

The Triage Model for Homeless Resolution- Sunbreakranch.com (San Diego, CA)

Sunbreak Ranch is a proposed central navigation center, designed to house people, identify their needs and move them with care and proper treatment to more permanent housing or treatment centers. It is an emergency , regional “triage” center where everyone in need will have a clean, healthy, safe and secure place to reside and sleep.

Sunbreak will be a voluntary village where individuals can reside in a series of designated and protected areas for families, single mothers, seniors, veterans, those with dogs and so on. The physical layout of the facility is important to achieving those goals. There will be individual sections for men, women, families, and a place where individuals can pitch their tents if that is their desire. There will also be an area for safe parking (RVs and cars) for those people who want to maintain those as their residence. Ideally, there will also be a significant number of pods (current funding available through the state) for individuals who qualify.

The following services will be provided: clean toilets, showers, dining hall, medical tent, storage (shipping containers) facilities, onsite homeless service providers, mental health counselors, substance abuse specialists and vocational trainers.

Each individual or family is treated individually with a thorough examination of their needs. Individuals and their families are brought in from unsanctioned camps /streets and are evaluated by professionals which include current service providers. Once the assessment is complete, a clear program can be established to meet those individual needs. The goal is to place the person(s) on a path to recover from homelessness and to rejoin society as a productive member.

This will be a managed facility, 24/7, with private security (and/or police) to maintain a safe environment away from the criminals who prey on the homeless on the streets. There will also be trash pickup & potable water. A bus line will serve the location multiple times per day. The facility will be kept clean with residents helping to maintain a neat, organized facility.

It is anticipated that there will be ultimately three facilities to address Deschutes County, each holding up to 200 (???) residents – One in Bend, one in Redmond and one in LaPine, all following the same model. Best to begin with one in Bend (with approx.. 50-100, then scale) and once up and running smoothly, duplicate the model in Redmond and La Pine. All other unsanctioned encampments in Deschutes County (public lands included) will be closed and restored. Those who are living unsheltered, will be given a choice to move to a village or leave the county. The enforcement of the camping laws are critical in order to protect our county from additional human caused wild fires that are being generated in the current unsanctioned camps.

Why use the concept of triage? Homeless individuals are in one way or another “wounded” and need help to recover. Triage accounts for individual needs rather than some blanket solution which may only address part of the problem. They need to be dealt with on an individual basis with the proper services so their specific needs can be addressed.

Funding: a combination of private & public funding will most likely be needed. Costs will need to be streamlined and efficient.

Notes from Pilot Program in Lane County – Andrea, Human Services Division

Over the last year, Lane County has sponsored a pilot program which utilized intensive outreach engagement, a multi-disciplinary approach, to improve services and sites (for approx. 90 days) before relocation to permanent housing. It was a targeted, organized approach. They selected 2 encampments: 1) with 6 households and 2) the other with 18 households. Their outreach team consisted of 3 people and they performed regular (ideal is daily) outreach. One year later 100% of the households in site #1 are still housed. For site #2 – 88% are housed, 5% are enrolled (?) and 5% exited to homelessness.

They stated it was critical to get buy in from the camp residents at the beginning. They created a by name list and entered into HMIS. They dedicated some efforts to a master lease program which local landlords which was funded by EO money. They were also able to utilize Governor All In Housing Funds, and Diversion Funds (for move in funds & reconnection to family). The Diversion program used a small amount of funding, but was very successful.

The partnerships between public works, law enforcement and local businesses were critical. They stated that the challenges included buy in from stakeholders & streamlined communication.

In Lane county there is a dedicated Landlord Liaison who works to help mitigate risk and offers incentives to not look so hard at tenant credit scores. Polk County also has a someone working on landlord relationships.

Mike Savara from the State, also spoke and mentioned the Governor’s desire to continue programs to help people from becoming homeless. They will be launching a long term rental program through the entire state including an Elder Rental Assistance Program.