LEAD ME HOME
PLAN UPDATE

**5 YEAR PLAN TO
REDUCE HOMELESSNESS
IN MONTEREY AND
SAN BENITO COUNTIES**

JULY 2021 THROUGH JUNE 2026

THE COALITION
OF HOMELESS SERVICES PROVIDERS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Lead Me Home Plan Update provides a five-year roadmap for the Monterey and San Benito County Continuum of Care (CoC) and its partners to achieve the vision that all people in the region live in decent, safe, and affordable housing from which they access services and supports that stabilize their lives. This Plan has been developed by the Lead Me Home Leadership Council of Monterey and San Benito Counties (the Continuum of Care board) and coordinated by the Coalition of Homeless Services Providers (CHSP), in partnership with the County of Monterey Department of Social Services, County of Monterey Health Department, County of San Benito Health and Human Services Department, and the City of Salinas. It builds upon and extends the vision articulated in the original Lead Me Home (LMH) 10-Year Plan. Key priorities for the Leadership Council in the Plan update were to ensure the Plan is informed by local data, integrates input from local stakeholders, and is aligned with national best practices.

The LMH Plan Update sets out the ambitious goal of reducing the total population of people experiencing homelessness in Monterey and San Benito Counties by 50% over five years (July 2021 to June 2026). Measurable performance targets have been established for each year of the plan, including targets for improvement in program performance as well as for creation of new housing inventory. To achieve these lofty goals, the Plan identifies a set of overarching strategies:

1. Increase Participation in Homelessness Solutions by Leaders and Key Stakeholders from Across the Region.

The community will embrace a regionwide vision for reducing homelessness that is informed by data and equity considerations, improve coordination across jurisdictions, and engage all stakeholders in being part of the solution to homelessness.

2. Improve the Performance of the Homelessness Response System.

Homelessness response system leadership and key stakeholders will design and implement a system that is highly effective at providing housing pathways for people experiencing homelessness, establish targets and measure progress towards program and system goals, and strategically expand housing and services inventory.

3. Expand Service-Oriented Responses to Unsheltered Homelessness.

Political leadership, funders, providers, and other stakeholders will be responsive to feedback from people experiencing homelessness about their needs and goals, with a focus on increasing the services available to address the immediate health and safety needs of people who are unsheltered.

A Year One Action plan sets out the key first steps the Continuum of Care, Leadership Council, CHSP, counties, cities, providers, and other key stakeholders will undertake to begin implementation, as well as processes for annual assessment and reporting on progress towards meeting goals and targets.

The Lead Me Home Plan Update calls for everyone in the community to join together in being part of the solution to homelessness. Aligning and coordinating around a shared set of objectives and strategies will ensure that the efforts of individuals, organizations, and jurisdictions have the maximum possible impact. By setting measurable goals, using data to assess progress, and continually improving and refining the work, Monterey and San Benito counties can make it possible that everyone in the community has a home.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The Lead Me Home Update sets out a framework to guide the response to homelessness in Monterey and San Benito Counties over the five-year period from July 2021 through June 2026. It builds upon and updates the original Lead Me Home Plan developed in 2009. This new Plan provides a roadmap for the Continuum of Care (CoC), jurisdictions (Counties, cities), funders, providers, and other key stakeholders to coordinate, align, and focus their efforts to maximize impact on reducing homelessness. It provides a detailed Action Plan for Year One, along with a process for reviewing and reporting on Year One results and developing Action Plans for Year Two and onward.

B. HOW THIS PLAN WAS DEVELOPED

In 2020, the Lead Me Home Leadership Council of Monterey and San Benito Counties (the Continuum of Care board) authorized the complete rewrite of the original Lead Me Home 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness. As the Continuum of Care (CoC) coordinating agency, the Coalition of Homeless Services Providers (CHSP) partnered with the County of Monterey Department of Social Services, County of Monterey Health Department, County of San Benito Health and Human Services, and the City of Salinas to develop this updated Plan.

Key priorities for the Leadership Council in the Plan update were to ensure the Plan is informed by local data, integrates input from local stakeholders and is aligned with national best practices. To help accomplish these objectives, CHSP engaged Focus Strategies, a nationally recognized technical assistance firm, to guide the Plan development process. Beginning in April 2020, Focus Strategies worked collaboratively with staff from CHSP and a Collaborative Planning Group comprised of staff from Monterey and San Benito counties

and the City of Salinas to develop and implement a system assessment and strategic planning process that included:

- A preliminary assessment of the existing system for addressing homelessness in the region, drawn from review of documents and key stakeholder interviews;

- A quantitative analysis of program and system performance on key outcome measures, using data from the community's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS);

- Predictive modeling to forecast impacts on the size of the population experiencing homelessness if different system changes are made;

- Analysis of housing market gaps at different levels of affordability;

- A series of stakeholder interviews and community input sessions to gather information to inform the Plan;

- A community survey to gather input from people with lived experience of homelessness; and

- Strategic plan development sessions with representatives from the CHSP Board and Leadership Council.

A draft of the Plan was developed by CHSP and Focus Strategies, with input from the Collaborative Planning Group, in May and June 2021. In July, the community and key stakeholders were invited to provide input on the draft before finalization. The Plan development steps and background materials are available at: https://chsp.org/plan-rewrite.

II. CONTEXT

A. HOMELESSNESS IN MONTEREY AND SAN BENITO COUNTIES

Homelessness is an urgent and growing issue in Monterey and San Benito Counties, driven by escalating housing costs and exacerbated by the turmoil of the COVID-19 pandemic. The most recent complete Point-in-Time (PIT) count of both unsheltered and sheltered people experiencing homelessness were conducted in January 2019.[1] These counts found that:

- There were 2,422 people experiencing homelessness in Monterey County. This represents 0.6% of the total general population of 434,061. Of those counted, 76% were unsheltered and 24% were living in shelters or transitional housing programs.

