This document is an extract of a larger publication.

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RESPONSE TO THE CIVIL GRAND JURY FINAL REPORT

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

2022-2023 CIVIL GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
HAVE WE M.E.T.? MENTAL HEALTH EVALUATION TEAMS AND HOW THEY WORK

RECOMMENDATION NO. 1.1
DPH/DHS/DMH/BOS should prioritize recruitment of additional mental health clinicians. Among other possibilities additional benefits, financial incentives, tuition reimbursements or student loan buy-outs, and flexible schedules should all be explored.

RESPONSE
Agree. This recommendation is in the process of being implemented. As directed by our BOS in the April 4, 2023, motion, "Incentivizing Hiring for Los Angeles County's Alternative Crisis Response," Los Angeles County DMH is providing additional incentives to promote hiring licensed mental health clinicians for Field Intervention Teams, including co-response teams. These incentives include implementing and supplementing: sign-on bonuses, retention bonuses, field work bonuses, and increasing the pay for shift differentials.

DMH has implemented a loan repayment program and is adding Licensed Psychiatric Technicians to our stipend program to incentivize hiring.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 1.2a
DMH/BOS should permit Mental Health Evaluation teams to use outside clinicians procured under contract from private companies, if DMH cannot provide sufficient personnel. Agencies should be reimbursed in whole or in part for such hires.

RESPONSE
Agree. This recommendation has been implemented. DMH posted a solicitation to increase the number of crisis teams in the County to decrease the use of police. To date, providers have experienced difficulties hiring clinicians due to a national mental health clinician shortage.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 1.2b

DMH/BOS should allow agencies to hire specially trained employees (non-certified, but equally qualified), in place of DMH employed mental health professionals, if DMH cannot provide sufficient personnel. Agencies should be reimbursed in whole or in part for such hires.

RESPONSE
Agree. This recommendation has been implemented. DMH hires non-licensed clinicians and provides them with the necessary training to fulfill the requirements of the Board of Behavioral Sciences.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 1.4 a

BOS/DMH/DPH/DHS should improve patient navigation services for recipients of emergency mental health services or allow agencies to provide their own patient navigation personnel to enable them to provide expanded services.

RESPONSE
Agree. This recommendation has been implemented. In 2022, DMH implemented a pilot project known as Therapeutic Transportation, a collaborative with LACoFD to ensure that individuals who were experiencing a mental health crisis would get the services they needed in a more timely manner. The Therapeutic Transportation Teams included navigation and linkage of clients to requisite resources and mental health urgent care clinics as appropriate. Additionally, DMH has acquired vehicles that will allow mobile crisis teams to provide transportation rather than rely on ambulance, police, or fire. Mobile Crisis provides linkage not only to mental health but also to other social services to ensure clients' needs are met. Finally, DMH has implemented hospital navigation programs which serve to assist clients in their transition from emergency department and acute inpatient hospitalization. This program, which was piloted in Service Area 3, has decreased rehospitalization and improved access and linkage to outpatient follow-up care.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 1.6
BOS/DMH/DHS/DPH should authorize the development and staffing of additional Psychiatric Urgent Care Centers and Sobering Centers in key locations to help provide sufficient placements of mental health patients.

RESPONSE
Agree. This recommendation has been implemented. DMH has authorized the addition of two additional youth Urgent Care Centers (UCC) to provide services to clients ages 3-12 years old (which has been a service gap) and is planning on adding an additional adult UCC in Service Area 7 (which has also been a service gap).

RECOMMENDATION NO. 1.7

DMH/DPH/DHS and the BOS should substantially increase the number of rescue transport vehicles in service to promote additional opportunities for persons in need.

RESPONSE
Agree. This recommendation has been implemented. DMH has acquired vehicles that will allow mobile crisis to provide transportation rather than rely on ambulance, police, or fire. Mobile Crisis provides crisis services, linkage to mental health services, housing, and other social services.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 1.8a

Given the need for the construction of additional mental health campuses and permanent supportive care for mentally ill patients, the BOS and LACC should endeavor to fully support and participate in the Governor's efforts to provide construction funding and programs.

RESPONSE

Agree. This recommendation has been implemented. DMH applied for all eligible rounds of Behavioral Health Continuum Infrastructure Program (BHCIP) grant funds offered by the State and DMH supported community-based organizations applications for BHCIP. BHCIP funds were specifically available for expanding or building new bed capacity.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 1.8b

In order to provide additional long-term mental health campuses, residential settings, and permanent supportive housing the BOS and LACC should prioritize acquiring, renovating, and opening mental health facilities.

RESPONSE

Agree. This recommendation has been implemented. DMH is exploring contracts with additional mental health facilities/providers to add residential treatment beds to the network. DMH recently received conditional funding to add a Crisis Stabilization Unit for children in the High Desert. DMH has received $259M in Behavioral Health Bridge Housing (BHBH) funding to expand housing opportunities for individuals experiencing Serious Mental Illness (SMI) including prioritizing housing for CARE Court participants. DMH in collaboration with LACDA is distributing Community Care Expansion (CCE) funding that will allow for the rehabilitation of Adult Residential Facilities (ARF) and Residential Care Facilities for the Elderly (RCFE) and allow for additional operational subsidies to augment the limited funding provided by the state. DMH is also working with CEO to add a large subacute facility at the Los Angeles General Medical Center.

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
Public Health

BARBARA FERRER, Ph.D., M.P.H., M.Ed.
Director

MUNTU DAVIS, M.D., M.P.H
County Health Officer

MEGAN McCLAIRE, M.S.P.H.
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July 31, 2023

TO: Fesia A. Davenport
Chief Executive Office
713 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Attention: Cheri Thomas

FROM: Barbara Ferrer, Ph.D., M.P.H., M.Ed.
Director

SUBJECT: **2022-23 Civil Grand Jury Recommendations Response For: Aging Out of Transitional Aged Youth, Zero Emissions and Air Quality Monitoring, Have We M.E.T Mental Health Evaluation Teams and How They Work**

Attached for your consideration is the Department of Public Health's response to the 2022-2023 Civil Grand Jury report, as required by California Penal Code sections 933(c). Please note that Public Health's Toxicology and Environmental Assessment Branch has been folded into the new Office of Environmental Justice and Climate Health. Please contact Joshua Bobrowsky at jbobrowsky@ph.lacounty.gov if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Attachment
BF:nq:tf

cc: Chief Executive Officer
Acting County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Internal Services Department

RESPONSE TO THE CIVIL GRAND JURY FINAL REPORT

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

2022-2023 CIVIL GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
HAVE WE M.E.T. MENTAL HEALTH EVALUATION TEAMS AND HOW THEY WORK

RECOMMENDATION NO. 1.1
DPH should prioritize recruitment of additional mental health clinicians. Among other possibilities additional benefits, financial incentives, tuition reimbursements or student loan buy-outs, and flexible schedules should all be explored.

RESPONSE
Agree. This recommendation has been implemented. Please note that the mental health clinicians at the Department of Public Health's Division of Substance Abuse Prevention and Control (DPH-SAPC) do not perform direct service work. This is because DPH-SAPC contracts out all of its services, so the recruitment of mental health clinicians is primarily to support community-based substance use disorder (SUD) services through the administrative clinical staff at DPH-SAPC. DPH-SAPC has been hiring mental health clinicians and prioritizing those hires.

Additionally, DPH operates Student Wellbeing Centers at school sites across LA County (39 at the moment). These centers create a safe space on school campuses where students can receive health affirming services and support the need to lead healthy lives. At many centers, staff see a high number of students seeking mental health support. The staff will connect students to existing mental health supports in the school system and the local community. However, many LA schools are understaffed in counseling support which can lead to long delays for students seeking mental health services. School districts should also be encouraged to prioritize hiring mental health clinicians.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 1.4
DPH should improve patient navigation services for recipients of emergency mental health services or allow agencies to provide their own patient navigation personnel to enable them to provide expanded services.

RESPONSE
Partially agree. This recommendation has been partially implemented as only a small component of the jurisdiction for emergency mental health services falls to the Department of Public Health. DPH-SAPC has been coordinating with DMH and continues to strengthen our partnership to ensure that people with a SUD served by their emergency mental health services are able to be transitioned and navigated to community-based SUD treatment. Additionally, DPH-SAPC has also been expanding its Client Engagement and Navigation Services (CENS) to support client transition and navigation to SUD services.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 1.6
DPH should authorize the development and staffing of additional Psychiatric Urgent Care Centers and Sobering Centers in key locations to help provide sufficient placements of mental health patients.

RESPONSE
Agree. This recommendation is being implemented. While DPH does not have jurisdiction over Psychiatric Urgent Care Centers, DPH-SAPC does contract for sobering center services at the MLK Behavioral Health Center (MLK BHC). Despite expanded outreach and engagement with the MLK Community Hospital and local partners, these services are under-utilized. DPH-SAPC is seeking an alternate destination site designation so that first responders can drop off clients at the sobering center at MLK BHC to increase the volume of people served. DPH-SAPC is also ensuring that services offered at sobering centers appeal to individuals that may be looking for harm reduction opportunities. DPH-SAPC also already has contracted agencies that are expanding sobering center services and these sobering center services will be contracted between the community-based organization and managed care plans offering funding for sobering centers under the Community Services option of CalAIM. This will result in additional sobering center services that will not require capital investments and will be managed outside DPH-SAPC.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 1.7
DPH and the BOS should substantially increase the number of rescue transport vehicles in service to promote additional opportunities for persons in need.

RESPONSE
Disagree. This recommendation will not be implemented as jurisdiction for the implementation of this recommendation falls outside DPH as it is not responsible for rescue transport vehicles.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 1.8a
Given the need for the construction of additional mental health campuses and permanent supportive care for mentally ill patients, the BOS and LACC should endeavor to fully support and participate in the Governor's efforts to provide construction funding and programs.

RESPONSE
Partially Disagree. This recommendation will not be implemented as jurisdiction falls outside of DPH. We would suggest that the County's support for funding for construction and programs from the State also highlight the importance of the County participating in allocation decisions over those funding awards. While opportunities such as the Behavioral Health Continuum Infrastructure Program (BHCIP) have been helpful, decision-making for BHCIP awards was entirely held by the State, while the County is in an ideal position to know what local capital investments are needed to address local needs.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 1.8b
In order to provide additional long-term mental health campuses, residential settings, and permanent supportive housing the BOS and LACC should prioritize acquiring, renovating, and opening mental health facilities.

RESPONSE
Partially disagree. This recommendation will not be implemented as jurisdiction for the falls outside DPH. Rather than just focusing on expanding mental health capacity, we would suggest broadening the focus of this recommendation to behavioral health capacity or "mental health and substance use" capacity so that SUD capacity is not excluded. Further, it is important to recognize that expanding SUD capacity may not always require investments in capital, since DPH-SAPC's services are entirely contracted out, but may instead require more funding and investments to support the expansion of contracted community-based SUD services.

Health Services
LOS ANGELES COUNTY

July 26, 2023

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Chief Deputy Director, Population Health

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www.dhs.lacounty.gov

"To advance the health of our patients and our communities by providing extraordinary care"

TO: Fesia A. Davenport
Chief Executive Officer

FROM: Christina R. Ghaly, M.D.
Director

SUBJECT: **RESPONSE TO THE 2022-2023 LOS ANGELES COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY REPORT**

Attached are the Department of Health Services' (DHS') responses to the 2022-2023 Los Angeles Civil Grand Jury (CGJ) Reports Sections:

- *"Have We M.E.T.?" – Recommendation Numbers 1.1, 1.4a, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8a, and 1.8b.*

These recommendations will not be implemented as jurisdiction falls with the Department of Mental Health (DMH). DHS defers to DMH for the responses to Recommendations 1.1, 1.4a, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8a, and 1.8b.

- *"MEDI-CAL Reimbursement, The Final Resolution of an Ongoing Issue" – Recommendation Numbers 1.1 and 1.2*

We concur and will continue to work with the Auditor-Controller in addressing Recommendation Number 1.1.

We concur with and have initiated actions to address Recommendation Number 1.2.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please let me know or your staff may contact Maria Lorena Andrade-Guzman at (213) 288-7901 or Angelo Cariaga at (213) 288-8437.

CRG:nm

Attachments

c: Hal F. Yee, Jr., M.D. Chief Deputy Director, Clinical Affairs
Allan Wecker, Chief Financial Officer
Kevin Lynch, Chief Information Officer

www.dhs.lacounty.gov

RESPONSE TO THE CIVIL GRAND JURY FINAL REPORT

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

2022-2023 CIVIL GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
HAVE WE M.E.T? MENTAL HEALTH EVALUATION TEAMS AND HOW THEY WORK?

RECOMMENDATION NO. 1.1
DPH/DHS/DMH/BOS should prioritize recruitment of additional mental health clinicians. Among other possibilities additional benefits, financial incentives, tuition reimbursements or student loan buy-outs, and flexible schedules should all be explored.

RESPONSE
The DHS disagrees with the finding.

This recommendation will not be implemented as jurisdiction for this recommendation falls with the DMH. DHS defers to DMH for response to Recommendation No. 1.1.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 1.4a
BOS/DMH/DPH/DHS should improve patient navigation services for recipients of emergency mental health services or allow agencies to provide their own patient navigation personnel to enable them to provide expanded services.

RESPONSE
DHS disagrees with the finding.

This recommendation will not be implemented as jurisdiction for this recommendation falls with DMH. DHS defers to DMH for response to Recommendation No. 1.4a.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 1.6
BOS/DMH/DHS/DPH should authorize the development and staffing of additional Psychiatric Urgent Care Centers and Sobering Centers in key locations to help provide sufficient placements of mental health patients.

RESPONSE
DHS disagrees with the finding.

This recommendation will not be implemented as jurisdiction for this recommendation falls with DMH. DHS defers to DMH for response to Recommendation No. 1.6.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 1.7
DMH/DPH/DHS and the BOS should substantially increase the number of rescue transport vehicles in service to promote additional opportunities for persons in need.

RESPONSE
DHS disagrees with the finding.

This recommendation will not be implemented as jurisdiction for this recommendation falls with DMH. DHS defers to DMH for response to Recommendation No. 1.7.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 1.8a
Given the need for the construction of additional mental health campuses and permanent supportive care for mentally ill patients, the BOS and LACC should endeavor to fully support and participate in the Governor's efforts to provide construction funding and programs.

RESPONSE
DHS disagrees with the finding.

This recommendation will not be implemented as jurisdiction for this recommendation falls with DMH. DHS defers to DMH for response to Recommendation No. 1.8a.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 1.8b
In order to provide additional long-term mental health campuses, residential settings, and permanent supportive housing the BOS and LACC should prioritize acquiring, renovating, and opening mental health facilities.

RESPONSE
DHS disagrees with the finding.

This recommendation will not be implemented as jurisdiction for this recommendation falls with DMH. DHS defers to DMH for response to Recommendation No. 1.8b.

OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

HALL OF JUSTICE

ROBERT G. LUNA, SHERIFF

August 7, 2023

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Supervisors:

RESPONSE TO THE FINAL REPORTS OF THE 2022-2023 LOS ANGELES COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY

Attached is the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (Department) response to the 2022-2023 Civil Grand Jury Report (CGJ) recommendations. The CGJ's areas of interest specific to the Department included:

- All Aboard: Is Metro Rail on Track (Attachment C)
- Have we M.E.T.? Mental Health Evaluation Team and How They Work (Attachment D)
- Sheriff's Operations: An Erosion of Trust. Examining Transparency, Accountability and Community Policing within the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (Attachment E)
- The Inmate Reception Center: An Outdated Process Imperils Staff, and the Justice System (Attachment F)

Should you have questions regarding our response, please contact Division Director Conrad Meredith, Administrative Services Division, at (213) 229-3310.

Sincerely,

R. Luna

ROBERT G. LUNA
SHERIFF

RESPONSE TO THE CIVIL GRAND JURY FINAL REPORT

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

2022-2023 CIVIL GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
HAVE WE M.E.T.? MENTAL HEALTH EVALUATION TEAMS AND HOW THEY WORK

RECOMMENDATION NO. 1.2b
DMH/BOS should allow agencies to hire specially trained employees (non-certified, but equally qualified), in place of DMH employed mental health professionals, if DMH cannot provide sufficient personnel. Agencies should be reimbursed in whole or in part for such hires.

RESPONSE
Disagree. This recommendation will not be implemented as jurisdiction falls outside of the LASD.

Since 1991, the DMH has been the Mental Evaluation Team's (MET) civilian partner in the co-response model. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, additional responsibilities were increased for clinicians, thereby, resulting in a nationwide shortage of clinician personnel. The increased demand for mental health professionals has made it difficult for DMH to hire qualified personnel. The scarcity of personnel in both departments and the current mental health challenges, has required both agencies to develop innovative strategies to address clinician shortages.

In the past, LASD has inquired with several private psychiatric facilities and urgent care centers to ascertain if their clinicians would be interested in joining LASD's MET Unit as clinician partners. There appeared to be interest from the private sector in collaborating with LASD and should be explored further to address the current shortages. Currently, the LASD's Veteran's Mental Evaluation Team (VMET) partners with federally licensed clinicians from the Veteran's Administration (VA) and Veteran's Peer Access Network (VPAN).

Presently, leadership from LASD and DMH have discussed the option of partnering with other DMH programs such as the Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) and Risk Assessment Management Program (RAMP). Most of the clients on AOT's case load are safety risks, due to their propensity for violence and non-compliance with medication and/or treatment, making this potential partnership viable.

It should be noted the San Diego Police Department's Psychiatric Emergency Response Team (PERT) partners with Star View Behavioral Health (SVBH). The SVBH is privately owned and not county operated.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 1.3
BOS/LASD/LACoFD/LAPD and the Los Angeles City Council (LACC) should authorize an update or replacement of the current CAD system to integrate it with systems in use by other agencies.

RESPONSE
Agree. The recommendation requires further analysis.

The LASD's Technology and Support Division is currently engaged in exploring replacement of our current CAD system to a newer version. A Request for Proposal (RFP) for a replacement system has been issued and is in the evaluation phase. The evaluation approach is extremely extensive and subject to being prolonged, (e.g., vendor protest, contract negotiations). Recommendation for additional resources will be made within the context of the overall budget, numerous funding priorities, and requests.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 1.4a
BOS/DMH/DPH/DHS should improve patient navigation services for recipients of emergency mental health services or allow agencies to provide their own patient navigation personnel to enable them to provide expanded services.

RESPONSE
Disagree. This recommendation will not be implemented as jurisdiction falls outside of the LASD.

LASD does not independently provide patient navigation services, however, with the recent national implementation of the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, mental health agencies would be able to provide their own patient navigation personnel. The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline is a nationwide mental health hotline for non-emergent mental health services. This navigation system would provide the necessary services for individuals experiencing a mental health crisis and afford them the opportunity to collaborate with partners in their communities.

Currently, DMH provides the Access Line for service referrals, crisis assessments, and field deployments 24-hours a day, seven days a week. This service provides assistance to those in crises, along with family members and loved ones who are affected.

In addition, DMH provides additional resources via 211 LA County. This service is available to the public and available in multiple languages. This service allows those in need to access information and obtain referrals to physical and mental health resources (i.e., housing, utilities, food, suicide, and crisis interventions).

Unfortunately, LASD does not possess the resources or experience to provide patient navigation services for recipients of emergency mental health services. These navigation services are provided by MET, RAMP, and VMET, in partnership with its DMH and federal clinicians.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 1.6
BOS/DMH/DHS/DPH should authorize the development and staffing of additional Psychiatric Urgent Care Centers and Sobering Centers in key locations to help provide sufficient placements of mental health patients.

RESPONSE
Disagree. This recommendation will not be implemented as jurisdiction falls outside of the LASD.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 1.7
DMH/DPH/DHS and the BOS should substantially increase the number of rescue transport vehicles in service to promote additional opportunities for persons in need.

RESPONSE
Disagree. This recommendation will not be implemented as jurisdiction falls outside of the LASD.

The MET currently collaborates with DMH for ambulance services, but ambulance services are requested by LASD field personnel. LASD requesting an ambulance to transport for medical emergencies has been found to be quicker and more time efficient. Ambulance services are normally delayed and force field deputies to transport patients to prevent waiting extended periods of time. LASD supports increased access to ambulance services for swift responses.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 1.8b
In order to provide additional long-term mental health campuses, residential settings, and permanent supportive housing the BOS and LACC should prioritize acquiring, renovating, and opening mental health facilities.

RESPONSE
Disagree. This recommendation will not be implemented as jurisdiction falls outside of the LASD.

This recommendation is beyond the LASD's scope to approve or acquire such facilities. The prioritization in acquiring, renovating, and opening mental health facilities by the BOS and LACC, would assist the MET, VMET, and RAMP with additional locations for placement of individuals experiencing a mental health crisis.

RECOMMENDATION NO 1.9
In order to provide the Mental Health Evaluation "H (Henry) 918" Division more autonomy and greater scope of service, the LASD should authorize creation of an independent Mental Health Evaluation Bureau. This will give the MET team the ability to expand its operations and to explore various pilot programs.

RESPONSE
Agree. LASD agrees with this recommendation, but a further exploration would have to be conducted in six months.

With over 10 million residents, the community's need for mental health services has reached a critical need. As LASD recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic, investing in programs to promote public safety and health has remained a priority.

Since 2018, the LASD has requested the reorganization and expansion of MET. However, due to staffing shortages and the need for collaborative growth with DMH partners, neither LASD nor DMH can expand at this time.

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
FIRE DEPARTMENT

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KATHRYN BARGER — FIFTH DISTRICT

July 21, 2023

TO: FESIA DAVENPORT, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

FROM: ANTHONY C. MARRONE, FIRE CHIEF

RESPONSES TO THE 2022-23 LOS ANGELES COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY FINAL REPORT

As requested in your memo dated July 3, 2023, attached are the Los Angeles County Fire Department's responses to the following recommendations from the 2022-23 Civil Grand Jury Final Report:

- Have we M.E.T? Mental Health Evaluation Teams and How They Work, Recommendation Numbers 1.2b, 1.3, 1.4a, 1.4b, 1.6, 1.7.
- Los Angeles County Fire Department Workers Compensation, Recommendation Numbers 1.1b, 1.2a, 1.2b, 1.2c, 1.2d, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6a, 1.6b, 1.7a, 1.7b, 1.8, 1.9, 1.10.

Should you have any questions, please contact me directly at (323) 881-6180.

ACM:al

Attachments (2)

SERVING THE UNINCORPORATED AREAS OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY AND THE CITIES OF:

AGOURA HILLS, ARTESIA, AZUSA, BALDWIN PARK, BELL, BELL GARDENS, BELL FLOWER, BRADBURY, CALABASAS, CARSON, CERRITOS, CLAREMONT, COMMERCE, COVINA, CUDAHY, DIAMOND BAR, DUARTE, EL MONTE, GARDENA, GLENDORA, HAWAIIAN GARDENS, HAWTHORNE, HERMOSA BEACH, HIDDEN HILLS, HUNTINGTON PARK, INDUSTRY, INGLEWOOD, IRWINDALE, LA CANADA FLINTRIDGE, LA HABRA, LA MIRADA, LA PUENTE, LAKEWOOD, LANCASTER, LAWNDALE, LOMITA, LYNWOOD, MALIBU, MAYWOOD, NORWALK, PALMDALE, PALOS VERDES ESTATES, PARAMOUNT, PICO RIVERA, POMONA, RANCHO PALOS VERDES, ROLLING HILLS, ROLLING HILLS ESTATES, ROSEMEAD, SAN DIMAS, SANTA CLARITA, SIGNAL HILL, SOUTH EL MONTE, SOUTH GATE, TEMPLE CITY, VERNON, WALNUT, WEST HOLLYWOOD, WESTLAKE VILLAGE, WHITTIER

RESPONSE TO THE CIVIL GRAND JURY FINAL REPORT

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
LOS ANGELES COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT

2022-2023 CIVIL GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
HAVE WE M.E.T? MENTAL HEALTH EVALUATION TEAMS AND HOW THEY WORK?

