



**Meeting Summary  
January 27, 2022  
1:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.  
Teleconference**

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

Executive Officer Julie Lo called the meeting to order at 1:08 p.m.

*Council Members Present:*

- Lourdes M. Castro Ramírez, Council Co-Chair and Secretary of California Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency
- Dr. Mark Ghaly, Council Co-Chair and Secretary of California Health and Human Services Agency
- Susan DeMarois, Director of California Department of Aging
- Kathleen Allison, Secretary of California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation
- Lisa Mangat for Mark Ghilarducci, California Governor's Office of Emergency Services
- Jacey Cooper, State Medicaid Director and Chief Deputy Director of Health Care Programs, California Department of Health Care Services
- Rebecca Ruan-O'Shaughnessy, Vice Chancellor of Educational Services and Support, California Community Colleges
- Gustavo Velasquez, Director of California Department of Housing and Community Development
- Tiena Johnson Hall, Executive Director of California Housing Finance Agency
- Dr. Tomás Aragón, State Public Health Officer and Director of California Department of Public Health
- Joe Xavier, Director of California Department of Rehabilitation
- Kim Johnson, Director of California Department of Social Services
- Stephanie Clendenin, Director of California Department of State Hospitals
- Nancee Robles, Executive Director of California Tax Credit Allocation Committee
- Alisa Becerra for Toks Omishakin, California Department of Transportation
- Dr. Vito Imbasciani, Secretary of California Department of Veterans Affairs
- Tim Rainey, Executive Director of California Workforce Development Board (*not present at initial roll call*)
- Jennifer Loving, Chief Executive Officer of Destination: Home
- Amy Anderson, Senior Vice President of Housing Affordability Philanthropy, Wells Fargo

## II. Welcome to Cal ICH

Secretary Castro Ramírez welcomed new and continuing members of the Council to this meeting. The Council is committed its collective approach to develop a system that prevents and ends homelessness for Californians. Noting that the addition of co-chair Ghaly works to integrate health and housing into the state's homelessness response.

The Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council created the [Action Plan for Preventing and Ending Homelessness in California](#), which will be a roadmap to guide our collective work. This council has new, Director- and Secretary-level membership that will help move this work forward, along with Executive Officer Lo and a staff of almost 50.

Last year, the Governor's California Comeback Plan included almost \$22 billion for housing and homelessness, with \$12 billion for transitional housing, flexible aid, rapid rehousing, and initiatives to create permanent housing, like Homekey. Two weeks ago, the Governor released the California Blueprint, which reaffirms his commitment to funding homelessness resources. It includes funding for solutions that integrate housing, human supports, and health services, with an additional \$2 billion to address homelessness—\$500 million to expand California Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal ICH)'s Encampment Resolution Funding Program.

As we move forward, this Council should take bold action, identify strengths and gaps in the state's systems, review data to inform its decisions, lead with equity, and develop practical and effective solutions to provide permanent housing for people experiencing homelessness.

Secretary Ghaly provided remarks, thanking members of the Council for joining. This group stands on the shoulders of previous iterations of the Council, whose work will be honored as a foundation going forward. This council should be responsible for “busting silos” in our work, and it is critical that the California Health and Human Services Agency (CalHHS) and its departments be as involved in the work of ending homelessness as they now are on this council.

This new council provides an opportunity for new coordination and innovation and is a chance to ask hard questions on the issue of homelessness. This council will not just exist as an interagency council on homelessness but will be a place to truly work toward ending homelessness in California.

We will build on the work of the Action Plan and take this as an opportunity to help partners put together plans and challenge those to be better in a data-driven way. This council can set a bold vision and goals, using data and metrics to assess progress and hold ourselves and local partners accountable.

Secretary Ghaly called out and expressed specific appreciation for the departments within CalHHS and all the other partners on this council for the work they do to assist people experiencing homelessness, along with pride and excitement for the work this council can do.

### **III. Presentation: People Experiencing Homelessness and Changing the Homelessness Response System**

Ann English, Senior Program Manager at the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) [presented](#). In 2013, the Speak Up! program was launched to pair individuals with lived experience of homelessness with volunteer coaches to learn about housing and homelessness in Los Angeles, with a focus on social justice advocacy and trauma-informed storytelling. In 2014, the first cohort completed the program and started the Tenant Knowledge Exchange, a community that creates trainings for service providers and advocates.

