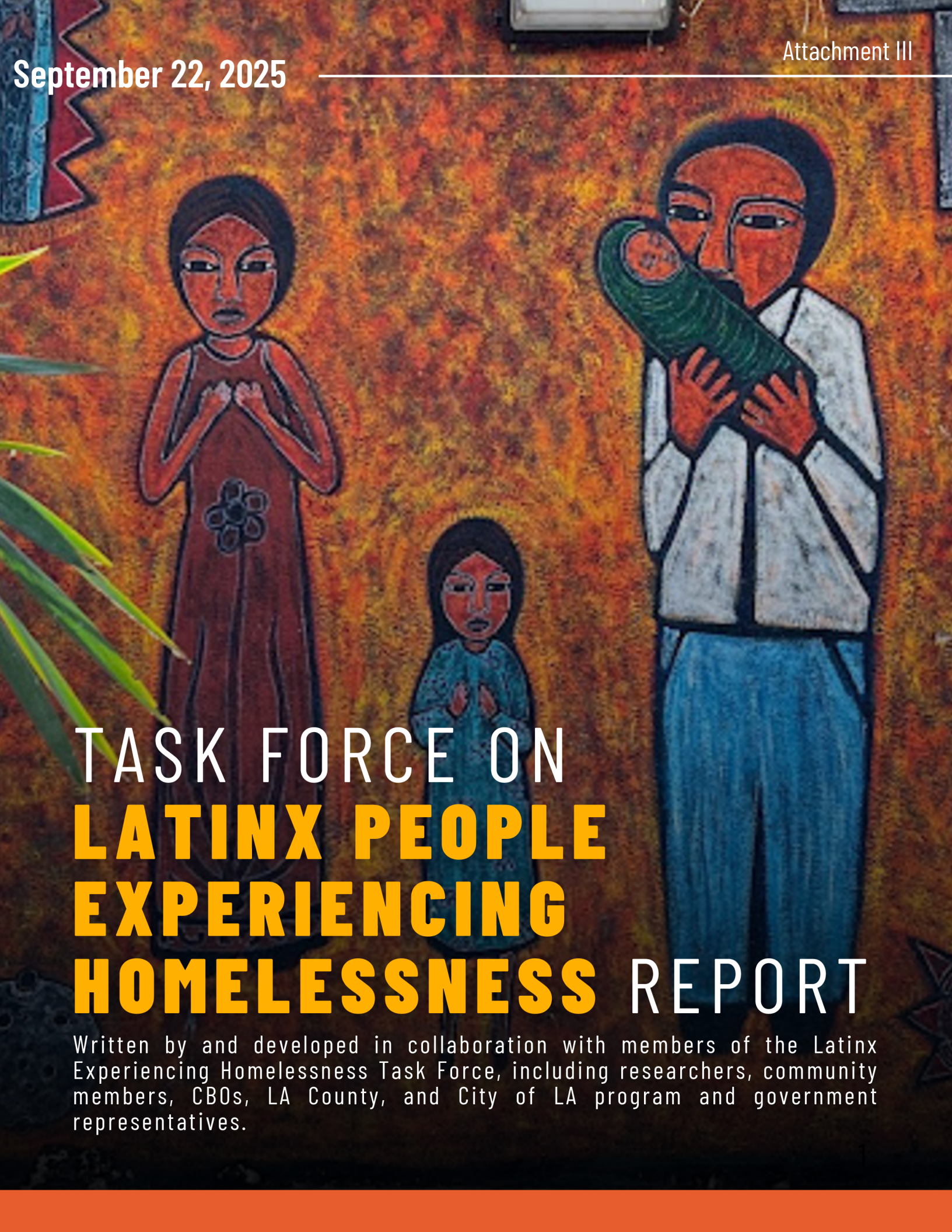


September 22, 2025



TASK FORCE ON **LATINX PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS** REPORT

Written by and developed in collaboration with members of the Latinx Experiencing Homelessness Task Force, including researchers, community members, CBOs, LA County, and City of LA program and government representatives.

About the Task Force On

LATINX PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

In response to a 76% rise in Latinx homelessness between 2018 and 2024, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors passed a 2022 motion directing the Chief Executive Office's Anti-Racism, Diversity, and Inclusion (ARDI) Initiative to collaborate with the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) to investigate the drivers of this alarming trend. The motion led to the creation of the Task Force on Latinx People Experiencing Homelessness, a body of 30 cross-sector leaders from community organizations, government, academia, and LAHSA. The Task Force was charged with identifying system gaps, evaluating service delivery, and developing actionable strategies to reduce Latinx homelessness.

Grounded in a targeted universalism framework, the Task Force pursued the goal that no person should live unsheltered by tailoring strategies to the distinct risks and realities faced by Latinx individuals. Through historical analysis, quantitative data review, and qualitative input from people with lived experience, the Task Force examined how structural racism and systemic barriers contribute to Latinx homelessness. Task Force members engaged deeply in equity-centered dialogue and worked to advance the implementation of findings within their respective spheres of influence. The Latinx Experiencing Homelessness Task Force produced this report with support from staff at LAHSA and ARDI.

Authors:

Patricia Lally, Racial Equity Works (REW)
Camila de la Vega, Racial Equity Works (REW)
Sky Mihaylo, Racial Equity Works (REW)
with input from the Latinx Experiencing Homelessness Task Force members

Meeting Facilitation:

Patricia Lally, Lead Facilitator
Dr. Elianny Edwards, Co-Facilitator



County of Los Angeles
Anti-Racism,
Diversity,
& Inclusion

Table of Contents

Stories of Homelessness and of Belonging	06
Executive Summary	09
Task Force on Latinx People Experiencing Homelessness Report	13
Beliefs and Values	16
Targeted Universalism Approach and Report Methodology	20
Colonization, Racism & Racialized Systems	23
Critical Data	30
Landscape Analysis, Data Findings & Prioritized Recommendations	37
The Immediate and Long-Range Impact of the January 2025 Catastrophic Fires	49
Impediments to Wellness	53
Service Delivery	58
Using an Intersectionality Lens to Serve and Protect Vulnerable Populations	68
Recommendations	83
Accountability & Next Steps	98

Acknowledgements

We thank all the members of the Task Force on Latinx People Experiencing Homelessness for their work, dedication, and support throughout the development of the recommendations and report.

We acknowledge the contributions of our colleagues, especially the community-based organization Task Force members whose diligent work and commitment to serving Latinx people in Los Angeles County were invaluable. We also thank the subject matter experts and service providers who accepted our invitations and offered compelling testimonials during community listening sessions and Task Force meetings, ensuring we were well-informed. Most importantly, we are grateful to the many community members, including individuals experiencing homelessness, who participated in community listening sessions and shared their stories, experiences, and recommendations.

Dr. Melissa Chinchilla, Task Force Co-Lead, LAHSA Commissioner, Health Services Researcher at VA of Greater Los Angeles

Daniella Urbina, Task Force Co-Lead, Senior Advisor, Office of LA County Supervisor Hilda L. Solis

Abigail Marquez, General Manager, Community Investment for Families Department

Angel Martinez, Chief, Equity & Engagement Officer at Community Programs, Dept. of Health Services

Armando Gudino, Executive Director, LA Worker Center Network

Bee Curiel, Training & Capacity Building Programs Manager, The TransLatin@ Coalition

Belen Monroy, Lead Program Manager, Housing for Health, Department of Health Services

Emilio Salas, Executive Director, Los Angeles County Development Authority

Erika Hartman, Executive Director, Safe Place for Youth

Geraldo Ramirez, Manager Homeless Programs, Homeless Initiative

Gloria Cruz, on behalf of CHIRLA

Henry Flores, Short-Term Housing Program Supervisor, Jovenes

Isela Gracian, Senior Deputy, Homelessness & Housing, Office of LA County Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell

Jonathan Nomachi, Principal Analyst, ARDI

Jose "Che" Ramirez, City of Los Angeles, Mayor's Office

Luis Montes, Chief Services Officer, North County Mental Health America of Los Angeles

Luis Quintanilla, Mental Health Program Manager II, Housing and Job Development Division, Department of Mental Health

Luz Castellanos-Vargas, Deputy Director, Office of Race and Equity, City of Los Angeles

Marco Santana, Principal Analyst, Homeless Initiative

Milagros Lopez, Senior Manager for Access, HOPICS

Odilia Romero, Executive Director, CIELO

Raquel Roman, Executive Director, Proyecto Pastoral

Rigoberto Reyes, Executive Director, Office of Immigrant Rights, Los Angeles County

Samuel de los Santos, Analyst, Housing for Health, Department of Health Services

Sofia Peralta, Director of Homelessness Outreach, Office of the City of LA Administrative Officer

Dr. Soledad de Gregorio, Homelessness and Housing Researcher, ABT Global

Norma Guerrero-Lewis, Clifton Trotter, Keisha Douglas, Saba Mwine-Chang, Phyllis Lozano, The LAHSA Team

Dr. D'Artagnan Scorza and Dr. Va Lecia Adams-Kellum, Collaborating and Task Force Supporting Organizational Leaders

Stories of Homelessness and of Belonging

Hector

Hector, a 46-year-old Zapotec man from Oaxaca, speaks Zapoteco as his primary language and only limited Spanish. After living in Los Angeles for about ten years, his job ended abruptly when COVID-19 restrictions eliminated his position. With no income or safety net, Hector became homeless. For more than a year, living on the streets was grueling and stressful. To cope, he turned to drinking, but his alcohol use disorder soon made his situation even more difficult.

Hector eventually turned to CIELO (Comunidades Indigenas en Liderazgo), an organization with a long history of supporting Indigenous migrants from Mexico and Central America. To access treatment, he first needed a Mexican passport. CIELO helped him gather the required documents, accompanied him to the Mexican consulate, and ensured he left with a passport.

With this documentation, new opportunities opened: Hector received medical care and enrolled in inpatient treatment for alcohol use disorder.

Four months later, Hector returned to CIELO sober, healthier, and grateful. He had secured shelter and was taking steps to rebuild his life. Hector credits CIELO with his recovery.

"I got my life back
because of you."

- Hector



Stories of Homelessness and of Belonging

Frida

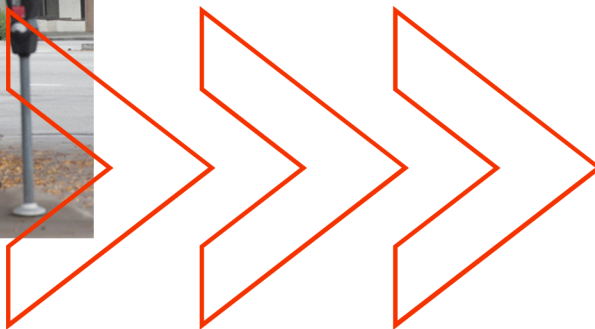
Frida's life was shaped by abuse, mistreatment, and insecurity rooted in transphobia. Forced to leave home at age 13 due to family abuse, she was introduced to cocaine and turned to sex work to survive. Despite these hardships, Frida faced challenges head-on, drawing strength from each moment of adversity.

She endured extreme violence, including an attack that left her blind in one eye, and fled mounting threats from a drug cartel. Her journey took her from Guadalajara to Tijuana to San Diego, where she found refuge at a shelter for trans migrants. Frida ultimately arrived at The TransLatin@ Coalition in Los Angeles, where she found safety and support through HOPE House, a transgender-specific refuge in Los Angeles County.

Today, Frida volunteers with The TransLatin@ Coalition, supporting food distribution and the drop-in center. She rents her own space, has been connected to Trans Care services, and continues to build a safer, more empowered life.

"Me dieron housing,
me brindaron la
mano, me sentí en
familia, me
acogieron, and me
brindaron su apoyo."

-Frida



Stories of Homelessness and of Belonging

Meta

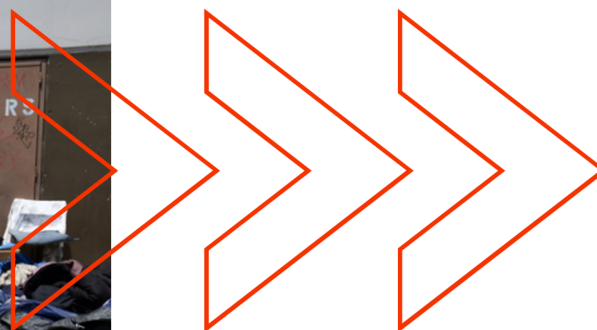
Meta first came to Safe Place for Youth (SPY) while experiencing homelessness. Through SPY's healing arts program and the support of a case manager, he discovered a passion for art and music—creative outlets that became sources of strength and healing. Meta eventually secured housing and now works as the Healing Arts Coordinator.

Drawing on his lived experience, Meta designs programming for youth experiencing homelessness with the goal of offering what he once needed: a space for expression, reflection, and relief.

At SPY, Meta tries "....to create a non-judgmental space for members to come in and express themselves, decompress, and really just create. [Everyone needs] to self-explore and see what else is out there creatively or what can help them maybe manage some of the frustrations experienced while they are out [on the streets]."

"I've been out there myself, and I get that being on the streets is hard. Being on the streets is REALLY hard. And sometimes you just need a place to process everything."

-Meta



LAHSA master leasing building opening, Dec 2023

PROGRESS
REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Task Force on Latinx People Experiencing
Homelessness Report

2025

Executive Summary

Despite the vast economic and cultural contributions of Latinx people in the United States – especially in California and Los Angeles –, Latinx people face injustice, systemic racism, poverty, and now, rising homelessness.

Between 2018 and 2024, the number of Latinx people experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles County rose by 76%, according to data from the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority's (LAHSA) annual homeless count.

In response, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors passed a 2022 motion authored by Supervisors Hilda Solis and Janice Hahn. The motion directed the Chief Executive Office's Anti-Racism, Diversity, and Inclusion (ARDI) Initiative to partner with LAHSA to investigate the causes of the sharp increase in Latinx homelessness. Together, ARDI and LAHSA established the Task Force on Latinx People Experiencing Homelessness, composed of community leaders, service providers, City and County officials, researchers, and staff from ARDI and LAHSA.

The Task Force was charged with identifying and assessing how gaps in the County social service system result in increased numbers of Latinx people falling into homelessness. By critically examining and evaluating the delivery of services to Latinx people experiencing homelessness, the Task Force's goal was to develop strategic recommendations intended to decrease the number of Latinx people at serious risk of losing their homes.

The Task Force embraced a targeted universalism approach to the work¹, which establishes a universal goal that will be achieved through targeted strategies that consider

"how different groups are situated within structures, culture, and across geographies." By first defining the universal goal that no person lives unsheltered, the Task Force recommended strategies to make this goal a reality for the specific culture, experiences and risks to homelessness of Latinx people, who now represent the fastest-growing group of people susceptible to losing their home.

Using a range of methodologies to explore risks and solutions to Latinx homelessness, the Task Force conducted an extensive historical review to understand the legacy of racist structures that impact Latinx people of all ethnicities and nationalities and contribute to the alarming rate of Latinx people experiencing homelessness. The Task Force took a multifaceted approach – assessing demographic data to understand: 1) the population dynamics of Latinx people in unstable housing situations; 2) reviewing qualitative surveys that shed light on the lived experiences of navigating homelessness as a Latinx person; and 3) analyzing service and administrative data to identify patterns in housing insecurity, entry into and exits from homelessness, service access, and returns to homelessness. This comprehensive process enabled the Task Force to share findings and present evidence-based, values-driven recommendations that are both actionable and realistic within a system striving for meaningful change.

¹ powell, john. (2019, May 29). *Berkeley talks transcript: John Powell on targeted universalism*. Berkeley News. <https://news.berkeley.edu/2019/05/29/berkeley-talks-transcript-john-powell-targeted-universalism/>

² Ibid.

Key Findings

Reporting performance can include details such as indicators identified, data collected, and SDG-related activities accomplished. Clear and concrete.



The vestiges of redlining continues to shape under-resourced and underserved neighborhoods, creating conditions of intergenerational poverty, displacement, and heightened risk of homelessness.



Language barriers, fear of governmental engagement, and the stigma associated with seeking help have led many Latinx families to address homelessness on their own. Latinx communities are often associated with hard work, resilience, and strong family and community ties that have historically provided support during hardship. One example is the “doubling up” effect³, in which multiple families and community members share housing designed for a single household as a way to prevent homelessness.



High housing costs and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic severely affected the Latinx community. When hospitality and service industry jobs came to a halt, Latinx workers—disproportionately employed in low-wage service positions—were suddenly left without income, even as housing costs in Los Angeles continued to rise. Adding to these pressures, anti-immigrant sentiment across the United States created a hostile national climate for Latinx people.



Data shows that wage theft and poor working conditions disproportionately affect Latinx people. Because Latinx workers are overrepresented in low-wage industries, the Task Force identified wage theft as a critical issue that undermines the community’s financial stability and economic mobility. In fact, Latinx workers are more likely to be employed in industries where 80% of low-wage workers experience wage theft⁴.



The legacy of racism and injustice—including historical land dispossession, ongoing housing discrimination, low-wage employment coupled with wage theft, the lasting effects of the 2008 financial crisis, and the impact of COVID-19—has created an ever-increasing threat of housing instability for Latinx communities. Addressing this crisis requires both an understanding of these deep-rooted issues and a commitment to dismantling the systemic inequalities that have long affected the Latinx community.

³ Chinchilla, M., Martinez, D. N., & Richard, M. (2003). *The full spectrum of Latinx homelessness: understanding and addressing doubling up*. UCLA, Latino Policy & Politics Institute. <https://latino.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Homelessness.pdf>

⁴ *Fact Sheet: What is Wage Theft*. Los Angeles Worker Center Network. (2023). <https://laworkercenternetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Los-Angeles-Worker-Center-Network-What-Is-Wage-Theft.pdf>

Proposed Recommendations

Latinx people experiencing homelessness are deeply affected by their environment and the lack of focused support. Without intervention, these trends will continue on an alarming trajectory. These findings shaped the Task Force's recommendations for meaningful, sustainable solutions to end homelessness.



Advance systemic change in housing. Housing must be recognized as a fundamental right. Support should be prioritized for people at risk of homelessness to remain stably housed, while expanding access to safe, affordable, accessible, long-term housing for those already experiencing homelessness. The principle that “no person lives unsheltered” requires state and local governments to identify additional revenue streams and commit to sustained development and funding of affordable housing.



Strengthen prevention efforts for Latinx individuals. Prevention models should better serve Latinx residents often overlooked by existing systems. The Task Force recommends creating a new Homeless Prevention risk model program tailored to Latinx needs; leveraging alternative data sources such as community health clinics and nonprofit organizations; and incorporating indicators like income instability and overcrowding. Expanded outreach and partnerships with culturally responsive community-based organizations are essential, including services such as legal aid and immigration assistance.



Improve Financial Security. Latinx individuals benefit from financial assistance programs that provide tax preparation support, credit education, and banking opportunities. Replicating these successful programs and partnering with culturally responsive organizations for outreach can strengthen economic stability.



Invest in scalable models to promote wellness. Effective models emphasize relationship-building and prevention for Latinx families rather than focusing solely on treatment and diagnosis. Key strategies include training community members as peer supports, bridging gaps between traditional health services and communities, avoiding stigmatizing language related to homelessness, and fostering wellness through social activities and shared meals that integrate Promotora-like support.



Innovate and provide culturally responsive, community-driven, trauma-informed, and language-inclusive adjustments to existing service delivery and prevention models in street outreach, interim housing, time-limited subsidies, and permanent supportive housing (PSH). Tailoring services to Latinx people addresses fundamental human needs and is a requirement to create a positive impact.

The Task Force intends for this work to complement existing research and the findings of similar committees, adding value to collective efforts to implement holistic solutions that bring transformative, positive change toward ending homelessness.

A portrait of a middle-aged man with a mustache, wearing a dark fedora and a light-colored t-shirt. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is a solid, warm orange color.

TASK FORCE ON LATINX PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS REPORT

Resident at Project Homekey in Compton, Photo by Michael
Owen Baker, Los Angeles County Flickr, April 30, 2021

Task Force on Latinx People Experiencing
Homelessness Report

2025

Background

Task Force on Latinx People Experiencing Homelessness Report

Despite the vast economic and cultural contributions of Latinx people in the United States—especially in California and Los Angeles—Latinx communities continue to face injustice, systemic racism, poverty, and now rising homelessness.

In Los Angeles County, Latinx people experienced a 76% increase in homelessness between 2018 and 2024, according to data from the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority's (LAHSA) annual homeless count.

In October 2022, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors passed a motion authored by Supervisors Hilda Solis and Janice Hahn. The motion directed the Chief Executive Office's Anti-Racism, Diversity, and Inclusion (ARDI) Initiative to partner with LAHSA to investigate the causes of this sharp increase. In response, ARDI and LAHSA created the Task Force on Latinx People Experiencing Homelessness.

The Task Force is deeply aware: ultimately, implementation is the force of change.

The Task Force convened to assess how gaps in the County's social service system contributed to rising Latinx homelessness, to critically evaluate service delivery, and to develop strategic recommendations aimed at reducing the number of Latinx people without stable housing.

The Task Force brought together 30 cross-sector leaders committed to improving the homeless services system to better meet the needs of vulnerable community members. Before formally joining, prospective Task Force members agreed to:

- Attend all scheduled meetings, including the initial all-day retreat, subsequent in-person monthly meetings, and at least one planned community listening session.
- Engage fully, bringing their specific expertise to enrich our discussions and strategies.
- Uphold the principles of equity, inclusion, and belonging, recognizing these as the pillars upon which lasting change is built.

For government leaders, the commitment also included: "Make this work your own by adopting any recommendations from the Task Force that fall within the scope of your agency's responsibilities and work towards their implementation."

Background

Despite the vast economic and cultural contributions of Latinx people in the United States, their history in the nation—particularly in California and Los Angeles—is also marked by injustice, systemic racism, poverty, and today, rising homelessness.

The Task Force began its work with a day-long retreat to establish a circle of belonging, develop shared values, and commit to a unified vision. From that starting point, members emphasized the urgency of critically assessing current programs, policies, and initiatives while centering the voices of those most impacted by homelessness. The group continued meeting monthly in half-day sessions that featured government and community experts addressing topics such as homelessness prevention, financial security, barriers facing non-citizen migrants, wellness, and other issues that exacerbate homelessness.



C3 Skid Row Outreach team in Skid Row neighborhood, Photo by Mayra Vasquez Los Angeles County, July 14, 2016

Toward the end of its learning journey, the Task Force invited more than 100 representatives from the City, County, LAHSA, and community service providers to review and respond to its draft recommendations. Task Force members presented their proposals, documented participant feedback, and incorporated those insights into the final recommendations.



