Mapping *the* Future-

A Shared Roadmap for an Equitable and Responsive Homeless Services and Housing

PREPARED FOR THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HOMELESS SERVICES AND HOUSING

Change Well Project

2026

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Acknowledgements

Change Well Project would like to extend our deepest gratitude to all community members who helped shape this vision for the Department of Homeless Services and Housing. This report is a testament to a six-month, countywide co-design effort that was intentionally inclusive and grounded in the real-world knowledge of those who interact with the rehousing system every day. We recognize that the wisdom required to build a responsive and effective department does not reside within a central bureaucracy; it already exists in the expertise of our community members, service providers, and individuals with lived experience.

We want to thank the 428 representatives who worked shoulder-to-shoulder across all eight Service Planning Areas during our intensive two-day design workshops. Your willingness to envision success, surface difficult challenges, and prototype practical solutions has provided the roadmap for a system that is regionally grounded, operationally efficient, and transparently accountable. We are profoundly grateful to the lived-experience experts, tribal representatives, frontline service providers, faith leaders, city and county staff, and legal advocates who brought their diverse perspectives to this process.

We wish to express our sincere appreciation to the leadership and employees of the Department of Homeless Services and Housing (HSH). We thank you for your active participation throughout this journey and for listening with open minds to the bold visions, unfiltered feedback, and hard truths shared by the community. Your willingness to step into this space as partners—dedicated to learning and growth—demonstrates a profound commitment to building a department rooted in equity, trust, and shared stewardship.

To the attendees and participants, your voices have been the primary driver of this transformation. We thank you for your labor, your vulnerability, and your persistent advocacy, especially as you navigate significant system transitions, capacity constraints, and engagement fatigue. Whether you joined us for one of our regional and countywide events, participated in our monthly town halls, or shared your story in a virtual listening session, you have helped ensure this department is built on a foundation of trust rather than administrative mandates alone.

We specifically acknowledge the lived-experience experts who participated as formal advisors and co-designers. We thank you for your leadership and for holding the system accountable to the core belief that equity is not a standalone initiative, but the very foundation upon which all social services must operate and evolve. Your contributions have ensured that the participant journey—marked by dignity, agency, and healing—remains the central measure of success for this new department.

This report belongs to you. Thank you for partnering with us to co-design a new vision for service delivery that centers justice and direct, meaningful investment in individuals and families.

Executive Summary

Drawing on over 25 years of experience supporting the transformation of social service systems into equitable, interconnected ecosystems of healing, Change Well Project (CWP) presents this executive summary of the community engagement process for the new Los Angeles County Department of Homeless Services and Housing (HSH). Guided by perspectives from multiple sector leaders, CWP facilitated a countywide co-design effort that engaged over 5,000 people—including lived experts, service providers, system and community leaders, and tribal representatives—across all eight Service Planning Areas (SPAs) to ensure HSH reflects the community's needs. This process identified persistent challenges, including fragmented leadership, administrative burdens, and unaddressed systemic inequities that hinder effective service delivery. As HSH prepares to navigate a projected $303 million deficit in fiscal year 26/27, this report offers a holistic, phased strategy to balance immediate stabilization with long-term systemic justice.

The singular, unifying theme tying all recommendations together is the fundamental shift from a fragmented, top-down bureaucracy to an interconnected ecosystem that is regionally grounded, operationally efficient, and transparently accountable.

This transformation is driven by several key pillars that the community identified as the necessary foundation for a just and responsive system:

Regional Grounding and Local Leadership	There is overwhelming support for anchoring the system in a regional, SPA-based model to ensure geographic responsiveness and alignment with existing local service ecosystems. This approach ensures that help is accessible locally, and that HSH respects the unique needs and priorities of individual communities rather than imposing a "one-size-fits-all" model.
Operational Excellence and Provider Stability	The community emphasized that HSH must fundamentally shift the administrative and operational environment of the housing and homelessness sector in Los Angeles County. What this means practically is stabilizing the provider network through streamlined contracting, timely advance payments for contractors, and multi-year agreements. This ensures agencies of all sizes can focus on delivering critical services and ensure that smaller, culturally rooted organizations can focus on direct service rather than survival. It also supports providers and their staff through training and technical assistance so they can effectively support our neighbors experiencing homelessness.

Executive Summary

Transparent and Equitable Accountability	Accountability is not viewed merely as a set of metrics, but as a commitment to transparency and shared power. This requires a dedication to disaggregating data to identify racial disparities, working with community members and Anti-Racism, Diversity and Inclusion (ARDI) to implement weighted equity rubrics for all budget decisions, integrating lived experience within the department itself, and strengthening the partnership with regional community-led bodies.
Human-Centered Design and Participant Agency	Every element of the new system, from "No Wrong Door" access points for families to digital participant portals, is designed to restore dignity and agency to those seeking assistance. By shifting away from traditional data extraction toward qualitative storytelling and the full participant journey, the department can ensure that the system remains responsive to the actual needs of individuals and families.

Ultimately, this unifying vision is captured by the community's core belief: **"Equity is not an initiative; it is the foundation for how systems must operate and evolve."** By embedding these principles into the very architecture of the new department, HSH can transition to a model of shared stewardship that honors the community's resilience and ensures a lasting transformation of the rehousing system.

The proposed roadmap is organized into three strategic phases that move from top-down management toward a model of shared stewardship. **Phase 1: Foundation for Stability and Structural Equity** prioritizes administrative reforms to reduce the capital gap for providers, including contract advances, the establishment of internal equity infrastructure, such as the Cultural Care Unit (CCU) or the Culture, Education, and Inclusion (CEI) Division, and and creating provider resources like "The Hope Hub," a centralized, free training portal that standardizes high-quality care across the region. **Phase 2: Regional Empowerment and Shared Wisdom** decentralizes authority by deploying SPA-focused agile teams and working with subregional coordinating bodies to establish the "model" for this community oversight role in each community. **Phase 3: Participant Agency and Healing** implements "No Wrong Door" access models and digital portals like LA LINC, enabling participants to own their housing journey, and evaluates system success through qualitative storytelling and the full participant journey. Ultimately, these recommendations provide a concrete foundation for a department that continuously learns and evolves, centering equity and trust as the basis for all operations.
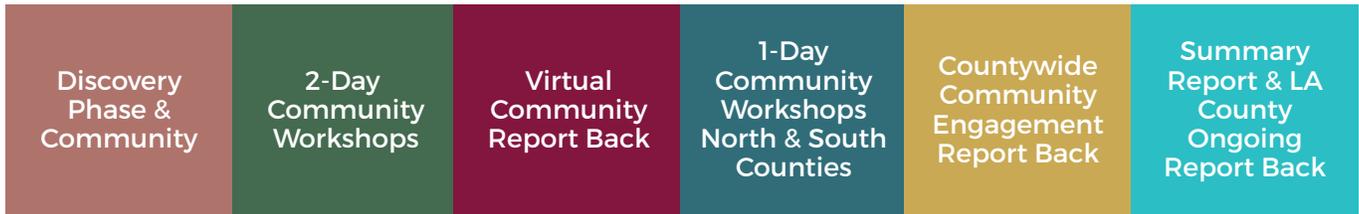
Background

In 2025, Change Well Project (CWP) was contracted to partner with the new Los Angeles County Department of Homeless Services and Housing (HSH) to help operationalize its commitments to community members, service providers, and public accountability.

CWP designed a sixth-month community engagement process informed by community input that was intentionally inclusive and accessible, grounded in the real-world knowledge of those who interact with the homelessness system every day—whether they are seeking services or providing them. CWP facilitated spaces where community members and service providers were able to collectively problem-solve and co-design solutions for HSH to consider for implementation, ensuring that input was shared honestly, insights surfaced meaningfully, and consensus was built across all levels of engagement.

This countywide effort brought together people from unincorporated areas and cities, representatives from various social service sectors, and people with lived experience to help design a department that reflects the actual needs of people seeking housing and services, as well as those working to support unhoused community members. We recognize that the knowledge needed to build a responsive and effective department already exists within our communities. This process was about surfacing that knowledge, identifying remaining barriers, shaping clear and practical solutions, and building shared understanding and agreement around what emerged.

The engagement plan was structured in phases—starting with discovery and alignment, then moving into community-led design, and ending with opportunities to refine and strengthen the recommendations before they were finalized. A public dashboard outlining the engagement process can be found here.

Background

Discovery Phase & Community	2-Day Community Workshops	Virtual Community Report Back	1-Day Community Workshops North & South Counties	Countywide Community Engagement Report Back	Summary Report & LA County Ongoing Report Back

Phase 1 - Discovery & Community Engagement

This phase lasted for three months and was centered on deep learning and discovery—taking stock of work already underway, so we did not retrace steps or repeat questions that had been addressed through prior community engagements. It also focused on identifying who needed to be at the table and initiating early conversations to thoughtfully shape the overall process. During this period, we aligned with ongoing efforts, including the work of several affinity groups; strengthened existing relationships; and ensured that insights generated through past conversations and engagement processes were not only acknowledged, but actively woven into the foundation of what followed. To help visualize CWP's accomplishments, a Community Engagement Dashboard was developed.

Outreach Statistics

During the discovery phase, 3,433 people were engaged through various means across Los Angeles County, including sixty-nine (69) regional-specific and twenty-one (21) countywide events. These included one-on-one meetings, small and medium-sized group presentations, and large-capacity town hall events. The events engaged a broad range of communities within Los Angeles County and covered all eight (8) Service Planning Areas (SPAs).

To reach a broad audience in a condensed time frame, the focus was on leveraging the networks within existing coalitions, cross-sector tables, and population-focused or affinity groups, such as Homeless Coalitions, DV/IPV/GBV coalitions, LA Emissary, and the Lived Experience Advisory Board (LEAB).   Additionally, government partners, including Councils of Governments (COGs), City of Los Angeles Council Districts, Supervisorial Districts, city governments, school districts, and Tribal communities, were also included.
This strategy successfully reached organizations deeply involved in the rehousing system, including those partnering in coalitions and affinity groups.

Challenges

- **Timing**: To meet the Board of Supervisors' implementation timeline, CWP was contracted in the summer. This season made engagement difficult, requiring engagement outside established agendas due to summer vacations and recesses. We collaborated with individuals and groups to host special meetings outside their regularly scheduled meetings and held several one-on-one meetings.

Background

- **Service provider capacity:** Service providers shared concerns about the timing of their involvement in shaping HSH. The engagement efforts began at a time when many providers were notified of an initial round of funding cuts and were in the midst of planning staff layoffs and rapidly responding to the urgent responsibility of preventing program participants from falling into homelessness and navigating the impending threat of ICE raids throughout the communities where services were provided. We acknowledged the challenges of the funding landscape and greater political climate, while emphasizing the value of their voice and expertise in responding to the moment.

- **Burnout and duplication:** Multiple community engagements on similar topics were happening simultaneously, managed by different consultants. While they valued community engagement, many also expressed feeling overwhelmed and not sure how to be present for all of the engagement requests. In response, we collaborated, cross-promoted, and explained how different community engagement initiatives connect.

- **Community confusion:** The development of HSH coincided with the community's adjustment to the various leadership tables established by Measure A. As a result, community members were unsure how the different efforts were related and what the role of LAHSA would be amid all the leadership changes. In response, we collaborated, cross-promoted, and clearly explained how these initiatives connect.

Community Feedback on the Engagement Plan

Our intention was for this outreach effort to be community-driven. It was important to leverage local expertise to design future engagement efforts, particularly the two-day in-person convening. CWP wanted to mitigate barriers to participation in the engagement effort, identify local priorities (by region and subpopulations), and ensure collaborating partners had a sense of ownership of the process. To accomplish this, during each meeting and one-on-one interview, verbal feedback was solicited on the engagement plan outline; logistics, including suggestions for in-person meeting venues; establishing a nomination process for who to invite to ensure cross-sector representation; and top-of-mind topics that could be woven into the engagement dialogue so the process would not be tone-deaf to the challenges participants may be facing.

Phase 1 participants raised concerns that the HSH implementation timeline may not align with community engagement, risking perceptions of tokenism. They also cited barriers to participation, including inadequate compensation for lived experience experts, scheduling conflicts for Transitional Age Youth, and safety concerns for immigrant communities. Additionally, participants noted that they had participated in and provided substantial feedback and recommendations in past County engagements yet still lacked clarity on how community input informed decision-making, which contributed to mistrust.

Background

How the Plan was Adapted to be Responsive to Feedback

In response to the primary concern raised about the pace of the community engagement timeline, Change Well Project partnered with HSH to launch monthly town halls beginning in July. These town halls were intentionally designed to gather community input to inform the Department's organizational structure and culture, operating on an accelerated timeline to meet early decision-making needs.

Other Adaptations to the Engagement Plan

- CWP ensured that stipends for lived experts were sufficient, and we later transitioned engagements from in-person to virtual formats to make them more accessible.

- CWP collaborated with trusted messengers who work with immigrant communities to schedule virtual events as an alternative to in-person sessions. We rapidly responded to the clear feedback to create a parallel, safe space where immigrant community members can participate in a virtual space, given the concerns regarding in-person events.

- CWP collaborated with HSH to develop public-facing dashboards and publicly available reports, thereby closing the loop and demonstrating how community feedback informs decision-making.

- We recognized the need to ensure representation by individuals who understood the specific community needs in unincorporated areas of the County. We ensured representation by service providers serving unincorporated areas and collaborated with the County's CEO-HI liaisons to unincorporated areas to invite additional local representatives from these communities to the two-day workshops.

- CWP reviewed previous reports and recommendations and created a summary of high-level themes raised by working groups such as Black People Experiencing Homelessness, LATINX, and American Indian/Alaska Native. This summary directly informed Phase II of this engagement plan and generated questions for each region to develop solutions. *See the summary report here.*

Community Priorities and Common Discussion Themes

In addition to verbal feedback during engagement efforts, we also provided a survey for participants and the broader community to complete. Many of the themes discussed with community groups and coalitions during this phase were also transformed into design questions for the next stage of engagement. The verbal and survey feedback highlighted the following community priorities:

Background

HSH Formation & Structure:

- Prevent repeating the known issues of previous systems in HSH.
- Ensure that there are clear goals, defined operations, and transparent success metrics for HSH.
- Focus on building a geographical presence and adopting a systems approach that goes beyond individual adults and is tailored for subpopulations such as TAY and families. This includes staffing that reflects the populations it serves.
  - Ensuring that diverse voices are included in the planning and decision-making processes.

Oversight and Accountability:

There was an emphasis on transparency and accountability in contracting, resource allocation, and regular reporting on outcomes, including the number of people housed and the results of different programs and different regions.

Coordination and Collaboration:

- A major concern centered on communication clarity, specifically regarding how HSH will operate and the roles of various system partners.
- There is a desire to prevent duplication of effort and to encourage collaboration among the County, unincorporated areas, cities, and various service providers. By working together more effectively, the system can avoid redundant work and save resources. This might include sharing client data (with proper privacy safeguards), coordinating outreach efforts, and aligning funding sources. Currently, people feel information isn't flowing smoothly, which results in duplicated efforts or, worse, people being overlooked. The importance of regular updates, transparent reporting, and easy access to information was emphasized.
- Cross-system, cross-agency, cross-jurisdictional collaboration was emphasized repeatedly.
- System partners emphasized the need to establish or rebuild authentic partnerships, transforming the current culture toward collaboration by engaging and aligning efforts with other municipalities, unincorporated areas, governing bodies, councils of governments, and tribal governments.
- There is an ongoing tension between the desire for a more coordinated regional approach to address homelessness and the need to preserve local control and responsiveness. This arises in the context of how HSH will interact with cities and sub-regions, as well as how funding will be distributed.

Background

Recognizing Unique Vulnerabilities and the Need for Culturally Responsive Services:

- Community members explicitly mentioned the importance of population-tailored approaches. Recognizing these differences means developing outreach strategies, housing options, and support services that are culturally sensitive, trauma-informed, and tailored to the specific needs of each group. This involves understanding cultural norms, values, and beliefs, as well as the unique barriers individuals face when accessing care, and incorporating these into service delivery. For example, HSH should recognize and understand Tribal sovereignty, culture, and the associated principles. It's a step toward a more equitable, responsive, and culturally respectful care for Tribal members. Populations discussed included, but were not limited to:

  - **Tribal members**
  - **Foster Youth**
  - **Immigrant Communities**
  - **People living with substance use disorders and mental health disorders**
  - **Veterans**
  - **Individuals Living in RVs**
  - **Single Women**

Equity and Inclusion

Focusing on equity and inclusion requires removing systemic barriers, amplifying the voices of marginalized individuals, and building a system that is fair, just, and responsive to the needs of all people experiencing homelessness.

- Addressing systemic disparities requires looking at policies, practices, and funding models to ensure equitable access and outcomes.
- Equity in funding and resource allocation includes addressing challenges in the Local Solutions Fund process, such as informing the community more widely (i.e., not just ECHRA and the Homeless Policy Deputies) through a fair and equitable input process, and ensuring access to funding for smaller organizations providing services.

Background

Survey Results Dashboard

In addition to group discussions, CWP also surveyed meeting participants to gather demographic information and asked respondents to rank their top priorities.

TOP PRIORITIES

Rated as a top priority in five (5) of eight (8) Service Planning Areas.

Strategies the new county department should use to reduce racial disparities among people experiencing homelessness were rated among the top two priorities in five of the eight Service Planning Areas.

Rated as a top priority in four (4) of eight (8) Service Planning Areas.

The structure of the new county department was rated as among the top two priorities in four out of eight Service Planning Areas.

Rated as a top priority in three (3) of eight (8) Service Planning Areas.

Contracting & payment processes for the new county department were rated as among the top two priorities in three of eight Service Planning Areas.

Phase I Summary

Phase I showcased broad and deep community interest in shaping the Department of Homeless Services & Housing. Through 69 region-specific and 21 Countywide engagements, reaching over 3,000 people, and 161 survey responses, there was a consistent call for clarity of purpose, transparent accountability, equitable resource distribution, and genuine partnership across jurisdictions and communities. Participants urged HSH to avoid recreating past system challenges, establish a visible geographic presence across all SPAs, and promote culturally responsive, trauma-informed approaches—especially for Tribal members, Transition-Age Youth, immigrants, single women, veterans, people with substance-use disorders and mental illness, and residents living in recreational vehicles (RV).

Background

Providers and community members are navigating real capacity constraints and engagement fatigue. In response, CWP adapted—shifting some sessions to virtual formats, increasing stipends for lived-experience partners, and launching monthly town halls with HSH leadership to gather input on items moving on accelerated timelines. CWP committed to closing the loop with public-facing dashboards and plain-language updates that show how input drives decisions.

Phase II translated the themes from Phase I into actionable design decisions - a functional organizational structure with clear roles and responsibilities; a procurement and payment approach that is fair, timely, and accessible to smaller providers; and a data-sharing framework that protects privacy while enabling coordinated outreach, accurate equity metrics, and real-time course correction. Achieving this will require co-design with cities, COGs, Tribal governments, service providers, labor, people with lived experience, and county partners—anchored in shared outcomes and mutual accountability.
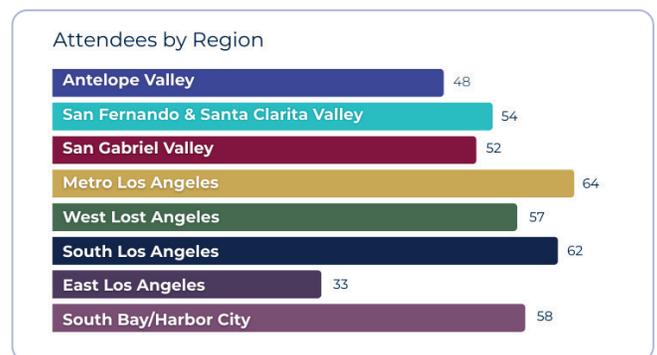
Phase II: Two-Day Community Workshops

Intensive community design workshops represented the real heart and center of the community engagement plan. These two-day workshops took place in each Service Planning Area (SPA) during September and October 2025. In these workshops, we gathered community members to work together shoulder-to-shoulder to co-design recommendations and build solutions for the Department. Participants included homeless service providers, people with lived expertise, tribal representatives, city and county staff, members of the faith community, and many others.

Nominating Participants

Change Well Project partnered with homeless coalitions, COGs, board offices, LA City Council districts, lived experience boards, faith communities, and special population groups to nominate representatives to attend the 2-day design sessions.

Participant slots were allocated across different groups of community representatives to ensure a diversity of voices. We aimed for representation from various perspectives, including age, gender, race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, and persons with disabilities. We also encouraged organizations to nominate a variety of staff, with an emphasis on inviting frontline staff members.

Attendees by Region

Region	Attendees
Antelope Valley	48
San Fernando & Santa Clarita Valley	54
San Gabriel Valley	52
Metro Los Angeles	64
West Lost Angeles	57
South Los Angeles	62
East Los Angeles	33
South Bay/Harbor City	58

We had a total of 428 attendees across all eight SPAs representing their respective communities.

Background

Design Workshops

During the two-day workshops, attendees worked to design solutions across five design areas vital to HSH in supporting those seeking and providing homeless services. These five areas represent topics specifically identified by the Board of Supervisors, as well as issues highlighted during discovery by diverse community members, including the homeless coalitions, lived experience experts, providers, survivors of gender-based violence, youth, and more. Each group produced a solution-focused prototype by moving through a series of steps: they envisioned success, they surfaced known challenges and opportunities, they started building solutions individually and then combined ideas and refined solutions with their peers.

The Five Design Areas

Strategies to Reduce Disparties

Foundation for Success

Feedback and Ongoing Co-design

Collaboration and Partnerships

Systems and Systems Performance

AREA 1 – STRATEGIES TO REDUCE RACIAL DISPARITIES
This was highlighted in the Board motion as an area to gather feedback and was also emphasized by the community. This area explored how HSH could support equity and inclusion by removing systemic barriers, amplifying the voices of marginalized individuals, and building a system that is fair, just, and responsive to the needs of all people experiencing homelessness.

AREA 2 - FOUNDATION FOR SUCCESS
This was another area requested in the Board motion and focused on the critical support that HSH can provide to service providers, including through building an effective contracting and invoicing process that works with and for all providers, large and small, in facilitating their work.

AREA 3 – FEEDBACK AND ONGOING CO-DESIGN
This area was also highlighted in the Board motion to ensure that community engagement isn't just a one-time event but becomes part of the department's culture. The questions in this area explored what an ongoing community engagement process could look like.

Background

AREA 4 – COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

This area emerged as a key theme discussed during Phase I. System partners highlighted the importance of establishing or rebuilding genuine partnerships, shifting the current culture toward collaboration by engaging and aligning efforts with other municipalities, unincorporated areas, governing bodies, councils of governments, and tribal governments. This area explored what a genuine partnership would look like from a community perspective.

AREA 5 - SYSTEMS AND SYSTEMS PERFORMANCE

Community members explicitly emphasized the importance of population-specific approaches. Recognizing these differences involves developing outreach strategies, housing options, and support services that are culturally sensitive, trauma-informed, and tailored to each population's specific needs. This requires understanding cultural norms, values, and beliefs, identifying unique barriers that specific groups face when accessing care, and then integrating these insights into service delivery.

Choosing Design Questions & Selecting the Design Groups

The attendees reviewed the list of design questions and received five sticky dots to select one question per design area that they believed was most important for their region. This was an early exercise in building consensus within the region.

The Design Roadmap

Once participants selected a design question, they began moving through the design journey—envisioning success, identifying opportunities and challenges, and developing and refining solutions grounded in community wisdom.

Background

Envisioning Success: LA Times headlines

After representatives self-selected into design groups, we began by developing aspirational LA Times headlines that would indicate success in addressing their specific design question. The goal of this activity was to inspire ambitious, outcomes-focused thinking and to unify the group around a shared vision, emphasizing values, priorities, and hopes for the project. Participants worked alone or in pairs to create a future front-page feature (including headlines, quotes, and pictures) that would highlight the success of their work related to a specific design question.

> *"How LA got it right: A look inside the data strategy that guided funding and led to massive decreases in PEH."*
>
> *"LA County successfully makes progress with the new department to make homelessness rare, brief, and one-time. "I see the differences from 5 years ago. The services meet people where they are and have person-centered interventions."*
>
> *"Homeward Bound: LA leads the nation in preventing, reducing, and ending homelessness."*

Framing the Challenge

Although the two-day workshops aimed to create a generative space, participants also needed time to reflect on design questions, recognize what is working in the current system, and pinpoint where improvements are needed. This reflection helped designers articulate challenges in a way that positioned them to create practical solutions. By naming bright spots, ongoing issues, and potential risks, the group identified footholds that will guide future design sessions.

Idea Generation & Prototyping

Participants then moved into solution development by first generating ideas individually. They began turning bold, practical ideas into tangible solutions, refining them through feedback from their peers to capture a variety of perspectives. By the end of the two days, they would emerge from their groups with a draft prototype that they would present in the form of a letter to the Los Angeles County Department of Housing and Homeless Services (HSH).

Background

Descriptions of all designs created during the 2-day workshop are available <u>here</u>. Additionally, we will summarize the designs by topic area later in this report and include a summary of designs by SPA in the appendices.

Background

Phase III: Regional Report Backs

We held eight virtual regional report-back sessions during the first week of November, where members from each workgroup were invited to share the design concepts and prototypes developed during the two-day convening. The goal of these virtual sessions was to give those who couldn't attend an opportunity to review each design, ask clarifying questions, and provide feedback to help strengthen and refine these ideas as we moved toward alignment and next steps. Overall, the designs were well received in each community, and virtual attendees offered helpful suggestions for improving or clarifying the designs.

Phase IV – One-Day Community "Synthesis" Session

Participants from all SPAs were invited to meet on November 19, 2025, to review all prototypes within a specific design area. The purpose of this call was to identify common components and intent across designs within each design area and across design areas. We looked for alignment, connections, and how designs across SPAs could complement each other. This process helped us prepare for the final Countywide report back, which took place on December 15th, 2025, from 1-3 p.m.

Phase V - Final Countywide Report back

The town hall on December 15, 2025, facilitated by Change Well Project as a **Countywide Report Back,** concluded a six-phase community engagement process. More than two hundred attendees received a thorough overview of the engagement efforts, from initial design workshops to a shared vision for the Department of Homeless Services and Housing (HSH). The event included detailed presentations on key designs developed during two-day workshops. An interactive poll was used to ensure these designs reflected community priorities and were informed by local insights and systemic accountability. Ultimately, over 97% of participants expressed strong support for the following designs.

Area 1: **Reducing Racial Disparities**

Background

L.A.'s homeless response system serves individuals with intersectional identities who need services delivered through culturally responsive strategies to address their rehousing needs. We began the conversation with race and ethnicity, as outlined in the Measure A metrics, to honor the community advocacy work of the past decade and to help focus on examining various parts of our system to see how they can be adapted to serve nearly everyone. In each community, the conversation included other vulnerable populations and did not ignore the unique needs of other social identities when considering strategies to support progress toward system-level goals of reducing inflows and decreasing the duration of homelessness.

We also note that we are facilitating this conversation under new federal race-neutral policies and lean into our commitment to developing the best strategies to address homelessness in our region.

Before beginning the design work, each group that chose this design reviewed the key data insights and the equity framework used by the Leadership Table for Regional Homelessness Alignment (LTRHA) equity subcommittee to develop the region's equity goals.

Area 1: **Reducing Racial Disparities**

Design Questions

Workshop participants prioritized the following design questions to guide this work:

SPA	QUESTION
SPAs 1 & 2	How can we best ensure that a wide range of community voices and perspectives are included in the design and implementation of strategies to address racial equity? What would representation look like within the new department?
SPAs 3,4,6,7,8	How does HSH make sure it is building services that integrate and support the unique needs of specific populations? What is the process they should use to identify and adopt the programmatic changes that need to be made across the system? What are the best practices and/or standards of care that should be implemented, and how should they approach implementing those across the system?
SPA 5	What approach, framework, or processes can HSH use to ensure that its policies, practices, and programs are culturally responsive to the unique needs of diverse populations experiencing homelessness?

Challenges Participants Sought to Address

1. **Equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts are insufficiently addressed,** resulting in a workforce that does not accurately reflect the populations served. Not all voices, especially those from underrepresented or marginalized communities, are heard due to the lack of mechanisms for community engagement. Policies, practices, and programs often fail to be culturally responsive, and there is inconsistency in providers' foundational knowledge of trauma-informed care and harm reduction. Decision-making processes scarcely include older adults, TAY, survivors of domestic violence and intimate partner violence, and marginalized or tribal communities. Additionally, small agencies frequently face funding barriers and are dismissed as non-credentialed, which leads to resource gaps despite their work with the most vulnerable populations.

2. **Community trust** has been persistently undermined by inconsistent messaging, lack of follow-through, and perceptions of power imbalances between County systems and community partners. Building trust requires time, transparency, fair compensation for participants, and confidential data sharing, particularly with vulnerable populations.

Area 1: **Reducing Racial Disparities**

3   **Data and information management deficiencies,** the PIT count data is viewed by the community as "inaccurate" because the demographic elements collected are not fully reflective of the community's diversity, and the methodology by which the data is obtained is viewed as flawed. Additionally, there is a notable absence of regional data, racial equity data by SPA, participant surveys, qualitative data, and targeted data collection efforts focused on vulnerable populations. This complicates efforts to allocate resources equitably, align SPA-specific data with countywide goals, and impedes effective strategic planning and accountability. The siloing of data also hinders shared learning and real-time data sharing across various subregions.

4   **Accountability and governance issues -** Los Angeles' homeless and housing sector operates through multiple, siloed governance structures that often lack alignment and clear communication. Community members and people with lived experience frequently report that these bodies feel inaccessible and opaque, leading to skepticism about how decisions are made and how individuals are selected to serve on boards, commissions, and coordination tables. There are also few mechanisms to ensure equity, promote cultural responsiveness, or gather feedback in a meaningful way from the community. This lack of transparency breeds distrust and creates uneven accountability within the system.

5   **Fragmented service delivery and coordination** hinder effective support, as there is a strong desire to shift from a generic system toward tailored services and thoughtful planning for special populations. Referrals, services, and resources frequently do not align with actual community needs, and even when housing options are available, poor coordination of services and case management create significant barriers. Disparities in service access are particularly notable in areas like SPA 7, especially for mixed-status and undocumented households, emphasizing the need for flexible, field-based models. Fear of authorities, such as ICE raids and deportation, along with stigma, discourages these vulnerable groups and communities of color from seeking essential services or engaging with County offices. Additionally, there is no countywide strategy to connect housing-related systems or to communicate effectively with the public. The collaboration between the County and community partners remains underutilized, resulting in fragmented systems that hinder comprehensive support.

Area 1: **Reducing Racial Disparities**

Designs

Area: Strategies to Reduce Disparities

SPA	Design (Short Description)
SPA 1	Establish regional community advisory boards that HSH will engage. The community advisory board will be responsible for communicating information and gathering feedback, using town halls and participant surveys from community members who identify as part of racial, ethnic, and special population groups that are disproportionately affected by homelessness, including people experiencing homelessness who are currently navigating our system. *Link to full design.*
SPA 2	Create an internal Strategic Initiatives-Population specific unit within the HSH that will develop and test new strategies with the goal of reducing disproportionality among groups experiencing homelessness and meeting equity subgoals recommended by ECHRA and approved by the Board of Supervisors. *Link to full design.*
SPA 3	HSH should establish a Culture, Education, and Inclusion (CEI) Division to drive organizational excellence by embedding cultural sensitivity, equitable education, and inclusive practices across all operations. Through standardized care, evidence-based frameworks, accountability measures, and community engagement, the CEI Division would ensure continuous improvement and alignment with HSH's core values of equity, transparency, and collaboration. *Link to full design.*
SPA 4	The design outlines the creation of a Cultural Care Unit (CCU) within HSH such as Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC), LGBTQIA+, and other vulnerable populations. The CCU will work with community advisory committees, focusing on evidence-based feedback and strategic alignment to support impacted populations. Community feedback loops will ensure that recommendations can be adjusted and refined. *Link to full design.*
SPA 5	HSH should establish the CQI Unit: Cultural Responsiveness Framework, a structured accountability model designed to ensure that all departmental policies, practices, and programs are equitable and responsive to the needs of diverse populations. It will integrate continuous feedback loops, lived experience representation, and measurable review processes to evaluate and strengthen cultural responsiveness across the organization. This framework is recommended for adoption by HSH to institutionalize transparency, inclusivity, and data-driven improvement in decision-making and service delivery. *Link to full design.*

Area 1: **Reducing Racial Disparities**

SPA **6**	Establish a Regional Housing Advisory Council (RHAC) and Equity Hub network in SPA 6 to reconnect existing County systems through a standardized, equity-centered service model that strengthens coordination and restores trust between communities and public systems. The model integrates the LA Equity Navigator (LEN) app, a physical Hub, and mobile community units to link people, programs, and data in real time, advancing transparency, accountability, and equitable access across the region. *Link to full design.*
SPA **7**	Establish a Mobile Community Care Unit in SPA 7 that embeds Department of Homeless Services and Housing staff alongside other County departments to deliver services directly in the community. The unit will focus on reaching vulnerable populations — including those at risk of deportation, violence, or criminalization — with the goal of expanding access to services for people experiencing homelessness and advancing equity priorities recommended by ECHRA and approved by the Board of Supervisors. *Link to full design.*
SPA **8**	The Community Ambassador Framework convenes SPA 8 partners through an equity lens to break down silos, align efforts, and ensure services are coordinated, agency-centered, and responsive to community needs. This equity-driven model connects County, agencies, and residents through trusted local ambassadors who use real-time data, coordination, and accountability to strengthen collaboration and deliver services that truly reflect community priorities. *Link to full design.*

Core Design Themes and Principles

Community members across all SPAs offered clear recommendations for advancing racial equity in housing, homelessness systems, and homeless prevention.

Shared Principles

Community members envision an equity-driven system that:
- Centers lived experience in planning and evaluation.
- Shares power and resources through ongoing collaboration.
- Builds structures for accountability that last beyond funding cycles.
- Connects County systems and community partners through data, trust, and mutual learning.
- Measures success by how people experience services, not just by outcomes reported on paper.

Area 1: **Reducing Racial Disparities**

These principles reflect a clear, unified vision for building an equitable system and convey a consistent message: "racial equity must be built into the system itself, not added on as a program." Their input highlights practical ways to align local action with countywide goals and embed equity into everyday practice. These insights can be organized around three main themes:

Theme 1: Building Equity Infrastructure within the LA County Department of Housing and Homeless Services (SPAs 2, 3, 4, 5)

- **SPA 2** community members recommended creating a **Strategic Initiatives Unit** to align operations, funding, and evaluation practices around racial equity standards.
- **SPA 3** community members called for a **Culture, Education & Inclusion (CEI) Division** and workforce training systems that embed cultural competency and equity checkpoints into hiring, development, and policy review.
- **SPA 4** community members proposed a **Cultural Care Unit (CCU)**. A dedicated division to coordinate culturally responsive strategies for populations most affected by homelessness, including BIPOC, LGBTQIA+ individuals, older adults, youth (TAY), and other vulnerable groups. The CCU would partner with community advisory committees and tribal governments, oversee culturally grounded training and standards of care, and maintain feedback loops to ensure policy and funding decisions reflect community guidance.
- **SPA 5** community members highlighted the value of a **CQI Cultural Responsiveness Framework** to ensure accountability and continuous improvement are sustained beyond individual initiatives.

Together, these approaches aim to integrate equity into infrastructure and daily practices, ensuring that accountability, learning, and inclusion are maintained beyond individual projects. Each design is connected to developing a structured mechanism for incorporating community voices.

Theme 2: Strengthening Community Partnership and Leadership (SPAs 1, 2, 4, 6)

Central to many of the designs was the creation or leveraging of community advisory boards or committees that would be tethered to and continuously engaged by any new unit tasked to address equity across HSH. The boards would be engaged to provide feedback on data collection, analysis, visuals, evaluation design, best practices, training, standards of care, racial equity strategies, and funding recommendations.

- **SPA 1** community members proposed **Regional Community Advisory Boards that would be a subcommittee of the homeless coalition** with compensated representatives (lived experts) who help shape funding priorities and planning decisions.

Area 1: **Reducing Racial Disparities**

- **SPA 2** community members proposed community engagement through regionally based standing community boards.
- **SPA 4** proposed ongoing community engagement, leveraging existing homeless coalitions, affinity groups, lived expert boards.
- **SPA 6** community members envisioned a reconstitution of the **Regional Housing and Accountability Council (RHAC)** to connect data, funding, and oversight across departments and community partners.

Real equity requires shared power and transparency. Each of these structures shows how community leadership can shape priorities, guide resource allocation, and influence service design. Each SPA recognized existing coalitions that could be supported and coordinated to provide this function.

Theme 3: Expanding Service Access and Mobility (SPAs 6, 7, 8)

- **SPA 6** community members proposed a central **Equity Hub** supported by satellite provider offices and a **mobile community unit** that travels to residents where they are, a digital app, and an access portal, the nucleus of the system, connecting clients, providers, and administrators in real time.
- **SPA 7** community members envisioned a **Mobile Community Care Unit** that brings multidisciplinary teams directly into neighborhoods, reducing barriers created by geography, transportation, and systemic exclusion. The model emphasizes partnerships with small, culturally rooted community-based organizations and rotating pop-up events to reach residents who face barriers such as language, transportation, or fear of criminalization.
- **SPA 8** community members developed the concept of a **Community Ambassador Framework** to embed trusted local representatives as ongoing bridges between systems and residents.

Together, SPAs 6, 7, and 8 highlight how equity is achieved through intentional design, combining cultural responsiveness, accessibility, and trust-building to ensure services meet people where they are and reflect who they serve.

Area 1: **Reducing Racial Disparities**

Theme 4: Measuring Progress Toward Equity

Community members emphasized that accountability should be both quantitative and relational, tracking measurable outcomes while also reflecting community experience and trust. Progress must be visible, meaningful, and grounded in transparency.

Key recommendations include:

- Disaggregate data by race, ethnicity, and geography to identify inequities and guide targeted action.
- Pair metrics with experience - Combine quantitative data with lived-experience feedback to tell the full story of progress.
- Community oversight - Residents and partners should review equity progress alongside staff through shared evaluation spaces.
- Focus on improvement, not blame - Use data to drive learning and system change rather than punitive compliance.
- Transparency - Share progress regularly in accessible languages through dashboards, reports, and public forums to sustain trust and engagement.

The roadmap outlined by the community across all eight Service Planning Areas represents a clear and unified vision that racial equity must be built into the system itself, not added as an afterthought. By integrating equity into the department's core infrastructure—through specialized entities such as the Strategic Initiatives Unit, the Cultural Care Unit, and the Culture, Education & Inclusion Division—the new system can move toward a model in which accountability, learning, and inclusion are sustained beyond individual project cycles. This transformation requires a fundamental shift in how success is measured, prioritizing the actual experience of those navigating the system over outcomes reported solely on paper.

Real progress depends on shared power and transparency. By establishing Regional Community Advisory Boards and implementing a Community Ambassador Framework, the department can ensure that community leadership consistently shapes priorities, guides resource allocation, and influences service design. Engagement must remain a long-term relationship rather than a one-time activity, supported by trusted messengers and visible, two-way feedback loops that show exactly how community input is utilized.

Ultimately, the goal is to build an equity-driven system that centers lived experience and connects County systems with community partners through data, trust, and mutual learning. Moving forward, HSH leadership must formalize partnerships with these community-led structures and co-design a feedback loop that results in meaningful shared decision-making, ensuring that the system delivers equitable access and outcomes for all, regardless of race or background.

Background

Foundations for Success - examined the administrative and operational conditions necessary for effective service delivery, with a focus on improving the funding, administrative, and operational environment in which homelessness service providers operate. Participants noted that without addressing these foundational issues, even the best programmatic innovations will struggle to succeed. Alternatively, by addressing these foundational challenges at the County level, capacity previously allocated to addressing challenges and duplication within the system would be available for improved and/or expanded service delivery.

Design participants across SPAs consistently emphasized that there are real, embedded costs associated with maintaining the current state and that improving housing and stability outcomes for people experiencing homelessness requires reducing administrative burden, improving fiscal stability and management, increasing transparency, and equipping organizations—of all sizes—with the tools they need to deliver high-quality, human-centered services and support.

Area 2: **Foundations for Success**

Design Questions

Workshop participants prioritized the following design questions to guide this work:

SPA	QUESTION
SPAs 1, 2, 4, 6, 7	What specific actions can the Department take to ensure that all service providers, regardless of size, have the support they need to deliver effective homelessness services?
SPAs 3, 8	How can the Department streamline and improve its administrative processes (e.g., contracting, payments) to reduce administrative burdens and allow providers to focus more on service delivery?
SPA 5	How can the Department equip all providers with the tools and resources needed to collect and report data through consistent, human-centered data collection processes of key outcomes?

Challenges Participants Sought to Address

Participants identified key challenges that HSH must address. Across SPAs, participants consistently identified the following system-level challenges:

1 **Transparency and System Coordination**
Providers do not have clear visibility into who is funded, what activities they are undertaking, the scale of their work, and their locations. Information tends to be fragmented, shared inconsistently, and often conveyed informally through personal networks. Vague roles and capacities lead to redundant services, misaligned efforts, and ineffective referrals. Additionally, opaque decision-making processes hinder accountability, trust, and the fair distribution of funding.

2 **Quality, Access, and Standardization**
Participants highlighted notable deficiencies in County-mandated training systems, noting inconsistencies in availability and timing, often outside contracting schedules. These delays threaten contract compliance and impose financial burdens on providers, especially small organizations, due to training fees and staff time. The absence of standardized, high-quality training results in differing staff expectations, variable service quality, and diminished system-wide accountability and coordination.

Area 2: **Foundations for Success**

3 **Funding, Contracting, and Administrative Burdens**
Providers across SPAs highlighted systemic issues with current contracting systems, including financial instability caused by contracts that fail to cover service costs or support competitive wages. They point out delays in contract execution that require providers to cover upfront costs without reimbursement, along with slow, segmented, and unclear processes with frequent changes and limited guidance. Reporting requirements are often duplicative and burdensome, and coordination across funding streams is lacking. Smaller and emerging organizations face disproportionate exclusion from participation.

4 **Data Collection, Systems, and Technology**
Participants identified serious inefficiencies and equity issues in data systems. Providers are required to enter duplicative data across platforms that do not communicate, and the continued reliance on paper-to-digital workflows increases errors and staff burden. Some providers lack access to HMIS entirely. Data collection is often duplicative, underutilized, not client-centered or dignity-preserving, and limited in transparency about how data is used. Additionally, there is minimal incorporation of client feedback into quality improvement efforts.

5 **Organizational Stability and Capacity**
System inefficiencies directly impact provider stability and client outcomes, as delayed contracts, slow payments, and administrative complexity destabilize providers and increase risk. Administrative burdens divert resources away from direct service, while unpredictable funding requirements limit effective planning. Smaller organizations face compounded challenges due to low reimbursement rates, inflexible budgets, administrative complexity, and unclear expectations.

Area 2: **Foundations for Success**

Designs

Area: Strategies to Reduce Disparities

SPA	Design (Short Description)
SPA 1	HSH should create a program/funding source launch process, centered around a county-wide launch meeting, to ensure information is shared transparently and consistently either when: (1) a new program is launched, or (2) there are significant changes to an existing program, such as decreases or increases in funding, program eligibility criteria, etc. This process should also include a feedback mechanism for reporting and resolving issues brought by service providers and community members. *Link to full design*
SPA 2	The Hope Hub: Create a free training portal/hub for homeless services providers in LA County that helps providers increase staff and organizational capacity by leveraging and centralizing existing training opportunities (both virtual and in-person) through one accessible hub. *Link to full design*
SPA 3	This design advocates for a four-step process that streamlines the process from funding through the contracting lifecycle: • Step 1 – HSH should work to improve the annual point-in-time count process, as it drives the funding cycle. • Step 2 – HSH should be responsible for supporting a regional and subregional strategic planning process. This will inform the most effective use of funding for each funding cycle. • Step 3 - HSH should develop a contracts management portal that is accessible to grantees. • Step 4 – HSH should streamline the funding and contracting process overall. • Step 5 – HSH should adopt a continuous quality improvement approach for contractors and for their funding and contracting processes. *Link to full design*

Area 2: **Foundations for Success**

SPA 4

Design #1: Menu of Supports for Providers.
HSH should offer a menu of a la carte supports for providers available directly from the County Department, leveraged from other departments, or through subcontracted providers. Providers can request and activate supports according to their needs. HSH can also recommend supports based on assessments of providers or specific programs. *Link to full design*

Design #2. Equitable Contracting. HSH should adopt equitable contracting practices into their contracting processes in order to ensure that contracts with providers are adequate to cover the cost of services and to reduce financial and administrative burdens on providers. This should include adopting a transparent mechanism for determining rates and terms. *Link to full design*

SPA 5

This design proposes a process that discards the practice of extracting data from the people we serve, adopts a human-centered approach, and enhances our data quality by reducing the volume of data collected by program staff. It emphasizes only the data necessary to help participants move from crisis to stability and to tell the story of our system. *Link to full design*

SPA 6

The Department should create a tiered, equity-focused contracting and funding model that is paired with front end braided funding. The model also requires cross-agency collaboration and scales the administrative requirements by provider size. The contracting process builds the capacity of smaller CBOs and aligns resources to housing and community development in advance to be activated at the time of need. *Link to full design*

SPA 7

Strengthen countywide service delivery and funding coordination. It introduces an inclusive, contract-based budgeting approach that considers all stakeholders; a region-based allocation method, that recognizes specialized population needs; and a contract cycle that is complete before the beginning of the fiscal year. *Link to full design*

SPA 8

HSH's design streamlines contracting and payment processes by aligning and consolidating funding sources, creating a transparent and predictable system that reduces administrative burdens for providers. It emphasizes timely payments, front-funded contracts, and stronger coordination across county entities to allow providers to focus more on delivering services and achieving community outcomes. *Link to full design*

Area 2: **Foundations for Success**

Core Design Themes and Principles

Two primary community-driven design recommendations emerged to address the challenge areas. These two design recommendations represent the synthesis of the designs from each SPA-wide workshop.

The **first design** recommendation, *The Hope Hub*, is a centralized portal or hub for homeless services providers to access both virtual and in-person training opportunities that best meet the needs of organizations of all sizes and at all stages of organizational development across LA County.

Participants recommend establishing *The Hope Hub*—a free, centralized training and resource portal for homelessness service providers across LA County. This platform would include both required and optional training sessions, available in virtual and in-person formats. It leverages County and community expertise, reduces redundant training costs, and enhances system-wide capacity and consistency. Additionally, it has the potential to serve as a public-facing community resource. Provide a Standardized Menu of Provider Supports at The Hope Hub. Recommended supports include:

- Technical Assistance
- Workforce Development
- Systemic Barrier Busting
- Clinical Support
- Integration Station (data + intersecting systems of care)
- Housing Triage and Housing Navigation Support
- Capacity Building

The second design idea is for the adoption of streamlined contracting and payment processing to improve equity and ensure that contracts with providers are adequate to cover the cost of services and to reduce financial and administrative burden on providers.

Area 2: **Foundations for Success**

Streamlined Contracting and Payment Processing

Participants strongly recommended that HSH incorporate equitable contracting and payment processing practices as a fundamental operating principle. Suggested actions include advancing 80% of monthly contract costs with reconciliation within 60 days, providing early technical assistance to smaller organizations, such as through an incubator model, and simplifying contract renewals via standardized document repositories. Additionally, offering longer, multi-year contracts when performance metrics are met, requiring a percentage of contracts to be awarded to small providers, and allowing designated administrative cost coverage during program ramp-up are advised. Engaging providers before major program changes and ensuring such changes are communicated in writing is essential, with formal processes created for provider engagement prior to significant modifications. Significant contractual changes should also be communicated in writing to ensure clarity and accountability.

To achieve improved housing and stability outcomes, HSH must prioritize reducing administrative burdens and ensuring fiscal stability through contracts that cover the full cost of services and support competitive wages. Concrete designs, such as The Hope Hub, and streamlined, tiered contracting models are critical tools for building system-wide capacity and transparency, enabling providers to move away from fragmented coordination and duplicative data entry. Ultimately, these community-led designs call for clearer, fairer, and more human-centered systems that allow practitioners to focus on what matters most, serving individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

Area 3: **Communication, Feedback Loops and Ongoing Co-Design**

Background

This summary reflects input from staff and partners across Service Planning Areas (SPAs) focused on strengthening communication, transparency, feedback loops, and co-design within the Los Angeles County homelessness response system. Across SPAs, participants expressed a shared desire to move from a system that is difficult to navigate and unevenly understood toward one that is clear, trusted, locally responsive, and built in ongoing partnership with communities and providers.

Participants articulated a collective vision of ending homelessness through a more vibrant, accessible, and trustworthy homeless response system, where:

- People can find help easily, quickly, and locally, without navigating unnecessary obstacles.
- Information about services is transparent, accurate, and available in real time, enabling communities to trust and use it.
- The system operates as a true partner, engaging authentically and continuously with providers, community members, and people with lived experience.

