



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

AGENDA ITEM

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

NORA VARGAS
First District

JOEL ANDERSON
Second District

TERRA LAWSON-REMER
Third District

NATHAN FLETCHER
Fourth District

JIM DESMOND
Fifth District

DATE: September 27, 2022

25

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT

APPROVE A PILOT SHALLOW RENTAL SUBSIDY PROGRAM ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS AMONG OLDER ADULTS AND AUTHORIZE APPLICATION FOR FUTURE FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES (DISTRICTS: ALL)

OVERVIEW

On February 8, 2022 (13), the San Diego County Board of Supervisors (Board) took action to further address the crisis of homelessness among older adults and directed the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to return to the Board with a plan for a pilot Shallow Rental Subsidy Program (SRSP) that would serve older adults who are very low or extremely low income, rent-burdened, and at risk of homelessness. The plan for the SRSP was to include recommendations on eligibility criteria, program size, funding needs and amounts. In addition, the plan was to include the development of an evaluation framework with a logic model, anticipated short-term and medium-term results, programmatic output and outcome metrics that would be collected and tracked over time; this evaluation framework would also include plans to measure the program's effectiveness.

The County of San Diego (County) Health and Human Services Agency, Department of Homeless Solutions and Equitable Communities, Aging & Independence Services, and Housing and Community Development Services, developed proposed elements of the SRSP design, which include recommendations on eligibility and participation criteria, program size, funding, community outreach, and an evaluation framework plan. Today's action requests the Board approve the SRSP Implementation and Evaluation Plan and authorize the Agency Director, Health and Human Services Agency, or designee, to apply for future funding opportunities related to addressing homelessness throughout the region.

Today's actions support the County's vision of a just, sustainable, and resilient future for all, specifically those communities and populations across San Diego County that have been historically left behind, as well as the ongoing commitment to the regional Live Well San Diego vision of healthy, safe, and thriving communities. This will be accomplished by improving the lives of older adults who are experiencing housing insecurity by providing a rental subsidy. Creation of this pilot program and an evaluation of its effectiveness will determine potential ongoing programming. This effort is in alignment with the County's Framework for Ending Homelessness, specifically in the Diversion and Mitigation Strategic Domain.

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RECOMMENDATION(S)

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

1. Approve the Pilot Shallow Rental Subsidy Program Implementation and Evaluation Plan.
2. Authorize the Agency Director, Health and Human Services Agency, or designee, to apply for future funding opportunities related to addressing homelessness throughout the region in the current and future fiscal years.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The County of San Diego (County) Health and Human Services Agency, Department of Homeless Solutions and Equitable Communities' (HSEC) mission is to ensure equity among all San Diegans, foster a community that is welcoming to new residents, and reduce homelessness in the region. HSEC, is dedicated to addressing the root causes of homelessness and providing equitable access to preventative and supportive services for vulnerable residents.

Of the nearly 3.4 million people currently residing in San Diego County, approximately 959,000 are adults aged 55 or older. By 2030, the number of adults 55 years or older in San Diego County is expected to increase to more than 1.1 million. San Diego County's 55 or older population is projected to grow faster than any other age group, thus it is crucial that the County takes the needs of the region's older adults into account as the County plans for the future.

In the 2022 We All Count Point-in-Time Count, 8,427 individuals were identified as living on the streets or in shelters throughout San Diego County. Of the 4,106 who were unsheltered, 25% were 55 years of age or older, 8% were youth and 15% reported chronic homelessness. While on average, 26% of San Diegans experiencing homelessness were over 55 in both 2020 and 2022, this year's count showed 47% of those seniors were experiencing homelessness for the first time, with 57% having a physical disability. The oldest person surveyed living on the street in San Diego County was 87. The Framework for Ending Homelessness outlines the County's strategic vision for ending homelessness over five strategic domains (Root Causes and Prevention; Diversion and Mitigation; Services, Treatment and Outreach; Emergency/Interim Housing and Resources; and Permanent Housing and Support) and supports building capacity across these strategic domains to ensure an equitable approach to service delivery.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT

Today's proposed actions align with the County of San Diego's Sustainability Goals. By engaging the community through a comprehensive outreach strategy that includes working collaboratively with our community partners, the Department of Homeless Solutions and Equitable Communities will help raise awareness of the program among older adults. These actions also align with the goal to protect health and wellbeing, which will be accomplished by improving the lives of older adults who are experiencing housing insecurity through enhanced funding and creation of a pilot Shallow Rental Subsidy Program. The recommended actions will also provide just and equitable access to housing and support countywide, including to those who are disproportionately represented in the homeless system or have a range of health and social needs, or who are Black, Indigenous and People of Color.

