
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING
Senator Scott Wiener, Chair
2023 - 2024 Regular

Bill No: AB 86 **Hearing Date:** 7/10/2023
Author: Jones-Sawyer
Version: 4/20/2023
Urgency: No **Fiscal:** Yes
Consultant: Alison Hughes

SUBJECT: Homelessness: 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:
 - 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 make policy and procedural recommendations to legislators and other governmental entities;

- f) To identify and seek funding opportunities for state entities that have programs to end homelessness and to facilitate and coordinate those state entities' efforts to obtain that funding;
 - g) To broker agreements between state agencies and departments and between state agencies and 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;
 - h) To serve as a statewide facilitator, coordinator, and policy development resource on ending homelessness in California;
 - i) To report to the Governor, federal Cabinet members, and the Legislature on homelessness and work to reduce homelessness; and
 - j) To ensure accountability and results in meeting the strategies and goals of the council.
- 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 that includes all of the following to access Homeless Housing Assistance and Prevention Program (HHAP) funds:
- a) A local landscape analysis that assesses the current number of people experiencing homelessness and existing programs and funding which address homelessness within the jurisdiction, utilizing any relevant and available data from the Homeless Data Integration System (HDIS), the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD's) homeless point-in-time count, CoC housing inventory count, longitudinal systems analysis, and Stella tools, as well as any recently conducted local needs assessments;
 - b) Identification of the number of individuals and families served, including demographic information and intervention types provided, and demographic subpopulations that are underserved relative to their proportion of individuals experiencing homelessness in the jurisdiction;
 - c) Identification of all funds, including state, federal and local funds, currently being used, and budgeted to be used, to provide housing and homelessness-related services to persons experiencing homelessness or at imminent risk of homelessness, how this funding serves subpopulations, and what intervention types are funded through these resources;

- d) An outline of proposed uses of funds requested and an explanation of how the proposed use of funds will complement existing local, state, and federal funds and equitably close the gaps identified;
 - e) Evidence of connection with the local homeless Coordinated Entry System;
 - f) An agreement to participate in a statewide HDIS, and to enter individuals served by this funding into the local Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), in accordance with local protocols;
 - g) A demonstration of how the jurisdiction has coordinated, and will continue to coordinate, with other jurisdictions, including the specific role of each applicant in relation to other applicants in the region;
 - h) A demonstration of the applicant's partnership with, or plans to use funding to increase partnership with, local health, behavioral health, social services, and justice entities and with people with lived experiences of homelessness;
 - i) A description of specific actions the applicant will take to ensure racial and gender equity in service delivery, housing placements, and housing retention and changes to procurement or other means of affirming racial and ethnic groups that are overrepresented among residents experiencing homelessness have equitable access to housing and services; and
 - j) A description of how the applicant will make progress in preventing exits to homelessness from institutional settings, including plans to leverage funding from mainstream systems for evidence-based housing and housing-based solutions to homelessness.
- 5) Requires HHAP 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 HDIS. The outcome goals shall set definitive metrics, based on 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 HHAP 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 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 between 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 170,000 Californians experience homelessness on any given night, making the Golden State home to the nation's largest homeless population. This 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 86 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, Statutes of 2016 created the Homelessness Coordinating and Financing Council which in 2021 was renamed the CA-ICH (AB 1220 (Luz Rivas, Chapter 398, Statutes of 2021) to

coordinate the state's response to homelessness. SB 1380 (Mitchell) set out a list of 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 homeless programs are Housing First.

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 Homeless Housing Assistance and Prevention Program (HHAP). To access this funding, eligible applicants (CoCs, counties, and eligible cities) are required to submit a Local Homelessness Action Plan that demonstrates how HHAP 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 the 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 HDIS.

- 3) *Action Plan for Preventing and Ending Homelessness in California (Action Plan)*. In March 2021, the CA-ICH adopted an Action Plan with specified goals that member agencies approved and agreed to work collaboratively on. The Action Plan required the creation of five work groups to address the following priorities:
 - a) Maximizing the Impact of State Funding and Programs Addressing Homelessness;
 - b) Racial Equity in Responses to Homelessness and Housing Instability;
 - c) Tailoring Strategies for Preventing and Ending Homelessness for Youth and Young Adults;
 - d) Strengthening Employment Opportunities and Outcomes for People with Experiences of Homelessness; and
 - e) Preventing Homelessness Among People Transitioning Back into Communities from Corrections Settings.

- 4) *State HDIS*. CA-ICH also launched a state HDIS system that captures the information collected and tracked in local HMIS databases. CoCs manage 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 a state homelessness 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 state agencies utilize them to provide. The assessment, the first of its kind done in California, will allow 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 or receiving all of the safety net programs they may be eligible for. Although this requirement is in statute, there are not 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.

- 5) *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. The Coordinator would also be responsible for coordinating the timing of release of state funds and applications for housing and housing based services impacting people experiencing homelessness.

6) *Here, there, and everywhere.* This bill was heard in the Senate Human Services Committee on July 3 and received a vote of 4-0.

RELATED LEGISLATION

AB 2345 (L. Rivas, 2022) — would have established the Office of Interagency Council on Homelessness as the lead entity for ending homelessness in California, subsumes the California Interagency Council on Homelessness into the Office, and creates a funding workgroup (workgroup) with various duties. *This bill was held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.*

AB 1845 (L. Rivas, 2020) — would have created the Governor’s Office to End Homelessness under the direction of the Secretary on Homelessness, and would have moved the CA-ICH from BCSH into the Governor’s Office to End Homelessness. *This bill was vetoed by the Governor. Veto message:*

I sincerely appreciate the author's leadership on this issue and the intent of this bill, but I do not support this particular vision of organizational restructuring at this time.

Homelessness has been and remains one of my top priorities, commanding the dedicated attention of a Senior Counselor on Homelessness and Housing in the Governor's office and the dedication of senior members of my Administration including multiple Agency Secretaries. Since taking office in January 2019, we have invested over \$2 billion in new, direct aid for homelessness. I am also proud of our work to implement Project Roomkey and Homekey, which help to protect homeless Californians from COVID-19 during this pandemic.

These initiatives and investments demonstrate our commitment to prioritizing this vulnerable population, no matter what other challenges we confront. And they serve as a proof point of the interagency coordination we have led to develop and implement them successfully.

Homelessness must not be considered in a vacuum.

Our Administration has taken a demonstrably integrated approach to preventing and ending homelessness by empowering leaders in the health care and housing space to work together on coordinated solutions.

Separating policy development on homelessness from that on health care or housing will lead to more fragmentation, not less. Looking at homeless spending through a separate lens, divorced from our health care and housing

budgets, will lead to more duplication and inefficiency.

There are certainly ways in which we can improve upon state government's collective work in this area. However, I am not convinced that the approach outlined in this bill is the best path forward.

I am committed to partnering with the author and the Legislature next year to continue making progress on this critical issue.

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

POSITIONS: (Communicated to the committee before noon on Wednesday, July 5, 2023.)

SUPPORT:

City of Redwood City

OPPOSITION:

None received.

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