

County of Santa Clara
Office of the County Executive
Office of Supportive Housing



79695

DATE: January 26, 2016

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Gary A. Graves, Chief Operating Officer

SUBJECT: Report and Planning for the FY2016 and FY2017 Cold Weather Seasons

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Consider recommendations relating to the Cold Weather Shelter Program for fiscal years 2016 and 2017. (Office of the County Executive)

Possible action:

- a. Receive report from the Office of Supportive Housing relating to the Cold Weather Shelter Program for fiscal years 2016 and 2017.
- b. Approve delegation of authority to Director, Office of Supportive Housing or designee, to negotiate, execute, amend, or terminate agreement with HomeFirst relating to providing Cold Weather Shelter Program services in an amount not to exceed \$1,257,883 and a contract term that started on November 1, 2015, and ends no later than June 30, 2016, following approval by County Counsel as to form and legality, and approval by the Office of the County Executive. Delegation of authority shall expire on June 30, 2016.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The recommended action would have no fiscal impact. However, if the County implements an emergency shelter program at the Arturo Ochoa Migrant Center (AOMC) from February 1 through March 31, 2016, the cost of the program would be approximately \$100,000. If the County establishes an inclement weather shelter at 999 Hamlin Court in Sunnyvale, the maximum cost of the program would be \$100,000, but actual expenditures will depend on how many Inclement Weather days were triggered. There is sufficient budget in the Office of Supportive Housing (OSH) to support these programs.

For the potential inclement weather shelter program at the Hamlin property, HomeFirst's Cold Weather Shelter Program (CWSP) agreement would be increased from its current maximum financial obligation of \$1,157,883 to \$1,257,883.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

On December 15, 2015, the Administration provided the Board with an update on the Cold Weather Shelter Program and countywide activities to reduce injury or death during inclement weather episodes. The latter is of particular concern given the impact of El Nino. During the FY 2015 cold weather season, an Inclement Weather Episode was declared for a total of five days. With approximately half of the FY 2016 cold weather season remaining, Santa Clara County has already declared five Inclement Weather Episodes totaling 29 days.

This report provides the Board with an update on the FY 2016 cold weather season, including efforts to increase inclement weather or cold weather shelter beds and services. The report also summarizes the Administration's planning process for the FY 2017 Cold Weather Shelter Program (CWSP).

Arturo Ochoa Migrant Center (AOMC)

The Administration has been working with the State to determine how many two- and three-bedroom units at AOMC could be used as emergency shelter during the remainder of the FY 2016 cold weather season. The goal would be to allow up to 20 homeless families with children to occupy some of the units until the morning of March 31, 2016. In addition to basic shelter services, the families would be offered case management services and would be allowed to use the shelter units for the remainder of the season. AOMC would not be operated as a night-by-night shelter like the Gilroy Armory.

As of the writing of this report (January 13, 2016), the Administration has been unable to confirm whether any of the AOMC units will be available. According to the State, the AOMC units need their roofs repaired and the State is attempting to complete the repairs before migrant farmworker families return at the end of April 2016. The Administration believes that a small shelter operation at AOMC could meet the needs of homeless families without interfering with the State's roof repairs. A shelter program using 20 AOMC units could serve between 60 and 100 homeless men, women and children nightly.

If the State agrees that some of the AOMC units can be utilized the FY 2016 cold weather season, the Administration would enter into single source agreements with a provider of supportive services and a property management company to operate the shelter program. The agreements would be retroactive to enable the organizations to mobilize as quickly as possible. Currently, St. Joseph's Community Center has agreed to provide the supportive services, but the Administration is having a difficult time identifying a property manager.

999 Hamlin Court as Emergency Shelter during Inclement Weather Episodes

The Administration has been working to determine the feasibility of using 999 Hamlin Court in Sunnyvale as emergency shelter during inclement weather episodes for the FY 2016 cold weather season. While the property is nearly 17,000 square-feet, most of it is configured as a

warehouse. Modifying the warehouse space to safely and legally use it as emergency shelter is not feasible by March 31, 2016.

However, the Administration is working to obtain a temporary change of occupancy permit from the County's Planning Department to use the office portion of the property for the FY 2016 season only. The permitting process ensures that the proposed use meets all of the necessary life-safety and accessibility requirements. The office portion of the property could shelter 20 – 25 homeless individuals nightly during Inclement Weather Episodes. The Administration estimates that March 1, 2016, is the earliest date that the County could begin using the office portion of the property for inclement weather shelter. As March 1 nears, the Administration may reevaluate the proposed use based on current needs and circumstances.

The Administration has determined that the project (i.e., use of the office portion for inclement weather shelter) qualifies for two Categorical Exemptions under Section 15300 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines—Class 3 (New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures) and Class 4 (Minor Alterations to Land). The project is also exempt under the general rule under CEQA Guidelines 15061(b)(3) because it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment.

