



News Release

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SAN DIEGO CITY COUNCIL APPROVES CITY'S TEMPORARY BRIDGE SHELTER PROGRAMS FOR HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES

*More than \$6.5 million from the San Diego Housing Commission
will fund operations through June 30, 2018*

SAN DIEGO, CA – The San Diego City Council today approved three Temporary Bridge Shelter Programs and authorized the San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC) to expend \$6.5 million of SDHC funds for the operations of these shelters, which will provide 700 beds for homeless individuals and families.

“The bridge shelters will serve as a starting point – not an end point – in the path to a better life,” San Diego Mayor Kevin L. Faulconer said at a news conference before the City Council voted 8-1 to approve the shelters. “The reality is, while we work to match folks with a permanent home, they need a safe place to stay. San Diego has a homeless crisis. People need an alternative right now to living on the streets. These temporary bridge shelters are that alternative.”

Mayor Faulconer initially announced the creation of these new shelters on September 13, 2017, to address homelessness in the City and combat the regional Hepatitis A outbreak. He was joined then by City Councilmembers Chris Ward and Lorie Zapf and community leaders.

“The action before Council today reflects a balanced approach to the limited resources we have in order to address the immediate public health and public safety concerns and the crisis going forward. And I do believe that these programs have clear, trackable expectations to ensure that we get the most impact out of every single dollar invested in solving homelessness,” Councilmember Ward, Chair of the City Council’s Select Committee on Homelessness and Vice Chair of the Regional Task Force on the Homeless, said at today’s news conference.

The shelters will offer homeless individuals and families access to appropriate services as they exit to permanent housing with the “Housing First” model of addressing homelessness – to provide housing as quickly as possible, with supportive services as needed. Among the goals for the shelters are that 65 percent of program participants will exit to permanent housing and that of those, no more than 15 percent will return to shelters within 12 months.

“These bridge shelters are a new housing option that will meet the immediate needs of homeless San Diegans and will focus on helping them move into permanent housing,” SDHC President & CEO Richard C. Gentry said. “I thank Mayor Kevin Faulconer, the City Council, the nonprofit shelter operators, and the local business leaders who made this public-private partnership possible.”

Donations from local business leaders covered the City’s cost to buy and construct two of the three Sprung structures that will be constructed.

The shelters, which are scheduled to open in December, will be located at three sites:

- 16th Street and Newton Avenue: 350 beds for homeless adults. Operated by Alpha Project.
- 14th Street and Commercial: 150 beds for homeless families. Operated by Father Joe's Villages.
- 2801 ½ Sports Arena Boulevard (property owned by the U.S. Navy): 200 beds for homeless Veterans. Operated by Veterans Village of San Diego.

Residents of each of the shelters will have a score from an assessment tool that identifies the most vulnerable homeless individuals and families, who then receive priority in being matched to permanent housing subsidies.

The highest priority for the shelters will be homeless San Diegans who have been matched to a subsidy and need a safe place to stay as a “bridge” while they look for a permanent rental housing unit.

Additional major components of the shelter programs include:

- Diversion strategies, such as those included in **HOUSING FIRST – SAN DIEGO**, SDHC's homelessness action plan, to help reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness, the demand for shelter beds, and the size of wait lists;
- 24-hour residential services, such as two daily meals, monitors and shelter coordinators, to meet residents' needs;
- Housing navigation and location staff to assist residents in finding and accessing safe, permanent housing;
- A designated County Health and Human Services staff member who will assist with connecting shelter residents with government benefits, as well as mental health and substance abuse treatment services.

In addition to the funds authorized by the City Council, SDHC has invested \$1.1 million toward start-up costs, which did not require City Council approval. The shelters will operate through June 30, 2018. Extensions of the shelter operations will require additional approval of the City Council, sitting as the Housing Authority of the City of San Diego.

The shelters complement the “Housing First” model of addressing homelessness, in which SDHC's homelessness action plan is deeply rooted. In the current phase of **HOUSING FIRST SAN DIEGO**, SDHC is directing \$79.7 million in Federal, City of San Diego, and SDHC resources toward six programs to provide permanent housing opportunities for 3,000 homeless San Diegans in the next three fiscal years (2018-2020).

For more information about SDHC, visit www.sdhc.org.

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Media Contact:

Scott Marshall, Vice President of Communications: 619-578-7138; scottm@sdhc.org