



Justice Center

THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS

Reducing Homelessness for People with Behavioral Health Needs Leaving Prisons and Jails

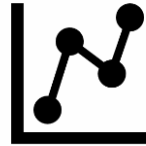
Recommendations to the California Council
on Criminal Justice and Behavioral Health

January 29, 2021

Our Process: Getting to Estimates & Recommendations



39 interviews
with state and local
policymakers,
researchers, people
w/ lived experience



Grounded in
(available) **data**

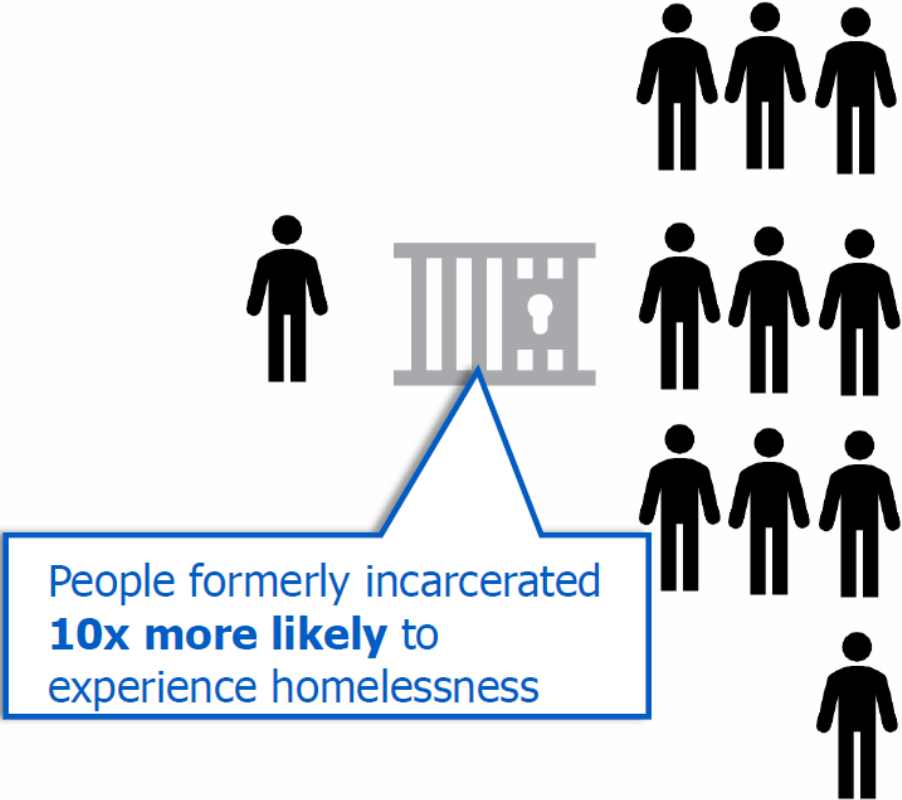


Informed by best
practices and local
successes

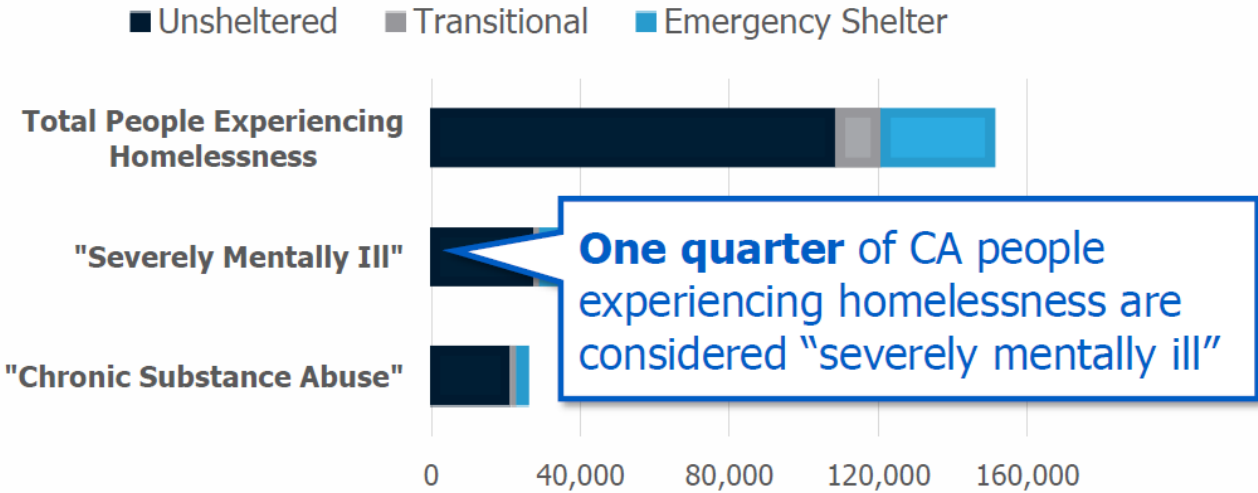


Guided by key leaders
and building on prior work

The Context: Behavioral Health, Incarceration, and Homelessness

