

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **ALBANY TEMPORARY TRANSITION SHELTER AND ALBANY PROJECT HOPE**

The following FAQ has been prepared to help answer some of the more frequently asked questions regarding the City of Albany's Temporary Transition Shelter located at the Albany Waterfront for persons transitioning off of the Albany Waterfront/Bulb and the services provided by Operation Dignity, the organization hired by the City to operate the shelter. In addition the FAQ includes information regarding Albany Project Hope, the City of Albany's Homeless Outreach and Engagement Program provided citywide in partnership with Berkeley Food and Housing Project (BFHP).

#### **BACKGROUND QUESTIONS**

##### **Why is the City transitioning people from the Albany Waterfront/Bulb?**

In May the Council directed staff to begin enforcement of the City's no-camping ordinance at the Albany waterfront beginning in October 2013. On September 3rd, the City Council reviewed the matter again to receive additional public comment. After receiving extensive public input at the September 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting, the Council ultimately reaffirmed their direction to begin enforcement of the no-camping ordinance beginning in October.

The City of Albany is assisting people who are homeless in Albany, and addressing unsafe, unsanitary conditions at our waterfront park. This is part of a larger effort to transition this area to [McLaughlin Eastshore State Park](#) for the benefit of the entire region. On October 21, 2013, the City Council adopted an [Albany Waterfront Park Transition Plan](#) to guide the transition of the Albany Bulb. Click here for the Albany Waterfront Park Transition Plan.

#### **ALBANY TEMPORARY TRANSITION SHELTER QUESTIONS**

##### **What is the Temporary Transition Shelter?**

The Temporary Transition Shelter consists of two portable buildings purchased by the City of Albany and located at the Albany Waterfront. The facility is a temporary shelter available to persons transitioning from illegal encampments on the Albany Bulb.

##### **Why did the City place a Temporary Transition Shelter at the Albany Waterfront?**

The City is providing assistance to people who are transitioning from the Albany Bulb. The shelter is intended to serve as a temporary location as people move from illegal encampments on the Bulb.

### **How is the Temporary Transition Shelter Administered?**

The City retained the services of [Operation Dignity](#), a local nonprofit service provider with over 20 years of experience providing housing and support services to people who are homeless. The City utilized the services of Operation Dignity for a similar program in 1999 when people were transitioned from the Albany Bulb. Operation Dignity is responsible for administration and operation of the shelter with oversight from the City.

### **What is the procedure for using the Temporary Transition Shelter?**

People transitioning from the Albany Bulb are welcome to use the temporary transition shelter. The shelter doors open for clients at 5:30PM and close at 8:00AM. Priority is given to people transitioning off the Bulb until 6:30 PM. After 6:30 PM, available beds are provided to others who are homeless in Albany.

### **What services are provided for people who stay at the shelter?**

People who stay at the shelter receive 2 meals (dinner & breakfast), a bed with blankets and pillow, access to restrooms and showers, storage for personal belongings and dog kennels.

### **Are meals, restroom and shower facilities available for people not using the shelter?**

No. In accordance with the Albany Waterfront Transition Plan, all services provided at the shelter are for people who stay overnight.

### **Are there specific rules for use of the Temporary Transition Shelter?**

Yes. Written rules are posted at the Temporary Transition Shelter and are intended to maintain considerate, safe behavior from all shelter participants to ensure everyone's safety. [Click here](#) for a PDF of Shelter Rules.

### **Is there a priority for who stays at the Temporary Transition Shelter?**

Priority will be given to people transitioning off the bulb until 6:30 PM. After 6:30 PM, available beds will be provided to others who are homeless in Albany until 8:00PM when sign-in ends.

### **What is the process when entering the shelter?**

People are asked to fill out an intake form and must agree to follow shelter rules.

### **Is there a list of people that Operation Dignity Staff use to determine who is eligible to enter the shelter?**

When the shelter first opened the Albany Police Department provided the names of persons known or thought to be camping on the Bulb in order to help shelter staff identify individuals in need of transitional shelter services. Such a list of names is no longer in use by Operation Dignity staff.

### **What happens if a person is in violation of the rules?**

Participants are expected to treat other participants, and staff with courtesy and respect. The following actions and any other actions that require police intervention will be cause for IMMEDIATE EXPULSION from the shelter:

- Alcohol, drugs, or weapons WILL NOT be allowed on shelter property or on person.
- Physical or verbal violence towards other participants, or staff
- Lack of cooperation and/or compliance with shelter rules or staff.
- Theft
- Sexual harassment, sexual activity and/or inappropriate sexual behavior involving other participants or staff are not permitted in the Shelter or on the property.

### **How long will the Temporary Transition Shelter remain at the Albany Waterfront?**

In accordance with the [Albany Waterfront Transition Plan](#), it is anticipated that the temporary transition shelter will remain open for a period of six months. The shelter was opened on November 22.

### **How is the Temporary Transition shelter funded?**

The shelter is funded with City General Fund Reserves.

