

WHO'S IN CHARGE?

Stepping up on Homelessness: The need for strategic leadership and comprehensive planning



SUMMARY

The impetus for this investigation is mounting public concern about homelessness despite existing efforts to address problems affecting our county's homeless residents. Upon closer examination, it appears homelessness is an even bigger problem in our county than the biennial homeless census suggests. However, there is no leadership body with political power and authority to change the course of homelessness and housing insecurity in our county.

Homelessness and housing insecurity is a serious and persistent problem affecting a broad swath of Monterey County residents. Homelessness is a complex social problem that is greatly exacerbated by the overall housing shortage, high cost of housing, and inadequate stock of affordable housing in this area. The faces of homelessness are the men, women and children in our community who live in a constant state of uncertainty over basic shelter—they are families, unaccompanied children, students, seniors, veterans, full-time workers, victims of domestic violence, the mentally ill or disabled, and those who have suffered a financial setback from a job loss, health crisis or divorce. Once one falls into homelessness, it's difficult to get back on track. How we respond to and address this problem has very real moral, economic, and quality of life implications for all of us both individually and as a community.

Monterey County has many people and organizations dedicated to serving the homeless and has established a Continuum of Care framework to coordinate housing services. The County does not, however, have a publicly accountable governing mechanism in place to secure strategic

leadership, cross-jurisdiction collaboration and the comprehensive planning needed to address homelessness. This is relevant because meaningfully reducing—and ideally ending—homelessness calls for a high-level of accountability and coordinated effort. The current network of services and new projects are a critical foundation. Nevertheless, change requires a broader level of public commitment in several areas, such as increased political cooperation between county and city officials, focused policy, and a dedicated budget.

The reality is that our community pays for the problems associated with homelessness whether we choose to manage these problems reactively or address them strategically. Our county cannot keep pace with the current level of need and, as housing insecurity worsens, the level of homelessness will not improve, and likely expand, without concerted effort to address housing stocks.

To move beyond managing homelessness, we need an empowered leadership body in order to secure the broad public support and joint county-city commitments necessary to meaningfully address homelessness.

GLOSSARY

CARS Coordinated Assessment and Referral System

CDE California Department of Education

CSAC California State Association of Counties

CHSP Coalition of Homeless Service Providers

CoC Continuum of Care

ESG Emergency Services Grant Funding

HEARTH Homeless Assistance, Rapid Transition to Housing Act (2009)

HACM Housing Authority County of Monterey

HCV Housing Choice Vouchers (formerly section 8 vouchers)

HDC The Monterey County Housing Authority Development Company

HMIS Homeless Management Information System

HUD U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

IHC U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness

LCC The League of California Cities

MBEP The Monterey Bay Economic Partnership

MCOE Monterey County Office of Education

NIMBY Not in My Backyard

UI Urban Initiatives

BACKGROUND

The Problem of Homelessness

A great deal of evidence exists about homelessness in terms of its causes, the extent of the problem, and strategies to address it. There is a general consensus that it is a problem we can, in theory, address with the right mix of policy, planning and supportive services. Yet, public frustration is a common theme throughout California in which cities and counties grapple with persistent homelessness even when officials set lofty goals and dedicate significant resources to homeless projects.¹ Notably, there are also common barriers to achieving meaningful progress including entrenched NIMBYism², misconceptions about the homeless, and diffused authority. These barriers seem to suggest a need for active leadership, coordinated organization, and marshalling political will.

The problem of homelessness is not unique to Monterey County. Homelessness affects all 58 counties in our state.³ In fact, the State of California accounts for more than 25% of the national homeless population even though our responses to the problem are similar to those undertaken by other states. This is directly linked to the high cost of housing and severe housing shortages throughout the state. A striking majority of the homeless in California live unsheltered—in other words, on the street. The cost of housing also means that an ever-increasing number of people live in financially precarious situations, spending more than 50% of their income on housing costs⁴. The stock of affordable rentals is far outpaced by population growth and demand for low

¹ Lopez, S. (January 28, 2018). L.A. homeless crisis grows despite political promises, many speeches and millions of dollars. How do we fix this? *Los Angeles Times*.

