HUMAN SERVICES GRANTS PROGRAM (HSGP)

FY 2023-24 PROGRAM STATUS REPORT

Agency: The People Concern

Program: Housing Retention Program

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###### FY 2023-24 SUBMISSION CALENDAR

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| **REPORTS** | **REPORT PERIOD** | **REPORT DEADLINE** |
| Mid-Year Program and  | 7/1/2023 - 12/31/2023 | Monday, February 5, 2024 |
| Fiscal Status Reports |
| Year-End Program and  | 7/1/2023 - 6/30/2024 | Monday, August 5, 2024 |
| Fiscal Status Reports |

**Instructions:**

* All reports submitted to the City are considered public record. Please note that staff will use the information provided in the mid-year and year-end reports to provide Council and the public with summary reports of agency performance highlighting key outcomes, successes, findings, and concerns.
* Please be concise. For example, do NOT copy and paste repetitive content from your Mid-Year to your Year-End. In most cases, a complete program status report will be no more than 8-10 pages in length.
* When preparing your report, please be sure to refer to your current Program Plan (Exhibit A) Program Budget (Exhibit B) and Special Funding Conditions (Exhibit C), of your executed Grant Agreement with the City.
* To submit your completed report to the City, upload the file to your agency’s SharePoint folder **as a Word document** and notify your grant analyst once you have done so.
* Please contact your grants analyst or humanservices@santamonica.gov for any issue with accessing your agency’s SharePoint folder.

**SECTION I: PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS, CHALLENGES, AND CHANGES**

Provide a brief summary of your program accomplishments, challenges, and changes that occurred during the reporting period. Please also provide information or observations related to population or service trends.

**Year-End Report: Housing Retention Program in Santa Monica, California**

Operating within the dynamic environment of Santa Monica, California, the Housing Retention Program has empowered individuals who were formerly experiencing homelessness to stay housed. During this reporting period, the agency proudly reports that it successfully maintained a 97% retention rate.

Over the course of the fiscal year, the program has adeptly tackled the unique challenges of the local housing market and the needs of our high-acuity clients, significantly enhancing the lives of these residents and uplifting the health and wellness of the entire community. Facilitated through the efforts of experienced and dedicated staff, the program provides comprehensive supportive services, including housing placement and retention services, mental health support, substance use programming, case management, income and benefits services, money management services, or linkage to new services as needed. Indeed, by leveraging The People Concern’s extensive network of landlords and housing sources, the program ensures that clients find the most suitable housing units to meet their needs and helps keep them stably housed.

**Program Achievements and Client Support**

Our program identified and provided housing retention support to 42 individuals within the Santa Monica community this reporting period. This demand for the program’s services highlights the widespread nature of housing instability in an area where market dynamics intensify the struggle for affordable and secure housing. Notably, 41 out of 42 participants (97%) have successfully obtained or maintained housing throughout this contract year, showcasing the program's effectiveness and reflecting the program's robust support mechanisms.

Further accomplishments include:

* With 41 out of 42 participants obtaining or maintaining housing throughout this contract year, our program has demonstrated the significant impact of retention services on housing stability. The one individual who relinquished their housing transitioned into interim housing outside of Santa Monica to continue to focus on building their wellness and gain access to more intensive case management support. The People Concern team continues to engage with the client regarding their housing needs, with the hope of re-housing them once they are stable. The agency also notes that another client who did not continue receiving retention services through this funding still retained housing during this reporting period. That client is counted towards the outcomes, as they only transitioned into project-based housing (remaining housed) because they needed a more therapeutic environment.
* The Housing Retention Program conducted comprehensive assessments for benefits eligibility for 40 individuals (100% of the annual goal), ensuring they receive the support they need.
* The program successfully empowered its clients to maintain income stability for client 38 (92% of the annual goal) of our clients, enabling them to meet their housing and other essential needs.
* Staff also identified and provided ongoing mental health services to 18 clients out of the 33 clients who reported a mental health disorder (51% of the annual goal), addressing critical issues that affect housing stability.

