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## SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Senator Becker, Chair  
2025 - 2026 Regular

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**Bill No:** AB 1899  
**Author:** Caloza  
**Version:** May 18, 2026  
**Urgency:** No  
**Consultant:** Naima Ford Antal

**Hearing Date:** June 15, 2026  
**Fiscal:** Yes

**Subject:** Office of Youth Homelessness Prevention

### SUMMARY

This bill requires the California Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal-ICH) to establish an Office of Youth Homelessness Prevention and establishes the Office of Youth Homelessness Prevention Fund in the State Treasury.

### ABSTRACT

#### Existing Law:

- 1) Defines, in the federal McKinney-Vento Act Homeless Assistance Act, “homeless children and youth” as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including children who are sharing the housing of other people, living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camp grounds, emergency or transitional shelters, abandoned in hospitals or awaiting foster care placement, or who are living in a place not generally used for sleeping, such as cars, parks, public places, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, and migratory children living in the circumstances above. (*Title 42 United States Code [USC] 11434(a)(2)*)
- 2) Requires the Governor to create an Interagency Council on Homelessness (*Welfare and Institutions Code [WIC] 8257 et seq*)
- 3) Makes findings and declarations establishing the Homeless Youth Act of 2018 to improve prevention and early intervention services for youth at risk of experiencing homelessness and increase access to services for youth experiencing homelessness. (*WIC 8259*)
- 4) Defines “homeless youth” as unaccompanied youth between 12 and 24 years old who is experiencing homelessness as defined in the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. It also includes youth that are pregnant or parenting. (*WIC 8260(d)*)
- 5) Requires Cal- ICH to set and measure progress towards the goals of the Homeless Youth Act of 2018 to prevent and end homelessness among youth in California (*WIC 8261 (a)*)

**This Bill:**

- 1) Makes findings and declarations related to the impact of homelessness on youth and young adults.
- 2) Defines “Council” to mean the California Interagency Council on Homelessness.
- 3) Defines “Functional zero” to mean the condition in which the number of youth experiencing homelessness does not exceed the capacity to provide youth with permanent housing.
- 4) Defines “Office” to mean the Office of Youth Homelessness Prevention.
- 5) Defines “Youth” to mean an individual under 26 years of age.
- 6) Creates the Office of Youth Homelessness Prevention in the California Interagency Council on Homelessness.
- 7) Requires the Office’s mission to be to reduce youth homelessness in the state to functional zero.
- 8) Requires the Office to have the following responsibilities:
  - a. Developing and overseeing the implementation of a comprehensive framework to reduce youth homelessness to functional zero, which shall include all of the following:
    - i. Specific and measurable goals, including, but not limited to, all of the following:
      1. Decreasing the number of youth who experience homelessness within 12 months of discharge from a public system of care, including foster care, inpatient residential treatment, and incarceration.
      2. Decreasing the length and occurrence of youth homelessness caused by a youth’s separation from family or a legal guardian.
      3. Decreasing the number of homeless youth experiencing homelessness to functional zero, through, among other things, identifying and enhancing programs that address the root causes of youth homelessness, including timelines within which to attain these measures of success.
    - ii. The office shall complete development of the framework specified in this paragraph on or before September 15, 2027.
  - b. Lead the coordination of funding, policy, and practice to prevent youth homelessness across federal and state agencies and departments with jurisdiction over the state’s child welfare, foster care, juvenile justice, education, and

workforce systems, including, but not limited to, the Department of Housing and Community Development, the State Department of Social Services, the Office of Youth and Community Restoration, the State Department of Education, and the Labor and Workforce Development Agency, focused on all of the following:

