

15 HUMAN SERVICES

The Human Services chapter discusses services available to children, seniors and persons with disabilities as well as general social service programs and medical services for Novato residents. The chapter begins with an overview of the local policy framework for those services followed by a description of the services and service providers in Novato.

A. Policy Framework

1. City of Novato General Plan

The City of Novato General Plan includes a Human Services Element. The purpose of this element is to coordinate the delivery of human services and associated facilities for those members of the community having special needs. Topics addressed in this element include services for seniors, the disabled and youth, as well as child care, social service programs and medical services. Objectives, policies and programs in the Human Services Element call for the City to expand outreach and education for human services, coordinate with and assist service providers, and remove regulatory barriers to the provision of human services in Novato.

2. Marin County Child Care Master Plan

To better understand child care needs, the Marin County Child Care Commission published the *Marin County Child Care Master Plan 2008 to 2013*. The Master Plan assesses the current state of the child care system in Marin County, creates a vision for the child care system and develops goals, objectives, indicators and strategies to meet the needs of the child care community. The Master Plan profiles Marin County jurisdictions including the City of Novato. The Plan identifies a deficit in child care services in the City of Novato, particularly for infant and school age children.¹ The Plan's recommendations and key objectives are presented on county-wide level, rather than providing specific recommendations for individual cities and communities. Key objectives in the Plan include developing a countywide infrastructure of child care and early learning, expanding public outreach and advocacy, increasing the supply of child care options and supporting a high quality child care workforce.

3. Marin County Early Childhood Obesity Prevention Plan

The Marin County First Five Marin Children and Families Commission published the Marin County Early Childhood Obesity Prevention Plan in 2012. The plan exemplifies the type of collaborative work necessary to turn the curve on early childhood obesity in Marin through an ecological frame. Although Marin County has many innovative and effective health, nutrition and physical activity programs, the need exists for greater coordination, consistency, sharing of best practices and expansion so that children in every community benefit.

4. Child Care

Child care services in Novato are primarily provided by privately-operated programs. Additional child care services are provided by the City of Novato and the Novato Unified School District.

¹ Marin County Child Care Commission, *Marin County Child Care Master Plan – 2008 to 2013*, page 33.

a. Private Programs

Privately-operated child care programs include family daycare homes and licensed child care centers. Family daycare homes are located in the provider's home, often with a single adult supervising up to 12 children for less than 24 hours per day. There are many family daycare homes servicing the Novato area. Licensed child care centers are usually larger facilities with multiple care givers. There are also privately-operated preschools, recreational and social programs in Novato that provide informal child care services.

b. City of Novato

The City of Novato Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Services provides before and after-school child care programming serving children attending Lu Sutton Elementary School. All-day child care is offered on Teacher Work Days and certain holidays and vacation periods. Child care is open to children from any school during school vacations.²

c. Novato Unified School District

The Novato Unified School District contracts with private child care programs to provide before- and after- school child care on-site at each elementary school.

5. Youth Services

Services for youth in Novato are provided by the City of Novato Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Services; the City of Novato Police Department, and a host of nonprofit providers including Novato Youth Center and the Marin YMCA.

a. City of Novato Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Services

The Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Services provides a wide range of programming for preschoolers, children and teenagers. The Department provides programs that appeal to various ages and interests, including educational, recreational, athletic and cultural programs. To serve youth in Novato, the Department operates a number of youth oriented facilities including the Downtown Recreation Center. The Center offers classes, workshops, sports camps, dances, and special events. Additional programs offered by the Department are described in Chapter 7, Parks and Recreation.³

b. Police Department

The City of Novato sponsors a number of community programs for youth. Top the Cops, a program at Infineon Raceway, engages high school students in friendly, competitive drag races against police officers. The Novato Police Exploring Program provides educational training for young men and women ages 14 through 20 on the purpose, mission and objectives of law enforcement. The program provides career orientation experience, leadership opportunities and community service activities. The Youth Police Camp is a four-day camp that provides an opportunity for children in 6th through 9th grades to learn about the jobs performed by civilian and sworn personnel of the Police Department. The

² City of Novato Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Services, *2013 Summer/Fall Activities Guide*.

³*Ibid.*

Minor Alcohol Access Prevention Program seeks to reduce the availability and consumption of alcohol by youth under 21. The Police Department also participates in the Safe Routes to Schools program.⁴

c. The Novato Youth Center

The Novato Youth Center at 680 Wilson Avenue is a community-based nonprofit organization that provides a variety of services to youth in Novato. The Center operates before- and after-school child care, child development programs for toddlers and preschool children, homework support, and counseling. The Novato Youth Center also offers services at the Wellness Center, 1767 Grant Avenue, including a Teen Wellness Clinic, Youth and Family Counseling Program, and Seeking Safety Teen Group.⁵

6. Services for Senior Citizens

Approximately 16 percent (about 8,100 people) of the City of Novato's population is age 65 or older.⁶ Services for seniors in Novato include the provision of affordable housing and non-residential services related to employment, health care, legal assistance and transportation.

