REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE ON BLACK PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

LOS ANGELES HOMELESS SERVICES AUTHORITY

DECEMBER 2018

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Photography by Leroy Hamilton

Dear Reader:

The persistent overrepresentation of Black people among the population experiencing homelessness is a troubling reality across the United States, and Los Angeles is no exception. In recognition of the urgent need to dedicate focused attention to better understand and address this critical issue, the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) Commission called for the creation of an Ad Hoc Committee on Black People Experiencing Homelessness to lead this effort.

We are pleased to share with you the enclosed report summarizing the key insights illuminated by this Committee's work as well as the Committee's recommendations for necessary actions to advance equity and eliminate racial disparities impacting Black people experiencing homelessness across Los Angeles County.

A theme that cut across the Committee's work was the acknowledgement that racism has contributed to, and remains intertwined with, homelessness. As such, ending homelessness will require a collective commitment to dismantling racism and addressing racial disparities, and sustained support from funders, policymakers, mainstream systems of care, service providers, and community partners.

The LAHSA Commission and LAHSA staff are committed to carefully examining policies and practices within the homeless services system and look forward to working with our City, County, and community partners to institute practices that advance equity within other systems of care that also serve those experiencing and at risk of homelessness.

LAHSA is also committed to infusing the use of a racial equity lens throughout all aspects of the organization's work, in alignment with the recommendations of this Committee. As a key first step in this endeavor, we are establishing a racial equity initiative within the organization. This ongoing initiative will focus both on ensuring equity in the agency's hiring and contracting practices, and on fostering the use of a racial equity lens in all aspects of the organization's work.

On behalf of LAHSA staff and the LAHSA Commission, we extend our sincere thanks to the partners and community members, particularly the individuals with lived experience of homelessness, who were vital contributors to this work. We appreciate their active engagement throughout this process and the rich insights they offered to inform the Committee's work. And finally, we want to acknowledge the members of this Committee for their tireless dedication of time, energy, and passion to this endeavor, and for their willingness to engage in often challenging but critical conversations. We are grateful for their contributions and look forward to working together to carry out the urgent recommendations they have put forth.

Sincerely,

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Chair, LAHSA Commission

Vice Chair, Ad Hoc Committee on Black People Experiencing Homelessness

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Executive Summary

Black people are more likely than White people to experience homelessness in the United States, including in Los Angeles County. In 2017, Black people represented only 9% of the general population in Los Angeles County yet comprised 40% of the population experiencing homelessness. The impact of institutional and structural racism in education, criminal justice, housing, employment, health care, and access to opportunities cannot be denied: homelessness is a by-product of racism in America.

Executive Summary

CONTINUED

In April 2018, the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) launched the Ad Hoc Committee on Black People Experiencing Homelessness (hereafter referred to as Committee). The purpose of the Committee was to: 1) examine the factors contributing to the overrepresentation of Black people among the population experiencing homelessness, 2) identify opportunities to increase racial equity within the homeless service delivery system, and 3) develop recommendations to more effectively meet the needs of Black people experiencing homelessness. To guide its efforts, the Committee employed a six-step Racial Equity Toolkit process. The Toolkit process provided the basis from which the Committee developed recommendations.

As part of the Toolkit process, the Committee adopted a racial equity outcome to guide its work: Eliminate racial disparities impacting Black people experiencing homelessness by ensuring racial equity within the homeless crisis response system.

Through a series of community listening sessions and focus groups, the Committee learned from service providers and community members and heard directly from youth and adults with lived experience in areas with high concentrations of Black people experiencing homelessness. Additionally, a group of researchers from the Race Equity Working Group of the Homelessness Policy Research Institute (HPRI) provided research and data analysis in response to various questions facing the Committee. Key insights illuminated through this multi-layered community feedback and data analysis provided the basis for the Committee's recommendations, which are outlined in this report.

