



LISA BARTLETT

CHAIRWOMAN

ORANGE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
SUPERVISOR, FIFTH DISTRICT

ORANGE COUNTY HALL OF ADMINISTRATION
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August 15, 2019

The Honorable Ross Chun
City of Aliso Viejo
12 Journey, Suite 100
Aliso Viejo, CA 92656

The Honorable Mark Tetterer
City of Lake Forest
25550 Commercentre Drive, #100
Lake Forest, CA 92630

The Honorable Joseph L Muller
City of Dana Point
33282 Golden Lantern, #203
Dana Point, CA 92629

The Honorable Jerry Holloway
City of Rancho Santa Margarita
22112 El Paseo,
Rancho Santa Margarita, CA 92688

The Honorable Don Sedgwick
City of Laguna Hills
24035 El Toro Road,
Laguna Hills, CA 92653

The Honorable Dan Bane
City of San Clemente
100 Avenida Presidio
San Clemente, CA 92672

The Honorable Brian L. Maryott
City of San Juan Capistrano
32400 Paseo Adelanto
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675

RE: Your Letter Dated, August 2, 2019 - Homelessness in Orange County

Dear Mayors Chun, Muller, Sedgwick, Tetterer, Holloway, Maryott, and Mayor Pro-Tem Bane:

Thank you for your recent letter regarding homelessness in Orange County. I wholeheartedly agree that a holistic approach involving an entire system of care is needed to address homelessness. As a County Supervisor, I am keenly aware that a comprehensive system of care is needed in order to reduce homelessness in all of our communities. The County has worked to create a system of care that is able to meet the complex needs of homeless individuals throughout the County. This includes, but is not limited to, provision of mental health care services, substance abuse treatment, employment training programs, recuperative care, shelter and housing. As there are no regulatory mandates designating responsibility for addressing homelessness, many jurisdictions lack the necessary system components to effectively respond. Our County has been proactive, working in a steadfast manner to build out a system of care, because it's the right thing to do.

The County has worked proactively with its 34 cities to identify sites for various needed programs because the cities maintain land use authority in siting these programs. The County acknowledges that there are many barriers to siting programs, hence the County departments have integrated field based and mobile services in order to increase access to resources countywide.

In your letter, it was requested that the County eliminate the Service Planning Areas (SPA). The SPAs are a construct to promote the coordination and regional deployment of County departmental resources which include Behavioral Health, Public Health and Social Services, with City resources and other community-based organizations. The County hosts semi-annual Service Planning Area meetings to ensure that all resources and services within each region are coordinated, which removes barriers to access and improves system efficiency. Service regionalization is common across many sectors spanning from the delivery of emergency medical services, to waste management and homeless services. Each region has different demographics and needs, and service regionalization allows communities to better meet their localized needs and priorities. Furthermore, regional collaboration is also being recognized and encouraged at higher levels of government including at the State of California. The state is providing additional funding opportunities to cities that are working regionally to pool funding that creates a systemic response.

Historically, shelters have been created with site approvals from the cities in which they are located. The only example in which the County created a shelter within a city without that city exercising their land use authority, is with the creation of the Courtyard in Santa Ana. Even then, there was no formal opposition from the City of Santa Ana. The Courtyard is the County funded shelter in the Central SPA and its operational plan currently allows walk ins/walk ups. However, the City where it is located, has stated that other cities, police departments, and providers have been “dumping” homeless individuals in their City because of the Courtyard. This has been a central theme in the discussion in Judge Carter’s courtroom. Santa Ana’s police department has stated that they were recording all drop offs and investigating which cities the homeless persons were coming from to hold those cities accountable for addressing their share of the regional homeless issue. At this time, the Courtyard is set to be relocated to another site that was identified by the City of Santa Ana, and its operational plan will likely become more similar to the Bridges model.

With regards to resource access, the majority of the resources available in the County’s system of care are available to all homeless individuals regardless of their place of origin. Additionally, your letter specifically focuses on shelter beds and indicates that elimination of Service Planning Areas would provide homeless individuals in South Orange County with greater access to shelter beds in other regions. The existence of SPAs does not create the barrier that restricts access to shelter beds in other regions. Homeless individuals residing in one region have difficulty accessing county funded shelter beds in other regions due in part to shelter operational plans and restrictions placed by the City where the program is sited. In North Orange County, the bylaws governing the Bridges shelter specifies prioritization for referrals coming from the North region. The Bridges operational plan allows for this because they have a bed reservation system linked with direct referrals made by the North SPA outreach teams. North County cities also contributed financially to the acquisition and development of the Bridges facility and their willingness to invest funds and allow the project to be sited, was contingent upon their ability to prioritize access to the direct benefit for their communities.

