

Agenda Report

August 28, 2023

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
FROM: Fire Department and Public Health Department
SUBJECT: PASADENA OUTREACH RESPONSE TEAM (PORT)

RECOMMENDATION:

This report is for information only; no action is required.

BACKGROUND:

While the exact number of people without homes on any given night fluctuates, 556 people were unhoused on the night of the 2023 Pasadena Homeless Count, a 9% increase over 2022. As in many cities in Los Angeles County, homelessness continues to be a pressing social concern in Pasadena. The root causes of homelessness have proven difficult to resolve but a partnership between the Pasadena Fire Department (“PFD”) and Pasadena Public Health Department (“PPHD”) has shown promising results by engaging, assessing, and linking people experiencing homelessness to resources and services.

The population of Pasadena community members experiencing homelessness are considered “high acuity”, meaning their conditions are severe and imminently dangerous to their health. Approximately 33% of the population of unhoused have chronic health conditions, and their struggles with multiple co-occurring health concerns, such as mental health and substance use disorder, have presented challenges for engagement with services.

In 2019, the PFD and PPHD launched the Pasadena Outreach Response Team (“PORT”) and introduced a new model for supporting the needs of people experiencing homelessness with a team composed of a Firefighter from PFD, a Case Manager/Social Worker from PPHD, a Peer Navigator from Union Station Homeless Services (“USHS”), and a Registered Nurse from Huntington Hospital. At the core of the model was a proactive approach to foster trust over time so the team can provide support and resources when community members are ready for them. The key to success for the team is to build relationships before an individual falls into crisis.

PORT provides field-based support and advocacy for people experiencing homelessness, living with chronic health conditions, and/or diagnosed with mental health, and/or substance use disorders. The team conducts intensive street-based outreach and responds to referrals from community partners or other City departments to identify potential clients. Once a potential client is identified, the team makes “soft contact” with the individual providing food, hygiene kits, clothing, or transportation to essential appointments. During these soft contacts, the team builds rapport and trust with the client with the goal of enrolling them in the program, receiving case management, and working toward secured housing.

Once a client decides to enroll in the program, a formal intake is completed. The intake helps to identify needs and the team links them to services to support those needs such as substance use treatment, mental health services, housing navigation, or medical appointments. It can take up to 12 months from the time the team completes the formal intake process to the time a client is considered stabilized. Once a client is discharged from the program, PORT staff continue to provide supportive services and advocacy, as needed.

Through intensive case management, medical and mental health/substance use disorder screenings, and linkages to treatment, housing, and other social supportive services, PORT has made an impact on Pasadena’s chronically homeless neighbors. From July 2019 to present, PORT has produced notable results including: helping 71 community members transition to housing; supporting 108 people enroll in detox and rehabilitation programs; completing or facilitating transportation to 488 appointments for clinical care; and responding to 1,044 Police dispatch calls related to people experiencing homelessness.

In July 2021, the City expanded the program by adding a second PORT team, which is dedicated to responding to 9-1-1 dispatch calls related to people experiencing homelessness and providing case management services. The PPHD has also secured additional grant funding to support the PORT teams through Proposition 47 and Congresswoman Judy Chu through the Congressional Directive Spending program administered by the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

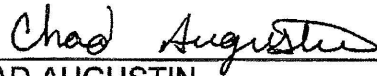
PORT welcomes direct referrals from the community and encourages residents to contact the program if they see someone in need of support by calling (626) 604-6693. PORT responds Monday through Friday between 8:30am and 5pm.

Respectfully submitted,



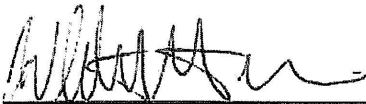
MANUEL CARMONA, MPA
Acting Director
Public Health Department

Concurred by:



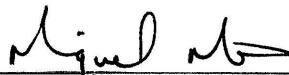
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