### **How much has the City paid Operation Dignity to operate the shelter?**

To date, the City has paid Operation Dignity \$61,987.06. The contract with Operation Dignity is a cost reimbursement model. This means that Operation Dignity only invoices for staff time and supplies that are actually provided. [Click here for a PDF of the budget submitted by Operation Dignity.](#)

### **Are there any other shelters under consideration in Albany?**

The City's [Social & Economic Justice Commission](#) is currently reviewing matters related to homelessness in Albany including opportunities for drop-in facilities and other services. The Commission serves as an advisory body to the City Council on matters related to Social & Economic Justice within the City of Albany.

## **ALBANY PROJECT HOPE QUESTIONS**

### **What is the City's program for conducting homeless outreach, engagement and case management services to people who are homeless in Albany?**

Utilizing strength-based case management, the Project HOPE Case Manager will use a Housing First/ Rapid Re-housing approach to house homeless individuals of Albany. Housing First philosophy holds that people's need for housing is a basic need that should be met as quickly as possible, without any preconditions. Consistent with Housing First principals, the program will use a Harm Reduction approach when addressing both substance abuse and psychiatric issues. Harm Reduction is a set of practical strategies that reduce negative consequences of high risk behaviors, incorporating a spectrum of interventions from safer use, to managed use, to abstinence.

### **Who is providing services for Project HOPE?**

[Berkeley Food and Housing Project](#) (BFHP) began providing services and activities for Albany Project HOPE, July 1, 2013. Founded in 1970, BFHP has extensive experience providing services to people who are homeless. Services are provided at five sites which house Berkeley's Men's and Women's emergency shelters, two (2) transitional housing programs, a multi service center which provides case management and a daily communal meal, a rapid re-housing and homelessness prevention program for veterans and permanent supportive housing for formerly homeless men and women with mental health issues. They also partner with many service and advocacy organizations such as Lifelong Medical, UC Berkeley Suitcase Clinic, Homeless Action Center and Highland East Bay Recovery Project, to name a few.

### **Who are the Project Hope staff and when do they work?**

From July-December 2013 Project Hope was staffed by two BFHP case managers who each worked 2 days/week on the project. In December, as the first contract with the City of Albany ended, both of these staff transitioned to other programs within BFHP. In January, after the contract was renewed BFHP began a search for a new full time case manager. In the interim, the Project had staff assigned a few hours/week. (During this time the City of Albany was only paying for these limited hours of Project Hope time). Starting in mid March, the project is again fully staffed with a new full time Case Manager.

### **How can people who want services reach the Project Hope Case Manager?**

The Project Hope Case Manager can be reached by calling (510)684-2598.

### **When does the Case Manager work?**

The Case Manager works full time, has a flexible schedule that includes late afternoon and evening hours in order to best connect with individuals who are homeless.

### **What will the Case Manager do?**

The goal of outreach continues to be engagement and relationship building to encourage participation in services and housing. Outreach will continue at the Albany Bulb until closure of the Albany Temporary Transition shelter; and in other parts of the city where ever there are homeless individuals. Engagement can be a long process and it can take many, many contacts with a homeless individual before an assessment can be made by the case manager.

Case Management will continue to assess people who are homeless focusing on tenant screening and housing retention issues.

After completing the initial assessment, the case manager and client create a Housing Case Plan together. Housing plans may include referrals to other mainstream services to help people obtain and maintain housing. This could include linking to resources for medical care, mental health, domestic violence, etc.

The Case Manager's role will also include the identification of rental units, to build relationships with landlords, and work with the client on the move in process and housing retention.

### **What is BFHP's scope of work under the 1 year contract?**

[For a PDF of the scope click here.](#)

### **Does BFHP have a list with names of people allowed to use the Albany Temporary Transition Shelter?**

No, BFHP has never provided a list of clients to Operation Dignity to use at the shelter.

### **How is Albany Project Hope funded?**

The City is utilizing a combination of General Fund (Council Discretionary and Human Services) and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding to pay for services provided by BFHP. The contract with BFHP is a cost reimbursement model. This means that BFHP only invoices for staff time that is actually provided. In January and February there was very little staff time devoted to the project and therefore there was very little cost to the City of Albany during these months.

**How much money has been spent so far on Project Hope?**

To date, the City of Albany has paid \$57,276.88 to BFHP since July 2013.

**What is Albany's Housing Subsidy Program?**

The City has developed a housing subsidy program to help people transitioning into housing. The subsidy covers a portion (or in some cases all) of the rent for a rental unit until an individual is able to begin paying towards the rent. The subsidy program is customized for each particular situation depending on the level of support that is needed to help sustain housing.

**How are people connected to programs, housing and other services?**

People are referred to or asked to call the Case Manager at (510) 684-2597

**How successful has the outreach & engagement program been within the City?**

To date, the City in collaboration with Berkeley Food & Housing Project has housed 9 people with seven remaining successfully housed. We continue to work with people who are homeless connecting them with available housing. Moving from an encampment into housing requires a commitment by the person, and individuals are given strong support throughout the transition process to help ensure those moving into housing are able to sustain their new housing by way of counseling, life skills training, and ongoing check-ins provided by Berkeley Food and Housing Project.

**If I have a question about the work of BFHP or Operation Dignity who should I call?**

For questions about the City of Albany's Temporary Transition Shelter and contracts with BFHP or Operation Dignity please contact the City's Public Information Officer at (510) 528-5722 or by email: [nalmaguer@albanyca.org](mailto:nalmaguer@albanyca.org).