



# Sonoma County Homeless Coalition Board

## Homeless Coalition Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, October 22, 2025

1:00 – 4:30 PM, Pacific Time – Zoom Meeting

Zoom Link:

[https://sonomacounty.zoom.us/rec/share/yWzAfJTFHzk6PQhF1L3baAmJ8TIF\\_df\\_T7qfdPiDZUW4GheahpVofuhgjs0si0Lg.UV4rIWROorjc5uGb](https://sonomacounty.zoom.us/rec/share/yWzAfJTFHzk6PQhF1L3baAmJ8TIF_df_T7qfdPiDZUW4GheahpVofuhgjs0si0Lg.UV4rIWROorjc5uGb)

Passcode: =4rdFwru

### Welcome and Roll Call Introductions (00:03:01 - 00:13:45)

Chair Jennielynn Holmes called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM, and explained the Zoom rules regarding public comment and the Brown Act guidelines.

Department of Health Services Division Director Nolan Sullivan introduced the new interim DHS Homelessness Services Division Director, Desiree Ohlstrom.

Chair Holmes welcomed two new members to the Homeless Coalition (HC) Board: Kimberly Stevens will be representing the Lived Experience Advisory Planning (LEAP) Board, and Ash Culver is the new representative for the transitional-aged youth seat. The HC Board thanks Kimberly and Ash for their willingness to serve.

Roll call proceeded with each member introducing themselves and identifying the seat they occupy.

**Present:** Jennielynn Holmes, Catholic Charities | Caroline Bañuelos, City of Santa Rosa | Kevin McDonnell, City of Petaluma | Chris Coursey, Sonoma County Board of Supervisors | Martha Cheever, Community Development Commission | Stephen Zollman, City of Sebastopol | Dannielle Danforth, West County Community Services | Margaret Sluyk, Reach For Home | Chessy Etheridge, Adult Lived Experience Seat | Chris Cabral, Committee on the Shelterless (COTS) | Kristi Lozinto, Member At-Large | Angelica Smith, Tribal Seat | Rosie Traversi, Licensed Healthcare Organization Seat | Maria Rico, BIPOC Led/Serving Organization Seat | Kimberly Stevens, LEAP Board | Ash Culver, Transitional-aged Youth Seat

**Absent:** Jackie Elward, City of Rohnert Park, Ron Wellander, City of Sonoma

A quorum was present.

#### **1 - 4. Approval of Consent Calendar (00:13:46 – 00:15:23)**

- Chair Holmes presented the following consent calendar items for approval:
  1. 10/22/25 meeting agenda
  2. 9/24/25 meeting minutes
  3. Summary of Follow-Ups from the Previous Meeting(s)
  4. Reports for Standing Committee Updates

- **Public Comment:** None.

**Motion:** Mayor Stephen Zollman moves to approve the Consent Calendar.

**Second:** Chessy Etheredge seconds the motion.

**Abstentions or Objections:** None.

**Motion passes.** The consent calendar is approved.

#### **5. Reports from Lead Agency Staff (00:15:26 – 00:33:43)**

- **Department of Health Services (DHS) Director Updates:**

-DHS Director Nolan Sullivan reported that Desiree Ohlstrom is now on board as interim Homelessness Division Director, and efforts to incorporate homeless operations into the Behavioral Health division are beginning to be developed. This integration is approached with a lens toward increasing in-depth services for county residents who present with higher acuity behavioral and/or substance abuse needs, to more readily prepare and increase their competency for permanent housing.

-Susan Price, with the consultant group MRG, is currently conducting interviews with community leaders and partners regarding the transition of Homelessness Services Division programs to Behavioral Health and the anticipated subsequent adjustments in services to the community. She will be in touch with Homeless Coalition (HC) Board members for one-to-one conversations concerning the upcoming changes. Various group feedback sessions for DHS staff, partners, and HC Board members will also be forthcoming. Dates and times of the sessions will be provided to HC Board members after today's meeting.

-The Measure O Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) application results indicate that fifty-six (56) applications have been received, with project requests totaling \$36,000,000 for an available \$10,000,000 in awards. An independent panel is currently in the process of rating and ranking the requests, and hopes to provide early responses to applicants by the end of the fiscal year, if possible.

