



MEMORANDUM

Date: August 9, 2016

To: The Honorable Chair and Members
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "CH Huckelberry", is written over the typed name and title.

Re: **Report on Pima County Expenditures to Address Homelessness**

Introduction

At the May 17, 2016 Board of Supervisors meeting, the Board approved Ordinance No. 2016-30, which prohibits the loitering of pedestrians on traffic medians on County highways. The Ordinance declares a pedestrian who is in the median refuge area longer than one traffic cycle a trespasser. While the primary purpose of the Ordinance is to enhance vehicle and pedestrian safety, the Board noted this action could decrease panhandling in these intersections. Expressing concern that such action could impact the homeless of Pima County, the Board directed staff to return in 60 days with a summary of the County expenditures made to support and assist the homeless. This information is provided below.

Background

During Fiscal Year (FY) 2016/17, Pima County will spend an estimated \$4 million to provide services such as homeless camp cleanup; services to individuals among the jail population who have a serious mental illness; and additional supportive services such as housing and emergency shelter to assist approximately 2,500 homeless individuals and families. County departments involved in service delivery include; Community Development and Neighborhood Conservation (CDNC); Community Services, Employment and Training (CSET); Environmental Quality (DEQ); Health; Library District; Regional Flood Control District (RFCD); and the Sheriff's Department (PCSD).

The Homeless in Pima County

For the purpose of this report, the broadest definition of homelessness will be used, *"Individuals and families who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence..."* Definitions of homelessness from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and other organizations vary. Some focus on chronically homeless persons – an unaccompanied homeless individual who has been continuously homeless for one year or more (i.e., sleeping on the streets or in a homeless shelter) and/or a homeless person with a disabling condition. However, many persons such as "couch-surfers," encounter episodic homelessness. These individuals and others with intermittent access to a bed are not

included in the HUD definition. The inconsistent definitions of homelessness make documenting accurate counts of homeless individuals and families problematic.

Anyone who loses a job and experiences an extended period of unemployment can become homeless. However, veterans, Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender/Queer youth, domestic violence victims, persons with serious mental illness, persons with substance abuse disorders, and ex-offenders are at-risk populations and account for disproportionately high numbers of homeless in the community. Chronically homeless persons and families with children often face the biggest barriers of being connected to appropriate community resources in order to access housing and employment.

In June, the Tucson Pima Collaboration to End Homelessness (TPCH) announced a decline in homelessness in Pima County. This year, 1,765 homeless persons were identified; a decrease of approximately 600 persons from 2012. The findings include data from the January 2016 Point-in-Time (PIT) Count data report, which identified 381 unsheltered homeless persons. While these estimates indicate a decrease in homelessness, the numbers do not account for individuals not reached at the time of the survey. Many organizations serving the homeless population assert these numbers are not a true representation of the total number of homeless in Pima County.

Most of the individuals surveyed were single, non-Hispanic white males. The subpopulations of homeless in Table 1 below indicate complex, overlapping community needs in mental health, substance abuse, domestic violence, disability, affordable housing, unemployment and health.

Table 1
Subpopulations (Unsheltered)

Chronically Homeless Individuals	120
Chronically Homeless Veterans	23
Adults with a Serious Mental Illness	161
Adults with a Substance Abuse Disorder	122
Adults with HIV/AIDS	4
Victims of Domestic Violence	89

It is notable that the findings in Table 2 below are consistent with a Match 2015 survey of occupants of Veinte de Agosto Park in downtown Tucson conducted on behalf of the Primavera Foundation and underwritten in part by the Pima County Health Department. At that time, 31 were surveyed, representing roughly one-third of the occupants. Males accounted for 55 percent of the group; 61 percent identified as being white/Caucasian; and 19 percent Mexican-American or Hispanic. Of those surveyed, 36 percent have lived in Tucson their entire lives and an additional 12 percent moved here when they were children; the rest having moved to the area within five years. Two homeless women reported being

in their third trimester of pregnancy, and seven others reported having disabilities that hindered daily life. In addition, 35 percent self-reported Serious Mental Illness (SMI); 91 percent of these individuals said they are not on medication but desired to be; and 20 percent of the people surveyed had dogs living with them.

Pima County Homeless Protocol

In June 2015, the Pima County Homeless Encampment Protocol (Administrative Procedure 50-02) was formalized, providing a clear procedure to offer humanitarian and human services resources to homeless camp inhabitants and address the facilitation of law enforcement and mediation activities on affected properties.

Per the Pima County Homeless Encampment Protocol, homeless camp complaints are forwarded to DEQ; basic response by the PCSD; RFCD first help move homeless people off the streets and into shelters; and cleanups by DEQ. In the event of criminal activity, PCSD will intervene and may file criminal charges. Nurses, behavioral health counselors and case managers help stabilize homeless persons in order to attain housing. Those who are in need of assistance in obtaining Social Security disability benefits are identified and given assistance in obtaining that resource to attain stable housing. Those who can seek employment are provided assistance in finding jobs through CSET.

FY 2015/16 Funding Snapshot

Some of the costs associated with addressing homelessness are difficult to identify, as many services for the homeless overlap with services for low-income persons who are not displaced but may be considered *“at risk”* for homelessness. Additionally, many agencies do not document homeless clients served. In other cases, County funds are allocated for specific homelessness services.

**Table 2
 FY 2015/16 Homeless Funding***

Service	Local Funds	Grants
Housing	\$ 94,400	\$1,647,239
Health/Behavioral Healthcare	999,057	-
Employment	120,000	430,720
Case Management	80,200	343,529
Homeless Database (HMIS)	60,000	221,492
Food and Supplies	125,000	-
Community Cleanup	70,000	-
Administration	-	97,975
Totals	\$1,358,657	\$2,740,955
Total All Funding		\$4,289,612

*Excludes Prevention and Outreach Activities

In FY 2016/17, 19 nonprofit agencies and other organizations will provide services to the homeless population, in part supported by County funding through General Funds and HUD grants. Pima County also operates services that directly connect with homeless persons. Pima County departments and programs with staff that provide services include the CDNC, CSET, Sullivan Jackson Employment Center (SJEC), DEQ, Health, Library District, RFCD, and PCSD.

As discussed above, PCSD can be the first point of contact between the County and the homeless population. Sheriff's deputies are tasked with placing a homeless individual in a shelter or making an arrest based on the circumstances of the initial contact.

DEQ is at times responsible for cleaning up homeless camps, human waste in parks and other areas, or making other disposals. DEQ has received and addressed an average of 10 homeless encampment complaints annually, which have been on the rise in 2016. DEQ spends approximately \$55,000 per year on cleanups.

RFCD removed a total of 17 homeless camps in 2015 totaling \$11,000 in costs.

In addition, the Pima County Health Department, in collaboration with the Pima County Library, placed nurses in libraries to provide basic health services such as assessment, case management, nutrition and health education, referrals to community resources, blood pressure screenings, and outreach. In 2014, this initiative served 436 homeless individuals – an increase of 236 percent from 2013. In addition, Pima County operates SJEC to provide assistance for homeless youth and adults to assist them in entering the workforce and becoming self-sufficient. SJEC is funded by more than \$1.5 million each year to help homeless obtain jobs. Significant portions of this funding are subcontracted to agencies for housing and homeless case management, which is reflected in Table 2 above.

Additionally, the Health Department has developed and disseminated best-practice guidelines to assist groups in providing food to the homeless. The guidelines delineate the types of food and drinks that do not require a Health permit, as well as the types of permits that may be appropriate for this type of activity. These efforts have been in coordination with stakeholders who serve this vulnerable population.

Pima County is part of the Emergency Solutions Grant Committee of the TPCCH Continuum of Care Program; a coalition of representatives from community organizations, government entities, businesses and individuals that identify local trends in homelessness, establishes priorities and locate gaps in services.

Information collected via interviews with homeless persons is entered into the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), a data collection tool used to record data regarding homeless persons and shelter services from participating providers. Per HUD requirements, the HMIS model was implemented by TPCCH and Pima County in 2008. Pima County, in

coordination with TPCH, is compliant with collecting and sharing HMIS client entry and exit history throughout the system. HMIS is a valuable tool for creating an overall picture of homelessness to inform local planning and evaluation. Participants in HMIS are required to report data findings to HUD; but it is important to note the HMIS system does not capture all homeless seeking services, only those who seek services through a TPCH-related agency.

Conclusion

Pima County recognizes homelessness is a serious health and safety concern for the community that must be addressed with ongoing, coordinated efforts in utilizing taxpayer dollars efficiently, participating in community collaboration, and complying with federal initiatives. While Pima County is in compliance with performing certain mandatory activities on behalf of the homeless population, the County also exceeds these requirements through allocating General Funds and grants for additional services. By persisting in these strategies, Pima County continues to make strides in addressing homelessness.

CHH/lab

- c: The Honorable Chris Nanos, Pima County Sheriff
- Jan Leshar, Deputy County Administrator for Community and Health Services
- John Bernal, Deputy County Administrator for Public Works
- Tom Burke, Deputy County Administrator for Administration
- Margaret Kish, Director, Community Development and Neighborhood Conservation
- Charles Casey, Director, Community Services, Employment and Training
- Ursula Nelson, Department of Environmental Quality
- Dr. Francisco Garcia, Director, Health Department
- Melinda Cervantes, Director, Library District
- Suzanne Shields, Director, Regional Flood Control District