

**SUMMARY FOR THE CALIFORNIA INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON HOMELESSNESS  
QUARTERLY COUNCIL MEETING**

**September 7, 2023  
1:00pm – 4:00pm**

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

The meeting was called to order on September 7, 2023, at 1:00 PM

*Council Members Present:*

- **Lourdes M. Castro Ramírez**, Council Co-Chair and Secretary of the California Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency (BCSH)
- **Dr. Mark Ghaly**, Council Co-Chair and Secretary of the California Health and Human Services Agency (CalHHS), (Not present at initial roll call)
- **Dr. Tomás J. Aragón**, State Public Health Officer and Director of the California Department of Public Health (CDPH)
- **Stephanie Clendenin**, Director of the California Department of State Hospitals (DSH)
- **Jacey Cooper**, State Medicaid Director and Chief Deputy Director of Health Care Programs, California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS),
- **Susan DeMarois**, Director of the California Department of Aging (CDA)
- **Kim Johnson**, Director of the California Department of Social Services (DSS)
- **Tiena Johnson Hall**, Executive Director of the California Housing Finance Agency (CalHFA)
- **Veronica Lewis**, Director of Homeless Outreach Program Integrated Care System (HOPICS)
- **Jeff Macomber**, Secretary of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR)
- **William McGee**, Director of the Student Achievement Support Division, California Department of Education (CDE)
- **Susannah Parsons**, as designee for Tomiquia Moss, Founder and Chief Executive of All Home
- **Ricki Hammett**, as designee for Nancee Robles, Executive Director of the California Tax Credit Allocation Committee (CTCAC)
- **Rebecca Ruan-O'Shaughnessy**, Vice Chancellor for Educational Services, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO)
- **Lindsey Sin**, Secretary of the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet)
- **Tony Tavares**, Director of the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)
- **Zach Olmstead**, as designee for Gustavo Velasquez, Director of the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD)
- **Lisa Mangat**, as designee for Nancy Ward, Director of the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES)
- **Joe Xavier**, Director of the California Department of Rehabilitation (DOR)

*Council Members Absent:*

- **Vacant**, Executive Director of the California Workforce Development Board (CWDB), and no designee was present

## II. Consent Calendar

There was one item on the Consent Calendar: [Adoption of the Meeting Summary from the May 31, 2023 Council Meeting](#)

- 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.

## III. Council Co-Chair Opening Remarks

Co-Chair Secretary Castro Ramirez provided opening remarks. The Secretary reminded the public that the Governor and his administration has made housing and homelessness a priority. The State is constantly collecting and analyzing data to track its progress in addressing housing insecurity and homelessness. The Secretary highlighted Senate Bill 326, which will set aside 30% of housing resources, benefiting people experiencing homelessness, with half the funding required to assist people experiencing chronic homelessness and a focus on helping those in encampments. This assistance will be a valuable resource to local partners as they seek ways to provide supportive services and rental assistance necessary for long-term support to those at risk of or experiencing homelessness. The Secretary also mentioned that Assembly Bill 531 proposes a bond that would provide funding for Behavioral Health Infrastructure and Permanent Supportive Housing, estimated to create approximately 3,800 permanent housing units for persons at risk of or experiencing homelessness and living with a behavioral health challenge, with nearly half the funding explicitly focused on housing for veterans. These housing resources would augment existing state programs, such as Homekey, which has funded 12,774 homes through 210 projects across the State.

## IV. Executive Officer Updates

Cal ICH Executive Officer, Megan Marshall announced the transition of the Cal ICH Grant portfolio to the Department of California of Housing and Community Development (HCD). With this transition, Cal ICH can increase focus on the State's Action Plan.

**Council Member Veronica Lewis:** Asked about how the process of this transition will ensure that the Action Plan and the conversations in the Council meetings inform Cal ICH funding?

- **Zach Olmstead:** Responded to Council Member Lewis by stating that in this year's budget, the legislature elected a phased transition. This means that this transition will not happen until next year. There will be extensive support for the Cal ICH staff to accommodate disruptions for any grantees.
- **Co-Chair Secretary Castro Ramirez:** Added to Zach's comment by stating that both Cal ICH and HCD are under BCSH agency and assured there will be no disruptions.

