

## ATTACHMENT B

### WORKING GROUP REPORT REVIEW

# MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** June 3, 2026

**TO:** Scott C. Stiles, City Manager

**FROM:** Jay Virata, Housing & Community Development Director

**CC:** Flinn Fagg, Assistant City Manager

**RE:** Review of the Martha's Village and Kitchen (MVK) Navigation Center Performance Assessment and Operator Responses

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## BACKGROUND

On October 22, 2025, Councilmembers Grace Garner and Ron deHarte convened an independent panel of local leaders and subject matter experts to evaluate the performance of MVK in operating the City's Navigation Center, Access Center, and Early Entry Facility. The evaluation assessed whether the Navigation Center is meeting benchmarks established in its scope of work. The Working Group submitted a final report on May 4, 2026.

The assessment concluded that while MVK is technically compliant with the existing contract and displays a commitment to the mission, the program is constrained by an obsolete legal and financial framework. Following the release of the report, MVK provided comprehensive responses, agreeing that structural changes are needed while detailing operational expansions they have achieved despite funding limitations.

Before proceeding, it is imperative to extend our gratitude to the independent Working Group—Ginny Foat, Tamara Hedges, Bob Smiland, and Bryan Rogers—as well as Councilmembers Grace Garner and Ron deHarte for their leadership in facilitating this review. The dedication, time, and attention to detail this group provided has produced valuable insight into the management and operations of the Palm Springs Navigation Center. Their work demonstrates a strong commitment to Palm Springs and ensures that our approach to homeless services remains accountable, effective, and compassionate. We sincerely appreciate their thorough evaluation and partnership.

## SUMMARY

A review of the assessment reveals four overarching themes:

1. Contractual and Financial Obsolescence: There is mutual consensus that the 2024 agreement and its \$2.4M to \$4.9M annual operating budget are functionally obsolete. The foundational assumptions failed to account for the true acuity of

participant behavioral health needs, evolving state/federal mandates, and real-world staffing costs.

2. **External Regulatory Constraints:** MVK's operational flexibility is heavily dictated by external forces. The program is severely hampered by funding entity income restrictions (though limits recently increased to 30% AMI) and the systemic crisis of local hospitals discharging medically vulnerable patients to a facility not licensed for skilled nursing.
3. **Unfunded Requests:** Working Group's expressed a need for expanded services—such as daily onsite clinical therapy, daytime Early Entry operations, and expanded employment matchmaking which exceeds MVK's current operational bandwidth. While the Working Group cites a lack of "out-of-the-box thinking," MVK vigorously defends its record of innovation (e.g., implementing Recuperative Care and trauma-informed workshops) and emphasizes that major programmatic expansions would require significant, currently unbudgeted funding.
4. **Jurisdictional Eligibility Limitations:** MVK pushes back on administrative and oversight recommendations regarding strict jurisdictional screening at the Access Center and the rollout of standardized digital surveys. MVK cites scope limitations, conflicts with state/county funding prohibitions, participant privacy laws, and the technological limitations of the unhoused population as primary barriers to these requests.

The detailed item-by-item analysis of the Working Group's findings and MVK's direct responses has been consolidated into a comprehensive table below.

### WORKING GROUP FINDINGS & MVK RESPONSE MATRIX

|          | <b>Working Group Findings / Recommendations</b>                                                              | <b>MVK Response</b>                                                                                                                                                          |
|----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1</b> | The 2024 agreement and \$2.4M-\$4.9M budget are obsolete, as they were drafted before full operations began. | Agree. The agreement and budget should be reevaluated to reflect true participant acuity and operational costs; MVK has secured outside grants/volunteers to minimize costs. |
| <b>2</b> | There are no apparent violations of the current contract.                                                    | Appreciates the acknowledgment of successful contract compliance.                                                                                                            |
| <b>3</b> | Performance is high, but neighbors request more direct engagement and response.                              | Unaware of any unaddressed formal requests; MVK has actively engaged the community, provided                                                                                 |

