

DAILY PRESS

NEWS

San Bernardino County approves ban on public homeless encampments; nonprofits object



[Rene Ray De La Cruz](#)

Victorville Daily Press

Sept. 11, 2025, 12:32 p.m. PT

Key Points AI-assisted summary ⓘ

San Bernardino County has approved an ordinance to ban homeless encampments on public property deemed dangerous.

County officials state the goal is to address health and safety risks while connecting individuals to supportive services.

Nonprofit groups argue the ordinance criminalizes homelessness and fails to address the root causes like the lack of affordable housing.

The county's action aligns with a recent Supreme Court decision and an executive order from California's governor.

An ordinance that takes a step toward “humanely” eliminating specific homeless encampments was approved by San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday, Sept. 9.

The board [adopted the ordinance](#), which prohibits unhoused people from camping on county public property where individuals are “exposed to dangers” such as flooding, wildfire, extreme cold, extreme heat, rail collisions and traffic accidents.

Meanwhile, the nonprofit Time for Change Foundation issued a joint press release from the Inland Region Housing Justice Coalition, alleging the ordinance equates to “effectively criminalizing unhoused residents for attempting to survive in public spaces.”

‘Proactive approach ‘

In a press release about the ordinance, Supervisors Chairperson and Third District Supervisor Dawn Rowe said the number of encampments on county public property has increased over recent years.

“These conditions threaten not only those living within the encampments, but also the broader community,” Rowe stated. “The goal of this ordinance is to address critical health and safety risks, while also ensuring that people experiencing homelessness have access to the care and support they need.”

Rowe added, “Passing this ordinance is an important step in our proactive approach to addressing homeless encampments. It also ensures that people experiencing homelessness have access to the appropriate supportive services.”

County's largest homeless counts

The latest San Bernardino County [Point-in-Time Count](#) revealed the top jurisdictions with the largest number of persons counted as homeless, which include:

San Bernardino: 1,535

Victorville: 448

Fontana: 364

Ontario: 297

Colton: 178

Redlands: 146

Rancho Cucamonga: 120

Barstow: 96

Nonprofits push back

The Inland Region Housing Justice Coalition said the “ordinance fails to address the real crisis. Our region’s lack of affordable housing and supportive services.”

“Criminalizing homelessness only deepens poverty and makes it harder for people to get back on their feet,” said Raynesha Belvins, homelessness survivor

and advocate of Time for Change Foundation. “We will continue to hold county leaders accountable until real, lasting solutions are prioritized. We need investment in housing, not handcuffs.”

During the public hearing, coalition representatives urged county leaders to prioritize evidence-based strategies proven to reduce homelessness, which include permanent supportive housing, rental protections, addiction treatment, mental health care and wraparound support, coalition officials stated.

“We will continue to push for policies that reflect compassion, equity, and justice,” said Sharon Green, CEO of Victor Valley Family Resource Center.

The coalition alleges that “enforcement targeted policies are both harmful and also costly to taxpayers, while housing-first models save money and lives.”

The Inland Region Housing Justice Coalition said its group includes Time for Change Foundation, IE Tenants Union, Victor Valley Family Resource Center, ACLU of Southern California, Congregations Organized for Prophetic Engagement, Inland Equity Community Land Trust, Inland Congregations United for Change, and Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity.

Moving forward

Following the ordinance adoption, county officials said they will prioritize flood channels and other areas that expose people to critical health and safety dangers and humanely relocate individuals while connecting them to housing and supportive services.

County officials said they have consistently conducted homeless outreach events to engage individuals, and these efforts will continue prior to any encampment clearing.

California’s executive order

The county’s ordinance aligns with an [executive order issued by Gov. Gavin Newsom in July 2024](#), which encourages local governments to adopt policies to

address homeless encampments and take action to humanely remove encampments.

Newsom's order came on the heels of the Supreme Court's [decision](#) that gave local and state governments more latitude to [remove people experiencing homelessness from their streets](#).

Newsom could not force cities and counties to dismantle homeless encampments, but advised local authorities on the best way to take action.

Victorville's policies

At that time, Victorville city spokeswoman Sue Jones said the directive won't change much, since the city's policies are already in line with the executive order.

"The city of Victorville's primary goal is to connect our unsheltered community to services and assistance to break the cycle of homelessness," Jones said in 2024. "We will continue to have our five-member Homeless Engagement Team working directly with our unsheltered community to connect them with services including sheltering services."

Victorville city officials in June reported that the city had experienced a 57% decrease in its unsheltered population from 2024.

The drop in unsheltered individuals in Victorville came from San Bernardino County's [2025 Point in Time Count](#), which was released in May.

Additionally, Victorville's overall homeless count, which includes unsheltered individuals and those living in shelters and interim housing, dropped by 27% since 2024, from 611 to 448.

Daily Press reporter Rene Ray De La Cruz may be reached at RDeLaCruz@VVDailyPress.com. Follow him on X @DP_ReneDeLaCruz