

**CITY OF ALBANY
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA
STAFF REPORT**

Agenda Date: March 1, 2021
Reviewed by: NA

SUBJECT: Albany CARES Program Update

REPORT BY: Annemarie Heineman, Albany CARES Program Director
Sid Schoenfeld, Neighborhood & Community Services Manager
Isabelle Leduc, Assistant City Manager/Recreation & Community Services Director

SUMMARY

The Albany CARES (Community Access to Resources and Services) program has been providing outreach, assistance and referrals to support Albany's most vulnerable and low-income residents since January 2019. The program has been successful in its outreach, collaboration with other agencies such as Berkeley Food and Housing Project and responsiveness to the needs of Albany residents. The item before the City Council is an update on the program, including an annual report on client tracking of outreach activities, client demographic information, type of services requested, and referrals provided.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the Council receive the Albany CARES (Community Access to Resources and Services) program update.

BACKGROUND

The Social and Economic Justice Commission researched the feasibility of a Community Resource Center as a venue for Albany residents to receive information and referrals to services available. On February 6, 2017, the City Council approved the inclusion of a 1-year Resource Center Pilot Program as part of its Strategic Plan.

The Community Resource Center opened on September 8, 2017 in the Albany United Methodist Church Community Hall. Days and hours of operation were on Wednesdays and Fridays from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM. The main goal of the Center was to connect residents to services available at a location within the City of Albany where residents could learn about existing services and receive referrals and assistance as needed. The Center was staffed by a part-time Resource Center Director and 8 volunteers. The Resource Center closed prematurely after 5 months in operation due to loss of staffing.

On March 19, 2018, the City Council held a study session to review the Community Resource Center 5-month pilot project and approved the recommendations by the Social and Economic Justice Commission to employ a part-time Human Services Resource Coordinator, designate a space in the Annex adjacent to the Senior Center for weekly consultations with residents and to monitor the use and effectiveness of these services including reports to the City Council and the Social and Economic Justice Commission on services use and needs in the Albany community.

DISCUSSION

The Albany CARES Program started in January 2019, staffed by one part-time Program Director and 5 volunteers. Albany CARES provides outreach, assistance and referrals to resources and services that support Albany's most vulnerable and low-income residents. Until March 2020, the CARES Program held drop-in hours in the Senior Center Annex on Wednesdays and Fridays from 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM.

Drop in hours were suspended due to the pandemic. Since then services have been provided through phone and email contacts. Staff at the Senior Center and the Albany CARES Director have been working together closely during the pandemic. Due to the increase in the number of calls and to ensure all calls would be answered the Senior Center phone number has been used as the city's primary human services hotline with calls needing a deeper level of assistance referred to the Albany CARES Director.

The number of people assisted by Albany CARES has increased steadily over the course of the program. The second quarter of 2020 was especially busy, as assistance was provided to 157 clients in that three-month period. Extensive outreach methods have been employed to reach community members through the distribution of printed flyers, posting of banners/posters city-wide, canvassing local businesses and organizations, implementing an information station at the Albany Library, referrals from Albany Project HOPE (Housing Opportunities Expanded) and the Police Department and other promotion through different media outlets such as the city website, e-News and Senior Center Chronicles e-newsletter.

To be responsive to the needs of vulnerable individuals and families in Albany, effectively connecting people in need to available resources in housing, food, legal aid, health, transportation and others Albany CARES collaborated extensively with several organizations such as Berkeley Food & Housing Project (Albany Project HOPE), Albany Police Department and Fire Department, Albany Library, ECHO (Eden Council for Hope and Opportunity) Housing, Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Project (HICAP), several food and homecare programs and legal resources.

The pandemic has exacerbated existing crises in residents' lives, and caused new problems as well. There was a significant increase in the number of clients experiencing homelessness seeking assistance this year. As compared to 47 in 2019, in 2020 73 clients were without housing. The social isolation has been especially difficult for seniors and those who live alone. In addition, many residents experienced a decrease in income, leading to difficulty paying rent and buying food. The Albany CARES Annual report attached to this staff for the Council's

information provides additional data on client tracking of outreach activities, client demographic information, type of services requested, and referrals provided.

ANALYSIS

N/A

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

N/A

SOCIAL EQUITY AND INCLUSIVITY CONSIDERATIONS

The Albany CARES program promotes increased access to basic needs by connecting residents to resources available, particularly seniors, people with disabilities and people experiencing homelessness.

