



BUDGET FACT SHEET

Adult Protective Services (APS) Home Safe

February 15, 2017 | 3 Pages

Homelessness Prevention for Vulnerable Seniors

PROPOSAL

Provide one-time funding of \$10 million General Fund in 2017-18 to establish APS-Home Safe, a homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing demonstration grant program for victims of elder abuse and neglect. Across California, county-run APS programs are finding that seniors and adults with disabilities who are the victims of financial exploitation, physical abuse, or caregiver neglect are at risk of losing their housing and becoming homeless. Currently, APS programs have limited resources to prevent homelessness or rehouse clients while they recover from abuse and neglect. Home Safe would allow participating counties to help APS clients maintain their housing through services such as short-term rental or utility assistance, legal assistance, and expanded case management services.

VICTIMS OF ELDER ABUSE, NEGLECT, AND EXPLOITATION AT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS

Each year, California receives about 150,000 unduplicated reports of elder abuse and neglect, and the number is rising as the population ages. Reports of elder abuse and neglect can vary widely – from reports of self-neglect in which seniors or dependent adults cannot meet their own physical needs, to reports of financial exploitation, fraud, and theft. Many of these victims are at risk of losing their housing as a direct result of abuse, neglect and exploitation. Many elders are targeted due to equity in their homes, others suffer such severe neglect their homes are in significant disrepair. Victims require intervention services to stabilize their housing so they may benefit from APS services, including linkage to counseling and in-home support. However, currently APS programs have limited, if any, resources to prevent homelessness or rehouse victims.

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Emerging research from the University of California, San Francisco School of Medicine shows that adults who become homeless later in life have significant health declines once losing their housing, dying at a rate four to five times greater than the general population.¹ The result is costly: older homeless adults are more than twice as likely to visit hospital emergency rooms than those with stable housing.² Older homeless adults are at higher risk of chronic health problems—such as diabetes, lung disease, cognitive impairment, and difficulty with mobility—at earlier ages than those who are housed.³ For many APS clients, these chronic conditions are coupled with the acute physical and emotional wounds of abuse and neglect. The situation can quickly deteriorate to the point of needing institutional care in nursing home settings, at much higher cost to taxpayers, or worse—homelessness. These conditions and the hardship of homelessness make older homeless adults likely to die nearly 30 years earlier than those who are housed.¹

HOME SAFE TAKES PROVEN RAPID RE-HOUSING APPROACH TO PREVENT SENIOR HOMELESSNESS

The dire consequences of homelessness, lack of available affordable housing for seniors and persons with disabilities, and limited fixed incomes of APS victims necessitate a prevention focus to serve this population. Home Safe builds on the best practices and evidence-based principles of rapid re-housing, a homelessness assistance model that gained national approval under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Proven to be cost-effective and have better outcomes than many other housing models, it prioritizes moving individuals into permanent housing, providing short-term supports, and maximizing community-based resources to bolster housing stability.⁴ With Home Safe, participating county APS programs would identify clients at risk of losing their homes and provide services including short-term rental and utility assistance, heavy cleaning, immediate mental health treatment, and intensive case management to ensure clients are able to maintain their homes.

The one-time \$10 million General Fund investment in Home Safe would allow ten participating counties—or groups of counties—to demonstrate over three years how providing short-term housing crisis intervention can help reduce the risk of homelessness and future incidents of elder abuse and neglect among California's older adults.

The goals of APS are to foster and protect the economic, social, and personal well-being of victims of elder and dependent abuse, neglect, and exploitation. The APS program, with

¹ Kushel, M. How the homeless population is changing: it's older and sicker. *The Conversation* (2016).

² Raven, MC, et al. Emergency department use in a cohort of older homeless adults: results from the HOPE HOME study. *Academy of Emergency Medicine* (2017). <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/27520382>

³ Baggett, TP, et al. Mortality among homeless adults in Boston: shifts in causes of death over a 15-year period. *JAMA Internal Medicine* (2013). <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23318302>

⁴ National Alliance to End Homelessness. Homelessness Prevention: Creating Programs that Work. (2009). <http://www.endhomelessness.org/library/entry/homelessness-prevention-creating-programs-that-work>

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housing stability services, supports these goals while ensuring compliance with federal requirements under Olmstead to maintain persons with disabilities in their homes and communities. Home Safe builds on proven and promising practices to ensure that APS clients have every resource available to recover, rebuild, and find safety in their own homes after experiencing abuse and neglect.

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