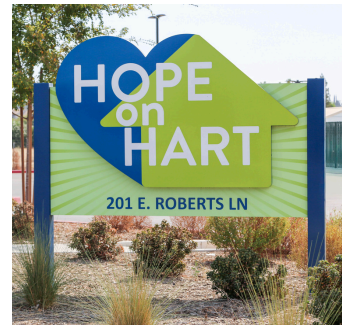


HOMELESS HOUSING ANNUAL REPORT

2025 - 2026



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Kern County continues to identify homelessness as one of its highest strategic priorities, aligning its response with the Countywide Strategic Plan’s commitments to safety, community well-being, and support for vulnerable residents. Rising rates of sheltered and unsheltered homelessness, coupled with volatile state funding, have reinforced the need for coordinated, data-informed planning, strengthened partnerships, and expansion of both interim and permanent housing solutions.



STRATEGIC DIRECTION SYSTEM PRIORITIES

Four themes guide the County’s approach:

- Reducing inflow into homelessness through prevention and diversion.
- Strengthening support for individuals in crisis, including mental health and substance use treatment.
- Increasing outflow by expanding access to permanent and supportive housing.
- Building a data-driven, coordinated system with shared accountability across County departments, the City of Bakersfield, BKRHC, and local service providers.

These priorities are reflected in the County’s alignment with the Bakersfield Kern Regional Collaborative’s 2026 Strategic Action Plan, which reported significant regional progress between 2024 and 2025—including a **66% increase in households served** through prevention, a **338% increase in diversion services**, **73 new interim housing units**, **146 new permanent supportive housing units**, and notable gains in exits from street outreach and emergency shelter into permanent housing.



KEY PARTNERSHIPS ✦ REGIONAL COORDINATION

Kern County, the City of Bakersfield, and BKRHC remain the core triad for planning, governance, and system alignment. County staff have supported BKRHC during the leadership transition, maintained collaborative planning with behavioral health, justice, education, service, and housing providers, and contributed to the County's Pro-Housing designation application to strengthen its competitiveness for state funding.

MAJOR HOMELESS PROGRAMS ✦ OUTCOMES

Kern County coordinates a diverse portfolio of shelter, outreach, housing, and supportive service programs serving both urban and rural communities. Together, these programs provide emergency shelter, case management, substance use treatment, legal barrier removal, rural outreach, and housing navigation. Highlights include:

- **M Street Navigation Center (CAPK):** 147-bed low-barrier shelter offering comprehensive services including legal coordination, behavioral health, and substance use treatment. Recognized for strong pathways to permanent housing.
- **Hope on Hart (Hope the Mission):** a 50-unit tiny-home shelter providing individualized space and strong employment and housing outcomes, particularly for clients exiting encampments in Oildale.
- **Safe Camping (CAPK):** A structured, safer alternative to unmanaged encampments with low-barrier access, harm-reduction services, and linkage to substance use treatment and legal navigation.
- **Rural Mobile Showers (Flood Ministries):** A critical hygiene and engagement program serving rural areas, including McFarland, Delano, Taft, Mojave, Ridgecrest, and others.
- **Youth Outreach (Kern Network for Children):** Trauma-informed engagement for at-risk youth, providing direct support, diversion, and linkage to long-term housing and benefits.
- **Mojave Drop-In Clinic (CAPK):** The only rural homeless drop-in center in Kern County, serving over 1,100 residents annually with essential services and housing linkages.
- **Coordinated Entry System Expansion (CAPK):** Expanded staffing and multilingual access to reduce wait times and increase system flow into shelter, outreach, and services.
- **Permanent Supportive Housing Development:** HHAP-funded project creating 15 PSH units in Oildale, expected to open in 2027.
- **Homeward Bound:** Supports voluntary relocation to reunify individuals with stable family or supports in other regions.



DEPARTMENT-LED HOMELESS INITIATIVES

Multiple County departments—Aging & Adult Services, Department of Human Services, Kern Behavioral Health and Recovery Services, Public Works, Animal Services, and the Planning and Natural Resources Department—operate a wide range of targeted programs or funding resources essential for housing access and homeless response.

These services and resources reach the county’s most vulnerable population: youth, families, those suffering with mental health and/or substance use disorders, and the aging. Services are broad and comprehensive, including:

- Housing stabilization, homelessness prevention services, transitional housing, and rapid rehousing for families and youth.
- Temporary and permanent housing support that covers shelters, security deposits, rental arrears, and move-in costs.
- Services including case management, crisis interventions, advocacy, and housing navigation.
- Disability benefit advocacy and housing support for medically vulnerable adults.
- Behavioral health treatment providing psychiatric care, street outreach, case management, and on-site services at shelters and navigation centers.
- Mobile clinics and specialized field outreach models that address high-acuity behavioral health needs among unsheltered residents.

Additionally, millions of dollars are expended annually to support housing and homeless services through the Planning and Natural Resources department that manages the Emergency Solutions Grants, HOME Investment Partnership program, and the Community Development Block Grant. These resources support the construction, acquisition, and rehabilitation of affordable housing as well as emergency shelters, street outreach, and rapid rehousing.

Public Works provides essential response to clean encampments and maintains safe public spaces.

Recognizing the connection between people and their pets, Animal Services has recognized the barriers unsheltered individuals face when trying to access shelters. In response, Animal Services provides resources, including kennels and pet care, to reduce barriers to shelter participation and ensure that four-legged loved ones are included in our mission to protect vulnerable populations.



FUNDING LANDSCAPE

Programs are supported through a mix of state, federal, and local funding, including HHAP (totaling \$8.7M awarded to date), PLHA (\$12.5M awarded), ARPA, HUD grants (ESG, HOME, CDBG), and the General Fund. A critical challenge facing the County is the expiration of ARPA funding by December 2026, which will create funding cliffs for several key programs — notably Hope on Hart and M Street Safe Camping — requiring General Fund investment to sustain operations.

STRATEGIC OUTLOOK

In FY 2025–26, the County made progress on standardizing data collection, supporting BKRHC administrative operations during a leadership transition, and completing an RFP for expanded Oildale street outreach. Looking ahead to FY 2026–27, strategic priorities include launching a public-facing Homeless Dashboard, finalizing Oildale outreach services, coordinating with regional partners to expand Permanent Supportive Housing, and pursuing additional funding to sustain existing programs facing resource gaps.



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KERN COUNTY'S STRATEGIC GOALS & HOMELESS PRIORITIES

Kern County has established homelessness as one of its highest strategic priorities, recognizing that a safe, healthy, and thriving community cannot be achieved without addressing the needs of residents experiencing housing instability. Across multiple County strategic documents, the County outlines a comprehensive, data-informed approach focused on prevention, system coordination, service accessibility, and pathways to stable housing.

Kern County's homelessness initiatives are guided by a set of core goals consistently reflected across planning documents. These goals include reducing inflow into homelessness through early intervention, strengthening support for those in crisis, and increasing outflow by expanding access to permanent housing and supportive services. Priorities emphasize improving emergency shelter options, expanding capacity for interim, temporary, and permanent housing, addressing barriers to housing stability, and enhancing the performance of the County's homeless system of care. These goals and priorities are grounded in a realistic assessment of local conditions: Kern County has experienced rising rates of sheltered and unsheltered homelessness, increased service demand, and shifting state policy landscapes, which create funding vulnerabilities. Local data highlights the urgency of strategic action and the need for more permanent, supportive, and affordable housing.

