

MOTION BY CHAIR HILDA L. SOLIS AND  
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December 15, 2015

November is National Homeless Youth Month. Studies from the National Alliance to End Homelessness have estimated that there are approximately 1.68 million runaway or homeless youth under the age of 18 in the United States each year. Twenty-five percent of former foster youth reported that they had been homeless at least one night within 2.5 to 4 years after exiting the foster care system. It is also estimated that 100,000 children are victims of commercial sexual exploitation each year, with homeless and runaway youth being the most vulnerable to trafficking.

An October 2014 survey by the Family and Youth Services Bureau conducted with homeless youth aged 14-21 found that:

- 51 percent became homeless because they were asked to leave home;
- 24 percent were homeless because they could not find a job;
- Those who became homeless for the first time at age 15 had been on the streets for almost two years;
- Nearly 40 percent of the youth identified as LGBT;
- While homeless, 78 percent slept in an emergency shelter or transitional living program;
- More than half had slept or rested outside on a street, in a park or on a bench;
- 53 percent of youth were unable to enter a shelter because it was full; and

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- 60 percent had been victimized by beatings, robberies, sexual assault or rape.

In the County, the Los Angeles Coalition to End Youth Homelessness (LACEYH) estimated that the total number of homeless youth was 6,150. This included a Youth Point in Time (PIT) Count, as well as an actual Youth Shelter Count and estimated Youth Street Count.

Homeless youth are a group that is not as visible as other sub-populations because it is assumed that once they leave school or workplace, they have a home to go to. This is simply not the case. For the more than 6,000 homeless youth counted, there are only 1,000 beds in Los Angeles that are specific to homeless unaccompanied minors and young adults. We must do everything possible to change this situation by developing and providing innovative programs of stable housing options, compassionate care, life skills training, education and employment training support for youth who are seeking a path to improving their lives.

Programs that utilize drop in centers, emergency, transitional, or permanent supportive housing, as well as a continuum of care that includes individualized case management, educational support or job preparation and placement, life skills training, and mental health/substance use disorder support, are needed to end youth homelessness.

The County is currently embarking on a process to generate a coordinated set of County strategies to reduce homelessness through an intensive, inclusive planning process known as the Homeless Initiative. At the same time the County is exploring creating the Transition Age Youth Resources and Connections to Housing and Services Programs. The County can prevent runaway and homeless youth from becoming the chronic homeless of the future by adequately investing in the solutions that help them get off the streets and on a path to healthy future.

**WE, THEREFORE, MOVE** that the Chief Executive Officer, in collaboration with the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, the Department of Children and Family Services, the Probation Department, the Department of Mental Health, the Department of Health Services, the Department of Public Health, the Department of Public Social Services, Los Angeles County Office of Education, the Community Development

Commission, and community-based organizations specializing in homeless youth issues, complete an inventory of existing programs that include the aforementioned services and report back in 60 days through the Homeless Initiative report back on how these programs can be expanded and coordinated to support the increased number of homeless youth in the County.

**WE, FURTHER, MOVE** that \$5 million of available new Homeless Prevention Initiative funds be set aside for this purpose of supporting the expansion of these programs or an appropriate amount, as decided by the CEO, be set aside for the purpose of expanding programs for transition age youth and allocated based on geographic burden and need as determined by the latest Homeless Count results for the Los Angeles, Glendale, Pasadena and Long Beach continuums of care.

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HLS:jyp