



# **Domestic Violence Council (DVC)**

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**General Membership Meeting**  
**Tuesday, November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023**  
**12:00pm – 2:00pm (Pacific Time)**  
**The California Endowment**



# Welcome Remarks



# Land Acknowledgment

The County of Los Angeles recognizes that we occupy land originally and still inhabited and cared for by the Tongva, Tataviam, Serrano, Kizh, and Chumash Peoples. We honor and pay respect to their elders and descendants — past, present, and emerging — as they continue their stewardship of these lands and waters. We acknowledge that settler colonization resulted in land seizure, disease, subjugation, slavery, relocation, broken promises, genocide, and multigenerational trauma. This acknowledgment demonstrates our responsibility and commitment to truth, healing, and reconciliation and to elevating the stories, culture, and community of the original inhabitants of Los Angeles County. We are grateful to have the opportunity to live and work on these ancestral lands.

We are dedicated to growing and sustaining relationships with Native peoples and local tribal governments, including (in no particular order) the

**Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians**

**Gabrielino Tongva Indians of California Tribal Council**

**Gabrieleno/Tongva San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians**

**Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians – Kizh Nation**

**San Manuel Band of Mission Indians**

**San Fernando Band of Mission Indians**

*To learn more about the First Peoples of Los Angeles County, please visit the Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission website at [lanaic.lacounty.gov](http://lanaic.lacounty.gov).*



# Welcome and Introductions

- Your name
- Pronouns
- Title/Role
- Agency or Affiliation



# Meeting Protocol

- ❑ Please be reminded that this is an open and public meeting.
- ❑ Therefore, anything discussed in this space is not protected nor confidential.
- ❑ Any client or survivor identifying information should not be presented. Thus, please avoid discussion of personal cases.
- ❑ If you need additional resources, please connect with myself or Cindy Hernandez after the meeting. Thank you!



# Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Presentation: LA County Needs Assessment
3. Presentation: LA County DV and Homeless Services Coalition
4. Presentation: Countywide DV and Homelessness Coordination
5. Update: DVC Shelter Directors Committee
6. Update: October 3<sup>rd</sup> Board Action – Addressing Physical Safety and Mental Health for Women Fleeing DV, SA, HT
7. Announcements and Public Comments



# LA County Women's Needs Assessment

**Amy Turk, Chief Executive Officer**  
Downtown Women's Center

&

**Sofia Herrera, Research Partner**  
The Hub for Urban Initiatives



# Los Angeles County Women's Needs

## Assessment

URBAN

*Findings from the 2022 Survey of Women Experiencing Homelessness*

Report Authors:  
Samantha Batko  
Sofia Herrera  
Lynden Bond  
Kaela Girod





# Acknowledgements

- All the women who shared their experiences with us in listening sessions and surveys
- Steering and Advisory Committee members
- Volunteers who administered surveys
- Downtown Women's Center and the County of Los Angeles Homeless Initiative

