



# CALIFORNIA HOMELESS COORDINATING AND FINANCING COUNCIL

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

---

**Meeting Summary**  
**September 22, 2021**  
**1:00PM – 4:00PM**  
**Teleconference**

## **I. Call to Order and Roll Call**

Secretary Lourdes M. Castro Ramírez called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m.

*Council Members Present:*

- Lourdes M. Castro Ramírez, Council Chair and Secretary of Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency;
- Emilio Ramirez, Council Vice Chair and Director of Housing, City of Oxnard;
- Amy Anderson, Senior Vice President, Housing Affordability Philanthropy, Wells Fargo;
- Russell Atterberry, Undersecretary of California Department of Veterans Affairs;
- Gina Buccieri-Harrington, Assistant Director of Grants Management, Victim Services Program, California Governor's Office of Emergency Services;
- Corrin Buchanan, Assistant Director of Housing and Homelessness, California Department of Social Services;
- Donald Cavier, Chief Deputy Director of California Housing Finance Agency;
- Jacey Cooper, Chief Deputy Director of Health Care Programs, California 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;
- Rebecca Ruan-O'Shaughnessy, Vice Chancellor of Educational Services and Support, California Community Colleges;
- Lindsay Tornatore, Director of Student Achievement and Support Division, California Department of Education; and
- Gustavo Velasquez, Director of California Department of Housing and Community Development.

*Absent:*

- Alexis Barries, Advocate;
- Joe Uchishiba, Former Police Officer, City of Fairfield

## Opening Remarks

Secretary Castro Ramírez gave opening remarks. California experienced a surge in COVID-19 cases over summer related to the Delta variant, and we encourage you to stay safe and get vaccinated. HCFC council meetings will continue to be held remotely for now.

Earlier this month, the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) announced \$1.45 billion in funding for round two of [Homekey](#).

Tiena Johnson Hall is the newly appointed Executive Director of the California Housing Finance Agency (CalHFA). She is currently in the appointment process to join this council. Thank you to Don Cavier, Chief Deputy Director at CalHFA, for his work on this council.

Ali Sutton is leaving her role as Deputy Secretary for Homelessness at the Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency (BCSH). She has accomplished much in her two years leading HCFC, and we will miss her.

## II. Adoption of the Meeting Summary from June 17, 2021 Council Meeting

The Council approved the [meeting summary](#) from the June 17, 2021 council meeting. All members present voted to approve.

## III. Lessons Learned: How Schools and Continuums of Care Work Together to Serve Youth Experiencing Homelessness

Michael Gause, Ending Homelessness Manager for Sonoma County Community Development Commission and Debra Sanders, Homeless Education Liaison for Sonoma County Office of Education (COE) [presented](#) on this item.

A Local Education Agency (LEA) is a school district or county office of education that provides administrative supervision and support to public schools. Sonoma County has 40 school districts, which makes coordination and partnership from the Sonoma COE particularly important in implementing the local Homeless Education Plan.

The first step in establishing a partnership between LEAs and Continuums of Care (CoCs) is building a relationship through communication, followed by identifying shared goals, working together, and including other community partners. An example of this partnership is the Sonoma County CoC and COE working together to improve local Point-In-Time count data by reaching out to school districts to help identify students and families experiencing homelessness. This also helps raise awareness among school districts and can encourage them to look more closely at their own data.

In Sonoma County, Michael has given Debra his phone number to share with McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act liaisons. He has also visited schools to give

talks and share information, so educational professionals know what homelessness services are available the community.

For ongoing coordination, identifying regular touchpoints, sharing data, and working together on grant opportunities are important. The CoC and COE make efforts to share Point-In-Time Count data, CalPADS data, and frequently work together on grant opportunities including youth funding and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) annual Notice of Funding Opportunity.

Practical resources are key, including the Sonoma COE [Homeless Education Resources webpage](#), but so are “soft” resources like building relationships, creating spaces where families can share, training staff to understand lived experiences of people and families experiencing homelessness, seeking youth input through the county’s Homeless Youth Task Force, and sharing McKinney-Vento information and materials.

Executive Officer Julie Lo commented that, laid out HCFC’s [Action Plan](#), a Youth and Young Adults Working Group is slated to be created in early 2022 to help with the state’s work on youth homelessness.

Council Member Atterberry asked to clarify whether LEAs are county-level or state-level organizations, and if similar LEA structures exist in other counties that may have just one school district.

- Every county has LEAs—school districts. Each county has an office of education, funded through state education dollars, that is eligible for an Education for Homeless Children and Youths grant, which funds the program Debra works with. Not every county applies for these funds, but many do, and there is additional funding available this year for COVID recovery.

Council Member Ruan-O’Shaughnessy asked about prioritization of students within the CoC system, and if there are obstacles to those students receiving services.

- The partnership that exists between COE and CoC can help cut through obstacles to service and determine potential pathways for students and families experiencing homelessness. LEAs also each have a McKinney-Vento liaison—whom Debra helps train and provide resources for—that can make connections between local programs and the COE for more efficient communication.

Secretary Castro Ramírez asked what the county is seeing in terms of youth experiencing homelessness, if that is increasing or decreasing, and what the ability of the county to provide services to all students is.

- In 2020, the county recorded a 40% drop in transitional-aged youth experiencing homelessness. Sonoma County has a great youth shelter to support this population, but during COVID there have been age-related barriers for entry to new interim housing solutions such as Project Roomkey. The COE has made efforts to help students during COVID by providing food and school supplies, and

is currently trying to identify youth experiencing homelessness who are not enrolled this year, to determine if those individuals still need assistance.

#### **IV. Legislative Report**

Legislative Specialist Jeannie McKendry presented on this item. The 2021 legislative session is wrapping up, and it is the first of a two-year session. There are several bills in the legislature that are relevant to this council and state homelessness work:

[AB 1220: California Interagency on Homelessness](#) would rename HCFC the California Interagency Council on Homelessness, add the Secretary of the California Health and Human Services Agency as a co-chair, raise the level of Council membership to directors and secretaries, create an advisory committee including people with lived experience of homelessness, and make other administrative changes related to the Council.

[AB 977: Homeless Program Data Reporting: Homeless Management Information System](#) (HMIS) would require specified homelessness services programs to report into HMIS as a condition of receiving state funds, with data elements in alignment with HUD reporting requirements; CoCs to continue to share HMIS data for the state's Homeless Data Integration System (HDIS); and HCFC staff to report out on fiscal data for state-funded homelessness programs.

[AB 27: Homeless Children and Unaccompanied Youths: Reporting](#) would require the California Department of Education (CDE) to develop best practices and a questionnaire to identify homeless children and youth, require LEAs to administer the questionnaire and report data back to CDE, and authorize grant funding through CDE to create three regional technical assistance centers in the state.

[AB 46: California Youth Empowerment Act](#) would establish the California Youth Empowerment Commission in state government to provide meaningful civic engagement opportunities for California's disadvantaged youth between 14-25 years old. The Commission would make recommendations to the legislature, the State Superintendent, and the Governor on issues affecting youth, including homelessness.

[AB 546: Dependent Children: Documents: Housing](#) would help ensure foster youth are not terminated from care into homelessness and require child welfare departments to explain whether a youth exiting foster care has stable housing, and if not, what additional services will be provided to prevent their homelessness.

[AB 362: Homeless Shelters: Safety Regulations](#) would require a city or county receiving a complaint from a homeless shelter occupant to inspect that shelter and follow up on violations. Each city and county would report violation information annually to HCD and BCSH.

Council Member Atterberry asked to clarify if HDIS currently captures all the required HUD data points as mentioned in AB 977.

- Federally funded programs currently use those data elements, and this bill would specify that reporting for state-funded programs use those same data elements for consistency.

Council Member Ruan-O’Shaughnessy asked if there is a list of programs that would be included under AB 977, and how the bill might apply to new and recent housing programs through California Community Colleges.

- The bill includes a list of programs, which are generally programs directly supporting people experiencing homelessness rather than broader housing programs.

Council Member Tornatore commented that the Student Achievement and Support Division at CDE has been working with the author’s office on AB 27 and has already put its pieces into action, including updated identification strategies considering the COVID pandemic.

## **V. HCFC Action Plan and Working Group Updates**

Julie Lo presented updates related to HCFC’s Action Plan. Staff have collected data on all 58 Action Plan activities in FY 20-21, which Council departments provided upon request. HCFC is preparing a draft report with a summary of FY 20-21 Action Plan progress, data analyses, and summarized reporting for all activities. The draft report will be sent to the Council before November meeting for review.

A new round of Housing First assessments is forthcoming. Prior to the November council meeting, HCFC staff will reach out to department staff to confirm the list of programs to be assessed.

There are five working groups laid out in the Action Plan with areas of focus identified through stakeholder conversations. The first of these, the State Funding and Programs Working Group, is up and running. HCFC staff will update the Council on planning and progress for additional working groups at the November meeting.

HCD Chief Deputy Director Zachary Olmstead and Council Member Buchanan gave updates on HCFC’s State Funding and Programs Working Group, on which they are both co-chairs. This working group will bring together leaders from state departments or agencies overseeing state homelessness funding.

Initial priorities for the working group are to:

- Set outcome targets and document impact of state funding programs
- Align new funding and program requirements
- Enhance access to funding for marginalized communities
- Uplift expertise of those with lived experience of homelessness in program design and implementation

The Working Group will report progress updates to the Council at least twice a year and will bring decisions and discussion items back to the Council. A draft charter has been created for this working group and includes 13 different state departments and agencies for membership. The Working Group's first meeting is set for October 5, 2021.

Council Member Anderson commented that, with the level of funding committed by the state to homelessness programs, the alignment and coordination of this working group will be critical to ensure the greatest impacts. The council member also asked to clarify the timeline for formation of future working groups.

- HCFC plans to stand up one working group per quarter for the next five quarters, starting with the State Funding and Programs Working Group in this current quarter. HCFC staff expect to provide a more thorough plan at the November 3 council meeting.

## **VI. Department and Federal Partner Updates**

Secretary Castro Ramírez introduced this item, noting that relevant [budget trailer bill language](#) is available as part of the updates in this meeting's materials.

Helene Schneider, Regional Coordinator for the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness is here today for federal partner updates and is expected to be a regular guest on this item. The secretary also expressed excitement for the new [House America](#) initiative led by HUD.

The following departments and federal partners provided [written updates](#) on their relevant programs:

- California Community Colleges (CCC)
- California Department of Education (CDE)
- California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS)
- California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD)
- California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES)
- California Department of Social Services (CDSS)
- California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)
- U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH)

Helene Schneider expressed appreciation from herself and colleagues for HCFC's recently released [Putting the Funding Pieces Together](#) guide and provided additions to updates from USICH.

The House America initiative, an "all-hands-on-deck" effort to address the country's homelessness crisis, was recently launched. The initiative focuses on rehousing through Housing First approaches and creating new affordable housing. USICH put out a [10 Strategies](#) document as part of this initiative.

USICH is updating its federal strategic plan and is currently accepting feedback through its website and in stakeholder sessions.

USICH wants to encourage communities to conduct as thorough a Point-In-Time count in 2022 as possible and will pass along information from HUD when it is available.

Council Member Tornatore provided additions to updates from CDE. 25% of the \$98 million CDE received through the American Rescue Plan Homeless Children and Youth Fund will be used for state-level activities, with 75% going out as local assistance funds directly for schools. CDE is using its state-level funding in four ways:

- Creating three regional technical assistance centers (noted in AB 27), which will assist communities in implementing homelessness funds.
- Increasing CDE staff capacity to manage grant programs.
- Creating an “innovative practices” grant for LEAs and community partners to support students experiencing homelessness.
- Contracting out for a third-party evaluation of the implementation of American Rescue Plan Homeless Children and Youth funds from CDE.

Council Member Velasquez provided additions to updates from HCD. With its \$2.75 billion in new funding for Homekey, HCD hopes to create over 10,000 new interim and permanent housing units. Homekey 2.0 includes an 8% youth set-aside and \$550 million for operating subsidies, to ensure long-term sustainability.

Council Member Cavier provided updates from CalHFA. In 2008, CalHFA created the Mental Health Services Act Loan Program, a \$400 million program to finance permanent supportive housing projects throughout California. In 2016, while this program was winding down, HCD’s No Place Like Home Program was enacted to finance similar permanent supportive housing projects.

CalHFA’s Special Needs Housing Program was created to bridge the gap between these two programs to ensure projects could move forward without delay. This program is no longer accepting applications and is winding down, with all projects expected to be closed out by June 30, 2022. To date, the program has funded 55 projects totaling almost 3,600 permanent supportive housing units.

Council Member Buchanan provided additions to updates from CDSS. Historically, CDSS homelessness programs have required matching funds from counties; for expansion funds in this year’s budget, no match is required. CDSS anticipates this will allow funding to reach areas that have historically not been able to participate due to the match requirement.

Several CDSS homelessness programs received expansion funding in this year’s budget:

- \$380 million over two years for CalWORKS Housing Support Program, on top of \$95 million annual ongoing funding.
- \$185 million over two years for Bringing Families Home Program.
- \$300 million over two years for Housing and Disability Advocacy Program, on top of \$25 million annual ongoing funding.
- \$185 million over two years for Home Safe Program.

- \$150 million for Project Roomkey, to be focused on rehousing efforts.
- \$805 million for the new Community Care Expansion Program.

Council Member Omishakin provided additions to updates from Caltrans. The Clean California Program, with \$1.1 billion in funding, is expected to create 11,000 jobs over the next three years. Caltrans is working to remove barriers to employment, including for individuals experiencing homelessness, by offering entry-level positions with no license requirements, providing employment exams in person, and offering next-day interviews.

Caltrans is continuing its program to provide lease agreements for temporary emergency shelters in state right-of-way areas; the program currently has nine agreements with cities and counties, including [Sacramento and Los Angeles](#), six agreements in progress, and 59 inquiries under review. In a similar effort, Caltrans worked with the City of Fresno on Operation Offramp, which has helped move 429 individuals—80% of those contacted—into shelter from encampments.

Council Member Atterberry provided updates from the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet). In partnership with HCD, the Veterans Housing and Homelessness Prevention Program Round 6, approximately \$150 million in funding, will be awarded soon. The previous five rounds of funding have helped create over 2,600 veteran-specific housing units.

In the FY 21-22 budget, CalVet received \$25 million for a three-year pilot of the Veterans Support to Self-Reliance program, which will provide supportive services for aging veterans experiencing homelessness, particularly those currently using HUD Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing vouchers. Approximately 600 veterans will receive services through the pilot program. CalVet also received \$20 million for construction on the West Los Angeles Veterans Affairs campus.

## **VII. HCFC Updates**

Secretary Castro Ramírez thanked Deputy Secretary for Homelessness Ali Sutton for her work and leadership with HCFC and this council, noting that she has been involved since the first meeting, when she was a member of the Council.

Deputy Secretary Sutton explained that, when she came into her role as the state's first Deputy Secretary for Homelessness, she had four main areas of focus:

- Increasing the impact and leadership of this council
- Standing up the Homeless Data Integration System
- Outcomes-based funding implementation
- Building out staffing at the level needed for this work

She expressed pride, in stepping out of this role, for the work this council and the HCFC staff have done over the last few years.



Council members expressed appreciation and thanks for Deputy Secretary Sutton's hard work over the years with HCFC.

### **VIII. Future Meeting Agendas**

*No comments were made on this item.*

### **IX. Public Comments and Final Remarks**

#### *Public Comment*

- Kim Lewis, California Coalition for Youth: Expressed appreciation for Deputy Secretary Sutton and her work to elevate the needs of young people experiencing homelessness.
- Peter, constituent from Orange County: Wants the state to implement more accurate calculations for rent increases. Currently, allowable increases are calculated as a percentage based on previous rent amounts, which is too simple. Rent increases should be based on the year-to-year difference in a county's area median income, multiplying this difference by 5% to get a dollar amount that would be the maximum allowable increase in yearly rent. Wants the Council to propose this change to the legislature.

Secretary Castro Ramírez thanked everyone for joining this meeting. The next council meeting is November 3, 2021, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

### **X. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 3:51 p.m.