Latinx Taskforce Design Charrette session, Los Angeles County, August 9, 2024

This ten-month journey culminated in recommendations that reflect the Task Force's collective thinking, insights, and expertise. While the process was significant, it marks a beginning rather than an end.

The implementation of these recommendations has the potential to make a meaningful difference in Los Angeles County communities and, most importantly, in the lives of people experiencing housing instability or homelessness. Recognizing that not every strategy will succeed, the Task Force emphasized the importance of measurement and evaluation. If a recommendation proves ineffective, the Task Force urged identifying and advancing more promising approaches.

BELIEFS AND VALUES

New interim housing at Pathway Home operation in Inglewood,
Photo by Michael Owen Baker, Los Angeles County Flickr, Oct. 30, 2024

CONA

Task Force on Latinx People Experiencing
Homelessness Report

2025

Beliefs and Values

The Task Force on Latinx People Experiencing Homelessness was formed in response to the complex conditions driving the alarming increase in Latinx homelessness in Los Angeles. Its work acknowledges, calls out, and responds to the clear evidence of institutional barriers.

This report rests on data-driven and empirical observations, including the following:

- Racism and colonization are real, present, enduring, intersectional, and systemic forms of oppression.
- All forms of oppression are linked. As the interaction and cumulative effects of multiple forms of discrimination based on race, gender, social, and sexual preference, intersectionality impacts the daily lives of individuals, and it must be addressed.
- People of color represent about 75% of all people experiencing homelessness.

In 2018, LAHSA's Ad Hoc Committee on Black People Experiencing Homelessness declared, "For lasting change to occur, institutional barriers across agencies and mainstream systems must be dismantled to eliminate the racial disparities and systemic racism affecting Black people experiencing homelessness."

The Task Force concurs with this statement, which remains true today for all people of color, including Latinx people. The same systems and structures that contribute to disproportionate rates of homelessness among Black residents also fuel growing disparities in Latinx communities.

The Task Force has benefited from the work of LAHSA's 2018 Ad Hoc Committee on Black People Experiencing Homelessness. It acknowledges and values that trailblazing report, concurring with its findings and recommendations. Moving forward, the Task Force seeks to work in solidarity with the Ad Hoc Committee and with other groups representing historically marginalized people experiencing homelessness.



Skid Row mural by El Mac, Retna, Los Angeles County Flickr, Jan 3, 2017

The Task Force aims for transformational change—fundamentally altering racialized systems and structures to ensure equitable and just outcomes for all. It believes the following principles are essential to guide meaningful action and progress toward ending homelessness for Latinx people and all communities.

We, the Task Force, Assert

Transformation begins with self. The Task Force's theory of change holds that to transform the world, people must first transform themselves—meaning the work starts at a personal level.



HOPICS and LAHSA outreach team in West Rancho Dominguez, Los Angeles County, Flickr, Aug 22, 2023

Racialized systems are intended to benefit some at the expense of others and to maintain the status quo. Systemic change cannot endure unless government leaders and stakeholders confront inequities and monitor progress through a transparent, ongoing, multi-year commitment.



LAHSA client embracing friend upon departure from the encampment in Hawthorne, Photo by Mayra Vasquez, Los Angeles County Flickr, July 11, 2021

Experiencing homelessness is always traumatic. The principle and practice of belonging are critical to reversing current trends and outcomes for Latinx people experiencing homelessness. The Task Force emphasized the critical need for a space that fosters “a felt sense in our bodies of safety, power, wholeness, and welcome,”⁵ particularly for people experiencing trauma.



C3 Skid Row Outreach team, Photo by Mayra Vasquez, Los Angeles County Flickr, July 14, 2016

To care for and empathize with people experiencing homelessness, requires individuals and institutions to recognize the fundamental responsibility to cultivate safe and caring spaces for all people, including people experiencing homelessness.



Local Assistance Centers & Disaster Resource Center at the Pasadena City College Community Education Center, Photo by Mayra Vasquez, Los Angeles County Flickr, Jan. 15, 2025

The Task Force believes that advancing equitable solutions for homelessness requires a shift in both cultural and policy change. U.S. history shows that policy shifts alone are insufficient to address inequities. Racism and other forms of oppression require deep cultural change rooted in curiosity, vulnerability, honesty, and self-examination. Strategic policy and administrative reforms can reduce disparities only if paired with meaningful cultural transformation.

⁵ Stout, B. (2023, March 6). *What does it mean to belong?* <https://citizenstout.substack.com/p/what-does-it-mean-to-belong>

Principles and Values

At its inception, the Task Force identified the standards that would guide its internal work, community engagement, and the development of strategies and recommendations. After a thoughtful discussion and strong advocacy from members, the Task Force adopted the following principles to guide its collective journey.

The Task Force's is most meaningful in large part because of its values-based premise.

Belonging: More than a feeling, belonging is a fundamental human need. The Task Force centers belonging in all of its work—in collaboration, in the creation of policies and programs, and in connections with community members. Cultivating belonging is not always perfect, but the commitment to its practice, individually and collectively, remains constant.

Accountability: The Task Force is first and foremost accountable to the many Latinx communities represented in Los Angeles County, especially the thousands of Latinx people experiencing the pain and trauma of homelessness.

Integrity: The Task Force commits to an ethical process, approaching its work with honesty and transparency, and striving always to “do the right thing,” even when difficult or contrary to the views of the dominant culture.

Inclusivity: “Nothing about you, without you” is the premise, promise, and commitment.

Equity: The Task Force challenges policies, power structures, and beliefs that benefit some at the expense of others. It explores and responds to the needs of those furthest from housing to ensure equitable outcomes for all.

Intersectionality: People hold multiple identities, including those within historically and systemically marginalized groups.

These overlapping identities shape how individuals encounter barriers within the homelessness system. The Task Force creates recommendations and strategies that account for the impact of multiple biases and barriers.

Lived Experience and Agency: The voices of lived experience deepen understanding of the conditions affecting Latinx people at risk of or experiencing homelessness and offer insight into solutions most appropriate for those impacted.

Humility: Being right is not the goal. The Task Force seeks to understand, remain curious, and learn from one another while building empathy for people, their backgrounds, and experiences.

Outcomes Driven: The Task Force works to change the trajectory for Latinx people facing or experiencing homelessness. It focuses on achieving outcomes such as preventing homelessness, shortening its duration, and ensuring no person lives unsheltered.

Corazón (Heart): The Task Force remains heart-centered, guided by humanity, humbled by the pain many endure, and uplifted by the potential of ending homelessness for all.

TARGETED UNIVERSALISM APPROACH AND REPORT METHODOLOGY

Spring Parks After Dark (PAD) event at Amelia Mayberry
Park. Photo by Mayra Beltran Vasquezr, Los Angeles
County Flickr, Oct. 30, 2024

Task Force on Latinx People Experiencing
Homelessness Report



2025

Targeted Universalism Approach And Report Methodology

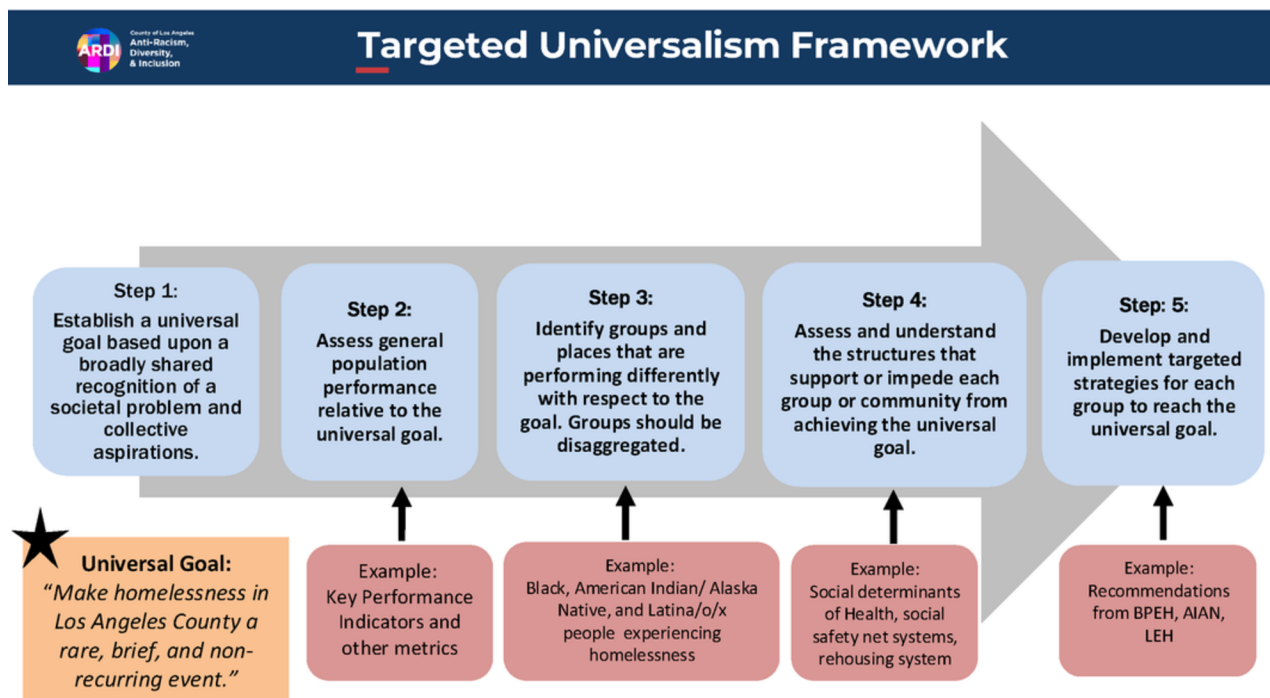
The Task Force's central approach was grounded in a targeted universalism framework.

As defined by the University of California, Berkeley, Professor John Powell, "Targeted Universalism" sets universal goals that can be achieved by addressing different needs. Using this approach, "The universal goal is not only for the dominant group, it's what everyone deserves."⁶

The Task Force on Latinx People Experiencing Homelessness defined its universal goal as follows:

Universal Goal: **No person lives unsheltered**

Once the Task Force defined its universal goal, it modeled its approach after the five-step process outlined by the UC Berkeley Belonging Institute:⁷



By using this targeted universalism approach, the Task Force asked: "How do we ensure all individuals in our communities reach the universal goal?" It then examined which specific identity groups were not meeting this goal, who was experiencing housing instability or homelessness, and what disproportionate trends and outcomes shaped those experiences of homelessness.

Focused specifically on the Latinx population, the Task Force's mission of developing strategies to ensure that Latinx people could achieve this universal goal of ending homelessness.

⁶ Powell, John. (2019, May 29). *Berkeley talks transcript: John Powell on targeted universalism*. Berkeley News. <https://news.berkeley.edu/2019/05/29/berkeley-talks-transcript-john-powell-targeted-universalism/>

⁷ Ibid.

Methodologies

The Task Force used the following methodologies to develop feasible targeted strategies:



It conducted an extensive historical review to explore the legacy implications of Latinx people of all ethnicities and nationalities in the United States and in Los Angeles, California.



It analyzed data from the annual Point-In-Time unsheltered homeless count, the U.S. Census, public policy organizations, peer reviewed research, and other public information sources to understand the population dynamics of Latinx homelessness.



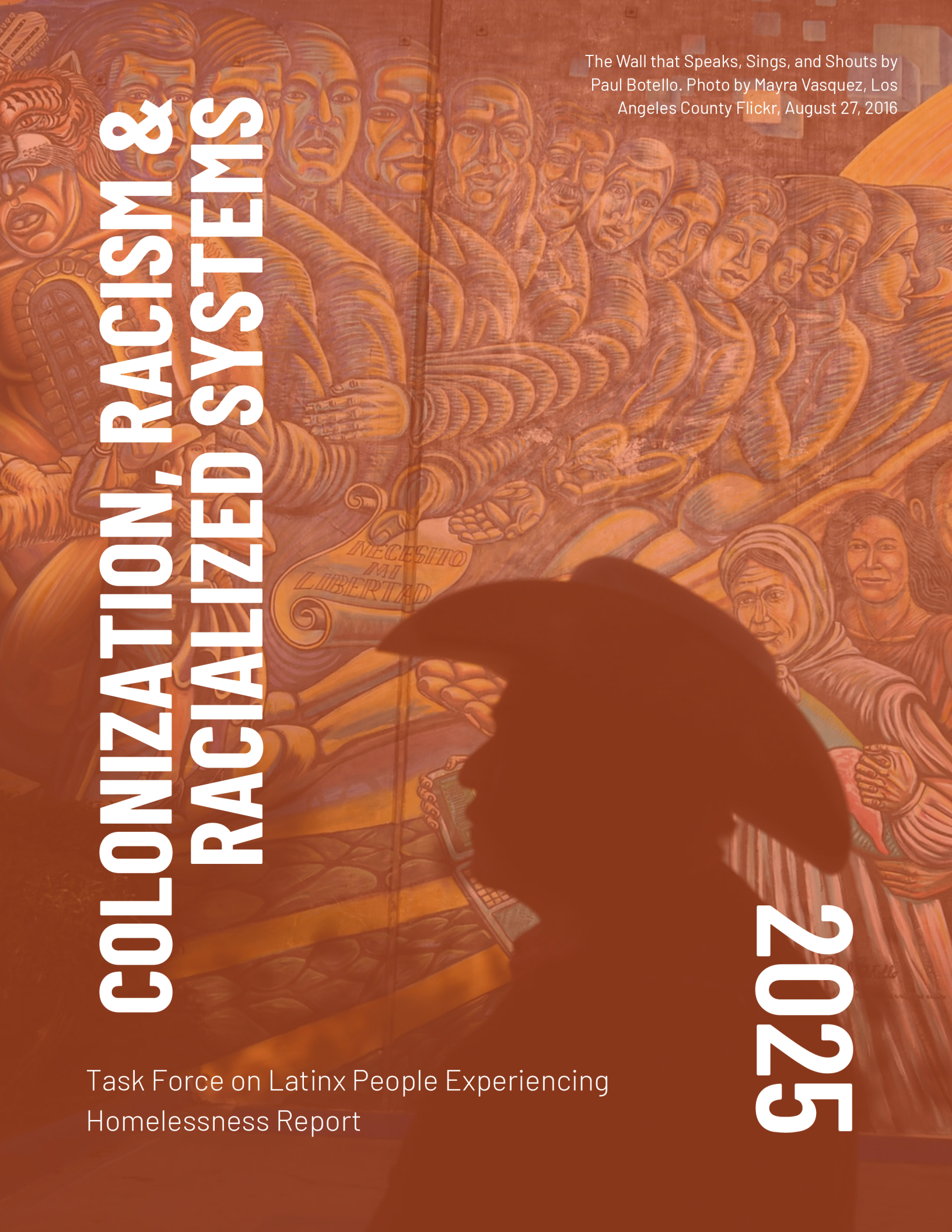
It assessed administrative service data, including the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), to connect Latinx experiences with housing insecurity, entry into homelessness, access to resources, duration of homelessness, exits, and returns to homelessness.



It examined data on homelessness prevention, barriers to financial security, impediments to wellness, and opportunities to improve service delivery. The Task Force also considered the impact of intersectionality; how overlapping identities and experiences such as race, gender, and immigration status shape the realities of individuals and families experiencing homelessness. It further reviewed data on service delivery performance, both for the general population and, when available, disaggregated by subgroup, to better understand the unique challenges facing Latinx communities.



To understand the structures that supported or hindered Latinx people in achieving the universal goal, the Task Force engaged with people with lived experience and expertise, community leaders, and service providers. In addition to focus groups and community listening sessions, it invited government department leaders and community organizations to monthly meetings to share data, describe City and County programs and initiatives, and discuss both challenges in service delivery and examples of promising or disappointing outcomes. These collective efforts informed the recommendations and strategies contained in this report, ensuring that findings were shaped by the voices of people with lived experience.



COLONIZATION, RACISM & RACIALIZED SYSTEMS

The Wall that Speaks, Sings, and Shouts by
Paul Botello. Photo by Mayra Vasquez, Los
Angeles County Flickr, August 27, 2016

Task Force on Latinx People Experiencing
Homelessness Report

2025

Colonization, Racism, and Racialized Systems

The Historical and Present Drivers of Homelessness

The Historical and Present Drivers of Homelessness

The history of Latinx people in the United States is deeply rooted in colonization and the racialized structures that followed. Across the country—and especially in Los Angeles—Latinx communities have been and continue to be significantly affected by this legacy. The chronology below begins with actions that shaped the experiences of Mexicans and Mexican Americans. In more recent years, Latinx and Indigenous people from other regions and countries have faced similar treatment. What follows highlights illustrative moments in this history.

Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo

In 1848, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ended the war between Mexico and the United States and transferred a large portion of Mexican territory, including California, to U.S. control. Despite agreements made in the treaty, Anglo settlers took advantage of language barriers and legal complexities to strip many Mexican American landowners of their property, setting the stage for decades of exclusion, limited access to land, resources, and political power.⁸

1930 – 1940

Repatriation of Mexicans and Mexican Americans. During the Great Depression, deportation campaigns sought to rid the U.S. of “cheap labor,” and those who could not be deported because they were legal residents or citizens were pressured to leave “voluntarily.” “The number of repatriated Mexicans is hard to know but estimates range from least 350,000 to as high as 2 million, out of which 60% are believed to have been American citizens—most of them children.”⁹

The New Deal’s exclusion of farmworkers. “Unlike most urban industrial workers, farmworkers, many of whom were people of color, were omitted from the National Industrial Recovery Act of 1933, the National Labor Relations Act, the Social Security Act of 1935, and the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938. Due to complicated state residency laws, migrant farmworkers, even as American citizens, were excluded from public aid.” This omission left farmworkers without the benefits of important labor protections and basic human rights.¹⁰

⁸ Chanbonpin, K. D. (2005). *How the Border Crossed Us: Filling the Gap between Plume v. Seward and the Dispossession of Mexican Landowners in California after 1848*. Cleveland State Law Review 29, 52. <https://doi.org/https://repository.law.uic.edu/facpubs>

⁹ *Land Loss in Trying Times*. <https://www.loc.gov>. (2024, December 18). <https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/immigration/mexican/land-loss-in-trying-times/>

¹⁰ Minian, A. R. (2020a, June 25). *1930s: Repatriation of Mexicans, 21 Lessons from America’s Worst Moments*. TIME.com. <https://time.com/5858169/americas-worst-moments/>

¹⁰ Martinez-Matsuda, V. (2020, June 25). *1933-38: The New Deal’s exclusion of farmworkers, 21 lessons from America’s worst moments*. TIME.com. <https://time.com/5858169/americas-worst-moments/>

Colonization, Racism, and Racialized Systems

The Historical and Present Drivers of Homelessness

1940's – 1950's

Redlining and Housing Segregation. Discriminatory housing policies and redlining confined people of color to less desirable neighborhoods, limiting access to resources and opportunities. Although redlining and property covenants are no longer legal, this legacy of inequality continues to affect people of color, confining them to historically under-resourced areas and excluding them from homeownership opportunities that could have built generational wealth.¹¹

Bracero Program. In 1942, U.S. officials, facing labor shortages during World War II, entered into agreements with Mexico to bring Mexican workers for agricultural and railway jobs. These agreements were intended to provide cheap labor while protecting workers from exploitation, wage theft, and unsafe housing. In practice, many employers ignored the protections, subjecting Mexican laborers to poor conditions. Congress also permitted the recruitment of agricultural workers from across North, Central, and South America.



Dorothea Lange, The first Braceros arriving in Los Angeles by train, 1942. Oakland Museum of California, Photograph by Dorothea Lange, working for the U.S. Government.

Zoot Suit Riots. In Los Angeles, Mexican Americans, primarily young Mexican men wearing distinctive zoot suit clothing, were attacked and beaten by white servicemen. Law enforcement and government officials largely ignored the violence, underscoring systemic racism and a deep racial divide that targeted Mexican American communities.



Mexican American youths in "zoot suits" are detained for questioning in a Los Angeles jail following a brawl, 1942. Courtesy of UCLA Digital Library Collection.

¹¹ Tijerina, J. (2019, March 16). *The Legacy of Redlining in Los Angeles: Disinvestment, Injustice, and Inefficiency*. https://clkrep.lacity.org/online/docs/2019/19-0600_misc_5-6-19.pdf

Melendez, M. (2021, May 7). *Redlining in Los Angeles, CA: The effects of historic redlining in today's LA cities*. ArcGIS StoryMaps. <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/7c68f65bb296484cbac51eb21dce3999>

Colonization, Racism, and Racialized Systems

The Historical and Present Drivers of Homelessness

Segregation in California Schools. Another example of the systemic racism faced by Mexican Americans was segregated schools. By 1940, more than 80 percent of Mexican-American students in California went to so-called “Mexican” schools, even though no California law mandated such a separation.¹² Race was a deciding factor when eight-year-old Sylvia Mendez was denied admission to a California public school. Her light-skinned cousins with non-Spanish last names were admitted, but Sylvia and her brothers were not. Her father, Gonzalo Mendez, filed a class action lawsuit against four Los Angeles-area school districts. In 1946, a federal judge ruled in favor of the Mendez family; the following year, an appeals court upheld the decision, and California banned all public school segregation.

However, a 2014 report found that California remained the most segregated state for Latinx students, with the Los Angeles Unified School District among the most segregated in the state.¹³ Authors stated that “the triple segregation, by ethnicity, poverty, and language that California Latino students face creates very severe obstacles to equal opportunity, and the situation has deteriorated for the past sixty years.”¹⁴



Sylvia Mendez, eight years old, 1944.
Duke University.

1950 – 1960

Displacement. Although redlining restricted Latinx people to less desirable neighborhoods, displacement from even those areas proved to be a constant threat for Latinx communities. The story of Chavez Ravine is one example. By the 1950s, the area of Chavez Ravine was home to over 1,800 mostly Mexican American families, who were led to this area due to housing discrimination. Initially, government leaders sought to turn the Chavez Ravine area into a large public housing project and coerced residents to sell their homes with the promise of public housing. However, the political tide turned against public housing, and ultimately, this Mexican American enclave was conveyed to the owners of the Dodgers baseball team to build Dodger Stadium. This displacement, first for the purposes of public housing and then given to the Dodgers as their private property, eviscerated an intact neighborhood and resulted in wholesale evictions with little compensation, leaving these families without stable housing.