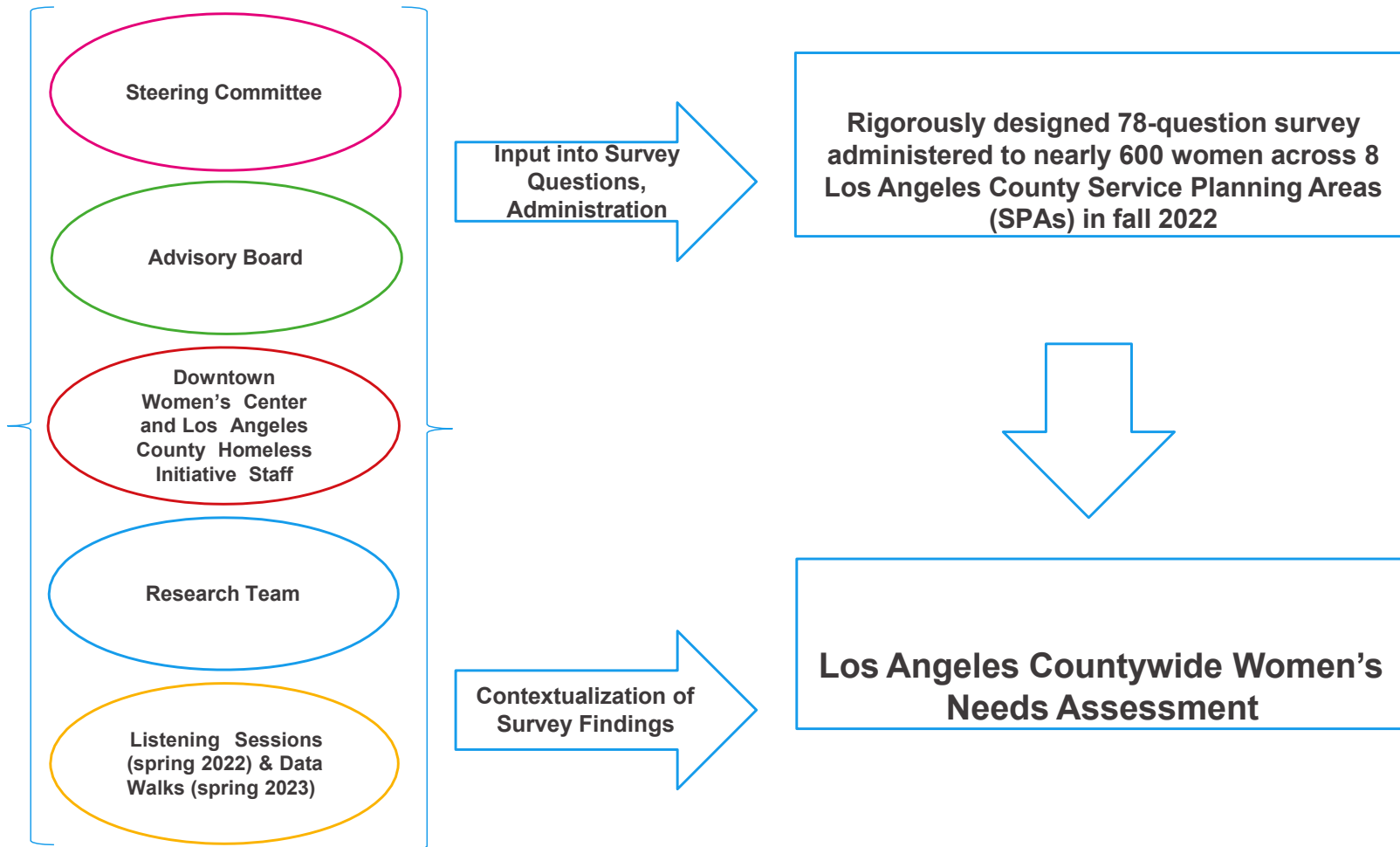


# The Los Angeles County Women's Needs Assessment

- This study is the largest and most rigorous study to date in the nation targeted specifically to women experiencing homelessness as individuals
  - In spring 2022, nearly 100 women participated in listening sessions
  - In fall 2022, nearly 600 women completed a 78-question survey



RESEARCH & SURVEY DESIGN



# Women Experiencing Homelessness are Diverse

- Ages ranged from 18 to 83 years old.
- 34% of women identified as Hispanic or Latina, 32% percent identified as Black
- Nearly 4 percent identifying as a gender other than exclusively a woman or man, such as nonbinary or gender fluid
- Nearly 20 percent identifying as bisexual, lesbian, gay, queer, or another sexual orientation other than straight
- 61 percent had a disability
- 30% were working for pay
- Over half experienced a separation from a partner or spouse
- Over half had children-either adults or children who were not currently with them
- Health rated as fair or poor, with dental health being rated the poorest.

