



San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments

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Date: April 16, 2009
To: Governing Board Delegates & Alternates
From: Nicholas T. Conway, Executive Director
Re: **Regional Homeless Services Strategy**

Recommended Action

Adopt the Regional Homeless Services Strategy and establish the ad hoc Homeless Services Committee that will support implementation including assisting in the creation of the San Gabriel Valley Housing and Homeless Services Coordinating Council.

Background

In May 2008, the COG adopted the development of a regional homeless services strategy as one of its strategic plan objectives. This effort was undertaken in response to a request by the County of Los Angeles, a member agency of the COG, to facilitate a community-based, “bottom-up” approach to addressing the issue of homelessness in the San Gabriel Valley. Over the past 10 months, the COG and its consultant, Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH), have completed a comprehensive study effort that was organized into two phases:

- Phase I:** Diagnostic survey of homeless services and targeted population
- Phase II:** Consensus-building process focused on development of an implementation plan to meet unmet needs with particular emphasis on the participation of community- and faith-based organizations in the region.

The Phase I Needs Assessment was presented to the COG Governing Board at its November 2008 meeting. Subsequent to this discussion, the COG undertook a consensus-building process to develop an implementation plan to address unmet needs with particular emphasis on the participation of community- and faith-based organizations in the region. The outcome of that effort has resulted in the attached regional homeless services strategy report.

Overview

The recommendations developed in the report seek to address the challenges faced by local government and not-for-profit agencies in developing solutions that are resource-based, locally-driven and community-contextualized. It is clear that our local governments do not have the resources for organizing and managing a comprehensive service-delivery system for the homeless population. Implementing human services programs, regarding such issues as

homelessness, is best led by community- and faith-based organizations in active partnership with local government.

To effectively build capacity, leverage resources, and garner support for needed homeless services, it was widely-agreed that a Valley-wide Housing and Homeless Services Coordinating Council (“Coordinating Council”) should be created. This Coordinating Council would not replace or duplicate current coordinating efforts, but rather serve as a means to link, enhance, and expand the various services while building partnerships between service providers and San Gabriel Valley cities. The report outlines guiding principles for the organizational structure of this membership body, emphasizing a balanced representation of the array of services, geographic boundaries, and make-up of the communities served.

It is important to note that the creation of such a structure will not take place at the expense of providing services to people in need. The regional homeless services strategy sets forth specific, realistic intervention strategies and goals to guide implementation and create a shared vision for an effective service-delivery system. The San Gabriel Valley Housing and Homeless Services Coordinating Council will facilitate this process.

Implementation Timeline

The regional homeless services strategy includes both short and long-term implementation recommendations. To continue the forward momentum of this study effort, it is recommended that a COG ad hoc Homeless Services Committee be created to:

- ✓ Establish the Coordinating Council composition and adherence to guiding principles; and
- ✓ Assist the Coordinating Council to identify and secure staffing resources

The Coordinating Council should be established and operating within six-months of the completion of this report. Specific intervention strategies, including contracts for new or expanded services, should begin concurrently as capacity is developed and partnerships forged. However, the full realization of the goals identified in the report was developed for a five-year timeframe.

Conclusion

The Governing Board’s direction to develop a regional homeless services strategy has resulted in an unprecedented effort to define a community-based approach to meeting the needs of this vulnerable population. The attached document reflects the input and collaboration of a wide-range of stakeholders and demonstrates the effectiveness of collectively partnering to develop solutions to lift more people out of homelessness. I would like to thank Supervisors Antonovich, Knabe, and Molina for their support and participation over the course of this effort as well as the more than 120 individuals representing local government and community- and faith-based organizations. I also extend my appreciation to the consultant, Corporation for Supportive Housing, for their dedicated and high-quality work throughout this process.