



SOUTH BAY CITIES
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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April 13, 2022

Hon. Holly Mitchell, Chair, and
Members of the Board
Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors
500 West Temple St. Ste 383
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Blue Ribbon Commission on Homelessness Recommendations

Dear Chair Mitchell and Members of the Board,

The South Bay Cities Council of Governments (SBCCOG) supports the 7 recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Homelessness. We urge the Supervisors to act with urgency to implement the recommendations with the caveat that we recognize that there are still a great number of details to be considered. As such, the SBCCOG would like to provide additional considerations to address the gaps in the recommendations. These fall under 3 themes:

Theme #1: Consolidation and Coordination

The SBCCOG believes the following recommendations should be grouped together:

- Recommendation #1: Creation of County Entity, Working Groups, and identify a Leader
- Recommendation #4: Consolidate various bodies into a single decision-making Board
- Recommendation #6: Define goals and improve data sharing and integrity

The creation of the new County Entity and the consolidation of the new single decision-making Board go hand in hand. We believe that the new Board and County Entity need to work collaboratively to create data-informed goals, metrics, policies and procedures for the entire County and across departments.

The importance of data-informed goals and decision making cannot be understated, which is why we are recommending a **Chief Data Officer (CDO)** to be housed at the new County Entity. The role of the Chief Data Officer is to consolidate data from disparate systems (CHIP, HMIS, etc.), and report actionable data to the new Leader and to the decision-making Board. The CDO will have a staff to analyze the data, and ensure that pertinent data is shared with cities and COGs across the County. Even though there is currently a CDO at LAHSA, that position is focused primarily on one data source – HMIS – and therefore does not take advantage of all of the data resources to help inform decision making.

Other considerations for Recommendations #1, 4, and 6:

- a) One important topic mentioned frequently during BRCH, and reported recently by Cal Matters, is the issue of employee turnover and burnout -

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN ACTION

Carson	El Segundo	Gardena	Hawthorne	Hermosa Beach	Inglewood	Lawndale	Lomita
Manhattan Beach	Palos Verdes Estates	Rancho Palos Verdes	Redondo Beach	Rolling Hills			
Rolling Hills Estates	Torrance	Los Angeles District #15	Los Angeles County				

<https://calmatters.org/economy/labor/2022/01/california-homeless-worker-shortage/>.

We recommend a Working Group dedicated to addressing the needs of employees across the Coordinated Entry System (CES). Furthermore, we recommend that this Working Group works closely with a new **Chief People Officer (CPO)** and staff at the County Entity. The goals of the Working Group and the CPO are twofold: to decrease systemwide turnover from 20% to under 10%, and to increase average employee tenure from less than 18 months to 3 years.

The Corporation of Supportive Housing estimates that a single turnover event can cost the system \$20,000 in lost productivity, training costs, and rehiring costs; not to mention the emotional toll on people experiencing homelessness (PEH) when they have to start-over with a new case manager. The return on investment (ROI) of reducing turnover and employee burnout can be 3x or more.

- b) Contract delays are common in homeless services – delaying important services while funding sits idle. The new County Entity will need to act across a number of County Departments, each with its own rules and regulations. We recommend that the County Entity house a **Chief Legal Officer** and staff to cut through the bureaucracy and streamline the contracting process.
- c) Strong leadership is missing at the executive level and is a big contributor to the failures of our homeless delivery system. This is why choosing a Leader for the County Entity must be executed wisely. Homelessness is a tactical, street problem (“FEMA-Like”) – we need a leader that is not afraid to roll-up their sleeves to assess the situation on the ground. The job posting for this position and qualifications for this Leader need to include:
 - i. Demonstrated ability to pro-actively identify and solve large, complex problems
 - ii. Experience in tactically deploying large teams, with responsibilities for thousands of employees
 - iii. Ability to bring diverse groups together and facilitate their collaboration

We do not believe this Leader necessarily needs to come from homeless services or the public sector for that matter. **It is more important that they have the experience solving large, complex, tactical problems in either the private or public sector.** For example, an ex-executive at a Fortune 500 company would have the tools gained from managing cross functional teams across multiple countries with thousands of employees. A Fortune 500 executive would be a great communicator, be a taskmaster, and have an eye for detail – all qualities we need in a Leader.

- d) Consolidating the various boards and commissions down to a single decision-making entity is going to be an important and difficult task. Just as important will be the composition of the people appointed to this new Board. In the past, we have seen Supervisors each appoint their own individuals to these posts; not knowing how much coordination occurs between the Supervisors. We recommend that the Supervisors take a very coordinated approach when making appointments to this new Board. **It is important that this Board not only have diverse demographic backgrounds, but also**

diverse professional backgrounds. For example, if one Supervisor appoints someone with a strong legal background, another Supervisor might want to appoint someone with a strong financial background.

