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

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**Bill No:** SB 246 **Hearing Date:** 4/24/2023  
**Author:** Ochoa Bogh  
**Version:** 1/26/2023 Introduced  
**Urgency:** No **Fiscal:** Yes  
**Consultant:** Aiyana Cortez

**SUBJECT:** California Interagency Council on Homelessness

**DIGEST:** This bill adds a representative from the State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) to the California Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal-ICH).

**ANALYSIS:**

*Existing law:*

- 1) Defines “Housing First” as the evidence-based model that uses housing as a tool, rather than a reward, for recovery and that centers on providing or connecting homeless people to permanent housing as quickly as possible. Housing First providers offer services as needed and requested on a voluntary basis and that do not make housing contingent on participation in services.
- 2) Establishes Cal-ICH to coordinate the State’s response to homelessness using Housing First practices with a number of goals including, but not limited to:
  - a) Creating partnerships among state agencies and departments;
  - b) Promoting systems integration to increase efficiency and effectiveness;
  - c) Coordinating existing funding and application for competitive funding.
- 3) Establishes the Secretary of the Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency and the Secretary of the California Health and Human Services Agency as co-chairs of the council which consists of 20 other members:
  - a) The Director of Transportation
  - b) The Director of Housing and Community Development
  - c) The Director of Social Services
  - d) The Director of the California Finance Agency

- e) The Director or the State Medicaid Director of Health Care Services
  - f) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs
  - g) The Secretary of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation
  - h) The Executive Director of the California Tax Credit Allocation Committee in the State Treasurer's Office
  - i) The State Public Health Officer
  - j) The Director of the California Department of Aging
  - k) The Director of Rehabilitation
  - l) The Director of State Hospitals
  - m) The Executive Director of the California Workforce Development Board
  - n) The Director of the Office of Emergency Services
  - o) A representative from the State Department of Education
  - p) A representative of the state public higher education system from one of the following:
    - i. The California Community Colleges
    - ii. The University of California
    - iii. The California State University
  - q) The Senate Committee of Rules and the Speaker of the Assembly shall each appoint one member to the council from two different stakeholder organizations.
- 4) Requires Cal-ICH to have a public meeting at least once every quarter and authorizes Cal-ICH to invite stakeholders, members of the philanthropic community, experts, and individuals who have experienced homelessness.
- 5) Requires Cal-ICH to seek guidance from and meet, at least twice a year, with an advisory committee that include the following:
- a) A survivor of gender-based violence who formerly experienced homelessness
  - b) Representatives of local agencies or organizations that participate in the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development's Continuum of Care Program
  - c) Stakeholders with expertise in solutions to homelessness and best practices from other states
  - d) Representatives of committees of African Americans, youth, and survivors of gender-based violence
  - e) A current or formerly homeless person who lives in California

- f) A current of formerly homeless youth who lives in California.
- 6) Establishes the SCDD in California to be comprised of 31 members appointed by the Governor, including individuals with disabilities, their families, other partners and state agencies.

**This bill:**

- 1) Adds a representative from the State Council on Developmental Disabilities to Cal-ICH.

**COMMENTS:**

- 1) *Author's statement.* “The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s report to Congress asserts that almost 30 percent (161,548 people) of all individuals experiencing homelessness across the nation are in California. According to *Psychology Today*, 30 to 40 percent of this population have a cognitive impairment, including traumatic brain injury, learning difficulties, intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorder, and/or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. In order to effectively address the many challenges associated with assisting the unhoused population, a wide variety of perspectives must be sought, including the perspective of those with knowledge about the intricacies of struggling with a developmental disability. SB 246 adds a representative of State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) to the Interagency Council on Homelessness, ensuring those with developmental disabilities have an advocate on the Council.”
- 2) *SCDD and housing.* SCDD administers grants to community-based organizations to fund new and innovative program development projects. All projects are intended to implement the California State Strategic Plan goals and objectives, including projects for improving housing options, to improve and enhance services for Californians with developmental disabilities and their families.<sup>1</sup>
- 3) *Cal-ICH.* Cal-ICH, formerly known as the Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council (HCFC), was created to oversee the implementation of “Housing First” policies, guidelines, and regulations to reduce the prevalence and duration of homelessness in California. Housing First is an evidence-based

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<sup>1</sup> CSH, LHA, and SCDD. Statewide Strategic Framework. <https://www.csh.org/2019/03/ca-scdd-lha-release-framework-on-housing-for-people-with-i-dd/>

model that focuses on the idea that homeless individuals should be provided shelter and stability before underlying issues can be successfully addressed. Housing First utilizes a tenant screening process that promotes accepting applicants regardless of their sobriety, use of substances or participation in services. As the state's homelessness crisis has worsened, the role of Cal-ICH has significantly increased, as it has been charged with administering two significant programs dedicated to addressing homelessness, the Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP) and the Homeless Housing Assistance and Prevention Program (HHAPP).

- 4) *Homelessness Numbers.* According to the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, chronically homeless people are people with disabilities who also experience extended or repeated episodes of homelessness. The 2020 point in time (PIT) count found that 48,812, or 40%, of individuals with chronic patterns of homelessness were in California; 84% of chronically homeless people in California were unsheltered. Nationally, 110,528 (over a quarter of all homeless individuals) were chronically homeless.<sup>2</sup> As a note, chronically homeless people are a subpopulation that Cal-ICH is required to quantify, and localities must address this subpopulation in local landscape analyses in order to receive HHAPP funding.

A review article published by UC San Diego in 2015 titled *A Quantitative Review of Cognitive Functioning in Homeless Adults* suggest the frequency of cognitive impairment is 25% among homeless individuals. This includes neurodevelopmental problems and acquired brain dysfunction. It is also unclear from the data collected if impairments caused homelessness or if homelessness caused impairment, and it is likely that aspects of homelessness impair brain function.<sup>3</sup> Thus, solving the homelessness crisis is intertwined with mental health supports.

- 5) *Is there a dais in California big enough?* This bill would add another member to Cal-ICH bringing the total to 23 people. As noted above, while there is a relationship between developmental disabilities and experiencing homelessness, Cal-ICH possesses the ability under existing law to invite experts and stakeholders to provide expertise on this subject without requiring representation. Given Cal-ICH already has 22 members, there is a risk of

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<sup>2</sup> Henry et al. "The 2020 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress." (US Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2021). <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/2020-AHAR-Part-1.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Depp, C. A., Vella, L., Orff, H. J., & Twamley, E. W. (2015). "A quantitative review of cognitive functioning in homeless adults." *The Journal of nervous and mental disease*, 203(2), 126–131. <https://doi.org/10.1097/NMD.0000000000000248>

having so many members that the council will have a hard time getting things done.

- 6) *Represented already?* As a co-chair of Cal-ICH and a member of SCDD, the Cal-HHS Secretary already serves as a representative of SCDD on Cal-ICH. Additionally, since it is infeasible to represent every population experiencing homelessness on Cal-ICH, existing law authorizes Cal-ICH to invite stakeholders, members of the philanthropic community, experts, and individuals who have experienced homelessness to participate in public meetings.
- 7) *And one more.* SB 842 (Jones, 2023) is being heard concurrently with this bill. SB 842 would add the Director of Developmental Services to Cal-ICH, bringing the total to 24 members if both SB 842 and this bill pass.
- 8) *Seeing double.* This bill is substantially similar to the introduced version of SB 1134 (Melendez, 2022) which was later amended by the author into a different subject in the Assembly.
- 9) *Double Referral.* This bill was passed out of the Senate Human Services Committee on March 20, 2023 with a vote of 5-0.

#### **RELATED LEGISLATION:**

**SB 842 (Jones, 2023)** — would add the Director of Developmental Services to Cal-ICH. *This bill is also being heard at this same committee hearing.*

**SB 1134 (Melendez, 2022)** — would have added a representative from the State Council on Developmental Disabilities to Cal-ICH. This bill was amended in the Assembly. *This bill died in the Assembly.*

**SB 1421 (Jones, Chapter 671, Statutes of 2022)** — added a current or formerly homeless person with a developmental disability to the advisory committee of Cal-ICH.

**AB 1220 (Luz Rivas, Chapter 398, Statutes of 2021)** — renamed the Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council to the California Interagency Council on Homelessness. It added five members to Cal-ICH: the State Public Health Officer, The Director of the California Department of Again, The Director of Rehabilitation, The Director of State Hospitals, and the executive director of the California Workforce Development Board. It also created the advisory committee that Cal-ICH must seek guidance from.

**SB 1458 (Rubio, 2020)** — would have added a representative of the State Department of Public Health to Cal-ICH. *This bill is on the inactive file.*

**AB 58 (Luz Rivas, Chapter 334, Statutes of 2019)** — added a representative from the State Department of Education to Cal-ICH.

**SB 687 (Rubio, Chapter 345, Statutes of 2019)** — added a representative of the state public higher education system to Cal-ICH.

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

**POSITIONS:** (Communicated to the committee before noon on Wednesday, April 19, 2023.)

**SUPPORT:**

California State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD)  
Disability Rights California

**OPPOSITION:**

None received.

**-- END --**