The Committee examined institutional barriers facing Black people in various upstream and mainstream systems—including housing and labor markets, the criminal justice system, and the child welfare system—and explored how these barriers lead to overrepresentation in the population experiencing homelessness. The Committee also examined the experiences and outcomes of Black people within the homeless services system and in permanent housing more broadly (including public and affordable housing).

Executive Summary

CONTINUED

"WHAT WOULD HAVE KEPT YOU FROM BECOMING HOMELESS?"

"HAVING SOMEONE WHO CARED ABOUT ME."

Key insights that emerged from the Committee's work include the following:

- For lasting change to occur, institutional barriers across agencies and mainstream systems must be dismantled to eliminate the racial disparities and systemic racism affecting Black people experiencing homelessness.
- The mounting affordable housing crisis in the state and in the Los Angeles region, paired with persistently low, stagnant, and declining wages, exacerbates homelessness and particularly affects Black people.
- The interconnectedness of incarceration and homelessness creates a revolving door that only serves to make the plight of homelessness more challenging and complex.
- Black people experiencing homelessness have disproportionately high rates of child welfare system involvement.
- Care and empathy are crucial components of outreach and case management services—and of policy and program design. These components must be embedded within agency leadership and decision-making bodies that support direct service delivery. When asked, "What would have kept you from becoming homeless?" participants, in different words, responded, "having someone who cared about me."
- The inclusion of Black people with lived experience of homelessness in all aspects of program and policy design, implementation, evaluation, and service delivery, is critical to ensuring that programs and services effectively meet the needs of those they are intended to serve.
- The quality of interim housing varies across facilities, and for some, living in a shelter can be a traumatizing or re-traumatizing experience.

- Despite local investment to expand the permanent housing resources within the Los Angeles County Coordinated Entry System (CES), a gap in housing availability remains, as the number of participants in need of permanent housing resources greatly exceeds the available supply. This scarcity of resources often results in people living in unsheltered conditions or in interim housing for extended periods of time.
- Although CES appears to place Black people experiencing homelessness into housing at proportional rates, Black people served through CES permanent housing interventions experienced a higher rate of returns to homelessness than all other race and ethnic groups. This points to a significant need for further research to better understand what is causing this disparity and what additional supports are needed to improve housing stability and retention.

Recommendations to address barriers identified throughout the Committee's work

The Committee developed a robust set of recommendations that aim to address barriers identified throughout the Committee's work. These recommendations are outlined in Part III of this report and address a wide range of issues. The overarching aims of the recommendations included within this report are to:

- Improve data collection, analysis, and collaborative research to better understand and track issues affecting Black people experiencing homelessness.
- Advance racially-equitable policies, programs, and funding across institutions, including LAHSA, homeless service providers, and City and County agencies.
- Enhance cross-system collaboration and partnerships to more effectively prevent and reduce the time spent in homelessness and improve housing retention and stability for Black people experiencing homelessness.
- Expand capacity building and training opportunities to ensure service providers understand the impact of institutional racism and racial bias on Black people experiencing homelessness.
- Target investments and funding enhancements to initiatives aimed at reducing disparities and ensuring sufficient funding for services and programs supporting Black people experiencing homelessness.
- Implement targeted improvements to service delivery within the Los Angeles County CES and other systems of care in which Black people experiencing homelessness are overrepresented, to address barriers and improve outcomes for Black people.
- Expand advocacy at federal, state, and local government levels for progressive and racially equitable policies, programs, and (direct or indirect) funding impacting Black people experiencing homelessness.

This report summarizes the key insights and recommendations that emerged from the Committee's work and outlines the commitment and action needed from LAHSA, the County of Los Angeles, the City of Los Angeles, and service providers, to eliminate racial disparities impacting Black people experiencing homelessness and achieve greater racial equity in the homeless crisis response system.