- There were 282 people experiencing homelessness in San Benito County, or 0.4% of the total general population of 62,808. Among the people experiencing homelessness, 60% were unsheltered and 40% were sheltered.

Taken together, Monterey and San Benito County reported a total of 2,704 people experiencing homelessness in the 2019 PIT count. According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) State of Homelessness Report, this translates to 54.5 people experiencing homelessness per 10,000 total population.[2] This is higher than the Statewide rate of 38.2.

Monterey and San Benito County both saw a decrease in their counts between 2017 and 2019, while many of the neighboring counties saw increases. However, lack of recent PIT data makes it difficult to draw conclusions about population trends. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and the devastation it has created to the economy, stakeholders have anecdotally observed increases in unsheltered homelessness. Requests for financial assistance for back rent have skyrocketed, indicating that the pandemic has placed many households at extreme risk of homelessness. The planned PIT Count to be conducted in

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[1] A count of sheltered people was conducted in January 2020. The January 2021 unsheltered count was postponed due to COVID-19 safety concerns. The next count is scheduled to be conducted in January 2022.

[2] https://endhomelessness.org/homelessness-in-america/homelessness-statistics/state-of-homelessness-2020/

January 2022 will provide more hard data on the extent to which homelessness has increased in the region since 2019.

Racial and Ethnic Disparities in People Experiencing Homelessness

In Monterey County, the 2019 PIT count found significant differences between the racial and ethnic composition of the total county population compared to the population of people experiencing homelessness. Most notably, African Americans were 25% of the people counted but only 3% of the general population. Conversely, Latinx people are 36% of the homeless population but 59% of the general population. In their 2019 report on Racial Disparities in Homelessness submitted as part of the CoC funding application, CHSP noted that the per capita population of African Americans in the PIT Census was 12.1 times greater than the per capita of Whites. Racial disparities in the homeless system are found throughout the State of California and nationally, as noted in the State of Homelessness and many other data sources. While analysis of HMIS data shows only minimal racial disparities in program outcomes, the CoC has made a commitment to continually analyze all homelessness response system data with an equity lens and develop and implement strategies to ensure both equitable access to the system as well as equitable results.

Subpopulations

Subpopulation data reported in the PIT counts for both Monterey and San Benito Counties largely aligns with State and national trends:

- In both Monterey and San Benito Counties, 25% of people counted are members of families with children, while 75% are individuals living alone or with other adults. Looking at the household level, 8.7% of all households were households with children while 90.7% of households consisted of only adults and 0.4% were households consisting of unaccompanied minors.

- In Monterey County, 14% of those counted were transition-age youth (18-24), 7% were Veterans, and 23% were experiencing chronic homelessness.

- In San Benito County, 5% were transition age youth, 5% were Veterans, and 28% were experiencing chronic homelessness.

Geographic Distribution

People who experience homelessness live throughout Monterey and San Benito Counties. The 2019 PIT count found that the largest population was in the City of Salinas, where 53%

of the County's unsheltered population was counted in 2019. There were 976 people in Salinas out of a total of 1,830 who were unsheltered in the County. The next largest population was in the City of Monterey with 167 people. While the Chinatown area of Salinas has the single largest and most visible unsheltered homeless population, this tends to obscure the fact that there are significant encampments scattered throughout the community including in Pajaro Valley, on the Peninsula in the cities of Seaside and Marina, in South Monterey County along the Union Pacific rail lines, and in San Benito County along the riverbed.

B.   ASSESSMENT OF THE CURRENT RESPONSE TO HOMELESSNESS IN MONTEREY AND SAN BENITO COUNTIES

1.   Framework for Assessment

This Plan builds from an in-depth assessment of the existing approach to homelessness in Monterey and San Benito Counties conducted in 2020-2021. The framework for the assessment is the concept of a homelessness response system. Experience from jurisdictions around the country, federal policy direction, and research all point to the need for communities to create a *system* to effectively end homelessness. While individual programs and initiatives may yield results with a subpopulation or group, making progress on the overall size of the homeless population requires a systematic approach.

A homelessness response system treats a loss of housing as an emergency that must be responded to quickly and effectively with a *housing* solution, targeting resources to this end. The assessment considered the extent to which leaders and stakeholders in Monterey and San Benito Counties have implemented a homelessness crisis response system, and the degree to which the work aligns with three key principles:

Housing-focused   **Strategic and data-informed**   **Person-centered and equitable**
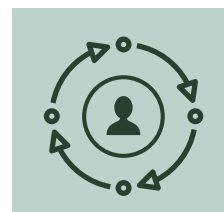
Housing-focused

An effective homelessness response system is built upon the understanding that homelessness is a crisis – the loss of housing – and the solution is to quickly return people to housing. The goal is to identify an appropriate housing solution for each household experiencing homelessness, and along the way to connect them to other services they might need. This does not mean that every program or service in the system must directly provide housing - but all interventions should in some way help people along the pathway to housing.

Strategic and data-informed

A robust homelessness response system has strong and coordinated leadership that makes strategic decisions informed by data. A priority is placed upon the collection and analysis of data to set goals, understand whether the system is meeting its objectives, and improve effectiveness. System leadership and funders work in a coordinated manner to ensure that all sources of funding for addressing homelessness are aligned to maximize impact and achieve identified system objectives.

Person-centered and equitable

A fair and equitable homeless system is focused on meeting people's needs for housing and responding to their self-identified goals for their future. It respects client choice and preferences about where and how they will be housed. The system is also easily understood and navigated by people experiencing homelessness, with minimal barriers to access. Disparities in access and in outcomes are analyzed and addressed.

