



County of Santa Cruz

HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Santa Cruz County awarded \$1.1 million to help house homeless families

Eighty homeless families will find new homes under a \$1.1 million state award to the County of Santa Cruz.

With the local housing crisis pushing rents higher and vacancy rates lower, trying to find landlords in Santa Cruz County willing to rent to homeless families can be like trying to find the proverbial needle in a haystack. However, with the recent \$1,128,852 award from the California State Department of Social Services, the County of Santa Cruz Human Services Department (HSD) plans to help dozens of homeless families to not just find their proverbial needle, but to use it to sew a new life together.

“We are extremely pleased with the funding award and recognition of our efforts to house homeless families in Santa Cruz County. The additional funding brings us one step closer to achieving the *All In – Toward a Home for Every County Residents’* goal of ending family homelessness in Santa Cruz County by 2020,” said Cecilia Espinola, Director of the County of Santa Cruz Human Services Department.

The funding, awarded through the California State Department of Social Services’ CalWORKs Housing Support Program (HSP), will support homeless families participating in the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program to become permanently housed and self-sufficient. The HSP utilizes the “rapid rehousing” model, which provides limited rental subsidies, case management, and other services to homeless families to help them secure and maintain housing.

Homelessness is an often insurmountable barrier to employment, which undermines the CalWORKs goal of self-sufficiency. For homeless parents, 84 percent of whom are single mothers, according to the California Welfare Directors Association, a lack of secure housing is

both cause and effect of job loss and physical and behavioral health problems. For children, homelessness contributes to impairments in cognitive development and interferes with learning and socialization.

Santa Cruz County's HSP, locally known as the CalWORKs Housing Assistance Move-in Program or CHAMP, provides assistance through a multi-disciplinary, private-public partnership with the Homeless Services Center and Families in Transition.

Last year, in the inaugural year of State HSP funding, the County housed 48 families, including 85 kids and 58 adults.