
PRESS RELEASE



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& SUPERVISOR JOEL ANDERSON**
SAN DIEGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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THE CITY OF EL CAJON IS PUSHING HOMELESS ONTO OUR STREETS

“The Board of Supervisors is taking action in a bi-partisan way to do the difficult work of getting people off the streets and into permanent housing. Mayor Bill Wells and the City of El Cajon want to push them back onto the streets. The public expects us to take action and El Cajon is playing a tired old blame game that does nothing to address the problem of homelessness in our region. We stand ready to work with anyone who is willing to do the tough work to get people off the streets but will not be deterred or distracted by those trying to drag us backwards,” said Chair Nathan Fletcher.

“To say that County is secretly using El Cajon as a dumping ground is misinformed. In the future, I believe our shared constituents would be better served if we worked together, rather than through press conferences,” shared Supervisor Joel Anderson, who represents El Cajon in the Second Supervisorial District.

The housing vouchers come with services and case management. Thirty percent of the individuals exiting this program are moved into permanent housing. Of the 121 individuals using vouchers at El Cajon hotels and motels, roughly 64% of them are from El Cajon, and approximately 94% of them are from East County.

Hotel and motel owners voluntarily decide to participate in the voucher program. It is not the County's place to tell the City of El Cajon's businesses how they should operate or who to conduct their business with nor should the County handle the City of El Cajon's law enforcement.

If the voucher program no longer aligns with the City's commitment to addressing the issue of homelessness from a regional approach, we have full confidence in their ability to find solutions—and in their police department to ensure the residents of El Cajon are safe.

Background on Investments in East County

This Board of Supervisors have made it a priority for the County to step up and do more to address homelessness and public safety—and so far, we think the County has done a great deal in helping clean up the City of El Cajon. The County cleared the N. Magnolia Avenue encampment by connecting 60 individuals to services and housing, and implemented a safe parking program, with wrap around services. The County also cleaned up the encampment at Graves Avenue and shut down more than 100 illegal pot shops around the City. In addition, the County expanded the hotel voucher program, providing more immediate shelter opportunities for East County's homeless population as we work to move them into permanent housing.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Are the individuals using vouchers at El Cajon hotels and motels from other areas of the County?

A. There are currently 121 Regional Housing Assistance Program (voucher) participants staying at 8 El Cajon hotels. Approximately 63% are from El Cajon (including the unincorporated area) and approximately 94% are from East County. As participants leave the program and new participants enter the program these figures may change.

Q. Has the number of homeless in the City of El Cajon changed?

A. According to the most recent Point-in-Time Count, the number of homeless in El Cajon increased 69%, from a total of 775 individuals in 2020 to a total of 1308 individuals in 2022.

Q. Has the volume of voucher program participants changed recently?

A. There has only been a slight increase recently (approximately 10 per week) in the number of voucher program participants. Those participating in the program are provided case management from the contracted provider and additional support from the County. The number of individuals exiting the program and moving into permanent housing is approximately 30%.

Q. Of all the hotels and motels that have voluntarily decided to participate in the County's voucher program, how many are located in El Cajon? How many are located elsewhere?

A. Of the 18 hotels that decided to participate in the voucher program, 8 are located in El Cajon. The others choosing to participate in this program are located in the City of San Diego (4), the City of Chula Vista (2), the City of Escondido, (2) the City of Santee (1), and the City of Vista (1).

Q. Is there a certain percentage or number of hotel/motel rooms that can be used for voucher recipients?

A. No. the hotel/motel owner decides how many rooms they want to use.

Q. What incentivizes hotel owners to participate in the program, particularly in El Cajon? Do they make more than they regularly would typically/is there a premium?

A. The maximum amount the County will pay is \$145 per night for a room.

Q. Does the City receive Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) and/or sales tax revenue when hotels accept vouchers as payment?

A. Yes. The City benefits from the receipt of both TOT and sales tax revenues when hotel/motel rooms are paid for through vouchers.

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