

Report on Governance for the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority

Homelessness and Poverty Committee

City of Los Angeles

April 22, 2021

Process

Interviews

- Interviews began on October 13 and ran through February 2021.
- 50+ interviews conducted with over 100 people.
- Some interviews conducted jointly with City and County staff, some conducted independently.

Interviewees:

- LAHSA senior staff and commission leadership
- Local Councils of Government
- Lived Experience Advisory Board members
- Business leaders
- City and County staff
- Faith-based groups
- Other Continuums of Care in the region
- Housing Authorities
- Police
- LA Continuum of Care leadership
- Coordinated Entry System lead organizations and policy council members
- HUD staff
- Philanthropic partners
- Elected officials
- Former Commissioners

Documents and Other Structures

Documents Reviewed

- Homeless Response System Map
- LAHSA Funding Overview
- LAHSA Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) and State JPA Guidance
- LAHSA Strategic Planning Materials
- City and County Motions on LAHSA Governance
- LAHSA Commission By-Laws, Organizational Chart and Commission and Committee Rosters
- Los Angeles Continuum of Care (CoC) By-Laws, Charter and Roster
- Regional Homeless Advisory Council (RHAC) Charter and Roster
- Coordinated Entry System (CES) Policy Council Background Memorandum, Process and Roster

- Overview of Home for Good Funders Collaborative
- Measure H Citizens Oversight Board Materials
- Lived Experience Advisory Board (LEAB) Charter and Roster
- Homeless Youth Forum of Los Angeles (HYFLA) Charter and Roster
- Federal Regulatory Requirements and CoC Guidance

Other Structures

- Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority Board
- Southern California Association of Governments
- Alameda Corridor Transportation Authority
- King County Regional Homelessness Authority
- New York City Continuum of Care and Department of Social Services
- Houston/Harris County, Las Vegas/Clark County, San Diego City and County, and Portland/Multnomah County Continuum of Care Governance

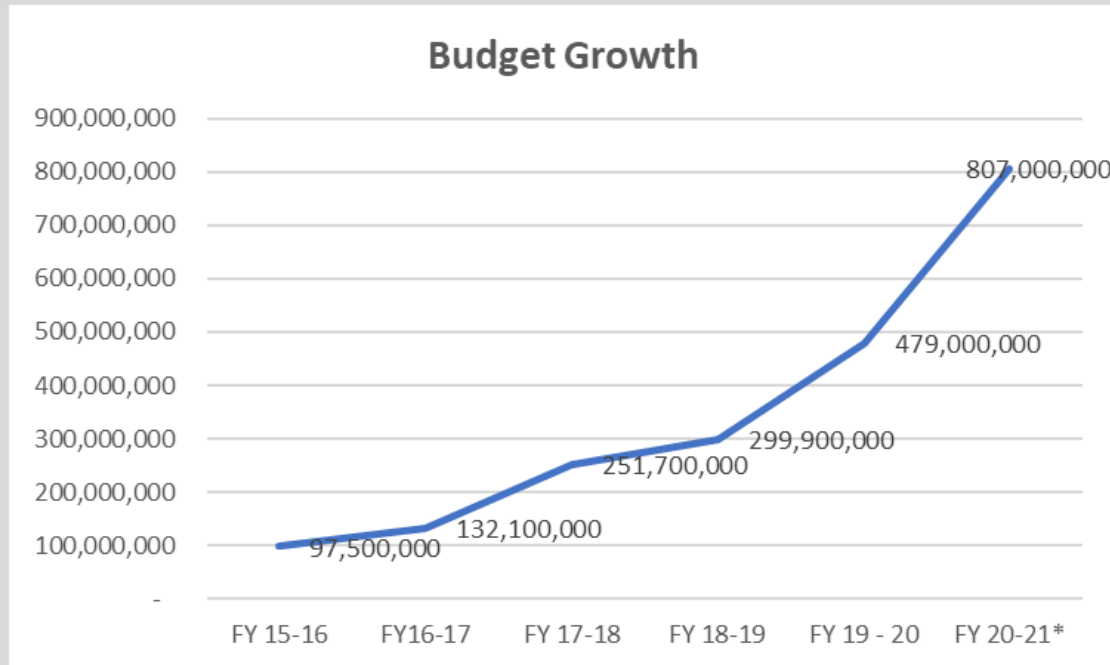
Context

Why Conduct a Governance Review?

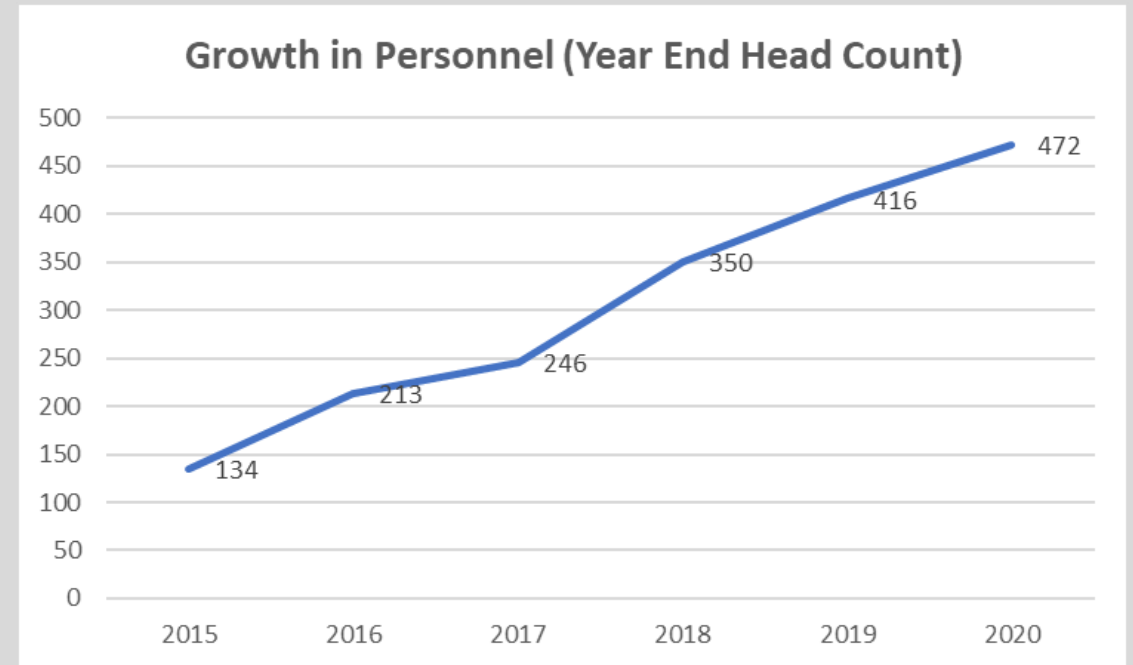
- 1) LAHSA is evolving from acting as a *grants* administrator for the homelessness system to being a *system* administrator – a role that is critically needed in the region.
- 2) LAHSA has seen unprecedented growth over the last five years - over \$709 million dollars (728%) in budget growth and an increase of 338 staff (252%).

LAHSA's Growth Since 2015

Budget (+709.5M/728%)



Personnel (+338/252%)



OVERVIEW OF LAHSA

Total FY 2020-2021
Q3 Budget \$868.5M

LAHSA receives funding from multiple sources & develops programs to address homelessness in LA, as well as contracts with sponsoring agencies to provide the programs to the community.



Advocacy, Policy, Program Design, Procurement, Contracting, Monitoring, Technical Assistance, Invoice Payment, Assessment, Reporting, Grant Closeout

MAJOR PROJECTS

- Annual Homeless Count
- Grants Management
- Coordinated Entry System

DIRECT PROGRAMS

- Operation Healthy Streets
- Countywide Outreach
- CoC Coordinated Assessment
- CoC Planning Projects
- HMIS

SPONSORING AGENCIES

(900+ Contractual Agreements)

- Family Solutions Center
- Permanent Housing - Rapid Rehousing
- Permanent Housing - Homelessness Prevention
 - Transitional Housing
 - Crisis/Bridge Housing
- Supportive Services
- Access Centers
- Outreach
- Winter Shelter
- Capacity Building
- Navigation Center
- Mobile Showers/Safe Parking
- Regional Coordination

Federal 3.8%

HUD CoC Funds: LAHSA Directly Administers \$33.3M

State of California 15.0%

CoC HEAP, CoC HHAP, FEMA, CESH: \$130.4M

County of LA 49.5%

HPI, Measure H, GF, HSF, HHAP, COVID, CRF, County ESG, State ESG, Federal ESG, SA, HSP, DCSF-ILP, WDACS-HSP: \$429.9M

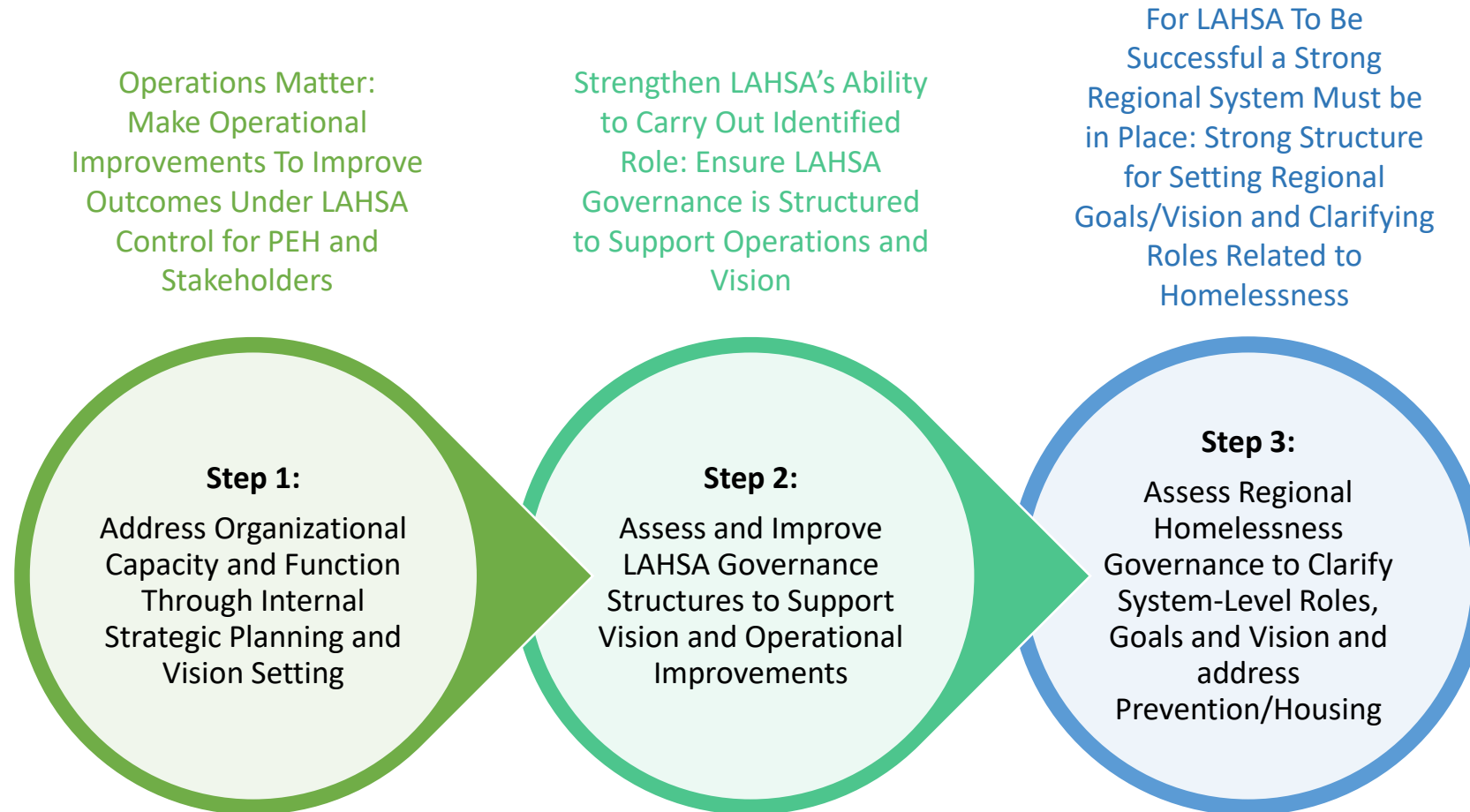
City of LA 31.5%

GF, ESG ConPlan 45 & 46, CDBG, HEAP, COVID, HHAP, ESG-CV, Roadmap "County Service Commitment Funds", State CRF & GF: \$273.9M

Other 0.1%

Hilton Foundation, CFG, CSH, Kaiser Permanente, Haynes Foundation: \$1.1M

LAHSA: Creating the Structure to Reach the Goal of Ending Homelessness



Themes

Four Broad Areas

- 1. Operations.** Challenges related to LAHSA operations were raised numerous times in Phase One and Two discussions, making it clear that LAHSA must successfully address these challenges for it to gain community trust and support. The two most often cited challenges relate to contracts and communication.
- 2. Role Clarity.** Many interviewees pointed to overlapping or unclear lines of authority for various governing bodies as a challenge. This lack of clarity exists even for members of these bodies – they are unsure when they are the final decision-makers versus when they are acting in an advisory capacity. This causes confusion and frustration for governing body members and community stakeholders.
- 3. Support for System Administration.** Generally, interviewees stated that LAHSA’s role as the homelessness system administrator is appropriate and needed. However, many also stated that LAHSA currently does not have the governance structure, independence, or political support necessary to successfully carry out this role. There was also general acknowledgement by many interviewees that LAHSA has an incredibly difficult job and is often blamed for issues that are not within its span of control.
- 4. System-Wide Vision and Goals.** The lack of regional goals, metrics and a common vision was raised as a challenge in numerous interviews. Many interviewees expressed that a lack of clear direction for the system as a whole contributes to the perception that LAHSA is “caught” between the City and County when policy or funding disagreements arise.

Partnering with People with Lived Expertise

- Align governance changes to a racial justice and equity approach and ensure that lived expertise is included.
- Align to principles and recommendations made by the Commission's *Ad-Hoc Committee on Black People Experiencing Homelessness*.
- Authentic representation in every governance body by people with lived expertise, including the LAHSA Commission.
- Need a more robust and clearer role for the Lived Experience Advisory Board (LEAB), including a direct connection between LEAB and LAHSA executive-level personnel and the Commission.
- Ensure that governing bodies are reflective of the characteristics of people who experience homelessness in Los Angeles.

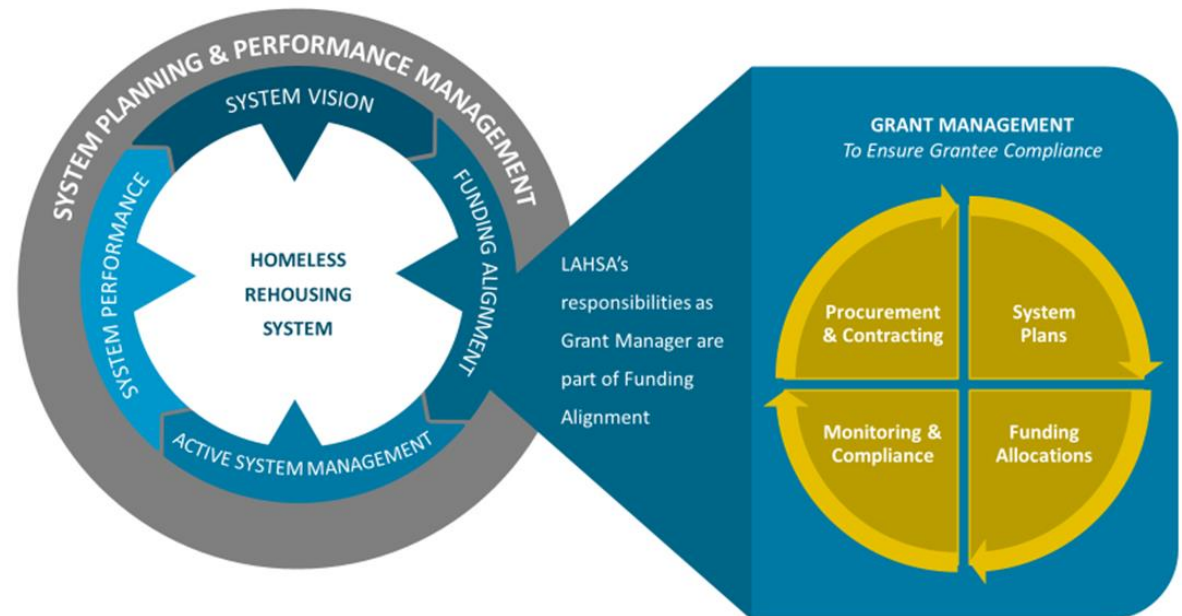
Summary of Recommendations

1) Operations

Complete implementation of the strategic plan to strengthen operations:

- **Contract and Payment Issues**
- **Communications** (including data transparency and government relations)
- **Equity Practices**
- **People with Lived Expertise**
- **Direct Connection with Subregional Leaders**

LAHSA is a System Administrator



2) Establish Role Clarity

- LAHSA should work with **the LAHSA Commission, the Continuum of Care Board, the Coordinated Entry System Policy Council, and the Lived Experience Advisory Board to establish clarity** as to when they have decision-making authority, when they are acting in an advisory capacity, and when they are workgroups making recommendations on specific policy/program areas.
- The **Regional Homelessness Advisory Council (RHAC) no longer serves its originally intended purpose, and therefore is recommended to be dissolved** after the process to map and document roles and responsibilities for the four priority groups discussed above is complete. A communications strategy for current RHAC members should be developed and implemented as part of the process for successfully disbanding the group.
- A full analysis of existing workgroups and committees created as part of the LAHSA Commission, the Continuum of Care, the RHAC, and the City and County should be conducted in order to understand any overlap or conflicting mandates and workflows. **Extraneous workgroups should then be dissolved and membership in newly created or existing workgroups should be reviewed** to ensure that they are comprised of appropriate subject matter experts, including people with lived expertise.

LAHSA Commission

The role of the Commission and its members can be immediately clarified and changes can be made to build a stronger connection between the Commission and elected officials, including the City Council. Recommended actions include:

- Create position descriptions for LAHSA commissioners and officers, including expectations of the positions.
- Develop a characteristics, skills and expertise matrix to aid elected officials in the selection of Commissioners when filling an open seat. Specifically address diversity, inclusion and representation by people of color and people with lived expertise.
- Work with Mayor's Office and City Council to develop a process for filling/confirming City of Los Angeles seats in the future.
- Create an Ad-Hoc Committee on sub-regional planning to address subregional issues and resources.

Create a Bridge

LAHSA should work with **key elected officials (City and County) with jurisdiction over homelessness assistance resources to create a homelessness-specific planning group** to convene regularly while the system-wide structure is in development. This approach will quickly engage important decision-makers to address urgent challenges and lay the groundwork to a regional, system-level approach.

3) Support System Administration and Develop System-Wide Vision and Goals

Leaders in the homelessness community, including key elected officials, **should undertake a system-level review to identify goals/vision for the system as a whole, clarify public and private sector roles, and tie LAHSA's work to its key partners within mainstream and affordable housing systems** that intersect with homelessness. It is therefore important that LAHSA be included as a partner along with the City and County as the review is conducted and a new regional structure is developed.

- An assessment of all public and private regional governance structures (including legal agreements) that impact homelessness.
- Identification of a City/County/LAHSA mechanism to develop a robust system approach to ending homelessness in Los Angeles through development of shared goals/metrics and vision to drive decision-making and resource allocation.
- A review of LAHSA's legal authority to ensure it can successfully carry out its role.

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