

REVISED MOTION BY SUPERVISORS HILDA L. SOLIS

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AND HOLLY MITCHELL

**Supporting Unhoused Women and Families Residing in Skid Row**

As homelessness has increased across Los Angeles County, the number of women falling into homelessness has disproportionately risen. According to the 2020 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count, there are 21,129 women experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles County, making up 32% of the total unhoused population in the region.<sup>1</sup> This reflects a 70% jump from 2013 when the number of unhoused women was 12,449<sup>2</sup>. In comparison, the total number of people experiencing homelessness in LA County increased by 14% between 2013<sup>3</sup> and 2020<sup>4</sup>.

Unsurprisingly, Black women are overrepresented in the count of women experiencing homelessness. While Black women make up less than 9% of the total female population in Los Angeles County, they account for over 30% of the region’s unhoused female

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.lahsa.org/documents?id=4698-2020-homeless-count-la-county-data-summary>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.downtownwomenscenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/DWC-2019-Los-Angeles-Womens-Needs-Assessment.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <http://documents.lahsa.org/planning/homelesscount/2013/HC13-Results-LACounty-COC.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.lahsa.org/documents?id=4698-2020-homeless-count-la-county-data-summary>

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population<sup>5</sup>. Given the upsurge in domestic violence and women leaving the workforce during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is expected that the 2022 homeless point-in-time count will show a significant increase in unhoused women in the region.

A lack of stable housing increases women's vulnerability to violence, exacerbating the trauma many unhoused women have already experienced. A significant portion (41.3%) of chronically homeless women sleep most frequently on the streets. These women are more likely to have experienced sexual violence: 42.2% had been sexually assaulted in their lifetimes and 26.7% had experienced sexual assault in the last year. LGBTQ women were more likely than average to have experienced sexual assault in the last year at a rate of 35.7%. The epicenter of the County's homelessness crisis is in Skid Row where there are 600 unhoused individuals who identify as cisgender female (541), transgender (45), and non-binary (11). Another 55 families experiencing unsheltered homelessness were also counted. Here, according to the 2019 Los Angeles City Women's Needs Assessment conducted by the Downtown Women's Center (DWC), many women identify as survivors of trauma, including domestic violence.

The rates of sexual assault and violence against women on Skid Row demands swift action from the County. The Downtown Women's Center has proposed an action plan to permanently end homelessness for all 600 individual women and 55 unsheltered families currently residing in Skid Row. The "Every Women Housed Action Plan for Women and Families on Skid Row"<sup>6</sup> report provides a roadmap to deliver temporary

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<sup>5</sup> [https://downtownwomenscenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/LA-Alliance-Brief-03\\_04\\_21.pdf](https://downtownwomenscenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/LA-Alliance-Brief-03_04_21.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> <https://downtownwomenscenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Every-Woman-Housed-Action-Plan-Executive-Summary.pdf>

and long-term housing solutions and services that will ensure women on Skid Row remain housed and supported. The proposal centers regional coordination and builds off existing systems that were developed with local and regional partners in the past several years.

DWC's "Every Women Housed Action Plan for Women and Families on Skid Row" plan to resolve homelessness for the 655 women living on Skid Row is an important starting point from which to end homelessness for women across the County. The County should take action to support DWC's efforts in combating women's homelessness.

**WE I, THEREFORE, MOVE** that the Board of Supervisors direct the Chief Executive Office Homelessness Initiative in collaboration with the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), Department of Mental Health (DMH), Department of Public Health (DPH), Department of Health Services Housing for Health (HFH), the Downtown Women's Center (DWC), and relevant stakeholders to report back in 45 days with:

1. A plan exploring the feasibility of using existing and new resources to support DWC's "Every Women Housed Action Plan for Women and Families on Skid Row", including:
  - a. Locating 200 landlords for women already enrolled in LAHSA funded rental assistance and social service programs,
  - b. Providing 100 women with financial resources for rapid placement into permanent housing,
  - c. Creating linkages to 100 mental health and substance abuse treatment

beds,

- d. Providing 200 interim housing placements,
- e. Identifying placement options for up to 55 unhoused families in Skid Row,
- f. Accessing Housing Choice Vouchers made available through the American Rescue Plan.

- 2. An exploration of existing or incoming funding to support the proposal.
- 3. An analysis of the impact of executing this plan on homeless services for women in other parts of the County, and how the County can minimize the reallocation of homelessness resources in support of this plan.
- 4. Recommendations for a group of non-profit, community, and government stakeholders that can oversee implementation of this plan, as well as the anticipated timeline for the plan's implementation.

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