

**COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA ITEM TRANSMITTAL**

(1) DEPARTMENT Social Services	(2) MEETING DATE 1/12/2016	(3) CONTACT/PHONE Laurel Weir 781-1833	
(4) SUBJECT Status report on implementation of the contract with Transitions Mental Health Association for the 50 Now Program, which provides housing and supportive services for chronically homeless individuals. All Districts.			
(5) RECOMMENDED ACTION It is recommended that the Board receive and file this report.			
(6) FUNDING SOURCE(S) N/A	(7) CURRENT YEAR FINANCIAL IMPACT \$0	(8) ANNUAL FINANCIAL IMPACT \$0	(9) BUDGETED? Yes
(10) AGENDA PLACEMENT { } Consent { } Presentation { } Hearing (Time Est. ___) { X } Board Business (Time Est. <u>45 min</u>)			
(11) EXECUTED DOCUMENTS { } Resolutions { } Contracts { } Ordinances { X } N/A			
(12) OUTLINE AGREEMENT REQUISITION NUMBER (OAR) N/A		(13) BUDGET ADJUSTMENT REQUIRED? BAR ID Number: { } 4/5 Vote Required { X } N/A	
(14) LOCATION MAP N/A	(15) BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT? No	(16) AGENDA ITEM HISTORY { } N/A Date: <u>6/5/2015, 8/26/2014</u>	
(17) ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE REVIEW Morgan Torell			
(18) SUPERVISOR DISTRICT(S) All Districts			

County of San Luis Obispo



TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Social Services / Laurel Weir
781-1833

DATE: 1/12/2016

SUBJECT: Status report on implementation of the contract with Transitions Mental Health Association for the 50 Now Program, which provides housing and supportive services for chronically homeless individuals. All Districts.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board receive and file this report.

DISCUSSION

Background

On August 26, 2014, the Board of Supervisors approved a three year contract with Transitions Mental Health Association (TMHA) in the amount of \$1,860,098 to place 50 vulnerable, chronically homeless individuals into housing and provide supportive services for those individuals to help them maintain their housing. That program, called 50 Now, is a partnership between the County, TMHA, and the Housing Authority of the City of San Luis Obispo (HASLO). This is the second presentation to your Board to report on the progress of 50 Now program implementation. The next report will be approximately 21 months into program implementation.

The 50 Now program uses a "Housing First" approach, which is considered a best practice by the Federal government for addressing chronic homelessness. Housing First programs provide permanent housing with intensive supportive services to stabilize individuals and families in housing. Program participants enter permanent housing straight from the streets or emergency shelter with few barriers to housing entry and are offered services (though participation is not required), and there is no time limit in the length of stay in the housing. Participants in Housing First programs still must agree to meet regularly with their case manager, pay their rent on time, comply with the terms of their lease, and allow their neighbors the peaceful enjoyment of their own premises.

For the 50 Now program, rent is subsidized by a Federal Housing Choice Voucher (formerly known as the Section 8 program). HASLO has made 50 Housing Choice Vouchers available to ensure that the housing remains affordable to the participants. Each 50 Now participant placed into housing receives a voucher. Vouchers may be used to help pay for apartments, rooms in shared housing, or other housing where the rent is at or below 40% of the Fair Market Rent for the county and where the units meet minimal habitation standards.

Program Participant Selection

50 Now program participants are selected through the use of a standardized assessment tool, called the Vulnerability Index-Services Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT). The VI-SPDAT is recognized by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development as an approved tool for prioritizing participants for available, permanent supportive housing.

In August 2014, just under 300 homeless persons were surveyed using the VI-SPDAT tool. The survey was conducted across the county at homeless service agencies, meal programs, the jail, selected street locations, French Hospital, and health care programs for homeless or low income persons. VI-SPDAT results were used to determine vulnerability and a list of the 53 persons rated most vulnerable was provided to TMHA. The three additional persons were provided on the assumption that at least some of the initial 50 persons would not be available to participate in the program. TMHA staff then attempted to reach out to all 53 persons on the list. Thirty seven of the most vulnerable persons were housed from that initial list, along with three family members, and 16 from the original list were determined not to be available. Reasons persons were determined not to be available included death, placement in housing through other programs, inability to qualify for Housing Choice Vouchers, or because the persons could not be found.

