

Attachment 2

**IMPERIAL COUNTY
CONTINUUM OF CARE
CONCEPT PROPOSAL**

Overview

It is estimated that over 84,000 individuals experience chronic homelessness in a given night in the United States (HUD, 2014). Approximately 1413 of homeless individuals were identified as experiencing homelessness in Imperial County during the 2019 Point in Time (PIT) count. A total of 490 of the 1413 individuals were identified as chronically homeless.

Homelessness is a community concern for the County of Imperial. Homeless individuals are 3-4 times more likely to die than the general population. In addition, the prevalence of substance use disorders, serious mental illness, developmental disability, posttraumatic stress disorder, HIV/AIDS, and other serious chronic physical illness or impairment is high in homeless individuals. Due to their lack of resources, homeless populations are 5 times more likely to be admitted into the hospital than the general population. Currently, a chronic homeless person costs counties approximately \$35,578 per year (HUD, 2014). Due to unstable housing, they cycle in and out of emergency departments, inpatient hospital stays, psychiatric centers, detoxification programs, and jails resulting in high public costs and poor health outcomes for individuals including premature death (O'Connell, 2005).

In 1995, HUD began to require communities to submit a single application for McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants in order to streamline the funding application process, encouraging coordination of housing and service providers on a local level, and to promote the development of Continuums of Care (CoC) programs.

The CoC program is designed to assist individuals and families experiencing homelessness and provide the services needed to help homeless individuals move into transitional and permanent housing, with the goal of long-term stability. The CoC is intended to promote community-wide planning and strategic use of resources to address homelessness; improve coordination and integration with mainstream resources and other programs targeted to people experiencing homelessness; improve data collection and performance measurement; and allow each community to tailor its program to the particular strengths and challenges.

Pursuant to 24 CFR part 578.1, the primary purpose of the CoC program is to:

1. Promote community-wide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness
2. Provide funding for efforts by nonprofit providers, States, and local governments to re-house homeless individuals and families rapidly while minimizing the trauma and dislocation caused to homeless individuals, families, and communities as a consequence of homelessness;
3. Promote access to and effective use of mainstream programs by homeless individuals and families;
4. Optimize self-sufficiency among individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

CoC's are responsible for managing and tracking the homeless systems of care in their community. One of the most important activities entrusted to CoC's is the homeless Point in Time (PIT) count. The count includes sheltered and unsheltered homeless individuals, an annual enumeration of emergency shelters, transitional housing units and beds that make up the homeless assistance systems. These counts provide an overview of the state of homelessness in a CoC and offer the information necessary to redirect services, funding and resources as necessary.

The Imperial County CoC's purpose is to work with the community and stakeholders to promote improved health, access to services, promote the long-term viability of safety net of providers, increase prevention, education and early intervention of services, and to improve services affecting our homeless population.

On May 2, 2018, the Imperial County Board of Supervisors approved the County of Imperial as the Lead Entity of the CoC and designated the Department of Social Services (DSS) as the administrative lead. The Imperial Valley Continuum of Care Council (IVCCC) constitutes the Continuum of Care (CoC). The IVCCC is the coordinating body of the Imperial County CoC, which includes all of the geography within the County of Imperial, including seven (7) incorporated cities and all eight (8) unincorporated communities. The IVCCC strategically comprised an IVCCC Executive Board that represents an array of stakeholders that enhance the capacity to coordinate and leverage resources from various community sectors throughout the Imperial County. The Executive Board acts on the behalf of the IVCCC and is charged with important responsibilities and authorities on behalf of the community of stakeholders. The Executive Board is responsible for building community awareness, regional planning, authorizing grant applications, setting regional goals and priorities for ending homelessness, monitoring performance targets and metrics and community process towards ending homelessness in the region, approving policies and provides direction to the administrative lead/collaborative applicant.

|| Concept

A holistic needs assessment of the present program is critical for the continued operation and successful implementation of the CoC. This can be accomplished with the assistance of a consultant who is an expert in the field of housing, social service, and mental health. Through a consultant, this would include the development of a strategic plan that will improve system capacity and performance of the CoC. The plan will identify the goals, related strategies and action steps for each goal, responsible parties, timeframe, and relevance to CoC capacity areas.