² NIMBYism: NIMBY is an acronym for the phrase Not In My Back Yard. NIMBYism refers to public opposition to projects in their neighborhoods, even if they are not opposed generally, due to the perception of how it will impact them personally

³ CSAC Joint Task Force. California State Association of Counties.

⁴ The Joint Center for Housing Studies uses the number of people who pay 30% or more of income on housing as a metric by which to track the problem of housing affordability

wage workers. Even though the state has yet to officially declare it a state-wide crisis, dozens of individual cities and counties have designated homelessness an emergency.⁵

Another problem is the perception of homelessness as being the result of mental illness or bad choices, such as unwillingness to work hard or drug addiction. In truth, there is a growing number of “economically homeless”—those who are driven to overcrowded or unsafe dwellings, cars, or the streets simply because they could not keep pace with the cost of living or were overwhelmed by a serious financial shock. Quite often, people succumb to various mental health, physical ailments, or addictions *after* they have become homeless.

There are many causes of homelessness including poverty, the absence of work opportunities, the lack of affordable housing, mental and/or physical illness, shrinking public services, addiction and domestic violence. However, the biggest contributors are increasing shortages of affordable rental housing and poverty.⁶ Many factors exacerbate the causes of homelessness including downturns in the economy or changes in public policies affecting housing, wealth disparities, and social services. These individual and structural factors are entwined and can lead to cycles of poverty and homelessness.

Solutions to address homelessness are cross-jurisdictional, involve public-private partnerships, and span multiple policy areas including housing, land use, public health, mental health, social services, economic development, and criminal justice. Thus, the federal government both models and encourages collaborative comprehensive responses.

The U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (IHC) has shown success in coordinating federal responses to veteran homelessness via partnerships across all levels of government; the goal of the agency is to apply this model to combating homelessness more broadly. To encourage local-level coordination, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) structured its homeless assistance funding to be contingent upon community-wide planning and the coordination of programs for individuals and families. As a result, cities and counties are forming partnerships to create strategic plans. In an effort to improve the outcomes of these collaborations, The California State Association of Counties (CSAC) and The League of California Cities (LCC) formed a task force to review how California cities and counties are addressing homelessness in order to identify new & best practices for establishing strategic plans, organizing collaborations, and implementing action plans.

The California legislature passed 15 housing bills in the Fall of 2017 to address the state-wide housing shortage through a variety of measures involving a mix of incentives and penalties. The new laws are intended to help spur affordable housing at the local level by creating new sources

⁵ Medina, J. (December 21, 2017). The State’s Homeless Population Drives National Increase. *The New York Times*.

⁶ National Coalition for the Homelessness <http://www.nationalhomeless.org/factsheets/why.html>

of funding, expediting building projects, tightening mandates on local planning, and fining jurisdictions that don't adequately plan for their share of housing demand.⁷

Homeless Strategy in Monterey County

The County of Monterey and its cities act independently and jointly with respect to various individual homeless shelter and housing projects. Housing requires a great deal of collaboration and shared resources for emergency shelters, transitional housing, rental assistance and permanent housing. The County deploys an array of public programs and nonprofit services and relies on local, state, federal, and nonprofit sources of funding.

Monterey County's primary formal system for addressing homelessness is shaped by HUD's Continuum of Care (CoC) system. The County receives federal funding authorized by the McKinney-Vento Act (1987)⁸ for local housing and supportive services programs. In 1994, the application process changed for this grant, requiring the community to apply for federal funds in one comprehensive application, rather than as individual organizations for each separate program. The County also depends on HUD's State and Federal Emergency Services Grant (ESG) funding.

The Coalition of Homeless Services Providers (CHSP) is a 501(c)3 that was formed to facilitate the CoC and the grant process for the County. CHSP is an independent nonprofit organization that is not part of any county or city government; but it plays an important role in the County's homeless service provision.

In 2009, Congress passed the HEARTH Act to further reinforce community focus on preventative measures and system-wide approaches to homelessness. Federal funding is stipulated upon establishing comprehensive planning that extends beyond receiving the annual federal grant. This required the County to establish a formalized means for ongoing planning by including elements, such as a coordinating organization for service provision, governance body, strategic plan, data collection and management, and an assessment and referral system. The idea is that the County not only coordinate shelter and services, but also link with broader planning and policy efforts, evaluate progress toward goals, and continuously update the strategic plan based on learning what does, and does not, work.

Since 1994, coordination of programs, the federal grant writing process, and compliance with federal requirements have been facilitated by the Coalition of Homeless Services Providers (CHSP), which is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. In 2009, the Lead Me Home Leadership

⁷ Brief summary of CA state housing bills <https://www.mercurynews.com/2017/09/14/california-affordable-housing-bills-are-finally-getting-a-vote/>

⁸ History of this legislation <http://www.nationalhomeless.org/publications/facts/McKinney.pdf>

Council (Leadership Council) convened as a working group to create ‘Lead Me Home’— Monterey and San Benito counties’ 10-year strategic plan to end homelessness (Strategic Plan).⁹ The Strategic Plan is intended to serve as the coordinating planning document for addressing homelessness. Depending on the documentation, the plan went into effect in 2011 or 2012, making this year 6 or 7 of the 10-year plan.

Despite the plan’s broad scope and ambitious goals, there were no elected officials seated on the Leadership Council prior to 2017. Progress toward goals has never been measured and the plan has not been updated. The Leadership Council is currently comprised of one county supervisor, four city mayors, executives of nonprofit service providers, county health and social service administrators, the Community Foundation, public safety officials, and homeless representatives. Due to its composition, the council is not compelled by the Brown Act (1953) to open its meetings to public attendance, input and scrutiny. The Leadership Council schedules meetings bimonthly and appears to serve as the governing body for the CoC and the Strategic Plan for ending homelessness.

CHSP is the designated Continuum of Care (CoC) coordinator for the County. The County’s CoC system and federal grant application process is overseen by the CHSP. As such, CHSP also complies with HUD mandates to collect and manage data as well as to integrate services. In addition to the coordinated grant application, CHSP administers the biennial Homeless Census and Survey, the Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS), and the Coordinated Assessment and Referral System (CARS). Data collection is shared with the federal government and used locally to monitor the size and characteristics of the homeless populations. The HMIS database gives service providers a common platform to track individual clients across providers, and CARS tailors housing and services to meet the needs of clients. Since a county CoC is insufficient support for individual municipalities, the City of Salinas has contracted with Urban Initiatives (UI) to similarly develop its own HUD strategies for an overarching municipal homeless and community development plan. The City also assumed responsibility for securing 2017 federal and state Emergency Solutions Grant Funding (ESG) for the County, which had previously been tasked to CHSP. The County needs this funding to contract with nonprofit homeless service providers. In addition, the City has been investing in its own a pipeline of housing and by partnering with the County and MidPen Housing on projects, which include an emergency shelter, permanent supportive shelter, and mixed-use revitalization project.

There are rental assistance programs and public-private partnerships designed to add affordable housing. The Housing Authority of the County of Monterey (HACM) is a public agency that receives federal funding to manage public housing programs. It also provides subsidies via Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV) that help low income families and veterans supplement the cost of rent. To add to our affordable housing stock, the Monterey County Housing Authority

⁹ Although CHSP and LMHLC oversee the CoC for Monterey and San Benito Counties, this report only refers to homeless leadership in Monterey County

Development Company (HDC) is a public benefit corporation that supports the Housing Authority and affordable housing developers. Since high building costs are a barrier to affordable housing construction, the HDC partnered with a company that builds prefabricated modular units to facilitate the Haciendas project in Salinas.

