



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AND CITY COUNCIL ADOPT SACRAMENTO'S TEN-YEAR PLAN TO END CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

(Sacramento, CA. September 26, 2006) – The Sacramento County Board of Supervisors and the City Council today approved a Ten-Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness. With ‘housing first’ as its central strategy, the plan is focused on moving disabled homeless individuals quickly off the streets and out of shelters and into permanent housing. The Plan is the result of a significant collaborative effort by public and private sector leaders led by Mayor Heather Fargo and County Supervisor Roger Dickinson.

“We have the community support to do this,” said Mayor Heather Fargo. “We are joining about 200 other cities throughout the United States who have made this commitment to put out a ten-year plan to end chronic homelessness.

“The issue is complicated by the life factors that affect so many of our homeless,” said Supervisor Dickinson. “These factors make it difficult if not impossible for them to exercise their own judgment and make choices that will lead them out of homelessness.”

Once housed, individuals will be provided flexible support services to help them maintain their housing and increase their self-sufficiency. The approach is based on successful local programs, as well as national best practice models from New York, Philadelphia, Portland, and San Francisco. Implementation detail has been developed for five key components of the Plan: Central Intake and Outreach, Housing First provided through leased housing and through development of permanent supportive housing, Prevention, Leadership, and Evaluation/Reporting. For each key component, this Plan develops program elements, designates lead entities, identifies anticipated resources including new ways to align existing resources, identifies funding gaps, and outlines potential challenges to implementation.

“This is a good example of what can be done in this community to get people off the streets and out of the camps.” Richard Harris, Executive Director of Central City Concern in Portland, Oregon. “The way to end homelessness is that you have to provide real opportunities for homeless people to end in stable, decent housing in the community.”

“No government can do it alone,” said Ed Cabrera, Region 9 Coordinator for the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness. “Providers, businesses, law enforcement, and stakeholders in the community all have to be engaged on this issue and this Ten-Year Plan has accomplished that.”

Supervisor Dickinson said the County has a successful program in addressing the vast majority of those who become homeless, stating that 80 to 90 percent are able to work through the County's continuum of care finding emergency shelter first and then moving on to transitional housing and then ultimately into the mainstream of community.

As the Plan is implemented, the collaborative process will continue through a strong public/private leadership structure that includes the establishment of a Policy Board and Interagency Council. The Policy Board will consist of high-level public and private sector leaders and will provide strategic direction, oversight, and advocacy for the Plan. The Interagency Council will plan and coordinate service delivery and recommend policies and strategies to the Policy Board. The Mayor of the City of Sacramento and the Chair of the Board of Supervisors, or their designees, will jointly appoint the initial membership of the Policy Board. Once established, the Policy Board will appoint replacement members as well as members of the Interagency Council. The Interagency Council will include representatives from the homeless service sector and stakeholder interests, and will reflect the ethnic and cultural diversity of Sacramento County.

While over 200 cities and counties across the country have developed 10-Year Plans to address homelessness, this is one of the few plans developed jointly by a city and county. The Plan envisions a continued high level leadership and staffing to oversee implementation and to measure results – in terms of both individual and community benefit.

An estimated 1,600 chronically homeless persons live in Sacramento County. Chronically homeless are disabled individuals experiencing homelessness for a year or more or with multiple episodes of homelessness within a short period of time. The Plan proposes a centralized intake and four initial prevention strategies. This coordinated approach among public and private agencies and service providers will reduce demands on emergency services and law enforcement and, most importantly, reduce the number of homeless persons who are living on the street. About 500 housing units are expected to be created over the next five years.

SHRA (www.shra.org) is a Joint Powers Authority created by the City and County of Sacramento to represent both jurisdictions for affordable housing and community redevelopment needs. The Agency is the leading public developer of affordable housing and oversees residential and commercial revitalization activities in 14 redevelopment areas throughout the City and County. SHRA has a FY 2006 budget of \$227 million and approximately 308 employees. The Agency owns and manages 3,400 units of public housing and is one of the largest landlords in Sacramento. SHRA also administers approximately 11,000 rental assisted vouchers per month.