



COUNTY OF YOLO

Board of Supervisors

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County Administrator, **Michael Webb**
Sr. Deputy Clerk of the Board, **Julie Dachtler**

September 9, 2025

To: Honorable Judge Timothy L. Fall
Superior Court of California, County of Yolo
1000 Main Street
Woodland, CA 95695

To: Yolo County Grand Jury
P.O. Box 2142
Woodland, CA 95776

RE: 2024-2025 Yolo County Grand Jury Report: Homelessness: Our Local American Tragedy

Honorable Judge Fall,

The following is the response to the findings and recommendations in the 2024-2025 Yolo County Grand Jury Report titled, "Homelessness: Our Local American Tragedy" from the Yolo County Board of Supervisors. The response from the Health and Human Services Agency was sent under separate cover on September 9, 2025 and is attached.

F-1: Despite being well past the midpoint of the 2023-2026 Yolo County Plan to Address Homelessness, there is a demonstrable lack of effectiveness in significantly reducing the number of individuals experiencing homelessness. This suggests fundamental challenges within the current strategic framework or its implementation. Furthermore, a critical gap exists in proactive leadership and consistent guidance from both County and City officials. This absence hinders effective communication, meaningful involvement, and the development of crucial partnerships with the business community. Businesses are directly impacted by issues related to homelessness, yet they are often not integrated into the collaborative process of finding sustainable solutions. This lack of unified direction and engagement impedes the development of comprehensive and impactful strategies across the county.

Response: The respondent disagrees with this finding. County and City representatives in the Executive Commission to Address Homelessness work in collaboration with the business sector, community organizations, and other interested stakeholders to focus on regional policies and strategies to promote an effective response to homelessness within Yolo County. This commission meets every other month and the public is invited to attend and provide public comments, and the agendas and minutes are published online.

F-2: A significant impediment to effectively addressing homelessness in Yolo County is the apparent lack of robust coordination and collaboration between the county's incorporated cities. While each city operates with its own distinct funding mechanisms and organizational structures for addressing homelessness, there is a recognized desire among them for overarching county oversight and a more unified strategic approach. Currently, the prevailing model appears to be one of independent shelters and initiatives, rather than a cohesive regional strategy to tackle the pervasive issue of homelessness that transcends city boundaries. Compounding this challenge is the absence of dedicated funding allocated at the Yolo County level specifically for homeless services, limiting the county's ability to provide essential resources, facilitate joint initiatives, and ensure equitable support across all jurisdictions.

Response: The respondent disagrees with this finding. County and City representatives formed the Executive Commission to Address Homelessness to act as an advisory commission to the City Councils, County Board of Supervisors and other organizational bodies, and to foster regional leadership promoting resource development to address homelessness within the Yolo County. The Commission's Bylaws and meeting information can be found here: <https://www.yolocounty.gov/government/general-government-departments/health-human-services/boards-committees/executive-commission-to-address-homelessness>

F-4: Inaccuracies inherent in the Point-in-Time (PIT) count methodology result in an underestimation of the true number of individuals experiencing homelessness within Yolo County. Consequently, an unknown but likely significant portion of the homeless population is not being accurately identified, leading to a failure in connecting them with much-needed services and support. The most recent PIT count in 2024 revealed a concerning 26.3% increase in homelessness in Yolo County since the 2022 count, representing an additional 196 individuals. This substantial increase underscores the urgency of improving data collection methods to ensure a more accurate understanding of the scope of the crisis and to effectively target resources.

Response: The respondent partially agrees with this finding. County staff will review the 2024 Yolo County Homeless County recommended improvements for implementation in future PIT counts.

F-5: The City of West Sacramento has demonstrated a proactive approach to expanding housing options for vulnerable populations through strategic investments in motels, facilitated by the passage of a dedicated sales tax. This model involves providing loans to developers and actively partnering with non-profit organizations to deliver essential supportive services within these housing facilities. This integrated approach highlights a commitment to creating tangible housing solutions. In stark contrast, Yolo County has faced significant challenges in identifying and implementing actionable housing solutions, largely due to the pervasive issue of NIMBYism ("Not In My Backyard"). This resistance acts as a substantial barrier, limiting the availability of suitable locations for developing homeless projects that are both equitably distributed and do not unduly impact existing residential or commercial areas. This inaction underscores the need for proactive community engagement and innovative strategies to overcome local opposition.