## V. Advisory Committee Recommendations

Advisory Committee members, Roxanne Wilson and Ludmilla Bade, presented the [Advisory Committee's recommendations related to homelessness funding and programs](#). The Committee recommended that the Council should pursue actions to reduce administrative burden for applicants, including: unified homeless funding applications, consolidating audits across multiple programs, aligning timelines/reporting with federal programs, aligning timelines/reporting with federal funding, multi-year funding applications, and direct generalized administrative funding to entities that administer homeless services. The second recommendation is for the Council to explore opportunities to strengthen capacity among funded entities and their service providers with an eye towards advancing equity, including: guidance on minimum administrative support for providers that contract with state grantees, expediting payments and reimbursements to awardees and their funded service, lower barriers to smaller, culturally-sensitive providers accessing funding, fostering greater roles for people with lived experience of homelessness in decision-making among grantees. The third recommendation is for the Council to explore opportunities to strengthen capacity among funded entities and their service providers with an eye towards advancing equity. The final recommendation is for the Council to advocate to the Administration and Legislature to prioritize changes for state funding, including ongoing funding or multi-year funding for programs, baseline funding, coupled with increased funding beyond baseline for uses such as capital and innovation.

**Council Member Tiena Johnson Hall:** Asked the Committee to unpack the topic of barriers to smaller, culturally sensitive programs in a future Council meeting, for educational purposes.

**Designee Zach Olmstead:** The specifics around the Committee's recommendations on consolidation alignment would be helpful. The Council would then know which audits and reports the Committee hope to consolidate, making them actionable by our departments. With this feedback we can see if alignment exists and where we are able to consolidate. There are trade-offs as many of those reports feed into data. We do not want to eliminate those streams that are feeding into our data systems and providing us needed information. He asked the Advisory Committee to clarify which reporting requirements and audits and which departments.

**Council Member Veronica Lewis:** Asked the Committee for more information on the five percent administrative rate and if it is regulatory or not since the significant investment that the State is making is going through intermediaries and CoC's. She also wishes to have more clarity on what organizational equity looks like. She pointed out that successful organizational equity can be viewed as minority-led organizations. She also wishes to clarify how the Working Group and Advisory Committee feedback intersect and how these groups are used to change the Action Plan. She also asks the State to have a more thoughtful compliance process when auditing organizations or communities that interact with multiple agencies. Lastly, she highlighted the importance of aiding organizations that have made an immense impact in their communities but do not know how to or have the capacity to apply for State funding.

**Council Member William McGee:** Wishes for the next Council meeting to bring discussions on K-12, families, and students who are experiencing homelessness.

**Council Member Rebecca Ruan-O'Shaughnessy:** Stated that small and culturally sensitive providers may not know about available funding and may not feel comfortable applying to a non-traditional department with whom they normally interact with. She wishes to see proactive measures from to help these communities interact and work with other departments.

Co-Chair Mark Ghaly provided his remarks at the end of this agenda item as he was not present at the beginning of the meeting. Co-Chair Ghaly shared updates on the Care Act. In October, eight counties will move forward with the Cohort One of the Care Act. He thanked the Judicial Council, the Agency team, and DHCS for working through the logistics and preparation. He also explained how this initiative is a different pathway into services. He addressed how critical it is to include housing in the service framework and provide stabilization for people experiencing homelessness.

Co-Chair Ghaly also shared that they are actively working with multiple partners on the Behavioral Health Modernization and Behavioral Health Services Act Reform. One key highlight of these two reforms is the inclusion of housing as a service, specifically aimed at people with serious behavioral health conditions, both mental health and substance use, experiencing homelessness or unstable housing. This service needs to be funded on an ongoing basis; 30% of the dollars must be used to pay for housing interventions. This can be accomplished through shared rental subsidy models or other creative solutions. This means that roughly four billion dollar a year, MHSA and BHSa fund nearly a billion dollars a year of ongoing funding. A quarter of that is available for Capital and three quarters are available for those other solutions to get that housing service in place. If passed, this will be a continuous source.