Throughout this process, CSH has learned the importance of actively listening and paying attention to advocates with lived experience, which is a cultural shift from a model that assumes people experiencing homelessness are just recipients of services and that only providers are the experts. Many organizations are incorporating people with lived experience into their work but lack planning, such as time to familiarize individuals with structure and governance.

In the Tenant Knowledge Exchange, people have highlighted operational and systemic challenges in homelessness services and housing. Speak Up! advocates frequently express gratitude for housing providers but point out a lack of needed supports and access to complicated systems.

Now is the time to legitimize peer support workers, with increasing support to integrate lived experience more fully into systems. Understanding the unique contributions and skillsets of peer workers is just as important as training them to provide services. As the Council moves forward with the implementation of the Action Plan, the need to provide more effective supports should be considered, focusing on how service is delivered and not just the array of services available.

### **IV. Presentation: Homelessness, Health and the State Survey**

Dr. Margot Kushel, Director of the University of California San Francisco (UCSF) Center for Vulnerable Populations and the UCSF Benioff Homelessness and Housing Initiative [presented](#). The lack of affordable housing is the primary driver of homelessness in California. Poor health is associated with becoming homeless and historically oppressed populations are at higher risk of both poor health and homelessness.

People experiencing homelessness have poor access to healthcare and high use of acute care, and significantly higher mortality rates than the general population. The homeless population is aging, with those 65 and older the fastest growing group of

people experiencing homelessness. Poor health contributes to the risk of homelessness and homelessness worsens health. Housing first principles work: everyone needs housing and some need access to voluntary services, such as those provided with permanent supportive housing.

The UCSF Benioff Homeless and Housing Initiative is conducting a state study on homelessness and health which was requested by Secretary Ghaly of CalHHS. This is being done with surveys and in-depth interviews with people experiencing homelessness and is being done to help make policy decisions. The study is being guided by community-engaged practices, most notably a statewide lived expertise board, and is taking place in carefully selected areas to represent the state as a whole. The study is ongoing and planned to have data collection completed in mid-late fall of this year.

## **V. Presentation: Homelessness and Housing Affordability**

Carolina Reid, Faculty Research Advisor at the UC Berkeley Turner Center for Innovation [presented](#). For every person experiencing homelessness who is successfully housed in California, approximately three more people become homeless. In any year, two-thirds of unsheltered homeless adults are experiencing homelessness for the first time, and 60% of people experiencing homelessness list economic hardship as the primary reason for becoming homeless.

While people in extremely low-income (ELI) households are most likely to fall into homelessness, homeowners are much less likely to than renters. A disproportionate share of ELI renters are seniors with fixed incomes, and ELI individuals are more likely to be disabled, not speak English well, and less likely to have a high school degree than the overall population. Almost half of ELI working-age adults are employed and frequently work in jobs providing essential services.

Systemic racism contributes to Black and Hispanic Californians being overrepresented among ELI renter households, and 32% of Black renters in the state live in an ELI household, almost double the rate of non-Hispanic white households. Eighty-five percent of ELI renter households in the state are cost-burdened, spending more than 30% of their income on rent, and 70% are severely cost-burdened, spending more than half of their income on rent. Studies have shown a direct link between high housing-cost burdens and risk of eviction, displacement, and homelessness.

The high cost of housing in California increases the challenge of providing housing assistance. The gap between rent affordable to an ELI household and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) fair market rent keeps increasing, meaning the gap that public dollars need to fill is growing. Funds for housing vouchers are not growing at the same rate as need.

Though the high cost of building housing in California is also a factor, it is important to balance cost-efficiency with funding. We need to make the necessary investments now because the long-term costs of not doing will be much greater. All these factors contribute to a lack of available affordable housing units in California as measured by the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA).

In recent years, the state has taken up unprecedented housing and land use reforms, including through AB 72, SB 35, and SB 9. These have increased accountability under the RHNA process, streamlined approval for affordable housing, and provided a legal framework to increase how much housing can be built. The state has also committed unprecedented funding in these areas.

This council will be important in breaking down silos in work and increasing coordination of efforts. The Biden Administration has also signaled support for expanded affordable housing. Foundations in California are also investing in pilots in providing funding support to help demonstrate what works and how to deliver that. Solving homelessness will require addressing not only the immediate crisis of people experiencing homelessness but also the structural factors that push individuals and families into homelessness.

