

ATTACHMENT "B"

CITY OF ANTIOCH

POLICY GUIDELINES FOR THE CITY'S APPROACH TO UNHOUSED RESIDENT SERVICES

Prepared April 16, 2021

I. PURPOSE

The City of Antioch is committed to adopting and implementing strategic, effective responses to the needs of residents who are unhoused. Contra Costa County's Continuum of Care (CoC) currently provides most of the crisis response and re-housing services for unhoused residents in Antioch and across the region. With the number of unhoused residents continuing to steadily rise, the City of Antioch has been developing its strategy to complement the services available through the CoC and more fully respond to the needs of its residents. The City Council has adopted these Policy Guidelines to articulate the City's strategic approach, guiding principles, and criteria to inform current and future investments in services for unhoused residents. The Policy Guidelines build on over two years of conversation and engagement within the City to better understand resident needs and the existing service landscape, review potential service and re-housing strategy models, and secure funding for adopted approaches.

II. BACKGROUND

In 2019, members of the City Council hosted a panel with the Homeless Encampment Task Force. From this, the City Council approved and initiated a Homeless Encampment Ad Hoc Committee that met from April 2019 to April 2020 to identify and recommend solutions to the growth in homelessness and the needs of unhoused residents. In April 2020, the Transitional Housing Ad Hoc Committee formed to continue to advance these efforts. Key outcomes from these efforts include the approval of City funding to be set aside for services for unhoused residents and the hiring of an Unhoused Resident Services Coordinator to inform and guide implementation of the City's work to address homelessness.

In November 2019, the City Council allocated a portion of the set-aside funding for immediate needs including mobile showers and toilets, trash disposal, laundry services, and

motel vouchers. In addition, the City Council allocated funds to support pilots for safe parking programs and warming centers. The balance of approved funds remains to be allocated, as of the writing of these Policy Guidelines. Given the limited funding available to respond to the needs of unhoused residents, these Policy Guidelines serve as a framework for decisions around pending and future fund allocations. To be most impactful in reducing homelessness, the City needs to adopt a response strategy that shifts from individual initiatives and reactive responses towards coordinated, data- and equity-informed efforts that drive towards long-term housing solutions: this document outlines that strategy.

The approaches, guiding principles, and criteria in these Policy Guidelines are informed by engagements with local stakeholders, reviews of national best practices for reducing homelessness, and effective programs and services for unhoused residents in peer communities. Most recently, in February 2021, the Transitional Housing Ad Hoc Committee hosted two public forums to introduce community members to the City's strategic framework for unhoused resident services including a feasibility study that had been completed at City's Council's request to explore the development and funding of a non-congregate bridge housing program. At the forums, community members offered feedback on the strategies presented as well as additional ideas for City Council consideration. The City, in coordination with its contracted consultant, Focus Strategies, has reviewed and discussed effective program services and overall homelessness response system strategies informed by national best practices with a lens towards the specific role of cities in crisis response and long-term housing solutions. Additionally, City staff have conducted research and visited several local and peer community programs including a motel voucher program operated by Contra Costa County, shower services provided by Golden Hills Church, food distributed at Troste Property, a tiny home program in Hayward, a safe parking site in Union City, and sanctioned encampment sites in San Francisco and Martinez.

III. CONTEXT

A. Homelessness in Antioch

In partnership with the City, the CoC conducts an annual enumeration¹ of people experiencing both sheltered and unsheltered homelessness in the region. In 2020, 238

¹ This enumeration process is known as the Point-in-Time Count, or PIT Count, and takes place in January each year. The PIT Count methodology includes a physical counting of people visibly seen to be experiencing homelessness in cars, tents, or other outdoor locations; an inventory of the number of people staying in interim housing programs such as emergency shelter; and a survey of people who are unsheltered to better understand characteristics and needs.

people were identified as unsheltered within Antioch. This represents 15% of the people experiencing unsheltered homelessness across Contra Costa County. While year-to-year data has fluctuated², the City has seen an overall upward trend in the number of residents who are unhoused over the past five years.

