

Increased Employment Opportunities for Homeless Individuals

The County of Los Angeles (County) currently faces a homelessness crisis that has reached unprecedented levels in recent years. In the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority’s (LAHSA) 2019 Point-in-Time Count, 58,936 individuals were identified as experiencing homelessness in LA County. This represents an estimated increase of 12% from the year prior.

The County has taken numerous steps to develop and implement a diverse set of strategies to combat homelessness, many of which are funded by Measure H. These strategies span six different categories: Prevent Homelessness, Subsidize Housing, Increase Income, Provide Case Management and Services, Create a Coordinated Entry System and Increase Affordable/Homeless Housing.

Mental illness and substance use are significant features of our existing homeless population in LA County. While chronically homeless people are often the face of homelessness in LA County, there is a significant population of residents who fall in and out of homelessness over time, often living in their cars, in a temporary shelter or on the streets for days, not years. Roughly 50% of the individuals who became homeless for the first time in 2018, cited economic hardship or loss of a job as a leading cause of their episode of homelessness.

On April 9, 2019, the Board of Supervisors approved the Employment Innovation Fund, facilitated by the United Way of Greater Los Angeles, to support job centers and employment programs with proven track records of successfully connecting individuals to employment opportunities.

MOTION

SOLIS _____

RIDLEY-THOMAS _____

KUEHL _____

BARGER _____

HAHN _____

Additionally, in the Fiscal Year 19-20 Recommendations for Measure H funding allocations, the Board approved an addition of \$2,000,000 for the CEO to implement initial recommendations from the Employment and Homelessness Taskforce and an addition of \$2,500,000 for WDACS to support a new career pathways program to serve 250 individuals experiencing homelessness.

The Board has prioritized a focus on employment as an upstream solution to preventing and combatting homelessness. However, for a reliable employment pipeline to be built for these high-barrier populations, incentives for employers may be an effective tool to entice them to hire and work with currently or formerly homeless individuals. By incentivizing county contractors to set and meet targeted goals for hiring homeless individuals, it affords them an opportunity to be part of the solution to ending homelessness in LA County and these newly employed individuals will be better positioned to identify and retain their housing which is critical to keeping them out of homelessness for good.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Chief Executive Officer in collaboration with the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, the Los Angeles County Development Authority, the Department of Mental Health, Department of Health Services, Public Social Services, Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services and Consumer and Business Affairs, County Counsel and other stakeholders to report back in 90 days on:

1. The feasibility and potential fiscal impact of a targeted hiring incentive program for County contractors who meet targeted hiring goals for individuals experiencing homelessness, which could include, but would not necessarily be limited to, enhanced scoring criteria on LA County Requests for Proposals (RFPs) and/or an extension of contract terms by one or two years.

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