LEAGUE OF CALIFORNIA CITIES

COMMUNITY SERVICES POLICY COMMITTEE
Thursday, March 26, 2026
10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Hilton Orange County/Costa Mesa

AGENDA

I. Welcome and Introductions
Chair Tamala Takahashi, Mayor, Burbank
Vice Chair Clint Weirick, Council Member, Grover Beach

II. Public Comment

III. Presentation: Childcare and the City Role *Informational*
Dr. Shelly Masur, Vice President, Advisory & Policy, Low Income Investment Fund

IV. Update to Existing Policy and Guiding Principles *(Attachment A)* *Action*
Caroline Grinder, Legislative Advocate
- Community Services Senior Policy

V. Legislative Agenda *Action*
- AB 1674 (Ahrens) Food Affordability Act *(Attachment B)*
- AB 1914 (Schiavo) General Plan Elements: Childcare *(Attachment C)*
- AB 2072 (Solache) CalFresh and WIC Contingency Fund *(Attachment D)*
- SB 492 (Menjivar) Youth Housing Bond Act of 2026 *(Attachment E)*

VI. Budget and Legislative Update *Informational*
Caroline Grinder, Legislative Advocate

VII. Wrap Up/Small Group Discussion *Informational*

VIII. Adjourn

Next Meeting (Virtual): Thursday, June 4, 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Brown Act Reminder: The League of California Cities' Board of Directors has a policy of complying with the spirit of open meeting laws. Generally, off-agenda items may be taken up only if:
1) *Two-thirds of the policy committee members find a need for immediate action exists and the need to take action came to the attention of the policy committee after the agenda was prepared (Note: If fewer than two-thirds of policy committee members are present, taking up an off-agenda item requires a unanimous vote); or*
2) *A majority of the policy committee finds an emergency (for example: work stoppage or disaster) exists.*

A majority of a city council may not, consistent with the Brown Act, discuss specific substantive issues among themselves at League meetings. Any such discussion is subject to the Brown Act and must occur in a meeting that complies with its requirements.

ATTACHMENT A

COMMUNITY SERVICES POLICY COMMITTEE
Legislative Agenda

Staff: Caroline Grinder, Legislative Advocate
Serena Scott, Legislative Affairs and Policy Analyst

Update to Cal Cities Policy

Issue:
During the Community Services Policy Committee meeting in January, the committee reviewed Cal Cities' Summary of Existing Policy and Guiding Principles document which is updated every two years to reflect the committee's work. This information is used as a reference tool for driving Cal Cities' engagement in the legislative process.

In that discussion, Committee members indicated they would like to make technical changes to the seniors' policy during the March meeting. Specifically, the committee suggested updating the language to refer to seniors as older adults and adding a new policy to combat ageism.

Pending Bills in the Legislature:
As the committee considers updates to this policy, below is an overview of bills related to older adults moving through the Legislature this year that Cal Cities is currently tracking:

AB 2037 **(Patterson) Wildfire Aging and Disability Grant Program.**
This measure would establish a grant program administered by the California Department of Aging to award grants to seniors to mitigate against wildfires on properties they own.

SB 837 **(Reyes) Disaster and emergency preparedness.**
This measure would require Aging and Disability Resource Connection programs to provide disaster and emergency preparedness training to help older adults prepare for emergencies.

AB 1819 **(Sanchez) Automated External Defibrillators**
This measure would require senior centers, including those run by local governments, to have an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) and to meet training and maintenance standards for the AED.

This committee will also consider legislation related to access to healthy foods, homelessness, and social safety net programs like CalFresh that may impact older adults.

Existing Cal Cities Policy:
Seniors
Cal Cities encourages cities to recognize seniors as a valuable state resource and to develop and improve intergenerational programs and activities. Cal Cities supports legislation that would provide funding for side-by-side day care facilities for California's youth, adults, and seniors.

Proposed Changes:
The proposed change would fall within the Community Services section of the Summary of Existing Policy and Guiding Principles document. If approved by the policy committee and Board, the following policy would be updated to say:

Older Adults ~~Seniors~~
Cal Cities encourages cities to recognize older adults ~~seniors~~ as a valuable state resource and to develop and improve intergenerational programs and activities. Cal Cities supports legislation that would provide funding for side-by-side day care facilities for California's youth and adults of all ages ~~adults, and seniors~~. Cal Cities also supports policies that promote age-inclusive communities and address ageism. This includes efforts to ensure that older adults are integrated into the economic and civic life of their communities.

Staff Comments:
Cal Cities staff believes the policy changes detailed above will provide clarity to the Community Services section of the Cal Cities Summary of Existing Policy and Guiding Principles. This policy will ensure that Cal Cities can continue to engage in legislation and influence policy decisions that impact older adults in communities across California.

Staff Recommendation:
Cal Cities staff recommend the committee discuss the proposed changes to ensure they reflect what was discussed in January. Following that discussion, Cal Cities staff encourage the committee to **adopt** a version of the updated policy.

Committee Recommendation:

Board Action:

ATTACHMENT B

HOUSING, COMMUNITY, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT and COMMUNITY SERVICES POLICY COMMITTEEs LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Staff: Brady Guertin, Legislative Advocate, Housing, Community, and Economic Development
Caroline Grinder, Legislative Advocate, Community Services
Waleed Hojeij, Policy and Legislative Affairs Analyst, Housing, Community, and Economic Development
Serena Scott, Policy and Legislative Affairs Analyst, Community Services

AB 1674 (Ahrens) Food Affordability Act.

Bill Summary:
AB 1674 would establish the Food Desert Elimination Grant Program to provide funding to developers and grocery store operators in designated food deserts. This measure would also require local governments in a food desert or an area at risk of becoming a food desert to ensure that applicants for new housing developments do not reduce the site's capacity for a large grocery store. If the site capacity is reduced, the local government must require the applicant to provide equivalent mitigation. Equivalent mitigation would include, at a minimum, "dedication of equivalent space and infrastructure for future grocery use, or funding contributions to the Food Desert Elimination Fund that are sufficient for a replacement store within one-half mile as determined by the Department of Food and Agriculture."

Author's Statement Summary:
According to the author, "challenges can arise when developers use the Density Bonus Law, which permits waivers of certain development standards in exchange for building more affordable housing units. While this law increases affordable housing, it can also result in reduced commercial space, including grocery stores, as developers prioritize residential units over commercial development. This shift can further limit access to healthy food and increase the risk of communities becoming food deserts".

According to the author, AB 1674 "would create the Food Desert Elimination Grant Program to support grocery stores in underserved areas, especially in new housing developments. The bill requires developers to maintain or mitigate any loss of grocery store capacity in these projects, ensuring continued access to healthy food."

- Author's Fact Sheet

Bill Description:
AB 1674 would establish the Food Desert Elimination Grant Program within the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) to help improve access to healthy foods in food deserts and areas at risk of becoming food deserts. The grant would be used towards

feasibility studies, employee compensation, rent, land acquisition, and other capital and operational expenses for grocery stores in low-income and low-access areas.

This measure would also require cities to ensure that any new housing development in a food desert does not reduce the site capacity needed for a large grocery store. If development reduces site capacity, the applicant must provide mitigation, including either dedicating equivalent space or infrastructure for future grocery use, or making funding contributions to the Food Desert Elimination Fund sufficient to fund a replacement store within one-half mile, as determined by the Department of Food and Agriculture.

The program also requires annual reporting by local governments to the Department of Food and Agriculture on new housing development projects in food deserts, including project capacity assessments and mitigation measures. These requirements would apply until January 1, 2031, and then will be repealed after that date.

The requirements defined in this bill will apply to any city that has a "food desert." A food desert is a census tract that meets the definitions of **both** federal standards of low-access areas and low-income areas.

- "Low-access area" means a census tract in which there are significant barriers to accessing a large grocery store, which may include, but not be limited to, a census tract with at least 33 percent of the population that lives more than one-half mile, for nonrural areas, or more than 10 miles, for rural areas, from a large grocery store.
- "Low-income area" means a census tract with a poverty rate of 20 percent or higher, or a census tract with a median family income less than 80 percent of the median family income for the state or metropolitan area.

Background:
Areas commonly referred to as "food deserts" are low-income inner-city neighborhoods and rural communities where residents live far from the closest grocery store or supermarket. Under current law, the Office of Farm to Fork within the Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) coordinates programs designed to address food distribution barriers across the state. This office was created in 2014 when Governor Brown signed AB 2413 (Perez). Since then, expanding access and affordability of healthy foods in underserved communities has been a major priority for CDFA.

Food deserts often arise from a combination of economic and land-use factors, including the high cost of developing large grocery stores, lower profit margins in low-income neighborhoods, and transportation barriers that limit residents' ability to travel to larger food retailers. Building decisions, specifically urban sprawl between 1990 and 2014 created many housing environments where essential services (like grocery stores) were only accessible by car. In the years since, these design choices have shown to disproportionately affect minority and lower-income communities, compounding existing disparities in health outcomes and quality of life. Healthy food access is critical to well-being and a healthy life, yet there are many communities across California that face food insecurity and are reliant on traveling far distances to access large grocery stores.

As a result, policymakers have increasingly explored strategies such as grants, financing programs, and land-use planning tools to incentivize grocery store development and improve food access.

California has taken several steps in the last decade to address barriers to healthy food access. One of the earliest policy efforts in this area was the California Healthy Food Financing Initiative (CHFFI), created by AB 581 (Perez, 2011). The initiative established the CHFFI Fund to support projects that expand access to healthy foods in underserved communities. California has also implemented targeted programs such as the Healthy Refrigeration Grant Program, which provides grants to corner stores, small businesses, and food donation programs to install energy-efficient refrigeration units so they can stock fresh produce and other perishable foods in low-income or low-food-access areas.

A recent proposal similar to this bill was recently vetoed by the Governor. SB 1419 (Rubio, 2024) sought to create the Food Desert Elimination Grant Program to provide grants to large and small-scale grocery store operators in food deserts. In his veto message, the Governor explained that he vetoed the bill because it created a new, unfunded grant program that instead should have been considered in the annual budget process.

In addition to state efforts, the federal government has focused on financing and supporting grocery stores and other food retailers in underserved communities. The Healthy Food Financing Initiative (HFFI), a federal program administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, provides funding and financing tools to support grocery store development and other food retail projects in areas with limited access to healthy foods.

In addition to financial barriers, food access issues are increasingly being discussed within the broader context of land-use planning and housing development. As California continues to face a significant housing shortage, many communities are experiencing increased pressure to redevelop or repurpose commercial land for housing projects.

In recent years, state legislation has significantly increased housing production requirements that local governments must plan and site for within their communities, while limiting local decision-making on housing development to address the statewide housing shortage. Specifically, cities must comply with identifying adequate sites to meet their Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) numbers and demonstrating in their plans that zoning and land-use policies allow housing development at required densities. RHNA also requires local governments to demonstrate that, within the cycle, housing sites must be viable for development over the next five to eight years.

The land-use provisions in AB 1674 would impose new requirements on developers, potentially undermining project feasibility. As a result, local governments may face greater difficulty approving housing developments that meet both local housing goals and state expectations, as fewer projects may "pencil out" under the added constraints of AB 1674.

Existing Cal Cities Policy:
<u>Local Control</u>

- *"To expand and protect local control for cities through education and advocacy to enhance the quality of life for all Californians."*
    - (Cal Cities Existing Policies & Guiding Principles, p. ii)
- *"The vitality of cities is dependent upon their fiscal stability and local autonomy."*
    - (Cal Cities Existing Policies & Guiding Principles, p. ii)

<u>General Plans / Local Planning Authority</u>

- "*Cal Cities supports the use of the general plan as a guide to meeting community planning needs."*
    - (Cal Cities Existing Policies & Guiding Principles, p. 50)
- *"A city's general plan should guide the individual city's land use planning and strategic decision-making."*
    - (Cal Cities Existing Policies & Guiding Principles, p. 50)
- *"General plan requirements should be flexible and provide guidance to local communities without requiring inappropriate levels of detail or mandating new topics or elements."*
    - (Cal Cities Existing Policies & Guiding Principles, p. 50)

<u>Economic Development</u>

- *"Cal Cities supports legislation that will provide tangible and productive tools and incentives to support job creation and retention in housing rich, jobs-poor communities, such as the awarding of direct grants to fund the development of infrastructure that results in the creation and retention of jobs"*
    - *(*Cal Cities Existing Policies & Guiding Principles, p. 47)

Principles for Smart Growth

- *"Cal Cities supports well-planned new growth to recognize and preserve open space, watersheds, environmental habitats, and agricultural lands while accommodating new growth in compact forms in a manner that:*
    - *De-emphasizes automobile dependency;*
    - *Integrates the new growth into existing communities;*
    - *Creates a diversity of affordable housing near employment centers; and*
    - *Provides job opportunities for people of all ages and income levels.*
    - (Cal Cities Existing Policies & Guiding Principles, p. 53)
- *"Cal Cities supports vibrant city centers by giving preference to the redevelopment and reuse of city centers and existing transportation corridors by supporting and encouraging:*
    - *Mixed-use development;*
    - *Housing opportunities for all income levels;*
    - *Safe, reliable, and efficient multi-modal transportation systems; and*
    - *Retaining existing businesses and promoting new business opportunities that produce quality local jobs.*
        - (Cal Cities Existing Policies & Guiding Principles, p. 53)

Healthy Cities Policy

- *"Cal Cities encourages California cities to help parents make healthy family choices; create healthy schools; provide access to healthy and affordable foods; and adopt city design and planning principles that promote physical activity."*
    - (Cal Cities Existing Policies & Guiding Principles, p. 4)

Fiscal Impact:
There are likely significant state and local costs. At the state level, AB 1674 would create a new grant program requiring appropriations, staffing, guideline development, oversight, technical assistance, and reporting. Given the state's structural budget deficit, allocating a significant amount of funding to the Food Desert Elimination Fund is unlikely, meaning a majority of the fund would likely have to be dependent on other sources, such as private and federal donations (which are typically inconsistent and in one-time allocations). Essentially, the bill establishes a grant program without identifying a stable or dedicated funding source.

At the local level, the bill would impose new annual reporting requirements on cities and new review and mitigation standards for developers of housing projects in food deserts or areas at risk of becoming food deserts. Additionally, the mitigation requirements for developers may increase housing costs due to the need to incorporate additional food desert considerations into their projects.

Staff Comments:
AB 1674 addresses an important public health and equity issue by attempting to improve access to healthy food in underserved communities. In many communities, particularly in urban areas, large grocery store sites are often much more easily accessible due to improved transit and strategic locations near higher-density communities. The proposed grant program and developer requirements outlined in AB 1674 could serve as a useful tool to incentivize grocery development in areas where the private market and location resources alone have not supported large-scale food retail investment.

However, the bill also introduces land-use requirements that may conflict with current housing production goals and local planning processes. Requiring applicants to preserve site capacity for large grocery stores, or to provide mitigation if housing development reduces that capacity, could constrain cities' ability to approve affordable housing projects on those sites. These overlapping priorities may have unintended consequences for building housing.

This issue may be particularly significant for affordable housing development, which often relies on underutilized commercial parcels or redevelopment of aging retail centers (which grocery store development also relies on). In some cases, these sites present the most feasible opportunities for affordable housing due to existing infrastructure, proximity to transit, and compatibility with higher-density zoning. If cities are required to approve only development applications that maintain grocery store site capacity or provide mitigation, this could increase project costs, delay development timelines, or discourage affordable housing proposals in areas already experiencing housing shortages.

Accessible, healthy food is a vital component of quality housing, as is supporting cities and developers in building affordable housing. We encourage the committee to consider how this bill impacts both of these important goals and to consider if AB 1674 strikes the appropriate balance between them.

Support:
This measure is author-sponsored.

Opposition:
None listed at this time.

Staff Recommendation:
Staff recommend that the committee discuss this measure and consider taking a position.

Committee Recommendation:

Board Action:

COMMUNITY SERVICES AND HOUSING, COMMUNITY, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY COMMITTEES
Legislative Agenda

Staff: Brady Guertin, Legislative Advocate, Housing, Community, and Economic Development
Caroline Grinder, Legislative Advocate, Community Services
Waleed Hojeij, Policy and Legislative Affairs Analyst, Housing, Community, and Economic Development
Serena Scott, Policy and Legislative Affairs Analyst, Community Services

AB 1914 (Schiavo) General plan elements: childcare.

Bill Summary:
This measure would require cities and counties, when they update two or more general plan elements on or after January 1, 2028, to review and update, at a minimum, the land use, circulation, housing, safety, and environmental justice elements, to address local childcare needs.

Author's Statement Summary:
According to the author: "As we continue to build housing to address our housing crisis, families need affordable childcare near where they live and work. This act recognizes childcare as essential infrastructure by requiring cities and counties to incorporate childcare into long-term growth strategies and general plans."

- Author Fact Sheet
- Sponsor Support Letter

Bill Description:
This measure would require local agencies to update various general plan elements and include childcare within the respective elements if two or more elements are updated after January 2028. A city would, at a minimum, be required to update the land use, circulation, housing, safety, and environmental justice elements to include childcare, as defined by the law. This represents a significant change, integrating childcare planning across multiple components of a city's general plan.

This measure defines "childcare" as all licensed childcare and development services and license-exempt childcare, including private for-profit programs, nonprofit programs, and publicly funded programs, for all children up to 12 years of age.

The bill's language outlines several ways to ensure that every family has access to quality, convenient, safe, and affordable childcare, including:

- Co-locating childcare near housing, jobs, and transportation;
- Partnering with local childcare planning organizations;

- Revising zoning and permitting to support family daycare homes and daycare centers;
- Incorporating childcare into emergency preparedness, hazard mitigation, and climate resilience planning; and
- Allowing emergency shelters to include childcare space.

Background:

General Plans Overview

Under California's Planning and Zoning Law (Government Code section 65302), every city and county must adopt and periodically update a general plan, which serves as the jurisdiction's long-term blueprint for physical development, land use patterns, housing growth, transportation systems, and public services. State law requires several core elements like land use, circulation, housing, safety, open space, conservation, and noise, while allowing jurisdictions to organize the plan and add additional elements based on local priorities.

Jurisdictions in the San Joaquin Air Pollution Control District must also address air quality in their general plans, and per SB 1000 (Leyva), jurisdictions identified as disadvantaged communities must either add an environmental justice element or integrate environmental justice goals, policies, and objectives into another element to comply with the law. This means some cities may technically have nine required elements, while all cities are otherwise required to have seven.

For the last several years, the legislature has passed multiple general plan update requirements that local agencies must complete on or after January 1, 2028. These laws include updates to the conservation, safety, and circulation elements, meaning local governments will be required to update two or more elements simultaneously at a minimum over the next few years, thereby triggering the current measure.

Descriptions of each element:

- Land use: Will reflect the community's vision; promote thoughtful, equitable, and accessible distribution of different land uses, including residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, and open space; and align well with other general plan elements.
- Circulation: More than a transportation plan, but rather a strategy addressing infrastructure needs for the circulation of people, goods, energy, water, sewage, storm drainage, and communications.
- Housing: The blueprint for how a city or county will grow and address changing needs for development.
- Conservation: Establishes goals and policies for the retention, enhancement, and development of land, water, ecosystem services, living resources, and the benefits that these resources provide to the community.
- Open Space: Identifies areas that provide value in an essentially undeveloped condition and creates a plan to preserve such areas.
- Noise: Ensure that a local planning area limits the exposure of the community to excessive noise levels in noise-sensitive areas and at noise-sensitive times of day.

