



STRATEGIC PLAN
SOHUM HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES
2023-2027

OCTOBER 2023

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SoHum Housing Opportunities (SHO) is committed to the idea that adequate shelter for all benefits our whole community.

“Our mission is to explore all options for creating this, including transitional housing villages; safe legal camping; and eventually permanent housing.”

This is what we have been exploring since 2018. We are also looking into the possibility of finding property for a Resource Center, that we envision as a place houseless people would be able to go to for assistance such as information regarding mental health counseling, drug use/abuse counseling, health resources, job training programs, phone charging, mail pick up, food assistance, washer/dryer, showers, etc.

When COVID 19 hit, we put that mission on pause for a while. With funding from the Humboldt Area Foundation we were able to provide the most at-risk homeless with temporary housing at a local motel to shelter in place during the first month of the pandemic. After the initial funding ran out the Humboldt County DHHS (Department of Health and Human Services) Roomkey Program enabled us to continue to shelter folks at the motel. Recently SHO was Community Development Block Grant funding enabling us to keep houseless people at risk safe as well as decreasing community spread. We are also providing masks, information about COVID, and tools to keep themselves and the community safe.

When houseless people have access to shelter/low income housing, they are much more likely to get help for mental, physical, and behavioral health issues such as

substance use/abuse. Once these barriers are addressed, the likelihood of people's ability to find and maintain employment and become contributing members of society leading happier lives increases. This results in positive community impact as crime goes down and there is less litter/panhandling, which leads to Garberville becoming a more attractive place for tourism and overall community well-being.

When we participate in giving people a second chance at life, it's a double blessing: one for our community and one for the individuals we serve. We understand that not all people will make changes overnight and instead it's a gradual process with the appropriate supports in place and some may not change. SHO has been able to assist houseless folks to be more food secure, address behavioral/mental health issues, and temporarily shelter the most at risk during the COVID 19 crisis.

Patte Rae, SHO Board President

WHO WE ARE

Founded in 2018, SHO is a grassroots 501 (c), (3) organization comprised of a board of directors.

President – Patte Rae

Board Member – Jay Moller

Vice President – Tami Moore

Board Member – Babette Bach

Treasurer – Caryn Surber

Board Member – Christy Watson

Secretary – Leonor (Leo) Ramirez

Board Member- Diana Copithorne

Mission – SHO is committed to the idea that adequate shelter for all benefits the whole community. Our mission is to explore all options for creating this, including transitional housing villages; safe, legal camping; and eventually permanent housing.

Vision – We envision a healthy community where every individual is acknowledged for their right to affordable shelter, basic sustenance, and opportunities to improve their lives.

Who We Serve – Anyone in our community who is un-housed.

Where We Operate – We provide services to anyone who is un-housed in and around Garberville. We provide outreach to local encampments and shelter/supportive services in Garberville, CA located in Southern Humboldt County.

OUR HISTORY

Beginnings

2016

- The Veteran's Hall in Garberville closed leaving no winter shelter in Southern Humboldt.
- As a result, two advocates (Peg Anderson and Yashi Hoffman) stepped in to revive the



SHO is Founded

2017-2018

- A board of local community members is formed and SHO obtains its nonprofit status.
- SHO begins to work with community partners to ensure winter shelter, meals, and other necessary basics are provided.



Services are Expanded

2019-2020

- Partnerships with Affordable Homeless Housing Alternatives (AHHA), Redwoods Rural Health Center to facilitate a monthly shower event.
- Prior to COVID, weekly free Friday community lunch was held at the Healy Senior Center for input to help the unhoused.
- COVID-19 response included Project Roomkey, through funding from the Humboldt Area Foundation and Humboldt County HHSA.
- Meals delivered to encampments weekly, along with other supplies and COVID-19 information and resources.
- Awarded CDRG funding to support services

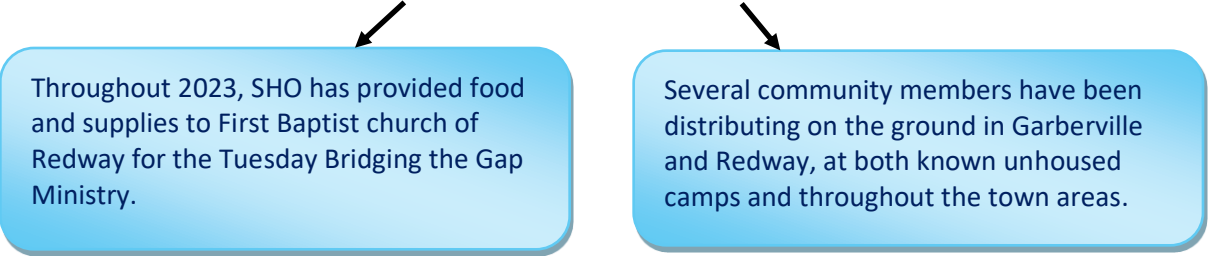


Continued Services and Evolution of Safe Camp

2020-2023

- Collaborated with local churches and with the Mateel Community Center for warming center days and overnight shelter days.
- Worked with CalFresh and Redwoods Rural Health Center to provide weekly meal deliveries to local unhoused camps.
- Developed plan for Safe Camp, working with grant writers to secure property.
- Hosted local fundraiser, Wine Auction, proceeds went towards funds for Safe Camp.

