California Behavioral Health Planning Council

Housing and Homelessness Committee

Meeting Minutes
June 19, 2025

Council Members present: Susie Baker, John Black, Jason Bradley, Monica Caffey, Dave Cortright, Erin Franco, Lanita Mims-Beal, Barbara Mitchell, Don Morrison, Danielle Sena, Daphne Shaw, Maria Sierra, Deborah Starkey, Bill Stewart, Arden Tucker

Staff present: Jenny Bayardo, Gabriella Sedano (virtual), Simon Vue
Presenters: Elizabeth Colorado, Anna Kokanyan, Claudine Sipili, Cody Zeger

Meeting Commenced: 8:30 a.m.
Quorum Established: 15 out of 18 members

Item #1 Review and Accept April 2025 Meeting Minutes

The Housing and Homelessness Committee reviewed the April 2025 Draft Meeting Minutes. The minutes were accepted by the committee as written.

Action/Resolution
The April 2025 Housing and Homelessness Committee Meeting Minutes are accepted and will be posted to the Council's website.

Responsible for Action-Due Date
Simon Vue – June 2025

Item #2 California Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal ICH) Action Plan for 2025 – 2027

Cody Zeger, Director of Statewide Policy at the California Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal ICH), presented an overview of their 2025-2027 Statewide Action Plan to prevent and end homelessness. Cody began with a brief introduction to Cal ICH, which is responsible for overseeing the implementation of Housing First policies, guidelines, and regulations supported by an advisory committee and a lived-experience advisory board.

Initially launched in 2020, Cal ICH's Action Plan aims to coordinate state efforts to address homelessness with a vision of building an equitable and just California where homelessness is rare, brief, and a one-time experience. The 2025-2027 Action Plan focuses on the following five key goals:

- Help more people leave unsheltered homelessness.
- Help more people move into housing.
- Ensure people do not experience homelessness again.
- Prevent more people from experiencing homelessness.
- Create more housing.

Cody also presented the plan's three-year targets:

- Move 70% of unsheltered individuals into shelters.
- Place 60% into permanent housing.
- Create 1.5 million new housing units with 710,000 designated for low-income residents.

He described key strategies to meet these goals such as interagency coordination, strategic investments, and equity-centered frameworks to address systemic barriers. Cody highlighted core principles that guide the plan, such as prioritizing racial equity, adopting trauma-informed approaches, and elevating the voices of those with lived experience of homelessness.

Cody concluded his presentation and opened the floor for questions from committee members. Key topics included:

- A committee member inquired about the size of the lived experience advisory board. Cody shared that Cal-ICH reduced its membership from 30 to approximately 25 members. Each member serves a two-year term. He explained that the board provides subject matter expertise, reviews key documents, and offers recommendations to Cal ICH members before key decisions.
- A committee member raised concerns about the proposed 44% federal cuts to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), particularly their impact on project-based and tenant-based rental assistance. Cody acknowledged the risk, noting that 15,000 emergency housing vouchers are slated to expire.
- A committee member asked how the number of homeless individuals aligns with the projected housing units. Cody explained that the 2.5 million planned units, including 1.5 million by 2027 and 710,000 reserved for low-income residents, are part of a broader housing strategy and not specifically designated for the homeless population.
- A committee member asked how racial equity is reflected in the plan's goals and data analysis. Cody emphasized Cal ICH's commitment to disaggregating targets by race, ethnicity, and gender to ensure a more inclusive and equitable approach.
- When asked about Cal ICH's leverage in advancing the Action Plan, Cody described their statutory authority and stressed the importance of cross-agency relationships. He noted that their influence stems from formal power and their ability to communicate and coordinate across state departments.

Public Comment:

Paula, a member of the public, inquired about current data reflecting progress toward the plan's three-year goal of a 42% increase in housing placements. Cody directed her to Cal ICH's website, where quarterly updates provide the latest information. He noted that the most recent data covers the calendar year 2024.

Barbara Wilson from Los Angeles County raised a question about tracking individuals moving from hospital settings to residential facilities, particularly those

with psychosis. She was concerned about how these transitions are captured and whether individuals lose housing access once in licensed facilities.

Council Member John Black emphasized the importance of early intervention, proposing the use of peer support workers to help individuals who are newly experiencing homelessness before their situation worsens.

