



CALIFORNIA HOMELESS COORDINATING AND FINANCING COUNCIL

Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency
Gavin Newsom, Governor | Lourdes M. Castro Ramírez, Secretary

January 21, 2021

Dear Members of the Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council:

With the new year comes an opportunity to renew the commitment of our state's efforts around Housing First to assure that individuals experiencing homelessness across California can safely access shelter and permanent housing. California's homelessness crisis is complex, requiring focus, coordination across state systems, good data to inform and measure our progress, stronger state and local partnerships, and investment in innovative strategies to effectively address the needs of individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness. To that end, I am incredibly grateful for the partnership of the members of this Council for your continued work toward our shared vision of reducing and ending homelessness in our state, and I have no doubt that this new year will bring continued progress.

In advance of the Council's upcoming meeting on February 23, I am pleased to offer updates on the following current, upcoming, and proposed work by HCFC and our state and local partners so that you are aware of recent activities and developments that may impact our work together:

Governor's Budget

On January 8, Governor Newsom released his [budget proposal](#) for FY 2021-22. The proposal includes \$1.75 billion in one-time funding toward new and continuing homelessness programs throughout California including:

- \$750 million in funding for Homekey, administered by the Department of Housing and Community Development to assist local jurisdictions with the purchase and rehabilitation of properties to permanently house people experiencing homelessness. The proposal also recommends \$250 million in continuing FY 2020-21 funding for existing Homekey projects.
- \$750 million to the Department of Health Care Services, over three years, for counties to acquire and rehabilitate facilities to expand behavioral health treatment resources.
- \$250 million to the Department of Social Services, for counties to acquire and rehabilitate residential facilities to house low-income seniors.

Action Plan Status

I am eager for our Council to wrap up the planning phase of our Action Plan in the first quarter of this year. Council staff has continued to expand the section detailing the current and planned activities of the state, which [they previewed for you](#) at the December 2020 meeting. HCFC staff will present a more detailed draft of the plan at

our upcoming special meeting, with the goal that the Council will approve and adopt a finalized version at our meeting on March 23.

Vaccine Guidance

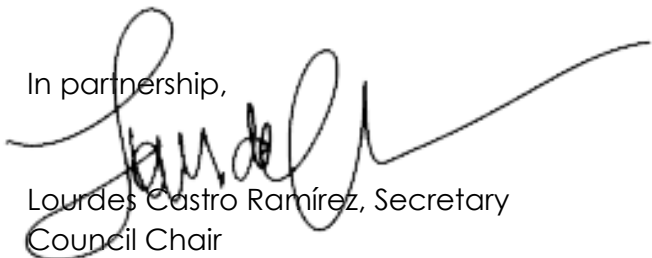
With leadership from the California Department of Public Health and in partnership with UCSF Benioff Homelessness and Housing Initiative and the California Health Care Foundation, HCFC staff will be releasing a set of tools for local homelessness response systems around COVID-19 vaccinations for service providers and people experiencing homelessness. These will include checklists for local vaccine planning preparedness, specific relevant information about prioritization of vaccines, and publications aimed at shelters to provide direct, clear messaging about receiving the vaccine. The first in this series of tools is expected to be released next week and will be posted on our [HCFC COVID-19 resources page](#). Full guidance on the state's vaccination plans can be found at [COVID19.CA.GOV](#).

State Homelessness Audit

The California State Auditor, per the [request](#) of the Joint Legislative Audit Committee (JLAC), is currently compiling a report on homelessness in the state of California, reviewing Continuum of Care (CoC) organizations with the goal of identifying best practices and increasing efficiency and accountability of CoC lead agencies. As referenced in the [audit's scope](#), auditors will review Continuum of Care (CoC) organizations in five counties in California. The report will include recommendations to the Legislature which will identify strategies, resources, best practices, and opportunities for CoCs to improve systems efficiency and accountability, increase outreach and collaboration, include more high-quality service providers, and better serve those experiencing homelessness in our state. We look forward to reviewing the report once available. It is currently scheduled for release next month.

These are only a few highlights of work happening at the state level to address homelessness. We know you, your organizations, and local communities are equally committed to preventing and ending homelessness in California. I would invite you all to share that passion for this work with the Council—this year, and beyond.

In partnership,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lourdes', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Lourdes Castro Ramírez, Secretary
Council Chair