

**ORANGE COUNTY CONTINUUM OF CARE
HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE**

Tuesday, February 25, 2025
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Location:

**Orange County Housing Authority (OCHA)
1501 E. St. Andrew Pl., 1st Floor, Conference
Room A, Santa Ana, CA 92705
[Click Here](#) for parking information.**

Committee Chair: Judson Brown, City of Santa Ana

Committee Vice-Chair: January Johnson, Orange County Housing Authority

Committee Members

- Orange County Housing Authority
- Anaheim Housing Authority
- Santa Ana Housing Authority
- Garden Grove Housing Authority
- CalOptima Health
- Orange County Housing Finance Trust
- Orange County United Way
- Kennedy Commission
- Orange County Housing Advocacy Collaborative
- Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funded entitlement jurisdictions

Purpose: The Housing Opportunities Committee will function as an advisory group to the Continuum of Care (CoC) Board and the Policies, Procedures and Standards (PPS) Committee. The Housing Opportunities Committee assists in the overall coordination of efforts and information sharing to foster the development of housing opportunities for people experiencing homelessness. The Housing Opportunities Committee will facilitate regional and systemwide collaboration in the development and implementation of affordable housing programs and opportunities that provide permanent housing solutions, such as housing choice vouchers, short-term rental assistance and/or permanent supportive housing, to reduce homelessness and to increase the supply of affordable and permanent supportive housing in Orange County. In addition to the facilitation and regional collaboration of housing opportunities in Orange County, the Housing Opportunities Committee will align its efforts with the Orange County CoC Board Vision.

MINUTES

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, and County Language Access Policy, those requiring accommodation and/or interpreter services for this meeting should notify the Office of

Care Coordination 72 Hours prior to the meeting at (714) 834 – 5000 or email CareCoordination@ocgov.com. Request received less than 72 hours prior to the meeting will still receive every effort to reasonably fulfill within the time provided.

Welcome and Call to Order – Judson Brown, Chair and January Johnson, Vice Chair

Chair Judson Brown called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m.

Public Comments – Members of the public may address the Housing Opportunities Committee on items listed within this agenda or matters not appearing on the agenda so long as the subject matter is within the jurisdiction of the Housing Opportunities Committee. Comments will be limited to three minutes. If there are more than five public speakers, this time will be reduced to two minutes. Members of the public utilizing interpreter services will be given double the amount of time to provide public comment.

To address the Housing Opportunities Committee, members of the public are to complete a Request to Address the Committee form prior to the beginning of each agenda item and submit it to CoC staff. Staff will call your name in the order received. Members of the public may also submit public comment by emailing CareCoordination@ocgov.com. All comments submitted via email at least 24 hours before the start of the meeting will be distributed to the Housing Opportunities Committee members and all comments will be added to the administrative records of the meeting. Please include “Housing Opportunities Committee Meeting Comment” in the email subject line.

Committee Discussion:

- Chair Judson Brown expressed gratitude to OCHA for hosting the meeting and proceeded to review the agenda items.

1. Housing Opportunities Committee Vision Setting Follow-Up – Judson Brown, Chair and January Johnson, Vice Chair

Chair Judson Brown provided a follow-up to the Vision Setting discussion that took place at the Housing Opportunities Committee meeting. Chair Judson Brown shared the Housing Opportunities Committee Purpose as defined in the Governance Charter and highlighted key points from the Vision Setting conversation for review and discussion. Finally, Chair Judson Brown requested that specific action items be brought forward.

Public Comment:

- Carolyn Coleman from Community Action Partnership of OC shared support for the Vision Setting document and noted that each part of the vision can be fleshed out. Carolyn Coleman suggested that the public be brought into the discussion of how to develop these initiatives and move forward, stating that Community Action Partnership of OC can be a partner in this work.

Committee Discussion:

- Members of the committee agreed that the feedback shared was accurately captured.