He expressed his excitement for Dr. Kushal during the Council meeting and provided a preview of Dr. Kushal's study. Historically, 20 years ago, the Mental Health Services Act didn't recognize the importance of substance use disorder services as a primary topic of discussion in behavioral health. Thanks to advocates across California, Behavioral Health Services Act Reform will provide funding for standalone substance use disorder services.

Dr. Ghaly also highlighted how the Department of Health Care Services, Mental Health Oversight Committee and County partners have worked together to create an integrated comprehensive Behavioral Health Plan. This plan will require data to be collected, state departments to look at that data, and make decisions about department performance.

Finally, he pointed out that California is serious about equity. The power of community-based organizations across the state is a crucial piece and he recognizes that the State has not made it easy for community organizations to access these resources. However, he reassured the public that everyone is collectively working on initiatives that will bring every concern and feedback together.

## **VI. Updated Action Plan for Preventing and Ending Homelessness**

Cal ICH is in the process of updating the Action Plan to add additional or expanded-upon activities for the coming fiscal year. Cody provided an overview of the public input sessions. Nearly 200 people engaged in feedback from across the State, representing multiple sectors and disciplines.

Based on various feedbacks, the Action Plan Updates are: sustain the Plan's current structure of five Action Areas and 15 Objectives, and its timeframe (FY 20-21 through FY 23-24); revise language, data, and information within the Plan's opening content; refine descriptions of the Plan's Objectives to ensure a focus on racial equity and social justice; update Activities included in the original Plan and add 33 new Activities – fully reflect the range of Activities being implemented during FY 23-24 (170 Activities total); refine objective descriptions with clarifying language and ensure they prioritize racial equity and the importance of including voices with lived expertise; include additional Key Principles and Practices to include a focus on recognizing and addressing the unique needs and challenges of Tribal Nations; update data on homelessness in California, utilizing HDIS system data documenting people served by homelessness systems across the State; and, finally, align key performance measures with the California System Performance Measures (CA SPMs) under Health and Safety Code §50220.7, which help the state and local jurisdictions, including HHAP grantees, assess their progress toward preventing and ending homelessness.

In response to the Council's discussion at its May 31, 2023, meeting, there is an expansion of new and revised Activities addressing interagency coordination and collaboration, racial equity and Tribal engagement, inclusion of people with lived expertise in policymaking and program design, communications, and public awareness.

BCSH and Cal HHS developed data-sharing recommendations between their respective Data Systems. Cal OES is convening the priority populations task force with partnership from many other departments and agencies to ensure the needs of people living outside are taken into consideration during Disaster Response. HCD is piloting efforts with CDCR to create housing opportunities for individuals exiting correctional settings. CTAC and CDLAC continue to implement set-asides for tribal entities and BIPOC-led developers. HCD is developing policies to implement the State's duty to affirmatively further fair housing. CDPH is working on creating a Lived Experience Advisory Board (LEAB) to help inform their work, and HCD will be providing technical assistance and program guidance reported by people with lived experience.

Cal ICH is increasing the State's Workforce knowledge on housing first, racial equity, and inclusion for engaging people with lived experience, among other topics.

*Public comment was available prior to the Council's vote to adopt the updated Action Plan:*

- **Ludmilla Bade:** Wishes to see clearer timelines on when the public can provide their feedback to the Action Plan. It is difficult to find the announcements on the Cal ICH website.
- **Marty Omoto:** Asked the Council to make sure people with development disabilities and their families are considered in the data reporting. Marty wishes to have clarity from the Council on why the Department of Development Services is not part of the Council.

The council voted to adopt the updated Statewide Action Plan for Preventing and Ending Homelessness for FY 2023-2024.

Cal ICH will begin work on a new iteration of the Action Plan. Council members responded to discussion questions to inform the development of a new Action Plan.

**Council Member Tiena Johnson Hall:** Proposed for State departments to explore ways to share digestible information to the public. She added, the Council should be more engaged with communities that struggle to apply for funding.

**Council Member Jacey Cooper:** Asked for more measurable goals in the Action Plan Activities and additional quantitative data.

