

# CHANGEWELLPROJECT

PARTNERING TO STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY SYSTEMS

Department of Homeless Services and Housing  
July 2025 HSH Town Hall  
Summary of Community Feedback

## Overview

Change Well Project and HSH cohosted its first town hall on July 22, 2025, attracting over 1600 registered participants and more than 600 attendees. The event focused on collecting feedback about the functions and structure of the new department.

During the town hall, Change Well Project applied two methods to collect participant data: (1) we facilitated 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 the following questions.

- (1) Is there anything missing from the organizational chart from your perspective?
- (2) In order to be responsive to communities and different populations of people experiencing homelessness—how should the new department organize this work?

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## Guiding Principles

Across both areas of inquiry—(1) what is missing from the organizational chart and (2) how the new department should organize itself—a consistent set of values emerged. Participants and facilitators alike emphasized that the department should be: - **Community-responsive - Equity-centered - Tailored to individual and population needs - Operationally transparent and accountable - Designed to ensure accessibility, integration, and continuity of care**

These themes point to a shared desire for an organizational structure that balances local responsiveness with countywide consistency, rooted in both community engagement and technical coordination.

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## Question 1: What's Missing from the Organizational Chart

Participants and facilitators identified several substantive and structural gaps in the current organizational chart:

- **Inclusion of Services:** The chart lacked clear visibility of core services, including mental health, domestic violence response, emergency housing, and reentry

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support. There was a desire to show how people access services and who is accountable for delivering them.

- **Focus on Specific Populations:** Respondents emphasized the need for targeted attention to groups such as youth, LGBTQ+ individuals, GBV survivors, and immigrants. The absence of these focal points suggested a risk of one-size-fits-all service delivery.
- **Equity and Representation:** Both groups called for equity to be integrated throughout the structure—not siloed in one division. Lived experience should be embedded across operational areas.
- **Clarity and Communication:** Several comments highlighted confusion about departmental functions, indicating a need to simplify language and visually clarify how responsibilities are distributed.
- **Accountability and Oversight:** Concerns were raised about how the department will ensure follow-through, measure outcomes, and remain transparent to the public.

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## Question 2: How the Department Should Organize Itself

In thinking about how the department should be structured to meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness, responses focused on foundational design choices and implementation strategies:

- **SPA-Based Regional Organization:** There was overwhelming support for anchoring the department in a regional (SPA-based) model. This would allow for geographic responsiveness and alignment with existing service ecosystems.
- **Subpopulation-Specific Expertise:** Many advocated for structure that includes targeted programming or leadership focused on priority populations—such as TAY, families, or justice-impacted individuals—to ensure their unique needs are not overlooked.
- **Combined/Layered Approach:** A combined geographic and subpopulation-based model was favored as a way to balance local delivery with specialized expertise.
- **Community Engagement:** Sustained community input, especially from those with lived experience and people who are currently experiencing homelessness, was seen as critical to ensure the department remains responsive and trusted.
- **Transparency and Flexibility:** Organizational design should be clear and adaptable, capable of evolving in response to community feedback and emerging needs.

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- **System Coordination:** While less frequently emphasized in surveys, facilitators highlighted the importance of integration across departments, with adjacent partners such as DMH, DPH, LAHSA, and LACAHSa to prevent service silos.
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## Conclusion

Townhall feedback reflects a strong and consistent desire for an organization that is people-centered, community-rooted, and equipped to respond to the layered needs of those experiencing homelessness. Participants envision a department that leads with equity, delivers with clarity, and organizes in a way that reflects both local context and population expertise. The next phase of planning should continue to refine these concepts and ensure they are embedded in both form and function.

## Summary of Themes from Organizational Chart Feedback

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### 1. Broad Desire for Service Integration and Responsiveness

**Source: Participants & Facilitators**

Across all inputs, there was strong interest in ensuring that the organizational structure prioritizes delivery of robust, accessible services. Participants frequently named service gaps—particularly in mental health, emergency housing, gender based violence, and youth supports. Facilitators noted a need for stronger coordination and integration across services, especially for those navigating homelessness.

*Participant data emphasized services 26 times, often as general or unspecified needs, but also in relation to mental health (8), youth (7), and education (8).*

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### 2. Focus on Equity, Inclusion, and Lived Experience

**Source: Facilitators (strong), Participants (moderate)**

Facilitators captured a strong emphasis on embedding lived experience across all divisions—not just Equity & Engagement. Specific calls were made to elevate marginalized populations such as TAY, GBV/DV/IPV experiencers, and transgender individuals. While not as frequent, participants also raised issues of community input, representation, and the need for inclusive systems.

*Facilitator notes detail proposed commissions of lived experience advisors; participant responses mentioned community input or voice in 2 instances.*

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### 3. Accountability, Transparency, and Oversight

**Source: Participants & Facilitators**

Both data sources show concern about how success will be defined, tracked, and enforced. Participants asked how outcomes will be measured and services held accountable, while facilitators discussed the need for benchmarks, clearer roles, and the integration of data analytics into operations.

*5 participant responses flagged oversight/accountability directly; facilitators proposed formal accountability structures and a dedicated Data & Analytics department.*

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## 4. Addressing the Needs of Specific Populations

### **Source: Participants & Facilitators**

There was consistent attention to populations who may be underserved by a one-size-fits-all approach. Youth, LGBTQ+ individuals, immigrants, and DV survivors were the most frequently named. Facilitators provided a detailed list of underserved groups and recommended embedding subject matter expertise into program areas.

