



County of Monterey

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

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March 21, 2024

The Honorable Sharon Quirk-Silva, Chair
Assembly Budget Subcommittee #5
1021 O Street, Suite 4210
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention Program Funding

Dear Assembly Member Quirk-Silva:

I am writing in support for the Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) Program funding. The County of Monterey remains steadfast in responding to homelessness in our communities. The HHAP program has transformed lives throughout the County by securing permanent housing and needed services. I am thankful for the unprecedented investments made by legislative leadership in creating this monumental program in partnership with Governor Newsom. Now, I am urging that the commitment continue through this difficult budget environment.

Last year, the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) created the AT HOME Plan (Accountability, Transparency, Housing, Outreach, Mitigation, and Economic Opportunity), that outlined the development of a comprehensive homelessness response system. Working with the Administration and Legislature, counties successfully advocated for several elements of this plan to be incorporated into the HHAP program through the enactment of Assembly Bill 129 (Chapter 40, Statutes of 2023). As part of these reforms, the County finalized our regionally coordinated homelessness action plans, signed memorandums of understanding with definitive roles and responsibilities, and will be submitting joint applications with our local Continuum of Care (CoC) and partner county within the CoC's region. Combined with the \$1 billion in funding for HHAP Round 5, these actions will increase accountability for HHAP funding, further regional collaboration, and strengthen homelessness response efforts.

The County is looking forward to the outcomes of this funding; however, the HHAP program is funded with one-time investments which prevent counties from making long-term programmatic commitments. Even more concerning, the Governor's proposed budget does not include funding for a HHAP Round 6, while acknowledging a commitment to discuss potential funding during this budget process. Ongoing funding for the HHAP program at a level of at least the current \$1 billion annual amount is critical for counties. In addition, the \$360 million in HHAP supplemental funding must be distributed as outlined in AB 129 instead of delaying until FY 2025-26 as currently proposed.



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The HHAP program has allowed for flexibility, innovation and transformation in local homelessness service delivery. Since 2019, the County's biennial point-in-time count has seen a reduction of 28%. As a result, of the State's Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP) and HHAP investments, our communities have opened several housing navigation centers boasting permanent housing outcomes ranging from 60-80%. The County's Permanent Supportive Housing units more than doubled, the first-ever transitional-aged youth rapid re-housing program was established, and outreach programs that provide mobile case management and medical services directly to encampment occupants were created. The County continues to build capacity and communities will suffer at the loss of HHAP in FY 2024-25.

Homelessness is not an issue that could be resolved with five years of investment. Counties have historically had very little federal investment in homelessness response efforts, and the State's flexible funding provided the necessary boost that led the County to its 28% reduction in homelessness. The County's goal remains unchanged – to get everyone into safe, stable housing – and HHAP is integral to its achievement.

Thank you for your consideration. Should you have any further questions, feel free to contact me at delarosasm@co.monterey.ca.us.

Sincerely,



Sonia M. De La Rosa
County Administrative Officer

cc: Honorable Members, Assembly Budget Subcommittee #5
The Honorable Jesse Gabriel, Chair, Assembly Budget Committee
Genevieve Morales, Assembly Budget Committee
Brent Finkel, Assembly Republican Fiscal Office
Katie Kolitsos, Office of the Assembly Speaker
Ginni Bella Navarre, Legislative Analyst's Office
Tomiquia Moss, Secretary, Business, Consumer Services, and Housing Agency
Teresa Calvert, Department of Finance
Myles White, Office of Governor Newsom
James Hacker, Office of Governor Newsom
Hafsa Kaka, Office of Governor Newsom
The Honorable Anna Caballero, 14th Senate District
The Honorable John Laird, 17th Senate District
The Honorable Robert Rivas, 29th Assembly District
The Honorable Dawn Addis, 30th Assembly District
California State Association of Counties (CSAC)
Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC)