

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS JANICE HAHN AND
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Expanding the Existing Safe Youth Zone Program

Over the past eight years, Los Angeles County has taken tremendous strides to identify and meet the needs of commercially sexually exploited children and youth (CSEC/Y). Despite these successes, victims often experience challenges finding safe places to go when they seek help or attempt to leave an exploitative situation. These barriers only further compound the control the trafficker hold over a youth and can result in more harm if they unsuccessfully try to escape or seek help.

On May 10, 2016 the Board of Supervisors introduced a motion to rebrand and expand the existing Safe House Program to meet the needs of these children and youth. As a result of this motion, on November 2, 2016 Los Angeles County launched the Safe Youth Zone within a pilot zone including the Los Angeles Sheriff’s Department (Compton and Century Stations), the Los Angeles County Fire Department (Lynwood and Willowbrook Stations), and the Long Beach Police Department (Downtown Station).

The Safe Youth Zone, once fully implemented, will create a countywide network of safe spaces for victims of child sex trafficking to seek refuge. Instead of waiting to be identified by law enforcement or having to navigate the streets of Los Angeles to find a

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safe place, the Safe Youth Zone allows youth to proactively identify safe places to go and be connect with immediate medical or basic need services.

Since implementing the Safe Youth Zone in the pilot areas in 2016, 25 young people have self-identified as victims of CSEC/Y and sought assistance from law enforcement through the initial Safe Youth Zone pilot areas while others have found safety within other non-pilot law enforcement stations, fire stations and hospitals. In a few instances, victims of trafficking have sought out these locations because of conversations they had while engaging in the CSEC/Y prevention curriculum, wherein facilitators and youth consistently discusses safety and resources, including the Safe Youth Zone locations and partner agencies.

More recently, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the County has seen an increase of youth being recovered by law enforcement through the First Responder Protocol as well as disclosures of youth who are seeking help. There is an urgent need to develop a strategy to expand the Safe Youth Zone beyond the pilot areas so that more youth can safely seek help.

WE, THEREFORE MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Los Angeles County Commercially Sexually Exploited Children-Integrated Leadership Team (ILT) to engage the Department of Public Social Services, Department of Mental Health, Department of Public Health, Department of Health Services, Department of Children and Family Services, Probation Department, Sheriff's Department, and County Fire Department, and provide the following information to the Board at the next scheduled ILT report back date of October 6, 2020:

1. Implementation plan that includes strategies to expand the Safe Youth Zone to all existing First Responder Protocol locations (LASD, LAPD, and Pomona PD),

County Fire, County Medical operations and clinics, and other applicable County departments;

2. Strategy to engage and partner with agencies outside of Los Angeles County including law enforcement, hospitals and clinics, fire departments, and schools;
3. Training strategy for agency participants to educate them on the Safe Youth Zone protocol; and
4. Any other necessary resources for the Los Angeles County Safe Youth Zone program expansion.

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