



STANISLAUS COUNTY FOCUS ON PREVENTION 2015 PROGRESS REPORT

Stanislaus County has a proud history of nurturing strong families and resilient communities. And like many counties in the Central Valley and across California, we face profound challenges. In 2015 leaders and residents throughout Stanislaus joined together to launch a long-term movement to improve the quality of life for residents and families across our county.

Initiated by the Board of Supervisors, this Focus on Prevention movement is growing through the efforts of volunteers and leaders from multiple sectors, including: neighborhoods; businesses; education; faith; health; non-profits; philanthropy; media; arts, entertainment, and sports; and local government.

WHY THIS IS DIFFERENT

We have a long history of coming together in this county when it matters. The Focus on Prevention movement builds on this spirit of community. We are indebted to the many efforts that have gone before us, and that are already underway to improve the lives of our families and communities.

Unfortunately, while substantial resources are spent each year addressing the symptoms of our challenges, we still are not seeing the progress we hope for. Too many of our families struggle to make ends meet. Too many of our children are not succeeding in school, are not prepared for success when they graduate. Too many of us are homeless, or at risk of becoming so. Too many of us suffer from physical and mental illnesses and distress without access to the care and support we need to heal. Too many of us are isolated and fearful, our neighborhoods beset with petty and profound violence.

The Focus on Prevention movement is about doing better, much better. How? First, by *focusing on prevention*, by moving more of our resources and attention to addressing root causes and the long term conditions that lead to individuals and families struggling in our county.

Second, by *working together*. Local government acting alone cannot create the future we hope for in our county. Businesses by themselves cannot strengthen and expand our economy. Hospitals and health care workers by themselves cannot improve the physical and emotional wellbeing of our families and communities. Community and faith leaders, by themselves, cannot help our neighborhoods thrive and become even more safe and vibrant. Teachers and school administrators by themselves cannot improve the graduation rates and reading levels of our children. For us to significantly improve the wellbeing and futures of our families and communities, residents and leaders from across the county must act together.

Third, we will do better through *learning and mutual accountability*. Acting together is not enough. Many of the challenges we face do not have simple or obvious solutions. We must learn together, and learn *how* to learn together, especially when we hold different stories from each other, or when we try something and the results are disappointing. This means we also must be committed to collecting good data, and reflecting unflinchingly on what the data is revealing so we *can* get better.

These commitments—to prevention, to acting and learning together, and to holding ourselves mutually accountable—can be challenging. No one sector can tell another what to do. Sometimes acting together takes longer because we have to build shared understanding and deep commitment to whatever actions we take. This commitment to act together, however, and to learn and adapt based on data and experience, is what will sustain this movement over time.

And this is ultimately why we will do better: because we are committed *for the long haul*. The results we seek will not be achieved in a few months, or even in a year or two. The results we are after will require sustained engagement by ever growing numbers of people across the county. Ultimately this movement is about who we are as a county. One of the defining values for this effort is a simple declaration: *“there is no other.”* What this means is that it’s up to us, all of us together, to create the future we want for our families and communities.

PROGRESS THIS YEAR

The Board of Supervisors allocated funding and authorized county staff to begin building a Focus on Prevention movement in late 2014. So what progress have we made over the past year?

Leadership and action structures

Following the Board of Supervisors’ action, County CEO Stan Risen and Supervisor Terry Withrow conducted dozens of individual and small group conversations to explore the willingness of key stakeholder groups and leaders to join and help guide this movement. From these conversations, a number of leadership and action groups are emerging to take charge of this effort.

First among these is the *Stewardship Council*, a volunteer leadership group that includes two representatives from each of the ten sponsoring sectors:

