

Barbara Poppe and associates

The collective for impact

The Path Forward:

*recommendations to advance an end to
homelessness in the Coachella Valley*

REPORT TO THE BOARD OF THE DESERT HEALTHCARE
DISTRICT AND DESERT HEALTHCARE FOUNDATION

NOVEMBER 27, 2018

How the recommendations for the Coachella Valley were developed...

CORE TEAM

Linda Barrack, Martha's Village and Kitchen

Cheryll Dahlin, CVAG

Linda Evans, Tenet Healthcare and City Council of La Quinta

Lisa Houston and staff, Desert Healthcare District (DHCD)

Sabby Jonathan, City Council of Palm Desert

Damien O'Farrell, Path of Life Ministries

Greg Rodriguez, Riverside County 4th District Supervisor

Carole Rogers, DHCD Board Member

Mike Walsh, Riverside County Housing Authority

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Key leader interviews

Two onsite consultations

Focus groups – west, mid and east valley

Leader planning sessions

Data gathering from Riverside County and providers – programs, outcomes, funding streams, etc.

Document review

Data analysis – national, state, and regional data

Best practices review

Program visits: Path of Life Ministries Outreach, Martha's Village and Kitchen, Coachella Valley Rescue Mission, and Indio CORP

Purpose of recommendations

Reduce unsheltered homelessness. This is critical since there are increasing numbers of people who are experiencing unsheltered homelessness within the Coachella Valley

Increase the “throughput” from literal homelessness to stable housing. Both a humane response and provides greater efficiencies for existing emergency responses through turning over temporary shelter capacity to enable more persons who are experiencing unsheltered homelessness to be served.

Address the needs of the **most vulnerable young children** who are precariously housed and at imminent risk of literal homelessness.



Housing First –

A proven
approach
and the
foundation
for success

An approach to ending homelessness that centers on providing people experiencing homelessness with housing as quickly as possible – and then providing services as needed.

The basic underlying principle of Housing First is that people are better able to move forward with their lives if they are first housed.



Keys to success



Crisis Response

- Focus crisis services on those who are **unsheltered** or at imminent risk of being unsheltered.
- Offer diversion first.
- Crisis housing that is low barrier and housing focused

Housing Solutions

- **Prioritize** housing resources for those who need more than crisis services to exit homelessness.
- Rapidly connect those who have the longest histories of homelessness and highest housing barriers to a viable housing option.

