

Appendix 5: Homeless Encampment Template

[Subchapter 6.6 Prohousing Designation Program](#) requires applicants to confirm that its treatment of encampments on public property complies with and will continue to comply with the constitutional rights of persons experiencing homelessness. An application must include a one-page summary demonstrating how the applicant has enacted best practices in their jurisdiction related to the treatment of unhoused individuals camping on public property, consistent with the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness' "7 Principles for Addressing Encampments (June 17, 2022). The following template and certification are included to help jurisdictions meet this threshold.

- **Principle 1: Establish a Cross-Agency, Multi-Sector Response to Encampments** – Describe how system partners (name partners) work together to prioritize health and safety both for residents and unsheltered individuals. (350 characters max)

[Cotati Police Department Policy 462](#) designates a Homeless Liaison Officer who coordinates with Sonoma County Department of Health Services, including the County's Homeless Encampment and Resource Team (HEART) and the City's mobile crisis team (SAFE). The Sonoma County Department of Health Services also acts as the Lead Agency for the [Sonoma County Homeless Coalition](#). The Coalition's goal is to achieve Functional Zero homelessness in Sonoma County while prioritizing health, safety, and connection to services.

- **Principle 2: Engage Encampment Residents to Develop Solutions** – Describe street outreach efforts to engage with encampment residents to find alternative shelter, housing, and service options using the housing first approach before an existing encampment is closed. (350 characters max)

Policy 462.3 encourages officers to contact the homeless for the purposes of rendering aid, support, and for community-oriented policing purposes. If possible, contact is led by SAFE and/or the Sonoma County Department of Health Services HEART team with police in a supporting role. Officers are to provide shelter referrals and counseling in lieu of arrest for non-violent offenses when appropriate. Outreach and notice occur prior to encampment closures consistent with department procedures.

- **Principle 3: Conduct Comprehensive and Coordinated Outreach** – Describe multidisciplinary connection strategies and linkages to resources and permanent housing solutions that is customized to individual needs. If applicable, describe how the jurisdiction uses the coordinated entry system to connect individuals to resources and permanent housing. (350 characters max)

Policy 462.2 requires coordination with social service organizations and maintenance of resource lists to connect individuals to housing, mental health, and

supportive services through County and regional programs. The Sonoma County Homeless Coalition and the County Department of Health Services provides funding for efforts to quickly re-house individuals and families.

- **Principle 4: Address Basic Needs and Provide Storage** – Describe efforts to meet basic needs, health, safety, and access to storage (timeframes) for people experiencing unsheltered homelessness while creating clear pathways to permanent housing. (350 characters max)

Coupled with the policies already cited above, Policy 462.4 prohibits destruction of personal property, requires supervisor authorization for cleanups, and mandates retention of property consistent with established safekeeping procedures. This policy also applies to unattended encampments and belongings that reasonably appear to be the property of a homeless person.

- **Principle 5: Ensure Access to Shelter or Housing Options** – Describe how low barrier resources to housing and supportive services are communicated to encampment residents. Include how strategies involve alternative measures to criminalization, focusing on service engagement and harm reduction. (350 characters max)

Policy 462.1 states homelessness is not a crime and shall not be used as a sole basis for detention and the City coordinates with the County to provide services and housing. Cotati also utilizes a 24/7 mobile mental health crisis response team ([SAFE](#)) consisting of a medic and crisis worker. The SAFE team responds to people under the influence, in need of treatment for mental illness, and homelessness. The SAFE team also provides minor medical care and transportation to shelters.

- **Principle 6: Develop Pathways to Permanent Housing and Supports** – Describe Housing First strategies emphasizing low barriers, a harm-reduction model, and services to support people obtaining permanent housing more efficiently. Identify efforts to align federal, state, and local funding/programs to provide clear pathways to permanent housing. (350 characters max)

Policy 462 directs coordination with County housing and service providers and supports referral to permanent housing, behavioral health, and assistance programs consistent with Housing First principles. The SAFE team and/or County Department of Health Services HEART team act as the coordinated entry point to move people into shelter and services. Sonoma County jurisdictions have adopted a [5 Year Strategic Plan](#) to prevent and end homelessness focusing on housing, supportive services, and operating as one coordinated system.

- **Principle 7: Create a Plan for What Will Happen to Encampment Sites After Closure** – Describe plans for former encampment spaces (long-term solutions to prevent encampments from reoccurring). Include efforts to emphasize safety,

accessibility, and inclusivity that improve infrastructure. Example: Communities can include curb cuts to increase mobility access and enhanced lighting to encourage safety. (350 characters max)

Policy 462 requires supervisor oversight of encampment cleanups and coordination with appropriate agencies to address environmental or community impacts. Encampment cleanups in the County consist of debris and hazard removal, temporary site security, site restoration, reopening public areas, and on-going monitoring. The County's [HEART](#) team supports post-clearance by offering services to help prevent re-encampment.

Certification and Authorization:

Signature of Authorized Representative

Date