



CHANGEWELLPROJECT

PARTNERING TO STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY SYSTEMS

CHANGE WELL PROJECT

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

End-of-Year Report
(January - December 2022)

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 year, the Change Well Project has partnered with California Department of Social Services Housing & Homelessness Division (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 into 2023, 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, this year the Change Well team:

- 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
- Provided 47 California counties and 23 tribal communities with individual, in-depth technical assistance 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 3300 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 & 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.

Our Work: Driving System & Program Performance

PILLARS OF OUR WORK



- We drive co-design of social services systems that promote collaboration, transparency, and equity.
- We partner with social service administrators and providers to strengthen service delivery and reimagine policies and processes that have failed to equitably support vulnerable community members.
- We deepen cross-system collaboration across the spectrum of social services programs so that systems become an inter-woven ecosystem.
- We create educational content, trainings, and concrete tools to help administrators and program staff increase effectiveness in service delivery while driving equity-based systems change.
- We facilitate effective integration and mutually beneficial relationships between public social service systems and community-based organizations.
- We promote an internal organizational culture that reflects our broader vision and centers equity, transparency, and the value of each

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CUSTOMIZED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR CALIFORNIA COUNTIES AND TRIBAL COMMUNITIES

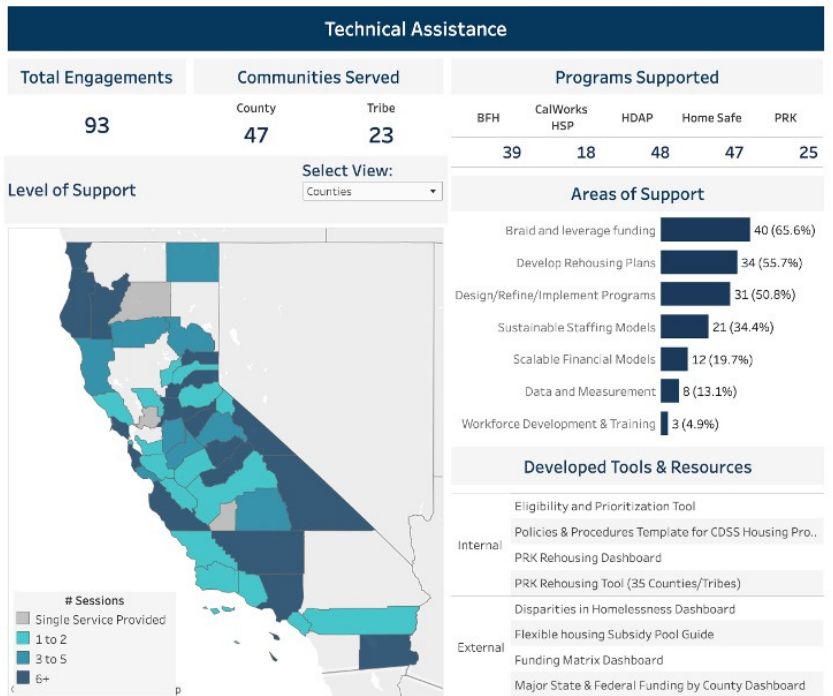
Customized Technical Assistance for California Counties and Tribal Communities

Since January 2022, the Change Well Project team has supported 47 California counties and 23 tribal communities through individual technical assistance—focusing on helping to 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.

Technical Assistance Impact: Based on recent evaluation, over 90 percent of the counties and tribal communities who received Change Well technical assistance felt their programs were better prepared to meet their community's needs, and 99 percent agreed that the Change Well team provided high-quality, high impact support.

Critically, 100 percent of communities and tribal communities 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.

Change Well Project Activities Report
Report Date: January - December 2022



[Link to the full Activities Dashboard here](#)

We deepen cross-system collaboration across the spectrum of social services programs so that systems become an inter-woven ecosystem.

Customized Technical Assistance for California Counties and Tribal Communities

Our team conducts an initial, in-depth conversation with staff from an individual county or tribal community, and then develops a comprehensive Technical Assistance Work Plan—ranging from a single session to up to three months of support—to address that community’s specific needs.

Our areas of focused support center in the following areas:

Application of Housing First Principles and Practices

The Change Well team is working with counties and communities to improve the delivery of supportive services from outreach to housing stabilization to be more person-centered and embody Housing First practices. Counties utilizing CDSS funds are working to identify areas of improvement at the County or subcontractor level to fully adopt a framework of Housing First, Harm Reduction and Trauma-Informed Care that is reflected in all program practices. This process during TA and beyond includes identifying gaps in current Policies and Procedures, updating existing Policies and Procedures that are not fully aligned with Housing First and creating a rehousing process that has minimal barriers and is centered around client choice. TA is also used to develop equitable assessments, equitable prioritization processes and establish client program agreements that are fully aligned with Housing First principles.

