

MONTEREY COUNTY

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM



2021-22 UPDATE

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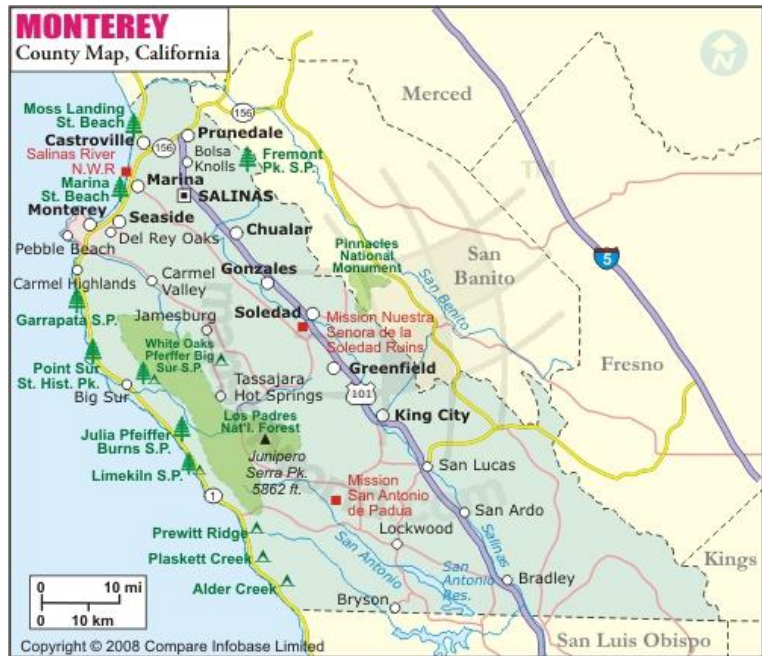
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About Monterey County

Monterey County is located on the beautiful Pacific Coast of California, south of San Francisco and north of Los Angeles. The County is comprised of 3,771 square miles and includes 12 incorporated cities and 16 unincorporated areas. The County seat and largest municipality is Salinas.

Demographics: In 2020 the U.S. Census Bureau listed the County's population at 439,035: 59% Hispanic, 29% White, 6% Asian, 3% Black, and 3% other. The County population is relatively young with a median age of 34.4. At 21.7%, Monterey County has the highest percent of noncitizens of any California County (*2020 Census Research by the Public Policy Institute of California*). There are 210,112 registered voters in Monterey County.



Labor Force: The California Employment Development Department lists the County labor force at 225,400, with 5.7% unemployment (September 2021 report). The County of Monterey is the largest employer with 5,517 full-time employees and a \$1.67 billion budget (Fiscal Year 2021-22).

Economy: Monterey County's economy is primarily based on agriculture in the Salinas Valley and tourism in the coastal regions. It is home to an extensive array of education, research and military institutions. The health care, non-profit, and government sectors are also among the County's largest economic drivers.

Agriculture: Monterey County is one of the nation's top agricultural producers. Agriculture is the County's largest economic and employment sector generating \$11.7 billion annually and providing 63,921 jobs (*Economic Contributions of Monterey County Agriculture, 2018*). Unlike most agricultural crops across the United States that are machine harvested, the crops grown in Monterey County are dependent upon a highly skilled labor force. The vast majority of companies based in the County are family-owned and operated.

Hospitality: Monterey County has long been a tourist destination attracting 4.8 million overnight visitors annually and generating \$3.24 billion in spending which supports 27,120 jobs (*2019-20 Annual Report Monterey County Convention and Visitors Bureau*). With a worldwide reputation, visitors delight in destinations such as the Monterey Bay Aquarium, the National Steinbeck Center, 17-Mile Drive, Cannery Row, Fisherman's Wharf, Pinnacles National Park, and the Monterey Wine Country. Visitors enjoy a wide range of recreational activities and nearly 300 annual special events.

Higher Education & Research: The Monterey Bay Area has a diverse concentration of higher education and research institutions, with eleven institutions of higher learning, five wildlife and/or marine-related reserves, seven government agencies, six language programs ranging from community college to graduate level, several graduate business programs, a law school, and a public policy institute. The County is also

home to the greatest collection of foreign language assets in the world and is directly involved in over 25% of the nation's post-secondary learning in languages other than English. In 2014, the Library of Congress approved a trademark for Monterey County as "*Language Capital of the World.*" Together these institutions have operating budgets of \$1.7 billion, including more than \$410 million in research and grant funding annually. Approximately 14,000 faculty, staff and researchers are directly employed, and 79,000 students are enrolled annually ([Monterey Bay Economic Partnership](#)).

Military Institutions: The County has a long and proud military history and is home to ten military missions, providing significant local economic benefits. The combined direct and indirect effects of the military activities in Monterey County total over 18,300 employees, of which 7,700 are in the private sector. These are suppliers of goods and services to the military as well as to military employees and their families. An additional 18,500 people are related to the military presence, including the families of service members, retirees and their families. Taken together the economic output of the military and its related industries and populations generates over \$2.5 billion. Personal income (wages, salaries, certain business income, and retirement) totals more than \$1.4 billion. Through its direct and indirect effects, the military in Monterey County touches all of the major industries in the private sector ([Contributions of the Military to the Monterey County Economy 6/2020](#)).

Legislative Program

Legislative Program

Monterey County maintains a long-standing and successful Legislative Program, ensuring that the interests of the County are well represented in Sacramento and Washington, D.C. The Program provides the County a voice in funding and policy decision-making in the state and national capitals and ensures that County leaders are fully apprised of evolving state and federal initiatives impacting the County and its residents. The Legislative Program is managed in accordance with a series of legislative principles and priorities which are designed in support of the Board of Supervisors' Strategic Initiatives. The Strategic Initiatives lay out a forward-looking vision for planning and management of County resources across programs to secure maximum return and benefit for County residents.

Strategic Grant Services Program

The Board of Supervisors created the Strategic Grants Services Program to concentrate funding efforts on the County's highest priority needs, and projects which require a high level of collaboration among County departments and community partners. The Strategic Grant Services Program works in alignment with the Board of Supervisors' Strategic Initiatives and in close collaboration with the Legislative Program to advocate for maximum funding through competitive state and federal grant programs.

Board of Supervisors – Legislative Committee

The Board of Supervisors has a two-member Legislative Committee, staffed by the County Administrative Office – Intergovernmental & Legislative Affairs Division. The Committee meets regularly to review and make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors regarding legislative, budgetary, and regulatory issues that could impact Monterey County, and to direct the efforts of the Strategic Grant Services Program. On an annual basis, the Legislative Committee recommends a Legislative Program and Strategic Grant Services Program Work Plan to the Board of Supervisors. The Legislative Committee also directs the legislative activities of the Committee staff, County departments, and the County's state and federal legislative advocates and grant consultants.

Community Priorities

In 2018, the Board of Supervisors hosted a community engagement process to identify local priorities. The process included telephone and online surveys as well as five community forums to understand how potential cannabis tax revenues could help meet community needs. The top funding priorities across the County were: education (especially early education and preschool), quality health and mental health services, homeless services, crime and violence prevention and reduction; affordable housing and displacement prevention. Additional concerns included preservation of existing services, equitable and culturally relevant programs, reparations and expungement, library funding, and animal shelter funding. These results were largely consistent with previous studies (e.g., Impact Monterey County). These community identified priorities have been used to help shape this Legislative Program.

COVID-19 Disparate Impacts Legislative Advocacy Priorities

In August 2020, the Board of Supervisors received the [COVID-19 Pandemic Disparate Impact Report: Strategies for Addressing the Disparate Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Communities of Color in Monterey County](#). The report identifies the underlying conditions that have contributed to the racial disparities present in the data and statistics of those most impacted by the pandemic in Monterey County, and proposes strategies to address these disparate impacts.

Legislative Policies

The Board of Supervisors has adopted policies pertaining to the legislative activities of the Board, department heads, County staff, the County's state and federal legislative advocates, and County advisory boards and commissions. ([*Policies Governing Legislative Activities rev.1/26/21*](#))

COVID-19 Pandemic Disparate Impacts – Legislative Advocacy

In August 2020, the Board of Supervisors received the [COVID-19 PANDEMIC DISPARATE IMPACT REPORT: Strategies for Addressing the Disparate Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Communities of Color in Monterey County](#). The report identifies the underlying conditions that have contributed to the racial disparities present in the data and statistics of those most impacted by the pandemic in Monterey County, and proposes strategies to address these disparate impacts.

Even before the pandemic, Monterey County's Legislative Program focused on numerous legislative priorities in the areas of health, human services, economic development and public safety. The County has adopted a strategy of "Health in All Policies" as part of its efforts to eliminate social, racial, economic, and environmental inequities that impede the attainment and maintenance of good health, including health care access.

Since March 2020, Congress has enacted six major pieces of legislation in response to the COVID-19 pandemic that have authorized a total of \$4.6 trillion in spending and created a host of new federal programs to assist individuals, businesses, and state and local governments. Much of this assistance is targeted to communities that are suffering disproportionately from the negative health and economic effects caused by the pandemic. Through the CARES Act and American Rescue Plan Act, Monterey County has been allocated over \$128 million in COVID-19 relief funds for pandemic response programs and revenue replacement. The County has used much of this funding, in addition to over \$10 million in competitive grant funding awarded to the Monterey County Health Department, to support COVID-19 mitigation measures in racial and ethnic minority populations. Funding has been used to support the VIDA Project and expand COVID-19 vaccination, testing, and treatment for vulnerable populations; deliver needed preventive and primary health care services to those at higher risk for COVID-19; and expand health centers' operational capacity during the pandemic and beyond.

The COVID-19 pandemic has a disparate impact on communities of color, especially in low-income communities. The County's state legislative advocacy efforts have been focused on ensuring those impacts are addressed with equity and inclusion. There has been a very broad range of issues the County has advocated for at the State level, including, but not limited to: unvaccinated youth, emergency rental assistance, vaccine data and equity metrics, vaccine availability and locations, agriculture workers and impacts, Housing for the Harvest and Project Homekey, K-12 education, digital divide, economic impacts and recovery, elections and public access to government, PPE availability and disbursement, and several funding streams through the state budget process that are tied to recovery from the pandemic. While several of these issues have been addressed in some way by the Legislature and Administration, the work required to address and recover from the pandemic is far from complete.

The County will continue to work to secure resources, flexibility, and the workforce necessary to maintain local ongoing coronavirus response efforts, including outreach to underserved populations and collaboration with schools and businesses. This includes negotiating a sustainable state investment in local public health activities while obtaining short-term funding and/or statutory flexibility for urgent needs.

Increased State and Federal Support and Investment

Despite recent investments, counties cannot continue to meet the unprecedented demands in public health, emergency response, and other vital services without additional state and federal support. Declining local revenues, coupled with the increasing demands on county delivered safety net services makes our situation unsustainable, and puts the health and security of the public, especially communities of color, at risk.

State and Federal Investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support additional direct fiscal relief to counties. ▪ Support maximum flexibility in the usage of federal funds allocated to counties to mitigate direct and indirect COVID-19 costs, revenue losses, and temporary expansion of benefits.
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Health

Access to quality healthcare is a fundamental human right. Communities of color have higher rates of underlying health conditions (e.g., diabetes, heart disease, lung disease, etc.) linked to more severe cases of COVID-19. Communities of color also often have less access to quality health care and are disproportionately represented in essential frontline jobs that cannot be done from home, increasing their exposure to the virus.

Health Care for All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support, deepen, and expand efforts to create equity and eliminate racial disparities by expanding access to health care through community access supports, universal coverage and other steps to improve the access to quality and affordability of health care (e.g., Medi-Cal expansion to undocumented adults and seniors). ▪ Support efforts to ensure employers help H-2A Temporary Agricultural Workers apply for health insurance through Covered California. ▪ Support policies and funding that preserve and expand primary prevention, essential public health functions, and that foster social/racial equity in the areas of community health, health care access (including telehealth), education, and disease prevention.
Public Health Departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support increased ongoing (not one-time) funding for public health departments to conduct essential activities including testing, case investigation, contact tracing, surveillance, epidemiology, infection control, mitigation, communications, and other preparedness and response measures. ▪ Support efforts and funding to enhance public health workforce staffing, infrastructure, and capacity.
Testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support increased funding to test individuals that are not connected to a primary health care provider to minimize access barriers for underserved communities and increase capacity to support outbreaks in congregate living settings. ▪ Support increasing production of testing supplies to increase the supply of testing kits for health care facility-based testing services. ▪ Support funding to deploy testing resources based on the needs of impacted communities. ▪ Support reimbursement for the full cost of specimen collection and testing.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support efforts to streamline the process to utilize presumptive eligibility for Medi-Cal for testing purposes.
Case Investigation and Contact Tracing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support funding to develop and maintain electronic data collection and reporting systems.
Surveillance, Epidemiology, Infection Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expand shared data collection and improvement of reporting standards for workplace infections ▪ Support efforts for state Health and Human Service Agency to alter the Confidential Morbidity Report form to produce more consistent occupation data (currently a write-in response).
Preparedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support funding for public health preparedness training and exercises. ▪ Support policies that prioritize vaccine distribution through a health equity lens. ▪ Support policies that prioritize certain groups to gain access to medications and vaccines based on documented higher risk for serious illness and death. ▪ Support efforts to establish and maintain adequate distribution, storage, and administration of vaccines. ▪ Support efforts to establish and maintain adequate supply chains for personal protective equipment.
Public Health Laboratories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support increased funding and staff training for state and local public health laboratories.
Commercial Laboratories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support increased oversight and enforcement of commercial lab responsibilities to ensure compliance with state mandates, state and local health officer orders, and adherence to reporting requirements.
Alternative Housing Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support efforts to expand eligibility for alternate housing to adequately isolate infected or exposed populations to reduce virus transmission (e.g., hotels, emergency rental assistance, Housing for the Harvest program, etc.).
Isolation Housing Supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support expanded funding for income replacement and other types of isolation and quarantine supports.
Health Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support state level policy that documents be produced in the language of our California residents. ▪ Continue to request that the State provide pandemic related communications associated with public health, safety, or business guidance in both English and Spanish.
Access to Healthcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support changes to continue the ability for healthcare to provide services using virtual services. ▪ Support the expansion or continuation of elimination of cost-sharing payments by insurers for plan members treated for COVID-19.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create an emergency health aid program to raise eligibility thresholds beyond Medi-Cal expansion levels and increase federal matching funds to help cover people who lost their jobs or remain uninsured during the pandemic. ▪ Expand testing and treatment (including clinical trials) to cover immigrants and temporary workers, including providing much needed funding for community health centers and removing barriers to permitting coverage under Emergency Medi-Cal. ▪ Expand Medi-Cal to include reimbursement for mild to moderate mental health needs related to the COVID-19 pandemic.
Worker Support and Protections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support creation of Workforce Safety Councils that build on partnerships between labor, government, and business to work with employers to implement safety protocols, develop and distribute educational materials, and support and fund Workforce Safety Officers to implement health orders and guidance.
Sick Leave and Family Care Protections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support policies that expand sick leave and family leave to support workers and their families regardless of immigration status or employment type (i.e., gig-workers). ▪ Support State and Federal policies that provide immediate cash assistance for families, such as young child tax credits, regardless of immigration status.

Public Assistance for Basic Needs

Safety net services are a critical element of community well-being that help struggling households survive and thrive.

Safety Net and Employment Support Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support funding for basic assistance to households who work in lower wage jobs, are underemployed, or are unemployed through CalFresh/Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program, childcare programs, Community Action programs and the CalWORKs/Temporary Assistance to Needy Family (TANF) programs. ▪ Support funding for programs that help prevent homelessness and rapidly secure housing (HUD Homeless Assistance, CalWORKs Housing Support, CalWORKs Family Stabilization, Housing Disability Advocacy Program). ▪ Support improvements to the CalWORKs/TANF program to modify work participation requirements to better match individual family needs and local economic circumstances and to recognize additional costs to communities as a result of ongoing funding stagnation. ▪ Support expansion of wage subsidy programs for households served by both CalFresh/SNAP and CalWORKs/TANF – these programs have proven to be effective local resources for promoting self-sufficiency and establishing a positive work history. ▪ Support the continuation of virtual interviews, self-attestation verifications, and other virtual means of submitting required documents for Medi-Cal, CalWORKs and CalWORKs employment services, CalFresh, and general assistance.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support efforts to increase CalFresh/SNAP, Medi-Cal, CalWORKs, CalWORKs employment services, and general assistance benefits, and eliminate eligibility barriers (e.g., residency and citizenship status, household size, income and property limits).
Food Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support funding for local food banks. Support funding to implement farmers markets in rural communities. Support funding for meal delivery programs (e.g., Great Plates, Meals on Wheels, Congregate Meals for Seniors). Support policy changes to make Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards eligible for online use through web-based marketplaces such as Amazon Pantry and Walmart for food purchases.

