

**HOMELESSNESS RESPONSE
STRATEGIC PLAN
2022 – 2024**

Draft Strategic Plan Framework



COMMUNICATIONS

1. **Communications Goal: Enable equitable access to resources and increase transparency so that *all* community members are aware of efforts to address gaps in service and know where/how/when to reach out for assistance to address concerns related to homelessness.**

1.1. *Supporting Objectives*

Objective 1: Increase homelessness response communications.

Key Tasks

- 1) Maintain and update SLO City's Homelessness Response website with relevant resources including information for At-Risk Community Members, Unhoused or Unsheltered Community Members, Property Owners, and Helpers.¹
- 2) Increase awareness of Ask SLO platform and streamline responses across homelessness response team.
- 3) Collaborate with service providers, the County, and other regional partners to co-facilitate an annual community forum focused on homelessness and local response resources.
- 4) Conduct annual survey to measure awareness of existing homeless services.²
- 5) Ensure that property owners are informed of their rights and available resources and actions that can be taken to prevent and address issues related to homelessness.
- 6) Update City Homeless Resources Pocket Guide annually and distribute to key stakeholders including service providers, regional partners, outreach staff, and unhoused and unsheltered community members.

¹ Homeless Response website has been updated with relevant resources and will be maintained and updated on an ongoing basis.

² Initial community survey was conducted in the Fall of 2022, including individual surveys to unhoused and unsheltered individuals.

Attachment A: Strategic Plan Framework

Objective 2: Communicate **consistent homelessness response messaging** across region.

Key Tasks

- 1) Collaborate with regional partners to develop and implement a communications strategy to inform residents, property owners, and the business community about individual and joint efforts to address homelessness, as well as strategies and resources to address and reduce adverse impacts.
- 2) Establish consistent web, print, and field outreach resources across the region for people vulnerable to or currently experiencing homelessness that are easily accessible and provide clear information on accessing needed services.
- 3) Update the City's external communication portals (e.g., website) to include regional homelessness resources.

1.2. Measurable Outcomes

We will recognize success when –

- 1) Our community members know where to go for information and resources related to homelessness.
- 2) The County is widely recognized as the leader in regional homelessness response efforts.
- 3) Effective talking points are consistently shared across our City and Region.
- 4) Unhoused individuals are clear about service capacity and where to obtain services.

DATA

2. Data Goal: Streamline internal and external data collection processes to enable timely and effective coordination of homelessness response efforts and provide analysis to inform best practices.

2.1. Supporting Objectives

Objective 1: Utilize a **shared data platform**.

Key Tasks

- 1) Develop and pilot a digital homeless encampment management tool to streamline field staff outreach, referral, and response efforts to connect unhoused individuals with needed services.³
- 2) Share data findings and best practices with the County and regional partners to support countywide systems including Coordinated Entry and HMIS.

Objective 2: Increase **data sharing between agencies**.

Key Tasks

- 1) Establish referral system for City staff to make referrals to service providers through the homeless encampment management tool to track outcomes and increase referrals for unhoused individuals.⁴
- 2) Coordinate with County to conduct on-site encampment visits and assess data needs and barriers to accessing services.

Objective 3: Increase transparency of **affordable housing inventory** and **make data more accessible** to service providers and regional partners.

Key Tasks

- 1) Utilize the City's below-market rate affordable housing administrator data to connect individuals at risk of experiencing homelessness with housing opportunities.
- 2) Share information with the County and regional partners on upcoming affordable housing units.
- 3) Promote regional programs (e.g. Section 8 Voucher program) to property owners within the City.

³ The digital homeless encampment management tool (Survey123 GIS app) was launched in December 2022 and is being used by City field staff.

⁴ The digital homeless encampment management tool includes service provider referral capabilities.

