

Restoration of the In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Public Authority Consumer Advisory Committee / Governing Board Funding

Sponsors:

CA Foundation for Independent Living Centers (CFILC)
 CA In-Home Supportive Services Consumer Alliance (CICA)

Funding Requested:

This budget request will restore funding for the IHSS Public Authority Consumer Advisory Committees and Governing Boards that was drastically reduced to \$6,000 from \$56,000 during the budget crisis in 2011. This funding has never been restored, therefore, restricting consumer input on IHSS policies and practices.

At the same time this funding cut was made, the mandate on counties to operate these IHSS advisory committees was removed through a budget trailer bill amendment with no debate.¹ This unfortunate change reduced the ability of these IHSS advisory committees to serve as a forum for consumers to improve IHSS to all government entities that intersect with IHSS. Therefore, we are also requesting that this mandate on counties be restored.

This funding would provide \$56,000 per year for each county-based Public Authority Consumer Advisory Committee and Governing Board (58 counties total) to realize the consumer input mandate of the IHSS Public Authorities legislation established in AB 485 (1992) and AB 1682 (1999).

If approved, this funding will reestablish these county-based committees and boards, which are essential in providing consumer input to policy makers regarding IHSS policies and practices.

Three-Year Budget Request Funding Detail				
	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	Ongoing? (Y/N)
General Fund	\$3,248,000	\$3,248,000	\$3,248,000	Y
Federal Fund	\$1,624,000	\$1,624,000	\$1,624,000	Y
Special/Other Funds	\$	\$	\$	

Background:

IHSS serves over 600,000 seniors and people with disabilities so they can live safely in their own homes. The IHSS Public Authority Consumer Advisory Committees and Governing Boards provide input and recommendations regarding IHSS to any entity that has influence on IHSS at the county, state, and federal levels of government.

Fundamental in the original public authority legislation (AB 485 and AB 1682) was the consumer role in the oversight of the delivery of IHSS. County-based Public Authorities were required to have a Consumer Advisory Committee or a Consumer Governing Board, which has at least 51% current or past IHSS consumers and include advocates and other organizations serving people who utilize IHSS. These Advisory Committees or Governing Boards were charged with giving input and recommendations to any entity that has influence or authority over IHSS at the county, state, or federal level.

The IHSS Public Authority was established to respond to horrendous conditions in the delivery of IHSS; consumers were “unsafe in their own homes” as cited by the Little Hoover Commission Report in 1991. Legislative mandates include that the Public Authority be the Employer of Record for IHSS providers; establish a registry for consumers and providers to find each other; and provide information on training to consumers and providers. Both AB 485 and AB 1682 mandated that counties establish a Consumer Advisory Committee or Governing Board.

However, in our research, only 32 of 58 counties (approximately 55 percent) have public web-accessible information about their Advisory Committee or Governing Board, which means that consumers have no information on when these Committees or Boards meet; how a consumer can apply to serve on the Committee or Governing Board; and more importantly, no information on how a consumer can give input on their IHSS services.

Additionally, for those counties that have this Advisory Committee/Governing Board information, much of the content, including rosters, meeting agendas and minutes are very out-of-date. In essence, this lack of information undermines the Public Authority’s ability to provide consumer input to entities regarding IHSS which a fundamental role of the Public Authority.

Our findings also indicate that many of these Consumer Advisory Committees and Governing Boards have not been meeting during the COVID-19 pandemic while the IHSS program has been historically impacted and needed most. Further, the current IHSS **provider shortage crisis** in which thousands of seniors and people with disabilities who have been approved for IHSS but cannot find a provider, demonstrates that now more than ever it is crucial to engage these Advisory Committees and Governing Boards to explore ways to address this crisis.

The diminishment and near erasure of consumer input in IHSS Public Authorities through severe cutback in funding for IHSS Consumer Advisory Committees and Governing Boards undermines a fundamental principle and function of the IHSS Public Authority: to engage consumers in the oversight of the delivery of IHSS and giving input to any entity, state, county, or federal that has influence in IHSS.

ⁱ WIC Section 12301.3 was amended by Stats. 2011, Ch. 8, Sec. 32. (SB 72) Effective March 24, 2011.