



**Mission:** Build partnerships and promote strong collaborative action to ensure all residents within the County have stable, safe, and healthy places to live.

**Santa Cruz County  
Housing for Health Partnership (H4HP) Policy Board  
Regular Meeting Agenda  
December 17, 2025; 3 pm**

**420 Capitola Ave., Capitola – Capitola City Hall - Community Room**

Zoom Conference Link: <https://santacruzcounty-us.zoomgov.com/j/1608759250>

Call-In Number: +16692545252      Webinar ID#: 1608759250

**Call to Order/Welcome/Introductions**

**Non-Agenda Public Comment**

**Action Items {3:10 – 3:15 pm}**

1. Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes: October 22, 2025
2. Approval of Special Meeting Minutes: November 25, 2025

**Lived Expertise Workgroup Updates {3:15 – 3:30 pm}**

3. General Updates and Report Back

**Report/Discussion Items {3:30 – 4:45 pm}**

4. County of Santa Cruz Strategic Plan 2025-32 Priorities Presentation and Discussion
5. Governance Charter Review / Proposed Changes
6. Annual Needs and Gaps Analysis Preparation and Presentation
7. Continuum of Care (CoC) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Update

**Information Items {4:45 – 5:00 pm}**

8. 2026 Point-in-Time (PIT) Count Planning and Volunteer Recruitment
9. Homeless Memorial
10. Updates on New Shelter/Transitional Housing Capacity
11. Status of HHAP-6 Funding Application

**Board Member Announcements**

**Adjournment**

**Next Meeting:      TBD**

*The County of Santa Cruz does not discriminate based on disability, and no person shall, by reason of a disability, be denied the benefit of the services, programs, or activities. This meeting is in an accessible facility. If you are a person with a disability and require special assistance to participate in the meeting, please call (831) 763-8900 (TDD/TTY- 711) at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting to make arrangements. Persons with disabilities may request a copy of the agenda in an alternative format. As a courtesy to those affected, please attend the meeting smoke and scent free.*



**Mission:** Build partnerships and promote strong collaborative action to ensure all residents within the County have stable, safe, and healthy places to live.

**Housing for Health Partnership (H4HP) Policy Board**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**October 22, 2025; 3 pm**

**Call to Order/Welcome**

*Present: Courtney Lindberg, Dr. Faris Sabbah, Eric Krebs, Kyrolos Saad, Mali LaGoe, Manuel Caceres, Shebreh Kalantari-Johnson, Susie O'Hara, Terence Concannon, Tom Stagg*

*Absent: Heather Rogers, Justin Cummings, Karen Kern, Kate Nester, Mars Nored, Monica Martinez, Rosie Garcia*

*Additions and Deletions to the Agenda: None*

**Non-Agenda Public Comment**

*None Received*

**Action Items (vote required)**

1. Approval of Minutes: August 06, 2025, Regular Meeting

*Discussion: None*

*Public Comment: None*

*Motion: Move to approve the August 06, 2025, meeting minutes.*

*Motion to Approve: Dr. Faris Sabbah*

*Motion Seconded: Mali LaGoe*

*Abstentions: None*

*Board Action: Motion passed unanimously*

**Lived Expertise Workgroup Updates (no vote required):**

2. General Updates and Report Back

*Discussion: The Lived Expertise Action Board (LEAB) and the Youth Lived Expertise Action Board (YLEAB) provided updates on their ongoing activities. Both boards are continuing professional development efforts, including an equity and inclusion training series. They also have additional training in facilitation, public speaking, outreach, and policy advocacy planned for the coming months. The LEAB has designated Manuel Caceres as liaison to the Policy Board and Lisa Bordenave as liaison to the Operations Committee. The YLEAB's liaison to the Operations Committee is Nia Saleem. The YLEAB recently completed a recruitment drive that filled two open seats, leaving one position still available for a youth with lived experience. Both boards also participated in the Neighbors Together community event held in August and are exploring potential collaborations with the Behavioral Health Division. Outreach*



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efforts will continue to fill the remaining youth position and to strengthen cross-departmental coordination.

**Information Items** (no vote required):

3. 2025 Point-in-Time (PIT) Count Planning and Volunteer Recruitment

**Discussion:** *Staff reported that the 2026 Point-in-Time Count is scheduled for Thursday, January 29, 2026. Preparations are underway to expand outreach and volunteer recruitment, particularly among youth populations. The Housing for Health Partnership Policy Board (H4HP Board) is partnering with the Youth Lived Expertise Action Board, the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program collaborative, and the County Office of Education to increase engagement and improve data accuracy in both North and South County. Volunteer trainings will be held via Zoom on October 27, November 24, and December 18, 2025, with an in-person session scheduled for January 22, 2026, at the Capitola Library. Staff will continue recruitment efforts and coordinate with youth-serving organizations to ensure broad participation.*

4. City of Watsonville Homelessness Strategic Plan

**Discussion:** *The City of Watsonville adopted its first Homelessness Strategic Plan on September 23, 2025. The five-year plan outlines three key priorities: ending suffering on the streets, sharing and protecting public spaces, and creating opportunity. Implementation will focus on four main areas—housing, policy and funding, prevention and resources, and management and enforcement. The plan was developed through extensive community input and collaboration with a 25–30-member task force representing diverse stakeholders. The city emphasized that the plan would help align local and regional funding applications, improving competitiveness for future grants. The H4HP Board discussed the importance of coordination among countywide strategic efforts and noted that the City of Watsonville's presentation materials will be shared here [filestream.ashx](#): and [public.cityofwatsonville.escribemeetings.com/Players/ISIStandAlonePlayer.aspx?Id=2ce92d0c-5d79-44d0-8934-bec445fa6cf9](#)*

5. Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) Planning Process

**Discussion:** *The Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA), approved through Proposition 1 in 2024, restructures the former Mental Health Services Act (MHSA). Changes include, but are not limited to, clarifying BHSA funds can be used for substance use services and 30% of BHSA funds must be directed toward housing-related activities. Proposition 1 will reduce the total MHSA/BHSA funding received by counties and trigger shifts in local BHSA funding away from certain service areas, such as, prevention. Counties are required to conduct a community planning process to gather input on how to adjust local BHSA investments in accordance*



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with the new requirements and current local needs. A county Behavioral Health staff member is coordinating the planning process and will host three open community meetings in November. Members discussed strategies for ensuring broad participation from cities, educational institutions, community-based organizations, and the Public Defender's Office. It was noted that BHSA revenue is volatile because it is a tax on households earning over \$1 million /year. Funding volatility makes long-term planning for housing or ongoing service commitments challenging. Suggestions were made to involve city representatives and city subcommittees to strengthen regional coordination. Members emphasized the importance of aligning behavioral health planning with homelessness-related goals, given the overlap between these systems. Additional discussion included the importance of regional collaboration, assessing funding opportunities, identifying emerging issues, and ensuring adequate representation across jurisdictions.