Representative	Sector	Organization
Lynn Dickerson	Arts, Entertainment, Sports	Gallo Center for the Arts
Mike Gorrasi	Arts, Entertainment, Sports	HWS Baseball
David White	Business	Stanislaus Business Alliance
Doug Johnson	Business	Stanislaus Surgical Hospital
Tim Byrd	Business	E.J. Gallo
Tom Changnon	Education	Stanislaus County Office of Education
Pam Able	Education	Modesto City Schools
Jeff Pishney	Faith	Love our Cities/Love Modesto
Cle Moore-Bell	Faith	Christ Unity Baptist Church
Jim Holgersson	Local government	City of Modesto
Chief Robert Jackson	Local government	City of Turlock
Ken Riddick	Media	Modesto Bee
Mark Vasche	Media	Former Editor-Modesto Bee
Marvin Jacobo	Neighborhoods	Catalyst
Brad Hawn	Neighborhoods	Modesto Neighborhoods, Inc.
Cindy Duenas	Non-profits	Center for Human Services
Yamilet Valladolid	Non-profits	El Concilio
Marian Kaanon	Philanthropy	Stanislaus Community Foundation
Francine DiCiano	Philanthropy	United Way Stanislaus County
Daryn Kumar	Health	Sutter Health
Warren Kirk	Health	Doctor's Medical Center
Stan Risen	Ex Officio member	County CEO
Terry Withrow	Ex Officio member	County Board of Supervisors

These senior sector leaders have agreed to provide guidance to the overall initiative, including developing priority results for the movement, recruiting other sector leaders and organizations to engage, and raising resources to help sustain the effort over time. Beginning in June, 2015, Stewardship Council members met together for six half-day meetings, and a number of small group and individual sessions.

A *Homeless Action Council* began meeting in late May 2015 to map the current realities for people who are homeless in Stanislaus County, and to develop recommendations for high leverage strategies that can have both immediate and long-term positive impact on preventing homelessness. Over 100 people participated in seven half-day sessions between May and December, including people who have been and are currently homeless. The HAC reached consensus on a set of priority strategies in December. Workgroups are now forming to turn these recommendations into actionable agendas for sectors and communities across the county. (See below for additional details).

Priority results

Unlike a business, where every one understands that success is measured by profit and shareholder value, one of the first tasks of this movement is to clarify what success means, and how we will measure it. This is one of the principal responsibilities of the Stewardship Council, and one of the signature achievements from this first year.

The Council has worked intensively over the past several months to define a set of results to inspire and unite action around the county. These include:

- All Stanislaus County residents enjoy mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual health and wellbeing.
- Stanislaus County supports excellence in education for all children and youth from cradle to career.
- Stanislaus County's diverse and engaged communities strengthen each other so that we have safe and vibrant neighborhoods.
- Stanislaus County has a healthy and growing economy.

These are draft results. The Stewardship Council will work over the next few months to refine these statements. Equally important, Council members will choose priority indicators and data sources to measure progress toward these results, and develop a reporting process so that residents across the county can assess how we are doing year in and year out. Once these draft results and indicators are developed, Stewardship Council members will lead dialogues with sector leaders and residents to solicit feedback and suggestions, and to build shared commitment to effect these results through sustained action.

In addition to these overarching results and indicators, the Homeless Action Council has recommended to the Stewardship Council results and indicators to guide sector and community efforts to prevent homelessness. These include:

Results to guide our efforts to prevent homelessness

- People who are homeless in Stanislaus County permanently escape homelessness.
- People who are at risk of homelessness in Stanislaus County do not become homeless.

Indicators to help us know if we are achieving the results

- For individuals who are homeless:
 - 1) Reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness
 - 2) Reduce the average length of time someone is homeless
 - 3) Increase the percentage of people who are homeless who access resources to improve their wellbeing
 - 4) Increase the percentage of people who are homeless who are experiencing improved wellbeing
- Improve the safety of parks and neighborhoods negatively impacted by people engaging in anti-social and criminal behavior who struggle with homelessness.
- Decrease the occurrences of public anti-social behavior committed by—and toward—people struggling with homelessness.

Beginning actions and impact

Some species of bamboo, when first planted, grow only a few inches over their first several years of life. And then, in the fifth year, they can grow more than 70-80 feet. All of the growth in the first few years has been underground, in the root system that the plant needs to sustain its enormous growth spurt.

This movement is like the bamboo plant. The first year has been about nurturing the roots of connection, collaboration, and commitment that will sustain this effort over time. Still, there are clear signs of growth, of the movement becoming visible and viable.

- The Board of Supervisors has authorized county resources to support innovative strategies that emerge through community dialogues and are endorsed by the Stewardship Council.
- Stewardship Council members have raised almost \$100,000 through contributions from companies, local governments, and individuals to augment the initial support pledged by the Board of Supervisors.
- More than 500 people engaged in a day-long Homelessness Summit in October, and hundreds more are now participating in local conversations about how to make a difference for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in their communities. People who are currently homeless, or who have been homeless, have been active participants in all of these conversations.

