

**SUMMARY FOR THE
ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE
CALIFORNIA INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON HOMELESSNESS**

August 14, 2023

Via videoconference and telephone

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

Cody Zeger, Cal ICH Director of Statewide Policy, called the meeting to order at 1:11 pm.

Advisory Committee Members Present:

- Ludmilla Bade, Homelessness Advocate
- Samantha Batko, Principal Research Associate, Urban Institute
- Doug Bond, President & Chief Executive Officer, Amity Foundation
- Joe Colletti, Chief Executive Officer, Hub for Urban Initiatives
- Charlene Dimas-Peinado, President & Chief Executive Officer, Wellnest Emotional Health & Wellness
- Vitka Eisen, President & Chief Executive Officer, HealthRIGHT 360
- Dora Gallo, President & Chief Executive Officer, A Community of Friends
- Eric Harris, Director of Public Policy, Disability Rights California
- Jody Ketcheside, Deputy Chief Operating Officer, Turning Point of Central CA (*Left meeting early*)
- Margot Kushel, Director, UCSF Benioff Homelessness and Housing Initiative
- Philip Mangano, President & Chief Executive Officer, American Round Table to Abolish Homelessness (*Left meeting early*)
- Luana Murphy, President & Chief Executive Officer, Exodus Recovery
- Alisa Orduña, Founder & Executive Director, Florence Aliese Advancement Network
- Sharon Rapport, Director of California State Policy, Corporation for Supportive Housing
- Emilio Salas, Executive Director, Los Angeles County Development Authority
- Sean Spear, President & Chief Executive Officer, Community HousingWorks
- Reba Stevens, Homelessness Advocate
- Megan Van Sant, Senior Program Manager, County of Mendocino
- Alex Visotzky, Senior California Policy Fellow, National Alliance to End Homelessness
- Jevon Wilkes, Executive Director, California Coalition for Youth

Advisory Committee Members Arrived later in the meeting, not present at initial Roll Call:

- Al Ballesteros, Chief Executive Officer, JWCH Institute
- Charles Helget, Executive Director, California Association of Veteran Service Agencies
- Moriah McGill, Housing Development Construction Manager, Northern Circle Indian Housing Authority
- Doug Shoemaker, President, Mercy Housing
- Roxanne Wilson, Homeless Services Director, County of Monterey

Advisory Committee Members Not Present:

- Carolyn Coleman, Executive Director, League of California Cities
- Jennifer Hark Dietz, Chief Executive Officer, PATH
- Janet Kelly, Founder & Executive Director, Sanctuary of Hope
- Chris Martin, Policy Director, Housing California

- Janey Rountree, Executive Director, California Policy Lab at UCLA
- Miguel Santana, Chief Executive Officer, Weingart Foundation

II. Consent Calendar

There was one item on the Consent Calendar: *Approval of May 8, 2023 Committee Meeting Summary*

- No Committee Members commented on the item

Public Comment: No comments were made on the item

Vote: The Committee voted to approve the Consent Calendar with 19 members voting Yes, 2 members abstaining, and 10 members absent during the vote.

III. Advisory Committee Funding and Program Draft Recommendations

Committee Member Alex Visotzky presented the [draft recommendations](#) on the Implementation of Funding and Programs: How could the State better align funding and/or coordinate across programs to improve their collective impact? The feedback was divided into three subcategories: The Council should pursue actions to reduce administrative burden for applicants; The Council should explore opportunities to strengthen capacity among funded entities and their service providers with an eye towards advancing equity; and The Council should advocate to the Administration and Legislature to prioritize changes to how State funding is structured.

Sharon Rapport: Had follow-up points, under Action Area 2, one point expressed concern on expanding the count of people experiencing homelessness to people in hospitals, jails, and other institutions because at any one point in time that can be a huge number of people, and most will not become homeless. What was likely meant was not to include all people in hospitals, jails and other institutions but to make sure that the definition of homelessness includes people who were homeless when they entered an institutional setting and are likely to be homeless when they exit.

Another point is on the severely underfunded services and property management in California. The Council should capture the recommendation around looking at the actual costs of what services and property management should be when serving a high acuity population. In terms of Supportive Housing, most are serving a high acuity population and when we look at the evidence around Supportive Housing, most studies looking at existing programs are paying much more for services and probably Property Management too. In terms of advancing equity, the state needs to be looking at rates of services and of property management and be paying for those costs.

