

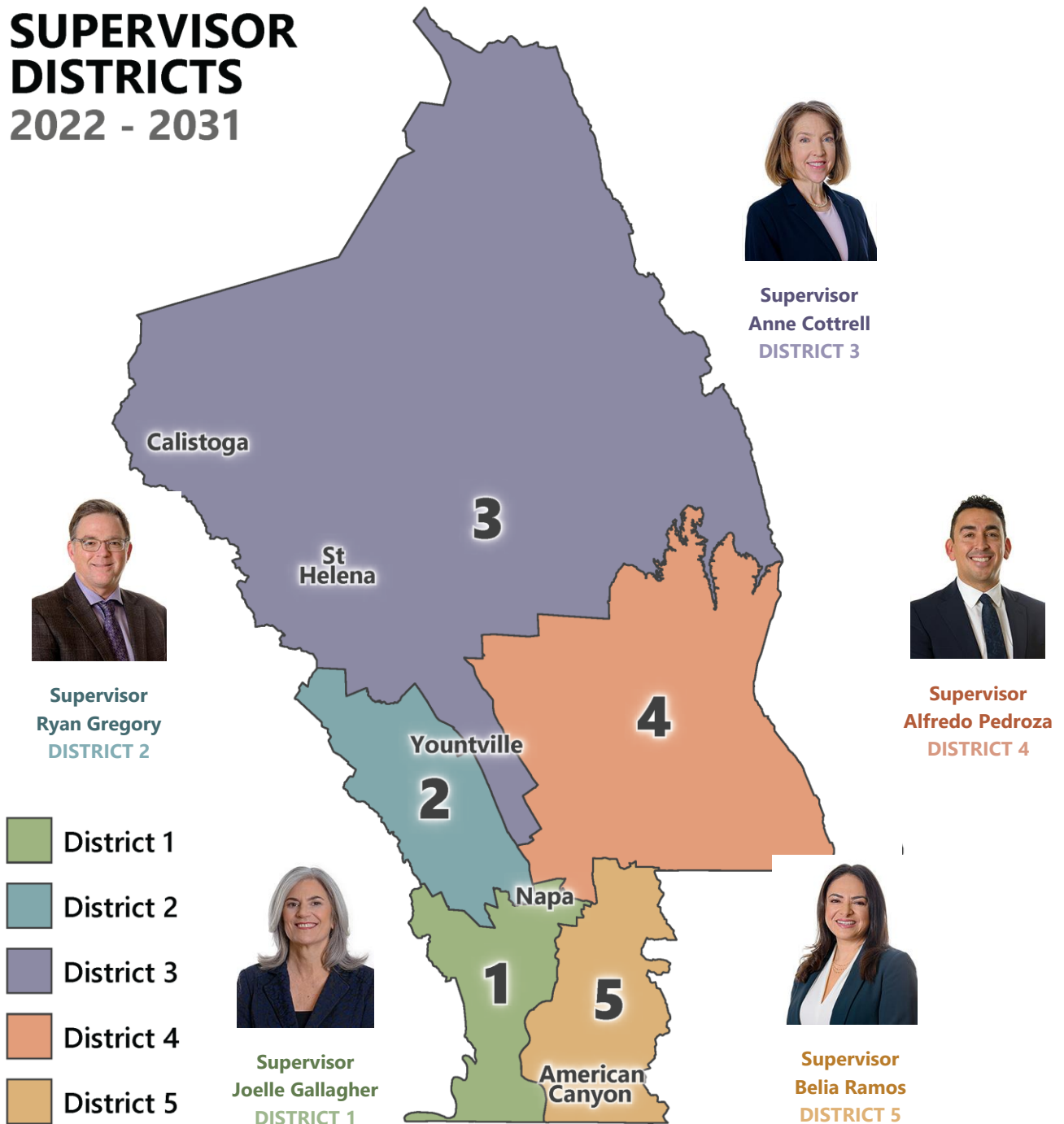


STATE AND FEDERAL
LEGISLATIVE & REGULATORY
PLATFORM

2024



SUPERVISOR DISTRICTS 2022 - 2031



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Overview

Napa County, located northeast of San Francisco, stands out for its remarkable demographic and ecological diversity, encompassing an area of 789 square miles. The Napa Valley, which includes the valley floor and surrounding mountain ranges, boasts a uniquely favorable climate for winegrape production. Stretching a mere thirty miles in length and five miles across at its widest point, the valley and its adjacent mountains form a complex tapestry of hundreds of vineyards, each reflecting distinct characteristics shaped by the soil and climate variations found in the region.

The linchpin of the county's economy lies in its Agricultural Preserve land use ordinance. The ordinance stipulates that only agricultural activities are permissible in the areas designated by the ordinance and sets minimum lot sizes, preventing further subdivision of existing parcels.