Introduction and Overview of the Process

Black[1] individuals and families have been persistently overrepresented among the population experiencing homelessness across Los Angeles County.[2] The results of the January 2017 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count[3] confirmed this ongoing and troubling trend. According to the 2017 Count, while Black people made up 9% of the overall population in Los Angeles County, Black people represented 40% of the population experiencing homelessness, with an estimated 20,960 sheltered and unsheltered individuals experiencing homelessness. This represented an increase of 22% from the prior year (17,188), while the Count showed a 7% decrease in the number of White people experiencing homelessness during the same period. These results generated concern and heightened attentiveness to this issue by the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) Commission, City and County leaders, and members of the community. The recognition that Black people experiencing homelessness face racial inequities, as well as the other risks and challenges of homelessness, further highlighted the need for action to address this specific facet of the homelessness crisis in Los Angeles County.

Committee Formation

In 2016, the LAHSA Commission established an Ad Hoc Committee on Women and Homelessness, which generated critical insights and recommendations to reduce barriers and improve outcomes for women experiencing homelessness. Based on the impact of this committee's work, and in response to rising concerns about disparities impacting Black people experiencing homelessness, the LAHSA Commission established the Ad Hoc Committee on Black People Experiencing Homelessness (hereafter referred to as Committee). The purpose of the Committee was to: 1) examine the factors contributing to the overrepresentation of Black people among the population experiencing homelessness, 2) identify opportunities to increase racial equity within the homeless service delivery system, and 3) develop recommendations to more effectively meet the needs of Black people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. The Committee began its work in April 2018 and covered a wide range of issues—both in upstream and mainstream systems that disproportionately impact Black people experiencing homelessness, and within the homeless service delivery system and public agencies.

In recognition that ending homelessness and eliminating disparities for Black people requires solutions and action across multiple social welfare systems, the Committee was comprised of a broad range of stakeholders and experts—both within and beyond the field of homeless services. The Committee's 26 members were appointed both for their expertise and for their critical roles within these intersecting systems of care. Members included individuals with lived experience of homelessness, homeless service providers, housing rights advocates, housing developers, employment advocates, civil rights advocates, mental health service providers, faith leaders, representatives of city and county housing agencies, and staff representatives of elected offices, including the offices of Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti, Los Angeles City Councilmember Marqueece Harris-Dawson, and Los Angeles County Supervisors Mark Ridley-Thomas and Sheila Kuehl. LAHSA Commissioners Jacqueline Waggoner and Kelli Bernard served as chair and vice-chair, respectively, of the Committee. See Appendix I for a full list of committee members.

RACIAL EQUITY IS THE CONDITION THAT WOULD BE ACHIEVED IF ONE'S RACIAL IDENTITY NO LONGER PREDICTED, IN A STATISTICAL SENSE, HOW ONE FARES.

The Committee's Approach and Commitment to Racial Equity

The Committee recognized the importance and necessity of centering race to fully understand the institutional and structural racial inequities, discrimination, and other barriers to housing stability that affect Black people. The Committee also recognized the critical importance of engaging community members and individuals with lived experience of homelessness as integral partners in this process.

A core component of the Committee's work involved going out into the community to gather feedback. The Committee held monthly public meetings, hosted six community listening sessions, and convened small focus groups throughout the county. Report-back community sessions provided opportunities to share key insights and gather input on the Committee's proposed recommendations.

Facilitators at community listening sessions and focus groups gathered feedback by asking targeted questions aimed at understanding: 1) key challenges that contribute to the overrepresentation of Black people among the population experiencing homelessness, 2) unique barriers that Black people experiencing homelessness face, 3) changes that could improve outcomes for Black people, and 4) programs and interventions that are and are not working well. At each listening session, participants generated informed and critical responses. See Appendix II for insights from the listening sessions. For a schedule of listening session and focus group meetings and locations, see Appendix III.

At each monthly public meeting, the Committee reviewed qualitative and quantitative data and invited presentations from technical experts, including researchers, policymakers, service providers, community leaders, and people with lived experience of homelessness. See Appendix IV for a full schedule of the meeting dates and the topics discussed, as well as links to review materials presented.

