

12-2020

## Homelessness Prevention Contacts Datasheet

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### Recommended Citation

Whitehead, Juan, "Homelessness Prevention Contacts Datasheet" (2020). *Capstone Projects and Master's Theses*. 908.

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### **Abstract**

The Coalition of Homeless Providers, located in Seaside, California provides services for over 2,400 homeless people in Monterey County. This organization collaborates with other agencies to provide support for those who are in need of emergency, transitional, or permanent housing. Because of lack of affordable housing in the area, and the lack of available resources, many men and women, as well as families find themselves without a place to stay. Homelessness Prevention Contacts Datasheet establishes a list of rental property management companies and landlords who may be interested in some of the programs provided by the Coalition. These programs provide vouchers and other financial support for people in need of housing. One of the expected outcomes of this project is a partnership between property owners and The Coalition of the Homeless Providers. This project is expected to eventually lead to a decrease in the number of people experiencing homeless in Monterey County, however this won't be known for at least another year.

*Keywords:* Monterey, Coalition of Homeless, contact list

### **Agency & Communities Served**

The Coalition of Homeless Providers is a community service organization that provides housing for homeless individuals. The coalition works with many housing organizations to provide homes to the homeless. The mission of the Coalition of Homeless Services Providers is to eliminate homelessness in Monterey and San Benito Counties by promoting interagency coordination to develop and sustain a comprehensive system of housing and support services designed to maximize the self-sufficiency of individuals and families. This mission statement highlights the coalition's primary goal which is to provide appropriate programs for their clients so that homeless are able to retain housing into the client in Monterey County. A system of coordinated entry is used to help provide services to the homeless population.

According to the 2017 Monterey Census Report, of the approximately 2,800 plus homeless in Monterey County, 64% of the homeless in the County were male and 36% were female. By race, whites accounted for 76% of the homeless in the area with 31% non-hispanic and 69% hispanic. African Americans made up 12% of the homeless population (2017). The Coalition of the Homeless Providers serves some of the most vulnerable populations including families. In 2017, there were 160 families in need of shelter. The circumstances that lead to homelessness in the area vary. Some of the homeless in Monterey County suffer from mental health issues, including substance abuse. Unfortunately, some people become homeless because they are trying to flee domestic abuse. Of course, some people are homeless due to extreme financial difficulties. There is also a significant number of homeless youth in the community as well as veterans. As of 2017, there were 110 veterans who were homeless. Some were sheltered and others were living in unsheltered environments (Monterey County Census Report, 2017).

### **Problem Description**

“On January 25, there were 2,837 individual experiencing homelessness in Monterey County. This represents an increase of 23% from 2015 and the largest number recorded in the past 10 years.”(Monterey County Census Report, 2017, p.12). Although the number of homeless in Monterey County has decreased in recent years, the number of homeless continues to remain high.

As of 2019, the number of homeless in Monterey County is reported to be 2, 422 which is a decrease of 15% from the previous two years. Communities such as Monterey, Salinas, and Seaside have seen a decrease in the number of homeless. There has also been a decrease in the homeless population in communities in South County such as Greenfield, Soledad, Gonzales, and King City. In North County, the homeless population has decreased in Pajaro and Prunedale (Johnson, 2019).

Although the decline in homelessness in these communities is a hopeful sign, community homeless advocates caution that homelessness is a cycle and there is more work to be done. Despite the good news, some demographics among the homeless in the county have continued to increase. For example, the Coalition for the Homeless of Monterey County has indicated that there is an increase in homelessness among people over the age of 50. Another alarming trend is the number of people who are homeless for the first time, and individuals citing financial problems as the reason for homelessness (Johnson, 2019). With the job losses of 2020, many residents who were once able to afford housing may find themselves in need of assistance, This adds to the growing challenge of serving the homelessness in the community.

## **Contributing Factors**

The lack of resources available in the community such as affordable housing, transitional housing, and affordable healthcare are all factors that contribute to homelessness in Monterey County. In Monterey County, the rents are extremely high, and there is not enough affordable housing to accommodate the area. For example, the cost of living in Monterey is 28% higher than the California average, and 80% higher than the national average (Areavibes, 2019). In addition, the average cost to rent an apartment in Monterey is over 2,000 dollars. Although the cost of rents vary within Monterey County, many people are still unable to afford housing. The lack of affordability in the area has contributed to an increase in the number of homeless and the increase in the number of people seeking housing.

