

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HOLLY J. MITCHELL

July 13, 2021

MODERNIZE LOS ANGELES HOMELESS SERVICES AUTHORITY’S (LAHSA) EXISTING GOVERNANCE AND STRUCTURE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES

On February 11, 2020 and September 1, 2020, the Board of Supervisors (Board) took action to examine the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) of the County of Los Angeles (County) and the City of Los Angeles (City), created in December 1993 to address homelessness in the region. LAHSA’s mission is to drive the collaborative strategic vision to create solutions for the crisis of homelessness grounded in compassion, equity, and inclusion. LAHSA is an independent body which administers federal, state and local funding to almost 100 service providers in County.

LAHSA oversees the Los Angeles Continuum of Care Homeless Management Information System, coordinates the annual Point In Time Count, provides outreach services on the ground with Homeless Engagement Teams and is a key player in advocacy of policies designed to solve homelessness as it develops, monitors, and advances nationally recognized best practices.

LAHSA’s current governance structure relies on direction from both the County and City, as well as input from the LAHSA Commission, the Continuum of Care Board, the Coordinated Entry System Advisory Council, the Regional Homelessness Advisory Council, the Lived Experience Advisory Board, and various workgroups. This complex

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governance dynamic puts LAHSA in the center of often-conflicting directives, policies and strategies without the authority to resolve the conflict. ([LAHSA's Ad Hoc Governance report](#), February 24, 2021).

In February 2020, the Board of Supervisors (Board) directed the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Auditor-Controller (A-C), and County Counsel, in consultation with LAHSA and other relevant County departments, to: 1) conduct an analysis of the current structure and function of LAHSA (in concert with the efforts underway in the City); and 2) report back to the Board with findings and recommendations, including proposed modifications to improve the governance structure, performance, accountability, and transparency of LAHSA. Similar motions were adopted by the Los Angeles City Council and recommendations were made by the LAHSA Ad Hoc Committee on Governance. The reports concur on recommendations to improve LAHSA's operations and authority.

On June 24, 2021 City Councilmember Mark Ridley-Thomas introduced a motion to the [Homelessness & Poverty Committee](#) to bridge the efforts of the County and City to restructure LAHSA. The includes empowering LAHSA as a quasi-governmental institution in order to build on its original design to function at its best by: improving and adding to what works and removing those barriers which hinder its purpose and function; strengthening its governance and authority; and clarifying its purpose and role in a manner that is appropriate to the current times.

Under the 2001 JPA Agreement, LAHSA's governing board is a commission (LAHSA Commission) composed of ten members. Five commissioners are appointed by the Board and five commissioners are appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council (Council). The County has traditionally appointed one commissioner per Supervisorial District, although this is not a requirement of the JPA Agreement. In addition, the JPA Agreement allows for one or more of the County and City appointments to be an elected official, but neither the County nor the City have appointed an elected official to date.

LAHSA and its role in managing and administering public dollars for homeless programs and services has the attention of the public. County residents have a vested interest in LAHSA, the County, the City of LA and the entire region succeeding in tackling

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the homelessness crisis. The philanthropic and educational sectors have joined in the conversation to improve the region's homeless crisis most recently through a report by Dr. Sonenshein and the [Pat Brown Institute of Public Affairs and the Committee for Greater LA](#) (*A Plan for Homelessness Governance in Los Angeles*). In the report they highlight challenges in LAHSA's structural design, including the conflicting directives that LAHSA often confronts.

LAHSA is nearing its 30-year anniversary at a time when people experiencing homelessness is increasing even as LAHSA, the County, City, and partners have increased their capacity to house people. In addition, the region has collectively felt the impacts of a global pandemic and are now on the road to recovery. In addition, since 1993, LAHSA's role has unofficially evolved from a simple grants administrator to a provider of services, as well as a full systems administrator and policy advisor. From 2015-2021, LAHSA's budget increased from \$97.5 million to \$807 million (728% increase) and its personnel increased from 134-472 people. This is a pivotal point to re-evaluate and recommend appropriate adjustments to LAHSA's role and function in our homelessness system to meet the current needs of County residents.