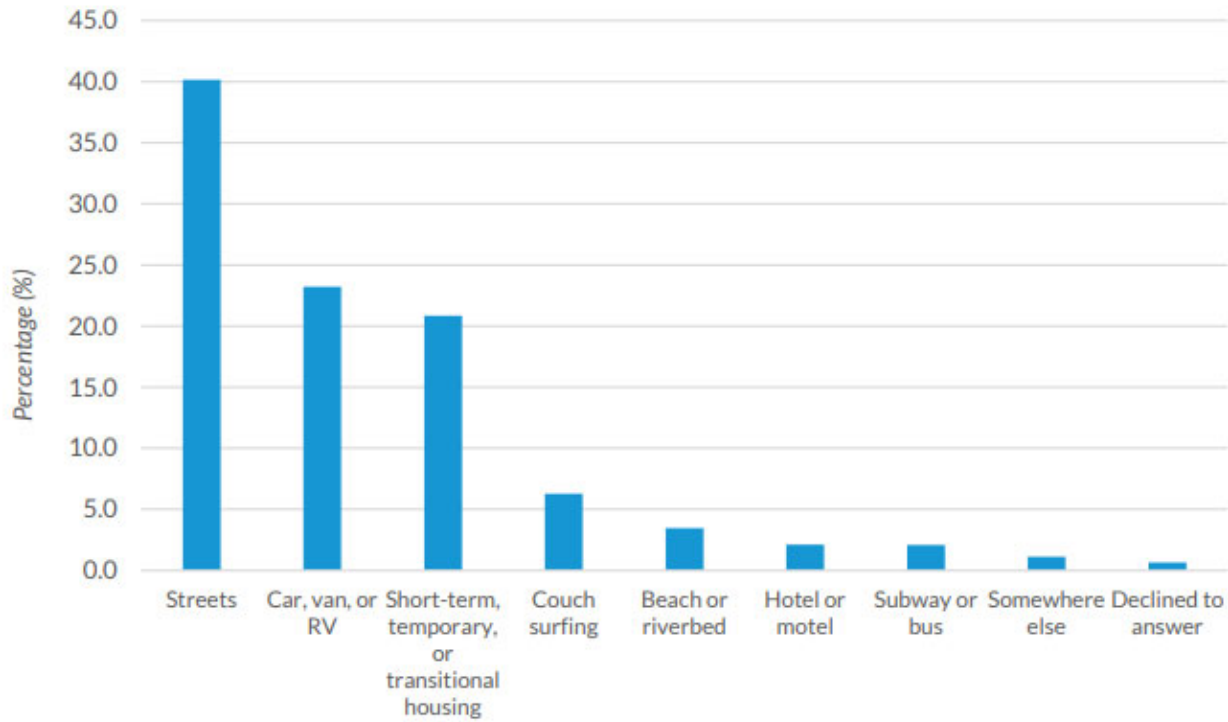


## Women Experienced Homelessness for Long Periods

- Women experienced **multiple episodes** of homelessness
- More than **8 in 10 women** had experienced lifetime lengths of homelessness **over a year**
- More than **4 in 10 women** had lifetime experiences of homelessness of **longer than five years**



# Women Most Often Slept In Unsheltered Locations



Where women sleep most often

Source: Weighted survey data.

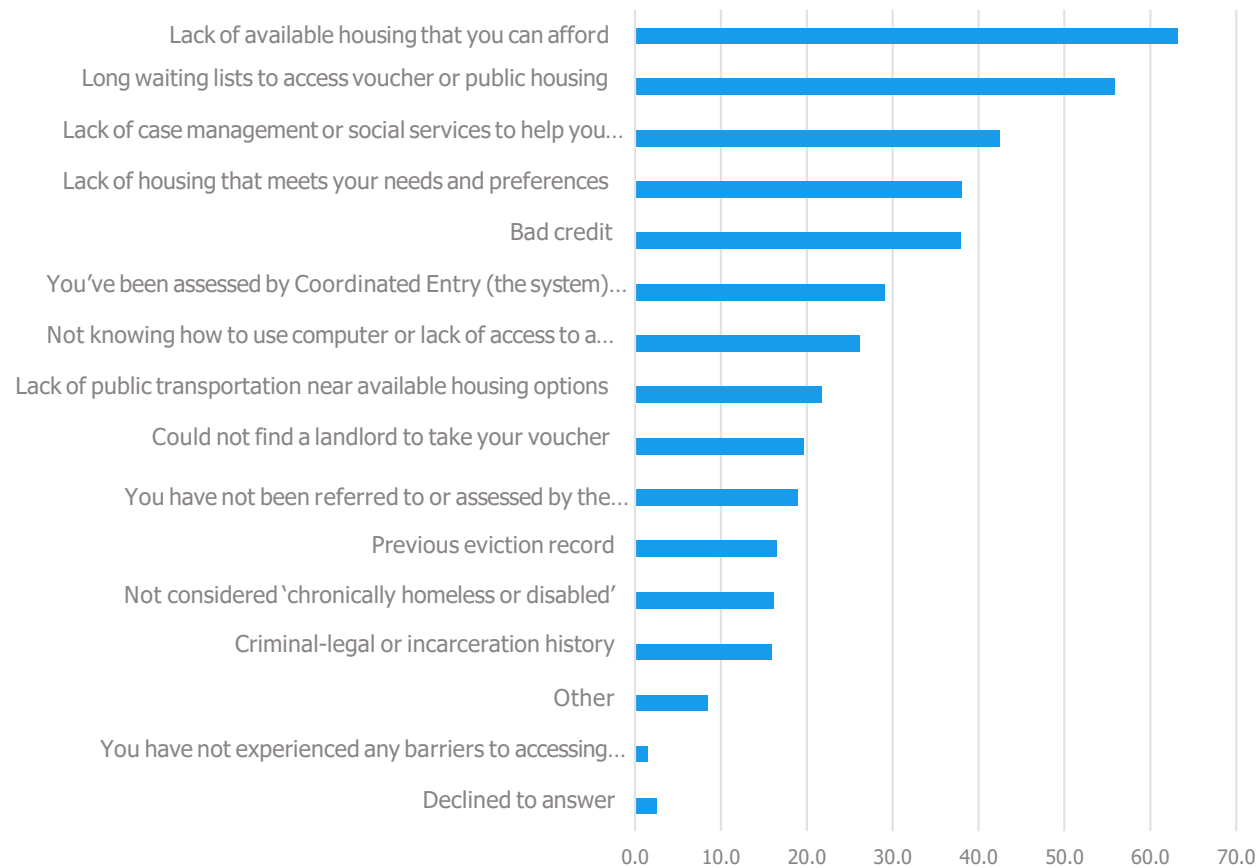
Notes: Unweighted N = 581.