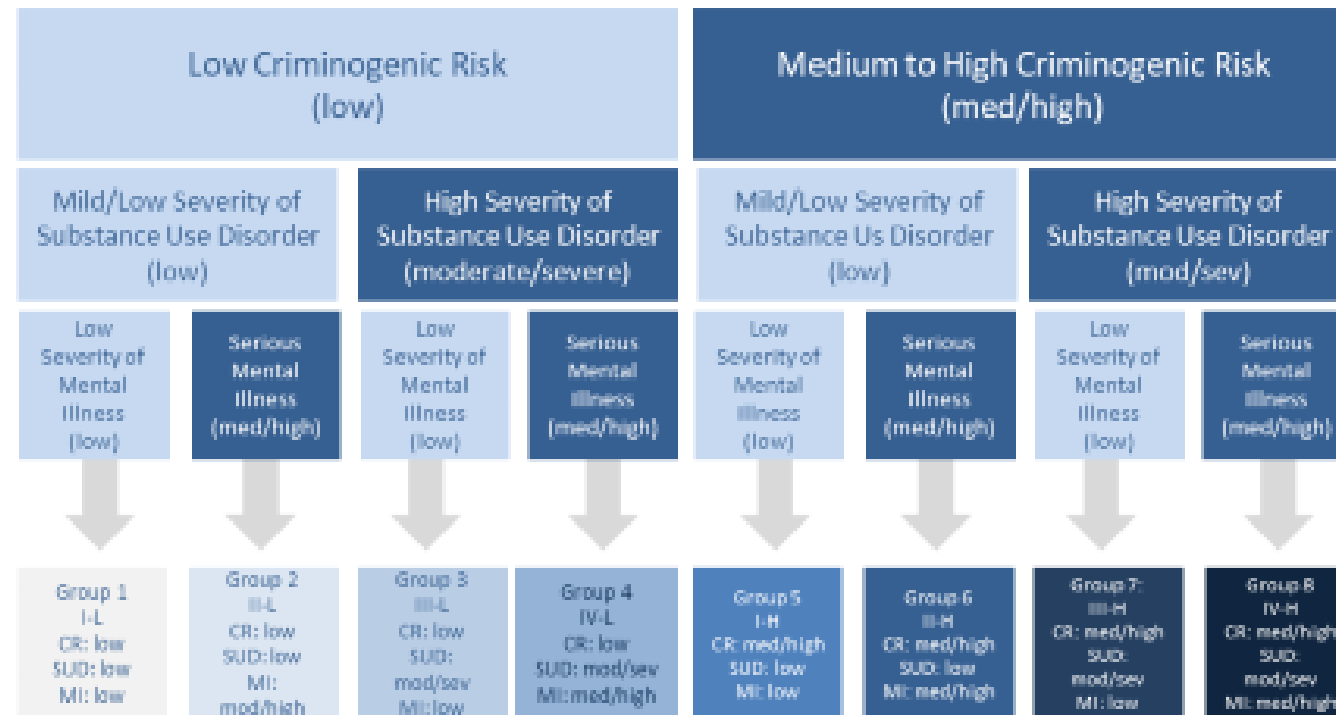


2019 California Point-in-Time Count

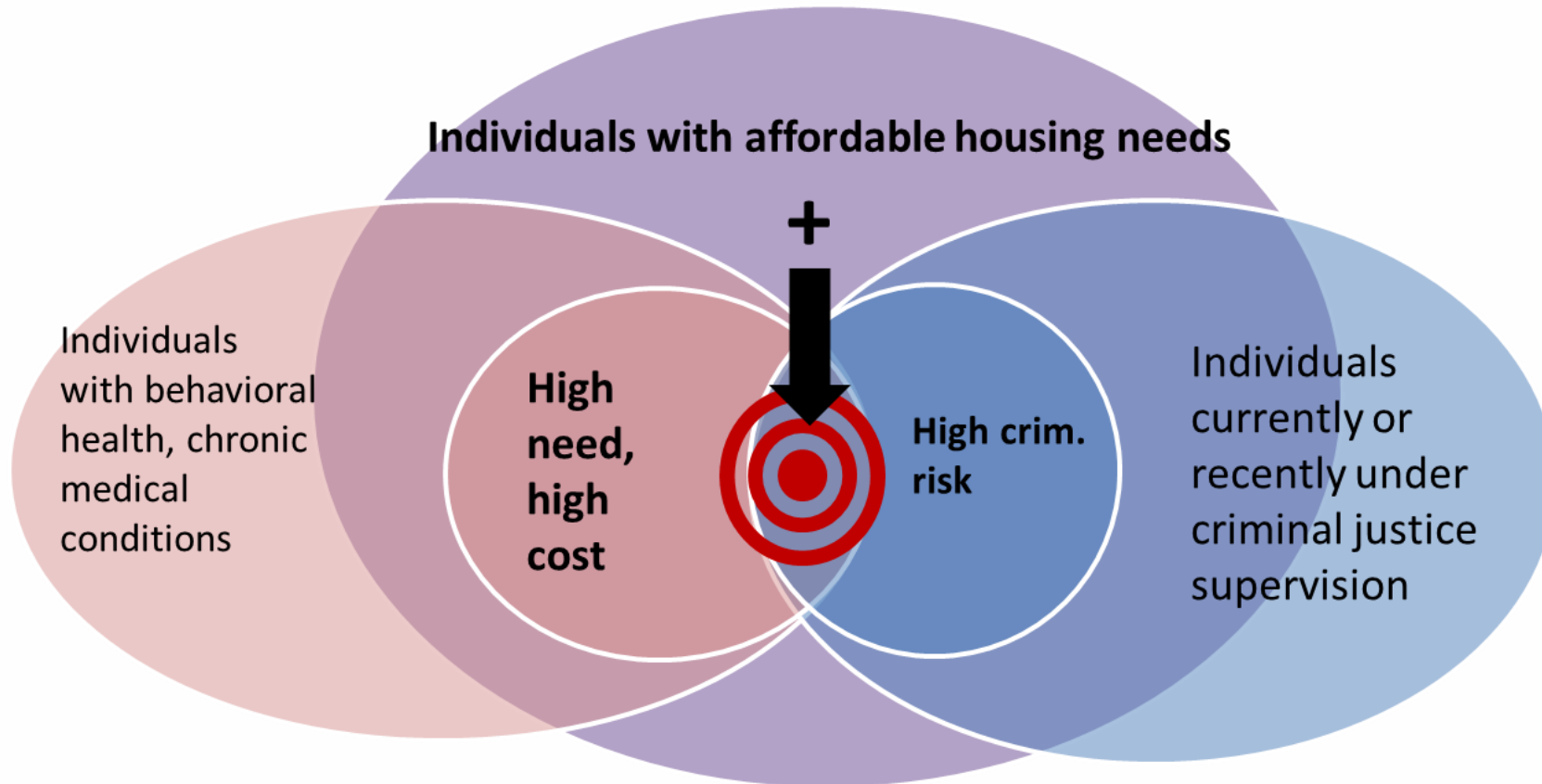


Applying the CJ/BH Framework to address Complex Needs

The Criminal Justice and Behavioral Health Needs Framework

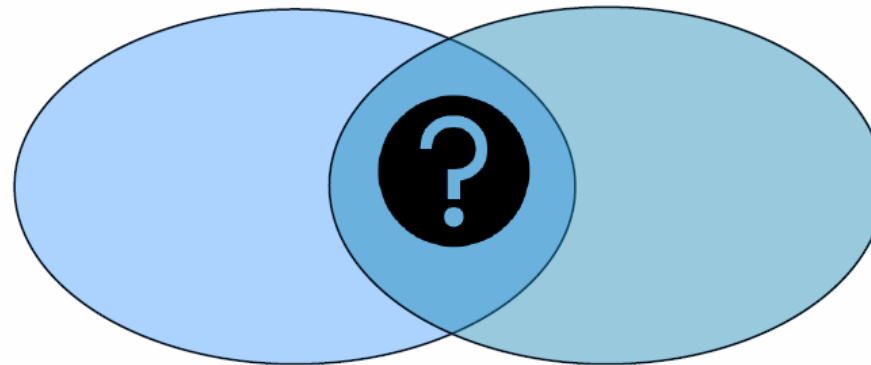


Applying the CJ/BH Framework to address Complex Needs (continued)

