

CLACKAMAS COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
Sitting/Acting as (if applicable)
Policy Session Worksheet

Presentation Date: December 5, 2017
Length: 30 Minutes

Approx Start Time: 3:30

Approx

Presentation Title: Winter warming shelter update

Department: Health, Housing and Human Services

Presenters: Richard Swift, Jill Smith, Brenda Durbin

Other Invitees:

WHAT ACTION ARE YOU REQUESTING FROM THE BOARD?

Requesting Board consider providing additional county funds to meet shelter and/or housing needs for our most vulnerable residents.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Living houseless is living dangerously. Theft, abuse, and other crimes perpetrated against the houseless are common. People who are unable to attend to their basic hygiene are at higher risk of illness and disease. The situation for people living without a safe place to call home becomes even more dangerous when cold weather sets in. Tragically, we saw the result of this last month when a woman died under the Abernethy Bridge, reportedly due to a fire caused by her efforts to stay warm.

Since the winter of 2010-11, Clackamas County Social Services has contracted with one or more non-profit organizations to provide overnight shelter to houseless people on nights when the temperature falls below 32 degrees. During these episodes of inclement weather, warming centers provide a refuge for persons who are without a safe, warm and dry place to sleep.

In 2013, Social Services was successful in its goal to increase the geographic coverage of the warming center network by contracting with Molalla Communities That Care.

The winter of 2016-17 was one of the coldest ever experienced in Clackamas County. Over the course of the winter, warming centers funded by Clackamas County were open 56 nights and sheltered 547 people, including six children. The per night capacity of the three centers funded by Social Services was 99 individuals. Additionally, shelter space at the Oregon City Residential Center and in Multnomah County were utilized by individuals who are houseless in Clackamas County. It is estimated that, over the course of the winter, as many as 600 individuals from Clackamas County stayed one or more nights in a warming center.

During the two-week period of continuous life threatening weather last winter, the strong commitments of our partners, along with creative problem solving, resulted in extraordinary measures being taken to ensure that everyone who needed shelter received it. Measures taken included:

- Social Services' Transportation Reaching People program transported people from Oregon City to Molalla when The Father's Heart was over capacity.
- In partnership with The Father's Heart, the Oregon City Residential Center opened an unused portion of its facility as a warming center.
- People were transported from the Clackamas Service Center to a shelter at the Mt. Scott Community Center in Multnomah County.
- Warming centers stayed open 24 hours a day to ensure that no one was forced to spend time outdoors during dangerously cold periods.
- Contingency plans were made to open the County Fairgrounds as a warming center. This included a call for county staff to volunteer. 43 County staff responded to the request.

Preparing for the 2017-18 winter season is ongoing.

- Warming Centers open when the forecasted temperature or wind chill is projected to be 33 degrees or colder.
 - The Father's Heart will open as a warming center with a capacity of 49 people.
 - The Annie Ross House, a family shelter that is currently closed as Northwest Housing Alternative redevelops their campus, will open to families. Their capacity is 20 individuals.
 - Molalla Communities That Care has not yet secured a location for its shelter, though they are fairly confident that a facility will be available for this use. It is estimated that their per/night capacity will be between 15 and 20.
 - The Clackamas Service Center, with a capacity of sheltering 30 people each night, is not able to operate as a warming center this year due a fire that damaged its facility. The Service Center expects to be able to offer this service again in the winter of 2018-19.
 - Social Services has changed the criteria for opening a warming center. Consideration will now be made for wind chill as well as actual temperature. Centers may also open when high winds or flooding is forecast.
 - All centers and shelters will open during the nights of 2019 Point-in-Time Count to ensure the most comprehensive count possible.
- Behavioral Health Supports
 - A need was identified last year for behavioral health support at winter shelters and warming centers. Clackamas County Behavioral Health will deploy the 24-7 mobile crisis team to warming centers in the event of a mental health emergency. In the event of an extended weather event, the Behavioral Health Division will deploy an outreach team, via the crisis program at Riverstone. Staff and volunteers from all providers will be trained to access the Behavioral Health Crisis team when needed.

- Impact of changes in Multnomah County
 - The Family Shelter operated by Human Solutions and funded by Multnomah County and the City of Portland will only have capacity to shelter residents of Multnomah County. It is estimated that 50 Clackamas County homeless households accessed the Multnomah County Family Shelter last winter.

- H3S is convening ongoing discussions about increasing capacity and developing contingency plans if we have another extended period of life-threatening weather.
 - Identifying transportation options to transport individuals from shelters that are at capacity to shelters with capacity
 - Identifying agencies with the knowledge base and experience to staff a shelter operation
 - Identifying additional facilities that could be used as a warming center
 - Reconnecting with county staff who offered to volunteer last year to determine their interest and ability to volunteer this year

Current Capacity Compared to Anticipated Need

The number of people needing shelter on any given night is difficult to predict. Last year, during the weeks-long snow and life-threatening cold event, an estimated 200 people from Clackamas County accessed a warming center on any given night. At other times during the winter, the 99 bed capacity of the three contracted providers seemed to be sufficient.

