



California Interagency Council on Homelessness

Gavin Newsom, Governor

Lourdes M. Castro Ramírez, MA, Co-Chair | Dr. Mark Ghaly, MD, MPH, Co-Chair

SUMMARY FOR THE CALIFORNIA INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON HOMELESSNESS QUARTERLY COUNCIL MEETING

February 27, 2023

1:00pm – 4:00pm

Teleconference

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

The meeting was called to order on February 27, 2023, at 1:06 PM

Council Members Present:

- Lourdes M. Castro Ramírez, Council Co-Chair and Secretary of the California Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency
- Dr. Mark Ghaly, Council Co-Chair and Secretary of the California Health and Human Services Agency
- Kathleen Allison, Secretary of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation
- Tomás J. Aragón, State Public Health Officer and Director of the California Department of Public Health
- Stephanie Clendenin, Director of the California Department of State Hospitals
- Jacey Cooper, State Medicaid Director and Chief Deputy Director of Health Care Programs, California Department of Health Care Services
- Susan DeMarois, Director of the California Department of Aging
- Lisa Mangat, Designee for Mark Ghilarducci, Director of the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services
- Vito Imbasciani, Director of California Veterans Affairs
- Kim Johnson, Director of the California Department of Social Services
- Tiena Johnson Hall, Executive Director of the California Housing Finance Agency
- Veronica Lewis, Director of Homeless Outreach Program Integrated Care System (HOPICS)
- William McGee, Director of the Student Achievement Support Division, California Department of Education
- Tomiquia Moss, Founder and Chief Executive of All Home

- Nancee Robles, Executive Director of the California Tax Credit Allocation Committee
- Rebecca Ruan-O'Shaughnessy, Vice Chancellor for Educational Services, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office
- Alisa Becerra, Designee for Tony Tavares, Director of the California Department of Transportation.
- Zach Olmstead, Designee for Gustavo Velasquez, Director of the California Department of Housing and Community Development
- Joe Xavier, Director of the California Department of Rehabilitation

Council Member Tim Rainey, CWDB, was absent and did not have a delegate.

II. Council Co-Chair Opening Remarks

California BCSH Secretary, Lourdes Castro Ramírez, opened remarks by welcoming and thanking the Statewide Interagency Council on Homelessness and the Advisory Committee for their commitment and collective progress with the Action Plan. The Statewide Action Plan is a tool to look at our joint commitments and progress we make in its implementation.

Addressing homelessness continues to be at the forefront of the Governor's All-In government approach, using intentional and person-centered methods to stay focused on removing structural barriers to prevent homelessness and investing in housing solutions. Secretary Castro Ramírez reinforced the importance of accountability within State agencies and remaining humble and critical in assessing what works, focusing on successful, innovative and equity-driven solutions.

California HHS Secretary, Dr. Mark Ghaly, continued opening remarks by highlighting the role of the Council in accountability and the important focus on innovations to support services for individuals who are currently incarcerated but returning to communities unhoused.

Dr. Ghaly spoke of four areas California must do: prioritizing populations experiencing homelessness; coordinating efforts across our state agencies; ensuring significant investments in money and coordination efforts to see fewer Californians sleeping unsheltered on the streets; and equity because although California is making achievements, there continue to be significant disparities and long-standing inequities in homelessness experiences.

III. Consent Calendar

There was one item on the Consent Calendar: [Adoption of the November 10th Council Meeting Summary](#)

- No Council Members made comments on this item.

Public Comment: No comments were made on this item.

The council voted to approve the consent calendar, with 15 members approving, 4 members abstaining, and 1 member absent.

IV. Proposed FY 23-24 Budget Homelessness Investments

Deputy Secretary for Homelessness, Dhakshike Wickrema, and Deputy Secretary for Policy and Strategic Planning, Corrin Buchannan, provided an overview of Homeless and Housing Services Investments in the January 10th budget proposal from the Governor.

Dhakshike Wickrema spoke of the Governor's continuing investment in the Homeless Housing Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) program. This provides one-time flexible funding across five years available to California's 58 counties and all 44 Continuum of Care entities, allowing them to support efforts to build capacity at the local level.

