

Measure H Funding Recommendation Process- FYs 2020-23

Homeless Initiative Policy Summit #7
Partnerships with Cities
Thursday, November 7, 2019

Key Points:

1. **Cities have the capacity to contribute critical resources to combat and prevent homelessness, but they need to be adequately supported – both financially and otherwise – in order to do so.** From their jurisdiction over land use issues to their capacity to utilize city-owned properties as sites on which to develop permanent and interim housing to their unique relationships with constituents and local institutions, the role of cities in the movement to combat and prevent homelessness should not be underestimated. But cities need financial support to maximize their capacity to contribute. In addition, they need guidance, technical assistance, and training to support their efforts.
2. **Cities need clear and consistent information from the County, the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, and community-based homeless services providers regarding efforts to address homelessness. While steps in the right direction have been taken in this regard, there is room to strengthen the lines of communication.** The recent release of city-level homeless services data is a helpful step forward in sharing information. Further expanding and institutionalizing lines of communication between cities, COGs, and County agencies can help to ensure effective partnerships.
3. **Cities have already been engaged in many creative and effective efforts to combat and prevent homelessness. We should ensure that these efforts are recognized and best practices derived from them are shared throughout the County and beyond.** Both as a result of recently- developed City homelessness plans and through other efforts, many cities across the County have been stepping up to do their part. Unique models of delivering services and partnering across departments within cities can help to inform strategies employed throughout the County.
4. **Like all actors in the homelessness policy arena, cities experience the challenges of limited resources and feel the impact of such limitations in their interactions with constituents and other stakeholders.** In particular, many cities feel that their law enforcement staff would be able to work more effectively and less punitively with people experiencing homelessness if they had access to interim housing, permanent housing, and substance use disorder treatment. In the face of the scarcity of such resources, some cities have funded interim housing beds specifically devoted to the clients with whom their law enforcement staff interact.
5. **There is broad recognition that to truly move the dial on homelessness, we will need more comprehensive and far-reaching intervention from higher levels of government, including the state and federal governments.** From state-level policies regarding land use and housing development to mental healthcare funding to ensuring ongoing funding for rental subsidies, the scale of the homelessness crisis in Los Angeles County requires ongoing action from other government entities.

Partnerships with Cities Policy Summit Notes
(Discussion questions/themes in bold)

What are current successful and/or promising city efforts in preventing and combatting homelessness?

Regional approach is helpful and should continue to be bolstered. Councils of Government have been effective coordinators.

- We need more of a regional approach (SPA or Sub-SPA level) because addressing issues just at a city level can push issues across jurisdictional lines without necessarily addressing them. For example, some cities have implemented overnight RV bans, which affects neighboring cities that don't have such bans.
- Board of Supervisors has allocated funding to COGs to help facilitate regional approaches.
- In the San Gabriel Valley (SGV), COG represents 30+ cities; has been helpful in coordination efforts, since the cities share the same service providers.
- In Gateway, the leadership of the COG has been helpful. PATH divided region into "quads," to facilitate collaboration and service delivery.
- After the Homeless Prevention Initiative (in about 2006), cities outside of downtown felt that they weren't getting sufficient funding. This helped motivate a regional approach as the County agreed and created regional programs. (HPRP, VASH, and county funds also helped).
- County should continue to support COGs and cities, which need administrative money and other sources of funding.
 - \$500,000 to COGs is ongoing.
 - \$9M one time supporting implementation of cities' homelessness implementation plans. Utilization timeline likely to be extended from Feb. 2021 to June 2021.
 - \$6M Innovation funding to the COGs. Utilization until June 2021.

City planning process/planning grants have been helpful.