¹² *Roadmap for Educational Equity*. LA Works. (2024). <https://www.laworks.com/ed-equity-101>

¹³ University of California, Los Angeles. (2014, May 14). *California the most segregated state for Latino students*. The Civil Rights Project. <https://www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/news/press-releases/2014-press-releases/ucla-report-finds-california-the-most-segregated-state-for-latino-students>

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

Colonization, Racism, and Racialized Systems

The Historical and Present Drivers of Homelessness

1970 - 1990

Central American Migration. Civil wars in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua, fueled by U.S. involvement, drove the emigration of significant numbers of Central Americans to the United States during the 1980s. Although smaller numbers of educated, urban Central American immigrants had been arriving in the United States since the 1970s, the first significant waves of wartime refugees came in the mid-1980s. By the mid-1990s, the huge demand created by American industries for cheap, exploitable labor, combined with the lingering aftermaths of war, lured increasing numbers of migrants to work in agricultural, meat processing, service, domestic, and industrial jobs.¹⁵

During the 1970s through the 1990s, the United States experienced significant migration from Central America, primarily due to political turmoil and economic instability in countries like Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala. In Nicaragua, the Sandinista revolution and subsequent Contra war prompted approximately 120,000 Nicaraguans, including many from the upper class, to seek refuge in the U.S. Similarly, civil conflicts in El Salvador and Guatemala led to widespread violence and human rights violations, displacing nearly a million refugees. Despite the dangers they faced, many of these individuals were denied asylum in the U.S. during the 1980s, as the Reagan administration often labeled them as "economic migrants" rather than acknowledging the political repression they fled.

This migration period shaped the demographics of Latinx communities in the U.S., with Los Angeles becoming the largest Central American diaspora hub. Today, the children and grandchildren of these migrants continue to advocate for immigrant rights, fair labor policies, and protections against deportation, as migration remains an ongoing reality due to violence, corruption, economic instability, and climate change in the region.¹⁶

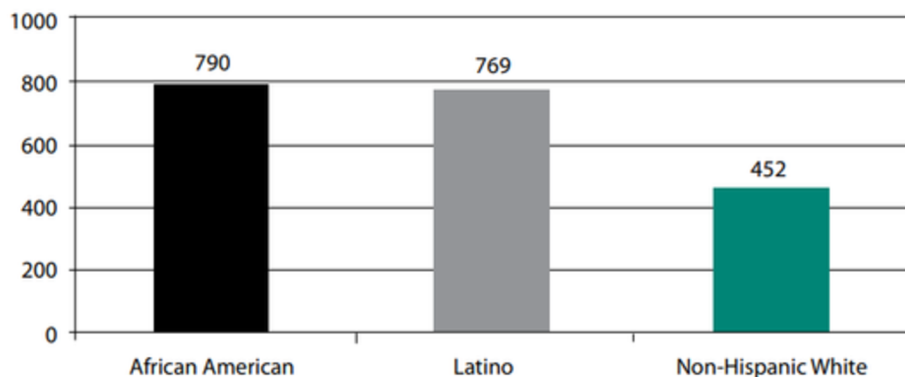
¹⁵ Foxen, P. (2021, July 14). *Understanding Central American Migrations*. UnidosUS Blog. <https://unidosus.org/blog/2021/07/14/understanding-central-american-migrations/>

¹⁶ Ibid.

2000 – 2010

Housing Crisis. The housing crisis across the country and in Los Angeles County impacted Latinx people disproportionately due to the use of risky subprime loans. Many Latinx families lost their homes in LA County, as in many other areas, during this time. Around 2011, Latino homeowners “were three times more likely than white owners to lose their homes to foreclosure, erasing hard-won gains in wealth and social integration.”¹⁷ A study also revealed alarming intersections between foreclosures and immigration status for some Latinx households; it concluded that “local immigration enforcement is significantly associated with foreclosure rates for Latino households, but not households of other backgrounds.”¹⁸

2007-2009 Completed Foreclosures per 10,000 Loans
(on loans made in 2005-2008 to owner-occupants)



2007-2009 Completed Foreclosures per 10,000 Loans
(on loans made in 2005-2008 to owner-occupants).¹⁹

2010 – Present

Wage Theft. Wage theft is when an employer does not pay an employee the compensation they are legally owed. In a report issued by Rutgers School of Management and Labor, a 10-year survey of California workers found on average, affected workers lost 20% of their paycheck, or about \$4,000 annually if they were working full-time each year between 2014 and 2023. Workers in the four metro areas (Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Diego, and San Jose) lost a combined \$2.3 to \$4.6 billion in wages each year during the study period. Black and Latinx workers, women, noncitizens, young people (ages 16-24), seniors (65+), workers without a college degree, and part-time and hourly workers are more likely to experience minimum wage theft, suggesting discrimination as a central explanation. In Los Angeles, called the “Wage Theft Capital of the Nation,” noncitizens are roughly 60 to 70 percent more likely to experience a minimum wage violation than citizens.²⁰

¹⁷ Rugh, J. S. (2021). *From crisis to progress: housing and Latino youth since 2000*. The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 696(1), 46-78. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00027162211041364>

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Gruenstein Bocian, D., Li, W., & Ernst, K. S. (2010, June 18). Foreclosures by race and ethnicity: the demographics of a crisis. <https://sociologyinfocus.com/files/mortgage-lending/research-analysis/foreclosures-by-race-executive-summary.pdf>

²⁰ Galvin, D. J., Barnes, J., Fine, J., & Round, J. (2024). *Wage theft in California: minimum wage violations*. Rutgers. https://smlr.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/Documents/Centers/WJL/California_MinimumWage_Study_May2024.pdf

2010 – Present

COVID-19. The COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately impacted the Latinx community, both economically and in terms of health outcomes. Non-citizen or permanent resident workers, primarily Latinx, faced the highest unemployment rate of any demographic group at 27%, with many excluded from federal relief programs, further deepening their economic vulnerability.²¹ Latinx workers in the hospitality and retail sectors were particularly hard-hit by COVID-19-related closures.²²

Health disparities were also stark. From July 2020 to January 2021, COVID-19 death rates among Latinx Californians were two to seven times higher than those of non-Hispanic whites, depending on the age group.²³ Dr. David Hayes-Bautista highlighted these inequities, noting that despite the strong Latinx work ethic and households having more wage earners, many Latinx workers were forced into high-risk, low-wage jobs without access to health insurance or Spanish-speaking doctors. “COVID brought a lot of preexisting inequities to a head,” he explained, underscoring how systemic issues exacerbated the pandemic’s toll on working-age Latinos.

January 2025 Fires. As the Task Force completed this report, a series of destructive wildfires swept through the greater Los Angeles area and surrounding regions, forcing tens of thousands to evacuate, killing 29 people, and damaging or destroying more than 16,000 structures. The two largest—the Palisades Fire in Pacific Palisades and the Eaton Fire in Altadena—rank among the most destructive in California’s history.

In the midst of the crisis, emergency services mobilized across Los Angeles County; but multiple news outlets reported that the fires disproportionately affected Latinx residents, many of whom worked in the homes and yards that have been destroyed.²⁴ Early lessons from the recovery effort included the need for interpreters to assist first responders with evacuation and relocation, as well as monitoring of rent price gouging.

The combination of historical land dispossession, ongoing housing discrimination, low-wage employment coupled with wage theft, the lingering effects of the 2008 financial crisis, and the impact of COVID-19 has created today’s escalating threat of housing instability for Latinx communities. Addressing this crisis requires both an understanding of these deep-rooted issues and a commitment to dismantling the systemic inequalities that have long affected the Latinx community.

²¹ Hinojosa-Ojeda, R., Dominguez-Villegas, R., & Aguilar, J. (2020, August 10). *non-citizen or permanent resident during COVID-19: essential for the economy but excluded from relief*. UCLA, Latino Policy & Politics Institute. <https://latino.ucla.edu/research/non-citizen-or-permanent-resident-during-covid-19-essential-for-the-economy-but-excluded-from-relief/>

²² Gonzalez, S. R., & Vasquez-Noriega, C. (2020, April 1). *Implications of COVID-19 on at-risk workers by neighborhood in Los Angeles*. Latino Policy & Politics Institute. <https://latino.ucla.edu/research/implications-of-covid-19-on-at-risk-workers-by-neighborhood-in-los-angeles/>

²³ Hayes-Bautista, D., & Hsu, P. (2021). *COVID-19’s Toll on California’s Latinos*. University of California, Los Angeles, Fielding School of Public Health. <https://ph.ucla.edu/news-events/ucla-fsph-public-health-magazine/our-path-forward/covid-19s-toll-californias-latinos>

²⁴ Ramirez, M. (2025, May 29). *Why “rippling effects” of wildfires will have lasting impact on LA’s Latino community*. USA Today. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2025/01/29/la-fires-latinos-employment-health-issues/77980541007/>



LAHSA Master Leasing building opening, Dec 2023

CRITICAL DATA

Task Force on Latinx People Experiencing
Homelessness Report

2025

Critical Data

Before analyzing the vulnerabilities and experiences of Latinx people facing homelessness, it is essential to establish a foundation for understanding the scale and key trends of this crisis. With visible homelessness rates rising sharply among Latinx residents, highlighting key data underscores the urgency of addressing the specific barriers to housing stability confronting Latinx individuals and families in Los Angeles.

Los Angeles is home to one of the largest Latinx populations in the country.

Of the close to 10 million residents in LA County, nearly half – 48.6% – are Latinx, making concerted efforts to address the needs of Latinx individuals at risk of or experiencing homelessness a central component of addressing the homelessness crisis in Los Angeles.²⁵ Latinos in California experience a poverty rate of 16.9%, higher than other demographic groups. This economic vulnerability contributes to housing instability within the community.²⁶

To understand the true scale of homelessness and housing insecurity among populations such as the Latinx community, it is important to consider the phenomenon of “doubling up homelessness” into consideration.

Recent studies have highlighted the alarming levels of housing insecurity among Latinx People.

Data show that the Latinx population has a disproportionately higher likelihood of “doubling up”—i.e., sharing housing with others due to economic hardship.²⁷ An estimated 221,778 Latinx individuals are living doubled up, accounting for 75% of those in such arrangements.²⁸ This hidden form of homelessness often precedes actual homelessness and underscores the limitations of Point-in-Time homeless count data in capturing the true scale of Latinx homelessness. Notably, nearly half of all people entering homelessness in California come directly from doubling-up situations, emphasizing the need to address these precarious living arrangements, where they tend to recur with higher frequency.²⁹

Historically, official data about homelessness in Los Angeles has underrepresented Latinx People among those experiencing homelessness. Yet years of shrinking opportunities for Latinx and immigrant residents, combined with economic and housing affordability pressures, have sharply increased both their vulnerability to and visibility within the homeless population.

²⁵ *Hispanic or Latino, and Not Hispanic or Latino by Race, 2020* [Data file]. U.S. Census Bureau. <https://data.census.gov>

²⁶ Walters, D. (2023, November 5). *What should be done to lower California's highest-in-nation poverty rate?* Cal Matters. https://calmatters.org/commentary/2023/11/lower-california-highest-poverty-rate/?utm_source

²⁷ Chinchilla, M., Nevarez Martinez, D., & Richard, M. (2023, December) *The full spectrum of Latinx homelessness: understanding and addressing doubling up*. University of California, Los Angeles, Latino Policy & Politics Institute. <https://latino.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Homelessness.pdf>

²⁸ Carmona, G.N., (2024, June). *Unveiling Latino housing insecurity in California* [Student Work]. University of California, Los Angeles Lewis Center for Regional Policy Studies. <https://www.lewis.ucla.edu/research/unveiling-latino-housing-insecurity-in-california/>

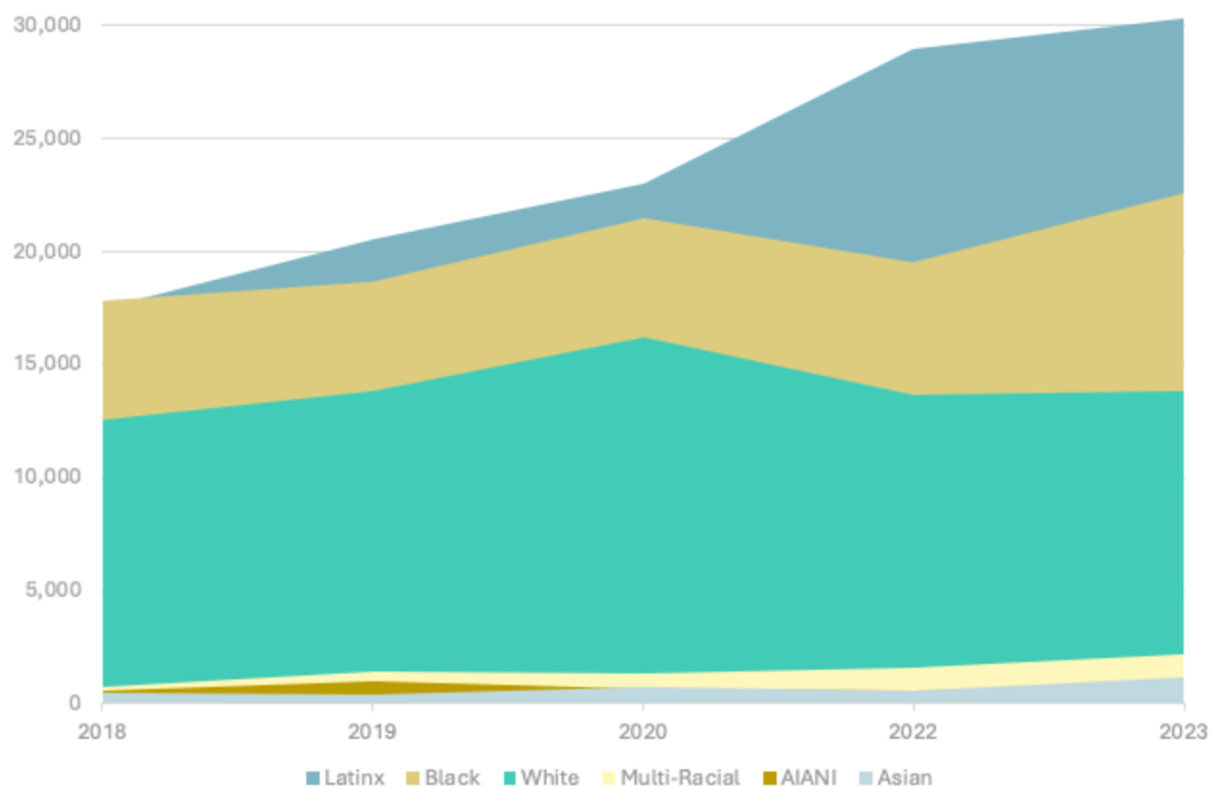
²⁹ Kushel, M., & Moore, T. (2023, June). *Toward a new understanding: the California statewide study of people experiencing homelessness*. University of California San Francisco Benioff Homelessness and Housing Initiative. <https://homelessness.ucsf.edu/our-impact/studies/california-statewide-study-people-experiencing-homelessness>

Critical Data

The population of Latinx people experiencing homelessness has increased at a disproportionately high rate in Los Angeles and nationally.

Between 2018 to 2023, Latinx homelessness in LA rose by 73% compared to 35% for the overall population. This trend is reflected more broadly across the U.S., where, over the same period, there was a 46% increase in Latinx homelessness and 18% increase in overall homelessness.³⁰

Los Angeles CoC Homeless Population by Race/Ethnicity, 2018-2023



Data Source: 2023 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report, US Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Community Planning and Development

The graph above shows that while homelessness decreased for Black, White, and AI/AN populations from 2020 to 2022, Latinx homelessness increased. This timeline coincides with the initial years of the COVID-19 pandemic, which disproportionately impacted those most vulnerable to the health, economic, and employment impacts of a public health crisis.

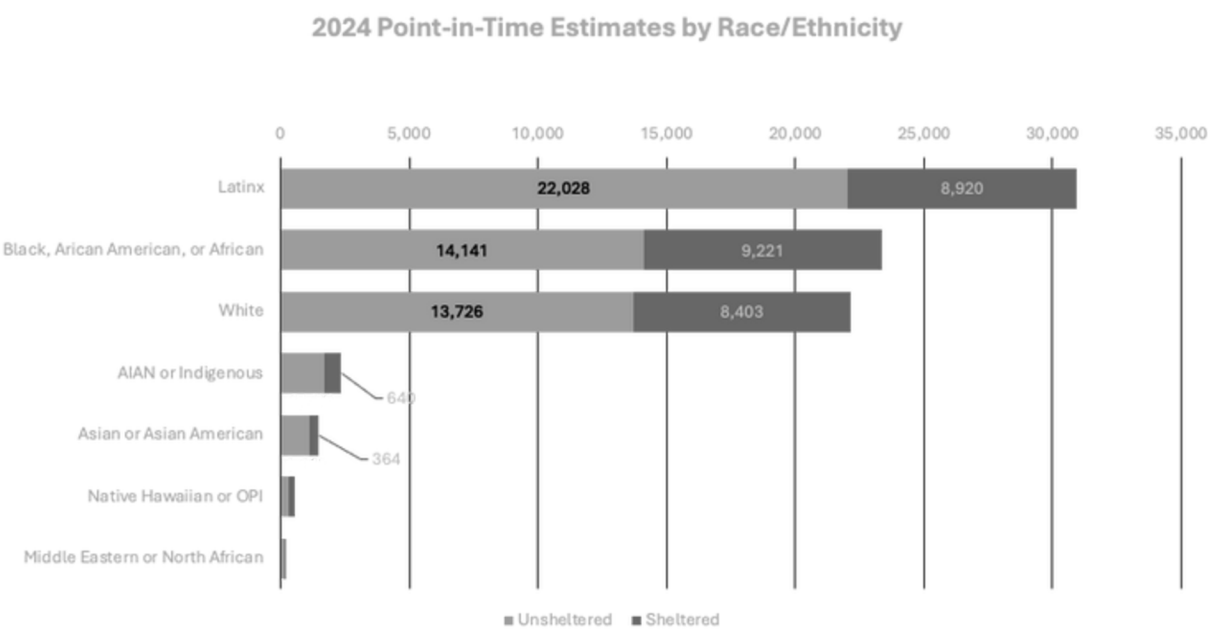
The unprecedented surge in visible Latinx homelessness reshaped the composition of Los Angeles's unhoused population, with lasting implications for the County's homeless demographic landscape and support needs.

³⁰ de Sousa, T., Andrichik, A., Prestera, E., Rush, K., Tano, C., & Wheeler, M. (2023, December). *The 2023 annual Homelessness assessment report (AHAR) to ...* US Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Community Planning and Development. <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/2023-AHAR-Part-1.pdf>

Critical Data

Latinx individuals make up the largest demographic of people experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles County.

In 2024, there were a total of 71,201 individuals experiencing homelessness, 30,948—or 43%— of whom were Latinx.



Data Source: 2024 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count Data, Data Summaries, 2024

In addition to overall and unsheltered homelessness outcomes among Latinx, there has also been a significant increase in chronic homelessness.

Chronic homelessness among Latinx People rose 57% between 2020 and 2024.³¹

This occurs when a household includes at least one member with a long-term disabling condition who has experienced homelessness continuously for a year or more, or on at least four separate occasions over the past three years.

Within the context of Latin homelessness, it is crucial to examine trends among Latinx experiencing homelessness between the ages of 25 to 54 – the largest demographic within the unhoused Latinx population.

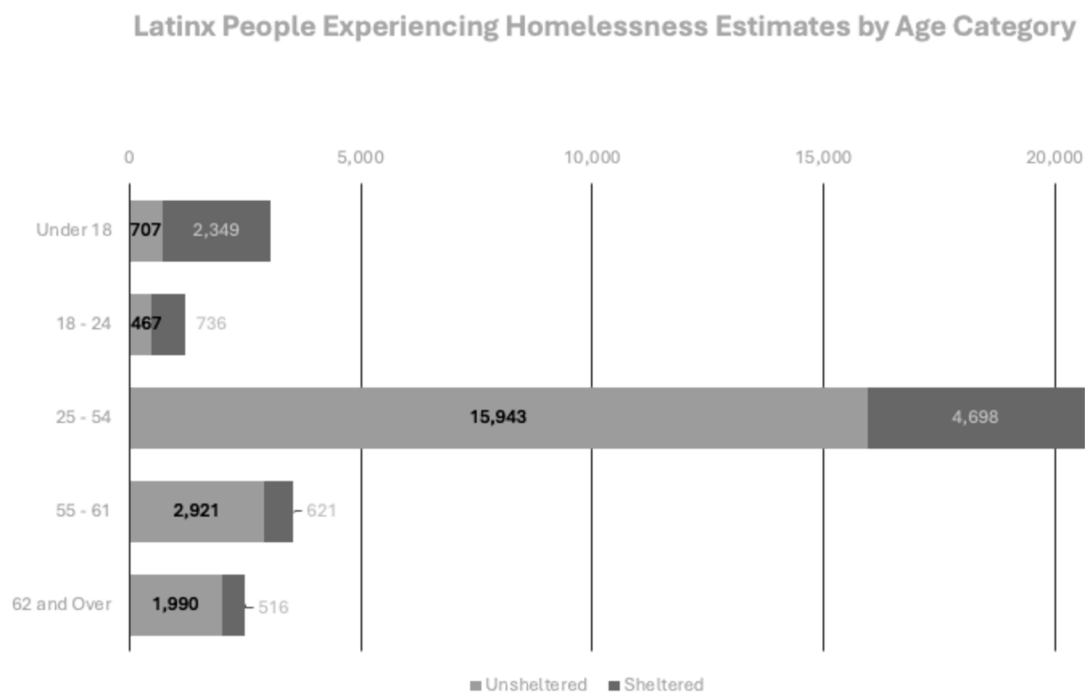
³¹ HC2020 Hispanic Latinx [Data Summary] (2020). Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority. <https://www.lahsa.org/documents?id=4985-hc2020-hispanic-latinx>
2024 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count Data [Data Summaries] (2024, June 28). Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority. <https://www.lahsa.org/news?article=976-2024-greater-los-angeles-homeless-count-data>

Critical Data



Efforts to address Latinx homelessness must consider unsheltered individuals between the ages of 25 and 54.

The 2024 Greater LA Homeless Count showed that among Latinx people experiencing homelessness, the largest group is between ages 25 to 54 (67%) and unsheltered Latinx individuals make up over half of all unsheltered people experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles and are often the least connected to resources and support needed to exit homelessness.



Latinx individuals between the ages of 25-54 make up the majority of unhoused residents within this population, in LA County.
Data Source: 2024 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count Data, Data Summaries, 2024

Addressing Latinx homelessness requires tailored approaches that reflect the unique needs and varying concentrations of Latinx individuals experiencing homelessness across different areas of Los Angeles County.

Critical Data

Efforts to address Latinx homelessness must consider needs across areas within LA County.

SPA 4 has the most significant number of people experiencing homelessness, and Latinx people make up more than half of the population experiencing homelessness in SPAs 3 and 7 (see Table 1).