The Racial Equity Toolkit

To guide its work, the Committee adopted the use of a Racial Equity Toolkit, a process and set of questions designed to guide, inform, and assess how policies, programs, and budgetary decisions burden and/or benefit Black people experiencing homelessness. The Toolkit process is briefly outlined below.

The use of the Toolkit promotes racial equity by:

- Listening to the voices of those most impacted—people with lived experience of homelessness, as well as those directly serving them—to understand how policies, programs, and services within the homeless service delivery system and other intersecting systems benefit or burden Black people experiencing homelessness;
- Raising awareness of racial justice issues for those providing services and community members;
- Working across governmental systems, with other institutions, and with community members to align strategies to eliminate racial disparities impacting Black people experiencing homelessness; and
- Evaluating progress over time and demonstrating a commitment to share results with community members.

This Toolkit process provided the framework for the Committee's work as described in this report. For more information about the Toolkit and a detailed outline of the Committee's implementation of this process, see Appendix V.

STEP 1. Set Outcomes
Set key community outcomes for racial equity to guide analysis.

STEP 2. Involve Stakeholders + Analyze Data
Gather information from community and staff on how the issue benefits or burdens community in terms of racial equity.

STEP 3. Determine Benefit and/or Burden
Analyze issue for impacts and alignment with racial equity outcomes.

STEP 4. Advance Opportunity or Minimize Harm
Develop strategies to create greater racial equity or minimize unintended consequences.

STEP 5. Evaluate, Raise Awareness, Be Accountable
Track impacts on community of color over time. Continue to communicate with and involve stakeholders. Document progress and unresolved issues.

STEP 6. Report Back
Share information learned from analysis, strategies developed, and results of implementation over time.

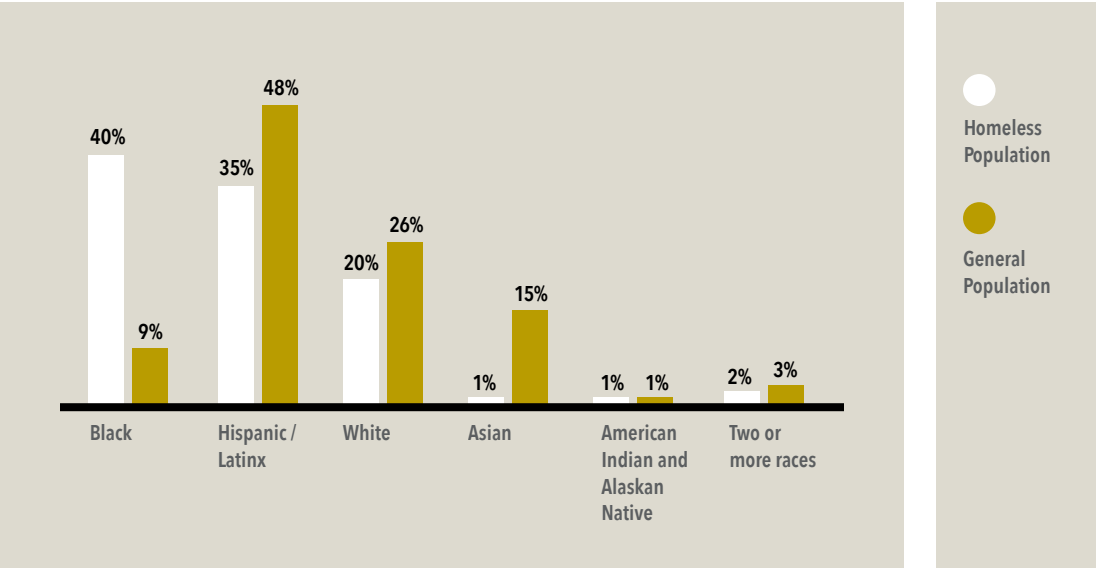
Analysis and Key Insights

Part II of this report summarizes key insights that emerged from the Committee's work—including the data gathered from community members and experts, as well as the Committee's analysis of the benefits and/or burdens that existing policies, programs, and services pose for Black people experiencing homelessness. These key insights serve as the basis for the recommendations that follow in each section. Where applicable, each section also highlights steps that are already being taken in response to the Committee's work to address challenges and barriers this work has illuminated.

