

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

Thursday, January 9, 2025

10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Location:

**County Administration North (CAN) Building
Multi-Purpose Room 101**

400 W. Civic Center Dr., Santa Ana, CA 92701

[Click here](#) for parking instructions.

Virtual Meeting Option:

Zoom Meeting Link: [Click here for meeting link](#)

Join by phone: +1 669 444 9171

Webinar ID: 975 8177 1571

****Listen-in option only****

Committee Chair: Robert “Santa Bob” Morse, Individual

Committee Vice Chair: Paul Kaiser, Individual

Committee Members:

Reha Agar, Individual

Elizabeth Flores, Individual

Nichole Gideon, Individual

Deborah Kraft, Individual

Miranda Mears, Individual

Jason Mercado, Individual

Larry “Smitty” Smith, Individual

Vinny Zarrella, Individual

MINUTES

Welcome and Meeting Overview – Robert “Santa Bob” Morse, Chair

Chair Robert “Santa Bob” Morse called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

Present: Reha Agar, Nichole Gideon, Paul Kaiser, Miranda Mears, Robert “Santa Bob” Morse, and Larry “Smitty” Smith

Absent Excused: Elizabeth Flores, Deborah Kraft, Jason Mercado, and Vinny Zarrella

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. 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:

- A member of the public provided public comment via email in advance of the LEAC meeting which was read aloud. The member of the public shared frustrations in dealing with the Legal Aid system.
- Melody L. Lark provided public comment via email in advance of the LEAC meeting, sharing insights from *Evicting from Uninhabitable to Unsheltered Homes: 10 Legal Pits*. Melody L. Lark's investigation highlights systemic barriers tenants face during eviction trials, including overlooked evidence of uninhabitable conditions and gaps in tenant protections under the California Tenant Protection Act (TPA) of 2019. Melody L. Lark emphasizes the urgent need for policy reforms to address these issues and protect tenants' health and well-being. Melody L. Lark also provided information on an investigation outlining the three barriers to obtaining free food resources, inclusive of clothing and shoes, mobility for the body and personal items, and emotional and mental capacity of people seeking free food.
- Alan Achterberg provided public comment via email in advance of the LEAC meeting, expressing gratitude for allowing public participate in a live LEAC meeting. Alan Achterberg hopes that opportunities can be discussed to get more involvement of people in the Continuum of Care and for both clients receiving care and services as well as providers to have discussions in open meetings using the full breadth of tools, including the written comments and the three minute comments. Alan Achterberg would invite the committee to keep this in mind during this agenda and under consideration for future agendas and in community outreach efforts.

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.

- Vice Chair Paul Kaiser expressed understanding of the member of the public's frustration with Legal Aid and noted challenges in the CoC Board's power to make changes within that system.
- Reha Agar stated that the situation described by the member of the public has unfortunately played out many times where people are not able to get help from Legal Aid, noting that a lack of a timely response to requests for assistance can result in homelessness. Reha Agar suggested the LEAC consider investigating ways to provide resources and guidance on typical response times for Legal Aid services. Reha Agar also suggested that paralegals be more sensitive on how they are recording client information.
- Chair Robert "Santa Bob" Morse expressed concerns for 2025, including the end of a needle exchange program, corporations removing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) centered policies,

elimination of fact-checking on social media platforms, and continued targeted discrimination for the LGBTQ+ community.

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Approve the LEAC Meeting Minutes from December 4, 2024.
2. Approve the 2025 LEAC Meeting Calendar.

Nichole Gideon motioned to approve Consent Calendar Items 1-2. Paul Kaiser seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

BUSINESS CALENDAR

1. **2025 Homeless Survey Update** – Doug Becht, Director, and Sarah Jones, CoC Manager, Office of Care Coordination
 - a. Update on development of County of Orange Office of Care Coordination’s 2025 Homeless Survey.

Doug Becht provided background information regarding the development of the 2025 Homeless Survey, with a goal to focus on the subpopulation of those who are experiencing homelessness for the first time in the past 12 months. The Office of Care Coordination has been working closely with City Net to formulate the survey questions and design the survey implementation methodology and will be hosting two listening sessions: one with the LEAC and one with the Commission to End Homelessness and the CoC Board. Zulima Lundy shared the structure and timeline of the survey and noted that the Office of Care Coordination will be accepting additional written feedback via email until end of day on Monday, January 20, 2025. Two representatives from City Net were also present to participate in the discussion and respond to inquiries.

Public Comment:

- A member of the public provided public comment via email in advance of the LEAC meeting, emphasizing the importance of accurate street counts to ensure that the "official numbers" reported by cities and jurisdictions reflect reality. The member of the public referenced feedback from an anonymous volunteer in the Continuum of Care, who noted that actual counts often differ significantly, with higher numbers than those officially reported. Member of the public suggested questioning the decision not to conduct a live count this year and raised concerns about potential under-reporting by jurisdictions. Additionally, the member of the public proposed involving additional Continuum of Care members to informally review and audit the process to promote greater transparency.
- Alan Achterberg shared that early feedback from individuals on the street highlighted concerns about jurisdictions potentially manipulating street count data. Alan Achterberg emphasized the importance of engaging with people during counts and acting as a triage resource, connecting them with appropriate support even if not all issues can be resolved immediately. Alan Achterberg noted the value of peer support networks and recommended leveraging available funds to align resources effectively, ensuring they promote independence and efficiency.

Committee Discussion:

- Larry “Smitty” Smith highlighted significant flaws in the survey process, emphasizing that the survey lacks empathy and fails to help the individuals being surveyed. Larry “Smitty” Smith criticized the script for focusing on helping others rather than the person being approached,

leading to skewed and unreliable data. Larry “Smitty” Smith also questioned the validity of the statistic revealed in the Point In Time (PIT) Count that 48% of people interviewed had been experiencing homelessness for less than 12 months. Finally, Larry “Smitty” Smith pointed out challenges in gaining trust from encampment communities and stressed the importance of having experienced personnel who can build genuine relationships with those experiencing homelessness.

- Miranda Mears highlighted that the survey results might not accurately reflect the full scope of the homeless population, as there are individuals who remain unreachable and, therefore, unaccounted for. Miranda Mears also advocated for a more personal and compassionate approach, suggesting that outreach workers and service providers build trust by making individuals feel seen and valued, rather than treating them as data points.
- Chair Robert “Santa Bob” Morse questioned whether anything besides gift cards is offered, suggesting the inclusion of resources like Medi-Cal and EBT information. Chair Robert “Santa Bob” Morse also recommended asking how long someone has been homeless.
- Reha Agar discussed the challenges of addressing different types of homelessness and noted that first-time homeless individuals may not know what help they need. Reha Agar suggested tailoring surveys for first-timers with more specific follow-up questions and involving case managers to provide tangible support and hope.
- Nichole Gideon emphasized clarifying the survey's purpose to participants and offering more than just gift cards, such as resources or contact with caseworkers. Nichole Gideon suggested a more approachable and supportive interaction, possibly by bringing items like food or toiletries to build rapport before asking questions, noting that word of resources offered will travel and people will start coming to where the resources are being provided to be surveyed. Nichole Gideon also suggested that the gift card amounts for all surveyed individuals should be the same amount, regardless of length of homelessness, so that no one provides false information in order to receive a greater incentive.
- Vice Chair Paul Kaiser agreed the opening script needs revision to emphasize improving access for the individual and maintaining anonymity. Vice Chair Paul Kaiser proposed connecting participants with caseworkers for better assistance and questioned the relevance of certain personal questions in the survey, specifically Questions 3-4. Vice Chair Paul Kaiser agreed that all individuals who participate in the survey, or a portion of the survey, should still receive a gift card.