Area 3: **Communication, Feedback Loops and Ongoing Co-Design**

- Challenges are addressed through a responsive and integrated system that resolves issues consistently rather than shifting responsibility.
- People seeking services experience greater satisfaction, dignity, and clarity.
- Local ecosystems are equipped with the resources and authority needed to respond to the needs and priorities of their own communities.
- The system is supported by stable funding, adequate staffing, and resilient infrastructure, including private dollars leveraged alongside public investment.
- County and provider staff are well trained in best practices, with sustained administrative and technical support to maintain system functions.

Design Questions

Workshop participants prioritized the following design questions to guide this work:

SPA	QUESTION
SPA 1	How might HSH increase transparency, about available programs throughout the county? When there are key challenges, realities, and limitations of the system, how should HSH communicate these more clearly to the broader public?
SPA 2	How can HSH build and use evidence about what works to improve programs and guide funding?
SPA 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	Lack of accountability and transparency is a recurring theme. People in need of services, frontline service providers, and even system partners face challenges in accessing information about available services program eligibility, and intake/referral processes. How might we ensure that the Department provides transparency and accountability?

Area 3: **Communication, Feedback Loops and Ongoing Co-Design**

Challenges Participants Sought to Address

Across SPAs, participants identified persistent challenges that undermine system performance and trust, including:

1 **Lack of clear, accessible, low-barrier entry points,** making it difficult for people to know where and how to seek help.

2 **Fragmented and inconsistent information flow,** where access to knowledge is often privileged rather than shared.

3 **Limited transparency, accountability, and real-time responsiveness,** contributing to public frustration and mistrust.

4 **Weak or uneven community engagement infrastructure,** limiting opportunities for co-design and shared problem-solving.

5 **Siloed systems and limited cross-sector collaboration,** resulting in disjointed service delivery.

6 **Structural funding gaps and misalignment,** with local needs outpacing available or appropriately scaled investment.

Area 3: **Communication, Feedback Loops and Ongoing Co-Design**

Designs

Area: Communication, Feedback Loops, & Ongoing Co-Design

SPA	Design (Short Description)
SPA 1	Create an AV Care Campus that houses a SPA based HSH office and rapid response team that interacts and convenes local providers on a regular basis. *Link to full design*
SPA 2	Develop rapid response SPA-based customer service teams that receive grievances and inquiries from providers and people experiencing homelessness who are trying to navigate HSH programs and services. *Link to full design*
SPA 3	Increase the funding allocation and contract directly with cities to prioritize and fund local solutions based on data collected from an annual census. *Link to full design*
SPA 4	A three-prong approach that builds a more inclusive community network; re-imagines data to make it user friendly for PEH and the broader community; and host events - townhalls and a bi-annual HOME event to educated people on how homeless dollars are being spent and meet & greet with providers and departments to demystify the homeless response system. *Link to full design*
SPA 5	LA LINC (Local Integrated Network of Care) is a centralized digital hub that ends the maze of who to call or where to go for homeless resources. It's a single, live platform built for end users, providers, and public partners to find services, check eligibility, make referrals, connect, and track progress in one place. LA LINC would integrate live operational tools, customized user dashboards and two-way communication channels to close the accountability gap. It also serves as an authoritative public site to provide information on how the system works, share success stories, and provide information for the community to stay up to date on local policy and department updates. *Link to full design*

Area 3: **Communication, Feedback Loops and Ongoing Co-Design**

SPA **6**	Leveraging existing successful programs and organizations to create a network of mobile and stationary sites where people will be able to access supportive services and radical hospitality with the assistance of community ambassadors. Partnering Sites: Places of Worship (All Faiths), libraries, college campuses, community sites, and metro locations. Supportive Services Include: food, showers, laundry, hygiene items, tap access cards, cell phone charges, transportation, Wi-Fi. Mobile triage and intake assessment, and metrics to gather data. *Link to full design*
SPA **7**	No design
SPA **8**	Establish a community-defined doorway to community engagement, information sharing, and problem-solving in each SPA. The idea: To promote effective community engagement and ongoing relationship building, the County needs to create designated, cross-departmental teams that are assigned to each SPA and coordinate all engagement and communication activities through a local trusted entity or intermediary in each SPA. *Link to full design*

Area 3: **Communication, Feedback Loops and Ongoing Co-Design**

Core Design Themes and Principles

Across SPAs, participants expressed a clear and hopeful message: improving communication, transparency, and co-design is not ancillary to system performance—it is foundational. Community is signaling a desire for a homelessness response system that is understandable, trustworthy, locally grounded, and capable of learning in real time, with information shared equitably rather than through informal networks, and with people with lived experience able to access the data they need to exercise agency over their own lives. By investing in shared infrastructure, authentic engagement, and sustained workforce support, the system can strengthen both public confidence and outcomes for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Core Design Components Identified Across SPA Designs

Across SPA-level designs, participants consistently emphasized the need for:

- **Regional and SPA-based infrastructure** that clarifies governance and accountability.
- **Participatory and co-design approaches** that elevate lived experience and shared decision-making.
- **Cross-departmental and cross-sector collaboration** to reduce silos.
- **Integrated data systems and information hubs** that support transparency and evaluation.
- **Formal community engagement and feedback loops** that inform continuous improvement.
- **Reimagined front-door and intake models** that reduce barriers and confusion.
- **Provider support and workforce development**, including training and stabilization.
- **Integrated service provision,** aligning housing, health, education, and supportive services.

Area 3: **Communication, Feedback Loops and Ongoing Co-Design**

Principles

From these conversations, a set of shared design principles emerged to guide future system development:

1. Design for low-barrier, multi-access entry points ("no wrong door").
2. Build transparent, real-time, and public-facing information systems.
3. Operate through continuous community engagement and shared decision-making.
4. Embed cross-departmental and cross-sector collaboration as core infrastructure.
5. Honor local expertise and regional flexibility across SPAs and cities.
6. Invest in sustainable funding, strong staffing, and professionalized support.
7. Design for accountability, responsiveness, and system integrity.
8. Normalize empathy-centered, anti-criminalization, care-first approaches.

The community-led designs across all eight Service Planning Areas demonstrate that ending homelessness necessitates a system where people can find help easily and locally, without navigating unnecessary obstacles. By addressing the lack of clear, low-barrier entry points and the fragmented flow of information, the department can restore dignity and clarity to those seeking services, allowing them to exercise true agency over their own lives.

The vision shared by participants across the county underscores that communication, transparency, and ongoing co-design are foundational to system performance. Whether through regional hubs like the AV Care Campus, centralized digital platforms like LA LINC, or SPA-based rapid-response teams, the goal is to build a system that learns in real time and resolves issues consistently. This transition requires a commitment to regional flexibility, honoring local expertise, and equipping local communities with the resources needed to address their unique priorities.

Area 4: **Collaboration and Partnerships**

Background

This summary reflects input from staff and partners across Service Planning Areas (SPAs) focused on strengthening collaboration and partnerships within the Los Angeles County homelessness response system. Workgroup members collectively built detailed designs that call on the Los Angeles County Department of Homeless Services and Housing to form the backbone of meaningful collaboration across county systems and departments, across SPAs, and within each SPA with the full range of partners active in homelessness response.

Area 4: **Collaboration and Partnerships**

Design Questions

Workshop participants prioritized the following design questions to guide this work:

SPA	
SPAs 3, 4, 6, 8	How can the Department foster collaboration among nonprofits, local grassroots organizations, faith communities, government agencies, and residents to create a more integrated, coordinated response to homelessness?
SPAs 1, 2, 5, 7	How can HSH support regional coordination and strategies that leverage investments across the service landscape, reduce duplication of efforts, and maximize participant movement through services?

Challenges Participants Sought to Address

Across SPAs, participants identified challenges that needed to be solved through more effective ways of collaborating across systems:

Fragmented leadership, governance, and decision-making result in diffuse, inconsistent efforts spread across numerous entities. There is a lack of SPA-level input into County decisions, and meetings often lack clear purpose, with representatives potentially lacking decision-making authority. Clarifying roles across systems, partners, and leadership tables is essential. Additionally, there is a need for a single entity to convene, align, and leverage resources across systems—especially in homelessness and health.

1 **System Fragmentation, Silos, and Poor Integration**
Fragmented systems of care exist with limited integration across housing, outreach, behavioral health, healthcare, and supportive services. This fragmentation leads to duplication of work, underutilized resources, and inefficiencies due to siloed operations. Participants are often bounced between programs without receiving the services they need. Additionally, there is difficulty in identifying resources, networking, and understanding what SPAs do and how to access them. External departments also struggle to access SPA-level homelessness and housing resources.

2 **Barriers to Navigation, Participant Flow, and Service Access**
Fragmented participant flow results in duplicated services and underused resources. Geographic isolation worsens access issues. A scarcity mindset and limited provider time further hinder care access. Community resistance adds extra obstacles to service delivery. There's a need for better navigation support and clearer pathways among programs.

Area 4: **Collaboration and Partnerships**

3 **Need for Stronger Collaboration, Coordination, and Cross-Sector Partnership**
Providers lack a county resource to help solve real-time system challenges. There is a need for greater interagency collaboration and shared problem-solving, with systems being networked and aligned rather than operating independently. It is also essential to have someone bridge knowledge gaps and translate language across sectors. The success of HSH depends on effective partnership to stretch limited resources.

4 **Equity, Community Voice, and Trust**
The community needs a stronger voice in decisions that affect them. To achieve this, local resistance must be addressed through trust-building and engagement. Additionally, accountability to the community is essential for maintaining legitimacy and effectiveness.

Area 4: **Collaboration and Partnerships**

Designs

Area: Collaboration & Partnerships

SPA	Design (Short Description)
SPA 1	Regional Coordination Redesign is: A strategic regional coordination model for SPA 1, designed to build unity through strengthened cross-sector partnership, increase alignment around resource utilization with the goal of getting people into housing and keeping them housed. *Link to full design*
SPA 2	Communication Infrastructure: This design promotes info/resource sharing via (1) a public facing component for community members to search for resources. (2) a Provider facing component where providers can find and share information for the benefit of participants. (3) SPA reps taking gathered info from database and conferencing upward to leadership (county to state) so decisions on Homeless Services (ex: decisions on funding & allocations of resources are made with accurate data and information (for context and elevation of PLE experiences). *Link to full design*
SPA 3	HSH should create a Division of Collaboration with the goal of identifying and strengthening networks & relationships within each SPA among CBOs, faith-based communities, cities, and other service providers. *Link to full design*
SPA 4	County Funded Partnerships Team. The county-funded partnership team is led by a Partnerships Manager and structured around need-based hubs. Each hub is managed by a staff lead who coordinates services and resources guided by community priorities, rather than being restricted to a single geographic area. *Link to full design*
SPA 5	HSH should become the primary driver of an expanded Leadership Table that is renamed the Multi-Sector Leadership Council. The Multi-Sector Leadership Council (MSLC) will include all partners who have a critical role in providing services and/or allocating and administering funding related to people experiencing homelessness. Together, The MSLC members will make transparent, specific commitments to address homelessness in LA County and will communicate these commitments to the community. *Link to full design*

Area 4: **Collaboration and Partnerships**

SPA **6**	Create an LA County Collective Impact Council ("CIC") with a shared leadership model where we unite nonprofits, faith communities, city and COG representatives, community members and advocates in order to break silos and build collaboration, providing a voice on making recommendations to HSH and other county departments, provide feedback to HSH on their plans, identify resources and resource gaps at the SPA level, and provide an honest voice on what is and isn't working in our homeless response system. *Link to full design*
SPA **7**	Each SPA should have an official centralized body (e.g., Coalition, COG, etc.) for bi-directional communication with the County. The centralized body should be determined locally and is responsible for coordinating across cities and agencies. Together they will review data, expectations, and where there are support needs. *Link to full design*
SPA **8**	Our vision: "HSH champions cross-departmental and community teamwork powered by open two-way communication. Together—we listen, share and serve better." HSH should model and promote collaboration by building a dedicated team that is SPA-focused and accountable to SPA-led collaboratives. HSH should also promote collaboration and integration with other County departments by building a team whose role is to build a strong foundation of inter-departmental service integration and braiding of funding. These two teams should closely coordinate their work, or they may be integrated on one team. L*ink to full design*

Core Design Themes and Principles

Participants across SPAs expressed strong enthusiasm for collaborating with the Department of Homeless Services and Housing. They are requesting HSH to take a leading role in creating new, effective structures that facilitate collaboration. These structures should not complicate processes but rather be flexible, streamlined, and adaptable. The participants emphasized the importance of always being inclusive by involving all partners. They want HSH to engage in intentional, transparent, and proactive communication with everyone involved in helping our unhoused neighbors and the system. Additionally, they called for honesty among all partners about what works well and what needs improvement. The community is advocating for a cultural shift within HSH, in its external relations with community partners, and as a leader promoting collaboration throughout the County system.

Area 4: **Collaboration and Partnerships**

Shared Principles

Across SPAs, participants asked for a shift in culture towards one that is oriented towards collaboration. They created designs for structures that will promote collaborative efforts in homelessness response and were clear that without this cultural shift the structures could risk simply becoming empty mechanics. The culture shift that workgroup participants are calling for is:

- Towards honesty and being real about what is working, what is not, and our system challenges.
- Towards transparency: what are our resources, how are they being used, and what are our outcomes?
- Towards partnership: communicating regularly and openly, understanding each other, setting aside our individual placement in the system in order to work together towards our shared goals.

Participants believed that our homelessness response system should be founded on these guiding principles:

- Transparency - Decision-making processes must be open and clear.
- Equity - Address disparities in service delivery to ensure fairness.
- Community Voice - Residents should have meaningful input in shaping services.
- Accountability - HSH and the Leadership Table must be held responsible to the community.

Design Synthesis 1

HSH has the opportunity to act as a central convenor of all system partners who have an important role in providing services and leveraging resources as part of the county-wide response to homelessness. HSH should lead & convene cross-department and cross-sector leadership to break down silos, ensure resources from all sectors are fully utilized, and reduce duplication of effort.

Area 4: **Collaboration and Partnerships**

Design Synthesis 1

HSH has the opportunity to act as a central convenor of all system partners who have an important role in providing services and leveraging resources as part of the county-wide response to homelessness. HSH should lead & convene cross-department and cross-sector leadership to break down silos, ensure resources from all sectors are fully utilized, and reduce duplication of effort.

- **SPA 5** recommended creating a Multi-Sector Leadership Council convened by HSH to replace current structures.
- **SPA 8** designed a cross-departmental Agile Team at HSH that would problem-solve, innovate, and integrate services.

Design Synthesis 2

A SPA-focused team at HSH is a critical necessity in order to improve communication and transparency, lift up the specific regional challenges in Los Angeles County, and resolve community-level challenges. HSH should create a SPA-focused team that is engaged in bi-directional communication and problem-solving with SPA coalitions, providers and the HSH team. This SPA team will have an on-the-ground presence, act as an integrator, synthesize and lift up challenges at HSH, and help to address specific collaboration challenges at the SPA level.

- **SPA 8** recommended creating a dedicated HSH Collaboration Team that is accountable and responsive to each regional (SPA) community. SPA 8 also recommended that this team has access to broader system-level partners who can work in an Agile team model to quickly solve specific challenges.
- **SPA 3** designed an HSH Division of Collaboration that is on-the-ground, acts as an integrator, listens closely, and helps resolve challenges at the SPA level.

# Area 4: **Collaboration and Partnerships**

Design Synthesis 3

A community voice is needed in each SPA and across SPAs to raise awareness of challenges and solutions, and to work together towards the shared community goal of ending homelessness. Each SPA will need an inclusive, centralized coordinating body to collaborate with HSH to map resources, strengthen relationships at the SPA level, and create intentional, bi-directional relationships.

- **SPA 7** recommended that a centralized SPA coordinating body be determined locally, but each SPA coordinating body shares common goals and meets quarterly across all SPAs.
- **SPA 1** designed a strategic regional coordination model to strengthen cross-sector partnerships.
- **SPA 8** envisioned SPA collaboration that would focus on unifying around shared goals.
- **SPA 6** envisioned creating an LA Collective Impact Council that unites community members across all the SPAs with representation from nonprofits, faith communities, city and COG representatives, community members and advocates. The Collective Impact Council would provide a shared voice on making recommendations to HSH and other County departments.
- **SPA 4** designed a Partnerships Team, funded by HSH, that is structured around need-based hubs and coordinates services and resources guided by community priorities instead of being restricted to a single geographic area.

The designs across all eight SPAs envision a system that breaks down silos and aligns resources across the County. This transformation requires a fundamental cultural shift toward honesty, transparency, and true partnership, so we can work toward our shared goal of ending homelessness.

This shift begins by creating dedicated, on-the-ground SPA-focused teams that directly address the unique challenges of our neighborhoods. These teams are anchored to each region by an inclusive, locally determined coordinating body that ensures two-way communication and effective resource mapping. Ultimately, we are building a model of shared leadership in which nonprofits, faith communities, and people with lived experience have a meaningful voice in shaping services. The vision is a system that is flexible, nimble, and always inclusive, ensuring that every decision is guided by community priorities.
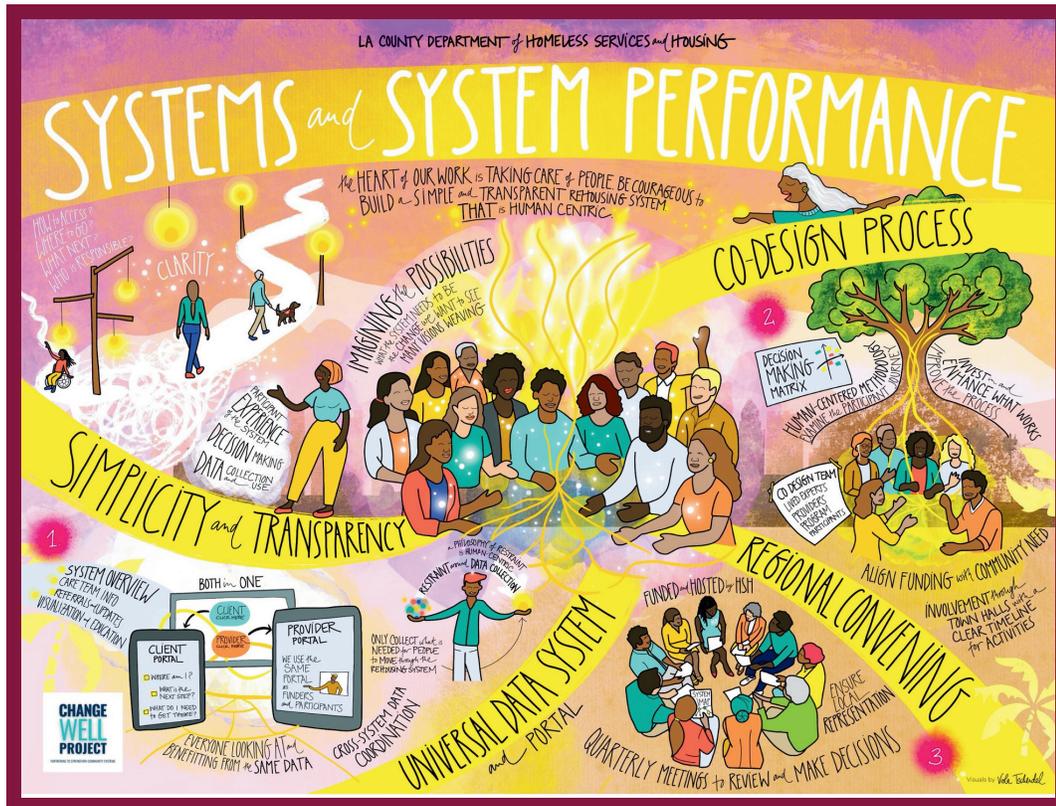
Background

Area 5 focused on the systems, structures, and performance mechanisms needed to support a transparent, equitable, and effective homelessness response within HSH. Through a series of design workshops across SPAs, participants examined how people, data, decisions, and resources move through the system—and where fragmentation, limited transparency, and misalignment currently impede outcomes.

Rather than treating system performance as a discrete function, the work approached it as an integrated ecosystem. Designs addressed governance, data infrastructure, regional coordination, and program design as interdependent elements that shape the pathway from outreach to permanent housing. Across proposals, participants emphasized that performance is not only about measurement, but about creating clear processes, shared accountability, and the ability to act on what the system learns.

Several shared priorities emerged across the designs in Area 5. First, there was a strong call for regional and community-grounded decision-making, including empowered SPA-level structures, formal community oversight, and regular convenings that bring cities, providers, County staff, and people with lived experience into shared accountability.

Area 5: **Systems and System Performance**

Second, participants prioritized transparent, human-centered data systems—including universal referral tools and client-facing portals—that reduce duplication, improve real-time visibility, and allow participants to understand and track their own housing journey. Third, the work highlighted the need for evidence-informed funding and program decisions, supported by co-design processes, shared decision-making tools, and a deeper understanding of the full participant journey across interventions.

Importantly, Area 5 designs also addressed populations whose needs are often diluted in system-wide approaches, including transition-age youth, families with children, and people exiting other public systems. Proposals such as a dedicated Youth and Young Adult Unit, no-wrong-door access points for families, and targeted regional hubs reflect a system performance framework that adapts to different pathways while maintaining coherence at the County level.

Together, the Area 5 designs outline a system that is simpler to navigate, clearer to understand, and more responsive to conditions on the ground. They provide a foundation for a department that continuously learns and improves—using data, lived experience, and community partnership to drive better outcomes and invest in what works.

Area 5: **Systems and System Performance**

Design Questions

Workshop participants prioritized the following design questions to guide this work:

SPA	QUESTION
SPA 5	How can HSH design programs and services that best serve Transition-Age Youth?
SPA 8	How can HSH design programs and services that best serve families or households with minors?
SPA 1, 4, & 7	What does a transparent and simple rehousing system from outreach to permanent housing look like in HSH?
SPA 3, 4, & 6	How can HSH build and use evidence about what works in the homelessness system to improve programs and guide funding decisions?
SPA 2	What approach, framework, or processes can HSH use to ensure that its policies, practices, and programs are culturally responsive to the unique needs of diverse populations experiencing homelessness? *This question was moved into Area 1 after the SPA 2 Design Workshop*

Challenges Participants Sought to Address

1 **Fragmented and Opaque System Navigation**
People experiencing homelessness, providers, and even system leaders lack a clear, shared understanding of how the rehousing system works from outreach to permanent housing. Entry points are inconsistent, processes are difficult to visualize, referrals are hard to track, and participants often do not know where they are in the process or what to expect next. This fragmentation increases delays, erodes trust, and places unnecessary burden on both participants and frontline staff.

Area 5: **Systems and System Performance**

2 **Limited Transparency and Accountability**
The current system lacks transparent mechanisms for decision-making, performance tracking, and public accountability. Communities most impacted by homelessness often have little visibility into how funding decisions are made, how programs are performing, or how feedback influences change. This includes gaps in community oversight, unclear budget authority, and limited feedback loops between County leadership, regional partners, providers, and participants.

3 **Data Systems That Are Burdensome, Incomplete, and Underutilized**
Data collection tools and processes are often duplicative, not trauma-informed, and focused more on compliance than learning. Existing systems fail to capture the full participant journey across interventions, limiting the ability to understand what works, identify disparities, or assess return on investment. Data is frequently siloed, delayed, or inaccessible to those who need it most—including providers, participants, and regional decision-makers.

4 **Weak Connection Between Data, Learning, and Funding Decisions**
Even when data exists, it is not consistently used to guide program improvement or funding allocation. The system lacks structured, evidence-informed processes that combine quantitative data, qualitative insight, and lived experience to inform investments. As a result, funding decisions are often perceived as opaque, reactive, or disconnected from real-time system performance and community needs.

5 **Insufficient Regional Authority and Coordination**
SPA-level teams and local partners often lack the authority, resources, and infrastructure needed to manage system flow, address bottlenecks, and respond to regional conditions. Coordination across cities, providers, and County departments is inconsistent, leading to misaligned priorities, duplicated efforts, and inequitable resource distribution. This is particularly acute in geographically large or underserved areas.

6 **Inadequate System Design for Specific Populations**
System-wide approaches frequently fail to account for the distinct pathways and needs of specific populations, including transition-age youth, families with children, people exiting institutions, and individuals with intersecting system involvement. Without tailored structures, dedicated coordination, and population-specific performance frameworks, these groups are at risk of being underserved or deprioritized within broader system reforms.