## 6. Status of HHAP-6 Funding Application

*Discussion:*

*Housing for Health Staff reported that the Continuum of Care (CoC) successfully submitted its Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP-6) application and is now working on amendments requested by the state, which are due by October 29, 2025. The requested revisions include tribal consultation documentation, updates to encampment data, corrections to the budget, and stronger connections between proposed actions and performance measures. County staff are actively engaging tribal partners to ensure meaningful consultation and inclusion in future planning efforts.*

## 7. Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) and Housing Authority Budget Issues

*Discussion:*

*Staff shared that the Emergency Housing Voucher program is projected to run out of funds by December 2026. Approximately 250 households, representing 550 individuals in Santa Cruz County, currently rely on these vouchers. The Housing Authority and the County's Housing for Health Division are coordinating efforts to help participants transition to alternative housing options before the program ends. Members were also informed that potential federal budget cuts of 5 to 15 percent, equivalent to \$6 to \$15 million, could further reduce Housing Authority funding and affect up to 2,000 local households. Due to the ongoing federal government shutdown, HUD funding is only secured through mid-November, creating uncertainty about rent payments in the coming months.*

## 8. Potential Continuum of Care (CoC) Policy and Funding Changes

*Discussion:*

*Staff reported on anticipated changes to HUD CoC funding including a cap of the 30% on the amount of funds that can be used for permanent housing programs. If this change goes through, it could impact over \$4M of programs within our CoC*



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and jeopardize long-term rental assistance for formerly homeless individuals with disabilities.

#### 9. One Big Beautiful Bill Act Changes

*Discussion:*

*The H4HP Board discussed potential impacts of federal policy changes, including the "One Big Beautiful Bill Act," introduced in July 2025, which proposes significant cuts to safety-net programs such as Medicaid and SNAP. These reductions, combined with the scheduled end of the Emergency Housing Voucher program, could lead to an increase in homelessness. Members discussed advocacy opportunities, including coordinated letters from local cities, school districts, and associations such as the League of Cities and the California School Boards Association, urging the protection of federal housing and homelessness funding. Staff agreed to compile and share a timeline of key legislative and funding milestones to support coordinated advocacy efforts across the CoC.*

#### 10. Medi-Cal – CalAIM, Transitional Rent, Future

*Discussion:*

*Staff reported on major Medi-Cal changes resulting from the One Big Beautiful Bill Act. The new change will require able-bodied adults to verify their work participation every six months to keep benefits. About one-third of county residents use Medi-Cal, and an estimated 10 to 25 percent may lose coverage under the new rules. Changes to Medicaid will significantly impact local hospitals, clinics, and behavioral health programs, as well as Medi-Cal investments in housing. Staff also noted that California's CalAIM housing-related services waiver will end in December 2026, which will reduce eligibility for housing supports. Local clinics and hospitals are already strained and may face further challenges as managed care plans make funding decisions. Staff also reported an update on the BH Connect waiver, approved in December, which creates a transitional rent benefit for Medi-Cal members with mental health or substance use needs. Starting in January 2026, all managed care plans must offer this benefit through contracts with local agencies. The County is working with Kaiser and the Central California Alliance for Health to establish agreements, and both plans may provide one-time start-up funding. Transitional housing eligibility requires meeting specialty mental health or substance use criteria and having a documented sustainable housing plan after the six-month transitional rental period. Staff estimate that 70 to 100 people may qualify in 2026 due to limited long-term housing availability. Highlighted that although the number may be small, the transitional rent benefit will still offer up to six months of rental assistance for eligible individuals.*



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11. CoC Policy Board Member Remote Meeting Participation

**Discussion:** Staff in the Housing for Health Division will receive updates and guidance from County legal counsel on implementing California Senate Bill 707, signed into law on October 3, 2025, which introduces significant amendments to the Brown Act.

12. CoC Policy Board Agenda Development Process

**Discussion:** H4HP Board members encouraged establishing a structured annual session to review data, trends, and needs, recommending that such an item be scheduled as general business rather than informational only, to allow Board action. Staff acknowledged the volume and complexity of public data and expressed interest in creating digestible presentations organized by population, program type, or service category. Members suggested using buckets such as prevention, outreach, shelter, and housing to guide future analyses. Staff noted that HUD's housing inventory charts and program performance data may support this work. Members proposed bringing forward an agenda item recommending a dedicated session to conduct a needs and gaps review with Board input.

13. November 12 – CoC Meeting @ 1440 Multiversity in Scotts Valley – 12-4:30 pm (lunch included)

**Discussion:** Housing for Health Division staff will host a CoC member meeting at the 1440 Multiversity campus in Scotts Valley on Wednesday, November 12th, from 12-4:30 pm. The meeting will focus on creating strategies to respond to significant changes in state and federal policies in innovative and collaborative ways. Sam Tsemberis, PhD, a founder and advocate for Housing First programs, will be attending the event to contribute to our discussions.

**Report/Discussion Items (no vote required)**

14. Continuum of Care – “System” and Policy Board Scope

The H4HP Board discussed its scope, authority, and responsibilities within the Continuum of Care (CoC) system. Staff explained that while federal language provides broad discretion for discussion topics, the Board's authority is limited to areas delegated by specific funding sources or local agencies. Traditional areas of CoC authority include Continuum of Care and Emergency Solutions Grant funding from HUD, oversight of coordinated entry, and the HMIS data system. Staff noted that additional state programs and local funding processes also require CoC participation, creating a patchwork of authority that varies across programs. Staff reviewed how the division defines the local housing and service system based on HMIS participation, county contracts, requirements to participate in the CoC, or formal partnership agreements. Some community entities, including school districts and the university, are not currently included because there is no formal relationship.



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Board members asked clarifying questions about how authority is granted across programs and raised the need to recognize substantial homelessness-response activities conducted by cities, including shelter and outreach. Staff provided examples of programs that participate in the system and others that are not connected to HMIS or CoC processes. Members expressed appreciation for materials outlining clear authority, responsibility, and aspirational roles, noting that these frameworks support more informed funding decisions. Staff discussed past gap analyses, noting that earlier recommendations exceeded current performance due to assumptions about permanent housing exits and the availability of affordable housing, which remains the most significant unmet need. Members suggested an annual review to synthesize emerging data, changes in funding, and community conditions to better guide Board decision-making. The H4HP Board discussed how to define system boundaries and whether needs analyses should include mainstream systems such as healthcare, criminal justice, education, and federal programs like HUD-VASH. Staff noted ongoing efforts at the federal and state levels to coordinate programs serving people experiencing homelessness and emphasized the importance of local interaction with these broader systems.

## 15. 2026 Meeting Plan, Calendar, and Locations

### *Discussion:*

The H4HP Board also discussed meeting logistics, including scheduling and challenges related to travel between regions of the county, and agreed that future planning should consider ways to improve participation and access.

