



FAQs

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is TC Hope?

Tulare County Hope for the Homeless (TC Hope) is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization formed in March 2019 with the goal of building a Low-Barrier Navigation Center in Tulare County. Motivated by compassion for those experiencing homelessness, the volunteer board of directors is comprised of local residents who worked tirelessly to fundraise and organize support for the Visalia Navigation Center, which broke ground in April 2023. TC Hope is anchored by a belief in the humanity of those in need, and prioritizes safe and stable housing as a critical first step to achieving hope and healing for the unhoused.

2. What is the Visalia Navigation Center?

The Visalia Navigation Center is a Low-Barrier Navigation Center (LBNC) that will have service-enriched living quarters focused on guiding residents into permanent housing. Based on the national Housing First approach, the “low-barrier” aspect of the center will employ best practices to reduce common barriers to entry, including a resident’s need to bring partners and/or pets, store personal possessions, or adhere to religious beliefs. The “navigation” aspect of the center refers to the presence of case managers to connect residents to supportive services. On-site resources will include beds, showers, laundry facilities, meals, phone/mail services, animal kennels, storage space, and parking for residents. On-site services will include employment training, public benefits, health services, substance abuse and mental health services, and connections to permanent housing opportunities. This model is considered the new standard of care, and in 2019 California State Legislature (AB101) declared that “Low Barrier Navigation Center developments are essential tools for alleviating the homelessness crisis in this state...”

3. Does Visalia need a Low-Barrier Navigation Center?

Yes! According to a 2022 KTHA Point in Time survey, there are an estimated 922 individuals in Tulare County experiencing homelessness, and an estimated 469 unhoused individuals in Visalia alone. Despite an increased need for housing, local shelter space has remained unchanged in the last decade. The community’s existing shelters are at capacity, and because Visalia does not currently have a low-barrier navigation center, there are many individuals and families who are being turned away and unable to access safe, secure, temporary housing.



FAQs

4. How does the Visalia Navigation Center differ from an Emergency Shelter?

At the Visalia Navigation Center, advance reservations are required, and will be made through an online portal that will be accessible by local agency partners and law enforcement. Beds are assigned, and residents can stay at the center for up to 180 days. Unlike emergency shelters, there will not be a line formed outside the facility waiting for entry because all residents are required to be pre-registered.

5. How will the Visalia Navigation Center help curb camping in public spaces?

There are legal limitations on local law enforcement's ability to enforce a ban on sleeping in public places, such as parks, because Visalia does not currently have a low-barrier facility available. When the Visalia Navigation Center is built, it will help address this issue so unhoused members of our community have a safe place to go. The availability of this model of a temporary, service-enriched shelter in Visalia will also make it legal for law enforcement to curb or deter sleeping and/or camping in the City's parks.

6. Who can stay at the Visalia Navigation Center?

The Visalia Navigation Center will provide temporary housing for single individuals as well as private spaces for families experiencing homelessness. Because children may be residing at the center, registered sex offenders will not be allowed entry or enrollment.

7. What types of 'possessions' are permitted at the Visalia Navigation Center?

Residents will be permitted to bring personal belongings and pets to the center, and storage facilities and animal kennels will be available for resident use. We are in the process of researching best practices and establishing guidelines for possessions, including prohibiting weapons, firearms, and illegal substances to help ensure a safe living environment for all residents and the surrounding community.

8. What is the size and design of the Visalia Navigation Center?

The Visalia Navigation Center was inspired by the 40 Prado Homeless Services Center located in San Luis Obispo, but with a custom designed facade to coordinate with Visalia's existing architecture (see photo on next page). Check our website to see progress of the construction.



FAQs

9. What are the staffing plans and safety precautions at the Visalia Navigation Center?

The Visalia Navigation Center will have onsite staffing 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Office space will be provided for several agency partners, including the Kings/Tulare Homeless Alliance, Tulare County Behavioral Health, and CSET employment services. Pre-enrollment is required for all residents (no evening drop-in services), transportation to/from the center will be arranged for residents through partner agencies, and no overnight parking will be allowed for non-residents. Due to these requirements, there will be extremely limited activity to/from the Visalia Navigation Center, especially in the evening and night hours. The center will feature a 6-foot concrete masonry wall, and security cameras on site. The TC Hope team is in the process of researching best practices for resident safety and logistics, and our primary goal is to create a safe and secure environment for the residents of the center as well as the surrounding community.

10. Where will the Visalia Navigation Center be located?

The Visalia Navigation Center will be located at 3525 N. Court St., Visalia, CA 93291. Much careful thought and consideration was placed on the best location for this type of facility by the TC Hope Board of Directors, made up of all local individuals. There are many factors that went into the location decision, including not just the ability to acquire the land, but other important requirements including lot size, zoning as “by-right”, proximity to public transportation, environmental and utility assessments, and many more. The location selected by the board met all of the criteria, and we are grateful to all of our community partners for their support of this project.

11. How much will the Visalia Navigation Center cost?

The estimated building costs are \$11.5 Million and the operating costs are estimated at \$1.5 Million per year. Many of these dollars were acquired federally through committed funds that the City of Visalia and County of Tulare can only access for this type of project. The Visalia Navigation Center will allow Visalia to take advantage of federal funding that would not otherwise be available. TC Hope is also fundraising for the project and has committed funding from a variety of local partners.





FAQs

12. Who is part of TC Hope's leadership?

TC Hope is led by a group of volunteers, community leaders, and housing advocates who all live in the City of Visalia. The TC Hope Board of Directors is as follows:

Bob Link, President

Brian Malison, Vice President

Rie Reniers, Secretary

Doug Berg, Treasurer

Dru Quesnoy

Judee Berg

Tom Peltzer

Walter Deissler

Tony Correia

Rachele Berglund

Ryan Gates

Phil Hornburg *

Don Hutton *

* Emeritus

13. Who are TC Hope's supporters and partners?

TC Hope continues to grow its list of partners and supporters of the Visalia Navigation Center. The following is a list of our current partners:

Kings/Tulare Homeless Alliance

Central California Legal Services

Self-Help Enterprises

Christ Lutheran Church

Tulare County HHSA

Visalia Police Department

Turning Point

College of the Sequoias

Visalia Rotary Foundation

Family HealthCare Network

Visalia Senior Housing

Visalia Emergency Aid

FoodLink

St. Paul's Episcopal Church

Kaweah Health

14. How can I get involved?

Community residents can get involved with the Visalia Navigation Center by volunteering or serving on the Neighborhood Council. The Neighborhood Council will be established prior to the end of construction, and will provide information and receive feedback from nearby residents on the Visalia Navigation Center operations. To volunteer or serve on the neighborhood council, visit www.cset.org/vnc and complete the short interest form.

*** This document was revised on June 2, 2023. Check TCHope.org for future revisions and project updates. ***