To spur a call-to-action with respect to our housing shortage, local forums, collaboratives, and initiatives are drawing attention to the need for affordable housing in the region and supporting various nonprofit, public and private sector led development projects. For example, broad local concern for low-income, senior, and disabled residents prompted the *Monterey County Housing and Homeless Summit* and *Seaside Housing 101 Forum*. In 2016, The Monterey Bay Economic Partnership (MBEP) launched a housing initiative to form a regional coalition of organizations to promote affordable housing development through advocacy and the establishment of a housing trust.

Local companies have also taken the initiative to invest in housing in order to be able to ensure a local workforce. Tanimura & Antle completed its 100-unit Spreckels housing project that provides low cost rental units for 800 employees. In the fall of 2017, the Nunes Company broke ground on a similar farm labor project in Salinas that is expected to house 600 agricultural employees. Other low-income housing projects underway are the senior housing units in Seaside and the Pebble Beach Company's inclusionary housing project in Pacific Grove.

In sum, homelessness and housing security affect the stability and vitality of our county. Despite the extent of efforts in place or underway, there is concern about the scope and persistence of the problem. The purpose of this study is to draw attention to one area that needs improvement if we are to make headway on homelessness.

APPROACH

The approach the Jury took was to broadly survey public concerns, community-wide problems and organizational challenges with respect to homelessness generally, rather than to focus on one particular program or agency. The investigative methodology for this report involved interviews, examining various collaborative homeless and housing efforts, and reviewing homeless data, research, and media reports. As such, the Jury examined a wide range of local, state, and national homeless-related issues, statistics, policies, and initiatives. In addition, the Jury interviewed local elected officials, public administrators and nonprofit executives. Jury representatives also attended public forums on homelessness and reviewed county and city-level strategies to address homelessness.

DISCUSSION

This report addresses the evidence that homelessness in our county is getting worse and the public perception that nothing is being done in response to the growing problem. Contrary to this perception, we found numerous agencies, partnerships, innovations, and best practices dedicated to homeless solutions. We also found that those committed to ending homelessness express deep frustration by the lack of progress. The most commonly cited reason for the inability to make headway was the lack of political will—particularly the lack of willingness to commit to a joint county-city regional plan. The community has the knowledge base and the framework for addressing homelessness. The community does not, however, have a leadership body that can be held accountable for producing results.

The County has a housing shortage and a growing homeless problem. Housing costs and shortages are a national trend that is more pronounced in Monterey County.¹⁰ The homeless census and survey gives an indication of who the homeless are, as well as the scope of homelessness. Officials caution against claiming an increase in homelessness because numbers may reflect more accurate record-keeping over time. Yet, the official count is based on a specific definition of homelessness that may not capture the extent of homelessness in the County.

There is more than one definition of homelessness, which impacts the number of people included in the homeless count. The Monterey County Homeless Census & Survey is based on a narrow federal definition limited to those living in shelters or places not designed as shelters—such as cars, parks, bus stations, airports, or camps. However, the California Department of Education (CDE) uses a broader definition of homelessness that takes into account students whose families live in motels, doubled-up conditions, “couch-surfing”, or who are waiting for placement in foster care. It is notable that when using a definition that accounts for housing insecurity, the problem of homelessness affects a greater number of Monterey County residents than documented in the homeless census.

- There is a severe shortage of affordable housing in the County, which is defined as rent not exceeding 30% of median household income. Long-standing residential instability was magnified during the 2008 financial crisis and the 2012 dissolution of the Redevelopment Agency, which was an important source of funding for affordable housing.

¹⁰ America’s Affordable Housing Shortage Mapped <https://www.citylab.com/equity/2017/03/americas-affordable-housing-shortage-mapped/518391/>
Murphy, Katy (February 1, 2018). Housing Shortage: New report shows how California cities and counties stack up <https://www.mercurynews.com/2018/02/01/housing-shortage-new-report-shows-how-california-cities-and-counties-stack-up/>

- The 2017 Monterey County Homeless Census & Survey Reported:
 - Monterey County Homeless numbers are the highest they have been in 10 years. Since the 2015 census, the number of homeless has increased 27% and the number of homeless families has increased by 37%
 - Homelessness has risen by 57% in Salinas, 102% in Del Rey Oaks, and 37% in Marina
 - 83% of the homeless were Monterey County residents before they became homeless
 - 21% of the homeless population is chronically homeless. The number is essentially the same as the 2015 survey
 - 25% of the homeless surveyed say they are employed but homeless because they cannot afford rent
 - 49% of the homeless are between 18-40 years old
 - 75% of the homeless live unsheltered, while 25% stay in emergency shelters or transitional housing or safe havens

- Homelessness is more problematic when the definition of homelessness includes those who live in overcrowded temporary situations. According to the 2017 Monterey County Education Report, 8.1% of children enrolled in our public schools, or 6,278 students, are homeless or are living in near homeless conditions. This number of children is almost two and half times the total homeless figure of 2,837 reported by the 2017 homeless census.

- The Monterey County Office of Education (MCOE) only counts homeless students. There is no county-wide total population count of homelessness using this broader definition of homelessness.

Who's in Charge?

The perception that little is being done to address homelessness is fueled, in part, by the scope and complexity of the problem, the diffused network of organizations involved, and the lack of clear authority or markers of progress. It is also driven by visible, impactful, and costly effects of homelessness in our county and other cities and counties throughout the state.

- The County, municipalities, private industry, faith-based and other not-for-profit organizations provide services and housing options such as warming shelters, temporary housing, transitional housing and affordable housing.

- CHSP is a group of private non-profit and public organizations working together to address the complex issues of homelessness. The mission is to promote interagency coordination for a comprehensive system of housing and services to maximize self-sufficiency of individuals and families.
- CHSP has been receiving federal grants from Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for 10 or more years. In 2018 the grant amounted to just under \$1.9 million from HUD. This grant money is distributed to 8 agencies for 14 programs providing street outreach, transitional housing, rental assistance programs, permanent supportive housing and homeless planning activities.
- When it learned CHSP was not applying for 2017 ESG funding, the City of Salinas took over the administration of Federal and State Emergency Solutions Grant Funding from CHSP. The City serves as the administrative entity to secure and distribute State ESG funding for Monterey County, which amounts to \$1,166,582 for over 2 years. Federal ESG amounts to \$670,562 over 4 years.

There are direct, indirect, and hidden public costs associated with homelessness. There is also no consistent budget process by which to identify and account for the full costs of homelessness or to accurately track the resources dedicated to homelessness. Social services, rental assistance, shelters and affordable housing require resources. Some of the hidden costs include unaccounted work hours public employees dedicate to addressing homelessness and the unquantifiable social costs in terms of human dignity or productivity. When adequate resources are not committed to eliminating homelessness, communities also must pay to respond to the consequences of homelessness.

There were several consequential events associated with homelessness in California this past year. For example, San Diego reported 580 cases of hepatitis A associated with an outbreak that began in a homeless encampment in September 1, 2017. San Diego spent \$6.5 million to set up 5 temporary industrial-sized treatment tents for 7 months, which was taken from funds budgeted for the purpose of building permanent housing.¹¹ In December 2017, a homeless encampment in Los Angeles was the source of a fire that was responsible for shutting down Interstate 405, a major freeway, during peak rush-hour traffic, burning 400 acres, destroying 6 houses, and damaging 12 additional homes in the Bel-Air neighborhood.¹² According to Cal Fire, there is an average of 103 wildfires per year caused by illegal open fires, which include homeless warming fires, cooking fires and encampment fires. The number attributed to homeless camps is not officially tracked. Yet, these scenarios represent realistic vulnerabilities for our county as well.

¹¹ Associated Press (December 2, 2017). San Diego Opens Homeless Tents to Fight Hepatitis Outbreak.

¹² Medina, J. (December 12, 2017). Los Angeles Fire Started in Homeless Encampment, Officials Say. *The New York Times*.

Together, the direct, indirect, and hidden costs of homelessness illustrate that while investment in housing and homeless services is costly, it is also costly not to make the investment—both in terms of dollars spent, quality of life, and human dignity.

- The costs of homelessness are hard to pin down because they are embedded in the budgets of numerous agencies, jurisdictions and private organizations. There are also many “hidden” or undocumented costs of homelessness, such as volunteer time, social costs and the work hours of public employees. Resources dedicated to homelessness come from nonprofits, and federal, state, and local governments.
 - Since 2014, the City of Salinas spent over \$5 million on homeless services, including warming shelters, affordable housing projects, and periodic “sweeps”. These expenditures are supported by federal, state, and local revenue as well as private funding.
 - On February 7, 2018 Monterey County became the latest county in the state to declare Hepatitis A outbreak among the homeless population residing within the county.
 - The City of Salinas, allocates \$300,000 per year for cleanups or “sweeps”. Last year, costs ran \$338,000 and are expected to be higher this year due to the Hepatitis A outbreak. The full cost of “sweeps” is not always accounted for in terms of public servants’ time and displacement of the homeless. They are disruptive to the homeless leaving them vulnerable to the elements and to losing their possessions.
 - The public health concerns with the outbreak is the challenge of vaccinating the homeless, the need to vaccinate an array of public service workers, and the potential of spreading to other populations, particularly gay men.
- Several community initiatives demonstrate ongoing public concern about problems related to homelessness and housing insecurity.
 - Housing Options Meaningful to Elders (HOME) is a new collaborative. HOME convened ‘A Call to Action!’ summit on Sept. 15, 2017 in an effort to brainstorm solutions to address the effects of the area’s severe housing shortage on seniors and disabled residents. The goal of the group of nonprofit, government, and private leaders and invited policymakers is to develop an actionable plan toward housing solutions in Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz counties.
 - Monterey County Housing and Homeless Summit and Seaside Housing 101 Forum. In 2016, The Monterey Bay Economic Partnership (MBEP) launched a housing

initiative to form a regional coalition of organizations to promote affordable housing development through advocacy and the establishment of a housing trust.

- In 2016 the Community Foundation for Monterey commissioned the Fund for Homeless Women report, “Assessment of the Homeless Women on the Monterey Peninsula”¹³, in order to document women’s homelessness causes, needs, and existing challenges, local policy considerations, and to craft recommendations.
- Several industry leaders have taken it upon themselves to provide dignified housing options for their employees, including the Tanimura & Antle housing facility, the Nunes Company project, and the Pebble Beach Company’s \$8 million project for 24 units of 100% affordable employee housing.

Monterey County struggles with similar barriers faced by other communities trying to make headway in the fight against homelessness. There are common themes expressed by public frustrations within communities that have not been able to alleviate homelessness even when they seem to have “done everything right” with respect to designating revenue, initiating partnerships, and assigning administrative bodies to allocate resources. Two specific impediments to progress are public push-back on individual projects due to NIMBYism and not having a strong enough governing body with “the-buck-stops-here” level of authority. Both these problems relate directly to the comment the Jury heard most often throughout our county, which is that we lack the political will to take the long-view and address homelessness strategically.

Political will is an expression for government’s firm intention, commitment, and ability to carry out policy, particularly if the objectives of that policy are not popular or are difficult to achieve. No individual politician or jurisdiction is inclined to stand alone or undertake more than is required by immediate needs or interests. This is a difficult, but common, problem that gets in the way of responding to complex public problems that involve many jurisdictions and agencies.

- Political will for any kind of change, like addressing homelessness, takes intention and requires:
 - The inclusion and involvement of all parties who have the power to make or block decisions necessary to meet goals
 - Agreement about the nature of the problem and its importance

¹³ Homeless Women on the Monterey Peninsula https://www.cfmco.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/FHW-2016-Full-Report_FINAL_web.pdf

- Decision-makers who are committed to the problem and not in conflict with interests of their own agencies or jurisdictions
- Agreement on a plan and action-steps that need to be taken.¹⁴

Thus, marshalling sufficient political will to change homelessness means a strong governing body is important not only to secure agreements necessary to get things done, but also to allay fears and gain support.