Kern County's homeless initiatives align directly with the 2026-2030 Countywide Strategic Plan, particularly its high-level priorities focused on safety, quality of life, and support for vulnerable populations.



Fostering thriving, resilient communities that are safe for all.

The 2026-2030 Kern County Strategic Plan emphasizes creating safe, healthy communities that thrive. Homelessness response actions—supporting shelter options, improving outreach, providing encampment response, and increasing access to supportive services—advance this vision by improving community wellness and addressing visible and systemic contributors to instability. These coordinated actions support individuals experiencing homelessness and enhance overall community conditions, reinforcing the County's broader goals of promoting vibrancy, stability, and public safety.



Supporting Vulnerable Populations

The 2026–2030 Strategic Plan explicitly lists homelessness as a top County priority and calls for expanded collaboration with homeless service providers to create broader support systems for vulnerable residents. The County’s homeless strategies, particularly permanent housing expansion, outreach, and service integration, are central to fulfilling these commitments.



Data-Informed, Cross-Agency Collaboration

Kern’s strategic plan emphasizes data-driven governance, coordinated responses, and cross-sector partnerships. Homelessness initiatives reflect this approach through coordinated entry improvements, system performance evaluation, and collaboration with city partners and the Bakersfield-Kern Regional Homeless Collaborative.



Long-Term Fiscal and Operational Responsibility

The County’s strategic documents emphasize sustainable, outcome-driven operations and responsible resource management.




Key Partnerships



Kern County's strategic approach to addressing homelessness is built on intentional partnerships with the Bakersfield-Kern Regional Homeless Collaborative (BKRHC), the City of Bakersfield, and a broad network of homeless service providers. These partnerships ensure the County can advance its strategic goals through coordinated planning, shared resources, and a unified system of care.

The County of Kern, the City of Bakersfield, and BKRHC serve as core partners in implementing countywide homeless response strategies and participating in regional governance structures, specifically the BKRHC Executive Board and Governing Board. This collaborative governance ensures alignment and shared accountability for system-wide outcomes.

This collaborative partnership leverages close working relationships to engage leaders, solicit engagement from diverse stakeholders, and ensure coordinated planning for funding opportunities and strategic interventions. This includes joint outreach to departments such as Behavioral Health, justice partners, education partners, service providers, and housing developers to ensure homelessness initiatives are informed by broad community expertise. Through this partnership with the City of Bakersfield, BKRHC, and local service providers, the County ensures that homelessness initiatives are comprehensive, coordinated, and grounded in shared regional priorities.



Highlighting the importance of partnership and updates, BKRHC published the Strategic Action Plan 2026 update in May 2026. This update highlights the three primary strategic goals for the Collaborative, which focus on reducing homeless inflow, strengthening support and services for individuals experiencing homelessness, and increasing outflow to create more exits from the homeless system into permanent and stable housing.

Key accomplishments in the 2026 plan update highlight the following significant achievements for the region, reflecting baseline data points from 2024 and outcomes materialized in the year following (2025):

Goal 1: Reduce Inflow

- **66%** increase of households served by prevention activities
- **338%** increase of households served by diversion activities

Goal 2: Strengthen Support

- **284%** increase of people exiting from street outreach into temporary destinations
- **128%** increase in the percentage of people exiting from street outreach into permanent destinations
- **18%** increase of people exiting from emergency shelter into permanent destinations
- **24%** decrease of homeless people with severe mental illness

Goal 3: Increase Outflow

- **73** additional units of interim, transition and bridge housing created
- **146** additional units created of permanent supportive housing

KERN COUNTY Point-in-Time Count




The 2026 Point-in-Time (PIT) Count was conducted in accordance with guidance from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), ensuring a consistent, comparable, and methodologically sound approach. The PIT Count included both sheltered and unsheltered populations and was designed to generate an unduplicated, point-in-time estimate of individuals experiencing homelessness throughout Kern County.

The sheltered count was conducted on the night of January 27, 2026, and gathered data from individuals residing in emergency shelters, transitional housing programs, and other temporary housing. Sheltered data was collected through coordinated provider reporting and a standardized data collection process to ensure accuracy and completeness.

The unsheltered count was conducted on January 28, 2026, and was supplemented by targeted outreach efforts over subsequent days to better capture individuals residing in encampments, riverbed areas, and rural locations that are not easily accessible within a single-day count. These extended efforts were implemented to enhance coverage and minimize undercounting in geographically dispersed and hard-to-reach areas.

2022 – 2026 HOMELESS POPULATION COUNTS				
	ADULTS W/O CHILDREN	ADULTS W/ CHILDREN	CHILDREN	TOTAL
2026	2,478	81	131	2,690
2025	2,348	86	172	2,606
2024	2,446	86	137	2,669
2023	1,747	76	125	1,948
2022	1,361	75	167	1,603

SUB-POPULATIONS		
CHRONICALLY HOMELESS	69% Sheltered 479 Individuals	31% Unsheltered 217 Individuals
VETERANS	56% Sheltered 55 Individuals	44% Unsheltered 44 Individuals
TRANSITIONAL YOUTH	45% Sheltered 77 Individuals	55% Unsheltered 94 Individuals

HOUSEHOLDS & COMPOSITION		
 ADULTS WITHOUT CHILDREN	41% 1,027 Sheltered	59% 1,451 Unsheltered
 ADULTS WITH CHILDREN	90% 73 Sheltered	10% 8 Unsheltered
 CHILDREN	93% 125 Sheltered	7% 6 Unsheltered

2026 KERN COUNTY SHELTERED / UNSHELTERED POPULATIONS	
46%	54%
SHELTERED 1,225 individuals	UNSHELTERED 1,465 individuals

Overview of Funding

HOMELESS HOUSING, ASSISTANCE & PREVENTION (HHAP)

Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) funds are one-time, California state-funded block grants that allow the County to address homeless needs with resources to support permanent housing development, interim sheltering, rental assistance, homelessness support services such as case management and street outreach, and prevention and diversion resources.

HHAP funds are allocated based on a region's proportionate share of the state's homeless population, primarily using data from the Point-In-Time count. HHAP funding is allocated annually through the state budget and is neither stable nor guaranteed. State funding allocations have been inconsistent, ranging from \$300 million to over \$1 billion across budget cycles.

To date, Kern County has been awarded \$8,659,602.84 in HHAP rounds 1-5.

PERMANENT LOCAL HOUSING ALLOCATION (PLHA)

The Permanent Local Housing Allocation program is administered by the California Department of Housing and Community Development for housing-related projects and programs that address the unmet housing needs of a local community. PLHA is a permanent, ongoing funding source to support affordable housing. Funds are dependent on real estate activities and are thus variable year-to-year.

To date, Kern County has been awarded \$12,484,969.00 in PLHA funds.

ARPA

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) was a federal stimulus package that provided emergency funding to local governments to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and its economic impacts. ARPA funds must be fully expended by December 2026 and have been used to fund several homeless programs.



COUNTY HOMELESS PROGRAMS

The following programs demonstrate the County's commitment to homeless services by highlighting programming directly contracted or provided by the County Administrative Office or County departments. These programs specifically serve individuals experiencing homelessness or areas directly impacted by homelessness.



