

Sonoma County Homeless Coalition Board

Homeless Coalition Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 25, 2026

1:00 – 3:30 PM, Pacific Time – Meeting held via Zoom

Zoom Recording:

https://sonomacounty.zoom.us/rec/share/XZVUANrHGw_CzueS53AnP1OyNjjmfU5kY67cM_DcKJ46sk_mjqjboaWbSAoMs_7_x.HILkmlAj0KftqabX?startTime=1774468721000

Passcode: *5M2Bf5R

Welcome and Roll Call Introductions (00:02:42 – 00:05:09)

Chair Jennielynn Holmes called the meeting to order at 1:01 PM and explained the Zoom rules regarding public comment and the Brown Act guidelines.

Present: Jennielynn Holmes, Catholic Charities | Caroline Bañuelos, City of Santa Rosa | Karen Nau, City of Petaluma | Chris Coursey, Sonoma County Board of Supervisors | Martha Cheever, Community Development Commission | Stephen Zollman, City of Sebastopol | Sylvia Lemus, Cities of Cotati/Rohnert Park | Dannielle Danforth, West County Community Services | Margaret Sluyk, Reach For Home | Chessy Etheridge, Adult Lived Experience Seat | Chris Cabral, Committee on the Shelterless (COTS) | Akash Kalia, At-large Seat | Ron Wellander, City of Sonoma | Angelica Smith, Tribal Seat | Rosie Traversi, Licensed Healthcare Organization Seat | Jessica Wolfe, Lived Experience Seat | Maria Rico, BIPOC Led/Serving Organization Seat | Ash Culver, Transitional-aged Youth Seat

Absent: None.

A quorum was present.

1 - 8. Approval of Consent Calendar (00:05:11– 00:07:31)

- Chair Holmes presented the following consent calendar items for approval and explained that the consent calendar has been expanded due to the recent decision to attempt to reduce the overall length of the monthly Homeless Coalition Board meetings.
 1. 3/25/26 Meeting Agenda
 2. 2/4/26 and 2/25/26 Meeting Minutes
 3. Summary of Follow-ups from the Previous Meeting(s)
 4. Reports for Standing Committee Updates

5. Designate Approval Authority for 2026 Continuum of Care (CoC) Competition Consolidated Application submission.
6. April Homeless Coalition Quarterly Membership Meeting Agenda
7. Coordinated Entry Advisory (CEA) Committee Member Approval
8. Homeless Coalition Governance Charter Ad Hoc Update

Public Comment: None.

Motion: A motion was made to approve the Consent Calendar with an addition to the February 4, 2026, Special Meeting minutes to reflect that Akash Kalia was present and was recused during the proceedings for item #2, CoC Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Reallocation Approval.

Second: Councilmember Zollman seconds the motion.

Abstentions or Objections: None.

Motion passes. The consent calendar is approved.

Staff reports for consent calendar items are included in the packet of meeting materials, pgs. 1-25.

9. Reports from Lead Agency Staff (00:07:36 – 00:47:50)

- LEAP follow-up to the Behavioral Health intake process and forms:

At a previous Homeless Coalition Board (HCB) meeting, the Lived Experience and Advisory Planning (LEAP) Board inquired about their outreach staff conceivably conducting intake screenings for referring clients to DHS Behavioral Health for assessment. Desiree Ohlstrom explained that County practices generally prohibit screenings by external partners. However, plans are in the early stages of development to eventually provide the necessary training and tools to enable the DHS Homelessness Services Division outreach workers to perform initial screenings in the field, once their anticipated merger with the DHS Behavioral Health Division is fully implemented. The initial screening determines whether there is a need for further assessment and resources, and of what nature.

An envisioned long-range goal would ideally see licensed mental health staff also operating in the field to conduct assessments with clients, rather than requiring the individual to travel to Behavioral Health locations. However, funding challenges may not allow this concept to come to fruition in the foreseeable future.

- Fiscal Year 2026 – 2027 Local Homelessness Contracts:

Michael Gause reported that declines in funding streams to the Lead Agency have resulted in reductions of 5% - 9% for Fiscal Year 2026-2027 local homelessness contracts.

Earnest efforts were made to identify any possible additional funding, but many previous sources have either suffered reductions or have ended.

Projects funded by Measure O or the Behavioral Health Service Act (BHSA) are not subject to these reductions.