For those seeking shelter, the limited availability of emergency shelters and transitional housing continues to pose a problem in the community. Although there are various agencies like the Coalition that find transitional housing in Monterey County, the need for this type of placement exceeds the availability. People, who for various reasons, find themselves without shelter must compete for the limited resources in the area. In addition, there is not enough available funding to address the growing problems in the homeless community. In Monterey County, there are only thirteen transitional housing facilities available, and there are currently only sixteen emergency shelters that have approximately 150 available beds. Some of these

shelters only accept single women or women with children. While others only accept single men. (Monterey County Homeless Service, 2019)

The lack of affordable healthcare, specifically drug rehabilitation clinics, and clinics that serve those who have mental health issues also contributes to the number of homeless in the area. Many of the homeless population suffer from mental health issues or substance abuse disorder. Currently, there are approximately ten clinics in Monterey County that serve primarily low income patients. These facilities provide general care for their patients, but often do not provide mental health care or treatment for substance abuse. The few mental health and drug treatment facilities that do exist in the area are costly and often do not accept people unless they have insurance that will cover the high cost of treatment.

### **Consequences**

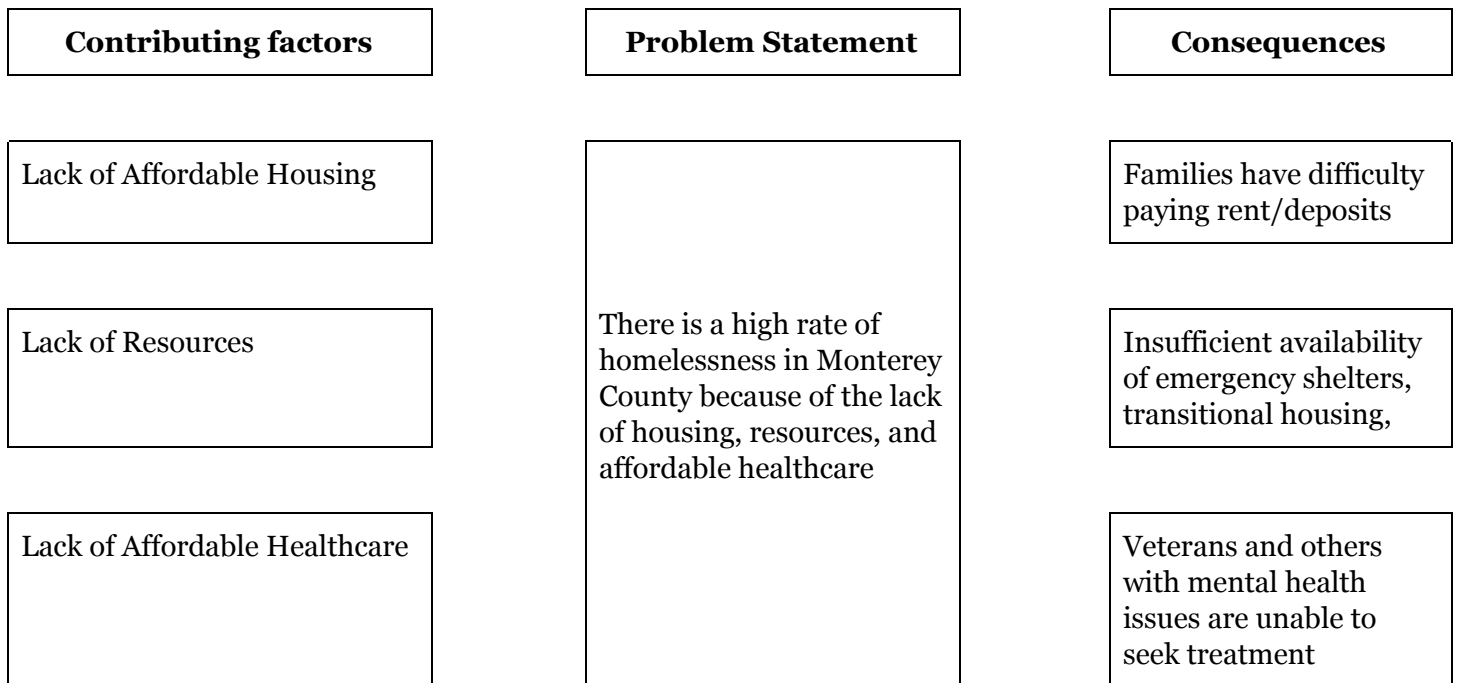
The consequences of lack of affordable housing is that it is harder for low income families to come up with the rent and deposit necessary to obtain housing in the elevated markets in Monterey County. This results in an increased number of people who remain homeless or who are forced to live with family members or friends. It is not uncommon for multiple families to live in one dwelling in order to afford the high rents in the area.

