



# Priority Issues & Policy Areas



## Protection of Agriculture

**Priority:** Preserve Sutter County's agricultural economy, farmland, and water access.

**Context & Concerns:**

- Federal programs (U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) farm programs, crop insurance, disaster relief) and state programs (Williamson Act, water supply projects) to protect farmland.
- Housing, environmental, and flood regulations may affect agricultural operations if misaligned.

**Sutter County Position:**

- Support Yuba-Sutter Farm Bureau priorities and farmland conservation incentives.
- Support affordable agricultural water supply and irrigation projects.
- Oppose legislation or regulations increasing costs or burdens on farmers.
- Support domestic and international markets for California farm products.



## Children, Youth, and Family Stability

**Priority:** Support legislative and budget actions that strengthen the stability and well-being of children, youth, and families by advancing prevention-focused, family-centered, and community-based systems of care.

**Context & Concerns:**

- Family stability is foundational to public health, educational success, workforce readiness, and long-term economic vitality.
- Families with children and youth are facing increasing pressures related to housing instability; access to health and behavioral health services; childcare and early learning; economic security; and exposure to trauma.

- When these challenges are not addressed early, they often lead to higher downstream costs across public systems, including child welfare, behavioral health, education, and public safety.
- Rural counties face additional barriers, including workforce shortages, limited transportation options, and reduced access to specialized services.
- Prevention and early intervention across the continuum of child, youth, and family services are proven strategies to improve outcomes, reduce long-term system strain, and promote intergenerational well-being.

### **Sutter County Position:**

- Support policies that prioritize prevention, early intervention, and family-centered approaches across child, youth, and family-serving systems.
- Advocate for flexible, sustainable funding that enables counties to respond to local needs and invest in strategies that strengthen family stability.
- Promote cross-system collaboration and data-informed decision-making to improve coordination, access, and service effectiveness.
- Advance local authority and implementation flexibility to ensure solutions are responsive to community conditions and evolving needs.
- Recognize investments in children, youth, and families as a long-term strategy to improve public outcomes and strengthen the local economy.



## **Economic Development, Workforce Development, & Education**

**Priority:** Promote sustainable economic growth and workforce readiness by supporting job creation, infrastructure investment, and expanded educational opportunities. Advocate for sustained investment in the Sutter County Library System as a Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title II provider, expanding access to adult education, digital literacy, and workforce readiness programs that strengthen economic growth and educational opportunity. Work in partnership with applicable property owners, developers, and service providers to ensure timely and coordinated implementation of the Sutter Pointe Specific Plan. Prioritize initiatives that close broadband, transportation, and industrial infrastructure gaps, attract private investment, align workforce training with local industry needs, and enhance access to higher education and business development resources.

**Context & Concerns:** Federal and state programs, including Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) economic development programs, and workforce grants, are essential to attract investment and support workforce training.

Broadband, transportation, and industrial infrastructure gaps in rural counties limit growth.

Timely and coordinated implementation of development plans, such as the Sutter Pointe Specific Plan, requires collaboration among property owners, developers, service providers, and local government to ensure planned economic and community benefits are realized.

**Sutter County Position:**

- Promote expanded opportunities for higher education, K-12 education, and life-long learning access to support growing community needs.
- Support the Yuba-Sutter Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy to guide regional growth, with measurable outcomes such as increased private investment and new business establishments in the region.
- Advocate for grants and infrastructure that support industrial growth and workforce development, targeting measurable improvements in broadband access, transportation connectivity, and industrial capacity.
- Encourage higher education access, business-friendly legislation, CDBG funding, tax incentives, and broadband expansion, with measurable outcomes including the number of new jobs created, workforce training program placements, and business retention rates.
- Advocate for the integration of library services into federal and state workforce initiatives to expand opportunities for career training, English language acquisition, and digital skills development.
- Work in partnership with property owners, developers, and service providers to ensure the timely implementation of the Sutter Pointe Specific Plan, with defined milestones for residential, commercial, and industrial development that align with county economic and community goals and measurable indicators of progress.



