



Office of the City Manager

October 2, 2024

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Paul Buddenhagen, City Manager

Re: Homeless Response Team Becomes a Limited Access Point for Coordinated Entry System

### **Homeless Response Team and New Role as Coordinated Entry Limited Access Point**

On September 24, 2024, Alameda County's Department of Housing and Homeless Services approved the City of Berkeley's Homeless Response Team (HRT) to serve as a Limited Access Point for the Coordinated Entry (CE) process. This new role will allow the HRT to assess individuals' housing needs directly on the streets, provide immediate housing problem-solving interventions, and add qualified people to the county's housing queue in real time. Previously, the HRT had to rely on nonprofit providers for these assessments, a process that was slow and often led to people missing out on housing opportunities.

The HRT team will complete training and participate in an orientation this October to fully adopt these new responsibilities. As a result, they will be able to guide unsheltered individuals through every step of the housing process—from collecting necessary documents to submitting housing applications—making them the primary point of contact for those moving from homelessness to housing.

### **How This Change Improves the Work of the Homeless Response Team**

The Homeless Response Team (HRT), part of the City Manager's Neighborhood Services Division, is a multi-departmental effort aimed at addressing homelessness and its impact on local communities, including those living in encampments. Team members come from various city departments, such as Public Works, Health, Housing & Community Services, the City Attorney's Office, Police, Fire, and Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront.

The HRT's main mission is to implement the All Home Regional Action Plan, a strategic initiative adopted by the City Council in July, 2022, to reduce street homelessness. The team focuses not just on clearing encampments, but on long-term solutions, working to connect homeless individuals to permanent housing.

Becoming a CE Limited Access Point is a major step forward for the HRT. This new role, the result of years of advocacy, allows the team to directly connect clients to housing resources the moment they express interest. It streamlines their work and improves efficiency in getting people off the streets and into housing.

For more details on the Homeless Response Team's progress and performance, please refer to the June 4, 2024 off-agenda memo titled "Homeless Response Team Quarterly Data and Progress Report,"<sup>1</sup>

### **What is Coordinated Entry (CE)?**

The Coordinated Entry (CE) process is a federally mandated system that prioritizes the most vulnerable individuals and families for housing and support services. Implemented at the county level in Alameda County, CE ensures that decisions about housing resources are made fairly and efficiently, connecting people to interventions that can end their homelessness.

The CE system includes several key components:

1. Access Points
2. Housing Problem Solving
3. Assessment of housing needs
4. Prioritization for available resources
5. Referrals or matching to housing and services
6. A grievance process for participants

Limited Access Points, such as the Homeless Response Team, provide CE services to people with whom they have an existing relationship or those who meet specific criteria. These Access Points include places like mental health clinics, schools, hospitals, or outreach teams. They must be trained to provide the full range of CE services and use the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).

If you have any questions, please contact Josh Jacobs, Homeless Services Coordinator, at 510-225-8035 or [jjacobs@berkeleyca.gov](mailto:jjacobs@berkeleyca.gov).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2024-06-04%20Homeless%20Response%20Team%20Quarterly%20Data%20and%20Progress%20Report.pdf>