

Albany Project HOPE
Homeless Outreach and Engagement Program
Berkeley Food and Housing Project Narrative
Report to City Council
October, 2016- December, 2016

Activities to Date

The Albany Homeless Outreach and Engagement Program and its Case Manager (CM) have worked very closely with newly housed clients to ensure a steady transition toward self-sufficiency. CM meets weekly with clients individually to discuss possible barriers and to fill out housing applications where possible. CM has been diligent in low income housing search, obtaining applications and forwarding them to prospective clients. A few clients are extremely motivated and diligent in moving forward whereas others move at a slower pace. One of the responsibilities of the CM is to keep clients on track in fulfilling their self-sufficiency requirements.

CM continues to support clients in their road to wellness. Client P.H., had been outside for 25+yrs. And although he is in remarkably good shape, CM picks him up weekly from Highland hospital where he undergoes a particular procedure series for wellness. That along with addressing other medical conditions have required CM to be available one to two times per week assisting with medical associated paperwork, rides and emotional support for overall medical wellbeing. In addition, our client who had been homeless the longest was selected, by lottery system, for a Project Based Section 8. This is a subsidy that is attached to the property rather than client. For as long as the client stays at that particular property he will be responsible for 1/3 of the rent. For a client like this one, this is literally a “golden ticket”. CM has been assisting client in gathering necessary documents and drove client to Firebaugh and Fresno Housing Authorities to start paperwork. At that time he needed to provide his actual Social Security Card, which, in turn called for his Naturalization document.

CM has worked relentlessly in assisting a client to obtain a Naturalization document. To put this in perspective, it takes a whole day just to be able to talk to a “higher level of customer service” representative at USCIS. You must call in early morning, explain the need, get the client to authorize you speaking on his behalf, get the transfer, leave call back number, and wait for a call back which generally takes 3-4 hours. Due to the client’s complicated history, CM has done this process eight times. There have been countless forms, packets, certified correspondence, tracking, photos (passport), and multiple trips to the San Francisco branch. CM also worked helped the client obtain his birth certificate. That process, although not as complicated as

obtaining the Naturalization documents, has required multiple steps as well. These documents were vital in obtaining client Social Security card. CM started this process with client in March, 2015 and was finally able to acquire the documents on Jan 5th 2017. CM faxed the Social Security card receipt to housing authorities and now client can move forward in securing housing and income. Without the aid of Project HOPE these lengthy, tedious steps could not have been completed effectively.

Other activities include accessing private and public donation sites for those clients preparing for the transition to self-sufficiency. Our client who has been in the program the longest has been awarded his social security which means he can finally be responsible for his own rents and living costs. Although client has been inside for over a year, prior to that he was homeless for twelve years. Project HOPE, in cooperation with other agencies will assist in his move north to the Mendocino County area.

Without the assistance, these clients surely could have returned to homelessness in Albany. Both were from the Albany bulb area.

Activities also included holiday referrals for all our housed clients as well as those in outreach. CM accessed several toy drives/giveaway for client in shared housing with a small son. Another shared housing client was clearly very depressed at the peak of the season. CM provided referral to Berkeley Free Clinic for counseling/therapy sessions. Other referrals have been to HAC (Homeless Action Center), and sources of donations (hygiene bags, personal needs, blankets, rain ponchos etc.).

Among the outreach individuals this quarter there have been several single women and two with children in need of assistance. One family was a referral from the Albany library/Drop-In Center. CM made many failed attempts to find the son who was seen there multiple times and decided to leave a note with staff at center. Fortunately the mother did call and CM was able to have three conversations with her but still could not get her name or location. She was afraid of losing her son. She wanted help in getting to Mexico, but did not show up for the two appointments to meet.

The other single homeless mother was much more forthright and we have been developing a case plan and assisting with rent to end her homelessness and achieve self-sufficiency.

CM worked with two women who were found at the corner of Solano and San Pablo. In one case, these efforts have not yet been successful, despite bringing in another case manager to see if a connection could be made. In the other case, CM was able to get the woman fed, a change of clothes and into the women's shelter. Work with both will continue.

CM continues weekly house meeting with all clients at the Oakland shared housing location and continues to check in with Landlord (approximately two to three times a month) to maintain problem free rental relationships.

CM has spoken to about 36 individuals about housing, medical resources and food resources. Approximately twenty claim to be passing through the area. Of those, CM started paperwork on

16 individuals. Of the 16 there were a significant number associated with the Gilman underpass, Berkeley. CM is noticing a pattern of people wanting services in the form of “tiny homes” or permanent property.

Successes this Quarter

Project HOPE successfully assisted a single mother and two children who were literally homeless in Albany with rents. This will allow for a safe environment and more time with her children.

The client with the longest homelessness, a 65 year old man, has been selected for Section 8 voucher and has obtained his naturalization document to complete the housing requirements. Client had been homeless for 28 years and has been housed through Project HOPE since 02/2016. He has made amazing strides and accomplishments and said “without your [Project HOPES] help, I would be dead by now”. He will be moving to his own apartment very soon.

The client longest in the program was awarded his Social Security in mid-December and will be able to move to complete self-sufficiency. With the help of Project HOPE he has become sober, including recovering from a tough relapse.

A woman outreached at Solano/San Pablo, starving with apparent mental health issues, was taken off the streets during heavy storm, and brought to the HUB. She was connected to the women’s shelter and will be able to obtain the mental health and other housing services.

Challenges this Quarter

Lack of affordable housing or unwillingness to relocate are on-going issues. Some people in outreach status have said that living outside in the Bay Area is better than living indoors elsewhere in unfamiliar territory. Although CM has definitely noticed that people being outreached are noticing her and more receptive to talk, the idea of land grants and tiny homes is an idea that gives the street population a reason to “wait it out”. CM has had many conversations about respecting city (ies) and find that overall clients tend to be responsive and agreeable as I reiterate that I am available.

Case Manager has spent on average fifteen hours weekly at the 14th shared housing location. There have been multiple conflicts needing mediation services. Two of the clients are currently preparing for housing transitions and two have had medical procedures. These influences along with prior trauma living outside brings up emotions and responses that require 3rd party interventions.

As I anticipate some substantial changes for a few of our existing clients, I also anticipate 2-4 clients in various phases of outreach to come on board for assistance. One of the challenges will be to positively match house mates.