



**Mission:** *Build partnerships and promote strong collaborative action to ensure all residents within the County have stable, safe, and healthy places to live.*

## **Housing for Health Partnership (H4HP) Policy Board**

### **Regular Meeting Minutes**

**August 16, 2023; 3 pm**

#### **Call to Order/Welcome**

*Present: Heather Rodgers, Jaime Goldstein, Judy Hutchison, Justin Cummings, Kate Nester, Manu Koenig, Martine Watkins, Tom Stagg, Lisa Murphy, Tiffany Cantrell-Warren*

*Absent: Mariah Lyons, Susan True, Suzi Merriam, Tamara Vides*

*Additions and Deletions to the Agenda: None*

#### **Non-Agenda Public Comment**

*No public comment received.*

#### **Action Items (vote required)**

1. Approval of Minutes: June 21, 2023, Regular Meeting

*Discussion: None.*

*Public Comment: None.*

*Motion to Approve: Judy Hutchison*

*Motion Seconded: Jaime Goldstein*

*Abstentions: None*

*Board Action: Motion passed with all members.*

2. Recommendations related to the annual HUD Continuum of Care (CoC) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

*Discussion: Housing for Health Division staff shared a powerpoint presentation on the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) release of its annual Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the 2023 Continuum of Care (CoC) program. Discussed that the Santa Cruz County CoC will compete nationally with 450 other CoCs by coordinating systems, submitting a narrative of their activities and performance, an extensive application package, and priority ranking of projects. Discussed how this process creates opportunities to make changes, renew projects, and apply for new funding. However, it is possible for low-ranking projects to lose funding. Mentioned the total possible funding for Santa Cruz County projects, before rent adjustments, is \$6.2 million. Mentioned current HUD CoC grant recipients include County of Santa Cruz Human Services Departments, County of Santa Cruz Health Services Agency, Housing Authority of the County of Santa Cruz, Encompass Community Services, Housing Matters, Families in Transition, Community Action Board, Walnut Avenue Family & Women's Center, Bill Wilson Center, Covenant House, and Monarch Services. Mentioned \$379K is*



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*available for new projects and \$106K is available for DV projects. Discussed that Encompass Community Services (ECS) voluntarily gave up \$106,047, which can now be reallocated towards new permanent supportive housing (PSH), Rapid Rehousing (RRH), joint RRH Transitional Housing (RRH-TH), and/or Coordinated Entry System (CES) grants. Mentioned HUD grants cannot be used for shelter. Questions were raised about why not reallocate toward existing projects that are doing well. Board members suggested giving the Review and Ranking Committee authority up to 7% to adjust the available funds for new applications from underperforming projects. Discussed the Review and Ranking Committee, which includes four non-conflicted individuals: Larry Imwalle, Heather Rogers, Carlos Landaverry, and Karen Kern. Their role is to review and evaluate project applications by using objective criteria and recommending a final ranked Project Priority List by September 12, 2023. Discussed slight adjustments to the rating criteria to support the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) Initiative, encourage rental assistance, and encourage housing for populations that are excluded from other housing options. The complete CoC-wide HUD application deadline is September 28, 2023. Concerns and questions were raised about Board members not being able to review the Review and Ranking Committee recommendations before applications are submitted to HUD. Board members suggested Housing for Health staff to provide meeting minutes of the Review and Ranking committee meeting.*

**Public Comment:**

*None.*

**Motion:**

*Approve the reallocation and addition of \$106,047 from ECS projects voluntarily given up to the \$379,274 CoC bonus making a total of \$485,321 available for eligible new PSH, RRH, RRH-TH, and/or CES grants; Approve the slight adjustments as presented made to CoC project rating criteria used to competitively score projects; Approve authority for Rating and Ranking committee to move up to 7% of funds from existing poor performing or underspending projects as part of its process; and, Approve granting of authority to the Review and Ranking Committee to make final project selection/ranking decisions to be confirmed by the Housing for Health Partnership (H4HP) Policy Board at its next regularly scheduled meeting (October 19, 2023).*