Housing

Available and affordable housing is integral to the health and well-being of County residents and an important element for social/racial equity, environmental justice and economic development. Lack of housing or dense, multi-generational housing conditions make communities more susceptible to the spread of the virus.

Housing Stability / Homeless Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support continued funding for the Housing for the Harvest Housing program that offers temporary hotel housing to agricultural workers who need to isolate due to COVID-19 positivity or exposure to protect their loved ones and coworkers by giving them a space to self-isolate. Support continued funding for Project Homekey to purchase hotels and establish permanent supportive housing for people experiencing chronic homelessness and are at risk of exposure to COVID-19. Support efforts to provide protections from eviction, foreclosure, and speculation. Support efforts to fund continued and expanded emergency rental and utility assistance programs. Support efforts to fund additional city and county emergency housing and ongoing operations. Support policies and funding to sustain and transition short term emergency COVID housing to long term housing use (travel trailers), and to fund ongoing operations. Support the continued provision of fair housing tenant/landlord services (e.g., CDBG Program). Support an increase in housing vouchers for transitional and permanent supportive housing and affordable housing. Support programs that allow for a variety of homeless housing types such as additional permanent, supportive, and shelter housing. Support the continuation of employer housing and food requirements under the H-2A Temporary Agricultural Worker program.
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<p>Affordable Housing Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support efforts to fund the planning and development of housing – especially affordable housing and affordable rental housing – for low-income residents and those with special needs (e.g., farmworkers, the disabled, and the homeless). ▪ Support efforts to streamline policies and processes that create barriers or delays to the development of affordable or special needs housing projects and incentivize providing more than the minimum inclusionary requirement (e.g., CEQA exemptions for farmworker housing projects). ▪ Support non-profit housing developments through additional/expanded tax credit programs. ▪ Support changes to the tax credit program to incentivize development of mixed income housing projects. ▪ Support regional approaches to affordable housing development which allow cities/counties to share in Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) credits. ▪ Support efforts to incentivize affordable housing development for migrant farmworkers and H-2A Temporary Agricultural Workers.
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Economic Development

Communities of color are over-represented in essential jobs that increase their exposure to the virus. High rates of poverty and low wages create greater risks of economic disruption.

<p>Individual Supports</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support the continuation/reinstatement of increased unemployment benefits by the federal government – including extending benefits to undocumented workers. ▪ Support additional economic stimulus payments to individuals – including funding to undocumented residents (e.g. Disaster Relief Assistance for Immigrants). ▪ Support expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit to provide more relief to low-income Californians, including those that file taxes with Individual Tax Identification Numbers. ▪ Support funding and policies that protect workers through the provision of personal protective equipment (PPE) and educational materials on how to prevent virus contraction and transmission. ▪ Support efforts to address the disparate impact of COVID-19 pandemic on women of color, exacerbating existing disparities and further undermining family economic stability and survival (including efforts to address childcare, loss of wage earnings due to COVID-19, wealth gap, and access to income supports). ▪ Support taxpayer hardship relief/assistance programs.
<p>Business Supports</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support efforts aimed at supporting women and minority owned businesses impacted by the pandemic. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Small business grants, loans, and/or no-interest loans ○ Workforce development programs ○ Entrepreneurship programs

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) ○ Payroll Protection Program (PPP) ▪ Support efforts to establish an emergency loan program through the state’s Small Business Disaster Relief Loan Guarantee Program. ▪ Support efforts to provide protections from eviction, foreclosure, and speculation for small businesses. ▪ Support taxpayer hardship relief/assistance programs.
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Protecting Youth and Families

The pandemic has added major stressors to children and families, especially in communities where there is a higher incidence of the virus. Economic challenges, school closures, and social isolation further add to the problem and place additional stress on family units.

Protecting Youth and Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support efforts to expand eligibility for isolation spaces (e.g., hotels) for people experiencing domestic violence. ▪ Support efforts to protect youth at heightened risk for abuse and mistreatment. ▪ Support efforts to strengthen social programs and family resources to keep families connected to county support systems and services (e.g., mental health, child care).
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Childcare

Local economic recovery from the COVID-19 crisis hinges on the ability of many county residents, especially those who work in industries deemed essential, to access childcare so that they can return to work.

Childcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support improved access to safe, high-quality childcare. ▪ Support child care workforce retention and development.
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Language Access

Since the pandemic began there has been a lack of communications and guidance documents in languages other than English. It is essential that these written and verbal communications be provided in non-English languages for communities where English is not the primary language.

Translation of Communications/ Guidance – and – Language Assistance Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue to request that the State provide pandemic-related communications associated with public health, safety, or business guidance in both English and Spanish. ▪ Support policy changes to ensure all individuals have meaningful access to equitable language assistance services that affirm the right to communication in the language in which one feels most comfortable.
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Virtual Access

As a result of the need for social distancing during the pandemic, some requirements have temporarily been waived to allow access to County services by virtual means and to increase virtual participation in government. Making these changes permanent will increase the public's access to County government.

Increased Internet and Virtual Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support policy changes to permanently increase access to virtual connection, learning, and public participation opportunities. ▪ Support policy changes to continue public participation and access by the public of meetings governed by the Brown Act. ▪ Support policy changes which allow County services to be provided by virtual means.
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Broadband Expansion

A lack of internet access disproportionately effects some County residents because internet access is not available in their area or is unaffordable. Expansion of broadband services would benefit economic activities, access to healthcare (e.g.: telehealth); and education (e.g.: distance learning).

Broadband Expansion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support efforts to secure funding for the expansion of broadband and cellular services to unserved and underserved areas of Monterey County (e.g., state universal broadband bond). ▪ Support investments in broadband affordability programs for low-income households. ▪ Support efforts to reform existing state programs to expand internet access, generate needed revenue, and make it easier for local governments to obtain funding to move local projects forward. ▪ Support efforts to regulate broadband/internet access as a utility by the Federal Communications Commission and California Public Utilities Commission.
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Education

Schools are facing significant challenges which disparately impact students of color. At the beginning of the pandemic nearly 7,000 students/families did not have access to the tools they need for distance learning (e.g., laptops or tablets), and over 10,000 students did not have internet access in their home because internet access is not available in their community or is unaffordable to their families.

Internet Access and Technology Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support efforts that ensure quality distance learning through expanded broadband access and technology supports, especially in low income, unserved and underserved communities.
In-Person Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support the safe transition to in-person learning through increased state funding for testing, rapid results, and appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for students and teachers. ▪ Support Whole Child, Whole Family school-based supports including integrated mental health care, school-based family support services and referrals, and after school programs.
K-12 Vaccines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support efforts to provide COVID-19 vaccines to eligible school children.

Economic Development

Legislative Principles – Economic Development

★ COVID-19 PRIORITY – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: *Communities of color are over-represented in essential jobs that increase their exposure to the virus. High rates of poverty and low wages create greater risks of economic disruption. See COVID-19 priorities on pages 10-17.*

General

Support the County’s ability to enhance the quality of life, well-being, prosperity, health, safety, livelihood, art, libraries, culture, recreation, housing, and education (e.g., early childhood development, cradle to career initiative) of Monterey County residents. Support policies and programs that protect consumers. Advocate for resources and policies that help families achieve self-sufficiency by providing critical support services such as child care. Child care plays a key role in the ability for parents to return to the workforce and/or retrain for the current labor market demands. Support job training, and public or private efforts, to stabilize and enhance jobs and economic growth. Support policies and programs that promote health, equity, and neighborhood sustainability, safeguard the preservation of prime agricultural lands and natural open spaces, and improve the environment and protect environmentally sensitive areas in order to ensure a diversified and healthy economy. Support funding, policies, and programs that remove barriers to local industries reaching their full economic potential and acting as regional economic generators.

Sustainable Job Growth

Support efforts to fund development of regional countywide economic development plans that balance environmental and economic considerations in furtherance of jobs key to the pillar industries of economic development in the County: agriculture, tourism, small business, higher education, and marine research. Support efforts to promote a strong state and county economy, and provide a healthy environment to retain, expand, and attract business and economic development. Support efforts to expand broadband infrastructure to provide high-speed internet to underserved areas of the County, and to retain local authority to assess fees and control placement of new wireless facilities. Support legislative, policy or regulatory efforts that provide local governments with economic and community development tools (e.g., opportunity zones) and encourage compliance with state-mandated regional planning strategies. Support efforts that promote ecotourism and wellness, Edu-tourism, Blue Economy research and development, and Agri-Technology that further economic and employment growth.

Workforce Development and Working Families

Support efforts to fund workforce development initiatives (e.g., youth and veterans’ employment and leadership programs) to ensure the continuity of employment, and training programs to stimulate economic growth through the creation of a trained and skilled workforce. Ensure public investments in roads, transit, sewers, and other community infrastructure are made in ways that create job opportunities for people residing in Monterey County who are underemployed and unemployed. Support efforts to prepare youth for future self-sufficiency and prevent youth violence and crime. Support working family initiatives that balance work and care-giving obligations such as: workplace flexibility and access to paid leave; affordable, quality child/elder care; and equal pay.

Housing & Homelessness

Support efforts that create affordable housing policies and fund the creation of housing – especially affordable housing and affordable rental housing – for low-income county residents and those with special needs (e.g., farm workers, veterans, seniors, the disabled, families with children, and the homeless). Work to streamline processes which create barriers or delays to the development of affordable housing projects. Support efforts to address the unique needs of homeless individuals and families, and equitably allocate funding to address homelessness.

Agriculture

Support efforts to protect and promote agriculture, farm worker health and safety, the protection of public health and the environment, and the assurance of a fair marketplace. Support efforts to provide agricultural research and education activities. Support efforts to protect and preserve prime agricultural lands (e.g., Williamson Act funding). Support pest detection and pest management programs and invasive weed prevention programs. Support efforts to ensure the success of the local cannabis and industrial hemp industries, while addressing the tax, regulatory, policy, enforcement, education, health, environment and safety of our communities as related to both cannabis and hemp.

Military Installations

Monterey County has a long and proud military history and is honored to support the ten military missions located here which provide many local jobs. Safeguarding and strengthening local military missions is critical to our national security and local economic strength. Support efforts to assist in military base reuse, especially the redevelopment of lands on the former Fort Ord, and to replace jobs lost because of the base closure. Support efforts to enhance, grow and protect national security assets in the Monterey Bay Area (i.e., Monterey Bay Defense Alliance), and oppose Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) and similar Department of Defense proposals, which would diminish local missions, negatively impacting the regional economy.

Legislative Priorities – Economic Development

Broadband & Telecommunication Services

★ COVID-19 PRIORITY – BROADBAND: *A lack of internet access disproportionately effects some county residents because internet access is not available in their area or is unaffordable. Expansion of broadband services would benefit economic activities, access to healthcare and education. – See COVID-19 priorities on pages 10-17.*

Broadband

A major impediment to business attraction is the lack of reliable County broadband coverage. Digital access is also linked with social equity, connecting with services, and democratic participation. The Central Coast Broadband Consortium is a broad-based ad hoc group of local governments and agencies, economic development proponents, education and health organizations, community groups and private businesses, dedicated to improving service in Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito Counties. Expanding broadband service throughout the region is important to the County’s social and economic health – and supports the education, medical, military, and research industries.

The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the critical utility of broadband infrastructure. From the homework gap and workforce adaptations, to essential healthcare services and e-commerce — broadband is now the keystone to our nation’s response to the global pandemic and imperative to building resilient and future-ready communities. The lack of reliable broadband is a major economic barrier and a leading driver of socioeconomic inequality.

A lack of internet access disproportionately affects some County residents because internet access is not available in their area or is unaffordable. Expansion of broadband services would benefit economic activities, access to healthcare (e.g.: telehealth); and education (e.g.: distance learning).

In August 2020, a photo of two girls sitting on the sidewalk with their laptops outside a Taco Bell restaurant in the City of Salinas to use the restaurant’s Wi-Fi went viral, shining the national spotlight on the digital divide which exists in Monterey County and many other communities in the state and nation.

Schools are facing significant challenges which disparately impact students of color. At the start of the pandemic, according to the Monterey County Office of Education, nearly 7,000 students/families did not have access to the tools they need for distance learning (e.g., laptops or tablets), and over 10,000 students did not have internet access in their home because it is not available in their community or is unaffordable to their families. There is also a need for digital literacy programs.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) standard for broadband speed is 25 megabits per second (Mbps) download, and 3 Mbps upload. The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Interim Final Rules released in 2021, defined unserved and underserved households and businesses as those not currently served by the FCC’s standards. However, ARPA eligible projects must reliably deliver minimum speeds of 100 Mbps download and 100 Mbps upload or where impracticable due to geography, topography, or financial cost 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload, and scalable to a minimum of 100 Mbps download and 100 Mbps upload.

A 2018 broadband study, *“Achieving Ubiquitous Broadband Coverage in the Monterey Bay Region”*, Monterey Bay Economic Partnership (MBEP) evaluated options available to the Monterey Bay region to support the deployment, availability, and accessibility of broadband services to residents and businesses. This study determined that the minimum broadband speed level required by both consumer and commercial users is 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload. Based on this standard, wireline broadband infrastructure found in Monterey County received an overall grade of “D+”. A “D” grade means it meets the minimum service standard determined by the MBEP study.

Telecommunications

Telecommunication services are extremely limited or non-existent in some parts of Monterey County, with cellular network strengths varying depending on topology, time of day, weather, and location. Development of a more robust network is needed, especially in remote highly trafficked tourist destinations such as Big Sur. To date, it has not been economically and environmentally feasible to expand services into many of these areas. However, recent wildfires and other emergencies highlight the need for dependable communications for residents, visitors and first responders.

Key Objective:

Last year’s historic investments in last-mile and middle-mile broadband infrastructure lay the foundation for community resilience, economic and educational opportunity. Support efforts to fund and implement the expansion of broadband and cellular service to unserved and underserved and digitally redlined areas of Monterey County (e.g., state universal broadband bond) and increase internet speeds. Support efforts

to address affordability (e.g., California LifeLine Program, Emergency Broadband Benefit Program). Support efforts to reform existing state programs to expand internet access, generate needed revenue, and make it easier for local governments to obtain funding to move local projects forward. Support efforts to regulate broadband/internet access as a utility by the Federal Communications Commission and California Public Utilities Commission. Support efforts that ensure quality distance learning through expanded broadband access and technology supports, and digital literacy programs especially in rural and underserved communities. Support efforts to fairly and equitably regulate access to telecommunications services, removing barriers and providing adaptations for all ages and for those with disabilities. Support expansion of broadband and telecommunications community hubs such as schools and libraries. Support affordable and flexibly connectivity options and opportunities.

Housing

★ COVID-19 PRIORITY – HOUSING: *Available and affordable housing is integral to the health and well-being of County residents and an important element for social/racial equity, environmental justice and economic development. Lack of housing or dense multi-generational housing conditions make communities more susceptible to the spread of the virus. – See COVID-19 priorities on pages 10-17.*

Through a 2018 community engagement process sponsored by the Board of Supervisors – conducted through phone, online and community forums – community members identified affordable housing, displacement prevention, and services for homeless individuals and families as some of their top priorities.

Available and affordable housing is integral to the health and well-being of County residents and an important element for social equity, environmental justice and economic development. It is critical that people have the option to live near their workplace, particularly those workers most essential to the local economy (e.g., farmworkers, teachers, emergency service workers, nurses, child care providers), many of whom find that housing is priced beyond their reach. When people can afford to live close to their jobs, entire communities reap the benefits. Commute times and traffic congestion ease, neighborhoods are more diverse and provide the opportunity for families to live and grow in one place, and economies strengthen by helping employers attract and retain essential workers. Therefore, Monterey County supports policies, funding, and programs that support additional multi-family, farmworker, disabled, senior, veterans, and workforce housing opportunities to assure an adequate supply of low-cost and affordable housing stock are needed.

HUD – CDBG & HOME Programs: State and Federal programs are important sources of funding to help local communities develop affordable housing. Currently Monterey County receives \$1.2 million annually in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funds through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) which supports community development and infrastructure needs ancillary to housing development, and services for low-income and moderate-income persons. Increasing CDBG funding and expanding the program to allow funding to be used for new housing construction would be a powerful tool for local governments. HUD also offers the HOME Investment Partnership Program which funds new housing construction. An increase in HOME funding is needed for the County, as part of a consortium, to consider participating. New permanent financing sources are needed to address housing needs at all income levels and to provide adequate housing subsidies for households.

