

Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles  
Board of Commissioners Regular Meeting  
**Public Comment**  
September 24, 2020

**Item VI. A1 – HACLA/LAPD CSP Update**

**Pico Gardens Resident Advisory Council**

Many people confuse LAPD and CSP, but it is a program created by the Housing Authority and LAPD for public housing communities. Perhaps the program works in some communities, but in Pico, we are opposed to the presence of CSP since it does not satisfy the needs of the community. We do not agree with the approval of funds for this program. There are no real results that can convince us that the program is good. You need an expert evaluation. Also, there are many needs for other programs for youth and seniors that would benefit better than just giving the money to CSP.

**Item VI. A2 – 2020 Cares Act Funding Expenditure Plan**

**Pico Gardens Resident Advisory Council**

We know that the Congress allocated more funds for vouchers to help people through these difficult days affected by the COVID-19. We are requesting support for our children to take classes at home. They are having a difficult time with the Internet. We need the support of HACLA to hire another company for the Internet service that at present is too slow. There is a very bad signal reception and it is very expensive. Always remember it is food or internet payment. It is urgent! Please!

**Item VI. A4 – Section 8 HCV Leasing Report**

**Chearon Raye**

Assistant Housing Manager, William Mead Homes

With respect to the Customer Care Center that is allegedly a proposal, although we are seeing actions that will have one believe that it is not a proposal but yet a project well under its way with the idea that it will be up and running by next year. I am confused about how this has come to be when HACLA is a UNION agency and there was no meet and confer. In addition, I am VERY concerned on how it will affect staff, our residents, and our yearly High Performance achievements.

Having a call center and pulling staff from other parts of the agency will ultimately hinder our ability to get our work done efficiently and correctly. I state this because my understanding in that we would be pulling at least four QCA's from our existing staff and sending them to a call center, allocating two more to Special Programs, thereby, leaving only four QCA's to quality check hundreds of files each. There is no way to expect efficiency when one person has such a heavy caseload. The work will be rushed trying to meet productivity and hence we will all suffer as an agency.

As for the Public Housing side, it has been more of a nightmare just dealing with COVID 19 and having residents walk across the street to our office and drop forms off in the mail slot. Can you imagine the delays if residents actually had to mail their paperwork in, which 9/10 times is always incomplete and then the length of time it would take to go back and forth with them via mail to comply? Our backlog rates will increase tremendously, which would also hinder any possibility of being a high performing agency.

It is my wish that HACLA would take more time to investigate this call center, the lack of protocol that was not followed, and ask the pertinent questions that one must act to insure that this is actually conducive to HACLA's mission of providing affordable housing not Customer Service to our most vulnerable population. In addition, one cannot look at productivity nor our lease up rate at a time of a pandemic. We

that have been at HACLA know that the table always swings our way in a time of crisis and landlords reach out to us to seek participants knowing that they will have guaranteed money from HACLA.

Just some things, I am hoping you all the BOC will take into consideration when considering an idea of a Customer Service Call Center. I am hoping that you will take into consideration how this will hinder our residents, our staff, and most of all our HACLA mission

Thank you for your time.

**Latrice Stingly**

Eligibility Interviewer & Vice President of AFSCME Local 143

Good Morning to the Commissioners and Mr. Guthrie.

My name is Latrice Stingly and I am an Eligibility Interviewer here at HACLA and the Vice President of AFSCME Local143. I am here to state my concerns regarding the lack of consideration and the disregard of Management's neglect in fulfilling their obligations in making sure HACLA is working at its full capacity. Our sole purpose is to serve and house low income families and do it with great care and to the best of our abilities. But this can only be accomplished when there are people to do the work. And there is a tremendous amount of work to be done here at HACLA.

Because we are living in unprecedented, unknown times; and we are, does not stop our purpose although difficult at times. But here lately, Management thinks that adopting a Customer Contact Center is more important than doing the work; ensuring that clients/customers/owners receive great customer service by fulfilling their needs. This includes lease ups, reviews, interviewing, and etc. But this cannot be attained if there is a lack; a lack of people to do work; a lack of consideration of employees doing the work. I am perplexed and appalled at the unjustified attitude of Management literally holding positions hostage and not filling vacant permanent/temp positions. It is impossible for two people in a contracting unit to do the work of five people, for example. This is irresponsible and stressful for our members. Management has also stalled the interviewing process by neglecting to draw down from the S8 waitlist since March, ultimately stopping/holding progress of housing people. Therefore, decreasing the numbers for lease-up in the S8 program. Is this great customer service that HACLA wants to pride itself on? I think not. Mr. Guthrie, commissioners we need positions filled right now. There is not enough people to do the work. The work is important but it is suffering and so are we. It hasn't gone away nor will it go away in the future. These times also demand great patience and understanding toward our clients. And it should be given to them.

