



THE QUARTERLY UPDATE

January - March 2023

Welcome to the Office of Care Coordination's quarterly update. Included in this edition are updates related to staffing, Commission to End Homelessness, Continuum of Care, Coordinated Entry System and County-operated shelter services.

Office of Care Coordination Staffing Updates

Grants and Programs Manager

Amanda Sanchez joined the Office of Care Coordination as the Grants and Programs Manager in March 2023. Amanda graduated from Pacific Union College with a bachelor's degree in psychology. Amanda has worked in the nonprofit sector for the past 11 years in a variety of capacities to support homeless services programs including Emergency Shelters, Homeless Prevention Programs and Rapid Re-housing Programs. Amanda's past administrative role supported and managed collaborative projects that focused on housing homeless individuals and families in Orange County. Amanda is excited to join the Office of Care Coordination to continue supporting programs and projects that are addressing homelessness in Orange County.

Continuum of Care Manager

Sarah Jones has worked in homeless services in Orange County for 17 years on various levels and across the homeless service system. Sarah started her work in homeless services in 2006 with a local non-profit where she found passion for serving individuals and families experiencing homelessness. During her 14 years in the non-profit sector, Sarah developed and expanded her knowledge of homeless services and evidenced-based practices. Sarah worked in direct client service, management and director level roles before transitioning to the Office of Care Coordination as the Shelter Administrator for the last two and half years. Sarah recently promoted to the Continuum of Care Manager position in February 2023. In Sarah's new role as the Continuum of Care Manager, she is most excited to see firsthand the positive impact the CoC has on the homeless service system.

Emergency Shelter Administrator

Rocio Palafox joined the County of Orange's (County) workforce four years ago with the CEO Government and Community Relations team, located at the County Service Center. During that time, Rocio learned knowledge about County departments and the services available to constituents. Rocio began her journey within homeless services in 2020 when she joined the Office of Care Coordination team assisting with the Project Roomkey operations and as the Grievance and Appeals specialist. In February 2023, Rocio was promoted to the Emergency Shelter Administrator position. In this new role, Rocio is responsible for the programmatic oversight of County-funded Emergency Shelters, Seasonal Cold Weather Shelter Program, and special projects within the shelter program. What excites Rocio most about working with the Office of Care Coordination is the ability to make a direct impact within the community.

Commission to End Homelessness Updates

New Appointments

The Commission to End Homelessness works in collaboration with the County of Orange (County), city governments, business sector, philanthropic organizations, community organizations, faith-based organizations, health care, public safety, and other interested stakeholders to address the County's initiatives surrounding homelessness.

On February 15, 2023, the Office of Care Coordination and the Orange County Continuum of Care (CoC) Board recommended the appointment of two CoC Representatives for the Commission to End Homelessness. The Commissioners approved the appointment of Maricela Rios-Faust and Robert Morse to the CoC Board Representative Seats for the term February 16, 2023 to February 15, 2025, during the February 15, 2023 meeting.

Maricela Rios-Faust serves on the Orange County CoC Board as the Domestic Violence representative. Ms. Rios-Faust leveraged her experience in the domestic violence field as well as her experience offering housing options for individuals and families fleeing who are survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking to explore opportunities to strengthen the CoC to better serve that segment of the homeless population.

Robert Morse serves on the Orange County CoC Board as an At-Large Seat representative for older adults. Mr. Morse brings a unique perspective to the work of addressing homelessness because of his own experiences with the homeless service system, as well as supporting people navigate through the system.

The new members compliment and expand the expertise of the Commission to End Homelessness membership.

Recruitment for Central Service Planning Area New Representative

The Orange County's Office of Care Coordination is seeking applications from Orange County residents to serve on the Commission to End Homelessness.

Recruitment is being conducted to fill the **Central Service Planning Area Representative** seat on the Commission to End Homelessness. Eligible candidates served or currently serve as a City Manager or an elected official in the Central Service Planning Area. The Central Service Planning Area includes the following cities of Costa Mesa, Fountain Valley, Garden Grove, Huntington Beach, Newport Beach, Santa Ana, Tustin, and Westminster. The following [Orange County Service Planning Area](#) map can be referenced.

The membership of the Commission to End Homelessness makes recommendations to the Orange County Board of Supervisors that shape policy and design programs aimed at addressing the needs of individuals and families at risk of homelessness or experiencing homelessness across Orange County.

The Orange County Board of Supervisors appoints the selected candidate to the Commission to End Homelessness. Commissioners serve a two-year term and meet six times per year. Meetings are bi-monthly, on the third Wednesday of the month at 1:00 pm at the County Administration South Conference Center, 425 West Santa Ana Boulevard, Santa Ana, CA 92701.