Ludmilla Bade: Suggested adjusting wording in the recommendations document to say, “expedite payments and reimbursements to awardees and their funded services to reduce the float time and costs.”

Luana Murphy: Committee Member Murphy seconded what Sharon Rapport said. There is regular talk about the barriers for people not wanting to come inside and many of them are related to the fact there is not enough funding to lower barriers to allow the services that will bring the people in. The state needs to look at what the real cost is.

Vitka Eisen: There are complexities when trying to calculate the true cost of providing services and often what happens is the funder will say, okay that is what we paid you and that's what it

costs, which fails to account for things like unfilled positions because the salaries have fallen below any kind of market rate. When we talk about paying for the cost of meaningful services attached to housing, the State needs to consider a more complex way of looking at that. Also, to allow for cost escalators over periods of years instead of being frozen into this is a five-year contract and this dollar amount over five years doesn't change despite the cost of living going up.

Alex Visotzky: There was a clear consensus among folks in the group on a few key points, specifically multi-year funding, lowering administrative barriers, streamlining programs, and have a more comprehensive approach that's coordinated across the board. The Advisory Committee should be asking Council members what their departments are going to be doing to advance this. Council members all play a strong role in driving legislation and respond to legislation.

Megan Van Sant: How do we communicate this to the Council? Creating a list and emphasizing a few main points? Multi-year funding or permanent ongoing funding are highlights. There is a clear acknowledgment at the State level that this is an expensive and complicated issue to solve around homelessness, but they keep doing these one-year fundings. Spending timelines are long, but an application each year doesn't match with what we all know is true, that this is this is a 10–20-year investment and it would be much easier for all of us to do this work if there was that acknowledgment on the financial side.

Ludmilla Bade: On the overall summary, where it speaks to supporting the unique needs of different communities, those should be three separate items because they are such different categories of action and concept. Fostering community buy-in is one thing that is helpful. Peer support programs and Workforce Development programs are helpful. These are relatively low cost but make a huge difference. The third point to separate planning efforts to reduce permitting times.

Reba Stevens: How do the lengthy gaps in funding affect the ongoing work of service providers? Does this impact the work that touches the people experiencing homelessness? Does it challenge the morale in the workplace? Committee Member Stevens supports ongoing funding to providers to overcome challenges brought on by gaps in reimbursement and funding.

Dora Gallo: Committee Member Gallo has not had experience with the State but has locally had contracts as short as six months, which places financial burden on providers. Some providers manage by borrowing or using their own funds, but some are not and by not being able to manage it excludes smaller organizations that could have provided services if the funding was in place right away. It has moral impacts, business impacts, and financial impacts, which is why this is a good recommendation.

Megan Van Sant: Lengthy gaps between award and execution of contracts impacts the organizations willing to do this work, which then impacts the clients. County government would be more comfortable doing multi-year contracts instead of problematic year-long or nine-month contracts to service organizations. It can take six months to process payments, so small non-profits will not find it worth the stress. An example would be that a non-profit is afraid to hire staff because then the county might not renew the contract. This has real world impacts on the work being done on the ground. From a county perspective, it makes it more difficult to monitor contracts and it makes it harder to hold service providers accountable in a fair way. The gaps between award and execution happen at both state and the local levels.

Joe Colletti: The committee talked about unified funding applications, consolidating audit requirements, and aligning timelines particularly with the feds and HUD. When we talk about

aligning with the feds, part of our charge as an Advisory Committee is to make the Council aware of what is happening at the federal level, to ensure they work in unison. When we get into system performance measures, a lot of the State legislation is saying to use HUD's systems performance measures.

Cody Zeger: Asked for volunteers to present to the Council at the September 7th meeting.

Roxanne Wilson and Ludmilla Bade volunteered.

IV. Advisory Committee Performance Measurement Draft Recommendations

Cody Zeger: Presented the [draft recommendations](#) on performance measurements: how can the State best assess its progress on the commitments it's made in the Action Plan? What are other measures should we investigate to assess progress in each of the five Action Areas? Are there measures the State could be using to assess overall progress? Any other ideas for a strengthening state level performance measurement? The formal discussion questions were: What additions or clarifications would you like to make to these recommendations? Do you have any ideas for additional measures to assess performance of the Action Plan as a whole? What questions do you have for the Council Members regarding these recommendations?

