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December 28, 2020

To: Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, Chair
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Supervisor Janice Hahn
Supervisor Kathryn Barger

From: Fesia A. Davenport
Acting Chief Executive Officer

ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF UNACCOMPANIED WOMEN EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS (ITEM NO. 8, AGENDA OF SEPTEMBER 29, 2020)

On September 29, 2020, the Board of Supervisors (Board) instructed:

1. The Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) to incorporate data on unaccompanied women experiencing homelessness into its pre-existing public-facing dashboards indicating race, gender, age, geography, sexual orientation, Domestic Violence/Intimate Partner Violence (DV/IPV) status, etc., in the Annual Point-in-Time Count and additional Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data analysis.
2. The Chief Executive Office-Homeless Initiative (CEO-HI) and LAHSA to report back to the Board with a plan to conduct a Countywide Women's Needs Assessment, documenting the experiences as well as the housing and service needs of women experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles County (County), including a focus on unaccompanied women; this Needs Assessment would include policy recommendations and be a collaboration with the Downtown Women's Center, academic institutions, Department of Health Services (DHS), Department of Mental Health (DMH), Department of Public Health (DPH), the Department of Consumer and Business Affairs (DCBA), Los Angeles County Development Authority (LACDA), and other relevant County departments and agencies.
3. The CEO-HI to provide an update regarding whether funding in any or all Measure H-funded Homeless Initiative strategies, beginning in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021-22 Measure H Funding Recommendations, should be set aside to address the needs of women experiencing homelessness, specifically unaccompanied women.

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective And Caring Service"

Background

In the 2020 Homeless Count, LAHSA identified more than 66,000 individuals and family members in the County experiencing homelessness on any given night. Nearly one-third (21,129) of these people are women, which is a 15 percent increase over the number of women experiencing homelessness in 2019. Nearly 55 percent of the women experiencing homelessness were identified as unsheltered; however, the Homeless Count did not account for how many of these women were “unaccompanied,” meaning women over the age of 18 living without a partner or children.

A March 2020 review of United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) data conducted by the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) California Policy Lab indicated that unsheltered and unaccompanied women across the country have higher rates of physical health, mental health, and substance abuse concerns. On average, unaccompanied women will spend more than a decade in their lifetime without the benefit of stable housing. Eighty percent of unsheltered women self-report trauma or abuse as the cause of their homelessness.

Responses to Board Directives

Directive No. 1: Data

LAHSA plans to produce estimates of the size and demographics of unaccompanied women experiencing homelessness in conjunction with its Annual Point-in-Time Count, similar to the attached data summary from the 2020 Homeless Count (Attachment I). This data summary will highlight important demographic information pertaining to this specific sub-population, including veteran and chronic homelessness status, race and ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, health information, disability information, as well as DV/IPV experiences. Furthermore, LAHSA is engaged in developing public-facing dashboards to reflect the demographics, experiences, and outcomes for the County’s homeless services system. LAHSA plans to incorporate unaccompanied women experiencing homelessness as a subpopulation in this ongoing development and refinement process. The first phase of the systemwide dashboards will be available for review by the end of June 2021.

Directive No. 2: Countywide Women’s Needs Assessment

The CEO-HI convened a Workgroup that assisted with developing a response to this directive that consisted of LAHSA, Downtown Women’s Center, UCLA, University of Southern California, DPH-Office of Women’s Health, DHS, DMH, DCBA-Immigrant Affairs, LACDA, the CEO-Office of Women and Girls’ Initiative, and various homeless service providers that provide assistance to women experiencing homelessness. The following are components of the Needs Assessment:

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- Draft workplan - Attachment II
- Draft timeline - Attachment III
- Draft budget - Attachment IV

It is estimated that the two-year project will cost approximately \$539,000. Due to the challenges of COVID-19 and the uncertainty of available funding, planning for the Needs Assessment is anticipated to start in June 2021. The additional time will allow the CEO-HI and the Workgroup to seek other non-Measure-H funding options to supplement this effort, including partnerships with philanthropic organizations. The Needs Assessment is anticipated to take place in October 2022, and the project is expected to be completed by July 2023.

