

# **The City's Response to Homelessness**

## **May 2023**

The City utilizes federal, state, county, and local funding to support a diverse group of programs and interventions for people experiencing homelessness and housing instability in Pasadena. Since the 1990s the City of Pasadena has been designated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development as a Continuum of Care (CoC), which is a local planning body for the jurisdiction's homeless response system. The City acts as the legal, fiscal, and administrative entity on behalf of the CoC which itself is a network of service providers and other community stakeholders. The Supportive Housing Division of the Housing Department oversees the Continuum of Care and manages the portfolio of federal, state, and county funds which are allocated to the CoC.

### **Homelessness Prevention**

Homelessness Prevention programs provide short-term assistance for individuals and families who are at imminent risk of homelessness to resolve their housing crisis so that they can maintain their housing or find a suitable housing alternative to avoid becoming homeless. The City was recently awarded \$612,000 in competitive state funding for a family homelessness prevention program and contracted an additional \$300,000 in state funding to two local nonprofits, Friends In Deed and Door of Hope, to provide short-term financial assistance and housing stabilization planning to single adults and families that are at risk of eviction or homelessness in Pasadena. The City also funds the Housing Rights Center to provide legal information and advice as well as limited-scope legal services to Pasadena residents at risk of homelessness.

### **Permanent Supportive Housing**

Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) is an effective intervention for formerly chronically homeless individuals and families who are highly vulnerable, living with a disabling condition, and need long-term support to live stably in their communities. The City allocates approximately \$3.5 million in grant funding annually to fund rental subsidies and intensive supportive services for individuals, families and young adults in Pasadena. Currently, the Housing Department directly funds eight different permanent supportive housing programs. These programs include three site-based programs at specific buildings and five scattered-site programs that offer rental assistance to participants who lease apartments throughout the community. In addition to directly administering two rental assistance programs, the City is contracted with Union Station Homeless Services, Step Up on Second Street, Pacific Clinics and Housing Works to operate PSH programs. Additionally, two new permanent housing units are in the pipeline and are expected to open in 2023. These new projects include Heritage Square South, which will provide 69 units for seniors aged 55 and older, and The Salvation Army's HOPE Center, which will provide 65 units for people experiencing chronic homelessness, including 16 units for veterans.

In 2022, 310 people experiencing homelessness in Pasadena were permanently housed, an increase from 277 in 2021. This number includes people who were housed through PSH and RRH programs, as well as other types of permanent housing.

### **Rapid Rehousing**

Rapid Rehousing (RRH) is a strategy that quickly rehuses people experiencing homelessness, through time-limited financial assistance and targeted supportive services.

Pasadena funds Union Station Homeless Services to lead this housing intervention for single adults and families and funds Volunteers of America Los Angeles to operate an RRH program for domestic violence survivors. In 2022, the City was awarded over \$200,000 in competitive federal grant funds to expand Volunteers of America's DV RRH project and over \$500,000 in grant funding annually supports these programs.

## **Mainstream and Emergency Housing Vouchers**

The Housing Department is in the process of administering 75 Mainstream vouchers and 109 Emergency Housing Vouchers, which collectively are being prioritized for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. The Department paired federal grant-funded supportive services with the Mainstream vouchers to create the MOVE Program. Services include housing location, financial assistance for move-in costs including security deposits and landlord incentives, and up to two years of housing stabilization case management to support rapid moves to permanent housing and long-term housing retention.

## **Emergency Shelter**

Emergency shelter provides temporary accommodations for people experiencing homelessness which does not require occupants to sign leases or occupancy agreements. Crisis housing, bridge housing, and motel vouchers are all forms of emergency shelter. The City has two year-round congregate emergency shelters, one which serves single adults and transitional aged youth and a second which serves families with minor children. Additionally, Pasadena coordinates and funds a network of weather-activated winter programs which provide motel vouchers on cold or wet nights from December to March. In 2022, the Housing Department contracted nearly \$700,000 among several local homeless service providers as well as the Public Health Department for motel vouchers and in 2023 the City Council committed \$300,000 in General Fund to support weather-activated motel vouchers.

## **Street Outreach**

Pasadena has six city-funded dedicated local outreach teams that collectively work to cover 100% of the City's geographic area, with the primary goal of quickly identifying and engaging people experiencing unsheltered homelessness. The City currently funds Friends In Deed, Union Station Homeless Services, and Housing Works to provide outreach services focusing on people who are the hardest to engage and who often have the longest experiences of homelessness. Additionally, the City's Public Health, Police, and Fire Departments are directly involved with providing outreach services. Multiple regional outreach teams also serve Pasadena, including a team that works with Huntington Hospital to target high utilizers of the ER, a multi-disciplinary team which provides street medicine services, and a team that operates on the L Line trains (formerly the Gold Line). The City commits an estimated \$300,000 annually to support street outreach programs.

## **HOPE Team**

The Pasadena Police Department and the L.A. County Department of Mental Health collaborate to pair specially trained police officers with licensed mental health clinicians to form three Homeless Outreach Psychiatric Evaluation (HOPE) teams. These teams provide crisis intervention to address the immediate mental health needs of people experiencing homelessness. Additionally, the HOPE Teams are supported by two Homeless Services Liaisons, staffed by Union Station Homeless Services, who facilitate linkages to shelter and housing resources. The HOPE Team is funded through the Police Department at \$982,000 in FY24 and the Housing Department also commits \$199,000 per year to support the team.

## **PORT**

In partnership with the Fire Department, Union Station Homeless Services and Huntington Hospital, the Public Health Department's Pasadena Outreach Response Team (PORT) implements a field-based approach to engage, assess and serve people experiencing homelessness with severe mental illness, substance use disorders, physical disabilities and chronic health conditions. PORT has a unique cross-sector approach that includes a case manager, social worker, registered nurse, firefighter, and peer navigator. In 2021, PORT expanded to include a second team and also began responding to non-emergency calls made to the Police Department regarding people experiencing homelessness in lieu of an armed officer response. Both PORT teams are estimated to cost \$1 million annually and are funded through the Public Health and Fire Departments.

## **Pasadena Public Health Department Programs**

The Pasadena Public Health Department's Social and Mental Health Division administer the Geriatric Empowerment Model (GEM) Link program, which provides older adults (ages 60+) with case management, housing navigation, and services to meet basic needs such as showers, laundry, food and clothing. PPHD also provides these services to youth between the ages of 18 and 24 through its Transitional Aged Youth (TAY) Link program. The department also staffs a care coordinator who conducts outreach at various library branches to provide linkages to resources for people experiencing homelessness, including those with chronic health conditions and/or mental health and substance use disorders. These two grant-funded programs are budgeted at \$2.3 million/year.

## **Housing Locators**

In order to reduce the average length of time people experience homelessness and increase the utilization of housing resources, the City funds a Housing Locator program at Union Station Homeless Services to identify available units for households who are enrolled in Pasadena-funded PSH and RRH programs. The primary role of housing locators is to engage, recruit, and establish relationships with landlords and property management companies in and around Pasadena to improve access to and availability of permanent housing. The Housing Department also recently hired a full-time Housing Liaison who will provide similar services to support the lease up of the City's allocation of Emergency Housing Vouchers.

## **Landlord Incentives**

The City administers a Homeless Incentives Program (HIP) that provides financial incentives to private landlords who rent available units to rental assistance voucher holders who are experiencing homelessness. Incentives include holding fees, move-in assistance, vacancy loss payments, and damage claims.

## **Pasadena Department of Transportation (DOT) Public Transit Support**

DOT, in coordination with Friends In Deed and the Housing Department, supports local weather-activated shelter programs by providing fare free transportation on Pasadena Dial-A-Ride for individuals 60 years or older or those who have a disability to participating shelter locations in our service area. Dial-A-Ride has also been providing either free transportation to the Foothill Unity Food Bank or direct delivery of food to seniors who may be at imminent risk of homelessness and rely on local food banks. DOT also supported the Housing Department's Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) Program participants by providing them with a transportation subsidy which allows them to use public transportation for free to search for housing. The City of Pasadena's local fixed-route services, Pasadena Transit, also participates in the regional Low Income Fare is Easy (LIFE)

program which provides transportation subsidies to participants allowing them to obtain Pasadena Transit passes for free.