



Madera County

Taking Action: Steps to Prevent & Reduce Homelessness in Madera County

Prepared for the County of Madera by Homebase
March 2023

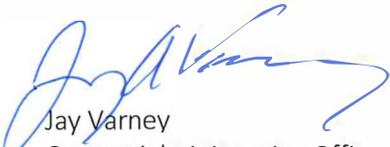
Executive Summary

My sincerest appreciation goes to the community leaders, advocates, and organizations who collaborated to create the Madera County Plan to Prevent and Reduce Homelessness (Strategic Plan), a set of goals and strategies that will fundamentally address the needs of our most vulnerable neighbors. Our community must dig deep and make a choice to assess our current system, identify the needs and gaps within it, and target our resources on areas that will bring to bear sustainable and measurable improvements on our approach to homelessness.

Madera County convened a network of stakeholders, including service providers, faith-based organizations, community organizers, and those with lived experience to work together to develop the Strategic Plan. In collaboration with the national nonprofit consultants from Homebase, Madera County convened a committee of community leaders to guide the process and incorporate broad perspectives. The committee also set out to create solutions that would respond to the feedback and insights gained during the robust stakeholder engagement process. In total, more than 10 stakeholder interviews were conducted, as well as 6 focus groups (including 2 focus groups of individuals with current or recent experience of homelessness).

Despite the many challenges we currently face, we believe we have an important opportunity to come together to take collective action to address homelessness. Through this Strategic Plan, we are providing a framework for us to begin a community-wide conversation that will help us prioritize action steps that will lead us to the goal of making homelessness rare, brief, and one-time in Madera County.

Success will only be possible by working together and in partnership with people experiencing homelessness. We believe that all of Madera County can join in this effort, bringing compassion, courage and accountability to help our friends, family, and neighbors who are struggling to find and maintain a home.



Jay Varney
County Administrative Officer
County of Madera



Mattie Mendez
Executive Director of CAPMC
County Homelessness Coordinator

INTRODUCTION

The decision to develop a strategic plan to prevent and reduce homelessness was collectively made by the Madera County Board of Supervisors (with leadership from the County Administrative Office). With funding from the Fresno Madera Continuum of Care (FMCoC) and County program sources, Madera County then contracted with Homebase — a national technical assistance provider helping communities prevent and reduce homelessness — to develop a gaps analysis and create a strategic plan to end homelessness for the region.

Why a Strategic Plan

Strategic planning is an important process that builds consensus on goals, facilitates group prioritization of key actions, fosters creative and collaborative problem-solving, provides a platform to consider resource needs and opportunities, and creates a concrete plan for action.

A well-developed strategic plan

- Lays out a shared vision and commitment to effectively respond to homelessness.
- Establishes community goals and benchmarks to define success and ensure accountability, and
- Serves as a roadmap for reaching those goals

About the Strategic Plan

The purpose of developing a strategic plan was to identify specific, key changes needed to move the needle on homelessness in Madera County and to build a roadmap for implementing those changes. The plan also includes recommendations designed to improve coordination in the County, as well as with the efforts of the broader Fresno Madera Continuum of Care (FMCoC). Key goals of the local planning process were to:

- Identify the many resources that exist and efforts that are underway to prevent and reduce homelessness throughout Madera County
- Build and enhance partnerships across agencies and organizations in the County
- Understand the relationship between Madera County and the FMCoC and to recommend ways to strengthen the relationship
- Guide all parties in toward a common mission, vision, and set of goals
- Develop specific actions steps tied to both overall and annual metrics to track progress.

The strategic plan was drafted in January-February 2023, building on the in-depth gaps analysis of Madera County homeless response resources. Both documents were created based on feedback gathered over eight months in 2022 and 2023 from a diverse set of Madera County residents. A Steering Committee comprised of local partners from the homeless system of care was established. Interviews were conducted, in addition to surveys and focus groups of key partners including people with lived experience of homelessness.

Throughout the research and development process, Madera County and the Steering Committee met to provide their own feedback and experience and to 1. discuss federal, state, and local priorities; 2. provide insights and references to best practices; 3. develop a vision, mission, guiding principles, and goals for the process, and 4. generate ideas to leverage the resources, expertise, and opportunities in the County to create a customized and coordinated response to homelessness.

