

San Gabriel Valley Positions on Homeless Housing, Shelter and Services Provision

BACKGROUND

Cities play a vital role in addressing and resolving homelessness within Los Angeles County. Cities control local zoning, which can facilitate, or hinder, the development of bridge, special needs, and affordable housing. Additionally, cities may partner with and direct resources to local nonprofits and community-based organizations that bring needed services to people experiencing homelessness. The decisions that cities make regarding homelessness directly impacts that quality of life for those who are un-housed, neighborhoods, and neighboring cities.

The 2018 Los Angeles Point in Time Homeless Count documented 3,615¹ persons experiencing homelessness within the San Gabriel Valley. Of those less than 13% are sheltered. Thirty five percent of those without a place to live are female and 8% are children. Thirty seven percent of those experiencing homelessness have experienced domestic violence and 11% are homeless as a direct result of fleeing a domestic violence incident.

Other San Gabriel Valley residents are at risk of losing their housing. Across the San Gabriel Valley schools², 6.9% of children live in households experiencing homelessness. There is a direct correlation between poverty and risk of becoming homeless. Over seventeen percent of households with children in San Gabriel Valley schools live at or below the poverty level and over 59% are eligible for free or reduced cost meals. Nearly 47% of households with children in San Gabriel Valley schools are housing cost burdened³. Teen behavior patterns today can predict potential homelessness. Over 6% of teens neither attend school nor are employed.

As housing costs continue to rise, senior citizens on fixed incomes who are paying rent or mobile home space fees are at risk of losing their housing. The high cost of medical services and medications and increasing general tax burdens also jeopardize housing for senior citizens. The 2018 Point in Time homeless Count identified a 22% increase in homelessness of those 62 years or older although the count went down in all other age groups.⁴ Cities struggle to provide adequate affordable housing for recent college graduates, residents on fixed incomes and those providing basic services in their communities. . Virtually all citizens are impacted by homelessness as residents living in cities without persons experiencing homelessness travel to and through, do business in and attend social activities in neighboring cities impacted by homelessness.

¹<https://www.lahsa.org/documents?id=2030-2018-greater-los-angeles-homeless-count-service-planning-area-3.pdf>. This count excludes the City of Pasadena, which is in the San Gabriel Valley Service Planning Area (SPA 3) but has its own Continuum of Care. The count for the entire SPA is 4,292. <https://www.lahsa.org/documents?id=2059-2018-greater-los-angeles-homeless-count-presentation.pdf>. Count data reflects those enumerated at a single point in time and fluctuates throughout the year. Demographic and Subpopulations data are obtained through self-reporting surveys and are statistically significant with 91% confidence level.

² <https://www.kidsdata.org>, Lucille Packard Foundation for Children's Health, 6/18/18.

³ Households with a high housing cost burden: This is the estimated percentage of households that spend 30% or more of household income on housing costs.

⁴ <https://www.lahsa.org/documents?id=2059-2018-greater-los-angeles-homeless-count-presentation.pdf>

The San Gabriel Valley is a subregion of the County of Los Angeles which, in 2016 formally adopted the Los Angeles County Homeless Initiative with Approved Strategies to Combat Homelessness. Recognizing the important role that cities have in supporting the Los Angeles County Homeless Initiative, the Board of Supervisors allocated one-time funding for individual cities to develop plans to address homelessness in their respective communities. The resulting plans that the cities developed are specific to their cultures and needs. As part of the planning process, cities identified subregional groupings and participated in discussions about implementing collaborative common and mutually supportive strategies. Core cities that until this time have hosted the bulk of services and housing for those experiencing homelessness also engaged in discussions specific to the fair and equitable provision of housing and services for people experiencing homelessness in the San Gabriel Valley. These discussions have resulted in the policies outlined in this document.

KEY PRINCIPLES

Recognizing the need to work together to address homelessness, participating cities agree to the following principles.

1. Commitment to Help Solve the Crisis of Homelessness

Each city and unincorporated area should be part of the solution to end homelessness and assist homeless persons who have a connection to their city or unincorporated area. Supportive activities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 1.1. Providing housing or bridge housing for a minimum of 25% of their most recent point in time (PIT) count need
- 1.2. Supporting outreach and education to remove stigma from those residents who need to enter bridge housing
- 1.3. Ensuring that bridge housing is operated by high-quality not-for-profit organizations to ensure limited negative impact on surrounding neighborhoods.

2. Local Preference

Unhoused families and individuals are often transient. Sometimes, this transience is due to circumstances and personal choice. However, many times, it is due to an absence of the needed support services in the community of origin which would enable them to remain housed or to secure and retain housing. Most unhoused families and individuals have connections to the community or communities in which they reside. According to the 2018 Point in Time Homeless Count survey, 56% of respondents stated that they lived in Los Angeles County when they became homeless. In 2016, the city of Pomona conducted a full survey of those experiencing homelessness in the city. Fifty three percent of respondents confirmed that they were living permanently in Pomona when they became homeless. These data hold across geographic areas. In Seattle, 70% of those without a housing living in Seattle/Kings County lived there prior to being homeless. A true definition of community connection can also mean a city where friends and family live, where one worships, attends school or works.

Cities and unincorporated areas have a right and responsibility to use local preference based on community connections when the providing housing and shelter to unhoused people in their communities. Local preference benefits both the community, by incentivizing them to do their part

in providing homeless solutions, and the person experiencing homelessness, by allowing them to remain connected to their existing support systems, school and work.

Recognizing that no one city can bear the burden or entire responsibility of meeting the region's homelessness needs. Cities in the San Gabriel Valley agreed upon the following criteria to help them to determine city connection:

Identified by the City staff (e.g. Police Department, Fire Department, Code Enforcement) or City Homeless Service or Outreach Team as high users of City resources and services and meet one of the other following criteria;

- 2.1. Individual or family is known to the City to be sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation, in the City, for more than 12 months and has a service history or open case for over one-year consisting of ongoing interaction with one of the service agents listed; or,
- 2.2. Individual or family has an immediate family member (mother, father, child, sibling, or grandparent) living in the City, who is willing to help in the remediation of their homelessness. Current residency of an immediate family member must be documented (e.g. owner of record, lease, and/or paid utilities necessary for legal use of the property for residential use), or;
- 2.3. Individual or family became homeless while living permanently in City. Proof of residency on property zoned for residential use in City (e.g. owner of record, lease, and/or paid utilities necessary for legal use of the property for residential use) must be provided; or,
- 2.4. Individual or family includes an individual that is currently attending a City school full-time or is legally and gainfully employed at least 20 hours per week and works within the City limits. Proof of school enrollment or employment must be provided (e.g. report cards, pay stubs, or school or employee identification), or;
- 2.5. Other criteria / documentation as identified by the local jurisdiction.

3. Reciprocal Agreements and Cooperation in Providing Shelter, Services and Housing

Within the San Gabriel Valley, cities and unincorporated areas do not have the capacity to provide all services, supports, shelter and housing for every demographic and subpopulation of the unhoused residents in their communities. In order to balance capacity and availability of services, cities may enter into reciprocal agreements to maximize assistance provided to homeless individuals and families.

By entering into fair and equitable agreements in writing, neighboring cities can work together to develop a range of services and housing meeting the varying needs of their unhoused residents. To this end, cities in the San Gabriel Valley agree to the following protocol:

- 3.1. Law enforcement, County and City Hospitals and clinics, service, shelter and housing providers, mental health jurisdictions, County departments and Governments will be provided with copies of the Jurisdictional Agreements and any modifications thereto.
- 3.2. Cities with Jurisdictional Agreements will actively promote the honoring of the agreements with their internal agencies and departments and local and regional providers.

- 3.3. There should be a clear and functional process for referral and acceptance, and a warm connection, meaning that the homeless family or individual is introduced to a receiver ready to assist them.
- 3.4. To facilitate referrals, cities and the service agencies therein, agree to provide referral contact information including position of authorized acceptor, phone number, e-mail, and days and hours of availability. As a courtesy, the authorized acceptor will respond promptly within the days and hours published.

4. Expectations in Collaborating with the County

By doing their part, cities in the SGV are contributing to the reduction of homelessness in the County of Los Angeles. This contribution should be recognized and valued by the County Departments, LAHSA and other agencies and government institutions. In order to enhance the partnership between cities and the County, the cities encourage the following best practices:

- 4.1. When contemplating service and resource allocation by SPA, the process should allow all partners (i.e. County, cities, supervisorial representatives, LAHSA, the United Way, and the SGVCOG) inform the process and share decision-making. This may include, but is not limited to, RFPs with regional parameters. Cities' unique populations, hotspots and subregional needs should be considered during this process.
- 4.2. Subregional designations should respect school districts' boundaries and have reasonable mileage parameters. Subregions should be determined by self-identified city groups.
- 4.3. Subregional and SPA level agreements between cities and the COGs regarding homelessness should be recognized in policy at the County level.
- 4.4. Subregion city groups should work with the County to serve subregional needs.
- 4.5. As additional cities participate in homeless programs, their efforts should be supported with funding and resources. New efforts, as well as hotspots, should be considered when allocating funding.
- 4.6. LAHSA should provide city and subregional level data on homeless populations, subpopulations, demographics, and funding levels in ratios to homeless populations and total residents. Additionally, this data should be used to evaluate proposed siting and funding and make objective comparisons between communities. Data should be released publicly on an annual basis and be maintained and easily accessible by cities and the COGs electronically.
- 4.7. The County should release a ranking of beds-to-population ratio annually by SPA, identified subregions and cities with more than 200 persons experiencing homelessness.
- 4.8. The County should engage early and often with cities and COGs when planning service provision and bed-siting options.
- 4.9. "Inventory County-owned real estate to determine what can be used for temporary housing and/or services for the homeless. Additionally, screen homeless individuals to determine which strategies, including mental health treatment and/or addiction treatment, permanent supportive housing and rapid re-housing, may best suit the needs of those individuals."