

efforts of those individuals and families to maintain their permanent housing. Directs Cal-ICH to administer HHAP.

- 5) Requires a HHAP recipient to use at least 10% of funding from a HHAP allocation for services dedicated to homeless youth.
- 6) Requires HHAP to be used for evidence-based solutions that address and prevent homelessness among eligible populations, as specified.
- 7) Establishes the Homeless Youth Act of 2018 to better serve the state's homeless youth population and requires Cal-ICH to take on additional related responsibilities, including setting goals to prevent and end homelessness among youth in the state, defining outcome measures, and gathering data related to those goals. These goals include:
 - a) Setting goals to prevent and end homelessness among California's youth;
 - b) Improving the safety, health, and welfare of young people experiencing homelessness in the state;
 - c) Increasing system integration and coordinating efforts to prevent homelessness among youth who are currently, or formerly, involved in the child welfare services or the juvenile justice systems;
 - d) Leading efforts to coordinate a spectrum of funding, policy, and practice efforts related to young people experiencing homelessness; and,
 - e) Identifying best practices to ensure homeless minors who have experienced maltreatment and are eligible to be dependent children are re-referred to, or have the ability to self-refer to, the child welfare system, as specified.
- 8) Instructs the Cal-ICH, in order to coordinate a spectrum of funding, policy, and practice efforts for youth experiencing homelessness, to do the following:
 - a) Coordinate with youth experiencing homelessness, the Department of Social Services (DSS), appropriate state and county agencies and departments, the state advisory group established pursuant to current law related to runaway and homeless youth, and relevant stakeholders, in order to inform policy, practices, and programs; and,
 - b) Provide technical assistance and program development support, to the extent that funding is made available, in order to increase capacity among new and

existing service providers to best meet statewide needs, particularly in areas where services to youth experiencing homelessness have not yet been established, and provide support to service providers in making evidence-informed and data-driven decisions.

This bill:

- 1) Establishes the Office of Youth Homelessness Prevention (OYHP) within the California Interagency Council on Homelessness.
- 2) Declares the OYHP's mission is to reduce youth homelessness in California to functional zero, as defined.
- 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) Assigns the following responsibilities to the OYHP:
 - 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 15th, 2027.
 - b) Leading 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 DSS, 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 prevent youth from exiting public systems into homelessness.
 - d) Developing best practices and policy recommendations, with proposed timelines for completion, to address gaps, shortfalls, and other inadequacies in the areas listed in (b).
 - e) Gathering 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.

- 5) Requires the OYHP, on or before December 15th, 2027, to create and post to its internet website a publicly accessible dashboard tracking the office's progress toward the specified goals.
- 6) Requires the OYHP 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.
- 7) Requires the Secretary of the California Housing and Homelessness Agency, on or before March 1st, 2027, to appoint members to the advisory committee.
- 8) Requires the advisory committee meet on or before June 1st, 2027, and at least twice each calendar year thereafter.
- 9) Provides that at least one member of the office shall attend advisory committee meetings to provide administrative support and guidance as needed.
- 10) Establishes the OYHP Fund within the State Treasury.
 - a) The fund may accept gifts, grants, and other funds from any source, private or public.
 - b) Moneys deposited into the fund shall, 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.
- 11) Requires the OYHP to report on its progress toward achieving the measurable goals in this bill to the Legislature and Cal-ICH on or before December 15th, 2027, and annually thereafter.
 - a) The office shall make the report completed pursuant to this section available to the public on its internet website.

- b) The report completed pursuant to this subdivision shall be submitted in compliance with Section 9795 of the Government Code.

Background

The creation of Cal-ICH. SB 1380 (Mitchell, 2016) created the Homelessness Coordination and Financing Council (HCFC) to coordinate the state's response to homelessness. HCFC was later renamed Cal-ICH. Cal-ICH is made up of all state agencies and departments that operate programs that provide housing or housing-related services to people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. Cal-ICH meets quarterly and has an advisory committee which includes a current or formerly homeless youth who lives in California. One of the listed statutory goals of the Council is to prevent and end homelessness among California's youth, recognizing the unique needs of the population.

Homeless Youth Act of 2018. SB 918 (Weiner, 2018) established the Homeless Youth Act of 2018 to better serve the state's homeless youth population. The Act requires Cal-ICH to set goals to prevent and end homelessness among youth in the state, define outcome measures, and gather data related to those goals. In addition, the Act requires Cal-ICH to coordinate with young people experiencing homelessness, the State Department of Social Services, and the other appropriate agencies and departments to coordinate a spectrum of funding, policy, and practice efforts related to young people experiencing homelessness. SB 918 did not include any deadlines by which Cal-ICH would deliver on the goals of the bill or a reporting requirement on progress or outcomes.

