



## Alameda County Acts to Curb Homelessness as Winter Approaches

To address a growing homelessness problem, Alameda County is launching several initiatives to provide emergency shelter and bolster a wide range of support services to prevent homelessness and assist people struggling to survive without proper places to live.

“There is no one root cause of homelessness,” said Wilma Chan, President of the Alameda County Board of Supervisors. “There are several avenues that lead people to such desperate circumstances, which is why we must take a multi-pronged approach in helping our residents find safe, stable and supportive places to live.”

The efforts seek to reverse a trend that sees unprecedented numbers of residents living without adequate shelter in all areas of Alameda County. Last year, Alameda County’s biennial homeless count showed the number of people experiencing homelessness in the County had grown by nearly 40 percent since 2015.

Currently, Alameda County provides over \$83 million in funding to address homelessness. At its November 20<sup>th</sup> meeting, the County Board of Supervisors formally approved several short- and long-term measures to curb the growing homelessness problem and supplement existing County funding.

Most notably, the Board approved a 3-Year Homelessness Action Plan that calls for investing about \$340 million to reduce homelessness in Alameda County. The increased funding is to support homelessness prevention, outreach to homeless residents, health care, temporary shelter and other assistance.

The Homelessness Action Plan is the work of the County Homelessness Council, which was established by the Board earlier this year in response to evidence that an inadequate supply of affordable housing and limited emergency shelter space were major factors behind a significant spike in Alameda County’s homeless population. The Council brings a wide range of perspectives to the homelessness problem by including leaders from the County’s law enforcement, social services, health care, housing and community development agencies.

In addition to the allocations approved through the Homelessness Action Plan, the Board supported plans to apply for more than \$16 million in block grant funds from the State’s Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP). HEAP funds are designed to provide local governments with flexible funding to immediately address homelessness.



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The approval of the Homelessness Action Plan and HEAP application come on top of two other actions taken by the Board on November 22<sup>nd</sup> to provide more immediate relief for homeless residents with the cold winter months approaching.

By unanimous vote, the Board:

- Approved seven separate agreements to fund emergency programs providing winter relief to homeless residents in all parts of the County. The agreements call for spending nearly \$500,000 to fund temporary shelters and warming centers, vouchers for short-term motel stays and rental assistance and other supportive services for homeless families.
- Increased by about \$4.2 million three existing contracts to provide transitional housing and other assistance for people in the community who are experiencing homelessness or in jeopardy of losing their homes. People supported by the contracts include families in need of rapid-rehousing rental assistance and youth transitioning from foster care.

At its next meeting on December 4, the Board will be asked to approve the Unincorporated County Homelessness Action Plan, which would provide \$10.6 million to serve the homeless population in the County's unincorporated areas over the next three years.

### CONTACT

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