

Date: September 3, 2024

To: Thomas B. Modica, City Manager 

From: Alison King, Director of Health & Human Services 

For: Mayor and Members of the City Council

Subject: Homeless Services Advisory Committee Policy Recommendations

The Long Beach Homeless Services Advisory Committee (HSAC) was established in 1988 and has worked as an advisory body for the Long Beach City Council and Department of Health and Human Services for the past 36 years. Through Resolution No. C-24600, the creation and purpose of the HSAC is to review existing or potential programs and services for individuals experiencing homelessness in the City of Long Beach and to make policy recommendations to the Mayor and City Council regarding such matters.

The attached 2024-2025 Policy Recommendations were approved by HSAC at the meeting conducted on June 5, 2024. These recommendations are also accompanied by an overview of homelessness within Long Beach as well as a report on the activity of the Mayor's Fund for Homeless Action for calendar year 2023. Within the policy recommendations, HSAC members have identified four recommendations that are being brought forward.

If you would like further information, please contact Paul Duncan, Homeless Services Bureau Manager, at (562) 570- 84581 or Paul.Duncan@longbeach.gov.

ATTACHMENT

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May 10, 2024

TO: MAYOR REX RICHARDSON, CITY OF LONG BEACH
THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LONG BEACH

FROM: THE HOMELESS SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE, CITY OF LONG BEACH

2024-2025 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Background

About the Homeless Services Advisory Committee

City of Long Beach Resolution No. C-24600 was adopted by the City Council of the City of Long Beach on November 15, 1987: “The Homeless Services Advisory Committee (HSAC) is hereby created and established for the purpose of reviewing existing or potential programs and services for homeless persons in the City of Long Beach and making policy recommendations to the Mayor and City Council regarding such matters.”

Status of Long Beach’s Homeless Population

In 2024, according to Long Beach’s Point-In-Time (PIT) Homeless Count:

- Approximately 3,376 City of Long Beach residents were experiencing homelessness.
- 73% of those individuals—2,455 people—were unsheltered.
- In 2023, 112 individuals experiencing homelessness (3% of 2023 LB PIT count) died, compared with an average US death rate of 1%. This equates to one Long Beach homeless resident dying every three to four days.

Results vs. Other California Municipalities

According to the Brookings Institute’s December 2023 Report, “Homelessness in U.S. Cities and Downtowns,” Long Beach has one of the highest rates of homelessness in the country. There are five California cities that rank in the United States’ top ten for highest homelessness rates per 100,000 residents; they are San Francisco (#1), Long Beach (#3), Los Angeles (#5), Oakland (#8), and Sacramento (#10).

- Despite having a higher rate of homelessness, San Francisco shelters 43% of its homeless population, while Long Beach shelters about 27%.
- With over 10,000 people experiencing homelessness, San Diego shelters about 51% of its homeless population through traditional and innovative interim housing models.

These two California cities—which also experience a high rate of homelessness—are relevant models for the City of Long Beach.



Policy Recommendations

The Homeless Services Advisory Committee (HSAC) urges the Mayor and City Council of the City of Long Beach to focus on cost-effective and expedient interventions to address homelessness and its most dangerous effects and impacts, which include vulnerability to assault, mental health deterioration, and exposure-related illness such as hypothermia, heat stroke, skin cancer, dehydration, trench foot, respiratory problems, vector-borne and communicable disease, and poor nutrition.

Since the City of Long Beach's homeless crisis disproportionately impacts Black/African American residents (33% of those experiencing homelessness), LGBTQ+ residents (7.7% of those experiencing homelessness), and male residents (66% of those experiencing homelessness), HSAC recommends considering equity as a goal in all policies, programs, and services.

Recommendation 1: The Homeless Services Advisory Committee recommends that City Council adopt concrete goals to increase the shelter rate among individuals experiencing homelessness. HSAC recommends a goal of sheltering 40% of Long Beach's homeless population by 2026, and 50% of its homeless population by 2028. The intention is to connect all individuals experiencing homelessness to permanent housing over time.

These goals would align Long Beach with other California cities (San Francisco and San Diego) that have succeeded in sheltering homeless residents at higher rates (43% and 51%, respectively).

The City of Long Beach's current rate of sheltering 27% of residents experiencing homelessness causes deleterious and inequitable impacts on this vulnerable population. Unsheltered individuals are often unable to meet basic human needs, including mental and physical health services, food, hygiene, and safety. The City of Long Beach must prioritize offering more residents shelter. If the number of people experiencing homelessness in Long Beach remains relatively stable, these goals would equate to sheltering a total of approximately 1,350 individuals experiencing homelessness in 2026. As a point of reference, the 2024 LB PIT homeless count identified 921 sheltered individuals.

- The City of Long Beach should select 1-3 priority populations through the strategic planning process to shelter first; for example, the recently homeless, parents with children, members of the LGBTQ+ community, foster youth, older adults/seniors, etc. to meet the targeted needs of specific populations.

Recommendation 2: The Homeless Services Advisory Committee recommends that the City Council request that the City's Homeless Services Division conduct an analysis using existing needs data from residents experiencing homelessness as well as past feasibility studies to calculate the total resources needed to provide shelter and housing to all residents experiencing homelessness.



- Homeless Services staff may use existing Multi-Service Center and outreach team client intake data to determine how many units of each type of housing/shelter are required to meet the varying needs of all people experiencing homelessness in the City of Long Beach.
- Homeless Services staff can also draw on information such as costs and timelines for launching existing and future shelter and housing projects such as Tiny Homes, Hotel/Motel master leases, and the conversion of existing buildings into congregate and non-congregate shelters to estimate implementation costs and timelines.

The results of this analysis should include, at a minimum:

- Approximately how many people experiencing homelessness currently meet requirements to move directly into permanent housing;
- How many permanent housing units (for families and individuals) will be available in 2024-2025;
- Approximately how many people experiencing homelessness first require interim shelter with case management (to secure documents, medication, treatment, life management skills, financial literacy, etc.);
- How many units of interim shelter (for families and individuals) will be available in 2024-2025;
- Expected annual funding sources (with estimated amounts) to sustain and create each type of interim shelter and housing; and
- Total cost of providing interim shelter and housing, for all individuals in each category, based on average costs currently incurred, noting the gap between expected and needed funding.

This information should help the City of Long Beach plan how best to use current and future resources, while prioritizing equitable access to services for the populations most impacted. It will also aid in the process of budgeting for specific needs; for example, potential on-site drug counselors at shelters where a high proportion of residents struggle with addiction.

If necessary, the City of Long Beach could also expand on existing feasibility studies for various types of shelter, such as “Safe Sleep” (survey and analysis conducted in Fall 2023).

Recommendation 3: The Homeless Services Advisory Committee recommends maintaining or increasing funding for homelessness prevention programs.

The most cost-effective policies, with the best health and safety outcomes, are those that prevent homelessness before it occurs.

- City Council should maintain or increase funding for programs such as the Emergency Rental Assistance Program, Guaranteed Income, and peer-led life skills and job development programs focused on workforce readiness, home economics, financial management, and personal development/well being offered by the City of Long Beach and its community partners.



Recommendation 4: The Homeless Services Advisory Committee recommends that the City of Long Beach pilot lower cost, quicker start-up interim housing solutions to reach the goal of sheltering 40% of people experiencing homelessness by 2026:

- Programs such as the “Safe Sleep” interim shelter projects in Denver, CO; San Diego, CA; and Culver City, CA are relatively low-costs to implement and have quick set-up times.
- Existing Safe Sleep sites include on-site sanitation, food, and round-the-clock case management and peer support.
- Case managers connect residents with resources such as medication, identification documents, life skills workshops, and other support services to help them prepare for their moves into permanent housing.
- 25% of Culver City’s “Safe Sleep” residents moved into permanent housing within three months of joining its pilot Safe Sleep site (August to November 2023, per Culver City’s program’s manager).
- Safe Sleep sites take an average of 3-6 months to construct and implement. They typically consist of all-weather tents on pallets on city or private parking lots, and water trucks and generators can address immediate utility needs—as in the case of Culver City—rather than waiting for brick-and-mortar infrastructure to be built.
- Sites typically shelter 40-100 individuals at a time.
- HSAC recommends piloting at least one Safe Sleep site in fiscal year 2024-2025 on a city or privately owned lot.
- HSAC recommends exploring city-owned lots in areas closer to the beach and in East Long Beach for this pilot project to increase equitable services.
- The City of Long Beach’s Office of the City Manager conducted an interest survey for “Safe Sleep” in Fall 2023 that was sent to faith-based and other community organizations.
- Community support exists for this concept -- a local organization has offered to purchase the all-weather tents for a pilot “Safe Sleep” site.

Mayor’s Fund for Homeless Action – 2023 Activities Report

The Homeless Services Advisory Committee oversees the distribution of funds in the Mayor’s Fund for Homeless Action. These funds are held at the Long Beach Community Foundation and are comprised of individual and other private donations which are tax-deductible. In 2023, a total of \$73,394.09 was received in donations to the Mayor’s Fund for Homeless Action. During 2023, the Homeless Services Advisory Committee approved Mayor’s Fund grant awards to the following seven local non-profits, as well as one carry-over non-profit that received approval in 2022. During 2023, the Mayor’s Funds distributed a total of \$68,546.00 to eight local organizations.



Mayor's Fund for Homeless Action – 2023 Activities Report

Name of Organization	Project Description	Amount
AOC7 Neighborhood Organization	Monday Matters Food & Supplies	\$ 5,000.00
His Little Feet	New shoes for LBUSD students	\$ 10,000.00
Beacon for Him	Motel stays, food & misc for families	\$ 10,000.00
Disabled Resource Center, Inc	Motel Vouchers for clients	\$ 10,000.00
GP Care Packages/Blankets of Love	Care Packages	\$ 5,000.00
House of Haven	Homeless Youth Services	\$ 10,025.00
Precious Lamb Preschool	Assistance for Families	\$ 10,000.00
Urban Community Outreach	Staff and meals	\$ 8,521.00
Total		\$ 68,546.00

In alignment with the recommendations in this report, the Mayor's Fund for Homeless Action could provide partial seed funding to pilot a low-cost, quick start-up interim housing project, such as a Safe Sleep site in fiscal year 2024-2025.

Conclusion

The Homeless Services Advisory Committee recommends that the Mayor and City Council of the City of Long Beach consider prioritizing four main policies to improve programs and services for individuals experiencing homelessness in 2024-2025.

These policies include a) setting a goal of sheltering 40% of residents experiencing homelessness by 2026 and 50% by 2028; b) requesting an analysis of the total costs and types of shelter and housing needed by all current homeless residents from Homeless Services staff; c) maintaining or increasing funding for current homeless prevention programs; and d) piloting low-cost, quick set-up, interim shelter solutions in the City's 2024-2025 fiscal year.

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Appendix I

August 2022


Homeless Services Advisory Committee's Values and Priorities

WE, the Homeless Services Advisory Committee, aim to make every effort to incorporate the values listed below within the scope of the committee. These values are how we approach, accomplish, and assess our work in the development of recommendations that are set forth to the Board and City personnel.

- **People-Centered and Compassion Driven:** The focus is on understanding individual experiences and accepting each person's unique interests; everyone holds value that is not measured on their conditions, disabilities, and environment.
- **Dignity and Worth of a Person:** The treatment of people must be caring and respectful that includes being mindful of the cultural and individuals' diversity.
- **Self-Determination:** Support and recognize that self-determination is a right; individuals are allowed to make their own choices and decisions.
- **Community Centered:** Strive to build and enhance Long Beach as a community. Being a community member is key to individual growth and support. It can nurture humanity and self-confidence in oneself and others.
- **Lived Experiences:** Empower people with lived experience to be part of the decision making and policy development process.
- **Multiple Frameworks:** The development of a multi-approach strategy to address the complexity of homelessness and to meet individuals' needs and assets.
- **Recovery Orientated:** Recovery programs should focus on the individual's strength and resilience to improve their mental health, substance use at their own pace and without judgment.
- **Safe, Stable and Affordable Housing:** The acknowledgement of the Housing First model that includes a safe, stable, and access to affordable housing as a necessity for health and economic security.
- **Best Practices:** Invest in solutions that work using best practices and evidence-based services models.
- **Equity-Driven Data:** Data should be assessed through the lens of equity which will serve those with the greatest need.
- **General wellbeing:** Health is not solely physical but emotional, that can go beyond mental deterioration and addiction, and equally pertinent to individual's wellbeing and quality of life.



Appendix II -- Safe Sleep - Case Models

<p align="center">Denver, CO</p> 	<p>First Year Cost: \$900,000 per site</p>	<p>Annual Costs: \$900,000</p>	<p>Property: 2 City-owned, 1 privately-owned for affordable housing</p>	<p>Funding Source: City Funds</p>
	<p>Housing Structure: Ice fishing tents on pallets with bathroom and shower facilities</p>	<p>Other Facilities: Laundry room, ADA access, and pets facilities</p>	<p>Staffing: 24/7 case managers and security</p>	<p>Services: Organizations provide on-site physical and behavioral health care, case management, tech support, housing and benefits navigation, conflict resolution, and employment services</p>
<p align="center">Eugene, OR</p> 	<p>First Year Cost: \$170,000-\$600,000 per site (5 sites)</p>	<p>Annual Costs: \$354,000 to \$1.5 M per site serving 561 people in 2023</p>	<p>Property: 2 City-owned, 1 Local transportation district, 1 privately-owned, 16 small rest-stop models</p>	<p>Funding Source: CARES Act Funds, American Rescue Funds, Lane County COC</p>
	<p>Housing Structure: All weather tents, RVs, and Pallet shelters with shared bathroom and shower facilities. Rest stops are smaller sites w/ huts and vehicles for up to 20 people max</p>	<p>Other Facilities: Mixture of sites with common areas, kitchens, laundry, storage, and pet facilities</p>	<p>Staffing: 24/7 case managers and security, except for rest-stop models</p>	<p>Services: Mixture of services for each site including: medical and mental health care, trauma programs, peer-led support; case management, housing, and navigation</p>
<p align="center">Culver City, CA</p> 	<p>First Year Cost: \$2M</p>	<p>Annual Costs: TBD – opened Aug 2023</p>	<p>Property: City-owned, near Overland/Jefferson, in business district, near large apartment building and city library.</p>	<p>Funding Source: City General Fund</p>
	<p>Housing Structure: All weather tents on pallets with ADA community bathroom and shower facilities</p>	<p>Other Facilities: Kitchen unit, microwavable Every Table food, dog run, and community pavilion for eating, workshops, and meetings</p>	<p>Staffing: 2 24/7 case managers</p>	<p>Services: Community organizations provide job training, shuttle to laundromat, wellness and other classes/woerkshops. Community volunteers and organizations assisted in the set-up</p>