

- b) Housing stabilization and relocation, including outreach and engagement, landlord recruitment, case management, housing search and placement, legal services, and credit repair.
- 4) Establishes the Bring Families Home Program (BFH) to provide families receiving child welfare services who are homeless, at risk of homelessness, or in a living situation that cannot accommodate the child or multiple children in the home with financial assistance, housing stabilization, and relocation.
- 5) Establishes the California Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal-ICH) with the purpose of coordinating the state's response to homelessness by utilizing Housing First practices.
- 6) Establishes the State Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) within HCD for the provision of federal rental assistance funds in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This bill:

- 1) Requires HCD to award grants to nonprofit community-based organizations, Continuums of Care (CoCs), PHAs, and area agencies on aging, as specified, to administer a housing subsidy program for older adults and adults with disabilities who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness.
- 2) Establishes the Older Adults and Adults with Disabilities Housing Stability Fund (Fund), upon appropriation, for HCD to allocate program funds to award recipients.
- 3) Requires HCD, in establishing the program guidelines and application, to do the following:
 - a) Prioritize communities in which a higher proportion of renters face severe rental cost burden than the state average; and
 - b) Prioritize grant awards to applicants that demonstrate adequate capacity, expertise, experience, cultural sensitivity, ability to serve in an equitable manner, and ability to use cross-sector partnerships.
- 4) Enables award recipients to use grant funds for the following:
 - a) Rent subsidies for leased, private market units or for affordable or supportive housing that need operating support until the participant is able to access a longer-term subsidy, no longer requires the housing subsidy, or the

specified expenditure period expires.

- b) Relocation costs if a landlord decides not to continue participating in the program, evicts a tenant, or refuses to accept a voucher.
 - c) Landlord recruitment and tenancy acquisition services, landlord incentives (e.g., holding fee, security deposits, and repairs), housing navigation and tenancy transition services, and any other administrative costs.
- 5) Requires award recipients to report program data into the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).
- 6) Requires HCD to establish partnerships, in all areas in which it has awarded grants, to establish partnerships with one or more PHAs to do the following:
- a) Create a plan for program participants to transition into a federally subsidized voucher or project based housing subsidy program; and
 - b) Work with award recipients and recruit landlords to ensure landlords meet the requirements of HCV.
- 7) Requires HCD to conduct oversight of the Program, to do the following:
- a) Ensure grant recipients report specific demographic data on people served, retention rates, tenant satisfaction, length of time to receive assistance, health and safety monitoring, admissions and releases from licensed care facility, and coordination activities.
 - b) Ensure grant recipients establishment of a grievance process for contesting denial or termination.
 - c) Contract with an independent evaluator to conduct and evaluate the Program and provide a report to specified legislative budget and policy committees in the Assembly and Senate.
- 8) Provides that to the extent allowable under federal law, assistance, services, or supports are not income of the participants for determining eligibility for or benefits from any public assistance program.
- 9) Provides that participation in other benefits or housing or housing-based service programs do not disqualify a person or household from participating in the Program.

COMMENTS:

- 1) *Author's statement.* "Housing has become unaffordable in California, and older adults and adults with disabilities are among those hit the hardest by the affordability crisis. Many of these Californians live on fixed incomes, such as Supplemental Security Income, which do not cover rising rents. Many worked for over thirty years in blue collar, low-wage jobs and have minimal retirement income to weather economic uncertainty.

A key goal of the California Master Plan for Aging is to prevent and end older adult homelessness, yet homelessness for older adult Californians (those 65 years of age or older) is expected to triple in the next eight years. Furthermore, people with disabilities comprise about 46% of those experiencing homelessness. No comprehensive state program exists that provides long-term housing subsidies for older or disabled adults. Federal Housing Choice Vouchers often take years for applicants to access, as they are oversubscribed.

SB 37 would provide a rent subsidy targeted to older adults and adults with disabilities who are homeless or are at high risk of homelessness. Such subsidies will prevent and end homelessness for thousands of older and disabled adults, as studies show low-income renters with housing subsidies are able to remain housed or exit homelessness for good."

- 2) *Homelessness in California.* California's housing and homelessness crisis is a half century in the making. Decades of underproduction underscored by exclusionary policies have left housing supply far behind need and costs soaring. California has the second highest rate (52%) of renter households paying more than 30% of their income for housing.

