



NEWPORT BEACH

City Council Staff Report

January 23, 2024
Agenda Item No. 18

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

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TITLE: Biannual Update on Homeless Outreach Services

ABSTRACT:

In June 2023, the Newport Beach City Council adopted Resolution No. 2023-41, which set forth the Council's approach to people experiencing homeless within the city. The resolution included a provision requiring staff to report back to the City Council every six months, for two years, on the City of Newport Beach's outreach efforts including, but not limited to, the number of shelter beds acquired/accessed; the funds expended related to homeless related services; the status of all City-directed initiatives; and what actions were taken by the City's partners, providers and staff to enable individuals to successfully exit the street. This report provides an update on the City's homeless outreach efforts for the period from July 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- a) Determine this action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2) and 15060(c)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines because this action will not result in a physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly; and
- b) Receive and file.

DISCUSSION:

Background

The City's homeless services program is managed by the City Manager's Office and accomplished through a combination of staff and contractor resources. In 2023, the City Council reestablished the Newport Beach City Council Homeless Ad Hoc Committee to evaluate the services provided by the City's contractors and consider if additional services were needed. The committee's work culminated in recommendations to the City Council that ultimately led to the Council adopting Resolution No. 2023-41, which set forth the Council's approach to people experiencing homeless within Newport Beach and included a provision requiring staff to report to the City Council on the City's homeless outreach efforts every six months.

Also, as a result of the ad hoc committee's recommendations, the Council adopted Ordinance No. 2023-11, which prohibits interference with public access, unpermitted structures on public property and certain conduct on public property. On August 12, 2023, after providing outreach and education, the Newport Beach Police Department began the phased implementation of the new ordinance, starting with addressing unpermitted structures. All aspects of the ordinance have now been implemented.

Outreach Efforts July 1 – December 31, 2023

In accordance with Resolution No. 2023-41, this report provides an update on the City's homeless outreach efforts for the period from July 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023.

Baseline Count

The City Council desired to have an accurate baseline count of those experiencing homelessness in Newport Beach in 2023 to help measure future actions and success. Under its agreement with the City, City Net completed a census in late November of last year. Staff is awaiting receipt of the final, detailed report; however, City Net has relayed that it determined 68 adults and two children were experiencing homelessness in Newport Beach at the time of the census. It should be noted that City Net includes in its count individuals that responded to the survey and those that refused. For the November 2023 census, 40 people participated in the survey and 28 did not.

Shelter Beds

Costa Mesa Bridge Shelter

In June of last year, the City Council approved an amendment to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the City of Costa Mesa to add five more Newport Beach designated beds at the Costa Mesa Bridge Shelter, for a total of 25 beds available for Newport Beach's exclusive use. The beds were installed and available as of late September.

Further, under the amended MOU, the City is now able to use up to six of Costa Mesa's beds at \$155 per bed, per day, when available. In early January of this year, Costa Mesa had some of its beds available for the first time since the agreement was amended and offered Newport Beach use of up to three beds. To date, Newport Beach has been able to fill two of those beds.

Over the six-month period of July 1 – December 31, 2023, Newport Beach staff and contractors were able to help 33 individuals enter the Costa Mesa Bridge Shelter.

Yale Navigation Center

As a member of the County's Central Service Planning Area, individuals experiencing homelessness in Newport Beach have access to the County's Yale Navigation Center, when beds are available. During the six-month period, four individuals from Newport Beach were accepted at the Yale Navigation Center.

Illumination Foundation Meeting

Councilmembers Lauren Kleiman and Robyn Grant, along with City staff, met with representatives of the Illumination Foundation in September to learn about the nonprofit's recuperative care / medical respite program, and how the Newport Beach outreach team can refer individuals needing medical care to the program. The Illumination Foundation provides bridge housing where individuals experiencing homelessness can receive medical oversight, case management and other resources while they recuperate. City staff and its contractors have been informed of the program, but have not yet been able to refer any individuals to the program.

