
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING

Senator Aisha Wahab, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No: AB 790

Hearing Date: 7/15/25

Author: Ávila Farías

Version: 5/5/2025 Amended

Urgency: No

Fiscal: Yes

Consultant: Erin Riches

SUBJECT: Homelessness: single women with children

DIGEST: This bill requires cities, counties, and Continuums of Care (CoCs) to include women with children within the vulnerable populations for whom they develop specific system supports with state homelessness funding.

ANALYSIS:

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the Homeless Housing, Assistance, and Prevention Program (HHAPP) under the state Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) to provide jurisdictions with one-time grant funds to support regional coordination and expand or develop local capacity to address their immediate homelessness challenges 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.
- 2) Establishes the Homeless Equity for Left Behind Populations (HELP) Act, which:
 - a) Requires cities, counties, and CoCs that receive state homeless funding to include families, people fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, and unaccompanied women within the vulnerable populations for whom specific supports are developed to maintain homeless services and housing delivery.
 - b) 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.

- c) Requires cities, counties, and COCs to ensure that analyses and goals are completed with the following guidelines: coordinate with victim service providers to address the specific needs of the populations in (a); incorporate aggregate data from victim service providers; address the nexus of homelessness and justice-involvement, particularly for women and survivors of domestic violence; and disaggregate the number of beds provided by victim service providers.
- d) Provides that, pursuant to federal policies, victim service providers shall not be required to enter client-level data in the state Homeless Data Information System (HDIS) or federal Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).
- e) Requires the California Interagency on Homelessness (Cal-ICH) to set and measure progress toward goals to prevent and end homelessness among domestic violence survivors and their children and among unaccompanied women, by decreasing the number experiencing homelessness; decreasing the duration and frequency of homelessness; decreasing barriers to service; defining outcome measures and gathering data related to the goals; providing technical assistance when funding is available; and updating the goals every two years.

This bill:

- 1) Requires cities, counties, and CoCs to include women with children within the vulnerable populations for whom they develop specific system supports by clarifying that “families” include unaccompanied women with children.
- 2) Requires cities, counties, and CoCs to provide to Cal-ICH, the analyses and goals they have developed pursuant to existing law to address the specific needs of vulnerable populations.
- 3) Requires Cal-ICH to post the information received pursuant to (2) on its internet website.

Background

HHAPP. The HHAPP Program was created to provide jurisdictions with one-time grant funds to expand or develop local capacity to address immediate homelessness challenges. Program funds can be used for services for those experiencing

homelessness or at risk of homelessness, such as rapid rehousing, operating subsidies, street outreach, services coordination, delivery of permanent and innovative housing solutions, and homelessness prevention. HHAPP replaced a prior program, the Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP), which also provided block grants to large cities and Continuums of Care (CoCs) for a variety of solutions addressing homelessness. HHAPP was administered by the Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal-ICH) until July 2024, when it was transferred to HCD.

Cal-ICH. Cal-ICH, formerly known as the Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council (HCFC), was created to oversee the implementation of “Housing First” policies, guidelines, and regulations to reduce the prevalence and duration of homelessness in California. Housing First is an evidence-based model that focuses on the idea that homeless individuals should be provided shelter and stability before underlying issues can be successfully addressed. Housing First utilizes a tenant screening process that promotes accepting applicants regardless of their sobriety, use of substances or participation in services. As the state’s homelessness crisis has worsened, the role of Cal-ICH has significantly increased, as it has been charged with administering two significant programs dedicated to addressing homelessness, the Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP) and the Homeless Housing Assistance and Prevention Program (HHAPP).

Comments

- 1) *Author statement.* “California’s single mothers face disproportionate housing cost burdens, and over 16,300 children are experiencing homelessness, often due to gaps in service delivery and prioritization. Addressing these issues will not only help vulnerable families but also reduce long-term state costs associated with emergency services, welfare, and intergenerational poverty. While many programs exist, none specifically prioritize women with children—a group disproportionately at risk of homelessness or fleeing domestic violence. AB 790 builds upon previous legislative efforts by requiring the California Interagency Council on Homelessness to include women with children within the population they are required to set and measure progress toward goals to prevent and end homelessness.”
- 2) *Homelessness, domestic violence, and unaccompanied women.* Although current federal law does not require tracking of unaccompanied, homeless women, counties like Los Angeles and San Bernardino have recently done so. In 2020, there were more than 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 the federal HMIS, which often does not include domestic violence service providers, so it is likely an undercount. In 2019-20, California Office of Emergency Services' Domestic Violence 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 the state HDIS helps Cal-ICH plan for future homelessness interventions. Because domestic violence survivor data is not incorporated into the state HDIS, survivors may not be fully considered in the State's homelessness response.

- 3) *Why call out vulnerable populations?* In its 2025 action plan, Cal-ICH notes that 22% of individuals accessing homeless services in 2023 reported having experienced domestic violence.⁴ Nationally, on just one day in 2020, 5,591 survivors received services, and there were 984 unmet requests for services; 65% of these unmet requests were for housing or emergency shelter.⁵ The need for safe housing and the economic resources to maintain safe housing are two of the most pressing concerns among abused women who are planning to or have recently left the person causing that harm.⁶

The Cal-ICH action plan also notes that 13% of individuals accessing homeless services in 2023 were unaccompanied youth (age 24 or younger). Transition

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://bcsd.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>.

⁴ Cal-ICH, Action Plan for Preventing and Ending Homelessness in California, December 2024, [Cal ICH Action Plan for Preventing and Ending Homelessness](#).

⁵ National Network to End Domestic Violence (2021). 15th Annual Domestic Violence Counts Report. Washington, DC. Retrieved from: <https://nncdv.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/15th-Annual-DV-Counts-Report-California-Summary.pdf>

⁶ Clough, A., Draughton, J. E., Njie-Carr, V., Rollins, C., & Glass, N. (2014). "Having housing made everything else possible": Affordable, safe and stable housing for women survivors of violence. *Qualitative Social Work*, 13(5), 671-688.

aged youth (TAY) are unlikely to utilize adult services, for a variety of reasons; for example, according to service providers, youth tend to choose to stay in unsheltered locations or with friends because they are often victimized in adult shelters. Unfortunately, youth experiencing homelessness are also at an unusually high risk for several life-threatening conditions including “not having their basic food and shelter needs met, untreated mental health disorders, substance use, sexually transmitted diseases and HIV infection, sexual trafficking, physical and sexual abuse, and suicide.”⁷ For this reason, HHAP includes a set-aside specifically for youth homelessness.

- 4) *HELP Act*. To help address concerns about vulnerable populations such as domestic violence survivors, the HELP Act, established by SB 914 (Rubio, Chapter 665, Statutes of 2022), requires cities, counties, and CoCs that receive state homeless funding to include families, people fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, and unaccompanied women within the vulnerable populations for whom they develop specific supports for homeless and housing services. “Unaccompanied women” is defined, pursuant to federal law, as “a woman 18 years or older who is experiencing homelessness *and who is not accompanied by children or other dependents*” (emphasis added). To ensure that unaccompanied women with children are included within the definition of vulnerable populations, this bill expands the designation of “families” in the HELP Act to include women with children.
- 5) *Incoming!* This bill was heard in the Senate Human Services Committee on June 30th, which approved it on a 5-0 vote.

Related/Prior Legislation

SB 914 (Rubio, Chapter 665, Statutes of 2022) – establishes the Homeless Equity for Left Behind Populations (HELP) Act, which requires cities, counties, and CoCs that receive state homeless funding to take specific actions to address the needs of unaccompanied homeless women, and in particular domestic violence survivors, as specified.

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

POSITIONS: (Communicated to the committee before noon on Wednesday, July 9, 2025.)

SUPPORT:

⁷ *On the COVID-19 Front Line and Hurting: Addressing the Needs of Providers for Youth Experiencing Homelessness in Berkeley and Alameda County*, UC Berkeley Public Health, (May 2020).

California Human Development
Center for Employment Training
Central Valley Opportunity Center (CVOC)
Climate Care Plumbing LLC
Coalition for Responsible Community Development
Del Sol Group, INC.
Denco Family INC
First Day Foundation
Goodwill Southern California
Haven Neighborhood Services
LA Comadre Network
Lalis Pizza
Macheen
Mc Foods
Milpa Kitchen
Mission Economic Development Agency (MEDA)
New Economics for Women
San Diego for Every Child
Shaday Fashion INC
Time for Change Foundation
YMCA of Metropolitan Los Angeles

OPPOSITION:

None received

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