## Board Member Announcements

## Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 PM.

**Next Meeting:**      **Wednesday, December 17, 2025, 3:00 pm**

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## Housing for Health Partnership (H4HP) Policy Board

### Special Meeting Minutes

**November 25, 2025; 11am**

#### **Call to Order/Welcome**

**Present:** Heather Rogers, Mali LaGoe, Dr. Marni R. Sandoval, Manuel Caceres, Monica Martinez, Shebreh Kalantari-Johnson, Susie O'Hara, Terence Concannon, Tom Stagg

**Absent:** Courtney Lindberg, Dr. Faris Sabbah, Justin Cummings, Kate Nester, Kyrolos Saad, Mars Nored, Rosie Garcia

*Additions and Deletions to the Agenda:* None

#### **Non-Agenda Public Comment**

*None Received*

#### **Action Items (vote required)**

##### **1. Approval of Local Process Timeline**

*Discussion:*

*The Housing for Health Partnership Policy Board (H4HP Board) held a special meeting to review the significant changes in the newly released federal Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Continuum of Care (CoC) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) and its impact on local homelessness and housing programs. Staff explained that the federal administration abruptly shifted national policy away from Housing First and long-term permanent housing, toward models requiring mandatory treatment, higher levels of services, and an emphasis on temporary housing. Discussed that these changes, combined with a dramatically shortened timeline, create substantial risk for local programs that rely on federal funds to keep vulnerable residents housed. The H4HP Board learned that the new NOFO reduces the amount of funding that can be safely renewed in Tier 1 from approximately 90% to 30%, and that 70% of the funds placed in Tier 2 will be highly competitive nationally. Mentioned that there is also a new permanent housing funding cap that further limits how much the County can request, leaving a multimillion-dollar gap between historic funding levels and what is now allowed. Mentioned that several projects could lose rental assistance as early as this spring if funds are delayed or denied. Board members discussed the challenges of aligning local applications with federal requirements that may conflict with community values, including voluntary services, harm reduction, and Santa Cruz County's status as a sanctuary jurisdiction. Staff explained that the NOFO's "risk assessment" language may allow federal reviewers to evaluate local jurisdictions for alignment*



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with administration policy, including positions on immigration, gender identity, and DEI. Staff will also coordinate with County departments and other funding partners to explore local funding options for households most at risk if federal support is lost. To protect the most vulnerable residents, the Board directed staff to prioritize rental assistance for permanent supportive housing projects that rely on HUD funding to maintain current housing development commitments. These projects will be placed in Tier 1 to maximize their chance of renewal. The H4HP Board also directed staff to work closely with providers who may need to restructure programs into transitional housing or supportive services-only models to remain eligible under the new rules.

**Public Comment:** None

**Motion:** Move to approve the proposed CoC NOFO Process Timeline, including meeting dates as presented.

**Motion to Approve:** Susie O’ Hara

**Motion Seconded:** Shebreh Kalantari-Johnson

**Abstentions:** None

**Board Action:** Motion passed

## 2. Approval of Application Selection Process and Review

**Discussion:** The H4HP Board discussed the review process for the upcoming U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), focusing on the tight federal deadlines and how authority will be shared between the Rating and Ranking Committee and the H4HP Board. Staff explained that applications are due December 15, and that HUD NOFO requires preliminary recommendations to be published by December 30, meaning the committee must complete its work before the H4HP Board meets on January 7. Although the committee’s recommendations will be posted in December, staff clarified they will remain preliminary and subject to final approval by the H4HP Board. Any appeals submitted after December 30 will also be considered by the H4HP Board. Board members discussed concerns about the limited time for H4HP Board input and whether adjusting meeting dates could help, but staff noted that the compressed schedule leaves little flexibility. The Board reviewed the need for a committee with diverse experience, while remaining small enough to manage the substantial review workload and confirmed that committee members must not have conflicts of interest. Staff explained that H4HP Board will receive project summaries rather than complete applications, allowing members to provide policy-level feedback at the January meeting.

**Public Comment:** None

**Motion:** Move to approve the establishment of a 2025 Review and Ranking Committee to review, rate, and develop a proposed ranking of the projects and empower H4HP



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staff to recruit 5-6 members and include Board volunteers and other representatives, particularly from South County, to ensure balanced representation. Grant authority one-time to the Committee to make the recommended selection/ranking decisions for public notification by no later than December 30, 2025, to be approved and finalized by the H4HP Board at a special meeting on January 7, 2026.

**Motion to Approve:** Shebreh Kalantari-Johnson

**Motion Seconded:** Terence Concannon

**Abstentions:** None

**Board Action:** Motion passed

### 3. Approval of Changes to Local Project Scoring Criteria

**Discussion:** The H4HP Board discussed potential strategies for structuring applications under the new HUD NOFO, including whether consolidating applications into fewer, larger Tier 2 submissions could create efficiencies or improve competitiveness. Members considered whether a consolidated strategy might better articulate the community's approach, while others noted that it could reduce the number of funding opportunities if fewer applications are submitted. The H4HP Board also discussed broader strategic concerns, including uncertainty about additional federal requirements that may be added after the initial scoring process. Staff noted that HUD has indicated that projects may be required to meet all screening criteria, including treatment-related requirements, before signing a contract, meaning that projects could pass scoring but ultimately receive agreements that the County or contracted agency cannot accept. H4HP Board Members expressed concern that these NOFO changes could threaten existing permanent supportive housing programs and lead to the loss of housing for current tenants, prompting a discussion about the need to prioritize permanent supportive housing rental assistance funding for a Tier 1 ranking to prevent displacement. Members expressed interest in providing guidance on scoring criteria and identifying which populations or project types should receive priority if funding is limited. The H4HP Board also discussed ways to group applications by population type to support collaboration and, where possible, maintain program elements. Staff described ongoing discussions with providers serving domestic violence survivors, youth, families, and individuals with behavioral health needs about potential partnerships, transitional housing models, and pooled subsidy strategies. The H4HP Board noted that clustering applications by population could help preserve housing options despite reduced federal funding and changing program requirements.

**Public Comment:** None

**Motion:** Move to approve the staff recommendation to prioritize permanent supportive housing rental assistance funding for a Tier 1 ranking. Tier 1 is set aside for projects that dedicate 100% of their funds to rental assistance linked to existing



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affordable housing developments that require this funding as part of their development commitments. Tier 1 is for Permanent housing; set aside a cap of 30%. Policy board directs the ranking committee to prioritize in tier 1 those that serve the most vulnerable (chronically homeless/disabled). Tier 1 prioritizes reallocation projects over new bonus projects in the rating and ranking within tier 2, directs staff to current grantees to collaborate on population-specific reallocation projects (transitional housing, and supportive service only) that maximize project continuity and maintain stability with the existing program while creating opportunities to use other funds to keep projects operational. Within tier 2, prioritize reallocation projects over new bonus projects in the rating and ranking. Utilize the scoring criteria recommended by staff to rate and rank the project with tier 2. Grant staff authority to make minor changes to scoring criteria to align with national scoring priorities.

