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

Bill No:	SB 914	Hearing Date:	4/27/2022
Author:	Rubio		
Version:	3/22/2022		
Urgency:	No	Fiscal:	Yes
Consultant:	Andrew Dawson		

SUBJECT: HELP Act

DIGEST: This bill requires cities, counties, and continuums of care (CoCs) that receive state funding on or after January 1, 2023 to take specific actions to address the needs of unaccompanied homeless women, and in particular domestic violence survivors, as specified.

ANALYSIS:

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the California Interagency Council on Homelessness (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.
- 2) 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.
- 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 domestic violence shelter programs to report the following:
- a) The total number of persons requesting services of the domestic violence shelter-based program.
 - b) The number of persons served in the domestic violence shelter-based program, by each type of service provided.
 - c) A description of the social and economic characteristics of persons receiving services, by type of service provided.
- 5) Prohibits, unless a release of information is obtained, grantees and subgrantees, such as victim service providers, from disclosing or collecting any personally identifying information regarding personal services requested, utilized, or denied, regardless of whether the information has been encoded, encrypted or hashed, in order to protect the confidentiality and privacy of persons receiving services, as specified.

This bill:

- 1) Defines “unaccompanied woman” as an individual who identifies as a woman who is 18 years of age or older, who is experiencing homelessness, as defined in the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, and who is not accompanied by children or other dependents.
- 2) Requires cities, counties, and continuums of care (CoCs) that receive state funding on or after January 1, 2023 to:
 - a) Take steps to ensure that the needs of victim service providers and survivors of violence, and a gendered analysis of the causes and consequences of homelessness are incorporated into homelessness planning and responses.
 - b) Include families, people fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, and unaccompanied women within the vulnerable populations for whom specific systems support are developed.
 - c) Ensure that analyses and goals are completed with the following guidelines:
 - i. Developed with victim service providers to address the specific needs of the population in (b).
 - ii. Incorporate aggregate data from victim service providers.
 - iii. Ensure that addressing the safety and wellness of people in encampments include addressing risk of sexual and domestic violence.
 - iv. Ensure that the response to family homelessness include victim service providers.
 - v. Address disparate racial and gender outcomes in accessing and maintaining services and housing.
 - vi. Address the nexus of homelessness and justice-involvement, particularly for women and survivors of domestic violence.
 - vii. Disaggregate the number of beds provided by victim service providers and the number of beds available for women, transgender, and gender-nonconforming persons.
- 3) Prohibits victim service providers from entering client-level data into the statewide Homeless Data Integration System (HDIS) or the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).
- 4) Allows for funding that supports data systems to be utilized for the development and maintenance of comparable databases

- 5) Requires Cal-ICH to set and measure progress toward goals to prevent and end homelessness among domestic violence survivors, their children, and unaccompanied women by doing the following:
- a) Setting goals that include:
 - i. Decreasing the number of domestic violence survivors, their children, and unaccompanied women experiencing homelessness,
 - ii. Decreasing their duration and frequency of homelessness,
 - iii. Decreasing their barriers to services.
 - b) Defining outcome measures and gathering data related to the goals.
 - c) Providing technical assistance when funding is available.
 - d) Establishing initial goals by January 1, 2025 and updating them every two years.

COMMENTS:

- 1) *Author's Statement.* “Domestic violence is one of the leading drivers of homelessness for women, and unaccompanied women experiencing homelessness wait on average more than 10 years to access stable housing, a rate twice that of men. Despite making up a significant portion of the homeless population, our state’s homelessness response does not appropriately consider the needs of these two intersecting groups. As noted in a 2021 report from the Little Hoover Commission, there is ‘difficulty in getting leaders at all levels of government to understand the intersection of domestic violence and homelessness and how widespread of a problem it is.’

SB 914 addresses this issue and will keep California at the forefront of innovative responses to homelessness and domestic violence by ensuring that data about these populations and the work of relevant service providers is incorporated into local homelessness planning. With this, cities, counties, and Continuums of Care will have a more complete picture of the homeless population in their community and be better able to achieve results in preventing homelessness and supporting individuals in moving to stable housing.”

- 2) *Homelessness, Domestic Violence, and Unaccompanied Women.* Unaccompanied, homeless women are not required to be tracked under current federal law, however counties like Los Angeles and San Bernardino have recently done so. In 2020, there were over 13,500 unaccompanied women in Los Angeles, amounting to 65% of all unhoused women. Around half of this

population reported domestic violence or intimate partner violence.¹ According to the state HDIS, 18% of homeless people reported experiencing domestic violence.² This is voluntary information given to providers that use HMIS, which often does not include domestic violence service providers, so it is probably an undercount. In 2019-20, California Office of Emergency Services' Domestic Violence (DV) Assistance Program served almost 19,000 individuals in their shelters, which accounted for over 600,000 nights, but there were still almost 28,000 unmet requests.³ For domestic violence and intimate partner violence survivors who recently left abusers, the need for housing is one of the most significant concerns.

Confidentiality is of utmost importance to survivors and programs supporting them because survivors often have to worry about their abusers trying to find them. Because of this, the data collected is aggregated. However, this means that client-level data for domestic violence survivors is not incorporated into the federal HMIS. This is the primary system that the state uses to collect information for its HDIS, and HDIS helps Cal-ICH plan for future homelessness interventions. Because domestic violence survivor data is not incorporated into the state HMIS, survivors may not be fully considered in the State's homelessness response.

Confidentiality may be an issue to obtain all the information on domestic violence survivors. It would be easier for Cal-ICH to access data from federally funded shelters, but accessing information from private sources may be difficult. However, even if the data is not fully complete, the data that can be obtained would still provide valuable information. As of now, victim service provider data is not collected by Cal-ICH so this population is missing. Victim service providers provide confidentiality and many resources including counseling, legal services, and others that are tailored help the specific needs of this population, and they are integral for many people who are homeless. Their inclusion in homelessness planning is reasonable.

- 3) *Cal-ICH members.* The Director of the Office of Emergency Services, whose office most serves domestic violence survivors, is on the Council. In addition, the advisory committee to the Council must have a survivor of gender-based violence who has experienced homelessness and a representative of committees

¹ Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, "2020 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count - Unaccompanied Women," (November 2020). https://clkrep.lacity.org/online/docs/2020/20-1425_rpt_cla_7-21-21.pdf Appendix to 7/21/21 CLA Report . Accessed April 2022

² California Interagency Council on Homelessness. "Homeless Data Integration System (HDIS)". (2021). <https://bcsh.ca.gov/calich/hdis.html>

³ California Governor's Office of Emergency Services. "Joint Legislative Budget Committee Report". (April 2021). <https://www.caloes.ca.gov/GrantsManagementSite/Documents/2021%20JLBC%20Report.pdf>.

of survivors of gender-based violence. The Council also has the ability invite experts and stakeholders to participate in meetings. These people can speak to the programs for homeless domestic violence survivors, but it might be easier to have the data fully integrated within Cal-ICH to coordinate easier.

- 4) *Cal-ICH and HHAPP*. Cal-ICH, formerly known as the Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council, 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. To help accomplish this, Cal-ICH collects data using HMIS to create HDIS. Using HDIS, Cal-ICH must perform an assessment that will help identify how to proceed with the state’s homelessness response.

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). HHAPP has four rounds of funding, 2022 is part of the third round. As part of the round, applicants must complete a local homelessness action plan and a narrative to describe current and future efforts to mitigate homelessness. In the next comment, language from this bill is compared to language that establishes Cal-ICH, the action plan, and narrative for HHAPP funding.

- 5) *Language Matching*. This bill is written so that the requirements match statutes that govern Cal-ICH and HHAPP. This could make it much easier to integrate this bill with existing programs. The charts below may help understand this connection. The main new provision is to include victim service providers in the data collection, analysis, and planning that Cal-ICH is already doing. Often people would receive homeless services from victim service providers, but, since they are not counted in HMIS, they are unaccounted for which leads to miscount of homeless people. This inclusion of data could help with more equitable access to services and resources.