- Cities having the opportunity to develop homelessness plans has been helpful. Cities have been getting connected to resources and learning more about services. Resource fairs that include service providers have been helpful and meaningful – they can help debunk many myths about homelessness. For example, the City of Carson just did one; the mayor attended, and it was very helpful.
- Planning grants have allowed cities to reflect on their resources.
 - Land use and zoning changes have been streamlined.
 - Cities have been more willing to use their own property for building PSH. Some have supported motel conversions.
 - This is a regional issue; seeing cities band together and form trust funds has been helpful.
- Cities initially felt resentful about perceived lack of fair share of Measure H; felt like there wasn't room for them to be part of it. But recent city-level data was helpful—it showed what's being done, how many people have been housed, and what partnerships already exist.
- Planning grants helped cities feel more in control and more included in Measure H efforts, leading to a large shift in attitude and focus among cities regarding their views of Measure H.

Promising actions by specific cities

- City of Torrance has a Homeless Services Commission. The Commission values data from agencies; helps show where money is going; it is objective and deliberates based off of data; engages the public and agencies monthly.
- Torrance also does lots of internal staff training, which is important because they are the ones who interact with and educate the public.
 - The County is currently working on an effort to educate county employees; this could be a model for educating cities.
- Pomona has built a 250-bed shelter and access center; 25 cities in California have come to visit Hope for Home, which has inspired other cities to make similar efforts.
 - Hope for Home hosts County services monthly.
 - Hope for Home also reserves beds for a cohort of three cities (Pomona, Claremont, La Verne) through the Homeless Initiative's funding.

Recommendations on service delivery and/or specific services/programs

- 10% of people experiencing homelessness are in unincorporated areas. What's happening with them?
- Law enforcement and public safety are getting more involved at city level, particularly with LAHSA, MET, and HOST teams.
- Law Enforcement-Assisted Diversion (LEAD) has been a helpful program—it helps people get case management and housing instead of going to jail—but needs to be expanded.
- Need stronger ICMS workers who can work with clients from start to finish.
- Need more collaborative efforts between law enforcement and SPA leads.
- Need more field-based mental health services. Meeting clients at McDonalds, etc. helps remove the stigma around receiving mental health treatment that is often reinforced in more formal, clinical settings.
- Cities need to employ people with lived experience to do outreach; this offers hope to people experiencing homelessness.

Role of city resources and land in addressing homelessness

- Cities should continue to repurpose their resources i.e. using their law enforcement, sanitation services, and property, etc. in order to address homelessness.
 - Examples: City of LA used its own land for interim housing; has also repurposed other municipal services through its Unified Homelessness Response Center (includes Sanitation, LAPD, City Depts, Aging, Disability, etc.).
- There has been a shift in how L.A.'s Department of Sanitation interacts with homeless clients. Now treating them like customers, just like people who are housed. Law enforcement is no longer needed to mitigate these interactions; have been called only 1% of the time.
- Cities can help create/preserve affordable housing through policy changes, including zoning changes, inclusionary zoning, a moratorium on no-cause evictions, etc.

Other comments

- We're seeing waves of city involvement; many cities wait and see what other cities do to get involved, and then choose to get involved themselves after that. Still, all 88 cities need homelessness plans.
- Education is key; staff and elected officials are more educated, but the public remains very uneducated – members of public often coming to meetings and make statements that aren't true/reiterating homelessness myths.

- Cities have not given themselves enough credit for what they have been doing. Resource fairs and connect days have been very helpful; a lot of cities have volunteered to be “Opt in” cities for the Point-in-Time Homeless Count.

What supports do cities need to scale up their efforts in the arenas where they are uniquely situated to prevent and combat homelessness?

Funding information and flexibility/streamlined contracting process

- Funding guidelines need to be expanded to accommodate pilot programs. For example, Redondo Beach borrowed from its Public Employees’ Retirement System (PERS) because there was no service funding to initiate the record-clearing project. Not addressing certain segment of population that is falling through cracks (resistant population).
- Flexibility is needed in contracts; cities’ contract experience has been very discouraging. Boilerplate templates are not working; takes a very, very long time.
- Need a guide for cities to track resources available to cities. Cities have different understandings of funding flow; cities need a better understanding of how funding works so they are not randomly applying for grants and getting frustrated along the way.
- Malibu needs assistance in effectively spending funds; spent \$30,000 in printed documents about homelessness; this money could have gone towards helping someone find housing.

