



CONTRA COSTA COUNCIL ON HOMELESSNESS MEETING

COUNCIL ON HOMELESSNESS MINUTES

Date: Thursday, March 5, 2026, 1 – 3 p.m.

Recording link: Available by email request to CChomelesscouncil@cchealth.org

Council Member Attendance:

- In-Person (15): Anastasia Lockwood, Belinda Jackson-Thomas, Courtney Pal, Dani Jimenez, Donnie Diego, Gabriel Lemus, Jared Murti, Juno Hedrick, LeAnn Matthews, Mia Fairbanks, Ralph Payton, Shawn Ray, Sherina Criswell, Tony Ucciferri, Verneda Clapp
- Remote (0): None.
- Absent (4): Alejandra Chamberlain, Heather Worobey, Nicole Green, Wayne Earl

Staff Attendance: Jamie Schecter, H3; Jaime Jenett, H3; Mark Mora, Homebase; Tania Morales, Homebase

Community Member Attendance:

- In-person: Dr. Grant Colfax, CEO of Contra Costa Health
- Remote: Alicia Espinoza, City of Antioch; Jared Murti, City of Pinole and COH member; Ishani Rasanayagam, City of Pittsburg; Catherine Casimere, City of Richmond; Benisa Berry, Center for Human Development (CHD); Aleta Perata, Community member; Awura Amani Dzidzornu, Community member; Donald Lang, Community member; Joanna Mezquita, Community member; Miranda Murphree, Community member; Rachel Rosekind, Community member; Wendalyn Fabian, Contra Costa Board of Supervisors; Lisa Malul, Contra Costa Crisis Center; Terri Brown-Garett, Contra Costa Family Justice Center; Teuna Gremillion, CCC MHSII; Melanie Erickson, Department of Conservation and Development; Elizabeth Winstead, Department of Rehabilitation; Jai De Lotto, Department of Veterans Affairs; Allison Mabbs, Focus Strategies; Claire Burrus, Focus Strategies; Brittany Ferguson, H3; Carina Rodriguez-Pena, H3; Caroline Miller, H3; Cheryl Leonor, H3; Jacqueline Franco, H3; Lavonna Martin, H3; Maria Dominguez, H3; Rachel Mitchell, H3; Rhonda Smith, H3; Shelby Ferguson, H3; Yessenia Aguilar, H3; Alex Michel, Homebase; Michele Byrnes, Homebase; Hang Mosier, SAHA Homes; Alicia Alferez, SHELTER, Inc.; Cynthia Chavez, SHELTER, Inc.; Daniel Barth, SOS Richmond; Janny Castillo, SOS Richmond; Sean Noland, Superior Court of California - County of Contra Costa.



AGENDA ITEM

1) Call to Order

A. Chair starts the meeting:

Speaker: Juno Hedrick, *Vice Chair & Lived Experience Representative*

Juno Hedrick called the meeting to order.

2) Introductions

A. Meeting Norms:

Speaker: Juno Hedrick, *Vice Chair & Lived Experience Representative*

Juno Hedrick provided an overview of the hybrid meeting norms and guidelines to help ensure that meetings are conducted in a safe and respectful environment that encourages participation and inclusivity.

B. Roll call of Council members and introduction of guests:

Speaker: Juno Hedrick, *Vice Chair & Lived Experience Representative*

Juno Hedrick conducted a roll call of Council members and invited guests to introduce themselves in the chat.

C. Poll – Who’s in the room?

Speaker: Juno Hedrick, *Vice Chair & Lived Experience Representative*

Juno Hedrick conducted the poll activity via Mentimeter. All answers are anonymous and the results are provided below:

- **Question 1: How many Council on Homelessness meetings have you attended?**

This is my first meeting:	0 (0%)
I’ve attended some meetings:	3 (19%)
I’ve attended a lot of meetings:	13 (81%)
I prefer not to answer:	0 (0%)

- **Question 2: Do you have lived experience of homelessness?**

Yes, currently	3 (16%)
Yes, within the past 7 years	0 (0%)
Yes, more than 7 years ago	2 (11%)
No	14 (74%)
I prefer not to answer	0 (0%)



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- **Question 3: What best describes your racial identify?**

African American/Black	4 (19%)
American Indian/Alaskan Native	2 (10%)
Asian/Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian	4 (19%)
Hispanic/Latinx	3 (14%)
White	6 (29%)
Multi-racial	1 (5%)
I describe myself in another way	0 (0%)
I prefer not to answer	1 (5%)

3) Public Comments

A. Open period for members of the public to comment on items not listed on the agenda

Members of the public:

- None.

