



COUNTY OF ORANGE

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County Settles Lawsuits Related to Homelessness

Santa Ana, Calif. (July 24, 2019) – The County of Orange has settled two lawsuits related to homelessness, Orange County Catholic Worker, et. al v. County of Orange and David Ramirez, et. al v. County of Orange.

"The settlement agreement underscores progress that can be made when all parties come together and collaborate on solutions," said Orange County Board of Supervisors Chairwoman Lisa Bartlett, Fifth District. "The County will continue its efforts with cities and other stakeholders to implement solutions with the ultimate goal of building out our comprehensive system of care and achieving an end to homelessness in Orange County."

On Tuesday afternoon, federal Judge David O. Carter signed a settlement agreement between the County and the plaintiffs that allows the County to continue to enforce anti-camping and anti-loitering ordinances in County unincorporated areas, on County-owned or leased properties, such as County regional parks, and in the channels of the Orange County Flood Control District.

"Enforcement means we can continue to make public health and safety a top County priority in all County facilities such as County parks," said Vice Chair Michelle Steel, Second District.

Additionally, County shelter operators will be obligated to comply with County standards of care concerning intake procedures, shelter staff training, ADA compliance and grievance procedures.

"The settlements before Judge Carter strike a good balance between compassionate treatment of homeless residents and the County's ability to address public health and safety concerns," said Supervisor Andrew Do, First District. "The System of Care that Orange County has built, to the satisfaction of plaintiffs and the Court, is an example of a successful system of coordinated care for the homeless, which I hope will be a model others working on homelessness can look to as they build out their own service model."

The agreement also allows the litigants to utilize a dispute resolution process, overseen by Judge Carter, to avoid further costly litigation.

"With a clear method for dispute resolution, the County can effectively enforce laws that ensure the safety of all individuals in our public spaces," said Supervisor Donald P. Wagner, Third District.

Closing this chapter allows the County to focus on continuing to build the system of care to address the needs of those experiencing homelessness.

"It is my hope that moving forward all parties can continue to work together in the best interest of all who call Orange County home," said Supervisor Doug Chaffee, Fourth District.

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