

NEWS

From the County of San Bernardino
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 25, 2007

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Supervisors form partnership to end homelessness

Responding to a dramatic rise in homelessness in San Bernardino County, the Board of Supervisors today formed the San Bernardino County Homeless Partnership and created four staff positions to develop solution-oriented programs and policy initiatives that will eliminate the root causes of homelessness.

A census conducted this year showed 7,331 homeless people in the county, an increase of more than 39 percent since 2003. The census showed the loss of a job, substance abuse, family upheaval and housing issues as the leading causes of homelessness in the county.

The partnership will provide leadership in creating a comprehensive countywide network of service delivery to the homeless and near homeless families and individuals through facilitating better communication, planning, coordination, and cooperation among all entities that provide services and/or resources for the relief of homelessness in San Bernardino County.

The county created the Homeless Coalition in 1992 and has provided millions of dollars in support to the coalition, which has functioned under the Community Action Partnership of San Bernardino County.

Fifth District County Supervisor Josie Gonzales, realizing that more could be accomplished under direct county leadership and a broader partnership, led the effort to create the new San Bernardino County Homeless Partnership.

"This partnership increases the opportunity and strengthens our efforts to resolve homelessness in San Bernardino County," Supervisor Gonzales said."

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“Capitalizing on existing resources and pooling services offered by county departments, cities and local agencies will enable us to effectively address the needs of every segment of our homeless population,” Gonzales said.

The new partnership created today by the Board of Supervisors will also provide a forum and environment where collaborative public-private programs can evolve, which either improve the current delivery of services to the homeless, or fill identified gaps in the homeless services network in San Bernardino County.

The partnership will utilize strategic thinking, wide-ranging experience, and expertise to prevent and address long-term homelessness with the goal of ending chronic homelessness through proven, cost effective solutions such as prevention and supportive housing.

The membership of the partnership will be composed of representatives of the following organizations and individuals:

- County Departments
- County Superintendent of Schools
- City Mayors/City Administrators
- Community Action Partnership of San Bernardino County
- Housing Authority of San Bernardino County
- 211-Inland Empire United Way
- Homeless Service Provider Network
- School Systems/Universities
- Non-Profit Organizations
- Faith-Based Organizations
- Funders/Advocacy Groups
- Businesses
- Hospitals/Medical Representatives
- Homeless/Formerly Homeless Persons

The four new county staff positions will provide administrative support for the partnership and will report to the Assistant County Administrator for Human Services within the County Administrative Office.

“This partnership brings everyone to the table to find solutions,” said Board of Supervisors Chairman Paul Biane. “We’re reaching out to our schools, our nonprofits, our businesses, our churches, our homeless population and other stakeholders to help develop programs that can and will make a difference in people’s lives.”