

County of Santa Clara

Office of the County Executive

70 W. Hedding Street, East Wing, 11th Floor
San Jose, California 95110



August 17, 2021

TO: Honorable Members of the Board of Supervisors
Jeffrey V. Smith, M.D., J.D., County Executive

FROM: Ky Le, Deputy County Executive 

SUBJECT: Utilization of San Jose State University Shelter and Housing Programs

During its June 22, 2021, meeting (Item #36), the Board of Supervisors requested information about the number of students who requested and received housing assistance from San Jose State University (SJSU) and the extent to which SJSU's shelter and housing programs had expended their funding. SJSU currently operates three programs.

- 1) The SJSU Hotel Voucher Program began in December 2020 and has a budget of \$19,600, of which \$8,000 has been expended. In total, the program has paid for 39 hotel night stays. Most individuals stayed for one to three nights, but one person used the program for two weeks. The program is still in operation.
- 2) The SJSU Rapid Rehousing Program is a two-year program which began on July 1, 2020. Its annual budget is \$650,000 and the program serves about 40 individuals per year. During its first year, July 1, 2020, to June 30, 2021, the program helped 28 individuals and expended \$187,000. The program is in its second year.
- 3) The SJSU Temporary Emergency Housing on Campus program has been in operation for several years. This program uses vacant resident hall rooms to assist individuals for seven to 14 days. From July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021, the program helped over a dozen students and provided 518 days of housing. For this past year, the program approved several extensions so the average housing days per student was relatively high. A fourth program, SJSU's Emergency Bed Program, will start in Fall 2021. This one-semester pilot program would also use resident hall rooms but would assist individuals for up to four weeks.

While utilization of these programs may be skewed by the pandemic, the housing needs of SJSU students may be different than those of persons who typically use shelter and supportive housing programs. From July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021, SJSU received 579 requests or referrals for assistance. Nearly 56% of requests indicated a housing need. Fortunately, very few individuals were living in shelters, vehicles, or places not meant for human habitation at the time of their interaction with SJSU. Most individuals were looking for help to identify more affordable housing options. In the three housing programs, SJSU staff report that all participants

were either couch surfing or had a rental lease. This appears consistent with students' housing needs as reported in the Spring 2021 SJSU Basic Needs Survey (Survey). While 41.5% of 5,238 respondents were screened – using various survey questions – as “housing insecure,” only 11.2% of housing insecure students were screened as experiencing at least one day of “homelessness” in the last twelve months. The average duration of homelessness was 3.4 days. The Survey's definition of homelessness included housing that was temporary (e.g., couch surfing).

CC: Chief Board Aides
Miguel Márquez, Chief Operating Officer
James Williams, County Counsel
Tiffany Lennear, Acting Clerk of the Board
Consuelo Hernandez, Director, Office of Supportive Housing