

Richmond ERF-3 Project

The City of Richmond was awarded its third Encampment Resolution Funding grant by the California Department of Housing and Community Development in October 2024. The \$9.3 million award will support city residents experiencing homelessness in encampments and recognizes Richmond's innovation and commitment to moving people who are unsheltered into housing. The three-year project will provide outreach, intensive case management, housing navigation, income development, literacy and vocational training, and job placement to 165 people. It aims to transition 90 people into permanent housing. The ERF grant program is competitive, and Richmond's ERF-3 proposal was heavily informed by the successes and limitations of the city's prior experiences in resolving encampments, including ERF-1 and ERF-2 projects.

Faced with high rents, a shortage of affordable housing, and limited access to housing vouchers, most people supported by Richmond's Community Development Department through ERF funds must secure sustainable income to avoid returning to homelessness. To address this challenge through the ERF-3 project, Richmond will provide income-focused case management and, for those who are interested, a comprehensive vocational training program. The program is specifically designed to empower people who have been chronically homeless to secure jobs with increasing responsibility as they stabilize and develop long-term goals. This approach, which emphasizes supportive workforce development, grew out of the city's success in moving more than 200 unhoused people out of encampments—those with stable employment have shown the greatest long-term stability.

At the outset of the project, a Rapid Response Team will conduct sustained outreach to people living at eight key sites, including the Greenway, Richmond Parkway, and South Garrard Blvd. Residents from these areas will be relocated in cohorts to the project's navigation center, an interim housing facility where they will be connected to healthcare and supportive services. As they stabilize, meet with case managers, and develop plans for generating income and transitioning into permanent housing, they will receive vocational case management, job training, and skill-building opportunities.

One key factor in Richmond's success in moving people from the streets into lasting solutions is its monthly "Staying on Your Feet" meetings. These gatherings bring together people who have experienced homelessness to learn critical life skills, build community, and support each other in forging new paths.

Of the city's total \$9.3 million total request, \$5.7 million will be directly allocated to people experiencing homelessness. This includes salary subsidies, rental assistance, incentives, and housing-related expenses. To ensure long-term stability for people served by the project, the budget includes \$1.1 million for workforce development, which includes vocational case management, training, and job placements designed to assist people in gradually adapting to increased responsibilities and sustaining their housing over time.