MADERA COUNTY GOALS AND STRATEGIES

	<p>Goal A: Stop Homelessness Before It Begins</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <u>Strategy A.1:</u> Increase prevention & diversion services ✓ <u>Strategy A.2:</u> Improve coordination to ensure people are not discharged into homelessness
	<p>Goal B: Increase Access to Homeless Emergency Response Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <u>Strategy B.1:</u> Expand access to safe, low-barrier temporary housing options ✓ <u>Strategy B.2:</u> Coordinate countywide street outreach and street medicine programs ✓ <u>Strategy B.3:</u> Expand services to support and maintain exits from homelessness
	<p>GOAL C: Expand Safe, Affordable Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <u>Strategy C.1:</u> Assess and use available and appropriate public land for permanent housing ✓ <u>Strategy C.2:</u> Protect and expand affordable housing through local policy ✓ <u>Strategy C.3:</u> Expand access to the housing market
	<p>GOAL D: Improve Quality of Data about Homelessness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <u>Strategy D.1:</u> Establish a data quality subcommittee for Madera County and the FMCoC ✓ <u>Strategy D.2:</u> Improve Madera County partner participation in HMIS ✓ <u>Strategy D.3:</u> Establish Protocols to Track System Performance and Address Disparities in Madera County ✓ <u>Strategy D.4:</u> Collect aggregate data about Madera County homelessness to be made publicly available
	<p>GOAL E: Collaborate & Communicate Effectively across the Region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <u>Strategy E.1:</u> Strengthen the Madera County homeless response system infrastructure ✓ <u>Strategy E.2:</u> Improve communication, coordination, and collective action ✓ <u>Strategy E.3:</u> Deepen public understanding of homelessness and its solutions

VISION, MISSION, & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

STRATEGIC PLAN VISION STATEMENT

All individuals and families in Madera County can achieve housing stability and long-term self-sufficiency.

STRATEGIC PLAN MISSION STATEMENT

Rapidly connect people experiencing or at risk of homelessness with services and supports that enable them to retain and sustain stable housing and independence.

STRATEGIC PLAN GUIDING PRINCIPLES



ROADMAP: GOALS, STRATEGIES, & ACTION STEPS

Together the five overarching **Goals** address the key challenges and needs identified in the Gaps Analysis.

Each goal has beneath it a set of **Strategies** to enable the community to achieve the goal. Under each strategy, the roadmap outlines a series of **Action Steps** that the community can undertake to move the strategy forward.

After each set of strategies, there is a set of **sample Metrics** that include short-term (6 months to 1 year), medium-term (1 to 3 years) and longer-term (3 to 5 years) measures for each goal. The metrics, while not exhaustive or prioritized, identify specific and quantifiable ways the community can measure whether and when the goals have been met. Additional work on metrics will be done **by the community as implementation begins**.

GOALS



Goal A: Stop Homelessness Before It Begins

As the housing crisis in the nation and in California deepens, more people are just one paycheck or financial crisis away from losing their housing. Often it only requires a small intervention to prevent a vulnerable household from becoming homeless — whether it is one-time financial resources to provide a security deposit, legal assistance to prevent eviction, or help learning to balance a budget. Preventing homelessness by supporting individuals and families before they become homeless is not only more humane, but also more cost-effective. Homelessness prevention can be a low-cost strategy that can be implemented immediately at any agency serving homeless clients.

Diversion protocols identify people and divert them from homelessness quickly back to stable housing options that they may not have been able to access alone. Diversion can help at-risk households mediate interactions with a landlord, fund reliable transportation, reunify with family members or support systems, or brainstorm about other options in a guided housing problem-solving conversation.

Additionally, working closely with partners from medical, law enforcement, and foster care systems can create interagency referral networks that proactively prevent homelessness for people exiting these systems. Discharge planning can help to identify and organize services a person with mental illness, substance use, and other vulnerabilities needs when leaving an institutional or custodial setting and returning to the community. Madera County's goal to **stop homelessness before it begins** will focus on the coordination and expansion of both prevention and diversion resources for the community.

Goal B: Expand Access to Homeless Emergency Response Services

While the 2022 Point-In-Time (PIT) count accounted for fewer people experiencing homelessness in Madera County, community partners have seen growth in unsheltered homelessness during the COVID-19 pandemic. Historic experience indicates that many more people have been unsheltered than identified in the annual PIT count. Because there is no low-barrier, housing-focused shelter located in Madera County, addressing unsheltered homelessness is one of the community's highest needs. Partnerships across agencies, government entities, and service providers, as well as the support of the community, are paramount to increasing access to homeless emergency response services.

Madera County's County Administrative Office, Department heads from Behavioral Health, Public Health, and Social Services, the Fresno/Madera Continuum of Care (FMCoC), and other partners can work collectively to help those most in need get the services and support they require to exit homelessness by expanding access to safe, low-barrier temporary housing options countywide, increasing coordinated and countywide street and encampment outreach to engage vulnerable households with assistance.

Community education for both Madera County residents and services providers will be needed to help outline a clear procedure of how to access resources available. By **expanding access to homeless emergency response services**, Madera County will better meet the need for countywide comprehensive shelter and supportive services to help people obtain and maintain stable housing.

Goal C: Expand Availability of Safe, Affordable Housing

Permanent housing is the primary and most effective solution to ending homelessness. It brings security and safety, allowing individuals and families to focus their efforts on maintaining a job, getting their kids to school or childcare, and improving or preserving their health and well-being. With more permanent housing coupled with supportive services, such as independent living skills, job training, and/or health and behavioral health services, many people currently experiencing homelessness would be on the road to self-sufficiency.