|           | <b>Working Group Findings / Recommendations</b>                                                                               | <b>MVK Response</b>                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|           |                                                                                                                               | direct contact info, and attended neighborhood meetings.                                                                                                                              |
| <b>4</b>  | Computer lab has limited staffing, and the kitchen is not being utilized as a culinary training center.                       | In process. Expanding lab access using volunteers instead of paid staff; actively exploring partnerships with culinary educators to utilize the kitchen.                              |
| <b>5</b>  | The current partnership (Riverside University Health) is inadequate for the high level of resident needs.                     | In process. Expanded partnerships (Desert Insight, etc.) but notes adding daily onsite clinical counseling requires significant unbudgeted funding (estimated \$95K-\$160K per role). |
| <b>6</b>  | Nine housing units are unoccupied due to maintenance issues, including five broken AC units.                                  | Update. Issues are significantly reduced; only two AC units and one door remain offline due to warranty-related vendor delays.                                                        |
| <b>7</b>  | HUD "Home Key" and "Housing First" mandates stifle MVK's flexibility by restricting admissions based on strict income limits. | Agrees. Mandates significantly impact operations, though HomeKey limits recently increased to 30% AMI (approx. \$1,960 monthly).                                                      |
| <b>8</b>  | Hospitals discharge vulnerable patients requiring physical assistance that MVK cannot provide.                                | Agrees. This is a statewide crisis, as the facility is not licensed or funded as a skilled nursing facility.                                                                          |
| <b>9</b>  | Leadership is passionate but lacks "out-of-the-box thinking"; the contract needs a rewrite to focus on outcomes.              | Disagrees that innovation is lacking, citing new house meetings, Recuperative Care, and trauma-informed workshops.                                                                    |
| <b>10</b> | The City should evaluate if a dedicated staff position is needed for homeless services.                                       | Notes the support and responsiveness currently provided by City staff member Jennifer Henning.                                                                                        |
| <b>11</b> | Modify the contract by July 2026 to include precise metrics, a                                                                | Agrees. Welcomes discussions but insists metrics must account for                                                                                                                     |

|           | <b>Working Group Findings / Recommendations</b>                                                 | <b>MVK Response</b>                                                                                                                                |
|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|           | communications plan, and clear funding responsibilities.                                        | funding limitations, participant acuity, and state/federal requirements.                                                                           |
| <b>12</b> | MVK must provide a 5-year strategic plan for long-term housing, Early Entry, and Access Center. | Agrees. Welcomes developing the plan if the City intends to maintain a long-term partnership.                                                      |
| <b>13</b> | Do not extend the two-year option unless year-three goals are achieved.                         | Agrees. Supports accountability but notes evaluations must consider operational realities and housing shortages.                                   |
| <b>14</b> | Implement a plan for better nutritional quality, variety, and healthier choices.                | Has made feasible menu modifications, but expanding options would cause a significant increase in operational and food costs.                      |
| <b>15</b> | Establish a formal protocol/feedback loop between residents and staff.                          | Already implemented a recurring house meetings, suggestion boxes, and conflict resolution training.                                                |
| <b>16</b> | Create an indoor space for socializing, wellness, and games.                                    | Physical footprint limitations prevent permanent indoor recreational areas, but MVK facilitates weekly yoga and meditation sessions.               |
| <b>17</b> | Implement a city-wide standardized digital survey instrument.                                   | Views this as a City-led initiative; argues that paper-based surveys remain the most effective and accessible format for this specific population. |
| <b>18</b> | Ensure the facility provides fully accessible accommodations.                                   | Remains committed to providing accommodations based on unit availability and facility design limits.                                               |
| <b>19</b> | Provide daily onsite counseling and consider adding recuperative care.                          | Established Recuperative Care in Feb 2026 and is exploring onsite individual therapy billed through IEHP.                                          |

