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MEMO

To: The Honorable Members of the Los Angeles City Council

From: Sophia Rice, Deputy Chief Program Officer Sophia Rice (Aug 13, 2026 11:55:53 PDT)

Date: August 13, 2026

CC: Paul Rubenstein, Chief of Staff

Re: **Report on LAHSA Housing Navigation and HET System Navigator Scope of Work (Council File 23-1182-S3)**

This memorandum is submitted in response to CF 23-1182-S3, approved by the Los Angeles City Council (Council) on February 23, 2024. The motion requests the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) to report on existing Housing Navigation (HN) services in the City-funded Interim Housing (IH) system, to provide recommendations on how to improve the provision of HN, to explain the criteria for deployment of HN, and to document the average length of time for a person experiencing homelessness to move from outreach to housing placement with the help of HN. The motion also requests LAHSA to set program goals and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for HN, so this report expands on expectations for HN providers.

HOUSING NAVIGATION – BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

The Housing Navigation (HN) Program[1] bridges a critical gap in services in the Los Angeles Continuum of Care (CoC) by providing supportive services with the goal of helping people experiencing homelessness identify, apply for, secure, and move into affordable permanent housing resources within 120 days of enrollment in HN. Please note that Housing Navigators are not involved in matching households to Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH).

The Housing Navigation program is a voluntary supportive service that works as an integral component of the Coordinated Entry System (CES). In coordination with other LAHSA-funded system components like IH and Time Limited Subsidies (TLS), HN helps ensure consistent approaches for access to and delivery of homeless services within the CoC.

Housing Navigation begins upon receiving a referral and usually ends once a participant has moved into PH. For optimal service delivery, programs are expected to maintain a ratio of approximately 1 case manager for every 20 adult participants. If a HN program loses staff in such a way as to affect client-to-staff ratios, the program must inform LAHSA and develop an acceptable plan for a temporary increase in caseload ratios. In general, programs are given 3 months to replace lost staff or lower their caseloads back to the regular contracted level.

[1] https://www.lahsa.org/news?article=897-lahsa-housing-navigation-programs

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HN programs are funded for the following services[2]:

1. *Intake and Enrollment* – ensures all appropriate and necessary documents, including those for income and program eligibility, are entered into the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)
2. *Housing Search and Supportive Services* – extends support through an individualized staff-to-participant relationship, including but not limited to:
    a. Developing a Housing Search Plan to identify appropriate housing for each participant's needs and preferences[3]
    b. Gathering documentation required for leasing, such as verification of identity, income, or disability status
    c. Assessing the participant's barriers to securing housing, which could include a credit check or background check
    d. Assessing the participant's household income, rent contribution potential, and subsidies, as well as reasonable housing options available within their budget
    e. Advocating with property owners to accept participants' housing applications
    f. Reviewing and explaining terms of proposed leases
3. *Limited Financial Assistance Toward Move-In Expenses*
    a. All participants shall receive transportation to and from unit viewings and lease signings as well as help with fees associated with housing applications/documentation
    b. Secondary financial assistance for security deposits, landlord incentives, furniture, or moving costs is limited to participants who cannot access support through other sources.
4. *Housing Location*: Housing Navigators and HN Programs are expected to
    a. Identify and build relationships with housing resources and owners
    b. Identify additional available housing units

This comprehensive approach allows people experiencing homelessness to have a smooth transition to Time Limited Subsidies or other PH resources.

HOUSING NAVIGATION IN THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES

In years prior to FY 2026-27, housing navigation programs were assigned to specific City IH sites, which was not necessarily the most efficient approach, nor was it simple to understand for stakeholders and those in need of this service. To solve this going forward, and to reduce costs, starting in FY2026-27, HN slots will instead be assigned by region to ensure full City coverage and access.

For Fiscal Year (FY) 2026-27, LAHSA-funded programs in the City of Los Angeles will have a total of 460 HN slots assigned. This is a slight increase in comparison with FY 2025-26, when there were 440 slots. A slot is a holding place for a participant that a service provider can use multiple times throughout the course of the year as participants enter and exit from the program.

[2] https://www.lahsa.org/documents?id=9117-fy-25-26-housing-navigation-srs
[3] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5aMN90_uvN8&list=PLQshUJFAYORvPyzrFr0oQIz0PtFyQ3WeM

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Table 1 shows the list of HN Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staffing and HN Slots for FY 2025-26 and 2026-27, by Council District (CD). The HN slots in Table 1 are specifically for the City and will be only utilized for City-funded programs. The number of FTEs and HN slots were determined by the results of the annual Point In Time Count[4].