Having a unit to answer phones is great. But answering phones doesn't place a roof over someone's head or maintain one. However, having someone doing the work to fulfill this task does and should be our first priority and obligation.

Commissioners, thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I would like to invite all of you to a virtual meeting to discuss this matter and more since we must maintain social distancing.

**Nina Mosby**

Sr. Community Case Manager, Section 8

I've decided to send this email regarding the history of my position. I'm still beside myself with the raise AHM's received so if they must assist with the QC now, I'm o.k. with that.

In 2007 HACLA was going into Receivership, the only way to keep HACLA out of Receivership was to add Quality Control to Section 8 Pre-Voucher and Contracting. This was what was agreed upon with HUD. The only position already contractual approved, which had the supervisory authority over E.I.'s and Advisor's

was the Sr. Community Case Manager Position. Sr. Community Case Mgr.'s were put in place in 2008, to bring up the SEMAP Scores and to keep HACLA from going into Receivership. Sr. Community Case Mgr.'s were responsible to QC all SEC 8 Pre-Voucher/Intake Files and all Contract Files for final approval. During this time AHM's were only required to QC 10% of their staff (E.I. & Advisor) files which did not help with the SEMAP Scores.

I was hired as a Sr. Community Case Mgr. (2008-2014) since I've been in this position, our SEMAP Scores have been perfect, my programs SEC 8 (Pre-Voucher), Homeless and VASH (Pre-Voucher & Contract). My Sr. Community Case Manager title changed to Quality Control Assistant in 2014, which removed the supervisory job description from our title to focus on quality control. We are the reason for HACLA SEMAP Ratings being high and why we did not go into Receivership in 2008. The programs I currently QC are VASH (Pre-Voucher & Contracts), PBV (Pre-Voucher & Re-Contract), TBSh (Pre-Voucher & Re-Contract) & LAUSD (Pre-Voucher & Contract). If I were to be removed than AHM's will have to quality control those 4 programs to keep the SEMAP Score High.

Quality controlling a program is not an easy task and the amount of errors that come across my desk if not fixed would lower the SEMAP Score and HACLA may return to being looked at for Receivership. Common errors are Income Calculation, Lease Dates, and Documentation within 60 days and Rent Calculations. These errors effect how much a tenant would pay for rent which is a detriment to our programs and to why we are here.

I hope this information give knowledge to the background of the QCA's.

**Deondre Harris**

Quality Control Assistant, Section 8

I feel that the proposal to take QCA's away from the general pool of work is unfair. We receive countless emails from the CEO, Carlos Van Natter and others giving this agency praise for the hard work that we do but without an understanding of how it gets done. I feel that the plan QCA's for this call center, and not replace them is a slap in the face to those who all work tireless to maintain our workload and this agency's reputation of being a "high performer." The saying goes "If it isn't broke, don't fix it." It appears as though people are more concerned about themselves and just creating something just to say they did it with no regard for those who are involved. Perhaps the focus should be put toward hiring more staff as opposed to taking away. When people retire, you are not hiring people to replace them that's what's meant by taking away. The Administration hires more higher positions than the baseline that do the real day to day work. Please stop saying you care about us because it's evident that you don't and show us that you do. Thank you.

**Monica Laurent**

Quality Control Assistant, Section 8

To whom it may concern:

I, Monica Laurent, truly believe if you were to remove a Quality Control position from each department the SEMAP will surely drop. The 2 position are there for a reason, It's not fair for the person left behind in that department to carry on a work load for 2 people. It's only fair to remove all Quality control positions and put them in the call center or see who would like to go. Start over with a new team of Quality control assistants for each department, we can be called Quality Control Assistants 1 and 2. Also, the Quality Control assistant that are left behind will they have the same pay as the ones that are leaving?

**Maria Castaneda**

Quality Control Assistant, Section 8

Through the eyes of a Quality Control Assistant we want to make Administration aware how we view our role and our contribution to this agency. By allowing us to continue to perform our duties, you are allowing us to help prevent another SEMAP error and sometimes another lawsuit against the agency.

The times we have sent a file back for corrections for an error such as IHSS income included for a developmentally disabled household is numerous. Whether it's because staff is overwhelmed with work or didn't know how to apply policy, we are there to make sure the Section 8 family will only be responsible for the portion they are entitled to. We never want to burden a family with a larger portion due to an employee's mistake. QCA's are there to make sure every "i" has been dotted and every "t" has been crossed. We want the program to work the way it was intended and that is to serve the public that is most in need.