More importantly, the County's year-round shelters are generally at capacity because there are more homeless individuals in need of shelter than beds available. Due to these capacity issues, many cities have created, or are in the process of creating, city specific shelters in an effort to enforce anti-camping ordinances. This includes Tustin, Santa Ana, Costa Mesa, Anaheim, Placentia, and Buena Park. The County recognizes that city willingness to site and fund city specific shelters is dependent upon their ability to prioritize access to homeless individuals within its respective city. CHART A: City Shelter Development and Funding.

The Countywide ability to make meaningful progress requires a recognition that homelessness is an issue that requires response from all levels of government. Given the critical role that cities play in land use and identification of an appropriate site for shelter creation, it is unlikely that there would be support for this effort if cities and regions could not prioritize bed utilization for their respective jurisdictions. The investments made by these cities seek to yield direct benefits, understanding how difficult it is to provide an effective response to homelessness.

Another important point of clarification is the letter's reference to available shelter beds during the Point in Time (PIT) Count. Some of the available beds were from the seasonal armory program which had a restricted transportation referral policy created by the cities where they are located. Many of the other beds that were available were restricted to certain populations, like women and families and those were accessible by homeless people countywide.

The County accepts its leadership role in the leveraging of Countywide resources to improve the overall response to homelessness in our County and, as such, remains committed to working collaboratively with cities and community based partners in their efforts to create programs that better address the complex needs of those experiencing homelessness. Last year, the State provided one-time funding to Continuum of Care jurisdictions and the 10 largest cities to use towards homeless programs. Upon receipt of the State Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP) funding, the County invited diverse stakeholders, including all cities, to apply for funding to support regional collaborative efforts. Many cities applied for this funding to support their efforts to create shelters. While the County does not dictate or require that cities create city specific or regional shelters, we remain committed to supporting efforts that enhance resource availability. As such, the County was supportive of the Continuum of Care Board's HEAP allocations to these cities. As the Supervisor representing the region, I personally worked to ensure that the South region would still be served and advocated that our community receive HEAP funds to enhance outreach efforts, rental assistance programs, and family reunification programs. Chart B: HEAP Allocations by Service Planning Area shows how the first round of HEAP funding was allocated. There will be another round of state funding announced in the Fall, with allocations to each of 1) 13 large cities 2) counties and 3) continuum of care jurisdictions, in an effort to further improve the Countywide response to homelessness.

Given the importance of collaboration between the County and cities in creating impactful solutions to address the growing homeless population, I welcome the opportunity to convene another meeting between the County and the cities. The County has been able to make significant advancements in building the system of care because of our collaborative efforts with cities and other community partners.

As your 5th District Supervisor, I remain committed to working with you to serve the communities we mutually represent. I am confident that when we work together, we can achieve greater results.

As always, my door is open and I stand ready to work with each of you on this issue, given the opportunity.

Sincerely,

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

Lisa A. Bartlett
Chairwoman, Orange County Board of Supervisors
Supervisor, Fifth District

Encl. (2)

Chart A City Shelter Development and Funding

City	Capacity	Year Established	Funding Source(s)
Anaheim – La Mesa	102 Beds	March 2019	City and State HEAP
Anaheim – Salvation Army	224 Beds	March 2019	City and State HEAP
Buena Park	150 Beds	Spring 2020	City, County and State HEAP
Placentia	80 Beds	Spring 2020	City, County and State HEAP
Costa Mesa	50 Beds	April 2019	City
Santa Ana	200 Beds	November 2018	City and State
Tustin	50 Beds	March 2019	City

Chart B. HEAP (Homeless Emergency Aid Program) Allocations by Service Planning Area

North Service Planning Area	
City of Placentia \$5,650,000	A capital improvement project to create 80 to 100 emergency shelter beds and serve the entire North Service Planning Area
City of Buena Park \$6,412,300	A capital improvement project to create 150 to 200 emergency shelter beds and serve the entire North Service Planning Area
Central Service Planning Area	
City Net \$350,000	An emergency service project to provide street outreach to the entire Central Service Planning Area
South Service Planning Area	
City of Laguna Beach \$909,000	A capital improvement and emergency service project to renovate and rehabilitate the existing ASL facility and expand operations to 24/7 with a drop-in day center program
Mercy House \$638,980	An emergency service project to provide street outreach to the entire South Service Planning Area
Family Assistance Ministries \$30,000	An emergency service project to conduct a homeward bound program to reconnect individuals and families experiencing homelessness to reunify with their support systems outside of the jurisdiction.
Countywide – Family Focus	
Families Forward \$500,000	An emergency service and rental assistance program to provide financial assistance, rental assistance and flexible housing funds to families at-risk of homelessness or experiencing homelessness
Youth Specific Programming	
\$778,435	OC Community Resources will award the youth-specific programming through a separate process, currently underway.
Administrative Costs	
OC Community Resources \$300,000	Funding to carry out the functions of the Administrative Entity and HEAP Funding implementation.
Total	
\$15,568,715	