Lack of resources such as emergency shelters and transitional housing makes it difficult for vulnerable individuals to make the necessary changes to get on their feet. If unable to find enough shelters, the homeless are often forced to reside in encampments or set up housing under freeway underpasses. Some of the homeless population end up sleeping on public benches at parks, bus stops and beaches. Unfortunately, for those who become homeless, the limited availability of temporary or permanent housing takes a toll on clients' morale. This leaves the

homeless individual with little or no hope. This feeling of hopelessness increases the chances of his or her state of homelessness becoming chronic.

With the lack of affordable healthcare, veterans who suffer from PTSD and others with mental health disorders are able to receive the treatment they need. Many veterans who are homeless suffer from mental health issues that are a direct result of their service to our nation. Those who suffer from substance abuse disorders also have difficulty finding treatment facilities that are affordable. This leaves them with little opportunity to truly change their lives.

### **Problem Model Diagram**





## **Capstone Project Description and Justification**

### **Capstone Project**

This Capstone Project, Property Management Database, will require research into the availability of affordable housing in Monterey and San Benito counties. Landlords and property owners will be contacted and asked if they would be willing to participate in any of the Coalition's programs. These programs include: permanent housing, transitional housing, and section eight housing. The job of an intern is to act as a middle man to inform the housing navigator of property owners who are willing to participate in one of the programs. Basically, the intern is tasked with making the initial contact with possible participants and then creating a spreadsheet that shows which property management companies and landlords are interested in one of the programs. The housing navigator will then make further contact with the interested party. The navigator will explain in more detail the various programs that are available. Once the property owner agrees to participate in the programs, the navigator will place an individual from the homeless community at the apartment site.

### **Project Purpose**

The purpose of this project is to provide more housing for the homeless population in Monterey County. In order to meet this goal, all available resources must be explored. To this end, a contact list of all available housing in both counties will be developed so that the Coalition is able to place as many of the homeless population as possible. Currently, The Coalition of the Homeless has an overstock of vouchers which have not been utilized. Because of this, the Coalition is making an effort to reach out to all landlords to inquire about their willingness to provide housing using vouchers provided by the Coalition.

## **Project Justification**

Prior to the pandemic, the issue of the homeless population was a hot button issue that was covered extensively by the local media. Efforts to find solutions to this problem continues to be ongoing. Justification for this capstone is based on the assertion that “Knowledge is Power.” Many of the homeless population, because of various life circumstances, find themselves feeling hopeless and powerless. Research regarding community and individual empowerment can hopefully be applied to the homeless population as well. Community-based participatory research has shown promising results when it comes to reducing health disparities in a community. This approach empowers individuals to become major players in solving their own health issue (Thompson, Molina, Viswanath et, al 2017). Empowerment can be defined as “the state of being empowered to do something: the power, right, or authority to do something” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2020). Applying this definition and the above referenced research to the homeless population would mean that once given information and opportunity, that these various housing programs provide, members of the homeless community would become better equipped to take control of their lives as well as engage and work collaboratively with others in the community to come up with viable solutions to the homeless problem in Monterey County.

## **Project Implementation**

The implementation of this project will consist of the following steps: (1) researching and developing a list of potential participants in the programs provided by the Coalition of the Homeless. These programs include: permanent housing, transitional housing, rapid housing, and voucher programs that help with deposit and rent. (2) This information is entered in a data bank using Excel. (3) using the list, initial contact is made by the intern to determine interest in one of

the programs. (4) The Navigator is part of the CHISPA organization and will follow up with potential landlords who are interested in participating in the program. Further details will be explained to the participants. (5) Finally, placement will take place. The implementation of this program from beginning to end will take approximately six weeks. The development of the data collection will take approximately two- three weeks and the remaining time will be allocated toward finalizing calls and contact. Final placement of tenants will take longer.

The materials needed to implement the program are basic, and they include access to a computer, the Excel program, and cellphone. The personnel involved in this plan are the intern, the program navigator, (CHISP) organization and the director of the coalition.

Resources necessary for the implementation of this project include: additional personnel and funding. The CHISPA organization will provide additional personnel to assist with contacting rental property owners. Funding for this program has been allocated and comes from a variety of sources.

### **Assessment Plan**

The assessment plan will be based on the following criteria: completion of full contact list of rental properties in Monterey County, the completion of contact calls, and lastly, the number of landlords who are willing to participate in one of the programs. The contact list must include all agreed upon information about the rental property. All contacts are made and interests in the various housing programs are noted.