**Successes in Housing Placements**

Securing and maintaining permanent housing in Santa Monica's competitive market is a significant accomplishment. The success of our placements underscores the program's adaptability and determination to address the unique challenges posed by local market dynamics. Notable accomplishments include:

* Successfully securing permanent housing for 22 clients, demonstrating a 55% placement rate among those identified for support. The agency notes that the other 20 program participants were already housed before the reporting period began.
* Reducing the average time to secure housing from 12 weeks to eight weeks through improved processes and stronger partnerships with local landlords and housing providers.
* Increasing client satisfaction rates by 20% since last year, as measured by post-placement surveys, reflecting enhanced support and service delivery.

**Comprehensive Support and Mental Health Integration**

Recognizing the critical role mental health plays in housing stability, our program conducted comprehensive mental health assessments at the time of intake for all clients. The compounded stressors associated with housing insecurity in Santa Monica emphasize the need for holistic mental health support. Our integrated approach includes:

* Providing access to mental health services for 18 clients, addressing issues such as anxiety, depression, and trauma that can hinder housing stability. While all 42 program participants were provided a mental health assessment, only 33 reported a mental health disorder and were all offered mental health services. Fifteen of those clients declined being linked, although they can and will receive clinical interventions when necessary. Any interventions are planned through case conferences with master level clinical staff and consultation with licensed clinical leadership. The high acuity level of many of our clients makes accepting treatment for themselves more challenging, but our staff consistently employs different interventions to help clients accept treatment, aiming to achieve our goal of a 75% engagement rate. Two clients, who previously declined mental health care, due to the work of the Case Managers, are currently pending enrollment with The People Concern’s mental health team
* The program implemented wellness workshops and support groups, which fostered a sense of community and resilience.

**The Path Forward**

The path to achieving stable housing in Santa Monica is undeniably complex, yet our program has a proven effect on reducing the recidivism rate and offers an evidence-backed method of permanently ending homelessness. As of this reporting period, the Housing Retention Program’s success rate of 97% notably exceeds the 92% of all of Los Angeles County’s programs (per the July through December 2023 study of Los Angeles County Department of Health Services). Through strategic interventions, continuous support, and dedicated advocacy, we empower our clients to secure not only housing but also a brighter, more stable future.

Our ongoing adaptability and innovative approaches ensure that the Housing Retention Program continues to make a significant and lasting impact on the lives of our clients and the Santa Monica community.

###### SECTION II: COLLABORATION EFFORTS

 Currently, our Housing Retention Program collaborates with The People Concern’s interim housing providers to enhance our support for a wider range of individuals. Clients at sites such as our own Santa Monica Shelter (Samoshel) receive guidance for housing navigation, life skills, mental health support, and other tailored services. When clients move from interim housing to the Housing Retention Program, an integrated team ensures a warm handoff between departments by providing intensive services through increased contact with Case Managers and Clinicians. Additionally, we maintain contact with The People Concern’s outreach teams to ensure our services are known and utilized throughout the community. These collaborations allow us to leverage combined resources and expertise, resulting in a more efficient and focused approach to tackling housing challenges within our community.

 Our comprehensive continuum of services emphasizes our unwavering commitment to improving housing retention. By forging strong alliances and expanding our outreach, we are dedicated to creating lasting solutions that address the complex housing needs of our community members.

###### SECTION III: STAFFING PATTERN

If applicable, please describe how staffing changes during the report period have impacted service delivery, caseload, and redistribution of work among other staff to ensure service levels are maintained. please also describe recruitment efforts and an anticipated hire date

* The staffing plan for this contract includes two Case Managers who carry a caseload of 1:20 high acuity individuals. Clinical and administrative oversite is provided by the Program Manager.  One Case Manager was already hired at the time of contract execution in July 2024.   A second Case Manager was since hired because of staffing turnover. However, since April of this contract period, staffing remains stable. The staff that did resign from their position left the agency for higher paying positions, or a desire to work with less acute individuals. Leadership provides many trainings on this population with special focus on field safety and crisis management, as well as daily/weekly clinical support around difficult client situations.
* When we do have staffing transitions, the caseload is reassigned to other Case Managers for coverage, as well as covered by the Program Manager.
* Open positions are posted within two days of notice by our Recruitment Team to ensure a steady flow of resumes. Leadership in the Housing Department works as quickly as possible to screen applicants and interview appropriate individuals.

**SECTION IV: GRIEVANCES & GOOD NEIGHBOR AGREEMENT (GNA)**

Please provide the total number of grievances recorded by your program during the reporting period. Discuss trends in the number and types of grievances and any action taken to address common or recurring issues.

The People Concern did not receive any client grievances during this reporting period. The agency also submitted its Good Neighbor Agreement to the City of Santa Monica and continues to uphold all City policies in ensuring consistent communication and proper activities in the Santa Monica community.

**SECTION V: SPECIAL FUNDING CONDITIONS**

The Agency will assist eligible participants in submitting applications to applicable relief and housing sustainability programs, including local, state, and federal rental assistance programs, including but not limited to: Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) and Below Market Housing (BMH) Waitlists, Preserving Our Diversity (POD), Continuum of Care (CoC), and HOME voucher programs.

The Housing Retention Program also confirms that:

* We continue to align resources, including services and existing bed capacity, with the goal of permanently housing priority populations consistent with City of Santa Monica requirements.
* We ensure clients have access to services outside of Santa Monica and link clients with services and resources in their community of origin or other appropriate regional services through program referrals or transportation assistance, such as Project Homecoming.
* The program provides adequate supportive services based on individual need to Santa Monica Program Participants placed in permanent housing to promote housing retention, regardless of the type of subsidy or housing utilized.
* We participate in the City’s HMIS by signing and adhering to the HMIS Agency Agreement; use the HMIS to comply with reporting requirements for participants in the City’s homeless initiatives; participate in other efforts to collect data and evaluate services.
* The Housing Retention Program documents service match in the City’s Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) on a monthly basis for all clients utilizing SMHA Continuum of Care vouchers.
* All SMPP individuals who receive case management services should be assessed through the VI-SPDAT and be co-enrolled in the Coordinated Entry System (CES).
* Program staff will submit Santa Monica Service Registry applications to Human Services staff for SMPP clients who score high acuity (8 or higher) on the VI-SPDAT.
* Program staff ensure that they will notify CSM Human Services staff as well as Housing Authority Staff (for SMHA voucher program participants) when SMPP program participants are at risk of eviction.
* The Housing Retention Program adheres to the attached Intake Policy for documenting homelessness.

In addition, the program will:

* Update all client information in HMIS within 10 working days of that information being provided.
* Maintain a hard copy and electronic Continuum of Care participant files and data.
	+ Hard Copy Files must contain:
		- A Face Sheet.
		- Copies of Application Materials.
		- Copies of Continuum of Care Contract, the Voucher, SMHA Grievance Procedures and Termination Policy.
		- Consent for Services and Releases of Information v. Annual Service Plan (updated quarterly).
		- Service Match Documentation (e.g. doctor’s verifications, transcripts, receipts).
	+ Electronic Files and Data
		- Enter accurate and timely tenant information into the City’s HMIS (as required by the most recent version of HUD form 40118), as well as progress notes.
		- All HMIS data entry must be maintained on a regular basis and must be complete by the last day of the grant year. The City of Santa Monica will monitor data entry on a monthly and quarterly basis.
		- Corrective Action Plan if i. and ii. above are not met.
* Maintain data consistent with HUD, Human Services and SMHA grant requirements, including timely entry and provision of data for reporting purposes
	+ Providing SMHA with an Annual Progress Report (APR) from HMIS, including accurate and documented service match figures within 30 days of the end of the grant reporting year. Also, providing SMHA with participant rosters and annual outcomes for the grant within 30 days of the end of the grant reporting year. The grant ends on May 31, 2024 and APR Reports, match reports and the annual outcomes for the grant are due no later than June 30, 2024.
* Attend all Chronic Homeless Program (CHP) monthly Case Managers’ meetings as scheduled by Housing & Human Services Division (HHSD).
* Inform SMHA of any personnel or program issues, including but not limited to, extended staff illness, injury, terminations, or staff resignations that may negatively affect the ability of the grantee to fulfill its Continuum of Care funding conditions as defined in this contract.
	+ When a Case Manager is assigned or re-assigned to a Continuum of Care participant, the Agency must inform SMHA in writing within 10 working days.
	+ If a property owner informs the agency that he/she plans to evict a participating tenant, that the participating tenant is violating lease agreement, or that for any other reason tenant’s housing might be affected the agency must inform the tenant’s Housing Specialist and Administrative Analyst responsible for CoC program at the SMHA within 10 working days.
* Inform the tenant’s Housing Specialist and Administrative Analyst responsible for CoC program at the SMHA within 10 working days f a property owner informs the agency that he/she plans to evict a participating tenant, that the participating tenant is violating lease agreement, or that for any other reason tenant’s housing might be affected.

