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**SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING**

**Senator Scott Wiener, Chair**

**2023 - 2024 Regular**

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**Bill No:** SB 842 **Hearing Date:** 4/24/2023  
**Author:** Jones  
**Version:** 2/17/2023 Introduced  
**Urgency:** Yes **Fiscal:** Yes  
**Consultant:** Aiyana Cortez

**SUBJECT:** California Interagency Council on Homelessness

**DIGEST:** This urgency bill adds the Director of Developmental Services 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) Establishes the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) within the California Health and Human Services Agency (CalHHS) to oversee the coordination and delivery of services and supports for Californians with developmental disabilities.
- 5) 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.
- 6) 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 or formerly homeless youth who lives in California.

**This urgency bill:**

- 1) Adds the Director of Developmental Services to Cal-ICH.

**COMMENTS:**

- 1) *Author's statement.* "California has almost 30% (161,548 people) of all individuals experiencing homelessness across the nation. Californians are becoming increasingly concerned with the state's growing homeless population. In fact, Californians name homelessness as the second most important issue, right behind COVID-19, for the Governor and Legislature to work on in 2022. In order to effectively address the many challenges associated with assisting persons experiencing homelessness, a wide variety of perspectives must be sought, including the perspective of the Director of Developmental Services. Currently, neither Cal ICH nor its associated advisory committee are required to include the Director of Developmental Services. SB 842 adds the Director of Developmental Services to the Cal ICH advisory committee in order to provide Cal ICH with readily available access to this much-needed perspective."
- 2) *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 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).

According to their website, the California Department of Developmental Services (DDS) “works to ensure Californians with developmental disabilities have the opportunity to make choices and lead independent, productive lives as members of their communities in the least restrictive setting possible.” DDS is responsible for overseeing the coordination and delivery of services and supports to more than 360,000 Californians with developmental disabilities.

- 3) *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>1</sup> Notably, 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>2</sup> Thus, solving the homelessness crisis is intertwined with mental health supports.

- 4) *Department of Developmental Services.* DDS is one of the 12 departments under CalHHS. Under the Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act, DDS is responsible for overseeing the coordination and delivery of services and supports to more than 360,000 Californians with developmental disabilities including cerebral palsy, intellectual disability, autism, epilepsy and related conditions. The state’s service system is designed to meet the needs and choices of individuals at each stage of their lives, and, to the extent possible, serve them in their home communities, providing choices that are reflective of lifestyle, cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

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<sup>1</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>2</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>

Six of the 12 CalHHS departments are currently represented in Cal-ICH: Aging, Health Care Services, Public Health, Rehabilitation, Social Services, and State Hospitals.

Child Support Services, Community Services and Development, Developmental Services, Emergency Medical Services Authority, Health Care Access and Information, and Managed Health Care are the departments not explicitly represented on Cal-ICH.

- 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 possessed 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 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, the Cal-HHS Secretary already serves as a representative of DDS 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 294 (Ochoa-Bogh, 2023) is being heard concurrently with this bill. SB 294 would add the Director of Developmental Services to Cal-ICH, bringing the total to 24 members if both SB 294 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 April 17, 2023 with a vote of 4-0.

**RELATED LEGISLATION:**

**SB 294 (Ochoa-Bogh, 2023)** — adds a representative from the State Council on Developmental Disabilities 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 later amended into a different subject 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 died in the Senate Rules Committee.*

**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:**

Association of Regional Center Agencies  
Disability Rights California

**OPPOSITION:**

None received.

**-- END --**