

# Monterey County Community Resilience Plan





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# PLAN SUMMARY

The Monterey County Community Resilience Plan is a guide for making our community more resilient, by bringing the whole community together to better understand our shared risks and capabilities during disasters and how we can become stronger, smarter, and more capable of handling any hardship that comes our way. The plan reviews county demographics, regions, history, and hazard risk and provides an overview of challenges, strengths, projects, and recommendations for fostering community disaster resilience.

## KEY CHALLENGES TO COMMUNITY RESILIENCE:

1. **A rapidly changing environment** caused by climate change, that is worsening the frequency and severity of weather-related disasters
2. **Failing infrastructure**, including the vulnerability of roads, bridges, and transportation systems to disasters, which can impact the ability to evacuate in emergencies.
3. **Unustainable lifestyle**, including a lack of modifications to older building, development in hazard zones, the reliance on nonrenewable energy and heavy greenhouse gas emitters, and high waste production.
4. **Social inequity and vulnerability** exist within our communities which increase disaster impacts for those who depend on others, have difficulty managing disasters on their own, already face discrimination or stigma, and are at a disadvantage pre disaster.
5. **Unaffordability** is a key issue in Monterey County, as disparities between the cost of housing and median income leaving 36% of County residents unable to meet the real cost of living, with childcare costs adding to this burden.
6. **Housing conditions** including homes built in hazard zones, mobile homes, overcrowded homes, and older homes that are not up to code increase hazard risk for County residents. High homeless rates and a lack of homeowners and renter's insurance throughout the county also affect disaster impacts and ability to recover.
7. **Overstressed food, water, and supply chains** are a common problem when disaster strikes, as food, water, medicine, and supply chains are often disrupted during major emergencies, making it difficult to access needed supplies.

## KEY STRENGTHS FOR FOSTERING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE:

1. **Strong community connections** exist within many of the Monterey County Communities, as community members tend to feel safe within their communities, noting high levels of trust, social support, and opportunity for outdoor and community activities.
2. **Schools have been used as a community resource** in Monterey County, with many residents having pride and a sense of connection to their schools. Schools and colleges in the county have also been a key partner in disaster response.
3. **A culture of preparedness** exists in Monterey County, with many outreach projects being conducted to encourage disaster mitigation and preparedness and residents and neighborhoods increasingly preparing for disasters
4. **Collaboration and partnerships during disasters** has helped Monterey County effectively respond to and recover from the increasing presence of emergencies.

## **STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING DISASTER RESILIENCE:**

### **Strategy 1: Build Social Mobility**

- 1.1 Empower Disaster Resilience Amongst Youth
- 1.2 Strengthen Public Private Partnerships
- 1.3 Create a Resilient Religions Program
- 1.4 Create OES Office Hours
- 1.5 Develop a Community Communications Strategy
- 1.6 Implement the Community Resilience Plan
- 1.7 Develop a Resilience Block Party Program

### **Strategy 2: Enhance Emergency Services Infrastructure**

- 2.1 Provide a Forum for Communication between Local CERTs
- 2.2 Develop a VOAD Program
- 2.3 Support Fire Mitigation Efforts
- 2.4 Address Hurdles to Vegetation Management
- 2.5 Encourage preparedness amongst tourists
- 2.6 Add adaptation into County's General Plan Safety Element
- 2.7 Reimagine Public Libraries as Resilience Hubs
- 2.8 Reimagine Schools as Disaster Hubs
- 2.9 Develop Research Partnerships with Universities
- 2.10 Strengthen Transportation Systems
- 2.11 Create Community HAM Radio Groups
- 2.12 Increase Cellular Bandwidth in Unincorporated County
- 2.13 Increase Cell Phone Availability at Evacuation Facilities
- 2.14 Amplify Cell Coverage during Disasters
- 2.15 Strengthen the Disaster Service Worker Program

### **Strategy 3: Move Toward Sustainability**

- 3.1 Develop Multijurisdictional Climate Council
- 3.2 Develop County & Department Climate Action Plans
- 3.3 Develop a Community Action Toolkit
- 3.4 Support County Youth Climate Action Council
- 3.5 Support 3CE project
- 3.6 Support SB743
- 3.7 Encourage Transportation System Resilience
- 3.8 Examine Ways to Provide Backup Power to Vital Facilities in the County

- 3.9 Support Stormwater Pollution Education Campaigns
- 3.10 Support Local Water Conservation Efforts
- 3.11 Support Drought Planning and Preparedness
- 3.12 Support Best Practices that Prevent Pollution and Waste
- 3.13 Support Recycling and Composting Public Outreach Campaigns
- 3.14 Support the Food Recovery Program and Working Group
- 3.15 Develop a County Food Policy Council
- 3.16 Develop a Disaster Food Voucher Program

### **Strategy 4: Create Healthy Communities**

- 4.1 Support Access to Public Health, Healthcare, And Social Services
- 4.2 Collaborate to Support Mental and Physical Well-Being during Disasters
- 4.3 Establish A Medical Reserve Corp
- 4.4 Encourage Preparedness for Poor Air Quality
- 4.5 Encourage Disaster Preparedness amongst Vulnerable Populations
- 4.6 Work with Rehabilitation Centers and Pharmacies to Develop COOP plans
- 4.7 Increase AFN Awareness Amongst First Responders
- 4.8 Develop an AFN Disaster Phone Tree
- 4.9 Develop an Equity & Access team in the EOC
- 4.10 Develop a Climate Action Plan's Equity Panel

### **Strategy 5: Encourage Resilient Households**

- 5.1 Provide Emergency Preparedness Packets and Kits to New Residents
- 5.2 Support Discounted Disaster Insurance for Renters & Low-Income Owners
- 5.3 Promote the Use of Renter's Insurance
- 5.4 Increase Funding for Disaster Mitigation Home Modifications
- 5.5 Develop Disaster Resistant Building Development
- 5.6 Support Local Housing Programs that Reduce Disaster Risk
- 5.7 Develop a post disaster rapid housing replacement program
- 5.8 Strengthen Partnership with organizations that serve homeless
- 5.9 Create a Resilient Hotels Program

### **Strategy 6: Empower Social Mobility**

- 6.1 Expand Affordable Child Care
- 6.2 Reduce Disaster Vulnerability of Supply Chains
- 6.3 Assist Small Business with Continuity of Operations Planning
- 6.4 Expand Access to Affordable, High Speed Internet

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MONTEREY COUNTY LEADERSHIP:**

- 1. Develop resilience office(s) or center(s)** where community members can meet before, during and after emergencies, to learn how to manage disasters and build resilience, can help keep the community resilience program running indefinitely, while providing a more interactive way for the program to work with the community.
- 2. Encourage outdoor interactions** by improving bike and pedestrian lanes and developing more green spaces, community gardens, community centers, and outdoor activities.
- 3. Development of evacuation funding for low-income residents** that is activated when an evacuation order is made in the county, to help cover transportation services, gas, and hotel stays, so that they are discounted or free for residents evacuating.
- 4. Provide emergency funding for undocumented immigrants** in Monterey County to assist in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery
- 5. Develop a program to review & suggest modifications for current codes/regulations** that impeded disaster mitigation
- 6. Develop a large animal rescue program for disasters** to support future efforts to rescue and protect large animals during disasters.
- 7. Improve stormwater drainage system capacities** through the use revetments & bioengineered bank stabilization techniques and protection/enhancement of natural mitigation features such as wetlands dunes.
- 8. Support affordable public transit development**, such as MST's discounted fare programs and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County's go831 program,
- 9. Incentivize affordable housing development** through a tax credit program for the acquisition, rehabilitation or new construction of low-income housing and increasing access to housing vouchers to subsidize rents.
- 10. Expand participation in efforts to combat racial and socioeconomic inequities and discrimination**, such as Monterey County's disparate impact working group and government alliance on race and equity (GARE)
- 11. Develop a proactive investigations process for housing/living conditions**



**Community Resilience is about transforming a community's culture of preparedness from "me" to "we" so that we are all smarter, stronger, healthier, and better prepared. It is an inclusive, informed process that addresses social, economic, natural, cultural, technological, and organizational sectors of a community.**

## THE PLAN

The Monterey County Community Resilience Plan is a guide for making our community more resilient, by bringing the whole community together to better understand our shared risks and capabilities during disasters and how we can become stronger, smarter, and more capable of handling any hardship that comes our way.

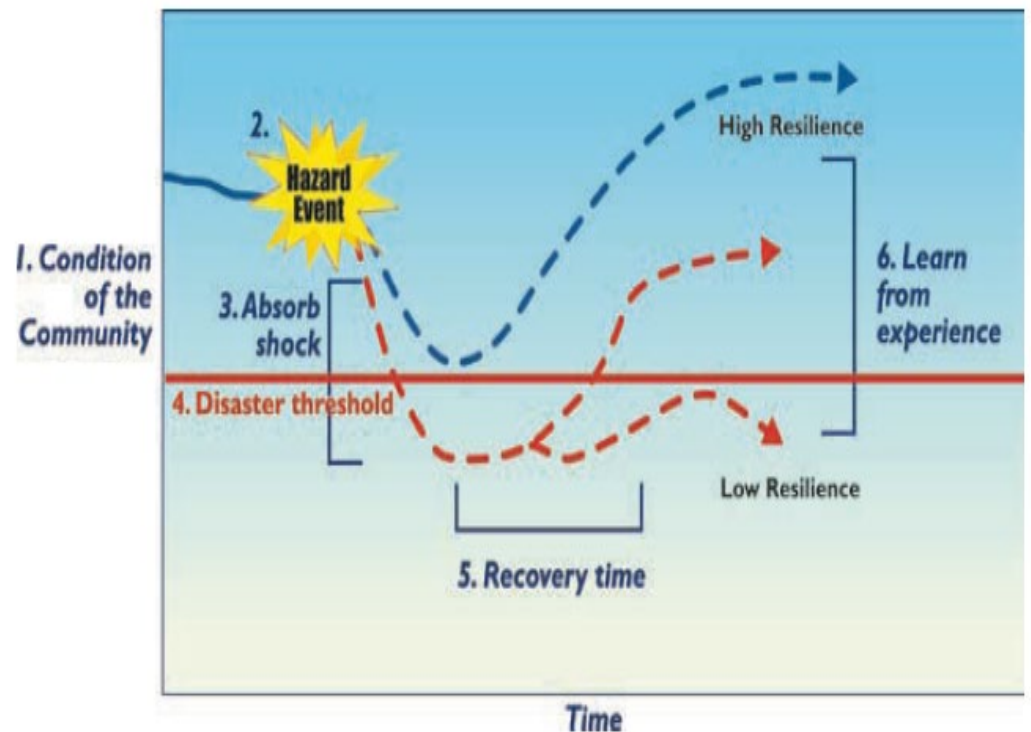
The community analyses and initiatives in this plan were developed through previously collected data, current survey analysis, community and stakeholder input, & lessons learned from previous/current emergencies. This plan is the first step in the process of community resilience and should be followed by projects that work to engage, educate, unite, and empower the larger Monterey County community and all subcommunities within it. Community resilience is an ongoing process that must be adapted to our ever-changing society and as such this plan should be routinely updated.

## RESILIENCE

**Resilience** is the ability to prepare for, cope with, overcome, positively adapt to, and recover from change, including adverse or stressful events. When disasters strike, resilient communities are better able to return to normal, learn from the experience, and become stronger and better prepared as a result. Resilience is a skill that we must constantly develop and build upon.

A **resilient community** is socially connected and cohesive, working together to manage daily adversities and prepare, respond, and recover from large scale emergencies. The community can take collective action after an adverse event because it has developed material and social resources that reduce the impact of major disturbances and help it recover and grow from each experience.

Developing community resilience benefits disaster planners and community members alike. Community resilience expands the traditional preparedness approach by encouraging actions that build preparedness, while also promoting strong community systems and addressing the many factors that contribute to disaster vulnerability.



*For the purpose of this document, the terms “disaster” and “emergency” are used interchangeably.*

## FROM ME TO WE

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**While every person should prepare themselves for emergencies, this is easier to do when you have a strong support system. When, individuals, families, and neighborhoods work to support each other during adversities, negative impacts are minimized, and everyone can recover more quickly.**

**Individuals and organizations** alike have a responsibility to prepare themselves for emergencies by learning how to respond, signing up for local emergency alerts, having an emergency plan and back up supplies/funds, and properly insuring their property. Everyone should encourage others (i.e. family, employees, customers, and neighbors) to do the same; helping those who cannot prepare on their own. Learn more about disaster preparedness at [Ready Monterey County](#)

**Every community member's role** is to become more involved within their communities by getting to know their neighbors and local emergency plans, attending community meetings, joining a community emergency response team, and making a community emergency plan and stockpile.

**Local government's role** is to plan for and respond to shocks that affect the region by working collaboratively across departments and jurisdictional boundaries, as well as with private and institutional stakeholders.

## PURPOSE

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Promote collaborative, whole-community efforts to increase resilience among Monterey County communities and residents, so that negative impacts of disasters can be removed or minimized, and our community is able to quickly recover from any and all emergencies.

### OBJECTIVE 1 – UNITE OUR COMMUNITY

- ✓ Promote cross-sector cooperation and collaboration on resilience building efforts.
- ✓ Remove barriers that inhibit participation by all sectors of the community to allow for diversified and representative leadership.

### OBJECTIVE 2 – UNDERSTAND OUR CAPABILITIES AND RISKS

- ✓ Provide a better understanding of the Monterey County community, by leveraging the knowledge of the whole community.
- ✓ Make sure that everyone's voice is heard, while placing a strong emphasis on gathering input from the most vulnerable and underrepresented populations.

### OBJECTIVE 3 – EMPOWER ACTIONS THAT MAKE US MORE RESILIENT

- ✓ Support existing community resilience projects.
- ✓ Create initiatives to advance community and individual self-sufficiency and emergency preparedness.
- ✓ Increase the engagement of individual community members in resilience building activities at home, at work and in their neighborhoods.



# MEASURING SUCCESS

Communities that are well prepared, tightly knit, and function smoothly pre disaster tend to cope with and recover from disasters more easily. To understand how resilient a community is, this plan examines emergency preparedness and mitigation efforts, community connections, and quality of community services (ex. health care, housing, employment).



## PREPAREDNESS

Preparing for disasters can help reduce anxiety and fear and prevent hazardous responses that can lead to injuries and death. To measure preparedness, we examine the knowledge and skills our residents/organizations have in relation to disasters (**Preparedness knowledge**) and how they use that knowledge to take action and prepare for and respond to emergencies (**Preparedness Actions**) Further, while preparation can help manage disasters in the short term, **environmental sustainability** is how we manage, mitigate, and prepare in the long term.



## UNITY

Research shows that communities that are more closely knit tend to have higher rates of well-being, bounce back more quickly from disasters, and take away more positive lessons from their experiences.<sup>1</sup> The takeaway is that we are stronger and better off when we work together, because, regardless of how much you know or what resources you have, some things are just too big to handle alone. To measure our County's social connectedness, we examine how many connections County residents and organizations have to their communities (**social capital**), the strength of these connections (**social cohesion**), and the level at which the people actively engage within the community (**social engagement**), by volunteering with organizations, participating in events, or otherwise working within the community.



## SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Knowing where to go is not enough if you do not have the means of getting there. When people and organizations have the resources to meet their needs without external help, they are better able to prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies and are more capable of assisting those who lack or have lost their resources during an emergency. Self-sufficient communities provide safe places to live and work and access to adequate food, water, healthcare, housing, employment, education, emergency preparedness resources (such as insurance and local emergency plans), energy and communication systems, and transportation for all community members.

An aerial photograph of a coastal region, likely Monterey County, California. The image shows a dark blue ocean on the left, a rugged coastline with a prominent rocky point, and a large area of agricultural fields in shades of brown and tan. In the background, there are dark, forested mountains. The text is overlaid on a dark blue semi-transparent background.

# COMMUNITY PROFILE

Monterey County takes up 3,280 square miles of the north-central coast of California. The western region of the County includes nearly 100 miles of coastline, with Monterey peninsula in the northwest and the Santa Lucia mountain range separating the coast from the Carmel and Salinas Valleys. Salinas Valley, often called the “Salad Bowl of the World” takes up the eastern region of the County, with the Gabilan Mountain Range running parallel to its east and separating it from San Benito, Fresno & King counties, the City of Salinas in the northeast, Santa Cruz County to the north, and San Luis Obispo County to the south. Most of the County is sparsely populated, with the mountain ranges, western coastline, and large southern agricultural regions occupying the majority of the space and most residents living in the northern third of the County, in one of the 12 incorporated cities.<sup>2</sup>



# OVERVIEW

Monterey County had a population of 439,035 residents in 2020<sup>3</sup> that has been increasing steadily and is projected to reach 569,450 residents by 2060.<sup>4</sup> 76% of the County's population live in one of its 12 incorporated cities, while 103,854 residents live within the unincorporated County.<sup>6</sup> As of 2019, the median age in the County is 35, with nearly half of the adult population being married and 26% of the population being under the age of 18. The elderly population in the County is 14% and is the fastest growing percentage of the population, increasing by 4% of the total residents since 2000. Most residents have lived in the same location for the past year (88.6%) and about 70% were born in the state, with most foreign-born residents coming from Latin America, followed by Asia and Europe. 32% of County residents are immigrants and 23% lack US citizenship. Additionally, 29% of residents do not speak English fluently, with Spanish being the most common primary language.<sup>5</sup>

59.4% of the County self-reported as "Hispanic",<sup>6</sup> with the large majority (93%) specifying that they are Mexican.<sup>4</sup> The Hispanic/Latinx population in the County has been rising since 2008.<sup>7</sup> 47% of the population categorized themselves as white, with 29.4% noting they are "Non-Hispanic White", 3.4% stated they are Black/African American, & 6.7% identified as Asian.<sup>6</sup> The Eastern side of the County has several regions with large Hispanic/Latinx concentrations, while the Western side of the County has several regions with large white concentrations.<sup>8</sup> 12.6% of County residents are living in poverty<sup>4</sup> with the largest population located in South County and Salinas, being females age 25-34, Latinx/Hispanics, and children.<sup>2,7</sup> Since 2000, poverty rates have grown by 3%, for everyone except children, whose rates have dropped by 3%.<sup>7,9</sup>

# SALINAS AREA

The development of the Southern Pacific Railroad and Highway 101 promoted the growth of the Salinas area, which includes the city of Salinas and adjacent towns and holds 36% of the County's population. This region has a similar age and race composition as Monterey County as a whole, however there are slightly less elderly, white, and Black/African American residents, more Hispanic residents, and higher poverty rates. <sup>6,8</sup>



**SALINAS**, located at the northern end of the Salinas Valley, is the largest city in the County, with over 150,000 residents. The city was once part of the Ohlone tribe's territory, was turned into rangelands while part of Mexico, and, as part of the US, grew through the development of a courthouse and the Southern Pacific Railroad in the 1870s, becoming the County seat. <sup>6</sup>

Today, the city has a large suburban region, several large growing and shipping company headquarters, more than 100 manufacturing firms and a highly frequented commercial region, known as Old Town Salinas. <sup>16</sup>

The city's population is younger, has a lower income and is less diverse than the County, with a large majority of residents identifying as Hispanic/Latinx and fewer residents who identify as non-Hispanic white or Black/African American. Salinas' position as a center for agricultural activity and its history of having many former confederate residents in the 1860s, who were not welcoming to Black/African Americans, contributed to Salinas' current ethnic composition. <sup>6,8</sup>

**BORONDA** is a census designated place directly west of Salinas, with a population of just over 1,700. The region has a smaller poverty rate and larger elderly population as compared to Salinas and Monterey County. Its ethnic composition mirrors Salinas, aside from fewer Asian residents, but is much less densely populated. <sup>6,7</sup>

**SPRECKELS** is a town located south of Salinas with a population of 414 that has no poverty and is largely white, middle-aged residents. <sup>1</sup> The town was developed in the late 1800s by Claus Spreckels who created the Pajaro Valley Railroad to transport beets and the Spreckels Sugar Factory, which employed the town's residents. <sup>6, 16</sup>

# NORTH COUNTY

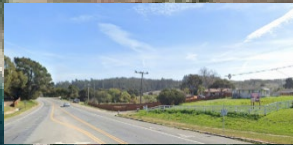
The Northeast portion of Monterey County includes the unincorporated regions to the north of Salinas and about 10% of the County's population. The towns in the northeast with the largest populations tend to be the areas with high Hispanic/Latinx concentrations, younger residents, more poverty, and fewer white residents, while the smaller population regions are the least impoverished areas in the County & tend to be older, have fewer children & more white residents. <sup>6,8</sup>



**PAJARO** is the northmost County town, on the southern tip of the Pajaro River. The town's population grew with the development of Ranchos, Southern Pacific Railroad & the gold rush and now includes 3,620 residents. <sup>6,23</sup> Pajaro has the largest Hispanic/Latinx & Indigenous American populations, higher poverty than the County average, the lowest white population, and youngest median age in the County, along with fewer elder residents & more children. <sup>6,7</sup>

**ELKHORN** is an area located northwest of Prunedale, developed as a stop on the Southern Pacific Railroad in the 1870s, & includes the natural reserve of Elkhorn Slough. <sup>24</sup> The town has about 1,100 mostly white residents & has a higher percent of pacific islander and elderly residents than the County & the 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest poverty rate. <sup>6</sup>

**AROMAS** is a town on the northern border of the County, partially located in San Benito County. The town has almost 2,500, primarily white residents & less children, Hispanic/Latinx & Asian residents than the County, & no Black/African American residents. <sup>6,7</sup>



**LAS LOMAS** is an area south of Pajaro, with a population of 2,924. The town has very few elderly residents and is majority Hispanic/Latinx. 1/5<sup>th</sup> of Las Lomas residents lives in poverty, making it the most impoverished region in the County. <sup>6</sup>



**MOSS LANDING AREA**, in the 95039 zip code, includes a historic fishing village & around 1,000 residents, located on the northern most coastline of the County, that has developed into a tourist attraction and a center for oceanic research. <sup>6,7</sup>

**PRUNEDALE** lies in northeast Monterey County and grew with the development of the 101 Highway, now hosting the largest population in all the unincorporated County (20,327 residents). The region has similar demographics as the County, but is slightly older, has a larger white population & a much smaller poverty rate.

<sup>6,7,8,25</sup>



**CASTROVILLE**, known as the Artichoke capital of the world, is located southeast of Moss Landing. The town has a population of 7,515, who are primarily Hispanic/Latinx and are younger and more impoverished than the rest of the County. <sup>6,7</sup>

Salinas

# THE SALINAS VALLEY CITIES

Salinas Valley makes up South County, which includes 22% of the County's population, with 98% of the Valley reserved for agriculture. The region grew with the development of missions, ranches, farms, the Southern Pacific Railroad, Highway 101, Soledad State Prison, and several oil refineries.<sup>16</sup> South County residents tend to be younger, having fewer elderly residents and more children, than the rest of the County. In all 4 cities, most residents are Hispanic and in all of South County, except for Soledad and Jolon, Asian & Black/African American populations are smaller than the County as a whole.<sup>6</sup>



**GONZALES** is a city of 8,647, located south of Chualar, with a majority Hispanic/Latinx population that is younger than the County average. The city has a small-town, rural character with a strong agricultural heritage, including an Agriculture Industrial Business Park & numerous wineries and vineyards in its foothills.<sup>6</sup>

Gonzales



**SOLEDAD** is the largest city in South County, located south of Gonzales, with over 26,000 primarily Hispanic/Latinx residents and a higher proportion of children and Black/African American residents than the County. The city moved from rangelands to row crops in the 1920s, becoming a prime area for wineries and vineyards, and further diversified in the 1990s with the construction of two prisons.<sup>16</sup>

Soledad



**GREENFIELD** is a densely populated city, just south of Soledad, with a quickly growing population of almost 19,000, that is primarily Hispanic/Latinx and relatively young, having few elderly residents and more children than the County average. The city contains a mix of rural and suburban lifestyles, has a large agriculture base and many vineyards.<sup>6</sup>

Greenfield



**KING CITY** is the southernmost city in the County, located along the Salinas River. The city's economy is based largely on agriculture, primarily in food processing and packing.<sup>16</sup> It is home to the Salinas Valley Fairgrounds, Mesa Del Rey Airport, San Lorenzo Park and Campground, Monterey County Agricultural and Rural Life Museum, and historic downtown area. King City has nearly 13,332 residents, a majority of which are Hispanic/Latinx, the highest poverty level of the 12 County cities and a relatively young population.<sup>6</sup>

King City

# THE SALINAS VALLEY UNINCORPORATED REGION



**CHUALAR** is an agricultural town south of Salinas with 1,512 residents, all of which are Hispanic/Latinx. The town has steadily grown since the late 1800s and has more poverty, more children, and fewer elderly residents than the County. [6](#), [7](#), [16](#)



**PINE CANYON** is a town just west of King City with about 2,300 residents, with a white majority, and an older and slightly less impoverished population than the County. [6](#)



**SAN LUCAS** is a town between King City and San Ardo, settled in the 1800s as farms, ranches, and dairies. The town has 543 residents and is primarily Hispanic/Latinx, with a younger population than the County. [6](#), [16](#)



**SAN ARDO** is a small town of 543, north of Bradley, that's focused on agricultural operations and is majority Hispanic/Latinx, with a younger and more impoverished population than the County. [6](#)



**JOLON, 93928**, is a town southwest of King City that drew in Chinese miners in the mid-1800s, followed by farmers in the late 1800s when mines closed. The town has 402 residents, a white majority, few children, no elderly residents, and the highest black/African American population in the County. [6](#), [16](#)



**PARKFIELD, 93451**, is on the southeastern edge of the County, in the Cholame Hills. It was settled in the 1850s as mining operations drew in settlers and now has 4,221, primarily white and Hispanic/Latinx residents, with a higher poverty rate than the County. [6](#), [16](#)



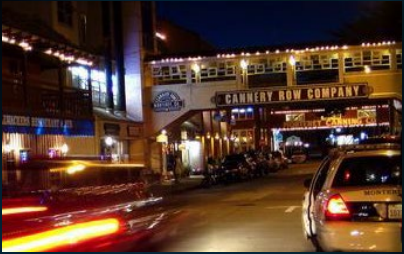
**LOCKWOOD** is south of Jolon and includes Lake San Antonio, Fort Hunter Liggett, ranches, vineyards, and 516 residents, with a white majority, a high proportion of children, and the highest poverty rate in the County. The town's settlers were neighbors and relatives from Fohr, Germany who developed farms that have now expanded to several thousand acres. [6](#), [16](#)



**BRADLEY** is a town of about 113 residents on the southern end of Monterey County, that includes primarily white residents between the age of 18 & 64. [6](#)

# THE PENINSULA

Monterey Peninsula holds 12% of the County's population and includes Carmel-by-the-sea, Del Rey Oaks, Monterey, and Pacific Grove. The region is a large tourist attraction and has a wealthier, older, whiter, and less diverse population than Monterey County as a whole.<sup>6,8</sup>



**MONTEREY** is the largest city on the peninsula, with 9 square miles of coastline and wooded hills and about 28,000 residents. The city has a long military history, housing the Presidio of Monterey & Naval Support Activity, served as California's first capital city, became the center of a thriving fishing industry, and is now a tourist destination, known for Monterey Bay Aquarium, Cannery Row, Fisherman's Wharf, & several historic and cultural sites.<sup>6, 7, 26</sup>



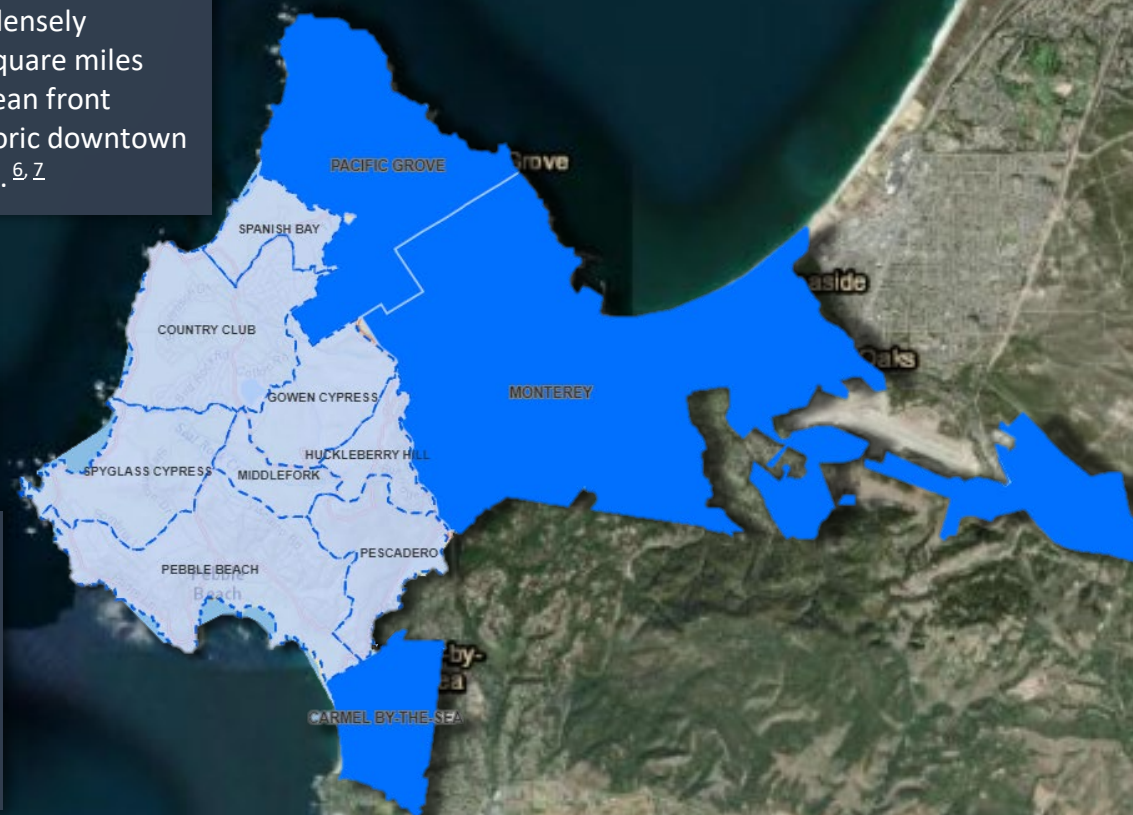
The city of **PACIFIC GROVE** is the most densely populated city in the Peninsula with 3 square miles and 15,265 residents. The protected ocean front scenery, Victorian style buildings & historic downtown have made the city a tourist destination.<sup>6, 7</sup>



**DEL REY OAKS** is located in the wooded Canyon of Del Rey. The city has just over 1,600 residents in its half square mile and the lowest poverty rate in West County.<sup>6, 27</sup>



**CARMEL BY THE SEA** is a city of 1 square mile of dense forest and 3,803 residents. The city is a popular commercial district that emphasizes independence, art, culture, & environmental preservation and has the largest elderly and white populations in the County.<sup>2, 6, 28</sup>

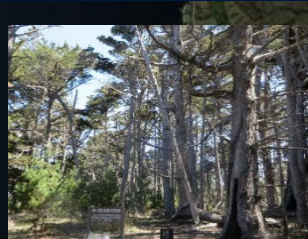




# The Coastline

The Coastline northeast and south of Monterey Peninsula, along with the Carmel Valley hold 20% of the County's population. The region's coastline and scenic beauty have attracted tourism. The Carmel Valley and Southern Coastline are sparsely populated and less diverse than the County, with Carmel Valley having an older and wealthier population than the southern coastline. [6.8](#)

Moving eastward along the coastline, the presence of CSUMB and the redevelopment of Ford Ord have attracted younger, poorer, and a more diverse populations. [7](#)



Carmel Valley

**DEL MONTE FOREST** includes pebble beach, a popular golf resort area, and is about 8 square miles, with just over 4,100 residents. The area has the fewest proportion of children in West County and one of the County's highest Asian population. [6.7](#)

**MARINA** lies on the eastern edge of the West County & was developed in 1975, growing through the redevelopment of the former Fort Ord military installation and California State University Monterey Bay (CSUMB). At nearly 10 square miles, including several miles of beaches preserved as public park space, Marina has a population of almost 23,000 and is the County's most ethnically diverse city, with the highest percent of Asian residents in the County & over double the Black/African American residents. [6.7](#) [29](#)



**THE CARMEL VALLEY**, 93924, is a sparsely populated region of about 190 square miles and 6,514 residents, many of whom migrated from Salinas Valley in the 1800s, with demographic trends that mirror the rest of West County. [6.7](#) [16](#) The area includes the Carmel Highlands and the Crossroads Carmel shopping center.

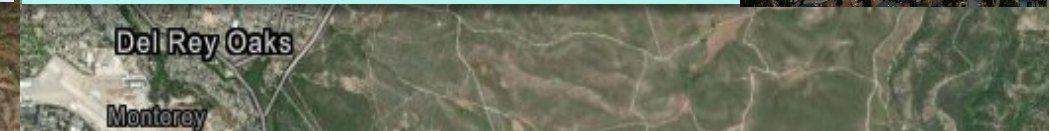


**SAND CITY's** half square mile includes slightly over 400 residents, few children and elderly residents, and a majority white population, with higher rates of Indigenous & Black/ African American residents than the County. The city is largely industrial, developed through sand mining and tourism, but is growing & becoming a more residential area. [6.7](#)



**THE BIG SUR REGION** and southern coastline, in the zip code of 93920, includes about 370 square miles and is sparsely populated with about 1,300 residents and demographics that mirror West County. Off the Pacific Coast highway, the region is a famous tourist attraction, known for its campgrounds, beaches, hiking trails, & the Bixby Bridge. [6.7](#) [28](#)

**SEASIDE** is a densely populated, coastal city of 9 square miles and 32,366 residents, that was built on the US Army Base Fort Ord and includes CSUMB. Seaside is diverse compared to the County, but somewhat less so than Marina, & is younger in age than both, with less elderly residents. [6.7](#)



# HISTORY



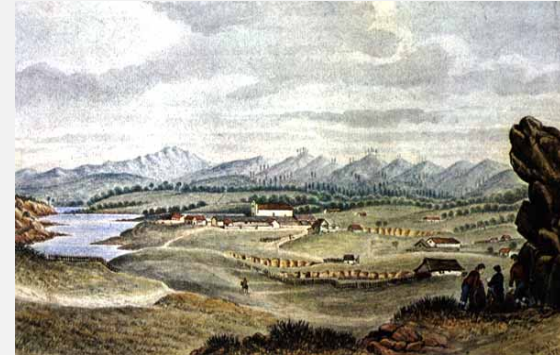
## PRE-COLONIZATION

Monterey County was originally occupied by Ohlone/Costanoan, Esselen, and Salinan Indigenous Americans. The Salinan Indigenous Americans lived in south County and had about 3,500-4,000 members.<sup>14</sup> The Esselen Indigenous Americans had several hundred members and resided on the northwest coast of the County. The Costanoan (Ohlone) group was the largest in the area with around 7,000 people, occupying Monterey Peninsula and north County.<sup>15</sup>

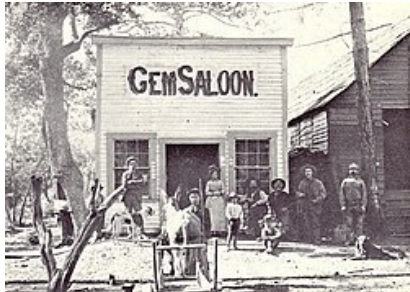
Spanish explorers first reached the area in the 16th century and resided in what is now the Presidio of Monterey. In the 1770s, Spanish settlers developed several Catholic missions, or religious outposts, within the County and used the Salinas Valley for range lands. This began a period of forced conversions of Indigenous American to Catholicism and the disintegration of Indigenous American traditional life. These stressful conditions, along with new diseases brought by settlers, led to the death of 80-90% of Indigenous Americans.<sup>16, 17</sup> The Indigenous Americans who survived the missions were released, but much of their land was now occupied by settlers and they faced hatred, violence, and persecution.<sup>16,18,19</sup>

## PRIOR TO UNITED STATES' ACQUISITION

Monterey was an important port and military position, for Spain, becoming the political and cultural Capital of Alta California in 1775. Spain established a formal pueblo government in the region that went into effect in 1794. By 1800, most settlers in the area lived in the presidio or at the mission in Carmel, while few had moved out to ranches south of Salinas. Slowly, settlers began moving into the Salinas Valley and developing ranches centered around cattle. The region remained a military outpost for most of Spanish rule. In 1822, following the Mexican War of Independence, California became a province of Mexico. Monterey remained the capital of Alta California during the 20-year period of Mexican rule. Under Mexican rule, there was an expansion of ranchos, the secularization, or break down, of missions, and continued conflict over land rights. [16](#)



## 1849 to PRESENT



In the mid-1800s, during the Mexican American war, the Presidio of Monterey was taken over by the US military and, in the 1850s, California became a US state, with Monterey being one of its original counties. In 1849, the gold rush sparked the development of the Southern Pacific

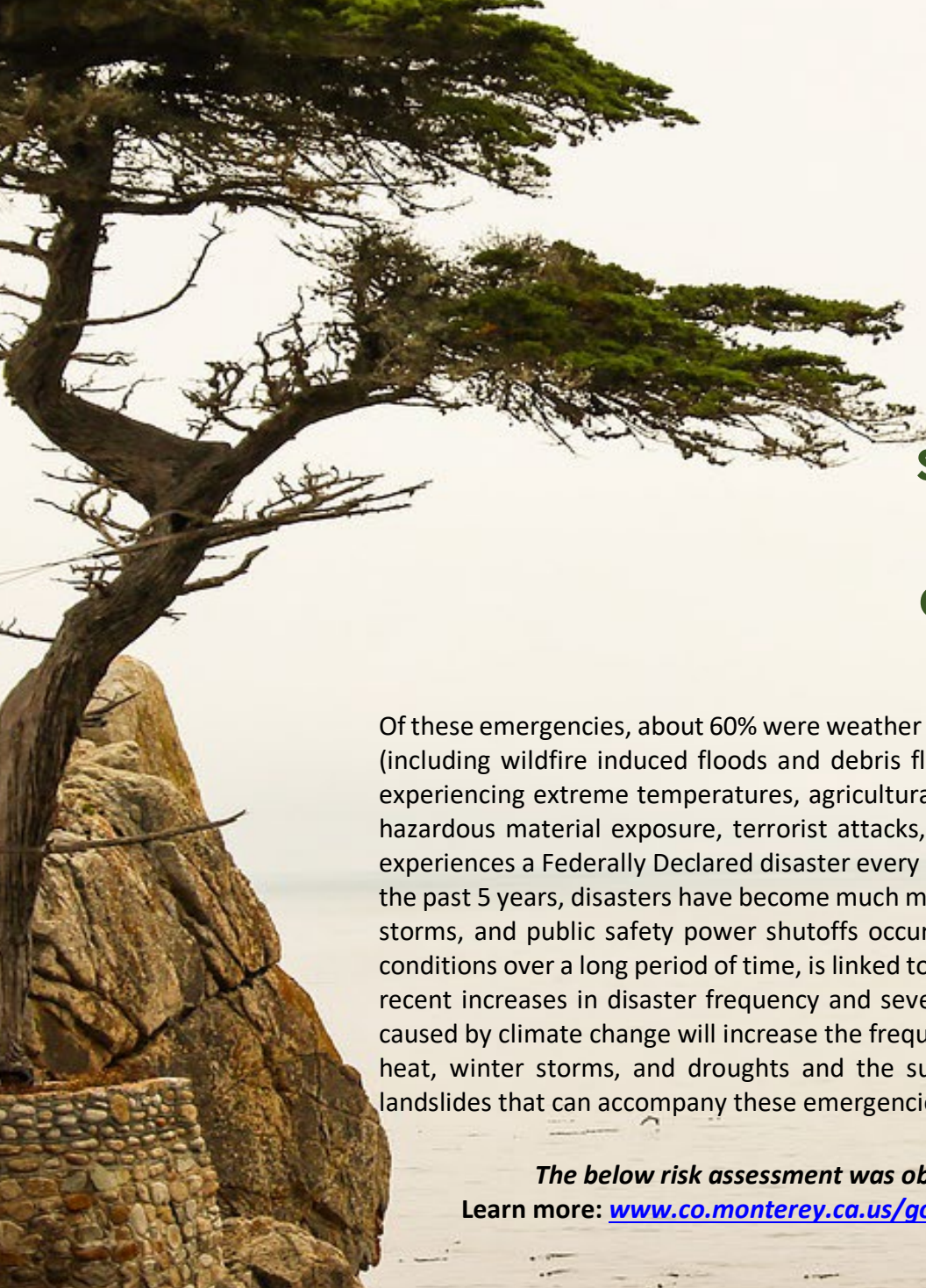
railroad and, as the railroad systems grew in the late 1800s, so did the Salinas Valley population. The gold rush also created a cattle boom, that ended with major flooding in 1862, shifting the use of land from ranching to dry farming of grains. [16](#)

By the 1880s, large-scale seasonal row-crop farming and related industries became the County's economic base, creating a demand for transient workers, who could migrate to the area to work during the peak of growing season and leave thereafter. The need drew in Chinese immigrants, who had been working on railroad system development and had begun fishing in the region. Anti-Chinese sentiments in the 1880-90s displaced many Chinese immigrants from farm labor, replacing them with Japanese immigrants, who ended up facing discrimination and hostility as well and were subsequently replaced by Filipino and Mexican immigrant farm laborers in the early 1900s, with Mexican immigrant populations growing since. [16](#)

The 1900s were a time of military growth for Monterey County with Fort Ord's creation in Seaside during World War I and Camp Roberts development in South County during World War II. However, in recent history, base closures have resulted in reductions of military presence in the County, and the reuse of major portions of the former Fort Ord. [8](#)

The 1900s marked a time of reunion for Indigenous Americans, as the remaining members of different tribes came together and formed groups such as Salinan Tribe and the Ohlone Costanoan Esselen Nation. Through activism, and in the interest of conservation and cultural resilience, Esselen Nation reclaimed a 1,999-acre parcel of their old land in Big Sur in July 2020. While none of the indigenous American groups in the County are currently federally recognized, they are petitioning the government for recognition and working to preserve their history and culture. [16,18,20,21,22](#)





# HAZARDS AND RISK

**Monterey County has experienced 29 emergencies since 1953 resulting in a federal disaster declaration, with disaster frequency and severity worsening over the years.**

Of these emergencies, about 60% were weather related, with 39% of these emergencies being storms, floods, and/or slides (including wildfire induced floods and debris flows) and 25% being wildfires. Although less frequent, there is a risk of experiencing extreme temperatures, agricultural emergencies, erosion, sea level rise, tsunamis, earthquakes, landslides, hazardous material exposure, terrorist attacks, public health emergencies and power outages. On average the County experiences a Federally Declared disaster every 1.5 years, with each disaster lasting approximately 40 days.<sup>10</sup> However, in the past 5 years, disasters have become much more frequent, with 5 major wildfires, flooding, landslides, droughts, winter storms, and public safety power shutoffs occurring since 2016. Climate change, or the change in the average weather conditions over a long period of time, is linked to many of the hazards and risks the County has experienced, along with the recent increases in disaster frequency and severity. Anticipated increases in temperatures and changes in precipitation caused by climate change will increase the frequency, duration, and extent of agricultural emergencies, wildfires, extreme heat, winter storms, and droughts and the subsequent coastal erosion, sea level rise, flooding, power outages and landslides that can accompany these emergencies.<sup>2, 11, 12, 13</sup>

*The below risk assessment was obtained from County's Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan.*  
Learn more: [www.co.monterey.ca.us/government/departments-a-h/administrative-office/office-of-emergency-services/hazard-mitigation](http://www.co.monterey.ca.us/government/departments-a-h/administrative-office/office-of-emergency-services/hazard-mitigation)



### LANDSLIDE

- 22% of the County lives in landslide hazard areas. With the Mountain Ranges, Carmel Valley, Big Sur Coast, & northern County at highest risk.
- Have occurred in Carmel Valley, Big Sur, & Las Lomas, during El Niño years (every 3-5 years).



### TSUNAMI

- The County's entire coastal area is susceptible to tsunamis, with highest risk in the low-lying areas and riverine valleys on the north County coastline
- 10 observed tsunamis have occurred in Monterey County over the last 200 years, almost all of which were in Monterey, Pacific Grove, or Moss Landing & were produced by earthquakes.



### WINDSTORM

- Monterey County has had several high windstorm events, including four tornadoes in the northeast, and winter windstorms throughout the County.



### COASTAL EROSION AND SEA LEVEL RISE

- High risk throughout the coastline; with risk increasing due to climate change.
- History of 20 -50 feet of erosion in Carmel and Marina and slope failure near Big Sur.



### AGRICULTURAL EMERGENCY

- Agricultural Emergencies pose a high risk to the County due to heavy economic reliance on the Agriculture sector, particularly in the Salinas Valley, & anticipated impacts of climate change.
- Have caused hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of crop damage since 1996.



### FLOODING

- 232.942 square miles within the County is within the 100-year floodplain, including 5% of County residents. The valleys, areas adjacent to rivers, the sloughs, & low-lying coastal areas are at highest risk.
- Has occurred 5 times since 1967, primarily between October and April.



### EARTHQUAKE

- 78% of Monterey County is at high/very high risk, with the highest risk in the northern and southeastern regions.
- On average, there are 5-10 small earthquakes each year & 1 medium earthquake every 22 years in the County.



### DROUGHT

- Droughts continue to be a risk for the County and are expected to worsen because of climate change
- The last extreme drought to hit Monterey County was in 2015. As of 2021, the County is facing severe drought.



### POWER OUTAGES

- Power outages can occur anywhere and can be intentional (ex. Rolling blackouts) or unintentional (ex. line damage).
- Public Safety Power Shutoffs can occur anywhere in the County during a red flag warning in or near the region.



### HAZARDOUS MATERIAL EVENTS

- A hazardous materials event is most likely to occur along transportation corridors, oil fields, or in agricultural production areas.
- There have been 897 reported incidents in Monterey County since 1990.



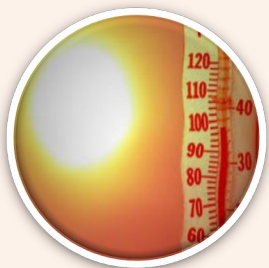
### WILDLAND FIRE

- 90% of County residents have a moderate to very high wildland fire risk, with Los Padres National Forest, Hunter Liggett Military Reservation, and Fresno & Kings counties' borders having the highest risk.
- Major fires have occurred in 1932, 1977, 2016 & 2020, burning 350,000+ acres of land



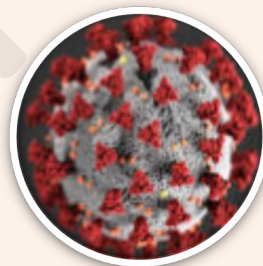
### MAN MADE DISASTERS

- Manmade disasters can include those directly or indirectly created by humans such as terrorist attacks, hazardous material events, human induced climate change impacts on weather related hazards, and oil spills.
- The type of manmade disaster determines the location at highest risk. For example, large gatherings tend to bring higher risk of terrorist attacks. While the County has experienced some man-made disasters, there have not been any large terrorist or oil spills in the County.



### EXTREME TEMPERATURES

- While less frequent in the County, there's extreme cold potential in coastal and mountain ranges during the winter (record low 10°F in King City), and extreme heat potential inland, during the summer (record high 115°F in King City).



### PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY

- Public health emergencies can occur anywhere, at any time, and tend to impact different populations differently, varying based on the type of health emergency occurring.
- The most recent public health emergency is the COVID-19 pandemic, that began in 2019 and is still occurring.

# CHALLENGES

## Shocks Expose Stresses

Disasters often work as microscopes, exasperating the adversities that already exist within a community. On an individual level, those who already lack the social, physical, material, & economic support to manage their everyday lives are often the ones most vulnerable to the extra adversities that disasters bring. On a community level, disasters can worsen issues such as homelessness, poverty, & discrimination that were already present in a community. This section will examine some of the largest challenges the Monterey County community faces as we strive to build disaster resilience.

**A RAPIDLY CHANGING ENVIRONMENT**

**FAILING INFRASTRUCTURE**

**UNSUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLE**

**SOCIAL INEQUITY AND VULNERABILITY**

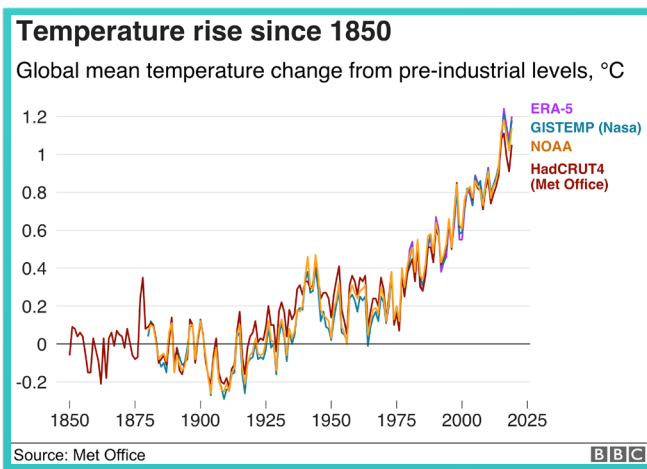
**UNAFFORDABILITY**

**HOUSING CONDITIONS**

**OVERSTRESSED FOOD, WATER, & SUPPLY CHAIN**

This section reviews challenges to community resilience in Monterey County. It is important to note that everything in our community is connected and as such, during disasters, when one section of the community becomes disrupted, it can impact all other sectors. For example, disasters can create home damage or loss that can lead to displacement, job loss, and financial strains, which are further exacerbated by the increases in renters, decreases in apartments, and raised housing prices and rents post disaster. Displaced persons can face issues with homelessness, unemployment, separation from community and family, loss of privacy and property, marginalization, loss of social support networks, and negative mental and physical health impacts that make disaster coping and recovery more difficult. For those already facing adversity pre disaster (ex. Health ailments, poverty), this shock not only creates new stresses, but can worsen those that already existed.<sup>30</sup>

## A RAPIDLY CHANGING ENVIRONMENT



From fire to drought to flood natural hazard events will become more frequent & severe because of climate change. Climate change has led to sea level rise and the increase in the frequency and severity of weather related extreme natural events, including droughts, wildfires, heat waves, flooding, and winter storms. These disasters impact life and property, effect beaches, wharves and campgrounds, and subsequently the County's second largest economic driver, tourism, disrupt wildlife, destroy natural environments, and spark other disasters.<sup>31</sup>

Every sector of our lives will be affected by climate change, as it impacts agricultural systems, the stability of food supplies, water quality/quantity, human health, air quality, ecosystems, biodiversity, and the economy.<sup>32</sup> This looming threat has left about half of County residents "very concerned" about climate change's impacts on our community's natural hazard risk.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, the share of Americans who see climate change as a major threat to the country's well-being has increased from 40% to 57% from 2013 to 2019.<sup>33</sup>

## FAILING INFRASTRUCTURE

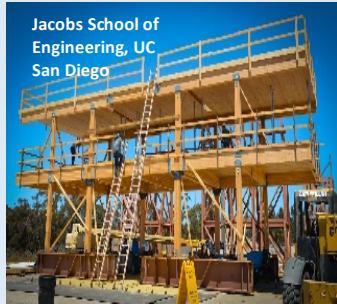
Disasters can cause road and bridge damage and can produce a need for large evacuations, creating congestion and costly repairs, while impacting the 11% of County residents employed in transportation.<sup>2</sup> The passage of Measure X in 2016 and Senate Bill 1 in 2017, along with the current development of 2 new rail services by TAMC are helping to alleviate these transportation needs, however the 2018 Regional Transportation Plan identifies \$3.27 billion of unmet costs needed to improve and maintain local streets and roads. Transportation was a key concern in the County's Community Resilience Survey, with respondents noting the need for more public transit and road, sidewalk, & bike lane increases, clean up and improvements.<sup>34</sup> The 2018 California Statewide local Streets and Road Needs Assessment echoed these needs, noting that the County's local streets, roads, and bridges are in significantly worse shape than state averages and have been getting worse over the past decade.





# UNSUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLE

## DEVELOPMENT



Where and how we build largely determines our risk of experiencing natural hazard events. Poor building codes and building near floodplains, high wildfire-threat zones, liquefaction zones, cliffs and mountain sides can increase the risk of being impacted by floods, wildfires, erosion, landslides, and earthquake induced liquefaction. The geography of Monterey County and locations of developed areas place most residents at some risk of experiencing a natural disaster. While Monterey County abides by the California Building Standards Code, which have expanded over the years as we continue to learn and improve building standards, these codes only place building requirements on new buildings, they do not require older buildings to be improved and brought up to code, unless they are already being modified. Given that many buildings in the County were built in the early 1900s, this can pose a serious threat to life and property if a major earthquake occurs.<sup>35</sup>

## ENERGY



Sustainable and renewable energy is often more resilient to disasters because it is locally produced, doesn't create a high level of greenhouse gas emissions, which trap heat in Earth's atmosphere contributing to climate change and subsequent increases in frequency and severity of weather-related disasters, and can spark local job growth. Sustainable energy can be achieved by moving to renewable forms of energy, such as solar panels, electric vehicles, and LED lighting. In California, renewable energy use has been on the rise since 2000, as more policies and programs have been put in place to move the state toward sustainability. Despite this progress, the state of California still has work to do in order to meet its goal of 100 percent carbon-free electricity & economy-wide carbon neutrality by 2045.<sup>36</sup>

## WASTE



A cornerstone of every productive community and work process is convenience. The drive to do what is the most convenient has resulted in nations transitioning from having to seek far and wide for resources to being able to mass produce and consume products with less effort. Convenience encourages competition which in turn provides the public more choices with constant upgrades in material goods. Convenience has allowed individuals to reallocate their time to more leisure over work. The convenience factor however often results in over production, extinction of limited resources and the generation of waste. A prime example of this is in the production, distribution, and consumption of food for and by people. 40% of food in America is wasted in that it is not consumed and often ends up in our landfills. Studies have shown that in the U.S. the average family of four throws out \$1500 worth of food each year. Food that is not consumed by people wastes the energy, water, fuel and money used to grow and distribute it.<sup>1</sup> Rotting food at its current volume in landfills creates actionable levels of greenhouse gases, adding to climate change.<sup>37</sup>

Aside from the overproduction and inequitable distribution of food, the overproduction and reliance on the use of non-biodegradable material, such as plastic, is filling our landfills, polluting our water, degrading our air, and poisoning our soil and ultimately affecting our health and future. During disasters, waste becomes an even larger issue, because of debris, spoiled food, and damaged materials. For example, many trees killed by wildfires are left to rot, releasing methane, a greenhouse gas, and acting as kindling for future fires and/or debris moved by landslides.

# SOCIAL INEQUITY AND VULNERABILITY

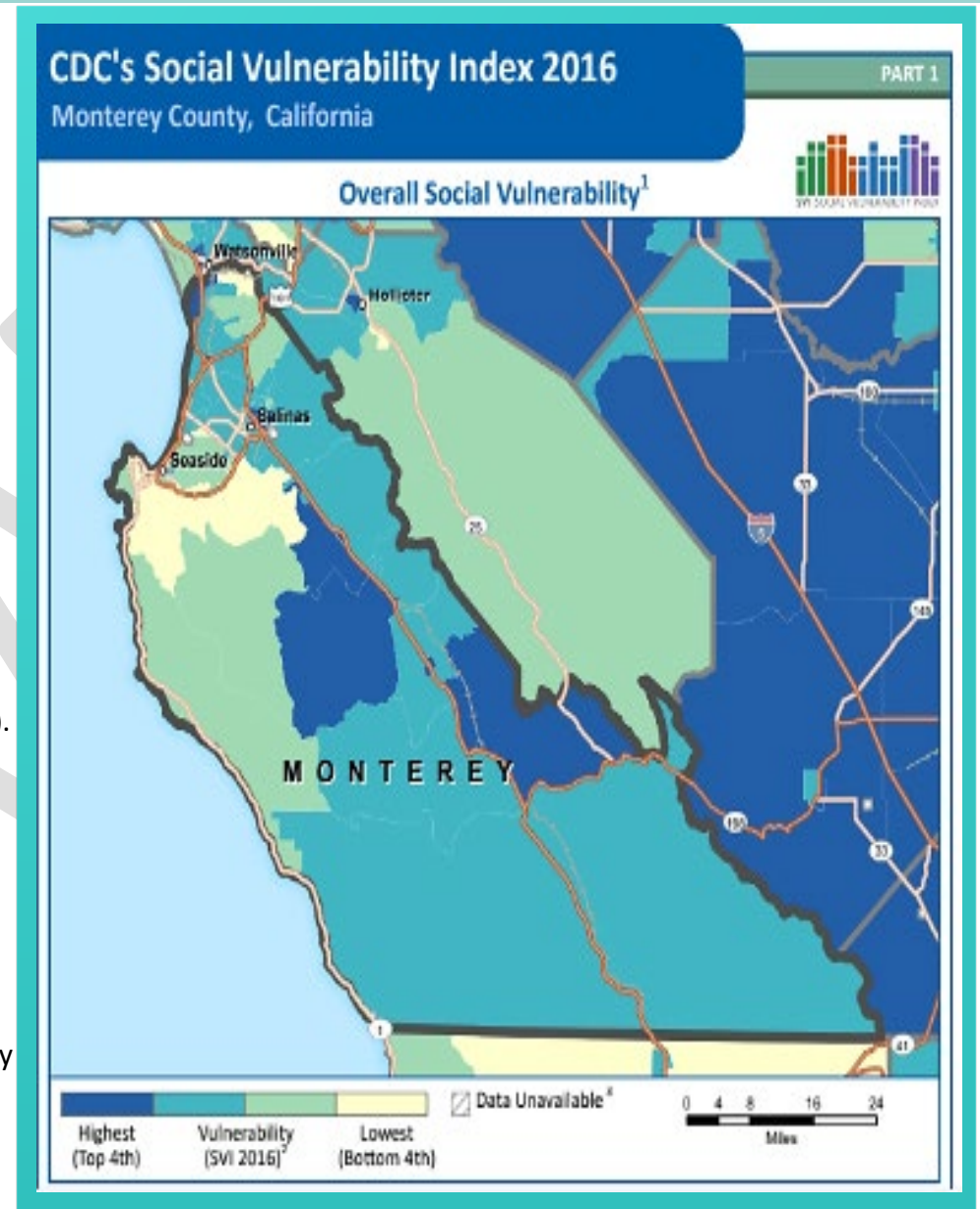
## SOCIAL VULNERABILITY

Hazard exposure alone does not fully explain disaster resilience; characteristics including age, disability, ethnicity, race, income, household structure, language, employment, home & car ownership, health, population density, insurance, and citizenship, can also impact how well a person manages hazard risks.

