

Date of Hearing: April 23, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Alex Lee, Chair

AB 1899 (Caloza) – As Amended April 9, 2026

**SUBJECT:** Office of Youth Homelessness Prevention

**SUMMARY:** Establishes the Office of Youth Homelessness Prevention. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Establishes the Office of Youth Homelessness Prevention within the California Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal ICH) to reduce youth homelessness in the state to functional zero.
- 2) Requires the Office of Youth Homelessness Prevention to have all of the following responsibilities:
  - a) Developing and overseeing the implementation of a comprehensive framework to reduce youth homelessness to functional zero, which shall include all of the following:
    - i) Specific and measurable goals, including, but not limited to, all of the following: decreasing the number of youth who experience homelessness within 12 months of discharge from a public system of care, including foster care, inpatient residential treatment, and incarceration;
    - ii) Decreasing the length and occurrence of youth homelessness caused by a youth's separation from family or a legal guardian; and,
    - iii) Decreasing the number of homeless youth experiencing homelessness to functional zero, through, among other things, identifying and enhancing programs that address the root causes of youth homelessness, including timelines within which to attain these measures of success.
  - b) Requiring the Office of Youth Homelessness Prevention to complete development of the framework specified above on or before September 15, 2027;
  - c) Leading the coordination of funding, policy, and practice to prevent youth homelessness across federal and state agencies and departments with jurisdiction over the state's child welfare, foster care, and juvenile justice systems, including, but not limited to, the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), and the Department of Youth and Community Restoration, focused on all of the following:
    - i) Sufficient stable housing, including, but not limited to, the utilization of housing vouchers, rapid rehousing, rental support, and eviction prevention;
    - ii) Economic and employment support, including job training and placement, financial management skills, flexible financial assistance, and assistance connecting with public benefits;

- iii) Education, including support to earn a high school degree and to pursue and complete postsecondary education and training programs;
  - iv) Prevention of youth homelessness, including family reconciliation, interventions to prevent exits from public systems of care, including child welfare, foster care, juvenile justice, and behavioral health, into homelessness, flexible financial assistance, and school-based supports;
  - v) Health and mental health, including support for youth to obtain and maintain mental health care; and,
  - vi) Services to assist youth to establish and maintain connections with supportive adults and peers.
- d) Authorizes the Office of Youth Homelessness Prevention to provide support, advice, or guidance to local agencies and entities, including, but not limited to, county child welfare agencies, and county probation departments, on funding, policy, and practice, including transition planning, housing services, aftercare supports, and other approaches to preventing youth from existing public systems into homelessness;
- e) Developing best practices and policy recommendations, with proposed timelines for completion, to address gaps, shortfalls, and other inadequacies as specified; and,
- f) Gathering data, including by initiating data-sharing agreements, and analyzing the data to evaluate the progress toward desired outcomes, including tracking the rate at which youth exit foster care and other public systems of care into homelessness.
- 3) Requires the Office of Youth Homelessness Prevention, on or before December 15, 2027, to create and post to its website a publicly accessible dashboard tracking the office's progress toward the goals specified in these provisions.
- 4) Requires the Office of Youth Homelessness Prevention to consult with a 12-member advisory committee with membership as follows:
- a) Two youth with current or previous lived experience with the foster care system. These youth may also have current or previous lived experience with homelessness or the juvenile justice system;
  - b) Two parent advocates;
  - c) Three advocates for youth;
  - d) Two members of the Legislature; and,
  - e) Three stakeholders knowledgeable in the provision of services to homeless youth, the dependency system, and family reunification;
- 5) Requires the members of the advisory committee to be appointed by the Governor on or before March 1, 2027.