Reason for request of Delegation of Authority

The Administration requests a Delegation of Authority to amend HomeFirst's Cold Weather Shelter Program agreement so that the agency could manage the inclement weather shelter services at 999 Hamlin Court, if all required permits and legal authorizations are obtained. Although delegations of authority are discouraged except under certain circumstances, this delegation of authority is necessary to allow HomeFirst to implement inclement weather shelter services at the property as quickly as possible. The cold weather season ends on March 31, 2016.

HomeFirst currently operates the 100-bed cold weather shelter that is located at the former Onizuka Air Force Station (Onizuka), the cold weather shelter at the Gilroy Armory and an inclement weather outreach program. The Hamlin property would essentially serve as an overflow site during Inclement Weather Episodes for the cold weather shelter at Onizuka. County and City of Sunnyvale staff coordinated two community meetings to discuss the County's plans.

Though utilization of inclement weather shelter beds has only been 21%, expanding shelter capacity by using 999 Hamlin Court would give the County more options during expected Inclement Weather Episodes. The county has yet to experience the wettest months of El Nino, and it will be difficult to predict unsheltered persons' willingness or need to access emergency shelter. Moreover, other than from the City of San Jose, County staff are not aware of any plans by cities to increase cold weather or inclement weather shelter.

Planning for the FY 2017 Cold Weather Shelter Program

While working to expand services this cold weather season, the Administration proposes that the County begin planning for next year's cold weather season in coordination with cities and other stakeholders. For the central part of the County, the Administration's plan will focus on analyzing utilization of year-round shelters and San Jose's new inclement weather shelters to improve service delivery and access to services next season. Countywide, the Administration's efforts will include: a) implementing the County's Safety-Net Capital Improvement program to increase shelter and drop-in services throughout Santa Clara County; and, b) implementing the countywide Client Engagement and Outreach Team and coordinating with other outreach teams to increase use of the crisis response system. Other services such as Safe Parking and Mobile Hygiene units would complement the CWSP.

For South County, the Administration's plans include two primary activities. The first is working with the Gilroy Compassion Center (GCC) and the City of Gilroy to determine if GCC's drop-in center can be used as shelter during the cold weather season or during Inclement Weather Episodes. The second is to continue working with the State on AOMC. Even if AOMC cannot be used this season, the current activities are helping the County and the State to plan for its use during subsequent seasons. As part of the FY 2017 budget process, the Administration will prepare recommendations for using some or all of the AOMC's 100 units to augment the Gilroy Armory shelter.

Planning for the 2017 cold weather season in North County will be more complex. The Administration intends to continue working with Project WeHOPE and InnVision Shelter Network (IVSN) to maintain or expand cold weather shelter beds in East Palo Alto and Palo Alto, respectively. However, these programs only represent 25 of the 125 cold weather shelter beds that are needed to replace the capacity that existed at the Sunnyvale Armory shelter.

Operations of the current 100-bed shelter at Onizuka is limited to this season only. The license agreement with the City of Sunnyvale requires the County to vacate the property by April 30, 2016, so that Sunnyvale can complete its land swap with the Jay Paul Company and take possession of a new fire station. The Administration must complete plans for the 2017 season so that it can efficiently dispose of, store, or relocate the existing modular structure that serves as the 100-bed shelter.

The Administration will continue working with North County cities, businesses and residents to identify other suitable sites. For example, the Administration has been communicating with LBA Realty on potential sites. Some of LBA Realty's properties are adjacent to 999 Hamlin Court. However, with the FY 2016 season ending in less than three months and options for a permanent site limited, the Administration will also begin assessing the feasibility of using 999 Hamlin Court as a 100-bed cold weather shelter. In the event that a permanent site will not be ready for the start of the FY 2017 season, the Administration will explore options for siting the shelter at a different temporary location for another season.

CHILD IMPACT

The recommended action would have a positive impact on children and youth. Increasing cold weather and inclement weather shelter services would help to meet the basic needs of some homeless families with children.

SENIOR IMPACT

The recommended action would have a positive impact on seniors. Increasing cold weather and inclement weather shelter services would help to meet the basic needs of some homeless seniors.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The recommended action will have no/neutral sustainability implications.

BACKGROUND

On April 15, 2014, the Board directed the Administration to work with HomeFirst, the cities of Mountain View, Palo Alto and Sunnyvale and other stakeholders to identify a replacement facility and funding options for providing cold weather shelter services in North County. To date, the County has not yet obtained a permanent replacement site for the shelter. However, in early December 2015, the County established and opened a temporary shelter facility at Onizuka for the FY 2016 cold weather season. The OSH is responsible for managing and coordinating the countywide crisis response system for homeless persons. This system includes the network of emergency shelters, seasonal shelters, inclement weather shelters, warming centers, and some transitional housing programs.

CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION

The Board would not receive the requested information, and the Administration would not be able to implement a shelter program at AOMC and an inclement weather program at 999 Hamlin Court. In addition, the Administration would need additional direction from the Board regarding planning for the 2017 cold weather season.

STEPS FOLLOWING APPROVAL

Please notify Ky Le (Ky.Le@hhs.sccgov.org) and Bob Dolci (Robert.Dolci@hhs.sccgov.org) in the Office of Supportive Housing.

LINKS:

- Linked To: 79054 : 79054