

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS KATHRYN BARGER
AND JANICE HAHN

JANUARY 23, 2024

COORDINATING FAITH-BASED OUTREACH IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

The County of Los Angeles (County) has a long engagement of working together with a variety of faith-based organizations (FBOs) and houses of worship (HoW) in a shared goal of serving communities and vulnerable populations in need. The County has partnered with these faith groups to share information and resources to support a variety of vulnerable populations such as people experiencing homelessness, low-income residents, foster youth, and more. Traditionally, this outreach has been established and organized by individual departments and agencies.

On September 25, 2018, the Board of Supervisors (Board) voted on a motion by Supervisor Barger to direct the Center for Strategic Partnerships and the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to develop a coordinated Faith-Based engagement strategy and program, including exploring hiring a faith-based consultant in partnership with philanthropy, develop measures and data collection methods, and explore creating a centralized faith-based section within DCFS.

On January 5, 2021, the Board passed “Promoting Faith Community Involvement in the Countywide Movement to Prevent and Combat Homelessness.” This motion directed a consultant to conduct a Countywide survey of FBOs who have worked on addressing homelessness, and to identify from the results of the survey what capacity building and development supports are essential, financial, and structural barriers that exist for these FBOs, and identify financial supports. The motion also asks the consultant to make recommendations on the creation of a County Faith Commission on Homelessness.

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On May 17, 2022, the Board passed “Coordinating Faith-Based Outreach by County Departments” which directed the Chief Executive Officer to work with the Center for Strategic Partnerships, representatives from several County departments, the Los Angeles Housing Services Authority (LAHSA), philanthropy, and FBOs and Houses of Worship (HoW), to assess existing needs and opportunities for the County to develop a robust and comprehensive partnership with FBOs to serve the County’s most vulnerable populations. A report back with recommendations was issued on May 19, 2023, and June 9, 2023, based on 12 Listening Sessions conducted across the County in all Supervisorial Districts. A landscape analysis was also conducted of local, regional, and national faith-based/governmental models.

The result of this feedback helped to give a clear direction ahead for the County to best work to coordinate faith-based outreach across County departments in a more strategic and less siloed way. Aligning the work of various county departments and advisory bodies into one cohesive team that has a clear mission and maximizes community engagement will help in ensuring the County can best work with FBOs, Community-Based Organizations, and HoW to facilitate a supportive and nurturing environment for our most vulnerable and impacted residents.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), in consultation with the Center for Strategic Partnerships, and all other relevant departments to:

1. Report back to the Board in 90 days with an analysis of establishing a Community Engagement Office (Office) for Los Angeles County’s (County) internal coordination and external interfacing with Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs)/Houses of Worship (HoW) and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs). The analysis should also contain a recommendation for the most appropriate department for the Office to reside in. It is envisioned that this office would include staffing, liaise between County departments and the Interfaith and Religious Partnership (I&RP), coordinate outreach efforts and initiatives across departments, have common goals and outcomes, convene trainings, capacity building efforts and technical assistance to better understand and engage with the County, and monitor progress made by County initiatives. The Office should:
 - a. Explore coordinating the exchange of information and serving as a clearinghouse, including, but not limited to, updated listings of County services and resources, unmet community needs, service gaps, demographic and other data, and best practices and lessons learned from across the County and other jurisdictions.

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- b. Explore, in conjunction with County Counsel and with Equity in Contracting, the establishment of uniform Countywide guidelines for departments to address questions raised regarding church/state separation and clarify how CBOs/FBOs/HoW should be able to do business with the County and/or compete for solicitations like any other business vendor.
 - c. Explore the standardization and feasibility of using Master Agreements across all County departments a vendor approach to solicitations from CBOs/FBOs/HoW partnerships.
 - d. Explore the feasibility of reimbursing CBOs/FBOs/HoW for their costs associated with County collaboration, by reducing administrative burden, insurance requirements, address contracting inefficiencies, and expand access, similar to the model implemented in the City of Pasadena that reimburses their members for the [Clergy Community Coalition](#) when asked to open their facilities for individuals unhoused during inclement weather.
 - e. Provide landscape analysis or inventory of existing partnerships within County departments. Additionally, explore piloting and expanding partnership programs that prove to be successful in different parts of Supervisorial Districts, in partnership with the I&RP.
2. Encourage the convening of an independent network of interfaith councils as a building block for establishing more formal working relationships. An independent, Countywide I&RP structure can establish its' own structure and timing and help to ensure a coordinated entity to help ensure that the Office is a success and connected to all FBOs/HoW and CBOs.
3. Explore the need for resources and reallocating existing County resources as well as the identification of non-County funding options that could help establish a new Office and encourage support from philanthropy in the creation of a backbone and assist the independent Countywide I&RP to help build new relationships with the County.

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