
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING
Senator Nancy Skinner, Chair
2023 - 2024 Regular

Bill No:	AB 2338	Hearing Date:	6/18/2024
Author:	Jones-Sawyer		
Version:	3/4/2024		
Urgency:	No	Fiscal:	Yes
Consultant:	Alison Hughes		

SUBJECT: Statewide Homelessness Coordinator

DIGEST: This bill requires the Governor to appoint a Statewide Homelessness Coordinator (Coordinator) within the Governor’s Office to serve as the lead person for ending homelessness in the state.

ANALYSIS:

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the California Interagency Council on Homelessness (CA-ICH), chaired by the Secretary of the Business, Consumer Services, and Housing (BCSH) Agency and the Secretary of the California Health and Human Services (HHS) Agency, made up of various state departments and agencies.
- 2) Sets the following goals for the CA-ICH, including but not limited to:
 - a) To identify mainstream resources, benefits, and services that can be accessed to prevent and end homelessness in California;
 - b) To create partnerships among state and federal agencies and departments, local government agencies, and nonprofit entities working to end homelessness, homeless services providers, and the private sector, for the purpose of arriving at specific strategies to end homelessness;
 - c) To promote systems integration to increase efficiency and effectiveness while focusing on designing systems to address the needs of people experiencing homelessness, including unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age;
 - d) To coordinate existing funding and applications for competitive funding, without restructuring or changing any existing allocations or allocation formulas;
 - e) To broker agreements between state agencies and departments, and among state agencies, departments, and local jurisdictions, to align and coordinate

- resources, reduce administrative burdens of accessing existing resources, and foster common applications for services, operating, and capital funding; and
- f) To serve as a statewide facilitator, coordinator, and policy development resource on ending homelessness in California.
- 3) Requires, after July 1, 2017, agencies and departments that implement funds, or administer a program that provides housing or housing-based services to people experiencing homelessness or at-risk of homelessness, with the exception of federally funded programs not consistent with Housing First or programs that fund emergency shelters, to work with the CA-ICH to adopt guidelines and regulations to incorporate core components of Housing First.
 - 4) Requires an eligible city, county, or Continuum of Care (CoC) to submit a local homelessness action plan, as specified, to access Homeless Housing Assistance and Prevention Program (HHAPP) funds.
 - 5) Requires HHAPP applicants to establish goals that prevent and reduce homelessness from July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2024, informed by the findings from the local landscape analysis and the jurisdiction's base system performance measure from the 2020 calendar year data in the Homelessness Data Information System (HDIS). The outcome goals shall set definitive metrics, based on US Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD's) system performance measures, for achieving the following:
 - a) Reducing the number of persons experiencing homelessness;
 - b) Reducing the number of persons who become homeless for the first time;
 - c) Increasing the number of people exiting homelessness into permanent housing;
 - d) Reducing the length of time people remain homeless;
 - e) Reducing the number of persons who return to homelessness after exiting homelessness to permanent housing; and
 - f) Increasing successful placements from street outreach.
 - 6) Requires each HHAPP applicant to determine its outcome goals in consultation with CA-ICH, and prohibits them from submitting final outcome goals before consulting with CA-ICH.
 - 7) Requires CA-ICH to assess outcome goals in the application based on the information provided in the local homeless action plan and the applicant's baseline data on the performance metrics and determine whether the outcome

goals adequately further the objectives of reducing and preventing homelessness.

This bill:

- 1) Requires the Governor to appoint a Coordinator within the Governor's Office to serve as the lead person for ending homelessness in the state. Requires the coordinator to do all of the following:
 - a) Set state goals to end homelessness;
 - b) Identify a local leader in each relevant city, county, city and county, or other jurisdiction to serve as a liaison between the coordinator and that jurisdiction;
 - c) Oversee homelessness programs, services, data, and policies among federal, state, and local agencies;
 - d) Coordinate the timing of release of state funds and applications for funding for housing and housing-based services impacting Californians experiencing homelessness; and
 - e) In collaboration with local leaders, provide annual recommendations to the Legislature and the Governor.
- 2) Allows the Coordinator to adjust state goals to the extent allowed by state law.
- 3) Requires the Coordinator to submit annual recommendations to the Legislature.

COMMENTS:

- 1) *Author's statement.* "Over 180,000 Californians experience homelessness on any given night, making the Golden State home to the nation's largest homeless population. This is in part due to the state's disjointed approach to ending homelessness. At least nine state agencies currently administer and oversee 41 different homelessness programs statewide. Considering the magnitude of the homelessness crisis in California and the amount of funding the state and federal governments have invested, there is a real need to ensure that our system for addressing problems at both the state and local levels is consistent and effective. AB 2338 establishes a Statewide Homelessness Coordinator to serve as the much-needed lead entity for ending homelessness."
- 2) *CA-ICH.* In 2016, SB 1380 (Mitchell), Chapter 847, created the Homelessness Coordinating and Financing Council, which in 2021 was renamed the California Interagency Council on Homelessness (AB 1220, L. Rivas), Chapter 398) to coordinate the state's response to homelessness. SB 1380 set out a list of

“goals” for CA-ICH to focus on but no clear authority to make changes to state policy or programs that address homelessness. CA-ICH is also responsible for ensuring that all state housing and homelessness programs follow Housing First principles.

