



**One at a Time:
Preventing and Ending Homelessness for Yolo County Residents
2010-2020**

****REVISED**
General and Strategic Plan to Address Homelessness
2017**

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PART I GENERAL PLAN

INTRODUCTION

This Plan is a revision to the original 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness. In the original Plan, it was envisioned that Yolo and its communities would be able to transition to a coordinated Housing First model for service delivery. This revised Plan embodies the successful transition from a traditional system to a coordinated system.

The revised Plan is composed of two (2) parts: The General, overarching plan and the Strategic Plan, which will function as a work plan.

The General Plan summarizes our needs and goals, along with the strategies required and steps needed to meet them. A key part of the Plan is supporting and maintaining the housing and services that are already available in the County, while improving coordinated intake and collaboration.

The Strategic Plan is envisioned as a collaborative effort and will also incorporate the Continuum of Care funding priorities, as well as efforts outside of federal funding in which the communities are engaged. It will be a two-year Strategic Work Plan.

Together, the two components represent the guiding principles and practical implementation of Yolo's efforts to address homelessness - comprehensively in terms of systems and individually to meet the needs of our most vulnerable and unhoused populations.

PLAN PROGRESS AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In 2009, Yolo County and the Cities of Davis, West Sacramento, Winters and Woodland supported the creation of the original Plan for Ending Homelessness because homelessness is a multi-faceted issue in our community that requires a coordinated, committed effort to address. They remain committed to a regional comprehensive Housing First framework while also providing for local response to distinctive on-the-ground issues that are unique to each jurisdiction.

Much has changed since the original Plan's inception, both at the federal and at the local level. There have been good, successful models of engagement, increased awareness of the issue, better access to medical insurance and medical care and emerging funding models, along with an emphasis on new affordable units. Some changes have been deleterious, including funding that didn't initially materialize for coordination and funding reductions to core housing programs, such as housing Vouchers, that are important sources of permanent housing options.

The Plan authors would like to acknowledge the work and participation of the Housing and Poverty Action Coalition, the Executive Commission for Ending Homelessness and the many members of the public and local agencies that contributed to the Plan revision and shared vision.

VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

All elements of this Plan are based on a vision, mission, values and goals. These have been drawn from the original plan, from community members at the 2015-2016 community workshops, which included representatives from the homeless community, as well as from the work of the Homeless and Poverty Action Coalition and from the direction of the 10-Year Plan Executive Commission in 2016 - 2017.

VISION: Yolo County should be a community where everyone has the opportunity for a safe and stable place to call home.

MISSION:

Yolo County will:

- Prevent and end (reach functional zero) homelessness among Veterans by 2018
- End (reach functional zero) chronic homelessness in 2020
- Prevent and end (reach functional zero) homelessness for families, youth and children by 2020
- Set a long term, sustainable path to ending homelessness

CORE VALUES:

Value # 1: Preservation of Human Dignity

- All people are worthy of respect, mercy, kindness, and compassion.

Value #2: Safe, Decent and Sanitary Housing

- All people deserve an opportunity for stable affordable housing.

Value #3: Innovation

- Yolo agencies and communities will be receptive to new ideas, methodologies, and technology. They will work to change existing ways of working and will use creativity, new strategies, and collaborations in effective problem solving.

Value # 4: Courage

→ Partners will address issues openly and in a timely manner. They will display a willingness to undertake prudent risk.

Value #5: Success

→ Yolo is committed to the principle of achieving success through realistic optimism and dedication to its principles and goals.

GOALS

This page provides the goals for this Plan, which have been updated from the original. As homelessness planning in Yolo matures, the vision, overarching goals, objectives and timelines in this Plan will continue to be refined. Goals in the Plan have become fewer, and have been scoped to focus on “like” items --- services, housing, advocacy and engagement, health and economic security.

For all the goals listed below, the cross-cutting goal for each includes retooling homeless services and programs into a coordinated system focused on early intervention, prevention and rapid introduction of stable housing for those experiencing homelessness.

GOAL ONE: Increase Availability of Stable and Affordable Housing

- Provide affordable housing to people experiencing, or most at risk of, homelessness.
- Provide permanent supportive housing to prevent and end chronic homelessness.

GOAL TWO: Increase Economic Security

- Improve access to education and increase meaningful and sustainable employment for people experiencing, or most at risk of, homelessness.
- Improve access to mainstream programs and services to reduce people’s financial vulnerability to homelessness.

GOAL THREE: Improve Health and Stability

- Integrate primary and behavioral health care services with homeless assistance programs and housing to reduce people’s vulnerability to and the impact of homelessness.
- Advance health and housing stability for unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness and youth aging out of systems such as foster care and juvenile justice.
- Advance health and housing stability for people experiencing homelessness who have frequent contact with hospitals and criminal justice.