In sum, there is evidence that the problem of homelessness affects a greater number of Monterey County residents than documented in the homeless census. The County has many people and organizations dedicated to serving the homeless and has established a CoC framework to coordinate housing services. However, there is no government, agency or inter-governmental entity that has ultimate authority for the goals identified in Monterey County’s 2010 strategic plan to end homelessness. The complexity of homelessness requires long-range committed regional planning in addition to coordinated social services. Political leadership is required for the higher-level decisions and policy actions needed to meaningfully address homelessness.

FACTS

- (1) There is more than one definition of homelessness. The extent of homelessness in Monterey County depends on how homelessness is defined.
- (2) There is a large discrepancy between the number of homeless reported by the 2017 Homeless Census and the Monterey County Office of Education. According to the census, the total homeless population is 2,837. According to the Monterey County Office of Education, there are 6,278 homeless students in the public-school system.
- (3) The County does not have an official count of the total homeless population based on the broader Monterey County Office of Education definition of homelessness.
- (4) Addressing homelessness is a complex—politically and logistically—challenging public problem.
- (5) There are many costs associated with homelessness both when we choose to invest proactively in preventative measures or react to homeless-related problems as they occur.

¹⁴ For more on defining and measuring political will: <https://www.vox.com/2016/2/17/11030876/political-will-definition><http://www.charneyresearch.com/resources/political-will-what-is-it-how-is-it-measured/>

- (6) Informal governance councils and/or nonprofit Continuum of Care administrators do not have the political sway or authority to secure political commitments, coordinate policy, or act on State housing bills.
- (7) At the end of 2017, the California legislature passed 15 bills aimed at addressing housing affordability & shortages. Together, the bills provide funding, make building easier, strengthen requirements for local planning, and impose fines for communities that do not address their portion of the housing shortage.
- (8) Monterey County has no county-level government agency dedicated to addressing homelessness. No joint county-city governing body has been formed or charged with overseeing homelessness.
- (9) The Lead Me Home Leadership Council (Leadership Council) is the only formal leadership body with political representation that oversees homelessness for Monterey County. Its structure was updated in 2017 to include some elected officials. Given its current composition, the council is not subject to the Brown Act (1953), which compels public access to meetings.
- (10) The structure of the Leadership Council does not give it the authority to enforce decisions or encourage public accountability. It is not legally required to hold public meetings, post meeting agendas, or publicly report goals and progress on goals.
- (11) The Leadership Council convened in 2009 to develop *Lead Me Home*: the 2010, 10-year strategic plan to end homelessness in Monterey and San Benito Counties (Strategic Plan). It operates within the Coalition for Homeless Service Providers, which is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.
- (12) The Strategic Plan to end homelessness has not been fully implemented. There is no budget associated with the Strategic Plan that ties resources to goals. The Strategic Plan has never been evaluated.
- (13) The current purpose and goals of the Leadership Council are unclear. The Leadership Council does not have a clearly defined purpose and goals specific to ending homelessness as initially set forth by the council in its 2010 Strategic Plan.
- (14) The Coalition of Homeless Service Providers is a small 501(c)3 nonprofit organization with four employees. Its purpose is to secure federal & state funding and to administer the Continuum of Care for Monterey and San Benito Counties.
- (15) The Coalition of Homeless Service Providers does not make its budget available to the public. It also does not post its IRS Form 990 (nonprofit tax filing) or annual report on its website.

- (16) There is no “line-item” in the budgets of County departments or cities to denote resources and/or expenditures associated with addressing homelessness.

