



2023 - 2026 Yolo County Plan to Address Homelessness

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Resource Development Associates, 2022





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Introduction

The Yolo County Homeless System of Care is a large network of organizations that include homelessness and housing agencies and organizations, Yolo County public agencies and community-based service providers from ancillary systems, community-based organizations and faith-based groups, and other types of private and public sector partners. Every three years, the County is required to develop a strategic plan that serves as a blueprint for how the County can identify the underlying causes of homelessness and implement strategies to address and prevent it. As part of three-year planning process, the Yolo County Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) and the Yolo County Continuum of Care (CoC), referred to as the Homeless and Poverty Action Coalition (HPAC), partnered with Resource Development Associates Consulting to solicit feedback from key stakeholders, and to review and update the goals and strategies identified in the County's 2019 Plan to Address Homelessness. Sparked by the opportunity presented through Round 3 of the State of California's Homeless Housing, Assistance, and Prevention (HHAP 3) Grant Program, this Plan was developed through a multi-phased, collaborative community process. Through focus groups and interviews with consumers, advocates, and service providers among the Yolo County Homeless system of care, the following priorities for updating the plan were identified:

1. Update the county's 2019 Plan to Address Homelessness with current data about homelessness in Yolo County
2. Review data and trends from the 2022 Point in Time (PIT) count of people experiencing or at-risk of homelessness
3. Describe current and future efforts and initiatives aimed at addressing and preventing homelessness in Yolo County and progress made over the past three years
4. Identify solutions to addressing and preventing homelessness in Yolo County
5. Provide additional information and context to support other initiatives aimed at addressing and preventing homelessness in Yolo County

To see a complete list of Yolo County Homeless System of Care partners and stakeholders, please see Appendix A. For more information on the homelessness system of care in Yolo County, see the section of this report titled "The Homeless System of Care in Yolo County". For more details on terms used in this plan, refer to Appendix B: Glossary of Terms.

Homelessness in Yolo County

The “snapshot” below of homelessness countywide in Yolo is comprised of data collected in partnership with local jurisdictions through the annual Point in Time (PIT) Count, the Housing Inventory Count (HIC), and the CoC programs contained in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). This snapshot provides data on the current population experiencing homelessness in Yolo, including their demographic characteristics. Data was also collected specifically to reflect the population experiencing homelessness with serious mental illness or co-occurring disorders.

2022 Point-in-Time Count

The 2022 Yolo County PIT Count, a mandated requirement of CoCs, was conducted on February 22, 2022, led by the Homeless and Poverty Action Coalition (HPAC). The U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires all communities receiving federal funding for homelessness services to conduct a biannual count of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness. HUD also requires an annual count of people experiencing sheltered homelessness within the boundaries of the CoC geographic region on a single night. The 2022 PIT count identified a total of **746** persons experiencing homelessness countywide on February 22. Of that number, **378** persons were unsheltered, a decrease of 4.8%, or 19 persons, compared to the PIT count from January 2019.

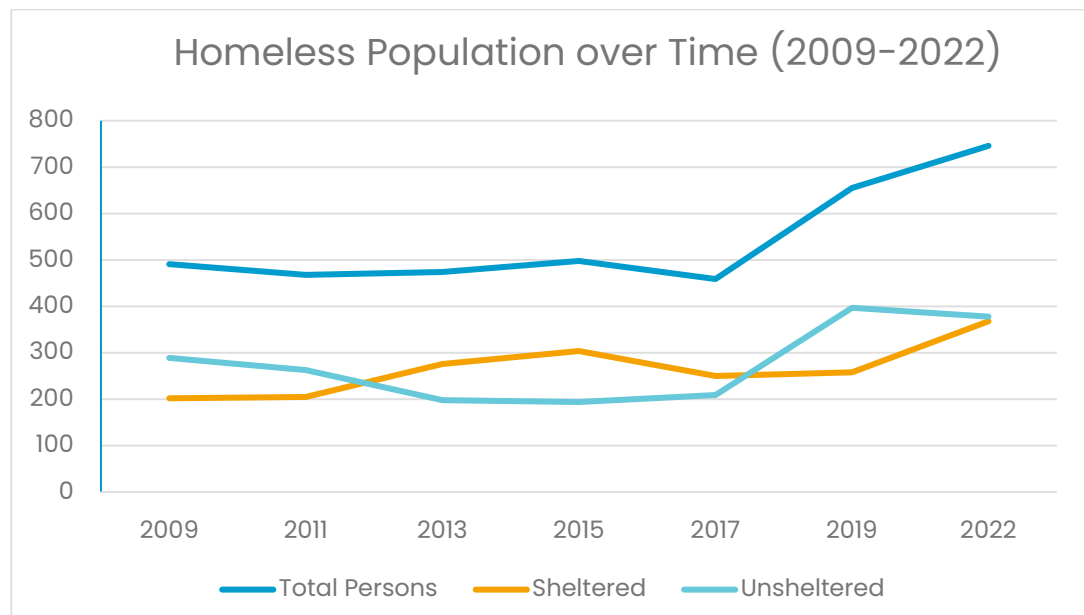


Figure 1: The homeless population in Yolo County has increased by 63%, or 287 persons, since 2017

Demographics of Persons Experiencing Homelessness

Household Status

Of the 746 people experiencing homelessness identified in 2022, a total of **145 (19.4%)** persons were in **households with children**, and **601 (80.6%)** were in **households without children**.

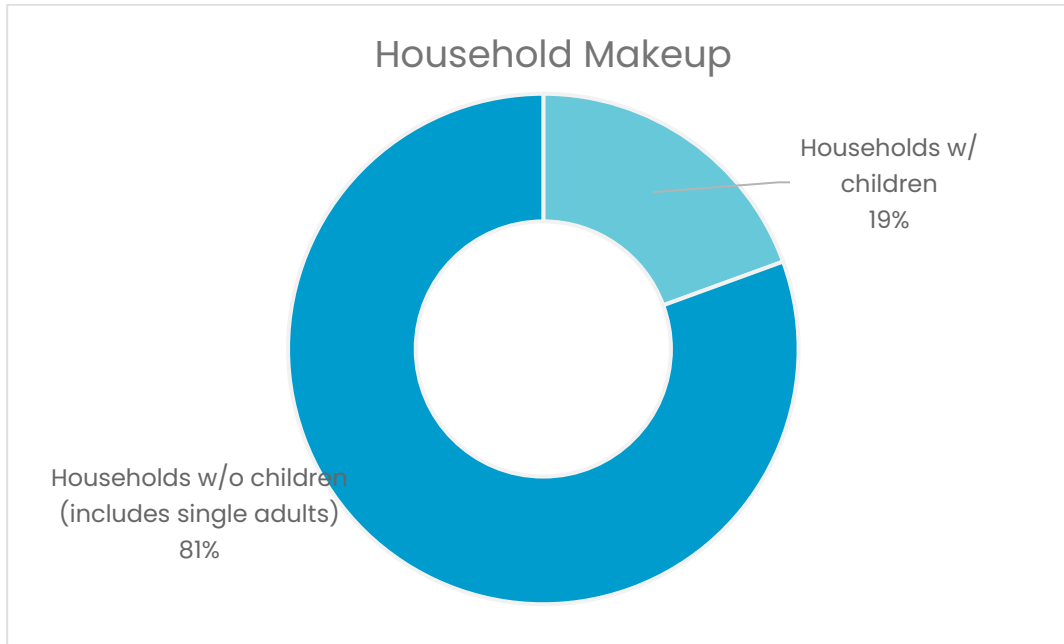


Figure 2: The homeless population is majority households without children (81%)

While **slightly over half (51%)** of the total population experiencing homelessness were **unsheltered** at the time of the PIT count, 4% of the households with children were unsheltered.

	Sheltered	Unsheltered
Households w/o children	38%	62%
Households w/ children	96%	4%

Figure 3: The unsheltered rate is higher for households without children, at 62%, or 372 persons

Age Groups

Of the total number of persons experiencing homelessness identified in the PIT Count, **594 (80%)** were adults **aged 25 and over**; **45 (6%)** were **Transitional Aged Youth (TAY)** between the ages of **18-24**, and **87 (12%)** were **youth aged 0 to 17 years old**. Of the **Transitional Aged Youth (18-24)**, **41 (85%)** were **unaccompanied** by an adult over age 25.

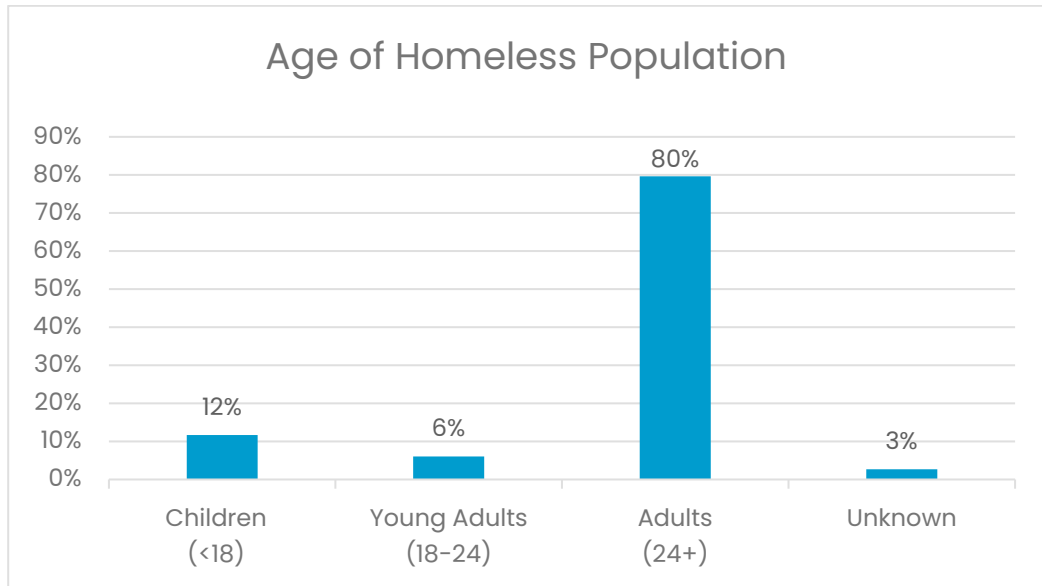


Figure 4. Of the young adults, 85% (41) were unaccompanied by an adult over age 25.

Chronic Homelessness

239 (32%) persons identified during the 2022 PIT Count were identified as experiencing **chronic homelessness**. **43 persons (6%)** were identified as not experiencing chronic homelessness, and **434 persons (58%)** had an unknown status. Per the final rule on Chronic Homelessness, HUD considers a person to be chronically homeless where that person is an individual or family that is homeless and resides in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter, and has been homeless and residing in such a

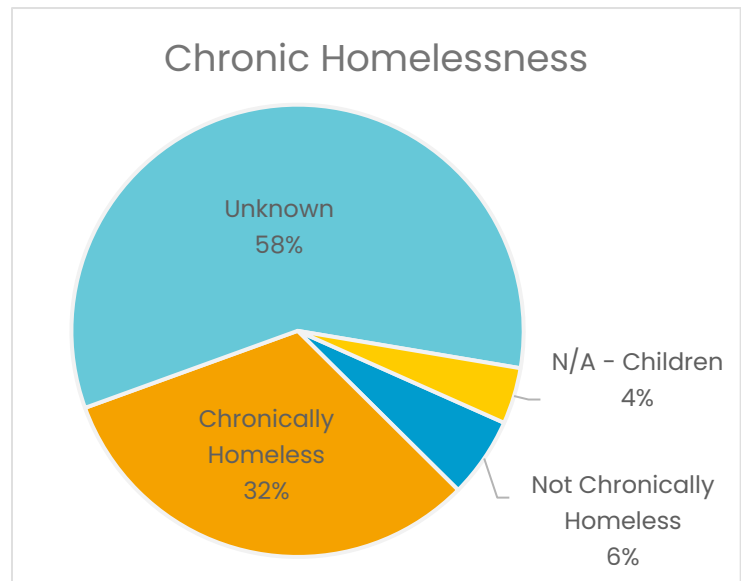


Figure 5: 32% of persons in the 2022 PIT count were identified as Chronically Homeless

place for at least 1 year or on at least four separate occasions in the past 3 years. The statutory definition also requires that the individual or family has a head of household with a diagnosable substance use disorder, serious mental illness, developmental disability, posttraumatic stress disorder, cognitive impairment(s) resulting from a brain injury, or chronic physical illness or disability.

Racial and Ethnic Makeup of Yolo County's Homeless Population

While approximately half (**374, or 50.1%**) of the 746 persons in the 2022 Point in Time count identified as White, **110 (15%) identified as Black or African American**. When compared to the general population of Yolo County, which is 66% White, and only **2.6% Black or African American**, this shows that Black or African Americans are overrepresented in the homeless population by about 500%. Additionally, people who identify as **American Indian or Alaska Native** make up less than **1%** of the general population in Yolo County, but consist of **7%** of the homeless population, which is an overrepresentation of about 800%.¹

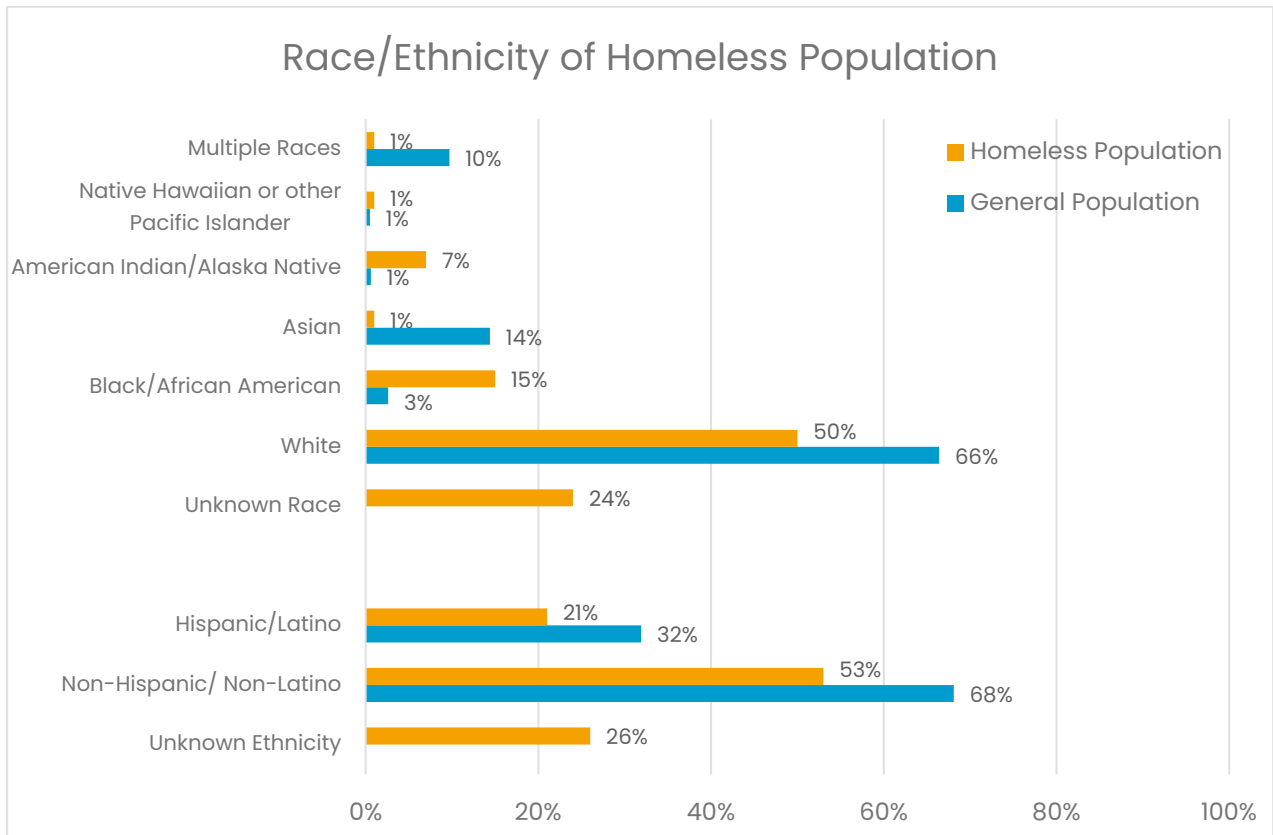


Figure 6: When compared to the overall population of Yolo County, African Americans and American Indians/Alaska Natives are overrepresented in the homeless population. "General Population" Data from US Census Bureau¹

¹ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/yolocountycalifornia#qf-headnote-b>

Persons Experiencing Homelessness with SMI, SUD, & Co-Occurring Disorders

On the night of the 2022 Point-In-Time Count, of the total number of persons (746) experiencing homelessness identified countywide, **120 (16%)** were experiencing **Serious Mental Illness (SMI)**; of those 120 persons, **49 (41%)** were sheltered, while **71 (59%)** were unsheltered. **95 persons (13%)** were identified as experiencing a **Substance Use Disorder (SUD)** on the night of the PIT count, **30 (32%)** of whom were sheltered on that night. There were **46 persons** with **Co-occurring SMI & SUD** on the night of the PIT Count, **100%** of whom were unsheltered.

	Sheltered	Unsheltered	Total
Adults with a Serious Mental Illness (SMI)	49	71	120
Adults with a Substance Use Disorder (SUD)	30	65	95
Adults with Co-Occurring SMI & SUD	0	46	46

Yolo County data from the State of California Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency’s Homeless Data Integration System (HDIS) for the period of January 1 through September 30, 2021, shows that of the 2,433 total individuals accessing services during that period, 34% were experiencing a Mental Health Condition (MHC) or Substance Use Disorder (SUD). The Yolo County HDIS data includes information on the number of people experiencing homelessness (such as that captured by the PIT Count), as well as information on the number of persons formerly homeless and now housed through subsidized housing programs or participating in homeless prevention programs. According to Yolo County HDIS data, from January 1 through September 30, 2021, the following data for participants was reported in Rapid Rehousing (RRH), Transitional Housing (TH), Emergency Shelter (ES), Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), or as accessing Homelessness Prevention Services:

Location	Mental Health Condition (MHC)	Substance Use Disorder (SUD)	MHC & SUD	Total Utilizations of Service (1/1-9/30/21)
Rapid Rehousing (RRH)	47	14	LV*	565
Transitional Housing (TH)	12	LV*	LV*	30
Emergency Shelter (ES)	117	95	36	749
Homelessness Prevention (HP)	LV*	LV*	LV*	91
Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)	59	31	22	145
<i>Total Participants (all services)</i>	<i>518</i>	<i>328</i>	<i>171</i>	<i>2433</i>

*LV = Low Value. Values below 11 are not reported due to privacy standards.