In May and June 2015, 231 persons were surveyed at the same or similar locations as the August 2014 survey around the county. New survey sites included Twin Cities Hospital, Arroyo Grande Hospital, and the County Mental Health office in Atascadero. In the May/June 2015 survey, persons were prioritized based on their VI-SPDAT score and a list of 24 additional names was provided to TMHA. TMHA staff has contacted 20 persons on the second list and had housed eight additional persons from that group as of September 30th.

Goals and Outcomes

According to the terms of the Contract, TMHA would seek to achieve the following milestones:

1. Within 9 months, TMHA would permanently house 17 individuals
2. Within 15 months, TMHA would permanently house 34 individuals (cumulative)
3. Within 21 months, TMHA would permanently house 50 individuals (cumulative)

As of September 30, 2015, just over one year into program implementation, a total of 44 persons on the lists have been placed into housing, along with three family members. Of those placed into housing, 38 persons (86%) have remained in their housing, three persons have exited to other permanent housing, and three persons have exited back to the streets. Of the 27 persons who were placed into housing at least six months ago or longer (as of September, 2015), 24 persons (89%) have remained in housing for at least six months.

The average time in housing as of September 30, 2015 was 200 days and the average time from initial engagement by TMHA staff to placement into housing was 40.2 days. TMHA reports the time to placement has been lengthened by the difficulty of finding affordable housing and where the landlord will agree to accept the Housing Choice Voucher. Additionally, when the participants need housing accessible to persons with disabilities or housing that will accept pets, it often takes longer to find housing.

In addition to the milestones noted above for housing, the contract with TMHA also listed ten performance objectives, listed below.

Table A: Contract Performance Objectives

Performance Objective	Target	Outcome to Date	Explanation of how outcome data was obtained	Comments
i. 50% of successfully housed participants will report improved self-sufficiency via a standardized assessment tool within 12 months of being housed.	50% will show improvements in self-sufficiency	100% showed improvements in self-sufficiency	Progress was measured using a standardized self sufficiency measurement tool	None.

Performance Objective	Target	Outcome to Date	Explanation of how outcome data was obtained	Comments
ii. Housed participants with a history of incarceration will demonstrate a 50% reduction in number of bed days in an incarceration setting, in the first 12 months of being housed compared to the previous 12 months.	50% reduction in bed days	97.6% reduction in bed days	Jail data was obtained from the County Sheriff's office	Data was gathered for 34 individuals who signed releases, not all of whom had arrest records. Total number of bed days in the one year before housing was 246, and the total number of bed days post-housing was 6.
iii. Housed participants with a history of citations and arrest will demonstrate a 50% reduction in number of citations and arrests, in the first 12 months of being housed compared to the previous 12 months.	50% reduction	95% reduction	Jail data was obtained from the County Sheriff's office	Of the 34 individuals that provided releases for this information, 14 had a history of arrests prior to housing, for a total of 41 arrests in the one year prior to housing. Post-housing, there were only two arrests among the participants. TMHA reports those two participants with arrests were arrested for crimes committed prior to being housed. Both participants also had other charges, primarily for nuisance crimes. Because the participants had been successfully participating in 50 Now, the judge, with the agreement of the prosecutor and public defender, agreed to recall all outstanding warrants and hold in abeyance all but one of the charges for each person. At the end of one year, if the participants continue to participate in 50 Now, and are not re-arrested, the judge will dismiss all charges.
iv. Housed participants with a history of emergency (ER) and hospital stays will demonstrate a 50% reduction in the number of bed days in ER and hospital settings, in the first 12 months of being housed compared to the previous 12 months.	50% decrease	21% increase in days hospitalized; 59% decrease in total ER visits	Aggregate data was obtained using managed care insurance data on hospital and emergency room utilization	Releases were obtained from 20 participants. Unlike other outcomes, data for this was provided for fixed time periods rather than tied to an individual's date of housing. For persons housed from the August 2014 list, "pre" data was provided for the time period of October 1, 2013 - September 30, 2014 and "post" was provided from October 1, 2014-December 21, 2015. For persons housed from the May/June 2015 list, "pre" data was provided for the July 1, 2014-June 30, 2015 time period. A total of 54 ER visits were reported for the "pre" time period and 22 ER visits were reported for the "post" time period, representing a 59% decrease in the number of visits. The number of days hospitalized for the "pre" time period was 19 days and "post" time period was 23 days. Because some persons were housed later than the start of the "post" housing data for their group, it is possible that some of the ER visits and days in the hospital reported as "post" actually occurred pre-housing. Further data collection over time should clarify the changes in visits and days hospitalized.

