

Establishing a Regional Emergency Centralized Response Center

Los Angeles County is home to 10 million people stretching 4,084 square miles and organized into 88 cities and unincorporated areas. The 2024 LAHSA Point in Time Count states there are over 75,000 people experiencing homelessness in the County on any given night, 52,365 unsheltered, and 22,947 sheltered individuals.

As the largest County in the nation with a diverse network of jurisdictional authority, we are faced with issues at a scale and complexity that require a collaborative regional response. At present, there is no centralized coordinating entity to oversee and direct daily operations for unhoused individuals across Los Angeles County. There must be stronger coordination of the vast resources deployed countywide to ensure that the investments to end this crisis are most efficiently leveraged to work toward a collective goal.

On any given day, there are multiple operations being conducted across the County by various departments at different levels of government. This includes but is not limited to: Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, CEO-Homeless Initiative, and DHS Housing for Health; the City of Los Angeles’s Department of Sanitation, Mayor’s Office, and Homeless Engagement Teams; State Department of Transportation

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(Caltrans); the US Army Corps of Engineers; and departments within the other 87 cities across the County. In addition, there are hundreds of outreach teams, mutual aid groups, faith-based institutions, street medicine teams, and other programs serving individuals in encampments. Encampments fall under City, County, State and Federal jurisdictions, and in many cases these multi-jurisdictional locations pose additional challenges and require deep coordination.

The newly proposed Emergency Centralized Response Center (ECRC) would centralize decision makers from regional stakeholders at one location, building on the foundational best practice of coordination and information sharing. There would be daily updates on encampment resolutions, Public Works operations, shelter occupancy, outreach priorities, and cross jurisdictional coordination. The ECRC would be positioned to produce real-time updates on resource availability, support program enrollment, and proactively connect teams from different agencies to more effectively serve unhoused residents and partner with all constituents of the County to work toward collective goals.

In the event of inclement weather such as heat waves, winter storms, and other crisis situations, the ECRC could provide the urgent and flexible response required to meet the needs of the unhoused population across Los Angeles County. As we reconsider and streamline the County's existing emergency response framework on homelessness, it is clear that a centralized entity is needed to coordinate responses to these crises. Available County, City and other governmental resources could be updated in real time, and information could be communicated in a timely manner to the outreach teams and service providers connecting individuals to life saving resources.

Centralization of resources and information will require embedding staff and committed participation from local jurisdictions to enhance service delivery, support shared goals, leverage regional resources, and improve outcomes. Staff from the departments and agencies should be deployed to the ECRC without shifting away from their current roles. This would provide an experienced, informed, well-connected ECRC team and prevent the barrier and costs incurred when hiring additional staff.

The City of Los Angeles demonstrated their interest in this model at the Executive Committee on Regional Homeless Alignment on July 26 in their submission, "Proposal for an Emergency Response to the Climate Crisis." Directives three and four state:

3. To assemble the necessary staff and resources a joint City County emergency command center should be immediately established with strategic guidance from the Los Angeles Homelessness Services Authority.

4. This emergency response system to house Angelenos should be established with consistent protocols and standards for service delivery along with clear and measurable deliverables and outcomes.

The success of the ECRC will rest on robust participation from the entire network of entities, agencies, providers, departments, and jurisdictions who are part of the region's homeless service response.

Key Los Angeles County partners at the ECRC will include: Department of Mental Health; Department of Health Services, Housing for Health; Department of Public Health, Substance Abuse Prevention and Control; Department of Military and Veterans Affairs; Department of Public Works; CEO-Homeless Initiative; Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, HOST unit; and other relevant departments to be deployed at the ECRC or

from remote locations if partnership is needed less consistently (e.g. Department of Animal Services) to track availability, eligibility, and access for local resources.

The City of Los Angeles will be a critical partner for the ECRC's success, including their City-funded outreach programs, Bureau of Sanitation, Department of Recreation and Parks, Mayor's Office, Council Offices, Los Angeles Police Department, and numerous other relevant City departments. Independent cities' participation will also be crucial to the continued development of a regional response, providing equitable access to regional resources where they are most needed. Finally, the ECRC will rely on LAHSA to communicate, coordinate, and provide access to the available resources necessary for the ECRC's success.

As Los Angeles County continues to expand and deepen its regional partnerships to end homelessness, the ECRC will serve a critical role. Just as the Executive Committee on Regional Homeless Alignment serves as an overarching framework for bringing all jurisdictions to the table to agree on regional policies and performance metrics, the ECRC will be the day-to-day operational "locking arms" hub, both creating and implementing on an effective, coordinated, equitable regional response to homelessness.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Chief Executive Office Homeless Initiative (CEO-HI) to establish an Emergency Centralized Response Center to coordinate region wide unsheltered strategy operations (e.g. encampment resolutions, CARE operations, other engagements) with the primary goal of serving the needs of unsheltered people experiencing homelessness, leveraging and fully utilizing all resources, finding the most appropriate intervention for each person, and working toward a unified regional solution. Direct the immediate implementation of the ECRC and provide

a written report back in 30 days, and each 30 days thereafter, with a progress update on identifying office space, creating a staffing plan, an operation plan for the ECRC, and a list of recommended actions this Board can take to empower departments to stand up the ECRC with urgency. CEO-HI's actions to implement the ECRC, should include, but are not limited to:

- 1) Coordinate with the Departments of Health Services (DHS), Mental Health (DMH), Public Health (DPH), Military and Veterans Affairs (MVA), Public Works (DPW), Human Resources (DHR), Los Angeles Sheriff's Department (LASD), Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), and other relevant departments to identify the number, type, and cost of staff that can be embedded at the ECRC. Prioritize positions that can be leveraged to advance the work to end homelessness in Los Angeles County without significantly shifting their role;
- 2) Develop a matrix of roles and responsibilities which will facilitate the operations of the ECRC and short- and long-term goals to expand the ECRC's role in other system components (e.g. interim housing throughput, connections to permanent housing) in coordination with the relevant departments and LAHSA. Assess CEO-HI funded outreach coordination resources to determine how those resources could be deployed to support the ECRC including adjustments to the current outreach coordination structure that would more fully integrate DMH HOME teams and DHS Multi-Disciplinary Teams who with increases over time now make up the largest number of outreach workers;
- 3) Engage the City of Los Angeles to discuss the City's participation in the ECRC and the City departments that would be represented at the ECRC;

- 4) Engage with other jurisdictions in the County whose participation in the ECRC will be critical for its success, in partnership with LAHSA and leveraging the leadership of the Executive Committee on Regional Homeless Alignment. Gather all operational information on encampment level operations in LA County from government partners;
- 5) Coordinate with CEO-Asset Management to identify space for the ECRC that can accommodate internal and external staff during operational hours and have the capacity to support easy access to multiple, cross-jurisdictional databases;
- 6) Coordinate with the Chief Information Officer, LAHSA, and relevant County departments to identify the data requirements for the ECRC and any potential barriers to the ECRC's success including barriers related to data access, availability, and integration; and
- 7) Delegate authority to the CEO and the Executive Office of the Board, or their designees, to execute any agreements necessary to support the foregoing efforts, provided that any such agreements and in form approved by County Counsel.

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