4) Consent Calendar (ACTION ITEM)

A. APPROVE minutes from the February 5, 2026 Council meeting

B. APPROVE staff report for the March 5, 2026 Council meeting

Speaker: Juno Hedrick, *Vice Chair & Lived Experience Representative*

Members made a motion to approve the items in the consent calendar as listed:

Motion

- State of Motion:
 - To approve the consent calendar items as listed.
- Discussion:
 - None.
- Procedural Record:
 - Motion made by: Dani Jimenez.
 - Seconded by: Verneda Clapp.
 - AYES: Anastasia Lockwood, Belinda Jackson-Thomas, Courtney Pal, Dani Jimenez, Donnie Diego, Gabriel Lemus, Jared Murti, Juno Hedrick, LeAnn Matthews, Mia Fairbanks, Ralph Payton, Shawn Ray, Tony Ucciferri, Verneda Clapp.
 - NOES: None.
 - ABSTAINS: None.
 - UNABLE TO VOTE: None.
 - ABSENT: Alejandra Chamberlain, Heather Worobey, Nicole Green, Sherina Criswell, Wayne Earl.



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5) Meet Dr. Grant Colfax, New CEO of Contra Costa

Speaker: Dr. Grant Colfax, *CEO of Contra Costa Health*

Dr. Grant Colfax introduced himself as the new Chief Executive Officer of the Contra Costa Health Department. Dr. Colfax shared that he became familiar with the Contra Costa work during the COVID pandemic based on a collaboration from different agencies to work on a regional approach while being the Director of Health in San Francisco and became to admire the work that was being done in Contra Costa. Dr. Colfax provided his work background as a trained primary care where he worked at a public hospital and helped patients who were experiencing homelessness and/or who were treated for HIV-AIDS. Dr. Colfax also worked as the Director of Domestic for the HIV-AIDS program in the White House during President Obama's term, giving him an opportunity to gain experience in housing policy work. He hopes to continue the great work that the Contra Costa community is doing during these challenging times. To conclude, Dr. Colfax gave an opportunity for anyone to ask questions.

6) Continuum of Care (CoC) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Update

A. Update on CoC NOFO and Funding Committee

Speaker: Mark Mora, *Homebase*, and Jamie Schecter, *H3*

Mark Mora provided an update for the 2025-2026 HUD Continuum of Care (CoC) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). A timeline from past and current news and developments per The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)'s policy changes and litigation events was shared. Per the recent guidelines released from HUD on January 8-9th of this year to request renewing existing programs to apply for grants, Contra Costa CoC submitted the renewal project list. The FY 2026 NOFO is anticipated to be announced this summer and will have funding available for new projects. The Funding Committee will start meeting monthly in March to update policies and scoring tools in preparation for the 2026 CoC NOFO competition. In lieu of the different shift of the current funding landscape, Christy Saxton recommended agencies and people being impacted to call their government representatives and provide specific examples on how these changes will impact organizations and people in the community overall. In addition, H3 is also working closely with the California State Association of Counties to identify gaps in fundings, find new ongoing grants such as HHAP-7 to fill in the gaps, and do advocacy at the state and federal level.



7) Committee Report Outs

A. Oversight Committee (ACTION ITEM)

APPROVE New Contra Costa Housing Needs Assessment (CC-HNA) as recommended by the Oversight Committee

Presenter: Mary Juarez-Fitzgerald, *H3*; Claire Burrus, *Focus Strategies* and Allison Mabb, *Focus Strategies*

In 2022, Contra Costa County conducted a Coordinated Entry (CE) Evaluation that included revising the VI-SPDAT tool, which is an assessment tool used at the national level. The study found that the VI-SPDAT was perpetuating inequitable outcomes and in response, the County redesigned and developed a customized assessment that is trauma-informed and provides fairness in the CES system. Fifteen current CE assessment staff were part of the pilot project and 109 assessments were completed. The new Housing Needs Assessment contains 19 questions, with seven of them being pre-populated based on prior information collected during HMIS intake. The previous data is confirmed by assessors rather than being asked again, reducing the overall time to complete it to 15-30 minutes. The presentation covered race and ethnicity of the pilot respondents and their feedback, the five main key areas of collection, and weight scale for the following categories: 1) history of housing and homelessness; 2) income and employment; 3) disabilities and health conditions; 4) experiences with services with other systems of care; and 5) experiences impacting people's well-being (e.g., domestic violence, history of abuse, etc.). In terms of next steps, Focus Strategies will train assessors on the CC-HNA tool, update the CES policies, officially launch the HNA, retire the VI-SPDAT, and monitor the data over time. The complete CC-HNA tool with questions may be accessed at the [Contra Costa County's Health site](#). Anyone with questions can contact Mary Juarez-Fitzgerald at mary.fitzgerald@cchealth.org or Focus Strategies at claire@focusstrategies.net and allison@focusstrategies.net.

