

NAMC 2015 Legislative Update

Monterey County Supervisor and Board Chair Simón Salinas was the keynote speaker at the Nonprofit Alliance of Monterey County's 2015 Legislative Update at the Marina Library. Over 40 local nonprofit and other business leaders participated in the discussion. The Supervisor spoke to the legislative priorities of the county including housing development in the former Fort Ord and the Salinas area. He also covered the urgent need for health care services and the budgetary constraints due to state and federal requirements for additional correctional capacity. Recent court rulings have placed an additional burden on municipal government to house formerly state/federal non-violent offenders in county jails.

The Supervisor also spoke to additional medical personnel being available under the Mental Health Services Act as well as K-12 education, disability services, and food and water shortages. When asked to discuss how individuals can advocate on their own behalf, Supervisor Salinas suggested that each person should feel empowered to reach out directly to their elected representatives and government agency personnel. Effective change can only come about through communication and education.

NAMC Advocacy members Lee Hulquist and Kaki Rusmore also shared highlights from a free, online toolkit titled *Our State Our Budget* which highlighted principles every nonprofit should consider when advocating on their mission and generating new conversations about directing public funding in support of the public good, including:

- Understanding and not underestimating an agency's ability to influence;
- Making the common good a common conversation;
- Understanding the basics of advocacy;
- Knowing what can be done;
- Practicing engaged listening to fully understand other people's views; and,
- Making things happen- engagement within and outside of the nonprofit community can prove to be more effective in achieving the common good.

-- Tom Conway, Easter Seals of Central California

Servando Medina also contributed to this article.