2. Key Findings

The system assessment process conducted in 2020-2021 revealed some important strengths of the current system as well as areas in need of improvement. These findings form the basis for the goals and strategies incorporated in this Five-Year Plan. This Plan provides a brief overview of key findings. Detailed assessment reports are available at https://chsp.org/plan-rewrite.

a. Housing-focused Programs and Services

The homelessness response system in Monterey and San Benito Counties has been gradually becoming more housing-focused, particularly through recent expansion of the shelter system and a focus

on more service-enriched shelter beds, as well as the addition of new rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing. However, system performance analysis shows that most programs in the system (emergency shelter, transitional housing, rapid rehousing) are underperforming in terms of their ability to help participants secure housing when they exit. Achievement of a measurable and sustained reduction in homelessness will require that all the interventions in the system, and particularly temporary housing programs, are strongly oriented towards helping all households

Achievement of a measurable and sustained reduction in homelessness will require that all the interventions in the system... are strongly oriented towards helping all households experiencing homelessness to secure a housing solution.

experiencing homelessness to secure a housing solution. Other critical gaps identified through the system assessment and via community input include:

- A lack of solutions-oriented mobile outreach that connects people to shelter and housing

- Inconsistent availability of shelter services to support transitions to housing

- Geographical gaps in the availability of shelter, particularly in Monterey's South County

- A need to refine the Coordinated Access and Referral System (CARS) to provide more effective and streamlined connections to housing, particularly for youth

- An insufficient supply of rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing

- Lack of a coordinated regional strategy to develop affordable housing, particularly housing for those at the lowest income levels

- A need for expanded efforts to prevent homelessness

### b. Coordinated, Data-Driven Planning and Decision Making

Coordinated and data informed decision-making is one of the strongest elements of the current system for addressing homelessness in Monterey and San Benito Counties. The Lead Me Home Leadership Council (the CoC Board), with support from CHSP, guides the overall development of the system and oversees funding decisions. The system performance

assessment conducted in 2020 found excellent data quality across all program types, with extremely low rates of unknown data, and no missing data, for critical data elements. The Leadership Council recently created a Funding Committee to focus on improving the ability of the system to align the various funding streams over which the Leadership Council holds responsibility, and to make greater use of data to inform decision-making and develop a targeted investment strategy to achieve measurable results.

Throughout the assessment process, stakeholders consistently identified a need to continue expanding representation on the Council and engagement of diverse groups – including greater involvement of people with lived experience of homelessness, local jurisdictions not currently active in homelessness response, and system partners such as health care or education that frequently engage with people experiencing homelessness. Stakeholders also identified a need for the Leadership Council to engage in community education to increase support for homelessness response efforts and in advocacy at the state level for funding and policies that advance affordable housing efforts.
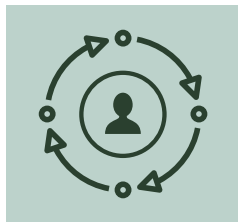
c. Person-Centered and Equitable Approach

Having person-centered and equitable approaches to reducing homelessness was identified in the assessment and input process as an area in need of strengthening. The homelessness response system providers could benefit from greater understanding of and alignment to Housing First principles, including low barrier program access and trauma-informed practices, such as by creating a peer learning and implementation collaborative focused on operationalizing Housing First principles. Interviews, discussions, and surveys with people with lived experience of homelessness revealed that they would like:

- Supports and services to help them secure housing;

- Investments in innovative permanent and temporary housing solutions, such as tiny homes, RV parks, transitional housing, and other options;

- A response to encampments that provides more expanded access to hygiene, more supportive services, and less involvement of law enforcement; and,

- More meaningful ways to be involved in developing solutions to homelessness.

Data analysis reveals significant differences between the racial and ethnic composition of the total county population compared to the population of people experiencing

homelessness. Most notably, African Americans were 25% of the people counted but only 3% of the general population. Conversely, Latinx people are 36% of the homeless population but 59% of the general population. However, Latinx households in both Monterey and San Benito counties are more likely than white, non-Hispanic households to be extremely low income (earning less than 30% of area median income), placing them at risk of housing instability and homelessness.

In addition to these stark racial and ethnic disparities, stakeholders noted that there are significant disparities in access to homelessness response services and programs for people living in the more rural areas of the community, particularly in Monterey's South County.

C. PREDICTIVE ANALYTICS

As part of the system assessment conducted in 2020-2021, CHSP and the Collaborative Planning Group worked with Focus Strategies to develop predictive modeling scenarios using the System-Wide Analytics and Projection (SWAP) tool. SWAP uses local data from Monterey and San Benito Counties - including the 2019 PIT count, 2019 HUD system performance measures, current inventory of beds in the system, system performance results, and assumptions about how many people can "self-resolve" their housing crisis. The modeling creates a 'peek' into the future to estimate how the numbers of people experiencing homelessness in the community might grow or shrink as changes are made to the homelessness response system. It does not provide a fixed or single "correct" answer, but rather predicts the likely implications of different choices and supports more intentional and deliberate strategic planning. A brief summary of the results is presented here, and the details may be found in the modeling report linked at https://chsp.org/plan-rewrite.

