

**ORANGE COUNTY CONTINUUM OF CARE  
LIVED EXPERIENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Wednesday, December 4, 2024

10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

**Location:**

**Orange County Housing Authority (OCHA)  
1501 East Saint Andrew Place,  
Santa Ana, CA 92705**

**[Click here](#) for parking instructions.**

**Committee Chair:** Nichole Gideon, Individual

**Committee Vice Chair:** Paul Kaiser, Individual

**Committee Members:**

Reha Agar, Individual

Elizabeth Flores, Individual

Deborah Kraft, Individual

Miranda Mears, Individual

Jason Mercado, Individual

Robert “Santa Bob” Morse, Individual

Larry “Smitty” Smith, Individual

Vinny Zarrella, Individual

**MINUTES**

**Welcome and Meeting Overview** – Nichole Gideon, Chair

- **Meeting Start Time:** 10:10 a.m. (Call to Order)
  - **Present:** Reha Agar, Elizabeth Flores, Nichole Gideon, Miranda Mears, Robert “Santa Bob” Morse, Larry “Smitty” Smith, Vinny Zarrella
  - **Absent Excused:** Paul Kaiser, Deborah Kraft, and Jason Mercado

Miranda Mears arrived during Business Calendar 2 (10:21 a.m.). Larry “Smitty” Smith arrived during Business Calendar 2 (10:51 a.m.).

**Public Comments** – Members of the public may address the Lived Experience Advisory Committee (LEAC) on items listed within this agenda or matters not appearing on the agenda so long as the subject matter is within the jurisdiction of the LEAC. Public comments will be limited to three minutes. If there are more than five public speakers, this time will be reduced to two minutes.

To address the LEAC during the Public Comment period, members of the public are to complete a Request

to Address the Committee form prior to the beginning of each agenda item and submit it to Continuum of Care (CoC) staff. Staff will call your name in the order received.

Members of the public may also submit public comment by emailing [CareCoordination@ocgov.com](mailto:CareCoordination@ocgov.com). All comments submitted via email at least 24 hours before the start of the meeting will be distributed to the LEAC members, and all comments will be added to the administrative records of the meeting. Please include "LEAC Meeting Comment" in the email subject line.

Public Comment:

- Member of the public inquired around providing access and promoting the training and resources available free from SAMHSA through the Homeless Housing Resource Center. Member of the public asked if LEAC members can be part of a working group with the "full Continuum of Care group to identify and recommend training that should be required by staff for CoC members."

**LEAC Member Comments** – Members of the LEAC may provide comments on matters not appearing on the agenda so long as the subject matter is within the jurisdiction of the LEAC. Comments will be limited to three minutes. If there are more than five members wishing to speak, this time will be reduced to two minutes.

- Chair Nichole Gideon expressed gratitude to the LEAC members for the opportunity to serve as Chair.

**BUSINESS CALENDAR**

- 1. LEAC Chair and CoC Board Member Recommendations** – Felicia Boehringer, CoC Administrator, Office of Care Coordination
  - a. Appoint Robert "Santa Bob" Morse as Chair of the Lived Experience Advisory for the term of January 1, 2025, to December 31, 2026.
  - b. Approve LEAC Chair to appoint LEAC Vice Chair, to serve a term that mirrors the LEAC Chair's term.
  - c. Appoint Nichole Gideon to the CoC Board seat for an individual with lived experience of homelessness for the term of January 1, 2025, to December 31, 2026.

Felicia Boehringer, CoC Administrator, Office of Care Coordination recapped the previous LEAC meeting, where nominees from SurveyMonkey were discussed. Larry "Smitty" Smith had withdrawn, leaving Chair Nichole Gideon as the sole nominee for CoC Board Representative and Robert "Santa Bob" Morse for LEAC Chair. The recommended actions would formalize these nominations for two-year terms from January 1, 2025, to December 31, 2026. Additionally, a recommended action was brought forth for the LEAC Vice Chair position to be appointed by the LEAC Chair, as no formal language exists within the LEAC Governance Charter.

Committee Discussion:

- No Committee Discussion

Public Comment:

- Alan Achterberg noted that there might be suggestions included within the anonymous public comments submitted that are relevant to items listed on the agenda.

Business Calendar 1 was tabled until quorum was established (11:29 am)

Robert “Santa Bob” Morse motioned to approve Business Calendar 1 items a, b, and c. Elizabeth Flores seconded the motion. Elizabeth Flores, Larry “Smitty” Morse, Miranda Mears, Nichole Gideon, Reha Agar, Robert “Santa Bob” Morse, and Vinny Zarrella voted yes, no nay, no abstentions. Motion Passed.

**2. Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Policies and Procedures Recommendation –**  
Erin DeRycke, Director, Data Analytics, 2-1-1 Orange County (211OC), Orange County United Way and Felicia Boehringer, CoC Administrator, Office of Care Coordination

- a. Approve the recommended revisions to the HMIS Policies and Procedures, inclusive of the Client Record Requests, Data Integration, Data Release, Client Consent Form, Grievance Form and HMIS User Agreement policies as recommended by the Orange County HMIS Policies and Procedures Working Group, for review and approval by the Policies, Procedures and Standards Committee.

Erin DeRycke, Director, Data Analytics 2-1-1 Orange County (211OC), Orange County United Way reminded LEAC of the CoC Board discussions in August 2024 where they approved HMIS Policies and Procedures, apart from the Client Record Request policy. The CoC Board requested more information, specifically on allowing clients to access their full HMIS records before approving. In November 2024, the HMIS Working Group discussed revisions and raised concerns about including case notes within client record requests, suggesting clients should specify which data they need. Erin DeRycke shared the current Client Record Request policy, noted that pulling such data can take up to two hours per request, and reviewed case notes training before asking the LEAC members for feedback on Client Record Request Policy.

Committee Discussion [Client Record Request]:

- Reha Agar asked Erin DeRycke if completing a client record request takes 40 hours, as mentioned in the presentation. Reha Agar emphasized that case managers should proactively offer the request when clients know what they need and highlighted the need for training to help clients navigate policies and feel empowered. Reha Agar also inquired about the impact on justice-involved clients and whether law enforcement agencies have access to HMIS.
- Miranda Mears asked Erin DeRycke if Referral History includes only active referrals or also past, unsuccessful ones. Miranda Mears emphasized that clients want to know the status of their referrals and whether progress is being made while noting that the process should use trauma-informed, strength-based language to ensure transparency and meet clients' needs.
- Robert “Santa Bob” Morse asked Erin DeRycke how many of the 20 client record requests made in a year were from active clients and if any requested additional information beyond what was originally provided. Robert “Santa Bob” Morse suggested that agencies should better inform clients about the process and urged providers to take more responsibility. Robert “Santa Bob” Morse also inquired about the members of the HMIS Working Group, pointing out that no individuals with lived experience are on the committee, and emphasized that the group is focused on providers, not clients.

- Vinny Zarrella shared concerns that Transitional Aged Youth (TAY) clients often face challenges with providers who record assumptions and non-factual information in HMIS case notes. This makes it difficult for clients to receive services from other providers, as they are unfairly labeled based on inaccurate case notes. Vinny Zarrella suggested creating a “Common Needs” or “FAQ” tab on the HMIS/211OC website to help clients understand how to request specific information like case notes or referrals. Vinny Zarrella also inquired about the next steps for the remaining HMIS policy updates and grievance form recommendations, questioning if they would still require further discussion before voting.
- Larry “Smitty” Smith explained that systems like HMIS simply collect, and store data provided by agencies, and client record requests only provide information submitted by providers. Larry “Smitty” Smith questioned the need for a policy that bypasses case managers to access client records, as case managers should be the point of contact. Larry “Smitty” Smith highlighted that not all providers or case managers input consistent information, which could lead to clients receiving outdated data arguing that clients should first go to their case manager for records, and if necessary, request data from HMIS/211. Additionally, Larry “Smitty” Smith emphasized the need for better coordination and accurate data input by providers.
- Elizabeth Flores redirected the discussion to the availability of case notes in client record requests and asked if case managers and HMIS users are required to complete mandatory training on entering case notes, noting that agencies must complete several trainings to gain HMIS access and suggested that case notes training should be included in these requirements. Elizabeth Flores emphasized that HMIS users must be reminded of the importance of properly entering case notes and asked if the recommendation could include making case notes training mandatory, as merely reminding users may not ensure compliance.
- Chair, Nichole Gideon raised several concerns with Erin DeRycke regarding the client record request process, beyond just the staff time required to pull data. She asked about security risks when clients access their own files and noted that clients often want to know where they are on the list, with referral history, CES events, and case notes being common requests. Nichole Gideon questioned whether 20 client record requests per year was too low, given the frequency of client inquiries and highlighted the legal right of clients to request case notes. Nichole Gideon also asked if other CoCs have similar processes and whether agencies can make edits at the local level. She stressed the need for sensitivity to client needs, advocating for access to records while balancing the potential impact on service provision. Nichole Gideon concluded that significant changes, including more case note training for providers, would be necessary for effective implementation.

