



Safe Parking Pilot Program Report

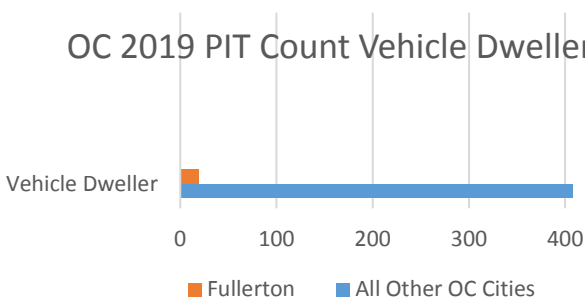


Background

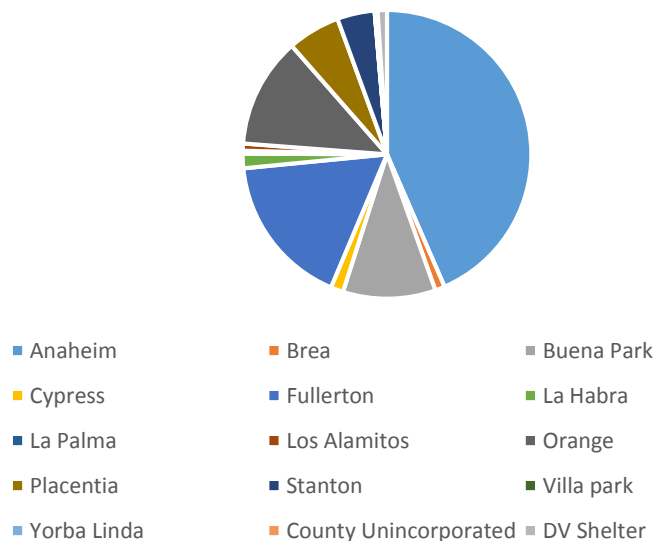
According to the 2019 Orange County Point-In-Time (PIT) Count the City of Fullerton had 473 homeless individuals, which was the third largest homeless population in Orange County and the second largest in the North Service Planning Area (SPA). The County of Orange had a total of 6,860 homeless people on the January PIT count. Based on the count, 427 (19.90%) individuals reported a vehicle as their current sleeping location. Of the 427 individuals, 19 vehicles (cars, RV's, vans) were located in Fullerton.

Due to concerns of people experiencing homelessness living in their vehicles, on July 2, 2019 the City Council directed staff to develop a six-month pilot "Safe Parking" program in response. In October 2019 the City Council approved the program with a budget of \$100,000, including set-up costs. The program commenced on November 12, 2019. The primary goal of the program was to provide families and/or individuals who have strong ties to Fullerton and are dwelling in their vehicle, a safe place to park, sleep at night and ensure participant linkage to supportive services such as the Coordinated Entry System. The City partnered with the Illumination Foundation to operate the Safe Parking Pilot Program. The program operated from 6:30pm-6:30am and with case management services. This report provides an overview of the operations, services and outcomes of the program.

