

THE QUARTERLY UPDATE

October- December 2021

Welcome to our Office of Care Coordination winter edition. Inside are updates on Orange County's Emergency Housing Voucher program and the work of our Continuum of Care and the Commission to End Homelessness. As we prepare for our 2022 Point in Time (PIT) Count, please find included details about how to volunteer and PIT count resources.

Everyone Counts - Change of Date for 2022 Point In Time Count

The Office of Care Coordination has received an exception from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to conduct the 2022 Point In Time (PIT) Count during the last 10 days of February. The Orange County 2022 PIT Count will conduct the sheltered count the night of Monday, February 21, 2022, and the unsheltered count starting the morning of Tuesday, February 22 through Thursday, February 24. The unsheltered count will count one Service Planning Area per day, which will include both an early morning and late evening shift.



**EVERYONE
COUNTS**

In coming to the decision to request an exception from HUD to conduct the 2022 PIT Count during the last 10 days of February, the Office of Care Coordination, which serves as the administrative lead for the Orange County Continuum of Care (CoC), consulted the County's Public Health Services, key community stakeholders and neighboring CoCs. Ultimately, the decision to request an exception was due to the ongoing COVID-19 surge related to the Omicron variant. The Office of Care Coordination understands the value of the data obtained through the PIT, including the impact on local planning efforts and funding sources, therefore the office wants to ensure an accurate count is conducted with the proper staffing and volunteers needed. As such, delaying the 2022 PIT Count to the last ten days of February will hopefully allow for the COVID-19 surge to pass and provide the necessary support for a robust and accurate unsheltered count.

For additional information about the 2022 Point in Time Count, including details on how to volunteer please visit:
<https://www.everyonecountsoc.org/>.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please email the Office of Care Coordination at carecoordination@ochca.com. Questions or comments can also be direct to Info@everyonecountsoc.org.

Director of Care Coordination Update

We are pleased to announce Doug Becht has accepted the position of Director of Care Coordination with the Office of Care Coordination in the Health Care Agency.

In his new role, Doug will oversee the Office of Care Coordination's engagement across Orange County, its work with cities and community-based organizations to strengthen regional capacity and multi-city, multi-sector investments to prevent and address homelessness, coordinate public and private resources to meet the needs of the homeless population in Orange County and promote integration of services throughout the community that improve the countywide response to homelessness.

Doug will also serve as the Director of the Commission to End Homelessness.



Doug has dedicated his career to the pursuit of ending homelessness, with extensive experience working in the homeless services field both in Southern California and New York City. After receiving his Masters in Social Work from Columbia University, he entered the homeless services sector as a line supervisor overseeing an homeless street outreach team in the Bronx. At the end of his time in New York, he served as an Assistant Vice President at a large nonprofit organization and was responsible for overseeing shelters and street homeless outreach in Brooklyn, Queens and Midtown Manhattan. Before joining the HCA, Doug was a Senior Program Manager at the Corporation of Supportive Housing providing permanent supportive housing and MHSA (Mental Health Services Act) technical assistance to the Counties of San Diego and Orange.

Doug joined the HCA in 2020, serving in the roles of Director of Operations as well as Acting Director for the Office of Care Coordination. In his time with the Agency, he has assisted in policy creation and execution of the County's approach to addressing homelessness in the community, led the County's data integration project called the Care Plus Program, and provided oversight to the procuring, contracting and administration of over 40 contracts that the Office holds with a variety of nonprofit agencies in the efforts to address homelessness in Orange County.

Doug holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Manhattan College and a Master of Social Work degree from Columbia University. He currently lives in Orange County with his wife and two boys (ages 3 and 4).

Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) Update

On May 5, 2021, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) allocated approximately 70,000 emergency housing vouchers (EHV) to public housing authorities via the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. Of these 70,000 vouchers, Orange County Continuum of Care (OC CoC) was provided an allocation of 1,035 across the housing authorities in Orange County (Anaheim Housing Authority, Garden Grove Housing Authority, Orange County Housing Authority, and Santa Ana Housing Authority). According to Notice PIH 2021-15, the eligible populations are people who are experiencing homelessness, at risk of experiencing homelessness, fleeing or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking or human trafficking, or were recently homeless and for whom providing rental assistance will prevent homelessness or having high risk of housing instability.

Referrals to the EHV's are facilitated through the Orange County Coordinated Entry System (CES) with priority for households with the longest lengths of homelessness and the greatest vulnerabilities. To date, 487 households in Orange County have received a voucher and are currently searching for housing. Every applicant is paired with a housing service provider. The housing service providers assist EHV applicants with housing navigation services, move in costs and housing stabilization services. The Office of Care Coordination would like to thank every CES Access Point, housing service provider and public housing authority for their support and coordination through this process.

Eligible households that are interested in receiving a referral to any of the CES housing opportunities, including but not limited to the EHV's, can contact 2-1-1 to receive a referral to a CES Access Point.

Project Toolbelt and Project Homekey

As of the end of November 2021, Project Toolbelt, one of the County of Orange's COVID-19 homelessness response programs, provided services to 606 program participants. Project Toolbelt engages individuals experiencing homelessness who accessed Project Roomkey, with the goal of connecting them to appropriate housing opportunities by using the 'every tool in the tool belt' approach. Of the total 606 participants in Project Toolbelt, 357 have already been supported to obtain permanent housing and work continues with the other participants.