The last training the agency provided to staff was almost 6 years ago in November of 2014. A lot of the current staff has not received any training because they were hired after 2014. As QCA's we take a proactive approach in our work and further explain to staff policies, procedures and regulations. Staff is confident that when we cite them for an error or if they have a question, we are able to back up our reply with the most current PPFT and assist them. We take pride in our work and when we sign off on a file we are confident that staff has properly processed the file with the current policies and guidelines. If a file is requested for SEMAP or a hearing, we are confident in the contents of the file.

By continuing to allow us to perform our work, you are not just assisting staff to make sure we are in compliance with HUD but also serving properly the most vulnerable in our community. We are proud of the contribution we have so far been able to provide to this agency and the Section 8 families we serve and hope Administration allows us to continue instead of jeopardizing our positions.

**Gabriela Virgen**

Quality Control Assistant, Section 8

We wanted to bring to your attention the concerns we have as Quality Control Assistants. It is our understanding that management is pushing forward with the Customer Contact Center because they believe that it will help with our customer service and that they are proposing to fill the center by pulling staff from each department. From a Quality Control Assistant point of view this would be detrimental to what we do. We are responsible for making sure that staff is following all policies and procedures properly and that all rent calculations are being done correctly. Our job is tedious, very important and must be done. Our position has led to high SEMAP scores and High Performer Status. Reducing the number of Quality Control Assistants reviewing files to staff the CCC would jeopardize this. It would also be unfair to the QCA left behind to QC the work that was previously done by more than one QCA. If the argument is that the current numbers show a reduced amount of work, then it would be unfair and inappropriate do take that into account at this time since it is undoubtedly due to the unprecedented and temporary situation of the pandemic. The volume of work will eventually grow back to normal once Covid 19 is behind us. If staff is reduced when that happens and becomes overwhelmed, then our customer service will definitely suffer as a result.

## **Ashley Winston**

Assistant Housing Manager, Housing Services- Rancho San Pedro

I am really against the centralized phone system for housing services, I believe that centralizing our phone calls will

- Disrupt our ability to address resident concerns in real time
- Increase in person office visits
- Decrease continuity of service
- Increase avenues for fraud
- Increase tenant complaints when performing job duties around the site

Which Housing Services staff are they trying to re assign to the phone bank?

If they are trying to pull our Management clerks, I am adamantly against it. Management clerks play a vital role in the daily operations at the site, they not only answer tenant phone calls, they manage the movement of office visitors, file and prepare annual recertification, distribute mail, translate and disseminate correspondences, maintain tenant files, send vacate files and a host of other activities that support our customer service efforts. Within Housing Services we operate with a skeleton crew and any changes to our current staffing will negatively affect our ability to perform our job duties.

If downtown is looking to increase our abilities to meet our customers' needs they should expand the efforts of the work order center. In our current system tenants call the work order center to schedule and request service only. This office should

- schedule maintenance appointments within a particular time frame instead of 24hr for Emergency , 72hrs Urgent or 25 days for Routine
- take complaints if service is not completed to satisfaction
- provide information if residents need follow up information on service
- monitoring irregularity of service
- tracking reoccurring service request, so we can better focus large scale projects

The work order center should be working closely with our Maintenance Supervisors so we can increase our ability to meet the needs of our residents.

**Billye Fairley**, President

Council of Housing Professionals- Administration

Good Day Commissioners,

During last month's meeting you were told by Management that there are a little over 43,000 contracts in the Section 8 Department. This month you are being presented with a chart that is supposed to explain how this happened during a time where HACLA is doing all it can to preserve housing.

I am not sure where Management received their numbers, however I can tell you that the numbers that I am presenting were received by going to each office. The numbers I am presenting can be easily verified and are as follows:

Section 8 West - 8566 Contracts

Section 8 East - 9203 Contracts

Section 8 Valley - 8171 Contracts

Section 8 South - 9299 Contracts

Special Programs Operations (SPO) - 8069 Contracts

Special Programs Applications (SPA) - 5360 Contracts.

**Totaling 48,668 contracts.**

This does not include the contracts that are in the pending stages in the Incoming and Outgoing Portability Offices and Applications Processing Interviewing Contracting (APIC) Office. Those numbers would take us close to 50,000. In addition Housing Services has approximately 6,288 occupied units and over 2000 applicants waiting to be housed.

Last month Ms. Margarita Lares stated that HACLA is still on its way to being a high performer without having adequate staffing to do the work. This is true because, as mentioned last month, remaining staff has been working relentlessly to do the work in anticipation of soon receiving the necessary assistance. With the subtraction of staff and Management's decline to sign the P1/P2s to replace them until the CCC is operational, there is sure to be a decrease in production at some point. We want to prevent that.