To be considered, an application and resume must be postmarked or emailed by 5:00 p.m. on May 15, 2023, submitted to carecoordination@ocgov.com. For additional information, please contact the Office of Care Coordination at (714) 834-5000.

The application can be accessed on the Office of Care Coordination website at: [Commission to End Homelessness Orange County CEO's Office \(ocgov.com\)](#)

Housing Funding Strategy

In 2018, the Orange County Board of Supervisors received the initial Orange County Housing Funding Strategy. The 2018 Housing Funding Strategy identified a goal of creating 2,700 units of supportive housing over seven years, with an estimated funding gap of \$353 million in capital and \$350 million in operating subsidies. Since then, extensive progress has been made toward the creation of 2,700 supportive housing unit goal in Orange County through investments in capital and operating expenses and the leveraging of local housing resources.

The Orange County 2022 Housing Funding Strategy Update provides an update to the 2018 Housing Funding Strategy and continues to build on and improve the planning and investments to maximize supportive and affordable housing production. The 2022 Housing Funding Strategy Update estimate a need for capital funding for 2,396 supportive housing units, including the need for 1,696 operating subsidies, with an estimated funding gap of \$458 million in capital and \$495 million in operating subsidies. This reflects significant increases in total development costs due to factors outlined in this report.

Additionally, the 2022 Housing Funding Strategy Update supports the creation of housing resources that follow the best practices, guiding principles, and commitments of the [Homeless Service System Pillars Report](#) created by the Commission to End Homelessness and accepted by the Board of Supervisors on October 4, 2022.

The Housing Funding 2022 Strategy Update Report is available on the Care Coordination website: [Housing Strategy 2022 Update](#).

Continuum of Care Updates

Equipping Shelter Providers with Housing First Training

As a national best practice, Housing First defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is an approach that prioritizes immediate access to housing for people experiencing homelessness without requiring participation in supportive services, such as behavioral health support or substance use treatment. Service providers partnering with the Orange County Continuum of Care (CoC) have adopted the Housing First approach and are actively seeking opportunities to reimagine program and service design that centers client choice and reduces barriers to access basic necessities in order to quickly move individuals and families experiencing homelessness into housing. To further collaborate and discuss how to operationalize a Housing First approach, the Office of Care Coordination invited Dusty Olson, HUD Technical Assistance Coach with Abt Associates, to provide a training specifically geared toward shelter providers.

On March 8, 2023, staff from eleven different shelter programs serving individuals and families in Orange County gathered for a three-hour Housing First training. Dusty Olson provided an overview of core components of Housing First, guidance on assessing programs to ensure alignment with housing first and facilitated discussion with shelter providers and Office of Care Coordination staff on how to reduce barriers to program participation, incorporate harm-reduction techniques, and increase client engagement in services. Attendees were engaged and energized by the conversation, hopeful of how the Housing First approach can continue being implemented to improve the experience of people accessing shelter in Orange County.

Release of Requests for Proposals

Point In Time Count Professional Services

The Office of Care Coordination, as the Collaborative Applicant and Administrative Entity for the Orange County Continuum of Care (CoC), is tasked with supporting the implementation of activities within the purview of the CoC and responding to the needs that arise within the homeless response system. The Point In Time Count is one of the activities that falls under the purview of the local CoCs, as CoCs across the nation are responsible for conducting a biennial Point In Time (PIT) count of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness on a given night. The count provides vital information that helps the County of Orange (County) and Orange County CoC better understand homelessness in the community and guides the way the County, CoC and its partners respond to homelessness in Orange County. On February 6, 2023, the Office of Care Coordination released a Request for Proposals (RFP) to identify an agency to support with the planning, implementation, and reporting of services for the PIT Count. The PIT Count RFP period closed on March 2, 2023. The Office of Care Coordination is looking forward to the planning and implementation of the 2024 PIT count.

Financial Incentives Professional Support Services for People with Lived Experience of Homelessness

Responding to a system-level need to further involve people with lived expertise in the planning and implementation of homeless services, the Office of Care Coordination has also released a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Financial Incentives Professional Support Services for People with Lived Experience of Homelessness. The RFP is to identify agencies to coordinate the provision of financial incentives for persons with current or past lived experience of homelessness who are partnering with the Office of Care Coordination and/or the Orange County Continuum of Care (CoC) as members of the CoC Board, Lived Experience Advisory Committee, Youth Action Board, and other relevant initiatives. This initiative ensures that people with lived experience are adequately supported and compensated for the time and expertise provided as valued partners in the work of the CoC. The Financial Incentives and Professional Support Services for People with Lived Experience of Homelessness RFP period is March 2, 2023 through March 30, 2023. The Office of Care Coordination is looking forward to better partnering with and involving people with lived expertise in the planning and implementation of homeless services.

Coordinated Entry System Updates

Casa Paloma

The Office of Care Coordination is pleased to announce that [Casa Paloma](#), located in Midway City, is fully leased up. The Casa Paloma project has 48 units, comprised of 41 one-bedroom and 7 two-bedroom units. Participants eligible for these units were identified through the Coordinated Entry System (CES) that qualified for the Special Needs Housing Program and/or met the Housing for Health California criteria. If and when vacancies become available, units will be filled through the CES.

New CES Referral Standards

In February 2022, the Office of Care Coordination applied to participate in the Coordinated Entry System (CES) Referral Best Practices Community Workshop to receive technical assistance from HUD over 12 weeks. The goal was to make data-informed system refinements with an equity lens to ensure that people experiencing homelessness are moved quickly through the CES referral process and into permanent housing. Three community stakeholders from the Orange County Continuum of Care (CoC) were participants in this workshop and technical assistance effort, and were able to work together to identify a way to improve the CES referral process. As a result of the workshop and collaboration with CES partners, new CES Referral Standards were developed to clarify roles and responsibilities of CES partners (CES Access Point, Matchmakers, and Housing Providers). The Office of Care Coordination is now working on rolling out the new standards, and will continue to monitor the effectiveness. Please visit the [CES Steering Committee minutes](#) for more information and the [CES Partner Documents and Resources](#) website for a copy of the CES Referral Standards.

Shelter Updates

Cold Weather Emergency Shelter Opening

On February 1, 2023, the Cold Weather Emergency Shelter (Program) opened as a low barrier, temporary emergency shelter to serve adult individuals experiencing homelessness in Orange County. The Program is a partnership between the County of Orange and the City of Fullerton. The Program is operated by PATH – (People Assisting the Homeless) and operated overnight from 5:00 pm to 7:00 am at the Independence Park Gymnasium in Fullerton, California. Since its opening, the Program has served 570 unduplicated participants and provided 5,258 bed nights during these cold and wet weather season.

The Program offers a range of services to participants including a warm dinner, breakfast, a sleeping cot in a communal area, supportive services, linkages to year around emergency shelter beds and access to sanitary facilities and showers. In addition, the Social Services Agency visited the Program to engage with participants and facilitate access and enrollment to services such as Medi-Cal, CalFresh, and Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Cards, which can offer food and cash aid benefits to registered clients.

On March 31, 2023, the Program ended operations. For more information about the Program and other County funded shelters, please visit the Office of Care Coordination [Shelter Programs Website](#).

Shelter Bed Reservation System

The County of Orange's Office of Care Coordination has been operating the Shelter Bed Reservation System for Individuals (Adult-only households) since September 2022. The Shelter Bed Reservation System for Families (households with at least one minor child and one adult) operated by the Family Solutions Collaborative since 2019. The goal of the Shelter Bed Reservation System is to create a more streamlined and accessible process for individuals and families experiencing homelessness to obtain shelter and understand the availability of emergency shelter beds throughout the community.

Since Fall 2022, all referrals to the Homekey Programs such as, the Huntington Beach Oasis location and the Anaheim North Harbor location; both operated by American Family Housing, have been provided through the Coordinated Entry System's (CES) Shelter Bed Reservation System for Individuals. On March 1, 2023, two (2) additional County shelter programs, the Yale Navigation Center (Yale) operated by PATH People Assisting the Homeless, and Bridges at Kraemer Place (Bridges) operated by Mercy House, began to participate in the Shelter Bed Reservation System. With the expansion of the two (2) additional shelter programs, the Bed Reservation System now offers access to an additional 625 beds for a total of 774 shelter beds. Access Points can refer individuals experiencing homelessness to available shelter beds through the Shelter Bed Reservation System once beds become vacant.

The Office of Care Coordination hosted a quarterly training session on March 20, 2023, to provide an overview about the Shelter Bed Reservation System for individual households, to provide space for Access Points to ask questions, and to review a step-by-step training. For all additional updates, CES partners will continue to be notified via the Coordinated Entry distribution list. If you have questions about the Individual Bed Reservation System, please visit the [Shelter Bed Reservation Website](#) or contact coordinatedentry@ocgov.com.

For more information on the work of the Office of Care Coordination,
please contact carecoordination@ocgov.com