

# 2019 - 2020 San Joaquin County Grand Jury



## Homelessness in San Joaquin County

### Building on a Foundation: Collaboration and Communication

#### Case #0119



## Summary

San Joaquin County, under the current Board of Supervisors, is leading the way in pursuing solutions to homelessness in the County. The cities of Stockton and Lodi are active participants in addressing homelessness and have joined with the County in its pursuit of solutions. These efforts are not readily apparent.

In July 2019, the San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors adopted a policy titled *Quality of Life* that established homelessness as an operational priority for all County departments. The Grand Jury evaluated how four departments (Health Care Services, Community Development, Sheriff's Office, and District Attorney's office) implemented the policy. The Grand Jury determined that all four departments are successfully implementing the policy.

The Grand Jury also evaluated how the City of Stockton implements its *Guiding Principles* established in 2017. The Grand Jury determined that Stockton abides by its principles, particularly in the last two years.

Tracy and Manteca have homeless task forces but have not joined with the combined efforts of San Joaquin County, Stockton, and Lodi in supporting the County position of Program Administrator for Homeless Initiatives to provide local leadership for the region. All seven cities have homelessness policies

Communication and collaboration have improved between the County, Stockton, and Lodi since the 2015-2016 Grand Jury published their report on homelessness. These actions resulted in a strong foundation that is likely to lead to continued collaboration and completion of successful projects in the future.

Among the Grand Jury recommendations are an easy-to-read website which would lead to a more-informed public on this topic of interest. Additional recommendations include:

- Petitioning the court to extend Homeless Court;
- Sheriff add four more deputies to the Community Car Program; and
- Cities of Tracy, Manteca, Lathrop, Ripon, and Escalon adopt the Program Administrator for Homeless Initiatives as the homeless coordinator for San Joaquin County.

## Glossary

- **CDD:** San Joaquin County Community Development Department; it serves as the fiscal agent for the administration of San Joaquin Continuum of Care ([SJCoC](#)) planning funds and project grants
- **HMIS:** Homeless Management Information System; a local information technology system used to collect client-level data and data on the provision of housing and services to homeless individuals and families and persons at risk of homelessness.
- **Housing First:** An evidence-based approach in which all people experiencing homelessness are believed to be housing ready and are provided with permanent housing immediately and with few to no preconditions, behavioral contingencies, or barriers. Housing First, consistent with

the US Housing and Urban Development Department, was signed into California law on September 29, 2016.

- **HUD:** U.S. Housing and Urban Development Department; a federal department that, as part of its mission, among other things administers homelessness grants.
- **LEAD:** Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion; a program that redirects individuals from criminal justice system involvement into community-based social, health, and behavioral services. The San Joaquin LEAD team consists of representatives from the Stockton Police Department, San Joaquin County District Attorney's Office, County Behavior Health Services, Community Medical Center, and the Public Defender's Office.
- **Plain Language:** Writing that is clear, concise, well-organized, and follows other best practices appropriate to the subject or intended audience (Plain Writing Act of 2020, October 13, 2010).
- **SJCoC:** San Joaquin Continuum of Care; a local program required by HUD to provide leadership and effective stewardship of resources, as well as to facilitate community planning, design, and implementation of programs critical to ending homelessness in San Joaquin County.
- **Stockton PD:** Stockton Police Department.

## Background

The 2015-2016 San Joaquin County Grand Jury published *Homelessness in San Joaquin County: Time for Collaboration, Commitment, and Communication* (Case No. 1507) in June 2016.

Key findings of the 2015-2016 Grand Jury investigation report on homelessness cited above (#1507) include:

- San Joaquin County does not have a single, clearly defined strategic plan to address homelessness;
- collaboration and communication among Government and private agencies are virtually nonexistent;
- there are many governmental, private, and non-profit agencies that strive to serve the homeless, but there is no leadership to focus all the parties involved; and
- the lack of leadership, communication, and collaboration indicates that addressing homelessness in the County has not been a major priority.

The 2015-2016 Grand Jury Report #1507 recommended that:

- county officials take the leadership role in creating a single, focused, and coherent strategic plan to address homelessness;
- the strategic plan contains measurable long-and short-term goals and objectives with an established timeline and an annual evaluation process;
- one individual within County government be appointed to oversee all matters related to the homeless: and

- the appointed individual described above would report directly to the County Administrator and have the authority, resources, and respect to bring together the necessary entities to develop the County's Strategic Plan on Homelessness.

Following the publication of the 2015-2016 Grand Jury report, the County Board of Supervisors in early 2017 adopted a policy known as the *Strategic Priorities on Homelessness for San Joaquin County*. Similar strategies were adopted by the City of Stockton in May of 2017 as the City's *Guiding Principles* ([Appendix A](#)). In 2018, the County Homeless Task Force transitioned to the San Joaquin Continuum of Care ([SJCoC](#)), a comprehensive coordinated homeless housing and services delivery system, as defined by the US Housing and Urban Development Department ([HUD](#)). In April 2018, the County selected a Program Administrator for Homeless Initiatives to act as the single point of contact for San Joaquin counties and cities. In early 2019, San Joaquin cities and county joined together under the leadership of the San Joaquin Continuum of Care to complete the most accurate Point in Time headcount of the unsheltered homeless to date for this region, with, after concerted effort, a 1000 percent increase in the number of volunteers. In June 2019, San Joaquin County adopted a new homelessness policy titled *Quality of Life - Addressing and Limiting the Impacts of Homelessness in San Joaquin County* ([Appendix B](#)).

The 2019-2020 Grand Jury investigated San Joaquin County and City of Stockton to determine what policy changes have been put in place after the 2015-2016 San Joaquin Grand Jury report, and whether the County and City of Stockton are implementing their policies (*Quality of Life Policy* and *Guiding Principles*, respectively). The 2019-2020 Grand Jury focused on Stockton because that is where the majority of the homeless population resides (San Joaquin Continuum of Care, Point in Time Count, 2019). The 2019-2020 Grand Jury also reviewed homelessness in the cities of Lodi, Tracy, Manteca, Lathrop, Ripon, and Escalon.

### **Reason for Investigation**

This investigation was initiated by the 2019-2020 San Joaquin Civil Grand Jury in response to a citizen complaint. Even though San Joaquin County has made efforts to address homelessness more remains to be done. The Grand Jury focused on how San Joaquin County and the seven cities addressed homelessness.

### **Method of Investigation**

The Grand Jury interviewed 11 key leaders involved in addressing homelessness in San Joaquin County. The interviewees represented governmental department heads as well as staff, appointed and elected officials, and non-profit volunteer groups. Tours included the Gospel Rescue Mission and Stockton Homeless Shelter.

The Grand Jury attended Board of Supervisors meetings (in person as well as streaming video) both current and past, as well as selected Stockton, Lodi, and Tracy City Council meetings. Additionally, the Grand Jury reviewed a variety of websites including those associated with San Joaquin County, all seven cities, and various nonprofit groups.

The Grand Jury surveyed each Department listed in Sections 1 through 4 and City of Stockton.