City-Directed Initiatives

Permanent Supportive Housing

On July 11, 2023, the City Council approved a one-time allocation of \$3,000,000 for a proposed, permanent supportive housing project in the City of Costa Mesa. The 128-room Travelodge North Motel, located at 1400 Bristol Street, would be converted into 78 housing units by American Family Housing via Project Homekey funding. Under the agreement, the City would receive 12 units dedicated to people experiencing homelessness that have Newport Beach ties. The County of Orange, the developer, and the Cities of Newport Beach and Costa Mesa (which also agreed to provide funding for the project), are awaiting notice from the State of California Department of Housing and Community Development as to whether the project has been approved under the Homekey program. That decision is expected in the first quarter of 2024.

Good Giving Campaign

The City is working with RMG Communications to update the Good Giving donation campaign with clearer messaging, a new video and promotional materials. The Good Giving program encourages people to donate to the City or a local nonprofit rather than handing cash or comfort items to people panhandling, as that practice can actually prolong an individual's homelessness and prevent them from accepting services that could help put them on a path to housing. Examples of how the City uses the donations it receives to help support individuals interested in exiting the street include funding travel expenses for family reunifications, purchasing household items when people move into their new homes, or providing clothing for job interviews. From July 1 to December 31, 2023, the City received \$3,280 in Good Giving donations.

Homeless Solutions Collaborative

Staff continues to host the Homeless Solutions Collaborative quarterly meeting to share information on the City's homeless outreach initiatives, contracted services, and housing placements. The Collaborative members represent local nonprofits, faith leaders and the City of Costa Mesa. Meetings were held on July 27 and November 15, 2023.

Amended Agreement for Be Well OC Mobile Crisis Response Team Services

On August 22, the City Council approved an amendment to the City’s agreement with Mind OC for the Be Well OC Mobile Crisis Response Team program. The amendment called for a greater focus on the Be Well team proactively working with the community’s unhoused to help achieve street exits. The amended agreement includes program enhancements such as having Mind OC provide housing navigation, increased case management support, and expanded data collection and reporting. The amendment extended the term of the agreement to June 30, 2024, and increased the contract amount by \$956,775.

Request for Proposals for Outreach Provider

City Net provides outreach and engagement consultant services to assist individuals experiencing homelessness in Newport Beach to exit the street. With the term of the City’s current professional services agreement with City Net expiring on February 25, 2024, the City issued a Request for Proposals for homeless outreach and engagement services in December 2023. Staff is currently reviewing the proposals received and anticipates bringing an agreement to the City Council in February.

Data Collection and Reporting

City staff and contractors track their homeless-outreach-related activities monthly. Data collected by the Police, Public Works and Recreation & Senior Services Departments, as well as contractors, City Net and Be Well OC, is included as Attachment A. The attached report also provides information, by month, on street exits and housing placements. For the reporting period, there were 51 street exits and 10 individuals housed.

In addition, staff posts a monthly Homeless Data Dashboard on the City website which features the total number of outreach contacts, expenditures and other metrics related to homeless services outreach. This fall, staff added new data details and trends that highlights expenses and street exits. The information can be found at newportbeachca.gov/homeless.

Funds Expended

The City expended the following Between July 1 and December 31, 2023 in support of its homeless outreach program:

Services in Support of Homeless Outreach	Expensed July 1- Dec 31
City of Costa Mesa: Bridge Shelter	\$558,288
City Net: Homeless Outreach Services	\$84,563
Be Well OC: Mobile Crisis Response Team	\$339,754
RMG Communication: Good Giving Campaign Revamp	\$8,085
City Homeless Assistance*	\$7,366
Total**	\$998,056

*The City has successfully received reimbursements for homeless assistance expenditures in the amount of \$7,569, covering all expenses through December 31 with some leftover funding.

**This table does not include the salaries and benefits of Homeless Services Manager or Homeless Liaison Officer

FISCAL IMPACT:

The City continues to allocate significant funding to support its homeless outreach program. The Fiscal Year 2023-24 budget includes \$3.1 million for Outreach Services (City Manager's Office Account #0102041) with includes funding for contract services and shelter beds.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

Staff recommends the City Council find this action is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2) (the activity will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment) and 15060(c)(3) (the activity is not a project as defined in Section 15378) of the CEQA Guidelines, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, because it has no potential for resulting in physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly.

NOTICING:

The agenda item has been noticed according to the Brown Act (72 hours in advance of the meeting at which the City Council considers the item).

ATTACHMENT:

Attachment A – Data Reports