CITY COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVE

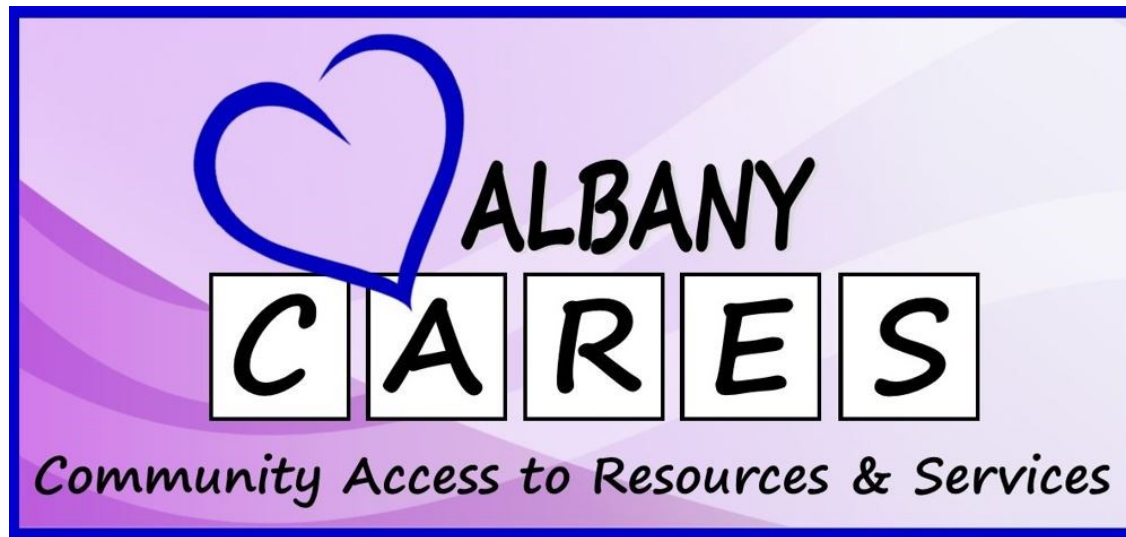
This item helps to fulfill the City Council Strategic Plan Goal 2, Objective 1 to Connect with and Engage Community. Work Plan Item 1: Continue outreach and service referrals through the “Albany CARES” program to households in need including but not limited to seniors and any resident at risk of or already experiencing homelessness. Evaluate outreach outcomes and efficiency in annual report to the City Council.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The cost of the Albany CARES program has been integrated into the City’s budget.

Attachments

1. Albany CARES Annual Report



ANNUAL REPORT

Jan 1, 2020 – Dec 31, 2020

Number of Contacts by Quarter – 2020 (2019 data for comparison)

| | 1 st Quarter | 2 nd Quarter | 3 rd Quarter | 4 th Quarter | 2020 Total | 2019 Total |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Drop In Contacts | 161 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 161 | 436 |
| Other Contacts: email, phone, etc. | 146 | 282 | 179 | 143 | 750 | 403 |
| Total Contacts | 308 | 282 | 179 | 143 | 911 | 839 |

Unduplicated Contacts – 2020 (2019 data for comparison)

| | 2020 | 2019 |
|--|------|------|
| Unduplicated Drop Ins | 64 | 183 |
| Unduplicated Contacts with No Drop In | 280 | 95 |
| Unduplicated Total | 344 | 278 |
| Unduplicated Contacts with Professionals Making Referrals or Needing Information | 21 | 21 |
| Unduplicated CLIENT Contacts | 323 | 257 |

Client Demographics for 323 Unduplicated Clients

| Age | |
|--|-----|
| 80+ | 26 |
| 62-79 | 131 |
| 50-61 | 54 |
| 40-49 | 31 |
| 26-39 | 31 |
| 18-25 | 9 |
| Under 18 | 1 |
| Age unknown | 40 |
| Ethnicity | |
| European American | 86 |
| African American | 38 |
| Asian American | 37 |
| Latinx American | 20 |
| Middle Eastern/North African American | 11 |
| Other | 4 |
| Ethnicity Unknown | 127 |
| City of Residence | |
| Albany | 229 |
| Berkeley | 26 |
| El Cerrito | 17 |
| Oakland | 9 |
| Richmond | 8 |
| Other (SF, San Rafael, Alameda, San Pablo, Martinez, Walnut Creek) | 11 |
| Out of State | 11 |
| Residence Unknown | 12 |
| Housing Situation | |
| Owns | 88 |
| Rents | 91 |
| Homeless | 73 |
| With Family | 15 |
| Other - friend/work exchange/renting room | 8 |
| Housing Situation Unknown | 48 |

Services

| Primary Issue Client Presents | |
|---|-----|
| Housing – Finding Affordable Housing | 120 |
| Financial – Parcel Tax Exemptions, Utility Bills, Rental Assistance | 76 |
| Donations/Concerns about Community | 36 |
| Health Care/Insurance issues | 28 |
| Homecare – Difficulty Living Alone or Finding Assistance | 24 |
| Food Assistance | 15 |
| Legal | 12 |
| Other – Child Care, Employment, just to talk | 12 |
| How Client Heard About CARES Program | |
| Albany Information Hotline (begun 3/2020) | 66 |
| Albany Senior Center | 45 |
| Other City Departments/City Website/Police Department/ | 41 |
| Neighbor/Friend/Family | 32 |
| Showers and Laundry Program/Volunteers | 22 |
| Outreach (Flyers/Street Sign/City Banner) | 22 |
| Alameda County Library/Albany Community Center/CARES Library Stand | 12 |
| Other Agency (School Counselor, UC Berkeley) | 12 |
| Unknown | 72 |
| Assistance Provided | |
| Advice and Referral Only | 126 |
| Referral and Additional Assistance (Research, Contact with Agencies, Paperwork) | 46 |
| Conversation/Information | 133 |
| Unable to Provide Assistance | 18 |

Referrals Made

| We Referred Clients to These Agencies | |
|--|----|
| Albany Project Hope | 32 |
| Subsidized Housing Information | 31 |
| Housing Counseling/Rent Assistance: ECHO Housing, AC Housing Renew, etc | 25 |
| Legal Resources: Bay Area Legal Aid, East Bay Community Law Center, etc | 17 |
| Showers and Food Programs | 15 |
| City Services: Essential Services, Mercy Brown Bag, etc. | 15 |
| Medical and Mental Health Services, Health Insurance Counseling | 14 |
| Homecare Resources: Center for Elder Independence, IHSS, Eldercare Specialists | 12 |
| Adult Protective Services | 8 |
| Employment Development Department | 7 |
| Financial Assistance: EDD, Utility Payments | 6 |
| Donation Centers | 6 |
| Other: UC Resources, 211, Services in Other Counties/Cities | 10 |