Doug Bond: It is important to define what we mean by permanent housing and how it relates to other forms of residential care. Does this mean Permanent Supportive Housing or all forms of permanent housing? A broader question is with the fact that the referral systems we work with through coordinated entry are often referring folks to us who we think need a higher level of care than we can provide or reasonably be expected to provide in an independent setting. There needs to be a much broader range of housing settings and more individualized referrals into them than our current system allows us to do. We are being referred folks who often need medication management into independent Permanent Supportive Housing, and we don't have the ability to do that with residents. Folks don't want to be on psychiatric medicines and that creates risk for both residents and staff. Do we really have the broad range of residential options we need to make appropriate referrals for the folks that are moving through this system? How do we assess whether we have that diversity of programs to refer to?

Cody Zeger: There is a description in the Action Plan, and we will make sure to be more specific around what the permanent housing is. Finding a way to measure not just a total number of permanent housing units but what types of units are appropriate for the folks we are serving. Sorting out how many of those each individual types are needed.

Margot Kushel: We do not have a great sense of how often we are assessing people, if folks we are counting are unsheltered. Secondary prevention is prevention of people returning to homelessness who have previously exited homelessness and if we had a limited number of dollars to spend on prevention that's where it should be spent because you always want limited dollars to go to the highest risk folks. We call a lot of things in HDIS "exit to permanent housing" which is a spectrum. It could mean going to Permanent Supportive Housing with community treatment and having a touch Point Daily. It is helpful to know whether an exit is durable or not because otherwise we do not know when it when someone returns to homelessness.

Sean Spear: About Area 5, the recommendations are more along retention as opposed to prevention. There has been a lot of political dialogue around prevention, and there are some pieces that can be measured, such as diversion programs for folks coming out of incarceration being

provided an opportunity to be housed where they otherwise would have ended up homeless. It is worth considering this in two pieces, retention versus prevention.

Margot Kushel: Agreed with Sean Spear.

Alex Visotzky: Agreed with Committee Members Kushel and Spear. Committee Member Visotzky echoed Committee Member Rapport's point on the wording of unsheltered homelessness and expanding the count. Expanding the definition of homelessness does not mean we are expanding the ability for our communities to serve folks with adequate resources. Another challenge is with how PSH placements are being recorded through HHAP, that they are not being recorded as exits to permanent housing but are being considered exits from the system. This is leading to communities having their permanent housing numbers being under shot.

Roxanne Wilson: Stated she had not experienced that in her community. There are subcategories in HMIS to record exits to permanent housing, such as with subsidies. Roxanne wants to learn more about this issue. Roxanne went on to discuss the Point in Time (PIT) Counts and expressed that her organization used to include people in hospitals who were experiencing homeless, but the issue that arose was that not all hospitals reported this data, and staff turnover made it even more difficult to track. It would have to be a federal or a state level requirement for hospitals and jails to participate otherwise it your PIT count will be not comparable over the years.

Megan Van Sant: The pit count has not been helpful and has even become a barrier to our work. How much confidence do we have in the count anymore? Bringing more data into a deeply flawed system is concerning. Another concern is the Coordinated Entry System (CES) being a counterproductive tool used in our community and there is a lack of Spanish speaking access to the system.

Charlene Dimas-Peinado: Agreed with the need for a spectrum of permanent housing options to meet the differing needs of people experiencing homelessness. It would be helpful to measure other successes in addition to exits to housing. An example would be how many people are being helped to access obtaining their high school diploma or GED.

Moriah McGill: Quantitative data is historically problematic for Tribal communities as they are undercounted. Homelessness in this country began with the termination of tribes and relocation of people off tribal lands. The definition of homelessness also does not fit many BIPOC communities, especially tribal communities. Some community members live in storage units, closed off car ports, or on couches and do not consider themselves to be experiencing homelessness. HMIS needs to have a drop-down menu that goes past checking a box for being a Native American and this could allow people to access tribal services faster and more effectively. This would streamline access for tribal members to housing and cultural benefits. Coordinated Entry is a westernized approach saying to go to the county and they will help you, but you will be number 1,863 on the waiting list. A tribal specific study is needed that focuses on quantitative and qualitative data and addresses the State sponsored genocide of a group of people.

