

**ORANGE COUNTY CONTINUUM OF CARE
LIVED EXPERIENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Wednesday, May 7, 2025

10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Location:

**County Administration North (CAN) Building
Multipurpose Rooms 103/105
400 W. Civic Center Dr., Santa Ana, CA 92701
[Click here](#) for parking instructions.**

Virtual Meeting Option:

Zoom Meeting Link: [Click here for meeting link](#)

Join by phone: +1 669 444 9171

Webinar ID: 923 4439 7221

****Listen-in option only****

Committee Chair: Robert “Santa Bob” Morse, Individual

Committee Vice Chair: Paul Kaiser, Individual

Committee Members:

Reha Agar, Individual

Elizabeth Flores, Individual

Nichole Gideon, Individual

Deborah Kraft, Individual

Miranda Mears, Individual

Jason Mercado, Individual

Larry “Smitty” Smith, Individual

Vinny Zarrella, Individual

MINUTES

Welcome and Meeting Overview – Robert “Santa Bob” Morse, Chair

Chair Robert “Santa Bob” Morse called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m.

Present: Reha Agar, Elizabeth Flores, Paul Kaiser, Miranda Mears, Jason Mercado, Robert “Santa Bob” Morse, Larry “Smitty” Smith, and Vinny Zarrella

Absent Excused: Nichole Gideon and Deborah Kraft

Miranda Mears arrived during Business Calendar Item 1. Elizabeth Flores arrived during Business Calendar Item 2.

Public Comments – Members of the public may address the Lived Experience Advisory Committee (LEAC) on items listed within this agenda or matters not appearing on the agenda so long as the subject matter is within the jurisdiction of the LEAC. Public comments will be limited to three minutes. If there are more than five public speakers, this time will be reduced to two minutes. Members of the public utilizing interpreter services will be given double the amount of time to provide public comment

To address the LEAC during the Public Comment period, members of the public are to complete a Request to Address the Committee form prior to the beginning of each agenda item and submit it to Continuum of Care (CoC) staff. Staff will call your name in the order received. Members of the public may also submit public comment by emailing CareCoordination@ocgov.com. All comments submitted via email at least 24 hours before the start of the meeting will be distributed to the LEAC members, and all comments will be added to the administrative records of the meeting. Please include “LEAC Meeting Comment” in the email subject line.

Public Comment:

- A member of the public shared that The Dwelling Place in Anaheim offers laundry services on Mondays and Thursdays.

LEAC Member Comments – Members of the LEAC may provide comments on matters not appearing on the agenda so long as the subject matter is within the jurisdiction of the LEAC. Comments will be limited to three minutes. If there are more than five members wishing to speak, this time will be reduced to two minutes.

- Chair Robert “Santa Bob” Morse shared that Senate Bill 634, sponsored by Senator Sasha Renee Perez, would eliminate all local and state penalties for the homeless. The bill has passed the Local Government Committee, and Robert “Santa Bob” Morse is hopeful it will advance. Chair Robert “Santa Bob” Morse informed LEAC members about a ministry at The Crossing Church in Costa Mesa which offers showers and laundry every Saturday morning, and noted that a local church sponsors laundry services at a laundromat.
- Miranda Mears shared disappointment in the fact that the day program at Friendship Shelter in Laguna Beach, which offers shower and laundry services, may be closing. There will be a city council meeting to discuss the issue in 60 days. Miranda Mears provided avenues for advocacy to the LEAC members.
- Reha Agar pointed out that even housed individuals may not have access to laundry, and Friendship Shelter is the only shelter Reha Agar knows of in Orange County that still offers laundry services. Reha Agar expressed a desire for increased involvement of individuals with lived experience in Orange County.
- Elizabeth Flores shared insights after attending the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) Supportive Housing Summit in Chicago, noting positive change in the recognition and involvement of people with lived experience of homelessness in the homeless service system.

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Approve the LEAC Meeting Minutes from April 2, 2025.

Vice Chair Paul Kaiser motioned to approve Consent Calendar Item 1. Vinny Zarrella seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

BUSINESS CALENDAR

1. CoC Strategic Plan Update and Discussion – Robert “Santa Bob” Morse, Chair; Felicia Boehringer, CoC Administrator, Office of Care Coordination; and Cameron Pastrano, CoC Staff Specialist, Office of Care Coordination

Chair Robert “Santa Bob” Morse and Felicia Boehringer shared background on the CoC Strategic Plan and implementation timeline. The presenters recapped the CoC Strategic Plan Working Session which took place on April 30, 2025, and noted that additional analysis of the working session is needed to ensure the appropriate next steps are in place before implementation begins in July 2025. Chair Robert “Santa Bob” Morse mentioned the possibility of putting together an ad hoc of the LEAC to support implementation of the CoC Strategic Plan.

Committee Discussion:

- Reha Agar and Vinny Zarrella expressed interested in participating in the ad hoc.

