



## Who we are

The Ventura County Continuum of Care Alliance is a collaborative group dedicated to promoting a desirable and thriving community by ending homelessness in Ventura County. The group is currently comprised of community advocates, housing providers, county agencies, housing authorities, health care providers, city administrators, and non-profit organizations.

## What we do

We seek to provide a county-wide end to homelessness by bringing together the skills and resources of a wide range of community partners in support of the efforts of homeless persons to become rehoused.

## How we do it

We share several guiding principles:

- Homelessness should be rare, brief, and non-reoccurring.
- Ending homelessness cannot occur without the support of all sectors of our community, including government, service providers, the faith-based community, businesses, community residents and homeless persons themselves.
- Solving homelessness requires an adequate supply of housing that very low income people can afford.
- Homelessness is a high-risk condition that has severe impacts on each homeless person and on the larger community. For this reason, homelessness (even if by choice) is not acceptable.
- Homelessness is a condition, not a character trait, and homeless persons should be treated with respect and be offered every opportunity to improve their lives.
- Because of the complexity and uniqueness of each homeless person's situation, each homeless person must be engaged, assessed and evaluated for strengths and vulnerability, so that services can be offered to meet individualized needs. Service delivery is most effective when connected to meaningful engagement.
- Coordinated service maximizes positive impact on homeless individuals, is more economic and efficient, and minimizes duplication of services. Engaging all of the local homeless service providers in the Coordinated Entry System is essential.
- Recognizing that some homeless persons have diminished capacity due to health or other issues, solutions to homelessness usually involve a mix of personal responsibility and social responsibility.
- Solutions to homelessness often require political will and governmental action.
- Positive community living behaviors are encouraged and will discourage high-risk, illegal, and anti-social behaviors.
- Realize that multiple approaches to service will be required to end homelessness, among which "housing first" and "rapid rehousing" strategies are primary, evidence-based practices. Both of these approaches require access to housing that people living in poverty can afford.



In keeping with these principles, we work collaboratively in a client-centered way. We make every effort to engage all homeless persons with a view toward urging them onto a path that leads out of homelessness. We embrace a coordinated entry system that includes: comprehensive assessment, vulnerability screening and movement into a strong system of supports. We provide services that help homeless persons both survive homelessness and permanently leave homelessness. We will work to increase the partnerships necessary to achieve the goal of ending homelessness. We create accountability systems that demonstrate positive outcomes. We work together to maximize resources. We embrace and promote best practices. We advocate for the development of housing that is affordable to persons of very limited means. We advance our mission when and where needed.

## **Why it matters**

Homelessness represents the deepest measure of poverty. The condition of homelessness robs individuals of their dignity, their privacy, their health, their independence and even their identity. It places them in living conditions that are unacceptable in our society. Homeless persons suffer at great cost not only to themselves, but also to the community — in healthcare, police and court interventions. Homelessness is often viewed as a scourge or blight on the community. Ending homelessness not only helps those barely existing, it makes the community a better place for all. The 2018 “point-in-time” count identified 1,299 homeless persons on one day in Ventura County. Experts tell us that the point-in-time count represents only a portion of those who are homeless during the year. Therefore, it is critical that the community marshal all of its resources and work together to end homelessness.

For more information, visit the Ventura County Continuum of Care website at [www.venturacoc.org](http://www.venturacoc.org).