



Homeless Encampment Assistance Pilot Program Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. What is the Homeless Encampment Assistance Pilot Program?

The Pilot Program employs a multi-disciplinary team focused on a compassionate approach to address the health, safety, and shelter needs of persons living in encampments and to ease impacts to surrounding communities. The team is comprised of representatives from various City departments and Catholic Charities' Homeless Outreach Services Team (HOST). Encampment resolution efforts to date include Farmers Lane Extension, 101 underpasses and Doyle Community Park, resulting in approximately 55% to 70% of occupants accepting services, shelter, and housing. The Pilot Program also provided advisory assistance to the County of Sonoma's resolution of encampments at Roseland Village and Joe Rodota Trail.

2. What is an encampment - how do you define it? How do you prioritize encampments?

The term "encampment" is used to denote either a makeshift shelter outdoors (such as a tent) that houses one or more persons or a group that habitually sleep with or without shelter structures in a public or private space. The City maintains a list of encampments which are prioritized based on the following criteria: the number of individuals estimated at the site and an assessment of their vulnerability due to living outdoors, associated health, safety, and fire risks, and property ownership.

3. How are you informing occupants of the encampments about the Pilot Program? What about business owners and residents?

Communication is coordinated between HOST and the Santa Rosa Police Department to ensure that occupants are provided the opportunity to access support services and shelter prior to the resolution of the encampment. Once the team develops a plan for the encampment, a community informational meeting is held that is open to all community members, including business owners, neighbors, and individuals living in the encampment.

4. What changes have been made at Samuel L. Jones Hall Homeless Shelter to accommodate pets, partners, possessions, and persons with disabilities?

The Samuel L. Jones Hall Homeless Shelter provides 213 year-round beds, 138 of which are set aside for individuals with highest vulnerability in conjunction with Coordinated Entry (countywide access to emergency shelter and housing resources) plus up to 75 beds prioritized for individuals identified through the Pilot Program or during emergent

situations. Catholic Charities operates the shelter following 'Housing First' protocols which aim to reduce barriers to assistance such as restrictions on pets, partners, possessions, and sobriety. HOST will assist individuals with pets to qualify them as companion animals, which allow placement into a shelter program. Additionally, Catholic Charities has made accommodations for persons with disabilities at the shelter, including making available smaller dorm rooms and the installation of partitions. While at Sam Jones each participant will be assigned a Housing Navigator to help them with long term permanent housing options.

5. What is 'Housing First'?

Housing First is an approach that prioritizes the provision of permanent housing as the primary strategy for ending homelessness. However, Housing First is not housing only. It includes a variety of interventions such as diversion, shelter, rapid re-housing, and permanent supportive housing, subject to an individual's needs and the availability of resources.

6. How long can people stay at the Samuel L. Jones Hall Homeless shelter?

The maximum length of stay in the shelter is six months or 180 days. The goal of the housing-focused program at the Samuel L. Jones Hall Homeless Shelter is to move participants into housing as quickly as possible with the best practice being to limit the time a family or individual spends homeless to 30 days or less. However, the shelter, along with our overall homeless system of care is in the process of transitioning to Housing First, so it will take some time before we achieve that benchmark.

7. Are there statistics from other communities using the same approach? Has data shown that people are staying in housing?

Communities across California and the nation are struggling with how to create effective solutions for persons experiencing homelessness and living in encampments. Staff utilized several resources to develop the Pilot Program, including those available through the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) and the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH), San Francisco's Navigation Center (low barrier shelter model), and local expertise through its partnership with Catholic Charities' HOST. Communities that have implemented housing-focused shelter interventions have seen their housing placement rates double. Locally, our system-wide housing placement rate from shelter is approximately 36% with a housing retention rate 92%.

8. What is the budget for the Pilot Program? How is the City measuring its success?

The program is funded through contracts with Catholic Charities' HOST program and the Samuel L. Jones Hall Homeless Shelter. The Fiscal Year 2018/2019 budgets for these programs are \$1,000,450 and \$1,349,331, respectively. Once an encampment is prioritized through the Pilot Program, Catholic Charities provides the City with regular updates on its outreach efforts throughout the resolution process, including a final

evaluation which reports out the number of individuals assessed and, of those, the number placed into services, shelter and housing. Additionally, outcomes for the Pilot Program are included in quarterly reports provided to the City by Catholic Charities for the HOST program and the shelter.

9. Do you track the people you have contact with?

The HOST program operates both city and county wide, and the outreach workers follow-up with individuals outside of the pilot encampment areas. Once someone is a part of the HOST program, the intention is to resolve that individual's homelessness which takes extensive follow-up. Once HOST engages with an individual they continue to provide engagement and supportive services while still focusing on permanent housing placement. An individual does not have to access shelter to receive housing placement, part of HOST's approach is to help place people directly from an encampment into housing. During Fiscal Year 2017/2018, HOST placed 145 individuals into housing.

10. How are you going to keep people from relocating to other areas of the city or coming back to the encampment once it is resolved?

Through intensive, proactive, and coordinated outreach and engagement of the occupants and by providing access to a variety of resources for relocation, including shelter, temporary and permanent housing and reunification with family and other support networks, we strive to avoid displacing occupants of encampments to other areas of the city. We cannot, however, force people to accept services. Once occupants are relocated from the site, on-going management of the area may be required. The Police Department will continue to enforce criminal activity and to work closely with HOST to coordinate services for those returning to the area or relocating to other areas of the city. This is a Pilot Program, we continue to evaluate our efforts with each new encampment and make adjustments to our approach as needed.