



# COUNTY OF MENDOCINO

STATE OF CALIFORNIA



2024  
LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM





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# COUNTY OF MENDOCINO

2024

## LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

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# MISSION STATEMENT

The Mendocino County Board of Supervisors' mission is to create and maintain a responsive and responsible government that enhances the quality of life of the people of Mendocino County. The County's mission is to deliver services that meet public safety, health, social, cultural, education, transportation, economic, and environmental needs of our communities. Mendocino County's Strategic Plan guides the critical decisions the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors faces to improve the quality of life for County residents.

## MENDOCINO COUNTY'S STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES

### **a. An Effective County Government**

- i. Define clear roles, responsibilities, and processes for government leadership. Create a thriving organizational culture.
- ii. Implement new approaches to demonstrate our commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI).
- iii. Improve operational efficiency by streamlining processes and implementing technology-based solutions.
- iv. Increase transparency in government operations to build trust with employees, communities, and partners.
- v. Assure financial sustainability of the County.

### **b. A Safe and Healthy County**

- i. Provide a person-centered approach to help under-resourced individuals and families thrive.
- ii. Deliver culturally relevant public health services that focus on prevention and are guided by social determinants of health.
- iii. Increase access to behavioral health services.
- iv. Help people feel safe in their communities.
- v. Implement practices that support a sustainable environment and responsible stewardship of natural resources.

### **c. A Thriving Economy**

- i. Support a vibrant economy.
- ii. Support increased housing stock at a range of affordability levels.
- iii. Ensure that affordable and reliable broadband communications is available to all County residents.

### **d. A Prepared and Resilient County**

- i. Increase disaster/emergency preparedness and resiliency.
- ii. Ensure access to rural fire protection and emergency medical services.
- iii. Improve and maintain transportation and road systems/access routes.

# COUNTY OVERVIEW

## BOARD OF SUPERVISORS - DISTRICT MAP

### BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

The Board of Supervisors is the legislative body of Mendocino County government. The Board adopts policies, establishes programs, appoints certain non-elected department heads, and adopts annual budgets for all County departments. The Board of Supervisors also serves as the governing board for two special districts; the Mendocino County Water Agency, and the Mendocino County Air Quality Management District. Supervisors also serve on regional agencies and as ex-officio members on the boards of county service districts. The Board of Supervisors is a five-member board elected by district on the basis of population, as required by state law. Supervisors are elected on a non-partisan basis and serve for a term of four years. Along with the Board's committee and agency appointments, Supervisors also elect a Chairperson and Vice Chairperson annually among themselves.



**Glenn McGourty**  
District 1



**Maureen Mulheren**  
District 2



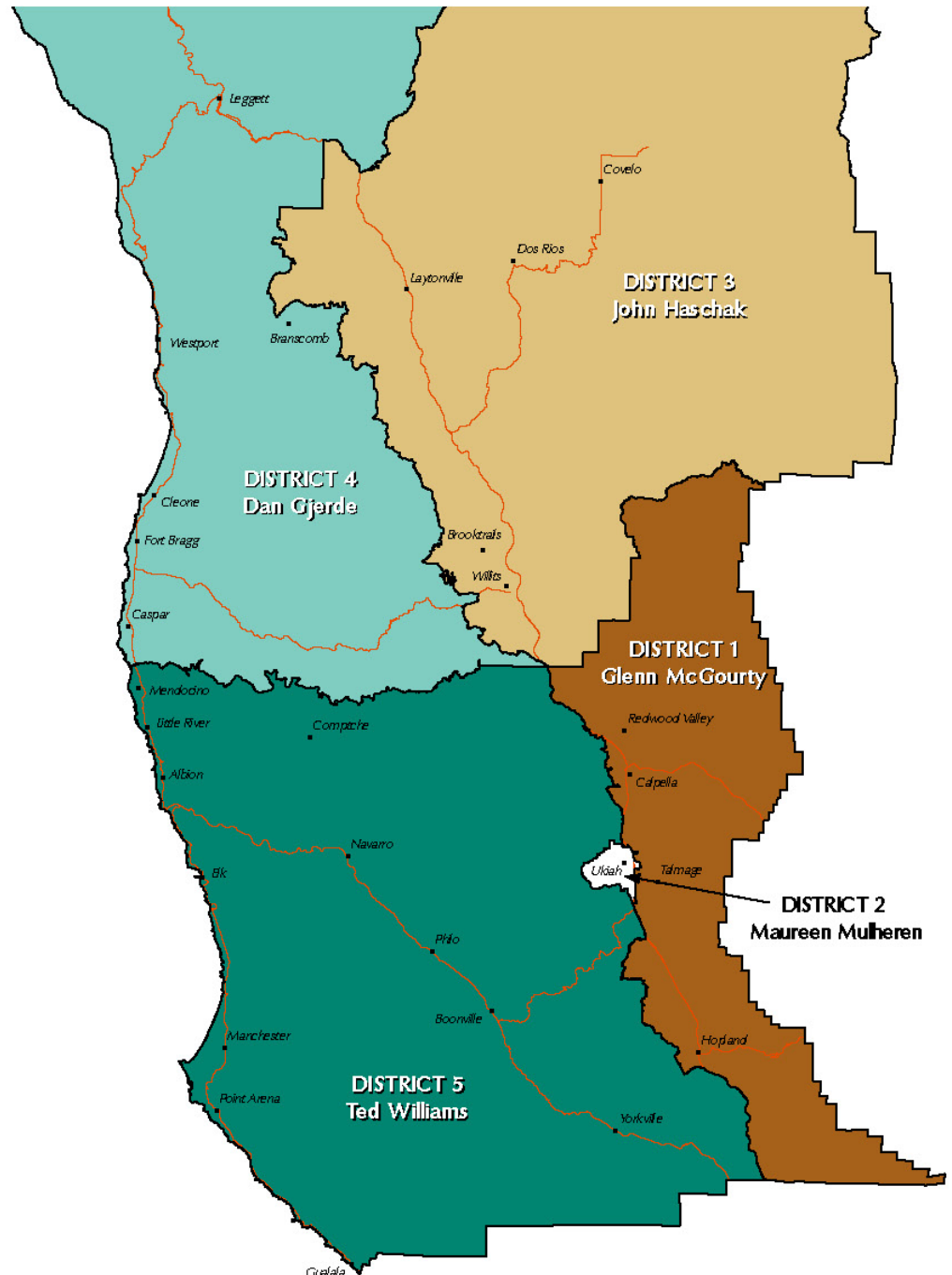
**John Haschak**  
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District 5





