

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

Wednesday, February 4, 2026
10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Location:

**Orange County United Way
Varanasi Equity Workspace (VEW)
18012 Mitchell S., Irvine, CA 92614
[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: 928 9235 0614

****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

Melissa Welsh, Individual

Vinny Zarrella, Individual

MINUTES

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, and County Language Access Policy, those requiring accommodation and/or interpreter services for this meeting should notify the Office of Care Coordination 72 hours prior to the meeting at (714) 834-5000 or email CareCoordination@ceo.oc.gov Requests received less than 72 hours prior to the meeting will still receive every effort to reasonably fulfill within the time provided.

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

Chair Robert “Santa Bob” Morse called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

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

Absent Excused: Nichole Gideon, Deborah Kraft and Miranda Mears

Jason Mercado arrived during Business Calendar Item 1.

Vinny Zarrella left during Business Calendar Item 1.

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@ceo.oc.gov. 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.

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Approve the LEAC Meeting Minutes from December 3, 2025.
2. Approve the 2026 LEAC Meeting Calendar.

Elizabeth Flores motioned to approve the Consent Calendar. Melissa Welsh seconded the motion. Chair Robert “Santa Bob” Morse issued a voice vote. No nays, no abstentions. The motion passed.

BUSINESS CALENDAR

1. **CoC Strategic Plan: Staff Training Survey Development Discussion** – Andrew Crowe, CoC Strategic Owner and Robert “Santa Bob” Morse, Chair

Andrew Crowe provided background information on the CoC Strategic Plan and strategic goals relating to staff training. Andrew Crowe reviewed a survey for direct service staff to evaluate training needs and options that may be beneficial to direct service staff, and asked for feedback on the survey from the Lived Experience Advisory Committee members.

Committee Discussion:

- Reha Agar asked if service providers include Public Housing Authorities and suggested adding Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) to the list of specific populations served.

- Vice Chair Paul Kaiser asked if use of the term disabled would include both physical and mental disabilities, and suggested separating them into different populations, as well as adding property management to the types of services/programs staff may support with. Paul Kaiser also suggested bringing the survey to other groups such as the Service Provider Forum, Health Care Agency, Coordinated Entry System (CES) Steering Committee, property management staff of local permanent supportive housing, and CalOptima CalAIM providers.
- Melissa Welsh suggested including trainings on pets/service animals/emotional support animals, and adding refugees/immigrants and individuals diagnosed with HIV/AIDS to the list of specific populations served. Melissa Welsh asked about the definition of anti-ableism and suggested that direct services staff receive peer support specialist training. Melissa Welsh noted that introducing the survey to high-level management at service providers may help with distributing the survey to their frontline staff.
- Vinny Zarrella asked if transitional-aged youth includes foster youth and highlighted the differences within these populations, and suggested that direct service staff receive training on compassionate realism.
- Chair Robert “Santa Bob” Morse discussed adding training for County administrative staff and making trainings a contract requirement for County-funded agencies. Robert “Santa Bob” Morse asked that the survey be brought back to the next LEAC meeting with revisions.
- Elizabeth Flores asked if there is a list of service providers in Orange County and suggested that once the trainings are released, grant applications should include questions on whether the trainings have been completed with direct service staff; Elizabeth Flores also discussed creating a training certification process for agencies.
- Larry “Smitty” Smith asked if incorporating the trainings would be voluntary for service providers, and expressed concerns about the effectiveness of training with current levels of staff turnover and lack of proven outcomes. Larry “Smitty” Smith suggested choosing one service provider to implement a trial program so other agencies can see the impact of standardized training.

2. CoC Committee Representative Appointment Process – Cameron Pastrano, CoC Staff Specialist, Office of Care Coordination

Cameron Pastrano provided background on the ongoing discussion topic of Lived Experience Advisory Committee representative appointments. Cameron Pastrano reviewed representative expectations and the nomination process, as well as the process for nominating replacement representatives.

