



COUNTY OF ORANGE OFFICE OF CARE COORDINATION

THE QUARTERLY UPDATE

January - March 2025

Welcome to the Office of Care Coordination's newsletter. Included in this issue are staff and funding updates, Office of Care Coordination in the Community updates, Commission to Address Homeless, Continuum of Care Board, Coordinated Entry System and Shelter updates.

Office of Care Coordination Updates

Office of Care Coordination Staffing Updates

Special Projects Specialist

Tatiana Restrepo joined the Office of Care Coordination as the Special Project Specialist in February 2025, bringing over eight years of experience in the nonprofit sector in Orange County. With a background in psychology, she is passionate about supporting vulnerable populations and ensuring communities have access to essential resources. Specializing in grants, contract management, and compliance, Tatiana has played a key role in securing and managing funding while ensuring programs meet regulatory standards and create lasting impact. As the Special Projects Specialist, Tatiana will support the Office of Care Coordination with financial monitoring including review and processing of invoices and ensuring compliance with funding regulations. Tatiana is excited to contribute to the team's mission and serve as a vital piece of the puzzle that helps individuals and communities thrive.

Office of Care Coordination in the Community

National Alliance to End Homelessness Conference

Over the course of three discursively productive days in February, the Office of Care Coordination team had the privilege of attending this year's National Alliance to End Homelessness: Innovations in Ending Unsheltered Homelessness conference in Los Angeles. During the conference, Office of Care Coordination Director, Doug Becht, along with Captain Christine Berryman of the Orange County Sheriff's Department Behavioral Health Bureau, had the opportunity to present a spotlight session on the critical importance of partnership between the homelessness response system and law enforcement, while advancing person-centered and trauma-informed approaches.

Additionally, the team attended thought-provoking workshops on a range of topics including data quality and security, homelessness messaging, benefits advocacy, minimizing inefficiencies in connecting people to housing, partnership with people with lived experience, homelessness among older adults, and providing shelter for people with complex healthcare needs. The National Alliance to End Homelessness conferences provide the opportunity for advocates, administrators, and thought leaders addressing homelessness in their communities around the country to come together to share knowledge and learn from each other.

Office of Care Coordination Updates (continued)

2025 Homeless Survey

The Office of Care Coordination began conducting homeless surveys in the off years of the Point in Time (PIT) Count beginning with the 2023 Homeless Survey. These surveys aim to explore various aspects of the results from the PIT Count and gain insight into what areas of addressing homelessness are working or not working.

The results of the 2024 PIT Count revealed 1,172 individuals had experienced homelessness for the first time within the past 12 months. In response to this significant finding, the Office of Care Coordination decided to make this subpopulation the focus of the 2025 Homeless Survey. The survey focuses on understanding individuals who are experiencing homelessness for the first time, including what services and programs they may have accessed or attempted to access in efforts to remain housed, and the challenges they have faced as a result of unsheltered homelessness. The Office aims to use the findings of the survey to support with future planning and program development, as well as decision-making efforts specific to homelessness prevention. Similar to the 2023 Homeless Survey, the Office has partnered with City Net to help administer the surveys and complete data analysis.

City Net completed the data collection phase of the survey throughout the month of March, and initial analysis has already begun. The Office anticipates completing and releasing the data analysis by Summer 2025.

Commission to Address Homelessness Bylaws

At the Commission to End Homelessness (Commission) meeting on June 19, 2024, an Ad Hoc was established to review and evaluate the Commission's Bylaws. Over the following months, the Ad Hoc met multiple times to review the Bylaws with the utmost integrity, ensuring an objective and thorough evaluation. The Ad Hoc's dedication to impartiality and rigorous analysis reinforced the credibility of the review process and reflected their deep respect for the Commission.

The Ad Hoc's suggested revisions were presented to the full Commission during the December 2024 meeting and included updates to the Commission name, mission, purpose, function, membership, terms of office, and duties of members. Of these recommendations, the two most prominent were the renaming of the Commission from the Commission to End Homelessness to the Commission to Address Homelessness, and updates to the membership. The proposed membership included the elimination of one Business Representative, one At-Large Representative, and the Municipal Fire Department Representative. Furthermore, the membership update included the addition of a representative who has current or past lived experience of homelessness and the transition of the two (2) Continuum of Care Representative seats from non-voting members to voting members.

