

Board Inquiry Form

Inquiry Number: 36

Board Member	
Carbajal	
Wolf	X
Farr	X
Gray	
Lavagnino	

Department: Community Services Department
Date: **6/13/12**
Page(s) of Budget Book:

Request/Question:

Are the warming centers part of the proposed \$45,000 cut to shelters as depicted on the Service Level Impact (SLI)? Are the warming centers funded this year?

Response Prepared by: Sharon Friedrichsen

Response:

The warming centers are not part of the proposed \$45,000 reduction to shelters listed on the Service Level Impact Report.

In Fiscal Year 2011-12, Community Services Department (CSD) provided \$33,830 (\$25,000 of General Fund and \$8,830 of Human Services funds) to the Unitarian Society to act as the fiscal agent for the Warming Centers. This amount funds a portion of the Unitarian Society's program coordinator, director, and other staffing costs to operate the warming centers between November 1st and April 30th only based upon weather conditions. The warming centers are located in Isla Vista, Santa Barbara, Lompoc and Santa Maria. For the Fiscal Year 2012-13 Recommended Budget, the proposed funding to the warming centers includes \$25,000 of General Fund, but no Human Services funding as the proposed budget does not include any Human Services funding.

The Unitarian Society is requesting \$30,000 to continue operations in FY 2012-13. In addition, the Unitarian Society is requesting another \$20,000 to fund new warming centers in Carpinteria and Goleta per the attached report.

2012-2013 Warming Center Report to SB County Supervisors

MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 12, 2012

TO: Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors

FROM: Nancy Edmundson, Director of Administration, Rev. Julia Hamilton, Assistant Minister
Unitarian Society of Santa Barbara, Fiscal Agent Freedom Warming Centers

RE: 2011-2012 Santa Barbara County Freedom Warming Centers Report
and 2012-2013 Request for General Funds \$50,000

This report outlines our general operations for the 2011-2012 year, and includes budget projections for the 2012-2012 year with a request for Santa Barbara County general funds.

The Unitarian Society of Santa Barbara, on behalf of the many Santa Barbara County faith communities and volunteers who have advocated or worked on building the Freedom Warming Center project over the past 3 years, thanks you once again for your support and funding provided to Warming Center operations in the amount of \$65,000 in 2011-2012 (\$25,000 general support and \$45,000 for emergency Lompoc response) and \$51,781 general fund support in 2010-2011. This money, this winter, reduced suffering and potential hypothermic health complications and death in many, many lives across the county. In addition, the SB County general fund support did assist in enlisting the financial support of some City jurisdictions as well as private donors in the county for the 2011-2012 year and for upcoming years.

We are requesting a minimum of \$30,000 to continue operations in 2012-2013. However, we have been in conversation with organizations in Goleta and Carpinteria about potential Warming Center sites. To fund operations including these new municipalities, we would need to increase our general fund support to \$50,000. This would present a cost-effective way for the County to provide services across the region.

A Typical Night...

On Thursday, January 19th, 67 men and women slept on the floor of The Unitarian Society, curled up on mats. 15 people slept at the Korean Methodist Church in Isla Vista, and another 10 on cots at New Life Christian in Lompoc. They arrived at 6pm, and would be out the door at 6am. The temperature had dropped into the low 30's for the fourth day in a row, and the Freedom Warming Centers were open yet again. The Lompoc site was still scrambling to respond to the sudden closing of the Bridgehouse shelter. A rainstorm would come through later in the week, drenching the Central Coast and keeping the Warming Centers open for 8 days at a stretch. During this time, Doctors Without Walls served 13 people; people who would likely have ended up in the emergency room, or worse, if the shelter had not been open.

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Across town, Casa Esperanza had its 100 emergency beds filled to capacity, as did the Rescue Mission, where women slept on the floor of the chapel when the beds ran out. The Salvation Army, which normally only accepts longer-term residents, served ten people this winter on an emergency basis, reserving those beds for people who can demonstrate sobriety. Good Samaritan, our partner in Santa Maria, provides emergency beds for Warming Center guests who would not qualify for their regular shelter program.

The Warming Centers are a last resort. Sobriety is not a requirement – the only thing we ask is that guests remain calm and respectful. For many of our guests, a traditional shelter is just not an option. On any given night, we may have up to five people in wheelchairs. There is nothing glamorous about sharing a bathroom with fifty other people, or sleeping on the floor among dozens, or getting up at 5:30am and going back out into the cold rain. But at least the Centers are warm, dry, safe, and you are treated like a fellow human being. Guests who are not able to find shelter in our warming centers will eventually find shelter in business doorways, our emergency rooms, our jails, or in worse case scenarios that we have already experienced, they will not seek or find shelter and risk death and suffering due to hypothermia.

