

# **Network for Homeless Solutions and Community Partners Reconnect Homeless to Their Families**

Thanks to the collaborative efforts of the Network for Homeless Solutions and its community partners, three individuals living on the streets of Costa Mesa were reconnected with their families within a 48-hour period.

Two individuals were sent home to Texas, one who came to Costa Mesa for work and lost his job and the other who suffered mental issues. A third person, who came to a sober living facility in Costa Mesa, was sent home to Ohio.

All three people are now off the streets of Costa Mesa and back home thanks to the hard work of this dedicated team.

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## **New UCI Study Launched to Put a Price on Homelessness**

Last week the Association of California Cities, Orange County, announced a new partnership with UC Irvine to study and quantify the costs of homelessness on cities in the county.

The study comes on the heels of a collaborative meeting Assistant CEO Rick Francis participated in with the ACC-OC Working Group on Homeless Issues in which he unveiled Five Pillars, including State Advocacy, Research and Data, Outreach and Sharing, Housing Options and Communications to

Constituents, to combat the problem of homelessness. These Five Pillars were later shared with a countywide group of city leaders in May. Costa Mesa is viewed by many county leaders as a model approach in addressing the complexities of homelessness, and the city has already been using many facets of the Five Pillars.

The UCI study falls under the Research and Data pillar and will analyze a comprehensive set of costs and services provided to the homeless population by cities, agencies, and hospitals. This includes emergency health care services, public safety, administrative services, parks and recreation, mental health services, and a number of other elements along the continuum of care.

The study is expected to be completed by next year and will be a helpful tool in the effort to understand existing costs and that data can be used to better deploy public resources.



**UCI** University of  
California, Irvine

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## **Assistant CEO details challenges city faces on homeless issues**

Costa Mesa Assistant CEO Rick Francis told attendees of the monthly Chamber of Commerce Breakfast Boost that the city is

working hard through community outreach and with the help of clergy and others to address the problems of homelessness here.

“We are willing to do our fair share and we will never back down from that,” Francis told the group gathered at the Costa Mesa Country Club on Thursday morning. “But if every city took care of their own, this problem would be a lot easier to manage.”

Francis noted that recent counts of homeless in Costa Mesa show a 45 percent increase in that population, but his presentation highlighted the success of the city’s outreach efforts and the work of the Network for Homeless Solutions, a city-sponsored group that includes, clergy, code enforcement, police and city outreach staff.

For example since 2013, the city was able to house 122 homeless people and reconnect 31 people with family members. From June of 2015 through December, volunteers clocked upward of 880 hours helping the homeless.

He pointed out to the audience several of the factors that lead to homelessness, including the price of housing, underemployment, a dramatic increase in drug use and abuse, especially heroin, and sober living home operators who have clients that drop out and go back onto the streets.

Changes in legislation to address prison overcrowding have also led to problems as criminal offenders spend less time incarcerated and are free to commit crimes more quickly.

Joining Francis at the breakfast were members of the city’s Network for Homeless Solutions, including Bill Nelson of Fresh Beginnings Ministry, Ian Stevenson of Trellis and Muriel Ullman, the city’s homeless liaison. City CEO Tom Hatch and Fire Chief Dan Stefano also attended the breakfast.