Area 5: **Systems and System Performance**

(7) **Limited Client Visibility, Agency, and Trust**
Participants often have little access to their own information, limited ability to track referrals or documents, and minimal understanding of who is responsible for next steps. This lack of visibility undermines agency, increases anxiety, and reinforces power imbalances within the system. The absence of client-facing tools also limits opportunities for engagement, feedback, and shared problem-solving.

(8) **Lack of Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Infrastructure**
The system does not consistently support structured learning cycles that allow teams to test changes, assess impact, and adapt in response to evidence. Without shared CQI frameworks, regular system flow review, and clear accountability for improvement, challenges persist even when they are well understood.

Area 5: **Systems and System Performance**

Designs

Area: Systems and System Performance

SPA	Design (Short Description)
SPA 1	The proposed design establishes a Regional (Satellite) Office in Service Planning Area 1 (SPA1) – Antelope Valley, as part of the new LA County department's strategy to deliver localized, responsive, and equitable services to one of the most underserved areas in the county. *Link to full design*
SPA 2	The department will establish a Community Oversight Committee Board (COB) made up of community members most impacted by homelessness, including families, TAY, immigrants, and formerly incarcerated individuals. The COB will work in partnership with departmental management — including strategy, finance, and HR leaders — to guide accountability, transparency, and community-driven decision-making. *Link to full design*
SPA 3	A quarterly regional coordination structure convened by the Council of Governments (COG) and HSH Regional Team, including community and lived experience representatives from each SPA (Service Planning Area). This design creates an accountable, data-informed space for system mapping, flow review, and collaborative problem-solving among cities and partners. *Link to full design*
SPA 4	① Create a universal data system that has both a provider and participant portal and is integrated with HMIS and CHAMP. Additional data system integration to follow. *Link to full design* ② HSH will establish a co-design process to guide evidence-based funding and program decisions in the homelessness system. A diverse Co-Design Team— including lived experts, program participants, and service providers—will create a transparent, public Decision-Making Matrix informed by data, storytelling, and proven practices. This approach aims to improve funding transparency, align budgets with community needs, and invest in what works. *Link to full design*
SPA 5	Creation of a Youth and Young Adult (YAY) Unit within the Department of Homeless Servies and Housing (HSH). This unit will advocate for, design, and coordinate services tailored to youth and young adults (age 16 to 30), ensuring their unique needs are recognized and addressed through process improvement, innovation, and collaboration across county systems and community partners. *Link to full design*

Area 5: **Systems and System Performance**

SPA 6
The design outlines a set of drivers that will help the department use data to improve programs and guide funding decisions. The design then zooms in on a methodology to examine the participant journey, enabling a better understanding of what works and what doesn't in our system, leading to program improvements and better investment decisions. *Link to full design*

SPA 7
Client-facing portal that:
- Tracks referrals
- Provides status updates
- Gives an overview of the rehousing process
- Shares information about the care team

Link to full design

SPA 8
1. This design proposes a "No wrong door approach" – with multiple points of access: ACE Access Points (Access Care Expedited)
   - The right door, at the right time, with the right resources and the right people
   - Create and app for the public and providers to access the family system
   - People can self-refer into the system.
     - Kiosks and access points in each city

2. All Providers and municipalities have access to enter the universal referral form into the data system
   - Referrals go to a "front door" triage team to coordinate beds and available resources in each geography.
   - HSH is responsible for coordinating resources in each region more effectively.
   - With greater access, we need more housing stock. We want HSH to invest in shared housing for families and leverage successful models like host homes.

Link to full design

Area 5: **Systems and System Performance**

Core Design Themes and Principles

Community participants emphasized that improving outcomes for people experiencing homelessness requires addressing the foundational systems that providers operate within. The findings from this engagement underscore that equitable contracting, transparency, standardized training, and human-centered data systems are prerequisites for effective homelessness response. Community participants asked for clearer, fairer, and more transparent systems that allow providers to streamline administration so that they can focus on what matters most, serving people experiencing homelessness with dignity.

A primary area of emphasis for participants in this area was a true commitment to a simple and transparent rehousing system. Rather than offering a single solution, these designs together outline a flexible, sequenced approach that allows the department to strengthen transparency, accountability, and effectiveness over time. Collectively, these designs provide a strong foundation for a system that learns continuously, responds to real conditions on the ground, and invests in what works to achieve better outcomes for people experiencing homelessness.

Shared Priorites Across Designs:

1 **Regional and community-grounded decision-making—** including empowered SPA-level structures, formal community oversight, and regular convenings that bring cities, providers, County staff, and people with lived experience into shared accountability.

2 **Transparent, human-centered data systems—** including universal referral tools and client-facing portals—that reduce duplication, improve real-time visibility, and allow participants to understand and track their own housing journey.

3 **Evidence-informed funding and program decision—** supported by co-design processes, shared decision-making tools, and a deeper understanding of the full participant journey across interventions.

4 **It is important to include space for approaches for specific populations so that their needs are not diluted in system-wide approaches—**this includes families, youth, and other specific populations.

Area 5: **Systems and System Performance**

Sequencing Designs

Participants recommend the following sequencing for how to approach incorporating designs that address different moments in the system, operate at different levels, or solve complementary challenges. The community recommends building from foundational system elements to more advanced functions over time. This will be a pathway for implementation that creates a coherent system while honoring the distinct contributions of each region while strengthening overall alignment and feasibility.

- Start with strengthening how the system collects, uses, and learns from data using the SPA 6 design that centers human-centered, trauma-informed data collection. It also would improve the use of data to understand the full participant journey and to analyze outcomes.

- Create a universal data system (championed by SPA 4) that builds on the revised data collection system while integrating HMIS and CHAMP into a single platform. The platform would have separate portals for providers and participants (designed by both SPA 4 and 7), reducing duplicative data entry and increasing real-time visibility across the rehousing system and all of its users.

- The SPA 3 regional convening structure and the SPA 4 co-design and decision matrix are complementary components of a shared system performance framework. The regional convenings create a consistent, SPA-level space for system mapping, data review, and collaborative problem-solving among cities, providers, County staff, and community members.

- The SPA 4 co-design and decision matrix builds on this foundation by providing a transparent, evidence-informed mechanism for translating what the system learns into funding and program decisions.

Together, these designs create a feedback loop between learning and action. Sequenced together, they strengthen accountability, improve transparency, and enable a more responsive system that invests in what works and adapts as conditions change.

Area 5: **Systems and System Performance**

Standalone Designs

In addition to the synthesized designs, the group preserved the remaining ideas as standalone proposals. These were not seen as inconsistent with the broader synthesis, but rather as discrete, complementary designs that the department could incorporate independently based on timing, capacity, and implementation priorities.

- The **SPA 1** design proposes establishing a **Regional (Satellite) Hub in Antelope Valley** to address geographic isolation, service gaps, and limited local decision-making authority.
- The **SPA 2** design establishes a **Community Oversight Board** to embed transparency, accountability, and lived experience into departmental governance and decision-making.
- The **SPA 5** design proposes creating a dedicated **Youth and Young Adult (YAY) Unit** to ensure the homelessness response is sensitive to the unique needs of young people aged 16–30.
- The **SPA 8** design introduces a **"no wrong door" access model** for families, combining multiple entry points, universal referrals, and coordinated regional triage to simplify navigation and reduce delays. Through **Access Care Expedited (ACE) Access Points**—both digital and physical—families, providers, and municipalities could submit and track referrals that route to a front-door triage team responsible for coordinating shelter, interim housing, and supportive services.

These designs provide a clear roadmap for transitioning from a fragmented, opaque bureaucracy to a system that is simpler to navigate and more responsive to conditions on the ground. By grounding decision-making in regional structures and human-centered data systems, the new department will foster a culture of continuous learning and shared accountability that values the expertise of both providers and people with lived experience. Ultimately, this commitment to evidence-informed funding and transparent processes ensures that our system finally meets the most vulnerable members of our community with the dignity, clarity, and holistic support they need to thrive.

Special Sessions

Special Sessions

Three special community sessions were hosted to ensure that we captured critical feedback from groups that could not attend the community design sessions or had a particular need for a special session. These included:

- Gender based Violence Coalition leaders
- Community members representing our immigrant neighbors
- LAHSA staff

Gender Based Violence Special Session

On November 18, 2025, Change Well Project held a virtual listening session with gender-based violence advocates and victim service providers to discuss strategies that can support the LA Department of Homeless Services and Housing in addressing homelessness while considering the specific needs of survivors. We reviewed the major achievements and progress made through the partnership between GBV advocates and LAHSA's DV unit, the current system challenges, and ultimately provided recommendations for HSH to maintain momentum toward integrating survivors' needs into homelessness policies.

This dialogue highlighted the critical intersection of gender-based violence (GBV) and homelessness. It acknowledges the significant progress made through the partnership between GBV advocates and LAHSA's DV unit, recognizing LAHSA's DV Unit as a leading national model with comprehensive policies, dedicated coordinators, and collaborative networks providing crucial support and housing options for survivors. The session also identified substantial challenges, particularly regarding the need for safe, specialized services, improved infrastructure, and sustainable funding models. Key issues include delayed reimbursements, inadequate staffing support (especially for 24/7 services), multi-year contract deficiencies, and disparities in payment rates for Victim Service Providers. There is also a recognized demand for more permanent and confidential housing options tailored for survivors, including those with adult dependents and male survivors.

To sustain momentum and more effectively integrate survivors' needs into homelessness policies, several key recommendations emerged:

- **Improve Access & Processes** - Enhance language accessibility, streamline processes with quick reimbursement, and ensure VAWA compliance in all program operations.
- **Strengthen Expertise & Care** - Appoint a high-level GBV advisor, hire specialized GBV positions, and universally implement trauma-informed care training.
- **Optimize Funding & Collaboration** - Fund programs that reflect best practices, enhance collaboration for supportive services, and provide advances on contracts with reimbursement-based funding, while executing contracts in a timely manner.

Special Sessions

- **Expand Housing Options -** Increase confidential shelter options for single adult women and integrate proactive screening questions to identify unique barriers.

While significant strides have been made, a concerted effort is required to address systemic funding and operational gaps. By implementing these recommendations, HSH and its partners can ensure a more responsive, equitable, and survivor-centered system that effectively tackles homelessness for those impacted by gender-based violence.
Link to full summary

Insights on Serving Immigrants with Housing and Homelessness Services

On December 18, 2025, Change Well Project held a virtual listening session for Spanish-speaking members of the community who have experienced homelessness, have accessed homelessness-related services, or work with community members experiencing homelessness. This listening session focused on unique barriers for immigrants experiencing homelessness and strategies that can support the Los Angeles County Department of Homeless Services and Housing in addressing homelessness while considering the specific needs of immigrants. We reviewed the community engagement process and asked for feedback centered around four areas of services: *(1)* access to services, *(2)* community outreach and engagement, *(3)* language access, and *(4)* access to housing. This report summarizes the themes brought forward by community members in each of these areas.

The insights shared during the December 18, 2025 virtual listening session offer a clear and compelling roadmap for strengthening how Los Angeles County supports immigrants experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Across every discussion area—service access, outreach and engagement, language access, and housing—participants emphasized the same core message: systems must be easier to navigate, culturally responsive, linguistically fluent, and grounded in trust.

Community members described barriers that are both structural and deeply personal: limited digital literacy, fear of sharing information, inconsistent language access, and the daily pressures of financial insecurity. At the same time, they offered practical, community-informed strategies that can meaningfully improve outcomes. These include:

- simplifying communication,
- embedding services where people live,
- partnering with trusted organizations,
- ensuring Spanish language fluency across all service points, and
- expanding access to affordable housing and rental assistance.

Special Sessions

Taken together, the themes in this report highlight a path forward that centers dignity, safety, and belonging. They underscore the importance of designing systems that reflect the lived realities of immigrant communities—systems that honor cultural differences, build trust through consistent and respectful interactions, and remove barriers that prevent families from securing stable housing. As Los Angeles County continues its efforts to address homelessness, the voices captured in this listening session provide essential guidance. *Link to full summary*

LAHSA Staff Session

On December 3, 2025, this summary reflects key themes and insights from a staff dialogue convened during a period of significant system transition following the County's decision to reallocate funding and establish a new department to oversee homelessness and housing services. LAHSA staff engaged in this dialogue brought deep operational, technical, and relational knowledge of the regional homelessness response system. Their reflections reflect both the emotional impact of institutional change and a sustained commitment to improving system performance and outcomes for people experiencing homelessness.

Across topic areas, staff articulated not only what is working and what could be improved, but also offered forward-looking recommendations grounded in lived system experience. Their feedback highlights the importance of continuity, integration, and intentional design during this transition.

Across all areas, staff are signaling several consistent system-level truths:

1. **Continuity Matters:** Staff value the preservation of institutional knowledge, relational infrastructure, and system coherence during transition. Disruption without continuity risks reversing progress and increasing fragmentation.

2. **Equity, Transparency, and Collaboration Require Infrastructure:** Good intentions alone are insufficient. Staff are calling for aligned data systems, clear governance structures, and enforceable accountability mechanisms to support equity and performance.

3. **Fragmentation Is the Primary Risk:** Political shifts, uncoordinated funding decisions, and siloed systems threaten regional coherence. Staff consistently prioritize system-wide integration over jurisdictional or program-specific approaches.

Special Sessions

4   **Workforce Stability Is a System Strategy:** Retaining experienced staff reduces costs, improves outcomes, and strengthens collaboration. Workforce investment is directly linked to system performance.

5   **People Experiencing Homelessness Navigate One System:** Regardless of funding source or department, participants move across programs and jurisdictions daily. Data, evaluation, and system design must reflect this lived reality.

Despite feelings of loss, uncertainty, and frustration, staff demonstrated a strong commitment to stewardship of the regional homelessness response system. Their insights reflect not resistance to change, but a desire to ensure that transformation is intentional, integrated, and grounded in operational reality. Centering staff expertise during this transition presents an opportunity to strengthen system performance, protect hard-won progress, and improve outcomes for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.
Link to full summary

Town Halls

Town Halls

Between July and November 2025, the Department of Homeless Services and Housing (HSH) collaborated with the Change Well Project to host a series of town hall sessions to integrate time-sensitive community feedback into the foundation of HSH. These sessions provided a platform for thousands of stakeholders—including service providers, advocates, and individuals with lived experience—to shape critical aspects of the department, such as its organizational structure, the Supportive Housing and/or Services Master Agreement (SHSMA), and frameworks for measuring success. As the department prepares to transition into a challenging fiscal environment with a projected $303 million deficit, these forums have been essential for refining the Measure A Spending Plan and ensuring that HSH remains community-responsive, equity-centered, and operationally transparent. By fostering a continuous collaborative process, HSH aims to build a system that prioritizes the needs of the most vulnerable populations while maintaining rigorous accountability and performance standards.

July 2025 Town Hall

Change Well Project and HSH cohosted its first town hall, attracting over 1600 registered participants and more than 600 attendees. The event focused on collecting feedback about the functions and structure of HSH. CWP used two methods to gather data on the initial version of HSH's organizational structure: (1) we led eleven virtual small group discussions, asking two questions to over 450 participants, and (2) we distributed a brief survey with the same questions, which received 125 responses.

We asked both small-group discussion and survey participants to review the functional org chart released on February 28, 2025, and then respond to questions about which functions were missing and how HSH should organize its work.

Community feedback highlighted a collective vision for a department that is community-responsive, equity-centered, and operationally transparent. Stakeholders identified a lack of visibility for essential services like mental health, domestic violence response, and youth support, leading to calls for an organizational structure that integrates these services rather than siloing them. Furthermore, participants emphasized the necessity of embedding lived experience and equity throughout all operational areas to ensure that the needs of marginalized groups—including LGBTQ+ individuals and immigrants—are proactively addressed rather than overlooked by a "one-size-fits-all" approach.

Town Halls

To balance local responsiveness with countywide consistency, there was overwhelming support for a hybrid organizational model that combines a regional (SPA-based) foundation with subpopulation-specific expertise. This structure is intended to improve system navigation and accountability by establishing clear lines of responsibility and dedicated front doors for service access. Additionally, facilitators and participants stressed the importance of sustainable funding, interagency coordination with partners like DMH and LAHSA, and the use of data analytics to track outcomes and ensure the system remains adaptable to emerging community needs. *See the summary report here.*

August 2025 Town Hall

The second town hall, held on August 20, 2025, by the Department of Homeless Services and Housing (HSH) and Change Well Project, focused on the existing Housing for Health (HFH) Supportive Housing and/or Services Master Agreement (SHSMA). Three hundred and eighty-seven (387) people registered for the event, with two hundred and forty-five attending. HSH provided an overview of how the SHSMA functions, why it is an effective model, and how HSH plans to leverage this model as it establishes the new department. We facilitated ten (10) breakout groups to have discussions about issues and concerns from existing HFH Providers and barriers to accessing the SHSMA for non-contracted providers.

Feedback revealed significant administrative and financial hurdles for both current and prospective providers. Non-contracted organizations expressed concerns that reporting requirements and compliance standards are too burdensome to meet RFSQ entry requirements. Meanwhile, current contractors identified a lack of understanding about the methodology used for acuity assessments and poor communication regarding rate changes as major disruptors to their billing and budgeting processes. These financial challenges are exacerbated by invoice delays resulting from requests for supplemental reports, which increase the administrative workload and delay critical funding for services already delivered.

Technological and oversight issues were also central themes, particularly regarding the CHAMP data system, which currently lacks a specialized financial view and integrates poorly with other systems like HMIS. Contractors called for better coordination between monitoring bodies to reduce the burden of overlapping audits and noted a perceived lack of expertise among monitoring teams. Furthermore, the lack of clear follow-up on monitoring findings and the limited availability of training courses hinder the ability of providers to remain in compliance. Ultimately, the feedback emphasizes a need for enhanced transparency, streamlined data integration, and improved communication between the department and its partners to ensure system sustainability. *See the summary report here.*

Town Halls

September 2025 Town Hall

The third town hall, co-hosted on September 15, 2025, by the Department of Homeless Services and Housing (HSH) and the Change Well Project, was titled **"Measuring Success in the Department of Homeless Services and Housing:** *Using Performance Management and Evaluation to Ensure Accountability, Improvement, and Innovation."* Three hundred and forty-nine (349) people registered for the event, with one hundred ninety-seven (197) attending. HSH provided an overview of the annual evaluation agenda and facilitated seven (7) breakout groups to discuss the following four (4) questions:

- What are the most important measures of success?
- How do we balance being data-driven while partnering with smaller organizations that do not have the same capacity to collect data?
- How do we ensure that our focus on being data-driven reduces racial and ethnic disparities and not furthering disparities?
- Are there models of how to incorporate qualitative data into performance measurements that we can learn from?

The community feedback emphasized a holistic and equitable approach to measuring departmental success, moving beyond mere housing placement to prioritize long-term housing stability, system efficiency, and human well-being. Participants advocated for a data-driven system that remains inclusive of smaller organizations by providing them with technical assistance, simplified reporting requirements, and streamlined interfaces. There was a strong consensus that the department must use disaggregated data to proactively identify and eliminate racial and ethnic disparities in service access and timelines, ensuring that performance metrics do not inadvertently perpetuate existing systemic biases.

Beyond quantitative metrics, the feedback highlighted the critical role of qualitative data and storytelling in demonstrating the real-world impact of interventions. Community members recommended incorporating testimonials and focus groups with those experiencing homelessness to ensure program designs are responsive, culturally relevant, and grounded in lived experience. To move the system forward, participants suggested specific evaluations, such as comparing lease-up timelines by race, researching mortality rates post-housing, and exploring the effectiveness of shared housing models. Ultimately, the feedback reinforces that HSH must balance rigorous data collection with a deep commitment to transparency and community-informed accountability. *See the summary report here.*

Town Halls

October 2025 Town Hall

The fourth town hall, co-hosted on October 27, 2025, by the Department of Homeless Services and Housing (HSH) and the Change Well Project, was titled **"Measure A Spending Plan Process FY 2026-27."** Two hundred (200) people registered for the event, with one hundred and seven (107) attending. HSH provided an overview of the current and anticipated funding landscape, as well as the results of Phase I, or the "rubric," which outlined the process by which the initial funding curtailments were determined. Following the presentation, we held small group discussions to explore the following questions:

Q1 Do the reductions outlined in the Rubric results reflect the priorities of the community?

Q1 How can the County reduce spending without exacerbating racial/ethnic/gender disparities and balance the needs of subpopulations experiencing homelessness?

Q1 The Rubric reflects the first phase of reductions, but significantly more reductions must be made. How can HSH provide maximum transparency as we work through this challenge?

The feedback revealed deep community concern that the homeless services system is being forced to carry a disproportionate share of the County's overall fiscal deficit. While the department's "rubric" for funding curtailments was acknowledged, stakeholders warned that cutting "non-housing" services such as outreach, regional coordination, and employment programs will ultimately lengthen the time it takes to move individuals from the Coordinated Entry System (CES) into housing. To prevent these reductions from worsening existing inequities, participants recommended that HSH use weighted rubrics and PIT count data to prioritize vulnerable subpopulations—including seniors, families, and Transitional Age Youth (TAY)—and evaluate service areas with high proportions of people of color to minimize the impact on those communities.

Beyond the immediate cuts, the community demanded a higher standard of financial transparency and strategic communication. Attendees requested line-item details on budget reductions by region and program area, as well as clearer data on the true cost of housing families versus individuals. The feedback also underscored a critical need for the County to demonstrate a stronger commitment to affordable housing preservation, with some participants suggesting an eviction moratorium as a necessary tool to maintain stability while the service system is under financial strain. Ultimately, the community emphasized that ongoing, plain-language communication is essential to ensure that providers and the public understand exactly what resources remain and how community input is integrated into the final spending plan. *See the summary report here.*

Town Halls

November 2025 Town Hall

The fifth town hall, hosted on November 20, 2025, by the Department of Homeless Services and Housing (HSH), featured a **presentation of the draft LA County FY 2026-27 Measure A Spending Plan** by Sarah Mahin, the Department's Director.

Two thousand forty-six (2046) people registered for the event, with one thousand, one hundred and ninety-seven (1197) attending. This presentation provided details on the proposed program categories and funding amounts and was followed by a Q&A session and discussion. Programs currently funded by the CEO-Homeless Initiative, which will transfer to the Department of Homeless Services and Housing on January 1, 2026, **are expected to face a significant deficit of approximately $303 million in the upcoming fiscal year, representing a one-third reduction from the approved FY 2025-26 Funding Recommendations.**

Following the presentation, we conducted ten (10) small group discussions with about 450 people to explore the following questions:
- How can the County reduce spending without exacerbating racial/ethnic/gender disparities and balance the needs of subpopulations experiencing homelessness?
- How can HSH continue to provide maximum transparency as we work through this challenging fiscal environment?
- Do the reductions outlined in the presentation reflect the priorities of the community?

While the community acknowledged the necessity of maintaining housing stock, they expressed significant apprehension regarding the disproportionate impact of cuts on marginalized groups, specifically Transitional Age Youth (TAY), families, and BIPOC communities. Participants argued that a "housing only" focus is a piecemeal approach, emphasizing that supportive services, mental health care, and education are essential to prevent a "revolving door" of homelessness.

To improve systemic accountability during this fiscal crisis, the community requested greater transparency through plain language communication, detailed breakdowns of one-time funds, and more accessible, regionally based engagement opportunities. Key recommendations for the new department include implementing data-driven equity rubrics for all budget decisions, supporting landlords as vital partners, and investing in the well-being of the frontline workforce to ensure sustainable service delivery. Moving forward, the department is encouraged to foster a continuous, collaborative process that integrates community feedback into a holistic, long-term strategy. *See the summary report here.*

December 2025 Town Hall

The December town hall was utilized to provide a final report back to the community. See summary above in Phase V – Final Countywide Report Back.

Common Community Priorities

Common Community Priorities

After reviewing the comprehensive feedback from the community engagement process, it is clear that stakeholders across all eight Service Planning Areas (SPAs) are calling for a fundamental shift from a fragmented, top-down system to one that is regionally grounded, operationally efficient, and transparently accountable. The following common priorities emerged across the engagement phases:

Strategic Infrastructure for Equity

To accomplish the universal goal of making homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring, HSH should implement targeted strategies to manage growth and address service disparities. Community members suggest integrating equity into the department's core structure through a dedicated unit. Examples of potential arrangements are:

- The department should immediately establish the Culture, Education, and Inclusion (CEI) Division and the Cultural Care Unit (CCU). These units will serve as the "brain" of the regional teams, providing evidence-based frameworks and equity rubrics to evaluate program performance across social identities and ensure that every internal policy, hiring decision, and program design is grounded in the lived experiences of BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, and immigrant communities.
- Implement a CQI Cultural Responsiveness Framework - This structured accountability model would use continuous feedback loops and lived experience representation to evaluate and strengthen the cultural responsiveness of all departmental programs.

