Legislative Staff Educational Lunch & Learn

ADDRESSING YOUTH HOMELESSNESS IN CALIFORNIA

JBAY

JOHN BURTON Advocates *for* Youth

Welcome & Opening Remarks

THANK YOU



Office of Assemblymember Chris Ward

78th Assembly District

for hosting today's Lunch & Learn at the State Capitol

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THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS





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AGENDA

1. Welcome & Opening Remarks
2. The Evolution of California's Response to Youth Homelessness
3. How CA Reduced Youth Homelessness &

   Risks That Threaten Youth Homelessness
4. Opportunities to Address & Prevent Youth Homelessness
5. Questions & Interactive Discussion

You can learn more about what is discussed today is in our reports.

1



Investing in Impact

jbay.org/resources/investing-in-impact-2025

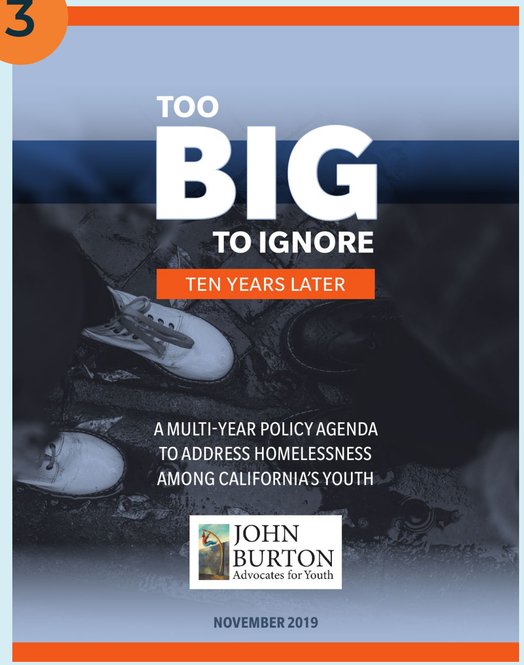
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Project 3500

jbay.org/resources/2024-thp-fyi

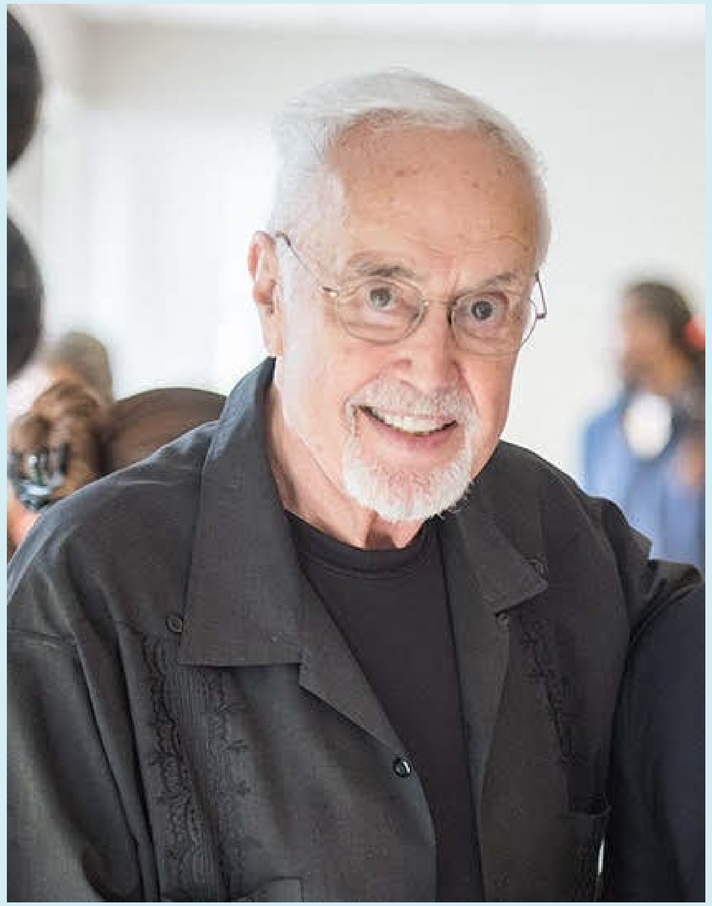
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Too Big to Ignore: 10 Years Later

jbay.org/resources/too-big-to-ignore-ten-years-later

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Emancipated from what? And into what? Into not being able to have a roof over their heads? Into homelessness? Into jail?

John Burton

Retired State Senator and founder of JBAY

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Source: JBAY, Remembering John Burton

JOHN BURTON Advocates for Youth

John Burton Advocates for Youth (JBAY)

Improves the quality of life for youth in California who have been in foster care or homeless by advocating for better laws, training communities to strengthen local practices and conducting research to inform policy solutions.

OUR FOCUS AREAS

- Housing
- Education
- Economic Mobility

JBAY has championed 71 major legislative and budget victories over the past two decades, transforming opportunities for foster youth and young people experiencing homelessness.

Founded by retired State Senator John Burton in 2004

TODAY'S SPEAKERS



Sarah Pauter
Executive Director
JBAY



Nick Hardeman
Principal, Hardeman Strategies and Consulting
JBAY Board Member



AJ Johnson
Director, Housing & Economic Mobility
JBAY



Simone Tureck Lee
Senior Director of Programs and Policy
JBAY



Deisy Madrigal
Youth Housing Provider
Lutheran Social Services



Cody Van Felden
Senior Project Associate
JBAY

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California has cut overall youth homelessness by a third since 2020, and unsheltered youth homelessness by half.



decline in youth homelessness statewide, 2020 to 2025

13,299 youth in 2020 to 8,829 in 2025

decline in *unsheltered* youth homelessness, 2020 to 2025

9,805 unsheltered youth in 2020 to 4,701 in 2025

Sheltered youth rose 18% over the same period (3,494 to 4,128), so the decline is driven by fewer youth living unsheltered.

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Source: HUD Point-in-Time Count data, California youth (under 25), 2020 to 2025; JBAY analysis

Even so, about 9,000 young people are homeless on a given night.

~9,000

unaccompanied Californians age 24 and younger are homeless on a single night

In addition, more than 1,000 children are being raised by young parents experiencing homelessness



Each dot represents about 60 young people

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Source: JBAY, annual homeless count data

Some young people face far higher risk: former foster youth, LGBTQ+ youth, youth of color, young parents and students.

FORMER FOSTER YOUTH

24%+

of young people in foster care at 17 had experienced homelessness by age 21, and 36% had couch-surfed (CalYOUTH study).

CURRENT FOSTER YOUTH

80%

lower risk of homelessness for youth who stay in extended foster care (in a foster family or transitional housing placement at 19) than for youth not in care.

LGBTQ+ YOUTH

2.2x

the risk of homelessness: LGBTQ youth face 120% higher risk than non-LGBTQ peers (national).

YOUTH OF COLOR

83%

higher risk for Black youth, and 33% higher for Hispanic youth who are not White (national). In California, over 75% of unaccompanied youth served are people of color.

YOUNG PARENTS

3x

the risk for unmarried parenting youth (200% higher, national). In California, more than 1,000 children are being raised by young people experiencing homelessness on a given night.

COLLEGE STUDENTS

1 in 5

California community college students experience homelessness, compared with 1 in 10 CSU students and 1 in 20 UC students.

LGBTQ+, Black, Hispanic and parenting figures are national relative risks from Voices of Youth Count. Student rates come from different surveys and are not directly comparable.

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Sources: CalYOUTH (via USC HPRI); Courtney, Park & Harty (2025); Chapin Hall Voices of Youth Count; USC HPRI, HDIS 2018-2021; RealCollege CA 2025; CA Competes

The Evolution of California's Response to Youth Homelessness

California built a youth-specific response by setting aside funding for young people.

California runs two systems: targeted prevention for youth connected to systems and institutions, and a safety net for youth who become homeless.

TARGETED PREVENTION

Preventing homelessness among youth connected to the foster care or probation systems, and post-secondary institutions

- Extended foster care and independent living skills support
- "Aftercare" housing and navigation (i.e. transitional housing, housing vouchers)
- Targeted student housing at public post-secondary institutions

Funded through federal, state, and county realigned child welfare dollars

HOMELESSNESS RESPONSE SAFETY NET

Identifies youth through the coordinated entry system

- Interim and permanent housing
- Rental support
- Supportive services
- Housing navigation
- Connection to benefits

Funded primarily through HHAP youth set-asides, which are one-time state funding

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HHAP pays for the full range of what young people need, from prevention to permanent supportive housing.

PERMANENT HOUSING

- Rental subsidies
- Landlord incentives
- Move-in expenses
- Operating subsidies in affordable or supportive housing
- Services in permanent housing
- Capital for permanent housing
- Services coordination

PREVENTION

- Rental assistance, rapid rehousing and other programs prioritizing households at or below 30% AMI
- Homelessness diversion programs

INTERIM HOUSING

- Low-barrier navigation centers
- Operating expenses for existing congregate shelter
- **Operating expenses for non-congregate shelter and transitional housing for youth**
- Motel or hotel vouchers
- Services in interim housing
- **Capital for new non-congregate shelter and transitional housing for homeless youth**
- Capital for clinically enhanced shelter
- **Youth-focused services in transitional housing**
- Improvements to existing shelters to lower barriers and increase privacy

NON-HOUSING

- Street outreach, engagement and intensive case management
- Assertive community treatment and housing navigation
- Harm reduction services
- Coordination with street-based health care
- Hygiene services

Orange items are youth-specific. All HHAP-funded interventions must follow Housing First, and administrative costs are capped at 7%.

Each grantee must spend at least 10% of HHAP funds on youth: no less than $78.85 million in Round 6.

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Source: JBAY, 2024 Implementation Fact Sheet (HHAP Round 6, 2024-25)

Four fact sheets provide summaries of HHAP and Homekey youth funding from 2022 to 2026.

1

2022-23

FACT SHEET

Homekey and HHAP

[Homekey Round 3 & HHAP Round 4 (2022-23)]

2

2023-24

FACT SHEET

HHAP Round 5

[HHAP Round 5 (2023-24)]

3

2024-25

FACT SHEET

HHAP Round 6

[HHAP Round 6 (2024-25)]

4

2026-27

FACT SHEET

HHAP Round 7

[HHAP Round 7 (2026-27)]

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California built a youth-specific response by setting aside funding for young people in every round.