**Motion to Approve:** Susie O' Hara

**Motion Seconded:** Mali LaGoe

**Abstentions:** None

**Board Action:** Motion passed

#### **Board Member Announcements**

#### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 PM.

**Next Meeting:** Wednesday, December 17, 2025, 3:00 pm

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## **LEAB/YLEAB 12/17/25 POLICY BOARD UPDATES**

### **LEAB Updates:**

- **Projects**
  - LEAB will continue to accept external project requests through its [online form](#), supporting community partners seeking lived experience input.
  - LEAB provided input on the 2032 County Strategic Plan led by the County Executive Office staff to inform approach and priorities over the next several years.
  - LEAB is continuing to plan to host a peer space along with support from community partners.
- **Recruitment**
  - LEAB is currently recruiting for a new member. We will share out the flyer; additionally, let Manuel know if you know of any people who may be interested.
- Manuel Caceres continues to serve as the LEAB policy board Liaison and Lisa Bordenave continues to serve as the Operations Committee Liaison, attending meetings every other month.

### **YLEAB Updates:**

- **Recruitment**
  - YLEAB members spearheaded the recruitment process and has recently filled all open seats!
- **Projects**
  - YLEAB will continue to accept external project requests through its [online form](#), supporting community partners seeking lived experience input.
  - YLEAB provided input on the 2032 County Strategic Plan led by the County Executive Office staff to inform approach and priorities over the next several years.
  - YLEAB is currently collaborating with the Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Division to support the 2026-2029 Community Planning Process, through an informal onsite gathering of youth with lived experience of homelessness incorporating a feedback process and art activity.
- Kyro Saad continues to serve as the YLEAB policy board liaison and Nia Saleem serves as the YLEAB Operations Committee Liaison, attending meetings every other month.

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## Report/Discussion Items 4-7

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### 4. County of Santa Cruz Strategic Plan 2025-32 Priorities Presentation and Discussion

The County of Santa Cruz is currently updating its Strategic Plan for the period 2025-2032. Staff from the County Executive Office have been engaged in gathering community input to inform the development of a draft strategic plan to present to the County Board of Supervisors for adoption in the spring of 2026. Information about the Plan and process behind its development can be found on this website: [Strategic Plan 2032](#).

Sven Stafford, Principal Administrative Analyst from the County Executive Office, will attend the Policy Board meeting to provide more information and gathering input from CoC Policy Board members.

### 5. Governance Charter Review / Proposed Changes

The current Housing for Health Partnership Governance Charter calls for an annual review of its contents. Staff are currently recommended only minor language and formatting changes to the current charter for Board consideration and approval:

- Clarification on the types of groups or committees that follow public meeting standards
- Removing the word “citizen” from the Policy Board membership table to clarify citizenship is not a requirement for participation
- Acknowledging the Policy Board will comply with Brown Act requirements and any approved amendments to the Brown Act
- Clarifying how Board meeting agendas are created and how additional items can be requested for future agendas
- Updating formatting of the document

A redlined version of the proposed updates to the Charter are included in the Board packet. Board members can accept and approve the proposed edits or propose additional changes at the meeting.

### 6. Annual Needs and Gaps Analysis Preparation and Presentation

H4H staff are working on a summary needs and gaps analysis to share with the CoC Policy Board in early 2026. Staff would like to work toward creating a standardized format for this summary and have the following questions for Board members:

- What key information would you like presented?
- How would you like the information presented (format)?
- What quantity of information are you interested in reviewing/seeing (# of pages, slides, etc.)?

- Should we hold a special meeting to review the analysis? If yes, should the special meeting be a meeting of the Policy Board or a community meeting that encourages attendance / participation from all CoC members?

Staff anticipate that this analysis could be completed by the end of January or early February 2026 depending on the extent of information requested and the audience for reviewing/discussing the information.

## **7. Continuum of Care (CoC) Notice of Funding Opportunity Update**

On Monday, December 8, 2025, HUD issued a formal announcement withdrawing the FY 2025 CoC grant program NOFO:

“The Department has withdrawn a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) with respect to the Continuum of Care (CoC) grant program. This withdrawal will allow the Department to make appropriate revisions to the NOFO, and the Department intends to do so. In the previous FY 24-25 NOFO, the Department reserved the right to make changes to the NOFO instead of processing renewals for a variety of reasons, including to accommodate a new CoC or Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) priority or new funding source. The Department still intends to exercise this discretion and make changes to the previously issued CoC NOFO to account for new priorities. HUD anticipates reissuing a modified NOFO well in advance of the deadline for obligation of available Fiscal Year 2025 funds.”

Given this announcement, H4H staff informed community members that the local application process will be put on hold while we wait for further information from HUD. H4H staff have included an “Updates from Homebase” document in the Board packet that answers questions related to the NOFO. The next court hearing related to the NOFO is scheduled for Friday, December 19, 2025. More information about likely next actions will be available after the hearing.

There is also an opportunity to advocate to have congress direct the administration to renew existing grants during budget reconciliation conversations in January. The US Conference of Mayors, National League of Cities, and National Association of Counties have signed on to letters to Congress on this issue. Based on information from the National Alliance to End Homelessness - education, health care, public defender, business and other groups have not sent in formal letters to Congress on this issue yet. The more letters and communications sent to elected representatives the more likely they will act on this issue.

**SANTA CRUZ COUNTY HOUSING FOR HEALTH PARTNERSHIP**

**GOVERNANCE CHARTER**

**Originally Adopted June 18, 2021**

**Revision Adopted December 18, 2024**

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## ARTICLE 1: PURPOSE AND AUTHORITY

The Santa Cruz County Housing for Health Partnership (the Partnership) aligns and develops resources, community members, collective wisdom, and action across the greater Santa Cruz County community to promote public health and ensure all county residents have stable, safe, and healthy places to live.

The Partnership serves as the community's designated Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Continuum of Care (CoC) governance entity in compliance with the requirements of federal regulations governing receipt of CoC funding, 24 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 578. This charter was developed in partnership with staff members from the County of Santa Cruz Human Services Department Housing for Health Division that currently serves as the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) lead agency, the CoC collaborative applicant, and the HUD Coordinated Entry implementation lead. Elements of this charter that reflect federal requirements are identified with a blue parenthetical note ([CoC Requirement](#)).

## ARTICLE 2: STRUCTURE

The Partnership consists of:

1. A **Policy Board** responsible for high level planning and decision-making. The Board sets overall policy direction and provides system oversight. The Board relies on guidance and support from CoC staff members and CoC general membership working groups to guide Policy Board planning and decision-making. Any [continuing](#) group or committee created by formal Policy Board action must follow the public meeting standards of the Policy Board. See Article 3.
2. **Working Groups** provide recommendations, input and guidance on key operational issues, resource needs, and areas for policy change and improvement. Working Groups are created by CoC staff members and form as needed and change over time based on evolving community needs, priorities, and opportunities. Working Groups bring together particular individuals with roles and responsibilities relevant to a specific focus area. Working groups coordinate local efforts and provide input and advice to the Policy Board. The Governance charter outlines current CoC Working Groups. See Article 4.
3. The **General Membership** consisting of any individual or organization in the community interested in joining the collective effort to ensure all county residents have stable, safe, and healthy places to live. The Policy Board may request formal input or votes from the General Membership on specific topics. Membership expectations are set by the Policy Board. See Article 5.
4. **Staffing** for the Partnership is provided by the Santa Cruz County Human Services Department, Housing for Health Division (H4H). See Article 6.

## ARTICLE 3: POLICY BOARD

### 1. Responsibilities of the Policy Board

The Policy Board has the following responsibilities:

- a. Create and/or adopt guiding principles, system objectives, equity goals and community-level plans for addressing homelessness, starting with the *Housing for a Healthy Santa Cruz Strategic Framework*, and including revisions and updates.

- b. Review and approve six-month work plans to implement the *Housing for a Healthy Santa Cruz Framework and subsequent revisions to the Framework*.
- c. Review and approve funding recommendations presented by CoC staff, Working Groups, or other entities.
- d. Approve applications for HUD Continuum of Care (CoC) and Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funding and any funds from the State of California or other sources that require CoC oversight, management, approval, or coordination. ([CoC Requirement](#)).

  - i. Designate a Collaborative Applicant for CoC funding. The current Collaborative Applicant is H4H. ([CoC Requirement](#)).
  - ii. Designate a Ranking and Review Committee composed of non-conflicted members to review, rate, and rank CoC applications and present a final Project Priority List to the Policy Board for approval ([CoC Requirement](#)).

- e. Review and approve operational standards, policies, and high-level procedures for components of the housing crisis response system including, but not limited to, Coordinated Entry. ([CoC Requirement](#)).

  - i. Designate a Coordinated Entry Management Entity and an Evaluation Entity. H4H is the current Management Entity. ([CoC Requirement](#)).

- f. Conduct high level evaluation of the system and make high level recommendations for continuous improvement. ([CoC Requirement](#)).

  - i. Conduct high level tracking of progress towards goals and outcomes in *Housing for a Healthy Santa Cruz and subsequent Framework revisions* and related six-month work plans, as well as progress towards other emerging priorities and activities.
  - ii. Designate an entity to manage the HUD mandated Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and provide oversight for HMIS. The current HMIS management entity is H4H ([CoC Requirement](#)).
  - iii. Approve the methodology and publication of the results of the bi-annual Point in Time (PIT) Count. ([CoC Requirement](#)).

- g. Provide direction to staff related to high-level communications and reports to interested community members on results of investments and operations of the system and progress on Framework goals.
- h. Ensure appropriate consultation and coordination with CoC, HUD Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), and other funding recipients when such efforts are required by HUD or other funding agencies.
- i. Provide guidance to staff on how to support local jurisdictions in their completion of HUD Consolidated Plans, Annual Plans, and Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Reports (CAPER).

## 2. Policy Board Membership

The Policy Board consists of 15 community leaders and partners who represent different entities and constituencies with significant experience and/or resources to address issues related to homelessness and housing instability. Slots on the Board fall into 3 categories: jurisdictional representatives, CoC member representatives, and partner system representatives. At least two members of the Board must have had lived experience of homelessness at some point in their lives.

Partners	Number of Seats	Eligible Representatives
<b>A. Jurisdictional Representatives</b>	<b>9</b>	
City of Santa Cruz	2	
City of Watsonville	2	
City of Scotts Valley/City of Capitola (alternating appointments)	1	May be filled by elected officials, government staff, or other <a href="#">citizen/community members</a> .
County of Santa Cruz	4	
<b>B. CoC Member Representatives</b>	<b>3</b>	
Adult (25 and older) with personal lived experience of homelessness in Santa Cruz County	1	May be filled by a member of the lived expertise action working group. An alternate representative from this same group is strongly encouraged to attend all meetings.
Youth (18 – 25 years old) with personal lived experience of homelessness in Santa Cruz County	1	May be filled by a member of the lived expertise action group. An alternate representative from this same group is strongly encouraged to attend all meetings.
Housing/Services Provider in Santa Cruz County	1	May be filled by a member of the operations workgroup. An alternate representative from this same group is strongly encouraged to attend all meetings.
<b>C. Partner System Representatives</b>	<b>3</b>	
Health Sector	1	May come from non-profit, for-profit, public agencies or philanthropic entities.
Workforce/Business/Foundation Sector	1	
Education Sector	1	

The CoC regulations require that the CoC Board must “be representative of the relevant organizations and of projects serving homeless subpopulations; and include at least one homeless or formerly homeless individual.” Board members will complete a brief checklist noting which organizations and groups they represent. Members may represent more than one group. All Board members will receive an orientation to the work of the CoC and their responsibilities as a Board member.

### 3. Appointments to the Board

HUD CoC regulations require that the process for appointing Board members will be reviewed, updated, and approved at least once every five years. Members will be appointed by an existing or to-be-created entity or body that represents that sector, as follows:

- a. Jurisdictional Representatives will be appointed by the jurisdiction's respective elected body (City Council or County Board of Supervisors). Jurisdictional representatives may be elected officials, staff of the jurisdiction, or community representatives determined by the appointing body to represent the interests and concerns of the jurisdiction. For members appointed by the County, no more than two may be elected officials. City jurisdictions may appoint up to two elected officials.
- b. CoC Member Representatives will be appointed by their respective working groups as long as the groups remain active. If there are no active working groups for a given role, the CoC membership will nominate and elect a representative.
- c. Partner System Representatives will be appointed by entities representing the work of the designated sector and will be recruited and recommended by H4H staff. The existing Policy Board will confirm sector representatives to be added to the Board. Criteria for selection of representatives will include:
  - i. Organization brings funding or other policy/systems change levers to the collective effort.
  - ii. Organization or individual within organization is motivated and committed to taking action to ensure all county residents have stable, safe, and healthy places to live.
  - iii. Nominees represent the interests and concerns of the appointing organization and of the field of interest.

### 4. Board Terms

Board Members will serve two-year terms. Each appointing body may determine if they will impose term limits on their representatives. If a member leaves before their two-year term is completed, their appointing body will appoint a replacement to serve out the remainder of their term.

