

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

PRESIDENT
Dennis Rodoni
4TH DISTRICT

September 10, 2024

VICE PRESIDENT
Mary Sackett
1ST DISTRICT

Honorable Mark A. Talamantes
Presiding Judge
Marin County Superior Court
3501 Civic Center Drive
San Rafael, CA 94903

2ND VICE PRESIDENT
Eric Lucan
5TH DISTRICT

Dear Judge Talamantes,

Katie Rice
2ND DISTRICT

The Marin County Board of Supervisors' response to the FY 2022-2023 Civil Grand Jury Report "*Older Adults on the Brink of Homelessness: Time to Act is Now*" (June 21, 2024) is attached. The attached document responds to all the requests made for responses from the Board of Supervisors.

Stephanie Moulton-Peters
3RD DISTRICT

Respectfully submitted,

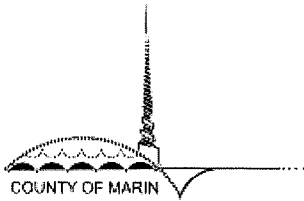
Derek Johnson
COUNTY EXECUTIVE
CLERK OF THE BOARD

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dennis Rodoni".

Carla Kacmar
ASSISTANT CLERK OF THE BOARD

Dennis Rodoni
President, Board of Supervisors
CC: Marin County Civil Grand Jury

Marin County Civic Center
3501 Civic Center Drive
Suite 329
San Rafael, CA 94903
415 473 7331 T
415 473 3645 F
415 473 6172 TTY
MarinCounty.gov/board



RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

REPORT TITLE: "Older Adults on the Brink of Homelessness: Time to Act is Now"
(June 21, 2024)


GRAND JURY FINDINGS

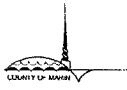
- We agree with the findings numbered: **F1, F3, F9, F12-F13**
- We disagree wholly or partially with the findings numbered: **F2, F4-F8, F10-F11, F14**

GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendations numbered **R1-R8** will not be implemented because they are not warranted or reasonable.

Date: September 10, 2024

Signed: 
Dennis Rodoni
President, Board of Supervisors



County of Marin Response to Grand Jury Report Findings and Recommendations
"Older Adults on the Brink of Homelessness: Time to Act is Now"
(June 21, 2024)

RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY FINDINGS

F1. Adults aged 60 and above are a large and expanding population in Marin and are at increasing risk of falling into homelessness.

Response: Agree

The County agrees that adults aged 60 and above are a growing population in Marin. Many population groups in Marin are at increased risk of falling into homelessness, due primarily to the increased cost of living and lack of affordable housing. This includes low-income adults, parents and children, foster youth, justice-involved individuals, as well as older adults.

F2. The lack of a mandate for aging equity by the Marin County Board of Supervisors results in the County not prioritizing the needs of adults aged 60 and above who are homeless or at risk of falling into homelessness.

Response: Disagree

The County provides many services to adults aged 60 and over, prioritizing needs based on epidemiologic and demographic data. Through Coordinated Entry, individuals are assessed following nationally recognized standards that consider individual history of housing security and homelessness, risk factors (including health, trauma, and justice involvement), socialization and daily function, and overall wellness.

In calendar year 2022, a team of consultants was contracted by the County to support development of targeted strategies that center older adults and the disabled community in Marin. From this report, several approaches for addressing the needs of these populations were proposed, incorporating partnerships with local municipalities, unincorporated communities, special districts, and community-based organizations. This work resulted in the Integrated Aging Services Study (IAS) which was presented to the Board of Supervisors on February 7, 2023. A majority of the recommendations in the IAS have been implemented, and continue to inform County decisions regarding policy and program implementation for older adult and disabled persons services.

