

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council
THROUGH: Steven Methvin, Deputy City Manager – Operations Officer
FROM: Naomi Farrell, Human Services Director
DATE: May 16, 2019
SUBJECT: Tempe Human Services – Homelessness Update



PURPOSE:

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide an update on Tempe Human Services as it relates to the City's response to homelessness. The memorandum provides: 1) a broad overview of the current state of homelessness 2) a brief historical review of the City of Tempe related to homelessness 3) an outline of the City's Human Services system approach built upon local and regional connectivity 4) knowledge of Human Services staff credentials and 5) an update on current input, output, and outcome performance measures.

RECOMMENDATION OR DIRECTION REQUESTED:

None

CITY COUNCIL STRATEGIC PRIORITY:

Quality of Life

3.28 Achieve an end to homelessness in Tempe as measured by Tempe's annual count.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

State of Homelessness

The number of people experiencing homelessness is on the rise in Maricopa County. According to Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG), the unsheltered count increased by 22% over 2018. Figure 1 shows an increase in people experiencing homelessness for local municipalities since 2014. This increase is attributed to many factors, the most prominent are high eviction rates, lack of affordable housing, and increasing rental rates.

Point-in-Time Unsheltered Count, 2014-2019						
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Chandler	18	31	14	27	54	54
Glendale	39	25	44	57	164	194
Mesa	55	155	95	130	144	206
Phoenix	771	994	1,235	1,508	1,735	2,036
Peoria	13	30	31	22	38	78
Tempe	97	24	88	202	276	373

Figure 1 Local Municipality Point In Time Count

In addition, Tempe Human Services Department (THS) improved the way its annual PIT count is performed in Tempe. These improvements include conducting a full canvassing of the city, improving the survey instrument, and implementing a new electronic survey technology. As a result, THS now records a more comprehensive census of Tempe's homeless population,

meaning the Human Services Department's annual count is more reflective of the actual number of individuals experiencing homelessness than in the past.

It is worth noting that when comparing PIT count numbers across Maricopa that differing count methodologies are used. This makes direct per-capita rate comparisons challenging. As an example, the City of Tempe canvasses the entire city utilizing approximately eight teams to count all individuals identified as experiencing homelessness. The City of Phoenix utilizes a mathematical extrapolation model based on a sample survey of the city's geography.

It is also important to note that THS utilizes the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), the regional system for tracking homelessness, to better ascertain the size, scope, scale of need throughout the year. Between the improved PIT count and the utilization of the HMIS system, THS has a clearer understanding of the everchanging state of homelessness in the region.

Tempe's History

The City of Tempe has a long history of conscientious program development to address homelessness. Today, Tempe is considered an innovator in creating successful strategies for assisting people out of homelessness.

In the late 1990s, a committee was formed to bring a Tumbleweed Youth Resource Center to Tempe to assist youth experiencing homelessness. Due to this program's success, in 2002, the City created a Homeless Outreach Coordinator position to further the City's efforts. The original committee remained intact in an advisory capacity to support the new Homeless Coordinator. Through the City's collaboration with the committee and non-profit partners, the HOPE outreach team was created in 2006 by funding two part-time outreach positions. In the summer of 2013, the original committee formally transitioned into the Tempe Homeless Coalition to support greater collaboration and planning among local stakeholders. In June of 2015, the Coalition adopted a new multi-year Strategic Plan.

Since the development of the Human Services Department, Tempe has further refined its approach to ending homelessness. In the past three years Human Services has formalized a system of connectivity that builds from the intra-departmental collaboration between CARE7 Crisis Response and HOPE Outreach Teams, to other City departments, non-profits, faith-based organizations, and regional resources. This system is informed by the multitude of collaboration that occurs across a range of stakeholder groups dedicated to issues surrounding homelessness including: The East Valley City Managers' Work Group, the East Valley Access to Housing Group, the Tempe Homeless Coalition, Tempe's Homeless Solutions Taskforce, Downtown Tempe Homeless Services Workgroup and the Tempe Homeless Operations Team.

