

California's Experience Addressing Homelessness in Disaster Recovery

COSCUDA Program Manager's Conference
March 20, 2023





Agenda

1. Homelessness in California
2. Wildfire impacts on housing and homelessness
3. Homelessness in disaster recovery
4. COVID response: Project Homekey



Homelessness in California

- 160,000 Californians experiencing homelessness, 70 percent unsheltered
- Third highest rate of homelessness nationwide
- Record state funding to prevent and end homelessness (\$27 billion over past five fiscal years)
- More people being served, but even more people entering homelessness
- State directing cities/counties to enhance regional coordination



Wildfire Impacts on Housing and Homelessness

- Impacted residents in lower-income, rural areas are less likely to have property insurance.
- Rural affordable housing more likely to be older single family units.
- Subsidized units more likely to face flood/earthquake risk, less likely to be in fire hazard severity zone.
- Rental vacancy rate is very low statewide.
- Disaster vulnerability landscape → wildfires may impact unhoused populations less than flooding disasters.



Homelessness in Disaster Recovery

- Pre-disaster unhoused are ineligible for temporary or long-term housing assistance
- Undocumented individuals ineligible for assistance (farmworker communities)
- Post-disaster homelessness in receiving communities endures years after disaster
- Limited long-term recovery resources



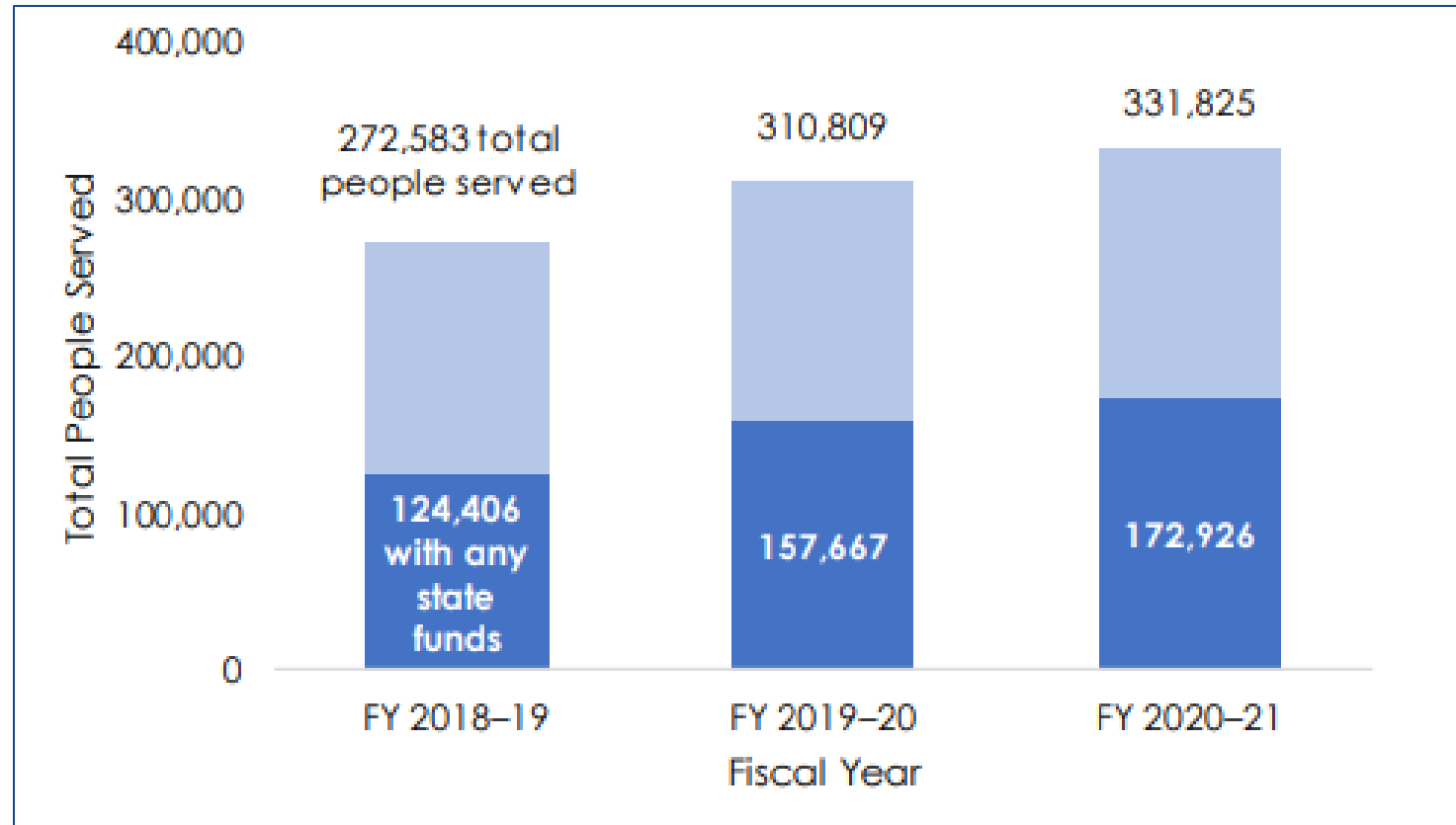
Wildfire and Federal Assistance

- Barriers to wildfire recovery and federal assistance
 - Insurance coverage and under-insurance
 - Per unit losses higher for wildfires
 - FEMA IA/SBA data and HUD unmet needs methodology
 - Low capacity regions in high capacity state



State Homelessness Response

- Priority Populations Task Force
- California Interagency Council on Homelessness
- Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention Grant Program (HHAP)
 - Regional coordination and unified regional responses
 - Flexible funding
- Project Homekey
 - COVID Response





Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention Grant Program (HHAP)

- Cal ICH awarded \$2.95B in five-year grants to eligible applicants across four rounds from FY19-FY22
 - Local governments, Non-profits, Unified funding agencies
- Flexible source of funds for cities, counties, and CoCs to create comprehensive plans to address homelessness challenges in ways that best meet local needs.
 - Housing relocation, stabilization, rental assistance
 - Operating subsidy for permanent housing
 - Housing subsidy funds
 - Operating support for emergency housing interventions
 - Systems support for homelessness services and housing delivery systems
 - Plan development or update



Project Homekey



Projects

Jurisdictions with Homekey Award: 60

Projects Serving Homeless Youth: 25

Tribal Projects: 6

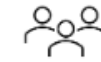


Homes

Homes: 6,863

Homes with 50+ Years of Affordability: 5,396

Family-Sized Homes: 602



People

Chronically Homeless Households Served: 2,457

Homeless Youth Households Served: 535

Households Served over Project Lifetime: 75,411

- 3 month timeline was powerful motivator
- Aging buildings have unexpected costs/repairs
- Construction costs may increase suddenly/significantly
- Support services are essential
- Buy-in from local leaders and elected officials necessary





Lessons Learned

- Objective is weaving together homelessness and disaster recovery areas of practice. Partnerships across silos required (housing, homelessness, emergency management, social services).
- Two populations: people experiencing pre-disaster homelessness and people made homeless by disaster.
- Natural hazard type impacts recovery resources available.
- Homelessness programs need to be flexible to support in disaster recovery contexts.
- COVID pandemic prompted policy innovation.

Questions?

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