City of Rohnert Park
PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Status of Homelessness in Rohnert Park- Need for Housing

Rohnert Park, CA (June 9, 2023) – Rohnert Park is working at the city and regional levels to add thousands of additional housing units. These efforts are driven by data showing the best way to reduce homelessness – increasing availability of affordable housing.

"Addressing homelessness continues to be a top priority for us," said Mayor Samantha Rodriguez. "Though there are many contributors to homelessness, we are taking steps with the knowledge that more housing is key in solving this complex issue."

Many claims attribute homelessness to mental health problems and drug use. However, studies show that only 33% of the homeless population suffer from severe mental health issues. Increased homelessness is also commonly attributed to higher drug use rates. In fact, data shows that a majority of homeless people with substance abuse problems developed the problems after becoming homeless. West Virginia has the highest drug overdose mortality rate in the country for example. It also has one of the lowest rates of homelessness.

Additionally, many claims attribute homelessness to poverty or progressive policies. Of 34 million Americans living below the poverty line, less than one-fifth of 1% of them are homeless. Likewise, both Detroit and San Francisco are considered progressive cities in the United States. However, one has a high rate of homelessness and the other does not.

Although these factors contribute to homelessness, housing supply continues to be the root issue. Nearly 100% of the homeless population is unable to afford housing. Areas with expensive housing often have high homeless rates. This includes much of California and Sonoma County. Housing is considered affordable when a household spends 30% or less of its income on housing costs.

Read more about Rohnert Park's response to homelessness at **rpcity.org**.

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