



California Interagency Council on Homelessness

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For Immediate Release

California Launches HEART Webinar to Strengthen Disaster Response for People Experiencing Homelessness

SACRAMENTO, CA – As California enters another fire season, the California Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal ICH) is proud to announce the release of a new companion webinar supporting the **Homeless Emergency and Active Readiness Toolkit (HEART)**, a resource launched in March 2025 to help local emergency managers improve disaster preparedness for people experiencing homelessness — especially those living unsheltered.

“Our state has seen firsthand the devastating impacts of disasters. Less often seen are the impacts disasters can have on people without shelter,” said Meghan Marshall, Executive Officer of Cal ICH. **“But when our communities plan for those most at risk, it doesn’t just help them — it makes the entire emergency system stronger. Clear plans reduce chaos, prevent last-minute scrambling, and help everyone stay safer during disasters.”**

Developed with extensive input from experts in disaster planning, including Cal ICH councilmember department Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) and persons with lived experience, HEART provides actionable strategies to help local communities **be informed, get connected, and take action** to protect unhoused residents during disasters such as fires, floods, and extreme weather.

The newly launched webinar offers a step-by-step walkthrough of the HEART resource, highlighting best practices, collaborative opportunities, and real-world examples from communities across California.

A member of the Cal ICH Lived Experience Advisory Board, who survived the 2024 Lake County fire and played a critical role in the HEART webinar, emphasized the importance of this work: **“I know what it’s like to have nowhere to go when disaster hits. Being part of this project means lifting the voices of people who are too often overlooked. When we plan ahead of a disaster, we avoid crisis in the moment — and that helps the whole community.”**

The HEART resource and companion webinar can be accessed online at www.bcsb.ca.gov/calich/heart.

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The California Interagency Council on Homelessness is the state entity charged with leading California’s efforts to prevent and end homelessness. For more information regarding this press release, contact Cal ICH External Affairs at comms.calich@bcsb.ca.gov. For more information about Cal ICH, visit <https://bcsb.ca.gov/calich/>