

Study of Rural Homelessness in Tuolumne and Calaveras Counties Provides Useful Insight

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Editor,

A new report from the League of Women Voters of the Mother Lode looked at homelessness in Tuolumne and Calaveras Counties between 2021-2023. The report sought to answer many questions about the homeless population, from how to determine how many homeless there are in both counties to establishing more specific considerations for young and elderly homeless people. You can read the full report on the Community Action Project website:

<https://calaverascap.com/lwvstudy/> ,

Calaveras' current mandatory Five-Year Plan to End Homelessness expires in 2024.

The county is now developing a Housing Strategic Plan and a phone app to improve navigation of services. The Housing Resource Partnership was formed to address all levels of housing needs while being mindful of the challenges unique to rural areas.

Compared to cities, rural areas have more undeveloped land and fewer services. The lack of services and transportation along with geographic isolation leads to an underestimation of the rural homeless population, which reduces the amount of funding available from the state.

Also, the annual Point in Time count is done in January to accommodate the urban homeless, because winter is when they will most likely be found in shelters. To help provide a more accurate number of the unsheltered, this year's Calaveras volunteers conducting the annual count were provided training and "incentive bags" which included information about services as well as practical items.

The LWV report also encouraged "education for the communities and law enforcement about the unsheltered to allay fears and create understanding of the causes and the people who need housing assistance."

CAP and the Calaveras Planning Coalition extend our gratitude to the League of Women's Voters of the Mother Lode for the efforts they put in to educate and inform voters on this important issue. You can learn more about them at www.lwvml.org .

Megan Fiske
Outreach Coordinator,
Community Action Project and Calaveras Planning Coalition
San Andreas