The M Street Navigation Center is Kern County's 147-bed low-barrier shelter, operated by the Community Action Partnership of Kern (CAPK). M Street's core goal is to provide a safe, stable, and accessible shelter for individuals experiencing homelessness while supporting their transition toward permanent housing. Program objectives include providing immediate shelter and basic needs, and delivering wraparound services such as case management, behavioral health access, healthcare access, workforce development opportunities, and assistance for clients with pets. M Street partners with Kern's Public Defender to provide service coordination for individuals to clear warrants and address legal barriers that prevent them from accessing housing resources. This work has made a meaningful difference for individuals to access care and resources to move into treatment and housing. M Street also ensures coordinated substance use care, working with medical providers who come on-site to provide Suboxone treatment and establish a monitoring protocol. With this essential treatment and the on-site Relapse Prevention classes offered by Kern Behavioral Health and Recovery Services, clients are engaging in unique resources currently only being offered in the M Street Navigation Center and M Street Safe Camping.

M Street Navigation focuses on improving housing outcomes through structured housing stability plans that support clients in setting phased goals, thereby steadily increasing exits to permanent housing. This low-barrier, service-oriented approach positions M Street as a critical component of Kern County's coordinated homelessness response system.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES & DATA

(July 2025 – March 2026)

- Total of **700** people served
- **16%** of Positive Exits
- **13%** of Exits to Permanent Housing
- Average length of stay: **129 days**

SUCCESS STORY

A female client arrived at M Street in March of 2023, facing significant challenges, including a lack of income, a criminal background, and a substance use disorder. She self-exited M Street in May of 2024 to care for her mother and returned to M Street again in July 2025 after her mother passed away. During her second stay, she made remarkable progress by securing Social Security Income and successfully working with the public defender's office to have her criminal background expunged. These achievements paved the way for her to receive a Home-At-Last voucher, and she officially moved into her own home on December 12, 2025.

FUNDING

M Street Navigation Center has an annual budget of \$2,715,815. The program is funded through the Permanent Local Housing Allocation (PLHA), a state grant. The County has secured PLHA funding to maintain operations and expects it to continue as ongoing PLHA allocations are received through FY 27-28.



HOPE THE MISSION

Hope on Hart is Kern County’s innovative tiny home emergency shelter operated in partnership with Hope the Mission, providing 50 individual units as part of the County’s expanding shelter portfolio. The program’s core goal is to offer a safe, low-barrier environment where individuals experiencing homelessness can stabilize, receive personalized case management, and work toward long-term housing. Program objectives focus on increasing successful exits to permanent housing, supporting clients in achieving individualized housing stability goals, and connecting participants with employment and supportive services. Hope on Hart is the only emergency shelter of its kind, offering individual spaces over a congregate care setting. Hope on Hart is recognized as a key shelter resource within Kern County’s homelessness strategy, providing essential capacity for encampment response and transitions from unsheltered homelessness serving the Oildale area.



PROGRAM OUTCOMES & DATA

(July 2025 – March 2026)

- Total of **73** people served
- **44%** of Positive Exits
- **30%** of Exits to Permanent Housing
- **11** clients gained employment while at Hope on Hart
- Average length of stay: **149 days**

SUCCESS STORY

One of the clients housed at Hope on Hart secured full-time employment as a bus driver for GET Bus. In September of 2025, she successfully matched to a housing voucher program, which allowed her to move into her own apartment. She is currently living independently and maintaining full-time employment.

FUNDING

Hope on Hart has an annual budget of \$2,241,367. The program has been funded by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) since its inception in 2023. ARPA funding for this program will end on December 31, 2026. Further funding through General Fund contributions will be required to keep the program operational from January 1st forward.





Kern County’s Safe Camping Program, operated by Community Action Partnership of Kern, provides a structured, low-barrier outdoor living environment that offers stability, safety, and supportive services to individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness. The program’s goals and objectives center on creating a secure alternative to unmanaged encampments by providing designated tent spaces, on-site security, access to hygiene facilities, meals, and individualized case management. Safe Camping residents can access the unique services currently offered through M Street navigation, capitalizing on the partnership with the Public Defender for service coordination to clear warrants and address legal barriers that prevent Safe Camp residents from accessing housing resources. Safe Camp residents also access coordinated substance use treatment, working with medical providers who come on-site to provide Suboxone treatment and establish a monitoring protocol.

Safe camping creates a very low barrier space that is a meaningful alternative to congregate care settings, as it offers individualized, private spaces to help move people from encampments or off the street and into a more secure setting where individuals can access services and resources. Safe Camping continues to serve as a critical harm reduction strategy within Kern County’s broader homeless response system.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES & DATA

(July 2025 – March 2026)

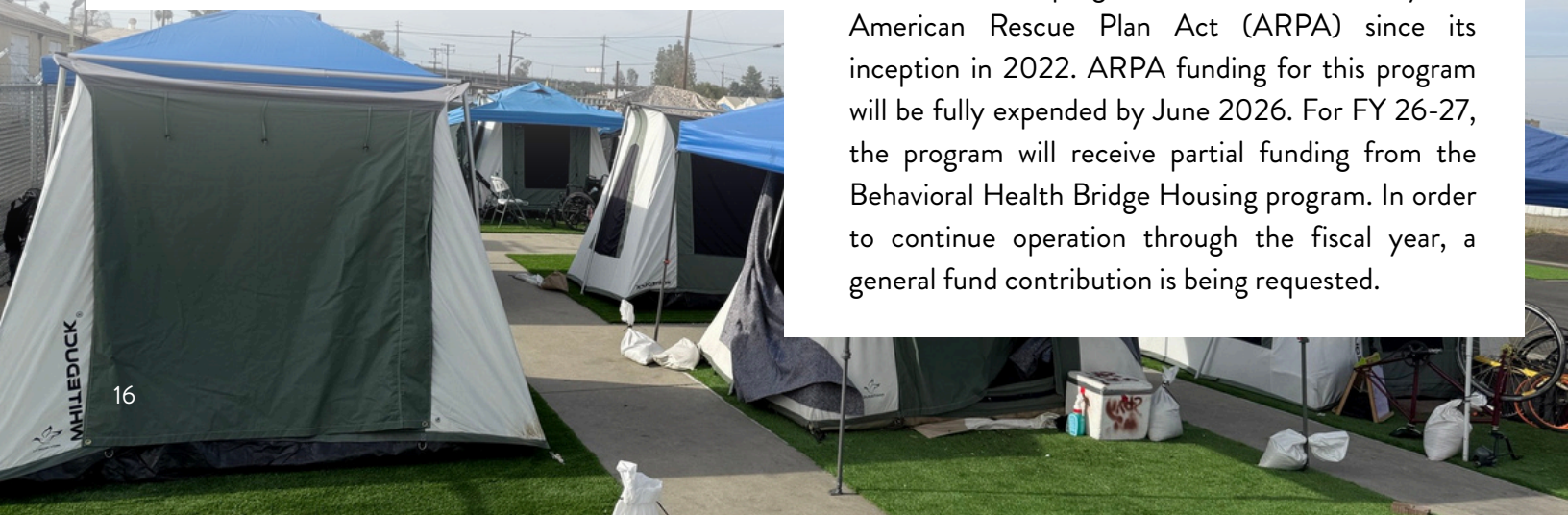
- Total of **116** people served
- **36%** of Positive Exits
- **32%** of Exits to Permanent Housing
- Average length of stay: **257 days**

SUCCESS STORY

A female client came to Safe Camping with a significant history of substance use starting at age 8 and being trafficked from age 16. When she came to Safe Camp in February of 2026, she heard from the other clients that one of the services provided was to help clear warrants and assist with getting off drugs through medication. She was connected to services, and through a connected provider, started taking Suboxone for substance use treatment. She worked with the Public Defender’s office to clear her warrants. She is still going through the recovery and court process, but is looking forward to her cases being dropped, staying clean, and moving on to the next phase of life, which includes being housed.

