



**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF VENTURA**

GOVERNMENT CENTER, HALL OF ADMINISTRATION
800 SOUTH VICTORIA AVENUE, VENTURA, CALIFORNIA 93009

April 6, 2010

From the Desk of **STEVE BENNETT**
SUPERVISOR, FIRST DISTRICT
(805) 654-2703
FAX: (805) 654-2226
E-mail: steve.bennett@ventura.org

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD
LINDA PARKS
KATHY I. LONG, CHAIR
PETER C. FOY
JOHN C. ZARAGOZA

Board of Supervisors
County of Ventura
800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009

SUBJECT: Recommendation of Supervisor Bennett and Supervisor Long for One-Time Funding in Support of the 10-Year Strategy to End Homelessness

Dear Board Members:

RECOMMENDATION:

Direct staff to include the following \$3,100,000 in appropriations from the year-end fund balance when they bring the 2010-2011 Budget to our Board for adoption.

1. Appropriate \$2 million in one-time matching funds on a two-to-one basis to cities and/or their partners to develop year-round emergency shelters in their communities. The total amount distributed on a first come, first served basis is not to exceed \$2 million.
2. Appropriate \$600,000 for development and a 3-year pilot program for a Social Model Substance Abuse Treatment Center in Ventura County, and request staff to return with their recommendations on how to implement such a program.
3. Appropriate \$500,000 to the HOME Fund for development of a Ventura County Housing Trust Fund, contingent upon the CEO confirming matching funds.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Currently we have one-time revenues that will cause our reserve balance to grow at the end of the year. Many local governments will actually be decreasing reserves. It is appropriate for us to consider the rate that our reserves will grow given our current reserves and our current efforts on the 10-Year Strategy to End Homelessness. The allocation of these funds from our year-end fund balance will decrease the rate that our reserves will grow, but they will continue to grow.

DISCUSSION:

Ventura County has made good progress in some areas of the 10-Year Strategy to End Homelessness, but we have three major areas where we have made no progress or have actually fallen behind where we were at the start of the plan. We know that ongoing funds are limited, but we have some one-time funding that can be used to move forward to meet the stated goals of the 10-Year Strategy to End Homelessness. The following programs are needed to advance the goals of the 10-Year Strategy to End Homelessness:

1. Appropriate \$2 million dollars in one-time matching funds on a two-to-one basis for cities or their partner agencies to build year-round emergency shelters in their communities. When this Board adopted the 10 Year Strategy to End Homelessness in 2007 the goal was to add 150 new emergency shelter beds throughout the County. Since that time, there has actually been a loss of 14 emergency shelter beds, at a time when our economy is driving more people into homelessness. Year-round emergency shelter beds are needed so that people can get off the streets and be safe while waiting for affordable housing, transitional housing or supportive housing programs. We are not able to discharge people safely from hospitals and jails or detox programs if there is nowhere for them to go while waiting for longer term housing.

Several cities in Ventura County are working with partners to develop year-round emergency shelters. The recommendation is to provide funding of \$2 million on a two-to-one matching basis to cities and/or their partners to develop these year-round shelters. Funding will be available on a first-come, first served basis and will be allocated by the CEO, with approval of this Board, until the total \$2 million in allocated funds for this program are exhausted.

2. Appropriate \$600,000 for development of a Social Model Substance Abuse Treatment Facility in Ventura County and a pilot program that would provide services for three years. Substance abuse is an issue that affects many of those who are chronically homeless in Ventura County. Ventura County Behavioral Health staff estimates that as many as 20-25 people per month would qualify for detox services if they were available.

There are at least two distinct types of detoxification residential facilities: 1) Medical Model and 2) Social Model.

Medical residential detoxification is more for clients who present with serious to severe withdrawal symptoms, have other serious medical conditions or are pregnant, are suicidal or homicidal, or have other serious psychiatric conditions. The County currently contracts for medical detox services with a facility in Tarzana. For the approximately 60 Tarzana clients we refer each year around 65% are referred for Alcohol, 30% Heroin, the remaining 20% prescription, other or poly-drug abuse. Excellent results have been experienced through this partnership; however, the program does not have the capacity to serve the amount of need in the community, nor is it necessary for all individuals with substance abuse issues to be treated at a medical detox facility.

Social Model residential detoxification, which typically requires 5 to 21 days, is monitored by a 24-hour staff, who provide counseling, therapy and supervision during detox. During this time patients will receive food, rest and some drug and alcohol education. The Social Model residential detox program available in Ventura County in the past provided clients residence and treatment for 5 to 21 days.

There is a significant gap in the provision of treatment in Ventura County without local access to this level of treatment. In addition, it is widely believed that the lack of a Social Model detox program has a negative impact on our local Emergency Rooms and Jail. An 8-bed social model residential detox facility would fill a gap in the continuum of care in Ventura County and be a start in addressing Recommendation #11 of the 10-Year Strategy. Behavioral Health Department staff has estimated the cost of such a program at approximately \$200,000 per year.

3. Appropriate \$500,000 to the HOME Fund for development of a Ventura County Housing Trust Fund, contingent upon the CEO confirming matching funds. Recommendation #3 of the 10-Year Strategy to End Homeless was the creation of a county Housing Trust Fund.

Board of Supervisors

April 6, 2010

Page 4

A housing trust fund is a tool for attracting and leveraging public and private funding for the creation of new housing opportunities, and for enhancing the affordability of housing. Countywide housing trust fund dollars are leveraged at an average ratio of ten to one, which enhances the ability of housing trust funds to help address the critical housing needs of local communities.

A Steering Committee of housing experts and other local leaders from the business community and government sectors has been working for many months to explore the feasibility of establishing a countywide housing trust fund in Ventura County.

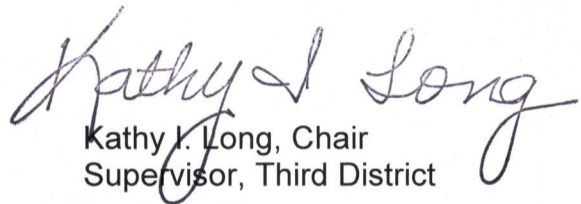
The Ventura County Housing Trust Fund (HTF) will generate and leverage funding sources to help create a continuum of housing options. Funds will be made available to qualified applicants through grants and loans and will be awarded through a NOFA or Request for Proposals. HTF funds will be used in combination with a variety of other funding sources to help create new housing units, including 15% of available HTF resources for the creation of transitional and permanent housing for the homeless. The CEO will recommend Housing Trust Fund projects for funding to the Board of Supervisors for approval.

The investments recommended in this letter are not only morally the right thing to do, but these critical programs will save money in law enforcement, prosecution, incarceration and emergency room visits. By approving these recommendations we will take a giant leap forward in our strategy to decrease our local homeless population. Significantly reducing homelessness in Ventura County is within our reach. We hope you will join us in seizing this one-time opportunity.

Cordially,



Steve Bennett
Supervisor, First District



Kathy J. Long, Chair
Supervisor, Third District