

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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June 12, 2025

The Honorable Mike McGuire
Senate President pro Tempore
1021 O Street, Suite 8518
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Robert Rivas
Speaker of the Assembly
1021 O Street, Suite 8330
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear pro Tem McGuire and Speaker Rivas,

I am writing on behalf of the Kern County Board of Supervisors to express our deep concerns with the Legislature's budget proposal, which does not include funding in this year's budget for the Homeless Housing Assistance and Prevention Program (HHAP). The lack of funding is especially alarming as our local communities anticipate an end to the federal emergency housing voucher program, eliminating roughly 15,000 vouchers for people experiencing homelessness.

As homelessness has increased 18% nationally, HHAP has prevented significant increases in California. For Kern, HHAP has been instrumental in building and sustaining homelessness resources. Numerous essential services are delivered through HHAP allocations—services that could not be sustained by the general fund resources of the County and the City of Bakersfield. These programs provide outreach, prevention, diversion, housing, and capital that is helpful in preventing, diverting, and addressing homelessness. Kern's 2025 Point-in-Time (PIT) Count will demonstrate a modest improvement in homelessness, an improvement made possible through the services funded by HHAP.

Despite this proven record of success, this budget provides no HHAP funding to big cities, counties, and Continuums of Care (CoCs) in 2026. Without HHAP funding this year, CoCs and service providers across California will struggle to deliver essential services and housing opportunities in their communities. In some communities, HHAP is the primary source of funding to serve people experiencing homelessness. The choice to completely eliminate HHAP funding in 2025-26 will slow down our work to reduce the number of people living on the streets. ***We urge the Legislature to immediately prioritize and allocate \$1 billion for HHAP in the 2025-26 budget.***

Ironically, the State's complete disregard for this critical funding comes after counties and other jurisdictions were required to submit 3-year homelessness plans under more onerous application requirements in the name of increased accountability. The State's lack of funding continues an unreliable, piecemeal approach to addressing this crisis that is untenable.

To add insult to injury, cities and counties still haven't received any of the \$1 billion appropriated in last year's budget deal. Half of the funds appropriated in the 2024 Budget Act are estimated to be allocated to local governments between August and December 2025, and the remaining half is estimated to be allocated to local governments in spring 2027. Given the delays in funding allocation from the state to local governments, skipping an appropriation in 2025-26 will create an estimated 18-month to two-year gap between funding rounds 6 and 7. This approach by the State is simply unacceptable. Now, more than ever, we need a budget that reflects the needs of our most vulnerable residents.

For these reasons, the Kern County Board of Supervisors demands that the Legislature and the Administration prioritize and restore funding for HHAP in the 2025-26 budget.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'LP' or 'L Perez', written in a cursive style.

Leticia Perez, Chair
Kern County Board of Supervisors

cc: Chair and Honorable Members, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee
Chair and Honorable Members, Assembly Budget Committee
Honorable Members, Kern Legislative Delegation
California State Association of Counties
Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lange