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Honorable Members of the City Council  
City of Los Angeles  
c/o City Clerk, City Hall  
200 N. Spring Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Attention: Adam Lid, Legislative Assistant

## **COUNCIL TRANSMITTAL: REPORT BACK ON THE STATUS OF THE HUMAN TRAFFICKING SHELTER OPERATIONS PILOT PROGRAM**

### **SUMMARY**

The Housing + Community Investment Department (HCIDLA) respectfully submits a report back in response to the Motion submitted by Councilwoman Nury Martinez, 6<sup>th</sup> District, requesting a status update on the Human Trafficking Shelter Operations (HTSO) Pilot Program. As part of the Fiscal Year 2018-19 City General Fund Budget, HCIDLA received \$800,000 to administer a Human Trafficking Shelter Operations Pilot Program. HCIDLA conducted a Request for Proposal (RFP) to determine the service provider(s) for the program. The Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (CAST) was selected through the RFP process as the service provider and was contracted for one year beginning July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019 to provide emergency and transitional shelters for victims of human trafficking. The contract allows for the services to be extended for additional years.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

The General Manager of HCIDLA respectfully requests that the Mayor and Council receive and file this report back.

### **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

The Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (CAST) currently operates two human trafficking shelters in the City of Los Angeles. CAST's Transitional Shelter, the first of its kind in the United States, serves adult women

survivors of all forms of trafficking, including foreign nationals, United States citizens, clients of various sexual orientations and individuals with disabilities. CAST’s Emergency Shelter provides emergency shelter residents with food, access to transportation assistance, gift cards for clothing and basic necessities, medical services, court accompaniment, and counseling from a qualified therapist. CAST’s Emergency Shelter utilizes a trauma-informed care approach offering holistic emergency shelter services which allows trafficking survivors a place of security to rest and begin the healing process. Currently, CAST is funded for 15 emergency shelter beds and 10 transitional shelter beds. This translates to serving approximately 54 people each year through the shelter-based program. Additionally, social services are also provided to approximately 100 non-shelter clients, which include basic necessities, safety planning, supportive counseling, medical, education, life skills training, employment, transportation and accessing state/federal benefits and more.

CAST’s two shelters are unique because they are the only ones in Los Angeles exclusively serving survivors of all forms of human trafficking. The agency receives referrals from the Los Angeles Police Department, Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department, homeless agencies, and others. The HT shelters creates a safety net for those who do not meet eligibility requirements at other shelters, and are designed to respond to survivors’ specific needs to ensure their well-being and recovery. CAST reports that 100 percent of their emergency response clients were homeless on initial contact. While ordinary shelters responding to domestic violence or homelessness often accept eligible trafficking survivors, their programs and rules cannot best respond to survivors’ particular needs, and in some cases, may compound their trauma and vulnerability. These shelters may lack staff with appropriate training for serving this population, and or in the case of homeless shelters, they may even close during the daytime.

Human trafficking is about economic exploitation, and options for viable employment for victims are extremely limited. In the case of survivors of sex trafficking, they are criminalized by law enforcement for the criminal activity they are forced to engage in, and the wait times for federal authorities to approve work authorizations is long. Human trafficking survivors have no means to support themselves financially after escaping their trafficker and therefore require more intensive and longer term services such as those offered by CAST’s emergency and transitional shelters.

CAST’s shelter programs also deal with a high level of safety concerns and danger. Human trafficking is often linked to organized crime and the safety concerns are extremely sensitive and require additional time and expertise of trained staff to develop safety plans, liaise with authorities, and create policies that protect shelter residents. Traffickers can be very sophisticated and have access to resources to pursue and locate their victims. Many shelters are not equipped to address these types of extreme safety issues.

**PROGRAMMING**

Funding allocated in the 2018-2019 City General Fund to the Human Trafficking (HT) Pilot Program provides 24/7 on-site staff at both of CAST’s shelters to provide comprehensive, specialized services that survivors of human trafficking require at any given time of the day, including those with medical conditions or mental health disabilities. CAST’s shelter staff includes social workers and experienced staff trained in trauma-informed program models. It is anticipated that the funding of \$800,000 will be fully spent by July 30, 2019. Further, CAST is actively seeking additional funding opportunities to enhance program services. In October 2018, the agency secured two grants for a total of \$987,500 to expand legal services and offer housing subsidies.

