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CITY OF PASO ROBLES

HOMELESS SERVICES OVERSIGHT COUNCIL

March 16, 2015

Jim App
City Manager
City of Paso Robles
1000 Spring Street
Paso Robles, CA 93446

Dear Mr. App,

Each year, the San Luis Obispo County community serves over 2,000 homeless individuals and families through funding for shelter and housing, case management, supportive services, eviction prevention, and assistance with security deposits and first month's rent. Many of these services are paid for through special grants awarded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and administered by San Luis Obispo County's Department of Planning and Building; including the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) and the Continuum of Care (CoC) Grant. These two grants alone provide nearly \$1.2M in funding for homeless services annually.

Every two years, as a condition of receiving homeless assistance funding from HUD, our community is required to conduct a visual count and survey of sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons in San Luis Obispo County. The most recent Count was conducted in January 2015. The total cost for the Count will be \$50,000. This cost includes the costs of statistical experts who designed the study to be consistent with HUD methodological standards, development and provision of trainings, required survey component design, and data analysis. The cost also includes small stipends for currently and formerly homeless persons who served as guides or surveyors, to help increase the accuracy of the Count. Lastly, we asked our contractor to make a change in the way the Count was conducted this year, so we would be able to provide the incorporated cities with information on the number of homeless persons counted within their city limits on the night of the Count. Data from the Count is expected to be available by May.

The Homeless Services Oversight Council (HSOC), which is responsible for overseeing the bi-annual Count, has committed \$15,000 and the County has committed \$15,000 for the project. The HSOC has voted to ask each city within the county to share in the cost for the remaining \$15,000. Specifically, we are asking each city to contribute \$2,143 to help support this project. HUD has recently begun using the Count data to measure the performance of our region's Continuum of Care for homeless persons. Conducting this bi-annual Count is key to ensuring that our local area continues to receive federal funding for homeless services every year.

In addition to the Count being required for our community to qualify for HUD's homeless assistance funding, data from the Count is used for a variety of other purposes, including public policy and for providing data that many cities use to complete federal and state housing plans and elements. This year's Count will, as noted above, include a city specific count for each of the incorporated cities.

We are asking that cities help pay a portion of the costs of the Count because they receive a benefit from the Count and from the services provided to homeless persons as a result of performing the Count and qualifying for HUD funding. Homelessness in our County is a significant issue and can only be addressed by working together as a region.

If it would be helpful, County Staff would be available to provide a presentation to you or your City Council about the purpose and importance of the Homeless Count. If you have any questions or would like to schedule a presentation, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Laurel Weir". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Laurel Weir
Homeless Services Coordinator
San Luis Obispo County Department of Social Services