# Women Experience Victimization Before and During Episodes of Homelessness

- Nearly 90 percent of women reported lifetime experiences of victimization
  - 49% reported experiencing intimate partner violence
    - 21% stated intimate partner violence was a cause of their homelessness
    - 13% stayed in a DV shelter
- While experiencing homelessness:
  - 3 of 5 had something stolen from them
  - 2 of 5 were attacked
  - 1 in 5 were forced to take part in unwanted sexual activity

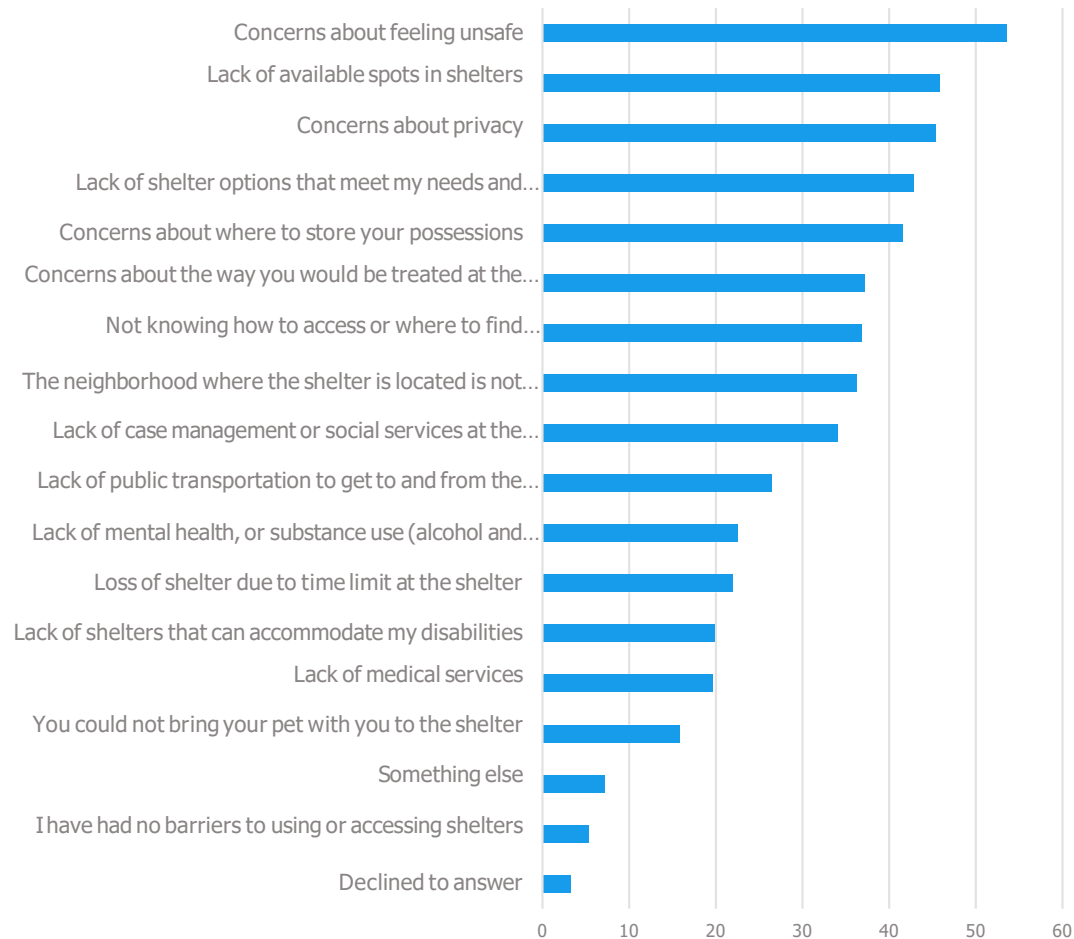


# Women Reported Significant Barriers to Exiting Homelessness and Securing Housing





# Women Reported Barriers to Accessing and Using Shelters



# Recommendations

# **#1 - Support efforts to collect data on and tailor services to women experiencing homelessness as individuals.**

- Collect and report on data on women's **experiences, needs, and preferences**
- Critical to **track progress** on ending homelessness among women



## #2 - Fund housing assistance at the level needed to house all women experiencing homelessness

- Universal voucher program provides clear path forward to ending homelessness for all women.
- Lack of affordable housing, long waiting lists for housing assistance were primary barriers to housing.



## #3 - Prioritize safety throughout the homelessness response system

- Prioritizing safety requires recognizing the unique needs and preferences of women.
- Concerns about safety was most common barrier to shelter
- Safety was a top priority in permanent housing



## #4 - Provide dignity in the absence of housing

- Women want **dignified access** to bathrooms, showers, and storage of possessions
- **Remove barriers** that prevent access to services and shelter



## #5 - Encourage programmatic response accountability for ensuring equitable outcomes for historically marginalized groups

- Women's **needs may vary** based on a variety of characteristics, their individual histories, and where they may be in their life cycle



# Full 2022 Los Angeles County Women's Needs Assessment Report







# **LA Domestic Violence and Homeless Services Coalition (DVHSC)**

**Amy Turk, Chief Executive Officer**  
Downtown Women's Center  
&

**DVHSC Members**

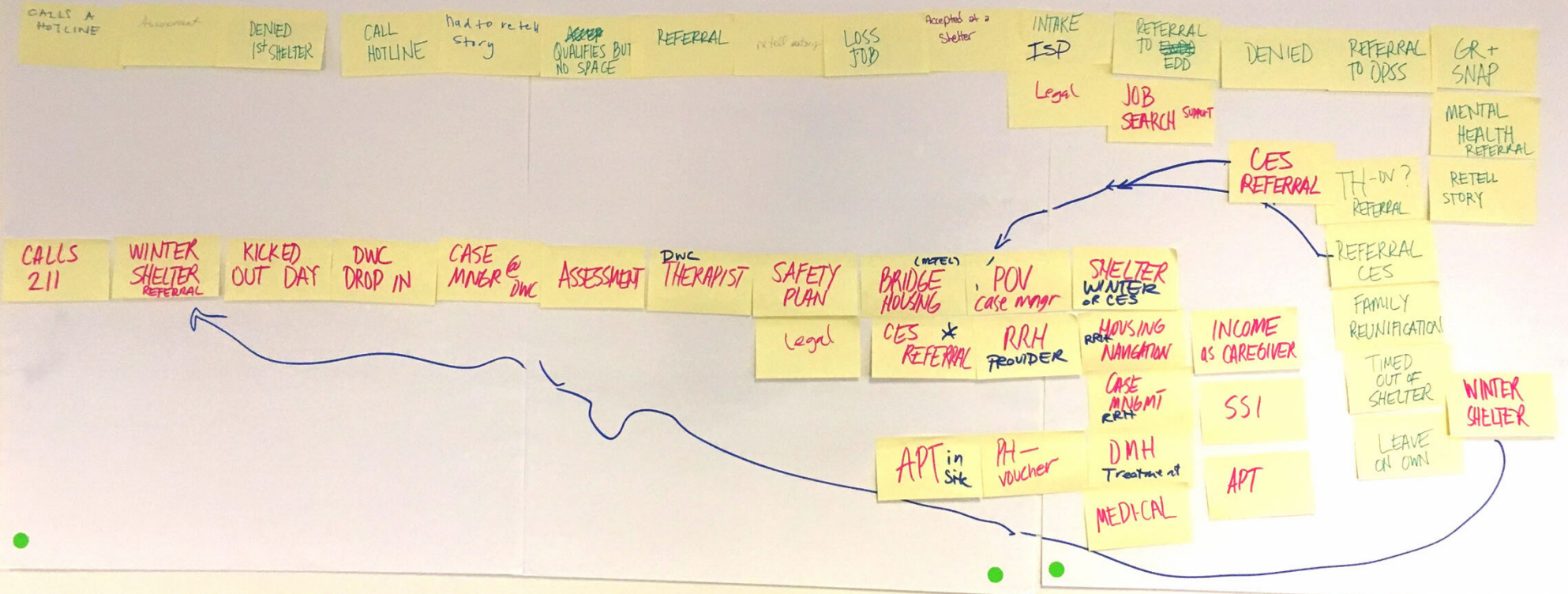
WE ENVISION A  
WORLD WHERE NO  
INDIVIDUAL OR  
FAMILY HAS TO  
CHOOSE BETWEEN  
STABLE HOUSING  
AND A LIFE FREE  
FROM VIOLENCE.

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# THE WHY

SONDRA





- Increase access to permanent housing for survivors
- Reduce barriers and increase access to services
- Understand trauma and its impact
- Increase domestic violence advocacy and education
- Reasonable accommodations for survivors with unique needs

DVHSC Focus Group Report: <https://dvhsc.org/publications-2>

## OUR MISSION



IS TO END HOMELESSNESS IN LOS ANGELES FOR SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND THEIR FAMILIES.

WE LEVERAGE SURVIVOR-DRIVEN INSIGHTS FOR GREATER CROSS-SECTOR ALIGNMENT, COORDINATION, AND KNOWLEDGE-SHARING, AND ARE COMMITTED TO FOREGROUNDING THE VOICES OF INDIVIDUALS WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE IN ALL ASPECTS OF OUR WORK.

Together, we seek to create a client-centered system that increases access to safe housing and supportive services for survivors of domestic violence and their families, in order to drive down the number of survivors entering homelessness and increase pathways to permanent housing.