### 5. Board Member Responsibilities

Each member will sign a written set of commitments for serving as a Board member, including:

- a. A code of conduct ([CoC Requirement](#)), including agreement to abide by HUD (Title 24 Code of Federal Regulations {CFR} part 578.5) and Policy-Board adopted conflict of interest regulations and recusal processes for the Board, its chair(s), and any person acting on behalf of the Board.
- b. Standards for Board service including expectations for attendance, preparation, and other responsibilities.
- c. All regular Members of the Board shall strive to attend all meetings. A Member that misses more than two meetings in a given calendar year may be removed by an action of the Board. Staff shall reach out to Members that have missed two meetings in a year to confirm they want to remain on the Board for their term and to encourage regular attendance.
- d. A pre-designated alternate may be established for each Member. Alternates for a given Member must be appointed by the Member's original appointing body. Alternates shall receive and remain informed about all meeting materials. Alternates may participate and vote only

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when the primary member has an unavoidable reason for not attending. Otherwise, alternates may participate in meetings as members of the public but not as primary members ~~while in attendance.~~

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~~Board members who fail to uphold their responsibilities may be removed by an action of the Board.~~

## 6. Co-Chairs

The Board will elect two co-chairs. Co-chairs may represent any of the three categories of ~~representatives~~ ~~but~~ representatives but may not both be representatives from the same category type. The co-chairs are responsible for working with staff to develop meeting agendas and to chair Board meetings. Staff will assist with meeting facilitation and the presentation of agenda items. The co-chair terms will be two years. A co-chair may be appointed for a subsequent term at the discretion of the Board. The co-chair terms will be staggered so that they do not change in the same year. To provide for staggering, one of the first two co-chair terms under this Charter will be a special one-year term; thereafter, the term will revert to two years.

## 7. Meetings of the Board

- a. Brown Act - The Policy Board is subject to the California Brown Act ~~and any future amendments to the Act. and a~~ All meetings will be conducted in alignment with those requirements.
- b. Frequency - The Board will meet at least every other month at a regularly scheduled time. Meetings may be held with more frequency as needed.
- c. Decision-Making - Board decisions and actions should strive to achieve consensus. However, in cases where consensus cannot be reached, the decision will be subject to a simple majority vote. Votes will be taken and recorded at Board meetings for decision/action items.
- d. Quorums - The Board must have a quorum to take any action. A quorum is defined as 8 or more members.
- e. Meeting Notification - A meeting notice and agenda shall be publicly posted at least 72 hours prior to each Board meeting.
- f. Public Comment and Standing Agenda Items - Each Board meeting shall include opportunities for public comment, in accordance with the Brown Act.
- fg. Agenda Topics - Most meeting agenda topics are generated by H4H staff members. Policy Board members and CoC members may request the addition of topics to future Board meetings. Request for additional topics can be made during or outside of a Policy Board meeting. Staff and current co-chairs will determine the final agendas for meetings.

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## ARTICLE 4: WORKING GROUPS

### 1. Authority

CoC staff members may create Working Groups to generate recommendations, provide input and guidance on key operational issues, identify and address resource needs, enhance community collaborations, support training and educational efforts, and to generate ideas and recommendations for policy changes and improvements.

Working groups do not have the authority to approve formal CoC policy changes or funding decisions. The number and type of Working Groups will evolve over time to meet changing local needs. Several Working Groups are expected to continue over time given the nature of the work within the CoC. These groups include: (1) CoC Operations Workgroup; (2) Lived Expertise Action Group; (3) Youth Lived Expertise Action Group; (4) HMIS User Workgroup; (5) Coordinated Entry Connectors Workgroup.

## 2. Operations Workgroup

### a. Responsibilities

The Operations Workgroup meets to address Housing for Health system operational issues and to draft new or updated policies and procedures for consideration by the Policy Board. At a minimum, this group should include recipients of federal CoC and ESG funding since CoC policies and procedures directly impact these grant recipients.

#### *System Policies and Standards*

- i. Develop and update DRAFT operational standards, policies, and high-level procedures for components of the system, including how people access and are prioritized for each component ([CoC Requirement](#)):
  - a. Prevention
  - b. Coordinated Entry and Housing Problem Solving
  - c. Outreach
  - d. Temporary shelter and transitional housing
  - e. Rapid rehousing and other time-limited subsidy program models (standards to include policies for determining what percentage or amount of rent each program participant must pay)
  - f. Permanent supportive housing and other housing dedicated for people experiencing homelessness
  - g. Supportive services dedicated to people experiencing homelessness

Standards must include required system policies such as those required under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). ([CoC Requirement](#))

- ii. Oversight and evaluation of the HUD mandated Coordinated Entry System (CES). ([CoC Requirement](#))
- iii. Establish a mechanism for client and community feedback and complaints to be handled at the system level and used to make system level improvements, when appropriate.

#### *Data and Performance Measurement*

- i. Building from HUD's required System Performance measures, establish performance measures and targets for the system and its component parts, as listed above. Proposed targets to be brought to Policy Board for approval.
- ii. Evaluate the housing crisis response system and develop continuous strategies for improvement; implement Results-Based Accountability (RBA) across the system.
- iii. Develop and manage systems for collecting and managing data needed to track performance and evaluate the system, including:
  - a. Review, revise, and approve a privacy plan, security plan, and data quality plan for the HMIS. ([CoC Requirement](#))
  - b. Conduct the HUD required Point in Time Count (PIT), not less than every other year and

with a goal of moving to annual. [\(CoC Requirement\)](#)

- c. Conduct a regularly updated inventory of the system and map of the resources available to respond to homelessness, including maintaining and updating the HUD required Housing Inventory Count (HIC) [\(CoC Requirement\)](#)
- d. Quantify system gaps and needs on a regular basis [\(CoC Requirement\)](#)
- e. Produce regular reports to funders (including HUD), local leadership, community members and other stakeholders as needed to understand and assess the performance of the system. [\(CoC Requirement\)](#)
- f. Coordinate with local jurisdictions to identify the information they need and facilitate needed data collection and sharing between organizations.
- g. Maximize data transparency between County, cities, service providers and the public.
- h. Ensure compliance with HUD HMIS requirements.
- i. Ensure consistent and active participation of agencies in HMIS including required and desired participating agencies.

b. Participants

The Operations Workgroup should have appropriate representation of key CoC housing and service providers. The size of the group may vary over time but should not be too large to preclude inclusive discussions and collaborative decision-making. Participants in the group should make commitments to remain active in the group for a period of at least two years and must represent a cross-section of expertise in program types and subpopulations as well as geographic diversity. Participants must represent the relevant organizations and projects serving homeless populations, such as persons with substance use disorders, persons with HIV/AIDS, veterans, persons who are chronically homeless, families with children, unaccompanied youth, persons with serious mental illness, and survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

Participants in the group will be recruited by CoC staff members to ensure active involvement among key housing and service provider organizational members of the CoC. Organizations that receive HUD CoC and ESG funding and agencies that use the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) will be strongly encouraged to participate. Individuals from the CoC lived expertise working groups will be strongly encouraged to participate as well. CoC staff shall work to create a group with diverse perspectives, roles, and experiences according to the representation parameters described above.