Recommended Action a: Approve the recommendation for the LEAC members to nominate and appoint one (1), but not more than two (2) representatives to participate in CoC Committees that currently have no standing membership for a one (1) calendar-year term.

Paul Kaiser motioned to approve Business Calendar Item 2. Melissa Welsh seconded the motion. Chair Robert “Santa Bob” Morse issued a voice vote. No nays, no abstentions. The motion passed.

Committee Discussion:

- Vice Chair Paul Kaiser asked when nominations would occur.
- Elizabeth Flores asked if representatives would be the same people for all committees or different people for each committee.
- Chair Robert “Santa Bob” Morse suggested nominations be done during next LEAC meeting.

3. Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Quality Policy Discussion – Erin DeRycke, Director, Data Analytics, 2-1-1 Orange County (211OC), Orange County United Way

Erin DeRycke discussed the development of a potential policy to support with improved data quality for the Orange County CoC, specifically as it relates to recorded data of approximate start date of homelessness. Erin DeRycke highlighted the importance of data quality, reviewed the current data quality process, and explained positive and negative changes shown in Orange County's System Performance Measures. Erin DeRycke detailed how the length of homelessness is determined, the trend of increasing lengths of homelessness, and discussed options for how to possibly address data quality concerns related to this, including strategies of nearby CoCs.

Committee Discussion:

- Vice Chair Paul Kaiser expressed concerns around the proposal to change the start dates of homelessness for records reflecting a start date before January 1, 2000.
- Larry "Smitty" Smith expressed concerns about assuming the data is an error instead of assuming it may be the true length of homelessness and highlighted that the day someone enters a program would not be the day they enter homelessness.
- Reha Agar discussed concerns with minimizing the length of homelessness and shared personal experience with people who have long lengths of homelessness due to a lack of resources and systems in older years.
- Chair Robert "Santa Bob" Morse noted that he would underreport his length of homelessness.
- Elizabeth Flores asked if the profiles in question are actively being served, and if the discussion could be brought back at the next LEAC meeting.
- Jason Mercado asked if the data could be left as is.

4. LEAC Meeting Logistics: Location – Cameron Pastrano, CoC Staff Specialist, Office of Care Coordination

Cameron Pastrano discussed hosting all 2026 LEAC Meetings at Orange County United Way offices, reviewing the benefits and barriers for each option.

Committee Discussion:

- Elizabeth Flores shared having no preference.
- Melissa Welsh shared having no preference but did have concerns for parking at Orange County United Way.
- Vice Chair Paul Kaiser shared a preference for Orange County United Way for consistency.
- Jason Mercado shared having no preference.
- Reha Agar shared a preference for Orange County United Way.
- Larry "Smitty" Smith shared having no preference.

5. CoC and General Updates – Nichole Gideon, CoC Board Secretary; Jasmin Miranda, Interim CoC Administrator, Office of Care Coordination and Cameron Pastrano, CoC Staff Specialist, Office of Care Coordination

Due to time restrictions, Business Calendar Item 5 was not presented.

6. LEAC Member Comments – Robert "Santa Bob" Morse, Chair

Due to time restrictions, Business Calendar Item 6 was moved to Item 5 on the agenda.

- Melissa Welsh highlighted concerns around the current CES 2-for-1 Match Policy.
- Elizabeth Flores highlighted concerns regarding a LEAC member's virtual participation.
- Paul Kaiser discussed the CES evaluation by Element Consulting, shared about his participation in the ad hoc and invited LEAC members to participate.
- Reha Agar discussed wanting to have Public Housing Authority (PHA)-related items on the agenda in the future.
- Chair Robert "Santa Bob" Morse discussed Nichole Gideon's appointment to the Policies, Procedures and Standards (PPS) Committee.

Chair Robert "Santa Bob" Morse adjourned the meeting at 11:30 a.m.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, March 4, 2026, 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.