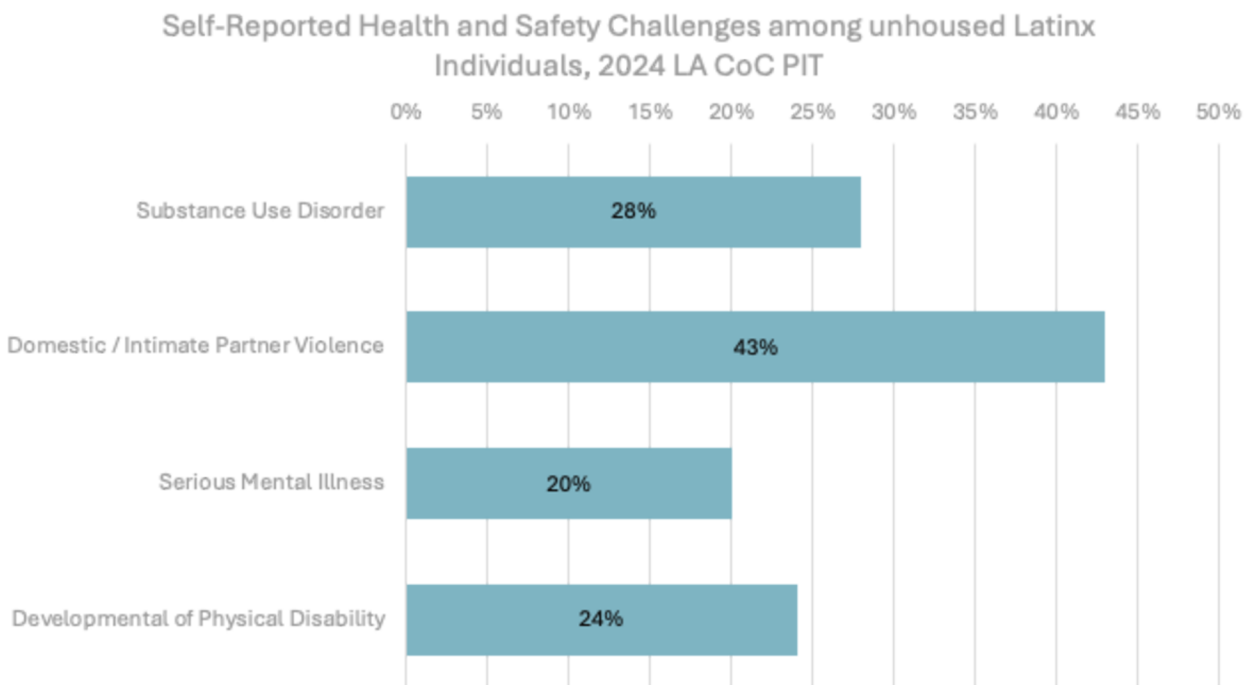
2024 Homeless Count Estimates by Service Planning Area (SPA)

SPA	Number of People Experiencing Homelessness	Number of Latinx People Experiencing Homelessness	Homeless Population That Are Latinx
SPA 1 Antelope Valley	6,672	2,020	30%
SPA 2 San Fernando Valley	10,701	4,900	46%
SPA 3 San Gabriel Valley	4,843	2,902	60%
SPA 4 Metro	18,389	8,142	44%
SPA 5 West	5,383	1,343	25%
SPA 6 South	13,886	5,566	40%
SPA 7 East	5,899	3,808	65%
SPA 8 South Bay	5,428	2,267	42%

Table 1

Critical Data

Successfully reducing Latinx homelessness requires a system capable of addressing challenges that contribute to homelessness, such as mental health, domestic violence, disabilities, and substance use disorder, in a culturally responsive manner.



Data Source: 2024 LAHSA Point-in-Time Count

Domestic and intimate partner violence make up the largest self-reported challenge among unhoused Latinx individuals.

Data from the 2024 homeless count show that a significant portion of unhoused Latinx individuals experience one or more of these challenges.

Although these self-reported data help enable a better understanding of the circumstances unhoused people face, these challenges are often unreported or underreported, obscuring the full extent of these conditions.

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS, DATA FINDINGS & PRIORITIZED RECOMMENDATIONS

LAHSA outreach team responding to LA-HOP request
for support, Sept 24, 2018

2025

Task Force on Latinx People Experiencing
Homelessness Report

Landscape Analysis, Data Findings & Prioritized Recommendations

This section provides an exploration of the experiences of Latinx individuals facing homelessness in Los Angeles, laying the foundation for the Task Force's recommendations. The analysis examines key themes reflected in the recommendations: access to prevention services administered by the city, county, and LAHSA; economic instability and impediments to wellness as primary drivers of housing insecurity; and how Latinx individuals navigate and experience outcomes within homeless services. It concludes with an exploration of the unique challenges and needs of vulnerable subpopulations, including Latinx TGI/LGBQ+ (Transgender, Gender Diverse, and Intersex, and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Queer +) individuals, non-citizen or permanent resident immigrants, indigenous migrants, youth, and seniors.

The Latinx Community is Not Monolithic

A Note on the Term "Latinx"

The term "Latinx" is used in this report as an inclusive, gender-neutral term to refer to individuals of Latin American descent. It recognizes the diversity within the community, encompassing a wide range of ancestries, identities, and experiences. By using "Latinx," this report aims to acknowledge shared challenges while respecting the complexity and intersectionality of cultural, linguistic, racial, and gender identities within this community. The Task Force chose the term "Latinx" during a discussion when many members of the Task Force expressed they did not identify with the term but embraced it after a nonbinary member shared how "Latinx" made them feel included. This perspective deeply resonated with the group, leading to the adoption of the term to reinforce its commitment to belonging and inclusivity.

The Latinx community in Los Angeles County is diverse and multifaceted. While the Mexican population accounts for over 70% of the County's Hispanic population, there are also significant numbers of Central Americans, including Salvadorans, Guatemalans, and other groups.³² Additionally, approximately 72,000 Afro-Latinos³³ and over 36,500 Indigenous migrants from Mexico and Central America reside in the region.³⁴

Ancestry is only one aspect of Latinx diversity. In this report, the Latinx community is sometimes referenced collectively to acknowledge shared challenges, such as the fear and stigma of accessing services without supportive community networks.

³² Peña, J.E., Lowe Jr., R.H., Ríos-Vargas, M. (2023, September 26). *Eight Hispanic groups each had a million or more population in 2020*. United States Census Bureau. Retrieved December 18, 2024, from <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2023/09/2020-census-dhc-a-hispanic-population.html>

³³ Galdamez, M., Gomez, M., Perez, R., Renteria Salome, L., Silver, J., Dominguez-Villegas, R., Zong, J., & Lopez, N. (2023, April 20). *Centering black latinidad: a profile of the u.s. afro-latinx population and complex inequalities*. University of California, Los Angeles Latino Policy Institute. <https://latino.ucla.edu/research/centering-black-latinidad/>

³⁴ Lee, J., Salome, R., & Martinez, J. (2024, October). *Indigenous migrants in Los Angeles County*. CIELO. https://mycielo.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/ERI-Indigenous-Migrants-of-LA-Report_V8_Final.pdf

Landscape Analysis, Data Findings & Prioritized Recommendations

Listening sessions with community members and Task Force discussions revealed that subpopulations such as Indigenous migrants, seniors, youth, non-citizen individuals, and TGI/LBQ+ individuals faced distinct barriers to housing stability.

These barriers are often compounded by intersecting marginalized identities, including race, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, and immigration status. Shared challenges, such as stigma and fear of accessing services, intersect with these unique factors, creating complex barriers to care.

Existing data captures only a fraction of these experiences. Many Latinx individuals — particularly those from intersectional or vulnerable subpopulations — may hesitate to disclose sensitive information, such as gender identity or immigration status, due to stigma, fear, or mistrust of authorities. Language barriers further hinder data collection. To deepen the understanding of these challenges, this report incorporates qualitative data from listening sessions with community members and insights from direct service providers, including organizations like Comunidades Indigenas En Liderazgo (CIELO), Proyecto Pastoral, and the TransLatina Coalition.

Each theme in the analysis included an overarching transformational recommendation and three prioritized recommendations. The term “transformational” recognized that disrupting racialized structures and institutions required both cultural and policy or program change. Cultural change rarely occurred with the stroke of a pen; it typically emerged through strong leadership, sustained employee and community engagement, deliberate efforts to address resistance, and ongoing monitoring with adjustments as needed. The transformational recommendations reflected the world the Task Force sought to create, while the prioritized recommendations guided implementation by balancing urgency, feasibility, impact, and resource availability. The complete list of recommendations appears in the following chapter.

Landscape Analysis, Data Findings & Prioritized Recommendations

Access to Prevention Programs in the Context of California's Housing Affordability Crisis

The severe shortage of affordable housing — primarily housing accessible to those with the lowest incomes — remains the primary driver of California's homelessness crisis. In California, this deficit is staggering. As of 2020, only 23 affordable and available housing units for every 100 renter households were categorized as "extremely low-income" under state and federal housing definitions.³⁵ Within the LA County context, there is a deficit of approximately 520,000 affordable rental units.³⁶ This shortage means over half a million households lack access to housing they can afford.

Within this landscape, targeted attention is essential to effectively addressing housing insecurity among Latinx Angelenos, who face unique barriers to housing stability and challenges accessing prevention programs.

Latinx people are more likely to face housing insecurity, including doubling up and living in substandard housing

In a County where rental prices continue to outpace wages, 55% of renters are Latinx, underscoring the community's heightened exposure to rental-related housing insecurity.³⁷ Latinx individuals account for 72% of those experiencing housing insecurity in LA County, according to a recent study which counts households who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including those doubled up, individuals living in motels/hotels, trailer parks, shelters, vehicles, unsheltered, or inadequate housing.³⁸

³⁵ Kimberlin, S., & Davalos, M. (2023, March). *Understanding homelessness in California & what can be done*. California Budget & Policy Center. <https://calbudgetcenter.org/resources/qa-understanding-homelessness-in-california-what-can-be-done/>

³⁶ 2024 Los Angeles County Annual Affordable Housing Outcomes Report. California Housing Partnership. (2024, June 28). <https://chpc.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Los-Angeles-County-Affordable-Housing-Outcomes-Report-2024.pdf>

³⁷ Bonilla, M., & Zong, J. (2024, January 30). *Facts about Latino renters in Los Angeles County*. Latino Data Hub. <https://latinodatahub.org/#/research/facts-about-latino-renters-in-los-angeles-county>

³⁸ Carmona, G. N. (2024, June). *Unveiling Latino housing insecurity in California*. University of California, Los Angeles Lewis Center for Regional Policy Studies. <https://www.lewis.ucla.edu/research/unveiling-latino-housing-insecurity-in-california/>

Landscape Analysis, Data Findings & Prioritized Recommendations

A significant indicator of this insecurity is the prevalence of doubling up homelessness—situations where individuals or families are forced to live with friends, relatives, or others due to an inability to afford their own housing. In LA County, Latinx individuals account for an estimated 75% of those in doubling-up situations,³⁹ often resulting in overcrowded and unstable living conditions.⁴⁰

Barriers to tenant rights and legal protections

“I had my own one-bedroom apartment, and I was there for 6 years paying my rent on time. A new management came in, and they said, ‘you’re not in our computer’. I said, ‘well, how could that be possible? I’m paying you my rent and when my rent goes up, I pay it’. I said, ‘it’s impossible that I’m not on your computer’. She said, ‘well, you’re not, so you have 30 days to get out’.” – Participant, Kingdom Cause Listening Session

Many Latinx renters, especially those who are non-citizens or permanent residents or have limited English proficiency, lack a full understanding of their housing and tenant rights, are unfamiliar with a complex legal process, or are fearful of governmental involvement. This leaves them vulnerable to exploitation by landlords, including unjustified evictions and excessive rent increases.

The prevalence of informal housing agreements—where tenants may not have a formal lease—worsens their situation. Without a formal contract, renters often have no legal recourse if they are displaced, making it easier for landlords to evict them without due process.⁴¹

Prevention as a key to ending homelessness

“Prevention is ending homelessness.” If we can prevent someone from becoming homeless, in the first place, you are ending homelessness.

LAHSA staff member serving on the Lived Experience Advisory Board

³⁹ Ibid., 40

⁴⁰ Chinchilla, M., Martinez, D. N., & Richard, M. (2003). *The full spectrum of Latinx homelessness: understanding and addressing doubling up*. UCLA, Latino Policy & Politics Institute. <https://latino.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Homelessness.pdf>

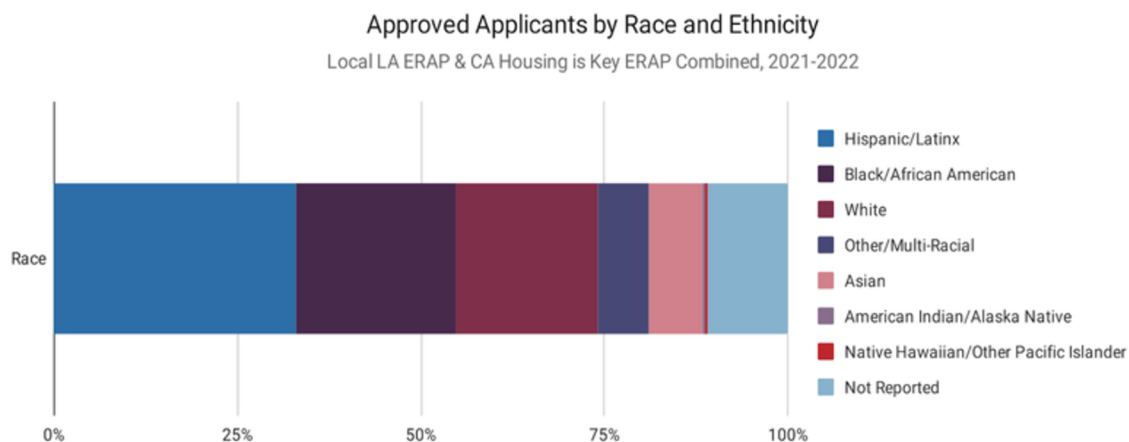
⁴¹ Berestein Rojas, L. B. (2024, May 30). *A less-visible side of the Latino homelessness crisis*. LAist. <https://laist.com/news/housing-homelessness/a-less-visible-side-of-the-latino-homelessness-crisis>

Landscape Analysis, Data Findings & Prioritized Recommendations

Challenges remain for Latinx Angelenos accessing prevention programs

Homelessness prevention programs are essential for helping households on the brink of losing housing stability remain secure. Emergency rental assistance, for instance, offers crucial financial support to households facing eviction. However, a study of the Los Angeles Emergency Rental Assistance Program from 2021 to 2022 found that these funds did not effectively reach the Latinx population. Most of the funds were allocated to single-person households, leaving Latinx families underrepresented.

Furthermore, Latinx households only made up about 33%⁴² of approved applicants, though they represent almost 43% of residents⁴³ in the City of Los Angeles. This gap suggests that more targeted outreach is needed to ensure Latinx households receive the support necessary to prevent homelessness.



Another prevention program historically available to Angelenos is LAHSA's Homelessness Prevention Program, which provides individuals and families at imminent risk of homelessness with temporary financial assistance and housing stabilization services or helps them find new housing to prevent them from becoming homeless.

⁴² City of Los Angeles, Alcazar, R. J., & Green, T. (9022). Los Angeles, CA. Retrieved from https://clkrep.lacity.org/online/docs/2021/21-0042-S3_misc_8-25-22.pdf.

⁴³ Demographic characteristics for occupied housing units. (2023). 2023 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, U.S. Census . chart. Retrieved from [https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2023.S2502?t=Owner/Renter+\(Householder\)+Characteristics:Owner/Renter+\(Tenure\)&q=050XX00US06037](https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2023.S2502?t=Owner/Renter+(Householder)+Characteristics:Owner/Renter+(Tenure)&q=050XX00US06037).

Landscape Analysis, Data Findings & Prioritized Recommendations

Program data from July 2023 to July 2024 shows 41% of enrolled participants are Latinx. However, Latinx participants in the program were less likely to see successful outcomes, meaning they exited the program to a permanent housing destination. 40% of Latinx participants in the program went to permanent housing destinations compared to 46% for non-Latinx participants.⁴⁴

More analysis is required to understand why Latinx participants are having a harder time exiting the current Homelessness Prevention Program into permanent housing destinations, but this data suggests that Latinx people face higher barriers to securing stable housing.

Innovations in Prevention Programs

The Homelessness Prevention Unit (HPU) is an innovative program model for effective prevention. It is a pilot project developed through a partnership between the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services—Housing for Health (DHS, HFH) and the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) California Policy Lab.

This model leverages administrative data-sharing from recent clients of DHS and the Department of Mental Health to identify individuals at high risk of homelessness using predictive analytics. The approach is proactive: instead of waiting for individuals at risk of homelessness to seek support, staff reach out to people identified as high risk, increasing the likelihood of supporting individuals who might not otherwise seek this support.

Case managers are empowered to offer financial support tailored to individual needs — whether it's rental assistance, security deposits for new apartments, car repairs, or basic household essentials — whatever is needed to help prevent a return to homelessness. As Associate Director of the HPU, Dana Vanderford puts it, "If we can invest a few thousand dollars earlier on in people's lives rather than letting them fall in and trying to get them back into housing, it's a much more cost-effective strategy."

This pilot program highlights an opportunity to learn from HPU to expand on this model's success and limitations by creating a model that incorporates additional data sources that can better identify individuals at risk of experiencing homelessness and unlikely to receive support within the broader Latinx community.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority. (2024). LAHSA Dashboards July 2023 – July 2024. Los Angeles.

⁴⁵ Blackwell, B., Caprara, C., Rountree, J., Santillano, R., Vanderford, D., & Battis, C. (2024, November). *The homelessness prevention unit: a proactive approach to preventing homelessness in Los Angeles County*. California Policy Lab. <https://capolicylab.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Homelessness-Prevention-Unit-Report.pdf>

Landscape Analysis, Data Findings & Prioritized Recommendations

Overarching Transformational Recommendation

Ending homelessness required systemic change in how society viewed each person's right to housing. People at risk of homelessness needed support to remain stably housed, while those already unhoused required access to safe, affordable, accessible, long-term housing. The principle that no person lives unsheltered demanded that state and local governments identify new revenue streams and commit to developing and funding diverse forms of affordable housing over a sustained period.

Prioritized Recommendations:

1. **Develop an additional homelessness prevention pilot program** using a new risk model and outreach program. The additional pilot program can work in collaboration with future prevention administrative leads to address the needs of Latinx individuals at risk of homelessness. This new model would identify a new risk pool using alternative data sources, such as community health clinics and nonprofit organizations, and incorporate criteria like income instability and overcrowding to better capture the challenges faced by Latinx communities. A culturally responsive outreach program and partnerships with community-based organizations can be created to address barriers specific to Latinx individuals at risk of homelessness, such as legal aid and immigration assistance. This new model must be funded and supported by an entity well-suited for piloting and supporting this new program to better serve Latinx individuals that County systems may not serve. This new program could work in a consultative partnership with HPU to inform the development, implementation, and assessment of the new model.

2. **Expand the Shallow Subsidy Program at LAHSA** to ensure that all participants exiting LAHSA rental assistance programs are eligible for continued rental assistance if those programs do not provide sufficient length of time for a stable resolution of a household's housing instability. With sufficient funding for program expansion, eligibility can be extended to anybody earning less than 50% AMI and exiting a LAHSA rental assistance program.

3. **Breathe LA is a guaranteed income pilot project that provides 1,000 eligible residents with \$1,000 per month for three years** and Los Angeles County DCFS foster youth with \$1,000 per month for two years. Expand the Breathe LA Guaranteed Income program and partner with municipalities to broaden the capacity and funding to support Latinx people experiencing housing insecurity.

Landscape Analysis, Data Findings & Prioritized Recommendations

Financial Insecurity

For many Latinx individuals in Los Angeles, the pathway to homelessness begins long before they lose their homes. It starts with the constant juggling act of trying to make ends meet in a county where wages for jobs accessible to most Latinx individuals don't keep up with the rising cost of living.

The mounting affordable housing crisis in California and in the Los Angeles region, paired with persistently low, stagnant, and declining wages, exacerbates homelessness and particularly among people of color, including Latinx people. In Los Angeles County, Latinx people, too often, are victims of wage theft, further shrinking already low wages – wages insufficient to pay for market-rate apartments.

The most recent economic setbacks brought on by the coronavirus recession hit Latinx workers the hardest. On a national level, Latinx workers experienced the largest employment losses when compared to their White peers.⁴⁶ These types of COVID-19 pandemic related hardships led one study to find Latinx and Black renters in California to be twice as likely to be unable to pay rent when compared to White renters.⁴⁷ Latinx Angelenos continue to experience the fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic⁴⁸, while navigating structural barriers, like lower wage jobs and wage theft, that have kept them in financial precarity.

Latinx communities in Los Angeles face higher levels of economic insecurity

The economic contribution of the Latinx population is central to California's economy, though this is often unacknowledged. Latinx Californians have the highest labor force participation rate of any racial or ethnic group in the state, with 65.1% actively working or looking for work. They pay an estimated \$83 billion in state taxes, and Latinx-owned businesses contribute 650,000 jobs to the state economy.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Gould, E., Perez, D., & Wilson, V. (2020, August 20). *Latinx workers--particularly women-- face devastating job losses in the COVID-19 recession*. Economic Policy. <https://www.epi.org/publication/latinx-workers-covid/>

⁴⁷ Ong, P. M. (2020, August 7). *Systemic Racial Inequality and the COVID-19 Renter Crisis*. UCLA Luskin Institute on Inequality and Democracy. <https://challengeinequality.luskin.ucla.edu/2020/08/07/systemic-racial-inequality-covid-19-renter-crisis/>

⁴⁸ Sanchez, G. R., Sugrue, N. M., & Pedroza, A. A. (2022, October 19). *The socioeconomic consequence of COVID-19 for Latino families*. Brookings Institution. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-socioeconomic-consequences-of-covid-19-for-latino-families/>

⁴⁹ *The economic status of Latinos in California*. UnidosUS. (2024, October). https://unidosus.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/unidosus_home_economicstatusoflatinosincalifornia.pdf.