## Fiscal and Administrative Stability

**Priority:** Strengthen county fiscal stability and operational flexibility amid shifting federal and state mandates, cost pressures, and expanding responsibilities across criminal justice, behavioral health, Incompetent to Stand Trial (IST) obligations, workforce sustainability, and general county administration.

### Context & Concerns:

- Volatile and unpredictable federal and state funding streams including one-time grants, budget variances, and short-term appropriations impede long-range planning, workforce stability, and reliable service delivery.
- State statutes, budget decisions, and contracting constraints affect counties' ability to maintain stable partnerships with nonprofits, service providers, and specialized contractors.
- Unfunded mandates such as expanded reporting, regulatory compliance, Public Records Act (PRA) obligations, cybersecurity requirements, and elections-related laws (e.g., AB 840, AB 1929) create financial and administrative strain for small counties with limited staffing capacity.
- Changes in state labor or contracting laws may restrict the County's ability to utilize private contractors for technical, specialized, or temporary functions, increasing costs and limiting operational flexibility.
- IST-related mandates, including Proposition 36 and associated state responsibilities, impose additional fiscal, staffing, and operational burdens.
- Sutter County's IST cap does not reflect small-county fluctuations or current data trends, resulting in distortions that undermine local planning and funding stability.
- The \$229,500 IST penalty for Fiscal Year 2023-24 and potential future penalties divert scarce resources away from CalAIM Justice-Involved programming, community-based treatment, workforce development, and system-capacity building.
- Reliance on punitive, penalty-based approaches rather than upfront state investment prevents counties from developing sustainable clinical, housing, technology, and workforce infrastructure.

- AB 339 (Ortega), now chaptered, imposes extensive new administrative requirements, duplicative reporting, and additional workload despite limited evidence of need, further diverting staff from core public services and internal capacity-building efforts.

**Sutter County Position:**

- Advocate for stable, predictable, and long-term revenue sources that support county-administered programs, essential services and workforce sustainability.
- Oppose unfunded mandates, administrative cost shifts, cybersecurity and reporting requirements without funding, and penalty-based funding structures that erode local capacity or flexibility.
- Support multi-year funding strategies, increased fiscal flexibility, and reliable reimbursement for elections, social services, transportation, behavioral health, and IST-related responsibilities.
- Request recalculation or elimination of Sutter County’s IST cap; any recalculated model should rely on at least five years of data to account for small-county variability.
- Advocate for rescission or reconsideration of the \$229,500 IST penalty and any future penalties, with resources redirected toward CalAIM Justice-Involved initiatives and coordinated efforts between the Department of State Hospitals (DSH) and Department of Health Care Services (DHCS).
- Support direct, upfront state funding and technical assistance to build sustainable community capacity, treatment systems, secure data infrastructure, and local workforce pipelines.
- Oppose statutory restrictions on the use of contractors that would limit the County’s ability to meet service needs efficiently or respond to evolving technical and operational demands.
- Support investments in modern voting systems, data management, cybersecurity protections, and PRA compliance resources to reduce risk, protect confidential information, and ensure transparency.
- Support policies that strengthen internal career pathways, recruitment and retention, and veteran employment initiatives including continued recognition of the County as an Army PaYS and SkillBridge-approved employer.
- Advocate for mitigation, clarification, or amendment of AB 339 to reduce unnecessary administrative burdens and disproportionate fiscal impacts on rural counties.



# Flood Control and Emergency Management

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**Priority:** Advance local and regional flood protection projects, strengthen levee and dam safety, and maintain effective and responsive emergency operations to safeguard residents, agriculture, and critical infrastructure.