RECOMMENDATION NO. 1.2b
DMH/BOS should allow agencies to hire specially trained employees (non-certified, but equally qualified) in place of DMH employed mental health professionals, if DMH cannot provide sufficient personnel. Agencies should be reimbursed in whole or in part for such hires.

RESPONSE
Disagree. This recommendation will not be implemented by LACoFD as jurisdiction for this recommendation falls outside of the LACoFD.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 1.3
BOS/LASD/LACoFD/LAPD and the LACC should authorize an update or replacement of the current CAD system to integrate it with systems in use by other agencies.

RESPONSE
Agree. This recommendation is in the process of being implemented. Funding, through the County's IT Legacy Fund, has been approved to upgrade LACoFD's CAD which should allow better integration and distribution of LACoFD specialty resources within the jurisdictions served by the LACoFD. It is anticipated that the CAD upgrade will be completed by Quarter 4, 2025.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 1.4a
BOS/DMH/DPH/DHS should improve patient navigation services for recipients of emergency medical health services or allow agencies to provide their own patient navigation personnel to enable them to provide expanded services.

RESPONSE
Disagree. This recommendation will not be implemented by LACoFD as jurisdiction for this recommendation falls outside the LACoFD.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 1.4b
LACoFD should be authorized to provide their own patient navigation personnel. Agency should be reimbursed by the County in whole or in part for such hires.

RESPONSE
Partially disagree. This recommendation will require further analysis. Recommendations for additional resources will be made within the context of the overall budget, numerous funding priorities, and competing requests. Additionally,

any such positions would ideally be DMH/DPSS/DPH positions to assigned to support LACoFD's mission, as LACoFD does not have the expertise nor the internal resources to provide the training and support that they would require.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 1.6
BOS/DMH/DHS/DPH should authorize the development and staffing of additional Psychiatric Urgent Care Centers and Sobering Centers in key locations to help provide sufficient placement of mental health patients.

RESPONSE
Disagree. This recommendation will not be implemented by LACoFD because jurisdiction for this recommendation falls outside the LACoFD.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 1.7
DMH/DPH/DHS and the BOS should substantially increase the number rescue transport vehicles in service to promote additional opportunities for persons in need.

RESPONSE
Disagree. This recommendation will not be implemented by LACoFD as jurisdiction for this recommendation falls outside the LACoFD.

LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT

MICHEL R. MOORE
Chief of Police

KAREN BASS
Mayor

P. O. Box 30158
Los Angeles, Calif. 90030
Telephone: (213) 486-6630
TDD: (877) 275-5273
Ref #: 8.2

November 9, 2023

Los Angeles Civil Grand Jury
222 South Hill Street
Sixth Floor, Suite 670
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Sir/Madam:

In response to the County of Los Angeles Civil Grand Jury request, dated June 21, 2023, the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD or Department), Detective Support and Vice Division (DSVD) has reviewed and addressed the report titled, "HAVE WE MET? Mental Health Evaluation Teams and How They Work." Below are several clarifications to the information listed in the Los Angeles Police Department section of this report, and responses to Recommendations 1.3, 1.6, and 1.7.

The LAPD clarifications to the following paragraphs within the report:

The LAPD Mental Evaluation Unit (MEU) was one of the original six law enforcement entities recognized as a national learning site and model for "Specialized Policing Responses: Law Enforcement/Mental Health." Currently, there are 15 law enforcement learning sites in operation throughout the country.

In 2005, the LAPD developed the Case Assessment and Management Program (CAMP) to identify, monitor, and engage those subjects and to construct a case management approach that linked them to appropriate services. The CAMP pairs police detectives with psychologists, nurses, and/or resources based on individual clients' needs. The CAMP typically averages approximately 30 to 40 new cases per week. After the initial contact, cases are not closed; rather, they are monitored and evaluated for the need for additional services to ensure an effective long-term assistance plan.

> **Note:** Footnote 34 on Page 9 of the report lists information received from an interview conducted on January 26, 2023, with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) personnel.

Currently, MEU-Systemwide Mental Assessment Response Team (SMART) units are assigned to the four geographic bureaus in the City of Los Angeles, operating in four shifts, 24 hours per day, seven days per week, with 10 to 14 units deployed daily. Teams include one specially

trained police officer and one licensed mental health clinician working in a co-response model responding to critical mental health incidents.

When a mental health professional is unavailable, two specially trained police officers are assigned to respond to these critical incidents.

Approximately 80 trained sergeants, detectives, and officers along with 37 licensed clinicians are on staff at MEU SMART and CAMP. The MEU SMART is often deployed in conjunction with the Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team in crisis situations, such as barricaded suspects and potential suicidal jumpers.

Recommendations:

Recommendation 1.3: *Board of Supervisors (BOS)/LASD/Los Angeles County Fire Department/LAPD and the Los Angeles City Council (LACC) should authorize an update or replacement of the current Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) system to integrate it with systems in use by other agencies.*

The Department acknowledges the importance of CAD system integration to streamline our processes and improve interagency communication and cooperation. The recommendation aligns with our commitment to enhancing the safety and well-being of our community members and is consistent with our goal of optimizing resource allocation and information sharing among various law enforcement agencies.

A Computer-Aided Dispatch system that can seamlessly communicate with other agencies is essential to ensure prompt and efficient response during critical incidents and emergencies. It will not only facilitate real-time information sharing but also reduce response times, enhance situational awareness, and improve the overall effectiveness of our operations.

Considering this, the Department will explore this recommendation with the Emergency Command Control Communication Systems Division (ECCCSD) and the Los Angeles City Information Technology Agency (ITA).

Recommendation 1.6: *BOS/DMH/DHS/DPH should authorize the development and staffing of additional Psychiatric Urgent Care Centers and Sobering Centers in key locations to help provide sufficient placements of mental health patients.*

This recommendation, which suggests the development and staffing of additional psychiatric urgent care centers and sobering centers in key locations, is a crucial initiative to ensure that mental health patients receive timely and appropriate care and that individuals facing substance use-related issues are provided with the necessary support.

The Department wholeheartedly supports this recommendation and recognizes the importance of enhancing the availability of these centers in key locations. The need for such facilities has become increasingly evident, as it directly addresses the challenges associated with the placement and treatment of mental health patients. Creating additional psychiatric urgent care centers and sobering centers aligns with our shared commitment to improving the quality of care and support for individuals in crisis while relieving the burden on law enforcement agencies.

The Department recognizes the importance of a careful needs assessment to identify the key locations for establishing these centers. This assessment should consider factors such as population density, proximity to existing mental health facilities, and the prevalence of substance use-related incidents.

Additionally, we encourage the involvement of mental health professionals and experts in the planning and execution of this expansion. Their expertise will be instrumental in creating an environment that is safe, therapeutic, and conducive to the recovery of individuals seeking help.

Recommendation 1.7: *Department of Mental Health (DMH)/Department of Public Health (DPH)/Department of Health Services (DHS) AND THE BOS should substantially increase the number of rescue transport vehicles in service to promote additional opportunities for persons in need.*

The Department understands that expanding the fleet of rescue transport vehicles can significantly improve the capacity to assist persons in need. This enhancement aligns with our commitment to public safety and the well-being of our community members. Therefore, the Department fully supports increasing the number of these vehicles in service.

To implement this recommendation, a collaborative approach involving multiple stakeholders, including the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD), DMH, and community partners, is warranted. This collaborative effort should involve an analysis of the current demand for rescue transport services, population growth, and geographical distribution to determine the optimal locations and number of vehicles required. In addition, a review of calls where MEU resources were deployed in conjunction with rescue transport vehicles would aid the process.

Moreover, a public awareness campaign can be initiated to educate community members about the availability and proper utilization of rescue transport services. This ensures community members are aware of how and when to access these services, which can lead to more efficient and effective responses to emergencies.

The Department remains committed to its partnership with the
Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health professionals to ensure the successful implementation of this initiative.

If you have any questions, please contact Captain Cliff Humphris.
Detective Support and Vice Division, at (213) 486-0910.

Respectfully,

MICHEL R. MOORE
Chief of Police

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

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KAREN BASS
MAYOR

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FIRE CHIEF

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July 25, 2023

Presiding Judge
Los Angeles Superior Court
Clara Shortridge Foltz Criminal Justice Center
210 West Temple Street, 13th Floor, Room 13-303
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Presiding Judge:

We are in receipt of the Civil Grand Jury report "HAVE WE M.E.T.? MENTAL HEALTH EVALUATION TEAM AND HOW THEY WORK." Pursuant to your June 21, 2023, request for response, the Los Angeles City Fire Department responds to the Civil Grand Jury's recommendations as follows:

Recommendation 1.2a: DMH/BOS should permit Mental Health Evaluation teams to use outside clinicians procured under contract from private companies, if DMH cannot provide sufficient personnel. Agencies should be reimbursed in whole or in part for such hires.

Response
The Los Angeles City Fire Department (LAFD) supports this recommendation. Based on the challenges that the Department of Mental Health (DMH) has had onboarding additional staff to meet the service demands of the County, sourcing needed staff through contracting agencies is prudent. Any increase in the availability of mental health evaluation teams will be a positive step in addressing the increased calls for service related to a mental health crisis. However, private contractors should be required to meet the same standards as the DMH staff and should be overseen by DMH.

Addressing the shortage of mental health clinicians requires a multi-faceted approach. This may involve increasing funding for mental health services, expanding educational programs and training opportunities, implementing policies to reduce stigma, and improving work conditions to prevent burnout among clinicians. These efforts aim to attract more individuals to the mental health field and retain them, ultimately expanding the availability of mental health services.

Recommendation 1.2b: DMH/BOS should allow agencies to hire specially trained employees (non-certified, but equally qualified), in place of DMH employed mental health professionals, if DMH cannot provide sufficient personnel. Agencies should be reimbursed in whole or in part for such hires.

Response
The LAFD supports this recommendation. An example of a relevant specially trained LAFD employee is an Advanced Provider (Nurse Practitioner or Physician's Assistant). The LAFD deploys a limited number of Advanced Practitioners partnered with Firefighter/Paramedics in Advanced Provider Response Units (APRUs). APRUs respond to 911 calls for service, including behavioral and psychiatric emergencies. Currently, the LAFD can transport patients experiencing an isolated psychiatric emergency who are cleared by an Advanced Practitioner to some Exodus Psychiatric Urgent Care Centers (PUCCs).

The APRU staff can provide advanced medical assessments and treatments; clear patients for transport to a Sober Center or PUCC; provide treatment and release resolutions for low acuity medical problems and make referrals to allied agencies for patients with elevated social risk factors such as homelessness.

Recommendation 1.3: BOS/LASD/LACOFD/LAPD and the Los Angeles City Council (LACC) should authorize an update or replacement of the current CAD system to integrate it with systems in use by other agencies.

Response
Computer-aided dispatch (CAD) integration or interoperability refers to the ability of different CAD systems to exchange information and communicate effectively. It plays a crucial role in public safety and emergency response operations. It enables seamless collaboration, efficient resource allocation, improved incident management, cross-jurisdictional operations, data integration and analysis, and interagency training.

- It is recommended that all public safety and partner agencies embrace CAD interoperability. Interoperable CADs can enhance capabilities, optimize response efforts, and save more lives.

Recommendation 1.4a: BOS/DMH/DPH/DHS should improve patient navigation services for recipients of emergency mental health services or allow agencies to provide their own patient navigation personnel to enable them to provide expanded services.