- 6) Requires the advisory committee to meet on or before June 1, 2027, and at least twice each calendar year thereafter.
- 7) Requires at least one member of the office to attend advisory committee meetings to provide administrative support and guidance as needed.
- 8) Requires the Office of Youth Homelessness Prevention to report on its progress toward achieving the measurable goals to the Legislature and Cal ICH on or before December 15, 2027, and annually thereafter. Requires the report to be available to the public on its website.
- 9) Makes the following legislative findings and declarations:
  - a) Youth homelessness continues to be a significant issue in California. While there has been a notable decrease in youth and young adult homelessness statewide, nearly 10,000 unaccompanied youth still experience homelessness in our state;
  - b) An estimated 33% of the nation's homeless youth and young adults live in California. A significant percentage of youth and young adults who experience homelessness emerge from the state's foster care system and other systems that serve youth, including the juvenile justice and behavioral health systems;
  - c) The state has unique responsibilities to youth who live in, or emerge from, the state's foster care system. The state is the parent of youth in foster care and has a duty to ensure their safety, welfare, and protection. One in four youth who have lived in the foster care system report experiencing homelessness by the time they reach 24 years of age;
  - d) Youth and young adults who experience homelessness have poorer physical and mental health outcomes, increased likelihood of contact with the legal system, and fewer opportunities to complete high school and pursue higher education and employment;
  - e) They also have a higher risk of chronic homelessness as adults. Research demonstrates that approximately 50% of adults experiencing chronic homelessness first experienced homelessness by the time they were 25 years of age;
  - f) To break the cycle of adult homelessness, it is crucial to achieve functional zero in youth and young adult homelessness, meaning the number of youth and young adults experiencing homelessness does not exceed the capacity to provide youth with permanent housing;
  - g) The State of Washington established the nation's first Office of Homeless Youth in 2015. Its goal is to prevent state systems from discharging youth and young adults into homelessness. The office's responsibilities include leading the coordination of a spectrum of funding, policy, and practice efforts related to youth and young adult homelessness, and using data to tailor investments in prevention. Since the office was established, the State of Washington has been progressing toward functional zero in youth and young adult homelessness, with a 40% reduction since 2016; and,

- h) California is now establishing the California Housing and Homelessness Agency. In recognition of the state's unique responsibilities to youth living in, and emerging from, the foster care system, the state should create a state-level Office of Youth Homelessness Prevention in Cal ICH to serve as the focal point for policy, funding, and best practices on preventing youth and young adult homelessness and deepening collaborations across all sectors of government toward the goal of achieving functional zero in youth and young adult homelessness.

**EXISTING LAW:**

- 1) Establishes Cal ICH, formerly known as the Homelessness Coordinating and Financing Council (HCFC), to oversee and coordinate the implementation of the Housing First guidelines and regulations in California and to identify resources and services that can be accessed to prevent and end homelessness in California. This includes ensuring that local jurisdictions and state agencies align their services with statutory core components that prioritize permanent housing placement without service-participation requirements or other preconditions. (Welfare and Institutions Code [WIC] § 8255 et seq.)
- 2) Requires Cal ICH to consist of the following members:
  - a) The Secretary of Business, Consumer Services, and Housing and the Secretary of California Health and Human Services, who both shall serve as cochairs of the council;
  - b) The Director of Transportation;
  - c) The Director of HCD
  - d) The Director of CDSS
  - e) The Director of the California Housing Finance Agency;
  - f) The Director or the State Medicaid Director of Health Care Services;
  - g) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs;
  - h) The Secretary of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation;;
  - i) The Governor's Tribal Advisor;
  - j) The Executive Director of the California Tax Credit Allocation Committee in the Treasurer's office;
  - k) The State Public Health Officer;
  - l) The Director of the California Department of Aging;
  - m) The Director of Rehabilitation;
  - n) The Director of State Hospitals;
  - o) The executive director of the California Workforce Development Board;

- p) The Director of Emergency Services;
- q) A representative from the State Department of Education, who shall be appointed by the Superintendent of Public Instruction; and,
- r) A representative of the state public higher education system who shall be from one of the following:
  - i) The California Community Colleges;
  - ii) The University of California; and,
  - iii) The California State University (WIC § 8257(c))

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Unknown, this bill has not been analyzed by a fiscal committee.