## Discussions, Findings, and Recommendations

### San Joaquin County

In 2015, San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors established the Homelessness Task Force consisting of local government leaders and non-profit service providers. On November 16, 2016, the Homelessness Task Force presented the *Homelessness Task Force 2015-2016 Annual Report* to the San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors at the *Special Evening Study Session on the Topic of Homelessness*. The *2015-2016 Annual Report* provided direction for the County to increase communication, forge collaborations and partnerships, produce efficiencies, maximize funding, and breakdown silos. The Homelessness Task Force merged with the San Joaquin Continuum of Care in January 2019.

In July 2019, the San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors adopted a new policy on homelessness. This policy, titled *Quality of Life - Addressing and Limiting the Impacts of Homelessness in San Joaquin County* (Appendix B) set homelessness as an operational priority for all County departments and identified nine activities as priorities for these departments within existing resources. Four departments were designated to lead the effort, namely 1) Health Care Services, 2) Community Development, 3) Sheriff's Office, and 4) District Attorney's office. In October 2019, the 2019-2020 Grand Jury surveyed each of the four designated leadership departments (referred to collectively in this report as the four Designated Lead Departments) asking how they implemented three tasks contained within the policy, as described below:

- 1) developing metrics to measure the services delivered and associated outcomes;
- 2) developing community outreach to foster input and dialog with the public; and
- 3) developing educational materials to assist residents, businesses, and the homeless.

Each department prioritized homelessness and has implemented the Quality of Life Policy. At the June 9, 2020 Board of Supervisors meeting, 22 Departments reported statistics regarding the number of engagements and encounters with the homeless population, totaling approximately 35,000 during Fiscal Year 19/20. This included encounters with the same individual interacting with multiple programs and departments. The County estimated that services provided for the sheltered and unsheltered homeless population totaled approximately \$34 million in Fiscal Year 19/20.

Below are results of the 2019-2020 Grand Jury's investigation of each department surveyed, staff interviews, and a review of publicly available documents. The actions described below are helpful in addressing and limiting the impacts of homelessness, but this information is not readily available nor commonly known.

#### 1.0 San Joaquin Health Care Services

The Health Care Services Agency provides leadership and oversight for seven divisions. These are:

- Behavioral Health Services;
- Mental Health;

- Public Guardian/Conservator;
- Substance Abuse;
- Emergency Medical Services;
- Public Health Services; and
- Veterans' Services.

These seven divisions regularly interact with patients or clients who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The Health Care Services Agency's mission is to provide quality care and services to residents of San Joaquin County and advocate for the comprehensive physical and psychological health needs of the disadvantaged, for good public health, and for accessible services for all.

### **Metrics and Data Collection**

The Health Care Services Agency collects metrics and data on the homeless population through its Whole Person Care Pilot program. Since its inception in November 2016, the San Joaquin Whole Person Care Pilot program has serviced approximately 1,200 individuals, of whom 1,125 individuals are homeless. San Joaquin is one of twenty-five counties that participate in this statewide program managed by the California Health Care Services. The statewide California Whole Person Care Pilot program is designed to improve the health outcomes of Medi-Cal beneficiaries who are high utilizers of the health care system but does not specify prioritization of the homeless population. Each County is allowed the flexibility to design its own program to address local needs and San Joaquin County elected to target Medi-Cal beneficiaries who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. People who are members of this population often have mental health or substance abuse disorders, and/or may have just been discharged from medical facilities or county jail. This population typically uses emergency rooms and inpatient hospital stays more frequently, and lacks the resources to maintain stable housing.

Health Care Services currently collects and tracks data such as basic demographics, housing status, substance abuse, veteran status, age, ethnicity, suicide risk assessment, recuperative care dates, and many others, as part of its Whole Person Care Pilot program. The Health Care Services staff are working to improve their data collection by integrating two databases that are currently independent of each other, the San Joaquin Community Health Information Exchange and the Homeless Management Information System ([HMIS](#)). The primary purpose of the Community Health Information Exchange database is to create a shared, continuous physician-established profile of each homeless individual seen by date, including medications and care provided. In contrast, the primary purpose of HMIS, which is required by HUD, is to collect unduplicated data on the extent of homelessness at the local level. Medical-related information such as clinic/office visits, diagnosis for mental health and substance abuse, laboratory information and medication information, all currently collected separately in the Community Health Information Exchange will be integrated with housing programs, shelter stays, veteran status, and additional outreach engagement information, currently collected through HMIS. Having a single database will result in increased efficiencies and more comprehensive data management.

The overarching vision of the Health Care Services Whole Person Care Pilot program is to build and sustain partnerships across the various publicly funded health care delivery systems and to develop infrastructure to share data between these systems. The goal is to provide efficient care-

management services in real time and to evaluate progress in improving the health of individuals as well as the overall homeless population. Accordingly, in the spring of 2019, Health Care Services implemented a cloud-based care management solution, which now manages all enrolled clients. The information (with the client's permission) can be accessed or amended by various county departments, health care entities, community-based organizations, and justice system partners working with these individuals.

In accordance with the *Quality of Life* Policy, Health Care Services was one of 22 county Departments that provided metrics collected on homeless individuals during Fiscal Year 19/20. This information was used to develop the 2020-2021 budget. Data compiled on engagements or encounters with homeless residents suggests that in many cases encounters are with the same homeless individuals, interacting with multiple programs and departments.

### **Fostering Input and Dialog with the Public Regarding Homelessness and Its Impacts**

The Director of Health Care Services participated in the interim governance committee that developed the Continuum of Care bylaws and the initial slate of officers. The Assistant Director is currently serving on the San Joaquin Continuum of Care Board of Directors and is leading the Agency's efforts to develop affordable housing under California's No Place Like Home program. The No Place Like Home program, signed into legislation in July 2016, dedicated up to \$2 billion in bond proceeds across California to invest in the development of permanent supportive housing for persons who require mental health services and are experiencing homelessness, chronic homelessness, or who are at risk of chronic homelessness.

Several Health Care Services staff participated on the San Joaquin Homelessness Task Force (2015 to 2019) that merged with the San Joaquin Continuum of Care. Several staff currently participate on the Encampment Response Team where they engage with homeless individuals before, during, and after any encampment cleanup process. More information on the Encampment Response Team is found in Section 5.0 of this report.

### **Educational Materials**

Health Care Services Agency provides information to the public through the Board of Supervisors in agenda items and presentations. The agency has also made presentations at San Joaquin Continuum of Care meetings and related subcommittees as well as at other community meetings but does not develop educational materials to assist residents and businesses in working with the homeless.

## **2.0 Community Development Department**

The San Joaquin County Neighborhood Preservation division within the Community Development Department ([CDD](#)) administers the County's U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grant programs and other state and federal grant programs. The CDD serves as the fiscal agent for the administration of San Joaquin Continuum of Care ([SJCoC](#)) planning funds and project grants. The CDD can be thought of as a pass-through department in which funds and grant monies flow from HUD through the Community Development Department and into various groups involved with homelessness (known in government parlance as "subrecipients").

