



Fwd: Public Comment: \$5M Long Covid Line-Item to Prevent \$3B in Losses (CF 25-0600)

1 message

Office of the City Clerk <cityclerk@lacity.org>
To: City Clerk Council and Public Services <clerk.cps@lacity.org>

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From: 'Laura Soto' via Clerk - CityClerk <cityclerk@lacity.org>

Date: Mon, Sep 15, 2025 at 8:36 PM

Subject: Public Comment: \$5M Long Covid Line-Item to Prevent \$3B in Losses (CF 25-0600)

To: <katy.yaroslavsky@lacity.org>, <CityClerk@lacity.org>, <Clerk.BudgetandFinanceCommittee@lacity.org>

Cc: <Councilmember.Blumenfield@lacity.org>, <heather.hutt@lacity.org>, <councilmember.mcosker@lacity.org>, <councilmember.hernandez@lacity.org>, <DOD.Contact@lacity.org>, <controller.mejia@lacity.org>

Dear Budget and Finance Committee Members,

Please accept this email as my official public comment for inclusion in the record for Council File 25-0600 regarding the Fiscal Year 2025–26 City of Los Angeles Budget.

In the face of a \$1 billion budget shortfall, it is essential to act strategically. I urge you to reverse the proposed \$1.075 million cut to the Department on Disability and to allocate a \$5 million Long Covid Response line-item to fund interdepartmental efforts (anchored by the Department on Disability) as a critical fiscal stabilization and cost-containment measure.

Key facts:

- \$1.075 million cut to the Department on Disability proposed
- \$5 million requested dedicated for Long Covid case management, benefits navigation, public outreach, prevention, and more
- \$3 billion in projected five-year economic losses if Long Covid is ignored¹
- \$5 million investment now is less than 0.2% of projected losses over the next five years
- 268,000 Angelenos living with Long Covid (and growing)²
- Over 20× the number impacted when the City first funded AIDS services³

The City of Los Angeles already has the infrastructure to carry this reasonable solution. The \$5 million can be applied through existing departments already serving disabled, high-risk, and under-resourced Angelenos:

- Department on Disability – Create a Long Covid Services Coordinator modeled on the AIDS Coordinator's Office to support education, benefits navigation, durable medical equipment access, and disability inclusion, especially for multiply marginalized residents.
- General City Purposes Fund – Support multilingual, culturally relevant public health campaigns and flexible mini-grants for Long Covid awareness, care navigation, and peer-informed support rooted in trusted organizations.
- Community Investment for Families Department (CIFD) – Expand programs for families facing housing instability, caregiving strain, and pediatric Long Covid through CIFD's existing resilience and early childhood initiatives.
- Civil + Human Rights and Equity Department (LA Civil Rights) – Include Long Covid in anti-discrimination enforcement and equity monitoring. Ensure the City upholds disability rights and reduces racial, economic, and language-based barriers to care.
- Emergency Management Department – Ensure emergency planning includes homebound and chronically ill residents,

with continuity of care, accessible alerts, and targeted resource delivery during public health or climate events.

- Economic and Workforce Development Department (EWDD) – Launch a workforce reintegration initiative for Long Covid, offering job protections, retraining, and income recovery; modeled on LA RISE and focused on communities hardest hit by employment loss.

By Harvard economists estimations, Long Covid will cost Los Angeles over \$3 billion in five years¹. Globally, Long Covid is already costing more than \$1 trillion per year⁴, and U.S. losses exceeded \$152.6 billion in 2024 alone⁵. Without intervention, these costs will continue to rise and directly undermine the City's tax base and services.

For comparison, during the AIDS crisis, Los Angeles began allocating dedicated funding in 1987, and by 1990 independently invested from its general fund; even though annual AIDS diagnoses in the County peaked at roughly 4,000 cases in 1992. Today, over 267,000 adults in Los Angeles are living with Long Covid, which is more than twenty times the peak impact of AIDS. Targeted investment at scale is again urgently needed.

A \$5 million starter investment today would stabilize residents, reverse critical service cuts, prevent escalating liabilities, and position Los Angeles to leverage future State and Federal pandemic recovery funds. This small, targeted investment today is a cost-saving, revenue-protecting action for the City's future. It strengthens our workforce, protects public health infrastructure, and positions Los Angeles to leverage additional State and Federal recovery funding. And it's the right thing to do.

Investing now is responsible governance. Thank you for your leadership and for considering this critical measure.

Respectfully,
Ele Calderón
90029

References:

¹ Cutler, D. (2022). The Economic Impact of Long Covid. Harvard Kennedy School.

² CDC Household Pulse Survey. (September 2024). Long Covid Prevalence Estimates.

³ Los Angeles Times. (1990). City Council Approves Funds for AIDS Prevention.

⁴ Nature Medicine. (2024). Global Economic Cost of Long Covid Estimated at \$1 Trillion Annually.

⁵ Economist Impact. (2024). Incomplete Picture: Understanding the Burden of Long Covid.