The groups at highest disaster risk include those who:

- **Depend on others for survival** (children & those with disabilities and severe physical or mental limitations)
- **Have difficulty managing disasters on their own** (the elderly, those with health problems or disabilities, living alone, without vehicles, or with limited education, single parents, & low-income households)
- **Already face discrimination or stigma** (non-English speakers, minorities, immigrants)
- **Are at a disadvantage pre disaster** (unemployed, homeless, renters, uninsured, and older, crowded, & mobile home residents).

While these groups do face higher risks, the emergency experienced and the mix of characteristics they have impact disaster vulnerability. Further, being more vulnerable does not necessarily mean being less resilient. For example, while those with low income have fewer resources needed to prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters, they often learn to be more resourceful and, through facing previous adversity, may be better capable of mentally and emotionally coping with emergencies. Similarly, while Latinx/Hispanic residents may face discrimination that creates a barrier to information & resources, their strong sense of community does provide some social capital that can be used to reduce disaster impacts.



## DISCRIMINATION AND INEQUITY



Discrimination and Prejudice can be corrosive to social cohesion, making community members feel like they are unwelcome or do not belong, increasing the chance of negative emotional, physical, and behavioral outcomes. In addition, discrimination bleeds into all sectors of life, from getting a home loan, to getting a job or promotion, to being incarcerated, to receiving adequate health care and education, to living in safe and clean housing; every part of life is impacted by the demographic characteristics of residents and the discrimination attached to it.<sup>8, 38, 39</sup> Discrimination can impede disaster preparedness for households & communities alike, as residents who are not socially connected to their communities are less likely to be exposed to the information, resources and encouragement that foster preparedness. During disaster response and recovery, discrimination can make it difficult to access resources, while creating additional emotional & mental strain for those being discriminated against.

Research clearly indicates that minority races and ethnicities (53% of the County population) in the United States face disparities in every aspect of life.<sup>40</sup> For example, African Americans/Blacks, Hispanics/Latinx, and Indigenous Americans in the US are disproportionately represented in poverty rates, school dropout rates, & incarceration rates and are more likely than white Americans to have poor mental and physical health and lack insurance.<sup>41</sup> One third of African Americans/Blacks report facing discrimination, with discrimination by employers and police, microaggressions, and racial slurs being the highest reported forms.<sup>42</sup> Likewise, about a quarter (24%) of Latinx/Hispanics in the US say they have been discriminated against or treated unfairly because of their ethnic background.<sup>43</sup> Discrimination against a given racial or ethnic minority also varies based on place and time. For example, hate crimes against Asian Americans have risen since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>44</sup>



Similar trends can be found for immigrant populations (32%), particularly undocumented immigrants (23%), Non-English Speakers (29%), LGBTQ populations (5.3% of California), low-income households (17%), those from minority religions (Christianity is largest religious groups in the County), and those with physical or mental limitations (9%).<sup>45, 46, 47, 48</sup> People who have a mixture of these characteristics can face compound discrimination (ex. simultaneous racism, classism, and sexism) that worsens stigma against them.<sup>2, 7, 50</sup> One concern voiced during discussions with community leaders in Monterey County regarding discrimination is the immigrant farm worker population who are transient residents, only residing in the County seasonally; as they not only are more likely to face compound discrimination, but are only in the region for limited periods of time, making it even more difficult for them to integrate into the community.

# UNAFFORDABILITY

## HOUSING COST

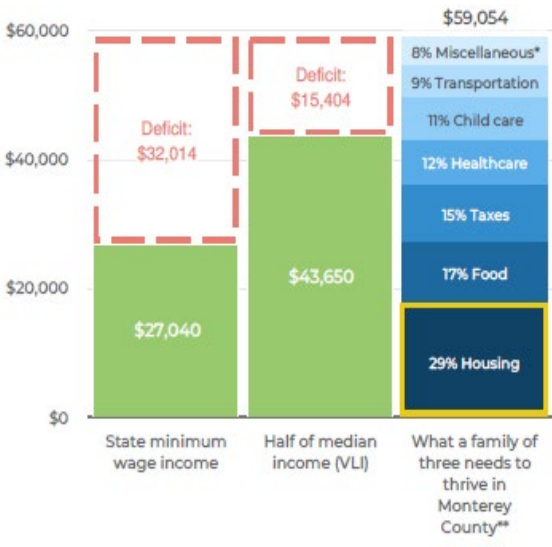
The median household cost for the County in 2019 was \$602,900 and median gross monthly rent was \$1,658. Salinas residents spend the highest percent of their income on housing in the County, with the percent of affordable homes (as compared to median local income) dropping from 52% in 2010 to 19% in 2019.<sup>51</sup> Median income has not increased at the same rate as housing costs and 58% of County households currently pay over 30% of their gross income on housing and 17% of households pay over 50% of their income on housing.<sup>6</sup> Housing cost was also the largest area needing improvement according to the Community Resilience Survey.<sup>34</sup>

## INCOME

In 2019, the median household income in Monterey County was about \$77,514 and the median per capita income was \$43,004. Household income was lowest in South County and highest in West County, with Chualar and San Ardo having the lowest per capita income on average.<sup>5,52</sup> Local career opportunities in the County also lean toward lower income level jobs, with the top economic sectors in the County, agriculture and tourism, also being some of the lowest paying.<sup>53</sup> Most County residents are not seeing much economic mobility; only a quarter of residents with high income were raised in medium income households, 15% were raised in low income households, and 8% were raised in very low income households.<sup>54</sup>

### COST OF LIVING

After paying the high cost of housing, very low-income households in Monterey County are short \$15,404 annually for basic needs.



Nearly 13% of County residents live in poverty, with the highest rates in south County. However, poverty rates do not fully explain financial needs, as the poverty threshold is federally defined and is not depictive of the real cost of living in many areas. In Monterey County, the real cost of living is over three times as high as the poverty threshold and is even higher for households with children. Overall, 36% of the County makes less than the real cost of living, even though 98% of this group had at least one working adult in their household.<sup>55, 56</sup> In the County, a family of four would need the income of 3-4 full time minimum wage jobs just to make ends meet and the average farmworker (who makes about \$24,000 annually) cannot even pass the cost of living threshold for a single adult.<sup>9, 57</sup>

Those unable to meet the real cost of living threshold face barriers to meeting basic needs and advancing financially and are also less able to prepare for and mitigate against disasters. They are more likely to have poor health, more likely to live in vulnerable housing conditions and less likely to have savings. Nationally, only about half of Americans have set aside more than \$700 of emergency savings and in the Community Resilience Survey, cost of living was cited as a barrier to being able to save for emergencies.<sup>34</sup> Unaffordable cost of living is also a large reason for overcrowded households and the leading cause of homelessness (76%) in the County.<sup>6</sup>

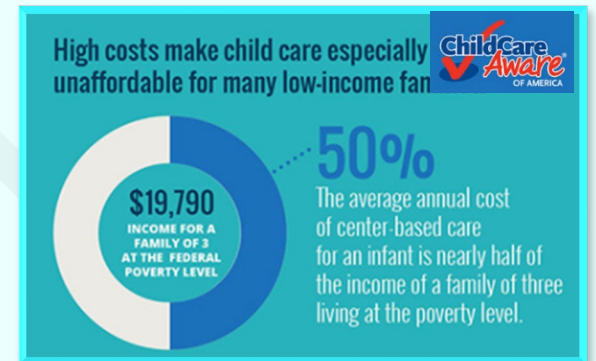
When examining demographic characteristics, Latinx/Hispanics, Blacks/African Americans, single mothers, children, and those with low educational attainment are most likely to make less than the real cost of living, while White residents and residents of Seaside, Marina, Monterey, and Pacific Grove are most likely to live above the real cost of living.<sup>9, 57</sup>

## CHILDCARE



Childcare can be extremely beneficial for children, providing socialization and preparing them for school. Childcare is an essential part of employment for parents, especially single parents, who may rely on childcare programs to watch over their children while they work. Having affordable quality child care available to residents not only eases employment and economic strains, making more productive workforces, but can have positive social and academic consequences, helping children better develop.<sup>58</sup> Childcare is also a crucial part of disaster management, as a strong childcare system can speed up recovery for families, providing them an alternative to schools and youth programs that often close, due to damage or safety issues, during disasters leaving parents unable to go back to work or conduct clean up and repairs to damaged homes and businesses.

Parents with children under 18 represent nearly a third of the workforce and childcare costs influence parent's career decisions. Women often shoulder the responsibility of childcare and are consequentially impacted by high childcare cost and the lack of childcare availability at disproportionate rates, particularly during disasters like the 2020 pandemic, where childcare availability went down while prices went up. Infant/toddler care for working parents is the largest unmet childcare need in the County, with over 85% of these families still in need of full time childcare and only 7% of families with two children able to afford full time childcare. While the state of California has taken steps to provide funding for childcare to low-income families, the County lacks the childcare spaces to meet need. 82% of children who are eligible for state funding are unable to receive care due to lack of funding or space. For school age children, 75% are unable to receive care due to lack of funding or available space.<sup>59</sup> Childcare for children under 5 is even more difficult to access, as many programs are only part-day and infant childcare costs nearly \$14,000 a year.<sup>60</sup> Childcare was a top area needing improvement according to the Community Resilience Survey, with several respondents noting that childcare was very expensive and not always available,<sup>34</sup> particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, as about 60% of childcare centers nationwide temporarily closed straining the already limited availability of affordable childcare.<sup>61</sup> In Monterey County, 26% of child care centers and homes remained closed as of January 2021.<sup>62</sup>



## HOUSING CONDITIONS



Housing conditions are deeply intertwined with disaster outcomes. Mobile and older homes, homes that are crowded, and those located in floodplains, liquefaction, or wildfire hazard zones, or on fault lines are more likely to be damaged during an emergency, creating economic hardship for households, and increasing risk of injury or death. Conversely, regular home maintenance and/or renovations that mitigate disaster impacts, such as bolting a home's foundation or creating defensible space, can reduce or prevent home damage. Disasters can also increase demand for emergency sheltering needs, creating more homelessness, and straining resources available to meet housing needs.

Homeowners tend to fare best in disasters, as they are more likely to have insurance and can use their home as collateral to receive loans. Homeless populations, often lacking a shield against disasters and having more pre-disaster unmet needs, tend to fair worst. Likewise, those with lower income, older age and/or physical limitations are less likely and able to make needed home repairs. Meanwhile, low-income County residents are less likely to own their homes and more likely to live in crowded households, putting these populations at higher disaster risk. When examining race & ethnicity, Pacific Islander, Indigenous, and Black/African American households in the County are the most disproportionately impacted by housing problems.<sup>63</sup>

## HOUSING COMPOSITION

There are about 128,000 households in the County, with 3.3 people on average per household. 53% of housing units are owner occupied and 49% are renter-occupied throughout the County, with owner-occupied housing higher in urban areas. 72% of households are composed of families, 22% are single person households, with about half being senior households. Most homes in the County are single family units, however 27% of housing structures are multi-family units and 4.6% are mobile homes. The rural regions of the County and south County cities and towns have the most mobile home residents, West County has the least. 28% of housing units were built before 1960 and 75% were built before 1990.<sup>6, 49, 56, 63</sup> 75% of homes built prior to 1970 contain lead, with rates even higher for homes built prior to 1940, which can create health issues.<sup>8</sup>

## HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Population growth has outpaced new housing development since 2009, largely because of obstacles related to the cost, time, and regulations for housing development, particularly in relation to building multifamily units.<sup>6</sup> These high costs for housing have led to overcrowding and people residing in unfit housing conditions. Currently Monterey County has higher rate of overcrowding than the state average, with 52% of residents live in overcrowded housing, with Greenfield, Gonzales and the unincorporated County having the highest rates.<sup>6, 49, 51, 56, 63</sup> Those who lived in overcrowded homes pre disaster tend to have difficulty finding new housing if their homes are damaged or destroyed in a disaster, because fewer landlords are willing to rent to them; similar challenges exist for migrant farmworkers.

## MIGRANT HOUSING

Migrant farmworker housing is of particular concern in the County, as this population typically only come to the County during harvest season, often don't make enough to afford the high rent in the County and/or do not have the documentation or credit to attain their own households. These workers are often forced into living in very small living quarters in motels, mobile homes, or households with many other farmworkers, placing them in unsafe conditions when disasters strike - as was the case during the pandemic where farmworkers disproportionately represented COVID positive cases. The availability of temporary housing to address the needs of migrant farmworkers is also problem, as there are not currently many options for temporary housing in the County. While hotels could be a means of temporary housing, the large dependence on tourism for the economy makes these locations less useable, as they are often filled with tourists. To help address the overcrowding needs of migrant farm workers, the state developed the California Employee Housing Act which places housing for agricultural workers as an accessory agricultural use in agriculture zones, subject to the same permit process; this makes these housing developments easier to create. However, Del Rey Oaks and Gonzales have not yet added this definition to their zoning codes.<sup>8</sup>

## INSURANCE

Despite the rising trends in insurance coverage, only 13% of homeowners in California have earthquake insurance<sup>64</sup> A lack of insurance was a problem in both the 2019 Chualar Flood and the 2016 Soberanes Fire in Monterey County, with most of the homes destroyed or damaged during these disasters lacking insurance to cover the losses. In addition, cost of insurance has been on the rise making it less affordable, particularly for hazards like fires in which there aren't programs like California Earthquake Authority and the National Flood Insurance Program to lower costs.

## HOMELESSNESS

The rate of people in Monterey County who do not have a stable housing is well above that of the state, with about 6,400 reported homeless residents per year and the homeless population growing by 23% from 2015 to 2017.<sup>51,65</sup> This number is most likely underestimated, as homeless populations can be difficult to accurately count. About 10% of the County’s student population is homeless, and about 90% of the student homeless population is Latinx/Hispanic.<sup>66</sup> Half of the homeless in the County were experiencing homelessness for the first time, 23% were chronically homeless, and 63% had been homeless for a year or more. 33% of homeless were families, 7% were veterans & 14% were minors, 5% of which were unaccompanied youth. Financial losses, substance abuse, and depression were the top causes of homelessness, while rental assistance and employment were the top ways out of it.<sup>9</sup> The highest prevalence of homelessness in the County was in the Salinas area, followed by the Monterey Peninsula.



76% of the homeless in the County were unsheltered, spending their nights outdoors, primarily in the streets or parks. Unaccompanied youth and chronic homeless were most likely to be unsheltered, while families and veterans were least likely. 10% of homeless youth have been in foster care and 19% have spent a night in jail in the past year. Men are disproportionately represented in the County’s homeless population (65%), as are Black/African American residents (25% of the homeless, 3% of the County). Nearly half of homeless survey respondents abuse drugs or alcohol (45%) or suffer from depression (44%) and about a quarter have physical disabilities (27%), chronic health problems (25%), or PTSD (23%). Strategic planning sessions found that transitional housing programs directed toward families, substance users, those with mental illness, and youth are the most vital need for homeless in the County.<sup>67</sup>

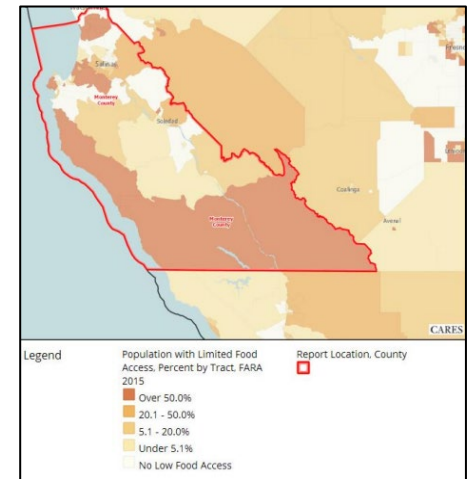
# OVERSTRESSED FOOD, WATER, AND SUPPLY CHAIN

Disasters can directly threaten our lives by impacting our physical and mental health and obstructing access to safe housing, clean water, healthy food, and other necessities (ex. sanitation items and clothing). Disasters may also impact supply chains and created shortages in supplies because they can damage infrastructure and roads, close businesses, lead to worker shortages, impacting manufacturing, distribution, and sale of supplies. While disasters create disruptions to supplies, they also increase the need for certain supplies. For example, there was a shortage of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that was needed to reduce virus spread. Similarly, during the pandemic, businesses increasingly reported domestic supplier delays, with 42% of businesses noting a significant negative impact in September 9, 2021.<sup>68</sup>

## FOOD

Communities that have access to healthy food tend to have better overall health and are better able to handle community food needs during a disaster. Food insecurity and food related health problems, such as obesity, diabetes and high blood pressure are linked to low income. Healthy food tends to be more expensive and low-income neighborhoods often lack full-service grocery stores and farmer's markets. Food insecurity is particularly devastating for children, whose developing brains and bodies need nutrients to grow. Food insecure children have worse arithmetic skills, and are more likely to have seen a psychologist, repeat a grade, and get suspended.<sup>69</sup>

34% of Monterey County residents and 66% of County farmworkers are food insecure.<sup>70</sup> Monterey County's food insecurity rates significantly exceed California's average, with women & children and the areas of East Salinas, Marina and South County having the highest rates of food insecurity in the County. A health needs assessment conducted by Salinas Valley Medical Healthcare System suggests that this difficulty in obtaining healthy food stems from high costs and lack of stores in close proximity.<sup>51, 71, 72, 73, 74</sup> While food pantries work to combat food insecurity, need often grows during disasters. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Food Bank for Monterey County quadrupled, serving more than 60,000 families monthly during the pandemic.



## WATER

Poor water quality can spread disease and illness to humans and animals, worsening overall health. Water quality can be worsened by poor infrastructure and disasters, such as floods, earthquakes, and long-lasting power outages; creating a situation where people need to boil water before use and/or only use bottled water. This was the case during the Soberanes Fire, where damage to watersheds impacted potable water supplies. Freshwater availability is also a concern, as fresh water is a limited but vital resource for people, animals, & crops.

## MEDICINE

Pharmacies can shut down during disasters do to damage to buildings, supply chains and/or electricity, temporarily cutting off access to life saving medicine. While individuals should do their best to prepare in advance for emergencies, by having extra needed medical supplies, financial restraints and hesitancy by doctors to provide 90 days' worth of medicine often prevents this preparedness effort.

## BABY SUPPLIES

Infants and young children require specific supplies, such as diapers and breastmilk, that's availability can be impacted during emergencies. In fact, nearly 95% of infant and child deaths during disasters result from contaminated water and unsanitary environments that lead to diarrhea. Parents may turn to infant formula as a substitute during emergencies, however it is less nutritious and could make babies sick if there is not clean water and a way to sterilize bottles.<sup>75</sup>

## PET SUPPLIES

Aside from meeting the basic needs of individuals, it is also important to recognize the needs of the over 12,500 pets in the County.<sup>76</sup> Animal owners often face additional struggles during disasters in regard to feeding, transporting and housing their animals. Many shelters and hotels do not welcome pets, making evacuations more difficult. Further, large animals may require special equipment to evacuate and more space for housing.





# STRENGTHS

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

SCHOOLS AS A COMMUNITY RESOURCE

CULTURE OF PREPAREDNESS

COLLABORATION DURING DISASTERS

While disasters do magnify the inequity and challenges that already exist within our community, they also highlight our strengths. Communities can utilize social capital, strong leadership preparedness efforts and redundancies built within community infrastructure, government, and the economy to respond and recover from disasters. The following chapter provides a snapshot of the community resources and efforts that make Monterey County strong and can be relied on during times of disaster.

# COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

**SCHOOL & FAMILY CONNECTIONS HELP PROTECT YOUTH**

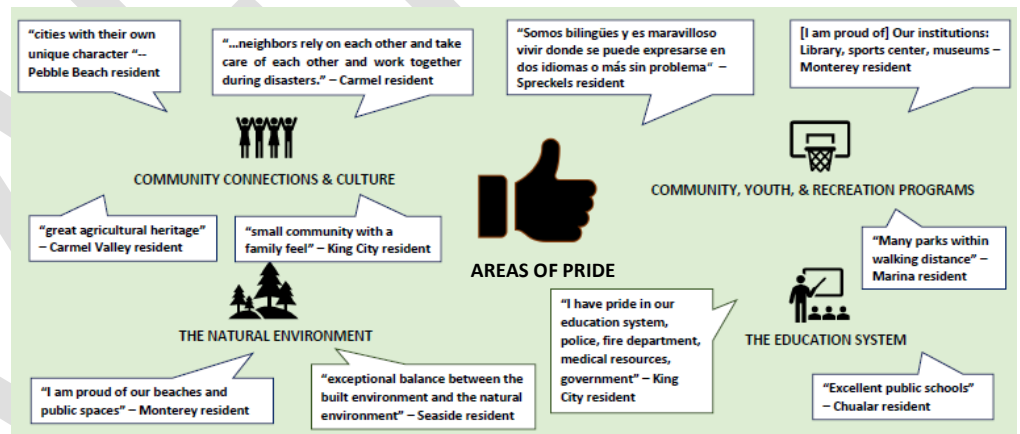
Adults who experienced strong connections as youth were

**48%-66% LESS LIKELY TO:**

- Have mental health issues
- Experience violence
- Engage in risky sexual behavior
- Use substances

When community members develop bonds to one another pre disaster they tend to work more cohesively and are more likely to help one another during and post disaster, providing information, supplies, and support. Being socially connected to one’s neighborhood can strengthen mental and physical health, advance opportunities, reduce barriers and discrimination, and create safer communities. Those who feel they belong in their community are more likely to help it by volunteering and participating in community events, and less likely to harm it through acts of violence, crime and terror.<sup>27</sup> Conversely, in order to create strong connections between a community and its members, people in the community must feel they are treated fairly and equitably, they are welcome in their community, and have opportunities to engage with the community, such as having organizations, events, and a well maintained natural environment, including hiking trails and parks.<sup>78, 79</sup>

Community connectedness is the top cited source of pride in the County, with 30% of respondents of the Community Resilience Survey mentioning it. Having a diverse community, the local culture and history, and recreation, youth and community programs and facilities and the local school system were also discussed as sources of community pride, although some respondents did state that inclusivity, equity, and government functions could be improved. Overall, survey respondents stated that the disasters they have experienced have shown them that they have good neighbors, communication is important in managing disasters, and that their communities should and do work together during emergencies.<sup>34</sup>



Community Resilience Survey Results

## SOCIAL SUPPORT

In 2013, most County residents indicated that they had someone “mostly available” or “always available” in their lives if they needed assistance.<sup>79</sup> Similarly, most respondents of the County’s Community Resilience Survey indicate they have between 1 and 5 people to turn to if they need help.

Respondents note having someone to turn to for material support (ex. a place to stay or money) more frequently than having someone to provide emotional support. 56% of respondents know their neighbors, 57% believe they belong in their community, and 51% believe they can influence it.<sup>34</sup> Of the business respondents, 81% partner with other local organizations, having an average of 33 local community partners per business, with a maximum of 300 partners and a minimum of 2 partners.

## FACTORS INFLUENCING SOCIAL SUPPORT



How long a person has lived in their community influences the time and ability to get to know and feel connected to one's community. In the County's Community Resilience Survey, 3% of respondents had lived in the County for less than a year, while 73% have lived in the County for more than 10 years. This may speak to the level of community connectedness but could also suggest that those taking this survey are the residents most imbedded in the County and thus most likely to be familiar with the County's Office of Emergency Services; more research is needed to better discern these results.<sup>34</sup>



The availability of outdoor activities encourages community members to get out and interact with one another. In the 2020 Community Resilience Survey, nearly half of respondents cited the County's natural environment and recreation facilities/programs as a large source of pride and increased funding for recreation, youth, and community facilities and programs was the top recommendation to improve the community.<sup>34</sup> Most regions of the County support outdoor activities and social gatherings, hosting several parks and community centers near homes, schools, and businesses, along with beaches along the coastline and Bay Coastal Recreation Trails. However, there are fewer parks and centers available in the County regions south of San Lucas.<sup>80</sup> Overall, 42.4% of County adults walk regularly.<sup>81</sup> Pacific Grove, Carmel, Monterey, Greenfield and King City have shops and services within walking distance to homes and plenty of pedestrian & bike lanes, but most of the unincorporated County and Salinas, Marina, and Del Rey Oaks are less pedestrian friendly.<sup>82</sup>



Safety influences community members' desire and ability to get out and socialize with one another. In 2010, Monterey County had the highest homicide rate in California, with Salinas leading the County. Since then, homicide rates have decreased moving from 10.6 to 3.2 per 100,000 residents, is one indication that the County is getting safer overall.<sup>83, 84</sup> Similar trends can be found in relation to gang violence and violent crime.<sup>51</sup> Safety issues still exist in the County, with crime rates currently higher than both state and national averages.<sup>84</sup> Latinx/Hispanic and Black/African American County residents are more likely to be impacted by crimes and violence than White residents.<sup>85</sup> Similar patterns can be found in County schools, with males who identified as "Black", "Other", and "Native American" being most likely to report feeling unsafe at school.<sup>79</sup> 58% of respondents to the County's Community Resilience Survey feel their community is a safe place to live/work and has safe, accessible community spaces and facilities (ex. libraries, parks). Further research is needed to better distinguish patterns and disparities in safety for the different demographic groups.



Trust is an important factor influencing social connections. 72% of respondents of the County's Community Resilience Survey believe that people in their community help one another in general and 60% believe people would do so during an emergency, suggesting a high level of trust between community members. 57% of respondents feel connected to their community, with many tying this connection to family and friends, followed by neighbours, community-based organizations, and work. Few residents cited strong connections to faith-based organizations and schools. Despite this, the availability of community and faith-based organizations can help enhance feelings of belonging and encourage people to get to know and work with their community, bringing people together through common hobbies, beliefs, and/or interests.<sup>34</sup>

# SCHOOLS AS A COMMUNITY RESOURCE

High quality affordable and accessible education is a vital part of a resilient community.



Schools teach children how to interact, provide childcare for working parents, advance economic and career opportunities, and enhance the ability to communicate and comprehend information, which can help individuals navigate hurdles in preparing for, responding to and recovering from disasters. Education and youth programs can help address mental, physical, and behavioral challenges youth may have, providing productive alternatives to drug use, crime, and other harmful activities. In fact, there is a strong relationship between educational attainment, crime rates and poverty, as those who graduate high school and go to college are less likely to be unemployed, less likely to engage in gang and criminal activities & more likely to make a living wage.<sup>86</sup>

Education and research are a top employer in the County, staffing the 20+ higher education institutions, 150+ PK-12 schools, and 11 research institutions in the County and employing 8% of County workers. The education system also has indirect long term impacts, as educational attainment is highly intertwined with employment and economic outcomes.<sup>25,87</sup>

All of these benefits of high-quality education have not been lost on the County, with over 58% of respondents to the 2015 Hazard Mitigation Survey stating that K-12 education is a “very important” part of their community. The local school system is a top source of pride listed in the County’s Community Resilience Survey, although respondents recommended educational opportunities be increased, particularly for those seeking vocational training, people with access and functional needs and young children.<sup>34</sup>

## PRIDE AND CONNECTIONS TO COUNTY SCHOOLS

Feeling connected to one’s school is associated with higher motivation in school and lower levels of depression, thoughts of suicide, gang involvement, and substance abuse. In the County, most middle and high school staff believe that their schools foster resilience and give students opportunities to make a difference. In addition, most believe that students can be successful; the school is an open and inviting place for both students and parents; the school staff care about students; and students are motivated to learn. Slightly over 50% of staff stated that their school collaborates with the community to assist students, with about three quarters saying the school helps students with substance abuse issues and provides adequate counseling. Most high school students note receiving school support, feeling connected to their schools, and having a caring relationship with school staff. Around three quarters of students feel highly motivated academically and a third of students believe that the things they do at school make a difference. However, Black/African American, Indigenous American and LGBT students, along with those who have been bullied, report having caring relationships with school staff and high levels of school connectedness less frequently.<sup>88, 89</sup>

## SCHOOLS AND DISASTER RESPONSE

Academic institutions and youth programs play a tremendous role in resilience against disasters. Directly, schools are a source of disaster preparedness and response information, such as what to do during an earthquake, and a source of social support for both children and their families. Indirectly, schools can bring children together with their communities, boost social connectedness, motivate children to become active community members, enhance community engagement, and reduce vulnerabilities such as behavioral & mental health problems, that can be worsened by disasters. One of the best ways to understand how students, schools and youth organizations can manage and cope with disasters in the future is to look at how they handled previous disasters.

### SCHOOL SUPPORT FOR DISASTER RESPONSE



Schools throughout the County have been used as testing sites during the pandemic and evacuation facilities during large wildfires. During the Soberanes fire and other disasters within the County, CSUMB played an important role in the disaster response, assisting in mass care and sheltering operations, contributing at the Operational Area Emergency Operation Center (EOC) and the Monterey Peninsula Regional EOC, sheltering firefighters, and being a base camp for the electrical company while they responded to wildfires. In addition, CSUMB provided support to meet the basic needs of students during the 2020 pandemic, including food distribution efforts and providing gift cards and emergency grants.

### SCHOOL ADJUSTMENT TO DISASTERS



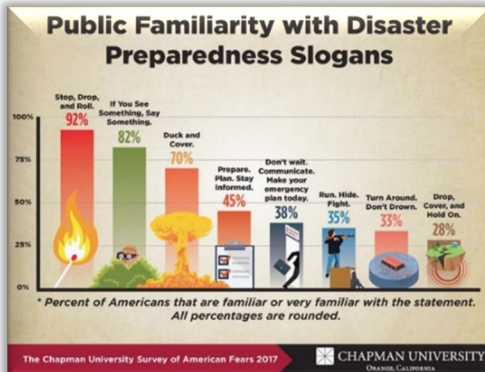
During the COVID pandemic, many preschools, kindergarten readiness programs, after school programs, and community centers were shut down and K-12 schools, colleges, and education/youth programs were rapidly moved online in the middle of the 2020 spring semester. Early research on the impacts of the pandemic suggest that virtual learning has already caused many students to fall significantly behind, widening existing racial and socioeconomic disparities.<sup>61</sup> To help address the pandemic's impacts, the Read to Me project, as well as many schools, revamped their curriculum, breaking up teaching material into smaller pieces to make it more digestible in an online format, and provided training to educators for moving to online classrooms. Aera Energy supported these efforts by funding some [special projects](#) that enhanced the academic development of students. The County Free Libraries, which often are a gathering point during emergencies for rural communities, hosted pop-up events to distribute thousands of meals and books to the community, in coordination with school districts. In addition, the County Free Libraries and Office of Education expanded free WIFI for students, to help manage the digital divide that was worsened because of increased use of online classes during the pandemic.

## CULTURE OF PREPAREDNESS

A community's ability to prepare and mitigate disasters is largely influenced by the availability of social and financial resources. Communities that are socially cohesive, or tight knit, can use this social capital to create Community Emergency Response Teams, Neighborhood Watches, and community emergency plans that allow them to work more cohesively together to respond and recover from emergencies. Communities that have a wealth of resources and financial capital can invest in community supplies and modifications, such as a community emergency stockpiles or power

sources. Alternatively, communities who lack resources and those who are unable to access high quality education, employment opportunities, health care, transportation, and technology pre disaster, are often unable to dedicate the time and resources needed to prepare, making them more likely to be negatively impacted by the disaster experiences. Further, even though everyone has some ability to prepare and mitigate disasters, those with limited financial or physical ability may feel discouraged because they believe they lack the power to do so.

## PREPAREDNESS KNOWLEDGE



In 2014, most Californians noted having at least some disaster preparedness knowledge, with those rating themselves as knowledgeable rising since 2006. White residents, men, and homeowners were most likely to state they were “very knowledgeable” about preparedness.<sup>90</sup> Nationally, the number of US residents who have actively prepared for disasters has fluctuated over the past 7 years and is currently at 36%, a rise from 34% in 2013, but a drop from 44% in 2019. Despite this fluctuation, discussion about preparedness has been growing, moving from 28% in 2018 to 48% in 2020; as has the percent of Americans actively seeking out disaster information, rising from 39% to 65% over the same two-year period. Intent to prepare in the next 6 months has also risen by 17% since 2013.<sup>91</sup> In the 2015 County Hazard Mitigation Survey, 71% of respondents stated that they were interested in making their home or community more resistant to hazards and 88% believed they were at least somewhat prepared for emergencies.

In the County’s Community Resilience Survey, 82% of residents stated that they knew where to access information on preparedness, a steep incline from the 43% of residents who stated this in the County’s 2015 Hazard Mitigation Survey. 47% of County residents were familiar with local government plans, while 62% were familiar with work/school emergency plans.<sup>34</sup> Exposure to the 2016 Soberanes Fire, the 2020 Pandemic, and the Dolan, Carmel and River Fires may have contributed to these increases, as research indicates that people who are exposed to disasters are more likely to seek disaster information and prepare, as are those encouraged to prepare by their employers, schools, family, or community.<sup>90,91</sup> While these two surveys may be skewed toward those who are already familiar with emergency management and preparedness, because they both come from the County’s Office of Emergency Services, the size of the surveys and way they were distributed were very similar, indicating that, at minimum, they can be used as points of comparison to one another to observe changes in preparedness over time in the County.



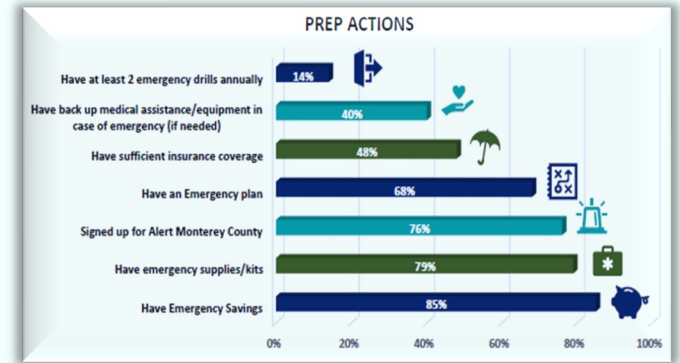
## TRUSTED SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The Community Resilience Survey found that family and friends were the most trusted source of information for residents, followed by government, newspaper, websites, TV, and radio. The top media sources were NPR, KSBW, and Monterey Weekly.<sup>34</sup> When asked about the most effective ways to receive hazard information in the 2015 County Hazard Mitigation Survey, email was the top source (67%), followed by community events (64%); websites (61%), and public service announcements (on radio or tv). Nationally, 90% of American adults use the internet, 81% own a smartphone and 72% use social media, with rates higher for younger Americans.<sup>86</sup> Social media use is also on the rise, with YouTube and Facebook being the top used platforms overall.<sup>93</sup> For these reasons, social media and phone alerts have now become common for local leadership, emergency management, & NGOs seeking to engage the community. As of September 2021, Monterey County Office of Emergency Services engaged 4,691 followers on twitter, 103,434 on Facebook, & 4,299 on Instagram.

## PREPAREDNESS ACTIONS

### INDIVIDUAL PREPAREDNESS

Between the 2015 and 2021 County surveys, there was a 22% rise in County residents with an emergency plan, a 5% rise in those with sufficient insurance to cover their disaster risks & a 9% rise in residents with emergency kits/supplies. In the Community Resilience Survey, several respondents noted that their disaster experiences have taught them the importance of having emergency supplies and planning for evacuations. Most residents said they had a place to evacuate to if needed and practice resilient and healthy habits, such as washing hands regularly, and keeping devices fully charged. 47% of the County's adult population and about 70% of businesses have signed up for Alert Monterey County, and several respondents of the community resilience survey said the alert system was helpful during their disaster experiences.<sup>34</sup>



The 2015 Hazard Mitigation Survey indicates that most residents have CPR or first aid training, have smoke detectors on each level of their home, own a fire extinguisher, know how to shut off their utilities, and have anchored large equipment and furniture. Around half of County residents have a battery powered radio, have defensible space around their home and use resistive landscapes, while a third have done retrofits to strengthen their homes. Few residents conduct emergency drills at least twice a year or have a NOAA weather radio, a generator, or sandbags at home. The need for more emergency drills was also highlighted in the Community Resilience Survey, as it was the least cited preparedness activity taken by respondents (13%).<sup>34</sup>

### ORGANIZATIONAL PREPAREDNESS

According to the Community Resilience Survey, organizations were more likely than residents to have emergency plans and sufficient insurance and were much more likely to practice their plans at least twice a year. 58% of organizations had continuity of operations plans and most have updated all plans this year. Most organizations have emergency/back up equipment, supplies, and funding and partnerships with local stakeholders. Finally, 80% of organizations teach their employees about preparedness.

### SCHOOL PREPAREDNESS



Under [California Education Code \(EDC\)](#) sections 32280–89 California schools and districts must have/maintain school safety plans. Under EDC-sect-32001, every school with an occupant capacity of 50+ and those with more than one classroom must have a dependable and operative fire alarm system and all elementary schools must have a fire drill at least once every calendar month and twice per school year at the secondary level. In Monterey County, Cal OES and the County Office of Education provide training and tools to prepare schools for disasters, including A.L.I.C.E 100 active shooter training, a safe schools workshop, and Incident Command system training. All County school districts have earthquake and fire drills at least once a year, while half conduct drills more frequently. 13 school districts have active shooter drills, Bradley Union Elementary conducts a bus evacuation drill and Salinas City Elementary has a school phone tree.<sup>1</sup> CSUMB has an emergency management division which assists with disaster preparedness & response and the Return of the Natives program that mitigates disasters through restoration of natural habitats.

## COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS

Of respondents to the Community Resilience Survey, 33% said that their community has an emergency plan or team and 15% stated their community has an emergency fund or stockpile. <sup>34</sup>

### LOCAL PREPAREDNESS EFFORTS

[Monterey County Office of Emergency Services \(OES\)](#) has taken many steps to help foster community preparedness:



- Developing emergency plans, including the [Hazard Mitigation Plan](#) & [Community Resilience Plan](#).
- Working on projects that inform the community about disasters, including Listos Social Bridging program, StormReady, and TsunamiReady.
- Conducting disaster exercises and emergency preparedness trainings and presentations.
- Providing multiple resources to information on their website (ex. [Preparedness toolkit](#))
- Creating multiple working groups to better coordinate and prepare throughout the disaster management process, including the Community Resilience Working Group
- Running Alert Monterey County

Monterey County and the cities of [Monterey](#), [Pacific Grove](#), [Marina](#), [Carmel](#), and [Sand City](#) provide online preparedness information. Most local, regional, and state fire agencies conduct public education programs and provide disaster information on their websites and social media, with twitter being a key source of response information. In addition:

- [The City of Seaside](#) has an active public education program covering a variety of topics, from fire safety to CPR trainings.
- [King City](#) provides flood preparation flyers and conducts a sediment removal program to reduce flood risk, along with providing disaster preparedness trainings and drills.
- [The City of Monterey](#) has a long-established Emergency Operations Center which provides regular training opportunities and support to an active Monterey Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program.
- [Monterey County - San Benito County Health Care Preparedness Coalition](#) provides training on preparedness for health care services and connects different organizations to one another.
- [The Fire Safe Council for Monterey County](#) educates the public on wildfire danger, supports wildfire mitigation projects, and helps neighborhoods and communities apply for and receive wildfire fuel reduction grants, by acting as fiscal sponsor to receive and administer grant funds.
- [CSUMB](#) provides online prep resources, develops campus disaster plans, & conducts regular emergency drills and trainings r to keep students and staff prepared, including a preparedness virtual academy.
- [Many smaller County communities](#) have made efforts to prepare for disasters. For example, the [Rancho Tierra Grande Fire Safety Committee](#) is developing a strategic community plan and [Carmel Valley Save Open Space](#) bought an airfield for emergency fire protection activities.



There are some organizations in the County whose daily operations can and have been amplified to assist disaster preparedness and response.

- The Community Foundation of Monterey County can provide disaster funds
- United Way Monterey County 211 Info & Referral Service adds non-emergency information during a disaster.
- SPCA help shelter and evacuate animals and provides emergency preparedness information
- The Salinas Valley Fair Grounds has & can be used for emergency management, hosting preparedness trainings, food drives, blood drives, emergency sheltering operations, point of distribution operations, and fire base camps.
- Monterey County is currently in the process of developing an Aging and Disability Resource Connection partnership with the Central Coast Center for Independent Living, and Santa Cruz/San Benito AAA.
- There are several private organizations, such as Peace of Mind Preparedness, and faith-based organizations, such as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, that provide emergency prep information, events, and trainings and have amplified services to assist during response and recovery efforts.

### STATE PREPAREDNESS EFFORTS



The [Governor's Office of Emergency Services](#) (Cal-OES) provides regional plans, support, training, guidance, and funding for emergency operations throughout the state. Cal OES has its own Emergency Operations center and 300 cameras to detect wildfires. Cal OES developed the [MYhazards website](#), which provides location specific information on disaster risk and preparedness. To help reach California's large Spanish speaking population, Cal OES developed the [Listos California's](#) preparedness campaign, which developed the [Disaster Ready Guide](#) & Social bridging program and awarded funding to the CERV of Monterey Peninsula to provide disaster preparedness grants & training to 15 local Nonprofits, which ended up reaching over 60,000 County residents.



Aside from combatting wildfires, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) is a leading source for state fire preparedness and prevention information and education. Cal Fire conducts public forums, distributes printed preparedness material, participates and hosts preparedness events, like the Pebble Beach Zombie Run, and runs several education campaigns including: ["Ready, Set, GO!"](#), [FireSmart](#), [MySafe](#), and the ["One Less Spark Campaign"](#) to encourage the public to prepare and mitigate fires.



The [Earthquake Country Alliance](#) works to improve earthquake and tsunami preparedness, mitigation and resiliency by developing resources and organizing activities for the public, including the annual nationwide Shake Out earthquake drill. Similarly, Cal OES developed an [Earthquake Early Warning system](#) and the ["Don't Get Caught Off Guard"](#) Earthquake campaign.

### HIGHLIGHT

[Listos Social Bridging program](#) was developed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The program conducted 71,849 total conversations in 2020 to check on elderly persons and provide disaster preparedness information to households. Through these calls, the program signed up 442 residents for County alerts, sent 590 disaster ready guides to households, had 1,788 COVID wellness conversations and 1,275 disaster readiness conversations with residents. These calls did not just deliver important preparedness information and references to residents, they provided much-needed emotional and mental health support, alleviating loneliness & providing people an opportunity to share their stories, during the long period of isolation.

## NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS EFFORTS



On a national level, the [Federal Emergency Management Agency](#) (FEMA) provides preparedness information and assistance for hazard mitigation projects. FEMA developed IPAWS (the national emergency alert system), the [Community Emergency Response Team \(CERT\) program](#), and [the National Flood Insurance Program](#) (NFIP). NFIP reduces the cost of flood insurance and encourages disaster resistant development; Monterey County has voluntarily participated in the NFIP for over 20 years.



[American Red Cross](#) provides emergency preparedness information and resources, including outreach material, CPR & first aid classes and emergency response volunteer opportunities & training. Red Cross also hosts events like Sound the Alarm, where fire alarms are installed in homes and The Pillowcase Project that provides interactive preparedness education for students grade 3-5.



The [National Fire Protection Agency](#) offers several educational resources on disaster preparedness, as does the Department of Homeland Security, through their in-depth disaster preparedness website: [www.ready.gov/](http://www.ready.gov/).



The US Department of Housing and Urban Development's [Community Development Block Grant](#) provides financial aid to local and state governments to address disaster recovery, mitigation, & preparedness.



The National Weather Service's [StormReady and TsunamiReady](#) programs help communities create plans to handle extreme weather & tsunamis, encouraging and recognizing community preparedness efforts. Monterey County participates in both programs.

### OUTREACH FOR COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS

Regardless of who or how information is shared, it should be engaging, easy to understand, utilize multiple sources (ex. print, web, videos), and be available in multiple languages, using both pictures & print. Some examples of engaging preparedness outreach include FEMA & Sony Pictures ["Zombieland: Double Tap"](#) which promotes preparedness using a famous movie and [San Francisco's "Owl Tech"](#) which provides a visual of future flooding potential using virtual reality. A great time to push this disaster preparedness messaging is during the disaster recovery process, as the reality and risk of disasters are fresh in people's minds, making them more likely to take it seriously and take steps to prepare for future events

## COLLABORATION DURING DISASTERS

Groups like CERV of Monterey Peninsula, American Red Cross, and Monterey County OES not only help communities prepare, they coordinate with one another during disasters, using their own social connectedness to better support the community through the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), WebEOC and, during large emergencies, the Regional Operations Center and Joint Information Center.

### 2015 TASSAJARA FIRE

During response, state, local and non-profit organizations ran a Local Assistance Center (LAC) to provide recovery information and resources. OES and fire responders held 14 community meetings over the three-month fire fight to maintain public communication. CERT provided escorts for displaced people accessing their property for personal damage assessments.

## 2016 SOBERANES FIRE



During response, the EOC coordinated with local nonprofits, affected communities, and the Nestle's Corp to provide over 36,000 bottles of donated drinking water to fire survivors. The County's alert and warning system sent 70+ emergency alerts related to evacuations and air quality issues, along with providing emergency information on social media. The United Way's call center provided the public 24-hour fire & air quality info, referred fire survivors to resources, & answered questions, available in 180 languages. Similar to procedures in other emergencies, WebEOC was used to coordinate information and resources internally. Community members and concerned people statewide offered donated goods and services to assist affected residents with recovery. Some of these efforts are highlighted below.

- County Department of Social Service worked with the EOC's Donations Management Unit and local non-profits to ensure donations reached impacted residents.
- Monterey Bay Aquarium hosted their largest night event on record, admitting 3,400 people for a fundraising event, for fire survivors.
- [CERV](#), in coordination with the EOC, ran their Monterey Recovers web-based donation management program, which matched unmet needs of fire survivors with donated goods & services.
- Salinas Valley agricultural companies donated cash.
- Community Foundation of Monterey County established the Soberanes Fire Relief Fund and managed monetary donations of about \$800,000 for fire victims' recovery.
- Wharf Marketplace hosted a fundraising farmers market that all contributed to the Fire Relief Fund.

## 2017 LANDSLIDE

The weather induced landslide in Big Sur damaged the Pfeiffer Canyon Bridge impacting Highway 1, a major transportation route for both Big Sur residents and tourists. The Monterey County community came together in response and, through the collaborative efforts taken, allowed the bridge to be rebuilt in a relatively short amount of time.

## 2019 PUBLIC SAFETY POWER SHUTOFFS

To assist in preparing vulnerable populations for public safety power shutoffs, Coastal Kids worked with families who had children reliant on electric medical devices, to add them to early notification lists, and connected families with grants to buy backup generators.<sup>2</sup>

## COVID-19 PANDEMIC

In response to the pandemic, Listos conducted welfare check calls to check on and provide emotional support to residents living alone, as did the city of Monterey and County Social Services programs. The [Patient-Provider Communication Forum](#) was developed to provide free communication supports for patients of different ages and abilities, through downloadable health care communication boards. United Way Monterey County's 211 call center amplified services by almost double, answering around 20,000 calls during 2020. This service helped refer people to resources while also helping identify top needs in the County, including rent/utility assistance, food insecurity, and housing.



Programs also emerged to better understand community building and inequalities during the pandemic. The County created a [COVID-19 Disparate Impact Report](#) and working group to track inequalities experienced during the pandemic. This effort has provided the County a forum to examine disaster inequities and solutions for assisting those disproportionately impacted, while highlighting the need to address racial and socioeconomic disparities pre, during and post disaster. Through the [Farmworker Initiative](#) Listos leveraged the strong tradition of oral communication among California farm workers and developed audios of critical pandemic information in multiple languages, including indigenous ones (ex. Mixteco), to address disparities for farmworkers. [Community Builders of Monterey County](#) engaged students from CSUMB, and Middlebury Institute engaged their students to document stories of resilience and innovative community building throughout the disaster experience. Similarly, County Office of Emergency Services pushed out surveys to see how organizations have been impacted by the pandemic.



While the pandemic worked against unifying the community in many ways, it did provide everyone a shared experience of adversity. It demonstrated to our community that we are deeply interconnected and provided people an opportunity to take responsibility for their community's health, which, when viewed in this perspective, can be a unifying force. This feeling that "you are not alone" can provide comfort and solace during periods of isolation, giving people the strength to continue, making them feel closer to their community, and providing them a lens in which to empathize with one another. In an attempt to reinforce positive community relationships and promote a collective goal toward a safer and healthier community, public information published by cities and the County reminded people that they must take steps not only to protect themselves and their loved ones but also their community.

## 2020 WILDFIRES



The sentiment that "we are all in this together" became even more evident as three large fires hit the County in August 2020 amidst a global health crisis. All traditional emergency response practices and policies were modified to adjust to the "new normal" the pandemic created, exacerbating the existing challenges in managing the complex and cascading disasters. The community rallied together to support one another; many local nonprofits, such as the [Food Bank](#) and [SPCA](#), amplified services to help County residents & [All-in-Monterey](#) stood up a location for spontaneous donations & volunteers, as did CERV through their ["Recovers" webpage](#).

While coordination amongst nonprofits quickly arose in response to the fires, the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) was not able to embed themselves quickly and effectively into spontaneous volunteer and donation management. However, the EOC was able to successfully work all fire responses and the pandemic response simultaneously, while the majority of the 100+ EOC staff worked remotely. The EOC effectively coordinated and communicated with response partners, like United Way Monterey County, and the public, sharing daily briefings and reports, providing consistent updates through social media and a text campaign, and developing the [2020 Fires Website](#) (including a Virtual Local Assistance Center) and corresponding maps with up-to-date information on the fires and available resources. As is the case during other fire responses, the EOC worked with local partners to open evacuation centers and shelters, push fire information through their alert system and social media, host community meetings, and develop a Local Assistance Center to assist fire survivors. Some differences in fire response caused by the pandemic included the use of hotel vouchers to assist with evacuations and the expansion of online & over the phone presence by the EOC and first responders, to fill gaps left by limited in person communication.

# STRATEGIES

THROUGH THE RESILIENCE ASSESSMENT AND COMMUNITY DISCUSSIONS, MONTEREY COUNTY HAS IDENTIFIED SIX STRATEGIES FOR MAKING OUR COMMUNITY MORE RESILIENT AND ABLE TO ADDRESS THE UNPREDICTABLE IMPACTS OF ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SHOCKS & STRESSES.

Building community resilience is a never-ending process and requires constant adjustment to new conditions and opportunities. Through the actions identified here, we take steps towards meeting these goals. These actions add to ongoing and historic efforts in a way that brings intentional direction toward catalyzing change across all sectors of the community. The actions being proposed are intended to be responsive to existing County priorities and bring a resilience lens and added value to new and existing projects & initiatives.

**STRATEGY 1: BUILD SOCIAL CAPITAL**

**STRATEGY 2: ENHANCE EMERGENCY SERVICES INFRASTRUCTURE**

**STRATEGY 3: MOVE TOWARD SUSTAINABILITY**

**STRATEGY 4: CREATE HEALTHY COMMUNITIES**

**STRATEGY 5: ENCOURAGE RESILIENT HOUSEHOLDS**

**STRATEGY 6: EMPOWER SOCIAL MOBILITY**

A summary table of all proposed activities is provided at the end of this document.

# STRATEGY 1: BUILD SOCIAL CAPITAL

Social Capital is the networks of relationships we have in our society, who we know and how well we know them. Through social capital we receive social support, which can be given in the form of emotional, financial, or material support. For example, during disasters your neighbors can help you talk through your trauma, but they can also lend you money, give you a ride or a place to stay, and help with home repairs.

## GOALS AND INITIATIVES:

Monterey County will work to build social capital through the following goals & initiatives.

### GOAL: FORGE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND TRUST

**Initiative 1.1** | Empower Disaster Resilience Amongst Youth

**Initiative 1.2** | Strengthen Public Private Partnerships

**Initiative 1.3** | Create A Resilient Religions Program

### GOAL: MAKE RESILIENCE ACCESSIBLE

**Initiative 1.4** | Create OES Office Hours

**Initiative 1.5** | Develop a Community Communications Strategy

### GOAL: EMPOWER ENGAGED COMMUNITIES

**Initiative 1.6** | Implement the Community Resilience Plan

**Initiative 1.7** | Develop a Resilience Block Party Program

## HIGHLIGHT

Carmel Valley Manor, a nonprofit senior living provider, has been working with Monterey County Health Department, Meals on Wheels, and local transportation organizations and hotels to ensure that their residents are disaster ready. The Manor conducts evacuation drills regularly, has emergency food stockpiles, developed an emergency operation plan and created MOUs with local hotels and skilled nursing & assisted living communities so residents won't have to stay in public shelters if they have to evacuate. The Manor also developed their own emergency alert system to compliment Alert Monterey County and provide easier communication amongst staff and residents. The partnerships Carmel Valley Manor developed, and the efforts taken to build disaster resilience have left its residents better able to respond to and evacuate safely during emergencies.

# WHAT PUTS US AHEAD

Monterey County has made several efforts to build trust between local leadership and the community and create a safer community, highlighting these goals in the [County's Strategic Initiatives](#).

The County and city governments, along with local community and faith-based organizations bring the community together, boosting social capital, through community centers, programs, events, and meetings.

County Departments, such as the Office of Emergency Services (OES), manage and coordinate projects, programs, and working groups to develop and maintain partnership within and between County communities. During disasters, OES runs the Emergency Operations Center, coordinating resources and disaster information to assist disaster response operations.

Within the County, cities have made cleaner and safer streets, open spaces, & places for the community to gather through neighborhood improvement projects. Police departments have boosted inclusion & trust within communities by creating police explorer programs, conducting community surveys, practicing community policing, & creating a citizen's police academy and programs like "coffee with a cop", "national night out", and "Cops Youth Literacy Program".

Groups such as [Monterey County Elections](#), [League of Women Voters of Monterey](#) and the [US Census](#) all encourage community members to actively engage with their communities, as do local youth councils and leadership organizations. Likewise, organizations and programs like [Vision Salinas](#), [Community Alliance for Safety and Peace](#), and [Monterey Peace and justice Center](#) work to reduce violence and enhance community connectedness. Similarly, the Four Cities for Peace initiative in South County has had a positive impact on violence due to gang activity.



# WHAT SETS US BACK

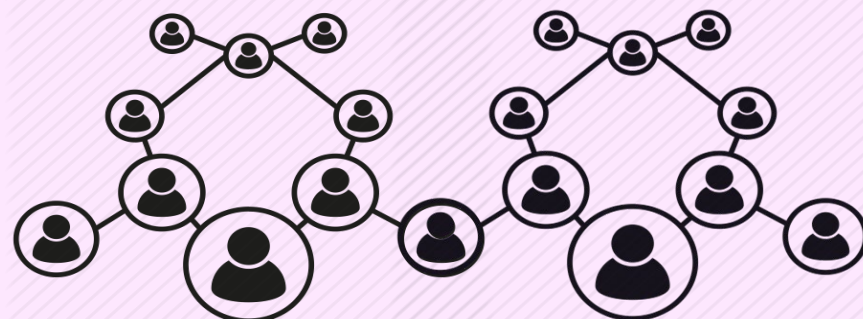
Despite the high level of social connection *within* County communities, there is a disconnect *between* communities, as the County's large geographic size and the concentration of people and services in Salinas and the Peninsula leaves south County isolated, physically, materially, and socially, stiffening both communication and trust.

While the unincorporated regions of the County have made efforts to collaborate within their own communities through groups like the [Southern Monterey County Rural Coalition](#), [South County Outreach Effort](#), and [North Monterey County Community Alliance](#), further efforts and groups are needed to connect the larger County Community with the more isolated regions of the County.

## THE 2020 PANDEMIC

Unlike most disasters, where we physically come together in shelters and during recovery, the pandemic forced us to stay apart. The pandemic cancelled social gatherings and events and shut down many organizations that work to unite the community. Sheltering in place left people isolated, which had a wide array of effects on mental & emotional health that are not yet fully understood, as the pandemic is still not over & impacts can appear far after it is.

The pandemic also amplified long-standing systemic health and social inequities faced by racial and ethnic minorities, with California Department of Public Health finding that Black/African American, Latinx/Hispanic, and Pacific Islander communities, low-income household and essential workers in California were disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.<sup>94</sup>



## GOAL: FORGE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND TRUST

### **Initiative 1.1 Empower Disaster Resilience Amongst Youth**

Working with youth to strengthen their bonds to their community can help reduce violent crime<sup>95</sup> and embed ideas of community resilience in residents early on; while utilizing our most energetic population to strengthen our community and amplify preparedness messaging.

#### **ACTION**

Over the next two years, Monterey County Office of Emergency Services will collaborate with Monterey County Office of Education and local youth programs and organizations to encourage youth to engage in disaster preparedness, through curriculum, events, and programs.

### **Initiative 1.2 Strengthen Public Private Partnerships**

Developing partnerships between different sectors of the community pre disaster can assist with coordination during and post disaster. For this reason, Monterey County developed a multitude of committees and working groups including: the [Community Action Committee](#), the [Equal Opportunity Advisory Commission](#), and the Community Resilience Working Group.

#### **ACTION**

Over the next two years, Monterey County Office of Emergency Services will work to strengthen partnerships with the community- building networks that include emergency management, social services, health care, community organizations, businesses, academia, NGOs, first responders, government, and faith-based stakeholders through community outreach and the community resilience working group.

### **Initiative 1.3 Create A Resilient Religion Program**

Faith based organizations often provide support to residents in need and can sometimes be an even more trusted resource than government, particularly for marginalized populations. During emergencies, faith-based organizations often work to assist their congregations by collecting and distributing donations & supplies and working as spontaneous evacuation centers. Often times these efforts are done reactively, without collaboration, limiting the reach and effectiveness of this assistance.

Developing a resilient religions program will make it easier for emergency management to partner with faith-based organizations prior to and during emergencies, so that they can assist one another in preparing the community, meeting the needs of residents during disasters, and amplifying one another's disaster mitigation and response efforts, while avoiding duplication of efforts.

#### **ACTION**

Over the next two years, Monterey County Office of Emergency Services will reach out to local faith-based organizations to encourage disaster preparedness and determine the feasibility of developing a resilient religions program and/or coalition



## GOAL: MAKE RESILIENCE ACCESSIBLE

### **Initiative 1.4 Create OES Office Hours**

Outreach and increased communication by government was a top cited recommendation in the County's Community Resilience Survey, with some respondents elaborating that they are unsure of government's emergency plans and role during disasters.

#### **ACTION**

To empower people, amplify community voices, help inform future projects, and better educate the community about emergency management and the role of the Office of Emergency Services (OES), Monterey County OES will develop and run weekly public office hours over the next year, in which the community can come and speak with emergency management staff and have questions answered.

### **Initiative 1.5 Develop a Community Communications Strategy**

To strengthen emergency communication, Monterey County Office of Emergency Services (OES) developed [Alert Monterey County](#), an opt in emergency notification system serving 150,000 residents, and [Nixle](#), a communication system designed for both community and emergency information serving about 15,000 residents. OES also uses [IPAWS](#), a federal communication system that does not require opt in and can push Imminent Threat alerts to all cell phones in the County. Other methods of public communication include [NextDoor](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), & [Twitter](#) accounts and a revamped website. In addition, OES coordinates with [211](#), who runs a 24-hour call center for those proactively seeking information before, during, and after disasters. The County & its cities also have websites and social media accounts providing emergency information, along with Emergency/Department Operations Centers that activate during disasters to facilitate coordination, including a designated role for public information.

Despite these efforts to advance public communication during emergencies, information is not always disseminated in an understandable way to all County residents. Language and comprehension barriers play a role, as 25% of the County adults read English below the 4th grade level<sup>96</sup> & 29% of Households don't have members who are English Language proficient.<sup>79</sup> Spanish is the only language considered legally "significant" in the County aside from English, however Tagalog is spoken by 2,280 individuals, Korean is spoken by 1,099 individual<sup>97</sup> and the most requested language services at Superior Court in Monterey County after Spanish were Triqui, Mixteco, Zapoteco, Tagalog, & Vietnamese. Regardless of how information is presented, the channels currently used to reach the public do not reach everyone, with marginalized communities, such as immigrant and homeless populations, often being missed by these communication efforts.

#### **ACTION**

Over the next three to five years, Monterey County Office of Emergency Services will develop a communication strategy that will expand the reach of emergency communication to the public and meet the communication needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the whole community.

## GOAL: EMPOWER ENGAGED COMMUNITIES

### **Initiative 1.6** Implement the Community Resilience Plan

Examining disaster management through a community resilience lens helps bridge gaps between different sectors of the community, allowing for more coordination and partnership between residents, organizations, emergency management, and local leadership. Monterey County Office of Emergency Services, with support from [Homeland Security's Urban Areas Security Initiative](#), [United Way Monterey County](#), and the [Community Foundation of Monterey County](#), has demonstrated their commitment to creating a Resilient Monterey County by hiring a Community Resilience Coordinator and developing this Community Resilience Plan and subsequent projects, including a preparedness toolkit & [resilience webpage](#).

#### **ACTION**

Monterey County Office of Emergency Services will complete the community resilience plan, updating it every three years; run quarterly meetings for the Community Resilience Working Group; and implement the initiatives listed in this document in collaboration with local partners.

### **Initiative 1.7** Resilience Block Party Program

Community bonds can be strengthened by creating or enhancing community programs and events, such as neighborhood watches and block parties. This is particularly true for regions of the County that are often overlooked, such as the unincorporated Monterey County and South County. Developing community block parties focused on preparedness and resilience building, is a fun way to get communities to better know their residents, while encouraging actions that make everyone better equipped to manage disasters.

#### **ACTION**

Over the next two years, Monterey County Office of Emergency Services will work with local leadership to develop and implement a community block party program.

## HIGHLIGHT

The Tularcitos Ridge Fire Safety Group was formed in collaboration with Monterey County Office of Emergency Services, the Sheriff's Office, and Cal Fire in response to the 2020 Carmel Fire. The group conducts community evacuation drills and monthly meetings to discuss neighborhood evacuation plans. Along with developing a neighborhood emergency plans and phone tree, the group created [a website](#) where residents can find real-time disaster alerts, an evacuation checklist, and resources for managing insurance claims and hardening properties to wildfires. The group is working to become a [Firewise Community](#) and is steadily building disaster resilience through projects like installation of high-visibility, reflective house numbers and the creation and postage of permanent neighborhood maps at neighborhood entrances for first responders, showing the locations of roads, house numbers, fire hydrants, swimming pools, and water storage tanks.

# WHAT ELSE CAN BE DONE?

**Organizations**, especially smaller ones, should broker partnerships pre-disaster with government and other local organizations, so that they have multiple places to turn for assistance during emergencies. Organizations should take the following steps:

- Develop an emergency response plan for the organization: [www.ready.gov/business/implementation](http://www.ready.gov/business/implementation)
- Develop a Continuity of Operations plan: <https://www.ready.gov/business-continuity-plan>
- Develop succession plans to ensure projects and partnerships are not lost when an employee leaves the organization.
- Identify the organization's needs and capabilities during a disaster & reach out to potential partners to discuss preparation and collaborations, including developing Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) to assist one another during disasters
- Reach out to the [Office of Emergency Services](#) to learn how to coordinate with them during emergencies.

**Primary, secondary, and higher education schools and youth programs** can make preparedness fun and engaging by:

- Having a day, week, or month at school that focuses on preparedness, hosting a preparedness event, or incorporating preparedness into current school events (ex. provide preparedness information at back-to-school events)
- Developing projects, games, movies, competitions, and/or immersive story telling with virtual reality programs like [VR4DR](#).
- Making preparedness into themes, such as “preparing for the zombie apocalypse”. *Find games, stories, and lesson plans [here](#).*
- Implementing programs and/or providing brochures on preparedness within youth centers, libraries, and school campuses.
- Creating preparedness clubs, [Teen Community Emergency Response Team](#) programs, or youth councils.
- Enhancing counseling, mentorship, and after school programs that encourage positive behaviors and community involvement.

**College and Universities should:**

- Offer a disaster preparedness course or include a preparedness section in new student orientation. *Preparedness classes can be intertwined with existing programs or majors.*
- Have student councils and student body organizations advocate for campus policies that advance disaster preparedness. *These efforts engage students, teaching them valuable skills, while also benefiting the community*
- Develop their own [Community Emergency Response Team](#) or preparedness club
- Conduct school preparedness surveys and events.

**Local Fire and Police Departments, along with emergency management organizations** should continue to enhance programs and events that allow them to interact with community members on a regular basis so that the community will be more familiar with and more willing to trust and listen to these organizations during emergencies.

# STRATEGY 2: ENHANCE EMERGENCY SERVICES INFRASTRUCTURE

Disaster preparedness and mitigation efforts can help protect communities from the impacts of disasters, making it easier to withstand, respond to and recover from emergencies. Further, advanced planning in terms of facilities, research, transportation, and communication systems can make response and recovery efforts easier.

## GOALS AND INITIATIVES

### GOAL: INCREASE COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS

**Initiative 2.1** | Provide a Forum for Communication between Local CERTs

**Initiative 2.2** | Develop a VOAD Program

**Initiative 2.3** | Support Fire Mitigation Efforts

**Initiative 2.4** | Address Hurdles to Vegetation Management for Wildfire Mitigation

**Initiative 2.5** | Encourage Preparedness amongst Tourists

### GOAL: STRENGTHEN EMERGENCY RESPONSE

**Initiative 2.6** | Integrate Adaptation into Monterey County General Plan's Safety Element

**Initiative 2.7** | Reimagine Public Libraries as Resilience Hubs

**Initiative 2.8** | Reimagine Schools as Disaster Hubs

**Initiative 2.9** | Develop Research Partnerships with Universities

**Initiative 2.10** | Strengthen Transportation Systems

**Initiative 2.11** | Create Community HAM Radio Groups

**Initiative 2.12** | Increase Cellular Bandwidth in Unincorporated County

**Initiative 2.13** | Increase Cell Phone Availability at Evacuation Facilities

**Initiative 2.14** | Amplify Cell Coverage during Disasters using Portable Cell Towers

**Initiative 2.16** | Strengthen the Disaster Service Worker Program

# WHAT PUTS US AHEAD

## PREPAREDNESS

Monterey County Office of Emergency Services (OES) has taken several steps to prepare for disasters including the development of the Emergency Operations Plan, the Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, and the Community Resilience Plan. To keep the County engaged in preparedness, OES assists County Departments with Continuity of Operations Planning, conducts preparedness trainings, exercises, and presentations, and runs several working groups. To help prepare the community for disasters, OES developed a Resilience toolkit & revamped their website to be more informative and user friendly. Further, OES has worked with regional partners to encourage preparedness, helping with community outreach and training for UASI preparedness webinar series in 2020 and 2021 for community-based organizations and supporting Listos' Social Bridging efforts, that included providing residents disaster preparedness information and packets.

Aside from OES, local cities, police & fire departments, and other disaster organizations, including the Red Cross, Local CERTs, Listos California, Cal OES, and FEMA provide programs, events, tools and information to help the community prepare for disasters and build resilience. For example, CSUMB and the city of Monterey both developed their own emergency operation centers, develop emergency plans, and conduct drills and exercises

## RESPONSE

OES works with local transportation organizations to plan for potential mass transportation needs, through documents like the Monterey County Mass Transportation/Evacuation Plan. OES collaborates with the fairgrounds, the American Red Cross, and local schools, libraries & centers to select potential emergency shelters and centers and develop a Mass Care and Shelter Plan. During emergencies these partners coordinate mass care, shelter, and evacuation operations through the Emergency Operation Center. For example, Monterey-Salinas Transit District (MST), the sole mass transportation operator in the County, has implemented an intelligent transportation systems tool called Rapid Response, which enables MST paratransit services to be alerted during an evacuation order to quickly pick up subscribers to the program.



# WHAT SETS US BACK

## MITIGATION

While the impacts of many disasters can be reduced or avoided all together, not enough has been done to mitigate disasters. For example, conducting vegetation management reduces fuel that can burn during wildfires, slowing their spread and making it easier to manage the disaster. For this reason, households close to wildland areas are asked to keep at least 100 feet of defensible space around their homes to help reduce the spread of forest fires.<sup>98</sup> However, some people lack the physical or financial means to clear their land, while those who try to be proactive and create 100 feet or more of defensible space on their land are often met with hurdles due to federal, state, and local regulations and permitting requirements.

## PREPAREDNESS

With the growing impacts of climate change it is projected that weather-related extreme events will increase in frequency and severity, placing everyone at higher risk of experiencing disasters.<sup>99</sup> Despite the increased risk, community members and organizations may not have the desire, motivation, and/or lack the resources, money, knowledge, and time to adequately prepare for emergencies. Further, regardless of how much you prepare, not all disasters can be avoided.

## RESPONSE

Poor cell coverage in much of rural Monterey County has created challenges in communication with these regions during disasters. In South County, Kion, & NPR San Luis Obispo are the only local radio station pushing emergency information, which created communication challenges during the 2020 Wildfires. Similarly, during the 2016 Winter storms, damage to power & telephone infrastructure made communication in Big Sur nearly impossible.

Disasters can impact transportation, creating difficulties for those with no vehicles (5% of County) and those living far from school or work (50% of commuters travel 90+ minutes). South County residents are especially vulnerable, as they commute the furthest & have the fewest available public transit methods, as MST offers 4 service lines to the area, with limited frequency & higher rates.<sup>100</sup> Transportation is also a concern for populations residing in group quarters such as college dormitories, farm workers' dormitories, psychiatric institutions, prisons, nursing homes and long-term care facilities, as many institutions are unprepared to quickly remove their entire staff & residents under conditions that require specialized vehicles.



## GOAL: INCREASE COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS

### **Initiative 2.1 Provide a Forum for Communication between Local CERTs**

Community Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) are a valuable community resource that can be utilized for disaster preparedness, response, and recovery. Pre disaster, these groups can educate and engage the community in preparedness, providing disaster management training and equipment for volunteers and conducting disaster exercises. During and after an emergency, these groups can be called upon to assist emergency management and communities with disaster response. In Monterey County, there are CERTs located in Big Sur, Cachagua, Monterey Peninsula, and South County. The [Community Emergency Response Volunteers \(CERV\)](#) of Monterey Peninsula, provides support to local CERTs and other organizations engaging in community preparedness through networking, grant writing, workshops, collaborating with local businesses and organizations, and co-sponsoring community events. Likewise, CERV created <https://montereyco.recovers.org> to assist with donation & resource coordination during disasters.

#### **ACTION**

Over the next three to five years, Monterey County Office of Emergency Services will work to provide a forum for communication between Local CERTs to enhance coordination and collaboration.

### **Initiative 2.2 Create a Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD) Program**





A Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters or VOAD, is a coalition of volunteer organizations who assist the community during disaster response and recovery. Having a local VOAD can assist in communication, coordination, and collaboration during disasters, helping to identify and address needs, while avoiding duplication of effort.

#### **ACTION**

Over the next three to five years, Monterey County Office of Emergency Services will collaborate with local nonprofits to develop a Countywide Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters.

### **Initiative 2.3 Support Fire Mitigation Efforts**

While many disasters cannot be prevented, some can. Home and wildland fires can be prevented through fire prevention education campaigns, smoke detector installations, building code enforcements, and fire fuel reduction programs such as prescribed burns. Local fire departments have been a leader in home and building fire prevention educational campaigns, while Cal Fire has worked to mitigate wildfire risk by developing the:

-  Climate Investments Fire Prevention Grant Program - provides funding for fuel reduction and fire prevention planning & education.
-  Office of the State Fire Marshal - provides building regulations and wildfire prevention guidance, training, and education.
-  Fire and Resource Assessment Program - assesses conditions in California's forests and rangelands and identifies alternative management and policy guidelines.
-  Vegetation Management Program – works to reduce fire fuels through prescribed burns on State lands.










In addition, PG&E's 2019 Wildfire Safety Plan works to prevent fires caused by their infrastructure through routine safety inspections, infrastructure improvements, vegetation management, public safety power shutoffs, weather monitoring technology improvements, and a Wildfire Safety Operations Center.

#### **ACTION**

The Salinas River Watershed Invasive Non-native Plant Control Program, led by the [Resource Conservation District of Monterey County](#), will continue work to eradicate *Arundo donax* (giant cane), *Tamarix* (salt cedar), and other invasive species from the Salinas River riparian corridor, to reduce wildfire risk, and improve wildlife quality, flood control and groundwater conservation.

#### **ACTION**

Monterey County Office of Emergency Services will continue to work with local fire agencies, Cal Fire, PGE, and the Fire Safe Council for Monterey County to develop and implement wildfire mitigation projects and support the following mitigation projects recommended by Cal Fire:

-  Suspension of state and local regulatory requirements as necessary to streamline fuels reduction projects
-  Fuel reduction projects, such as prescribed burns, and vegetation treatment programs
-  Implement incentives to facilitate wildfire fuel reduction on private land
-  Research and planning for wildfire mitigation and management
-  Home retrofit programs to help homeowners meet the new Wildland Urban Interface Standards
-  Development of methodology to assess community wildfire risk and data collection tools for fuel reduction project reporting and information sharing
-  Technical assistance for local governments to enhance/enable fire hazard planning
-  Code updates for codes governing defensible space and forest/rangeland protection.
-  Coordination of community education campaigns.

#### **Initiative 2.4 Address Hurdles to Vegetation Management for Wildfire Mitigation**

In Community Listening Sessions for the 2015 Monterey County Multi-jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, and several community meetings thereafter, Monterey County residents highlighted issues with getting permits to remove invasive blue gum eucalyptus trees in the County because of conservation and scenic easement restrictions. Plants, such as eucalyptus trees, fuel fires and increase wildfire risk.

#### **ACTION**

Over the two years, Monterey County Public Works, Facilities & Park, Housing & Community Development, and Office of Emergency Services will review the feasibility and process for easing codes to obtain permits for vegetation removal & other vegetation management efforts to reduce fuels.

#### **Initiative 2.5 Encourage Preparedness Amongst Tourists**

Hotels are a key industry for tourists, who are often less familiar with the region and the organizations that can help them during a disaster, may be unsure about how to properly respond to certain, unfamiliar disasters (ex. Earthquakes) and may not speak English, making it harder to

communicate emergency instructions to them. Partnering with hotels to provide pamphlets and information to tourists in the event of a disaster may help bridge this communication gap.

#### **ACTION**

Over the next three years, Monterey County Office of Emergency Services will work with wine, agriculture, and tourist business in the County to develop programs that encourage disaster preparedness.

### **GOAL: STRENGTHEN EMERGENCY RESPONSE**

#### **Initiative 2.6 Integrate Adaptation into Monterey County General Plan's Safety Element**

To address the interlinked nature of disasters, activities and programs must be well coordinated, using a systemic approach to reduce multiple risks at the same time and prepare communities to handle disruptions of any kind. One way of doing this is by adding a focus on adaptation to climate change and the more frequent occurrence of extreme weather.

#### **ACTION**

Monterey County Housing and Community Development will work to integrate adaptation to climate change into the County's General Plan Safety Element over the next two years.

#### **Initiative 2.7 Reimagine Public Libraries as Resilience Hubs**

There are 21 libraries in the County, 16 of which are Monterey County Free Libraries that offer free tutoring, free Wi-Fi and computer access, and educational programs for County residents. These libraries are a key source of social capital for the community, as they are trusted and familiar places for residents when searching for resources; thus, libraries are a valuable resource for disseminating pre- and post- disaster information.

#### **ACTION**

Over the next two to three years, Monterey County Office of Emergency Services will work with Monterey County Free Libraries to strengthen physical infrastructure at the facilities to function in disasters, train staff to serve in disasters, assist the libraries in emergency response planning, and integrate the libraries new capabilities into Emergency Operations Center operations.

#### **Initiative 2.8 Reimagine Schools as Disaster Hubs**

Disasters can destroy and/or close schools and youth programs, leaving children educationally behind, with less support and assistance when they need it the most, and parents without childcare while they work and rebuild post disaster. School disruptions can have long lasting impacts on social and economic mobility of the community, as educational facilities provide students the education, skills, degrees, and networking that allows them to obtain high paying employment. Prolonged school disruption can slow down children's ability to recover from disasters, as schools provide a much-needed sense of routine and normalcy that fosters recovery,<sup>101</sup> along with putting an entire cohort of students behind, with those already at a disadvantage (ex. Disabled, low income, and limited English proficiency) often being most deeply impacted. For these reasons, building school resilience can have positive impacts on students and the entire community pre, during and post disaster.



Pre-disaster, schools can assist with disseminating emergency preparedness information, as the 24 school districts in the County have a far reach, serving over 150,000 students, who can further amplify preparedness messaging by bringing home information to their families. During disasters, schools are familiar locations that often have the staff and equipment to support emergency operations as evacuation shelters or centers. Working with schools to reduce barriers to academic success can help students, educational facilities, and parents recover more quickly from disasters, while simultaneously having positive long-term impacts on social mobility.

### **ACTION**

Monterey County Office of Emergency Services will partner with Monterey County Office of Education to develop plans on how to best utilize schools for disaster response over the next five years, such as:

1. Conducting routine assessments of a school's ability to respond and recover from disasters.
2. Utilizing schools as family care centers that provide education, shelter, and/or resources specifically for families with school aged children. A portion of the school would be designated to sheltering and feeding services, while the classrooms would remain open to provide families childcare and education. This would keep children in a familiar place, get them back into a routine quicker, and aid parents with childcare so they can focus on healing and recovery.
3. Strengthening available support services (ex. Counselors, social workers) in schools' pre-disaster, so that they are better able to assist children and families with recovery.
4. Developing post disaster recovery programs through youth and education programs to engage children, teens, and young adults in recovery projects; giving children an opportunity to take some control back over their lives while simultaneously boosting social connectedness and supporting community and individual recovery.

### **Initiative 2.9 Develop Research Partnerships with Universities**

The County's higher education sector focuses largely on research and can be a great resource for disaster data and analysis, providing information relating to disaster mitigation and resilience. For Example, [Middlebury Institute's Center on Terrorism, Extremism, and Counterterrorism](#) research on how extremist messaging motivates individuals to carry out acts of violence can be used to mitigate against terrorism. Higher Education facilities are often better equipped to conduct survey analysis and go through the IRB approval processes that allows them to collect more sensitive data (ex. Race, religion, citizenship status), which can be helpful when trying to understand the best approaches to preparing communities & combating discrimination throughout the emergency management process. A collaboration between emergency management and research institutions can create more valid data on disasters, as some groups, like undocumented immigrants, are more likely to respond to non-government organizations; while government tend to attract larger audiences than most higher education facilities can alone.

### **ACTION**

Over the next two years, Monterey County Office of Emergency Services will work with local colleges and universities to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to facilitate collaboration on rapid response disaster research.

### **Initiative 2.10 Strengthen Transportation Systems**

Having affordable and efficient public transit and roads/bridges that are well maintained fosters mobility in communities, providing residents more options when it comes to accessing schools, employment, resources, and services. Disasters can impact transportation and infrastructure, destroying roads/bridges while increasing transportation needs due to evacuations and displacement. Those most impacted by the stresses disasters have on transportation systems are those who lacked transportation pre-disaster (ex. no close public transit, don't own a vehicle).

#### **ACTION**

Monterey County Office of Emergency Services will continue to update the County's mass transportation and evacuation plan, including corresponding evacuation zone mapping and a "Know your Zone" Outreach Campaign; while maintaining partnerships with local transportation organizations as they work to strengthen their capability to maintain/adjust operations during disasters.

#### **ACTION**

As part of the County's Strategic Initiative, Monterey County Public Works, Facilities, & Parks will continue to maintain and improve their roads and bridges, while seeking new ways to foster disaster resistant transportation infrastructure.

## **WHAT ELSE CAN BE DONE?**

**Community Members** should organize carpool or bike caravans to work, school, or other locations, including walking school bus programs to reduce vehicle reliance and better familiarize residents with their neighborhoods

**Employers** can create incentives to drive less to work, such as offering safe bike storage rooms, showers at work, nearby gym memberships, company commuter shuttles, or free bus passes on public transit.

### **Initiative 2.11 Create Community HAM Radio Groups**

One community level program that works to enhance emergency communication is [Monterey County ARES](#), a group of ham radio volunteers who can assist with radio operations during disasters, when cell and internet communication is impacted. Pre-disaster ARES can provide training to the public so that they too can have additional communication capabilities when disasters strike.

#### **ACTION**

Monterey County Office of Emergency Services will work with Monterey County ARES to expand Ham Radio trainings and groups over the next three years, paying particular focus to rural and unincorporated areas of the County.

### **Initiative 2.12 Increase Cellular Bandwidth in Unincorporated Monterey County**

Much of the unincorporated County has poor cell coverage, limiting communication in these areas during disasters.

#### **ACTION**

Monterey County Information Technology Department will partner with local cell phone companies to increase cellular bandwidth in unincorporated Monterey County over the next five to ten years.

### **Initiative 2.13 Increase Cell Phone Availability at Evacuation Facilities**

Having phones available at evacuation facilities can help disaster survivors find loved ones and let people know they are okay, which can reduce the mental and emotional stress related to disaster induced displacements.

#### **ACTION**

Over the next two years, Monterey County Office of Emergency Services will collaborate with the Information Technology Department to develop a Memorandum of Understanding with local cell phone companies to increase the deployment of cell phones to evacuation facilities.

### **Initiative 2.14 Amplify Cell Coverage during Disasters using Portable Cell Towers**

During the 2015 Tassajara fire, communications between the EOC & field staff was hampered by infrastructure damage and lack of cellular service in some areas. Portable cell towers are one way to bolster disaster response communication in rural areas, where cell coverage is lacking.

#### **ACTION**

Over the next two to three years, Monterey County Office of Emergency Services will continue to collaborate with local utility companies to increase the use of Portable Cell Towers during disasters, amplifying cell coverage for first responders throughout the County.

### **Initiative 2.15 Strengthen the Disaster Service Worker Program**

All local, County and state public employees take and subscribe to the oath or affirmation set forth in the California Constitution that declares them to be disaster service workers in time of need. This allows for more staffing capabilities during major disaster when staff availability decreases as need increases. During the COVID-19 pandemic response issues, new disaster service workers reported having a limited understanding of Incident Command System and their roles within the EOC.

#### **ACTION**

Over the next three years, Monterey County Office of Emergency Services will expand outreach to educate County employees on their roles and responsibilities as Disaster Service Workers and provide trainings on the Incident Command System and functions of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), so that disaster services workers new to the EOC will be better equipped to assist during an emergency.

## WHAT ELSE CAN BE DONE?

**Every person and organization** should work to prepare their home and self for disasters by:

- ✓ Making an emergency plan and kit
- ✓ Signing up for local alerts and buying a NOAA weather radio
- ✓ Insuring and preparing their properties
- ✓ Developing or joining a local CERT and/or HAM radio group.

**Community members** should work together to make emergency communication easier & allow community members to better help one another before, during, & after disasters by:

- ✓ Creating preparedness fairs
- ✓ Developing community emergency response plans
- ✓ Making a neighborhood contact tree.
- ✓ ***In rural regions***, community members can develop programs like the [General Mobile Radio Service](#), a licensed radio service that uses specific radio stations to communicate during disasters when cell coverage is limited.

**Students, workers, & business owners** should encourage preparedness activities, programs & groups in their work/school.

**Animal Owners** should:

- ✓ Make an animal emergency kit
- ✓ Incorporate animals into emergency and evacuation plans, placing extra consideration on managing larger animals during emergencies
- ✓ Conduct emergency drills with animals

Learn more about disaster preparedness and mitigation at: <https://www.co.monterey.ca.us/government/departments-a-h/administrative-office/office-of-emergency-services/ready-monterey-County>

# STRATEGY 3: MOVE TOWARD SUSTAINABILITY

Resilience and sustainability represent complementary values. Sustainability is about actively and thoughtfully managing resources to achieve environmental, social, and economic goals that preserve or enhance quality of life.

Resilience is about strengthening the entire community to mitigate against, better adapt to and learn from adversities.

In the long term, sustainable living can prevent the depletion of resources and can reduce the impacts of climate change on sea level rise and weather-related disasters, making our community more resilient.

## GOALS AND INITIATIVES

### **GOAL: DEVELOP LOCAL SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAMS**

Initiative 3.1 | Develop Multijurisdictional Climate Council

Initiative 3.2 | Develop County & Department Climate Action Plans

Initiative 3.3 | Develop a Community Action Toolkit

Initiative 3.4 | Support County Youth Climate Action Council

### **GOAL: INCREASE ENERGY & TRANSPORTATION RESILIENCE & SUSTAINABILITY**

Initiative 3.5 | Support 3CE project

Initiative 3.6 | Support SB743

Initiative 3.7 | Encourage Transportation System Resilience to Climate Change

Initiative 3.8 | Examine Ways to Provide Backup Power to Vital Facilities in the County

### **GOAL: PROMOTE WATER SECURITY & SUSTAINABILITY**

Initiative 3.9 | Support Stormwater Pollution Education Campaigns

Initiative 3.10 | Support Local Water Conservation Efforts

Initiative 3.11 | Support Drought Planning and Preparedness

### **GOAL: ENCOURAGE CLEAN COMMUNITIES**

Initiative 3.12 | Support Best Practices that Prevent Pollution and Waste

Initiative 3.13 | Support Recycling and Composting Public Outreach and Education Campaigns

### **GOAL: COMBAT FOOD INSECURITY**

Initiative 3.14 | Support the Food Recovery Program & Working Group

Initiative 3.15 | Develop a County Food Policy Council

Initiative 3.16 | Develop a Disaster Food Voucher Program

# WHAT PUTS US AHEAD

Monterey County has emphasized the need to live more sustainably, with the County Board of Supervisors listing the need to “develop a sustainable, physical infrastructure” as part of its Strategic Initiatives. In line with this initiative, the County and state have worked to mitigate disaster impacts through building code updates, development, and hazardous material regulations. To help bolster these efforts, the County created a sustainability program and joined the [Urban Sustainability Directors Network](#).

Several Monterey County cities have taken steps to become more sustainable, including implementing programs that increase the use of solar power, wind turbines, LED lighting, and zero emission vehicles, and recycling programs & events. Likewise, Cal Fire is combatting climate change through their [Climate and Energy Program](#) which identifies forestry strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions using reforestation, forestland conservation, fuels reduction, urban forestry, and improved forest management. [LandWatch](#) is a nonprofit group working on sustainable and equitable land use policies in Monterey County

## SUSTAINABLE WATER AND WASTE SYSTEMS

[Monterey County Water Resources Agency](#) manages, protects, stores, and conserves water resources in the County. [Monterey County Environmental Health](#) provides educational opportunities on sustainable practices and enforces laws related to sewage systems and treatment, wastewater facilities, water distribution systems, desalination treatment facilities, retail food protection, water quality and quantity issues, substandard housing, vector control, and other general health protection activities. [Monterey Peninsula Water Management District](#) works to promote a long-term sustainable water supply, along with managing and protecting water resources. [Carmel Marine Sanctuary Foundation](#) and [Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary](#) work to build resilient watersheds through the improvement of water quality in creeks, rivers, and storm drains. There are also several wastewater treatment plants in the County that recycle water for reuse.

## SUSTAINABLE ENERGY AND TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS

[Gonzales](#) is working to develop a microgrid, which would provide through solar and energy storage to provide power in and around the Agricultural Industrial Business Park. Organizations like [MST](#) and [Cal Trans](#) are moving to zero emissions vehicles. Several programs in the County push for more energy efficient buildings, homes, and equipment, including: [GRID alternative](#), [Central Coast Community Energy \(3CE\)](#), California’s [PACE](#) program, [Monterey Bay Green Business Program](#), and [AMBAG’s Energy Watch Program](#).

# WHAT SETS US BACK

Disasters can have far reaching and long-lasting consequences and can impact all sectors of life, both indirectly and directly, while also triggering other emergencies. For example, droughts stress the County’s ecosystems, accelerating the damage of pests on forests, thereby increasing the fuel for wildfires, and consequently denuding slopes and increasing flash flooding risk. Each event builds on another and sets the stage for even more complex interactions.

The impacts of Climate Change are already being felt in Monterey County. While moving toward sustainability can help combat some of these impacts, these moves are often costly and require buy in from local organizations and government that is not always easy to obtain because of the cost and time required to implement sustainability projects.