The proposed Bylaw revisions were approved by the Commission in December 2024 and agendized for final approval by the Orange County Board of Supervisors (Board) during the board meeting on February 25, 2025. During the Board meeting, the Bylaws were approved with a revision to incorporate an annual report into the Bylaws in order to showcase the good work of the Commission and in alignment with other commissions and boards. The Commission to Address Homelessness held their first meeting under the updated Bylaws on April 16, 2025.

Office of Care Coordination Updates (continued)

State Funding Updates

Emergency Solutions Grant

The State of California Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) Program 2024 Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) was released on December 31, 2024, with an estimated \$1,604,350 allocation for the Orange County Continuum of Care (CoC) over the course of three annual funding cycles. Moving forward, the California Department of Housing and Urban Development (HCD) will issue one ESG NOFA every three years and awardees will enter into a Standard Agreement covering three annual funding cycles. Allocations for the first funding cycle were determined utilizing a formula allocation. HCD will notify awardees of the updated allocations for the subsequent funding cycles once they have been confirmed.

In March 2025, the Office of Care Coordination acting as the Administrative Entity for the Orange County CoC completed the application process for this funding. Awards are estimated to be announced in July 2025. ESG Program funds can be used to support activities such as outreach, rapid rehousing, emergency shelter operations, and homelessness prevention. The California HCD receives ESG funding from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development and allocates these funds to eligible CoCs.

Homeless, Housing, Assistance and Prevention

On March 27, 2024, the Office of Care Coordination submitted the Homeless Housing, Assistance, and Prevention (HHAP) Program Round 5 application to the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) on behalf of the County of Orange and the Orange County CoC. The Office of Care Coordination was notified in February 2025 that HHAP Round 5 grant was awarded to the County of Orange and the Orange County CoC. State priorities for HHAP Round 5 include sustaining existing investments towards the long-term sustainability of housing and supportive services and prioritizing permanent housing solutions.

In February 2025, the California HCD released the HHAP Round 6 Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA), with the objective of providing recipients with flexible funding to continue efforts to improve regional and systems coordination to prevent and end homelessness in their communities.

Similar to Round 5, the Round 6 application process will involve coordinated collaborative efforts with the cities of Anaheim, Irvine, and Santa Ana. The regional application for Orange County for HHAP Round 6 is due August 29, 2025. The HHAP Program Round 6 provides grant funds to support regional coordination and capacity building to address immediate homelessness challenges in the community.

Garden Grove Encampment Resolution Funding

In 2024, the City of Garden Grove was awarded an Encampment Resolution Funding (ERF) grant, with a term through June 30, 2026. The City of Garden Grove has partnered with the Office of Care Coordination to implement this program, targeting an encampment on Beach Boulevard along and underneath the State Route 22 freeway. These funds have been incorporated into People Assisting the Homeless (PATH) Regional Care Coordination program. Since July 2024, PATH has been actively outreaching the designated encampment and engaging individuals in services with ultimate goal of connecting them to permanent housing. The ERF program is a competitive grant program administered by the State of California to assist local jurisdictions to provide critically needed support to people experiencing homelessness in encampments.

Coordinated Entry System Updates

Five New Supportive Housing Developments Fully Leased Up

The Office of Care Coordination functions as the Orange County Coordinated Entry System (CES) lead agency. The Office of Care Coordination assisted in fully leasing five Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) developments, helping 135 households end their homelessness through referrals from the CES and the partnerships of many stockholders.

The Meadows, in Lake Forest, was a new community developed by C&C Development and in partnership with the Orange County Health Care Agency (HCA), the City of Lake Forest, and Friendship Shelter, Inc. The Meadows included 65 units, with 7 units designated for Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) for seniors aged 62 and older (seniors), who were Mental Health Service Act (MHSA) qualified, and experiencing homelessness.

