

The Coalition of Homeless Services Providers

Homeless Encampment Position

November 2021




Executive Summary

The Coalition of Homeless Services Providers (CHSP) is made up of nonprofit and public agencies that provide direct services to people who are homeless in Monterey and San Benito Counties. Our 5-Year Plan to End Homelessness can be found on our website at CHSP.org.

Our vision is that all people in the region live in decent, safe, and affordable housing with access to services and supports that stabilize their lives. The Coalition recognizes an individual's basic need for shelter, safety, food, plumbing and electricity. We recognize that people living homeless in our communities is a public health crisis, and a public health responsibility. Our statistics show that most people in long-term homelessness have substance addiction, mental health, and/or serious physical ailment that must be addressed.

Additionally, the Coalition recognizes that without an adequate supply of low-income transitional (short-term) housing, supportive housing, or permanent (long-term) housing too many people living with very low incomes have no local housing options other than living unsheltered, in make-shift encampments, or in their vehicles.

To address this reality of insufficient housing and lack of sufficient shelter options, communities (public, non-profit, faith-based, and voluntary) should offer resources that aid in basic human survival and address critical health and quality of life issues for those living unsheltered and in encampments.




However, the current state of these encampments poses a public health risk to the general community as well as to the people living in them. To address the safety issues of these, make-shift shelters, some jurisdictions conduct “clean-ups.” For those living in these places, they have called them “sweeps,” as they feel they are being treated like trash without being provided another location to live.

The Coalition strongly recommends the following short-term and long-term solutions to jurisdictions responding to this public health and public safety crisis:

- Public disclosure of the specific health and safety or policy concerns being addressed when clean-ups are scheduled, two weeks prior to any action.

- Provision of self-help resources that can support people living without housing to prevent the build-up of public health and hygiene risks including:

1. trash receptacles with pickup service
2. portable restrooms and sinks
3. 24-hour accessible public restrooms and showers
4. Portable electrical hookup for cell phones so service providers can find people without permanent addresses
5. Storage for small amounts of personal property

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- Scheduled encampment outreach efforts as a partnership between jurisdictions, homeless service providers, public assistance, health services and individuals with lived experience
 - Eliminating street clean-ups when sufficient shelter to provide an alternative to encampment living is unavailable.
 - Temporary sanctioned “safe parking” areas for those living in vehicles or recreational vehicles with security.
 - Temporary sanctioned encampments that possess the 5 elements listed above for safety and hygiene
 - Developing more shelters, transitional housing, and supportive housing throughout our region
 - Permanent RV Park subsidized by self-pay

The Coalition is committed to:

- Coordinating and providing services to support bringing people experiencing homelessness into shelters and housing and to addressing physical, mental, and environmental circumstances that lead to long term homelessness
- Developing strategies, policies and new resources for providers working to bring housing into our communities



-Advocating for county-wide collaboration in pursuit of this mission in Monterey and San Benito

-Developing a Coordinated Outreach and Resources for Encampments (CORE) team to respond to encampment concerns.

We should not criminalize residents for fulfilling their basic human needs but extend a helping hand in recognition of the complexity of their situation.

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