

Albany Project HOPE
Homeless Outreach and Engagement Program
Berkeley Food and Housing Project Narrative
Report to City Council
April-June 2017

Activities to Date

The Albany Homeless Outreach and Engagement Program, with its full time Case Manager and part-time Housing Navigator, has continued to work closely with housed clients and other residents to provide various levels of case management and outreach informational services

Each week CM spends 8-16 hours out in the field, speaking to potential clients for the first time and/or touching base with previously contacted persons in need of social services. Referrals have been made resulting in a higher quality of life for individuals living on the street. Case Manger is in contact with Albany police department via e-mail and has followed up on leads they have provided resulting in positive housing services. Other fruitful leads are coming from various public organizations and private citizens/business owners about people spotted on the street in need. CM makes every attempt to reach out to that person immediately as the street population tend to change camps frequently. CM continues to assist with research for individual needs of current clients such as bus routes, food pantries, clothing donation sites, libraries and other free computers for housing research and referral agencies.

Project HOPE's part-time Housing Navigator meets with individuals contacted in outreach and completes Face Sheets to determine participants' housing needs and how we can best serve them.

CM spends 5-10 hours per week keeping client files updated with accurate and detailed notes.

With the housed clients at the shared housing facility in Oakland, CM and Housing Navigator continue to provide assistance to clients in permanent housing search, filling out applications and getting on all housing lists. CM has also provided transportation to DMV, local hospitals and the Albany showers. Case Manager stays in constant contact with landlords with weekly "check-ins" with a positive results. Case Manger continues to ensure rents are paid on time and other landlord requirements are met.

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

CM spends as much as a day each week gathering essential donations set up throughout the week such as blankets, toiletries, and food. Most clients are either on GA or Social Security so in

order to make ends meet, CM is diligent in supplying all participants with much needed donations and information about sites for food and other necessities.

Case Manager has accessed the Benevolent program for each client for various needs. For example a client who has just gotten a part-time job is very interested in going back to school. We have submitted paperwork to Benevolent for a simple laptop so that the client can further his educational goal, ultimately getting better job opportunities.

In terms of outreach, 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 individuals who were regularly hanging around their businesses. These calls have been positive as it gives CM the opportunity to meet people “where they’re at” and provide essential supplies such as water, handy wipes, socks and food. It has led to positive conversations and further meetings.

This quarter CM has provided outreach to 51 potential participants. Many were not interested in further discussion, including 24 “travelers” who did not identify with the city. Seventeen of those individuals had conversation with CM before. Of the new 10 potential housing clients, 3 were interested in housing services and they were housed this quarter. CM is having further conversations with the remaining 7 and they are in various stages of that process.

Case Manger attended a meeting for the new Community Resource Center and its partners. The meeting was dynamic and informative with all interested parties given the opportunity to share information. Case manager will be setting up an appointment with Alison Mertz to talk about collaborative ways to serve the needs of Albany’s indigent and other people.

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

Successes this Quarter

Project HOPE has successfully housed three more individuals who were literally living on Albany streets. Two of those individuals were referred to Homeless Action Center to begin the SSI application process and for assistance with GA/Cal Fresh and Medical.

CM also was able to obtain a bed and other essential items for the clients living at the Oakland shared housing location. Case Manager was able to assist one of the newly housed individuals in preparing his resume and locating several potential job leads. One application for Sprouts was accepted and the client was given an interview in which he received a job offer for part time employment.

Our longest participant completed the program successfully. He received SSI and moved to other permanent housing. He continues to work closely with the TRUST Clinic on his sobriety and good health.

Challenges this Quarter

One of our newly housed clients has some mental health issues that he, with CM assistance, has made some progress in addressing. While he is open to maintaining balance through medication and counseling, it has been a tough road. Client has lost 5 sets of keys, has very poor housekeeping and there have been reports of him taking food that doesn't belong to him. CM has addressed this many times verbally and has made certain the client has everything he needs to get his own food. Still there continue to be reports from other housemates. CM has set up another mandatory house meeting for July 17th to address this and any other housekeeping issues that may be of concern. CM will discuss this issues with Supervisor for other ideas in maintaining a trusting environment at the shared housing unit.

Lack of affordable housing in the current market continues to be a problem. Landlords are reluctant to rent to people 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 that may make housing affordable, it makes housemate matching challenging as some of our clients have physical and/or mental health that makes co-habituating sometimes a long and thoughtful process. Locating other subsidy options that are "open" can be scarce.