

September 2022

SACRAMENTO AREA

HOMELESSNESS PROGRESS REPORT

City's Outreach and Engagement Center opens full time to help people experiencing homelessness

By Gregg Fishman

The City of Sacramento on Sept. 29 opened its [Outreach and Engagement Center](#) full time to help people experiencing homelessness.

Located in what used to be the Powerhouse Science Center and Museum, the Outreach and Engagement Center (3615 Auburn Blvd.) provides overnight respite for up to 50 people at a time and offers connections to other resources that can lead to more stable and sustainable housing.

The center previously was being used as a weather-based respite location and was open for 10 consecutive days during the [early September heatwave](#).



It now is open 23 hours a day, seven days a week, and staffed round the clock.

"Sacramento needs more places where people living without shelter can go to have their basic needs met, such as food, water, hygiene, and respite from the elements," said Mayor Darrell Steinberg. "There is no simple fix for homelessness, but this facility and the services we will offer here will help people get indoors and lead more stable and productive lives. That's a win for them and for our community."

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.

Walk-up entry is not allowed at the center. Instead, outreach teams from the City's [Department of Community Response](#) refer clients into the facility, which is being operated by [Hope Cooperative](#), a non-profit organization.

Caseworkers from Hope Cooperative can connect clients with health care, mental health care, substance abuse treatment and other services. They also can connect clients with housing opportunities.

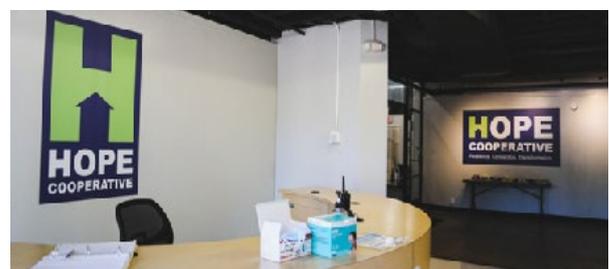
All potential clients will be assessed to make sure they are a good fit for that setting, officials said. The center can accept a limited number of pets, and it has space to store personal belongings while guests acclimate to a new, more stable environment.

The average stay at the center is expected to be days -- not weeks or months, said Nick Golling, manager of homeless services for the Department of Community Response.

"This is not a long-term shelter, but it will allow us to work alongside people to identify barriers to housing, and match them up with the available resource," he said. "This facility is going to be an important part of Sacramento's approach to helping people connect with benefits and find sustainable housing."

"You can't overestimate how stressful it is living unsheltered on the street, not knowing if you are safe, or where you will sleep that night," said Erin Johansen, executive director of Hope Cooperative. "That's why providing that safe environment is so important. After a few days of safety and stability, guests are more able to consider the next steps that will lead to long-term solutions."

For more information about what the City is doing to address homelessness -- including its Safe Ground, Safe Parking, shelters and motel programs -- [click here](#).





The City of Sacramento is continuing to support the Sacramento LGBT Center's Short Term Emergency Program, aimed at transitional aged youth who are experiencing homelessness. The City Council voted in September to extend a contract for STEP, which offers general health and wellness services, behavioral health services, alcohol and drug treatment, education, case management, employment and rehousing support.

"STEP is working because the LGBT center knows this clientele so well," said Nick Golling, manager of homeless services for the Department of Community Response. "They provide this population with the stability they need, the freedom to be themselves and vital support to keep moving forward."

The LGBT Center also administers the Host Home program, in which families with extra space at home offer a room to a young person, aged 18-24 who might otherwise be homeless. That program needs more homes, and it does offer some compensation to the hosts.

[See more details here.](#)

Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency

The Housing Choice Voucher (HCV/Section 8) program administered by SHRA is Sacramento Housing Authority's most commonly known rental assistance program for low income residents. Families use the voucher to search for affordable housing in the private market. Here we spotlight two programs that provide vouchers to homeless households. The HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) program combines HCV rental assistance for homeless veterans with case management and clinical services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs and their partners. The Agency has leased up approximately 500 formerly homeless veterans and their families. The Move On program serves formerly homeless households who previously needed higher levels of care and were living in permanent supportive housing. They are now stabilized and can transition or "move on" from permanent supportive housing into housing with a rental assistance voucher without receiving intensive case management. This creates a continuous flow of housing opportunities for homeless households who are on the streets and need long term supportive housing with mental health, drug intervention and other services in order to live independently. The Agency is able to assist up to 50 families in the Move On program. [Learn more on our website.](#)



Sacramento Steps Forward

Sacramento Steps Forward, on behalf of the Sacramento Continuum of Care (CoC), is excited to announce the launch of the Housing Families First Collaborative.

The Housing Families First Collaborative will inform and advise the Sacramento CoC's efforts toward addressing homelessness for families of minor children by advancing system-level approaches to identify, support and monitor families at risk of and/or experiencing homelessness in Sacramento County. Convened and supported by Sacramento Steps Forward, the Housing Families First Collaborative supports the shared vision of the Sacramento CoC, to reduce and end homelessness in Sacramento through systems-level change, enhanced access to services and housing, prioritization of racial equity, and by improving and using data analytics to inform strategies, per the Built for Zero model.

The Housing Families First (HFF) Collaborative membership will be comprised of content experts representing various sectors related to or interfacing with families experiencing or at risk of homelessness, including adults and youth with lived experience. Membership applications will be available in early October. For more information, please email Kaylin Jones at kjones@sacstepsforward.org.



County of Sacramento

Sacramento County remains committed to not only providing rehousing and shelter services to persons experiencing homelessness, but also behavioral health services – both mental health and substance abuse programs. While Sacramento County currently has more than 30,000 clients, many of them experiencing homelessness, the need for qualified and dedicated staff remains the largest barrier to providing critical services to those that need them. Sacramento County is actively recruiting applicants from diverse backgrounds and different levels of clinical, professional and/or lived behavioral health experience, with high energy, compassion and enthusiasm for public service and a desire to serve the unhoused. For more information on this life changing job, [visit our website.](#)