Attachment A: Strategic Plan Framework

2.2. *Measurable Outcomes*

We will recognize success when –

- 1) Information is shared more efficiently increasing the placement of unhoused individuals into temporary or permanent housing.
- 2) Shared data resources make it easier for outreach professionals to routinely make successful referrals connecting unhoused individuals with services.
- 3) City staff and regional partners share a tool for data entry that ensures consistency and improves outcomes across the region.
- 4) Encampment cleanups and outreach efforts are coordinated regionally.

PILOT PROGRAMS

3. **Pilot Programs Goal: Collaborate with the County to develop scalable and replicable programs to connect those experiencing homelessness to a variety of shelter and housing options through timely outreach, and advocate for County implementation of successful programs.**

3.1. *Supporting Objectives*

Objective 1: Expand hotel voucher program in collaboration with the County to ensure a **bridge for temporary emergency shelter** is in place as new transitional housing opportunities are developed.

Key Tasks

- 1) Collaborate with the County and homeless services providers to expand hotel voucher program in coordination and alignment with the 2023-25 Financial Plan to provide hotel vouchers, up to a specified amount of annual funding, for unhoused individuals who are unable to receive shelter due to homeless service providers being at capacity.

Objective 2: Coordinate with the County to develop and implement pilot programs for potential long-term implementation if proven effective.

Key Tasks

- 1) Continue development and operation of Community Action Team (CAT) and Mobile Crisis Unit (MCU) pilot programs. Support CAT and MCU encampment outreach efforts to connect unhoused individuals with needed services by developing clear and effective policies and procedures.
- 2) Document successful outcomes for CAT and MCU deployment and share outcomes and best practices with the County.
- 3) Meet regularly with the County's Homeless Services Department to evaluate the effectiveness of City-operated pilot programs and discuss long-term sustainability and implementation at the County level.⁵
- 4) Provide quantitative and qualitative data to County showing the impact of pilot programs.

⁵ Bi-weekly meeting schedule implemented between City's Homelessness Response staff and the County's Homeless Services staff.

Attachment A: Strategic Plan Framework

Objective 3: Identify and support **new pilot program opportunities** to develop shelter and housing specifically for **chronically homeless individuals, medically vulnerable individuals, and families.**

Key Tasks

- 1) Establish partnerships with key stakeholder groups including housing providers, homeless services providers, and faith-based community organizations to provide new transitional housing resources for individuals and families.
- 2) Research emergency shelter and transitional shelter programs that address target beneficiary populations and advocate for further development of small-scale pilot programs.
- 3) Pursue opportunities with the faith-based community to develop safe parking or tiny home placement initiatives.⁶
- 4) Proactively coordinate with the County to assess new pilot program models and determine feasibility.

3.2. Measurable Outcomes

We will recognize success when –

- 1) Pilot programs are developed and implemented in collaboration with the County and achieve long-term sustainability.

⁶ Follow up stakeholder meeting scheduled with faith-based community to discuss partnership and collaboration opportunities.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

4. Funding Opportunities Goal: Proactively seek funding opportunities to meet localized needs as aligned with regional goals to prevent and address homelessness.

4.1. *Supporting Actions*

Objective 1: Strategically apply for **funding opportunities** for homelessness response in **coordination with the County and non-profit partners** to secure funding that may become available through Federal and State, and other sources.

Key Tasks

- 1) Collaborate with County and regional partners to strategically apply for ongoing and one-time homelessness response funding opportunities.
- 2) Track homelessness response grant opportunities as appropriate to meet City goals and objectives outlined in this strategic plan.
- 3) Establish partnerships with donor organizations with an interest in addressing homelessness through municipal government.
- 4) Identify and apply for funding opportunities in collaboration with the County that will increase outreach and case management services to provide unhoused individuals with needed resources and opportunities to engage in services.

Objective 2: Support efforts to establish **emergency/transitional housing** for key beneficiary groups including chronically homeless individuals, medically vulnerable individuals, and families.