The modeling analysis shows that adopting and meeting ambitious performance improvement targets will lead to a 100% reduction in unsheltered homelessness and 38% decrease in all homelessness over three years. These targets include:

Increase in rate of entry into programs by people who are unsheltered

Significant increase in rate of exit to permanent housing from shelter, transitional housing, & rapid rehousing

Significant decrease in length of stay in these programs

Meeting the targets for rate of exit to permanent housing will require an estimated additional 2,000 to 3,000 "exits" per year above what the system is currently achieving. While some people may exit by securing an existing housing unit (either a subsidized unit or market rate unit with or without rental assistance), an increase in the overall supply of affordable housing will also be needed and particularly for Extremely Low Income (ELI) units (units affordable to people at 30% of less of area median income). A Housing Market Study completed by Focus Strategies as part of the system assessment found an estimated gap of 8,262 ELI units in Monterey County and 935 ELI units in San Benito County. While the gap of 8,262 ELI units is substantial, it is important to understand that this is the number of units needed so every ELI household in the community has access to an affordable unit. Developing more ELI housing will help improve the system's ability to provide affordable

III.   THE PLAN: 5 YEAR STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR HOMELESSNESS RESPONSE

This Plan lays out the key goals and strategies that will organize the community's response to homelessness over the five-year period from July 2021 to June 2026. It builds upon the system assessment, predictive analysis, and community input process completed in 2020-2021 to set goals, measurable targets, and effective strategies designed to reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness in the community.

A.   VISION

The vision encompassed by this Plan is that all people in Monterey and San Benito County communities live in decent, safe, and affordable housing from which they access services and supports that stabilize their lives.

B.   GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Plan is informed by six key principles:

- *Embedded with dignity and respect.* The homelessness response system's efforts center the needs of people requesting assistance by delivering individualized, comprehensive, and culturally competent services. Strengths-based, person-centered, trauma-informed, and harm reduction-based approaches are integrated into all aspects of service design and delivery.

- *Informed by people with lived experience of homelessness.* People experiencing homelessness are experts of their personal needs; the homelessness response system honors and elevates their input on service design and delivery.

- *Housing-focused.* The solution to homelessness is housing; all efforts of the homelessness response system work towards the goal of helping people gain and maintain stable, permanent housing situations.

Vision:
All people in Monterey and San Benito County communities live in decent, safe and affordable housing from which they access services and supports that stabilize their lives.

- *Data-driven towards results.* Strategies and priorities for reducing homelessness will be informed by data to best serve people experiencing homelessness, achieve desired outcomes, and guide strategic investments in programs and services.

- *Coordinated.* The homelessness response system and other systems of care will communicate and partner towards shared goals of improving service linkages and reducing homelessness.

- *Equitable and social justice oriented.* The homelessness response system acknowledges the barriers to housing and resource connection that disproportionately impact people by race, ethnicity, gender, and other identities. The system adopts intentional policies and programs to reduce these disparities and advance equity in system experiences and outcomes.

C.   GOALS AND MEASURES TO TRACK PROGRESS

The centerpiece of this Plan is a set of measurable goals and targets that will organize the community's response to homelessness and provide a methodology to track progress.

The Monterey and San Benito County CoC is setting a goal to reduce homelessness in the region by 50% over the next five years.

This reduction will be accomplished through three overarching strategies:

Increasing participation in homelessness solutions by leaders and key stakeholders from across the region

Improving the performance of the homelessness response system, and particularly the system's effectiveness in supporting people to secure and sustain housing

Expanding service-oriented responses to unsheltered homelessness.

Reductions in Numbers of People Experiencing Homelessness

The table below shows the targets for reduction in the size of the people of people experiencing homelessness over the five-year term of the plan. Since Monterey and San Benito Counties each conduct a separate PIT count, separate targets are provided for each county. The targets anticipate there will be an increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness in the first year of the plan. The increase is estimated due to several factors including that more than two years will have gone by since the 2019 PIT and pandemic-related economic and housing impacts have also impacted the size and composition of the population of people experiencing homelessness.

HOMELESSNESS REDUCTION TARGETS						
Measure	Target					
	Baseline 19/20	Year 1 21/22	Year 2 22/23	Year 3 23/24	Year 4 24/25	Year 5 25/26
Population Size Targets						
Total Number of People Experiencing Homelessness (PIT)	2,704	3,623	3,218	2,696	2,164	1,297
By County						
Monterey County	2,422	3,245	2,882	2,414	1,938	1,162
San Benito County	282	378	336	282	226	135

System and Project Performance Targets

To accomplish this level of success in reducing homelessness will require significant and sustained improvement in the ability of the homelessness response system to provide housing to people who experience homelessness. Achieving this 50% reduction will require that the CoC, counties, cities, and other funders set performance targets and work collaboratively with provider partners to ensure targets are met. The table below shows the targets set for each across three key measures: (1) entries from literal homelessness, which measures whether the system is accessible to people who have the greatest needs; (2) length of stay in programs, which measures how quickly programs in the system assist people to address their service and housing needs; and (3) rate of exit to permanent housing, which measures how effectively programs are supporting participants to secure safe and stable housing when they leave the system.

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE TARGETS

Measure	Target					
	Baseline 19/20	Year 1 21/22	Year 2 22/23	Year 3 23/24	Year 4 24/25	Year 5 25/26
Entries from Literal Homelessness (% of Households)						
Emergency Shelter	78%	78%	80%	80%	85%	85%
Transitional Housing	66%	75%	80%	85%	90%	95%
Rapid Rehousing	73%	80%	85%	85%	90%	95%
Length of Stay (Days)						
Emergency Shelter	51	51	51	45	40	35
Transitional Housing	300	300	300	275	215	160
Rapid Rehousing	170	170	170	150	135	120
Exit Rate to Permanent Housing (% of Households)						
Emergency Shelter	12%	15%	25%	30%	40%	50%
Transitional Housing	70%	75%	80%	85%	90%	90%
Rapid Rehousing	55%	60%	65%	75%	80%	90%

Housing **Targets**

Meeting the ambitious performance targets in the table above will mean that the homelessness response system overall must substantially increase the number of people who experience homelessness who secure a safe and stable housing placement on an annual basis. The table below provides targets over the five-year term of the plan relating to number of housing placements. The top of the table shows that to reach the overall goal of a 50% reduction in homelessness, by year 5 the system needs to have the capacity to house 2,929 households per year. Some of these housing placements can be achieved through use of the existing housing inventory, but some will need to come from newly constructed units. The bottom part of the table provides targets for the development of new permanent supportive and extremely low income (ELI) affordable units, broken out for each county.