# COUNTY OF MENDOCINO

## 2024 STATE & FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

### **LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM OVERVIEW**

Local government is uniquely and best positioned to support, serve, and respond to community and individual needs. The ability of the Board to deliver on its mission, “to create and maintain a responsive and responsible government that enhances the quality of life of the people of Mendocino County,” requires support from all levels of government. Therefore, State and Federal legislative and regulatory policy and action are often needed to support local government in having this impact. State and Federal action can affect the County’s ability to deliver, shape, and resource services, in addition to removing obstacles to providing those services.

This support has been significant in the County’s recovery from several major disasters and a global health pandemic. To fulfill Mendocino County’s commitment to the community, positive state and federal action, including the allocation of resources, is sought by county staff. Each year, Mendocino County departments review and recommend state and federal legislation to improve and enhance County financing, operation, and efficiency in service delivery. The platform includes the over-arching guiding principles listed below, prioritizes state and federal issues intended for specific legislative action, and lays out ongoing general state and federal issues that the County will monitor for potential action should opportunities arise. The Board of Supervisors adopts these legislative positions as a platform that guides County advocacy to elected state and federal representatives. This advocacy is carried out by County staff and professional lobbyists hired by the County, the National Association of Counties (NACO), Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), and the California State Association of Counties (CSAC).

The numbering and listing of items and order are for tracking purposes and do not denote rank or relative importance. Priority state and federal issues have been identified as a focus for staff and state lobbyists during the legislative session. However, action can be taken on any issue as opportunities arise. Additionally, some items identified as state priority issues could yield advocacy opportunities in a federal setting and vice versa.

### **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

Through this platform, Mendocino County will rely on advocates, professional associations, such as the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), and the National Association of Counties (NACO), local elected officials, and staff to:

1. Support legislation that furthers the goals identified within the County’s Strategic Plan Priorities:
  - i. An Effective County Government
  - ii. A Safe and Healthy County
  - iii. A Thriving Economy
  - iv. A Prepared and Resilient County
2. Develop, pursue, and support legislative and budget efforts that protect and/or enhance local governments’ revenues, maximize the County’s access to state and federal funding sources,

and/or increase local funding flexibility. Oppose any effort to balance the state budget by removing or recouping local government resources and support legislation that will allow the County to ensure full cost recovery for services provided to other governmental entities.

3. Encourage and seek legislation to facilitate orderly and sustainable economic development and increase the opportunity for discretionary revenues and programmatic and financial flexibility for the County.
4. Oppose unfunded mandates and any realignment initiatives that fail to fully fund services mandates cost-shifted to the County, including appropriate cost of living increases and cost increases due to population and caseload growth.
5. Support legislation that preserves local control; oppose legislation that diminishes local control of services and revenues.
6. Support the County's authority to ensure mutually acceptable tax-sharing agreements for annexation and incorporation that protect or enhance the County's ability to provide services to its residents.
7. Support legislation that provides tax, bond, and other funding formulas for the equitable distribution of state and federal monies while opposing attempts to decrease, restrict, or eliminate County revenue sources.

Pursuant to Mendocino County Policy No. 19, the Board of Supervisors adopts an annual legislative platform reflecting the County's priorities for legislative advocacy, state and federal funding, and issues of interest to local government and communities. The purpose of this Legislative Platform is to clearly outline the positions of the County on priority issues and matters that impact the County's ability to operate effectively while allowing the consideration of legislative and budget issues that arise during the legislative session. In keeping with past practice, the Board referred the development of the 2024 Legislative Platform to the General Government Standing Committee, comprised of Chair John Haschak and Supervisor Glenn McGourty, to work with County Department Heads and Executive Office staff in developing a framework of issues for Board consideration.

On March 12, 2024, the Board adopted the 2024 Legislative Platform reflecting the County's legislative priorities and policies for the upcoming legislative cycle. In adopting an annual legislative advocacy platform, the Board of Supervisors strives to enhance the quality of life in Mendocino County through effective state and federal legislation.

## **STATE & FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES & FOCUS AREAS**

In adopting this year's legislative platform, the following serve as Mendocino County's priorities and focus areas for federal and state legislative advocacy:

### **GOVERNMENTAL TRANSPARENCY & PUBLIC ACCESS**

**ISSUE:** Article I, Section Three of the California Constitution guarantees that “the people have the right to instruct their representatives, petition government for redress of grievances, and assemble freely to consult for the common good.” This includes a right to access information concerning the meetings and writings of public officials. To ensure that the right to openly scrutinize public agencies is maintained, the Constitution requires local agencies to comply with certain state laws that outline the basic requirements for public access to meetings and public records.

The Ralph M. Brown Act provides guidelines for how local agencies must hold public meetings. Among other provisions, the Act requires that meetings of the legislative body of a local agency be open and public. The Brown Act was enacted in 1953 first allowed teleconference meetings in 1988. At the time, San Diego County was considering the use of video teleconferencing for meetings and hearings of the board of supervisors due to concerns about the long distances that some of their constituents travelled to participate and were concerned that these distances prohibited some people from attending at all.

In response to the impacts of the COVID19 pandemic, including mandatory “stay-at-home” orders, public agencies had to adjust to new ways of conducting business because of the public safety risk associated with meeting in person. In March 2020, the Governor issued Executive Order N-29-20, which provided local agencies with more flexibility to use teleconferencing without making those teleconference locations accessible to the public. On June 11, the Governor issued Executive Order N08-21 notifying local agencies and the public that previous executive orders concerning the conduct of public meetings would apply through September 30, 2021. The Legislature later enacted AB 361 (Robert Rivas, 2021) which allows, until January 1, 2024, local agencies to use teleconferencing without complying with specified Brown Act restrictions in certain state-declared emergencies. In 2022, AB 2449 was passed, allowing the legislative body of a local agency to use teleconferencing without complying with the traditional Brown Act teleconferencing rules or the modified AB 361 rules in certain circumstances. Additional flexibility is needed to maximize public participation, further reduce vehicle miles traveled, and to adjust to uncertain events.

