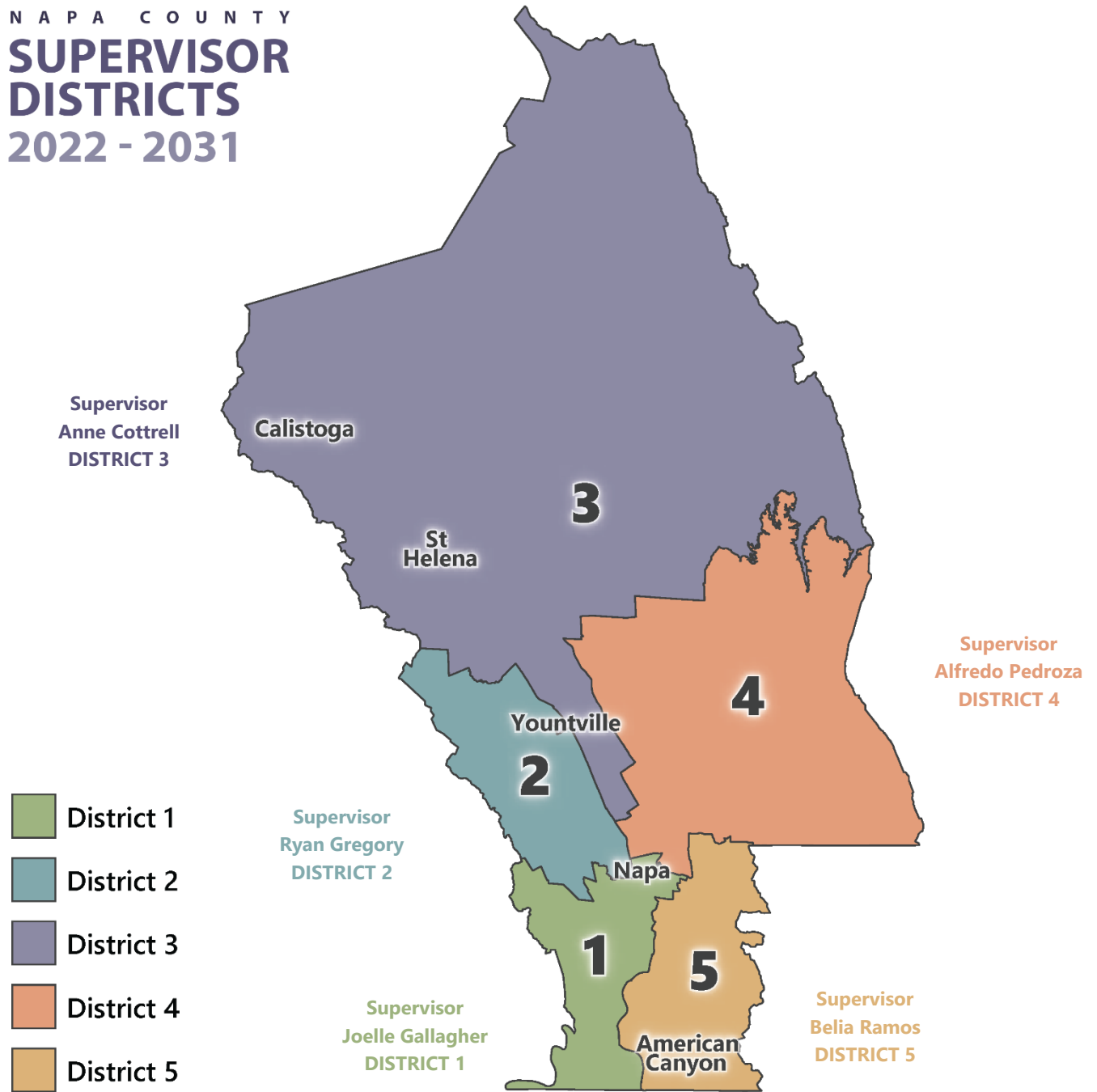




2025

State and Federal
Legislative & Regulatory
Platform

N A P A C O U N T Y
**SUPERVISOR
 DISTRICTS**
 2022 - 2031



Federal Advocates

Platinum Advisors
 800 Maine Ave, Suite 200
 Washington, DC 20024

State Advocates

Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lange
 1415 L Street, Suite 1000
 Sacramento, CA 95814 916-446-4656