- Over 100 people have participated in Homeless Action Council meetings since May, including a number of people who have been or are currently homeless.
- Another signature achievement of the first year is the beginning plan to address homelessness in Stanislaus County developed by the Homeless Action Council (see Appendix 1 for a one-page summary). At the heart of this plan are four broad strategies to help people who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, permanently escape this condition. These strategies include:
 - 1) Improving community-based engagement strategies to build relationships with people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness;
 - 2) Developing a countywide coordinated access system integrating public and community based supports;
 - 3) Increasing the availability and effectiveness of supportive services that help people escape from and stay out of homelessness; and
 - 4) Improving both the quantity and quality of temporary, transitional, and permanent supportive housing in the county.
- City and County government departments are already taking action to align their programs and efforts with the larger movement, including improving programs and policies to support people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

EMERGING PRIORITIES FOR 2016

Building on the progress we have achieved in 2015, we have a number of priority actions and developmental needs in the coming year. Appendix 2 includes summaries of the emerging 2016 work plans.

Most importantly, we want to make progress on implementing the high priority strategies that have emerged from the Homeless Action Council. Action will emerge through dialogue and planning among sector leaders and in local communities.

Equally important, we want to develop broad agreement and commitment to the priority results and indicators emerging from the Stewardship Council, and begin developing priority strategies for at least one of the priority results. As part of this process, we will engage leaders of multi-sector change efforts already underway—e.g., Stanislaus Reads—and work to integrate these efforts with the broader movement. Stewardship Council members will also engage in 1:1 and small group conversations to increase sector engagement with the larger movement.

Beyond these efforts to address our priority results, we must continue to develop the infrastructure and capacity to sustain this movement for years to come. First, we need

to strengthen our countywide and local capacity to collect and report on meaningful data to help us assess progress toward results.

Second, we need to strengthen the capacity of sector leaders and residents to engage in learning conversations about this data, particularly with people who may share very different perspectives about the data or the underlying root causes for what the data is revealing. Similarly, we need to develop a local cadre of people with the skills and expertise who can help facilitate the increasing number of community and cross-sector learning conversations that will unfold as work begins on the four priority results.

Finally, in anticipation of the increasing community-level and sector work to address all four priority results, we need to recruit or create one or more organizations that can coordinate the overall initiative going forward. Currently this coordination work is being done by the County CEO's office, and in ad hoc ways by other organizations stepping forward to help. As the work of the movement grows, however, we will need a more permanent infrastructure to help coordinate the overall initiative.

CONCLUSION

The Focus on Prevention movement is still in its early stages of development. We cannot yet document measurable improvement in our priority results and indicators, of course. We are still working to define these. Yet we already are witnessing its impact—in the actions that are emerging in communities and sectors across the county, and in the hopefulness and passion the movement is inspiring. As a Homeless Action Council member observed:

I just want to say that I am hopeful for the first time in a long time that change is possible. I really appreciate the reminder of what a group of people can do if they believe they can make a difference. Without that reminder it is easy to get overwhelmed and lose faith with taking on such a complex issue.

—Homeless Action Council member

As impressive as the progress to date has been, however, long-term success is far from assured. The work gets harder from here. More people must get involved. Data systems and long-term infrastructure must be developed. We will need to engage each other in more difficult conversations—about root causes, about core values, about the ways we have to be different and do things differently to effect our results. And we will need to sustain this work for months or longer before we start to see measurable change in our priority indicators.

What will help us continue the work when we get bogged down, or when we don't see progress as rapidly as we want, is our commitment to each other, and our absolute conviction that this matters. As a Stewardship Council member reflected:

This [movement] matters because no one agency or person owns our problems and therefore no one agency or person can solve our problems. I think developing shared understanding, truly listening, and truly working together in a meaningful way is the only way we can improve the quality of life for all in our region. Why does this work matter? Because we all desire a thriving community where there is prosperity for all. We have to change the old narrative! There is a groundswell of positivity.