FUNDING

Safe Camping had an annual budget of \$1,275,824. The program has been funded by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) since its inception in 2022. ARPA funding for this program will be fully expended by June 2026. For FY 26-27, the program will receive partial funding from the Behavioral Health Bridge Housing program. In order to continue operation through the fiscal year, a general fund contribution is being requested.





Kern County’s Flood Mobile Showers Program, operated by Flood Ministries, Inc., provides essential hygiene and supportive services to individuals in rural communities experiencing homelessness. The program’s goals center on increasing access to basic needs—safe showers, hygiene kits, clothing, and food—as well as expanding reach into underserved areas, improving engagement with unsheltered residents, and supporting connections to housing and service pathways. Through its mobility, low-barrier approach, and integration with other homelessness initiatives, the Flood Mobile Showers Program plays a vital role in improving health, restoring dignity, and building trust with individuals on the path toward stabilization and housing.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES & DATA

(July 2025 – March 2026)

- Total of **595** people served
- Service locations provided in: McFarland, Delano, Taft, Mojave, Ridgecrest, Oildale, Wasco, Rosamond, M Street Safe Camping
- **3,282** of ancillary services offered (hygiene kits, clothing, food packets)

FUNDING

This program has been funded through Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) Round 3 and 4. A total of \$344,360 has been allocated to this program through HHAP.





The Youth Outreach Program, delivered through Kern Superintendent of Schools' Kern Network for Children Program, provides targeted, trauma-informed support to youth and young adults experiencing or at risk of homelessness. The program's core goal is to engage vulnerable youth and connect them to safe shelter, basic needs, and pathways to long-term stability. This program focuses on delivering direct outreach, safety planning, and intervention to homeless youth through prevention and diversion, facilitating linkage to education, employment, mental health, and substance use resources, and connecting youth to permanent housing.

Through ongoing engagement, flexible service delivery, and collaboration with other service partners, Youth Outreach offers youth-centered interventions that build trust, address immediate needs, and promote long-term housing stability for some of the most vulnerable residents.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES & DATA

(July 2025 – March 2026)

- Total of **329** people served
- **82** Positive Exits and Permanent Housing Placements
- **2,928** of ancillary services provided (food, hygiene, emergency clothing, transportation, educational supplies or support)

FUNDING

This program has been funded through Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) Rounds 1, 2, 3, and 4. A total of \$581,870 has been allocated to this program through HHAP.

SUCCESS STORY

Due to this funding, a young woman has successfully left street homelessness, has been connected to Kern Regional Center Services, Independent Living Services, and housing subsidy supports.

Upon entering outreach services with Kern County Network for Children, the young woman stated she was sleeping outside in the 93308 area code, very close to the river, and shared concerns for her safety. While working with her outreach specialist, it was discovered that the youth was eligible for Kern Regional Center (KRC) services, lifelong supports that assist adults with independent living. The young woman's outreach specialist assisted with the necessary tasks and established a connection with KRC. The outreach specialist assisted with establishing connections to mental health services and coordinating her match to the Milestone Project within the Coordinated Entry System. KRC assisted the youth with temporary housing until her outreach worker could facilitate her move to the subsidized Milestone units. The youth continued to exhibit behavior concerns while in KRC temporary housing, putting her at risk of being exited until permanent housing was ready. The youth outreach worker regularly followed up with the youth while they were in temporary housing. Additionally, it was discovered that the youth could not access any of her Social Security benefits because her payee, a family member, was withholding her funds. The outreach worker assisted the youth with coordinating payee services with an agency that allows the youth autonomy for weekly funds and ensures all her monthly expenses are paid. The youth is now successfully housed and maintaining all supportive services.

The Mojave Drop-In Center, operated by the Community Action Partnership of Kern (CAPK), serves as a rural access point for individuals and families in East Kern who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness. This community center, located in Mojave, is the only homeless drop-in center within Kern County and one of just a few places to access homeless resources in rural Kern. The center's primary goals are to reduce rural homelessness by providing low-barrier, walk-in access to essential services and to strengthen stability for residents across the desert and mountain communities. The drop-in clinic provides clients with food, hygiene items, and clothing. They provide targeted case management, facilitate connections to mental health care, medical services, housing resources, and social services, and provide outreach and education for individuals facing housing insecurity. Through these services, the Mojave Drop-In Center bridges service gaps in geographically isolated communities, increases linkages to housing and supports, and provides a consistent, trusted hub for residents seeking pathways toward long-term stability.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES & DATA

(July 2025 – March 2026)

- Total of **1,179** people served
- **155** of Linkages made to supportive services (Social Security, Medical, behavioral health, substance use services, education and career development services)
- **32** housing or shelter placements made

SUCCESS STORY

When the client's rent began to rise faster than her SSI could keep up with, she found herself in a frightening situation: every month became a choice between keeping a roof over her head and meeting the basic needs of herself and the nephew who depended on her. As the bills piled up, she received a 72-hour pay-or-quit notice—an urgent reminder that homelessness was no longer a distant fear, but a real and immediate possibility.

The client reached out to the Mojave Drop-in Clinic and was connected with a housing navigator. Together, they found a safe, affordable home within her budget, completed the paperwork to apply for IHSS support for her medical disabilities, and built a realistic monthly budget that could carry her family forward. With stable housing, in-home care, and a plan she could sustain, she was able to regain stability and continue caring for her nephew, turning a crisis into a fresh start rooted in safety, dignity, and hope.

FUNDING

This program has been funded through Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) Rounds 3, 4, and 5. A total of \$758,124 has been allocated to this program through HHAP.



Kern County's Coordinated Entry System (CES) Expansion is designed to strengthen the Countywide homeless response system by increasing staffing capacity to improve response times within the CES, thereby supporting clients' access to services. The program's goals include ensuring people experiencing homelessness can quickly connect to housing navigation, shelter access, outreach teams, and supportive services through a more efficient and equitable system.

The CES Expansion program focuses on reducing wait times, expanding access, and improving system equity through multilingual staffing, culturally responsive engagement, and better service coordination.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES & DATA

(July 2025 – March 2026)

- Total of **3,157** people served
- **3,157** of CES enrollments
- **876** referrals to shelters
- **263** referrals to outreach

SUCCESS STORY

A client was internally referred to our program after it was identified that they were at imminent risk of returning to homelessness. At the time of referral, the client was actively engaged with a service provider; however, their current placement was scheduled to end due to the conclusion of program funding. Following a comprehensive conversation with the client, it was determined that they would benefit from additional wraparound. As a result, the client has been successfully connected with dedicated case managers who are working to address immediate needs while supporting their long-term goals of housing stability and self-sufficiency.