**Residential Stability**

80% or more of participants will remain in permanent housing as of the end of the operating year or exit to permanent housing (subsidized or unsubsidized) during the operating year. The Case Manager will provide necessary life skills and supportive services to avert relapse to homelessness. Success will be measured by: 1) Case Manager will maintain a file on each resident which will include move in and move out dates and details on the destination after leaving the housing program 2) This data will be counted at the end of the program year

**Increased Skills or Income**

80% or more of participants age 18 and older will maintain or increase their total income (from all sources) as of the end of the operating year or program exit. Skills or income will be improved through: 1) Increased access to benefits; 2) Vocational/job training; and/or 3) Job search and placement. If it is determined that a participant has the capacity to increase his or her income and self-sufficiency through employment, Case Managers will support clients to enroll in vocational education or to search for and secure employment. It may also be determined that a client is unable to receive vocational/job training or job search and placement due to medical condition. If, after assessment, it is determined that a client is unable to work, case management efforts will focus on insuring clients have applied for and secured appropriate public benefits.

###### SECTION VI: BOARD INVOLVEMENT (COMPLETE AT YEAR-END ONLY)

Please indicate:

* Number of Board meetings conducted during the reporting period: Six (6).
* Board vacancies and plans to fill those vacancies, if applicable: No vacancies.
* Significant policy actions or development activities taken by the Board during the program year:

The Board of The People Concern emphasized capacity building for current Board members during this reporting period, but also focused on recruitment, by adding two members to the roster. The Board continued their personal capacity building within the realm of diversity, equity and inclusion through interactive activities led by the agency’s Chief Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Officer, Suzanne Edwards-Acton. Members of the Board also continued the practice of holding periodic Town Halls that explain the state of the agency with agency staff. A virtual meeting was held in October 2023 and another in May 2024. As The People Concern concluded our celebration of 60 years of service, the Board partnered with staff to host a celebration to which all staff were encouraged to attend.

The Board of Directors has remained primarily focused on supporting the agency to provide more affordable, permanent supportive housing to those in need in Los Angeles, as laid out in the Vision 2028 strategic plan. The Vision 2028 plan envisions future housing success for thousands more people in Los Angeles County so that 20,000 people are supported in permanent housing by The People Concern by 2028. The master leasing initiative continued as a tactic to increase affordable, supportive housing without depending on new housing stock and gained traction with County partners. Efforts to support the expanding staff and operating infrastructure continued as well as several new housing buildings with supportive services by The People Concern opened during the reporting period. The Board also supported sector-wide efforts to bring a housing and homeless services tax initiative to County voters this Fall.

**SECTION VII: PROGRAM PARTICIPANT INVOLVEMENT (COMPLETE AT YEAR-END ONLY)**

Share examples of how feedback from program participants was incorporated into program design during the program year.

Client satisfactions surveys were administered to all our Permanent Supportive Housing participants throughout the months of March through May 2024. Survey results were collected electronically, during face-to-face encounters, or by client receiving survey to hand in at a later date. Consideration for administration was given to client’s level of comfort with technology, written communication, and desire for privacy. The survey is also made available in Spanish.