Response: The respondent disagrees with the finding. The County is exploring options such as updating the Zoning Code to remove constraints to a variety of housing types, and implementing the County's Inclusionary Housing Ordinance to ensure new residential development addresses its fair share of housing needs for all income levels and assists in providing a variety of housing types, including opportunities for special needs populations throughout unincorporated Yolo County. Furthermore, Yolo County has historically directed growth to the incorporated cities to preserve agricultural land and open space. As

such, much of the unincorporated area lacks water and wastewater utilities sufficient to support dense development.

F-6: The current definition and cost structure of "affordable housing" often remain inaccessible to the majority of individuals and families experiencing homelessness. While intended to provide a pathway to stability, the actual rental rates and associated costs of many affordable housing units are still beyond the financial reach of those with little to no income, highlighting a critical disconnect between the available housing stock and the economic realities of the homeless population. This necessitates exploring alternative housing models and deeper subsidy options to truly address the housing needs of this vulnerable group.

Response: The respondent agrees with the finding. "Affordable housing cost" for lower-income households is defined in California State law (Health and Safety Code Section 50052.5) and affordable housing costs for all jurisdictions in Yolo County are determined based on the states' income limits.

Yolo County's Housing Element within the 2030 Countywide General Plan provides guidance on the development of alternative housing models and options to address the supply of affordable housing. This includes coordinating with the cities to expand affordable housing opportunities within incorporated areas, pursue funding from local, State, and federal sources to support development, and invest in alternative housing models to more efficiently develop affordable housing.

F-7: The Fourth and Hope facility, a key resource for individuals experiencing homelessness in the Woodland area, faces significant challenges related to transportation access for its residents. Currently, adequate transportation options to connect residents with essential services, employment opportunities, and the broader community are lacking. Addressing this deficit would require a reallocation of existing funds, potentially impacting other vital programs. This highlights the need for a comprehensive assessment of transportation needs and the exploration of dedicated funding sources to ensure reliable access for residents of this crucial facility.

Response: The respondent agrees with the finding; however, the Board of Supervisors has limited authority in implementing transit projects as that falls under the purview of the Yolo Transportation District (YoloTD). YoloTD is Yolo County's transportation planning commission, which funds and implements capital projects and programs that affect transit infrastructure in Yolo County.

YoloTD has collaborated with the City of Woodland to improve transportation access to the Fourth and Hope East Beamer Campus. The collaboration has resulted in a BeeLine service zone expansion, which is set to launch in mid-August 2025.

F-9: The existing shortage of mental health professionals within Yolo County significantly exacerbates the complex challenges of providing adequate mental health services to residents, particularly those experiencing homelessness. Staffing shortages within the mental health system are attributed to factors such as stringent training requirements and insufficient funding. Furthermore, recent legislative changes appear to have had a limited positive impact on increasing access to mental health care. The intersection of homelessness and mental health is critical, and addressing the systemic gaps in mental health service provision is essential for effectively supporting the well-being and long-term stability of individuals experiencing homelessness.

Response: The respondent partially agrees with the finding and concurs with the response from the Health and Human Services Agency.

Health and Human Services Agency response under separate cover:

HHSA partially agrees with this finding. The existing shortage of mental health professionals in Yolo County is indicative of a larger shortage of mental health professionals at the state and national level. Yolo County is competing with other employers across the state for qualified professionals at a time when governmental budgets are constricting due to the impacts of the current federal administration and an economic downturn.

F-10: Cities within Yolo County possess numerous parking lots, many of which are currently unused or significantly underutilized, particularly during nighttime hours and potentially even during the day. Despite this readily available infrastructure, there has been a lack of proactive exploration into the feasibility of utilizing these spaces for initiatives such as safe parking programs. Implementing safe parking, whether on a part-time (nightly) or even full-time basis, presents a tangible opportunity to alleviate the stress and safety concerns endured by individuals experiencing homelessness who are living in their vehicles and struggling to find safe and legal parking options. This could also contribute to reducing homeless vehicle presence in residential and commercial areas, addressing community concerns.

Response: The partially agrees with the finding; however, the Board of Supervisors has no authority regarding the use of parking lots within city limits and cannot unilaterally implement “safe parking” sites.

F-11: Communities across Yolo County are expressing growing frustration and discontent over the perceived lack of tangible progress in addressing homelessness. A significant concern driving this dissatisfaction is the urgent need for accessible and comprehensive mental health facilities and services within the county. Residents recognize the critical and often intertwined nature of homelessness and mental health challenges, observing that a lack of adequate support acts as a major barrier to housing stability and overall well-being. This desire extends beyond basic facilities, with communities advocating for a range of services, including crisis stabilization units, sobering centers, residential treatment programs, and robust outpatient care options. The absence of these resources is viewed as a major impediment to breaking the cycle of homelessness and fostering healthier, safer communities. This underscores the pressing need for county leadership to prioritize the development and funding of a comprehensive mental health infrastructure as an integral component of its strategy to effectively address homelessness.