**Council Member Rebecca Ruan-O'Shaughnessy:** Hopes to see more compliance with reaching each Action Plan Activity. She asked the State departments to continue going above and beyond with their Activities, even after reaching their goals.

**Council Member Veronica Lewis:** Highlights how more than a 12-month Action Plan is needed for State departments to reach their actionable goals. Changes take time, and Council Member Lewis hopes the Council can explore a two to three-year plan.

**Council Member William McGee:** Highlights the importance of assuring the public that the overarching goal correlates with each State department's goals. He also proposed to have interactive meetings. This can range from having someone writing on a whiteboard, presenting HMIS Data, etc.

**Council Member Susan DeMarois:** Asks to see more recognition of the intersectionality of populations. She also shared to be mindful when explicitly naming people.

**Co-Chair Secretary Mark Ghaly:** Highlighted how the concept of interagency is one of the great benefits of this group and how many leaders from across the state are connected to different stakeholders, counties, and communities, which helps with the sharing information and resources.

**Designee Susannah Parsons:** Hopes to see a stronger leadership stance and have the Action Plan address and break down silos.

**Co-Chair Secretary Castro Ramirez:** Echoed the ideas about establishing the next iteration of the Action Plan, including more strategic planning and interaction. She also discussed setting a separate goal around what the State is doing to help both nonprofits and institutions in the community that are implementing these programs.

## **VII. California Statewide Study of People Experiencing Homelessness (CASPEH)**

Dr. Margot Kushel presented on the [California Statewide Study of People Experiencing Homelessness \(CASPEH\)](#). This study was conducted across eight California counties and targeted adults 18 or over and chose several participants per County based on the size and composition of homeless populations in each County. Young adults were not studied due to being a profoundly different population and there being difficulty finding youth using the same methods for adults. The study is available to view in full in the meeting materials.

90% of participants were last stably housed in California, and 75% lived in the same County where they lost their housing. A significantly higher percentage of people in the study were born in California than people who moved here at some point.

In the study, individuals who came from institutions, such as prisons or jails were more likely to experience homelessness. 49% came from what is called non-lease holding arrangements. This meant people were housed but did not currently have a legal tenancy, meaning they didn't have a lease to their name. Thus, they do not have the protections we see in eviction protections.

41% of people studied indicated there was a time they wanted shelter but were unable to access it during their current episode of homelessness. Some unsheltered participants expressed concerns about congregate shelter: COVID-19 and health-related risks, burdensome rules, and inadequate support to find permanent housing.

The key barrier to returning to housing is high housing costs. Many also indicated not having someone help them find housing as a barrier. Participants believed financial interventions or housing navigator would meaningfully impact their return to housing.

Dr. Margot Kushel recommends increasing access to affordable housing options and expanding rental assistance programs by supporting the usability of existing subsidies, incentivizing housing production, and piloting shared housing. Provide support to access behavioral health and substance use treatment. This includes providing meaningful support and increased access to Mental Health Care for those living outside who are most disconnected. This includes investing in street outreach that supports unsheltered individuals with access and embedding a racial equity approach in the homeless system service delivery that strengthens anti-discrimination policies.

**Co-Chair Secretary Castro Ramirez:** Thanked Dr. Kushel for leading the California Statewide Study of People Experiencing Homelessness (CASPEH). The Secretary proposed using the policy recommendations listed in the presentation and applying them to the Statewide Action Plan. The second point is in terms of rental subsidies, particularly emergency rental assistance; California distributed over 4.7 billion dollars in emergency rental assistance across the state to about 370,000 households and 80% under 30. This was a response to the pandemic to keep people housed during this public health emergency. The State saw how the federal government enabled California to have funding resources during a public health emergency.

**Council Member Veronica Lewis:** Appreciated how the study crosses over to many State departments in the Council. She hopes departments will digest the full report and incorporate some data elements to inform policy conversations, specifically about equity. She stated that while doing the groundwork, she first saw how rents are outpacing income subsidy programs have driven upgrades in some of her communities because of the competing interests to try to find units for people. She would like to see more conversations about how these time-limited subsidy programs are not helping people stay housed. She proposed more long-term support or vouchers. She hopes State departments will use this study and ask for better preventative resources for people on the verge of eviction or losing their homes.