Response
The LAFD supports this recommendation. Improving patient navigation services for recipients of emergency mental health services is an important tactic for improving mental health services in Los Angeles County for several reasons:

1. Continuity of care: Emergency mental health services often provide immediate crisis intervention, stabilization, and short-term support. However, to effectively address the underlying mental health issues, it is essential for individuals to receive ongoing care and follow-up treatment. Patient navigation services help bridge the gap between emergency services and long-term care, ensuring a smooth transition and continuity of care for recipients.

2. Access to appropriate resources: Navigating the mental health system can be challenging, especially for individuals in crisis. Patient navigation services can help recipients connect with the appropriate resources and services they need, such as outpatient therapy, medication management, or support groups. Navigators can assist with scheduling appointments, coordinating referrals, and providing information about available community resources, making it easier for individuals to access the support they require.

3. Reducing relapse and readmission rates: Without proper follow-up and ongoing care, individuals who receive emergency mental health services may be at a higher risk of relapse or readmission to the emergency department. Patient navigation services can help prevent these relapses by ensuring that individuals receive the necessary support, monitoring, and treatment after their initial crisis. By addressing their ongoing mental health needs, patient navigation can reduce the likelihood of repeated emergencies and promote long-term recovery.

4. Support and advocacy: Navigating the mental health system can be overwhelming, especially for individuals in crisis or those who may be unfamiliar with available services. Patient navigators provide valuable support, guidance, and advocacy throughout the process. They can help individuals understand their rights, assist with paperwork and documentation, and act as a liaison between the individual and healthcare providers. This support can empower recipients, increase their engagement in their own care, and improve their overall mental health outcomes.

5. Preventive care and early intervention: Patient navigation services can also play a crucial role in preventive care and early intervention. By connecting individuals with appropriate mental health resources and support early on, potential crises can be identified and addressed before they escalate. Timely interventions and ongoing support can help individuals manage their mental health effectively, reducing the likelihood of future emergencies.

Overall, improving patient navigation services for recipients of emergency mental health services enhances their access to care, promotes continuity of care, reduces relapse rates, provides support and advocacy, and enables preventive and early intervention measures. By addressing these needs, patient navigation services can significantly improve the overall mental health outcomes and well-being of individuals in crisis.

Recommendation 1.6: BOS/DMH/DHS/DPH should authorize the development and staffing of additional Psychiatric Urgent Care Centers and Sobering Centers in key locations to help provide sufficient placements of mental health patients.

Response
The LAFD supports this recommendation. As Psychiatric Urgent Care Centers (PUCCs) and Sobering Centers are becoming increasingly occupied, it is recommended that they be geographically expanded to service a greater number of patients throughout the area. Expanding psychiatric urgent care centers, sobering centers, and additional medical detoxification centers in Los Angeles is of paramount importance to address the growing mental health and substance abuse crisis across the County.

PUCCs and Sobering Centers provide vital support and services to individuals facing acute psychiatric emergencies, alcohol or drug-related issues, and the dire need for medical detoxification. By investing in such facilities, we can ensure timely and appropriate care for those struggling with mental health challenges while also offering a safe and supportive environment for individuals seeking sobriety. With the expansion of these centers, Los Angeles can alleviate the strain on hospitals and emergency rooms, offering specialized care tailored to the unique needs of patients in crisis. Moreover, these centers can serve as a bridge to long-term treatment and recovery programs, fostering a more holistic and effective approach to healing our community. By prioritizing the establishment of additional facilities, we can create a healthier and more compassionate city that prioritizes the well-being of all its residents.

Recommendation 1.7: DMH/DPH/DHS and the BOS should substantially increase the number of rescue transport vehicles in service to promote additional opportunities for persons in need.

Response

Demand for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) has not only increased in the City and County of Los Angeles, but it has also evolved. The City of Los Angeles has not only experienced an increase in traditional calls for life-threatening emergencies, but it has also experienced an increase in calls for services related to:

- Mental health crisis incidents,
- low-acuity/non-life-threatening medical incidents, and
- Medical incidents related to homelessness.

Additional ambulances and new forms of alternative response and transport units are required to address the growing and evolving needs of the public.

The LAFD appreciates the opportunity to provide written responses to the Los Angeles County Civil Grand Jury Report "HAVE WE M.E.T.? MENTAL HEALTH EVALUATION TEAM AND HOW THEY WORK."

Sincerely,

KRISTIN M. CROWLEY
Fire Chief

HHH

Too Few, Too Much, Too Slow



2022 – 2023

LOS ANGELES COUNTY

CIVIL GRAND JURY

Ann Sewill, General Manager
Tricia Keane, Executive Officer

Daniel Huynh, Assistant General Manager
Anna E. Ortega, Assistant General Manager
Luz C. Santiago, Assistant General Manager

City of Los Angeles

Karen Bass, Mayor

LOS ANGELES HOUSING DEPARTMENT
1200 West 7th Street, 9th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90017
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September 19, 2023

Honorable Judge Samantha P. Jessner, Presiding Judge
Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles
Clara Shortridge Foltz Criminal Justice Center
210 W. Temple Street, Thirteenth Floor, Room 13-303
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: HHH
Too Few, Too Much, Too Slow
Pre-Release of a report by the 2022-2023 Los Angeles County Civil Grand Jury

Dear Judge Jessner:

The Los Angeles Housing Department acknowledges receipt of the 2022-2023 Los Angeles County Civil Grand Jury Pre-Release of a Report regarding HHH, its findings and recommendations. The Los Angeles Housing Department appreciates the Civil Grand Jury's interest in our program. In accordance with California Penal Code §933 (c) and §933.05, we respectfully submit Attachment A as our formal response to Recommendations 1.1 through 1.11

For additional questions or comments, your staff may contact Daniel Huynh, Assistant General Manager, at: (213) 808-8901, or via email at: daniel.huynh@lacity.org.

ANN SEWILL
General Manager

RESPONSE TO THE CIVIL GRAND JURY FINAL REPORT

Department: Los Angeles Housing Department

Subject: 2022-2023 Civil Grand Jury Recommendations For:
HHH: Too Few, Too Much, Too Slow

Proposition HHH, a $1.2 billion initiative endorsed by voters in 2016, aimed to significantly boost the City's annual production of supportive housing units from 300 to 1000. The original goal of Proposition HHH was to facilitate the creation of 7,000 new homes for individuals dealing with homelessness within a span of ten years. However, the current status as of August 2023 reveals a more promising outlook, with 8,596 HHH units actively progressing. Among these, 2,877 are already in operation, while an additional 3,512 are actively under construction. Concurrently, the City continues to commit funding for another 300 non-HHH supportive housing units each year.

Recommendation No. 1.1 - Whatever remains of HHH funds, if any, should go to projects that provide more immediate "interim" housing for individuals experiencing homelessness.

Response: In the past two fiscal years the City has invested $860,516,405 from other sources in producing and operating 10,000 interim housing beds, ranging from congregate shelters to Project RoomKey motels to Tiny Home Villages and others. Every year to keep these open the City would need to allocate funds for operations ranging from $50 to $267 per unit per night, with an average of $65 per unit per night, or $237 million annually for all 10,000. Permanent housing requires the initial capital investment, but operating costs are much lower and are covered by rental income from residents and federal or county rental vouchers.

Permanent housing is not only a better financial investment; it is what moves people from homelessness into being housed. These HHH units are needed to move people from interim beds into homes. HHH is one of the few sources the City has to provide capital funding for permanent housing for people experiencing homelessness.

Recommendation No. 1.2 - The City Council, LAHD, and the Mayor's office should prioritize controlling PSH costs and mitigating delays.

Response: Despite a global pandemic and related challenges in virtual processing, the pace of development is anything but sluggish. The HHH program has committed financing to 131 projects. Fifty-three projects totaling 3,243 units have been constructed and 52 projects totaling 3,378 units are under construction. The remaining projects are in pre-development and by the end of 2024 we expect HHH to have contributed to the construction of 8,596 units of Permanent Supportive Housing. The Mayor's Office Executive Directive 30 streamlining initiative has reduced the number of days for ready-to-issue permits for HHH projects by 154 days. Every month LAHD publishes the attached HHH Summary showing how projects are progressing from early entitlement planning, to construction loan closing, to completion.

Recommendation No. 1.3 - Tiny home villages are de facto permanent housing that should be reclassified as such, protected and supported by the City, until more substantial permanent housing is available.

Response:

This recommendation falls outside the purview of LAHD. Tiny Home Villages are constructed and installed with the expectation of operating as interim housing. They do not contain individual kitchens or bathrooms, which are key components of permanent supportive housing. The city is utilizing an approach incorporating both interim and permanent supportive housing, and new PSH units are coming on line. Interim housing units serve a specific purpose of providing unhoused residents with strategies to address critical needs while being placed in permanent housing, however units constructed to the standard of permanent supportive housing are needed to address this problem in the long term. Residents of interim housing, including tiny home villages, receive access to services and support, including but not limited to on-site caseworkers, housing navigation services, and mental and physical health services.

Recommendation No. 1.4 - The City should remove any City-imposed impediment to building any type of safe, affordable PSH project, including container housing and manufactured home projects.

Response: This recommendation is not under the purview of LAHD, however the city has already implemented this recommendation to the best of its ability. The Mayor issued Executive Directive 1 (ED1), which expedites the entitlement and permitting process for 100% affordable housing developments that are consistent with the underlying zoning for a site, which includes permanent supportive housing projects. In its first 6 months 1,649 affordable units across 22 projects have secured approvals in an average of 37 days, a savings of at least 6 months. There are over 400 projects and 8,500 units in the ED1 pipeline. In June 2023, the City Council directed the Department of City Planning to develop an ordinance that would make ED1

permanent. ED 1 does not preclude based on building type, provided the project is zoning compliant and meets both building and safety requirements and building codes. However in some instances it is prudent for a project, even a permanent supportive housing project, to be subject to the required discretionary review and public hearing process. Streamlining must be applied with care.

Recommendation No. 1.5 - The City should remove any lender hesitation by guaranteeing construction loans on container PSH projects.

Response: The City's HHH pipeline of deals includes eight modular projects (modular or prefabricated construction includes "container" housing) with financing structures similar to traditionally constructed buildings. Generally, LAHD makes no distinction in the development process between modular and conventional construction. The Housing Challenge, an $120 million competition to test a range of housing innovation supported the advancement of modular projects. Thus far, LAHD has not seen a marked decrease in costs of modular construction compared to traditional construction but as the innovation develops and projects become more common, perhaps the speed of construction will increase and the costs will decrease. LAHD continues to support developers who elect to build modular projects.

Recommendation No. 1.6 - The City should immediately put vacant land under its control that is suitable to be used for housing purposes toward safely housing individuals living on the streets, in tents or in vehicles. These sites should be secured and appropriate services provided until such time as permanent housing can be produced.

Response: In November of 2012, after the dissolution of the Community Redevelopment Agency of Los Angeles (CRA/LA), the Los Angeles Housing Department (LAHD) created the Land Development Unit (LDU) to implement the development of affordable housing on land purchased by the CRA/LA for affordable housing.

In February of 2016, the City of Los Angeles adopted a Comprehensive Homeless Strategy that included strategy 7D, "Using Public Land for Affordable and Homeless Housing." Shortly after the homeless plan was released, the City Administrative Officer (CAO) launched the Affordable Housing Opportunity Sites (AHOS) Initiative to identify City-owned sites identified for affordable housing.

Since 2016, the LAHD and the CAO have collaborated on the Land Development and AHOS Initiative by developing common processes and regulations. In general, the CAO is responsible for identifying and evaluating City-owned sites for development, and the LAHD is responsible for selecting developers and negotiating disposition development agreements.

In December of 2019, the Los Angeles City Council restricted development of housing on public land by adopting a motion (CF 19-1362) which limits projects on public land to 100% affordable housing, unless it is determined by Council that an increased number of affordable units can be achieved through a different business model.