FOOD DISTRIBUTION



Throughout 2023, SHO has provided food and supplies to First Baptist church of Redway for the Tuesday Bridging the Gap Ministry.

Several community members have been distributing on the ground in Garberville and Redway, at both known unhoused camps and throughout the town areas.

After the Veteran's Hall in Garberville closed, Southern Humboldt was left without a location for an Extreme Weather Shelter. In early 2016, longtime residents and local advocates, Peg Anderson and Yashi Hoffman, worked to revive this effort. By that winter, they and a small group of dedicated volunteers were able to offer a hot meal and shelter on the coldest and wettest winter nights. The First Baptist Church in Redway and Presbyterian Church in Garberville were the primary locations, along with a few nights at the Healy Senior Center and the Mateel. That year was particularly stormy and there were 17 shelter nights. Some of the volunteers spend Christmas Eve and/or Christmas Day night with the sheltered. Although it was certainly different, it was a wonderful Holiday, complete with spiced cider, candy canes, and a visit from Peg's young grandchildren. Out of that group of early volunteers came the beginning of SHO, and four of its original Board Members.

In 2018 the board expanded and SHO became an official 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization. We have since collaborated with Affordable Humboldt Housing Alternatives (AHHA), and Redwoods Rural Health Center (RRHC) to facilitate a monthly Shower event with AHHA's 3-bathroom trailer that they bring down. People in need are provided toiletries, a hot shower, a clean set of clothing, the use of towels and food-to-go at the event. We also hosted monthly Sunday community dinners at a restaurant in Garberville that winter, all the while researching and working on our main goals of starting a Resource Center for people who find themselves experiencing homelessness, and a

Safe Camp. Availability of appropriate local property and funding are our main challenges.

When COVID 19 hit rural Northern California in March of 2020, we started a "Shelter In Place" program at a local hotel in Garberville, for the 20 most at-risk houseless in our area, with funding granted by the Humboldt Area Foundation. The Department of Health and Human Services took over funding us to facilitate the Roomkey program a few weeks later, and has committed to continue their support of Roomkey, at least through December of this year. DHHS also helps fund the once-a-week expanded lunch program we are running to assist So Hum's houseless campers to shelter in place which in addition to food provides masks, crucial info about COVID and the availability of social services including mental health, drug & alcohol counseling, and other resources. Recently, DHHS began funding wrap-around services on a half-time basis for the Room key program, which was previously done only by volunteers. In response to COVID SHO / DHHS installed hand-washing stations at two locations in Garberville and Redway.

On August 25th, 2020, the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors approved the allocation of a California Development Block Grant to SHO. Out of a field of 200 applicants our tiny non-profit was one of the four chosen to receive funding from CDBG. The amount initially awarded was \$41,000, which was increased to \$56,000 and was released in November 2020.

Throughout SHO's short history, from the Extreme Weather shelter nights; to the monthly Sunday dinners when folks left with full bellies, warm socks and knitted caps; to our ongoing hot shower events; right up through today with SHO's lunch program for houseless campers, and Roomkey, one abiding light has remained constant: our hard-working volunteers. It's their faith, dedication and compassion that keeps this going. People sacrifice their free time to prepare meals, attend meetings, deliver food, comfort

people in need, arrange for support services, and any number of tasks that are needed to help.

SHO remained dedicated to helping people in need of shelter and resources, giving people the chance to live a safe, healthy and fulfilling life through the COVID-19 years , March 2020-September 2023. During that time the organization also experienced significant leadership challenges with the unexpected passing of Carla Harris, Director of the Outreach Program in February 2022. The programs Carla initiated were maintained by SHO board members and case management staff until September 2022 at which time Redwoods Rural Health Center assumed the operations of the programs until funding expired in September 2023.

After many years of volunteer service, Cathy Miller stepped down as SHO board president in September 2022. Patte Rae assumed the reins October 2022 and assisted the SHO Board to restructure by clarifying roles and recruiting new members for three new openings on the board.

The Board was energized with revisiting the strategic plan in October 2022 and conducting a retreat in February 2023. The focus was the realization that Pandemic funding was temporary emergency funds and for the need to review and renew previous mission goals and projects outlined.

PROGRAMS AND IMPACT

Baptist Church “Bridging the Gap” program support:

- Outputs – beginning November 2022, 25-40 houseless folks received supportive services and weekly hot meals at the Baptist Church in Redway, CA. The Baptist Church assumed this program in April 2023 with SHO’s support and referrals.
- Outcomes – many of our homeless have experienced a decrease in mental health symptoms and active substance use/abuse. This is due to just having a safe place to be, access to showers/toilets, access to weekly food, emotional support, and access to ancillary services. This has enabled folks to become more housing ready and feel hopeful.
- Impact – there has been less negative community impacts due to fewer folks on the streets, pan handling and searching for food, sheltering in front of local business establishments, etc. This has enabled the community at large to feel safer with increased positive engagement and support.