Project Homekey: Project Homekey allows local governments to develop a broad range of housing types based on local community needs, including but not limited to hotels, motels, hostels, single-family homes, multifamily apartments, adult residential facilities, and manufactured housing, and to convert commercial

properties and other existing buildings to permanent or interim housing. The County supports the ongoing funding and resources to continue this program.

Housing Vouchers: In order to build more affordable housing and assist residents in need of subsidized housing opportunities, increased access to public housing and vouchers programs is needed. Voucher programs need to meet the high cost of rent in Monterey County and the area's Fair Market Rents (FMR).

Flexible Housing Subsidy Programs: The State can assist communities to implement flexible housing subsidy programs, intended to provide housing stability to those at risk of experiencing homelessness. Subsidy pools centralize the management of housing resources under a single operator to match resources to eligible households, provide housing navigation and placement services, and provide flexibility in funding that can be utilized in several ways to close the funding gaps that serve as barriers to securing housing.

Low-Income Housing Tax Credit: Increasing access to the Federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) Program is needed to provide funding opportunities to developers. Currently, the LIHTC Program can take developers several rounds and years of delays to fund low-income multi-family housing developments.

Barriers to Housing Production: Some of the biggest barriers to affordable and market rate housing construction are the development of necessary infrastructure, California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and development impact fees, and the threat of litigation over CEQA and land use issues. Major infrastructure is needed for the development of housing (e.g., sewer, water, roads, transit, and other infrastructure). Supporting the expansion of CEQA exemptions for affordable housing infill projects and policies which provide protections for affordable housing and market rate developers (e.g., litigation) would help alleviate these concerns. Supporting policies that remove barriers to housing developments related to State Minimum Fire Safe Regulations.

Housing Fund Opportunities: Housing funding opportunities are critical to get developers the funding they need to kick start local projects. Tools that assist in affordable housing production (e.g., Local Housing Trust Fund); and affordable housing preservation (e.g., Community Land Trust) would greatly enhance these efforts.

RHNA Credit Allocation: State law requires cities and counties to meet housing production goals as defined by the Housing Elements Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) or to face penalties. New state housing funding (e.g., Healthy Homes California, No Place Like Home) is geared to incentivize housing production and collaboration as the funds can be spent anywhere countywide. However, if the housing is built within city's boundaries – not the urban county unincorporated area – the city receives the full RHNA credit, while the county which put extensive effort into the development of the project, receives no direct RHNA credit. Monterey County is supportive of policy changes that allow for RHNA credits to be allocated through a regional approach that truly reflects collaborative housing development efforts.

Farmworker Housing: The 2018 Farmworker Housing Study and Action Plan for Salinas Valley and Pajaro Valley, prepared by the California Institute for Rural Studies, estimated that in 2016 the number of workers in the region employed in agriculture was 91,433, and stated that farmworker housing in the region is severely overcrowded. Based on the data, 45,560 additional units of farmworker housing are needed to alleviate critical overcrowding in farmworker households. Additionally, state funding programs and resources (e.g., Joe Serna, Jr. Farmworker Housing Grant Program) are needed to build affordable farmworker housing. Infrastructure funding opportunities are needed to ensure farmworker housing is built in locations that are close to communities and existing transit and other opportunities.

Key Objectives:

Support efforts and funding to increase the supply of affordable and accessible housing production to meet County needs, especially rental housing, and housing for special need populations, with a preference for infill projects. Support funding resources to address homelessness issues locally. Support efforts to fund infrastructure (e.g., water, sewer) to support affordable housing development. Support the expansion of CEQA exemptions for affordable housing infill projects with infrastructure. Support policies which provide protections for affordable housing developers (e.g., litigation). Support increased in tax credits for affordable housing developers to help spur affordable housing production. Support funding for programs that help get people into affordable housing and avoid displacement or homelessness (e.g., Project Homekey and the Flexible Housing Subsidy Program). Support reform of housing element laws, and changes to eliminate or reduce school impact fees for employer sponsored housing projects. Support the development of tools that assist in affordable housing production (e.g., Local Housing Trust Fund); and affordable housing preservation (e.g., Community Land Trust). Support regional approaches to affordable development which allow cities/county to share in Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) credits. Support an appropriate balance between statewide goals for housing production and affordability while maintaining appropriate discretion for Counties in implementing these policies through locally driven plans.

Immigration

The County strives to support and defend the civil and human rights of all of its residents, including those that are foreign-born. Immigrants comprise over 30% of the total population, and at 21.7% Monterey County has the highest percentage of non-citizens of any California county. The County's immigrant population, including undocumented immigrants, is a critical component of the local labor force, especially for the County's two largest industries – agriculture and hospitality. The contributions of immigrants to the economic, cultural, and social well-being of our community are a source of pride for the County, and the County recognizes the importance of maintaining an environment of trust and safety for immigrants who choose to make Monterey County their home.

The Board of Supervisors has proudly supported the County's immigrant community by supporting comprehensive immigration reform which includes a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants; removing Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) from the County jail and declaring Monterey County a "Welcoming County"; supporting reinstatement of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program and becoming the first "Dreamers County" in the nation; supporting the Farm Workforce Modernization Act; and opposing policies that seek to discriminate against individuals based on their immigration status.

Key Objectives:

Support policies that provide permanent legal status and a path to citizenship for Dreamers. Support policies that extend Temporary Protected Status for qualifying individuals. Support policies that establish effective nonimmigrant visa programs that address the workforce needs of the agriculture and hospitality industries. Oppose legislative and executive actions that seek to punish local governments for failure to assist with federal immigration enforcement actions. Oppose legislative and executive actions that unlawfully discriminate against immigrants based on their country of origin. Oppose legislative and executive actions that restrict public benefits to immigrants. Support comprehensive immigration reform legislation that addresses the County's labor force needs and provides a path to citizenship for the nation's

undocumented immigrant population. Support efforts to increase language access, ensure access to health care, facilitate naturalization, extend voting rights, and build leadership development pipelines for immigrants.

Labor Force

The availability of skilled and unskilled labor is critical to the maintenance and enhancement of economic development activities across all sectors. Monterey County’s economy is primarily based on agriculture and tourism, both of which are highly dependent on an adequate labor supply. An aging worker population and current immigration policies make it increasingly difficult to meet these workforce needs. The lack of agricultural workers is one of the largest challenges facing our local industry today. The agriculture industry contributes \$11.7 billion and 63,921 jobs, and the hospitality industry provides 27,120 jobs and contributes over \$3.24 billion to the local economy. However, industry sources report that they are increasingly affected by labor shortages that jeopardize the local economy, the hospitality industry, and the availability of agricultural goods for national and international shipment. The California Farm Bureau reports that over half of the farmers in California are experiencing labor shortages and that fewer potential employees are applying for seasonal harvest jobs despite increased recruiting efforts, higher wages offered and other incentives. Additionally, the Central Coast is experiencing a significant shortage of skilled medical personnel, which is expected to grow over the next 15 years, especially for primary care clinicians – as well as, public health professionals; social workers; and child care workers.

Key Objectives:

Support efforts to implement comprehensive federal immigration reform to ensure that Monterey County has an adequate labor supply for all economic sectors. Oppose efforts to implement restrictive immigration policies that threaten the economic well-being of Monterey County residents. Support policies that promote a greater investment in higher education, training and retaining health care professionals, social workers, and child care workers to meet local workforce needs.

Workforce Development

The Workforce Development Board coordinates and leverages local workforce strategies with education and economic development stakeholders to ensure that workforce development and job training programs meet the needs of employers. Investments in workforce development create a comprehensive system to provide our community with a highly skilled workforce that competes in the local, regional, and global economy. Monterey County receives funding through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to manage programs to assist with local workforce investment needs.

Key Objectives:

Support funding through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), including expanded funding for a business-led Workforce Development Board governed and supported by local leaders. Support the America’s Job Center of California’s centers in Monterey County, which focus on the needs of job seekers and businesses to ensure workers have access to critical employment programs, services, and training opportunities. Support funding for personal financial management education services. Support funding for career pathways for existing local and potential new industries, including securing

resources and developing additional workforce of licensed mental health professionals due to the extreme shortage in the California labor market and increasing demand for mental health services.

Youth Employment

Youth employment programs are nationally recognized for preventing youth violence and bringing hope and opportunity to communities. Such programs are highlighted as one of the five strategies in the Office for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention’s Comprehensive Gang Prevention Model. In Monterey County gang issues, violence and crime steal the futures of all too many young people. Providing local youths with employment opportunities goes a long way toward ending youth violence and criminal gang involvement and is a priority for the County and its many city and community partners. A cradle to career initiative (Bright Futures) is developing connections across the County to support children, youth, and adults to attain their educational goals and find gainful local employment. Summer and year-round youth employment and leadership programs prepare youth for future self-sufficiency, prevent youth violence and crime, and support businesses and organizations. The Monterey County Workforce Development Board has a number of job training and youth leadership programs for young adults between the ages of 18-24, that are focused on low-income, homeless and justice involved youth, with the end goal of getting young adults into, jobs, or post-secondary education.

Key Objectives:

Support efforts such as Bright Futures to improve access to high quality and affordable education, foster progress in educational outcomes for local students from cradle to career and improve the pipeline of quality talent in Monterey County. Support efforts to enhance funding for summer youth employment and training programs and expand funding for year-round programs to better prepare youth for future self-sufficiency and prevent youth violence and crime.

Agriculture

Agriculture is the cornerstone of prosperity in Monterey County. Support for agriculture is critical to the economic vitality of the region, State, and nation. The Salinas Valley is known as the “salad bowl” of the world and produces diverse vegetable crops, strawberries, and is a major producer of high-quality varietal wine grapes. Adequate transportation system maintenance and capacity, along with the security of County water supplies (e.g., water rights, storage, reuse, and financing) is critical to the health of the local agricultural economy.

Key Objectives:

Support efforts to secure and enhance Monterey County’s water resources for agriculture (e.g., water rights, storage, reuse, financing); secure funding for transportation infrastructure that supports the agricultural industry; protect prime agricultural lands (i.e., Williamson Act, conservation easements); and promote agriculture and agritourism.

Cannabis

According to the most recent Department of Cannabis Control ListServ, Monterey County is ranked fifth in California cannabis cultivation by license count. The Monterey County Cannabis Program provides a local framework for the management of licensed commercial cannabis activities in coordination with state agencies and local governments to address taxation, regulation, policy, enforcement, education, and the protection of the health, environment, and safety of our communities. Program efforts seek to:

- Preserve local government authority and control of taxation, revenues and fees, land use, and oversight of the sale, distribution, production, and cultivation of cannabis;
- Preserve the environment through pesticide regulations and other contaminant standards, reduce environmental degradation, and ensure the responsible use of resources for cannabis cultivation; and
- Protect public health and safety with routine inspections of licensed operators, take enforcement actions against unlicensed cannabis activities, establish enforceable standards for impaired driving, enact policies and regulations for cannabis products to ensure packaging does not appeal to and is not accessible to children, develop effective public health campaigns and resources to address the impacts of cannabis, and monitor state standards governing worker safety and security in the cannabis industry.

The Program updated its Strategic Plan and Implementation Plan in the Spring of 2020, but there are outstanding issues that need to be addressed for the Program to be successful as follows:

Banking: Conflicts between federal and state law regarding cannabis-related businesses continue to impact operators, though the industry has reported increased access to banking services provided by local credit unions. The County remains concerned with the large amounts of cash that cannabis businesses are required to store on site and the risk it poses for violent crime. For reference, the County collected \$73 million in tax revenue between July 2016 and October 2021. The County is also concerned that its tax assessment, collection and audit functions will be needlessly complicated in a “cash only” environment, and that the potential revenue loss could negatively affect other County programs. A new federal policy is needed to permit financial institutions to serve the cannabis industry in accordance with state law. The County supports legislation that would create a safe harbor for individuals and entities from federal cannabis laws if they comply with state law.

Federal Legalization: The County supports the federal legalization and decriminalization of cannabis, along with a federal regulatory regime that aims to protect public health, ensure consumer safety, and promote social equity in the emerging cannabis marketplace while respecting the autonomy of states and providing necessary resources to ensure effective cannabis regulation. Federal legislation should promote a cooperative federal-state regulatory partnership that prioritizes public health and safety but does not unduly interfere in established cannabis markets that are being overseen by the states.

Funding for Enforcement: The 2018-19 State Budget included General Fund monies for a Department of Justice proposal for cannabis-related enforcement aimed at the illegal cannabis market and intrastate and interstate diversion activity by criminal organizations. None of this funding was provided directly to local enforcement agencies. The Cannabis Program was awarded a Proposition 64 three-year grant beginning October 2020 under the Board of State and Community Corrections that focuses on public education and enforcement against unlicensed cannabis operations. The County supports additional funding provided directly to local law enforcement agencies for cannabis related enforcement activities.

War on Drugs: The County has identified and is pursuing three equity-oriented grant opportunities: Cannabis Equity Grants program for Local Jurisdiction offered by the Governor’s Office of Business and Economic Development, the California Community Reinvestment Grant Program offered by the Governor’s Office of Business and Economic Development, and the Local Jurisdiction Assistance Grant Program offered by the Department of Cannabis Control. The County recognizes that the War on Drugs has had a disproportionate effect on low income communities and communities of color, especially regarding infractions for cannabis possession. The County supports policies that work to rectify these historical impacts, particularly those with grant funding opportunities, that address harms caused by the War on Drugs to local residents.

Cannabis Excise and Cultivation Taxes Imposed by the State of California: In August 2021, permittees noted a substantial decline in wholesale commercial cannabis pricing, both locally and throughout California. Coinciding harvests of cannabis cultivated using mixed-light and outdoor techniques are typical for this time of year, however the effect on wholesale pricing was much more significant than previous years. Many operators believe that cannabis has reached a point of oversaturation, attributable to the over issuance of cultivation licenses throughout the state. To that end, the cannabis excise and cultivation taxes imposed by the State for calendar years 2018, 2019, and 2020 equaled approximately \$228,213,989, \$398,295,350, and \$714,382,438 respectively. The County supports legislative action for state tax reform to provide relief and address declines in wholesale price points resulting from the ongoing issuance of new state cultivation licenses and oversaturation of the market.

Department of Cannabis Control – Continuous Improvement of Consolidation: In July 2021, Governor Newsom signed SB 160 into law. This bill consolidated the three cannabis licensing bureaus into one entity, the Department of Cannabis Control (DCC). Progress to date includes a new webpage, unified license search tool, consolidation of regulations, and a single licensing division. Future milestones include a single online licensing system for all cannabis businesses and the improvement of regulations based on input from stakeholders, local governments, and policymakers, which hopefully will result in simpler regulations that are easier to understand for businesses, local governments, and the public. The County supports DCC’s continued efforts to improve and expedite license application review and issuance, revision of the regulatory structure for simplicity and consistency, and local jurisdiction access to Metrc (Trac-n-Trace) seed database.

Key Objectives:

Support efforts to: reform banking regulations for cannabis-related businesses; legalize cannabis at the Federal level; provide funding for cannabis-related enforcement; fund and implement cannabis equity programs; reduce state cannabis excise and cultivation taxes; continuously improve upon consolidation of state licensing bureaus; and stabilize the cannabis industry.

Industrial Hemp

The California Industrial Hemp Act became effective on January 1, 2017 and made the cultivation of industrial hemp for fiber, seed, and extracts legal at the federal and state levels. Industrial hemp production includes cultivation of cannabis sativa plants, the same species of plant cultivated for the cannabis market. What differentiates legally between industrial hemp and cannabis varieties is the amount of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) present in the flowering tops - under 0.3% THC is defined as hemp, and greater than 0.3% THC is defined as cannabis.

In 2019, the Monterey County Board of Supervisors adopted Ordinance No. 5314 establishing a pilot program for the cultivation and processing of industrial hemp in the inland unincorporated areas of the County. This ordinance added Chapter 21.49 to Title 21 (non-coastal zoning) of the designation (HMP district) establishing industrial hemp cultivation as an allowed use subject to certain restrictions under the pilot program and development of new industrial hemp processing plants with a use permit. The ordinance requires approval of registration by the Monterey County Agricultural Commissioner, limits the number of industrial hemp cultivation registrations that may be issued (not to exceed 30), provides for a maximum cultivated area of 100 acres per registration, and requires a three mile setback from existing legal commercial cannabis cultivation sites unless the setback is reduced or waived by mutual consent of the industrial hemp cultivator and the cannabis cultivator.

