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**California Selected for Special Federal Program
to Help Ease Chronic Homelessness**

SACRAMENTO, November 28, 2012 – The California Housing Finance Agency (CalHFA) announced today that California was selected by the federal government to participate in a groundbreaking federal program to help ease chronic homelessness, an issue that affects about 136,000 people in the state.

While more than a dozen groups in the state that work closely on homelessness will participate in the program, CalHFA will lead the effort, which will be jointly coordinated by the state Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) and CalHFA. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, invited nine states to apply for the "Policy Academy" program and chose six. California's application outlined challenges, current programs and proposed efforts to fight homelessness.

"Homelessness is a critical issue in California, and it has a far-reaching effect, from contributing to poor health to increasing behavioral health problems," said Claudia Cappio, the Executive Director of CalHFA. "Many people don't realize how close some Californians, including their family members or friends, are to being homeless."

As part of the Policy Academy, California will receive technical assistance to reduce chronic homelessness. About one of every 280 Californians is homeless, according to an annual report to Congress.

"We must push forward with aggressive, forward-looking, coordinated programs to fight homelessness in the state and the country," Cappio said. "We cannot look the other way. It affects so many of our most vulnerable residents."

The Policy Academy will include a comparison with other programs and practices that have worked across the nation. The effort is intended to reduce fragmentation, increase community education and leadership, and provide a framework to best use available resources.

California adopted a Ten Year Chronic Homelessness Action Plan in 2006-07, outlining five goals to combat the problem: establish a statewide prevention effort to reduce chronic homelessness; increase the supply of affordable housing for the homeless or those at-risk; identify as soon as possible those at-risk and establish programs and policies for prevention; improve accessibility of supportive services; and promote financial stability for homeless residents.

The Policy Academy will help further improve the plan and state efforts by identifying and determining how federal and state programs, such as the Affordable Care Act, CalFresh, CalWORKs and Medi-Cal funds, can be coordinated to help the homeless.

Other state agencies and departments participating in the Policy Academy include Mental Health Services Oversight & Accountability Commission, Department of State Hospitals, Department of Alcohol & Drug Programs, Department of Health Care Services, and the Health & Human Services Agency. About 15 groups throughout the state, from nonprofits for the homeless to law enforcement, will also be involved in the effort.

About the California Housing Finance Agency and California Department of Housing and Community Development

California Housing Finance Agency (CalHFA) and the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) oversee programs that provide and preserve safe, decent and affordable housing to Californians. Together, CalHFA and HCD are committed to addressing homelessness by developing an aggressive program that helps the state's most vulnerable residents. CalHFA, a self-supporting agency, is chartered as the State's affordable housing bank and offers low-interest loans to low and moderate-income Californians. HCD, the state's lead housing department, is part of the State's Business, Transportation and Housing Agency. For more information, please visit www.calhfa.ca.gov and www.hcd.ca.gov.

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