Additionally, LAHD must adhere to the Surplus Land Act (SLA). The SLA is a statute that local agencies must follow when disposing of surplus land. It was amended by Assembly Bill 1486 (Ting 2019) as well as other subsequent bills. These amendments modified the SLA to require local agencies across California to submit notices of availability of surplus land to the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) for listing on the HCD website, and to notify interested developers and certain local public entities. Land declared exempt surplus may be exempted from some or all provisions of the SLA by meeting certain criteria. The city has an ongoing effort through Executive Directive 3 to see if publicly owned sites within the City of Los Angeles can be developed with minimal public subsidies, and instructed departments to identify undeveloped or underutilized city-owned land, with the purpose of potential development into interim or permanent housing.

Recommendation No. 1.7 - The City must find a new method of developing PSH which allows for both cost and quality controls.

Response:

Costs for HHH or any affordable housing development need to be put in the context of costs for equivalent market rate developments. Even a quick google search of "multifamily construction costs in California" produces reports from the Terner Center at UC Berkeley, the UC Riverside School of Business, and others showing that market rate construction in all of California, and particularly in Los Angeles and the Bay Area, has reached staggering heights. A feasible plan to produce the housing we need must be understood in the context of the broader real estate market.

It is possible to compare the costs of affordable housing and comparable market rate developments and identify the elements that increase costs in affordable units - prevailing wages, higher energy efficiency standards, operating and replacement reserves, furniture and developer fees - that aren't included in development budgets for market rate projects because they are paid upon sale when the project is completed, or covered by escalating rents over time. Affordable housing project budgets also include holding costs and legal fees involved in assembling "soft" financing from multiple sources. The reliance on layered financing adds time and money, but stretches HHH funding to meet production goals. Without leveraging, HHH would have produced only 3,900 permanent units.

The LAHD staff is committed to finding ways to reduce costs, while retaining the commitment to funding projects that are physically and financially healthy for the decades covenanted. Realizing that some of the highest cost projects were those that had high public agency involvement, the HHH portfolio is divided into "basic" projects that include prevailing wages, higher energy efficiency standards, accessibility standards, and reserves and fees, and a "Housing Plus" category. The Housing Plus projects have been developed on Metro-owned or publicly-owned land and included requirements for community amenities such as neighborhood-serving commercial, child care centers or clinics, more parking spaces than required, or more open space. Others were funded with the Affordable Housing Sustainable Communities Program using the State's cap and trade program, and included additional greenhouse gas reduction features, support of infrastructure such as bus shelters, and water conservation features.

In addition to better understanding cost drivers, LAHD has been working with applicants to reduce costs by creating financing tools to support the use of modular development, using all entitlement benefits available such as parking reductions, and using standardized units that reduce costs while still complying with accessibility requirements. Also, in 2011, the Department transitioned to requiring Guaranteed Maximum Contracts (G-Max Contracts) for all general contractor contracts related to the construction of LAHD-funded multifamily projects. These G-Max Contracts only allow for general contractors to receive a maximum of 14% overhead & profit on projects and eliminate the opportunity for contractors to pocket cost savings that they may be entitled to with stipulated sum construction contracts.

Recommendation No. 1.8 - Programs focused on remodeling and rehabbing structures like Project Homekey should be given funding priority over larger, publicly funded, new PSH projects.

Response:

The City of LA submitted 6 of the 13 applicant projects in Homekey Program Round 2 and an additional group of three new projects for the Homekey Program Round 3. Fortunately, the varying sources of funding available have different priorities and different timelines. For example, programs like Project Homekey focus on acquisition and rehabilitation, while other sources, like HHH, focus on the creation of new units of housing. And as one of the largest cities in America, Los Angeles has the capacity to process all these projects to start construction quickly. The diversity of sources creates an environment to test what works best, including: construction cost control, efficient use of public resources, speed of development, opportunity to provide services, appeal in the marketplace, long term viability of the project, etc. All these factors and more create a healthy environment to provide a big diverse response to a complex problem. As well, it provides the City, and

the nation, with knowledge about what responses and which typologies work best for a given population of people. *Of note, remodeled or rehabilitated projects are not necessarily smaller or less expensive than newly* constructed projects.

Recommendation No. 1.9 - The PLA was not approved by the voters for HHH and should not be applied to PSH projects.

Response: On April 13, 2018 the Los Angeles Council voted unanimously to adopt an ordinance requiring that Proposition HHH funded projects include a Project Labor Agreements, as a means to seek to address unemployment and underemployment in concentrated poverty within City neighborhoods, including the further promotion and advancement of the skills of the local labor pool. including provisions for local hire and employing transitional/disadvantaged workers who are residents of the City ofLos Angeles as one tool to address these larger issues of systemic poverty and unemployment.

As noted above, the vast majority of HHH dollars are committed to projects with this requirement in place. It should be noted that many projects obtained entitlements through Measure JJJ which also requires a Project Labor Agreement. Even if the ordinance was revoked with regard to HHH, the requirement would still be in place as a result of project entitlements.

Recommendation No. 1.10 - A new, private market solution for PSH development must be considered.

Response:

In an effort to incentivize the development of PSH projects from market rate developers, the Department of City Planning created the Qualified Permanent Supportive Housing (QPSH) program through Ordinance 185,492. The program was modeled after the Density Bonus Ordinance, but also includes several features that were unique at the time. For example, the QPSH program allowed for unlimited density for projects that were located in an R3 or less restrictive zone, up to five incentives to modify various development standards, and significant parking reductions. In addition, the program allows developers to restrict all the affordable units with rent schedule 1 instead of the more restrictive rent schedule 6. Although many affordable housing developers have utilized the program, very few market rate developers have explored the program and even less have actually proposed a project.

One of the reasons for this lack of interest may be due to the complexity of financial instruments that are necessary to construct supportive housing and the compliance requirements tied to these sources of funds

(both public and private). Another potential deterrent is the support services requirement that the program requires. Most developers do not have the experience or knowledge required to provide supportive services to the formerly homeless population. Another reason may be that the state Density Bonus program was significantly modified by AB 1763 (2019), AB 2345 (2020), and most recently by AB 2334 (2022) so that it would provide even more development incentives than the QPSH program. Therefore, developers have more profitable alternatives to the QPSH program.

LAHD would welcome any private market solution. To the best of our knowledge there have been no private solutions that combine code compliance with long term operating feasibility. What has been demonstrated in the market are projects with privately financed construction, permanent loans dependent upon extremely low operating costs and property tax abatements coupled with tenants holding Section 8 vouchers. It will be interesting to see how these projects operate long term. Lessons learned from these private market solutions may provide important lessons the City might emulate going forward.

Recommendation No. 1.11 - DWP should have one designated electrical and water contact person for each PSH project.

Response: This recommendation is not under the purview of LAHD. LADWP has been coordinating with other city departments and the Mayor's office to implement ED1, which includes expediting all 100 percent affordable projects, including permanent supportive housing projects. DWP provides project contacts that project developers or their utility consultants can reach directly, and the city has multiple teams aimed at providing project troubleshooting. The City Administrative Officer has launched a new Affordable Housing Liaison Unit, which provides concierge service to support expediting efforts of 100 percent affordable projects, and serves as a direct point of contact between project development teams and the departments. The Mayor's office also has multiple staff members to support project expediting efforts. Between these teams and designated DWP contacts, PSH developers have several designated resources and points of contact aimed at expediting development efforts, for matters related to DWP as well as other departments.

KAREN BASS
MAYOR

October 6, 2023

Samantha P. Jessner
Presiding Judge
Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles
Clara Shortridge Foltz Criminal Justice Center
210 W. Temple Street, Thirteenth Floor, Room 13-303
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: HHH: Too Few, Too Much, Too Slow
Report by the 2022-2023 Los Angeles County Civil Grand Jury

Dear Honorable Judge Samantha P. Jessner:

The City of Los Angeles acknowledges receipt of the 2022-2023 Los Angeles County Civil Grand Jury Report regarding Housing Vouchers for Low-Income and Homeless Angelenos, its findings and recommendations. The City respectfully submits Attachment A as the City's formal response. The City's response was prepared by knowledgeable staff working in the Los Angeles Department of Housing.

For additional questions or comments, your staff may contact Jenna Hornstock, Deputy Mayor of Housing, at jenna.hornstock@lacity.org.

Karen Bass
KAREN BASS
Mayor

Paul Krekorian
PAUL KREKORIAN
City Council President

CITY OF LOS ANGELES RESPONSE TO THE CIVIL GRAND JURY FINAL REPORT

Subject: 2022-2023 Civil Grand Jury Recommendations:
HHH: Too Few, Too Much, Too Slow

The below responses were prepared by the Los Angeles Housing Department and the Department of Water and Power.

Recommendation No. 1.1 - Whatever remains of HHH funds, if any, should go to projects that provide more immediate "interim" housing for individuals experiencing homelessness.

Response: In the past two fiscal years the City has invested $860,516,405 from other sources in producing and operating 10,000 interim housing beds, ranging from congregate shelters to Project RoomKey motels to Tiny Home Villages and others. Every year to keep these open the City would need to allocate funds for operations ranging from $50 to $267 per unit per night, with an average of $65 per unit per night, or $237 million annually for all 10,000. Permanent housing requires the initial capital investment, but operating costs are much lower and are covered by rental income from residents and federal or county rental vouchers. Permanent housing is not only a better financial investment; it is what moves people from homelessness into being housed. These HHH units are needed to move people from interim beds into homes. HHH is one of the few sources the City has to provide capital funding for permanent housing for people experiencing homelessness.

Recommendation No. 1.2 - The City Council, LAHD, and the Mayor's office should prioritize controlling PSH costs and mitigating delays.

Response: Despite a global pandemic and related challenges in virtual processing, the pace of development is anything but sluggish. The HHH program has committed financing to 131 projects. Fifty-three projects totaling 3,243 units have been constructed and 52 projects totaling 3,378 units are under construction. The remaining projects are in pre-development and by the end of 2024 we expect HHH to have contributed to the construction of 8,596 units of Permanent Supportive Housing. Executive Directive 30 streamlining initiative has reduced the number of days for ready-to-issue permits for HHH projects by 154 days. Every month LAHD publishes the attached HHH Summary showing how projects are progressing from early entitlement planning, to construction loan closing, to completion.

Recommendation No. 1.3 - Tiny home villages are de facto permanent housing that should be reclassified as such, protected and supported by the City, until more substantial permanent housing is available.

Response: This recommendation falls outside the purview of LAHD. Tiny Home Villages are constructed and installed with the expectation of operating as interim housing. They

do not contain individual kitchens or bathrooms, which are key components of permanent supportive housing. The city is utilizing an approach incorporating both interim and permanent supportive housing, and new PSH units are coming on line. Interim housing units serve a specific purpose of providing unhoused residents with strategies to address critical needs while being placed in permanent housing, however units constructed to the standard of permanent supportive housing are needed to address this problem in the long term. Residents of interim housing, including tiny home villages, receive access to services and support, including but not limited to on-site caseworkers, housing navigation services, and mental and physical health services.

Recommendation No. 1.4 - The City should remove any City-imposed impediment to building any type of safe, affordable PSH project, including container housing and manufactured home projects.

Response: This recommendation is not under the purview of LAHD, however the city has already implemented this recommendation to the best of its ability. The Mayor issued Executive Directive 1 (ED1), which expedites the entitlement and permitting process for 100% affordable housing developments that are consistent with the underlying zoning for a site, which includes permanent supportive housing projects. In its first 6 months 1,649 affordable units across 22 projects have secured approvals in an average of 37 days, a savings of at least 6 months. There are over 400 projects and 8,500 units in the ED1 pipeline. In June 2023, the City Council directed the Department of City Planning to develop an ordinance that would make ED1 permanent. ED 1 does not preclude based on building type, provided the project is zoning compliant and meets both building and safety requirements and building codes. However in some instances it is prudent for a project, even a permanent supportive housing project, to be subject to the required discretionary review and public hearing process. Streamlining must be applied with care.