A lack of affordable housing is the biggest contributor to homelessness.¹ On a single night in January 2022, 171,521 Californians experienced homelessness, highlighting the direness of the state's housing affordability and homelessness crises.² As housing costs continue to rise, rent becomes less affordable for lower-income households, who are forced to live beyond their means or are pushed out of their homes and often, their communities. When an individual or

¹ Thomas H. Byrne, Benjamin F. Henwood, and Anthony W. Orlando, "A Rising Tide Drowns Unstable Boats: How Inequality Creates Homelessness," *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 693, no. 1 (2021): 28-45, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716220981864/>

² U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, *The 2020 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress Part 1: Point-in-Time Estimates of Homelessness* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, January 2021), <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/2020-AHAR-Part-1.pdf>

household pays too much on rent, there is no space to save for emergencies. For the most vulnerable renter households, a single emergency or unexpected expense could be the difference between stable housing and homelessness.

- 3) *California's aging population.* According to the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC), 15% of the state's population is 65 or older, and, by 2030, about one in five Californians will be 65. Currently, nearly half (45%) of Californians experiencing homelessness are 50 years or older, and older adult homelessness is projected to increase. A recent study from UCSF's Center for Vulnerable Populations showed that nearly half of unhoused older people experienced their first episode of homelessness after age fifty. Homelessness contributes to lower life expectancy, especially among seniors. Older adults experiencing homelessness are likely to have physical health conditions and functional health status similar to, or worse than, someone 10 to 20 years older.

In January of 2021, the Newsom Administration released the Master Plan on Aging, which calls for an end to homelessness and a requirement to develop housing solutions to prevent and end homelessness among older adults and other at risk populations. Targeted programs play an important role to help very specific populations of adults access housing, including those who are Adult Protective Services clients and those who are eligible for SSI payments. However, no comprehensive state program exists that provides long-term housing subsidies for older and disabled adults who are on fixed incomes. Meanwhile, HCV and other federally subsidized housing programs often take years for applicants to access, since such programs accommodate only a fraction of eligible applicants.

- 4) *Homelessness prevention.* According to research conducted by Serving Seniors, a nonprofit organization, housing subsidies are highly effective in both preventing and reducing homelessness. Studies show low-income renters accessing "shallow" housing subsidies of two hundred dollars (\$200) to five hundred dollars (\$500) per month are able to remain stably housed. Moreover, people experiencing homelessness are able move into permanent housing quickly, and remain stably housed, with a housing subsidy and the right services interventions. The state has focused homelessness prevention on those who are receiving benefits through safety net programs like CalWORKS and the foster care system.
- 5) *Housing assistance programs.* The state offers several programs that provide rental assistance and housing navigation services targeted at vulnerable populations that are homeless or housing insecure. The Department of Social Services operates two programs, CalWorks HSP and BFH. HSP provides

families who are receiving CalWORKs benefits financial assistance, including rental assistance, security deposits, utility payments, moving cost assistance, and motel and hotel vouchers, landlord recruitment, case management, housing search and placement, legal services, and credit repair.

- 6) *Housing choice vouchers.* The Federal HCV program provides households at or below 80% of area median income (AMI) rental vouchers that can be used in the private rental market or in subsidized affordable housing. Voucher holders use 30% of their income towards the fair market rent and the voucher covers the remaining amount. PHAs administer the voucher program.

According to the 2022 Statewide Housing Plan, federal support and funding for addressing housing need has not kept up with demand and is a contributing factor to the state's housing crisis. Despite modest increases in the amount of money allocated by the federal government for rental housing assistance in the form of deep-subsidy programs, an increase in the total number of renter households and mounting rental costs render these federal subsidies insufficient to meet demand.³ Only a fraction of renters that need assistance receive it, and this housing assistance gap is expected to worsen.

- 7) *Older Adults and Adults with Disabilities Housing Stability Act of 2023.* This bill would create the Program to provide rental subsidies for older adults and adults with disabilities who are currently or at high risk of experiencing homelessness. The program, administered by HCD, will provide grants to nonprofit organizations, continuums of care, and other organizations. HCD will select grantees with the resources, expertise, and cultural specificity to provide assistance to households experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Grants will prioritize communities in which a high proportion of the renters face cost burdens. Grantees will provide subsidies to help older adults and adults with disabilities remain housed, with subsidies covering the difference between 30% of a person's household income and the unit's reasonable rent.
- 8) *Seeing Double.* This bill is similar to AB 2547 (Nazarian, 2022), which would have authorized the California Department of Aging to create and administer the Housing Stabilization to Prevent and End Homelessness Among Older Adults and People with Disabilities Program. That bill was held on suspense in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

³ G. Thomas Kigsley, Trends in Housing Problems and Federal Housing Assistance (Washington, DC: Urban Institute, October 2017), <https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/94146/trends-in-housing-problems-and-federal-housing-assistance.pdf>

9) *Double-referral*. This bill is also referred to the Committee on Human Services.

RELATED LEGISLATION:

SB 847 (Hurtado, 2022) — would have established the COVID-19 Tenancy Grant Program, to be administered by HCD, and Fund within the State Treasury, upon appropriation, for the purpose of awarding grants to landlords who are qualified applicants. *This bill was held on suspense in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.*

AB 2547 (Nazarin, 2022) — would have authorized the California Department of Aging to create and administer the Housing Stabilization to Prevent and End Homelessness Among Older Adults and People with Disabilities Program to offer competitive grants to nonprofits, CoCs, and PHAs to administer a housing subsidy program for older adults and individuals with disabilities who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. *This bill was held on suspense in the Senate Appropriations Committee.*

SB 611 (Caballero, 2019) — would have required the Governor to establish the Master Plan for Aging Housing Task Force to assess the housing issues affecting California's aging population. *This bill was vetoed by the Governor.*

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

POSITIONS: (Communicated to the committee before noon on Wednesday, March 15, 2023.)

SUPPORT:

Corporation for Supportive Housing (Co-Sponsor)
 Justice in Aging (Co-Sponsor)
 Leadingage California (Co-Sponsor)
 State Council on Developmental Disabilities (Co-Sponsor)
 United Way of Greater Los Angeles (Co-Sponsor)
 Council Member Nelson Esparza, City of Fresno District 7
 AAA Coastal Commission
 AARP
 Active San Gabriel Valley
 Affordable Living for The Aging
 Alzheimer's Association State Policy Office
 Alzheimer's Orange County

California Alliance for Retired Americans
California Apartment Association
California Association of Food Banks
California Council of the Blind
California Housing Partnership Corporation
California Long Term Care Ombudsman Association
Camping Unlimited for the Developmentally Disabled
CCCSC
CDR
Central Coast Commission for Senior Citizens
City of Firebaugh
City of Fowler
Communify
Community Access Center
Community Action Partnership of Madera County, INC.
Community Empowerment & Resource Consultants
County of Fresno
County of Sacramento
Dayle McIntosh Center for The Disabled
Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund
Down Syndrome Connection of The Bay Area
East Bay YIMBY
Eskaton
Faith Action for All
Fresno Housing Authority
Greater Napa Valley Fair Housing Center
Grow the Richmond
Healthy Aging Association
High Impact Solutions
Hopics
Housing California
How to ADU
J Gould Consulting
Jewish Family Service of Los Angeles
KIWA (Koreatown Immigrant Workers Alliance)
Law Foundation of Silicon Valley
Legal Aid of Marin
Marin Aging Action Initiative
Marin County Commission on Aging
Mental Health Advocacy Services
Mental Health America of Los Angeles
Mountain View YIMBY

Napa-Solano for Everyone
National Alliance to End Homelessness
National Health Foundation
Northern Neighbors SF
Oasis Senior Center
Parents Helping Parents
Pasadena Village
Peninsula for Everyone
People for Housing - Orange County
Progress Noe Valley
Public Law Center
Resident United Network Los Angeles
Residents United Network Los Angeles
San Francisco YIMBY
San Joaquin Valley Housing Collaborative
San Luis Obispo YIMBY
Santa Cruz YIMBY
Santa Rosa YIMBY
South Bay YIMBY
Southside Forward
St. Joseph Center
The United Way of Greater Los Angeles
Union Station Homeless Services
United Health Centers of The San Joaquin Valley
Ventura County YIMBY
West Hills Community College District
YIMBY Action
6 Individuals

OPPOSITION:

None received.

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