Item #3 Perspectives on Recovery Housing Panel Discussion

Over the past two quarterly meetings, the Housing and Homelessness Committee engaged in discussions about recovery housing and the Housing First model. The discussions focused on their roles within behavioral health services and highlighted key challenges and best practices. This panel built on those discussions and provided first-hand insights to inform the Committee's work further.

The panel featured three distinguished speakers with lived experiences of addiction and homelessness:

- **Elizabeth Colorado**, Advocate for the Unhoused Community
- **Claudine Sipili**, Lived Experience & Innovation Director, Destination Home
- **Anna Kokanyan**, Director of Admissions & Program Director, Conquer Recovery Centers

Each panelist shared their personal story of how recovery housing played a pivotal role in their journey to stability and long-term recovery. They addressed the barriers often faced during transitions from homelessness and addiction to stable housing, including financial hardship, limited guidance, and systemic obstacles. Their experiences highlighted the need for compassionate, structured environments that foster connection and provide resources without rigid requirements.

The panelists called for more flexible, trauma-informed approaches that prioritize human dignity, autonomy, and choice. Claudine emphasized the need to advocate for policies that center racial equity and incorporate lived expertise. She also stressed that recovery housing should remain voluntary and not a requirement. Anna emphasized the need to validate individuals' feelings and provide care in safe and supportive settings. Elizabeth highlighted the need to meet people where they are and guide them through both recovery and permanent housing pathways.

The panelists expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to share their experiences. The discussion concluded with a Questions-and-Answers session with committee members. Key topics included:

- A committee member asked Anna about the duration of her program at Conquer Recovery Centers and why participants travel from out of town. Anna explained that many public facilities have waitlists of six to nine months. Her program, which accepts private insurance, provides more immediate access to treatment.
- A committee member celebrated Anna's recent acceptance into a college program and shared heartfelt reflections on her journey. They emphasized the value of lived experience, resilience, and personal growth.

- Another member raised concerns about the decision to offer housing before addressing mental health and substance use needs. The panelists acknowledged the diverse perspectives on the Housing First model and emphasized that services must reflect individual needs and allow each person to guide their own recovery.
- When asked how they remain strong and grounded in their work, the panelists shared personal wellness practices. Anna spoke about the importance of caring for the mind, body, and spirit through exercise, prayer, meditation, a healthy diet, and therapy. Claudine described her connection with nature through off-road travel as a source of peace, reflection, and spiritual strength. Elizabeth emphasized simple acts of kindness to give back and stay rooted in empathy and purpose.
- A committee member offered encouragement and shared a personal story about how they helped an individual regain custody of her children. The story affirmed the power of persistence, compassion, and hope.

Public Comment:

Barbara Wilson expressed appreciation for the panel discussion and proposed the creation of a safe healing space for individuals with behavioral health challenges. She shared that, in her experience, every unhoused person she had worked with could successfully maintain housing. Barbara also raised concerns about the Housing First model, noting that some individuals struggle with its structure and may feel like failures when they must return to more supported environments. Additionally, she questioned defining success solely in terms of paid employment, emphasizing that mental health conditions can impact a person's ability to work.

Anna, a college student, shared how impactful it was to hear directly from individuals with lived experience. While she studied incarceration and homelessness in her coursework, she said the personal stories gave her a deeper and more meaningful understanding of the issues.

A committee member highlighted the challenges of treating individuals who use substances. She acknowledged the value of harm reduction but emphasized that trauma work remains difficult when a person remains under the influence.

Item #4 Cal ICH and Recovery Housing Panel Debrief Discussion

The Committee debriefed on the information presented by Cody Zeger from the California Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal ICH) and the panelists from the Recovery Housing Panel. Committee members also discussed potential next steps.

A committee member expressed deep appreciation for the lived expertise shared by the panelists. She emphasized the value of hearing from individuals who have experienced addiction and homelessness, are now in recovery, and are helping others through successful programs. She encouraged the inclusion of similar presentations in future meetings.

Another committee member outlined the following follow-up items in response to the presentation from the California Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal ICH):

- **Federal Housing Voucher Concerns**: Urged follow-up with Cal ICH about federal funding cuts and reduced availability of rental vouchers. She noted that the presentation addressed only Homeless Prevention vouchers, which make up a small portion of the total supply. In Monterey County, she reported that no new Tenant-Based Vouchers appear available, and Project-Based Vouchers remain unavailable, which has stalled progress for individuals on waitlists.