1

2018-19

HEAP

5% youth set-aside in the state's one-time $500 million homelessness investment

2

2019-20

HHAP Round 1

$650 million, with an 8% youth set-aside

3

2020-21

HHAP Round 2

$300 million, with an 8% youth set-aside

4

2021-22

HHAP Round 3

$1 billion, with the youth set-aside increased to 10%

5

2022-23

HHAP Round 4

$1 billion, with a 10% youth set-aside

6

2023-24

HHAP Round 5

$1 billion, with a 10% youth set-aside

7

2024-25

HHAP Round 6

$1 billion, with a 10% youth set-aside

2025-26

No HHAP funding

$500M negotiated for inclusion in 2026 budget for HHAP

9

2026-27

HHAP Round 7

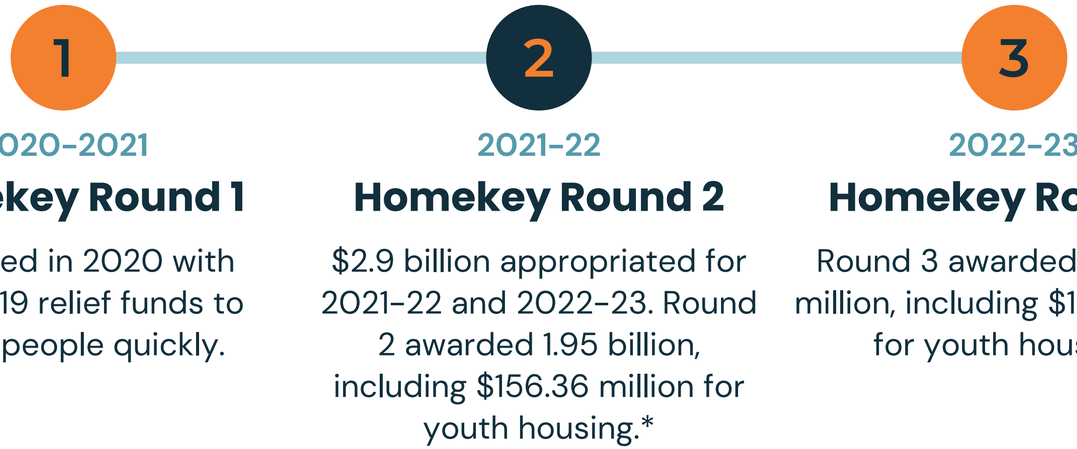
$890 million, with a 10% youth set-aside

In Round 5, HHAP grantees are investing 10.83% of funding in youth, and 27% are investing above the 10% minimum.

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Source: JBAY, Investing in Impact (2025)

Homekey added 8% to 10% youth set-asides for building housing.



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Source: California HCD Homekey Round 2, Round 3 and Homekey+ NOFAs; JBAY
*Funding awarded over multiple years but appear in this chart in the year the funds were appropriated.

HHAP-funded services to youth grew 18% from 2023 to 2025.

	2023	2024	2025	2026*
Total youth served	**42,505**	**49,101**	**50,098**	**24,336**
WITHIN THAT TOTAL				
Unaccompanied youth	**16,088**	**17,547**	**17,200**	**9,808**
Unaccompanied minors	1,506	1,718	1,300	682
Unaccompanied young adults	14,522	15,750	15,846	9,038
Parenting youth	**3,010**	**3,674**	**3,770**	**1,660**

*2026 is partial (through March 31).

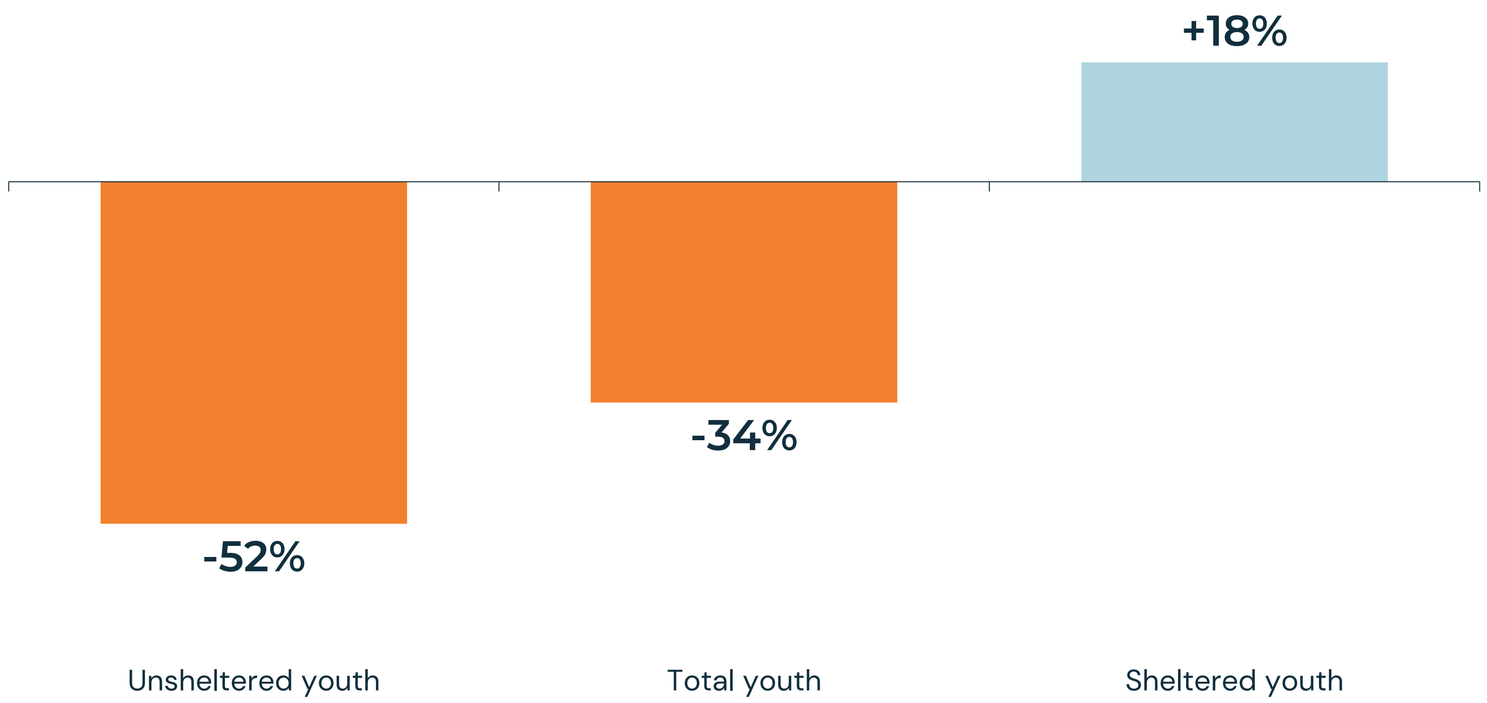
We do not add the years together, because the same young person can be served in more than one year.

