



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

Meeting Summary
March 23, 2021
2:00PM – 5:00PM
Teleconference

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

Secretary Lourdes M. Castro Ramírez called the meeting to order at 2:06PM.

Council Members Present:

- Lourdes M. Castro Ramírez, Council Chair and Secretary of Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency;
- Emilio Ramirez, Council Vice Chair and Director of Housing, City of Oxnard;
- Amy Anderson, Former Chief Housing Officer, Office of Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti;
- Russell Atterberry, Undersecretary of California Department of Veterans Affairs;
- Gina Buccieri-Harrington, Assistant Director of Grants Management, Victim Services Program in California Governor's Office of Emergency Services;
- Corrin Buchanan, Assistant Director of Housing and Homelessness Branch in the California Department of Social Services;
- Donald Cavier, Acting Executive Director of California Housing Finance Agency;
- Jacey Cooper, Chief Deputy Director of Health Care Programs in the California Department of Health Care Services;
- Jody Ketcheside, Deputy Regional Director of Turning Point of Central California;
- Toks Omishakin, Director of California Department of Transportation (*not present at initial roll call*);
- Rebecca Ruan-O'Shaughnessy, Vice Chancellor of Educational Services and Support, California Community Colleges;
- Lindsay Tornatore, Director of Student Achievement and Support Division in the California Department of Education; and
- Gustavo Velasquez, Director of California Department of Housing and Community Development.

Absent:

- Alexis Barries, Advocate;
- Gail Gilman, Chief Strategy Officer, All Home California;
- Jennifer Loving, Chief Executive Officer, Destination: Home;
- Gary McCoy, Congressional Aide, Office of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi; and
- Joe Uchishiba, Former Police Officer, City of Fairfield.

Opening Remarks

Secretary Lourdes M. Castro Ramírez welcomed new council members Rebecca Ruan-O'Shaughnessy and Lindsay Tornatore and provided updates on the state's COVID response. The state has administered over 15 million vaccines, recently introduced a framework to ensure 40% of vaccines go to hardest hit communities, and is working to ensure vaccine access for people experiencing homelessness.

On March 15, the State began accepting applications for the CA COVID-19 Rent Relief program to assist renters and landlords. The state has established a local partner network of community-based organizations to provide support in connecting tenants and landlords to the program.

Today, the Council is considering approval of the [Action Plan for Preventing and Ending Homelessness in California](#), which has been created with extensive input from council members, State departments, the Governor's Office, external stakeholders, and individuals with lived experience.

II. Adoption of the meeting summary from February 23, 2021 Council meeting

The Council approved the [meeting summary](#) from the February 23, 2021 council meeting. Council Member Rebecca Ruan-O'Shaughnessy abstained; all other members present voted to approve.

III. Adoption of HCFC Action Plan

Secretary Castro Ramírez introduced this item, acknowledging work by consultant Matthew Doherty, Deputy Secretary for Homelessness Ali Sutton, and Executive Officer Julie Lo to guide and shape the Action Plan. Its [initial framework](#) was approved in October 2020. The [current draft](#) includes more detail, such as activities that State departments represented on the Council are committing to, objectives and timeframes for these activities, background and explanatory content, and the creation of five working groups to identify strategies for work within the plan's action areas.

This is a two-year action plan that is focused on data analysis, performance metrics, and tracking progress. In a few weeks, the Homeless Data Integration System (HDIS) will launch and will help inform and provide additional data to integrate into the Action Plan moving forward.

Matthew Doherty provided an overview of changes that have been made to the plan since it was discussed at the February 23 Council meeting. Meetings were held with State departments represented on the Council, from which the language for some activities was refined, and performance measures and timeframes were determined. In objective four, which focuses on asset- and wealth-building, a reference to educational opportunities was added.

Through discussions with State departments, activities were separated into two tiers: highest priority activities for implementation, which include core functions of the State and are expected to have the highest impact, and additional activities prioritized for implementation. Some activities were removed based on discussions, with the intent that the Action Plan does not necessarily express everything the State is doing but focuses on the most important things.

The pace for formation of working groups was adjusted so that one group is expected to be formed for each upcoming quarter, and the groups are listed in the plan in the order expected to be formed. HCFC will initiate planning and determine processes for forming these groups, including which external stakeholders will be engaged, and report back to the Council.

An executive summary was also added to the plan to help readers more quickly engage and understand its core areas of focus, its structure, and the information described within.

Deputy Secretary Sutton thanked the Council and HCFC staff for partnership and collaboration in developing this action plan. It is a public commitment to delivering on opportunities to build toward a more equitable future in preventing and ending homelessness.