### **Expected Outcomes**

At the end of this capstone project, one of the expected outcomes is the creation of a viable data bank that can be updated and used in the future to help develop a partnership with

property management, landlords, and the Coalition for the Homeless. Another expected outcome is hopefully, an increased interest in the various programs available through the Coalition for the Homeless and members of the community including landlords. Ultimately, the increased placement of the homeless is an expected outcome. The goal is to see an increase in placement of the homeless of greater than 5% this year.

### **Project Results**

After compiling an initial list of approximately 100 rental properties and making initial phone contact, only four people have shown interest in the housing programs provided by the Coalition of the Homeless. Although this number is disappointing, it falls in line with the expectation of the staff at the Coalition. What was achieved through this Capstone project was the establishment of a complete list of available rental properties in Monterey County with the necessary contact information to continue reaching out to these members of the community. With continued effort, hopefully, more people will be willing to participate in the program.

### **Conclusion & Recommendations**

Monterey County, like other counties, is making an effort to address the needs of its homeless population. One of the difficulties that arises when tackling homelessness is that there is often insufficient correlation between the different programs that provide services for the homeless. One of the goals at the Coalition for the Homeless is to provide a more coordinated approach to solving homelessness. Another problem that the Coalition has identified is the need to establish a more efficient database of resources for the homeless. This project was designed to provide a database of all possible temporary or long term placement for the homeless population in

Monterey County. The goal was that this database could be utilized by various organizations that serve the homeless and would be expanded and updated regularly.

In general, while planning for the implementation of this project, it became apparent how important it is to be prepared, detailed oriented, patient, and willing to modify as necessary when challenges arise. The design of this project proved to be labor intensive as entering such detailed information on an Excel spreadsheet can present problems of its own. In addition, researching all apartment listings available in Monterey County can be laborious and time consuming. A more streamlined approach to gathering information about potential participants in the program would make creating a database more manageable; thereby, allowing for more daily contacts to occur. Although not entirely unanticipated, another issue that was a hinderous to the implementation of this project was the lack of interest in the three programs offered by the Coalition. Although a low participation rate was anticipated, the lack of initial support made the success of this project uncertain. Despite this concern, the project continued to completion in hopes that it would prove to be beneficial in the future. Fortunately, some initial success has occurred because the project's database is currently being utilized by Operation Room Key and the Cielo Non-profit organization. In addition, as a result of the information on the project's database, several homeless individuals had been placed in temporary housing. Because of the initial success of this project, this database will continue to be updated and expanded to include other counties in the Central Coast area.

The issues that face the homeless population are varied and include: mental health issues, substance abuse issues, lack of employment, and of course, the lack of affordable long term

housing as well as temporary housing. This project attempts to address the latter issue by providing a resource that can be utilized by organizations that serve the homeless population.

Although the initial implementation of this project was, in part, successful, more should be done to encourage members of the community specifically, apartment owners and rental agencies to participate in the programs offered by the Coalition for the Homeless. Many of the individuals contacted were unfamiliar with the program and were hesitant to participate. However, with further outreach and communication between homeless organizations and community members, a better participation rate is possible

The problem of homelessness is evident around our nation. One could travel to any part of the country and find the homeless, from the big cities to the small towns and rural areas. So like others, I was aware of this issue prior to my internship at the Coalition of the Homeless. However, after working at the Coalition, I have become more aware of the many societal as well as personal reasons people become homeless. I also now better appreciate how difficult it is to address the different and complex needs of homeless people and how urgent it is to make the effort to solve the problem of homelessness in communities across the nation.

The opportunity to work at the Coalition of the Homeless of Monterey County has allowed me to grow both personally and professionally. Personally, I have become confident in my ability to communicate and advocate for others. Professionally, I have learned to manage time more effectively in order to make deadlines. I would encourage anyone seeking an opportunity to work at the Coalition of the Homeless of Monterey County to be prepared to work hard, listen to your mentor, learn as much as possible and remain positive.

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## Appendix A

### Scope of Work

Activities	Deliverables	Timeline/Deadlines	Supporting Staff
Learning about the Coalition and agencies	Research		
Creating contact list of personnel	Email and Phone	Fall 2019	Roxanne/Nykole
Made a final a decision on Capstone project	Meeting	Spring 2020	Roxanne/Nykole
Decide work schedule and time frame	Emails	September 17, 2020	Roxanne/Nykole
Started contacting landlords and property management companies	Research/Data Entry/Phone Contact	September 27, 2020	Roxanne/Nykole
Ended contacting landlords and property management companies	Research/Data Entry/Phone Contact	November 23, 2020	Roxanne/Nykole