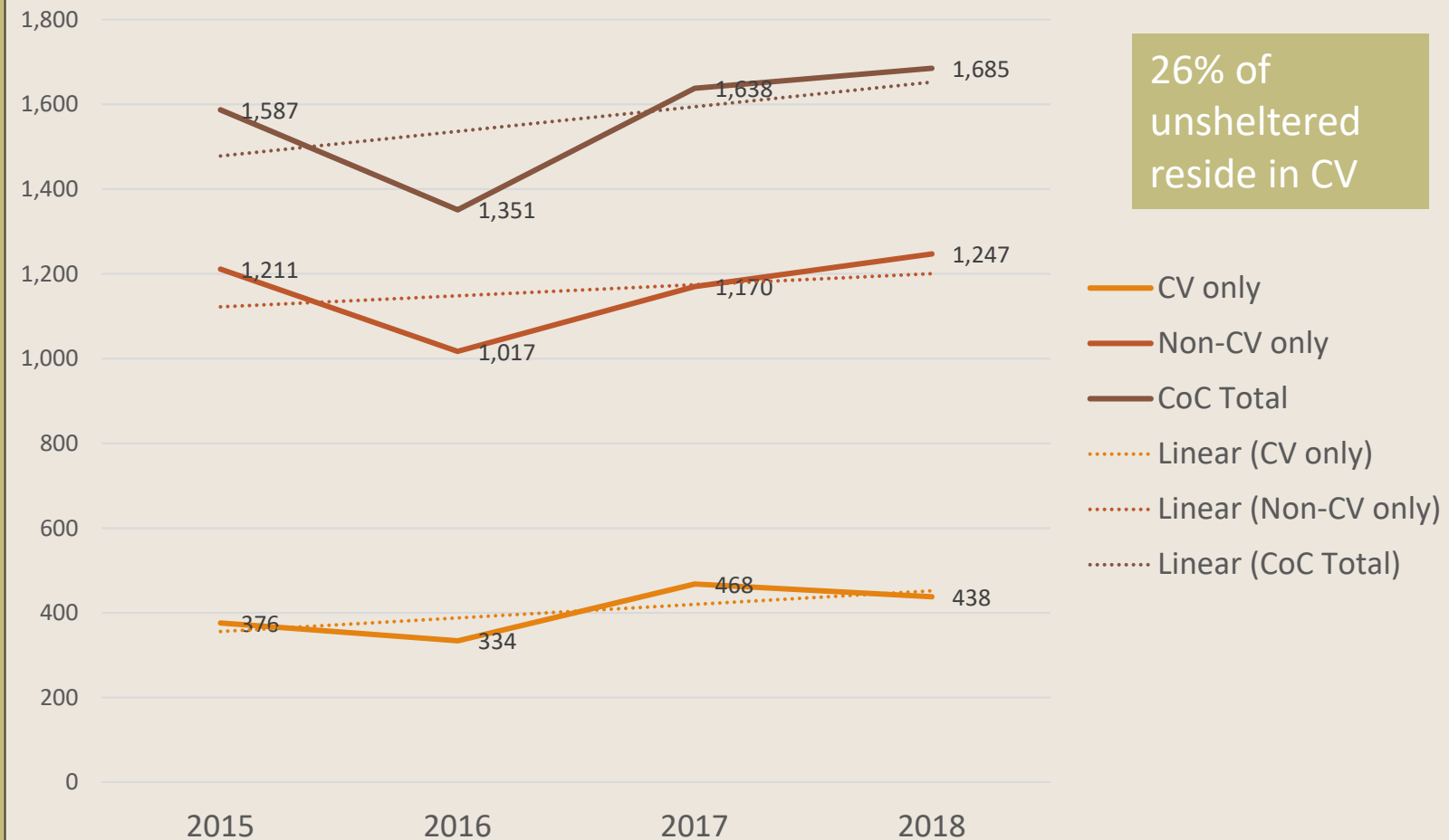
Alignment

- Develop cross-sector, client-centered systems approach for Coachella Valley
- Grounded in **Housing First**
- Data driven
- Reduce fragmentation and align resources
- Leverage mainstream resources and funding

