

Date: April 15, 2021

To: Thomas B. Modica, City Manager 

From: Kelly Colopy, Director of Health and Human Services 

For: Mayor and Members of the City Council

Subject: **Addressing and Preventing Violent Crime**

Violence Prevention begins with strong families, education, workforce opportunities, and wellness. It begins early in a person's life, otherwise known as "upstream." It requires engagement of community members, community-based organizations, and government organizations and systems working together to address social impacts that can lead to increased violence. The Health and Human Services Department (Health Department) launched the Community Impact Division (CID) in 2018, to lead efforts across the City to prevent and reduce community-level violence and strengthen family protective factors. The division has five foundational pillars:

- Violence Prevention
- Youth Development
- Reentry and Human Trafficking,
- Trauma and Resiliency, and
- Strengthening Families Programming

These five pillars build off Safe Long Beach efforts initiated in 2013 and align with the Racial Equity and Reconciliation Framework Initiative by using public health approaches to violence prevention. Using a public health approach, Division staff collaborate across City departments and with community-based and agency leaders to prevent violence, intervene in community violent crimes, and sustain/maintain safe and healing communities through youth and family programming and place-based community engagement efforts.

Safe Long Beach: Violence Prevention and Intervention

Violence prevention opportunities are implemented through place-based efforts using a collective impact approach to reduce gun violence, address community-level trauma, and increase youth development and community social connectedness. The vision is to create and sustain a city where everyone lives in safe communities, attends safe schools, and are contributing neighbors connected to their community. This vision is operationalized through the Long Beach Activating Safe Communities (LB ASC) program and the development of the Long Beach Collaborative (LBC).

LB ASC:

The Health Department is launching the Long Beach Activating Safe Communities (LB ASC) program to address gun violence through a three-year \$1.1-million Board of State Corrections

and Community, California Violence Prevention (CalVIP) grant award. The LB ASC program will work in partnership across sectors with community stakeholders and various City departments (Police, Economic Development-Pacific Gateway, Parks, Recreation and Marine), Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD), nonprofit community-based organizations, faith-based organizations and community residents.

The LB ASC program will begin as a pilot program focused on the Washington Neighborhood. The Police Department identified the Washington Neighborhood as having among the highest concentration of firearm assaults in Long Beach. The Washington Neighborhood falls within Beat 4 of the Police Department's West Division. In 2018, the West Division contributed to 40.2 percent of the city's firearm assaults and murders. The pilot will test the development and implementation of a gun violence coordinated response for victims of gun violence with the intent that the model be sustained for citywide use.

LB ASC program goals include: (1) creating a comprehensive and coordinated City of Long Beach Gun Violence Response System (CLB-GVRS) for victims of gun violence; (2) reducing gun-related violence through effective street outreach and intervention programming; and, (3) activating safe community spaces to provide programs, resources, and services in the Washington Neighborhood. The LB ASC project is a community-level intervention seeking to reduce gun violence by 20 percent in the Washington Neighborhood by June 2023.

Over the course of three years, the LB ASC will reduce gun violence in the Washington Neighborhood by:

- Establishing a coordinated gun violence response system for victims of gun violence to receive services and support;
- Contracting with a community-based organization to implement an effective street outreach/interventionist model to prevent and interrupt gun-related violence as well as de-escalate community violence;
- Providing case management services to at least 30 justice-involved youth;
- Providing life coaching to at least 75 at-promise youth through Pacific Gateway's Success Track program;
- Hosting quarterly community engagement events to engage at least 700 residents to strengthen community social connectedness and community safety and well-being; and,
- Supporting the Be Safe Program at Seaside/14th Street Parks in partnership with the Parks, Recreation and Marine Department, by engaging at least 300 youth and families.

Two agencies have been contracted to support this program - the Urban Peace Institute will provide technical support to develop a protocol for the response system, and the CSULB Center for Latino Community Health, Evaluation and Leadership will conduct a program evaluation. Additionally, the City issued a request for proposals (RFP) to contract a nonprofit organization to provide street outreach and case management services for the LB ASC.

Long Beach Collaborative

The City's Violence Prevention Initiative is a citywide and neighborhood approach to improve safety and well-being for everyone. The Health Department is leading the multisector collaborative with the vision to create and sustain a city where everyone in Long Beach lives in safe communities, attends safe schools, and are contributing neighbors connected to their community. This initiative has four goals: increase social connectedness, improve economic opportunities, foster safe and healthy neighborhoods, and create trauma-informed systems.

The Long Beach Collaborative (LBC) was launched in 2019 and builds on the work of Safe Long Beach, initially launched in 2013. It consists of a citywide cross-sector partnership with community stakeholders working together to define safety and create a shared vision to achieve it. The LBC collectively agrees to track and measure progress and success, promote coordination, and build trust and relationships through continuous communication.

A Steering Committee comprised of residents and anchor place-based organizations was established to better understand neighborhood approaches for violence prevention and youth development as well as to inform the development of an LBC collective agenda. The Steering Committee's purpose is to drive implementation and provide oversight of the City's violence prevention efforts.

In addition to a citywide approach, this initiative takes a place-based neighborhood approach to improve safety and well-being. This neighborhood approach seeks to engage and uplift community voices, foster trust and relationships, build community capacity, and align and coordinate resources. By reviewing City plans and police data, staff identified four neighborhoods with high levels of crime and poverty and face social distress, among them the Washington Neighborhood. These neighborhood place-based efforts are centered around several middle schools to improve safety and well-being of residents and coordinate services to improve health outcomes.

This summer, the Health Department will issue approximately \$40,000 in neighborhood spark awards to support grassroots violence prevention projects. The City has allocated \$25,000 to contract with an urban planning group to facilitate the Washington Neighborhood community engagement process to identify locations for the future development of a youth-focused community center. Additionally, community direct investments will be made available via Long Beach Recovery Act funds.

Youth Development

The [Long Beach Strategic Plan for Youth and Emerging Adults \(Plan\)](#) was presented to the City Council in February 2021. The Plan represents a cross-city departmental and community partnership for positive youth development in Long Beach. Its intent is to mobilize the entire community to strengthen and create pathways that will improve the health, mental health, well-being, and economic mobility of youth.

Federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funds and other investments have provided the opportunity to design and implement several early strategies and objectives aligned with the Plan's six goals, including Planning for the Future, Community

Care, Social Connectedness, and Health. Earlier this year, the Office of Youth Development funded ten agencies to support projects that raised awareness of COVID-19 testing and resources and fostered virtual and socially-distant opportunities for engagement. Activities and resources included [learning spaces](#), a [podcast](#), [community guide](#), [healing circles](#), and workshops. Collectively, these projects connected 534 youth to COVID-19 resources and engaged 2,460 in youth development activities. These projects created a foundation for ongoing work that could be funded and supported through a soon-to-be-established youth fund.

Additionally, the City will award 2021 summer youth development grants to local nonprofit organizations to support project-based summer placements for youth at nonprofit organizations, as well as support efforts to create inclusive, safe spaces for youth to engage in developmental activities over the summer. The dedicated total amount of grant funding is \$150,000.

Early implementation of the Plan includes the launch of the Office of Youth Development (OYD). The OYD is collaborating with Long Beach City College (LBCC) and LBUSD to design a community-wide mentorship program. The mentorship program will build upon best practices identified by [MENTOR](#) and local agencies, as well as emerging workforce mentorship practices led by Pacific Gateway. The Plan is exploring opportunities to pilot and eventually scale this work with the support of philanthropic partners that have expressed interest and engaged the Health Department in planning conversations.

The OYD is also leading planning efforts with the Long Beach Youth Services Network, LBCC, LBUSD, Pacific Gateway, and the Long Beach Commission on Youth and Families to coordinate a youth forum that will include seminars, a resource fair, and arts-based festival for youth, families, and service providers. The event will be outdoors and will take place September 24-25, 2021.

Reentry and Human Trafficking

[My Sister's Keeper \(MSK-2\)](#) ([English](#), [Español](#), [Khmer](#))

This is a Department of Justice and California Office of Emergency Services funded human trafficking diversion program. MSK-2 utilizes an evidence-based, U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) supported anti-gang strategy that includes a three-pronged approach to reduce gang membership and gang victimization among at-risk populations within Long Beach. The program provides services to both sex- and labor-trafficking victims. The intervention intends to deter individuals from human trafficking and refer them to the City Prosecutor's Court Diversion Program. Victims will avoid prosecution and have access to comprehensive supportive services including emergency housing, mental health, mentoring, workforce training, and job placement provided by selected service providers. This program is administered in partnership with the City Prosecutor, GEMS Uncovered, Goodwill, and the CSULB Health Equity Center. The program also developed a citywide awareness campaign, public service announcements, and provided service-provider trainings on trauma and resiliency approaches when working with victims of human trafficking. In January 2021, MSK-2 provided two trainings on trauma and resiliency approaches in which more than 100 service providers participated.

In its next iteration, this program will focus on transitional age youth, who are most at risk to be victims of human trafficking. The MSK-3 program will offer counseling, case management, and employment services to any person between the ages of 16 to 25 that has experienced physical, sexual, financial, or emotional harm resulting from trafficking exploitation. Additionally, the program will contract the National Compadres Network to offer culturally relevant youth development trainings to members of the human trafficking taskforce in Long Beach. To date, this program has served 25 victims of human trafficking in 2020, thus ending modern-day slavery for the program participants.

Reentry

Long Beach is home to system-impacted persons seeking to integrate into their local community and families. The profile of incarceration in Los Angeles is consistent with national research showing that a disproportionate number of people admitted to jails are sick, poor, homeless, and struggling with mental health and substance use disorders. Blacks and People of Color are most impacted by the justice system (ATI Report, 2020). Upon release, many formerly incarcerated persons face multiple life challenges as they strive to reintegrate into their communities and families. The newest pillar of the Division's efforts, the Long Beach Restore Initiative is focused on: (1) expanding and scaling community-based, holistic care and services through community capacity building and service coordination; (2) supporting family reunification models through two-generational family approaches, including fatherhood programs that increase father-child bonds and father's economic stability; (3) identifying partners for the development of a restorative center for formerly incarcerated service coordination and social connectedness; and, (4) aligning City and County alternatives-to-incarceration strategies, wherever possible.

During the Summer of 2021, the City will issue \$100,000 in direct community capacity building grants to local organizations working with persons formerly incarcerated and their families, including institutions of higher learning. The City is also collaborating with the Office of Economic Development to pilot an integrated community care model emphasizing mental health, employment, and social entrepreneurship to support formerly incarcerated persons, and their family reunification efforts. This pilot will be supported by a cross-departmental effort with funds allocated through the Long Beach Recovery Act.

Trauma and Resiliency Initiative Long Beach

In 2018, the Health Department launched Trauma- and Resiliency-Informed Long Beach (TRI LB), a Citywide initiative focused at reducing the impact of trauma inadvertently activated by organizations and City departments. Through the racial reconciliation process, community members uplifted the need to incorporate the use of trauma- and resiliency-informed practices in the operations of City efforts and to effectively address community level trauma. Working internally, TRI LB is focused on making Long Beach a trauma-informed city.

Continuous exposure to violence, poverty and inequity can have persistent traumatic impacts on communities. While the City has made strides to reduce violence, increase educational opportunities, and strengthen family bonds, certain areas continue to be highly impacted by violence and trauma. Studies show that exposure to persistent trauma can result in higher rates of disease and behavioral health conditions. For many residents in Long Beach, the

continuous exposure to unsafe family and community environments have resulted in higher rates of heart disease, respiratory illness, and low social mobility.

Persistent trauma not only impacts our community members and clients, but it also impacts our service providers, systems, and the built environment. Organizations and systems play a multifaceted role in addressing the impacts of trauma. Organizations have the potential to either lessen or exacerbate the effects of trauma exposure for their employees and service providers. The way in which service providers hold, process, and manage trauma will in turn have an impact on the experiences of clients, most of whom are trying to navigate complex systems while carrying their own traumatic load. The Health Department recognizes that supporting staff in addressing vicarious trauma can be crucial in interrupting the cycle of re-traumatization in clients.

TRI LB has piloted trauma and resiliency strategies within the Health Department and Long Beach Public Libraries (LBPL). Three core components of this initiative include developing and implementing training on trauma and resilience across both departments, adopting policies and procedures that enhance the delivery of services, using trauma- and resiliency-informed approaches in internal processes, and documenting organizational culture shifts through an evaluation process. TRI LB has completed Trauma and Resiliency 101 Training for nearly 450 Health and Library staff and is now expanding this training to additional City departments, including Legislative staff and Parks, Recreation, and Marine in an effort to become a trauma-informed city.

In preparation for City facilities reopening to the public, TRI LB will provide Health Department staff with additional training opportunities to prevent and intervene in instance of vicarious trauma. TRI LB trainings will incorporate reflective leadership for supervisors. This training will provide Department leadership with tools on how to engage staff who may experience anxiety and/or other social distress as facilities open up and constituent services are offered in person. In an effort to become a trauma informed city, the Health Department has worked to support its workforce to provide trauma-and resiliency-informed services throughout the pandemic, in line with community requests for trauma and resiliency approaches outlined in the Racial Equity and Reconciliation Framework. TRI LB will continue as part of the Long Beach Recovery Act effort through an allocation of \$300,000. These funds will support the second phase of this work, which includes additional trainings, organizational assessment, and undertaking administrative policy changes to support a culture of health and resiliency.

Summary

Through these various programs and systemic approaches, the City is committed to addressing the underlying social determinants of health that can help communities heal, prevent violence, and intervene in cases of violent crimes. These programs and systemic approaches require cross-departmental partnerships, authentic community engagement, continuous quality improvement and evaluation efforts to better inform the City's vision for a safe and healthy community for all.

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April 15, 2021

Page 7

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