The Freedom Warming Centers are a critical piece of the picture for homeless individuals in Santa Barbara County. Casa Esperanza, the Rescue Mission, Good Samaritan and the Salvation Army each provide arms of support for those without homes, but the Warming Centers are there for those who cannot manage to stay anywhere else, either because other shelters are full or because they do not yet have the ability to qualify. As Restorative Policing Officer Kell Hove likes to say, you never give up on someone – it may be the 15th time you reach out that something changes. Eventually, our guests may be able to find a way into a more supportive environment, but only if they survive long enough to do so. Until that change happens, our basic human duty is to prevent unnecessary death and suffering from exposure.

Freedom Warming Centers, by the numbers:

- 2,858 guests served, Countywide, between November 15, 2011 and April 15, 2012
- 35 nights (50 nights in Lompoc)
- 65% increase in number of people served
- 77 guests seen by Doctors Without Walls
- 11 host sites across the County
- 2 part-time paid Coordinators, a pool of 17 on-call overnight staff (south county) and 9 on-call overnight staff (north county though Good Samaritan Shelter)

2012-2013 Warming Center Report to SB County Supervisors

Program Development

This year, as we come upon the end of the Warming Center's third active season, we have made great strides in improving both the day-to-day operations of the Freedom Warming Center program as well as increasing our partnerships with a broad group of faith communities and community organizations. Supporting organizations include:

The Good Samaritan Shelter in Santa Maria, The New Life Academy Christian Church in Lompoc, the Korean United Methodist Church, St. Michael's, and the Student Religious Co-Op in Isla Vista, The Unitarian Society, Trinity Episcopal Church, First United Methodist Church, First Presbyterian Church, The Santa Barbara Jewish Federation, Unity Church, First Congregational Church in Santa Barbara, the PEO United Methodist Women's Alumni, and the Santa Barbara Friends Meeting, and Goleta Neighbors Without Homes congregation collective.

We work with Doctors Without Walls, a volunteer street-medicine team who provides basic medical care and evaluation to our guests, and with EasyLift, a van service that provides wheelchair accessible rides to our guests who cannot walk to our host sites.

We have convened an Advisory Board comprised of clergy and lay leaders from our congregational partners, local activists and community partners. This Board has supported the work of the Unitarian Society in determining policies, identifying areas for growth, and building relationships with new congregations and organizations.

Most importantly, we hired two part-time, seasonal Coordinators who oversaw the day-to-day operations and site management, supported grant writing, improved communication and outreach, clarified center operations and documentation, trained, scheduled and supervised on-call staff and monitored the weather. We also have a pool of 26 county wide on-call overnight staff. Almost all of the paid staff of the Warming Centers have personal experiences of homelessness that have motivated them to do this work.

Volunteers from each host site provided hospitality and support, making sure that the guests were welcomed and comfortable. The generous host congregations made many adjustments to their own schedules to be available and flexible to the needs of the Centers. At the Unitarian Society alone over 75 volunteers supported in the warming center operations in addition to the involvement of our youth groups and children's religious education program.

Crisis in Lompoc

In mid-January, the existing Lompoc shelter closed on short notice. The Warming Centers responded quickly, filling the gap and staying open every night until a suitable alternative situation could be arranged. We provided a critical emergency response that gave the County time to negotiate a complex situation without leaving anyone out in the cold.

Because they are organized as on-call emergency shelters, the Warming Centers are able to respond quickly and flexibly to the unexpected, whether that means a long spell of severe weather or an unforeseen local situation. The Centers are also aware of the different needs found in North and South County, and make every effort to adjust in ways that serve our areas of coverage best.

2012-2013 Warming Center Report to SB County Supervisors

Looking Forward

The Unitarian Society is developing a three-year plan for the Warming Centers to ensure that this program will be here for as long as it is needed. We have begun preliminary conversations with Social Venture Partners and the Fund for SB to assist us in this important time of organizational maturation. We will continue to stay in close communication with the other agencies and people serving the homeless here in the County. We can do our part most effectively in the context of the larger whole.

It is vital the Warming Centers remain a public/private/nonprofit partnership. Our public funding plays a vital role in attracting and maintaining support from private donors and foundations. It also keeps us in close collaboration with the civic agencies that work on the issue of homelessness, allowing us to direct our work in ways that complement but do not duplicate other efforts. Without any one of these three “legs of the stool”, we would not be able survive. The Unitarian Society cannot do this alone!

Looking at the dramatic increase in guests served this past year, we have come to the realization that our emergency Warming Center bed capacity in the city of Santa Barbara and Isla Vista may have been reached. Religious congregations with facilities that are appropriate in location and space are not infinite, and if the guest count continues to grow, we will not be able to shelter them all. We have never turned anyone away, but if cuts to other shelters and agencies have the impact we fear, meaning that more people are left to fall through the cracks, that day might come.

However, we will continue to work to build capacity for our volunteer hospitality teams and fundraising efforts within the wider faith community. With the potential that the Common Ground/BOCH merger brings for new volunteer coordination, we see that the Warming Centers have a key role to play in connecting volunteers with meaningful service.

Warming Center Reporting Statistics

	<u>2010-2011</u>	<u>2011-2012</u>
Hosting Sites	8	11
Total Guests	1736	2858
Total # nights (excepting Lompoc)	33	35
Guests: North County	240	832
Guests: South County	1507	2026
Avg. # guests per night	50	82
Cost per guest	\$37	\$38
Total Cost of Operations	\$64,608	\$109,624

We are pleased to report that our average cost per bed night is relatively unchanged at \$38, and recognize that this represents a significantly less amount of money than an emergency room visit or the cost of a night in county jail.

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2011-2012 Budget Report and 2012-2013 Plans: Funding was secured from the cities of Santa Barbara and Goleta to supplement the county funding for current year operations. In addition, 2011-2012 CDBG and HSC funding was received from the County of SB and the city of Santa Barbara. Additional funds were sought from Santa Maria, SB County, CDBG, but were not granted for 2011-2012 or 2012-2013.

The proposed minimum budget for 2012-2013 is based on 40 service nights with minimal expansion of center sites or number of beds. Operation dates are extended to November 15 through April 15.

EXPENSES	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015
	35 nights (Lompoc 50)	40 nights	40 nights	40 nights
Coordination Staff	\$ 25,653	\$ 34,100	\$ 34,100	\$ 34,100
On-Call Center Staff	\$ 70,721	\$ 57,480	\$ 57,480	\$ 57,480
Insurance	\$ 2,891	\$ 2,750	\$ 2,750	\$ 2,750
Administration fee	\$ 5,220	\$ 10,183	\$ 10,183	\$ 10,183
Supplies	\$ 4,755	\$ 7,000	\$ 7,000	\$ 7,000
Travel	\$ 384	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 500
Total Expense	\$ 109,624	\$ 112,013	\$ 112,013	\$ 112,013

The revenue scenario below reflects how \$30,000 in SB County 2012-2013 general funds would be utilized.

Scenario One REVENUE	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015
County General Public Funding Support \$30,000	35 nights (Lompoc 50)	40 nights	40 nights	40 nights
County of SB	\$ 65,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000
City of SB	\$ 3,000	\$ 4,675	\$ -	\$ -
City of Goleta	\$ 2,274	\$ 7,726	\$ -	\$ -
City of SB CDBG	\$ 6,000	\$ 7,500	\$ -	\$ -
County HS	\$ 8,350	\$ 8,350	\$ 8,350	
Fund for Santa Barbara	\$ -	\$ 3,000	\$ -	\$ -
Private Fundraising Reserve	\$ -	\$ 24,000	\$ 24,000	\$ 24,000
Additional Private Fundraising & Foundation Support	\$ 25,000	\$ 26,762	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000
Total Revenue	\$ 109,624	\$ 112,013	\$ 92,350	\$ 84,000
Net Revenue/Expenses	\$ -	\$ -	\$ (19,663)	\$ (28,013)

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The revenue scenario two, below, reflects the plan should the \$30,000 additional general funds not be approved by the County Board of Supervisors. The fundraising reserve would be expended fully in 2012-2013 and operations would cease for 2013-2014 and 2014-2015. In addition, in 2012-2013 centers would cease when funds exhausted with the likelihood that the centers would not activate 40 nights unless additional funds are found.

Scenario Two REVENUE	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015
NO County General Public Funding Support	35 nights (Lompoc 50)	40 nights	no operations	no operations
County of SB	\$ 65,000	\$0		
City of SB	\$ 3,000	\$4,675		
City of Goleta	\$ 2,274	\$7,736		
City of SB CDBG	\$ 6,000	\$7,500		
County HS	\$ 8,350	\$8,830		
Private Fundraising Reserve	\$ -	\$72,000		
Private Fundraising	\$ -	\$10,000		
Private Foundation Gift	\$ 25,000			
Total Revenue	\$ 109,624	\$110,741	\$0	\$0
Net Revenue/Expenses	\$0.00	-		

Goleta and Carpinteria: Formative conversations have begun with congregations and organizations in the cities of Goleta and Carpinteria about potential Warming Center sites and volunteer support. We project the cost of operating an additional center in another city area would be approximately \$22,000 per site. We are requesting an additional \$20,000 in County general funds to be used toward establishing warming centers in these communities and to facilitate our fundraising from those jurisdictions and additional private donors.