### **Metrics and Data Collection**

Metrics and data on services provided to homeless individuals and families is captured in the Homeless Management Information System ([HMIS](#)) database, including those services provided by the County, cities, and non-profit organizations. In keeping with HUD's requirement for data entry, the Community Development Department requires all programs receiving HUD funds through the SJCoC to enter data into HMIS. This information is used within the County to measure services delivered and outcomes relating to people experiencing homelessness in the county. Any grant recipient entity that receives funds through the SJCoC program and HUD's Emergency Solutions Grant is required to submit annual progress reports on their projects, including HMIS data, to San Joaquin County.

### **Input and Dialog with the Public Regarding Homelessness and Its Impacts**

The Community Development Department administers grants for the Emergency Solutions Grant program and San Joaquin Continuum of Care, processes payments, maintains financial records, develops and executes subrecipient agreements, and monitors subrecipient's program(s). In keeping with their role as fiscal agent, CDD conducts public outreach regarding each HUD Notice of Funding Availability to help programs that are providing eligible services to apply and receive HUD funds. The CDD does not interact directly with the public, only indirectly through the San Joaquin Continuum of Care.

### **Educational Materials**

The CDD monitors subrecipients' programs receiving funding, and these subrecipients provide educational materials to their clients through outreach and emergency services. The CDD has no additional materials on homelessness other than those provided by San Joaquin Continuum of Care on the SJCoC website.

## **3.0 San Joaquin Sheriff's Office**

The San Joaquin County Sheriff's office is composed of six divisions including Custody, Investigation, Patrol, Professional Services, Unified Court Services, and Lathrop Police Services. The Sheriff's Office website states that they are "driven by goals to enhance the quality of life, investigating problems as well as incidents, seeking solutions, and fostering a sense of security in communities and individuals." The statement goes on to say that they "nurture public trust by holding ourselves to the highest standards of performance and ethics." The Sheriff's Office regularly comes in contact with members of the various homeless communities.



## Metrics and Data Collection

Metrics and data are collected by the Sheriff's Office when delivering services to homeless individuals or families by noting whenever a call involves or potentially involves a homeless person. Training bulletin SJSO TB 013-2019, issued in September 2019, provides guidance to sworn staff on how to properly document such contacts while responding to or investigating calls for service. When Dispatch enters calls for service into the system and there are indicators there may be a homeless component, the descriptor "homeless" is entered into the narrative/body of the call history. The responding deputy also notates the term "homeless" into his or her report, prior to closing out the cases. Thus, both Dispatch entering calls for service and the responding deputy are



*San Joaquin Sheriff's Lieutenant Joe Petrino stands amid trash strewn beneath the railroad bridge at a homeless encampment near the Mokelumne River when several deputies from the Sheriff's Office partnered with social services to offer help to the homeless.*

responsible for noting if a call might have a homeless component, reducing the chance that the homeless element of the call might not be noted. Crime Analysts manage the data as it relates to homeless contacts throughout the county including tracking dates, times, and locations. The Sheriff's Office uses this system to provide the number of homeless residents engaged by staff on request and can tell exactly how many calls for service were related to homelessness for any given time period. The Sheriff's Office had 2,412 calls for service during Fiscal Year 19/20 related to

homeless individuals, which represents 2.6% of 93,715 total citizen-initiated calls for patrol services.

The Community Car Program consists of four Deputy Sheriffs permanently assigned in patrol cars to unincorporated areas of the county. These four deputies serve as the Sheriff's Office homeless outreach team. Their responsibilities include locating potential homeless individuals and populations, making contact, establishing trust, and interviewing the individuals. This outreach is done on a regular basis to identify needs and create referrals to outside resources. The Program was suspended August 2019 due to lack of staffing and remained suspended for approximately one year. The Community Car Program is fully funded for Fiscal Year 20/21 and four deputies have been recently assigned back to the Program. It is the understanding of the Grand Jury that the Sheriff's Office has committed to assigning four additional deputies for a total of eight in the near future.

### **Input and Dialog with the Public Regarding Homelessness and Its Impacts**

The mission of the San Joaquin Sheriff's Office is to create and maintain partnerships with people in the communities they serve. The Sheriff's Office achieves this mission through contacts with the public while responding to calls for service and participating in various community events. Officers meet community members living in various homeless communities as well as neighboring residents when responding to calls for service. The Sheriff's Office receive numerous concerns from the public regarding issues associated with the homeless community. Additionally, the Sheriff's Office has opened and maintained communication with local area law enforcement. By doing so, they strive to create a collaborative approach and exchange effective techniques in maintaining a balance between the rights of the homeless and the rights of the residents in areas affected by actions of homeless individuals.

In addition to calls for service, representatives from the Sheriff's Office regularly attend Community Meetings, Multi-Agency Coordination group meetings, and Neighborhood Watch meetings throughout the county, where the topic of homelessness and associated blight is often discussed. The Sheriff's Office also responds to community requests to assist in conducting cleanups of encampments. The Sheriff's Office participates in coordinated responses from agencies located outside of the San Joaquin County Sheriff's jurisdiction.

The Custody Division of the Sheriff's Office provides programs to incarcerated persons with the goal of addressing underlying issues commonly associated with homelessness. The intent of these programs is to connect inmates who are eligible for release back into the community with resources that will increase their probability of success upon release, leading to a reduction in the number of released inmates who end up homeless.

### **Educational Materials**

Deputies responding with the Encampment Response Team distribute brochures that list local resources available to assist homeless individuals.

## **4.0 San Joaquin District Attorney's Office**

Homeless individuals are at disproportionate risk for crime victimization because they live outside the mainstream of services and supports. The San Joaquin District Attorney's office partners with the Family Justice Center to help victims of domestic violence, human trafficking, sexual assault, child abuse, and elder abuse. The Family Justice Center provides a range of support services for all crime victims, including a food pantry, clothing pantry, and linkages to emergency shelters, rapid re-housing, and specialty programs for women and children fleeing domestic violence. Recent data collection efforts include identifying homelessness and housing status of those individuals visiting and seeking services. The District Attorney's Office served 27 families through the Family Justice Center during the past 20 months.

The Neighborhood Deputy District Attorney program consists of three prosecutors dedicated to engaging partners within specific areas of San Joaquin County. They directly engage with citizens by participating at Business Watch meetings, Municipal Advisory Committee meetings and community events. They provide overall problem solving by connecting partners, such as the

Board of Supervisors, law enforcement agency representatives, and behavioral and mental health representatives.

The District Attorney's Office also partners with representatives from Stockton Police Department, County Behavioral Health Services, Community Medical Center, and the Public Defender's Office as part of a Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion team, or [LEAD](#). The LEAD program redirects

individuals from criminal justice system involvement into community-based social, health, and behavioral services. The goal of LEAD is to improve public safety and reduce recidivism by increasing the availability and use of social service resources while reducing costs to law enforcement agencies and courts stemming from repeated incarceration. The San Joaquin LEAD team meets bi-weekly, interacting with homeless individuals and connecting them to needed services. The goal is to take individuals through programs and services and then have them graduate. During LEAD meetings, each individual in the program is discussed by the team who then decides whether a) further engagement is best for the individual, b) the individual should be referred to other services, or c) the individual should be removed from the program. The team manages a group of approximately 25 to 30 individuals per month.



*Photo courtesy of The Record*

***San Joaquin District Attorney Tori Verber Salazar conducts outreach for coronavirus testing at a homeless encampment.***

### **Metrics and Data Collection**

The District Attorney's Office established metrics to measure interactions with homeless individuals. These include:

- Housing status of visitors to the Family Justice Center;
- Numbers of referrals to emergency shelters, transitional housing, or re-location support services;
- Housing status added to the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion database;
- Homeless status or transient status added as a flag on the charging sheets for the District Attorney's Office internal database; and
- Homeless or transient status for both charged and uncharged cases (pending addition to new prosecutorial case management system).

Additionally, a new data and reporting system currently under development will include tracking interactions and communication with residents and businesses. The District Attorney's Office collects data to capture an update for each LEAD program individual and to track their connectivity

to services such as housing, behavioral and mental health, and any other service suited to the needs of the specific individual participants.

The District Attorney's Office reported that 95 homeless individuals had felony arraignments during the fourth quarter of Fiscal Year 19/20, and that 143 homeless individuals had misdemeanor arraignments during that same quarter.

### **Input and Dialog with the Public Regarding Homelessness and Its Impacts**

The District Attorney's Office works with local elected officials, law enforcement, collaborative courts, public agencies, community and faith-based partners, business associations, municipal advisory groups, and the San Joaquin Continuum of Care to engage in public discourse associated with housing and homelessness. These efforts include talking with county residents, including those who are homeless, about solutions and strategies to address homelessness, and the negative impacts of homelessness on the quality of life in San Joaquin County. The District Attorney's Office perspective is that the best strategy for mitigating the negative consequences of homeless is using a Housing First approach ([see Glossary](#)). Accordingly, they:

- Actively participate in regular SJCoC general membership meetings, various committees, and other ad hoc discussions of its leadership group;
- Regularly participate in homeless encampment outreach and engagement;
- Provide a dedicated Deputy District Attorney to assist the Veterans' Court with case dismissal, clearance of fines and fees, and intensive engagement with veteran's services and programming to promote recovery and rehabilitation;
- Provide a dedicated Deputy District Attorney to work with substance abuse and/or repeat offenders through the Collaborative Court calendar process;
- Provide a range of diversion program pathways and alternatives to traditional prosecution with a focus on those who are homeless with mental/behavioral health concerns;
- Participate in events specifically focused on engaging residents and community members in a discussion of community concerns, which may range from services and programs for older adults to addressing school safety or homelessness; and
- Provide support to the Homeless Court to waive fines and fees for charges associated with homelessness to reduce barriers to housing support services.

Homeless Court was developed to assist the homeless community of San Joaquin County to clear up minor traffic and morals offenses. Bench warrants and failure-to-appear charges are also dealt with in Homeless Court. Individuals serve their sentences with volunteer work and attend programs set up by their shelter case workers. Homeless Court is held the last Friday of the month at St. Mary's Dining Room in Stockton, a familiar and safe environment to the local homeless community.

Homeless Court is important because homeless individuals often struggle with having transportation access and cannot make it to their court appearance. As a result, many end up with minor offences and warrants on their record. These in turn make it more difficult for the individuals to find employment. Homeless Court is offered only in Stockton. Homeless Court is not

offered in the outlying courts, despite being a primary policy recommendation included in the *Homelessness Task Force 2015-2016 Annual Report* (November 16, 2016).

The Neighborhood Deputy District Attorneys team attends between 12 to 15 regular standing meetings of local Business Watch groups and municipal advisory committees. The Neighborhood Deputy District Attorney prosecutors also handle the criminal cases arising from low-level offenses and crimes. This enables prosecutors to help homeless individuals get services.

### **Educational Materials**

The District Attorney's Office has various brochures and information available regarding services and interventions associated with the Family Justice Center, Victim's Services, and Domestic Violence. The Office reportedly plans to introduce a variety of different brochures and video engagement platforms for other subject matters in 2020.

Resource brochures and materials directly targeting services for homeless individuals are vetted and distributed by other county partners, including the Encampment Response Team and 211 San Joaquin County (a 24/7 county-wide information and referral service system).

### **Findings for Sections 1 through 4**

**F1.1** None of the four Designated Lead Departments has provided a [plain language](#) website that describes their efforts in addressing and limiting the impact of homelessness, leaving many San Joaquin residents with the false impression that the County and is doing little or nothing to address homelessness.

**F1.2** The Community Car Program adds value to the community by reducing response times for calls for service, supporting the Encampment Response Team, and limiting the impacts of homelessness in San Joaquin County.

**F1.3** Holding Homelessness Court only in Stockton denies access to many individuals and is inconsistent with the intent of the Quality of Life Policy, which is to address and limit the impacts of homelessness in San Joaquin County.

**F1.4** The four Designated Lead Departments are successfully prioritizing homelessness and implementing the Quality of Life Policy to address and limit the impacts of homelessness in San Joaquin County.

### **Recommendations for Sections 1 through 4**

**R1.1** By March 1, 2021, the San Joaquin Board of Supervisors develop and publish an easy-to-find, plain language website that includes a description of efforts made to address and limit the impacts of homelessness in San Joaquin County.

**R1.2** By October 1, 2020, the Sheriff's Office assign four additional deputies to the Community Car Program, for a total of eight deputies.

**R1.3** By March 1, 2021, County Board of Supervisors petition the court to expand the Homelessness Court to the Branch Courts, as recommended in the *Homelessness Task Force 2015-2016 Annual Report* (November 16, 2016).

## **5.0 Joint Efforts of the Designated Lead Departments**

The four Designated Lead Departments for the Quality of Life Policy (Health Care Services, Community Development, Sheriff's Office, and District Attorney's Office) primarily work independently of each other with a few notable exceptions where their missions overlap. These include working with the Program Administrator for Homeless Initiatives, working with the San Joaquin Continuum of Care, working together on the Encampment Response Team, and using Homeless Management Information System ([HMIS](#)).

### **Program Administrator for Homeless Initiatives**

One of the primary recommendations of the 2015-2016 Grand Jury 1507 report was for San Joaquin County to appoint a single individual within County government to oversee all matters related to the homeless. As stated in the 1507 Report, a designated leader is critical for homelessness strategies to succeed. The 2015-2016 Grand Jury envisioned that the leader's primary purpose would be to ensure effective coordination, cooperation, and communication among the County, cities, and all public and non-profit agencies that serve the County's homeless population. Accordingly, San Joaquin County established and filled the position of Program Administrator for Homeless Initiatives in April 2018 to serve as a liaison between the County, local jurisdictions, funding sources and various public and private agencies. Additional objectives and priorities regarding the Administrator include:

- Developing a County-wide strategy for reducing the impact of homelessness;
- Fostering collaboration between private and public agencies;
- Ensuring information regarding the number and demographic makeup of the homeless population is shared among agencies engaged in homelessness prevention; and
- Fostering public/private partnerships for the development of new strategies and enhancing existing programs to prevent homelessness before it occurs.

The Administrator has become the go-to County individual for homelessness, communicating with all levels of government and with non-profit organizations. For many, this is the first individual they turn to for needed information. The City of Stockton and the City of Lodi have both pledged financial support for the Administrator position (although it is currently funded through a grant). The Administrator reports directly to the County Administrator but there is no Department of Homeless Initiatives, no assigned administrative support, and no assigned staff.

## **San Joaquin Continuum of Care**

“Continuum of Care” is a national program developed by HUD in 1994 to promote community-wide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness. Almost every county in the United States has a Continuum of Care. According to HUD, the Continuum of Care Program is designed to:

- Promote community-wide planning and strategic use of resources to address homelessness;
- Improve coordination and integration with mainstream resources to address homelessness;
- Improve data collection and performance measurement; and
- Allow each community to tailor its programs to the particular strengths and challenges in assisting homeless individuals and families within that community.

As defined by HUD, a Continuum of Care is a regional or local planning body that coordinates housing and services funding for homeless families and individuals. HUD does not provide funding directly to the Continuum of Care but instead designates a “collaborative applicant.” For the San Joaquin Continuum of Care ([SJCoC](#)), the collaborative applicant is the San Joaquin County Community Development Department, which means that the County is the entity that applies for funds on behalf of the SJCoC. These funds, both federal and state, include HUD planning funds, the HUD Continuum of Care program, State Homelessness Emergency Aid Program, and the California Emergency Solutions and Housing Program.

The San Joaquin Continuum of Care is governed by a Board of Directors made up of participants from diverse backgrounds and geographic regions, including at least one member of the Board who is homeless or formerly homeless, and at least one member who represents an Emergency Solutions Grant recipient or subrecipient. Representatives from various non-profit agencies include:

- Ready to Work;
- Lodi Committee on Homelessness;
- Community Medical Centers;
- Central Valley Low Income Housing Authority Corporation;
- St. Mary’s Dining Room;
- Lutheran Social Services of Northern California;
- Gospel Center Rescue Mission; and
- Tracy Community Connections.

Representatives from local government include:

- City of Stockton;
- San Joaquin County Administrator’s Office;
- Housing Authority of the County of San Joaquin;
- San Joaquin County Health Care Services; and
- Manteca Police Department.

At the time of the 2015-2016 Grand Jury investigation, the San Joaquin Continuum of Care was located within the Community Development Department but did not have a significant leadership

role in the County and its stakeholder meetings were sparsely attended. In 2018, the SJCoC was redefined and reestablished as a volunteer-based organization. It was officially designated by the Board of Supervisors as the county lead organization in early 2019. In May and October of 2019, it was formally adopted by the cities of Stockton and Lodi, respectively, as the primary organization through which the County and cities work to develop solutions to homelessness. The five non-entitlement cities of Tracy, Manteca, Lathrop, Ripon and Escalon have not adopted the SJCoC as the homelessness leader.

The full membership of the San Joaquin Continuum of Care meets every other month and, in order to accommodate the large number of attendees, recently moved their meetings to the Civic Memorial Auditorium in downtown Stockton. Additional meetings of the SJCoC include Board of Director's meetings (bimonthly) and standing committee meetings, which vary, with each committee setting its own schedule from every two weeks to monthly, as needed. The SJCoC has several standing committees that work on various responsibilities and aspects of the organization. Volunteers interested in helping SJCoC are encouraged to apply.

As recommended in the Grand Jury 2015-2016 report, the San Joaquin Continuum of Care successfully completed the *2020 San Joaquin Strategic Plan: Community Response to Homelessness* (hereafter referred to as the *Strategic Plan*). The *Strategic Plan* includes the following priorities:

- Establish a coordinated and engaged regional system;
- Increase access and reduce barriers to homeless crisis response services; and
- Ensure households experiencing homelessness have access to affordable and sustainable permanent housing.

The *Strategic Plan* will inform city and county decisions and result in a shared vision across the entire county with common goals and strategies. The *Strategic Plan* emphasizes the need for a collaborative approach to develop a formal coordinated system that functions throughout the San Joaquin community. The *Strategic Plan* also stresses the need to coordinate key resources across all sectors of the County, with an emphasis on creating meaningful solutions rather than simply addressing symptoms.

### **Encampment Response Team**

The Encampment Response Team (ERT) is a multi-agency effort that was formed in April of 2019 as part of the County's strategy to address homelessness in the unincorporated part of the County. The intent is to divert homeless individuals from the criminal justice system and help them back on their feet while protecting human health and the environment. Three of the four designated Lead Departments for the Quality of Life Policy participate in the ERT, along with several other departments including Environmental Health, Public Works, County Administrator's Office, General Services, Parks and Recreation, Animal Services, and County Counsel.

The CDD maintains a master list of homeless encampments within the County derived from citizen complaints and reports from County staff. Health Care Services staff visit homeless encampments before ERT notifies the homeless individuals that there is an impending clean-up/closure. Additionally, Health Care Services staff return to the encampment site to further engage with occupants after the notice of an impending clean-up/closure has been posted, and again at the



time of closure. Sheriff's Office staff provide security during outreach and closure/cleanup efforts with other County Departments, making sure team members are safe and providing law enforcement if necessary.

Health Care Services, Community Development Department, and Sheriff's Office staff attend weekly ERT meetings to review encampments and determine the best course of action to protect public health, safety and welfare. After the determination to close and/or clean the encampment is made, social service members of the ERT mobilize an outreach team to identify and engage the occupants of the encampment, with a goal to connect the occupants with services tailored to their unique needs. The ERT developed a pamphlet identifying community resources and provides the address and phone numbers including quick references such as hotlines, family services, healthcare providers, mental wellness providers, community centers, veteran's assistance programs, shelters, food banks, and hot meals. ERT Team participants provide this pamphlet to occupants of any encampment subject to clean-up or closure by the ERT in the days before any actions are being undertaken. Behavioral Health Services and Public Health Services staff are expected to return to the encampment site to further engage with occupants both after the Encampment Response Team has posted notice of an impending clean-up/closure, and also at the time of closure.

### **Homeless Management Information System**

The San Joaquin Continuum of Care designated the Central Valley Low Income Housing Corporation as the Administrator of the Homeless Management Information System ([HMIS](#)). HMIS is a database designed to collect information regarding housing and services to homeless individuals and families and persons at risk of homelessness. HUD requires HMIS to comply with HUD's data collection, management, and reporting standards. The SJCoC receives an annual grant from HUD to operate the HMIS. Every individual that works with the homeless, both local government staff and non-profit workers, are expected to upload data into HMIS following their encounter to ensure accurate tracking. However, due to the inherent difficulty of tracking the ever-shifting homeless population, data may be uploaded incompletely. Thus, accurate data entry is paramount as underreporting of homeless numbers could negatively impact the County's ability to apply for and receive funds.

The nexus between HMIS and San Joaquin County government is that the Community Development Department requires all programs receiving HUD funds through the SJCoC to enter data into HMIS. Additionally, Health Care Services relies on HMIS for metrics and data collection. Finally, the ERT (which includes Health Care Services, Community Development Department, and Sheriff's Office) reviews HMIS data prior to reaching a decision to close an encampment.

## **Findings**

**F2.1** One staff person is not sufficient to ensure all needs within the county are met.

**F2.2** The revised San Joaquin Continuum of Care has increased collaboration between the County, the cities, and non-profit organizations, helping to improve services for the homeless.

## Recommendations

**R2.1** By December 30, 2020, the County Board of Supervisors complete an analysis to determine if additional staff is needed for the Program Administrator for Homeless Initiatives.

### Cities of San Joaquin County

The 2019-2020 Grand Jury reviewed the activities of the seven incorporated cities of San Joaquin County with respect to their approach to homelessness. The cities of Stockton and Lodi, unlike the other five cities in the county, are entitlement cities that work closely with the San Joaquin Community Development Department in procuring grants to assist the Homeless. Entitlement cities receive their own funding from HUD annually to combat homelessness or potential homelessness. HUD provides annual grants to entitlement cities on a formula basis, with the intent of developing viable urban communities by providing a) decent housing, b) a suitable living environment, and c) expanding economic opportunities for low- and moderate-income persons. The Cities Tracy, Manteca, Lathrop, Ripon and Escalon are not entitlement cities. These cities, along with the unincorporated portions of San Joaquin County, are collectively considered the San Joaquin Urban County, and receive funds as one entity from the Federal government for housing, economic development, and community development activities.

## 6.0 Entitlement Cities

### Stockton

The City of Stockton has both the largest population in the County and the largest number of homeless individuals. Stockton's population was 312,697 as of 7/1/19 (US Census) and is the 13<sup>th</sup> largest city in the State. According to the SJCoC, there were 921 unsheltered homeless persons counted during the Point in Time Count.



*Hygiene Stations installed by City of Stockton during COVID-19*

Historically, the City of Stockton operated somewhat independently from the County in its approach to homelessness. In 2016, Stockton established the Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness. In May of 2017, Stockton developed its own set of principles similar to the principles adopted by San Joaquin County. However, in more recent years, the City of Stockton is showing

commitment to a collaborative approach by working collectively with the County in pursuing grants and opportunities. For example, in May of 2019, the City of Stockton formally adopted the SJCoC as the primary organization through which the County and cities work to develop solutions to

homelessness. Later, in September of 2019, the Stockton City Council approved a contract with Homebase, a nationally recognized expert on homelessness in the amount of \$90,365. The purpose of the contract was for Homebase to assist Stockton in applying for State Homeless, Assistance and Prevention program Funds as well as preparation of the 2020 San Joaquin *Strategic Plan* on behalf of the San Joaquin Continuum of Care. This action represents a new approach of the City and County working together to access HUD and State funds rather than separately. The City, in collaboration with the San Joaquin Continuum of Care and San Joaquin County hosted a neighborhood summit on December 4, 2019, designed to gather community input.

In a similar manner, the Stockton Police Department ([Stockton PD](#)) coordinates with other departments and agencies to address public health and safety concerns. Stockton PD works with public works and the Sheriff's office to coordinate encampment cleanups. Stockton PD also provides the California Department of Transportation (CalTrans) with assistance to address safety of roadway issues relating to homelessness. The Stockton PD has a Strategic Community Officers Unit composed of two sergeants and twelve officers who remove unsafe and unhealthy living conditions, and work with homeless individuals daily.



*Beds at Stockton Homeless Shelter for Men*

In 2019, the Stockton City Council allocated money for a mobile shower and wash station for unsheltered homeless. In April 2020, the City installed hygiene stations in five locations to help the homeless during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Additionally, Stockton used HUD funds, including Community Development Block Grant funds, to provide loans and grants for various public and private entities focused on ensuring decent, affordable housing and suitable living environments. These funds, amounting to approximately \$9.8 million during the last three years provided various organizations including:

- Stockton Shelter for the Homeless;
- St. Mary's Dining Hall;
- Habitat for Humanity; and
- Sierra Vista Project (a project which converted 67 barrack style units into 115 new, energy-efficient units, and ultimately, 215 new units).

Most recently, the City of Stockton and San Joaquin County contributed funds to assist the Gospel Rescue Mission to establish a COVID-19 positive quarantine home that opened June 3, 2020. Additionally, the City is working with the Stockton Shelter for the Homeless to address solutions for permanent/longer-term arrangements.

Although the City of Stockton has conducted work and activities regarding homelessness as described above, this information is not readily available. The City of Stockton website contains information about the Stockton homelessness policy but otherwise does not refer to homelessness.

## **Lodi**

Lodi's population was 67,586 as of 7/1/19 (US Census Bureau). According to the SJCoC, there were 139 unsheltered homeless counted during the Point in Time Count held during the last ten days of January 2019.

The City of Lodi has long been a local leader in addressing homelessness. In an article titled "How to Deal With Homeless" (3/7/19) the *Manteca Bulletin* called Lodi a role model for cities across the country and stated that members of Congress and the US Department of Housing and Urban Development are pointing to Lodi as an example of success. Lodi began addressing homelessness in the autumn of 2014 when the Lodi Police Department, Salvation Army, and the Lodi Community Foundation began initial discussions around the negative impact on public health and safety that was associated with the regular occurrence of noon-time meals being offered to homeless individuals in Lawrence Park. These representatives reached out to various religious organizations and formed the Committee on Homelessness in 2014. The Lodi City Council authorized the group to continue their informal investigation and to report back to the Council. This report, titled the *Homeless Solutions Report*, was adopted by the City Council in September 2015. The *Homeless Solutions Report* was based on four public meetings regarding homelessness including one specifically held to hear from homeless individuals, as well as research and field trips to other cities to see how they managed their homelessness problem. The *Homeless Solutions Report* resulted in several long-term and short-term strategies that continue to guide Lodi at present. The 2015-2016 Grand Jury acknowledged in their report the work done by Lodi and included the *Homeless Solutions Report* as an appendix.

In subsequent years, an extensive number of actions have been completed by the City of Lodi. A subset of these actions is included below:

- Funded various non-profit groups including the Salvation Army Emergency Shelter, Hope Harbor Family Homeless Shelter, and Lodi House acquisition and improvements;
- Added one full-time Transient Liaison Officer and one part-time Transient Liaison Officer;
- Created Transient Outreach teams to focus on quality of life issues;
- Involved City Attorney's Office, who dedicates 50 to 60 hours per month to homeless citations and prosecutions;
- Assisted the Committee on Homelessness in funding two work training programs to get homeless youth trained for a trade; and
- Helped lead the effort to improve the accuracy of the Point in Time Count in 2019, allowing the City of Lodi to better understand the demand for homeless services and to apply for funding.