Dynamic and Appropriate Housing and Service Support

Housing identification support works best when it is client-centered, proactive, and engaged, with expectations clearly communicated to the client. Our team works with counties and tribal communities to strengthen case management strategies – so that programs are better prepared to support clients as they overcome issues once they are moved into permanent housing and plan to help make linkages to income sources and other services for which the client may be eligible.

Development of Affordable Housing Strategies

Post-pandemic migration and climate events have impacted an already tight affordable housing market in the state. We work with counties and tribal communities to leverage multiple strategies to develop the available housing stock for clients, including using housing navigation and landlord engagement efforts, making connections to a variety of housing options for clients, and using shared housing, master leased housing, habitability improvements to existing housing stock and leveraging Homekey awards.

“Best technical assistance experience in my 20-year career in human services.”

*Change Well Project
Technical Assistance Recipient*

Customized Technical Assistance for California Counties and Tribal Communities

Community Collaboration and Regional Integration & Building Staff Skills and Competency

Collaboration at the system level ensures that referrals and reverse referrals that may be necessary at the client level to maintain or sustain housing are done with minimal friction on the part of the household being served. The Change Well team helps counties and tribal communities identify opportunities to cultivate partnerships and develop strategies for service delivery and help to develop sustainable staffing models that improve efficiency and effectiveness by refining roles, expanding training, and centralizing functions across programs and funding streams for improved efficiency and effectiveness.

Braided and Leveraged Funding

Braiding and leveraging funds ensures that clients are able to access an expanded set of resources and support in a way that is seamless for the household receiving services. This process involves aligning programs so that funding from multiple sources supports a seamlessly integrated program with limited gaps or limitations due to funding sources. The Change Well team works with counties and tribal communities to evaluate and refine their financial models, finding ways to braid funding to align efforts around key outcomes, leverage community resources more fully, and reduce fragmentation, duplication, and administrative burden.

We facilitate effective integration and mutually beneficial relationships between public social service systems and community-based organizations.



Customized Technical Assistance for California Counties and Tribal Communities

Using Data for Program Improvement

Key data sources can help us paint a picture of what is working well in a community and where there are opportunities to improve our systems. The Change Well team provides frameworks for development of key performance indicators, helping counties and tribal communities develop program goals and benchmarks, review current data and data systems, and identify opportunities to strengthen current practices to provide robust and actionable data to support rehousing programs. Understanding population level data can be a powerful predictive tool in determining future program success and the characteristics of households who are high utilizers of housing program. Counties can then use this data to streamline processes, direct housing supports, community engagements, and landlord engagements.

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PROVIDING CUSTOMIZED
SUPPORT TO TRIBAL
COMMUNITIES

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Providing Customized Support to Tribal Communities

We partner with social service administrators and providers to strengthen service delivery and reimagine policies and processes that have failed to equitably support vulnerable community members.

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.

“The Social Services safety net is historically underfunded in Indian Country, so there isn't the same existing program infrastructure to work from that Counties who administer these funds are able to leverage.”

Whitney Lawrence
(Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe),
Senior Consultant at Change Well Project

To support the critical work of Indigenous leaders, over the last year the Change Well Project has worked to provide intensive technical assistance to 23 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.

Providing Customized Support to Tribal Communities

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.