County Staff

Ryan J. Alsop, County Executive Officer
 Holly K. Dawson, Deputy County Executive Officer
 Andrew M. Mize, Legislative & Policy Analyst

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 30 miles in length and 5 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 home², 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](#)

Contents

Overview	0
Guiding Principles	5
Agriculture & Natural Resources.....	6
Land Use & Groundwater Management.....	6
Land Use	6
Groundwater Management	6
Support for Agricultural Programs	6
Climate Action & Resiliency	7
Priorities Supporting Internal Organizational Activities	7
Priorities Supporting Community Climate Change Mitigation Efforts	8
Infrastructure.....	9
Roads & Bridges.....	9
Access to Transportation	9
Public Protection.....	10
Disaster Mitigation & Recovery.....	10
Public Health & Safety	11
Public Health	12
Public Safety.....	12
Carrier of Last Resort Obligations	12
Gun Violence Prevention	13
Local Emergency Medical Services	13
Victims' Rights	13
Youthful Offenders	13
Resident Quality of Life.....	15
Broadband.....	15
Childrens' Services.....	15
Fiscal Responsibility.....	16
Language Access	16
Library Services.....	17
Older Adult Support Services.....	17
Skyline Park Acquisition	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Social Safety Net Services	17
Affordable Housing	18

Live Where You Work..... 18

Transitional & Permanent Housing for Unhoused Persons and Persons at Risk of Becoming Unhoused..... 18

Behavioral Health Services 19

Basic Needs: Food Insecurity, In-Home Support Services, & Access to Medical Care..... 19

DRAFT

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. Napa 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. Napa County will generally support efforts that uphold the integrity of the County's Agricultural Preserve ordinance, promote commercial agricultural activities, and enable the County and its residents and businesses to reduce their climate impact and mitigate the effects of climate change. Conversely, the County generally opposes initiatives seeking to diminish its land use authority or that make more challenging efforts to reduce climate impact or mitigate the effects of climate change.
4. Napa County will generally support efforts that mitigate the current climate emergency and promote a stable climate necessary for the County's continued economic prosperity and public well-being.

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.

Land Use & Groundwater Management

Land Use

Napa County’s Agricultural Preserve zoning ordinance is fundamental to the County’s operations. The first-of-its-kind mechanism shapes the daily lives of Napa County residents through its concentration of development into existing urban areas. The result is that residents of the five cities and town live relatively close to existing infrastructure, schools, healthcare facilities, and retail stores. It also reduces the need for and climatological impact of creating new infrastructure to support development in previously undeveloped areas of the county. The 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.

Groundwater Management

Napa County’s Groundwater Sustainability Agency (“Napa GSA”) received approval for its Groundwater Sustainability Plan (“GSP”) from the California Department of Water Resources (“DWR”) in January, 2023. Since approval, County staff have worked diligently to develop a model that will track the effectiveness of the GSP and help the County understand whether the implementation of the GSP is having the desired effect on groundwater levels. The model would benefit from more availability of hydrologic and evapotranspiration data. The County will support legislative proposals that would assist the Napa GSA in developing more accurate models to measure the effectiveness of its GSP.

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

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 initiatives, 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. From the perspective of supporting the efforts of our local agricultural industry to reduce their climate impact, the County will support financial commitment by the state to help farmers statewide who want to reduce their climate impacts through a range of measures, including but not limited to the

incorporation of compost in lieu of synthetic fertilizers, use of low smoke burn technologies to produce biochar on-site, and the challenging transition to zero-emission field equipment.

- Consider additional support for expanded pest control, pest management, and pest exclusion programs as the need for these programs increases, driven by higher pest pressure and climate change dynamics.
- Consider financial support for farmers seeking to reduce climate pollutants in their operations through measures.