As of the end of November, 127 Project Toolbelt participants have successfully transitioned into the Homekey Program. The Homekey Program provides non-congregate shelter to individuals experiencing homelessness who are at high-risk for severe COVID-19 illness due to age and/or underlying health conditions. The Homekey Program is at full capacity and provides interim housing to 132 program participants. Since November 2020 to date, the Homekey Program has served 219 participants, with 62% of exits to permanent housing.

Continuum of Care Notice of Funding Opportunity Update

The annual Continuum of Care (CoC) Program Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) was released by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) on August 18, 2021. Incorporating a two-tiered ranking system and competitive application process, HUD invites Continuums of Care from across the nation to apply to federal funding for new and renewal permanent housing projects focused on serving individuals and families experiencing homelessness, Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), Coordinated Entry System (CES) and planning grants.

The Office of Care Coordination as the Collaborative Applicant of the Orange County CoC released an application for renewal funding to current CoC funded agencies, along with two Requests for Proposals for new projects that fell under either a CoC Bonus project or Domestic Violence (DV) project category. Four experienced service providers submitted applications for new projects, leveraging health care and housing resources and incorporating evidence-based practices, and were approved by the CoC Board for inclusion in the CoC NOFO application. The Office of Care Coordination successfully submitted the consolidated application for the FY2021 CoC NOFO on Monday, November 15, 2021, in the total amount of \$32,379,780, which included 29 new and renewal projects proposed by twelve different service providers in Orange County. This funding will renew and hopefully expand the capacity of Orange County's homeless response system and allow for a variety of service model approaches to be offered to individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

Continuum of Care Trainings

In an effort to provide learning opportunities and support to service providers in Orange County, the Office of Care Coordination hosted four virtual trainings in the last quarter:

- **Equal Access Final Rule and Gender Identity Final Rule:** Dr. Deme Hill provided a training on the Equal Access Final Rule and Gender Identity Final Rule established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Through this training, service providers learned how to effectively implement HUD's Equal Access Rules to ensure fair housing and shelter opportunities for those experiencing homelessness. This training aligned with the Orange County Continuum of Care's adoption of an Anti-Discrimination Policy and provided some technical guidance on how to best implement and provide a welcoming environment.
- **Best Practices for serving LGBTQ+ Persons:** Joel Gemino from the LGBTQ Center in Long Beach facilitated a training on best practices for LGBTQ+ individuals, focusing on how service providers can incorporate trauma-informed care into service delivery, ensure safe and welcoming spaces for LGBTQ+ persons and utilize tools that promote equity in service provision.
- **Domestic Violence for Service Providers:** In October, in honor of Domestic Violence Awareness Month, Human Options, Inc. provided a training on understanding and best practice in domestic violence. This covered safety planning and trauma-informed practices in supporting survivors of domestic violence.
- **Mainstream Benefits:** The Office of Care Coordination in partnership with the OC Social Services Agency (SSA) hosted a training to provide information on eligibility requirements and enrollment process for CalFresh, Medical, CalWorks, and General Relief. This training provided an opportunity for discussion on eligibility criteria as well as benefit determination processes.

The Office of Care Coordination plans to provide consistent training offerings relevant to emerging best practices and service provider requests.

Commission to End Homelessness Update

The Commission to End Homelessness has identified and is reviewing four pillars related to the homeless system of care, which includes prevention, outreach & supportive services, shelters, and housing. The review for each pillar includes identifying the current service landscape, defining the goals of each service area and establishing a set of principles based on best practice recommendations. This will provide a framework to recommend to the Commission and adoption by the Orange County Board of Supervisors. The Commission is currently reviewing the second pillar identifying best practices and guiding principles around outreach to guide priorities and future programming. Once the Commission has worked through all four pillars, a report on the homeless system of care will come back to the Board for review and adoption. The best practices and guiding principles will then be incorporated into the work of the Office of Care Coordination and shared with community stakeholders.

Please visit the **Commission to End Homelessness**.

Orange County Cold Weather Shelter

Volunteers of America, in partnership with The County of Orange, opened the Orange County Cold Weather Emergency Shelter on Wednesday, December 1, 2021 (Location: 612 E. Warner, Santa Ana, CA 92703, **walk-ups are not permitted and this program is for adults 18 and older ONLY**). Participants are provided transportation to and from the shelter site from the pick up locations listed below and onsite services include a warm meal and access to restrooms.

BUS PICK-UP LOCATIONS:



Pick Up#1

Arriving at 4:15p.m. Departing at 4:30p.m.

Flower & Civic Center, Santa Ana. On Flower (east side of street), between 6th and Civic Center Drive.

Pick Up#2

Arriving at 5:15p.m. Departing at 5:30 p.m. On Walnut near 1st Street (across the street from the Social Services Agency).

Participants are required to wear a mask while indoors and maintain physical distance from others. No weapons, drugs or alcohol are permitted in or around the shelter. For more details, contact the cold weather emergency shelter site: (626) 442-4357.

For more information on the work of the Office of Care Coordination,
please contact carecoordination@ochca.com



Office of
CARE COORDINATION