



# County of Los Angeles CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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April 19, 2022

To: Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell, Chair  
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Supervisor Sheila Kuehl  
Supervisor Janice Hahn  
Supervisor Kathryn Barger

From: Lesley Blacher, Acting Executive Director *LB*  
Jail Closure Implementation Team

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## **SAFELY REDUCING THE JAIL POPULATION BY EXPANDING COMMUNITY-BASED SYSTEM OF CARE FOR CISGENDER WOMEN, TWO SPIRIT, LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, QUESTIONING, AND TRANSGENDER, GENDER NON-CONFORMING AND/OR INTERSEX INDIVIDUALS (ITEM NO. 18, AGENDA OF OCTOBER 19, 2021)**

On October 19, 2021, the Board of Supervisors (Board) approved a motion in support of the Gender Responsive Advisory Committee's (GRAC) report and directed the Jail Closure Implementation Team (JCIT) Executive Director to report back every 90 days on JCIT's efforts to prioritize and implement GRAC recommendations that further their mandate to decrease the jail population and close Men's Central Jail (MCJ), expand the community-based system of care for cisgender women, two spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, questioning, transgender, gender non-conforming and/or intersex (2S-LGBQ+TGI) people, develop a scope of work for a consultant to complete an updated population study of Century Regional Detention Facility (CRDF) and the K6-G units at MCJ, and work with Correctional Health Services and Gender Responsive Services on the prioritization of recommendations that promote gender responsive, trauma-informed services and programming for those that do not immediately qualify for release from custody.

On January 19, 2022, JCIT filed its first status report and subsequently, as directed by your Board, will continue to provide status updates every 90 days. In response, this report will serve as the second quarterly report to provide updates on the status of the directives from the October 19, 2021 motion.

### **GRAC Report Recommendations**

Since the last report, JCIT has continued to meet regularly with the Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI) Office and Office of Diversion and Reentry (ODR) to inform our efforts to develop programming for the diversion and reentry of incarcerated cisgender women. Additionally, JCIT has remained invested in understanding the jail population through engagement at the GRAC and Jail Population Review Council public meetings and is scheduled to present on jail depopulation efforts at each respective meeting this month.

To advance the GRAC recommendations, JCIT completed a matrix that pairs them with ATI's Prevention and Reentry Recommendations as aligned with the Sequential Intercept Model and JCIT's current and proposed initiatives, and recommendations from collaborative partners. The matrix includes input from the Director of the Sheriff's Department's Gender Response Services, Dr. Melissa Kelley, and Correctional Health Services (CHS) Medical Director, Dr. Sean Henderson, and Director of Addiction Medicine Services, Ronnie Thomas, to further refine and prioritize the recommendation categories. The recommendation matrix is dynamic and will be updated regularly as roundtable conversations with incarcerated persons at CRDF and K6-G units occur, and will target and map select GRAC recommendations for implementation.

### **Engagement**

JCIT has cultivated positive working relationships with representatives from the Sheriff's Department and CHS, which has provided direct opportunities for the team to obtain firsthand experience with the jail facilities and their operations and programming. On March 18, 2022, accompanied by the Office of Inspector General's Assistant Inspector General Cathleen Beltz, JCIT toured the Forensic Inpatient Stepdown Unit at Twin Towers Correctional Facility. The unit houses men who were previously treated in the Forensic Inpatient Hospital for exhibiting symptoms of severe mental illness but have been stabilized through psychiatric interventions and are learning to live in a structured, yet supportive environment, aided by psychiatric technicians and inmates serving as trusted messengers in the role of mental health assistants.

During the visit, JCIT also met with staff from CHS' Addiction Medicine Services and the Sheriff's Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) team. To minimize substance abuse and overdose, the MAT team works to encourage medication compliance by inmates using FDA-approved medications coupled with counseling and behavioral therapies to treat substance use disorders, such as opioid use disorder and alcohol use disorder. JCIT toured the K6-G unit and observed a classroom that was participating in Substance Treatment And Reentry Transition (START) programming. The Los Angeles Centers for Alcohol and Drug Abuse (LA CADA), the START contracted provider, offers substance

use disorder programming, discharge planning, and court advocacy for the gay, bisexual, and transgender people housed in the K6-G units.

Additionally, JCIT is convening regular meetings with the District Attorney (DA), Public Defender (PD), Alternate Public Defender, ODR, and Vera Institute of Justice to identify a process and procedure to prioritize the pretrial release of women housed at CRDF. Case-review conferences have begun to evaluate the circumstances of pregnant women in custody to determine if a community setting can appropriately meet the needs of the individual without increasing the risk to public safety. The DA has secured placement and supportive resources for this specific population. Additionally, the PD has started to identify cases of women in custody who are not pregnant to help facilitate similar case-review conferences.

JCIT is also working with the County department leads identified in the November 16, 2021 report to expand existing contractual relationships with community-based organizations to provide housing and necessary supportive services to facilitate the release of more women from custody. In March of 2018, your Board directed ODR to divert pregnant women from the jail, whenever possible and through court interventions, and provide them with supportive housing and Reentry Intensive Case Management Services (RICMS). ODR Housing relies on an existing patchwork of funding to provide interim and permanent supportive housing and needs additional funds to expand services. To maximize ODR's capacity, JCIT has committed to fund ODR's Maternal Health Program through Fiscal Year 2023-2024 to expand its portfolio of housing options with the goal of serving more women and creating additional service capacity in the ODR clinical supportive housing programs.

Further, JCIT has sought additional community engagement opportunities with LA CADA, Anti-Recidivism Coalition, and Homeboy Industries, in addition to maintaining reoccurring contact with stakeholders, of which, many are members of GRAC and/or have lived experience or advocate for those with lived experience, including: Dignity and Power Now, La Defensa, Vera Institute of Justice, A New Way of Life, Health Right 360, and the Trans Latina Coalition.

### **Scope of Work for Consultant**

With technical guidance from the Chief Information Officer and Dr. Melissa Kelley, JCIT developed a scope of work for an academic/research institution to conduct a population study on the cisgender women and 2S-LGBQ+TGI populations for those housed at CRDF and in the K6-G units at MCJ. A racial equity focus will inform the population study and incorporate focus groups for the purpose of determining, but not limited to, the social, behavioral, and health needs of incarcerated individuals and how they relate to the GRAC

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recommendations in coordination with jail programming to address those needs and mitigate unfavorable outcomes. The academic/research institution will be expected to produce an analysis and final written report and a presentation synthesizing all statistical findings and focus group outcomes that address the conditions of those that are detained, as well as provide another facet in which to assess the prioritization of the GRAC recommendations. Currently, JCIT is working with the Chief Executive Office Contracts Section on a solicitation process to procure the academic/research institution.

### **Next Steps**

JCIT will continue to work with the Board offices, County departments, Board-established initiatives, and community stakeholders to move forward with the recommendations in the GRAC report and directives contained in the October 19, 2021 motion and provide a status update every 90 days. Should you have any questions, please contact me at (213) 262-7989 or [lblacher@ceo.lacounty.gov](mailto:lblacher@ceo.lacounty.gov).

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c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors  
County Counsel