*Participant data mentioned youth (7), LGBTQ+/immigrant needs (multiple), and domestic violence (frequently).*

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## 5. Clarity and Navigation of the System

### **Source: Facilitators (strong), Participants (moderate)**

Facilitators raised repeated concerns about system navigation, access points (e.g., LA-HOP), and the lack of a visible “front door” in the chart. Participants expressed confusion about where certain functions lived and who was responsible, indicating that clearer structure and communication is needed.

*Participants often asked, “Where does X live?” or flagged ambiguity in roles.*

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## 6. Funding and Resource Allocation

### **Source: Participants & Facilitators**

Participants directly questioned how funding flows and whether services were sustainably resourced. Facilitators advocated for transparency and accountability in resource deployment, especially across Continuums of Care and county departments.

*Funding/budget transparency was flagged in 5 participant responses.*

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## 7. System Coordination and Interagency Collaboration

### **Source: Facilitators (strong), Participants (limited)**

Facilitators described structural gaps in coordination across county departments, service providers, and local CoCs. They proposed resource-sharing teams, feedback loops, and designated FTEs. This theme was less directly noted in participant responses but can be inferred from concerns about confusion and duplication.

*Few participant responses explicitly mentioned coordination, though facilitator notes suggest it was discussed in-room.*

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## 8. Training, Capacity Building, and Staff Development

### **Source: Facilitators only**

Facilitators emphasized the absence of a training unit and the need to build staff capacity across departments. They recommended training for both internal staff and community partners, but this did not appear in the participant data.

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## 9. Prevention and Early Intervention

### **Source: Facilitators (strong), Participants (indirect)**

Facilitators noted a need to focus upstream on prevention, eviction diversion, and root causes of homelessness. This theme was less explicit in participant data but likely underpins many of the service-related responses.

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## Conclusion

Overall, the combined feedback from participants and facilitators paints a cohesive picture of what stakeholders want: a responsive, accountable, and inclusive system that delivers clear services to people in need. While facilitators surfaced more structural and operational recommendations, participant surveys emphasized practical gaps and lived realities. Both sources underscore a need for clarity, coordination, and equity in how the new department is structured.

## Summary of Themes from Departmental Structure Feedback

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### 1. Strong Support for a SPA-Based (Regional) Foundation

#### **Source: Participants & Facilitators**

Both participants and facilitators emphasized the value of organizing by geography—particularly around SPAs (Service Planning Areas). This model was seen as responsive to local needs and better suited for community engagement.

*Participants: 71 responses specifically named SPA, region, or geographic structure.*

*Facilitators: Recommended SPA-based foundation as a core part of a hybrid model.*

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### 2. Subpopulation-Specific Focus

#### **Source: Participants & Facilitators**

A clear theme was the need to tailor the department to the unique needs of specific populations such as youth, DV survivors, veterans, LGBTQ+ individuals, and families. Facilitators emphasized embedding subject matter expertise for these groups.

*Participants: 39 responses mentioned population-focused structure.*

*Facilitators: Supported subpopulation programs layered within geographic regions.*

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### 3. Hybrid Model (Geography + Population)

#### **Source: Facilitators (explicit), Participants (implied)**

Facilitators recommended a hybrid structure combining geographic and subpopulation approaches. While participants did not always use this terminology, their dual emphasis on SPAs and populations suggests support.

*Facilitators: Described a hybrid model as best suited for balancing responsiveness and equity.*

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### 4. Organizing by Services or Systems

#### **Source: Participants**

A notable group of participants proposed organizing by service type (e.g., housing, mental health) or by broader systems (e.g., justice, health). This reflects a desire for clearer functional alignment.

*Participants: 47 mentioned “systems”; 24 suggested service-based organization.*

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## 5. Community Engagement and Responsiveness

### **Source: Facilitators & Participants**

There was shared support for embedding diverse community voices, including people seeking services, along with other community stakeholders, including faith-based organizations, cities, unincorporated areas, etc., into the department’s design and decision-making processes. Participants and facilitators stressed responsiveness to community needs as a structural principle.

*Participants: 13 mentioned community engagement or responsiveness.*

*Facilitators: Advocated for ongoing community input and feedback loops.*

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## 6. Accountability, Clarity, and Transparency

### **Source: Participants & Facilitators**

Concerns were raised about how roles, outcomes, and accountability would be handled in the new structure. Facilitators highlighted the need for clear lines of responsibility.

*Participants: 5 responses mentioned accountability or transparency.*

*Facilitators: Called for defined responsibilities and mechanisms for consistent care.*

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## 7. Equity and Lived Experience

### **Source: Facilitators (strong), Participants (light)**

While participants only lightly referenced equity or lived experience, facilitators strongly emphasized integrating these principles throughout the structure, not isolating them to a single department.

*Participants: 3 responses on equity/lived experience.*

*Facilitators: Framed equity as a foundational value across all functions.*

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## 8. Operational and Implementation Considerations

### **Source: Facilitators Only**

Facilitators raised additional concerns not reflected in survey data, including: - Ensuring consistency of care across SPAs. - Using data for real-time decision-making, streamlining data sources (e.g., HMIS, CHAMP) - Staff burnout and retention related to geographic assignments.

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*These were not directly mentioned by participants but may have surfaced in discussion.*

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## Conclusion

There is broad agreement between participants and facilitators that the department should be structured to reflect local context (SPA-based), while also addressing the unique needs of subpopulations. A hybrid model is implicitly or explicitly supported. Other shared themes include community engagement, accountability, and responsiveness. Facilitators introduced deeper operational insights that may need to be explored further with community stakeholders.