2. LEAC Member Vacancies Recommendation – Robert “Santa Bob” Morse, Chair and Felicia Boehringer, CoC Administrator, Office of Care Coordination

Chair Robert “Santa Bob” Morse and Felicia Boehringer provided an update on the current vacancies within the LEAC. Felicia Boehringer outlined the most recent LEAC member recruitment process in August 2024, which led to identifying only one (1) selected member for the North Service Planning Area (SPA) seat. The LEAC Nominating Ad Hoc determined not to recommend any of the other candidates be selected for the Central and South SPA seat representatives, and recommended forming a new ad hoc in April or May 2025 to facilitate another recruitment. Chair Robert “Santa Bob” Morse has requested a recommended action to approve the LEAC Chair to nominate individuals to fill vacant committee seats, for approval by the LEAC, as alternative process.

Committee Discussion:

- Vice Chair Paul Kaiser confirmed whether LEAC members can suggest interested individuals to the chair for nomination, and if nominated, the committee will take a vote to make the final decision. Vice Chair Paul Kaiser expressed concern that nominating members could be perceived as favoritism, creating a legality issue, and suggested opening the application to the public.
- Vinny Zarrella inquired about the regular process for recruitment and asked about the possibility of bringing in Transitional Aged Youth (TAY). Vinny Zarrella advocated for an application process that is open to the public.
- Miranda Mears pointed out that new members can be TAY as long as they have experienced homelessness in the Central or South SPAs. Miranda Mears expressed no concern with nominating members, comparing it to a referral for employment.
- Chair Robert “Santa Bob” Morse noted that committee members can have specific experience, such as being a survivor of domestic violence, without being designated for the seat specific to that experience. Chair Robert “Santa Bob” Morse suggested expanding the committee charter to bring more voices to the table and explained that the nomination process would only apply to vacancies in between election periods.
- Elizabeth Flores brought up the possibility of allowing individuals from other counties to join the LEAC, as similar groups in other areas have done. Elizabeth Flores noted additional interesting differences in how other LEACs function.

- Reha Agar initially stated that the positions are listed online, and the nomination process is simply to expedite recruitment, but learned that this is not the case.

Recommended Action a. Approve Chair to bring forward nominations of individuals to fill current member vacancies, for approval by the LEAC membership.

Vice Chair Paul Kaiser motioned to approve Recommended Action a. Elizabeth Flores seconded the motion. Larry “Smitty” Smith, Miranda Mears, Paul Kaiser, Reha Agar, Robert “Santa Bob” Morse, and Jason Mercado voted yes. Elizabeth Flores and Vinny Zarrella abstained. The motion passed.

3. CoC Updates – Felicia Boehringer, CoC Administrator, Office of Care Coordination

Felicia Boehringer shared updates from the CoC Board Meeting on April 23, 2025, and reviewed changes to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) website. Felicia Boehringer informed committee members that Homebase is offering a free webinar titled “Creative Strategies to Enhance Your Budget,” and National Network for Youth is offering a free webinar titled “Transforming Housing Access - How Providers Are Ending Youth Homelessness,” both taking place on May 8, 2025. Felicia Boehringer shared information regarding upcoming CoC Board and Committee meetings.

Public Comment:

- Melissa Welsh shared a personal journey from lived experience of homelessness to doing volunteer work at an emergency shelter and later becoming a staff member at Mercy House. Melissa Welsh was invited by Chair Robert “Santa Bob” Morse and Vice Chair Paul Kaiser to attend the LEAC meeting and thanked the committee for the work that they are doing.

Committee Discussion:

- Chair Robert “Santa Bob” Morse informed committee members regarding the data request from the University of Chicago that initially CoC Board members were questioning the university’s ability to keep data confidential, however, at the most recent CoC Board meeting, the concern had shifted to the government’s commitment to protecting data. Chair Robert “Santa Bob” Morse suggested forwarding Vice Chair Paul Kaiser’s petition to all CoCs, and invited individuals with lived experience to apply to the seat for a person with lived experience on the Commission to Address Homelessness when recruitment begins.
- Reha Agar asked which committee member is currently in the seat for someone with lived experience of domestic violence. Reha Agar noted that HUD’s documentation requirements have become a substantial barrier for housing and street medicine programs. While verifications are thankfully being completed in Anaheim, Reha Agar mused that other agencies may be hesitant to write letters of verification for more sensitive cases such as crime victims or families with minor children. This can be seen as a subtle form of discrimination.
- Vinny Zarrella emphasized support of an application process open to the public for those who would feel more comfortable filling out an application than speaking to someone face to face.
- Miranda Mears expressed initial confusion as to how to answer the question of how LEAC members would like to be listed and identified on the agenda, and proposed a conversation about whether members would like to include what seat they hold on the committee next to their name.
- Elizabeth Flores shared a similar experience to Miranda Mears, and recommended the Office of Care Coordination update the agenda to show that Elizabeth Flores holds the “family” seat on the committee.

- Vice Chair Paul Kaiser shared concerns regarding a policy from HUD that requires individuals experiencing homelessness to provide third-party documentation proving their length of homelessness for it to be reported accordingly within the Coordinated Entry System (CES) and for other housing opportunities. Vice Chair Paul Kaiser feels this policy is unfair because timelines of homelessness can be challenging to prove, especially for those who have been experiencing homelessness for long periods of time, and requiring agencies to provide verification slows the process down. Vice Chair Paul Kaiser shared plans to start a petition against HUD's policy and invited committee members to sign it once it is ready.

Meeting adjourned at 11:12 a.m.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, June 4, 2025, 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., at the CAN Multipurpose Rooms 103/105, 400 W. Civic Center Drive, Santa Ana, CA 92701