- Elizabeth Hansburg expressed satisfaction with the Vision Setting notes and raised the question of how to create accountability for Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) to collaborate more effectively. Elizabeth Hansburg emphasized that because participation is voluntary, not all stakeholders are represented. While funding has been used as a means of accountability in the past, Elizabeth Hansburg noted concerns about taking away resources that could be needed elsewhere. Elizabeth Hansburg shared that a roster of all housing developments is currently being developed.
- Michael Shepherd emphasized aligning collaboration with PHAs within the CoC Strategic Plan and clarifying the committee's role in the CoC, particularly regarding Objective 1C. Michael Shepherd advocated for a shared community vision and quarterly housing updates to improve advocacy and transparency. Michael Shepherd also sought clarity on the role of the Coordinated Entry System (CES) and whether committee input reaches the CES Steering Committee. To enhance engagement, Michael Shepherd stressed making contributions meaningful, improving accessibility for remote participants, and conducting a landscape analysis to strengthen advocacy for affordable housing. Michael Shepherd highlighted the need to define the committee's value to PHAs, foster collaboration, and refine action items for broader participation.
- Vice Chair January Johnson supported the Vision Setting conversation and stressed the need for defining roles and expectations for partners, especially regarding coordination with PHAs. Vice Chair January Johnson noted that PHAs might be more willing to participate if they understand their role and what they are being asked to contribute to the Housing Opportunities Committee. Vice Chair January Johnson highlighted funding as a key issue in the housing opportunity landscape. To encourage engagement, Vice Chair January Johnson suggested framing discussions around how funding challenges impact housing opportunities.
- A committee member emphasized the importance of fostering engagement during the committee meetings, noting that it is difficult to have a meaningful discussion without key stakeholders at the table.
- Cesar Covarrubias emphasized that addressing housing insecurity and homelessness requires collaboration beyond housing authorities, involving all stakeholders in Orange County. With many housing authorities operating independently and federal budget cuts posing challenges, Cesar Covarrubias stressed the need for strategic alignment and increased participation, including virtual options. Over the next six months, the focus should be on collective action, public engagement, and navigating funding uncertainties. Cesar Covarrubias suggested assessing what goals are feasible within a year, leveraging existing efforts to avoid redundancy, and engaging developers through ongoing discussions. To improve housing authority participation, Cesar Covarrubias proposed a pre-meeting to clarify expectations and encourage involvement.
- Chair Judson Brown noted receiving quarterly updates on the Orange County Housing Funding Strategy, which are provided to the Board of Supervisors, and asked if others were receiving these updates as they are beneficial. To strengthen collaboration with PHAs, Chair Judson Brown suggested expanding participation on the committee and including developers and the staff who administer Special Purpose Vouchers. Chair Judson Brown also proposed using the Housing Funding Strategy for a landscape analysis with quarterly updates in the Housing Opportunities Committee meetings. Chair Judson

Brown summarized committee Vision Setting action items to include inviting PHAs to meetings, providing clear definitions and expectations to PHAs about participation in the committee, incorporating updates on the Housing Funding Strategy, enabling access for virtual meeting participation, assessing federal budget cuts and potential impact, and acknowledging successes.

2. CoC Strategic Plan – Sarah Jones, CoC Manager, Office of Care Coordination; Felicia Boehringer, CoC Administrator, Office of Care Coordination; Judson Brown, Chair; and January Johnson, Vice Chair

Sarah Jones, Felicia Boehringer, Chair Judson Brown, and Vice Chair January Johnson provided background about the CoC Strategic Plan and brought forward Objective 1C for the committee's focused review. A discussion was led to determine if there is anything the committee members would like to change or add to the drafted Strategies or Actions and if there are any additional Strategies or Actions that should be included. As next steps, the Office of Care Coordination will compile the feedback to bring back to the next Housing Opportunities Committee Meeting and prepare insights and feedback to be shared at future CoC Board meeting as implementation planning continues.