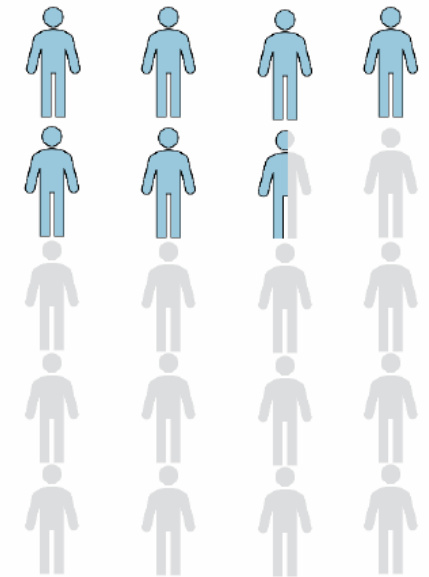


The Need: Homelessness & Mental Illnesses in California Jails

About **17% to 39%** of people in jail report experiencing homelessness in 30 days prior to jail stay

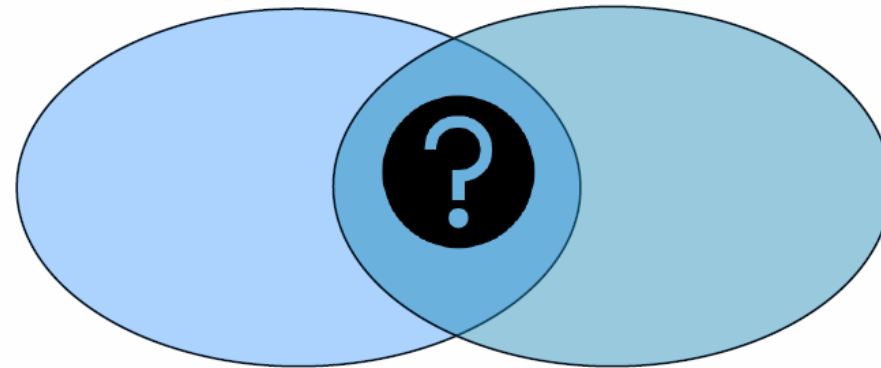


Depending on the measure used, **29% to 35%** of Jail ADP have mental health needs



Rental Assistance & Mental Health Services in California Jails

About **2% to 10%** of people in jail may need **ongoing rental assistance** and **intensive** mental health services



Another **8% to 16%** of people in jail may need **ongoing rental assistance** and **less intensive** mental health services

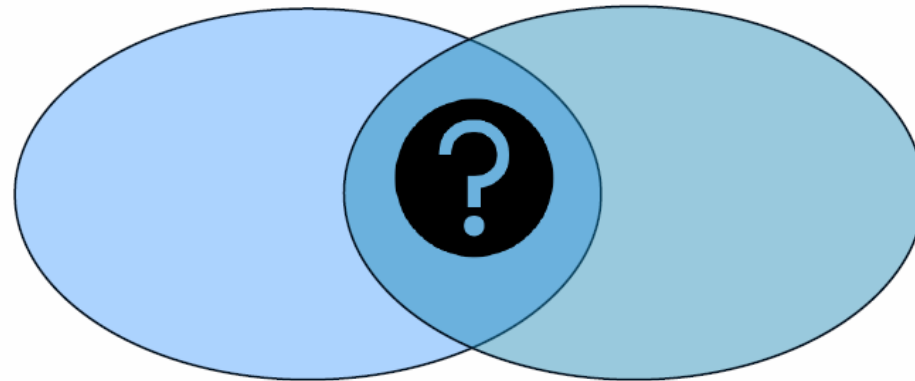
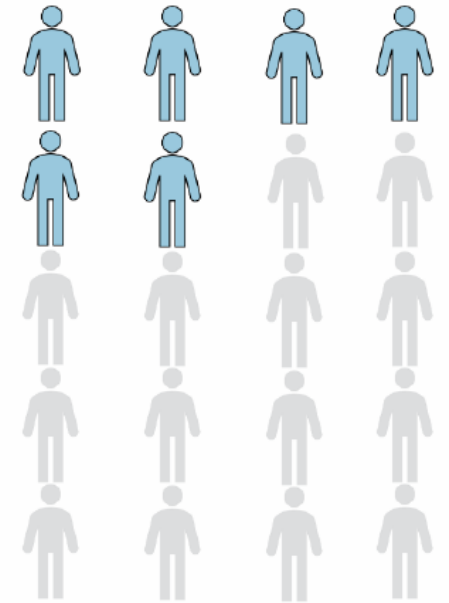


The Need: CDCR, Homelessness Risk, and Mental Illness

About **39 percent** of people **leaving on parole** report “moderate or high residential instability”



At least **29%** of people in prison have been diagnosed with a serious mental illness



Key Challenges Identified by Stakeholders: Silos



Silos between criminal justice and other systems

- ✓ *Prevents connection to mainstream, evidence-based housing resources*

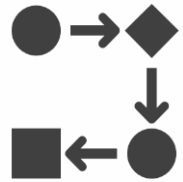
Key Challenges Identified by Stakeholders: Data



Lack of data on homelessness and housing needs

- ✓ *Makes needs-based housing placements in discharge planning difficult*
- ✓ *Limits efforts to advocate for increased resources*

Key Challenges Identified by Stakeholders: Barriers



Regulatory barriers to accessing housing

- ✓ *Reentry population often not prioritized or considered at all*

Key Challenges Identified by Stakeholders: Stigma



Lack of resources and stigma

- ✓ *Housing Authorities, service providers, landlords*

Key Challenges Identified by Stakeholders: Supply



Lack of available housing

- ✓ *Tight housing market creates competition*
- ✓ ***Only viable long-term strategy given need***

Recommendations: Cross-Cutting Themes

1. Identify, Assess, Connect



2. Meeting Urgent Needs



3. Growing the Housing Pie



Recommendations at a glance

- 1. Facilitate** cross-system collaboration
- 2. Identify** those at risk of homelessness
- 3. Assess** housing needs prior to release
- 4. Connect** people to the homeless assistance system
- 5. Quantify** overall housing and service needs

Recommendations at a glance (continued)

- 6. Increase** resources to meet immediate housing needs
- 7. Leverage** supportive services to connect with housing
- 8. Prioritize** target population for existing housing
- 9. Equip** staff across systems to respond to needs
- 10. Develop** new affordable housing supply statewide

Key Theme 1: Identify, Assess, Connect



- **Foundation for impactful housing investments**
- Implement “light-touch” jail homelessness risk assessment
- Expand prison and jail housing needs assessments
 - Require for all CDCR releases
 - Identify “in-reach” funding to implement in jails
- Build direct relationships between discharge planners, community supervision, and housing providers (esp. CoCs)

Key Theme 2: Meeting Urgent Needs



- Begin with low-dollar rental assistance coupled with landlord incentives
- Combine available public and private resources
 - Expand targeted, state-funded rental assistance
 - Partner with private funders on innovative approaches such as Flexible Subsidy Pools
- Leverage supportive services investments (i.e. CalAIM) to help locate and retain housing

Key Theme 3: Growing the Housing Pie



- While we must maximize existing resources, **they are not sufficient to meet the full scope of housing need**
- Promising long-term strategies include:
 - Prioritizing surplus land for reentry population
 - Leveraging state/federal capital & operating funding
 - Identifying cost savings to fund gap financing
 - Expanding successful Pay for Success approaches

Looking Ahead

- Full report release expected in 1-2 weeks
- 2021 messaging focus: **Ensure this population is prioritized as new housing investments are made**

A Final Word

*"I don't think homelessness can be solved. I know homelessness can be solved. Let us rise to the challenge and make California stand up as an exemplar of what true courage and compassion can achieve. **Let's all get to work.**"*

Gov. Gavin Newsom, 2020 State of the State Address

Thank You!

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Slide 3 Sources

- Lucius Couloute, “Nowhere to Go: Homelessness Among Formerly Incarcerated People,” Northampton, MA: Prison Policy Institute, 2018, <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/housing.html>.
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- “Jail Profile Survey” BSCC, accessed January 2021, https://www.bscc.ca.gov/s_fsojailprofilesurvey/; California Health Policy Strategies (CalHPS), *The Prevalence of Mental Illness in California Jails is Rising: An Analysis of Mental Health Cases & Psychotropic Medication Prescriptions, 2009-2019* (Sacramento: CalHPS, 2020), https://calhps.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Jail_MentalHealth_JPSReport_02-03-2020.pdf. Current estimate comes from June 2020 BSCC report, reported as of the last day of the month. A previous study by CalHPS, pre-COVID, put the number of people in California jails with an “open mental health case” at 32 percent.

Slide 6 Sources

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- Augustine and White, *High Utilizers of Multiple Systems in Sonoma County*; Wu and Stevens, *The Services Homeless Single Adults Use and their Associated Costs*. A high level of mental health services may include Assertive Community Treatment, which include multidisciplinary teams with very low caseloads.

Slide 7 Sources

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