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Mayor Kevin Johnson Announces Solutions for Winter Shelter *Plan Will Include More Emergency Beds at a Lower Cost than Last Year*

SACRAMENTO, CA – Today Mayor Kevin Johnson announced a new program to address winter shelter housing for homeless women, children and men in the Sacramento community this winter.

The announcement came after the city learned in September that the county funding for homelessness services had been cut by 84%. At that time, funding for winter shelter had been totally eliminated and the county had zero dollars to shelter people through the winter season.

In late September, Mayor Johnson charged a task force to find solutions for winter shelter, with a bold goal of creating 250 beds with less money. Last year, the county offered just 206 winter shelter beds.

Today, Johnson announced that the task force was able to create 269 beds, while also finding resources to help over 100 households move from shelters into permanent housing.

The task force's achievement is part of an effort to help facilitate and mobilize local organizations throughout the city, county and region to create a program of emergency beds, transitional housing, permanent housing and motel vouchers.

“The idea of having zero winter shelter capacity was completely unacceptable to me,” Johnson said.

“Given the desperate conditions of state, county and city budgets in California, our ability to create emergency winter housing is a triumph of hard work and cooperation.”

Last year, the county paid almost \$700,000 for winter shelter. Due to the current economic climate and budgetary issues, it could no longer afford to pay this amount to run the winter shelter at Cal Expo from November to April.

This year, there is five-way balanced funding from the federal government, county, city, local service providers and private donations. In addition to leveraging support from all sectors, the task force cut costs by over \$200,000.

In the plan, the city, county and private sources are all matching funds at the \$100,000 to \$150,000 level. They are also drawing on local non-profits and federal resources through Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program.

“Most communities avoid the entire subject of homelessness. Here in Sacramento, we are choosing not to close our eyes anymore. Fortunately, we have many more people who are willing to step forward and find practical solutions,” Johnson said.

Recognizing that the homeless population is not “one size fits all”, the task force, along with the help of city and county officials, have customized shelter options for families, single men, single women, couples, and even people with pets.

In addition to creating more beds in local shelters for the winter months, the county is freeing up existing beds by helping families and individuals leave the shelter and move to a permanent home or to transitional housing.

“This fall and winter, we will be able to give a hand up and empower over 200 men, women and children to leave shelters and truly have a place to call their own,” said Johnson.

The city council and county board of supervisors are giving final approval to the plan next week. Locations will be ready for use around the city, in the county and throughout the region by November.

Mayor Johnson is currently chair of the policy board to end homelessness in Sacramento and focused on finding long-term, comprehensive solutions that will end homelessness in our region. His campaign slogan, “A City That Works for Everyone,” was designed with the homeless population in mind.

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Mayor Johnson can be followed on:

Official Mayor’s Site: www.cityofsacramento.org/mayor/

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Kevin-Johnson/30765321048>

Twitter: https://twitter.com/KJ_MayorJohnson