

To: Meghan Marshall, Executive Officer, California Interagency Council on Homelessness

From: Advisory Committee to the California Interagency Council on Homelessness

Subject: Recommendations from Members of the Advisory Committee on Strengthening Implementation of State Homelessness Funding and Programs

Date: August 30, 2023

PURPOSE

Beginning in November 2022, and at each subsequent Interagency Council meeting, Council members expressed interest in seeking suggestions from the Advisory Committee on how to best align and coordinate State funding and programs as well as how to best assess statewide performance toward the goals of the *Action Plan for Preventing and Ending Homelessness in California*. The suggestions summarized below from the Advisory Committee reflect their discussion on aligning and coordinating funding and programs, and should be considered as Cal ICH staff and the Interagency Council embark on the Fiscal Year 2024-25 update to the Action Plan over the course of the next year.

The Advisory Committee recognizes that the implementation of some suggestions may be beyond the authority of the Council and its member departments and agencies, such as those related to funding amounts and program requirements. The Advisory Committee will continue to work with Cal ICH staff to understand which recommendations are in the Interagency Council's purview and how they may be best moved forward.

IMPLEMENTATION OF FUNDING AND PROGRAMS

The following is a summary of the recommendations from members of the Advisory Committee to strengthen the implementation of State funding and programs. A recommendation with wide agreement from the Committee includes addressing the need for multi-year or ongoing permanent funding to recognize that ending and preventing homelessness requires complex solutions and ongoing commitments to solve.

The Council should pursue actions to reduce administrative burden for applicants, including:

- The creation of a unified homeless funding application, especially in cases where eligible applicants and uses are duplicative, and potential consolidation of overlapping programs into one more comprehensive program.
- Consolidating audits across multiple programs.
- Aligning timelines/reporting with similar federal funding sources.
- Creating multi-year funding applications, as the federal government is considering for the CoC program.
- Direct generalized administrative funding to entities that administer homeless services, akin to CalFresh Administration or Medi-Cal Administration allocations to counties.

The Council should explore opportunities to strengthen capacity among funded entities and their service providers with an eye towards advancing equity, including:

- Providing guidance on minimum administrative support for providers that contract with state grantees, including direction to ensure admin dollars reach culturally-sensitive providers serving marginalized communities to allow these entities to invest in needed back-office functions.
- Expediting payments and reimbursements to awardees and their funded service to reduce the “float” time and costs of programs due to factors like A) lengthy gaps between award and execution of contracts or B) the cost-reimbursement basis of funding. The Council should lower the barriers to obtaining cash advances.
- The Council should work with grantees to lower barriers to smaller, culturally-sensitive providers accessing funding. This should include incentivizing grantees to remove procurement and contracting requirements that screen out organizations that are well-equipped to serve marginalized populations but may not meet all traditional procurement requirements.
- Fostering greater roles for people with lived experience of homelessness in decision-making among grantees, including allowing/incentivizing stipends for people with lived experience and greater support for peer support programs.
- Center marginalized communities: provide Technical Assistance for rural communities, invite tribal entities to the planning process, and ensure program data is disaggregated by race.
- Support the unique needs of different communities with:
 - Funding that supports uses like fostering community buy-in,
 - Peer support programs and other workforce development programs,
 - Planning efforts to reduce permitting times,
 - And other flexible, innovative uses.

- Research the intensity of services needed to serve high acuity populations served in Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) and costs of delivering of those services, including property management and living wages for staff over time.

The Council should advocate to the Administration and Legislature to prioritize changes to how state funding is structured, including:

- Providing ongoing funding or multi-year funding for programs, including multiyear application cycles, which would reduce administrative burden and allow for longer-range planning and investments in uses such as Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) that successfully end people's homelessness.
- Consider baseline funding, coupled with increased funding beyond baseline for uses such as capital and innovation.

NEXT STEPS

Members of the Advisory Committee will present these recommendations to the Interagency Council at their meeting on September 7, 2023. The Council will have a chance to ask questions of Advisory Committee members or request clarification on specific recommendations. Cal ICH staff will take these questions and clarifications and use them to inform discussion at future Advisory Committee meetings with the goal of creating actionable steps toward achieving these recommendations that are within the Interagency Council's purview or the work of Cal ICH Working Groups.

Members of the Advisory Committee will also continue to develop and refine a separate set of recommendations on performance measurement to assess progress of the Action Plan and present it to the Council at a later date.