The People Concern uses an adaptation of the HOME for GOOD Client Satisfaction Survey. The version created for our programs is separated into three categories and asks the client to report their satisfaction with Property Manager, Case Management Staff, and Overall Community. There is also space for additional comments.

Of those who completed the survey, 95% of the clients engaged indicated being highly satisfied with their Case Manager and case management services. Of the remaining 5% of surveys, 3% of the participants did not respond.

Comments regarding service staff included:

* “I can't recommend The People Concern more strongly for outreach to the homeless and client support after one has gotten into housing.”
* “Having a support system and housing is helping me stay healthy and safe. I appreciate it very much.”
* “Mr. R. (a Program Manager) is very professional. I recently had a situation that needed to be addressed ASAP I am pleased to say Mr. R. addressed in a very fast timely manner. It brings a sense of peace knowing that their team is there for support. I appreciate it thank you.”

The People Concern continues to be invested in mediating landlord and tenant relationships. If issues arise within the building, or with client behavior, we are keenly aware of the challenges both parties face and work to find an integrated intervention. When these barriers persist, we will continue to implement new strategies to retain positive relationships with landlords.

**SECTION VIII: SUCCESS STORIES (COMPLETE AT YEAR-END ONLY)**

Please include no more than three success stories that illustrate the impact of your program on individual participants or households. When doing so, please take care to avoid any personally identifiable information that could compromise the privacy of any program participants. Please also note that staff will use the information provided to update Council and the public on agency performance.

*Success Story # 1*: J lived in an apartment in Santa Monica for over 10 years before becoming homeless. After losing his job in 2019, J faced severe economic hardship, which left him unable to pay his rent. Consequently, he became homeless and ended up sleeping in Virginia Park, along with many others with similar stories.

After being contacted by the Santa Monica C3 outreach team, J moved into interim housing with The People Concern. There, he built a foundation of wellness and prepared to transition into permanent housing. His journey took a remarkable upturn when he was matched with a Santa Monica Housing Authority voucher, allowing him to successfully return to housing. He then enrolled in The People Concern’s Housing Retention Program, receiving ongoing case management support to reduce the likelihood of him becoming homeless again.

J proudly shares his successes since securing housing. With the stress of homelessness now behind him, he returned to school and found employment in his previous field of expertise. He is most proud of re-entering his previous social circle and no longer feeling isolated or ashamed of his economic or housing status. Instead, he experiences a meaningful reemergence into the aspects of life that bring him the most joy and happiness. We wish J continued success on his journey and remain committed to providing services that support his ongoing needs to stay housed, healthy, and safe.

*Success Story # 2*: When J signed a lease after moving into her own apartment in Santa Monica, her hopes and outlook on life dramatically changed for the positive. She started talking about her future goals and the activities that bring her joy. J envisioned pursuing passion projects and completing courses in computer technology, with long-term aspirations for a career in technology. Currently, she is working on developing an app and taking steps to stabilize her health to meet her career goals.

J recently volunteered to participate in a public panel designed to give a voice to those who have experienced homelessness. At this event, she shared her concerns about the rising needs of such individuals and the urgent need for more resources. Following this experience, she eagerly discussed it with her Case Manager, describing it as extremely meaningful and enjoyable. J felt like she was making a difference and is now actively working as an advocate in her community.

With the help of her Case Manager, J has agreed to consistently participate in mental health services for the first time since engaging with The People Concern. This is a significant accomplishment and demonstrates how the Housing Retention Program works to stabilize individuals and influence their choices regarding their care. J’s success is evident in her increased connection to the community and her goals for self-determination. The People Concern’s continued engagement through the Housing Retention Program will be key in helping her stay on track and maintain housing stability.

**By submitting this report to the Human Services Division, I certify that this report is true, complete, and accurate to the best of my knowledge and that all disbursements have been made in compliance with the conditions of the Grantee Agreement and for the purposes indicated**