Additional Resources for Houseless People

A four-fold increase in state Emergency Housing Account and State Homeless Assistance Program funds will be used to support warming centers. In addition these dollars will fund:

- One or more providers will be identified to operate a Homeless System Diversion program that will serve an estimated 50 households with homeless prevention and rapid re-housing services. System Diversion is a problem solving strategy that prevents people who are homeless or at imminent or high risk of homelessness from entering the homeless system by helping them identify immediate alternate housing arrangements and, if necessary, connecting them with services and financial assistance to help them return to permanent/stable housing. Homeless system diversion is flexible and may include support to overcome other kinds of barriers that would lead to housing stability. Mediation and conflict resolution are also important elements of homeless system diversion.
- Additional capacity through the Coordinated Housing Access line (CHA) will provide assistance that matches the need of the caller with the appropriate level of support. CHA is the “front door” for most of the supported housing programs operating in the county. Many of the callers to the line do not need the intensive support offered by supported housing programs. Instead they need a few months of rent, or help with move-in costs. These services would provide a “lighter touch” than those offered by the supportive housing program(s).

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (current year and ongoing): Clackamas County provides \$40,000/year in General Fund to support warming centers. Other funds come from the State of Oregon State Homeless Assistance Program (SHAP) and Federal Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP).

Is this item in your current budget? YES NO

What is the cost? Social Services has budgeted \$280,000 for warming center activities for the 2017-18 winter. Contracted costs for 84 beds is estimated to be \$145,000. What is the funding source? \$40,000 in County General Fund and \$220,000 in SHAP and \$20,000 EFSP.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

- How does this item align with your Department's Strategic Business Plan goals?
This item aligns with the Department of Health, Housing and Human Services' goal that Individuals and families in need are healthy and safe
- How does this item align with the County's Performance Clackamas goals?
This item aligns with the county's goal to ensure safe, healthy and secure communities.

LEGAL/POLICY REQUIREMENTS: The recently approved Housing Emergency declaration may speed up the process of bringing additional providers into the warming center network.

PUBLIC/GOVERNMENTAL PARTICIPATION: PGA provides ongoing communication support during periods of inclement weather that helps to ensure that everyone needing shelter knows how to access it.

OPTIONS:

1. Fill the funding gap between the need, which is estimated to be 99 beds with an additional 100 beds on contingency as needed to respond to an extended period of life-threatening cold weather. Actual costs won't be known until discussion with contractors are completed.
2. Fund a best-practice model for serving houseless families with children called Mobile Housing Services that uses a Housing First model that provides families with immediate shelter via a motel voucher, rental deposits, up to 12 months of rent assistance, and wraparound services to promote long-term housing stability.
 - A. Mobile Housing Services to 20 houseless families with children = \$428,400/Year
 - B. Mobile Housing Services to 40 houseless families with children = \$856,800/Year
3. Fund a package of supports including support to the Oregon City Homeless Solutions group and additional staff capacity at Social Services to coordinate warming center activities and to support the housing programs operated by Social Services. Estimated cost \$150,000.
4. Encourage Clackamas County landlords to rent to people experiencing houselessness.
5. Take no action.

RECOMMENDATION:

Any investment the Board chooses to make to support county residents who are houseless will have a positive impact on the lives of some of the most vulnerable county residents. Staff recommends the following priority:

- 2B Mobile Housing Outreach for 40 families
- 2A Mobile Housing Outreach for 20 families
- 1 Fill any funding gap for warming centers
- 3 Fund additional coordination capacity
- 4 Reach out to landlords

ATTACHMENTS: Mobile Housing Services Proposal

SUBMITTED BY:

Division Director/Head Approval _____

Department Director/Head Approval _____

County Administrator Approval _____

For information on this issue or copies of attachments, please contact Brenda Durbin @ 503-655-8641

Mobile Housing Services Proposal

In response to Multnomah County's recent decision to limit their homeless family shelter to families with recent residency in Multnomah County, Clackamas County Social Services is proposing to implement Mobile Housing Services. CCSS has reviewed cost and outcome data on a similar project and based this proposal on those findings.

Mobile Housing Services offer families living on the street, in a car, or in another place not meant for habitation an alternative to emergency shelter and access to long term affordable housing. MHS utilizes motel vouchers, intensive case management, landlord advocacy, access to financial assistance and short term rent assistance to move families with children off the streets and into a home.

		40 Families	20 Families
Motel Vouchers	\$600/week for six weeks	\$144,000	\$72,000
Rent Assistance	12 months of rent assistance @ \$1,000/month and including security deposits @\$2,000	\$560,000	\$280,000
Case Management	Offered via contract with one or more non-profit providers	\$85,000	\$42,500
Materials & Services, including mileage		\$27,000	\$13,500
Subtotal		\$816,000	\$408,000
5% Administration		\$40,800	\$20,400
Total Request		\$856,800	\$428,400