

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Lived Experience Advisory Board - LAHSA  
**Date Submitted:** 02/06/2023 04:54 PM  
**Council File No:** 19-1020  
**Comments for Public Posting:** On behalf of the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority's (LAHSA) Lived Experience Advisory Board (LEAB), we write in support of CF 19-1020, the establishment of a Commission on Lived Experience with Homelessness for the City of Los Angeles.

January 30, 2023

The Honorable Nithya Raman  
Chair, Homelessness and Housing Committee  
Los Angeles City Council  
200 N Spring Street, Suite 425  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

**RE: SUPPORT: CF 19-1020 – Commission on Lived Experience with Homelessness**

Dear Chair Raman,

On behalf of the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority's (LAHSA) Lived Experience Advisory Board (LEAB), we write in support of CF 19-1020, the establishment of a Commission on Lived Experience with Homelessness for the City of Los Angeles.

LAHSA is a joint-powers authority of the City and County of Los Angeles and serves as the lead agency in the Los Angeles Continuum of Care (LA CoC). LAHSA is responsible for funding a significant portion of the housing and supportive services for individuals and families experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles County. LEAB is a group of individuals from various regions of Los Angeles County who represent and provide the lived experience of homelessness perspective for LAHSA. LEAB provides expertise on how to navigate the homeless services system, as well as on best practices and policies for LAHSA to use. LAHSA and LEAB's mission is to ensure that everyone in the LA CoC has access to safe and stable housing.

The Greater LA Homeless Count estimates, on any given night, 41,980 people are experiencing homelessness in the City of Los Angeles in 2022. The homelessness crisis on our streets has impacted every council district in the city. However, as the largest city in the state and second largest in the country with over 4 million residents, the City of Los Angeles currently does not have a commission for people with lived experiences (PWLE). Cities such as Austin, Texas and Vancouver, Canada have commissions for PWLE providing policy guidance, perspective, and representation to an often-silenced unhoused community.

As the Los Angeles City Council is actively introducing policy and budgetary motions to eradicate adversities faced by unhoused Angelenos, the City has invested more than \$1 billion in the 2022-2023 Fiscal Year budget towards homelessness. A request for bids is also underway to transfer outreach services for unsheltered persons experiencing homelessness under the Homeless Outreach Framework (CF 21-0329). With the recent inauguration of Mayor Karen Bass, a state of emergency was declared on homelessness. Initiatives such as "Inside Safe", focusing on immediate housing placements, showcase a renewal of dedication towards alleviating homelessness with the new administration. The City of LA's increasing involvement in homeless services without a commission for PWLE leaves an empty seat at the table to inform, advise, and collaborate.

LAHSA's LEAB wholeheartedly supports the establishment of a Commission on Lived Experience with Homelessness for the City of Los Angeles. The Commission on Lived Experience with Homelessness provides an inclusionary platform for PWLE to share their journey, battles, and navigation of the Los Angeles homeless services system that impact nearly 42,000 unsheltered Angelenos. Similar to many

LEAB members, many PWLE currently work in the homeless and housing services system. PWLE add a unique value to the system, having both perspectives of formerly experiencing homelessness and working to end homelessness.

Federal agencies and national organizations such as the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the National Alliance to End Homelessness emphasize the importance of providing accessible and purposeful opportunities for PWLE to shape all levels of planning and implementation for homeless services, policies, and programs. Many service providers throughout the region also have a PWLE advisory board.

LAHSA's efforts of building LEAB began in 2016 with a focus group identifying the structure of an advisory board and its involvements with the joint-powers authority. The first LEAB meeting occurred in September of 2018 and LEAB continued meeting throughout COVID and was involved in initiatives such as Project Roomkey. LEAB's current responsibilities involve advocating on behalf of LAHSA, planning workshops and summits, providing feedback on policies, state and federal rule changes, programs, finetuning trauma-informed language, and engaging with external stakeholders. Gloria Johnson, a member of LEAB, shares:

*"Being a LEAB member strengthens my advocacy in the war to end homelessness in LA and beyond."*

We believe voices like Gloria and bodies like LEAB, who are invaluable to LAHSA, deserve a seat at the table when advising the City of Los Angeles on decisions engaging populations experiencing homelessness.

Lived experiences on homelessness differ for every individual. Each PWLE has a different need and has faced varying hardships of trauma and discrimination. Expanding opportunities for PWLE through a citywide commission greatly diversifies input and reflects the diversity of perspectives and experiences that exist in our population. With over 300,000 constituents in every council district, perspectives from individuals with lived experiences from every corner of Los Angeles is necessary to properly address homelessness.

LEAB understands the concerns made that a PWLE commission may be duplicative of our advisory body role. Often decisions made at City Council and its' committees impacting homelessness are not discussed with LAHSA or with LEAB. As CoC's, states, and other large municipal bodies transition towards inclusionary commissions with PWLE, we believe this is the opportunity for the City of LA to continue leading in inclusionary policies with the establishment of this commission. Additional voices sharing and advising through their experience on homelessness does not hinder the role of LEAB, rather enhances the role of best practices and trauma-informed care for all.

LEAB appreciates the effort towards creating an advisory body on lived experiences. LEAB also kindly suggests that PWLE should be appointed to decision-making positions. The effort to end homelessness - improves with inclusion of PWLE due to the experience they bring that some decision makers may not have. Homelessness touches every sector including the environment, climate, criminal justice, housing, and social welfare. Decisions are often made without including PWLE, who can be the most directly impacted by these decisions. LEAB also suggests ensuring feedback mechanisms and proper follow-up process is built into the procedures of the PWLE commission, safeguarding lived experiences in its role.

LEAB greatly appreciates the opportunity to share our support for CF 19-1020, the Commission on Lived Experience with Homelessness, with members of the LA City Council. LEAB cannot undervalue the

historic opportunity to provide PWLE equitable representation in the decision-making process impacting the unhoused community. We look forward to working more collaboratively in the future on this and other efforts.

Sincerely,

  
[Albert palacio \(Jan 25, 2023 18:12 PST\)](#)

Albert "Al" Palacio  
Lived Experience Advisory Board Co-Chair

  
[Pamela Crenshaw \(Jan 26, 2023 09:44 PST\)](#)

Pamela Crenshaw  
Lived Experience Advisory Board Secretary

  
[Debra Gatlin \(Jan 26, 2023 13:22 PST\)](#)

Debra Gatlin  
Lived Experience Advisory Board Member

  
[Eric Lee Gray \(Jan 26, 2023 20:22 PST\)](#)

Eric Gray  
Lived Experience Advisory Board Member



Gwendolyn Tolbert  
Lived Experience Advisory Board Member

  
[Martin Holguin \(Jan 27, 2023 18:13 PST\)](#)

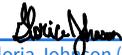
Martin Holguin  
Lived Experience Advisory Board Member

  
[orlando ward \(Jan 27, 2023 10:19 PST\)](#)

Orlando Ward  
Lived Experience Advisory Board Member



Zue Villareal  
Lived Experience Advisory Board Co-Chair

  
[Gloria Johnson \(Jan 26, 2023 12:50 PST\)](#)

Gloria Johnson  
Lived Experience Advisory Board Treasurer

  
[Shalonda Battee \(Jan 26, 2023 13:24 PST\)](#)

Shalonda Battee  
Lived Experience Advisory Board Member

  
[Shawn E Pleasants \(Jan 26, 2023 17:12 PST\)](#)

Shawn Pleasants  
Lived Experience Advisory Board Member

  
[Theodore Patton \(Jan 30, 2023 15:54 PST\)](#)

Theodore Patton  
Lived Experience Advisory Board Member

  
[KiaD \(Jan 30, 2023 15:57 PST\)](#)

Tkeyah "Kia" Dupclay  
Lived Experience Advisory Board Member



Tiffany Duvernay-Smith  
Advisory Group Coordinator