a. Housing Services

Choices for Living, published by the Marin County Division of Aging, identifies housing resources for seniors in Marin County. Housing resources for seniors specifically available in Novato include relief assistance with domestic utility bills, emergency housing, subsidized housing, mobile homes, retirement residences, residential care homes and skilled nursing facilities. Casa Nova at 35 Carmel Drive, Mackey Terrace at 626 Owens Drive, the Nova-Ro complexes at 1128 Olive Street, 1130 Seventh Street and 31 Pinheiro Circle, the Villas at Hamilton at 410 South Palm Drive, and the Warner Creek Senior Housing at 806 Diablo Avenue are subsidized housing developments for seniors located in Novato.⁷

b. Other Services

Services for seniors in Novato that are not housing-related are provided by a network of local non-profit organizations and governmental agencies. The Division of Aging within the Marin County Department of Health and Human Services coordinates the provision of employment services, family caregiver support, health insurance counseling, legal services, health care services and transportation services. In addition, the Marin County Commission on Aging, an advisory council to the Marin County Board of Supervisors, works with the Division of Aging to address the needs of seniors in Marin County.

Non-residential service providers in Novato include Marin Adult Day Health Center at 1905 Novato Boulevard, an adult day health care facility providing day programs for seniors with health care and socialization needs. The Margaret Todd Senior Center at 1560 Hill Road is a full-service senior center which provides educational and recreation programs, and health and wellness programs. The Center is owned and operated by the City of Novato Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department. Through an agreement with Episcopal Senior Communities, the Center hosts the Novato Independent Elders Program (NIEP), which provides a wide variety of services to meet the needs of Novato's frail, el-

⁴ City of Novato Police Department website, <http://www.ci.novato.ca.us/Index.aspx?page=1947>, accessed October 31, 2013.

⁵ Novato Youth Center website, <http://www.novatoyouthcenter.org/>, accessed October 31, 2013.

⁶ 2010 U.S. Census (SF1:QT-P1).

⁷ County of Marin Health and Human Services Division of Aging, *Choices for Living 2012*.

derly and multicultural seniors. The Novato Senior Citizens Club is a non-profit organization sponsored by the City and offers social and recreational activities at the Center.⁸

7. Social Service Programs

a. County of Marin Department of Health and Human Services

The Division of Social Services within the County of Marin Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is the governmental agency that administers social service programs for Novato residents. Services provided by the Division of Social Services include general assistance programs such as Medi-Cal, Food Stamps/SNAP and Cash Aid, Child Protective Services, foster care and employment and training services.

b. Novato Human Needs Center

The Novato Human Needs Center at 1907 Novato Boulevard is a non-profit agency that assists low-income individuals to overcome financial challenges and move toward self-sufficiency. Services offered at the Center include emergency food and rental assistance, grants for critic needs such as car repair, medical bills and special equipment, and employment and education services.

c. New Beginnings Center

The New Beginnings Center, a non-profit agency operated by Homeward Bound Novato at 1399 North Hamilton Parkway, is an 80-bed emergency housing facility that provides health care, counseling and vocational training programs for families affected by domestic violence. In addition, Homeward Bound sponsors the Next Key facility at 1385 North Hamilton Parkway which is a housing and jobs-training campus that includes 32 studio apartments, a training kitchen for Fresh Starts Culinary Academy and a 150 person event space.

d. Gilead House

Gilead House, located on Seventh Street, is a faith-based transitional home for single mothers. Programs offered at Gilead House include job skills training, basic financial management training, parenting and life-management counseling and mentoring by sponsors.

8. Care of Persons with Disabilities

Many of the same programs and organizations serving seniors described in Section B.2 also provide services for persons with disabilities. Additional services for persons with disabilities in Novato are provided by Easter Seals, a non-profit organization providing education, outreach and advocacy services. Easter Seals' regional headquarters is located at 20 Pimentel Court in Novato. Services provided by Easter Seals include medical rehabilitation, employment and training, child care, adult day programs, camping and recreation programs.

9. Medical Services

In addition to a typical range of private doctors practices and other daily medical offices, Novato is home to the following medical facilities.

⁸The Novato Senior Citizens Club.

a. Novato Community Hospital

The Novato Community Hospital (NCH) is the only general (full service) hospital in the Novato area. NCH is a Sutter Health Affiliate located on the east side of Highway 101 at the Rowland Boulevard exit in Novato. Since opening in May 2000, NCH has operated an acute care facility with 40 patient beds, an 8-bed Emergency Department, and three medical office buildings located on the 10-acre campus. Services provided include a 24-hour Emergency Department, inpatient/outpatient surgery, a medical/surgical unit, a critical care unit, imaging services, and a laboratory, and a physical therapy and sports fitness center.⁹

Transportation service to the Novato Community Hospital is provided by Health Express, a van service sponsored by Sutter Health and Whistlestop.

b. Marin Community Clinics

Marin Community Clinics, an independent nonprofit organization, provides cost-effective health care at two locations in Novato. A medical clinic is located at 6100 Redwood Boulevard and a Dental Clinic is located at 6090 Redwood Boulevard.

c. County of Marin Department of Health and Human Services

The Marin County Department of HHS provides a full range of medical services that are available to County residents regardless of income. There are no HHS office locations in Novato. The closest HHS office at 3260 Kerner Boulevard in San Rafael provides immunization, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, and sexually transmitted disease services.

⁹ Novato Community Hospital website, <http://www.novatocommunity.org/>, accessed on October 31, 2013.