

News

CVAG announces dedication of \$334K annually to homeless program expansion

The initiative was announced last summer.

By:

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PALM DESERT, Calif.- - Expansion plans are in the works for a Coachella Valley program that secures housing for the homeless, following promising results through its first seven months, it was announced today.

CV Housing First was launched last summer by the Coachella Valley Association of Governments and has had a successful start, with 82.6 percent of homeless individuals exiting the program to permanent housing, according to an evaluation by the nonprofit Health Assessment and Research for Communities.

``The independent analysis shows that CV Housing First is working on a regional level," said Coachella Mayor Pro Tem Betty Sanchez, a CVAG Homelessness Committee member. ``We're trying to solve homelessness by focusing our resources on getting people into permanent housing, not just into a shelter."

The program was launched in the western Coachella Valley following the closure of Roy's Desert Resource Center in North Palm Springs before spreading regionwide. The planned expansion includes adding two outreach teams to be deployed throughout the Coachella Valley and new homeless prevention resources, officials said. Outreach teams will connect the homeless with ancillary services, while a new fund will assist with issues preventing people from securing or financially maintaining their current housing situation.

The expansion approved last week by the Homelessness Committee would cost \$334,000 annually, which would be covered by existing resources, according to CVAG.

``The additional services will provide more outreach into our communities, allowing CV Housing First to directly and immediately respond to the needs in each of our cities," said Homelessness Committee member and Palm Springs Councilwoman Christy Holstege. ``We've been utilizing teams like this in Palm Springs, and we can help even more people by expanding the services that help their unique needs."

The CVAG Executive Committee is slated to vote on the scope of the expansion next week.

``We need to stop the cycle of having cities address homelessness by using their law enforcement to pick people up and ship them to another city that has a shelter," Palm Desert Mayor and CVAG Homelessness Committee Chairman Sabby Jonathan said. ``That may solve the problem in one city, but it doesn't work regionally. Increasing the scope of the CV Housing First program will allow us to continue our holistic approach to addressing homelessness."

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