

ORANGE COUNTY
CONTINUUM OF CARE BOARD
Wednesday February 24, 2021
2 p.m. – 4 p.m.

Webinar:
<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/694403981>

Dial by Phone:
+1 (312) 757-3121

Access Code:
694-403-981

AGENDA

Board Members

Jeanne Awrey, OC Dept. of Education

Matt Bates, City Net

Judson Brown, City of Santa Ana

Natalie Bui, Veteran Affairs CRRC

Donald Dermit, The Rock Church

Becks Heyhoe, OC United Way [Secretary]

Tim Houchen, Hope4Restoration

Patti Long, Mercy House

Dawn Price, Friendship Shelter

Albert Ramirez, City of Anaheim

Maricela Rios-Faust, Human Options [Vice Chair]

Soledad Rivera, Families Together of OC

George Searcy, Jamboree Housing

Tim Shaw, Individual [Chair]

Christina Weckerly Ramirez, Health Care Agency

Call to Order – Tim Shaw, Chair

Board Member Roll Call – Becks Heyhoe, Secretary

Public Comments: Members of the public may address the Continuum of Care (CoC) Board on items listed within this agenda or matters not appearing on the agenda so long as the subject matter is within the jurisdiction of the CoC Board. Members of the public may address the CoC Board with public comments on agenda items in the business calendar after the CoC Board member discussion. Comments will be limited to three minutes. If there are more than five public speakers, this time will be reduced to two minutes.

In order to address the CoC Board, members of the public are to enter their name and agenda item number in the GoToMeeting chat box to be placed in a queue. CoC Board staff will call your name in the order listed in the chat box.

CONSENT CALENDAR

All matters are approved by one motion unless pulled by a Board Member for discussion or separate action. The CoC Board requests that only pertinent information be discussed during this time.

1. Approve Continuum of Care Board Meeting Minutes from January 19, 2021.

BUSINESS CALENDAR

1. **Orange County System of Care Update** – Jason Austin, Office of Care Coordination Director
2. **Orange County Continuum of Care (CoC) Update** – Zulima Lundy, CoC Manager
3. **CoC Data Dashboard** – Zulima Lundy, CoC Manager and Erin DeRycke, Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Lead
 - a. Approve the CoC Data Dashboard developed by 2-1-1 Orange County utilizing HMIS data, Contact Call Center data and Coordinated Entry System Virtual Front Door data as reviewed by the Policies, Procedures and Standards Committee.
4. **Approve State Emergency Solutions Grant – Coronavirus Round 1 and 2 Funding Recommendations** – Zulima Lundy, CoC Manager
 - a. Approve the Project B – Rapid Rehousing Services Vendor Recommendations, as recommended by the COVID-19 Homeless and Prevention Response RFP Panel.
 - i. Mercy House Living Centers for COVID-19 Response Rapid Rehousing Services, for the term of March 23, 2021, through June 30, 2022, for an amount not to exceed \$9,110,656.
 - ii. Interval House for COVID-19 Response Rapid Rehousing Services, for the term of March 23, 2021, through June 30, 2022, for an amount not to exceed \$200,000.
 - iii. People Assisting the Homeless (PATH) for COVID-19 Response Rapid Rehousing Services, for the term of March 23, 2021, through June 30, 2022, for an amount not to exceed \$1,714,219
 - b. Approve Families Forward acting as the Fiscal Backbone for the Family Solutions Collaborative for COVID-19 Response Rapid Rehousing Services for Families for the term of March 23, 2021, through June 30, 2022, for an amount not to exceed \$3,971,625.
5. **Care Plus Program Update** – Natalie Dempster, Data Integration Manager
 - a. Update on the County of Orange Care Plus Program, previously known as the System of Care Data Integration System (SOCDIS).
6. **Orange County United Way Data Release Request** – Zulima Lundy, CoC Manager and Becks Heyhoe, OC United Way
 - a. Approve OC United Way’s data release request utilizing Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data. OC United Way requests aggregate data from HMIS on households that entered and exited homeless service system for calendar year 2020.
7. **Open Letter to President Joe Biden and HUD Secretary Marcia Fudge** – Zulima Lundy, CoC Manager
 - a. Approve the Orange County CoC to sign a joint letter to the new federal administration to bring awareness to three main points:
 - i. CoCs suffer from mandate confusion and scarcity
 - ii. COVID-19 presented a different way forward: resources and alignments
 - iii. Federal support and direction can allow us to use housing as the vaccine for homelessness.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, March 24, 2021, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

