



Monterey County

Board of Supervisors
168 W. Alisal St.,
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Board Report

Legistar File Number: 19-0659

August 27, 2019

Introduced: 8/19/2019

Current Status: Agenda Ready

Version: 1

Matter Type: General Agenda Item

Receive the 2019 Monterey County Homeless Census and Survey Report.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors:

Receive and approve the 2019 Monterey County Homeless Census and Survey Report.

SUMMARY/ DISCUSSION:

Every two years during the last ten days of January, communities across the country conduct comprehensive counts of the local population experiencing homelessness. The biennial Point-in-Time Census Counts of sheltered and unsheltered persons are required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for all jurisdictions receiving federal funding to provide homeless services for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Monterey County receives approximately \$1.6 million in federal Continuum of Care (CoC) funding that supports homeless shelters, housing and service providers. This Census is also essential for the new funding provided by the State of California to address homelessness. The County of Monterey along with the Coalition of Homeless Services Providers funds this critical project for our community.

The 2019 Monterey County Point-in-Time Count was a community-wide effort conducted on January 31, 2019 - this effort includes a count of all individuals in shelters and transitional housing the night before, an early morning observational street count, a targeted count of unaccompanied homeless youth and young adults, and a count from the Monterey County Office of Education of unsheltered students and their families. Data from these efforts are carefully reviewed to assure duplicate counts are removed.

It is important to keep in mind that the Point-in-Time Census Count does not likely capture the complete extent of homelessness, given its reliance on a visual count of homeless individuals conducted by volunteers on a single morning during the last ten days of January and can be impacted by a number of uncontrollable variables such as weather. However, it is a consistent methodology mandated by HUD and employed in communities throughout the nation to provide a snapshot of this difficult to count population. To better inform policy, Monterey County supplements the Census Count with a more in-depth survey administered to 450 unsheltered and sheltered individuals experiencing homelessness.

On January 31, 2019, there were 2,422 individuals that were able to be identified as experiencing homelessness. This represents a decrease of 415 (15%) from the Count conducted in 2017. Factors that may have influenced the decline include: the increase in the General Assistance grant available to homeless individuals from \$133 to \$340 per month, implementation of the Homeless Coordinated Assessment and Referral System (CARS) funded by Monterey County, and

implementation of the Whole Person Care initiative, along with other initiatives pursued by municipal jurisdictions. The decline also could be influenced by the instability inherent in the federally mandated methodology.

Of all individuals experiencing homelessness counted in the Census Count, twenty-four percent (24%) were staying in shelters (either emergency shelters or transitional housing), twenty-two (22%) were living on streets, nineteen percent (19%) were staying in vehicles, eighteen percent (18%) were staying in tent encampments, nine percent (9%) were staying in structures not intended for sleeping, and seven percent (7%) were staying in motels/hotels paid for by a homeless services agency.

Individuals experiencing homelessness are distributed across regions of the county as displayed in the attached chart.

Of the jurisdictions in the county, Seaside and Soledad were the only two to see increases during the Census Count, rising 86% and 169% respectively from 2017 to 2019.

Additional notable findings include: 23% of the unhoused population experiences chronic homelessness, 7% were veterans, and 25% were individuals in families living with children.

In addition to the county-wide Census Count, surveys were administered to a randomized sample of homeless individuals in the weeks following the Census Count. This effort resulted in 450 surveys. Findings generated from the survey provide more in-depth information regarding individuals and families experiencing homelessness and their circumstances, including but not limited to: the causes and length of homelessness, previous and current living accommodations, obstacles to obtaining permanent housing, age, and health conditions.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

The 2019 Monterey County Homeless Census and Survey Report was prepared by Applied Survey Research, who also prepared censuses for Sonoma, Solano, Marin, Alameda, San Francisco, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, and El Dorado Counties. Its implementation was coordinated by the Coalition of Homeless Services Providers. It is funded by Monterey County Department of Social Services and Department of Health, Behavioral Health Division and the Coalition of Homeless Services Providers. The conduct of the Census Count itself was supported by the partnership of many local nonprofits that provide services to the homeless services, community volunteers, and current or formerly homeless individuals who served as guides.

FINANCING:

Receipt and approval of the Homeless Census has no impact to the County General Fund contributions.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS STRATEGIC INITIATIVES:

This report correlates to the Health & Human Services Strategic Initiative adopted by the Board of Supervisors by allowing the Department of Social Services to understand the homeless population in Monterey County to provide better targeted services.

Check the related Board of Supervisors Strategic Initiatives:

- Economic Development
- Administration
- Health & Human Services
- Infrastructure
- Public Safety

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Attachments: Monterey County 2019 Homeless Census and Survey, Jurisdiction Report

Copy is on file with the Clerk of the Board as an attachment to this Board Report.