- Safety: Reduce the potential short and long-term risk of death, injuries, property damage, and economic and social dislocation resulting from fires, floods, droughts, earthquakes, landslides, climate change, and other hazards.
- Environmental Justice: Identify disadvantaged communities within jurisdictions planning areas and develop policies to reduce health risks and promote civic engagement.
- Air Quality: To address air quality issues through general plans, development ordinances, local circulation systems, transportation services, and other plans and programs.

Land use, circulation, conservation, noise, and open space don't have specific deadlines for updates but can be revised at the city's discretion. It should be noted that local governments may only amend a single mandatory element no more than four times per year, but cities may do more than one change at a time.

The housing element, on the other hand, must be updated and approved by the state every five or eight years, depending on the jurisdiction's location. This deadline follows a staggered schedule for approval. The safety element must also be updated when the housing element is updated, or at a minimum, a local agency must update it at least once every eight years. These timelines are important because they illustrate how frequently cities may be required to incorporate childcare considerations if the requirement is triggered whenever two or more elements are updated.

Childcare in California

California has experienced persistent challenges related to childcare affordability and availability, which policymakers increasingly link to workforce participation and housing stability. Research shows that childcare capacity in California meets the needs of only about one in four children who require care, and many families face difficulty securing reliable childcare arrangements.

In addition, fewer than half of children ages 0–5 have regular childcare arrangements, and nearly one in five households report being unable to secure care when needed, with cost cited as the primary barrier. Childcare costs can also be substantial: average annual expenses for one child in California have been estimated at roughly $11,900 per year, representing a significant share of household income.

Because childcare facilities must operate within local zoning and land use frameworks, some policymakers and advocates have argued that planning decisions like where housing, transportation, and employment centers are located can influence access to childcare services. This has led to increasing policy discussions about whether local planning processes should more explicitly consider childcare access when planning communities.

Existing Cal Cities Policy (Housing):

Local Control

- *"To expand and protect local control for cities through education and advocacy to enhance the quality of life for all Californians."*
    - (Cal Cities Existing Policies & Guiding Principles, p. ii)
- *"The vitality of cities is dependent upon their fiscal stability and local autonomy."*
    - (Cal Cities Existing Policies & Guiding Principles, p. ii)

General Plans / Local Planning Authority

- "*Cal Cities supports the use of the general plan as a guide to meeting community planning needs."*
    - (Cal Cities Existing Policies & Guiding Principles, p. 49)
- *"A city's general plan should guide the individual city's land use planning and strategic decision-making."*
    - (Cal Cities Existing Policies & Guiding Principles, p. 49)
- *"General plan requirements should be flexible and provide guidance to local communities without requiring inappropriate levels of detail or mandating new topics or elements."*
    - (Cal Cities Existing Policies & Guiding Principles, p. 49)

Existing Cal Cities Policy (CS):

Child Care Policy

- *"Cal Cities supports the creation of more affordable, innovative and quality parks and recreation and childcare options for parents and concurrently encourages adherence to strict regulations and guidelines."*
    - (Cal Cities Existing Policies & Guiding Principles, p. 2)
- *"Cal Cities supports funding and resources to address the affordability and availability of early learning and care options."*
    - (Cal Cities Existing Policies & Guiding Principles, p. 2)

Fiscal Impact:

This measure would have little to no fiscal impact on the state because it does not require state reimbursement. This measure states that reimbursement is not required because cities can levy service charges, fees, or assessments sufficient to cover the mandated level of service.

For cities, likely costs include:

- Staff time to analyze childcare needs across multiple general plan elements;
- Consultant expenses for technical studies, drafting, outreach, and plan integration;
- Possible CEQA and noticing costs associated with plan amendments
- Potential costs related to downstream zoning and permit code updates.

Smaller and under-resourced cities may be disproportionately impacted because the bill does not provide a funding source, planning grant program, or state technical assistance framework.

Staff Comments:
Since not all cities are required to have a standalone Environmental Justice element in their general plan, this measure could impose requirements on elements that cities do not currently have or have never been subject to.

Cal Cities staff also note that the two-element trigger would not account for when childcare-related updates were previously completed. Cal Cities staff have been in communication with the author's staff and the sponsors regarding what elements would be most relevant to childcare considerations and ensuring that redundant work is avoided.

Both the author's office and the sponsors relayed that the intent of the bill is not to burden cities with adding unmandated elements or continuous cycles of childcare considerations. They expressed interest in ideas for amending the language as follows:

b) (1) ~~Upon the next update of two or more elements described in Section 65302, on or after January 1, 2028, a city or county shall review and update the land use, circulation, housing, safety, and environmental justice elements, and any other element, where appropriate, to address the childcare needs of the jurisdiction.~~

After January 1, 2028, upon adoption or next revision of the following elements a city or county shall review and update the element to address the childcare needs of the jurisdiction:

- *Land use*
- *circulation*
- *Housing*
- *Safety*
- *Environmental justice, if applicable*

Given these conversations, we recommend the committees discuss the following:

- What elements of the general plan would be most important to help facilitate robust, accessible and safe childcare?
- If an element is recently updated to include childcare, how often should it be revisited and what should the trigger be in the first place?
- Is the workload associated with revising multiple elements at one time to incorporate childcare, worth the intended goal of more childcare considerations in a city's planning process?