Council Members Jacey Cooper, Amy Anderson, Russell Atterberry, and Corrin Buchanan expressed their appreciation for the Action Plan, including thanking staff for their work on the plan and for incorporating feedback from the Council, and commenting on its necessity in terms of showing leadership, coordination, and partnership.

Public Comment

- Gerry Londe-Berg, Petaluma: Hope that edits and modifications to the Action Plan sent to HCFC today will be accepted. The plan's emphasis on youth has not been balanced by attention to elders; mentions of "youth" in the plan are 40:1 to mentions of elders. The plan should also reference California's new Master Plan on Aging, call out the population who have traumatic brain injuries, and create focus on private sector involvement to house people experiencing homelessness. Approximately 20% of people in any county are not able to work, including elders in Social Security, Social Security Disability Insurance, and Supplemental Security Income programs. The State of California should work with the Social Security Administration to make these processes more efficient, which the poorly coordinated SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery program was intended to do. There should also be more work with law enforcement to stop homeless encampment sweeps.
- Joe Colletti, Urban Initiatives: On behalf of the Southern California Continuum of Care Alliance, appreciate that "trauma-informed" now appears in the draft Action Plan. Recommend that trauma-informed design be included either as a separate key principle or used through the plan's action areas. The U.S. Department of

Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration has developed core components of trauma-informed design and care which have been widely accepted by agencies working toward solving homelessness.

- Kim Lewis, California Coalition for Youth: Appreciate the attention to youth and young adults in the Action Plan. The majority of chronically homeless adults first experienced homelessness when they were youth, and there is overrepresentation of LGBTQ and people of color among youth experiencing homelessness. The attention to employment services and economic supports within the plan will be important to ensuring people who are served can live successful lives.
- Ludmilla Bade: Would like to see focus on senior services and supports, such as part-time work with benefits for those who don't have the capacity to work 40+ hours per week, and flexibility of housing situations including shared or community living spaces. Tying in with the Master Plan on Aging is important, as is support for trauma and recovery programs. Housing First is a good model but should not be used to prevent access to other services needed for recovery.

Council Member Toks Omishakin was called for roll at 2:53PM.

Council Member Anderson asked HCFC staff to provide thoughts about the public comment on trauma-informed care.

- HCFC did not want to add or change principles that the Council would not have sufficient time to review and provide feedback on before voting today. The Action Plan is intended to be a living document and HCFC staff will continue to engage with the Council about possible future updates.

The Council voted to approve the Action Plan for Preventing and Ending Homelessness in California. All members present voted to approve.

Executive Officer Julie Lo went through next steps after approval. There will be some final cleanup of the Action Plan before its public release, which will include updated 2020 Point-in-Time count numbers. HCFC staff will start developing a tracking and accountability system to work toward commitments in the plan. HCFC will begin to determine details for implementing working groups and will provide a progress update at the June 17, 2021 Council meeting.

IV. California Debt Limit Allocation Regulations Rule Change

Secretary Castro Ramírez introduced this agenda item and congratulated Nancee Robles, recently appointed Executive Director of the California Tax Credit Allocation Committee (TCAC) and California Debt Limit Allocation Committee (CDLAC).

Gina Ferguson, Housing Program Manager for the California State Treasurer's Office presented on this item. CDLAC receives approximately \$4 billion in federal tax-exempt bonds to allocate each year. Several years ago, it became apparent that changes were needed to the system used to allocate bonds. In 2020, CDLAC came up with a new system, through participation from committee members and stakeholders in public meetings and discussions.

This year, under the new system, \$3.7 billion of \$4.3 billion in bonds is devoted to multi-family housing in various pools, including housing for people experiencing homelessness and housing for extremely low or very low-income individuals.

\$559 million is set aside for homeless housing, with the criteria for at least 25% of units to be filled by people who are or have been homeless, and priority for developments dedicated 100% to homeless housing. CDLAC is in its first round of applications and expects to make awards on April 28, 2021, with most or all of that funding going to 100% homeless housing projects.

\$671 million is set aside for projects targeting lower income individuals and can also include projects for homeless housing if that pool is oversubscribed. This pool requires that projects serve tenants at or below 50% of average area median income. Applicants that receive funding from the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) are eligible to compete in this pool, as are applicants with at least 15% funding through other public sources.

Just under \$112 million is set aside for the Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) pool, to ensure that emerging BIPOC developers are able to compete and develop in communities of their choosing.