Recommendation No. 1.5 - The City should remove any lender hesitation by guaranteeing construction loans on container PSH projects.

Response: The City's HHH pipeline of deals includes eight modular projects (modular or prefabricated construction includes "container" housing) with financing structures similar to traditionally constructed buildings. Generally, LAHD makes no distinction in the development process between modular and conventional construction. The Housing Challenge, an $120 million competition to test a range of housing innovation supported the advancement of modular projects. Thus far, LAHD has not seen a marked decrease in costs of modular construction compared to traditional construction but as the innovation develops and projects become more common, perhaps the speed of construction will increase and the costs will decrease. LAHD continues to support developers who elect to build modular projects.

Recommendation No. 1.6 - The City should immediately put vacant land under its control that is suitable to be used for housing purposes toward safely housing individuals living on the streets, in tents or in vehicles. These sites should be secured and appropriate services provided until such time as permanent housing can be produced.

Response: In November of 2012, after the dissolution of the Community Redevelopment Agency of Los Angeles (CRA/LA), the Los Angeles Housing Department (LAHD) created the Land Development Unit (LDU) to implement the development of affordable housing on land purchased by the CRA/LA for affordable housing.

In February of 2016, the City of Los Angeles adopted a Comprehensive Homeless Strategy that included strategy 7D, "Using Public Land for Affordable and Homeless Housing." Shortly after the homeless plan was released, the City Administrative Officer (CAO) launched the Affordable Housing Opportunity Sites (AHOS) Initiative to identify City-owned sites identified for affordable housing.

Since 2016, the LAHD and the CAO have collaborated on the Land Development and AHOS Initiative by developing common processes and regulations. In general, the CAO is responsible for identifying and evaluating City-owned sites for development, and the LAHD is responsible for selecting developers and negotiating disposition development agreements.

In December of 2019, the Los Angeles City Council restricted development of housing on public land by adopting a motion (CF 19-1362) which limits projects on public land to 100% affordable housing, unless it is determined by Council that an increased number of affordable units can be achieved through a different business model.

Additionally, LAHD must adhere to the Surplus Land Act (SLA). The SLA is a statute that local agencies must follow when disposing of surplus land. It was amended by Assembly Bill 1486 (Ting 2019) as well as other subsequent bills. These amendments modified the SLA to require local agencies across California to submit notices of availability of surplus land to the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) for listing on the HCD website, and to notify interested developers and certain local public entities. Land declared exempt surplus may be exempted from some or all provisions of the SLA by meeting certain criteria. The city has an ongoing effort through Executive Directive 3 to see if publicly owned sites within the City of Los Angeles can be developed with minimal public subsidies, and instructed departments to identify undeveloped or underutilized city-owned land, with the purpose of potential development into interim or permanent housing.

Recommendation No. 1.7 - The City must find a new method of developing PSH which allows for both cost and quality controls.

Response: Costs for HHH or any affordable housing development need to be put in the context of costs for equivalent market rate developments. Even a quick google search of "multifamily construction costs in California" produces reports from the Terner Center at UC Berkeley, the UC Riverside School of Business, and others showing that market rate construction in all of California, and particularly in Los Angeles and the Bay Area, has

reached staggering heights. A feasible plan to produce the housing we need must be understood in the context of the broader real estate market.

It is possible to compare the costs of affordable housing and comparable market rate developments and identify the elements that increase costs in affordable units - prevailing wages, higher energy efficiency standards, operating and replacement reserves, furniture and developer fees - that aren't included in development budgets for market rate projects because they are paid upon sale when the project is completed, or covered by escalating rents over time. Affordable housing project budgets also include holding costs and legal fees involved in assembling "soft" financing from multiple sources. The reliance on layered financing adds time and money, but stretches HHH funding to meet production goals. Without leveraging, HHH would have produced only 3,900 permanent units.

The LAHD staff is committed to finding ways to reduce costs, while retaining the commitment to funding projects that are physically and financially healthy for the decades covenanted. Realizing that some of the highest cost projects were those that had high public agency involvement, the HHH portfolio is divided into "basic" projects that include prevailing wages, higher energy efficiency standards, accessibility standards, and reserves and fees, and a "Housing Plus" category. The Housing Plus projects have been developed on Metro-owned or publicly-owned land and included requirements for community amenities such as neighborhood-serving commercial, child care centers or clinics, more parking spaces than required, or more open space. Others were funded with the Affordable Housing Sustainable Communities Program using the State's cap and trade program, and included additional greenhouse gas reduction features, support of infrastructure such as bus shelters, and water conservation features.

In addition to better understanding cost drivers, LAHD has been working with applicants to reduce costs by creating financing tools to support the use of modular development, using all entitlement benefits available such as parking reductions, and using standardized units that reduce costs while still complying with accessibility requirements. Also, in 2011, the Department transitioned to requiring Guaranteed Maximum Contracts (G-Max Contracts) for all general contractor contracts related to the construction of LAHD-funded multifamily projects. These G-Max Contracts only allow for general contractors to receive a maximum of 14% overhead & profit on projects and eliminate the opportunity for contractors to pocket cost savings that they may be entitled to with stipulated sum construction contracts.

Recommendation No. 1.8 - Programs focused on remodeling and rehabbing structures like Project Homekey should be given funding priority over larger, publicly funded, new PSH projects.

Response: The City of LA submitted 6 of the 13 applicant projects in Homekey Program Round 2 and an additional group of three new projects for the Homekey Program Round 3. Fortunately, the varying sources of funding available have different priorities and different timelines. For example, programs like Project Homekey focus on acquisition and rehabilitation, while other sources, like HHH, focus on the creation of new units of

housing. And as one of the largest cities in America, Los Angeles has the capacity to process all these projects to start construction quickly. The diversity of sources creates an environment to test what works best, including: construction cost control, efficient use of public resources, speed of development, opportunity to provide services, appeal in the marketplace, long term viability of the project, etc. All these factors and more create a healthy environment to provide a big diverse response to a complex problem. As well, it provides the City, and the nation, with knowledge about what responses and which typologies work best for a given population of people. Of note, remodeled or rehabilitated projects are not necessarily smaller or less expensive than newly constructed projects.

Recommendation No. 1.9 - The PLA was not approved by the voters for HHH and should not be applied to PSH projects.

Response: On April 13, 2018 the Los Angeles Council voted unanimously to adopt an ordinance requiring that Proposition HHH funded projects include a Project Labor Agreements, as a means to seek to address unemployment and underemployment in concentrated poverty within City neighborhoods, including the further promotion and advancement of the skills of the local labor pool. including provisions for local hire and employing transitional/disadvantaged workers who are residents of the City of Los Angeles as one tool to address these larger issues of systemic poverty and unemployment.

As noted above, the vast majority of HHH dollars are committed to projects with this requirement in place. It should be noted that many projects obtained entitlements through Measure JJJ which also requires a Project Labor Agreement. Even if the ordinance was revoked with regard to HHH, the requirement would still be in place as a result of project entitlements.

Recommendation No. 1.10 - A new, private market solution for PSH development must be considered.

Response: In an effort to incentivize the development of PSH projects from market rate developers, the Department of City Planning created the Qualified Permanent Supportive Housing (QPSH) program through Ordinance 185,492. The program was modeled after the Density Bonus Ordinance, but also includes several features that were unique at the time. For example, the QPSH program allowed for unlimited density for projects that were located in an R3 or less restrictive zone, up to five incentives to modify various development standards, and significant parking reductions. In addition, the program allows developers to restrict all the affordable units with rent schedule 1 instead of the more restrictive rent schedule 6. Although many affordable housing developers have utilized the program, very few market rate developers have explored the program and even less have actually proposed a project.

One of the reasons for this lack of interest may be due to the complexity of financial instruments that are necessary to construct supportive housing and the compliance

requirements tied to these sources of funds (both public and private). Another potential deterrent is the support services requirement that the program requires. Most developers do not have the experience or knowledge required to provide supportive services to the formerly homeless population. Another reason may be that the state Density Bonus program was significantly modified by AB 1763 (2019), AB 2345 (2020), and most recently by AB 2334 (2022) so that it would provide even more development incentives than the QPSH program. Therefore, developers have more profitable alternatives to the QPSH program.

LAHD would welcome any private market solution. To the best of our knowledge there have been no private solutions that combine code compliance with long term operating feasibility. What has been demonstrated in the market are projects with privately financed construction, permanent loans dependent upon extremely low operating costs and property tax abatements coupled with tenants holding Section 8 vouchers. It will be interesting to see how these projects operate long term. Lessons learned from these private market solutions may provide important lessons the City might emulate going forward.

Recommendation No. 1.11 - DWP should have one designated electrical and water contact person for each PSH project.

Response: DWP indicates that it has implemented this recommendation.

HOUSING VOUCHERS FOR LOW INCOME AND HOMELESS ANGELENOS



2022 – 2023

LOS ANGELES COUNTY

CIVIL GRAND JURY

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Hilda L. Solis	Holly J. Mitchell	Lindsey P. Horvath	Janice Hahn	Kathryn Barger
First District	Second District	Third District	Fourth District	Fifth District

Chief Executive Office.

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street, Room 713, Los Angeles, CA 90012
(213) 974-1101 ceo.lacounty.gov

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Fesia A. Davenport

August 31, 2023

To: Supervisor Janice Hahn, Chair
Supervisor Hilda L. Solis
Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell
Supervisor Lindsey P. Horvath
Supervisor Kathryn Barger

From: Fesia A. Davenport FOR
Chief Executive Officer

2022-2023 LOS ANGELES CIVIL GRAND JURY FINAL REPORT

Attached are responses to the 2022-2023 Civil Grand Jury Final Report. We are responding to specific recommendations dealing with the following sections:

- Aging Out: Transitional Aged Youth
- All Aboard: Is Metro Rail on Track
- Civil Grand Jury Compensation
- Election Operations
- Have We M.E.T.? Mental Health Evaluation Teams and How They Work
- Housing Vouchers For Low income and Homeless Angelenos
- The Inmate Reception Center: An Outdated Process Imperils Staff, Inmates, and the Justice System
- Juvenile Justice CYA
- Lack of Housing: The Social Injustice of the 21st Century
- Los Angeles County Fire Department Workers Compensation
- Medi-Cal Reimbursement: The Final Resolution of an Ongoing Issue
- Proposition 19: Implementation and Related Matters
- Sheriff's Operations: Examining Transparency, Accountability, and Community Policing within the LASD
- Storm Water Capture and Wastewater Reuse
- Zero Emissions: Air Quality Monitoring

Attachment A represents the Chief Executive Officer's responses; Attachments B through V represent the departments' responses; and Attachment W represents a matrix of the questions and responses from each department.

If you have any questions regarding our responses, please contact me, or your staff may contact Cheri Thomas, by phone at (213) 974-1326 or by email at cthomas@ceo.lacounty.gov.

FAD:JMN:CT:md

Attachments

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
County Counsel
District Attorney
Assessor
Sheriff
Auditor-Controller
Children and Family Services
Fire
Health Services
Human Resources
Internal Services
Mental Health
Probation
Public Health
Public Social Services
Public Works
Regional Planning
Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk
Los Angeles County Development Authority
Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts
Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority

RESPONSE TO THE CIVIL GRAND JURY FINAL REPORT

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE FOR THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

2022-2023 CIVIL GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
HOUSING VOUCHERS FOR LOW-INCOME AND HOMELESS ANGELENOS

RECOMMENDATION NO. 1.20
The Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles' (HACLA's) and Los Angeles County Development Authority's (LACDA's) Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) and Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) programs should be administered by one agency by agreement among the County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors, the Los Angeles City Council and Mayor, HACLA and LACDA. This will eliminate unnecessary duplication of effort and expense, enable Los Angeles residents to use an agency with a demonstrated excellent track record and promote efficiency. This recommendation relates to Findings 20, 21 and 22, and each of them.