Through this conscientious program development, Tempe is considered an innovator in creating successful strategies for assisting people out of homelessness. Evidence of this can be found in the Maricopa Association of Government's 2018 Municipal Responses to Homelessness report. In this report, other municipalities are considering adopting Tempe's approach. For example, the City of Glendale reported in their 2018 municipal plan that they will seek to establish an internal homeless outreach position. As another example, Tempe's outreach team, HOPE, has been asked to present their expertise in multiple settings, including the Arizona Housing Coalition Conference.

Human Services System

Since the development of a Human Services Department in 2014, THS and Tempe Community Council (TCC) have worked diligently to develop a comprehensive system of human services. This is an ever-evolving interconnected system designed to assist people when and how they need it; inclusive of city services, non-profits, community and regional partners. In FY17/18 Tempe Human Services was able to dramatically leverage the City's investment by securing additional external funding for this system. For every dollar invested by the city, two dollars and seventeen cents (\$2.17) of external funding were secured.

In addition to Tempe Human Services providing direct services to individuals and families experiencing homelessness, virtually every city department collaborates and participates in the system of human services. City departments most notably engaged in this endeavor are the Police Department, Tempe Fire Medical Rescue, Tempe Municipal Court, Public Works, the City Prosecutors' Office, the City Attorney's Office, and Community Services, Public Works. Beginning in 2017, THS, Tempe Police Department, and Community Services Parks Maintenance created a partnership to address encampment issues in Tempe parks guided by council's direction of "compassionate enforcement". After developing a protocol that proved to successfully manage

these encampments this group transitioned to a standing operations team. This team continues to meet, reviewing emerging trends and crafting strategies to meet them.

CARE 7 and Tempe Fire Medical Rescue have also developed a strategic partnership to address the chronic use of public safety systems by high-cost/high-need users, many of which are homeless. This cost-efficient program for addressing the needs of such users is known as Patient Advocate Services or (PAS), which has proven to be a successful approach for this population.

Further, Tempe Human Services works with an array of community partners to round out a human services system. Human Services has worked diligently to maximize these partnerships and is highly involved with the Maricopa County Regional Continuum of Care, the HUD designated entity for funding and managing regional homeless programs and services. A few examples of the department's commitment to regional engagement include, Human Services staff participation in the development of the Continuum of Care's regional plan to end homelessness, serving on multiple Continuum of Care committees, and collaborating on numerous regional response efforts to end homelessness. These regional operational efforts include: participation in Coordinated Entry, the Continuum of Care Chronic homelessness workgroup, Continuum of Care Outreach Collaborative, Case Conferencing at the Welcome Center and the monthly regional effort to identify both chronically homeless and veterans. Additionally, HOPE works directly with the Family Housing Hub to assist families with access to shelter.

Finally, THS has executed an MOU that establishes THS as the first satellite coordinated access point for the Continuum of Care. This means Human Services' staff have been trained and approved to utilize the regionally agreed upon assessment tool, the Vulnerability Index Services Priority Decision Assessment Tool (VI-SPDAT) for evaluating individuals and families experiencing homelessness. This tool identifies the appropriate housing interventions for people experiencing homelessness, including those with behavioral health needs. To efficiently support these individuals, Human Services has also contracted with the Regional Behavioral Health Authority (RBHA) to provide housing to qualified individuals/families¹ (e.g. seriously mentally ill, general mental health/substance abuse). Housing options are expedited, as staff have direct knowledge and ability to refer clients to Tempe's housing programs such as Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA), Bridge program, emergency housing units, and the Housing Choice Voucher program (Section 8). This is crucial as these housing options retain preference for referrals from Tempe services.

By developing a comprehensive system that maximizes layered regional connections, THS is able to reduce redundancy and maximize efficiency of services to those in need of assistance.

Trauma Informed Service Delivery

This Human Services System, created by THS, is designed to provide trauma informed service delivery. This is a system that removes barriers and utilizes warm handoffs to provide a supportive environment for clients, available to our community 24 hours a day; 7 days a week. Some services are provided directly through THS, and when appropriate services are coordinated to our partners via CARE7 and HOPE. Utilizing THS as the HUB of our system to provide case management, clients experience timely access to food, clothing, emergency housing, housing navigation, behavioral health services, and substance abuse treatment.

This model, inclusive of the previously mentioned collaboration between city departments, non-profit partners, faith-based community, and regional partnerships, provides an effective and efficient response to our community's needs. This level of integration and client centered approach is why Tempe is considered an innovator within this discipline.

Staffing Approach

To support this client centered approach, Tempe Human Services hires highly qualified professionals at all levels of the organization whom effectively and compassionately respond to the needs of our community. Staff knowledge, expertise, and education range from peer support certified specialists with lived experience to licensed clinicians working in an Arizona Department of Health Services licensed facility. Tempe Human Services staff are outcome focused having been trained in the SAMHSA housing first model, the use of evidence-based practices such as trauma informed care, critical time intervention and

¹ The 2017 Annual Homeless Assessment Report shows that approximately 25% of the chronically homeless are diagnosed with significant behavioral issues.

community based intensive case management. SOAR² certified staff assist disabled clients with applications for social security benefits. Further, staff assist clients with applying to AHCCCS and make referrals to all seven of the AHCCCS healthcare plans.

Effective Outcomes

Overall program effectiveness is measured through the City’s Strategic Management Process. The City of Tempe is committed to “achieving an end to homelessness in Tempe as measured by Tempe’s annual count.” Specifically, the Human Services Department is committed to making homelessness a rare, brief and one-time experience in our community. That means: 1. Homelessness does not happen often; 2. People who become homeless are connected to shelter and housing as soon as possible; and 3. People who are housed do not return to homelessness. Specific input, output, and outcome performance measures are established and tracked for each of these areas.

Figure 2 shows the performance indicators that are tracked on annual basis to measure our success utilizing the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).

HOMELESS SOLUTIONS PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	FY2018 All Providers	FY2018 HOPE	FY2019* HOPE
Number of unduplicated people served through navigation and case management	1,117	624	479
Number of new unduplicated people served through navigation and case management	483	457	318
Number of chronically homeless people engaged	266	201	171
Number of people permanently housed	239	103	42
The average length of time from program entry to housing (when vouchers are available)	41	35	In Process
Retention rate for housing	89%	95%	95%

Figure 2 Homeless Solutions Performance Indicators

As a baseline for rarity, 1,117 unduplicated individuals experiencing homelessness were served last fiscal year through navigation and case management, of which, 56% were served by HOPE alone. To further explain this value, this baseline number includes individuals who may have been engaged in another jurisdiction but identified Tempe as their last known address. This is distinct and more comprehensive than the annual Point In Time count, which is a census taken on one day of the year of individuals physically identified in our jurisdiction.

Second, HOPE engaged 201 of the 266, or 76%, chronically homeless individuals in Tempe. Fifty-five of those chronically homeless individuals were housed by HOPE. Specifically, these 55 individuals received housing vouchers for Permanent Supportive Housing using regional resources (not Tempe vouchers). Calculating the cost of the voucher and the ongoing housing- based services at \$20,000 per person, per year, this represents a leveraging of resources at a cost savings of \$1,100,000 last year.

Third, 239 Tempeans were housed last fiscal year, this is inclusive of the 55 chronically homeless individuals.

² SOAR Certified: Social security Outreach Access and Recovery certified

Fourth, the data shows that HOPE is able to house individuals more quickly (31 days on average) and their clients are more likely to remain housed (95%) as compared to those housed by all providers in the region (41 days and 89%, respectively).

Overall, looking at six months of Fiscal Year 2019 data, HOPE is on pace to exceed last year's performance, while still maintaining a 95% retention rate.

FISCAL IMPACT or IMPACT TO CURRENT RESOURCES:

None

ATTACHMENTS:

PowerPoint Presentation