Lunch Program : Funding ended December 31, 2023

- Outputs – Up to 60 lunches are delivered weekly to houseless folks in encampments and the streets.
- Outcomes – Folks are more food secure leading to a decrease in anxiety, stress and illness and an overall increase in energy and physical wellness. Houseless folks are less likely to get COVID if they don’t have to leave the encampments to search for food and they are provided COVID

information and tools to stay safer. This decreases their contracting and spreading COVID -19, anxiety, and increases personal safety.

- Impact – Less houseless folks are panhandling which can create a safety concern, fewer folks from the encampments are in the community.

Community support for supporting our houseless has increased.

- Extreme Weather Shelter:

- Outputs – As indicated by weather, 24 hour sheltering provided.
- Outcomes – Increase homeless safety and well being during extreme weather event.
- Impact – When persons able to maintain personal safety it keeps them not only emotionally more healthy but it also impacts their physical health, which decreases community health costs (fewer ER visits, etc.)
- MARKET SITUATION AND NEED



THE NEXT THREE YEARS



Resource Center – Plan, Develop, and Implement a Resource Center where folks can access a variety of resources to either assist them to get housed and/or reduce the potential of becoming unhoused. How will we reach our goal?

1. Find a location
2. Develop an implementation plan
3. Get buy in from neighbors/stakeholders
4. Focus groups with unhoused folks towards developing services.
5. Obtain funding to support the location and services.

Services may include but are not limited to; showers, laundry facilities, mail pick-up, phone charging station, storage, supportive services such as assistance with ID's,

benefits applications workshops, life skills classes (job search, job preparedness, communication, coping skills, social skills, self-awareness, budgeting, etc.), additional support groups (AA, NA, emotional support groups, grief and loss groups, etc.

How will we know we are successful?

- ✓ We have a fully operational resource center.
- ✓ Clients are accessing services.
- ✓ Clients are engaged in services.
- ✓ Client surveys indicate that we are meeting our stated goals and objectives.

Safe Camping Program – Plan, Develop, and Implement a Safe Camping Program

where the unhoused can have a place to be, access supportive services, and have access to showers, bathrooms, and food. How will we accomplish our goal?

1. Find and secure a location – work with real estate agents and other stakeholders.
2. Make our goal known to the community and get community buy-in.
3. Develop policy and procedures including pet policies.
4. Secure funding to support services and activities

Services, activities and supports will include providing folks with a safe place to be, outreach and case management, meals, healthcare outreach, linkages to services, portable bathrooms/showers, etc.

How will we know we are successful?

- ✓ Fewer houseless people will be on the street and loitering.
- ✓ Houseless people will have a sense of safety indicated thru services surveys.

- ✓ Houseless people will be healthier and happier – survey, focus groups.
- ✓ Houseless people in need of supportive services and linked to those services and engaged in services. Monthly reports will indicate outputs and outcomes.

Transitional Housing – Plan, Develop, and Implement a Transitional Housing program where folks can continue to work on their individual barriers so that they are housing ready. How will we reach our goal?

1. Find and secure a location – reach out to real estate agents and other stakeholders.
2. Ensure that the community is aware of our goal and engage them in the process.
3. Get community buy-in. Practice our good neighbor policy.
4. Obtain funding and resources to support facilities and services.
5. Develop Policies and Procedures including eligibility, program guidelines, and program expectations including engagement in housing readiness services and assessed service plan needs.

The transitional housing will provide the following services; intake/assessment/service planning, access to housing resources, referrals, and access to services at the Resource Center.

How will we know we have been successful?

- ✓ We have documented outcomes of persons exiting into permanent housing.
- ✓ There are fewer returns to homelessness – HMIS data.

- ✓ Newly housed people are continuing to engage in wraparound services and needs for services decrease over time. We will track and report data.
- ✓ Newly housed increase their overall functioning and well-being. Client surveys.
- ✓ There are fewer unhoused people in the community.

Improve Our Organizational and Operational Capabilities. SHO's Board of Directors has identified several areas for improvement and steps towards improving its overall organizational and operational capabilities.

Implementation Plan for Capacity Building

	Description of Action	Assigned to	Deadline for Completion	Status / Comments
1.	Review and update mission and vision statements	Board of Directors	Completed Oct. 2023	Annual review-October
2.	Review and update board by-laws, board governance	Board of Directors	March 2023	Annual review
3.	Develop Board Job Descriptions and expectations (Officers and General Board Members)	Board of Directors	Posted on sohumhousing.org March 2023	Annual review
4.	Develop Marketing Materials (brochures, website, social media, annual newsletter).	Board of Directors	February 2021 see above	Annual review- As needed
5.	Develop Communications Plan		February 2021	In progress
6.	Develop 3-year Strategic Fundraising Plan		February 2024	In progress
7.	Obtain an office		December 2022	January 2023
8.	Fundraising/Volunteer management		June 2024	First fundraiser 11/23
9.	Develop Job Descriptions for various positions – outreach, case management, Executive Director, etc.	Safe camp application process	December 2023	Completed - 4/2021
10.	Recruit additional board members	Board of Directors	June 2024	Have added on 3 additional board members – 2023

