



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

AGENDA ITEM

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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Second District

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Third District

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Fourth District

JIM DESMOND
Fifth District

DATE: January 24, 2023

03

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT

RECEIVE UPDATE ON EXPLORING THE FEASIBILITY AND BENEFIT OF USING A BY-NAME-LIST TO SUPPORT HOMELESSNESS SERVICES IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY (DISTRICTS: ALL)

OVERVIEW

On August 16, 2022 (2), the San Diego County Board of Supervisors (Board) directed the Chief Administrative Officer to work with staff, community organizations, service providers, local governments, people with lived experience, and the Regional Task Force on Homelessness (RTFH) to explore the feasibility of creating a countywide By-Name-List (BNL) and determine the benefits and costs associated with its implementation. Staff were to consider a phased-in approach focusing on subregions, and/or additional subpopulations, and to return to the Board within 90 days with a recommendation that includes potential costs and staffing requirements to support this type of program.

Following this direction, the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency (HHS), Department of Homeless Solutions and Equitable Communities, Office of Homeless Solutions held community information gathering sessions with local city jurisdictions and homeless service providers regarding the feasibility of a BNL and met with RTFH to explore potential implementation strategies.

Today's item provides an update to the Board on the feasibility of a countywide BNL and requests the Board approve the recommended approach for a focused BNL process. Additionally, in accordance with Board Policy A-87, today's item requests the Board authorize a single source contract with the RTFH for implementation of a BNL.

This item supports the County's vision of a just, sustainable, and resilient future for all, specifically those communities and populations in San Diego County that have been historically left behind, as well as our 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 our most vulnerable residents, specifically unsheltered people experiencing homelessness. Today's actions

SUBJECT: RECEIVE UPDATE ON EXPLORING THE FEASIBILITY AND BENEFIT OF USING A BY-NAME-LIST TO SUPPORT HOMELESSNESS SERVICES IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY (DISTRICTS: ALL)

also align with the County's Framework for Ending Homelessness across all domains as it seeks to connect individuals experiencing homelessness to available services.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

1. Receive an update on the feasibility of a countywide By-Name-List.
2. Approve the recommended approach for a focused and intentional By-Name-List process.
3. In accordance with Board Policy A-87, Competitive Procurement, approve and authorize the Director of the Department of Purchasing and Contracting to enter into negotiations with the Regional Task Force on Homelessness and, subject to successful negotiations and determination of a fair and reasonable price, award a contract for the By-Name-List technical support for an initial term of up to one year, and up to three option years with an additional six months if needed, and to amend the contract as needed to reflect changes to requirements and funding, subject to the approval of the Agency Director, Health and Human Services Agency, or designee.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

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

In 2022, the We All Count Point-in-Time Count identified 8,427 individuals 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. People of color are disproportionately impacted among those experiencing homelessness, with 24% identifying as Black or African American, which is five times the proportion of African Americans in the region; 3% identifying as American Indian or Alaskan Native, which is three times the proportion in the region.

People at-risk of or experiencing homelessness, impacted community members, community partners, and other key stakeholders are engaged during the development of County plans to address homelessness, and their feedback is valued and incorporated in the development of programs. Ensuring racial and social equity in all aspects of homelessness prevention and response is one of the key principles that guides the Framework for Ending Homelessness and all items that fall under its strategic domains. It is anticipated that the By-Name-List will support the provision of housing and support for those who are disproportionately represented in the homeless system including, people who are justice-involved or have a range of health and social needs, Black, Indigenous, People of Color, and young adults. The increase in homelessness is an issue of concern to our entire County and continuing to explore ways to create equity by decreasing homelessness for individuals and families is a benefit to the entire region. By creating a By-Name-List and managing a comprehensive list of data, the County can streamline the process for providing housing and services to some of the most vulnerable individuals.

SUBJECT: RECEIVE UPDATE ON EXPLORING THE FEASIBILITY AND BENEFIT OF USING A BY-NAME-LIST TO SUPPORT HOMELESSNESS SERVICES IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY (DISTRICTS: ALL)

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT

Today’s proposed actions support the County of San Diego’s Sustainability Goal #1 to engage the community; Sustainability Goal #2 to provide just and equitable access; and Sustainability Goal #3 to protect health and wellbeing. 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, with assistance from Regional Task Force on Homelessness, will be able to create a By-Name-List and utilize it to match people experiencing homelessness with housing and other resources. The creation of a By-Name-List will also support just and equitable access to housing and services targeted to a person’s specific situation and needs. Additionally, it will help to protect the health and well-being of the unsheltered population by providing information about them to those that can help to coordinate access to services and housing that may not have been available otherwise.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Funds for this request are included in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022-24 Operational Plan in the Health and Human Services Agency. If approved, this request will result in costs and revenue of approximately \$50,000 in FY 2022-23 and \$50,000 in FY 2023-24. Funds for this program will use existing appropriations and will be included in future Operational Plans as needed. The funding source is American Rescue Plan Act, Homeless Services Component. 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

The San Diego County Board of Supervisors (Board) has taken significant steps in exploring creative solutions to address homelessness throughout the San Diego County region. 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’s 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.

