

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



Los Angeles County Women's Needs Assessment

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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



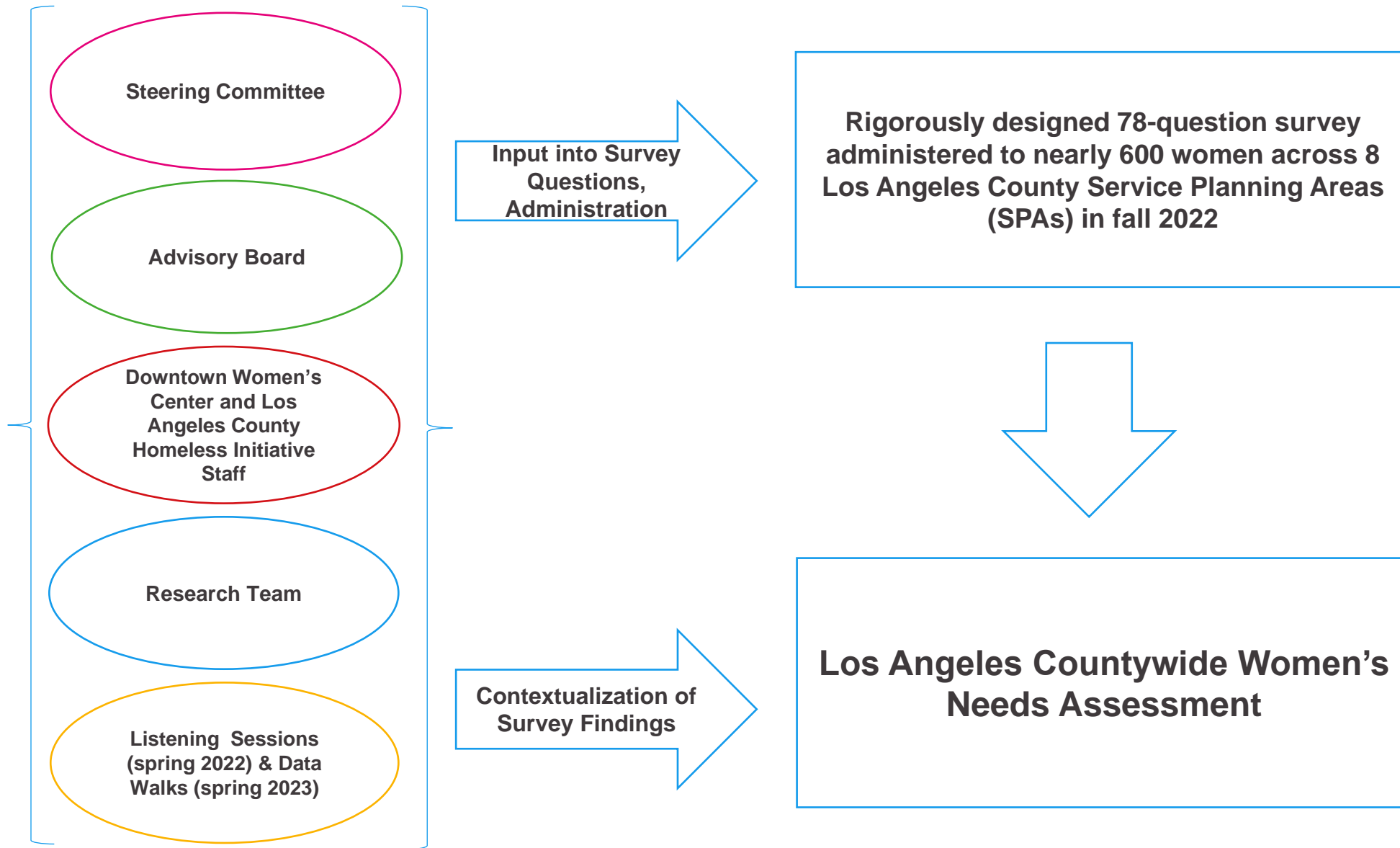
DOWNTOWN
WOMEN'S
CENTER



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



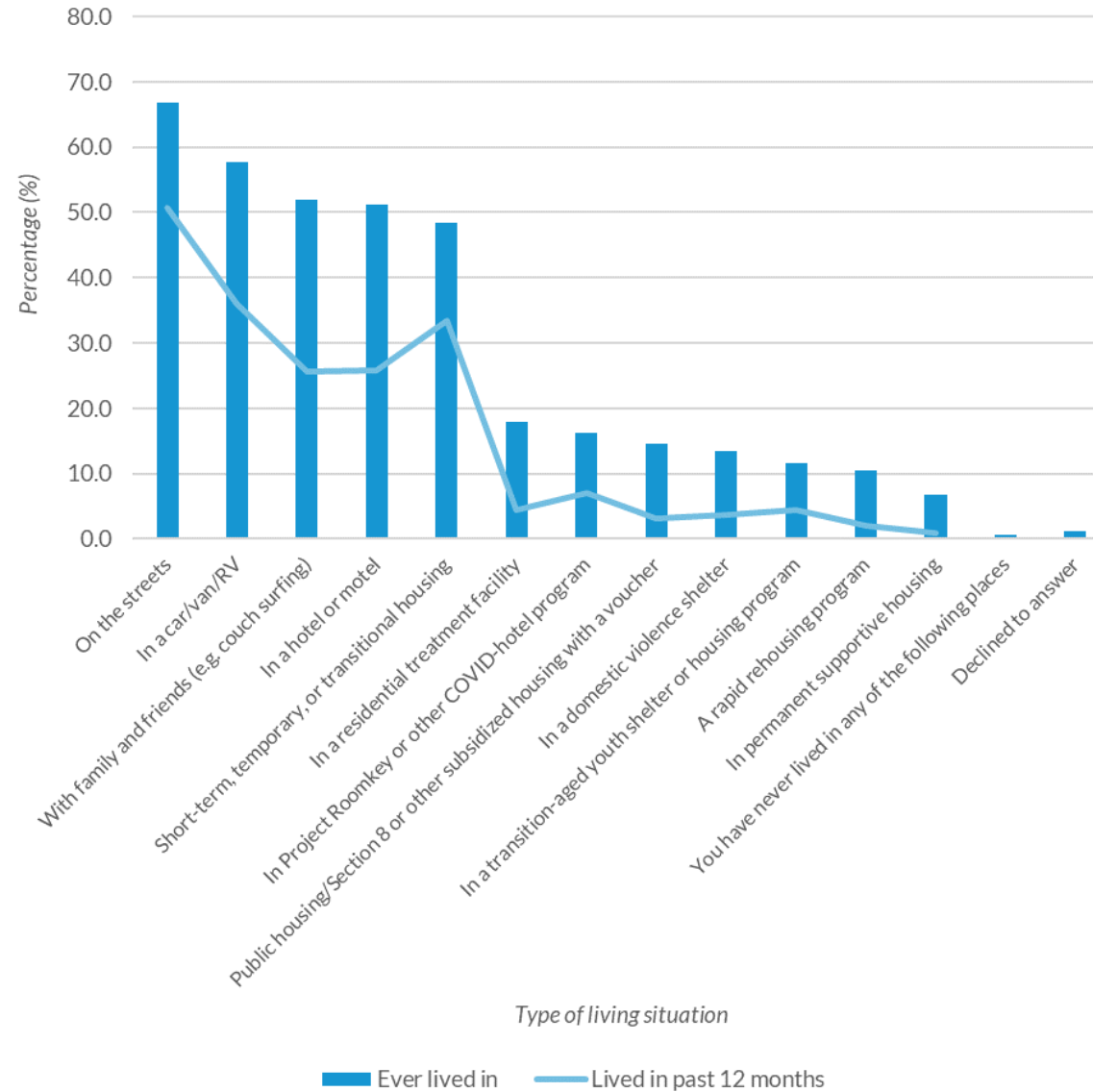
Women Experiencing Homelessness are Diverse

- 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



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



Women Reported Barriers to Accessing and Using Shelters



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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