

SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY HOMELESS PREVENTION PROGRAM PLAN:

Primary goals/objectives:

In accordance with the consolidated plans of San Joaquin County and the City of Stockton, and in accordance with the objective stated in the ten year plan to end homelessness included in the annual Continuum of Care submission to HUD to reduce the number of homeless families, the general goals and objectives of the homeless prevention plan are to provide:

- Intervention on behalf of households who are in imminent risk of becoming homeless to prevent people from initially becoming homeless
- Diversion from emergency shelters of working households who have reached the point of contacting shelters
- Rapid re-housing of working households who have become homeless.

The benefits of the Homeless Prevention Program are available to all qualified households in San Joaquin County.

Targeted populations:

- Households forced to vacate rental properties that enter foreclosure, and where there is a reasonable expectation of becoming self-sufficient within six months
- Households at imminent risk of becoming homeless due to factors not related to the activity of one or more household members, where the household has experienced a sudden and substantial loss of income, where such loss is not due to the activity of one or more household members, and where there is a reasonable expectation of becoming self-sufficient within six months
- Households in transitional housing where the household has experienced a sudden and substantial loss of income, where such loss is not due to the activity of one or more household members, and where there is a reasonable expectation of becoming self-sufficient within six months
- Households at imminent risk of becoming homeless due to factors not related to the activity of one or more household members, where the household has experienced a sudden and substantial increase in utility costs where such increase is not due to the activity of one or more household members, and where there is a reasonable expectation of becoming self-sufficient within six months
- Households with forced to vacate rental housing condemned by local housing officials, when condemnation is not a result of the activity of one or more household members, and where there is a reasonable expectation of becoming self-sufficient within six months
- Households at imminent risk of becoming homeless due to factors not related to the activity of one or more household members, where there has been a traumatic life event, such as death of a spouse or primary care giver or recent health crisis that prevented the household from meeting its normal financial responsibilities, and where there is a reasonable expectation of becoming self-sufficient within six months
- Households with at least one adult employed, at imminent risk of becoming homeless due to factors not related to the activity of one or more household members, and where there is a reasonable expectation of becoming self-sufficient within six months
- Households with currently living in an emergency shelter, in locations not meant for human habitation, or are fleeing domestic violence, where there is a reasonable

expectation of becoming self-sufficient within six months, and who for whom there is not the expectation of transitional or permanent housing assistance from other existing community programs within 30 days

Definitions:

- Households include unaccompanied individuals and families with minor children.
- Transitional housing: a HUD sponsored program designed to assist homeless households become self-sufficient within a two year period
- Imminent risk: household will be homeless within 2 weeks of initial contact without assistance through this program
- Area median income: based on published HUD guidelines adjusted for family size
- Sudden and substantial loss of income: one or more household adults has had an income loss of at least 20% within the past three months; specifically the loss of employment
- Not a result of the activity of one or more household members: examples: loss of employment is not due job related behavior, increase in utility costs not due to changes in behavior or failure to control utility costs; loss of housing not due to behavior in violation of rental agreement, etc.
- Reasonable expectation of becoming self-sufficient within six months: based on case manager's assessment, it is likely that the assistance required under this program will be temporary in nature

Basic requirements:

All participant households must meet the following requirements:

- Assessment by an authorized program case manager
- Household income (adjusted by size) at or below 50% of area median income
- Household must either be homeless (federal definition) OR at risk of losing housing and meet both of the following circumstances:
 1. No appropriate subsequent housing options have been identified; AND
 2. Household lacks the financial resources and support networks to obtain housing or remain in its existing housing.

Financial Assistance:

General:

- Rent assistance must meet rent reasonableness established by HUD and can not exceed actual rent costs
- Rent assistance can not duplicate by time or amount assistance from any other federal, state, or local rent subsidy or assistance program; households receiving assistance through any program administered by the Housing Authority of San Joaquin or Central Valley Low Income Housing Corp. are not eligible for Homeless Prevention assistance
- No payment will be made directly to a participant household or individual member of a participant household
- Assistance limited to one time
- One time assistance, including arrears, may be 100% of amount of actual rent owed; penalties and late fees are the responsibility of the participant household

- For households requiring short term assistance of more than one month (not including arrears), the first month's assistance may be 100% of the actual rent owed, with each subsequent month's assistance based on calculating the participant's share at 30% of adjusted monthly income. Assistance at a higher level must be approved by the Program.
- Regardless of any other provision, the maximum amount of monthly rent assistance will be \$1,000.00.
- Regardless of any other provision, the maximum amount of assistance (all categories or types combined) to any one household is \$8,000.00.