HOUSING TARGETS					
Measure	**Target**				
	Year 1 21/22	**Year 2 22/23**	**Year 3 23/24**	**Year 4 24/25**	**Year 5 25/26**
System Permanent Housing Needs (Number of Households)					
HHs Needing a Permanent Housing Placement	1,339	1,760	2,046	2,482	2,929
HHs Housed Using Existing RRH & PSH	819	819	819	1,042	1,042
HHs Housed Using Additional Placements	520	941	1,227	1,440	1,887
Additional Housing Placement Targets (Number of Households)					
Newly constructed PSH and ELI affordable units	200	300	400	500	500
Use of existing inventory (housing subsidies, shared housing, housing problem solving, housing navigation, property owner engagement, etc.)	320	641	827	940	1,387
New Construction Targets by County (Number of Units)					
Monterey County	180	270	360	450	450
San Benito County	20	30	40	50	50

D. STRATEGIES TO ACCOMPLISH GOALS

This section outlines the high-level strategies that the Leadership Council, CHSP, counties, cities, funders, providers, and other key stakeholders will deploy over the next five years to achieve the goals set forth in the Plan. These strategies apply to all populations of people experiencing homelessness and all parts of the region. The next section articulates specific strategies for priority subpopulations that have been identified as having the greatest need for assistance from the homelessness response system.

Strategy Area 1: Increase Participation in Homelessness Solutions by Leaders and Key Stakeholders from Across the Region

This strategy area reflects the community's desire to develop and embrace a regionwide vision for reducing homelessness that is informed by data and equity considerations. It reflects a need for improved coordination across jurisdictions to inform housing and services

priorities and investment strategies. It also encompasses the goal of engaging and involving all jurisdictions and stakeholders in being part of the effort.

Key Strategies:

1.1   **Adopt Five-Year Plan.** Use this Five-Year Plan to establish a region-wide vision and action plan that includes practical ways that all stakeholders and community members can contribute to positive solutions to reduce homelessness.

1.2   **Invest Strategically.** Develop a data-informed and strategic regional investment strategy and provide actionable path for jurisdictions to align funding to achieve goals set out in this Five-Year Plan. Develop an annual investment report summarizing how homelessness response system resources were invested and the results.

1.3   **Build Political Will for Affordable Housing.** Maximize regional political and public support for affordable housing development as a solution to homelessness, with particular focus on housing for low-income workers, extremely low income (ELI) units, and permanent supportive housing.

1.4   **Include People with Lived Experience of Homelessness.** Create structures and processes to more meaningfully involve people who are experiencing homelessness in decision-making about the design, implementation, and evaluation of the homelessness response system.

1.5   **Engage New Partners.** Engage with jurisdictions, systems, and sectors not currently represented to participate in the Leadership Council or other CoC bodies. Educate and inform partners on how they can be part of the regional solution to homelessness, including practical strategies and activities for smaller and medium sized jurisdictions.

1.6   **Center Equity.** Apply an equity lens to all regional decision-making regarding homelessness. Identify and address racial and ethnic disparities throughout the system.

Strategy Area 2: Improve the Performance of the Homelessness Response System

This strategy area articulates the community's commitment to creating a system that is highly effective at providing housing pathways for people experiencing homelessness. These strategies include establishing and measuring progress towards program and system goals, refining program and system strategies towards best practices, and strategically expanding housing and services inventory.

Key Strategies:

2.1   **Prevent Homelessness.** Prevent homelessness through adoption of problem solving (also known as diversion or rapid resolution) and targeted prevention strategies system-wide (accessible in all regions of the community). Effective homelessness prevention and shelter diversion activities are rooted in strengths-based, trauma-informed approaches, and creative problem solving. These practices assist people seeking services in exploring all the potential resources available to resolve their housing crisis and supporting solutions outside of shelter or the resources of the homelessness response system.

2.2   **Enrich and Expand Mobile Outreach Services.** Provide solutions-oriented mobile outreach to all geographic areas of the region, with particular focus on underserved areas (South Monterey County and San Benito County). Equip and train outreach teams to engage and build relationships with people who are unsheltered and to provide practical support to access shelter, housing, and service connections.

2.3   **Provide Low Barrier Shelter.** Maintain the region's inventory of accessible, low barrier, and service-rich emergency shelter. Strategically expand temporary housing inventory (shelter and transitional housing) to fill identified gaps (e.g., for underserved geographic areas or special populations).

2.4   **Expand Housing Solutions.** Increase the capacity of the homelessness response system to provide "exits" from homelessness through:

- Expanding services and supports to help people secure existing units (e.g., housing focused case management, navigation services, property owner outreach and education, refinement of the CARS system).

- Expanded availability of rental assistance (e.g., shallow subsidies, rapid rehousing, tenant-based permanent supportive housing, and housing choice vouchers)

- Building more permanent supportive housing and ELI affordable housing (see Section above for specific targets).

Specific targets for numbers of exits, including goals for new units, are detailed in the Section III.C., above.

2.5 **Support People to Retain Housing.** Provide robust housing retention support to ensure people entering housing do not return to homelessness, with a particular focus on people who need assistance to manage behavioral health and health conditions.

2.6 **Embrace Housing First.** Strengthen understanding of and alignment to Housing First principles throughout the system. Adopt system policies and standards that incorporate housing first principles. Provide training and capacity to providers and other partners to support implementation.