ORANGE COUNTY
CONTINUUM OF CARE BOARD
SPECIAL MEETING
Tuesday, January 19, 2021
2 p.m. – 4 p.m.

Webinar:
<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/694403981>

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MINUTES

Board Members

Jeanne Awrey, OC Dept. of Education

Matt Bates, City Net

Judson Brown, City of Santa Ana

Natalie Bui, Veteran Affairs CRRC

Donald Dermit, The Rock Church

Becks Heyhoe, OC United Way [Secretary]

Tim Houchen, Hope4Restoration

Patti Long, Mercy House

Dawn Price, Friendship Shelter

Albert Ramirez, City of Anaheim

Maricela Rios-Faust, Human Options [Vice Chair]

Soledad Rivera, Families Together of OC

George Searcy, Jamboree Housing

Tim Shaw, Individual [Chair]

Christina Weckerly Ramirez, Health Care Agency

Call to Order – Tim Shaw, Chair

Chair Tim Shaw called the meeting to order at 2:03 p.m.

Board Member Roll Call – Becks Heyhoe, Secretary

Present: Jeanne Awrey, Matt Bates, Judson Brown, Natalie Bui, Donald Dermit, Becks Heyhoe, Tim Houchen, Patti Long, Dawn Price, Albert Ramirez, Maricela Rios-Faust, Soledad Rivera, George Searcy, Tim Shaw and Christina Weckerly-Ramirez.

Absent Excused: none

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- No public comments

CONSENT CALENDAR

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1. Approve Continuum of Care Board Meeting Minutes from December 17, 2020.

Dawn Price motioned to approve the Consent Calendar. Vice Chair Maricela Rios-Faust seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous consent.

BUSINESS CALENDAR

1. Presentation by the Orange County Sheriff's Department – Sheriff Don Barnes, Orange County Sheriff's Department

Sheriff Don Barnes presented to the CoC Board on the Orange County Sheriff Department's (OCSD) Behavioral Health Bureau, the department's crisis intervention training, the enhanced homelessness and mental health response efforts, the System of Care Data Integration System and the Orange County jail reforms to address the mental health crisis. Please reference [slides 3-13](#) for further information.

CoC Board member comments:

- Donald Dermit thanked Sheriff Barnes on the presentation and inquired on the COVID-19 vaccination process within the Orange County jail system. Sheriff Barnes commented on the department's current COVID-19 isolation and safety precautions and noted that vaccinations will be offered to the jail facility population once the vaccinations are available.
- Secretary Becks Heyhoe asked about the Homeless Liaison Officer (HLO) trainings. Sheriff Barnes commented on the biannual training that HLOs must go through amounting up to 80 hours annually.
- George Searcy expressed an interest in a greater alignment between the OCSD and the Orange County CoC. Sheriff Barnes offered to host a CoC Board meeting in the future and to continue working with the CoC.

2. Orange County System of Care Update – Jason Austin, Office of Care Coordination Director

- a. Project Roomkey: The County of Orange (County) continues to operate the temporary isolation shelters and congregate shelters for individuals experiencing homelessness who are COVID-19 sick or positive. Referrals into the program will be made by Public Health Services, hospitals, shelters, street outreach teams and law enforcement.
- b. Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) Overview: The ERA was established by the Consolidated Appropriation Act of 2021 and provides \$25 billion to the U.S. Department of the Treasury for the administration of the ERA Program. The ERA Program assists renter households that are unable to pay rent and utilities due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The ERA Program funds are to be provided directly to the States, US Territories, local governments with more than 200,000 residents and is based on 2019 U.S. Census Bureau data. The State of California which accounts for 11.95 percent of the Nation's population is expected to receive a maximum allocation of \$2,610,593,356. In

Orange County, the County of Orange, the City of Anaheim, the City of Santa Ana and the City of Irvine are eligible to receive allocations as the population in each jurisdiction is over 200,000. Funding is expected to be dispersed to grantees on January 27, 2021, and funding must be completely expended by December 31, 2021. The County of Orange is currently working on developing an ERA program to assist renter households.

