



**City of Long Beach**  
Working Together to Serve

**Memorandum**

Date: March 17, 2016

To: Patrick H. West, City Manager *P.H.W.*

From: Kelly Colopy, Director of Health and Human Services *KC*

For: Mayor and Members of the City Council

Subject: **Update on Homeless Services Division Activities**

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This memo serves as an update on a number of activities that are currently being managed by the Homeless Services Division.

Winter Shelter

With the goal of increasing the number of emergency shelter beds available throughout Los Angeles County, the Winter Shelter program has been a significant benefit for the City of Long Beach from November 2, 2015 through March 31, 2016. The Winter Shelter opened one month earlier and was extended to close two weeks later per an increased allocation provided by the County of Los Angeles in response to the anticipated El Niño storm surge. This program provides increased engagement opportunities with homeless individuals to encourage enrollment into case management services, employment, and housing programs through the Multi Service Center, and it further maximizes the effectiveness of those services to reduce homelessness in the City.

The Winter Shelter was operated successfully by the Long Beach Rescue Mission, serving above the numbers funded, and without major incidents with clients or impacts on the local community. The program was initially funded for 144 beds, was later increased to 169, but served upwards of 195 on its busiest night, without turning away a single person during this season. The street outreach network was critical in linking homeless individuals to the Winter Shelter and supportive services to help stabilize their housing crisis. The Winter Shelter also provided an opportunity to engage homeless veterans for housing services in the effort to end chronic veteran homelessness in Long Beach, and it allowed for emergency housing for clients who are working with case managers to establish a permanent housing plan. With the six week extension, approximately 1,400 unduplicated persons utilized the shelter services this season.

One of the many individuals who was connected to services at the shelter was a homeless Navy veteran, who served his country for eight years. This veteran and his wife lost their supportive housing due to their landlord's unwillingness to accept their VASH voucher. The couple found their way to the Winter Shelter to provide them temporary shelter and, while at the shelter, a veterans case manager completed an assessment of their housing needs and they were successfully linked to supportive services, including housing location and deposit assistance.

### Street Outreach Network

The street outreach network, led by Shannon Parker, Homeless Initiative Coordinator, is an inter-disciplinary team comprised of agencies with expertise in mental health, veterans services, chronic homeless engagement and substance addiction. Though this group has been diligent in coordinating its response to hot spots driven by constituent calls, the purpose of this team is to provide targeted, proactive and responsive outreach efforts throughout Long Beach on a daily basis. As calls for service continue to increase across the City, the efforts of this team are recognized for their preemptive approach to engaging people into services and housing.

### Intradepartmental Task Force

While the outreach network coordinates to meet external demands, the intradepartmental task force, made up of departments within the City structure, meets regularly with the goal of strengthening internal coordination to address homeless-related issues, including encampments, posting and removal of belongings, hot spots around the City, constituent complaints, and impacts on businesses, parks and other public lands. This task force, co- led by the Police Department and the Health and Human Services Department, is attended by the Public Works, Parks, Recreation and Marine, City Attorney, Fire, and Library Services Departments, as well as the City Prosecutor's office.

### New Initiatives

As the Homeless Services Division continues to expand its capacity, several initiatives are emerging. For example, the City Prosecutor Doug Haubert and Judge Haynes from Long Beach Community Court partnered with the Long Beach Continuum of Care in a pilot program to stabilize housing. Two homeless individuals, who were high utilizers of law enforcement and emergency services, had successfully been housed for over a year, but had 36 total citations between them. The individuals were facing employment barriers given these outstanding citations. This program allowed for the citations to be dismissed. In a push to continue this effort, the Los Angeles County Homeless Court Program is partnering with the Homeless Services Division to host a citation clinic for the City of Long Beach, taking place on March 31, 2016, at Veteran's Park from 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Quality of life and traffic citations are often a barrier to housing and stabilization efforts. The partnership with the Los Angeles County Homeless Court will help reduce these barriers for other homeless households striving towards self-sufficiency.

### Continuum of Care

Though Long Beach is its own Continuum of Care, the Division works very closely with regional partners to ensure efforts are maximized to serve all who are in need of housing services. On February 9, 2016, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved a plan to combat homelessness across the county. This comprehensive initiative includes 47 strategies aimed at addressing the root causes of homelessness, and provides for an opportunity for cities to work together to create unprecedented opportunities for combating homelessness while maximizing the effectiveness of current efforts and to implement new actions where appropriate. The Long Beach Health and Human Services

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Department is proud to be a part of this regional effort and looks forward to further collaboration with its regional partners.

Please let me know if you require additional information.

cc: Charles Parkin, City Attorney  
Laura Doud, City Auditor  
Tom Modica, Assistant City Manager  
Arturo Sanchez, Deputy City Manager  
Rebecca Jimenez, Assistant to the City Manager  
Department Heads