I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

1. Direct the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to collaborate with the City of Los Angeles' Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and Chief Legislative Analyst (CLA) in consultation with Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority's (LAHSA) Executive Director to, within 60 days, establish a standing intergovernmental body comprised of elected officials from both the County of Los Angeles (County) and the City of Los Angeles (City) to provide timely and regular input on governance of the homelessness system. The body's role and purpose should include the following:
 - a. Strengthen LAHSA's regional system and ability to clarify system-level roles of the governing body by realigning LAHSA's purpose to lead Los Angeles' Homeless Rehousing System.

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- b. Meet at least quarterly, with greater frequency as needed to align the vision, mission, purpose and outcomes for the County and City homelessness systems and strategy.
 - c. Clarify, define, and unify language used to publicly report out numbers and outcomes in unison and in consultation with California Policy Lab or other expert jointly selected between CEO and CAO as a third party for data analysis.
 - d. Clarify and/or define a unified outreach, engagement, and housing placement approach to encampments. Include an input process with service providers, County and City departments, and Council of Governments.
 - e. Clarify and/or define LAHSA's role in prevention programming as it relates to their purpose in being lead on homelessness rehousing.
2. Direct the CEO to collaborate with the CAO and CLA for an intergovernmental report from LAHSA's Executive Director in writing within 120 days, with recommendations and a proposed implementation plan to modernize LAHSA's organizational structure which incorporates the recommendations from LAHSA's governance report and include the following:
- a. Right sizing the responsibility of the committees and workgroups, including consideration to sunset committees that have fulfilled their purpose and/or are no longer needed in the proposed modernization, for example the Los Angeles Regional Homelessness Advisory Council. ([LAHSA P. iii](#))
 - b. Expand LAHSA's commission ability to join policy-making discussions in an advisory role to the County and City inclusive of laws and municipal codes around ethical treatment of unhoused populations.
 - c. Recommendations on models of appointing people with lived experience to the advisory committees and workgroups overseeing LAHSA's operations and governance. The models should include the appropriate supports for individuals to fully participate and be

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- intentionally engaged. ([CLA Recommendation P. 3](#), [LAHSA Recommendation P. 10](#)).
- d. Provide LAHSA with tools needed to address organizational growth both in terms of funding and capacity with periodic assessment of needs. ([LAHSA, P. 3](#))
 - e. Provide an analysis and recommendations to right-size LAHSA's HET to focus on cross-jurisdiction area such as watersheds and government owned land as well as responding to Los Angeles Homeless Outreach Portal (LA-HOP) outreach requests. The analysis and recommendations should include shifting outreach services from LAHSA to re-locating and housing the outreach teams with lead providers. LAHSA would continue to oversee funding and implementation of general outreach plan as devised by the governing body in partnership with providers. Redirect outreach teams to SPA leads based on an equitable regional distribution and strengthen LAHSA's ability to provide systems analysis and technical support.
 - f. Include recommendations to create a Government Inquiry and Response Unit with an ombudsman for issues related to local governments which are not the City or County and a team of government liaisons to engage directly with elected offices, including COGs and providers for improved communication on referrals from elected offices
3. Direct the CEO to engage LAHSA's Executive Director to, within 60 days, provide a progress report in writing on LAHSA's implementation of recommendations from the Ad Hoc Committee of Governances on operational changes intended to streamline the contracting and administrative activities between LAHSA, community-based service providers, the County and the City to ensure alignment between City and County contracts where feasible, including:

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- a. Grants management system to reduce complexity and frequency of the existing procurement process. ([LAHSA, P. 8](#))
 - b. Reducing barriers in policy and program implementation by making funding flexible, removing the burdensome application process and providing tools and access to support from both City and County agencies on homelessness and health.
 - c. Providing capacity-building for smaller and/or emerging non-profits working on housing and homelessness, which are typically not as competitive during the traditional Request for Proposals process. Additionally, overseeing contracting between private industry and the City or County to foster private/public partnerships in affordable housing, landlord engagement and homelessness services.
4. Direct the CEO, Auditor-Controller, and County Counsel, in conjunction with LAHSA to renew the presentation of comprehensive bi-monthly public reports starting on October 1, 2021 to the Board of Supervisors (Board) on the work being done by LAHSA and provide updates on its newly implemented Community Relations Coordinating Team. The report should include data on outcomes from the Coordinated Entry System, rehousing services, and outreach and prevention efforts.

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