## **VI. Follow Up Questions to Presentations**

Council Member Loving commented on the need, highlighted in all three presentations, for homelessness prevention. There is a good focus on encampments and Homekey but there is still the reality that, for every person housed, two to three more fall into homelessness. Rent relief and eviction protections have been helpful in keeping people housed through the pandemic, but as a council and a state, it will be critical to prioritize keeping people housed as well as ELI-affordable housing.

Council Member Allison asked about how this information applies to rural communities. She also commented that “low income” affordability levels are often not affordable to ELI families and asked if there is a way to improve that.

- Reid: Rural areas are struggling with similar problems as urban areas and have additional difficulty with housing and development capacity. With market-rate housing developments, the state can require a certain percentage of units to be affordable to lower-income households. The difficulty is that the cost of building and operating enough ELI-affordable units is not possible by the private market alone and needs public subsidies to close the development cost gap.
- Kushel: As housing costs increase statewide, we are seeing “creep” of costs as people move from more urban to more rural areas. It is also important to note that wildfire and natural disasters are a major driver of homelessness in rural communities. These communities can also face significant transportation barriers that exacerbate the problem.

Council Member Johnson commented that, as government, we must include the voice of people we are serving in everything we do. She asked if the speakers have seen any

success or have recommendations around breaking down community resistance to new affordable housing.

- English: Advocacy through lived experience tends to have the most impact in communities. Data is important but many people don't connect to it the same way they do to stories from real people.
- Reid: People experiencing homelessness are not some separate population from the general public, as some people tend to feel. It's likely that around one in five Californians have experienced homelessness at some point.
- Kushel: Black Americans are around three to four times more likely to become homeless than the general population, and in California's major metropolitan areas, that jumps to five or six times more likely. Black people are much more likely to say they know someone who is homeless and to identify the causes of homelessness as structural, rather than individual conditions.

Council Member Johnson Hall asked Carolina Reid if her group has done any work around the preservation of existing housing, and if that can be an effective tool in addressing the challenge of homelessness.

- Reid: There are multiple approaches to that preservation including focuses on affordability covenants for affordable housing units, preservation of lower-cost market rate units, and preserving affordability by keeping people sustainably housed. The challenge with housing preservation is that there are not as many tools available, such as funding streams focusing on preservation or the ability for government and nonprofits to compete with private actors when older housing units are purchased and "flipped".

Council Member Xavier asked what is known about loss of employment as a factor in homelessness, and if there is any information the presenters can share about helping people experiencing homelessness obtain family-sustaining wages so they can both become and stay housed.

- Kushel: When we talk about housing, it is really a housing-income mismatch. It is known that job loss, either of an individual or of someone in their household, is often a reason someone can become homeless. It is also important, and some organizations are doing work to, uplift the need to help people experiencing homelessness to find employment, and also for that employment to pay enough to sustain housing.

Council Member DeMarois asked Dr. Kushel if there is any attention being given to older adults as a specific subpopulation in the state homelessness survey.

- Kushel: Older adults are being included and looked carefully at in the survey, with some age-specific questions. We will be able to get data from older populations, focusing on those over 50, as individuals in significant poverty often experience age-related conditions earlier.

Council Member DeMarois commented that Serving Seniors from San Diego recently produced a report showing that the difference in remaining housed, for a majority of their respondents, was \$300 a month.

Council Member Cooper asked if there are any policy recommendations on how to balance the current needs of people experiencing homelessness with diversion and prevention.

- Reid: We need to become a state that prioritizes housing, particularly affordable housing, but also market-rate middle-income housing. The pandemic also showed the value of financial relief through direct payments.
- Kushel: We think a lot about overall prevention, but individual targeting is also important. Among people who are at risk of homelessness, the single biggest predictor for becoming homeless is having ever been homeless before. There are also factors such as living in a disadvantaged neighborhood, or individuals exiting correctional or other institutional facilities.

Council Member Ruan-O'Shaughnessy commented that the California Community Colleges system has about 1.8 million students, with 60% reporting housing insecurity and 19% reporting facing homelessness, prior to the pandemic. She asked what strategies are within homelessness prevention for addressing housing insecurity, including among those who may not be considered at immediate risk of homelessness, and how the community colleges might implement Housing First approaches in the time-limited college setting.

- Kushel: One of the most important things in homelessness prevention is making sure people who have recently gotten housed, stay housed. Keeping college students housed is likely a good investment, especially in the long term. Given resource limitations, homelessness prevention funding should be targeted to people at highest risk, which is likely to be people paying more than 50% of their income in rent who have previously experienced homelessness.