-The Sonoma County Mayors' and Councilmembers' Association (SCMCA) graciously invited Director Sullivan to address their meeting tomorrow night (Thursday, October 23, 2025). He will attend and present an overview on the status and intricacies of funding for homeless projects in the county. Mayor Coursey invites Director Sullivan to also offer his presentation to the HC Board at a future meeting.

-In partnership with West County Community Services (WCCS), the DHS Homelessness Services Division is planning to embed a Homeless Encampment Assistance & Resource Team (HEART) outreach worker in the City of Sebastopol Police Department for a period of two-to-three months. This effort would serve to enhance access to portions of west county that encounter geographic limitations to services. Future plans include embedding an outreach worker in Sonoma Valley in east county, as well.

-Mayor McDonnell asks if the east county outreach worker will also be embedded with the City of Sonoma Police Department, and the rationale for that decision, if so. Chair Holmes suggested that this may be an item for follow-up as the meeting progresses, as Director Sullivan is temporarily detained with a conflicting call.

- **Sonoma County Racial Equity Workgroup Update**

Karissa White reported that the Homeless Coalition Racial Equity Workgroup has reenacted a racial equity assessment survey from 2023 to query staff and stakeholders. The collected and analyzed survey data would serve to determine needed areas of focus and work prioritization in the coming year. The survey has been updated and distributed via Survey Monkey in both Spanish and English.

**Public Comment on Item #6:** Adrienne Lauby

**Informational item only; no action taken.**

## **6. Lead Agency Evaluation Update (00:33:46 – 00:34:59)**

- Jennielynn Holmes reports that the Lead Agency Evaluation Ad Hoc Committee has not met recently, but plans to resume meeting to develop questions for a survey being prepared to elicit public and stakeholder feedback for evaluation of the performance of the lead agency. Once questions are finalized, two community meetings will be held: one to receive input from providers and other stakeholders, and a separate meeting for input for cities and towns.

Additional information describing the lead agency evaluation process is included within the staff report for item #6, pg. 19, in the packet of meeting materials.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Informational item only; no action taken.**

## 7. HUD Continuum of Care (CoC) Program Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Update (00:35:02– 01:05:20)

- Recusals were made for this item: Jennielynn Holmes, Chris Cabral, Martha Cheever, Danielle Danforth, Angelica Smith. Mayor McDonnell presided during the duration of this item in the absence of Chair Holmes.

Karissa White presented information to the Board regarding the nature and disposition of Homeless Coalition Continuum of Care program funds and permanent supportive housing (PSH) projects, along with updates about an anticipated 2025 HUD NOFO release and related policy changes and funding cuts. An extensive summary of the presentation, including a list of current CoC projects and probable impacts to 209 PSH units from a potential funding cut of 70%, along with description of other conceivable policy shifts, is available in the staff report for item #7, pgs. 20-22, in the packet of meeting materials.

**Informational item only; no action taken.** Staff will continue to update the HC Board as action alerts are received and changes in direction from HUD develop.

The recused board members were returned to the group, and Chair Holmes continued to preside over the remainder of the meeting.

- **Public Comment:** Adrienne Lauby, Matthew Verscheure

Michael Gause stated that he has sent a memo to Congressman Mike Thompson's office detailing the prospective impacts to Sonoma County from impending funding cuts, including the loss of 209 PSH units.

## 8. MOUs Between Homeless Coalition and Lead Agency (01:05:23 - 01:09:15)

- Michael Gause relayed a short history of the development and edits of the Memos of Understanding (MOUs) between the Homelessness Coalition and DHS, which serves as both the Lead Agency and Collaborative Applicant for the Coalition, and explained recent updates from County Counsel. Copies of the MOUs and an explanation of edits are included in the staff report for item #8, pgs. 23-33, in the packet of meeting materials.

The requested action today is for the HC Board to review the changes, approve the MOUs, and to subsequently ratify the MOUs upon approval.

- **Public Comment:** None.
- **Motion:** Mayor McDonnell moves to approve the MOUs.  
**Second:** Martha Cheever seconds the motion.  
**Objections or Abstentions:** None.  
**Motion is approved.**

Chair Holmes will act as signatory for the Homeless Coalition, and CAO Christina Rivera will sign on behalf of County of Sonoma in ratification of the MOUs.

**9. 10-Minute Break: 2:07 – 2:20 PM (01:09:16 – 01:22:21)**

**10. Word from the LEAP Board (01:22:23 – 01:22:40)**

- Chessy Etheredge confirmed that there is no report from the Lived Experience Advisory Planning (LEAP) Board this month.

