An Initial Assessment of California’s Homeless Emergency Aid Program

A Presentation to the California Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council
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1. Background and Purpose
2. Key Findings
3. Recommendations and Conclusion
4. Q & A
BACKGROUND

Substantial rise in homelessness in California, particularly in past four years

POINT IN TIME ESTIMATES FOR CALIFORNIA; 2007-2019
BACKGROUND

- CA State legislature passed SB 850 in 2018
- $500 million in one-time funding through Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP)
  - 70% of funds to CoCs
  - 30% of funds to 11 large cities
• HCFC commissioned CSUS to conduct an initial assessment of HEAP planning and implementation
  • 20 in-depth interviews (out of 54 jurisdictions)
  • 40 survey responses
  • Application review
BACKGROUND

• Our report describes…
  • The variety of programs and innovative practices funded by HEAP in the first year
  • Overarching strategies used by communities
  • Early successes and challenges
  • Our recommendations
 background

• Please keep in mind…
• An independent study
• Not intended to be an evaluation of the outcomes or impact of HEAP
• Intended to help inform ongoing evaluation and planning decisions
OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS
HOW ARE GRANTEES SPENDING HEAP FUNDS?

Four main categories
• Services
• Capital improvement
• Rental assistance
• Youth set-aside
The largest proportion of funds were allocated to **direct services** to help Californians either avoid or exit homelessness.
Urban, suburban and rural communities varied in their HEAP allocations, particularly with respect to capital investments and services.
Almost all communities (92%) reported that they had allocated some portion of their HEAP grant to support direct services.
• Approximately 87% of communities reported using HEAP funds for *capital investments*
• 85% of communities planned or allocated HEAP funds to support a variety of rental assistance programs
HEAP Funding Strategies

- Innovate: 56%
- Scale: 38%
- Reassess: 26%
LESSONS LEARNED

• Initial distrust of the flexibility of HEAP
• Collaborative planning described as “a big lift”
• Challenges associated with shelter declaration requirement
• Delays in capital investment projects
RECOMMENDATIONS

• Avoid single metric to measure success
  • Reduce harm associated with homelessness
  • Reduce time homeless
  • Prevent homelessness

• Additional technical assistance needed
It is very likely that some innovative models will result in better outcomes than others—though it is unclear how results and impacts can be assessed across these different contexts.

Therefore HCFC should support...

- Evaluations at the local level
  - Help identify successful models and best practices
- Workshops and/or small learning communities
  - Disseminate innovative uses of state funds
THANK YOU

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ADDITIONAL REFERENCE SLIDES
HEAP Allocation by Type of CoC

16 Urban CoCs: $208 Million (42%)

11 Major Cities: $150 Million (30%)

17 Suburban CoCs: $109 Million (22%)

10 Rural CoCs: $32 Million (6%)
Large cities collectively allocated a substantially larger proportion (45%) toward capital investments compared to CoCs (32%).