2.7 **Implement Performance Measurement and Continuous Quality Improvement.** Adopt and implement performance measures for emergency shelters, transitional housing, and rapid re-housing over a five-year period. Continuously evaluate and report on system results, including assessment of equity in access and outcomes.

Strategy Area 3: Expand Service-Oriented Responses to Unsheltered Homelessness

This strategy area reflects the community's investment in responding to feedback from people experiencing homelessness about their needs and goals, with a focus on increasing the services available to address the immediate health and safety needs of people who are unsheltered.

Key Strategies:

3.1 **Provide Services and Supports to Encampments.** Prioritize the provision of services as a key element of the response to encampments, including offering:

- Hygiene and safety (e.g., food, showers, sinks, toilets, trash removal)

- Access to needed services (e.g., case management, mental health services, linkages to services, shelter connections, housing navigation, and other supports)

3.2 **Build Collaborative Relationships with People in Encampments.** Include people living in encampments in planning and decision-making about how to meet their needs.

3.3 **Provide Safe, Temporary Locations for People to Stay.** Expand availability of temporary places where unsheltered people and the public can both be safe and healthy (e.g., approved parking sites, safe sleeping spaces).

3.4 **Connect Unsheltered People to Housing.** In addition to meeting basic needs, ensure that crisis/emergency and temporary services and programs that target unsheltered people provide connections to services and/or pathways to housing.

E. SPECIFIC STRATEGIES FOR PRIORITY SUBPOPULATIONS

Within the population of people who experience homelessness in Monterey and San Benito Counties, there are several subpopulations that are most critically in need of focused attention, due to having particularly complex needs and challenges to securing safe and stable housing. This section describes four priority subpopulations and identifies the primary strategies the CoC Leadership Council, CHSP, counties, cities, funders, providers, and other key stakeholders will deploy to address their needs.

1. People Experiencing Chronic Homelessness

A single individual or family is considered to be experiencing chronic homelessness if there is an adult in the household that has a disabling condition and has been continuously homeless for more than a year and/or has experienced four or more episodes of homelessness in three years. The 2019 PIT count found there were 562 people who were chronically homeless in Monterey County (23% of the population) and 79 in San Benito County (28% of the population). People in this subpopulation are particularly vulnerable due to their disabilities and extended length of time spent living outside. Many are frequent users of emergency services and have many interactions with law enforcement.

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Strategies to Provide Solutions for People Experiencing Chronic Homelessness

Securing and sustaining stable housing is particularly challenging for people who have experienced chronic homelessness. System level strategies to provide solutions for this population include:

- Expanding the region's inventory of permanent supportive housing, with a particular focus on construction of new PSH units. This will include leveraging existing and new State financing sources, including No Place Like Home (NPLH), the Homekey program, and other new funding through the California Comeback Plan.

- Continuing to build partnerships between the Continuum of Care/homelessness response system and the health and behavioral health systems in both Monterey and San Benito Counties, to provide integrated, interdisciplinary care to address the multiple and complex needs and problems faced by people who experience chronic homelessness. Expanding permanent supportive housing will require leveraging State Medicaid funds to pair health and behavioral health services with housing, such as through Whole Person Care. This strategy area will also focus on building the capacity of community-based agencies and supportive housing providers to bill Medicaid/Medi-Cal for the services people need to achieve health and stability.

- Investing in programs that connect people who are chronically homelessness with the public benefits for which they are eligible, such as the federally sponsored SOAR (SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access and Recovery) Project, a proven approach to assisting homeless people with disabilities to access SSI/SSDI benefits.

2. Youth

At the time of the 2019 PIT count, unaccompanied youth under the age of 25 made up 13% of the population of people experiencing homelessness in Monterey and San Benito Counties. Of those young people, 91% were unsheltered. At the time of this Plan's development, there was only one housing program in the CoC specifically serving young adults. Young people often prefer and feel safer in programs geared towards their age range where services are tailored towards their developmental phase.

With extensive feedback from community stakeholders and young people with lived experience of homelessness, the CoC has been working towards developing a homelessness response system that can better address the needs of unaccompanied young people. Between 2020 and 2021, Focus Strategies supported the CoC in completing a needs assessment exploring the scope and experiences of homelessness among youth in Monterey and San Benito Counties as well as the strengths and gaps of the existing homelessness response service network, and in developing a vision for a youth-tailored homelessness response system. These processes provided foundational understanding and goals for the community's Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project (YHDP) application submitted in July 2021.

Strategies to Provide Solutions for Youth

Key system level strategies to provide solutions for unaccompanied youth and young adults include:

- Adopting and implementing recommended refinements to the Coordinated Access and Referral System (CARS) process to respond to the specific needs of youth and young adults. Recommended refinements include ensuring young people have a consistent point of contact at a service provider agency throughout the CARS process, revising the phased assessment process to integrate problem solving and to include more strengths-based and equity-focused questions, and updating the prioritization process to improve the rates of referral for young people to available housing resources.

- Expanding the inventory of youth-tailored housing options to include multiple types of housing with varying levels of services intensity and programs in multiple regions of the CoC. This includes youth-specific rapid rehousing programs and permanent supportive housing, as well as innovative models that

may be pursued if the community is a YHDP grantee. Innovative models may include host homes, joint transitional housing-rapid rehousing programs, or extended rapid rehousing programs with service intensity flexibility.

- Increasing coordination between homelessness response system and systems of care that young people at-risk of and experiencing homelessness frequently engage. This includes developing and implementing strategies with the child welfare system, juvenile and adult justice systems, education system, and behavioral health system to identify and coordinate specific roles for each system in homelessness prevention and response.

