



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**The Midnight Mission Contracted to Run Santa Ana Transitional Center for Civic Center Homeless Community**

On Tuesday, September 27, the Orange County Board of Supervisors awarded a \$1.4 million, one-year contract to The Midnight Mission, to oversee a round-the-clock transitional center with emergency shelter beds and enhanced services located at the former Santa Ana Transit Terminal. Supervisors also hired the Long Beach nonprofit City Net at \$150,000 annually to coordinate local nonprofit and faith-based organizations so they can operate in the new shelter without providing redundant services. The facility, which will be called "The Courtyard," is scheduled to open by October 6, 2016.

Midnight Mission CEO Mike Arnold said, "The Supervisors heralded this action as 'historic' – and we are pleased to be a part of Orange County history."

The plan to use the former terminal was proposed by Supervisor Andrew Do at a special Board meeting earlier this month, with a directive to open the center within 30 days providing access to showers, food programs, storage and comprehensive services to lead homeless people to housing stability. Public restrooms have been available at the former bus terminal since 2009; in August, the County installed additional portable restrooms at the Civic Center.

"We set an ambitious goal to have this shelter up-and-running within 30 days," said Supervisor Do, whose First District includes Santa Ana. "Midnight Mission is the right operator to run this shelter that will get people off the streets and onto a productive path to self-sufficiency." He added, "Our homeless population, many of whom are veterans that honorably served our country, deserve our attention and a helping hand up."

The operation and service coordination contracts with The Midnight Mission and Kingdom Causes Inc., also known as City Net, call for expanded services to be available at The Courtyard for those who have congregated in the Civic Center.

"This is a start to a larger effort to identify ways to help those in the Civic Center without a home to find permanent shelter and to create a safe space for people to rebuild their lives," Board Chairwoman Lisa Bartlett, Fifth District, said.

"Homelessness is a complex problem. It hurts those who are living on the streets and their families, and it causes serious concerns about public health and safety," said Board Vice Chair Michelle Steel. "We are committed to doing what we can to work with city governments, nonprofits, and local communities to reduce the number of people living unsheltered on the street and to improve life for all Orange County residents," said Vice Chair Steel, Second District.

Supervisor Shawn Nelson urged his Board colleagues earlier this month to create a more permanent location for homeless services in Santa Ana in addition to the temporary opening of The Courtyard. "We can and should have this facility up now, but this is not an answer to anything long-term," said Supervisor Nelson, Fourth District. "We need to take ownership of our own destiny and find a more permanent solution."



Supervisor Todd Spitzer said the Board must consider additional alternatives for assisting those without permanent housing, including creating a possible "campus" style cluster of buildings and shelter space with services including drug and alcohol detox, mental health services, job training and access to permanent housing such as the national best practices model in San Antonio, Texas, and Phoenix, Arizona.

"We need something above and beyond the steps we've taken," said Supervisor Spitzer, Third District. "After recently touring a national best practices model in San Antonio, I'm looking forward to having a comprehensive discussion about how the County's effort should piece together to provide services in a more permanent and efficient way."

A recently completed survey by County staff and non-profit organization volunteers found 461 people who said they were living permanently in the Civic Center, a 13% increase over a survey conducted at the same time last year. Among other findings:

- The bulk of those surveyed – 57% - said their last permanent residence was Santa Ana.
- Four in Ten people said they had been living in the Civic Center for less than a year.
- Two-thirds stated that they are receiving Medi-Cal and CalFresh benefits (food stamps).
- The reasons people cited most for why they were living in the Civic Center was the sense of community, the availability of free food and lack of housing.

A copy of the 2016 Orange County Civic Center Homeless Survey can be found here:

<http://ochealthinfo.com/civicax/filebank/blobdload.aspx?BlobID=58117>

**About The Midnight Mission:** Founded in 1914, The Midnight Mission offers paths to self-sufficiency to men, women and children who have lost direction. Our emergency services and 12-step recovery, family living, job training, education and workforce development programs offer a compassionate bridge to achieve and maintain healthy, productive lives. We remove obstacles and provide the accountability and structure that people who are experiencing homelessness need to be productive in their communities. Our conviction and commitment to their success define us. For additional information, please visit [www.midnightmission.org](http://www.midnightmission.org).