On August 16, 2022 (2), the Board directed the Chief Administrative Officer to work with staff, community organizations, service providers, local governments, people with lived experience, and the Regional Task Force on Homelessness (RTFH) to explore the feasibility of a countywide By-Name-List (BNL) and determine the benefits and costs associated with its implementation. Staff were required to consider a phased-in approach focusing on subregions, and/or additional

SUBJECT: RECEIVE UPDATE ON EXPLORING THE FEASIBILITY AND BENEFIT OF USING A BY-NAME-LIST TO SUPPORT HOMELESSNESS SERVICES IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY (DISTRICTS: ALL)

subpopulations and to return to the Board within 90 days with a recommendation that includes potential cost and staffing requirements to support this type of program.

On August 29, 2022, the County Department of Homeless Solutions and Equitable Communities, Office of Homeless Solutions (HSEC-OHS) engaged in a meeting with RTFH to begin the BNL planning process. HSEC-OHS subsequently met with RTFH on several other occasions on this topic to discuss best practices, receive technical guidance, as well as establish commitment on the next steps. On September 28, 2022, HSEC-OHS and RTFH convened a meeting with city jurisdictions, at which multiple city representatives across ten jurisdictions participated and provided input. Additionally, on October 12, 2022, HSEC-OHS convened a meeting with the broader stakeholder community including non-profits, community-based organizations, outreach staff and other entities that serve persons experiencing homelessness. The meeting was well attended with over 50 participants.

Valuable feedback received from RTFH, city jurisdictions, and stakeholders is captured in the recommendations and informs today's update on 1) Feasibility of a countywide By-Name-List; 2) Recommended approach for a focused and intentional BNL process; and 3) Recommendations on BNL implementation, including a single source contract with RTFH.

1) Feasibility of a Countywide By-Name-List

In San Diego County, the RTFH administers the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), which captures all San Diego homeless data to meet federal reporting requirements. RTFH reports out the regional trends to the State and federal governments and has made the data in HMIS publicly available on the RTFH website. Based on the feedback received during the engagement process, it was determined that creating a countywide BNL would be duplicative to HMIS. Currently, HMIS captures the real-time information on individuals experiencing homelessness and prioritizes individuals for housing subsidies based on several factors including chronicity of homelessness, physical disability, or behavioral health issues, as well as other factors that may make them more vulnerable. Cities and providers recommended a more focused and intentional process be followed when creating a BNL, which is outlined in the recommended approach below.

2) Recommended Approach for a Focused and Intentional By-Name-List

A focused and intentional BNL is defined as a collaboration between a group of stakeholders who come together to develop a list of people experiencing homelessness based on identified criteria and dedicated resources. A few examples of a focused and intentional BNL are illustrated below:

- A single city jurisdiction comes together with all the partners who operate within jurisdictional boundaries to address all persons experiencing homelessness in that single jurisdiction. Each entity brings resources to the table and regular case conferencing is done to ensure that progress is made.
- Multiple jurisdictions coming together to address a specific population within their area (e.g., seniors or people with serious mental illness). Jurisdictions and partners pool resources relevant to the particular population and work together to address the unique needs of the population identified on the list.

SUBJECT: RECEIVE UPDATE ON EXPLORING THE FEASIBILITY AND BENEFIT OF USING A BY-NAME-LIST TO SUPPORT HOMELESSNESS SERVICES IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY (DISTRICTS: ALL)

- A community provider works with cities and other partners in the area they serve to address the highest need population. They work together to identify criteria for the list and based on that criteria are able to identify the top 25 individuals from this population with the highest needs and will focus on connecting them to services and support.
- Outreach staff address a large encampment via coordinated outreach. To effectively serve those in the encampment and ensure appropriate resources are provided, they create a BNL of all residents in that encampment to best match them to available resources. This strategy was effectively executed at the Magnolia Encampment in El Cajon, where HSEC-OHS led coordinated outreach efforts from March through May 2022 and successfully housed over 100 individuals, many with high needs and chronic homelessness.

The creation of a focused and intentional BNL is achievable and there are local examples of successful efforts that can be replicated for other populations or geographical areas. RTFH currently manages two BNLs, which focus on unhoused veterans and youth. Notably, veterans and youth were the only populations that showed marked improvements in the 2022 We All Count Point-in-Time Count, a 30% decrease in veteran homelessness and a 6% decrease in youth experiencing unsheltered street homelessness. The successful reduction in rate of homelessness among these populations may also be attributable to consistent designated federal housing resources, highlighting the importance of leveraging existing and identifying new resources to support the region's homeless population. RTFH produces reports for the City of Carlsbad, which administers a local Carlsbad BNL and matches individuals to available resources.