3. People who are Undocumented

Both Monterey and San Benito Counties have significant populations of immigrants and agricultural workers, some of whom are undocumented. While exact numbers are difficult to compile, service providers report that many people experiencing homelessness in the region lack legal immigration status. Undocumented people experiencing homelessness include both single individuals as well as families with children. These households face particularly severe barriers to securing safe and stable housing, including difficulties securing regular employment, non-eligibility for federally funded housing and benefits programs, identification and paperwork requirements for accessing private market housing, and language barriers.

Strategies to Provide Solutions for People who are Undocumented

Key system level strategies for these households include:

- Removing barriers to temporary housing, including both single adult and family shelter and transitional housing programs.

- Identifying local and flexible sources of funding to provide housing subsidies for this population.

- Continuing to expand the supply of farmworker housing in the community.

- Strengthening connections between the homelessness response system and programs that provide legal and other services for immigrants.

4. Reentry Population

In the 2019 PIT count, 18% of people experiencing homelessness in Monterey County and 12% in San Benito County reported prior involvement with the criminal justice system. Like many communities in California, Monterey and San Benito Counties have a significant number of people who experience homelessness upon their release from jail or prison. At the same time, people who are unsheltered are at high risk of entering or returning to the criminal justice system. Breaking this cycle is particularly challenging due to the many housing barriers experienced by people who have criminal justice involvement, including difficulty securing employment, restrictions on accessing federal funded housing and benefits programs, stigma and discrimination, and in many cases disabling behavioral health conditions.

Strategies to Provide Solutions for Reentry Population

Key strategies the CoC and its partners will deploy to help reduce homelessness for this subpopulation include:

- Continuing to partner with the Monterey County and San Benito County Sheriff's and Probation Departments to expand and enrich pre-release services, with a particular focus on housing planning.

- Scaling up housing-focused re-entry programs targeted to individuals with prior histories of homelessness, providing support with housing search, housing subsidies, and connection to employment services.

- Developing criminal justice diversion strategies and incarceration alternatives for people experiencing homelessness (e.g., drug courts or homeless courts), to prevent people experiencing homelessness from entering jail whenever possible.

- Lowering barriers to shelter access and ensuring there is an adequate inventory of shelter beds that can accept people with felony convictions, including sex offenders.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

## A. DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING ANNUAL ACTION PLANS

This plan sets out a set of five-year goals and performance targets and outlines the broad strategies that the community will implement to achieve the targets. To operationalize these strategies, the Funding Committee of the Leadership Council will be responsible for developing annual action plans each year and aligning available funding to support the activities identified in each year's plan. The Action Plan for Year One (July 2021 to June 2022) is included in the next Section.

B. TRACKING AND REPORTING ON RESULTS

Each year, CHSP will track and report on progress in meeting the goals and targets outlined in this Plan, including:

1. Change in size of population experiencing homelessness (as measured by PIT counts or other methodology)
2. Change in numbers of people served in the homelessness response system annually (from HMIS)
3. System and program performance in relation to established targets:
   a. Entries from homelessness
   b. Length of stay in programs
   c. Exit to permanent housing
4. Increase in system "exits" in relation to established targets
5. Development of new housing units in relation to established targets
6. Any other measures identified in the Annual Action Plan

In addition, progress in completing activities set out in the Annual Action Plan will also be tracked and reported.
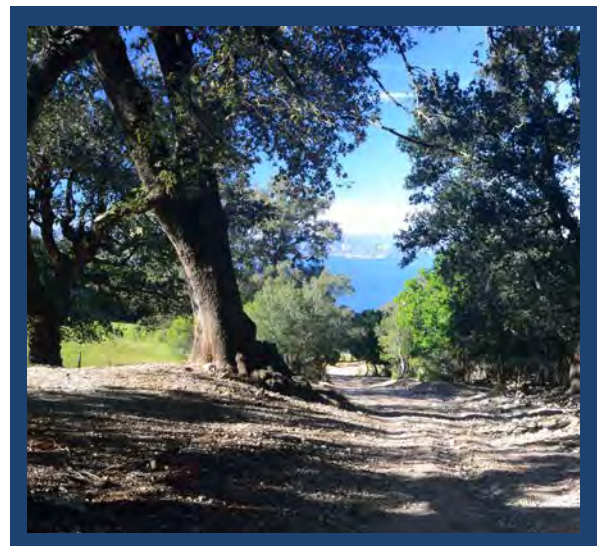
V. YEAR ONE ACTION PLAN

The tables below present the specific action steps that will be implemented in Year One of this Five-Year Plan to achieve the identified goals and targets.

	Action/Activity	Lead Entity	Supporting Entities	Begin	End	Funding Source	Strategy
	Year One Action Plan: July 2021 to June 2022						
	STRATEGY AREA 1: Increase Participation in Homelessness Solutions by Leaders and Key Stakeholders from Across the Region						
a	Organize a regional convening to launch the LMH Five-Year Plan	CHSP	MC, SBC, CoS	Aug. 2021	Sept. 2021	N/A	1.1
b	Present LMH Five-Year Plan to jurisdictions for adoption (Counties, cities)	CHSP	LC Members	Aug. 2021	Dec. 2021	N/A	1.1
c	Following the launch, meet with stakeholders not currently engaged in homelessness solutions to orient them to the plan and identify how they can support implementation, including: criminal justice system reps (probation, courts), healthcare (hospitals, clinics, residential facilities, large employers)	CHSP	LC Members	Oct. 2021	Dec. 2021	N/A	1.5
d	Develop coordinated investment plan for FY 2021-2022 homelessness assistance funding from State and federal sources; present to the community	LC Funding Committee	CHSP, MC, SBC, CoS	July 2021	Aug. 2021	TBD	1.2
e	Convene affordable housing working group to begin developing a regional strategy to increase production, including revisiting possibility for a Housing Trust Fund or bond measure, recruiting developers to the region, and exploring innovative housing types such as modular units, tiny homes, and ADUs	LC Housing Pipeline Committee	CHSP, MC, SBC, CoS	Jan. 2022	Ongoing	TBD	1.3