- i. Sufficient stable housing, including, but not limited to, the utilization of housing vouchers, rapid rehousing, rental support, transitional housing, and eviction prevention.
  - ii. Economic and employment support, including job training and placement, financial management skills, flexible financial assistance, and assistance connecting with public benefits.
  - iii. Education, including support to earn a high school degree and to pursue and complete postsecondary education and training programs.
  - iv. Prevention of youth homelessness, including family reconciliation, interventions to prevent exits from public systems of care, including child welfare, foster care, juvenile justice, and behavioral health, into homelessness, flexible financial assistance, and school-based supports.
  - v. Health and mental health, including support for youth to obtain and maintain mental health care.
  - vi. Services to assist youth to establish and maintain connections with supportive adults and peers.
- c. The office may provide support, advice, or guidance to local agencies and entities, including, but not limited to, county child welfare agencies, county probation departments, continuums of care, county behavioral health departments, local housing authorities, and local homelessness departments on funding, policy, and practice, including transition planning, housing services, aftercare supports, and other approaches to preventing youth from existing public systems into homelessness.
  - d. Develop best practices and policy recommendations, with proposed timelines for completion, to address gaps, shortfalls, and other inadequacies in the areas specified by this bill.
  - e. Gather data, including by initiating data-sharing agreements, and analyzing the data to evaluate the progress toward desired outcomes, including tracking the rate at which youth exit foster care and other public systems of care into homelessness.
- 9) On or before December 15, 2027, the office must create and post to its internet website a publicly accessible dashboard tracking the office's progress toward the goals specified in this section.

- 10) Requires the Office to consult with a 12-member advisory committee with membership as follows:
  - a. Two youth with current or previous lived experience with homelessness. These youth may also have current or previous lived experience with the foster care or juvenile justice system.
  - b. Two parent advocates or legal guardians of formerly homeless youth.
  - c. Three advocates for homeless youth.
  - d. Two members of the Legislature.
  - e. Three stakeholders knowledgeable in or with demonstrated experience with the provision of services to homeless youth, the dependency system, and family reunification.
- 11) Requires the members of the advisory committee to be appointed by the Secretary of California Housing and Homelessness on or before March 1, 2027.
- 12) Requires the advisory committee to meet on or before June 1, 2027, and at least twice each calendar year thereafter.
- 13) Requires at least one member of the Office to attend advisory committee meetings to provide administrative support and guidance as needed.
- 14) Establishes the Office of Youth Homelessness Prevention Fund in the State Treasury.
- 15) Allows the fund to accept gifts, grants, and other funds from any source, private or public.
- 16) Requires moneys deposited into the fund to, upon appropriation by the Legislature, be made available to the council to be used in the manner prescribed by law to carry out the provisions of this chapter.
- 17) Notwithstanding Section 10231.5 of the Government Code, the office shall report on its progress toward achieving the measurable goals in this chapter to the Legislature and the council on or before December 15, 2027, and annually thereafter.
- 18) Requires the office to make the report completed pursuant to this section available to the public on its internet website.
- 19) Requires the report completed pursuant to this bill to be submitted in compliance with the Government Code.

### FISCAL IMPACT

According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee:

“Cal- ICH estimates General Fund costs of \$1.22 million in the first year and \$1.15 million annually thereafter for staff to lead statewide coordination across various stakeholders, develop a framework with measurable goals, and align funding and policy toward achieving functional zero youth homelessness.”

## BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

### **Purpose of the Bill:**

According to the author, “No young person should have to choose between school and the streets or between meaningful work and the street economy. No young person should be sleeping on a city bus or camping on a sidewalk. Creating an Office of Homeless Youth, as envisioned in AB 1899, will ensure that there are programs specifically designed to support and serve youth and young adults to prevent unnecessary suffering and prevent them from growing up and becoming chronically homeless. It is modeled after Washington State, which has reduced youth and young adult homelessness by forty percent. California can, and must, do more for our young people who are experiencing homelessness.”

