



DATE: September 18, 2019

TO: Community Services Commission

FROM: Community Services Manager

SUBJECT: Review the 2019 Point-in-Time Count and Survey of Homeless Persons in Alameda County and Hayward

RECOMMENDATION

That the Community Services Commission reviews and comments on this report.

SUMMARY

The data contained in the 2019 Point-in-Time Count (PIT) is an essential tool to understanding the scope, trends, and causes of homelessness in our community and throughout the region. The data is the result of a coordinated regional effort that includes every jurisdiction in Alameda County. This report summarizes the findings of the 2019 Point-in-Time Count and Survey of homeless persons in Alameda County and Hayward that was conducted and led by EveryOne Home in January 2019.

BACKGROUND

Founded in 2007 to regionally coordinate efforts and resources to address homelessness throughout the County, EveryOne Home is the Continuum of Care (CoC) agency that supports all fourteen municipalities, as well as Alameda County. The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development Department (HUD) annually provides funding to localities that implement and maintain CoC's. EveryOne Home was formed in response to HUD's national initiative to end homelessness. Among the requirements HUD sets forth for this funding is the biennial collection of quantitative and qualitative data about sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons. The PIT count uses the federally required methodology to receive funding for homelessness assistance programs through the CoC. EveryOne Home undertakes this PIT count on a biennial basis, enumerating the sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons on a single night in January.

Data was collected through four primary components:

1. *General street count*: an observation-based enumeration of unsheltered individuals between the hours of approximately 5:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m.;

2. *Youth count*: a targeted enumeration of unsheltered youth under the age of 25 between the hours of approximately 2:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.;
3. *Sheltered count*: an enumeration of individuals residing in emergency shelter, safe haven, and transitional housing facilities on the night before the street count; and
4. *Survey*: an in-person survey of a randomized sample of unsheltered and sheltered individuals conducted by trained peer surveyors and program staff in the weeks following the general street count.

The resulting county-wide data was released on July 23, 2019 after a presentation at the inaugural convening about homelessness of Alameda County mayors, city managers, and the County Supervisors. Additionally, several municipalities, including Hayward, requested data specific to homeless persons within their respective jurisdictions. The jurisdiction-specific data was released on September 3, 2019. Executive summaries and the full reports of the county-wide data and Hayward-specific data are provided in Attachments II and III, respectively.

DISCUSSION

Homelessness is an extraordinarily difficult and persistent regional issue. The scope and intractability of the homelessness issue is such that no one jurisdiction can hope to address, much less solve it alone with the limited resources at hand. A coordinated county-wide effort to address homelessness is paramount.

2019 Point-in-Time Count and Survey – Key Findings

The executive summary and full report of the county-wide 2019 PIT count and survey data are provided in Attachment II. Key county-wide findings from the data include:

- 8,022 homeless persons were counted county-wide in 2019. This represents a sharp increase (43%) since the previous 2017 count, which recorded 5,629 homeless persons county-wide.
- 79% of homeless persons are unsheltered – meaning that they dwell in tents, parks, vehicles, vacant buildings, underpasses, and other locations not intended nor fit for human habitation. This is an increase from 69% in 2017.
- 62% of surveyed homeless persons indicated that they have experienced more than one episode of homelessness.
- 25% of surveyed homeless persons self-reported that a lost job and mental health issues primary causes of their homelessness in 2019
- 33% of surveyed homeless persons self-reported that rent assistance might have prevented their homelessness in 2019
- 30% of surveyed homeless persons self-reported that benefits/income might have prevented their homelessness in 2019

The executive summary and full report of the Hayward 2019 PIT count and survey data are provided in Attachment III. Key city-wide findings from the data include:

