

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HILDA L. SOLIS

October 19, 2021

**Motion to Increase Support for Undocumented Individuals and Immigrants**

**Experiencing Homelessness**

Los Angeles County's growing homeless population includes a mix of racial and ethnic groups that have unique and varied needs. One group that is particularly critical to serve and may be less visible in our homeless services system are immigrants who come to the United States in search of a better life. In some cases, despite finding steady employment, they are unable to sustain housing with the wages they earn and fall into homelessness.

According to a report published by the Latino Policy and Politics Initiative at UCLA<sup>1</sup>, there are indications that undocumented individuals are not engaging with mainstream homeless services due to cultural differences and distrust of government. In fact, the housing and homelessness system can be particularly challenging for immigrant and monolingual populations to navigate, leading many immigrant or

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<sup>1</sup> [Stemming the Rise of Latino Homelessness: Lessons from Los Angeles County - Latino Policy & Politics Initiative \(ucla.edu\)](#)

**MOTION**

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undocumented people experiencing homelessness to fall through the cracks of our County's social safety net.

There are several barriers to effectively serving immigrants and undocumented people experiencing homelessness. The lack of lawful immigration status for some means that they are not eligible for many public benefits and may not enter the homeless services system through typical access points. Immigration status concerns may also make some individuals wary of accessing services out of fear of having their information collected and recorded. Those who are eligible for public benefits may be unaware of what services exist, may not know how to access the system, or may be wary of accessing the system because of cultural stigma. Further, becoming "document ready" for housing can be particularly daunting for immigrant populations. Language can be another barrier, especially for those who are most comfortable communication in an indigenous language. Sometimes, if individuals are reached, but services are not available in a particular area, the individual may refuse to leave an area where they have cultural and linguistical ties. Immigrants also appear less likely to engage with traditional homeless service providers and more likely to seek homeless services from non-traditional settings such as medical clinics and churches.

Our County should and can serve our immigrant communities who come here in search of a better life and fall into homelessness.

**I, THEREFORE, MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS** direct the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, in collaboration with the Department of Consumer & Business Affairs' Office of Immigrant Affairs, the Departments of Public Social Services,

Department of Health Services, the Department of Mental Health, the CEO Homeless Initiative, and community and faith-based organizations that work with immigrants and undocumented individuals experiencing homelessness to develop a plan to be issued in 90 days that will include policy recommendations to improve outreach and services to undocumented individuals experiencing homelessness including the following components:

- a. Assessing the scope of the population of immigrants and undocumented people experiencing homelessness and how the homeless services system is currently serving this population.
- b. Identifying gaps in homelessness prevention and homeless services that are accessible to undocumented people experiencing homelessness.
- c. Recommendations to better serve this population including, but not limited to:
  - i. Improving outreach to undocumented people experiencing homelessness, considering hours when outreach may be more effective. This should include the development of outreach materials for immigrants and service providers that describe the support services available to noncitizens and the immigration status restrictions, if any.
  - ii. Improving bilingual and culturally competent services through partnerships with community-based organizations, interpreters, and a multilingual workforce. Consider how to improve access to services in indigenous languages.

- iii. Reducing barriers to service access including expansion of outreach to non-traditional homeless service connection points, including faith-based organizations, community clinics, and other local institutions trusted within the undocumented community.
- iv. Trainings for the frontline workforce on how to effectively serve undocumented people experiencing homelessness by applying the immigrant equity lens to consider immigration status, cultural and language access concerns.
- v. Strengthening linkages between the homeless services system and immigration legal services.
- vi. Improving access to housing resources for immigrants experiencing homelessness.
- vii. State and federal advocacy recommendations.

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