In May 2020, the Monterey County Board of Supervisors updated the ordinance with the passage and adoption of Ordinance No. 5327, which re-opened registration for qualified operations; extended the length of the Industrial Hemp Pilot Program for a three-year period ending on December 31, 2022, allowed for split-parcel zoning – potentially allowing previously excluded portions of parcels to be included in the HMP District, and banned the use of artificial lights.

Funding for Enforcement: The County is under contract with the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) to perform work under the CDFA Industrial Hemp Cultivation Program. Maximum funding under the contract is \$49,250. CDFA recognizes this funding level will not cover all costs incurred by counties for enforcement activities. The County may consider establishment of a fee for Industrial Hemp cultivation pursuant to Food and Agricultural Code Section 81005. (c) which provides that: “The board of supervisors of a county may establish a reasonable fee, in an amount necessary to cover the actual costs of the commissioner and the county of implementing, administering, and enforcing the provisions of this division, except for costs that are otherwise reimbursed pursuant to subdivision (b), to be charged and collected by the commissioner upon registrations or renewals required pursuant to Section 81003 or 81004 and retained by the commissioner or the county, as appropriate. *(Amended by Stats. 2019, Ch. 838, Sec. 9. (SB 153) Effective January 1, 2020.)*”

Key Objectives:

Support efforts to increase funding for enforcement activities. Support efforts to develop uniform pesticide and other contaminant standards. Support efforts to fund local research of industrial hemp cultivation especially research of pollen travel and contamination.

Tourism

In 2019, tourism spending in Monterey County reached a record \$3.24 billion. That year, tourism was the number one industry on the Monterey Peninsula and the second largest industry in Monterey County, supporting more than 27,000 jobs and generating \$153 million in local tax revenues (e.g., sales tax, transient occupancy tax). This revenue provides communities with vital tax resources needed to invest in infrastructure improvements, programs and projects that benefit residents. In 2020, the hospitality industry was decimated in a matter of months, experiencing a total loss in visitor spending of \$1.74 billion and estimated job losses of 25%.

Monterey County has an abundance of open or undeveloped space and unique natural environments which lend themselves to tourism, eco-tourism, sustainable-tourism, and cultural-heritage tourism (e.g., Pinnacles National Park, Fort Ord National Monument, and numerous State, Regional and County parks). With proper marketing these assets can attract visitors for longer stays and more frequent visits, which

benefit the local economy through increased visitor spending on lodging, food, retail, and other services. The attraction of recreational enthusiasts encourages the establishment of manufacturing, retail and service businesses which cater to the recreational equipment needs of visitors and residents. Tourism benefits can also be gained by collaborating with the Monterey County Convention and Visitors Bureau and national organizations such as Brand USA, the Jobs Originated through Launching Travel (JOLT Act), and the State of California Travel Program. Traffic congestion acts as a deterrent to tourist, exacerbating the need to support transportation and infrastructure projects which improve public safety, enhance roadway capacity, provide for more public transportation, and improve coastal and trail access for residents and visitors.

Key Objectives:

Support efforts that promote tourism, eco-tourism, sustainable-tourism, and cultural-heritage tourism, including support for federal, state, and local conservation and recreation areas; partner with other agencies to leverage the benefits of tourism to increase economic growth, create jobs, generate tax revenue and boost U.S. exports; fund infrastructure improvements and capital projects that support visitor travel and tourism.

Arts & Culture

Through a 2018 community engagement process sponsored by the Board of Supervisors – which was conducted through phone, online and community forums – community members identified libraries as one of their top priorities.

Strengthening arts and cultural assets is vital to community development and can significantly contribute to economic development. Assets include those related to entertainment (e.g., theaters, performing groups), personal development (e.g., community centers, libraries, bookstores), education (e.g., schools, museums), and communities (e.g., cultural events/festivals). A flourishing arts and culture sector can affect where workers want to live and as such is important for workforce recruitment and retention. Arts and cultural activities also promote economic development by attracting visitors and increasing the length of time and money they spend.

Libraries: The Monterey County Free Library (MCFL) operates seventeen branch libraries, three bookmobiles, a library by mail program, deposit collections in local schools, and several special programs, including a literacy program which operates a literacy outreach vehicle focused on family literacy and kindergarten readiness. Free library services are provided to all residents of Monterey County.

MCFL serves as a community hub, equipped to serve evolving and diverse community needs in such areas as: literacy; education; lifelong learning; health information; workforce development and career support; economic and business development; digital literacy; critical thinking; financial literacy; new and emerging technologies; after-school-programming; veterans services; and assistance to vulnerable populations. Libraries have been drivers for equity and inclusion during the COVID-19 pandemic, as they are every day. However, the pandemic has caused major financial losses and disrupted libraries’ work to support small businesses, students, and jobseekers.

Key Objectives:

Support efforts that expand, strengthen, and support art and cultural activities and facilities, which improve the education, health, and well-being of both visitors and those who live in our communities. Support efforts to equip and empower public libraries to act as cultural hubs of understanding and

inclusion in public programming including materials, programs, and services to meet equity, diversity, and inclusion goals. Programs and services should include funding for art displays, cultural programming, access to meeting rooms for community groups, and expert logistical support.

Old Monterey County Jail

The Old Monterey County Jail located in Salinas, California, was built in 1931 in the Gothic Revival architectural style during the Art Deco period. It served as the County's primary jail until a new jail was completed in 1977. In 2004, the building was listed on the U.S. National Register of Historic Places reflecting its architectural significance and for areas where Cesar Chavez was imprisoned during the 1970 Salinas Lettuce Boycott – raising national attention of farmworker working conditions. The 50th anniversary of this historic moment in labor and civil rights history took place in 2020. After extensive evaluation of multiple alternatives, the Board of Supervisors selected three preferred alternative redevelopment and/or rehabilitation projects. The County needs funding to implement a capital project and repurpose the historic jail and site. Most recently it has been considered as a potential site for a Family Justice Center which would provide wrap around services to victims of intimate partner violence, sexual assault, child abuse, and elder abuse.

Key Objectives:

Support efforts to secure local, state and/or federal funding for a capital project to repurpose the Old Monterey County Jail.

Administration

Legislative Principles – Administration

General

Support legislative and regulatory efforts that protect and enhance local governments' revenues, maximize County access to state and federal funding sources and increase local funding flexibility. Support efforts to increase local authority and control over revenues, governance, and service delivery – as well as protect the County against federal and state mandates that constrict its ability to manage its own affairs. Support efforts to provide funding or reimbursement at the actual cost of doing business for County administered programs, projects, and responsibilities. Support efforts to recruit and retain a highly skilled and professional county workforce, provide staff opportunities for professional development, and promote the recognition of employees as professionals in their fields. Protect the attorney-client privilege. Support full funding for mandated programs and oppose unfunded mandates and the imposition of unreasonable or unnecessary legislative, administrative, or regulatory burdens that add costs or risks to County and local operations. Support efforts to provide increased training opportunities to County staff to ensure public health and safety.

Local Revenue Generation

Support efforts that preserve the County's autonomy as the fiscal manager, administrator, and policy-making entity related to County funds. Support expanded authority to generate voter approved revenues at the local level. Protect the County's revenue sources, especially property, sales, commercial cannabis business and transient occupancy taxes. Oppose efforts to restrict, limit or eliminate local taxing authority and policies that have the effect of reducing revenues to state and local government (e.g., the tax-exempt status of municipal bond interest, and the deduction for state and local taxes). Support the County's authority to engage in public-private partnerships and other alternative financing mechanisms for infrastructure development.

Government Efficiency & Privacy

Support efforts to modernize the governance structure of County divisions and agencies or enter into strategic partnerships to improve the efficient delivery of government services. Support efforts to streamline operations, enhance access and use of digital and other information technologies, and add flexibility and discretion for counties to manage programs in the most efficient and cost-effective manner possible. Support policies that promote net neutrality and open access to information in any format. Support efforts to increase data privacy and cybersecurity, limit third party access to data, safeguard against data breaches, and guard against election interference.

Brown Act

The Brown Act ensures that public decisions are deliberated on and made in public, at noticed meetings in which the public can participate; however, some of its out-of-date provisions make it difficult for members of boards, commissions, and advisory bodies to participate. Support efforts to modernize the Brown Act related to elected official and public participation in public meetings virtually, technical adjustments to the newly implemented law - AB 361 (Rivas, 2021), and code of conduct rules to foster public meetings that are safe and welcoming for all members of the community.

Civil Rights & Civic Engagement

★ COVID-19 PRIORITY – LANGUAGE ACCESS: *Since the pandemic began there has been a lack of communications and guidance documents in languages other than English. It is essential that these written and verbal communications be provided in non-English languages for communities where English is not the primary language. – See COVID-19 priorities on pages 10-17.*

★ COVID-19 PRIORITY – VIRTUAL ACCESS: *As a result of the need for social distancing during the pandemic, some requirements have temporarily been waived to allow access to County services by virtual means and to increase virtual participation in government. Making these changes permanent will increase the public's access to county government. – See COVID-19 priorities on pages 10-17.*

Support efforts that respect civil rights, provide equal opportunity for all, and pursue equity in all operations by developing a culture of diversity and inclusion. Support efforts to improve services to Limited English Proficiency (LEP) persons by providing services in the language spoken by our residents, including indigenous languages and American Sign Language. Support efforts to increase access to government for persons with different abilities using adaptive or assistive devices. Support efforts to improve the Department of Fair Employment and Housing's discrimination, harassment, and retaliation investigative process. Support efforts to increase diversity and inclusion in government boards, commissions, and committees. Support efforts to protect the constitutional rights and voting rights of County residents, the integrity of the election process, and equitable access to voter registration and voting. Support efforts to reform the election process and fund election administration to ensure reform efforts can be implemented. Support policies that create efficiencies and reduce costs in elections administration.

Strategic Collaboration

In matters where legislative pursuits align or are consistent with the interests of Monterey County, support other agencies' efforts. Collaborate with neighboring cities, counties, and other agencies on large-scale projects and regional planning efforts. Maintain effective relationships with the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC) and National Association of Counties (NACo).

Legislative Priorities – Administration

Local Government Funding and Authority

★ COVID-19 PRIORITY – STATE AND FEDERAL SUPPORT AND INVESTMENT: *Despite recent investments, counties cannot continue to meet the unprecedented demands in public health, emergency response, and other vital services without additional state and federal support. Declining local revenues, coupled with increasing demands on county delivered safety net services makes the County's situation unsustainable, and puts the health and security of the public, especially communities of color, at risk. – See COVID-19 priorities on pages 10-17.*

It is essential that the County work to protect and enhance local government revenues, maximize access to State and Federal funding sources and increase local funding flexibility. Local authority and control over revenues, governance, and service delivery – as well as protection against mandates that constrict the

County's ability to manage its own affairs is essential. Efforts must be supported which provide funding or reimbursement at the actual cost of doing business for County administered programs, projects and responsibilities and vigilantly oppose unfunded mandates and the imposition of unreasonable or unnecessary legislative or regulatory burdens that add costs or risks to operations.

Federal and State Aid: Monterey County receives funding from the Federal and State government to administer health, welfare, and public safety programs, and much of this funding is based on federal census data. The County also receives revenue from competitive grant programs. Total Federal and State aid to the General Fund for Fiscal Year 2020-21 is estimated at 34% of total financing. Social service and health programs rely heavily upon and are the largest recipients of this aid. However, funding to counties to deliver required services has not kept pace with costs.

Discretionary Revenues: The County's primary discretionary revenue sources are property, sales, commercial cannabis business taxes and transient occupancy taxes. These revenues support most County services and basic functions (e.g., public safety, criminal justice, health, public assistance, land use, recreation, environment, administration).

Targeted Federal and State Advocacy: The County's state and federal legislative advocacy efforts work to support or defend legislative, regulatory or budget actions that impact resource, operation, revenue or funding opportunities for County projects and programs. The Board of Supervisors has a Legislative Program and Strategic Grant Services Program to aid County departments in legislative efforts and priority project grant applications. These programs work in close collaboration to advocate for maximum state and federal program funding which translates into locally available funding opportunities. The County's lobbyists and grant consultants are key to these efforts, working with state and federal agency staff to shape rulemakings and guidance for programs that impact County finances and operations.

Local Authority: The County must have adequate authority, operational flexibility, and resources to meet its role as an agent of the State and local service provider. The County supports efforts to ensure local discretionary control over governance issues and the delivery of services. The County opposes the transfer of programs from the State to counties unless program control and flexibility are also shifted, and adequate State funding is guaranteed.

Transparency: The County supports transparency in its operations and business decisions, open government, and freedom of information as it executes its responsibilities. The County believes that the transparency of public spending strengthens democracy, promotes fiscal responsibility, and bolsters public confidence.

Key Objectives:

Support efforts to secure and enhance State and Federal revenues and funding for local government operations and programs; preserve the County's autonomy and local authority as the fiscal manager, administrator, and policy-making entity related to County funds; and to expand authority to generate voter approved revenues at the local level. Support efforts to increase transparency in the way the County conducts its business, modernize the governance structure of County divisions and agencies, and enter into strategic partnerships to improve the efficient delivery of government services. Support efforts to enhance and equitably distribute constitutionally guaranteed funds to counties for realigned public safety, health, and human services programs. Support the reduction or elimination of regressive fees and fines that disproportionately affect low-income residents. Oppose administrative and regulatory burdens which unnecessarily add risks or costs to County business activities. Oppose federal efforts to eliminate or limit local taxing authority, the state and local tax deduction, the tax-exempt status of municipal bonds, and other tax policies that have the effect of reducing revenues for state and local governments. Support

legislative and administrative policies that ensure the accuracy and completeness of collected census data that reflects the total resident population in each state, including noncitizens.

Social, Health, and Racial Equity

★ COVID-19 PRIORITY – DISPARATE IMPACTS: *The “COVID-19 Pandemic Disparate Impact Report” identifies the underlying conditions that have contributed to the racial disparities present in the data and statistics of those most impacted by the pandemic in Monterey County. - See COVID-19 pandemic disparate impact legislative priorities on pages 10-17.*

Monterey County supports policies and practices that promote equity and reduce disparities based on race, ethnicity, national origin, immigration status, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability, and socioeconomic status. Policies should address all forms of racism, particularly institutional and structural racism, which have historically played a central role in creating and perpetuating persistent social and health inequities. Despite progress in addressing explicit discrimination in these policy areas, inequities continue across the nation. These inequities exist across all indicators for success, including education, criminal justice, jobs, housing, public infrastructure, and health, regardless of region. Identifying and addressing the root causes of these disparities is needed to understand the unintended consequences of policies, systems and institutional biases which may marginalize certain communities.

Monterey County has developed a Governing for Racial Equity Action Plan that will move a theory of change into action to achieve a collective vision of equity and drive institutional and structural change across County departments.

Key Objective:

Support efforts, policies and practices that eliminate disparities based on race, ethnicity, national origin, immigration status, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability, and socioeconomic status, to ensure equitable opportunities and better futures are available to all Monterey County residents. Support efforts to fund and implement proven Governing for Racial Equity practices across County departments, including establishing and funding equity infrastructure (i.e., equity offices in key County departments with decision-making power) to sustain ongoing efforts.

Health & Human Services

Legislative Principles – Health & Human Services

General

Assure that adequate protections are in place to provide equitable opportunities for all individuals to realize their full potential and provide for needed public health, safety, and social service programs. Support state and federal actions that promote the health and welfare of the County's most vulnerable residents. Support efforts to fund, expand, coordinate, and improve the County's health care safety net system, including COVID response funding. Support efforts protect and preserve the health care systems that serve Monterey county residents where our interests align, especially in serving the most vulnerable. Support reforms to fully fund comprehensive health care programs, providers, and facilities for every resident, without adversely affecting the local economy and business community. Oppose funding cuts to critically important health and human service programs, such as Medicaid (Medi-Cal in California), Medicare, and Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) funding, and efforts that reduce local flexibility in the implementation of such programs. Support initiatives that eliminate or indefinitely delay implementation of DSH cuts. Oppose policies that limit access to private health insurance. Support state efforts to implement CalAIM with the federal government as part of providing expanded Medicaid (Medi-Cal) funding to California counties. Support funding for, and policies that, assure parity for mental health and substance use disorder prevention and treatment. Oppose attempts to require website posting of hospital contracts which would affect the hospital's ability to compete, increase potential lawsuits, and place an undue burden on County business. Oppose federal surprise billing legislation that places unreasonable and costly regulatory requirements on hospital. Support efforts to reduce the burden resulting from price transparency rules that were effective January 2021. Support programs that promote increasing and improving workforce development to assist with healthcare staffing shortages. Support efforts to fund electronic health records integration and implementation so health information exchange efforts can expand. Support changes in federal substance abuse confidentiality rules to allow for streamlined information sharing.