RESPONSE
Disagree. This recommendation will not be implemented.

LACDA enjoys a close working relationship with the City of Los Angeles as well as the 17 other public housing agencies operating within the County. The LACDA has taken a regional approach to align its policies and in the implementation of its programs. To that end, the LACDA works very closely with these agencies; especially with HACLA to address utilization, interagency Memorandum of Understanding agreements to streamline lease-up and reduce barriers to access, and the creation of a universal housing application. In fact, both the LACDA and HACLA often attend landlord recruitment and education events together to demonstrate their collaborative relationship.

HACLA

Build HOPE: Investing in People and Place

August 30, 2023

Presiding Judge
Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles
Clara Shortridge Foltz Criminal Justice Center
210 W. Temple Street, 13th Floor, Room 13-303
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Your Honor:

HACLA'S RESPONSE TO THE 2022-2023 LOS ANGELES COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY REPORTS:

- ***HOUSING VOUCHERS FOR LOW INCOME AND HOMELESS ANGELENOS*, and**
- ***LACK OF HOUSING: THE SOCIAL INJUSTICE OF THE 21ST CENTURY***

On June 21, 2023, the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles ("HACLA"), received Pre-Release Reports from the 2022-2023 County of Los Angeles Civil Grand Jury (the "Civil Grand Jury"). On or about July 3, 2023, the Civil Grand Jury published its Final Report. HACLA's governing body and agency head are required to provide responses to the findings and recommendations pertaining to matters under their control cited in both reports. *See* Pen. Code § 933(c). This letter constitutes the response of HACLA's Board of Commissioners and Chief Executive Officer to the reports entitled *Housing Vouchers for Low Income and Homeless Angelenos* and *Lack of Housing: The Social Injustice of the 21st Century.*

Agency Background

HACLA was established in 1938 by the City of Los Angeles Resolution No. 1241. HACLA has grown to become the second largest and leading public housing authority in the nation, providing the largest supply of quality affordable housing to residents of the City. HACLA's annual budget is close to $2 billion and through various resources, including federally-funded public housing and vouchers, houses over 105,000 Angelenos.

HACLA administers nearly 60,000 rental assistance vouchers across multiple federal programs including the Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV), Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Vouchers (VASH), and more recently Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHV). For the last 15 years HACLA's HCV program has been rated as a "High Performer" by the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) in its annual performance assessment. Additionally, HACLA's public housing program, with 6,393 public housing units, has been rated as a "High Performer" by HUD for 13 years. Through these programs along with its acquisition and development of affordable housing, HACLA is a principal player in providing much needed affordable housing in Los Angeles.

From January through June 2023, HACLA's Section 8 Department housed 2,733 new families and is on track to house 6,000 by the end the year. This is the largest number of new families HACLA has housed in a single year. Additionally, HACLA is utilizing 98% of the federal funds it receives for the HCV program. In July 2021, HACLA received 3,365 EHVs, the second largest allocation in the nation. As of the date of this response, 2,601 families have secured housing with an EHV. It has taken an immense effort and significant

resources to reach this milestone, and no other housing authority, except for the New York City Housing Authority, has reached this number. HACLA is on track to reach 100 percent utilization of these vouchers by year-end. In furtherance of Los Angeles' housing goals, HUD recently awarded HACLA 250 new VASH vouchers on June 1, 2023, and 377 new Stability Vouchers are expected on August 1, 2023. These recent awards demonstrate HUD's confidence in HACLA.

The Section 8 Department is handling a very large volume of applicants and participants. Recognizing its continuing growth and operational complexities, in June 2022 HACLA initiated, with the assistance of Guidehouse, Inc., a consulting firm, an organizational assessment of the Section 8 Department to identify opportunities for operational improvements and streamlining. Since then, HACLA has implemented some quick-wins, and is continuing to identify areas for future, systemic, long-term modernization.

HACLA responds below to the findings and recommendations pertaining to matters under the control of HACLA and defers to other agencies to respond to those findings and recommendations pertaining to matters under their control.

HOUSING VOUCHERS FOR LOW INCOME AND HOMELESS ANGELENOS

FINDINGS REGARDING HACLA

1. *HACLA's caseworkers handle many parts of servicing HCV and EHV applicants and holders; whereas LACDA's work flow for handling HCVs and EHVs uses specialized teams or departments.*

HACLA RESPONSE – HACLA disagrees with this finding because, as set forth in HACLA's response to Recommendation 1.1 of this report below, HACLA uses a specialized team model.

2. *HACLA has difficulty recruiting and retaining employees for working on HCVs and especially the EHV temporary program.*

HACLA RESPONSE – HACLA agrees with this finding. During the COVID-19 pandemic HACLA experienced challenges in filling vacancies, especially for temporary work. Further details are provided in HACLA's response to Recommendation 1.2 of this report below.

3. *HACLA caseworkers sometimes do not give meaningful and prompt replies to inquiries from applicants, tenants and landlords.*

HACLA RESPONSE – HACLA agrees with this finding and is working to improve overall customer service across the agency. HACLA's Director of the Section 8 Department has met with staff in that department and reminded them of the importance of providing meaningful customer service. HACLA recently updated the staff performance evaluation tool, which includes a performance indicator related to customer service.

4. *HCV applicants and EHV homeless referrals must complete a "byzantine housing application process" and provide extensive documentation, not only of their income, but also identification and verification of citizenship, typically a birth certificate.*

HACLA RESPONSE – HACLA agrees with this finding. The voucher programs are federally funded and have federal requirements which HACLA must adhere to. For years, HACLA has advocated for changes to the programs that will reduce barriers to access. Recently, in March 2023, HACLA submitted a waiver request

to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to waive many of the burdensome application requirements for people experiencing homelessness. On July 18, 2023 and August 14, 2023, HACLA received a response from HUD providing limited approval of four of the eight waiver requests for a one year period. HACLA will continue its advocacy for streamlining program requirements. HACLA is working with Guidehouse to streamline the application process and paperwork required as well.

5. *When HACLA clients reach the point of getting selected to apply for and receive Section 8 vouchers, they are given a very limited period of time in which to complete the complex application and assemble the required documentation.*

HACLA RESPONSE – HACLA agrees with this finding. HACLA is required to comply with the federal requirement to issue vouchers within a specified time period.

6. *Holders of HCVs and EHVs navigate a difficult rental market and are given 180 days to find landlords who will accept their vouchers.*

HACLA RESPONSE – HACLA partially agrees with this finding. The City of Los Angeles has a difficult rental market with a vacancy rate of less than 3%. Although all voucher holders are usually provided with 180 days to find housing, HACLA modified its policy allowing up to 365 days for EHV participants. HACLA is currently evaluating this policy and will soon make appropriate adjustments to ensure that voucher holders have adequate time but not defer the housing search. HACLA is now providing services to voucher holders from a professional housing location/relocation company in order to assist participants in locating housing as soon as possible.

7. *Many HCVs/EHVs go unused because initial inspections and necessary re-inspections are not done in a timely manner.*

HACLA RESPONSE – HACLA disagrees with this finding. This finding is vague and the Civil Grand Jury did not identify any evidence supporting this finding. Additional information is provided within HACLA's response to Recommendation 1.9 of this report below.

8. *Despite HACLA's landlord outreach and incentive programs, many landlords remain reluctant to accept tenants using HCVs and EHVs.*

HACLA RESPONSE – HACLA agrees with this finding. HACLA is working with Mayor Bass to roll out a communication campaign that will encourage more landlords to accept tenants using vouchers.

9. *The Cecil Hotel in downtown Los Angeles and other SROs have large numbers of vacancies despite readiness and availability to accept HCV and EHV applicants.*

HACLA RESPONSE – HACLA partially agrees with this finding. HACLA agrees that the Cecil Hotel may have available rental units. However, voucher holders, not HACLA, choose the property and community they live in. HACLA is prohibited by HUD from steering voucher holders to a specific property.

10. *HACLA's low Unit Utilization Rate can be attributed in part to HACLA's conservative strategy of issuing no more EHVs than allocated it by HUD.*

HACLA RESPONSE – HACLA disagrees with this finding. The Civil Grand Jury did not provide evidence that additional issuance of vouchers could increase or expedite utilization. Additional information is provided

in HACLA's response to Recommendation 1.10 of this report below.

11. *Many landlords and tenants, and even quite a few HACLA employees are unaware that FEHA prevents landlords from discriminating against tenants who plan to pay rent using government provided vouchers.*

HACLA RESPONSE – HACLA partially agrees with this finding. Many landlords and tenants may be unaware that FEHA prevents landlords from discriminating against tenants who plan to pay rent using government provided vouchers. However, HACLA disagrees with the vague finding that "quite a few HACLA employees" are unaware of this. It appears the Civil Grand Jury interviewed approximately *four* voucher department employees in preparing its report. HACLA provides annual trainings for its staff, conducts bi-monthly landlord orientations, and issues regular reminders via newsletters and forms to both voucher holders and landlords regarding this subject. HACLA will continue to issue information and guidance to all stakeholders.

12. *Although FEHA prevents landlords from discriminating against applicants and tenants who plan to pay rent using government provided vouchers, HACLA, and the Los Angeles City Attorney do little to enforce this law, and referrals for enforcement are seldom made.*

HACLA RESPONSE – HACLA partially agrees with this finding. HACLA agrees that some landlords discriminate against voucher holders in violation of the FEHA, but HACLA is not responsible for enforcing the FEHA, nor does it have the authority to do so. When HACLA becomes aware of alleged FEHA violations, it refers those matters to the Housing Rights Center. Additionally, HACLA welcomes enforcement by the City Attorney or other agencies, and we plan to meet with the City Attorney's Office to discuss whether they may be able to assist in this regard.

FINDINGS RELATED TO MULTIPLE AGENCIES

20. *Having HACLA and LACDA performing the same tasks is an unnecessary duplication of effort and results in confusion and numerous inefficiencies.*

HACLA RESPONSE – HACLA disagrees with this finding. Each public housing authority is responsible for administering its own program and complying with federal regulations. Each public housing authority operates within the limits of specific jurisdictions authorized by HUD.

21. *LACDA has had considerably better results than HACLA in issuing vouchers and moving applicants into homes.*

HACLA RESPONSE – HACLA disagrees with this finding. This oversimplified comparison ignores the reality that LACDA and HACLA operate in different jurisdictions, serve different populations, encounter different challenges, and have different histories. For instance, while this finding is vague as to which voucher program it is referring to, if the reference is to the EHV program, the LACDA began issuing vouchers before HACLA because it already had an established team that transitioned from an expiring program to the new EHV program. HACLA had to hire and train new staff during the COVID-19 pandemic.

22. *HACLA's and LACDA's Section 8 HCV and EHV programs could be combined into one agency by agreement among the Board of Supervisors, the Los Angeles City Council and Mayor, HACLA, and LACDA. Already, numerous cities contract with LACDA to manage Section 8 programs.*

HACLA RESPONSE – HACLA disagrees with this finding. Each public housing authority is responsible for administering its own program and complying with federal regulations. Each public housing authority operates within the limits of specific jurisdictions authorized by HUD.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HACLA

1.1 HACLA should consider adopting LACDA's workflows for handling HCVs and EHVs, using specialized teams.

HACLA RESPONSE – HACLA implemented this recommendation prior to this report. HACLA already operates in a specialized team model. Staff are responsible for handling specialized tasks such as reviewing applications, conducting housing quality standards inspections, reviewing leases, preparing housing assistance contracts, etc.

1.2 HACLA *should consider using temporary workers to perform routine tasks and process paperwork that involve little or not client interface. When hiring, it should also explore recruiting non-traditional employees, such as retired people.*

HACLA RESPONSE – HACLA implemented this recommendation prior to this report. HACLA is already using temporary employees. With the support of its bargaining units, HACLA has been utilizing temporary workers to assist with various tasks related to issuing vouchers and preparing housing assistance contracts for the past year. Permanent employees are selected through a certified list of candidates who apply through an open and competitive recruitment. HACLA retirees receiving a public employees retirement benefit must comply with the employment restrictions set forth in their retirement plan. Nevertheless, all members of the public who believe they meet the minimum requirements are welcomed to apply.