Cal-ICH or HHAPP Language	This Bill's Language
“A description of specific actions... to ensure racial and gender equity in service delivery, housing placements, and housing retention” (HSC Chapter 6 Section 50220.8)	“address disparate racial and gender outcomes in accessing and maintaining services and housing”
“further the efforts to improve the public health, safety, and welfare of people experiencing homelessness” (WIC Chapter 6.5 Section 8257)	“addressing the safety and wellness of people experiencing homelessness in encampments includes addressing risk of sexual violence and domestic violence”
“Reducing the number of persons experiencing homelessness” (HSC Chapter 6 Section 50220.7)	“decreasing the number of domestic violence survivors and their children and of unaccompanied women experiencing homelessness”
“Reducing the length of time persons remain homeless... Reducing the number of persons who return to homelessness” (HSC Chapter 6 Section 50220.7)	“Decreasing the duration and frequency of experiences of homelessness among domestic violence survivors and their children and among unaccompanied women”
“Obtain the following information... the number of emergency shelter beds” (WIC Chapter 6.5 Section 8257.1)	“disaggregate the number of beds provided by victim service providers”
“increase partnership with local health, behavioral health, social services, and justice entities” (HSC Chapter 6 Section 50220.7)	“decreasing barriers to services through promoting cross-system partnerships to expedite access to services, including social services, domestic violence services, regional services, housing services, and mental health services” “address the nexus of homelessness and justice-involvement”

6) *Double Referral*. This bill was passed out of the Senate Human Services Committee on April 5, 2022 with a vote of 4-0.

RELATED LEGISLATION:

AB 2325 (Ramos, 2022) — creates the Office of the Interagency Council on Homelessness. Among other things, it creates a funding workgroup to ensure survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and exploitation experiencing

homelessness have access to housing navigation, housing acquisition support, and programs. *This bill is pending in the Assembly Housing and Community Development Committee.*

SB 678 (Rubio, 2021) — would have required the Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council to set goals to prevent and end homelessness among unaccompanied women and gather data related to the goals. *This bill was held in Assembly Appropriations Committee.*

AB 1575 (Committee on Housing and Community Development, 2021) – would have required the Council to conduct a needs and gaps analysis which would include numbers and demographics on domestic violence survivors. *This bill died in Assembly Appropriations Committee.*

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

POSITIONS: (Communicated to the committee before noon on Thursday, April 21, 2022.)

SUPPORT:

California Partnership to End Domestic Violence (Co-Sponsor)
Downtown Women's Center (Co-Sponsor)
Rainbow Services, Ltd. (Co-Sponsor)
Mayor Eric Garcetti, City of Los Angeles
Representative Nanette Diaz Barragan, California's 44th Congressional District
ACLU California Action
Alexandria House
American Association of Doctors of Behavioral Health
Bay Area Legal Aid
Brilliant Corners
CA Council of Community Behavioral Health Agencies
California Catholic Conference
California Rural Legal Assistance
California Women's Law Center
Central City Association of Los Angeles
City of Alhambra
City of LA Canada Flintridge
Community Forward SF
Community Legal Aid SoCal
Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH)
Culver City Democratic Club

Domestic Violence Solutions for Santa Barbara County
Ella Baker Center for Human Rights
Family Violence Law Center
Futures Without Violence
Good Shepherd Center
Gray's Trauma-informed Care Services Corp
Harbor Community Health Centers
Haven Hills
Haven Women's Center of Stanislaus
Homeless Health Care Los Angeles
Housing California
Hub for Urban Initiatives
Human Options
Imagine LA
Interval House
Jenesse Center
Jewish Family Service of Los Angeles
Jewish Public Affairs Committee
Junior Leagues of California State Public Affairs Committee (CALSPAC)
LA Family Housing
Little Hoover Commission
Little Tokyo Service Center
Los Angeles Center for Law and Justice
Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office
Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority
Los Angeles LGBT Center
Loyola Law School, the Sunita Jain Anti-trafficking Initiative
National Association of Social Workers, California Chapter
Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles County
New STAR Family Justice Center
Peace Over Violence
People's Health Solutions
Roberts Enterprise Development Fund
Safe Housing Alliance
Safe Place for Youth
San Gabriel Valley Consortium on Homelessness
Shelter Partnership
Sojourn
St. Joseph Center
Sycamores
The Harriett Buhai Center for Family Law
The People Concern

United Way of Greater Los Angeles
Valley Oasis
Venice Community Housing Corporation
Walnut Avenue Family & Women's Center
Western Center on Law & Poverty
Wiseplace
Women's Center - High Desert
Women's Foundation California
Women's & Children's Crisis Shelter
YWCA Glendale and Pasadena
YWCA of San Gabriel Valley

OPPOSITION:

None received.

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