Opportunities exist in Madera County to **expand safe, affordable housing**. It takes a collective effort across jurisdictions – the County, the City of Madera, the City of Chowchilla – to develop a countywide long-term plan to increase housing for individuals and families in need. A review of policies that currently

exist that serve as barriers to housing and/or that could promote or incentivize developers to initiate new building development, rehabilitation, and renovation in the county could expedite and attract more affordable housing partnerships.

Additionally, efforts to expand access to the housing market can be undertaken collectively by taking steps, such as creating flexible funding to support individuals and families to successfully exit homelessness, addressing barriers that make it difficult for tenants to obtain affordable housing, and proactively enforcing fair housing and source of discrimination laws to reduce discrimination.

Goal D: Improve Quality of Data about Homelessness

Both evaluation of outcomes and sound decision-making supported by defined needs and progress metrics require access to reliable, accurate data. Without access to such data, decision makers do not have the proper basis to make informed choices necessary to guide planning processes, prioritize resources, or evaluate and measure performance in preventing or ending homelessness. In addition, key funders—including state and federal governments—rely on data collected through the Point-in-Time count and HMIS, to allocate limited resources.

As part of Goal D – to **improve quality of data about homelessness**, Madera County will develop and implement policies, procedures, and systems to ensure that quality information is collected by all organizations and agencies working in the homeless system of care, so that data is known and entered accurately into the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Madera County will enforce policies to establish data systems fluency and infrastructure so that data quality is high, to accurately reflect the circumstances of persons experiencing homelessness in the real world, thus enabling Madera County’s leadership to make the decisions necessary to improve the overall system of care and impact the lives of individuals and families in a positive manner.

Goal E: Collaborate & Communicate Effectively Across the Entire System of Care

No one strategy or agency alone can end homelessness in Madera County. Deeper partnerships, a stronger local infrastructure, more dedicated staffing, better coordination with the FMCoC, and greater engagement throughout the county will build the support needed to increase solutions to address local homelessness effectively. The strategic planning process, overseen by a local Steering Committee of Madera County agency leaders and local service providers, has brought to light the need **to collaborate and communicate effectively across the entire system of care**. With improved coordination, the systems created to help people in times of need can be better equipped to address the breadth of needs individuals or families may have. Moreover, improving collaboration and leveraging investments across the many systems can help the community gain support for homeless solutions and implement strategies more quickly and efficiently.

Madera County has strong support among agency leaders who are committed to investing staff and resources to address homelessness, but formal systems are not in place to ensure that services are not duplicative and that local actors are working in alignment. Partnering together, with dedicated staff to

anchor efforts countywide, engaging people with lived experience of homelessness, increasing more varied involvement from the County members in the FMCoC, and focusing collectively on implementing an agreed-upon set of strategies can help ensure the community is well positioned to prevent and end homelessness. Madera County will develop a systematic and multi-faceted approach that engages the entire region – it requires investments from both the public and private sectors, dedicated resources with a focus on proven strategies, and collaboration and coordination across all sectors.

GOAL A: STOP HOMELESSNESS BEFORE IT BEGINS

Strategy A.1: Increase Prevention and Diversion Services in Madera County

ACTION STEPS:

A.1.a	<p>Create and implement coordinated, system-wide prevention and diversion screening and problem-solving protocols for Madera County to help people at high risk of homelessness remain housed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Identify key partners to be part of the core team ii. Develop prevention and diversion screening and problem-solving protocols that include eligibility criteria, benefits covered, etc. iii. Reach out to key partners, such as California Rural Legal Assistance, emergency response system (ERS) providers, and others to provide feedback and agree to collaboration
A.1.b	<p>Identify and allocate flexible funding and other resources for prevention and diversion and eviction prevention and designate agencies to disburse those funds to eligible clients.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Seek additional, sustainable sources of funding for prevention and diversion, including local, state, federal and private sources. ii. Establish countywide program guidelines for flexible funding resources with consistent and equitable rules for eligibility, benefits, etc. iii. Create a centralized process to allocate prevention and diversion funding.
A.1.c	<p>Develop an ongoing education and training program about prevention and diversion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Train all Madera County providers on prevention and diversion screening and problem-solving protocols and techniques such as motivational interviewing. ii. Include staff from all access and outreach teams in training opportunities. iii. Educate clients, providers, and landlords on tenants’ rights, fair housing, and reasonable accommodations, so that advocacy can happen in real-time.
A.1.d	<p>Identify subpopulations in need of prevention services and align resources accordingly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Analyze Madera County and HMIS data for patterns among first-time homeless families and individuals and create a plan to address the most common reasons for first-time homelessness. ii. Develop a process to work with the local McKinney-Vento program liaisons to ensure early identification of families facing housing instability.