Orchard View Gardens, in Buena Park, was a new community developed by National Core located on land owned by St. Joseph's Episcopal Church and in partnership with Orange County Housing Authority (OCHA), HCA and the City of Buena Park. Orchard View Gardens consists of 66 units with 13 units designated for PSH for seniors who were MHSA qualified and experiencing homelessness.

Villa St. Joseph, in Orange, was converted from the Motherhouse of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange into affordable housing for seniors through the partnership of OCHA, HCA, the City of Orange and Mercy Housing. Villa St. Joseph has a total of 50 units, with 18 units designated for PSH for seniors who were MHSA qualified and experiencing homelessness.

Miraflores, in Anaheim, was a new affordable housing community developed by the City of Anaheim and National Core, and in partnership with HCA. Miraflores has a total of 85 units with 8 units designated for PSH for households with residency ties to the city of Anaheim, that were MHSA qualified and experiencing homelessness.

Estrella Springs, in Santa Ana, was a former motel site that was transformed into an apartment community by the City of Santa Ana and JHC North Harbor, LLC, and in partnership with HCA, Veterans Affairs (VA) and Jamboree Housing Corporation. Estrella Springs contains 89 PSH units for households experiencing homelessness, with 39 units designated for Veterans, 37 units having a preference for Veterans and 14 units designated for households who were MHSA qualified.

Vacancies for any of these units will be filled through the CES. To access CES, call 2-1-1 via the Virtual Front Door or contact a CES participating agency directly.

Orange County Coordinated Entry System Academy Launched

The Office of Care Coordination is proud to announce the launch of the Orange County (CoC) Coordinated Entry System (CES) Academy, an online-based training platform, that will house all CES related trainings and relative materials. This also includes the launch of the CES 101 training module.

The CES 101 training module is an introductory course that will provide an overview of CES, designed with a wide audience in mind and from the most experienced CES navigator or someone unfamiliar with CES. The OC CES Academy will continue to evolve over time to include training modules for CES Access Points and Housing Providers that will focus on specific CES processes and procedures, as the need arises for additional CES tools and resources, and when CES policies and practices change.

Included on the OC CES Academy is the CES Resource Library which has a plethora of CES related resources such as CES guides, tools, forms, video trainings, and links to other relevant resources, as well as an interactive map for guidance on Service Planning Areas and Public Housing Authority Jurisdictions.

To view OC CES Academy, visit egovoc.com/ces-training/.

Continuum of Care Updates

FY 2024 CoC Program Award Announcement

On January 17, 2025, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) announced \$3.6 billion in Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Continuum of Care (CoC) Competition Awards to approximately 7,000 local homeless housing and service programs across the United States and its territories. These CoC grants provide funding for efforts by nonprofit providers, states, and local governments to quickly rehouse individuals and families experiencing homelessness and provide support while minimizing the trauma and dislocation caused by homelessness.

For the first time, HUD issued a 2-year CoC Program Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) as authorized by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024. Communities were only required to submit one CoC Consolidated Application to be applicable for FY 2024 and FY 2025 funds.

The Orange County CoC has been awarded \$34,589,770 for FY 2024. This award encompasses Tier 1 of the Orange County CoC application – 21 renewal housing projects, including two (2) joint transitional and rapid rehousing (Joint TH-RRH) projects; one (1) rapid rehousing project; eighteen (18) permanent supportive housing projects; and the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) grant and the Coordinated Entry System (CES) and the CoC Planning grant, which provide key infrastructure and support for the Orange County CoC. The \$3,838,750 increase in funding is due to a first-of-its-kind cost of living adjustment to allow CoC budgets to better keep up with rising costs. This increase provided additional pay and support for direct service staff that will support service delivery for people experiencing homelessness.

The Office of Care Coordination would like to extend their appreciation to the Orange County CoC Board, as well as the executive leadership and staff of CoC-funded nonprofit service providers who worked long hours to submit the FY 2024 CoC Program Applications. The Office of Care Coordination is grateful for the continued partnership in working towards ending homelessness in Orange County.