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Source: HHAP youth data, all CoCs, as provided by JBAY; 2026 reporting through March 31

Targeted state investment is working: unsheltered youth homelessness is down 52% since 2020.

Change in youth homelessness in California, 2020 to 2025



5,104
fewer unsheltered youth on a single night in 2025 than in 2020 (9,805 to 4,701)

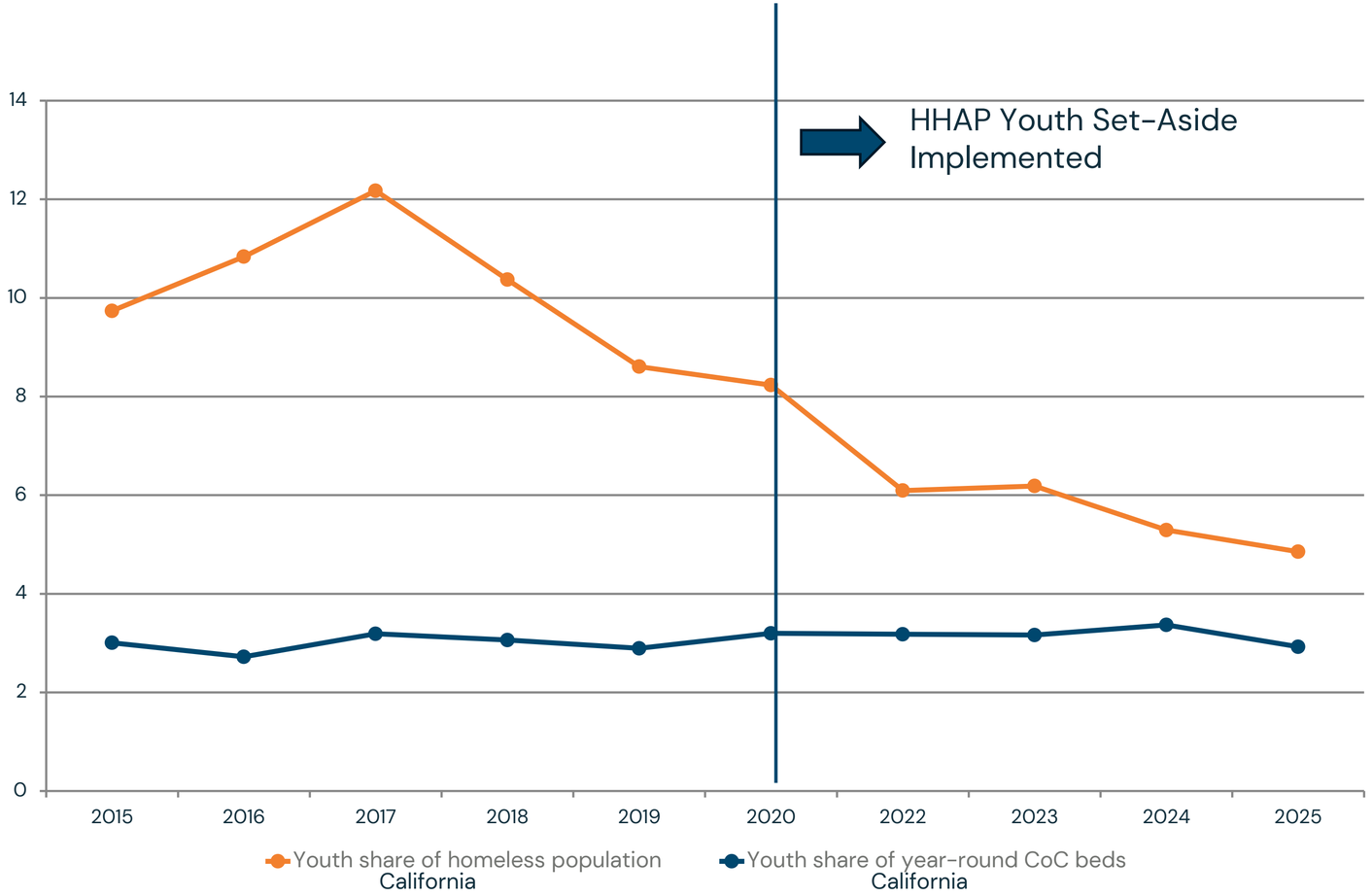
4,470
fewer youth overall (13,299 to 8,829)

1,073
fewer youth in the past year alone, 2024 to 2025 (–11%)

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Source: HUD Point-in-Time Count data, California youth (under 25), 2020 to 2025; JBAY analysis

Homeless youth in California have not received a proportionate share of federal funding.



