

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview

The County and City of Napa are jointly initiating transformative systems change that coordinates systems of care and brings innovative permanent housing solutions to vulnerable households.

Challenge

Napa has been struggling to bring solutions to a complex population with compounding health issues that cycle between hospitals, jails, and the shelter system. Constantly in flux, this population is not getting healthier and the most commonly identified need is housing. The homeless services and housing resources available to support this population are a patchwork of small funds isolated in departmental and community partner silos. The available resources are, at best, loosely coordinated among partners on a case-by-case basis, with little coordinated strategic oversight.

Innovative Solution

Realizing the large scope of these challenges, the County and City of Napa joined together to address the homelessness and housing crisis strategically and, with the support of national experts, developed a plan for systems change on the platform that housing is healthcare. The plan calls for better coordination for Napa's systems of care, re-imagines shelters as housing-crisis response centers, targets those with frequent interactions with hospitals and institutions, and increases permanent housing opportunities by braiding together disparate funding resources under the oversight of a collaborative of community funding partners. Napa is implementing these large-scale change efforts all at once because each intervention depends upon the other and Napa sees these changes as part of a larger cultural shift in the way a county can serve its most vulnerable.

The Napa Funders Collaborative was formed in 2016. It comprises representatives from various departments within the City and County of Napa, health system partners, and philanthropic partners, some of whom have not been historically engaged in addressing homelessness. The group oversees the newly-formed Napa Flexible Housing Funding Pool, which centralizes the management of system housing resources under one Operator, who matches these resources to eligible households and housing opportunities. The Pool provides housing navigation and placement services, as well as flexible funds that can be used in various ways to close the funding gaps that are barriers to securing housing. The Pool also incentivizes landlords to rent to vulnerable populations by setting aside funds that can be drawn upon for security and utility deposits, household furnishings, and unforeseen tenant damages.

Napa was fortunate to receive the State's Whole Person Care grant, which is the catalyst for better coordination in Napa's systems of care through collaboration and data sharing. Napa is focusing its Whole Person Care pilot on housing and housing stability to align with the larger systems change at hand.

Originality

Napa is undergoing a major systems change transformation that involves several parallel programs and initiatives happening at the same time, which is not often seen in other counties. Napa is testing how national best practices and transformative systems change can be effectively implemented in a small and semi-rural county. Napa is contracting with both an external evaluator and a communications firm to evaluate the systems change and its impact, and to use communications as a vehicle for implementing change.

Cost Effectiveness

The County and City of Napa are both investing more funds to make the systems change a reality; however, the County is also actively finding new funding resources for these efforts. The County secured the Whole Person Care grant and has applied for several other public and private housing resource grants. The Funders Collaborative and Flex Pool has leveraged new funding from health partners.

Results

Napa is in the process of this large-scale systems change and has already re-designed the shelter system to focus on housing, has formed the Funders Collaborative and the Flex Pool, and is paving the way for interdepartmental data sharing and care coordination through the Whole Person Care grant. Thus far, the efforts have brought new funding resources to the community and have better prioritized the available housing resources for those who are most vulnerable.

Project or Program Contact

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