Data collected by the County's Coordinated Outreach, Referral, Engagement (CORE) teams provides additional insight into the population of residents who are unhoused in Antioch. In 2020, CORE teams provided services to 1,104 unique Antioch residents experiencing housing crises: of these residents, 25% were individuals in family households with children. Fifty-seven percent of people served by CORE teams in Antioch were ages 25-54, 13% were under the age of 18 (includes children in family households), 12% were ages 55-61, 9% were ages 18-24 and 9% were over the age of 62. Of the people who received services through CORE teams in 2020, 45% identified as white, 37% as Black or African American, 18% as Hispanic or Latino, 8% as American Indian or Alaskan Native, 7% as multi-racial, and 2% as Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander. In addition, 3% of adult participants were Veterans; 67% of adult indicated having a disabling condition; and 17% reported recent or prior experiences of domestic or intimate partner violence.

Most residents who are unhoused in Antioch had connections to the jurisdiction prior to losing their housing. Of the people served by CORE teams in Antioch, 50% were originally from the City and 32% were from other parts of Contra Costa County. Many of these individuals previously worked, attended school, accessed services, or were connected to friends or family in Antioch.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted housing stability for many residents as well as the availability of services. While an enumeration of people experiencing homelessness has not taken place during the pandemic due to public health concerns, many stakeholders within Antioch have expressed concern that the situation has worsened over the past year. In addition to exacerbating need, the pandemic has shifted the landscape of crisis response and emergency housing services. While CORE teams are continuing to provide mobile outreach services, for example, transportation assistance to get to resources is no longer available. In addition, congregate emergency shelters have closed, and non-congregate

² Number of people identified through PIT Count by year: 238 people in 2020; 226 people in 2019; 350 people in 2018; 137 people in 2017; and 164 people in 2016.

programs based out of motels have opened to provide shelter to individuals identified as most vulnerable to severe COVID-19 health impacts.

B. Current City Response

The City's historical approach to responding to homelessness has been three-pronged: Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds are allocated towards homelessness prevention efforts; the City leverages the Community Engagement Team in its Police Department to respond to incidents such as mental health crises or reports of illegal activity involving residents who are unhoused; and the City's Public Works Department engages in abatement efforts at sites deemed encampments.

Through its community engagement in recent years, the City has received a significant number of ideas and concerns related to the presence of, and increase in the number of, unhoused residents. There is a varying feedback. For example, in some instances feedback appears in the form of advocacy to reduce the utilization of law enforcement as part of encampment response. In other instances, it is showcased as the concern about the impact of homelessness on home values and public safety. There is also concern about the promotion of additional services and immediate housing options for residents who are unhoused.

As noted in Section II, the City has set-aside \$531,174 in funds for new homelessness response efforts, with \$140,000 already allocated for mobile showers and toilets, trash and sharps disposal, laundry services, motel vouchers, and pilots for safe parking programs and warming centers. As of the writing of this Policy Guidelines document, the City is preparing to fund and launch a shower access program, laundry services, and a motel voucher program. Other services are still in the research and/or development phase. To promote service delivery coordination among these funded efforts and other local and regional programs, the City's Unhoused Resident Coordinator will be convening regular meetings for networking and strategy development.

C. Additional Local and Regional Resources

Multiple community-based groups in Antioch currently provide services for their unhoused neighbors. These groups include: Facing Homelessness, an advocacy group that serves meals and provides other basic needs; SHARE Community and Shower House Ministries that provide mobile or site-based shower access; and Loaves and Fishes and St. Vincent de Paul

that offer meals and food access. There are currently no emergency housing programs operating within Antioch.

In nearby communities, families with children can access shelter at Shepherd's Gate in Brentwood or Love-a-Child in Bay Point: access to shelters for individual adults and young people are extremely limited in East Contra Costa County. Contra Costa County is currently in the process of opening an East Contra Costa County CARE Center (located in a recently acquired Motel 6 in Pittsburg) and interim housing program that will expand service access for residents from Antioch. Unhoused Antioch residents are also eligible to access services available through the CoC's Coordinated Entry System (CES). CES is a centralized and coordinated process to prioritize and facilitate linkages to housing resources such as Rapid Re-housing and Permanent Supportive Housing. Unhoused residents can access these services by visiting one of the Coordinated Assessment, Referral and Engagement (CARE) Centers in Contra Costa County, calling 2-1-1, or engaging with a mobile CORE team.

IV. CRITERIA TO INFORM FUTURE STRATEGIES

The City has identified the following goals for its homelessness response approach:

- Engage in data-informed planning and investments.
- Invest in temporary housing and shelter that provide a pathway to housing.
- Participate in and leverage the Contra Costa County homelessness response system.
- Build partnerships with Antioch-based community partners and community-based efforts that complement City-funded and regional strategies.
- Adopt strategic encampment resolution policies focused on linking unhoused people to shelter, housing and services.

