



CALIFORNIA HOMELESS COORDINATING AND FINANCING COUNCIL

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

Meeting Summary November 3, 2021 1:00PM – 4:00PM Teleconference

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

Secretary Lourdes M. Castro Ramírez called the meeting to order at 1:04 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;
- Alexis Barries, Advocate;
- 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;
- Gail Gilman, Chief Strategy Officer, All Home California (*not present at initial roll call*);
- Tiena Johnson Hall, Executive Director of California Housing Finance Agency;
- Jody Ketcheside, Deputy Regional Director of Turning Point of Central California;
- Jennifer Loving, Chief Executive Officer, Destination: Home; and
- Toks Omishakin, Director of California Department of Transportation.

Absent:

- Jacey Cooper, Chief Deputy Director of Health Care Programs, California Department of Health Care Services;
- Gary McCoy, Congressional Aide, Office of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi;
- 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;
- Joe Uchishiba, Retired Police Officer, City of Fairfield; and
- Gustavo Velasquez, Director of California Department of Housing and Community Development.

Opening Remarks

Secretary Castro Ramírez gave opening remarks. This is the last Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council (HCFC) meeting of 2021, and today we will look back on all that has been accomplished this year, including adoption of the Action Plan and release of the Homeless Data Integration System.

This year, the Governor and the Legislature adopted a historic budget with over \$22 billion to address the housing affordability crisis, including \$12 billion to address homelessness. \$50 million of that is for an Encampment Resolution Funding grant program administered by HCFC, for which a Request for Applications was released last week.

Governor Newsom signed almost 3 dozen housing and homelessness bills into law this year to accelerate the production of affordable housing and to increase coordination in addressing homelessness. [Assembly Bill 1220](#), the most significant to this council, will rename and restructure this council as the California Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal ICH). The Council will have director-level membership and will now have two co-chairs, adding Secretary Ghaly from the California Health and Human Services Agency.

It is important to remind everyone to stay healthy and safe and to do everything possible to protect individuals experiencing homelessness from the COVID-19 virus. This council's meetings will continue to be held remotely due to the ongoing pandemic.

II. Adoption of the Meeting Summary from September 22, 2021 Council Meeting

The Council approved the [meeting summary](#) from the September 22, 2021 council meeting. All members present voted to approve.

III. Housing First Update

Executive Officer Julie Lo presented on this item. From 2018 to 2019, HCFC conducted its first round of statutorily required Housing First assessments. Specific Housing First requirements are laid out in statute and were included in the assessment checklist.

In the coming months, HCFC will conduct another round of Housing First assessments. Staff have been working with Council departments to identify programs that fall under Housing First requirements, including a new provision from AB 1220 that will include emergency shelters, previously exempted. HCFC has updated the Housing First checklist is working on a web form for collection.

Staff have identified [33 state programs](#) under Housing First requirements, up from about 25 programs in the previous round of assessments. Following these assessments, HCFC will provide a written report summarizing current Housing First status and the extent to which recommendations in the prior round of assessments were addressed.

In December, HCFC will distribute instructions on Housing First reporting along with the checklist itself. Between January and March, HCFC will work with departments to assist in the completion of this checklist and will report out publicly in mid-2022.

Council Member Anderson asked if the checklist tool and the completed checklists are available on the website for the public to view.

- All checklists that were submitted in the last round are available as meeting materials throughout 2018-2019. Future checklists will be available as an appendix to the summary report.

Council Member Anderson commented that this sort of accountability will be important in this process; that it should not just be an internal assessment, but that the public should be able to review as well.

IV. Adoption of HCFC Action Plan Report

Executive Officer Lo introduced this item. HCFC's Action Plan, adopted in April 2021, includes a requirement for annual reporting on activities committed to by state departments represented on the Council. HCFC has prepared the [draft Fiscal Year 20-21 Implementation Progress Report](#), which will be voted on today.

Interim Director of Statewide Policy, Cody Zeger, presented on this item. In July 2021, HCFC reached out to staff from all 13 reporting departments and agencies for updates on their FY 20-21 activities. In August, HCFC worked with departments to collect responses with the most relevant and useful information, then compiled and summarized these responses into the draft report. HCFC received 82 responses across 58 activities with timeframes or milestones in FY 20-21, a 100% response rate.

The report is structured in four major sections: highlights of accomplishments from each Council department; baseline data for key measurements to help assess progress moving forward, including a racial equity analysis; summarized responses to each activity in order of its place in the Action Plan, which make up the bulk of this report; and priorities for the next fiscal year.

Many of the priorities for FY 21-22 include expanding existing programs and continuing to strengthen work done together as a state. Along with these priorities, HCFC will also update the Action Plan in 2022 to include new activities and updated performance measures as needed.

Council Member Gilman was called for roll at 1:38 p.m.

Council Member Loving asked if there is anything HCFC wishes had happened in the last fiscal year that did not, and if HCFC has worries in going forward.

- In the development of this report, HCFC realized just how many actions it had committed, not all of which were able to be fully achieved. It is always a regret if a commitment must be delayed or deferred. Going forward, the priorities listed in the Action Plan report will be important, as will integrating the work of new

Council departments in the updated Action Plan and ensuring that plan is a focus of HCFC's work.

Secretary Castro Ramírez commented that the report captures tremendous progress and has been shaped by all the departments on this council. As we bring on new departments in becoming the Cal ICH, this will be an opportunity to prioritize actions for the Action Plan. The Council was very aspirational and ambitious in this plan, with several working groups that may have had overly ambitious timelines to be up and running. Going into 2022, it will be important to focus and prioritize.

Council Member Loving commented that she has concerns around COVID-related protections and resources ending. Community opposition is also at an all-time high, which is being seen at a local level, particularly in advancing Homekey projects.

Council Member Gilman commented that the Council should be proud of all its work shown in the report. It will be important that the advisory committee being created as part of changes to this council can be well-informed and play a role in giving feedback to inform the work of the new council and the state. She asked if the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) could be firmer in working with local partners on Homekey 2.0 to ensure CEQA and other exemptions are fully used to benefit projects.

HCD Policy and Program Support Unit Chief, Josh Rosa commented that HCD intends to lean heavily on the advisory committee and welcomes thoughts from local partners. With Homekey, HCD is conducting pre-application consults with interested local governments and has heard about a level of community opposition as a barrier to these projects. HCD wants to make available guidance to help local governments engage with their communities and would also like to hear back on successful strategies for overcoming these barriers.

Council Member Loving commented that her organization has brought out positive speakers and worked to [organize](#) in communities where proposed projects are slated to be developed. There has been significant [negative comment](#) and [opposition](#) from some, and support from the state in guidance and removing barriers is very helpful.

Council Member Gilman commented that she would like to see the state be more directive in this area, and to have HCFC work to determine why certain communities might not be applying for Homekey. It is great that HCD is looking into San Francisco having not approved a recent housing project, but the state should be doing more of this to push jurisdictions to move forward in helping people experiencing homelessness.

Council Member Omishakin commented thanks for everyone who worked on the Action Plan and this report. In response to Council Member Loving's comment about negative communication, it is also important for the state to share how much positive there is, including more detail about that \$12 billion for homelessness in the budget. Council

members should each be informed enough to point out specific investments in a solutions-oriented way, and to communicate those out broadly.

Secretary Castro Ramírez agreed and commented that it will be important for the Council, in its transition, to be more strategic about communicating the breadth and scope of work across the state and what that means for communities.

Council Member Buchanan commented thanks to HCFC staff for their work on this report, and to county, city, and community-based partners and direct service workers for their work to help house people experiencing homelessness. As a co-chair of the State Funding and Programs Working Group, it was great to present at the last council meeting with Zack Olmstead from HCD and Julie Lo from HCFC. Moving forward, coordination is going to be increasingly important to help break down silos at the state and local level.

Council Member Anderson commented that an important role for the Council and its member departments, reflected in the Action Plan, is as a convener and a clearinghouse for information and best practices. The Department of Social Services has done a great job of this with Project Roomkey, and it's great to hear HCD say they're thinking along the same lines with Homekey. California is a very diverse state with communities that need different things, and the state can play a key role in giving access to information relevant to different places.

The Council voted to adopt and communicate broadly the [FY 20-21 Action Plan Implementation Progress Report](#). All members present voted to adopt.

V. Year End Review & Council Transitions

Executive Officer Lo presented on this item. The Council has made significant accomplishments in the last year, including the development and adoption of the Action Plan for Preventing and Ending Homelessness in California. Council members and stakeholders were actively engaged through about 80 input sessions in developing the plan.

The Council has continued to be active in moving actions forward throughout the pandemic, working in partnership to help local providers offer critical services for people experiencing homelessness. The state's historic budget allocation for homelessness has been made possible in part by the work this council and its member departments have done, and that work is worth reflecting on as we come to the end of this "chapter" of the Council.

Secretary Castro Ramírez thanked council members for the work this council has done, the speed at which efforts have moved forward, the progress that has been made in implementing the Action Plan, and the work that is yet to come. As this council changes and becomes the Cal ICH, its work will build on what has been done by the current council. On behalf of Governor Newsom and his administration, HCFC will send certificates of appreciation to outgoing council members.

Council Vice Chair Ramirez thanked the Secretary and staff for all their good work.

Council Member Johnson Hall commented that she is looking forward to the work that will be done on this council, is optimistic about what can be done, and is excited to be an active member of this team. In thinking about addressing homelessness, it was initially unclear what role the California Housing Finance Agency could play, but it has become clear that every council member has a place in communication and in the work to be done.

VI. Future Meeting Agendas

No comments were made on this item.

VII. Public Comments and Final Remarks

Public Comment

- Debra Villaseñor, Housing Consultant in Northern California: Wants to note that, because of remote meetings due to COVID, it has actually been easier for stakeholders to participate in these council meetings. HCD recently released the last round of No Place Like Home funding, and Debra is concerned about how the program, which has helped counties and their communities significantly, will be funded going forward. The Council should consider placing this on a meeting agenda soon, to help avoid gaps in funding or a loss in momentum.

The state should also consider creating a project-based voucher program, because there is not enough money for these important operations, especially permanent supportive housing projects. To fully embrace Housing First, accepting people as they are often means they have little or no income, so these projects need funding for operations and project-based vouchers to help individuals.

- Tim Houchin, Chairman of Anaheim Housing and Community Development Commission: Serves on the Orange County Continuum of Care Board, is formerly homeless, and is a strong supporter of Housing First policies. Is concerned that recipients of Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHVs) from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in Orange County and elsewhere may not be getting the necessary services to help them remain permanently and stably housed. HUD requires jurisdictions to provide housing navigation for EHV recipients, but only encourages additional support services and leaves the responsibility to Public Housing Authorities, who often are not accustomed to providing these services.

The Council should provide guidance on how standards for support services can be established around these EHVs and should offer oversight to ensure standards are upheld. The Council might consider providing emergency funding to ensure supportive services will be available for people who receive EHVs.

Secretary Castro Ramírez thanked everyone for joining the meeting and wished everyone a safe and healthy holiday season.

VIII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 2:24 p.m.