Corrin Buchanan spoke of leveraging Medicaid to support housing efforts. The CARE Act creates a new pathway to deliver behavioral health services to the most severely impaired Californians who often suffer through homelessness or incarceration without access to treatment. There are seven counties the CARE Act will begin serving by October of this year, with Los Angeles joining by December of 2023, and remaining counties launching by December of 2024. Funding for startup costs for counties and courts was included in the 2022 budget.

The Behavioral Health Bridge Housing Program provides \$1.5 billion in funding administered by the Department of Health Care Services to counties to address the immediate housing needs of people experiencing homelessness with serious behavioral health conditions. Housing will be provided through interim housing, rental subsidies, and Board and Care settings. Funds will be prioritized for those individuals engaged through the CARE Act.

The California Department of Social Services (DSS) implements seven housing and homelessness programs with one-time program expansion dollars, over \$2 billion invested in the budget acts of 21 and 22. There are no cuts or changes to the CDSS housing and homelessness programs in the proposed 23-24 budget.

Cal Aim transitional rent waiver amendment marries the well-being and health outcomes of Medi-Cal members during critical transitions by paying for six months of rent or temporary housing to eligible individuals. This year's budget includes \$17.9 million increasing up to \$116 million per year at full implementation. Additionally, the Medicaid Program, Community-Based Continuum waiver, would expand behavioral health services for Medi-Cal beneficiaries who are living with serious mental illness and serious emotional disturbance, with a focus on youth, people experiencing homelessness, and other justice involved individuals. The waiver would allow for counties to cover rent or temporary housing for up to six months for certain high need beneficiaries as well as support to address critical needs for the treatment and recovery of individuals who are living with serious behavioral health conditions.

V. Cal ICH Statewide Homelessness Assessment (AB 140 Report)

Cal ICH completed a statewide assessment of homelessness programs funded by the state as mandated by AB140. Our research partners from the UC Berkeley Turner Center for Housing Innovation presented on key findings. After this presentation the Co-Chair of the Cal ICH State Funding and Programs Working Group and Deputy Director of Housing and Homelessness at CDSS, Hannah Azamati, discussed the group's priorities.

Ryan Finnegan, Senior Research Associate for the Turner Center, provided a presentation to highlight findings from the Homelessness Landscape Assessment. The Homelessness Landscape Assessment is a snapshot of programs designed to address homelessness over the

course of a three-year fiscal year period which spanned July 1st, 2018, through June 30th, 2021. The report to the legislature responded to AB140 answering questions such as how much state administered funding was allocated to address homelessness and how those funds were used, who was served by these landscape assessment programs, what types of services were provided, how much temporary and permanent housing was created, and what were the outcomes for people who received this assistance.

After the presentation time was given for questions from Council members:

Council Member McGee: How students are included in these services? There seemed to be services for families and for youth 18 to 24 years old. How are children who elementary school age and middle school age included in these services?

- Finnegan's response states that the services provided families are for those entering through mainstream homelessness services systems within localities. These are administered differently than services for public school students and define homelessness differently. In one section of the report, it specifically outlines differences between the public school system and mainstream homelessness services. The distinction is that the elementary school system services are often not required to participate in HDIS, so they are not reflected in some of the numbers that we present unless the provider is participating in this system. Another difference is that public school system data includes children who are living doubled up, not just people experiencing literal homelessness meaning staying in Emergency Shelters, temporary housing, or in situations not meant for human habitation.

Council Member Moss: Commented that there was reference to a low 58,000 units of affordable housing and about 10,000 of those units are set aside for extremely low-income (ELI) households. Over the next eight years, the Bay Area alone needs at least 58,000 units of ELI housing to start to address the disproportion, disinvestment and deeply unaffordable housing in the region. How do State programs, such as Homekey and Roomkey have long-term sustainability, not just in terms of funding, but in bringing units on the market faster?

Co-Chair Castro Ramirez: Stated she agreed regarding the low number of affordable housing units, but added the three-year snapshot does not cover projects funded since June 30th, 2021 or projects that are in construction. The state's housing plan calls for the creation of 1,000,000 new units of affordable housing between now and 2030.

Council Member Velasquez: More units are being created by local funding and that that could be why the number is much smaller.