3. Orange County Continuum of Care (CoC) Update – Zulima Lundy, CoC Manager

- a. CoC Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA): The FY 2020 CoC NOFA has been cancelled by the U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). All grants included in the Orange County CoC's 2020 Grant Inventory Worksheet and expiring in 2021 will be automatically renewed for one 12-month period. Grant renewals will reflect Fair Market Rent adjustments, as applicable. Additional details are expected from HUD soon.
- b. HUD Waivers: On December 31, 2020, HUD released another waiver that extends the temporary flexibilities currently in place for the CoC Program and Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Program.
- c. 2021 Sheltered Count and Housing Inventory Count (HIC): 2-1-1 Orange County (211OC) leads the annual sheltered Count and HIC. The night of the Sheltered Count and HIC is January 25, 2021. 211OC has emailed agencies with both Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) participating and HMIS non-participating projects to review the Sheltered Count and HIC process. The first deadline in support of the Sheltered County and HIC is on February 1, 2021. For more information please visit 211OC's [2021 HIC & Sheltered PIT knowledge base article](#).
- d. Longitudinal System Analysis (LSA) Extension Request: 211OC has requested an extension from HUD for the LSA submission. 211OC has been working on the LSA since October 2020. HUD contacted 211OC noting that there were several errors within the data that considered the data "unusable". Guidance is pending from HUD on what errors make the LSA data "unusable". The extension was approved to submit on January 29, 2021, rather than the original deadline of January 15, 2021.
- e. HMIS User License Fees: On December 17, 2020, the CoC Board approved the HMIS User License Fee Policy. On January 8, 2021, 211OC sent emails to HMIS participating agencies that provided background on the CoC Board action and provided an opportunity for HMIS participating agencies to review and confirm the number of HMIS user licenses in use. 211OC issued invoices to HMIS participating agencies and agencies have 60 days from invoice date to submit payment.
- f. Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) Round 2: The California Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council released the NOFA for HHAP Round 2 on November 13, 2020. The application has since been released and is due January 25, 2021. The OCC will complete the application on behalf of the CoC as the designated Administrative Entity. The HHAP Round 2 allocated to the Orange County CoC will support the Homekey Program Operations per prior approval CoC Board action. The Transitional Aged Youth Set Aside will be programmed at a later date.
- g. Request for Proposals (RFP) Updates: The COVID-19 Homelessness and Prevention Response RFP review is underway. Applicants will be notified when funding recommendations are being considered by the CoC Board. The Coordinated Entry System (CES) for Individuals RFP and the Bridges at Kramer Place RFP have closed, and review is underway.
- h. Commission to End Homelessness Homeless Service Mapping Survey: The survey was developed by the Commission to End Homelessness to better understand the services and resources in

Orange County for those experiencing homelessness. The information collected will support the mapping of the System of Care. An update on the results of the survey is anticipated February 2021.

- i. COVID-19 Homelessness Responses Funding: Expenditures through December 30, 2020, will be paid with Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding. Letter of Agreements for the provision of Alternative Shelter Placement will continue to be an available resource to the CoC Providers. Approximately 10,533 alternative shelter nights have been provided since program implementation. Currently 54 households at high-risk for severe COVID-19 illness are receiving assistance with alternative shelter.

4. Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP) and California Emergency Solutions and Housing (CESH) Service Contract Renewals – Zulima Lundy, CoC Manager and Maricela Rios-Faust, Vice Chair

- a. Zulima Lundy provided an overview of the current contracts funded through HEAP and CESH grants and detailed the reasoning behind the recommendation. With CESH Round 2 funding recommendations, it is recommended utilizing CESH Round 2 for an additional one-year term for Rental Assistance, Housing Relocation and Stabilization Services, and Operating Support for Emergency Housing Interventions projects. With HHAP Round 1 funding recommendations, it is recommended utilizing \$1 million to renew HEAP service contracts for one year, utilizing \$400,000 to renew the CESH Flexible Housing Subsidy Funds for a one-year term and utilizing remaining \$2,595,312 in funding to support Project C: COVID-19 Homeless Response Programs from the RFP. The Ad Hoc appointed in July 2020 by the CoC Board for the COVID-19 Homeless Response Funding engaged in conversation of whether to consider extending existing CESH and HEAP contracts for a third year. The Ad Hoc members spoke to the importance of funding programs that have a demonstrated concept and expressed a need for clear agreed upon assessment of existing program performance. Although not all components of the recommendation of the passed the Policies, Procedures and Standards (PPS) Committee, the OCC and the PPS Committee Chair Maricela Rios-Faust felt it important that the entirety of the recommendation be presented to the Orange County CoC Board for additional discussion and consideration.
- b. Motion: Approve the renewal of expiring contracts funded by HEAP and CESH for an additional one-year term utilizing CESH Round 2 and Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) Round 1 funding as presented to the Policies, Procedures and Standards Committee.

Vice Chair Maricela Rios-Faust motioned to approve the recommendation. George Searcy seconded the motion. Matt Bates, Becks Heyhoe, Patti Long and Dawn Price abstained from voting. The motion passed.

5. Ad Hoc on Homelessness Prevention Assessment Tool Recommendation – Zulima Lundy, CoC Manager; Maricela Rios-Faust, Vice Chair; and Judson Brown, Ad Hoc Chair

- a. Zulima Lundy provided an overview of presentations shared to the PPS Committee by the Ad Hoc on Homelessness Prevention Assessment Tool. Karen Williams, from 211OC, presented the Homelessness Prevention Assessment Tool to the CoC Board as developed by the Ad Hoc and presented to the PPS Committee. 211OC has partnered with homeless service provider agencies to centralize calls by household seeking Prevention Assistance through the 211OC's Contact Call Center. 211OC's role as a virtual front door facilitated the triage of households at highest risk of experiencing homelessness to access limited resources and allowed for the eligible household's information to be entered directly into the HMIS.

- b. Albert Ramirez asked how cities can utilize the tool. Karen Williams noted to contact Albert Ramirez for further discussion.
- c. Motion: Adopt the Homeless Prevention Assessment Tool created by the Ad Hoc on Homelessness Prevention to prioritize households at-risk of homelessness for Prevention Assistance as recommended by the PPS Committee.

Vice Chair Maricela Rios-Faust motioned to approve the recommendation. Tim Houchen seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous consent.

- 6. CoC Data Dashboard** – Zulima Lundy, CoC Manager and Erin DeRycke, Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Lead
- a. Recommended Action: Approve the CoC Data Dashboard developed by 2-1-1 Orange County utilizing HMIS data, Contact Call Center data and Coordinated Entry System Virtual Front Door data as reviewed by the Policies, Procedures and Standards Committee.
 - b. The Item was tabled until the February 24, 2021 CoC Board meeting.

Meeting adjourned: 3:58 p.m.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, February 24, 2021, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Date: February 24, 2021

Subject: Continuum of Care (CoC) Data Dashboard

Recommendation:

- a. Approve the CoC Data Dashboard developed by 2-1-1 Orange County utilizing Homeless Management Information System data, Contact Call Center data and Coordinated Entry System Virtual Front Door data as reviewed by the Policies, Procedures and Standards Committee.

Background:

During the Policies, Procedures and Standards (PPS) Committee meeting held on December 8, 2020, a presentation on the Continuum of Care (CoC) Data Dashboard was made by Zulima Lundy, CoC Manager and Erin DeRycke from 2-1-1 Orange County. The CoC Data Dashboard was created by 2-1-1 Orange County (211OC) and incorporates data from:

- Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)
- the 211OC's Contact Call Center Data; and
- the Coordinated Entry System (CES) Virtual Front Door Data.

