AGN. NO.____

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS HILDA L. SOLIS & SHEILA KUEHL

November 20, 2018

Re-orienting Transition Age Youth Systems of Care to Support Housing Stability

In response to a motion unanimously approved by the Board of Supervisors on June 13, 2017, the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) issued a report analyzing whether housing programs for transition-age youth (TAY) are utilized fully and appropriately. The report confirmed underutilization of certain transitional housing beds, including beds in the Independent Living Program (ILP). For instance, LAHSA's report found that 25% of ILP beds were vacant as of June 30, 2017. It also confirmed a need for improved housing resources, program support, outreach efforts, and data collection across housing programs for current and former foster youth.

LAHSA's report found that 73% of youth participating in Transitional Housing Program Plus Foster Care (THP+FC) exit to unstable housing in Los Angeles County. By contrast, only 7% of youth exit from THP+FC to homelessness, according to the recent THP+FC & THP-Plus Annual Report issued by John Burton Advocates for Youth. While each of these reports measures different outcomes, Los Angeles County's

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discharge rate to unstable housing demonstrates an immediate need to improve THP+FC by ensuring the program can meet the diverse needs of youth in extended foster care. The report found that LA County has other new promising housing models that have demonstrated strong outcomes, such as Transitional Housing Program Plus (THP-Plus) and Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) for youth.

LAHSA's report found that many TAY housing programs, particularly those funded by Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), have significant barriers to youth being able to access the programs and to be successful in the programs. Strict age limits and program requirements can make it difficult to match youth to housing resources when they are needed. While some programs that serve youth who are currently in foster care must by their very nature have strict rules, programs that serve youth who have exited care do not need to be as rigid as they are designed today. Similarly, programs are not structured to serve youth exiting the probation system, who are often in dire need of housing resources. Additionally, absent data makes it challenging to determine the success of programs and whether funding for one housing program should be redirected to another program. This challenge is compounded by inconsistent methodologies across County departments for tracking data.

There are emerging practices that could inform the development of a more robust homelessness prevention and crisis response system for youth. LAHSA, the Office of Child Protection (OCP) Center for Strategic Public-Private Partnerships (now named the Center for Strategic Partnerships), and Home for Good launched a series of pilots in the fall of 2017 to strengthen collaboration between DCFS and the Youth Coordinated Entry

System. These pilots have highlighted the acute need for youth in extended foster care and youth exiting foster care to have access to housing programs. The pilots have also highlighted the need for a homelessness diversion framework within DCFS.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

1. Direct DCFS to report back in 90 days on available funding to increase capacity in the THP-Plus program by at least 50% and at least an additional 33% percent increase in the THP+FC program, including appropriate bed rates and expanding the range of programs, including those that can serve youth with high needs, low barrier placements, placements with intensive mental health services, other wraparound services and aftercare to ensure the placement's success;
2. Direct Probation to report back in 90 days on available funding to expand housing opportunities for youth exiting the juvenile justice system;
3. Direct DCFS, Probation, and LAHSA to report back in 90 days on structural challenges to increasing the effectiveness of the ILP program and recommendations for how to overcome those challenges;
4. Direct DCFS, Probation, and LAHSA to develop a universal referral process from DCFS and Probation to the Youth Coordinated Entry System (YCES), develop a plan to train DCFS social workers and probation officers on YCES and appropriate referrals, identify resources needed to implement training, and identify representatives at DCFS regional offices and probation camps to serve as primary points of contact to maintain ongoing collaboration with YCES;
5. Direct DCFS, DMH, LAHSA and CEO to report back in 90 days with recommendations for how to expand housing resources available to youth in

extended foster care, youth exiting foster care, youth exiting the probation system, and highly vulnerable youth exiting these systems beyond THP Plus, THP+FC, and ILP such as expanding rapid re-housing for youth, expanded case management and housing navigation services, and increased leverage and improved performance of the Supervised Independent Living Placement program including designing more robust SILP programs with enhanced clinical supports and wrap around services that can serve youth with higher barriers;

6. Direct DCFS and Probation, in consultation with DMH, LAHSA and CEO, to report back in 90 days with a staffing plan to enhance each Department's efforts to prevent discharges into homelessness (DCFS and Probation's Staffing Plan shall explore the feasibility of inclusion of dedicated staff to support housing navigation, assess adequate staffing of ILP coordinator positions and administrative staff, as necessary), and to monitor, track and ensure connection to housing supports after exiting care.
7. Direct DCFS, Probation, LAHSA, CEO and the Center for Strategic Partnerships to report back in 180 days with the following:

    a. A report back on the quarterly sampling review of discharge plans across the various DCFS and Probation regional offices. The report back should include the number of connections to housing, education, employment, physical/mental health services and life skills/mentorship supports as identified in enhanced discharge planning policy implemented as a result of Homeless Initiative Strategy A4. The report back should also include an analysis of whether additional actions are needed to ensure discharge

plans are effectively preventing transition age youth from experiencing housing instability after exiting care;

b. A plan to develop a homelessness diversion framework within DCFS and Probation including aftercare for youth who exited care, but are experiencing housing instability. The plan should incorporate lessons learned from the recent Youth Coordinated Entry System (CES) pilots with DCFS and strategies for systematically identifying youth exiting care who are at greatest risk for experiencing homelessness; and

8. Direct DCFS, Probation, LAHSA, CEO and the Center for Strategic Partnerships to report back within 30 days on whether a consultant could be engaged to identify the different type of existing housing programs, the locations of those programs and the number of beds, and align this information with the areas where youth most commonly emancipate from, and the type of housing programs they need to determine the housing requirements of system involved youth in the respective areas across the County;

9. Direct DCFS, DMH, LAHSA, and Probation to report back within 180 days on implementing enhanced data collection and reporting for TAY housing programs, including establishing universal data elements and reporting semi-annually the average lengths of stay, age at program entry, the length of waitlists and time on waitlists (non-YCES programs), the vacancy rates, the number of applications denied and why, the reasons for exits to unstable housing, the types of unstable housing youth are exiting to, the number of current and former DCFS and Probation youth assessed through Youth CES, the number waiting for a housing

resource, the assessed youths acuity score ranges, and the number of youth instructed to address mental or behavioral health problems before being accepted for youth housing programs;

10. Direct DCFS, DMH, LAHSA, and Probation to utilize aligned tools and methodologies to track all youth housing data in order to implement streamlined methodologies for data collection, such as reducing or consolidating data systems, and ongoing data matches of DCFS, DPSS and HMIS data to determine if youth who have exited care are experiencing homelessness after discharge from care; and
11. Direct DCFS, DMH, LAHSA, and Probation to report back quarterly for two years on the progress towards achieving the goals outlined above.

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CATEGORIES: (Please check ☒ those that apply)

☒ 1. Child Welfare

☒ 2. Community and Youth Empowerment

☒ 3. County Services

☐ 4. Economic Justice

☐ 5. Economic and Workforce Development

☐ 6. Education

☐ 7. Environment

☐ 8. Fiscal

☐ 9. Governance

☐ 10. Health

☒ 11. Homelessness

☐ 12. Immigration

☐ 13. Public Safety

☒ 14. Social Justice and Human Rights

☒ 15. Technology and Data