Motion

- State of Motion:
 - To approve the new Contra Costa Coordinated Entry Housing Needs Assessment.
- Discussion:
 - None.
- Procedural Record:
 - Motion made by: Sherina Criswell.
 - Seconded by: Ralph Payton.
 - AYES: Anastasia Lockwood, Belinda Jackson-Thomas, Courtney Pal, Dani Jimenez, Donnie Diego, Gabriel Lemus, Jared Murti, Juno Hedrick, LeAnn Matthews, Mia Fairbanks, Ralph Payton, Shawn Ray, Sherina Criswell, Tony Ucciferri, Verneda Clapp.
 - NOES: None.
 - ABSTAINS: None.
 - UNABLE TO VOTE: None.



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- ABSENT: Alejandra Chamberlain, Heather Worobey, Nicole Green, Wayne Earl.

B. Youth Action Board (YAB) Update

Presenter: Juno Hedrick, *Vice Chair & Lived Experience Representative* and Anastasia Lockwood, *YAB Member and Outreach and Retention Facilitator*

Juno Hedrick shared the different activities that YAB members accomplished in the month of February, which included bimonthly hybrid meetings with H3 and RYSE, subcommittee communications, Oversight Committee, peer support meetings, YAB retreat, and Youth PIT survey. The activities for the month of March will include social media, strategic planning for youth and young adults, financial and taxes learning opportunities, among others. Anyone interested in connecting with YAB can send an email at ContraCostaYAB@cchealth.org or call at (925) 500-3237.

8) Old Business

A. Update: CoC Compliance Monitoring Process

Presenter: Michele Byrnes and Alex Michel

The CoC Compliance monitoring process involves working towards an improvement system performance that help identify any opportunities or gaps where agencies need additional support in areas such as technical assistance training and it helps them be better prepared for HUD audits. The monitoring process is mandated by HUD and is an annual activity. This year's review focuses on participant files across 22 CoC-funded projects. The agencies will be asked to provide three files per project (two from active clients and one who exited), which will be assessed for eligibility documentation, person-centered and low-barrier services, case management, grievance procedures, and VAWA compliance. Site visits will occur in April, followed by findings and agency feedback in the month of August. The overall goal is to support providers, clarify requirements, and improve compliance.

B. Sector Report Outs from Council Members

Speaker: All

- Tony Ucciferri shared that the Nevin Plaza project in Richmond has a waitlist open for project-based voucher programs. The waitlist will be open until March 19th, 2026 and only senior adults 62 years old and up can apply. The flyer and application may be found at the [Housing Authority of the County of Contra Costa's website](#).
- As of February 1st, 2026, Contra Costa County's Crisis Response is no longer part of the County's Behavioral Health Department but it will now be under Contra Costa's Community Response Division and will include H3 and 4th Street Outreach. They will utilize mobile responses for community calls not related to EMS or 911 emergency services but rather as field-based teams to leverage resources and skills.



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- Mia Fairbanks shared that The Healthcare for the Homeless agency will start its laser tattoo removal in mid-April. More information about who qualifies and how to schedule appointments will be shared soon. The qualification process will be based on the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) definition of homelessness, which is different from the HUD definition, and encompasses a wider group of people who can qualify.
- Due to the shortage of staffing of the Bay Area Community Services agency at the Delta Landing project, residents at the program are under a lot of stress. Jamie Schecter emphasized that the program is not closing and reassured that Contra Costa County is working to increase staffing to have them back on the site and rebuild the supportive services. Tony Ucciferri added that the project has 25 project-based vouchers (PBV), 12 of them being reserved for the site-based waitlist, and 13 have a homeless requirement and are connected through Coordinated Entry. All the coordinated entry units are one-bedroom units, and the regular PBVs are three bedrooms.
- Many prospect applicants who applied to be housed at Legacy Court housing development in Richmond received letters of acceptance but were told that over the phone by property management that they are not pulling new applications even though the prospect applicant status on the website shows them as being accepted. In other instances, prospect applicants called many times but never received a phone call back. In general, Tony Ucciferri explained that the acceptance letters are sent to all the applicants who are on the waitlist but the units are filled on a first come first serve basis to avoid vacancy loss penalties. If the program fills the units before someone gets the paperwork ready, they go back to the waitlist for the next cycle. Tony Ucciferri recommended agencies and service providers to call him directly if prospect residents don't get anyone at the property office to answer the call so he can investigate what is happening.
- Courtney Pal shared that she and Mary Juarez-Fitzgerald from H3 will be presenting a panel on improving access to Coordinated Entry through policy changes at the Housing California Conference based on the work Contra Costa County is doing. The conference will take place March 18th – March 20th in Sacramento City.