In the 2024-26 County Budget, the Board of Supervisors approved a number of funding requests to support new or enhanced older adult initiatives that were developed in partnership with community stakeholders, all of which are key for older adults at risk of or currently facing homelessness, including but not limited to:

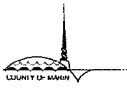
1. **New Senior Department Analyst, Aging and Adult Services:** The Board of Supervisors approved an ongoing increase of \$200,000 per year to fund a permanent position to support Aging and Adult Services Initiatives that span across all of HHS. Recruitment for this position commenced in summer 2024. Housed in Health and Human Services Administration, the Senior Department Analyst – Adult and Aging Services, will interface with and leverage data from all HHS divisions as a member of the Measurement and Learning evaluation team. This is expected to facilitate service design and outreach strategies for older and disabled adults experiencing homelessness, housing insecurity, and other critical needs.
2. **Wage Increase for IHSS Providers:** The Board supported an IHSS provider wage increase in 2024, from \$16.95 to \$18.00 per hour. Additionally, the Board approved a



County of Marin Response to Grand Jury Report Findings and Recommendations
"Older Adults on the Brink of Homelessness: Time to Act is Now"
(June 21, 2024)

scheduled to increase to \$21.00 per hour by 2027 consistent with a recently approved bargaining agreement. This funding was recognized by labor organizations as critical to recruiting and retaining IHSS workers to support the needs of older adults in the county.

3. **New position added to Veteran Services:** The Board of Supervisors approved an ongoing funding increase to support a new staff member in the Veteran Services Office, dedicated in large part to serving older and disabled adult veterans.
4. **CalFresh outreach:** HHS continues to increase awareness of the CalFresh program to ensure that eligible residents are aware of this entitlement program. Staff continue prioritization of older adults during outreach, focusing on raised awareness and reduction of stigmas that may present barriers for eligible older adults in applying for CalFresh benefits.
5. **Chief Resilience Officer (CRO) position added to the Office of Emergency Management (OEM):** The Board of Supervisors approved a new Chief Resilience Officer as a fixed-term-four-year-position. This role focuses on the following areas relevant to the issue of older adults and housing in an emergency or natural disaster:
 - Liaisons with Public Health, Community Resilience Teams (CRTs), and Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) to establish local networks during disaster incidents. The CRO promotes information and resource sharing with older adults, disabled adults, and other vulnerable populations who may need additional resources due to housing loss or inaccessibility during a natural disaster
 - Merges local resilience/recovery strategies developed within VOAD and CRTs into a countywide County Long Term Recovery Plan. This helps the County access FEMA reimbursements after a disaster event
 - As the County Recovery Plan is a framework for disaster recovery from incidents impacting 50 or more persons; the CRO will simultaneously develop plans for a shelter and care response for incidents where 49 or fewer persons are impacted. This significantly enhances support for older adults, disabled adults, and other vulnerable populations impacted by smaller or regional disasters such as mudslides or structure fires.
6. **Digital Marin and the Marin Housing Authority Digital Divide Project:** In partnership with Comcast, this project covers the cost of high-speed internet broadband installation at five public housing sites for older adults in Marin County. Services includes broadband installation (wiring to individual housing units and in community facilities) and two years of broadband internet service. By project completion, 200 units for low-income, older adults will receive high speed internet service.
7. The County has begun a pilot with North Marin Community Services for \$250,000 to provide Shallow Rent Subsidies to 12 low-income seniors who are currently homeless. This pilot project will help determine the effectiveness of rehousing people who are unable to afford market rent by supplementing their rent with an average of \$600 per month while providing supportive services to connect them to other resources. In addition, the County will be contracting with St. Vincent de Paul to provide \$232,990 for a shallow subsidy prevention program in the 2024-25 budget year.



County of Marin Response to Grand Jury Report Findings and Recommendations
"Older Adults on the Brink of Homelessness: Time to Act is Now"
(June 21, 2024)

8. Beginning in summer 2023, County staff and community stakeholders have held ongoing meetings determine prioritization of over \$700,000 allocated by the Board of Supervisors to enhance services for older and disabled adults. Parties to these conversations include HHS executive leadership, the Office of the County Executive, the Commission on Aging, the Aging Action Initiative, Marin Center for Independent Living, and the Marin Aging and Disability Institute. This group is expected to present an update regarding a planned Ageism and Ableism training for County staff, the development of an updated Community Resource Guide for older adults facing homelessness or housing insecurity, a planned series of community convenings on dementia and caregiving, and other topics; to the Board of Supervisors on September 10, 2024.

In summary, the County has invested significantly through multiple department workplans, to enhance or create new services for older adults that are at risk of homelessness.