|           | <b>Working Group Findings / Recommendations</b>                                              | <b>MVK Response</b>                                                                                                                                     |
|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>20</b> | Establish an onsite employment office with a "matchmaker".                                   | Already provides support via staff and recently partnered with an HR professional volunteer.                                                            |
| <b>21</b> | Partner with Culinary education provider to use commercial kitchen as a training center.     | Welcomes recommendation and is actively exploring partnerships with culinary educators, workforce development programs, and community organizations.    |
| <b>22</b> | Expand employment internships (similar to Palm Springs Disposal program).                    | Agrees. Open to exploring but notes success depends entirely on the willingness of local employers.                                                     |
| <b>23</b> | Partner with the Palm Springs Animal Shelter for vet care and boarding.                      | Made multiple attempts but faced funding/staffing limits; currently awaiting follow-up from a committee member for connections.                         |
| <b>24</b> | Find a new location because the current site is too small and poorly located.                | Agrees the site presents severe operational limitations, but warns relocation could disrupt funding structures and service accessibility.               |
| <b>25</b> | Open Early Entry facility during the day to provide a safe cool environment for 125+ people. | Open to expanding, but requires significant additional funding. Also requires coordination with neighboring residents and businesses.                   |
| <b>26</b> | Tighten Access Center screening to track which jurisdictions individuals originate from.     | Notes that state and county funding prohibits excluding individuals based on residency; privacy laws prevent sharing certain data with law enforcement. |
| <b>27</b> | Add skilled evening staff to the Early Entry facility to assist with job searches.           | Open to expanding, but requires significant additional funding (approx. \$58K-\$68K per role).                                                          |

|           | <b>Working Group Findings / Recommendations</b>                             | <b>MVK Response</b>                                                                               |
|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>28</b> | Create a dedicated space in Early Entry for individuals to sleep near pets. | Already began modifying the Early Entry setup to safely accommodate participants near their pets. |

The complete response from MVK is provided as **Attachment 1**.

## ANALYSIS

As noted above, implementation of several recommendations not needing contractual or budgetary amendments are now being implemented through internal operational adjustments, scheduling changes, and community partnerships:

### 1. Programmatic Adjustments Implemented by MVK

- Participant Feedback Loops: MVK established recurring house meetings, suggestion boxes, and staff conflict resolution/trauma-informed care training.
- Pet Accommodations: MVK modified internal facility layouts in the Early Entry facility to create a dedicated space for clients to sleep near their pets.
- Veterinary Partnerships: MVK administratively coordinates with local shelters for pet veterinary care, supplies, and boarding.
- Wellness & Nutrition: Within current space and funding limits, MVK implemented weekly yoga and meditation, and made minor administrative menu modifications to address nutritional requests.

### 2. Internal Administrative Strategies

- Operational Optimization: Adjusting service delivery workflows, streamlining internal processes, and integrating technology—such as using Obsidian for knowledge management or Gemini and NotebookLM for rapid data analysis—without requiring new enterprise software procurement.
- Strategic Shifts: Reprioritizing staff focus, utilizing volunteers, launching small-scale internal pilot programs, initiating exploratory grant writing, and formalizing memorandums of understanding (MOUs) where no currency changes hands.

Recommendations that may require amending the agreement, require new city funding (such as hiring daily on-site clinical staff or opening the Early Entry facility during the day), or involve relocating the Access Center cannot be done administratively and require formal City Council approvals.

It should also be noted that Building C is not part of the agreement with MVK except for the office space and limited storage. Staff is evaluating complimentary, revenue generating uses for this space. This may include expanded recuperative care services.

Uses like this, however, would likely require that Building C be upgraded for residential occupancy, which would require additional capital investment.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

The current Phase III operating budget allocates \$4,904,400 annually. There is no direct fiscal impact in directing staff to implement several of the recommendations which are already underway. However, service increases (staffing and increasing hours of service) would require a future contract amendment. Implementing the enhancements recommended by the Working Group will likely require an increase in the City's financial commitments.

MVK provided the following annualized estimates (inclusive of benefits) required to meet the Working Group's programmatic recommendations:

- Licensed Behavioral Health Clinician: \$125,000 – \$160,000
- Substance Abuse Counselor: \$95,000 – \$125,000
- Early Entry Evening Case Manager: \$58,000 – \$68,000
- Early Entry Evening Employment Specialist: \$58,000 – \$68,000

Adding just one full-time equivalent (FTE) to each of these roles would represent an immediate operational budget increase of \$336,000 to \$421,000 annually. Furthermore, executing recommendations for daytime Early Entry operations, increased food variety, and facility modifications will also introduce additional costs.

MVK should provide an updated budget to include recuperative care and grant revenues generated at and for the Navigation Center to provide a complete view of the facility's revenue and operating expenses.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS & NEXT STEPS**

Staff recommends the following actions:

- Work with Martha's Village & Kitchen to draft an Amended and Restated Navigation Center Operating Agreement for City Council consideration, updating the scope of services to align with current regional operational realities and programmatic needs.
- Reconstruct the operational budget incorporating a comprehensive strategic plan, itemized projected costs for enhanced programmatic staffing, and a holistic accounting of all alternative revenue streams (including external grants and recuperative care billing).
- Ensure the restated agreement establishes precise performance indicators that shift focus toward long-term housing placement and workforce readiness metrics, while appropriately accounting for funding agency regulatory frameworks, resident acuity, and legal privacy constraints.

# **ATTACHMENT A**

**May 4, 2026**

# **Martha's Village and Kitchen Navigation Center Performance Assessment**

*Submitted by: Councilmember Grace Garner and Ron deHarte*

## **Executive Summary**

To ensure the Navigation Center remains a high-impact asset for Palm Springs, Councilmembers Garner and deHarte convened a panel of local leaders on October 22, 2025, to evaluate the performance of Martha's Village and Kitchen (MV).

Our objective was clear: to ensure that the Navigation Center (238339) is delivering on its promises to the community and meeting every benchmark established in its scope of work.

This evaluation serves as a strategic roadmap for our continued partnership with MV. To ensure high standards of service, Councilmembers Garner and deHarte request an ongoing status update on current operational gaps and the City's specific timeline for resolution.

The complete working group report is attached.

## **Methodology and Governance**

To ensure a rigorous and unbiased assessment, the evaluation was conducted independently of City staff and Council influence. Councilmembers Garner and deHarte acted strictly as facilitators, maintaining a clear separation from the evaluative process to preserve the integrity of the findings.

## **Evaluative Working Group**

The independent working group was composed of the following subject matter experts and community leaders:

- **Ginny Foat:** Former Councilmember, City of Palm Springs
- **Tamara Hedges:** Higher Education Executive and Community Leader

- **Bob Smiland:** Small business owner
- **Bryan Rogers:** Small business owner

### **Broad Working Group Observations**

The assessment of the MV Contract Review Draft against the Navigation Center Operating Agreement reveals a program that is technically compliant but functionally constrained by an outdated legal and financial framework.

### **Contractual & Financial Assessment**

1. The committee concluded that the 2024 agreement is "obsolete as written" because it was drafted before the facilities actually opened. They found the \$2.4M to \$4.9M annual budget to be similarly outdated.

#### **MVK Response:**

- *MVK agrees the original agreement and budget assumptions should be reevaluated, as the agreement was developed prior to full operations and before the true level of participant acuity, behavioral health needs, staffing demands, and operational costs were fully known.*
  - *Additionally, MVK has actively secured outside support through grants, monetary donations, in-kind volunteer services, donated goods, and community partnerships that have helped strengthen operations and minimize overall operational costs.*
2. There are "no apparent violations" of the current contract. Martha's Village is successfully fulfilling its role as the operator for the Access Center, Early Entry Facility, and Navigation Center.

#### **MVK Response:**

- *MVK appreciates the acknowledgment that there are no apparent violations of the current agreement and that Martha's Village & Kitchen continues operating the Access Center, Early Entry Facility, and Navigation Center within the current contract scope and funding structure.*
3. Performance regarding neighborhood relations is relatively high; neighbors report little disruption, crime, or trash caused by the facility. However, there continue to be requests for more neighborhood engagement and direct response from MV.

### **MVK Response:**

- *MVK has continuously worked to minimize neighborhood impacts through operational modifications, increased participant engagement, enhanced staff oversight, and direct communication with surrounding residents and stakeholders. Leadership has provided direct contact information to community members and community groups, responded to concerns, and participated in meetings with the Desert Highland Gateway Estates community.*
- *At this time, MVK is not aware of any formal requests for additional meetings or engagement that have not already been addressed and welcomes continued direct communication and collaboration with neighborhood stakeholders.*

**While the signed agreement lists specific "Programs and Services," significant gaps in their real-world application were identified.**

4. The agreement mandates employment services and a computer lab. The committee found the computer lab is available but has "limited" staffing support. Furthermore, the kitchen, designed as a food-service training center is not being used for that purpose.

### **MVK Response:**

- *MVK is currently expanding computer lab accessibility and operational hours while implementing IT safeguards to prevent misuse. To reduce additional costs, MVK is utilizing volunteer partnerships and community support instead of immediately expanding paid staffing.*
  - *Additionally, MVK has already begun expanding workforce development opportunities including culinary training, landscaping, housekeeping, maintenance support, and vocational pathways. MVK is actively exploring partnerships with culinary educators and workforce development organizations to fully utilize the commercial kitchen as a training space.*
5. The contract requires coordination of behavioral health and medical services. However, the committee found that MV's partnership with Riverside University Health is "not adequate" for the high level of mental health and substance abuse needs among residents.

### **MVK Response:**

- *MVK has significantly expanded on-site behavioral health and medical coordination efforts over the last year despite limited dedicated clinical funding within the agreement. Current partnerships include Riverside University Health System, Desert Insight Counseling, Desert Healthcare District mobile medical and pharmacy services, psychiatric medication providers, and multiple clinical providers through Palm Springs operations.*
  - *MVK is also expanding its partnership with Desert Insight Counseling to continue providing group workshops for participants and to explore the addition of on-site individual therapy sessions at the Navigation Center with Desert Insight providers. This would further increase access to behavioral health support in a familiar, low-barrier setting for participants who may otherwise have difficulty engaging in off-site services.*
  - *MVK acknowledges the behavioral health and substance abuse needs within the unhoused population continue exceeding currently available resources. Expanding to daily onsite behavioral health and substance abuse counseling would require significant additional operational funding.*
    - *Estimated annual staffing costs:*
      - *Licensed Behavioral Health Clinician: approximately \$125,000 to \$160,000 including benefits*
      - *Substance Abuse Counselor: approximately \$95,000 to \$125,000 including benefits*
6. Despite the requirement to keep the property in good condition, the committee found that nine housing units are currently unoccupied due to maintenance issues, including five with non-functioning AC units.

### **MVK Response:**

- *The originally identified maintenance issues have already been significantly reduced. The current remaining issues involve two air conditioning-related units and one sliding door repair. These concerns were previously reported to the City and originate from warranty-related repairs and vendor coordination delays. MVK maintenance staff have continued actively addressing unit repairs to minimize vacancy time and return units back into operation as quickly as possible.*

**Two major external factors that the original agreement did not fully anticipate:**

7. Federal "Housing First" and HUD "Home Key" mandates require MV to admit individuals with monthly incomes below \$1,070. This "stifles" MV's ability to be flexible and forces them to turn away individuals who slightly exceed that threshold.

***MVK Response:***

- *MVK appreciates acknowledgment that state and federal homeless service regulations significantly impact operational flexibility. Housing First and HomeKey requirements directly affect participant eligibility standards and service delivery requirements tied to funding compliance.*
  - *Additionally, HomeKey income thresholds have since changed, with the current 30% AMI threshold for a single individual now approximately \$1,960 monthly. Discussions regarding possible future federal changes to Housing First-related requirements are ongoing nationally, though no final decisions have been made.*
8. Local hospitals often discharge patients back to the Navigation Center who require physical assistance (walking, bathing) that MV is not equipped or staffed to provide.

***MVK Response:***

- *MVK strongly agrees this continues to be one of the most significant operational challenges impacting homeless providers statewide. Hospitals frequently discharge medically vulnerable individuals requiring levels of support beyond what homeless shelters were originally designed, licensed, or funded to provide.*
- *The Navigation Center and Early Entry Facility were not established as medical or skilled nursing facilities. Despite this, staff routinely work to support medically vulnerable participants while coordinating outside resources whenever possible.*

**Working Group "Verdict" on Performance**

9. The authors rate the MV leadership as "committed" and "passionate" but ultimately limited by a lack of "out-of-the-box thinking" from both the contractor and the City to clear these systemic hurdles. Their primary recommendation is a total contract

re-write to move from a focus on "activities" to a focus on "outcomes," such as specific data on transitions to permanent housing and employment.

**MVK Response:**

- *MVK respectfully disagrees with the implication that operational innovation has not occurred. Over the last year, MVK has implemented participant house meetings, expanded feedback opportunities, strengthened behavioral health and medical partnerships, expanded workforce development planning, increased volunteer engagement, implemented Recuperative Care services, facilitated additional participant engagement and wellness workshops, increased participant engagement efforts, and modified operations at Early Entry Facility and Navigation Center to better support participant autonomy, and respond to the unique needs of unhoused individuals.*

**Outside of the Agreement evaluation, the Working Group provided recommendations to improve operations and oversight of the Navigation Center.**

10. The committee recommended evaluating current oversight levels to determine if a dedicated City staff position is needed for homeless services.

**MVK Response:**

- *The City previously had dedicated homeless services oversight through Roman Ruiz, which provided additional operational coordination and communication support. Since Jennifer Henning stepped into that role, MVK has experienced tremendous support, responsiveness, and collaboration in helping coordinate operational needs and strengthen communication between City staff and MVK operations.*
11. Modify the current contract before July 1, 2026, to include precise performance metrics, a formal communications plan between the City and the contractor, and a clear understanding of funding responsibilities.

**MVK Response:**

- *MVK welcomes discussions regarding updated contract expectations, clearer performance metrics, communication structures, and funding responsibilities. Future performance*

*measures should account for participant acuity, Housing First requirements, staffing shortages, behavioral health realities, and funding limitations impacting homeless service systems statewide.*

12. Require Martha's Village to provide a five-year strategic plan with specific goals, tactics, and milestones for long-term housing, the Early Entry program, and the Access Center.

**MVK Response:**

- *MVK welcomes developing a five-year strategic plan if the City intends to maintain a long-term operational partnership with MVK. Long-term planning would help improve staffing stability, partnership development, infrastructure planning, and operational consistency while also taking into account funding requirements, contract expectations, participant acuity, and the increasing complexity of homeless services operations.*

13. Do not extend the contract's two-year option unless the stated year-three goals are being achieved.

**MVK Response:**

- *MVK supports accountability and measurable outcomes. Future evaluations and contract extension discussions should also take into account operational realities including participant acuity, housing shortages, behavioral health needs, staffing challenges, funding limitations, and state and federal homeless service requirements that continue impacting providers statewide.*

**Operational and Facility Improvements**

14. Require a formal plan to address client requests for better nutritional quality, more variety, and healthier food choices.

**MVK Response:**

- *MVK has already implemented menu modifications and dietary accommodations when operationally feasible and medically necessary. Concerns regarding healthier meal options and expanded variety have previously been discussed with the City, including the significant projected increase to food and operational costs that would result from implementing expanded meal programs under the current funding structure.*

15. Establish a formal protocol or feedback loop for communication between residents and staff to resolve friction points.

