

Mar Vista Neighborhood Council Homeless Issues Sub-Committee

MOTION: *Calling on the City of Los Angeles to Reprioritize Homeless Housing Strategy*

The City of Los Angeles is unable to produce individual housing units fast enough to positively impact our homeless housing crisis. The Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA)'s housing coordination efforts do not enable efficient supportive services, decrease likelihood of housing success, and leave people homeless far too long.

Given the lack of individual housing units, streets, shelters and bridge housing are being used for long-term habitation by homeless persons. Supportive services, including health care, substance abuse treatment, money management, case management, and legal advocacy, are poorly provided to these persons.

Shared supportive housing programs have not been aggressively pursued though these are more viable and appropriate solutions for the most vulnerable homeless persons.

Currently, much of the City's investment in homeless solutions is through 2016 Measure HHH funding of new-build, permanent individual supportive housing units. Supportive housing combines affordable housing with services for residents. However, requirements for on-site services are vague and, to date, only 60 units have opened at a median cost of \$531,000 per unit.

LAHSA coordinates the City's homeless housing efforts. LAHSA's Coordinated Entry System (CES) utilizes the Vulnerability Index-Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT) to prioritize homeless persons for housing.

Homeless persons are scored points (0-17) for independent housing barriers such as chronic homelessness, inability to care for basic needs, financial strain, chronic health and substance abuse issues, disability, medication misuse, trauma and abuse, exploitation, risky behavior, and being a victim or perpetrator of crime.

Homeless persons are categorized by score as high (8-17), mid (4-7), or low (0-3) acuity. Persons rated high acuity are then prioritized to receive individual housing units, even though they face the most housing barriers. In actual practice, a score of 17 is required to have any realistic individual housing priority. This prioritization is inappropriate because:

1. High acuity persons often require comprehensive supportive services.
2. High acuity persons often lack support systems.
3. Current supportive services are inefficient, provided to one person, in one location, at a time.
4. Landlords are reluctant to rent to high acuity persons.

5. Individual housing units are almost always preferred to shared alternatives because, once housed anywhere, any priority for future individual housing is lost.
6. High acuity persons are more likely to suffer negative housing outcomes including eviction.
7. Landlords are less likely to rent to high acuity persons once impacted by a problematic tenancy and eviction process.
8. The time from highest acuity ranking to individual housing can be well over one year.
9. Low acuity persons, most likely to succeed in individual housing, are not prioritized.

The Mar Vista Community Council Homeless Issues Sub-Committee therefore moves that the Los Angeles City Council:

Direct LAHSA to reprioritize homeless housing strategy. This strategy should:

1. Recognize the streets, shelter, and bridge housing as the City's current, long-term, first-housing model.
2. Locate field-service teams by council district to provide comprehensive services and peer support.
3. Recognize that high acuity persons are poorly served by the current housing process. Stop the initial offering of scarce and inappropriate individual housing to these persons.
4. Reprioritize high acuity persons to supportive shared housing including single or shared bedrooms in collaborative houses or apartments, motels, Board and Cares, SROs, and sober living homes.
5. Utilize and expand existing supportive shared housing programs using HHH and other available homeless housing funds.
6. Locate comprehensive services and peer support at shared housing locations.
7. Increase participation by developing a system whereby homeless persons, after a specified time spent in shared housing, may obtain individual housing.
8. Prioritize homeless persons rated low acuity to affordable individual housing units.

Visibly and proactively respond to housed community concerns by:

1. Forbidding high acuity shared housing within 500 feet of a childcare center, school or park.
2. Providing LAHSA and district service team updates at each community council homeless committee meeting.
3. Promoting community involvement through volunteer opportunities to help homeless persons on the streets, and at shelters, bridge housing, and shared-housing locations.

Approved, with Amendment added, on February 19, 2020

MVCC Homeless Issues Sub-Committee

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