In February 2021, the City's Unhoused Resident Coordinator and its contracted consultant, Focus Strategies, presented a strategic framework to the City Council that included a portfolio of program models the City may pursue to serve unhoused residents. This includes:

- **Strategies to address the immediate and public health needs of unhoused residents.** The goal of these strategies is to keep residents as safe as possible while continuing to work with them towards housing solutions and/or until adding housing resources are available. This may include services like increased access to showers and toilets for people who are unsheltered, the provision of dumpsters and sharps

containers particularly at or near more populated encampment areas, vouchers for laundry services, and/or improved access to emergency shelter programs. This also may involve review and refinement of the City's existing approach to encampment response and/or the role of law enforcement in situations where illegal activity is not the primary concern.

- **Interim housing and services solutions designed to facilitate the transition into stable housing.** This may include short-term motel vouchers for people awaiting other housing solutions, safe parking sites with case management services, housing-focused CORE team services dedicated to work with residents of Antioch, and/or bridge housing programs. Bridge housing programs can be designed in a variety of settings ranging from motels to tiny homes to congregate facilities. To maximize positive outcomes (i.e., people leaving temporary shelter secure permanent housing upon exit) for any of these efforts, these services will need to be closely coordinated with the CoC's Coordinated Entry System and resource network.
- **Permanent housing resources and linkages.** This strategy area focuses on helping residents maintain or obtain stable housing by providing rental assistance, housing problem solving services (sometimes referenced as diversion), and/or housing-focused case management. This may include targeted homelessness prevention efforts, short- or medium-term rental assistance through Rapid Re-Housing programs, and/or long-term rental assistance through permanent housing vouchers such as Permanent Supportive Housing.

Given limited funding availability, it is important the City invest in programs and services that will have maximum impact in reducing homelessness and align with the City's identified approach to unhoused resident services. As the City considers pending and future investment opportunities, the table below provides a framework of criteria and considerations for assessing whether a program or service is likely to strategically further the City's efforts. Programs may not meet all the criteria: however, programs that align with these standards are more likely to achieve the City's goals for serving unhoused residents.

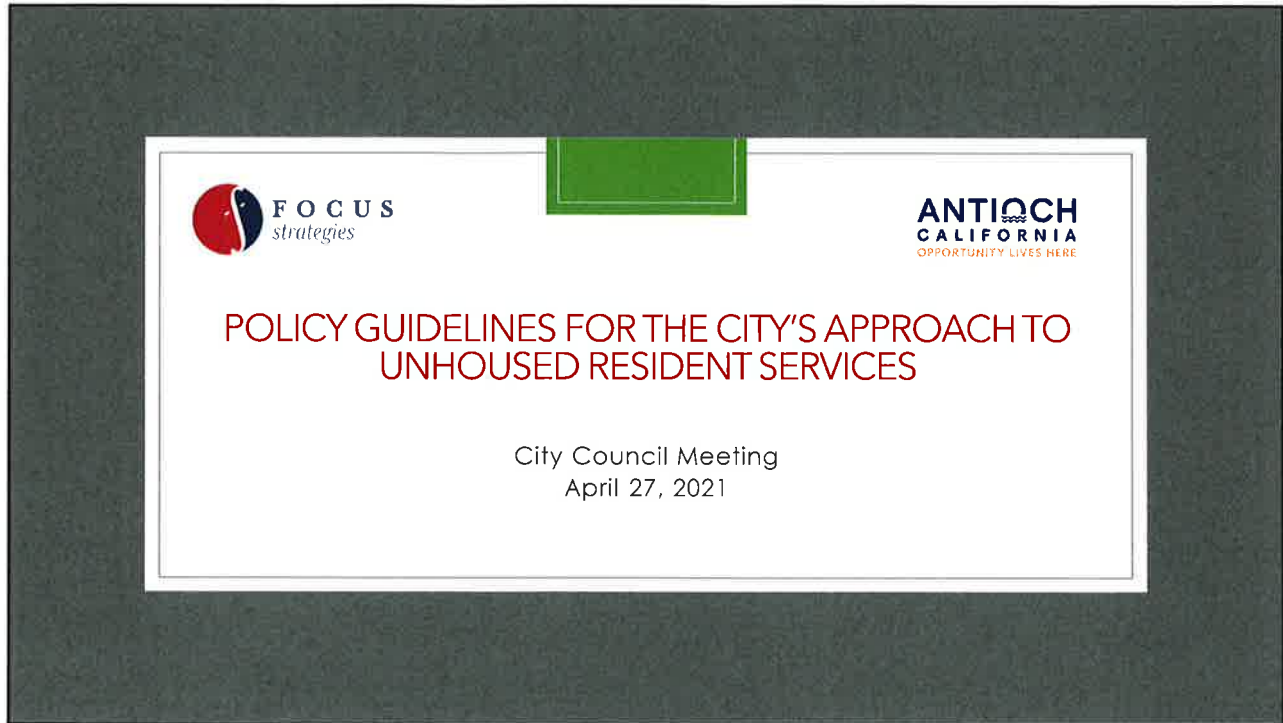
Criteria	Considerations
I. Alignment with Best Practice Approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Is the program low barrier and in alignment with Housing First practices? <input type="checkbox"/> Does the program use a trauma-informed approach to program design and delivery? <input type="checkbox"/> Is the program culturally competent in its design and delivery? <input type="checkbox"/> Does the program advance equity; for example, will it help address racial, ethnic, or other disparities identified among the population of residents who are unhoused?
II. Advancement of Housing Solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> What services and approaches does the program use to help people connect to housing solutions? <input type="checkbox"/> How does the program promote maximum utilization of available housing stock in the city? <input type="checkbox"/> How effective has the program been at helping people exit to positive housing outcomes? <input type="checkbox"/> If the program is new or innovative and does not have prior data for reference, how was the program designed and what gap(s) does it aim to fill in the community's existing service network?
III. Responsiveness to Critical Health and Safety Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Does the program advance the City's goals to alleviate encampment development and/or the need for abatements? <input type="checkbox"/> How effective has the program been at helping people who are unhoused improve their health and safety? <input type="checkbox"/> If the program is new or innovative and does not have prior data for reference, how was the program designed and what gap(s) does it aim to fill in the community's existing service network? <input type="checkbox"/> If the program does not directly or indirectly provide housing solutions, how is it balanced by other programs in Antioch's service portfolio that do advance permanent housing outcomes?

