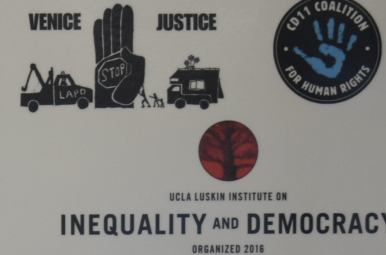


Very Large Expenditure, Very Little Care: Los Angeles' "CARE+" Homeless Services Program in Council District 11

Authors: Peggy Lee Kennedy, Sam Lutzker and Chris Tilly

Contributors: DJ Darren, Katherine King, Barrie Levy and Pat Raphael

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1. Background and Study Rationale

- **Comprehensive Cleaning and Rapid Engagement (CARE+)** sends teams of City staff to assist people experiencing homelessness (PEH) and clean up trash.
- **Costs: \$56M in FY24-25 and \$35M budgeted for FY25-26**, including 17 Sanitation teams and 27 homeless engagement teams (FY25-26), but not including associated law enforcement costs.
- CARE+ operations are often referred to as **"sweeps"** given PEH's experiences of displacement and dispossession of personal belongings.
- Given substantial resources attached to CARE+ and critiques, **what does CARE+ translate into on the ground?**

2. Research Methods

- **Community-engaged research:** Our study is a collaboration between academics and community stakeholders, including Venice residents and activists. We used three different methods to understand CARE+:
- A. Observation:** Coalition members observed CARE+ operations in Venice across 13 days in May, June, July, and October 2025, recording evidence and taking notes.
- B. Survey:** Coalition members surveyed 51 unsheltered persons in Venice who had experienced displacement in past 30 days in October and November 2025.
- C. Content analysis:** Coalition members reviewed 17 e-newsletters and linked videos distributed by LA City Council District 11 (CD11) representative Traci Park for months of which we observed CARE+ operations, tracking mentions of encampments to understand how relevant policies are described to the public.

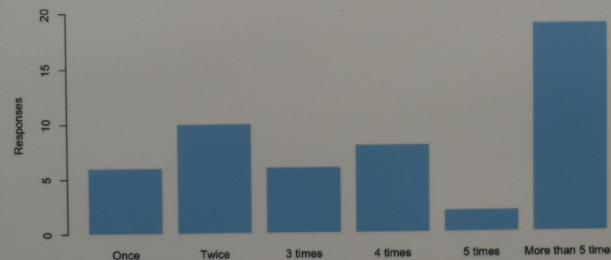
3A. Observation of CARE+ Operations

- **CARE+ operations prioritize displacement over homeless services outreach:**
 - Of 50 PEH engaged by CARE+ over 13 days, 44 were displaced.
 - Outreach occurred on 5 of 13 CARE+ operation days, resulting in 9 contacts.
- **CARE+ operations are an inefficient use of government resources:**
 - Average number of government staff per day: 15.0
 - Average number of government staff vehicles per day: 9.6
 - Staff regularly present: Sanitation (LASAN), Police (LAPD), Council office (CD11), and Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA).
 - Staff sometimes present: Parking enforcement (LADOT), LA Park Rangers, LA County Beaches & Harbors, and cleaning contractors (e.g., Business Improvement District).
- **CARE+ operations regularly trash the possessions of PEH:**
 - With only one exception, personal possessions seized were not "stored," as the policy calls for "absent an immediate threat to public health or safety;" rather, they were regularly thrown in a trash compactor.

3B. Survey of Recently Displaced People Experiencing Homelessness

- **Participant Demographics (n=51):**
 - Shelter type(s): "Rough sleeping" (53%), tents/makeshifts (33%), vehicles (10%), and multiple types (4%).
 - Gender: 82% male, 18% female.
 - Race: 61% White, 16% Black, 12% Hispanic/Latinx, 8% mixed race, 2% Native American, and 2% refused to answer.
 - Age: mean (avg.) 46 years; max. 63 years; min. 28 years.
 - Disability: 59% self-identify as disabled.
- **Group(s) that told participant to move (most recent "forced move"):**
 - LAPD (63%), LA Sanitation (16%), Private security (14%), Social service provider (12%), LA Park Rangers (10%), Business Improvement District (6%), LA County Beaches & Harbors (6%), CD11 staff (2%) and miscellaneous "other" (12%).
- Only 5 of 51 participants were offered "help accessing shelter or housing in the days before, during, or after [they] were forced to move."
- **Displacement was common and resulted in loss of personal property in 30% (n=15) of cases** (see figures below).

How many times have you been forced to move from your location over the past 30 days?



Possessions Thrown Away (most recent forced move)

- [1] "Girlfriend's clothes, second tent, bike, speaker"
- [2] "Clothes, tent, toiletries, coloring books"
- [3] "Sunglasses, sleeping bag."
- [4] "Clothing, sleeping bags, family photos, social security card"
- [5] "Tent, clothes, diaries, books"
- [6] "Tent"
- [7] "Backpack, pictures, clothes, and most belongings"
- [8] "Tent & clothing"
- [9] "Sleeping mat and jug"
- [10] "Work supplies, clothes, bedding, computer"
- [11] "Clothes"
- [12] "Clothes, toiletries, food, utensils"
- [13] "Bedding, blankets, jacket, ebike, tools, tent, ss card, birth cert"
- [14] "Medication, pictures, electronics"
- [15] "Phone, money, clothes, wagon. Tent"

3C. Content Analysis of Council District 11's Communications re: Homeless Encampments

- We reviewed **17 e-newsletters** and **linked videos** distributed by LA City Council District 11 representative Traci Park's office for the months during which we observed CARE+ operations.
 - Of these 17 e-newsletters, 9 mention encampment cleanups like CARE+.
- **Council District 11's communications celebrate encampment removal while being relatively unconcerned with homeless services.**
 - Between e-newsletters and linked videos, there were 48 mentions of specific encampments, either taking credit for removing or attempting to remove an encampment.
 - But there were only 3 mentions of efforts to help unhoused people find housing.

4. Study Conclusions, Limitations, and Future Questions

- The **primary purposes of CARE+** as studied by our coalition in the Los Angeles, CA neighborhood of Venice are to:
 1. **Compel unsheltered people experiencing homelessness to regularly relocate.**
 2. **Confiscate and trash the belongings of unsheltered people experiencing homelessness.**
 3. **Pick up actual trash.**
- **Delivering homeless services like shelter or housing offers is a secondary purpose of CARE+, if that.**
- **Future studies** should 1) examine CARE+ in other council districts to understand variation in program implementation, 2) estimate associated law enforcement costs, or 3) co-design a humane replacement program with PEH.

Read the full report