- Finnegan added that both are correct, for example, Homekey 1 is included in the landscape assessment but not Homekey 2. It is also correct that housing built with local or federal sources that are not state administered are not included in the count.

Deputy Director Azemati then provided information on the State Funding Working Group's priorities and lead the conversation on how we can use the lessons from the assessment.

Deputy Director Azemati provided background on the working group, which includes representatives from 12 state agencies and departments. The State Funding Group is tasked with improving access to funding and programs for organizations deeply engaged with historically marginalized communities including tribal communities. The group has discussed how to leverage HDIS and align data collection efforts across state programs.

The Working Group had four priorities: (1) incorporating focus on racial equity data analysis and planned activities within applications for state homelessness and housing funding, (2) focus on cross-system coordination, supporting and strengthening expectation of joint CoC, county, and city coordination, (3) focus on incorporating lived experience, specifically providing guidance to local grantees regarding the eligible uses of state funds for costs associated with engaging people with lived experience and expertise and encouraging local grantees to hire people with lived experiences into regular staff positions, and (4) implement a wide array of other state and federal funding programs that support interventions with clear unit production goals.

Two questions were posed to the Council. First, given the findings from the assessment, would you like to share any general guidance or considerations for the working group as they set out to advance on the four priorities? Second, in what ways has your department already built a foundation for these priorities and what opportunities do you see for your department to continue making headway?

Council Member Lewis: Working with the Education Department is important as we consider our next Action Plan, to find what data from non-direct homeless funding we capture and think about the interagency piece of our work. There is a bandwidth issue as we look at the respective departments and agencies but given what we know about harmful policies and the data, racial equity should be an overlay to everything. There could be a phased approach as we ask departments to take on this additional work. Digging into the data and analysis, I still have not seen the effort to really understand racial equity across these 19 state departments, such as redundancies in their programs and services. This analysis needs to be done so we can move towards the integration we are looking for and reducing the harmful, and often time conflicting, policies. Veronica stated it was not clear which working group would have this responsibility. It is also important to look at overarching issues and trends to assist in developing a matrix to evaluate progress within the State. This work requires organizational culture shifts in terms of practices and protocols, listening to those who have received services.

- **Deputy Director Azemati:** Responded as the work is continued in respective working groups, it is important to understand how we can better intersect and ensure that we are building on each other's work. While two of four priorities specifically speak to racial equity, it must be centered in planning and coordination across different systems -- creating production goals, targets, number of households to receive services, and embedding goals and metrics into our programs, and looked at through the lens of who is benefiting, being served and being reached through those different elements. Looking at overarching issues and trends can assist in developing a matrix to evaluate progress. The metrics are twofold it's one is looking at past goals and data and the other are forward-looking goals, which is setting fourth priorities.

Co-Chair Mark Ghaly: Responded to center on racial equity is one piece but to lead with it and judge outcomes on how we perform on the racial equity aspects of our goals is important.

- **Director Zeger:** Racial equity is within the purview of this Working Group.

Council Member Johnson Hall: Agreed this needed to be elevated and was glad other Council Members are aware. The State must find ways to incentivize as part of the application process to ensure that we get optimal results. This must be done in the application process to move in the right direction and consider the entire application process.

Council Member McGee: How can we tease out the experiences of those people who may be unhoused that have gone to school in California, and what they may have needed from the education system, as well as for those families that have children going to school. Then looking at how we can give technical assistance around issues or needs that families have. Although we do not have funding to do the work, we are continuing to partner and advocate so we can find how we can support families, particularly when it comes to meals.

Council Member Ruan-O'Shaughnessy: Highlighted the importance of viewing this work through the recipients' perspective. There must be clarity around the people we are trying to serve using State funding and what burdens they bear in order to receive these fundings. These extend to eligibility and data considerations among different organizations, agencies, and institutions. If these burdens are not alleviated, then we are building an inequitable structure where people with good grant writers will continue to rise to the top to receive funding rather than people or organizations in need.

Co-Chair Castro Ramirez: Agreed that it is important for Working Groups to help identify tangible quantitative metrics that strengthen the Action Plan. The Council is building a culture of cross-sector collaboration and finding a common language, we encourage the working groups to define the scope and refine the outcomes.

