

Albany Project HOPE
Homeless Outreach and Engagement Program
Berkeley Food and Housing Project Narrative
Report to City Council
Jan-March, 2017

Activities to Date

The Albany Homeless Outreach and Engagement Program, along with its full time Case Manager has continued to do outreach as well as work closely with housed clients to provide various levels of case management

On average, CM will spend 10-16 hours a week out in the field, speaking to potential clients for the first time or touching base with a person where contact has already been made with positive outcomes. Many referrals have been made, resulting in a higher quality of life for individuals living on the street.

In any one week time, CM may get 3-5 “leads” from Albany PD, other public organizations and private citizens/business owners about people spotted in need on the street. CM makes every attempt to reach out to that person immediately to establish contact as the street population tends to change camps frequently. This has had a direct result in the housing of one individual with a history of long term homelessness and two others in the final stages of the housing process.

CM has done research for the individual needs of current clients such as identifying bus routes, food pantries, clothing donation sites, and free computers for housing research, libraries, and referral agencies.

CM spends 5 hours per week keeping client files updated with accurate and detailed notes and information as required by the grant contract.

For the housed clients at the temporary shared housing facility in Oakland, CM continues to provide assistance in permanent housing search, filing out applications and getting on all housing lists. CM has been able to provide support to them and other Albany residents with transportation to DMV, the hospital and Albany showers. Case Manager stays in constant contact with their landlord with weekly “check-ins” with positive and problem free results.

CM makes 1 to 2 home visits weekly (1-2 hours per household) to ensure good housekeeping and to offer any assistance in reaching program goals, managing disputes, ensuring timely rent payments and that all housing needs are met. CM spends approximately 6-8 hours driving clients to essential agency appointments where application assistance may be needed.

CM may spend an entire day gathering essential donations set up throughout the week such as blankets, toiletries, food from food sites, making referrals to legal organizations (HAC), and providing for other essential needs, while furthering the conversation about housing opportunities. Only a small handful are interested in longer term assistance but CM continues to call them periodically to “check-in” and see if they are ready for longer term help.

This quarter CM had some interaction with business owners in Albany who had contact with “sleepers” and/or individual who were regularly hanging around their businesses. One of these meetings led to the housing of a 29 year old man who had been homeless in Albany for almost a year.

This quarter CM provided outreach to approximately 48 potential participants. Many were not interested in further discussion including about 18 “travelers” who did not identify with the city. About 15 individuals had had conversations with the CM before. Of those, three led to further conversations for housing services and are in various stages of that process.

PLEASE NOTE: Case Manager still finds that these outreach numbers include contacts with people who wouldn't identify as either homeless in Berkeley or Albany. Some have said Albany and been located in Albany one week but Berkeley “side” the next. In most of these cases, individuals are more interested in donated items and services than in housing assistance.

Successes this Quarter

Project HOPE has successfully permanently housed a client who had been homeless the longest. With CM assistance, he applied for a property-based section 8 subsidy and was chosen through a lottery system. This means that the client will no longer have to worry about becoming homeless again as long as he remains in his new 1 bedroom apartment. CM was able obtain new furnishings for the client by accessing the Seasons of Sharing program and other charitable organizations. Client's new apartment is a considerable distance from the office, so CM stays in contact mainly through e-mail and phone conversations. One in-person follow up meeting has taken place since his move in mid Feb.2017, a full year from the time he entered into the Project HOPE program.

Another 29 year old man, TC, was housed in March after being homeless in Albany for nearly a year. CM accompanied the client to the Social Service Agency to obtain financial and food assistance. CM also was able to obtain a bed and other essential items for the client. CM will closely monitor the client's progress in accessing other social services.

Another client—JE--completed program successfully. He received SSI and moved into his own apartment. JE began the program with a full rental subsidy and within a year moved toward full rental self-sufficiency.

Our client who has been in the program the longest, has finally received his SSI award and is currently becoming able to pay his own rent. He has battled with drug addiction and Project HOPE continues to provide supportive services to him.

Challenges this Quarter

Lack of affordable housing in the current market continues to be a problem. Landlords are reluctant to rent to clients with subsidies and our client base brings with them questionable credit reports and poor tenant histories. We continue to search for shared housing opportunities that will fit limited budgets. Although shared housing can help to address the challenge of high rents, it makes housemate matching challenging as some of our clients have physical and/or mental health issues that makes co habituating sometimes a long and thoughtful process. Locating other available subsidy options is a further challenge, because they are scarce.