



City of Arts & Innovation

PRESS RELEASE

Police Department
LARRY V. GONZALEZ
Chief of Police

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 21, 2021

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SATURATION ENGAGEMENT DAY

Multiple agencies collaborate to address issues of homelessness, mental illness, and substance abuse in Riverside.

RIVERSIDE, CA – The Riverside Police Department's Community Engagement Bureau has seen an increase in calls for services, livability issues, and concerns from our community members regarding those experiencing homelessness who are also struggling with mental illness and substance abuse. As part of an ongoing response to these concerns, our department collaborated with Riverside University Health Systems' (RUHS) Behavioral Health Department and other agencies to conduct "Saturation Engagement Day" this past Wednesday, September 15, 2021.

Officers assigned to our Public Safety Engagement Team, Community Behavior Assessment Team, and Problem Oriented Policing Team partnered with outreach workers, clinical therapists, substance abuse counselors, animal services officers, code enforcement officers, and housing support teams to address these livability issues with not only our homeless population, but also our community at large.

These teams of over 60 personnel from the various agencies checked 86 locations and contacted 186 homeless individuals. Of those, 49 people accepted services including 3 who were immediately placed into residential substance use treatment facilities, 1 teenager who was placed into a transitional living program, 2 people with medical issues who were provided emergency shelter, and 1 person who was admitted into an



outpatient substance use treatment program. Those who were resistant to services will be engaged again in hopes they eventually accept assistance.

The purpose of Saturation Engagement Day was to assist our vulnerable homeless population that are suffering from mental illness and substance abuse on both private and public property. It provided a larger opportunity to make contact, assess their needs, and offer them multiple resources to get them off the streets and into permanent supportive housing with wrap around services.

Riverside Police Chief Larry Gonzalez stated, "Homelessness is by far the most common issue our community members have concerns about in our city. With this recent Saturation Engagement Day and others in the future, we want people to know that we hear their concerns and will continue to address them going forward through these partnerships."

"Our city team is working feverishly and creatively to address our issues of homelessness in Riverside," said City of Riverside Mayor Patricia Lock Dawson. "Just a couple months ago, I joined my fellow Big City Mayors in a request for funding to support homelessness services and housing. With robust negotiations between our coalition, the state legislature and the Governor's Office, 1 billion dollars is now budgeted for the next four years for ongoing operations and mental and physical well-being services. Services that will be operational here in Riverside to help address our local concerns."

Saturation Engagement Day would not have been successful without our existing and fruitful relationships between our department and RUHS Behavioral Health Department, City of Riverside's Office of Homeless Solutions and Code Enforcement Division, Riverside County's Department of Animal Services, Probation Department, Housing Authority, Department of Mental Health (<https://www.rcdmh.org/>), along with our non-profit organization partners from Operation Safehouse (<https://operationsafehouse.org/>), Step Up (<https://www.stepup.org/>), and CityNet (<https://citynet.org/>).

Future Saturation Engagement Days will be planned so the needs of our homeless and concerns of our community can continue to be addressed outside the daily efforts of the Public Safety Engagement Team. You can get involved by watching a special meeting of the Riverside City Council for a multi-jurisdictional homelessness workshop on Thursday, September 30, 2021. More information can be found [HERE](#).

To learn more about the City of Riverside's continued efforts to address homelessness, along with additional referrals and services, visit our Office of Homeless Solutions website at <https://www.riversideca.gov/homelessolutions/>.