**MVK Response:**

- *MVK has already implemented recurring participant house meetings, direct staff communication, conflict resolution discussions, expanded participant engagement efforts, and added suggestion boxes throughout the facilities where participants can share feedback and remain anonymous if preferred. Staff have also received trauma-informed care and communication trainings, and operational staffing restructures were implemented to improve participant interactions and overall communication. These changes have significantly reduced complaints, strengthened opportunities for participant feedback, and helped address friction points more proactively.*
16. Create an indoor space for residents and Early Entry clients to use for socializing, exercise, wellness activities, and games.
- MVK Response:**
- *MVK currently facilitates participant engagement and wellness activities whenever possible within the current facility layout. However, physical space limitations within the existing facility footprint create challenges regarding permanent indoor recreational and wellness areas.*
  - *MVK has implemented yoga and mindful meditation sessions multiple times per week, with the option of seated yoga to ensure activities remain flexible, accessible, and appropriate for participants with varying mobility levels and comfort needs.*
  - *MVK is also actively looking to partner with a trauma-informed yoga instructor to further expand wellness programming and provide participants with additional opportunities for stress reduction, emotional regulation, and supportive mind-body practices.*
17. Implement a city-wide standardized digital survey instrument to ensure cleaner and more professional data aggregation.

**MVK Response:**

- *A city-wide standardized survey instrument would be a City-led initiative rather than an MVK operational function. MVK already utilizes internal participant surveys and feedback tools designed around the population being served. Current survey methods are intentionally structured to allow anonymity and accessibility, as many participants do not consistently maintain mobile devices or electronic access. Paper-based formats have proven to be the most effective and realistic method for participant engagement and feedback collection within the current population being served.*

18. Ensure the facility provides fully accessible accommodations for residents with disabilities.

#### **MVK Response:**

- *MVK remains committed to accommodating participants with disabilities whenever possible within the limitations of the facility infrastructure and available operational capacity. The Navigation Center and Early Entry Facility include ADA-accessible areas intended to support participant access, and the facility has a limited number of units specifically designed for accessibility needs. Staff continue doing everything reasonably possible to accommodate participants based on unit availability and facility design limitations.*

#### **Programmatic Enhancements**

19. Provide daily on-site mental health and substance abuse counseling , and consider adding recuperative care services similar to those in Indio.

#### **MVK Response:**

- *MVK established Palm Springs Recuperative Care services as of February 2026 to help address increasing medical and behavioral health acuity among participants. However, Recuperative Care services are tied to medical eligibility requirements, insurance authorization, and referral criteria, including IEHP eligibility. These services are not structured, licensed, or funded to operate as a hospital-level medical program or to serve all participants requiring higher levels of medical care.*
- *MVK is continuing to strengthen on-site health education and intervention efforts through a summer internship beginning in June 2026 with a current California State University San Marcos student*

*who is pursuing a Master of Public Health degree while also working as a Health Science Educator and Licensed Vocational Nurse. Through this internship, she will provide weekly health workshops and onsite support at the Navigation Center and Early Entry Facility focused on trauma-informed health education, coping skills, mental health, substance use support, and other wellness topics that specifically impact unhoused individuals. These workshops are intended to support proactive health education, early intervention, participant engagement, and practical skill-building in an effort to reduce unnecessary use of emergency services and support overall participant wellbeing.*

- *MVK is further exploring its partnership with Desert Insight Counseling to potentially bring clinicians onsite to provide individual therapy for eligible participants, with services billed through IEHP for those enrolled with that insurance carrier. This would provide an additional pathway for participants to access behavioral health support onsite, while remaining subject to insurance eligibility.*

20. Establish an employment office on-site staffed by an "employment matchmaker" to connect clients with local job openings.

#### **MVK Response:**

- *MVK already provides employment-related support through Navigation Center and Access Center staff assisting participants with resumes, job searches, applications, and employer connections. MVK also recently partnered with an HR professional volunteer to strengthen employment support services at no additional cost.*

21. Partner with a culinary education provider to utilize the commercial kitchen as a training center for back-of-the-house restaurant skills.

**MVK Response:**

- *MVK welcomes this recommendation and is already actively exploring partnerships with culinary educators, workforce development programs, and community organizations to establish culinary training opportunities utilizing the commercial kitchen.*

22. Expand the use of employment internship models, similar to the existing program with Palm Springs Disposal.

**MVK Response:**

- *MVK is open to exploring expanded employment internship partnerships similar to the Palm Springs Disposal model and will begin looking into additional opportunities. However, partnerships of this nature also depend on the willingness of local businesses and employers to work with the population being served. The existing Palm Springs Disposal partnership was established with support and involvement from the City of Palm Springs, and similar partnerships would require strong community and employer collaboration.*

23. Partner with the Palm Springs Animal Shelter to provide veterinary care, supplies, and temporary boarding for clients' pets.

**MVK Response:**

- *MVK has made multiple attempts to establish partnerships related to veterinary care, pet supplies, and temporary boarding support. Due to funding limitations and staffing constraints, some organizations have indicated they have been unable to come onsite; however, MVK has also offered transportation options and coordination support to help participants access services directly at partner locations.*
- *Additionally, Tamara Hedges, who participated on the working group committee, had also offered to help connect MVK with additional resources and potential partnerships regarding pet services. At this time, MVK has not yet received further follow-up regarding those efforts.*

## **Access Center and Early Entry Specifics**

24. Find a new location for the Access Center, noting the current site is too small and poorly located.

### **MVK Response:**

- *MVK agrees the current Access Center location presents significant operational limitations including limited space, storage issues, participant congestion, restroom limitations, outdoor shower concerns, and overall operational inefficiencies. These concerns have previously been communicated to the City and have also contributed to many of the operational complaints and challenges experienced at the Access Center.*
- *While MVK supports identifying a more appropriate long-term location, it is also important to recognize that relocating the program could create additional operational and funding challenges, including possible impacts to existing funding structures and service accessibility.*

25. Open the Early Entry facility during the day to provide a safe, cool environment for 125+ people.

### **MVK Response:**

- *MVK welcomes discussions regarding expanded daytime operations at the Early Entry Facility. However, transitioning the facility into a daytime operational model would require substantial additional staffing, security, custodial support, utilities, participant supervision, behavioral health support, and operational funding beyond the current agreement structure.*
- *Any expansion of daytime access would also require coordination with neighboring businesses, nearby residential housing areas, and community stakeholders to thoughtfully address potential impacts related to increased foot traffic, surrounding undeveloped areas, and neighborhood concerns.*
- *Any revised jurisdictional screening expectations would need to be clearly outlined within future contractual requirements while remaining compliant with applicable funding regulations.*

26. Tighten the screening process at the Access Center to better understand which jurisdictions individuals are coming from.

**MVK Response:**

- *MVK already implements intake and screening processes documenting participant origin and jurisdictional information whenever possible. However, depending on the funding source, many state and county funding programs prohibit providers from excluding unsheltered individuals solely based on residency or jurisdictional status unless specifically authorized within funding agreements.*
- *Additionally, certain participant information requested previously by outside agencies, including law enforcement, cannot always be released due to confidentiality requirements and participant privacy protections tied to homeless services and case management operations.*
- *Any revised jurisdictional screening expectations would need to be clearly outlined within future contractual requirements while remaining compliant with applicable funding and confidentiality regulations.*

27. Add skilled evening shift staff at the Early Entry facility who can assist with job searches and financial counseling.

**MVK Response:**

- *MVK is open to expanding evening staffing focused on employment assistance and financial counseling; however, doing so would require significant additional operational funding. Currently, staffing levels are structured to support overnight shelter operations and participant supervision needs only.*
- *Estimated annual staffing costs:*
  - *Case Manager: approximately \$58,000–\$68,000*
  - *Employment Specialist: approximately \$58,000–\$68,000*

28. Create a dedicated space in the Early Entry facility where individuals can sleep near their pets.

**MVK Response:**

- *MVK has already begun modifying portions of the Early Entry operational setup to better accommodate participants near their pets while maintaining overall safety, sanitation, and operational functionality within the facility.*