GOAL FOUR: Increase Leadership, Collaboration and Civic Engagement

- Provide and promote collaborative leadership at all levels of government, as well as across all sectors, to energize and inspire residents to commit to preventing and ending homelessness.
- Strengthen the capacity of public and private organizations by increasing knowledge about collaboration, homelessness, and successful interventions to prevent and end homelessness.

GOAL ONE: INCREASE AVAILABILITY OF STABLE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

SOLUTIONS:

To achieve the goal of increasing the availability of stable and affordable housing, Yolo will implement the following solutions:

Objective #1 Prevent Homelessness through Early, Comprehensive Assistance to At-Risk

- Enroll people who are unstably housed in programs that increase affordability, such as programs that reduce utility costs and provide food and other needed household items.
- Link those at-risk of homelessness to mainstream services such as benefits programs, case management, health care and behavioral health treatment to increase stability.
- Provide aftercare services to homeless persons who have secured housing, to ensure they remain housed.
- Provide housing focused discharge planning from public institutions and medical settings.
- Conduct household repairs that will assist units in passing a home inspection.
- Provide eviction prevention services, including rental assistance and landlord mediation.
- Provide services that rapidly re-house people who will otherwise become homeless.

Objective #2 Increase Access to Existing Decent and Affordable Housing

- Maintain an inventory of affordable housing.
- Provide housing navigation services to assist homeless persons in securing decent and affordable housing placements.
- Eliminate barriers to securing housing by providing eviction history repair services.
- Eliminate barriers to securing housing by providing criminal records cleanup and expungement.
- Advocate with landlords to eliminate barriers caused by admissions criteria, such as review of credit reports and criminal records.

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- Provide treatment based housing for physical and behavioral health issues.
- Increase diversity of housing types offered to homeless persons.
- Provide a variety of rent subsidies including long term, short term and shallow subsidies.
- Provide assistance in navigating the housing application process.

Objective #3 Develop a Range of Affordable Housing Options

- Provide a range of affordable housing options that are geographically dispersed and integrated within the local communities.
- Develop affordable housing for people at the lowest end of the income spectrum.
- Relax general plan and zoning regulations and fees that create increased barriers to developing affordable housing.
- Create affordable housing policies that are friendly to developers.

GOAL TWO: INCREASE ECONOMIC SECURITY

SOLUTIONS:

To achieve the goal of increasing economic security, Yolo will implement the following solutions:

Objective #1: Provide Access to Mainstream Benefit Programs and Other Services

- Provide access to mainstream benefit programs, including CalFresh, CalWORKs, General Assistance, Medi-Cal, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) and Veterans Benefits.
- Enhance use of the SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access and Recovery (SOAR) model to increase application approval rates for SSI/SSDI for homeless persons.
- Provide assistance in obtaining important identification documents, including driver's license, California identification cards and birth certificates to ensure homeless persons are able to apply for benefits, employment and housing.
- Provide education regarding use of the public transportation system, to empower homeless persons to transport themselves independently..

Objective #2: Create Opportunities for Self Sufficiency by Maximizing Each Person's Access to Education, Job Training and Employment Assistance

- Provide educational opportunities that encourage self sufficiency and increase employability, including literacy classes, financial education and mentorship, assistance obtaining a GED, life skills classes, and budgeting classes.
- Increase vocational training opportunities, job skills programs, internships and mentoring programs to increase employability.
- Increase job training and readiness opportunities such as short-term employment and volunteer opportunities.
- Expand employment opportunities for people with disabilities through dedicated programs.
- Partner with local businesses to identify and fill potential employment opportunities.

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- Provide comprehensive employment assistance, including assistance with preparing resumes and submitting applications, interview preparation, advocacy with potential employers, and ongoing mentorship for those employed.
- Provide supports that remove barriers to employment, such as childcare, transportation, and funding for work clothes and tools.

GOAL THREE: IMPROVE HEALTH AND STABILITY

SOLUTIONS:

To achieve the goal of improving health and stability, Yolo will implement the following solutions:

Objective #1; Provide Access to Health Care

- Conduct outreach that builds relationships between homeless persons and care providers.
- Ensure enrollment in public health benefits, including Medi-Cal and Veteran's Medical Benefits.
- Divert homeless persons from emergency departments to primary care providers for non-urgent medical issues.
- Provide navigation services to assist homeless persons in accessing health care services.
- Expedite access to health care services for homeless persons.

Objective #2; Stabilize and Maintain Physical and Behavioral Health

- Provide comprehensive health care services to homeless persons, including primary care, urgent and emergency care, detox, residential and outpatient substance use treatment and mental health services.
- Provide medical respite housing for those leaving hospitalizations, whose medical issues may be worsened if returning to homelessness.
- Engage in housing focused discharge planning from inpatient healthcare facilities, including emergency rooms, hospitals psychiatric hospitals and residential substance use treatment.
- Facilitate placement in involuntary care, only for individuals who are a danger to themselves or others, or are gravely disabled.

