AGN. NO.

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HOLLY J. MITCHELL November 24, 2026

Sustaining the Public Health Councils Program

Workers hold the most crucial roles in our economy and in our communities. In early 2020, workers were among the first to encounter Coronavirus (COVID-19) at their places of employment, working to support our economy and daily lives through peak infection rates. While most people were required to stay home under local health orders, the workers deemed *essential* continued their jobs, with many encountering unprecedented public health challenges at their workplaces. Yet, despite the critical roles they play, many workers, particularly those in low-wage and high-risk industries, continue to face unsafe working conditions, limited workplace protections, and barriers to understanding their rights.

In response to these challenges, the Los Angeles County (County) Department of Public Health (Public Health), in partnership with labor organizations, worker centers, community-based organizations, and academic institutions, established the Public Health Councils (PHC) program to protect workers in low-wage and high-hazard industries who faced elevated risks of workplace exposure. The program was designed to address gaps in traditional enforcement approaches by engaging workers directly and supporting worker-led efforts to identify and address health and safety concerns in workplace settings.

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MOTION

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Since its establishment, the PHC Program has expanded beyond its initial pandemic response role to address workplace conditions that affect both short-term and long-term health outcomes. The program is nationally recognized and has received awards from the National Association of County and City Health Officials for its innovative approach to worker health and safety. The program now reaches more than 100,000 workers annually, has distributed more than 1.3 million units of personal protective equipment and COVID-19 test kits, and has supported the establishment of 146 worker-led PHCs throughout the County.

This program's success is rooted in the recognition that trusted relationships between workers and community-based organizations are essential to advancing public health. Worker-serving organizations are uniquely positioned to reach workers who may otherwise face barriers to accessing information, resources, and protections due to language, immigration-related concerns, fear of retaliation, or limited awareness of their workplace rights. The program's peer-to-peer model further empowers workers to become advocates for their own health and safety and that of their coworkers. For many workers, the program has provided a critical opportunity to learn about protections they may not have previously known existed.

The Office of Worker Health and Safety, established within Public Health in 2024, currently oversees the program and works closely with a network of worker-serving organizations representing industries including construction, warehousing, food manufacturing, retail, domestic work, restaurants, car washes, nail salons, and residential care facilities. Through these partnerships, the program has developed trusted relationships with workers across multiple languages and cultural communities, strengthening the County's ability to respond to emerging public health threats.

The infrastructure created through the PHC program has enabled rapid mobilization during public health emergencies and climate-related disasters. The program has repeatedly demonstrated its ability to tackle emergent public health issues. Following the authorization and rollout of COVID-19 vaccines in 2021, the program leveraged its existing partnerships with community and worker-serving organizations to expand access to vaccinations and provide reliable health information to at-risk

communities. During the 2022 Mpox outbreak, these organizations mobilized to provide essential education on transmission, prevention, and strategies to combat misinformation and stigma. Most recently, during the devastating 2025 Los Angeles wildfires, the program's network was activated within 24 hours to distribute protective equipment and critical resources to impacted workers and communities.

Despite its demonstrated success, the PHC program faces an uncertain future, as existing funding for the program is set to end on November 30, 2026. Without continued authority and funding for this program, the County risks losing invaluable public health infrastructure, community partnerships, and workforce capacity developed over the past five years to reach and support a highly at-risk worker population.

Given the impending negative impacts of H.R. 1 on access to healthcare and nutrition programs, as well as the continued disruption and uncertainty caused by immigration enforcement activities, many workers remain at heightened risk of adverse health outcomes and workplace exploitation from non-compliant, low-road employers. Sustaining and expanding this proven model will help preserve the County's vital worker health and safety infrastructure, strengthen emergency preparedness efforts, maintain trusted connections to vulnerable worker populations throughout the County, and ensure that workers have access to the resources, education, and protections necessary to support their health, safety, and well-being.

I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

1. Delegate authority to the Department of Public Health to execute an amendment to the current agreement with Liberty Hill Foundation for Public Health Councils to extend the term up to one year and increase the total contract sum by up to $333,333. The amendment must be approved as to form by County Counsel. For this amendment, the Board shall waive the requirement of Board Policy 5.100. All funding for this amendment will be from the current Department of Public Health operating budget for FY 2026-27.
2. Delegate authority to the Director of Public Health, or designee, to execute amendments to the agreement executed in Recommendation 1 that:
   a. Extend the term through June 30, 2027, contingent upon availability of funds

and not to exceed a maximum of $1 million;

b. Allow the rollover of unspent funds, contingent upon availability of funds;
c. Allow reallocation of funds between budgets;
d. Provide an increase or decrease in funding above or below the annual base maximum obligation effective upon execution;
e. Update the statement of work and/or scope of work, as necessary; and
f. Correct or update the contract terms and conditions, subject to review and approval by County Counsel.

3. Delegate authority to the Director of Public Health, or designee, to execute change notices to the agreement executed in Recommendation 1 for:
    a. Modifications to the budget with corresponding modifications to the statement of work, scope of work, and/or work plan, as necessary;
    b. Modifications to Contractor's or County's administration; and
    c. Changes to hours of operation and/or service locations.
4. Delegate authority to the Director of Public Health, or designee, to immediately suspend or terminate any agreement upon issuing a written notice to the contractor if the contractor fails to perform and/or fully comply with contractual requirements; and to terminate any agreement for convenience, including cancellation without cause and in response to federal, State, or County budget reductions, by providing prior written notice to the contractor, subject to review and approval by County Counsel.

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