CoC Board and Commission to End Homelessness Joint Special Meeting

In a groundbreaking first, the Continuum of Care (CoC) Board and Commission to End Homelessness held a joint special meeting on January 16, 2025, to discuss and provide feedback on the upcoming 2025 Homeless Survey. Led by the Office of Care Coordination, this initiative aims to engage individuals experiencing homelessness for the first time in the past 12 months, offering valuable insights into their challenges and informing future solutions for addressing homelessness across the region.

The meeting brought together key stakeholders, including elected officials, government staff, service providers, housing providers, and individuals with lived experience. This partnership underscores a shared commitment to understanding the evolving needs of homeless individuals and developing targeted interventions, while marking a significant step forward in fostering collaboration and driving meaningful change in the fight against homelessness.

Housing Security 101 Training for FaCT Partners

The Office of Care Coordination was invited to provide a Housing Security 101 training course on February 15, 2025, for the Families and Communities Together (FaCT) quarterly training. FaCT, an OC Social Services Agency public-private partnership program, provides support services to children and families through community-based collaboratives operating family resource centers. Recognizing that FaCT family resource center staff are important points of contact for families experience housing insecurity or homelessness, the Office of Care Coordination provided a Housing Security 101 Training inclusive of an overview of common myths and misconceptions surrounding homelessness, guiding principles and best practices when providing housing navigation, an overview of the Orange County Continuum of Care (CoC) and Coordinated Entry System (CES), and a guide for staying connected to the work of the Office of Care Coordination and Orange County CoC. As part of the training, the Office of Care Coordination was able to walk through a case scenario with attendees, providing a space for engaging discussion and development of practical knowledge that staff could take back to their day-to-day work when supporting families.

Shelter Updates

Annual Monitoring: Second Half

The Office of Care Coordination provides annual monitoring to 19 shelter programs county-wide to ensure adherence to both Federal and State funding regulations, as well as compliance with the County of Orange's Standards of Care for Emergency Shelter Providers (Standards of Care). The shelter programs are funded using a variety of funding streams, including the Homeless Housing Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) program, the State Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), and the Federal Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG). The goal of the annual monitoring process is to ensure quality assurance in the operation of emergency shelters.

The annual monitoring involves a comprehensive review of shelter policies and procedures, participant files, and a thorough walk-through of each facility to assess compliance with established habitability standards. Through the monitoring process, the Office of Care Coordination is committed to offering technical assistance to program providers while reviewing their services, operations, and activities. The monitoring also provides an opportunity to verify compliance with site funding regulations and ensures that all requirements are in place to maintain the safety and effective operation of the program.

The Office of Care Coordination is currently in the second half of conducting the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 annual monitoring process for all 19 County-funded programs. Seven (7) programs have already been monitored, and the 12 remaining shelter programs will be monitored by the end of fiscal year.

Same Day Solutions Fair

The Office of Care Coordination held its first Orange County Same-Day Solutions Fair on March 27, 2025, at the Second Baptist Church in Santa Ana. This event was aimed to connect individuals experiencing homelessness with critical services that promote stability, empowerment, and long-term housing solutions. County and State Departments, alongside community-based organizations, will provide comprehensive support to help reduce barriers and improve access to essential resources. Additionally, the event expanded access to Homeless Court, offering individuals the opportunity to resolve outstanding infractions, misdemeanors, and warrants—an important step toward regaining stability.

The services available ranged from enrolling into public assistance benefits in addition to Veteran Benefits Services, child support debt relief, obtaining State Identification Cards, Homeless Court. There was also a wide range of representatives from the following departments: Social Service Agency, Veterans Affairs, Orange County Healthcare Agency, Orange County Child Support Services, Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), Orange County Public Defenders, and Orange County District Attorney, Orange County Community Resources, The Salvation Army, OC United Way and 2-1-1. The Office of Care Coordination would like to express their upmost appreciation to all the partnerships that have made this event possible and is looking forward to planning future OC Same-Day Solutions Fair across the Orange County.

For more information on the work of the Office of Care Coordination,
please contact carecoordination@ocgov.com