Landscape Analysis, Data Findings & Prioritized Recommendations

Non-citizen workers in the Latinx community further bolster California's economy, contributing more than \$263 billion to the state's GDP and generating \$63 billion in government revenue.⁵⁰ Additionally, workers with various statuses support 3.2 million jobs in California through their economic activity, underscoring their vital role in the state's economic stability and growth.⁵¹

Despite its contribution to the economy, the Latinx population represents the most significant portion of those living in poverty (i.e., below the federal poverty threshold) and in low-income households (i.e., the family income falls under 200% but meets or exceeds the federal poverty threshold) in LA County, with 38% of Latinx individuals falling into these combined categories, compared to 29% for the overall population.⁵² Among non-U.S. citizen Latinx individuals, 50% live in poverty and low-income households. For context, in 2022, the federal poverty threshold for a family of four was \$27,750, and 200% of that threshold was \$55,500.⁵³



The core issue lies in the types of jobs available to most Latinx workers, who, despite having the highest labor force participation rates in the County, are concentrated in industries known for low wages, limited job security, and weak labor standards protections. For example, 72% of construction workers and 65% of service industry workers in LA County are Latinx.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Hinojosa-Ojeda, R., Dominguez-Villegas, R., & Aguilar, J. (2020, August 10). *Undocumented during COVID-19: essential for the economy but excluded from relief*. UCLA, Latino Policy & Politics Institute. <https://latino.ucla.edu/research/undocumented-during-covid-19-essential-for-the-economy-but-excluded-from-relief/>

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Latino Data Hub. (2024). *Individual Poverty Rate (<100% FPL) in Los Angeles County in California, 2022*. Compared by Racial and Ethnic Groups; Nativity and Citizenship." and "Individuals Living in a Low-Income Household (100-199% FPL) in Los Angeles County in California, 2022. Compared by Racial and Ethnic Groups; Nativity and Citizenship." www.latinodatahub.org

⁵³ Ibid.

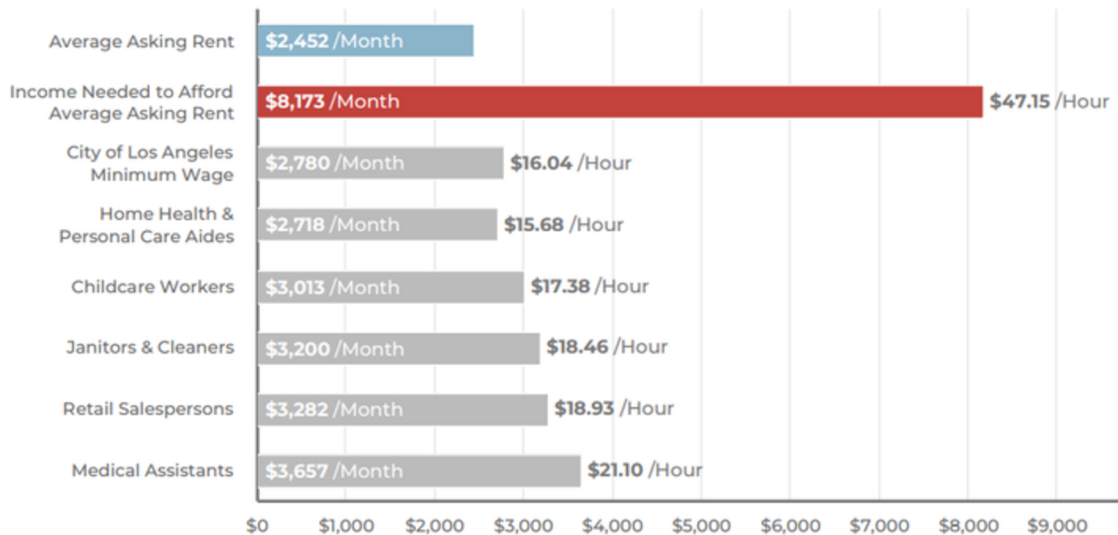
⁵⁴ Latino Data Hub. (2024). *Individuals in Construction Industry in Los Angeles County in California, 2022*. Compared by Racial and Ethnic Groups." and "Individuals in Retail Trade Industry in Los Angeles County in California, 2022 Compared by Racial and Ethnic Groups." www.latinodatahub.org

Landscape Analysis, Data Findings & Prioritized Recommendations

As a result, even when Latinx people are working full-time, possibly even multiple jobs, they struggle to make ends meet. Making minimum wage isn't enough to afford rent anywhere in the country, but in Los Angeles, renters need to earn nearly three times the local minimum wage in order to afford the average asking rent.⁵⁵

WHO CAN AFFORD TO RENT

Renters need to earn **2.9 times** the minimum wage to afford the average asking rent in Los Angeles County.



Efforts like the City of Los Angeles Solid Ground Homeless Prevention Program (HPP) show promise. The HPP helps prevent new cases of homelessness for families by stabilizing housing and working with them to build a more financially secure future. Services include housing search and placement, and housing stabilization services such as case management, budgeting and financial management, assistance accessing public benefits, and financial assistance.

While the HPP notably partnered with over nineteen family resource centers around Los Angeles, the Latinx community is the fastest-growing demographic community in the Los Angeles PIT count, which suggests there may be an opportunity to scale the work.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ *Out of reach: the high cost of housing*. National Low Income Housing Coalition. (2024). <https://nlihc.org/oor>

⁵⁶ *Homelessness prevention: solid ground*. Community Investment for Families Department [City Services]. (n.d.). <https://communityinvestment.lacity.gov/solid-ground-homeless-prevention-program-hpp>

Landscape Analysis, Data Findings & Prioritized Recommendations

The Impact of Wage Theft & Poor Working Conditions

Wage theft involves various practices where an employer **does not pay** workers what they have earned. These include unpaid minimum wage, overtime, lack of meal or rest breaks, tip stealing, illegal deductions, misclassification as an independent contractor, paid by the piece (common in the car wash and garment industries), and even complete non-payment.

Los Angeles owns the distinction of being the “Wage Theft Capital of the Nation.” A new study found a stunning number of minimum wage violations across California, and confirmed the disappointing reality that Los Angeles remains the Wage Theft Capital of the United States:

- In LA, \$1.6 billion to \$2.5 billion is stolen from workers annually due to minimum wage violations.
- Over 12% of workers (nearly 650,000 workers) in the LA area get paid less than the minimum wage.
- Workers paid below minimum wage lose an average of 20% of their paycheck to wage theft.
- Minimum wage violations have more than doubled since 2014.⁵⁷

The disproportionate representation of Latinx workers in low-wage industries has led the Task Force to identify wage theft as a critical issue that severely undermines their financial security. Latinx workers are more likely to be employed in sectors such as garment work, maintenance, restaurants, domestic work, construction, and car washes—industries where 80% of low-wage workers experience wage theft.⁵⁸ In addition, the likelihood of experiencing wage theft increases if someone is a non-citizen or permanent resident: such a Latinx worker in LA is 60 to 70% more likely than a citizen to experience wage theft.⁵⁹

The combination of wage theft, limited or unenforced worker protections, and low wages keeps most Latinx workers in financial precarity, increasing their risk of housing insecurity and homelessness.

⁵⁷ Galvin, D. J., Barnes, J., Fine, J., & Round, J. (2024). *Wage theft in California: minimum wage violations*. Rutgers. https://smlr.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/Documents/Centers/WJL/California_MinimumWage_Study_May2024.pdf

⁵⁸ *What Is Wage Theft?* Los Angeles Worker Center Network. (2023, May). <https://laworkercenternetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Los-Angeles-Worker-Center-Network-What-Is-Wage-Theft.pdf>

⁵⁹ Sancho, F. (n.d.). *The True Cost of a Car Wash*. *WorkingNation*. Retrieved from <https://www.workingnation.com/wage-theft-robs-workers-of-economic-mobility-and-dignity/>

THE IMMEDIATE AND LONG- RANGE IMPACT OF THE JANUARY 2025 CATASTROPHIC FIRES

LA County residents seeking support at
FEMA Local Assistance Center, Photo by
Mayra Beltran, Los Angeles County Flickr,
Jan 15, 2025

Task Force on Latinx People Experiencing
Homelessness Report

2025

The Immediate and Long-Range Impact of the January 2025 Catastrophic Fires

UCLA's Latino Policy and Politics Institute (LPPI) issued a report regarding the impact of the Los Angeles fires on Latinx workers.⁶⁰ The report includes four findings:



At least 35,000 jobs held by Latinos were at risk of temporary or permanent displacement due to the wildfires. Although Latinos comprise just 23% of the population across the three evacuation zones, they account for 36% of all workers in those areas. The disparity is particularly striking in the Palisades Fire zone, where Latinos hold 34% of jobs despite representing just 7% of the population



Latino workers face greater economic instability due to limited opportunities for remote work. Latino workers in evacuation zones are more vulnerable to economic disruptions than white workers because they are disproportionately employed in occupations and industries that do not allow for remote work. While 22% of white workers in Los Angeles County can work from home, only 7% of Latino workers share this option. This disparity underscores the overrepresentation of Latinos in jobs requiring a physical presence, such as service, retail, and manual labor. These roles are particularly susceptible to temporary layoffs during wildfire-related disruptions and, in some cases, permanent job loss if workplaces are damaged or destroyed. The financial disruption is particularly hard on those living paycheck to paycheck.



Latino workers face greater economic instability due to employment in vulnerable industries and occupations. Worker vulnerability is especially evident in more affluent evacuation zones such as Pacific Palisades, where many household workers, such as maids, housekeepers, and home health aides, commute daily to support households. Latino workers disproportionately hold these roles. In Los Angeles County, 85% of individuals employed as household workers are Latino, reflecting broader systemic patterns in labor distribution. Moreover, these roles often lack formal protections such as paid leave, and many workers are self-employed, making them ineligible for unemployment insurance benefits.



Latinos will be central to recovery efforts after wildfires, particularly in key industries such as construction. Latinos will be pivotal in recovery efforts following wildfires, especially in the construction industry. This sector is critical to the regional economy and essential for rebuilding homes and infrastructure. Notably, Latinos comprise 84% of construction workers in the industry, while white workers account for only 11% of construction workers. These numbers highlight the overrepresentation of Latinos in this vital sector and underscore their indispensable contributions to wildfire recovery and rebuilding efforts.

⁶⁰ Gonzalez, S. R., Pech, C., & Ong, P. M. (2025, January 15). *Wildfires and Latino communities: Analysis of residents, workers, and jobs*. Latino Policy & Politics Institute. <https://latino.ucla.edu/research/wildfires-and-latino-workers-analysis/>

The Immediate and Long-Range Impact of the January 2025 Catastrophic Fires

The Impact of Wage Theft & Poor Working Conditions

As established by UCLA's LPPI, in addition to the loss of lives and property, the fires also significantly disrupted the livelihoods of thousands of workers in the affected communities. Latinx people, already disproportionately subject to lower wage jobs and wage theft, are now suffering the additional burden of lost employment (temporarily and permanently).

As the government delivers disaster and recovery services and resources, steps must be taken to ensure workers impacted by a sudden loss of employment are properly supported during this critical phase. Moreover, as residents and businesses begin rebuilding, steps must be taken to ensure workers, particularly Latinx construction workers, are protected from wage theft.

The Immediate and Long-Range Impact of the January 2025 Catastrophic Fires

Overarching Transformational Recommendation

Achieving financial security requires increasing “availability of and access to meaningful and sustainable employment,” including financial education, and job training for living wage jobs.

(Source: <https://www.usich.gov/federal-strategic-plan/prevent-homelessness>)

1. The City and County should implement a Unitary Enforcement strategy integrating fair labor practices across city, county, and state levels, targeting industries with a high percentage of low-wage workers.

- Establish a unified "One Stop Shop" for labor violation reporting and enforcement, collaborate with CBOs to address wage theft, and expand resources for these efforts.
- Launch a community education program to raise awareness of labor rights, ensure a safe space for reporting with immigration protection, and promote ITIN usage.
- Allocate funding to scale these initiatives and support stable employment pathways.

2. Collaborate with the LA Family Source System to learn more and replicate successful financial assistance and support programs such as Solid Ground, including 1) income tax preparation (to obtain refundable tax credits); 2) credit score improvement; 3) banking opportunities, and other financial literacy programs. Replicate Solid Ground’s outcome reporting system and its effective collaboration with community service providers, including accountability and performance measures. Launch an outreach campaign to build trust through partnerships with CBOs and consistent messaging from government agencies. Invest in community-based financial models, promote trusted banks, and prioritize education on financial stability, including money transfer fees and tax practices. Explore initiatives like "Bank On," an initiative that offers and maps accounts with no overdraft fees and low monthly fees at traditional banks across the country. The project is meant to enhance mainstream resource access and financial literacy, which is underutilized by some Latinx populations.⁶¹

To improve wage-earning potential, partner with workforce development centers, community colleges, non-profit organizations, and unions with apprentice programs to invest in effective workforce development programs that prepare participants, particularly youth and young adults, for more competitive, higher-wage jobs.

⁶¹ Expand banking access in your community with Bank on. American Bankers Association. (2022, May 6). <https://www.aba.com/news-research/analysis-guides/expand-banking-access-in-your-community-with-bank-on>

IMPEDIMENTS TO WELLNESS

Los Angeles County Sheriff Homeless Outreach Team works along the Whittier Narrows river bed, Photo by Mayra Beltran Vasquez, Los Angeles County Flickr, Jan 28, 2019

Task Force on Latinx Angelenos Experiencing
Homelessness Report

2025

Impediments to Wellness Findings

“Having a place to call home is the most basic foundation for health and well-being regardless of age, gender, race, or zip code.”⁶² “The stress of homelessness can also seriously harm individuals’ mental well-being. Research shows that the trauma of experiencing homelessness can cause people to develop mental health problems for the first time and can worsen existing behavioral health challenges that can further complicate already existing physical health conditions. Longer time spent without a home is linked to higher levels of mental distress and more damage from coping behaviors like substance use.”⁶³

This is an emergency, and this crisis is when people need care, concern, and love. How do we push pause to do that? Can we create a space where people can breathe and be like “Finally, I’m not in my tent, I’m not in my car, I’m not on a curb, I’m not hiding somewhere so I don’t get hurt during the night. I’m here. I can breathe.” Paraphrased from a Lived Experience Advisory Board (LEAB) member.

Essential health care and behavioral health services is out of reach for many Latinx People

Access to health care, including mental health services, is another significant challenge for Latinx people. About 648,000 or 13% of Latinx residents in LA County are uninsured.⁶⁴ Immigration status plays a vital role in access to care; among uninsured Angelenos, 36% were immigrants without permanent status, and 19% were legal permanent residents.⁶⁵

The lack of comprehensive health insurance coupled with concerns about costs lead Latinx Californians to be more likely to delay care than other Californians of differing racial or ethnic groups.⁶⁶

⁶² Kimberlin, S., & Davalos, M. (2023, March). *Understanding homelessness in California & what can be done*. California Budget & Policy Center. <https://calbudgetcenter.org/resources/qa-understanding-homelessness-in-california-what-can-be-done/>

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ *Uninsured individuals in Los Angeles County in California, 2022*. (n.d.). data. Retrieved from <https://www.latinodatahub.org>.

⁶⁵ Moreno, C., Kim, S., Gonzalez, D., Duncan, K., Viloria, P., Garcia, V., Ortiz, R., Wang, S. L., Mendoza, A., Rkasnuam, D., Pastor, M., Le, T., Giang, J., Scoggins, J., Muña, E.-M., Carter Fahnestock, V., Flores, J. C., Velarde Flores, E., Malibiran, G., & Perez, L. (2023). *State of immigrants in LA County 2023*. University of Southern California, Equity Research Institute (ERI). <https://dornsife.usc.edu/eri/publications/soila-2023/>.

⁶⁶ *Health disparities by race and ethnicity in California Almanac - 2024 Edition*. California Health Care Foundation. [Data File] (2024, May 30). Los Angeles.

Impediments to Wellness Findings

Spanish speakers report difficulty communicating health concerns to their doctors.⁶⁷ Nearly one-quarter of Latinx participants surveyed shared that they, or someone close to them, has needed treatment for severe mental illness.⁶⁸ According to the 2020 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), approximately 12.7% of Hispanic or Latinx individuals aged 12 and older, equating to about 6.2 million people, had a substance use disorder.

The stigma of seeking help and cultural ideals of resilience

"I identify as Latino and I think that one of the biggest barriers is the idea that you have to do everything the hard way, like you have to constantly struggle. You have to do this on your own, what I mean is you or your family, and no one else, have to figure it out on your own."

- Paraphrased quote from a young Latino man, Homeless Youth Forum of Los Angeles

Stigma and the lack of culturally responsive services play a significant role in reducing access to behavioral health care. Even when mental health and substance use disorder services are available, severe stigma often keeps Latinx individuals from seeking help. Fear of being labeled as "loco" or crazy prevents many from accessing services. Finding bilingual therapists and culturally responsive programs is a further obstacle.

The availability of services in a client's primary language is essential. In one study, an interviewee noted that finding a bilingual therapist is difficult. Even if a connection is made, "employment turnover at agencies providing mental healthcare can trigger a long wait for a new bilingual therapist."⁶⁹ As the study notes, this can further perpetuate decreased trust between clients seeking these specialized supports and the providers available to them.⁷⁰

These challenges are compounded when trying to reach members of the community that face additional layers of marginalization, like indigenous migrants who may need additional language support to access care. According to a new report on indigenous migrants in LA based on collaborative research by the University of Southern California (USC) Equity Research Institute and Comunidades Indígenas en Liderazgo (CIELO), "There are at least 25 distinct Indigenous Communities that live in Los Angeles County, speaking at least 36 different languages."⁷¹

⁶⁷ Joynt, J., Catterson, R., & Alvarez, E. (2024, January 31). *The 2024 CHCF California health policy survey*. California Health Care Foundation. <https://www.chcf.org/resource/2024-chcf-california-health-policy-survey/>

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Chinchilla, M., (2019). *Stemming the rise of Latino homelessness: lessons from Los Angeles County*. University of California, Los Angeles, Latino Policy & Politics Initiative Web site: <https://latino.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Stemming-the-Rise-of-Latino-Homelessness-2-1.pdf>

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Lee, J., Salome, R., & Martinez, J. (2024, October). *Indigenous migrants in Los Angeles County*. CIELO. https://mycielo.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/ERI-Indigenous-Migrants-of-LA-Report_V8_Final.pdf

Impediments to Wellness

Findings & Recommendations

Language barriers to accessing addiction services

“The hardest thing for me [as a provider] is to find drug treatment for Latinx people, where they can find treatment in Spanish.” – Latinx Service Provider, attending Kingdom Causes Listening Session

For many Latinx individuals, seeking help can feel like admitting defeat. Cultural stigmas and the belief that one must struggle independently often prevent individuals from accessing critical prevention and health services. As discussed earlier, this hesitancy to connect to services can be compounded if services are not language-inclusive or do not offer resources regardless of documentation status.

The Task Force studied current efforts to address Latinx people's needs and, in combination with existing gaps, developed a number of recommendations to improve wellness in this population. An example of a current effort is the work taking place at the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services (DHS) and Mental Health (DMH). These departments have partnered with UCLA's California Policy Lab on the Homeless Prevention Unit pilot program, which uses predictive analytics to identify people who are heavy users of public health care and other social safety net services, and who are considered to be at the highest risk of becoming homeless. Participants are provided financial assistance and connected to health care, mental health care, employment training, legal services, and other supportive services.

Need for more bilingual and culturally competent staff across service areas

The availability of services in a client's primary language is essential. In one study, an interviewee noted that finding a bilingual therapist is difficult and even if a connection is made, “employment turnover at agencies providing mental healthcare can trigger a long wait for a new bilingual therapist.” (Stemming the rise of Latinx Homelessness: Lessons from Los Angeles County) As the study notes, this can further perpetuate decreased trust between clients seeking these specialized supports and the available providers. (Stemming the rise of Latinx Homelessness: Lessons from Los Angeles County). These challenges are compounded when trying to reach members of the community that face additional layers of marginalization, like recent indigenous migrants who may need less common language support to access care and services. While bilingual staff are crucial, language accessibility alone is not enough—staff must also possess cultural competency and humility to understand the unique experiences, histories, and challenges faced by diverse Latinx and Indigenous communities.

“Immigrants and monolingual renters are often unaware of their rights and are either afraid or lack the knowledge to assert them.” (Stemming the rise of Latinx Homelessness: Lessons from Los Angeles County)

Impediments to Wellness

Recommendations

Overarching Transformational Recommendation

Homelessness is profoundly detrimental to both the physical and mental health of people experiencing it. Improving health and well-being requires a continuum of efforts ranging from systems change to health promotion to treatment. At the same time, it is critical to provide care for those in immediate need while advancing the systemic changes necessary to end the pipeline into homelessness.

Wellness: Priority Recommendations

- **Expand the Promotora and Wellness Ambassador models** to focus on relationship-building and preventative services for Latinx families rather than immediate treatment and diagnosis. Train community members to promote healthy living and provide peer support, bridging the gap between traditional health services and the community. Ensure cultural sensitivity by avoiding stigmatizing language related to homelessness and using social activities, including shared meals, as opportunities to introduce Promotora support. To scale this model, secure funding to train additional *promotoras*, enhancing the reach and impact within the community.
- **To ensure that Latinx individuals in need of mental health services and substance abuse treatment receive appropriate, culturally competent, and linguistically accessible care**, the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH), the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (LACDPH), the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services (LADHS), the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), the Los Angeles County Department of Aging and Disabilities, the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), the Los Angeles County Office of Immigrant Affairs (OIA), and the Los Angeles City and County Office of Reentry (Justice, Care, and Opportunities Department - JCOD) should work with multilingual service providers and certified substance abuse treatment providers to ensure that treatment is available in Spanish and other high-need languages.
- **Promote a culturally responsive “Whole Person” Service Delivery** that leverages a wide range of resources to provide patient physical, behavioral, and social support while also incorporating community wellness, intergenerational rituals, cultural sharing, and the interconnectedness between body, mind, and spirit.



Homeless resource fair, Los Angeles County Flickr, April 3, 2018

SERVICE DELIVERY

Task Force on Latinx People Experiencing
Homelessness Report

2025

Service Delivery

Three central concerns surfaced during Task Force meetings and community listening sessions regarding service delivery and access: system failure to collaborate to provide clear guidance and resources for serving participants without a permanent resident status; gaps in services, practices, and organizations that are culturally and linguistically accessible and representative of Latinx communities; and the persistent fear, misinformation, and lack of knowledge among recent immigrants and mixed-status families regarding the accessibility of social services.

System efforts to collaborate to support immigrant and non-citizen or permanent resident individuals experiencing homelessness fall short

Community listening sessions emphasized the critical role of outreach workers, case managers, and housing navigators—particularly for recent immigrants and non-English-speaking clients. Staff in these positions often took extraordinary measures to locate resources and navigate eligibility requirements due to unclear guidance on services available to individuals with uncertain status. Limited resources to help clients obtain identification or secure housing compounded the challenge.

Although Measure H and Measure A were created to address the needs of all people experiencing homelessness, non-citizens and permanent residents continued to face barriers due to eligibility restrictions and difficulties in securing employment needed to qualify for housing subsidies or afford rent.

Even when resources existed for non-citizen clients, information about them often failed to reach frontline staff. This lack of communication reflected a broader issue of insufficient collaboration and coordination between government agencies and departments. For example, during one Task Force meeting, members of an LAHSA street outreach team described their innovative efforts to connect with immigrants living unsheltered. Their commitment to stay in contact with each individual until the person obtained shelter and moved toward permanent housing was striking. Yet, further discussion revealed the team was unaware of opportunities to collaborate with other government initiatives to leverage additional resources, including legal services.