Despite having the smallest population among the nine Bay Area counties, with approximately 139,000 residents, Napa County is rich in diversity.¹ Approximately 34 percent of its residents speak a language other than English at home,² reflecting the county's multicultural character.

Agriculture serves as the economic powerhouse of Napa County, employing over 7,000 workers, of which approximately 73 percent are immigrants.³ The population is concentrated predominately in the southern parts of the county, while the northern part of the county is primarily dedicated to the winegrape cultivation.

The primary objective of Napa County's intergovernmental affairs program is to ensure that the County can function effectively while maintaining the flexibility to address the evolving regulatory, legislative, and budgetary challenges that may affect the County's operations. This Legislative & Regulatory Platform has been designed to support the County's legislative program by clearly outlining Napa County's stance on certain priority issues at both the State and Federal levels, allowing the Board of Supervisors and County staff the discretion to swiftly address the wide array of issues facing the County and California. This document does not represent an exhaustive list of every County priority; the priorities contained herein simply represent the challenges faced by County staff on a day-to-day basis that the State and Federal legislatures have demonstrated interest in addressing. The areas of interest are listed in alphabetical order: all are of equal priority to the County. The bullets represent actions directed to State and Federal legislators and executive branch officials.

¹ [U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Napa County, California](#)

² *Id.*

³ [Profile-of-Immigrants-in-Napa-County.pdf \(napavalleycf.org\)](#); [California LaborMarketInfo, The Economy](#)



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Guiding Principles

1. Napa County will generally support efforts that provide for local discretion in new and existing programs required by the State and Federal governments and that strengthen the County's capacity to deliver efficient, effective, and transparent governance to our residents.
2. The County will generally oppose legislative and regulatory initiatives that detract from the County's operational efficiency by imposing new mandates or overlapping or redundant administrative burdens on counties without providing adequate resources to meet those obligations, sustain programs, and retain staff.
3. The County will generally support efforts that uphold the integrity of the County's Agricultural Preserve ordinance and promote commercial agricultural activities. Conversely, the County generally opposes initiatives seeking to reduce its land use authority.



Agriculture & Natural Resources

Agriculture is the beating heart of Napa County's economy, fostered by the County's Agricultural Preserve ordinance. Napa County will continue to emphasize maintaining the delicate balance between agriculture and the environment to encourage agricultural growth where appropriate while working to preserve the county's natural resources.

Support for Agricultural Programs

Napa County administers several vital agricultural programs that help protect the county's agricultural industry from pests and associated diseases. The programs, funded through a combination of State and Federal programs, represent some of the County's most crucial agricultural functions. The dedicated staff responsible for managing these programs play a pivotal role in maintaining the health of our vineyards and forests by effectively addressing pest-related challenges. Napa County's robust pest exclusion regulations and the State's related laws are instrumental in ensuring that incoming plants and raw materials are properly quarantined. Additionally, the County's Pest Detection Team annually deploys thousands of traps throughout the county (over 7,800 in 2022) and conducts tens of thousands of inspections (more than 65,000 inspections in 2022) to identify high-risk areas. Increased pest and disease identifications in the past several years demonstrate the need for statewide expansion of these vital programs.

- **Consider additional support for existing and expanded pest control programs as the need for these programs increases, driven by higher pest pressure and climate change dynamics.**

Agricultural & Environmental Balance

California is a net export state with respect to its agricultural products. The nationwide economic impact of Napa County wine in 2016 was \$33.5bn,⁴ and in 2022, grapes grown in Napa County were valued at over \$890m,⁵ figures which continue to rise over time. The economic benefits of this critical industry, which is the primary source of income for millions of Californians, should be properly addressed in considering climate action bills that impose short-term deadlines to rapidly reduce climate pollution. Legislation aimed at addressing the effects of climate change that implicates agricultural production should acknowledge the crucial role of agriculture in California's economy and consider the far-reaching consequences of reduced agricultural commodity exports.

- **Address stability and continuity in the state's agricultural industry when considering climate action bills that aim to rapidly reduce climate pollution.**

⁴ 2016 Economic Impact Report, Napa Valley Vintners.

⁵ 2022 Agricultural Report, Napa County Agricultural Commissioner's Office.



Land Use

Napa County will oppose any attempt to diminish its capacity to uphold its pioneering agricultural preserve through State-level encroachment on local zoning authority.

The County is resolutely committed to preserving its agricultural character and ensuring the land primarily serves agricultural purposes. It endorses measures and regulations that enable the County to exercise discretion in designating appropriate areas for agriculture and adamantly opposes any measures that impose constraints or mandates on its zoning determinations.

- **Authority over land use should remain entirely within the purview of local governments.**

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Climate Action & Resiliency

As the effects of climate change continue to intensify, the County must alter its internal operations to manage and reduce the environmental impact of these operations to meet its 2030 net zero emissions target. The County's primary intersections with climate change are in the areas of remote public meetings, fleet electrification, extreme weather events, and the remodeling and construction of County facilities. In 2023, the County sought and obtained State funding to undertake a multi-jurisdictional effort to develop a regional climate action plan with the five cities and town contained within Napa County. The Climate Action Committee, consisting of two elected officials from each of the six jurisdictions, is primarily responsible for the development of this plan. As the Committee develops the plan further, it may be appropriate for the County staff responsible for administering the operations of the Committee to seek further support from the State through the County's legislative program. The County will seek this funding as needed.

Legislative and regulatory efforts that facilitate remote public meetings not only reduce the environmental footprint of these meetings by decreasing vehicle miles driven but also expand access to meetings for individuals who might not otherwise participate. The County will support additional efforts to grant all types of local bodies full flexibility to conduct remote public meetings as appropriate.

With respect to the electrification of county fleets, there are certain county functions for which internal combustion vehicles currently remain the most practical option. In many rural areas of Napa County, which primarily consists of mountainous terrain, the lack of electric charging infrastructure and prohibitively high infrastructure installation costs make it more appropriate for county officials to have the flexibility to use internal combustion engines when their duties require travel to these areas. The County will continue to pursue conversion of County vehicles from those powered solely by internal combustion engines to vehicles utilizing renewable energy power sources as it is able and as technology and infrastructure advance.

State evaluation of electrification requirements should use a function-specific approach that gives weight to the following three criteria in evaluating electrification requirements for a county function: (1) affordability, or the marginal cost this will impose relative to the use of internal combustion vehicles; (2) feasibility, or the ease of acquiring electrified vehicles and installing related charging infrastructure for a given function; and (3) practicality, or the suitability of electrification to a particular function, again giving due consideration to the availability of charging infrastructure.



The County also prioritizes the use of ecologically sustainable materials and design that reduces climatological impact in constructing new buildings and renovating existing buildings. The County will seek State and Federal investment as needed and advocate for appropriations that incentivize climatological considerations in construction.

The County further supports measures that will safeguard its most vulnerable residents, including children, the elderly, and agricultural workers, by allocating resources to protect them from the impacts of extreme weather events that are brief in duration, including cycles of extreme heat, extreme cold, or flooding. These events may only affect certain parts of the county for a relatively short period, and as a result may not warrant the declaration of a disaster that eases administrative and regulatory burdens. Nonetheless, these short-lived extreme weather events pose a significant threat to human life. These measures may include the provision of shelter, essential goods, and services to those in need. As noted above, in the introduction to this section, the increasing frequency of these brief, localized extreme weather events creates additional strain on County resources. Unlike large-scale disaster events, there is no formal infrastructure in place to respond to these events using a consistent and methodical process.

- **Expand permissible use of remote meetings under ordinary circumstances, including decision-making bodies.**
- **Permit local discretion in deciding which county functions can support the use of electric vehicles.**
- **Invest in building local resource infrastructure to respond to micro-disaster events.**



Infrastructure

Napa County's infrastructure is the backbone of our local economy. Predictability is key to both infrastructure itself and the financial support underpinning our infrastructure projects. Residents and visitors alike depend on reliable, safe roads and bridges, as do commercial vehicles traversing to and from the vineyards located in often remote corners of the county. The bulk of this funding originates from State and Federal sources. The county requests that the State and Federal governments maintain the present funding system and funding levels to allow us to continue to maintain our infrastructure, driving the county's economy forward and improving the well-being of its inhabitants.

Roads & Bridges

Napa County relies heavily on its network of roads and bridges, which serve as crucial arteries that support our vibrant agricultural and tourism sectors and meet the daily needs of our residents. It is essential to maintain consistency and stability in the flow of funding for these lifelines of Napa County's economic stability and well-being. To achieve this goal, the county strongly advocates for legislation and regulations that streamline and enhance the flexibility of funding mechanisms for roads, bridges, and airport repair and maintenance. The county further endorses legislation and regulatory frameworks that empower local governments to exercise discretion in the development and execution of transportation projects.

The county prioritizes its existing projects and will continue to advocate for stability in the funding of existing programs, including: the Highway Users Tax Account allocation; SB1 (the Road Repair and Accountability Act of 2017); the Highway Bridge Program; and the Highway Safety Infrastructure Program. These established funding sources provide the county with a known and dependable framework, enabling us to continue to improve our roads and bridges. Any re-evaluation of the criteria used in allocating funding under these programs should provide avenues for county-level input.

- **Sustain current funding levels for the critical programs that have been instrumental in Napa County's roads and bridges maintenance efforts.**



Water & Flood Control Facilities

Napa County's Flood Control District has an established history of successfully securing funding through the State's Flood Control Subventions Program. Over the past two decades, the district has received approximately \$180 million in reimbursements, which have been instrumental in funding various improvement to and maintenance projects for our flood control infrastructure. Given the increasing competitiveness in applying for State financial assistance, the county strongly advocates for State officials to adopt pragmatic and flexible criteria when evaluating flood control projects. By relaxing multi-use criteria, we can optimize project costs, ultimately enabling more counties to access much-needed funding.

Napa County is committed to maintaining active engagement with relevant staff at the State Department of Water Resources to ensure the reimbursement for ongoing flood control projects is duly incorporated in future budgets.

- **Maximize the utility of flood control project funding allocations with respect to safeguarding nearby residences and businesses.**

Access to Transportation

Napa County is committed to providing full support to the Napa Valley Transit Authority (NVTa) as it endeavors to enhance access to transportation options for our residents. In line with this commitment, the county will support efforts to implement the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022. Additionally, as mentioned in **Public Protection – Disaster Mitigation & Recovery**, Napa County will advocate for the streamlining of the FEMA reimbursement and appeals processes, supporting NVTa's parallel efforts.

- **Support the Napa Valley Transit Authority in its mission to improve public transit access for residents, workers, and visitors.**



Public Protection

The safety and well-being of Napa County residents are of paramount importance and the county remains committed to expanding its emergency preparation, driven by the increasing frequency and severity of disaster events. The county's emergency preparation efforts, including hazard mitigation and fire suppression, are designed specifically in response to wildfire events that pose grave threats to both life and property.

The county additionally fulfills several vital functions within this sphere of interest, including public health duties that encompass addressing all medical and health needs of the community. Its responsibilities encompass a broad and intricate array of public safety functions, ranging from investigating and controlling the spread of identified infectious diseases to relatively new roles in handling youthful offenders and managing the care of offenders with mental health and substance abuse issues to advocating for the rights of victims of criminal offenses.

Disaster Mitigation & Recovery

Since 2017, Napa County has experienced the substantial impact of extreme weather events on its residents, businesses, and economy. During this period, natural disasters have resulted in approximately \$20 billion in costs reimbursed to the county by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, with an additional estimated \$10 billion stemming from the 2023 winter storms. A range of factors lead to extreme fire behavior: vegetation fuels that are not properly maintained, climate change, and more housing located in the wildland-urban interface. With the increase in frequency and severity of weather events, the county recognizes the urgency of intensifying its efforts to mitigate the factors leading to these events, respond swiftly and effectively when they occur, and facilitate countywide recovery initiatives. To accomplish this, a multi-pronged approach with diverse strategies is essential, as outlined below.

First, the State must act quickly to reform the homeowners' insurance system to establish a sustainable insurance market for Napa County residents and businesses. A stable insurance market will increase investment in residential and commercial property in the county and improve the lives and business operations of existing property owners.



Napa County's fire service has aggressively pursued vegetation management efforts to reduce the fuel available, including a chipper program for downed fuels available to residents at no cost. To mitigate the risk posed to residents of the wildland urban interface, the county additionally supports local homeowners through its Defensible Space Certification program, which provides technical advisory services to harden homes against wildfire. Expanding these programs through additional investment from the State and Federal governments will assist residents, the county fire department, and CAL Fire in mitigating the spread of future wildfires.

The county encourages efforts that increase oversight and transparency regarding infrastructure damage, coverage disruptions, and other pertinent issues related to telecommunications service companies before, during, and after an Enhanced Powerline Safety Settings Shutoff (EPSS), a Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS), or a disaster event.

Additionally, Napa County supports the development of a statewide training curriculum that assists county agricultural pass programs. Local governments should retain control of their respective agricultural pass programs, including the ability to designate essential agricultural activities during a disaster.

From a recovery perspective, the County is developing a countywide Fire Rebuild Plan and will pursue State and Federal investment to implement the Plan when appropriate. Finally, the County will advocate for regulatory streamlining of the reimbursement and appeals processes by FEMA. Any new or amended federal regulatory frameworks imposed upon the County's disaster mitigation efforts by state or federal agencies should consider the constantly evolving nature of fire suppression services.