F3. The primary cause of homelessness in Marin is the lack of affordable housing.

Response: Agree

There are many factors that contribute to homelessness, but the lack of adequate affordable housing in Marin and the Bay Area is a primary cause.

F4. The County has not developed a long-range strategy to prevent adults aged 60 and above from falling into homelessness.

Response: Disagree

The County provides mandated and discretionary services for adults aged 60 and above that reduce financial burdens leading to homelessness. These include (but are not limited to) Medi-Cal health insurance, CalFresh food and nutrition assistance, support for home-delivered and congregate meal services, funding for transportation support, financial and credit coaching, and older adult mental health services.

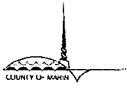
Additionally, the County is collaborating with municipal partners on the Rooted in Marin project, a community-centered engagement and education process to understand displacement in Marin County. The process will result in tools and resources that can help communities build strategies to prevent displacement of vulnerable residents, including older adults.

These programs are embedded into core programmatic and resource allocation strategies, that are indicative of a long range, comprehensive strategy.

F5. The lack of a systematic approach designed to prevent adults aged 60 and above from losing their housing results in these adults falling into homelessness.

Response: Partially Disagree

There are many factors that result in a loss of housing for individuals. These include housing costs and affordable housing availability as well as a variety of social, economic, and health factors. As discussed in the response to F2 above, the County employees a variety of strategies, rooted in several departments, to address the myriad of factors that contribute to



County of Marin Response to Grand Jury Report Findings and Recommendations
"Older Adults on the Brink of Homelessness: Time to Act is Now"
(June 21, 2024)

homelessness. Older adults experience homelessness for largely the same reasons as any other age demographic, including the high cost of housing in an unrestrained market, and a variety of social and economic factors. No single system can address all factors that contribute to homelessness. The County considers the Housing First strategy, combined with a myriad of programmatic and resource solutions embedded into multiple departments, to be the most effective and equitable way to address homelessness in older adult and other demographic populations.

F6. The County lacks a strategic plan that identifies the county agency that is responsible for homelessness prevention for adults aged 60 and above.

Response: Disagree

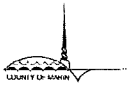
As described previously, the County has prioritized a cross-departmental and cross-functional Housing First strategy as its approach to addressing homelessness. There is no strategic plan that identifies a single County agency that is exclusively responsible for homelessness prevention. Instead, the County's approach to addressing homelessness, including homelessness in the older adult population, leverages funding, expertise, and capacity of multiple County departments, nonprofit partners, municipalities, special districts, and external government agencies.

The County looks forward to continuing partnership with volunteer groups, non-profits, faith-based institutions, private businesses, and community members with lived experience to further develop homelessness prevention strategies.

F7. The County Area Agency on Aging is not appropriately positioned or resourced to meet its federal mandate to function as the leading planner, administrator, and funder of services across a broad spectrum of focus areas for adults aged 60 and above.

Response: Disagree

We have no evidence to suggest that the County Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is not positioned to meet its federal mandate. To date, the AAA has performed its designated functions; including advocacy, planning, inter-agency coordination, information distribution, brokering, monitoring, and evaluation. The AAA's placement within Social Services provides inherent connections to an array of benefit programs that have been proven effective in preventing and addressing homelessness. These include Medi-Cal, CalFresh, and Veteran's Services. Housing challenges, including for older adults, were most recently addressed in the 2024-28 [AAA Area Plan](#). According to the data presented in the plan, older adults surveyed in Marin indicate a rising concern about rental and mortgage affordability, with 21% indicating it as a top priority in 2023. This is an 11% increase from 2019. The recommendations included in the report include "*Increase awareness, visibility, and access to services and resources with special attention to black and Latino populations*", and "*Partner with Community Based Organizations to address financial security*". The County has, and will continue, to address these recommendations in our homelessness mitigation strategies.



County of Marin Response to Grand Jury Report Findings and Recommendations
"Older Adults on the Brink of Homelessness: Time to Act is Now"
(June 21, 2024)

F8. The County has not diligently pursued existing governmental and private funding opportunities designated for homelessness prevention programs and services for adults aged 60 and above.