Prior to HHAP:

- 1 in 10 of CA's homeless population were youth
- But only 3% of CA's federally funded beds were designated for youth.

Since HHAP:

- Youth homelessness in CA has decreased by 34%
- Youth now make up a smaller share of CA's homeless: 5% in 2025.

Without HHAP:

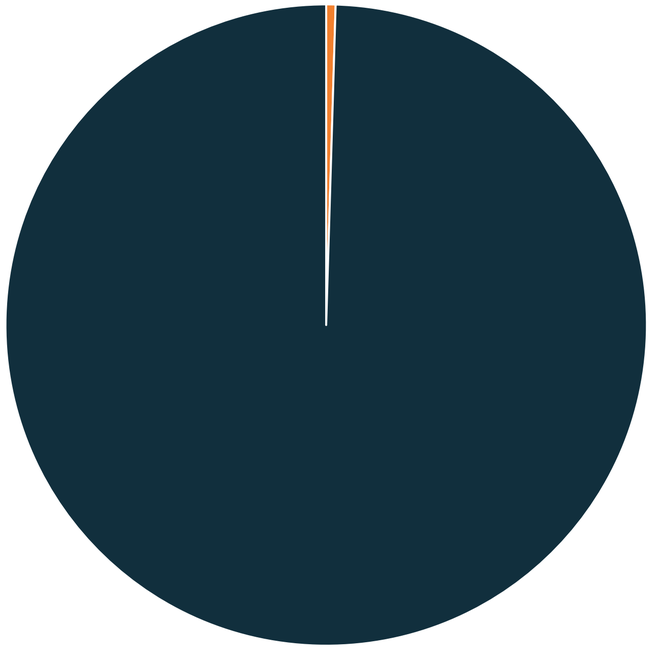
- The funding gap would return.

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How California Reduced Youth Homelessness & Risks That Threaten Youth Homelessness

The set-aside worked, and four things put that progress at risk.

California spends less than 0.5% of its state funds on homelessness.



Homelessness

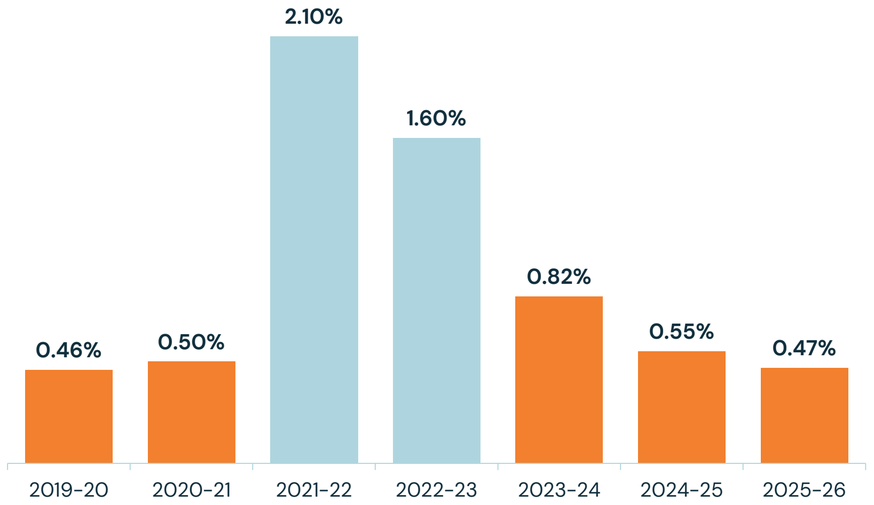
All other state spending

0.47%

about **$1.5 billion** of **$321 billion** in state-controlled funds, FY 2025-26

Put another way: about 47 cents of every $100

Share of state funds spent on homelessness



Light bars: one-time pandemic-era surplus spending

The share is about where it was in 2019-20 (0.46%). The pandemic surge was one-time.

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Source: USC Homelessness Policy Research Institute (June 2026)

Voters want homelessness addressed, but the funding to solve it is not in place.

WHAT CHANGED

$890M

HHAP Round 7: $500M from last year plus $390M new (+78%), all one-time

New rules

Local match, prohousing designation and encampment policies tied to Cal ICH guidance

New agency

Cal ICH and HCD now sits within the California Housing and Homelessness Agency (July 1, 2026)

WHAT CALIFORNIANS WANT

58%

said state government most needs to improve on homelessness and housing, more than any other area (Politico/UC Berkeley, 2025)

22%

of registered voters named homelessness the most urgent issue facing California, the top answer (Quinnipiac, 2023)

WHAT IS NOT IN PLACE

0.47%

of state funds in 2025-26, about the same as 0.46% in 2019-20

One-time

HHAP has been funded as one-time money, with no ongoing commitment

$2.2B

a year in state and federal funds combined, under 1% of the budget

Concern has eased somewhat in more recent surveys (PPIC, Oct. 2025). Also on the November 2026 ballot: an $11.25 billion housing bond, outside the budget package.

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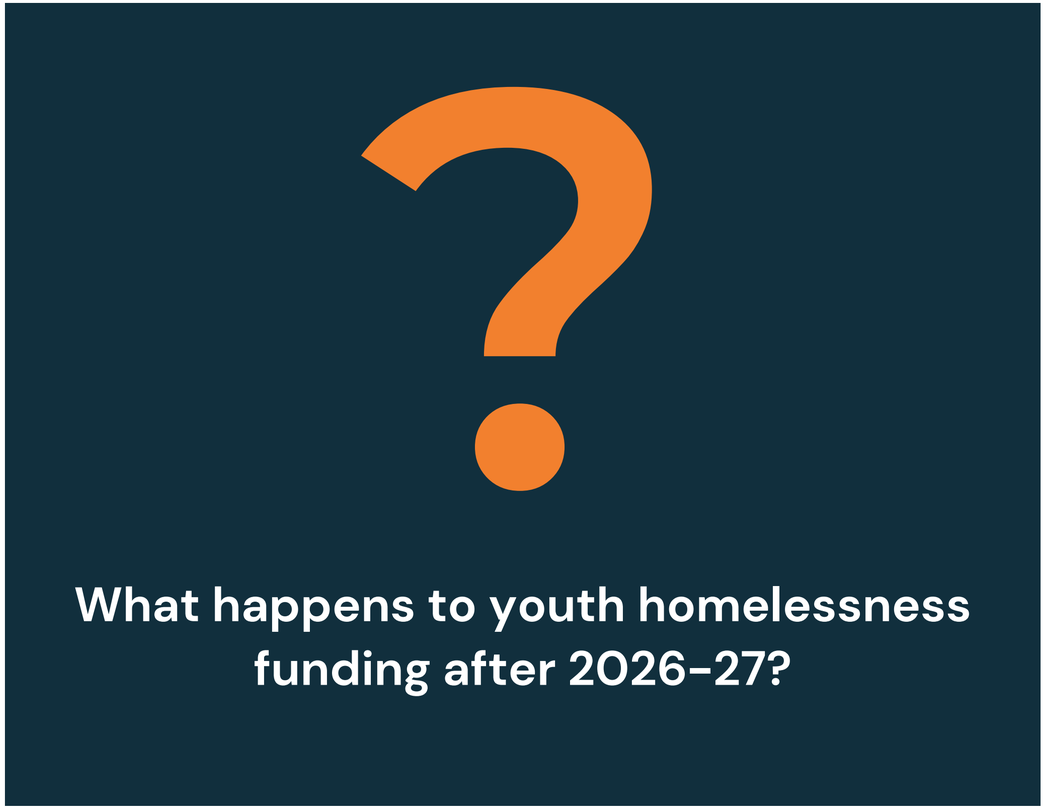
Source: LAO (Sept. 2026); USC HPRI (June 2026); Quinnipiac; Politico/UC Berkeley

WHAT PUTS CALIFORNIA'S PROGRESS AT RISK

RISK 1 OF 4 | ONE-TIME FUNDING

HHAP is one-time money, with no commitment after 2026-27.

HHAP was in every state budget from FY 2019-20 to 2024-25, left out of 2025-26, and funded at $890 million in 2026-27, again as one-time funding.



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Source: JBAY

WHAT PUTS CALIFORNIA'S PROGRESS AT RISK

RISK 2 OF 4 | LIMITED FEDERAL SUPPORT

Federal support for youth has always been small and is now under pressure.

Before HHAP, federal funding for youth homelessness totaled under $10 million for select California communities. While it has reached ~$45 million as of 2024, continued funding is uncertain.

Federal cuts now compete for state dollars.

Loss of federal support for food, health, and childcare services create additional strain on housing and homelessness providers to further fill the gaps.

<$10M

in federal funding for youth homelessness prior to HHAP

<$50M as of 2024
Continuity uncertain

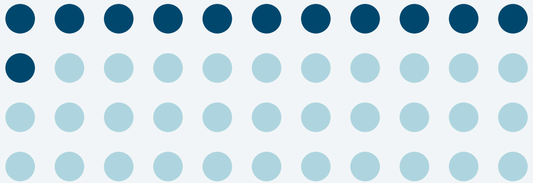
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Source: HHS ACF/FYSB, HUD Award Summary Report and HUD announcements

The one HUD program for homeless youth has an extremely limited geographic scope, reaching only about 1 in 4 CoCs

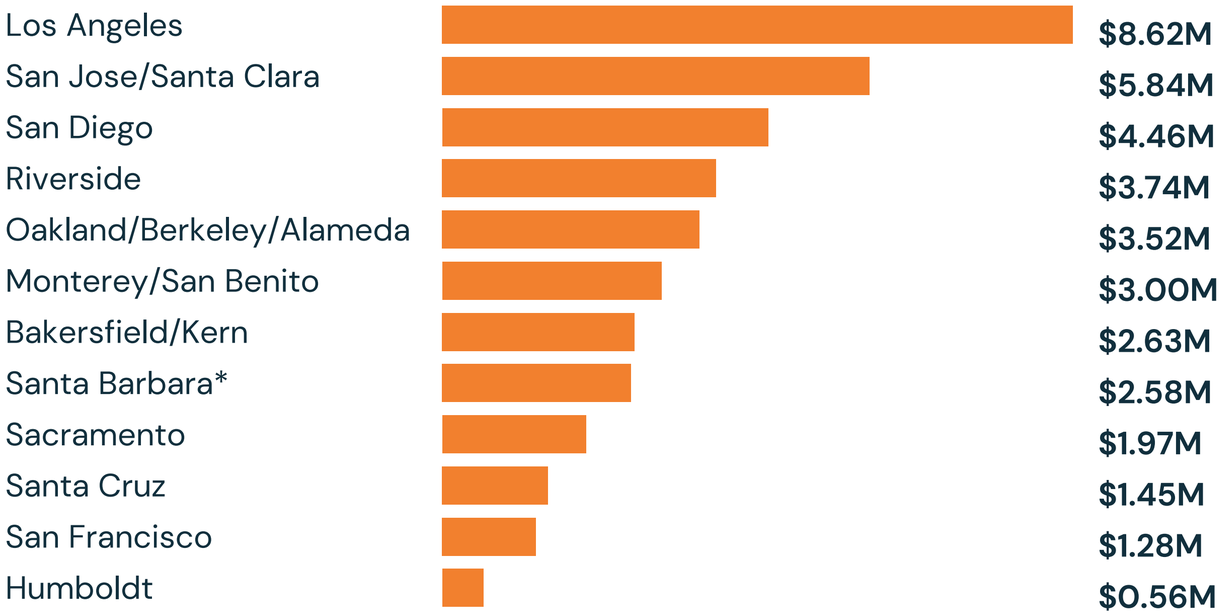
73%

32 of 44 CoCs receive $0



12 CoCs received funding (27%)

Funding among the 12 CA recipients



Total annual YHDP funding: $39.66 million

Program: Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project

Key Takeaways

- Funding is highly concentrated: **73% of California CoCs received no funding.**
- Nearly half of all funding (48%) goes to just **three** CoCs: Los Angeles, San Jose/Santa Clara, and San Diego.

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*Santa Maria/Santa Barbara County CoC was awarded $5.17M over two years; the annual amount is shown.
Source: HUD Award Summary Report; HUD announcements for Riverside, Bakersfield/Kern, Santa Barbara and Humboldt

13 of California's 58 counties are in a Continuum of Care that receives YHDP funding.

In a CoC that receives YHDP funding (13 of 58 counties)

No YHDP funding (45 counties)

Alameda	Glenn	Marin	Placer	San Mateo	Sutter
Alpine	**Humboldt**	Mariposa	Plumas	**Santa Barbara**	Tehama
Amador	Imperial	Mendocino	**Riverside**	**Santa Clara**	Trinity
Butte	Inyo	Merced	**Sacramento**	**Santa Cruz**	Tulare
Calaveras	**Kern**	Modoc	**San Benito**	Shasta	Tuolumne
Colusa	Kings	Mono	San Bernardino	Sierra	Ventura
Contra Costa	Lake	**Monterey**	**San Diego**	Siskiyou	Yolo
Del Norte	Lassen	Napa	**San Francisco**	Solano	Yuba
El Dorado	**Los Angeles***	Nevada	San Joaquin	Sonoma	
Fresno	Madera	Orange	San Luis Obispo	Stanislaus	

*Glendale, Long Beach and Pasadena have their own CoCs and receive no YHDP funding.

Not funded today? New YHDP funding means applying for a new HUD grant, and the timing depends on Congress and HUD.

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Source: HUD Award Summary Report and HUD announcements; YHDP funding by Continuum of Care supplied by JBAY

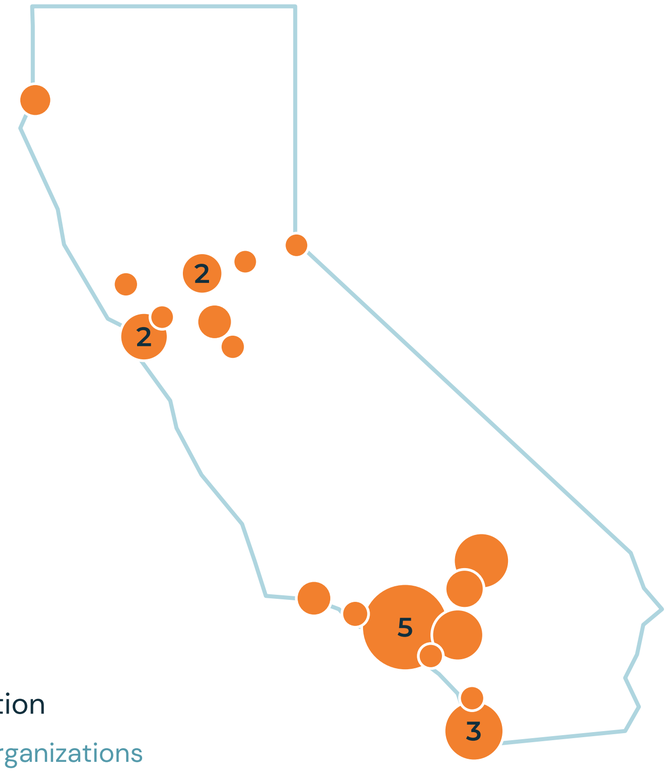
YHDP Funding in the Central Valley and North State is Particularly Sparse.

	CoCs (filled = funded)	Funded	YHDP $
Bay Area San Francisco, Alameda, Santa Clara, San Mateo, Contra Costa, Marin, Sonoma, Napa, Solano	●●●○○○○○○	3 of 9	$10.64M
Southern California Los Angeles, San Diego, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, Imperial (incl. Glendale, Long Beach, Pasadena)	●●●○○○○○○	3 of 9	$16.82M
Central Coast Monterey, San Benito, Santa Cruz, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Ventura	●●●○○	3 of 5	$7.03M
Greater Sacramento Sacramento, Yolo, Placer, El Dorado, Sutter, Yuba	●○○○○	1 of 5	$1.97M
Central Valley San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Fresno, Madera, Kings, Tulare, Kern	●○○○○○	1 of 6	$2.63M
North State & Sierra Humboldt, Mendocino, Lake, Butte, Shasta and neighbors, Tehama, Colusa, Glenn, Trinity, Nevada, Mother Lode, Eastern Sierra	●○○○○○○○○○	1 of 10	$0.56M

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Source: HUD Award Summary Report and HUD announcements; YHDP funding by Continuum of Care supplied by JBAY

The one federal HHS-funded program for youth also has an extremely limited geographic scope.



City with an RHY-funded organization

Dot size = three-year dollars; number = organizations

California RHY grantees

26 organizations hold RHY grants

15 of 58 counties are home to a funded organization

$5.70M a year across California ($17.09M over three years)

43 counties have none

Shows where each funded organization is based; its services may reach neighboring counties.

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Source: HHS ACF/FYSB; JBAY analysis of California RHY grantees (three-year grant totals)

WHAT PUTS CALIFORNIA'S PROGRESS AT RISK

RISK 3 OF 4 | LEADERSHIP TRANSITION

Youth homelessness needs a place on the new governor's agenda.

A new governor takes office in 2027.

Will they prioritize addressing youth homelessness?



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Source: JBAY

WHAT PUTS CALIFORNIA'S PROGRESS AT RISK

RISK 4 OF 4 | DATA GAPS

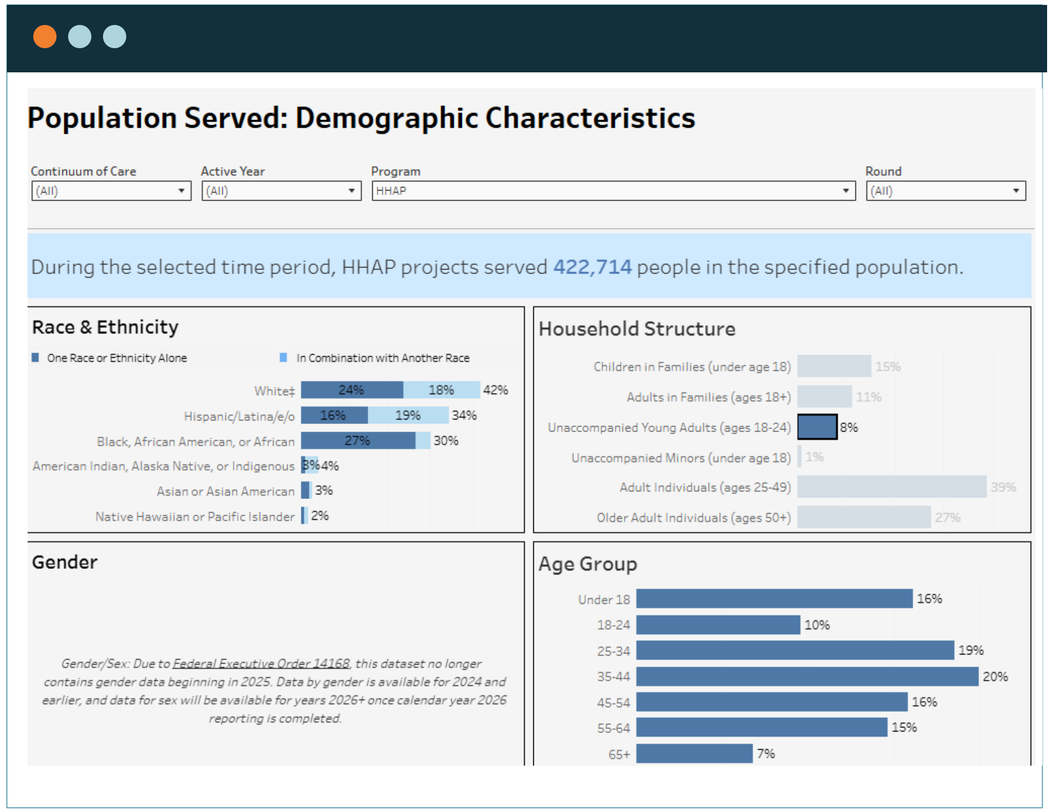
The state cannot yet say how many different young people are served.

No central data point shows how many young people are served, so duplication and the full need are hard to see.

→HHAP data collection requirements are extensive, but statewide public facing data is limited,

→Some other state funded programs serving youth do not enter data into HMIS/HDIS.

What is the existing service capacity and remaining need to address youth homelessness?



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Source: JBAY

Opportunities to Address & Prevent Youth Homelessness

Three opportunities for staff to sustain and build on the progress.

Three opportunities: stabilize funding, improve data and leadership, and share what you learn.

1

Funding stability

Identify and stabilize youth homelessness funding amid competing demands and uncertain federal support.

JBAY's report recommends an ongoing youth funding guarantee of at least $80 million within HHAP.

2

Data, planning and leadership

Paint a clearer picture of the scope of youth homelessness, who is being served, the gaps that remain, and what it would take to prevent and end it.

3

Shared learning

Learn across districts, agencies and both houses of the Legislature, and visit a youth-serving provider in your district.

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QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION

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