The Homeless System of Care in Yolo County

The Yolo County homeless system of care provides housing assistance for Yolo County residents as well as a robust range of services for persons experiencing homelessness. Resources include emergency shelter, transitional housing, rapid rehousing, permanent supportive housing, homeless outreach, as well as housing case management and housing navigation. The system of care is led by decision and policymakers, including the following:

- Yolo County Board of Supervisors
- City Councils of the cities of Davis, West Sacramento, Winters, and Woodland
- Yolo County Housing (Housing Authority)
- Local non-profit boards and developer boards

Local initiatives to prevent and end homelessness in Yolo are spearheaded by three main collaborative groups:

- The Yolo County Commission to Address Homelessness (staffed by Yolo County HHSA),
- The Homeless and Poverty Action Coalition (the Yolo Continuum of Care, staffed by the County HHSA and private consultants),
- The Yolo County Housing Authority Board of Commissioners.

This section details recent strides made by the Yolo system of care in improving outcomes for persons experiencing homelessness through selected System Performance Measures as reported annually to HUD and details the work underway to continue seeing progress in ending homelessness countywide.

Work Underway to End Homelessness in Yolo County

Multiple entities are working to end homelessness countywide. A description of each partner entity/agency can be found below, along with a summary of its current efforts and projects aimed at addressing homelessness. Please note the list of providers is not exhaustive.

Partners in Ending Homelessness

Yolo Continuum of Care – HPAC

The Davis/Woodland/Yolo County Continuum of Care, referred to as the Homeless and Poverty Action Coalition (HPAC), is a local planning body that provides leadership and coordination on the issues of homelessness and poverty in Yolo County. Its mission is to end and prevent homelessness and poverty in Yolo County, with a vision of creating and sustaining a

comprehensive, coordinated, and balanced array of human services for homeless and low-income individuals and families within the county.

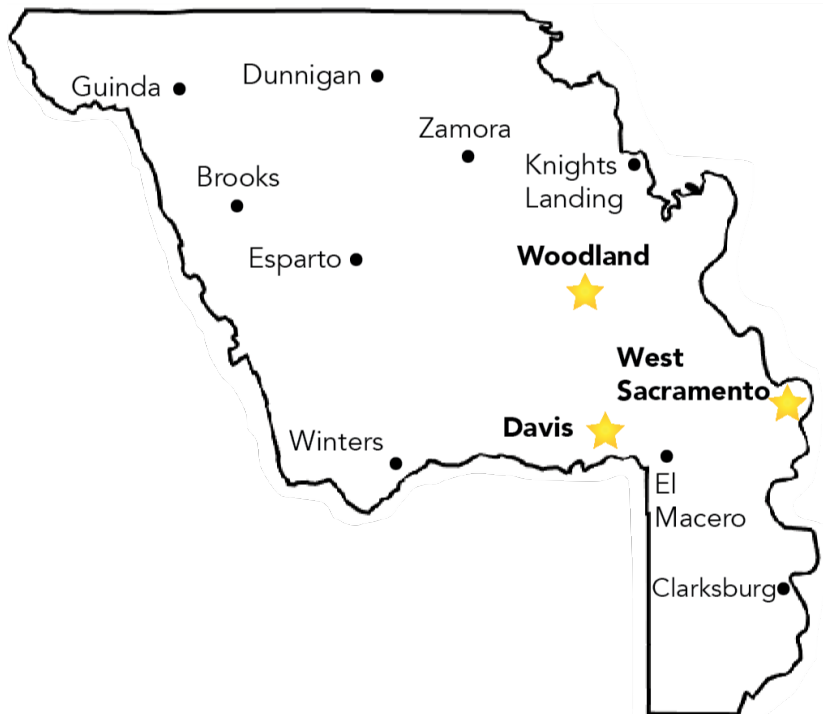
HPAC has a significant role to fulfill many of the federal, state, and local government mandates. It carries responsibilities including locally implementing the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act. In addition to maintaining a coordinated response among service providers to ensure continuity of services, HPAC assists with assessing the need and identifying gaps in services for persons facing homelessness in Yolo County on an ongoing basis, as well as supporting the planning, funding, and development of services to meet prioritized needs within Yolo County. HPAC also works to plan, develop, and sustain options to meet the housing needs of people facing homelessness, and promote access to and effective utilization of mainstream human services programs.

In 2021, HPAC applied for and received 501c3 nonprofit status. It now has a 15-member Board of Directors and is in an active search for an Executive Director and staff analyst.

Efforts at the City Level

One of Yolo County's unique assets is the strong partnership that exists among the individual city jurisdictions and between the cities and the county. Representatives from each city participate on the Homeless and Poverty Action Coalition, and elected officials from the four largest jurisdictions have a seat on the Commission to Address Homelessness. Below are a few recent developments in efforts to address homelessness locally: The cities of Davis, West Sacramento, and Woodland have remained committed to strengthening their efforts to prevent and reduce homelessness.

In 2021, the city of Davis created a Department of Social Services and Housing and appointed its first Director in May 2022. This department will have multiple homeless outreach and coordination staff, an affordable housing manager, and dedicated staff to focus on social services



coordination. The city also provided a motel emergency shelter program during the winter of 2021-2022 for the most vulnerable individuals and partnered on the Bridge Apartment rapid-rehousing program. For the past two years, the city of Davis, under contract with CommuniCare, has operated a day center, the Respite Center, that provides access to showers, laundry, case management and navigation services.

In November of 2016, the City of West Sacramento passed Measure E, enacting a 1/4 percent transactions and use tax (sales tax) raising approximately \$3.3 million annually on an ongoing basis for general governmental purposes. This measure funds, among other things, city services and initiatives aimed at reducing homelessness and its community impacts and improving educational and career opportunities for youth.

One of the first initiatives funded by Measure E was a Winter Warming Centers program in 2018. In Coordination with the City and Yolo County, The West Sacramento Mercy Coalition arranged for 4-5 church locations for nightly stays for program participants. The Winter Warming Centers program ran from December through March during the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 winter seasons. A total of 114 unique individuals were served during the two seasons and over 200 volunteers participated each year.

Measure E also funds the Downtown Streets Team (DST), which initiated a pilot program in the City in 2018. DST is a unique work experience program for people experiencing or at-risk of homelessness. The goal of DST's program model is to reduce homelessness by restoring dignity and preparing participants for employment. With DST, homeless participants become part of a "team" that carries out community beautification and maintenance activities in exchange for receiving case management (counseling and housing navigation services), employment assistance services, and financial rewards for basic needs. Program activities may include tasks such as garbage pickup, graffiti removal, and assisting with the cleanup of homeless encampments. The DST program is currently in its fourth year of contract with the City and during the first three years of the program an annual average of 37 unique individuals were served and 27 found gainful employment. Additionally, more than 380,000 gallons of debris and over 2,800 sharps were collected from cleanup activities.

Over the past two years, the Cities of Davis, West Sacramento, and Woodland have been active participants of Yolo County's Project RoomKey, a state initiative to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic by making funds available to provide emergency non-congregate shelter for families and individuals experiencing homelessness. As part of Project RoomKey, Yolo County master-leased motel rooms throughout the County to provide emergency shelter. The Cities of Davis and Woodland ran large scale Roomkey programs from March 2020 to November 2021 and June 2021, respectively, while West Sacramento's program has been ongoing.

In an effort to provide medium-term emergency housing to Project RoomKey participants in West Sacramento, in December 2020 the city purchased a 40-unit motel for a local Homekey Program. The Homekey Program is another State initiative and is in essence a continuation of Project RoomKey, with the goal of creating permanent and medium-term housing for homeless. The purchase of the motel was not only made possible with State Homekey Program funds, but also with a Yolo County subaward, local Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)-Coronavirus funds, CDBG Program Income funds and Measure E funds. Homekey Program participants receive on-site case management, meal distribution and laundry services with the ultimate goal of transitioning into permanent housing.

In 2020, the City of West Sacramento created the Division of Community Outreach and Support to expand the Police Department's approach to public safety that focuses on supporting those in crisis or otherwise suffering from mental illness, substance abuse disorders, homelessness, and other conditions. Staff from the Division of Community Outreach and Support play a major role in the City's homeless initiatives and oversee day-to-day operations of the City's Homekey Program. The Division continues to have an active homeless team working on the field and coordinate emergency respite/motel vouchers and provide direct referrals for rapid rehousing rental assistance for West Sacramento residents. Division staff actively collaborate with Yolo County Health and Human Services Agency, Yolo County Children's Alliance, Homeless and Poverty Action Coalition and other homeless providers.

In December 2021, the 85-unit Mercy Housing Permanent Supportive Housing project was completed. All placements to the PSH project are by referral by the City's Homeless Manager, Yolo County Health and Human Services Agency and Yolo County Housing. The City provided approximately \$3.7 million in local CDBG and Housing Trust Funds, in addition to awards from the State No Place Like Home Program, Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, Sutter Health Foundation and Partnership Health Foundation. Many Project RoomKey and Homekey Program participants were able to be placed in the Permanent Supportive Housing project.

The City of Woodland launched its Bridge to Housing 3.0 project in December 2018. The intent of the project is to provide interim housing to 30 individuals living in a parking lot encampment on county property and ran until Project RoomKey opened March 2020. The City of Woodland was also a strong Project Roomkey partner for the County, through its work at the Fourth & Hope site during COVID outbreaks. Woodland operates a Homeless Outreach Street Team (HOST), and in January 2021, opened the East Beamer Way Campus with a new 100-bed emergency shelter. In 2022, the city will open 60 new units of Permanent Supportive Housing, and plans are

in place to re-locate a residential substance use program in 2023, . This facility, Walter’s House, will increase its bed capacity from 44 to 60.