# DVHSC STRUCTURE

CORE TEAM

COMMUNITY  
SUMMIT

WORKGROUPS

Systems and Funding

Training and Education

Advocates and Allyship

ALL MEMBER  
CONVENINGS



# LEADING PARTNERS IN THE COALITION



- Co-Leads:
  - Downtown Women's Center
  - Rainbow Services
- Core Team:
  - Advocates with lived expertise
  - Community Legal Aid SoCal
  - LA City Community Investment for Families Department
  - LA County Domestic Violence Council
  - LA County Women & Girls Initiative
  - Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority
  - Valey Oasis
- Advisory Council:
  - Elizabeth Eastlund
  - Eve Sheedy
  - Jessica Reed
  - Kris Billhardt

# LIVED EXPERTISE

- Advocacy Opportunities
- Connecting Advocates & System Leaders
- Mutual Support
- Joint Learning Opportunities
- Celebrating Accomplishments
- Compensation





# RESULTS

With 250 organizations and 900 individuals we:

- Built a VAWA comparable referral system to housing
- Established county-wide DV Regional Coordinators
- Provided education for priority access for DV survivors for Emergency Housing Vouchers
- Scaled Domestic Violence Housing First model
- Secured \$5,800,000 in HUD DV Bonus
- Published Supportive Housing for Trauma Survivors
- Partnered with Southern CA Nonprofit Housing (SCANPH) on developing housing series
- and we....





# 2022 SB 914 HELP ACT

Requires the [California Interagency Council on Homelessness \(Cal ICH\)](#) to support domestic violence survivors and their children and among unaccompanied women by:

- (1) Setting specific, measurable goals.
- (2) Gathering data related to the goals.
- (3) When funding is available, providing technical assistance to cities, counties, and continuums of care to support the development of local programs and plans that address the needs.
- (4) Work with HUD to provide technical assistance to cities, counties, and continuums of care in furtherance of this section.

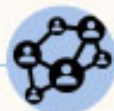
Implement by January 1, 2025, and evaluate these goals at least every two years

# OUR NEW STRATEGIC PLAN



## CIRCLE OF LEARNING

Create intentional learning space to increase members' knowledge of DV, housing, and homelessness systems.



## PROFESSIONAL NETWORKING

Facilitate networking opportunities to build relationships & trust across organizations & sectors.



## COMMUNITY TRAINING

Deliver proprietary trainings & content to deepen understanding of survivor needs and create a funding stream for the Coalition.



## ADVANCING ADVOCACY

Develop a strategic annual advocacy agenda & create opportunity for members to contribute and participate.



## ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

Promote sustainable economic opportunities: competitive compensation, advancement opportunities, access to housing & life-affirming organizational cultures.

# THANK YOU!

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[www.dvhsc.org](http://www.dvhsc.org)  
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# Countywide Domestic Violence and Homelessness Coordination

**Sarah Whitman, DV Systems Coordinator**  
LA Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA)



**LAHSA**

**Domestic Violence Council**

# Countywide Domestic Violence and Homelessness Coordination

Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority

Sarah Whitman, DV System Coordinator

November 21, 2023

# Domestic violence and homelessness have largely been treated as separate issues but...

- Domestic violence is the number one cause of homelessness for women
- Domestic violence is the number three cause of homelessness for families

# Definition of Homelessness

Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, the Secretary shall consider to be homeless any individual or family who—

- (1) is experiencing trauma or a lack of safety related to, or fleeing or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous, traumatic, or life-threatening conditions related to the violence against the individual or a family member in the individual's or family's current housing situation, including where the health and safety of children are jeopardized;
- (2) has no other safe residence; and
- (3) lacks the resources to obtain other safe permanent housing.



# Point in Time Count

## 2022 – LA CoC

- 38% of homeless individuals have experienced DV/IPV
- 9% of homeless individuals are homeless due to fleeing DV/IPV

# Women's Needs Assessment

## 2022

- On any given night in 2022, there were more than 14,000 women experiencing
- More than 90 percent of women experienced some form of victimization in their lifetime
  - 48% were g threatened, physically hit, or made to feel unsafe by a romantic partner
- For women with lifetime experiences of victimization, experiencing threats or violence from a romantic partner was the type of victimization most likely to cause their experience of homelessness

# Women's Needs Assessment

## 2022

- While experiencing homelessness, 57.9 percent of women had something stolen from them; 43.1 percent were repeatedly harassed or threatened; 37.6 and 35.3 percent witnessed an attack or were attacked themselves, respectively; and 20.4 percent were forced to take part in unwanted sexual activity
- Women reported significant barriers to permanent housing and shelter, with the most frequent barrier to shelter being feeling unsafe

# Countywide Coordination

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## Domestic Violence Regional Coordinators

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The DVRC position addresses the intersection between victimization due to DV/SA/HT and homelessness per SPA through building and maintaining collaborative networks with community partners in order to provide a full scope of supportive services and resources for victims/survivors experiencing homelessness to become stabilized.

