

Date of Hearing: April 15, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Matt Haney, Chair

AB 1924 (Gabriel) – As Amended March 9, 2026

SUBJECT: Statewide homelessness prevention strategy

SUMMARY: Requires the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), by July 1, 2027, to develop and publicly issue a statewide homelessness prevention strategy. Specifically, **this bill:**

1) Includes the following definitions:

- a) “At risk of homelessness” means the presence of multiple evidence-based homelessness risk factors for an individual, including, but not limited to, any of the following:
 - i. Prior experience of homelessness;
 - ii. Annual income below 30% of the area median income (AMI);
 - iii. Experiencing rent burden; and
 - iv. Experiencing other household and social characteristics that are known to elevate the risk of homelessness.
- b) “Housing stability” means the ability of an individual or family to maintain housing that is consistent, safe, and affordable.
- c) “Relevant agency” means any state agency or department that affects, or has the potential to affect, housing stability and the prevention of homelessness, including, but not limited to, all of the following:
 - i. HCD;
 - ii. The Interagency Council on Homelessness;
 - iii. The State Department of Social Services;
 - iv. The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation;
 - v. The Division of Rehabilitative Programs, Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation;
 - vi. The Office of Youth and Community Restoration, California Health and Human Services Agency;
 - vii. The California Health and Human Services Agency;
 - viii. The State Department of Public Health;

- ix. The State Department of Health Care Services;
 - x. The State Department of State Hospitals;
 - xi. The Employment Development Department; and
 - xii. The State Department of Education;
- 2) Requires HCD, by July 1, 2027, to develop and publicly issue a statewide homelessness prevention strategy that includes all of the following:
- a) An inventory of each definition of homelessness prevention employed by each relevant agency and how those definitions differ;
 - b) The actions each relevant agency is taking to promote housing stability and homelessness prevention, and the gaps in those actions;
 - c) A homelessness prevention action plan for each relevant agency that is developed by HCD and the relevant agency that details specific actions the agency will take to contribute to housing stability and homelessness prevention, and the timeline for those actions;
 - d) Recommendations for legislation or executive action to implement the homelessness prevention action plans;
 - e) A plan to coordinate and integrate the homelessness prevention action plans;
 - f) A plan to annually evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the homelessness prevention action plans that includes, but is not limited to, both of the following:
 - i. Accountability measures; and
 - ii. An assessment of the impact of the homelessness prevention action plans on homelessness prevention.
 - g) An inventory of state resources currently devoted specifically to preventing homelessness;
 - h) A proposal for state resources and actions to prevent homelessness in addition to existing resources;
 - i) Statewide homelessness prevention goals and accountability measures;
 - j) An annual agenda recommending third-party evaluations of selected local or state homelessness prevention programs other than the homelessness prevention action plans that test the impact of those programs on homelessness prevention;

- k) Evidence-based model homelessness prevention practices identified or designed and developed by the department that include, but are not limited to, all of the following:
- i. Identification of persons most at risk of homelessness through evidence-based risk factors, including, but not limited to, all of the following:
 - a. Prior experience of homelessness;
 - b. Annual income below 30 percent of the area median income;
 - c. Rent burden; and
 - d. Other household and social characteristics that are known to elevate the risk of homelessness.
 - ii. The use of predictive models to identify individuals most at risk of homelessness;
 - iii. The targeting of resources to households most at risk of homelessness;
 - iv. The most effective and efficient interventions to prevent homelessness, including, but not limited to, all of the following:
 - a. Financial assistance to increase housing stability, including, but not limited to, the most effective methods of accelerating the delivery of emergency rental assistance;
 - b. Eviction defense and holistic legal services to increase housing stability;
 - c. Case management to increase housing stability;
 - d. Specific homelessness prevention practices that address the needs of subpopulations;
 - e. Successful integration of financial, legal, and case management assistance;
 - f. Evaluation of the effectiveness of homelessness prevention strategies on preventing homelessness, including performance metrics;
 - g. The most effective and efficient means of coordinating state and federal homelessness prevention efforts identified and proposed by the department;
 - h. The most effective and efficient means of coordinating state and local homeless prevention efforts identified and proposed by the department;
 - i. Evidence-based state and local homelessness prevention programs and systems that have received evaluations validating their effectiveness in preventing homelessness identified by the department, and

recommendations for scaling up those programs and systems to have a broader impact on homelessness prevention; and

