

Mental Health Services Act Housing (MHSA)

Project Question & Answer Summary

Introduction/Overview:

- Mental Health Services Act Funds available for permanent housing for Specialty Mental Health Clients
- 1.3 million dollars is available to Mendocino County for the purchase, rehabilitation, development, and Capitalized Operating Rent Subsidy that must support the project for a minimum of 15 years.
- All MHSA programs are prioritized through stakeholder, consumer, and community feedback.
- Mendocino County needs to prioritize three primary decision points regarding this housing project:
 1. Whether to Renovate an existing building or leverage funds for a development (this will determine whether the project is a small or large project)
 2. One Site or Two (and where to prioritize locations)
 3. Single Use or Mixed Use, and if Mixed use what kind of mixed use
- Rural Community Housing Development Corporation (RCHDC) can apply for Tax Credit Incentives, which will leverage our funds to allow for the development of a larger complex, possibly making low income housing available to a larger population than only the specialty mental health population.
- Using leveraged funds can greatly expand the number of housing units made available, however there are time frames and additional requirements about where the unit can be located (close to community resources)
- Funds must be spent by May of 2018 or they revert to the State. Because leveraging funds can take several months, timing, and minimizing delays is essential to ensure we are able to utilize these funds.

Questions:

- *Are Veterans Services involved?* Not at this time. But we will look into additional partners and referral sources as appropriate as we develop the project.
- *Who provides the supportive services?* Supportive services would be provided through the MHSA programs and Specialty Mental Health Programs.
- *Do we have numbers of the need for housing in the County by location, and where housing exists?* There are reports that are available: the Abbreviated Consolidated Housing Plan, but it was completed in 2011, and is due for update later in 2016. Prior to application for tax credit a market study would be completed regarding need and available housing.
- *Some people won't have funds, how will we address the various housing funding resources?* Part of the Capital Operating Rent Subsidy funds is to support those that can't afford housing. The housing will be low income housing, so criteria will need to be met, but funding for housing will be supported until longer term housing fund support is able to be developed for the individual.
- *Where do the leveraging of 2:1 and 4:1 ratios come from in the presentation?* RCHDC has been involved in a number of projects that have used these rates and gained tax credits of 4% or 9%.
- *What are some of the Pros and Cons for being a small county in this project?* Small Counties were granted additional options to access and use the funds by the State, due to the historical difficulty in small counties being able to use the funds with the prior requirements. Cons are that in order to successfully build a project of a larger magnitude in the timeframes needed, we will need support from the communities and availability and possible donation of qualifying land. This can be difficult in smaller communities.
- *Regardless of the size of the project do the supportive funds still need to be available to maintain operation of the project for at least 15 years?* Yes.
- *Is Habitat for Humanities involved in this project?* They are very active in Fort Bragg. Habitat for Humanities is not involved in this project at this

time, however a discussion was raised of considering them as part of a housing continuum of care with this project.

- *What are the time lines we are dealing with from applying for funds to breaking ground, and from breaking ground to occupancy?* The deadline to use the funds is May 2018, which will correlate with breaking ground. The process that takes the longest is applying for and leveraging funding, which can take around a year. Breaking ground to occupancy can also take about a year. It is reasonable at this time to assume we are still approximately 3 years from anyone being able to move in.
- *Will the project include family units?* It is possible that the larger unit options will include family units; that has not yet been decided.
- *Will HUD be a part of the project?* HUD has different requirements that are often in opposition with Tax Credit requirements. At this point they are not involved, but that doesn't mean they won't be involved in the future.
- *How can the Community Support this project?* Share information learned at the Q&A, encourage people to complete the survey, attend City Council meetings where housing projects are being discussed to support these projects, advocate, raise awareness, and reduce stigma around Mental Illness, communicate any possible land opportunities to Mike Pallesen at RCHDC for further exploration.
- *Is renovating a regular apartment complex an option?* Yes.
- *Is coordinating with an existing apartment complex an option to have just a few SMI/MHSA units available?* We can look into that.
- *Will services be a mandatory part of the housing project since it is supported housing?* Clients must meet MHSA criteria for the MHSA housing units. MHSA must make supportive services available to clients living in MHSA units. However, clients still have the right to decline services, and to participate in their treatment voluntarily. Continued housing is not conditional on compliance with treatment. Of course, housing agreements will need to be honored.
- *Will clients be required to be on SSI, or SSDI?* No, though if they qualify for income, they will be encouraged to apply.

- *Who will hold the title?* It is a limited partnership between the County and RCHDC with the County holding the bulk of the partnership. The Tax Credits require that it be made available as affordable housing for 55 years, and MHSA funds require the supportive housing component for at least 15 years. So regardless of ownership those components will be met for those time frames.
- *Can the program be designed so that clients no longer needing intensive supportive care can be transitioned and supported if they are doing better but have challenges?* Yes.
- *What are the next steps, will we be going to City Council Meetings?* We ask that the survey be completed as broadly as possible to help us focus what type of housing we are pursuing. Once we can answer our three primary questions [renovate or develop (small versus large projects), one versus two locations, and if a large project whether the unit will be mixed use and what type] then we can begin looking at properties applying to community government for support, approval, and land use, and eventually applying for tax credits.
- *Concern was raised that Fort Brag has a measure on the ballot to not allow any more projects of this type in the central services district.* That is a concern. While we frequently hear the request for housing options on the Coast, if we aren't able to find or develop property that meets centrally located requirements, we may not be able to meet timelines to use the funds.
- For additional questions, please feel free to call the MHSA team at 472-2332.