### *Homeless Youth*

There are many definitions of homeless youth found within federal code and program eligibility. For example, the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act defines “homeless youth” as individuals who are less than 21 years of age and for whom it is not possible to live in a safe environment with a relative and who have no other safe alternative living arrangement. This definition only includes those youth who are unaccompanied by families or caregivers. Through the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, the federal government defines “homeless children and youth” as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including children who are sharing the housing of other people, living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camp grounds, emergency or transitional shelters, abandoned in hospitals or awaiting foster care placement, or who are living in a place not generally used for sleeping such as cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, and migratory children living in the circumstances above. According to Cal-ICH, the California Department of Education reported that over 210,000 students experienced homelessness during the 2023-24 school year.

Another subsection of homeless youth, as defined by the McKinney-Vento Act is “unaccompanied youth”. These are youth experiencing homelessness, as defined above, and not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. As such, the McKinney-Vento Act definition of homeless children and youth may include both those youth experiencing homelessness with their family or caregiver and those youth experiencing homelessness alone. Unaccompanied youth are captured as a unique subset of data in the annual United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Point in Time Count.

### *Data on Youth Homelessness in California*

Most homelessness data stems from the HUD Point in Time Count. Annually, HUD directs local community Continuums of Care to conduct a Point in Time Count of people experiencing homelessness in January, and includes people experiencing homelessness who are “sheltered” – living in temporary shelters – and those who are “unsheltered,” or living out in the open or in places not designated for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for people (i.e. the streets, vehicles, or parks). The Point in Time Count is required by HUD as a condition of receiving federal funding. The Point in Time Count captures homeless children and youth data in two ways, through reporting numbers on homeless families with children and reporting numbers on unaccompanied homeless youth. According to HUD, counting unaccompanied youth is very challenging because this population is less likely to use residential services, they congregate away from adults experiencing homelessness, and often hide from law enforcement because they are minors. In the 2024 Point in Time Count (the latest data available), California was reported to have 9,052 unaccompanied homeless youth and 60% of those were unsheltered, which is a decrease from 2022 when the Point in Time Count identified 9,590 unaccompanied homeless youth.

California also uses the Homeless Data Integration System (HDIS), to gather data on the needs of people experiencing homelessness and changing demographics. The HDIS is a compilation of data reported by Continuums of Care to their county Homelessness Management Information Systems about the services they have provided to people experiencing homelessness. This means HDIS data is limited only to what is provided by service providers who use the Homelessness Management Information System. Potential gaps includes providers to the 110 federally recognized Tribes and domestic violence victims, because they are not required to use the system. Despite the potential gaps in data, California is the only state to create such a data warehouse based on Homelessness Management Information System data. The advantages of using this warehouse of data includes its ability to show “patterns of service usage across geographic regions and support[s] efforts to identify and address racial and other inequalities among people experiencing homelessness.”<sup>1</sup> According to HDIS data, in 2025, 75,696 individuals under the age of 18 years old and 27,088 people age 18 to 24 year old accessed homeless support services.

#### *California Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal-ICH)*

Cal-ICH was created in 2021 by AB 1220 (Rivas, Chapter 398) as a successor to the Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council to address the coordination and oversight of homelessness programs. The bill also made changes to the membership of Cal-ICH and provided Cal-ICH with additional authority to access information from other departments. To ensure Cal-ICH has access to information about homelessness programs throughout state agencies, Cal-ICH is allowed to require state departments that have homelessness programs to participate in Cal-ICH workgroups or other collaborative work. They can also require those departments or agencies to provide Cal-ICH data on those programs. Unlike the Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council, Cal-ICH also requires department directors, agency secretaries, and executive directors to participate on the council rather than their representatives.

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<sup>1</sup> California Interagency Council on Homelessness' Statewide Action Plan for Preventing and Ending Homelessness in California. December 2024.

In addition to improving coordination between agencies, the Cal-ICH is also charged with coordinating existing and competitive funding for homelessness initiatives, find new funding initiatives, make policy recommendations, broker agreements between state agencies, increase accountability, create reports for the Governor and Legislature, and create a statewide database for local homelessness data. This bill will place the Office of Homeless Youth within Cal-ICH.

