



COUNTY OF YOLO

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 20, 2020

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Yolo County's Project Roomkey Efforts Have Provided Over 49,000 Nights of Shelter and 60 Permanent Housing Transitions

(Woodland, CA) – Yolo County's Project Roomkey (PRK) has assisted approximately 533 homeless individuals with 49,244 nights of shelter, equaling an average stay of 92 nights per person between March 16, 2020 and November 17, 2020. PRK's objectives are to protect public health, isolate the medically vulnerable and lessen the demand on local shelters to allow for physical distancing. While Project Roomkey was never intended to be a permanent housing solution, the program's increased stability and access to case management services has resulted in over 61 permanent housing transitions to date, with clients moving into both market rate and subsidized apartments, room and boards, and some reuniting permanently with family.

Locally, Project Roomkey is a partnership between Yolo County Health and Human Services Agency (HHS); the cities of Davis, West Sacramento and Woodland; the Yolo County Public Defender's Office; four service providers; and nine motels. In addition, the CommuniCare Health Center mobile medicine team, funded through Dignity Health, in partnership with Woodland Clinic Medical Group and Sutter Health funding, has provided 1,340 unique visits as of October 14 to PRK clients and has conducted multiple COVID-19 onsite tests when clients appeared symptomatic.

“In the midst of a pandemic, this project has been a shining example of what can occur when those most in need are supported through a collaborative effort from providers, cities, and the County,” said Yolo County's Homeless Program Coordinator Nadia Waggener. “Yolo County's Project Roomkey has become a model to the state, and a success story for community-supported Housing First approaches to homeless services.”

In an effort to provide wraparound services, individuals in PRK have received support from many local service providers along with local restaurants, the Yolo Food Bank, Love Laundry and several city and county departments. Services are tailored to meet the needs of individual clients and include the following:

- Aid in applying for Medi-Cal as well as help in understanding their qualifications for various benefits (i.e. CalFresh, CalWORK's, and General Assistance)
- Assistance applying for Unemployment Insurance and completing housing applications
- Procurement of medical care, mental health screenings or substance use screening appointments
- Free COVID-19 testing, as needed

While Yolo County has until December 2020 to utilize federal CARES Act funding for Project Roomkey, the cities and county are collaborating on longer term options and next steps:

- The City of West Sacramento has been awarded two Project Homekey awards and is currently in negotiations with the motel owners with the hope that purchase agreements for both can be made.

- The City of Davis has launched the Davis Emergency Shelter project which utilizes 25 2-bedroom apartments for up to 6 months. The first clients were moved into the apartments in mid-October and the project will run through April 2021, providing non-congregate shelter for up to 40 individuals at a time. The project's target population is elderly and medically vulnerable individuals. Case management and other services are provided onsite.
- The City of Woodland is opening their new permanent shelter at Road 102 and Beamer Street. The facility is a newly constructed 100 bed shelter that is expected to house up to 70 individuals during the COVID-19 response. Laundry, showers, restrooms, food, and a host of services will be available to those onsite, including day services to ensure those staying do not need to leave during the day.

On April 3, 2020, Yolo County was recognized by Governor Gavin Newsom for leading the way in providing non-congregate shelter for those experiencing homelessness during the pandemic. Yolo County obtained a \$600,000 grant from the County Medical Services Program to cover the initial costs of behavioral health services as well as funding from Dignity Health, in partnership with Woodland Clinic Medical Group, and Sutter Health. On March 27, 2020 the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act was passed and signed into law for the purpose of providing fast and direct relief to Americans including through State and Local government agencies. HHSA received a portion of the County CARES Act allocation to continue Project Roomkey through December 2020 and is working with all involved parties to determine appropriate options for sustainable housing and services, including the ongoing hope that Project Roomkey can continue past December 2020.

For more information on Project Room Key, please email Ian Evans at Ian.Evans@Yolocounty.org. Stay connected with Yolo County on Facebook at www.facebook.com/YoloCounty and Twitter at www.twitter.com/YoloCountyCA.

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