



City of Arts & Innovation

# News Release

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Jan. 2, 2018

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## **City of Riverside Requests Public Comment on Housing First Strategy**

*Residents, business owners and others encouraged to provide feedback by Jan. 25*

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – The City of Riverside’s Office of Homeless Solutions today (1/2) published its draft Housing First strategy, which is designed to reduce the number of people who are homeless, and is seeking the public’s comment on the plan through Jan. 25.

The Housing First strategy is a community-based program designed to address homelessness across Riverside, relying on partnerships to develop much-needed projects and programs. The approach is seen as a way to allocate scarce resources to amplify City efforts to combat homelessness.

Responding to a growing incidence of homelessness in the City, and using data from state and local sources, maps and other city records, the Office of Homeless Solutions hopes to utilize the Housing First strategy as a road map to create, implement and operate additional housing in the City of Riverside.

Copies of the Housing First Plan are available on the City’s website – <http://www.riversideca.gov/HomelessSolutions/what-are-we-doing/housing-first.asp> -- and at City libraries, and at the offices of the City Housing Authority, on the 5th Floor of City Hall, 3900 Main Street, and at the Office of the City Clerk, on the 7<sup>th</sup> floor of City Hall.

“Today, we are proposing a proactive and targeted homeless plan that will benefit residents, businesses, and neighbors who need assistance to lead healthy and productive lives,” Mayor Rusty Bailey said. “This Housing First Plan will enable us to assist a greater number of our homeless neighbors.”

The Housing First plan is the latest in a series of efforts to combat homelessness. A Riverside City Council workshop with a variety of stakeholders to discuss the issue of homelessness within the City suggested Housing First could be a key strategy to implement.

At a follow-up meeting with the City Council regarding homeless policy, the Council directed staff to pursue Housing First. The Housing First Plan, modified with public comment collected this month, is expected to be considered by the City Council on Feb. 27.

“The City of Riverside is working on many fronts to combat homelessness,” Mayor Pro Tem Jim Perry said. “I encourage all stakeholders in Riverside to review the Housing First strategy and provide their feedback so the City can achieve the best result.”

The Office of Homeless Solutions aims to prevent and reduce homelessness across Riverside through the mobilization of partnerships at the federal, County, regional, and community levels. These partnerships contribute to sustainable and comprehensive development of services and facilities to help those who are chronically or episodically homeless, or at risk of homelessness, or are part of the hidden homeless population, move towards well-being and self-sufficiency.

“The Housing First Plan is ultimately about assisting the most vulnerable Riverside residents with meeting their needs for basic survival and providing them with general support as they begin the process of charting a course for recovering their lives,” said Emilio Ramirez, Director of the Office of Homeless Solutions.

The Housing First Plan specifically supports the core principles of permanent supportive housing, and embracing people experiencing street homelessness who have a mental health or addiction challenge, untreated mental illness or addiction that drives them to live on the street.

The City encourages comments from residents, stakeholders, and regional government partners throughout the month of January. After reading the Housing First Plan, citizens can email comments to [H1plancomment@riversideca.gov](mailto:H1plancomment@riversideca.gov) . Comments also can be mailed to: City of Riverside Housing Authority, ATTN: H1 Plan Comment, 3900 Main Street, Riverside CA 92522.