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Assembly California Legislature



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January 31, 2020

Honorable Rudy Salas, Jr.
Chair, Joint Legislative Audit Committee
1020 N Street, Room 107
Sacramento, CA 95814

JAN 31 2020

2020-112

Dear Chair Salas:

This letter requests that the Bureau of State Audits examine and survey the lead agencies of five Continuum of Care (CoC) areas to obtain perspective related to best practices of homeless services across the State. The selected counties of focus should include a large county in Southern California, a county on the Central Coast, a Bay Area county, a county in the San Joaquin Valley, and a county in the Sacramento Valley.

As you know, California currently has 43 CoC areas that cover the entire state and each lead agency of a CoC is responsible for planning the administration of homeless services. The responsibility and relationship between the lead agency and the CoC is crucial. The CoC program promotes commitment within our communities to the goal of ending homelessness. They provide funding for efforts by non-profit providers, and State and local government to rehouse homeless individuals and families while minimizing the trauma and dislocation caused to homeless individuals, families, and communities by homelessness. They also promote access and awareness of programs used by homeless individuals and families and optimize self-sufficiency among individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

Homelessness continues to be a major and growing problem throughout the state. The Legislature must identify and support best practices conducted at the local level. Although every county is unique and faces specific obstacles when attempting to address the increasing homeless populations, lead agencies of CoCs may provide examples for other lead agencies to borrow and implement. For example, various lead agencies within CoC areas could provide a plan for fostering strong partnerships and better coordination with local nonprofits to optimize limited resources. Additionally, these lead agencies of CoCs could provide best practice models improving important HUD-recommended activities, which include annually counting unsheltered homeless, improving efforts to raise nonfederal funding, and improving their coordination with other agencies.

With the goal of identifying best practice models and increasing efficiency and accountability of lead agencies of CoCs, we respectfully request a review of the following topics, to the extent possible:




- (1) What are notable characteristics of each county's planning and strategy for its administration of homeless services? Are there similarities among lead agencies identified with the best practices of homeless services/coordination? What level of resources do those best practices/activities require?
- (2) What efforts or internal planning/strategy could help lead agencies with conducting accurate annual counts, coordinating with other homeless service agencies?
- (3) What resources and internal protocols are necessary in order for lead agencies of CoCs to collect, retain, and analyze data to measure effectiveness?
- (4) Do the selected counties make an effort to collaborate with various non-profits in order to increase outreach and services provided to our most vulnerable populations? Could the state provide opportunities and incentives for lead agencies of CoC areas to work collaboratively in order to secure more HUD funding/activities that would help the homeless population?
- (5) How do the selected counties collect and use data? Are there barriers to data collection for local entities? If it is not a problem for the selected counties, what tools have they implemented to ensure accurate data is collected and retained?
- (6) Follow up to the question above – What structural changes or resources are necessary in order for lead agencies (for example, LAHSA) to obtain/collect complete and accurate data at each point of the funding process, including the application evaluation process.
- (7) How could lead agencies throughout the state's services areas collect and report the number of eligible providers, the reason providers do not apply for certain requests for proposals, which providers win funds and why, where they are located, and how programs are affecting homelessness? Are there areas within these counties where homeless populations are provided insufficient or no services? If so, why?
- (8) What best practice models for increasing efficiency and accountability can be used in other counties?

We appreciate your attention to this request.

Sincerely,



Assemblymember, AD 30



Cristina Garcia
Assemblymember, AD 58