Of the \$3.7 billion for multi-family housing, just under \$1.5 billion is set aside for geographic regions, which encompass all counties in the state, to ensure that housing is geographically diverse and not unbalanced toward one area. The regions are Bay Area, Coastal, City of Los Angeles, County of Los Angeles, Inland Empire, and Northern.

Within this new system, CDLAC has established point categories including building density, State and local money used, on-site service amenities within projects, cost containment, and proximity to outside amenities such as transit, schools, and grocery stores. Many applicants are scoring at or near the maximum number of points. There is a tiebreaker for points which is based on bond allocation and a number of units ratio, with the goal of spreading bonds across as many projects and gaining as many housing units as possible.

Council Member Gustavo Velasquez commented that affordable housing projects, whether funded by the State or local jurisdictions, ultimately come through TCAC or CDLAC programs to secure full financing. The demand for these programs in 2021 is unprecedented, and the State has been strategic in prioritizing to ensure that projects include units for formerly homeless persons and units that are deeply affordable.

V. Governor's Budget Briefing & Legislative Bills Update

Myles White, Assistant Director of Legislation for Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency presented on this item. The Governor's January 2020 budget proposal included about \$2 billion specifically for homelessness investments, including \$750 million to HCD for Homekey, \$750 million to the California Department of Health Care Services for Medi-Cal behavioral health facilities, and \$250 million to the California Department of Social Services (DSS) for adult residential care facilities.

The California State Legislature is currently in the first year of a two-year session, and so far about 50 homelessness-related bills have been introduced.

AB 71 from Assemblymember Rivas is the Bring California Home Act, which would make tax changes at the state level to potentially generate \$2.4 billion per year in dedicated homelessness funding. The funding would be administered jointly between HCD and HCFC and be structured similarly to the Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) Program, with about 40% of funding to large cities, 60% to counties and Continuums of Care, and an additional \$400 million set aside for capital investments. Bonus funding would be available for performance, based on a statewide needs and gaps analysis.

AB 816 from Assemblymember Chiu is focused on homelessness planning efforts at the state and local levels, with the intent to ensure that State and local governments are creating plans to make measured reductions in homelessness. The bill includes the goal of reducing the number of people experiencing homelessness in California by 90%, by the end of the decade. The bill would establish a Homelessness Inspector General to audit and verify that local plans would be enforceable and actionable, and also requires a statewide needs and gaps analysis.

AB 1220 from Assemblymember Luz Rivas would establish the Office to End Homelessness, which would restructure the administrative framework of this council. It includes other technical changes and reporting and data collection requirements for Continuums of Care (CoCs) and Council member departments.

SB 234 from Senator Wiener is the Transitional Aged Youth Housing Program and would dedicate \$100 million to develop housing for individuals between the ages of 16 and 26.

At the Federal Government level, the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue plan was just passed. The bill includes \$26 billion for rental assistance, of which California will receive about \$4.6 billion, and \$10 billion for mortgage assistance, of which California will receive about \$1 billion.

Council Member Jody Ketcheside asked if the Council takes positions on bills or not.

- The Council does not have its own formal legislative process but goes through the administrative process through the Governor's Office.

Council Member Atterberry commented that the Transitional Aged Youth Housing Program slide states that the Council would be required to develop, implement, and administer the program, and suggested that be changed.

- HCFC staff currently administers the Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP) and HHAP program separately from the Council and this would be done similarly. Staff will continue to work with the bill's author's office to potentially find a better administrative entity.

Council Member Anderson asked about timing for funding from the American Rescue Plan, and whether the mortgage assistance program within it includes properties of two-to-four units or if it is just for single-family homes.

- 40% of total funds will be released at first, with subsequent tranches available once grantees start spending funding down. Initial funds should be available within 60 days of the bill's enactment. Properties of two-to-four units will probably be included for mortgage assistance, but specific guidance is still forthcoming from the Treasury.

Council Member Atterberry asked if there will be accompanying guidelines for the rental assistance component in the American Rescue Plan.

- The State is currently administering a round of about \$2.6 billion in Federal rental assistance funds. Guidance is expected to be released for new rounds of funding as the money is made available and should be similar to current guidance.

VI. Other Department and HCFC Updates

Deputy Secretary Sutton provided updates from HCFC. The California Department of Public Health recently put out guidance indicating that people experiencing homelessness and staff who serve them are eligible for the COVID vaccine starting March 15. In partnership with the University of California Benioff Housing and Homelessness Initiative and the California Healthcare Foundation, HCFC has released two new resources around COVID vaccines: [Lessons Learned: Planning and Implementing a Vaccine Strategy For People Experiencing Homelessness](#) and [Preparing to Vaccinate People Experiencing Homelessness Who Are Unsheltered](#).