Key Tasks

- 1) Establish partnerships with housing developers and homeless services providers to submit funding applications in coordination with the County (e.g., HomeKey Grant Funding) that will provide new transitional housing resources for families.
- 2) Collaborate with housing developers and homeless services providers to expand affordable housing options and coordinate with the County to ensure inclusion of wrap around and support services.
- 3) Advocate for development of skilled nursing facilities in San Luis Obispo County that can serve extremely low-income individuals.

Attachment A: Strategic Plan Framework

Objective 3: Engage in efforts to **leverage resources** to develop a more robust regional service delivery system.

Key Tasks

- 1) Participate on the Steering Committee for the Countywide Strategic Plan to Address Homelessness.⁷
- 2) Regularly participate in activities convened by the Homeless Services Oversight Council, Coordinated Entry System Lead Agencies, homelessness response provider agencies, and neighboring jurisdictions to identify opportunities to leverage funding resources.
- 3) Provide recommendations to the County of SLO Homelessness Accountability Commission and advocate for the formation of key metrics to monitor and improve resource allocation to effectively decrease homelessness.

4.2. Measurable Outcomes

We will recognize success when –

- 1) The County uses its established metrics to guide actions and confirm the positive impact of regional efforts to reduce homelessness.
- 2) The City reaches KPI targets for affordable housing production and implements successful transitional housing projects to help bridge the gap between temporary and permanent housing solutions.
- 3) The City collaborates with County and regional partners on funding opportunities and receives funding for regional efforts.

⁷ Homelessness Response Manager participated in the Steering Committee for the Countywide Strategic Plan development process in 2022.

Attachment A: Strategic Plan Framework

REGIONAL COLLABORATION AND ENGAGEMENT

5. Regional Collaboration & Engagement Goal: Collaborate with the County to engage regional partners in collaborative efforts to improve the effective use of resources and promote proven best practices.

5.1. *Supporting Actions*

Objective 1: Work collaboratively with the **County's Homeless Services team** to establish and support regional priorities and implement strategies in alignment with shared regional goals (e.g. housing, infrastructure, homelessness).

Key Tasks

- 1) Advocate for policies and implement programs that are in alignment with the City and Countywide strategic plans, and regularly share progress with City Council and community members.
- 2) Promote best practices and advocate for consistent KPIs to measure progress on connecting unhoused individuals with services and housing opportunities.

Objective 2: Strengthen relationships with **key stakeholders** to create alignment, accountability, and opportunities for resource sharing and collaboration.

Key Tasks

- 1) Commit to regular community engagement with key stakeholder groups including homeless services providers, housing services providers, faith-based groups, health care providers, downtown business community, activists, and higher education institutions.
- 2) Identify and develop strategies to alleviate the priority concerns of key stakeholders within the framework of the City's strategic plan.
- 3) Collaborate with Downtown SLO, SLOPD, SLOFD, and City outreach teams to enhance programs and services for downtown business community (e.g. Police bike officers, Police Community Service Officers, Fire Mobile Crisis Unit, Police Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design program, Downtown SLO Ambassadors).

Attachment A: Strategic Plan Framework

Objective 3: Coordinate regional encampment outreach and cleanup efforts with the County, service providers, and regional partners.

Key Tasks

- 1) Work with the County to support shelter and housing options to reduce the number, size, and location of encampments.
- 2) Examine current challenges with City's encampment outreach and cleanup efforts and develop consistent strategies and processes, in alignment with the City's Compassionate Assistance, Mitigation and Prevention (CAMP) Standards.
- 3) Coordinate with County on encampment outreach to capitalize on windows of opportunity to connect unhoused individuals to services and shelter and avoid shuffling individuals between encampment locations and jurisdictions.

5.2. Measurable Outcomes

We will recognize success when –

- 1) Regional priorities, strategies, and resources are established by the County and consistently communicated to regional agencies and evaluated to ensure effective implementation
- 2) Identified key stakeholder groups are consistently and intentionally engaged.
- 3) The number of people inhabiting encampments is reduced.
- 4) Encampment outreach, referral, and cleanup efforts are coordinated regionally.