



NEWS

For Immediate Release

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SANTA CLARA COUNTY'S CHRONICALLY HOMELESS DIRECT REFERRAL PROGRAM WINS 2014 AWARD OF MERIT FROM NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF HOUSING AND REDEVELOPMENT OFFICIALS

Housing Authority, Santa Clara County and Destination: Home Successfully House and Serve 266 Chronically Homeless Individuals and Families

SAN JOSE, Calif. — July 17, 2014 — Committed to providing permanent supportive housing for the more than 2,000 people in Santa Clara County chronically living without shelter, the Housing Authority of the County of Santa Clara (HACSC) partnered with Destination: Home, the County of Santa Clara and the Santa Clara County Continuum of Care (CoC) to create a new and flexible way to assist this vulnerable population using federal housing choice (Section 8) vouchers. The resulting Chronically Homeless Direct Referral (CHDR) program has won a 2014 Award of Merit from the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO).

Launched in October 2010, the CHDR program is a locally designed voucher referral program that prioritizes housing for chronically homeless individuals and families who are receiving case management services. Many other public housing agencies have various programs that provide assistance to the unhoused; however, HACSC's program is distinct in that it uses regular Section 8 vouchers to assist chronically homeless individuals directly referred from the streets and pairs their rental assistance with intensive case management provided by community partners.

"On any given night, there are about 7,600 people who are living without shelter in Santa Clara County," says Jennifer Loving, executive director of Destination: Home, a public-private partnership ending homelessness in Santa Clara County. "The CHDR program is proving that housing people first, and then surrounding that housing with supportive services to ensure recovery and stability, works."

Local coordination of services produces tangible results

It took just over a year to house 202 CHDR program participants using the allocated 202 Section 8 turnover vouchers. HACSC estimated that 10 participants per year would leave the CHDR program.

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However, at the end of the program's third year (October 2013), an average of only eight participants per year (23 total participants) had left the program. In an equally sized group of chronically homeless individuals and families assisted through regular Section 8 assistance (without the additional case management services), an average of 18 participants surrender their vouchers annually. As a result of the program's success, HACSC allocated an additional 100 turnover vouchers to the CHDR program in fiscal 2013. Now almost four years into the program, 266 chronically homeless individuals and families have been housed through the CHDR program.

"Families and individuals in the county's CHDR program are more successful in maintaining housing largely because of the case management and ongoing supportive services they receive," says Alex Sanchez, HACSC executive director. "It would be frustrating to have federal funds cut for the voucher assistance portion of this program when communities across the nation are making inroads into solving this problem."

HACSC and the CoC spent about one year to conceptualize the program and train staff prior to the first vouchers being released. Local service providers that specialize in working with the unhoused provide case management services for CHDR program participants. The case management agencies compiled a list of chronically homeless individuals and families in the county and prioritized the list based on several factors including a vulnerability index score and length of time homeless. Unlike a regular Section 8 waiting list, the CHDR list is constantly evolving as people enter the program and are re-prioritized based on their current situations. HACSC reports to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) the length of time it takes for a referral to obtain housing and tracks participants who surrender their vouchers or lose their assistance.

About NAHRO

NAHRO is the leading housing and community development advocate for the provision of adequate and affordable housing and strong, viable communities for all Americans—particularly those with low- and moderate-incomes. NAHRO members administer HUD programs such as public housing and Section 8 housing choice vouchers. The NAHRO Agency Awards Program was created to give national recognition to the achievement and innovation of NAHRO agency/organizational members, to inform the public of the best in housing and community development, and to create a resource bank of information on significant, innovative activities performed by housing and redevelopment agencies and community development departments. Agency programs receiving 2014 NAHRO Awards of Merit must have been put into operation after January 1, 2010, and have produced demonstrable results by October 31, 2013. For more information visit www.nahro.org.

About HACSC

HACSC is the largest provider of affordable housing assistance in Santa Clara County, helping make rental housing safe and affordable for low-income families through Section 8 voucher programs and below-market rental properties. Designated a Moving to Work agency, HACSC assists approximately 19,000 households. Since 1992, HACSC has directed and invested more than \$84 million in permanent rental assistance for nearly 2,500 families and individuals living without housing in Santa Clara County. For more information visit www.hacsc.org.

About Destination: Home

Destination: Home is a public-private partnership serving as the backbone organization for collective impact strategies to reduce chronic homelessness in Santa Clara County. A program of The Health Trust since 2010, Destination: Home's work is to provide permanent homes and supportive services to the county's most vulnerable residents. For more information visit www.destinationhomesc.org.

About CoC

The Continuum of Care is a structure that is mandated by HUD, and enables communities to receive federal homeless assistance funds. The CoC's mission is to increase the supply of affordable housing and reduce homelessness in Santa Clara County.

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