

RESOLUTION NAMING DECEMBER 21, 20265 NATIONAL HOMELESS PERSONS' MEMORIAL DAY IN CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

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In recognition of the lives lost and the ongoing crisis of homelessness, the Contra Costa Board of Supervisors seeks to honor the memory of those who died without housing and to recommit to lasting solutions that affirm dignity, health, and housing for all.

WHEREAS, December 21, 20265 marks the first day of winter and the longest night of the year, symbolizing the hardships faced by individuals living without shelter; and

WHEREAS, the National Coalition for the Homeless and the National Health Care for the Homeless Council have designated December 21, 20265 as National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day; and

WHEREAS, 14,245 individuals accessed homeless services in Contra Costa County in 2024—an increase of 40% from 2020, underscoring systemic housing challenges¹; and

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WHEREAS, homelessness increases risk of illness, injury, and premature death, with non-elderly homeless individuals facing a mortality rate 3.5 times higher than their housed peers—comparable to housed individuals two decades older in age²; and

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WHEREAS, dozens of Contra Costa residents experiencing homelessness lose their lives each year, and each loss underscores the urgent need for stable housing, health care, and community support; and

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WHEREAS, in 2024, the Contra Costa Coroner reported 76 people experiencing homelessness who died during calendar year 2024, a 33% decrease from 2023³; and

WHEREAS, drug and alcohol-related accidental deaths represented the highest cause of mortality in this group, followed by natural causes and other accidents⁴; and

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WHEREAS, impending federal reductions to permanent housing programs beginning in 2027, coupled with projected cuts to Medicaid, SNAP and other essential health and stabilization services

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WHEREAS, cuts to essential programs like Medicaid and SNAP will disproportionately impact people experiencing homelessness, making it more difficult to

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¹ 2024 Contra Costa Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data

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² *Life and Death at the Margins of Society: The Mortality of the U.S. Homeless Population*, Meyer, Wyse, Logani (2023)

³ 2024 Contra Costa Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data

⁴ 2024 Contra Costa Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data

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access the broad range of care needed to maintain their health, engage in employment, and achieve housing⁵; and

WHEREAS, Contra Costa County calls on government agencies, faith communities, business leaders, nonprofit organizations, and residents to recognize the urgent need to address homelessness through sustained collaboration, compassion, and advocacy; and

WHEREAS, the Council on Homelessness, serving as both an advisory board to the Board of Supervisors and the planning body for the Continuum of Care, coordinates the county’s strategy toward ending homelessness and encourages active community participation; and

WHEREAS, the Health, Housing, and Homeless Services Division of Contra Costa Health is committed to making homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring through an integrated system of housing and support; and

WHEREAS, a ~~Homeless Persons’ Memorial~~ **Homeless Persons’ Memorial** event will be held on ~~Friday, December 19, 2025~~ **Monday, December 21, 2026**, coordinated by ~~partners~~ including ~~Bay Area Rescue Mission~~, Contra Costa Council on Homelessness, ~~Trinity Center~~ **and NAMI Contra Costa and** Safe Organized Spaces Richmond, offering space to honor lives lost; and

WHEREAS, by gathering in remembrance and solidarity, the community can affirm its commitment to meaningful change and honor the humanity of every neighbor lost to homelessness; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED That the Contra Costa Board of Supervisors hereby declares December 21, 2026⁵ as **National Homeless Persons’ Memorial Day** in Contra Costa County—to honor those who have died without shelter, to encourage collective reflection and engagement, and to strengthen our commitment to housing solutions rooted in dignity, equity, and hope.

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⁵ Rabell, L. (2025, April). *Homelessness and Medicaid: What’s the connection?* National Health Care for the Homeless Council.