### *Programs for Homeless Youth*

There are a number of current state programs that Cal-ICH has identified as providing services that advance the goal of preventing youth homelessness. Some of these programs include:

- **Transitional Age Youth Program:** Funds services to help young adults 18-24 secure and maintain housing, with priority given to those formerly in the foster care or probation systems, operated by HCD.
- **Homeless Youth and Exploitation Program:** Provides services to help homeless youth find permanent shelter, with a focus on providing specialized services for youth experiencing sexual exploitation, operated by Cal OES.
- **Homeless Youth Emergency Services and Housing Program:** Provides funding for food, shelter, counseling, and outreach services to locate homeless youth and link them with services, screen for basic health needs, and provide long-term stabilization planning with an emphasis on housing, operated by Cal OES.
- **Homeless Youth Emergency Services Pilot:** Provides funding to expand crisis intervention and stabilization services to homeless youth to address immediate crisis, operated by Cal OES.
- **Specialized Emergency Housing Program:** Expands emergency shelter/emergency housing assistance and provides supportive services for victims/survivors of crime with specialized needs (e.g. elderly, youth, women, disabled, LGBTQIA+, non-English speaking, culturally or religiously marginalized, etc.) who cannot be served through a traditional shelter, operated by Cal OES.

There are also programs and services provided by schools, county welfare departments, county behavioral health departments and other local agencies that combat youth homelessness. This bill would create an office that could provide leadership and coordination between the departments that oversee these and other relevant programs.

### *Homeless Youth Act of 2018*

The Homeless Youth Act of 2018 (Act) was created by AB 918 (Weiner, Chapter 841) within the Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council before it became the Cal-ICH. The Act placed additional responsibilities on the Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council to focus on youth facing homelessness including data collection and coordination with relevant departments. The Act's current goals reflect the overall goals of Cal-ICH to decrease homelessness and increase coordination. The Act defines homeless youth as unaccompanied youth between 12 and 24 years of age, inclusive, who are experiencing homelessness, including youth who are pregnant

or parenting. Specifically, the Act requires Cal-ICH to pursue the following goals:

- Decrease the number of youth experiencing homelessness
- Decrease homelessness caused by separation from family or legal guardian
- Decrease the rate and length of youth experiencing homelessness
- Decrease barriers to service by increasing cross- system partnerships with government entities service this population.

Cal-ICH is also required to define the outcome measures and data collection processes needed to reach these goals including:

- Develop and collect data on county-level and statewide measures, including, but not limited to, the number of young people experiencing homelessness in California and their dependency status, delinquency status, family reunification status, housing status, program participation, and runaway status.
- Require programs that receive state funding for youth homelessness to collect data and share with state and county agencies as a condition of receiving the funds.

This bill would require Cal-ICH to create an office within the Council that oversees the creation, and leads the implementation, of a comprehensive framework to reduce youth homelessness to functional zero. This includes setting similar and new goals, advising other departments, creating best practices and gathering data.

### *Functional Zero Homelessness*

Functional Zero is a way for cities and communities to define their goals for reducing homelessness in a measurable way. According to the nonprofit organization, Community Solutions, to be considered meeting “functional zero,” a community must reduce its number of people experiencing homelessness to close to zero, and keep it “below the community’s capacity to ensure positive exits from homelessness.” For example, functional zero for addressing chronic homelessness would mean the number of people experiencing chronic homelessness would be 0.1% of the number of people reported in the most recent point in time count. Achieving functional zero relies heavily on data gathering and metrics like the point-in-time count and local tracking efforts. It also comes with the expectation that communities will sustain these sheltering goals. According to Community Solutions, the Bakersfield/ Kern County community achieved functional zero in January 2020 and sustained it through June 2021. Criticisms of functional zero stem from its focus on stopping the growth of people experiencing homelessness over decreasing the existing number of people experiencing homelessness. Communities can claim functional zero if the rate of people entering and exiting homelessness remains low. However, there is concern that achieving this metric can distract from the number of people that remain homeless even as functional zero is maintained and take resources from efforts to address the root causes of homelessness. This bill requires the Office of Homeless Youth to achieve functional zero homelessness for youth.