Climate Action & Resiliency

In June 2022, the Napa County Board of Supervisors – and all of the county’s incorporated municipalities – took the unprecedented step of approving a resolution declaring a countywide climate emergency and directing staff to prioritize greenhouse gas emission reductions.⁴ In pursuit of this goal, the County’s climate priorities are divided into advocacy for efforts internal to the organization and advocacy for efforts with broader community impact.

Priorities Supporting Internal Organizational Activities

As the effects of climate change continue to intensify, the County must also alter its internal operations to manage and reduce the environmental impact of these operations to meet its 2030 net zero emissions target, including working to find ways to use less fossil fuel. The primary intersections between the County and the State and Federal governments in climate change mitigation are in the areas of remote public meetings, fleet electrification, the remodeling and construction of County facilities, and the multi-jurisdictional Climate Action Committee.

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 local bodies full flexibility to conduct remote public meetings as needed.

With respect to the State’s Advanced Clean Fleets requirements, 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. 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 under the totality of current circumstances.

The County also prioritizes the use of ecologically sustainable materials and design that reduces climatological impact in constructing new buildings and renovating existing buildings in connection with

⁴ <https://napa.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6334187&GUID=F64CC9CE-C378-40A6-A0EB-C469E7CD8C29&FullText=1>

the update to its facilities master plan. The County will position itself to seek State and Federal investment and incentives as needed and advocate in support of appropriations and legislative and regulatory measures that incentivize climatological considerations in construction.

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.

- 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.
- The County expects to position itself to complement its facilities master plan by targeting opportunities to defray the costs of infrastructure updates that reduce the climate impact of its operations.

Priorities Supporting Community Climate Change Mitigation Efforts

From a broader community perspective, the most significant State effort likely to impact the county's residents and businesses is Prop 4, the \$10 billion bond put to the voters in November, 2024. Prop 4 outlines spending of \$3.8 billion for water programs, \$1.5 billion for wildfire and forest resilience programs, \$1.2 billion for coastal resilience programs, \$1.2 billion for biodiversity protection and nature-based climate solutions, \$850 million for clean air programs, \$700 million for park creation and outdoor programs, \$450 million for extreme heat mitigation, and \$300 million for sustainability programs for working lands. In addition to advocacy for Napa County's share of this planned spending, the County will encourage investment by the State and Federal governments in improving carbon sequestration efforts in commercial industry (e.g., biochar) and increasing access to funding to install climate-adaptive infrastructure in residential and commercial settings (e.g., solar power infrastructure and home hardening measures).

- Invest in improving commercial carbon sequestration processes.
- Increase funding for residential and commercial climate-resilient infrastructure.

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.

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, the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, as well as efforts by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission to enact legislation enabling the Commission to propose ballot measures. 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 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. Natural disasters during this period 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.

Given the increase in frequency and severity of extreme 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 through a multi-pronged approach, as outlined below.

The County will support the efforts by California's Insurance Commissioner, the State and Federal Legislatures, and other regulatory agencies to improve availability and affordability of property insurance in California. This means fewer property owners resorting to the FAIR Plan or insurance from outside of California's admitted market, or foregoing coverage entirely. The County will continue to advocate for the Federal government to take a more active role in stabilizing the nation's property insurance markets and conducting investigations as it finds appropriate. Additional priorities are improving transparency for consumers, providing access to data used in ratemaking and modeling, and improving return on investment in vegetation management and defensible space through improved coverage and reduced rates.

The County faces significant threats from wildfire, sea level rise, and mudslides. In terms of wildfire mitigation, the County will support statewide efforts to improve emergency management and emergency response capabilities at State and local levels. 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. Further expansion of these programs through additional investment from the State and Federal governments will assist residents, the county fire department, and CAL Fire in mitigating the impact of future wildfires.

The State Legislature, recognizing the risks posed by sea level rise, in 2023 passed legislation intended to incentivize early local planning to mitigate the adverse environmental, social, and economic effects of sea level rise within the San Francisco Bay Area.⁵ Napa County has and will continue to engage with the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission to prepare for the launch of the Commission's Bay Adapt Joint Platform and position itself to seek priority funding for related projects.

Atmospheric rivers pose substantial threats to life and property during the winter months throughout urban and rural areas of California through flooding and increasing the risk of mudslides and landslides. In addition to the threat to private property, public roads are often substantially impacted, and counties must front the cost of these repairs while waiting for federal reimbursement. A streamlined process for reimbursements for costs incurred to reopen access to roads and make temporary repairs would free up local capital for long-term repairs.

Additionally in emergency response, Napa County supports the passage of statewide legislation granting additional discretion to local governments in the substance of an agricultural pass program, including the ability to designate essential agricultural activities during a disaster. The County also supports legislative authorization for the State Fire Marshal to develop a statewide training curriculum that assists county agricultural pass programs.

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. In conjunction with this effort, the County supports regulatory changes that extend the initial FEMA registration period for disaster assistance applicants from 60 days to between 90 and 120 days, a change that would allow survivors reeling from the trauma of living through a major disaster event additional time to gather or procure replacements for key documents and understand the full impact of the disaster to their property. Disaster survivors will also benefit significantly from continued assistance in Disaster Case Management (DCM) from the California Department of Social Services when FEMA DCM is delayed. Finally, the County will advocate for regulatory streamlining of county-level 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.
- Provide additional local flexibility in the substance of an adopted agricultural pass program and add statewide training curriculum.
- 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

⁵ This is Senate Bill 272, 2023-2024 session, Chapter 384, Statutes of 2023.

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 maintain its investment in this particularly vital source of funding and to continue to allow flexibility to focus on surge events. This includes investment in local public health systems and healthcare providers, which are key partners to local governments during public health emergencies. Finally, current statutory local public health authority gives counties an appropriate level of discretion to respond to public health incidents, and the County will oppose any efforts seeking to diminish its existing local health authority.

- Maintain local public health funding.
- Seek investment in local public health systems and healthcare providers.
- Maintain current scope of local public health authority.

Public Safety

From a public safety perspective, the major points of focus for Napa County are carrier of last resort obligations, gun violence prevention, local emergency medical services administration, victims' rights, and youthful offenders, the rights of victims.

Carrier of Last Resort Obligations

Napa County, characterized by its rural and mountainous terrain, faces unique challenges in reliable methods of communication. Residents of the mountainous areas to the east, north, and west of the Valley lack reliable access to broadband and depend on copper line plain old telephone service (POTS) regulated by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) for communication due to inadequate or nonexistent access to broadband. This includes vital public safety communications like notifications from friends, family, and caregivers about disaster events and potential evacuations. Fifty seven percent of Napa County's 789 square miles burned since 2014⁶: the burned areas squarely overlap with the areas served by POTS. It is a matter of life and death to ensure that any change to the carrier of last resort statutes, regulations, or current providers adequately address the lack of broadband coverage in these areas and continue to provide POTS regulated by the CPUC until current inadequacies in broadband coverage are resolved.

- Maintain existing statutory and regulatory requirements for carriers of last resort.
- Decline to relieve existing carriers of last resort of their obligations unless alternative carriers are provided that will step into the shoes of the existing carrier from the very outset of any petitioned withdrawal.

⁶ Shao, Elena. *Half Their Land Burned in a Decade: The California Counties Constantly on Fire*. The New York Times. August 15, 2024. <<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/08/15/us/california-fires.html>>

Gun Violence Prevention

Finally, Napa County and local municipalities in 2023 passed firearm safety ordinances intended to better protect our community's most vulnerable members, including children. The County will support efforts by the State to fund early childhood and teen gun violence prevention programs.

- Create funding opportunities for early childhood and teen gun violence prevention programs.