Establish a Hybrid Internal Infrastructure

The Department of Homeless Services and Housing (HSH) is encouraged to adopt a hybrid organizational model that balances regional responsiveness with specialized expertise for specific subpopulations. Beyond the previously discussed frameworks for youth and families, the community identified several other groups that require dedicated, tailored support to ensure the system effectively addresses their unique barriers.

The community highlighted the need to move away from a "one-size-fits-all" approach by creating dedicated units or leadership roles for vulnerable groups.

- Deploy SPA-Focused Agile Teams - Instead of a centralized bureaucracy, HSH should field regional teams that are directly accountable to SPA-led collaboratives. These teams will serve as "integrators" who troubleshoot real-time system challenges and coordinate local resources.

Common Community Priorities

- Secure Specialized Leadership - Establish dedicated leadership roles for Gender-Based Violence (GBV), Youth and Young Adults (YAY), and Families within the HSH executive office. These advisors will ensure that population-specific standards of care—such as VAWA compliance and trauma-informed family triage—are integrated into all initial departmental policies.

- Operationalize population-specific teams such as the Youth and Young Adult (YAY) Unit-Create a dedicated unit (serving ages 16–30) to lead cross-system coordination with education and child welfare, driving innovation to achieve "functional zero" for youth homelessness.

Regional Empowerment and System Integration

The emphasis should also be on decentralizing authority and promoting quality standards through collaboration. Long-term accountability and governance for the Department of Homeless Services and Housing (HSH) should focus on shifting from hierarchical management to a shared-power model and community-led oversight. A key recommendation is to create the Community Oversight Committee Board (COB) or Collective Impact Councils (CIC) at the subregional or SPA level. These groups aim to unite those most affected by homelessness, nonprofits, faith communities, and government agencies into a single coordinating body to eliminate silos and foster shared responsibility within the rehousing system. These entities would collaborate with departmental leaders to make decisions on budgets, policies, and performance metrics.

Ultimately, these structures are intended to create a continuous collaborative process where success is measured by the level of trust and agency experienced by those navigating the rehousing system. Many community participants recommended that these structures remain independent of HSH but remain supported and integrated into the HSH regional teams and the department's overall decision-making framework. We recommend that the department explore how these structures could be financially supported through a public-private partnership. Other key elements of regional coordination are:

- Regional Coordination and System Mapping - Quarterly regional convenings (Area 5) and SPA-focused agile teams (Area 4) create accountable spaces for real-time system mapping, flow review, and collaborative problem-solving.
- Increase the Public-Sector Leadership Table's Leverage - Convene a body of all system partners (Health, Mental Health, Justice) to braid funding and minimize redundancy. In a resource-constrained environment, it is essential that agencies' funding for outreach and support services do not overlap.

Common Community Priorities

Foundations for Operational Success: Administrative Reform

The effectiveness of programmatic innovations depends on the administrative environment. Current systems are characterized by high administrative burdens, delayed payments, and inconsistent training.

There is a push to streamline contracting and payments to stabilize the provider network, particularly small agencies, and to combat the structural inequities that force vulnerable community partners to carry the financial burden of public service. HSH should adopt new approaches to stabilize providers and ensure the long-term sustainability of small, diverse, and nonprofit providers, which have often been excluded due to the "capital gap" created by reimbursement-focused payment models.

- Implement multi-year agreements and an advance contract costs structure with short reconciliation periods. This reduces the administrative cost of constant renewals and ensures smaller, culturally rooted providers can survive the fiscal crisis. Models to consider:
  - HSH could adopt a mechanism similar to NYC, which requires a 50 percent advance payment of the contract value upon official execution. This provides the necessary "float" for organizations to meet payroll and vendor obligations without accruing high-interest debt while waiting for bureaucratic processing.
  - Alternatively, HSH could establish a quarterly advance system, a routine payment framework modeled after NYC, that provides at least 25 percent of a contract's annual value each quarter. For multi-year housing contracts, these advances allow firms to plan long-term capacity investments rather than struggling for immediate survival.

This recommendation is based on input from a wide range of service providers, some of whom currently hold contracts with the County and others who do not. The Service Provider Task Force is also putting forth recommendations about contracting that are more specific to County contracts. However, this recommendation to create an advance contracting structure still holds true for many providers that lack the capital to wait for reimbursement under County contracts.

Another key concern is the negative impact of shifting ICMS participants from high-to low-billing rates. Because staffing levels depend on reimbursement rates, abrupt changes in payment structures can disrupt providers' operational budgets. Therefore, HSH should collaborate with providers to develop a consistent or more predictable schedule for transitioning participants from high to low billing rates. This approach would enable providers to better plan and manage their budgets.

Common Community Priorities

Once basic contracting is stabilized, HSH could offer a menu of technical assistance, clinical support, and systemic barrier-busting resources that providers can request according to their specific organizational needs.

- Launch solutions including an "a la carte menu of technical support," or "The Hope Hub" - a centralized, free training portal that leverages County and community expertise to provide standardized, trauma-informed education for all providers. This reduces redundant training costs while ensuring a universal standard of care.

Equity-Centered Accountability & System Performance

The community also called out that measuring performance is not merely an exercise in data collection; it is a fundamental act of accountability to the individuals and families we serve. Community-led designs focused on performance and measurement are primarily housed in Area 5: Systems and System Performance, though essential elements of accountability are also woven into Area 1: Strategies to Reduce Racial Disparities and Area 2: Foundations for Success.

To better understand what is working in our system and how we should prioritize future investments or make curtailment decisions, the community has prioritized immediate, data-driven accountability mechanisms that protect the most vulnerable. They recognized that quantitative metrics alone cannot capture the holistic needs and successes of our most vulnerable community members and indicated that incorporating qualitative storytelling is essential for demonstrating the real-world impact of rehousing interventions and ensuring program designs remain responsive to lived experiences.

Equitable Fiscal and Performance Accountability

- Launch a transparent performance dashboard - to maintain community trust during a period of scarcity, HSH must provide plain-language public reporting on budget allocations and outcomes. This ensures accountability and allows for real-time course correction if certain subpopulations are falling through the cracks.
- To ensure that future investments and curtailment decisions do not disproportionately harm BIPOC, TAY, or senior populations, the department must immediately implement weighted equity rubrics for all budget decisions. This requires a commitment to disaggregate all system data by race, ethnicity, and geography to proactively identify and eliminate disparities in service access and timelines. By prioritizing these data-driven mechanisms, the department can better understand what is working in the system and protect those most at risk.

Common Community Priorities

Human-Centered and Dignity-Based Data Collection

- They also recommended a fundamental shift away from traditional data extraction toward human-centered, trauma-informed data collection processes. By prioritizing the dignity of the individual, the system should focus on collecting only what is necessary to support a participant's journey from crisis to stability. This intentional shift helps to foster transparency and build trust, ensuring the department remains accountable to the community members it serves.
- Incorporating qualitative storytelling—including direct testimonials and focus groups with individuals currently experiencing homelessness—is essential for demonstrating the real-world impact of rehousing interventions. This methodology examines the full participant journey to capture nuances of engagement, support, and stability that quantitative data points often overlook. By pairing experiential feedback with quantitative metrics, the department can tell the full story of progress beyond paper outcomes. This approach addresses current system deficiencies by allowing stakeholders to understand the return on investment in human terms and track how specific policies impact a participant's long-term well-being.

Participant Agency and Advanced Transformation

The theme focuses on digital transparency and restorative access points that empower participants as owners of their own housing journey.

- **Implement Participant-Facing Portals (LA LINC) -** Finalize a universal data platform where participants have their own dashboards to track referrals, view status updates, and access their care team information. This restores agency to individuals and removes the "maze" of system navigation.
- **Scale the "No Wrong Door" Access Model -** Fully implement Access Care Expedited (ACE) points, including digital kiosks and apps, in every city. This allows families to self-refer and receive coordinated triage for beds and resources in real-time.
- **Establish Regional Satellite Hubs -** In geographically isolated areas like the Antelope Valley, open physical satellite offices with local decision-making power and regional expertise. These hubs will provide a visible HSH presence and mobile community care units to reach those who face barriers to traditional service points.
- **Mobile Community Care Units -** These units would embed HSH staff alongside other County departments to deliver services directly to neighborhoods. This model is designed to reach vulnerable populations who face barriers such as a lack of transportation or fear of authorities.
- **HEAR LA** is a constituent service platform designed to rectify the "basic fundamentals" of the participant experience. Crucially, this model is designed for those already navigating the delivery system, addressing a strategic gap left by entry-focused systems. It includes low-barrier technology, strict response timeframes, and standardized response policies.

Conclusion

Conclusion

The engagement process facilitated by Change Well Project marks a pivotal step toward transforming Los Angeles County's social service system into an equitable, interconnected ecosystem of healing. By engaging community members across all eight Service Planning Areas (SPAs), the Department of Homeless Services and Housing (HSH) has recognized that the knowledge to build a responsive system already exists within the expertise of community members, providers, and individuals with lived experience. This collective effort has produced designs across five areas, that together, build an ecosystem grounded in the core belief that housing and support should be holistic and direct, moving away from a fragmented, top-down approach toward one that is regionally grounded, operationally efficient, and transparently accountable.

No single area works in isolation; each relies on the structural integrity of moving toward a model of shared stewardship that centers the lived experiences of those seeking supportive services. The proposed approach is holistic and concrete, providing a phased strategy that balances immediate fiscal stabilization with long-term systemic justice.

Conclusion
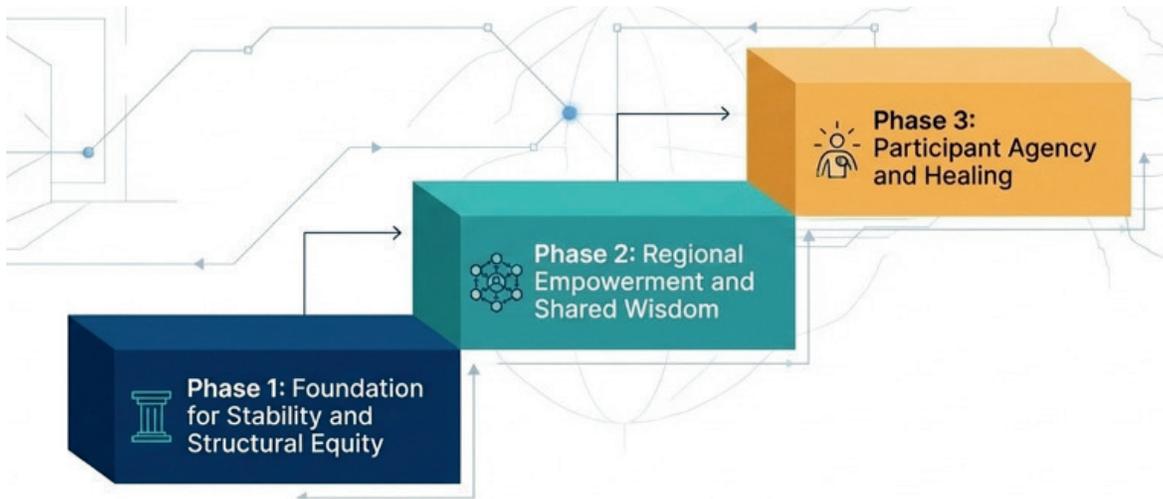
Phase 1: Foundation for Stability and Structural Equity

The immediate focus should be to reform the administrative and operational environment to reduce the capital gap that has historically marginalized small, culturally rooted providers and create centralized resources, reduce redundancy and minimize the upfront cost for providers.   This phase also ensures that equity is not a standalone program, but the foundation of every internal policy and resource allocation decision. Steps that HSH can take immediately:

- **Reform Contracting and Payments** HSH should immediately adopt equitable contracting practices, such as contract advances, to reduce the "capital gap" that often excludes smaller, culturally rooted organizations.
- **Establish Internal Equity Infrastructure -** The department must launch the **Cultural Care Unit (CCU) or** the **Culture, Education, and Inclusion (CEI) Division.** This unit will serve as the "brain" for the system, providing evidence-based frameworks and weighted equity rubrics for all funding allocation and contract procurement procedures.
- **Specialized Leadership Roles -** Establish dedicated advisors for Gender-Based Violence (GBV), Youth and Young Adults (YAY), and Families within the HSH executive office to ensure population-specific standards of care are integrated into all policies.
- **Institutionalize Lived Experience –** HSH should collaborate with lived experience organizations to ensure that those most affected by homelessness have a formal role in guiding accountability and transparency. This can be achieved through employment within HSH and by supporting lived experts' ability to participate in regional community oversight boards.
- **Launch Provider resources -** Establish a centralized, free training portal that standardizes high-quality, trauma-informed care across the region, reducing redundant training costs for providers.

Conclusion

Phase 2: Regional Empowerment and Shared Wisdom

The second phase shifts authority from a centralized bureaucracy toward localized ecosystems. By decentralizing power and formalizing community-led oversight, the department ensures regional nuances and population-specific needs—such as those of youth, families, and survivors of gender-based violence—directly inform system coordination. This creates a continuous collaborative process where success is measured by the level of trust and mutual accountability between the County and its partners. Steps HSH can take next:

- **Deploy SPA-Focused Agile Teams** - HSH should field regional teams that act as "integrators," moving away from a centralized bureaucracy to provide on-the-ground troubleshooting and coordination alongside local collaboratives.
- **Empower Regional Coordinating Bodies** - Formalize bi-directional communication channels by funding local trusted entities (such as COGs, Coalitions, and Consortia) to serve as "doorways" for community engagement and resource mapping.
- **Regional Coordination and System Mapping** - HSH can start collaborating with regional coordinating bodies right away. The SPA-focused agile teams can participate in regular meetings and organize quarterly regional gatherings to begin real-time system mapping and flow reviews, spotting bottlenecks before they turn into crises.
- **Community Oversight Committee Board (COB) and Collective Impact Councils (CIC)**. The SPA-focused agile teams can also work with subregional coordinating bodies to establish the "model" for this community oversight role in each community. Many of these communities already have the infrastructure in place and need financial support and dedicated staffing to coordinate and sustain this oversight function. Other communities will require assistance to reestablish their coalitions and implement this structure. Although this varies in each SPA, most coalitions and consortia are managed by service providers who perform these duties as an additional responsibility. In other SPAs, this is a dedicated role, but funding has decreased in recent years. HSH could support the creation of these dedicated positions through public-private partnerships and other creative strategies to ensure that funding is provided to coalition and consortia leads.

Phase 3: Participant Agency and Healing

The community engagement process aimed to lay the foundation and structure of HSH. This will enable it to evolve the rehousing system toward a human-centered ecosystem that promotes justice and healing. That foundation is achieved by implementing recommendations in the previous phases. We didn't set out to "redesign the system" during this engagement. However, we did capture glimmers and sparks of how HSH could begin to think about parts of our system that are in critical need of repair.

Conclusion

This final phase begins to articulate an evolved system with designs that expand access with a "no wrong door" approach, creates transparent information hubs that empower participants to be the owners of their housing journey, and redesigns our data systems to capture the full story of what is working in our and what is not so that we can align resources, improve our system over time and restore dignity to the rehousing process.

- **Expand Access Points** – HSH can partner with the community and technology providers to broaden access to the homeless system. Leveraging technology from the Access Care Expedited (ACE) design—including digital kiosks, apps, and physical sites—will enable self-referral and real-time triage in every city.
- **Invest in Regional (Satellite) Hubs** – Establishing satellite hubs throughout the County will ensure a consistent HSH presence in subregions. These hubs will form regional partnerships, learn about local response systems, and tailor support accordingly. In areas like the Antelope Valley, these offices will support local decision-making and provide a visible departmental presence.
- **Invest in or Leverage Mobile Community Care Units -** These units embed HSH staff alongside other County departments to deliver trauma-informed services directly in neighborhoods, reaching those who face barriers such as fear of authorities or a lack of transportation.
- **Launch LA LINC (Local Integrated Network of Care)** - A centralized digital hub that provides participants with a personal dashboard to track referrals, view status updates, and communicate directly with their care teams.
- **Launch HEAR LA** - A constituent service platform designed specifically for those already navigating the system, providing low-barrier technology for inquiries and grievances with strict response timeframes.
- **Adopt Human-Centered Data Practices** – Although this larger shift to human-centered data practices will take some time, there is an immediate opportunity to shift to qualitative storytelling, pairing quantitative metrics with direct testimonials to measure success by the participant's actual well-being and long-term stability through the design and implementation of the Measure A evaluation agenda.

The community understands that many of the designs below will require resources that may not be available in HSH's first full fiscal year. The goal is to use the newly implemented HSH structure to start these conversations. They seek to honestly examine the system, evaluate what doesn't work or causes harm, and begin re-envisioning how our system could be redesigned. HSH could start exploratory conversations in the near future and pursue public-private partnerships to help turn these ideas into reality in the coming years.

Appendix A - Designs by SPA

Community-Driven Designs for SPA 1 (Antelope Valley)

Introduction and Context

Change Well Project held a two-day design workshop for Service Planning Area 1 (SPA 1) on September 8-9, 2025. Historically, the Antelope Valley has been governed centrally by the County, which has often failed to address the area's specific social and geographic needs. SPA 1 is not simply under-resourced; it is structurally different from urban SPAs, with its vast size, dispersed communities, rural-suburban terrain, limited public transportation, and extreme weather. All these unique characteristics directly impact local infrastructure, service delivery, access to services, and ultimately successful outcomes.

Participants highlighted that shifting to a regionalized, community-driven approach is essential. Decentralizing authority enables SPA 1 to evolve from a peripheral stakeholder into the main force shaping its own housing systems.

The Central Challenges

- The designs presented in this redesign intentionally address long-standing structural instabilities that have historically marginalized the Antelope Valley.
- Geographic isolation was cited as a primary core challenge for SPA 1. This isolation has fostered a sense of being an afterthought in County resource allocation, exacerbated by a lack of regional expertise at the central decision-making levels. This isolation is not just a matter of distance but also of disconnected systems and a lack of local infrastructure.
- The Antelope Valley spans significant distances between Lancaster, Palmdale, Littlerock, Lake Los Angeles, Quartz Hill, and unincorporated desert areas. Individuals experiencing homelessness may live 20–40 minutes from the nearest service site, often without reliable transportation. Unlike dense urban SPAs where services are within walking distance or connected by frequent transit, SPA 1's scale creates real access barriers.
- The region suffers from a severe lack of public transit; notes from the workshops indicate there is currently no free transit or reduced transport, making it particularly difficult for individuals and families to access services
- Information sharing remains fragmented and informal. Community members feel they receive directives and funding updates in a disjointed manner, which prevents a unified regional response. This lack of coordination leaves the burden of strategy solely on individual providers rather than on a coordinated system.
- There is a critical gap in regional racial equity data and in SPA-specific affinity groups. Without qualitative data or participant surveys from those navigating the Antelope Valley's specific barriers, the system remains blind to the disproportionate impacts on its most vulnerable sub-populations.
- Collectively, these challenges manifest as service duplication, the severe underutilization of existing resources, and community resistance (NIMBYism).

Appendix A - Designs by SPA

Unifying Themes Across Designs

- Central to all the SPA 1 designs is the establishment of HSH SPA-based offices and a local hire mandate. This is to ensure that staff possess regional knowledge and lived experience.
- The shift toward shared dashboards, program launch meetings, and real-time funding updates ensures that every partner, from the largest agency to the smallest faith-based group, operates from a single source of truth.
- The integration of PWLE and Community Advisory Boards ensures that those with lived expertise are not merely consulted but are embedded in the governance structure.

Design Prototype 1: Reducing Racial Disparities

The design to reduce racial disparities centers on the creation of regional community advisory boards tasked with ensuring that a wide range of community voices and perspectives are incorporated into racial equity strategies. This model addresses critical gaps in the current system, such as the lack of regional affinity groups and the absence of SPA-specific racial equity data. The advisory board is designed to be a functional partner in HSH's operations through several key activities:

- Members will participate in equity data analysis and provide recommendations on data collection strategies specifically intended to reduce disproportionality in homelessness.
- The board will make annual funding recommendations based on regional equity data and emerging trends.
- A primary responsibility involves gathering feedback from the community through town halls and participant surveys. These efforts will focus on racial, ethnic, and special population groups that are disproportionately affected by homelessness.

Board Composition and Qualifications

- The sources emphasize that representation must be diverse and rooted in local expertise.
- Representation will include Black/African-American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian Pacific Islander, Latinx, and immigrant communities, as well as survivors of gender-based violence, Transition-Age Youth (TAY), veterans, and the disability community.
- Members must reside in the specific SPA and either have lived experience (or be at risk) of homelessness or have at least three years of experience working/advocating in homeless or justice-involved services.
- The design proposes 18-month terms with quarterly reassessments and monthly meeting attendance.
- The advisory board will report to the regional Homeless Coalition and work directly with the Leadership Table Equity Subcommittee and the LA County Department of Homeless Services and Housing. The Homeless Coalition will oversee the board, vetting nominations and selecting members to ensure community-led oversight.

Appendix A - Designs by SPA

Design Prototype 2: Foundations for Success

This design proposes standardizing how homeless services are introduced and managed in Los Angeles County through a centralized program launch process. The goal is to replace fragmented information sharing with transparent, countywide meetings that ensure all service providers and community members understand funding allocations, roles, and operational workflows.

Launch Meetings

The central component of this design is a formalized program/funding source launch process. This process is triggered whenever a new program is introduced or when an existing program undergoes significant changes in funding or eligibility. Key elements include:

- County-Wide Launch Meeting - A hybrid event (virtual and in-person) designed to roll out contracts and programs with full transparency regarding funding sources, funded agencies, and specific responsibilities.
- Operational Clarity - The department will provide clear workflows and a liaison list for funded agencies to ensure everyone knows their role and who to contact for support.
- Strategic Timeline - The process follows a structured annual cycle, beginning with planning and feedback gathering (January–March), the launch event (April), and post-launch reviews to report implementation updates and changes (September–October).

Building a Culture of Reflection

Another design element addresses the challenge of inconsistent program implementation. This element of the design establishes a continuous learning cycle for the department and its partners.

- Using digital platforms and meetings, the system will collect input from all staff levels, community partners, and community members.
- The department and providers will use this feedback to identify areas for program growth, strengthen relationships, and improve contracting processes.
- The department commits to transparently reporting how feedback has resulted in concrete changes to the system at least twice a year.

Appendix A - Designs by SPA

**Design Prototype 3: Feedback & Ongoing Co-design –
The Antelope Valley Care Campus "The Center"**

This design proposes a centralized hub that offers low-barrier, one-stop access to a wide range of social services for vulnerable populations. The initiative emphasizes participatory co-design, ensuring that the physical space and its programs are developed alongside local providers and individuals with lived experience of the systems being addressed. The Center neutralizes service fragmentation by consolidating essential whole-person services into a single, dignified location, reducing the trauma of navigating a geographically dispersed system. Key Components include:

Physical Site

- The physical campus is intended to be co-designed by local providers and PWLE to ensure the environment promotes safety, flow, and a sense of belonging.
- Possible locations identified include former schools, military barracks, and large retail spaces, such as a former Costco.
- The design includes specific features, such as mobile service units, rotating satellite access days in outlying areas, a low-barrier drop-in center for walk-in housing assessments and transportation support strategies via Uber/Lyft.
- The campus will house a satellite office for HSH to ensure local decision-making and advocacy for regional priorities.
- A dedicated team, familiar with local programs and people, will be on-site to provide one-on-one technical assistance to providers. This team has the authority to convene local providers for real-time updates on funding and program changes.
- It acts as a physical space to host both existing and new contracted providers, as well as vetted community-based organizations, to reduce system fragmentation.

Services

- The campus is designed to offer a wide range of "whole person" and specialized services. These services include:
  - Showers, laundry, storage, clothing, nutrition, food, and gym.
  - A comprehensive health-care clinic, substance abuse and mental health support, and an on-site veterinarian for pets.
  - Eviction prevention, harm reduction, legal aid (for homeless court or parole/probation), and access to the DMV, Social Security, and Hall of Records.
  - Coordinated entry, housing navigation, case management, life skills training, and an enrollment/computer room.

Appendix A - Designs by SPA

<u>Localized Staffing and Training</u>

- The design prioritizes hiring local People with Lived Experience (PWLE) for various roles, including welcoming teams, peer navigators, and workshop facilitators.
- All staff, including security, will receive annual training in trauma-informed communication, cultural humility, de-escalation, mental health first aid, and overdose reversals.

