

February 25, 2022



The Honorable Sydney Kamlager
Chair, Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 4

The Honorable Wendy Carrillo
Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 4



Honorable Members
Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 4

Honorable Members
Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 4



Re: Request to Permanently Fund the Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention Program

Dear Chairs and Members of the Budget Subcommittees,



A statewide coalition of the undersigned organizations led by John Burton Advocates for Youth (JBAY) respectfully requests that the Legislature reduce youth homelessness in California by making the Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) program permanent. HHAP is an effective, flexible local program that has significantly assisted homeless youth in California. JBAY has issued three publications on HHAP and its predecessor, the Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP). The specific benefits to homeless youth identified in these publications include:



Increased investment in youth homelessness: California has long struggled to address youth homelessness. Attempts to address it have historically focused on establishing a separate program, disconnected from larger state investments for adults. HHAP took a different approach, integrating funding for youth homelessness into larger state investments by establishing a 10% set-aside. This has significantly increased state investment in youth homelessness, from \$1 million annually prior to HEAP and HHAP to \$200 million with the most recent one-time investment in HHAP.



Integration of youth into local homeless response network: By requiring local jurisdictions to spend 10% of HHAP funds on youth homelessness, HHAP has integrated youth into local homeless response systems. Youth providers are now “at the table” and accessing HHAP alongside adult providers. In the 2019 publication on the impact of the youth set-aside in HEAP, 44% of jurisdictions indicated that their CoC awarded funding to youth providers that had never-before received CoC funding.ⁱ



Increased local understanding of youth homelessness: HHAP has increased local understanding and awareness of youth homelessness. The California Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal ICH) reported that the youth set-aside led to a renewed engagement around what unique services youth experiencing homelessness need, and as a result, formed new partnerships around providing and expanding services.ⁱⁱ Rounds 3 and 4 of HHAP require local Homeless Action Plans, which will further incorporate youth into local homelessness planning.



Expansion of the continuum of housing options for youth: Like adults, youth experiencing homelessness need a range of housing and service interventions—there is no “one size fits all.” HHAP has enabled jurisdictions to fund a range of interventions based on local needs, including shelter and navigation centers, rental assistance and Rapid Rehousing, outreach





and coordination, prevention and shelter diversion, permanent housing, and more. This is a significant improvement from prior to HHAP, when a community commonly had a single “youth program.” Additionally, Cal ICH reports that HHAP grantees are creating new partnerships with universities and community colleges to reach college students experiencing homelessness, a hidden population that has hit crisis levels of homelessness in recent years.ⁱⁱⁱ



Comprehensive assistance to youth experiencing homelessness: Many youth housing programs have very narrow eligibility criteria. For example, the state’s Transitional Housing Program-Plus (THP-Plus) provides supportive housing to youth who were in foster care at age 18, making youth who exited foster care at an earlier age ineligible, along with homeless youth who were never in foster care. While well-intended, narrow eligibility criteria such as these often leave youth without the assistance they require because they do not fit in the right “box.” HHAP has no such restrictions and provides communities with a flexible tool to address the diverse experiences of youth experiencing homelessness, including youth who identify as LGBTQ, are survivors of commercial sexual exploitation, and young parents, among others.



Locals support youth set-asides: Representatives from local jurisdictions have expressed support for the youth set-aside approach and regard it as an effective way to meet the needs of homelessness youth. In 2019, JBAY surveyed CoCs and large cities about the effectiveness of the youth set-aside in HEAP; 100% of the CoCs and large cities interviewed indicated that a youth set-aside was essential.^{iv} Without it, homeless youth would not have received an equitable share of HEAP funding.



While HHAP represents significant progress for youth experiencing homelessness in California, the housing and supportive services made possible by it will end in 2027 when HHAP expires. These local programs must be supported with a long-term, sustainable funding source. Given HHAP’s success, we strongly recommend that it serve this important role.



Thank you for being a champion for California’s youth and young adults. We request that the Legislature build on this momentum and consider how California can deepen its commitment to ending homelessness by making HHAP a permanent program in the upcoming budget year.



Sincerely,



- John Burton Advocates for Youth
- 3rd Street Youth Center & Clinic
- Abode Services
- Alternative Family Services
- Antelope Valley Domestic Violence Council
- Bill Wilson Center
- California Alliance of Child & Family Services
- California Youth Connection
- Casa de Amparo
- Children Now
- Covenant House California
- Fighting Back Santa Maria Valley
- First Place for Youth
- Five Keys Schools and Programs





GLIDE
 Hillside
 Hope Solutions
 Jovenes, Inc.
 Kamali'i Foster Family Agency, Inc.
 Mesa



National Center for Youth Law
 New Alternatives, Inc.
 North County Lifeline
 Northern California Youth and Family Programs



Operation SafeHouse
 Orangewood Foundation
 Public Counsel Law Center
 Redwood Community Action Agency
 Sanctuary of Hope



St. Anne's Family Services
 StarVista
 Sycamores
 Tahoe Youth and Family Services



The Village Family Services
 TLC Child & Family Services
 TruEvolution
 Vacaville Solano Services Corporation
 Volunteers of America Los Angeles
 Waking the Village
 Walden Family Services
 Youth Alliance
 Youth Law Center



Cc: Chris Woods, Office of the Senate President Pro Tempore
 Mareva Brown, Office of the Senate President Pro Tempore
 Jason Sisney, Office of the Speaker of the Assembly
 Kelsy Castillo, Office of the Speaker of the Assembly
 Jessica Bartholow, Office of Senator Skinner
 Tania Dikho, Office of Assembly Member Ting
 Genevieve Morelos, Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 4
 James Hacker, Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 4



Chantelle Denny, Senate Republican Fiscal Office
 Joe Shinstock, Assembly Republican Fiscal Office
 Eric Dietz, Assembly Republican Fiscal Office
 Ginni Bella Navarre, Legislative Analyst's Office
 Angela Short, Legislative Analyst's Office
 Lourdes Morales, Legislative Analyst's Office



Jason Elliot, Office of the Governor
 Lourdes Castro Ramirez, California Business Consumer Services and Housing Agency
 Teresa Calvert, Department of Finance



Kris Cook, Department of Finance
 Chris Hill, Department of Finance
 Brittany Thompson, Department of Finance

ⁱ John Burton Advocates for Youth. Youth Homelessness in California: What impact has the five percent youth set-aside in the Homeless Emergency Aid Program had so far? (2019). Page 13. <https://jbay.org/resources/youth-homelessness-in-california-what-impact-has-the-five-percent-youth-set-aside-in-the-homeless-emergency-aid-program-had-so-far/>.

ⁱⁱ California Interagency Council on Homeless. Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council Annual Funding Report (2021). Page 27. https://bcsh.ca.gov/calich/documents/2020_grants_annual_report.pdf.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid. Page 49.

^{iv} John Burton Advocates for Youth. Youth Homelessness in California: What impact has the five percent youth set-aside in the Homeless Emergency Aid Program had so far? (2019). Page 13. <https://jbay.org/resources/youth-homelessness-in-california-what-impact-has-the-five-percent-youth-set-aside-in-the-homeless-emergency-aid-program-had-so-far/>.