

CoC 2024 Annual Meeting

Afternoon Discussion Summary: Regional Action Plan

Meeting participants separated into small groups and discussed activities and strategies related to the Regionally Coordinated Homelessness Action Plan. Sacramento Steps Forward staff and members of the People with Lived Expertise of Homelessness Committee led these conversations. Questions included: 1) What activities and investments should the CoC pursue to help effect change in our community? What inspirations or lessons can be learned from the morning sessions to inform the CoC's direction?

Several themes were consistent across each of the Solution areas:

- **Collaboration within and outside of the homeless response system**
- **Deeper, more transparent data insights about how people move through the system**
- **More effective service and referral coordination**
- **PLE engagement for peer navigation and expertise in program development**
- **Stronger advocacy about homeless response solutions that best serve our community**
- **Comprehensive education and training for a more culturally responsive workforce**

Coordinated Access System:

Collaboration, training, and resource-sharing are essential to creating better experiences for clients and effective connections to services. Our system would benefit from deeper data insights (e.g., shelter waitlists, access points, client flow) and process improvements that encourage better flow and linkages through CAS, 211, and programs. We need stronger connections to 211, case management, and support services that may be outside HRS. There is also a growing need to support clients in having more autonomy and self-advocacy in navigating system.

Prevention:

Integration with the education system is critical for better identification and linkages for youth and families. This includes HMIS tracking and asking questions better to understand client needs related to school and parenting. More transparency and awareness of eligibility for financial assistance programs would help reduce confusion for providers and clients.

Outreach & Engagement:

There is great desire for centralized coordination hub and outreach module to improve coordination and resourcing across outreach teams. Education about safe camping zones, low barrier programs, and shelter resources were raised as priority focuses as well as fundraising, coalition building, and attention to accessibility needs.

Emergency Shelter & Interim Housing:

Key issues include a lack of low-barrier shelters, particularly for TAY youth and those with disabilities, as well as barriers in emergency shelters that limit access. The loss of transitional housing programs and the need for life skills and job-readiness support were also emphasized. Solutions proposed include advocating for lived experience staff, reimagining shelters as entry points to the housing system, and expanding partnerships with local universities and external service providers. Strategies such as integrating safe camping spaces, improving data sharing, and offering resources at encampments before enforcement could help address immediate needs. Better shelter staff training, livable wages, and support for families and those with support animals were also raised as areas of improvement for the system.

Rehousing Assistance:

Strong resources and case management are critical for helping clients build skills and successful pathways toward self-sufficiency and housing sustainability. Braiding funding resources like CalAIM continues to be important. Greater transparency and understanding are needed about income requirements, placements, and referral timelines. Partners with lived experience would be a welcome support for case management, planning, and accountability for clients.

Permanent Housing:

Lack of ADA-compliant units is a significant barrier to meeting community needs. CalAIM home modification Community Support is a resource that can help clients navigate these accommodations. Financing continues to be a challenge for building affordable housing in the region. Timeline for hotel conversions and building PSH are lengthy, and there are many complications associated with vouchers. Concerns raised about the bridge from rapid rehousing to permanent supportive housing as well as move on from permanent supportive housing. Clarity of expectations and eligibility is crucial for supporting clients in reaching the best next step.

Integrated Services:

Streamlined discharge planning, medical respite, and other resources for people with complex medical needs continue to be a gap in our system. Bidirectional data sharing across homeless response and healthcare systems would help coordination of care. Better integration with the justice system also continues to be a high need, given barriers such as implicit biases of frontline staff, release times, and lack of timely connections for those reentering society. There are opportunities for partnership with community-based organizations that serve justice-involved populations and alignment with CalAIM Population of Focus rollout in 2025.

Capacity Building:

Language access resources (e.g., interpreters, translators) and cultural brokers need to be expanded and invested in to support our communities. Easily searchable and accessible local resources would help service provision. It is important to share narratives about the experience of homelessness and navigating homeless services to create better awareness across our community, local elected officials, and state/federal legislators. HMIS data and engagement with persons with lived experience in our system can help advocacy and education efforts.