Design Prototype 4: Collaborations & Partnerships - Regional Coordination Redesign

The proposal establishes a Regional Coordinating Body or Hub to improve communication among government agencies, service providers, and the local community, thereby maximizing the effectiveness of housing resources. It promotes implementing standardized navigation pathways and shared data tools to reduce service overlap and speed the process of moving unhoused people into permanent homes. Key components include:

<u>Regional Coordination Redesign</u>

- Create a Regional Coordinating Body or Hub
- Joint strategy and planning across providers in SPA 1; leverage new regional convening spaces for collective strategy.
- Align with broader countywide rehousing and prevention strategies.
- Shared resources and investment alignment in the SPA.
- Strategic partnerships with cities, LAHSA, County Departments, and CBOs.
- Facilitate regular convenings to align priorities.
- Regional data dashboards and shared measurement tools; improve participant data sharing and feedback loops.

<u>Service Navigation Improvements</u>

- Develop clear pathways and standardized referral processes.
- Centralized system for eligibility and assessment.
- Use of shared language and common tools to improve navigation.
- Improve communication across providers to ensure real-time updates.
- Strengthen the connection between outreach, shelter, permanent housing, and other systems of care.

Appendix A - Designs by SPA

Community Engagement

- Address NIMBYism with coordinated messaging and education campaigns.
- Build trust by communicating transparently with communities.
- Engage cities and faith communities as partners.

Resource Leveraging

- Identify shared funding opportunities.
- Co-investment strategies to avoid duplication.
- Utilize existing infrastructure and assets more efficiently.

Capacity Building

- Training for providers on systems navigation.
- Shared learning spaces and technical assistance.
- Improve understanding of each other's programs to enhance referrals.

Design Prototype 5: Systems & Systems Performance

This design proposes that HSH establish a physical regional Satellite Office in the Antelope Valley to deliver localized, responsive, and equitable services to one of the county's most underserved areas. The key components of this design include:

- A regional (satellite) office will be established in SPA1–Antelope Valley. The hub will be physically located within the region and adequately staffed.
- Local hires with lived experience, regional knowledge, expertise in local systems and services, and a strong knowledge of local resource networks.
- Adequate resources (funding, staff, tools) will be allocated to meet regional capacity needs.
- Local control over the "by-name list" and matching to housing resources, including Interim Housing (IH), Housing Navigation (HN), Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), and Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF).
- System-level case conferencing to resolve bottlenecks.

Appendix A - Designs by SPA

Critical Assumptions

- A secured, adequate budget for SPA 1 Regional Coordination must be established.
- Private investment to augment public funding is required to realize the "Care Campus" vision.
- Contracts must be finalized and funds issued before start dates; administrative delays will compromise local providers' stability.
- As identified by the working groups, the development of a functional, simple matching process will make or break this concept.
- HSH must commit to hiring staff with regional knowledge and lived experience; bringing in external central office staff will replicate previous failures.
- Regional coordination must be mandated within the Statement of Work (SOW) and be fully funded to ensure provider alignment.
- Explicit, active buy-in from the cities of Lancaster and Palmdale is mandatory for site acquisition and NIMBY mitigation.

Conclusion

The proposed designs present a hopeful and practical solution to address geographic isolation and fragmented services in SPA 1. By adopting a community-centered and regionally empowered approach, SPA 1 is set to become a leading example of fair and efficient service delivery. The collaborative strategies described here are not only responses to enduring challenges but also proactive investments in the future of the Antelope Valley—creating a space where local voices influence solutions, resources meet actual needs, and all residents are given the chance to succeed.

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Community-Driven Design for SPA 2 (San Fernando & Santa Clarita Valleys)

Introduction and Workshop Context

On September 3rd and 4th, 2025, a Two-Day Workshop was held to design the foundational frameworks for The Department of Homeless Services and Housing (HSH), bringing together regional stakeholders from the San Fernando and Santa Clarita Valleys. The workshop served as a design lab to ensure HSH's DNA is rooted in local expertise. These design prototypes represent a fundamental shift toward a person-centered approach. By transitioning from bureaucratic silos to a continuum of care that cares, the proposed frameworks prioritize human dignity and ensure that the community's voice recalibrates departmental operations at every level.

The Central Challenges

Community members identified that the current landscape is frequently hampered by leadership voids, short-term political cycles that prioritize quick wins over durable outcomes, and a lack of genuine accountability. Without a centralized, community-vetted structure, the system remains trapped in a cycle of crisis management rather than strategic resolution. The core challenges driving this redesign are synthesized into three main themes:

Information & Access Gaps
A profound lack of centralized and accurate information regarding program availability creates barriers to matching and stalls participant progress. For providers and participants alike, navigating a fragmented information landscape leads to wasted resources and a failure to reach those most in need.

Institutional & Trust Deficits
Historical failures have left marginalized communities deeply skeptical of County initiatives. It was frequently noted that community input is often tokenized. Members are invited to share stories but lack the power to shape funding or policy decisions, which has led to a breakdown in the collaborative bond between the department and its constituents.

Capacity & Resource Strain
Organizational budgets are drained by high staff turnover and the exorbitant costs of specialized training. This creates a relational tension in which the County mandates standards but fails to provide accessible training tools for providers, particularly smaller community-based organizations, to meet those expectations.

Appendix A - Designs by SPA

Unifying Themes Across Designs

The diverse designs developed during the workshop, ranging from feedback platforms to training hubs, are bound by common threads. These themes ensure that HSH functions as a cohesive whole rather than a collection of disparate units. The four unifying themes include:

- Centralization & Transparency - Establishment of one-stop shops for information and public-facing data dashboards to ensure performance is visible to all stakeholders.
- Empowerment of Lived Experience - Move beyond advisory roles to integrate peer ambassadors and a Community Oversight Committee with actual influence over budgets and policy.
- Standardization of Excellence - Implement uniform, trauma-informed training across all providers to ensure a consistent quality of care throughout SPA 2.
- Regional & Interjurisdictional Coordination - Empower HSH SPA Leads to serve as strategic thinkers who navigate city, county, and state lines to eliminate duplication and maximize housing movement.

Design Prototype 1: Reducing Racial Disparities - Strategic Initiatives & Population-Specific Units

Create an internal Strategic Initiatives-Population specific unit within the Department of Homeless Services and Housing that will develop and test new strategies with the goal of reducing disproportionality among groups experiencing homelessness and meeting equity subgoals recommended by ECHRA and approved by the Board of Supervisors.

Roles & Responsibilities

- Design and test strategies to improve equity & equity metrics
- Coordinate with community groups (existing and future) for ongoing feedback on:
    - Data collection strategies
    - Data analysis
    - Evaluation design
    - Design of data dashboards
    - Design of culturally responsive services
- Coordinate with the HSH Data and Evaluation team on equity data.
- Work with HSH Contracts & Grants to identify providers who can provide culturally responsive programming.
- Identify community training needs.
- Coordinate with ARDI.
- The AI/AN team will work on and monitor tribal consultation.

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Methods of Community Engagement

- Physical Outreach - town halls, meet-and-greets, and canvassing to meet the community where they live.
- Digital Integration -coordinated social media, text blasts, and HSH website updates to reach younger generations.
- Data Co-Design - involving community groups in the design of data collection strategies and dashboards as active participants in designing culturally responsive services.

Design Prototype 2: Foundations for Success - The Hope Hub

Create a free training portal/hub for homeless services providers in LA County that helps providers increase staff and organizational capacity by leveraging and centralizing existing training opportunities (both virtual and in-person) through one accessible hub. This portal/hub will:

1. Make available trainings that occur both virtually and in-person.
2. Increase organizational capacity of homeless service providers in LA County.
3. Leverage county and community training resources to lessen the burden on organizations to train their staff.
4. Might also be used as a community resource accessible to residents.

The Five-Stage Development Framework

1. Portal Design - defining access methods and confirming the feasibility of utilizing the County LMS.
2. Training Offerings - conducting an agency needs assessment to prioritize contractually required and specialized training (e.g., trauma-informed care).
3. Identify Strategic Partnerships.
4. Dedicated HSH Staffing - establishing a team within the new department whose primary focus is the Hub's maintenance and content curation.
5. Marketing & Rollout – a robust communication plan to ensure the provider community is aware of these free resources.

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Design Prototype 3: Feedback & Ongoing Co-design - HEAR LA

HEAR LA is a constituent service platform designed to rectify the basic fundamentals of the participant experience. Crucially, this model is designed for those already navigating the delivery system—addressing a strategic gap left by entry-focused systems like 211 or LA-HOP.

Key Components of HEAR LA:
- SPA-Based Expert Teams - staffing includes specialists in Adult, Family, and TAY systems, alongside peer ambassadors with deep knowledge of HSH and County programs.
- Low-Barrier Technology - an adaptable suite of submission methods, including kiosks, text lines, web portals, and phone access, ensuring information is routed to SPA teams within minutes.
- 24-72 Hour Mandate – a strict triage and response timeframe to ensure grievances do not languish in administrative queues.
- Standardized Response Policies - clear call-decision trees and scripts to ensure every interaction is handled professionally and with empathy.

HEAR LA signifies a cultural shift away from a punitive, shaming-based grievance process toward one focused on collaborative learning and problem-solving. By turning individual complaints into systemic data, the department can address issues promptly, helping to rebuild trust with those whom the system has traditionally let down.

Design Prototype 4: Collaborations & Partnerships

Communication Infrastructure

This design promotes info/resource sharing via (1) a public-facing platform for community members to search for resources. (2) a provider-facing component of the platform where providers can find and share information for the benefit of participants. (3) SPA Reps take gathered info from the database and confer with leadership (county to state) so decisions on Homeless Services (ex, decisions on funding & allocations of resources are made with accurate data and information (for context and elevation of PLE experiences).

The Platform Elements

- Public-Facing - Allows residents and participants to search for resources and understand system processes.
- Provider-Facing - a secure portal for case conferencing and resource sharing between contracted and community-based partners.

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The Strategic Role of the SPA Lead

In this design, the SPA Lead serves as the primary liaison between regional data and executive policymaking. They are strategic thinkers who synthesize qualitative and quantitative insights from the database to inform leadership at the County and State levels. This ensures that funding and resource allocations are grounded in real-world SPA 2 dynamics rather than administrative assumptions.

Design Prototype 5: Systems & Systems Performance - Community Oversight Committee Board

The department will establish a **Community Oversight Committee Board (COB)** made up of community members most impacted by homelessness, including families, TAY, immigrants, and formerly incarcerated individuals. The COB will work in partnership with departmental management, including strategy, finance, and HR leaders, to guide accountability, transparency, and community-driven decision-making.

The COB serves as the department's primary vehicle for community-driven decision-making. The COB will require diverse representation, including families, TAY, immigrants, refugees, and formerly incarcerated individuals. Strategic credibility is bolstered by the COB's mandate to work in partnership with departmental strategy, finance, and HR leaders. To ensure accessibility and effectiveness, members will receive orientation, training, and stipends for their participation.

The COB will collaborate closely with department leadership to:

- Provide input on budgets, policies, and outcomes.
- Guide public communication and outreach strategies.
- Act as a community feedback loop, strengthening transparency and trust between the department and the public.

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Critical Assumptions

The viability of these community-driven designs depends on several high-stakes requirements:

- Unwavering County buy-in and a commitment to cultural change to collaborative models.
- Full funding for HSH staffing, COB stipends, and incentives for non-contracted provider engagement.
- Technology and seamless integration with 211, LA-HOP, and the County LMS via a capable vendor.
- Equity and authentic engagement with ARDI, along with a robust Tribal Consultation process.

Conclusion

These five design prototypes offer a clear roadmap toward a more effective, equitable, and transparent homelessness system. By combining HEAR LA's quick response, Hope Hub's capacity building, the equity-focused Strategic Initiatives, COB's governance, and the data-informed Communication Infrastructure coordination, the department can progress toward a caring continuum of care.

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Community-Driven Designs for SPA 3 (San Gabriel Valley)

Introduction and Workshop Context

On October 22–23, 2025, the Service Planning Area (SPA) 3 workgroups convened for a two-day workshop to fundamentally architect the homelessness response system for the Department of Homelessness Services and Housing (HSH). This workshop marks a decisive transition from a top-down, one-size-fits-all administrative model to a localized, community-informed architecture specifically tailored to the San Gabriel Valley. By empowering those closest to the ground, municipalities, community-based organizations (CBOs), and persons with lived experience, the designs ensure that HSH functions as a strategic partner responsive to the unique geographic and social nuances of SPA 3.

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The Central Challenges

The SPA 3 attendees identified operational pain points that actively prevent participants from achieving housing stability. The following table evaluates the central problems they hoped to solve through their designs:

Problem Category	Issue Identified	Impact on Service Delivery
Administrative & Contractual	Slow payments, segmented contracting, tedious and unrealistic KPI processes.	Financial instability among CBOs leads to high staff turnover and administrative burnout, which detracts from direct participant care.
Data & Transparency	Lack of HMIS access for cities; reliance on inaccurate PIT counts; unknown points of contact within agencies.	Inefficient resource allocation; inability to track real-time bed availability or system flow.
Equity & Inclusion	Inconsistent care standards; lack of outreach on the east end of the county; limited connection to DPSS/211.	Persistent geographic and racial disparities; marginalized groups, including tribal communities, remain underserved.
Coordination & Silos	Participants bounced around between agencies; lack of a single point of contact; closed doors for those who don't fit the narrow criteria, silos and lack of coordination between City and County staff, COGs, service providers.	Fragmented service paths result in participant frustration and increased movement out of the housing pipeline.

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Unifying Themes Across Designs

Across the workgroup designs, four unifying themes emerged:

- Redesign the point in time count (PIT) to include a locally driven "annual census" accompanied by public dashboards. This would allow us to move beyond the limitations of the annual Point-in-Time (PIT) count and ensure funding is dictated by current need.
- Share power with the Sub-regions to directly address the grievance that the current monolithic County model is unresponsive to local and municipal priorities. Power is strategically shifted toward the community and leverages existing spaces like the HLC (Homeless Leadership Committee) facilitated by the SGV Consortium.
- Standardize equity by establishing the Culture, Education, and Inclusion (CEI) Division and institutionalizing mandatory, competency-based care standards.
- Integrate collaboration by creating a formal Division of Collaboration to replace fragmented silos with a unified culture of partnership. This integrator role shifts HSH from a telling to an asking posture, fostering a network in which providers are connected through shared roadmaps rather than isolated contracts.

The following prototypes present a comprehensive structural approach, going beyond small changes to suggest new divisions and workflows that reshape how the Department interacts with the San Gabriel Valley.

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Design Prototype 1: Reducing Racial Disparities

The design aims to resolve persistent systemic and structural inequities that lead to uneven resource allocation. It also addresses a general lack of foundational knowledge regarding cultural responsiveness and trauma-informed care among providers, as well as the inconsistent inclusion of marginalized and tribal communities in decision-making. The CEI Division is structured around five primary focus areas:

- Culture - This involves establishing standardized care grounded in Housing First, Harm Reduction, and Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) principles. It includes adopting a unified Inclusion and Equity Statement to guide funding and performance.
- Education - The division would implement mandatory, standardized training for internal staff, community-based organizations, and elected officials. This curriculum would address racism, systemic inequities, disabilities, and historical trauma, often incorporating educators with lived experience.
- Inclusion - To improve representation, the design proposes a Community Engagement Council featuring tribal members and individuals with lived experience. It also seeks to develop enforced communication standards to improve cross-sector collaboration.
- Research & Evaluation - Accountability is maintained through a centralized data platform used for continuous monitoring and equity impact analyses of funding and outcomes. The division would publish Annual CEI Impact Reports to show progress.
- Training & Technical Assistance (TA) - This component focuses on building system-wide capacity by offering hands-on coaching for leadership and facilitating peer exchanges to share best practices.

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Design Prototype 2: Foundations for Success

The Foundations for Success design for SPA 3 focuses on streamlining and improving administrative processes, such as contracting and payments, to reduce burdens on service providers and allow them to prioritize service delivery. The design proposes a five-step process to modernize the funding and contracting lifecycle:

The Five-Step Streamlining Process

1. PIT Count Improvement - Enhance the annual Point-in-Time (PIT) count process, as it is the primary driver for the funding cycle.
2. Strategic Planning - Establish a regional and subregional strategic planning process that is informed by "bottom-up" engagement with community members, service providers, and lived experts to ensure funding is used effectively.
3. Contracts Management Portal - Develop a user-friendly digital portal for grantees to track the contracting lifecycle in real-time. Features would include pre-filled templates, automated digital signatures, document tracking, and access to program guidelines.
4. Administrative Streamlining - Implement multi-year contracting, increase budget flexibility, and adopt mandatory timelines for contract execution and payments to ensure grantees can invoice from the start of the fiscal year.
5. Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) - Adopt a performance-based accountability model that includes quarterly feedback loops for administrative pain points, capacity building for new contractors, and a formal contract grievance process.

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Design Prototype 3: Feedback & Ongoing Co-design

This design focuses on ensuring transparency and accountability within HSH. The core proposal is to increase funding allocations and contract directly with cities to prioritize and implement local solutions based on accurate, community-driven data. The design shifts control to the local level through several key mechanisms:

- Annual Census - This aims to enhance standard Point-in-Time (PIT) data with a more accurate local count and a needs assessment, ensuring funding aligns with the actual local reality.
- Community Advisory Board - A council of community members, including youth and individuals with lived experience, would be established to provide recommendations for local funding allocations and participate in proposal reviews.
- Care First Approach - Contracts with cities would mandate a "Care First" framework to ensure funds are used for supportive services rather than criminalizing people experiencing homelessness.
- Data Transparency & Dashboards - The design calls for enhanced public dashboards that show the micro-level impact of how publicly funded programs are being spent.
- Bi-Annual Regional Evaluation - The department (HSH) would perform a regional evaluation every two years to measure the effectiveness of these localized solutions.

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Design Prototype 4: Collaborations & Partnerships

The Collaborations and Partnerships design for SPA 3 centers on creating a "Division of Collaboration" within HSH. This division's primary goal is to identify and strengthen networks and relationships within each SPA among community-based organizations (CBOs), faith communities, cities, and other service providers to create a more integrated response to homelessness. Each SPA would have dedicated staff members who act as "Integrators" and are accountable to their specific community through the following functions:

- On-the-Ground Presence - Staff will maintain deep knowledge of local resources and understand how various pieces of the local system connect.
- Listening and Synthesizing - Staff will actively listen to feedback from CBOs and cities regarding what is working and what is not, serving as a conduit to lift these issues to HSH decision-makers.
- Solving Collaboration Hurdles - When partnership challenges arise between agencies, the division will convene the correct partners to resolve the issue or invent new solutions, such as creating workflows or roadmaps for specific needs (e.g., connecting families to permanent housing).
- Fostering Transparency - The division will emphasize transparency regarding HSH goals and outcomes at the SPA level, inviting community partners to help fill identified service gaps.

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Design Prototype 5: Systems & Systems Performance

The Systems and Systems Performance design for SPA 3 focuses on creating an accountable, data-driven environment through a quarterly coordination structure known as the SPA-Level System Flow Convening. This design is intended to build and utilize evidence regarding effective practices to guide funding decisions and improve overall program performance.

Core Objective and Structure:

The central component of this design is a Quarterly Regional Convening led by the Council of Governments (COG) in partnership with the SGV Consortium and the HSH Regional Team. These meetings would include a diverse range of participants from SPA 3, including:

- City partners.
- Service providers.
- Community representatives.
- Individuals with lived experience.

Key Functions and Activities

The convenings are designed to serve as a space for collaborative problem-solving and system-wide alignment through several specific activities:

- System Mapping - Conducting both initial and ongoing mapping of local resources and processes.
- Dashboard Reviews - Reviewing system flow dashboards to understand real-time outcomes and identify bottlenecks.
- Data-Informed Accountability - Ensuring that performance data directly informs system-level problem-solving and annual funding recommendations.
- Bridging Gaps - Actively working to resolve the disconnect between community partners and government entities.

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Critical Assumptions

These assumptions represent the necessary conditions for the proposed designs to function effectively:

- The success of these designs relies heavily on the voluntary cooperation and buy-in of diverse partners.
- Partners must be willing to engage in behavioral and cultural change.
- Strengthening partnerships requires a high degree of transparency regarding goals and outcomes at the SPA and sub-regional levels.
- It is assumed that all cities will buy in, participate equally, and cooperate with HSH.
- Cities are committed to implementing best practices and implementing a comprehensive development plan and housing elements to address all aspects of homeless response (prevention, outreach, interim housing, PSH, affordable housing, support services).
- Multiple designs assume the existence of sustained political will and County investment in these new processes.
- Securing long-term sustainable funding and adequate resources is a baseline requirement for all initiatives.
- The department must have adequate staffing levels, and those staff members must possess the experience and training required to act as facilitators and integrators.
- For administrative improvements, it is assumed the department will have sufficient legal and contract support to execute agreements in a timely manner.
- The department is assumed to have the capability to build a contracts management portal and a data platform or app that provides cities and providers with access to shared data, such as HMIS.
- Decisions must be informed by accurate, integrated data and regional strategic planning processes with active community participation.
- HSH must be recognized as a neutral equity oversight body that holds authority across different jurisdictions.
- Regional staff must be resourced and empowered to convene partners and have the authority to elevate local issues directly to department leadership.

Conclusion

The SPA 3 designs provide a detailed plan to transform the homelessness response system into a structurally integrated, regionally coordinated, and equity-focused approach. They aim to tackle existing challenges like jurisdictional silos, delays in payments, and uneven care standards by proposing a department that serves as a neutral facilitator and an empowered integrator.

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Community-Driven Designs for SPA 4 (Metro Los Angeles)

Introduction and Workshop Context

On September 22-23, 2025, a critical workshop was convened to help design the transition toward the Department of Homeless Services and Housing (HSH). The workshop engaged a specialized cohort of participants, including SPA 4 leads, service providers, and individuals with lived experience.

To ensure the HSH structure is resilient and responsive, the following foundational values were established as core design principles:

- Prioritizing the experiential data and insights of those who have navigated the system.
- Shifting the system's primary focus from transactional metrics to human outcomes.
- Embedding structural supports that address the specific needs of marginalized and disproportionately impacted populations.
- Expanding the stakeholder definition to include school districts, businesses, and the broader public.
- Distributing resources to empower individuals with the autonomy to meet their own needs.

The Central Challenges

- For service providers, the administrative burden is more than bureaucratic; it reflects a financial shortfall where contract rates fail to cover actual service costs, hindering agencies from offering competitive salaries and retaining staff. This fosters a continual scarcity mindset that hampers quality care.
- Inflexible contracting and complex invoicing processes disproportionately impact smaller, grassroots organizations.
- Information flow is critically broken; system partners and providers currently lack access to basic eligibility and intake/referral data, creating a landscape of confusion rather than clarity.
- Essential departments (SSA, DMV, DMH) operate in isolation, leading to fragmented work and significant duplication of effort.

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Unifying Themes Across Designs

To bridge the gap between current issues and the future state of HSH, four themes were identified:

- Develop an equitable infrastructure within HSH that can move away from one-size-fits-all programs toward Cultural Care and tailored supports for specific subgroups, including Transition-Age Youth (TAY), LGBTQIA+, and Tribal communities.
- Implement public-facing dashboards and open, bi-directional feedback loops that make the system understandable to the general public and foster radical transparency.
- Shift away from transactional data tracking to tracking data across the participant journey. This empowers clients with access to their own knowledge and records, moving away from a system that simply moves people through to one that supports a continuous personal journey.
- Shift the organizational culture from weaponized data used for punitive compliance to a culture of support where data is used to identify where the department must provide additional resources to providers.

Design Prototype 1: Reducing Racial Disparities –The Cultural Care Unit – CCU

The design outlines the creation of a Cultural Care Unit (CCU) within the Department of Homeless Services and Housing. Its aim is to address and support disproportionately affected homeless groups such as Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC), LGBTQIA+, and other vulnerable populations. Key components include:

1. Equitable recruitment and community-responsive practices.
2. Strategic planning and collaborations with governments and tribes.
3. Community engagement through surveys and feedback loops.
4. Data collection and analysis to inform decisions.

The CCU will work with community advisory committees, focusing on evidence-based feedback and strategic alignment to support impacted populations. A community feedback loop will ensure that recommendations can be adjusted and refined.