<b>Program</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b># of beds</b>	<b>Unduplicated Clients</b>	<b>notes</b>
HT Emergency	\$362,000	15	40	Clients are housed for up to 90 days
HT Transitional	\$438,000	10	14	Clients are housed for up to 2 years
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$800,000</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>54</b>	

## **IMPACT**

Since the July 1, 2018 Program Year start date, CAST has housed 11 survivors at the transitional shelter and 33 survivors at the emergency shelter. The emergency shelter location officially started its program in September 2018, as CAST had to secure and furnish the location. Thus far, the pilot program has provided referrals and immediate, short-term services to 493 callers through the CAST emergency hotline.

### **1. Successes**

Services provided through CAST have allowed clients to begin the healing process and work to equip and empower them for their lives beyond shelter. CAST utilizes the Survivor Outcomes Assessment (SOA) to identify residents' needs and to inform and guide the recovery process. It measures 13 categories in a client's life including: caregiver/placement, financial/basic needs, safety, support systems, independent living skills, employment and job skills, education/literacy, medical, dental, vision, emotional/behavioral, family/child reunification (if applicable), and legal/system involvement. CAST found that transitional shelter clients, whose average stay is 15 months, improve at a faster rate than unsheltered clients.

The following are expected outcomes of survivors placed in HT emergency and transitional shelters:

<b>PROGRAM OUTCOMES</b>	<b>EMERGENCY</b>	<b>TRANSITIONAL</b>
95% of unduplicated clients will increase their safety	√	√
80% of unduplicated clients will increase their knowledge of available resources	√	√
65% of unduplicated clients will participate in activities leading to increased social support/decreased isolation	√	√
50% of unduplicated clients will maintain or increase income	N/A	√
80% of unduplicated clients exit into one of the following: PH/PSH/Rapid Re-housing or other safe stable housing	√	√

### **2. Challenges**

One of the major challenges faced in CAST's shelter programs is in supporting residents to overcome obstacles to secure housing, and ultimately graduate from CAST's program. In seeking safe and quality housing, survivors encounter the same challenges as many Angelenos—increasing rents, expensive security deposits, etc. They may also have the added hurdles of damaged or no credit, criminal records due to the activities previously forced upon them, language barriers, and enduring long waits to secure proper legal identification. Human traffickers force victims to break the law and these criminal records can often take months to expunge. Unfortunately, these barriers identified for housing are also faced when survivors seek employment and independence.

## **FUTURE FUNDING NEEDS**

The housing challenges faced by human trafficking victims make the existence of these shelters increasingly indispensable. Both CAST shelter locations serve as havens where victims receive specialized services after enduring the horrors of labor and/or sex trafficking. The need far outweighs CAST's capacity, 31 victims assisted over the hotline were denied shelter from July 1, 2018 through January 31, 2019 due to limited beds at CAST shelters and referred to other types of shelters.

July 1, 2018 through January 31, 2019	
Number of hotline calls	1,028
# of hotline calls that were HT survivors (or persons calling on behalf of HT survivors)	493
# of HT survivors from hotline calls that were accepted into the shelter	26
# of HT survivors from hotline class that were DENIED shelter due to NO available space and were referred to other shelters	31

Given the specific needs for this population, shelters specializing in serving human trafficking survivors are vital for an international metropolis like Los Angeles. Beyond interventions to address the housing challenges described above, CAST’s shelter staff have identified the need for increased support for residents’ transportation costs for commuting to work, to attend legal appointments, and to obtain food and other everyday needs. Due to the safety risks, shelter clients cannot readily utilize affordable public transportation options and thus rely on ridesharing mobile apps or taxis to navigate from place to place.

The scope of coverage offered by Medi-Cal, the affordable healthcare alternative accessible to shelter residents, is limited and does not cover many residents’ complex needs, such as dental, vision, or minor surgeries, posing a financial strain.

The funding allocated by the City is critical to support the complex challenges human trafficking survivors face. Without this funding, CAST would not be able to maintain their emergency shelter operations. Human trafficking is a growing problem in Los Angeles that requires dedicated shelter-based resources and other wrap-around services. HCIDLA will continue to monitor CAST and encourage the agency to apply for available funding sources to augment programs and people served.

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