Criteria	Considerations
IV. Cost Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="581 247 1409 373">☐ In comparison to other program models, how cost effective is the program when looking at permanent housing outcomes? <li data-bbox="581 394 1416 478">☐ If the program requires staffing and/or infrastructure, is there a long-term sustainable funding source for the program? <li data-bbox="581 489 1404 615">☐ Does the program leverage the broader network of services available in Antioch inclusive of mainstream resources and community-based services? <li data-bbox="581 636 1367 714">☐ Does the program coordinate with and leverage regional resources such as the Coordinated Entry System?

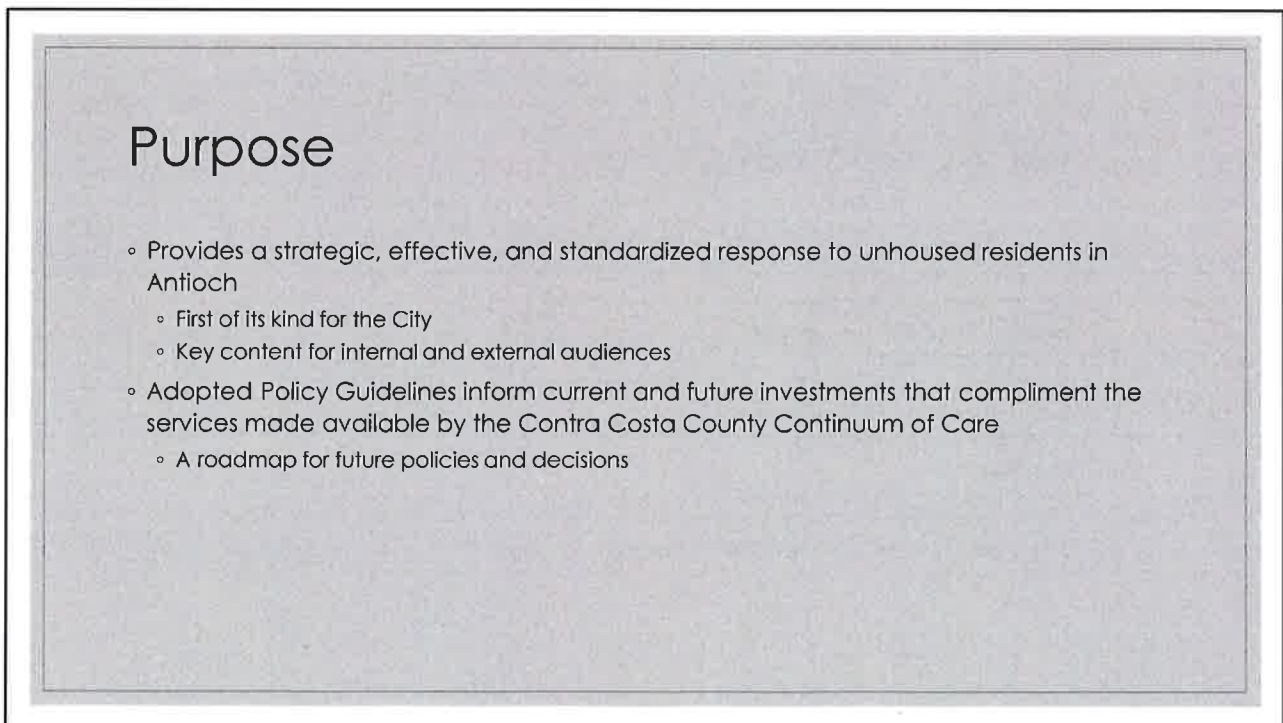
The four criteria above also offer an applicable lens for the development and modification of City policies pertaining to the needs and experiences of unhoused residents, such as policies that guide the City’s approach to encampment areas. Policies, funding decisions, and program services are most impactful towards solutions when they are working towards a shared vision and direction. Thus, policy decisions will be reviewed in light of how they utilize best practices; their alignment with the City’s approach to trauma- and equity-informed responses to homelessness; the extent to which they advance the City’s goals of advancing housing solutions and responding to critical health and safety needs of residents; and whether they are the most resource-effective solution to a challenge.

V. CONCLUSION

The City of Antioch is moving forward in its intent to improve services for unhoused residents and other community members impacted by homelessness. As it does so, it will be important for the City to make policy and investment decisions focused on achieving maximum impact towards advancing housing solutions and reducing homelessness. The criteria in this Policy Guidelines document provide a roadmap for assessing new program or service opportunities through the lens of alignment with best practices, advancement of permanent housing solutions, responsiveness to critical health and safety needs, and cost effectiveness in achieving housing stability for Antioch residents. With all new or expanded efforts, coordination with and leveraging of regional and community-based resources will be critical to maximizing permanent housing connections.