**Motion to Approve:**

*Manu Koenig*

**Motion Seconded:**

*Heather Rodgers*

**Abstentions:**

*None*

**Board Action:**

*Motion passed with all members.*

#### **Information Items (no vote required):**

##### **3. HMIS Privacy and Security Updates and Training Completed - [Santa Cruz HMIS Home \(bitfocus.com\)](https://bitfocus.com)**

**Discussion:**

*Reviewed plans to implement the new federal HMIS data standards with current and future users of Homeless Management information System (HMIS). Focus*

*Santa Cruz County Housing for Health Partnership Policy Board Regular Meeting Minutes – August 16, 2023*



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*Strategies (consultant) and BitFocus (HMIS vendor) will support more frequent and in-person trainings for HMIS users. New HMIS privacy and security standards have been implemented.. Mentioned all organizations using HMIS have signed new participation agreements, and all 170 users have completed updated training. Discussed the Housing for Health Division, Focus Strategies, and BitFocus will prepare new trainings that incorporates the new HUD HMIS standards starting on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023. Discussed how the new standards and training aim to enhance the appropriate use and handling of client information, improve data quality, and increase service coordination while capturing participant demographics and tracking program outcomes.*

#### 4. New Coordinated Entry Effort Launched

**Discussion:** *Reviewed the new adopted Coordinated Entry System policies and the implementation efforts are in the early phases. Highlighted that the Housing for Health Division staff have taken several actions including developing new coordinated entry tools and forms, updating HMIS with new data fields and processes, conducting data analysis, developing reports to help match participants to resources, and providing updated information to the community via newsletters and the Housing for Health Partnership website. Discussed that over the coming months the Housing for Health Division plans to expand the number of Connectors to 50+ individuals and improve their effectiveness through networking and training.*

#### **Report/Discussion Items** (no vote required):

##### 5. 2023 Santa Cruz County Point in Time (PIT) Count Report

**Discussion:** *Reviewed the Santa Cruz County Point in Time Count Report, and reported the total number of people experiencing homelessness is the lowest number in the history of PIT counts in Santa Cruz County. Highlighted that the number of people experiencing homelessness in Watsonville increased by 15%, and the Hispanic/Latinx population experiencing homelessness and unsheltered persons sleeping in vehicles has reached the highest percentage ever recorded in Santa Cruz County PIT counts. Discussed how this year the extra federal funding and Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHVs) were the most impactful investments within the CoC. Mentioned that The Housing for Health Partnership is eligible for additional HUD funding, and the Housing Authority has received an allocation of 41 additional Stability vouchers to help households experiencing homelessness due to our collective performance with EHVs and in other programs.*

##### 6. California Statewide Study of People Experiencing Homelessness

**Discussion:** *Discussed how the UC San Francisco Benioff Homeless and Housing Initiative published the most extensive study of homelessness in the United States since the mid-1990s. Discussed the comprehensive look at the causes and consequences of*

*Santa Cruz County Housing for Health Partnership Policy Board Regular Meeting Minutes – August 16, 2023*



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*homelessness in California. Discussed the recommended policy changes in the report and highlighted the importance of enforcing tenant rights. Mentioned The Housing Assistance Fund has provided quick and flexible financial aid to prevent homelessness. Discussed how the lack of sustainable funding poses a significant obstacle in providing the necessary assistance to individuals experiencing or at-risk of homelessness.*

**7. Homelessness and Housing California FY24 Budget Update**

**Discussion:** *Discussed Key parts of the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) summary of FY23-24 California policy changes related to homelessness. Highlighted \$1 billion statewide funding for Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention round 5, which requires approval of a regional homeless action plan. Mentioned that the new state guidelines for the regional plan will be issued by September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Discussed how local communities will then have 180 days to complete and submit the new regional plan and have the option to spend \$250 thousand of the HHAP 5 funding to help with the planning process. Mentioned that \$400 million Encampment Resolution funding will be made available statewide and Supplemental Homekey funding of \$170 million statewide will be available for big cities and counties that have a compliant Housing Element and a regionally coordinated homelessness action plan.*

**Board Member Announcements**

*No additional announcements.*

**Adjournment**

**Next Meeting:** **Wednesday, October 18, 2023, 3 pm**

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