

Addressing Youth Homelessness in California

Educational Lunch & Learn for Legislative Staff

October 20, 2026

11:45 AM – 1:00 PM

State Capitol, Room 317, Sacramento, CA

Program Overview

California has made measurable progress in reducing youth homelessness, but maintaining that progress depends on sustained, youth-specific investment. Between 2020 and 2025, youth homelessness statewide declined by 34%, largely driven by the Homeless Housing Assistance and Prevention Program. Yet nearly 9,000 unaccompanied Californians age 24 and younger who are raising more than 1,000 children, remain homeless on a given night in the annual count.

Join [John Burton Advocates for Youth \(JBAY\)](#), homeless service providers, and youth leaders for an educational lunch and learn examining the policies and partnerships behind recent gains, the barriers that continue to leave young people without stable housing, and actionable opportunities to preserve and build on California's progress to end youth homelessness.

Accompanying Materials

- [*JBAY Report - Investing in Impact: How State Investment Reduced Youth Homelessness in California*](#)
- [*JBAY Report - Project 3,500: How Two State Programs Increased Housing Supports for Former Foster Youth in California*](#)

Agenda

I. Registration, Lunch & Networking | 11:45 AM–12:00 PM

Attendees will gather, grab their lunches, and settle in.

II. Welcome & Opening Remarks | 12:00–12:05 PM

Sarah Pauter, JBAY Executive Director and **Nick Hardeman**, Principal at Hardeman Strategies and Consulting and JBAY Board Member, will open the lunch and learn by establishing the legislative imperative to address youth homelessness and highlighting how targeted state investments help young people achieve stability.

III. The Evolution of California's Response to Youth Homelessness | 12:05–12:15 PM

Sarah Pauter will welcome legislative staff and trace how California's approach to youth homelessness has evolved through dedicated state funding, to where it stands today: a dual approach consisting of **preventative efforts** reaching foster youth paired with a **homelessness response safety net**, funded primarily through HHAP youth set-asides.

IV. How California Reduced Youth Homelessness & Risks That Threaten Youth | 12:15–12:35 PM

AJ Johnson, JBAY Director of Housing & Economic Mobility, will moderate a panel with **Simone Tureck Lee**, JBAY Senior Director of Programs and Policy, **Deisy Madrigal**, a youth housing provider at Lutheran Social Services, and **young adult advocates**. Together, they will highlight the investments and approaches that reduced youth homelessness and explore federal and state funding, policy, and data, along with challenges that could reverse California's progress and undermine youth stability.

V. Opportunities to Address & Prevent Youth Homelessness | 12:35–12:40 PM

Sarah Pauter, JBAY Executive Director, will discuss a forward-looking view of federal and state budget outlooks and opportunities that could safeguard youth-specific funding, bolster affordable housing, and leverage existing state and local infrastructure aimed to end youth homelessness.

VI. Questions & Interactive Discussion | 12:40–1:00 PM

An open session moderated by **Nick Hardeman**, Principal at Hardeman Strategies and Consulting and JBAY Board Member, giving legislative staff the opportunity to engage directly with JBAY policy experts, young adult advocates, and frontline providers. Attendees are invited to discuss district-specific needs, evaluate solutions, and uplift strategies that support youth experiencing homelessness.

Event Contact & Inquiries

For questions or additional information, please contact **AJ Johnson**, Director of Housing & Economic Mobility at aj@jbay.org.

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