A.1.e	<p>Establish an eviction prevention program in collaboration with the County, cities, legal services, local housing courts, and homeless system providers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Identify what eviction prevention efforts are already underway in Madera County. ii. Identify potential funding sources to establish a countywide eviction prevention program. iii. Develop a program model that takes into consideration best practices and is achievable in Madera County. iv. Develop a partnership with California Rural Legal Assistance (CRLA), Madera County Court Civil Division, the County, and cities to implement a robust eviction prevention program. v. Create policies and procedures for data collection and reporting. vi. Introduce new program to public. vii. Evaluate program effectiveness after 6 months and then annually thereafter.
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Strategy A.2: Improve Coordination to Ensure Individuals are not Discharged into Homelessness

ACTION STEPS:

A.2.a	<p>Coordinate discharge planning with institutional settings: the criminal legal system (e.g., jail/prison/probation, juvenile legal system), child welfare (including foster care), and health care systems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Examine the discharge planning processes that currently exist at Madera County institutions and how they are connected to the CES for those who may need housing. ii. Work with the CES lead and the FMCoC to ensure HMIS can track discharge planning referrals and if it cannot currently, work with the HMIS Lead and CE Lead to suggest updates. iii. Create new discharge planning protocols based on the collective work with systems. iv. Train and collaborate with the staff of discharge planning institutions and CE on new protocols. v. Meet regularly with discharge planning institutions and CE to evaluate processes and successes or challenges with discharge planning coordination. vi. Work collectively with discharge planning institutions to ensure that their clients are placed in housing and receive services until they achieve housing stability. vii. Conduct ongoing evaluations of the effectiveness of a new coordinated discharge planning system.
A.2.b	<p>Create additional resources and housing for people discharged from institutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Evaluate the resources that exist for populations exiting institutions, including case management, educational resources, job training, life skills, housing navigation, housing subsidies, housing placement, etc. ii. Ensure that discharge planning providers are aware of available resources and receive regular updates and relevant resource guides. iii. Identify gaps in housing and resources for people discharged from institutions. iv. Identify and collectively help secure funding to fill the gaps in resources.

Goal A Sample Metrics: Stop Homelessness Before It Begins

Short-Term 6 months to 1 year	Medium-Term 1 to 3 years	Longer-Term 3 to 5 years
<p>Metric 1.1: A uniform, systemwide prevention and diversion screening and problem-solving protocol has been developed and is in place in Madera County.</p> <p>Metric 1.2: Discharge planning collaboration has started with at least one cross-sector agency (e.g., criminal legal system, child welfare, and/or health care systems).</p>	<p>Metric 1.3: New resources have been identified and are funding prevention and/or diversion activities.</p>	<p>Metric 1.4: System Performance Measures indicate that the FMCoC has decreased first-time homelessness in Madera County.</p> <p>Metric 1.5: An eviction prevention program is active and sustainable in Madera County.</p>

GOAL B: INCREASE ACCESS TO HOMELESS EMERGENCY RESPONSE SERVICES

Strategy B.1: Expand Access to Safe, Low-Barrier Temporary Housing Options

ACTION STEPS:

B.1.a	<p>Increase available year-round, low-barrier housing-focused shelter with countywide coverage to reach adequate capacity and use evidence-based practices to support households exiting homelessness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Provide technical assistance to the local emergency shelter to enable them to transition to a low-barrier, housing-focused shelter offering day services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Enact low-barrier admission policies that screen-in rather than screen-out potential participants who face the greatest barriers to housing. b. Integrate behavioral health services (e.g., mental health, alcohol, and substance use services) into shelter and provide more wrap around services. c. Ensure access to shelter is full-time (24/7), year-round, and housing-focused (e.g., provides services and case management to transition to permanent housing). d. Enact minimal rules and restrictions that focus on behavioral expectations to help ensure client and staff safety – few rules, not “no rules.” e. Ensure staff are trained on housing-focused approaches and housing navigation.
B.1.b	<p>Ensure all new shelters, transitional housing, or bridge housing are low-barrier, housing-focused.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Investigate possibility of renovating/rehabilitating/constructing an additional low-barrier, housing-focused shelter that is non-congregate and provides day services.
B.1.c	<p>Create safe parking zones/sites for households experiencing vehicular homelessness where they can park safely and connect to additional services, including medical help, housing navigation, public benefits, employment, hygiene needs, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Identify a site or sites for a safe parking program (i.e., faith-based, municipal, or commercial parking lot, campground, vacant lot, etc.). ii. Identify potential service partners and funding. iii. Ensure site is low-barrier and housing-focused (see list above in B.1.a.i for list of attributes). iv. Start a pilot program to demonstrate need and viability of program, if needed, with possible focus on subpopulation(s) (i.e., families or single adults).
B.1.d	Track and share in real-time bed availability for homeless service providers
B.1.e	Establish permanent funding sources for motel/hotel subsidies to supplement emergency shelter capacity.

Strategy B.2: Coordinate Countywide Street Outreach & Street Medicine Programs

ACTION STEPS:

B.2.a	<p>Establish a mobile multi-disciplinary outreach program to support health and wellness and provide connections to benefits and other resources to exit homelessness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Coordinate countywide street outreach and street medicine teams from Behavioral Health, Public Health, CAPMC, and Camarena Health to build on already existing outreach efforts. ii. Ensure a robust cross-sector team meets semi-monthly to share information, troubleshoot experiences, and coordinate efforts to avoid duplication of services and ensure trusting relationships with people living unsheltered. iii. Establish geographical coverage and times of day for outreach efforts to ensure that all parts of Madera County receive street outreach or street medicine services at least weekly, if not daily. iv. Ensure the diversity of street outreach and street medicine staff to include people with lived experience by lowering barriers to employment and recruitment. v. Publicize the efforts and share information about how to access the street outreach and street medicine teams with local community groups and service providers. vi. Implement trainings on evidence-based best practices for outreach staff, including trauma-informed care, critical time intervention, motivational interviewing, and use of technology such as HMIS. vii. Evaluate street outreach and street medicine quality and outcomes regularly to ensure effectiveness and lived experience feedback.
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Strategy B.3: Expand Services to Support and Maintain Exits from Homelessness

ACTION STEPS:

B.3.a	Increase the number of organizational or agency partners who are officially members of the CoC so that they can become access points for the Coordinated Entry System (CES)
B.3.b	<p>Hire housing navigators to help increase exits from homelessness by building and maintaining relationships with landlords, affordable housing providers, and other housing programs to increase the number of units available for households exiting homelessness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Identify potential funding source(s) for ongoing staffing. i. Identify host agencies or jurisdictions for housing navigator staff. ii. Hire qualified housing navigators with some housing/real estate experience.
B.3.c	Initiate case conferencing for Madera County providers to help frontline staff coordinate and collaborate effectively.
B.3.d	<p>Expand or establish new day shelters/day centers to offer a place to go for anyone, regardless of gender, mental health status, age, etc. during daytime hours that offers laundry, showers, food, and supportive services during traditional work hours.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Make the day center/s access points for CE. ii. Offer supportive services that include case managers, CE assessors, housing navigators, SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) specialists, housing problem solving diversion specialists.
B.3.e	<p>Establish a humane, multi-sector encampment resolution program that assists people to access permanent solutions to their homelessness before enforcement and/or movement away from public spaces, which may cause displacement and/or removal of their belongings. The program should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Engage a combination of outreach, supportive services, shelter, and housing, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Focus on sustained, focused, and intensive outreach b. Ensure adequate notice is provided directly to all encampment residents c. Provide space to store people’s belongings d. Minimize law enforcement involvement and ensure that an outreach worker or peer specialist accompanies law enforcement when visiting camps ii. Pursue encampment resolution funding iii. Collaborate with neighboring jurisdictions which may be affected by encampment resolution efforts

Goal B Sample Metrics: Increase Access to Homeless Emergency Response Services

Short-Term 6 months to 1 year	Medium-Term 1 to 3 years	Longer-Term 3 to 5 years
<p>Metric 2.1: Plans are developed to transition existing shelter to low-barrier, housing focused shelters.</p> <p>Metric 2.2: A safe parking pilot is in place for individuals and families no later than February 2024.</p> <p>Metric 2.3: Implement case conferencing for housing and service providers by December 2023.</p>	<p>Metric 2.4: A multi-disciplinary outreach program is coordinated and providing services and support to unsheltered individuals full-time throughout the entire geography of Madera County.</p> <p>Metric 2.4: At least one shelter in the community has transitioned from a high-barrier shelter to low-barrier, housing-focused shelter or an additional shelter exists in Madera County that is low-barrier, housing-focused, serving all individuals regardless of household status.</p>	<p>Metric 2.4: Encampment resolution funding has been obtained and a humane countywide multi-sector encampment resolution program is in place.</p>

GOAL C: EXPAND AVAILABILITY OF SAFE, AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Strategy C.1: Assess & Use Available Public and Private Land for Permanent Housing

ACTION STEPS:

C.1.a	<p>Establish a five-year countywide Housing Development Pipeline that identifies an achievable path to establish new housing for underserved populations.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Establish a Housing Committee including developers, the Madera Housing Authority, the Cities of Madera and Chowchilla, and experienced service providers to develop and facilitate implementation of a countywide Housing Development Pipeline. ii. Develop systems to increase local capacity to respond to development opportunities and expand capital funding and resources available to meet development goals. iii. Conduct and maintain an inventory of unused, underutilized, and available properties to ascertain opportunities for additional safe and affordable housing in the county. iv. Identify suitable sites for rehabilitation or development of affordable permanent housing in the county v. Assess housing sites' proximity to amenities to support affordable housing (e.g., transit, food, services).
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vi. Initiate planning to aggressively expedite development and offer incentives, specifically for permanent supportive housing (PSH). vii. Endorse California Roadmap Home 2030 policies. Enact policies where locally feasible.
C.1.b	<p>Increase the development of units available for permanent supportive housing (PSH) for Madera County residents with disabilities who need intensive supportive services to retain housing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Invest in subsidy programs to incentivize PSH set-aside units in new development projects. ii. Establish a dedicated funding stream for construction or renovation of units to be used as PSH. iii. Partner with the Cities of Madera and Chowchilla to rehabilitate vacant or underutilized properties to develop permanent supportive housing (PSH). iv. Partner with Fresno County to support development of a pro-rata portion of dedicated permanent supportive housing (PSH) inventory over the next five years. v. Explore master lease, lease to own, or create agreements with existing facilities in the community to create additional permanent supportive housing with partner organizations in Madera County or surrounding counties (housing developers able to expand their offerings into Madera County).
C.1.c	<p>Consider developing single-room occupancy (SROs) buildings, which provide non-congregate, small furnished single rooms within multi-tenant buildings for residents with low- or minimal income who may be transitioning out of long-term homelessness.</p>

Strategy C.2: Protect and Expand Affordable Housing through Local Policy

ACTION STEPS:

C.2.a	<p>Evaluate current County and City policies to identify any rules or programs in place that inhibit development of affordable housing. Identify changes that would reverse the negative impacts of those policies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. As part of the local Housing Elements, identify and implement opportunities to streamline approvals for housing and service locations for formally and currently homeless households (e.g., year-round overnight shelter, community cabins, safe parking, and permanent supportive housing). ii. Determine if zoning or real estate laws, regulations, or ordinances exist that make it challenging to develop safe, affordable housing for low-income households in Madera County, the City of Madera, and the City of Chowchilla. iii. Consider California Roadmap Home 2030 policies where appropriate. iv. Update local zoning code to make it easier to build smaller units, including SRO or tiny home style units.
C.2.b	<p>Develop a “Moving On” policy with the City of Madera Housing Authority that prioritizes Housing Choice Vouchers for people in permanent supportive housing (PSH) to provide an affordable housing option and short-term services and resources that support program participants during and shortly after their transition to a greater level of independence. The Moving On program helps to keep limited supportive housing available for households who need intensive services.</p>

C.2.c	<p>Create local policies that incentivize property owners to sell, repair, or develop substandard units/properties into safe and affordable housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Adopt policies by municipalities and the County that require set asides for all new development, dedicating a certain proportion or number of units within each new development for very low-income (VLI) and extremely low-income (ELI) households. ii. Create financial incentives for landlords renting to voucher holders, including bonuses for new and/or returning landlords. iii. Review policies on empty land and empty buildings to encourage owners to convert the properties to active use. iv. Make it easier for property owners to convert under-utilized commercial buildings for use as residential.
C.2.d	<p>Consider limitations on the use of residential units as short-term rentals to make more units available to long term renters or local purchasers and reduce artificial inflation pushes on the market rental rate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Assess and adopt a formal annual permitting requirement and consider residency requirements that make it a condition that the permit holder verify residency on a regular basis to prevent outside or out of state investor-owners from purchasing residential housing units simply to create short-term rentals. At the same time, ensure that any policy created will still allow local homeowners or previous residents the ability to rent their homes. Any policy should also not indirectly inhibit someone from making Madera the location of their second or vacation home. The goal is to prevent large scale and/or institutional investors from injecting speculation in the local housing market, which disproportionately drives up values far above what the community and local jobs can support.

Strategy C.3: Expand Access to the Housing Market

ACTION STEPS:

C.3.a	<p>Develop a Flexible Housing Fund program to provide financial support to individuals and families with moving costs, address the limitations of housing subsidies, and address other financial barriers that can prevent people from successfully exiting homelessness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Examples include application fees, excessive deposits, move-in costs, and other fees.
C.3.b	<p>Address barriers that make it difficult for tenants to obtain affordable housing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Provide help with criminal record expungement, credit repair, and eviction expungement, if needed and applicable. ii. Create applicant portfolios that include letters of support from community members who know the potential tenant. iii. Establish a landlord risk mitigation fund that provides compensation to landlords to mitigate any damage caused by tenants and a support fund to incentivize landlords to rent to formerly homeless individuals.

C.3.c	<p>Proactively enforce fair housing and source of discrimination laws to reduce housing discrimination.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Perform outreach to ensure that providers, potential tenants, and landlords are aware of the California law that prohibits discrimination based on the source of income that a person uses to pay all or part of their rent. This includes the use of any public assistance, rental assistance, housing subsidy, or a request for a reasonable accommodation. ii. Provide Know Your Rights training for case managers and consumers, including procedures for reporting violations and connections to legal assistance when needed.
C.3.d	<p>Provide first-time homebuyer purchase assistance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Locate funding and create first-time buyer program to provide down payment loans to income eligible purchasers towards the acquisition of entry level homes (condominium, town home, or single-family residence) located within Madera County.
C.3.e	<p>Develop shared housing in Madera County.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Develop shared housing program(s) that can increase the housing available to single adults by matching them and taking advantage of the much more predominant 2- and 3+ bedroom homes for individuals exiting homelessness.

