



COUNCIL MEMBERS

APPOINTED SEATS

Central California Alliance for Health – Kate Nester

City of Hollister – Mayor Mia Casey

City of King – Mayor Mike LeBarre

City of Salinas – Mayor Dennis Donohue

City of Seaside – Mayor Ian Oglesby

City of Soledad – Mayor Anna Velasquez

Coalition of Homeless Services Providers – Casey Powers

Coalition of Homeless Services Providers – Jill Allen

County of Monterey Board Supervisor – Luis Alejo

County of Monterey Homeless Services Director – Roxanne Wilson

County of San Benito Board Supervisor – Kollin Kosmicki

County of San Benito Community Services & Workforce Development – Enrique Arreola

Housing Authority of the County of Monterey – Zulieka Boykin

Lived Experience Advisory Directive – Timothy Heavin

Lived Experience Advisory Directive – Wes White

Monterey County Department of Social Services – Eva Jeronimo

Monterey County Health Department – Elsa Jimenez

Monterey County Office of Education – Donna Smith

ELECTED SEATS

California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc. – Phyllis Katz

CHISPA – Dana Cleary

Community Foundation for Monterey County – Dan Baldwin

October 13, 2026

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Community partners continue efforts to expand housing and services as residents face persistent barriers to housing stability

SAN BENITO COUNTY, Calif. — The Coalition of Homeless Services Providers (CHSP), in partnership with San Benito County, local governments, community organizations, service providers, and volunteers, announce the results of the 2026 Point-in-Time (PIT) Count, which identified **267 people experiencing homelessness—a 57% decrease from the 621 people counted in 2024.**

Of those counted in 2026, 69 people, or 26%, were sheltered, and 198 people, or 74%, were unsheltered. Unsheltered homelessness decreased by approximately 60%, from 496 people in 2024 to 198 in 2026.

The PIT Count provides a snapshot of homelessness on a single night, including people staying in emergency shelters and transitional housing, as well as those living outdoors, in vehicles, or in other places not intended for human habitation. The count helps inform local planning, funding priorities, and efforts to strengthen the homelessness response system.

“This decrease is encouraging and reflects the dedication of our county partners, service providers, and community members working to connect people with housing and support,” said Katrina McKenzie, Executive Director of CHSP. “At the same time, the survey findings remind us that many residents continue to face serious barriers to housing. Our shared responsibility is to build on this progress through prevention, affordable housing, and services that help people achieve lasting stability.”

Understanding the Results

San Benito County and its partners have continued to expand housing and service resources, including shelter, rapid rehousing, transitional housing, rental assistance, permanent supportive housing, and outreach.

The results should also be considered alongside factors that may affect count coverage. The 2025 river cleanup may have reduced the number of people present in known encampment locations during the count. Changes in encampment locations, accessibility, and participation may also have affected the number of people counted.



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The PIT Count alone cannot determine how much of the decrease resulted from housing placements or other factors.

Survey Findings Highlight Continued Housing Needs

In addition to the PIT count, 99 people completed the PIT survey, providing insight into their experiences and barriers to housing. These findings reflect survey respondents and should not be interpreted as representing everyone counted.

Among respondents:

- **82%** were living in San Benito County when they became homeless.
- **74%** experienced homelessness for one year or longer.
- **48%** reported that their current episode was their first experience of homelessness.
- **61%** first experienced homelessness at age 25 or older.

Affordability and income were the most frequently reported barriers to obtaining housing. Seventy-seven percent of respondents reported being unable to afford rent, and 74% reported having no or insufficient income. Other barriers included housing costs (40%), missing documents (34%), prior eviction or housing-related history (30%), and difficulty finding suitable housing (30%).

Health challenges also remained significant. Fifty-four percent reported at least one disabling condition. Self-reported conditions included depression (40%), substance use disorder (36%), physical disability (33%), post-traumatic stress disorder (31%), chronic health conditions (26%), and psychiatric or emotional conditions (22%).

Eleven percent of respondents were employed. Among those who were unemployed, 55% were looking for work. Seven percent reported prior involvement in foster care, and 26% reported having spent time in jail, prison, or juvenile detention.

Together, these findings highlight the overlapping challenges many unhoused residents face, including limited income, long-term homelessness, health conditions, and difficulty finding affordable housing.

Continued Commitment to Housing Stability

San Benito County's Health & Human Services Agency, CHSP, and community partners continue to coordinate housing navigation, supportive services, homelessness prevention, and connections to permanent housing.

"This is exciting news for San Benito County and shows what we can accomplish when our community works together," said Enrique Arreola, Deputy Director of San Benito County Health & Human Services Agency. "I am proud of our staff, the Board of Supervisors, HHSA, and our community partners for their dedication to providing housing and supportive services to our unhoused residents. While this progress is



encouraging, we must continue working together to help more individuals achieve long-term housing stability.”

“The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development-required Point-in-Time Count is vital for understanding homelessness in San Benito County,” said Tracey Belton, Director of San Benito County Health & Human Services Agency. “The data helps guide policy decisions, resource allocation, and our collective efforts to ensure that individuals and families experiencing homelessness have access to the housing and services they need.”

CHSP and its partners remain committed to using these findings to strengthen the local response, expand access to housing and services, and prevent homelessness throughout San Benito County.

For information about homelessness services and resources, contact info@chsp.org.

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