

ASSEMBLY THIRD READING
AB 1924 (Gabriel and Quirk-Silva)
As Amended March 9, 2026
Majority vote

SUMMARY

Requires the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), by July 1, 2027, to develop and publicly issue a statewide homelessness preventions strategy.

Major Provisions

- 1) 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;
 - 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; and
 - k) Evidence-based model homelessness prevention practices identified or designed and developed by the department.
- 2) Requires HCD to annually review and update the strategy and publish any revisions.

COMMENTS

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 Homeless Data Integration System (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. 35% 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.

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."

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.

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Assembly committee on Appropriations:

- 1) HCD estimates ongoing General Fund (GF) costs, likely in the low millions of dollars, for additional staff to perform extensive coordination with other relevant state agencies, create and align best practices and data, and annually update and adjust the strategy to meet current conditions.
- 2) The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS), as a relevant state agency under this bill, anticipates additional workload to be absorbable using existing staffing and resources. DHCS anticipates increased administrative burden due to duplicative planning, reporting, and data infrastructure requirements.
- 3) Costs to additional relevant state agencies are of an unknown amount, but likely minor and absorbable (GF and various special funds).

The Legislative Analyst's Office recently warned of General Fund structural deficits of around \$35 billion per year in the 2027-28 fiscal year and ongoing.

VOTES

ASM HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: 12-0-0

YES: Haney, Patterson, Ávila Farías, Caloza, Garcia, Kalra, Lee, Quirk-Silva, Ta, Tangipa, Wicks, Wilson

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 15-0-0

YES: Wicks, Hoover, Aguiar-Curry, Calderon, Caloza, Dixon, Fong, Mark González, Krell, Pacheco, Pellerin, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Ta, Tangipa

UPDATED

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