- j. The compilation, acquisition, and use of relevant data necessary to effectuate homelessness prevention, including, but not limited to, a universal system of data collection and reporting that facilitates access to data by all participants in a homelessness prevention system.
- 3) Requires HCD to do both of the following with the model homelessness prevention practices:
 - a) Offer them as guidance to local programs; and
 - b) Propose methods to integrate relevant practices into state agencies and programs.
 - 4) Requires HCD to annually review and update the strategy and publish any revisions.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Establishes the California Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal-ICH) with the purpose of coordinating the state's response to homelessness by utilizing Housing First practices. (Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) Section 8255)
- 2) Requires agencies and departments administering state programs created on or after July 1, 2017, to incorporate the core components of Housing First. (WIC 8255)
- 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. (WIC 8255)
- 4) Defines, among other things, the "core components of Housing First" to mean:
 - a) Acceptance of referrals directly from shelters, street outreach, drop-in centers, and other parts of crisis response systems frequented by vulnerable people experiencing homelessness;
 - b) Supportive services that emphasize engagement and problem-solving over therapeutic goals and service plans that are highly tenant-driven without predetermined goals;
 - c) Participation in services or program compliance is not a condition of permanent housing tenancy;
 - d) Tenants have a lease and all the rights and responsibilities of tenancy, as outlined in California's Civil, Health and Safety, and Government codes; and
 - e) The use of alcohol or drugs in and of itself, without other lease violations, is not a reason for eviction. (WIC 8255)

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown.

COMMENTS:

Author's Statement: According to the author, "For each homeless individual who is successfully connected with housing, nearly three access homelessness services for the first time. To make meaningful progress and address California's homelessness epidemic, we can't have more people entering homelessness than exiting it. Prevention is a cost-effective and critical piece of solving this problem. AB 1924 would create a statewide homelessness prevention strategy, along with a collection of evidence-based best practices that can guide programs and agencies that work to stop people from falling into homelessness in the first place. Through stronger guidance and support to those seeking to prevent Californians from becoming unhoused, this legislation will help prevent homelessness before it can occur, better protecting our state's most vulnerable residents and preserving limited state resources."

The High Cost of Housing: The high cost of housing is the cause of homelessness in California. Other states with higher rates of overdose but lower costs of housing report much lower rates of homelessness. West Virginia leads overdose deaths per capita but has one of the lowest homelessness rates in the country. A study by the National Low Income Housing Coalition found that West Virginia has 50 affordable and available rental homes for every 100 extremely-low-income households, more than double the number that California has. A family in West Virginia can afford a two-bedroom rental on less than \$17 an hour – the second-lowest figure in the nation. In California a family would need more than \$40 per hour to be able to afford an average two-bedroom rental.

California needs an additional 2.5 million units of housing to meet the state's need, including 643,352 for very low-income households and 394,910 for lower income households. Since 2018, California has permitted 890,000 units of new housing, with 126,000 of those being low- and very low-income units. The Legislature has passed major legislation in recent years to allow affordable housing to be built on almost any site in the state. However, the lack of housing overall and, in particular, the continued lack of sufficient affordable housing is a problem that is decades in the making.

Millions of Californians, who are disproportionately lower income and people of color, must make hard decisions about paying for housing at the expense of food, health care, child care, and transportation—one in three households in the state doesn't earn enough money to meet their basic needs. Currently, according to HDIS data, for every five individuals who access homelessness services in California, only one is housed each year, leaving four unhoused.

