

SENATE THIRD READING
SB 914 (Rubio)
As Amended August 15, 2022
Majority vote

SUMMARY

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.

Major Provisions

- 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 CoCs that receive state funding on or after January 1, 2024 to:
 - a) Include families, people fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, and unaccompanied women within the vulnerable populations for whom specific systems support are developed;
 - b) Develop analyses and goals, with victim service providers, to address families, people fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, and unaccompanied women, with data measures not included within the Homeless Management Information System, in accordance with federal policies that includes the following:
 - c) Any local landscape analysis that assesses the current number of people experiencing homelessness and existing programs that address homelessness within the jurisdiction shall incorporate aggregate data from victim service providers, along with any other data sources;
 - d) Ensure responses to family homelessness include victim service providers;
 - e) Address the nexus between homelessness and justice-involvement particularly for women and survivors of domestic violence; and
 - f) Disaggregate the number of beds provided by victim services providers in the city and county services by the CoC.
- 3) Prohibits victim service providers from entering client-level data into the statewide Homeless Data Integration System (HDIS) or local Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).
- 4) Allows for funding that supports data systems to be used to develop and maintain 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; and
 - 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; and
- 6) Establishing initial goals by January 1, 2025 and evaluate them every two years.

COMMENTS

CA-ICH: The California Interagency Council on Homelessness (CA-ICH), formerly known as Homelessness Coordinating and Financing Council, is responsible for coordinating the state's response to homelessness. The CA-ICH is required to address a set of goals to respond to homelessness. CA-ICH is also responsible for ensuring that all state housing and homeless programs are Housing First. Housing First is an evidence-based housing model that centers on providing people experiencing homelessness with housing as quickly as possible and then providing services as needed.

As the state's homelessness crisis has worsened, the role of the CA-ICH has significantly increased. The council is now responsible for administering two significant programs dedicated to addressing homelessness, HEAP and HHAP. In 2021-22 budget included multi-year funding for HHAP. To access this funding, eligible applicants (CoCs, counties, and eligible cities) are required to submit a Local Homelessness Action Plan that demonstrates how HHAP funds and all local dollars for homelessness can reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness.

The Local Homelessness Action Plans are based on data collected through local homelessness management information systems (HMIS) and must include:

- 1) An analysis that assesses the current number of people experiencing homelessness and existing programs and funding which address homelessness within the jurisdiction;
- 2) Identification of the number of individuals and families served, including demographic information and intervention types provided, and subpopulations that are underserved relative to their proportion amongst those experiencing homelessness in the jurisdiction; and
- 3) Identification of all funds, including state, federal and local funds, currently being used, and budgeted to be used, to provide housing and homelessness-related services to persons experiencing homelessness or at imminent risk of homelessness, how this funding serves subpopulations, and what intervention types are funded through these resources.

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 offer 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.

This bill would require any CoC, city, or county that receives state funding to address homelessness to develop a strategy to address homelessness among unaccompanied women. CA-ICH would be required to set goals to reduce homelessness among unaccompanied women. CA-ICH is the processes of working with CoCs, cities, and counties to develop measurable outcome goals as a requirement of HHAP. The goals will be based on data from local HMIS systems.

According to the Author

"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

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>.

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."

Arguments in Support

According to the sponsors, "SB 914 will improve California's response to homelessness by requiring cities, counties, and continuums of care that receive state funding to address homelessness to include domestic violence survivors and unaccompanied women within the vulnerable populations for whom specific system supports are developed."

Arguments in Opposition

None on file.

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee:

- 1) Cal-ICH estimates General Fund (GF) costs of approximately \$328,000 in the first year and \$312,000 annually thereafter, for 2.0 personnel years (PY) of staff to set and measure specified progress goals and provide technical assistance specifically targeting homelessness among survivors of domestic violence, their children, and unaccompanied women.
- 2) Costs to cities and counties of an unknown, but likely significant, amount to coordinate with victim service providers, conduct additional analysis, collect and incorporate data, and take other specified actions to ensure specific supports are developed to address the needs of families, people attempting to flee domestic violence, and unaccompanied women. These costs are potentially reimbursable by the state, subject to a determination by the Commission on State Mandates.
- 3) Additional GF cost pressures, of an unknown amount, to provide additional resources to cities, counties, and CoCs to support development and maintenance of alternate data systems, and to provide additional resources to Cal-ICH for funding for technical assistance to support the development of local programs and plans.

VOTES

SENATE FLOOR: 37-0-3

YES: Allen, Atkins, Bates, Becker, Borgeas, Bradford, Cortese, Dahle, Dodd, Durazo, Eggman, Glazer, Gonzalez, Grove, Hueso, Hurtado, Jones, Kamlager, Laird, Leyva, Limón, McGuire, Melendez, Min, Newman, Nielsen, Ochoa Bogh, Pan, Portantino, Roth, Rubio, Skinner, Stern, Umberg, Wieckowski, Wiener, Wilk

ABS, ABST OR NV: Archuleta, Caballero, Hertzberg

ASM HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: 8-0-0

YES: Wicks, Seyarto, Carrillo, Gabriel, Kalra, Kiley, Quirk-Silva, Ward

ASM HUMAN SERVICES: 7-0-1

YES: Calderon, Davies, Arambula, Mia Bonta, Bryan, Stone, Villapudua

ABS, ABST OR NV: Waldron

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 12-0-4

YES: Holden, Bryan, Calderon, Arambula, Mike Fong, Gabriel, Eduardo Garcia, Levine, Quirk, Robert Rivas, Akilah Weber, McCarty

ABS, ABST OR NV: Bigelow, Megan Dahle, Davies, Fong

UPDATED

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