Future Homeless Coalition Board conversations may focus on how service providers and the Lead Agency might work together to prioritize and optimize utilization of resources. The Lead Agency can also work on developing an analysis of the overall funding scenario for a future meeting, perhaps in concert with the consultant firm MRG.

Public Comment on Item 9: None

A staff report for item #9 is included in the packet of meeting materials, pg. 26.

Informational item only; no action taken.

10. MRG Homeless Services Report (00:47:53 – 01:59:50)

- Prior to current DHS Director Nolan Sullivan joining the County of Sonoma in April 2025, the County Administrator's Office (CAO) had contracted with a consultant firm, MRG LLC, to conduct an assessment of the Department of Health Services (DHS) and each of its three divisions to create a series of "roadmaps" as suggested recommendations to the anticipated new DHS Director and leadership team as the department moves forward.

The first of MRG's assessments focuses on the DHS Homelessness Services Division (HS) and the three teams (HEART, SOUL, Ending Homelessness) which comprise the division. The findings of the HS organizational assessment were previously presented to County of Sonoma management for review and consideration and were made available to the HC Board prior to today's meeting.

Director Sullivan introduced Susan Price and Don Ashton of MRG to present their strategic recommendations for ideas or changes to explore regarding the design and function of the HS Division. The report also provides advice geared toward enhancing the ability of various entities of the Continuum of Care (CoC) to interact more productively. Feedback, input and questions from HC Board members were encouraged at today's meeting and may also be submitted via email.

Public Comment: Kelli Kuykendall

For next steps, Director Nolan indicated that the County will be creating an action plan based on MRG's report. Meetings will be initiated with elected leaders of the cities within Sonoma County to discuss their areas of responsibilities as identified in the report findings, as well as with the CoC regarding the components of the report relative to their function, and with County leaders regarding the portions of the assessment relevant to their responsibilities.

Supervisor Coursey requested that Director Sullivan and the Lead Agency prepare a comprehensive overview of the landscape of the entire system of funding, including the reliability of each funding source on a year-to-year basis, as well as the flexibility of each source, as can best be determined.

Chair Holmes suggested that recommended next steps related to MRG's findings be identified within the next two HC Board monthly meetings, leading to a future action item.

Informational item only; no action taken.

11. 10-Minute Break: 3:00 – 3:10 PM (01:59:52 – 02:12:54)

12. Word from the LEAP Board (02:12:56 – 02:33:07)

- Jessica Wolfe reported that the incidents of death that occur once clients acquire Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) was a topic of concern at the recent LEAP Board meeting.

Discussion at the LEAP Board meeting included speculation about the numbers and causes of deaths, and whether a tracking mechanism is currently in place, or could be developed. That potential data might reveal whether a particular window of increased vulnerability to mortality exists after being housed, conceivably leading to the development of screening tools and preventive measures to increase awareness and intervention for medical and/or substance use issues once individuals are housed. The LEAP Board will continue to explore this topic and hopes to develop recommendations for enhancing the level of care and support provided to the newly housed.

HC Board members indicated that this issue is of great interest and importance. Discussion continued for the exploration of ideas to ameliorate circumstances for those entering PSH, notably by convening support groups, possibly located at one of the local peer centers. The idea of creating a homeless mortality review was also introduced, with further conversation to continue at future HC Board meetings.

- **Public Comment:** None.

Informational item only, no action taken.

13. Review Agenda for April & Future Coalition Board Meetings (02:33:42 – 02:39:04)

- Chair Holmes displayed the draft agenda for the April 22, 2026, HC Board meeting.
- Additional topics for future meeting agendas were identified during today's meeting:
 - Tracking of mortality data and preventive measures for those new to PSH
 - Next steps to be developed regarding the MRG report
 - An overview and next steps for funding sources and issues from the Lead Agency

- Supervisor Coursey suggests a discussion to clarify funding priorities and options, including recommendations from staff, to occur within the next couple of months.

Public Comment: None.

14. Board Member Questions and Comments (02:39:06 – 02:42:12)

- Mayor Wellander, Chessy Etheredge, Rosie Traversi, Jennielynn Holmes

Public Comment: None.

15. Public Comment on Items not on the Agenda (02:42:13 – 02:42:55)

- None.

Adjournment: 3:41 PM (02:42:32 – 02:42:53)

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