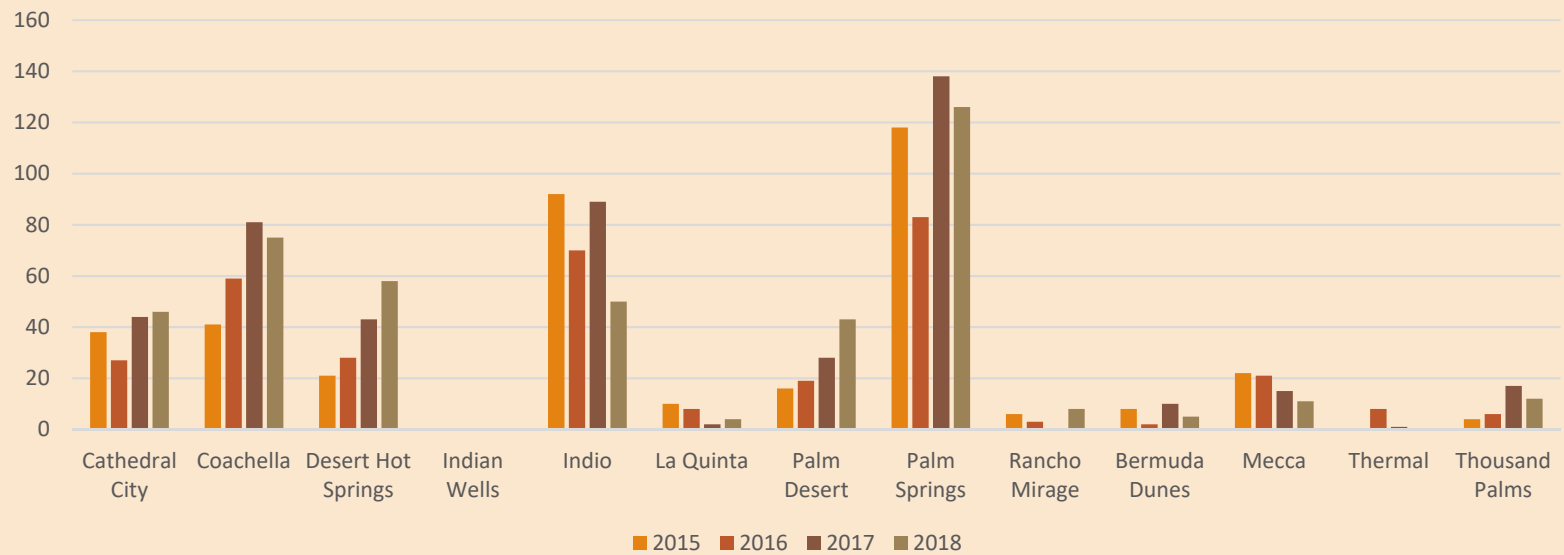
Optimal System

1. None to very few people unsheltered
2. Diversion offered to all (diversion = problem-solving conversation, perhaps light flexible financial assistance)
3. Short length of time homeless
4. High rate of exit to permanent housing across all types of crisis interventions
5. Low rates of return to homelessness
6. Self-resolution from emergency shelter is positive for system (self-resolution = exit without requiring housing intervention)
7. Housing interventions reserved for literally homeless (i.e. from emergency shelter or streets) and for those who do not self-resolve
8. Most intensive housing resources serve highest need households
9. High utilization rates for housing interventions

Riverside CoC PIT Unsheltered Trends Coachella Valley Compared to Other Areas



Coachella Valley PIT Trends By Jurisdiction 2015-2018



Unsheltered PIT Trends



Coachella
Valley
Programs:
focus is
crisis relief

- Most RRH and PSH providers operate county-wide and serve CV but are not specifically operating within the CV.
- **530 beds for crisis housing v. 138 beds for permanent housing**
 - 61% of CV crisis beds are dedicated to adults and couples without children in the households
 - 32% of CV crisis beds are dedicated to families with children
 - 7% of CV crisis beds are dedicated to under-age youth
- Not operating at full capacity
 - **79%** during the annual PIT count (Riverside CoC 2018 HIC)
 - Average annual utilization rates across Riverside CoC for emergency shelter and transitional housing was **87%** and **83%** for families and singles adults, respectively (Riverside CoC FY2017 AHAR).

Coachella Valley provides disproportionate share of crisis housing response for Riverside County

18% of general population lives in Coachella Valley

26% of unsheltered homeless people reside in Coachella Valley

63% of all emergency shelter beds are located in the Coachella Valley

58% of all transitional housing beds are located in the Coachella Valley

Annual performance

- Average and median length of time that a household stayed in emergency shelter was **58 and 24 days** respectively.
- PSH with **97%** of household served in PSH retained that housing or exited to other permanent housing.
- **Street outreach** had the lowest rate of successful exits, just **19%** exited to permanent housing and the lowest rate of quality data collection.
- Other program types were more successful - with **44%** of exits from **emergency shelter, transitional and rapid rehousing** successful
 - ***but lower than would be seen if programs were aligned with best practices.***
- Among households who exited from emergency shelter or transitional to permanent housing, **81% did not return to homelessness.**

Riverside County

Riverside County, AHAR: 10/1/16-9/30/17
(Coachella Valley only data for all programs was not available)



HOMECONNECT: CV HOUSEHOLDS

During the first ten months of 2018, 425 CV households assessed

- 206 scored for RRH
- 219 scored for PSH

Since 2016, 881 CV households assessed

- ❖ 299 housed
- ❖ 55 have housing match and seeking a landlord
- ❖ 250 were inactivated due to loss of contact
- ❖ 277 are currently active and awaiting a housing match
 - 74% are chronically homeless awaiting PSH,
 - 6% need PSH but aren't chronically homeless
 - 16% are awaiting RRH
 - 94% are single individuals
 - 6% are families with children.

Pillar One: Community Engagement and Leadership

1

Establish the Coachella Valley Collaborative to End Homelessness Collaborative

Establish the **Coachella Valley Collaborative to End Homelessness** in partnership with the CVAG Homeless Committee, the Riverside County Executive Office and the Riverside Continuum of Care. This cross-sector, collective impact initiative should:

- create a shared agenda and clear, measurable goals,
- align and enhance funding from public, philanthropic, and private sources,
- establish CV-specific data and performance management plan,
- support the CVAG homelessness committee and its member organizations,
- align with the County of Riverside strategic plan to address homelessness and inform the CoC,
- promote community awareness and education about the problem of and solutions to homelessness in CV, publicize how to help, and raise new funding,
- organize a funders collaborative that includes current and potential local public and philanthropic investors, and
- implement the recommendations contained in this report

