

Central Coast Collaborative on Homelessness (C3H)

Overview

The Central Coast Collaborative on Homelessness (C3H) is a countywide program that works in partnership with community stakeholder groups to minimize the impacts of homelessness.

Challenge

Santa Barbara County has a high rate of homelessness and among individuals without housing, many that are considered high in vulnerability, living on the streets. C3H directly speaks to this challenge in their purpose statement: Harness all resources available to reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness, as well as minimize the impacts of homelessness in Santa Barbara County. In the year 2011, countywide volunteers gathered to conduct a point in time count of homeless individuals and a vulnerability index in Santa Barbara County in order to determine how many homeless are living in the county and how to prioritize the most vulnerable people for housing. 1,536 individuals were identified. Sixteen percent of people surveyed had been formerly involved with the foster care system, 33 percent had experienced domestic violence and 57 percent said they had been victims of violence or trauma while living on the streets. C3H has played a key role in using this information to reduce homelessness countywide through multi-agency community collaboration.

Innovation Solution

The goals of C3H were developed to address the above challenge – to prevent homelessness, support the expansion of housing for the homeless, build a results and data-driven culture, elevate community dialogue, support, and collaborate regarding homelessness and encouraging commitment to self-sufficiency.

C3H has coordinated regional groups throughout the county, in a variety of communities, to address the homeless needs unique to the respective communities and to focus on projects that can expand housing. For example, working with landlords to line up tenant housing as well as working with local businesses to identified homeless in need and to link them to housing.

Knowing that creative ways would be needed to increase housing options, a landlord liaison program, modeled after a program in Seattle which relies on a contractual relationship between social service agencies and landlords, was developed.

Originality

C3H works in partnership with a broad group of service providers and stakeholders, including government agencies, non-profit organizations, business leaders, foundations, faith communities, and volunteers, to harness all resources available to reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness, as well as minimize the impacts of homelessness in Santa Barbara County.

The outcome data of the program speaks largely to the impact of the originality of the design of C3H. C3H organizes itself with an efficient and effective organizational structure which has sustained itself since the program inception. The collaboration of C3H has dramatically reduced homelessness and 2015 data showed that 94 percent of the people housed were still housed a year later.

Cost Effectiveness

On an operating budget of approximately \$300,000, C3H coordinates a sophisticated and effective organizational leadership and operational structure. C3H organizes through a Policy Council, Executive Oversight Committee with membership appointments occurring through the Policy Council, and Regional Coordination. The Executive Committee of C3H oversees the daily operations of the organizations and includes members from the City of Santa Barbara, Board of Supervisor representation, Housing Authority of the City of Santa Barbara, County of Santa Barbara Executive Office, Dignity Health and United Way of Northern Santa Barbara County. C3H works with community partners in seven regions -- Buellton/Santa Ynez; Carpinteria; Goleta; Isla Vista; Lompoc; Santa Barbara; and Santa Maria. In each region, members of nonprofit support organizations, city staff, county officials, law enforcement, business leaders, volunteers, and homeless advocates work together to identify needs, gaps in services, and ultimately, to create a list of potential clients to house.

Results

C3H tracks the effectiveness of their program through data collection on people who are homeless and found homes through the support of the program. The data tracking not only measures the success of the program in reducing the number of individuals living on the streets who are now living in homes, but also helps to allocate resources across the county. Between January and April of 2016, 141 individuals were housed through the work of C3H. Of the 141 housed, 45 were children, 41 were veterans, 47 were considered vulnerable (17 from those identified on the county homeless vulnerability index) and 23 were families. Santa Barbara County is proud of and greatly fortunate for the work of C3H and the impact it is making in the lives of so many living within our community.

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