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

**Background:** *Youth Homelessness in California.* Youth homelessness remains a significant and persistent crisis in California. According to the 2024 Point-in-Time Count, approximately 10,000 unaccompanied youth experience homelessness on any given night in the state which is understood to be an undercount given the hidden nature of youth homelessness, including couch surfing and doubling up. California accounts for an estimated 33% of the nation's homeless youth and young adults.<sup>1</sup> Since 2020, the state's young adult homeless population (ages 18 to 24) has declined by nearly 25% from 11,403 to 8,569 in 2024, even as national youth homelessness increased by 11% over a similar period. Despite this progress, 60% of unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness remain unsheltered, and the average waiting time for a youth seeking any type of housing is 4.5 months. Research has found that every additional day of waiting for housing services reduces a youth's chances of achieving stable housing by 2%.<sup>2</sup>

According to federal data<sup>3</sup>, the foster care system is the single largest institutional pathway into youth homelessness in California, which as of January 1, 2026, has 36,999 children in foster care, which is the largest foster care population in the nation. Research consistently finds that approximately 31% of transition-age foster youth in California experience homelessness after exiting care, compared to a 4% lifetime prevalence in the general population. One in four youth who have lived in the foster care system report experiencing homelessness by the time they reach 24 years of age. Youth who exit the juvenile justice and behavioral health systems face similarly elevated risks, compounding the need for cross-system coordination.

The long-term consequences of youth homelessness contribute to them having poorer physical and mental health outcomes, an increased likelihood of contact with the legal system, and reduced opportunities to complete high school and pursue higher education and employment. Approximately 50% of adults experiencing chronic homelessness first experienced homelessness

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<sup>1</sup> <https://besh.ca.gov/calich/hdis.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://jbay.org/resources/investing-in-impact-2025/>

<sup>3</sup> Penny Lane Centers foster care statistics (citing AFCARS FY2024): <https://www.pennylane.org/resources/foster-care-statistics>

by the time they were 25 years of age. This pipeline from youth to adult chronic homelessness represents both a human tragedy and a long-term cost to public systems.<sup>4</sup> Addressing youth homelessness is a prevention strategy for adult chronic homelessness.

*The Homeless Youth Act of 2018.* SB 918 (Wiener), Chapter 841, Statutes of 2018, established a statutory mandate for the HCFC, now Cal ICH, to set and measure progress toward specific, measurable goals to prevent and end homelessness among youth in California. Those goals included measurably decreasing the number of young people experiencing homelessness statewide; increasing permanency rates by decreasing the length and occurrence of homelessness caused by a youth's separation from family or a legal guardian; decreasing the duration and frequency of youth homelessness experiences; and decreasing barriers to services through cross-systems partnerships to expedite access to social services, child welfare, regional center, and mental health services. The Act also required Cal ICH to coordinate a spectrum of funding, policy, and practice efforts related to young people experiencing homelessness, and to develop and collect county-level and statewide data, including dependency status, delinquency status, family reunification status, housing status, and program participation.

Cal ICH created a Youth and Young Adult Working Group in November 2024 to begin this work and then paused all working groups in August 2025 for a strategic review to identify gaps and reduce silos within the state's homelessness structure and to ensure resources were effectively advancing the new 2025-27 Statewide Action Plan. Cal ICH completed this review and resumed focused activities at the end of 2025. The working group's objectives have been absorbed into the Statewide Action Plan for Preventing and Ending Homelessness (2025-27). This plan specifically prioritizes "centering the voices and needs of those most impacted," which includes youth with lived experience. Starting July 1, 2026, Cal ICH and its specialized working groups will transition into the newly created California Housing and Homelessness Agency. This reorganization is expected to further centralize youth-specific homelessness resources that are currently spread across multiple state departments.

