



**CHANGEWELLPROJECT**  
PARTNERING TO STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY SYSTEMS

# FISCAL YEAR-END REPORT

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2022

## **The Change Well Project Supports Counties and Tribal Communities in Addressing California's Homelessness Crisis**

California has invested billions to strengthen homelessness response systems in counties and communities across the state in response to the growing crisis of homelessness. The California Department of Social Services Housing & Homelessness Branch (CDSS) plays a critical role in this effort—working with counties and tribal communities to meet the urgent needs of Californians experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity.

To leverage this infusion of additional resources in homelessness prevention, CDSS is working to redesign and scale up its 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.**

This work poses a range of opportunities and obstacles for the counties and tribal communities implementing this work on the ground. Many communities face a range of implementation challenges, including the demand to make 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.

## The Change Well Project's Role and Mission

Over the last six (6) months, the Change Well Project has partnered with the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to help counties and tribal communities overcome their challenges in creating, implementing, and scaling their CDSS funded homelessness programming. Today, with support from the Change Well team, county and tribal leaders across the state are strengthening and expanding existing programs and launching new programs to ensure 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.

Specifically, Change Well provides **comprehensive technical assistance, training, and workforce preparation** to support California counties and tribal communities in scaling existing programs quickly, developing a prepared, effective workforce, and advancing systems integration efforts **to strengthen the ecosystem of housing and homelessness programming across the state**. 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.

## Customized Technical Assistance for California Counties and Tribal Communities

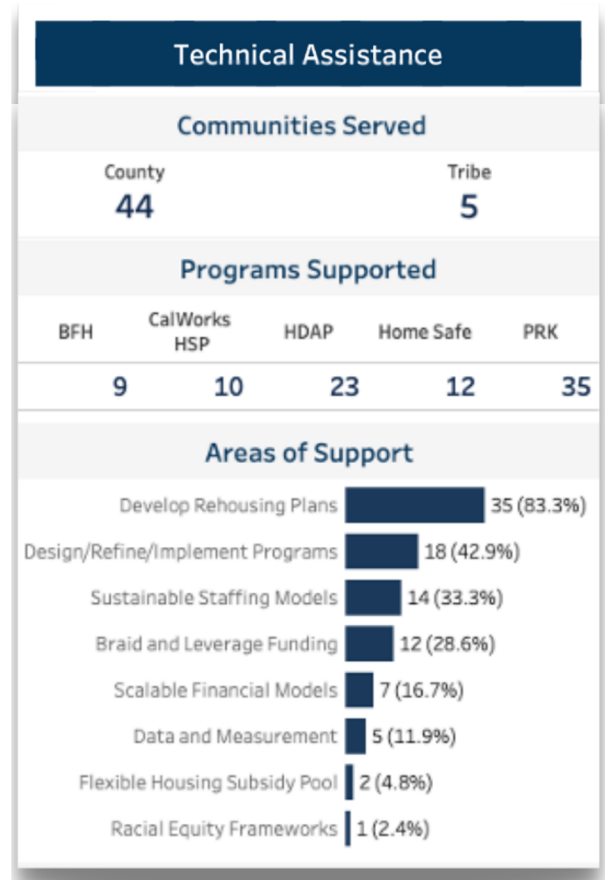
Since January 2022, the **Change Well Project team** has supported **44 California counties** and **5 tribal communities** through individual technical assistance—focusing on helping to **design or redesign programs for a new expanded scale** and sharing **concrete tools and resources** that assist in the day-to-day work required to launch and scale homelessness programs.

Members of the Change Well Project’s support team bring an average of 20+ years of experience addressing homelessness and are uniquely qualified to guide and support county and community leaders as they create and expand programming to fight homelessness. After an initial, in-depth conversation with staff

from an individual county or tribal community, the Change Well Project team 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. Customized support has focused on a wide range of issues, including:

- **Assess and Map Rehousing Systems and Design New Rehousing Plans:**

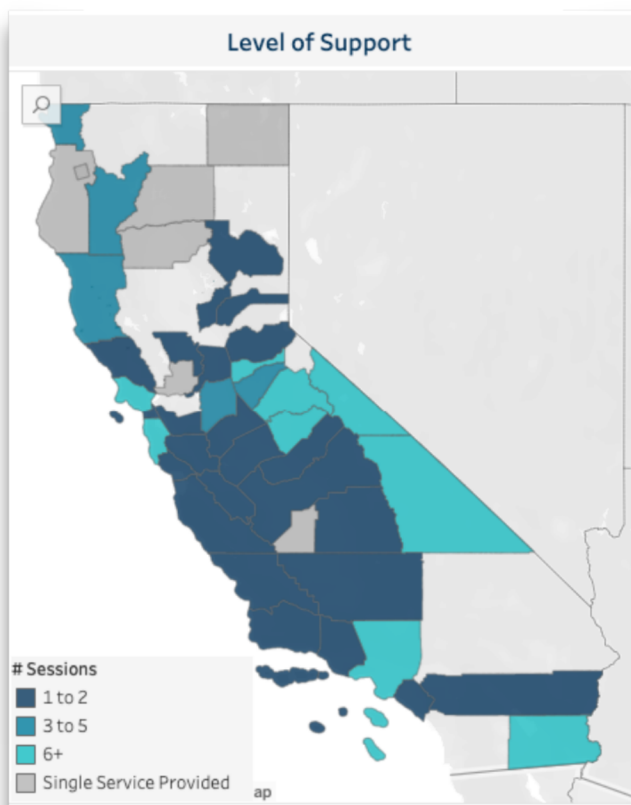
The Change Well team has worked with a range of communities to map their existing rehousing system and its resources and establish goals for moving forward. For those communities prepared for the next step, counties and tribal communities may receive support in developing comprehensive Rehousing Plans that leverage innovations in housing and service delivery models to support better program and participant outcomes.