Through this coordinated approach, the client has met eligibility criteria for transitional rental assistance. This support will play a critical role in preventing a lapse into homelessness while providing the client with the stability needed to focus on sustained housing outcomes and long-term success.

FUNDING

This program has been funded through Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) Round 3 and 5 dollars. A total of \$265,003 has been allocated to this program through HHAP.



Creating brighter futures...one home, one family at a time

OILDALE PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING PROGRAM

The County of Kern has partnered with Golden Empire Affordable Housing to support the investment in additional permanent supportive housing. The HHAP investment supports for this capital project located at 801 & 805 North Chester Avenue and 106 & 108 Decatur, which will create 15 one-bedroom permanent supportive housing units in the unincorporated community of Oildale. This program will house a minimum of 15 homeless individuals upon completion and anticipates that 80% of those placed in the permanent supportive housing program will continue to remain housed after 12 months.

This project is anticipated to be completed in March 2027.

FUNDING

This program has been funded through Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) Round 4 dollars. A total of \$1,196,230 has been allocated to this program through HHAP.



HOMEWARD BOUND

Kern County’s Homeward Bound Program helps individuals experiencing homelessness safely reconnect with family, friends, or other support systems outside the area. Working with Flood Ministries, the program provides travel assistance when a confirmed, stable destination is identified, ensuring people can return to a supportive environment of family and friends. Homeward Bound focuses on voluntary relocation, safety, and long-term stability—offering a path for individuals who wish to rebuild their lives with the support of loved ones.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES & DATA

(July 2025 – March 2026)

- Total of **20** people served
- Locations people were returned to include: Texas, Ohio, Oregon, Nevada, Tennessee, Arizona, Wyoming, North Carolina, Alaska, Sacramento, San Diego, and Los Angeles.

SUCCESS STORY

In October 2025, Flood was working with a young lady engaged in the Keepers of the Cross women’s discipleship program. Once she completed her time in the discipleship program, she felt she was ready to return home to her family in Anchorage, Alaska. She reached out to her family members and agreed it was time for her to return home. Homeward Bound facilitated her successful reunion with her family in Alaska, providing what was needed to safely complete this journey.

FUNDING

A total of \$27,500 was invested to support Homeward Bound in this Fiscal Year. This program was funded through the General Fund.

An aerial photograph of a city at sunset, with a large, semi-transparent red triangle overlaid on the center. The sky is a mix of orange and yellow, and the city lights are beginning to glow. The triangle is the central focus, framing the text.

DEPARTMENT HOMELESS PROGRAMS

AGING ADULT SERVICES

Aging and Adult Services operates the Home Safe Program, funded by the California Department of Social Services, to address clients who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness due to abuse or neglect. This program serves adults aged 60 and older or adults 18-59 with mental or physical disabilities that interfere with their ability to protect themselves, who have been subject to abuse, neglect, or self-neglect. The program seeks to prevent or reduce homelessness through outreach, services, and resources.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Aging and Adult received **500** Adult Protective Services referrals in FY 25-26 that met criteria for the Home Safe Program.

FUNDING

Fiscal year 25-26 costs for this program were \$496,384. The program is expected to be funded through June 30, 2028, unless funds are fully expended before that date.

ANIMAL SERVICES

Kern County Animal Services received a Behavioral Health Bridge Housing grant through Kern Behavioral Health and Recovery Services to provide integrated animal care services to support reducing barriers that prevent individuals experiencing homelessness from fully engaging in available programs. This approach supports the County’s broader strategy to reduce practical barriers and increase engagement in long-term housing solutions.

KC Animal Services has deployed the mobile medical clinic to conduct outreach veterinary clinics in encampments, at M Street Navigation and Hope on Hart navigation centers, and other high-need locations. These clinics offer no-cost wellness exams, vaccinations, parasite prevention, minor medical treatments, and spay-neuter services. The grant money allows for updates and expansions to the kennels and pet spaces at the M Street navigation center, enabling 29 additional kennels to be established. It has supported purchasing medical and pet supplies and staffing to support these services. Providing accessible reproductive and preventative care reduces stray-animal populations, strengthens public health, and builds trust with community members who may be unable or hesitant to seek traditional veterinary care.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

(July 2025 – March 2026)

- **110** spay/neuter surgeries for 15 cats and 95 dogs
- **121** animals provided service at M Street Navigation Center

FUNDING

\$970,128 was received through the Behavioral Health Bridge Housing Funding is anticipated to be fully expended by June 30, 2027.



BEHAVIORAL HEALTH RECOVERY SERVICES

HOMELESS ADULT TEAM (HAT)

The Homeless Adult Team provides intensive behavioral health and co-occurring treatment, case management, and peer support to adults who have been or are at risk of being homeless, who are in shelters, transitioning out of incarceration, or who have or are on probation over the past year.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

(FY 24/25)

- Total of **409** people served
- **58** Psychiatric assessments
- **200** Assessment services
- **3,264** Targeted case management services

FUNDING

HAT has an FY 25/26 program cost of \$3,185,755.27. It is funded through Realignment, Federal Financial Participation, State General Fund, Mental Health Services Act, and the PATH grant.

The HAT program is anticipated to undergo programmatic changes in FY 26/27 in response to Proposition 1 funding and regulations.

HOUSING SERVICES TEAM (HST)

The Housing Services Team serves as a liaison between community-based organizations, providers, and partner agencies to support placement of clients into safe, stable, recovery-oriented, and supportive housing. The Housing Services Team collaborates with treatment teams for housing placements and provides services to support retention of current housing by coordinating services, administering payments for housing assistance, and mentoring housing partners.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

(FY 24/25)

- **743** Unduplicated clients were housed

FUNDING

Program costs for FY 25/26: \$1,921,403.57

Funding Source: Federal Financial Participation/State General Fund, Behavioral Health Bridge Housing grant, AB109, ARPA, FIST, Mental Health Services Act, Prop 47, and Transitional Rent.

Looking toward FY 26/27, KernBHRS expects to identify a Flexible Housing Pool Operator responsible for managing a pool of funds designated to secure housing for individuals experiencing homelessness or housing instability.



MOBILE CLINIC WITH STREET PSYCHIATRY

The Mobile Clinic with Street Psychiatry program is designed to reduce barriers to psychiatric and behavioral health care services for individuals living on the street by bringing needed services to where people are. Using a motor home and a van outfitted as mobile clinics, Street Psychiatry is providing needed psychiatric, mental health, and medical resources where the most vulnerable unsheltered clients need them most—on the street.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

(FY 24/25)

- Total of **108** people served
- **91** Assessments
- **574** Targeted Case Management services
- **30** Psychiatric Assessments

FUNDING

Program costs for FY 25/26: \$915,114.16

Funding Source: Federal Financial Participation/State General Fund and the Mental Health Services Act Innovation Plan



RELATIONAL OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT MODEL (ROEM)

The Kern ROEM program is a behavioral health field outreach team consisting of therapists, case managers, psychiatrists, and nurses dedicated to serving the needs of the unsheltered individuals with significant behavioral health challenges. The mission of ROEM is to provide field-based outreach, engagement, and treatment services to unserved and underserved individuals who are experiencing homelessness with mental illness and/or substance use disorders. The program prioritizes engagement with individuals who are treatment-resistant or have experienced repeated treatment failures, working closely with street outreach providers to provide intensive mental health support to unsheltered individuals with the highest mental health needs.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

(FY 24/25)

- Total of **139** people served
- **92** Assessments
- **1,390** Targeted Case Management services
- **40** Psychiatric Assessments

FUNDING

Program costs for FY 25/26: \$1,752,440.09

Funding Source: Federal Financial Participation/State General Fund, Mental Health Services Act

ON-SITE SUPPORT AT SHELTERS/NAVIGATION CENTERS

KernBHRS staff provide on-site behavioral health and substance use disorder services for individuals residing within local shelters and Navigation Centers. These mental health and substance use services ensure service coordination and linkage for shelter residents and support their success in accessing further housing resources. On-site behavioral health and substance use services are offered at Hope on Hart, M Street Navigation Center, M Street Safe Camping, Brundage Lane Navigation Center, The Open Door Network, and the Mission of Kern County.

