

Strategy A

Prevent Homelessness



Combating homelessness requires effective strategies to reduce the number of families and individuals who become homeless, in addition to helping currently homeless families and individuals move into permanent housing. This includes reducing both the number of individuals who are discharged into homelessness from institutions such as jails, hospitals, and foster care, and the number of families and individuals who lose their housing and become homeless.

Los Angeles County
Homeless Initiative

Homeless Prevention Program for Families

POPULATION IMPACT

ALL

3 FAMILIES

TAY

SINGLE ADULT

VETERAN

CHRONICALLY HOMELESS ADULT

RECOMMENDATION

Direct the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority and the Department of Public Social Services, in consultation with relevant County departments and key community stakeholders, to develop an integrated, comprehensive homeless prevention program for families which draws on the Homeless Family Solutions System (HFSS) model and builds upon current available County homeless prevention funding sources to address rental/housing subsidies, case management and employment services, and legal services.

DESCRIPTION

Los Angeles County has an opportunity to build on current programs and services to develop an integrated, comprehensive system to assist families on the verge of homelessness.

DPSS provides homeless prevention assistance to certain CalWORKs families in the form of eviction prevention, temporary rental subsidies and other financial services, but provides limited case management services and no legal services. First 5 LA funds home visitation programs which could play a role in identifying families who are at risk of homelessness. The County and City of Los Angeles fund the HRSS to expedite the delivery of housing and other supportive services to families experiencing homelessness, but has provided very limited homeless prevention services. The Board recently allocated \$2 million to HFSS for prevention purposes that could be useful to learn from and build upon.

LEAD AGENCIES

Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA)
Public Social Services (DPSS)

COLLABORATING DEPARTMENTS/AGENCIES

Children and Family Services
Community and Senior Services
Community Development Commission
Consumer and Business Affairs
County Office of Education
First 5 LA
Health Services
Mental Health
Probation
Public Health

LAHSA should develop, in collaboration with County agencies and family system partners, a comprehensive strategy to effectively identify, assess, and prevent families from becoming homeless, and to divert families in a housing crisis from homelessness. The strategy should consist of a multi-faceted approach to maximize and leverage existing funding and resources, evaluate and potentially modify policies that govern existing prevention resources to allow greater flexibility, prioritize resources for the most vulnerable populations, and create an outreach and engagement strategy to identify access points for families at risk of homelessness. The major areas critical to developing a homeless prevention system in Los Angeles County involve identifying additional and targeting current resources from multiple systems to focus on homeless prevention.

DESCRIPTION continued

Such a strategy would need to:

- A. Develop an approach to homelessness prevention across multiple systems, supportive services, and homeless services that address rental/housing assistance, case management and employment services, and legal services.
- B. Identify and review potential administrative barriers to better target and allocate homeless prevention interventions and programs.
- C. Review and evaluate the creation of a universal assessment to identify families who are at imminent risk of experiencing homelessness.
- D. Develop program thresholds for rental assistance that would prioritize families with the greatest potential to stay housed after one-time or short-term assistance.
- E. Provide an opt-in mechanism for cities who wish to contribute to the program.

POPULATION(S) TARGETED & OTHER CATEGORIZATIONS

Families on the verge of homelessness, subject to the eligibility requirements for the available funding streams.

POTENTIAL PERFORMANCE METRICS

Increase in the number of families receiving homeless prevention services

Increase in employment and income among potentially homeless families

Number and percentage of families receiving services through this program who avoid eviction

Percent of assisted families still in permanent housing at 6, 12, and 24 months following assistance

FUNDING

\$5 Million in One-Time CalWORKs Fraud Incentive Funding

Ongoing CalWORKs Single Allocation Funding currently used for Emergency Assistance to Prevent Eviction for CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work families

Ongoing CalWORKs Single Allocation Funding currently used for temporary rental subsidies for CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work families who receive Emergency Assistance to Prevent Eviction

CONNECTION TO CITIES

SAME

3 COMPLEMENTARY

NO CITY ROLE

Cities could contribute to the program to enhance prevention services for families in their cities.



Strategy A2 | PREVENT HOMELESSNESS

Related to Strategy Briefs 7.1 and 8.1

Discharge Planning Guidelines

POPULATION IMPACT

ALL

FAMILIES

3 TAY

3 SINGLE ADULT

3 VETERAN

3 CHRONICALLY HOMELESS ADULT

RECOMMENDATION

Direct the Department of Health Services, in consultation with the Department of Children and Family Services, Department of Mental Health, Department of Public Health, the Sheriff, the Probation Department, the Veterans Administration, the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, the Hospital Association of Southern California, and key community agencies to utilize known best practices to develop/enhance Discharge Planning Guidelines, with the goal of preventing individuals from being homeless upon discharge.

DESCRIPTION

Relevant County institutions include foster care, DHS hospitals, jails and domestic violence (DV) shelters. Effective discharge planning prevents clients/patients from entering a “revolving door” in and out of homelessness and successfully reintegrates an individual back into his/her community with the goal of preventing the individual from falling into homelessness.

Potential programmatic elements of an effective discharge plan include, but are not limited to: Family Reunification; connection to the Coordinated Entry System; physical health care; substance use treatment; connection to a Federally Qualified Health Center; court-ordered services for perpetrators of domestic violence; and mental health treatment. The actual elements of an individual’s plan will depend on the individual’s circumstances.

Potential housing elements of an effective discharge plan include, but are not limited to: Recuperative Care; Board and Care; Motel Voucher; Halfway House; bridge housing; and permanent housing.

DHS will convene a workgroup comprised of the departments and agencies identified below to develop the recommended Discharge Planning Guidelines, including both common elements and elements that are specific to a particular department/institution. The workgroup will draw on best practices and established guidelines in use by other agencies.

LEAD AGENCY

Health Services

COLLABORATING DEPARTMENTS/AGENCIES

Children and Family Services
Community and Senior Services
Domestic Violence Service Providers
Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority
Mental Health
Probation
Public Social Services
Sheriff Department
Veterans Administration
Private Hospitals
Public Health
Cities that operate jails



POPULATION(S) TARGETED & OTHER CATEGORIZATIONS

Single Adults, TAY, Veterans, Older Adults, and Chronically Homeless Adults

POTENTIAL PERFORMANCE METRICS

Number of individuals who are homeless upon discharge from an institution

Number of individuals who would have been homeless upon discharge and are successfully placed into some type of housing upon discharge

Number of individuals who decline or opt-out of housing

Reduction in cost and an increase in cost savings by implementing successful discharge plans

Reduction in readmissions or recidivism rates

FUNDING

No cost to develop guidelines. The cost of implementing the guidelines will need to be addressed separately by each department.

CONNECTION TO CITIES

SAME

3 COMPLEMENTARY

NO CITY ROLE

Cities that operate jails which release inmates directly into the community could adopt discharge planning guidelines similar to those that will be adopted by LASD.

Strategy A3 | PREVENT HOMELESSNESS

Related to Strategy Brief 8.3b

Housing Authority Family Reunification Program

POPULATION IMPACT

3 ALL

FAMILIES

TAY

SINGLE ADULT

VETERAN

CHRONICALLY HOMELESS ADULT

RECOMMENDATION

Direct the Sheriff (LASD) and the Probation Department (Probation) to work with the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) and the Office of Diversion and Reentry to develop a plan to increase utilization of HACLA's Family Reunification Program.

Direct the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles to evaluate the feasibility of implementing a similar program with its Section 8 vouchers, and report back with its findings.

DESCRIPTION

The goal of the Family Reunification Program is to house formerly incarcerated persons (FIP) released from the criminal justice system within the last 24 months with family members who are current participants of HACLA's Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program.

This plan would serve to facilitate the connection of LASD and Probation clients to the program and allow them to make referrals directly from their systems to the three partner non-profit agencies currently working with HACLA. Non-profit organizations assist this population by providing supportive services to the FIP to ensure successful re-integration to the family and community.

LEAD AGENCIES

Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles
Sheriff Department
Probation Department

COLLABORATING DEPARTMENTS/AGENCIES

Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles
and its non-profit partners
Office of Diversion and Reentry





POPULATION(S) TARGETED & OTHER CATEGORIZATIONS

Section 8 families who would like to reunite with a formally incarcerated family member released from the criminal justice system within the last 24 months.

