

# REPORT TO THE SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY CONTINUUM OF CARE

Report Findings from the Homelessness Leadership Forum (HLF)

November 9, 2023

A blue banner for the Homelessness Leadership Forum. At the top, logos for Lathrop, Escalon, Lodi, and Ripon are displayed. The center features the text 'HOMELESSNESS LEADERSHIP FORUM' in large white letters. At the bottom, logos for United Way, San Joaquin County, Stockton, and Tracy are shown.



**SAN JOAQUIN**  
COUNTY  
*Greatness grows here.*



**United Way**  
of San Joaquin County

Central to the event's mission  
was the guiding question:

HOW MIGHT WE  
INCREASE THE  
EFFICIENCY OF  
SERVICES FOR THE  
HOMELESS  
POPULATION IN SAN  
JOAQUIN COUNTY?

1

## SUPPORT STRUCTURES

"What support structures should be established to enhance collaboration between San Joaquin County, the Cities, and the Continuum of Care?"

2

## STAFFING STRUCTURES

"How can we best support positions like the Program Administrator for Homeless Services and other support roles? Where should these positions be situated within county services?"

3

## SYSTEMS

"How can existing systems like HMIS, CoC, Encampment Response Teams, or Coordinated Entry be improved through county operations? How might we strengthen, redesign, reset, or reroute these systems?"

4

## SYNERGY

"How can we enhance continuous communication between SJC, Cities, and Shelters, rebuilding trust and respect in our collaborative efforts? How can we establish alliances that expand our communication with the community?"

5

## SUSTAINABILITY

"How can we ensure mutual accountability towards our objectives without the appearance of self-promotion or shifting responsibility? How can we ensure that trust, respect, and communications remain at the forefront of our efforts toward sustainable systems and structures?"

# WHAT THE HLF REPORT IS, AND IS NOT...

This report does not intend to serve as an analysis of homelessness nor as a strategic plan about how to address homelessness but as a **compilation of ideas from key stakeholders** as to how we must strengthen the support systems within our county.

Centralization of services emerged as a key attribute, but streamlining efforts and resources to create a more efficient and cohesive approach to homelessness services will be required.

By cultivating trust, promoting communication, and centralizing services, the Homelessness Leadership Forum aims to pave the way for more effective and unified action in addressing homelessness in the region.

# KEY THEMES EMERGED FROM THE FORUM

- Leadership** We must build stronger bonds of trust between the county, cities, and nonprofit partners, create communication systems for the public, and break down historical silos to advance our work.
- Systems of Support** We must create better systems of support that strengthen the leadership structures.
- Synergy** We must promote collaboration among leaders instead of fostering competition.
- Information** We must enhance efficiency by consistently gathering and disseminating.
- Funding** We must re-evaluate funding solutions to strengthen homelessness initiatives.
- Law and Policy** We must address legal and policy frameworks to promote transparency, accountability, and secure funding for programs and services.

## ACTIONABLE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LEADERSHIP

1. Create an Office of Housing and Homelessness Services within the San Joaquin County Health Care Services Agency.
2. The new Program Manager of Homeless Initiatives recruited by the County should be the Deputy Director overseeing this new Office, which should be supported by a County general fund contribution and have additional support staff allocated.
3. Trust and Respect themes surfaced multiple times in how top management and CoC must support agencies, partners, and cities. Recommend CoC hosts an offsite with members to strengthen trust, communication, respect, and avoidance of silo-based decisions.



## ACTIONABLE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SYSTEMS OF SUPPORT

1. The Homelessness Project Manager needs more staff to effect change properly, including a data analyst, grant and funding specialist, program coordinator, and communications specialist.
2. Create a publicly shared organizational chart with staff positions, roles, and expertise.
3. Create a standing committee of the Board of Supervisors and City representatives, staffed by the new Office, to provide ongoing leadership, recommendations, and policy direction from the municipal partners to the CoC.
4. Need a robust Coordinated Entry System managed by SJC and connected to health and referral systems.

## ACTIONABLE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SYNERGY

1. To bolster synergy between all stakeholders and enhance effective collaboration, the CoC should return to in-person meetings, ideally every quarter, following them with Forum-type events to maintain momentum and interest.
2. Clear expectations between cities and the county.
3. Establish clear roles and responsibilities for all public partners and have cities/county aligned as a partner to act independently using an “Alliance” model.
4. Host consistent meetings where the right people are at the table and definitions of work streams and actions can be decided and implemented.





## ACTIONABLE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INFORMATION

1. Establish a unified and comprehensive platform housing crucial data for informed decision-making, featuring HMIS view access, a veteran screening option, and real-time updates on standard and recuperative bed availability, all aimed at optimizing shelter placements and service provision.
2. Communication must be a priority using public information, coordinated media efforts, shared calendars with agencies, and quarterly reporting using newsletters and PSAs.
3. Inform the public using data analytics and reports.
4. Develop a communication strategy encompassing website updates and coordinated social media.

## ACTIONABLE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUNDING

1. General funds support services for agencies supporting people experiencing homelessness.
2. Re-evaluate funding and redirect funding from what is not working to what is working.
3. Examine ways to reduce or eliminate funding competition and develop a fair resource allocation.
4. Equitable distribution of funding competition and resources.



## ACTIONABLE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LAW AND POLICY

1. Enforce Laws and hold people accountable.
2. Explore the possibility of establishing a Parcel Tax to provide a dedicated local revenue stream.
3. SJC to support the capital and operating needs of our housing and homelessness providers.
4. Countywide sales tax to increase funding for homelessness work.

# Additional Recommendations Regarding the CoC

## Systems of Support

1. CoC needs to be revisited: membership representative of the BIPOC community, introduce term limits, an annual audit of fiscal oversight, and alignment with county and city needs. Overhaul might be required to bring up to date to the homelessness needs of the county.
2. Other systems such as HMIS, Encampment Response Team, CoC, and Coordinated Entry can be improved if managed within the control of county operations. (Multiple recommendations to bring HMIS under county control.)

## Synergy

1. Each group (CoC, County, City) clearly defines what they want to see happen in their city. How do they relay their vision to the County? Come to a unified effort where everyone is in alignment.

## Law and Policy

1. Changes to CoC rules: No funding recipients as voting members to remove the perceived conflict of interest.
2. Ensure common understanding by county, BOS, cities, providers, and stakeholders of CoC purpose.
3. Educate the functions surrounding what is mandated by HUD and what is outside the ability/realm of the CoC.

# NEXT STEPS

1

Direct engagement with the Continuum of Care and the City of Stockton, Manteca, Lodi, and Tracy on aligning the recommendations in this report.

2

The SJC Health Care Services Agency will bring various recommendations in this report and seek policy direction from the Board of Supervisors during their November 28th meeting.

3

A follow-up homelessness stakeholder event will be scheduled with the United Way of San Joaquin County before the January point-in-time count.

This report is an outline of a new beginning in San Joaquin County to ending homelessness.