Based on the collaborative input gathered, a focused and intentional BNL will align with the Coordinated Entry System (CES) and increase community engagement and coordination through case conferencing. In addition, jurisdictions will have:

- The ability to connect persons experiencing homelessness to local resources;
- A comprehensive list of persons experiencing homelessness based on real time data and an increased ability to prioritize the most vulnerable, with the goal of quicker case resolution;
- The ability to track inflow and outflow of individuals experiencing homelessness within their community; and
- The ability to make strategic decisions based on local activities.

Additionally, consistent themes that emerged during the stakeholder engagement session highlighted the importance of:

- A carefully defined BNL that has resources attached to it;
- Alignment of a BNL with the CES in HMIS and utilize existing resources as well as potentially some local resources should those be made available by the participating entities;
- Coordination and management of a BNL by RTFH utilizing the HMIS and CES;
- Case conferencing as an essential element and key component of a BNL, and built to be inclusive and based on partner agreements due to varying resources; and
- Consistent definitions and procedures to understand and implement a BNL.

Based on the identified benefits and themes, it is being recommended that the County work with RTFH to support jurisdictions and entities in developing the focused and intentional BNLs based

SUBJECT: RECEIVE UPDATE ON EXPLORING THE FEASIBILITY AND BENEFIT OF USING A BY-NAME-LIST TO SUPPORT HOMELESSNESS SERVICES IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY (DISTRICTS: ALL)

on their perceived need and identified criteria. The implementation process and steps are outlined in the next section.

3) *Recommendations on By-Name-List implementation including a single source contract with the Regional Task Force on Homelessness.*

A BNL would best be suited to be coordinated by RTFH, which is designated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development as the local Continuum of Care responsible for the local HMIS and CES. If approved, today's recommended approach would result in a contract with RTFH for technical assistance to support local jurisdictions and entities on strategic planning, development, and implementation of a BNL. Components to successfully implement BNL(s) would include:

- RTFH utilizing data from HMIS to generate a customized BNL for a jurisdiction or entity that wishes to participate;
- RTFH creating data sharing agreements with participating jurisdictions or entities;
- Case conferencing, which is an integral part of managing a BNL to ensure individuals are effectively matched to available resources;
- Participating jurisdictions and entities identifying their own staffing, and partner with agencies that provide case management and case conferencing; and
- Jurisdictions and entities closely monitoring BNLs that are created for communities who have resources outside of the CES to ensure that Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) individuals are equitably accessing resources and housing placements. Equity must remain a constant focus to reduce disparities particularly among BIPOC individuals.

In accordance with Board Policy A-87, today's action requests the Board authorize to award a single source contract to the RTFH for the administration and coordination of the BNL. A single source contract is requested for coordination of the BNL process for an initial term of up to one year, with three optional years, and an additional six months if needed. The annual contract amount is estimated at \$50,000. The County will benefit by working with RTFH who is the expert and has the necessary data to leverage for this effort. The County does not have access to the data and will rely on RTFH who is the only holder of the needed data for this effort. This procurement qualifies as a single source as it is a procurement of services from a provider with unique knowledge, skill, or ability not available from other sources. Due to its role as the lead of the San Diego Continuum of Care and the administrator of the HMIS, which contains data that will be leveraged to create BNL, RTFH is the only provider that can provide this service on behalf of the County. County's Department of Purchasing and Contracting will enter into negotiations with the Regional Task Force on Homelessness and make a determination of a fair and reasonable price prior to awarding a contract.

Upon engaging at the convening coordinated by HSEC-OHS and RTFH with city jurisdictions, at which multiple city representatives across ten jurisdictions participated and provided input, a jurisdiction in the North Region has volunteered to be the first to engage with RTFH to create a BNL process for their City as part of this effort. Upon approval and execution of the contract with RTFH, this process is anticipated to begin in Spring of 2023. The HSEC and RTFH partnership in the North Region enables learning opportunities that support and guide future BNL efforts as RTFH's consultants will leverage their expertise in BNL processes and will assist in collecting the

SUBJECT: RECEIVE UPDATE ON EXPLORING THE FEASIBILITY AND BENEFIT OF USING A BY-NAME-LIST TO SUPPORT HOMELESSNESS SERVICES IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY (DISTRICTS: ALL)

necessary information to inform whether this process is valuable to implement in other jurisdictions.

LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

Today's actions support the County of San Diego's 2023-2028 Strategic Plan initiatives of Sustainability (Resiliency), Equity (Economic Opportunity), and Community (Quality of Life). This will be accomplished through adding capacity to respond to the immediate housing needs of individuals and families, creating initiatives that promote accessibility to housing, creating programs that value health and housing, and by improving the quality of life for individuals experiencing or at-risk of experiencing homelessness through increased availability of housing and resources. Today's actions are also aligned with the County's Framework for Ending Homelessness across all domains as it seeks to connect individuals experiencing homelessness to available services.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Helen N. Robbins-Meyer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a period at the end.

HELEN N. ROBBINS-MEYER
Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENT(S)

N/A