

June 13th Forum

Comment Cards

- i. How are you going to prevent toxic verbal abuse to our presenters (homeless speakers)?
- ii. Why can't we speed up using the Sheriff's proposed area (which provides maximum safety) for our 80 – 90 homeless women and emergency safe parking for women and children sleeping in their cars?

a) - Because adjacent to the jail is not a very attractive place for our homeless neighbors to be. I have asked numerous homeless folks about this and their response is that they wouldn't go because they do everything they can to stay away from law enforcement. - This is a way to criminalize homelessness'.

b) The only formal plan put forth by the Sheriff's office that we are aware of was the "Hostess" plan, which did not include a safe parking component. However, the CoC is currently working to procure funding to work toward a safe parking option for families living in their vehicles.

c) The BOS recently took action on the development of a Navigation Center, to be developed on the County campus in Placerville. This project was established per BOS direction. To date, while there has been some ongoing references to ideas regarding the use of the property adjacent to the jail, the Sheriff has not presented a plan to the Board of Supervisors during a public item, as to how to utilize the property adjacent to the jail for any program type. It is possible at a future date that this presentation may occur.

- iii. How much money has El Dorado County received from the State? What percentage goes toward housing? What percentage goes toward services, etc.?

b) This question would need to be addressed by the County Offices.

c) On August 31, 2021, HHSA presented a homelessness update to the BOS. This slide below reflects a breakdown of the funds that were shared during that presentation, as a part of that powerpoint. Any other inquiries as to how funds are being utilized can be accessed on the August 31st 2021 powerpoint that was presented. Since that update, another allocation beyond this that was received in FY 2021-2022 was the HHAP3 grant (Homeless Housing Assistance Program). An additional amount of approximately \$1.8million was received as part of HHAP3.

- iv. What are the benefits of?
 - a. Harm Reduction
 - b. Housing First
 - c. Strength-Based Help

ba) Harm Reduction – “*Harm reduction plays a significant role in preventing drug-related deaths and offering access to healthcare, social services, and treatment. These services decrease overdose fatalities, acute life-threatening infections related to unsterile drug injection, and chronic diseases such as HIV/HCV*” (US Department of Health and Human Services, <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/harm-reduction>, 10/2022).

a. Housing First – “*...There is a large evidence base demonstrating that Housing First is an effective solution to homelessness. Consumers in a Housing First model access housing faster and are more likely to remain stably housed, and systems see many benefits when using the Housing First model. Providing access to housing generally results in cost savings for communities because housed people are less likely to use emergency services, including hospitals, jails, and emergency shelter, than those who are homeless*” (National Alliance to End Homelessness, https://endhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Housing-First-Fact-Sheet_Aug-2022.pdf, 10/2022).

b. Strength-Based Help – “*Strengths-based education is a learner-centered approach to teaching that helps students identify, articulate and apply their individual skills relevant to their learning needs. Based on research from social work, positive psychology and business, a strengths-based approach can help build student confidence, encourage efficacious behaviors, and support life-long learning pursuits*” (National Education Association, <https://www.nea.org/advocating-for-change/new-from-nea/new-focus-strength-based-learning#:~:text=%E2%80%9CStrengths%2Dbased%20education%20is%20a,relevant%20to%20their%20learning%20needs>, 10/2022).

c. Housing First is a programmatic approach designed to help chronically homeless families and individuals move more quickly off the streets or out of the shelter system. Housing First employs crisis intervention, rapid access to housing, follow-up case management and support services to prevent the recurrence of homelessness. What differentiates a Housing First approach from traditional emergency shelter or Transitional Housing models is the immediate and primary focus on helping homeless families and individuals quickly access and then sustain housing. Housing First is designed to respond to the most acute need of chronically homeless individuals with disabilities—*housing*—and through the provision of housing, to respond to the other services the participant may need to maintain housing stability and to improve their level of health and functioning.

v. What is the long-term plan for those identified with mental illness and/or drug addiction?

a) - The plan is for "Housing First" with supportive services to help people with their mental health, substance abuse needs, employment opportunities and benefits access.

b) These questions would best be addressed to County Behavioral Health.

vi. Safety was a major theme of all the speakers, why did Daniel del Monte say they (homeless) would not feel comfortable if they were housed next to the county jail? Please explain.

a) - see answer to #2

b) We cannot speak for Daniel del Monte.

c) Comments about this were specific to the Court ruling in *Martin v. City of Boise*. The Plaintiffs, who were homeless, filed suit against the City of Boise seeking retrospective relief for their

previous citations under the Camping Ordinance and Disorderly Conduct Ordinance. The court held that an ordinance violates the Eighth Amendment insofar as it imposes criminal sanctions against homeless individuals for sleeping outdoors, on public property, when no reasonable shelter is available to them. The courts held that the Cruel and Unusual Punishments Clause of the Eighth Amendment precluded the enforcement of a statute prohibiting sleeping outside against homeless individuals with no access to reasonable shelter. The panel held that, as long as there is no option of sleeping indoors, the government cannot criminalize homeless persons for sleeping outdoors, on public property, on the false premise they had a choice in the matter. In communicating with peer Counties and Cities in California that have settled or have been sued under the 9th Circuit Court ruling for Martin v. Boise, feedback was consistent that placing a program next to a jail would not be effective in building trust with the homeless population, therefore it would likely be ineffective at being considered a 'reasonable' option – consistent with court ruling. This feedback has been consistent, as well, from professional providers across our region who have served homeless populations in shelters.

