

NEWS

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For Immediate Release

Ending Homelessness: County Seeks Innovative Ideas, With Skin in the Game

Redwood City – In the spirit of innovation, the Board of Supervisors today [set up a \\$2 million fund](#) to kick-start transformational programs to end homelessness.

The fund is the latest in a series of moves that puts the County of San Mateo on the forefront of attempting to end one of California’s most vexing issues: moving unsheltered residents into services that lead to permanent housing.

“We are looking for bold and collaborative efforts,” said Don Horsley, president of the Board of Supervisors. “We set a goal of ending homelessness and we encourage everyone to contribute to that effort. This grant program is really intended to get people thinking and to get people involved in workable, doable solutions.”

Nonprofit and faith-based organizations, cities, towns and affiliated agencies that serve homeless residents in San Mateo County may apply under the “Working Together to End Homelessness Innovation Grant Program.” Grant amounts will vary, and eligible applicants must provide some type of match and meet certain requirements.

Teamwork – that is collaborations between cities, towns, nonprofits and other entities – is strongly encouraged.

“We know many of the organizations that serve our unsheltered residents have great ideas but not necessarily the means to put those ideas into action,” said Supervisor Warren Slocum. “Now, with this grant program, we are challenging those organizations to offer innovative and new approaches.”

The grant program builds upon the County’s current [extensive efforts](#) to end homelessness – that is, homelessness will be rare, brief and one-time. Recent efforts include purchasing five hotels to use as temporary and long-term housing, building a state-of-the-art [Navigation Center](#), boosting the [supply of affordable housing](#) and funding an [array of services](#) to assist the most vulnerable residents.

At the same time, the County is hosting a series of workshops leading to the [Working Together to End Homelessness](#) Summit on Oct. 28, 2022, where participants will help the County develop a “2023 Homelessness Action Plan.”

Innovating Grant Focus Areas

The County’s [one-day homeless count](#) held on Feb. 24, 2022, found 1,092 unsheltered residents. This includes 352 people living on the streets or in encampments, 616 people living in cars, vans, or RVs and 102 people residing at safe parking sites (areas set aside for individuals to spend the night in vehicles).

Applicants must develop a plan to address how to engage those living on streets or encampments or those living in vehicles with services or develop innovative ways to assist the homeless and formerly homeless with job training, work experience and other steps toward financial self-sufficiency.

Projects could be brand new ideas or those tested elsewhere but new to San Mateo County. Applicants can also pitch ideas that have worked at small scale in the county with the goal of expanding countywide.

Evaluation

The grant application evaluation criteria will include but not be limited to the following:

- The extent of the need for the proposed project in the target service area.
- The experience and skills of the applicants in providing services to unsheltered residents.
- Whether the proposal tests an innovative and/or replicable approach to assisting unsheltered residents.
- The extent that the proposed project promotes equity.
- Whether the budget is sufficient and appropriate for the proposed work and includes a match that reflects the scale of the project.

Timeline

Detailed FAQs on the grant program will be posted at SMCendinghomlessness.org.

An informational session for potential applicants will be held on Sept. 22, 2022, via Zoom at 2 p.m. The Zoom link will be included in the program FAQs. Grant applications will be accepted from Wednesday, Sept. 14, 2022, through 5 p.m. on Oct. 7, 2022.

Grantees will be notified of awards during the last week of October and funds are expected to be distributed by mid-November.

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