This disconnect illustrated the tendency of government agencies and departments to operate in silos. An effective service delivery system cannot depend on chance to determine whether a person in desperate need of housing receives appropriate support.

Service Delivery

Creating accessible and culturally inclusive pathways for unhoused Latinx communities

Need for community-based providers and trusted messengers

“I think that especially when talking about specific demographics, we should uplift grassroots organizations. Again, from my experience, working at a predominately Latinx organization, I’ve seen a lot less resistance to receiving support because it was for people that looked like them, people that could effectively communicate with them, understand their challenges, related to their experiences and things like that.” – Young adult case manager, Homeless Youth Forum of Los Angeles

To effectively support the rehousing journey of Latinx People experiencing homelessness, the homeless response system must address significant gaps in culturally and linguistically accessible services as well as engage organizations that are embedded in Latinx communities to build trust within the community. Task Force discussions revealed the challenges posed by a system that, while expanding to meet the needs of different populations, still lacks the targeted investment necessary to overcome language, trust, and cultural barriers. For instance, homeless engagement teams frequently encounter unsheltered Latinx individuals who refuse shelter due to language barriers or the absence of staff and residents who reflect their community and speak their language.

Providers also emphasized the need for behavioral health and substance use treatment programs that offer services in Spanish. The lack of such resources not only limits access but also reinforces perceptions that existing supports are neither designed for nor inclusive of Latinx communities.

Cultural understanding, representation, and community connection play an essential role in overcoming these barriers. Latinx culture strongly emphasizes family and community networks, often viewing these as primary sources of support in times of hardship. However, this cultural reliance can delay or prevent many from seeking public services, and within the context of the current crisis of housing affordability and economic pressures, family and community networks are often overwhelmed and unable to provide sufficient support.

Service Delivery

The experiences shared by Task Force members suggest that grassroots organizations, which are culturally representative and community-driven, have greater success in connecting with Latinx individuals.

When service providers reflect the identity and lived experiences of those they serve, Latinx individuals experience less resistance to support, feeling more understood and represented. This highlights the need for targeted investment in grassroots and culturally aligned organizations, as well as in developing a service approach that reflects the values and culture of Latinx communities, ultimately helping to bridge critical service gaps and enhance engagement within the Latinx community.

Guadalupe Homeless Project: A model of community-driven, culturally inclusive support

The Guadalupe Homeless Project (GHP) at Dolores Mission Church exemplifies the impact of culturally accessible, community-based support for Latinx individuals experiencing homelessness. Established in 1988 by local residents who opened the church doors to shelter unhoused refugee families, GHP has become an essential part of the Boyle Heights community. Today, GHP's men's shelter continues to serve 45 men each night, and in 2014, it expanded to include a unique shelter for elderly women, serving 15 women over age 55—the only such refuge in Los Angeles. The project fosters a close-knit environment where clients are housed and actively woven into the community.

Boyle Heights residents embrace the shelter, cooking meals for clients each night and engaging them in community events. This inclusive approach reduces the isolation and stigma often associated with homelessness, creating a supportive network that encourages higher transition rates to permanent housing. GHP demonstrates the importance of culturally responsive and community-rooted programs in meeting the needs of Latinx individuals, showing that it can bridge significant gaps in service accessibility.

Service Delivery

The experiences shared by Task Force members suggest that grassroots organizations, which are culturally representative and community-driven, have greater success in connecting with Latinx individuals.

When service providers reflect the identity and lived experiences of those they serve, Latinx individuals experience less resistance to support, feeling more understood and represented. This highlights the need for targeted investment in grassroots and culturally aligned organizations and in developing a service approach that reflects the values and culture of Latinx communities, ultimately helping to bridge critical service gaps and enhance engagement within the Latinx community.

Addressing the persistent fear and misinformation in accessing social services for all residents and mixed-status families

Task Force discussions and research on Latinx homelessness highlight a critical barrier faced by all residents and mixed-status families experiencing housing insecurity or homelessness: persistent fears and misinformation. Concerns about potential impacts on immigration status, such as being labeled a “public charge” or possible deportation, deter many from seeking essential assistance, even when eligible. This “chilling effect” leads to underutilization of available resources, exacerbating housing instability and other challenges.⁷²

With anti-immigrant rhetoric and policies intensifying under the current administration, these fears may become even more widespread, underscoring the urgent need for targeted outreach and clear communication to ensure that all eligible individuals can access services without fear of repercussions.

⁷² Chinchilla, M., Moses, J., & Visotzky, A. (2023, January 24). *Increasing Latino Homelessness -- what's happening, why, and what to do about it*. National Alliance to End Homelessness. https://endhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Latino-Homelessness_ResearchBrief_01242023_FINAL.pdf

Service Delivery

How LA's homeless rehousing system data reflects these barriers faced by Latinx participants

LAHSA's System Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) provide information on the effectiveness and efficiency of services across the homeless rehousing system in LA County. Examining access and outcome trends for Latinx participants helps identify where the system has successfully engaged individuals and where significant barriers continue to persist.

Important note on this data: *The data on participant outcomes comes from LAHSA's System KPIs Demographics for Street Outreach, Interim Housing, and Time Limited Subsidies for Fiscal Year 2023-24 (FY 2023-24) Quarters 1-3. The source of this data is the Homeless Management Information System from the LA Continuum of Care, which contains client-level data from providers across the system for services provided to people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. The demographic estimates of the homeless population are derived from the 2024 Los Angeles Continuum of Care (CoC) Point-In-Time Count, which provides a snapshot of unhoused individuals in Los Angeles on a specific night. The Task Force used Point-in-Time Count data to establish baseline estimates of the population experiencing homelessness compared with those receiving services. While not perfect, this measure provided the most accurate estimate available.*

Street outreach engagement among Latinx unsheltered individuals

Street Outreach programs serve as the primary gateway for people experiencing homelessness to access support services. Outreach teams work to build trust with unsheltered individuals, offering connections to essential resources and pathways to shelter or interim housing. However, while adult Latinx individuals represent 45% of the adult unsheltered homeless population,⁷³ only 36% of adults engaged in Street Outreach programs during the first three quarters of FY 2023-24 identified as Latinx. This disparity suggests that unsheltered Latinx adults face barriers to engaging with outreach services, including stigma, fears related to immigration status, and potentially a greater distrust of the system.

⁷³ Estimate based on data from the Los Angeles Continuum of Care 2024 Homeless Count.

Service Delivery

In contrast, engagement levels among Latinx Transitional Age Youth (TAY) and Latinx families in Street Outreach programs are more proportional to their estimated representation among the unsheltered population. Latinx TAY, who constitute 37% of total unsheltered TAY,⁷⁴ made up 42% of TAY engaged by Street Outreach programs during the same period. Similarly, Latinx family members (individuals that are part of a household with at least 1 child under 18 years of age) make up 44% of unsheltered family members⁷⁵ and 49% of family members served by Street Outreach teams. This data reflects Task Force observations about the rising number of Latinx families experiencing homelessness. This trend has strained the shelter system and led to a higher prevalence of unsheltered homelessness among these families.

Interim Housing

Interim Housing programs provide temporary shelter while helping participants obtain essential requirements, such as identification documents, and connect to housing navigation programs to secure permanent housing. Latinx adults remain underrepresented in these programs, comprising 35% of participants in the first three quarters of FY 23-24, despite representing 43% of all sheltered and unsheltered adults experiencing homelessness.⁷⁶ Like the trend seen in street outreach programs, enrollment of Latinx family members and TAY in Interim Housing was proportionate to their estimated representation in the homeless population. This suggests that the barriers to engagement experienced by Latinx adults, such as stigma, distrust, and systemic challenges, may not be as substantial among TAY and families.

A key objective for Interim Housing participants is becoming “document ready,” which means uploading a valid identification document to the system. Case managers support participants who do not have a valid form of identification to acquire documents like a state ID, driver’s license, or consular ID card, as this is a requirement to enroll in services to connect participants to permanent housing. Only 43% of Latinx adults in Interim Housing achieved document readiness compared to 51% of white adults and 57% of Black adults, the other major demographic groups. Document readiness rates among Latinx TAY and families reflected a similar challenge, with lower rates than other major demographic groups. Task Force discussions highlighted that case managers face significant challenges in assisting immigrant residents without documentation with obtaining identification, including figuring out the immigration status of participants with visas or permanent residents, transporting participants to consulate visits, navigating varying consulate requirements—often involving contact with family members abroad—and covering associated fees. These lengthy and complex processes are compounded by the system’s limited existing guidance and support, limiting equitable access to housing programs for Latinx participants.

^{75, 76} Estimate based on data from the Los Angeles Continuum of Care 2024 Homeless Count.

Service Delivery

Time Limited Subsidies

Time-Limited Subsidy (TLS) programs help people move from homelessness to stable housing by providing short-term rental assistance for up to 24 months. These programs focus on assisting participants to find housing and stay housed through the support of Housing Navigators. For a participant to be housed through TLS, however, they need to secure a unit with a landlord willing to rent to them, a significant challenge for participants lacking documentation. Reflecting trends observed in Street Outreach and Interim Housing, Latinx adults are increasingly underrepresented in TLS outcomes: while they make up 43% of adults experiencing homelessness,⁷⁷ only 31% of adults successfully housed through TLS in the last fiscal year were Latinx. Latinx TAY and families are closer to proportional representation in TLS outcomes than adults overall. Latinx TAY makeup 37% of TAY experiencing homelessness⁷⁸ and 34% of those successfully housed through the program, while Latinx families account for 48% of families experiencing homelessness⁷⁹ and 52% of those housed through TLS.

The data highlights a concerning trend: as programs move closer to achieving permanent housing, the representation of Latinx adults diminishes. While the system does not track participants without documents, higher housing program barriers may disproportionately impact these individuals.

Permanent Supportive Housing

Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) is a critical, evidence-based resource for individuals experiencing homelessness, particularly those with the highest levels of need—people with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, and/or behavioral health conditions who experience chronic homelessness. PSH combines long-term, stable housing with supportive services to help residents maintain their housing and improve overall well-being. However, federal restrictions prevent HUD-funded PSH from directly serving non-citizen or permanent resident individuals, leaving a critical gap in support for many Latinx individuals. Data from FY 2023-24 shows that PSH in Los Angeles County, provided by the Departments of Health Services, Mental Health, and Public Health, served 21,369 individuals. Of those served, 30% were Latinx,⁸⁰ despite Latinx individuals making up 48% of the County's population and an estimated 43% of those experiencing homelessness. While missing data may contribute to this disparity,⁸¹ the suggested underrepresentation of Latinx individuals in PSH reflects systemic barriers to housing that service providers and Task Force discussions highlighted during community listening sessions.

⁷⁷⁻⁷⁹ Estimate based on data from the Los Angeles Continuum of Care 2024 Homeless Count.

⁸⁰ *Quarterly Report #30*. Los Angeles Homelessness Initiative. (2024, December 10).

https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/bc/1134740_HomelessInitiativeQuarterlyReportNo.25_ItemNo.47ofAgenda2-9-16_.pdf

⁸¹ Of the 21,369 participants served in FY 23-24, 2,464 did not have data on ethnicity.

Service Delivery

Though limited in scope, the Los Angeles Flexible Housing Subsidy Pool (FHSP) offers a critical alternative to the HUD-funded PSH. This innovative program, designed to provide rapid access to permanent housing, is a privately funded program managed by DHS in partnership with housing providers like Brilliant Corners. The FHSP's flexible structure allows it to house individuals without imposing limitations based on U.S. citizenship or eligible immigration status. Service providers often refer to this program as one of the few options to house such individuals. Still, its limited scale underscores the urgent need for expanded investment to meet the needs of the Latinx community.

Overarching Transformational Recommendation

Greater collaboration between County departments and between inter-governmental bodies is evident - change is underway. Further opportunities to strengthen and expand collaboration are crucial for delivering effective services and supporting individuals and families experiencing homelessness, with a particular focus on ensuring that those facing the most significant barriers to housing stability do not fall through the cracks. One tool to further organize this collaboration is to track system-wide measures of outcomes by race and ethnicity. Similar to the system's Key Performance Indicators, tracking this information can build our understanding of how the system is meeting the unique needs of different communities. It can also serve as a tool to foster collaboration and accountability to respond to the surfacing needs and gaps.

- In collaboration with the Los Angeles Office of Immigrant Affairs, identify community spaces, non-traditional access points, and locations to serve Latinx community members, including vulnerable populations, to enhance connection to services. Locations may include churches, libraries, healthcare centers, parks, labor centers, schools, pop-ups, farmers markets, local Latinx serving grocers, and swap meets. Establish connections between non-traditional entities and the corresponding lead Service Planning Area (SPA) providers and assess the feasibility of creating a recurring coalition meeting space comprised of traditional and non-traditional partners, as well as immigrant-serving organizations that provide legal representation, such as Represent LA (which funds multiple organizations), Stay Housed LA, CARECEN, and CHIRLA, LA.
- To improve data collection processes to capture the Latinx population experiencing homelessness more accurately, include queries related to language barriers and language needs. In addition, a plan should be developed, and the feasibility of implementation should be assessed to track and measure individuals/families who are turned away from the homeless services system. This may be due to being doubled up and/or living in informal tenancy arrangements or otherwise experiencing homelessness or housing instability that does not meet the HUD definitions (for example, somebody paying on their own nightly for a motel/hotel).

Service Delivery

Overarching Transformational Recommendation

- To build and maintain multilingual staff capacity, explore the feasibility of implementing a compensation structure that rewards case managers and staff for their multilingual skills, recognizing the critical role of effective communication when serving diverse client populations. This could include salary incentives or bonuses for those fluent in multiple languages, thereby enhancing the overall quality of service delivery. A necessary component of building capacity is assessing a staff person's language competencies to ensure the quality and effectiveness of communication and interpretation skills.
- To maximize local funding to fill gaps for many households that do not qualify for federal housing programs (e.g., Section 8) due to immigration status or documentation barriers. To address this, County and City agencies should maximize local funds – such as Measure A and ULA – to fill critical gaps in housing assistance. Agencies should assess the flexibility of these local resources and determine how they can be structured to serve households excluded from federally funded programs. Explore innovative funding mechanisms that blend local and private sector funds to support non-citizen or permanent resident individuals, mixed-status families, and others who do not meet federal eligibility criteria. Ensure transparency and accountability by tracking who benefits from these funds and evaluating their impact on long-term housing stability.

USING AN INTERSECTIONALITY LENS TO SERVE AND PROTECT VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

C3 Skid Row resident, Photo by Mayra Beltran
Vasquez, Los Angeles County Flickr, Jan. 14, 2016

Task Force on Latinx People Experiencing
Homelessness Report

2025

Using an Intersectionality Lens to Serve and Protect Vulnerable Populations

Legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw introduced the term "intersectionality" to explain how overlapping social identities like race, gender, sexuality, and citizenship create unique experiences of marginalization or privilege. Initially focused on how racism and sexism combine to affect Black women, intersectionality emphasizes how interconnected systems of power shape our experiences. Applying this framework helps reveal how social structures and institutions contribute to inequality and influence our understanding of marginalized groups.

Mapping out intersecting marginalized identities

Research has shown that Latinx individuals at the intersection of multiple marginalized identities are particularly vulnerable to experiencing housing insecurity. Latinx people facing housing insecurity may often be immigrants grappling with economic hardships due to underemployment or unemployment, frequently living in multigenerational households;⁸² however, focusing on just economic justice does not get to the root of how youth, aging, disabled, TGI/LGBQ+, immigrant, or Indigenous families who do not speak English or Spanish experience homelessness due to compounding vulnerabilities. These are all common experiences and identities of those within the "Latinx" umbrella that often get pushed to the margins because of interlocking systemic inequalities.

Othering is the Problem, Belonging is the Solution

All vulnerable populations share one common feature: they are "othered" because of their unique identities. Policies, programs, and initiatives may be created to better serve marginalized populations, but they are unlikely to achieve the desired results without a fundamental shift in how society views people who are different. The solution to Othering is straightforward yet uncommon: cultivating spaces of belonging that include all people in all their uniqueness.

Overarching Transformational Recommendation for Vulnerable Populations

Transformational and structural change begins with the individual. Personal development is the starting point for efforts to better serve vulnerable populations in Los Angeles County. Caring for others—particularly those who differ from ourselves—requires the ability to "see" each person as deserving to belong, to be cared for, to have a meaningful voice, and to participate in decision-making.

⁸² Carmona, G.N., (2024, June). *Unveiling Latino housing insecurity in California* [Student Work]. University of California, Los Angeles Lewis Center for Regional Policy Studies. <https://www.lewis.ucla.edu/research/unveiling-latino-housing-insecurity-in-california/>

Using an Intersectionality Lens to Serve and Protect Vulnerable Youth Populations

Youth and Young Adults

According to LAHSA's 2024 Los Angeles Youth Count, an estimated 2,670 unhoused youth are on LA County's streets on any night.⁸³ This estimate includes unaccompanied youth under 18 and young people up to 25 years old, but excludes children under 18 who are part of a youth-headed household. Among these unhoused youth, 41% are Latinx,⁸⁴ nearly one-third have previous involvement in the foster care system, and about one-quarter identify as LGBTQ+. Most lack a supportive social network, compounding the challenges they face as they navigate housing instability.⁸⁵

"When I was 16, my mom and I were not getting along, and she kicked me out of the house. At first, I couch-surfed at friends' houses but eventually, I had nowhere to go, and I dropped out of school. It was a hard time. But I was lucky enough to find a program where I got housing and a case manager. My case manager helped me find a job, I'm completing school, and I hope to go to college. I even have a car now." – Young Latinx adult male, Venice community listening session

A panel of young people from Safe Place for Youth (SPY) reported to the Task Force that the most significant contributors to youth homelessness are family issues and neglect. Also contributing are a lack of education and job skills, immigration status, racial and ethnic discrimination, addiction, poverty, and trauma. While these contributing factors overlap with many communities, the ways in which these traumas and barriers arise differ among youth, and the solutions and strategies to address these harms and challenges may also differ.

"I had a Latinx teen that was emancipated. She was 17. We got her matched to permanent supportive housing, but although she was emancipated, she still couldn't sign legal documents. She couldn't sign a lease agreement, so luckily though, her birthday came up in like a couple of months, so we were finally able to get her into a place and the agency was good enough to hold it for her." – Case Manager, Lived Experience Advisory Group

Following is a list of recommendations to better serve vulnerable populations that focus on wrap around services, extending length of support, and adding culturally sensitivity.

⁸³ YC2024 LA CoC data summary. (2024) Los Angeles Homelessness Service Authority. <https://www.lahsa.org/documents?id=8271-yc2024-la-coc-data-summary84> Ibid

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ *The problem*. Safe Place for Youth. (n.d.). https://www.safeplaceforyouth.org/the_problem

Using an Intersectionality Lens to Serve and Protect Vulnerable Youth Populations

Priority Recommendations for Youth and Young adults

1. To ensure adequate housing support for foster youth, the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) should lead a collaborative effort with other agencies and housing authorities across LA County to accomplish the following:

- Given that current vouchers are time-limited, explore methods to provide continuous support during and after the voucher period to foster independence.
- Actively engage foster youth, particularly those harder to reach, by gathering their input and compensating them for their participation in policy development surrounding housing supports for youth.
- Develop a plan to increase transitional housing support, preserve existing shelters, and invest in infrastructure to ensure long-term stability for this vulnerable population.

2. Invest in mentorship projects as part of interim housing services for transitional-aged youth to connect with mentors that share specific identities or experiences (cultural identities, migration, former foster, incarcerated, LGBTQ, etc.). Youth should receive monetary incentives to participate in receiving mentorship, and there should be a component of life skills, career exploration, and goal setting.

3. Create a pool of TAY funding from governmental and philanthropic sources specifically for community-based organizations (CBOs) and trusted community partners that provide financial security services, life skills support, and employment programs serving Latinx communities.

Using an Intersectionality Lens to Serve and Protect Vulnerable Older Adult Populations

Seniors

According to former Director of the LA County Aging and Disabilities Department, Dr. Laura Trejo, Los Angeles County has the largest older adult population in the country, with 2,072,050 residents aged 60 or older. Currently, older adults make up 25% of LA County's homeless population, and nearly half of these individuals became homeless after the age of 50. The face of homelessness is changing, as older adults represent the fastest-growing demographic among those experiencing homelessness, with projections indicating this population could triple by 2030. Notably, the number of older adults (55+) experiencing homelessness increased by 6.5% from 2023 to 2024. On the night of the 2024 Los Angeles CoC Homeless Count, an estimated 6,048 Latinx individuals aged 55 and older were experiencing homelessness. This represents one-fifth of the Latinx population experiencing homelessness.

Seniors and people with disabilities often face significant hurdles in increasing their income, especially when age or disability limits their ability to participate in the job market. This makes resources like Social Security and other social safety net programs essential for achieving financial security. However, many of these programs have failed to keep pace with inflation, leaving vulnerable populations struggling to meet basic needs. For instance, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and General Relief (GR) have not been adequately adjusted to reflect the rising cost of living, contributing to persistent poverty among older adults and people with disabilities.⁸⁶

For immigrants, these challenges are compounded. In 2022, these workers paid \$96.7 billion in federal, state, and local taxes, averaging approximately \$8,900 per person.⁸⁷ Despite contributing billions to social service programs, non-citizen workers are often barred from receiving the benefits they help fund. This inequity is particularly striking in California, where immigrant workers generated over \$8 billion for the state but saw little to no return on their tax dollars.⁸⁸ For our aging population, many who have paid federal and state taxes for years go without the social services and supports that address the health and income concerns of Latinx elders.

⁸⁶ Smalligan, J. A. (2024, May 14). *Increasing SSI benefits is a more effective approach to reducing poverty than an enhanced social security minimum benefit*. Brookings Institution. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/increasing-ssi-benefits-is-a-more-effective-approach-to-reducing-poverty-than-an-enhanced-social-security-minimum-benefit/>

⁸⁷ Davis, C., Guzman, M., & Sifre, E. (2024, July 30). *Tax payments by undocumented immigrants*. Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy. <https://itep.org/undocumented-immigrants-taxes-2024/>

⁸⁸ Ibid.