California Statewide Study of People Experiencing Homelessness (CASPEH): The University of California, San Francisco Benioff Housing and Homelessness Institute conducted the CASPEH, the largest representative study of homelessness since the mid-1990s and the first large-scale representative study to use mixed methods (surveys and in-depth interviews). They administered questionnaires to nearly 3,200 participants and conducted in-depth interviews with 365 participants. Their report provides evidence to help shape the state's policy response to homelessness. The median age of participants was 47 (range 18-89). Participants who report a Black (26%) or Native American or Indigenous identity (12%) were overrepresented compared to the overall California population. Thirty-five percent of participants identified as Latino/x. The report found that people experiencing homelessness in California are Californians. Nine out of ten participants lost their last housing in California; 75% of participants lived in the same county as their last housing.

The median monthly household income in the six months prior to homelessness across all CASPEH participants was \$960. Almost all participants met criteria to be considered “extremely low-income” or making less than 30% of the Area Median Income. Participants’ inability to afford housing was both the underlying cause of homelessness and the primary barrier to their returning to housing. Evidence and interviews with people who are experiencing homelessness show that a small amount of shallow subsidy could keep people from falling into homelessness. This finding was true throughout California, not only in the high-cost coastal regions.

Homelessness Prevention: Making progress in solving homelessness requires that we reduce the number of people falling into homelessness while simultaneously expanding housing opportunities for those currently experiencing it. Homelessness prevention interventions can include:

- Short-term and medium-term rental assistance,
- Emergency Rental assistance
- Flexible financial support
- Legal services, mediation, and credit repair
- Moving costs support, including rental application fees, security and utility deposits; and
- Housing case management.

Homelessness Prevention programs are funded through local sources, through the state HHAP Program, and through federal sources, including the Emergency Solutions Grant Program and the Continuum of Care program. In HHAP Round 5, Prevention and Shelter Diversion programs accounted for roughly 5% of total funds awarded.

California Interagency Council on Homelessness: In 2016, SB 1380 (Mitchell), Chapter 847, created the Homelessness Coordination and Financing Council (HCFC) to coordinate the state's response to homelessness. HCFC was later named the California Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal-ICH). Cal-ICH is made up of all state agencies or departments that operate programs that provide housing or housing-related services to people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. The council 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.

Arguments in Support: According to the Steinberg Institute, “AB 1924 offers a thoughtful and necessary shift toward prevention. The bill requires the Department of Housing and Community Development to develop a statewide homelessness prevention strategy, including coordinated action plans across relevant state agencies, identification of evidence-based prevention practices, and accountability measures to track progress. It also calls for targeted interventions such as financial assistance, eviction defense, case management, and predictive data models to identify individuals most at risk of homelessness. These provisions reflect best practices and help ensure that state resources are used strategically to reduce inflow into homelessness rather than solely responding after individuals have already lost housing. California cannot end homelessness without preventing it. AB 1924 provides a wise, data-driven framework to better align state agencies, scale what works, and ensure that prevention becomes a central pillar of California’s homelessness response. By shifting toward a proactive, coordinated strategy, this bill will help

reduce homelessness before it occurs and strengthen our broader efforts to end homelessness statewide.”

Arguments in Opposition: None on file.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

All Home (Co-Sponsor)
Inner City Law Center (Co-Sponsor)
Active San Gabriel Valley
Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment
Being Alive/people With Aids Action Coalition
Bet Tzedek Legal Services
Community Corp. of Santa Monica
Community Health Project Los Angeles
Compass Family Services
Corporation for Supportive Housing
DAP Health
Destination: Home
Housing California
LA Forward Institute
League of California Cities
MidPen Housing Corporation
National Alliance to End Homelessness
Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California
Para Los Ninos
Restoration Diversion Services
Safe Place for Youth
Safehouse San Francisco
Steinberg Institute
SV@Home Action Fund
The People Concern
The Sidewalk Project
Union Station Homeless Services

Opposition

None on file.

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