

## FACT SHEET

Department of  
**SOCIAL SERVICES**



### Bringing Families Home (BFH)

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The Bringing Families Home (BFH) program, created by Assembly Bill (AB) 1603 (Chapter 25, Statutes of 2016), is intended to help reduce the number of families in the child welfare system experiencing homelessness, increase family reunification, and prevent foster care placements.

#### Program Overview

- BFH assists homeless families involved with the child welfare system and is designed to offer housing supports in order for families to successfully reunify.
- BFH follows a Housing First model and uses evidence-based housing interventions, including Rapid Rehousing and Permanent Supportive Housing. The type of housing intervention provided is determined by the family's level of need.
- Collaboration and coordination with homeless programs, child welfare, and juvenile dependency courts is critical to program success.
- The 2016-17 Budget Act included a state allocation of \$10 million General Fund (one-time) for BFH. The program requires a dollar-for-dollar county match, bringing the total program budget to \$20 million. The funds are available for a three-year period from July 2016 through June 2019.

#### Early Learnings, Program Accomplishments and Key Statistics

- Counties have attributed BFH with helping families within the child welfare system reunify faster and with higher success.
- BFH has supported systems change within communities by helping to build invaluable partnerships between child welfare systems and the local housing and homelessness system resulting in more streamlined, efficient and effective service provision.
- BFH has increased use of homeless data tracking by utilizing the Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS) and collaboration with the local homelessness Coordinated Entry System.
- From July 2017 through November 2018:
  - 1,380 families have been referred to BFH
  - 1,111 families have been approved
  - 642 families have needed and been provided temporary housing
  - 440 families have been permanently housed

- BFH data will be formally evaluated by third party researchers to assess program outcomes and effectiveness. However, in the interim, BFH county program staff report that BFH families appear to be reunifying faster and are staying reunified.

### Technical Assistance and Support

- The CDSS Housing and Homelessness Bureau provides regular and targeted technical assistance to counties operating a BFH program. These include:
  - A monthly conference call, with participation from all 12 BFH counties, to provide an opportunity for peer-sharing and targeted support from CDSS.
  - Individualized county specific support including regular and ongoing telephone and email correspondence as well as in-person site visits and meetings to strategize on how to resolve county specific challenges and gather information on lessons learned.
  - Ongoing support to help counties procure or expand housing opportunities for families, including securing federal Family Unification Program (FUP) vouchers and connecting to their local homelessness Continuum of Care (CoC) for additional permanent housing options that may benefit BFH families.
  - Webinars designed to support counties in securing housing, successful budgeting strategies, and using data to continuously improve the program.
  - In-person BFH specific Learning Forums hosted by CDSS which provide training on how best to facilitate collaboration among the child welfare and housing and homelessness systems, securing housing, and operating the BFH program consistent with evidence-based practices, including utilizing a Housing First approach in Rapid Re-Housing and Permanent Supportive Housing.
  - Promoting opportunities to attend national and statewide level housing and homelessness conferences to share strategies and hear lessons learned.

The CDSS allocated BFH Program funds in May 2017 to the following 12 county child welfare agencies:

|                 |             |
|-----------------|-------------|
| Kings           | \$250,000   |
| Los Angeles     | \$2,580,300 |
| Orange          | \$357,450   |
| Sacramento      | \$860,100   |
| San Diego       | \$850,000   |
| San Francisco   | \$1,873,993 |
| San Luis Obispo | \$856,907   |
| Santa Clara     | \$799,210   |
| Santa Cruz      | \$545,000   |
| Solano          | \$208,000   |
| Sonoma          | \$400,000   |
| Yolo            | \$112,500   |