The HMIS component of the CoC Data Dashboard provides aggregate data regarding the Orange County CoC at a system-level, project-type level, and by subpopulations. It reflects information regarding households experiencing homelessness and accessing homeless services within Orange County. The dashboard also details a handful of performance metrics that will be helpful in supporting the ongoing development of the homeless service system.

The 211OC's Contact Center Data presents the outcomes of calls and texts to the 211OC Contact Center. The dashboard details contacts by Service Planning Area, service needs of callers based on information and referrals provided and details statistical demographic information of callers.

The CES Virtual Front Door Data presents the outcomes of the Virtual Front Door in facilitating access to shelter and housing programs for households at-risk of homelessness or experiencing homelessness. The dashboard details the total housing needs by referral type, total referrals by agency, homeless household information and veteran information.

The CoC Data Dashboard will be updated on a quarterly basis by 211OC. The CoC Data Dashboards can be viewed here:

<https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoizmM1NWViMzAtY2Q3OS00Njc2LTkxNGQtNTc4ODM2NTg5Y2FmIiwidCI6ImQ1MmZhM2ViLTkwYjMtNDkyMS04YzAzLTc4NjBjZjMyOGEzYSIsImMiOiZ9&pageName=ReportSectionb7acc195e66627896582>

At the direction of the PPS Committee membership, the CoC Data Dashboard was emailed to the PPS Committee for final review and prior to presenting to the CoC Board for final approval. The PPS Committee membership reviewed in detail and had no additional suggested changes or feedback.

This recommendation is being continued from the CoC Board meeting of January 2021.

Analysis:

Approval of the CoC Data Dashboard will support the CoC Board, CoC Board Committees and the annual CoC Notice of Funding Availability funding competition in assessing any gaps in the delivery of homeless services, planning activities, and highlighting outcomes within the Orange County CoC. Additionally, the CoC Data Dashboard will serve as a resource tool for nonprofit organizations that provide homeless services to support with understanding the landscape of homeless program assistance and needs.

Date: February 24, 2021

Subject: COVID-19 Homeless and Prevention Response Request for Proposals

Recommendation:

- a. Approve the COVID-19 Homeless and Prevention Response RFP: Project B – Vendor Recommendations, as recommended by the COVID-19 Homeless and Prevention Response RFP Panel.
 - i. Mercy House Living Centers for COVID-19 Response Rapid Rehousing Services, for the term of March 23, 2021, through June 30, 2022, for an amount not to exceed \$9,110,656.
 - ii. Interval House for COVID-19 Response Rapid Rehousing Services, for the term of March 23, 2021, through June 30, 2022, for an amount not to exceed \$200,000.
 - iii. People Assisting the Homeless (PATH) for COVID-19 Response Rapid Rehousing Services, for the term of March 23, 2021, through June 30, 2022, for an amount not to exceed \$1,714,219
- b. Approve Families Forward acting as the Fiscal Backbone for the Family Solutions Collaborative for COVID-19 Response Rapid Rehousing Services for Families for the term of March 23, 2021, through June 30, 2022, for an amount not to exceed \$3,971,625.

Background:

Under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Stimulus (CARES) Act enacted March 27, 2020, the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) received funding from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in the amount of approximately \$42 million in federal funds for the Emergency Solutions Grants Program (ESG). These funds are referred to as the ESG-Coronavirus (State ESG-CV).

The County of Orange, Health Care Agency (HCA) in collaboration with the Orange County Continuum of Care (CoC) serves as the administrative entity for the State ESG-CV funding. On May 11, 2020, HCD announced the release of the 2020 ESG-CV Round 1 Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for the Continuum of Care allocation. The Orange County CoC received an allocation of \$2,444,700 in State ESG-CV Round 1. On October 2, 2020, HCD announced the release of the 2020 ESG-CV Round 1 NOFA for the Continuum of Care allocation. The Orange County CoC received an allocation of \$18,207,901 in State ESG-CV Round 2.

On July 22, 2020, the CoC Board appointed an ad hoc of non-conflicted members to work with the Office of Care Coordination (OCC) to release a request for proposals (RFP) for the COVID-19 Response Funding. After meeting with the ad hoc, on August 5, 2020 the CoC Board authorized the OCC to release an RFP to solicit proposals for COVID-19 Response Homeless and Prevention Response.

On September 9, 2020, HCA issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) to seek qualified providers for COVID-19 Homeless and Prevention Response Services, with three separate projects types identified within:

Homeless Prevention Services, Rapid Rehousing Services and COVID-19 Responsive Services. The award of these contracts is specifically for Rapid Rehousing Services. There were thirteen respondents to the Rapid Rehousing Services project in the RFP. An evaluation panel consisting of one HCA representative and two CoC Board members representatives evaluated the proposals and recommended award of contracts to Mercy House Living Centers, Interval House and PATH. HCA has completed successful negotiations with the providers and recommends award of contracts to the Mercy House Living Centers, Interval House and PATH.

As presented at the July 2020 meeting of the CoC Board and the meeting of Funding Ad Hoc of the CoC Board, the Family Solutions Collaborative (FSC) is to serve as the lead entity to administer the funding to provide rapid rehousing services to families experiencing homelessness in Orange County. The FSC is a coalition of 22 family service nonprofits in Orange County. The FSC was formed to streamline the process for families experiencing homelessness to be connected to the services they need in a timely manner. This infrastructure and role within the homeless service system allows the FSC to quickly make rapid rehousing service funding available to all 22 family service nonprofits as they interact and serve families experiencing homelessness due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, the coordination amongst the 22 agencies allows for the family seeking services the ability to access services with the provider of their choice without having to be handed off from provider to provider.

Total funding recommendations for COVID-19 Response Rapid Rehousing Services

Agency	Contract Term	Funding Amount
Mercy House Living Centers	March 23, 2021 - June 30, 2022	\$9,110,656
Interval House	March 23, 2021 - June 30, 2022	\$200,000
People Assisting the Homeless (PATH)	March 23, 2021 - June 30, 2022	\$1,714,219
Families Forward	March 23, 2021 - June 30, 2022	\$3,971,625

Analysis:

Approval of the Recommended Actions will support the Office of Care Coordination in contracting with the four homeless service providers – Mercy House, Interval House, PATH and FSC. These contracts will provide individuals and families experiencing homelessness with rapid rehousing services to secure permanent housing and further enhance their overall health and wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic,

Date: February 24, 2021

Subject: Orange County United Way Data Release Request

Recommendation:

- a. Approve OC United Way's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data request for aggregate data on households that entered and exited the homelessness system of care in calendar year 2020.. OC United Way HMIS aggregate data request will support the United to End Homelessness efforts and be incorporated into Homelessness 101 class curriculum.

Background:

On February 5, 2021, OC United Way submitted a data request to 2-1-1 Orange County (211OC) requesting aggregate data from HMIS on households that entered and exited the homelessness system of care during the calendar year of 2020.

The reporting period for the request is from January 1, 2020, to December 31, 2020. The following data points were detailed in the request:

- Number of unique individuals who experienced homelessness in 2020
- Number of unique individuals who experienced homelessness for the first time in 2020
- Number of unique families (households with at least one minor child) who experienced homelessness in 2020, and number of adults and children in those family households
- Number of unique seniors (ages 62 and older) who experienced homelessness in 2020
- Number of unique veterans who experienced homelessness in 2020
- Number of unique Transitional Aged Youth (ages 18 to 24) who experienced homelessness in 2020
- Number of unique individuals who exited homelessness into permanent housing in 2020
- Number of unique families who exited homelessness into permanent housing in 2020, and number of adults and children in those family households
- Number of unique seniors who exited homelessness into permanent housing in 2020
- Number of unique veterans who exited homelessness into permanent housing in 2020
- Number of unique Transitional Aged Youth who exited homelessness into permanent housing in 2020

OC United Way will utilize the requested information to share with the United to End Homelessness Leadership Council, will be utilized in OC United Way's Homelessness 101 classes and will be available on OC United Way's website. OC United Way will publish the information on the United to End Homelessness website, the OC United Way Scorecard and in the Homelessness 101 class curriculum.

Based on the approval from the HMIS Policies and Procedures, requests for HMIS data must be reviewed and approved by the CoC Board prior to the data being released if the request meets any of the criteria below:

Data Request Criteria	HMIS Participating Agency		Entity Does not Participate in HMIS		CoC Board Sub-Committee	
	Approved	Needs Approval	Approved	Needs Approval	Approved	Needs Approval
Aggregate system level data	X			X	X	
De-identified client level data		X		X	X	
Ongoing data requests	X			X		X
For use as research		X		X	X	
For media release		X		X		X
For other public use		X		X		X

Although OC United Way is requesting aggregate data, the data will be utilized for public use and media release which requires an approval by the CoC Board.

Date: February 24, 2021

Subject: Open Letter to President Joe Biden and HUD Secretary Marcia Fudge

Recommendation:

- a. Approve the Orange County CoC to sign a joint letter to the new federal administration to bring awareness to three main points:
 - a. CoCs suffer from mandate confusion and scarcity
 - b. COVID-19 presented a different way forward: resources and alignments
 - c. Federal support and direction can allow us to use housing as the vaccine for homelessness.

Background:

On February 18, 2021, a representative from the Los Angeles County Continuum of Care (CoC), in partnership with the National Alliance to End Homelessness and more than 20 CoCs across the nation, reached out to the Office of Care Coordination as the Collaborative Applicant for the Orange County CoC and surrounding CoCs seeking broad support for an open letter to the new federal administration. The open letter (Attachment A) aims to bring awareness to the challenges CoCs face and how the COVID-19 pandemic response has created resources and opportunities to better help those experiencing homelessness.

The goal of the open letter is to open the door for future dialogue with the administration on specific policy proposals that can help CoCs move the needle on driving down homelessness in our communities.

Analysis

The recommended action will allow the Orange County CoC to sign on to a letter on behalf of the Orange County CoC in effort to bring awareness to the challenges and opportunities CoCs face in effectively addressing homelessness, including the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. By signing on to the letter, the Orange County CoC will be able to join other CoCs across the nation in seeking additional resources to expand the availability and delivery of homeless services.

Attachment:

- A. Draft of an open letter to President Joe Biden and Secretary of U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Marcia Fudge

Attachment A – An open letter to President Joe Biden and Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Marcia Fudge

Dear President Biden and Secretary Fudge,

A little less than one year ago, the leaders of every regional [Continuum of Care \(CoC\)](#)—the public agencies that coordinate the delivery of homeless services through hundreds of nonprofits, city departments and their own staff—could see a looming catastrophe approaching, a swift killer about to join the slow killer that is homelessness in America.

Then something remarkable happened: everyone else saw it coming too. Despite tragic losses, the response to the COVID-19 pandemic has been better funded and better aligned than any other program to combat homelessness in the time that we, the undersigned executive directors of thirty Continua of Care, have served the public.

Why? We finally saw homelessness treated as the public health crisis that it is.

Today political leaders and their publics share a clear goal: to help as many people get back into housing as possible.

We cannot afford to retreat from that goal. Instead, we should establish the urgency that fueled our COVID-19 response as the new normal for addressing homelessness. We should make housing the vaccine for homelessness.

The consensus that housing ends homelessness is, surprisingly, a fragile one. Prior to COVID-19, homeless services leaders across the country knew we needed a consolidated emergency response to this humanitarian crisis, but we were operating with insufficient resources to fulfill confusing and imprecise mandates. We were asked to repair or provide food security systems, domestic violence responses, and post-hospital rehabilitation. We stretched loaves of bread to feed dozens, and single shelter beds to serve tens of thousands. From Harlem to Honolulu, our successes at rehousing people were dwarfed by more people falling into homelessness than our systems could keep up with.

Even if that inflow stopped tomorrow, we would have neither the funds nor the homes to serve the number of people who are currently unhoused. According to the National Low-Income Housing Coalition, the nation faces a shortage of 7 million affordable homes. Since 1979, Congress has slashed annual funding for Community Development Block Grants—the most flexible program that local governments can use to preserve or create affordable housing—by 77%. And only one in four households eligible for Section 8 vouchers ever actually receive one, due to limited funding. Meanwhile, our nation's income disparities have grown wider than ever, forcing more and more people into homelessness.

Scarcity forced us into lose-lose dilemmas: should we bow to pressure from squeaky wheels and use law enforcement strategies to push people out of sight, or should we ask the public to accept tent cities as part of the community fabric? Should we use limited funds to achieve a meaningful end to homelessness for too few, or spread resources too thin to offer people living outside modest hygiene services, mass shelters, and storage?

Only the threat of swift, mass death on the street pushed the communities we serve past these dilemmas. People living outdoors cannot self-isolate or social distance. Over-crowded congregate sites rapidly decompressed to avoid becoming hubs of super-spreading. Our systems identified the most vulnerable, moved many of them into hotel rooms, and put them on a path to permanent housing with appropriate services.

Now we're confronting the threat of an "eviction tsunami" that could push even more people into homelessness. As the affluent have enjoyed the safety and comfort of working from home and corporations have reaped huge financial gains, the financial fallout of the pandemic has fallen squarely on lower-income people—the vast majority of whom are people of color—who were already struggling to keep up with the rising cost of housing and may soon find themselves on the street. Some predict we will see a [more than 40% increase](#) in the number of unhoused people. If our systems struggled before the pandemic, can they possibly withstand what's next?

They can if we heed the three big lessons of the pandemic: set consistent priorities, fund solutions adequately, and respond to homelessness as a public health crisis—a crisis each one of us must commit to solving with urgency, especially those of us with the means to help.

This last point cannot be overstated. Housing is a social determinant of health. COVID-19 reinforced that good housing is good healthcare, and it will remain so even after unhoused people have vaccines. Housing makes it possible to isolate. To rest. To receive care.

If we agree that housing is the vaccination for homelessness, what will logically follow, and what would stop?

We would help people get back into housing as quickly as possible with the intent of rehousing them all.

We would recognize and properly fund "upstream" safety nets and systems—foster care, criminal justice, housing construction and employment—while unraveling the structures of racism that have resulted in disproportionate Black and brown suffering.

We would stop holding CoCs accountable for ancillary supports such as food, mental and physical rehabilitation, and hospital discharge reception that stretch our funds so thin enough that they are barely even band-aids.

Instead, CoCs should be held accountable for the singular, critical task of helping people get back into housing that is connected to needed services and keeping them housed.

To achieve this, the Biden administration should offer an implementable, scalable, and funded plan in support of proven interventions that end homelessness. Those should include specific practices that bore fruit during COVID-19, such as directing FEMA to address people experiencing homelessness as a special vulnerable population. Congress should maintain the flow of flexible, federal dollars that originally came through the CARES Act and restore funding that has been stripped over the past decade to equip communities to rapidly rehouse people.

The Biden plan should lay out two clear goals for state, county, city governments, and CoCs:

- Rehouse as many people as quickly as possible into permanent environments such as existing apartments or converted hotels and motels; and

- Bolster those efforts with prevention and support strategies—especially for people who have already experienced homelessness.

This does not mean abandoning ancillary features of homeless services. It especially does not negate the need for safe, dignified, temporary shelter. But shelter must be clearly subordinate to permanent housing. The alternative is the “warehousing trap” = getting people out of the elements, out of sight, only to leave them in limbo.

It would be all too easy to allow the unity, resolve and resourcing we have today to evaporate in favor of the over-complicated, resource-starved homeless services system of the past. The arrival of an effective COVID-19 vaccine comes as the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel to a nation battered by the pandemic. Now is the time to agree that housing is the vaccine for homelessness.

Signed,

[List of CoCs]