- Approximately 6% of the county's homeless population lives in Hayward (487 persons), the fourth-highest percentage by jurisdiction. Oakland has 51% of the county's homeless population (4071 persons), Berkeley has 14% of the county's homeless population (1,108 persons), and Fremont has 8% of the county's homeless population (608 persons).
- Between 2017 and 2019 there was a 23% increase in homelessness in Hayward, with 397 total homeless in 2017 to 487 total homeless in 2019.
- 76% of homeless persons are unsheltered – meaning that they dwell in tents, parks, vehicles, vacant buildings, underpasses, and other locations not intended nor fit for human habitation. This is slightly reduced from 79% in 2017.
- 40% of surveyed homeless persons experiencing homelessness for the first time indicated that they were homeless for a year or more.
- 27% of surveyed homeless persons self-reported that a lost job or incarceration are primary causes of their homelessness
- 45% of surveyed homeless persons self-reported that benefits/income might have prevented their homelessness
- 36% of surveyed homeless persons self-reported that rental assistance might have prevented their homelessness

Local Efforts to Address Homelessness and Housing Affordability

The City of Hayward annually allocates approximately \$835,000 of local and federal funds to support projects and programs that address homelessness and housing issues in the Hayward community. Additionally, on January 22, 2019, the City Council approved emergency actions to implement a Hayward Housing Navigation Center for approximately 45 individuals on the currently vacant City-owned parcel at the corner of Depot and Whitesell Roads (Site), including authorizing the appropriation of up to \$3 million in State and local funding for one-time start-up costs (approximately \$500,000) and one year of operational funding (approximately \$2.5 million). The Hayward Housing Navigation Center is modeled after the successful City of Berkeley Pathways STAIR Center that opened in June 2018 and has placed over a 100 individuals in housing since opening. Council has long identified homelessness and housing affordability as key issues in the community and has supported local efforts to address these issues in conjunction with the larger regional efforts.

Regional Issue – Regional Efforts

Homelessness is a complex regional issue, and as such, coordinated regional efforts such as those being undertaken through the CoC are essential to address homelessness in an impactful, lasting way. The regional CoC include local governments, social services agencies, health agencies, local nonprofits and community advocates, all of which are coordinating closely together and have been engaged in core strategies to prevent and address homelessness and related crises such as hunger and housing affordability.

The EveryOne Home coalition of municipalities, combined with and reinforced by local grassroots groups, are essential components of a county-wide assessment of the strategies and level of resources required to address homelessness. Subsequent to the 2017 PIT count, EveryOne Home developed the *EveryOne Home Plan to End Homelessness* (EveryOne Home Plan)¹, laying out a county-wide approach to ending homelessness.

The EveryOne Home Plan recommends four broad strategies that together bring the necessary capacity, investment, partnership and collective impact to end homelessness:

- *Expand Capacity* – the Alameda County system needs to expand assistance of temporary financial assistance and legal support, add more units of permanent supportive housing, add more units of subsidized permanent housing units, and expand street outreach and other services to unsheltered individuals.
- *Increase Investment* – there is a need to identify new sources of financial investment from all levels of government.
- *Build Stronger Partnerships* - engaging in the leadership and expertise of people experiencing homelessness in governance, policy, planning, and service delivery, and expanding employment opportunities and career development within our system
- *Align Public Policies* – advancing policies to reduce homelessness, such as protecting renters, increasing affordable housing, protecting dignity, health, and safety of those living on the streets, and counteracting disparate racial impacts of housing policies.

Other key elements of the coordinated county-wide strategy to prevent and address homelessness include technical coordination, such as the updated implementation of a county-wide coordinated system of data entry (the county-wide Homeless Management Information System, also known as HMIS), implementation of standardized performance indicators and targets for results-based accountability across systems, and the commitment of over \$580 million dollars in Measure A1 funds to the creation of affordable housing units including permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless persons.

NEXT STEP

The EveryOne Home Plan outlines a range of actions that can be tailored to local communities. Utilizing the 2019 PIT Count data and the EveryOne Home Plan framework, City staff are currently developing a five-year strategic plan to address homelessness that aligns with the EveryOne Home Plan, while taking into consideration the unique characteristics of the Hayward community. This plan will be presented at a future CSC meeting.

Prepared and Recommended by: Monica Davis, Community Services Manager

Approved by:

¹ 2018 EveryOne Home Strategic Plan, <http://everyonehome.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/FINAL-EveryOne-Home-Plan.pdf>

Jennifer Ott, Deputy City Manager