C. Funding Updates

Speaker: Jamie Schecter and Christy Saxton, H3

Jamie Schecter shared that there has been a lot of advocacy and support for the funding amount to be restored in full for the Homeless Housing Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) Round 7 application. This billing dollar allocation is from the State of California and supports many projects across the state.



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9) General Announcements

A. General Announcements:

Speaker: All

- The California Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal ICH) is recruiting for their Lived Experience Advisory Board. Person with prior lived experience of homelessness can apply and can do so by March 31. it is a two-year term beginning in July 2026. Anyone interested in applying can check the flyer at the [State of California's Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency](#).
- The National Alliance to End Homelessness recruited people with lived experience of homelessness for their Community Strategic Team (CST). The number of applications was limited to the first 100 applicants, and it reached that number quickly. The application is now closed.
- Greater Richmond Interfaith Program (GRIP) staff announced that the program has modified their eligibility criteria for the family shelter program where now extended family members, such as grandparents, can be included. The program is inclusive to families with children under 18 years of age. They have open slots and are now taking intakes every day on Monday mornings at 10 a.m. Abbreviated intakes are also taken during the weekends. The families' average length of stay is usually around 6 months but there is some flexibility if parents are working towards a career certification. Anyone is welcome to tour the site to learn more about the program. Additionally, the program will have its annual meeting — called Sunset and Sips — on Thursday, March 12th from 5:30–7 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley where the main goal of discussion will be accomplishments for the last year. Representatives from local government agencies such as John Gioia, District 1 Supervisor, will be present and will be part of the panel discussion. The official flyer with information about the event may be found at the [GRIP's website](#).
- The America's Job Center in Concord is open to give some tours to agencies and service providers in the County. The program prioritizes formerly incarcerated population and provides individuals with trainings. The site has a full computer lab where people can work on their resumes and offers advanced manufacturing and health trainings such as EMT and paramedic program, IT, truck driving classes for people to get Class A licenses courses, etc.

10) Pin It

Speaker: Jaime Jenett, H3

- The next COH meeting will be on April 2, from 1 – 3 p.m.
- A list of upcoming meetings was shared and will also be sent via email. Calendar meeting invites to all committee meetings will be sent out to COH Council members based on the committees for which they signed up.



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Commonly Used Acronyms

Acronym	Definition
APR	Annual Performance Report (for HUD homeless programs)
BIPOC	Black and Indigenous People of Color
CARE	Coordinated Assessment and Resource
CCYCS	Contra Costa Youth Continuum of Services
CDBG, CDBG-CV	Community Development Block Grant (federal and state programs) and the federal Community Development Block Grant CARES Act coronavirus allocation.
CESH	California Emergency Solutions and Housing program (state funding)
Continuum of Care (CoC)	Continuum of Care approach to assistance to the homeless. Federal grant program promoting and funding permanent solutions to homelessness.
Con Plan	Consolidated Plan, a locally developed plan for housing assistance and urban development under CDBG.
CORE	Coordinated Outreach Referral, Engagement program
COVID-19	Coronavirus
DCD	(Contra Costa County) Department of Conservation and Development
DOC	Department Operations Center
EHSD	(Contra Costa County) Employment and Human Services Division
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
ESG and ESG-CV	Emergency Solutions Grant (federal and state program) and the federal Emergency Solutions Grant CARES Act coronavirus allocation.
ESG-CV	Emergency Solutions Grant CARES
FMR	Fair Market Rent (maximum rent for Section 8 rental assistance/CoC grants)
HCD	Housing and Community Development (State office)
HEAP	Homeless Emergency Aid Program (State funding)
HEARTH	Homeless Emergency and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act of 2009
HHAP	Homeless Housing and Assistance Program
HMIS	Homeless Management Information System
HOME	Home Investment Partnerships (CPD program)
HUD	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (federal)
MHSA	Mental Health Services Act
NOFA/NOFO	Notice of Funding Availability/ Notice of Funding Opportunity
PHA	Public Housing Authority
PUI	Persons Under Investigation
PWLE	People With Lived Experience of Homelessness
SAMHSA	Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration
SRO	Single-Room Occupancy housing units
SSDI	Social Security Disability Income
SSI	Supplemental Security Income



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Acronym	Definition
TA	Technical Assistance
TAY	Transition Age Youth (usually ages 18-24)
VA	Veterans Affairs (U.S. Department of)
VASH	Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing
VI-SPDAT	Vulnerability Index – Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool