



CHANGEWELLPROJECT

PARTNERING TO STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY SYSTEMS

CHANGE WELL PROJECT

*Supporting California's Communities in
Addressing the Homelessness Crisis*

Fiscal Year-End Report
2023

Our Mission

At Change Well, we support the transformation of social service programs into equitable, interconnected ecosystems of healing that are directly informed by the needs and experiences of vulnerable individuals and families.

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Our Vision

We envision a world where all communities are able to provide vulnerable community members the holistic supportive services they need to achieve stability, self-sufficiency, and wellbeing.

Change Well Project invests in long-term partnerships with government agencies, tribal communities, and community service providers to redesign service delivery systems that better address the needs of vulnerable community members.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Executive Summary

STRENGTHENING THE ECOSYSTEM OF HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS PROGRAMMING IN CALIFORNIA

While homelessness remains a critical issue across California communities, with support from the Change Well Project team, county and tribal leaders across California are making significant progress in ensuring that individuals with disabilities, older adults and families at risk of and experiencing homelessness are safely housed, have access to income supports, and the services they need to thrive.

Over the past two years, the Change Well Project has partnered with California Department of Social Services Housing & Homelessness Branch (CDSS) to help counties and tribal communities meet the urgent needs of Californians experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity. Through intensive technical assistance, training, and workforce development, the Change Well team supports counties and tribal communities in redesigning and scaling up programming to equitably house and provide services to vulnerable individuals and families across the state through programs including Bringing Families Home, CalWORKs Housing Support Program, Housing and Disability Advocacy Program, Project Room Key, and Home Safe.

Our team focuses on helping create systems-level responses that address challenges holistically while making decisions around program infrastructure quickly to meet crisis-level needs, and to build a workforce with the broad range of skills needed to effectively run expanded programming.

Drawing on our teams' deep experience addressing homelessness, our primary goal is supporting the implementation of programs that are transformative in the communities they serve and deeply stabilizing to program participants. We focus on assisting programs in implementing housing-first principles through practical practices and tools, and orienting programs to those strategies in a step-by-step way.

This critical support for California counties and tribal communities in scaling existing programs quickly, developing a prepared, effective workforce, and advancing systems integration efforts is having a powerful impact and helping to strengthen the ecosystem of housing and homelessness programming across the state. Going forward, Change Well Project will continue this robust support of programs throughout the State and expand specific training opportunities in new areas. Our multi-year technical assistance enables us to build long-term, deep partnerships to support the continued growth, sustainability, and strength of these critical programs.

IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

In our work to support California counties and tribal communities to combat the homelessness epidemic, to date the Change Well team has:

- Created a holistic framework—including seven key best practices—that drive system and program performance for rehousing programs based on knowledge gained through hundreds of technical assistance engagements and training opportunities across the state.
- Delivered individual, in-depth technical assistance to 53 out of California 58 counties, as well as 26 tribal communities, focusing on designing and redesigning programs for a new expanded scale and strengthening overall systems of care to support better housing outcomes for program participants.
- Provided over 4380 systems administrators, program leaders, and direct service staff with high-impact training to develop the key competencies needed across multiple disciplines to create and scale transformative housing programs and systems.

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OUR WORK:
DRIVING SYSTEM
AND PROGRAM
PERFORMANCE

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Our Work: Driving System and Program Performance

In California, Change Well's work focuses on providing counties and tribal communities with the knowledge and capacity to:

- fully operationalize and scale CDSS programs to strengthen the ecosystem of housing and homelessness services;
- train and grow an effective workforce prepared to meet the needs of those experiencing homelessness; and
- share promising practices, access tools and resources, and engage in intensive, cohort-based learning.

Tailoring support to each community's unique context, the Change Well team provides practical tools, solutions, and training to improve program strategy, planning, and day-to-day operations, increase equity, and ensure community voices are heard and honored.

Out of hundreds of technical assistance engagements and training opportunities, we have identified key best practices that drive system and program performance for rehousing programs in the state:

- 1 Application of Housing First principles and practices**
- 2 Development of Affordable Housing Strategies**
- 3 Dynamic and Appropriate Housing and Service Support**
- 4 Braided and Leveraged Funding**
- 5 Regional Integration & Community Collaboration**
- 6 Building Staff Skills and Competency**
- 7 Using Data for Program Improvement**

These practices guide all our work in providing direct technical assistance and training—to deepen our impact in transforming communities and the lives of program participants.

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CUSTOMIZED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR CALIFORNIA COUNTIES AND TRIBAL COMMUNITIES

Customized Technical Assistance for California Counties and Tribal Communities

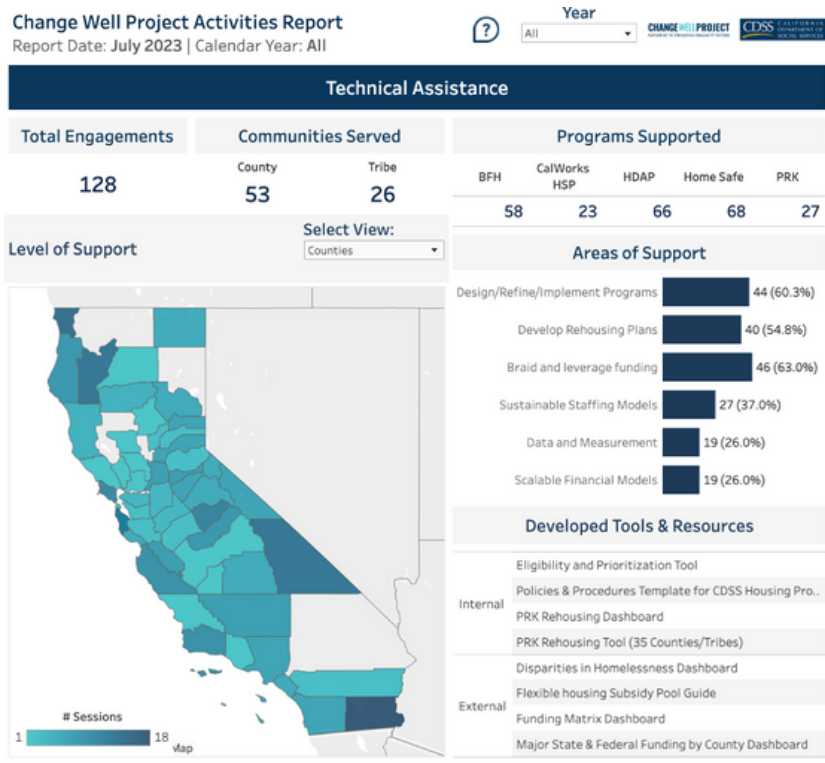
Since January 2022, the **Change Well Project team has supported 53 out of California's 58 counties, as well as 26 tribal communities**, through individual technical assistance.

FISCAL YEAR HIGHLIGHTS

- From January 2022 through June 2022, the Change Well Project team began providing a range of technical assistance services to **44 California counties and 5 tribal communities**—focusing on helping design or redesign programs for a new expanded scale and sharing concrete tools and resources that assist in the day-to-day work required to launch and scale homelessness programs.
- From July 2022 through June 2023, our team focused on deepening relationships with diverse counties and tribal communities across the state, continuing to provide technical assistance support to **43 counties and 26 tribal communities**—working to increase their capacity to measure and strengthen program performance over time.

Technical Assistance Impact:
Based on recent evaluation, **100 percent** of the counties that received Change Well technical assistance felt their programs were better prepared to meet their program goals, and **98 percent** agreed that the Change Well team provided high-quality, high impact support.

Critically, a significant majority of counties reported that they now see their programs as part of a larger system of care and know how to leverage the system components for better housing outcomes for program participants.



Click [here](#) to access the full Activities Dashboard.

Customized Technical Assistance for California Counties and Tribal Communities

Providing Customized Support to Tribal Communities

Across California, there are more than 150 diverse Indigenous nations—including 110 federally recognized tribes and more than 40 other tribal communities—each with their own distinct identity and governing structures. As California continues to grapple with the homelessness crisis, tribal nations face unique challenges in developing and implementing housing programs that meet their community needs.

- Federal housing funding available to Indian tribes are not enough to meet the full housing needs of the community, particularly for members of the community who are homeless.
- Many California tribal communities are quite small—and so unlike larger Indigenous nations that are based on large reservations, some don't have their own land base, or housing specifically designated for tribal community members.

To support the critical work of Indigenous leaders, the Change Well Project has worked to provide intensive technical assistance to 26 tribal communities.

When CDSS announced a set-aside of \$17.5 million in funds available only to tribal grantees in July 2022, Change Well Project worked closely with CDSS to ensure tribal nations were aware of this new funding, and offered intensive sessions, working with tribes and tribal organizations on their initial funding request. Since then, Change Well Project has continued to provide technical assistance to tribal grantees, provide technical assistance on operationalizing their program(s) to meet their community's needs and anticipates providing intensive support to a large cohort of new tribal grantees.

Specifically, Change Well Project provided foundational education on how CDSS HHD funding can be operationalized by reviewing the eligible populations and key program components of CDSS HHD funding streams, and provided tools that simplify and bring together the language laid out in various CDSS policy documents.

In addition, the Change Well Team worked with the tribal communities to identify data sets and other sources of information that served as the basis of the community needs statement. This data informed budget parameters by helping the Tribal team determine the target number of members to serve with each CDSS HHD funding stream. The Change Well team provided tribes with a robust budget template and iterated the build of a budget that supported their funding ask and programmatic plans.

Customized Technical Assistance for California Counties and Tribal Communities

Providing Customized Support to Tribal Communities

This spring, the Change Well team launched our Tribal Learning Community's first cohort to offer robust technical assistance to new tribal grantees through combining group learning communities and one-on-one technical assistance. Through the Learning Community, tribal grantees are engaging with a comprehensive curriculum on launching CDSS-funding programs, with content geared toward supportive team members who are leading design and implementation. To complement this group learning experience, tribal grantees are engaging in one-on-one technical assistance sessions to dive deeper into the concepts and activities introduced in the learning community.

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TARGETED TRAINING
AND WORKFORCE
PREPARATION SUPPORT
IMPLEMENTATION
AT A SYSTEMS
AND PROGRAM LEVEL

Targeted Training and Workforce Preparation Support Implementation at a Systems and Program Level

In addition to providing individual Technical Assistance, this year the Change Well Project continued to provide a comprehensive Training and Workforce Development program designed to strengthen the key competencies needed across multiple disciplines for public and private organizations to fully operationalize CDSS programs, and to ensure that California counties and tribal communities have a prepared workforce ready to meet the needs of residents experiencing homelessness.

Since January 2022, the Change Well Project has hosted over **125 training experiences, including learning communities, learning cohorts, and webinars, for nearly 4400 participants**—providing comprehensive learning opportunities in a dynamic, engaging space. These focused on a range of topics related to expanding and scaling homelessness programming.

FISCAL YEAR HIGHLIGHTS

- From January 2022 through June 2022, the Change Well Project **facilitated 28 events for 2349 participants**, including webinars, cohort learning communities, and trainings through our Digital Learning Platform.
- From July 2022 through June 2023, our team facilitated **113 events for 2031 participants**, including in-depth learning communities, blending live and online training cohorts through our Digital Learning Platform, webinars, and more.

Change Well training and learning opportunities focus on building the capacity of leaders working in three key areas to strengthen the homelessness response system:

- **Systems Leaders:** Supports CDSS-funded program administrators who are responsible for developing systems within their county or community agency, department, and/or organization.
- **Program Leaders:** supports CDSS-funded program managers and analysts responsible for designing and/or administering programs.
- **Direct Service Leaders:** supports CDSS-funded direct service providers who are delivering services in the community, including individuals from multiple disciplines that are critical to successful implementation of this work.

Targeted Training and Workforce Preparation Support Implementation at a Systems and Program Level

Change Well Project's training focuses on increasing understanding of housing first principles, effective policies and procedures, program requirements, effective case management practices, effective housing identification strategies, landlord engagement strategies, budgeting, and community coordination. We cover the components staff need to successfully operate a rehousing program while also building connections between providers across the state through their learning community.

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KEY ACTIVITIES FISCAL YEAR 2022-2023

Key Activities

I. Learning Communities

2022/2023 System Leaders Track Series: This series is dedicated to helping county leadership transition to a system leadership role. Each series is composed of two webinars followed by a learning community. They are designed to support County leadership who oversee staff that administer CDSS homeless funding such as HDAP, Bringing Families Home, CalWORKs-HSP, HomeSafe and are responsible for designing their department's homelessness response. This fiscal year Change Well offered the following series:



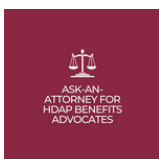
Monetizing Your Rehousing Investment - Performance Budgeting for System Leaders: A series focused on helping systems leaders understand the value of their investments as a contributor to the local homelessness response system, and how to best align funding with program goals, objectives, and outcomes to do their part to achieve anticipated results.



Defining a Homeless Response System: Sessions focused on learning about local level actors and their contributions to the homeless response systems as well as exploring regional partnerships and collaborative efforts.



Racial Equity Series: Sessions focused on bringing racial equity to the forefront of our work to address homelessness and using programmatic data and program design to reduce racial disparities.



Ask-an-Attorney Sessions for HDAP Benefits Advocates: The Change Well team partners with Inner City Law Center to provide a monthly opportunity for HDAP Benefits Advocates to ask legal questions about Social Security rules, CAPI rules, or other HDAP-specific case questions.