- **Support for Undocumented Populations**: Requested information on Cal ICH's strategy to support undocumented individuals. The committee member shared that 13.5% of her county's population are undocumented and many in this group experience homelessness. She shared that local shelters have reached capacity and often house undocumented families for extended periods, which forces others in need of emergency shelter to go without. She urged the Committee to seek state-level guidance and data on this growing concern.

The committee member raised concerns about the long-term effectiveness of six-month rapid rehousing programs. She explained that individuals with serious mental illness who are unemployed often do not meet eligibility requirements for these short-term services. Even among those who do qualify, many are unable to sustain rent payments once the assistance ends. In one local case, 90% of participants became homeless again after the six-month support period. She questioned whether this approach offers a sustainable solution.

A committee member added that shelters should function as gateways to permanent housing, not long-term temporary accommodations. While acknowledging the value of recovery housing, he stressed that it is just one piece of a broader housing continuum that requires support.

Another committee member emphasized the importance of homelessness prevention. She referenced research from the University of California, San Francisco, showing that many people become homeless after missing a single rent or mortgage payment. She questioned why state and national investments remain focused on rehousing rather than proactively preventing housing loss. She also acknowledged the efforts of one panelist whose organization is working effectively in the prevention space.

A committee member described the current moment as a pivotal opportunity to advance the Committee's advocacy efforts. He noted that, although the presenter outlined several strategic goals, homelessness prevention remained undefined. He emphasized the value this Committee brings, as members provide firsthand insight into effective prevention strategies. The committee member added that the collective effort of this Committee could help influence broader policy decisions and bring hope to individuals at risk of homelessness.

Public Comment:

Barbara Wilson expressed appreciation for the Committee's longstanding work, recalling her early involvement when she raised concerns about the closure of licensed adult residential facilities due to low reimbursement rates. She also highlighted the gap in oversight for sober living homes, which are unlicensed and therefore not subject to consistent standards. Barbara noted she has been in dialogue with her county's Sober Living Council and referenced similar efforts in Santa Clara County to establish operational guidelines for these homes.

She emphasized the lack of communication between systems and that many individuals' experiencing homelessness are unaware of licensed residential options. In contrast, mental health providers often lack insight into the realities of homelessness. Barbara stressed the urgency to break down these silos, particularly due to recent resistance from the substance use community during a Los Angeles County town hall meeting, where concerns were raised about merging mental health and substance use systems.

Action/Resolution
Committee staff will follow up with the questions to the California Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal ICH).

Responsible for Action-Due Date
Simon Vue – April 2025

Item #5 Proposition 1 Update

Council staff, Simon Vue, shared an update on Proposition 1 Bond Behavioral Health Continuum Infrastructure Program (BHCIP) Round 1: Launch Ready.

On May 12, 2025, the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) announced Proposition 1 BHCIP Round 1: Launch Ready awards. Eligible organizations applied for funding to construct, acquire, and rehabilitate properties for behavioral health services for Medi-Cal members. The Department awarded 124 projects across 214 behavioral health facilities in California to support:

- 5,077 new residential/inpatient treatment beds for mental health and substance use disorders.
- 21,882 new outpatient treatment slots.

Additionally, the Department is preparing to launch BHCIP Round 2: Unmet Needs in May 2025, which will provide up to $1 billion in competitive funding awards.

This funding is a vital part of the Department's Behavioral Health Transformation efforts, which aim to strengthen California's approach to providing services for mental health and substance use disorders by focusing on community-based care and support.

Although the Behavioral Health Continuum Infrastructure Program (BHCIP) is not part of Proposition 1, the measure allocates up to $4.4 billion through the Behavioral Health Infrastructure Bond Act (BHIBA), which establishes the program as a key vehicle to expand California's behavioral health infrastructure. This funding supports the development of treatment facilities, including residential care settings and supportive housing. The Department distributes these funds through competitive grants, focusing on community-based services and regional projects.

Action/Resolution
Staff will continue to monitor for the May updates regarding the Bond Behavioral Health Continuum Infrastructure Program Round 2: Unmet Needs.

Responsible for Action-Due Date
Simon Vue – May 2025

Item #6 Wrap-up Next Steps

Chairperson Deborah thanked the Committee for their participation and time. The meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Action/Resolution
The Committee leadership and staff will plan the agenda for the October 2025 Quarterly Meeting. The Committee will monitor the action sections of past and current quarterly meetings to determine what actions are needed at upcoming meetings.

Responsible for Action-Due Date
N/A