Public Health

Support policies and funding that preserve and expand primary prevention and essential public health staffing infrastructure and functions. Support efforts that foster social equity in the areas of community health, health care access, education, and disease prevention. Support efforts to create safe neighborhoods and invest in affordable housing to assure the environment is supportive of making healthy choices that lead to healthy lifestyles, with a focus on early childhood development, prevention of childhood obesity, promotion of maternal and child health, and youth violence prevention. Support efforts to create climate resilient communities. Support efforts and policies that promote environmental health regulations that require businesses and individuals to follow public health principles that protect people and the environment. Support efforts to allow streamlined information sharing across multi-sector entities to improve coordination of care and client outcomes.

Social Services

Support efforts to preserve and advance social services by providing the authority and resources required to promote the social and economic self-reliance of individuals and families, and for the protection of children, elders, and dependent adults. Support efforts to restore funding and clarify state/county

responsibilities for county provided social services. Encourage and support the State’s efforts to secure funding and federal waivers resulting in additional resources for counties and community-based social service providers. Support efforts to provide funding and policies to address the unique needs of veterans and their families.

Legislative Priorities – Health & Human Services

Public Health, Health Care Coverage, Access & Integration

★ COVID-19 PRIORITY – HEALTH: *Access to quality healthcare is a fundamental human right. Communities of color have higher rates of underlying health conditions (e.g., diabetes, heart disease, lung disease, etc.) linked to more severe cases of COVID-19. Communities of color also have less access to quality health care and are disproportionately represented in essential frontline jobs that cannot be done from home, increasing their exposure to the virus. – See COVID-19 priorities on pages 10-17.*

Through a 2018 community engagement process sponsored by the Board of Supervisors – which was conducted through phone, online and community forums – community members identified quality health and mental health services as some of their top priorities.

California counties play a critical role in serving those most in need through the provision of public health, communicable disease control, behavioral health, social services, and a strong public safety net health care system. Funding cuts during the great recession left significant underfunded infrastructure needs for public health and communicable disease control. Restoration of these funds in particular are needed for a comprehensive infectious disease control system in California to combat emerging and reemerging diseases.

Additionally, the reduction of health inequities is a critical need that can be accomplished through intentional systems change to improve the social determinants of health and increasing the proportion of county residents covered by health insurance. System changes include fostering the promotion of health and prevention strategies, developing multi-sector coalitions using collective impact to address complex issues, expanding health care coverage, and partnering health care delivery with public health. These efforts are an intentional move up-stream from the treatment of illness associated with communicable and chronic disease to advance a policy, systems and organizational change approach to address the underlying environmental factors and conditions that influence health and health behaviors.

Monterey County faces numerous health-related issues (e.g., childhood obesity, youth violence, and adult onset diabetes). The County has adopted a strategy of “Health in All Policies” as part of its efforts to eliminate social, racial, economic, and environmental inequities that impede the attainment and maintenance of good health, including health care access. The County supports a broad system-wide and public health prevention approach to reduce risk factors that exacerbate health inequities, maintain, and strengthen the County’s role in health care reform, and the health of the public safety net health care system.

The safety net health care system and access to it provides residents with opportunities for routine care. Those opportunities include comprehensive health care insurance coverage, continued support for those with pre-existing conditions, reimbursement mechanisms that cover the costs of providing health care, and support for a twelve-month extension of the Medi-Cal 2020 waiver, and the five-year renewal of California’s Section 1115 new Medicaid waiver.

Key Objectives:

Support efforts that reduce health inequities, improve health care access for all (e.g., Esperanza Care), promote primary public health prevention, fund interventions to prevent emerging and reemerging communicable diseases, and strengthen communities (e.g., social support networks, community design, clean energy, public transportation, access to education, employment practices, alternatives to incarceration, restorative justice, etc.). Support funding and policy changes to support population-based chronic disease prevention efforts such as the creation of funding of a State Wellness Trust with allocations to counties and other key partners to implement programs, policies, and strategies to prevent chronic illness.

Support efforts promote and fund health prevention efforts, address Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), behavioral health, communicable and chronic disease, positively impact current and future health outcomes, promotes the integration of cognitive and physical health, mental health, behavioral health, and other types of preventive services and healthcare in unified service delivery models.

Support efforts to fully fund Health Department enhanced case management services to managed care Medi-Cal beneficiaries.

Support efforts to improve the design and care of built and natural environments to be culturally supportive of healthy living throughout the county. Support increased information and resources to empower community members to choose healthy eating, active living, and drug free lives.

Oppose efforts to repeal or diminish funding or services under the Affordable Care Act, or to limit the scope of the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Oppose efforts that reduce funding for public health, shifts costs to local health departments, or create unfunded mandates. Oppose legislative and executive actions such as the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) proposed rule or Medicaid Fiscal Accountability Rule (MFAR) that could limit Medicaid supplementation payments and other financing arrangements which would limit the County's funding sources for federal government programs. Support efforts to stabilize and strengthen public safety net health care systems and pharmacy benefits. Support efforts to provide higher Medi-Cal and Medicare reimbursement levels for inpatient and outpatient services, and substance abuse disorders. Support expansion of coverage for low-income individuals, families and seniors through Medi-Cal and Medicare programs, regardless of legal status. Support the continued implementation of CalAIM for California and its public health care systems to lead the nation towards care for low-income and vulnerable patients that emphasizes preventative and patient-centered care in the right place at the right time.

Behavioral Health

Counties provide specialty mental health and substance use disorder services on behalf of the state through county-run mental health plans. The various and complicated funding streams that support behavioral health services include such sources as the 1991 and 2011 Realignments, the Mental Health Services Act, and new homeless funding. The Affordable Care Act has improved behavioral health service delivery, but additional funding and reforms are needed. The development of an integrated and comprehensive system of care that includes supports for behavioral health prevention and treatment programs will lead to reduced costs, improved equity for behavioral health care, enhanced patient outcomes, reduced mental health stigma, and reduced treatment delays and safety issues.

The County needs expanded mental health beds and program space in its adult detention and mental health facilities. Due to the limitations of the detention facility, mentally ill inmates are housed in a variety of locations which creates challenges and security issues. Funding is needed for the construction of dedicated mental health beds for adults and juveniles, individual and group mental health therapy and program space, safety cells, and in and out of custody offender programming needs.

The County's only locked 5150 mental health facility is located at Natividad Hospital. There has been a significant increase in the demand for inpatient mental health beds. Funds are needed to expand beds and program space to better serve the adult and juvenile population, and to engage in behavioral health community outreach and education.

The County would like to repurpose dormitory style jail housing units and utilize those areas for a locked mental health treatment facility. Secure housing is necessary to treat some offenders while they receive a combination of counseling, therapy, and medication to stabilize their condition. Housing and treatment should be expanded to include misdemeanor inmates and those misdemeanor offenders deemed incompetent to stand trial. The County will need funding to renovate and staff a locked treatment facility.

The pandemic has had a significant impact on family mental health, adding to long-term stressors such as Adverse Childhood Experiences including systemic racism and poverty. Social-emotional development and wellness are fundamental in the earliest years of childhood for long-term health and well-being. The County supports whole child/whole family systemic approaches to mental health, including shifting the societal conditions that create toxic stress and triggering events, as well as holistic services in all of the settings most comfortable to families, including (but not limited to): dyadic care models in pediatric clinics, particularly for families enrolled in Medi-Cal; early childhood mental health consultation and related services in subsidized child care programs; and attachment and maternal mental health supports through home visiting.

Key Objectives:

Support efforts to enhance the comprehensive behavioral health system, including broader support to expand transitional and permanent housing for the homeless and disabled. Support local control over spending priorities for the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA)/Proposition 63 funds, inclusive of the innovation component for funds. Support efforts to prohibit the funds currently allocated to counties from being re-directed by the State for other purposes. Support efforts to require coverage and increase reimbursements for mental health and substance use disorder services; give counties flexibility to blend mental health, alcohol and drug treatment funds and direct funds to areas of greatest need; and increase availability of services to the uninsured. Support efforts to secure funding to construct mental health beds, residential placement facilities, and program space for residents of all ages.

Public Guardians, Administrators and Conservators

Public Administrators, Public Guardians and Public Conservators act under the authority of the California Supreme Court but are solely a County function and mostly funded with County General Funds and some fees collected through the conservatee's estate. These funding sources have not kept pace with the increasing demand for services and there has been a rise in interest in conservatorships as vehicles to help manage criminally involved and homeless populations.

Key Objectives:

Support efforts that would provide adequate and sustainable funding for public guardians, conservators, and administrators to ensure quality safety-net services including securing and safeguarding financial assets for all who qualify. Oppose additional duties, mandates, and requirements for public guardians without the provision of adequate funding to carry out these services. Support efforts to enhance placement capacity for public guardians, as California severely lacks safe and secure housing for the majority of residents under conservatorship.

Support efforts to create a suitable designation for persons with traumatic brain injury, dementia, or co-occurring mental illness and dementia; and extend Medi-Cal Managed Care or private insurance coverage to provide appropriate coverage, placement, and treatment options for these individuals.

Public Health and Prevention Policies: Cannabis and Tobacco

Legalization of recreational cannabis may exacerbate existing health disparities such as low birth weight, poor mental health outcomes, or lower high school graduation rates for children and youth. Increased cannabis use may lead to cannabis dependency and attendant health and social harms. While tobacco use has declined in Monterey County for the past few decades, lung cancer is the number one cause of cancer deaths, the use of electronic smoking devices and other smokeless tobacco products has been on the rise, and smoking rates among youth are increasing. The proliferation of tobacco product categories, flavored products, and the evolution in tobacco marketing appear to be fueling teens switching from traditional cigarettes to a new generation of tobacco products. And the use of electronic smoking devices is linked with cannabis as well as tobacco. In a 2016 National Youth Tobacco Survey, 9% of students surveyed said they had used an e-cigarette device with marijuana, THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) or hash oil or THC wax.

Key Objectives:

Support efforts that increase funding for cannabis and tobacco education programs and to study the impacts of cannabis use and legalization on public health. Oppose efforts to exempt electronic nicotine delivery systems, such as e-cigarettes, from tobacco control laws and regulations. Support legislation regulating the sales and marketing of smokeless tobacco products, restrict sale of flavored nicotine-containing products, prevention of youth-focused marketing strategies, and establish a minimum price or minimum package size for all tobacco products.

Early Childhood Development

★ COVID-19 PRIORITY – CHILDCARE: *Local economic recovery from the COVID-19 crisis hinges on the ability of many county residents, especially those who work in industries deemed essential, to access childcare so that they can return to work. – See COVID-19 priorities on pages 10-17.*

Through a 2018 community engagement process sponsored by the Board of Supervisors – which was conducted through phone, online and community forums – community members identified early learning and preschool programs as some of their top priorities.

There is a total of 47,545 children ages 5 and under in Monterey County, accounting for 7.4% of the population. Using measures that supplement federal poverty data (e.g., cost of living), Monterey County (combined with San Benito County) has the highest child poverty rate in the state, at 31%, with 25.5% of children being food insecure. Monterey County has one of the highest rates of children living in overcrowded housing in the state, at 36.3%.

Research clearly shows that for children to thrive they need good health and quality early learning experiences that unfold within strong family environments. Without early intervention children for whom these statistics are a reality are likely to experience adverse consequences into adulthood - resulting in higher health care costs, a poorly educated workforce, and lifelong dependence on public assistance. Targeted interventions to improve conditions during early childhood offer a greater return on investment than interventions later in life. With a strong investment in early childhood development, all children will be able to contribute to the local economy through increased human productivity.

The County understands the years between conception and age three are uniquely important for the positive development of the child and family; and they are the most likely time frame for a child to enter the child welfare system. Home visiting is a critical lever during that window to build buffering supports and connect families to a holistic range of systems and services, including the social safety net, public health, and family strengthening, to improve outcomes for families and children down the road.

Additionally, the County believes that early identification and intervention play a key role in successful early childhood care. Silos within systems of care prevent children and families from accessing the care, supports, and services they are eligible to receive, particularly for children with developmental delays and concerns. A child's early development is tied to their lifelong outcomes and should be nurtured in the community and across systems, and at all levels of ability.

Key Objectives:

Support efforts to ensure that parents and primary caregivers are well-informed and capable of supporting their children physically, emotionally, mentally, intellectually, and financially (e.g., preschool for all, increase opportunities and access to culturally relevant, trauma informed care, education, and services, along with timely and appropriate information to support families). Support efforts to strengthen families' equitable access to quality early childhood services that meet a variety of family needs (e.g., early childhood workforce development, improved access to quality and developmentally appropriate early care, increase number of quality childcare providers, improved reimbursement rates for licensed childcare providers) with an emphasis on families with children ages birth-three. Support efforts to ensure children

Bright Beginnings Early Childhood Development Initiative: Framework & Strategy Priorities

- ☆ An equitable system that supports all children and families.
- ☆ Families surrounded by support: implement an integrated, holistic, family-centered support system of screening, care coordination referrals and services; scale up home visiting programs for families with young children; expand paid family leave, protect and support breastfeeding, and implement other family-friendly business practices
- ☆ Empowered and Resilient Families: improve support for parent's and caregiver's mental health; expand access to parent-child play groups.
- ☆ Caregivers support children's growth and learning: embed parenting and child development supports in health and other public services; establish capacity support for family, friend and neighbor caregivers; scale up effective parenting programs.
- ☆ Transform early care and education systems to increase access and improve quality.
- ☆ Design coherent public policies that will improve the lives of children and families.
- ☆ Cross-cutting strategies: generate sustainable funding for early childhood services; engage families with young children in shaping local and regional policies, budgets and services; capacity development and awareness raising.

are physically, mentally, socially, and emotionally healthy (e.g., increased availability and equitable access to social determinants of health: healthy food, affordable housing, trauma and special needs services, minimize harmful environmental health risk factors, child friendly workplaces). Support efforts to ensure that the early childhood development system is comprehensive, cohesive, and navigable (e.g., increase coordination, collection and sharing of data and best practices, increase coordination of whole family services and support for children and families, increased early childhood investments, immigration reform that benefits children and families, quality infrastructure development or improvement). Support efforts to increase funding for early childhood development systems, programs, facilities, and First 5 Monterey County.

Promote Child Well-Being and Prevention of Child Abuse

★ COVID-19 PRIORITY – PROTECTING YOUTH AND FAMILIES: *The pandemic has added major stressors to children and families, especially in communities where there is a higher incidence of the virus. Economic challenges, school closures, and social isolation further add to the problem and place additional stress on family units. – See COVID-19 priorities on pages 10-17.*

Monterey County continues to pride itself in having a strong child welfare system that invests substantial local discretionary funds into child abuse prevention and early intervention programs. The County has one of the lowest foster care entry rates in the state, further reflecting our prevention efforts. With the statewide implementation of Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) the County is putting an ever-increasing emphasis on keeping children with kin whenever possible, to include a formal foster care setting. This includes doing an extensive search for family and supporting kin caregivers as formal resource families. Monterey County continues to struggle with challenging community demographics ranging from overcrowded and unstable housing to co-occurring mental health and substance abuse disorders, along with youth and family violence.

In 2016, the Monterey County Department of Social Services began a community dialogue to develop a Roadmap to Child Well-Being. The dialogue was facilitated by the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) with the support of the staff to the National Commission to Eliminate Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities, and included national, state and local stakeholders. In 2018, the formalized work was complete and next steps were outlined by the team. This has included a comprehensive review and update of our local mandated reporter training, collaborating to bring forth evidence-based Nurse Family partnership with the Health Department, and work on providing more grass root supports for the community by those in the community.

Key Objectives:

Support policies that expand funding for child abuse prevention services to meet collaborative next steps outlined through the work with APHSA. For children and youth who enter foster care, locate kin to be trained and supported as caregivers along with recruiting and preserving Community Resource Families (formally known as foster families). Support policies to improve the integration of data among youth serving agencies, including child welfare, public assistance, behavioral health, physical health, education, and public safety. Support funding to assist with housing for children, families and emancipating foster youth. Support funding for social work workforce development and education programs. Support funding to sustain and expand primary prevention efforts such as the Nurse Family Partnership and relative support programs. Support the gathering of community through Child and Family Teams as best practice to get the individual needs of the family met. Support funding and programs for parenting education, domestic violence prevention, and childcare training for family, friends and neighbors who provide

unlicensed care. Support resources to expand life skill training for pre-teens and teens. Support staff and community coaching around the Child Welfare Core Practice Model to best serve those who are in need of services. Support funding for the recruitment foster parents for probation foster youth and children-family teams. Support efforts to remove barriers to access of the Child Support Services program to reach unserved families and increase funding for mandated child support services staffing.