Last week, HCFC held a vaccine webinar with partners from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDPH, Blue Shield, and HCD.

HCFC will soon launch the HDIS and will host a public launch webinar to walk through what has been learned so far, as well as how to use the public system that will be on the HCFC website. The system incorporates data from 44 Continuums of Care and will show how many people are served across the state's homelessness response systems, with historical data going back five years. Additional data and analysis will be launched quarterly.

HCFC recently published its [2020 Annual Funding Report](#), which summarizes data from annual reports received from grantees. Over approximately two years, HEAP funding has served over 65,000 individuals, nearly 25% of whom were identified as chronically homeless, around 9% unaccompanied youth, and about 5% veterans. 13,000 of those individuals served have exited homelessness into permanent housing. Over the course of about five months, HHAP funding has served about 5,000 individuals, 41% of whom were identified as chronically homeless.

Council Member Tornatore provided updates from the California Department of Education (CDE). The Department is currently reviewing 122 local education agency and county office of education applications that were received for McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act funds, which are available on a three-year cycle. California has approximately \$11.6 million of this funding to allocate, which is determined with a formula based on number of students experiencing homelessness in a school district or county. CDE will post preliminary award amounts in late April.

CDE has created a [COVID-19 resource page](#) for school administrators, counselors, and other staff around identification strategies for students who may be experiencing homelessness.

Council Member Atterberry provided updates from the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet). Draft guidelines have been released for sixth round of funding of about \$75 million under the Veterans Housing and Homelessness Prevention Program, a \$600 million program enacted by Prop 41 in 2014 for designing, developing, and administered a veterans multi-family housing program. This program is administered with assistance from HCD and the California Housing Finance Agency (CalHFA) and at least 50% of the funding will be awarded to extremely low-income veteran households. A webinar is happening on March 30, 2021 to discuss the draft guidelines with stakeholders.

The following departments provided [written updates](#) on their relevant homeless programs: P

- California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS)
- California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD)
- California Housing Finance Agency (CalHFA)
- California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (CalOES)
- California Department of Social Services (DSS)

Council Member Ruan-O'Shaughnessy provided additional detail from CCC. The California Higher Education Basic Needs Alliance (CHEBNA) is a working group between CCC, the California State University, and the University of California to address student basic needs, including housing. CHEBNA is organizing a learning series to spotlight best practices, with sessions focusing on areas including financial aid, accessing housing resources, food security, health and mental health, and equity and service access.

CCC is in year two of implementing the Homeless and Housing Insecure Pilot (HHIP) Program at 14 of the 116 community colleges in its system. This is \$9 million in annual, ongoing funding for pilot programs to begin to address barriers CCC students experience around housing and food insecurity. A 2018 basic needs survey that was done in partnership with the Hope Lab found that, of 40,000 students who responded, 50% reported food insecurity, 60% reported housing insecurity in the previous 12 months, and 19% reported experiencing homelessness in the previous 12 months.

VII. Future meeting agendas

Council Member Atterberry asked if the Council would see a demo of the HDIS before it goes live.

- Because the Council's meetings are necessarily public, a demo for the Council would be a public demo as well. HCFC is hosting a public launch webinar and will ensure Council members are invited.

VIII. Public comments and final remarks

Public Comment

- Joe Colletti, Urban Initiatives: The Council should do whatever it can to encourage all 44 California CoCs to conduct an unsheltered Point-in-Time count in January 2022. HUD does not require CoCs to conduct an unsheltered count during even-number years, and 21 California CoCs only conduct an unsheltered count in odd-number years. Due to COVID, we will be left comparing 2019 to 2023 Point-in-Time count data.
- Steve McNally, Orange County: Interested in the \$250 million set aside for adult residential facilities in the Governor's proposed budget. Who are some of the key players at the State and local level going to be for this program?
- Jay Cole: Recently set up a private church for shelter. Private enterprise and churches are a big part of the solution to homelessness. The Council should lay out rules to stop discrimination by program managers, for example against those with Section 8 vouchers. There are many creative solutions that the state, cities, and counties should look into.

Secretary Castro Ramírez provided final remarks, thanking the public for their comments today. Public input is central to policy development at the State, and the level of active involvement and engagement from the public and Council recently is exciting. HCFC's Action Plan, adopted today, will help continue to drive the Council's work forward.

IX. Adjournment

Meeting is adjourned at 4:16PM.