The Operations Working Group shall nominate one participant and an alternate to serve on the CoC Policy Board.

c. Meetings

The Operations Workgroup shall meet at least every other month at a regularly scheduled time.

### **3. Lived Expertise Action Group (Group Name TBD)**

#### **a. Responsibilities**

The Lived Expertise Action Group will provide advisory and decision-making support to the Policy Board and Operations Workgroup on system operations, data, evaluation, and any other topic relevant to improvement of the community's efforts to ensure stable, safe, and healthy places to live for all County residents.

#### **b. Membership**

The Lived Expertise Action Group will consist of a minimum of 5 members who are either currently experiencing homelessness or who have experienced homelessness in Santa Cruz County that have a diverse range of personal experiences and expertise to contribute to the group. The Group is staffed by H4H staff and consultants who will identify members through community outreach.

#### **c. Meetings**

Meetings will be coordinated by H4H staff and will be held at accessible and equitable locations. Meeting frequency will be at the discretion of the Group but will occur at least six times per year.

### **4. Youth Lived Expertise Action Group (Group Name TBD)**

#### **a. Responsibilities**

The Youth Lived Expertise Action Group will provide advisory and decision-making support to the Policy Board and Operations Workgroup on system operations, data, evaluation for all elements of the system that impact transition age youth, and for those components funded by the HUD Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP). [\(CoC Requirement\)](#)

#### **b. Membership**

The Youth Lived Expertise Action Board (Y-LEAB) will consist of a minimum of 5 members who are either currently experiencing homelessness or who have experienced homelessness that have a diverse range of personal experiences and expertise to contribute to the group. Y-LEAB members must be between the ages of 18 and 25 years old. The Y-LEAB is staffed by H4H staff who will identify members through community outreach.

#### **c. Meetings**

Meetings will be coordinated by H4H staff and will be held at accessible and equitable locations. Meeting frequency will be at the discretion of the LEAB but will occur at least twelve times per year.

5. **HMIS Workgroup also known as “HMIS Office Hours”**

a. Responsibilities

The HMIS Workgroup provides recommendations and advice to CoC Staff and the HMIS community administration team related to HMIS policies, procedures, training, and quality improvement efforts. The Workgroup also provides an opportunity for staff to provide updates, feedback, and brief trainings for HMIS users and HMIS agency leads.

b. Membership

The HMIS Workgroup includes CoC staff involved with administering HMIS, staff from the HMIS software vendor team, HMIS leads from HMIS-participating agencies, and any interested HMIS users. HMIS leads from HMIS-participating agencies are required to attend these meetings.

c. Meetings

The HMIS Workgroup meets monthly virtually.

6. **Coordinated Entry Connectors Workgroup**

a. Responsibilities

The Coordinated Entry Connectors Workgroup meets to receive regular updates and information on the CoC’s coordinated entry system. The meeting provides an opportunity for networking among CoC staff members and Connectors. Participants have an opportunity to provide advice and support to others in similar roles and to offer input to CoC staff members on opportunities for improving Coordinated Entry within the CoC.

b. Membership

The Coordinated Entry Connectors Workgroup includes CoC staff involved with managing Coordinated Entry and designated Housing for Health Coordinated Entry Connectors within the CoC.

c. Meetings

The Coordinated Entry Connectors Workgroup meets quarterly with smaller breakout groups by regions and subpopulations meeting more frequently.

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## ARTICLE 5: GENERAL MEMBERSHIP

The full membership of the Partnership is open to any interested individual who wishes to join with a personal commitment to contribute to the goal of ensure stable, safe, and healthy places to live for all county residents. Members join by submitting their name and contact information to H4H staff and completing a membership participation agreement. The Partnership must issue a public invitation for new members at least once per year.

HUD regulations require that the CoC general membership is representative of a broad range of organizations, including: *"nonprofit homeless assistance providers, victim service providers, faith-based organizations, governments, businesses, advocates, public housing agencies, school districts, social service providers, mental health agencies, hospitals, universities, affordable housing developers, law enforcement, and organizations that serve veterans and homeless and formerly homeless individuals."* Members will complete a brief questionnaire asking them to indicate which stakeholder groups they represent. A single member may represent multiple groups.

Members are encouraged to participate in events, trainings, special and ongoing meetings, working groups, and to attend general membership meetings.

Responsibilities of the General Membership include, but are not limited to:

- Identifying volunteers to support the annual Point in Time Count and other data gathering efforts
- Completing feedback survey(s) on efforts of the Housing for Health Partnership
- Supporting community education and outreach efforts
- Voting or providing feedback on items as requested by H4H staff, working groups, or the Policy Board

The full membership holds bi-annual meetings, with published agendas. ([CoC Requirement](#))

## ARTICLE 6: PARTNERSHIP STAFFING

The County of Santa Cruz Human Services Department (HSD) Housing for Health (H4H) Division will staff the Partnership. Staffing responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Implementation of the overall vision and direction set forth in the Strategic Framework, with oversight from the Policy Board, through:
  - Developing and presenting six-month work plans for approval by the Policy Board
  - Managing funding processes (developing recommendations, applying for funds, managing grants, issuing RFPs, managing contracts)
  - Setting performance measures and tracking progress
  - Gathering and analyzing data
  - Conducting ongoing housing crisis system and program evaluation and planning
  - Developing policies and standards for programs and components that are part of the housing services system.
- Identifying and inviting participation from Partner System Representatives
- Staffing the meetings of the Policy Board, Working Groups, and General Membership meetings, including developing agendas, drafting, and presenting staff reports and other materials, taking and publishing meeting notes, and meeting logistics (scheduling, room reservations, meeting announcements, etc.)
- Providing training and technical assistance to any members who may need support to participate.

- Providing compensation and other support to members per guidance from the Policy Board
- Coordinating and aligning the work of County and city staff working on expanding housing opportunities and reducing homelessness.
- Supporting training and capacity building throughout the system.
- Maintaining an information clearinghouse on issues related to housing and homelessness in Santa Cruz County.
- Reporting and communication with the public.
- Responding to input and concerns from the public, including people with lived experience of homelessness.

#### **ARTICLE 7: CHARTER AMENDMENTS**

On an annual basis, the Policy Board in conjunction with the HMIS lead, CoC collaborative applicant, and other stakeholders, shall review and update this Charter as needed.



# Updates from Homebase

## What just happened with the 2025 NOFO?

**In today's newsletter, we'll cover some Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).**

On December 8th, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) **withdrew** the previously posted FY 2025 Continuum of Care (CoC) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). While HUD has stated they plan to revise and reissue the NOFO, the timeline and scope of changes are still unclear.