Management has stated that they will remove 30 employees from various departments; not replace them; staff a whole new department and not negatively impact all involved. We disagree. We believe that less staff to process the files the fewer people we will be able to provide with housing.

Management stated that there are fewer applicants coming through the pipeline. We found out that this is because the March 2020 drawdown (**the process where people are called off the waitlist to be interviewed for a voucher**) of 500 applicants was not mailed out until August 2020 due to closing of the office to the public. In addition to this, another drawdown of 600 was done in September (**There was no drawdown from April to August**). That is a total of 1100 applicants to be processed. Those applicants will need to be interviewed and possibly contracted but definitely QC'd. We need staffing in order to do this properly. With less staff, fewer people will be housed during this most crucial environment of COVID-19.

**Anna Berberian**

Manager IV, Section 8 West

Due to the word restraints in place I am continuing CHPs-A submission under my name:

Commissioners, it is likely that you are asking why the Union is bringing this matter before you when you have approved this action. I am presenting this information to you now because the Unions were not given the opportunity to voice the concerns of the impact of the CCC on our Members prior to Management presenting it to you for approval. CHPs-M and AFSCME expressed this as well. Neither of them had a meet and confer. The Unions began meeting with Management on the idea of the CCC last year but came to no agreements. Although we were still in the meeting stage, the plan was submitted for approval. Management has now declared that they cannot hire new staff based on the approved plan. (See the attached emails).

As I expressed last month, we are not against a call center. Customer service can always be improved upon. In reality, HACLA has over 100,000 clients. This includes Tenants, Owners and outside agencies. With over 100,000 clients I believe our customer complaint ratio is less than 1%.

Management wants to revamp an agency that has with good customer service and a high performance rating. Staff assures that HACLA provide decent, safe and sanitary housing for low income families. Does Management want to move them around so that they can provide better telephone service? If you surveyed the applicants/clients I believe they would prefer the housing.

Commissioners, CHPs-A, CHPs-M and AFSCME have all expressed a desire to meet with you via zoom or another platform in order to further express our concerns.

Thank you for your time.

#### **Item VI. A5 – Disposition and Development Agreement for Pueblo Del Sol Phase I**

**Leonardo Vilchis** From Union de Vecinos

I have been asked by the Pueblo del Sol Residents association to present the attached documents. In addition I have the following comments regarding Item VI5.

The residents of Pueblo del Sol are not opposed to change, what they are asking is for guarantees.

A guarantee that they will be able to stay in the development during remodeling if there are no major changes in their property.

A guarantee that if they have to move temporarily that they will get enough advance notice of 6 months and guarantee that they will be able to return to the development.

In addition, the residents are requesting a guarantee that there will no relocation as long as the COVID crisis continues.

Before the pandemic crisis Residents of Pueblo del Sol, through the residents association were in communication with representatives of HACLA and in constant communication to address concerns. The communication has become more difficult under COVID. It is important that a good solid communication be established and that residents' concerns be addressed in a meaningful manner.

We are concerned that some residents will not be able to return into the development because changes in family size, or because the need for downsizing the apartment for which they qualify. Residents are not clear on that, and it would be extremely beneficial both to the tenants and HACLA to address this issue as soon as possible. But if the guarantee to stay in spite of these changes still stands it would also help to confirm this for all residents.

Also we are concerned about the background checks. We are concerned that background checks may be used to disqualify tenants unnecessarily. All residents in the development have already demonstrated their qualifications through the last years of residing in the development without any problems. This should be enough as background evidence.

Union de Vecinos has been asking for an individual agreement for every family explaining in detail the type of repairs or changes that are going to be made on their unit, whether they are going to need to relocate temporarily and the potential length of time. In addition, an agreement guaranteeing their return. If HACLA, or Related feel that the family would benefit for a permanent relocation a clear offer with options for relocation so the residents can choose without any pressure or anxiety. We believe that acting in good faith and timely transparency will help this project

#### **Item VII. General Public Comment**

**Daisy Vega**, Mar Vista Gardens  
POWER

I believe HACLA should hire an independent specialized task force that deals with sexual harassment and domestic violence case. The current system of dealing with such issues is ineffective and fails to provide assistance to the victims. As a victim myself, I can attest to the sheer lack of attention HACLA has for victims and their cases. It is extremely important to create an effective transparent system for reporting and

executing sexual harassment and domestic violence cases. The Vanessa Guillen case shows how an ineffective reporting system can be damaging and potentially life threatening if not taken seriously.