Public Comment:

- Marcy Kovacevich from the Orange County Health Care Agency noted that efforts are being made to utilize Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) funds.
- Alan Achterberg shared background and personal experience. Alan Achterberg emphasized the importance of incorporating elements like motivational interviewing, safe spaces, and trauma-informed care into the Strategic Plan while reviewing its alignment with group, regional, CoC, and PHA goals. With experience navigating financial crises, Alan Achterberg noted that while traditional resources may face additional pressure, new opportunities will emerge. Alan Achterberg highlighted challenges in coordinating housing development efforts across different regions and mentioned an upcoming visit to Sacramento to discuss Proposition 1 implementation and its connection to mental health.

Committee Discussion:

- Michael Shepherd raised a question about collaboration with housing developers, asking whether they were included in discussions on new housing requirements. Michael Shepherd emphasized the importance of ensuring developers feel engaged rather than pressured and inquired whether enhanced accessibility requirements for seniors and people with disabilities reflect a specific community need. Michael Shepherd noted that collaboration with developers should also consider long-term funding and operational costs, suggesting reframing efforts to focus on securing resources for vulnerable populations. Additionally, Michael Shepherd recommended broadening language to say reducing "adverse" rather than "criminal" screening requirements and questioned whether certain action items should be integrated into existing strategies to ensure inclusivity.
- Elizabeth Hansburg inquired whether ADA-accessible units are more expensive and whether there is public resistance to funding them. Elizabeth Hansburg sought

clarification on the levels at which this concern is being discussed and whether it applies to existing initiatives. Elizabeth Hansburg asked if increasing landlord participation could be a solution and encouraged Vice Chair January Johnson to share insights. Elizabeth Hansburg suggested refining language to specify discretionary funding, allowing general funds to support other populations. Elizabeth Hansburg also expressed appreciation for Vice Chair January Johnson's willingness to share knowledge and educate others.

- Chair Judson Brown proposed several additional actions to the CoC Strategic Plan under Objective 1C. including revising documentation requirements to reduce criminal screening for housing programs, increasing the utilization of Special Purpose Vouchers from 80% to above 97% (in line with HUD performance measures), advocating for an affordable housing bond for Orange County, pushing for deeper affordability levels and a reasonable percentage of Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) units in each housing complex, and developing an affordable housing access plan.
- Vice Chair January Johnson highlighted challenges in gaining public support for affordable housing investment, noting the difficulty in justifying costs and addressing concerns about pricing. Vice Chair January Johnson emphasized the need for clear messaging, particularly around the necessity of one-bedroom units. Vice Chair January Johnson suggested adding "as funding allows" to the verbiage and broadening efforts to include both landlord engagement and relationship-building. Vice Chair January Johnson supported involving housing authorities in discussions and stressed the need for collaboration to bridge the gap between policy and real-world implementation.
- Cesar Covarrubias emphasized the need to focus on PSH while also addressing the shortage of traditional housing. Cesar Covarrubias noted that PSH cannot be built without traditional housing and sought ways to highlight its importance. Cesar Covarrubias suggested adding "families" to the fourth action item proposed, but remained open to including a description that also accounts for special populations.

3. Project-Based Housing Updates

a. Project-Based Voucher Pipeline – Public Housing Authority (PHA) Representatives

Chair Judson Brown provided background regarding the Project-Based Voucher (PBV) program, which is a discretionary component of the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program. Under the PBV program, the PHA enters into a long-term Housing Assistance Payments Contract with the owner for a specified number of units for up to a 20-year term, with the option for an additional 20 years. Tenants residing in project-based units pay 30 percent of their income for rent and utilities, and the balance of their housing costs are paid by the PHA. Tenants in project-based units are assisted as long as they live in the unit and continue to qualify for the program. Representatives from each of the four PHAs shared updates for their respective pipelines.

4. Tenant-Based Housing Updates

a. Special Purpose Voucher Updates – PHA Representatives

Chair Judson Brown shared that the four PHAs in Orange County can also apply for and receive Special Purpose Vouchers from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to serve people experiencing homelessness including Mainstream Vouchers, Veteran Affairs Supportive Housing Vouchers, and Family Unification Program and Foster Youth to Independence

Vouchers. A Voucher Summary Chart displayed which vouchers used for each of the four PHAs. Representatives from each PHA shared updates on their Special Purpose Vouchers.

