



CALIFORNIA HOMELESS COORDINATING AND FINANCING COUNCIL

Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency
Gavin Newsom, Governor | Lourdes M. Castro Ramírez, Secretary

Meeting Summary October 26, 2020 1:00PM – 4:00PM Teleconference

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

Lourdes M. Castro Ramírez, Council Chair and Secretary of Business, Consumer Services, and Housing Agency called the meeting to order at 1:10PM.

Council Members Present:

- Lourdes M. Castro Ramírez, Council Chair and Secretary of the Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency;
- Emilio Ramirez, Council Vice Chair and Director of Housing, City of Oxnard;
- Amy Anderson, Chief Housing Officer, Office of Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti;
- Russell Atterberry, Undersecretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs;
- Alexis Barries, Family Partner, Placement Service and Crisis Stabilization Response Team, Santa Clara;
- Gina Buccieri-Harrington, Assistant Director of Grants Management, Victim Services Program in the Governor's Office of Emergency Services;
- Corrin Buchanan, Assistant Director of the Housing, Homelessness and Civil Rights Branch in the Department of Social Services;
- Donald Cavier, Chief Deputy Director of the California Housing Finance Agency;
- Jacey Cooper, Chief Deputy Director of Health Care Programs in the Department of Health Care Services;
- Gail Gilman, Chief Strategy Officer, All Home California;
- Jody Ketcheside, Deputy Regional Director of Turning Point of Central California;
- Jennifer Loving, Chief Executive Officer, Destination: Home;
- Gary McCoy, Congressional Aide, Office of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi;
- Toks Omishakin, Director of California Department of Transportation;
- Joe Uchishiba, Police Officer, City of Fairfield (*not present at initial roll call*); and
- Gustavo Velasquez, Director of California Department of Housing and Community Development

Opening Remarks

Secretary Castro Ramírez welcomed Council members and the public to the meeting and commented on the release of a strategic plan by the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH). The plan has good components and suggestions but mischaracterizes the Housing First model of addressing homelessness. Housing First is at the core of the Council's mission and there is much data, and many efforts to demonstrate that this approach works.

During September's special Council meeting the efforts of the Council were highlighted, including the [Guide to Strategic Uses of Federal Funds to Reduce Homelessness During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#). Resources are continuing to be shared by the Council and by its members locally.

In November, the Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council (HCFC) will release round two of the [Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention \(HHAP\) Program](#) funding. This funding complements \$200 million in additional funds announced recently by the Governor for Homekey.

The [Homeless Data Integration System \(HDIS\)](#) project is expected to come online in the first quarter of 2021. The system will incorporate data from California's 44 Continuums of Care (CoCs) collected from their Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS) and will enable better understanding of services provided and how dollars are being used. Information will be used to inform understanding, policymaking, and continued efforts to prevent, reduce, and end homelessness.

Today, the Council will vote on its [Action Plan objectives](#), which are a framework that has been developed with input from all Council members along with key experts, providers, and persons with lived experience. The 15 high-level objectives will be used to guide the Council's work over the next two years.

II. Adoption of the September 15, 2020 Council meeting minutes

The Council approved the [meeting minutes](#) from the September 15, 2020 Council Meeting. All members present voted to approve.

III. Racial Disparities Among People Experiencing Homelessness

HCFC Executive Officer Julie Lo [presented](#) on this topic and providing framing for guest speakers on Agenda item IV. Black Californians are overrepresented by a four-times multiple among people experiencing homelessness relative to their proportion of the state's population. Racial and ethnic minorities make up about half of people experiencing homelessness overall. These groups also face disproportionate hardships in relation to housing and income, and while the Council's work is about preventing, decreasing, and ending homelessness, it is different from that of the closely related housing crisis.

Researchers, practitioners, and people who have struggled amidst racial disparities have shown that it is not just about income; the significant gaps are the direct result of longstanding discrimination towards people of color, and specifically Black people, among facets of the system including criminal justice, access to quality and affordable healthcare, housing discrimination, and other socially-determined factors.

Links to recommended reading materials were sent out prior to this meeting, including the [SPARC Phase One Study Findings](#). This study used over 111,000 HMIS records and qualitative data over six communities, including San Francisco, and looks at overrepresentation of particular racial and ethnic subgroups. The study found that racial inequity is consistent across many communities. It indicates that poverty alone does not equal homelessness—it is caused by a range of factors—and highlights racial and gender differences in permanent exits from homelessness.