STRATEGY AREA 1: Increase Participation in Homelessness Solutions by Leaders and Key Stakeholders from Across the Region

	Action/Activity	Lead Entity	Supporting Entities	Begin	End	Funding Source	Strategy
f	Develop plan to launch a Lived Experience Advisory Board, modeled after the Youth Advisory Board	CHSP	Work group of people with lived experience	Jan. 2022	June 2022	TBD	1.4
g	Update data on race and ethnicity in homelessness response system services, convene CoC work group to advance racial equity in the homelessness response system	CHSP	Work group of CoC members	Jan. 2022	June 2022	TBD	1.6

STRATEGY AREA 2: Improve the Performance of the Homelessness Response System

	Action/Activity	Lead Entity	Supporting Entities	Begin	End	Funding Source	Strategy
a	Develop pilot project to implement targeted prevention and diversion; identify funding sources to scale up	CHSP	Prevention partners	Jan. 2022	June 2022	TBD	2.1
b	Re-establish CORE outreach working group to develop strategy for coordinated outreach and streamlined access to shelter and navigation centers	CHSP	Outreach partners	Oct. 2021	Ongoing	TBD	2.2
c	Increase investment in rapid rehousing, navigation services, housing focused case management, and other interventions to improve the ability of emergency shelters to help participants secure housing upon exit	CHSP/CoS	LC	July 2021	June 2022	ESG, others	2.4
d	Develop program to provide incentives to property owners to rent to people experiencing homelessness	CHSP	LC	TBD	TBD	TBD	2.4
e	Design and implement Coordinated Entry (CARS) system for youth to streamline access to housing for this population	CHSP	YAB, Youth system work group	July 2021	Dec. 2021	TBD	2.4
f	Secure opportunities to expand inventory of Housing Choice Vouchers, starting with the Emergency Housing Vouchers offered to the Housing Authority in May 2021	CHSP, MC, SBC	Housing Authority	July 2021	June 2022	EHV funding	2.4

STRATEGY AREA 2: Improve the Performance of the Homelessness Response System

	Action/Activity	Lead Entity	Supporting Entities	Begin	End	Funding Source	Strategy
g	Continue investing in acquisition and conversion of motels to provide permanent housing for people experiencing homelessness; apply for new Homekey program funding available from the State of CA for projects in Salinas and King City (due August 2021).	CHSP, CoS, MC	LC	July 2021	Aug. 2021	Homekey	2.4
h	Establish policies relating to termination and exit protocols for CoC and ESG-funded housing programs	CHSP	Housing partners	Sept. 2021	Dec. 2021	TBD	2.5
i	Review and update existing CoC level operational standards for shelters, with a focus on alignment to Housing First principles (low barriers to entry, person centered policies); partner with large shelter operators to identify and implement changes to policies and practices to lower barriers to participation in shelter	CHSP	MC, SBC, CoS	Jan. 2022	June 2022	TBD	2.6
j	Explore providing storage and pet facilities at existing shelters	CHSP	MC, SBC, CoS	Jan. 2022	June 2022	TBD	2.3
k	Convene work group to explore feasibility of adding a small shelter in South County to address regional inequities in shelter access	CHSP, MC	South County cities	Jan. 2022	June 2022	TBD	2.3
l	Issue RFP for affordable family housing at 845 E. Laurel Drive	CoS	MC	TBD	TBD	TBD	2.4
m	Adopt performance targets for shelter, TH, RRH, and PSH from the Five-Year Plan and begin to integrate into RFPs, contracts, and other accountability measures	CHSP, MC, SBC, CoS, other funders	LC	July 2021	Dec. 2021	TBD	2.7
n	Develop HMIS reports to track and report on program and system outcomes, including progress in meeting performance targets as well as racial and ethnic disparities	CHSP	LC	Jan. 2022	Dec. 2022	TBD	2.7

STRATEGY AREA 3: Expand Service-Oriented Responses to Unsheltered Homelessness

	Action/Activity	Lead Entity	Supporting Entities	Begin	End	Funding Source	Strategy
a	Continue to expand and improve provision of basic needs to encampments (nutrition, health, hygiene, PPE, trash removal)	CoS, MC, SBC	CHSP	July 2021	June 2022	TBD	3.1
b	Continue to improve communication and collaboration with encampment residents by convening regular meetings with encampment leaders	CoS, MC	CHSP	July 2021	June 2022	TBD	3.2
c	Engage encampment leaders in plan for developing a Lived Experience Advisory Board (see above under Strategy 1)	CHSP	Work group of people with lived experience	Jan. 2022	June 2022	TBD	3.3
d	Develop communications materials to share with the community explaining the CoC's strategy on encampments, message that providing safe places for people to go is a responsibility for all jurisdictions	CHSP	CoS, MC, SBC	July 2021	Dec. 2021	TBD	3.3
e	Provide training and information to outreach teams to ensure they are equipped to provide people in encampments with connections to available services and supports as well as information about how to access available shelter and housing	MC, CoS, CHSP	TBD	July 2021	June 2022	TBD	3.4
f	Convene a working group including representation from Monterey County, San Benito County, city jurisdictions, and people with lived experience of homelessness to begin developing a common set of guidelines relating to encampment response	CHSP	Counties, cities, people with lived experience	Jan. 2022	June 2022	TBD	3.1

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS