

**LOCAL EMERGENCY SHELTER STRATEGY
(LESS)**

Los Angeles County

Emergency Housing and Assistance Program Round 15
November 9th, 2007

Application Deadline:
Monday, December 10th, 2007 at 4:00 PM

NEEDS

There is no complete and accurate count of the number of homeless people in Los Angeles City or County. However, according to an estimate from the 2005 Homeless Count conducted by the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), there are approximately 88,000 people homeless in Los Angeles County on any given night. Yet, according to the 2006 *Short Term Housing Directory of Los Angeles County* published by Shelter Partnership, there are only 14,855 emergency shelter and transitional housing beds in the County.

According to the *Quality of Life in Los Angeles* report published by the United Way of Greater Los Angeles in 2007, over 28% of Los Angeles County residents live in poor households, earning less than \$30,000 a year for a family of four. Although the median family income is \$53,431, 53% of renters pay more than 30% of their income in rent and an income of over \$100,000 is necessary to afford the median price home in Los Angeles County.

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION:

Los Angeles County comprises over 4,000 square miles. Homelessness is prevalent throughout Los Angeles County, but presents a different face in different communities and neighborhoods. While runaway homeless youth may be the primary homeless group in Hollywood and West Hollywood, single males are predominately found in the Skid Row area of downtown Los Angeles and in the South Los Angeles area. In addition, while homeless persons are located in every area of the County, the largest population is found in SPA 4 (Central City) and SPA 6 (South Los Angeles).

<i>HOMELESS POPULATION & SHELTER BEDS IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY</i>		
Service Planning Area (SPA)	# of Homeless¹	# of Beds²
SPA 1 (Lancaster and Antelope Valley)	3,544	209
SPA 2 (San Fernando Valley)	11,637	1974
SPA 3 (San Gabriel Valley)	10,471	637
SPA 4 (Central City, Downtown)	20,023	5428
SPA 5 (West Los Angeles)	6,860	979
SPA 6 (South Los Angeles)	16,787	1976
SPA 7 (East Los Angeles)	7,178	1240
SPA 8 (South Bay)	11,844	2442
TOTAL	88,345	14,855

POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS:

The following information outlines the nature and extent of various homeless sub-population groups in Los Angeles County. The 2005 Homeless Count conducted by LAHSA estimated that:

Target Population

- 55% of all unsheltered homeless are individual males
- 19% are individual females
- 2% are individual youth
- 1% are transgender
- 24% are families

¹ This number includes the homeless population in Glendale, Long Beach, and Pasadena. These cities have their own Continuum of Care and conduct their own homeless counts.

² This number does not include shelter beds available during the Winter Shelter season (November 1 – March 15).

ETHNICITY:

- Nearly 39% of respondents are African-American
- Almost 29% identified themselves as Caucasian
- Over 25% of respondents are Hispanic or Latino
- Nearly 3% of respondents are American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Almost 1% identified themselves as Asian or Pacific Islander
- Approximately 4% of survey respondents indicated they identified with other or multiple ethnic

AGE:

- The median age of respondents is 43 years old.

CURRENT AND FUTURE TRENDS:

The causes of homelessness are numerous, including: unemployment and underemployment; poverty; the changes in the welfare system; the systematic loss of manufacturing jobs in Southern California; the decline of affordable housing stock; cuts in numerous social programs; family crisis; domestic violence; alcohol and drug abuse; HIV/AIDS; and mental illness. At the same time, there are a number of public policies at the federal, state and local levels that will adversely impact homeless and low-income communities across the U.S. in general, and in Los Angeles County in particular. A study conducted by the Southern California Inter-University Consortium on Homelessness and Poverty, indicates that the number of people apt to become homeless as a result of welfare reform will grow dramatically. The study estimates that homelessness could increase by 40 to 80 percent, under a high impact scenario. The nine-month time limit on receipt of General Relief for individuals considered “employable” has resulted in recipients becoming unable to afford housing and many have become homeless. Local policies, such as those implemented in the City of Santa Monica, place limits on panhandling and park closures at night, resulting in more homeless individuals seeking shelter and supportive services. In an effort to combat these obstacles, the Local Board has supported the creation of “Bring LA Home”—a partnership of more than 50 leaders who are all committed to creating a plan with the goal to end homelessness in Los Angeles County in 10 years.

RESOURCES

SHELTER AND TRANSITIONAL HOUSING RESOURCES:

Los Angeles County has emergency shelters and transitional housing programs throughout the region with a total capacity to serve approximately 14,855 individuals on a nightly basis. The emergency and transitional shelter capacity is supplemented during the winter months with an additional 2,000 beds, with funds from the City, County, and Emergency Food & Shelter Local Board. Emergency shelters, transitional housing providers, and supportive service providers are located throughout Los Angeles County. As is evident, the need (as reflected in the number of homeless people) far exceeds the shelter and service resources—only 1 in 6 people in Los Angeles County have their immediate shelter needs met. While some of the homeless who are turned away from shelters are vouchered into motels, many stay in overcrowded, temporary housing, or on the streets, in cars and in encampments. Shelters are facing increasing need, combined with declining resources, and increased competition for these scarce resources.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES:

Because Los Angeles County is demographically, as well as geographically diverse, a fair and effective mechanism to allocate resources to sub-populations of the homeless with the greatest need, as well as allocating to the greatest need areas geographically, must be coordinated. The Los Angeles Continuum of Care represents one of the nation's largest homeless delivery systems and incorporates a year-round planning process to ensure that the needs and gaps in shelter bed and services to the homeless are addressed at the local level. The Local Board coordinates and participates with this annual planning process to ensure a streamlined homeless service delivery system for the region.

In the past decade, several model programs have been developed to address the growing crisis of the lack of housing and homelessness within Los Angeles County. In June 2001, Shelter Partnership, Inc. published the *Funding Opportunities Directory for Homeless Activities in Los Angeles County*, a comprehensive directory of public (Federal, State, County and City) funding sources that are available for homeless service providers in Los Angeles. Other funding sources for homeless programs in Los Angeles County include the following:

- **The Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA)** is a joint powers authority between the City and County of Los Angeles that is responsible for allocating funds from the City, County, HUD and other sources. LAHSA funds shelter, rental assistance, cold wet weather and other social service programs in Los Angeles County. In 2007, LAHSA secured \$52,521,696 for the Continuum of Care, the majority of which was used to renew existing program grants.
- **The Emergency Food and Shelter Program** allocates federal funds to shelter and food providers in Los Angeles County. Last year, \$5.2 million was allocated to non-profits that operated emergency shelters, voucher programs, food pantries, soup kitchens, food banks, and a countywide rental and utility assistance program.
- The State Department of Housing and Community Development's **Emergency Housing and Assistance Program (EHAP)** provides grants to emergency shelter and transitional housing providers in Los Angeles for operating and supportive services. Last year, approximately \$1,000,000 was allocated to non-profits organizations providing shelter to homeless clients in Los Angeles County.
- **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)** and **Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)** funds are a critical support for service providers. These block grants are utilized to fund

emergency shelter, food, and other social services. The County and City of Los Angeles distribute CDBG and CSBG grants to over 200 agencies.

- The **Emergency Shelter Grants Program (ESG)** funds, administered locally through LAHSA, can be used for the renovation of homeless facilities, provision of essential services (i.e., prevention, counseling, case management), operational expenses, and non-staff operation costs.
- The **AB 2034 (Steinberg) Integrated Services for Homeless Adults with Serious Mental Illness Program** began in the fall of 1999 as a demonstration project in three California counties, including Los Angeles. Currently, the Program is administered through the County Department of Mental Health (DMH) and funds 19 contracted mental health service agencies to provide outreach, intensive case management and integrated services to seriously mentally ill persons who are homeless, incarcerated, or at risk of homelessness or incarceration. In 2000, the program added three new target populations, including transitional age youth, women with children and veterans.
- **City of Industry** funds are made available through tax increment revenue to the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles (HACOLA) for the development of transitional and permanent housing developments for very low-income and special needs populations.
- During 2005-2006, **United Way of Greater Los Angeles** allocated approximately \$2 million to meet emergency and basic needs of LA County residents.
- In its most recent fiscal year, Shelter Partnership distributed more than \$12 million of new goods to Los Angeles County service providers to assist them in providing quality services to homeless clients.
- In addition to public funding sources, there is some **private foundation support** for homeless shelters and services, such as the California Community Foundation, the Ralph M. Parsons Foundation, and the Weingart Foundation.

GOALS

TYPE OF HOUSING:

The Local Board's goal is to fund providers who will expand their existing emergency shelter or transitional housing programs by increasing the number of bed slots for homeless persons. However, applicants may also request funding for the maintenance of currently operating shelter beds and/or supportive services. Rental assistance, eviction prevention, and winter shelter programs are other areas where the Local Board seeks to distribute funding. Vouchers are not a priority, given that this funding is limited and available through the Emergency Food and Shelter Program.

COORDINATION WITH THE CONTINUUM OF CARE PLANNING PROCESS:

The planning body for the Local Continuum of Care is the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA). LAHSA sits on the Local Board and the EHAP Planning Committee. The continual exchange of information between LAHSA and the Local Board ensures that the LESS reflects the same needs as the Local Continuum of Care.

POPULATION TO BE SERVED:

The Local Board recognizes that many homeless sub-populations have extensive and diverse needs. Given the extent of the need for all population groups and the recognition that all population groups are under-served, the Local Board has determined that 76.8% of the allocation will be utilized for emergency shelter and transitional housing operations.

As a result, in order to address the needs of individuals and families at-risk of homelessness as a result of eviction, 9.1% of the county allocation will be used to provide expansion to the eviction prevention and rental assistance program. The program is operated by a Central Coordinating Agency that oversees agencies that refer clients into the program (all EHAP funded agencies are eligible to refer their clients to the Central Coordinating Agency for rental assistance). These agencies are trained by the Central Coordinating Agency to provide case management and stabilization counseling.

12.1% of the county allocation will be used to fund the use of armory shelter facilities during the cold/wet weather months.

The DLB will use the remaining 2% of the regional allocation to defray its administrative expenses.

GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS:

In order to ensure that the funds are distributed to shelters operating in all parts of Los Angeles County, the Local Board has determined that the majority of the funding will be distributed among eight Service Planning Areas (SPAs) of the county. The formula to determine the allocation in each SPA weights the need (or the number of homeless persons in each SPA) with the capacity (or the number of shelter beds in each SPA). The number of grants available in each SPA is as follows:

Service Planning Area (SPA)	Grants
SPA 1 (Lancaster and Antelope Valleys)	1
SPA 2 (San Fernando Valley)	3
SPA 3 (San Gabriel Valley)	2
SPA 4 (Central City, Downtown)	7
SPA 5 (West Los Angeles)	2
SPA 6 (South Los Angeles)	4
SPA 7 (East Los Angeles)	2
SPA 8 (South Bay)	4

BROAD DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS:

Given the number of service providers and the limited availability of funds, the Local Board has reaffirmed its goal of distributing the funds to as many eligible shelter providers as possible.