Objective #3 Provide Comprehensive and Integrated Services

- Prioritize limited services and resources using the local coordinated entry assessment tool and system.
- Improve case coordination between entities to improve program delivery and drive successful outcomes.

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- Provide wrap around services, including outreach, linkage to mainstream benefit programs, case management, housing navigation, healthcare and housing.

GOAL FOUR: INCREASE LEADERSHIP, COLLABORATION AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

SOLUTIONS:

To achieve the goal of increasing leadership, collaboration and civic engagement, Yolo will implement the following solutions:

Objective 1: Provide leadership regarding homeless issues and opportunities.

- Use the 10 Year Plan Executive Commission to disseminate information, engage other homeless leadership and provide input into homeless strategy implementation.
- Provide routinely updated information to local leadership bodies around emerging issues related to homelessness, progress towards goals and next steps.
- Identify and quantify the costs of homelessness on our local systems, so leaders can make informed decisions about best use of resources.
- Identify and quantify the funds and resources going towards homeless services and programming, so leaders can make informed decisions about best use of resources.
- Prepare an annual update on Plan, including costs, benefits and progress towards goals.
- Host an annual Homeless Summit to disseminate information regarding existing homeless services, system progress, and to identify priorities for the upcoming year.
- Advocate for providing sufficient funding and resources to implement evidence- based solutions.
- Provide advocacy to State officials regarding Yolo's needs related to homelessness and housing.

Objective 2: Support existing and expanding collaborations, and develop new collaborations when needed.

- Provide support (including resources and political support) for the Homeless and Poverty Action Coalition, which is the body of local homeless services providers acting as the local homeless Continuum of Care (CoC).
- Provide financial support for the countywide Homeless Coordinator.

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- Strengthen collaborative approach to data sharing by improving data systems to provide timely and accurate shared data on scope, need and outcomes.
- Strengthen collaborative approach to coordinated assessment and entry into the homeless system of care.
- Pursue collaborative efforts to secure financial support for housing and homeless services.
- Engage subject matter experts in securing the technical assistance needed to be successful at addressing homelessness.

Objective 3: Increase civic engagement.

- Educate the public on the cost-effectiveness of ending homelessness.
- Educate the public on root causes of homelessness and evidence-based strategies for addressing homelessness.
- Motivate the public to re-engage with our neighbors experiencing homelessness to explore our common humanity.
- Implement a broad program to engage the public, local organizations, faith-based organizations, and neighbors in supporting proven solutions to ending homelessness.
- Work with partner agencies and neighbors to identify strategies for addressing homelessness that find a balance between ensuring public safety and quality of life issues for all housed and un-housed residents.
- Routinely use media to educate the public and share success stories from the local homeless system.

DEFINITIONS AND FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

The development of a countywide Plan is necessary for receipt of federal funding and is consistent with State and Federal initiatives for ending homelessness. To encourage this goal, communities must report on their progress in developing and implementing a Plan to end homelessness into the annual application for Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Funding to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Definition of “homeless”: A person is considered homeless when s/he lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime resident and sleeps in a variety of places not fit for human habitation or meets certain other requirements. Homeless persons include, but are not limited to, those sleeping in:

- Cars, parking lots, campgrounds, sidewalks, railroad tracks, alleys, storm drains, freeway underpasses, behind shopping center buildings, in abandoned buildings, etc.,
- Emergency shelters; or
- Transitional housing for homeless persons who originally came from the streets or emergency shelters.

Who are the homeless? There are many different entry points into homelessness. Chronic homelessness, which is the most difficult and is the culmination of several factors, including trauma, chemical dependence or other disability, is the most recognizable face, but homelessness affects many populations, both in Yolo and nationally. It includes:

→ Short-term Homelessness due to an unforeseen circumstance (such as job loss, loss of housing without notice, domestic violence, unexpected injury and healthcare bills). In the case of youth homelessness, it includes an unsafe or unstable family and/or nonacceptance of the minor child by the family);

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→ Chronic Homelessness involves long-term &/or repeated episodes of homelessness coupled with disabilities and/or substance abuse. Additionally, veterans make up 33% of the chronic homeless population. Nationally, chronic homelessness is estimated to make up only 16% of the entire homeless population.

The main source of data on the number and demographics of the homeless in Yolo County is the Point in Time Homeless Count (PIT). It is required for communities that want to apply for Federal homeless assistance funding through HUD. Yolo is also working with Sacramento's Steps Forward on HMIS data management to further gather information on homeless demographics and program success.