- **Reform statewide insurance market to establish sustainable market for Napa County residents and businesses.**
- **Invest in expanding statewide vegetation management efforts and in the development and utilization of methods and technologies that do not cause an increase in climate pollution to do so.**
- **Reduce reliance on EPSS and PSPS and increase oversight and transparency related to the use of these measures.**
- **Build a statewide agricultural pass education program and retain local control of agricultural pass programs.**
- **Streamline FEMA reimbursement and appeals processes.**



Public Health & Safety

Napa County houses several critical community health functions that have substantial impacts to the safety of our communities. For instance, decisions made by the State to shift responsibility for behavioral healthcare to counties and limit admissions to state hospitals have direct impacts to the indigent care for which the County is responsible. Moreover, State funding reductions to the County's public health budget undermine the County's preparedness to address public health crises that threaten community safety, including investigation and mitigation of the spread of infectious disease outbreaks. These interconnected issues represent areas of substantial potential risk for community health and safety.

Public Health

Napa County's public health officials are responsible for the health and medical needs of the county, an expansive mission that intersects with a broad cross-section of the county's residents and seasonal workers. Funding related to the mitigation of and response to incidents with direct links to unfavorable health outcomes has historically been disproportionately affected by budget cuts during times of financial shortfall. The County strongly urges State policymakers to resist any cuts to this particularly vital source of funding and to continue to allow flexibility to focus on surge events.

The County also advocates for policies and funding that sustain the financial viability of local public health systems and local healthcare providers, including hospitals and community health partners. Napa County and neighboring counties cannot afford to lose any health care facilities. The closure of facilities in neighboring counties may shift patients to Napa's community health facilities, stretching their capacity to properly care for an increased patient load. Therefore, it is imperative that the State continues to support facilities that demonstrate a genuine need for additional funding to remain solvent.

- **Resist cuts to public health funding.**
- **Continue investment in local public health systems and healthcare providers.**

Public Safety

From a public safety perspective, the major points of focus for Napa County continue to be youthful offenders and the rights of victims.

Napa County supports the overarching goal of providing early interventions to reduce the causes of crime among individuals under the age of twenty-six. The County should nonetheless retain local authority to impose appropriate consequences when early interventions prove ineffective. The shift of juvenile justice oversight to counties is a relatively new responsibility, and the County advocates for the time and flexibility needed to effectively manage these new obligations before further changes are introduced. The County currently lacks adequate funding to sustain these new responsibilities. Adequate recurring funding is required to properly manage the county's youthful offenders.



Napa County strongly advocates for efforts that protect the rights of victims of crimes and reduces opportunity for repeated instances of victimization. These legislative and regulatory efforts take a range of forms, from expanding protections for victims and their families from known threat; opportunities for victims and their families to share their stories in official proceedings; and the creation of new legal and informational resources to better understand their rights and the criminal justice system. The County disavors efforts that create additional obstacles for victims and their families to be heard by courts during official proceedings, that restrict eligibility for compensation or protection, or that do not adequately address the risk of re-victimization of crime victims upon the release of an offender.

- **Increase recurring appropriations to allow the County to properly implement its new responsibilities related to youthful offenders.**
- **Protect the rights of victims of crimes and reduce opportunities for repeated victimization.**

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Resident Quality of Life

The topics encompassed within this area pertain to the County's direct interactions with its residents. While the following is not exhaustive, it serves as a framework for addressing issues that have a direct impact on residents. The County and its workforce are dedicated to enhancing public trust in their operations. Achieving this goal necessitates consistent operational improvement efforts, continuity, and transparency in decision-making processes.

Older Adult Support Services

Napa County's aging population is a significant demographic, with over 45,000 residents over the age of 55, representing about one third of the county's total population.⁶ As the county continues to experience this demographic shift, the demand for essential County services will inevitably rise. These services, primarily administered by HHSA, include Veterans' Services, In Home Support Services (IHSS), Adult Protective Services, Medi-Cal and CalFresh, and mental health care tailored to older adults. It is imperative that any proposed changes to these services are adequately funded and the result of data-driven analysis.

The Four-Year Area Plan on Aging developed by the Napa-Solano Area Agency on Aging (Napa-Solano AAA) outlines four ongoing priorities: transportation, housing, nutrition, and access to services and resources. Additionally, the plan identifies specific objectives such as outreach, expanding education programs, forging partnerships with local service providers and officials, and expanding services to underserved and at-risk older adult populations. The County remains committed to supporting the Napa-Solano AAA in achieving these priorities and objectives.

- **Recognize and alleviate increased local pressure on services for older adults caused by ongoing demographic shifts through increased investment and local flexibility in existing programs.**

⁶ [Napa County, California - Census Bureau Profile](#)



Broadband

Napa County is committed to improving resident access to resilient and reliable broadband services, particularly in rural areas and for older and lower-income households. To support this initiative, the County is actively recruiting full-time staff dedicated to broadband expansion efforts. Broadband access, particularly in the "middle-mile" areas of the county, not only facilitates resident engagement with digital government services and access to current information during disasters, but also ensures connectivity for County employees engaged in fieldwork.

