Los Angeles County Women’s Needs Assessment: Survey Findings and Opportunities for Impact
Los Angeles County Women’s Needs Assessment

Findings from the 2022 Survey of Women Experiencing Homelessness
Acknowledgements

- All the women who shared their experiences with us in listening sessions and surveys
- Steering and Advisory Committee members
- Volunteers who administered surveys
- Downtown Women's Center and the County of Los Angeles Homeless Initiative
The Los Angeles County Women’s Needs Assessment

- This study is the largest and most rigorous study to date in the nation targeted specifically to women experiencing homelessness as individuals
  - In spring 2022, nearly 100 women participated in listening sessions
  - In fall 2022, nearly 600 women completed a 78-question survey
Rigorously designed 78-question survey administered to nearly 600 women across 8 Los Angeles County Service Planning Areas (SPAs) in fall 2022

Los Angeles Countywide Women’s Needs Assessment
Women Experiencing Homelessness are Diverse

- Ages ranged from 18 to 83 years old.
- 34% of women identified as Hispanic or Latina, 32% percent identified as Black
- Nearly 4 percent identifying as a gender other than exclusively a woman or man, such as nonbinary or gender fluid
- Nearly 20 percent identifying as bisexual, lesbian, gay, queer, or another sexual orientation other than straight
- 61 percent had a disability
Women Experienced Homelessness for Long Periods

- Women experienced multiple episodes of homelessness
- More than 8 in 10 women had experienced lifetime lengths of homelessness over a year
- More than 4 in 10 women had lifetime experiences of homelessness of longer than five years
Women Most Often Slept In Unsheltered Locations

Type of living situation

- Ever lived in
- Lived in past 12 months
Women Experience Victimization Before and During Episodes of Homelessness

- Nearly **90 percent of women** reported lifetime experiences of **victimization**
- While experiencing homelessness:
  - 3 of 5 had something **stolen** from them
  - 2 of 5 were **attacked**
  - 1 in 5 were **forced** to take part in **unwanted sexual activity**
Women Reported Significant Barriers to Exiting Homelessness and Securing Housing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barrier</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of available housing that you can afford</td>
<td>70.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long waiting lists to access voucher or public housing</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of case management or social services to help you...</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of housing that meets your needs and preferences</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad credit</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You’ve been assessed by Coordinated Entry (the system)...</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not knowing how to use computer or lack of access to a...</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of public transportation near available housing options</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could not find a landlord to take your voucher</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You have not been referred to or assessed by the...</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous eviction record</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not considered ‘chronically homeless or disabled’</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal-legal or incarceration history</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You have not experienced any barriers to accessing...</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Declined to answer</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Women Reported Barriers to Accessing and Using Shelters

1. Concerns about feeling unsafe
2. Lack of available spots in shelters
3. Concerns about privacy
4. Lack of shelter options that meet my needs and...
5. Concerns about where to store your possessions
6. Concerns about the way you would be treated at the...
7. Not knowing how to access or where to find...
8. The neighborhood where the shelter is located is not...
9. Lack of case management or social services at the...
10. Lack of public transportation to get to and from the...
11. Lack of mental health, or substance use (alcohol and...
12. Loss of shelter due to time limit at the shelter
13. Lack of shelters that can accommodate my disabilities
14. Lack of medical services
15. You could not bring your pet with you to the shelter
16. Something else
17. I have had no barriers to using or accessing shelters
18. Declined to answer
Recommendations
#1 - Support efforts to collect data on and tailor services to women experiencing homelessness as individuals.

- Collect and report on data on women’s experiences, needs, and preferences
- Critical to track progress on ending homelessness among women
#2 - Fund housing assistance at the level needed to house all women experiencing homelessness

- Universal voucher program provides clear path forward to ending homelessness for all women.

- Lack of affordable housing, long waiting lists for housing assistance were primary barriers to housing.
#3 - Prioritize safety throughout the homelessness response system

- Prioritizing safety requires recognizing the unique needs and preferences of women.
- Concerns about safety was most common barrier to shelter.
- Safety was a top priority in permanent housing.
#4 - Provide dignity in the absence of housing

- Women want **dignified access** to bathrooms, showers, and storage of possessions
- **Remove barriers** that prevent access to services and shelter
#5 - Encourage programmatic response accountability for ensuring equitable outcomes for historically marginalized groups

- Women’s needs may vary based on a variety of characteristics, their individual histories, and where they may be in their life cycle
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