Counties and other local governments have also faced a significant increase in the number and size of PRA requests over the past few years. The intensive work required to review records and redact the material that is exempt or prohibited from disclosure has grown exponentially. Further compounding this problem is that counties must make tough judgment calls on whether to release some records, especially when doing so is specifically prohibited, for example because doing so would violate privacy laws or employee confidentiality. Counties have also seen an increase in vexatious litigants using the PRA to grind government work to a halt.

The County of Mendocino supports governmental transparency and public access. However, legislative proposals are needed to address the impacts of these growing issues on local governments capacity to provide this service without impacts to other critical services.

### **STATE ACTION**



- Support legislation that balances increased public trust, confidence and access to public meetings and records while realizing the fiscal and operational constraints of local government.
- Advocate for the appropriate utilization of video technologies to increase public participation and reduce vehicle miles traveled.

## **COUNTY ROADS & INFRASTRUCTURE**

**ISSUE:** The revenue received from the fuel tax is deposited in the State Highway Users Tax Account (HUTA). This revenue is allocated to the state, counties, and cities, with the majority (56 percent) designated for state highway maintenance. However, more than 80 percent of all road miles in the state are owned and operated by cities and counties. As a result, gas tax revenue is woefully inadequate to cover the state's local road infrastructure needs, including 54 out of 58 counties where Pavement Condition Indexes are considered to be at risk or poor. Mendocino County is one of these counties.

The implementation of Senate Bill 1 (Beall and Frazier), a landmark transportation funding package that was signed by Governor Brown on April 28, 2017, offered counties a significant influx of new revenue to invest in the local street and road system. Maintenance of our streets and roads is vital to our safety and economic wellbeing. Given attempts in 2018 to repeal this law, it is critical that counties stay vigilant to protect investments in our roads and infrastructure and work to inform state partners of impacts on counties that could limit access to SB 1 funds. It is important that state road and infrastructure investments are protected to continue our progress toward a full recovery and to prepare for future disasters.

### **STATE ACTION**

- Advocate for increased funding levels for transportation infrastructure, operations and maintenance as accessible transportation plays a vital role in economic and community wellbeing.
- Oppose efforts that would divert SB 1 transportation funds from road and highway projects and support efforts to protect and preserve transportation funding.
- Advocate for increased and stabilized state revenues to the County.
- Support work with federal, state, local, tribal, community and other partners to identify, assess, modify, repair, or construct essential transportation infrastructure for critical County emergency response and evacuation missions.
- Advocate for increased and stabilized federal revenue and reimbursement to the County related to FEMA activities, and the need to restore or replace public infrastructure within the disaster and fire-scarred areas.
- Support a set-aside in the Cap-and-Trade funding for preventative maintenance of road systems for all local governments.

## **CLIMATE RESILIENCE & RENEWABLE ENERGY**

**ISSUE:** With over 3,500 square miles of diverse terrain and 129 miles of coastline, Mendocino County is home to significant ecosystems, critical biodiversity and a rural population. Population density is about 26.1 per square mile (2020 Census). Mendocino County is an at-risk region which necessitates a comprehensive effort and substantial resources, including state and federal support, to effectively address and support county-wide actions and community resiliency projects. Per FEMA’s National Risk Index, Mendocino County is in the 95.1 national percentile, has a “very high” social vulnerability, and the highest hazard type risk ratings are wildfire (97.3), drought (99.4), earthquake (98.4), landslide (99.5), and riverine flooding (96.0). In recent years, climate change-related hazards continue to be experienced throughout the County—from the 2017 firestorm through the severe winter storms of 2023.

Hazards generally faced in Mendocino County include but are not limited to wildfire, drought, extreme heat events, severe winter storms and associated flooding, poor air quality due to wildfires, agriculture and forestry pests and diseases, dune and bluff erosion, landslides and debris flows, wide-scale tree mortality, and sea-level rise. Many hazard types are experienced countywide while other categories occur in distinct climate areas dependent on their geography. Nonetheless climate change is an increasing challenge experienced county-wide, already impacting Mendocino communities, and requiring consistent, dedicated efforts to address it.

California’s 4th Climate Assessment warns that the costs of climate change could climb beyond \$113 billion annually if action is not promptly taken. While the County has identified numerous climate-induced challenges, the investment necessary to fund required resiliency efforts is far beyond available financial resources. Funding is needed to support efforts to reduce emissions, increase the pace and scale of forest health and wildfire resiliency activities, and support other action to increase climate adaptation.

### **STATE ACTION**

- Support investment in and efforts to support the infrastructure needed in rural areas and tribal regions to reduce carbon emissions, including strengthening federal, state and local capacity for carbon analysis and accounting, and emissions reduction strategies to support climate resilient planning and decision-making.
- Advocate for projects that improve community resilience to climate impacts and improve electric grid reliability.
- Support investment in infrastructure to facilitate clean renewable energy and transition to zero emission vehicles and transport, as well as wildfire resilience and land use practices that support carbon sinks and reduced emissions.
- Support legislation and budgetary action that would extend tax incentives for alternative fuels, vehicles, and infrastructure, including tax credits that support electric charging and biofuels infrastructure; tax credits for producers of biodiesel and cellulosic biofuels; tax credits for conversion to plug-in hybrid vehicles; and tax credits for purchases of alternative fuel vehicles.
- Support legislation that fosters, promotes, and creates incentives for the adoption, use, and economic benefits of sustainable, net zero emissions energy endeavors benefitting Mendocino County.
- Support legislation that encourages research and analysis of net zero emission energy projects; streamlines the environmental review processes; increases investment in critical infrastructure, and the regional electric grid; allows stakeholder involvement; and supports the development of net zero emission energy.
- Advocate for support for installation of solar power, geothermal, and hydropower as renewable energy sources.