Napa County has 13 geographic areas classified as underserved with respect to broadband access within the county. The County has set two primary objectives to address this issue. The first goal is to enhance coverage as extensively as possible through grant funding, allowing the formation of partnerships with existing broadband providers through the entire process, from design and engineering to construction. The second goal is to expand the County's Affordable Connectivity Program, which covers the entire cost of wireless internet bills for eligible households but is not currently administratively funded. The program represents an investment opportunity for the State and a pilot program for expansion throughout California.

- **Incentivize public-private broadband partnerships through increased investment in middle-mile access.**
- **Expand the County's Affordable Connectivity Program, including administrative funding, and consider using it as a model for statewide expansion.**

Childrens' Services

Napa County administers a range of programs and services aimed at improving the development and welfare of our children through the Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) and Probation Department. The County faces challenges in properly staffing these programs and retaining talent in light of new statewide requirements and challenging workloads. As a result of these challenges, staff are under increased strain to fulfill the County's responsibilities to ensure that every parent or custodial party has equal access to services for establishing parentage, establishing and enforcing child support, medical support, childcare costs, and health insurance. State investment in programs to further incentivize the educational development of a larger child welfare workforce in rural areas will help address these challenges.



Finally, as childcare costs continue to rise at unprecedented rates, the County will advocate for legislation and funding that increases accessibility to affordable childcare, promotes high-quality early-life education programs for low- and moderate-income families.

- **Allocate resources for further development of child welfare education programs specifically targeting rural areas.**
- **Invest in improving accessibility to affordable childcare and early-life education programs.**

Cybersecurity

Strengthening cybersecurity measures within County infrastructure is critical to maintaining continuity of operations and safeguarding the sensitive information of our clients. The regulatory and statutory framework for cybersecurity requirements applicable to local governments is still in a relatively early stage of development, and Napa County is committed to actively shaping these requirements to make them feasible for small rural counties like ours.

Funding for the implementation of new cybersecurity measures primarily flows to Napa County from the Federal government through the State as one-time funding opportunities. However, modern cybersecurity tools primarily operate on a subscription basis, and while one-time funding may cover the initial implementation, ongoing costs are borne by the County. This situation will become increasingly challenging as statutory and regulatory requirements grow more stringent and necessitate new layers of protection. The County advocates for the addition of recurring funding appropriations in conjunction with new requirements.

- **Define an avenue for counties to provide input in the rapidly evolving landscape of cybersecurity measures required for government entities.**
- **Make appropriations for new cybersecurity requirements recurring rather than one-time, recognizing the ongoing nature of cybersecurity efforts and subscription model of modern cybersecurity products.**



Language Access

Napa County is home to a diverse population, with approximately one-third of households using a language other than English at home. Among these households, 26.6 percent speak Spanish, four percent speak Asian or Pacific Islander languages, and three percent speak other Indo-European languages. The County places a strong emphasis on client-focused services, aiming to serve its diverse population by utilizing communication formats that align with the preferences of its residents. Effective multilingual communication is essential, not only during disasters and emergencies but also in regular day-to-day operations, ensuring that residents are fully informed about the range of services available to them.

In 2023, the County initiated the development of a Language Access Plan and will actively pursue Federal and State resources for its implementation as required.

- **Invest in the implementation of local language access plans.**

Fiscal Responsibility

Napa County, its cities, and town are likely to lose millions in revenue to its schools in fiscal year 2024-2025 as a result of declining enrollment at the Napa Valley Unified School District (NVUSD). This decline in enrollment will cause NVUSD to become a basic aid district, likely in fiscal year 2024-2025. As a result, Napa will become a complete basic aid county and lose its prior ability to use property taxes from the NVUSD to pay for the Vehicle License Fee swap. This will send the County's budget spiraling from a cliff overnight: the loss to the County will create a hole the approximate size of 20% of the County's annual budget. Absent a permanent fix in law, the County will be forced to cut significant positions and programs: should this shortfall come to pass, it will fundamentally alter the way the County conducts business.

- **Create in state law a permanent, long-term solution to meet funding obligations to, and protect local property taxes for, the County and its cities and town.**



Social Safety Net Services

The fundamental question of how California should care for its residents will define the near future of State and local government. The State and counties invest a substantial portion of their time in deliberations on this issue. The solutions required are uniquely complex because California has the largest population in the country, surpassing the second largest by more than 23 percent.⁷

As a consequence of these circumstances and the myriad challenges faced by Californians as a result, California's state government leads the nation in its identification of the pervasive challenges facing its residents and the volume of its efforts to solve them. Few other Governors and state legislatures can match California's commitment to tackling problems of such magnitude and complexity. However, the consequence of taking on these formidable tasks is often significant challenges in implementation, primarily due to the scale and cost of creating new programs and improving existing programs. California's agricultural counties, including Napa County, are home to a large population of settled and seasonal agriculture workers.