2. Coordinated Entry System (CES) Policies and Procedures – Felicia Boehringer, CoC Administrator, Office of Care Coordination

Felicia Boehringer discussed the goal of CES and what is covered by the CES Policies and Procedures. During the LEAC Meeting on September 4, 2024, members were asked to review and discuss the current policy that notes participants are made inactive in CES after 90 days of non-engagement. In previous meeting discussions, LEAC members emphasized the importance of client communication, case manager training, reactivation processes within the CES Community Queue, and addressing barriers for unsheltered individuals in verifying homelessness. The LEAC agreed to bring a recommendation for further review of the policy to the CES Steering Committee, with the final decision postponed to ensure Vice Chair Paul Kaiser could attend when it is presented. Felicia Boehringer noted that the LEAC was being asked to consider approving Vice Chair Paul Kaiser to attend and upcoming CES Steering Committee to present on ideas for potential CES Policies and Procedures changes, as well as possible training ideas for service providers and CES Access Points.

Recommended Action a: Approve Vice Chair Paul Kaiser, as a representative of the LEAC, to attend an upcoming CES Steering Committee meeting to recommend reviewing the CES Policies and Procedures to:

- 1) Revise the policy stating that CES participants will be made inactive in CES after 90 days of nonengagement.
- 2) Discussing potential policy revisions and training ideas.

Nichole Gideon motioned to approve recommended action a. Miranda Mears seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment:

- A member of the public provided public comment via email in advance of the LEAC meeting, expressing hope that there is some discussion on this idea with the current group and invite comments from the broader community. It will be interesting to see if there are concerns about removing people too fast and also concerns about the negative effects of continuing to be in the system as it appears that visibility of participation in the HMIS system is broad and can involve effective tracking and changes in how services are provided. It would be important to begin to understand these differences.
- Alan Achterberg shared that many individuals are unaware of CES and have to navigate the system independently, often relying on online resources rather than direct support, noting personal experience with this, as well. Alan Achterberg emphasized the importance of informing people of how personal information is tracked and shared in CES or HMIS and raised concerns about the potential misuse of this information, which could lead to further targeting of vulnerable individuals. Alan Achterberg noted that while the system can provide support, it can also feel scrutinizing, making it challenging to figure out the specific steps needed to access resources. Alan Achterberg highlighted the importance of transparency about data and ensuring individuals understand the implications of being in the system.

Committee Discussion:

- Paul Kaiser highlighted that without being proactive in learning about CES policies and procedures, Paul Kaiser would have become inactive during participation in CES. Paul Kaiser expressed concern that individuals unaware of CES policies or lacking regular contact with case managers could fall off the prioritization list and face long delays before being re-engaged and referred for housing.
- Nichole Gideon expressed support for the recommendation and was pleased to see the issue elevated through formal channels. Nichole Gideon acknowledged the limitations of discussions at the LEAC level and commended the pivot to engaging the CoC for actionable change.

3. LEAC Nominating Ad Hoc Update – Cameron Pastrano, CoC Staff Specialist, Office of Care Coordination

Cameron Pastrano shared an update regarding the LEAC Nominating Ad Hoc. Following the October 2, 2024, LEAC meeting, the Office of Care Coordination was unable to confirm a desire from two (2) of the three (3) selected candidates to proceed with participating in the LEAC. During the December 20, 2024, LEAC Nominating Ad Hoc Meeting the Committee concluded that none of the candidates in this round of recruitment would be the best fit to represent the two open seats, and recommended reopening recruitment in April or May.

Public Comment:

- A member of the public provided public comment via email in advance of the LEAC meeting, expressing gratitude for the update. Member of the public shared hope that this meeting might include discussion about how to again enhance and improve a broader participation in all of the Continuum of Care committees and meetings from people withing the Lived Experience community, both on this Committee and from the broader community.