Homeless Housing, Assistance, and Prevention Grant Program. Beginning in 2018, in response to a growing number of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness, the state began investing significantly in the local homelessness response system through HHAP. HHAP provides one-time grants to cities with populations over 300,000, counties, and Continuums of Care (CoCs) to support regional coordination and expand, or develop, local capacity to address their immediate homelessness challenges. Investments are informed by a best-practices framework focused on moving homeless individuals and families into permanent housing and supporting the efforts of those individuals and families to maintain their permanent housing. Big cities, counties, and CoCs can use HHAP funds for operating subsidies for shelters and supportive housing; construction of shelter, interim housing, and supportive housing; landlord incentives, rental assistance and rapid rehousing; prevention and shelter diversion; and street outreach and services coordination. The program has received 7 rounds of funding totaling \$5.45 billion from 2019-2025, of which \$3.9 billion has been awarded, and \$2.3 billion has been expended. Round 6 of HHAP is available to applicants and an additional \$500

million was included in this year's budget, contingent on more accountability, with a commitment that funds would go out in an expedited fashion.

Comments

- 1) *Author's statement.* "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."

- 2) *Youth Homelessness in California.* According to the 2024 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Point-in-Time (PIT) Count, there are over 187,000 people experiencing homelessness in California. This includes 9,052 homeless youth and 1,890 parenting youth and their children experiencing homelessness. Homelessness among some subcommunities of youth is significantly disproportionate. LGBTQ+ youth are 120% more likely than their non-LGBTQ+ peers to be homeless, and represent up to 40% of homeless youth. Further, Black, Indigenous, and other youth of color were especially overrepresented, with an 83% increased risk of having experienced homelessness compared to their non-BIPOC peers.¹ The lack of a high school diploma or General Equivalency Diploma (GED) is a factor strongly correlated with experiencing homelessness. These young adults, without a high school diploma or GED, are at 4.5 times higher risk of experiencing homelessness compared to peers who completed high school.² Beyond those demographics, other contributing factors include economic circumstances like poverty and financial insecurity, racial disparities, and mental health and substance use disorders. Young people who have had involvement with the child welfare and juvenile justice systems are also more likely to become homeless. Evidence has also shown that being homeless as a youth is a key indicator of adult homelessness. All of these factors demonstrate the complexity of the drivers of youth homelessness and reiterate the need for comprehensive supports.

¹ National Network for Youth. *Understanding Youth Homelessness*. Accessible here: <https://nn4youth.org/learn/lgbtq-homeless-youth/>.

² Kull, M. A., et. al. *Missed opportunities: Education among youth and young adults experiencing homelessness in America*. Accessible here: https://www.chapinhall.org/wp-content/uploads/ChapinHall_VoYC_Education-Brief.pdf. November 2019.

- 3) *Targeted Funding & Supports Show Results.* Between 2023 and 2024, California had the largest reduction in the number of unaccompanied youths experiencing homelessness in the nation, with 1,121 fewer unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness on a single night in January 2024 than in January 2023. According to the UCSF Benioff Homelessness and Housing Initiative, the reductions in youth homelessness can be attributed to consistent HHAP and Homekey funding for youth homelessness, as well as targeted strategies by Cal-ICH and other relevant state agencies.
- 4) *Potential for Duplicative Responsibilities.* This bill would establish the OYHP as the lead state entity in 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, and juvenile justice systems, including, but not limited to, Cal-ICH, DSS, and the Department of Youth and Community Restoration. It is worth noting that Cal-ICH is already tasked with coordination across federal and state agencies with such jurisdiction. Additionally, this bill would require OYHP to establish a comprehensive framework to reduce youth homelessness to functional zero. The Homeless Youth Act of 2018 already requires Cal-ICH to set goals to prevent and end homelessness among youth in the state, define outcome measures, and gather data related to those goals. While homeless youth face unique challenges which should be uplifted and addressed by policy, and data bear out the value of targeted interventions, it is not clear how creating a standalone office and adding bureaucracy would result in fewer homeless youth when many of these responsibilities are already assumed by Cal-ICH.
- 5) *Incoming!* This bill was also referred to the Senate Human Services Committee, where it passed on a vote of 5-0.

Related/Prior Legislation

SB 1380 (Mitchell, Chapter 847, Statutes of 2016) — created the Homelessness Coordination and Financing Council (HCFC), now known as Cal-ICH, to coordinate the state's response to homelessness.

SB 918 (Weiner, Chapter 841, Statutes of 2018) — established the Homeless Youth Act of 2018 to better serve the state's homeless youth population.

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

POSITIONS: (Communicated to the committee before noon on Wednesday, June 17th, 2026.)

SUPPORT:

California Coalition for Youth (Sponsor)
Inner City Law Center (Sponsor)
Advanced Consulting, LLC
Aids Healthcare Foundation
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 Youth Connection
City of Los Angeles
Echoes of Hope
Fostering Promise
Glide
Home Start, INC
John Burton Advocates for Youth
LA Emissary
Larkin Street Youth Services
Legacy Bridge CDC
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

OPPOSITION:

None received.

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