FINDINGS

- F1. Homelessness is a bigger problem in the County than the biennial homeless census would suggest.
- F2. The County’s homeless problem has the potential to get worse if we do not invest in accessible housing solutions. Growing housing insecurity will only increase demand on our underfunded, over-stressed public services.
- F3. The County’s strategy for addressing homelessness needs a clearer focus, accountable leadership, and enhanced capacity.
- F4. Structuring the Continuum of Care administrator as a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization is conducive to securing funding and coordinating homeless services. However, a nonprofit organization cannot establish public policy and planning needed to end homelessness.
- F5. The County has unofficially established the Coalition of Homeless Service Providers as the central organization for addressing homelessness. Making any non-profit the center of homeless solutions effectively creates the perception there is governmental leadership when there is, in fact, no formal political leadership. This arrangement provides elected officials with a way to avoid accepting political responsibility for addressing homelessness.
- F6. The Coalition of Homeless Service Providers is a small nonprofit that does not have sufficient capacity to administer the County’s strategic plan to end homelessness *and* its continuum of care for both Monterey and San Benito counties. It does not provide political leadership to coalesce public support and government commitments around a concrete action-plan to end homelessness.
- F7. The composition of the Leadership Council and its location within the Coalition of Homeless Service Providers has affected the focus of the leadership council. The Leadership Council’s critical opportunity of generating and executing a strategic plan to end homelessness has narrowed to providing oversight of the Continuum of Care.
- F8. The structure of the Leadership Council does not provide authority to design and execute a regional plan to end homelessness, and it does not support full public accountability for meeting stated targets.
- F9. Political leadership is necessary to secure public support, enact policy and planning decisions that capitalize on state legislation, and execute a regional homeless plan.

- F10. Government decision-making is essential for making choices about resource commitments.
- F11. To meaningfully change the course of homelessness and housing insecurity, there must be a regional approach to homelessness and the creation of a new governing body with the power to oversee implementation of the plan.
- F12. The strategic plan to end homelessness serves as an informal guide rather than a definitive regional plan. It needs to be updated and fully implemented.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1. Elected County and City officials should provide government leadership to address homelessness.
- R2. The County and its Cities should form an accountable leadership body that has the power to oversee a regional approach to ending homelessness and address housing insecurity in Monterey County.
- R3. The County and its Cities should enter into a binding, enforceable agreement, such as a Memorandum of Agreement, to secure commitment to the plan and ensure responsibilities of each jurisdiction.
- R4. The Lead Me Home Leadership council should clearly define its purpose and goals.
- R5. There should be a clear distinction between governance of the Continuum of Care—*as an integral part of the broader strategic plan*— and the leadership body charged with implementing a regional strategic plan to end homelessness.
- R6. If the County effectively exerts control of Coalition for Homeless Service Providers through the Leadership Council, then the County should clearly define the purpose and role of the Coalition for Homeless Service Providers. It also follows that the Coalition for Homeless Service Providers should be adequately funded and staffed in proportion to its level of responsibilities with respect to securing resources and performing services for the county.
- R7. The newly created regional leadership body (*see R2*) should update and implement a regional strategic plan to end homelessness by defining its purpose, goals and assessments to measure and track progress.
- R8. The strategic plan should be revisited annually using outcome measurements to evaluate and adjust strategies for meeting goals.

- R9. Reports that assess which goals are, or are not, being met should be generated and made publicly available.
- R10. The new regional leadership body should produce a transparent consolidated budget to maximize resources and identify expenditures. All municipalities should demonstrate their commitment to the regional plan to end homelessness in an equitable, or proportionate, manner.

REQUEST FOR RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code section 933.05, the grand jury requests responses as follows:

From the following governing bodies:

- Monterey County Board of Supervisors: F1-12; R1-10
- City of Carmel: F1-12; R1-10
- City of Gonzales: F1-12; R1-10
- City of Greenfield: F1-12; R1-10
- City of Pacific Grove: F1-12; R1-10
- City of Marina: F1-12; R1-10
- City of Monterey: F1-12; R1-10
- City of Salinas: F1-12; R1-10
- City of Seaside: F1-12; R1-10
- Sand City: F1-12; R1-10
- City of Soledad: F1-12; R1-10
- King City: F1-12; R1-10

INVITED RESPONSES

The Coalition of Homeless Service Providers: F2, F9, F11, F12; R2, R7

Reports issued by the Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. Penal Code section 929 requires that reports of the Grand Jury not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Grand Jury.
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