Public Comment:

- Alan Achterberg inquired if it would be possible for the Orange County CoC to create a system for clients and individuals to go through a peer support training.
- Member of the public stated that allowing outside agencies, “particularly unaccountable ones like Legal Aid”, to contribute data to HMIS poses significant risks, including potential fraud and corruption. Member of the public noted there are state and federal mandates ensuring individuals can amend their healthcare records, and unregulated data entry could compromise the system’s integrity. The Continuum of Care should “explore using retired or senior attorneys for legal aid to support homeless individuals, rather than relying on vulnerable, unaccountable legal aid systems.” Additionally, Member of the Public noted careful planning and strategic discussions are

needed to ensure the system of care evolves effectively while minimizing future risks and liabilities.

Nichole Gideon motioned to approve the recommended revisions to the HMIS Policies and Procedures, Client Record Requests with direction to Office of Care Coordination Staff and HMIS Lead to have a one-step request process, while delaying Data Integration, Data Release, Client Consent Form, Grievance Form and HMIS User Agreement policies as recommended by the Orange County HMIS Policies and Procedures Working Group, for review and approval by the Policies, Procedures and Standards Committee. Vinny Zarrella approved the motion. Elizabeth Flores seconded the motion. Elizabeth Flores, Miranda Mears, and Vinny Zarrella voted yes, Larry “Smitty” Smith voted nay. Nichole Gideon, Reha Agar, and Robert “Santa Bob” Morse abstained. The motion failed.

Nichole Gideon stated that feedback can be provided to HMIS, and that Business Calendar 2 will be revisited in January 2025 with incorporated comments from this conversation, along with recommended updates that the committee has not yet discussed.

**3. CoC Board and Committee Updates** – Nichole Gideon, Chair and Felicia Boehringer, CoC Administrator, Office of Care Coordination

Felicia Boehringer CoC Administrator, Office of Care Coordination, introduced a discussion, based on an agenda item submitted from Reha Agar, regarding the rescheduling of the LEAC meeting noting that if the meeting time changed, a new location would need to be found, as County Santa Ana offices are fully booked for 2025, and the room must accommodate virtual meetings. Additionally, the committee would need to select a new January meeting date, as the first Wednesday falls on New Year’s Day, an Orange County Holiday. The Office of Care Coordination will send a survey to gather feedback on a new January meeting date and share the results with members.

Chair, Nichole Gideon, also shared that California State University, Fullerton, is applying for a National Institutes of Health (NIH) grant to evaluate the Foster to Youth Independence Voucher Program in Orange County and requested LEAC’s support for the proposal.

Committee Discussion:

- Elizabeth Flores suggested that morning meetings, regardless of the date, work best and recommended sending a survey to gather feedback on this item.
- Vinny Zarrella stated that morning meetings work best and offered to contribute his time and expertise to the CSUF project if they receive the award.

Public Comment:

- No Public Comments

Meeting adjourned at 11:37 a.m.

**Next Meeting:** To be determined, pending the 2025 CoC Board and Committee Calendar approval.