Sustain and Strengthen Safety Net & Employment Support Resources

★ COVID-19 PRIORITY – PUBLIC ASSISTANCE FOR BASIC NEEDS: *Safety net services are a critical element of community well-being that help struggling households survive and thrive. See COVID-19 priorities on pages 10-17.*

Safety net services are a critical element of community well-being that help struggling families and individuals survive and thrive. According to the 2016 American Community Survey 16% of all Monterey County residents have incomes below the federal poverty level (FPL) and 24% of children live in poverty. When the high cost of living in Monterey County is taken into consideration – the effective poverty rate climbs. The FPL represents a bare minimum threshold. A better standard is the self-sufficiency standard budget which considers average costs for various household budget items (housing, food, childcare, etc.). Using this standard, 59% of households with children in Monterey County have annual incomes below the self-sufficiency standard.

Key Objectives:

Support funding for basic assistance to individuals who work in lower wage jobs, are underemployed or are unemployed through CalFresh and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), CalWORKs Employment and Training Services, the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program, child care programs, Community Action programs and the CalWORKs/Temporary Assistance to Needy Family (TANF) programs. Support efforts that ensure a living wage for all Monterey County residents. Support funding for programs that help prevent homelessness and rapidly secure housing (HUD Homeless Assistance, CalWORKs Housing Support). Support improvements to the TANF program to modify work participation requirements to better match individual family needs and local economic circumstances, the need for wrap around services for families struggling through crises, and to recognize additional costs to communities as a result of ongoing funding stagnation and high unemployment caused by job loss due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Support expansion of wage subsidy programs for households served by both CalFresh/SNAP and CalWORKs/TANF, and CalWORKs Employment Training Services – these programs have proven to be effective local resources for promoting self-sufficiency and establishing a positive work history.

Assure Safe & Legal Shelter for All

Through a 2018 community engagement process sponsored by the Board of Supervisors – which was conducted through phone, online and community forums – community members identified affordable housing, displacement prevention, and services for homeless individuals and families as some of their top priorities.

California’s poverty and homeless rates remain among the highest in the nation, affecting all Californians including children, adults, veterans, seniors, and families. The deepening homelessness crisis not only

takes a toll on those who live without adequate shelter or housing, but it also diminishes the community as a whole.

State Efforts to Address Homelessness: The State has invested significant resources to address homelessness and homelessness prevention, including resources for local governments to house the homeless population during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Governor’s Council of Regional Homeless Advisors created a Comprehensive Crisis Response Strategy that outlines proposed next steps to further California’s homeless related public policy goals aimed at: dramatically reducing street homelessness; breaking down barriers to accessing mental health and substance abuse services; reducing the cost and increasing the supply of housing options; and preventing people from becoming homeless. In addition to focusing on implementing and funding these next steps, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic the Governor and Legislature adopted an Action Plan for preventing and ending homelessness in California in March of 2021 and in July of 2021 signed a historic housing and homeless funding package as part of the \$100 billion California Comeback Plan. The package includes \$10.3 billion for affordable housing and \$12 billion over two years towards services and strategies that address the homelessness crisis head-on and created new opportunities to fund innovative housing programs such as Project Roomkey. The goal of this program is to provide non-congregate shelter options for people experiencing homelessness, to protect human life, and minimize strain on the health care system.

Homelessness in Monterey County: The 2019 Monterey County Homeless Point-In-Time Census and Survey identified 2,422 homeless individuals, 76% of which were unsheltered. According to the California Department of Education, 9.6% of K-12 students met the broader definition of homeless used by education. This staggering figure is matched by data from the American Community Survey which states that 39.8% of children live in crowded housing. The McKinney-Vento Act, which provides states with funding for the education of homeless students, defines homeless children and youth as those who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. Under this definition, Monterey County’s student homeless population is approximately 9,900. Rapid response to the unsheltered homeless and public encampments is necessary, as are midterm strategies such as establishing low-barrier transitional housing and bridge communities. The long-term goal is to provide safe, healthy, accessible, affordable housing for all.

Lead me Home Plan Update – 5-Year Plan to end Homelessness in Monterey and San Benito Counties: In November 2021, the County adopted the [Lead me Home Plan Update](#) which provides a five-year roadmap for the Monterey and San Benito County Continuum of Care (CoC) and its partners to achieve the vision that all people in the region live in decent, safe, and affordable housing from which they can access services and supports that stabilize their lives. The Plan sets out the ambitious goal of reducing the total population of people experiencing homelessness in Monterey and San Benito Counties by 50% by June 2026.

Addressing Homeless Encampments: Without an adequate supply of housing too many people living with very low incomes have no local housing options other than living unsheltered. To address this reality of insufficient housing and shelter options, service providers (public, non-profit, faith-based and voluntary) offer resources that aid in survival and address critical health and quality of life issues for those living unsheltered and in encampments. Encampments can pose public health and safety hazards to individuals and the environment which require their removal. Additional resources are needed for both service providers and the cost of cleanup of encampment areas.

Key Objectives:

Support the fair and equitable calculation and distribution of State and Federal funds to counties to provide services to all homeless populations. Support the proposed goals of the Governor’s Council of Regional Homeless Advisors aimed at: reducing homelessness; increasing access to mental health and substance abuse services; reducing the cost and increasing the supply of housing options; and homeless prevention. Support resources for local government to house the at-risk homeless population during the COVID-19 pandemic. Support efforts to provide on-going funding to support services and operations that would utilize the new facility and maintain high quality services that assist homeless individuals and families navigate the continuum of care. Strengthen “by right” permitting or CEQA streamlining for safe parking programs. Support efforts that address the homelessness issue in all California communities, ensuring that counties, as the social services providers, are at the forefront of all solutions addressing homelessness. Support efforts to expand housing subsidies to prevent loss of housing and provide long-term assistance to sustain housing. Support efforts that encourage and facilitate the production of housing that is attainable to households at or below 30% of average median income. Support innovative approaches to increase affordable housing availability (e.g., rent control, facilitating construction of accessory dwelling units). Support additional resources for local shelter, transitional, and permanent supportive housing programs. Support efforts to prevent homelessness and to assist the current homeless population with coordinated services, health services, health access, and other health supports. Support an increase in student homeless funding under the McKinney-Vento Act. Support funding to provide services and address the environmental cleanup of homeless encampments.

Strengthen Resources for Seniors and People Living with Disability

Long-term services and supports help all individuals live successfully while maintaining dignity and independence in their homes and communities. Years of funding erosion has taken a toll on service capacity and strains the ability of local agencies to provide financial, health and social supports to older adults, people with disabilities, and caregivers. It is increasingly difficult for the aging and disability services network to maintain existing safety net services. Reports to Adult Protective Services continue to increase, and demand for services is rising as families struggle to support and care for older relatives. The number of older adults who struggle to make ends meet, face food insecurities, and homelessness continues to increase. Out of pocket medical expenses, lack of sufficient assets, dramatically rising housing costs and fixed budgets are major causes of economic insecurity. Without additional resources to address these growing needs, local communities are unprepared to adequately respond to the needs of this growing population. The population of people who are 60 years old or older is growing – 16% of County population in 2014 and projected to be 24% by 2030. The Federal Poverty Level (FPL) for these seniors is 8.2% (2015). However, the Elder Economic Security Standard Index (Elder Index) which accounts for cost of living more accurately estimates the County’s senior poverty rate at 27.6% (2011) - three times the number captured by the FPL.

Key Objectives:

Support funding for programs and services that promote the ability of older adults and people with disabilities to live safely and with dignity in an environment of their choice where they can eat well, stay healthy, and avoid unnecessary and costly institutional care. Key legislation supporting these efforts are the Elder Justice Act, Older Americans Act, and the Older Californians Act. Such legislation provides funding for food programs, legal services, caregiver and family supports, and ombudsman initiatives. County programs requiring additional support include Adult Protective Services, In-Home Supportive

Services (IHSS), Public Authority, SSI Advocacy, and the newly formed Aging and Disability Resources Connection (ADRC). The ADRC model is one that combines the efforts of the aging and disability networks to create a streamlined, “no wrong door” approach to the provision of person-centered resources.

Support funding to minimize health care costs at end of life, avoid spending end of life in institutional settings and create livable communities for all ages. Support funding to ensure an adequate number of social workers are available to meet the needs of the growing number of older adults and people with disabilities in our community. Support initiatives developed for the Master Plan on Aging (December 2020). Support efforts to enable all County agencies, services, and facilities to offer access and options tailored to the needs of this growing County demographic.

Honor our Veterans

Monterey County is home to more than 20,000 veterans and an estimated 25,000 spouses and dependents whom the Monterey County Military & Veterans Affairs Office (MVAO) is in place to assist in obtaining a variety of state and federal benefits. MVAO provides free-of-charge assistance in filing claims with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for the benefits they have earned by their service in defense of our nation, as well as information and referrals to other federal, state and local programs. Currently only 31.8% of Monterey County’s veterans are accessing VA Compensation and Pension Benefits.

Veterans and members of the military have made tremendous sacrifices, and some have paid the ultimate sacrifice for the protection of our country and the well-being of people facing tragedy and injustice around the world. Expanded federal, state and local resources are needed to assist our veterans and their families with successful reintegration into civilian life (e.g., family reintegration, employment, housing, education, childcare, and services to address a multitude of disabilities including post-traumatic stress and traumatic brain injury).

Federal Benefits: The County supports improved access and service expansion for: health benefits (e.g., dental); local facilities (e.g., Veterans Drop-In Center; Major General Gourley VA-DoD Outpatient Clinic (e.g., pharmacy services); Veterans Stand Down events and other outreach efforts; Veterans’ Treatment Courts; and Veterans’ Justice Outreach programs. The veterans community can also benefit from increased funding for County Veterans Service Officers (CVSOs) and increased and expedited access for CVSOs to the VA Veteran Benefits Management Systems (VBMS), which will aid in developing and monitoring various claims and appeals submitted on behalf of veterans, surviving spouses and eligible dependents resulting in better, timelier services to claimants. The County also supports efforts to increase compensation to disabled veterans and their surviving spouses.

State Benefits: The County supports efforts to obtain increased County Subvention Program funding from the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet). This program funds a group of programs mandated by the Legislature to reimburse counties for a portion of the costs of “presenting and pursuing any claim the veteran may have against the VA and in establishing the veteran’s right to any privilege, preference, care, or compensation provided for by the laws of the United States or of this state” (Military & Veterans Code 971). The County supports efforts to expand and improve the Disabled Veterans’ Property Tax Exemption, which reduces the property tax liability on the principal place of residence of qualified veterans who, due to a service-connected injury or disease, have been rated 100% disabled or are being compensated at the 100% rate due to unemployability. The County supports efforts to eliminate the state tax obligation on military retirement pay.

State Veterans Home: One of the County's top priorities is the development of a Veterans Home in Monterey County to serve aged and disabled veterans, eligible spouses, domestic partners and Gold Star families. There are over 50,000 veterans in Monterey, Santa Cruz, San Benito and San Luis Obispo Counties alone. CalVet operates eight Veterans Homes in the California providing a range of services from independent living to skilled nursing and memory care. Four of the homes offer combined skilled nursing and memory care, however demand for these services far exceeds the current supply of available beds which results in 2-5+ year wait times. The closest of Veterans Home is over two hours away from Monterey County. The County strongly believes that our veterans should not have to leave their families, friends and the community they call home to access these services.

The County intends to pursue State legislation to authorize the development of a State Veterans Home in Monterey County, potentially located on or near other veterans' services at the former Fort Ord. The County will work with its state and federal delegations and the Veterans Administration to ensure the project meets regulatory requirements for assistance through CalVet and the VA's State Veterans Home Construction Grant Program, which can provide up to 65% of construction costs. If constructed the facility would be available to all California veterans.

Other Veterans Facilities: The County supports efforts to establish a Veterans Memorial Building to serve as an anchor and testament of gratitude to the Veterans of Monterey County. The building would serve as a central meeting place for veteran organizations (e.g., Veterans for Foreign Wars, American Legion, The Retired Enlisted Association, Military Officers Association of America, etc.). Additionally, the building could house the County's Military and Veterans Affairs Office. The County also supports efforts to obtain continued state funding to maintain the Central Coast Veterans Cemetery in Seaside, California at the former Fort Ord and continued further development with regard to in-ground burial.

Key Objectives:

Support efforts to establish a CalVet Veterans Home in Monterey County to serve the needs of our growing veterans' population and support the veteran's community's contributions to our local economy. Support efforts which provide tax relief to veterans. Support efforts to improve and expand benefits to veterans and their surviving spouses, access to VA and CalVet benefits. Support local assistance outreach efforts to discharging military members, reservist and National Guard members, veterans, surviving spouses and eligible dependents. Support increased subvention funding from CalVet. Support the growth and expansion of the Central Coast Veterans Cemetery. Support efforts to establish and maintain a Veterans Memorial Building. Support the addition of a pharmacy at the Major General Gourley VA-DoD outpatient clinic.

Infrastructure

Legislative Principles – Infrastructure

General

Support efforts to identify and secure funds for local transportation, water, energy, technology, government facility, housing, and community infrastructure projects, in particular where such improvements contribute to clean energy and green building. Support funding efforts to repair, upgrade or modernize transportation, wastewater collection and disposal systems, and other infrastructure projects or systems, particularly in areas where the associated infrastructure is aging and there is insufficient financial capacity to fund necessary improvements.

Environmental Review

Support efforts to reform environmental processes such as the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to retain environmental protections while reforming the legal process to reduce abuses. Support efforts to align state and federal requirements, and to obtain, streamline and coordinate state and federal permit processes for public infrastructure and safety projects.

Water Resources

Support efforts to fund, manage and protect the County's water quality, water supply, groundwater sustainability, storm water, flood protection, and mediate the effects of climate change (e.g., drought, sea level rise); and the Monterey County Water Resources Agency's water rights.

Energy

Monitor the potential Federal lease of lands for oil and gas exploration and the potential effects of these activities on water quality and dam safety. Support efforts to ensure appropriate oversight and funding for State regulation and monitoring of energy extraction activities (e.g., hydraulic fracturing). Support efforts to allow the County to manage an adequate renewable energy program (e.g., fees on oil, commercial solar).

Land Preservation

Support efforts to sustainably fund, protect and preserve the federal, state, county, and regional parks within Monterey County, including the promotion of park designations and the preservation of resources of historical or cultural significance. Support efforts to manage County open space lands (e.g., Fort Ord, Odello East, Hatton Canyon, Jack's Peak) including partnerships with or transfers to Monterey Peninsula Regional Parks District, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), or other public land management agencies. Maintain and protect rural resources, coastal areas, biodiversity, park facilities and recreation features.

Legislative Priorities – Infrastructure

Resilient and Sustainable Communities

Monterey County is experiencing the negative consequences of climate change with increasing regularity; catastrophic wildfire and flooding, prolonged drought, and sea level rise are the new normal. Monterey County is planning for long term resiliency and sustainability of County infrastructure to support our communities, the economy, natural resources, clean air quality, and transportation options. The County supports the development of renewable energy generation and energy efficiency efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, mitigate the impacts of climate change, and increase energy security throughout the region. The County supports policies and programs that increase clean commute opportunities and vehicle trip reduction that increase walking and biking mobility and safety for all users, promote traffic calming, promote mass transit, and improve regional transportation demand management. The County supports the development and expansion of electric vehicle deployment and charging infrastructure, vehicle to grid technology, and stationary battery storage. The County is working on several complete street and active transportation projects that provide access for all users regardless of age, ability, or transportation mode through development of bicycle infrastructure, pedestrian amenities, and public transit systems and facilities. The County supports actions that prioritize the preservation and restoration of our climate and natural environment to help ensure the long-term health, social well-being, and economic vitality of the communities we serve while improving the quality of life for all.

