



City of Arts & Innovation

# News Release

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## **City of Riverside Creates Department of Housing and Human Services to More Effectively Prevent and Reduce Homelessness**

*New department to create more comprehensive and effective approach to state's biggest issue*

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – The City Council voted unanimously Tuesday (9/12) to create a new Department of Housing and Human Services to bring together all the City's existing resources with a renewed focus to prevent and reduce homelessness in Riverside.

The new department was proposed by City Manager Mike Futrell to foster increased coordination and greater efficiency in formulating and delivering programs to help people avoid becoming homeless and, when necessary, get off the streets and into shelter and then housing.

“The issues of housing and homelessness are inextricably linked, so our response must reflect that,” Futrell said. “This new approach will make us more nimble, more responsive and better equipped to take a more universal approach to fulfilling the promise of the city's Homelessness Action Plan.”

The new department will include two entities – Housing Authority and Office of Homeless Solutions – that already were reporting to Futrell and two others that were not – the Neighborhood Engagement Division and the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. The new department will be led by Director Michelle Davis and report to Futrell, who became city manager earlier this year.

The creation of the new department comes as the City expands the use of in-the-field outreach workers and clinical therapists, who are the front-line workers helping those who are homeless. Outreach teams will now operate seven days a week from 6:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. This is in conjunction with expanded hours at the city's Access Center, the starting point to recovery and self-sufficiency for Riverside residents experiencing homelessness, and expansion of the city's jail in-reach program working with inmates in danger of becoming homeless when released.

“I am encouraged by the ways in which this new department can help us move the needle on the objectives identified in our [Homelessness Action Plan](#),” Mayor Pro Tem Erin Edwards said. “We have the right plan, and now we have the right structure in place to achieve the goals envisioned in that document.”

The unanimous decision devotes an additional \$503,945 to the anti-homelessness effort and transfers to the Department of Housing and Human Services another \$10.1 million already in the budget for the existing entities that now make up the department. When fully staffed, the additional personnel costs are estimated to be \$915,489.63 annually.

The new department will consist of six divisions: Housing Authority, Administration, CDBG Management, Human Services, Neighborhood Engagement, and Outreach Services.

The new approach also will solidify the City's resiliency efforts by creating new housing and assisting families in maintaining their existing housing, while also strengthening efforts to ensure families have access to food and other essentials.

Incorporating the CDBG program will ensure a coordinated and more effective approach to providing services to low- and moderate-income families who might be at risk of losing their housing.