Nonetheless, the County remains committed to engaging with the State through this legislative program, encouraging lawmakers and regulators to consider long-term implications for counties and their residents in the course of their decision-making processes.

Affordable Housing

Napa County faces a dual housing shortage dilemma. First, the existing housing supply falls short in accommodating individuals with low and moderate incomes who work in the county, in particular the farmworkers that are the engine powering Napa County's agricultural economy. Second, Napa County lacks necessary housing options designed to address the transitional and permanent housing needs of its unhoused population.

Consequently, the County will advocate for initiatives that secure funding and create additional affordable housing opportunities within urban areas while simultaneously investing in the necessary infrastructure to support these housing endeavors. The County further encourages regulatory measures that avoid unnecessary increases in construction costs for new units or conversion projects and maintains local discretion to determine the best way to aid individuals and families at risk of becoming unhoused.

⁷ [U.S. News & World Report](#)



Live Where You Work

The County supports legislative and regulatory efforts that streamline the development of new housing within urbanized areas. From a disaster mitigation perspective, expanding existing urban areas is safer and more cost-effective than developing areas outside of the county's established urban corridors and within the wildland-urban interface. Expanding the infrastructure in existing urban zones mitigates climatic impacts and reduces development expenses compared to building new infrastructure to serve previously undeveloped land. The County will support efforts to modernize existing workforce housing laws to streamline construction of housing for employees of a private employer and permit the use of public funding for the creation of affordable units within a workforce housing development. The County encourages the State to prioritize construction of new farmworker housing through State investment and regulatory streamlining. Farmworker housing construction must also provide for family housing and safety measures as more women join the county's agricultural workforce.

Napa County has initiated an Affordable Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Forgivable Loan Program, offering short-term forgivable loans to property owners who construct ADUs on their land and agree to charge below-market rent for a minimum of five years. After just one year of operation, the quantity of applications received by the program significantly exceed available funds by a substantial margin. The County's ADU Forgivable Loan Program can be a model program for the State to create diversified housing stock in the Bay Area. We ask the State for an investment in the success of the program, including as a pilot program that could be expanded to other areas of the state in the future.

- **Streamline development of housing in urbanized areas.**
- **Prioritize construction of new farmworker housing, including housing for families.**
- **Invest in Napa County's ADU Forgivable Loan Program to act as a statewide model.**

Transitional & Permanent Housing for Unhoused Persons and Persons at Risk of Becoming Unhoused

Napa County faces a multifaceted array of housing needs that mirror its diverse population. These needs encompass a wide spectrum, ranging from transitional housing to permanent housing solutions for chronically unhoused individuals, as well as housing cost assistance for those at risk of losing their homes. Addressing these needs is an ongoing challenge.

The development of transitional housing primarily falls under the purview of our county's cities. The County actively supports these endeavors, offering technical assistance and guidance to the cities and providing emergency services to residents of transitional housing. The availability of permanent affordable housing, to which chronically unhoused residents can transition, remains limited. To address this issue, the



County supports the consistent, ongoing allocation of resources to cities for managing this population. This group of chronically unhoused persons often struggles with physical or behavioral health issues and substance abuse, making it challenging to maintain a permanent residence. The pressure on the county's emergency services providers created by responding to incidents at transitional and permanent housing developments can be mitigated by State investment in 24-hour staffing at these facilities.

Finally, the County endorses an expansion of funding for housing cost assistance for individuals and families currently residing in permanent housing but facing eviction threats or utility service disconnections, or those who have already experienced eviction but are not yet chronically homeless. The rising cost of living, encompassing expenses like food, childcare, and transportation, places an increasing number of families in Napa County at regular risk of falling behind on their rent. Diverting this category of individuals through rent and utility payment support before they become unhoused stands to yield long-term cost savings for the County.

- **Invest in additional transitional and permanent affordable housing for cities through funding and regulatory streamlining.**
- **Fund 24-hour staff at transitional and permanent affordable housing developments to reduce strain on county emergency services.**
- **Expand rent and utility cost assistance programs for individuals and families facing the threat of eviction.**

Behavioral Health Services

The County shares space in the delivery of behavioral health services to Napa County residents with other behavioral health partners, including hospitals, managed care plan providers, school-based services, and community-based organizations. The patient populations for which the County is responsible are primarily the indigent and the seriously mentally ill. Growing – and encouraging community partners to grow – the layer of unlicensed members of the behavioral health workforce will enhance the performance of licensed clinicians and improve the ability of the County to fulfill its obligations.

The County will advocate for reduction of state- and federal-level administrative burdens on behavioral health workers through the streamlining of requirements to better retain these workers and reduce the statewide behavioral health workforce shortage.⁸ This shortage leads to understaffed facilities, lack of

⁸ Coffman and Fix, Healthforce Center at the University of California, San Francisco, "Building the Future Behavioral Health Workforce: Needs Assessment," at pp. 46-49.



appropriate facility designation for behavioral health service and housing space, and mixed community support for community-based behavioral health services, including substance use disorder services.⁹

Behavioral health services necessarily include support for services and staff, necessitating consistent, ongoing funding to keep facilities and community-based programs properly staffed. Drastic fluctuations in funding render long-term planning for services and staffing at times challenging given economic instability. The implementation of a multi-year rolling average of state revenues to smooth funding models will result in greater predictability in planning for future initiatives and ensure greater longer-term stability in the provision of County services.

Finally, the County advocates for flexibilities to retain local control as parts of the Governor's Behavioral Health Services Act move to the March 2024 ballot. The County will focus on working with State partners to ensure that policies and regulations developed to implement the rural exemption to the Act are clear, unambiguous, and narrowly tailored.

- **Invest in new acute psychiatric treatment beds and personnel to staff these facilities.**
- **Use a rolling average of funding levels of multiple preceding years to set behavioral health services funding.**
- **Develop clear and narrowly tailored policies and regulations regarding the rural exemption to the Behavioral Health Services Act.**

Basic Needs: Food Insecurity, In-Home Support Services, & Access to Medical Care

Napa County is committed to ensuring that the resources needed to meet the basic needs of its residents are reliably available. In addition to its work on affordable housing initiatives, as outlined above, the State has significant opportunity to increase its investment in meeting three key basic needs, access to food, to in-home support services, and to medical care.

In response and to address the rising costs of food, the County has increased investment in food programs at an accelerated rate over the past three years, a pace which is not sustainable. Reliable, stable investment from the State in this area is needed. Similarly, access to both medical and behavioral healthcare services for these households is progressively becoming more constrained. Currently, approximately 34,000 Napa County residents, or about one in four residents, are enrolled in Medi-Cal. But access to a provider for a Medi-Cal enrollee is far from guaranteed. Over time, an increasing number of healthcare providers across California have denied access to care for Medi-Cal patients, while the cost of essential medications

⁹ Notably, the California Department of Healthcare Services in 2021 allocated \$2.2b in Behavioral Health Continuum Infrastructure Program funding over several rounds; Napa applied for and received over \$3m in funds to expand the Crisis Stabilization Unit.



continues to rise. The current system presents challenges for patients at every step of the healthcare journey. The State possesses the authority and resources to intervene in ways that will make access to healthcare more readily available to Medi-Cal patients, including implementing a Managed Care Organization (MCO) tax at appropriate rates, ultimately making healthcare more readily available and accessible to those in need.

Workers providing in-home support services help their charges meet key basic needs. Of each dollar paid in wages to these workers, fifty cents are paid by the Federal government, thirty-two and one-half cents are paid by the State, and seventeen and one-half cents are paid by the responsible local government. The State has set a ten percent three-year threshold for increases to its participation level in the current funding mix for this and other programs, after which the County is responsible for the payment of the State's portion. Current wages for these workers in Napa County are below livable wage level,¹⁰ and the State's ten percent threshold places responsibility on the County for an unsustainable amount of funding to get these workers to a living wage. The State should maintain the current funding mix at a living wage by increasing its maximum participation threshold in funding wage increases for in-home support services workers to a local livable wage. It should also eliminate the penalty for failure to reach a collective bargaining agreement for in-home support service workers.

- **Invest in food programs at increased levels in a stable and predictable manner to reduce food insecurity.**
- **Implement and sustain a Managed Care Organization tax at appropriate rates.**
- **Increase maximum participation threshold in funding wage increases for in-home support services workers to a local livable wage.**

Data Integration & Management of Coordinated Care

In 2023, Napa County commenced a substantial project to centralize client data from various departments into a unified portal, in part to prepare for implementation of CARE Court. The purpose of this initiative is to allow visibility of all services a client receives from multiple departments. Absent further investment by the State in this data integration project, the County cannot be fully prepared to implement CARE Court.¹¹ Specifically, the County seeks a recurring funding allocation to create a unified client portal to execute the requirements of the program for the limited number of residents expected to be impacted.

- **Secure adequate recurring funding to prepare for the implementation of CARE Court**

¹⁰ Glasmeier, Amy K. *Living Wage Calculator, 2023*, Massachusetts Institute of Technology. <https://livingwage.mit.edu>

¹¹ Note that full preparation for CARE Court will also require the construction of more transitional and affordable housing than currently exists in Napa County, as described in **Social Safety Net Services – Affordable Housing**.

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