California Cohort 1: 100-Day Challenge Summary

Riverside County

100-Day Challenge Goal

In 100 Days, 140 seniors aged 65 years and older who are currently participating in Project Roomkey will be in safe and stable permanent housing.

100-DAY CHALLENGE CONTEXT & FOCUS AREAS

HISTORY OF COLLABORATION TO END HOMELESSNESS

Prior to the 100-Day Challenge, Riverside County had already begun to mobilize stakeholders around a community-wide focus on addressing senior homelessness. A joint convening of the California Association of Area Agencies on Aging and County Welfare Directors Association Adults Committee held on January 23, 2020 resulted in creating a greater awareness of the causes, interventions, and solutions regarding senior homelessness among stakeholders in Riverside County. The community was able to garner significant support from the county Board of Supervisors, county executives and departments, Continuum of Care (CoC) members and the CoC Board of governance to dedicate resources to increased efforts to prevent and end homelessness among seniors. Members of the Riverside County Board of Supervisors have been consistency and actively engaged in addressing homelessness in their respective districts, with a specific attention to senior homelessness. Riverside County was committed to using the 100-Day Challenge as an opportunity to build upon these partnerships and the new relationships forged during the COVID-19 crisis to implement innovative solutions and achieve tangible results to ensure that seniors across the County are safely and stably housed.

100-DAY CHALLENGE FOCUS AREAS

System leaders from across Riverside County came together to help identify the following areas of focus for their 100-Day Challenge on Project Roomkey:

- Housing seniors (65 years and over) who are currently sheltered in hotels and motels as part of Project Roomkey, including veterans and seniors with disabilities or complex medical conditions;
- Finding innovative solutions for seniors facing high barriers and multiple needs;
- Advancing equitable access to housing and services; and
- Implementing trauma-informed strategies to meet the needs of seniors experiencing homelessness.

System leaders also recognized the importance of strong partnerships in order to reach the 100-Day Challenge goal and recommended that the team test innovative ways to enhance existing collaborative efforts, including:

- Establishing single points of contact for cross-partner resources to facilitate access to services;
- Providing wraparound case management to seniors to ensure that applications for needed public benefits are completed and processed expeditiously;
- Developing and testing training/cross-training standards for networks of professionals regarding homeless resources and their qualifying criteria;
- Establishing and using partnership agreements to triage service referrals to network partners based on acuity, need, and/or resource availability; and
- Developing tools and processes to find solutions to cover "gap services" through the network partnership.

100-DAY CHALLENGE SUCCESSES, ACCOMPLISHMENTS & INNOVATIONS

SNAPSHOT OF 100-DAY CHALLENGE PROGRESS

100-Day Challenge Goal: *In 100 Days, 140 seniors aged 65 years and older who are currently participating in Project Roomkey will be in safe and stable permanent housing.*

OUTCOMES AS OF DAY 100:
74 Project Roomkey (PRK) guests who have secured housing

Permanent Housing	**Pending Housing Placements**	**Housing Vouchers**
58 seniors in PRK sites permanently housed	**16 seniors in PRK sites** pending permanent housing placement as of Day 100	**120 housing vouchers issued** for seniors from PRK sites

ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN SYSTEMS CHANGE

CROSS-SYSTEMS COLLABORATION

Riverside County was able to recruit and maintain active involvement from a diverse array of partner agencies for the 100-Day Challenge. The community leveraged the 100-Day Challenge to make a strong push to broaden the range of organization – including non-profit service providers and government agencies – involved in solving the homelessness and housing crisis for seniors in Riverside County. The Team incorporated housing agencies, the County Public Housing Authority, service providers, city officials, and representatives from a number of County departments, including Public Social Services, Mental Health, Adult Protective Services, In-Home Supportive Services, Office of Aging, and Veterans Services. The Team was also able to strengthen an existing partnership with the County Department of Public Social Services, Self-Sufficiency Division to help document income levels and

make connections to housing vouchers for Project Roomkey guests. Riverside County is working to formalize these relationships by establishing memoranda of understanding (MOUs) and data sharing agreements across partner agencies for the 100-Day Challenge.