- Support carbon sequestration programs and projects, including carbon farming and forest management.
- Support legislation that incentivizes responsible water storage systems for existing new and existing construction.
- Advocate for funding to counties, Tribal Nations and cities along the coast to develop and implement sea level rise adaptation plans and projects.
- Advocate for funding where adaptation requires retreat or moving away from properties.
- Advocate for full cost recovery by counties in new state climate action mandates.

## **DISASTER PREVENTION, RECOVERY, RESILIENCY & MITIGATION**

**ISSUE:** During the 2017 Redwood Complex Fire, Mendocino County suffered tremendous loss, 36,000 acres were burnt, homes were lost, agricultural land was damaged, and watersheds were affected. However, this does not touch on the loss of lives. Mendocino communities continue to be hit hard by unprecedented disasters, including significant fires in 2018, 2020 and 2021 along with public safety power shut offs in 2019, drought, COVID-19 public health emergency, and severe winter storms in 2022 and 2023. The devastation of these events will live on for decades. The support of the State and Federal government in both appropriations and policy changes are vital as the County continues to rebuild resilient communities and prepare for the “new normal” of increasingly catastrophic natural disasters.

### **STATE ACTION**

- Support efforts to enact legislation, regulations, and executive orders that ease the burden and promote rapid recovery and preparedness for future disasters.
- Support maximum reimbursement for loss and damages for the County and for residents recovering from wildfires or natural disasters.
- Support additional funding at a local level for disaster preparedness and recovery.
- Advocate for the state to evaluate regulations and requirements for grants, housing projects and mitigation projects for opportunities to streamline processes and provide exemption when necessary.
- Advocate and support state protection for homeowner’s insurance availability and affordability in fire prone areas.
- Support state efforts to strengthen and stabilize California's marketplace for homeowners and commercial property insurance and expand consumer coverage choices, particularly in underserved areas.
- Support funding for wildfire prevention including the development and/or improvement of second access routes and emergency egress for communities in the wildland urban interface.
- Support funding for the assessment and removal of dead and dying hazardous trees.
- Support efforts to remove hazardous vegetation and combustible material from parcels situated in the unincorporated areas of the County to reduce the potential for fire, promote the public health, safety, and welfare of the community, and a structure to enforce defensible space requirements.
- Support full and flexible, non-competitive funding for enhanced emergency preparedness

and all hazard planning to include provisions for establishing a baseline emergency management capability in each county.

- Advocate for increase funding and coordination of local government alert & warning systems.
- Advocate for state financial assistance to support vulnerable communities impacted by disaster; allowing for the swift response to the actual needs of our most vulnerable survivors prior to the receipt of federal funds.
- Support increased funding for equitable emergency planning and response specifically addressing the safety of seniors, children, non-English speakers, and individuals with access and functional needs.
- Support an increased allocation of funds to support local recovery and resiliency efforts in the immediate aftermath of a disaster.
- Support increased access to funding for local jurisdictions for disaster-related infrastructure and personal property damages, and response costs such as debris removal and property recovery.

#### **FEDERAL ACTION**

- Support maximum reimbursement for loss and damages for the County and for residents recovering from wildfires or natural disasters.
- Support implementation of new requirements that limit “funding claw backs” and oppose efforts to withhold disaster recovery payments to Mendocino County.
- Advocate for additional FEMA technical assistance for counties to assist staff in navigating direct assistance programs and regulatory requirements for approved disaster projects.
- Advocate for financial and direct services to eligible individuals and households affected by a disaster, who have uninsured or under-insured necessary expenses and serious needs in non-federally declared disasters.
- Support federal efforts to stabilize the home insurance market and ensure homeowners and communities have access to affordable, accessible, quality insurance coverage.

#### **COVID-19 RESPONSE & RECOVERY**

**ISSUE:** Since January 2020, the County has been part of a coordinated public health response involving the Federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). The then Director of Emergency Services/Chief Executive Officer declared a Local Emergency and the then Health Officer declared a Local Health Emergency on March 4, 2020. The County’s response efforts to protect human life and minimize the strain on the health care system during the COVID-19 pandemic is estimated to exceed \$28 million in 2020. Costs include labor, essential supplies and materials, contracts with public health and technical consultants, testing, education, and outreach, contacting investigation and tracing, motel rooms for homeless individuals, preparation and operation costs for the health emergency alternative care facility, staff overtime costs, and emergency food relief programs.

#### **STATE ACTION**

- Support ongoing and increased assistance by the State in providing epidemiologist and bilingual/bicultural contact investigators and tracers.



- Support ongoing operational funding for project HomeKey projects.

#### **FEDERAL ACTION**

- Support ongoing federal coronavirus aid to local government to support the COVID-19 response including, but not limited to testing, vaccines, isolation/quarantine housing and economic recovery.

### **NATURAL RESOURCES**

**ISSUE:** Mendocino County supports efforts to conserve and preserve the county's natural resources to help restore its fisheries, maintain healthy forests, support clean reliable water supplies, and ensure agriculture is preserved for future generations. The County supports activities and policies that promote responsible land management that integrate local government involvement in federal and state land management decisions. The County supports increased state and federal funding for public land management to address deferred maintenance of infrastructure in forests and fire prevention and mitigation activities.

#### **STATE ACTION**

- Support local control in the implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) and development/implementation of a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP).
- Support state funding for implementation of Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSP).
- Support state funding for storm water infrastructure improvements and compliance with storm water quality regulations.
- Advocate for recycling and organic waste reduction legislation that take into account the needs of rural communities.
- Advocate for legislation to allow and streamline the process for water districts to consolidate districts. Support state funding for drought response and infrastructure to facilitate water resiliency in rural communities.
- Support state funding for flood response and infrastructure, as droughts happen, floods follow including post-wildfire debris flows.
- Support the restoration of Williamson Act (the California Land Conservation Act) Subvention funds. Mendocino County, like most other rural counties, is dependent on State funding to offset the loss of property tax revenue to the County. Without a resumption of subvention payments, the County budget will suffer a detrimental impact.
- Support restorative funding for the Division of Measurement Standards, within the California Department of Food and Agriculture to ensure that consumer protection and commercial device accuracy support is maintained.
- Support the development and expansion of cap-and-trade funding programs specifically targeted at rural communities.
- Support state and federal local assistance, financial resources, regulatory relief and assistance with outreach and coordination efforts to address health and safety risk from dead and dying trees, including areas within the coastal range overseen by the California Coastal Commission.
- Advocate for legislation that would address the formation of a governing authority for the Potter Valley Project.
- Advocate for state funding to assist the Inland Water and Power Commission and Planning Agreement Parties in the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) re-licensing process for the Potter Valley Project.
- Advocate for legislation that would address the formation of governing authority for the Potter

Valley Project that includes Mendocino County representation.

- Advocate for state funding to assist the Mendocino County Inland Water and Power Commission in preserving the water supply provided by the Potter Valley Project for the thousands of people who use the water domestically, for agriculture, and for environmental uses in the Russian River watershed.
- Prioritize projects that reduce or prohibit development and vehicle miles traveled potential on conservation lands, open space, agriculture and working lands, and important watersheds.
- Support and promote new and innovative programs and projects that reduce or sequester greenhouse gases, including vegetation management, urban greening, and land use planning.
- Advocate any new state climate action mandates include full cost recovery by counties.
- Support parks and open space lands, as public natural resources, in the provision of carbon neutrality.

### **FEDERAL ACTION**

- Engage in the re-licensing process for FERC Project No. 77 – the Potter Valley Hydroelectric Project and other related items to achieve Mendocino County goals.
- Support the Mendocino County Inland Water and Power Commission and the Two-Basin Partnership efforts to re-license the Potter Valley Hydroelectric Project.
- Monitor the legal challenges to the Waters of the United States rule (by the EPA and Army Corps) aimed at re-defining the definition of "Waters of the US" inside the Clean Water.
  - Advocate for developing a new rule that would not inappropriately or unnecessarily expand coverage to new land features or waters or broaden the overall jurisdiction of the agencies. Additionally, the detrimental impacts and burdens to municipalities and agriculture nationwide could be more thoroughly assessed and minimized.
  - Support Congressional efforts to establish a more effective definition of "Waters of the U.S."
- Support restoring full mandatory funding for the Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program, which compensates public lands counties for untaxable Federal land.
- Support long-term Federal reauthorization and full funding for Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act (SRS), which provides funding for rural counties and school districts to replace revenue from dwindling forest receipts due to national decline in timber harvesting.
- Engage with United States Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and other Federal land management agencies to ensure that local communities are consulted regarding land management issues including recreation, fire management and law enforcement.
- Engage in the efforts with to preserve the water supply provided by the Potter Valley Project for the thousands of people who use the water domestically, for agriculture, and for environmental uses in the Russian River watershed.
- Support the Mendocino County Inland Water and Power Commission in the efforts with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to raise Coyote Dam at Lake Mendocino and secure the related water supply.

### **ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

**ISSUE:** Communities prosper when ideas, programs, and activities aimed at improving its economy and the quality of life of its residents are encouraged. Economic and community development is the creation of wealth from which community benefits are realized. It's more than a jobs or small business program, it's an investment in growing our local economy and enhancing the prosperity and quality of life for all



residents. These programs can lead to increased tax revenues, job growth, and increased community prosperity. Jurisdictions are often limited in the types of tools and resources which they can employ for encouraging development activity in their own regions. The County supports legislative efforts designed to foster development tools and funding options for effective programs and job creation. The County supports legislative efforts that promote strategic land use and development practices that maintain or increase local control. Mendocino County will continue to advocate for economic and community development opportunities suitable for the unique character of its rural communities and seek support from state and federal partners.

### **STATE ACTION**

- Promote legislation that positively impacts a jurisdiction's ability to engage in and implement economic development programs and policies.
- Enhance and engage regional collaboration.
- Encourage the development and implementation of a statewide "proactive" California business retention strategy, led by the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz). The county supports partnerships with local economic development organizations.
- Support legislation that increases the competitive position of the State of California, its geographical areas, and its jurisdictions.
- Advocate for legislation that incorporates clean energy and preparedness in economic development efforts.
- Support legislation that fosters, promotes, and creates incentives for the adoption, use, and economic benefits of clean and sustainable energy endeavors benefitting Mendocino County.
- Advocate for support for installation of solar, geothermal, and hydropower as renewable energy sources.
- Support legislation to broaden eligibility and access to high-quality, affordable childcare and early learning programs, and increase childcare workers' compensation and professional development opportunities.
- Support the maximum level of funding for the CDBG program. In addition, the County supports allowing permanent housing to be considered an eligible activity for the program and increased operational flexibilities.
- Support legislation that maintains and strengthens tax increment financing tools for communities.
- Support legislation that provides ongoing State funding for mandated planning projects such as the Regional Housing Needs Assessment, Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS), General Plan Housing Element updates, and other planning initiatives under AB 32 and SB 375.
- Promote a full range of housing in all communities to better address the housing needs and solutions in rural communities.
- Support the repeal of Article 34 of the California Constitution, which would reduce administrative burden on local governments around affordable housing development.
- Support expansion of State tax incentives for the provision of affordable housing. The tax codes and financial industry regulations need to be revised to provide stimulus to produce affordable housing, particularly for median, low, and very low-income households.
- Oppose legislation that creates restrictions on local control of land use and development.
- Oppose legislative actions or reform measures that penalize jurisdictions for non-compliance with state-mandated Housing Element update schedules.
- Broadband Deployment
  - Support "Dig Once/Trench Once" and other policies which streamline the deployment of conduit for underground fiber-optic and electrical cables and minimize regulatory burdens and permitting processes for deployment of internet connectivity.
  - Advocate to maximize broadband infrastructure investment and equitable county-wide

connectivity from the delivery of Middle and Last Mile projects under SB 156 and other State and Federal funds. In addition to explore options that would include wireless and satellite technology in providing internet service delivery where underground fiber-optic is not possible or feasible.

- Support and monitor the development and deployment of a robust county-wide Middle Mile open access fiber-optic backbone to stimulate economic development and affordable broadband availability to homes, businesses, schools, libraries, public safety facilities, health services, and other institutions throughout Mendocino County.
- Advocate for complete and accurate broadband connectivity data needed for smart policy and design decisions required to effectively bridge the growing digital divide.
- Advocate to strongly encourage, if not require, last mile to the consumer broadband providers to supply equitable service to all potential customers as part of a new area service acquisition.
- Support legislation that provides resources to improve rural counties access to high-speed broadband. The County also supports legislation that protects access to broadband service.
- Support and advocate for sustained access to reliable and affordable telecommunication services for the County's diverse communities.
- Advocate for secured, long-term, ongoing funding, maintenance, and planning of the Great Redwood Trail.
- Support community access to local libraries and advocate for broadband equity, the freedom to read and to access diverse points of view, literacy for all ages, and intellectual freedom.
- Advocate for additional grant funding for libraries who provide services to vulnerable populations such as Lunch at the Library which provides literacy-rich activities for libraries working with USDA lunch providers to offer nutritious lunches to children 18 and under who might not have access to lunches over the summer break and JobNow, VetNow, and LearnNow to support education for vulnerable populations.
- Support efforts to promote local school-museum partnerships to providing engaging, hands-on learning opportunities. Advocate for additional state and grant support for regional museum's role as vital education providers and keepers of primary source material.

#### **FEDERAL ACTION**

- Support efforts by the Administration and Congress to increase the nation's infrastructure investments to help promote economic development, public safety, and overall mobility through a comprehensive infrastructure package, surface transportation reauthorization and water resources bill.
- Advocate for complete and accurate broadband connectivity data, which is necessary to effectively bridge the growing digital divide as the Federal government relies on this information to determine the true need for critical broadband resources.
- Support the deployment and availability of broadband and emerging technology, to rural communities to ensure equitable economic and educational opportunities for all.
- Advocate for federal funding for rural airport infrastructure projects.
- Advocate for the expansion of federal tax credits to better meet the statewide need for subsidized affordable housing units.
- Advocate for a change in federal tax law to eliminate current tax incentives for short term rentals, as these federal tax incentives are leading to the conversion of housing for year-round residents to a commercial use of housing for the purpose of short-term rentals for visitors.
- Advocate for funding for combating censorship and aid for libraries and librarians who are encountering challenges.
- Support funding for USDA meal sites for Lunch at the Library.
- Advocate for funding for programs that support services to vulnerable populations from the

Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).

- Advocate for federal education programs in which the Mendocino Museum participates.

## **CANNABIS**

**ISSUE:** Mendocino County is a pre-eminent producer county in the State of California, home to a very large number of multi-generational cultivators, manufacturers, and other added-value cannabis industry participants. Nearly 20 years after California voters legalized medical cannabis via Proposition 215 (1996), the State legislature passed the Medical Cannabis Regulation and Safety Act (MCRSA) in 2015 to license, regulate, and address the impacts of commercial medical cannabis businesses. Then in November 2016, voters passed Proposition 64, the “California Control, Regulate and Tax Adult Use of Marijuana Initiative,” also known as the “Adult Use of Marijuana Act” (AUMA). These laws have since been consolidated to form the “Medical and Adult Use Cannabis Regulation and Safety Act” (MAUCRSA), Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code § 26000 et seq., which is administered by the Department of Cannabis Control (DCC).

As the State continues to develop regulations for this industry, consideration must be given to the difficulties facing small cannabis operators in rural communities, unable to compete in the emerging legal market if it demands large sums of investment to scale up and meet regulatory requirements. Mendocino County will continue to advocate for maintaining local government’s flexibility and authority to address individual community needs through local control measures. As Mendocino County implements local and state regulations, funding assistance will be critical to ensuring successful integration of the cannabis industry into the legal economy. Mendocino County supports federal initiatives to either repeal or modify the federal prohibition of cannabis and encourages federal recognition of state laws regulating cannabis.

### **STATE ACTION**

- Advocate for a reduction in the state excise tax as a means to support the economic recovery of small businesses and quell competition with the illicit market.
- Advocate for statutory changes that eliminate project specific CEQA analysis as an annual licensing requirement and instead allow the Department of Cannabis Control (DCC) to accept the CEQA compliance pathways set forth by local jurisdictions, including pathways that provide ministerial permits and principally permit commercial cannabis activities.
- Advocate for cannabis cultivation to be considered an agricultural crop produced for human consumption and regulated in the California Food and Agricultural Code rather than the Business and Professions Code.
- Advocate for the removal of the state regulatory prohibition on cannabis activities within a residence so that local jurisdictions can implement cottage industry codes allowing commercial cannabis businesses the ability to conduct activities analogous to those of non-cannabis related cottage industry businesses.
- Advocate for licensed commercial cannabis business to have access to state-funded disaster relief, technical assistance programs and grant programs.
- Advocate for the simplification of the state’s commercial cannabis licensing framework and regulations in a manner that reduces barriers to entry into the legal market, protects public health and safety, and ensures a regulated environment for commercial cannabis activities that does not impose such barriers as to perpetuate, rather than reduce and eliminate, the illicit market for cannabis.
- Advocate for the ability of licensed cultivators to conduct multiple types of cultivation under a single license.
- Advocate that the DCC establish a simple process for cultivation license holders to conduct cultivation license type changes and cultivation license size changes.



- Advocate that the DCC allow for “batch tagging” of mature cannabis plants and harvested cannabis material in METRC similarly to what is currently allowed for immature plant tagging.
- Advocate for regulatory reform that allows locally permitted and state licensed cultivators to:
  - a) receive genetic material from any permitted and licensed commercial cannabis business entity,
  - b) transfer genetic material to other permitted and licensed cultivators,
  - c) receive genetic material from members of the public, not to exceed personal adult use allowances
  - d) enter no-source cannabis seeds into METRC in unlimited amounts because cannabis seeds are not federally restricted.
- Advocate for state and federal policy changes that establishes opportunities for cultivators, processors, and manufacturers to engage in direct-to-consumer sales, including through cannabis events, direct to consumer delivery operations, direct to consumer shipping and on-farm sales.
- Advocate that the DCC conduct annual audits of licensed distribution businesses to monitor how much cannabis material being sold within the supply chain is produced by permitted and licensed cultivators and how much is produced by unpermitted and unlicensed cultivators.
- Advocate for the California Department of Food and Agriculture to develop educational materials and guidance document that clarify and support the development of appellation of origin petitions.
- Advocate for the promulgation of comprehensive labeling requirements for all cannabis geographical indications, including county of origin, city of origin, city and county of origin, and appellation of origin designations.
- Advocate for the California Department of Food and Agriculture to be sufficiently funded to manage the appellation of origin program and the establishment of a petition review panel.
- Advocate for state and federal legislation and funding to combat illegal trespass cultivation of cannabis on public and private lands. Support adequate funding to address illegal water diversion, water pollution, erosion, poisoning of wildlife, and other environmental damage associated with trespass cannabis growing operations.
- Support the state fully funding County cannabis related expenditures including legislation that clarifies that cannabis-related expenditures are reportable expenses for the purpose of calculating unclaimed gas tax reimbursements to County Agricultural Commissioners or cannabis expenditures will not count against maintenance of effort calculations.
- Support non-competitive or direct allocation of state cannabis tax revenue for small and rural counties.

#### **FEDERAL ACTION**

- Support federal legislation that allows cannabis to be regulated at the federal level, including removing cannabis from Schedule 1 of the Controlled Substances Act. The county takes the position that any change to the legal status of cannabis at the federal level must be accompanied by a thorough regulatory framework that delineates the clear roles and responsibilities of the jurisdictions involved.
- Advocate for commercial cannabis production to be legally designated and regulated as commercial agricultural activity, regulated by the United States Department of Agriculture.
- Support efforts at the federal level to allow for and make available banking and other financial services to cannabis operators in order to minimize the use of cash.
- Advocate for changes to the Federal Tax Code to ensure that state licensed commercial cannabis businesses are taxed in the same manner as non-cannabis businesses, including but not limited to, advocating for the elimination of Federal Tax Code Section 280E.

## **PUBLIC SAFETY**

**ISSUE:** Mendocino County strongly supports community safety by providing high quality public safety services to maintain health and safety standards for its residents. The County supports additional state and federal funding and tools to enhance law enforcement programs and the safety of its residents and public safety employees. It is recognized that the State, and not the County, is responsible for trial court operations costs and any growth in those costs in the future. Nevertheless, counties continue to be responsible for justice-related services, such as, but not limited to, probation, prosecutorial and defense services, as well as the provision of local juvenile and adult detention facilities. Therefore, it is imperative there is secure, stable, and sufficient funding allocated to Mendocino County to fulfil the state responsibilities mandated to the local level to implement. The County firmly oppose future and further unfunded state mandates.

### **STATE ACTION**

- Advocate for adequate, secure, and stable funding is provided to implement the evidence-based practices mandated by realignment.
  - The County believes that the State should assume cost increases associated with state-imposed program changes and expansions, as well as federal maintenance of effort mandates.
  - Oppose state and/or federal funding reductions that shift responsibility for services, administration, or fiscal support to counties.
- Advocate for state and federal funds to offset costs of the behavioral health wing of the new jail.
- Support additional state funding for pre-trial service under SB 129.
- Advocate for an increase in funding due to SB 823 and the insufficient funding the formula created.
- Oppose legislation that would directly or indirectly shift costs related to state prisoners that are transferred under realignment to counties.
- Support additional permanent and stable state back-fill to cover the counties revenue loss resulting from AB 1869, the recent removal of criminal justice fines, fee, and penalties by the Legislature.
- Support permanent, stable, and consistent funding of SB 678 in light of AB 1950.
- Oppose any additional state efforts to change criminal justice fines, fees, and penalties without providing a corresponding revenue back-fill that is permanent and stable.
- Support reform of state laws that would increase hard drug crime and theft penalties.
- Support state efforts to increase penalties for dealing hard drugs such as fentanyl and provide local jurisdictions sufficient resources to enforce legislation, target drug trafficking as well as provide substance use treatment and harm reduction programs in prisons and juvenile facilities.

### **FEDERAL ACTION**

- Support amending the Medicaid Inmate Exclusion Policy under the Social Security Act to remove limitations on Medicaid, Medicare, and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and Veteran's Affairs health services benefits for pre-trial inmates of public institutions.
- Support policies and programs that divert non-violent individuals struggling with mental illness and/or substance use disorders from local jails into more appropriate treatment services.

## **HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES**

**ISSUE:** Counties are mandated to protect Californians against threats of widespread disease and illness and are tasked with promoting health and wellness. Mendocino County supports and encourages the use of multi-jurisdictional approaches to health care. Mendocino County supports the maximum amount of flexibility in managing programs and adequate and secure state and federal funding to accomplish mandated services. Counties should have the ability to expand or consolidate facilities, services, and program contracts to provide a comprehensive level of service and accountability and achieve maximum cost effectiveness.

### **STATE ACTION**

- Support legislative efforts to provide sustaining wages to IHSS workers while limiting the County's obligation to increases in local required funding.
- Support efforts to sustain or restore funding for Health and Human Services safety-net programs and regulations, including: CalFresh Categorical Eligibility; School Lunch Programs; Health Care Enrollment (inmates); Preventing Elder and Dependent Care Abuse; Fees and Charges for Residential Care Facilities for the Elderly; Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program; Drug Abuse Prevention and Safe Disposal Program; Childhood Vaccinations; and Child Welfare Services.
- Advocate and support Enhanced Care Management (ECM) provisions and insurers, increasing services to the County Medi-Cal population.
- Support expansion of data sharing agreements for Public Health and other programs as required by the State to improve prevention and intervention care coordination.
- Support expansion of State staffing to facilitate funding for Maternal Child and Adolescent Health programs, for evidence-based Home Visiting (HV) programs promoted by CDPH, and adolescent health and mental health.
- Advocate and fund LHJ health data scientists and epidemiologists in Public Health, Behavioral Health, and Social Services.
- Advocate for increased funding for essential local public health responsibilities including workforce development, facilities, communicable disease prevention and response, and public health prevention and health equity activities.
- Support funding for and legislative support of Community Healthcare Workers (CHW) as well as development of career pathways for these CHWs.
- Advocate for increasing allocation to Public Health Emergency Preparedness to build sustainability of preparedness in public health infrastructure and staff.
- Support statewide single-payer healthcare systems to streamline healthcare delivery and eliminate gaps in coverage.
- Advocate for the allocation of additional realignment revenues. Current cost-sharing ratios no longer reflect counties' long-term ability to control costs in the programs.
- Support sustainable funding for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Systems.
- Support funding incentives for homeless providers who develop and implement meaningful and integrated workforce development programs.
- Support funding for small business wage subsidies to hire homeless and recently homeless individuals.
- Support efforts to build capacity within local child welfare agencies to serve child victims of commercial sexual exploitation as commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) is a growing national and statewide issue. The County believes this complex problem warrants immediate attention, including funding for prevention, intervention, and direct services through child welfare services agencies, and supports close cooperation on CSEC issues with law enforcement, the judiciary, and community-based organizations to ensure the best outcomes for child victims.



### **FEDERAL ACTION**

- Support for a new Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Medicaid waivers for California. The new Cal-AIM waiver proposal is essential to enhance services at the local level particularly regarding mental health, substance use treatment services and homeless services.
  - Medicaid/Medi-Cal waiver projects have allowed for substantial funding and local expansion of services outside of traditional Medi-Cal billable services, including the Whole Person Care waiver pilot that has enhanced mental health and homeless services. And more recently, the Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System pilot to expand substance use treatment services.
- Support increased and ongoing federal funding for the OAA programs, with appropriations matching the levels of authorized funding.
- Support funding and seek appropriations to improve senior transportation services.
- Advocate for increased federal support in growing and retaining a highly skilled public health workforce.

### **BEHAVIORAL HEALTH**

**ISSUE:** County behavioral health services are central to many difficult policy issues such as homelessness, housing, and justice system recidivism and diversion. One in five adults experience some form of mental illness in any given year. According to recent studies by the Well Being Trust and the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute, COVID has increased rates of clinical depression, anxiety, and suicide. Across the population, 1 in every 25 adults is living with a serious mental health condition such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or long-term recurring major depression. Treatment for these conditions is often not sought due to inaccessibility to services, coverage and reimbursement barriers or the patient is unaware that other physical symptoms could be connected to a mental health condition.

State and federal resources and flexibility are needed to improve access to treatment in rural communities and address racial inequities. Counties need resources to expand access to evidence-based suicide awareness and prevention training. Importantly, legislation that helps expand, support and sustain behavioral health workforce is necessary to meet these needs.

### **STATE ACTION**

- Support additional funding and programs that provide improved access to local mental health services, including increased and consistent funding for mental health housing programs, crisis support, and jail diversion programs and services for foster youth with complex needs.
- Support insurance parity for mental health services to ensure residents with private insurance have the same services available as those with Medi-Cal.
- Advocate for the legislature to review the innovation component of the Mental Health Services Act for accountability. Innovation in rural, suburban, and urban counties vary drastically and should be evaluated based on local demographics.
- Advocate for state and federal funds to offset costs of the Behavioral Health wing of the new jail.
- Support the integration of behavioral health into the broader health care system and a balance between state expectations and local authority.
- Advocate for support of mental health initiatives for seniors and other vulnerable residents.
- Advocate for maximization of funding for inmate medical and mental health care services.

- Advocate for increased availability of inpatient psychiatric beds.
- Advocate for the needs of county residents as SB 1338 commences and for full funding for associated county costs for implementing CARE Act.

### **FEDERAL ACTION**

- Advocate for reform of the Institutions for Mental Disease (IMD) exclusion language which bars Medicaid from receiving federal dollars to pay for mental health and substance use care provided in facilities with more than 16 beds which leads to a stark inequity in access to care. Unlike in Medicare or private insurance, Medicaid cannot cover many inpatient psychiatric services, even when they are recommended by a physician or mental health professional.
- Support federal investment, including funding from court settlements, in mental health and substance use disorder workforce, training, prevention and treatment.

### **HOMELESSNESS**

**ISSUE:** Mendocino County has a large population of Homelessness although the core of the homeless population is in the city of Ukiah, the majority of resources are also located in Ukiah. Limited housing and rental availability are a large contribution for continued transient and homeless growth within the county. There is a community impact on local businesses, and they are being affected by the homeless population encampments that need to be addressed. There are resources that may be being underutilized because of the lack of knowledge to the homeless population.

### **STATE ACTION**

- Support full operationalization of the ACCESS initiative care coordination teams to coordinate care for crucial health and social services (e.g., mental health substance use, MediCal, Social Security, primary health, and general assistance enrollments, etc.), which are critical determinants of successful entering and maintaining sheltering and housing placements.
- Advocate for increased or sustained funding to prevent and end homelessness through direct allocations to the county directly or the local continuum of care (COC), as the counties are responsible for the broad scope of services and mandates provided to successfully move individuals out of homelessness; Sustainable and flexible state funding sources to enable communities to serve more people with outreach, shelter, eviction prevention, supportive housing, and short term rent assistance programs; Establishment of immediate solutions to address encampments.
- Advocate for increased opportunities such as Project Homekey providing funding, separate regulatory rules specific to address immediate needs, multi-element approaches to address homelessness and mental illness, including co-occurring substance use disorders; and incentivized alignment of health, human services, and housing programs by facilitating data sharing, and providing one- time funding for systems redesign efforts undertaken by willing counties.
- Advocate for the creation of new sources of funding and incentive programs to produce affordable housing through incentivized jurisdictional cooperation and regional housing planning.
- Support the preservation of mobile home parks as a valuable housing resource.
- Support improving rent stabilization tools, including protections from displacement and unreasonable rent increases for mobile home park tenants.
- Support efforts to ensure that code enforcement does not result in the closure of mobile home parks (or other affordable housing) unless it is an immediate danger to life, health, and safety.
- Support efforts to address disparities in housing by ensuring that disaster recovery resources

reach all impacted households, including those with the lowest incomes who are often the hardest hit by disasters and have the fewest resources to recover.

- Advocate for increasing accessibility to levels of support from federal and state food programs.
- Advocate for funding to assist local businesses with security, clean up, and restoration due to homelessness.

#### ***FEDERAL ACTION***

- Support Rental Assistance and Rapid Rehousing Support to prevent individuals at risk of losing their housing, which has tremendous financial impacts on low-income individuals and families.





# COUNTY OF MENDOCINO

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