
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING
Senator Scott Wiener, Chair
2021 - 2022 Regular

Bill No:	AB 1220	Hearing Date:	7/8/2021
Author:	Luz Rivas		
Version:	6/24/2021		
Urgency:	No	Fiscal:	Yes
Consultant:	Erin Riches		

SUBJECT: Homelessness: California Interagency Council on Homelessness

DIGEST: This bill renames the Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council (HCFC) as the Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH), reconstitutes its membership, and requires it to consult with a specified advisory group of stakeholders.

ANALYSIS:

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the HCFC, in the Business, Consumer Services, and Housing Agency with the purpose of coordinating the state's response to homelessness by utilizing Housing First practices.
- 2) Requires agencies and departments administering state programs created on or after July 1, 2017, to incorporate the core components of Housing First.
- 3) Defines "Housing First" to mean 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.
- 4) Establishes the Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP) to provide one-time grant funds to address the immediate homelessness challenges of local cities and counties. HEAP is administered by the HCFC.
- 5) Establishes the Homeless Housing Assistance and Prevention Program (HHAPP) to build on HEAP and provide funds to help local jurisdictions combat homelessness. HHAPP is also administered by the HCFC.

This bill:

- 1) Renames the HCFC as the ICH and reconstitutes its membership as follows, to serve at the pleasure of the relevant appointing authority:
 - a) Requires existing member agencies and departments to be represented by the Director or Secretary rather than by a representative, except for the Department of Education.
 - b) Adds the Directors of the Departments of Aging, Rehabilitation, and State Hospitals; the State Public Health Officer; the executive director of the California Workforce Development Board; and the Director of the Office of Emergency Services.
 - c) Specifies that the two homeless representatives shall be currently or formerly homeless (existing law provides for formerly homeless individuals).
 - d) Moves the two representatives of local agencies who participate in HUD's CoC program to an advisory committee (see #2 below).
 - e) Removes the other members who may be appointed at the Governor's discretion.
- 2) Requires the ICH to meet at least quarterly with an advisory committee that includes:
 - a) A survivor of gender-based violence who formerly experienced homelessness.
 - b) Representatives of local agencies or organizations who participate in HUD's CoC program.
 - c) Stakeholders with expertise in solutions to homelessness and best practices from other states.
 - d) Representatives of committees on African Americans, youth, and survivors of gender-based violence.
- 3) Requires a state agency or department that administers a homeless program or programs to, upon request of the ICH, participate in ICH workgroups, task

forces, or other similar administrative structures, and provide to the ICH any relevant information regarding those programs.

COMMENTS:

- 1) *Author's statement.* “AB 1220 makes a number of structural changes to the current Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council. This measure renames the Council to the California Interagency Council on Homelessness. This name change more accurately represents the purpose of the Council and will set the stage for the restructuring of the Council membership and committees. The Council will be tasked with various goals, among them are: identifying resources to prevent homelessness, creating partnerships among state agencies, promoting system integrations to increase efficiency, making policy recommendations to the Legislature, and others. It's time we restructure, and empower the California Interagency Council on Homelessness to serve as a statewide facilitator, coordinator, and policy development to end homelessness in California.”

- 2) *Homelessness in California.* According to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) 2020 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress, in January 2020 California accounted for more than one-fifth of the nation's homeless population (28%, or 161,548 people). California also contains more than half of the nation's unsheltered homeless population (51%, or 113,660 people), including people living in vehicles, abandoned buildings, parks, or on the street. California experienced the largest increase in homelessness in the US, a 6.8% increase from 2019 to 2020 (10,270 individuals). Los Angeles accounts for the highest number of homeless people in the nation, at 51,290 (followed by New York City at 36,394). In five major metropolitan areas, more than 80% of homeless individuals were unsheltered: San Jose (87%), Los Angeles (84%), Fresno (84%), Oakland (82%), and Long Beach (81%).

While these numbers provide a snapshot of the state's homeless population, they likely underestimate the scope of the crisis because the HUD point-in-time (PIT) count only measures the homeless population on one day of the year. Moreover, the PIT count does not capture everyone experiencing homelessness, as some do not wish to be counted and others cannot be counted because their location is not known to those counting. People experiencing homelessness face a variety of challenges including food and income insecurity, as well as health problems; the homeless population faces a higher risk of exposure to communicable diseases such as COVID-19, influenza, strep throat, sexually transmitted diseases, Hepatitis C, HIV/AIDS, and tuberculosis, among others.

- 3) *State efforts to address homelessness.* Since 2018, the state has allocated over \$3 billion to address homelessness. The state's recent investments to address homelessness fall into three categories: programs that support the construction of new affordably-priced housing units; programs that help individuals and families afford housing; and health and human services programs aimed at reducing or preventing homelessness. In all three cases, the state generally allocates funds to local governments, who then direct resources to developers, service providers, and counties to either construct housing units or provide services. This funding does not include other moneys allocated to encourage affordable housing production. The Governor's 2021-22 budget proposal continues these efforts. Three significant proposals include increasing funding for Homekey, support for residential facilities serving vulnerable adults and seniors, and support for behavioral health infrastructure. On June 14, 2021, The Legislature passed a budget proposal that included \$20 billion over five years to address homelessness.
- 4) *The HCFC.* The HCFC was created in 2017 (SB 1380, Mitchell, Chapter 847, Statutes of 2016) 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. This approach contrasts to the "housing readiness" model where people are required to address predetermined goals before obtaining housing. The federal government has shifted its focus to Housing First over the last decade, and housing programs under HUD utilize core components of this strategy. Since the implementation of the Housing First model, chronic homelessness in the U.S. experienced a 27% decrease between 2010 and 2016. Housing First was embraced by California in 2015 through SB 1380, which requires all state housing programs to adopt this model.

As the state's homelessness crisis has worsened, the role of the HCFC has significantly increased, as it has been charged with administering two significant programs dedicated to addressing homelessness, HEAP and HHAPP. This bill recognizes this increased role, and the increasing severity of the homelessness crisis, by raising the profile of Council members from department representatives to department heads; expanding the membership of the Council; and requiring the Council to meet at least quarterly with a specified advisory committee.

- 5) *Trying again.* A similar bill last year, AB 1845 (Luz Rivas, 2020) would have created a Governor’s Office to End Homelessness, which would be headed by a Secretary on Homelessness and would have overseen the HCFC. Governor Newsom vetoed this bill, stating that while “Homelessness has been and remains one of my top priorities,” he did not support “this particular vision of organizational restructuring at this time.” The veto message stated that the Administration has taken an integrated approach to preventing and ending homelessness, and does not choose to separate policy development on homelessness from that on health care or housing. The author has chosen to take a more measured approach in this bill.
- 6) *Triple referral.* Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and the unprecedented nature of the 2021 Legislative Session, all Senate Policy Committees are working under a compressed timeline. This timeline does not allow this bill to be referred and heard by more than two committees as a typical timeline would allow. In order to fully vet the contents of this measure for the benefit of Senators and the public, this analysis includes information from the third committee included in the original referral. This bill was also referred to the Human Services Committee, which passed it out on a 4-1 vote on June 22, 2021.

According to the Senate Judiciary Committee:

“As introduced, this bill included provisions related to the application of the Bagley-Keene Open Meetings Act to the HCFC. These provisions fell within the jurisdiction of the Senate Judiciary Committee, and so this bill was also referred to Judiciary. However, this bill was amended on June 24, 2021 to remove the Bagley-Keene Open Meetings Act provisions, thereby removing the Judiciary Committee’s jurisdiction over this bill.”

RELATED LEGISLATION:

AB 816 (Chiu, 2021) — establishes a Housing and Homelessness Inspector General (HHIG) to oversee specified state and local actions to address homelessness; creates a public right of action for the HHIG to compel compliance with these actions; and directs National Housing Trust Fund monies to homeless projects, as specified. *This bill is in the Senate Human Services Committee.*

AB 1845 (Luz 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 HCFC from the Business Consumer Services and Housing Agency (BCSH) into the Governor's Office to End Homelessness. *This bill was vetoed.*

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

POSITIONS: (Communicated to the committee before noon on Thursday, July 1, 2021.)

SUPPORT:

Brilliant Corners
California Partnership to End Domestic Violence
California YIMBY
City of Thousand Oaks

OPPOSITION:

None received

-- END --