

AGN. NO. _____

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS SHEILA KUEHL AND
MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS

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Developing a COVID-19 Recovery Plan Related to People Experiencing

Homelessness

People experiencing homelessness are extremely vulnerable to the COVID-19 virus both because it is very difficult to prevent virus transmission while experiencing homelessness due to limited opportunities to safely self-isolate and socially distance, and because the experience of homelessness often causes underlying health conditions that make the virus much more dangerous for this population. The Federal government and the State have both recognized the threat to public health posed by virus transmission among this vulnerable population and have dedicated significant resources to providing temporary housing to reduce virus transmission. In March 2020, the County and the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority launched Project Roomkey with a goal of providing a significant number of hotel and motel rooms for people experiencing homelessness who meet the vulnerability criteria set forth by the Center for Disease Control of being age 65 or above or having underlying health conditions.

In addition to Project Roomkey, the County has worked to provide housing to people who are experiencing homelessness and are symptomatic through medical

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sheltering sites, to people who are experiencing homelessness and exiting the jail through the Office of Diversion and Re-entry, and to people in our hospitals who are homeless and suffering a psychiatric emergency through the Department of Mental Health. The County has also partnered with the City of Los Angeles to serve more than a thousand people experiencing homelessness through the Tier 3 congregate shelters at recreation centers as well as domestic violence survivors through motel vouchers provided by the Mayor's Fund.

As Los Angeles County and other jurisdictions begin to explore a roadmap for recovery, it remains clear that the COVID-19 virus will continue to be a serious threat until such time as a vaccine is widely available, especially for vulnerable populations, including the thousands of people experiencing homelessness who are being temporarily housed through the efforts described above. A plan that considers the ways in which the homeless services system recovers from this crisis must also consider a resiliency plan related to COVID-19 and other disease outbreaks to ensure that the right resources are available to prevent and respond to such public health crises in the future.

The County must provide an array of resources that will ensure that all people who are now being temporarily housed through these efforts can successfully transition to other housing opportunities and ultimately end their homelessness permanently. Our plan should leverage existing resources, including The CARES Act (H.R. 748) Coronavirus Relief Fund, partnerships with philanthropy, and collaboration with the City of Los Angeles and other cities committed to this goal.

In addition to expanding housing capacity, the County must ensure that we preserve and maximize our existing housing capacity. The County uses a variety of

housing types to shelter people experiencing homelessness ranging from emergency shelter to recuperative care to adult residential facilities. Many of these facilities have been negatively impacted by COVID-19 due to loss of staff, reduced number of beds to accommodate social distancing, and increased cleaning costs. Our recovery plan must ensure that we provide the resources necessary to support the wide array of housing opportunities we currently have access to in Los Angeles.

The County has also committed to developing and determining the amount of new funding that would be needed to implement a Comprehensive Homeless Crisis Response Strategy focused on providing housing for everyone age 65 and above, which is a subset of people currently housed through Project Roomkey. The County's Homelessness COVID-19 Recovery Plan should incorporate recommendations from the Comprehensive Homeless Crisis Response Strategy and align closely with this effort, as well as advocating for additional resources to support all people experiencing homelessness who are highly vulnerable to COVID-19 transmission.

In addition to identifying housing resources for people now being temporarily housed and who are highly vulnerable, we must also ensure that our current financial crisis does not lead to a new wave of people becoming homeless who would similarly have to struggle to protect themselves from virus transmission or other illnesses on the streets and in our shelters. Our Homelessness COVID-19 Recovery Plan must include concrete actions the County can take now to prevent homelessness for people experiencing financial crises as a result of the pandemic, including providing eviction defense services, rental assistance, and advocating for stronger Federal regulation over banks to ensure that mortgage-holders have reasonable choices, including forbearance, loan modifications and foreclosure prevention provided in tandem with rent relief for

renters.

WE, THEREFORE MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the interim Executive Director of the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, in collaboration with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), the Department of Health Services Housing for Health Division and Office of Diversion and Re-entry, the Department of Public Health, and the Department of Mental Health, as well as coordinating with the City of Los Angeles, philanthropy, and other key partners, to develop a Homelessness COVID-19 Recovery Plan, which , among other input, incorporates recommendations from the Comprehensive Crisis Response Strategy and post-pandemic housing plans for homeless older adults as approved by the Board on April 14th, and report back to the Board in 15 days with a plan framework and in 30 days with a full plan that presents goals and objectives for this effort.

WE FURTHER MOVE that the Board direct the CEO to identify existing resources, including The CARES Act (H.R. 748) Coronavirus Relief Fund, to support the plan and report back to the Board with a funding plan in 45 days.

WE FURTHER MOVE that the Board direct our Chief Executive Office Legislative Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations Branch Washington, D.C. and Sacramento advocates to continue advocating for Federal and State resources to expand COVID-19-related housing opportunities for highly vulnerable people experiencing homelessness and resources to prevent homelessness including eviction defense services and rental assistance that can support implementation of the Homelessness COVID-19 Recovery Plan, as well as financial regulation that provides financial relief for struggling mortgage holders and renters.