This robust cross-system collaboration allowed Riverside County to get feedback on current processes from across organizations; to understand the different approaches and strengths of participating agencies; and to develop multidisciplinary teams to coordinate efforts to connect seniors in Project Roomkey to permanent housing options. For the City and County of Riverside, this collaboration ensured that successes were communicated back to elected officials, including regular updates to City Council, in order to garner greater political support for addressing the needs of seniors experiencing homelessness beyond the 100-Day Challenge.

CULTURE OF ORGANIZATIONS & COMMUNICATION

Riverside County utilized the 100-Day Challenge to change the "normal way of doing work" in order to better meet the needs of seniors participating in Project Roomkey. Through the 100-Day Challenge, the Team worked to improve cross-provider and cross-system communication to allow for stronger coordination of rehousing efforts. The 100-Day Challenge Team mobilized frontline workers from across the system to help connect seniors in Project Roomkey to housing and services. In order to support these coordination efforts, the Team set up a WhatsApp chat group to enable real-time communication about client readiness and available units and developed a case management protocol to support consistent and effective case management and communication with clients across Project Roomkey sites. The Team quickly established a release of information (ROI) and established regular calls focused on housing coordination to help break down silos that had previously existed in the local housing process. Riverside County also implemented daily team check-ins, regular update emails on the number of seniors housed, and lively weekly team meetings to keep everyone engaged and committed to housing seniors at a rate substantially higher than before the start of the 100-Day Challenge.

In addition to improving communication and coordination between agencies, Riverside County also set out to improve the culture of the work among providers to better reflect the unique needs of seniors experiencing homelessness. The Team is working across different agencies serving seniors to incorporate greater knowledge of the housing process into their work so that they can better navigate seniors into safe and stable housing options as part of their day-to-day operations. Riverside County also began to incorporate town halls and meetings at Project Roomkey sites in order to improve communication directly with guests and provide clear information on the housing process and the anticipated journey from Project Roomkey into safe and stable housing. This work has helped to create a broader cultural shift in Riverside County among housing and service providers to respond more intentionally and collaboratively to the unique needs of seniors experiencing homelessness.

INNOVATIVE HOUSING OPTIONS

Riverside County recognized the need to invest in creative housing solutions in order to meet the needs of seniors participating in Project Roomkey. The 100-Day Challenge Team worked closely with seniors at Project Roomkey sites in Riverside County to learn more about their housing preferences and what they consider a safe and stable home environment, including considerations for health needs and experiences of trauma. The community is exploring a range of innovative housing options – including shared housing, back-yard houses, casitas, skilled nursing facilities, and board-and care facilities – and is working to identify those options that best meet the needs and preferences of seniors experiencing homelessness. Riverside County is committed to providing a range of housing options that fit the needs of the seniors participating in Project Roomkey that they are working to serve.

One significant success for Riverside County was working with the County Public Housing Authority to secure 120 housing vouchers for seniors aged 65 and older participating in Project Roomkey. Riverside County found that most of the seniors participating in Project Roomkey are living on fixed incomes, and being linked to subsidized housing through the Public Housing Authority greatly increases their chance of getting placed into permanent housing and sustaining that housing placement. Team Leaders are committed to ensuring the sustainability of the 100-Day Challenge Team's housing efforts and are working to implement a county-wide strategy to ensure that appropriate support services are in place once seniors participating in Project Roomkey are housed.

LANDLORD ENGAGEMENT

One strategy to increase housing availability for seniors participating in Project Roomkey in Riverside County was to strengthen relationships with local landlords. The 100-Day Challenge Team launched a comprehensive landlord engagement campaign, including a press release and landlord recruitment flyer that was shared through email and across various social media platforms (#ProjectRoomKeyRivCo) as part of a "Landlord Call to Action". The Team also partnered with a local agency, Path of Life Ministries, to offer landlord incentives of $500 for every unit committed to housing seniors participating in Project Roomkey. Throughout the 100-Day Challenge, Riverside County was able to secure over 40 units through private landlords to be used for Section 8 applications for seniors exiting Project Roomkey into permanent housing. The community is continuing to build new relationships with landlords and is working with existing landlord partners to understand their needs to shape future outreach and engagement efforts.

SYSTEM MAPPING & COORDINATION

The Riverside County 100-Day Challenge Team worked to address gaps in the adult homelessness system that prevent seniors from accessing the range of housing and services they need to successfully transition out of homelessness. The Team leveraged the knowledge and experience gained throughout the 100-Day Challenge to develop a Housing Service Roadmap for ending senior homelessness in the County of Riverside. This Roadmap shows the flow of seniors experiencing homelessness through the homeless response system from the point of identification to housing placement and follow-up case management. The Roadmap will be used to help identify and address housing barriers for seniors throughout the system in the months following the 100-Day Challenge. The Team concluded that there is also need to make changes to Coordinated Entry to better serve seniors, including developing and utilizing a By-Name List specific to seniors and revisiting the prioritization process to ensure that the vulnerabilities of seniors are adequately reflected, such as increased vulnerability due to complex medical conditions and increased risk of severe illness due to COVID-19.

MAINTAINING 100-DAY CHALLENGE MOMENTUM

Three Month Community Performance Goal

In the next 3 months, we will house between 15 and 45 seniors currently participating in Project Roomkey.

In order to lock in their gains and maintain the momentum around connecting Project Roomkey guest to safe and stable housing, the Riverside County 100-Day Challenge team plans to focus on the following priorities moving forward:

1. Continuing with regular team meetings, case conferencing, and housing navigation meetings;

2. Convening a regular steering group meeting involving and extended sponsor group and team representatives;
3. Using WhatsApp for regular communication on unit availability; and
4. Continuing to regularly share updates on housing placements.

Additionally, the team has established the following priority system shifts needed to sustain performance and proposed actions to make those system shifts a reality.

Priority System Shifts	Action Areas for System Shifts & Sustainability
Overall: Our system does not serve seniors adequately.	*In an ideal world, there will be an 'alcove' for seniors in our system.* • *We will have a senior-friendly crisis-response center which will provide a safe place to which outreach workers can refer seniors for short-term stays while they get their documents and approvals for appropriate housing.* • *Seniors will have ready access to needed health services and other benefits.* • *There will be outreach workers, case managers and housing navigators dedicated to working with seniors.* • *We will have adequate and appropriate case management (including updating our Permanent Support Housing services) to adequately meet the needs of vulnerable seniors.*
Policies and guidelines needed to facilitate sustained progress	• Lock in key multi-sectoral and multi-agency partnerships through signed MOUs • Strengthen partnerships, particularly with Social Services Agency (SSA) and Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) • Create a clear path to vital document collection • Assess bottlenecks for seniors in current coordinated entry system • Improve eligibility structure for bridge housing • Restructure existing fund allocation to maintain service levels where possible • Create mechanisms and policy guidance to access flexible funding for county and city government and non-profit providers
Tools and processes that enable progress	• Involve all relevant stakeholders to create a dedicated by-name list (BNL) for seniors and revisit current prioritization processes (e.g. when to use VISPDAT) • Broaden the use of the Housing Locator tool specifically for seniors (e.g. providing training, promoting widespread use) • Develop and implement a clear strategy for landlord engagement, including maintaining a landlord register, peer support, communication tools, and reliable mitigation funding

	• Create and use a county-wide release of information (ROI) form
Relationships, roles and skills identified as necessary to sustain progress	• Redefine job descriptions to align with tasks that need carried out to house seniors • Identify critical staffing needs • Involve and train staff from the range of service agencies working with seniors in ensuring that seniors are housed
Ways to promote equity and client engagement	• Provide clear guidance to clients on program requirements and actively seek out their input on program effectiveness • Continue to implement Town Halls with Project Roomkey guests
Communication with system leaders to facilitate progress	• Share progress and obstacles with policy makers • Convey requests to the State (e.g. addition of focus on 65+ to State government housing priorities)