

Sonoma County Lived Experience and Advisory Planning Board (LEAP)



Committee members: Aaron Mello, Chair | Rebekah Sammet, Vice Chair/Minute Taker | Angie Sebring, Time Keeper | Peyton Forwood | Mary Ruffatto | Victoria Yanez | Juanita Butterfly | James Di Stefano | Alice Linn | Jessica Wolfe | Wendell Coleman | Chessy Etheridge

May 22, 2024

The Honorable Sharon Quirk-Silva, Chair
Assembly Budget Subcommittee #5
1021 O Street, Suite 8230
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Chair Quirk-Silva and Members of Assembly Budget Subcommittee #5,

We are writing to urge the Committee to prioritize at least \$1 billion for a round 6 of the Homeless Housing, Assistance, and Prevention (HHAP) program in the 2024-25 state budget. This important program offers funding to counties, big cities, and homeless Continuums of Care to provide shelter beds, services, and housing for people experiencing homelessness.

The Sonoma County Lived Experience Advisory and Planning (LEAP) Board is a diverse group of people with lived experience of homelessness, with an emphasis on racial and ethnic diversity in its composition. Our purpose is to advise and plan with the Sonoma County Homeless Coalition Board and homeless service agencies how to improve homeless programs, services, shelters, and housing in Sonoma County.

We appreciate your commitment to solving homelessness in California. As a result of this commitment, grantees used HHAP and other funding to serve more Californians than ever before, [over 300,000 Californians last year](#), over a third of whom were families with children and over 28,000 were youth experiencing homelessness, thanks in large part to state investment. HHAP grantees have used HHAP to create 15,722 shelter beds, and funded tens of thousands of housing subsidies to allow people to exit homelessness, along with services that help people get and stay housed. It has contributed to reductions in homelessness among youth, and has created shelters in communities that had no previous options for people experiencing homelessness but the streets.

Proposals to disinvest in HHAP will bring the state's progress to a screeching halt. Zero dollars for HHAP in the 2024-25 state budget would result in closure of shelters, shutting non-profit organizations now operating in communities thanks to HHAP, thousands of Californians returning to the streets, stalling and putting at risk Homekey projects, and ending multiple rapid re-housing programs. In short, decisions to end HHAP will result in more people on the streets in every member's district, and the stakes of disinvesting in HHAP are a matter of life and death.

For these reasons, we urge you to ensure at least \$1 billion for HHAP. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
The Sonoma County Lived Experience & Advisory Planning (LEAP) Board