



CALIFORNIA HOMELESS COORDINATING AND FINANCING COUNCIL

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

Meeting Summary February 23, 2021 2:00PM – 4:00PM Teleconference

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

Secretary Lourdes M. Castro Ramírez called the meeting to order at 2:05PM.

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 and Homelessness Branch in the Department of Social Services;
- Donald Cavier, Acting Executive Director of the California Housing Finance Agency;
- Jacey Cooper, Chief Deputy Director of Health Care Programs in the Department of Health Care Services;
- Jody Ketcheside, Deputy Regional Director of Turning Point of Central California;
- Jennifer Loving, Chief Executive Officer, Destination: Home;
- Toks Omishakin, Director of California Department of Transportation;
- Joe Uchishiba, Police Officer, City of Fairfield; and
- Gustavo Velasquez, Director of California Department of Housing and Community Development

Absent:

- Gail Gilman, Chief Strategy Officer, All Home California and
- Gary McCoy, Congressional Aide, Office of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi

Opening Remarks

Secretary Castro Ramírez welcomed the Council and the public to the meeting. Today's meeting includes discussion of the draft HCFC Action Plan and progress updates from HCFC, including the Homeless Data Integration System (HDIS).

Earlier today, the Governor signed a \$7.6 billion economic relief package which will provide one-time stimulus to about 5.7 million low-income Californians.

Led by the state's Health and Human Services Agency and Government Operations Agency, California has been working to accelerate distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine. Out of 8.8 million doses of vaccine that have been delivered, approximately 7.5 million have been administered across the state.

Council Member Donald Cavier has been appointed by the Governor to serve as acting Executive Director of the California Housing Finance Agency (CalHFA), following the former Director's departure to work with the new presidential administration.

II. Adoption of the meeting summary from December 18, 2020 Council meeting

The Council approved the [meeting summary](#) from the December 18, 2020 Council Meeting. Council Member Jacey Cooper abstained from voting. All other members present voted to approve.

III. HCFC Action Plan for Preventing and Ending Homelessness in California

Secretary Castro Ramírez introduced this item. HCFC's [draft Action Plan](#) has been developed with collaboration from Council Members, the Governor's Office, State departments, and stakeholders across the state.

This plan is action-oriented, recommits to strong partnerships, and includes increased State leadership to accelerate the work of preventing and ending homelessness in California. It is a living document and will be revisited frequently to provide updates or additional information.

Consultant Matthew Doherty walked through the draft Action Plan, its five action areas and fifteen objectives within those areas. The development of this plan has been ongoing August 2020 and has included one-on-one discussions with Council Members, extensive stakeholder input, and a special council meeting in September dedicated to the Plan. In October, the Council approved initial [draft objectives](#) for the Plan.

Since then, HCFC has been working to draft content, add and refine activities listed under each objective, and prioritize items within the Plan. The current draft includes over 80 activities led by State departments, and five planned working groups which will focus on highest-priority issues that require further interagency coordination.

Deputy Secretary for Homelessness Ali Sutton explained the vision behind this Action Plan, noting a need for increased leadership from the State but also efforts to include service providers and people experiencing homelessness. Racial equity and justice will be pursued within the Plan, as will a continued commitment to align activities with Housing First approaches and a need to address unsheltered homelessness through permanent housing.

Each working group that is established within the Plan will be charged with a variety of goals including developing strategies for its particular area of work and strengthening supports for subpopulations of focus, as applicable. Accountability, performance measures, and robust data collection and analysis will be important to the execution of the Plan.

Council Member Russell Atterberry commented that scheduling between different working groups should be a consideration, as some individuals may want to be included in multiple groups.

Council Member Alexis Barries asked what strategies will be used to identify candidates for the Youth and Young Adults Working Group and commented on unique challenges young people have experienced during this pandemic. Young people are currently experiencing a near-25% unemployment rate, youth experiencing homelessness are largely unsheltered and may not have been targeted specifically in pandemic response, and Homekey awards for permanent housing solutions have inequitably served homeless youth by around 18 times less than their representation in the homeless population.

- The process of forming working groups is still to be determined, but each group will be in charge of thinking about overarching and subpopulation-specific strategies.

Council Member Jacey Cooper commented that the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) should be included in the Re-Entry Working Group, as the department has multiple components within its California Advancing & Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM) proposal that will be relevant to this group.

Council Member Jody Ketcheside commented that there is an opportunity to look at larger youth set-asides in funding allocations, especially among rural communities who may not be able to do much with a very small allocation.

- The Action Plan does not directly address gaps in funding, but this is the sort of topic the Youth and Young Adults Working Group will be to discuss further.

Council Member Gustavo Velasquez commented that last year, the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) published an analysis of impediments to fair housing. There are subpopulations not specifically called out in the five proposed

working groups who experience impediments to housing, and likely homelessness services, who should be considered further.

- Each group will have its own area of focus but should also consider the unique needs of subpopulations not explicitly mentioned.

Council Member Amy Anderson commented that the Plan is thorough, comprehensive, and ambitious but that there may be a need to prioritize certain items for focus.

- Working groups are being prioritized by order of implementation. Council Members are invited to share their thoughts about priorities or additional activities for inclusion.

Council Vice Chair Emilio Ramirez asked if there is space for local representatives such as himself to be included in the proposed working groups, and to what extent support services are going to be considered when looking at gaps in systems.

- The only group expected to be State staff only is the State Funding Working Group. The exact structure of each group is yet to be determined.

Council Member Cooper echoed Council Member Anderson's thoughts and suggested there be more documentation in the Plan about how working groups will function, as far as resources given or feedback received from groups.

- Working groups will be able to define and prioritize their own work, and to report back to the Council with information and recommendations.

Council Member Jennifer Loving commented that specific targets and measurable goals are important and will help demonstrate commitment.

- Based on Council feedback today, HCFC will aim to include some additional specificity around working group goals in the Plan.

Secretary Castro Ramirez commented that prioritization is needed but that even the de-prioritized activities and objectives are important. HCFC staff should aim to highlight areas where good work is already happening and work with Council members to create a balanced plan that is bold but also achievable.

Council Member Corrin Buchanan echoed comments about prioritization and added that working groups should also consider how to best interact with and use data from HDIS.

Council Member Atterberry commented that a communications plan will be important in order to show the public what is being accomplished by HCFC and to communicate priorities within the Action Plan.

IV. HCFC Action Plan: Process for Approval

Matthew Doherty walked through the process for revision, review, and approval of the HCFC Action Plan. Before the next Council meeting, HCFC staff will meet with each Council Member from a State department to review the activities for which their department is listed as lead. A revised version of the Plan will be distributed on March 16, to allow time for review prior to the Council meeting on March 23.

Communication and educating stakeholders will be part of the launch process of the approved Plan. Before the start of Fiscal Year 2022-23 the Plan will be revised to incorporate new or more specific planned activities from State departments.

Council Member Buchanan commented appreciation for the framing of “housing-focused” interim housing settings in the Action Plan, and that there is a good opportunity to use data to create measurable outcomes in the Plan. Specific activities should also be considered to address the needs of youth and transitional-aged youth, specifically those involved with child welfare or probation systems, as should activities to better serve older adults and people with disabilities.

Council Member Velasquez commented that HCD is listed as lead for 20 activities in the draft Action Plan and there are four more being finalized. It will be important to strengthen local housing elements related to people experiencing or at risk of homelessness and the department is committed to intentionality in how it reviews and approves those plans across jurisdictions. As part of the Plan, people experiencing homelessness in the wake of disasters should be specifically considered.

Council Member Cavier commented that CalHFA is preparing its 2021 mid-year budget update for its board and is planning for Fiscal Year 2021-22, which may help inform performance measures for the agency’s activities in the Action Plan. Report-back for \$300 million in National Mortgage Settlement funds deployed by the agency, including numbers of families served, can also be included in the Plan.

Council Member Toks Omishakin commented on three items for Caltrans involvement in the Action Plan: with new leadership at the Federal level, there may be opportunities to use Caltrans right-of-way for emergency shelters; homelessness response plans should consider the fact that many people are currently on the State’s right-of-way, and coordinate partnerships between the State and local governments on this issue; and Caltrans should be included in decision-making, accountability, funding, and implementation of the Action Plan.

Council Member Atterberry commented that Federal Government partners should be considered in the Action Plan, in particular the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs for veteran-specific activities.

Council Member Gina Buccieri-Harrington commented that Governor’s Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) staff is currently reviewing its activities in the Action

Plan. The department will be experiencing a decrease in funding for victims' services this year and is working on a five-year plan to determine the future of some of its programs.

Public Comment

- Natalie Komuro, City of Ontario: There has been a lack of investment in housing and human services for decades, which does not appear clearly acknowledged in the Action Plan. The Plan should include level-setting for ongoing investment needs in the homelessness response system, as local jurisdictions need certainty of future funding to sustain investments. Caltrans may also need additional funding to help coordinate responses to people living on Caltrans property, and coordinated communication around the Plan will be important.
- Joe Colletti: State activities should be aligned not only with Housing First approaches but also trauma-informed design and care approaches. Trauma-informed approaches will likely be accepted as an evidence-based best practice during this decade and the Council should get out in front of it.
- Machael Smith: The Action Plan's goals and objectives should look not only at California's urban areas but rural areas as well, because outcomes may be different between them. The Council should encourage homelessness funders such as HCD and DSS to require consistent strategies across cities and counties, such as trauma-informed care. When looking at numerical goals in the Plan, keep in mind that Continuum of Care (CoC) performance data from 2019-2020 is about to be reported, and due to COVID-19 will show significant impacts to outcomes.
- Anna Johnson, John Burton Advocates for Youth (JBAY): A recent JBAY analysis of Homekey awards found that just 0.5% of funding targeted unaccompanied homeless youth, despite the group making up 9% of homeless individuals, and 79% of these youth were unsheltered. Working groups and HDIS should help advise funding decisions to ensure that populations in need, particularly youth, and all areas of the state are included in planning and service delivery.
- Helene Schneider, U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH): The Action Plan is a great start for the State of California. USICH stands ready to help as a Federal partner with navigating new directions with funding or other forms of assistance needed.
- Kim Lewis, California Coalition for Youth (CCY): The Council should prioritize by focusing on young people experiencing homelessness, who if not assisted will become the chronically homeless adult population of the future. Employment and economic supports are needed. CCY will also be submitting written comments on the draft Action Plan.
- Ludmilla Bade: There are many different causes of homelessness, including losing housing, trauma, finance, aging, health, and addiction. Better and quicker

outcomes will happen by identifying the correct type of assistance for each individual.

- Jevon Wilkes, CCY: Young people, and especially Black, Indigenous, and People of Color as well as LGBTQ youth should be prioritized. The greatest solution to preventing and ending chronic adult homelessness is focusing on young people, who should be included in decision-making processes and in future investments.
- Laurie Flores: A working group focused on the aging population should be considered for inclusion in the Action Plan. Older individuals may have difficulty increasing income or returning to work and may not be able to rely on services or subsidies that are not ongoing. Care attendants should also be considered locally when staffing homeless assistance programs.

V. HCFC Executive Officer Update

Executive Officer Julie Lo provided updates from HCFC. The California State Auditor recently released findings from an audit of 5 California CoCs, which includes broad recommendations for CoCs and for HCFC. Recommendations in its report are related to the Action Plan, which is currently on track to be approved, and the HDIS, which will be ready for public beta by the end of March.

Data through December 2020 and for several years prior has been collected for HDIS from about 95% of CoCs. The public beta will include a variety of the collected data to illuminate system efficiencies and possible inefficiencies, to inform a coordinated response. The system is intended to help improve a data-driven response to reduce and end homelessness. HCFC will continue working with CoCs to improve data quality and data culture.

HCFC has new staff members: Jeannie McKendry, who is the Legislative Specialist, and Victor Duron, who will be the Grants Director, leading Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP) and Homeless Housing, Assistance, and Prevention (HHAP) Program teams.

Three technical assistance contracts totaling around \$4 million are being finalized under the HHAP Program in the areas of racial equity, youth, and permanent housing. HCFC expects grantees to be receiving this support by the end of spring.

VI. Governor's Budget Briefing & Legislative Bills Update

Item was deferred to the next Council meeting.

VII. Future meeting agendas

No comments were made on this item.

VIII. Public comments and final remarks

Secretary Castro Ramirez provided closing remarks, noting that this has been one of the most robust and engaging HCFC Council meetings thus far. All materials presented during today's meeting are available [online](#).

For individuals experiencing housing instability and needing resources, the State has developed [HousingIsKey.com](#). Additional resources are also available from [HCFC](#).

IX. Adjournment

Meeting is adjourned at 4:07PM.