



**CWDA**

Advancing Human Services  
for the Welfare of *All* Californians

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Date January 26, 2021

To: The Honorable Dr. Joaquin Arambula  
Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 1

Honorable Members  
Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 1

The Honorable Susan Talamantes-Eggman  
Chair, Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 3

Honorable Members  
Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 3

From: Cathy Senderling-McDonald, Executive Director

**RE: FLEXIBLE FUNDING FOR COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES  
DEPARTMENT-ADMINISTERED HOUSING PROGRAMS  
(EARLY ACTION REQUEST)**

The County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA) respectfully requests your consideration as part of the early action on the budget a \$100 million one-time General Fund augmentation for county human services departments to create a flexible funding pool to fill service delivery gaps in the housing programs that the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) and county departments currently administer. The housing programs specifically serving those linked to the state's social safety net programs are critical to the success of those programs.

Homelessness continues to be one of the most growing and unremitting problems in California and has been exacerbated even further by the COVID-19 pandemic. There is a clear need for more resources, and a shift towards more preventative strategies and flexible uses of funding targeted towards the most vulnerable individuals in the state. The CDSS administers various housing programs for populations that are homeless or at-risk of homelessness and that are served by programs such as Adult Protective Services, CalWORKs, Child Welfare Services and Foster Care, and others. These safety net programs serve some of the most vulnerable populations in California, an increasing number of whom are housing insecure and/or homeless and who are often left out of other, larger solutions related to housing and homelessness. The current CDSS-administered housing programs,

while very successful, are limited in the services they can provide, and participants often have to already be homeless or about to be evicted in order to receive services.

This request would establish a pool of additional one-time funding, available through the 2022-23 fiscal year, for housing and homelessness prevention and intervention in order to mitigate the on-going and expected long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic specifically for populations served by the CDSS safety net programs, who are among the poorest and hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. These flexible funds would be administered by CDSS and allocated to counties to supplement the following programs: Housing and Disability Advocacy Program (HDAP), Home Safe, Bringing Families Home (BFH), and the Housing Support Program (HSP). Counties will be able to direct these funds based on local needs and priorities to meet a broader range of housing needs of the individuals and families served by the safety net programs run by county human services departments who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These services could include but are not limited to:

Assistance to prevent homelessness (such as payment of rental or mortgage arrearages, arrearages on utilities, short or longer term rental subsidies, one-time utility payments, or other services and supports needed to maintain housing)

- Assistance in obtaining or maintaining housing (such as payment of first and last months' rent and security deposits, services to clients to facilitate transition to housing, or short or longer term rental subsidies)
- Securing temporary or emergency housing for individuals in crisis such as lease agreements for temporary dwelling units and securing unused property
- Working with landlords on housing availability
- Legal assistance for individuals to fight illegal evictions

We propose that this \$100 million in one-time funding be allocated to all counties (rather than administered on a competitive basis) to aid families and adults in the programs counties administer who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The HDAP, Home Safe, HSP, and BFH housing programs currently involve detailed application requirements and processes to award the funding to selected counties (rather than using a direct allocation), a process that would delay counties' access to and ability to spend the funds during this immediate pandemic crisis. We also propose the funding be available to counties without a match requirement, as a required match would be an additional barrier to counties quickly utilizing the funding. CWDA is committed to working with CDSS and counties to create a process of reporting regarding the services and supports provided to prevent and intervene in homelessness with this additional funding to inform future policy and program decisions.

County human services departments serve the poorest and most vulnerable Californians,

who often have unique and complex needs and face housing challenges even in the best of times and have now borne the brunt of the most devastating health and economic impacts from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Our proposal is meant to ensure that there is a targeted housing investment for low-income families, child-welfare involved families, older adults who have been abused, neglected or exploited, and single adults with disabilities, and that they are not left out of the very welcome, but more general, statewide solutions on homelessness and COVID-19. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

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  
Gail Gronet, Office of the Speaker of the Assembly  
Renita Polk, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Subcommittee No. 3  
Nicole Vazquez, Assembly Committee on Budget Subcommittee No. 1  
Rebecca Hamilton, Senate Republican Fiscal Office  
Joe Shinstock, Assembly Republican Fiscal Office  
Eric Dietz, Assembly Republican Fiscal Office  
David Stammerjohan, Office of Senator Talamantes-Eggman  
Ana Melendez, Office of Assemblymember Arambula  
Jessica Bartholow, Office of Senator Nancy Skinner  
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Richard Figueroa, Office of the Governor  
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Adam Dorsey, HHS, Department of Finance  
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County Caucus