Local Emergency Medical Services

Established statutory and judicial precedent has repeatedly affirmed county responsibility for the administration of emergency medical services and with that, the flexibility to design systems to equitably serve residents throughout our jurisdiction. Counties are required by the Emergency Medical Services Act to create a local EMS system that is timely, safe, and equitable for all residents, and do so by contracting with both public and private agencies to ensure coverage of underserved areas. This unified authority is particularly important for small jurisdictions like Napa County that include significant unincorporated rural areas with difficult terrain. Fragmenting that authority and abrogating years of precedent would create a patchwork of providers in rural and unincorporated areas– the very problem the EMS Act, passed over forty years ago, intended to resolve.

- Protect local authority of emergency medical services.

Victims' Rights

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 disfavors 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 revictimization of crime victims upon the release of an offender.

- Protect the rights of victims of crimes and reduce opportunities for repeated victimization.

Youthful Offenders

Napa County supports the overarching goal of providing early interventions to reduce the causes of crime among individuals under the age of 26. The most effective solutions in this field are local, as the State recognized with its shift of responsibility for juvenile justice to local governments. Counties should therefore retain existing local authority to impose appropriate consequences when early interventions prove ineffective. Counties should also retain local control of the memberships of both juvenile justice coordinating councils and Community Corrections Partnerships. 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 or administrative burdens 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 – including the maintenance of Juvenile Justice Block Grant funding, which funds the County's Camp program, at its current level. Finally, 2025 will be a critical year in planning for the transition of juvenile justice providers to MediCAL billing: administrative burdens for provider billing must be minimal to ensure continued service by providers to local juvenile justice departments.

- Maintain local oversight over youthful offenders and associated working groups.

- Maintain Juvenile Justice Block Grant appropriation at current levels.
- Minimize administrative burden on juvenile justice providers during transition to MediCAL billing.

DRAFT

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.

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 hired 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 three primary objectives to address this issue. The first is the restoration of the \$2 billion removed from the State's budget for middle-mile broadband projects. The second is securing a recurring funding appropriation for the federal Affordable Connectivity Program. The final objective is the creation of a California-specific affordable connectivity program that provides one or both of a bulwark against future federal funding instability and additional subsidies and bandwidth requirements.

- Restore the \$2 billion in funding for public-private broadband partnerships to improve middle-mile access.
- Fund the federal Affordable Connectivity Program.
- Pass into law a California-specific Affordable Connectivity Program to provide one or both of a bulwark against future federal funding instability and additional subsidies and bandwidth requirements.

Children's 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 (HHS) 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. Quality childcare is a key economic driver for the United States – the provision of high-quality childcare requires investment in an educated and qualified workforce, and leads to better childhood outcomes, reducing disparities across the socioeconomic

spectrum.⁷ Workforce development and higher pay for early care and education careers, including though increased reimbursement rates in State childcare vouchers, is a direct line to success in this critical area.

- 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.

Fiscal Responsibility

In 2004, the Vehicle License Fee Swap (VLF) was created as part of a budget compromise. The State permanently reduced the Vehicle License Fee rate from 2.00 percent to 0.65 percent significantly decreasing VLF revenues to counties, cities, and towns. The State also required local taxing agencies to shift an additional \$1.3 billion over two fiscal years to address the state's budget deficit. In exchange, the State agreed to reimburse the counties, cities and towns for lost VLF revenues. The ongoing VLF obligations were thereafter adjusted annually based on growth in the assessed value of property with the local agencies' boundaries. The funding for the State's in-lieu VLF obligation is now the Education Revenue Augmentation Fund (ERAF) and property taxes that would otherwise go to non-basic aid schools, which are backfilled to schools through an increased State contribution.

Current law does not provide a statutory mechanism to reimburse counties, cities and towns when there are no non-basic aid school districts within a county. In Napa County, the largest school district, Napa Valley Unified School District (NVUSD), is the only remaining non-basic aid school district but it is trending towards basic aid status. The significant trend of decreasing students attending NVUSD combined with a high property tax apportionment factor and increasing assessed valuation within the District are pushing NVUSD towards basic aid status. The County estimates NVUSD will approach basic aid status as early as 2024-25. As a result, Napa will become a complete basic aid county and instantly lose its statutorily provided means of funding the State's VLF obligation. The loss of \$50 million of local revenues every year would send the County, its cities and town, into financial crisis. Absent a statutory fix, Napa County, its cities and town, will be forced to significantly reduce staffing and crucial programs fundamentally altering the way Napa County provides services.

- 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.

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.

⁷ See, e.g., Heckman, James J., Invest in early childhood development: Reduce deficits, strengthen the economy, Dec. 7, 2012. <https://heckmanequation.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/F_HeckmanDeficitPieceCUSTOM-Generic_052714-3-1.pdf> See also Heckman, James J., Return on Investment in Birth-to-Three Early Childhood Development Programs, Sept. 6, 2018. <https://heckmanequation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/F_ROI-Webinar-Deck_birth-to-three_091818.pdf>

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.

Library Services

The State's 2024 adopted budget reduced by \$1.8 million the recurring annual funding to implement the California Library Services Act (CSLA) at local libraries. This funding is used locally to maintain relatively high rates of eBook purchases for use by the public, and statewide on Lunch at the Library program and maintaining access to comprehensive, engaging library collections throughout the state. If not restored in 2025, this funding reduction will significantly impact the quality and range of our library's collection moving forward.

- Restore the \$1.8 million ongoing reduction to California Library Services Act funding.

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.⁸ 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.

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.⁹

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.

⁸ [Napa County, California - Census Bureau Profile](#)

⁹ [U.S. News & World Report](#)

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.

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 that will provide new funding for housing in the Bay Area.

- Create new funding sources for housing in urbanized parts of the Bay Area.

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 State of California must continue to prioritize maximizing shelter capacity and rapid rehousing programs with tenancy support for immediate needs. For long-term needs, Permanent Supportive Housing investments and Very Low Income deed-restricted affordable housing development continue to see sustained success and provide the most effective return on State and local investment.

The California Department of Social Services is also responsible for a number of safety net housing programs for persons who are currently or at risk of becoming unhoused. Napa County strongly advocates for the maintenance of funding for these programs, which are critical to the safety net of many clients served by the County.

- Invest in additional transitional and permanent affordable housing for cities through funding and regulatory streamlining.
- Maintain funding for California Department of Social Services safety net housing programs.

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.¹⁰ This shortage leads to understaffed facilities, lack of 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.¹¹

In 2023, the State enacted a significant expansion of the class of patients who can be involuntarily committed. This State-led shift will require significant investment by the State in both facilities to house the expanded class of patients affected by this shift and workforce training to staff those beds at safe patient-to-staff ratios, including both licensed and non-licensed personnel. 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. 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 the substantial local efforts by the County and cities within the County on affordable housing initiatives, as outlined above, the State has significant opportunity to

¹⁰ Coffman and Fix, Healthforce Center at the University of California, San Francisco, “Building the Future Behavioral Health Workforce: Needs Assessment,” at pp. 46-49.

¹¹ Notably, the California Department of Healthcare Services in 2021 allocated \$2.2 billion in Behavioral Health Continuum Infrastructure Program funding over several rounds; Napa applied for and received over \$3 million in funds to expand the Crisis Stabilization Unit.

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 over the past four years at an accelerated and unsustainable rate: it is imperative to, at a minimum, sustain key Federal and State food programs at existing funding levels.

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 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, 50 cents are paid by the Federal government, 32 ½ cents are paid by the State, and 17 ½ cents are paid by the responsible local government. The State has set a 10 percent three-year threshold for increases to its contribution level, after which additional costs are borne by the County. Current wages for these workers in Napa County are below the level of a livable wage,¹² and the State's ten percent threshold places an unsustainable burden on the County to elevate wages to a livable standard. To resolve this, the State should consider options to raise the wages for in-home support service workers statewide to a livable wage statewide and eliminate local penalties 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.

¹² Glasmeier, Amy K. *Living Wage Calculator*, 2023, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
<https://livingwage.mit.edu>



NAPA COUNTY ♦ CALIFORNIA