**11. Strategic Plan Update and Review (01:22:41 – 02:16:12)**

- Michael Gause presented an overview of the development, structure, and accomplishments of the Strategic Plan. Next steps were also proposed, including reviewing the plan with regard to expected shifts in governmental funding and policies, implementing the merger of DHS Homelessness Services into Behavioral Health, initiating opportunities to leverage resources such as Prop 1, protecting core services from future funding cuts, and developing a process for adding content or revisions to the Strategic Plan. In the past, HomeBase has acted as the organizer for that process, and perhaps could be engaged to do so again.

A larger discussion looms for the future to discern what are considered core services, whether those designations should be modified in light of funding shifts, and which priorities should be preserved or changed.

Mayor Zollman requests an item be agendaized for the next HC Board meeting to facilitate a discussion of the types of projects and populations that should optimally be prioritized, and the preservation of resources generally for those prioritizations. Mayor Zollman suggests the discussion also employ a matrix framework proposed by Chair Holmes.

DHS Director Sullivan proposes an in-person facilitated strategic planning or update session once the HUD NOFA and Measure O NOFA announcements are made, using visuals to help integrate the information gleaned to help identify cuts, gaps, priorities, and efficiencies that may need to be created.

- **Public Comment:** Vickie Miller

In response to feedback from board members, Chair Holmes recommends as a next step that the upcoming HC Board meeting agenda should include a discussion of subpopulations to be prioritized (beginning with family, youth, and children), as well as a presentation from Director Sullivan on various funding sources that he will be providing to the Sonoma County Mayors' and Councilmembers' Association at their upcoming meeting. This would occur at the December 2025 meeting, as the November 2025 meeting has been cancelled.

## 12. Request for Proposals (RFP) Updates (02:16:16 – 02:22:14)

- **Coordinated Entry System (CES) Operator**

Michael Gause presented the timeline and details for the Request for Proposals (RFP) for a Coordinated Entry (CE) Operator. Funding will be approximately \$763,000 per year for three (3) years, with two potential one-year extensions, dependent upon funding and performance. A notice of intent to award will be released in December 2025.

- **Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Software Vendor**

Michael Gause reported that the RFP for an HMIS Software Vendor has been drafted and is undergoing internal review. No release date or timeline has been developed. The current software vendor's contract is in place until April 30, 2027.

In related discussion, Michael Gause indicated that an agenda item regarding the status of Coordinated Entry with respect to possible shifts in NOFO requirements from the federal government is potentially planned for either the December 2025 or January 2026 meeting.

- **Public Comment:** None.

Additional information regarding the RFPs is included in the staff report for item #12, pg. 37, in the packet of meeting materials.

**Informational item only; no action taken.**

## 13. Review Agenda for December Coalition Board Meeting (02:22:17 – 02:24:35)

- There will be no HC Board meeting in November 2025. The next meeting date will be December 17, 2025.
- Michael Gause reviewed agenda items for the December 2025 meeting. The draft agenda is included in the packet of meeting materials, pgs. 39-40.
- **Public Comment:** None.

## 14. Board Member Questions and Comments (02:24:39 – 02:29:09)

- Director Sullivan responded to earlier questions regarding embedding outreach workers with the City of Sebastopol Police Department and Sonoma Valley, providing details about the purpose of these liaisons and potential timelines for implementation.

**15. Public Comment on Items not on the Agenda (02:29:11 - 03:35:02)**

- No comments from the public; some HC Board members had additional comments.
  - Chris Cabral announced that COTS is expanding their shelter capacity in Petaluma to serve up to sixteen (16) families rather than the previous limitation of eight (8) families. Remodeling for the expansion will begin in January 2026, and is expected to be completed in July 2026, barring construction delays. No families will be displaced during the project.
  - Chair Holmes shared the good news that Catholic Charities has been awarded a new federal contract through the Children, Youth, and Family Administration to resurrect the “Coffee House,” the only runaway youth shelter in Northern California.
  - Rosie Traversi invited interested parties to review “Starting Right Now,” a federally-funded project in Florida which serves at-risk, unaccompanied homeless youth with a 97% success rate. Additional information can be found on the “Starting Right Now,” website.

**Adjournment: 2:38 PM (02:35:04 – 02:35:44)**