The development of a community-based homeless plan is another critical requirement of the Imperial County CoC to assess the specific needs of the region. One of the priorities is to effectively assess, organize and utilize mainstream and other resources in a goal oriented, performance based manner, supported by data and information regarding our community. The plan should incorporate performance metrics to assess the effectiveness of numerous strategies implemented to target homelessness or those at risk of homelessness.

The Imperial County CoC would like to request \$200,000 from the Imperial County Local Health Authority to help meet these critical elements in order to continue moving forward in addressing the issue of homelessness in Imperial County. By addressing the homeless and housing needs of Imperial County, the Imperial County CoC through a collective of stakeholders and local agencies to improve the health, economic, and social conditions in our communities.

The County of Imperial Continuum of Care (CoC) Plan

The funds awarded through this proposal would be to help pay for professional consulting services for the County of Imperial Continuum of Care (CoC) and related programs. The Consultant will perform the subsequent services under the supervision and direction of the Director of the Department of Social Services or its designee. The consultant shall provide the following services within 24 months of an executed agreement:

- A.** Development of a community-wide strategic plan working on the goal of addressing homelessness. The plan should incorporate the following elements:
 - 1. Incorporate mission, goals, and objectives;
 - 2. Delineate specific strategies and action steps for each goal, responsible parties, and timeframe that will guide the community for the next three (3) years;
 - 3. Be data driven, by improving the use of data to ensure program and system level performance;
 - 4. Improved community engagement and participation in the CoC;
 - 5. Implementation of best practices and innovative solutions to end homelessness;
 - 6. Creating meaningful connections to mainstream agencies to address gaps in service provision to individuals experiencing homelessness;
 - 7. Incorporate recommendations on how to maximize existing resources and leverage funding.

- B.** Development of Homeless Plan that meets the needs of our community as well as Federal and State standards.
 - 1. Collaborative process that will gather input from:
 - a. Stakeholders, community based organizations and community members on homelessness, to include Behavioral Health, Public Health, Probation/Criminal Justice, Social Services, and Housing Departments.
 - b. Health Care Providers
 - c. Other relevant providers
 - 2. The County Homeless Plan shall include:
 - a. An overall description of the County's goals, strategies and activities in process and to be initiated, to reduce homelessness and make it non-recurring.

- b. A description of description of homelessness County-wide, including a discussion of the estimated number of residents experiencing Homelessness or Chronic Homelessness among single adults, families, and unaccompanied youth.
 - c. To the extent possible, the estimated number of residents experiencing Homelessness or Chronic Homelessness who are also
 - i. Experiencing serious mental illness,
 - ii. Experiencing co-occurring disorders, or
 - iii. Children with a serious emotional disturbance.
3. Proposed solutions the County plans to undertake to reduce and end homelessness.
- C.** Deliver all tasks, and services necessary as it relates to the general administration concerning the Continuum of Care projects and programs, funded through the State of California, and United States (U.S.) Department of Housing and Urban Development.
 - D.** Advise the Department of Social Services regarding funding opportunities for Continuum of Care and related programs.
 - E.** Serve as a liaison between HCD, HUD and the Department of Social Services regarding projects and programs funded through said programs.
 - F.** Provide knowledge and expertise related to rules and regulations associated with the solicitation, management, and operation of grant funds.
 - G.** Assist the Department of Social Services in community outreach and education on regional homeless and housing needs.

References

1. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. 2014. The 2014 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR).
2. O'Connell, J.J. 2005. Premature Mortality in Homeless Populations: A Review of the Literature. Nashville, TN: National Health Care for the Homeless Council, Inc.
3. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Federal Register. Vol. 80, No. 233, 24 CFR Parts 91 and 578. December 4, 2015.