

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

## Speaker Biographies

**Samantha Batko** is a principal research associate in the Metropolitan Housing and Communities Policy Center at the Urban Institute, where her research focuses on homelessness, housing instability, housing assistance, and supportive services. She has expertise in several US Department of Housing and Urban Development homelessness programs, including homelessness prevention, emergency shelter, rapid rehousing, and permanent supportive housing. She is currently the principle investigator of an evaluation of Tipping Point Community's Chronic Homelessness Initiative in San Francisco, an evaluation of Hamilton County's FUSE permanent supportive housing project, development of the Emergency Rental Assistance Priority Index and targeting tool, a study of COVID-19 homelessness responses, and a study on the monetary and nonmonetary value of ending homelessness. Her other current projects include the US Department Housing and Urban Development's Pay for Success permanent supportive housing demonstration evaluation, US Department of Labor's Homeless Veteran Reintegration Program evaluation, and an evaluation of New Jersey's Keeping Families Together program. Before joining Urban, Batko spent 12 years at the National Alliance to End Homelessness, where she developed expertise in homelessness and housing policy, research, and technical assistance.

**Lynden Bond** is a research associate at the Metropolitan Housing and Communities Policy Center at the Urban Institute. Bond is a licensed social worker whose direct practice and research has focused on housing, housing insecurity, and homelessness. Before joining Urban, Bond worked as clinical supervisor in a homeless outreach program and in a permanent supportive housing program. She is passionate about and committed to using community-empowered methods and partnering with people with lived expertise in research and advocacy. Her prior research has employed qualitative and mixed methods to examine service use and barriers to care among people experiencing housing insecurity and homelessness. Bond is currently a doctoral candidate at New York University's Silver School of Social Work.

**Mary K. Cunningham** is vice president for metropolitan housing and communities policy at the Urban Institute, where researchers and policy experts work to diagnose problems and identify solutions on issues including homelessness and access to affordable housing, fair housing and discrimination, community and economic development, land use and zoning, racial segregation, and housing and climate change. She has studied housing and homelessness for more than 20 years and has led several evaluations of the US Department of Housing and Urban Development's homelessness and assisted-housing programs, including those related to permanent supportive housing, rapid rehousing and homelessness prevention, and housing choice vouchers. From 2005 to 2008, Cunningham launched and directed the Homelessness Research Institute, the research and education arm of the National Alliance to End Homelessness. She also cochaired a research council on homelessness composed of nationally recognized academics and policy researchers. She has authored numerous reports, including *A Research Agenda for Ending Homelessness* and *Homelessness Counts*. Cunningham has been cited in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, has been a guest on *The Weeds* podcast, and was recently interviewed on *CBS Morning News*. She started her career as a caseworker for families with housing vouchers at Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership (now Metro Housing|Boston) and has an MPP from Georgetown University.

**Adrienne Epstein** serves as Senator Padilla's (D-Calif) Policy Advisor for Homelessness, Housing, Education, Labor, and Government Operations. Prior to this role, she served as Congresswomen Barragán's Legislative Assistant, and helped support her efforts to become a Co-Chair of the Congressional Caucus on

Homelessness. She also spent time at the City of LA as a Legislative Deputy and at Downtown Women's Center co-authoring a toolkit focused on Permanent Supportive Housing for Survivors of Domestic Violence. Adrienne is a proud alumni of the Coro Fellowship in Public Affairs and of the University of Texas at Austin. She is passionate about bringing people with relevant lived experiences into the policymaking space.

**Tiffany Duvernay-Smith** is the Advisory Group Coordinator with Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, and a member of the Women's Needs Assessment Steering Committee. She's a Systems Reform Advocate focused on Domestic Violence survivorship, Mental Health stigma reduction, housing our Homeless neighbors and Criminal Justice Reform. She uses her lived experience to encourage others to tap into their own power to break patterns, cycles and chains while recovering from trauma through "healing and dealing". In addition to working for a housing authority, Tiffany is a powerful force in the community who uses her positive attitude and energy to kindle change in hearts, minds and policies. She is inspired daily by love, her relationship with God and her husband. Nature, fitness, relaxation and experimenting with natural remedies are activities she enjoys.

**Amy Turk**, LCSW, is the Chief Executive Officer of the Downtown Women's Center (DWC). Amy has held leadership positions in the field of social work and homeless services since 2001. Amy began her tenure at DWC in 2013 as the Chief Program Officer. Appointed as CEO in early 2020, Amy has grown revenue by 60%, created a new three-year strategic plan, and is deepening DWC's focus on social justice. In the 12 years prior to joining DWC, Amy progressively took on more responsibilities to assist women experiencing homelessness from case management to serving for seven years as Director of Daybreak, a project of The People Concern. Amy has held numerous local, statewide, and national leadership positions in efforts to end homelessness, including as a founding member and co-lead of the Los Angeles Domestic Violence Homeless Services Coalition, Coro Women in Leadership graduate, USC Barbara Boxer Fellow with the USC Center for the Political Future, John A. Hartford Foundation Practice Change Leader award recipient for her efforts to improve healthcare for older adults experiencing homelessness, a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's *100 Million Healthier Lives* Campaign Systems Leader, National Trauma Recovery Center Association Advisory Board Member, Los Angeles County Coordinated Entry System Councilmember, and the previous Board Chair for Los Angeles Central Providers Collaborative.

**Congresswoman Maxine Waters** is considered by many to be one of the most powerful women in American politics today. She has gained a reputation as a fearless and outspoken advocate for women, children, people of color and the poor. Elected in November 2022 to her sixteenth term in the U.S. House of Representatives with more than 70 percent of the vote in the 43rd Congressional District of California, Congresswoman Waters represents a large part of South Los Angeles including the communities of Westchester, Playa Del Rey, and Watts and the unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County comprised of Lennox, West Athens, West Carson, Harbor Gateway and El Camino Village. The 43rd District also includes the diverse cities of Gardena, Hawthorne, Inglewood, Lawndale, Lomita and Torrance. Congresswoman Waters made history as the first woman and first African American Chair of the House Financial Services Committee. An integral member of Congressional Democratic Leadership, Congresswoman Waters serves as a member of the Steering & Policy Committee and is the Co-Chair of the bipartisan Congressional Task Force on Alzheimer's Disease. She is also a member of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, and member and past chair of the Congressional Black Caucus.