Response: Disagree

The County actively pursues a diverse range of public and private funding opportunities to comprehensively address the multifaceted needs of Marin residents across all demographics. To further enhance this pursuit of external funding, the County is developing a centralized grants coordination process to enhance the quality and quantity of grant/funding applications completed countywide.

F9. The County has not undertaken a cost-benefit analysis to determine the relative cost of investing in measures to prevent homelessness versus investing in services for people who are already homeless.

Response: Agree

The County has not undertaken any such cost-benefit analysis as described in this finding. We consider both prevention of homelessness, and housing placement for the currently homeless, to be important issues.

F10. The lack of a standardized assessment tool to identify, quantify, and characterize residents who are on the brink of homelessness prevents the County from providing them with urgently needed services.

Response: Disagree

Aging and Adult Services assesses and evaluates older adults through crises intervention systems such as the [Help Line](#), and through safety net service programs such as Adult Protective Services and IHSS. Trained social workers do comprehensive assessments in client homes to determine if housing and other resources are warranted

F11. The County has failed to implement "Doorway," a universal waitlist portal, to identify adults aged 60 and above in need of housing.

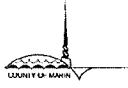
Response: Disagree

The County has yet to fully assess the merits of the Doorway program. While the Doorway program is not precluded from potential future strategies, adoption will require further research.

F12. The County has not implemented a system to match residents who have available rooms or housing units, including Accessory Dwelling Units, with adults aged 60 and above who need housing.

Response: Agree

As discussed in response to F11 above, the County has not yet assessed Doorway or other platforms to match affordable housing providers and those seeking housing.



County of Marin Response to Grand Jury Report Findings and Recommendations
"Older Adults on the Brink of Homelessness: Time to Act is Now"
(June 21, 2024)

F13. The County does not have an effective shallow rents program in place to prevent adults aged 60 and above from falling into homelessness.

Response: Agree

Although such a program is not in place for individuals before they become homeless, the County is currently administering a \$250,000 pilot with North Marin Community Services to provide shallow rent subsidies to 12 low-income seniors who are currently homeless. This pilot will help determine the effectiveness of rehousing for individuals who are unable to afford market-rate rent with an average supplement of \$600 per month. The program also provides supportive services and connection to other resources. In addition, the County will be contracting with St. Vincent de Paul to provide \$232,990 for a shallow subsidy prevention program in the 2024-25 budget year.

F14. The County has not effectively educated adults aged 60 and above about the programs, resources, and services available to address homelessness and homelessness prevention.

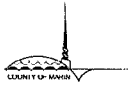
Response: Disagree

Health and Human Services has implemented programs to educate older adults on resources and services that would address and prevent homelessness. Examples of this work include:

- In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) and Adult Protective Services (APS) Social Workers are dedicated to coordinating resources and providing support, education, and access to services for their clients. IHSS staff share information on housing and homelessness during home visits. Solutions for APS cases may include home modifications, landlord mediation, caregiver selection, and IHSS referrals, all aimed at preventing and addressing housing insecurity.
- Marin County residents over 60 and their caregivers can utilize the [Information & Assistance Line 473-INFO](#) for guidance on housing.
- The Commission on Aging's Housing and Transportation subcommittee educates the community, as seen in their January 2024 event, [From Homelessness to Affordable Housing: A Full Circle View](#), featuring experts from various organizations.
- AAA's [Choices for Living](#) guide offers low-income housing options, while the [Financial Abuse Specialist Team \(FAST\)](#) volunteer team educates on scam prevention to protect older adults' financial well-being.
- The AAA-sponsored [Homematch](#) program pairs those seeking housing with older adults offering rental space, fostering community connections and reducing isolation.

RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Grand Jury recommends that by June 30, 2025:



County of Marin Response to Grand Jury Report Findings and Recommendations
"Older Adults on the Brink of Homelessness: Time to Act is Now"
(June 21, 2024)

R1. The Marin County Board of Supervisors should create and issue a mandate for aging equity, similar to the vitally important mandate for racial equity, thereby requiring the Area Agency on Aging, as well as other departments, to prioritize aging equity in any strategic plan.

This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable.

The County of Marin agrees that supporting a growing older adult population is a high priority. We are committed to prioritization of older adults as one of several vulnerable populations. This commitment is evidenced through the variety of Board approved investments referenced above.

The data collected in various housing programs internal to the county, and provided by our municipal and nonprofit partners, informs County strategies and allows us to respond proactively to changing conditions in older adult housing conditions within the county. County equity strategies are inclusive of age, race, ability, sexuality, gender, income, and other metrics of diversity. An inclusive approach to equity lends itself to solutions that benefit everyone.

R2. The Marin County Board of Supervisors should direct the Office of the County Executive to develop and fund a strategic plan for homelessness prevention as recommended by the federal Department of Health and Human Services in its October 2023 report.

This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable.

Several aspects of the County's approach to address homelessness are described in the responses above. The Office of the County Executive works extensively with HHS and other departments with related expertise to facilitate these strategies. We have no evidence that a strategic plan administered by the Office of the County Executive will enhance these programs and services.

R3. The Marin County Board of Supervisors should direct the Community Development Agency to be the lead county agency in addressing the steps and actions necessary to prevent adults aged 60 and above from falling into homelessness, including coordination with community-based and private organizations.

This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable.

Older adult homelessness is a multi-faceted challenge involving homelessness response, prevention, and housing affordability. CDA, HHS, and other County departments will continue to work with community partners to address this complex issue. The social, economic, and historic determinates of homelessness encompass a multidisciplinary challenge, requiring a multidisciplinary approach.

R4. The Marin County Board of Supervisors should direct the Community Development Agency to promote affordable housing options, including shared housing and rent subsidies.

This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable .



County of Marin Response to Grand Jury Report Findings and Recommendations
"Older Adults on the Brink of Homelessness: Time to Act is Now"
(June 21, 2024)

The Board of Supervisors has adopted six priorities that drive departmental objectives and strategies. The first of these priorities is a focus on affordable housing and addressing homelessness. The Community Development Agency (CDA), along with HHS, the Office of the County Executive, and other departments actively develop and maintain programs that address homelessness, housing affordability, and the unique challenges faced by various demographics, including those of older adults. In addition, the Marin Housing Authority administers programs to expand housing options for low income individuals and families, including Housing Choice Vouchers and the Below Market Rate Homeownership program. CDA's work in affordable housing includes housing planning and policy, funding for production and preservation of affordable housing, and support and assistance through entitlement and permitting of new affordable housing projects. Safety net programs for individuals such as shared housing and rent subsidies are outside CDA's service areas.

R5. The Marin County Board of Supervisors should direct the Public Communications Division to develop a public education and communication plan to educate older adult residents of Marin County about the programs, resources, and services available to address homelessness and homelessness prevention.

This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable.

As discussed in the responses above, addressing homelessness is a multidisciplinary and multi-jurisdictional endeavor. While the office of the Public Information Officer plays a role in disseminating information on a variety of countywide initiatives, the public outreach strategies of other partners are vital in reaching the geographically, culturally, linguistically, and socially diverse communities within Marin.

R6. The Marin County Board of Supervisors should direct the Community Development Agency to implement an assessment tool that is specific to adults aged 60 and above who are housed and on the brink of homelessness.

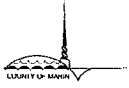
This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable.

While the County and all internal departments remain focused on elevating older adult services as a priority, this recommendation falls outside the scope of work for the Community Development Agency. While CDA certainly plays a role in addressing supply-side housing considerations in the county through development, permitting, and other functions; safety net resources for housing consumers are best served by other service providers both internal and external to the County.

R7. The Marin County Board of Supervisors should direct the Community Development Agency to provide ongoing support to ensure full implementation of the "Doorway" universal waitlist portal.

This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable.

While the Community Development Agency plays a critical role in actively promoting and approving housing development, resources for those seeking housing are currently, and best, handled by partners internal and external to the County.



County of Marin Response to Grand Jury Report Findings and Recommendations
"Older Adults on the Brink of Homelessness: Time to Act is Now"
(June 21, 2024)

R8. The Marin County Board of Supervisors should begin issuing quarterly public reports on the status of the strategic plan for homelessness prevention for older adults.

This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable.

Program updates, new allocations of funding, and development of new programs are regularly discussed and approved at public Board of Supervisors meetings.