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Background

- Compiled data informed by
 - Homeless Encampment Task Force
 - November 2019 City Council allocated funds for immediate needs
 - Ad Hoc Committee Meeting April 2019-April 2020
 - Funds were allocated for the response, but given their limitations, policy guidelines can serve as a framework for pending and future fund allocations
 - Transitional Housing Ad Hoc Committee April 2020-present
 - Hiring of Unhoused Resident Coordinator and Focus Strategies
 - February 2021 Public Forums
 - Staff visits to local and peer community programs

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Current City Response

Three Pronged Response

- CDBG prevention supports
- Community Engagement Team at PD
- Abatement Team at Public Works

\$531,174 in Set Aside Funds

- Motel Voucher Program and Laundry Voucher Program

RFPs – Bridge Housing & Support Services

P/T Staffing of Unhoused Resident Coordinator

Additional Resources

- Community Based Advocacy Groups
- Contra Costa County CARE Center plans
- Contra Costa County Coordinated Entry System
 - CORE
 - 2-1-1

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Goals for the Approach to Unhoused Resident Needs

- Engage in data-informed planning and investments.
- Invest in temporary housing and shelter that provide a pathway to housing.
- Participate in and leverage the Contra Costa County homelessness response system.
- Build partnerships with Antioch-based community partners and community-based efforts that complement City-funded and regional strategies.
- Adopt strategic encampment resolution policies focused on linking unhoused people to shelter, housing and services.

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Strategic Framework

- Strategies to address the immediate and public health needs of unhoused residents.
- Interim housing and services solutions designed to facilitate the transition into stable housing.
- Permanent housing resources and linkages.

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Criteria and Considerations for Investments and Policies

- Alignment with Best Practice Approaches
- Advancement of Housing Solutions, Permanent Housing Resources & Linkages
- Responsiveness to Critical Health and Safety Needs
- Cost Effectiveness

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Questions?

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