Despite Monterey County’s emphasis on sustainability:

- ! Many homes are older and not built up to code, making them less energy efficient and more likely to be damaged during disasters. [102](#)
- ! The size of Monterey County and rural nature of much of the region increase average commute times and vehicle mileage, contributing to air pollution and CO2 emissions.
- ! Electrical systems are tightly coupled and interdependent with no fail safe, creating power outage issues that can have wide geographical impacts. In addition, damaged or downed overhead electrical lines have led to multiple fires throughout the state of California.
- ! About a third of all County adult residents are food insecure and, during disasters, small food pantries can face challenges assisting the community because of their dependence on the Monterey County Food Bank for supplies. [70](#)

## GOAL: DEVELOP LOCAL SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAMS

### Initiative 3.1 Develop a Multijurisdictional Climate Council

The cities in Monterey County have taken steps to combat climate change. Monterey, Salinas, Pacific Grove and Marina signed the [United Nations Urban Environmental Accords](#), committing to work toward more sustainable living through energy efficiency and water conservation upgrades at major facilities, a recycling outreach campaign, and a Green Building Ordinance. Big Sur, Carmel, Marina, Monterey, Pacific Grove, Salinas, and Seaside developed [Communities for Sustainable Monterey County](#) (CSMC) to provide environmental education, encourage resource conservation and sustainable practices. [Monterey](#) and [Gonzales](#), have developed Climate Action Plans focused on greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction. Greenfield developed an [energy action strategy](#), Seaside has an [Environmental Commission](#) and Carmel-by-the-Sea created a [climate committee](#).

#### ACTION

To consolidate efforts and create a collaborative approach to combating climate change, the [County's Sustainability Program](#) is developing a multi-jurisdictional climate council over the next two years.

### Initiative 3.2 Develop Community and County Operations Climate Action Plans

To assist with overall climate change reduction, the County's sustainability program is developing a climate action plan which seeks to address all aspects of sustainability including: reducing emissions; utilizing cleaner energy; preserving/enhancing water quality and supply; ensuring clean, healthy, and fresh air; transforming waste management; supporting increased mobility options and access to services; promoting sustainable agricultural practices; supporting local farms; creating partnerships, preparing and strengthening adaptation and mitigation for climate change impacts; conserving natural habitats; and ensuring all sustainable activities are inclusive of the whole community. The program will develop a Municipal Climate Action Plan that addresses operational emissions that result directly from the business of the County.

#### ACTION

The Monterey County Sustainability Program will develop a Community Climate Action Plan and Municipal Climate Action Plan.

#### ACTION

Monterey County Office of Emergency Services will assist the Sustainability Program in developing the climate adaptation section of the County Climate Action Plan.

### Initiative 3.3 Develop a Community Action Toolkit

Monterey County residents and businesses are part of the solution for sustainability. A Community Action Toolkit is a resource to get the community involved in sustainability efforts.

#### ACTION

Over the next two years, the Monterey County Sustainability Program will develop a Community Action Toolkit to work as a compliment to the County Climate Action Plan, directing community members to organizations where they can take action to combat climate change.

### Initiative 3.4 Support the County Youth Climate Council

Monterey County's Youth Action Leadership is a group that connects youth to organizations and programs that focus on sustainability. This council is also a way for County youth to participate in the development of the climate action plan; bringing an often unheard voice to the table while encouraging awareness and action by County youth to combat climate change

### **ACTION**

The Monterey County Sustainability Program will provide ongoing support and participation in the Monterey County Youth Climate Action Leadership Council.

## **WHAT ELSE CAN BE DONE?**

Individuals have power to impact climate change by developing a local climate action plan/task force and encouraging sustainable development by local government. For a more detailed how-to-guide on combating climate change, check out California's [cool block program](#).

### **GOAL: INCREASE ENERGY & TRANSPORTATION RESILIENCE & SUSTAINABILITY**

#### **Initiative 3.5 Support 3CE project**

Moving to sustainable energy systems can help reduce the amount of greenhouse gases emitted into our environment, thus helping combat climate change. In addition, building stronger systems, with redundancy and backups can help combat the impacts that disaster induced power outages can have, reducing disaster impacts and potentially speeding up the recovery process. To address the need for sustainable energy, the County became a founding member of [3CE](#), whose goal is to bring clean energy to the entire County by 2030. 3CE is a Community Choice Aggregator and residents and businesses of Monterey County are "opted-in" to its service. 3CE has already implemented a number of projects that are helping move the county toward sustainable energy and development including: the [Electric School Bus Program](#) that replaces diesel school buses with clean running electric buses; the [New Construction Electrification Program](#) which provides incentives for housing developers to construct new, all-electric affordable housing in the region; and the [Ag Electrification Program](#) which provides incentives to the Ag sector to move from fossil fuels to cleaner all-electric alternatives.

### **ACTION**

The Monterey County Sustainability Program will continue to support and participate in the Central Coast Community Energy (3CE).

#### **Initiative 3.6 Support SB 743**

### **ACTION**

California's [SB 743](#), which was signed into law in 2013 and took effect July 1, 2020, added a vehicle miles traveled (VMT) measure to the [California Environmental Quality Act](#) guidelines to better measure the actual transportation-related environmental impacts of projects.

Over the next three years, the Monterey County Sustainability Program will support the implementation of SB 743 throughout the County.



### Initiative 3.7 Encourage Transportation System Resilience to Climate Change

#### ACTION

Over the next three years, Monterey County Office of Emergency Services and Sustainability Program will support transportation organizations work to strengthen transportation resilience to climate change, including:

- [Cal Tran's Adaptive Response Projects](#)
- Transportation Agency for Monterey County work to develop climate resilient transportation infrastructure through the replacement of existing traffic signal with a grade-separated interchange (roundabouts) to prevent transportation disruptions during power outages.
- The City of Monterey's public input platform ([Have Your Say Monterey](#)) on sea level rise adaptation
- The Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments sustainability initiatives such as the Central Coast Zero Emission Vehicles Strategy.
- MST's Zero Emission Bus Implementation Plan

### Initiative 3.8 Examine Ways to Provide Backup Power to Vital Facilities in the County

Power outages associated with many disasters, can worsen disaster impacts and slow down recovery. Having backup power for vital facilities within the County can help keep organizations that serve the community running during and after disasters, when they are needed most.

#### ACTION

Over the next year, Monterey County Office of Emergency Services and Sustainability Program will work with local jurisdictions to seek out programs that can fund additional backup power capability for vital County facilities.

## WHAT ELSE CAN BE DONE?

**Individuals** can conserve energy by getting involved with the [Local Clean Energy Alliance](#) or local chapter of the [Sierra Club](#). When possible, individuals should try to move their home and vehicle energy source to renewable energy (ex. electric vehicle, solar panels on house).

**Communities** can work with neighbors to conserve energy by creating green teams (ex. [Acterra's Green Team](#) or Berkeley's [Low Carbon Diet program](#)) and/or pooling money to purchase a renewable energy source for the community.

**Electrical Companies** should work to modify electrical systems to prevent wildfires, such as moving electrical lines underground when possible.

## GOAL: PROMOTE WATER SECURITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

### Initiative 3.9 Support Stormwater Pollution Education Campaigns

Urban stormwater runoff is one of the leading causes of pollution across the nation. Understanding the importance of pollution prevention is critical to every community. Thus, educating the public and targeted audiences about the impacts of stormwater on water quality and the specific behaviors they can implement to protect local waterways are key to protecting water quality in the County. Stormwater pollution prevention educational campaigns are being conducted by [King City](#) and the [Monterey Regional Stormwater Management Program's Stormwater Education Alliance](#), which includes the Cities of Carmel-by-the-Sea, Del Rey Oaks, Monterey, Pacific Grove, Sand City, & Seaside, and the County of Monterey. Likewise, [the Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability](#) & [Marina Groundwater Sustainability](#) Agencies are developing comprehensive groundwater sustainability plans and California American Water is conducting a [Peninsula Water Supply Project](#).

#### ACTION

Over the next three years, Monterey County Sustainability Program will support efforts by local programs, organizations & jurisdictions as they work to educate the public about stormwater pollution through social media campaigns, hands-on presentations at schools, & local clean up events.

### Initiative 3.10 Support Local Water Conservation Efforts

Water is a vital resource, that becomes even more critical during emergencies. Having adequate quality and quantities of clean drinking water in the County is a key component of sustainability and disaster preparedness. Several efforts have been made to boost water conservation. The [Monterey Peninsula Water Management District](#) implements a Water Conservation Program in its service area that promotes water conservation through rebates and distribution of free water-saving devices, development-related water credit and efficiency reviews, drought and rationing planning, and other mandated water-saving efforts. The District also has adopted a Conservation and Rationing Plan which provides adaptive responses to drought and water shortages. The County's Water Resources Agency regulates [Ordinance 3851 and 3886](#), which require annual fillings of Agricultural and Urban Water Conservation Plans; [Greenfield's energy service contract](#) replaces outdated water meters & irrigation control systems and [Pacific Grove's water conservation rebate program](#) imposes a surcharge on monthly water utility bills.

#### ACTION

Over the next three years, Monterey County Water Resources Agency will work with the Office of Emergency Services, Environmental Health, the Sustainability Program, and local jurisdictions to support water conservation and protection.

### Initiative 3.11 Support Drought Planning and Preparedness

Monterey County Water Resources Agency has taken several steps to prepare for droughts by monitoring and mapping drought conditions, managing reservoir operations in the County and planning for drought operations. These efforts can support wildfire response efforts by providing situational awareness on available water reserves during periods of shortened water supplies.

#### ACTION

Over the next three years, Monterey County Office of Emergency Services will work with the County's Water Resources Agency to strengthen and support drought planning and preparedness.

## WHAT ELSE CAN BE DONE?

Individuals can conserve water and prevent water pollution by:

- Running sprinklers at night
- Using rainwater catchment tanks
- Properly recycling unwanted chemicals
- Washing cars on unpaved surfaces or at a commercial car wash
- Conducting regular maintenance of vehicles
- Landscaping with native plants
- Using nontoxic alternatives to pesticides
- Sweeping rather than hosing down driveways, patios, and sidewalks
- Avoiding littering
- Participating in local beach cleanup projects
- Getting involved with the [Environmental Justice Coalition for Water](#) & [Sierra Club's Campaign for Clean Water](#).

Learn more at <http://ourwaterourworld.org/>

### GOAL: ENCOURAGE CLEAN COMMUNITIES

#### Initiative 3.12 Support Best Practices that Prevent Pollution and Waste

Developing sustainable waste management practices can assist in both disaster mitigation & recovery efforts. Pre-disaster, sustainable waste management can reduce pollution and impacts of climate change. Post-disaster, disaster induced debris can increase waste management issues.

Environmental Health's [Recycling Resource & Recovery Services](#), [Monterey Regional Waste Management District](#), [Salinas Valley Recycles](#), & local jurisdictions have all worked to manage waste in the County through the development of recycling centers, events & programs, education on waste management & composting, bans on single-use disposable items, and the adoption of Policies and Laws like [AB 341](#), [SB 1383](#), and [AB 1826](#). Likewise, the Monterey County Sustainability Program has developed best practices to reach zero net waste including:

- Hosting annual County Staff refreshers on sustainability
- Providing recycling and composting bins at all County buildings
- Promoting paperless communication amongst County Departments
- Expanding the County's recycling and composting capacity
- Providing free curbside cell phone & battery collection
- Establishing community composting locations
- Supporting a circular economy that promotes the recycling and reuse of materials and products
- Providing free recycling bins to local events
- Monitoring and encouraging County purchasing to meet [green purchasing goals](#)

## ACTION

Monterey County Environmental Health and Sustainability Program will support efforts to reduce pollution and waste in the County over the next five years.

### **Initiative 3.13 Support Recycling and Composting Public Outreach and Education Campaigns**

The Environmental Health Bureau is working to expand sustainable waste management outreach and education to Monterey County residents, schools, and businesses through the development of a recycling resource and recovery division, a Zero Waste Public Newsletter, and a Zero Waste training module for County employees. Another way to reach the public regarding waste reduction is the County's "[What Goes Where](#)" application that residents can use as a how-to-guide for recycling and composting. Finally, the Monterey County Illegal Dumping and Litter Abatement Task Force (IDLATF) was developed to reduce illegal dumping in the County through public educations and community clean ups, bulky item pick up, enforcement of mandatory garbage requirements, and inter-agency cooperation

## ACTION

Monterey County Environmental Health will continue waste management sustainability public outreach efforts to businesses, County departments and multi-family properties by supporting compliance with SB 1383 and supporting the IDLATF group.

## WHAT ELSE CAN BE DONE?

**Individuals** can reduce waste by reducing consumption, reusing products, and recycling products whenever possible. To learn more about illegal dumping and report littering problems visit [www.mtyhd.org/illegaldumping](http://www.mtyhd.org/illegaldumping)

**Communities** can participate in [IDLATF](#) and support/create local waste policies and community clean up events.

**Businesses** can engage in recycling efforts and reduce their use of plastic and other nonbiodegradable material. Local businesses can also contact their waste/recycling collection service provider and participate in the [Monterey Regional Compost Program](#), which turns food scraps into compost while creating energy

## GOAL: COMBAT FOOD INSECURITY

### **Initiative 3.14 Support the Food Recovery Program and Working Group**

California currently sends 11.2 billion pounds of food to landfills, some of which is still edible and can help feed the 4.3 million Californians who are food insecure.<sup>103</sup> To address this, California's [SB 1383](#), passed in September 2016, requiring counties in the state to implement a food recovery program to capture 20% of edible food that is currently discarded by 2025. This will help reduce organic waste being disposed of in landfills, reduce carbon dioxide and air pollution caused by this waste, and help feed food insecure Californians. Food recovery can be done through donation agreements between grocery stores/restaurants and those that need food & by recycling organic products for compost, renewable energy, & mulch.

## ACTION

Over the next three to five years, Monterey County Sustainability Program and Environmental Health will support efforts to implement SB 1383, including assistance in the development of a food recovery program and participation in the food recovery working group.

### **Initiative 3.15** Develop a County Food Policy Council

To combat food insecurity, County organizations involved in food production and supply should collaborate and coordinate to identify and determine best ways to address food needs. Collaboration to address food insecurity pre disaster can be built upon and amplified during disasters to help address ruptures in food supply chains and increased needs.

## ACTION

Over the next year, Blue Zones, CSUMB, Cal Fresh Health Living, the Nutrition Collaboration of the Central Coast and Salinas Valley Memorial Healthcare System will develop a Food Policy to foster a resilient, equitable food system by and for all people in the County. This Council will advocate for effective policy and systems changes and build productive, lasting collaborations in service to a sustainable, just, prosperous food system for Monterey County through numerous working groups and community outreach.

### **Initiative 3.16** Develop a Disaster Food Voucher Program

During disasters, the need for food assistance often increases, while food supply chains may be slowed or stopped temporarily, because of damage to buildings, infrastructure, and/or roads. For example, during the COVID-19 Pandemic and 2020 fires in Monterey County, smaller food pantries became overwhelmed by the increased need for food and couldn't fill their need through the Monterey County Food Bank. These smaller pantries had to turn to local grocery stores for assistance. Implementing a disaster food voucher program, where restaurants and grocery stores provide food pantries, shelters, and evacuation facilities food vouchers for those in need, can help reduce post-disaster food insecurity.

## ACTION

Over the next year, Monterey County Office of Emergency Services will work with restaurants, food pantries, and grocery stores to determine the interest and feasibility of implementing a Disaster Food Voucher Program in Monterey County.

## WHAT ELSE CAN BE DONE?

Sustainable food production not only reduces greenhouse emissions and promotes health food consumption but can help ease issues of food insecurity that worsen during and after disasters. Sustainable food production and distribution is a key staple of a sustainable community, as proper farm to table practices can prevent negative environmental impacts, soil erosion, and food scarcity. Sustainable food production includes farming methods that promote [soil health](#), minimize [water use](#), and lower [pollution levels](#). Sustainable harvesting and distribution practices include keeping food local, to avoid food waste and GHG emissions created when transporting food; avoiding non-biodegradable food containers; and using 'unmarketable crops' through donation or compost. In the community, green roofs and community gardens increase local, sustainable food, lower food costs for residents, bring community members together and reduce community carbon emissions.



**INDIVIDUALS** can reduce food waste at home while simultaneously saving households money by:

- ✓ Meal planning and shopping carefully
- ✓ Properly storing food
- ✓ Eating food that will go bad quickly first
- ✓ Donating or composting extra food



**THE COMMUNITY** can boost food security by:

- ✓ Developing community or school gardens and farms (Learn more: [Guide to starting a community garden](#))
- ✓ Joining or starting a food cooperative. (ex. [Cooperative Grocery](#); [Rainbow Grocery](#))
- ✓ Supporting or starting a produce stand or delivery service (ex. [Somethin' Fresh](#); [Farm Fresh Choice](#))
- ✓ Starting a Food Policy Council to implement a long-term food security plan for your community.



**SCHOOLS** can reduce food insecurity by

- ✓ Increasing summer meal programs and summer EBT for children
- ✓ Holding potlucks at the end of the school year to distribute old food supplies to families before expiration.



**CITIES** can support healthy eating by limiting less nutritious foods and beverages and encouraging health food retail near schools, transit and government buildings and events



**LOCAL NONPROFITS AND FOOD PANTRIES** can partner with grocery stores and local transportations services to bolster food distribution and delivery services, particularly to homebound seniors and persons with disabilities and during disasters.



**BUSINESSES** working in the food industry can join the food recovery program and working group and/or partner with local food banks & shelters to donate unused food, rather than throwing it away, helping both the community and our environment.



**RESTAURANTS** can join [Cal Fresh's Restaurant Meals Program](#), allowing food stamps (which are increased during disasters as part of [the D-SNAP program](#)) to be used at their facilities. This increases the food resilience of the community by enhancing access to healthy food options for some of the most vulnerable in our community.

# STRATEGY 4: CREATE HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Trauma from disasters can affect resilience by negatively impacting physical and mental health, directly harming individuals, and creating stress that can be debilitating to both mental and physical health, as the two are highly intertwined.

Alternatively, those with good physical health are able to evacuate much easier during disasters, while those with strong mental health are better able to positively adapt to stress, and thus mitigate the negative impacts disasters can have to overall health and well-being.

Resilient communities have strong public health and healthcare systems, with resilient individuals who are both physically and psychologically healthy. Health outcomes, particularly during emergencies, when health care systems are put under the highest pressure, are a strong indicator of the overall well-being and resilience of a community, as they are deeply interconnected with all aspects of our lives.

## GOALS AND INITIATIVES

### GOAL: ADVOCATE FOR HEALTHY AND PREPARED COMMUNITIES

**Initiative 4.1** | Support Access to Public Health, Healthcare, And Social Services

**Initiative 4.2** | Collaborate to Support Mental and Physical Well-Being during Disasters

**Initiative 4.3** | Establish a Medical Reserve Corp

**Initiative 4.4** | Encourage Preparedness for Poor Air Quality

### GOAL: REDUCING HEALTH INEQUITIES DURING DISASTER

**Initiative 4.5** | Encourage Disaster Preparedness amongst Vulnerable Populations

**Initiative 4.6** | Work with Rehabilitation Centers and Pharmacies to Develop Continuity of Operations Plans

**Initiative 4.7** | Increase Access and Functional Needs (AFN) Awareness Amongst First Responders

**Initiative 4.8** | Develop an AFN Disaster Phone Tree

**Initiative 4.9** | Develop an Equity & Access team in the EOC

**Initiative 4.10** | Develop a Climate Action Plan's Equity Panel

## HEALTH CARE ACCESS & COST

### WHAT PUTS US AHEAD

There are numerous County programs that work to meet the County's Strategic Initiative of improving health and quality of life and promoting access to equitable opportunities for healthy choices and environments. [Blue Zones Project](#), Monterey County Well-Being Initiative and Wellness Committee, the County's Behavioral Health Commission, County Health Department Programs, [the Nutrition and Fitness Collaborative](#), along with community-based Behavioral Health agencies (Full listing: [resource directory](#)) work to strengthen overall health in the County.



### WHAT SETS US BACK

The US [Health Resources and Services Administration](#) has labeled Monterey County as a primary care shortage area, with the most medically underserved regions being Del Rey Oaks, Marina, Gonzales, Greenfield, King City, Pine Canyon & Jolon and services largely concentrated in Monterey Peninsula and Salinas. [85,104](#) Overall, the second highest need in the County is health related services, with top health needs being: health insurance (25%), health services (22%), family mentoring & planning (16%), exercise & fitness (10%), substance abuse support (7%) & domestic violence support (6%). [105](#)

11.2% (46,650 residents) of the County is uninsured, with this rate on the rise [7](#) When excluding seniors and children, who are least likely to be uninsured, rates rise to 29%. [6](#) Private insurance covered 57% of insured residents, followed by Medi-Cal (23%). [5, 79](#) Low income residents who live above the poverty line, those with less than a high school education, Hispanic residents, & residents of East Salinas, Moss Landing, Greenfield, King City, Parkfield, Pine Canyon & Jolon are most likely to be uninsured [105, 106](#)

11% of Californians have not been to a doctor in the past year because of cost. 21% of County adults report difficulty or delay in obtaining healthcare services in the past year, largely due to problems finding a doctor or making an appointment at a convenient time. Behavioral health, substance abuse treatment, chronic disease care, and primary care were identified as the most difficult health care services to access. [105, 106](#) The County also lacks inpatient psychiatric services for children.



#### **Initiative 4.1 Support Access to Public Health, Healthcare, And Social Services**

Strengthening health care and social service access pre disaster not only helps these services continue to run during emergencies, when they are often needed most, it creates a healthier community that is better able to withstand disasters. As such, Monterey County Board of Supervisors listed improving health and quality of life through County supported policies, programs, and services and promoting access to equitable opportunities for healthy choices and environments as part of their strategic initiative, with the goal of improving overall health outcomes, reducing inequities, and advocating for more health care funding. Similarly, the County Health Department set goals to:



- ♥ Support and expand opportunities for community engagement in initiatives addressing priority health risks or issues.
- ♥ Support laws and policies that promote health and equity.
- ♥ Make safe built environments.
- ♥ Participate in events that provide health information to populations disproportionately impacted by health issues.
- ♥ Ensure Access to Culturally & Linguistically Appropriate, Customer-Friendly, Quality Health Services.
- ♥ Explore and expand wellness centers and counseling services
- ♥ Meet the health care needs of seniors and those with disabilities

- ♥ Continue partnerships with schools to implement positive behavioral interventions and supports
- ♥ Expand clinic services and/or capacity as needs are identified
- ♥ Engage community organizations, businesses, and government agencies in changing environments to make residents healthier and safer.
- ♥ Develop/implement a plan to align funding & budget allocation to support health and racial equity & other strategic priorities
- ♥ Work with local jurisdictions and organizations to expand health and nutrition education, senior centers, after school programs, outdoor activities, bike paths & parks

**ACTION**

Monterey County Office of Emergency Services will work to support health, social services, community-based partners, and community members through continued collaboration during disaster recovery and response & participation in the Monterey-San Benito HealthCare Coalition.

**ACTION**

Monterey County Office of Emergency Services, in collaboration with the County’s Health Officer will continue to encourage the public to practice “resilient habits” which include managing health, exercising, and washing hands regularly, eating healthy, and staying home when sick.

**ACTION**

Over the next three years, Monterey County Health Department will develop a Health Literacy Plan that aims to improve community understanding of health information needed to make informed decisions on managing health.

**ACTION**

Over the next five years, Monterey County Health Department will promote increases in affordable and accessible health insurance, to address insurance disparities in the County and ensure that all residents have access to quality health care services that meet their health needs.

# MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

## WHAT PUTS US AHEAD

Central California Alliance for Health, through Beacon Health Options, manages mild to moderate mental health needs for those with Medi-Cal, while Monterey County Behavioral Health manages more acute needs. County Behavioral Health and contract providers served 13,134 individuals in 2020<sup>106</sup> and have worked to:

- Expand substance use disorder treatment
- Develop a comprehensive behavioral health prevention & early intervention plan
- Modify Emergency Medical Services to include non-ambulance transport for behavioral health care services
- Conduct case management of behavioral health patients

Mental health care for private insurers has also recently expanded through Ohana, a program that assists youth in managing mental & behavioral health problems.

As a result of these efforts, the number of behavioral health survey respondents noting a lack of access to services dropped by 10% between 2019 and 2020.<sup>107</sup>

Efforts to combat increased needs in behavioral health services caused by the COVID-19 pandemic are currently underway, as the nation works to develop 9-8-8 as a national mental health crisis line, with the Family Services Agency Of Central California actively working to assist the roll out in the region.



## WHAT SETS US BACK

1 in 5 US adults have a mental health condition, with higher rates for youth and isolated seniors.<sup>108</sup> 32% of adolescents in Monterey County are at risk for depression, with higher rates for Non-Hispanic white and Black/African American children.<sup>108</sup> 25% of County students exhibit moderate mental health problems, a higher rate than the California average of 20%.<sup>109</sup> Clients served by County behavioral health rose in 2020 to 13,134 clients, 34% of which had a substance use diagnosis.<sup>106</sup> The Salinas Valley serves the highest number of behavioral health clients and is the County region with the largest mental health professional shortage.<sup>106, 110</sup>

Access to mental health services has been increasing, however 56% of Americans still lack access to care.<sup>111</sup> According to a survey conducted by County Behavioral Health in 2020, 84% of service providers note that services are available to the communities and regions they served, but are insufficient to meet all need, with those who didn't speak English or Spanish and homeless populations having the least access to services.<sup>107</sup> Other barriers to receiving needed mental health services, aside from cost, include being unaware of available programs, lack of staff, resources or space, stigma, transportation barriers, time restraints, & lack of follow up care.<sup>107, 106</sup>



### **Initiative 4.2 Collaborate to Support Mental and Physical Well-Being during Disasters**

During the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2020 fires, there were challenges getting behavioral health support at emergency shelters because of a lack of pre disaster resources and funding dedicated to behavioral health. Mental health problems and shortages in access to mental health

assistance can be debilitating to disaster recovery and overall community well-being. Pre disaster coordination and preparedness by mental health agencies, emergency management, schools, senior facilities, and community organizations can help alleviate disaster impacts of mental health and foster mentally resilient communities.

### **ACTION**

Over the next five years, Monterey County Health Department and Office of Emergency Services will coordinate with faith-based organizations, health organizations, schools, senior facilities, and community-based programs to develop a long-term strategy for managing and expediting physical, mental, and behavioral health services during and after disasters; along with actively searching for funding to bolster behavioral health services in the County during both normal operations and emergencies

### **ACTION**

Over the next two years, Monterey County Behavioral Health will develop a suicide prevention coalition and strategic plan, that will work to reduce suicides by addressing the underlying conditions that lead to suicide, including a focus on managing increases in suicide rates linked to disaster experiences.

### **WHAT CAN BE DONE**

**Parents** should work to prepare their children to be mentally resilient prior to disasters, by frequently conducting disaster drills with children, and making preparedness activities fun and engaging. During and after disasters, parents should try to involve their children in age-appropriate recovery efforts, discuss the disaster experience with children, and work to maintain their own mental well-being, as children's disaster recovery is often linked to their parent's ability to cope with the emergency.

*Learn more about helping children cope with disasters and other traumatic events: [English](#); [Spanish](#)*

# HEALTH AND DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

## WHAT PUTS US AHEAD

Monterey-San Benito Health Care Preparedness Coalition was created to advance the regional health care system's capability to manage disasters, by enhancing healthcare partnerships, preparedness, planning, policies, procedures, trainings, and exercises. To assist local jurisdictions, the Bay Area Access & Functional Needs (AFN) Project provides guidance documents regarding AFN inclusive disaster management operations and the County is developing an AFN plan.

During emergencies, the County's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is the point of coordination for all large-scale disaster management, with the Medical Health Operational Area Coordinator working as the point of contact for health mutual aid. To assist those with disabilities, the health department coordinates with the EOC in mass care and shelter operations and in the Access and Functional Needs Unit. For evacuations, Monterey Salinas Transit and Emergency Medical Services coordinate paratransit for those with access and functional needs. In emergency shelters, Functional Assessment Service Teams have been created to ensure equal access to care.



## WHAT SETS US BACK

Any and every disaster can have a major impact on the health care system, as all emergencies can poorly impact mental and physical health, creating a higher need for health-related services. However, certain types of disasters, such as public health emergencies (ex. Pandemics, biological terrorist attacks), have higher impacts on the health care system. Likewise, earthquakes, fires, floods, tsunamis, and other disasters that cause mass casualties can overwhelm the health care system. Different types of disasters can place different strains on the health care system, for example, fires can worsen respiratory health and winter storm can increase carbon monoxide poisonings and hypothermia.

People who do not have health insurance, have pre-existing health issues, and/or have limited connections within the community, including linguistically isolated populations and those who lack internet, are often at highest risk of worsened health related to a disaster experience. The type of disaster experienced can also place certain populations at higher risk of facing health problems. For instance, fires often impact outdoor workers (ex. farm workers) and those with respiratory issues worse than other populations. The physical & mental health impacts of disasters can manifest months or even years after the traumatic experience, thus the full extent of health impacts a disaster has on a community aren't always immediately seen.



### **Initiative 4.3 Establish a Medical Reserve Corp**






The Medical Reserve Corps is a national network of volunteers with healthcare backgrounds, organized locally to improve the health and safety of their communities through emergency preparedness and response efforts. Medical Reserve corps strengthen health care systems prior to disasters and help meet increased demand for staff during disasters, expediting the process of onboarding health care volunteers. While Monterey County does not currently have a Medical Reserve Corp, the Monterey County Medical Society does.

### **ACTION**

Over the next three to five years, Monterey County Health Department will collaborate with the Office of Emergency Services to develop a Memorandum of Understanding with Monterey County Medical Society to utilize their Medical Reserve Corp during disasters.