Other recommending reading includes Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority's (LAHSA's) [Report and Recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee on Black People Experiencing Homelessness](#).

IV. How Local Homelessness Systems Are Responding to Racial Disparities

Tomiquia Moss, Founder and Chief Executive of All Home, [presented](#) on this topic.

Black, brown, and Indigenous people—African Americans, in particular—are disproportionately impacted by the homelessness crisis. It is important to pay attention to structural racism when looking at solutions addressing racial equity throughout the Bay Area and the State of California.

Contra Costa County did a racial equity analysis in which African American individuals were the highest utilizers of prevention and rapid resolution services and continue to be overrepresented in the county. Data must be disaggregated and analyzed to find out what the problems are and what disparities exist, before taking action.

Relative to other marginalized groups in the Bay Area, the proportion of Indigenous people who are experiencing homelessness is especially important to pay attention to. As services are delivered with a racial equity lens, structural challenges that remain in place will cause disparate impacts. Income and wealth gaps exist for people of color, and it is necessary to look at wealth-building opportunities and resources to achieve economic mobility and prosperity for extremely low-income (ELI) individuals.

Federal policies have contributed to discrimination and structural racism. Communities of color have experienced structural barriers that have persisted over hundreds of years. It is important to build leadership capacity for people with lived experience and lived expertise.

Council Member Jennifer Loving has helped the region, Santa Clara County in particular, understand the importance of developing and producing ELI housing. Above

moderate-income housing has had the most production and the region is under-resourced in ELI housing. Deeply subsidized housing is needed, and this should be incentivized and prioritized by the State.

Work with the National Innovation Service has looked at impacts of COVID-19 for communities of color with input from marginalized communities across the country. Two key needs are culturally relevant employment services and housing interventions that respond to what people in the community need.

Destination: Home in partnership with SPARC and other local partners did a homelessness and race report for Santa Clara County which highlights the importance of including the voices of people of color. Santa Clara's work has also shown that it is important to adopt new housing and land use policies that can help reverse existing housing disparities.

Alameda County has engaged all the cities within their county for a racial equity analysis and systems modeling for their homelessness system. This has looked at interim and bridge housing needs, housing exits needed for people of color, and how services and programs should be delivered for the people most impacted.

San Francisco City and County has also participated in the SPARC initiative in work on a racial equity analysis. An equitable coordinated entry system (CES) is important because racial disparities continue to be seen in these systems.

It is important to look at who is leading organizations that are serving people of color and that people who are impacted by homelessness are impacted in system processes. A racial equity lens is necessary, as is effective data use and ensuring systems and supports are in place for jurisdictions to use that data. Policies and interventions should also be intersectional and support a community's most vulnerable residents.

Karla Chalif, Chief Operating and Legal Officer of Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), [presented](#) information on this topic from the Ad Hoc Committee on Black People Experiencing Homelessness.

The Ad Hoc Committee launched in April 2018 and used data from the 2017 Point-In-Time Count. Black people made up 9% of the general population in LA County but 40% of people experiencing homelessness. As of the 2019 Point-In-Time Count, Black people in LA are still four times more likely to experience homelessness relative to the general population, making up 8% of the population but 33% of people experiencing homelessness.

The Committee was established in recognition of persistent overrepresentation of Black people experiencing homelessness, and with three core goals: better understanding factors that contribute to overrepresentation, identifying gaps or opportunities to increase racial equity, and developing recommendations for improvements to more

effectively meet the needs of Black people experiencing homelessness. The term “Black” was used to represent more than just African American populations.

The Committee used a nationally recognized Racial Equity Toolkit process to inform and assess how decisions burden and/or benefit Black people experiencing homelessness. Recommendations toward eliminating racial disparities were developed using the Toolkit as a basis, and by listening to people with lived experience of homelessness and those directly providing services to understand how policies, programs, and services within the system benefit or burden Black people.

The Committee held listening sessions to learn from people experiencing and on the brink of homelessness, as well as from front line provider staff; examined the barriers facing Black people in various systems; and explored how those barriers lead to overrepresentation among people experiencing homelessness. The Committee then developed a set of 67 recommendations to advance racial equity.

In response to the question “why do you think Black people are overrepresented in the homeless population?” participants identified generations of racism as the root cause. Segregation and redlining have precluded Black people from homeownership opportunities, a traditional method of upward mobility. Current disparities are related to pervasive racial biases, rather than individual challenges. For lasting change, systems must work to eliminate racial disparities and systemic racism.

The Committee’s analysis of the system included focus on coordinated entry, assessment, outreach, and interim housing. Listening session participants expressed concerns about the system including a lack of compassion, overly burdened case managers, lack of follow-through, excessive turnover, and lack of lived expertise. Issues with the assessment/triage tool were brought up, for example that individuals may not want to immediately share that they’ve been incarcerated or answer questions about mental health, and there were concerns about re-traumatizing someone by asking the same questions repeatedly.

Participants and providers recommended data analysis to evaluate existing tools, designating funding for outreach teams and an expanded network of sites, access to housing assistance, and examining interim housing programs. Regarding permanent housing, community members raised an issue with inadequate affordable housing supply. Black participants in CES permanent housing have a higher rate of return to homelessness; outside of CES, Housing Choice Vouchers can take years to obtain and often the amount is too low for Los Angeles rentals.

LAHSA supported AB 1482 to expand eviction protections and cap rent increases, SB 329 to prohibit source of income discrimination, AB 53 to prohibit discrimination by landlords based on criminal justice system involvement, and State efforts to expand the low-income housing tax credit. LAHSA is working to move toward the Committee’s recommendations, has created a Director of Equity role, and has contracted with the

University of Southern California (USC) Racial Equity Team to move work forward across the county.

The Racial Equity Team completed a feasibility analysis to prioritize which of the Committee's 67 recommendations to address first. This identified 21 areas for focus during pilot implementation. The Racial Equity Team will convene workgroups to focus on implementation work over the next 24 months.

LAHSA is using race and ethnicity data collection, reporting, and transparency through all aspects of the agency's work. LAHSA has committed to launching a racial equity plan, ensuring its contracting and hiring processes advance racial equity, and emphasizing ongoing training. These efforts are part of a broader, national racial equity movement.

Council Member Jennifer Loving asked if Karla can send out her presentation slides.

- They are posted on the HCFC website.

Council Member Gail Gilman commented that CES, as raised in both of these presentations, can be a barrier to ending racial inequity. The Council should look at recommendations on changes to CES to try to end racial disparities.

Karla Chalif added that systems are created with good intentions but often important steps, such as involving those impacted by the system, can be missed. Community listening sessions are important but are frequently skipped when creating plans and systems.

Tomiquia Moss added that in the way the system was designed to look for people who are chronically homeless through behavioral health and other factors, it can miss African American folks who don't exhibit those acute factors. Systems should be more culturally responsive to what communities need.

Council Member Amy Anderson commented that using a racial equity lens to look at and adjust this work should also lead to better system outcomes overall.

Council Member Jody Ketcheside asked to talk about partnerships with others to help disrupt existing systems of oppression.

- All Home has found the most helpful partnerships to be those across systems that are perpetuating inequities that show up in homelessness, such as criminal justice, foster care, and workforce development.
- LAHSA has also made sure these systems were involved from the beginning—it is harder to be dismissive of goals and recommendations when involved in authoring them.

Council Member Joe Uchishiba joined the meeting and was called in for roll at this time.

V. Priorities and Objectives for Action Plan

Deputy Secretary for Homelessness Ali Sutton introduced this topic. The goal for this item is to identify priorities to discuss in Council meetings, strengthen work between State agencies and between State and local partners, and to align strategies to move forward in a coordinated way. The objectives talked about today will be “umbrella” areas, with specific action areas and action items added on later.

These objectives are based around the Framework for an Equitable COVID-19 Response, with input from a range of stakeholders and close coordination with the Governor’s Office. Today’s goal is to approve an initial draft of objectives, ensuring that nothing critical is missing but knowing that these may not be exactly how they are worded in the final plan.

This Action Plan is on a two-year horizon, with a check-in at one year. As HCFC’s first Action Plan and with things frequently changing in the world, the objectives and actions should be things that can potentially be done at the State level within the two-year period. These will be discussed more during December’s Council meeting with a goal to approve and adopt a full plan in March 2021.