Karmina Barrales, of California Department of Education (CDE), commented on the need to listen to youth with lived experience and suggested that could be one point of focus in Dr. Kushel's study, offering CDE connections to assist. It's also important to note that programs consider the HUD definition for "at risk of homelessness" in eligibility, which differs from the definitions used in education that include families who are doubled-up due to economic hardship.

California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) representative Alisa Becerra commented that it's clear that housing is medicine, and noted that with much more teleworking during the pandemic, people from higher-cost urban areas have been moving to lower-cost areas, driving up prices significantly in these areas and potentially pushing more people into homelessness.

Council Member Imbasciani asked about landlords who may be resistant to accepting housing vouchers and if there is something the Council might do to help that. For example, San Diego, for a number of years, supplemented HUD Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing vouchers to make them more attractive to landlords.

- Reid: There is a lot of research on discrimination against people using housing vouchers. California prohibits landlords from source-of-income discrimination, but the challenge is still with enforcement of that law.

Secretary Ghaly reiterated the comment that housing is medicine, noting a Housing for Health program in Los Angeles that was created through the local health department to house people with health problems experiencing homelessness.

## **VII. Council Activities for 2022**

Executive Officer Lo presented on Action Plan areas and priorities, noting that Cal ICH is currently accepting applications to administer a lived experience advisory board to inform the work laid out in the Action Plan. The Action Plan, adopted by the prior iteration of this council in 2021, orients the state's work for preventing and ending homelessness. A priority of Cal ICH between now and the next council meeting is to work with Council departments to add activities from new departments and update existing activities, which will be compiled into an updated plan and voted on by the Council. Cal ICH is also working to form the advisory committee to this council.

Grants Director Victor Duron presented on local homelessness action plans, which are included as an accountability measure in the newest round of Homeless Housing, Assistance, and Prevention Program (HHAP) funding. To date, Cal ICH has disbursed nearly \$1 billion in funding through the program, with \$1 billion additional to be disbursed in both 2022 and 2023. Local homelessness action plans will include data and analysis on local landscapes, descriptions of local issues, and an assessment of the resources at all levels that communities will be using.

These plans are not intended to be just the "HHAP plans", but to represent the full extent of systems, partners, and resources to end homelessness in each community. More important than this process itself is the culture change it represents in "busting silos", which is being modeled at the state level by this new iteration of the Council. Cal ICH is preparing to engage with the 76 communities that have submitted HHAP proposals and provide support in the development of their local action plans. We would like to hear perspectives from the Council on priorities and key elements that should be considered in these local action plans.

Executive Officer Lo continued, noting that Cal ICH is actively seeking Council input on the vision for what a robust action plan might look like and will work under that direction. The totality of the local action plans will also be brought for Council vote and approval.



## VIII. Council Member Discussion

Council Member Loving asked if Cal ICH has done mapping to understand which jurisdictions already have local homelessness action plans and how much room for flexibility there will be within these plans, based on local needs.

- Duron: There is a wide range of preparedness in jurisdictions, from complete local action plans to those that do not even know where to start. This process seeks to be flexible and recognize that every community is different, which individual engagements with communities will be a key part of.

Council Member Cooper asked for thoughts on how to best integrate systems and maximize existing resources without duplicating efforts, such as in the plans that are part of the California Department of Health Care Services' Homeless Housing Incentive Program (HHIP).

- Duron: Cal ICH is in close communication with the HHIP team to make sure we are working toward alignment and not duplication. One of the key elements required in the local action plans will be an explanation of resources and how those different resources support strategies focused on outcomes.

Council Member Johnson commented that she would like to see in local action plans how the foundational social services are being used as part of the whole system. She asked if there are things this council can do to help make those connections clearer, or resources that could be produced which would be of benefit to local communities.

- ✚ Duron: The leadership on this council and across the state continues to reflect the cultural change and increased coordination. As Cal ICH works with local communities, we will make sure they can see that modeled from the state level.

Council Member DeMarois commented that, through the Master Plan for Aging, there is a local playbook and regional stakeholder coalitions throughout the state. The California Department of Aging would be happy to partner with Cal ICH so those voices and experiences can be reflected in local action plans.

Council Member Clendenin asked about the involvement of criminal justice partners in the local action planning process and the consideration of resources for people with serious mental illness or experience with the criminal justice system.

- ✚ Duron: That is an important topic, and there have been a lot of conversations lately about how to support people involved with the criminal justice system and ensuring people are not exiting incarceration into homelessness. On the behavioral health front, there are a lot of new resources becoming available, and the local action planning process is looking at how existing and new resources will be used.
- ✚ Lo: Part of the local action planning process is approvals at the state level but local communities are also required to put their plans before a local council or board so the local community can really "own" their plan.

To give council members time to think further on the topic, Secretary Ghaly suggested sending out a survey to get more input on this topic from the Council and for responses to be publicly available.

## **IX. Consent Calendar**

*Public comment:*

- ✚ Jeffery Tardaguila: Asked to be put on the distribution list to know about this meeting but that did not happen. The Council's publicity needs to be better.
- ✚ Nino Parker, homeless advocate in Oakland Lake Merritt area: Would like to get information for the people on today's panel and learn more.

The Council voted 16-0 to approve the consent calendar:

- [November 3, 2021 Council Meeting Summary](#)
- [Cal ICH Council Charter](#)

## **X. Future Meeting Agendas**

No comments were made on this item. Secretary Ghaly suggested sending out a survey to council members for input on future council meeting agendas.

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

*Public comment:*

- ✚ Tim McCormick, former California resident and director of Housing Alternatives Network in Portland: Creating housing is very costly with wide variation in costs. Hotel conversion has been a great opportunity but has limited potential supply. To facilitate ongoing new housing availability, how might we create programs to better develop more efficient, lower cost, and potentially new types of housing projects?
- ✚ Jeffery Tardaguila: Dr. Ghaly should contact the California Department of Transportation and ask them to speak to those conducting local homeless Point in Time (PIT) counts, having seen encampments displaced by highway construction, to ensure those conducting counts know about this. It would be great if someone on the Council would be there to have an insight to what's going on.

On housing, has seen three people evicted and two not able to get into his apartment complex due to being Supplemental Security Income recipients, showing that enforcement needs to be better. The Council should work on a plan for how to provide units at less than \$1,000 per month for those with greatest need, as well as best practices for safe camping and safe parking sites.

- ✚ Joe Colletti, Urban Initiatives: Cal ICH should base the allocations of HHAP round 4 on upcoming 2022 PIT counts rather than the pre-pandemic 2019 counts. This is an opportunity to allocate \$800 million based on data that has surely been

impacted by the pandemic. AB 140, which created HHAP round 4, states that applications shall be made available “no later than September 30, 2022”. HUD does not publicly release PIT count results until they are reported to Congress in fall but requires that data to be submitted around May 1. Cal ICH can ask each of the 44 continuums of care (CoCs) for their 2022 PIT count data directly, which would then be used for HHAP round 4 allocations, with the caveat that CoCs prefer to make their results known to local stakeholders first.

- ✚ Rena Burns: The current child welfare system under development through the Families First Prevention and Services Act and the current statewide Homeless Data Integration System might provide an opportunity to share data and identify families to keep them in their homes.
- ✚ Helene Schneider, regional coordinator for U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH): Wants to introduce herself to the new council and is looking forward to continuing to help facilitate partnership between state and federal partners.
- ✚ Asada Oligbala, resident of Oakland: Currently protesting outside a tiny home encampment at Lake Merritt with two sites, one called a co-governance site and the other managed by the Housing Consortium of the East Bay. One of these programs has a 90% white population, while the homeless population of Oakland is 70% Black. The protest aims to have them take down the fence between sites. The majority white site is also disproportionately resourced, for example having showers and individual storage units, with significant funding for security and training, while the other site does not. To end its segregation, this whole site should become an integrated community.
- ✚ Nino Parker: Everything Ms. Oligbala said is true. Look for the East Bay Times article from last week which will give you more information, though unfortunately it was written with bias. Any time you are protesting racism, it's not a small protest, it is a smaller part of a nationwide protest. It will not be a “win” to get the fence down, as this should not happen in the first place. One side is well-groomed and resourced, and the other had someone die and get left in his tent for three weeks.

Secretary Castro Ramirez thanked members of the public for joining and noted that, while the Council cannot respond directly to public comments, we are listening. It is a privilege to share this space with all the members of this council. The presentations today have helped us think more carefully about why working across agencies and departments is so important. Health, housing supports, and housing affordability are all connected.

Secretary Ghaly thanked everyone for participating in the midst of their busy schedules.

**XII. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 3:42 p.m.