



**Working together, we can build a Better LA County – even in tough economic times.**

SEIU Local 721 members are committed to making improvements on the job to make LA County work better. Here are some of our many ideas. Ideas to maximize revenues and reduce costs. Proposals to improve the quality of services and make LA County more efficient. Suggestions for more appropriate equipment to make jobs safer and more efficient. Recommendations regarding Los Angeles County's contracting policies. And plans to make a "greener" LA County through environmentally-friendly energy, transportation and workforce development programs.

We look forward to using the collective bargaining process to find common ground and begin to implement these and other ideas to Build A Better LA County.

**July 2009**



# Quality Services

| <b>PROPOSAL 1: Shorten lines and waiting times at the Registrar-Recorder.</b>                 |  | <b>TABLE</b> |
|---|--|--------------|
| <b>Problem</b>  | The public often spends upwards of three hours in lines that snake outside the building, waiting for documents from the Birth, Death, and Marriage section of the Department. Members of the public placing orders by phone now face a two to three month back-log which often results in multiple re-issues at additional costs to the County.  | 111          |
| <b>Solution</b>   | Implement a 4-Step plan to shorten lines and reduce wait times:<br><ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Utilize unused windows in the Document Analysis and Recording Unit.</li> <li>2. Restore bi-lingual positions.</li> <li>3. Dedicate Window B for will-call only.</li> <li>4. Strengthen management presence in the work area.</li> </ol>   |              |
| <b>PROPOSAL 2: Restore book &amp; materials purchasing authority to community librarians.</b> |  | <b>TABLE</b> |
| <b>Problem</b>  | Purchasing decisions are now made by a small bureaucracy, rather than by the Librarians who know the community they serve. Full-scale centralized selection may work in smaller library systems, but is not suited to LA County. Each of the 84 LA County libraries serves a distinct community with distinct needs. Maintaining a community focus is critical to providing the highest quality service to the most diverse population in the country. | 811          |
| <b>Solution</b>   | Library materials will be centrally selected only when appropriate, for example, in the case of universal resource or reference materials used in a majority of libraries. The percentage of materials selected centrally shall not exceed 25%, with 75% of the book and materials budget being allocated to selections at the community level.  |              |
| <b>PROPOSAL 3: Give nurses a voice in staffing and patient acuity decisions.</b>              |  | <b>TABLE</b> |
| <b>Problem</b>  | Patients and nursing and are commonly faced with inadequate staffing that does not comply with state mandated ratios, thereby compromising quality of care.  | 311          |
| <b>Solution</b>   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. When a nurse reports an inadequate staffing situation, management should take immediate rapid deployment measures to correct the situation to come into compliance.</li> <li>2. New hospital-based Labor/Management committees should be established dedicated to addressing staffing and patient classification challenges.</li> </ol>  |              |
| <b>PROPOSAL 4: Avoid assigning ER caseloads to recent social work academy graduates.</b>      |  | <b>TABLE</b> |
| <b>Problem</b>  | Emergency response cases are best handled by experienced Social Workers, but too often such cases have been assigned to recent graduates of the social work academy.   | 723          |
| <b>Solution</b>   | Implement and enforce a policy of not adding Emergency Response cases to the caseload of inexperienced Social Workers.   |              |

## Cost Savings / Efficiencies

| <b>PROPOSAL 5: Reduce lobby congestion and waiting times in DPSS offices.</b>                   |   | <b>TABLE</b> |
|---|---|--------------|
| <b>Problem</b>  | With unemployment at 11.5% in LA County, many DPSS offices are plagued by congested waiting areas and long waiting times.   | 731          |
| <b>Solution</b>   | 1. The County should equip EWs with mobile QR7 scanners to expedite the onsite processing of quarterly reports; and 2. The County should enable recipients to process their medical redetermination packets online by creating a web-based renewal system.  |              |
| <b>PROPOSAL 6: Place medical record coder program graduates in appropriate positions.</b>       |   | <b>TABLE</b> |
| <b>Problem</b>  | The Department of Health Services is spending millions of dollars on high-priced registry medical record coders. Meanwhile the County has invested millions of dollars to train incumbent County employees to perform coding responsibilities in the Health Information job family. However, to date dozens of training program graduates have not been placed in appropriate coding positions. | 121          |
| <b>Solution</b>   | Place all medical record coder program graduates in appropriate positions.  |              |
| <b>PROPOSAL 7: Utilize available Workforce Investment Act funds to train County workers.</b>    |   | <b>TABLE</b> |
| <b>Problem</b>  | The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) provides through the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) \$11 million for Dislocated Workers, up to 50% of which can be used for incumbents. However, to date the County has no plan to use these available dollars to increase training opportunities for County workers.   | Common       |
| <b>Solution</b>   | Utilize the available \$5.5 million WIA funds to strengthen workforce development programs and expand training opportunities for County workers.  |              |
| <b>PROPOSAL 8: Create a high-level L/M task force to address County HR system deficiencies.</b> |   | <b>TABLE</b> |
| <b>Problem</b>  | To survive and provide high quality services in an increasingly competitive environment the County needs an HR system that is quick, nimble, efficient, and equitable. The current system is widely viewed as an obstacle to efficiency, often frustrating efforts to hire, reclassify, promote, etc. in a timely manner.   | Common       |
| <b>Solution</b>   | The County and SEIU Local 721 should establish a high-level task force to examine the HR system and make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors for improvements.  |              |

## Cost Savings / Efficiencies (continued)

| <b>PROPOSAL 9: Evaluate all application &amp; billing processes to maximize revenue generation.</b> |   | <b>TABLE</b> |
|---|---|--------------|
| <b>Problem</b>  | The Department of Health services may be losing out on millions of dollars of available revenues by missing opportunities in its application and billing processes.   | 729          |
| <b>Solution</b>   | Establish a joint Labor/Management Committee to monitor and evaluate all application and billing processes and revenue programs in order to maximize revenue generation to the County.  |              |
| <b>PROPOSAL 10: Incorporate Whistle Blower protections in SEIU Local 721 contracts.</b>             |   | <b>TABLE</b> |
| <b>Problem</b>  | In a time of budget contraction it is vital to eliminate waste and encourage employees to come forward with suggestions to increase efficiency. Unfortunately, despite protections in existing law, some employees are afraid to speak out for fear of retaliation. | Common       |
| <b>Solution</b>   | Incorporate Whistle Blower protections in all SEIU Local 721 contracts.   |              |

## Equipment, Health & Safety

|   |   |              |
|---|---|--------------|
| <b>PROPOSAL 11: Improve County park safety by issuing uniforms to park employees.</b>             |   | <b>TABLE</b> |
| Problem   | LA County employees supervise recreation programs in parks throughout LA County. These programs take place both in daytime and in the evenings, and park safety is an important concern for parents and park employees alike. But, recreation staff are not issued appropriate uniforms so that they may be easily recognizable to police and to serve as deterrents to crime and gang activity | 121          |
| Solution  | To improve park safety, issue to all recreation staff in County parks appropriate uniforms with recognizable County logos   |              |
| <b>PROPOSAL 12: Strengthen the County's employee wellness program.</b>                            |   | <b>TABLE</b> |
| Problem   | Health care insurance premiums continue to escalate year after year diverting desperately needed resources from other County priorities. Too many County workers utilize excessive sick time due to chronic illness, resulting in a loss of productivity for the County. County workers do not have adequate access to the tools and resources necessary to maintain good health.               | Fringe       |
| Solution  | Appoint a full time Wellness Manager to oversee the Wellness and Cost Containment Program (CMGO). Work collaboratively with the Union in developing joint labor management committees in each department. Have Union Wellness Advocates in each department to help plan and implement programs that have an effect on our members' health as well as insurance premiums.                        |              |
| <b>PROPOSAL 13: Provide boots for workers, longer poles for controlling dangerous animals.</b>    |   | <b>TABLE</b> |
| Problem   | Animal Care and Control workers do not have adequate equipment to ensure their health and safety, as well as the health and safety of the animals under their care.   | 431          |
| Solution  | Provide the proper equipment to our members who deal with the County animal population. This could potentially save the County money in Worker Comp claims, and loss of productivity due to sick days. More importantly it would provide greater safety to the workers and the animals under their care.  |              |
| <b>PROPOSAL 14: Provide cell phones and self-defense training to Welfare Fraud Investigators.</b> |   | <b>TABLE</b> |
| Problem   | The County's Welfare Fraud Investigators are routinely placed in harm's way in the course of fraud investigations in the community. Such investigations are conducted unarmed. DPSS no longer even provides cell phones to the Investigators as a safety measure in the event of an emergency situation.  | 121          |
| Solution  | Cell phones should be re-issued, and self-defense training appropriate to the job should be offered to all Welfare Fraud Investigators.   |              |

# Contracting

| <b>PROPOSAL 15: Keep Glendale Health Center PUBLIC.</b>                                     |   | <b>TABLE</b> |
|---|---|--------------|
| Problem   | The current proposal to privatize the Glendale Health Center threatens to disrupt the long-standing relationship between DHS care providers and the community they serve. It makes no sense to pursue this piece-meal policy which is totally out of context of any comprehensive primary care plan or plan to restructure DHS services in anticipation of national health reform.  | Common       |
| Solution  | The County should halt current efforts to privatize the Glendale Health Center. Energy should be re-directed to the development of a comprehensive primary care plan that anticipates national health reform.   |              |
| <b>PROPOSAL 16: Retain employees, union when a facility is sold, leased or transferred.</b> |   | <b>TABLE</b> |
| Problem   | When a County facility is sold, leased or transferred, employees can find themselves without a job or without a Union contract. Resulting dislocation, disruption, or reduction in job standards leads to a deterioration in the quality of service.  | Common       |
| Solution  | In the event of a sale, lease, or facility transfer, the County should require an outside agency to retain workers, recognize the Union, and preserve contract standards.   |              |
| <b>PROPOSAL 17: Reopen MLK hospital as an SEIU Local 721 represented facility.</b>          |   | <b>TABLE</b> |
| Problem   | The reopening of a Martin Luther King hospital in South Los Angeles presents significant challenges. Labor continuity and stability should be high priorities in this transition.   | Common       |
| Solution  | Require a successor agency operating a new MLK hospital to recognize SEIU Local 721 as the bargaining representative for employees it hires to provide services at the hospital, upon showing of a majority support through a card check process. Should the Successor also assume operation of any existing function or facility, the Successor should be required to adopt any existing MOU covering County employees in that facility or function at the time of the transfer. |              |
| <b>PROPOSAL 18: Refrain from contracting to avoid paying comparable wages and benefits.</b> |   | <b>TABLE</b> |
| Problem   | The County continues to enter into, renew, and expand Prop A contracts. In many cases, the cost savings required under Prop A are achieved purely through use of lower-paid workers whose jobs do not afford adequate health care or a secure retirement. These contracts are simply mechanisms to circumvent collectively bargained wage and benefit standards. They replace decent jobs with poor jobs – at great social cost.  | Common       |
| Solution  | Prop A contracts may make sense in cases where outside agencies can provide a service more efficiently because of technology or expertise that the County would be hard-pressed to duplicate. But, the County should refrain from entering into Prop A contracts when “efficiencies” are achieved only by replacing decent jobs with lousy ones.  |              |

# Green LA County

| PROPOSAL 19: Reduce commutes through a County-wide transfer matching system.           |  | TABLE  |
|--|--|--------|
| Problem  | County employees spend more and more time on congested freeways, which places a strain on work and home life, while exacerbating the region's carbon emissions problems. During their daily commutes, thousands of workers pass nearby County facilities to get to worksites much further away.  | Common |
| Solution   | <i>"The shortest way to get from A to B is sometimes to move the two points closer together."</i> Utilizing the model employed in DPSS for Eligibility Workers, the County should establish a "proximate commuting" transfer match system to allow workers to identify transfer opportunities, including position swaps, to shorten daily commuting times. Shortening commutes would enhance productivity while reducing fuel consumption and emissions.   |        |
| PROPOSAL 20: Encourage alternative work schedules for job functions within facilities. |  | TABLE  |
| Problem  | (See above.)<br>Another strategy for reducing commute times is reducing commuting trips through alternative work schedules. Unfortunately, the County's most recent evaluation of alternative work schedules focused exclusively on closing down entire facilities for a day, thereby failing to identify many promising opportunities   | Common |
| Solution   | The County should establish a target goal for expansion of the alternative work week program. County managers should work with union representatives to identify work functions <i>within facilities</i> where alternative work schedules (4/10, 9/80, etc.) are feasible and can be offered to employees on a voluntary basis.  |        |
| PROPOSAL 21: Provide subsidized Metro passes to employees through the TAP program.     |  | TABLE  |
| Problem  | In addition to the problems of freeway congestion, fuel consumption, carbon emissions, and lost productivity (mentioned above), over-reliance on automobile commuting also requires a heavy investment in real estate which must be dedicated to parking.  | Common |
| Solution   | The County should provide incentives for employees to utilize public transit for their commutes. Working with the Metropolitan Transit Authority's <i>Transit Access Pass</i> (TAP) system, the County should develop and offer a subsidized group-rate transit program for its workforce.   |        |
| PROPOSAL 22: Retrofit County buildings using ARRA funds for green career pathways.     |  | TABLE  |
| Problem  | Millions of dollars in ARRA funding are available to the County for energy efficiency training and capital expenditures. The County's plans for this ARRA funding do not connect green sector workforce development and capital funding, foregoing an opportunity to create quality green sector jobs. The County has engaged in just over 350 projects during the last 15 years, mostly lighting retrofits. There are no plans to retrofit all County buildings to energy efficiency standards. | Common |
| Solution   | The County should create a Green Career Pathway program. The program would utilize ARRA green sector training funds, and connect trainees to jobs retrofitting and maintaining County facilities.  |        |