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FISCAL IMPACT

Funds for this request are included in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022-23 Operational Plan in the Health and Human Services Agency. If approved, this request will result in estimated total program costs and revenue of \$0.7 million in FY 2022-23, estimated costs and revenue of \$1.8 million in FY 2023-24 and estimated costs and revenue of \$0.4 million in FY 2024-25 for a total of \$2.9 million from FY 2022-23 through FY 2024-25. This includes costs for the rental subsidy payment, outreach, case management, and administration of the program. The funding sources are the American Rescue Plan Act, Homeless Housing Assistance and Prevention Grant Program Round 3, and Home Safe Program. The Health and Human Services Agency will continue to pursue additional funding opportunities to support further implementation plans resulting from the evidence-based and positive evaluation of the pilot program. There will be no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT

N/A

BACKGROUND

Over the last several years, the San Diego County Board of Supervisors (Board) has demonstrated its commitment to housing and providing the support needed to address the needs of people experiencing and at risk of homelessness. To maximize existing and future regional work on homelessness and to create a unified strategic approach to support the coordination of homeless services and funding, the Board adopted the Framework for Ending Homelessness (Framework) on November 2, 2021 (4). The Framework is anchored in five strategic domains: 1) Root Cause and Upstream Prevention; 2) Diversion and Mitigation; 3) Services, Treatment, and Outreach; 4) Emergency/Interim Housing and Resources; and 5) Permanent Housing and Support. Each of the five strategic domains is driven by five key commitments that guide the County of San Diego’s (County) approach: Person-Centered, Data, Regional Collaboration, Sustainability, and Equity. The Framework encompasses the County’s ongoing work and provides a vision to support forward, collaborative, and impactful progress.

The COVID-19 pandemic created additional hardships for seniors who are more vulnerable to and at risk of the COVID-19 virus, with some older adults experiencing economic disparities that put them at risk of homelessness. Furthermore, the number of older homeless adults is anticipated to triple in the next decade, with many of these individuals requiring complex care and unique housing needs. In alignment with the Framework’s strategic domain of Diversion and Mitigation, on February 8, 2022 (13), the Board took action to find a solution to this issue and directed the Chief Administrative Officer to return to the Board with a recommendation for a pilot Shallow Rental Subsidy Program (SRSP), which would help address the crisis of homelessness among older adults who are low-income, severely rent-burdened, and at risk of homelessness. The Board also requested staff return with a proposed evaluation framework that includes a logic model,

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anticipated short-term and medium-term results, programmatic output and outcome metrics that will be collected and tracked over time, and specific plans for evaluating the program effectiveness. Based on a review of similar models, the proposed SRSP would serve approximately 220 households by providing a \$500 monthly subsidy over a period of 18 months. Participants will also receive light case management services. Eligibility for this program will include households with a head of household that is 55 years of age or older, are very low income, which is at or below 50% Area Median Income (AMI), and are severely rent-burdened. Severely rent-burdened, as defined by Housing and Urban Development, are households paying more than 50% of their income toward housing costs. Of those deemed eligible, households with a head of household age 60 or older, with an income at or below 30% AMI, and located within one of the 39 Health Equity Zip Codes as defined by the Healthy Places Index, will be prioritized for the pilot.

If approved by the Board today, the County Department of Homeless Solutions and Equitable Communities (HSEC) will launch the pilot program. To ensure all eligible households are aware of this pilot, a robust communication and outreach effort will be launched prior to the opening of the online application. Outreach will utilize existing communication networks, social media, community partners, community health workers and promotoras, in addition to messaging that is accessible in multiple languages.

In alignment with the Board's value of implementing data driven strategies, prior to the launch of the pilot SRSP, the County's Office of Evaluation, Performance and Analytics will develop a robust evaluation framework to review the effectiveness of this program in preventing homelessness for older adults. Should findings in the evaluation of the pilot be positive, the County would pursue additional funding opportunities to support the sustainability of the program. Additional details about the proposed pilot SRSP are outlined in Attachment A.

SRSP will leverage a combination of funds from the County's American Rescue Plan Act funds, Homeless Housing Assistance and Prevention Grant Program Round 3, and Home Safe Program (Home Safe). Home Safe was established by the California Department of Social Services, to support safety and housing stability to those involved in Adult Protective Services, and who are experiencing or at imminent risk of homelessness due to elder or dependent adult abuse, neglect, self-neglect, or financial exploitation. Home Safe provides housing-related assistance using evidence-based practices for homeless assistance and prevention.

Today's actions request the Board approve the pilot SRSP Implementation and Evaluation Plan and authorize the Agency Director, Health and Human Services Agency, or designee, to pursue future funding opportunities related to addressing homelessness.

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LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

The proposed actions support the County’s 2022-2027 Strategic Plan Initiatives of Sustainability (Resiliency) by creating initiatives that reduce and eliminate poverty by promoting economic sustainability for all; Equity (Health and Economic Opportunities) by creating programs that value health, housing, and economic opportunity; and Community (Engagement) by improving the quality of life for individuals experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness through increased availability of services and resources.

Respectfully submitted,



HELEN N. ROBBINS-MEYER
Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENT(S)

Attachment A – Pilot Shallow Rental Subsidy Program Implementation and Evaluation Plan