Using an Intersectionality Lens to Serve and Protect Vulnerable Older Adult Populations

Priority Recommendations for Older Adults

1. City and County housing agencies, LACAHSa, HACLA, and ULA, should focus on designating, rehabilitating, and preserving existing spaces, particularly for seniors and do the following:

- Develop an accurate resource inventory and prioritize alternatives to new construction, such as renovating unused spaces.
- Ensure that housing initiatives include diverse options, quality of life assessments, and cultural sensitivity, while expanding tax credits and rental assistance programs to maximize immediate support.
- Design a targeted rental assistance and/or universal basic income program for older adults, along with a set aside number of Time Limited Subsidy slots, to ensure that older adults experiencing homelessness have equitable access to housing and income social supports regardless of immigration status.
- Strengthen partnerships between housing and healthcare providers to integrate on-site healthcare, harm reduction services, behavioral health support, and home-based care options, reducing hospitalizations and ensuring that older adults receive the necessary medical care within their housing environments.

2. Many older adults are capable of and interested in wage-earning employment. Job training, development and resources should include specific opportunities and support for older adults interested in entering or returning to the labor force.

3. Develop and implement culturally specific, multilingual programming and services for aging Latinx populations through strategic partnerships with cultural arts programs, advocacy organizations, and coalitions.

Using an Intersectionality Lens to Serve and Protect Vulnerable TGI/LGBQ+ Populations

TGI/LGBQ+

Transgender, Gender Diverse, and Intersex (TGI): An umbrella term that includes a wide range of gender identities, such as transgender, transsexual, genderqueer, and intersex. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Queer + (LGBQ+): Similar to TGI is another term that encompasses a range of sexual orientation identities. TGI/LGBQ+ communities navigate many unique experiences that can increase their likelihood of experiencing housing insecurity and homelessness, and may also hinder their ability to seek and connect with resources and become rehoused.

A recent report by the TransLatin@ Coalition⁸⁹ outlines the housing challenges TGI-identifying people face, including discrimination based on prejudicial stereotyping, verbal harassment, physical abuse, and even sexual violence. These experiences can further traumatize Latinx TGI residents and make it difficult or impossible to sustain housing as they are pushed out of unsafe environments while simultaneously experiencing other drivers of housing insecurity, like poverty.

Latinx TGI-Identifying People experience with homelessness

"I find myself in the street. It's very different. Very, very sad because you don't have a plan for how you're going to get out from there. And every day you pass in the street, every day it stretches more and more down, down, and on . . ." – Transgender People Experiencing Homelessness Focus Group, Transgender Latinx woman living unsheltered.

As a result, about 2% of Los Angeles County residents experiencing homelessness identify as TGI, even though only 0.49% of California residents do. While it can be difficult to fully understand the size and breadth of both the TGI community and the share of them experiencing housing insecurity, these data show that there is a disproportionate number of TGI-identifying people experiencing homelessness in our community.

Risks of homelessness for Latinx TGI-Identifying People

"There's certain ideals that are harmful to the LGBT community. An example would be when parents find out. The first instinct is, 'Oh, you're not family anymore. Disowned. Get out of my house.' So that is an instant connection to homelessness." – Homeless Youth Forum of Los Angeles, Latinx youth

⁸⁹ *The pathway home: Los Angeles TGI housing needs assessment*. The TransLatin@ Coalition. (n.d.). https://static1.squarespace.com/static/55b6e526e4b02f9283ae1969/t/67007f83578fa4078f7a0de1/1728085892828/TLC_The_Pathway_Home_Housing_Assessment.pdf

Using an Intersectionality Lens to Serve and Protect Vulnerable TGI/LGBQ+ Populations

When seeking services and resources to achieve greater stability, TGI-identifying people often face additional barriers – such as obtaining valid identification documents that reflect their identity and are recognized across government systems – which can further delay their path to rehousing. The same discrimination and abusive behaviors that drive TGI individuals into housing insecurity can also keep them in financial hardship, such as facing stigma when seeking employment. According to the TGI Housing Needs Assessment, many TGI-identifying survey participants expressed experiencing conditions with their employment that pushed them to “perform duties according to their assigned sex at birth, citing and prioritizing the comfort of other employees and customers overall.”⁹⁰

Discriminatory and abusive practices can also persist when TGI-identifying residents seek out services from organizations that should be well-positioned to serve and support them, but may not be sufficiently equipped to serve their unique needs or may fail to bridge trust with these communities. Barriers such as misgendering, denial of services based on gender identity, placement in unsafe or inappropriate housing facilities, and a lack of staff training on gender-affirming care can create hostile environments that further alienate TGI individuals. Additionally, rigid intake processes, failure to provide gender-inclusive restrooms and accommodations, and the absence of TGI-affirming mental health and medical services contribute to systemic exclusion. These barriers also arise for Latinx youth experiencing homelessness who are also part of the TGI/LGBQ+ community and face challenges specific to the intersectionality of their identities and experiences.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 74

Using an Intersectionality Lens to Serve and Protect Vulnerable TGI/LGBQ+ Populations

Priority Recommendations for Latinx TGI-Identifying People

1. Establish a county-level training program for all direct service providers, including CBOs and partners, to support TGI individuals, emphasizing BIPOC, Latinx, and Indigenous communities. Update and leverage existing gender-affirming training from ARDI within DMH and DHS, expanding it to ensure comprehensive coverage across all relevant services—partner with TGI-led and serving organizations like the TransLatin@ Coalition as subject matter experts.
2. Expand appropriate accommodations in each SPA that ensure the safety and privacy of TGI participants. Some examples include expanding gender-neutral restrooms and showers, expanding private rooms or beds for vulnerable populations, creating permanent and temporary partitions within congregate shelters for increased privacy, hiring community specialists who are also members of the LGBQ+ or TGI community, and implementing bilingual safety and care plans to address incidents of discrimination and harassment.
3. For TGI/LGBTQ families, establishing an Intentional Proximity Bridge Between Single Adult Shelters and Family Shelters/Services is critical. Create a strategic physical and operational linkage between shelters for single adults and shelters or services supporting families with two parents, enhancing access to comprehensive support for families in need.

Using an Intersectionality Lens to Serve and Protect Vulnerable Indigenous Populations

Indigenous Migrants

Indigenous migrants primarily from Mexico and Central America in Los Angeles are often grouped under the broader Latinx category, leading to a lack of specific data on their unique experiences and needs. However, recent efforts by organizations like Comunidades Indígenas en Liderazgo (CIELO) and the USC Dornsife Equity Research Center are working to address these gaps.

“Numbers are important. Data is important. If we don’t have data, we don’t exist, and if we don’t exist, there are no services, no language supports, and it becomes a human rights violation against Indigenous people.” Odilia Romero, Co-founder and Executive Director, CIELO

In addition to CIELO and the USC Dornsife Equity Research Center, another organization representing Indigenous Mexicans, the Mixteco Indígena Community Organizing Project (MICOP), located in Ventura County, is also focused on the collection of data and community-based research. “Grounded in principles of mutual respect, reciprocity, and transparency, our approach to community-based research seeks to cultivate meaningful relationships and drive positive social change. Our vision emphasizes community leadership, reimagines power dynamics, and honors the knowledge and self-determination of Indigenous communities. We are committed to fostering reciprocal, inclusive, and equitable research partnerships wherein Indigenous voices are respected and empowered.”⁹¹

This intersectionality, where indigeneity, race, class, and language converge, exacerbates their challenges. Indigenous migrants are not only marginalized within the broader Latinx population but also experience unique forms of exploitation, especially in labor markets. Research by CIELO and the USC Dornsife Equity Research Center reveals that the destabilizing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have left Indigenous Migrants particularly vulnerable. Over 80% of those surveyed reported ongoing struggles to afford food and rent, leading to severe housing instability. Barriers such as low literacy rates and a lack of resources in Indigenous languages further hinder access to necessary housing support, reflecting the compounded marginalization these communities face as both indigenous and non-Spanish speakers. Job instability disproportionately affects this population, with 73% of respondents experiencing reduced hours, 50% facing employment loss, and 35% reporting workplace closures during the pandemic. Indigenous women in particular face heightened vulnerabilities, including gender-based violence and exploitation in low-wage sectors like domestic work and street vending.⁹²

⁹¹ Mixteco Indígena Community Organizing Project. Mixteco. (n.d.). <https://mixteco.org/>

⁹² Lee, J., Salome, R., & Martinez, J. (2024, October). *Indigenous migrants in Los Angeles County*. CIELO. https://mycielo.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/ERI-Indigenous-Migrants-of-LA-Report_V8_Final.pdf

Using an Intersectionality Lens to Serve and Protect Vulnerable Indigenous Populations

Research shows that skin color plays a role in shaping the experiences of the Latinx community, connecting anti-indigeneity with colorism and anti-Blackness.^{93 94} Having a darker skin tone is linked with higher reports of racial discrimination, furthering the disadvantages Indigenous migrants may face when navigating the job and rental markets, as well as living in the community more broadly.⁹⁵ Furthermore, linguistic isolation from both Spanish-speaking Latinx communities and English-speaking institutions creates significant barriers to accessing healthcare, legal services, and labor protections. These overlapping forms of discrimination highlight the critical need for culturally and linguistically appropriate resources to address the specific intersectional challenges faced by indigenous migrants in Los Angeles.⁹⁶

In 2012, a Mexican Indigenous youth group, called Tequio (The term “Tequio” describes an indigenous person’s desire and obligation to assist their community) in Ventura County, California, held a press conference to announce their campaign called, “No Me Llamas Oaxaquita” or “don’t call me Little Oaxacan.” The event called attention to the pervasive use of the derogatory racial and ethnic epithets, “Oaxaquita” and “indito” (little Indian) that non-indigenous Mexican immigrant students use to bully their indigenous peers.⁹⁷

As recently as 2022, similar discrimination and anti-Indigenous bias persisted. In that year, a leaked recording revealed three Latinx Los Angeles City Council members making derogatory remarks about Indigenous Mexican immigrants, highlighting the ongoing challenges of bias and prejudice within the community. They called them “little short dark people” and “ugly.”⁹⁸ Unsettling because, despite this bias, as leaders of the City, they are responsible for allocating resources and enacting and implementing law, ordinances, policies, and programs. Racial and ethnic bias will persist until both individuals and communities address the negative associations that sustain it.

⁹³ Noe-Bustamante, L., Gonzalez-Barrera, A., Edwards, K., Mora, L., & Lopez, M. H. (2021, November 4). *Majority of Latinos say skin color impacts opportunity in America and shapes daily life*. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/race-and-ethnicity/2021/11/04/majority-of-latinos-say-skin-color-impacts-opportunity-in-america-and-shapes-daily-life/>

⁹⁴ Monk, E. P. (2021). The unceasing significance of colorism: skin tone stratification in the United States. *Daedalus*. <https://www.amacad.org/publication/colorism-skin-tone-stratification-united-states>

⁹⁵ Marrow, H. B., Okamoto, D. G., Garcia, M. J., Adem, M., & Tropp, L. R. (2022). Skin tone and Mexicans’ perceptions of discrimination in new immigrant destinations. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 85(4), 374–385. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01902725221128387>

⁹⁶ Lee, J., Salome, R., & Martinez, J. (2024, October). *Indigenous migrants in Los Angeles County*. CIELO. https://mycielo.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/ERI-Indigenous-Migrants-of-LA-Report_V8_Final.pdf

⁹⁷ Perez, W., & Vásquez, R. (2024). *Culturally responsive schooling for indigenous Mexican students*. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.

⁹⁸ “Full transcription of leaked audio revealing racist remarks by L.A. city council members. (2022, November 21). *Los Angeles Times*. <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2022-11-21/la-city-council-racist-audio-leak-transcription-annotation>

Using an Intersectionality Lens to Serve and Protect Vulnerable Indigenous Populations

Prioritized Recommendations for Indigenous Migrants

1. CIELO and academic researchers should employ new strategies and new measurements to ensure indigenous migrants from Mexico and Central America data are collected, analyzed and published to ensure these communities are properly represented, particularly to ensure accuracy of the annual PIT count. In addition to the collection of quantitative data, government data collection systems must include qualitative data as well. Such data would include storytelling, responses derived from community listening sessions, community-based data collection efforts, and from trusted community-based organizations.

2. Trusted community-based organizations and networks are the primary systems of support for Indigenous migrant communities who are often locked out of traditional governmental support systems – however these groups are frequently under-resourced and overlooked by those seeking to serve immigrant communities. Enduring investments in and partnerships with Indigenous Migrant serving organizations and community networks are needed to adequately serve the variety of needs across these diverse indigenous communities.

Using an Intersectionality Lens to Serve and Protect Vulnerable Non-Citizen Populations

Immigrants

Despite contributing an estimated \$8.5 billion a year in California state and local taxes, non-citizens are largely shut out of the social safety net of resources available to citizens and permanent residents.⁹⁹ The COVID-19 Pandemic brought much-needed attention to the precarity faced by migrant workers as they experienced the most extreme consequences and had the highest unemployment rate compared to the rest of the population.¹⁰⁰ While challenges in accessing opportunities and receiving services are not new for Latinx people who lack permanent status, the pandemic helped illuminate the costs of these barriers, and how they can have ripple effects in the broader community.

“They made us the sanctuary state, right? But they don't give individuals opportunities to work... It's hard to get a social security card, and it's very challenging to get even an ID. And so if we are a sanctuary state and we're allowed to stay, then why can't we make opportunities for people to work and be part of society instead of being outcasts where you're staying and working?”
- Participant, Kingdom Causes Listening Session

Every driver of housing insecurity and barrier to rehousing detailed in this report becomes significantly heavier when a person lacks legal status. Non-citizen Latinx residents must navigate a complex and often hostile legal landscape, compounded by inconsistent policies at the federal, state, and local levels. Mixed-status households—where non-citizen individuals live alongside U.S. citizens or permanent residents—further illustrate the challenges. Fear for the security of these family members often discourages households from seeking services, even when some members may qualify for assistance.

This hesitancy affects a substantial portion of the population in Los Angeles County. In 2021, 841,000 U.S. citizens and 230,000 permanent residents in the county lived with a family member who lacked legal status.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Davis, C., Guzman, M., & Sifre, E. (2024, July 30). *Tax payments by undocumented immigrants*. Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy. <https://itep.org/undocumented-immigrants-taxes-2024/>

¹⁰⁰ Hinojosa-Ojeda, R., Dominguez-Villegas, R., & Aguilar, J. (2020, August 10). *Undocumented during COVID-19: essential for the economy but excluded from relief*. UCLA, Latino Policy & Politics Institute. <https://latino.ucla.edu/research/undocumented-during-covid-19-essential-for-the-economy-but-excluded-from-relief/>

¹⁰¹ *Mixed-status Families, Los Angeles: undocumented immigrants and residents living with undocumented family member(s)*. University of Southern California, Equity Research Institute (ERI), Los Angeles Immigrant Data Portal. (2021). <https://immigrantdataca.org/data-summaries>

Using an Intersectionality Lens to Serve and Protect Vulnerable Non-Citizen Populations

Statewide, Latinos and Asian Americans are disproportionately affected: nearly 30% of Latinos and 15% of Asian Americans were non-citizens or permanent residents themselves, or lived with someone who had no legal status in the country.¹⁰² While California and Los Angeles County have taken steps to address these challenges and mitigate harms, these efforts remain insufficient without meaningful changes at the federal policy level.

The impact of deportations has ripple effects beyond the individual, affecting households, extended family members, neighbors, employers, and employees. A national study assessed the economic impact of removing a member from a mixed-status household. It revealed that the median household income can decrease from \$41,300 to \$22,000, pushing families further into poverty.¹⁰³

It has become increasingly complex to understand the level of need that exists for immigrants when it comes to housing and homelessness because of reticence to share and track data specifically tied to a person's documentation status due to safety concerns. While some agencies can use proxies and rely on trust built by community organizations and advocacy groups to better understand the challenges experienced by this community, these data are limited and do not paint the whole picture. That said, the picture they offer provides a window into how services and policies can be better designed and operationalized to support the needs of non-citizens or permanent residents and their families. The recommendations that follow are a start to addressing these barriers.

¹⁰² *Mixed-status families, California: undocumented immigrants and residents living with undocumented family member(s)*. University of Southern California, Equity Research Institute (ERI), California Immigrant Data Portal. <https://immigrantdataca.org/data-summaries?geo=02000000000006000>

¹⁰³ Warren, R., & Kerwin, D. (2017). Mass deportations would impoverish us families and create immense social costs. *Journal on Migration and Human Security*, 5(1), 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.14240/jmhs.v5i1.71>

Using an Intersectionality Lens to Serve and Protect Vulnerable Non-Citizen Populations

Priority Recommendations for Immigrants

1. Outreach and Education:

- Launch linguistically, culturally, and immigration status-sensitive outreach campaigns to inform individuals about available resources and services, addressing concerns that may impact a person's ability to access benefits (especially shelter), and include the use of infographics and videos to ensure literacy is not a barrier to accessing this information.
- Partner with the faith-based community and organizations that serve immigrant communities, such as The TransLatin@ Coalition, CHIRLA, CARECEN, etc., to increase connections and awareness of County public agencies and resources, including the Offices of Immigrant Affairs.
- Develop a targeted strategy that focuses on high-need communities to ensure resources and contractor services are allocated based on population density.
- In collaboration with community partners, assess the feasibility and explore the benefits and drawbacks of establishing a centralized department to track limited data on all immigrant individuals without permanent status and their challenges, improving coordination and service delivery.

2. Develop and launch a Rent Housing Subsidy Pilot: This pilot program would provide rental assistance to immigrants ineligible for federally funded housing subsidies. In Los Angeles County, an estimated 246,000 households are behind on rent and at risk of eviction, with non-citizen or non-permanent resident immigrant families being particularly vulnerable due to their exclusion from many state and federal housing assistance programs. To address this gap, assessing the feasibility and developing a plan for a locally funded rental subsidy program that offers modest financial support to these immigrants is necessary. Even small subsidies could mean the difference between housing stability and homelessness for these households. Additionally, this initiative should explore pilot programs and the expansion of existing local assistance efforts to serve high-need groups.

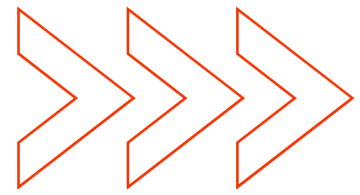
3. Remove Legal Status Barriers for Housing Programs: Sheltering programs should be accessible to immigrants, regardless of their immigration status. Measure H and now Measure A-funded programs are to be accessible to anyone living in LA County. However, immigrant advocates report that some non-citizen or permanent resident immigrants are turned down for services due to their status. Ensure that a comprehensive review of all LA County housing programs is conducted to identify and remove barriers preventing non-citizens from accessing those services, and ensure that service providers are properly trained.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Pathways Home participant in Baldwin Park, Photo by
Michael Owen Baker, Los Angeles County Flickr, Dec. 13, 2023

Task Force on Latinx People Experiencing
Homelessness Report

2025



Recommendations

Performance goals are a good way to monitor and measure progress.

This section outlines the complete set of recommendations the Task Force developed, aimed to address the burdens identified throughout their examination. Recommendations address each of the issue areas that the Task Force explored in depth, as outlined above.

Recommendations for Homelessness Prevention

1. Expand the following flexible cash assistance programs that directly impact housing stability: CalWORKs; General Relief; City of LA UBI Pilot.
- Enhance prevention efforts by making funding more flexible and accessible, particularly for the Latinx community and those in informal rental arrangements.
 - Ensure relevant organizations are maximizing the use of funding streams that are not restricted by documentation status for all households.
 - Develop a program that does not require a written eviction notice and extends eligibility to tenants with informal rental arrangements and/or experiencing financial hardship, which is likely to lead to future eviction. The current Prevention Program only serves those who are imminently at risk to ensure that the minimal funds are used for those most in need.
2.
 - Create a working group composed of program coordination staff for all existing Prevention efforts across the City and County (Home Safe, and Problem Solving; Mayor's Office fund; Solid Ground; DPSS Prevention; Stay Housed; County HI; etc.) to facilitate coordination and to plan for regional coverage of all Prevention related needs, including ensuring that all programs include eligibility for Latinx populations, and that services are equitably reaching those groups.
 - Expand accessibility of these programs to CBOs already working with the Latinx community so that funding and accessibility are more targeted.
 - Establish a countywide centralized hotline for those in need of Prevention services. Staff can triage cases to the most appropriate program based on the caller's needs.

Recommendations for Homelessness Prevention

3.	Expand the Shallow Subsidy Program at LAHSA to ensure that all participants exiting LAHSA rental assistance programs are eligible for continued rental assistance if those programs do not provide sufficient time for a stable resolution of a household's housing instability. With adequate funding to program expansion, extend eligibility to anybody earning less than 50% AMI and exiting a LAHSA rental assistance program.
4.	Breathe LA is a guaranteed income pilot project that provides 1,000 eligible residents with \$1,000 per month for three years and Los Angeles County DCFS foster youth with \$1,000 per month for two years. Expand the Breathe LA Guaranteed Income program and partner with municipalities to broaden the capacity and funding to support Latinx people experiencing housing insecurity.
6.	For years, the Los Angeles County government has relied on the 211 hotline to assist the public seeking prevention and homelessness services. The system falls short because of limited direct access to housing placements, long wait times to connect with shelters due to high demand, and a lack of immediate shelter availability. Collaborate with government departments and community service providers to develop a more responsive and effective countywide centralized hotline for those needing Prevention services, where staff can triage cases to the most appropriate program based on the caller's needs.
7.	Develop an additional homelessness prevention pilot program using a new risk model and outreach program. The additional pilot program can work in collaboration with the Homelessness Prevention Unit (HPU) to address the needs of Latinx individuals at risk of homelessness. This new model would identify a new risk pool using alternative data sources, such as community health clinics and nonprofit organizations, and incorporate criteria like income instability and overcrowding to better capture the challenges faced by Latinx communities. A culturally responsive outreach program and partnerships with community-based organizations can be created to address barriers specific to Latinx individuals at risk of homelessness, such as legal aid and immigration assistance. This new model will need to be funded and supported by an entity well-suited for piloting and supporting this new program to better serve Latinx individuals who may not be served by County systems. This new program could work in a consultative partnership with HPU to inform the development, implementation and assessment of the new model.

Recommendations to Improve Financial Security

8.	The City and County should implement a Unitary Enforcement strategy that integrates fair labor practices across the city, county, and state levels, targeting industries with a high percentage of low-wage workers. • Establish a unified "One Stop Shop" for labor violation reporting and enforcement, collaborate with CBOs to address wage theft, and expand resources for these efforts. • Launch a community education program to raise awareness of labor rights, ensure a safe space for reporting with immigration protection, and promote ITIN usage. • Allocate funding to scale these initiatives and support stable employment pathways.
9.	Collaborate with the LA Family Source System to learn more and replicate successful financial assistance and support programs such as Solid Ground, including 1) income tax preparation (to obtain refundable tax credits); 2) credit score improvement; 3) banking opportunities, and other financial literacy programs. Replicate Solid Ground's outcome reporting system and its effective collaboration with community service providers, including accountability and performance measures. Launch an outreach campaign to build trust through partnerships with CBOs and consistent messaging from government agencies. Invest in community-based financial models, promote trusted banks, and prioritize education on financial stability, including money transfer fees and tax practices. Explore initiatives like "Bank On" to enhance resource access and financial literacy.
10.	To improve wage earning potential, invest in high-quality, results-driven job training and workforce development programs that prepare participants, particularly youth, young adults for more competitive, higher wage jobs.
11.	Expand the Promotora and Wellness Ambassador models to focus on relationship-building and preventative services for Latinx families rather than immediate treatment and diagnosis. Train community members to promote healthy living and provide peer support, bridging the gap between traditional health services and the community. Ensure cultural sensitivity by avoiding stigmatizing language related to homelessness and using social activities and shared meals as opportunities to introduce Promotora support. To scale this model, secure funding to train additional Promotoras, enhancing the reach and impact within the community.