Homeless Housing and Service Providers

Yolo County HHSA works to ensure the health, safety, and economic stability of children and adults, particularly individuals that are vulnerable, through the administration of approximately 50 state and federally mandated programs and services as well as non-mandated programs that improve community well-being. In addition to having a position on the governing Board of HPAC, HHSA provides services directly through internal services and indirectly through contracts with community partners. The County Medical Services Program (CMSP) funds a robust internal team of three case managers and a supervisor. HHSA also holds internal family homelessness supports through the CalWORKs Housing Support Program (HSP), Bringing Families Home, many master leases, and the new Yolo Basic Income (YOBI) program.

Nonprofit partner agencies across Yolo County (listed in detail in Appendix A) provide persons and families who are low-income or experiencing homelessness with housing, food, and human services through various programs, including emergency shelter and transitional housing, residential treatment programs, permanent supportive housing programs, resource center/day shelters, street outreach, and meals programs.

Public Housing Authority

Yolo County Housing (YCH), the local Public Housing Authority, has a robust presence in Yolo County. In addition to holding a position on the governing Board of HPAC, YCH partners with the City of West Sacramento to provide property management services at its Homekey homeless hub location for that City. YCH also partners with the City of Davis to provide property management at a long-term low-income housing complex. It also partners with the County of Yolo to own properties where County clients live and are supported by County programs. In addition, it administers grant funding, such as CDBG and HOME. YCH currently oversees 1,900+ low-income Housing Vouchers annually and owns and manages 431 Public Housing Units. Finally, in partnership with the State of California, YCH owns land and manages two seasonal Migrant Farmworker Housing programs, serving several hundred families employed in local seasonal agriculture work every year.

Physical and Behavioral Health Providers

Through joint funding from HHSA, Dignity Health, and Sutter Health, the CommuniCare Mobile Medical team offers field-based care to people experiencing homelessness in Yolo County. The team includes a social worker, peer support advocate, registered nurse, physician and nurse practitioner. Services include hospital follow-up, wound care, acute and chronic condition management, medication refills, de-escalation and short-term counseling, substance use

counseling and medication assisted treatment, and connection to brick-and-mortar services. The team is in the field 4-5 days a week and serves over 250 unique patients a quarter. Service areas include the three main cities of Yolo County, rural areas like Knight's Landing and Winters, and migrant centers.

A partnership between Dignity Health, Sutter Health, and the Yolo Community Care Continuum, Haven House is a medical respite transitional program that utilizes a four-bed house and offers respite for persons experiencing homelessness upon discharge from the hospital. This program, located in Woodland, focuses on providing a safe place for person experiencing homelessness to recuperate after hospital discharge and getting them linked to wraparound services and resources. During their stay at Haven House, individuals get assistance with additional services including health insurance enrollment, finding a medical home, substance use and mental health services and placement in permanent housing.

HHSA contracts with TLCS Hope Cooperative and Telecare to provide Full Service Partnership (FSP) services, which including permanent supportive housing onsite case management and assistance at multiple housing sites throughout Yolo County. For a more complete list of mental health and substance use services throughout the county please visit the HHSA websites on [Mental Health](#) and [Substance Abuse](#).

Service Providers for Domestic Violence Survivors

Empower Yolo provides Rapid Rehousing and services including emergency shelter to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and trafficking in Yolo County. Additionally, Empower Yolo offers regular training to the HPAC and partner agencies regarding best practices for providing services to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and trafficking, such as safety planning, and education on available resources.

Legal Services Providers

Legal Services of Northern California (LSNC) provides crucial civil legal services to low-income individuals and families across 23 counties in Northern California. LSNC engages in litigation, legislation, administrative advocacy, and community development work in a number of priority fields, such as preservation of housing, health care, enhancing economic stability, support for families, civil rights, education, and supporting populations with special vulnerabilities. As the only legal aid office in Yolo County, LSNC continues to be a strong partner and a voice for vulnerable populations. In conjunction with Yolo County Housing, LSNC facilitates an annual Fair Housing Conference attended by approximately 100 landlords, property owners, and CoC agencies, which provides education to both landlords and tenants regarding fair housing rights under state and federal legislation. Through the Sargent Shriver Civil Counsel Act, LSNC has operated a housing court pilot project since 2011. The project provides full representation and a range of unbundled legal services to eligible litigants in unlawful detainer (eviction)

cases. The project also offers self-help assistance and mediation in collaboration with the Yolo County Superior Court. In 2021, the project served 698 Yolo County household members in 321 housing cases. LSNC also partners with Empower Yolo on the Emergency Solutions Grant, through which LSNC provides legal assistance to tenants at-risk of homelessness.

Coordinated Entry in Yolo County

In January of 2017, HUD published the Notice CPD-17-01, which announced the requirement that all Continuums of Care must establish or update a Coordinated Entry System in accordance with the criteria set forth in 24 CFR 578.7(a)(8). According to the notice, all CoC- and ESG-funded projects operating within the CoC's geographic area must also work together to ensure the CoC's Coordinated Entry process allows for coordinated screening, assessment and referrals for all CoC and ESG projects.

On January 17, 2018, HPAC adopted policies and procedures for the **Yolo County Coordinated Entry System**. This system allows for people experiencing a crisis to access emergency homeless and housing services with as few barriers as possible, and "ensures that the most vulnerable individuals or families are prioritized first for permanent housing placements".

Overview of Yolo County Coordinated Entry System

Coordinated Entry in Yolo County operates as a multi-site centralized system. Access to the Coordinated Entry System occurs through either points of referral or points of entry when an individual reaches out to a local organization to access mainstream services, or homeless specific services. Participants may access the system and be assessed through various sites throughout the County. To support increased Coordinated Entry, Yolo HHS plans to leverage the intercept mapping process to update the entry points and link that information on the HHS website.

Yolo's Coordinated Entry System covers the CoC's entire geographic area. Historically, the rural communities in Yolo County are the most difficult to reach. For that reason, outreach programs operate throughout the community to reach individuals and families that live in the rural areas. Additionally, various community partners serve as "Referral Sites," which determine whether an individual should be referred to the Coordinated Entry System. If it is determined that the household's homelessness or risk of homelessness cannot be resolved by resources outside of the homeless system, a full assessment will be completed within 48 hours of the household's contact with the Coordinated Entry system. The primary assessment tool utilized to determine vulnerability is the Vulnerability Index and Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT). While many Coordinated Points of Entry were not available during COVID, clients were served during Project Roomkey which helped facilitate connection to services and entry into HMIS, and it is anticipated that many points of entry will be re-established in the future.

Yolo Coordinated Entry Affirmative Marketing and Outreach

Yolo County is committed to ensuring that the Coordinated Entry System allows for people experiencing a housing crisis to access emergency homeless and housing services with as few barriers as possible; these services include homeless prevention assistance, domestic violence and emergency services hotlines, drop-in service programs, emergency shelters and other short-term crisis residential programs. Coordinated Entry is also linked to street outreach efforts so that people sleeping on the streets are prioritized for assistance in the same manner as any other person assessed through the Coordinated Entry process.

HPAC, the Yolo County Continuum of Care, affirmatively markets its housing and supportive services to eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender, age, familial status, history of domestic violence, or disability, who are least likely to apply in the absence of special outreach and maintains records of those marketing activities. Housing made available through the Coordinated Entry System is also made available to individuals and families without regard to actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status in accordance with 24 CFR 5.105 (a)(2). Additionally, HPAC follows the nondiscrimination and affirmative outreach requirements for the Emergency Solutions Grant program in accordance with 24 CFR § 576.407(a) and (b).

Service & Outreach Challenges

Yolo County has strong and diverse partnerships and resources in the continued effort to prevent and end homelessness. However, partner entities and community stakeholders have identified the following barriers and challenges in providing housing, services, and conducting outreach to persons experiencing or at-risk of homelessness.

Challenges Understanding & Accessing Crisis Resources

While Yolo County providers have had success in connecting persons experiencing homelessness to permanent housing, other resources that assist with preventing homelessness for people at-risk of homelessness or diverting them from the homeless system of care may be difficult to utilize. Challenges to accessing and utilizing these resources include a lack of consistent information and understanding concerning all available resources countywide aimed at crisis response. Additionally, there are challenges identifying and assisting persons at-risk of homelessness, before falling into homelessness becomes unavoidable.

Uneven Distribution of Emergency Shelter Capacity

Currently, emergency shelter capacity does not meet the existing need within Yolo County. Emergency shelter beds are unevenly distributed throughout the County and certain population centers such as Davis and West Sacramento have considerably low capacity compared to their proportion of Yolo's unsheltered individuals. For people with complex needs such as substance use or physical health issues, there are very few emergency shelter options that can provide additional supports or easy access to health or behavioral health services.

Limited Prevention Services

Prevention services make up a small fraction of the total amount of funding available for homelessness and housing services. Most stakeholders felt that prevention services such as eviction prevention services and diversion programs are a worthwhile investment as they keep people at-risk of homelessness in their current housing. These services keep people from experiencing homelessness and help reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness who would otherwise require costly shelter stays and often experience a lengthy and difficult housing process. To date, the community has not adopted a standardized homelessness risk assessment tool. The lack of such a tool makes identifying people at-risk of homelessness less consistent and widespread across providers.