Goal C Sample Metrics: Expand Availability of Safe, Affordable Housing

Short-Term 6 months to 1 year	Medium-Term 1 to 3 years	Longer-Term 3 to 5 years
<p>Metric 3.1: The City of Madera Housing Authority has adopted a “Moving on” policy that prioritizes Housing Choice Vouchers for people transitioning from permanent supportive housing (PSH) no later than September 1, 2023.</p>	<p>Metric 3.2: The jurisdictions have identified at least one site to renovate/rehabilitate or newly construct affordable housing.</p>	<p>Metric 3.3: At least 50 new permanent supportive housing (PSH) units exist throughout the county by January 2028.</p>

GOAL D: IMPROVE QUALITY OF DATA ABOUT HOMELESSNESS

Strategy D.1: Establish a Data Quality Subcommittee for Madera County & the FMCoC

ACTION STEPS:

D.1.a	Establish a Madera County level system administrator for HMIS to strengthen the local data infrastructure, who can collect, hold, analyze, and monitor local data.
D.1.b	Develop a more robust set of data points to be collected during the PIT count to better understand people’s experiences with homelessness, including reasons for homelessness, how long someone has experienced homelessness, barriers they have experienced, and their location history. Explore options for geotagging engagements during the PIT.
D.1.c	Create a Madera County data quality committee to develop a plan for data collection, data quality, data monitoring, and data visualization of data about Madera County residents and providers.
D.1.d	<p>Work with the FMCoC to create a CoC-wide data quality subcommittee to work on improving HMIS data quality, data monitoring, and data visualization for the entire FMCoC that allows data to be segregated and tracked easily by each County.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Ensure that recommended improvements allow Madera County to pull comprehensive data about Madera County residents and providers from the system easily and smoothly. ii. Produce aggregate data reports, at least quarterly, which can provide public information about the numbers of people being served by the homeless system of care and/or placed in stable housing in Madera County. iii. Review data entry and data quality requirements for the HMIS-participating homeless service providers to improve local understanding of the scope of chronic homelessness in Madera County.
D.1.e	<p>Create data quality standards and develop a more robust, clear, and transparent FMCoC “Data Quality Plan” that establishes expectations for both the community and end-users.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> iv. Incorporate into the FMCoC’s policies, procedures, and/or written standards data quality benchmarks and provide regular updates to each HMIS-participating agency. v. Implement appropriate incentives for partner agencies to use HMIS and establish a monitoring structure and designate a key agency to oversee the process. vi. Review data entry and data quality requirements for HMIS- participating homeless service providers to improve local understanding of the scope of chronic homelessness in Madera County, such as regular collection of county location data or geotagging during outreach engagements.

Strategy D.2: Improve Madera County partner participation in HMIS

ACTION STEPS:

D.2.a	Ensure local organizations are aware of the opportunity to get subsidies to participate in the FMCoC’s HMIS so that participation is more financially accessible to a diverse range of agency and organizational partners in Madera County. (Consider requiring organizations that want to place their clients in housing to participate in HMIS if a subsidy is available.)
D.2.b	Evaluate, track, and implement a training program for all Madera County service providers to make it easier to participate in HMIS.

Strategy D.3: Establish Protocols to Track System Performance and Address Disparities in Madera County

ACTION STEPS:

D.3.a	Establish a monitoring protocol , including a field in HMIS to identify households who fall into homelessness for the first time or who return to homelessness, and to track impact of interventions.
D.3.b	Use a newly established monitoring protocol to address any disparities in system access and service provision for special sub-populations.

Strategy D.4: Collect aggregate data about Madera County homelessness to be made publicly available

ACTION STEPS:

D.4.a	Report and make available more in-depth data from Madera County in the annual Point-in-Time Count and Housing Inventory Count when the larger FMCoC report is made public (either as a section of the FMCoC report or as a companion document). Details might include distribution by gender, household size, race, age + last place of stable housing, # of chronically homeless, # of first-time homeless, and other details that will help Madera County's homeless system of care understand outcomes and impacts.
D.4.b	Establish a publicly available data dashboard that provides aggregate data about homelessness in Madera County that is helpful for service providers to measure success and gaps/needs, as well as that helps put a public face on homelessness in the county.