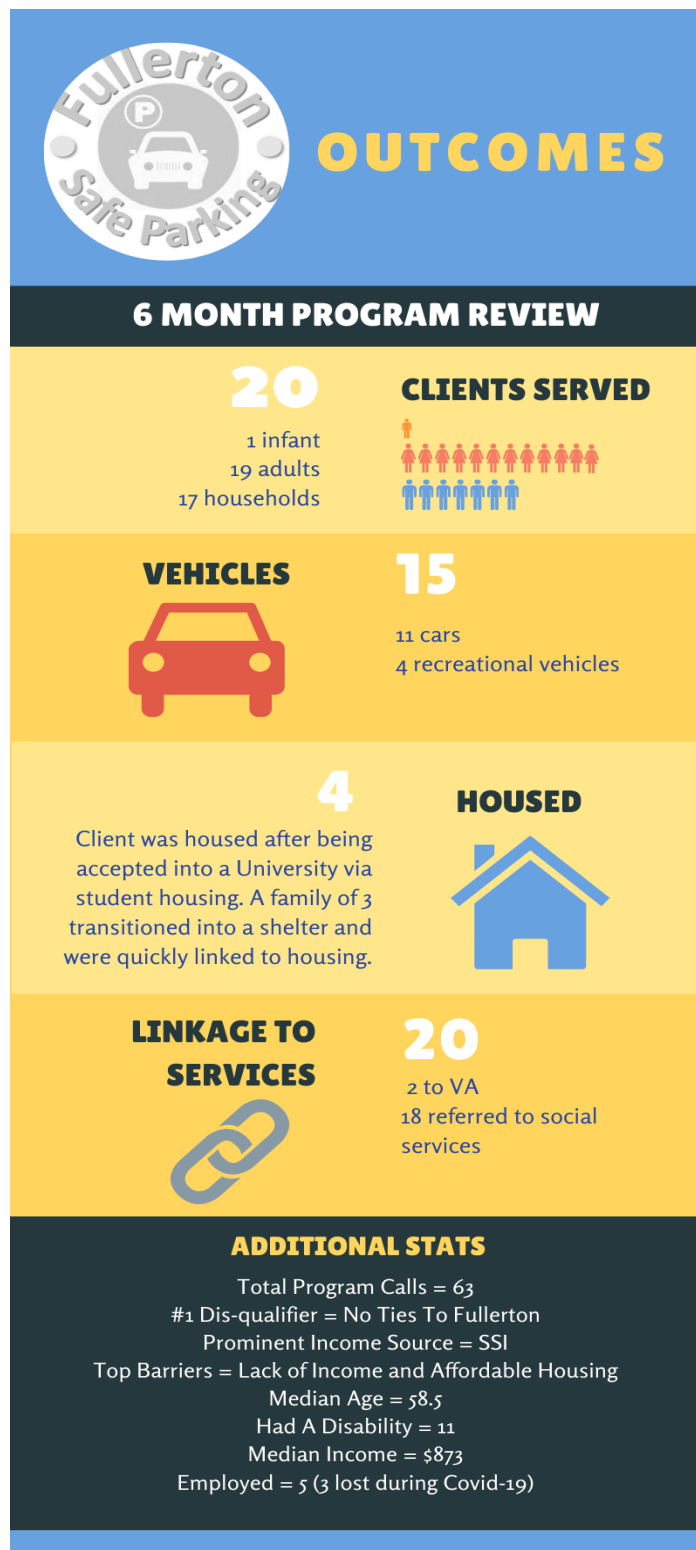
OC 2019 PIT Count Vehicle Dwellers



North OC Homeless Count



Program Summary



City of Fullerton Investment

The Safe Parking Pilot Program occurred from November 12, 2019 through May 12, 2020 for a total of six months. The program was facilitated at a City-owned lot located at Union Pacific Park (121 W. Truslow Ave). The lot had the ability to hold twenty-five automobiles, five designated for recreational vehicles and twenty for regular vehicles. The Public Works department trimmed the trees, installed locking swing arms on each side of the lot, painted new lines, added numbers, installed signs and installed a fenced-in area for the bathrooms, trash and wash station to ensure the lot was safe for clients. In addition, the City paid for security guards, wash station and bathrooms for the duration of the program. The City provided for overall administration of the program. The Homeless Resources Coordinator received all calls from those interested in participating and vetted the interested clients through the Fullerton Police Department. Once a client was in the program, the Homeless Resources Coordinator supported the Illumination Foundation staff through assisting them in locating resources needed for clients and addressing program site needs.

Illumination Foundation Investment

The Illumination Foundation worked closely with City staff, providing input on program best practices, facility preferences and creating the documents needed for the program including the guidelines, flyer and liability form. The program began with two staff from Illumination Foundation assigned to the program. One staff was assigned as a case manager and the other overseeing operations. Two months into the program, due to a staff member departure, Illumination Foundation reduced the staff to only the case manager and rotated other staff who were present at the site at night during intake hours. Illumination Foundation provided the staff at their expense. Therefore the \$100,000 does not include case management expenses.

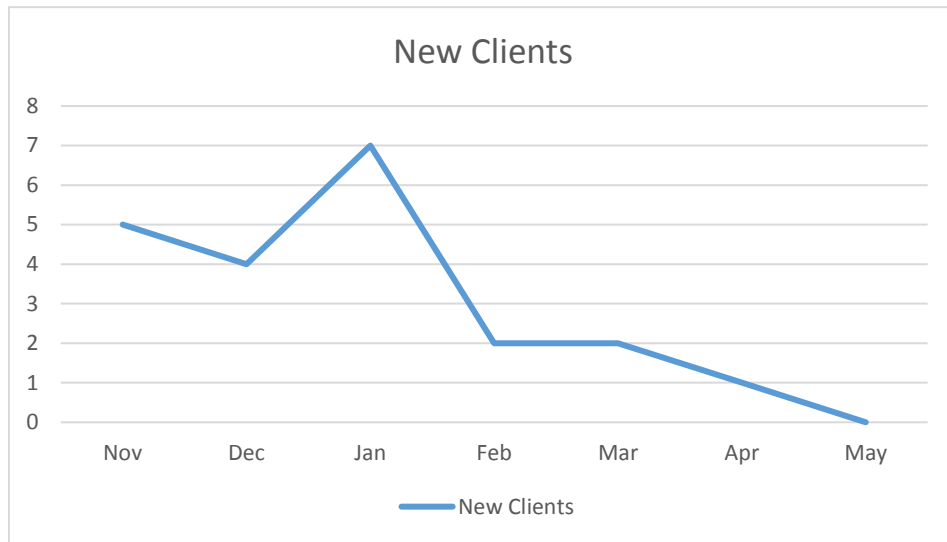
Programming Takeaways

- Based on observation, a program with clients of 10 or more should have 10-15 hours of dedicated case management per week, one Case Manager for every 10 clients or cars
- The program requires staff dedicated for check-in hours in the evening and check-out in the morning
- Program should be focused on connection to services and housing, not just “safe parking”
- Create a timeframe for how long a client can remain in the program, based on the client working towards housing

Community Outreach

In an effort to publicize the program, the Homeless Resources Coordinator, Fullerton Police Department Homeless Liaison Officers and Illumination Foundation staff engaged in six (6) outreaches throughout the City. A flyer was created to outline the qualifications, how to access the program and contact numbers for those desiring to be screened for the program. Three outreaches were conducted from morning to evening hours during the weeks leading up to the program opening. During outreach the team traveled to locations known as hotspots for the RV community and vehicle dwellers. The team made contact with an average of 20 vehicles during their outreaches, the majority of which were recreational vehicles. Three more outreaches took place after the start of the program, due to the COVID-19 crisis all other outreaches were cancelled from March through the end of the program.

All local homeless service providers were provided the flyers and information on the opportunity and to Fullerton focused outreach partners City Net, Health Care Agency, Pathways of Hope, St. Jude Medical Center and Break Every Chain. Additionally, the flyer was sent out to all faith community collaborative members and the Fullerton Collaborative. The Fullerton Tri-Parish Homeless Collaborative was a key partner in supporting the program and its pursuit of ensuring the community had access to the opportunity through giving their strategic input.



Outreach Takeaways

- College students living in their cars find not being allowed to come and go during program hours unappealing
- Communication about the program should be inviting, but direct on qualifications
- Connect with homeless outreach stakeholders and collaboratives about the program and make yourself available to answer questions
- When doing street outreach, go in pairs and alternate outreach efforts with and without Homeless Liaison Officers to balance encounters with those who are hesitant to speak with police officers
- When doing street outreach be mindful of surroundings, body language and safety
- Expect the need to make multiple contacts with potential clients due to hesitance about the program and give time for clients in the program to share about their experience with other vehicle dwellers

Safety

To ensure the safety of program clients, proper fencing and gates were installed to help maintain a controlled environment. Once a client checked into the program they could not leave the lot for the remainder of the night. If they chose to leave they could not return until the following evening. All cars were searched upon entry of the program to ensure no illegal items were entering into the program.

The program began with two guards, but was later adjusted to one guard. When issues with downtown bar patrons walking through the program lot began to arise, a second guard was added on site during the hours of 10:00pm – 4:00am on Thursday - Saturday. However, with the Covid-19 crisis closing down the bars, security was brought back down to one guard for the remainder of the program. In response to COVID-19 crisis, the bathrooms were cleaned three times a week by the contracted sanitation service and Illumination Foundation staff implemented the Center for Disease Control's recommendations on social distancing.

Safety Takeaways

- Be aware of events or nights that are busy in the surrounding area in order to maintain adequate staffing and security
- Enclosing your lot should depend on the location of your program and if there is a risk of non-program individuals loitering nearby or on the lot
- All clients should remain in their vehicles or assigned space
- Searching clients vehicles upon entry helps prevent illegal items from entering the program, but will deter people from being open to the program
- Staff should daily check the bathrooms, trash and lot to ensure a clean and safe environment
- All pets must remain in the vehicles or on leash in their assigned spot if outside

Vetting, Intake and Check-in Process

When an interested clients called the program line, four questions were asked: Where is the person calling from? What is your connection to Fullerton (church, resources, doctor, mailing address, etc)? What is your vehicle situation? Will you pass a background check? If the client cleared the four questions, the Coordinator would then share more details of the program and what to expect if accepted into the program and would proceed to collect the clients information to give to the Police Homeless Liaison Officers (HLO's) who would run a background check and give the final clearance for the program. If the Officers had concerns based on interactions with the client in the past or the person had a questionable background, the Coordinator and Officers discussed whether or not the program would be a good fit. When a client was cleared by the HLO's the Coordinator would give the client's contact information to Illumination Foundation's case manager to set-up an intake appointment.