Matthew Doherty, HCFC consultant walked through the [draft Action Plan objectives](#). These objectives are based on conversations with Council members, the last Council meeting, and external stakeholder conversations to date. There will be more conversations and more work will be done to ensure input is included from people with lived expertise.

Council Member Ketcheside asked if subpopulations would be addressed, specifically youth as required by SB 918.

- Youth-specific strategies, family and children’s strategies, veterans’ strategies, and other subpopulations will be considered specifically.

Council Member Gilman commented that a non-traditional subpopulation to consider should be those who have recently become homeless, for example those who have been homeless for less than 15 months. Additionally, the Council should consider setting bold goals, for example in quantitative reductions in homelessness, to hold itself accountable to at the State level.

- On goals, the plan is intended to find a balance of being actionable and aspirational, while also not knowing what impact future budgets or legislation might have.

Council Member Corrin Buchanan commented that she would like to see partnerships and collaborations, such as those with State criminal justice and workforce development partners, noted in the Action Plan.

Secretary Castro Ramírez commented that she would like objective number 13, partnerships between homeless services and workforce development systems, to be reframed to consider asset building and wealth building to drive a different set of strategies and actions.

Council Member Donald Cavier commented that, whatever objectives the Council agrees to, its staff should be tasked to identify the measures to evaluate the objectives' success and the frequency with which that will be reported out. It would also be helpful to hear reports from staff on outcomes from HCFC funding.

- Once the Action Plan objectives have been approved, the next step will be to build in detail including strategies, measurements, and reporting. There will also be some information on HCFC funding outcomes during the next agenda item. HCFC funding should be considered one piece of the puzzle at the State level and information learned from the Department of Social Services (CDSS), Governor's Office of Emergency Services, Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), and other funding is also important.

Public Comment

- Christine Smith, California Partnership to End Domestic Violence: 57% of homeless women report domestic violence as an immediate cause of their homelessness. 18,000 domestic violence survivors stayed in shelters last year, and it is important to highlight and consider that population in the long-term plan.
- Kimberly Lewis, California Coalition for Youth: as workforce development is being talked about, think about youth independence and creating self-sufficiency. It is also important to note involvement with Medi-Cal, behavioral health care, and substance abuse services systems.

The Council approved the draft Action Plan Objectives. All members present voted to approve.

VI. Department and HCFC Updates

Deputy Secretary Sutton provided updates from HCFC. Contract negotiations for HDIS are in progress. The system will be in development starting in November and through February. HDIS will be a warehouse of de-identified data of individuals experiencing homelessness who are being served by systems throughout the state's 44 CoCs. It will not be a comprehensive count of people experiencing homelessness, nor will it be a case management system with live-time data.

The HHAP Round 2 application is expected in the next couple of weeks, prior to the November 30 statutory deadline. Applicants will have 60 days after release to submit applications, and HCFC can ask for additional information before the application is approved. The application will look different from Round 1 and will incorporate similar questions to those asked in other applications for State homelessness funding.

As of June 30, the \$500 million in [Homeless Emergency Aid Program](#) funding was 92% obligated and 47% expended. The \$650 million in HHAP Round 1 funding was 35% obligated and 3% expended.

HCFC is working with partners from CDSS and HCD on additional guidance on rehousing out of Project Roomkey sites into permanent housing, including information learned from the 100-Day Challenge Cohort 1.

The following Departments provided a written [update](#) of their relevant homeless programs:

- Department of Education
- Department of Health Care Services
- Department of Housing and Community Development
- Housing Finance Agency
- Governor's Office of Emergency Services
- Department of Social Services
- Department of Transportation

VII. Public Comments on Items Not on the Agenda

No public comments were made on this item.

VIII. Future Meeting Agendas and Final Remarks

Secretary Castro Ramírez shared that BCSH has taken the lead in ensuring information and resources are available regarding protections from AB 3088, which is focused on preventing evictions of those experiencing financial hardship due to COVID-19. Visit housingiskey.com for additional information.

Secretary Castro Ramírez thanked the HCFC Staff, Council members and their departments or agencies, and community members for their work to ensure that people experiencing homelessness have prevention, services, access to housing, and the proper support. The Council's next meeting will be December 18.

IX. Adjournment

Meeting is adjourned at 4:36PM.