Response: The respondent partially agrees with the finding and concurs with the response from the Health and Human Services Agency.

Health and Human Services Agency response under separate cover:

HHSA partially agrees with this finding. While the intersection of behavioral health services and homelessness is critical for housing stability with individuals that are experiencing behavioral health challenges, a more relevant factor locally is the paucity of affordable housing. Access to mental health services, in and of itself, is insufficient to address local needs. The current economic outlook of the County creates a significant barrier to provide comprehensive mental health services, as there is insufficient funding to provide more than basic services at this time.

F-12: The multifaceted challenge of homelessness presents a significant and intricate problem that inevitably confronts every community. The growing allocation of taxpayer money to support essential services for unhoused individuals can place a considerable strain on a community's financial stability and its collective sense of compassion, requiring an increasing commitment of valuable resources to this crucial endeavor. Ultimately, it falls under the purview of county and local governmental bodies to diligently manage and monitor this critical humanitarian situation with the aim of achieving a substantial reduction in homelessness, with the aspirational goal of its near elimination in the future.

Response: The respondent partially agrees with this finding. Yolo County, similar to other counties statewide, is experiencing higher than usual cost increases in labor, services and supplies, and capital improvements. This can be attributed to the ongoing national monetary inflation, shortages in the workforce resulting in upward salary pressures, and continually rising construction costs in our region. The budgetary constraints have limited the Board of Supervisors' ability to allocate General Fund dollars towards resources for individuals and families facing homelessness.

The County relies on state-funded grants to support and supplement its homelessness efforts, but these grants have variable funding amounts and may be impacted by the State of California's budget shortfall and uncertainty of federal funding for essential public safety net programs.

R-2: Yolo County needs to budget dedicated funds for homelessness services to significantly improve coordination, communication, and the collaborative development of initiatives between existing programs. This funding should prioritize streamlining service delivery and fostering innovation to more effectively address homelessness.

Response: The recommendation has been implemented. The County's FY 2025-2026 budget includes a goal to strengthen the Yolo County Homeless Continuum of Care and achieve functional zero by 2027. This includes expanding new partnerships and reinforce existing efforts with homeless non-profit organizations and city partners; as well as, utilizing new housing partnerships to expand inventory to increase affordable housing for adults and families.

R-3: Yolo County needs to proactively research and assist existing homelessness service providers in identifying appropriate and accessible locations for their services. This includes actively exploring and establishing well-managed "safe parking" sites, along with developing clear operational guidelines and providing consistent oversight to ensure the safety and well-being of participants and the surrounding community

Response: The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable. The Board of Supervisors has no authority regarding the use of parking lots within city limits and cannot unilaterally implement “safe parking” sites. The County continues to collaborate with local service providers in best practice research and data and gaps analysis to address homelessness.

R-4: Yolo County should establish a dedicated and mobile Mental Health Outreach Team specifically trained to engage with and provide services to homeless individuals. This team would be responsible for actively seeking out individuals in need, conducting mental health assessments, providing immediate support and crisis intervention, and facilitating connections to ongoing mental health care and other essential resources.

Response: The respondent will not implement the recommendation as it is not warranted at this time for the reasons described in the Health and Human Services Agency response.

Health and Human Services Agency response under separate cover:

HHSA partially agrees with this finding. Development of a mobile mental health outreach program is indeed a best practice and a component of a comprehensive behavioral health system of care that Yolo County ultimately desires. However, at this time there is insufficient funding to support such an approach.

R-5: The Yolo County Board of Supervisors should consider taking a more active and collaborative leadership role in addressing homelessness countywide. This would involve providing dedicated funding, clear strategic guidance, and facilitating enhanced communication and coordination between the cities and rural areas within the county. By fostering a cohesive approach, the Board can enable the sharing of successful strategies, proactively highlight potential pitfalls in tackling this complex issue, and ultimately promote more effective and unified solutions across Yolo County.

Response: The respondent has implemented the recommendation. The Board of Supervisors work in collaboration with City governments to focus on regional policy and implementation strategies to respond to homelessness within the County of Yolo through the Executive Commission to Address Homelessness.