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Design Prototype(s) 2: Foundations for Success – Equitable Contracting & Provider Supports

<u>Design #1</u>

HSH should offer a menu of a la carte supports for providers available directly from the County Department, leveraged from other departments, or through subcontracted providers. Providers can request and activate supports according to their needs. HSH can also recommend supports based on assessments of providers or specific programs. Some supports would assist providers with building their internal capacity, and other supports would add to the capacity of providers in serving participants by bringing in or connecting external services for participants. Menu of Supports includes:

Technical Assistance	• Reporting • Documentation • Compliance & Audit Metric Clarity • UHA/Voucher Applications	• CHAMP • HMIS • RMS • QA/QC
Systemic Barrier Busting	• Help with CA IDs • SSA Access • CBEST • Verifications of Homelessness	• Certificates of Disability • Interagency Relation • CES Matching
Clinical Support	• Field-based MDs, RNs, NPs • Occupational therapy • Case conferencing	
Workforce Development (Provider Staff Level)	• Training • Addressing burn-out • Self-care/Wellness Grants or Events • Evidence Based Certifications	• Recruiting staff (ads, job fairs) • Scholarships • Intern placement (MSW, AMFT)

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Integration Station	• HSSP/DMH Connections • SUD Treatment Referrals • DME Connections • Care Court	• Public Guardian • IHSS/IHCG • Meals/Food Banks
Housing Triage	• Interim • Permanent • Voucher Correction	• Voucher Utilization • Eviction Prevention/Legal Resources
Invoicing/Contract Consultation	• Billing Questions • Scope of Work Interpretations • Renewal	• Amendment Requests • Audit Metrics
Capacity Building (Provider Agency-Level)	• Peer Agency Consults/Mentoring • Best Practices/Training • Incubation	• Provide funding for consultants and larger organizations to provide capacity-building to smaller organizations

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Design Prototype(s) 2: Foundations for Success – Equitable Contracting & Provider Supports

Design #2

HSH should adopt equitable contracting practices into their contracting processes in order to ensure that contracts with providers are adequate to cover the cost of services and to reduce financial and administrative burdens on providers. Some recommendations for equitable contracting practices that HSH should adopt are:

1. HSH advances 80% of monthly contract costs to provider with reconciliation within 60 days (continuing CEO-HI current practice).
2. Advance technical support for smaller organizations to enter the contracting process, such as through a small organization incubator program.
3. Simplify contract renewal processes by creating folders of standard renewal documents (similar to how RAMP has stored files for organizations).
4. Longer, multi-year contract terms if performance metrics are met.
5. Create a requirement that 25% of contracts go to small providers (a small provider preference for a % of contracts).
6. Identify a percentage of funding available for administrative costs when ramping up a new program.
7. Create a process to engage providers and others when contemplating major program changes.
8. Ensure that any significant changes that impact contract obligations are communicated in writing.

HSH should adopt a transparent mechanism for determining rates and terms. Recommended Mechanism for Determining Rates and Terms of Contracts:

1. County initiates study for specified service(s).
2. Third-party expert is engaged to do cost analysis study for the service.
3. Cost analysis draft released to providers with proposed conclusion for rates/terms for specified service(s).
4. Draft open for comment by providers.
5. Final analysis released, including changes and/or responses to comments received.
6. Department creates an implementation plan to incorporate cost/rate changes into contracts for services.

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Design Prototype 3: Feedback & Ongoing Co-design – The "Three-Prong Approach"

This model restores community trust through a structured engagement web.

- Stakeholder Web - A comprehensive network including school districts, Tribal communities, and local business leaders.
- Systemic Assessments - The mandatory implementation of a Provider Needs Assessment (to identify system-wide gaps) and a Partner with Lived Experience Assessment (to track the reality of navigating from agency to agency).
- Convene (HOME Events) - Hosting monthly Town Halls and bi-annual HOME (Honest Open Minds Engagement) events. Inspired by the "Skid Row Carnival of Love" philosophy, these are low-barrier, inclusive spaces designed to build equitable relationships between housed and unhoused neighbors.

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Design Prototype 4: Collaborations & Partnerships - The Partnerships Team

The proposed solution is a County Funded Partnerships Team. The county-funded partnership team is led by a Partnerships Manager and structured around need-based hubs. Each hub is managed by a staff lead who coordinates services and resources guided by community priorities, rather than being restricted to a single geographic area.

The Partnership Team is funded through HSH and includes a small group of staff, some of whom bring recent lived experience of homelessness. Additional staff are appointed through a Community Board–led process, which includes both applications/nominations.

Participants will include representatives from County Departments, individuals with lived experience, service providers, grassroots organizations, Tribal partners, hospital liaisons, and school districts.

Focus Areas:

- Exchange information on available programs and support.
- Share updates on resource availability and regular updates.
- Elevate community and provider insights to inform County-level decisions.
- Provide report-backs on action items and progress.
- Strengthen collaboration and promote a culture shift.
- Develop strategies to maintain coordination and communication between monthly meetings.

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Design Prototype(s) 5: Systems & Systems Performance - Universal Data System

<u>Design #1</u>

This design directs HSH to establish a co-design process to guide evidence-based funding and program decisions in the homelessness system. A diverse Co-Design Team—including lived experts, program participants, and service providers—will create a transparent, public Decision-Making Matrix informed by data, storytelling, and proven practices. This design aims to improve funding transparency, align budgets with community needs, and invest in what works.

<u>Design #2</u>

This design establishes a universal data system that streamlines the journey from street outreach to permanent residency. By integrating existing databases into a single unified portal, the design aims to eliminate redundant data entry for staff while providing real-time transparency for those seeking housing. Participants would gain digital empowerment through a personal interface that lets them track their progress, upload essential documents, and communicate directly with their care teams. Ultimately, the project seeks to foster a more equitable and efficient rehousing process by ensuring that both providers and clients have seamless access to the same critical information. The prototype integrates the currently siloed databases of HMIS, CHAMP, IBHIS, and LAANES into a single Universal Data System.

- Client Portal - Features document readiness capabilities, allowing participants to upload and maintain vital records for housing eligibility.
- Provider & Public Portals - Streamlines messaging and provides public-facing dashboards to ensure system-wide accountability and performance visibility.

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Critical Assumptions

The integrity of these new designs relies on several assumptions to ensure feasibility.

- Success requires dedicated County funding for the 15 FTE in the CCU, Partnership Managers, and stipends for consultants with lived experience.
- The Universal Data System must be built with a low-barrier interface that is fully accessible across multiple languages and levels of technical literacy.
- Agencies like the DMV, SSA, and HACLA must agree to partner differently, breaking traditional bureaucratic silos to allow for barrier-busting at the community level. Failure to secure these conditions risks a return to building the plane while flying it, a reactive state that perpetuates system-wide trauma.

Conclusion

SPA 4's designs highlight the need for a unified, community-driven approach grounded in lived experience, equity, and transparency. By embracing these core principles and addressing systemic barriers, the Department of Homeless Services and Housing can create a more responsive, effective, and humane system that truly meets the needs of the region's most vulnerable populations.

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Community-Driven Designs for SPA 5 (West Los Angeles)

Introduction and Workshop Context

In October 2025, the Service Planning Area (SPA) 5 design workshop convened to chart a transformative course for the Department of Homeless Services and Housing (HSH). This community workshop focused on the transition from a fragmented, system-first model to a unified, human-centered ecosystem. Across all design prototypes, we see the community calling for a shift to transparent, cross-sector accountability focused on the participant journey.

The Central Challenges

The central problems identified across the SPA 5 community designs are rooted in systemic fragmentation, a lack of institutional accountability, and inefficient data practices that fail to meet the needs of both service providers and participants.

- Leadership and decision-making are too diffuse, leading to siloed departments (e.g., health vs. housing) and duplicative programs that waste resources.
- A lack of transparency makes it difficult for both providers and people seeking help to find clear information on eligibility, available beds, or application status.
- Current systems are technologically incompatible, forcing providers to perform burdensome, duplicative data entry while often failing to collect meaningful client feedback.
- Specific groups, particularly Transition-Age Youth (16–30) and marginalized communities, are often overlooked or underserved by one-size-fits-all policies that lack cultural responsiveness.
- Slow contracting, payment delays, and gatekeeping prevent providers from focusing on service delivery and participants from moving quickly into housing.

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Unifying Themes Across Designs

The community designs from SPA 5 are unified by a strong commitment to moving away from fragmented, siloed systems toward a more coordinated, transparent, and human-centered approach to addressing homelessness. The SPA 5 community designs explicitly propose to clarify the role of lived experts in the system by embedding individuals with lived experience into the structural leadership and workforce of HSH, through direct employment, partnering with lived experts on systems evaluation and by moving lived experts into the role of service providers.

The following unifying themes emerge across the diverse design proposals:

- The need to institutionalize transparency and accountability is a primary theme across all designs.
- The designs consistently seek to reduce duplication and streamline efforts through regional coordination and information sharing.
- Ensuring that we elevate lived experience and that those most affected by homelessness have a seat at the table and that all spaces that engage lived experience should be led by lived experience.
- Rather than collecting data for its own sake, the designs focus on using information to tell a meaningful story and improve participant outcomes.
- The designs recognize that certain groups require tailored approaches.

Appendix A - Designs by SPA

Design Prototype 1: Reducing Racial Disparities – The CQI Unit

HSH should establish the CQI Unit: Cultural Responsiveness Framework, a structured accountability model designed to ensure that all departmental policies, practices, and programs are equitable and responsive to the needs of diverse populations. It will integrate continuous feedback loops, lived experience representation, and measurable review processes to evaluate and strengthen cultural responsiveness across the organization. This framework is recommended for adoption by HSH to institutionalize transparency, inclusivity, and data-driven improvement in decision-making and service delivery.

Key Areas	Description
Review Framework	• Each policy, practice, or program must answer 3–5 culturally responsive review questions (developed collaboratively). • Supervisors or analysts answer questions and then submit them to the CQI Committee.
Committee Structure	• The committee includes diverse community voices, lived experience representatives, and underrepresented populations. • Meets monthly to review submissions.
Timeline	• **30 days** for committee feedback. • **2 weeks** for the program unit to implement the input. • **30 days** for committee verification. • **Total cycle:** ~ 75 days.
Process Flow	• Policy/practice/program drafted → Submitted to CQI → Reviewed for cultural responsiveness → Feedback incorporated or rejected → Verified by committee → ----- → Final product approved.
Training and Support	• Ongoing training on the CQI framework and cultural competency for staff. • Development of internal feedback loops within departments before submission.

Appendix A - Designs by SPA

Design Prototype 2: Foundations for Success –
Human-Centered Data

This design proposes a process that discards the practice of extracting data from the people we serve, adopts a human-centered approach, and enhances our data quality by reducing the volume of data collected by program staff. It emphasizes only the data necessary to help participants move from crisis to stability and to tell the story of our system.

- Step 1 – Identify the outcomes that we want to communicate.
- Step 2 – Define the data elements that will be collected based on the story we are trying to tell and limit the data collection to those elements. HSH can access any additional information from the Info hub.
- Step 3 – Define the points in the participant journey where we want to collect those data elements.
- Step 4 – HSH should train providers on how the data is used and why accurate data is so important.
- Step 5 – HSH should create a learning community to work closely with providers, lived experts, and other community members to make sense of the data, look at the trends, and the emerging story.
- Step 6 - HSH should clearly communicate the story to the Public at large, where they can clearly see the (a) investment made + (b) what was done with that investment = (c) our impact.
- Step 7 – HSH should invest in bi-annual public forums to communicate the "state of homelessness" to the public.

The Engage-Support-Exit-Re-Engage Framework

This framework operationalizes the "Culture of Restraint" to solve the problem of trauma-inducing repetitive questions:

- **Engage:** Collect only core eligibility and triage questions at the front door. The full assessment occurs only after a certain number of engagements, to reduce barriers to entry.
- **Support:** Quantify services and use AI to improve qualitative data, such as case notes, while focusing on participant milestones.
- **Exit:** Document the transition to stability and long-term housing.
- **Re-Engage:** Track returners to identify where the system, not the individual, was unsuccessful.

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Design Prototype 3: Feedback & Ongoing Co-design –LA LINC

LA LINC (Local Integrated Network of Care) is a centralized digital hub that ends the maze of who to call or where to go for homeless resources. It's a single, live platform built for end users, providers, and public partners to find services, check eligibility, make referrals, connect, and track progress in one place. LA LINC would integrate live operational tools, customized user dashboards and two-way communication channels to close the accountability gap.

It also serves as an authoritative public site to provide information on how the system works, share success stories, and provide information for the community to stay up to date on local policy and department updates.

Seeking Services Landing Page (No Login Required)

A simple public landing page—a clear front door that doesn't ask for an account. In plain language and multiple languages, it offers:

- City/ZIP search to find nearby housing, legal aid, health, food, and employment resources —mapped with hours, walk-in rules, and transit directions.
- A quick eligibility screener ("Do I qualify?") that narrows options by situation (eviction risk, domestic violence, disability, veteran status, etc.) and produces a printable/shareable checklist of next steps and documents.
- Urgent alerts (e.g., extreme weather, new waitlist openings, eviction protections), plus "What's changed this week?" updates.
- How to get help now: phone/text lines, libraries and Access Centers with staffed kiosks, and a button to request a warm handoff to a navigator.
- Know your rights & privacy mini-guides, FAQs, and short videos explaining processes in everyday terms.
- Feedback ("Something here is wrong?") so the public helps keep information current.
- User progress tracking. Allows users to know their status regarding services and housing.

From the landing page, she can choose to **continue anonymously**—using the map and guides—or **create a simple profile with consent**. If she opts in, the hub routes a referral and opens a shared timeline, so she and her case manager can see exactly what's happening: documents received, appointments scheduled, waitlist status, and next steps. If something stalls, they can message each other directly or escalate to an Access Center—no more "we'll call you back" purgatory.

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Provider Landing Page (Login to Update Data, Otherwise Open)

LA LINC replaces duplicative data entry with role-based portals that replace or integrate with existing tools (211, WIN, VA and housing portals). The key is whether the current system allows for immediate connections and not just sending links to outdated services. Intake notes flow to the same record the client sees. Dashboards show caseloads, deadlines, and urgent tasks; policy updates, funding notices, and "what's new" alerts appear in one feed. The hub also links to volunteer opportunities and includes a benefits calculator to show support a family can receive right now.

Serves as an **information hub** for all service providers, including faith-based and volunteer organizations.

Get To Know the System Landing Page (No Login Required)
Welcome page: Understand how Los Angeles' homelessness response system works. Some examples include:

- Education: Understand Homelessness, What causes homelessness? Myths vs. facts. Why do encampments exist? The homelessness response system (101). Housing solutions explained. Behavioral health & substance use 101. How funding works. Equity & history. Data & outcomes.
- Community stories & voices: Short videos and first-person stories from people with lived expertise, providers, neighbors, and landlords. "A day in the life" of outreach, access centers, and housing navigation.
- Glossary: Plain-language definitions (CoC, CES, PSH, RRH, FUP, HMIS, etc.), available in multiple languages.
- Policy & Local Legislation Hub: Current measures & ordinances.
- City/County items affecting housing, encampments, zoning, tenant protections, incentives for landlords.
- Get involved: Volunteer sign-ups, supply drives, mentorship opportunities. Donate money or goods (a live "needs" list). Neighborhood action: host info nights, adopt-a-project, support a building.

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Design Prototype 4: Collaborations & Partnerships - The Multi-Sector Leadership Council (MSLC)

HSH should become the primary driver of an expanded Leadership Table that is renamed the Multi-Sector Leadership Council. The Multi-Sector Leadership Council (MSLC) will include all partners who have a critical role in providing services and/or allocating and administering funding related to people experiencing homelessness. The MSLC members will together make transparent, specific commitments to address homelessness in LA County and will communicate these commitments to the community.

Mandates of the MSLC

- To act as brave leaders -they will engage transparently with each other, make clear commitments to address homelessness, and be willing to take risks to effect change.
- Ensure resources from all sectors are fully used - they will identify duplication and underutilization of resources. They will share and barter resources on a system scale to stretch every available resource. They will identify gaps and gap-fillers across systems.
- Define their specific contribution to the homelessness system - each member defines their role and specific contributions (services, funding) to the system, no matter their sector. Members should coordinate funding for homeless services and housing to determine the partner best positioned to administer/deploy the funding.
- Share and understand data from across sectors - each member should bring the data from their own system to allow for broader cross-sector understanding of community needs and the County homelessness response.
- Communicate commitments to the community - the Council and individual members will provide clarity to the community by transparently communicating their roles and their specific commitments to the County's homeless response efforts.

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Design Prototype 5: Systems & Systems Performance – The YAY Unit (Youth & Young Adult)

Creation of a Youth and Young Adult (YAY) Unit within the Department of Homeless Services and Housing (HSH). This unit will advocate for, design, and coordinate services tailored to youth and young adults (age 16 to 30), ensuring their unique needs are recognized and addressed through process improvement, innovation, and collaboration across county systems and community partners. Its mandate includes:

- The YAY Unit would be led by co-directors and ensure that unit leadership and many unit positions have lived experience of homelessness and/or navigating youth and young adults' systems.
- The YAY Unit will serve as a connector among multiple components of homeless response within HSH (internal). The YAY unit will also work to connect interdepartmental partners focused on addressing youth and young adult homelessness (external). Additionally, the YAY Unit will convene and support service providers, partners, and young people in the community.

Focus Areas of Youth and Young Adult Unit

- Advocacy for youth and young adults across county and non-county systems and disconnected youth to increase and strengthen services.
- Service Design: YAY Unit leads the technical assistance.
- Leads partnerships across the county, systems, and the community.
- What is the housing need for youth and young adults in your department/programs?
- What housing/services resources does your department/program have to support youth and young adults?
- What are the housing/services gaps for youth and young adults?

Intersectional Engagement

The Youth and Young Adult Unit (YAY) would be a stand-alone unit with a direct report to HSH Director and Dept. of Senior Leadership. The unit would engage with multiple program diversions and teams to ensure an intersectional and cross-collaborative approach. As the unit staffing allows growth, the YAY Unit Team would interact with the following divisions/teams:

- Early Intervention
- Prevention & Diversion
- Feedback Loop - understanding the complex needs of youth and young adults in LA County and the service providers and partners that support.

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- Outreach & In-reach - partnership with schools, street outreach, service provider coordination.
- Interim Housing, Long-Term Housing
- Data & Evaluation
- Intersectional Experiences - addressing reentry, intimate partner violence, and community reintegration.
- Inter-County Connections - collaboration across county and non-county systems.

Critical Assumptions

- A fundamental assumption across nearly all designs is that diverse partners will be willing and ready to participate in a more integrated system.
- The designs rely on high-level political and administrative support to move from concept to reality.
- Significant administrative and financial resources are assumed to be available.
- Several designs assume that complex data systems can be harmonized.
- Finally, the designs assume that stakeholders will adopt new ways of thinking and behaving.

Conclusion

By prioritizing collaboration, equity, and transparency, we can build a more responsive and humane system that effectively addresses the needs of our most vulnerable populations. Continued commitment to these values will be essential for lasting, positive change in SPA 5.

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Community-Driven Designs for SPA 6 (South Los Angeles)

Introduction and Workshop Context

The SPA 6 strategic workshops held in October 2025 emphasized the urgent need to shift toward a community-focused design approach that moves from design for deficit to design for success. These designs aim to build a framework rooted in radical transparency and racial equity, restoring the humanity in data and fostering trust in community partnerships. The synthesis reflects a unified vision where governance, finance, and technology intersect to ensure a smooth transition.

The Central Challenges

- The current system often duplicates efforts and has a significant power imbalance between County leadership and community providers.
- A primary and recurring theme is the lack of transparency and accountability within the existing system. There is often no clear mechanism to hold leadership bodies accountable to the communities that they serve.
- The system is frequently described as siloed and fragmented, which leads to a disconnected experience for both participants and providers.
- Lack of coordination between SPAs, COGs, and various county departments results in fragmented communication and services.
- Information is often trapped in separate systems (like HMIS and Champ) that do not communicate with each other, making it impossible to see the whole story of a participant's journey.
- Different agencies often provide inconsistent messages, causing confusion and a lack of trust within the community.
- Current data collection and utilization practices are cited as a major core challenge:
  - There is a concern that current data methods strip away the humanity of the individuals they are meant to represent.
  - Even when data exists, it is often not used effectively to guide funding decisions or to understand the return on investment for different interventions.
  - Data collection tools are frequently outdated and are not designed to be client-centered or trauma-informed.

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Unifying Themes Across Designs

To ensure a cohesive overhaul rather than a piecemeal administrative adjustment, the following themes serve as the foundational pillars of the new system architecture:

1. Transitioning from centralized bureaucracy to community-anchored oversight. This is achieved through the Collective Impact Council (CIC) and the Regional Housing Advisory Council (RHAC), which help rebalance the power asymmetry between the Board of Supervisors and SPA-level practitioners.
2. Human-Centered Radical Accessibility - moving the system to the participant through mobile units and the LA Equity Navigator (LEN). This approach replaces the invisible door with tangible, dignified entry points.
3. Shifting from "one-size-fits-all" contracts to tiered models. This prevents system-wide failure by ensuring small, localized CBOs have the capacity-building support and braided funding necessary to provide stable service.
4. Transition from data systems built for fraud prevention to tracking the "Social Return on Investment (SROI)." This philosophy emphasizes the participant's strengths and long-term journey rather than isolated, deficit-based snapshots.

Design Prototype 1: Reducing Racial Disparities –
Radical Accessibility & The LEN Nucleus

Create a standardized, equity-centered service model that restores trust in communities that have historically experienced inequities and deep distrust in public systems. Grounded in an equity lens, this model connects people, programs, and data through clear communication, shared accountability, and continuous real-time learning across systems.

Building on the successful framework of the former Children's Planning Council (CPC), a proven cross-system hub that once coordinated data, partnerships, and accountability across Los Angeles County, emphasis is on reconnecting and strengthening what already exists rather than dismantling current systems. This design re-establishes a structure that aligns community, county, and provider efforts around shared values of transparency, responsiveness, and equity.

A countywide communications strategy, the Regional Housing Advisory Council (RHAC), and the LA Equity Navigator (LEN) digital hub work together to ensure alignment, transparency, and responsiveness across County systems, providers, and communities.

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LA Equity Navigator (LEN)

- A digital app and access portal, the nucleus of the system, connecting clients, providers, and administrators in real time.
- Provides immediate access once a participant is entered into the system at the Equity Hub or through the mobile community unit.
- Feeds live data to the RHAC to support equitable service coordination and track impact across the County.
- Facilitates two-way communication and transparent, real-time reporting for oversight, accountability, and learning.

The Regional Housing Advisory Council (RHAC)

- A 25-member body where 51% are appointed by the Board of Supervisors and 49% are nominated by SPA coalitions/COGs. This balance ensures that while political will is represented, the council remains tethered to community-driven evidence.

LA Equity Center, Hub & Mobile Unit Network

- A central Equity Hub supported by satellite provider offices and a mobile community unit that travels to residents where they are.
- The mobile unit serves as both an outreach and service access point, connecting participants directly to the system in real time.
- Three entry points to the system:
    - Through a service provider who refers participants to the Hub or mobile unit;
    - Directly at the Equity Hub or one of its connected provider offices; and
    - Through the mobile community unit, which can enroll participants and grant immediate access to the LEN app.
- This multi-access model ensures equity, accessibility, and real-time coordination for all participants.

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Design Prototype 2: Foundations for Success – Financial & Contracting Equity

HSH should create a tiered, equity-focused contracting and funding model that is paired with front-end braided funding. The model also requires cross-agency collaboration and scales the administrative requirements by provider size. The contracting process builds the capacity of smaller CBOs and aligns resources to housing and community development in advance to be activated at the time of need.

The system replaces the current exclusionary contracting model that modernizes homelessness services through a tiered, equity-focused contracting model. The proposal aims to dismantle traditional silos by:

- Including contract requirements to collaborate with partner agencies.
- CLEAR, tiered contracting process based on provider size/scope (e.g., distinct pathways for small/medium/large; right sized Master Agreements/RFP/RFQ/FFP).
- Size & scope tied to service needs; braided funds available and aligned to time of need.
- Funding for capacity building (setasides); host contract fairs for both large and small organizations.
- Ensure admin and data/reporting requirements are scaled to mission delivery and provider capacity.
- Collaboration infrastructure in place; funding available at time of need.
- Housing strategy includes community development (open space, community improvements, grocery stores, neighborhood development).
- Parity in the bid process.

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Design Prototype 3: Feedback & Ongoing Co-design – Radical Hospitality

The proposal addresses a historical lack of transparency and accountability in service delivery by shifting away from centralized offices toward a community-led network of mobile and stationary hubs. Places of worship, certain community orgs and college campuses, are already successfully doing this work. There's no need to seek their buy-in. They have long served as trusted, safe spaces for people in crisis. Many have resources such as parking lots and office space that can support this effort. Parking lots can house mobile vans when not in use, while buildings can serve as co-located office space for community ambassadors, creating an all-hands-on deck approach.

This model builds on the proven approaches of Showers of Hope and ICMS DHS outreach, which embody the principles of radical hospitality and meet people exactly where they are. By building the capacity of places of worship and community orgs to serve as frontline, mobile entry points, this approach ensures a truly no wrong door system one that removes barriers, responds immediately to crisis, and provides pathways to health, wellness, and stability through compassionate, community-based care.