FUNDING

Program costs for FY 25/26: \$730,270

Funding Source: Mental Health Services Act, Federal Financial Participation, and PATH grant

Proposition 1 changes have impacted funding that may be used to provide services as of July 1, 2026, which may lead to a reduction in on-site services in FY 26/27.



RURAL OUTREACH

KernBHRS contracts with Flood Bakersfield Ministries, Inc. to provide street outreach in Bakersfield and outlying areas of Kern County to assist with the assessment process and facilitate linking individuals to the Coordinated Entry System. Proposition 1 changes have resulted in a decrease in funding from \$1.5M in FY 24/25 to \$50,000 for FY 25/26.

KERNBHRS HOMELESS PROGRAMS THAT HAVE ENDED IN THE LAST YEAR:

- Bakersfield Referral Team—this team ended June 30, 2025
- Homeless Co-Response team—this program ended in March 2025 due to the expiration of funding. KernBHRS Mobile Evaluation Team still regularly engages with individuals experiencing homelessness in coordination with both the Bakersfield Police Department and Kern County Sheriff’s Office.
- Homeless Outreach in Delano, Taft, Tehachapi, Mojave, Lake Isabella, and Lamont—these programs were funded by ARPA and Mental Health Services Act funding. Funding ended June 30, 2025.

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Kern County Human Services (DHS) administers several California Department of Social Services (CDSS) funded housing and homelessness programs that are managed through the Housing Support Unit. DHS housing and homelessness programs are available to eligible households that are receiving core social services from DHS and meet HUD definitions of homelessness or of at-risk of homelessness. Additionally, DHS works in conjunction with the Bakersfield Kern Regional Homeless Collaborative Continuum of Care (CoC) and Coordinated Entry System to identify long-term rental assistance and services if needed.

CALWORKS HOMELESS ASSISTANCE

The CalWORKs Homeless Assistance (HA) Program aims to help CalWORKs families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, meet the reasonable costs of securing housing. CalWORKs HA can provide payments for temporary shelter or permanent housing services, such as payments to secure or maintain housing, including a security deposit and last month's rent, or up to two months of rent arrearages. The CalWORKs HA program serves active CalWORKs recipients with either temporary and/or permanent services, or apparently eligible CalWORKs applicants with temporary services only.

CALWORKS FAMILY STABILIZATION PROGRAM

The CalWORKs Family Stabilization Program provides intensive case management and services to CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work parents experiencing an identified situation and/or crisis that is destabilizing the family and would interfere with the parents' ability to participate in Welfare-to-Work activities and services, such as homelessness. The goal of the Family Stabilization Program is to increase success through more intensive case management and the assignment of additional activities or barrier-removal services necessary to ultimately achieve self-sufficiency, including, but not limited to, temporary shelter and payments to secure or maintain housing, including a security deposit and other move-in cost assistance.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

(FY 25/26)

- Enrolled over **250** parents
- **18** families secured housing
- Issued **149** housing stability services

CALWORKS HOUSING SUPPORT PROGRAM

The CalWORKs Housing Support Program provides evidence-based housing interventions, including homelessness prevention services and/or rapid rehousing core components, to eligible CalWORKs recipients experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Housing Support Program fosters housing stability through housing navigation and identification, housing-related case management, rental/move-in assistance, homelessness prevention assistance, such as arrears and/or repairs, and short- or medium-term rental subsidies on a graduated, declining scale in monthly intervals.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

(FY 25/26)

- Enrolled over **250** parents
- **30** families secured housing
- Assisted over **140** families in exiting to stable, permanent housing within 8 months of program enrollment

FUNDING

FY 25-26 HSP received an \$1,434,927 annual allocation from the California Department of Social Services.

BRINGING FAMILIES HOME

The Bringing Families Home program provides evidence-based housing interventions to families who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness and receiving child welfare services, including but not limited to Family Reunification, Family Maintenance, Emergency Response, and Voluntary Family Maintenance.

The goal of Bringing Families Home is to improve housing security for families, reduce the need to place children in foster care, and increase family reunification for children in out-of-home placement. Available services include housing navigation and identification, housing-related case management, rental/move-in assistance, homelessness prevention assistance, such as arrears and/or repairs, and short or medium-term rental subsidies on a graduated declining scale in monthly intervals.

DHS will also pre-screen Bringing Families Home-enrolled households for eligibility to the Housing Authority of the County of Kern's Family Unification Program. Family Unification Program provides a housing choice voucher and additional supportive services to establish housing stability for families who lack adequate housing, which is a primary factor in the imminent placement of the family's child, or children, in out-of-home care, or in the delay of discharge of a child, or children to the family from out-of-home care. Bringing Families Home funds are used to provide continued ongoing case management and wrap-around services to help achieve housing stability upon Family Unification voucher issuance.

FUNDING

In January 2026, the California Department of Social Services provided DHS with a one-time funding allocation of \$1,644,901, eligible to be expended through June 30, 2028, to restart Bringing Families Home services in Kern County.

HOUSING AND DISABILITY ADVOCACY PROGRAM

The Housing and Disability Advocacy Program (HDAP) provides housing support, disability benefit application assistance, and advocacy to people who are likely eligible for disability benefits and are experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. HDAP's core components include outreach, case management, disability benefits advocacy, and housing assistance. Eligible populations include youths, including former foster youth, eligible to receive benefits due to their own eligibility of a parent based on a qualifying disability, families that include an individual (including a child) who may be eligible for disability benefits, and individuals who may be eligible for disability benefits and are exiting jails, prisons, correctional facilities, hospitals, or other institutions, and those who are chronically homeless who may be eligible for disability benefits.

HDAP also looks to connect referred parties to additional community resources, such as Cal-AIM Enhanced Care Management Community Supports.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

(FY 25/26)

- Enrolled over **45** individuals
- **6** disability benefit applications approved
- Assisted **12** individuals in exiting to permanent housing

FUNDING

For the State Fiscal Year 2025-26, HDAP received a \$356,861 annual allocation and \$640,832 one-time allocation, eligible to be expended through June 30, 2028, from the California Department of Social Services to continue providing HDAP services in Kern County.

TRANSITIONAL HOUSING PROGRAM AND HOUSING NAVIGATION AND MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

The Transitional Housing Program (THP) and Housing Navigation and Maintenance Program (HNMP) provide current and former foster youth and young adults ages 18 to 24 with additional support needed to successfully transition to independence while reducing the risks of homelessness, unemployment, and instability.