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TARGETED TRAINING AND WORKFORCE PREPARATION SUPPORT

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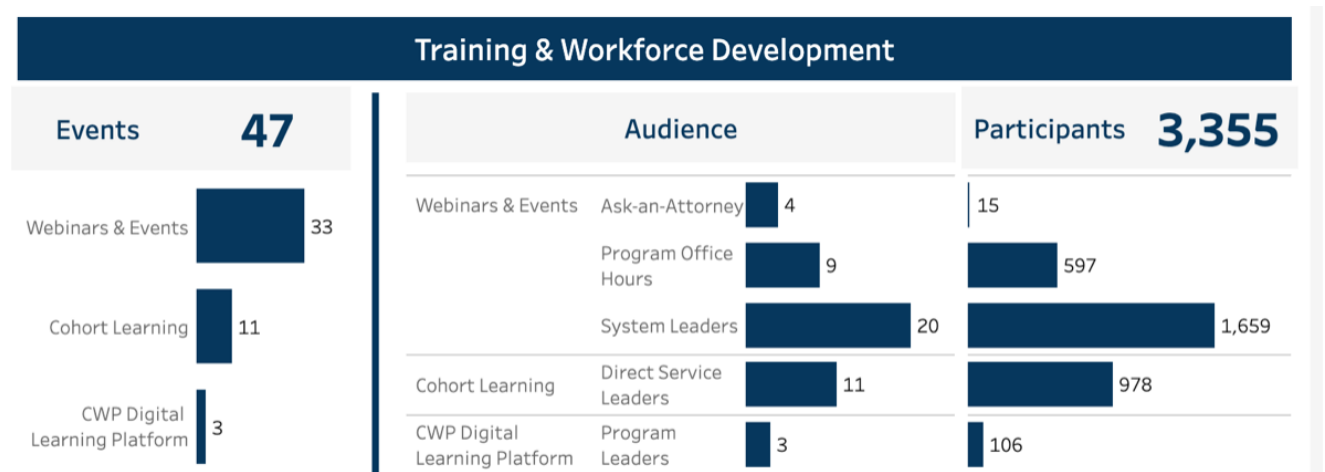
Targeted Training and Workforce Preparation Support

We create educational content, trainings, and concrete tools to help administrators and program staff increase effectiveness in service delivery while driving equity-based systems change.

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.

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

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.

“Being a part of Change Well Project’s learning cohort for program leaders gave me a clear and effective way to organize my thinking around building a new brand-new program designed to address a set of incredibly complex issues and community needs. Change Well synthesized the latest data, research, policies, resources and best practices around addressing housing and homelessness issues, which provided such a strong foundation for me—one that has been truly formative in how I’ve designed our Home Safe program.”

Reflections from Hannah Brady, Housing Programs Manager
Senior Advocacy Network, Modesto/Stanslaus County, California

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KEY ACTIVITIES

Key Activities

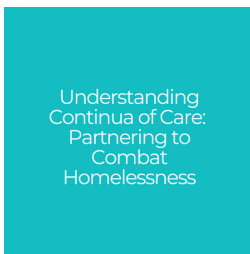
- I. **Webinars and Events:** This year the Change Well Project hosted **33 webinars and events for over 2300 participants**—providing comprehensive learning opportunities in a dynamic, engaging space. These focused on a range of topics related to expanding and scaling homelessness programming; examples include:



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 you 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.



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.

Key Activities

We drive co-design of social services systems that promote collaboration, transparency, and equity.

- II. **Cohort Learning:** This year the Change Well Project **engaged nearly 1000 participants in 11 opportunities** for intensive cohort-style learning focused on key topics in strengthening homelessness programming, including:



HDAP Benefits Advocacy Training: 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.



2022 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. In 2022, Change Well offered the following series:

- **Designing for Scale (Feb.-April 2022).** Sessions focused on creating flexible housing subsidy pools and strategic service partnerships.
- **Racial Equity Series (April-May 2022).** 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.
- **Defining a Homeless Response System (Sep.-Nov. 2022).** 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.