Education, training, data and communications

- LAHSA is working to communicate better with cities, as there is currently lots of misinformation; LAHSA wants to launch either quarterly or monthly phone calls for cities to provide updates/education.
- SPA-level data would be helpful, including info detailing numbers on motel conversions, subpopulations, etc.
 - Inclusion of SPA-level data in forthcoming Gaps analysis will be useful.
- Training is needed for city staff; Sheriff staff training has been good, but needs to be tailored to what the staff are experiencing on the ground.
- City officials also need communications training to facilitate interacting with people who are misinformed about the issue of homelessness.
- Need to create an App to consolidate available services (similar to the way that veterans can text to get services from 211).
 - There is an upcoming County technology innovation challenge, which will include a category for the design of a coordinated homeless portal.
- Frontline staff members are not the only ones who should have information; CEOs and administration need to know what is happening on the ground, too.
- A major barrier for cities is knowing who to contact, so quarterly meetings with LAHSA are needed.

Specific services/staffing

- Challenge for Malibu and other cities within Malibu’s COG: Lack of services available in this area.
 - Need better partnerships with entities that have resources.

- Need fewer restrictions on voucher use. Clients in City of Malibu have subsidy vouchers but nowhere to use them. ADUs that are not permitted by the city are not eligible for voucher use. There is general lack of knowledge about voucher use.
- Malibu/Los Virgenes area also needs additional outreach workers; currently takes 48-72 hours for outreach workers to respond to calls.
- If cities offer office space for outreach workers in their cities, this helps to build relationships with them and learn more about what is going on/what cities can do to help.
- LA-HOP is not meant to provide an immediate response, but working in closer proximity to outreach teams can facilitate faster responses.
- Santa Monica invested into an Affordable Housing Trust Fund to keep low-income seniors in Section 8 units, but residents were then penalized by CalFresh because housing was considered income.
- In terms of staff capacity: Licensed social workers are helpful; having public health nurses on paramedic teams would also be helpful (but not all cities can do this, because of the costs).
- Board approved 4 Public Health Nurses ongoing; they will accompany outreach teams to larger encampments where there are PH risks.
- Need to better utilize people in training: students in social work, nurses getting their BSN, etc. who need hours—utilize them in order to serve our clients.
- Concern about death rates among people struggling with addiction on the street; need to create more beds in hospitals for these people.
 - Cities need more detox beds; need for engagement with community hospitals about increasing number of detox beds.
- Substance Abuse Prevention and Control: Recognizes the need to connect with hospitals and provide 24/7 services.
- Need more spaces for services; transportation is a big issue for people trying to access services.
- Need housing locators to find rooms and ADUs, to help combat Section 8 discrimination, and to form relationships with property owners.
- Challenge: Finding a balance between investing in immediate needs (such as the expensive interim housing that is needed now), and investing in needs for tomorrow.

Unique roles of cities and relationships between cities

- SGV cities are uniquely situated; they have the ability to leverage relationships with property managers. If owners are apprehensive about the Countywide master leasing program, having direct access to local City departments will increase owners' buy in and willingness to rent to people experiencing homelessness.
- Cities can learn from best practices of other cities, e.g. Affordable Housing ordinances.
- Across the County, there are inconsistencies in city policies regarding how street homelessness is addressed; for example, when surrounding cities ban RVs, they end up in the City of LA.
- Need to work with people living in garages that are not considered ADUs and get these spaces up to code.
 - A countywide ADU website is coming, developed by the County and LA City.

What opportunities exist for cities and the County to optimize encounters between law enforcement/fire/paramedics and individuals and families experiencing homelessness to connect them to housing and services?

Fruitful collaborations with law enforcement/first responders and opportunities to share information

- LAHSA Outreach Teams have been working with the fire department in high fire areas to identify encampments and reach out to people living in them before fire season.
 - No fires this season have been related to people experiencing homelessness, which is significant.
- Pasadena has built good relationships with its police.
 - Still, officers are feeling like they don't have the resources to address homelessness. They are stating, "I want to take the individual experiencing homelessness somewhere [he or she can access services], but if I can't, I'll have to arrest them."
- Need for access centers and safe storage to which frontline staff can easily refer their clients.
 - Board of Supervisors approved a motion directing County to establish 5 storage facilities (one in each Supervisorial District)
 - City sites could be ideal for safe storage (with County funding).
 - County will model storage sites on City of LA model and contract with Chrysalis to administer.
- Need more communication with law enforcement. Explore options for sharing with law enforcement as authorized under AB 210. This is constrained by HIPAA, but there may be opportunities for limited data sharing in phase 2 of AB 210 implementation, which involves the launch of an automated system.
- LAHSA has policy concerns about sharing HMIS data with law enforcement.
- Law enforcement is partnering with outreach teams as frontline workers.
 - In Redondo Beach, pilot program includes law enforcement, prosecutors, drug courts. It is a creative way to divert people from courts. Has been implemented for 4 months. Pilot is working, but there is no funding for law enforcement.
 - Program is also looking into linking those on 5150 holds to a bed and getting back on their meds.
- Sharing client health information with law enforcement is prohibited. DPSS and LAHSA information could legally be shared with law enforcement to support access to services and housing, but should it be?

Efforts to find alternatives to arrests

- It has been helpful to educate the public about when *not* to call police (and to use LA-HOP in most cases instead). It is not illegal to walk down the street "looking homeless."
 - Would be useful to have wallet cards with info for community members re: who to contact and when.
- Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) should be expanded; LEAD connects people living on the street who have engaged with police or committed low-level crimes to ICMS. Re-entry teams have been helpful, but they need better integration with cities. Youth Diversion and Development Program has been helping youth stay out of juvenile detention centers.
- Important that law enforcement communicate the positive effects of homeless services to those on the street and to the public.

In order to be successful, law enforcement needs access to beds and services

- San Gabriel Valley still has no place specifically for people struggling with substance use and no after-hours access to services, which forces police to get involved in a lot of situations with people on the street.
- The reality is that as long as services are not offered on weekends/evenings, law enforcement and paramedics will be the ones doing much of this work.
- Police departments should be able to drop people off at beds. Pomona's Officers Assisting the Homeless Program has dedicated a lieutenant, a sergeant, and 4 police officers all trained in responding to homeless-related concerns.
- In the city of Pomona, an access center (now open 6 days a week) has been set up to divert paramedic calls; 8 beds at Hope for Home are dedicated to clients brought in by police officers only. So far, this is a good pilot that could be used elsewhere.
- Need to have beds set aside; the Homeless Initiative could have set-aside beds for cities.
- Need substance abuse and mental health facilities; problematic that some urgent care and sobering centers are limited to 24 hours of care, as more hours may be needed.

Recommendations for further collaboration: colocation, case conferencing, diversion

- Law enforcement should be at case conferencing with LAHSA.
- Need to have an outreach worker and/or case manager housed at the Sheriff's Department office so they can respond to non-criminal issues that arise. COGs may explore using innovation funding to support such a placement of outreach workers.
- Need to applaud efforts to educate law enforcement—it is so necessary to connect people to beds instead of making arrests, especially because arrests are a major barrier to housing, employment, etc. down the line.

What collective legislative advocacy should cities and the County pursue at the state and/or federal level to maximize our ability to address homelessness and remove barriers to doing so?