Support:
Low Income Investment Fund (sponsor)

Opposition:
N/A

Staff Recommendation:
Staff recommends that the committee discuss this measure and consider how the committee's goals around childcare access and affordability relate to local planning requirements.

Committee Recommendation:

Board Action:

ATTACHMENT D

Community Services Policy Committee
Legislative Agenda

Staff: Caroline Grinder, Legislative Affairs Lobbyist
Serena Scott, Legislative Affairs and Policy Analyst

AB 2072 (Solache) CalFresh and WIC Contingency Fund.

Bill Summary:
This measure would create the CalFresh and the supplemental nutrition program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Contingency Fund to maintain continuity of benefits during a federal government shutdown or other lapse in federal appropriations.

Bill Description:
Specifically, this measure would, upon appropriation by the Legislature, allocate funding to the State Department of Social Services for the CalFresh program and to the State Department of Public Health for the WIC Program, to maintain continuity of CalFresh and WIC benefits during a federal shutdown or other federal appropriations lapse through January 20, 2029.

Within 60 calendar days after the conclusion of a federal government shutdown or other federal funding lapse during which contingency funds were used, the two administering state departments would be required to submit a joint report to the Legislature and the Department of Finance detailing all the following:

- Duration of the funding lapse.
- Amounts expended or borrowed.
- Number of households and individuals served.
- Federal reimbursements received or anticipated.

This measure would also require the departments to seek federal reimbursement for expenditures made from the fund. Any federal reimbursements received would be deposited into the fund until the fund is restored to its pre-withdrawal balance.

Background:
CalFresh and WIC are federally funded nutrition programs that provide food assistance to millions of Californians. CalFresh, known federally as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), provides monthly food benefits to individuals and families with low incomes. The program is federally mandated, and in California, it is state-supervised and county-operated.

As the state's largest anti-hunger program, CalFresh alone supports more than three million California households each month. Of the over five million individuals served by CalFresh in 2025, 1.8 million were children under the age of 18, and 1.3 million were seniors.

The Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program provides assistance to pregnant women, new mothers, infants, and children under age five. WIC helps California families by providing food benefits to individual participants based on their nutritional needs and a risk assessment. The food benefits can be used to purchase healthy supplemental foods from about 4,000 WIC authorized vendor stores throughout the state.

WIC also provides nutritional education, breastfeeding support, healthcare referrals, and other community services. Participants must meet income guidelines and other criteria. Currently, 84 WIC agencies provide services monthly to approximately one million participants at over 500 sites in local communities throughout the state.

When the federal government shut down on November 1, 2025, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced that CalFresh and WIC benefits would not be issued for November, cutting off food assistance for the millions of Californians who rely on the program.

Following legal action by California and other states, a federal court ordered the USDA to use contingency funds to restore full SNAP funding. Benefits resumed on November 6, 2025. This five-day lapse demonstrated the vulnerability of relying solely on federal appropriations for nutrition programs that millions of California families and businesses depend on to support daily food needs.

Cal Cities reported that while counties and nonprofits are typically on the front lines of addressing food insecurity, many cities were also responding when the government shut down. Cities were sharing information about county and nonprofit food banks and, in some cases, directly funding food assistance programs, including efforts in South San Francisco, Mammoth Lakes, and Riverside.

Existing Cal Cities Policy:

Healthy Cities

Cal Cities encourages California cities to help parents make healthy family choices; create healthy schools; provide access to healthy and affordable foods; and adopt city design and planning principles that promote physical activity.

Seniors

Cal Cities encourages cities to recognize seniors as a valuable state resource and to develop and improve intergenerational programs and activities. Cal Cities supports legislation that would provide funding for side-by-side day care facilities for California's youth, adults, and seniors.

Children

Cal Cities believes that the children of California must be recognized as our state's most valuable resource. Their development, education, and wellbeing are key to our state's future. Further, it is essential that each child have the support needed to become a productive citizen in the world of the 21st Century. This involves supporting diverse before- and after-school programs and creating stronger linkages between municipal services and school-based job training programs in order to produce more job placement opportunities.

Cal Cities promotes the development of a cooperative program with the goal of increasing enrollment of California's children in the Healthy Families Program.

Cal Cities encourages cities to promote antibullying efforts across California as well as provide education and awareness to the general public about the imminent health and safety concerns for bullied children, especially those with special needs.

Cal Cities supports increasing opportunities for California's youth to participate in civic engagement activities.

Fiscal Impact:
There are several fiscal impacts to be considered with this measure:

- The state would need to allocate general fund revenue to the contingency fund. Given the state's structural budget deficit, allocating a significant amount of funding to the contingency fund is unlikely.
- Covering the cost of these benefit programs for extended periods could be very expensive. Currently, California spends approximately $36 million to $43 million per day on CalFresh benefits, with total annual funding estimated at over $13 billion to $15 billion for 2025-26.
- During the government shutdown, businesses, especially grocery retailers, also experienced operational and revenue impacts as customers suddenly lost access to their food budgets. A contingency fund could help stabilize local economies during future shutdowns by maintaining consumer purchasing power and reducing sudden drops in food spending.
- When federal nutrition benefits lapse, local governments, food banks, and community organizations often face increased demand for emergency food assistance. Maintaining continuity of benefits through a state contingency fund could reduce the need for cities and counties to redirect local resources or expand emergency food programs during federal funding disruptions.

Staff Comments:
Last year, the CS Committee considered AB 543 (Gonzalez), which enables street medicine providers to more effectively utilize Medi-Cal to deliver healthcare services to individuals experiencing homelessness. The committee received background information explaining that Cal Cities does not have an existing policy to engage on issues related to Medi-Cal and other social safety net programs that are largely administered by counties. The committee voted to support AB 543, but rather than adopting policy related to Medi-Cal, the committee requested that related measures in the future come back to the committee for consideration.

Medi-Cal, CalFresh, and WIC are interconnected. California safety-net programs are designed to support low-income families by providing health coverage and nutrition assistance. Enrollment in Medi-Cal or CalFresh often qualifies individuals for WIC, and all three can be used simultaneously to improve access to healthcare and healthy food for families. As with Medi-Cal, Cal Cities does not have an existing policy regarding CalFresh or WIC programs. Committee members are encouraged to consider how this proposal relates to cities and the impacts of these programs in their communities.

Support:
California Retailers Association (sponsor)

Opposition:
As of 3/10/26, there is no opposition on file.

Staff Recommendation:
Staff recommends that the committee discuss this measure and consider a position.

Committee Recommendation:

Board Action:

ATTACHMENT E

Community Services Policy Committee
Legislative Agenda

Staff: Caroline Grinder, Legislative Affairs Lobbyist
Serena Scott, Legislative Affairs and Policy Analyst

SB 492 (Menjivar) Youth Housing Bond Act of 2026.

Bill Summary:
This measure would create the Youth Housing Bond Act of 2026, which would authorize the sale of $1 billion in general obligation bonds at the next statewide election to fund youth housing programs.

Bill Description:
The Youth Housing Bond Act would allocate $1 billion in grants to local agencies, nonprofit organizations, or joint ventures to purchase equipment and acquire, renovate, and construct youth centers or youth housing. The Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) would distribute funding. Of the $1 billion available, $100 million would be allocated to youth centers, and $900 million would be for youth housing. Of the available funding for youth housing, at least 50% must be spent on housing for homeless youth, and no more than 50% on housing for current or former foster youth.

SB 492 defines a youth center as a facility equipped to meet the needs of youth, including mental and behavioral health needs, housing, education, employment support, and linkage to other services, where youth ages 12 to 25 gather for programs and services.

Youth housing is defined as a facility that provides a variety of services to current or former foster youth, homeless minors, or youth at risk of homelessness to assist them with their immediate basic needs.

This measure would require HCD to prioritize applications based on all the following:

- The greatest need in the most heavily populated areas.
- The most underserved areas.
- The most economically disadvantaged areas, both in urban and rural counties.
- The number of youths to be served.
- The cost effectiveness of the proposal
- The utilization of, and coordination with, other agencies serving youth.
- The applicant's experience in program management, particularly in programs serving the needs of youth.
- The applicant's experience in programs serving youth.

After ranking the proposals, funds would be awarded to applicants in the following order of priority:

- Nonprofit organizations.
- Joint ventures between local agencies and nonprofit organizations.

- Local agencies.

If SB 492 were to pass in the legislature and be signed by the Governor, it would go on the November 2026 ballot to be approved by voters before taking effect.

Background:
Annual homelessness counts consistently find that California has the highest number of homeless youth, with over 60% of the homeless youth being unsheltered, and only 3.4% of the beds available in California are dedicated to youth.

According to California's Homeless Data Integration System (HDIS), in 2024 (the most recent full year of data), of those who experienced homelessness and accessed services in California, 121,287 were people in families with children, and 47,662 were unaccompanied youth (up to age 24).

Under the federal McKinney-Vento Act, schools are required to count their homeless students throughout the school year and ensure they receive services. Under state law, schools must distribute forms at the beginning of the school year asking families where they live — in their own homes, in motels, doubled-up with other families, in shelters, cars, or outdoors. According to the California Department of Education, there were 230,443 homeless youth enrolled in K-12 schools in California in the 2024-25 school year, a 9% increase from the year prior.

Cal Cities has a history of supporting housing bonds at the ballot box. In 2018, Cal Cities supported Proposition 1, a $4 billion bond to support the construction of 50,000 housing units for veterans, working families, people with disabilities, and those experiencing homelessness. That same year, Cal Cities also supported Proposition 2, a $2 billion bond financed by the Mental Health Services Act to build permanent supportive housing linked to mental health treatment and services. Cal Cities also supported Proposition 1 in 2024, which provided another $6 billion for behavioral health housing to address homelessness.

Existing Cal Cities Policy:
Cal Cities 2026 Advocacy Priorities
Secure ongoing funding to bolster all cities' efforts to support unhoused residents and strengthen state and regional partnerships to expand access to wraparound services.

Secure ongoing funding to accelerate the construction of affordable housing and reform the Regional Housing Needs Allocation process.

Ensure cities have the flexibility and local decision-making authority to meet their community and state housing goals, as well as reduce homelessness.

Housing for Homeless
Housing and programs for homeless and other extremely low-income populations are necessary to ensure quality of life and economic viability for all Californians.

Homelessness is a statewide problem that disproportionately impacts specific communities. The state should make funding and other resources, including enriched services, and outreach and case managers, available to help assure that local governments have the capacity to address the needs of the homeless in their communities, including resources for regional collaborations.

Homeless housing is an issue that eludes a statewide, one-size-fits-all solution, and collaboration between local jurisdictions should be encouraged.

State and federal funding programs should be designed to reflect responsibilities imposed by state and federal law.

<u>*Children*</u>
Cal Cities believes that the children of California must be recognized as our state's most valuable resource. Their development, education, and wellbeing are key to our state's future. Further, it is essential that each child have the support needed to become a productive citizen in the world of the 21st Century. This involves supporting diverse before- and after-school programs and creating stronger linkages between municipal services and school-based job training programs in order to produce more job placement opportunities.

Cal Cities promotes the development of a cooperative program with the goal to increase enrollment of California's children in the Healthy Families Program.

Cal Cities encourages cities to promote antibullying efforts across California as well as provide education and awareness to the general public about the imminent health and safety concerns for bullied children, especially those with special needs.

Cal Cities supports increasing opportunities for California's youth to participate in civic engagement activities.

Fiscal Impact:
According to the Senate Appropriations Committee:
- <u>Bond costs</u>: Total principal and interest costs to pay off the bonds would be approximately $1.739 billion ($1 billion in principal and $739 million in interest), with average annual debt service payments of $58 million (General Fund).
- <u>Administrative costs</u>: The Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) would incur significant increased staffing and operations costs, likely in the low- to mid-millions annually, and up to $50 million in the aggregate over the life of the bonds. This measure authorizes HCD to use up to 5% of bond proceeds appropriated to the department for its administrative costs, which the department indicates is sufficient to cover their administrative costs.
- <u>Ballot costs</u>: One-time Secretary of State (SOS) costs in the range of $784,000 to $984,000 (General Fund) in the 2026-27 fiscal year for printing and mailing costs to place the measure in the Voter Information Guide ballot pamphlet for the November 3, 2026, statewide general election.

Staff Comments:
This is not the only housing bond currently moving through the Legislature. Cal Cities is already supporting AB 736 (Wicks) and SB 417 (Cabaldon), both of which would place a $10 billion bond on the November 2026 ballot. These bonds would fund several key state housing programs, including the Multifamily Housing Program, the CalHOME program, the Joe Serna, Jr. Farmworker Housing Program, the My Home down payment assistance program, and more.

The Committee may wish to consider whether Cal Cities should be advocating for SB 492 to be included in the larger housing bonds currently moving through the Legislature.

Should any of these measures qualify for the ballot, there would need to be a 2/3 vote of the Cal Cities Board of Directors to take a position on the ballot measure.

Support:
As of 1/23/26, the following organizations were listed in support:

- Alliance for Children's Rights (co-source)
- California Coalition for Youth (co-source)
- Children Now (co-source)
- Aspiranet
- Bill Wilson Center
- California Alliance of Child and Family Services
- California Youth Empowerment Network
- Children's Law Center of California
- Community Solutions
- Covenant House California
- First Place for Youth
- Hollywood Homeless Youth Partnership
- Home Start INC.
- Home Start, INC
- Homeless Prenatal Program
- Homeward Bound of Marin
- John Burton Advocates for Youth
- Larkin Street Youth Services
- Loyola Law School, the Sunita Jain Anti-trafficking Initiative
- Nasw California
- National Network for Youth
- Orangewood Foundation
- Ready for Life Host Homes
- Redwood Community Action Agency's Youth Service Bureau
- Restorative Pathways
- Sacramento Lgbt Community Center
- Safe Place for Youth
- San Diego Youth Services
- San Jose Conservation Corps & Charter School
- Schoolhouse Connection
- Sycamores

- YMCA of San Diego County
- Youth Employment Partnership, INC.
- Youth Law Center

Opposition:
As of 1/23/26, there was no opposition to SB 492.

Committee Recommendation:

Board Action: