

**Coachella Valley Association of Governments  
Technical Advisory Committee  
June 12, 2017**



**Staff Report**

**Subject:** West Valley Housing Navigation Program Addressing Homelessness Update

**Contact:** Cheryll Dahlin, Management Analyst ([cdahlin@cvag.org](mailto:cdahlin@cvag.org))

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**Recommendation:** Approve, in concept, entering into an Agreement with Path of Life Ministries to provide West Valley Housing Navigation Program Services.

**Homelessness Committee: To Review (6/21/17)**

**Background:** The CVAG Executive Committee made a commitment to the administration of Roy's Desert Resource Center (Roy's), an emergency shelter in North Palm Springs until 2017. Roy's has helped more than 6,000 unduplicated individuals and families since 2009. The Homelessness Committee learned the operator of Roy's, Jewish Family Services of San Diego, dba Desert SOS, will not continue in that role after June 2017. The Homelessness Committee determined that a fresh approach to providing homeless services in the West Valley is needed given a new permanent shelter location is not easily identifiable and replacement services needs to be available as soon as July 1, 2017.

At the November Homelessness Committee, the late Supervisor John J. Benoit endorsed the vision put forth by the County to transition the emergency shelter program at Roy's with services centered on the Rapid Rehousing philosophy, also known as Housing First. Supervisor Benoit also announced the new purpose for Roy's to become a much needed long term board and care facility with 90 beds to be administered by the Riverside University Health System, Behavioral Health.

The Homelessness Committee released a Request for Interest (RFI) for a Program Operator for Addressing Homelessness through West Valley Housing Navigation Program on February 24, 2017. The RFI focused on two distinct services: (1) Homeless Prevention and Diversion and; (2) Crisis Stabilization Housing. The submission deadline was March 14, 2017. CVAG staff received two submissions, one from Path of Life Ministries (POLM) and another from Mr. Bruce Rhodes. Mr. Rhodes withdrew his application.

The Homelessness Committee approved the POLM Request for Interest submission on April 19, 2017. The Homelessness held a study session June 6, 2017 to receive a presentation from POLM's executive director about the proposed program. POLM is a private, nonprofit organization headquartered in Riverside. POLM has been providing homeless services for over 12 years. They are governed by an eight-member Board of Directors and Damien O'Farrell serves as their chief

executive officer. POLM supports a Housing First program model and employs 45 staff who are engaged in emergency sheltering, rapid rehousing, and permanent supportive housing. The organization receives funding from private donors and public sources such as US Department of Housing and Urban Development (through the Riverside County Continuum of Care), FEMA Emergency Food and Shelter Program, and Community Development Block Grant programs.

POLM proposes delivering WVHNP services from one office location (to be determined) in each of the three cities - Desert Hot Springs, Palm Springs, and Cathedral City. Using a staggered staffing schedule, coverage will be provided 7 days a week from 7am to 9pm. In addition to the office location, WVHNP will be conducting outreach in these West Valley cities. Below is a summary of the two components that were asked in the RFI:

1. Homeless Prevention and Diversion (HPD) services will be achieved through rapid rehousing opportunities, emergency rental assistance, housing navigation assistance, and supportive services such as security deposits, utility assistance, and case management services.
2. Crisis Stabilization Housing (CSH) programming will ensure that individuals in emergency housing exit quickly into stable non-emergency housing. POLM intends to provide 6-10 beds of emergency housing in Desert Hot Springs, Palm Springs, and Cathedral City through the leasing of up to 4 rental properties in each of these cities. Clients may stay up to a maximum of 90 days. POLM already has these types of homes in every Coachella Valley city, as a part of their countywide efforts. Like those homes, clients will be monitored by case managers with the goal to be permanently housed.

In addition to these services POLM, the contract outlines the leverage of community partnerships and services that will enhance opportunities for the Western Coachella Valley. All individuals and clients will be assessed and entered into the Countywide Coordinated Entry System that helps those in the highest need first. A ramp up plan beginning July 1, 2017 is outlined in the contract, along with projections based on POLM's experience in Housing First programs.

**Fiscal Impact:** The Homelessness Committee previously directed staff to ask cities to budget a place holder. Letters were sent to member jurisdictions, but did not specify an amount. To date, the cities of Palm Springs, Palm Desert, Cathedral City and Rancho Mirage have budgeted a placeholder for \$103,000 for FY 17-18. The City of Desert Hot Springs has put a placeholder in the amount of \$100,000, but still in discussions on its allocation. The City of Coachella is in discussions with their council. The City of Indian Wells has requested CVAG staff to participate in the City's Grants in Aid Program, which meets this month. The City of Indio contributes \$103,000 to homeless programs within the City. The City of La Quinta contributes \$50,000 to Coachella Valley Rescue Mission and has provided a mini-grant to Martha's Village and Kitchen. The County has notified CVAG that they will be able to provide a confirmation of the County's contribution after June 13<sup>th</sup>.

POLM's proposed budget for the WVHNP is \$864,737.22. The contract approval is conditional upon the funding received from cities. The program is scalable, so there can be more or less services provided depending on the contributions.

There is no fiscal impact as staff time is charged under the duties of the homelessness program.

**Contract Finalization:** Minor changes/revisions may be made for clarification purposes by CVAG's Executive Director and Legal Counsel prior to execution.