



City of La Habra

"A Caring Community"

ADMINISTRATION

110 East La Habra Boulevard
Post Office Box 337
La Habra, CA 90633-0785
Office: (562) 383-4010
Fax: (562) 383-4474

August 15, 2022

Erick L. Larsh
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92701

RE: City of La Habra Response to Orange County Jury Report "How is Orange County Addressing Homelessness?"

In reply to the Orange County Grand Jury issued June 23, 2022, regarding the aforementioned report, the City of La Habra's responses are as follows:

F3 *The County of Orange and cities within Orange County have been inconsistent in collaboration for support of shelters and services, which has resulted in missed opportunities to end homelessness.*

Response **The City of La Habra disagrees with the finding.** The collaboration between the County, the Orange County Continuum of Care (COC) and cities in Orange County has resulted in the creation of shelters and services that better address unsheltered homelessness.

This is especially the case among the 13 cities that comprise the North Service Planning Area (North SPA), which includes the City of La Habra, that have worked collaboratively in recent years to address the issue of homelessness in the region. Some of the North SPA cities have contributed funding toward the construction of the Bridges at Kramer facility in Anaheim, and all have provided funding toward the construction and operation of the Navigation Centers in Buena Park and Placentia. Cities in the North SPA have also, both individually and collectively, funded homeless services and housing opportunities. More specifically, the City of La Habra has grown its local homeless outreach to include two Community Outreach Liaisons in the Community Services Department and a Homeless Liaison team in the La Habra Police Department who collaborate to provide services and outreach to homeless individuals in the City.

F4 *There are insufficient number of rental units available to those exiting emergency shelters, resulting in the majority returning to homelessness when leaving the shelters*

Response **The City of La Habra agrees partially with the finding.** On a Countywide basis, Orange County has oversight of the Coordinated Entry System which streamlines access and referrals to permanent housing opportunities. Often individuals and families experiencing homelessness who are working towards a permanent housing option may experience delays and barriers in securing rental units due to a variety of factors.

Because of the barriers to housing faced by these individuals/families, the County has invested in programs with equipped staff to assist in finding and securing units successfully. These efforts have resulted in housing-focused emergency shelters, increased housing navigation and unit identification programming, and enhanced supportive services to assist those in need to secure permanent housing.

At the local level, the City of La Habra has initiated a pilot program to provide “scattered-site” permanent supportive housing (PSH) in La Habra. Under the program, the City contracts with Mercy House, a recognized leader in PSH housing options, to provide homeless support and PSH case management services. If successful, and if funding is available, the program may be expanded in the future.

R4 *By July 1, 2024, the County of Orange and cities should collaborate to open facilities that can house people with severe and persistent mental illness and addiction issues in a secure setting.*

Response **The recommendation has been implemented.** The 2022 Housing Inventory County identified 2,793 units of PSH. PSH is long-term affordable housing paired with supportive services for people experiencing homelessness who may have other challenges, such as mental illness. PSH is prioritized for individuals experiencing the longest lengths of homelessness in Orange County and with high service needs as a result of the conditions they experience.

Since the County's adoption of the Orange County Housing Funding Strategy in 2018 and through the Orange County Housing Finance Trust (OCHFT), which the City of La Habra participates in, a total of 1,273 PSH units have been completed, are in progress of funding, or under construction. The Housing Funding Strategy has established a target for the development of 2,700 new supportive housing units by 2025. The development of new PSH and affordable housing is an existing and ongoing collaborative effort between the County, the cities, and OCHFT.

R5 *By July 1, 2023, the County of Orange, cities, and COC should collaborate to encourage the development of housing affordable to individuals existing the emergency shelters in Orange County.*

Response **The recommendation has been implemented.** The County, cities, and COC have been working together to encourage the development of affordable housing and PSH that supports the needs of people experiencing homelessness and accessing the system of care.

In 2019, the OCHFT was established to provide a funding tool that could be used to facilitate and encourage the development of affordable and PSH units in Orange County. Twenty-four cities are members of OCHFT, including the City of La Habra, and OCHFT has funded seventeen projects to date.

In addition, COC and the four public housing authorities – Orange County, Santa Ana, Garden Grove and Anaheim - have worked together to support the Emergency Housing Voucher program, which provides more than 1,000 special purpose vouchers for people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness as identified by service providers in Orange County.

The County continues to allocate additional resources to subsidize housing opportunities for households that previously experienced homelessness and/or households experiencing homelessness. Since the adoption of the Housing Funding Strategy, the County has authorized the utilization of more than 300 project-based Housing Choice, Mainstream and Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing vouchers from the Orange County Housing Authority for permanent supportive housing developments throughout Orange County. The County has also allocated more than \$135 million in Mental Health Services Act funding for supportive housing development that is administered at both the state and local levels, and partnered with developers to apply jointly for other available funding sources such as “No Place Like Home,” “Housing for a Healthy California,” and “Housing Accelerator” funds.

Through its partnership with cities, the County has also worked with developers to identify prospective sites that may be eligible for State of California’s Homekey Program funding. To date, more than \$50 million in funding has been awarded to the County of Orange and to developer co-applicants for five motel conversions that provide 252 units of PSH around Orange County.

The County and cities will continue to work closely with COC in various capacities to collaborate and encourage the development of affordable housing and PSH as part of the system of care.

R6. *By December 1, 2022, the County of Orange, cities and COC should collaborate to increase the number of housing opportunities for Transitional Aged Youth.*


Response: **The recommendation has been implemented.** Since June 2020, the County's Office of Care Coordination has worked to improve the homeless service delivery for transitional aged youth experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. The County provides oversight over the Coordinated Entry System and has worked to implement a separate process for transitional aged youth to be prioritized for available housing resources in Orange County. This has resulted in the implementation of a Transitional Aged Youth Registry, composed of youth participants experiencing homelessness in Orange County regardless of their household composition. Transitional aged youth service providers are invited to attend a collaborative case conferencing meeting to discuss individual cases, available housing resources, and dynamic prioritization through the Coordinated Entry System to ensure that the most vulnerable participants are receiving the most appropriate housing referrals.

In addition, the Office of Care Coordination has begun tracking outcomes in the form of transitional aged youth-focused dashboard to understand the housing needs and analyze trends. The Office of Care Coordination and the COC have utilized this information to inform the implementation of housing resources and the solicitation of new housing resources specifically designed to meet the needs of the transitional aged youth experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness in Orange County.

The Office of Care Coordination most recently applied for the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program, a funding opportunity from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) designed to reduce the number of transitional aged youths experiencing homelessness through a coordinated community approach.

Lastly, the State of California's Homeless, Housing Assistance and Prevention Program, which provides funding to the County, cities, and COC, requires recipient jurisdictions to allocate a minimum percentage of the funding to create housing opportunities and resources for transitional aged youth. This focused funding resource has proven helpful in the planning and design of a homeless service system that meets the needs of transitional aged youth.

We thank you for this opportunity to respond. In the event you have questions, please contact me at 562-383-4010.


Jose Medrano
Mayor

cc: La Habra City Council
Jim Sadro, City Manager
Adam Foster, Chief of Police
Kelly Fujio, Director of Community Services
Susan Kim, Director of Community and Economic Development