



To: Cal ICH Partners  
From: Julie Lo, Executive Officer  
California Interagency Council on Homelessness  
Date: April 6, 2022  
Subject: Protections of Gender Identity and Expression in California's  
Homelessness Services

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In response to laws criminalizing transgender and non-binary youth and adults that are currently being proposed or passed in other states, the California Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal ICH) would like to reiterate our state's commitment to serving people of all gender identities and expressions. We issue this memo as a condemnation of laws that threaten the health and safety of transgender and non-binary people across the country and a reminder of the services and protections California has in place for these groups, specifically in relationship to homelessness services. In addition to the state's protections, the federal administration took action last year to reaffirm [its commitment to equal access to housing](#).

Cal ICH recognizes that across the country transgender and non-binary individuals, especially youth, may be negatively impacted by current legal actions attempting to limit equal access. People who identify as transgender, and youth in particular, are more likely to experience higher rates of unsheltered homelessness than the general population and are at risk of violence and trauma specifically due to their gender identity or expression—examples of the harm that allowing discrimination can lead to.<sup>1</sup>

Among other protections, California's fair housing laws prohibit discrimination and harassment based on someone's actual or perceived gender identity or expression in all housing and shelter environments, including emergency, overnight, and transitional shelters.<sup>2</sup> According to the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing, homelessness service providers must determine housing eligibility regardless of someone's gender identity and grant transgender and non-binary individuals with

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<sup>1</sup> National Alliance to End Homelessness. "Demographic Data Project: Gender Minorities." <https://endhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Gender-Minority-Homelessness-Article-Revised-6-24-19-JJ-002.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Identities protected in all or most housing include: ancestry or national origin, citizenship, disability (mental or physical), familial status, gender identity or gender expression, genetic information, immigration status, marital status, military and veteran status, primary language, race or color, religion, sex or gender, sexual orientation, and source of income.

equal access to programs and facilities consistent with their gender identities. To learn more about California's fair housing laws or file a complaint, visit: [www.dfeh.ca.gov](http://www.dfeh.ca.gov).

Cal ICH requires all the grantees of our funding programs to ensure equal access and non-discrimination in the administration of homelessness services. We also encourage our grantees and local service providers to address the needs of transgender and non-binary individuals and youth by creating services tailored to the specific needs and experiences of these groups.

For further information or to share guidance about how to better serve transgender or non-binary individuals experiencing homelessness, we encourage you to reach out to us at [calich@bcsh.ca.gov](mailto:calich@bcsh.ca.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Julie Lo". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

Julie Lo