



## **INNOVATIVE PROJECT APPROVAL SUMMARY**

### **Humboldt County**

**Name of Innovative Project: Rapid Re-housing**

**Total Requested for Innovative Project: \$1,109,133**

**Duration of Innovative Project: 2 Years 6 Months**

**Staff Recommends: APPROVAL**

#### **Review History**

County Submitted Innovation (INN) Plan: July 17, 2015

Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC or Commission) vote on Innovative (INN) Project: August 27, 2015

#### **Innovative Project Summary**

Humboldt County is seeking MHSOAC approval for the following INN project: Rapid Re-housing. Humboldt will use a “Housing First” approach to provide housing, peer support, and supportive services for individuals with severe mental illness who are homeless. Humboldt County will make changes to rapid rehousing practices demonstrated to be successful in larger urban areas to assess their effectiveness on a smaller scale in rural areas.

Humboldt County has been designated by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as a community of high need due to the large number of people who are chronically homeless relative to the County’s population. In addition, as a small rural county, Humboldt struggles with economy-of-scale challenges brought about by the smaller number of special-need populations, which increases costs. This INN project will also address stigma and discrimination in the community related to homelessness and mental illness.

Key features of Humboldt County's planned approach include:

- Conducting outreach and engagement in collaboration with law enforcement, emergency departments, psychiatric emergency services and hospitals, as well as other community partners to engage individuals who are homeless and experiencing severe mental illness
- Exploring innovative approaches to engaging homeless persons with serious mental illness who have a pet
- Collaborating with local homelessness service agencies to implement a rapid rehousing initiative designed to help individuals with mental illness exit homelessness quickly and return to stable housing
- Providing short-term supportive housing for mixed populations, including persons with serious mental illness
- Utilizing peer support in new ways and settings

This community-wide initiative will offer assistance without such preconditions as employment, income, absence of criminal record, or sobriety. Resources and services will be tailored to the unique needs of each individual. The housing component will be linked to the efforts of a Mobile Intervention and Services Team (MIST), which combines law enforcement officers and mental health workers in street-level interventions for persons experiencing homelessness and mental illness.

A key component of the Innovative Project is to include people with severe mental illness in The Multiple Assistance Center (MAC), a transitional housing program that provides short-term stays (average thirty days) for homeless adults who are awaiting permanent housing. Services will include an assessment to determine the appropriate level of housing and to identify any ongoing needs for supportive services, including a significant focus on peer support, to promote recovery and residential stability. The County has found that peer support is very beneficial also in shifting community attitudes and beliefs by modeling resilience and recovery.

### **Evaluation:**

Humboldt County will monitor client outcomes quarterly using the Department of Health Care Services' Data Collection and Reporting (DCR) data base for Full-Service Partnerships. Examples of client outcomes to be assessed include:

- Residential stability
- Attainment of educational and vocational goals
- Reduction in psychiatric hospitalizations and emergency visits
- Reduction in arrests and incarcerations.

The implementation team will monitor data quarterly to identify successful elements and strategies associated with positive outcomes. The evaluation will include annual reports as well as a final project report.