

**WESTSIDE CITIES**

- BEVERLY HILLS
- CULVER CITY
- LOS ANGELES
- SANTA MONICA
- WEST HOLLYWOOD
- COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

Date: May 13, 2009

TO: Westside Cities Council of Governments

FROM: Gordon R. Anderson, Interim Executive Director

SUBJECT: STATUS OF 2009 ANNUAL ISSUES CONFERENCE

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Governing Board provide feedback to the Homeless Issues Committee on a modified format for the Issues Conference.

Executive Summary

As indicated in the Draft Meeting Notes for the Homeless Issues Committee, it's proposed that the COG effort coordinate with the County in the format of a working session to address a specific topic and create tangible outcomes. This would be more a roll-up your sleeves work session with potential participants to include: COG members, VA staff and leadership, service providers, County DMH staff, County Department of Military and Veterans Affairs staff, HUD staff, and representatives from Congress member Waxman's, Harmon's and Watson's offices and Senator Feinstein's office.

The issue suggested was homeless veterans - particularly as it related to their access to HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing vouchers ([HUD-VASH Vouchers](#)). Potential issues related to that topic include: 1) understanding eligibility of veterans for services and vouchers; 2) ways of addressing some veteran's reluctance to seek services at the VA – including Memorandums Of Agreement's between the VA and other providers (who may already be working with a veteran) to do case management for the VASH program; 3) the VA's position on Housing First and harm reduction; and, 4) the difficulty of finding housing units given the current HUD payment standards.

The Homeless Issues Committee will begin coordinating with LA County on the workshop in June. The workshop will be in the fall.