



October 10, 2023

House LA Citizens Oversight Committee
Los Angeles City Hall
200 N Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Cc: Jenna Hornstock, Deputy Mayor of Housing, Office of Mayor Karen Bass
Cc: Ann Sewill, General Manager, LA Housing Department
Cc: Greg Good, Senior Advisor, LA Housing Department

RE: October 11, 2023 Agenda for The House LA Citizens Oversight Committee

Dear Members of the House LA Citizens Oversight Committee:

The Citizens Oversight Committee agenda for October includes important items that proposes approvals for updates to the Interim Program Guidelines requested by City Council for programs funded under the \$150 million expenditure plan approved earlier this year for six of the eleven ULA programs. Importantly, this progress comes on the heels of the completion of the initial application period for the ULA Short-Term Emergency Assistance program. Additionally, this agenda begins the process to develop and approve Permanent Program Guidelines for all eleven ULA programs, which should be moved forward expeditiously so that full ULA implementation can commence once pending litigation is resolved. In the spirit of achieving the best possible outcomes for both the Interim and Permanent ULA programs, the United to House LA coalition (UHLA) offer the following recommendations:

#1: Create a Strong Permanent Program Guidelines Process Led by the Citizens Oversight Committee

We applaud the Citizens Oversight Committee for advancing the process to establish Permanent Program Guidelines for the eleven ULA programs by establishing a new ad hoc subcommittee. These guidelines will lay the foundation upon which hundreds of millions of dollars of ULA funds will be implemented and will remain in effect for at least three years. This process should uphold the letter of the law outlined in Measure ULA, which starts by identifying the Citizens Oversight Committee as the authority that develops program guidelines.

SEC. 22.618.6 of the statute reads as follows:

The Oversight Committee shall have the authority to: (1) Develop guidelines for prioritizing use of the House LA Funds (“Program Guidelines”).

As such, the United to House LA coalition calls on the Citizens Oversight Committee and its Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Permanent Program Guideline Development to develop a process that centers the development of guidelines within the COC, taking into consideration input from the general public, the United to House LA coalition, and the LA Housing Department's Stakeholder meetings from January 2023.

#2: Maximize Impact for the Multifamily Affordable Housing Accelerator Plus Program

UHLA supports a program that maximizes the number of units that will be produced and as quickly and effectively as possible. These interim guidelines should be approved and implemented immediately. Shovel-ready affordable housing developments are waiting for this very type of funding source to initiate construction and no further delays should stand in the way of producing new homes for Angelenos.

#3: Reallocate funding carefully. Earmark \$12 million of the Income Support program for seniors and/or people with disabilities who have applied for rental assistance under the Short-Term Emergency Assistance program.

The Expenditure Plan proposed to be modified was vetted through a trusted process that spanned over four months. The process to develop the Interim Program Guidelines and Expenditure Plan for the Income Support for Rent-Burdened At-Risk Seniors and Persons with Disabilities went through three public COC meetings during the summer followed by three separate City Council meetings. Decisions made by the COC should only be revisited under significant and urgent circumstances. As the drafters of Measure ULA, the United to House LA coalition intended for decisions made by the Citizens Oversight Committee to be held firm. Along the same lines, we built into the law limitations on the amount of funds that can be reallocated each year. So decisions to change funding plans should be handled carefully. Reallocation of funding should only be considered when all other options have been exhausted.

In this case, the Income Support for Rent-Burdened At-Risk Seniors and Persons with Disabilities ("Income Support") program is likely to take several more months before it is fully off the ground. Instead of delaying the utilization of funds committed to the Income Support program, some of those dollars can be put to use through the Short-Term Emergency Assistance program, which has already begun implementation and has seen overwhelming demand from over 23,000 households seeking over \$300,000,000 in rental assistance. The proposal to reallocate \$12 million would mean \$11 million would remain in the Income Support program that will begin implementation in 2024.

However, we recommend a modification to the proposal from the LA Housing Department.

Because these dollars were originally committed to a program designed specifically for seniors and people living with disabilities, UHLA calls for \$12 million to be allocated ONLY if they are earmarked for applicants of the Short-Term Emergency Assistance program who meet the eligibility requirements and are seniors and/or people living with disabilities.

#4: Pass the Protections from Tenant Harassment staffing and enforcement plan with additions.

Funding to enforce the Tenant Anti-Harassment Ordinance (TAHO) remains a top priority and this staffing and enforcement plan should be approved so that implementation can begin immediately.

In addition to the expenditures outlined in the plan, we recommend that LAHD build and maintain a public dashboard that is updated at least monthly with TAHO complaints, citations and prosecutions, along with the landlords being cited, investigated and litigated against for violations of TAHO.

Sincerely,

United to House LA Coalition Steering Committee