- vii. I would like to hear from the homeless, how they feel about the Sheriff's offer to set up secure structures for individuals, couples, and families, by the jail which provides for meals, showers, restrooms and offers a program for drug recovery and services to get back into the work force to get benefits they are due all at one place.

b) I would like to hear from the homeless

- viii. Today, we have heard a lot of feelings, opinions, and conjecture about the local homeless population, where are the facts? The actual number of homeless in our County? What are the costs of these services?

a) - Our last Point in Time Count was in 2019 with 619 folks in El Dorado county and 80% of them /495 on the Western Slope

- We are awaiting the results of our recent 2022 Point in Time Count that will hopefully be available this fall.

- c) Without knowing specifically what facts and services the writer is referencing it is challenge to respond to the question. The "actual" number for those experiencing unsheltered homelessness is calculated through the process of the HUD prescribed "Point in Time" count. The numbers from the most recent count will be released by the county when they have been verified through HUD. Prior year counts can be found at www.edokcoc.org

The 2022 Point in Time Count will come out over the next month or so, and it will be released by the El Dorado Opportunity Knocks Continuum of Care. This will provide a snapshot of the homeless population, specific to numbers, at the point in time in which the Count was conducted (earlier in 2022)

- ix. How is this plan better at reducing El Dorado County homelessness than the El Dorado County Sheriff's plan?

a) - The Sheriff's Plan is not eligible for State or Federal funding.

- Adjacent to the jail is not an appropriate place for our Navigation Center/Shelter.

x. Please provide actual number of homeless folks in El Dorado County—the percentage are not helpful without actual counts.

a) - See #8

b) Any discussion surrounding plans for services must be grounded in meeting the requirements of the funders who will be supporting such plans. Current plans being proposed all meet the funders stipulations.

c) The 2022 Point in Time Count will come out over the next month or so, and it will be released by the El Dorado Opportunity Knocks Continuum of Care.

It's worth noting that people come in and out of homelessness every day and week, and therefore there is never a 'fixed' number of residents facing homelessness. The PIT Count provides a 'snapshot' of homelessness on a given day, and it is widely considered one of the more accurate 'measuring sticks' as to how homelessness keeps evolving, overtime. It shouldn't be considered a 'fixed number,' but rather it can be used to see how homelessness has evolved, bi annually, by conducting a 'homeless census' on a consistent basis. Because the PIT Count is done the same way, every two years, while making improvements in the approach based upon each experience, it is the most accurate way to compare these 'snapshot' statistics between counties across California. There is no other homeless count conducted in our Country or State that is done the same way across all jurisdictions, and therefore – while this Count should not be considered the 'true number of homeless persons,' it should be considered a valuable piece of 'snapshot information' as to how homelessness has evolved locally when compared to other jurisdictions.

xi. Where is the compassion for the homeowners, school children and business owners that have been negatively affected by the crime that is created by unfettered use of illegal drugs that are perpetuated by our State's liberal policies?

a) - There is compassion - that is why we need a Navigation Center, shelter and increased supportive and affordable housing. That will help get people off the streets.

- People who are committing crimes should be handled by law enforcement but then helped to become self sufficient and not just released to the streets.

b) Our hope is that working together we can achieve a solution that upholds the El Dorado County Government's Vision of a..." *Safe, healthy and vibrant communities, respecting our natural resources and historical heritage*", the Continuum of Care's Strategic Plan Vision, "*That all individuals and families in El Dorado County have equal access to community resources and safe and affordable housing*" and EDCOE's Vision to, "...provide excellence in education for the 21st century through quality service to school districts, students, parents and community, while promoting educational excellence for all learners..."

xii. Can you address the horrible trash problems the homeless can and do create?

a) - It is very difficult when homeless people have no place to put their trash and don't have a waste collection service to take it away.

- We have trash on the highway that is picked up by volunteer groups to keep it clean - that is not from homeless folks. I have people dropping off big items of trash like appliances, couches on my street instead of taking their items to the dump.

- Again if you don't have a place to live and someone to collect your trash - then it just builds up.

- It would be good to enlist homeless folks in efforts to clean up trash. I have seen programs where people would get gift cards for their help.