Key Activities

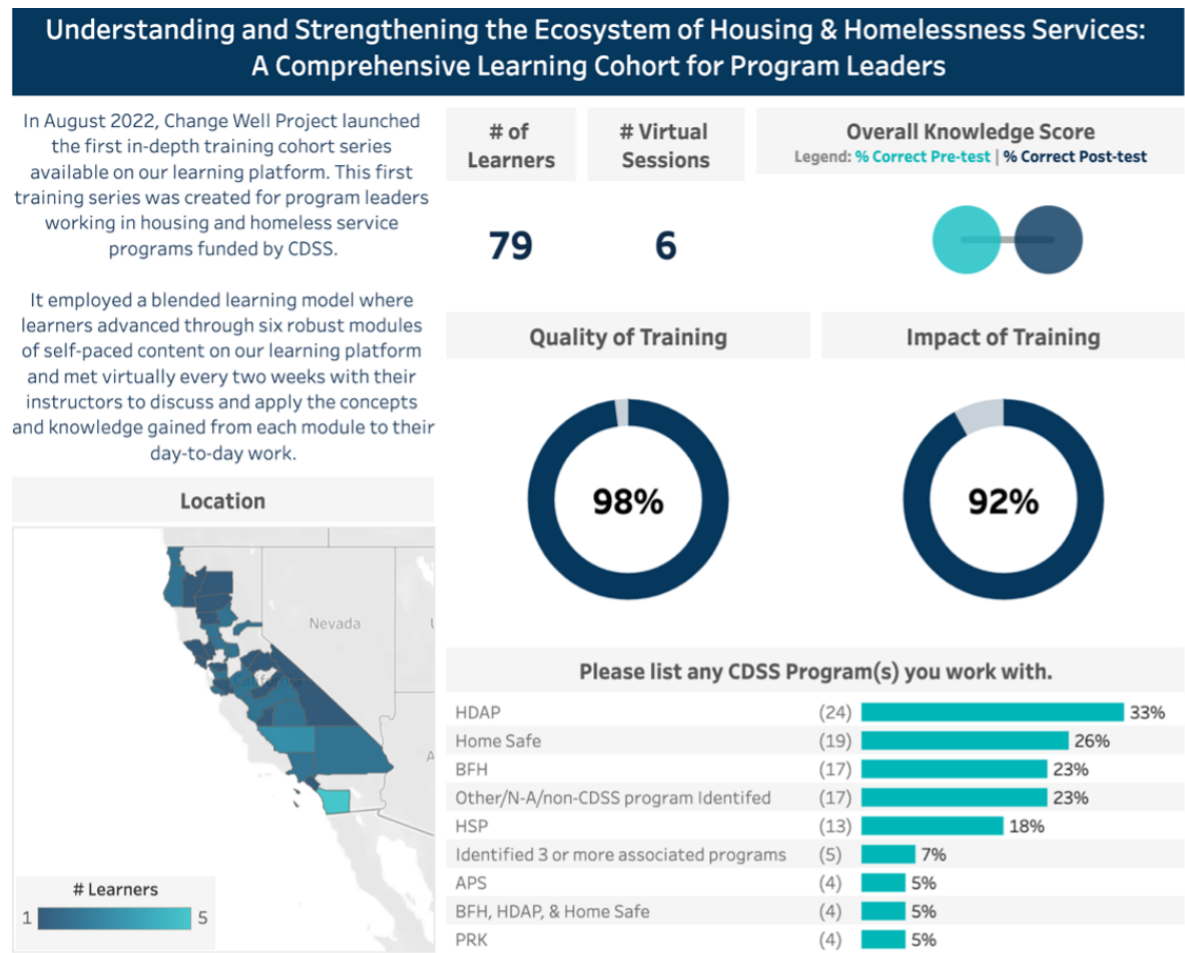
III. **Digital Learning Platform:** This year we launched Change Well Project’s Digital Learning Platform to provide next-level training designed to help leaders and teams with a range of complex challenges in order to strengthen social service systems. The Digital Learning Platform is an innovative 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. It 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.



Key Activities

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.



Key Activities

- IV. Presentations:** Our team, led by Change Well Project Founders **Elena Fiallo** and **Rebecca Watson**, presented at the 2022 County Welfare Directors Association of California (CWDA) conference on the importance of integrating disability advocacy as an essential strategy for ending homelessness. Individuals with disabilities are the most likely population to experience homelessness, yet there are significant barriers preventing these individuals from accessing SSI/SSDI benefits to help them achieve housing stability. Our session provided an overview of the barriers that exist in accessing Social Security programs, the core HDAP services that help eliminate these barriers, and how California Counties are stepping up to create effective Housing & Disability Advocacy Programs that ensure disability advocacy is being used as an essential tool to end homelessness in California.

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THE YEAR AHEAD

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The Year Ahead

As we head into 2023, the Change Well Project team will continue to provide targeted technical assistance to counties and tribal communities as they continue to build sustainable, accountable, effective programs in their communities. We look forward to supporting the new cohort of tribal grantees of CDSS HHD funds who will receive funding confirmation in early 2023. We have a robust technical assistance plan for these new tribal grantees that will combine group learning communities along with one-on-one technical assistance.

The Change Well team will be launching two new cohort learning series on its digital learning platform in 2023. To advance the skills of Direct Service Leaders, in January 2023 Change Well will launch a Housing Case Manager Certificate Training as part of the Digital Learning Platform. This self-paced learning opportunity will provide 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 will provide frontline staff with the knowledge and capacity they need to effectively service Californians experiencing homelessness.

Later this year, Change Well Project will launch a blended learning Benefits Advocacy training program. Moving this training from a live to a blended learning format will enable a deeper learning experience for participants with even more hands-on activities and opportunities to reinforce concepts and skills.



We promote an internal organizational culture that reflects our broader vision and centers equity, transparency, and the value of each.



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