

Communication from Public

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Comments for Public Posting: The Downtown Women's Center is the only agency in Skid Row exclusively dedicated to serving women experiencing or with histories of homelessness. Each year, we support 5,400 women on their pathways out of homelessness, offering interim and permanent housing, workforce development, mental health care, and support for basic needs. The covid-19 pandemic brought to light the systemic gender and racial inequities in the workforce. Women, and particularly women of color, entered the pandemic worse off economically, thanks to gender pay gaps and occupational segregation. Prior to the pandemic, women in the state were employed at a rate 20% lower than men, and women of color continue to see lower rates of employment than white women. In the early months of the pandemic, 80% of job loss occurred in fields dominated by women, such as retail, education, hospitality, healthcare, and government. These workforce disparities have resulted in significant housing insecurity among women, as female-headed households are also more likely to be rent-burdened. We cannot end homelessness without addressing the factors that cause people to lose their housing in the first place. For these reasons, the Downtown Women's Center supports the passage of agenda items 12 and 13, permanently protecting vulnerable tenants from eviction for non-payment of rent less than one month and offering support for tenants forced to relocate due to increases in rent.