Short term rent assistance

- One time assistance to qualified households covering no more than current month and up to two months in arrears
- Up to three months assistance to qualified households (requires continuing case management); can also include additional assistance up to three months in arrears
- Motel "vouchers" for temporary placement of approved participant households until permanent housing becomes available, not to exceed a stay of 30 days; does not count against time allotted for assistance

Medium term assistance

- To qualify for more than an initial 3 months of assistance, participants must be reassessed by an authorized case manager
- The level of rent assistance after an initial three months of participation will be reduced by ten percent each month.
- Up to nine months total assistance to qualified households (nine month period includes initial three month assistance; requires continuing case management)
- Households whose transitional housing benefits are expiring and who otherwise meet program criteria are eligible for medium term assistance
- Assistance beyond nine months is on an individual basis and must be approved by the Program

Security deposits:

- Deposits on behalf of participants can be made to either obtain new housing or to retain existing housing
- Deposits in excess of an amount equivalent to one month's rent must be approved by the Program
- Deposits can be made to allow participants to keep their pets
- As required based on case management assessment, in order to secure housing, an amount equivalent to one month's rent may be set aside to cover possible damages to a living unit.
- Deposits, or the remaining portion thereof, made by the program on behalf of a participant are to be returned to the program when a unit is vacated.

Utility assistance:

- Security deposit required for new unit or when service is restored
- Assistance with continuing utility payments (not to exceed nine months and requiring continued case management) provided a member of the participant household has the account in their name
- Assistance with payment of utility arrears, not to exceed three months arrears; if combined with continuing assistance can not exceed a total of twelve months assistance.

Moving assistance:

- Based on assessed need, program will cover reasonable moving costs to a new unit
- Based on assessed need, program can cover the cost of an appropriate sized storage unit for up to three months.

Outreach:

Information regarding the program will be disseminated to the community, and referrals will be accepted from:

- Property management companies
- Emergency shelters
- Food providers
- Fair Housing
- Human Service Agency (Food Stamps, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, Senior Services)
- Faith based organizations

Case management:

Case management services will be made available (but will not be required) to all participants through either Central Valley Housing or one the partner agencies. Partner agencies will include all current homeless service providers in San Joaquin County. Participants will have the option of selecting the case management provider agency based on community location, cultural compatibility, prior experience, and personal preference. Case management will include initial assessment, locating and securing suitable, appropriate housing, coordination and delivery of necessary community support services, monitoring and evaluating participant progress, and planning for permanent housing stability.

Housing search and placement:

Program staff will facilitate participants locating suitable housing. Program staff will work with participants in reviewing leases and rental agreements, informing participants about tenant rights and responsibilities, securing utilities, and making moving arrangements. Case management staff will be available to participants and landlords to mediate problems related to retaining housing.

Legal Services:

As needed, the Program will contract with California Rural Legal Assistance and/or Family Legal Services to provide legal assistance to help participants retain housing.

Credit repair:

Case management services, whether through Central Valley Housing or one of its partners, will work with participants in creating sustainable, realistic household budgets, developing money management skills, and understanding consumer credit reports. As needed, the program will assist participants in enrolling in programs to resolve long standing personal credit issues.

Data collection:

The Program will utilize the San Joaquin HMIS program for data collection and reporting on all participants.

Program acceptance:

Assistance through this program is not an entitlement. All participants must meet all applicable basic requirements established by HUD, must be eligible under one of the identified target populations of this program, must provide all necessary document and information required by this program, and must have a positive case management assessment. Any applicant denied assistance through this program will be provided a written reason for such action. Any applicant denied assistance through this program may appeal the decision, in writing, to the Program.

Termination of benefits:

Assistance through this program is not an entitlement. Assistance may be terminated, without notice, for any of the following causes:

- to pay rent share
- behavior in violation of the rental agreement
- vacating the unit without proper notification
- vacating the unit while owing rent or other amounts due
- having utilities shut off due to non-payment of bills
- conviction of adult household members of any felony
- conviction of adult household members of more than one misdemeanor within any twelve month period
- jail time of the adult head of household in excess of twenty days resulting from a violation of parole
- any child in the household being placed with Child Protective Services
- failure to engage in activities determined by program staff that would lead to self-sufficiency
- engaging in activities that threaten the stability of the family or reduce the likelihood of achieving self-sufficiency
- exhausting benefits without having reached self-sufficiency

Grievances/appeals:

If a participant believes that assistance has been terminated unfairly, they may file a grievance in writing, clearly stating the circumstances and why they believe the action was wrong. Their case will be reviewed by a Program staff team (composed of staff from multiple program areas), and may involve an interview with the review team. If a client

believes that the review team has not adequately examined the issues involved, a final appeal may be made to the Programs administrator; this appeal must clearly state how or why the review team did not adequately investigate the original grievance.

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