Recommendations to Remove Impediments to Wellness

12.	To ensure Latinx people in need of mental health services and substance abuse treatment receive the appropriate care, government departments should work with multilingual service providers and certified substance abuse treatment providers to ensure treatment is available in Spanish and other high-need languages.
13.	Assess for language gaps that may interfere with delivering services to diverse communities in a culturally responsive and competent manner. Focus on Mexico and Central America indigenous languages and standard Spanish dialects in Los Angeles County. Examine current translation/interpreting services contracts and, if necessary, collaborate with community-based organizations to identify other translation providers to ensure all people needing services have language access. Build and maintain a list of interpreters and translators along with a fee schedule.
14.	In addition to “Connect Days,” to further engage the community, assess the feasibility and cost of organizing culturally relevant community events, like “Boba Day” or “Cafe Charla.” Frame these events under a broader wellness umbrella, emphasizing the interconnectedness of behavioral health, housing, and well-being.
15.	Promote a culturally responsive, “Whole Person” Service Delivery that leverages a wide range of resources to provide patient physical, behavioral, and social support while also incorporating community wellness, intergenerational rituals, cultural sharing, and the interconnectedness between body, mind, and spirit.
16.	Promote education and awareness campaigns to reduce stigma surrounding behavioral health issues, encouraging more individuals to seek help. Ensure representation of Mexico and Central American indigenous people and all genders, including TGI/LGBQ+ community members.

Recommendations For Improvements to Service Delivery

Focus Area I: Advance a collaborative responsibility approach (such as collective impact) that brings together government agencies, community service providers, and non-traditional partners to ensure comprehensive access to services and resources.

17.	Local government offices and community organizations organize “Connect Days” to provide assistance, outreach services, employment resources, hygiene supplies, and other essentials to individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Conduct an analysis of existing “Connect Days” to ensure that all necessary and appropriate governmental and service provider parties are represented and to assess existing accountability structures to ensure that all partners take active ownership of and successfully complete assigned tasks.
18.	Seek guidance from the Office of Immigrant Affairs and consider and assess the feasibility of establishing a dedicated non-citizen Coordinator role that can bring together all key stakeholders and community service providers.
19	In collaboration with the Los Angeles Office of Immigrant Affairs, identify community spaces and non-traditional access points and locations to serve Latinx community members, including vulnerable populations, to enhance connection to services. Locations may include churches, libraries, healthcare centers, parks, labor centers, schools, pop-ups, farmers markets, local Latinx serving grocers, and swap meets. Establish connections between non-traditional entities and the corresponding lead Service Planning Area (SPA) providers and assess the feasibility of creating a recurring coalition meeting space comprised of traditional and non-traditional partners, as well as immigrant-serving organizations that provide legal representation, such as Represent LA (which funds multiple organizations), Staying Housed LA, CARECEN, CHIRLA, LA Voice, etc.
20.	Identify and engage philanthropic partners to fund innovative and nontraditional strategies aimed at enhancing service delivery and support, such as funding necessary identification and immigration documentation, funding to support promotoras, funding for childcare, funding for small business development, and funding for ESL classes.
21.	To ensure all people, particularly vulnerable populations, receive the appropriate services by suitable providers, create a pathway for people seeking services to have a choice of providers beyond traditional geographical boundaries, for individuals who do not live within a single SPA or who are uncomfortable with a particular provider within their SPA.

Recommendations For Improvements to Service Delivery (Cont.)

22.	To develop trusted, accurate information channels, working with the Office of Immigrant Affairs and trusted community-based partners, co-create a centralized knowledge and resource hub (bank) tailored to the Latinx community. In multiple languages, it should provide easy-to-read information about homelessness services, tenant rights, eviction prevention, fair housing rights, homelessness prevention resources, and anti-scam awareness.
23.	To ensure all Latinx clients can fully engage with and benefit from available services, reduce the use of jargon and acronyms, and communicate, in writing and orally, in a manner that makes service-related information more accessible, understandable, and reduces client stress and anxiety.
24.	To improve data collection processes to more accurately capture the Latinx population experiencing homelessness include queries related to language barriers and language needs. In addition, develop a plan, and assess feasibility of implementation, to track and measure individuals/families who are turned away from the homeless services system due to being doubled up and/or living in informal tenancy arrangements or otherwise experiencing homelessness or housing instability that does not meet the HUD definitions (for example, somebody paying on their own nightly for motel/hotel).
25.	Identify all incidents in which people from protected classes and immigrants are victimized in interim housing, as part of LAHSA's existing Incident Reporting system, report data regularly, and develop strategies to reduce such occurrences.
26.	To build and maintain bilingual and multilingual staff capacity, explore the feasibility of implementing a compensation structure that rewards case managers and staff for their bilingual/multilingual skills, recognizing the critical role of effective communication when serving diverse client populations. This could include salary incentives or bonuses for those who are fluent in multiple languages, thereby enhancing the overall quality of service delivery. A necessary component of building capacity includes an assessment of a staff person's language competencies to ensure the quality and effectiveness of bilingual communication and interpretation skills.
27.	Advocate for a periodic compensation study to ensure equitable compensation for homelessness service providers, recognizing their essential role in delivering high-quality services and supporting vulnerable populations.

Recommendations For Improvements to Service Delivery (Cont.)

28.	Explore the feasibility of establishing more professional development and educational opportunities for frontline staff, prioritizing those with lived experience of homelessness, to enhance and broaden skills, increase opportunities for advancement and promote job satisfaction and greater contribution to workforce and clients.
29.	A recent study on government front-line workers provides promising evidence that “burnout” can be positively impacted by low-cost measures promoting belonging and perceived social support. Consider measures to mitigate front-line staff burnout by adopting techniques that cultivate a sense of belonging and perceived social support while also addressing other factors, such as social support. Based on findings, develop and implement a plan to address the identified factors, including lower caseloads, attention to wellness programs, increased compensation, a change in workforce culture, etc.
30.	To ensure adequate housing support for foster youth, the Homeless Services and Housing (HSH) Department should lead a collaborative effort with other agencies and housing authorities across LA County to do the following: • Given the time-limited nature of current vouchers, explore methods to provide continuous support during and after the voucher period to foster independence. • Actively engage foster youth, particularly those harder to reach, by gathering their input and compensating them for their participation in policy development surrounding housing supports for youth. • Develop a plan to increase transitional housing support, preserve existing shelters, and invest in infrastructure to ensure long-term stability for this vulnerable population.
31.	Invest in mentorship projects as part of interim housing services for transitional-aged youth to connect with mentors that share specific identities or experiences (cultural identities, migration, former foster, incarcerated, LGBTQ, etc). Youth should receive monetary incentives to participate in receiving mentorship and there should be a component of life skills, career exploration and goal setting.
32.	Preserve and expand innovative youth bridge programs that help bridge the gap between faith-based organizations, parents or families, and LGBTQ+ Latinx transitional-aged youth experiencing homelessness (modeled after HOPIC’s Transitional Aged Youth Bridge Program).
33.	Create a pool of TAY funding from governmental and philanthropic sources specifically for community-based organizations (CBOs) and trusted community partners that provide financial security services, life skills support, and employment programs serving Latinx communities.

Recommendations For Vulnerable Populations: Seniors

34.	City and County housing agencies, LACAHSa, HACLA, and ULA, should focus on designating, rehabilitating, and preserving existing spaces, particularly for older adults, and do the following: • Develop an accurate resource inventory and prioritize alternatives to new construction, such as renovating unused spaces. • Ensure housing initiatives include diverse options, quality of life assessments, and cultural sensitivity while expanding tax credits and rental assistance programs to maximize immediate support. • Design a targeted rental assistance and/or universal basic income program for older adults, along with a set aside number of Time Limited Subsidy slots, to ensure that older adults experiencing homelessness have equitable access to housing and income social supports regardless of immigration status.
35.	Many older adults are capable of and interested in wage-earning employment. Job training, development, and resources should include specific opportunities and support for older adults interested in entering or returning to the labor force.
36.	Develop and implement culturally specific, multilingual programming and services for aging Latinx populations through strategic partnerships with cultural arts programs, advocacy organizations, and coalitions.

Recommendations For Vulnerable Populations: Indigenous Migrants

37.	Evaluate the ADA accessibility of interim housing facilities identifying and documenting areas requiring improvement, including ramps, elevators, showers, and other facilities.
38.	CIELO and academic researchers should employ new strategies and new measurements to ensure indigenous migrants from Mexico and Central America's data are collected, analyzed, and published to ensure these communities are properly represented, particularly to ensure the accuracy of the annual PIT count. In addition to collecting quantitative data, government data collection systems must also include qualitative data. Such data would include storytelling, responses derived from community listening sessions, community-based data collection efforts, and from trusted community-based organizations.
39.	Trusted community-based organizations and networks are the primary systems of support for Indigenous migrant communities who are often locked out of traditional governmental support systems; however, these groups are often under-resourced and overlooked by those seeking to serve immigrant communities. Enduring investments in and partnerships with Indigenous Migrant serving organizations and community networks are needed to adequately serve the variety of needs across these diverse indigenous communities.

Recommendations For Vulnerable Populations: TGI/LGBTQ

40.	Establish a county-level training program for all direct service providers, including CBOs and partners, focused on supporting TGI individuals, emphasizing BIPOC, Latinx, and all. Update and leverage existing gender-affirming training from ARDI within DMH and DHS, expanding it to ensure comprehensive coverage across all relevant services—partner with TGI-led and serving organizations like the TransLatin@ Coalition as subject matter experts.
41.	Launch an educational campaign to distribute literature clarifying terminology and educating the community about the TGI/LGBQ+ population.
42.	To improve access and understanding, develop a centralized resource hub with hyperlinks and a list of LA County programs categorized by population. Uplift community experts and consultants and invest in partnerships across the county.
43.	Expand appropriate accommodations in each SPA that ensure the safety and privacy of TGI participants. Some examples include expanding gender-neutral restrooms and showers, expanding private rooms or beds for vulnerable populations, creating permanent and temporary partitions within congregate shelters for increased privacy, hiring community specialists who are also members of the LGBQ+ or TGI community, and implementing bilingual safety and care plans to address incidents of discrimination and harassment.
44.	Develop and pilot low-barrier, culturally sensitive data collection methods that encourage community participation, particularly among vulnerable populations, standardize data collection across entities to improve comparability and transparency, and incorporate qualitative data, such as personal stories, to capture a fuller picture of community needs. Increase the frequency of publicly available data updates, particularly from agencies like LAHSA, to ensure information is current and accessible. Ensure that data collection teams represent the communities they serve, focusing on including more POC assessors to build trust. Establish a public-facing dashboard to provide real-time data and benchmarks for tracking progress.
45.	Conduct an assessment of the data collected by CES/LAHSA in consultation with CBOs that serve these communities to ensure equitable representation of vulnerable populations, including Indigenous and Black Latinos, country of origin, languages spoken, and sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (SOGIE).

Recommendations For Vulnerable Populations: TGI/LGBTQ

46.	For TGI/LGBTQ families, establishing an intentional proximity bridge between single adult shelters and family shelters/services is critical. Create a strategic physical and operational linkage between shelters for single adults and shelters or services supporting families with two parents, enhancing access to comprehensive support for families in need.
47.	For TGI/LGBTQ families, develop a coordinated service delivery model that supports seamless transitions and holistic care for families with two parents who do not want to be separated.
48.	For equitable resource allocation, analyze subsidy amounts through DCFS to examine whether differences exist based on the classifications of applicable statutes (e.g., foster system/official adoption versus interim caregiver).

Recommendations For Vulnerable Populations: Immigrants With No Legal Status

49.	Enhance Shelter Safety: Address the fear and hesitation in utilizing the shelter system by incorporating safety planning as a required component of program enrollment for all Interim Housing participants to ensure they know how to respond to potential unsafe situations while in shelter.
50.	Outreach and Education: • Launch linguistically, culturally, and immigration status-sensitive outreach campaigns to inform individuals about available resources and services, addressing concerns that may impact an individual's ability to access benefits (especially shelter), and include the use of infographics and videos to ensure literacy is not a barrier to accessing this information. • Partner with the faith-based community and organizations that serve immigrant communities, such as The TransLatin@ Coalition, CHIRLA, CARECEN, etc., to enhance support for County public agencies, including the Offices of Immigrant Affairs. • Develop a targeted strategy that focuses on high-need communities to ensure resources and contractor services are allocated based on population density. • In collaboration with community partners, explore the benefits and drawbacks of establishing a centralized department to track limited data on all immigrant individuals and their challenges, improving coordination and service delivery, and assessing the feasibility of doing so.

Recommendations For Vulnerable Populations: Immigrants With No Legal Status (Cont.)

51.	Remove Legal Status Barriers for Housing Programs: Sheltering programs should be accessible to immigrants, regardless of their immigration status. Measure H-funded programs are to be accessible to anyone living in LA County. However, immigrant advocates report that some immigrants without permanent status are turned down for services due to their status. Ensure that a comprehensive review of all LA County housing programs is conducted to identify and remove barriers preventing immigrants from accessing those services and that service providers are adequately trained.
52.	Provide Free Legal Representation to Low-Income Tenants: On July 16, 2024, the LA County Board of Supervisors (Board) voted to adopt an ordinance to provide free legal representation to low-income tenants facing eviction in the county's unincorporated areas. Ensure that all immigrants are equitably served through this ordinance, assess for any geographic gaps, and ensure its design and implementation are responsive to their needs.
53.	Strengthen Language Access: In FY 2023-24, the Board launched a robust Language Access Initiative to strengthen language access across all County departments, including adopting a Language Access Policy in April 2024. The Board delegated the implementation of the Language Access Initiative to the LA County Office of Immigrant Affairs. Ensure that lessons learned through this initiative are leveraged to strengthen language access for all residents seeking shelter in access and family solution centers.
54.	Identify Unique Needs: Non-citizen immigrants require specific support, such as connecting with family members and sponsors, assistance with travel to final destinations, literacy and English classes, guidance on public benefits eligibility, and orientation for community integration. Ensure shelter staff receive ongoing training on these unique needs and are linguistically and culturally competent. Assess contracted providers fidelity to their Scope of Required Services requirement that they must <i>"provide at least one Bilingual, Spanish speaking staff to meet the needs of participants receiving services. Service Providers must have an established plan and procedure to provide services to participants whose primary language isn't English. Please see Multilingual System and Programmatic Documents for more information, and provide TA for those who have not met this requirement.</i>

Recommendations For Vulnerable Populations: Immigrants With No Legal Status (Cont.)

55.	Immigration Legal Services and Documentation: Many recent immigrants require urgent legal assistance to address their immigration status, obtain work permits, and secure identification documents. Without proper documentation, accessing other services becomes exceedingly difficult. After sufficient implementation of the LA County Office of Immigrant Affairs' new programs (Mobile Legal Clinic; Case Management Pilot Program), assess the remaining need for legal assistance to help residents navigate immigration issues, apply for asylum, or seek other legal status that could improve their access to services and employment, and explore what funding will be needed to fill the gap.
56.	Healthcare Access: Immigrants often face challenges in accessing health care due to a lack of insurance, unfamiliarity with the healthcare system, or fear of seeking services due to their immigration status. Review existing data to ensure immigrants are enrolling in healthcare services, including full-scope Medi-Cal, and ensure that frontline staff have the tools they need to inform immigrants about how to find, and what to expect from, doctors, dentists, and other health care professionals.
57.	Supportive Services: Explore the feasibility of implementing a program that uses problem-solving funds that offer up to \$1,000 for temporary housing support or other direct cash programs that provide families with funds for essential services, like childcare, under the County's Poverty Alleviation Initiative. Additionally, ensure any forthcoming best practice guide for non-citizen individuals is provided to all contracted providers, publicized online, and referenced in all programs' scope of required services.
58.	Mobile Services: In collaboration with LAHSA, deploy and maintain support and funding for mobile teams to provide support services designed to address the needs of immigrants in shelters with high concentrations of non-citizen immigrants.

Recommendations For Vulnerable Populations: Immigrants With No Legal Status (Cont.)

59.	Job Training and Employment Programs: Many immigrants, particularly asylum seekers, become eligible for work authorization six months after arrival. To support their path to self-sufficiency, it is crucial to ensure they have access to job training programs, credential validation, and employment services that recognize and enhance their existing skills and qualifications. A targeted strategy should be developed to focus on high-needs communities where resources and contractor services could be allocated to self-employment and small business creation, such as co-ops, by allocating funding for business development, education, entrepreneurship, connections to day laborer programs, and other essential needs.
60.	Educational Opportunities: Many immigrants have credentials from their countries of origin. Guidance should be provided (through training or other means) to case managers to help them identify an immigrant's level of education and ensure they know about and have access to job training programs, vocational training, and certification courses that recognize and build upon their existing skills and qualifications, including recognition of foreign credentials. Ensure case managers are also aware of how to leverage Educational Liaisons to ensure parents receive orientation on how to enroll and support their children in school.
61.	Workers' Protections and Justice Fund: Wage theft, as a form of lost income, is a significant driver of housing insecurity. Guidance should be provided (through training or other means) to case managers to help them ensure that immigrant workers are informed about their work rights, know where to report workplace abuse, and get help in recovering stolen wages. Additionally, non-citizens with certain statuses aren't eligible for Workers' Compensation and other employment safety net services. Relevant organizations should continue or begin advocating at the state or local level for a restitution fund to be established to help low-income, non-legalized immigrant workers awaiting restitution of stolen wages.
62.	Rent Housing Subsidy Pilot: dedicated to immigrants who cannot access federally funded rental subsidies. An estimated 246,000 households in LA County are behind on rent and risking potential eviction. Undocumented immigrant families are especially vulnerable because they are not eligible for state and federal housing subsidy programs. Explore the feasibility and develop a plan to create a subsidy program to provide small rental subsidies to immigrants regardless of status, as a small boost in income would be the difference between maintaining a home and becoming homeless. Consider, also, pilots specific to high need groups as well, such as people with a history of incarceration, immigration detention, physical and mental health disabilities, and people who would otherwise be eligible for PSH if they had legal status.

Recommendations For Vulnerable Populations: Undocumented Immigrants

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 63. | Create a Flexible Housing Subsidy Pool (FHSP) Pilot Subprogram available for vulnerable populations (TAY, Seniors, TGI, Indigenous, etc.) who also navigate being un/under-documented. Funding should maximize the use of local and state funding, not be restricted by federal policy. In this way, local funds can fill the gap potentially caused by federal restrictions. |
| 64. | Financial Education and Empowerment: Many immigrants are unfamiliar with traditional banking and financial institutions, and are therefore at risk of predatory payday lenders, check cashers, and loan sharks who charge exorbitant fees for basic financial services. Relevant organizations should continue or begin to advocate at the state or local level for increased access to traditional financial institutions (i.e., banks, credit unions, etc.) for immigrants, regardless of immigration status, as well as status. Guidance should be provided (through training or other means) to case managers to help them provide more outreach and education focused on budgeting, banking, savings, and retirement planning to promote financial inclusion, reduce poverty, and enhance social equity. |

ACCOUNTABILITY & NEXT STEPS

Pathways Home participant in Huntington Park, Photo by
Michael Owen Baker Los Angeles County Flickr, Dec. 14, 2023

Task Force on Latinx People Experiencing
Homelessness Report

2025

Accountability & Next Steps

To make good on the commitment to end homelessness, including for the many Latinx individuals and families residing in LA, all stakeholders must come together to earnestly and effectively implement these and other recommendations.

As the Task Force concludes the process leading to this Report and Recommendations, it does so fully aware that sharing of this report is just the beginning. Ending homelessness requires strong commitment from government leaders, particularly in Los Angeles City and County. Latinx residents are not alone in the crisis of homelessness. Government agencies cannot operate in isolation, and racialized identity groups should not be forced to compete for scarce resources or struggle for recognition. Progress depends on solidarity; working together to balance immediate assistance with long-term systemic change.

In presenting this report, the Task Force extends a commitment to collaborate with other task forces, community service providers, and Los Angeles City and County governments—all essential stakeholders—in implementing, measuring, and evaluating the recommendations outlined here. Promises alone are not sufficient; for people experiencing homelessness, persistent and steadfast action is required.

To advance the universal goal *No Person Lives Unsheltered*, the Task Force proposes the following steps:

- **Maintaining and expanding our commitment to change:** The Task Force emphasized that meaningful change begins with the individual. As part of its effort to understand the drivers of homelessness and identify impactful solutions, the Task Force first examined complicity with unfair systems, biases that unintentionally harm others, and assumptions inconsistent with stated values. It committed to self-reflection and personal change while also working to reform system-wide policies and programs aimed at reducing—and ultimately eliminating—homelessness.
- **Accept recommendations:** Changing the world is possible, but it begins with changing oneself—mentality, habits, and actions. Although personal change is not easy, it is necessary to make a lasting impact. City and County officials, along with other stakeholders, can explore the feasibility of implementing these recommendations within a timeframe that responds to the urgency of the current homelessness crisis.
- **Implementation:** The Task Force urges LAHSA, City, and County government officials to swiftly implement these recommendations, along with those developed by other committees and task forces addressing similar issues.

-
- **Cooperation:** Accountability requires government officials to provide reasonable and objective evidence of their current and planned efforts, a public action plan, and clear intended outcomes. The Task Force recognized that full implementation of these recommendations would require both inter- and intra-governmental cooperation and expressed appreciation for the collaboration already underway. At the same time, it acknowledged that undoing decades of siloed systems would demand sustained and concerted effort.
 - **Collection of Data and Public Reporting:** Collecting quantitative and qualitative information is essential to evaluate and ensure the implemented strategies perform as intended. The Task Force seeks public reporting of:
 - City/County efforts to implement these and other recommendations generated from multiple
 - An easy-to-find and informative resource that provides information on which strategies are most effective and which recommendations, despite best intentions, fail to reach full potential.
 - **Ongoing Participation and Consultation:** The Task Force proposes to serve as an ongoing body and participate in future efforts to implement the recommendations contained herein.