Directive No. 3: Measure H Funding

Eligible unaccompanied women experiencing homelessness have full access to Measure H-funded programs for single adults, including, but not limited to, Interim Housing (Strategies B7 and E8), Rapid Re-Housing (Strategy B3), Permanent Supportive Housing (Strategy D7), and Housing Navigation and Domestic Violence Regional Coordination (Strategy E7). In 2017, \$2.5 million in Measure H funding (through Strategy E8) was allocated to expand bridge housing for women in the County. These funds support a minimum of 200 enhanced bridge housing beds dedicated to women experiencing homelessness.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a reduction in sales tax revenue and corresponding reductions in Measure H funding for strategies in FY 2020-21. At this time, the CEO-HI cannot determine how much funding will be available in FY 2021-22; however, further scaling of housing resources for unaccompanied women will be discussed during the FY 2021-22 Measure H Funding Recommendations process. The intention is to maintain the resources dedicated to unaccompanied women experiencing homelessness and potentially grow resources as appropriate.

Should you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact Phil Ansell, Director of the Homeless Initiative, at (213) 974-1752 or pansell@ceo.lacounty.gov.

FAD:JMN:TJM
PA:JR:RM:tv

Attachments

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
County Counsel
Consumer and Business Affairs
Health Services
Mental Health
Public Health
Los Angeles County Development Authority
Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority



2020 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count - Unaccompanied Women

Notes: Unaccompanied women are defined as females in households with no children under 18 that report living alone. · Data from the 2020 Greater Los Angeles Point-In-Time Count estimate the number and demographic characteristics of the homeless population on a single night in January 2020 in the Los Angeles Continuum of Care (LA County with the exception of Glendale, Long Beach, and Pasadena). · If you have any questions about the data presented, please email datasupport@lahsa.org.

Population	Sheltered	Unsheltered	Total	Prevalence among Pop. (%)
TOTALS				
Total Persons Experiencing Homelessness	17,616	46,090	63,706	-
All Unaccompanied Females	2,685	10,793	13,478	100%
Adults 25+	2,364	10,157	12,521	93%
Transitional Age Youth 18-24	311	622	933	7%
Unaccompanied Minors (Under 18)	10	14	24	0%
VETERANS				
All Veterans	37	188	225	2%
CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS				
Persons Experiencing Chronic Homelessness	870	5,921	6,791	50%
Chronically Homeless Veterans	8	91	99	1%
GENDER				
Transgender	81	236	317	2%
RACE / ETHNICITY				
American Indian/Alaska Native	21	119	140	1%
Asian	48	137	185	1%
Black/African American	1,268	2,877	4,145	31%
Hispanic/Latino	703	3,496	4,199	31%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	16	17	33	0%
White	561	3,886	4,447	33%
Multi-Racial/Other	68	261	329	2%
AGE				
Under 18	10	14	24	0%
18 - 24	311	622	933	7%
25 - 54	1,591	7,936	9,527	71%
55 - 61	459	1,538	1,997	15%
62 and Over	314	683	997	7%
SEXUAL ORIENTATION				
Straight	2,332	9,601	11,933	89%
Gay or Lesbian	102	369	471	3%
Bisexual	142	678	820	6%
Sexual Orientation Non-Conforming	109	145	254	2%
HEALTH & DISABILITY Note: Indicators are not mutually exclusive (a person may report more than one).				
Population	Sheltered	Unsheltered	Total	Prevalence in 18+ Homeless Pop. (%)
Substance Use Disorder	240	3,457	3,697	27%
HIV/AIDS	54	140	194	1%
Serious Mental Illness	816	3,824	4,640	34%
Developmental Disability	498	694	1,192	9%
Physical Disability	626	2,471	3,097	23%
DOMESTIC / INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE				
Population	Sheltered	Unsheltered	Total	Prevalence in 18+ Homeless Pop. (%)
DV/IPV Experience	1,050	5,406	6,456	48%
Homeless Due to Fleeing DV/IPV	1,013	1,556	2,569	19%

Addressing the Needs of Unaccompanied Women Experiencing Homelessness Needs Assessment Workplan Proposal

Background

On September 29, 2020, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (Board) directed the Chief Executive Office-Homeless Initiative (CEO-HI) and the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) to work in collaboration with key stakeholders and report back to the Board with a plan to conduct a Los Angeles County Women's Needs Assessment, including documenting the housing and service needs of women experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles County, with a focus on unaccompanied women¹. This Countywide assessment will also include a robust set of policy recommendations aimed at addressing the service needs of this population.

