



DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH
hope. recovery. wellbeing.

LISA H. WONG, Psy.D.
Director

Curley L. Bonds, M.D.
Chief Medical Officer

Connie D. Draxler, M.P.A.
Acting Chief Deputy Director

December 19, 2023

ADOPTED

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

50 December 19, 2023

CELIA ZAVALA
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Dear Supervisors:

**APPROVAL TO EXTEND EXISTING AGREEMENTS AND REQUEST DELEGATED AUTHORITY
TO EXECUTE NEW AGREEMENTS WITH THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF LOS
ANGELES AND THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY THROUGH JUNE
30, 2034
(ALL SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICTS)
(3 VOTES)**

SUBJECT

Approval to extend existing Agreements and request delegated authority to enter into new agreements with the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles and the Los Angeles County Development Authority.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE BOARD:

1. Approve and authorize the Director of Mental Health (Director), or designee, to prepare, sign, and execute amendments to extend existing Agreements between the Department of Mental Health (DMH) and the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA), and the DMH and the Los Angeles County Development Authority (LACDA) until such time that DMH receives new agreements to execute. These Agreements include the following federal housing subsidy programs which are fully funded by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) revenues: Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA)/Continuum of Care, (previously known as Shelter Plus Care), Tenant Based Supportive Housing, Homeless Section 8, and Housing Choice Voucher Programs. The DMH clients receiving housing certificates and vouchers will receive an in-kind match, as needed, of mental health support services.
2. Delegate authority to the Director, or designee, to sign and execute new Agreements, between the DMH and the HACLA, and the DMH and the LACDA on an annual basis as they become available.

This delegated authority will be effective through June 30, 2024. The new agreements will also include the following federal housing subsidy programs, fully funded by the HUD revenues: TBRA/Continuum of Care, (previously known as Shelter Plus Care), Tenant Based Supportive Housing, Homeless Section 8, and Housing Choice Voucher Programs. The purpose of the housing subsidy programs is to provide the DMH clients experiencing homelessness with housing certificates and vouchers for which the DMH will provide an in-kind match, as needed, of mental health supportive services through June 30, 2024.

3. Delegate authority to the Director, or designee, to amend the agreements in Recommendations 1 and 2, to accept financial compensation from HACLA and LACDA, provided that: 1) any financial compensation will be used for administration of the agreements; 2) reflect program and/or federal, State and County regulatory and/or policy changes; 3) approval as to form by County Counsel is obtained prior to execution of such amendments; and 4) the Director notifies your Board and Chief Executive Office (CEO) of amendments in writing after execution of each amendment.

4. Delegate authority to the Director, or designee, to terminate the agreements in Recommendations 1 and 2 in accordance with the agreements' termination provisions, including Termination for Convenience. The Director, or designee, will notify your Board and CEO, in writing, of such termination action.

PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTION

Adoption of the requested actions will allow the DMH to execute amendments while new annual agreements are pending from LACDA and HACLA, and allow the DMH to execute new agreements as they become available without interruption to the program. This further allows the DMH to meet its goals of working to alleviate barriers to unhoused individuals with serious mental illness (SMI). According to the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority 2023 Homeless Count Report, on any given night there are 75,518 persons experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles County. In the Los Angeles Continuum of Care, which excludes Long Beach, Pasadena, and Glendale, 31,991 persons are considered chronically homeless and 25 percent of the unhoused report experiencing SMI. The DMH's strategy to end homelessness for the clients we serve includes securing housing resources such as those provided by these federal housing subsidy programs. Eligibility for these programs is limited to those that meet HUD's definition of homelessness and/or chronic homelessness. While the tenants pay 30 percent of their income, the Housing Authorities subsidize the remaining portion of the rent.

These federal housing subsidies will provide the DMH clients and their families TBRA/Continuum of Care, Housing Choice Voucher, Tenant-Based Supportive Housing, and Homeless Section 8 certificates and vouchers.

Board approval of Recommendation 1 will allow the DMH to extend existing Agreements, and to accept financial compensation from HACLA and LACDA until such time when new agreements are available to be executed to avoid an interruption of services.