4. **CoC Updates** – Felicia Boehringer, CoC Administrator, Office of Care Coordination and Nichole Gideon, CoC Board Secretary
 - a. CoC Board Updates
 - b. CoC Strategic Vision

Felicia Boehringer presented the following CoC updates:

- **November 5, 2024, CoC Board Special Meeting Updates:** CoC Board Approved Jamboree Housing Corporation’s permanent supportive housing project proposal called Costa Mesa Senior submitted in response to the CoCBuils Projects Request for Proposals (RFP), for inclusion in the Orange County CoC Buils Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Application to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), as recommended by the CoCBuils NOFO ad hoc. The Board also approved CoC Board Chair and Officers’ letter of support for application submission of the CoCBuils NOFO.
- **December 18, 2024, CoC Board Meeting Updates:** The CoC Strategic Plan was approved as a living framework to be refined before its implementation in July 2025. The Board ratified election results, appointing new members for the 2025-2026 term. Updates included amending the Policies, Procedures and Standards (PPS) Committee Charter to allow alternate representatives and approving HMIS data requests from Orange County United Way and the University of Chicago for housing referral and research projects.
- **CoC Board Membership and Decision-Making Process:** Discussed CoC Board membership composition, process for reviewing recommendations, and process for voting on recommendations.
- **Collaborative Agenda Setting:** LEAC members will be able use a template to draft agenda items for consideration, which would be shared with the LEAC leadership and Office of Care Coordination prior to each month’s LEAC planning meeting. The Office of Care Coordination will provide more information via email to the LEAC membership on the proposed collaborative agenda-setting process, including the timeline for submitting agenda item requests prior to the LEAC Planning Meetings.
- **CoC Strategic Vision:** At the December 18, 2024, meeting, the CoC Board approved the CoC Strategic Plan as a living framework to be continually refined in preparation for implementation in July 2025. The CoC Strategic Plan can be referenced on the CoC webpage. Committees of the CoC will be involved in the implementation planning over the course of the next several months.
- **LEAC Compensation** - The Office of Care Coordination provided an update on compensation methods. LEAC members are encouraged to contact the Office of Care Coordination to ensure your compensation preferences are recorded.
- **Upcoming Meetings:** Provided updates on upcoming meetings of the CoC Board and subcommittees.

Public Comment:

- Alan Achterberg provided public comment via email in advance of the LEAC meeting, sharing that it would be beneficial to discuss ways to increase participation from the Lived Experience community. Alan Achterberg suggested offering free rides to CoC Board meetings, emphasizing the impact of having individuals directly affected present during discussions and decisions, even if they do not speak. Alan Achterberg also proposed promoting and training individuals on how to effectively participate in these meetings and recommended posting Board agendas in as many Continuum of Care member offices as possible. Alan Achterberg expressed hope that these efforts would encourage people to believe in their ability to create positive changes by actively participating.
- Alan Achterberg explained that the University of Chicago study is similar to another multi-generational study on the economic impact of social programs, which had led to a professor being recruited away. Alan Achterberg expressed concerns about the study's vague details regarding the sharing of information with the Census Bureau, emphasizing the potential risks if sensitive data, such as a history of homelessness, were accessible. Alan Achterberg also mentioned outreach efforts, including collaboration with BYU students, to track down the professor behind the similar study to understand their data tracking methods but had not received a response. Additionally, Alan Achterberg highlighted the importance of creating opportunities for individuals with lived experience to attend and actively participate in meetings, noting the power of having these individuals present in the room. Alan Achterberg suggested forming ad hoc committees to address these concerns and increase engagement.

Committee Discussion:

- Nichole Gideon offered to provide information and updates from the CoC Board meetings, as well as share feedback or topics of discussion from the LEAC to the CoC Board. Nichole Gideon provided further context around the University of Chicago's HMIS data request, noting that concerns about data sharing led to the request not being approved as originally listed on the CoC Board meeting agenda.

Meeting adjourned at 11:39 a.m.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, February 5, 2025, 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., at the County Administrative North (CAN) Building Multi-Purpose Room 101, 400 W. Civic Center Dr., Santa Ana, CA 92701