These are only some of the actions the City of Lodi has undertaken. A more complete list of actions is available on the City of Lodi website under "What Has Lodi Done."

Demonstrating collaboration with San Joaquin County, the City of Lodi formally adopted the SJCoC as the primary organization through which the County and cities work to develop solutions to homelessness. Lodi also agreed to help fund the San Joaquin County Program Administrator for Homeless Initiatives. The City of Lodi is represented on the SJCoC by a member from the community-based organization Committee on Homelessness. Most recently, the City of Lodi successfully applied for Homeless Emergency Assistance Program funds to fund six small homes designed to provide transitional/permanent housing. This project is a collaborative project between the City of Lodi and the Housing Authority of San Joaquin County. Six pre-manufactured, unattached homes will be built with standard amenities such as refrigerator, stove, oven, kitchen sink, and bathroom with shower. Residents will be individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of being homeless.

## **7.0 Non-Entitlement Cities**

Tracy, Manteca, Lathrop, Ripon, and Escalon are all non-entitlement cities. All five have a homelessness policy, but they vary in degree. None of the five cities offered to contribute toward funding of the Program Administrator for Homeless Initiatives, nor have they adopted San Joaquin Continuum of Care as the primary organization through which San Joaquin County and the various cities work together to develop solutions to homelessness.

Tracy's population was 94,740 as of 7/1/19 (US Census Bureau). According to the SJCoC, there were 155 unsheltered homeless counted during the January 2019 Point in Time Count.

Tracy has a Homelessness Task Force made up of religious and nonprofit agencies. In April 2020, the City Council approved a Homeless Strategic Plan as a step toward creating a homeless shelter that will give people a place to go other than city streets and parks.

Manteca's population was 83,028 as of 7/1/19 (US Census Bureau). According to the SJCoC there were 218 unsheltered homeless counted during the 2019 Point in Time Count.

In December 2019, the City of Manteca built a temporary warming center for the homeless individuals in the city, consisting of tents and showers. Manteca has a Homeless Task Force and has made efforts to educate businesses on current Manteca municipal codes related to homelessness. The City provides information as to what efforts are being made to combat homelessness with a brochure to advise citizens on what to do if they encounter homeless individuals. Manteca Police Department has two police officer positions interacting directly with the homeless daily, and has a representative serving on the San Joaquin Continuum of Care Board of Directors.

### **Lathrop, Ripon, and Escalon**

According to the US Census Bureau, on July 1, 2019, Lathrop's population was 24,483, Ripon's population was 16,386, and Escalon's population was 7,574. According to the SJCoC, there were 14 unsheltered homeless individuals in Lathrop, seven unsheltered homeless individuals in Ripon, and four unsheltered homeless individuals in Escalon during the January 2019 Point in Time Count.

## Findings

**F3.1** Although many residents are interested in how homelessness is being managed, only the City of Lodi has published accomplishments in [plain language](#) on its website. This lack of readily available information makes it difficult for residents to understand what is being done to address homelessness.

**F3.2** There is a need for community-wide planning and strategic use of resources for homelessness involving all cities within the County.

**F3.3** It is important to establish a coordinated and regional system of care for the homeless community to improve services while addressing and limiting the impact of homelessness.

**F3.4** Publishing a plain-language website titled *What Lodi Has Done* for has made it easier for the public to readily understand the actions the city has taken to address homelessness.

**F3.5** The leadership shown recently by the City of Stockton in working with San Joaquin County towards a shared goal of obtaining funds will streamline processes and result in improved efficiency.

**F3.6** Stockton's leadership efforts in securing a regional strategic plan speaks to the current spirit of collaboration and communication between Stockton, San Joaquin County, and the San Joaquin Continuum of Care.

## Recommendations

**R3.1** By December 30, 2020, the Cities of Stockton, Tracy, Manteca, Lathrop, Ripon, and Escalon post plain language information on their website that outlines the actions each city has taken to address homelessness.

**R3.2** By December 30, 2020, the Cities of Tracy, Manteca, Lathrop, Ripon and Escalon adopt the San Joaquin Continuum of Care as the primary organization through which the County and cities work together to develop solutions to homelessness.

**R3.3** By December 30, 2020, the Cities of Tracy, Manteca, Lathrop, Ripon and Escalon in open forum officially acknowledge and support the Program Administrator for Homeless Initiatives position as the homeless coordinator for San Joaquin County.

## Conclusion

Collaboration and communication in addressing homelessness in San Joaquin County have improved considerably in the County since the Grand Jury 2015-2016 report. Greater effort must be made to ensure that all residents with questions as to what their city or county is doing about homelessness can find the information laid out on easily understood city and county websites.

San Joaquin County, under the current Board of Supervisors, is leading the way in pursuing solutions to homelessness in the region. The Cities of Stockton and Lodi are active participants in addressing homelessness and have joined with the County in its pursuit of solutions. Manteca, Tracy, Lathrop, Ripon, and Escalon have an opportunity to contribute towards a successful regional solution to homelessness. Working collaboratively with the San Joaquin Continuum of Care and the Program Administrator for Homeless Initiatives provides the best chance of success in developing solutions for homelessness.

In the four years since the 2015-2016 Grand Jury report, local government and non-profit service providers worked together to build a foundation by creating a strategic plan, by establishing a county wide inclusive Program Administrator for Homeless Initiatives, and by collectively applying for grants and funding. The post-COVID-19 future is uncertain with its impact on homelessness. However, a strong foundation was built with the work begun in October 2015 by creating the Homelessness Task Force and continuing to present day. Now is the time for San Joaquin County and its resident cities to work together with a coordinated and shared vision, to build on the foundation, and implement solutions to ending homelessness.

### **Response Requirements**

California Penal Code Sections 933 and 933.05 require that specific response to all findings and recommendations contained in this report be submitted to the Presiding Judge of the San Joaquin County Superior Court within 90 days of receipt of the report.

The San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors shall respond to all Findings and Recommendations, where applicable.

The San Joaquin District Attorney's Office shall respond to all Findings and Recommendations F1.1, F1.3, F1.4, and R1.1.

The San Joaquin Sheriff's Office shall respond to all Findings and Recommendations F1.1, F1.2, F1.4, and R1.2.

The Stockton City Council shall respond to all Findings and Recommendations F3.1, F3.5, F3.6, R3.1, R3.2, and R3.3.

The Lodi City Council shall respond to all Findings and Recommendations F3.1, F3.4, R3.1, R3.2, and R3.3.

The Tracy City Council shall respond to all Findings and Recommendations F3.1, R3.1, R3.2, and R3.3.

The Manteca City Council shall respond to all Findings and Recommendations F3.1, R3.1, R3.2, and R3.3.

The Lathrop City Council shall respond to all Findings and Recommendations F3.1, R3.1, R3.2, and R3.3.

The Ripon City Council shall respond to all Findings and Recommendations F3.1, R3.1, R3.2, and R3.3.

The Escalon City Council shall respond to all Findings and Recommendations F3.1, R3.1, R3.2, and R3.3.

Mail or hand-deliver a hard copy of the response to:

Honorable Xapuri B.Villapudua, Presiding  
San Joaquin County Superior Court  
180 E Weber Ave, Suite 1306J  
Stockton, California 95202

Also, please email a copy of the response to Ms. Trisa Martinez, Staff Secretary to the Grand Jury, at [grandjury@sjcourts.org](mailto:grandjury@sjcourts.org)

### Sources

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14. The Record. , 2020. *More Homeless in San Joaquin Getting COVID-19 Testing*. May 24. <https://bit.ly/2CRpcWI>
15. Superior Court of California, County of San Joaquin, Homeless Court pamphlet (<https://www.sjcourts.org/wp-content/uploads/HOMELESS-COURT-HANDOUT.pdf>)
16. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development ([www.hud.gov](http://www.hud.gov))



## Appendix A: City of Stockton Guiding Principles

### Homelessness

San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors established a county-wide Homelessness Task Force. The Task Force includes members from state and local government, homeless service providers, and various service organizations. Five Strategic Priorities for Homelessness were developed and adopted by the San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors, and the Board asked cities within the County to adopt a similar set of strategies.

On May 9, 2017, the Stockton City Council adopted the following Guiding Principles and action items that will provide the framework for making decisions related to homelessness:

#### Guiding Principle 1

Foster collaboration between private and public agencies to ensure that collection of data regarding the number and demographic makeup of the homeless population is accurate and shared among agencies engaged in homelessness prevention activities.

- Provide appropriate access to agencies working with the homeless population.
- Employ Department of Housing and Urban Development ([HUD](#)) best practices for accurate collection of homeless census and demographic information for input to the Homeless Management Information System ([HMIS](#)).
- All emergency homeless shelters, regardless of funding source, should actively participate in the HMIS and Coordinated Entry (CE) process operated by the San Joaquin County Continuum of Care.
- Point-in-Time (PIT) and HMIS data should be used to inform all County strategies and actions to address homelessness.
- The San Joaquin County Continuum of Care governance structure will be refined to promote greater collaboration and representation by agencies and organizations in the region that serve the homeless population and follow both best practices and HUD guidelines.
- The San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors will play an active role in the convening and functioning of the Continuum of Care by assigning a Supervisor each year.

#### Guiding Principle 2

Work collaboratively to reduce or eliminate upfront barriers to housing.

- Focus on assisting individuals and families to access and sustain permanent housing as quickly as possible.
- Promote links between law enforcement and service/housing/behavioral health providers.
- Seek out all available funds to enhance the “Housing First” model access to permanent housing.
- All transitional housing programs are reconfigured, when possible, to rapid rehousing or permanent supportive housing.

- All permanent housing projects for the homeless, regardless of funding source, shall actively participate in in the HMIS and CE processes.
- San Joaquin County, cities, agencies and the private sector should consider jointly funding and conducting a study on the feasibility of establishing an agency-specific or countywide Affordable Housing Trust Fund to provide financing in our region.

### **Guiding Principle 3**

Adopt unified discharge policies to prevent individuals from being discharged into homelessness

- All institutions, including those of the criminal justice and foster care systems, health care, and mental health care facilities, non-profit/profit operated facilities, should adopt and implement comprehensive discharge policies that provide information on services available to avoid discharge into homelessness.
- All law enforcement agencies should participate in the development of and shall adopt, a uniform Restorative Policing model to establish permanent, cooperative links with homeless service and housing providers, mental health, substance abuse, and other community experts to best address the needs of homeless individuals encountered during their enforcement of law.

### **Guiding Principle 4**

Adopt a “No Wrong Door” approach, wherein the homeless or individuals facing homelessness can receive information regarding available services regardless of which agency they contact.

- Provide staff with tools and resources necessary to connect individuals with appropriate services and housing assistance.
- Utilize 2-1-1 system to identify and connect individuals with appropriate service.

### **Guiding Principle 5**

Foster public/private partnerships for the development of new strategies and the enhancement of existing programs to prevent homelessness before it occurs.

- Increase affordable housing in the region.
- Bring more jobs to the region through ongoing economic development efforts.
- Seek funding opportunities and relationships for all aspects of the City’s homeless population

## **Appendix B: San Joaquin County Policy**

### **Quality of Life – Addressing and Limiting the Impact of Homelessness in San Joaquin County**

As part of the 2019-2020 Final Budget adoption, the San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors established homelessness as an operational priority for all County Departments. Homelessness affects everyone, regardless of socio-economics. San Joaquin County is committed to developing and implementing solutions to this pervasive problem. Success depends upon the involvement of the entire community, a community that values responsibility and accountability.

To address and limit the impacts of homelessness in San Joaquin County, the Board of Supervisors hereby identifies the following activities to become departmental priorities within existing resources:

- Consistent with Constitutional limitations, exercise authority and discretion in the application of all laws enacted to protect the health, safety and welfare of all County Residents
- Focus on the impacts of homelessness (e.g. services provided by the County Encampment Response Team pursuant to the County Encampment Management and Resolution Policy and Operating Procedure addressing public health and safety, crime, and blight)
- Educate and communicate with residents, businesses and the homeless
- Focus on outreach, intervention and prevention due to the impacts of homelessness
- Collaborate with stakeholders including County departments, cities, communities, judges, courts, and non-county organizations
- Focus on addressing behavioral health and substance abuse problems facing many in the homeless population
- Establish crisis-response protocols for appropriate County personnel to effectively address behavioral health issues at the initial point of contact
- Establish departmental metrics to measure the volume of activity and associated outcomes
- Collect and share comprehensive data regarding the financial impact of homelessness on each county department, develop strategies to more effectively and efficiently address the impact of homelessness on the County.

### **Next Steps**

#### Lead Departments

The following departments shall be designated to lead this effort – Health care Services, Community Development, Sheriff’s Office, and District Attorney’s Office. Functional work units involved in this effort shall include Community Car Program, Neighborhood Deputy District Attorney Program, and Code Enforcement.

#### Measurements/Outcomes

Involved departments shall establish metrics to measure services and outcomes. Metrics will include- the number of homeless residents engaged by County staff, and the number of homeless

residents directed to and/or successfully connected with social services, including but not limited to, physical and mental health care, shelter, and available government benefits.

#### Community Outreach and Collaboration

- Community outreach shall occur to foster input and dialog with the public regarding homelessness and its impacts.
- Assess the appropriate action for limiting the use of public property by way of reasonable time, place and manner restrictions.
- Departments will develop educational materials to assist residents, businesses and the homeless.
- The County will incorporate homelessness topics within existing advisory boards and appropriate forums where applicable (i.e. Farm Bureau, Planning Commission, etc.). Efforts will focus on developing strategies to address homelessness and improve the quality of life for the residents of San Joaquin County.