Samantha Batko: We need to look at and measure more than just access to housing, such as retention and housing quality. This could help to identify discrimination in the private rental market, which is then bleeding into the systems we have that are reliant on the private rental market. This can be expanded beyond racial disparities to gender and sexual orientation. For example, one of the main reasons women listed as to why they left permanent housing is because of safety.

Doug Bond: Many people who enter institutional settings, such as jail, lose their housing as result. This data needs to be captured from non-custody staff because people will not want to be honest out of fear of not being released or given a parole date due to their homeless status. We need to have a baseline of who is experiencing homelessness within the justice system.

Charles Helget: Shares the concerns around the PIT count flaws. How we define homelessness has become institutionalized. We need to keep perfecting the system until we have an alternative or focus on creating an alternative. Focusing on recommendations to improve the current system may be the best way forward at this time.

Joe Colletti: Working with multiple CoCs around the State, they are working with data from the PIT, CES, and HMIS. Prior to 2018 CoCs were establishing HMIS and only working with HUD funding, then the State comes and offers HEAP, HHAP, and others. These systems have grown tremendously since 2018 and we need to ask, is there something they are already doing that can accomplish what we need, especially because they are already overloaded systems.

Reba Stevens: There is an overrepresentation of black people in homelessness across the State and yet the conversation does not seem to be had enough. This is data that is painful to more than just black people and it is about the systems in place like the jail, child welfare, and foster care systems. What needs to be brought back to the Council is how do we prioritize in some way. We keep hearing that the State cannot do things, but there is report after report and it must be addressed. Seeking support from other Committee members on this.

Cody Zeger: We can be very specific in the recommendations to the Council and consider how we identify successful strategies for the most marginalized populations.

Megan Van Sant: If someone is running a program that does not accurately reflect racial equity, they need to be held accountable. Currently there are no consequences for this, it is just noted down. We also no not reward the programs who are doing well.

Alisa Orduña: When looking at racial equity and lived experience, we want to capture them across all domains. The State needs to measure racial equity at all stages of homelessness. People with lived expertise need to be included in the decision-making processes. This can be included in the strengthening systems section.

Alex Visotzky: Agreed that racial equity should be an outcome measure that programs are held accountable for. This does not mean that a program needs to be held accountable for all the inequitable or racist systems in place that feed into the program or drive people into homelessness

Ludmilla Bade: Under Action Area 5 for prevention, it says assessment of costs, but it is more an assessment of the value of services that are received by clients. One of the biggest complaints Ludmilla has heard is that services are not reaching people. We need some way to measure the connected time with a service provider and how much service has been received. Committee Member Bade feels that if this were tracked, the numbered outcomes would prove to be concerning. Also, get feedback directly from clients and service providers. How much of a case manager's time is spent on paperwork and how much is interacting with the clients.

Cody Zeger: The Committee has agreed to spend more time on the Performance Measure recommendations before they are presented to the Council.

V. Public Comment

Cal ICH Staff opened public comment. General public comments made during this meeting:

Rich L: It is critical for staff to be working towards working themselves out of a job. There needs to be a long-term goal of say 5 years, with an end date so that you work towards hitting that goal. Representatives from different populations need to have a seat at the table for discussions. We need to work towards a solution, not working towards having more and more meetings.

Lahela Mattox, Chief Operations Officer for the Regional Taskforce on Homelessness in San Diego: We are the Continuum of Care for San Diego region. To add onto Joe Colletti's comments, there are many pieces linked to the Federal mandates for CoCs which are unfunded by the State and our funding is stagnant from HUD. We must be careful about what the State wants to do and require vs what we are required to do by HUD. The Committee and Council need to be cognizant of what CoCs are federally mandated to do and then what the State might layer upon that, considering what the CoCs are funded to do.

VI. Final Remarks and Adjournment

The Committee's final Charter will be sent out and posted on the Cal ICH website. The next Advisory Committee meeting will be held on November 6th, 2023 at 1PM. The meeting was adjourned by Director Cody Zeger at 2:58PM.