## Customized Technical Assistance for California Counties and Tribal Communities

- **Develop Staffing, Contracting & Strategic Partnership Plans:** 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.
- **Develop Scalable Financial Models that Leverage Funding Across Programs:** 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.



- **Track Data and Impact:** 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.

## Providing Customized Support to Tribal Communities

Change Well Project has also focused specifically on providing technical assistance and support to tribes in California to build out CDSS-funded programs. Although several tribes were grantees of CDSS-funded programs prior to this fiscal year, CDSS placed a special priority on funding tribal grantees starting this fiscal year with a set-aside of \$17.5 million in funds available only to tribal grantees.

The application for the tribal set-aside funding was released in July 2022 and Change Well Project closely collaborated with CDSS in the pre-release process. This included co-designing and hosting a listening session in late July along with the release of the funds and engaging trusted partners to share information on the tribal set-aside.

Tribes are eligible grantees to operate the Bringing Families Home, Home Safe, and Housing and Disability Advocacy Program. Change Well Project offered intensive technical assistance during the pre-funding application period in August/September 2022 to work with tribes and tribal organizations on their initial funding request. This technical assistance includes determining need in their community and structuring a detailed budget for their funding request.

Change Well Project will be available for continuing technical assistance to tribal grantees once funding is released. Change Well Project will provide technical assistance on operationalizing their program(s) to meet their community's needs and anticipate providing intensive support to a large cohort of new tribal grantees.

"I get really excited when I talk about Change Well, because this relationship has been so positive, and they've been so supportive. Homelessness, mental health challenges, and substance abuse are challenges in so many tribal communities, including ours—and we have very limited funding to address the housing needs we face. The tribal set-aside funding has been long overdue, and the Change Well team immediately started helping us identify what funding to apply for and how to approach that work. Tribes know what's happening in their communities, but it's wonderful to see the State make an active effort to bring tribes to the table in accessing these new resources—and to have the Change Well team to help us navigate the process."

***Ida Riggins, Vice Chairwoman of the Pit River Tribe***

## Targeted Training and Workforce Preparation: Supporting Implementation at a Systems and Program Level

In addition to providing individual Technical Assistance, this year the Change Well Project launched 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.

## Key Activities

- I. **Webinars and Events:** This year the Change Well Project hosted 21 webinars and events for over 1500 participants—providing comprehensive learning opportunities in a dynamic, engaging space. These focused on a range of topics related to expanding and scaling homelessness programming.
  
- II. **Cohort Learning:** This year the Change Well Project engaged over 700 participants in 5 opportunities for intensive cohort-style learning focused on key topics in strengthening homelessness programming, including:
  - **HDAP Benefits Advocacy Training:** Led four 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.

"I hadn't done disability work for about 5 years, and the training for me was really amazing. I loved the way the Change Well team and their counterparts at Inner City Law Center talked through things with such enthusiasm, and with the breadth and depth I needed to really solidify an approach to my work going forward. I really appreciated being able to connect with other disability advocates across the state—and to remember that while I may be the only HDAP case manager for our county, there's a statewide infrastructure to inform and support our work. I'm now using the tools Change Well presented and sharing them with other disability advocates as well. It's a training that's incredible whether you're new to this work or bringing deep experience in the field—I highly recommend it."

*Melissa Reed, PhD*

*Program Coordinator, Housing and Disability Advocacy Program - HDAP,  
Transitions Mental Health Association, San Luis Obispo County*

- **Landlord Engagement Series:** Led a three-part cohort training series on developing a system-wide approach to landlord engagement and unit acquisition—offering detailed examples of how to best engage and support landlords and housing program participants.



## Key Activities

**III. Digital Learning Platform:** Just before the end of the fiscal year, the Change Well Project finalized the development of its Digital Learning Platform and completed planning for the first cohort for Program Leaders. This comprehensive learning experience focuses on understanding how to strengthen the ecosystem of housing and homelessness services, providing program analysts and managers with in-depth support and training tailored specifically to their work.



## The Year Ahead

As we embark on the year ahead, the Change Well Project team will continue to provide targeted technical assistance to counties and tribal communities working to launch and scale high impact homelessness programs—diving deep into the fundamental capacities and practices that are required for meaningful systems change.

In addition, the Change Well team is expanding its training and workforce preparation activities to include new learning opportunities providing promising practices, innovative tools and resources, guidance from subject matter experts, and engagement with peers across the state. A third Designing for Scale series will focus on the critical topics of: Advancing Racial Equity; Building Collaborations & Partnerships; Integrating Persons with Living Expertise; Braiding Funding; and Leadership Development.

Finally, Change Well will launch the first learning cohort for Program Leaders through its Digital Learning Platform. Program Leaders—including program managers and analysts responsible for designing and/or administering housing programs—play a critical role in meeting the needs of those experiencing homelessness. This blended learning opportunity includes a series of courses to deepen understanding of the homeless response systems and to explore the latest innovations and effective practices.

To advance the skills of Direct Service Leaders, 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.



## Contact

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