

Upward Bound House President & CEO Christine Mirasy-Glasco provided the following response to LAist in December 2024:

“Five participants residing at Family Place located in Santa Monica made complaints at several LAHSA meetings. We responded to all these complaints with factual information and worked collaboratively with LAHSA and the participants to resolve the issues raised. With the exception of 1 participant, the complainants were all long-stayers and had been in the program for over 15 months. During this time, UBH had offered a variety of services and numerous housing opportunities through Time Limited Subsidies (TLS), however, the participants all declined this resource, requesting Section 8 vouchers instead. I have summarized the information below.

- 1. Several participants felt they had not received enough support in finding housing, and that they only received 30 days’ notice to leave the program.*

UBH provides case management, housing navigation and employment services to all participants at Family Place. Typically, this occurs on a monthly basis, however, it is participant-driven meaning that participants who need frequent services meet with staff more often. All the interactions are documented in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).

We typically do not provide exit notices to families, this is because families usually proactively engage in the development and execution of their housing plans. However, with COVID, the length of stay in programs was relaxed. Although operations are back to pre-COVID policies, certain practices are slow to change for participants. In this instance, families who were identified as long-stayers (15 months or more in the program) received a 30-day notice encouraging them to prioritize working with staff on their housing plans. This situation was unique because the families who complained did not want to avail themselves of the TLS resources UBH was offering for permanent housing. They wanted a permanent subsidy because they felt they couldn’t afford to pay the full rent once the TLS expired. They preferred housing vouchers or low-income affordable housing developments, both of which are very scarce for families and require UBH to rely on CES Leads to obtain. However, with LAHSA’s assistance, some of these families were able to be prioritized for these housing opportunities.

- 2. One participant said that she was matched for housing, but that staff didn't have the documentation ready and she missed the window for receiving permanent supportive housing.*

This participant reported that she went to the Housing Authority and was told that “she had been matched to a permanent supportive housing project and an email was forwarded to the agency”. UBH did not receive any communication from the Housing Authority regarding this match. When staff followed up with the Housing Authority, we were informed that when participants are matched, all documentation needed is retrieved from HMIS and participants are contacted directly to apply for a housing voucher. Therefore, per Housing Authority practices, UBH would not have been contacted to provide any participant documentation.

- 3. One participant said that the apartment leads that their case manager gives them are out of their price range and they don't feel like they are getting help finding realistic housing options.*

As required by our grant, the participants served must be low-income (be at 50% Area Median Income [AMI] or less). The housing market in Los Angeles is not aligned with this requirement. In reality, housing market rates are far higher than the average income of our participants. As stated earlier, using TLS is the only option most providers have for housing participants in the time frames required by our contracts (4-6 months). So we share housing leads that are aligned with Fair Market Rents approved by HUD with the anticipation that participants will get into the shallow subsidy program or increase their income before TLS assistance expires. In sum, there are no market rate housing units in LA County that are priced at levels that support an income at 50% or less AMI. As a result, rents must be supplemented by other forms of subsidies until participants can pay a substantial part of the rent (after increasing their income) or obtain a longer-term subsidy.

- 4. Three participants said they didn't receive case management, life skills training, or job training.*

As stated above, case management sessions are conducted at least once monthly, however, the frequency is determined by a participant's needs. Each participant has an individualized service plan that lays out his/her needs, short and long term goals and strategies to achieve these goals. Employment services are offered to all participants who do not have jobs, need training or educational support i.e. GED

and clinical referrals are made to outside agencies that provide mental health services. All services provided including employment are documented in HMIS.”