

Mr. chairman, members of the city council, my name is John Foley, I am the executive director of Sacramento Self-Help Housing. Thank you for the opportunity to talk with you today about this important topic.

In the 1990's we were a program of Loaves&Fishes, helping to house homeless disabled individuals in SROs, rooming houses and inexpensive apartments, much of which existed in midtown and downtown in that long gone era.

In the year 2000, Sacramento Self-Help Housing was established as a separate non-profit organization as the calls for housing help went beyond the geography of Loaves&Fishes and downtown to throughout the city and county.

SSHH has used the "housing first" model to quickly move homeless people into shared housing. Our permanent supportive shared housing that receives funding from HUD operates on a subsidy of only \$586 per person per month so the operation is very cost-effective as well as being ranked number one in our continuum of care for positive resident outcomes. By having private bedrooms and sharing common areas, our tenants begin socializing and helping each other overcome individual problems.

As you know we also operate shared interim housing for highly vulnerable people coming in off of the street as a part of your Common Cents Program. These people are then assisted to move on into permanent supportive housing provided by ourselves or other service providers. This year we have begun working with the Rapid Rehousing Program with Volunteers of America to focus on people who can work intensively to gain housing and employment in less than two months and will need only short term support.

Currently, we lease 43 homes throughout the City and county, with 172 bedrooms. We work closely with Sacramento Steps Forward, the police and district attorney, Sutter, Kaiser, Dignity and WellSpace health organizations. We have operated special programs for veterans, for persons who are chronically homeless and have serious psychological and physical disabilities, for seriously ill people, and for those identified by Sacramento Steps Forward as priority placements. We can house people with dogs, we can house couples, we try to accommodate the real life situations people are in as they come off the street.

We operate a tenant –landlord hotline which averages 400 calls per month. Many of the callers get either information or direct assistance, trying to help them keep their existing homes; often, we mediate a problem between a landlord and the tenant. Last year we helped 2,811 families resolve their housing problem and stay in their home. We also assisted 676 families to relocate to appropriate permanent housing when they needed to move. With assistance from the city, the county and other local cities, we also are the primary fair housing agency, often assisting tenants to retain housing or obtain reasonable accommodations in order to avoid eviction or a forced move.

With all of this, we barely touch the need. We know that there are thousands more individuals and families in a terrible housing crisis than the 2,400 reported officially. For example, the local public schools reported over 12,000 children as without permanent addresses at some point during the school term. We all know that rents are increasing precipitously, making keeping and finding rental housing all the more difficult for lower income workers and those on subsidy programs. Is there more that we at SSHH can do to help?

First, SSHH could lease and operate more shared rental housing, charging \$350 to \$450 for a room with very modest support for homeless people who are not among the most vulnerable. We would need some subsidy from you for this program which could house 50, 100 even 200 people by the end of the year.

Second, HUD could fund some of the "Tier Two" Continuum of Care priorities, including the SSHH proposal to house 60 of the most vulnerable homeless. We could have them housed in less than 6 months.

Third SSHH could help establish and coordinate more neighborhood Homeless Assistance Resource Teams, as we have already in Elk Grove, Rancho Cordova and Citrus Heights, to help motivated community volunteers bring together private local resources, faith-based groups and government officials to mitigate the effects of homelessness in local communities.

Fourth, SSHH acted as the fiscal agent for First Step Communities until they gained their own tax exempt status. We believe that a sleeping cabin community could be in place by next winter to provide transitional housing for 80 or more homeless people while providing critical counseling and other services to assist them to achieve stability.

Finally, the City and County could take a new look at their zoning ordinances and encourage, rather than discourage, more rooming houses for individuals and couples. This inexpensive option, which could be implemented quickly if landlords were encouraged to remodel existing structures, would provide more inexpensive housing options, and if supervised carefully could keep it of good quality such as the homes SSHH operates.

I have provided you with a short hand-out about our current activities. Within a few weeks, we will complete our 2015 annual report, which explains in more detail what we do and how our clients benefit. We will provide Emily with a copy to circulate to you and post on-line.

Thank you for your consideration. Are there any questions I can answer?