

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

Wednesday, July 16, 2025

10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Location:

**County Administration South (CAS) Building
Multipurpose Rooms 103 & 105
601 N. Ross St., 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

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 10:06 a.m.

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

Absent Excused: Nichole Gideon and Paul Kaiser

Jason Mercado arrived during Business Calendar Item 1. Reha Agar left during Business Calendar Item 3.

1. Request for Virtual Participation

The Brown Act allows exceptions for members of legislative bodies to participate remotely under two specified circumstances: (1) “Just Cause” or (2) “Emergency Circumstances”. At least a quorum of the committee must be participating in-person for the exception(s) to be voted on and enacted. Following the Call to Order, Chair Robert “Santa Bob” Morse referenced a request for committee member Deborah Kraft to join virtually due to “Just Cause”.

Recommended Action: Allow Deborah Kraft to participate remotely for today’s LEAC meeting.

Miranda Mears motioned to approve the Recommended Action to allow Deborah Kraft to participate remotely. Elizabeth Flores seconded the motion. Chair Robert “Santa Bob” Morse issued a voice vote. Motion passed unanimously.

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:

- Chase Wilkerson expressed concern about the cancellation of key veteran programs in Orange County, including OC4Vets, U.S. VETS senior veteran outreach, and Strong Families Strong Children; further emphasizing these programs were critical in preventing veteran homelessness and suicide, especially among families and seniors. Chase Wilkerson noted the loss of these services, along with the sunseting of the Veterans Committee, would significantly impact outcomes for homeless veterans in the region and urged for the more mental health and support initiatives.

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Approve the LEAC Meeting Minutes from June 4, 2025.

Elizabeth Flores motioned to approve Consent Calendar Item 1. Miranda Mears seconded the motion. Chair Robert “Santa Bob” Morse issued a voice vote. Motion passed unanimously.

BUSINESS CALENDAR

1. LEAC Member Nomination – Robert “Santa Bob” Morse, Chair and Felicia Boehringer, Interim CoC Manger, Office of Care Coordination

Felicia Boehringer provided background on the new recruitment process for filling the two vacant LEAC SPA seats, then reviewed the nomination procedure and the steps taken to move forward with nominating Melissa Welsh as the Central Service Planning Area representative.

Recommended action a: Approve Melissa Welsh to serve on the LEAC in the seat representing an individual who experienced homelessness within the Central Service Planning Area

Elizabeth Flores motioned to approved Business Item 1. Miranda Mears seconded the motion. Chair Robert “Santa Bob” Morse issued a voice vote. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comments:

- Melissa Welsh expressed appreciation for the nomination and thanked the committee for the opportunity to join. Melissa Welsh also affirmed her commitment to attending meetings, stating that availability will not be an issue, and she is prepared to be consistently present for LEAC meetings.

Committee Discussion:

Elizabeth Flores asked if Melissa Welsh would be able to commit to the time commitment for the meetings.

2. Lived Experience Compensation Process – Felicia Boehringer, Interim CoC Manager, Office of Care Coordination

Felicia Boehringer provided an overview of the updated compensation program, including the amended compensation structure, the scope of work for the Orange County United Way (OCUW) compensation process, coordination of participant involvement, financial compensation, and program administration. Felicia Boehringer also shared the research and analysis conducted to determine appropriate compensation rates and ranges for committee members and various roles, based on guidance from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and external consultants. The goal is to establish an ethical and equitable approach that acknowledges the valuable expertise of individuals with lived experience and the time and effort contributed to the CoC.

Recommended action b: Approve the recommended compensation framework for People with Lived Experience partnering with the Orange County Continuum of Care (CoC) for review and approval by the CoC Board.

- (1) Range of \$35 – \$45 per hour for Storyteller Role, determined based on the Lived Experience Compensation Rate Rubric and Determination Table
- (2) Range of \$40 – \$50 per hour for Advisor Role, determined based on the Lived Experience Compensation Rate Rubric and Determination Table.
- (3) Range of \$45 – \$55 per hour for Leadership Role, determined based on the Lived Experience Compensation Rate Rubric and Determination Table.

Chair Robert “Santa Bob” Morse directed the Office of Care Coordination to bring Item 2. back to the August 6, 2025, LEAC meeting. No action was taken.

Public Comment:

- Melissa Welsh shared from personal experience that as an employee of a homeless service provider, employer provides time off but does not pay for LEAC meeting attendance.

Committee Discussion:

- Chair Robert “Santa Bob” Morse inquired whether the budget presented applies only to LEAC or also includes members of the CoC Board.
- Reha Agar sought clarification on the phrase “working within the homeless service system”, specifically, whether it referred exclusively to employment with service providers or also encompassed volunteerism. Reha Agar emphasized that travel compensation is the biggest barrier for many committee members.
- Deborah Kraft raised concerns about individuals who are already employed and may receive compensation through their employers. Deborah Kraft supported inclusive language that recognizes volunteer efforts, noting that volunteering is unpaid, unlike employment within service organizations. Deborah Kraft also asked if being on different committees would determine how points are allocated, whether travel compensation should be considered in the rubric, particularly for those traveling longer distances, and if there are options for carpooling or if the County could provide transportation with a bus or van.
- Elizabeth Flores asked for clarification on mileage reimbursement and how it applies to travel times exceeding one (1) hour. Elizabeth Flores proposed adding an additional thirty (30) minutes to the allowed travel time, stressing that individuals with lived experience should not have their compensation consumed by travel expenses. Elizabeth Flores also revisited the definition of “working within the homeless service system,” pointing out that volunteering, working within the homeless service system and lived experience carry different but important values.
- Miranda Mears questioned whether travel compensation policies could be adjusted, noting that under the current system, compensation might only cover rideshare costs, especially given the limit of only two virtual meetings per year. Miranda Mears also inquired about the meaning of retroactive pay.
- Vinny Zarrella recommended offering flexible options for members with longer commutes or high rideshare costs to ensure meeting are accessible.
- Larry “Smitty” Smith suggested separating compensation for committee participation from travel reimbursement. Larry “Smitty” Smith warned that combining the two could complicate the budget, especially if increasing hourly wages. Larry “Smitty” Smith also asked whether members receive points based on the number of committees or groups they participate in and if travel time is included for every committee a member serves on.
- Jason Mercado asked whether the proposed budget includes a defined amount allocated for member compensation.

3. CoC Strategic Plan – Robert “Santa Bob” Morse, Chair

Felicia Boehringer provided background on the CoC Strategic Plan, including ongoing work related to the plan and updates from CoC Board meetings. Felicia Boehringer discussed the seven (7) priority strategies and collaboration with the AC Strategies consultant to determine the Owners of said strategies.

Committee Discussion:

- Chair Robert “Santa Bob” Morse emphasized that the LEAC will play a central role in supporting and shaping key strategies within the CoC Strategic Plan, specifically highlighted the LEAC’s involvement in the compensation component and affirmed that the LEAC would be consulted on most aspects of the Strategic Plan. Chair Robert “Santa Bob” Morse stressed the importance of including perspectives from those with lived experience, especially around understanding outcomes, evaluating the Coordinated Entry System, and ensuring those voices are reflected in strategies like items #5 and #7.
- Vinny Zarrella agreed with Chair Robert “Santa Bob” Morse’s points. Vinny Zarrella expressed frustration with the challenges people face in maintaining housing, especially during transitions from one housing unit to another, noting the importance of being involved in what HUD states and how local efforts are ensuring compliance but considering the clients. Vinny Zarrella spoke about the need to observe and understand what people go through in real-time and actually see the person living through it, not just hear about it after the fact, and how the CoC can consider how these different housing situations connect and affect each other.
- Deborah Kraft responded to Vinny Zarrella’s point acknowledging that this is a major issue at the HUD level, indicating that systemic changes need to be necessary.
- Larry “Smitty” Smith raised questions about the origins and intended audience of certain policies or strategies and asked whether these elements would be taken on by the Training Ad Hoc highlighted in the presentation. Larry “Smitty” Smith also emphasized the need for clarity on how LEAC and others will be involved in this process.

4. CoC Updates – Felicia Boehringer, Interim CoC Manager, Office of Care Coordination

Felicia Boehringer provided updates on the June 25, 2025, CoC Board meeting; the integration of the Orange County Outreach & Engagement (O&E) team into the Office of Care Coordination; and the upcoming Same-Day Solutions Fair.

5. LEAC Member Comments – Robert “Santa Bob” Morse, Chair

Committee Discussion:

- Larry “Smitty” Smith asked whether changing O&E shirt colors would lead to other changes, expressing concern that many organizations already use different-colored shirts, which may create confusion or reinforce silos. Larry “Smitty” Smith questioned how collaboration would occur across different outreach groups and emphasized the need for Lived Experience input in these conversations. Larry “Smitty” Smith also raised concerns about the number of different policies people are expected to remember and communicate to individuals on the street.
- Vinny Zarrella mentioned past involvement with the Youth Action Board (YAB) and requested more information about it, including when updates or meetings might occur.

Meeting adjourned at 11:36 p.m.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, August 6, 2025, 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., at the CAS County Conference Center 104/106, 425 W. Santa Ana Blvd., Santa Ana, CA 92701.