#### **Initiative 4.4 Encourage Preparedness for Poor Air Quality**

Poor air quality can negatively affect overall health and can be made worse by disasters like wildfires, windstorms, and releases of hazardous material occurring both inside and outside of the County. Those most vulnerable to the detrimental effects of air pollutants are

-  Those with cardiovascular and respiratory diseases. Air pollution can exacerbate chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and asthma, increasing respiratory morbidity & mortality.<sup>112</sup>
-  Pregnant women
-  Those who work outside, particularly agriculture workers who are already exposed to dust from farms
-  The very old and young
-  Those who lack health insurance

To manage outdoor air quality issues, the [Monterey Bay Air Resources District](#) (MBARD) monitors and provides public information on regional air quality. Local MBARD regulations and the [California Air Resources Board's](#) Low Emission Vehicle, Off-Road Motor Vehicle and Advanced Clean Cars Programs have helped improve air quality over the past 50 years. When air quality is poor, such as during a wildfire event, residents are encouraged to follow guidance from MBARD and public health advisories. [Section 5141.1](#) of the California Code of Regulations requires employers to protect workers from poor outside air quality by providing proper respiratory protection equipment. To protect agricultural workers from wildfire induced air pollution, [AB73](#) provides resources for specialized Cal/OSHA strike teams, bilingual education materials and stockpiles of protective masks. To manage indoor air quality, California's [AB836](#) provides an incentive program to help improve air filtration in public buildings in disadvantaged communities throughout the state.

#### **ACTION**








Monterey County Agricultural Commissioner's Office, Health Department, Monterey Bay Air Resources District, and Office of Emergency Services will advise local agricultural businesses and organizations about air quality preparedness, such as having stockpiles of N95 respirators and particulate masks for all staff during periods of poor air quality to protect the health of farmworkers during both regular operations and disasters, over the next five years.

#### **ACTION**

Monterey County Office of Emergency Services will investigate the feasibility of creating clean air centers and small filtration distribution during wildfires over the next two years.

## WHAT ELSE CAN BE DONE?

Poor air quality is not just an outdoor threat, as buildings can bring in the same pollutants as outdoor air, along with generating other harmful pollutants through improper cooking and heating, smoking indoors, emissions from construction materials/furnishings, and poor ventilation systems.<sup>112</sup> To address poor indoor air quality, **households and buildings** should:

-  Use clean fuels for cooking and heating
-  Choose furniture with less chemical emissions
-  Upgrade & maintain ventilation systems, stoves, and heating appliances
-  Ventilate rooms regularly by opening up windows/doors when air quality is good outside
-  Clean regularly
-  Get air filtration appliances/equipment
-  Avoid smoking indoors

# GOAL: REDUCING HEALTH INEQUITIES DURING DISASTER

## WHAT PUTS US AHEAD

California ranks better than the nation in effective treatment and preventative care, healthy living, cancer, cardiovascular disease, mental health, and substance abuse rates, improving most in nursing homes and with low-income patients.<sup>113</sup>

Monterey County Department of Social Services provides information, referrals, programs, and assistance for older adults and individuals with disabilities, including In-Home Supportive Services, non-medical home care, the Social Security Income program, & Medi-Cal insurance.

There are several programs in the County that seek to assist those with disabilities, including group homes and residential care facilities, however most services are located in the more urban areas of the County, with the highest concentration of services in the cities of Salinas and Monterey.<sup>113</sup> The World Institute on Disability, along with the County's Commission on disabilities and programs like Functional Assessment Service Teams and The Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies, work to promote equal access, disability rights and full inclusion of people with disabilities, older adults, and people with access and functional needs before, during, and after disasters. Likewise, Cal OES' Office of Access and Functional Needs were developed to ensure that issues related to AFN populations are accounted for throughout the disaster management process.

Review Attachment #3 for list of programs and organizations that provide services to those with disabilities or illnesses and their loved ones (this list is not exhaustive)

## WHAT SETS US BACK

California ranked worst in HIV rates, opioid related diagnoses, health provider-patient communication, and with Medicare managed care, becoming worse in access to health care and diabetes & HIV/AIDs rates.<sup>113</sup> Hypertension, high cholesterol, and depression were the most impactful health conditions in the County, with obesity being a risk factor for diabetes, hypertension, and high cholesterol. In 2009, 8% of all County residents had diabetes, a quarter were obese, and over a third were overweight. Nearly half of children were overweight or obese, with the highest rates in Seaside, Salinas, and Soledad.<sup>85, 114</sup> 43% of residents have received a flu shot and most adults have been screened for breast or colorectal cancer; with rates highest among non-Hispanic residents. 20% of residents are physically inactive and 12% of the adult population smokes, with men smoking at three times higher rates than women.<sup>85, 115</sup>

According to County Health Department staff, the largest County health concern is health care access, particularly in the Northeast County. Teen birth rates and mental & behavioral health were a large concern for most of the County, with South County having the greatest concern over substance abuse and West County most concerned about school bullying. Other regional concerns included childhood asthma for the West County; obesity, diabetes, and injuries for the South County; and diabetes, violence, perinatal mortality, & dental care for Northeast County.<sup>85</sup>

37,000 people (8.9%) have disabilities in the County with the highest rates being ambulatory, cognitive, hearing, and independent living difficulties. Likelihood of having a disability increased with age and is about 3% for children, 7% for adults 18-64, and 32% for those 65 or older.<sup>85</sup> The senior resident population in the County is 14% and is steadily rising, with about 10% of this population living alone. There are 17,403 veteran residents in the County, who make up 29% of the disabled population.<sup>5</sup> The unincorporated regions of Bradley, Boronda, Pajaro, Las Lomas & Spreckels have over half of the senior residents with disabilities; Seaside has the most for cities (41.5%) & Pajaro the most for any region (80.4%).<sup>6</sup> There are about 58,600 Medicare Beneficiaries in the County, with Del Rey Oaks, Seaside, Salinas & Monterey reporting the highest rates and 1,500 confirmed people who depend on electricity powered medical equipment.<sup>50</sup> According to the Community Resilience Survey, only 38% of those with medical needs have back up equipment/assistance to fulfill their needs during a disaster.<sup>34</sup>



### **Initiative 4.5 Encourage Disaster Preparedness amongst Vulnerable Populations**

Engaging individuals with potential vulnerabilities to take an active part in protecting their health and aiding their community's resilience strengthens the whole community. Monterey County can take action to strengthen community health and address the health needs of the most vulnerable residents by:

- ♥ Increasing the presence of health care staff in schools, including mental and behavioral health professionals. This can help catch and address health issues in students early on, before they become severe, & can be a source of support post-disaster in addressing trauma.
- ♥ Coordinating with youth and recreation programs, community organizations and faith-based institutions to amplify messaging promoting health habits.
- ♥ Advancing environmental protection. This can improve air, soil & water quality which improves overall community health.
- ♥ Encourage seniors to have emergency preparedness plans, including back up medication, medical equipment, and assistance.

While these actions do not all directly impact disaster outcomes, having a healthier society when a disaster strikes can make withstanding and recovering from disaster impacts easier.

#### **ACTION**

Monterey County Health Department will continue to work with local health care organizations and collaboratives, along with increasing partnerships with other community sectors, like schools, faith-based institutions, social service, youth & recreation organizations, Community Based Organizations, senior centers, congregate senior living facilities and transportation & environmental agencies.

#### **ACTION**

Over the next five years, Monterey County Office of Emergency Services will assist programs that serve at-risk individuals and geographic areas within the County that have high levels of vulnerable populations to develop robust disaster and continuity of operations plans, so they are better equipped to assist their clients during emergencies.

### **Initiative 4.6 Work with Rehabs and Pharmacies to Develop Continuity of Operations Plans**

Disasters can pose additional problems for those who rely on medications, as pharmacies may not be available during emergencies. Similarly, those who have substance use disorders during disasters may face withdrawal and those in recovery may be triggered into a relapse because of the loss and stress associated with the disaster experience. For example, during COVID-19, calls to 211 regarding assistance with relapse and overdoses increased and according to the [CDC](#), drug overdose deaths hit their highest number ever in the United States in 2020, increasing by 29% for a total of 93,000 deaths. Programs like the [Monterey County Prescribe Safe Initiative](#) have already taken steps to prevent prescription drug misuse, increase access to treatment for addiction, and provide opioid overdose antidotes to law enforcement and patients who use opioids and other drugs; which can help manage increases in substance use and overdose during disasters. Similarly, the [County's Behavioral Health Bureau](#) has



programs available to prevent and treat substance use disorders. Another way to help prepare rehabilitation centers and pharmacies for increased demand during emergencies is by ensuring these facilities have Continuity of Operations Plans to continue and enhance service in emergencies.

### **ACTION**

Over the next three to five years, Monterey County Office of Emergency Services and Health Department will coordinate with rehabilitation centers and pharmacies to develop Continuity of operations plans so that these facilities are better equipped to assist during emergencies.

### **Initiative 4.7 Increase Access and Functional Needs Awareness Amongst First Responders**

Populations with Access and Functional Needs may face barriers when receiving emergency information. For this reason, emergency management and first responders must take extra consideration in communicating with these populations during disasters. For example, when strategizing on how to best communicate with those who are deaf or hard of hearing, emergency management should keep in mind that:

- Written information may not be effective due to the grammar and syntax differences between ASL and written languages
- There are 5 visual languages in the County, with ASL being the predominant visual language
- If someone relies on a visual communications language or method other than ASL and has minimum ASL skills, then the use of a Certified Deaf Interpreter (CDI) will be necessary.

### **ACTION**

To advance communication between first responders and those with access and functional needs, Monterey County Office of Emergency Services will distribute [Tips for First Responders](#) to County first responders over the course of the next year.

### **ACTION**

Monterey County Office of Emergency Services will collaborate with the County's Public Information Officer to address the needs of those who are deaf and hard of hearing by including captions and an ASL interpreters for emergency information whenever possible.

### **Initiative 4.8 Develop an Access & Functional Needs Phone Tree to Support Disaster Response Efforts**

During disaster, those with Access and Functional Needs (AFN) may need additional assistance to evacuate or shelter in place. To identify and assist those who need additional help, emergency management coordinates with organizations that assist AFN populations, including the Department of Social Services, local transportation and electricity services, health facilities, and assisted living facilities. Often times these organizations are reluctant to give contact information for their clients but are willing to push out emergency information and coordinate with emergency management regarding needed sheltering and transportation assistance.

## **ACTION**

Over the next two years, Monterey County Office of Emergency Services will develop a formal procedure for coordinating with County Department of Social Services, County Commission on Disabilities, Area Agencies on Aging, and other organizations as identified to support AFN populations during response efforts, including a phone tree with 24-hour contacts information for organizations mentioned above.

### **Initiative 4.9 Develop an Equity and Access Team as Part of the EOC**

Disasters can enhance inequities that exist in our society, disproportionately impacting populations that lack the physical, political, and material ability to respond quickly and effectively, while often heightening discrimination. To ensure emergency operations equitably serve the County and address access and functional needs, an Equity and Access Team should be developed within the Emergency Operation Center (EOC)

Organizational Structure

## **ACTION**

Over the next year, Monterey County Office of Emergency Services will add an Equity and Access Team to the EOC organizational structure.

### **Initiative 4.10 Develop a Climate Action Plan's Equity Panel**

The County's sustainability program is developing an equity panel made up of community-based organizations to provide input on the County's climate action plan. The Equity Panel Objectives are to:

1. Share the needs of underserved communities in the face of climate change and disasters.
2. Provide an opportunity for the County to develop an equity lens and equity considerations for decision-making processes relevant for the Climate Action Plan and the Hazard Mitigation Plan.
3. Collaboratively develop a set of recommendations for the Climate Action Plan's strategies.
4. Share scientific data and policies relevant for the Climate Action Plan with leaders of underserved communities.
5. Foster future partnerships pertinent to climate change, adaptation, and community resilience with the County and among Panel members.
6. Build overall community capacity to address and prepare for climate change.

## **ACTION**

Monterey County Sustainability program will develop an equity panel as part of the County Climate Action over the next year



# HIGHLIGHT: HEALTH AND THE COVID PANDEMIC



## PROBLEMS

The pandemic created numerous health impacts that are yet to be fully realized, as the pandemic is not yet over. As of 9/27/2021, the pandemic killed 573 County residents, impacted hospital capacity (with COVID cases filling over a third of all hospital beds at the height of the pandemic), and left the health care system short on trained staff to assist in housing COVID positive residents. The pandemic made people less likely to visit their doctors and participate in life saving early diagnosis, such as cancer screening. The pandemic also created mental health concerns, as the Shelter in Place and social distancing requirements needed to quell the virus, the losses of loved ones, businesses and employment, and the uncertainty of the pandemic led to worsened mental health, substance abuse problems, and domestic violence; which was exacerbated by reductions in mental health and case management resources during shutdowns. [116,117,118, 119, 120](#)

While it is still too soon to see all of the pandemic's impacts, existing County data indicates that there is racial inequity in Covid-19 infections that mirrors other health outcomes prior to the pandemic, with Hispanic/Latinx and south County residents being disproportionately impacted. [61](#) Those who were not familiar with or did not have consistent access to technology were also at a disadvantage, facing barriers to important information & resources. Even for those with access to the internet, navigating through public health information and resources was challenging for some residents, while the County websites did seem to help, as did United Way Monterey County's 211 call center, this challenge remained a problem.

## SOLUTIONS

During the pandemic the entire County community came together to address and alleviate the pandemic's impacts. To address the physical health impacts of the pandemic, contact tracing and free testing programs were implemented, telehealth services were increased, several health care facilities offered free and/or virtual care and hotlines to answer health related questions and concerns, and the County provided over a thousand housing referrals to at risk and COVID positive populations. [The Great Plates Program](#) was developed to provide meal delivery to seniors who were at higher risk of having poor health outcomes when contracting the virus. Further, several pharmacies offered free prescription delivery, [Meals on Wheels](#) boosted their services, and grocery stores created senior shopping hours to increase access to food and supplies for this high-risk population. [Monterey Salinas Transit](#) provided food delivery and telephone wellness checks to isolated seniors, along with providing transportation vouchers to promote vaccination. [Project RoomKey](#) provided temporary and alternative housing for those infected or under investigation for the virus and those at high risk of facing medical complications if they became infected by the virus. Finally, several organizations, including [Community Builders](#) and the [In-Home Supportive Services Program](#) distributed masks & other personal protective equipment to residents & organizations. The pandemic also led to more community health workers reaching out to residents to provide information on the pandemic and available resources; this effort seemed to be an effective method for reaching Spanish speaking residents, who are not always reached during public outreach campaigns. The County Health Department provided [a stipend program](#) and [Housing for the Harvest](#) was implemented to financially support qualifying isolating residents.

To address the mental health impacts of the pandemic, the City of Monterey created "[Operation Outreach](#)", Listos, in coordination with OES, created the "[Social Bridging Program](#)", and [Covia](#) checked in on seniors throughout the Bay area. These programs provided welfare calls to older adults and those with disabilities, checking on residents and providing information & referrals to needed services. [2 County Social Services also provided](#) welfare check calls to IHSS & APS program recipients. Some organizations, like [Special Kids Connect](#) used their funding from the Listos readiness program, with the assistance of CERV, to make the pandemic an opportunity to bring up the conversation about preparedness to families of children with special needs, along with distributing PPE and hosting workshops regarding the pandemic.

# STRATEGY 5: ENCOURAGE RESILIENT HOUSEHOLDS

Housing and food are often the highest priority needs in a disaster, as homes are destroyed, and supply chains are impacted. The type and circumstance surrounding a disaster may create a priority for other supplies as well, such as a pandemic creating a need for face masks or a flood creating a need for clothes.

Renters and those who lack rental/property insurance prior to a disaster are often disproportionately impacted by disasters, lacking the financial means to manage disaster response and recovery costs.

## GOALS AND INITIATIVES

**Goal: Encourage Preparedness amongst Residents**

**Initiative 5.1** | Provide Emergency Preparedness Packets and Kits to New Residents

**Initiative 5.2** | Support Discounted Disaster Insurance for Renters and Low-income Owners

**Initiative 5.3** | Promote the Use of Renter's Insurance

**Goal: Support building modifications that reduce hazard risk**

**Initiative 5.4** | Increase Funding for Disaster Mitigation Home Modifications

**Initiative 5.5** | Develop Disaster Resistant Building Development

**Initiative 5.6** | Support Local Housing Programs that Reduce Disaster Risk

**Goal: Foster quicker household recovery post disaster**

**Initiative 5.7** | Develop a Post Disaster Rapid Housing Replacement Program

**Goal: Increase emergency sheltering capabilities**

**Initiative 5.8** | Strengthen Partnership Between Emergency Management and Organizations that Serve the Homeless

**Initiative 5.9** | Create a Resilient Hotels Program

## WHAT PUTS US AHEAD

The County's affordable housing programs include, the Inclusionary Housing Program that provides home ownership and rental opportunities and access to various Down Payment Assistance programs for first time home buyers.<sup>3</sup> The Inclusionary Housing Program requires housing developers to include a percentage of affordable housing units in new projects within the unincorporated County. The cities within the County have implemented similar programs, including investing in affordable housing, first time home buyer down payment programs, and housing grants/loans. There are several organizations that work to provide affordable housing, and housing and rental assistance to those in need. The County is utilizing recent state funding to streamline housing development and create more affordable housing. The County in coordination with the City of Salinas, recently opened the SHARE Center, a 100-bed homeless navigation center. (Learn more: [Attachment 3](#))

To address housing during disasters the Emergency Operations Center coordinates resources for evacuation facilities between organizations, working with American Red Cross, SPCA, and several sheltering organizations. To foster this disaster response, the County and state emergency operations keep a list of nearly 100 potential shelter locations in the County, including schools, fairgrounds, hotels, and other locations that can be used as emergency facilities. As of July 2020, these facilities could house up to 21,844 shelter residents.



## WHAT SETS US BACK

During disasters, need for food, housing, and other necessities, such as personal protective equipment and hygiene items, increases dramatically. Supply chains are often disrupted and homes are damaged, increasing food insecurity and homelessness. Organizations put in place to address these needs pre disaster are often the hardest hit by disasters, further exasperating these needs.<sup>121</sup>

For a more detailed discussion on housing challenges, please refer to the [Challenges Chapter](#) of this document.



## HIGHLIGHT:

During the 2020 pandemic, the Emergency Operations Center worked with local jurisdictions and organizations to install several portable wash stations and developed temporary housing facilities for those with the virus and medically fragile persons. The County's housing efforts addressed some of the long-term housing issues, as the [Coalition of Homeless Services Providers](#) worked to move medically fragile homeless from temporary to permanent housing and the State expanded [Project Home Key](#), which converts hotels into permanent housing. Similarly, after the 2020 fires, 3CE provided \$125K of funding for homeowners in 3CE service territory whose homes were red tagged by Cal Fire and plan to rebuild their homes as all-electric. These projects are great examples of how we can and should be using disaster response to tackle larger social issues.

## GOAL: ENCOURAGE PREPAREDNESS AMONGST RESIDENTS

### **Initiative 5.1 Provide Preparedness Information to New Residents**

Often, the best time to encourage preparedness is when a person moves into the community, as they can intertwine preparedness activities with settling into a new home. Further, approaching new residents can broker strong community relationships early on, while teaching new residents of the available disaster management resources in their new community.

#### **ACTION**

Over the next two to three years, Monterey County Office of Emergency Services will work with realtors, the Monterey County Realtors Association, local property managers and the Housing Authority of Monterey County to provide emergency preparedness packets and kits as welcome presents to new residents.

### **Initiative 5.2 Support Discounted Disaster Insurance for Low Income Renters and Property Owners**

Disaster insurance can be expensive, particularly in areas vulnerable to disasters, such as urban wildland interfaces. To encourage building resistance to disasters, insurance companies may offer discounts to home and business owners who make building modifications. For example, Mercury Insurance provides discounts to homeowners living in [Firewise Communities](#) or who have modified their home to protect it against wildfires. Similarly, the [National Flood Insurance Program](#) requires modifications of building in flood plains to receive discounts on flood insurance & the [California Earthquake Authority](#) offers earthquake insurance discounts for home retrofits focused on earthquake resistance.

#### **ACTION**

Monterey County Office of Emergency Services will support efforts by local leadership and insurance companies to create and expand discount discounted disaster insurance programs for low-income renters and property owners over the next three years.

### **Initiative 5.3 Promote the Use of Renter's Insurance**

Renters are typically more vulnerable to disasters than homeowners, as they less frequently have insurance, are often less financially comfortable than homeowners, and are more likely to face housing instability post disaster.

#### **ACTION**

Over the next three years, Monterey County Office of Emergency Services will expand public outreach encouraging the use of renter's insurance.

## GOAL: SUPPORT BUILDING MODIFICATIONS THAT REDUCE HAZARD RISK

### **Initiative 5.4 Increase Funding for Disaster Mitigation Home Modifications**

Home modifications, particularly on mobile homes and older homes, can be lifesaving, preventing damage or destruction during major earthquakes, storms, tsunamis, and floods. Developing effective defensible space around one's home/building or modifying homes with fire

resistant material can prevent or reduce the impacts of wildfires. Often, residents have the desire to harden their homes for disaster but lack the financial means to do so; programs like [California's Wildfire Home Hardening Program](#), which provides financial assistance to retrofit homes to be more resistant to wildfires, can help reduce these financial barriers and encourage home modifications that strengthen resilience.

### **ACTION**

Over the next five years, Monterey County Office of Emergency Services will, if obligated, use Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funding to develop a Community Wildfire Resilience program which provides financial incentive to residents to implement defensible space & ignition resistant construction.

### **Initiative 5.5 Develop Disaster Resistant Building Development**

Taking certain steps when modifying or building new structures can make them more sustainable, while also helping to mitigate the impacts of disasters. Utilizing strong building codes can prevent building damage during wind events and earthquakes. Elevating property can prevent building flooding. Creating effective defensible space and using fire resistant material for buildings can prevent fire damage. Installing shutters, air conditioning, cool roofs, and insulation can prevent or reduce the impacts of extreme weather. Adding canopy covers and vegetation around buildings and using permeable pavement and rain gardens can reduce the impacts of flooding and heat waves. Likewise, making sure that building exits are easily accessible to all, including those with functional limitations, can make emergency evacuations safer.

### **ACTION**

Over the next five years, Monterey County Housing and Community Development Department will encourage disaster resistant and sustainable building development programs such as [Greenfield's Owner-Occupied Housing Rehabilitation Assistance Program](#)

### **Initiative 5.6 Support Local Housing Programs that Reduce Disaster Risk**

Housing programs that also work to mitigate against disasters can help make residents safer and healthier, while reducing overall disaster risk for the community. For example, federal and state low-income housing credit programs evaluate air quality for new developments to reduce the health impacts of air pollution (example: next to freeways or industrial areas), which also reduces the risk of exposure to transportation related hazardous material spills for residents. Housing programs can also help mitigate disasters by encouraging the development of charging ports for electrical vehicles on new housing developments; incentivizing building with fire resistant material; and conducting rental verification programs that provide inspections of new rentals to make sure they are safe to live in.

### **ACTION**

Over the next three years, Monterey County Office of Emergency Services will work to support local housing programs that reduce disaster risk

## GOAL: FOSTER QUICKER HOUSEHOLD RECOVERY POST DISASTER

### **Initiative 5.7** Develop a Post Disaster Rapid Housing Replacement Program

Developing a rapid housing replacement program pre-disaster, that includes funding and a recovery plan focused on expediting repairs and rebuilding of damaged and destroyed housing structures, particularly low-income housing, post disaster can speed up recovery, providing households some stability and peace of mind as they work to recover from their disaster experiences, while reducing sheltering and housing needs that generally grow during disasters.

#### **ACTION**

Over the next three years, Monterey County Office of Emergency Services will look into the feasibility of creating a post disaster rapid housing replacement program.

## GOAL: INCREASE EMERGENCY SHELTERING CAPABILITIES

### **Initiative 5.8** Strengthen Partnership Between Emergency Management and Organizations that Serve the Homeless

Homelessness remains a large problem for Monterey County and, as a result, most cities and County departments have allocated time and resources to coordinate efforts and funding to address homelessness, as have many nonprofits and community-based organizations. Overall, there are 15 facilities and 366 beds being used specifically as emergency shelter in the County. Moreover, several programs have been developed to provide permanent supportive housing, including 214 permanent supportive housing beds targeted toward chronically homeless veterans.<sup>56</sup> While these programs are helpful, they do not always have the capacity to meet the needs of all their clients, particularly during disasters when sheltering needs are even more prevalent.

#### **ACTION**

Monterey County Office of Emergency Services will expand coordination and partnership with sheltering organizations over the next two to three years to strengthen their ability to meet increased demand during disasters and ensure that homeless populations don't face barriers in accessing resources and assistance during disasters.

### **Initiative 5.9:** Create a Resilient Hotels Program

Hotels can be valuable resources during emergencies, as they can provide temporary shelter to evacuees, when evacuation shelters do not suffice. Hotels can also house first responders who come from out of the area to assist with response. For example, during the 2020 pandemic, several fires occurred in Monterey County, and, as a response, over 70 Monterey Peninsula hotels provided discounted accommodations for evacuees and first responders; many of these hotels lifted pet restrictions as well.<sup>122</sup> While these altruist efforts provided a great deal of support for the community, developing a hotels program will allow the County more certainty regarding hotel assistance during disasters

#### **ACTION**

Over the next two years, Monterey County Office of Emergency Services will create a hotel program to identify & partner with local hotels pre disaster in order to advance sheltering capacity and encourage situational awareness among tourists.



# STRATEGY 6: EMPOWER SOCIAL MOBILITY

All disasters can have deep and long-lasting impacts on employment and economic outcomes, causing shortages of staff & customers and layoffs or cut hours for employees, destroying businesses and work sites, and straining finances through costly response and recovery. Those with the lowest income and the lowest paying jobs are often hit hardest and quickest by disaster economic impacts.

Workers impacted by disasters often need employment assistance, including access to job placement, training, and education, to help them re-establish themselves financially.

Business owners who have experienced disruption to business operations may struggle to re-open, pay creditors & employees, and handle the recovery costs for building damage.

## GOALS AND INITIATIVES

### **Goal: Develop A Resilience-Oriented Workforce**

**Initiative 6.1** | Expand Affordable Child Care

**Initiative 6.2** | Reduce Disaster Vulnerability of Supply Chains

**Initiative 6.3** | Assist Small Business with Continuity of Operations Planning

### **Goal: Decrease the Digital Divide**

**Initiative 6.4** | Expand Access to Affordable, High Speed Internet

# GOAL: DEVELOP A RESILIENCE ORIENTED WORKFORCE

## WHAT PUTS US AHEAD

Monterey County highlights the importance on strengthening economic development and opportunities, placing Economic Development as 1 of the 5 County Strategic Initiatives. The County is also developing a comprehensive economic development strategy that analyzes the economic needs of the County and provides recommendations on building economic resilience and prosperity, guiding economic development programs, funding, and decision making. The higher educational institutions, government agencies, and youth organizations in the County provide training to advance employment opportunities and economic mobility for residents.

To assist businesses and workers, the County's Workforce Development Board provides programs and facilities, including job training and placement. Cal Coastal Small Business Development Center (SBDC), Monterey County Business Council, the Red Cross, and Seaside partnered in 2020 and 2021 to provide information on government resources during the COVID-19 pandemic and 2020 wildfires; along with providing a regional preparedness webinar and workshop in Seaside.

To address childcare needs that are present for many local workers, the Childcare Planning Council of Monterey County provides childcare needs assessments and is developing a strategic framework (2018-2025) to provide more equitable early childhood and education systems. Similarly, programs like First 5's Bright Beginnings and Quality Matters Programs work to provide early childcare & education and advance the resilience of parents, families, & caregivers. These programs worked together during the COVID-19 pandemic to develop an emergency childcare task force.



## WHAT SETS US BACK

There were around 8,800 employer establishments and 209,000 people employed in Monterey County in 2019, however recent data indicates that these numbers have dropped since the pandemic and, as of May 1, 2020, there were 167,000 people employed in the County. The unemployment rate was 6.2% in 2018 and rose to 14.4% in June 2020, with almost 30,000 residents unemployed, a rate much higher than the state's average <sup>5, 51, 123, 124</sup> The highest unemployment rate is in the southern most portions of the County, followed by Northeast County. <sup>49, 125</sup> Top employment needs in the County include job readiness, vocational & on-the-job training and job search & career counseling.<sup>51</sup>

Issues with school and business closures and unemployment tend to be problems during most large-scale emergencies. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, 40% of businesses shut down, while 28% faced slowdowns, causing layoffs of about half of all employees, and cut hours for 64% of employees.<sup>126</sup> While businesses did reopen, as they adjusted their services to be more pandemic safe, and shelter in place orders were eased, customer and revenue losses have made some of the layoffs and closures permanent, particularly for smaller businesses. Closed schools, childcare and youth programs impacted many parents' ability to go back to work. The demand for childcare often exceeds the supply prior to disasters, worsening during and after each emergency.



### **Initiative 6.1 Expand Affordable Child Care**

Having accessible and affordable childcare is a crucial component of disaster recovery, giving parents time to work on repairs and recovery and allowing them to get back to work more quickly. According to the US Chamber of Commerce foundation, about half of all parents in the County who did not return to work during the 2020 pandemic cited childcare accessibility as a primary reason.

#### **ACTION**

Over the next year, the Monterey County's Child Care Planning Council will develop a stakeholder engagement process and gather/analyze relevant data in regard to access and affordability of childcare in Monterey County.

### **Initiative 6.2 Reduce Disaster Vulnerability of Supply Chains**

Disasters can reduce food produce by causing shortages of farmworkers, who may be displaced or busy working on recovery from a disaster, along with damaging crops. Building and road damages and power outages caused by disasters can make it difficult to store food and transport/sell food, water, and other supplies. For these reasons, disasters are often linked to increased food insecurity and supply shortages. In locations where agriculture is depended on for economic prosperity, these supply issues can have additional impacts on the workforce and economy. Developing a program that examines the vulnerability of the County's supply chain to disruptions during disasters and provides strategies for reducing the likelihood of disruptions, not only helps manage disaster induced food insecurities and supply chain interruptions, but can help protect the County's largest economic driver & employer, the agriculture industry.

#### **ACTION**

Over the next three years, Monterey County Office of Emergency Services will collaborate with the Food Policy Council, the Agricultural Commissioner's Office, and other stakeholders to analyze the vulnerability of the County's supply chains to disruptions during disasters and develop strategies to help avoid these disruptions.

### **Initiative 6.3 Assist Small Business with Continuity of Operations Planning**

90% of Monterey County's 14,000+ businesses are small businesses, employing fewer than 20 people. Over half of these businesses are in the fields of retail, professional services, health care, social services, or financial services.<sup>5.127</sup> Small businesses are particularly vulnerable to disasters, as they often lack the savings and revenue to manage the periods of no or little income that occur during and after a disaster. Having an emergency plan and continuity of operation plan in place can be helpful for small businesses, as can coordinating with other businesses and the government during disaster preparedness, response, and recovery. Disaster planning not only helps businesses more quickly recover post disaster but can be beneficial for bringing back customers. For instance, when communities that have a lot of tourism show that they can handle and recover from emergency situations, their reputations among travelers improves, thereby enhancing tourist business.

#### **ACTION**

Over the next two years, Monterey County Office of Emergency Services will expand efforts to encourage organizational preparedness through the development of Continuity of Operations Plan workshops, training, and material for small businesses. Particular focus will be given for smaller organizations who don't usually have a predeveloped relationship with emergency management. This will be done by targeting community and faith-based organizations, including vulnerable communities, such as assisted living and senior communities.

## GOAL: DECREASE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

### WHAT PUTS US AHEAD

Schools, libraries, community centers, and organizations that provide life skills training and career counseling often provide computer literacy education and access to internet and computers within their facilities. Loaves, Fishes, and Computers offers computer literacy classes and low-cost computer repairs and sales, providing about 9,500 computers locally to low-income families. The Digital Nest works to create centers in low income and rural communities to teach technical skills needed to be competitive in a growingly digital world. Salinas installed a municipal dark fiber network and Marina developed a Broadband project to connect employment centers with publicly owned broadband.

To meet expanded technological needs during the pandemic, the County Office of Education partnered with MST to provide mobile Wi-Fi hotspots. Monterey County Public Libraries also rolled out Wi-Fi Hotspots at their facilities. Through these programs and CARES Act funding, the number of students without access to devices was decreased from 9,839 to 1,120 and students without sufficient internet access was reduced from 11,291 to 1,082.



### WHAT SETS US BACK

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Overall, 12.4% of County households do not have a computer and 19.2% don't have internet access.<sup>6</sup> During the COVID-19 pandemic, communication technology became more prominently used and the digital divide grew. Many households lacked laptops and video conferencing services, which impacted ability to work and go to school. Over 11,000 students lacked the technological services needed to excel in school during remote school work. Similarly, older populations, who were at highest risk of being impacted by the virus, often lacked connectivity and/or the skills to utilize the internet, making it hard for them to access telehealth services.<sup>122</sup>

While recent infrastructure development has helped reduce the digital divide, the region still lacks variety in providers offering affordable high-speed services in rural regions. Further, regardless of how much we improve access to affordable internet, learning new technology can be overwhelming and some groups (ex. the very young & old and those with learning limitations or behavioral issues) may have trouble learning and working online. This limitation does not just impact education, health, and employment, it can prevent people from receiving needed services. For example, the city of Monterey created a food distribution program that required online sign up, however those without computer access or who did not know how to navigate websites were unable to access the services.<sup>122</sup>



#### Initiative 6.4 Expand Access to Affordable, High Speed Internet

The Monterey Bay Economic Partnership and Central Coast Broadband Consortium are working to bring 100% broadband coverage at 100/25 MBPS to the region.<sup>122</sup> In addition, to help address the increased digital divide created by the COVID-19 pandemic and assist students with distance learning, Monterey County Office of Education formed a Digital Equity Task Force. The Monterey County Board of Supervisor submitted a referral to create a regional governance body to create a strategy and collaborate with partners to close the digital divide in Monterey County with equitable geographic representation and priority for unserved, underserved, and disadvantaged communities. [United Ways of California](#) also set up a low-cost Internet screening tool to get people connected to low-cost internet.

### ACTION

Monterey County Information Technology Department will support local efforts to expand internet & computer accessibility throughout the county.

## WHAT ELSE CAN BE DONE?



**Businesses & community organizations** should:

- ✓ Get to know local emergency management
- ✓ Create/practice Emergency Response & Continuity of Operations Plans
- ✓ Have emergency funds/supplies
- ✓ Teach employees & clients about preparing
- ✓ Host prep fairs or block parties (ex. [Neighborfest](#))



**Libraries, community centers, and educational facilities** should expand internet literacy programs, in both English and Spanish, in all County regions. This will expand the number of residents who know how to effectively use the internet to attain lifesaving services, work and go to school remotely.



**Local government, schools, colleges, businesses, and workforce development** should work together to enhance the school to career pipeline that connects high school and college students to local career opportunities. This could help students expand their skills, network, and experience, while providing t young residents opportunities to get above or avoid poverty and attain a living wage

# Recommendations for Monterey County Leadership

While our Monterey County Community has and continues to take steps to enhance disaster resilience, there is still so much more we can do! The following are suggested project for County leadership to consider, that currently lack the funding and/or resources to implement, as we work to better prepare our community for all types of disasters and the ever-growing threat of climate change.

## STRATEGY 1: BUILD SOCIAL CAPITAL

### 1. Develop Resilience Office(s) or Center(s)

Developing a physical location(s), similar to the [Vegas Strong Resiliency Center](#), where community members can meet before, during and after emergencies, to learn how to manage disasters and build resilience, which can help keep the Community Resilience Program running indefinitely, while providing a more interactive way for the program to work with the community. This location could be run by a resilience coordinator/team to maintain the Community Resilience Plan, develop, and run resilience building projects, and provide community members a location to voice thoughts and concerns and access resources, referrals, meetings, and presentations that help build resilience

### 2. Encourage Outdoor Interactions

Healthy, more socially connected communities are better able to work together and respond to disasters. Improving bike and pedestrian lanes and developing more green spaces, community gardens, community centers, and outdoor activities can maximize social interactions, make community members more familiar with their neighborhoods, and improve overall health in the community by contributing to both physical & mental wellbeing. The need for these improvements is recognized by the community, with improvements to pedestrian and bike lanes, and increases in community gardens, farmers markets, and community & recreation infrastructure/programs were top points of discussion in the recommendations and areas needing improvement sections of the Community Resilience Survey.<sup>34</sup>

## STRATEGY 2: ENHANCE EMERGENCY SERVICES INFRASTRUCTURE

### 3. Development of Evacuation Funding for Low-Income Residents

Often times those trying to evacuate lack the money to pay for gas or stay in a hotel, making them less likely to evacuate and more likely to be injured or killed during a disaster. Developing an evacuation fund that is activated when an evacuation order is made in the County, can help cover transportation services, gas, and hotel stays, so that they are discounted or free for residents evacuating. This program could be done in collaboration with transportation agencies, gas companies, and local hotels to further decrease cost for residents and relieve some of the financial stress that disasters create.

#### **4. Provide Emergency Funding for Undocumented Immigrants in Monterey County**

Monterey County has a large undocumented immigrant population, that is primarily made up of seasonal farmworkers. This group often lacks the social and financial resources to manage disasters, making them more vulnerable when an emergency occurs. Developing a fund to assist undocumented immigrants throughout the County in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery can help reduce their vulnerability, while strengthening the overall resilience of our County's largest economic driver, agriculture.

#### **5. Develop a Program to Review & Suggest Modifications for Current Codes/Regulations that Impeded Disaster Mitigation**

While environmental regulations have helped protected local wildlife and ecosystems, some of the local, state, and federal regulations can work as hurdles to clearing vegetation to reduce wildfire risk and clean up rivers of vegetation during flooding. Several reports have come out expressing the need to amend local, state, and federal laws to enable wildfire fuel reduction work to take place and Monterey County has been rated at the highest priority of need for landscape-scale wildfire fuel reduction work by the national Wildland Fire Leadership Council. [128](#), [129](#), [130](#) however those recommendations have not yet led to updates on regulations. Leadership should conduct a deep review of local regulations and modify them to reduce barriers to disaster mitigation and recovery. Examining state regulations and requesting action from the governor, such as regulation modifications or a temporary stop to regulations through an emergency proclamation, can also help encourage the reduction of impediments to disaster mitigation and recovery.

#### **6. Develop a Large Animal Rescue Program for Disasters**

Many larger animals reside in the farms and ranches throughout Monterey County. In previous disasters, such as the 2020 wildfires, there was a high need for evacuation and sheltering of large animals, which was conducted by the SPCA of Monterey County. To support future efforts to rescue and protect large animals during disaster, Monterey County should develop a large animal rescue program.

### **STRATEGY 3: BUILD SOCIAL CAPITAL**

#### **7. Improve Stormwater Drainage System Capacities**

Improving stormwater drainage system capacities can help reduce flooding and pollution during storms. This can be done through the use of revetments & bioengineered bank stabilization techniques and protection/enhancement of natural mitigation features such as wetlands dunes.

#### **8. Support Affordable Public Transit Development**

Having a strong public transportation system pre-disaster, can make managing evacuations during disasters and recovery easier, as systems are already in place to support transportation for those who lack their own vehicles. For this reason, the County should work to enhance programs like [MST's discounted fare programs](#) and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County's [Go831 program](#), which offers alternative modes of employer based commutes & an emergency ride home program that provides reimbursement for a taxi, ride share service or rental car in an emergency situations.

## **STRATEGY 5: ENCOURAGE RESILIENT HOUSEHOLDS**

### **9. Incentivize Affordable Housing Development**

A lack of affordable housing increases rates of homeless and overcrowding and places community members at higher risk of experiencing the negative impacts of disasters. Those who are homeless often lack protection from the elements during weather related emergencies. Those in overcrowded living conditions may face extra challenges in evacuating and sheltering during disasters, along with being at higher risk during public health emergencies, as they may not be able to isolate when necessary. Affordable housing availability can be increased in the County through a tax credit program for the acquisition, rehabilitation or new construction of low-income housing, and increasing access to housing vouchers to subsidize rents and Accessory Dwelling Units. On the Monterey Peninsula, the availability of water continues to be a significant obstacle to affordable housing efforts. Expanding water sources could help support the region's affordable housing goals.

### **10. Expand Participation in Efforts to Combat Racial and Socioeconomic Inequities and Discrimination**

Trainings and working groups, such as Monterey County's Disparate Impact Working Group and [Government Alliance on Race and Equity](#) (GARE) help bring racial and socioeconomic inequities and discrimination to the forefront of the mind of our County's public servants, making it easier to be aware of and address disparities. Monterey County leadership should push for continued and expanded participation in trainings and working groups that work to combat inequities and discrimination by all government departments and employees.

### **11. Develop a Proactive Investigations Process for Housing/Living Conditions**

Unlike the food, water, and hazardous materials health programs that the County provides, housing does not have a pro-active inspection program. Pro-active health inspections are an essential service of Public Health that assures a higher level of prevention of negative health outcomes, including but not limited to airborne respiratory diseases that are exasperated by overcrowded and unsanitary conditions. Currently Monterey County Code 18.15 is enforced through an existing complaint response system. A complaint response system does provide short term solutions, however, will not result in long term compliance and progress. Programs that have the potential to cause widespread negative outcomes if not pro-actively approached require a monitoring component such as a pro-active inspection program. The challenges in establishing this program would be gaining stakeholder buy-in as well as funding. All pro-active health inspection programs are funded primarily with health permit fees. Although this program does not exist currently in Monterey County, there are many successful models in existence in other counties such as San Mateo, City and County of San Francisco, and County of San Diego. Monterey County Environmental Health Bureau is currently exploring this program and will present options to the decision makers as well as interact with local stakeholders.



# IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY

Disasters are incredibly powerful, with the ability to impact every sector of our lives, amplifying both good and bad, while creating new challenges and hardships, along with some opportunities. However, we too are powerful. We have the power to prevent, withstand, and adapt to anything that comes our way. Below is a summary table of the steps Monterey County is currently taking to foster disaster resilience throughout our community.

## Strategy 1: Build Social Mobility

Initiative	Initiative Task	Lead Organization(s)	Timeline
1.1	Empower Disaster Resilience Amongst Youth	Monterey County Office of Emergency Services and Office of Education	2 years
1.2	Strengthen Public Private Partnerships	Monterey County Office of Emergency Services	2 years
1.3	Create a Resilient Religions Program	Monterey County Office of Emergency Services	2 years
1.4	Create OES Office Hours	Monterey County Office of Emergency Services	1 year
1.5	Develop a Community Communications Strategy	Monterey County Office of Emergency Services	3-5 years
1.6	Implement the Community Resilience Plan	Monterey County Office of Emergency Services	Continuous
1.7	Develop a Resilience Block Party Program	Monterey County Office of Emergency Services	2 years

## Strategy 2: Enhance Emergency Services Infrastructure

Initiative	Initiative Task	Lead Organization(s)	Timeline
2.1	Provide a Forum for Communication between Local CERTs	Monterey County Office of Emergency Services	3-5 years
2.2	Develop a VOAD Program	Monterey County Office of Emergency Services	3-5 years
2.3	Support Fire Mitigation Efforts	Resource Conservation District of Monterey County	Continuous
		Monterey County Office of Emergency Services	Continuous
2.4	Address Hurdles to Vegetation Management for Wildfire Mitigation	Monterey County Public Works, Facilities & Park, Housing & Community Development, & Office of Emergency Services	2 years
2.5	Encourage preparedness amongst tourists	Monterey County Office of Emergency Services	3 years
2.6	Integrate Adaptation into Monterey County General Plan's Safety Element	Monterey County Housing & Community Development	2 years

2.7	Reimagine Public Libraries as Resilience Hubs	Monterey County Office of Emergency Services and Free Libraries	2-3 years
2.8	Reimagine Schools as Disaster Hubs	Monterey County Office of Emergency Services and Office of Education	5 years
2.9	Develop Research Partnerships with Universities	Monterey County Office of Emergency Services	2 years
2.10	Strengthen Transportation Systems	Monterey County Office of Emergency Services	Continuous
		Monterey County Public Works, Facilities, & Parks	Continuous
2.11	Create Community HAM Radio Groups	Monterey County Office of Emergency Services	3 years
2.12	Increase Cellular Bandwidth in Unincorporated County	Monterey County Information Technology Department	5 years
2.13	Increase Cell Phone Availability at Evacuation Facilities	Monterey County Office of Emergency Services and Information Technology Department	2 years
2.14	Amplify Cell Coverage during Disasters using Portable Cell Towers	Monterey County Office of Emergency Services	2-3 years
2.15	Strengthen the Disaster Service Worker Program	Monterey County Office of Emergency Services	3 years

### Strategy 3: Move Toward Sustainability

Initiative	Initiative Task	Lead Organization(s)	Timeline
3.1	Develop Multijurisdictional Climate Council	Monterey County Sustainability Program	2 years
3.2	Develop County & Department Climate Action Plans	Monterey County Sustainability Program	Continuous
		Monterey County Sustainability Program and Office of Emergency Services	Continuous
3.3	Develop a Community Action Toolkit	Monterey County Sustainability Program	2 years
3.4	Support County Youth Climate Action Council	Monterey County Sustainability Program	Continuous
3.5	Support 3CE project	Monterey County Sustainability Program	Continuous
3.6	Support SB743	Monterey County Sustainability Program	3 years
3.7	Encourage Transportation System Resilience to Climate Change	Monterey County Sustainability Program and Office of Emergency Services	3 years
3.8	Examine Ways to Provide Backup Power to Vital Facilities in the County	Monterey County Sustainability Program and Office of Emergency Services	1 year

3.9	Support Stormwater Pollution Education Campaigns	Monterey County Sustainability Program	3 years
3.10	Support Local Water Conservation Efforts	Monterey County Water Resources Agency and Office of Emergency Services	3 years
3.11	Support Drought Planning and Preparedness	Monterey County Water Resources Agency and Office of Emergency Services	3 years
3.12	Support Best Practices that Prevent Pollution and Waste	Monterey County Environmental Health and Sustainability Program	5 years
3.13	Support Recycling and Composting Public Outreach and Education Campaigns	Monterey County Environmental Health	Continuous
3.14	Support the Food Recovery Program and Working Group	Monterey County Sustainability Program and Environmental Health	3-5 years
3.15	Develop a County Food Policy Council	Blue Zones, CSUMB, Cal Fresh Health Living, the Nutrition Collaboration of the Central Coast and Salinas Valley Memorial Healthcare System	1 year
3.16	Develop a Disaster Food Voucher Program	Monterey County Office of Emergency Services	1 year

### Strategy 4: Create Healthy Communities

Initiative	Initiative Task	Lead Organization(s)	Timeline
4.1	Support Access to Public Health, Healthcare, And Social Services	Monterey County Office of Emergency Services	Continuous
		Monterey County Health Department	3 years
		Monterey County Health Department	5 years
4.2	Collaborate to Support Mental and Physical Well-Being during Disasters	Monterey County Health Department & Office of Emergency Services	5 years
		Monterey County Behavioral Health	2 years
4.3	Establish A Medical Reserve Corp	Monterey County Health Department	3-5 years
4.4	Encourage Preparedness for Poor Air Quality	Monterey County Agricultural Commissioner's Office, Health Department, and Office of Emergency Services, & Monterey Bay Air Resources District,	5 years
		Monterey County Office of Emergency Services	2 years
4.5	Encourage Disaster Preparedness amongst Vulnerable Populations	Monterey County Health Department	Continuous
		Monterey County Office of Emergency Services	5 years

4.6	Work with Rehabilitation Centers and Pharmacies to Develop COOP plans	Monterey County Office of Emergency Services and Health Department	3-5 years
4.7	Increase Access and Functional Needs (AFN) Awareness Amongst First Responders	Monterey County Office of Emergency Services	1 year
		Monterey County Office of Emergency Services	Continuous
4.8	Develop an AFN Disaster Phone Tree	Monterey County Office of Emergency Services	2 years
4.9	Develop an Equity & Access team in the EOC	Monterey County Office of Emergency Services	1 year
4.10	Develop a Climate Action Plan's Equity Panel	Monterey County Sustainability Program	1 year

### Strategy 5: Encourage Resilient Households

Initiative	Initiative Task	Lead Organization(s)	Timeline
5.1	Provide Emergency Preparedness Packets and Kits to New Residents	Monterey County Office of Emergency Services	2-3 years
5.2	Support Discounted Disaster Insurance for Renters and Low-Income Owners	Monterey County Office of Emergency Services	3 years
5.3	Promote the Use of Renter's Insurance	Monterey County Office of Emergency Services	3 years
5.4	Increase Funding for Disaster Mitigation Home Modifications	Monterey County Office of Emergency Services	5 years
5.5	Develop Disaster Resistant Building Development	Monterey County Housing and Community Development Department	5 years
5.6	Support Local Housing Programs that Reduce Disaster Risk	Monterey County Office of Emergency Services	3 years
5.7	Develop a post disaster rapid housing replacement program	Monterey County Office of Emergency Services	3 years
5.8	Strengthen Partnership Between Emergency Management and Organizations that Serve the Homeless	Monterey County Office of Emergency Services	2-3 years
5.9	Create a Resilient Hotels Program	Monterey County Office of Emergency Services	2 years

### Strategy 6: Empower Social Mobility

Initiative	Initiative Task	Lead Organization(s)	Timeline
6.1	Expand Affordable Child Care	Monterey County's Child Care Planning Council	1 year
6.2	Reduce Disaster Vulnerability of Supply Chains	Monterey County Office of Emergency Services and Agricultural Commissioner's Office	3 years
6.3	Assist Small Business with Continuity of Operations Planning	Monterey County Office of Emergency Services	2 years
6.4	Expand Access to Affordable, High Speed Internet	Monterey County Information Technology Department	Continuous



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN PREPARED BY A COLLABORATIVE, INTER-DISCIPLINARY TASK FORCE OF OPERATIONAL AREA (OA) PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS' REPRESENTATIVE OF THE WHOLE-COMMUNITY. THE FOLLOWING ORGANIZATIONS PARTICIPATED IN PLANNING EFFORTS

- [Aera Energy LLC](#)
- [Agriculture & Land-Based Training Association](#)
- [Alisal Union School District](#)
- [American Cancer Society](#)
- [American Red Cross](#)
- [Anthem Christian School](#)
- [Aromas Community Grange](#)
- [Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments](#)
- [AT&T](#)
- [Big Sur Education Council](#)
- [Big Sur Fire](#)
- [Blue Zones](#)
- [Boys and Girls Club](#)
- [Bright Beginnings](#)
- [Cachagua CERT](#)
- [Cal Coastal Small Business Development Center](#)
- [Cal Fire](#)
- [Cal OES](#)
- [CalTrans](#)
- [California State University Monterey Bay](#)
- [Carmel Chamber of Commerce](#)
- [Carmel Police Dept](#)
- [Carmel Sunset Rotary Club](#)
- [Carmel Union School District](#)
- [Carmel Valley Manor](#)
- [Castro Plaza Child & Family Resource Center](#)
- [Catholic Diocese of Monterey](#)
- [Cedar Street Times](#)
- [Center for Community Advocacy](#)
- [Central Coast Center for Independent Living](#)
- [Central Coast Citizenship Project](#)
- [Central Coast Community Energy \(3CE\)](#)
- [CERV of Monterey Peninsula](#)
- [Chevron](#)
- [Church of Jesus Christ - Latter Day Saints](#)
- [City of Carmel by the Sea](#)
- [City of Del Rey Oaks](#)
- [City of Gonzales](#)
- [City of Greenfield](#)
- [City of King City](#)
- [City of Marina](#)
- [City of Monterey](#)
- [City of Salinas](#)
- [City of Sand City](#)
- [City of Seaside](#)
- [City of Soledad](#)
- [Clinica de Salud del Valle](#)
- [Coalition of Homeless Service Providers](#)
- [Coastal Kids Home Care](#)
- [Communities Organized for Relational Power in Action](#)
- [Community Alliance for Safety and Peace](#)
- [Community Association of Big Sur](#)
- [Community Builders for Monterey County](#)
- [Community Foundation for Monterey County](#)
- [Community Homeless Solutions](#)
- [County of Monterey Sustainability Program](#)
- [Deaf and Hard of Hearing Service Center](#)
- [Doctors on Duty](#)
- [Felton Institute](#)
- [Fire Safe Council for Monterey County](#)
- [First 5 Monterey County](#)
- [Gateway Center of Monterey County, Inc.](#)
- [Gonzales Fire Dept.](#)

- [Grower Shipper's Association of Central California](#)
- [Hartnell College](#)
- [Health Project Center](#)
- [Healthy Eating Active Living Cities Campaign](#)
- [Housing Authority of Monterey County](#)
- [ITN Monterey County](#)
- [Josephine Kernes Memorial Pool](#)
- [King City Chamber of Commerce](#)
- [King City Police Dept.](#)
- [Kiwanis Club of Monterey](#)
- [Legal Services for Seniors](#)
- [Loaves, Fishes & Computers](#)
- [Marina Fire Department](#)
- [Marina Police Department](#)
- [Meals on Wheels](#)
- [MEE Memorial Hospital](#)
- [Mid Coast Fire Brigade](#)
- [Middlebury Institute](#)
- [Monterey Bay Central Labor Council](#)
- [Monterey Bay Economic Partnership](#)
- [Monterey Bay Air Resources District](#)
- [Monterey CERT](#)
- [Monterey College of Law](#)
- [Monterey County Behavioral Health](#)
- [Monterey County Child Care Planning Council](#)
- [Monterey County Civil Rights Office](#)
- [Monterey County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee](#)
- [Monterey County Convention & Visitors Bureau](#)
- [Monterey County Department of Social Services](#)
- [Monterey County District Attorney's Office](#)
- [Monterey County Environmental Health](#)
- [Monterey County Fire Chief's Association](#)
- [Monterey County Free Libraries](#)
- [Monterey County Health Department](#)
- [Monterey County Hospitality Association](#)
- [Monterey County Housing and Community Development Department](#)
- [Monterey County Law Enforcement Officer's Association](#)
- [Monterey County Office of Community Engagement & Strategic Advocacy](#)
- [Monterey County Office of Education](#)
- [Monterey County Office of Emergency Services](#)
- [Monterey County Office of the Agricultural Commissioner](#)
- [Monterey County Public Health](#)
- [Monterey County Public Works, Facilities and Parks](#)
- [Monterey County Resource Management Agency](#)
- [Monterey County Sheriff's Office](#)
- [Monterey County Vintners & Growers Association](#)
- [Monterey County Water Resources Agency](#)
- [Monterey County Weekly Workforce Development](#)
- [Monterey Fire Dept.](#)
- [Monterey One Water](#)
- [Monterey Parks & Recreation Department](#)
- [Monterey Peninsula Chamber of Commerce](#)
- [Monterey Peninsula Water Management District](#)
- [Monterey Police Dept.](#)
- [Monterey Public Library](#)
- [Monterey Regional Stormwater Management Program](#)
- [Monterey Salinas Transit](#)
- [Monterey Urban County Standing Committee](#)
- [Monterey-San Benito Health Care Preparedness Coalition](#)
- [Monterey Undergrounding](#)
- [National Coalition Building Institute](#)
- [New Monterey Neighborhood Association](#)
- [Non-Profit Alliance of Monterey County](#)
- [Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History](#)
- [Pacific Grove Police Department](#)
- [Pacific Grove Recreation Department](#)
- [Palma High School](#)

- [Pebble Beach](#)
- [PG&E](#)
- [Rancho Cielo Community School](#)
- [Read to Me Project](#)
- [Region 5 After School Partnerships](#)
- [Resource Conservation District of Monterey County](#)
- [Ruth Andresen Elementary School](#)
- [Salinas Police Department](#)
- [Salinas Recreation & Community Services Department](#)
- [Salinas Union High School District](#)
- [Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce](#)
- [Salinas Valley Fair, Inc](#)
- [Salinas Valley Memorial Healthcare System](#)
- [Salvation Army](#)
- [Sand City](#)
- [SEIU Local 521](#)
- [Soledad Police Department](#)
- [Soledad- Mission Recreation District](#)
- [South County CERT](#)
- [South County Outreach Effort \(SCORE\)](#)
- [SPCA for Monterey County](#)
- [Special Kids Connect](#)
- [Steinbeck Library](#)
- [Steinbeck Real Estate](#)
- [T Mobile](#)
- [Thomas Carman Food Pantry](#)
- [Transportation Agency for Monterey County \(TAMC\)](#)
- [United Farm Workers](#)
- [United Way Monterey County](#)
- [University of California 4H Program](#)
- [US Census](#)
- [Verizon](#)
- [Wonder Wood Ranch](#)

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## RECORD OF CHANGES

ANY APPROVED ADDITIONS OR MODIFICATIONS TO THE COMMUNITY RESILIENCE PLAN WILL BE DOCUMENTED AND NOTED IN THIS SECTION. THE DATE OF THE CHANGE, THE TITLE OF THE PERSON MAKING THE CHANGE, AND A SUMMARY AND REASON FOR THE MODIFICATIONS, WILL BE INSERTED INTO THIS SECTION OF THE PLAN.

Change Number	Date of Change	Section	Summary of Change	Change Made By (Title or Name)
1				
2				



# ATTACHMENTS

## ATTACHMENT #1 – REFERENCES

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- **Link to Reference Page:** <https://www.co.monterey.ca.us/home/showdocument?id=105444>

## ATTACHMENT #2 - COMMUNITY RESILIENCE SURVEY AND RESULTS

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The Community Resilience Surveys were created to gather public input for the Community Resilience Plan. They ask about areas of pride & need in the community, lessons learned from disaster experiences, preparedness efforts taken, and recommendations for building resilience.

- The Organization Survey is for those who own or manage a business or organization in Monterey County. **Link:** <https://arcg.is/08bGHG>
- The Individual Survey is for County residents, workers & students. **Link:** <https://arcg.is/04vPv>
- **Results:** <https://www.co.monterey.ca.us/home/showdocument?id=105417>

## ATTACHMENT #2 - COMMUNITY RESILIENCE TOOLKIT

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The Community Resilience Toolkit provides guidance on preparing for, responding to, and recovering from emergencies in Monterey County. The direct links to each section of the toolkit are provided below and can also be found at Monterey County's Disaster Ready Webpage: [www.co.monterey.ca.us/government/departments-a-h/administrative-office/office-of-emergency-services/ready-monterey-county](http://www.co.monterey.ca.us/government/departments-a-h/administrative-office/office-of-emergency-services/ready-monterey-county)

- **Emergency Preparedness Toolkit** - A guide on preparing for emergencies, including a fillable emergency plan and communication card. [English PDF](#), [Spanish PDF](#)
- **Emergency Preparedness Checklist** - A quick checklist of the basic things you should know and do to prepare for emergencies. [English PDF](#)  
*Spanish Version Under Construction*
- **Guide to preparing for additional needs** - Tips for preparing those with access and functional needs, animals, businesses, and children. [English PDF](#), [Spanish PDF](#)
- **Disaster Response Toolkit** – A guide on how to respond during different types of disasters. *Under Construction*
- **Disaster Recovery Toolkit** - A guide on what to do after a disaster strikes. *Under Construction*

## ATTACHMENT #3 - DISASTER RESOURCE DIRECTORY

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- **English Version:** <https://www.co.monterey.ca.us/home/showdocument?id=105415>
- **Spanish Version:** *Under Construction*