Goal D Sample Metrics: Improve Quality of Data about Homelessness

Short-Term 6 months to 1 year	Medium-Term 1 to 3 years	Longer-Term 3 to 5 years
<p>Metric 4.1: At least 4 new Madera County agencies or organizations have begun entering their data into HMIS.</p> <p>Metric 4.2: Madera County data committee has met with FMCoC to discuss establishment of a CoC-wide data quality subcommittee.</p>	<p>Metric 4.4: A new Data Quality plan is approved and in place for the FMCoC, with training and education for all FMCoC members.</p> <p>Metric 4.5: All Madera County agencies and organizations working with the people experiencing homelessness are fully participating in HMIS, including those that need subsidization.</p>	<p>Metric 4.6: Madera County has a website with a data dashboard available to providers and the public.</p>

<p>Metric 4.3: The 2023 PIT count report has details about Madera County, as part of the FMCoC report or as a companion document</p>		
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GOAL E: COLLABORATE & COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY ACROSS THE ENTIRE REGION

Strategy E.1: Strengthen the Madera County Homeless System Response Infrastructure

ACTION STEPS:

E.1.a	<p>Fund a full-time staff county leadership position to support community-wide implementation of strategies, including coordination of implementation bodies, the outreach campaign, and execution of various initiatives and action steps.</p>
E.1.b	<p>Develop a year-round structure for countywide strategic plan implementation and reporting process that includes a countywide implementation body (committee/task force) to lead the development of a communication strategy, coordinate the implementation process, and monitor the progress of the strategies. Ensure the implementation body includes representation from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with lived experience of homelessness • The City of Madera leadership (from the City Manager’s office) • The City of Chowchilla leadership • Hope House and/or the Mountain Community Wellness Centers • The Madera Rescue Mission • Madera County Departments of Behavioral Health, Public Health, and Social Services • The County Administrators Office • Community Action Partnership of Madera County • Camarena Health • City of Madera Housing Authority • At least one front-line/direct service staff person • At least one representative from the FMCoC that is not a <i>Madera County</i> resident, agency, or organization
E.1.c	<p>Develop an annual work plan with prioritized action steps to guide strategic plan implementation along with identifying key agency and organizational partners to guide each step. Establish stakeholder committees, as needed, and a process for regular updates to the countywide implementation body. Provide regular updates on progress made on goals, strategies, and metrics to the Planning Council and refine action steps as needed.</p>
E.1.d	<p>Establish roles and responsibilities of other partners needed to make the plan successful including identifying champions for key pieces of the plan and first year priorities.</p>
E.1.e	<p>Broaden the local homeless system of care by reaching out to new organizations to participate, including California Rural Legal Assistance (CRLA), tenants’ rights groups, people experiencing homelessness, Tribal nations, local NAACP Chapter, farmworker rights organizations, and others.</p>

Strategy E.2: Improve Communication, Coordination, and Collective Action

ACTION STEPS:

E.2.a	<p>Increase participation by key agency and organizational partners and essential community partners in meaningful solutions to address homelessness in Madera County.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Involve people with lived experience, philanthropy, service organizations, and faith-based organizations in supporting critical initiatives such as public engagement and education campaigns, street outreach, and volunteer opportunities. ii. Include a diverse set of partners in strategic plan implementation processes and committees to ensure engagement across sectors and all partners with a stake in addressing homelessness are part of the solution.
E.2.b	<p>Create a Madera County website with a publicly facing dashboard that shows progress toward identified goals (i.e., services offered, people assisted, or people placed into housing), up-to-date data, and information regarding success stories, challenges, key policy decisions, funding allocations, available resources, housing opportunities, etc.</p>
E.2c	<p>Strengthen partnership with FMCoC to better coordinate policy and data-driven decision-making for Madera County within the regional discussions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Explore creation of Madera County oriented subcommittee of the FMCoC. ii. Ensure greater Madera County representation on key FMCoC committees and governing bodies.

Strategy E.3: Deepen Public Understanding of Homelessness and Its Solutions

ACTION STEPS:

E.3.a	<p>Roll out the Strategic Plan, using a process to support communitywide engagement and alignment around a single roadmap for next steps in addressing homelessness.</p>
E.3.b	<p>Establish a year-round communication strategy to educate the public about homelessness and the local homelessness response, addressing common myths and celebrating progress in strategic plan implementation. Highlight programs and services, data-driven best practices, opportunities for community members to get involved, and examples of impact and success.</p>

Goal E Sample Metrics: Collaborate and Communicate Effectively Across the Entire Region

Short-Term 6 months to 1 year	Medium-Term 1 to 3 years	Longer-Term 3 to 5 years
<p>Metric 5.1: A full-time coordinator position has been advertised and a hire has been made.</p> <p>Metric 5.2: A countywide implementation body has been selected and begun to implement a first-year Action Plan.</p>	<p>Metric 5.3: A year-round communication strategy to educate the public about homelessness has been created and is in place.</p>	<p>Metric 5.4: Madera County has a website with a public-facing dashboard that provides visualization of progress toward the 5 stated goals.</p>