportive services.

The City and its partners quickly pivoted toward compromise when the County selection committee tasked with disseminating those emergency state funds slashed the proposal by more than 70 percent. The adjusted award of \$2 million will be allocated toward supporting the following:

- City has identified approximately \$360,000 available in its Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program, which may possibly be contributed toward capital improvements for a project(s) that would result in the provision of additional beds for homeless individuals. The City will seek to identify a suitable project.
- Employ a nurse practitioner at .75 full-time equivalent.
- Apply rapid rehousing, rental assistance, and security deposits.
- Leverage community funding to support vital components of the initiative.
- The Housing Authority will remain a committed collaborative partner with no funding from the HEAP grant by prioritizing existing housing vouchers, whenever possible, to help permanently house program participants and by using an existing security deposit program for HEAP permanent housing support.

BACKGROUND

The HEAP program was enacted in June 2018 by California Senate Bill 850, which provided \$500 million in one-time block grants to address homelessness throughout the state. On September 5, 2018, the state issued a Notice of Funding Availability outlining the requirements for application submittal. Santa Barbara County was eligible to receive up to \$9.4 million in HEAP funds via its CoC, due to the number of unsheltered homeless individuals identified in the federally mandated 2017 Point in Time Count of homeless individuals.

Given that this count revealed that 53 percent of the county-wide homeless population was found within Santa Barbara city limits, on September 18, the Santa Barbara City Council declared the existence of a shelter crisis, which enabled the City to apply for HEAP funds through the County CoC.

On October 12, the County released its Notice of Funding Availability for the HEAP funds, with an application deadline of November 16, 2018. Fifteen applications totaling \$36.9 million were submitted. Funding recommendations were approved by the County CoC Board on November 29. The County has until December 31, 2018, to submit its planned use for HEAP funds to the state.

More information regarding the HEAP grant and the Santa Barbara Connect Home proposal can be located at:

<https://www.santabarbaraca.gov/HEAP>

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