Committee Discussion:

- Elizabeth Hansburg inquired about what it means to be “short” regarding vouchers and why new vouchers cannot be funded.

5. Funding, Program, and Policy Updates

a. Federal and State Legislation Updates – Cesar Covarrubias, The Kennedy Commission

Cesar Covarrubias provided federal and state legislation updates. Cesar Covarrubias noted that addressing the administration’s priorities has impacted reporting and highlighted concerns about proposed HUD staff cuts, which could significantly affect housing programs. Cesar Covarrubias emphasized the uncertainty surrounding federal housing policies and the need for contingency planning. At the state level, Cesar Covarrubias noted challenges in maintaining affordable housing momentum, particularly after the governor proposed no new housing funds. However, advocacy efforts continue, with proposals for a \$3 billion investment in affordable housing and homelessness prevention. Cesar Covarrubias also highlighted recent legislative efforts, including AB 736 and SB 417, which could lead to a \$10 billion housing bond for affordable housing and homeownership if approved for the 2026 ballot.

Public Comment:

- Alan Achterberg highlighted the uncertainty surrounding housing policies and funding and provided an example of a peer specialist funding program through Medicaid and Medicare, where certified individuals are paid to provide services. Another recent program offered younger participants a \$35,000 scholarship in exchange for a one-year commitment to this work. Alan Achterberg suggested exploring similar models, comparing them to AmeriCorps, and considering policy adjustments to better allocate resources for housing initiatives.

Committee Discussion:

- Elizabeth Hansburg asked if the funding challenges are affecting individual PHA staff. Elizabeth Hansburg referenced an article about the harsh realities of shelter living. Elizabeth Hansburg questioned whether policymakers acknowledge these experiences, noting a disconnect between government solutions and lived realities. Elizabeth Hansburg also asked whether funding could be coupled with labor unions or if it would be fully allocated elsewhere.

6. CoC Updates – Sarah Jones, CoC Manager, Office of Care Coordination

Sarah Jones shared that the Office of Care Coordination is continuing to stay up to date on the actions of the current administration and is sharing relevant information with CoC-funded agencies. An item related to the recent executive orders and their potential impacts to the funding of the Orange County CoC will be added to the agenda of the February 26, 2025, CoC Board meeting. Since updates are everchanging, the Office of Care Coordination encourages CoC General Members and organizations to stay updated by subscribing to distribution lists. Sarah

Jones provided information regarding two Requests for Proposals (RFPs): Vocational Services and Educational Services. Finally, Sarah Jones shared the 2025 Housing Opportunities Committee meeting calendar and provided information regarding upcoming CoC Board and Committee meetings.

7. Coordinated Entry System (CES) Updates – Daniel Garcia, CES Administrator, Office of Care Coordination

Daniel Garcia shared an overview of CES inflow and outflow over a twelve-month span from February 2024 to January 2025 for Individual CES (ICES), Family CES (FCES), Transitional Aged Youth (TAY), Veterans, and Survivor CES (SCES). Additionally, Daniel Garcia shared the number of households on the community queue as well as how many were chronically homeless, pending a match to a housing opportunity, and housed between February 2024 and January 2025 for each of the five subpopulations.

Committee Discussion:

- Elizabeth Hansburg noted that individuals entering CES typically face barriers to housing and asked whether housing options for families within CES are exclusively Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) or if they also include Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) options.
- Chair Judson Brown commended the work of the Office of Care Coordination's CES staff and noted a desire to share the user-friendly dashboards with the CoC Board.

Chair Judson Brown adjourned the meeting at 12:00 p.m.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, April 9, 2025, from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. at Orange County Housing Authority (OCHA), Conference Room, 1501 East Saint Andrew Place, 1st Floor Santa Ana, CA. 92705