



County of Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors

Agenda Item Submittal

From: Office of Response, Recovery and Resilience

Subject: Ratify Revenue Agreements with the Cities of Santa Cruz and Watsonville for Several Weather Shelter Services

Meeting Date: June 10, 2025

Formal Title: Ratify revenue agreements with the City of Santa Cruz in the amount of \$140,000, and the City of Watsonville in the amount of \$60,000, for severe weather shelter services during the 2024-2025 winter season, and take related actions

Recommended Actions

1. Ratify revenue agreements with the City of Santa Cruz in the amount of \$140,000, and City of Watsonville in the amount of \$60,000, to support County-led severe winter weather shelter operations during the 2024-2025 winter season;
2. Adopt resolution accepting unanticipated revenue in the amount of \$200,000 from the City of Santa Cruz and City of Watsonville for severe winter weather shelter operations.

Executive Summary

The Office of Response, Recovery and Resilience (OR3) requests Board ratification of revenue agreements with the Cities of Santa Cruz and Watsonville to support the County's Severe Winter Weather Shelter Program. These agreements contribute local municipal funds toward the operation of temporary shelter sites activated in response to extreme winter conditions that pose health and safety risks for individuals experiencing homelessness. These funds will supplement existing County funds to support a unified, countywide sheltering effort during severe weather events.

Discussion

In December 2024, the Board approved an agreement with People First of Santa Cruz County to operate temporary shelter sites during the 2024-2025 winter season in response to severe weather conditions. The agreement established a framework for County-led shelter activation and operations in collaboration with municipal partners.

The attached revenue agreements formalize the financial commitments made by the Cities of Santa Cruz and Watsonville to support this year's activation of the program. These agreements mirror the activation criteria, roles, and responsibilities previously described in the Board-approved contract with People First and reflect each jurisdiction's shared interest in providing emergency shelter capacity for unsheltered individuals during severe weather.

Jurisdictions' commitments are as follows:

- The City of Santa Cruz will contribute up to \$140,000 toward sheltering activities at the Santa Cruz Veterans Memorial Building or another designated site in the City of Santa Cruz.
- The City of Watsonville will contribute up to \$60,000 toward sheltering activities at the Watsonville Veterans Memorial Building or another designated site in Watsonville.

- The County of Santa Cruz will contribute \$130,000, and will oversee site activation, facility provision, contractor coordination, and financial management of the funds used for shelter operations.

People First of Santa Cruz County was contracted to provide staffing, operations, sanitation, security, and supplies. The 2023-24 program was originally designed to support up to 20 full-day operational shelter activations across one or more sites, in 2024-25 winter the program was shifted to evenings only to facilitate use of existing Veteran's Halls in Santa Cruz and Watsonville with reduced impacts to existing programming. Activation criteria include sustained overnight cold temperatures, flood warnings, or County-issued evacuation orders.

This year's extreme weather shelter program operated for 18 nights between December 2024 and February 2025. During those nights, the program provided over 600 bed nights to unhoused residents in Watsonville and nearly 1,000 in the City of Santa Cruz, resulting in unhoused residents being able to sleep indoors for a combined total of roughly 1,600 nights. Additional unhoused residents received support or stayed for portions of the activation hours indoors to get out of the harsh weather.

The 2024-25 activation built and improved upon programs from prior years. The Office of Response, Recovery, and Resilience (OR3) has held an after-action review of the program with County, City, People First, and Veteran partners to find ways to continue to improve the program, reduce impact to daily facility operations at both Veterans Hall locations and support our unhoused community.

This regional collaboration approach aligns with the County's strategic goals addressing health equity and homelessness response, while leveraging local partnerships to more effectively meet the urgent needs of unsheltered individuals during hazardous weather events.

Financial Impact

Revenue from the Cities of Santa Cruz and Watsonville will be received in OR3's disaster response events budget under General Ledger (GL) Key 302150, revenue object 41150, and appropriated under GL Key 302150, expense object 62381.

Strategic Initiatives

Operational Plan - Comprehensive Health & Safety

Submitted By:

David Reid, OR3 Director

Recommended By:

Carlos J. Palacios, County Executive Officer

Artificial Intelligence Acknowledgment:

Chat GPT, an Artificial Intelligence (AI) large language model tool, significantly contributed to the development of this agenda item, including Staff Report, in compliance with the County of Santa Cruz AI Appropriate Use Policy.