

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Kristen Aster

**Date Submitted:** 09/20/2022 04:13 PM

**Council File No:** 22-0979

**Comments for Public Posting:** One of Los Angeles County's largest housing and social services agencies and present in every Service Planning Area (SPA), The People Concern is an expert in connecting with people on the streets, bringing them inside and then keeping them inside. 93% of people placed in permanent housing by The People Concern never experience homelessness again. The People Concern works with some of the most high acuity people experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles County. During our 2020-2021 fiscal year, our Mental Health Teams served 998 program participants, provided 42,016 mental health services, and provided 2,709 psychiatric services. The People Concern supports council files 22-0979 and 22-0978 to further examine and plan for strengthening unarmed responses for certain emergencies as part of an effort to reimagine public safety. The agency believes, based on its extensive experience, that trained mental health and crisis response professionals are best positioned to respond to people experiencing homelessness who are having non-violent crises associated with their mental health or substance use condition. The agency appreciates the efforts of the city to explore new ways of addressing these calls, which can help target care appropriately while also allowing armed public safety to more appropriately use their resources to respond to other incidents in the city. Furthermore, one driver of homelessness is interactions with the criminal justice system, including both the financial implications of these interactions and the connection between exiting incarceration and homelessness. Reducing the likelihood that individuals who need care end up being targets of enforcement can help reduce homelessness, particularly among communities of color who both are disproportionately represented among people experiencing homelessness and disproportionately represented among the justice-impacted. The People Concern welcomes evaluation of these programs and encourages the city to engage with service providers as well as people who have interacted with both these pilots and traditional response systems to refine the next iterations of their design and implementation. The agency also encourages greater integration with existing service provider systems. Stronger resourcing, engagement, and integration will strengthen the potential impact of these pilots. We urge your support of these motions.