

# MAP Point at the Pov prepares to help Fresno's needy

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Officials from Fresno Housing Authority and Fresno City Hall gathered today to announce a new program, based out of portable offices to aid the homeless population in accessing services such as health care. Video: John Walker  
THEFRESNOBEE

A portable building designed to make a permanent difference in the lives of Fresno's most vulnerable residents was unveiled Wednesday.

Community leaders gathered next to a trailer on G Street south of downtown to announce the creation of MAP Point at the Pov.

MAP stands for Multi-agency Access Program. The Pov, of course, is the nickname for the Poverello House, long a source of comfort to Fresno's homeless.

Speakers said the reality behind the acronym and brand name is long overdue: A single spot in a strategic location helping the needy find services that too often are hidden in the muddle of bureaucracy.

Specifically, housing for the homeless, care for the mentally ill, relief for the physically ill and hope for the addicted.

Fresno Mayor Ashley Swearengin said history may judge MAP Point's arrival as a turning point in the region's efforts to help the destitute.

"This is a major moment," Swearengin said.

Clovis Mayor Lynne Ashbeck, speaking as regional vice president for the Hospital Council of Northern and Central California, said MAP Point will make an immediate difference in people's lives even as the concept improves with experience.

Bottom line, Ashbeck said, MAP Point "is a gigantic step."

The 45-minute news conference next to MAP Point's new headquarters had its share of inside talk about the challenges of helping the vulnerable. For potential clients and the community at large, MAP Point's essence is simple.

- The Fresno metropolitan area has lots of social services.
- The needy don't always know how to get them.
- Helping those without a home or suffering from health and substance-abuse challenges is a moral and policy imperative.
- The Pov and the Fresno Rescue Mission a short walk to the south form a geographic center of human vulnerability in Fresno.
- Get access to all those services in one place, open the front door and spread the word — we're here to help.

Officials expect to open MAP Points in other parts of the metropolitan area.

Fresno Housing Authority Chief Executive Preston Prince said perfection must not be the enemy of the good. MAP Point, he said, will only get better.

“This is a great launch,” Prince said.

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