Need for Increased and Diverse Stock of Affordable Housing

To meet the housing needs of persons experiencing homelessness in Yolo County, more affordable housing must be developed for persons with extremely - low to low levels of income.

Without additional available affordable housing, housing navigators often must compete against each other for the same limited housing stock. During focus groups and public meetings, stakeholders noted that additional opportunities to foster partnerships between the cities/county and housing developers of all kinds should be identified and pursued.

Challenges Providing Outreach and Coordinated Care to Persons Experiencing Homelessness with Behavioral Health Needs

City and county outreach teams have been largely successful in facilitating referrals to resources for persons experiencing homelessness who are also identified as likely benefitting from behavioral health assistance. However, outreach and service providers noted challenges in coordinating referrals to mental health resources for individuals with complex needs such as individuals with co-occurring physical and behavioral health issues or individuals reentering from the justice system. Similar to challenges accessing consistent information on available crisis response resources, information on all available mental health services and strategies must be collected and disseminated to providers. Additionally, methods for co-locating services or enhancing capacity of mental health providers should be considered.

Coordinated Entry Capacity

While Coordinated Entry practices and tools have been adopted in Yolo County, stakeholders felt that it is not consistently practiced across the continuum and has largely not met the vision or goals of the initiative. For the most part, providers felt that HPAC and Yolo County HHSA could provide more guidance around Coordinated Entry practices, tool, and communication processes as well as training and other capacity building support.

Harm Reduction Services

During focus group discussions, stakeholders noted that in addition to needing more supports related to substance use disorder (SUD) programming, providers who work with people experiencing or at-risk of homelessness should adopt more harm reduction approaches in service provision. There is also limited street outreach within the county that is specifically focused on promoting harm reduction practices, resources, and equipment among people experiencing substance use disorder. It was noted that the number of direct service providers with access to Naloxone, an opioid antagonist medication that is used to quickly reverse an opioid overdose², is somewhat limited and inconsistent across HPAC.

² Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), 2022.
<https://www.samhsa.gov/medication-assisted-treatment/medications-counseling-related-conditions/naloxone>

Barriers to Serving the Most Vulnerable Populations

System Collaboration

One of the most notable developments for Yolo County Homelessness Services Continuum of Care in the past three years has been the formation of HPAC into a non-profit organization. However, HPAC currently lacks an executive director and staffing. This has prevented HPAC from fully assuming its role as the regional leader and coordinator of homelessness and housing services in Yolo County. The lack of staff leadership also prevents or delays other initiatives that aim to improve system coordination and collaboration. For instance, HPAC could benefit from developing and implementing a funding strategy, but this requires staff to develop, organize, and execute.

Similarly, service coordination has not met its full potential as data sharing capacity is limited, practices and tools are not standardized, and information on services and trends are not kept up to date or made available in a central location.

Staffing Levels

Since 2019, recruiting, hiring, and retaining staff at all levels among providers throughout the county has been a major barrier. While much of this was driven by the lockdowns and social distancing measures early in the pandemic, it has remained a challenge. This is especially true for specialized roles such as social workers, case workers, and healthcare providers.

Racial inequities

Systemic racism and racial inequities disproportionately increase the risk of homelessness among Black and Indigenous people. For instance, Black residents make up only 2.7% of the County population but were almost 20% of unsheltered population. The same is true for the County's Native American/Indigenous population, which makes up about 2% of the population but accounts for 10% of the homeless population. The disproportionate risk and experience of people experiencing or at-risk of homelessness in BIPOC communities compounds and elevates other risks including cycles of generational poverty, substance use, mental and physical health issues, as well as involvement with the justice system.

Within the HPAC continuum, there is a shortage of BIPOC staff across all roles and levels within most organizations. In particular, stakeholders noted that there are very few BIPOC folks in leadership roles within HPAC organizations. As BIPOC individuals and families represent a large segment of the population experiencing or at-risk of homelessness in Yolo County, the lack of BIPOC-led organizations and staff creates cultural and racial barriers on both individual and organizational levels.

Lastly, while HPAC is currently in the early stages of developing a plan to address racial inequities and bias, the system of care lacks a clear understanding of what drives racial

inequities and solutions to both reduce racial bias and elevate BIPOC communities. A large focus of this plan will be to take steps to assess the needs and drivers of inequity and work with BIPOC communities to develop systems and programs that address them.

Solutions to Homelessness in Yolo County

Through a community process, the stakeholders affirmed a continued focus on the four goals from the County's 2019 Plan to Address Homelessness. Yolo County's 2022 Plan to Address Homelessness is informed by the County's 2019 Plan to End homeless, stakeholder input included previously in this document, and a review of various data available to stakeholders. The 2022 Plan outlines the move from the County's traditional homeless service delivery model to a coordinated model based on Housing First principles.³ The four goals of this Plan are:

1. Strengthen the homeless crisis response system and prevention services
2. Increase permanent affordable housing options for those experiencing or at-risk of homelessness
3. Improve collaboration and coordination between physical and behavioral healthcare and housing and homeless services
4. Strengthen systems level coordination

Following completion of this plan, HPAC, the Commission to Address Homelessness, and community partners will work together to finalize an implementation timeline with identified leads for each goal, strategy, and action item and create anticipated timelines for completion of efforts related to each. Over the next three years, the goals, strategies, and action steps that are detailed below will be reviewed by community partners on an annual basis to assess the level of progress in each of these areas.

Goal 1: Strengthen Homeless Crisis Response System and Prevention Services

The 2022 PIT Count data found that, of the 746 people who are homeless, nearly 50% (378) were unsheltered. Compared to the 2019 PIT Count, Yolo saw an overall increase of 13.8% in people experiencing homelessness (746 compared to 655), and while the decrease in unsheltered was 4.8% (378 compared to 397) there likely would have been an increase if it weren't for some of the efforts described below.

Since 2019, Yolo County experienced an increase in federal and state funding for emergency shelter beds and homeless prevention services largely in part from funding through Project

³ Yolo County 2017 General and Strategic Plan to End Homelessness:
<https://www.yolocounty.org/Home/ShowDocument?id=55468>.

Room Key and CARES Act funding. There were approximately 100 individuals served in Project Roomkey and Homekey beds during the 2022 PIT Count, and without those programs many of those individuals likely would have been experiencing unsheltered homelessness which would have led to a larger increase compared to 2019. While these services have been critical in preventing homeless, some of this funding is temporary and continued funding is not anticipated to keep pace with the rapidly growing number of people experiencing or at-risk of homelessness. In a recent survey, key stakeholders felt that some progress has been made towards strengthening the homeless crisis response system, but also strongly conveyed that there is still considerable progress to be made in this area.

Over the next three years, Yolo County will continue to strengthen the crisis response system and prevention services, which will be measured by:

1. Completion of a process to map the homeless response system
2. An increase in the number of emergency shelter beds, as indicated in the annual housing inventory count.
3. An increase in the available funding and resources for prevention services county-wide, which will be tracked through the year-end report of homelessness funding in Yolo County.

Strategy 1.A. Develop an intercept map of the Yolo County homeless system of care, including crisis response system and prevention resources available.

Action Step 1.A.1: Facilitate an intercept mapping process for the homeless services system. In 2019, Yolo County aimed to develop an intercept map of services, however, the plan for this strategy was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Given the changes to the system during the pandemic, utilizing sequential intercept mapping remains a critical step towards fully mapping the homeless system of care, including the crisis response system and prevention resources. Yolo County HHSA completed intercept mapping for the criminal justice system and could partner with the community and HPAC to conduct a similar process for the homeless system of care. Sequential intercept mapping provides the opportunity to identify intercepts, or points along an individual's or family's engagement in the homelessness continuum of care, detailing where opportunities for engagement are and what types of resources are available at each point. This framework offers the opportunity to map out resources with partners while also working strategically to identify gaps and opportunities for improved outreach and coordination. This intercept mapping exercise will be a more in-depth planning activity that the County undertakes to identify longer-term intervention strategies as well as provide updated information on available services and resources.

Action Step 1.A.2: Update the crisis response and prevention services guide. Since 2019, the County has increased the level of crisis response and prevention services and resources to include five discrete prevention programs. As such, the influx of funding along with growth and changes to the homeless system of care has resulted in a need to update existing resource guides. Building on the momentum gained once the sequential intercept mapping process is completed, partners will engage in a two-step effort to update resource guides throughout the county.

First, through the intercept mapping process, partners will work to compile a complete list of resources, including information on who provides the resource and where. Crisis response and prevention services can include flexible funding pools, rental assistance, emergency shelter, transitional housing, and outreach services. After this effort is completed, partners will examine ways to make this information more accessible for providers, consumers of services, and the public. The County, Cities, and HPAC will coordinate on providing this information on appropriate websites which can be accessed through a mobile device or computer and meets Americans with Disability Act (ADA) standards for public resources. This online resource guide will be designed to be easy to navigate with clear information and updated on a regular basis to ensure that all partners and community stakeholders have access to a complete and current list of what crisis response resources exist in Yolo County. The online resource guide will serve as an outreach tool to engage landlords, businesses, and other organizations looking for resources to help support people experiencing housing instability and at-risk of experiencing homelessness. This information will also help inform the larger social service community and public about what resources are available across the County.

Strategy 1.B. Increase emergency shelter capacity to meet growing needs.

