

Introduction

This study examines how Federal, State, and local government funds are allocated to assist homeless persons. It includes all programs and services that are known to directly assist homeless individuals and families in San Diego County. Together, these funds form a broad range of programs and services, from emergency assistance to longer-term support.

The purpose of this study is to:

- Determine the region's priorities in addressing homelessness.
- Review the methods used to address these priorities.
- Measure the effort each governmental jurisdiction is directing to homelessness, and examine trends.
- Present information that assists policymakers, planners, service agencies, community groups, and the public in determining what choices have been made, and what options are possible in responding to homelessness.

This is the thirteenth year that the Regional Task Force on the Homeless (RTFH) has produced this study. As with previous efforts, there are difficulties and limitations that accompany the task of amassing detailed financial data for a wide range of program funding. These results are presented with the following notes of caution:

1. *Funding is dynamic.* The data in these pages are current (except for cash assistance programs) as of December 31, 2004, which was the cutoff date used in compiling this report. Any funds awarded after this date are not reflected in this report. In addition, the RTFH does not amend previous annual reports to reflect any additional funding that was awarded subsequent to publication. Unfortunately, this would not be practical as the time intensive labor would greatly outweigh the benefit.

2. *Funds are sometimes allocated and never spent.* Some funds may be returned or redirected, or may not be spent at the projected volume or time schedule.

3. *There are different time frames.* Programs occur within a variety of funding periods. In this study, most fund amounts listed are for an annualized, 12-month period. In most cases, the fiscal year is for the period July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2005. In some cases the fiscal year is based on the calendar year, January 1, 2004 to December 31, 2004, or a fiscal year from October 1, 2004 to September 30, 2005. Some programs only last several months per year, so the funding period only covers those months. Cash assistance funding is reported for the last fiscal year since the funds are allocated monthly and cannot be predicted.

4. *Programs that prevent homelessness from occurring are not in this study.* Preventative programs are not included. The benefits of these programs are impossible to quantify, but are certainly large. The County's Temporary Assistance to Needy Families program certainly saves thousands of families from homelessness each year. In addition to preventative programs offering cash assistance, there are numerous affordable housing, mental health, substance abuse, and counseling programs for low-income persons, which interrupt the downward spiral into homelessness, but are outside the scope of this study.

5. *The specific use of funds is not always obvious.* While an attempt has been made to describe the primary purpose of each program listed, there are secondary and tertiary uses of funds that may not be apparent. For instance, funds allocated for an emergency shelter program are sometimes used for accompanying meal and case management costs.

6. This study only includes programs and services that can be tracked directly to the homeless population. Other public costs associated with homelessness are not included. These include public health and sanitation, parks and recreation expenditures, and expenses incurred in the criminal justice system (jails, courts, prosecutors, public defenders, incarceration, probation).

7. It is sometimes difficult to distinguish if programs also serve non-homeless persons. Included in this report are two categories of programs or services: (1) Those which are exclusively used by homeless persons; and (2) Those which are used by a larger population of which the homeless are only a part. In cases where a program also serves non-homeless persons, estimates have been made by qualified public and private agency personnel to arrive at the dollar amount used in this report.

8. Public funding reflects only part of the picture. Contributions from the private sector are not included here. Many capital expenditures are raised through private contributions, and some nonprofit organizations report that as much as a third of their operating budget is derived from the private sector.