Workplan Proposal

This proposed workplan for the Countywide needs assessment is put forth by a Workgroup comprised of representatives from the Downtown Women's Center (DWC), LAHSA, the University of Southern California Sol Price School of Public Policy, Department of Public Health (DPH)-Office of Women's Health, and The Good Shepherd. The workplan is primarily informed by lessons learned from the DWC [2019 Los Angeles City Women's Needs Assessment](#)². The proposed Countywide Needs Assessment, the 2022 Los Angeles County Women's Needs Assessment, will expand upon the citywide assessment as follows:

Research Team

The 2022 Los Angeles County Women's Needs Assessment will be a collaborative project led by the Research Team: DWC, LAHSA, the CEO, and a procured Research Partner. The Research Partner will be responsible for administering the survey methodology, as determined by the Research Team, adapting the survey to an online tool (or other determined format), conducting data analysis, and providing expert research consultation throughout the project timeline. The Research Team will also collaborate with key community partners, including women with lived experience, service providers with expertise in serving the designated population, as well as other relevant academic institutions and County departments.

¹ According to the Board motion, "unaccompanied women" is defined as women over the age of 18 living without a partner or children.

² The Downtown Women's Center 2019 Los Angeles City Women's Needs Assessment was a community-based research project documenting the demographics, needs, and conditions of women experiencing homelessness in the City of Los Angeles. The report can be found at: <https://downtownwomenscenter.org/reports/>

Scope of Assessment

Data for the 2022 Los Angeles County Women’s Needs Assessment will be gathered through in-person surveys, consisting of quantitative and qualitative data. The Research Team will bring together women with lived experience and partner agencies to develop an updated survey tool, determine survey areas, and interview women experiencing homelessness across the entire Los Angeles County area. While the 2019 Los Angeles City Women’s Needs Assessment included responses from 305 women across six Service Planning Areas (SPAs) within the city of Los Angeles (Metro Los Angeles, West, South, East, South Bay, and San Fernando Valley), the 2022 Los Angeles County Women’s Needs Assessment will include responses across all eight SPAs. The Research Team will determine what a representative sample size should be for this designated population within the larger geographic area of Los Angeles County.

The Countywide assessment will also feature focus groups and partner meetings. The qualitative and quantitative data collected throughout the survey process will inform community-generated recommendations regarding policy, programming, and other solutions to address homelessness, with a focus on unaccompanied women.

Survey Design

While the exact 2022 Los Angeles County Women’s Needs Assessment methodology has yet to be determined, the survey design will largely reflect the design utilized in the 2019 Los Angeles City Women’s Needs Assessment. To that end, the majority of the questions will focus on the needs of unaccompanied women experiencing homelessness, including questions about their demographic characteristics, housing, income, health, safety, violence, and access to resources and services. The survey will consist of close-ended “Yes” or “No” questions, pre-defined multiple response options, and Likert scale opinion questions (i.e. strongly agree, agree, strongly disagree). LAHSA’s [Annual Youth Count Survey](#)³ will also be examined further to determine if this survey methodology would be beneficial to utilize for the 2022 Los Angeles County Women’s Needs Assessment.

Eligible Survey Participants

Participants are considered eligible to take the survey if they are experiencing homelessness, are over the age of 18, and self-identify as a woman. An important subset of this population will be unaccompanied women. All who participate in the survey will be provided with a gift card as compensation for their time.