As the state’s homelessness crisis has worsened, the role of the CA-ICH has significantly increased. The council is now responsible for administering two large programs dedicated to addressing homelessness, HEAP and HHAPP. Recent budgets have included multi-year funding for HHAPP. To access this funding, eligible applicants (CoCs, counties, and eligible cities) are required to submit a Local Homelessness Action Plan that demonstrates how HHAPP funds and all local dollars for homelessness can reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness. CA-ICH is tasked with working with eligible applicants to develop measurable outcome goals to reduce homelessness.

The governance structure of CA-ICH has also evolved since its creation. In addition to changing the name of council, AB 1220 (L. Rivas) appointed the Secretary of the California HHS Agency as co-chair of CA-ICH with the Secretary of the BCSH Agency. In addition, AB 1220 (L. Rivas) removed people with lived experience of homelessness from the council membership and placed them on an advisory board, and required staff of agencies and departments of CA-ICH to participate in council work groups or task forces at the request of the council.

In addition to administering funding, the CA-ICH developed two major work products in the past few years: an Action Plan and a state HDIS.

- 3) *Action Plan for Preventing and Ending Homelessness in California (Action Plan) and State Homelessness Data Integration System (HDIS)*. In March 2021, CA-ICH adopted an Action Plan with specified goals that member agencies approved and agreed to work on collaboratively. The Action Plan required the creation of five work groups to address specified priorities.

CA-ICH also launched a state HDIS system that captures the information collected and tracked in local HMIS databases. CoCs manage homelessness management information systems (HMIS), local information technology systems used to collect client-level data and data on the provision of housing and services to homeless individuals and families and persons at risk of homelessness. Each CoC is responsible for selecting an HMIS software solution that complies with HUD's data collection, management, and reporting standards.

All 44 CoCs in the state have entered into contracts to provide their HMIS data to CA-ICH. HDIS is intended to give the state a more accurate picture of the

local homelessness response system and inform the state's response to homelessness. Using data from HDIS, the state recently developed a Statewide Landscape Assessment. AB 140 (Committee on Budget), Chapter 111, Statutes of 2021, required BCSH to conduct or contract with an entity to develop this landscape assessment. The purpose of the landscape assessment was to evaluate the existing funding allocated within the various state departments to prevent and end homelessness and link the funds to the actual services and resources utilized by state agencies. The assessment, the first of its kind done in California, allows for more accurate data collection for targeting future investments more effectively.

The next step for HDIS is to use the data to determine if people experiencing homelessness are receiving the state and federal benefits they are eligible for and that could help increase their income to reduce their housing insecurity. AB 977 (Gabriel), Chapter 397, Statutes of 2021, required all state agencies and departments administering programs that serve people that may be experiencing homelessness to enter their data into HDIS so that locals can determine if people in the local HMIS are eligible for, or enrolled in, all of the safety net programs for which they may be eligible. Although this requirement is in statute, there are no outcome requirements for the Legislature to determine if this coordination is occurring and its effectiveness in resolving individual homelessness, nor did the landscape assessment contain any specific outcome evaluations.

- 4) *Statewide Homelessness Coordinator.* This bill would create a Statewide Homelessness Coordinator in the Governor's Office to coordinate the state's response to homelessness. The Coordinator would be responsible for identifying a leader in each city or county to serve as a liaison between the coordinator and the jurisdiction. Although large cities, counties and CoCs are required to set goals as part of HHAPP as a condition of receiving funding, the state has not set any goals to reduce homelessness either statewide or for local governments. The Coordinator would be required to set state goals to address homelessness.
- 5) *If at first you don't succeed....* AB 86 (Jones-Sawyer, 2023) was identical to this bill and would have required the Governor to appoint a Coordinator within the Governor's Office to serve as the lead person for ending homelessness in the state. That bill was held in the Senate Appropriations Committee.
- 6) *Double referral.* This bill was also referred to the Human Services Committee.

RELATED LEGISLATION:

AB 86 (Jones-Sawyer, 2023) — would have required the Governor to appoint a Coordinator within the Governor’s Office to serve as the lead person for ending homelessness in the state. *This bill was held in Senate Appropriations Committee.*

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: No

POSITIONS: (Communicated to the committee before noon on Wednesday, June 12, 2024.)

SUPPORT:

California Apartment Association

OPPOSITION:

None received.

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