## **Context & Concerns:**

- Federal programs, including Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood-mitigation funding, the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), and other disaster resilience grants, are essential for maintaining levees, dams, floodwater impoundments, and floodplain management.
- State flood-control funding, including allocations through the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) and local reclamation districts, is critical to prevent infrastructure failure, manage water flows, and support agricultural operations.
- Emergency management funding, such as FEMA preparedness grants and Cal OES disaster response programs, is vital for readiness, staffing, training, emergency exercises, and post-disaster response.
- California counties face expanding responsibilities under emerging legislation, including coordination with utilities for wildfire-related flood risks, climate-change-driven extreme weather events, landslide response, and local mitigation planning.
- Agricultural operations in Sutter County depend on reliable flood protection to protect crops, property, and water delivery systems. Any disruption in flood management can have significant economic and social impacts.
- Counties are increasingly tasked with coordinating multi-agency disaster drills, enforcing mitigation plans, and integrating community preparedness efforts, adding operational and planning burdens.

## **Sutter County Position:**

- Support opportunities for educating the public on emergency preparedness to promote a safer and more resilient community.
- Advocate for sufficient federal and state funding and timely permitting for levee, dam, and flood protection projects to ensure resilient infrastructure.
- Support the Sutter Butte Flood Control Agency and collaborative regional flood-control initiatives.

- Promote affordable and accessible flood insurance programs and reasonable agricultural infrastructure requirements, including compliance with NFIP and state floodplain regulations.
- Oppose reductions in emergency response or preparedness funding, particularly those affecting staffing, equipment, training, and county-level emergency operations.
- Encourage legislation that recognizes county emergency management capacity limits and provides resources for increased coordination demands arising from climate-driven disasters, wildfire mitigation, and evolving federal/state mandates.
- Support policies that enhance multi-agency collaboration and preparedness, while minimizing unfunded mandates or disproportionate administrative burden on county emergency management offices.



## Health and Human Services (HHS)

**Priority:** Maintain access to essential health, behavioral health, and social services for all residents while minimizing county General Fund exposure, and protect residents from adverse effects of federal and state policy changes.

### Context & Concerns:

- Federal Medicaid/Medi-Cal regulations, including ongoing CalAIM implementation and potential 2026 federal policy changes, impact eligibility, reimbursement rates, and service delivery models.
- Federal legislation such as H.R. 1 restructures Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP - CalFresh) eligibility, work requirements, and cost-sharing, reducing access for low-income residents and increasing local administrative costs.
- H.R. 1 will produce significant and direct impacts on vulnerable children, youth, families, and older adults, along with substantial county cost burdens stemming from increased workload, direct cost shifts, indirect pressure on safety-net systems, and restrictions related to health care financing.
- Federal reductions or caps on Medicaid/Medi-Cal funding could strain county health and behavioral health systems, disproportionately affecting rural counties.

- State-level implementation through California Department of Social Services (CDSS) regulations and federal waivers (USDA, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services [CMS]) continues to shape local program operations and eligibility requirements.
- State programs including Mental Health Services (MHSA), In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS), and other safety-net programs remain essential for seniors, persons with disabilities, and low-income populations. Consistent and adequate funding is necessary to meet service demands.
- California’s behavioral health system is undergoing significant reform through Proposition 1/Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA), the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARE Act), and expansion of the Lanterman-Petris-Short Act (LPS Act). These reforms create increased responsibilities for counties.
- Key implementation milestones begin in 2026, including expanded criteria for involuntary detention and conservatorship under SB 43 (effective January 1), expanded CARE Court eligibility under SB 27 (effective January 1), and the development of new BHSA three-year County Integrated Plans next summer.
- While the state has made notable one-time investments, counties will need reliable multi-year funding and technical assistance to successfully implement behavioral health reforms and maintain service continuity.
- Behavioral health needs continue to grow due to population changes, increased acuity, and post-pandemic impacts, placing pressure on county mental health, crisis response, and substance use systems.
- Funding reductions, reimbursement delays, and new mandates increase county General Fund exposure and risk interruptions to essential services.
- Court-related mandates, including Proposition 36, IST programs, and other treatment orders, create significant operational and financial burdens.
- Effective integration of health, behavioral health, and social services requires predictable funding and sufficient flexibility to adopt innovative and coordinated care models.

### **Sutter County Position:**

- Oppose federal actions that reduce safety-net funding, shift costs to counties, or impose administrative burdens that threaten access to CalFresh, Medi-Cal, or essential social services.
- Prioritize coalition-based advocacy including coordination with HHS affiliates—to protect indigent care, CalFresh and other social services, Medi-Cal, public hospitals, and other county-administered programs impacted by H.R. 1.
- Support federal and state actions that safeguard low-income residents, seniors, persons with disabilities, and vulnerable populations from service reductions.
- Advocate for federal and state backfills when policy changes reduce SNAP or Medi-Cal allocations or increase county administrative responsibilities. Pursue opportunities to mitigate and reverse harmful federal cuts to Medicaid and SNAP enacted under H.R. 1.
- Support policies that reduce county General Fund exposure and strengthen the fiscal stability of health, behavioral health, and social service programs.
- Support maintaining and expanding Medi-Cal access, behavioral health treatment, emergency psychiatric care, crisis services, and substance use programs. Oppose reductions that undermine service continuity or local capacity.
- Promote IHSS program stability and statewide parity in emergency psychiatric services.
- Support funding frameworks that meet growing demand and enhance integration across mental health, substance use, and social services.
- Advocate for sustained resources, funding, and technical assistance needed to implement Proposition 1/BHSA requirements, CARE Court expansion, LPS Act changes, SB 43 and SB 27 mandates, and other multi-year behavioral health system reforms.
- Support maximum local flexibility in behavioral health and social service implementation. Oppose county sanctions or unreasonable withholding of funds, particularly when outcomes rely on factors outside county control.
- Encourage federal and state legislation that allows counties operational flexibility to deliver effective, efficient, and innovative service models while meeting evolving community health and safety needs.



## **Housing, Homelessness, and Human Services Support**

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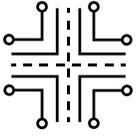
**Priority:** Advocate for stable, multi-year, and predictable funding for homelessness services, affordable housing programs, and state-mandated safety-net services delivered by counties.

### **Context & Concerns:**

- Counties serve as primary providers of housing stabilization, homelessness interventions, Adult Protective Services, CalWORKs, and Medi-Cal enrollment.
- Reliance on one-time allocations (e.g., state bond funds, episodic grants) creates operational instability.
- The California Housing and Homelessness Agency (CHHA) may restructure program funding and compliance, impacting grants such as Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention Funding, Housing Support Services via CalWORKs, Bringing Families Home, Home Safe, and Housing and Disability Advocacy Program (HDAP).
- Critical CalAIM supports may be discontinued from future state to federal healthcare waivers, drastically impacting critical Medi-Cal funded services in rural counties where healthcare infrastructure is systemically and significantly under resourced from a Medi-Cal Managed Care perspective.
- Federal funding through HUD Continuum of Care (CoC) grants, Emergency Solutions Grants, and other housing programs is essential; changes in HUD policy or federal appropriations could reduce resources.
- Implementation of California Proposition 36 and similar diversion programs creates additional county service and treatment obligations that require consistent funding.

### **Sutter County Position:**

- Support legislation providing multi-year, ongoing funding for programs such as Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention Funding, Bringing Families Home, Home Safe, HDAP, CalWORKs Housing Support, and Proposition 36-related programs.
- Advocate for clear program guidance and streamlined CHHA processes.
- Oppose funding reductions or unfunded mandates for homelessness or safety-net services to include reductions to CalAIM Waiver included services and Medi-Cal State Plan Benefits.



## Housing & Infrastructure Reform Impacts on Rural Counties

**Priority:** Ensure state housing and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) streamlining laws provide flexibility and support for rural counties with limited capacity, unique environmental constraints, and critical infrastructure needs including the ability to promptly repair and maintain culverts, roads, and bridges.

### Context & Concerns:

- CEQA and housing reform laws (SB 35, AB 2011, AB 130, SB 131) accelerate housing approvals and may bypass discretionary review, shifting responsibilities and risks onto local governments.
- Rural counties face increased demand on roads, water, wastewater, emergency services, and community facilities.
- Strict state and federal permitting requirements, particularly under CEQA, the Clean Water Act, the Endangered Species Act, and related regulatory frameworks can delay urgent repairs to culverts, roadways, and bridges, heightening safety risks and increasing long-term costs.
- Rural communities must balance housing growth with agricultural preservation, flood-risk management, habitat protection, and environmental stewardship.
- Effective implementation of specific plans, such as the Sutter Pointe Specific Plan, requires close collaboration among property owners, developers, service providers, and regulatory agencies to align infrastructure capacity with planned development.

### Sutter County Position:

- Support legislation aligning housing mandates with infrastructure funding and the realities of rural capacity limitations.
- Advocate for flexibility in housing requirements for rural communities as well as streamlined regulatory pathways for critical public works such as culvert replacement, bridge maintenance, and road repairs to ensure timely response to safety hazards, storm damage, and flood-risk conditions.
- Seek state and federal support for water, flood control, transportation, and broadband infrastructure, including funding mechanisms that recognize rural cost structures.

- Support reforms that simplify or expedite permits for routine maintenance and emergency repairs under CEQA, the Clean Water Act, and other regulatory regimes when delays pose risks to public safety or essential transportation access.
- Work in partnership with property owners, developers, and service providers to ensure timely implementation of the Sutter Pointe Specific Plan while maintaining responsible stewardship of natural and agricultural resources.



## Public Safety

**Priority:** Enhance the County’s ability to provide effective public safety services and ensure adequate, sustainable funding for all justice system partners, particularly amid expanding criminal justice, racial justice, and behavioral health mandates while preserving constitutional protections and community safety.

### Context & Concerns:

- State funding is critical to maintaining constitutionally required public defense services. While many states provide all or nearly all funding for public defense, California remains virtually alone in failing to provide regular, annual state funding for trial-level public defense, placing disproportionate responsibility on counties to fund a core constitutional obligation.
- Absent regular, stable, and substantial state funding, county-based public defense programs are unable to meet standards necessary to ensure appropriate staffing levels, manageable attorney workloads, and the effective assistance of counsel, particularly as state-driven reforms expand responsibilities and case complexity.
- Legislative mandates, such as SB 90, affect state reimbursement for county obligations and create long-term fiscal uncertainty, especially for state-driven criminal justice reforms and court decisions that expand workload without corresponding funding.
- State laws impacting jail operations, public defender responsibilities, prosecution workload, and probation oversight frequently shift substantial costs to counties without accompanying revenue, compounding fiscal and operational strain across the justice system.

- IST Penalty Cap Fines limit county revenue recovery while shifting state-mandated care and treatment obligations to counties, creating severe operational and fiscal pressure related to state felony IST and other state-level criminal justice responsibilities.
- Federal programs, including FEMA and COPS grants, supplement public safety capacity but require complex compliance and often do not align with ongoing operational or staffing needs.
- Recent expansions of California’s Racial Justice Act (RJA), particularly the retroactive implementation under AB 256 and the procedural requirements under AB 1071, significantly increase workload for county justice partners, including the Public Defender, District Attorney, and Superior Court. These laws require extensive historical case review, expanded discovery, additional hearings, expert analysis, and potential resentencing, without adequate or ongoing state funding.
- The cumulative impact of RJA mandates imposes new staffing, investigative, documentation, and court-processing demands on small and rural counties, straining limited legal and administrative resources and diverting attention from core public safety operations.
- While the state has offered limited grant funding through RJA implementation programs, these funds do not fully offset the long-term workload, staffing needs, or sustained case-review volume generated by AB 256 and AB 1071.

**Sutter County Position:**

- Support legislation that strengthens public safety, improves fairness, and upholds constitutional protections, while opposing measures that reduce operational capacity or impose new unfunded or underfunded state mandates on counties.
- Advocate for regular, stable, and substantial state funding for trial-level public defense services to ensure effective assistance of counsel, manageable attorney workloads, and equitable access to justice across all communities.
- Ensure sustainable and equitable funding for the Sheriff, District Attorney, Probation, Fire, Public Defender, Emergency Management, Environmental Health, and Public Health services recognizing their interconnected roles within the justice and public safety systems.
- Oppose legislation that increases county jail populations, expands court caseloads, or heightens administrative workload without adequate funding, staffing support, or phased implementation timelines.