# Education

- DV Regional Coordinators
- VSP Learning Community
- Technical Assistance for VSPs and CES providers
- Internal education for LAHSA staff
- DVHSC Education and Training Committee

# DV Bonus

- LAHSA has applied for HUD Domestic Violence Bonus funds every year since 2018
- LAHSA oversees 11 DV Time Limited Subsidy programs and 5 Joint Component (TH-RRH) programs
- Universal Referral Form to streamline the referral process and increase grant utilization
- DV Shared Space to connect survivors to providers with capacity

# Human Trafficking Advocacy

- Human Trafficking experience in unsheltered population aged 18 and older in LA CoC (2022)
  - Total persons: 8,116 (18% of total population)
  - Youth (18 to 24): 135 (14% of youth)
- Being a survivor of DV is a risk factor for being a survivor of HT
- 64 percent of respondents to the Polaris survey reported that the lack of affordable housing was a barrier in their ability to leave their trafficking situation Supporting Human Trafficking Survivors Group
- Applied for Human Trafficking Regional Coordinators through DV Bonus



# Housing Navigation

- Housing Navigation Program bridges a critical gap in services in the Los Angeles Continuum of Care (LA CoC). DV Housing Navigation will provide housing-focused supportive services for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking, and sexual assault that are experiencing homelessness with the goal of helping them identify, apply for, secure and move into permanent housing within 120 days of Navigation enrollment.
- Contract is set to begin before the end of the year

# Policy Advocacy

- Domestic Violence Homeless Services Coalition Systems and Funding Committee
  - Funding to Include DV Survivors, Human Trafficking Survivors and Sexual Assault Survivors
    - More emergency and transitional shelter beds
    - Increased funding for pets in shelters
    - Ensure shelters are ADA accessible
  - Set aside motel vouchers for survivors, specifically unaccompanied women, and LGBTQ+ survivors
  - Wraparound services and flexible funding for survivors
- County Motion to support Unaccompanied Women

# Streamlining Services for Survivors

- Current DV “system” is not trauma-informed
- Need to get survivors into Emergency Shelter faster, and ensure connection to permanent housing
- Ensure each program for DV survivors has the ultimate goal of providing safety, permanent housing, and stability to reduce the number of survivors experiencing homelessness. → Centralized Access
- Applied for funding for LAHSA VAWA matchers to support
  - Non-HMIS Portal Matching
  - Rapid Re-Housing Matching
  - Emergency Transfers
- Meeting on November 29<sup>th</sup> at 10 AM for more information!

# Questions?

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Sarah Whitman  
Domestic Violence System Coordinator  
[swhitman@lahsa.org](mailto:swhitman@lahsa.org)





# LA County Women's Needs Assessment

**Krysta Warfield, Co-Chair**

**&**

**Veronica Sandoval, Co-Chair**

DV Shelter Directors Committee

LA Domestic Violence Council



# LA County Women's Needs Assessment

Ellen Eidem, Director

&

Nicolle Perras, Health Analyst II

Office of Women's Health  
LA County Health Department



# Addressing Physical Safety and Mental Health for Women Fleeing Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, and Human Trafficking

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Office of Women's Health  
Domestic Violence Council – General Meeting  
November 21, 2024





## Overview

October 3, 2023, the BOS passed the following motion -  
***Addressing Physical Safety and Mental Health For  
Women Fleeing Domestic Violence,  
Sexual Violence and Human Trafficking***  
– *Supervisors Mitchell and Barger*

- Originated only with DV, then expanded to also include women fleeing Sexual Violence and Human Trafficking





## BACKGROUND

- The number of unhoused women in Los Angeles County (County) continues to grow.
  - Over 21,000 annually
  - Critical shortage of services
  
- Few services that focus/understand the unique needs of women struggling with homelessness and trauma as a result of fleeing physical and sexual abuse.
  - **This especially true for unaccompanied/single women.**



## 2023 Point in Time Count Data

- According to the 2023 Point in Time Count, **29% of unhoused people identify as women and 25% suffer from serious mental illness.**
- **More than 90% of unhoused women experienced victimization in their lifetime.**
- For over a decade, **unaccompanied single unhoused women—and female identifying people—have been one of the fastest growing unhoused populations.**
- **Homelessness among unaccompanied single women increased 41% from 2013 - 2019.**
- **One in four of homeless women report wanting mental health services and not being able to receive them.**



## Unique Needs

- Many of these women suffer additional trauma from experiencing **domestic violence, sexual violence, and human trafficking.**
- Many have serious **mental health issues, including substance use disorders.**
- Current county systems provide far fewer resources/services for single women.



## Single Women

- Barriers to finding a safe shelter to receive services and mental health support for unaccompanied women are significant.
- **45% of unaccompanied women cited barriers such as lack of available domestic violence shelter beds and concerns about privacy, safety, and lack of shelter options.**
- **The County's homelessness and mental health system does not have the infrastructure in place to meet the very specific needs of this sub-population.**
- As a result, victims are left in public spaces that make them even more vulnerable.