POTENTIAL PERFORMANCE METRICS

Increase in number of families participating in this program

A decrease in individuals discharged into homelessness

FUNDING

No funding required.

CONNECTION TO CITIES

SAME

3 COMPLEMENTARY

NO CITY ROLE

Cities which operate public housing authorities could also implement a Family Reunification Program.

Strategy A4 | PREVENT HOMELESSNESS

Related to Strategy Brief 8.5

Discharges From Foster Care & Juvenile Probation

POPULATION IMPACT

ALL

FAMILIES

3 TAY

SINGLE ADULT

VETERAN

CHRONICALLY HOMELESS ADULT

RECOMMENDATION

Direct the Departments of Children and Family Services and Probation, in conjunction with the the LA Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), to develop a plan to strengthen the County's Foster Care and Juvenile Probation System Discharge Policies. The strengthened policy should include at least the nine items set forth in the Description of this strategy.

DESCRIPTION

In addition to the plan strengthening the County's current discharge policies for foster care and juvenile probation clients, it will serve to address gaps identified through the implementation of AB12, CA Fostering Connections to Success Act, particularly as AB 12 outcome data becomes available. One of the key changes made by AB 12 was extending the age that youth can remain in foster care to age 21. Youth are eligible for extended foster care if they are in out-of-home placement in the child welfare or juvenile probation system on their 18th birthday. The intent of extended foster care is to provide additional time that youth can utilize resources in order to increase positive outcomes that support long-term self-sufficiency and prevent homelessness.

LEAD AGENCIES

Children and Family Services
Probation

Depending on the age of the youth, Probation takes specific steps to connect youth with resources that support long term self-sufficiency and prevent homelessness by using the appropriate housing and services available.

COLLABORATING
DEPARTMENTS/AGENCIES

Community and Senior Services
Community Development Commission
Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles
Los Angeles County Office of Education
Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority
Mental Health
Public Library
Public Social Services

At a minimum, the "strengthened" policy should incorporate the following components:

- Convene transition planning meetings six months before discharge as opposed to the current 90 days before discharge, which does not allow sufficient time to identify and prepare the TAY for housing.
- Offer wrap-around support services to families when youth exit back to a family member's home. Families need support when youth are coming from out-of-home placement.
- Ensure that community college or vocational training, at minimum, is part of the education component of the transition plan.

DESCRIPTION continued

- Link youth to supports that promote career pathways, e.g., the YouthSource system or programs funded through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA).
- Improve utilization of assessments for determining placement into the Supervised Independent Living Program (SILP) in order to determine if the SILP is an appropriate placement for the TAY and to provide broader access to the SILP. SILP placements can consist of shared housing with a friend or roommate in an apartment or other suitable setting, separate apartment rental, college dorm settings, or single room occupancy hotels.
- Systematically collect data regarding youth exit destinations.
- Increase housing capacity and housing/services options for non-minor dependents, including HUD's Family Unification Program (FUP) for youth at least 18 years old and under 22 years old who left foster care at age 16 or older and lack adequate housing. FUP vouchers can provide a youth up to 18 months of housing assistance, subject to program eligibility criteria established by HUD.
- As needed, ensure access to public benefits.
- Seek to extend data tracking of youth beyond discharge from the foster care or juvenile probation system (as part of the implementation of Strategy E9).

POPULATION(S) TARGETED & OTHER CATEGORIZATIONS

TAY and non-minor dependents

POTENTIAL PERFORMANCE METRICS

Number of transition plans completed six months before discharge

Increased enrollment into community college and vocational training

Increased number of TAY being connected to YouthSource and WIOA

Increased use of assessments for the purpose of proper placement

Increase data entry on youth exit destinations

Decrease in the number of TAY who leave a family placement without going to appropriate alternative housing

Decrease in the number of homeless foster and Probation youth

Increase in the number of former foster and probation youth in subsidized housing or transitional housing

FUNDING

Much of the plan could be accomplished at no additional cost; however, County General Funds and Title IV-E waiver funds could be considered to the extent that additional funding proves necessary.

CONNECTION TO CITIES

SAME

3 COMPLEMENTARY

NO CITY ROLE

Cities that operate WIOA programs could contribute to the implementation of this strategy.