- Getting phones for clients without an address is a major challenge. This could be addressed at the federal level.
- AB 1971: County needs to revisit and expand the definition of "gravely disabled."
- If the state invests in interim housing, there needs to be a long-term solution; otherwise, the investment is a waste of money.
- CEQA poses challenges.
- City of Whittier is sitting on \$1.4 million in HOME Funds, which cannot currently be used for transitional housing because it doesn't create discrete units. Need more flexibility at federal level with HOME.
- On state level, there is a state law that allows for conversion of single-family units into triplexes, e.g. two ADUs on the property. If we don't get credit for this under the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA), will experience a lot of pushback.
- The state of California should declare a state of emergency in order to bypass local and zoning challenges currently stagnating efforts. People have a right to do more than exist. Three people per day are dying on the streets.
- Need to pass bill to allow paramedics to take people experiencing homelessness to alternative care facilities.

- Need mental health care to be more flexible like the Full Service Partnership program. We are hearing a lot from managed care providers about the challenge in not being able to center services around what people need, but rather what they can be reimbursed for.
- Rent control is a huge issue.
- Life skill programs are needed for people exiting foster care and prison; will help preserve relationships with landlords.
- Need senior housing, TAY housing, childcare centers, and after-school programs.
- Opportunities to reduce restrictions in employment laws to allow for more social enterprises, such as relaxing meet and confer laws.
- Need more federal and state assistance for rental subsidies for supportive housing to ensure investments are sustainable over time.
- Need commitment from state to preserve existing housing and Board and Care. Existing covenants for affordable housing are expiring.
- Administrative rates for funding that is coming down at state level needs to be higher; should not dip into service costs.

What barriers hinder development of affordable and supportive housing in cities throughout the County? How can we streamline and incentivize the process of permanent housing development? How can the County, cities, and community organizations collaborate to address community opposition to the development of affordable housing and supportive housing?

Education about and enforcement of housing-related laws

- AB 1482 – Pomona has passed urgency ordinance to prevent evictions before rent stabilization goes into effect on January 1.
- With implementation of AB 1482, need to work with landlords and empower tenants. Housing Authorities are working with Housing Rights Center to provide tenant and landlord education.
- Challenging to understand fair housing laws.

Cities want to be able to prioritize their own residents for services/housing they provide/invest in

- Cities are interested in building affordable housing, but want their residents to be prioritized.
- Cities often want local resources to be reserved for local residents. Don't want others coming from elsewhere to utilize housing they establish. Cities need to have local preference.

Need for public education/education of city officials, PR campaigns, partnerships and efforts to change perceptions

- Lack of education for city officials is a major barrier; "NIMBY-ism" is also a major barrier; materials are needed for residents and businesses in order to change perception of homelessness.
- Lack of understanding about homelessness in general; campaign is needed to show what it really is.
- The incentive for creating more PSH should be having less people on the street.
- Cost of building housing and "NIMBYs" are the major barriers.
- City managers may want to build housing, but as soon as it comes up in city council, the momentum for building stops.

- Need frequent PSH tours so that people can see that they are okay to have in a neighborhood and are not unsafe or “scary.”
- Need to activate people in support of PSH (“YIMBYs”), rather than trying to drown out the “NIMBYs.”
 - United Way’s “Everyone In” campaign is working to do this.
- Cities should engage service providers as partners with mutual end goals in mind.
- Need layers of community engagement (community to directly engage with elected officials). Good results with IH and permanent housing.
- Need education for city officials. Just because someone is staying at a park, library, etc. does not mean that they are service-resistant or that service providers are not doing their jobs (rather, there simply aren’t enough beds).
- Need collaboration with faith communities; need for faith communities to be at the table.

Need to work with, accommodate, and incentivize developers/builders and change rules that are barriers to building

- Additional barrier: Some developers and builders do not understand what PSH is; need to educate them and bring them on board.
- Cities can incentivize developers to build PSH by waiving permitting fees, providing “concierge service” to ease process for developers.
- Issue with permit fees being waived: Some smaller cities rely on that money, so a pool of money should be formed to compensate cities when these fees are waived.
- Not just city permitting fees, but water and sanitation fees that raise the cost of development.
- Cities in the San Gabriel Valley have tried to use motels as PSH, but their proximity to freeways has been a major barrier.

