

February 18, 2025

**MOTION BY SUPERVISORS HOLLY J. MITCHELL AND  
JANICE HAHN**

**Implementing the Pilot to Enable County Libraries to Better Serve Their Unhoused Patrons**

On September 24, 2024, the Los Angeles County (County) Board of Supervisors (Board) approved a motion titled: *Enabling County Libraries to Better Service Their Unhoused Patrons*<sup>1</sup>, that instructed the Director of the Department of Mental Health (DMH), in coordination with the County Librarian, the Director of the Department of Public Health (DPH) Substance Abuse Prevention and Control (SAPC) and the Chief Executive Office (CEO), to explore the feasibility of reinstating the pilot program that assigns clinicians and/or licensed social workers to support high-need libraries where unhoused patrons often need assistance. The motion addressed the mounting pressures and strains that librarians face while serving a growing number of underserved, unhoused and mentally ill patrons.

Reinstatement of the pilot program strategically co-locates clinicians and/or licensed social workers at libraries that have been identified as having the highest needs based on incident reports involving unhoused library patrons. The pilot program can be included in future community planning processes for the Behavioral Health Services Act and other funds.

On January 24, 2025, DMH submitted the *Report Response On Enabling County*

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<sup>1</sup> [Motion Enabling County Libraries to Better Service Their Unhoused Patrons](#)

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*Libraries to Better Service Their Unhoused Patrons.*<sup>2</sup> The report includes an implementation plan that would utilize staff from the newly established Interim Housing Outreach Program (IHOP) to assist the 10 libraries that were identified as having high needs for homeless services and supports. IHOP was developed to meet the high demand for services in interim housing settings. Re-establishing the pilot program in libraries will require sharing and thus diverting IHOP staff between interim housing sites and libraries. DMH and the library will collaborate to manage the needs of constituents both in interim housing and at the libraries. The implementation and collaboration between the departments will work to minimize the impact on program resources and the support to libraries will be scaled through future budget requests. DMH plans to increase support for libraries in the future through a formal budget request.

Due to the urgent mental health and homelessness crisis the County is facing, this Board is responsible for addressing the needs of both housed and unhoused residents that seek to find resources in our libraries. County libraries have become a de-facto day shelter for thousands of unhoused individuals seeking respite from extreme weather conditions and unsafe street encampments.

According to the report back from the County Librarian<sup>3</sup>, from October 2018 to December 2024, there were 19,628 security incidents reported that involved people experiencing homelessness and/or mental health issues. The incidents were tracked through the County Library's internal security reports that also collect data on which libraries have the highest need for services.

There are currently 85 County-operated libraries. Each of our County libraries strives to be a civic and cultural center, a hub for public information and services, and an institution of literacy, innovation, and lifelong learning. Our public parks and libraries represent the County in the public sphere and the Board must ensure a healthy and safe environment in these facilities.

This motion seeks to restore the previous pilot with modifications based upon the

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<sup>2</sup>DMH Report [1176514\\_ReportResponse-EnablingCountyLibrariestoBetterServeUnhousedPatrons\\_Item7AgendaofSeptember242024\\_LHW.pdf](#)

<sup>3</sup> Library Report <https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/195685.pdf>

lessons learned and other efforts made by public libraries in areas with high volumes of unhoused patrons with serious mental illness. Restoring the pilot is needed now more than ever as the number of mentally ill unhoused patrons has risen since the pilot was discontinued due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**WE THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:**

1. Direct the Director of the Department of Mental Health (DMH), in coordination with the Los Angeles County (County) Librarian to operationalize the implementation plan included in the *Report Response On Enabling County Libraries to Better Service Their Unhoused Patrons* with the following recommendations:
  - a. Allocate one homeless services team per Supervisorial District to serve the 10 highest need libraries. The team will consist of one Master's level clinician (Social Worker, Marriage & Family Therapist or Professional Clinical Counselor) and one paraprofessional (Medical Case Worker or Community Health Worker). The teams will have dedicated office hours at high need branch locations and will provide rotational coverage to other branches within the Supervisorial District as needed following the recommendation in the report back to provide five mental health clinicians and five medical case workers to assist libraries, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
  - b. Direct the Director of DMH in coordination with the County Librarian, or designee, to:
    - i. establish office hours at library branch locations, identify office/group space, rotational schedules, leadership structure, workflows, and program development starting January 27, 2025, and
    - ii. identify 10 staff (2 in each Supervisorial District) to support this effort by April 30, 2025, to begin deployment and regular office hours in the high need locations on June 2, 2025.
  - c. Direct the County Librarian and the Director of DMH to collect data and outcomes, to report back on a quarterly basis to the Board, with findings on the number of patrons served through this pilot per quarter, the demographics of the individuals served, the needs, whether or not the program is successful in diverting unhoused patrons away from involvement with police officers, and any

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housing/programmatic success outcomes that can be shared. Also, include an annual outcomes-report that specifies possible ways to expand the pilot to meet growing needs in additional libraries.

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