To enter into the program, all clients had to go through an intake process with Illumination Foundation staff at their Anaheim office. During the intake appointment the Case Manager would review the program expectations, guidelines and liability release form before having the client sign all of the documents. The

client was then given a placard to show security upon entering into the program lot and to display in their window. The placard contained information on the clients dwelling in the vehicle, their entry date, license plate number and parking spot number. All clients dwelling in a vehicle were vetted by the City before entering the program. Once clients entered into the program they received case management.

Illumination Foundation staff was present during the check-in hours from 6:30-9:00pm of the program and returned during the closing hours of the program from 5:00-6:30am. When present, staff would connect with clients and address any issues that would arise.

Vetting, Intake and Check-In Takeaways

- Define what strong ties to your city means with program partners to ensure clarity
- Having law enforcement a part of the vetting process can help give additional perspective on if a candidate is a good fit for the program
- Be clear with potential clients during the vetting process on details regarding the program including timeline, guidelines and what to expect to ensure the individual enters the intake process informed
- Have a set location to conduct intakes that follows best practices of safety – close to parking lot
- Have an identifier for those in the program, such as a large placard with the client’s information to make the check-in process easy for staff and security

Budget and Donations

The Fullerton City Council approved a \$100,000 budget for the total cost of the program. Illumination Foundation offered \$30,000 in in-kind program services. The City’s cost for the program was \$80,335. Illumination Foundation hired the security company for the program, but were reimbursed by the City. All other cost were paid directly by the City to provide the bathrooms and to meet facility needs.

The Tri-Parish Homeless Collaborative donated \$900 to assist with paying for the cost of the restrooms in November and donated \$450 in gas cards. In addition, the Fullerton Collaborative “Whatever It Takes Fund” reimbursed the Illumination Foundation for the cost of a car battery a client needed.

Safe Parking Budget

Monthly Costs

| Item | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Total |
|----------------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| Security | \$ 8,208.00 | \$ 13,392.00 | \$ 13,608.00 | \$ 7,776.00 | \$ 7,776.00 | \$ 6,480.00 | \$ 2,592.00 | \$ 59,832.00 |
| United Site Services | \$ 910.76 | \$ 561.20 | \$ 561.20 | \$ 721.58 | \$ 607.45 | \$ 2,312.91 | \$ 1,156.46 | \$ 6,831.56 |
| Monthly Costs | \$ 9,118.76 | \$ 13,953.20 | \$ 14,169.20 | \$ 8,497.58 | \$ 8,383.45 | \$ 8,792.91 | \$ 3,748.46 | \$ 66,663.56 |

| | |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| Additional Cost | \$ |
| Staff | \$ 132.27 |
| Maintenance | \$ 14,439.73 |
| Total | \$ 14,572.00 |

| | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| Donation | \$900 |
|-----------------|--------------|

| | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| Grand Total | \$ 80,335.56 |
|--------------------|---------------------|

Budget and Donation Takeaways

- Identify collaboratives, individuals or groups interested in supporting the program and keep them informed on needs that arise
- The program requires dedicated funds to meet unexpected client expenses such as car batteries and gas cards
- Identify who is responsible for pursuing donations and program funding if partnering with another agency
- In agreement with Safe Parking Manual by the New Beginnings Counseling in Santa Barbara, historically Safe Parking programs are very hard to fund due to funds like the Emergency Solutions Grant or Community Block Grant Funding being limited on what they can cover.

Program Conclusion

The Clients

Out of the twenty clients who participated over the course of six months. One client was able to secure housing and a family of three transitioned to a family shelter and moved into housing shortly after staying at the family shelter. The single client came into the program waiting to receive notification on being accepted to a University. They moved to California from out of state looking to start a new life, but was met with the reality of limited affordable housing. However, having applied to multiple Universities they knew there would be housing opportunities if accepted. After a month in the program they were informed on acceptance into a University. They applied for an on-campus job and qualified for campus housing, which they quickly secured.

For the majority of the clients in the program securing income was the greatest challenge due to having a disability or struggling to find stable work. The COVID-19 crisis left three of the five employed clients without a job. For those on SSI, finding affordable housing with their income was very difficult. In addition, for the veterans in the program finding housing with their Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) voucher was difficult. During the final month of the program the Case Manager worked with each household on next steps in preparation of the program ending.

Final Conclusion

Homelessness is a multifaceted issue in any community that requires a variety of approaches. The purpose of this report was to document the Pilot Program and its outcomes with the hope that the information would help other community partners desiring to start a program of their own. The City of Fullerton is grateful to have had the opportunity to partner with the Illumination Foundation and for the community partners who supported the program.