Key objectives:

Support efforts that advance policies to reverse and plan for the impacts of climate change while building resilient and sustainable communities (e.g., energy, water, and resource efficiency; clean energy; pollution control and toxics reduction; wildfire mitigation; and climate protection). Support efforts to increase California’s waste management infrastructure, ensure the County’s ability to comply with recycling and waste management goals, and support the development of domestic market solutions. Support efforts by the County’s Sustainability Program to promote resources conservation, climate adaptation, and pollution reduction including but not limited to evaluating energy alternatives (e.g., solar) for County facilities. Support housing, transportation, land-use, and community development policies and projects that create diverse neighborhoods, promote healthy and greener lifestyles, develop green jobs, and protect local and global ecosystems. Support efforts to protect, conserve, and maintain healthy coastal, ocean and forest ecosystems and the thriving economy it supports in the County. Support efforts to act as stewards and provide sustainable management of the County’s ocean and coastal resources in the areas of: sustainable fisheries and aquaculture; sea-level rise adaptation and coastal resilience; coastal sediment management; marine pollution; and marine renewable energy. Support resources and policies that advance wildfire mitigation efforts, forest conservation, and habitat restoration. Support policies that bring environmental justice to all, and keep our citizens safe from the physical, economic, and the health effects of environmental degradation, while creating pathways to economic prosperity and strong local economies. Support redundancy and resiliency in County facilities and enable facilities to act as community hubs in a disaster, emergency, or utility disruption.

Transportation

The transportation infrastructure is the backbone of all economic activity and is in vital need of funding for capital, maintenance, safety, and operations of local roads, bridges, pedestrian/bike facilities, transit, and rail. Transportation systems should meet industry and societal needs, provide users choices, be integrated with planned land use, be compatible with the environment by considering air quality, noise pollution, aesthetics, ecological factors, cost benefit analyses, and energy consumption measures.

Monterey County owns and operates a significant portion of the local transportation infrastructure and supports funding to local governments for system preservation, capacity improvement, and safety needs - using regional partnerships and collaborations on system planning and investment. The County's transportation infrastructure has many needs including pavement maintenance, adequate facilities for pedestrian/bike travel, transit, and rail services, and for improvements such as shoulder additions, adding vehicle lanes to roadways, repair/replacement of aging bridges, and other safety improvements.

Maintenance Improvements: The County maintains 1,260+ road miles and 175 bridges. Even with the addition of Measure X and SB 1, additional funding is needed to provide an acceptable maintenance program. Deferred road maintenance results in rapid deterioration and compromise of roadway structural integrity and exponentially increases repair costs. The current maintenance backlog is over \$750 million for roads, \$300 million for bridges, and \$500 million in road appurtenances and growing.

Capacity Improvements: Traffic congestion and inadequate roadway capacity can negatively impact the local economy through impacts to tourism, agricultural product delivery to market, and increased unproductive travel time. Efforts to increase capacity and/or movement should be supported (e.g., State Route 156, Blackie Road extension, Davis Road widening and bridge, or public transportation options) to increase road safety and capacity to accommodate user needs.

Safety Improvements: Roadway safety is a top priority, and improvement efforts should be evaluated for the overall benefits provided. Recently the County was part of a public-private partnership to construct a roundabout at Holman Highway. Roundabouts have certain advantages over signalized intersections, such as safety, air quality and reduced maintenance costs of signals. Additionally, Monterey County, the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC), and Caltrans collaborated on the G-12 Pajaro to Prunedale Corridor Study, a regional safety study for that set of roads – the County successfully acquired grant funding for two (2) out of the six (6) project segments. Moreover, the County is in the design phase of a roundabout for the intersection of Carmel Valley Road and Laureles Grade. The County has developed a multi-year program/cycle to maintain roadway striping and signage. In addition, the County is working with fire fuel reduction programs to help manage/reduce vegetation along roadways. The County has developed a multi-year program/cycle to maintain roadway striping and signage. In addition, the County is working with fire fuel reduction programs to help manage/reduce vegetation along roadways.

Rail Expansion: Expansion of rail service to Monterey County provides many benefits, including improved access and connections for local, regional, and interregional travel; decreased highway congestion; enhanced goods movement; and environmentally sound transportation serving a variety of travel markets and transportation needs. Rail expansion also promotes mixed-use, transit-oriented development, affordable housing, livable and walkable communities, and economic growth around rail stations.

Active Transportation Program & Safe Routes to Schools Program: Active Transportation and Safe Routes to Schools programs promote safe and convenient opportunities for physically active travel for daily trips to and from work and schools – and addresses health, physical activity, and traffic safety issues while

tackling air pollution and climate change. Investment also focuses on infrastructure to increase the comfort of the on-road experience (e.g., for cycling) to improve the appeal of active modes to all people.

Key Objectives:

Support efforts to develop and fund the capital, maintenance, safety, capacity, and operation of County transportation infrastructure: local roads, bridges, pedestrian facilities, bike facilities and trails, transit (e.g., Marina-Salinas Multimodal Corridor), and expanded public transit and rail access (e.g., Salinas Rail Extension, Coast Daylight, and Monterey Branch Line projects). Support efforts to increase funding for Active Transportation and Safe Routes to School projects, as well as Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) projects. Support efforts to streamline the regulatory process to repair and maintain public infrastructure, which reduces costs. Support proactive efforts to streamline permitting and reduce fees (e.g., take permits) for multiple pre-and post-storm maintenance activities, to allow for timely response while protecting the environment.

Water Resources Sustainability

The Monterey County Water Resources Agency (WRA) manages, protects, stores, and conserves water resources in Monterey County for all beneficial uses, while minimizing damage from flooding to create a safe and sustainable water supply for present and future generations. WRA operates Nacimiento and San Antonio Reservoirs for flood management and water supply (groundwater recharge) purposes, and also leases land around the reservoirs to the County for park use that can benefit from sustained water levels. Additionally, WRA operates a distribution system that delivers roughly 23,000 acre-feet of river, well, and recycled water to approximately 12,000 acres of agricultural land in the northern Salinas Valley.

An estimated 95% of all water used in Monterey County is derived from groundwater wells. With nearly 350,000 acres of land under cultivation in the Salinas Valley, agricultural pumping averages 495,000 acre-feet per year. Combined with urban and other uses, total water pumped in an average year from the Salinas Valley is about 520,000 acre-feet. Assuring that there are sufficient quantities of good quality groundwater is the most important aspect of managing water resources in Monterey County today. Major water resource management issues in the County include the preservation of water rights, protection of existing and the development of new surface and groundwater supplies for agricultural and municipal users (particularly disadvantaged communities), combating water quality issues (e.g., seawater intrusion, chromium, nitrate, and arsenic contamination), and enhancing flood protection and threatened and endangered species habitat especially along the Salinas, Carmel, and Pajaro Rivers.

The Monterey County Water Resources Agency, acting as the County's Flood Control Authority, works to ensure continued protection from flooding and to protect natural resources. The County supports efforts to increase funding for restoration projects, and the development of adaptive strategies to climate change and sea level rise. Regulatory complexities continue to hinder the effective and timely delivery of flood control projects. The multiple and redundant approval processes and long timeframes often delay delivery of projects, including environmental clearance and mitigation, design approval, right of way certification, and project financing. To this end, the County supports efforts to streamline regulatory burdens while advocating for funding support to adequate staffing at the local, state, and federal regulatory agencies.

Monterey County is also a member of the Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (SVBGSA) which was established in 2017 under California's Sustainable Groundwater Management Act. The SVBGSA is tasked with the ambitious goal of developing groundwater sustainability plans for each of

the Salinas Basin's seven (7) subbasins no later than January 2022 and implementing those plans to achieve basin sustainability by 2040.

Preserve and Enhance Water Supply

The sustainability of Monterey County's water resources depends on minimizing threats to supplies, enhancing existing or developing new resources and fostering a regional approach to water supply solutions. County residents and businesses rely upon multiple sources of water (groundwater, surface water, recycled water, and desalinated water), but are most dependent on groundwater. The County is completely dependent upon local water sources and derives no help or benefit from the State or Federal water projects. The main challenges which the County faces related to supply are contamination due to seawater intrusion or contaminants; environmental requirements from regulatory agencies/ environmentally challenging issues; development of additional supplies; and the preservation of County water rights. A top priority of the County is the preservation of a surface water permit the Monterey County Water Resources Agency holds on the Salinas River basin, Permit #11043, which would authorize the diversion of up to 135,000 acre-feet of water per year for projects intended to halt seawater intrusion into the groundwater basin, as well as provide flood control.

Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) is a collaborative effort to plan and implement water management solutions on a regional basis. The County participates in IRWM planning to take a regional approach to finding solutions that will improve water quality and supply reliability to support and meet the community's public health, agricultural, industrial and environmental water goals and needs. Regional water solutions are an efficient model for water supply and management planning. Continued regional water efforts will assist the County in providing a path forward to address many of the water challenges facing our communities.

The Monterey County Health Department Environmental Health Bureau regulates 1,296 water systems with 2-199 connections through inspection, monitoring and consultation. Drinking water contamination is a widespread problem, as is adequate source capacity for many residents especially in disadvantaged communities. Primary drinking water standards for nitrates, arsenic, or fluoride in 235 of these systems exceeds primary drinking water standards and requires the use of bottled water as an interim emergency measure.

Resolving a contaminated water system is costly and residents and communities often lack the economic means to do so. Typical solutions include consolidation with a water system that meets standards, drilling a new well, or installing treatment. Consolidation is preferred, but many systems are not adjacent to other water systems with adequate supply, capacity, quality, or willingness to consolidate - or the cost of the necessary infrastructure is a barrier. A solution could be to drill a new well, but sufficient groundwater may not be available or may be contaminated. Treatment is an option, but treatment maintenance is costly and time consuming and generates waste products that may present challenges for proper disposal.

Despite the history of proactive water policies at the state level, Monterey County residents still face formidable water challenges. Disadvantaged communities disproportionately bear the health and financial impacts of contaminated water or inadequate access to safe water.

Human Right to Water: In 2018, Monterey County became the first county in the nation to recognize the human right to safe and clean drinking water. The County adopted a resolution that requires County departments to consider this right when implementing policies and regulations pertinent to the uses of water for human consumption, cooking and sanitary purposes. Support efforts to create a low-income

water rate assistance program that provides financial relief to ratepayers using funding in the State's General Fund, or by allocating cap-and-trade funding.

Potential Projects to Preserve and Enhance Water Supply

- **Interlake Tunnel:** A tunnel to connect existing facilities at San Antonio and Nacimiento Reservoirs to increase water storage capacity and achieve environmental and water conservation release efficiencies. The project needs additional funding and may require legislative or regulatory actions for completion.
- **San Antonio and Lake Nacimiento Dams and Reservoirs Infrastructure and Maintenance Projects:** These multi-use facilities provide flood control, water supply, groundwater recharge, recreation, and other benefits. High priority capital and maintenance projects for these facilities have been identified, but capital resources do not exist to complete them. Completion of these projects will allow full operation of Nacimiento and San Antonio Dams, meet federal and state regulatory compliance, and assure the safety of Monterey County residents.
- **Salinas Valley Water Project, Phase II:** This project would use the water allocated by Permit #11043. The project configuration is under development, but it could consist of two distinct pipelines pinpointing water deliveries to specific areas of the Salinas Valley to augment water supplies and combat seawater intrusion.
- **Expansion of Existing Recycled Water Project:** This project builds upon the success of existing recycled water usage near the coast in the Salinas Valley by expanding infrastructure to additional acreage.
- **Destruction of Abandoned Wells:** With the implementation of a recycled water source, wells that are in seawater intruded areas need to be destroyed so the well casings do not become conduits for seawater to move from upper to lower aquifers.
- **Monterey Peninsula Water Supply Project:** A project to construct a desalination plant to provide water to the Monterey Peninsula. Sizing of the desalination plant will be determined by the implementation of the Pure Water Monterey (PWM) project.
- **Safety and Security of Water Supply Facilities:** Projects to ensure adequate security for key dam facilities and structures against credible threats and appropriate protective measures including surveillance, site access restriction and failure warning systems.

Key Objectives:

Support efforts to provide adequate funds for efforts aimed at agricultural water supply/sustainability, safe drinking water for all County residents, especially those in disadvantaged communities, local regulation and support for large and small drinking water systems and domestic wells – especially those that do not meet drinking water standards, and sufficient funding for the California Drinking Water Program. Support efforts to secure legislative, funding and regulatory approvals to advance Monterey County water supply projects, and to protect and preserve Permit #11043 water rights. Supports a sustainable funding source for dam and spillway infrastructure repairs and rehabilitation, and funding for dam infrastructure in any legislative water and/or climate related bond measure.

Protect Water Resources and the Environment

The sustainability of the County's water resources depends on protection from natural disasters and environmental hazards and threats. Monterey County has three major river systems, the Salinas, Carmel and Pajaro that are prone to flooding. In 1995, all three river systems flooded causing over 11,000 evacuations, damaging 1,500 homes and 150 businesses, and creating millions of dollars in economic damage throughout the region both in terms of agricultural production and impact to tourism. Each river has unique characteristics that make flood management complicated, especially with the need to protect species listed as threatened or endangered. On the flip side, California recently experienced a historic drought, and is currently in another drought emergency which threatens the security of local water supplies, highlighting the need for the development of drought contingency plans and additional water sources. In the area of stormwater, the County must comply with state and federal stormwater regulations which require monitoring and abatement of stormwater entering the Monterey and Carmel Bays, which have been designated as Areas of Special Biological Significance (ASBS).

Challenges associated with protecting water resources and the environment often relate to the unpredictability and severity of uncontrollable events such as droughts or floods. Another major challenge is the lack of funding available, both locally and at the State, for appropriate resource planning and management. Currently, State funding for water related projects is tied to compliance with various State programs. To enhance funding opportunities, the County is participating in the California Statewide Groundwater Elevation Monitoring (CASGEM) program. The County, along with the Water Resources Agency, County of Santa Cruz, the Santa Cruz County Flood Control and Water Conservation District and the City of Watsonville recently formed the Pajaro Regional Flood Management Authority, a joint powers authority, to implement projects on the lower Pajaro River for flood control purposes. Efforts are underway to raise funds to implement those projects.

Potential Projects to Protect Water Resources and the Environment

- ***Salinas River Management Program and Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP):*** This program provides a more holistic approach to river management which incorporates watershed management principles, water delivery scenarios, and maintenance of the water course, providing increased flood and habitat protection.
- ***Salinas River Stream Maintenance Program, Phase II:*** This project is an expansion of the highly successful Phase I demonstration project developed by The Nature Conservancy, to provide overdue maintenance on the remaining sections of the Salinas River channel.
- ***Salinas River Lagoon and Old Salinas River:*** Project to reduce flooding, enhance steelhead migration and promote environmental and habitat protection.
- ***Lower Carmel River & Lagoon:*** Multiple projects which aim to protect infrastructure, reduce flooding, and promote environmental and habitat protection.
 - Carmel River Floodplain Restoration and Environmental Enhancement (CRFREE) Project
 - Scenic Road Protection Structure Project / Carmel Lagoon Ecosystem Protective Barrier
 - County Service Area 50 (CSA-50-1) Flood and Drainage Improvement Projects
- ***Pajaro River Flood Risk Management Project:*** Structural improvements to the lower Pajaro River, Salsipuedes and Corralitos Creeks to reduce flood risk in Watsonville and Pajaro - developed by the U.S. Army, Corps of Engineers in partnership with Monterey and Santa Cruz Counties.

- ***Aquatic Invasive Species: Quagga and Zebra Mussel Prevention Program:*** Vessel inspection and education program aimed at preventing an infestation of Lake Nacimiento and Lake San Antonio from aquatic invasive species (e.g., Quagga or Zebra mussels). Funding for the development and ongoing operation of a statewide vessel tracking database is important in this infestation prevention effort.

Key Objectives:

Support legislative and funding efforts and necessary regulatory approvals to advance Monterey County projects that protect water resources and the environment. Support efforts to provide for appropriate planning efforts (e.g., Salinas River Management Program HCP, Groundwater Sustainability). Support regional wastewater collection and recycling efforts; and the disposition of County sanitation districts to public utility purveyors.

Public Safety

Legislative Principles – Public Safety

General

Support efforts to protect life and property through the delivery of emergency response, law enforcement, custody, and rehabilitation services that provide a high level of safety to residents and visitors. Support funding for programs that assist the County with efforts aimed at reducing crime, enhancing public safety through community partnerships and multi-jurisdictional efforts, providing alternatives to incarceration, increasing access to justice by providing the community with adequate and accessible facilities (e.g., proposed Greenfield Courthouse), and to provide court security services. Support justice policy reforms that advance racially equitable public safety. Support efforts to fund public safety facilities, equipment, training and programs. Support funding for programs that assist the County with broad based Emergency Management (response, mitigation, prevention and recovery), emergency, disaster, and homeland security preparedness, including efforts at achieving communications interoperability. Support collaborative efforts to maintain and increase public safety, prevent and reduce the frequency, severity, and impact of fire and other natural or man caused disasters.

