

## STAKEHOLDER INPUT: INCOMES AND EMPLOYMENT

### I. Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) Stakeholder Meetings

#### Where This Stakeholder Input Came From?

In 2005 the State of California Inter-Agency Council on Chronic Homelessness requested state government departments to solicit stakeholder input to assess current needs. Responding to the request, HCD held three stakeholder meetings throughout the State:

Tuesday, November 15, 2005	1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.	San Francisco, California
Thursday, November 17, 2005	1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.	Los Angeles, California
Monday, November 28, 2005	1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.	Sacramento, California

The following questions were presented to the Department:

1. What are state agencies doing well and what should continue?
2. What is not working well and should be changed?
3. What should be done that isn't being done?
4. What changes, improvements, etc., do we need from the federal government?

- Need a public education campaign to end stigmatization of the homeless.
- Increase the minimum wage.
- Provide a "living wage."
- Address federal rules that make limits on income and employment. Mainstream programs like CalWorks do not provide adequate funding for rents.
- Return CalWorks homeless assistance program to Deukmejian era -- "once in a year" allowance rather than "once in a lifetime."
- Return to higher SSI/CalWorks cost of living increase formulas of earlier times (e.g., early '70s).
- Create WPA type employment and training program for the homeless in the infrastructure bond.
- Jobs in Perata's bond bill (SB 1024) should be targeted to our target populations.
- Fund literacy and vocational education programs.
- Remove disincentives that SSI people have in entering workforce. Fix SSI to remove work disincentives.
- Expand the Homeless Court system in California. Homeless Courts are supported by the American Bar Association. They help homeless people with warrants or tickets to clear their records in order to get a valid ID or a job.
- Create a homelessness jobs program.
- Need year-round non-vocational education funding for homeless and at-risk.

- Increase the savings allowance for SSI and CalWorks.
- Create source for first and last month's rent and security deposit for the homeless and near homeless.
- Prevent banks and check cashiers from taking advantage of poor customers.
- Need rent subsidy money. Mental health money is only useful for a subgroup of the homeless.
- The State (Governor) has limited the use of TANF for rent subsidies to 4 months. Undo this limit.
- Federal rental subsidy program commitments are too short. Create a new State rental assistance program with funding enough to cover the length of rental restrictions.
- Eliminate "80% of income for rent rule" in CalWorks program.
- Section 8 vouchers should be more flexible.
- State programs provide wrong incentives. Cal-Works & food stamps disappear when people start low wage jobs, but the jobs pay too little even for rent.

## II. California Department of Veterans Affairs Stakeholder Input

### Where This Stakeholder Input Came From?

In 2005 the State of California Inter-Agency Council on Chronic Homelessness requested state government departments to solicit stakeholder input to assess current needs. Responding to the request, the California Department of Veterans Affairs submitted written input.

The following questions were presented to the Department:

1. What are state agencies doing well and what should continue?
2. What is not working well and should be changed?
3. What should be done that isn't being done?
4. What changes, improvements, etc., do we need from the federal government?

- Establish outreach programs to ensure veterans are aware of their benefits.
- Increase the percentage of California's veterans that receive compensation and pension benefits to match or best neighboring Western states.
- A coordinated effort between the National Guard, Reserve Guard, Reserve Commands and Veterans Affairs is needed to ensure demobilizing troops receive valuable benefit information.
- Increase the number of one-stop services, which bring USDVA, State VA, social services and labor departments. Local veteran and social services departments and VSOs together to provide immediate information for filing of veteran benefits.
- Develop public service announcement programs, including radio and print media designed to make veterans aware of their eligibility.

- The state must make it a priority to reach out to all veterans not currently receiving benefits.
- The state currently makes no specific outreach to advise homeless veterans of their benefits or provide veteran specific assistance in transitioning back into the workforce.
- Expand and fund the “Thank You for Services” program, a 2005 California Governor’s Office project providing recently released veterans with information on how to obtain benefits.