We also stress the need to have cities and COG representation on this Board.

Theme #2: Improving Local Partnerships

SBCCOG fully supports Recommendation #2: Provide multi-year local solutions fund to be accessed by cities and COGS.

One problem is that many of our cities have homeless counts of <100 and are too small to dedicate staff to address homelessness. This is where coordinating entities such as the SBCCOG play an important role. However, the SBCCOG only has 2 paid staff to address homelessness, and we understand that other regions may also lack the administrative capacity to take on more funding. If the Supervisors were to implement Recommendation #2, we suggest the County immediately provide Seed Money to build staff at the regional level.

At the SBCCOG, we could immediately use the Seed Money to hire additional staff members to build out programs such as a 24/7 Alternative Crisis Response, additional interim housing sites, landlord engagement programs, permanent housing development assistance, and outreach coordination for our member cities.

Theme #3: Streamline and Improve LAHSA

SBCCOG supports Recommendation #3: Streamline LAHSA, and Recommendation #5: Improve LAHSA operations with a special “Ops Team”.

The SBCCOG believes it makes sense to do #3 first before #5. We need to streamline LAHSA and then improve on what’s left at LAHSA. As recommended by BRCH , we support streamlining LAHSA by transitioning the authority back to its role as CoC lead and away from a direct service provider.

Once LAHSA’s role has been clearly defined, we can then begin the task of improving LAHSA’s operations. However, we would caution that LAHSA has already spent millions of dollars on consultants to improve operations, including recent work such as:

- a) Hundreds of thousands of dollars on Clutch Consulting and the recent multi-year reorganization of LAHSA
- b) Millions of dollars on the recent revamp of its Grant Management System and the complimentary consulting work
- c) Public Consulting Group’s analysis of LAHSA information management systems
- d) A consulting group hired for a compensation study for the entire organization

Unfortunately, the problem at LAHSA is not having enough consultants, but the problem is ineffective executive management. Both Veronica Lewis, Director of HOPICS and Donyielle Holley, Homeless Programs Supervisor, City of Pomona, addressed this issue at BRCH:

“Internal struggle with communications at LAHSA make it difficult to get things done,”
“..they operate in crisis mode and tend to take action and make decisions that are reactive in nature..”

BRCH recommends an “Ops Team” to take a holistic look at LAHSA systems and processes. But as mentioned before, LAHSA has already spent millions of dollars on consultants. **The SBCCOG would like to recommend a more surgical approach – a Management Consultant.** This Management Consultant would:

- a) Look at LAHSA’s 360 degree performance review process to make sure feedback from lower level staff are heard by Managers and Senior Executives
- b) Evaluate performance of Senior Executives, recommend individual development plans, and make termination recommendations if needed
- c) Conduct management training and best practices

Summary:

The SBCCOG is supportive of Recommendations #1-6 under the themes of Consolidation & Coordination, Improving Local Partnerships, and Streamlining and Improving LAHSA. The SBCCOG is also supportive of Recommendation #7: Convening and Executive Level Action Team. However, this recommendation does not fall under any of the themes. We are supportive of the notion of convening senior subject matter experts, thought leaders, and people with political influence, but we are unsure how this Executive Level Action Team fits with the New County Entity and the Working Groups that will be formed under the new Entity.

In summary, the SBCCOG is supportive of the BRCH Recommendations, and would like to add the ideas underlined throughout this letter for your consideration:

- a) Create a New County Entity
- b) Include Chief Data Officer and staff to New County Entity
- c) Include Chief People Officer and staff to New County Entity
- d) Include Chief Legal Officer and staff to New County Entity
- e) Find a Leader of the New County Entity that has experience solving large, tactical problems from either the public or private sector
- f) Appoint Board members to new decision-making entity that not only have diverse demographic backgrounds, but also diverse professional backgrounds
- g) Ensure City and COG representation on new consolidated Board
- h) Provide Seed Money for regions to build out infrastructure to support more multi-year local funding
- i) Instead of the BRCH recommendation of a holistic “Ops Team” consultant at LAHSA, consider more targeted management consulting services to address management

communication and competency – the root cause of many of the ills at LAHSA. This is in recognition of the millions of dollars of consultant fees already spent at LAHSA.

The SBCCOG is ready to support the Supervisors in implementing these recommendations. We are open to help in any way, including participating in any future discussions or working groups. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Drew Boyles', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Drew Boyles, SBCCOG Chair
Mayor, City of El Segundo