*Washington Office of Homeless Youth*

In 2015, the state of Washington passed the Homeless Youth Act which established the state's Office of Homeless Youth. The Office has five priority service areas to reduce and prevent homelessness in unaccompanied youth between 12 and 24 years old. Those areas include: stable housing, family reconciliation, permanent connections, education and employment, and social and emotional well-being. According to the York University research project Homeless Hub, the state had a decrease of almost 10,000 homeless youth between 2016 and 2022. It credits the change to cross-sector coordination starting with the state government, which led to "prevention-focused strategies and interventions, including wraparound, legal, financial, and school-based support."<sup>2</sup> In addition to gathering data and overseeing an advisory group, the office operates a grant program, a statewide training program on homeless youth for criminal justice personnel, and publishes strategic initiatives to prevent youth homelessness. This bill would create an office with a similar structure and purpose in California.

**Related/Prior Legislation:**

***SB 606 (Becker, 2025)*** would have added to the information required of applicants to the Homeless Housing, Assistance, and Prevention program and established a definition for "functional zero unsheltered." AB 606 was held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

***SB 918 (Weiner, Chapter 841, Statutes 2018)*** created Homeless Youth Act of 2018, which adds new responsibilities related to homeless youth to the Homeless Coordinating and Financing and Cal- ICH.

***AB 1220 (Luz Rivas, Chapter 398, Statutes 2021)*** created the California Interagency Council to coordinate state homelessness resources and programming.

**COMMENTS**

This bill creates the Office of Homeless Youth in California. Children and young adults experiencing homelessness are part of the population that has increased since the beginning of the pandemic, but they have unique needs and face unique challenges. Some are minors living with their family in unstable housing, some are teenagers who are not living with or supported by a parent or guardian, and some are young adults on their own for the first time. This bill creates an office that will coordinate the efforts of the various departments and organizations that serve homeless youth or prevent youth homelessness. The office is not meant to remove youth homelessness prevention from the larger state anti-homelessness effort but instead create a team that can provide a long-term strategy, technical assistance, and data to the entities providing services directly to this unique population.

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<sup>2</sup> "Washington State's 40% Reduction in Youth Homelessness Shows What Happens When Prevention Becomes State Legislation". November 25, 2025. [homelesshub.ca/blog/2025/washington-states-40-reduction-in-youth-homelessness-shows-what-happens-when-prevention-becomes-state-legislation/](https://homelesshub.ca/blog/2025/washington-states-40-reduction-in-youth-homelessness-shows-what-happens-when-prevention-becomes-state-legislation/)

**PRIOR VOTES**

Assembly Floor:	74 - 0
Assembly Appropriations Committee:	15 - 0
Assembly Housing and Community Development Committee:	12 - 0

**POSITIONS**

**Support:**

- California Coalition for Youth (Co-Sponsor)
- Inner City Law Center (Co-Sponsor)
- Advanced Consulting, LLC
- Aspiranet
- Bill Wilson Center
- Black Women United
- Bresee Foundation
- Bright Futures for Youth
- California Alliance of Child and Family Services
- California Apartment Association
- California Association of Christian Colleges and Universities
- California Behavioral Health Association
- California Community Foundation
- California Youth Connection
- Children Now
- Echoes of Hope
- Fostering Promise
- Glide
- Home Start, INC
- John Burton Advocates for Youth
- LA Emissary
- Larkin Street Youth Services
- League of California Cities
- Legacy Bridge CDC
- Los Angeles Unified School District
- Public Counsel
- Safe Place for Youth
- San Diego Youth Services
- Sunset Youth Services
- SV@Home Action Fund
- Unity Care
- YMCA of San Diego County
- Youth Law Center

**Oppose:**

None received

**-- END --**