Board approval of Recommendation 2 will allow the DMH to execute new agreements between DMH, HACLA, and LACDA, once available, and to accept financial compensation from HACLA and LACDA to provide the DMH clients experiencing homelessness with housing certificates and vouchers for which the DMH will provide an in-kind match.

Board approval of Recommendation 3 will allow the DMH to amend the Agreements in Recommendations 1 and 2, expeditiously, without an interruption to services.

Board approval of Recommendation 4 will allow the DMH to terminate the agreement in accordance with the agreements' termination provisions, including Termination for Convenience, in a timely manner, as necessary.

Implementation of Strategic Plan Goals

The recommended action is consistent with the County Strategic Plan Goal I (Make Investments that Transform Lives), via Strategy I.2 (Enhance our Delivery of Comprehensive Interventions), specifically, I.2.1 (Provide Subsidized Housing for Vulnerable Populations).

FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING

The housing subsidies are federally funded by HUD and distributed to the local housing authorities. The DMH is required to provide in-kind supportive mental health services funded by multiple sources including, but not limited to, Sales Tax Realignment, Medi-Cal, and State Mental Health Services Act revenue. The Housing Authorities require that the DMH provide documentation of clients who receive TBRA/Continuum of Care subsidies that are equivalent to at least 25 percent of the aggregate amount of the housing subsidies in DMH services. The Housing Choice Voucher, Tenant-Based Supportive Housing and Homeless Section 8 programs do not require a specific in-kind match, but the DMH is required to provide mental health services, including monthly contacts and quarterly home visits to the clients receiving those subsidies.

On an annual basis, the local Housing Authorities will subsidize approximately 1,742 Continuum of Care housing certificates for the DMH clients with a total estimated value of \$39,000,000.

There is no net County cost associated with the recommended actions.

FACTS AND PROVISIONS/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Since 1997, the DMH has been granted 1,742 TBRA/Continuum of Care certificates through the Los Angeles County Continuum of Care. The DMH has also received various allocations of Housing Choice Voucher, Homeless Section 8, and the Tenant Based Supportive Housing vouchers over the years. In 2021, LACDA allocated 250 Housing Choice Vouchers. In 2021, HACLA allocated 200 Homeless Section 8 vouchers; and in 2017 and 2022, HACLA allocated 169 and 100, respectively, Tenant-Based Supportive Housing vouchers to the DMH. The certificates and vouchers were made available to clients served by the DMH in our directly operated and contract agencies. The DMH's management of these agreements includes ensuring that all agreement requirements are met. This responsibility includes providing training to the DMH staff, approving all referrals into the program, reviewing, processing, and submitting applications, and submitting quarterly and annual reports to the Housing Authorities.

The TBRA/Continuum of Care Agreements require an in-kind match of supportive services. The supportive services provided by the DMH include outreach and engagement of people experiencing homelessness that meet the DMH's eligibility criteria, and assistance with the transition from homelessness to a permanent, affordable home. This includes helping the client to complete the housing application, accompanying clients to appointments, housing search assistance, preparation for housing authority and landlord interviews, and assistance with moving in. After the clients move in, the DMH's goals are to provide specialty mental health services and to support clients with enhancing independent living skills, meeting lease requirements, budgeting, developing community connections and other assistance that allows them to successfully maintain their housing in the community. The DMH also conducts outreach to landlords and property owners to increase the availability of affordable and supported housing, thereby expanding options for the DMH clients. Administrative staff at the DMH will continue to administer and supervise the Agreements and ensure that Agreement provisions and Departmental policies are followed.

IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES (OR PROJECTS)

Board approval of the recommended actions will provide the DMH clients experiencing homelessness, and their families, access to subsidized housing through agreements with the housing authorities thereby supporting the County's effort to end homelessness.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lisa H. Wong, Psy.D.", written in black ink.

LISA H. WONG, Psy.D.

Director

LHW:CDD:KN:SK:JD:atm

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
Chief Executive Office
County Counsel
Chairperson, Mental Health Commission