

WENDY THOMAS

3101 Center Street
Placerville, California 95667

August 14, 2017

To: El Dorado County Board of Supervisors
RE: **ITEM 17-0741 Presentation of EDOK**

Dear Honorable Members of the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors,

I am writing in support of the new and improved Continuum of Care that is being developed and implemented in El Dorado County as part of the Opportunity Knocks initiative. As you know, a strong collaborative comprised of the non-profit and faith community, law enforcement, homeless advocates as well as City and County representatives embarked on a comprehensive process to effectively address homelessness in El Dorado County. Our timeframe was propitious.

Across the country, communities are developing robust Continuums of Care and Coordinated Entry Systems in coordination with HUD requirements. One of the most important things to understand is that CoCs focus on data-informed programs that are proven to produce the highest exits from homelessness when these programs are part of a coordinated system. That coordinated system is exactly what EDOK (*El Dorado Opportunity Knocks*) is all about.

We know that resources come or go over time, however, through an effective system working to coordinate whatever resources are available, El Dorado County can maximize its ability to effectively address homelessness in our region while reducing the cost of service. In addition, service will be streamlined and targeted because it will be based on current and accurate data; we won't just throw taxpayer's money at a problem we don't understand.

It is my privilege to serve as the City of Placerville's representative on EDOK, and from what I have seen over the past year, building coordinated entry systems is hard work. I want to make sure we all acknowledge that. It doesn't happen overnight, and there are no short cuts. The CoC and all community partners will need to continue to overcome barriers, break down silos, engage in respectful collaboration and problem solve at the local level. County and City support will be a critical piece to this.

While developing an effective CoC is daunting, it is important to understand that we aren't alone. All communities encounter challenges with these efforts, including bringing early efforts to scale, financing the system on an ongoing basis, and overcoming the limitations of current homeless data systems. While the challenges to getting there are real, the benefits of developing an effective system in this community will be worth the effort. A robust CoC program can save us money at a local level, make our community efforts to address homelessness more effective and sustainable while making a positive impact on the businesses and individual lives in Placerville and El Dorado County.

Thank you for your support of this ongoing effort.

With gratitude,



Wendy Thomas
Vice Mayor, City of Placerville