

Homelessness and Women

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Homelessness in Los Angeles

The 2016 Point in Time (PIT) count estimates that roughly 42,000 individuals experienced at least one night of homelessness in 2016; an increase of 11% since 2015.

- 33% identified as women
- 14% identified as families, with 65% of families indicating they are single parent homes with women HoH

SPA 2: San Fernando and Santa Clarita Valley

LA Family Housing FSC screened over 1,400 families, enrolled 895, and housed 242 during 2015-2016 program year

- Single parents w/female HoH, Undocumented HoH, Victim of DV, and TAY families make up the largest subpopulations

What Contributes to Women Becoming Homeless?

Economic Barriers

- Low minimum wage, wage gap, and under-employment
- “Safety net” programs don’t meet the needs of women and children
 - Insufficient and time limited benefits keep women and children in poverty
- High rent costs coupled with a 2.8% vacancy rate county wide
- Limited affordable and reliable childcare
- Macro economic patterns have cyclical and lasting impact on women of color and women in low income communities

Contributing Factors leading to Homelessness Among Women

Transitional Age Youth (18-24 years old)

- 26% increase in TAY families entering homeless system between 2014-2016
- High rates of trauma exposure impacts brain development, mental/physical health, and is linked to increase in substance use
- Multi-system involvement
 - History of and/or current engagement with DCFS, justice system, DPSS, etc.
- More likely to be a single parent home, with low educational attainment and high rates of unemployment
- Limited community and family support
- Generational patterns of housing instability and poverty

Contributing Factors leading to Homelessness Among Women

Undocumented Women

- Regulations prevent legal engagement in workforce, leading to low paying and unsafe working conditions
- Low educational attainment, limited job skills, and language barriers further exacerbate challenges in obtaining employment
- Limited access to protective resources: cash aid, health insurance, job training, etc.
- Inadequate family and community support caused by immigration and/or fear of engagement due to risk of deportation
- High rates of trauma and poor access to treatment

Contributing Factors leading to Homelessness Among Women

Domestic Violence/Intimate Partner Violence

- Leading cause of homelessness among women and children
- Linked to high rates of substance use, mental and physical health issues, and increased rates of trauma exposure among all family members
- Inadequate resources for women “fleeing” violence
 - Limited crisis housing can cause family separations and street homelessness
 - More DV shelter beds for women with children vs single women
- Multiple systems provide specific services leads to gaps in care and ineffective use of resources

Causes of Dramatic Increase in the Rate of Women Experiencing Homelessness

Homelessness is always a symptom of larger social and economic issues. When we neglect to address barriers that prevent women from accessing health care, earning a living wage, obtaining dependable child care, securing affordable housing, and ensure protection against racial and sexual injustices, we will continue to see high rates of housing instability and homelessness among women.

Current Methods for Ending Homelessness in Los Angeles

Los Angeles CoC Coordinated Entry System

- County wide effort to end homelessness using a system wide coordinated effort with a 'no wrong door' approach
- Unique systems for Families, TAY, and Single Adults
- Ensures that limited housing resources are afforded to those most in need, using a housing first model
- Current services offered through CES include crisis housing, bridge housing, short and long-term rapid rehousing, permanent supportive housing, and long term housing subsidies

Current Methods for Ending Homelessness in Los Angeles

Homeless Prevention Strategies

- Research indicates that a history of housing instability is the primary predictor for future episodes of homelessness
- Preventing women from becoming homeless by diverting them to safe housing alternatives, while linking to community based resources (mental health treatment, employment, etc.) can prevent future episodes of homelessness

Aligning the DV System with the Homeless System

- Ensuring that women have crisis housing available when leaving abusive partners
- Reducing barriers for women/families to interact within both system, while reducing duplication of services by providers (i.e. DV agency provides trauma informed crisis housing and housing agencies provide ongoing rental assistance)

Current Methods for Ending Homelessness in Los Angeles: City and County Initiatives

- Measure H: Generates \$355 million annually for homeless programs over 10 years. Services will address homeless prevention through housing for individuals and families experiencing homelessness.
- Measure HHH: Issues a \$1.2 billion bond to fund affordable and permanent supportive housing for individuals and families experiencing homelessness.
- Measure JJJ: All development projects that include 10 or more residential units are required to make a percentage of the units affordable to low-income and working residents, or pay a fee to fund affordable housing and enforce laws that protect renters.

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