In an effort to further expedite housing, as of February 2023, HACLA is also utilizing a third-party industry administrator, Nan McKay & Associates, to assist with preparing housing contracts for EHV and project-based voucher holders.

1.3 HACLA should develop methods to assure that inquiries and complaints regarding Section 8 vouchers get meaningful responses within two business days.

HACLA'S RESPONSE – HACLA implemented this recommendation prior to this report. This is already HACLA's internal response time requirement, whether a question or inquiry comes into the customer contact center or directly by phone or email to a staff person in any unit, including EHV and HCV. Supervisors continuously reinforce this requirement with their staffs and monitor its adherence, taking corrective actions as appropriate. Efforts to ensure full staffing in all units contributes to improvement in this crucial metric.

1.4 HACLA's Section 8 application forms and instructions should be shortened and simplified.

HACLA'S RESPONSE – HACLA implemented this recommendation prior to this report. As noted, HACLA is working with consultant Guidehouse and has already identified this as an area of improvement. The collaboration is in the process of shortening and simplifying Section 8 application forms and instructions while still meeting HUD regulations.

1.5 HACLA should give applicants forms and instructions, along with appropriate assistance, in time so that the applications can be ready for filing and review at the earliest possible times well before their names come up for vouchers.

HACLA'S RESPONSE – HACLA implemented this recommendation prior to this report. HUD requires that all application income verifications forms and documents be current within 60 days of voucher issuance. To meet this requirement, applicants are provided application packets with adequate advance notice to complete them timely with assistance available from Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) supported case managers for special program applicants and HACLA staff for Section 8 waitlist applicants.

1.6 HACLA should partner or leverage outside housing specialists to assist clients in navigating the complex process of applying for Section 8 vouchers.

HACLA'S RESPONSE – HACLA implemented this recommendation prior to this report. Applicants are already connected with case workers assigned by LAHSA. They are responsible for providing wraparound services which include assistance with completing voucher applications, obtaining required identity and income documents, housing navigation and search, and facilitating move-ins. To further supplement this effort, HACLA now has an internal housing support specialist team and in June contracted with OPC/TranSystems, a relocation expert, to provide housing search assistance.

1.7 HACLA should schedule inspections at the earliest possible time when it appears that they will be necessary, even if applications and other details have not been completed.

HACLA'S RESPONSE – HACLA implemented this recommendation prior to this report. HUD requires that the proposed rental unit be inspected within 60 calendar days of the contract date. For this reason, potential rental units cannot be pre-inspected if the owner has not completed a Request for Tenancy Approval for a unit that the tenant has selected. However, HACLA has adjusted its internal process to negotiate the rent immediately upon receipt of the Request for Tenancy Approval, prior to the inspection rather than after, to reduce delays and more efficiently process the work. Prior to this change made in April, rent discussion with the owner took place after the unit was inspected by the inspections team. Many times, the inspection was fruitless because the owner was not in agreement with the rent offer. Or, an additional inspection was warranted to validate additional information provided by the owner, such as additional amenities. Delays in scheduling inspections are generally due to the owner or property manager indicating that unit has not been made ready for a new tenant, the units is not vacant or utilities have not been turned on. Approximately 50% of units fail their first-time inspection because deficiencies are identified in the unit.

1.8 HACLA should creatively use HUD service fees as landlord incentives, including housing search assistance, application fees, utility hook-ups charges, security deposit assistance and a landlord mitigation fund.

HACLA'S RESPONSE – HACLA implemented this recommendation prior to this report. HACLA already provides several landlord incentives to help facilitate the utilization of vouchers for people experiencing homelessness; these incentives are virtually the same as those offered by the LACDA. For EHV applicants, HACLA pays landlords a $2,500 signing on bonus, provides security deposit assistance and up to $5,000 in unit repairs. Funds for paying these incentives are covered with service fees received from HUD. Landlords

willing to house an HCV client experiencing homelessness, are also eligible to receive similar incentives which are paid with Los Angeles County Measure H funds. Additional information is available on HACLA's website at hacla.org and attached to this response. See Attachments 1 and 2. These incentives have been offered since inception of the EHV program in 2021, and with passing of the County of Los Angeles Measure H in 2017.

To further supplement this effort in the EHV program, in June HACLA contracted with TranSystems Corp., formerly known as Overland, Pacific, and Cutler, a professional housing relocation firm, to provide housing search assistance. HACLA has hired designated housing support specialists to also facilitate housing search assistance. These efforts supplement the work of a real estate broker that HACLA has contracted with since the beginning of the EHV program that does outreach to landlords to secure property listings for applicants.

1.9 HACLA should arrange to have many units in a SRO building inspected at one time, so that several units can be leased without inspectors duplicating efforts and making numerous separate trips to the site.

HACLA'S RESPONSE – HACLA implemented this recommendation prior to this report. As noted in 1.7 above, HUD requires that the proposed rental unit be inspected within 60 calendar days of the contract date. For this reason, potential rental units cannot be pre-inspected if the voucher holder and owner have not completed a Request for Tenancy Approval for a unit that the tenant has selected. HACLA attempts to group inspections in the same building wherever possible, but inspecting units that applicants have not selected or may never select is not an efficient use of inspection resources.

1.10 HACLA should consider implementing LACDA's more aggressive method of over-issuing EHV vouchers.

HACLA'S RESPONSE – HACLA implemented this recommendation prior to this report. Although HACLA received 3,365 EHVs, it has issued 4,516 in anticipation that not all voucher holders will be successful. HACLA is closely monitoring the success rate of voucher holders and will issue more vouchers as needed. It is a balancing act to issue the appropriate number of vouchers so that the full allocation is utilized while avoiding:

- over-saturation and competition among all voucher holders (as well as renters without vouchers) for the same affordable units; and
- the problem of overissuing vouchers that later need to be rescinded due to full utilization of the allocation or insufficient funding, as has happened with other housing authorities.

HACLA's responsible approach is in line with HUD's expectations.

1.11 HACLA should provide easy to read and understand written information about FEHA's antidiscrimination provisions to landlords and tenants, and should schedule seminars and/or webinars to educate the public on this topic.

HACLA'S RESPONSE – HACLA implemented this recommendation prior to this report. HACLA already provides every voucher holder and landlord with easy to read and understand information about FEHA anti-discrimination provisions, including local Source of Income ordinances. Information is also provided in landlord and tenant newsletters and on HACLA's website. HACLA provides this information to landlords during HACLA landlord orientation sessions and in partnership with LAHD in their landlord information

sessions as well.

1.12 HACLA supervisors and caseworkers should be taught about FEHA and related local ordinances and should be trained on how and when to make referrals to the City Attorney or the HRC.

HACLA'S RESPONSE – HACLA implemented this recommendation prior to this report. HACLA staff are already trained on FEHA and related local ordinances at least annually with additional training offered on a bi-monthly basis and assist clients with completing the federal forms. Staff have also been instructed on how to make referrals to HRC regarding local Source of Income discrimination, as HRC is the agency contracted by the City of Los Angeles for Source of Income discrimination enforcement. As noted previously, HACLA welcomes additional enforcement by the City Attorney or other enforcement agencies, and HACLA plans to discuss whether any such assistance may be available later this calendar year.

RECOMMENDATION FOR MORE THAN ONE AGENCY

1.20 HACLA's and LACDA's HCV and EHV programs should be administered by one agency by agreement among the Board of Supervisors, the Los Angeles City Council and Mayor, HACLA, and LACDA. This will eliminate unnecessary duplication of effort and expense, enable Los Angeles residents to use an agency with a demonstrated excellent track record and promote efficiency.

HACLA'S RESPONSE – This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted and is not reasonable. As detailed in the Background section of this response, HACLA has a demonstrated excellent track record as noted by its high performer rating by HUD, near full utilization of budgeted resources; extraordinary leasing efforts this year and continued award of new resources by HUD. As with all PHAS, HACLA administers its program and complies with all federal regulations within its significant jurisdiction as authorized by HUD in an effective manner. HACLA and LACDA collaborate, share best practices, and, more importantly, share one common goal – to end homelessness in Los Angeles.

LACK OF HOUSING THE SOCIAL INJUSTICE OF THE 21ST CENTURY

FINDINGS REGARDING HACLA

1. *EHV voucher funding will end in the fall of 2023.*

HACLA'S RESPONSE – HACLA disagrees with this finding. Funding for EHV is not ending in 2023 and leasing of EHV will continue beyond 2023 for any public housing authority who has available vouchers as clarified in HUD's PIH Notice 2023-14 issued on June 29, 2023.

2. *Units are often left empty, waiting for a tenant, because a potential tenant is not document ready to occupy the unit.*

HACLA'S RESPONSE – HACLA partially agrees with this finding. HACLA agrees with this finding to the extent that it refers to units tied to a Permanent Supportive Housing Project-Based Voucher. HACLA is working closely with the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority and the Los Angeles Housing Department to improve the method and timeline for matching individuals and families to HACLA's units.

7. *HACLA does not inspect potential voucher funded units in a timely manner.*

HACLA'S RESPONSE – HACLA disagrees with this finding. HACLA inspects a unit only after a voucher holder

has submitted a request for tenancy approval to HACLA and the owner has agreed to consider tenancy. Because HUD requires HACLA to inspect a unit within 60 days of the contact date, inspections cannot be conducted too far in advance. Furthermore, it is not the best use of staff resources to inspect a unit that may never get selected by a voucher holder.

20. The total allotment for HUD vouchers for the City is 58,000 per year. These vouchers are all allocated.

HACLA'S RESPONSE – HACLA partially agrees with this finding. HACLA's total allocation of vouchers is 57,985. At this time HACLA is expending the 98% of the annual funds made available by HUD to make rental payments.

21. Many landlords violate the antidiscrimination law regarding renting to potential voucher holders.

HACLA'S RESPONSE – HACLA partially agrees with this finding. HACLA believes that some, not necessarily many, landlords may violate antidiscrimination law, but does not have evidence on this point.

24. There are 10,000 people with vouchers in the City who have been unable to find housing.

HACLA'S RESPONSE – HACLA disagrees with this finding. There are approximately 3,100 voucher holders looking for housing at this time.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1.7 HACLA must implement procedures to inspect potential voucher funded units in a timely manner.

HACLA'S RESPONSE – HACLA implemented this recommendation prior to this report and will continue to implement procedures to inspect properties in a timely manner. The average time period from receiving an inspection request to scheduling the inspection is three days, with shortest being one day and longest being 12 days. The primary reason for a delay is the inability to reach the owner or property manager to schedule the inspection. The average time from scheduling an inspection to conducting the inspection is four days, with the shortest being two days and the longest being 14 days. The primary reason is for any delay is that the property has not been made ready for a new tenant (the unit is not vacant, housekeeping and maintenance is required, utilities are not turned on, etc.). Almost 50% of units must be re-inspected to correct deficiencies cited in the initial inspection.

HACLA conducts over 60,000 inspections every calendar year – a huge undertaking for any organization. As stated above, HACLA is pursuing technological improvements for scheduling and communicating with property owners and managers.

Closing Statement

HACLA recognizes that all public entities, including HACLA, can and should improve their delivery of services. People experiencing homelessness face many housing barriers, including discrimination, in a challenging Los Angeles rental market of low vacancies and high rents. HACLA leadership wishes to express its sincere appreciation to HACLA staff for their tireless dedication and to property owners for supporting the agency's mission to preserve, enhance, and expand deeply affordable housing opportunities that improve the quality of life for all Angelenos.

Sincerely,

Cielo Castro
Chairperson, Board of Commissioners

Doug Guthrie
President and CEO

Attachments 1 and 2