



**South Bay Coalition to End Homelessness
General Meeting Minutes
for February 24, 2021
held via Zoom teleconference**

Attendees: This list was unavailable.

Welcome. SBCEH co-chairs Mark Silverbush and Nancy Wilcox opened the meeting at 10:04 am. Because the meeting was held via video conference, our traditional round of introductions was not made.

Advocacy. SBCEH Advocacy Chair Paul Stansbury reported: (1) at the national level, we are following the National Low Income Housing Coalition's advocacy on the upcoming COVID Relief bill for housing and rental assistance; and (2) at the state level, we are watching AB816 bill authored by David Chu that addresses long-term solutions to homelessness and is endorsed by Darrell Steinberg (mayor of Sacramento and co-chair of state's Council of Regional Homelessness policy council). Locally, Measure J, which is funded by 10% of the unrestricted County's general funds, has formed five committees that are making spending recommendations to the Alternatives To Incarceration Advisory Board. The committees are meeting weekly over a 5-week period to get community inputs. Everyone is welcome to join these.

Special Topic: Update on the South Bay's Major Homelessness Programs. Guest speakers Shari Weaver with Harbor Interfaith Services (HIS), Courtney Reed with PATH, and Grace Farwell with the South Bay Cities Council of Governments (SBCCOG), gave a summary of the publicly funded programs in operation throughout Service Planning Area (SPA) 8/South Bay.

- Coordinated Entry System (CES): Shari reported that the COVID response was targeting vulnerable people ages 65 and older, or who had an underlying health condition. They are being categorized with "Tier 1" assessments and given priority to resources. Measure H has been financially impacted since sales tax revenues were down because of COVID. Supplemental funding has come in the form of COVID relief funds, along with special state homelessness funding.

On the CES-Family system, she said many SPAs have already spent down their funds for motel vouchers, which are used as crisis housing because of the lack of interim housing sites. SPA 8 has fortunately not been affected. When asked if the CES-Families has a wait list, Shari replied they do not have one and families are encouraged to go through a CES entry point such as its San Pedro Access Center.

- Prevention and "Problem Solving" Interventions: Fewer people are coming in for homelessness prevention assistance this year because of the eviction moratorium that is still in place. Shari and Courtney are concerned what will happen once these expire.

Grace reviewed the SBCCOG's "Home Share" pilot program (this was highlighted in our September 2020 meeting). It does not include a mitigation fund in case the match of renter to home provider does not work out.

There is "problem solving" funding available through both Harbor Interfaith and PATH to prevent individuals and families from falling into homelessness.

- Street Outreach: Courtney explained that some of the outreach staff were not always available because they had to be COVID-quarantined. PATH responds to LA-HOP.org and law enforcement requests, and she encouraged everyone to use LA-HOP.org to report someone experiencing homelessness. Once a relationship with the outreach worker has been established, the participant is offered referrals to the resources they need. This includes for shelter, housing, benefits through DPSS, etc.

Shari informed us that the new SPA 8 Outreach Coordinator is Ari Hamilton, formerly the regional data coordinator.

Street outreach have been engaged at encampments throughout the South Bay, but especially at the ones located along the freeways to comply with Judge Carter's ruling that they be a top priority. There have been fewer referrals for interim housing through street outreach because it is challenging to find the people once the referrals have been made. Providing transportation during COVID has also been a challenge.

COVID vaccines for the unhoused are starting to be given to those meeting the state's eligibility, i.e., by age and health condition. Many participants staying at interim housing sites (include the Project Room Key in San Pedro) have received the vaccine. DHS provided education on the importance and safety of them through a Jeopardy-style game. Shelter program staff has also been able to get their shots.

- Interim Shelter: Shari provided an overview of SPA 8's publicly funded shelters. HIS opened four sites this past 12 months for individuals: 40-beds at a former DPH building in San Pedro (reduced to 32 because of COVID social distancing rules); City of LA's A Bridge Home (ABH) 100-bed site in San Pedro (reduced to 75 beds); 15 unit pallet shelter in Redondo; and a Project Roomkey site that was operational for a planned 4-month period. US Vets in Long Beach is operating the ABH 100-bed site in Wilmington (reduced to 75 beds). PATH operated a PRK site in Lawndale. Just one year ago, SPA 8 had only 5 publicly funded beds.

Two Safe Parking programs are set to open on March 1st: 30 slot program at Harbor Gateway's "Hamilton" site (RV's welcomed), and another program for 25 vehicles at a San Pedro site. Families are welcome at both locations but Shari said they would be referred to the CES-Families program. They can also contact "211," especially over the weekend, and they may be able to provide motel vouchers for the families. Grace reported there was limited SBCCOG funding available for a South Bay city to open a Safe Parking program. The City of Hawthorne's City Council is considering this, with a Caltrans site as a possible location.

A 75-unit pallet shelter is being developed across from Harbor College. It will provide shelter for people at the Lomita/McCoy encampment and for students attending this college.

All of the sites will be filled through CES referrals.

- Permanent Housing: Courtney explained there is Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) funds for people who have an income or are willing to seek employment. RRH provides a “progressive rental assistance” approach, first covering 100% of the rent and then decreasing it as the person is able to take on more of the rent responsibilities. There is also “recovery rehousing” funding for COVID vulnerable people, such as those who are in a PRK site. The “Bridge to Subsidy” program provides a modest monthly stipend over 12-18 months for people on recovery RRH who are waiting for another longer-term rental subsidy.

Shari mentioned LAHSA is spearheading a letter to President Biden, co-signed by several continua of cares across the country, to advocate for more affordable housing funding.

Nancy reported that at a recent County Homeless Deputies meeting, it was said that there were few RRH placements being made across the county. Shari clarified this was not the case in SPA 8 and their placement numbers had not diminished.

- South Bay City Engagement: Grace gave an overview of the City of Redondo Beach’s “Homeless Court” pilot, being funded by the SBCCOG with Measure H funds.

Zulma Gent with the City of Torrance mentioned they had approached Supervisor Hahn about duplicating this program in Torrance. The City now has a dedicated outreach worked staffed by Harbor Interfaith who started on February 1. She has hit the ground running, working with the Torrance Police Department.

Nancy gave a report on the City of Hawthorne, provided by Jesse Ramirez of St. Margaret’s Center. He has connected with 162 people in need in less than one year since he started. He has also developed a Community Resource Guide.

- Other Programs: Grace invited everyone to join the SBCCOG’s annual General Assembly. This free event being held on March 18th will cover many topics including homelessness in a “Ted talk” online format.

Co-Chairs’ Report. Nancy mentioned the ongoing efforts to revamp LAHSA’s governance structure. Three independent efforts are in the works by LAHSA, County of LA, and the City of LA, to make recommendations to change it. The LAHSA report was just released.

Member Announcements.

- Zulma said the City of Torrance is offering emergency rental assistance via a lottery because of the overwhelming response to this program. Information is available on the city’s website.
- Jennifer Pesavento of SoCal Regional Occupational Center said classes are starting in April in these areas; welding, Adobe Illustrator, medical assistants, emergency first responder online class; new general electrician modules; pharmacy tech; sterilization processing distribution technician distribution test (Torrance Memorial requested this training because of the high need, with internships readily available).

The meeting was adjourned at 11:32 am.

Respectfully submitted by Nancy Wilcox.