

Continuum of Care Progress Report

Date prepared: July 1, 2013

For the period: April 1, 2013 – June 30, 2013

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Program Overview

This report is intended to serve as the Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG) fourth quarter progress report for Continuum of Care planning services during the contract period July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013.

The Continuum of Care (CoC) is a HUD term referring to the “continuum” of services allowing individuals to move from homelessness to emergency shelter, transitional housing and, ultimately, permanent housing. Through this process, individuals in need of supportive services are provided necessary resources to address root causes of homelessness.

The CoC Plan is a document describing a community’s comprehensive response to homelessness. This document is a prerequisite for submitting an application to HUD’s CoC grant program. The 2012 application was submitted on January 16, 2013.

With a CoC Plan in place, local organizations were able to apply for \$385,008 in CoC renewal funding for the 2012 application cycle. On March 13, 2013, HUD announced renewal awards and Merced’s programs were granted \$388,144.

Program Year Goal set by CoC General Collaborative

Implementation of the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness.

Status of Goal

The 10-Year Plan was approved by the MCAG Governing Board in May 2011. The Implementation Team (10-Year Plan Recommendation 20) was appointed by the MCAG Governing Board in September 2011. May 2013 marked the second anniversary of the 10-Year Plan. Goals to date:

- Recommendation 1 - Adopt a “Housing First Model/Rapid Re-housing Approach” and begin implementing it immediately. **Outcome:** Model/Approach was adopted immediately.
- Recommendation 2 – Obtain Shelter Plus Care Certificates. **Outcome:** The Housing Authority of Merced County is currently administering eight vouchers. Along with permanent housing, clients are receiving supportive services from Mental Health.
- Recommendation 3 – Create Permanent Supportive Housing Units. **Outcome:** Merced County Mental Health opened Project Hope Westside. The program provides 10, dually diagnosed, chronically homeless mental health clients housing, basic needs and

individualized intensive services as clinically appropriate in Los Banos. As of June 6, 2013, eight persons are in the program.

- Recommendation 4 - Obtain HUD Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) Vouchers. **Outcome:** Housing Authority of the County of Merced received 25 HUD-VASH Vouchers – HUD-VASH Vouchers will support 25 veterans in finding and maintaining permanent housing. HUD provides a Housing Choice Section 8 Voucher and VA provides case management and support for veterans transitioning from homelessness to permanent housing. Currently, 23 veterans are housed, one veteran has a voucher and is searching for housing, and one veteran is pending eligibility for a voucher. The Veterans Administration has a local Licensed Clinical Social Worker who provides the case management and works at the Veterans Community Based Outpatient Clinic located at 340 E. Yosemite Avenue in Merced.
- Recommendation 8 – “...Funding to increase homelessness prevention resources will also be the focus of a funding request by the Community Action Agency to the City of Merced Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) by the end of the calendar year.” **Outcome:** Community Action Agency applied for CDBG funds and was awarded \$19,980. Fourteen families were assisted with these funds. Applying and receiving these funds also satisfies Recommendation 12 of the 10-Year Plan.
- Recommendation 13 – “...Work with the County Department of Mental Health (DMH) to target Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) services to chronically homeless persons using data that documents length of homelessness and disabling conditions. Currently, the Department is able to provide funding for 50 homeless persons with mental illness who are often chronically homeless and have other disabling conditions. A request will be for funding to serve an additional 10 persons during the three months after the implementation of the 10-Year Plan. **Outcome:** ACT services have been expanded by Mental Health to include an additional 10 persons.
- Recommendation 17 – Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) – Encourage all homeless service providers to participate in HMIS which is designed to record and store client level information concerning the characteristics and service needs of homeless persons. **Outcome:** Community Action Agency is the CoC’s HMIS administrator. CoC HUD grantees are required to enter data in HMIS. Currently, one non-HUD funded homeless service provider inputs in HMIS. Other non-HUD funded agencies are seeking further information to potentially participate in HMIS.
- Recommendation 18 - Street Count – **Outcome:** The 2013 street count took place on the morning of January 23rd 2013. The surveys will be conducted on January 25th 2013. The annual county-wide homeless count and survey identifies and enumerates various sub-populations such as veterans, chronically homeless persons, families, youth, ex-offenders and others. This data helps communities understand changes in trends among homeless populations, assess programs, justify requests for additional resources, comply with HUD and other stakeholders, raise awareness, and measure community progress toward preventing and ending homelessness. The final report was completed May 2013.
- Recommendation 19 - Cost Study – Engage UC Merced or other regional university to assist in the creation of a cost study concerning chronically homeless individuals in Merced County. **Outcome:** A Stanislaus State University student conducted a literature review during the fall 2012 semester. The literature review provided information on the methodologies that have been used to measure the cost of homelessness for a community

and evaluated the best approach for Merced. A discussion was held on April 25th to discuss availability of data with public and private service providers. A proposal by CSU Stanislaus is expected in July 2013. Funding for the cost study activities have been granted from the City of Merced’s CDBG funds as well as from the Human Services Agency.

Special Events/Activities

June 21, 2013 – The third annual Merced Homeless Connect took place from 9:00am-3:00pm at Central Presbyterian Church’s Hoffmeister Center located at 1920 Canal Street in Merced. The purpose of the event is to make available a proven one-day, one-stop setting to welcome people who are homeless to a wide range of resources and services from various public and private service providers. The focus of the event is to reduce the barriers to housing and employments as well as to offer community hospitality to homeless persons. There were approximately 36 service providers and 40 volunteers who served 235-250 homeless individuals. Project Homeless Connect is Recommendation 15 of the 10-Year Plan.

Quarterly Meetings Summary

Throughout the quarter, MCAG staff coordinated and/or facilitated CoC meetings, as well as meetings related to 10-Year Plan, as outlined below. Agenda and minutes for Executive Council and General Collaborative Meetings are available at the Merced County Association of Governments.

Fourth QUARTER – April 1, 2013- June 30, 2013

04/17/2013	CoC General Collaborative Meeting	28 Attendees
04/25/2013	Cost Study Meeting	19 Attendees
05/23/2013	CoC General Collaborative Meeting	19 Attendees
06/07/2013	Homeless Connect Meeting	16 Attendees
06/12/2013	Homeless Connect Service Provider Training	Approx. 20 Attendees
06/19/2013	CoC General Collaborative Meeting	28 Attendees
06/20/2013	Homeless Connect Volunteer Training	Approx. 10 Attendees

Referrals

- 04/17/2013 – I spoke to a male who called for housing information. I provided him information and phone numbers to Parsons House, Rescue Mission, Atwater River Church, LifeLine CDC, and Turning Point Community Programs.
- 05/15/2013 - I provided information to an inquiry from a female regarding “prisoner released facilities available.” She stated she knew of a recently released male who was living under a bridge. I gave her phone numbers and contact information for the Rescue Mission, Monika Grasley, and Turning Point Community Programs.

Program Staff

- Alicia Ochoa-Jones – Project lead
- Robin Lamas – Administrative staff who prints brochures as needed
- Judi Perry – Accountant whom processes invoices
- Lori Flanders – Program Manager

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