



Jesse Arreguín
Councilmember, District 4

CONSENT CALENDAR
October 2, 2012

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Councilmember Jesse Arreguín
Subject: Proclamation Declaring October 2012 as Homelessness Awareness Month

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the attached proclamation declaring October 2012 as Homelessness Awareness Month in the City of Berkeley.

BACKGROUND:

Homelessness is an ongoing issue that affects every city across the United States. The recent economic downturn and continual cuts in social services and assistance has seen a sharp rise in homelessness as well as heightened visibility.

October is dedicated to raising awareness of homelessness and to put faces on the staggering number of people who do not have a home to call their own and struggle to survive daily. Through education about homeless people, we are encouraged to take action and volunteer to help those who need a helping hand.

This year, Homeless Awareness Month coincides with a prolonged recession and the resulting proliferation of local “quality of life” measures that criminalize “acts of living,” such as sleeping, eating, sitting, or panhandling in public spaces. It is important to not only encourage residents to volunteer, but to dispel misinformation and misconceptions about the causes of homelessness, who are the homeless population, and the state of our services.

Below is a snapshot of national Homelessness statistics:

- **643,067** people are homeless on any given night in the United States.
- Of that number, **238,110** are people in families and **404,957** are individuals.
- **17%** of the homeless population is “chronically homeless.”
- **12%** of the homeless population (67,000 people) are veterans.

Below are some local homelessness statistics:

- Over **4,000** people are homeless in the City of Berkeley
- There is 1 bed available in local shelters for every 4 homeless individuals
- 1 in 2 foster youth aging out of services in Alameda County will experience homelessness

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

None.

CONTACT PERSON:

Jesse Arreguín, Councilmember, District 4

981-7140

Attachments:

1. Proclamation

Declaring October 2012 as Homelessness Awareness Day in the City of Berkeley

WHEREAS, in America, a country filled with infinite promise, the continuing problem of homelessness is deeply disturbing; and

WHEREAS, the most recent available data estimates that there 649,917 people experiencing homelessness in the U.S. on any given night and that more than 1.59 million people spent a least one night in emergency shelter or transitional housing over the last year.

WHEREAS, according to the 2011 point-in-time homeless count, there are over 4000 homeless individuals residing in the City of Berkeley; and

WHEREAS, the gap between the rich and the poor in the Bay Area is widest in the City of Berkeley and that US poverty levels are on track to reach their highest levels since the 1960's; and

WHEREAS, the current economic recession and foreclosure crisis exacerbate the problem of homelessness and that the number of homeless individuals is projected to increase by 2% over the next year as the lingering effects of the recession and constant budget cuts continue to aggravate deep poverty levels; and

WHEREAS, 33% of homeless males are veterans and that 27% of the homeless population had spent time in foster care.

WHEREAS, in California, 65% of foster children leave care without a place to live and that in Alameda County, 60% of foster youth will experience homelessness within one year of emancipation; and

WHEREAS, there is only 1 bed available in local shelters for every 4 homeless persons in Berkeley; and

WHEREAS, adequate and permanent shelter is a basic need, and its absence has a deleterious effect upon physical and mental health, personal development, and the ability to exercise individual rights and obligations; and

WHEREAS, ending homelessness is critical to the vitality of our community and we must commit ourselves to understanding the causes of homelessness and how to best serve those in the greatest need.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that it hereby proclaims

October 2012 as Homelessness Awareness Month

in the City of Berkeley; and that it does hereby encourage Berkeley residents to gain a greater awareness of homelessness in our community, to volunteer at a local shelter or meal program, and to represent Berkeley at its best –a compassionate city of solutions.

Mayor Tom Bates

Councilmember Linda Maio

Councilmember Darryl Moore

Councilmember Max Anderson

Councilmember Jesse Arreguín

Councilmember Laurie Capitelli

Councilmember Susan Wengraf

Councilmember Kriss Worthington

Councilmember Gordon Wozniak