



City of Placentia

Press Release

For Immediate Release

November 9, 2018

Contact: Damien R. Arrula
City of Placentia
(714) 993-8117
administration@placentia.org

ORANGE COUNTY CONTINUUM OF CARE APPROVES FUNDING FOR REGIONAL NAVIGATION CENTERS

PLACENTIA, CA – At the November 7, 2018 meeting for the Orange County Continuum of Care, the board members unanimously approved \$12 million dollars to the North Orange County Service Planning Area (North SPA) as part of the State of California's Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP). Through a competitive application process, the North SPA applied and has been awarded these funds for the acquisition/development of two Navigation Centers to provide comprehensive supportive services to long-term homeless residents of the North Orange County region.

In an effort to comply with a Federal Mandate as well as a recent case law, *Martin v. Boise* (2018), the North SPA, comprised of the cities of Placentia, Anaheim, Brea, Buena Park, Cypress, Fullerton, La Habra, La Palma, Los Alamitos, Orange, Villa Park, Stanton, and Yorba Linda are collaborating on a regional approach to address homelessness in the North SPA.

Based on the local mandate by U.S. District Federal Judge David Carter, cities in the North SPA are required to work on a homeless housing plan for the region, which shall include creating Navigation Centers designed to house and service North Orange County cities' homeless population. The requirement for North SPA is to create Navigation Centers that would provide comprehensive supportive services including vocational services, recreational services, mental health, transportation services and 200 beds to the homeless residents of the North Orange County region. If cities do not comply with the mandate to add emergency housing, they will not legally be able to keep the homeless from creating an encampment in public areas, such as city halls, senior centers, parks and neighborhood sidewalks, including sidewalks in front of residents' homes.

The City has thus far utilized a variety of tools to enforce the City's anti-camping laws for the above mentioned public spaces. The City's ability to address homelessness has been significantly diminished based upon the *Martin v. Boise* (2018) ruling by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals on September 2, 2018. The ruling asserted that the City of Boise's camping and disorderly conduct ordinance was unconstitutional, relying upon the U.S. Supreme Court precedent that it is cruel and unusual to criminalize a person's status, as opposed to his or her conduct. Ultimately, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that these types of Ordinances violated the Eighth Amendment when enforced against those who have been forced to sleep outdoors because they cannot obtain shelter.

This decision along with the recent Orange County Federal Court case presiding under Judge Carter significantly limits the City's ability to manage and control homeless proliferation and public camping in our community. In order to comply with these Federal requirements and court decisions, and to ensure that the City maintains local control over enforcement of its own anti-camping ordinance in

public areas, including public sidewalks, the City of Placentia along with the North SPA cities have identified two potential locations for Navigation Centers – one in Placentia and one in Buena Park. The final location of the Navigation Center will be determined by identifying a location that is suitable for safely housing homeless as well as addressing the following factors: proximity to residential areas, cost of construction, and well managed operations. In addition, these Navigation Centers will be contingent upon receiving additional grant funding for the acquisition, construction improvements and ongoing operations and maintenance of the Navigation Centers. The City of Placentia will not be using any general fund dollars for the Navigation Center in the City and has thus far only secured the aforementioned grant funding, which is the first step in the process.

The management and operational plan for the Navigation Centers will specify certain requirements to ensure local control for providing safe and secure housing as well as providing comprehensive programs and services. The Navigation Centers will be referral-only based facilities with managed and controlled access in and out. The proposed Navigation Centers will work not only to house the homeless, but to provide health resources, job and social skills, and opportunities to reunite with friends and family, with the goal of integrating North Orange County's homeless to become productive members of society while decreasing the number of homeless in public areas.

According to the most recent 2017 Point-in-Time count conducted by the County of Orange, there were approximately 4,792 people in Orange County whom have experienced homelessness (2,584 of whom were unsheltered) on any given night. This represents a 7% increase from 2015. The majority of Orange County's homeless, whether male or female, are U.S. citizens and long-term Orange County residents of over 10 years vs. people who are brought to Orange County from other counties.

"The City of Placentia, in working with the North SPA cities in an unprecedented effort, have collaborated to solve homelessness on a regional level," said Council Member Ward Smith. "We know that homelessness is not a single city issue and will not solve itself alone. Therefore, these Navigation Centers have the ability to provide a comprehensive, well managed approach to getting men and women off the street and into a safe and productive environment with wraparound services, such as health and wellness resources, employment training and assistance, substance abuse services and coordinated counseling."

"While we are concerned about the Federal Mandate and recent appellate court decision, the City believes that through local control and a well-managed approach to solving homelessness, we can ensure that the City has the ability to continue enforcing its anti-camping laws to ensure that our public parks, public spaces and the sidewalks in front of our residents very own homes will be protected," said City Administrator Damien R. Arrula. "This also allows our Police Officers to uphold and enforce local and state laws as we work together with other North Orange County Cities to develop a coordinated approach to solving homelessness in our region."

The City will seek additional public input as we examine the location and management of the proposed Navigation Center.

For additional information on this regional effort, please visit www.placentia.org/homelessness.

--END--