## Motion's Intentions

Seek to improve access for single women fleeing GBV to include –

- Free and safe transportation
- Extended stays in emergency/crisis shelter in order to secure -
  - Benefits enrollment
  - Mental health treatment
  - Pathway to transitional and permanent housing
- Doing so by building on policies and programs currently in place to –
  - County-wide providers and departments into *alignment around* -
    - best practices
    - centralizing the intake processes
    - leveraging limited resources/services to enhance the continuum of care
    - trauma informed and culturally responsive



## **DIRECTIVE #1 – Lead by DPH/OWH**

- A proposed plan for a mandatory, trauma informed domestic violence, sexual violence and human trafficking training program for all County and county contracted service providers
  - Including implantation timeline and budget
  
- Leverage existing trainings from
  - LAHSA, DV Regional Coordinators
  - State’s 40-hour DV training and additional sexual violence training
  - Inter-Agency Council on Child Abuse & Neglect (ICAN)



# DIRECTIVE #1 – Training

## Training components -

- Information provided
- Mandated training audience (providers, staff, etc.)
  - Who?
  - How many?
- Budget
  - Training development
  - 6-12-month implementation timeline to train all designated entities/staff



## Centralized Intake -

- Description of current intake processes homeless service providers use for persons fleeing DV, SV, HT\*
- Recommendations to align County providers' intake forms and assessment processes with a trauma-informed model and connection to appropriate services\*
- Recommendations to implement culturally sensitive and trauma-informed Release of Information forms (ROI's) for all County contracted providers\*

*\*All of the above should take into account the intersecting needs of survivors of sexual violence and human trafficking.*





## **DIRECTIVE #2 – led by DPH/DVC, in collaboration with the DPSS**

Outline the current process for helping unaccompanied women who are actively fleeing domestic violence, sexual violence and human trafficking.

Including:

- Analysis on how the County can keep this population housed in a hotel/motel program for 90 days in order to determine eligibility for public benefits
  - Cost and funding options to achieve this 90 day stay
- Cost projection to include mental health services through DMH within the first 60 days of the client's entrance into emergency shelter.
- An outline of the current process for mental health services and a recommendation to strengthen this process.



## **DIRECTIVE #3 – led by Women and Girls Initiative with CEO-Housing Initiative, DPSS and Metro**

Ways the County can provide free Taxi Vouchers through the Metro Low Income Fare is Easy (LIFE) Program for victim-survivors who meet the income threshold to qualify for free transportation.

Including:

- Cost projection to provide Metro services to contracted providers in special circumstances when the victim is actively fleeing.
- Description of how LA Care is currently using the Call-the-Car ride-share program
  - cost projections of using Call-the-Car to quickly transport unaccompanied unhoused women fleeing domestic violence to a safe destination



## Timeline

- Report back for Directives 1 and 2 is January 3, 2024
- Report back for Directive 3 is December 3, 2024



# Questions and Discussion



# TIMELINE

DATE	ACTION ITEM	LEAD	DUE
10/31/23	Initial convening with partner agencies to clarify roles, action items, timeline	Dept. of Public Health	NA
11/02/23	Meeting with DMH and DPSS to clarify roles, action items, timeline	Dept. Public Health	NA
	Partner agencies provide Dept. of Public Health with information in response to board directive	All	Friday 11/17/23
11/17/23 – 11/30/23	Dept. of Public Health drafts Board response.	Dept of Public Health	Thurs. 11/30/23
11/30/23 – 12/6/23	Partner agencies review and provide feedback.	All	Wed. 12/06/23
12/06/23 – 12/12/23	DPH internal review	Dept. of Public Health	12/12/23** Submit item to Board



## **October 3, 2023 Board Action:**

### ***Addressing Physical Safety and Mental Health For Women Fleeing Domestic Violence, Sexual Violence and Human Trafficking***

**Thank you!**

**For more information/contact:**

**Nicolle Perras**

**[nperras@ph.lacounty.gov](mailto:nperras@ph.lacounty.gov)**



# Announcements and Public Comments

- ❑ We are now inviting attendees to share announcements, updates, and public comments not to exceed two (2) minutes per person.
- ❑ Public comments be on items of interest which are within the subject matter jurisdiction of the DVC.



# Closing Remarks

- ❑ **There will NOT be a DVC meeting in December.** However, there may be a Special Virtual Presentation. Stay tuned.
- ❑ **Remember to sign-in if you have not; however, is not required.** Names on sign-in sheet will be added to DVC email listserv to receive information, meeting reminders for future DVC meetings and events.
- ❑ **For more information on DVC, you may contact us at:**
  - ❑ <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/dvcouncil>
  - ❑ Email: [dvc@ph.lacounty.gov](mailto:dvc@ph.lacounty.gov)
  - ❑ Call: (213) 974-2799