*This bill* creates a specific office housed within Cal ICH charged exclusively with driving a comprehensive, outcomes-focused strategy toward functional zero youth homelessness.

*The California Interagency Council on Homelessness* was established as the state's primary coordinating body for homelessness policy and programs. Cal ICH is responsible for overseeing the implementation of Housing First guidelines and regulations, developing and implementing a statewide action plan to prevent and end homelessness, setting measurable goals, leading data collection and analysis through the Homeless Data Integration System, and coordinating funding, policy, and practice across state agencies and departments. Cal ICH's membership spans multiple state agencies including CDSS, HCD, the Department of Youth and Community Restoration, the Department of Health Care Services, and others.

Cal ICH's organizational role is changing significantly as a result of the Governor's Reorganization Plan No. 1 of 2025, effective July 1, 2026. Under the reorganization, the Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency is eliminated and replaced by two new entities: the Business and Consumer Services Agency and the California Housing and Homelessness Agency. Cal ICH is reconstituted as an independent entity within the California

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<sup>4</sup> : <https://www.library.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/More-Than-a-Roof-FINAL.pdf>

Housing and Homelessness Agency, and renamed the California Interagency Executive Council on Homelessness.<sup>5</sup>

*This bill* situates the new Office of Youth Homelessness Prevention within Cal ICH as restructured, placing it at the center of the state's reconstituted homelessness governance structure.

Cal ICH adopted a three-year Action Plan for Preventing and Ending Homelessness in 2024, covering 2025 through 2027. The plan includes five measurable goals organized around reducing unsheltered homelessness, increasing housing exits, and addressing racial disparities. Youth homelessness is addressed within this broader framework, but does not have a dedicated driver or accountability structure. The 2023 State Auditor's report<sup>6</sup> on California's homelessness investments found that Cal ICH had not adequately required state agencies to report costs and outcomes of homelessness programs, limiting transparency and the ability to assess program effectiveness. *This bill* requires a publicly accessible dashboard tracking progress toward functional zero, and annual legislative reporting.

*The Washington State Model.* Washington State's Office of Homeless Youth, established in 2015 as the nation's first such office, has the goal of preventing state systems from discharging youth and young adults into homelessness and leads the coordination of a spectrum of funding, policy, and practice efforts related to youth and young adult homelessness, using data to tailor investments in prevention. Since the office was established, Washington has reduced youth and young adult homelessness by 40% from 2016 to 2022.<sup>7</sup> The number of people who were homeless in Washington in 2016 was 23,961, and in 2022 that number was down to 14,410, according to the report. The provisions of *this bill* seek to adopt the same functional zero mission and the same emphasis on cross-system coordination, data-driven goal-setting, and prevention of system discharges into homelessness.

**Author's Statement:** According to the Author, "No young person should have to choose between school and the streets or between meaningful work and the street economy. No young person should be sleeping on a city bus or camping on a sidewalk. Creating an Office of Homeless Youth, as envisioned in [this bill], will ensure that there are programs specifically designed to support and serve youth and young adults to prevent unnecessary suffering and prevent them from growing up and becoming chronically homeless. It is modeled after Washington State, which has reduced youth and young adult homelessness by forty percent. California can, and must, do more for our young people who are experiencing homelessness. If youth or young adults do experience homelessness, then it must be rare, brief, and non-recurring."

**Equity Implications:** The provisions of *this bill* seek to create the Office of Youth Homelessness Prevention to reduce youth homelessness to functional zero. Black and Native American youth are dramatically overrepresented among those experiencing homelessness, LGBTQ+ youth account for a disproportionate share of homeless young people, and youth exiting the foster care system, which is a population that is itself disproportionately composed of youth of color, face homelessness at rates that dwarf the general population. For these young

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<sup>5</sup> [https://bcsh.ca.gov/calich/action\\_plan](https://bcsh.ca.gov/calich/action_plan)

<sup>6</sup> and <https://information.auditor.ca.gov/reports/2023-102.1/index.html>