Performance Objective	Target	Outcome to Date	Explanation of how outcome data was obtained	Comments
v. Housed participants with a history of Psychiatric Health Facility (PHF) stays will demonstrate a 50% reduction in number of bed days in San Luis Obispo County PHF, in the first 12 months of being housed compared to the previous 12 months.	50%	80%	Aggregate data was reported by County Mental Health	In one year pre-housing, there were 8 PHF admissions for a total of 20 bed days.* As of September 30, 2015, there was one PHF admission for two days among persons placed into housing.
vi. In the first 12 months, 30 of 50 participants will be screened for case management	30 out of 50	44 out of 50	Data was reported by TMHA	None.
vii. In the first 12 months, 30 of 50 participants will be assessed for Affordable Care Act qualifications and apply for benefits if appropriate.	30 out of 50	44 out of 50	Data was reported by TMHA	None.
viii. 60% of participants housed will remain in housing for at least 6 months.	60%	89%	Data was reported by TMHA for all persons who were placed into housing at least six months prior to the report.	Out of 27 persons placed into housing six months or more prior to September 30, 2015, 89% have remained in permanent housing as of September 30, 2015 (the most recent quarterly report), with 7% having left for other, permanent housing with family, and 4% leaving housing to return to the streets.
ix. 50% of successfully housed participants will be offered opportunities for educational development, participation in TMHA's Supported Employment Program or other employment opportunities, and/or involvement with peer education activities.	50%	100%	Data was reported by TMHA	For most participants, the focus of services in the first six months is on stabilization in housing. Additionally, many participants have disabilities that may significantly limit future work potential.
x. In the first 12 months, 60% of participants will increase or maintain income entitlement benefits; in months 13-24, 80% will increase or maintain income (General Assistance, SSI, SSDI, and CalFresh).	80%	84%	Data was reported by TMHA	Data was provided for all participants.

*In the May 2015 report, pre-housing data was reported in the written report for January 1, 2012-December 31, 2013.

Challenges

TMHA reports that the lack of affordable housing continues to be a challenge countywide, particularly units that are at or below 40% of the Fair Market Rent for the county and where the landlords are willing to accept Housing Choice Vouchers. Affordable, accessible units and units that accept pets are particularly difficult to find.

The County continues to work with partner agencies and cities in identifying ways to secure more permanent supportive housing. For example, in 2015, the County partnered with the Family Care Network to purchase nine affordable units to house homeless families. It also has applied for bonus funding for 10 additional permanent supportive housing beds in

the 2015 Continuum of Care funding competition administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Opportunities

The 2015 VI-SPDAT survey process, in addition to being used to identify 50 Now participants, has provided opportunities to screen homeless persons for other resources for which they may be eligible. Persons who identified themselves as veterans during the survey were asked to sign releases and were referred to a Supportive Services for Veteran Families program, a rapid rehousing program for homeless veterans, for eligibility screening for that and other programs for homeless veterans. Additionally, TMHA is in the process of attempting to contact all persons surveyed in 2015 to ascertain whether they have health insurance and to offer to assist with health care applications or recertification as needed.

List Refresh

It is expected that TMHA will fill all 50 remaining slots from the most recent list provided from the May-June 2015 survey. The County will continue to maintain a list of vulnerable, chronically homeless persons who have been surveyed using the VI-SPDAT. The County will provide training for interested staff or volunteers from homeless service agencies, local hospitals, and others who have frequent contact with vulnerable homeless persons on how to administer the VI-SPDAT. Persons trained in the use of the VI-SPDAT will be permitted to survey people and provide the survey to DSS for ranking. DSS will maintain a current, ongoing list of vulnerable homeless persons. Should any additional beds become available or should any currently housed persons leave their housing, the County will fill those slots from the updated list.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT/IMPACT

TMHA has worked with several other agencies since the program's inception, including Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo County, the 5Cities Homeless Coalition, the El Camino Homeless Organization (ECHO), SLO Housing Connection, the County Health Agency, the County Department of Social Services, and the Community Action Team from the City of San Luis Obispo's Police Department.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

There is no impact to the County General Fund.

RESULTS

The intent of the program is to permanently house and provide intensive supportive services to 50 of the most vulnerable, chronically homeless individuals in the county. The results are included in the body of the report.

ATTACHMENTS

N/A