

03-08-2023 Town Council Meeting

Responses to Council Questions

ITEM #7: Orange County Partnership to End Homelessness Update

Council Question:

Throughout the presentation, there is data on numbers served that in some places seem to be conflicting (people reached per service, number of gaps to be filled, etc.). It may be different time frames or variations in service provided, so it would be helpful to provide additional context or explanation when there is variation.

Partnership Staff Response:

Differing numbers refer to different performance periods (e.g. System Performance Measures come from HUD and reflect the federal Fiscal Year [Oct 2021 – Sept 2022] and only include some of the existing programs in the Orange County system and program specific slides reflect program data in the Homeless Management Information System for calendar year Jan – Dec 2022).

Council Question:

The increase in numbers housed between 2020 and 2021 is much more significant than in previous years - does that reflect increased need, increased access to housing resources, both? And why did it go down in 2022?

Partnership Staff Response:

There were a number of programmatic and community factors that contributed to the rise of people housed between 2020-2021:

- the rapid development and implementation of the Housing Helpline as the “front door” for people experiencing homelessness or at imminent risk of homelessness enabled a more complete picture of the need as well as a pathway to accessing housing and supports,*
- collaboration with Carolina Homelessness Prevention Initiative created diversion funds*
- the enhanced collaboration between the Continuum of Care and the OC Housing Authority that lead to the issuance of HCV, enabling people experiencing homelessness who solely need more affordable housing to access rental units on the private market,*
- increased COVID relief funds allowed for the expansion of housing with supports like Rapid Re-housing to help people who need some support to find / keep housing,*

The number of people connected with housing in 2022 declined from 145 to 141. I would hesitate to draw conclusions based on a 2.8% decrease and the system’s shelter capacity has been reduced following the COVID-related expansion into non-congregate shelter, going from 361 in FY21 to 312 in FY22. Additionally, we know that people experiencing homelessness who

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are searching for housing with a HCV take longer to find housing than people who are porting in with an HCV who may not have the same barriers.

Council Question:

The list of gaps seems like it would have a far higher price tag than \$2.2 million per year. What is included in that amount?

Partnership Staff Response:

The gaps listed are at differing stages of development and as such estimated costs can vary greatly depending on the approach used to fill the gap. The \$2.2 million includes:

Expanded Rapid Re-housing, Expanded DV-specific Rapid Re-housing, Expanded Permanent Supportive Housing, Ongoing Landlord Incentive Payments, Furniture and Household Goods, Accessible, low-barrier shelter, Expanded non-congregate DV shelter, Expanded Bridge Housing, Housing Help staffing, Memorial Service fund.

Council Question:

What can we do about income-based rental unit barriers to entry based on criminal justice involvement, poor credit, etc.?

Partnership Staff Response:

The Continuum of Care provides training and support to service providers and people in housing search to check their credit and criminal backgrounds prior to engaging in a housing search so they know what may come up during an applicant screening process. We recently hosted a training by the Fair Housing Project – a project of Legal Aid of NC. This training addressed how to request reasonable accommodations, particularly when criminal legal involvement may be related to a protected class and how to file a fair housing complaint. Additionally, the CoC is asking that income-based affordable housing providers to take referrals directly from the HOME Committee (the By-Name List and staffing of people experiencing homelessness by service providers) to reduce barriers to access, such as mailing incomplete applications to people who may not have a mailing address and barriers to entry. The Housing Access Coordinator also develops relationships with landlords to explore and address concerns they may have to enable people experiencing homelessness with barriers greater access.

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Council Question:

The PEH MOU is set to expire in July of 2023. What is the status of the discussions on a new MOU? How will that process impact how we make funding decisions this spring?

Partnership Staff Response:

The OCPEH Executive Team, comprised of representatives from the four elected boards, meet quarterly and at their December meeting, proposed that the MOU should be extended for one year annual terms while discussions are ongoing at the MMC level to develop a recommendation for how multijurisdictional issues should be analyzed to ensure that the Towns and County's funding investments maximize impact. I don't have a sense of how that process will impact funding decisions for FY24.

Council Question:

Given that the MOU requires an annual appointment to the executive team, does that mean Council should vote annually on that?

Partnership Staff Response:

Each board has the discretion to determine the process for making appointments to the Executive Team.

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Responses to Council Questions #2

ITEM #7: Orange County Partnership to End Homelessness Update

Council Question:

What are the steps required to make changes to the Good Neighbor Plan?

Staff Response:

The Good Neighbor Plan (GNP) contains a modification section. The two essential steps are: (1) The Inter-Faith Council (IFC) Board of Directors must approve any recommendations to amend the GNP before presenting the changes to the Town Council; and (2) the Town Council must approve the changes. The provision reads as follows, where CHAC refers to the [Community House Advisory Committee](#)¹:

Recommendations to amend the Good Neighbor Plan can originate from the Residential Services Director, the CHAC, the IFC Board of Directors or the Town Council. ... Any concerns or proposed amendments to the Good Neighbor Plan will be shared with the IFC Executive Director and the CHAC. The CHAC may also recommend to the IFC Board of Directors specific changes to the Good Neighbor Plan.

Any recommendations to amend the Plan must be approved by the IFC Board of Directors before presenting the recommendations to the Town Council.

The CHAC will be notified in advance about any proposed changes to the Plan by the IFC Board of Directors or the Town Council.

The IFC Board of Directors and the CHAC will look to the Town of Chapel Hill for specifications regarding notification standards to surrounding neighbors and other interested parties concerning proposed changes and/or actual changes to the Plan.

¹ <https://www.ifcweb.org/chac>