

*August 2022*

# SACRAMENTO AREA

# HOMELESSNESS PROGRESS REPORT

## County, City of Sacramento adopt new ordinances affecting people experiencing homelessness

By Gregg Fishman and Janna Haynes

The County and City of Sacramento in August both approved new ordinances that will affect people experiencing homelessness and the ways they are able to inhabit certain public areas.

The Sacramento County Board of Supervisors on Aug. 23 unanimously [approved two ordinances](#) that prohibit camping on the [American River](#) and [Dry Creek](#) Parkways and on or near several categories of critical infrastructure, including flood levees, fire-risk zones, government buildings, schools and libraries.

County officials have repeatedly stated that they do not intend to conduct mass enforcement actions on the parkway. Instead, any action will be focused on addressing specific areas associated with fire risk or public health concerns.

"These ordinances provide another tool for County staff and our outreach partners to engage with folks experiencing homelessness camping illegally, assess their needs and determine the best course of action to move them away from critical infrastructure," said County Board Chair Don Nottoli.

"We have to be good stewards of our infrastructure, and very good stewards of the unique asset that is the American River Parkway," said County Supervisor Phil Serna. "And we have an obligation to make sure that nobody suffers in this county unnecessarily."

The Sacramento City Council, also on Aug. 23, [updated an ordinance](#) to keep sidewalks clear and safe for pedestrians.

Under the updated ordinance, tents and other obstructions on sidewalks will need to be moved if they do not allow at least four feet of clear space for pedestrians and bicyclists to get by. The ordinance also prohibits any obstructions within four feet of the entrance of a building.

The updated language in the ordinance allows City employees other than police, such as staff from the Department of Community Response, to make contact with campers and encourage voluntary compliance, with police available to step in if they refuse.

"In my opinion, this ordinance is necessary," Mayor Darrell Steinberg said. "Our city sidewalks must be clear and safe for the residents of our city, including children walking to and from school. Assuring that safety ... is common sense, and it is one of the most basic functions of city government."



The City must provide eight hours of notice before removing an obstruction unless there's an immediate threat to public health, welfare or safety. Absent such an immediate threat, the ordinance states, it shall provide an alternative location to move or store the items obstructing the sidewalk.

Both the County and City ordinances go into effect in late September.

### *About this Report*

The City of Sacramento, Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency, Sacramento Steps Forward and the County of Sacramento are publishing this monthly report to keep the community informed about our collaborative work to address homelessness in Sacramento.



On a recent August evening, a speeding car missed a turn in Miller Park, crashed through a metal gate, launched off a 50-foot embankment and landed on its roof in the Sacramento River.

The driver, dazed and hanging upside down from the seatbelt, was trapped inside the vehicle. But he was lucky. Three residents and a staff member from the City of Sacramento's Safe Ground facility for people experiencing homelessness saw the crash and went to help.

Shona, the staff member, waded into the river to help a stranger without thinking of her own safety.

"They were pulling him out of the car as I was making my way into the water; and funny fact, I don't know how to swim," she said. "So, I don't even know what I was doing. I was just doing it."

[Click here](#) to learn more about this story of courage and selflessness.

## Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency

Jamina found herself nearing homelessness and worried where she and her children would live after a series of events lead her family to a situation many hope to never face. Fortunately, her story is one of redemption and testament to the need of housing programs like the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency's Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) program and the committed people that work to change lives.

The mother of three boys suffered a series of setbacks due to an unsafe environment that caused her to lose her job which lead to an eviction. Jamina had to deal with finding a safe home to live while being out of work.

"It's one thing to be homeless by yourself, but when you're homeless with three kids, it's something else." Thankfully, Jamina had a prior connection with SHRA and in particular, EHV Unit Locator, Cher, who "went above and beyond to get her the help she needed through the EHV Program." [Read more here.](#)



## Sacramento Steps Forward

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) released a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), signifying the beginning of the annual funding competition among approximately 450 Continuums of Care (CoC). The 2022 CoC NOFO was released on August 1st, 2022, making available approximately \$2.8 billion nationally to serve people experiencing homelessness. The entire grant application is due on September 30, 2022, giving the Sacramento community approximately 9 weeks to complete the full application process.

For the 2021 HUD program competition, the Sacramento region was awarded \$29.7 million to fund 31 projects for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Of the 31 awards, 23 renew various housing programs and homeless service programs. Combined, these critical funds will continue to finance 2,367 housing beds and add 210 new housing beds to the homelessness response system. Much of the permanent supportive housing in the Sacramento region is funded through this HUD grant. To stay informed on the 2022 Program Competition, visit [this link](#).



## County of Sacramento

The Coroner releases a report every year of the deaths, causes and some demographics for people experiencing homelessness at the time of death. In 2021, 199 deaths were reported to the coroner's office that were investigated and determined to be people who were experiencing homeless. While this is an increase from the years prior, it is not the same incremental increase as the overall increase in the homeless population, based on the most recent point in time count. The causes of death among the unhoused population vary, but overwhelmingly, the causes are unnatural – vehicular, homicide and nearly 50 percent were death by substance use. Sacramento County continues to invest in existing and new programs to help meet the needs of the homeless population. Read more [here](#).

**WORKING TO REDUCE  
HOMELESS DEATHS**

IN SACRAMENTO COUNTY