

Date of Hearing: May 1, 2025

**ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES**

Alex Lee, Chair

AB 790 (Ávila Farías) – As Amended April 23, 2025

**SUBJECT:** Housing and homelessness programs: single women with children

**SUMMARY:** Clarifies that single women with children are included within the designation of families, who are part of the vulnerable populations for whom specific system supports are required to be developed by cities, counties, and continuums of care (CoCs) receiving state funding to address homelessness in order to maintain homeless services and housing delivery.

**EXISTING LAW:**

- 1) Requires cities, counties, and CoCs receiving state funding to address homelessness to include families, people fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, and unaccompanied women within the vulnerable populations for whom specific system supports are developed to maintain homeless services and housing delivery. (Welfare and Institutions Code [WIC] § 8264(a))
- 2) Requires cities, counties, and CoCs receiving state funding to address homelessness to develop analyses and goals with victim service providers to address the specific needs of the population described in 1) above, with data measures not included within the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), in accordance with federal policies and all of the following guidelines:
  - a) Any local landscape analysis that assesses the current number of people experiencing homelessness and existing programs that address homelessness within the jurisdiction shall incorporate aggregate data from victim service providers, along with any other data sources;
  - b) The analyses and goals shall ensure the responses to family homelessness include victim service providers, as these organizations consistently provide shelter and housing responses to survivors and their children;
  - c) The analyses and goals shall address the nexus of homelessness and justice-involvement, particularly for women and survivors of domestic violence; and,
  - d) The analyses and goals shall disaggregate the number of beds provided by victim service providers in the city, county, or region served by a CoC. (WIC § 8264(b))
- 3) Defines “Homeless Management Information System” as the information system designated by a CoC to comply with federal reporting requirements, as defined in current federal law. (Health and Safety Code § 50216(j))
- 4) Defines “Homelessness Data Integration System” (HDIS) as the statewide data system or warehouse that collects local data through HMIS, with the ultimate goal of matching data on homelessness to programs impacting homeless recipients of state programs, as provided and in compliance with federal law. (WIC § 8257(b)(13))

- 5) Defines “unaccompanied woman” to mean an individual who identifies as a woman who is 18 years of age or older, who is experiencing homelessness, as defined in the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, and who is not accompanied by children or other dependents. (CODE SECTION)
- 6) Defines “continuum of care” to have the same meaning as defined in federal regulations, as described in 13) below. (HSC § 50216(d))
- 7) Establishes the California Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal ICH) to coordinate the state’s overall response to homelessness and requires Cal ICH staff to develop and regularly maintain a strategic funding guide and a calendar of new or existing funding opportunities. Requires agencies and departments administering state programs to provide Cal ICH updated information on new or existing funding opportunities on a quarterly basis. Further requires Cal ICH to collect fiscal and outcome data from grantees or entities operating state programs that are required to enter data elements on individuals and families it serves for state homelessness programs, by February 1, 2027, and annually thereafter. (WIC § 8255 *et seq.*)
- 8) Requires Cal ICH to coordinate a spectrum of funding, policy, and practice efforts related to young people experiencing homelessness by coordinating with young people experiencing homelessness, the California Department of Social Services, and other appropriate state and county agencies and departments, and to provide technical assistance and program development, as provided. (WIC § 8261(b))
- 9) Requires programs receiving state homeless funding to collect and share relevant data from HMIS among state and county agencies and service providers, and with Cal ICH for programs related to youth homelessness and prevention, as specified, and in accordance with state and federal privacy and confidentiality laws and regulations. (WIC § 8256(d)(1))

Federal law:

- 10) Establishes the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness to coordinate a federal response to homelessness that involves a nationwide partnership between all levels of government and the private sector. (42 United States Code [U.S.C.] § 11311)
- 11) Defines “homeless” for the purpose of housing assistance, to mean an individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. (42 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] § 91.5)
- 12) Establishes the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act to address barriers to education for homeless children and youth, ensuring they receive the same free and appropriate education as other children. (42 U.S.C. § 11302),
- 13) Defines “continuum of care” to mean the group organized to carry out specified required responsibilities and that is composed of representatives of organizations, including nonprofit homeless providers, victim service providers, faith-based organizations, governments, businesses, advocates, public housing agencies, school districts, social service providers, mental health agencies, hospitals, universities, affordable housing developers, law enforcement, organizations that serve homeless and formerly homeless veterans, and

homeless and formerly homeless persons to the extent these groups are represented within the geographic area and are available to participate. (24 CFR § 578.3)

14) Defines a “family” for purposes of the Housing Choice Voucher Program, to include but not be limited to, regardless of marital status, actual or perceived sexual orientation, or gender identity, the following:

- a) A single person, who may be an elderly person, displaced person, disabled person, near-elderly person, or any other single person; or,
- b) A group of persons residing together, and such group includes, but is not limited to a family with or without children; a child temporarily absent from the home due to placement in foster care must be considered in determining family composition and size; a family that consists of a pregnant woman only, and no other persons, must be treated as a two-person family. (24 CFR § 5.403; 982.402(b), 42 USC § 1437a(b)(3))

**FISCAL EFFECT:** This bill was keyed non-fiscal by the Legislative Counsel.

**COMMENTS:** This analysis only discusses policy issues germane to the jurisdiction of the Assembly Committee on Human Services.

**Background:** *The Homeless Equity for Left Behind Populations (HELP) Act*, which became law in 2023 (SB 914 [Rubio], Chapter, Statutes of 2022), requires cities, counties, and CoCs receiving state funding to address homelessness to include families, people fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, and unaccompanied women within the vulnerable populations for whom specific system supports are to be developed in order to maintain homeless services and housing delivery. The cities, counties and CoCs were also directed to develop analyses and goals with victim service providers to address the specific needs of this population, and to use data measures beyond what is included with HMIS.

HMIS serves as a centralized database designed to collect and manage information related to individuals experiencing homelessness and their interactions with service providers. The data collected is intended to facilitate the understanding of service needs, patterns of homelessness, and the effectiveness of various interventions. Each CoC is responsible for selecting HMIS software that complies with the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) data collection, management, and reporting standards.

The HELP Act directed the analyses and goals to ensure responses to family homelessness include victim service providers, as these organizations consistently provide shelter and housing responses to survivors and their children, and to address the nexus of homelessness and justice-involvement, particularly for women and survivors of domestic violence. Additionally, participants receiving funding were directed to disaggregate the number of beds provided by victim service providers in the city, county, or region served by CoC.

Accessing disaggregated data on shelter beds provided by victim service providers in California can be challenging due to confidentiality constraints. Victim service providers, such as domestic violence shelters, are prohibited from entering client-level data into HMIS to protect survivor privacy. Instead, they use comparable databases and share aggregate data.

*This bill* clarifies that single women with children are included within the subpopulation of families, and are part of the broader vulnerable population for whom specific supports are required to be developed by cities, counties, and CoC's in order to maintain homeless services.

*Homelessness and Housing Unaffordability among Women with Children.* According to an August 2022 analysis of the gender impacts of California's housing affordability crisis conducted by the Gender Equity Policy Institute, women are more likely than men to face unaffordable rental costs. Key findings include that 49% of women are rent burdened, compared to 43% of men, which means they spend more than 30% of their income on housing costs; 25% of women are severely rent burdened compared to 20% of men, which means they spend more than 50% of their income on rent; 59% of Black women are rent burdened, while 33% are severely rent burdened; 66% of women who live alone are rent burdened; women-led households are five times as likely as joint-led households to be extremely low-income; and, 73% of women-led households with children are rent burdened compared to just 56% of male-led households with children. Nearly one in three people in California live in a household headed by a woman. Two-thirds of these renting, women-led households (68%) are rent burdened.

Another indicator of how California's housing affordability crisis disproportionately impacts women comes from the federal government's measure to allocate housing assistance: the local area median income (AMI). Data show women are more likely than men to live in extremely low-income households—those earning less than 30% of AMI. Roughly a quarter of women-led households are extremely low-income.

According to data from the Los Angeles Almanac, the number of homeless families in Los Angeles County increased by 2.2%, from 10,466 families in 2023, to 10,710 in 2024. The Author and sponsor contend that while many programs exist, none specifically prioritize single women with children, a group disproportionately at risk of homelessness or of fleeing domestic violence.

*The California Interagency Council on Homelessness* was required as a result of SB 914, to set and measure progress toward goals to prevent and end homelessness among domestic violence survivors and their children, and among unaccompanied women in California by doing all of the following:

- Setting specific, measurable goals aimed at preventing and ending homelessness among domestic violence survivors and their children and among unaccompanied women in the state. These goals include:
  - Measurably decreasing the number of domestic violence survivors and their children and of unaccompanied women experiencing homelessness in the state;
  - Decreasing the duration and frequency of experiences of homelessness among domestic violence survivors and their children and among unaccompanied women; and,
  - Decreasing barriers to services through promoting cross-systems partnerships to expedite access to services, including social services, domestic violence services, regional center services, housing services, and mental health services.
- Defining outcome measures and gathering data related to the goals; and,

- When funding is available, providing technical assistance to cities, counties, and CoCs to support the development of local programs and plans that address the needs of domestic violence survivors and their children and of unaccompanied women. In addition, working with HUD to provide technical assistance to cities, counties, and CoCs in furtherance of preventing and ending homelessness among this population.

Cal ICH was required to establish initial goals, by January 1, 2025, and must evaluate these goals at least every two years to determine whether updated goals are needed. These goals are included in the most recent Cal ICH Action Plan, which was approved in December of 2024.

According to the Action Plan, 22% of those accessing homelessness services reported having experienced domestic violence. Cal ICH notes that HDIS includes data from programs that receive many types of state and federal funding, but does not include programs that primarily serve people who have experienced domestic violence, or providers affiliated with tribal communities.

The California Office of Emergency Services is the lead on three programs designed to address homelessness among those experiencing domestic violence:

- The Domestic Violence Housing First Program is included under the Action Plan’s goals and is intended to provide victims/survivors of domestic violence with safe, permanent housing and ongoing, trauma-informed services tailored to address the individual needs of each victim/survivor that allows them to choose how to best rebuild their lives;
- The Domestic Violence Assistance Program provides local assistance for comprehensive support services to existing domestic violence providers throughout California, including emergency shelter to victims/survivors of domestic violence and their children; and,
- The Native American Domestic Violence, and Sexual Assault Program provides supportive services to Native American or Indigenous women and their children, who are victims/survivors of domestic violence and/or sexual assault.

**Author’s Statement:** According to the Author, “The two fastest-growing demographics for homelessness are senior citizens and families led by single mothers.

“California’s single mothers face disproportionate housing cost burdens, and over 16,300 children are experiencing homelessness, often due to gaps in service delivery and prioritization. Addressing these issues will not only help vulnerable families but also reduce long-term state costs associated with emergency services, welfare, and intergenerational poverty.

“While many programs exist, none specifically prioritize women with children—a group disproportionately at risk of homelessness or fleeing domestic violence.

“[This bill] builds upon previous legislative efforts by requiring the California Interagency Council on Homelessness to include women with children within the population they are required to set and measure progress toward goals to prevent and end homelessness.”

**Equity Implications:** Individuals and families are considered homeless if they do not have a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. For example, if they are living in a shelter,

vehicle, or other places not meant for habitation. While single adults make up the vast majority of homeless Californians, 14% of those experiencing homelessness are families with children. California faces challenges in addressing the needs of women and children at risk of and experiencing homelessness. Data show that families with children often fall into homelessness because of the lack of affordable housing and other compounding economic challenges. In order to adequately build the capacity of housing and services for women-led families with children, it is important to understand the unique needs of each subpopulation experiencing homelessness, and to prioritize helping children whose families are experiencing homelessness to be considered.

**Policy Considerations:** This bill makes references to “single women with children” which is an imprecise term that could presumably refer to a mother’s marital status or the number of parents in a family. In HUD terminology, women with children are classified as “families.” However, because data show that California’s housing affordability crisis, and therefore risk of homelessness, falls disproportionately on women, it is reasonable to require cities, counties and CoCs to develop solutions tailored to the disproportionality they experience.

*Should this bill move forward, the Author may wish to consider finding an alternative to the term “single women with children.”*

This bill requires cities, counties, and CoCs receiving state funding to address homelessness to develop specific system supports for “single women with children” in order to maintain homeless services. However, the provisions do not include a mechanism for this information to be publicly posted.

*Should this bill move forward, the Author may wish to consider requiring the specific system supports that are developed by cities, counties and CoCs to address homelessness within subpopulations to be publicly posted.*

Existing law requires Cal ICH to set and measure progress toward goals to prevent and end homelessness among domestic violence survivors and their children, and among unaccompanied women in California, but does not require these goals to include women with children.

*Should this bill move forward, the Author may wish to consider including women with children to be included among the population that Cal ICH is required to set and measure progress toward goals to prevent and end homelessness.*

**Proposed Committee Amendments:** The Committee proposes amendments to address policy considerations stated above to do the following:

- Strike reference to “single women with children” and instead refer to “women with children.”
- Require Cal ICH to publicly post on their website, the specific system supports that have been developed by cities, counties and CoCs to address homelessness within families, people fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, unaccompanied women, and women-led families with children.
- Require Cal ICH to include women-led families with children within the population they are required to set and measure progress toward goals to prevent and end homelessness.

**Double referral:** This bill was previously heard by the Assembly Committee on Housing and Community Development on April 30, 2025, and was approved on a 10-0 vote.

#### **RELATED AND PRIOR LEGISLATION:**

***SB 914 (Rubio) Chapter 665, Statutes of 2022***, required cities, counties, and CoCs that receive state funding to address homelessness to take specific actions to address the needs of families, unaccompanied homeless women, and in particular domestic violence survivors.

***AB 140 (Committee on Budget), Chapter 111, Statutes of 2021***, required Cal ICH to issue a standard agreement for cities, counties and CoCs applying for state homelessness funds to submit an application that includes a local homelessness action plan and specific outcome goals to prevent and reduce homelessness.

***AB 1220 (L. Rivas), Chapter 398, Statutes of 2021***, renamed the Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council (HCFC), Cal ICH, and made changes to council membership.

***AB 2329 (Chiu) of 2020***, would have required HCFC to perform a homelessness statewide gaps and needs analysis by July 31, 2021. *AB 2329 was held on the Assembly Committee on Appropriations suspense file.*

***SB 918 (Wiener), Chapter 841, Statutes of 2018***, established the Homeless Youth Act of 2018 to better serve the state's homeless youth population and required the HCFC to take on additional related responsibilities, including setting goals to prevent and end homelessness among youth in the state, defining outcome measures, and gathering data related to those goals.

***SB 1380 (Mitchell), Chapter 847, Statutes of 2016***, created HCFC in order to implement Housing First policies throughout the state.

#### **REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**

##### **Support**

New Economics for Women (Sponsor)  
California Catholic Conference  
California Human Development  
Center for Employment Training  
Central Valley Opportunity Center (CVOC)  
Climate Care Plumbing LLC  
Coalition for Responsible Community Development  
Del Sol Group, INC.  
Denco Family INC  
First Day Foundation  
Goodwill Southern California  
Haven Neighborhood Services  
LA Comadre Network  
Lalis Pizza  
Macheen  
MC Foods  
Milpa Kitchen

Mission Economic Development Agency (MEDA)  
San Diego for Every Child  
Shaday Fashion INC  
The YMCA of Metropolitan Los Angeles  
Time for Change Foundation

**Opposition**

None on file.

**Analysis Prepared by:** Jessica Langtry / HUM. S. / (916) 319-2089