



Mission: Build partnerships and promote strong collaborative action to ensure all residents within the County have stable, safe, and healthy places to live.

Housing for Health Partnership (H4HP) Policy Board Regular Meeting Minutes February 21, 2024; 3 pm

Call to Order/Welcome

Present: Heather Rogers, Justin Cummings, Karen Kern, Kate Nester, Mali LaGoe, Manu Koenig, Mariah Lyons, René Mendez, Shebreh Kalantari-Johnson, Suzi Merriam, Terence Concannon

Absent: Fred Keeley, Tom Stagg

Additions and Deletions to the Agenda: None

Non-Agenda Public Comment

No public comment received.

Action Items (vote required)

1. Approval of Minutes: December 13, 2023, Regular Meeting

Discussion: None.

Public Comment: None.

Motion to Approve: Heather Rogers

Motion Seconded: Justin Cummings

Abstentions: None.

Board Action: Motion passed with all members.

2. Approval of Co-Chairs for Policy Board

Discussion: None.

Public Comment: None.

Motion: Approve Suzi Merriam and Tom Stagg as Co-Chairs of the Policy Board for a minimum two-year and one-year term, respectively.

Motion to Approve: René Mendez

Motion Seconded: Heather Rogers

Abstentions: None.

Board Action: Motion passed with all members.

3. Approval of Nominee for Workforce/Business/Foundation Sector Representative on Policy Board.

Discussion: Terence Concannon, Chief Executive Officer for Visit Santa Cruz County shared he has more than 25 years of experience in the hospitality and tourism industry, which includes sales, marketing, and operations of hotels, wine events, and destinations. Mentioned that prior to his current position, he spent six years leading Go Lake Havasu, the destination management organization in Lake Havasu City, Arizona. Visit Santa Cruz County is a destination marketing



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organization that markets and promotes the county as a world-class destination. Mentioned that Visit Santa Cruz County has been certified as an autism center.

Public Comment: *None.*

Motion: *Approve Terence Concannon to serve a minimum two-year term (calendar year 2024 and 2025) in the Workforce/ Business/ Foundation Sector role on the Housing for Health Partnership Policy Board.*

Motion to Approve: *Justin Cummings*

Motion Seconded: *Manu Koenig*

Abstentions: *None.*

Board Action: *Motion passed with all members.*

4. Review and Approval of Proposed Homeless Housing Assistance and Prevention- Round 5(HHAP-5) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Housing for Health Partnership (CoC) and County of Santa Cruz

Discussion: *Robert Ratner, Director of Housing for Health mentioned that in 2018, the state created the California Emergency Solutions and Housing (CESH) and Homeless Emergency Aid Programs (HEAP) block grants available for local bodies as a statewide investment in addressing housing and homelessness. These block grants were replaced by the Homeless Housing, Assistance, and Prevention (HHAP) block grant in 2019. Discussed how the HHAP-5 funding that the Santa Cruz County and Housing for Health Partnership (CoC) receive requires an updated Regionally Coordinated Homelessness Action Plan (RCHAP). Mentioned that the County and CoC have executed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) since HHAP Round 3 to combine their funding and use it in a shared agreeable way to support collective work. Discussed the MOU that is included in the HHAP-5 funding application will refer to the required RCHAP. Shebreh Kalantari-Johnson, policy board member, mentioned advocating in the future to include how Santa Cruz County is in the Top 5 per capita of the number of people experiencing homelessness per CoC in the funding formula. Discussed that The County of Santa Cruz Human Services Department, Housing for Health Division Staff will not start a program unless it can be sustained for 3 years.*

Public Comment: *None.*

Motion: *Review and Approval of Proposed Homeless Housing Assistance and Prevention - Round 5 (HHAP-5) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Housing for Health Partnership (CoC) and County of Santa Cruz.*

Motion to Approve: *Kate Nestor*

Motion Seconded: *Mali LaGoe*

Abstentions: *None.*

Board Action: *Motion passed with all members.*



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5. Review and Approval of Proposed HHAP-5 Budget

Discussion: *The board discussed how the County of Santa Cruz Human Services Department's Housing for Health has managed the budget for HHAP since 2021. Discussed the difficulty of developing sustainable and impactful housing interventions because the state does not commit to ongoing predictable HHAP funding allocations on an annual basis. Discussed for HHAP-5, the County and CoC plan to budget with the same ratio as last year, except for shelter improvements for a youth transitional project. Questions were raised on why investing in youth when the current Point in Time count resulted in a lower percentage of youth experiencing homelessness. Mentioned that the State has approved a Youth HomeKey Round 3 award for a youth transitional housing project that is contingent upon dedicated HHAP funding over multiple years. HHAP priority investment areas have been low-barrier navigation centers (service-enriched shelters) and transitional housing. Shebreh Kalantari-Johnson, a policy board member, suggested to use the broader term of Interim housing that includes low barrier navigation center and transitional housing for flexibility of use of the funding. Discussed the future state of funding for interim housing programs and concerns about instability in this funding. Mentioned H4H has allocated money to operate the proposed youth transitional project for three years, but beyond that, funding is uncertain. Mentioned there are ongoing County advocacy efforts to convince state leaders to making ongoing, stable, and streamlined investments in addressing homelessness statewide. Mentioned that the State has allocated behavioral bridge housing funding to communities, and depending on whether Prop 1 passes, some of the money that goes to service programs in mental health will have to be used for housing programs. Mentioned that the HHAP regulations allow for budget and program plan amendments.*

Public Comment: *None.*

Motion: *Approve the proposed HHAP-5 budget as included in the Policy Board packet for submission as part of our community application for HHAP-5 funding.*

Motion to Approve: *Manu Koenig*

Motion Seconded: *Shebreh Kalantari-Johnson*

Abstentions: *None*

Board Action: *Motion passed with all members.*

6. Review and Approval of Housing for Health Partnership Key Action Steps over the next Three Years (January 2024- 2026).

Discussion: *Housing for Health Staff discussed key action steps for the next three years by gathering feedback from the community and policy board members. Discussed how the board members emphasized that priorities should include a Safe Parking program, low-cost programs, advocacy for tenant rights and just cause eviction prevention, a holistic reentry plan that includes a pathway to housing for foster*



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and criminal justice populations, exploring opportunities for local policy changes to help with housing opportunity and retention, and helping the housing services provider community get into the Medi-Cal (CalAIM) world. Mentioned that the policy board wanted to also focus on preventing housing stock from being converted into vacation rentals, promoting housing stability. Question was raised about getting involved in policy action that can impede communities from building housing and maintaining their pro-housing designation.. Mentioned that the Alliance offers training on billing Medi-Call for CalAIM providers.

Public Comment: *None.*

Motion: *Approve the proposed board core action steps for inclusion in updates to the Housing for Health Santa Cruz Framework and the HHAP-5 regionally coordinated homelessness action plan and directed Housing for Health Division staff to utilize the document as a guide for priority work areas over the next three-year period and include recommendations provided by the Housing for Health Partnership Policy Board.*

Motion to Approve: *Justin Cummings*

Motion Seconded: *René Mendez*

Abstentions: *None*

Board Action: *Motion passed with all members.*

7. Authorize Staff to Finalize and Submit HHAP-5 Regionally Coordinated Homeless Action Plan and Application on behalf of the CoC.

Discussion: *Tony Gardner, CoC consultant supported the RCHAP planning process, the MOU, and HHAP-5 application. Discussed how H4H staff held two community meetings where some major themes emerged, which became the pillars of the Housing for Health Framework planned update and HHAP-5 application. Mentioned the four pillars of the framework are: Increasing Connections, Coalition Building, Expanding Permanent Housing, and Preventing Homelessness. Questions were raised about the missing racial disparity data in the draft materials, and the H4H staff mentioned that the RCHAP is still a draft. Concerns were raised that if H4H staff rely too much on community feedback, then only the dominant narratives will be amplified. Kate Nester, a policy board member, recommended that H4H staff follow up with the organization listed as a collaborative entity in the draft document to confirm that they agree with the draft HHAP-5 application. Discussed that the draft will be posted online for public comment, and the final draft will be going to the County board of supervisors, and the public can make comments.*



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Public Comment: *Erika Cortes highlighted that the HHAP-5 application is still a draft, and the county will work on it and be able to submit it without another revision from the policy board.*

Motion: *Authorize Housing for Health Division staff to follow up with the organizations listed as collaborative entities to confirm agreement with the draft HHAP-5 application to finalize the HHAP-5 Regionally Coordinated Homelessness Action Plan and Application for Submittal on or before the application deadline of March 27, 2024.*

Motion to Approve: *Justin Cummings*

Motion Seconded: *Heather Rogers*

Abstentions: *None*

Board Action: *Motion passed with all members.*

Information Items (no vote required):

8. 2024 Continuum of Care (CoC) Awards

Discussion: *The Housing and Urban Development Department (HUD) has granted \$6.014 million in federal funding to The Housing for Health Partnership CoC. Mentioned that additional funds will be allocated to Housing Matters 180 Together, which is a permanent supportive housing rental assistance project and a Planning grant to support and maintain efforts to increase the involvement of people who have experienced homelessness in the Housing for Health Partnership initiatives. Mentioned that the Housing Authority conducts a fair market rent study and uses the results to adjust HUD's initial federal market rent calculations.*

9. Homekey Round 3 award for Freedom House Youth Transitional Housing Project

Discussion: *Discussed Santa Cruz County has been granted its fourth Homekey Award for their first transitional housing project. Mentioned that The Freedom House Youth Transitional Housing Project will consist of 11 units operated by Covenant House. Mentioned that referrals for the project will come through the Housing for Health Partnership coordinated entry process. Mentioned that CFSC is the property owner, while Front Street will manage the property. Discussed that Behavioral Health or one of its contractors will provide mental health services for the youth residing at the housing project.*

10. 2024 Point-in-Time (PIT) Count Update

Discussion: *Discussed a successful Point-in-Time (PIT) count was conducted with the help of over 100 volunteers and the highest number of paid peer guides over the past few years. Peer guides have lived experience of homelessness help guide other volunteers to areas that may have unsheltered individuals throughout the county. Mentioned that H4H staff and Applied Survey Research conducted four public community meetings, carried out direct outreach to specific groups, and*



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held two youth meetings to recruit volunteers. Mentioned that The PIT Count results will be available to the public by the end of summer.

11. Youth Homeless System Improvement (YHIS) Grant Proposal Submission

Discussion: *Alex Dami, a member of the Housing for Health staff, collaborated with youth housing and service providers to prepare and submit a grant proposal to HUD for \$625,375. Discussed the Youth Homeless System Improvement (YHSI) grant aims to bring about systemic changes to improve local efforts to address youth homelessness. Discussed the funds will be used to create and build capacity for Youth Action Boards, collect and use data on at-risk youth experiencing homelessness, and improve projects serving youth.*

12. Lived Expertise Action Boards- Updates

Discussed that there are five available spots for a youth-specific board and five for the lived experience board. Mentioned that over 60 individuals have expressed interest in joining the Lived Expertise Action Boards. Mentioned that Mayeda Consulting will be the facilitators and consultants of the group, and Goodwill Central Coast will be the employer of record. Discussed that the HUD planning grant and proposed YHSI grant will be used to help sustain and strengthen the Lived Expertise Action Board groups.

Report/Discussion Items (no vote required):

- 13. Coordinating efforts to raise local resources through strategic grant making, partnerships, etc.**
How can Housing for Health Partnership best support generating more local resources to support efforts?

Discussion: *Discussed interest in supporting non-profit organizations in the area to secure state funding. Mentioned that the Housing for Health Partnership should have a shared document that shows a collection of historical grants that have been awarded to the community by the state and federal governments.*

Board Member Announcements

No additional announcements.

Adjournment

Next Meeting: **Wednesday, April 17, 2024, 3 pm**

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