- Mobile Community Units: Traveling directly to residents, these units provide "Radical Hospitality"—not just basic showers and laundry, but also haircuts, companion animal support/supplies, and hygiene items.

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Design Prototype 4: Collaborations & Partnerships - Collaborative Governance

Create an LA County Collective Impact Council (CIC) l with a shared leadership model where we unite nonprofits, faith communities, city and COG representatives, community members and advocates in order to break silos and build collaboration, providing a voice on making recommendations to HSH and other county departments, provide feedback to HSH on their plans, identify resources and resource gaps at the SPA level, and provide an honest voice on what is working and what is not working in our homeless response system.

The LA County Collective Impact Council (CIC) has the following purposes and roles:

1. Act as authority in sharing community concerns, needs, and recommendations on services and funding impacting homeless response efforts.
2. Holds HSH, other LA County Departments, and the Leadership Table accountable to the community.
3. Is a community voice in real-time for community needs in times of emergency or other crisis.
4. Acts as a conduit for communicating out information/responses/updates to the community at the regional level.

The Collective Impact Council (CIC)

Composed of 32 members (4 per SPA), the CIC functions as the primary mechanism for community-anchored oversight. Membership includes at least one Person with Lived Expertise (PLE) and one frontline staff member per SPA. Utilizing a Shared Leadership Model with rotating co-chairs (every 6 months), the CIC holds the "Leadership Table" and County Departments accountable.

The CIC will be supported by the work of an active subcommittee/council/coalition at the SPA level. This SPA level subcommittee/council/coalition should include representatives from:

- Community-based organizations
- Persons with lived expertise
- Faith communities
- Cities
- COG
- Educational system
- First responders
- Community advocates (including County Commission representatives)

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**Design Prototype 5: Systems & Systems Performance -
Data-Driven Participant Journeys**

The Systems & Systems Performance framework tracks four stages of the participant journey: Engage, Support, Exit, and Re-engage. At each stage, the system must collect disaggregated data (race, ethnicity, age, and gender) to identify and rectify disparities in real-time. The accountability framework utilizes specific targets and a "Philosophy of Restraint," tracking only the critical data points that facilitate the participant journey. The design outlines an approach that will help the department use data to improve programs and guide funding decisions.

- Improve data collection processes.
- Improve Data collection tools.
- Improve the utilization of existing data.
- Understand the full participant journey.

The design then focuses on a framework to examine the participant journey, enabling a better understanding of what works and what doesn't in our system, leading to program improvements and better investment decisions.

The Engage-Support-Exit-Re-Engage Framework

This framework operationalizes the "Culture of Restraint" to solve the problem of trauma-inducing repetitive questions:

- **Engage**: Collect only core eligibility and triage questions at the front door. The full assessment occurs only after a certain number of engagements, to reduce barriers to entry.
- **Support**: Quantify services and use AI to improve qualitative data, such as case notes, while focusing on participant milestones.
- **Exit**: Document the transition to stability and long-term housing.
- **Re-Engage:** Track returners to identify where the system, not the individual, was not successful.

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Critical Assumptions

The critical assumptions for the SPA 6 designs can be summarized into five key areas:
- County leaders will be responsive to community recommendations, transparent in decision-making, and provide sustained funding.
- Diverse agencies and providers are willing to share protected data and coordinate effectively using real-time tools.
- Stakeholders can set aside individual organizational interests to commit to shared, equity-centered goals.
- There is sufficient staff and capacity to manage new structures such as the Collective Impact Council and the Equity Navigator.
- The public will embrace "radical hospitality" and overcome NIMBY (Not In My Backyard) attitudes to support local access points.

Conclusion

The designs from SPA 6 represent a meaningful shift from a punitive, deficit-focused approach to managing homelessness. Instead, they embrace a model rooted in Radical Hospitality and community-based governance. The introduction of the "Collective Impact Council" and "Equity Hubs" aims to empower practitioners and residents, giving them more influence over decisions, as they are closer to the local realities. Ultimately, fostering community connections through transparency, tiered contracting, and safeguards for vulnerable groups is vital for rebuilding trust in public systems. This approach holds great promise for transforming SPA 6 and the broader Los Angeles area.

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Community-Driven Designs for SPA 7 (East Los Angeles)

Introduction and Workshop Context

From September 16–17, 2025, a meaningful two-day workshop brought people together in Service Planning Area 7 (SPA 7) to craft thoughtful recommendations for the new Los Angeles County Department of Homeless Services and Housing. SPA 7's ideas embraced a hopeful shift away from a centralized, top-down approach, welcoming a more community-focused, provider-partnership model under the Department of Homeless Services and Housing (HSH). By involving those who are most engaged with the work, the workshop aimed to celebrate regional expertise as a key to making the system work better for everyone.

The Central Challenges

The core challenges identified during the workshop are synthesized into the following strategic categories:

- Access & Safety Barriers - persistent fear of ICE raids and government surveillance; undocumented/mixed-status households avoiding site-based facilities; geographic size of SPA 7.
- HMIS safety risks - law enforcement access to data creates a barrier for Domestic Violence (DV) providers.
- Administrative & Operational Friction - significant duplication of services; "one-size-fits-all" standards that ignore regional nuances; prohibitive startup/insurance costs; and a paperwork-centered monitoring model that ignores the clinical realities of poly-victimization.
- Data & Communication Gaps - failure of current PIT data collection process to accurately capture race and ethnicity; lack of regionalized sub-population data; reliance on staff who lack decision-making power; and fragmented tracking systems (HMIS/CHAMP) that lack bi-directional utility.

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Unifying Themes Across Designs

The SPA 7 design prototypes mark a positive shift from just reacting to crises to actively engaging with the community. They are centered on the idea that services should be easily accessible where people need them, and the system should be clear and straightforward. Four unifying strategic themes:

- In addition to community-based facilities, adding mobile "trauma-informed hubs" in community-trusted spaces to bypass the fear of deportation or general lack of access.
- Demystifying the rehousing process by adopting commercial-grade tracking and universal "apps" to empower clients with real-time access to their progress.
- Shifting the locus of power to SPA-level centralized bodies.
- Moving away from punitive auditing toward strengths-based monitoring that supports the technical and operational stability of specialized local providers.

Design Prototype 1: Reducing Racial Disparities –
Mobile Community Care & Housing Unit

The Mobile Community Care & Housing Unit is a strategic care center on wheels designed to advance equity priorities recommended by ECHRA and approved by the Board of Supervisors. This trauma-informed hub addresses the specific logistical and security threats that render traditional County offices inaccessible to SPA 7's most vulnerable residents.

Key Components:

- County-funded positions coordinate the hub, while specialized, culturally responsive providers (contracted and non-contracted) are brought in as population-specific experts.
- On-site presence of DPSS, Public Health, and Mental Health, alongside the DMV, legal aid, and record expungement providers, to resolve intersecting legal and administrative barriers.
- HSH SPA 7 staff act as air-traffic control, connecting residents directly to permanent supportive housing, prevention, and interim housing. By redefining the front door, this model provides a safe entry point for populations experiencing poly-victimization, including undocumented families, victims of intimate partner violence (IPV), and Transition-Age Youth (TAY).

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Design Prototype 2: Foundations for Success – Funding, Contracts, and Equity

Strengthen countywide service delivery and funding coordination. It introduces an inclusive, contract-based budgeting approach that considers all stakeholders; a region-based allocation method, that recognizes specialized population needs; and a contract cycle that is complete before the beginning of the fiscal year.

- The budget is inclusive of all stakeholders, including CBOs, cities, and gender-based organizations.
- The department will report back on the budget by contracts.
- Allocations will be made for programs other than HC.
- Families will be prioritized by headcount.
- Allocations will be region-based and will consider all funded programs.
- The design recognizes needs for specialized populations.
- The contract cycle will start before the fiscal year.
- Contracts will be fee-for-service rather than based on acuity.
- Small annual advance payments will be provided.

Design Prototype 3: No Design

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Design Prototype 4: Collaborations & Partnerships - Centralized Regional Coordination Body

Each SPA should have an official centralized body (e.g., Coalition, COG, etc.) for bi-directional communication with the County. The centralized body should be determined locally and is responsible for coordinating across cities and agencies. Together they will review data, expectations, and where there are support needs.

- The centralized body should be determined locally and is responsible for coordinating across cities and agencies.
- Vision and metrics are set at the County level, and each SPA will have a plan for how it will locally implement in service of the vision and metrics. The plan will be reviewed by the SPA regularly to ensure it is up to date.
- There will be resource & asset mapping across the SPAs.
- The central body will coordinate with the designated SPA team member at the county. The County will ensure that there is a County-level team member assigned to each SPA who has no other responsibilities outside of being SPA-facing.
  - Together, they will review data, expectations, and where there are support needs.
  - The county will implement strengths-based monitoring to support all funded agencies to be successful (focus will be on improvement, won't be punitive).
- The County will host/facilitate quarterly knowledge sharing between the centralized bodies for each SPA to ensure that practices are shared and resources are coordinated.

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Design Prototype 5: Systems & Systems Performance: The Client-Facing Digital Portal

The proposed solution is a comprehensive, client-facing digital portal developed to facilitate a smoother and more transparent rehousing process for clients. This portal acts as a centralized platform where clients can easily access and manage critical information related to their rehousing journey. Key features of the portal include:

Referral Tracking
Clients can monitor the progress of their referrals in real-time. This feature allows them to see when a referral has been received, processed, and any next steps, reducing uncertainty and the need for repeated inquiries.

Status Updates
The portal provides timely and automated status updates at various stages of the rehousing process. This keeps clients informed about important developments, upcoming appointments, or required actions, thereby enhancing communication and engagement.

Rehousing Process Overview
A clear, step-by-step overview of the rehousing process is provided within the portal. This helps clients understand what to expect, timelines, and milestones, which empowers them to be better prepared and more confident throughout their journey.

Care Team Information
Clients have access to detailed information about their care team, including contact details and roles. This transparency fosters trust and encourages better communication between clients and their support network.

Overall, the client-facing portal is designed to increase transparency, reduce administrative burden, and improve the client experience by keeping all relevant information accessible in one easy-to-use platform. By providing clients with direct access to their referral status, process insights, and care team contacts, the portal supports greater autonomy and peace of mind during the rehousing process.

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Critical Assumptions

The strategic risk profile of these reforms is high, depending entirely on the Department's willingness to delegate authority and adopt bureaucratic flexibility:

- HSH is willing to delegate decision-making power and prioritize SPA-level plans. Increased Participation: Higher engagement rates in regional coordinating bodies and local agent visibility in County actions.
- Backend systems are integrated, shielding HMIS from law enforcement to maintain participant trust.
- HSH maintains staff members who are exclusively SPA-facing and embedded in the community.
- HSH has the authority to restructure funding into fee-for-service and advance payment models.
- A transition to monthly reporting and the creation of a County-wide Inventory of Best Practices.

Conclusion

The SPA 7 design prototypes provide a roadmap for a system that is mobile, transparent, and locally governed. By moving from a government-centered model to a provider-partnership model, HSH has an opportunity to rebuild trust. If implemented with fidelity to these community-designed prototypes, HSH can leverage localized expertise to dismantle the barriers of fear and bureaucracy. This is the necessary path to effectively ending homelessness through a system that is as responsive to the cultural and geographic realities of SPA 7 as it is to the clinical needs of the individuals it serves.

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Community-Driven Designs for SPA 8 (South Bay & Harbor City)

Introduction and Workshop Context

This summary synthesizes the insights, findings, and design recommendations gathered during the two-day SPA 8 convening held on October 15-16, 2025. The session focused on recommending the structure and operational strategies for the Department of Homeless Services and Housing (HSH) to better serve the community, specifically in Service Planning Area 8 (SPA 8). The primary objective of the convening was to solicit community ideas and recommendations for HSH that avoid recreating some of the challenges in the current homeless response system—specifically, reducing racial disparities, improving administrative processes to better support providers, improving transparency and communication, strengthening collaboration and partnerships, structuring the process to enable enduring feedback loops, and improving our homeless system—and to propose a more integrated, accountable, and localized model for HSH.

Workshops held for Service Planning Area 8 (SPA 8) identified several critical systemic gaps in the current homeless response system and proposed specific designs to foster a more integrated, transparent, and equitable department.

The Central Challenges

The SPA 8 community highlighted several overlapping challenges that currently hinder effective service delivery:

- The current system is siloed and duplicative, leading to inefficiencies. Providers face a heavy administrative workload due to multiple contracts with varying reporting requirements, low administrative rates, and slow reimbursement timelines, which particularly hurt smaller organizations.
- Community members reported that the 211 system is not functional for many in need. There is a lack of real-time visibility into available resources, such as bed availability.
- Additionally, many Cities are unable to access HMIS to submit referrals for constituents they may be serving within their jurisdiction. They are forced to find a nonprofit partner to submit the referral on their behalf, making the process inefficient and time-consuming.
- Engagement efforts are often perceived as top-down rather than collaborative. Current community liaisons often lack the decision-making authority or expertise to provide real-time answers, leading to a lack of transparency and accountability.
- There are significant unaddressed racial disparities in homelessness, coupled with a lack of cultural understanding in staffing and a scarcity of programs tailored to the unique needs of specific populations, such as American Indian/Alaska Native communities.
- Families with minors lack immediate emergency shelter options, 24/7 support, and affordable housing with wraparound services for parents.

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Unifying Themes Across Designs

- A central recommendation is to create cross-departmental, SPA-specific teams embedded in local communities to bridge the gap between County policy and regional needs.
- The "ACE" (Access Care Expedited) system, a no-wrong-door model that uses a universal application, kiosks, and a mobile app, is proposed to replace the non-functional 211 system and streamline family intake.
- Reform of contracting and payment processes is essential, including greater budget flexibility for providers (allowing movement of funds between budget lines) and alignment of non-profit salaries with County standards.
- The use of Cultural Brokers and the inclusion of people with lived experience are considered fundamental to closing the racial disparities in homelessness.
- Participants requested real-time data dashboards for bed availability and a formal collaborative cycle to guarantee that feedback from the field directly influences County policy.

Design Prototype 1: Reducing Racial Disparities

The Community Ambassador Framework establishes an equity-driven infrastructure that connects the County and local agencies with trusted SPA 8 community representatives. Ambassadors are community-based professionals who collect real-time data, provide resource navigation, and relay local needs directly to supervise liaisons and County program managers.

This structure ensures coordination, transparency, and responsiveness across systems by engaging both traditional and non-traditional stakeholders through shared data, regular meetings, and equitable oversight of funding.

Community Ambassadors embedded in neighborhoods to:

- Collect local census and data on how services are used to understand who is being served, where gaps exist, and how resources can be better targeted.
- Provide cross-disciplinary navigation and case support, helping residents connect to housing, health, employment, and social services across systems.
- Serve as trusted connectors and advocates between SPA 8 community members, agencies, and the County, ensuring communication flows both ways; equity is embedded in decision-making, and community needs to directly inform system improvements.
- Identify barriers and trends through real-time feedback and lived experience, helping the County make more equitable, data-informed decisions.

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<u>County Role</u>

- Awards and manages contracts for selected SPA 8 agencies serving as Ambassador Liaisons, ensuring that procurement and funding processes are transparent, equitable, and aligned with regional needs.
- Establishes a dedicated Program Manager and Evaluator within the County Department to oversee implementation, monitor outcomes, and ensure that equity and accountability are embedded throughout every phase of the program.
- Implements the ARDI Blueprint as the foundation for evaluation, setting measurable deliverables and performance indicators that reflect equitable access, effectiveness, and community impact.
- Coordinates braiding of funding sources across departments to create a sustainable financial structure that supports long-term staffing, training, and system improvements.
- Provides technical assistance and data-sharing support to ensure consistency across SPAs and to strengthen local capacity for data-driven, equity-focused decision-making.

<u>Operational Structure</u>

- Daily check-ins between Community Ambassadors and their supervising agencies to share updates, address challenges, and ensure services are aligned with resident needs.
- Bi-weekly coordination meetings where teams review data, discuss trends, and adjust to improve service delivery and cross-system connections.
- Monthly County/Agency/Ambassador sessions to ensure information flows in both directions and decisions are informed by real-time community insights.
- Quarterly County reviews to evaluate referrals, outcomes, and equity metrics, using data to guide continuous improvement and identify systemic barriers.
- Annual program learning and reflection sessions to capture lessons, share innovations, and strengthen alignment across SPAs.

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Design Prototype 2: Foundations for Success - Administrative and Financial Reform

HSH can streamline the contracting and payment processes by aligning and consolidating funding sources, creating a transparent and predictable system that reduces administrative burdens for providers. It emphasizes timely payments, front-funded contracts, and stronger coordination across county entities to allow providers to focus more on delivering services and achieving community outcomes.

The department's contracting, procurement, and monitoring process:

- Facilitates the contract and procurement processes that reduce administrative burdens for providers.
- Collaboration between the CEO, County Counsel, and the Board of Supervisors to streamline systems.
- Create a crosswalk of funding to reduce the number of contracts per provider (better alignment of funding sources).
- Transparent goals and funding processes for the County.
- Opportunities for provider input before decisions are made.
- Create contracts that allow front-funded payments (rather than reimbursement).
- Pay on time — timely reimbursements and predictable cash flow.
- Targeted providers (specialized services) to manage systems efficiently.
- Allow providers more autonomy to manage their own systems and contracts, such as slot and TLS allocations.

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Design Prototype 3:
Feedback & Ongoing Co-design

The idea: To promote effective community engagement and ongoing relationship building, the County needs to create designated, cross-departmental teams that are assigned to each SPA and coordinate all engagement and communication activities through a local trusted entity or intermediary in each SPA. Given that relationships and capacities differ across SPAs (e.g., SPA 1 doesn't have a COG, whereas all others do but the COGs vary greatly in their effectiveness and the same can be said for Homeless Coalitions), the structure and makeup of this local coordinating entity ("the doorway") will differ by region and should be determined by each local community or region. Formalizing this coordination role through funding will be essential to success.

The Doorway Concept

County establishes cross-departmental concierge teams, one assigned to each SPA. Given the overlapping nature of homelessness, the diverse community stakeholders needing to be engaged (PLEH, service providers, business and faith community, cities and COGs, hospitals, schools, etc.) and the different levels of expertise needed (funding and budgets, contracting, data, behavioral health, land use and zoning, homeless services and different subpopulations, public works), these cannot be teams just of new Dept staff; have to be across departments but can be coordinated by the new Dept. It is suggested that the County create a matrix of desired expertise and characteristics (e.g., knowledge of the needs of the business community; an understanding of how to navigate the law enforcement community vs the faith community) to determine the right mix and number of team members.

There should be clear points of contact for each community to ask questions and receive responses efficiently. These individuals should be equipped to engage at a higher level, provide insight, help solve problems, and answer questions. To support relationship building and foster trust, (some of the) staff on these teams should be embedded in the local community (e.g., co-located at designated agencies or entities TBD – determined by each SPA in consultation with the County - on a rotating basis) and ideally live in and/or be from the SPA.

To support community engagement and consistent, regular two-way communication and collaboration between SPAs and the County, each SPA will identify a local trusted body to: 1) coordinate messaging, communication and engagement from the County down to local stakeholders and support the streamlined delivery of feedback to the County; 2) act on behalf of, and represent, the local community, particularly during time-sensitive decision-making

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periods with short windows (e.g., funding cuts or system shifts); 3) provide greater community education and training to prepare all community stakeholders for public engagement opportunities; 4) build partnerships in the local community on behalf of, and in partnership with, the county; and 5) consist of staff (and not just 1 FTE) that are funded to assume these roles rather than volunteers as currently occurs, for example, in many homeless coalitions. These staff will then have to be transparent with, and accountable to, the various local stakeholder groups, hence why this is more than just a one-person job.

The coordinating body identified in each SPA may differ, but it must be a trusted organization that is responsible for the local coordination and communication, ensuring local accountability with a wide variety of stakeholders, tailored to the unique profile of the SPA. In one SPA, it may be the Homeless Coalition, in another it may be the COG, in another a combination of the two, and in yet another, a different entity altogether. Regardless, even if an organization exists to house this trusted body, the form, function, and resources of this model do not yet exist. To represent diverse community stakeholders, the local coordinating body would establish and manage a steering committee or council of nominated/elected representatives from the different stakeholder groups. To promote consistent involvement, the County could consider building expectations into service provider contracts for supporting this new community engagement intermediary.

Given the need for funding to support this two-way structure of community engagement, the County should consider piloting this first in a few SPAs, provided that there is a commitment to taking this to scale countywide following the pilot period. Philanthropy should be engaged to support joint investment in the pilot. As a pilot, evaluation has to be built into the implementation plan to inform future iterations of the model.

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Design Prototype 4: Collaborations & Partnerships -
The Agile Team Model

Our vision: "HSH champions cross-departmental and community teamwork powered by open two-way communication. Together—we listen, share and serve better."

HSH should model and promote collaboration by building a dedicated team that is SPA-focused and accountable to SPA-led collaboratives. HSH should also promote collaboration and integration with other County departments by building a team whose role is to establish a strong foundation for inter-departmental service integration and funding braiding. These two teams should closely coordinate their work, or they may be integrated into one team.

HSH's structure should reflect its full commitment to collaboration. HSH should model and promote collaboration through incorporating dedicated teams into its structure that: (1) collaborate closely with each regional (SPA) community and (2) focus on inter-departmental collaboration with other County Departments.

The **Inter-Departmental Collaboration Team** should adopt an *agile team model* with representatives from other County Departments in order to respond to system gaps and barriers identified at the regional (SPA) level and with the goal of increasing integration of services and funding across systems that impact homelessness.

HSH will work collaboratively with Regional (SPA) partners, across internal teams at HSH, and with other County Departments in identifying and resolving information or service gaps, emergent needs, or system barriers.

The Collaborative Cycle is a proposed workflow to ensure system gaps are addressed:

Step-by-Step Cycle Mechanics
1. The SPA Collaborative identifies a specific service or policy gap (e.g., lack of interim housing for non-traditional family structures).
2. The HSH SPA Collaborative Team "lifts up" the gap to HSH leadership and the Inter-Departmental team.
3. HSH Programs and Policy teams evaluate existing inter-departmental resources and identify specific policy levers to pull.
4. The HSH SPA Team serves as the active bridge, securing resources and answers across departments.
5. The team communicates back to the SPA within 3 business days. This communication must be specific: (1) what has been done, (2) specifically who has been asked, and (3) the expected date for a full answer. This cycle empowers frontline outreach workers and Cultural Brokers to inform high-level policy directly, ensuring that the system adapts to the people it serves, rather than forcing the people to adapt to the system.

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Design Prototype 5: Systems & Systems Performance - ACE Model (Access Care Expedited)

To achieve Functional Zero, the system must adopt a "No Wrong Door" approach that eliminates barriers for families and households with minors. This is operationalized through the ACE Model (Access Care Expedited).

ACE Access Points

ACE provides 360-degree coverage via multiple channels, replacing the non-functional 211 system:

- A real-time public-facing app and website (building on the WIN app model).
- Physical Kiosks strategically placed in libraries, community colleges, and transit hubs.
- Physical access points are co-located in every city, hospital, and school district.

Universal Referral and Application System

The framework mandates a Universal Referral System. We are authorizing all providers and municipalities—regardless of whether they hold a direct County contract—to enter data into HMIS and CHAMP. This turns every city office and school into a functional front door, resolving the "47 definitions" crisis and streamlining triage. By allowing all organizations access to resource info, we ensure that a family's location—not their political connections—determines their access to a bed.

Housing Interventions that would need to be aligned to this access model:

- Investing in shared housing models for families.
- Providing incentives to landlords to create immediate openings for emergency housing (within 24 hours).
- Using Host Homes and transitional housing specifically for young parents.

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Critical Assumptions

The proposed designs rely on several foundational assumptions:

- The department will secure a sustained budget, possibly supplemented by pooled philanthropic funds.
- A fundamental change in the relationship between the County and cities is necessary, moving from "top-down" to "co-creative."
- County staff assigned to SPAs must have the decision-making authority to solve problems in real-time.
- Service providers will adopt new technology (dashboards/apps) if it reduces their administrative burden.

Conclusion

The strategic designs proposed for the new Homelessness Department (HSH) in SPA 8 mark a fundamental shift from a siloed, bureaucratic paradigm to a system grounded in justice, respect, and shared leadership. Ultimately, these strategies move the homeless response from top-down mandates to a co-creative, community-led framework that advances the goal of "Functional Zero" homelessness through a transparent, accountable, and truly collaborative regional architecture.