Violence Prevention

Support collaborative efforts to maintain and increase public safety, prevent and reduce the frequency, severity, and impact of criminal behavior on the community, and the long-term effects of violence, especially youth violence, and trauma. Support federal gun control actions to prevent death and injury. Support evidence-based approaches and services for the rehabilitation and community re-entry of juvenile and adult offenders, and strategies to deter criminal behavior and promote law-abiding lifestyle choices, and a healthy family environment. Support efforts to recognize and protect victim's rights and the restoration of justice (e.g., work of the Restorative Justice Commission) while promoting healing. Support efforts to fund County and collaborative efforts aimed at preventing and reducing violence (e.g., gang violence, domestic violence) and other law offenders (e.g., human exploitation/trafficking), recognizing a public health approach to the prevention of violence and in support of the strategies outlined in the *Building Safe & Thriving Communities Action Plan (2015)*.

Legislative Priorities – Public Safety

Emergency Preparedness, Response and Recovery

Monterey County is vulnerable to a wide range of natural and manmade hazards that threaten the life and safety of residents and visitors and has the potential to damage or destroy both public and private property and disrupt the local economy and overall quality of life. Monterey County has experienced several major disaster events, and is concerned that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) may reduce disaster related reimbursement funding and/or change the manner in which disaster events qualify for reimbursement.

Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic and projections for more frequent and severe extreme weather events demonstrate the need to ensure the County is prepared and has a coordinated system in place to respond to disasters while maintaining continuity of operations. Regional planning must take place to develop technology and communication systems that are functional in a mutual aid response situation. Funding is needed to support needed technologies for operation continuity such as alternate 9-1-1 dispatch centers, next generation 9-1-1, and enhancement of existing communications and information management systems by leveraging cloud-based technology.

Enhancing communication with respect to public safety is paramount to assisting in emergencies. This includes radio communication, Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD), interoperability with neighboring agencies, and the coordination of various data points that are used to manage the Internet of Things (IoT). Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG911) technology is currently being implemented throughout the state. This process will take time and there may be additional funding and support required as technology changes along with public demands and expectations. Text to 9-1-1 was implemented statewide in 2021, the County of Monterey has been accepting text since 2017. This feature of communicating assists with those that are unable to make voice calls

The COVID19 pandemic has identified new needs to increase social distancing between staff in the Emergency Communications Center. Also, it has become necessary to consider web-based emergency communications systems that can be accessed remotely to ensure continuity of emergency coordination from the 9-1-1 center.

Additionally, as the threat of wildfires has increased so has the County's need arisen to focus on fire fuel management measures and the ability to respond to Community Power Resiliency (formerly Public Safety Power Shut-off (PSPS)) events – which have significant impacts on our community and local economy, often leaving large segments of the population without power for days at a time.

The Role of Libraries in Disaster Response: Recent disaster events have highlighted the important and expanded role public libraries play in enhancing community resiliency and post-disaster recovery efforts. Libraries serve as vital information hubs to connect residents to disaster resources and services, providing free access to technology and essential information. The role libraries play can be greatly expanded with investments in independent/redundant power and connectivity, flexible facilities that are ADA compliant, and staff education and training (e.g., disaster protocols, first aid, CPR, AED, FEMA, etc.).

Key Objectives:

Support efforts that assist the County with disaster prevention, preparedness, response, mitigation, and recovery; medical and health disaster planning; coordination, response and mitigation including infrastructure and emergency response personnel, homeland security needs, and communications service expansion and interoperability. Support efforts to fund FEMA and oppose changes that would reduce or make it more difficult for counties to qualify for FEMA reimbursements. Support efforts to provide financial assistance to local governments and private property owners to efficiently repair homes, businesses, infrastructure and the natural environment after disaster events. Advocate for additional funding for emergency operations planning, exercises to validate the planning process, trainings, and equipment; seek funding for emergency planning specifically addressing the safety of seniors and those with disabilities; and increase access to funding for local jurisdictions for disaster-related damages. Support emergency management education and preparedness to underserved populations. Support efforts to fund wildfire prevention efforts (e.g., fuel management) and to provide adequate resources to local governments and communication to sensitive populations to mitigate the impacts of investor owned utilities power shut off events.

Support funding for expanded dispatch and web-based communication systems to allow the Emergency Communications Department to operate from multiple locations in case of disaster, pandemic, or other unforeseen circumstances. Support efforts to expand and fund public libraries expanding role in community disaster response and recovery.

Fire Insurance

An estimated 10 million Californians live in wildland-urban interface areas, leaving them especially vulnerable to the spread of wildfire. It's estimated that over 11,000 residences in Monterey County are in high or extreme fire risk zones.

California has encountered unprecedented wildfire activity over the past decade. The last major fires in Monterey County were the 2016 Soberanes Fire which over 82 days burned 57 homes, 11 outbuildings, and consumed 132,000 acres along the Big Sur coast, and the Carmel River, and Dolan fires in 2020 that consumed 179,719 acres and damaged or destroyed 130 structures.

As a result of the record claims paid out in recent years, insurers that operate in the state have been reevaluating their exposure in fire hazard areas. Insurance rates have been raised dramatically in certain areas and insurers are increasingly declining to write new policies and refusing to renew insurance even for longtime customers.

In August 2019, the California Insurance Commissioner released data showing that from 2015 to 2018, insurance companies dropped more than 340,000 customers across the state. Monterey County residents account for approximately 6,000 of the total. The inability to obtain insurance can create a domino effect for the local economy, affecting home sales and property taxes.

In December 2019, the California Insurance Commissioner issued a mandatory 1-year moratorium on insurance companies non-renewing policyholders within certain zip codes, however the moratorium did not include any zip codes in Monterey County. The Commissioner repeated the moratorium in 2021 following the Governors emergency proclamation which included 22 California Counties but again Monterey County was not included even though the county suffered severe losses from the 2020 fires.

Key Objectives:

Support efforts that provide incentives to insurance companies and reasonable and timely solutions for homeowners, renters and businesses to keep insurers writing policies in high wildfire risk areas. Support efforts that help homeowners, renters and businesses with home hardening and creation of defensible space. Support efforts to have the insurance industry reevaluate fire risk models. Support efforts to have Monterey County included in any Insurance Commissioner actions to assist homeowners. Support efforts to modify the FAIR plan to make it easier to understand and navigate and more affordable for those that cannot get private fire insurance.

County Control of Emergency Medical Services

In 1980, the EMS Act empowered counties to establish local EMS agencies (LEMSAs) to develop and implement EMS systems. LEMSAs oversee and coordinate a systems approach to the delivery of EMS services by both public and private providers, hospitals, and tertiary resources. Any attempts to limit the

authority or move control of local EMS systems from the counties would cause significant disruption to the coordinated care that is provided in EMS systems.

Key Objectives:

Support efforts to maintain the authority and governing role of counties and their local emergency medical services agencies to plan, implement, and evaluate all aspects and components of the emergency medical services system. Support efforts to maintain the administration and medical control of emergency medical services, pre-hospital emergency medical care, and ambulance services at the county level.

Violence Prevention and Reduction

Through a 2018 community engagement process sponsored by the Board of Supervisors – which was conducted through phone, online and community forums – community members identified crime and violence prevention and reduction as some of their top priorities.

Monterey County recognizes the devastating societal impacts of gang violence – not only on the victims of gang-related crimes, but also the lives of gang members and their families and has identified gang violence prevention and reduction as a top priority. The County is committed to working with law enforcement, allied agencies, municipalities, and community-based organizations to prevent and reduce violence, especially gang violence, and promote healthy and safe communities.

County Violence Prevention and Reduction Initiatives: Monterey County has a full array of County-led initiatives designed to prevent and reduce gang violence utilizing a public health approach to address its underlying causes – including prevention, intervention, enforcement, and reentry initiatives (e.g., Building Safe and Thriving Communities Action Plan; Silver Star Resource Center; Striving to Reduce Youth Violence Everywhere (STRYVE); and Truancy Abatement). Monterey County hosts an annual Youth Violence Prevention and Intervention Conference (My Life Story) geared towards youth-serving organizations and hosts youth, adult and parent panelists who share of their lived experience as a result of being impacted by gangs, violence and system involvement. Each of these areas would benefit greatly from additional federal and state support.

County Collaborative Efforts: The County is also involved in other countywide collaborative efforts such as the Community Alliance for Safety and Peace (CASP) in Salinas, Four Cities for Peace (4C4P) in South Monterey County, Seaside Youth Violence Prevention Task Force, Building Healthy Communities in East Salinas, the North Monterey County Community Alliance in Castroville, Impact Monterey County, Moms Demand Action Be SMART Monterey County Chapter, and the California Cities Violence Prevention Network.

Federal Assistance for Public Safety: Monterey County’s federal advocacy program related to violence prevention is focused on supporting U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) programs that provide critical support to county courts and corrections, juvenile justice, and law enforcement agencies. These programs include, but are not limited to, the Byrne/Justice Assistance Grant Program, which helps counties across nation test emerging and evidence-based approaches to the public safety challenges facing their jurisdictions, and the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP), which reimburses counties for costs associated with the incarceration of undocumented immigrants. These DOJ programs provide critical support to the County’s efforts to safely lower jail populations, fight recidivism and combat drug trafficking while providing treatment and alternatives to incarceration.

Gun Violence: Monterey County residents are adversely impacted by gun violence that results in an average of fifty deaths every year, half of whom are youth homicide victims aged 10-24 years old, and over a hundred life threatening gunshot injuries that require trauma-level hospital care. The County is committed to supporting efforts to close gaps in the current patchwork of regulation, including those gaps that enable felons, people convicted of domestic violence, children, those found to be a danger to themselves or others, and other prohibited persons to access firearms and ammunition, and those that allow the trafficking of illegal guns.

Key Objectives:

Support federal and state efforts to fund violence prevention and reduction efforts and local law enforcement programs designed to reduce violence, especially gang violence; support a public health approach for violence prevention and community-wide collaborative efforts, including school-based violence prevention efforts; support continued participation in the California Cities Violence Prevention Network. Support efforts that increase supports for community promotion of peace and equity. Support efforts that promote community programs that prevent childhood trauma and intergenerational violence, such as parenting education programs. Support efforts to enhance data-sharing between County departments and local jurisdictions. Support federal efforts to adopt stricter controls governing the sale, transfer, possession, manufacturing, and distribution of all firearms, dangerous weapons, and ammunition; support repeal of the Dickey Amendment, which complicates public health research into the causes and consequences of gun violence by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Domestic Violence Prevention

★ COVID-19 PRIORITY – PROTECTING YOUTH AND FAMILIES: *The pandemic has added major stressors to children and families, especially in communities where there is a higher incidence of the virus. Economic challenges, school closures, and social isolation further add to the problem and place additional stress on family units. – See COVID-19 priorities on pages 10-17.*

The effects of violence in the family environment, particularly on children as victims or witnesses, both short and long-term, are well documented by research. The existing efforts to provide services to children of parents on probation for domestic violence have been on-going for years through several County operated and supported programs. The Child Advocate Program (CAP) operated by the Probation Department is funded by a First 5 grant and serves children age 0 – 5 and their families. Mental health and emergency safe house shelter services to victims of domestic violence are coordinated by the District Attorney’s Office Victim Witness Program in partnership with County Behavioral Health and community-based organizations. Due to the number of domestic violence cases, the need to identify and intervene as soon as possible, focus a wider age range, additional resources are required to manage and limit the negative impact of domestic violence on children, victims, and the community at large. An expansion of CAP, mental health services and support of emergency and transitional shelters would assist in addressing these unmet needs.

Key Objectives:

Support efforts aimed at reducing multi-generational violence, including in the family and home environment, mitigating the long-term effects of violence-induced trauma, and promoting efforts and services to stabilize families, increase their self-sufficiency, and provide a healthy environment for child development.

Post-Sentence Relief and Reintegration to Reduce Recidivism

Monterey County provides attorney services to assist persons convicted of crimes with reintegration back into our community, including services to persons seeking to obtain post-conviction dismissals of their cases under Penal Code section 1203.4, charge and sentence reductions under Proposition 47, certificates of rehabilitation, and gubernatorial pardons. These services greatly expand the social and financial opportunities of people who may have received a criminal conviction and correspondingly decrease the probability they may reoffend. Due to the large volume of people seeking this assistance, the County would benefit greatly from additional federal and state support.

Key Objectives:

Support efforts to reduce reliance on incarceration without compromising public safety (e.g., bail reform efforts that address current socioeconomic inequities). Support efforts to reform the cash-bail system while ensuring that counties have the funding necessary for planning, pre-trial assessments and supervision. Support funding for re-entry teams comprised of jail civilian program specialists, social workers, and eligibility workers to identify and alleviate barriers to successful reintegration into the community after release from jail. Re-entry planning would include but not be limited to obtaining housing, driver license, Medi-Cal, cash aid, and employment prior to release from county jail.

Access to Justice

Increasing access to justice by providing the community with adequate and accessible court facilities is a priority for Monterey County.

Greenfield Courthouse: The City of Greenfield and County of Monterey, in collaboration with the Courts, worked diligently to locally fund a portion of a courthouse in Greenfield that has been proposed for construction for over ten years. Locally the County and City worked to lower the overall project cost and position the project for timely construction. The City dedicated land for the project and reduced the estimated project cost from \$49 million, to \$33 million by tightening the scope of the project. Additionally, the City has committed funding up to \$10 million toward the project. Once full funding is secured, the project is positioned to begin construction quickly and is shovel ready. In November 2019, the Judicial Council updated the Courthouse Construction Program project priority list for new courthouse construction projects statewide and adjusted the scoring process and criteria used to create the list. Under the new methodology the Greenfield Courthouse project moved down the list to number 45 of 80 total projects.

This project is an important long-term priority for the County, as our community members face extreme access-to-justice issues, with the next closest courthouse located on the other side of our large county boundaries. For residents of South Monterey County that could mean a 1.5 hour drive each way (3 hours total) to the Courthouse in Monterey that handles all civil and family law cases, including obtaining temporary restraining orders. Additionally, the population of the area is anticipated to grow by 16,000 – 20,000 new residents in the next 10 years.

Given the State's current fiscal constraints there is not an immediate opportunity for funding this project; however, as the economy recovers, the Legislature will have the opportunity to revisit funding for court construction project that will enhance access to justice.

Key Objectives:

Support efforts to authorize and secure funding to establish the Greenfield Courthouse. Support legislative efforts to examine the Judicial Council’s methodology and ranking of court facility projects. With the addition or expansion of court facilities support funding for court security (bailiffs and supervision of court facilities).

Offenders with Mental Health Conditions

Many defendants in the criminal justice system suffer from mental health conditions. In the justice system, there currently is no distinction between offenders diagnosed with a mental illness and the general population. Monterey County supports funding and programs designed to divert offenders diagnosed with mental illness by connecting them with treatment as opposed to incarceration. Monterey County supports adequate funding be made available for housing and delivering comprehensive services needed to better support these offenders to address the underlying mental health condition that manifests in criminal violations.

Monterey County supports collaborative efforts between state and local mental health practitioners and corrections officials to host Jail Based Competency Treatment (JBCT) programs and other measures to increase capacity for incompetent to stand trial (IST) treatment in local jails. There is a long felony IST waitlist, and the County supports solutions to resolve waitlist issues. Given the pressing need to significantly shorten days individuals spend on the waitlist, the state included provisions in a budget trailer bill that would authorize the suspension of county LPS patient intake at state hospitals if IST solutions are insufficient; a requirement to return existing LPS patients back to counties would follow. The County opposes the state utilizing this LPS “trigger/backstop” and supports efforts to develop alternative IST solutions, as well as ensuring the necessary resources and infrastructure align with any change to the division of state and county responsibilities.

In 2020, the County entered into a contract with the California Department of State Hospitals and began operating a JBCT Program in the Monterey County Jail. The County’s JBCT is a regional model and serves inmates from Monterey, San Benito and Santa Cruz Counties.

Key Objectives:

Support efforts to fund programs that assist the County in addressing the needs of offenders with mental health conditions, including funding to deploy behavioral health specialists with law enforcement personnel in the community. Oppose utilizing the LPS “trigger/backstop.” Support alternative IST waitlist solutions. Support efforts to fund provision of restoration services to those with pending misdemeanor charges deemed IST.