—Stewardship Council member

APPENDIX 1
EMERGING PLAN TO PREVENT HOMELESSNESS

COMMON AGENDA

Results	<div><div>1. People who are homeless in Stanislaus County permanently escape homelessness.</div><div>2. People who are at risk of homelessness in Stanislaus County do not become homeless</div></div>
Indicators	<div><div>For individuals who are homeless...<div><div>Reduce # of people experiencing homelessness</div><div>Reduce average length of time someone is homeless</div><div>Increase % in accessing resources to improve their wellbeing</div><div>Increase % in experiencing improved wellbeing</div></div></div><div><div>Improve safety of parks and neighborhoods negatively impacted by people engaging in anti-social and criminal behavior who struggle with homelessness</div><div>Decrease occurrences of public anti-social behavior committed by—and toward—people struggling with homelessness</div></div></div>
Strategies	<div><div><div>Coordinated Access</div><div>Housing</div><div>Supportive Services</div><div>Engagement (Relationship/Peer Support)</div></div><div>Mutually reinforcing activities and strategies across multiple sectors and communities.<div><div>Community-level Strategies</div><div>Countywide Strategies</div><div>Multi-sector Strategies / Sector Development</div></div></div></div>

APPENDIX 2
EMERGING 2016 WORK PLANS

Focus on Prevention Initiative

2016 Work Plan for Overarching Results and Indicators

	Jan-Mar 2016	Apr-Jun 2016	Jul-Sep 2016	Oct-Dec 2016
Common agenda	Stewardship Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalizes vision, results, and indicators Convenes one or more Action Councils Plans for Sector dialogues 	Stewardship Council members convene sector dialogues Action Council(s) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess current reality Explore root causes and stories behind curves Develop beginning list of high leverage strategies 		
Shared measurement practices	CEO's office convenes data workgroup Data workgroup <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalizes data sources for each priority indicator Collects data and assembles reports to support first Action Council deliberations Begins work on high priority data development issues 		Data workgroup <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continues work on collecting data and assembling reports for Action Councils Continues work on data development issues Stewardship and Action Council(s) as appropriate begin conversations with other county funders about adopting priority indicators and aligning relevant performance measures	
Mutually reinforcing activities		Leadership Development and Facilitation Training processes begin to support community and sector dialogues	Action Council(s) convene community and sector dialogues to develop shared understanding of current reality and commitment to high leverage strategies	
Build public will			Stewardship and relevant Action Council(s) convene 2016 Summit	
Backbone organization	Advisory group working with the Stewardship Council: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maps the functions needed to sustain the Initiative through 2016 and beyond. Develops a plan for building a sustainable infrastructure to perform these functions. Seeks feedback and endorsement from the Stewardship Council for the plan. Works with funders, organizations, and others as needed to put the infrastructure in place by the end of 2016. 			

Focus on Prevention Initiative

2016 Work Plan for Movement to Prevent Homelessness

	Jan-Mar 2016	Apr-Jun 2016	Jul-Sep 2016	Oct-Dec 2016
Common agenda	Stewardship Council formally reviews and endorses: Results • Indicators • Values • Priority strategies CEO's office convenes Homelessness Prevention workgroups to develop detailed implementation plans for priority strategies, including quick win and long-term efforts			
Shared measurement practices	CEO's office convenes data workgroup Data workgroup <ul style="list-style-type: none">Finalizes data sources for each priority indicatorCollects data and assembles reports to support Workgroup(s) and Community dialogues	Data workgroup <ul style="list-style-type: none">Continues work on priority indicators as neededBegins data development workCreates template for community driven Point in Time Count in the fall	Coordinating Structure (see below) with support from Stewardship Council: continues to build commitment to common agenda among communities and sectors	
			Data workgroup continues work on data development agenda Community leadership groups organize to conduct Fall 2016 Point in Time Count	
Mutually reinforcing activities	Community leadership groups organize to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Develop effective engagement strategiesReview and adopt as appropriate recommended strategies from the HP Workgroups		Community leadership groups continue work on engagement strategies, Point in Time Count, and other strategies as appropriate County Coordinating Structure supports sector dialogues about committing to high leverage strategies	
Build public will	CEO's office takes the lead on developing and implementing a coordinated communication plan to support the Movement to Prevent Homelessness		Stewardship Council, County Coordinating Structure, and Workgroup(s) convene 2016 Summit (<i>Question: is this a separate event from the Focus on Prevention Summit?</i>)	
Backbone organization	CEO's office <ul style="list-style-type: none">Works to organize a Coordinating Structure to oversee overall effortWorks with Coordinating Structure to develop a stable backbone infrastructure to support the effort through 2016 and beyond			

