



Staff Report

TO: City Council
FROM: Sean Thuilliez, Chief of Police
DATE January 18, 2022
SUBJECT: Homeless Outreach Approach for Beaumont

Background and Analysis:

Homelessness exists in virtually every community across the nation including the City of Beaumont. According to a recent estimate, there are approximately 1,600 homeless individuals living in Riverside County on any given day. Many homeless suffer from various conditions, such as mental illness and substance abuse that limit their abilities to seek resources on their own. The homeless population is also more prone to be victimized by criminal activity and less likely to report their abuse to police.

The Beaumont Police Department's (BPD) Homeless Outreach Program liaisons with other agencies of Riverside County as well as the Riverside County Continuum of Care Network (COC). The COC consists of private and countywide public sector homeless service providers and was created to promote community-wide planning and the strategic use of resources to address homelessness.

The Homeless Outreach Team is tasked with identifying homeless individuals throughout the community of Beaumont and to help coordinate the delivery of resources available to homeless individuals throughout the Pass Area, focusing on those most at risk and to include the homeless veteran population.

The program works alongside members of Riverside County's Department of Public Social Services (DPSS), Department of Public Health and local public safety partners to effectively engage homeless individuals coming into contact with law enforcement and the criminal justice system.

For several years the BPD has been assisting the homeless population within the City of Beaumont. However, since July 15, 2017, members of the BPD comprised of Patrol, Community Oriented Policing and Problem Solving (COPPS) and the Multiple Enforcement Team (MET), participated in the first of many Homeless Outreach Program

events funded by a grant. The purpose of the program is to identify homeless individuals, help them obtain needed resources, and reduce the victimization of criminal activity in homeless encampments.

First, the homeless issue from a global approach is addressed, recognizing the necessity to become better educated in dealing with this population while striving to achieve updated training. As such, this grant funding allowed officers to participate in Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) to better understand and address mental health issues associated with the homeless population. Furthermore, each member of the BPD attended de-escalation training in an effort to reduce and mitigate potential use-of-force matters.

Seconded, to further the effort in addressing homelessness in the community, the BPD develops goals and objectives to effectively and strategically coordinate police resources. This is accomplished by completing comprehensive crime analysis and prevention plans to better understand specific homeless issues that may affect businesses and property owners. As an organization, understanding the philosophy and recognizing the importance of “buy-in” from stakeholders in order to foster collaborative efforts with community partners is most effective to address these matters.

Each year the BPD participates in the countywide “Point-in-Time” count. These efforts are coordinated through the Riverside County Housing, Homelessness Prevention and Workforce Solutions Department, a subdivision of COC. The purpose of this program is to identify and count the homeless population in each city within the County of Riverside and offer resources based on their individual needs. In 2021, the total homeless count in the City of Beaumont was 16. Each homeless person contacted was offered resources which included housing, drug/alcohol rehabilitation, and vocational training. None of these resources were accepted.

The department has taken the lead on crafting a comprehensive approach for the San Gorgonio Pass area in efforts to solving the problem of regional homelessness in a way that respects the inherent worth and dignity of every person. The BPD has entered in a partnership with the Riverside County Department of Public Health to partner a mental health clinician with a police officer, creating the Community Behavioral Assessment Team (CBAT).

CBAT’s purpose is to intercede with persons experiencing a mental health crisis and find long-term solutions to the on-going mental health issues encountered within the community. CBAT’s resources will include partnerships with the Banning Police

Department and Riverside County Sheriff's Department within the City of Calimesa and Cabazon community.

CBAT's mission is to develop a multi-agency partnership to increase collaboration of service providers to assist the homeless in becoming self-sufficient. Provide ongoing personal contact between the Homeless Outreach Team officers and homeless individuals to increase trust and make referrals to service providers. CBAT and the COPPS Team will work closely with county resources and local outreach organizations to coordinate housing, employment, and medical and mental health services.

In addition, the Beaumont Police Department Outreach Program performs the following tasks:

- Identify homeless encampments within the City;
- Identify and establish working relationship with the homeless individuals;
- Coordinate with non-profit agencies (example: Riverside County Health to Hope Healthy bus);
- Coordinate with the Veterans Administration in locating veterans amongst the homeless;
- Liaison with the Department's Corrections Division on inmates being released from custody with a potential of being homeless to offer re-entry methods preventing homelessness;
- Provide free transportation to area resources centers when requested;
- Develop a program to pay for bus/train tickets for individuals to reunite with family members, must have family who will receive them (Project Reunite);
- Coordinate with other allied agencies to discuss homeless liaison duties and methods;
- Continual follow-up with governmental agencies dealing with homeless individuals' status to find permanent housing as well as individuals who have already been placed;
- Preparation/execution of the annual "Point in Time" (PIT) countywide count of homeless event;
- Attend countywide homeless related meetings including the COC (Continuum of Care);
- Attend homeless related events (example: US VETS led "Stand Down" events);
- Give presentations to City groups to help educate the sensitive issues related to homelessness;
- Ensure panhandlers are aware of City and County ordinance violations in all affected areas;
- Visit homeless encampments to ensure inhabitants are not violating trespass laws;

- Provide a safe environment by identifying and removing the criminal element from homeless encampments;
- Provide escort to encampments for outreach services to be offered;
- Monitor areas that have been cleared of homeless encampments;
- All participating personnel shall receive training to ensure an understanding of the program, resources available, and how to effectively deliver services to the homeless;
- Research viability to eliminate sales of single liquor/ beer cans; and
- Ensure priority is given to all homeless that are identified to be:
 - At risk,
 - Families with children,
 - Military Veterans,
 - Sufferers of mental illness, and
 - Victims of abuse.

Fiscal Impact:

The police officer assigned as the Homeless Outreach Officer/CBAT is budgeted annually at a cost of \$164,696. City staff estimates the cost to prepare this report to be \$1,170.

Recommended Action:

Receive and file.