

Date of Hearing: April 6, 2011

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Norma Torres, Chair

AB 683 (Ammiano) – As Amended: March 24, 2011

SUBJECT: Homelessness

SUMMARY: Requires the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) to create a statewide Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), contingent on receiving sufficient federal and private funds. Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Requires HCD to create a statewide HMIS to compile data for the purpose of developing a composite portrayal of the homeless population in the state, as well as services currently provided to people who are homeless.
- 2) Requires HCD, with the cooperation and collaboration of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, the Department of Education, the Department of Health Care Services, the Department of Mental Health, the Department of Social Services, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs, to draft and carry out a strategy to create a de-identified integrated research database to provide longitudinal, cost-based studies based on the following information:
  - a) The number of people imprisoned each year who were homeless upon arrest and the costs of their imprisonment;
  - b) The number of parolees experiencing homelessness each year and the costs of their parole;
  - c) The number of children in California schools experiencing homelessness;
  - d) Claims for Medi-Cal emergency department, hospital, and nursing home services among people experiencing homelessness, and the costs of those claims each year;
  - e) The number of children receiving foster care services whose family members are homeless and the costs of the foster care provided to those children each year;
  - f) The number of people who are homeless receiving services, the costs of those services, and outcomes of those services through the Department of Mental Health, the Department of Social Services, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs; and
  - g) The number of people living in housing funded through programs administered by HCD who were homeless upon admission.
- 3) Specifies that these new duties shall be implemented only when sufficient federal and private sector funds have been received to create the HMIS.

EXISTING LAW

- 1) Enacted in 1987, the Stuart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act (McKinney-Vento) authorized federal funding for homeless assistance programs administered by several federal agencies, including the U.S. Departments of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Health and Human Services, Labor, Education, and Veterans Affairs. HUD operates two programs through McKinney-Vento, the Federal Emergency Shelter Grant Program and the Continuum of Care Program.
- 2) Enacted in May 2009, the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (Hearth) Act reauthorized and made changes to McKinney-Vento, including increasing the priority on homeless families with children and increasing prevention resources.

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS:

California has the highest number of people experiencing homelessness in the country. Homelessness is traumatic for those who suffer it, often leading to separated families, exacerbation of health conditions, a rise in avoidable emergency room use, social and academic delays among children, higher rates of foster care, and greater likelihood of incarceration. Many people who lack permanent shelter and the ability to access regular support ricochet through separate and expensive public systems: overburdened corrections systems, overcrowded hospital emergency rooms, mental health programs, substance abuse treatment and detox facilities, shelters, and emergency housing.

Innovative approaches across the nation and within California show promise for reducing homelessness and the resulting impact on public services. These approaches rely on accurate data on the homeless population and how the homeless interact with various state programs, data that California does not collect. Collecting and analyzing data regarding homelessness would assist the state in using state resources more effectively and help guide future state policy regarding homelessness, as recognized in Goal 1.2 of California's *Ten-Year Chronic Homeless Action Plan*, adopted by the state in February 2010.

AB 683 would require HCD to create a statewide HMIS to compile data from continua of care throughout California for the purpose of developing a composite portrayal of the homeless population in the state, as well as services currently provided to people who are homeless. Continua of care are local homeless assistance program planning networks that coordinate efforts to address homelessness, including deciding how to spend federal homeless grant monies. Some are governmental entities, others are non-governmental, and some are joint powers authorities. Local continuums of care produce annual plans that identify the needs of local homeless populations, the resources that are currently available in the community to address those needs, and additional resources needed to fill identified gaps. The continuum of care process is a community-based approach that encourages the creation of collaborative, comprehensive systems to meet the diverse of needs of local homeless populations.

By gathering data from local continua of care and integrating it with data from the numerous state agencies that interact with homeless individuals, the state would have a valuable tool to assist with structuring programs and services that assist the homeless to improve outcomes and decrease administrative and program costs. A state data warehouse on homelessness would improve collaboration among state agencies, help assess the costs of homelessness to the state, provide greater transparency in state agency and grantees' operations, determine what interventions work to prevent or end homelessness, identify gaps in services, discover how patterns of service use relate to patterns of homelessness, analyze trends in homelessness, assess use of mainstream systems among people experiencing homelessness, and enhance planning and policy efforts to reduce homelessness. Federal funds are available to create this type of data warehouse, and the bill states that HCD does not have to begin the process until federal and private funds have been secured.

In addition to designing a statewide HMIS, the bill requires HCD, in collaboration with other state agencies, to draft and carry-out a strategy to create a de-identified (i.e., does not contain names) integrated research database comprised of information from the Departments of Correction and Rehabilitation, Education, Health Care Services, Health, Social Services, Veterans Affairs, and California Alcohol and Drug Programs, to provide longitudinal, cost-based studies on the following information:

- The number of people imprisoned each year who were homeless upon arrest and the costs of their imprisonment.
- The number of parolees experiencing homelessness each year and the costs of their parole.
- The number of children experiencing homelessness in California schools.
- Claims for Medi-Cal emergency department, hospital, and nursing home care among people experiencing homelessness, and the costs of those claims each year.
- The number of children receiving foster care services whose family members are homeless and the costs of the foster care provided to those children each year.
- The number of people who are homeless receiving services, the costs of those services, and outcomes of the services through the Departments of Mental Health, Social Services, Veterans Affairs, and California Drug and Alcohol Programs.
- The number of people living in housing funded through programs administered by the Department of Housing and Community Development who are homeless upon admission.

According to the bill's sponsor, the Corporation for Supportive Housing, "California has the largest homeless population in the nation. Yet, we have very little data about our homeless population. Our state agencies, for example, do not maintain data on housing or shelter services homeless people receive, how many homeless people get housed through state housing programs, how many veterans experiencing homelessness access mental health or Medi-Cal services, or how many people are homeless when entering prison or while on parole. These data

are critical in determining state program and grantee use of state funds, as well as in assessing how these funds could be used more efficiently."

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Corporation for Supportive Housing (sponsor)  
EveryOne Home (Alameda County Continuum of Care)  
United Homeless Healthcare Partners

Opposition

None on file

Analysis Prepared by: Anya Lawler / H. & C.D. / (916) 319-2085