



# HOMELESS OUTREACH QUARTERLY REPORT

## JANUARY 1 – MARCH 30, 2022

### OVERVIEW

#### City's Response to Homelessness

As with nearly every community in Southern California, there are individuals experiencing homelessness in Newport Beach. Once each month, a City of Newport Beach (City) staff member counts the number of people experiencing street homelessness. The number of people counted may vary due to weather conditions, housing and shelter availability, or financial factors.

	July 2021	August 2021	September 2021	October 2021	November 2021	December 2021	January 2022	February 2022	March 2022
Street Homeless	35	60	75	71	41	-	37	45	47

Homelessness is, indeed, transient in nature and the majority of unsheltered individuals that pass through town are here for a short time. Some individuals are here much longer. And to some, Newport Beach is home, as they were raised, were once housed, or have a family or friend connection to the community. However, due to financial hardship, illness (physical or mental), addiction, or other circumstances, they no longer have housing.

The City of Newport Beach's homeless outreach and response program primarily focuses on outreach - connecting individuals with services and shelter - because the over-arching goal is to help people experiencing homelessness get on a path to finding permanent shelter. There is also an enforcement component to the City's response and the Newport Beach Police Department actively enforces the laws in Newport Beach against anyone, housed or unhoused, who willingly violates the law.

This update will provide information on both aspects of the program. Community members can receive weekly updates in the City Manager's Week in Review, published every Friday, and you can sign up to receive that [here](#). The City also posts information on its [website](#), social media channels and Nextdoor.

## **City Council Ad Hoc to Evaluate Contracted Services for Homeless Outreach**

On March 8, 2022 the Newport Beach City Council re-established the Homeless Ad Hoc Committee and it is comprised of Council Members Brad Avery, Joy Brenner and Will O'Neill. The Committee is responsible for evaluating the contracted services under the City's homeless outreach program. The services and providers include, but are not limited to, City Net, the Costa Mesa Temporary Bridge Shelter, the Be Well OC Mobile Crisis Unit, the Trellis International Community Impact Team, and Permanent Supportive Housing. (For information about each contractor, please see the [Homeless Programs Overview](#).) The Committee will expire upon making its recommendations to the full City Council or on December 31, 2022, whichever occurs first. The Committee meets with City staff and contractors and with community representatives who have expertise in mental health, social services and homeless services, or are faith or business leaders.

## **OUTREACH**

### **City Staff**

The City's program includes a team of staff members from the City Manager's Office and the Police, Fire, Park Patrol, Recreation & Senior Services, and Public Works Departments. Two dedicated, full-time staff members, are responsible for the day-to-day activities of the homeless outreach program. They are Homeless Coordinator Natalie Basmacyan and Homeless Liaison Officer Cynthia Carter. Each has served in their respective roles for more than two years. Every day of the week, team members work throughout the community, proactively interacting with those experiencing homelessness in Newport Beach.

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### **Contract Services**

*Data provided is for the period of January 1 – March 30, 2022*

#### City Net

City Net is a social services provider that helps connect individuals experiencing homelessness to services, shelter and housing. Since January 1, 2022, City Net has engaged in 156 outreach contacts and has helped house 13 people, which includes families with minor children and elderly women. The contractor provides a report to the City of Newport Beach each month that reflects the number outreach contacts City Net staff made during the previous month. The Outreach Contacts total reflects the number of interactions for the specific purpose of reaching out to unsheltered homeless neighbors in a process of building trust and offering support toward

the long-term goal of connecting them with emergency shelter, housing, or critical services; and providing urgent, non-facility-based care. This number can be duplicated in any given reporting period.

City Net Outreach Contacts January – March 2022:

Month	Outreach Contacts
January	65
February	52
March	39

Be Well OC

Be Well OC now operates a mobile crisis response unit in Newport Beach and provides mental health services to those experiencing homelessness, as well as residents and visitors who may be experiencing a mental health crisis. Be Well responds to requests for service made through the Police Department’s non-emergency line, 949-644-3717, and emergency line, 9-1-1.



In between calls for service, the Be Well team travels the city in a bright blue Be Well van, stopping at popular locations to interact with community members and provide information about the services they provide.

Since the program was implemented in late February 2022, the Be Well team has placed six people into crisis stabilization units, six people into Be Well’s sobering station in Orange, and two people into psychiatric facilities. They also connected 17 people experiencing homeless to social service agencies. Be Well has de-escalated six situations for housed residents.

## Trellis International

Trellis, is a non-profit organization that works with homeless and housing insecure individuals by assisting them in re-entering the workforce and eventually returning to a self-sustaining level of employment. Trellis' Community Impact Team is a program wherein current and former homeless individuals serve in volunteer positions to participate in work projects in a city. Under a grant from the City, Trellis' Community Impact Team began to perform projects around town in the fall of 2021. Since last September, Trellis has helped six of the individuals that have worked on the team in Newport Beach to gain full-time employment.

Since January 2021, Trellis has completed 30 projects for the City of Newport Beach. Crews have assisted with cleaning up storm debris on the beach, and helped keep certain parks and arterials tidy by picking up litter, wiping down signs, verifying objects are functional (like crosswalks, lights, drinking fountains), and sweeping up debris.

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## **Shelters & Housing**

Per Federal Judge David Carter's direction, Orange County was divided into three Service Planning Areas (SPAs) – north, central and south. Newport Beach is in the Central SPA along with Huntington Beach, Costa Mesa, Santa Ana, Garden Grove, Seal Beach, Fountain Valley, Tustin, Westminster and certain County unincorporated areas. The cities within each SPA work together and with the County of Orange to identify, develop and share homeless response resources within each SPA.