As reported in the Housing Inventory Count, there are 373 emergency shelter beds in the County.⁴ While this is a substantial increase from 2019 where the number of beds was at 157, it should be noted that a total of 99 of the beds that contributed to this increase can be attributed to Project HomeKey (65) and Project RoomKey (34). Even with the expanded emergency shelter beds in countywide through various programs, current capacity does not meet the current need of unsheltered people in the county. To address the gaps in capacity, partners will need to collaborate to expand current capacity, considering multiple avenues to do so based on state and federal funding, local jurisdictional need, and the capacity to convert existing facilities or add new ones. There is also a need for more emergency shelter with capacity to meet the needs of people experiencing behavioral health and/or substance use issues.

⁴ Yolo County Housing Inventory Count, 2021

Action Step 1.B.1: Identify more sustainable funding for emergency shelter beds. Over the past three years, Yolo County has funded emergency shelter beds through a mix of ongoing and temporary funding sources that have included the COVID Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) funding, the American Rescue Plan (ARP), Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG), Project Room Key, California Emergency Solutions and Housing (CESH), Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP) and HHAP. These funds have been a welcomed resource to emergency shelter programs helping to address the growing needs of people experiencing and at-risk of homelessness. As stated before, much of this funding was temporary which creates a need for more sustainable funds for emergency shelter beds.

Action Step 1.B.2: Utilize funds for emergency shelters that are tailored to people with behavioral health and substance use issues. Local providers have noted that the need for crisis response services and emergency shelters for people with behavioral health (BH) and substance use disorder (SUD) issues has increased. While the County has seen an increase in crisis response services, the lack of BH and SUD housing capacity creates additional barriers for people to find shelter. The County will track how funds for these services grow year over year with an emphasis on finding new opportunities to invest in the County’s emergency shelter system.

Action Step 1.B.3: Increase capacity for Coordinated Entry. To best address the needs of people currently experiencing or at-risk of homeless, HPAC and the County should continue to prioritize and invest in Coordinated Entry. As Yolo County continue to open new programs and housing developments, investment in infrastructure is needed to ensure that programs are designed around qualities of effective Coordinated Entry.⁵ HPAC and the County will work to update points of entry within the current system and look for opportunities to bolster system supports (e.g. training and technical assistance), increase program and client entry in the HMIS, and identify funding to go towards infrastructure needs. The County and HPAC should also allocate resources to build capacity among homeless service providers not funded through HPAC and ESG funds.

Strategy 1.C. Increase capacity of prevention and emergency diversion programs

Prevention services provide supports to keep individuals and families at-risk of homelessness in their homes and housing stable. Since 2019, overall funding levels for prevention services have increased, however prevention services remain a small fraction (less than 1%) of the

⁵Yolo County Homeless Assessment and Referral System Overview.

<https://www.yolocounty.org/home/showdocument?id=54313#:~:text=Coordinated%20Entry%20requires%20organizations%20that,access%20to%20the%20services%20available>

overall funding for homelessness services. These services are critical to keeping people who may otherwise become homeless or unsheltered in their homes and should be considered an investment in both individuals and communities.

Action Step 1.C.1: Develop a funding strategy to increase the capacity for prevention and emergency diversion programs. Prevention and emergency diversion programs offer a variety of services including eviction prevention services and case management services aimed at keeping people at-risk of homelessness in their homes. With an increase in the number of persons at-risk of eviction, many prevention and emergency diversion programs are unable to respond in timely manners. Preventing individuals and families from becoming homeless requires investing in resources that can in turn be used to help those at-risk. The County and HPAC should develop a funding strategy aimed at increasing the percentage of ongoing funds for prevention and emergency diversion programs. One potential strategy for Yolo County and HPAC to explore is the 1-2-4 funding strategy developed by the Regional Impact Council. This intervention strategy concurrently increases emergency shelter, permanent housing, and homeless prevention intervention over time. The 1-2-4 reflects the estimate of adding all three interventions at a ratio of 1:2:4 (emergency/interim housing: permanent housing: prevention) in terms of cost and service levels.⁶

Action Step 1.C.2: Identify and implement a new homelessness risk assessment tool for Coordinated Entry. Many stakeholders pointed to the need for a validated homelessness risk screening tool that can help providers to assist in assessing people for risk of homelessness. Ideally this tool will also assist in determining what type of resources an individual or family at-risk of homelessness needs and provide support to them before they enter the homelessness system. Providers and other partners from across systems, including food banks, libraries, and schools, can adopt this tool to determine how to define those at-risk of homelessness and provide connections or referrals to prevention services and resources.

Action Step 1.C.3: Pilot a homelessness risk assessment tool with HPAC providers and other partners. Once a tool is identified, the focus will shift to engagement of partner organizations to pilot the tool as part of their intake processes. The pilot will evaluate the extent to which the tool can increase the ability of providers to identify those at-risk and the kinds of supports and resources needed to prevent them from experiencing homelessness. This screening tool will be paired with the resource guide so that when someone is identified as in-need of services, they are connected to appropriate services.

⁶ Regional Impact Council. 2021. Regional Action Plan, A Call to Action from the Regional Impact Council

Goal 2: Increase Permanent Affordable Housing Options for Those Experiencing or At-Risk of Homelessness

For much of the last ten years, Yolo County has experienced a housing affordability crisis and, like many areas across the state, needs to develop more affordable housing options. This crisis has only worsened in the past three years, as the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in both substantial increases in housing values and rental costs and an increase in the number of people at-risk of or experiencing homelessness.

Based on the most recent census data, rentals make up almost half of all housing in Yolo County and the rental vacancy is between 1.5% and 2%⁷, which suggest a competitive and challenging rental market for all residents. According to Yolo County Housing's Annual Update for FY 2020, there are 8,725 renter families with housing needs who earn between 0-30% of area median income (AMI)⁸. While additional affordable housing is needed for individuals and families at low and moderate-income levels, there is a significant need for housing for individuals and families who are economically the most vulnerable and living at very and extremely low-income levels. Within this group there is especially a need for developing housing that assists those experiencing homelessness.

Developing housing that targets those most vulnerable, living at the lowest income level and experiencing or at-risk of homelessness, is both critical and a challenging task. Like much of California, local public opposition to new housing projects runs high in Yolo County. Compounding public opinion challenges, regulatory, zoning, and other legal hurdles increase the cost and timeline of building new affordable housing developments.

Since 2019, Yolo County has increased the number of affordable permanent housing units with several more projects expected to complete in 2023. However, as many stakeholders have noted, the increase in the past few years represents a "drop in the bucket" when compared with current demand. Connecting those experiencing or at-risk of experiencing homelessness to stable housing is crucial to supporting increased self-sufficiency and improved economic security.

⁷ American Community Survey, 2015 – 2019. 2020 Census data is not currently available for this field.

⁸ FY 2020 Annual Update to the FY2020 – 2024 Five-Year Agency Plan, Yolo Housing.
http://cms3.revize.com/revize/yolo/docs/FY2020%20Annual%20Agency%20Plan%20Update%20Adopted%2004.15.2020_YCH.pdf

Even with the progress in expanding permanent housing, stakeholders and partners both recognize that the process of building new units is expensive, requires navigating many layers of permitting and red tape, and is subject to high levels of public scrutiny. The most practical and effective approach to navigating the housing development process is to identify projects that are easily permitted, have secured funding, and have public buy-in. To achieve this goal, the County, Cities and HPAC will continue to strengthen partnerships with housing partners and developers to implement a series of strategies and action steps to increase affordable housing development.

Progress toward this goal will be measured by:

1. An increase in permanent supportive housing by 138 beds.
2. An increase in the number of people exiting homelessness to permanent housing as tracked through HMIS.
3. Creation of informational flyers and a plan to conduct public outreach campaigns on affordable housing developments.
4. Identification of new funding sources for more affordable housing developments.

Strategy 2.A. Invest in and increase affordable, permanent, and supportive housing.

The past three years, there has been notable progress in Yolo County on expanding the number of permanent housing units. Within Yolo County, there are 676 permanent housing beds. The County is adding another 78 beds through Friends of the Mission at East Beamer (60 beds) and Davis Community Meals and Housing at Paul’s Place (18). While stakeholders praised recent investments in new affordable permanent housing developments, they were also resoundingly clear that the current inventory of affordable permanent housing is not sufficient to meet the current need.

Action Step 2.A.1: Invest in alternative housing models to pilot. County and City leadership will partner with planning departments to explore opportunities for developing alternative models of housing, looking specifically at opportunities to develop more modular units, Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), tiny homes, and utilizing modular building techniques to build housing more quickly and efficiently. As part of assessing and creating pilots around these alternative models, Yolo will look to other communities who have piloted this type of housing development specifically to house those who have experienced homelessness. Los Angeles County and Multnomah County in Oregon are both piloting efforts around providing

homeowners with financial incentives to develop ADUs if these units are rented out to those who have experienced homelessness or have a housing voucher.⁹

Additionally, the need to pair the housing opportunities with wraparound and mediation services was identified. This additional service provision will help in maintaining tenant health while also providing support for landlords who may be hesitant to participate. Providing these services increases housing retention and stability. These alternative models for housing must also be pursued with efforts to continue expanding other supportive housing environments, like room and board housing.

Action Step 2.A.2: Review existing zoning laws and fees and partner with City Planning Departments to pilot models. As part of this work, partners will also review how to ease zoning and fee requirements to expedite development and make it financially feasible. As part of this step, the County should also prioritize development projects that have a lower burden of permitting and zoning hurdles to get approval. City planners will be an important partner in these efforts, helping develop and message new housing opportunities and the benefits of participation.

Strategy 2.B. Engage the public and developers around the benefits of affordable housing development.