Eligible activities include, but are not limited to, identifying and assisting housing services, helping secure and maintain housing (with priority given to those formerly in the state's foster care system), improving coordination of services and links to community resources within the child welfare system and the Homeless Continuum of Care, and outreach and targeting to serve those with the most severe needs.

BUILDING BLOCKS TRANSITIONAL HOUSING PROGRAM

The Building Blocks Transitional Housing Program is a collaborative effort between DHS and the Housing Authority of Kern to provide an on-site subsidized housing program that teaches youth how to pursue educational and employment goals, get acclimated to the community, develop and maintain a budget, enhance daily living skills, and reach personal goals for former foster youth, who are 18-21 years of age.

Participating youth will be required to work full- or part-time, may attend school, and are allowed to reside at the site for up to 24 months. Youths who successfully complete the program are provided with a Section 8 voucher to assist them with affordable housing in the community.

BUILDING AND LEADING YOUTHS TO SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Additionally, in 2025, DHS was awarded a \$1,355,779 two-year grant through Bakersfield Kern Regional Homeless Collaborative's HUD-funded Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program to establish a joint transitional housing and rapid rehousing program for youths ages 18 to 24 to continue combating youth homelessness in Kern County. Building and Leading Youths to Self-Sufficiency (BLYSS) program will aim to assist youth with obtaining self-sufficiency via connections to permanent housing, stable income, higher education, job readiness programs, and social support, and will act as an integration program between other youth transitional programs available through DHS to best leverage funds and resources for all youths seeking homelessness assistance. BLYSS is anticipated to begin accepting enrollments in June 2026.

CHOICES TRANSITIONAL HOUSING PROGRAM-PLUS

The CHOICES THP-Plus Program can accommodate up to 58 youths who have aged out of foster care and are between 18 and 24 years old, providing safe, secure housing while they develop and acquire the education, employment, and life skills needed for independent living. CHOICES THP-Plus offers HOST Home, in which youths live with a host family for up to 36 months, and Scattered Site Models, in which youths obtain and live in their own apartment for up to 24 months. Youths in either model receive a rental subsidy, a living allowance, and individualized case management services to assist them in achieving educational, employment, and life skills goals.

YOUTH ELEVATING TO SELF- SUFFICIENCY

In 2025, DHS established the Housing Navigation and Maintenance Program, Youth Elevating to Self-Sufficiency (YESS), to serve as a bridge program for youths 18-24 years of age who are ineligible for or waitlisted from traditional transitional housing programs, or who are awaiting approval for a youth Family Unification Program or Foster Youth to Independence voucher. YESS follows a Housing First model and evidence-based housing interventions, including components of rapid rehousing, to assist youths in securing and maintaining permanent housing. YESS offers direct financial assistance and wraparound supportive services, including, but not limited to, security deposits, move-in costs, housing case management, housing navigation, short- to medium-term rental subsidy assistance, home-habitable assistance, eviction prevention assistance, and frequent unit inspections to help youths achieve housing stability.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

(FY 25/26)

- Assisted over **35** youths in securing and/or maintaining housing

PLANNING NATURAL RESOURCES

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provides annual funding to the County for housing and community development programs, including the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME), and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG).

The County establishes funding priorities in accordance with HUD regulations (24 CFR 91.215), focusing on three categories: affordable housing, homelessness, and non-housing community development. Priorities are based on data from the Consolidated Plan (Needs Assessment and Market Analysis), information gathered during the consultation and citizen participation process, and the availability of resources to address these needs.

EMERGENCY SOLUTIONS GRANTS (ESG)

The County receives ESG funding and distributes it to qualified service providers for eligible activities, with a focus on emergency shelter and rapid re-housing.

Qualified service providers engage with homeless individuals, operate emergency shelters, and rapidly rehouse people into permanent housing. ESG grant dollars must be matched dollar-for-dollar against any assisted funds granted to the provider.

- **2025** - Entered into 14 agreements with providers, including Flood Ministries, Pearl Transit Corporation, Be Finally Free, The Mission at Kern County, The Open Door Network, and Women’s Center High Desert Incorporated, supporting street outreach, homelessness prevention, emergency shelter services, rapid re-housing, and Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) case management.
- **2026** - Entered into 5 agreements with providers, including The Mission at Kern County, The Open Door Network, and the Women’s Center High Desert Incorporated for emergency shelter services and rapid rehousing.

FUNDING

For fiscal year 2025-2026, Kern County received \$398,675 from HUD.

For fiscal year 2026-2027, Kern County has been allocated \$390,832 from HUD.

HOME INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM (HOME)

The HOME program is the largest federal block grant dedicated exclusively to creating affordable housing for low-income households. Funds support acquisition, construction, and rehabilitation through deferred-payment loans to developers and homeowners.

Recent local benefits from the program include:

- **2025** - Partnered with the California Veterans Assistance Foundation to construct Covey Cottages, 12 tiny homes for homeless veterans. Partnered with HACK for 28 units of affordable housing in Lost Hills (Almond Village II), and 85 new units of affordable housing on Pioneer Drive. Partnered with Golden Empire Affordable Housing Incorporated (GEAHI) to construct 15 units of permanent supportive housing on North Chester Avenue.
- **2026** (to date) - Partnered with a developer to provide a no-interest loan to purchase and rehabilitate an existing affordable housing duplex, and a second loan to construct a new duplex for affordable housing, both in the Mountain Mesa area.

FUNDING

For FY 25-26, Kern County received \$1,722,748 from HUD.

For FY 26-27, Kern County has been allocated \$1,791,632 from HUD.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM (CDBG)

CDBG funds support the development of viable communities by providing decent housing, a suitable living environment, and economic opportunities, principally for persons of low and moderate income. Funds can be used for a wide array of activities, including housing rehabilitation, homeownership assistance, lead-based paint detection and removal, construction or rehabilitation of public facilities and infrastructure, removal of architectural barriers, public services, rehabilitation of commercial or industrial buildings, and loans or grants to businesses.

While this funding source is used across the County for qualified projects, there are two specific housing-related programs:

- **Housing Rehabilitation Program** - Funds support the repair or removal of uninhabitable housing units, along with necessary site improvements such as utility connections and septic system abandonment. Assistance is provided through direct loans to eligible low- and moderate-income homeowners or occupants. This program is typically allocated \$189K annually.
- **Home Access Grants Program** - Funds provide grants to low- and moderate-income residents with verified disabilities to complete ADA accessibility improvements in their homes. Eligible upgrades include wheelchair ramps, grab bars, and modified fixtures to improve accessibility. In 2025, funding was approved to make 25 housing units accessible for seniors and individuals with disabilities, improving safety and livability. This program is typically allocated \$189K annually.

FUNDING

The County can expect to receive approximately \$4.4M annually for the overall CDBG program, of which approximately \$378K will be allocated to the two programs listed above, subject to federal appropriations.