Data Collection

The 2019 Los Angeles City Women’s Needs Assessment utilized approximately 100 service provider staff and volunteers to administer the surveys via tablets and cell phones

³ Information on the 2020 Los Angeles County Youth Count can be found at: <https://layouthcount.com/about>

through Qualtrics survey software. Teams surveyed areas across multiple SPAs in the City of Los Angeles; many survey sites were coordinated with homeless services providers. Surveys were also conducted on Homeless Connect Days, which are monthly events held in different geographic locations across Los Angeles County that bring social services to people experiencing homelessness and other low-income populations. Surveys were also administered on streets with concentrations of people experiencing homelessness. The 2022 Los Angeles County Women's Needs Assessment will largely reflect this data collection method with a larger scope of survey participants and volunteers. Additionally, any new and improved methods of data collection via electronic survey tools or online that can be implemented for swifter data collection across a broader survey sample size will be explored.

Workplan Logistics

Timeline

The two-year project is anticipated to start July 1, 2021 and be completed by June 30, 2023. Attachment III contains information on the proposed project deliverables, agencies responsible for executing each deliverable, and approximate start and due dates for each deliverable.

It will be challenging to conduct in-person surveys during the COVID-19 pandemic; therefore, planning will begin in 2021. This will allow the partners involved in this project to investigate funding sources and create a solicitation process. It is anticipated that the Los Angeles County Women's Needs Assessment would take place in July 2022. The compilation of data and finalization of the report would potentially take place by June 2023.

Budget

It is anticipated that the total costs for the project will be \$539,000. See Attachment IV for further details on the proposed budget.

LA County Women's Needs Assessment Draft Proposed Workplan Timeline

No.	Project Element	Due Date
<i>Needs Assessment Planning</i>		
1	Create Request for Proposals to select a Research Consultant	07/01/21
2	Select Research Consultant and solidify Scope of Work/Memorandum of Understanding	09/01/21
3	Solidify internal planning committee (including women with lived experience) and plan initial kick off efforts	09/01/21
4	Form planning subcommittee responsible for survey tool (including women with lived experience)	09/01/21
5	Create protocol for Service Planning Area (SPA)-wide listening sessions (including women with lived	10/01/21
6	Conduct SPA-wide listening sessions (for a total of eight listening sessions) and summarize key themes	12/31/21
7	Determine list of SPA-wide Community Based Organizations to conduct surveys	01/01/22
8	Create outreach strategy/flyers for training volunteers	01/01/22
9	Create community training materials for volunteers and Community Based Organizations	03/01/22
10	Update community training materials (service brochure, maps, emergency contact information, etc.)	04/01/22
11	Subcommittee finalizes survey instrument	06/01/22
12	Outreach to SPA-wide Community Based Organizations and volunteers	06/01/22
13	Translate survey instrument into Spanish and transfer survey to online format	07/01/22
14	Conduct community training for volunteers and order gift cards for survey takers	07/01/22
15	Provide payment to survey site Community Based Organizations	09/01/22
16	Order supplies for Community Based Organizations and volunteers (food, office supplies, etc.)	09/01/22
<i>Needs Assessment</i>		
17	Start of survey week/month (final dates are to be determined)	10/01/22
18	Gather feedback from survey takers, volunteers, and Community Based Organizations	11/01/22
19	Conduct Lived Experience Focus Groups	11/01/22
<i>Post Needs Assessment</i>		
20	Data entry & analysis	12/31/22
21	Write report	03/01/23
22	Edit and finalize recommendations for the report	04/01/23
23	Design and print final report	05/01/23
24	Press Conference	06/30/23
25	Needs Assessment Presentations	06/30/23

LA County Women's Needs Assessment Draft Proposed Budget

Project Title: Los Angeles County Women's Needs Assessment
Funding Sources: To Be Determined
Budget Start Date: July 1, 2021
Budget End Date: June 30, 2023

Budget Category	Fiscal Year 2021-2022	Fiscal Year 2022-2023	Total
Personnel	\$ 96,000	\$ 96,000	\$ 192,000
Domestic Travel	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 4,000
Participant Stipends		\$ 24,000	\$ 24,000
Materials and Supplies	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 4,000
Publication Costs		\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000
Consultants (Research, Graphic Design, Writing)	\$ 120,000	\$ 180,000	\$ 300,000
	\$ 220,000	\$ 319,000	\$ 539,000