Action Step 2.B.1 Engage in marketing campaigns about the benefits of affordable housing developments. There is a need for greater education around the benefits of affordable housing developments and the potential for positive impact in Yolo County. To help provide the public with more information around the importance of community investments in a range of affordable housing options, especially for those who are most vulnerable, the County will leverage marketing campaigns to help make the public case for more affordable housing development. The goal is to dispel myths around affordable housing and highlight the need for increased development in the community.

In addition, creating a strategy to engage both current and potential housing development stakeholders to form partnerships for future affordable housing developments could be impactful. To support this strategy, appropriate partners will collaborate to develop materials that highlight the benefits of investments in affordable housing.

Strategy 2.C. Identify Sustainable Funding for Affordable Housing Development.

Action Step 2.C.1: Review successful ongoing funding Measures. Ultimately, more housing development requires more funding. State and Federal funding streams like NPLH, ARP,

⁹ LA County ADU Pilot: <https://www.mas.la/adu-pilot-project/>; Multnomah County ADU Pilot Program: <https://multco.us/file/77423/download>

MHSA Housing and Support Services, Homekey and tax credits help in encouraging affordable housing development, but these programs have limited funding. . Yolo County is experiencing a housing crisis and must explore the potential of developing new funding sources to address this crisis. Yolo County can look to what other communities in California have done to create new local funding for housing and homelessness services. For example, the 2018 election saw many cities taking up special measures to levy taxes to fund homelessness services and/or housing development.¹⁰ In 2016, West Sacramento passed Measure E, a 0.25% transactions and sales tax for the City's general fund for city services including homelessness services. That same year, the City of Los Angeles passed Proposition HHH, which increased property taxes by \$0.348 per square foot, providing \$1.2 billion in funding to increase the city's permanent supportive housing by 7,000 units for those experiencing or at-risk of experiencing homelessness. As of 2020, 179 supportive units have been completed with HHH funds and another 5,522 are under construction or in pre-development.¹¹ While these efforts are primarily in larger cities and counties, Yolo County can learn how different communities are approaching generating new funds and can scale a proposal appropriately for Yolo County.

Action Step 2.C.2: Strengthen partnerships between the county and the cities to support partners to use the Plan when making decisions. Over the next three years, efforts will continue to strengthen partnerships with county housing and homeless agencies, county leadership, and city council leadership to explore creating a local funding source for affordable housing development. This work may include engaging the Board of Supervisors and City Councils to review and evaluate potential options for providing new, local revenue for development. By the end of the three-year period, city and county leaders will have a recommendation and plan for pursuing a local funding stream for affordable housing development.

¹⁰ CityLab, "California Ballots Get Creative on Homelessness and Affordable Housing." October 31, 2018. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-10-31/will-this-election-solve-california-s-housing-crisis>

¹¹ Local Housing Solutions, Los Angeles Proposition HHH: <https://localhousingsolutions.org/housing-policy-case-studies/los-angeles-proposition-hhh/>

Goal 3: Improve Collaboration and Coordination Between Physical and Behavioral Healthcare & Housing and Homeless Services

The 2022 PIT Count found that 36% of unsheltered adults in Yolo County reported having one or more behavioral health issues.¹² Of the sheltered and unsheltered adults in the County, 32% are chronically homeless. Homelessness is a health care issue and Yolo County recognizes the connection between health and housing.

Current efforts across the County include the provision of health care outreach services, often at co-located sites with other homeless providers. Mobile health services now are available throughout much of the county and often include behavioral health components. More than half of surveyed stakeholders (52%) felt that there has been some progress towards this goal. The CommuniCare Mobile Medicine Team expanded to serve the three major cities and the rural areas of Winters, Knights Landing, and migrant centers as well as the Haven House medical respite transitional program. In 2023, the County is launching the Crisis Now model which includes a 24-hour behavioral health crisis center providing assessments, psychiatric evaluations, medication support, peers, and other clinical services aimed at ameliorating the current crisis and supporting re-entry into the community.

Despite these efforts, stakeholders in both the survey and focus groups noted that the connection and coordination between behavioral health programs and homelessness and housing services needs to be strengthened. They also pointed to an increase in substance use among people experiencing or at-risk of homelessness. Stakeholders also expressed concern in the observed increase in the use of opioids, especially fentanyl, and felt that consideration needs to be given to investing resources in harm reduction services, especially overdose death prevention. These services would ideally serve areas with encampments and other areas with frequency of substance use.

Yolo County will assess its progress toward stabilizing and maintaining physical and behavioral health for those with the highest needs by tracking:

1. Demonstrated use of data to locate and deliver healthcare services
2. Reductions in the number of Emergency Room visits by those experiencing homelessness as reported by existing data reporting systems

¹² Yolo County 2022 PIT Count

3. Education and training of providers in harm reduction approaches and benefits

To achieve this goal and realize these reductions, Yolo County will work to expand current mobile health outreach and co-located services while also leveraging new opportunities to build partnerships across health, housing, and homelessness services.

Strategy 3.A. Utilize Intercept Mapping to Identify Entry Points into Services and Better Target Services

Action Step 3.A.1: Leverage Intercept Mapping to promote awareness and to identify areas of need. Part of this plan will be to conduct intercept mapping to understand where people utilizing the homeless system of care are served, including behavioral health and health care services. Using information from the intercept mapping process will help providers to understand where people experiencing or at-risk of homeless receive other public services and better target services through outreach and co-location of services at these locations.

Action Step 3.A.2: Expand outreach and co-located services. With the expansion of more mobile and collaborative physical and behavioral health services, HPAC and the County should continue to strengthen and expand co-located or mobile behavioral health and physical health services that focus on people experiencing homelessness. For example, stakeholders indicated that there is still a need for culturally appropriate mobile behavioral health services that can serve Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities. By increasing health outreach efforts, the number of service providers may increase, and providers may have an opportunity to form closer relationships with those who are experiencing homelessness. Developing these closer relationships will in turn help encourage engagement and the use of services by those experiencing homelessness while also providing opportunities to offer warm handoffs to other types of needed services. The connection to and provision of comprehensive services will offer the opportunity for those experiencing homelessness to improve their health and housing outcomes, ultimately leading to greater self-sufficiency.

Strategy 3.B. Improve Connections Between Health and Homeless & Housing Services.

Critical to stabilizing and maintaining physical and behavioral health is having coordinated partners who can provide warm handoffs and assist clients in navigating services which support improved self-sufficiency such as access to public benefits or other sources of income. One example of how health and housing can be better connected is through medical respite. There is currently a four-bed medical respite program in Woodland that provides health and housing support. This resource is often full and those in need are unable to access it. Expanding this type of model for those with serious health and housing needs is crucial to helping those with the most serious health concerns.

Action Step 3.B.1: Continue to strengthen information sharing between agencies.

Recent state laws provide an opportunity to further develop partnerships between healthcare, housing, and homelessness services in the County. AB210, signed into law in 2017 and taking effect in 2018, authorized the establishment of multidisciplinary teams (MDTs) to expedite identification, assessment, and linkage of people experiencing homelessness to housing and supportive services. This allows partners from various disciplines including healthcare, behavioral health, criminal justice, veterans' services, social services, education, domestic violence support, and housing and homelessness services to share and discuss relevant information about clients to help connect them to services and housing. While Yolo County launched homeless MDTs utilizing the AB210 framework, these were paused in response to COVID and have yet to officially re-start. Engaging partners through these MDT meetings will help facilitate improved connection once again.

Stakeholders have felt that HPAC and health and behavioral health providers have made noticeable progress in collaboration and coordination of care especially with the introduction of CommuniCare teams.

Action Step 3.B.2: Leverage new healthcare policies and system change to provide whole-person services.

California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) is currently engaged in an effort to transform and strengthen Medi-Cal called CalAIM (California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal). The goal of CalAIM is to make Medi-Cal services more equitable, coordinated, and person-centered to improve health, life trajectory, and outcomes. Under this model, providers will work with their healthcare network and community-based organizations to support an individual's physical, developmental, behavioral, and dental needs as well as provide long term services, community and social supports¹³. For people experiencing or at-risk of homelessness with health or behavioral needs, this initiative will offer coordinated and multi-disciplinary services to address complex needs and support the whole person. Ensuring robust partner engagement to support and bolster CalAIM efforts within the County and to maximize this opportunity for the benefit of all Yolo Medi-Cal beneficiaries will be critical.

Action Step 3.B.3: Expand mobile harm reduction services across the county with a focus on serving unsheltered people.

In the most recent PIT count, substance use disorder was the most common physical or behavioral health issue listed. Of the total 746 sheltered and unsheltered individuals counted, 13% (95) listed having a substance use disorder. Of those 95 individuals, 68% (65) were unsheltered. Given the high self-reported prevalence of

¹³ California Department of Health Care Services. <https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/calaim>

substance use disorders among people experiencing homelessness, expanding the capacity of providers to provide harm reduction approaches is a priority. The County and HPAC will explore options to offer providers training in harm reduction practices and benefits. In addition, Yolo County HHSA will look for opportunities to increase funding for harm reduction supplies including expanding access to Naloxone, a medicine that reverses opioid overdoses.

Goal 4: Strengthen Systems Level Coordination

Over the past three years, Yolo County has made substantial progress towards strengthening system level coordination countywide. With multiple jurisdictions and service providers, the Yolo County system of care contains many components and partners, and these partnerships require coordination to be successful. The 2019 Plan aimed to incorporate elements of coordination, but this goal has been updated to explicitly focus on examining how to better coordinate and strengthen partnership efforts to improve service delivery, funding, and policy opportunities and address racial inequities that impact homelessness.