TABLE 1: Housing Navigation Slots *(As of May 11, 2026)*

		FY 2026-27		FY 2025-26	
Provider	**CD**	**Provider FTEs for Proposed Slots**	**Proposed Slots**	**FTEs for Current Slots**	**Current Slots**
Hope of the Valley Rescue Mission	2, 3, 6, 7, 12	2	40	2	100
LA Family Housing	2, 3, 6, 7, 12	3	60	0	0
United States Veterans Initiative	1, 4, 10, 13, 14	3	60	2	200
The People Concern	1, 4, 10, 13, 14	5	100	0	0
The People Concern	5, 11	1	20	1	20
St. Joseph Center	5, 11	1	20	1	20
VOA	8, 9, 10, 15	2	40	0	0
St. Joseph Center	8, 9, 10, 15	2	40	0	0
PATH	15	2	40	1	40
United States Veterans Initiative	15	2	40	0	60
		23	**460**	**7**	**440**

Households identified from City-funded Interim Housing programs may be referred either through a LAHSA-managed matching process, in which case LAHSA identifies and refers eligible households to available HN slots, or through direct referrals submitted by IH providers on behalf of eligible households.

After the assigned housing navigator enrolls the new participant, they complete a Housing Search Plan (HSP) in HMIS within three days of enrollment (if the HSP has not been completed already by a member). Staff are encouraged to complete HSPs with participants prior to HN enrollment to expedite the housing search process. The HSP helps guide the conversation between the participant and housing navigator to

[4] https://count.lahsa.org/

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inform how the housing search will proceed[5]. For example, it includes information about the participant's geographic preferences, including areas where they cannot live due to safety concerns, which is especially relevant for people who have experienced intimate partner violence or gang violence. All a participant's relevant information is notated in the plan, such as whether they have pets, require accommodation due to a disability, are willing to live with a housemate, as well as details of their rental history and income.

The final step of the plan is outlining goals, such as applying for a certain number of units each week, applying for public benefits, and any other goals relevant to the participant's pathway to permanent housing. The housing navigator and participant agree on how often to meet, and the housing navigator or both parties begin searching for units that meet the participant's needs. Participant choice is important to their future housing stability. If participants are pushed to accept housing that does not meet their needs or makes them feel unsafe, it is less likely they will retain that housing over time.

HOUSING NAVIGATION SYSTEM PERFORMANCE

There are significant barriers to securing permanent housing for participants, making housing navigators an especially valuable asset to the system. The overall vacancy rate in Los Angeles County is currently 5.5%[6]. In market data analysis for 2025, Eastern Los Angeles County was found to have a 95.9% occupancy rate, while Western Los Angeles County held a 92.3% occupancy rate, with the average number of prospective renters for each vacant unit being 15 and 9 respectively[7]. This leaves HN participants, who often lack consistent rental and income history, at a significant disadvantage. Housing navigators fill this need by advocating their participants as potential tenants in comparison with applicants who have more consistent rental history, earn higher incomes, and do not carry the stigma of having experienced homelessness. With these barriers in mind, the primary goal of the HN program is to help participants sign a lease and move into PH within 120 days of enrollment and exits to PH destinations[8].

Housing Navigation Program Key Performance Indicators

LAHSA has aligned its system components' Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for FY 2025-26 with a focus on improving system throughput. For HN, the deliverables and Key Performance Indicators are as follows[9]:

1. Data Quality Score of 95% or higher
2. 95% of contracted slots will be utilized throughout the contract period
3. 95% of participants will have a Housing Search Plan completed within 3 days of enrollment, for those whose HN referral didn't include that information

[5] https://www.lahsa.org/documents?id=8138-tls-housing-search-plan.pdf
[6] https://www2.naicapital.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/LA-Mulifamily-Market-Outlook-Q4_2025.pdf
[7] https://www.rentcafe.com/blog/rental-market/market-snapshots/most-competitive-rental-markets-this-year/
[8] https://www.lahsa.org/data-refresh/home/datadashboard?id=61
[9] https://www.lahsa.org/documents?id=9117-fy-25-26-housing-navigation-srs

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4. 95% of participants will have at least 1 weekly unit viewing starting 14 days after enrollment, until approved for a unit
5. 60% of participants will move into permanent housing within 120 days of enrollment
6. 75% of participants will exit to permanent housing destinations
7. 95% of participants invited to apply to Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) opportunities while enrolled in this program will complete the PSH housing application within 7 days of match notification or will decline within 2 days of match notification

System Key Performance Indicators

LAHSA tracks the average length of time it takes people experiencing homelessness to move through each system component and publishes System KPI Quarter Overviews online on the Homeless Count & System Key Performance Indicator Dashboard. In Q2 of FY 2025-2026, it took an average of 82 days to move from Street Outreach to IH, and an average of 266 days to move from IH to PH[10].

CONCLUSION

Housing Navigation is a critical resource for participants in IH sites in the City of Los Angeles, but access to slots is highly dependent on staffing and resources. LAHSA's changes to the HN program, including offering HN as a general City-wide option, rather than as a location-based resource at specific IH sites, will ensure that FY 2026-27 slots are utilized more effectively. Increased slots and more efficient service delivery will lend a helping hand to participants seeking permanent housing in the competitive Los Angeles market. Overall, these changes are expected to improve the provision of HN services for all participants. Housing Navigation is integral to system throughput, and LAHSA continues to support providers and lead creative solutions to housing shortage challenges to ensure efficiency in bringing people indoors and into Permanent Housing.

[10] https://www.lahsa.org/documents?id=9784-adult-system-fy25-26-q2-skpi-quarter-overview.pdf