CDBG - CORONAVIRUS AID, RELIEF, AND ECONOMIC SECURITY (CARES) ACT

This program refers to supplemental CDBG funding to help communities prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19. These funds are distributed to states, local governments, and insular areas, with at least 70% required to benefit low- and moderate-income residents through housing, public services, permanent jobs, or infrastructure improvements. The remaining 30% can be used to eliminate slum or blighted conditions or address urgent needs where no other funding is available.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

- \$1M was allocated to build and improve shower and laundry facilities at the M. Street Navigation Center.
- \$1M was allocated to the Community Action Partnership of Kern (CAPK) food distribution program for eligible low- and moderate-income residents, including unhoused residents.

FUNDING

No future funding is anticipated.

GENERAL PLAN HOUSING ELEMENT PROGRAMS

In addition to federally funded programs, the Planning and Natural Resources Department is committed to implementing a range of programs under the General Plan's Housing Element. These programs support housing and homelessness initiatives, promote affordable housing development, and streamline permitting, and will remain a priority throughout the 6th cycle Housing Element planning period (2023-2031). These programs are generally funded through existing resources or future grant opportunities.

PROGRAMS DIRECTLY RELATED TO HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

- Programs 1.4 through 1.7 – Coordinate with HACK, referring and screening tenants, and adjusting strategies for Housing Choice Voucher rental assistance.
- Program 4.3 - Coordinate with the Bakersfield/Kern Regional Homeless Collaborative and the Bakersfield/Kern Continuum of Care to identify homeless needs and direct funds toward projects that effectively address them (target 2,136 Permanent Supportive units and 1,945 Rapid Re-Housing units).

PROGRAMS SUPPORTING AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

- Programs 1.8 through 1.10 - Monitor and preserve at-risk affordable units.
- Program 2.1 – Host semi-annual affordable housing workshops.
- Program 2.4 – Promote Enhanced Infrastructure Financing Districts (EIFDs).
- Programs 2.10 and 2.11 - Pursue state, federal, and other housing funds to leverage local funds to maximize assistance offered to low- and moderate-income households, and prioritize large family units.
- Programs 3.1, 3.5, and 3.7 - Provide fair housing services, education, and complaint referral systems.
- Program 4.5 - Prioritize the use of HOME funds to increase the supply of low-income large family rental units and farmworker housing.

PROGRAMS FOR STREAMLINING HOUSING PERMITS

- Program 2.7 - Facilitate expedited development review for affordability projects.
- Program 2.8 - Encourage developer use of the density bonus program.
- Program 2.20 - Establish written procedures for implementing SB 35, Streamlined Ministerial Approval Process.
- Program 2.21 – Prepare a Special Housing Needs Strategic Plan.
- Program 3.8 – Conduct a County-wide Housing Conditions Study to evaluate the condition of the existing housing stock and estimate the number of units in need of rehabilitation and replacement.
- Programs 3.9, 3.11, and 3.13 - Amend the Zoning Ordinance to ensure that transitional housing, supportive housing, residential care facilities, and low-barrier navigation centers are identified as by-right uses in the applicable zone districts.

PUBLIC WORKS

The Homeless Outreach & Encampment Response Program maintains clean, safe public spaces while connecting individuals experiencing homelessness to services. Core operations are delivered by Code Compliance, the RAPID illegal dumping crew, and the Open-Door Network litter abatement teams.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

(July 2025 – March 2026)

- **1,198** encampments cleaned county-wide
- **6,493** dump sites cleaned by RAPID crews, collecting **1,931** tons of debris
- **2,498** sites cleaned by Open Door Network Crews, collecting **754** tons of material over 3,735 miles

FUNDING

The program will continue into FY 25–26 with Solid Waste Fund support for Code Compliance, RAPID, and Open Door Network, supplemented by ARPA funding, which has supported the program since its inception in 2022.

Program operations year-to-date have been funded through \$684,164.33 in ARPA support and \$1,917,105.43 from the Solid Waste Enterprise Fund. Open Door Network contract expenses total \$1,347,051 and are split evenly between the two funding sources (\$673,525.50 each). ARPA funding is projected to be fully expended by December 2026, after which the program will continue operating.

Notable Achievements

The County continues to strengthen its commitment to addressing and ultimately ending homelessness by reinforcing the infrastructure, partnerships, and policy frameworks needed for long-term impact. Additional activities of note completed by the County Administrative Office in the past year are highlighted to identify the supplemental work completed.



SUPPORT FOR BKRHC

During the second half of the fiscal year, County and Bakersfield City staff have collaborated to provide administrative support to the Bakersfield-Kern Regional Homeless Collaborative. By providing the backbone functions that keep the Collaborative operating, the team has helped maintain a unified system of care during a period of leadership transition. This support allowed service providers and community partners to focus on ensuring stable, well-organized regional coordination while ongoing collaborative functions.



PARTNERSHIP TO SUPPORT PRO-HOUSING DESIGNATION

The County Administrative Office has played a supportive role in advancing the Planning Department's Pro-Housing designation application. This designation not only signals the County's commitment to removing barriers to housing production but also positions the region to be more competitive for state funding opportunities tied to housing and homelessness solutions. County staff have supported the development of the application by gathering policy documentation, aligning internal processes with Pro-Housing criteria, and coordinating across departments to demonstrate readiness and capacity. This work strengthens the County's ability to accelerate housing development.



OILDALE STREET OUTREACH

The County has moved forward with a key initiative to expand outreach services by completing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for an Oildale Street Outreach provider. The RFP process was designed to identify a partner with deep community expertise, the ability to engage individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness, and the capacity to connect people to shelter, services, and housing pathways. By completing this competitive selection process, the County is working to ensure the Oildale community receives consistent, professional, and impactful outreach services tailored to local needs.

Strategic Goals

The following goals were identified as Strategic initiatives for FY 2025-2026 to advance the County's homeless priorities.

I.

Refine areas with current funding to allocate, considering rural needs.

The County's Homeless Team continues to look for opportunities to address homeless needs in the rural, unincorporated areas of Kern County. Additional funding opportunities have not been presented during this fiscal year, limiting options to expand programs and services without eliminating other operational programs. Additional investments in homeless services in rural areas have not been made, but consideration is ongoing to determine the best possible resources. Ongoing investments in the Rural Drop-in Clinic in Mojave continue through HHAP funding.

II.

Prioritize ongoing funding during FY 2025-26 for programs that are facing funding cliffs at the end of the fiscal year.

Programs facing funding cliffs are being evaluated on an ongoing basis for outcomes and programmatic benefits. Program costs have been reviewed in depth to identify opportunities to reduce costs and extend the program's life. Looking for additional funding sources has been an ongoing project to support sustaining existing programs.

III.

Standardize data tracking for all homeless resources operated by county departments and administered by the CAOs office.

This project has been completed. Data for homeless programs administered by the County Administrative Office has been standardized and collected. Data will be used going forward to develop a public-facing dashboard for housing and homeless services.

Strategic Goals

I.

Deploy a Homeless Dashboard that demonstrates relevant homeless data for the County of Kern and the outcomes of county-funded programs.

II.

Finalize and implement an agreement for comprehensive street outreach services in Oildale. Begin targeted street outreach services in the Oildale area.

III.

Coordinate with the City of Bakersfield and the Bakersfield Kern Regional Homeless Collaborative to identify opportunities for pooled investments to support additional Permanent Supportive Housing. Explore potential opportunities with Behavioral Health and Managed Care plan provisions for qualified individuals.

IV.

Continue exploring and applying for additional funding sources to support ongoing homeless services and operations.