Council Member Moss: If we are to focus on addressing racial disparities, we must understand the data to know what is truly happening and give guidance to local jurisdictions who are addressing disparities, particularly in outcomes. Reimagining how services and resources are delivered and looking to Alameda County who has done work on understanding what happens with black men over 50 who are receiving rental subsidies and then become unhoused again in 12 months. Getting that specific would be instructive for the Council and jurisdictions who care about racial equity and want to transform outcomes.

VI. Action Plan for Preventing and Ending Homelessness - Progress Report

Director Zeger introduces the next action item and gives a short presentation on the Action Plan for Preventing and Ending Homelessness, including a brief history of the Action Plan and previous updates and a review of the [FY 21-22 Action Plan Implementation Progress Report](#) recently released.

There are three main components to the progress report: highlights of accomplishments for the year, data on key measures outlined in the Plan and progress updates from departments on their activities in the Action Plan. As this report covers FY 21-22, departments that were brought on in 2022 are not be included. Most activities were reported for in Action Areas 1 and 5.

Action Area	Highlights of Accomplishments in FY 21-22
Action Area 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cal ICH's RFP and RFI for the establishment of a Lived Experience Advisory Board • CDE's development of the Homeless Education Technical Assistance Centers • CA Community Colleges implemented the Homeless and Housing Insecurity Pilot project and served 322 students in Fall 2020 and 672 in the Spring 2021

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporation of Tribal entities from multiple departments to ensure equitable access to State programs and funding
Action Area 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cal ICH launched Encampment Resolution Funds for 19 communities • DHCS received approval for its CalAIM waivers and began implementation • CDPH worked with other departments and agencies to create guidance for addressing need of people living unsheltered during public health emergencies
Action Area 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CDSS' Project Roomkey and Rehousing Strategies for 43 counties and 3 Tribes • Cal ICH implemented Family Homelessness Challenge Grants in 10 communities • Cal OES administered 6 grants programs for victims of crime for approximately 165 subrecipients and provided 56,000 bed nights
Action Area 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HCD's Homekey helped create over 4,000 units across 44 jurisdictions • CDSS' program expansion which included the new Community Care Expansion Capital Expansion Program • CTCAC provided credits for projects serving people experiencing homelessness with an expected 2,000 units to come online in 2021
Action Area 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BCSH's COVID Rent Relief program which served about 350,000 households • Cal HFA supported 78 active housing counseling agencies • CDCR implemented the Returning Home Well Program in coordination with Amity Foundation

Director Zeger introduced Roxanne V. Wilson, Monterey County's Homeless Services Director and member of the Cal ICH Advisory Committee. Committee Member Wilson summarized the [feedback that was solicited from the Committee on the Action Plan's 5 Action Areas](#). Other Committee Members were invited to respond to Council Member comments.

Director Zeger gave a brief overview of the Action Plan update process, including planned meetings and a timeline for its adoption, and posed two questions for Council Members: (1) What questions do you have about the feedback from the Advisory Committee? (2) How do the progress report and this feedback affect how Cal ICH should go through the Action Plan update process? Are there activities or areas for coordination that you'd prioritize in that update?

The following is a summary of the discussion and comments from Council Members:

Council Member Johnson: As the Action Plan is implemented and progress is demonstrated, are there things that the Advisory Committee wants to flag or additional goals that we might be working on together to further our Action Plan?

Council Member DeMarois: Responded to feedback related to employment opportunities. Our state's 33 area agencies on aging, part of the Older Americans Act, could be a resource to help with senior employment as we see growing numbers of adults 50 and older entering homelessness for the first time.

Council Member Cooper: Added that the Advisory Committee will be critical to this work. CalAIM has done some off-lining with a number of people on both the Advisory Committee and others to figure out how we can create better toolkits and have received great feedback and examples for cheat sheets and toolkits and show how it's unfolding through the full continuum.

Council Member Lewis: In thinking about the Action Plan, would like to hear what the Advisory Committee would think about creating some high level metrics and standards with consideration for all the nuances.

Co-Chair Castro Ramírez: Asked Advisory Committee members to elaborate on feedback for areas of refinement in Action Area 3, which mention looking at traditional congregate sheltering and developing a way to establish a ratio of non-congregate shelter to congregate shelter.

- **Committee Member Wilson:** Speaking specifically to her community, they have and support congregate sheltering however there is a group of individuals that would thrive better in non-congregate environments. They will test this in partnership with the County of Santa Cruz, who they share an encampment with, to see if that could help resolve some of the homelessness instances for people who have been historically service resistant. They spent a lot of time getting folks and it seems like it is one of the biggest issues for this particular encampment as they prioritize privacy.
- **Committee Member Kushel:** Adds, we see empirically a lot of people who would reject congregate shelter who would accept private shelter, the numbers keep going up, and if you offer people housing instead of shelter the numbers go up further. She thinks people choose services that can meet their needs and there's a larger group of people who will accept non-congregate shelter then congregate shelter but it's more expensive Etc.
- **Committee Member Colletti:** Adds, the reason behind a more balance is because, as Advisory Committee members have heard from street outreach teams, there are a large number of people that street outreach teams encounter that won't go into a congregate shelter for all kinds of reasons.
- **Council Member Lewis:** Adds, there needs to be a reimagining of what congregate shelters look like in terms of all the best practices that our state says that we want to see exhibited throughout different shelter. The other reason beyond people preferencing privacy, are some of the rules and how they operate is problematic.
- **Committee Member Mangano:** Agrees with Committee Member Colletti's observations. It's broader than just the street, there is an opportunity to evolve our response, and the evolution of that response is to housing, where Homekey is a prime example. In recent days, there has been a variety of different names for congregate housing and for transitional housing, which all need to be connected with permanent housing. Even if there are places where congregate housing seems necessary, there needs to be that intricate connection to permanent housing, to Homekey projects into other permanent supportive housing projects. Lots of people who have who have experienced congregate shelter never want to go back.

Co-Chair Ghaly: As they discuss shelter and congregate versus non-congregate settings, there's also the conversation about permanent, individual units and then the shared housing mode. He would be interested in having the Advisory Committee provide some feedback in a future meeting on shared housing models as the permanent solution and what some of the

attributes of successful shared housing models look like and would like to know if shared housing models as seen as an either under tapped or even over utilized solution within California's response.

- **Committee Member Colletti:** Responds to Co-chair Ghaly, noting that Los Angeles County is doing an assessment on unaccompanied women, interviewing nearly 600 unaccompanied women experiencing homelessness, and some of those questions have focused on shared housing. The report will be complete around June and it may be something that comes to the Council.

Director Zeger thanked everyone for their input and moved to the next agenda item.

VII. Federal Strategic Plan Discussion

Director Zeger introduces Helene Schneider, Regional Senior Advisor, and Katie Jennings, Policy Director, from USICH to discuss [All In: The Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness](#).

Schneider and Jennings gave a brief overview of the federal plan which included a goal to reduce homelessness by 25% nationwide by 2025, built on a vision in which no one has to experience the crisis of homelessness, and everyone has a safe and affordable home, and upholds six pillars: foundational pillars include equity, data and evidence, and collaboration; solutions-based pillars include scaling up housing and supports, crisis response system, and homelessness prevention.

The following is a summary of the discussion and questions from the Council:

Secretary Castro-Ramirez: A lot of alignment of the Federal and State plans, especially in addressing the root causes of homelessness. There is opportunity to continue using waivers and flexibilities that were granted during the pandemic for how quickly they were able to get people into housing. Asked Council Members to lay out which waivers and flexibilities were most beneficial and should continue.

Council Member McGee: Something to consider in addition to flexibility is how to better leverage the education system and include them in all conversations. Programs like universal preschool or pre-k, meals, after-school programming all can be leveraged to help families that are unhoused and need education or job training.

- **Katie Jennings:** Partnerships like those created for YHDP can be leveraged or replicated. More support needed to get more Homeless Coordinators into schools.
- **Helene Schneider:** We need to be better prepared when we know programs have an end date and people get exited to the streets. Higher education has a role to play as well in making sure students can be successful without having to worry about rent, food or safety.

Council Member Ruan-O'Shaughnessy: Connecting with CDE is a goal to ensure a continuum of services and how else can public resources be leveraged. Need to be able to build affordable student housing and adopt Housing First principles.

Council Member Lewis: Pieces from the federal plan around framing and organization can be replicated by the Council. Still have exclusionary criteria for people exiting jail or prison that are

unnecessary barriers. More support is also needed for families that are caring for others with significant disabilities and require 24-hour care.

- **Helene Schneider:** Need for better data and understanding where the gaps exist, including how to prevent incarceration in the first place and deal with the immediate crisis. Things like voucher rules need to be re-examined to allow families to add people to their vouchers.

Secretary Ghaly: There are examples of successful utilization of waivers including the HUD VASH program that can be learned from. Needs to span across all agencies at the federal and state level. CalAIM waivers could be a good place to dive deeper into connecting the dots between HUD and Medicaid. Also a need to align data sets across state and federal programs to decrease burden on staff while looking at accountability.

- **Helene Schneider:** There are opportunities for “legitimate larceny” and lessons that can be taken and applied to other communities.

VIII. General Public Comments

General public comments made during this meeting:

Gerry La Londe-Berg from Petaluma, California: Expressed appreciation to the Council. Gerry believes that shared housing and community housing is part of the solution and encouraged the Council to review the National Shared Housing Resource Center. There are seniors who have empty bedrooms, and we need to develop housing matching programs to match seniors with those empty bedrooms. Additionally, Sonoma County has multiple community houses they developed over the past several months. Gerry requested in the next update that seniors be further included by consulting the Master Plan on Aging.

Ludmilla Bade, Homelessness Advocate and member of Cal ICH Advisory Committee: Spoke addressing William McGee about education, tying in her lived experience. Ludmilla mentioned examples of curriculum missing from school systems, such as community building; non-violent communication, specifically how to do talking circles and mediation; how to speak and function professionally and collaboratively; and peer support. These would help to reduce violence and help people to better function in their housing situations. There are certificated training programs and Ludmilla was trained in emergency community response, which was a factor in her survival during her time on the street. It helped with skills such as fire suppression and prevention, earthquake survival, and survival in encampments or on the street.

Patti Prunhuber, Director of Housing Advocacy at Justice in Aging: Commended the presentations and for speaking on the All-In plan. Patti had three recommendations. First, the importance of lifting the issue of older adult homelessness and separating homeless data by age. HUD is now gathering more age granular data in the Point in Time count including people 55 and over and this will bring to light the crisis in older adult homelessness. Second is to make older adults part of the strategic plan. Third is to move forward on the Master Plan for Aging 23-24 Housing Related Initiative, to set up a Working Group to explore and analyze existing local pilot rental assistance programs. That matches SB37 authored by Senator Caballero, which would create a rental assistance program, a competitive grant program for localities targeted to older adults and people with disabilities who are at imminent risk of homelessness.

Kim Lewis from the California Coalition for Youth: Highlighted the state assessment report and elevated the needs of young people experiencing homelessness. Minimal investment in our rural communities, such as \$30,000, makes it difficult to run programs. When local counts see a reduction in numbers there should not automatically be a reduction in funding, being mindful that programs have differing definitions of eligibility. We need to continue the conversations about supporting young people, so they do not end up becoming homeless when they're adults.

IX. Final Remarks and Adjournment

Co-Chair Castro Ramírez thanked the Council Members, Turner Center, and Advisory Committee Members for feedback, engagement, and critical thinking in terms of implementing the Action Plan. The data presented was striking and highlighted the need for more prevention strategies. We must use data to inform the work and be critical in terms of examining where we are making progress and where we need to do more. Secretary Castro Ramírez posed the following questions for the Council members to consider: What more can we do to hold ourselves accountable for the programs that we administer and deliver? Where do we see opportunities to remove redundancies and barriers that make it difficult to deliver programs?

Co-Chair Ghaly Highlighted that accountability across all state government continues to be vital. Since the last meeting, California experienced terrible winter storms and as part of the response across the state, we created a priority populations task force to address issues of those who experience the impact of the storms very differently, including those experiencing homelessness. This demonstrates the strong working relationships that we depend on.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:06 PM.