



**DATE:** October 24, 2017

**TO:** Homeless Strategy Committee

**FROM:** Paul Duncan, Associate Director of Systems Integration  
Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority

**SUBJECT:** Strategy 6E: Homeless Navigation Centers

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**Recommendation:** No action required.

This report satisfies the request of the City of Los Angeles' Comprehensive Homeless Strategy (CHS) 6E: *Homeless Navigation Centers*, which instructs LAHSA to report on the feasibility of establishing multi-service Homeless Navigation Centers in the City of Los Angeles. As cited in the CHS report, several cities have implemented multi-service centers with offerings that range from substance abuse and mental health treatment, employment services, laundry, showers, storage, and safe parking. The report also cites the City of San Francisco's Navigation Center as an exemplary model. Their model is a low-barrier shelter with other services onsite.

Feasibility for a Los Angeles Navigation Center with some or all of these offerings requires the availability of an appropriate facility, the allocation of funds to support programming, and neighborhood support. An ideal site would be located in an area with a high density of people experiencing homelessness, provide space for a range of services including health maintenance, benefits enrollment, case management, restrooms, showers and laundry, and other drop-in center offerings like places to charge cell phones and receive mail.

**BACKGROUND: THE NAVIGATION CENTER MODEL**

The City's CHS report references multi-service centers that offer numerous services at one location. The City of San Francisco's Navigation Center is a shelter program that removed many common barriers to entering shelter. That facility has no participant curfew, accommodates pets, and allows partners to share the same sleeping quarters. Orange County, Long Beach, and other cities have multi-service centers that act as drop-in facilities that offer services such as evaluation and assessment, substance abuse prevention and education, and case management, while also providing meals, showers, laundry, clothing, and transportation.

**FUNDING**

A Navigation Center as a low-barrier shelter model with added services would be more expensive to operate than LAHSA's current Crisis Housing program model (formerly known as emergency shelter). The Navigation Center shelter model would require more staff onsite

during the evening hours to accommodate the lack of curfew and a strong harm reduction approach. An increase in animal companions at the shelters would also increase operating and maintenance costs. LAHSA currently funds crisis housing programs at \$40 per bed per night. These added requirements could increase cost between \$60 - \$80 per bed per night.

It is difficult to estimate the costs of a multi-service center since each facility would have unique expenses. A multi-service center that brought together several different service providers under one roof could leverage the funding sources of the other providers and thereby lower operating costs.

There is potential to utilize Proposition HHH to rehabilitate a facility and Measure H to fund the services. A navigation center is being designed in Council District 8 that plans to utilize Proposition HHH funds. Unfortunately, it has proved difficult to find more than one facility that meets the goals of a navigation center.

#### **FACILITY AVAILABILITY**

The availability of a facility may be the most challenging aspect of the navigation center model opening in Los Angeles. An ideal multi-service center facility would be ADA compliant, have a reception space for intake, several rooms for case management offices, a large warehouse space for storage operations, restrooms, and be easily accessed by foot or public transportation. Unfortunately, the vacancy rate for warehouse or industrial spaces is between one and two percent, making it extremely difficult to find a space that meets the criteria.

#### **NEIGHBORHOOD SUPPORT**

Siting homeless programs has also been challenging due to neighborhood opposition. In the last year, LAHSA and the CAO office worked with local Council Districts to open navigation centers in the Venice and San Pedro neighborhoods. Both sites that were identified for storage services were met with disapproval from the constituents. Neighborhood residents expressed fears such as participants loitering near the facility, shopping carts and other personal items being discarded, and that the site would attract more people experiencing homelessness to the neighborhood.

#### **NEXT STEPS**

The City of Los Angeles has identified a navigation center site in Council District 8 that will offer storage, restrooms, showers, and offices for case management services. The City's Bureau of Engineering has been allocated Proposition HHH funds for the building and will select a contractor and manage the construction process. LAHSA will procure a service provider before construction is complete.

LAHSA is interested in working with the City to identify additional navigation center sites.