



County of Los Angeles CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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SACHI A. HAMAI
Chief Executive Officer

March 4, 2016

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To: Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, Chair
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Supervisor Don Knabe
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From: Sachi A. Hamai
Chief Executive Officer

MOTION TO SUPPORT FEDERAL FUNDING TO ASSIST THE HOMELESS (ITEM NO. 4, AGENDA OF MARCH 8, 2016)

Item No. 4 on the March 8, 2016 Agenda is a motion by Supervisors Kuehl and Solis to instruct the Chief Executive Officer and the Washington, D.C. advocates to support President Obama's budget request of \$11.0 billion in mandatory funding over 10 years for a new Homeless Assistance for Families Program, support appropriations of \$75 million for new Housing and Urban Development (HUD)/Veteran Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) vouchers, \$88 million for Housing Choice Vouchers to assist homeless families with children, and \$2.664 billion for Homeless Assistance Grants in Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2017, and send a 5-signature letter to the County's Congressional Delegation in support of the President's Homeless Assistance for Families Program and the appropriations for homeless programs as noted above.

Background

In January 2015, Los Angeles County alone had more homeless persons than any state besides California and New York, and more homeless veterans except for California. The County accounted for nearly 8 percent (44,359) of the nation's 564,708 homeless persons, and over 9 percent (4,366) of its 47,725 homeless veterans. The County had an even higher share of all homeless persons with the greatest needs -- those who are chronically homeless or unsheltered, the latter of whom live in places not meant for human habitation, such as outdoors, in cars, or abandoned buildings. The County alone had 15,393 (16 percent) of all chronically homeless persons, and 31,025 (18 percent) of all unsheltered homeless persons in the United States.

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The motion recommends that the County support Obama's budget requests for the following programs, except that it recommends that \$75 million be appropriated in FFY 2017 for new HUD-VASH vouchers.

President's Proposed Homeless Assistance for Families Program: The President's Proposed FFY 2017 Budget requests roughly \$11 billion in mandatory funding for a new Homeless Assistance for Families Program, which would fund rental assistance for nearly 550,000 families with children over the next 10 years. The program's annual funding would grow from \$79 million in FFY 2017 to over \$2 billion by FFY 2026.

Homeless Assistance Grants: These grants, which were funded at \$2.250 billion in FFY 2016, are the single largest existing source of Federal funding for providing housing, supportive services, planning, and other services to aid the homeless and prevent homelessness. The largest Homeless Assistance Grant (HAG) component is the Continuum of Care (CoC) Grant, which was funded at \$1.935 billion in FFY 2016. The President has proposed an increase in HAG funding to \$2.664 billion in FFY 2017, including \$2.362 billion for CoC grants.

HUD-VASH Vouchers: Under this program, HUD funds vouchers, which reduce homelessness among veterans by enabling them to obtain affordable rental housing, which are complemented by VA-funded case management and supportive services. The President did not request any funding for new HUD-VASH vouchers for FFY 2017. Congress appropriated \$75 million a year in FFYs 2012 through 2015 to fund approximately 10,000 new HUD-VASH vouchers each year before reducing funding for new HUD-VASH vouchers to \$60 million in FFY 2016.

Housing Choice Vouchers for Homeless Families with Children: The President is requesting \$88 million in discretionary funding through the FFY 2017 Transportation/HUD appropriations bill to fund 10,000 new Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers to help homeless families with children obtain affordable rental housing. This request is separate from the President's request for \$79 million in mandatory funding in FFY 2017 for his proposed Homeless Assistance for Families Program.

Homeless Assistance Grants and HUD-VASH vouchers also are discretionary programs, which would be funded through the FFY 2017 Transportation/HUD appropriations bill. Discretionary programs are subject to the overall FFY 2017 non-defense discretionary spending cap of \$518.5 billion, which is roughly the same as in FFY 2016. Under Federal "pay as you go" budget rules, increased mandatory spending for the Homeless Assistance for Families Program must be offset by a corresponding amount of mandatory spending cuts or revenue increases.

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Conclusion

This office recommends approval of the motion because Federal funding to assist the County's large homeless population, and other residents who are at risk of homelessness, would significantly increase if the motion's recommended funding increases were enacted. The motion also is consistent with existing Board-approved policies in the County's Federal Legislative Agenda to support increased funding for homeless assistance programs, additional resources for meeting the housing and related supportive service needs of special populations, such as veterans, and funding which would increase rental housing opportunities for low and moderate income individuals and families.

We will continue to keep you advised.

SAH:JJ:MR
MT:ma

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
County Counsel