

RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT FORM

Report Title: Homelessness in Marin - A Progress Report
Report Date: May 9, 2018
Response by: Marin County Board of Supervisors

FINDINGS

- We agree with the finding(s) numbered: **F1-F5 and F7-F10**
- We disagree wholly or partially with the finding(s) numbered: **F6**

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendation(s) numbered **R2, R4, and R5** have been implemented.
- Recommendation(s) numbered **R1 and R3** will not be implemented because they are not warranted or reasonable.

Date: July 31, 2018

Signed: 
President Board of Supervisors

Marin County Board of Supervisors

Response to Findings and Recommendations from Grand Jury Report "Homelessness in Marin - A Progress Report"

FINDINGS:

- F1. The nonprofit and faith-based groups that have provided emergency shelter under the REST program for the past ten years will no longer continue to do so. The REST program ended in April 2018.**

Response: Agree.

- F2. The Housing First philosophy espouses housing-focused shelter, including services for the homeless and case management.**

Response: Agree.

The Housing First philosophy espouses placement in permanent housing as quickly as possible with no preconditions or requirements other than those usually present in a rental agreement. Housing-focused shelter can be an important part of a Housing First system, providing a safe place for emergency needs to be met and the process of return to housing begun.

- F3. Housing First is dependent upon the availability of housing. The very limited supply of rental housing makes this a challenge in Marin County.**

Response: Agree.

A Housing First system of care places people in permanent housing as quickly as possible. The speed with which people are able to access permanent housing is dependent upon the availability of housing, but Housing First may be applied even in a difficult housing market.

- F4. Nonprofits provide most services and shelter to the homeless in Marin County; some of them receive funds from the County, the State, and the Federal Government in addition to fundraising from private sources.**

Response: Agree.

Nonprofits provide many of the services and shelter to people experiencing homelessness in Marin County, but virtually all receive county, state, and federal funding. Marin County Health and Human Services (HHS) is a significant funder of most nonprofit-provided homeless-specific services in Marin. HHS also provides many safety net services that are essential to people experiencing homelessness, such as behavioral health treatment and General Relief.

- F5. Collaboration between the County and the nonprofit service providers has improved. The coalition of Ritter Center/St. Vincent de Paul Society/Marin Housing Authority providing assistance under the Whole Person Care program is a notable example.**

Response: Agree, with the note that Whole Person Care was a grant obtained and managed by County HHS.

- F6. At least 400 units for the chronically homeless must be added to the existing housing stock to achieve functional zero homelessness. This can be accomplished by new construction as well as repurposing existing housing, motels, churches/convents, and office/retail.**

Response: Partially disagree.

We estimate that approximately 400 units must be added to reach functional zero for chronic homelessness. "Functional zero" indicates that while people may continue to fall into chronic homelessness, such occasions are rare and sufficient resources exist to quickly return people to permanent housing.

However, homelessness in Marin is broader than the population experiencing chronic homelessness. We are concerned with any impression that an additional 400 units would eliminate homelessness. Addressing the larger problem of homelessness will require additional strategies, including more housing affordable to people with extremely low income and homelessness diversion programs.

- F7. Federal funding for the WPC and HHP programs ends in 2020. New funding sources must be created to continue the benefits of these programs.**

Response: Agree.

While the County has increased its general fund allotment to programs that address homelessness, and may continue to do so relative to other budgetary priorities, we also acknowledge that State, federal, and private funding sources will need to be available to support WPC efforts after 2020.

- F8. The cost of chronic homelessness in Marin in terms of emergency room visits, hospital stays, police services, jail and the negative impacts of living on the streets has been documented to be approximately \$60,000 per person per year. By contrast, the cost of a person in supportive housing has been documented to be approximately \$34,000. Thus, housing is actually less expensive than abandoning the homeless to the streets.**

Response: Agree.

The figure of \$60,000 per year for each person experiencing chronic homelessness is from a recent study done in Santa Clara County, not Marin. However, we believe it is a reasonable estimate for our community as well.

- F9. Homeward Bound's Mill Street facility does not have staffing during the day. As a result everyone who stays there is turned out at 8:00 AM and cannot return until 5:00 PM. With additional funding, this facility could provide intensive housing-focused support throughout the day.**

Response: Agree.

Marin County HHS and Marin Community Foundation have agreed to fund these changes. (Please see response to R2)

- F10. The State of California has millions of dollars allocated to serve the homeless that have not yet been released. Marin's collaborative homeless advocates are well positioned to put additional funds to immediate use in ending homelessness in Marin.**

Response: Agree.

Our increased collaboration and effectiveness in Marin has increased our competitiveness for such funding and we will aggressively pursue these potential opportunities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The 2017-2018 Marin County Civil Grand Jury recommends that:

R1. The County of Marin should provide capital funding for up to 400 units of additional housing for the chronically homeless.

This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable.

The County agrees that up to 400 units of additional housing for people experiencing chronic homelessness may be necessary to reach functional zero for chronic homelessness (See F6, above). However, capital funding is only one means of creating new permanent supportive housing units and funding the creation of new units should be a collaborative effort of federal, state, local, business, and private funders.

We are investigating the possibility of additional State aid available to Marin as part of the FY 2018-19 State Budget, which could provide one-time emergency or short-term housing assistance of up to \$4.8 million – though many details remain to be determined. The County is proceeding with the following strategies:

- Continue to fund the policy work, planning, and extensive application process for US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Continuum of Care (CoC) funds, which provide more than \$4 million in permanent supportive housing via vouchers and master leased units (which do not require capital funding) to Marin County. Since the Grand Jury's 2015 report, we have secured an additional \$1.4 million in CoC funds, and continue to be competitive for new permanent supportive housing funds through this program.
- Continue to fund the Marin Housing Authority's Housing Locator and Landlord Partnership Program. The Housing Locator works closely with existing landlords to locate rental units for persons holding a permanent supportive housing voucher, such as those funded by the CoC program (see above) or County general funds. The Landlord Partnership Program provides supports to landlords who are willing to rent to people holding Section 8 or permanent supportive housing vouchers with tools such as increased security deposits. In its first year of operations, the Landlord Partnership Program engaged more than 80 new landlords to accept housing vouchers.
- When available from the state, apply for No Place Like Home (NPLH) funds. Marin is eligible to apply non-competitively for an estimated \$2 million in capital funding for permanent supportive housing for people experiencing chronic homelessness who have been diagnosed with as serious mental illness. This funding is pending litigation but is anticipated to be available in fall 2018 or winter 2019.
- The Grand Jury has acknowledged the County's collaboration with our cities, foundations, nonprofits, business leaders, and developers through Opening Doors Marin (formerly MCHAT). Indeed, the recommendation that 400 additional permanent supportive housing units are necessary to end chronic homelessness originated in Opening Doors Marin's business plan, developed with County input. Marin County will continue to work with these partners to locate potential

opportunities for development, acquisition and rehabilitation, and to identify the most appropriate funding sources to support each project.

R2. The County of Marin should fund Homeward Bound's Mill Street facility to provide 24/7 staffing with housing-focused case managers.

This recommendation has been implemented.

Prior to the release of the Grand Jury report, Marin County HHS and the Marin Community Foundation (MCF) began discussions with Homeward Bound regarding funding for the shift to housing-focused shelter. Beginning July 1, 2018, HHS and MCF are jointly funding the following activities at the Mill Street Emergency Shelter:

- Removal of the \$3 nightly fee.
- Increased staffing capacity to:
 - Allow the shelter to remain open during the day
 - Work closely with clients to create and progress in housing plans
 - Permit persons with higher needs (including those engaged in active substance use) to access the shelter
- Lead agency-wide implementation of housing first and harm reduction philosophies.

R3. The County of Marin should create additional emergency shelter capacity to replace the services lost by the end of the REST program.

This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable.

The County of Marin agrees with the determination of our nonprofit partners that the best way to end homelessness in Marin is to dedicate resources toward helping people access permanent housing. The County recognizes that accessing permanent housing in a housing market with limited availability can take time, and that people will still require shelter to meet their emergency needs. Therefore, the County will continue to fund the existing 140 emergency shelter beds at Mill Street, New Beginnings Center and Center for Domestic Peace to meet these emergency needs. The County is working with Homeward Bound to transition their current shelter system toward a housing focus (see R3, above), and is also partnering with St. Vincent de Paul to provide single-unit emergency housing for people who are unable to live in a communal setting due to medical needs, mental health issues, or other concerns.

Additionally, the County is partnering with Homeward Bound to ensure that during severe weather events, sufficient additional emergency shelter beds will be available.

In lieu of establishing additional emergency shelter beds, the County will work to establish additional permanent supportive housing beds (see response to R2, above), collaborate with our nonprofit partners to divert people from the homeless system of care

into permanent housing, and support our existing shelter beds to place people in permanent housing as quickly as possible. We will also look to our cities and towns for their continued interest and investment in shared solutions to these shared issues, including potential sites in which it is appropriate to locate housing.

R4. The County of Marin should create a local housing voucher program to supplement Federal funding.

This recommendation has been implemented.

The County of Marin has funded local permanent supportive housing through Ritter Center's Housing First and Homeward Bound's 4th Street Permanent Supportive Housing programs for many years. These local funds are flexible, allowing these programs to serve people who do not qualify for federal vouchers, and are an important part of our permanent supportive housing stock. Beginning July 1, 2018, all new admissions to these programs will come through Coordinated Entry.

The County agrees that additional permanent supportive housing vouchers are necessary to end chronic homelessness in Marin. In June and July 2018, HHS is partnering with the Marin Housing Authority (MHA) to apply for additional federal homeless vouchers through the Section 811 Program and the Family Unification Program, which will serve people with disabilities exiting institutions and families with child welfare involvement, respectively. As acknowledged in Finding 10 of this report, Marin is well-positioned to successfully apply for these competitive funds.

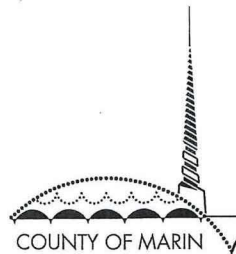
Additionally, as discussed in our response to Recommendation 1, above, the County is working with our partners through Opening Doors Marin to identify appropriate funding streams for various housing models. In other communities, local vouchers are supported by a diverse group of funders, including healthcare entities.

R5. The County of Marin and each city and town should actively seek developers to create housing for the homeless within their jurisdictions.

This recommendation has been implemented.

As discussed in our response to R1, above, the County of Marin is partnering with representatives of our cities, nonprofits, foundations, business community, and developers to identify potential opportunities to create housing for people experiencing chronic homelessness.

The County of Marin also respectfully suggests that each jurisdiction seek potential sites in which it is appropriate to locate housing. Building relationships with developers and identifying funding are important elements to housing development but are not functional without appropriate locations.



OFFICE OF THE
COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Matthew H. Hymel
COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

July 31, 2018

Daniel Eilerman
ASSISTANT COUNTY
ADMINISTRATOR

Marin County Board of Supervisors
3501 Civic Center Drive
San Rafael, California 94903

Angela Nicholson
ASSISTANT COUNTY
ADMINISTRATOR

SUBJECT: Response to 2017-2018 Grand Jury Report "Homelessness in Marin"
(May 9, 2018)



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Dear Board Members:

RECOMMENDATION: Concur in and adopt the attached proposed response to the FY 2017-2018 Marin County Civil Grand Jury Report regarding Homelessness in Marin and authorize the Board President to forward the response to the Presiding Judge of the Marin County Superior Court.

SUMMARY: The 2017-2018 Civil Grand Jury Report published a report entitled "Homelessness in Marin." (May 9, 2018). The report included a request for response from your Board. Attached for your consideration, in accordance with §933 of the California Penal Code, is a proposed response. A copy of the Grand Jury report is also attached for your information.

FISCAL IMPACT: None.

ALTERNATIVE: The Board may amend any suggested response.

REVIEWED BY:

<input type="checkbox"/>	County Counsel	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A
<input type="checkbox"/>	Human Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dept. of Finance	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A

Respectfully submitted,

Reviewed by,

Charlotte Jourdain
Management and
Budget Analyst

Matthew H. Hymel
County Administrator

Attachments: Grand Jury Report "Homelessness In Marin"
CC: Grant Colfax, Health and Human Services