

Lake Forest Homelessness Town Hall

Questions submitted by the public on May 18, 2022

Updated June 28, 2022

1. Tech has made van life builds the most efficient way to live. Are you working on initiatives to make this safe and acceptable?

The City is not working on a van residency initiative. Lake Forest is working with nonprofit partners [Community HousingWorks](#) and [National CORE](#) to help provide adequate housing for those in need.

2. With all this new development going on, our children population has increased. How is the school district helping to service the additional influx of more children in impacted schools?

The City does not have influence over Saddleback Valley Unified School District. For information about school-related issues, contact SVUSD at (949) 470-4885.

3. Is Lake Forest considering a community center for homelessness or at-risk? This will provide a haven and connect individuals with resources.

Lake Forest is working with local community partners and government agencies to help individuals who are at-risk or facing homelessness be connected to support services and programs. The City is not considering a center at this time.

4. In total, how much in annual city funds does the City of Lake Forest spend on the nonprofits to reduce homelessness? Has this amount increased annually for the last five years, and by how much?

Annually, the City receives federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for the purpose of developing viable urban communities for persons of low to moderate-income. The federal CDBG program allocates 15 percent of the annual grant to public services. The City Council allocates the maximum allowed (15 percent) to nonprofits that provide public services. CDBG allocations to nonprofit public service providers in the past three years were as follows: FY 2022-2023: \$76,461 (15% of \$509,742); FY 2021-2022: \$77,000 (15% of \$513,604); FY: 2020-2021: \$195,232 (38% of \$513,771 *The City received separate CDBG funds for pandemic response).

The amount of CDBG funding received varies from year to year. However, 15 percent (the maximum) is also allocated to nonprofit public service providers.

The City also contracts with Mercy House to provide ongoing homeless outreach and case management services. The contract with Mercy House has a total cost of

approximately \$82,000 to \$88,000 per year. These annual costs are offset by grant funds Mercy House may receive from the State or other government agencies. The City pays for the cost of Mercy House contract out of the General Fund.

5. A few speakers talked about people who are homeless who do not want help. But is that always true? Or is it that the services being offered are not what every homeless person needs?

Individuals facing homelessness have different needs. Some are service-resistant, but most seek helpful resources. The City relies on a team of specially trained sheriff's deputies who work with outreach workers from [Mercy House](#). The team works to get to know local homeless individuals to gain their trust and persuade them to enter appropriate housing or treatment programs.

6. What could Lake Forest do in the next one to five years that would help improve the housing supply in our City?

Lake Forest is already working toward improving housing in the community. The City is partnering with [Community HousingWorks](#) and [National CORE](#) to provide nearly 130 affordable housing units to low-income individuals and families. Both housing projects broke ground this year.

7. How can we as a community bridge the gap of compassion from residence to projects?

The community can engage in public outreach opportunities, tour the City's housing projects, and learn about the services provided. Residents are also encouraged to research the issues and support proposals for affordable housing or other initiatives that come before the City Council. The Council's agendas are posted at <https://www.lakeforestca.gov/129/Agendas>.

8. With the coming recession, what is Lake Forest doing to prepare for greater homeless needs?

The City will continue its efforts with local nonprofits and government partners to ensure support is provided to those receptive to services.

9. If someone calls 211, what is the average time that it takes to find adequate housing for the caller? A shelter does not count.

The average varies across all cities in California. The waitlists are long due to the limited supply of housing. Housing is also segmented for different populations, such as veterans or families, so that can affect wait times, as well.

10. Are for-profit service providers part of the City's caregiving partnerships? If so, what role do they play?

The City does not partner with for-profit services.

11. What is your answer to the lack of housing for the 90 percent of voucher holders who can't find an apartment?

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, vouchers matched the market rate but with higher rents, vouchers are below the rate. The county and local nonprofits are working diligently to help the most vulnerable find homes.

12. What percentage of homeless people/families have pets that need assistance? How the Pet Adoption Center of the OC partner with other community organizations to best assist those affected?

The [National Coalition for the Homeless](#) estimates that 5 to 10 percent of people have pets while experiencing homelessness. Nonprofits are working towards instilling programs and housing that accept them and their animals. Visit [Families Forward](#), [National CORE](#), and other local community organizations to learn how to assist.

13. The state has proposed establishing a Care Court in all 58 counties. This would allow an assigned judge to order a treatment plan for the homeless who suffer from psychosis or severe drug addiction—which would require compliance. The bills are AB2830 and SB1338. Is the Lake Forest government going to support this legislation to help end homelessness?

The City of Lake Forest will support any legislation passed that takes a compassionate approach to reducing homelessness and its impact on the community.