Changes to staffing and service delivery needed

- Need to employ people with lived experience in every step of the process (not just in services, but also in housing development, etc.).
- Need for onsite support for housing locations.
- Need for 24-hour access centers, with access to showers, mail, medication storage, needle exchange programs, etc.
- Need accountability for landlords – ensure that units are livable.

Public Comment

1. Rainbow Services, which serves domestic violence survivors, appreciates this conversation; still, there is concern that domestic violence survivors were not mentioned today; they are a frequently overlooked population; need to collaborate with community agencies to address this issue.
 - Rainbow Services can refer people to Harbor Interfaith (since DV agencies cannot enter data into HMIS); unfortunately, this type of collaboration has only occurred in SPAs 6 and 8.
2. California Contract Cities Association did survey of cities in LA County. 69/88 cities responded to survey; 17 of those cities, which all had homelessness plans approved by the county, made the following recommendations:

- Cities should be prioritized in receiving Priority 1 housing funds to house people in their city; cities are hesitant to build housing for people experiencing homelessness because when they do, the county ends up taking those beds; constituents do not want to see “homelessness migration” into their cities, but instead want to focus on housing people experiencing homelessness within their own city.
 - Need to give maximum flexibility for cities in working with homeless service providers; service providers are overwhelmed; cities can help.
3. There is need for more flexibility and innovation; however, the main issue is that cities are the ones who know what their population needs, the County does not; cities know what is politically possible in their area; the County does not and cannot. Land use and community buy-in are local issues; also, Measure H is generated primarily at the city level. The County’s broad, one-size-fits-all approach is not working; therefore, the County’s primary role should instead be to support the work of cities.
 4. Cities refusing to build PSH are free riders—forcing cities that are building PSH to accommodate them; need to track number of people getting evicted from cities that refuse to build PSH so that those cities can take proper responsibility for their residents; also need to track number of section 8 voucher holders being turned down in a given city, forcing them to relocate to another.
 Measure H and Measure M money should be tied to land use and tenant protection ordinances.
 Police departments and fire departments are receiving too large a percentage of city funding; need to also support libraries, which often end up supporting people experiencing homelessness.
 How do we get city departments to go to case management conferences? Their performance metrics and money are not tied to this.
 We should in no circumstances consider “rounding up” and deporting people experiencing homelessness.
 5. Need support groups in every city; need to heal impacts of homelessness; need to reduce stigma of homelessness, scale up on our efforts in preventing, diverting, and combating homelessness, increase advocacy voice, and highlight needs of DV population. Need more support for case managers and peer employment opportunities.
 6. Need to shift paradigm; the story of someone with lived experience is part of the solution, not the problem.
 7. Need to focus on funding programs that are already working. How are we representing all 88 cities in the county? How do we ensure communication between cities and the county?
 - Maybe LEAB should be dispersed not in SPAs, but in cities.
 - Need to change the narrative around homelessness.
 - Need sober living facilities, as it is hard for people wanting to get sober to get into sober facilities, and hard for sober people to stay sober in the current system.
 8. How do we apply principles of equity for Black people experiencing homelessness? We need more Black people at the table; Black people have certain needs and challenges, and other Black people can help address them.
 - Transitional housing with extended services is needed for Black people.
 9. All community clinics in all SPAs need access to the AB 210 Info Portal; all service providers need access to HMIS; 80% of someone’s health is determined by social determinants of health, and only 20% is attributable to the person’s clinical care; community clinics are

increasingly using the (Protocol for Responding to and Assessing Patients' Assets, Risks, and Experiences) PRAPARE tool to screen clients for social determinants of health; the county and other entities should use the Prepare tool, too. Consider replicating the San Diego 211 model in LA.

10. City of Burbank has special Homeless programs.

- Development of supportive housing is costly at \$500,000-\$600,000 per unit, which mostly covers soft costs.
- Could the county provide support in paying developer fees?
- We need to provide incentives for churches if we want to use their space.
- Consider using rental subsidies for high users of healthcare system.