

NEWS

Long Beach city auditor to review homeless service contracts



by **Alicia Robinson**

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Marie Tennyson hands a care package to a homeless woman as volunteers take part in the annual homeless count in Long Beach Thursday, Feb.24, 2022. Photo by Thomas R. Cordova.

In the past five years, Long Beach's annual spending on homeless services has ballooned from about \$5.5 million in fiscal year 2018 to almost \$19 million last year, and City Auditor Laura Doud wants to see how effectively those dollars are being used.

Even as spending to address the crisis has increased, with millions of state and federal pandemic aid dollars pouring in over the last few years, the number of unhoused people in Long Beach has increased, growing from 1,873 in the 2017 annual count to 3,447 as of this January.

A significant share of the city's homeless services are provided through contracts with nonprofits and outside agencies. This week, Doud announced she'll be auditing some of those contracts to see "whether service providers are fulfilling the requirements outlined in their agreements," she said in a news release.

"We are committed to addressing this complex homelessness crisis in our community," Doud said in the release. "As homelessness is a priority for the City, this audit will look to ensure best practices are being implemented as homeless services are being expanded."

The audit will focus on service providers who were already under contract with the city before the City Council declared a homelessness state of emergency in January, and it will include three contracts for intensive case management, permanent supportive housing and rapid rehousing, according to an email from Doud's office.

Doud has met with city Health and Human Services Director Kelly Colopy and homeless services staff to discuss the contracts.

"Meeting the needs of people experiencing homelessness is of utmost importance," Colopy said in Doud's news release, adding that she welcomes the auditor's review.

A spokeswoman for Doud said a report on the audit's findings should be completed by early next year.