



# CALIFORNIA HOMELESS COORDINATING AND FINANCING COUNCIL

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

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August 28, 2020

Dear Members of the Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council:

The Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council (HCFC), together with the Governor's Office, our sister state agencies and local partners, has been diligently responding to the myriad of challenges facing our state--- from fighting COVID19 to the current wildfires. I'd like to take a moment to acknowledge your work and that of our HCFC team under the leadership of Ali Sutton, Deputy Secretary for Homelessness --- together we continue to meet the moment while advancing the Council's priorities to prevent and end homelessness.

As we look ahead to our upcoming special meeting on September 15<sup>th</sup>, I want to provide an update on these recent efforts.

#### HCFC Staffing

- The state's FY 20-21 budget authorized 10 additional positions for the HCFC. We have begun active recruitment efforts to fill these positions with qualified, passionate individuals as quickly as possible. We sincerely appreciate you sharing these position openings with your networks as we continue to recruit in the coming months. Please check [HCFC's job openings webpage](#) for updates on current openings.

#### Technical Assistance

- Today, we released a [Guidance Memo](#) focusing on actions local homelessness systems should take to protect people experiencing homelessness from recently ignited wildfires and power shut-offs, made even more challenging due to the persistent threat of COVID-19. We encourage you to share with your networks to ensure communities are taking clear action to the current fires across the state and are prepared for the remainder of this year's fire season.
- As we announced earlier this month, the HCFC released the [Guide to Strategic Uses of Key State and Federal Funds to Reduce Homelessness During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#). This Guide is designed to advance our collective efforts to protect the immediate health and well-being and address the permanent housing needs of people experiencing homelessness during this public health crisis. We truly believe this new resource will aid local governments and Continuums of Care in California in making informed decisions on the most strategic uses of a range of new and existing Federal and State resources to address homelessness during COVID-19. Please continue to share this Guide and be on the lookout for supporting materials that HCFC will be releasing in the coming weeks.

- HCFC has also recently launched a [resources page](#) promoting evidence-based and promising best practices that communities can utilize to end homelessness in California. The page includes two focused sections on racial equity and youth homelessness. This page will continue to expand and be updated in the weeks and months ahead, and I encourage you to share additional resources we should highlight with HCFC staff at [HCFC@bcsh.ca.gov](mailto:HCFC@bcsh.ca.gov).
- In addition to developing, identifying, and sharing key resources, HCFC has also continued to provide robust technical assistance to local jurisdictions on their COVID-19 response, including bi-weekly office hours for HCFC grantees, individual grantee calls, and a highly intensive technical assistance effort with 4 communities currently participating in the first cohort of the [Governor's 100 Day Challenge](#). Additional information about lessons learned from this first cohort will be released in late September and the second cohort is expected to launch later this fall. Communities interested in participating in additional cohorts should email [HCFC@bcsh.ca.gov](mailto:HCFC@bcsh.ca.gov).

#### Funding Updates

- As shared in the previous meeting, in April and May, HCFC distributed \$100 million to 13 large cities, 58 counties, and 44 Continuums of Care (CoCs) for shelter support and emergency housing to prevent and mitigate the spread of COVID-19 among those experiencing homelessness. As funds were dispersed, HCFC provided technical assistance, in partnership with CDSS, to all grantees to support local efforts to operationalize social distancing guidelines in shelters, administer symptom screenings, and connect high-risk individuals and COVID+ individuals to non-congregate shelter for safe isolation. As a result of these efforts, most of these funds (73%) are being spent on non-congregate shelter in alignment with public health guidance.
- HCFC has executed all contracts and dispersed all \$618 million in funds to Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention Program (HHAP) grantees. HCFC is now working with local jurisdictions to provide technical assistance and developing performance and monitoring guidelines. HCFC is also drafting a HHAP round two application that incorporates new [statutorily required goals](#) around racial equity and performance metrics, which must be released by November 30, 2020.
- HCFC has expanded technical assistance and monitoring efforts for Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP) grantees. As of March 31, 2020, HEAP grantees had spent 34% (\$172 million) of the \$499 million allocated and have an additional 56% (\$279 million) of planned expenditures under obligation. In this most recent quarterly update, spending on services and rental assistance accelerated the most — both categories doubled from December 2019 to March 2020 as programs reached full operation. Youth set-aside spending also accelerated — more than doubling from December 2019 to March 2020. HCFC



will receive another spending update in September in its continued efforts to monitor and support grantee progress.

#### Homeless Data Integration System (HDIS)

- HCFC received signed Data Use Agreements from all Continuums of Care and is collaborating with California Department of Technology to procure a vendor to build the HDIS. The first phase of the project — compiling standardized data from all local Homeless Management Information Systems — is expected to start later this year, with implementation scheduled for completion in early 2021. More information about HDIS can be found [here](#).

#### HCFC Action Planning

- Finally, HCFC continues to work on the HCFC action planning process. Our Deputy Secretary for Homelessness, Ali Sutton, is coordinating stakeholder input to inform the development of the plan priorities and objectives. Thank you for making yourselves available for these preliminary interviews - your input is critical to the success of this effort. More information regarding this process will be discussed at our special meeting in September.

In summary, the HCFC team has been working tremendously hard these past few months. We have much more work to do, but I am grateful for their spirit and determination during these unprecedented times. And, again, I thank each of you for your unwavering determination and action to prevent and end homelessness. I look forward to our gathering together on September 15, 2020. Be well and stay safe.

In partnership,

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

Lourdes Castro Ramírez, Secretary  
Council Chair