



# Agenda Report

October 21, 2019

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council

**FROM:** Department of Libraries & Information Services & Pasadena Public Health Department

**SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO LOS ANGELES COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY FINAL REPORT 2018-2019 – THE IMPACT OF THE HOMELESS ON PUBLIC LIBRARIES**

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the City Council authorize the Mayor to transmit the proposed responses, which appear in the body of this agenda report, to the Presiding Judge of the Los Angeles County Superior Court for those portions of the Civil Grand Jury's Final Report 2018-2019 – "The Impact of the Homeless on Public Libraries," that address the City of Pasadena, in order to comply with the recommendations listed in the Report.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The Los Angeles County Civil Grand Jury annually undertakes a number of investigative reports, the results of which are published in its annual Final Report. In its 2018-2019 Final Report, the County of Los Angeles Grand Jury released an investigative report entitled "The Impact of the Homeless on Public Libraries Grand Jury Report." The City of Pasadena Public Health Department and the City of Pasadena Public Library were among the eight (8) organizations selected for the County Grand Jury investigations. Specifically, the City's Care Navigator Program which serves individuals who are experiencing homelessness, mental illness and substance use issues was singled out for review.

The agencies that were interviewed and reviewed as part of the Grand Jury Report included the County of Los Angeles Public Library (seven of its branches), Los Angeles Public Library (four of its branches), Santa Monica Public Library, Los Angeles Sheriff's Department – County Services Bureau – Operations, Los Angeles Police Department – Security Service Division, and Pasadena Public Health and Public Library. There were eleven (11) findings and nine (9) recommendations. Of the nine (9) recommendations, Pasadena must respond to five (5) of them. The nine (9) findings are listed below. The five in bold are the ones to which Pasadena is required to respond.

- 10.1 North County and other remote libraries should be permitted to maintain emergency funds provided by the County to handle minor needs and light maintenance immediately.
- 10.2 North County libraries and other remote libraries should be authorized to set up contractual agreements, as approved by Internal Services Division, with local vendors to perform minor maintenance on library facilities, including but not limited to electrical, plumbing, or painting problems.
- 10.3 North County libraries and other remote libraries should be authorized, in collaboration with Human Resources, to offer employment to prospective applicants with an incentive for geographic hardships.
- **10.4 Additional partnerships should be developed with agencies that can provide additional services to library users e.g. AARP, commercial establishments, travel groups, etc.**
- **10.5 Training should be created for all staff, including part-timers, on how to handle difficult situations and effectively refer them to a person who can solve the problem.**
- **10.6 Library management should seek appropriate funding to hire staff e.g. clinical social worker or public health technician who can build stronger relationships with homeless individuals and connect them through cross-functional teamwork with various agencies e.g. DMH, DHS, DPSS, LAHSA to provide information and referrals to homeless and other behaviorally challenged patrons.**
- **10.7 Library representatives should become more visible to the greater public by attending interactive forums including block club meetings/neighborhood councils/community forums to share the philosophy and techniques used by the Library to address local issues.**
- 10.8 Each problematic library must develop, in collaboration with their security department, a corrective action plan.
- **10.9 Security personnel should be assigned to each branch of the Los Angeles Public Library and County of Los Angeles Public Library to provide security for all.**

According to the Grand Jury Investigative Report, the methodology used to determine the recommendations included gathering related information, specifically: creating a survey that was used in all visits to extract vital information for this investigation; conducting an exhaustive review of literature regarding public libraries and homeless including local newspaper articles, online resources and television programs; viewing a variety of videos produced by the Los Angeles City and County of Los Angeles public library systems; participating in tours and interviews of twelve diverse libraries; interviewing library administrators at two large city libraries, interviewing law enforcement agencies designated as security providers for Los Angeles Public and County of Los Angeles Public Library systems; and, finally, utilizing data provided by County of Los Angeles Public Library, Los Angeles Public Library system, Los Angeles Sheriff Department, and Los Angeles Police Department.

**Grand Jury Recommendations and Proposed City Responses:**

The City of Pasadena Public Health Department and the Libraries & Information Services Department are jointly responding to the following recommendations.

**Grand Jury Finding 10.4** *Additional partnerships should be developed with agencies that can provide additional services to library users e.g. AARP, commercial establishments, travel groups, etc.*

**Proposed Response:**

The City agrees with this recommendation. This recommendation is already being implemented, in a collaboration of the Public Health and Libraries and Information Services Departments, to institute a partnership to address the growing need to serve a larger community, especially for those impacted by homelessness who find safety in our public libraries. The Homeless Care Navigator Project was implemented in 2017 to support the Library staff, patrons and addressing other gaps in the delivery of social services. The project seeks to contribute to the homeless continuum of care by enhancing the points of entry into available social services. This project collaborates with several entities, such as the established lead agencies for the Coordinated Entry System (CES) Programs (Union Station, Family Foothill and Hillside) that serve, adults, families and youth to improve access to housing and shelter. The program will continue to outreach to other service providers to enhance services to the general community and to provide social support for vulnerable populations.

**Grand Jury Finding 10.5** *Training should be created for all staff, including part-timers, on how to handle difficult situations and effectively refer them to a person who can solve the problem.*

**Proposed Response:** The City agrees with this recommendation. Prior to the initial implementation of the Care Navigator position, the Public Health Department provided training to the Library staff including: Mental Health Training, De-escalation Techniques, Safety Processes, and Trauma-Informed Approaches & Self-Care. Other trainings in which staff have participated include, but are not limited to, the Urban Libraries Council's Safety and Security in Libraries webinar, training by The Homeless Training Institute at the California Library Association annual conference, mental health first aid training from the California State Library (CSL) & Southern California Library Cooperative (SCLC). This has been part of the California State Library's Mental Health initiative. Trainings are scheduled as needs arise and as staff schedules permit. The departments will engage Human Resources to explore capacity building.

**Grand Jury Finding 10.6** *Library management should seek appropriate funding to hire staff e.g. clinical social worker or public health technician who can build stronger relationships with homeless individuals and connect them through cross-functional teamwork with various agencies e.g. DMH, DHS, DPSS, LAHSA to provide information and referrals to homeless and other behaviorally challenged patrons.*

**Proposed Response:** The City agrees with this recommendation; however, there needs to be additional funding in order to provide additional staff. This area needs additional resources to provide capacity to address the individuals experiencing

homelessness who have severe mental health conditions and substance abuse. The Library currently funds a public health technician position called the Care Navigator focused on serving the needs of homeless individuals. The current Care Navigator position is funded at .80 FTE (32 hours per week). The Care Navigator has reported the complexity in the cases, and the challenges of engaging with those who present complex conditions. Such cases may require expert, clinically based interventions best provided by a trained social worker or other professional. Any additional positions will require outside funding through grants or private entities.

**Grand Jury Finding 10.7** *Library representatives should become more visible to the greater public by attending interactive forums including block club meetings/neighborhood councils/community forums to share the philosophy and techniques used by the Library to address local issues.*

**Proposed Response:** The City agrees with this recommendation. Examples of visibility at interactive community forums at which Library staff share information on programs and services related to local issues include, but are not limited to, National Night Out, Assembly District community events, City Council district community events, Salvation Army outreach events, community conversations around the City's Community Health Improvement Plan, Library in the Park programs, African American parent council meetings, and other outreach opportunities that arise. In addition, since the Library does have ten locations throughout the City, many of these outside meetings are held in Library Branches.

**Grand Jury Finding 10.9** *Security personnel should be assigned to each branch of the Los Angeles Public Library and County of Los Angeles Public Library to provide security for all.*

**Proposed Response:** While the Pasadena Public Library is neither part of the referenced Los Angeles Public Library or the County of Los Angeles Public Library, the Pasadena Public Library (a department of the City of Pasadena) has a staff of security guards who are regular City employees. These guards are scheduled to patrol three of our ten library locations, on a daily basis, and are available to be deployed to the remaining seven at any time. The farthest distance a guard would need to travel to a location from Central Library is less than five miles, making the response time relatively short. Staff is also advised to contact 911 in any threatening situation. The Department does not currently have the capacity or budget to staff all ten locations with guards during all operating hours.

#### **COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:**

This report by the City of Pasadena is consistent with the City Council Goals & Objectives to support and promote the quality of life and local economy and to ensure public safety.



**FISCAL IMPACT:**

Cost for most of the recommendations are already included in the Libraries & Information Services and Public Health Department's approved operating budget. Any enhancements to service will require additional funding and would need to be addressed during the annual budget process.

Respectfully submitted,



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