**Council Member Kim Johnson:** Hopes that that the council can bring Dr. Kushel and others back to talk about prevention and understand what it takes to provide stability. Also asks for recommendation on how the state is amplifying prevention efforts.

**Council Member Jacey Cooper:** Agreed with the previous comments and thanks Dr. Kushel for the study. It has been referenced in documents from the DHCS and is a great tool that will inform their daily work.

**Council Member Tomas Aragon:** Asked if there are any places that are prosperous and have been able to address homelessness or if there are low-income areas that have not been able to.

- **Dr. Kushel:** The shortage of housing or extremely low-income households is correlated to homelessness. While many people moved to California, housing did not increase; however, California is making progress in developing units. States like Texas have been able to address homelessness as they have much land and less regulations to build housing.

**Council Member William McGee:** Found it interesting that the data showed that older adults who experienced homelessness for the first time are the age 50 and over. He brought up the point that there are children currently experiencing homelessness. He also shared that he has a data team working on publishing their K-12 report. He wishes to share his department's study with the Council. He asked the Council to provide more support on resources for K-12 kids and families facing homelessness.

**Council Member Lindsey Sin:** Discussed how the study illuminated new veterans' information. There is pushback from resources because they do not fit in the income qualifier. She proposes having better housing navigators to ensure that everyone can be housed regardless of income. She echoed what Council Member McGee said about not having enough data on families—including people who are couch surfing, living in multi-generational households, people on the verge of being displaced, and people caring for many dependents.

**Council Member Joe Xavier:** Asks if the study collect the information on disability, if it distinguishes between hidden disabilities and visible disabilities, and its connection to loss of employment.

- **Dr. Kushel:** Survey participants were asked about mobility impairments, mental health disability, and any disability that interferes with functionality, which could be matched with employment information. There is an overlap as it was mentioned that illness or acquisition of a new disability interfering with employment and contributing to homelessness.

**Council Member Rebecca Ruan-O'Shaughnessy:** Highlighted the policy recommendations for future State Action Plan preparations. She liked how all the recommendations are issue-driven and force agency collaboration across and beyond. She wishes the Council would consider the effects that short- and medium-term changes can have on students' educational journeys, specifically for Community Colleges.

## VIII. USICH ALL Inside Updates:

Maxine Pulliam, with the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, provided a federal update. With the ALL INside initiative, Seattle, Chicago, Dallas, Phoenix, and Los Angeles each have one Federal team lead assigned to their community. Two are from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and two are from US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Los Angeles is currently waiting to have a federal team member assigned to them. For the next two years, ALL INside will take a people-based approach focusing primarily on Veterans, older adults, and youth. The initiatives address various areas, including assisting with Medicaid, reimbursements, and waivers, especially for older adults. The Federal teams supports effective delivery of services across Veteran Affairs (VA) locations and provides engagement with resources for Youth and Young adults experiencing homelessness.

There are goals to remove barriers, create regulatory flexibilities, and improve coordination by maximizing Federal resources, including project-based vouchers and benefits, including Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), and Social Security Rulings (SSR). The initiative will also reduce documentation for VA programs and support the coordination of excess state properties, local surplus properties, and federal properties for housing development. The federal team aims to ensure people can use existing resources by expediting application processes, reducing paperwork to obtain social security cards, and strengthening outcomes by supporting local efforts across the state.

## IX. Public Comment

- **Sophia Herrera:** Beginning on January 1st, 2024, cities, counties, and CoCs that receive State funding to address homelessness will be required to include unaccompanied women as domestic violence survivors and their children as a sub-population priority as stated in SB 914. Sophia is asking Cal ICH to use the submitted data to make achievable changes for this population.
- **Kim Lewis:** Highlighted the importance and urgency of addressing youth homelessness.
- **Reba Stevens:** Wishes to see more substance support and resources. They also wish for the Council to address how funding contracts should protect the front-line staff salaries and wellbeing.

## X. Final Remarks and Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:01 PM.