Since 2019, there have been two significant developments around system coordination. One of those was the formation of HPAC as a 501c3. This new formation followed a systemwide technical assistance evaluation recommending a new structure for the HPAC Board and its subcommittees to ensure it met all requirements of HUD designated homeless continuums of care (CoC). Additionally, this structure allows HPAC to hire an Executive Director and staff to lead system coordination efforts, fund raising, and other strategic initiatives. Locally, HPAC has worked to strengthen coordination and communication between HPAC, the Commission to Address Homelessness, providers, local community-based organizations, and jurisdictions such as the Cities of Davis, West Sacramento, and Woodland as well as rural areas.

Lastly, HPAC and its stakeholders recognize that racial inequities are a large driver of who is at the greatest risk of experiencing homelessness within Yolo County. For example, Black and African Americans make up 2.6% of Yolo County's population, but in the recent PIT count made up 15% of the homeless population. Several stakeholders mentioned that there is a need to conduct an equity assessment of current services to see where there are inequities in terms of which groups are being served and where funding is going. Similarly, there is a need to provide more culturally competent services through hiring more BIPOC staff in prevention and crisis response services as well as improving diversity among HPAC partner leadership. To further strategize how HPAC can address racial inequities and biases, HPAC began work in 2022 to develop a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion plan.

The other significant development was the formation of the Commission to Address Homelessness, a 6-member commission comprised of elected officials from the County, cities of Davis, Woodland, West Sacramento, and Winters, and the HPAC Chair. The purpose of the

Commission is to:

1. Work in collaboration with County government, City governments, philanthropy, business sector, community and faith-based organizations, and other interested stakeholders to focus on regional policy and implementation strategies, affordable housing development, data and gaps analysis, best practice research, social policy and systemic change to promote an effective response to homelessness within the County of Yolo.
2. Act as an advisory commission to the City Councils, County Board of Supervisors and other organizational bodies as represented, having no independent authority to make decisions or act on matters such as legislation or lobbying.
3. Foster regional leadership that promotes resource development to address homelessness within the County of Yolo.

Yolo County will qualitatively examine the following measures to assess whether systems level coordination and partnering is improving:

1. Hiring of HPAC Executive Director and staff.
2. A measurable increase in ongoing funding across the system of care.
3. Increase in the number of BIPOC staff and managers among HPAC partner organizations.
4. Review of Coordinated entry practice and adopt a more equitable process.

While these measures of success can be quantified through data, they can also be measured through surveying and interviewing partners over the next three years to determine what current perceptions of coordination are, what additional improvements could be made, and whether progress is being made toward this goal.

Strategy 4.A. Support and stabilize key organizations to take on leadership roles in homeless services.

Action Step 4.A.1: Prioritize hiring executive leader and staff. Feedback from the focus groups and the survey indicated that most stakeholders were pleased with the progress that has been made over the past three years. However, they also felt that turnover among executive leadership across the system of care has been a challenge. For example, HPAC needs to hire an executive director and other key roles to lead system coordination and partnership building within the CoC and efforts to coordinate with providers outside of the CoC.

Action Step 4.A.2: Build system level capacity to lead efforts to address and prevent homelessness in Yolo County. HPAC, the Commission to Address Homelessness, and Yolo

County HHSAs are seen as the lead entities for coordinating efforts and strengthening partnerships around homelessness services and housing. These three organizations will continue to work collaboratively to engage with services providers and cities to develop strategies to better coordinate across the entire County. In particular, the County and HPAC can both provide more advocacy and fund development to support growth in critical areas such as housing development as well as provide leadership around efforts to address racial inequities.

Action Step 4.A.3: Strengthen capacity for Coordinated Entry. The County's Coordinated Entry System has been in place since 2019 but has struggled to reach its full potential. HPAC and Yolo County HHSAs will review current coordination entry practices and identify opportunities for improvement and expanded capacity. HPAC will work with Yolo County to develop a strategy to increase Coordinated Entry and work with providers to evaluate and improve practices.

Strategy 4.B. Create more equity and inclusivity within the Continuum of Care by addressing racial inequities and bias.

Action Step 4.B.1: Conduct an equity assessment to identify inequities in services and funding: HPAC and Yolo County should explore the possibility of conducting an equity assessment of current services locations, utilization, staffing, and funding to determine if there are inequities in how current HPAC resources and investments are deployed compared to local demographics and utilization trends. This assessment could help set priorities for future funding that targets addressing DEI issues and racial inequities.

Action Step 4.B.2: Develop strategies to partner with more BIPOC-led organizations and organizations that hire people with lived experience. Creating a more inclusive System of Care is a multi-faceted approach that requires change on various levels. At the systems level, the County and HPAC should prioritize building partnerships with BIPOC organizations to provide more competent services. Black and Indigenous individuals and families are less likely to be successfully placed in permanent housing compared to White people. To address this issue, Yolo County, HPAC, and providers should prioritize increasing the number of BIPOC-led organizations and BIPOC service providers as well as increase the number of service providers with lived experience of homelessness.

Action Step 4.B.3: Create contract requirements to encourage more cultural competence among providers. At a micro level, HPAC and the County should look at strategies that will result in more inclusive services. One option to consider is the adoption of contracting requirements for organizations serving BIPOC communities to be located within the community and to hire a certain percent of staff from that community or with lived

experience for direct service roles. The City of Oakland has included this type of language within the procurement and contracting processes as a way to ensure that organizations that receive funds are connected to the communities they serve.

Appendix A. Yolo County Homeless System of Care Partners

We would like to thank the following partners for their assistance in compiling this County Homelessness Plan (the Plan), and for their dedication in moving toward our shared goal of ending homelessness.

- County and City Representatives
 - City of Davis
 - City of West Sacramento
 - City of Winters
 - City of Woodland
 - Yolo County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA)
- County Health Plans & Health Care Providers
 - Local Hospitals – Dignity Health/Woodland Memorial Hospital and Sutter Health/Sutter Davis Hospital
 - CommuniCare Health Centers
- Criminal Justice
 - City of Davis Police Department
 - City of West Sacramento Police Department
 - City of Winters Police Department
 - City of Woodland Police Department
 - Yolo County District Attorney’s Office
 - Yolo County Sheriff’s Office
- Education
 - Local School Districts
 - Yolo County Office of Education
- Housing and Homeless Service Providers
 - Davis Community Meals and Housing
 - Davis Opportunity Village
 - Downtown Streets Team
 - Empower Yolo/Family Resource Center
 - Fourth and Hope
 - HEART of Davis
 - Interfaith Rotating Winter Shelter (Woodland)
 - Mercy Coalition (West Sacramento)
 - Resources for Independent Living
 - Rural Innovations in Social Economics (RISE)
 - Shores of Hope
 - Turning Point Community Programs

- Volunteers of America (VOA)
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Health Care
- Yolo Community Care Continuum
- Yolo Conflict Resolution Center
- Yolo County Children's Alliance
- Yolo Healthy Aging Alliance
- Local Homeless Continuum of Care
 - Members of the Yolo County Homeless and Poverty Action Coalition (HPAC)
- Public Housing Authority
 - Yolo County Housing
- Representatives of Family Caregivers of Persons Living with serious mental illness (SMI)
 - National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Yolo
- Other Valuable Partners
 - Legal Services of Northern California (LSNC)
 - Meals on Wheels Yolo County
 - Yolo Adult Day Health Center
 - Yolo County Library
 - Yolo Food Bank

Appendix B: Glossary of Terms

Adapted from the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority's (LAHSA) "Homeless Services Delivery System Glossary of Terms/Acronyms"

Continuum of Care (CoC) – A community network to organize and deliver housing and services to meet the specific needs of people who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness. It includes action steps to end homelessness and prevent a return to homelessness. Yolo County has one CoC, the Homeless and Poverty Action Coalition (HPAC), which established its own 501c3 nonprofit status in 2021.

Coordinated Entry – A regional connection of new and existing programs into a "no wrong-door network" by assessing the needs of people experiencing homelessness and linking them with the most appropriate housing and services to end their homelessness. The essential components are: 1) a system that is low-barrier and easy to access; 2) a system that identifies and assesses people's needs; and 3) a system that prioritizes and matches housing resources based on those needs.

Emergency Shelter (ES) – A facility whose intended purpose is to provide temporary shelter for persons experiencing homelessness. Some are only open at night, and some may focus on specific populations.

Homeless Crisis Response System – Refers to the continuum of services and housing available to persons who are experiencing homelessness or are at imminent risk of experiencing homelessness. These resources include those focused on homelessness "prevention," supporting persons at-risk of homelessness to remain in housing, while others focus on "diversion" away from the homeless system of care and back into stable housing situations.

Homeless System of Care – This refers to the larger countywide network of providers, services, resources, and other supports for people experiencing or at-risk of homelessness. This includes all organizations that provide homelessness and housing services including the CoC as well as entities that may serve the same population in a different context such as health, behavioral health, and human services organizations, law enforcement agencies, veterans services, education, youth services, and community groups.

Permanent Housing – Community-based housing without a designated length of stay, which includes both Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) and Rapid Rehousing (RRH). Examples of permanent housing include, but are not limited to, a house or apartment with a month-to-month or annual lease term or home ownership.

Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) - Long-term, community-based housing that has supportive services for homeless persons with disabilities. This type of supportive housing enables the special needs of populations to live as independently as possible in a permanent setting.