### Costa Mesa Bridge Shelter

The Cities of Newport Beach and Costa Mesa entered into a memorandum of understanding that provides Newport Beach with 20 of the 70 beds in Costa Mesa's Temporary Bridge Shelter. Since the shelter opened in the spring of 2021, Newport Beach has filled, on average, 18 to 20 of the beds it has access to. Many nights, all beds are filled. Since its opening, 62 people from Newport Beach have entered the shelter.

Since the start of 2022, 17 individuals experiencing homelessness in Newport Beach have entered the Costa Mesa Bridge shelter.

### Other Shelters

In addition to the Costa Mesa Bridge Shelter, as part of the Central SPA, Newport Beach has access to shelter beds at the County's Yale Center Shelter. Since the beginning of the year, the City and its contract service providers have been able to connect 22 individuals to shelter at this location. The County also operates a Cold Weather Emergency Shelter from December 2021 to

the end of March 2022 in the City of Santa Ana. Since January, 12 from Newport Beach were sheltered at this location.

### Additional Shelter Beds

In 2019, the City sought to open a shelter in Newport Beach, but the City was unable to find a cost-effective location. Should another possible location become available, the City will again embark on an extensive community outreach process. In the meantime, the City continues to seek agreements with cities within the Central SPA that would allow Newport Beach access to additional, dedicated beds in other shelters.

### Permanent Supportive Housing

The City issued a request for proposals and selected two developers to compete to develop a viable housing project with up to 50 units in Newport Beach. Each firm must identify a site and develop a concept to present to the City Council. As of April 2022, both firms are still working to identify a viable site.

In parallel with that effort, City staff continues to seek opportunities to partner with other cities within the Central SPA on a permanent supportive housing project.

### Housing Vouchers

In 2021, The Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) released 70,000 Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHV) across the country. The County of Orange (County) received 1,035 vouchers and 10 people experiencing homelessness in Newport Beach were awarded an EHV. Each EHV covers 30% of a person's monthly rent. The balance is paid for by funds received by the County through the American Rescue Plan Act.

Of the 10 individuals that received vouchers in Newport Beach, five have been housed to date. The delay in housing the remaining five is two-fold. The process required to meet the EHV voucher requirements is detailed and therefore, time consuming. The City has raised its concerns about this with elected officials at the county and state levels.

Moreover, there is a lack of available housing units in Orange County to house those that have vouchers. The United Way of Orange County is leading a campaign that identifies the urgent need to find more than 600 available rental units before the housing vouchers expire. More information is available [here](#).

## **ENFORCEMENT**

While it is not a crime to be homeless and the government cannot criminalize conduct such as sleeping on the street if there is no alternative shelter, if there are shelter options available or people otherwise voluntarily violate the Newport Beach Municipal Code or break the law, the

Newport Beach Police Department does issue citations and, if warranted, makes arrests. They have done so at the Newport Transportation Center and other locations in Newport Beach, including, when appropriate, for camping on public property.

Lt. Pete Carpentieri recently presented at a Speak Up Newport meeting and spoke about the NBPD's outreach and enforcement efforts. You can find the full presentation [here](#).

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

### ***What is happening at the Newport Transportation Center?***

The Newport Transportation Center presents some interesting challenges because it is the confluence of public and private property. The City maintains the greenbelts/parkways and sidewalks, and The Irvine Company owns the parcel that the Transportation Center sits on, but leases it to the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA).

In general, the Orange County Sheriff's Department is responsible for patrolling OCTA properties. While the NBPD can make arrests and issue citations at the Transportation Center, it is typically done in conjunction with and/or at the request of the OCTA. Our staff, particularly NBPD command staff, is regularly communicating and coordinating with the OC Sheriff's Department regarding the enforcement of applicable laws at this site.

NBPD visits the site frequently. During a recent week, Newport Beach police officers conducted 51 patrol checks, issued four citations, and made four arrests at that location. In addition to routine patrol checks, the City's contracted mobile crisis unit, operated by Be Well OC, stops by the Transportation Center two to four times per day. And City Net, the City's contracted social services provider, visits that location four days per week, to help individuals connect with services and shelter. Further, the OC Sheriff's Department is visiting the Transportation Center several times a week and, on some visits, is accompanied by the OC Healthcare Agency, which also provides services to those experiencing homelessness.

In early January 2022, there were 10-14 tents at the Transportation Center, considerably more tents than had been there in the past year to two. The City learned that a Newport Beach resident provided the tents out of concern during a period of inclement weather.

As of early April 2022, there were, on average, three to four tents at the site. The reduction in the number of people experiencing homelessness at the Transportation Center is, in large part, the result of the City outreach team assisting individuals experiencing homeless in the following ways:

- Nine individuals have entered a shelter;
- One individual has entered housing and one will soon be housed;
- One person has entered detox; and
- Three people have received medical services.

The City continues to work with the individuals staying in the remaining tents to connect to them with services and to help them on their path to shelter.

***Does the City have an anti-camping ordinance?***

Yes, the City has an anti-camping ordinance that pertains to public spaces and it does enforce it. However, as a result of a federal case called *Martin v. Boise*, cities and counties cannot enforce their anti-camping ordinances if there isn't a shelter option available at that specific time.

***Can the City offer hotel rooms or vouchers to those experiencing homelessness?***

The City has found offering hotel rooms to be helpful in specific, short-term circumstances. For example, hotel rooms have been provided to individuals with a housing voucher and/or a housing unit identified and are awaiting their move-in date. While hotel rooms provide shelter from the elements, they do not come with important services that facilities like the Costa Mesa Bridge Shelter and the Yale Transitional Service provide – meals, medical and dental assistance, housing navigation, job search assistance and more that are important to helping individuals be successful in their efforts to obtain permanent housing.