



City of Culver City

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Staff Report

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Item #: C-14.

CC - Approval of the 2018 Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count Opt-In Memorandum of Understanding

Meeting Date: January 8, 2018

Contact Person/Dept: Tevis Barnes (CDD, Housing Division)

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Fiscal Impact: Yes ☐ No ☒

General Fund: Yes ☐ No ☒

Public Hearing: ☐ **Action Item:** ☒ **Attachments:** ☒

Commission Action Required: Yes ☐ No ☒ **Date:**

Public Notification: (E-Mail) Meetings and Agendas - City Council (01/02/2018); Committee on Homelessness (12/05/17); St. Joseph Center (12/05/17); and Upward Bound House (12/05/17).

Department Approval: Sol Blumenfeld, Community Development Director (12/21/17)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the City Council approve the 2018 Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count (Count) Opt-In Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

BACKGROUND:

Homelessness has become an epidemic in the County of Los Angeles. Over 57,000 homeless reside on the streets of Los Angeles County. Of this number, over 5,000 homeless reside on the streets and other locations not meant for human habitation on the Westside of Los Angeles. From the 2017 Homeless Count, 227 people were found experiencing homelessness in Culver City, and this number is an increase of 105 from the 2016 Count where 122 homeless were enumerated and, for the first time since the start of the homeless census, an unsheltered family of four was identified. “Unsheltered” is defined as living on the street or other location not meant for human habitation.

On November 28, 2016, the City Council adopted a resolution joining the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors in identifying homelessness as a priority issue for the region. This resolution affirmed

that all members of the Culver City community should have their basic human needs met with services provided in a manner that maintains human dignity and respect. Through the resolution to combat homelessness, the City Council will explore:

- Contributing funding toward the cost of rapid re-housing for homeless Culver City residents;
- Dedicating federal housing subsidies to permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless individuals;
- Ensuring that law enforcement and other first responders effectively engage homeless families and individuals; and
- Using land use policies to maximize the availability of homeless and affordable housing.

Annually (since 2015), LAHSA conducts a Homeless Count to better understand what homelessness looks like throughout Los Angeles City and County. The Count incorporates a street count, shelter/institution count, and homeless demographic survey. The street count is a point-in-time census that is conducted in late January between the hours of 8pm and 2am. The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines homelessness is not having a regular fixed nighttime residence or sleeping in places not meant for human habitation. The Count enables LAHSA and local governments to account for the number of homeless individuals within its jurisdiction and understand the scope of homelessness. Information from the Count is essential in assisting jurisdictions in requests for funding.

The 2018 Count will start Tuesday, January 23, 2018 in the San Gabriel and San Fernando Valleys. **The West Los Angeles and South Bay/Harbor Count will be conducted Wednesday, January 24, 2018.** The Metro, South Los Angeles and Antelope Valley Counts will be conducted on Thursday, January 25, 2018.

DISCUSSION:

To participate in the 2018 Count, jurisdictions must Opt-In or Opt-Out. Opt-In means the City of Culver City (City) will participate in and have the opportunity to get a full enumeration of the entire city by counting all 9 census tracts. In exchange for gaining a full enumeration, the City will be responsible for recruiting volunteers, and providing a deployment site (The Culver City Senior Center has served as the deployment center during past homeless counts). Additionally, it means entering into a MOU with LAHSA and the City including indemnification and insurance requirements. Unlike previous years, the current MOU is for a three year period.

To further the intent of resolution to combat homelessness approved by City Council on November 28, 2016, since 2009 the City has participated in the Count and executed an Opt-In MOU with LAHSA. There are no fees or charges required to participate, only in-kind resources of volunteers and a designated command center for volunteer deployment and distribution of resource materials. LAHSA will provide all necessary presentation materials and a volunteer training.

The City Attorney's Office has reviewed the Opt-In MOU and noted the following:

1. The Indemnity and Waiver of Liability Releases which are included in the MOU only protects LAHSA. To address this concern, the City Attorney created a Culver City Waiver of Liability Release for both youth and adult volunteers. City staff obtained approval from LAHSA to allow the use of a Culver City Indemnity and Waiver instead of the LAHSA Indemnity and Waiver. Volunteers under the age of 18 are not allowed to participate in the street count, but can assist at the deployment center. Persons younger than 18 years of age will not be allowed to assist past midnight unless accompanied by a parent/guardian. In all past Counts, volunteers were required to executed a release prior to participating in the Count.
2. Participation in this Count requires the City to agree not to conduct any sweeps of homeless persons for the week prior to or on the date of the homeless count. The Housing Division will coordinate with the Culver City Police Department (CCPD) and the Code Enforcement Division to make sure no sweeps or clean-up of homeless encampments occur prior to the Count. Chief Bixby was informed and agreed that no such sweeps will occur. Historically and with this Count the CCPD will both increase patrols to protect volunteers and assist as necessary.
3. The MOU requires that the City provide refreshments the day of the Count. Under a separate agenda item this evening, it is recommended that the City Council authorize the Committee on Homelessness to solicit volunteer enumerators and donations for the 2018 Count. The Committee on Homelessness will solicit refreshments from the local business community. During previous Counts, the Committee on Homelessness was essential to coordinating the Counts and enlisted over 200 volunteer enumerators and solicited refreshments from various Culver City businesses such as Copenhagen Bakery, Tito's Taco, Tub's Fine Chili, the West Basin Water District, Seasoned Greetings, Starbuck Coffee and Sorrento Market.
4. The City will not be able to release or publish any of the Count's results without first obtaining written approval from LAHSA for such release or publication. LAHSA's goal is not to prevent or discourage Opt-In participation, but rather to avoid confusion resulting from public releases of conflicting and/or incomplete data regarding the 2018 Homeless Count.

LAHSA plans to release the Opt-In partner reports as soon as they are available. LAHSA will distribute the preliminary reports to each respective jurisdiction for verification and review. After this review period LAHSA will release the final reports to each jurisdiction, upon which each jurisdiction will be free to publish and/or distribute the reports at their discretion without needing specific approval from LAHSA. Prior to the release of the final Opt-In reports, LAHSA discourages public release and/or publication of preliminary data without prior written approval from LAHSA, though confidential internal communications of preliminary estimates for internal planning purposes or responses to verbal questions regarding the Count result may be permitted so long as such communications include disclaimers/annotations that the contained information is preliminary, confidential and not for public release.

In the event that the City decides to Opt-Out after execution of the MOU, the City must notify LAHSA in writing and be subject to the Opt-Out restrictions. The Opt-Out restrictions require the City to still provide the deployment site and volunteers.

FISCAL ANALYSIS:

There is no impact to the City's General Fund or the CCHA budget.

ATTACHMENTS:

- 1) 2018 Homeless Count Opt-In MOU with the LAHSA
- 2) Waiver of Liability Releases (Adult and Youth)
- 3) 2015, 2016 and 2017 Homeless Count Results

MOTION:

That the City Council:

- 1) Approve the 2018 Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count Opt-In Memorandum of Understanding, and;
- 2) Authorize the City Attorney to review/prepare the necessary documents; and
- 3) Authorize the City Manager to execute such documents on behalf of the City.