

April 19, 2021

Honorable Susan Talamantes Eggman, Chair
Senate Budget & Fiscal Review Sub. No. 3
State Capitol, Room 5114
Sacramento, CA 95814

Honorable Dr. Joaquin Arambula, Chair
Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 1
State Capitol, Room 5155
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Flexible Funding for County Human Services Department-Administered Housing Programs

Dear Chair Talamantes Eggman and Chair Arambula:

The County of Lake respectfully requests your support for a \$100 million one-time General Fund augmentation to create a flexible funding pool for county social services departments to fill service delivery gaps in the housing programs that the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) and county departments currently administer. These housing programs, specifically serving individuals and families linked to the state's social safety net programs, are critical to those programs' success.

County social service departments serve the poorest and most vulnerable Californians, who often have unique and complex needs and face housing challenges even in the best of times. Our clients have now borne the most devastating health and economic impacts from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. This proposal would provide a targeted housing investment for low-income families; child-welfare involved families; older adults who have been abused, neglected or exploited; and single adults with disabilities, to ensure that they are not left out of the very welcome, but more general, statewide solutions on homelessness and COVID-19.

Homelessness continues to be one of the most growing and unrelenting problems in California and has been exacerbated even further by the COVID-19 pandemic. There is a clear need for more resources, and a shift towards more preventative strategies and flexible uses of funding, targeted towards the most vulnerable individuals in the state. County-administered safety net programs serve some of the most vulnerable populations in California, an increasing number of whom are housing insecure and/or homeless and who are often left out of other, larger solutions related to housing and homelessness. The current CDSS-administered housing programs, while very successful, are limited in the services they can provide, and participants often must already be homeless or about to be evicted in order to receive services.

The requested \$100 million in one-time funding would be allocated to all counties and is intended to be available over two fiscal years to aid families and adults in the programs counties administer who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In our county, we believe this funding would allow us to supplement the services and supports provided to HDAP participants in Lake County.

We note that given fluid discussions currently occurring in both houses and the Administration, should additional funds become available to draw down, we understand this proposal also could be adapted into a longer-term support, such as \$150 million one-time over three years. The need for these resources is great and we would support such an expansion of funding for this proposal.

For these reasons, Lake County urges your support of this urgently needed request.

Sincerely,

cc: Members and Staff of the Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 3
Members and Staff of the Assembly Budget Subcommittee No.1
County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA)