

# The Politics of Homelessness



## ***2024 NCCAE-NACo Knowledge Management Forum*** ***August 15, 2024***

Presented by: Graham Knaus, CEO  
California State Association of Counties

# Homelessness Politics



- Intractable issue, frustrated communities
  - Crossover authority/responsibility of multiple levels of government
  - HUD & the COCs
  - Incentive to blame greater than incentive to solve
  - Myopic focus: Dude, look for the big picture!
-

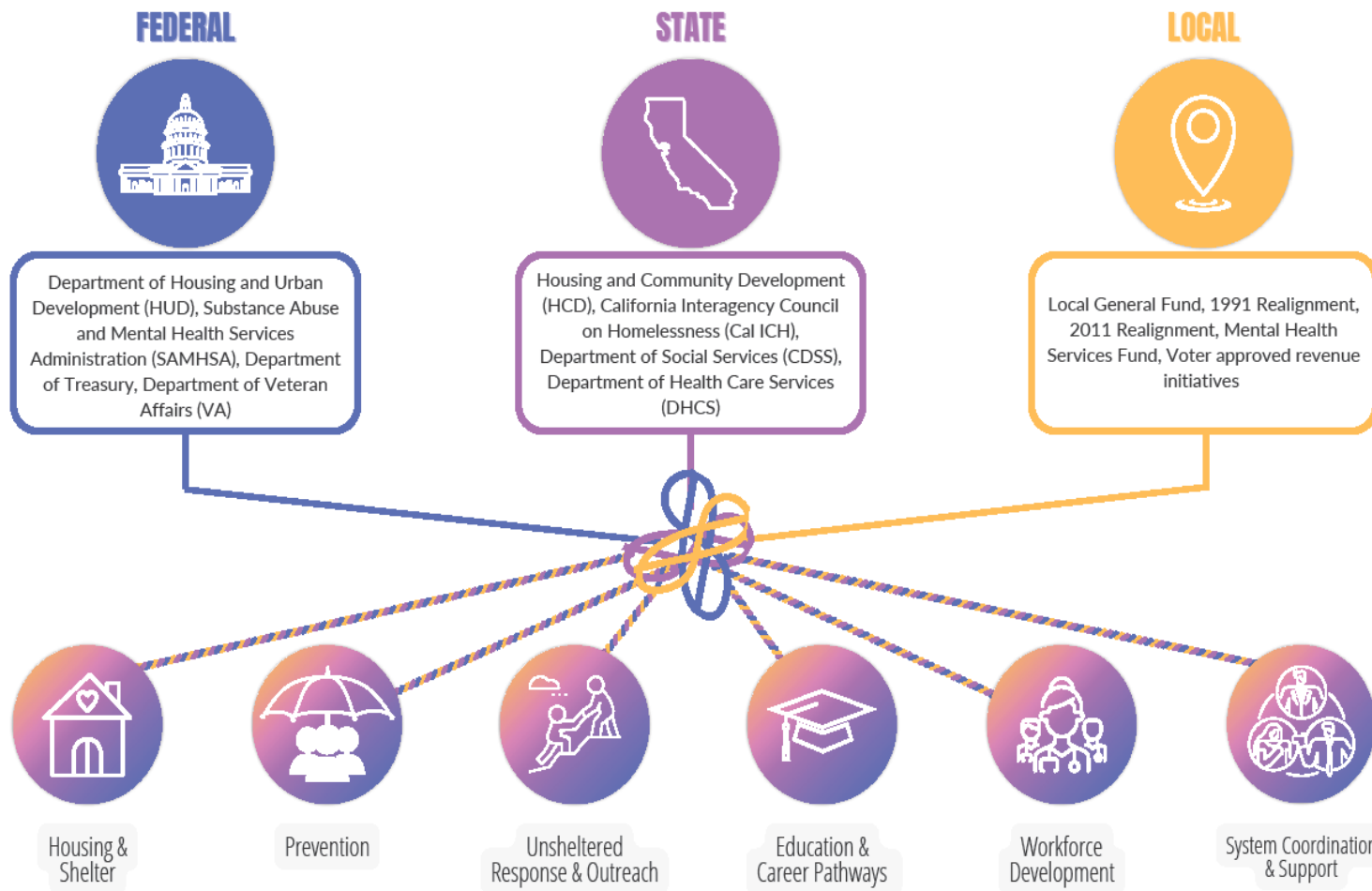
# Homelessness System?



**“Everything, everywhere, all at once.”**

- No system or defined responsibilities for all levels of government
    - ✓ Federal
    - ✓ State
    - ✓ Counties
    - ✓ Cities
    - ✓ COCs
  - No performance measures or outcome goals
  - Lack of ongoing funding commitment
-

# How it Works





# Homeless “Joe”



- Suffers from trauma -- self-medicates
- Camps on downtown sidewalk blocking public access
- Refuses services
- Insufficient shelters & transitional housing
- Un-designed to fail





Imagine the Possibilities

# AT HOME



## Accountability

Clear responsibilities aligned to authority, resources, and flexibility for all levels of government. That means defining state, county and city roles with appropriate funding to match responsibilities.

## Transparency

Integrate, expand and share data to improve effectiveness. We must know what's working and what's not.

## Housing

Siting and operating shelters, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing.

## Outreach

Emergency response system and a sufficient workforce to deliver services.

## Mitigation

Strengthen safety net programs to stem inflow of people entering homelessness.

## Economic Opportunity

Create employment and education pathways out of poverty, as well as basic needs support for those too disabled to get to self-sufficiency.

---



***Drive the Narrative***

***Build a Coalition***

***Move the Machine***