Pillar One: Community Engagement and Leadership

1

Establish the Coachella Valley Collaborative to End Homelessness Collaborative

Strengthen the data foundation—what gets measured, gets done

- Improve HMIS functionality
- Expand HMIS to include non-HUD funded community residential programs and non-residential services
- Use HMIS as tool for coordinating street outreach
- Identify research partner to support data analysis and research necessary to undertake cross-system strategies
- Provide community dashboards and data analysis to support the collective impact initiative
- Conduct disparities and impact analysis

Pillar One: Community Engagement and Leadership

1

Establish the Coachella Valley Collaborative to End Homelessness Collaborative

Engage the entire community in **solutions**

- Understand causes and consequences of homelessness in Coachella Valley.
- Increase awareness of the network of agencies working to address homelessness
- Mobilize public will for real solutions to homelessness.

Create a strong staffing – a “backbone” will be required

- Initial staffing should be flexible and lean. 3-person team is recommended: executive director, a project facilitator, and a data manager
- With DHCD, CVAG and partners, some staff support functions may be achieved by loaning or reassigning talent. Partners should also be tapped to provide in-kind contributions of office space, shared IT systems, fiscal management, etc.

Pillar Two: Improve Cross-Sector Responses

2

Implement an enhanced Health Home Program to prevent homelessness and assist homeless individuals to exit more quickly to stable housing with services.

The **Health Homes Program (HHP)** for eligible Medi-Cal beneficiaries with multiple chronic conditions who are frequent utilizers and may benefit from enhanced care management and coordination.

HHP coordinates the full range of physical health, behavioral health, and community-based long-term services and supports needed by eligible beneficiaries.

- Comprehensive care management
- Care coordination health promotion
- Comprehensive transitional care
- Individual and family support
- Referral to community and social support services, including housing

What: Establish a cross-sector, multi-agency collaborative composed of organizations that interact with and serve the target population should work with the MCPs

Why: Individuals who meet criteria for HHP have frequent interactions with public systems (police, courts, child welfare, etc.) and have experience repeated episodes of homelessness, chronic homelessness, or housing instability.

Pillar Two: Improve Cross-Sector Responses

3

Establish an **early childhood and school-based collaborative** for homelessness prevention programs to stabilize the most vulnerable children and families

Key fact: 3,000 children counted as homeless across the three CV school districts with rates of homelessness nearly 10% in the Palm Springs Unified District

This new collaborative should:

- Identify, link, and coordinate services and programs to stabilize the most vulnerable children and families.
- Focus on children who are identified as homeless by early childhood programs and school systems and intersect with domestic violence services and child welfare.
- Initially improve awareness of available resources, identify ways to reduce duplication and better fill gaps, and create a more holistic community response.
- The collaborative could also undertake pilot projects.

Pillar Three: Improve Crisis Response

4

Scale up diversion assistance or “**assisted rapid resolution**” across the Coachella Valley

Prevention: *At risk of losing housing*

Rapid Resolution:
Requesting shelter
or unsheltered

Homeless
Services

Rapid Resolution

- Problem-solving approach
- Relocation assistance
- Housing search
- Rental and financial assistance
- Mediation
- Connection to mainstream resources

Pillar Three: Improve Crisis Response

4

Scale up diversion assistance or “**assisted rapid resolution**” across the Coachella Valley

Scale up rapid resolution **FIRST** everywhere

- ✓ Inventory currently available resources for diversion and prevention assistance.
- ✓ Raise flexible funds
- ✓ Identify organizations that can serve as access points
- ✓ Organize cross-agency training on best practices
- ✓ Develop procedures to support administration of centralized diversion assistance funding
- ✓ Add staff capacity for assisted rapid resolution services, as needed, at direct service organizations that receive a high volume of referrals for homeless assistance
- ✓ Advocate with Riverside County CoC to align its diversion approach with proven practices for assisted rapid resolution

Pillar Three: Improve Crisis Response

5

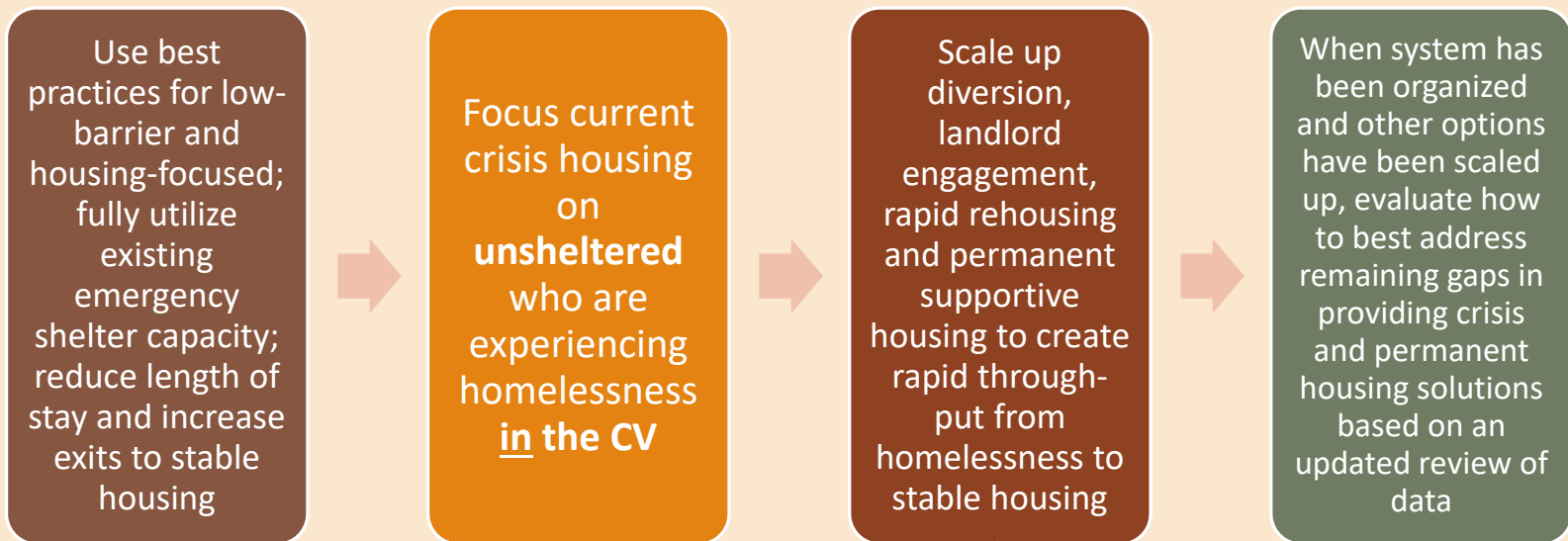
Establish a true, collaborative **crisis response system** to provide a more comprehensive response to homelessness across the Coachella Valley.

The Collaborative should convene the Coachella Valley Crisis Response Network as a working group of the Collaborative. Invite all organizations and programs that address homelessness in the Coachella Valley to participate.

Work with these organizations to, over time, build a Crisis Response Network that based on the strong foundation of direct service programs and organizations that are currently addressing homelessness.

- share program information, discuss and problem-solve challenges meeting client needs
- provide a forum for staff to know each other
- review current program data
- advance partnerships to embed services from one agency into another agency's programs
- identify common challenges and barriers and request the Collaborative problem-solve solutions
- apply for joint funding that supports the objectives of the Network and advances progress toward the shared agenda of the Collaborative

Before expanding crisis housing options....



Under-investment in these other areas will create bottleneck resulting in more discharges into homelessness or long stays in crisis housing

Pillar Four: Increase Exits to Housing and Services

6

Increase access to affordable rental housing **by preserving existing housing** options and establishing a coordinated and **collaborative landlord recruitment** initiative.

Preserve affordable rental housing

- Develop an **inventory** of existing affordable housing (apartments, weekly hotels/motels, SROs, rooming houses, and group homes)
- Review units developed using public funding to understand the timeline for **expiration of affordability requirements** and engage with the owners to develop ways to extend the affordability of these units.
- Set up a series of workshops for owners to **promote preservation through rehab.**
- Create a protocol with **code enforcement** to advance efforts to preserve affordable rental housing.

Pillar Four: Increase Exits to Housing and Services

6

Increase access to affordable rental housing **by preserving existing housing** options and establishing a coordinated and **collaborative landlord recruitment** initiative.

Landlord engagement/recruitment – develop position, that engages landlords and develops a cadre of landlords with units willing to rent to homeless individuals and families who may have less than perfect credit histories, low income to rent ratios, poor job stability and prior evictions. Focus on owners who have received public benefits.

Landlord mitigation fund –an added protection for landlords who are willing to reduce screening criteria to rent to someone with limited income, poor rental history, history as a survivor of domestic violence, etc. If there are excessive damages to the unit, lost rent, or legal fees beyond the security deposit, property owners can be reimbursed for damages up to a specific amount.

Pillar Four: Increase Exits to Housing and Services

7 Scale up **Rapid Rehousing** (RRH) that uses best practices approach

Rapid Rehousing

- 1) Housing Identification
- 2) Rent and Move-In Assistance
- 3) Rapid Rehousing Case Management and Services

Progressive engagement is critical - a strategy of starting with a small amount of assistance and then adding more assistance only when needed.

Rapid rehousing in the Coachella Valley:

- Length of assistance usually more than 12 months.
- Very few households receive shorter term assistance of one to four months which would suggest that progressive engagement is not being used.
- Recently (October 2018), 45 Coachella Valley households had been assessed as eligible for RRH but had been unable to be matched to RRH due to lack of RRH capacity.

Pillar Four: Increase Exits to Housing and Services

7 Scale up Rapid Rehousing (RRH) that uses best practices approach

Recommended actions:

- ✓ With Riverside County executive office, review current contracting and funding practices for RRH
- ✓ Partner with the Riverside County CoC to identify ways to expedite and streamline referrals from HomeConnect for RRH and align with best practices including progressive engagement.
- ✓ Identify resources to support “one-shot” housing assistance
- ✓ Review current program data and outcomes for the programs that provide RRH and work to improve performance
- ✓ Work to embed employment services and supports into the RRH programs
- ✓ Offer cross-agency training on best practices in RRH

Pillar Four: Increase Exits to Housing and Services

8

Scale up **Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)** that uses best practices approach, targeted to chronic homelessness and at risk of chronic homelessness and **expand access to housing with services** in other settings

Recommended actions:

- ✓ Expand **Scattered Site PSH** through partnerships to access housing vouchers/rental assistance and enhanced health care services, especially mental health services.
- ✓ Establish a **PSH development pipeline** that also creates additional affordable rental housing units
- ✓ Inventory and facilitate access to **shared housing, independent livings** (quality board and care) and other settings to be determined.
- ✓ Enhance **partnerships with Riverside County and the Riverside County CoC** to enhance services in PSH and expedite referrals for PSH vacancies.

Recommendations (ranked by order of impact)	
<p><i>Community Engagement and Leadership</i> Establish the Coachella Valley Collaborative to End Homelessness</p>	Phase 1
<p><i>Improve Crisis Response</i> Scale up diversion assistance or “assisted rapid resolution” (problem-solving with access to flexible financial assistance) across the Coachella Valley</p>	
<p><i>Increase Exits to Housing and Services</i> Scale up Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) that uses best practices approach and increase access to housing and services in other settings</p>	
<p><i>Improve Cross-Sector Responses</i> Implement an enhanced Health Home Program to prevent homelessness and assist homeless individuals to exit more quickly to stable housing with services</p>	
<p><i>Increase Exits to Housing and Services</i> Increase access to affordable rental housing by preserving existing housing options and establishing a coordinated and collaborative landlord recruitment initiative</p>	
<p><i>Increase Exits to Housing and Services</i> Align Rapid Rehousing (RRH) funding and practices with best practices approach; scale up as needed</p>	
<p><i>Improve Cross-Sector Responses</i> Establish an early childhood and school-based collaborative for homelessness prevention programs to stabilize the most vulnerable children and families</p>	Phase 2
<p><i>Improve Crisis Response</i> Establish a true, collaborative crisis response system to provide a more comprehensive response to homelessness across the Coachella Valley</p>	

Closing thoughts...

The “north star” for the Coachella Valley Collaborative to End Homelessness should be to bring a functional end to homelessness – making it rare, brief and non-recurring.

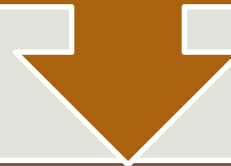
The residents of neighborhoods across the Coachella Valley – those who are housed and those who are without – should be able to see the first-hand impact of this effort over the next few years.

Next steps:

Endorse the recommendations



Convene the Coachella Valley Collaborative to End Homelessness



Establish a timeline with accountabilities

“ending
homelessness not
only is the
right thing to do,
it makes
economic sense.”