<sup>7</sup> [https://awayhomewa.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/2024-WA-Unaccompanied-YYA-Landscape-Scan\\_Final.pdf](https://awayhomewa.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/2024-WA-Unaccompanied-YYA-Landscape-Scan_Final.pdf)

people, homelessness is not a random misfortune but a predictable and largely preventable outcome of systems that failed to protect them. The state is legally and morally the parent of youth in foster care, and the absence of a dedicated, accountable institutional home for youth homelessness prevention within state government has meant that this preventable crisis has been treated as a diffuse responsibility belonging to no one in particular. Establishing an Office of Youth Homelessness Prevention with a clear mission, measurable goals, and a mandate to coordinate across the child welfare, juvenile justice, and behavioral health systems creates the infrastructure necessary to translate policy commitments into on-the-ground outcomes for the young people most at risk.

**Double referral:** This bill was previously heard in the Assembly Committee on Housing and Community Development on April 8, 2026, and was approved on a 12-0 vote.

**Arguments in support:** Inner City Law Center and the California Coalition for Youth write in support, “Solving youth homelessness is a critical part of ending California’s larger homelessness crisis because young people who experience homelessness are five times more likely than their peers to become homeless adults. While the Interagency Council on Homelessness is tasked with setting goals to reduce youth homelessness, a state-level Office of Youth Homelessness Prevention, focused exclusively on leading California to achieve Function Zero in youth and young adult homelessness, would ensure these goals are fulfilled.”

**Arguments in opposition:** None on file.

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

**AB 589 (Boerner) of 2023**, would have required, to the extent that funding is made available, HCD to establish the Unicorn Homes Transitional Housing for Homeless LGBTQ+ Youth Program as a five-year pilot program. *AB 589 was vetoed by Governor Newsom due to costs.*

**AB 2663 (Ramos) of 2022**, would have required CDSS to establish a five-year pilot program to increase permanency outcomes for LGBTQ+ and gender-expansive youth and their families. *AB 2663 was vetoed by Governor Newsom due to costs.*

**AB 592 (Friedman), Chapter 702, Statutes of 2021**, expanded the housing options for extended foster youth, particularly as it related to LGBTQ youth.

**AB 1979 (Friedman), Chapter 141, Statutes of 2020**, expanded the definition of a Supervised Independent Living Setting to include a transitional living setting approved by the county to support youth entering or reentering care or transitioning between placements, and required counties to examine their ability to meet the emergency housing needs of nonminor dependents (NMDs).

**AB 531 (Friedman) of 2019**, would have permitted certain approved caregivers of NMDs to convert to a host family without additional certification, would have required counties to examine their ability to meet the emergency housing needs of NMDs, and would have allowed counties to request funds for the purpose of providing housing navigation services to youth. *AB 531 was held on the Senate Appropriations Committee suspense file.*

**SB 918 (Wiener), Chapter 841, Statutes of 2018**, see comments above.

*SB 1380 (Mitchell), Chapter 847, Statutes of 2016*, created the HCFC to coordinate the state's response to homelessness.

**REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**

**Support**

California Coalition for Youth (Co-Sponsor)  
Inner City Law Center (Co-Sponsor)  
AIDS Healthcare Foundation  
American Academy of Pediatrics, California  
Aspiranet  
Bill Wilson Center  
Black Women United  
Bright Futures for Youth  
California Behavioral Health Association  
Children Now  
Destination: Home  
Fostering Promise  
GLIDE  
John Burton Advocates for Youth  
Larkin Street Youth Services  
League of California Cities  
Legacy Bridge CDC  
Los Angeles Unified School District  
National Center for Youth Law (NCYL)  
Orangewood Foundation  
Public Counsel  
Safe Place for Youth  
Stanford Sierra Youth and Families  
Steinberg Institute  
SV@Home Action Fund  
The Village Family Services  
Unity Care  
YMCA of San Diego County  
Youth Law Center

**Opposition**

None on file.

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