- Advocate for adjustments, funding backfills, or statutory reform to address IST Penalty Cap Fines and other mandates that disproportionately impact small and rural counties.
- Advocate for state funding, workload mitigation strategies, and long-term financial support to offset the substantial county obligations created by RJA expansions under AB 256 and AB 1071, including retroactive case review, discovery requirements, expert consultation, legal representation, and resentencing proceedings.
- Support the equitable implementation of racial justice reforms while opposing unfunded mandates that undermine the County’s ability to maintain core law enforcement, emergency response, and justice system services.
- Support interagency communication and collaboration across local, state, and federal partners to ensure coordinated service delivery, shared accountability, and effective public safety outcomes.



## Strengthening Partnerships & Community Capacity

**Priority:** Support partnerships with nonprofits, healthcare providers, and regional entities to deliver essential services efficiently and effectively.

### Context & Concerns:

- Community-based organizations and regional partners play a critical role in service delivery, especially when state or federal funding levels fluctuate.
- Regional coordination is essential for homelessness response, including programs funded through the HUD CoC and other federal initiatives.
- State and federal funding through agencies such as the CHSA or other state programs often requires interagency collaboration to meet mandates and maximize service delivery, to include CalAIM Justice Involved efforts.
- Access to competitive grants is increasingly important to sustain programs and build local capacity. Small counties often face challenges navigating complex grant application processes.

### Sutter County Position:

- Support strengthening Continuum of Care structures and enhancing regional collaboration to maximize impact.

- Advocate for grant programs that prioritize collaboration over competition and ensure accessibility for smaller counties and community-based organizations.
- Actively support and provide letters of endorsement for grant applications submitted by community partners and county departments to increase funding opportunities and foster shared service delivery.
- Promote legislative and administrative measures that simplify grant processes, encourage innovative partnerships, and strengthen community capacity across sectors.



## Transportation and Infrastructure

**Priority:** Secure and protect investments for regional transportation systems, local roads, highways, and transit infrastructure while addressing emerging infrastructure challenges.

### Context & Concerns:

- Federal programs, including Surface Transportation Block Grants, Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grants, and discretionary infrastructure funding, are critical for local and regional projects.
- State programs, including SB 1 Gas Tax funding, the Transportation Development Act, and Active Transportation Program grants, provide essential support for road maintenance, transit, and multimodal transportation.
- Housing growth, economic development, and demographic shifts continue to increase demand on existing infrastructure, requiring strategic planning and capacity expansion.
- Anticipated 2026 legislative and regulatory changes such as stricter climate and vehicle emissions mandates, potential reallocation of gas tax revenues, and federal infrastructure policy reforms, may strain local project funding and planning.
- Rising construction costs, supply chain constraints, and labor shortages increase the need for predictable funding and flexible project timelines.

### Sutter County Position:

- Advocate for continued and increased state and federal funding for roads, highways, and transit systems to meet local and regional needs.
- Oppose legislative or administrative actions that reduce dedicated transportation revenues or divert funds from existing programs.

- Support constitutional or statutory protections for transportation tax revenues to ensure long-term predictability.
- Promote transportation projects that enhance regional mobility, including commuter rail expansion, bus and transit improvements, and safe multimodal options.
- Support reasonable regulations for hazardous-materials transport that balance public safety with the efficient movement of goods.
- Encourage state and federal policies that account for local infrastructure cost increases, promote workforce development in construction and maintenance, and incentivize climate-resilient infrastructure design.



## Beale Air Force Base & Veterans Support

**Priority:** Protect and expand Beale AFB operations and strengthen support for military families and veterans.

### Context & Concerns:

- Federal defense policy, Department of Defense (DoD) appropriations, and base closure review processes directly affect Beale AFB.
- Veterans programs (housing, healthcare, employment) depend on federal Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) funding and state support initiatives.

### Sutter County Position:

- Support Beale AFB operations; oppose base reductions or closure.
- Support infrastructure projects improving base efficiency.
- Support military family programs and veterans housing, healthcare, and employment initiatives.