Change Well Project Learning Lab (formerly Program Office Hours): Offered monthly, Learning Lab is a space for CDSS Program Leaders to gain critical knowledge, skills, and resources focused on helping effectively manage and scale housing and homelessness programs. During each Learning Lab session, a subject matter expert dives deeply into a key topic or tool, providing both essential context and practical application tips leaders can bring immediately to their work.

Key Activities

II. Cohort Learning through the Change Well Project's Digital Learning Platform

Last year we launched Change Well Project's Digital Learning Platform to provide next-level training designed to help leaders and teams with a range of complex challenges in order to strengthen social service systems. The Digital Learning Platform is an innovative educational space offering courses and trainings tailored specifically to support social service staff—providing the latest knowledge, skills, and tools to strengthen community programs and systems. The Learning Platform provides:

- A powerful hybrid learning model that combines self-paced courses with live online seminars with expert instructors and peer learners
- Instruction from subject matter experts who are also practitioners, bringing together theory and practical tools you can apply immediately to your work
- Opportunities to connect and engage with your peers and fellow leaders to share challenges, experiences, and promising practices
- Access to the latest research, resources, and tools aimed at designing social service systems that prioritize equity, trust, and justice.

In fiscal year 2022-2023, Change Well offered the following cohort learning opportunities:



Benefits Advocacy for HDAP Providers: In 2022, Change Well Project and Inner City Law Center co-led six month-long intensive cohort trainings on Disability Benefits Advocacy to give staff the skills to advocate for children and adults with disabilities in the Social Security system. Transitioning this training from a live to a blended learning format provided participants with a deeper learning experience, with more hands-on activities and opportunities to reinforce concepts and skills.



Program Leaders Learning Cohorts: Through the Learning Platform, in August 2022 we introduced the first learning cohort of **Understanding and Strengthening the Ecosystem of Housing and Homelessness Services**. Designed to support program leaders working in housing and homeless service programs funded by CDSS, this program included six robust modules of self-paced learning combined with live sessions with introductions to discuss and apply the concepts and knowledge gained through each course and training. Of the 79 participants in this first cohort, 98 percent reported that the content provided in each course was high-quality, and 92 percent reported that the training will have a significant impact in strengthening their programs and approach to rehousing work. This second program leaders cohort was completed in the spring of 2023; again, 98 percent agreed the content was high-quality, and 92 percent reported agreed the content would help them advance efforts to strengthen their programs.

Key Activities



Housing Case Managers: To advance the skills of Direct Service Leaders, in January 2023 Change Well launched a Housing Case Manager Certificate Training as part of the Digital Learning Platform. This self-paced learning opportunity provides case managers with a deeper understanding of the landscape of homelessness, how to prepare to work in housing and homeless services and the role that case managers play, system components, and effective practices. This series provides frontline staff with the knowledge and capacity they need to effectively service Californians experiencing homelessness.

III. Webinars & Events



Understanding Continua of Care: Partnering to Combat Homelessness. Continua of Care play a critical role in coordinating services for those who are experiencing homelessness—and can serve as key partners to counties and tribal communities standing up CDSS-funded housing programs. To that end, Change Well Project partnered with Technical Assistance Collaborative, Inc (TAC) to present an in-depth webinar designed to help counties and tribal communities deepen their understanding of the role and mandate of the local CoC's.



Shared Housing Workshop: Shared housing interventions are building momentum and interest as most communities across the country struggle with enough affordable housing stock. Change Well Project partnered with The Impact Group to offer this workshop which covered various areas to help communities better understand how to set up and build successful shared housing programs within their rehousing system.

IV. Tribal Learning Community

As noted above, this spring the Change Well team launched our Tribal Learning Community's first cohort to offer robust technical assistance to new tribal grantees through combining group learning communities and one-on-one technical assistance.

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THE YEAR AHEAD

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The Year Ahead

In the fiscal year ahead, the Change Well Project team will continue to provide targeted technical assistance to counties and tribal communities, supporting them to implement program improvement strategies, gather and analyzing high-impact program performance data, and engage in compelling storytelling to build widespread, community-based support.

Specifically, we will focus on:



- Continuing to work closely with the current cohort of tribal grantees through our Tribal Learning Community, pairing group learning with one-on-one technical assistance.
- Launching a second Housing Case Managers cohort to run from late summer through the fall.
- Completing the blended-learning format of our Benefits Advocacy for HDAP Providers cohort to give staff the skills to advocate for children and adults with disabilities in the Social Security system.



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