In this rapidly shifting moment, Homebase is here to help you make sense of the uncertainty. Below, we break down some frequently asked questions and offer guidance on what might come next, what to prepare for, and what communities can do now.

### **Q. What has happened with the NOFO so far?**

Major developments include:

- **November 13:** HUD released the FY 2025 CoC NOFO, outlining dramatic shifts in funding priorities and application criteria.

- **November 25 - December 1:** Two lawsuits, *NAEH v. HUD* and *State of Washington v. HUD*, were filed. Both challenge the legality of several changes in the NOFO.
- **December 8:** HUD withdrew the FY 2025 CoC NOFO. Shortly after their announcement, there was a joint court hearing for the two lawsuits. During the hearing, HUD argued the lawsuits were now moot, since the NOFO was withdrawn. The Court disagreed, stating the issue is “capable of repetition and evading review” and allowing the cases to move forward.

## Q. What's happening next with the NOFO?

A follow-up hearing is scheduled for December 19, where the Court will likely consider whether HUD can proceed with a revised NOFO and how to handle the plaintiffs' concerns. HUD has stated they plan to reissue a revised NOFO, but timing and changes are unknown.

## Q. What should my community be thinking about?

We suggest the following next steps:

- **Determine your local strategy.** Decide whether to pause your local CoC NOFO process. Clearly communicate your strategy to potential applicants.
- **Advise interested applicants.** Inform stakeholders that a revised NOFO may require revisiting and changing the local application process, project prioritization, and scoring.
- **Look at the big picture.** Even though this NOFO was withdrawn, it offers insight into HUD's shifting priorities, including a greater emphasis on Transitional Housing (TH) and Supportive Services Only (SSO) projects. This is a good time to assess how your community is positioned to build capacity in these areas and do proactive outreach to TH, SSO, and faith based partners.
- **Identify funding risks early.** CoCs should be working closely with renewal project applicants to identify risks or challenges related to delayed contracts, funding gaps, or service interruptions, and to begin contingency planning.

## Q. What can my community do now?

We suggest the following next steps:

- **Urge Congress to hold HUD accountable.** Find NAEH's advocacy resources [here](#).
- **Advocate for extended renewals to avoid gaps.** Because many existing CoC grants expire between January and June, advocate for a provision to renew eligible grants for 12 months, preventing service disruption and protecting clients from losing housing or support.
- **Mobilize and amplify community voices.** CoCs should partner with local providers and people with lived experience to reach out to elected officials to raise concern about the NOFO's potential harms.

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## Information Items 8-11

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### 4. 2026 Point-in-Time (PIT) Count Planning and Volunteer Recruitment

The 2026 PIT Count will take place on **Thursday, January 29, 2026**. Volunteers are still needed and can sign-up here: [Point-in-Time \(PIT\) Counts](#). Volunteer trainings are scheduled for December 18 and January 22. There is also a training video available online. H4H staff expect an increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness with this count given the impact of federal and state budget cuts on lower income households and people at-risk of or currently experiencing homelessness.

### 5. 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Homeless Memorial Ceremony (December 19, 2025)

The public is invited to attend the **26th Annual Homeless Memorial Ceremony on Friday, December 19, from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.** This year's event will take place at the **Portuguese Hall of Santa Cruz**, located near Harvey West Park at **216 Evergreen Street**.

As of **November 30, 2025**, **35 community members experiencing homelessness have died** this year—whether on the streets, in local hospitals, or in care facilities. While this number may rise by the time of the ceremony, it currently reflects a **decrease** from last year's total of 75 deaths. People experiencing homelessness face significantly shortened life expectancies and disproportionately high rates of violence, trauma, and serious health conditions. The annual memorial provides our community with an opportunity to honor their lives, acknowledge these inequities, and recommit to efforts that support the safety and dignity for everyone in our community.

Individuals wishing to honor someone that died over the past year are encouraged to attend and share brief remembrances. The event will include an opportunity for speakers.

Held in conjunction with **National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day**, this event has been a Santa Cruz tradition for more than two decades. It is presented by the **Human Services Department's Housing for Health Division**, the **Homeless Persons' Health Project**, and **Housing Matters**.

For event details and to download a flyer, please visit the [Homeless Memorial webpage](#).

### 6. Updates on New Shelter / Transitional Housing Capacity

Between January and March 2026, H4H staff expect three new emergency and transitional housing programs will open.

- (1) HOPE Village (formerly known as "Recurso de Fuerza") – a 34-bed low-barrier navigation center, modular new construction project in Watsonville. A collaborative project with Monterey County and the Central California Alliance for Health. Initial target population is unsheltered individuals living in camps near the Pajaro River. Longer-term plan is to serve homeless individuals with significant health care needs referred from health care partners. Operator is Community Action Board (CAB). Scheduled to open in January 2026.

- (2) Live Oak Landing (formerly known as the Santa Cruz Inn) – a former 20-room hotel in Live Oak acquired by Housing Matters with financial support from the County and City of Santa Cruz. Will serve as a 24-bed emergency housing program for unsheltered individuals with behavioral health conditions living in or formerly living in camps in the Harvey West neighborhood. Population will shift over time to serve homeless individuals with behavioral health challenges. Operator is Housing Matters. Scheduled to open in January/February 2026.
- (3) Bridge House - a 32-bed low-barrier navigation center, modular new construction project in Soquel. Funded with one-time state behavioral health dollars. Will serve individuals experiencing homelessness with behavioral health conditions. Operator is Housing Matters. Scheduled to open in February/March 2026.
- (4) Casa Sankofa (property name is Freedom House) - a 11 unit, 21-bed capacity transitional housing program for youth experiencing homelessness. Funded with state Homekey and HHAP funding. Will serve youth between the ages of 18-24 y/o experiencing homelessness. Operator is Bill Wilson Center. Scheduled to open in February/March 2026.

## **7. Status of HHAP-6 Funding Application**

The California Housing and Community Development Department (HCD) did not accept our HHAP-6 application revisions submitted in November 2025. Our HHAP-6 total block grant allocation is around \$4.4M. On December 1, 2026, they notified us that additional revisions are required beyond those requested in November. We have until December 31, 2025, to submit our revisions. The new requested revisions include: (1) Identifying specific key actions in our plan that involve utilizing HHAP Round 3 and Round 4 funding; (2) Adding a milestone target date for one key action; (3) Correcting an incorrect reference between funding sources and a specific action plan; (4) Provide a signed copy of the County/CoC HHAP-6 funding MOU. H4H staff anticipate being able to make the required corrections and to submit the revisions before the deadline. It remains unclear if these will be the final requested revisions. Other CoCs throughout California are experiencing similar delays in receiving approval of their HHAP-6 applications. This is the first year in which HCD staff are responsible for reviewing and approving HHAP applications. In addition, HCD staff are responding to new legislation and guidance from the Governor and CA legislature to increase local accountability related to HHAP funding.