The Demographics of Black People Experiencing Homelessness

As noted above, Black people are dramatically overrepresented in the population experiencing homelessness, when compared to their representation among the overall population in Los Angeles County. **Graph 1** demonstrates this disparity by comparing estimates from the 2017 Homeless Count with 2017 Census Bureau estimates of the overall population in Los Angeles County, by race and ethnicity.

GRAPH 1: Homeless Population vs. General Population, by Race & Ethnicity, Los Angeles Continuum of Care, 2017



Sources: Homeless population data represent estimates from the 2017 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count for the Los Angeles Continuum of Care (LA CoC). General population data taken from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey: 5-Year Estimates for Los Angeles County.

The Committee examined additional data from the 2017 Homeless Count to understand various demographic characteristics of the population of Black people experiencing homelessness—including geographic distribution, sheltered status, household composition, gender identity, and age. This demographic overview is outlined below.

Geographic Distribution

Table 1 shows the estimated number of Black people experiencing homelessness in each service planning area (SPA) along with the proportion they comprised of the total homeless population. The prevalence of Black people among the population experiencing homelessness was highest in SPA 6 (South Los Angeles) and SPA 4 (Metro Los Angeles, including Skid Row), where 68% and 49% of the homeless population identified as Black, respectively. The Committee intentionally held multiple listening sessions in these regions to ensure it heard directly from those most impacted. Insights that emerged from these sessions are included throughout this report, and the Summary of Community Listening Session and Focus Group Insights (see Appendix II) highlights additional community feedback from these regions, including a section that focuses on insights specific to Skid Row.

TABLE 1: Population of Black People Experiencing Homelessness by Service Planning Area, Los Angeles Continuum of Care, 2017

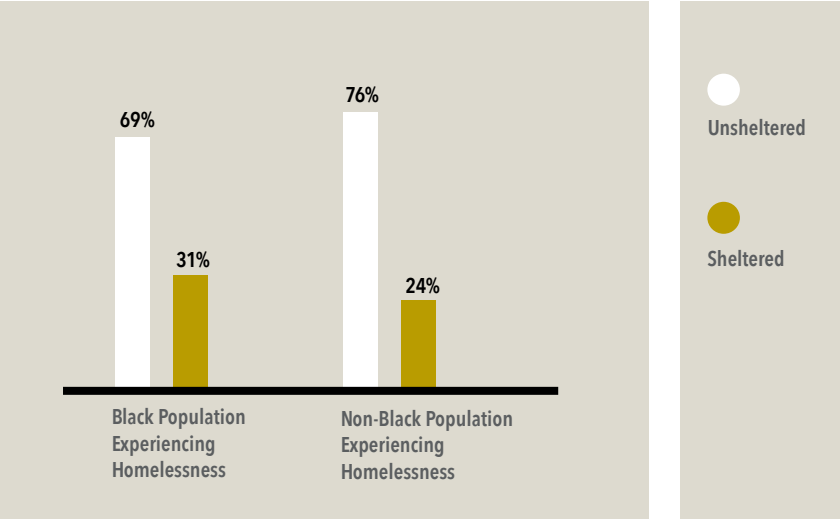
SERVICE PLANNING AREA	BLACK POPULATION EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS	PERCENT OF TOTAL HOMELESS POPULATION
1. Antelope Valley	1,340	35%
2. San Fernando Valley	1,246	17%
3. San Gabriel Valley	653	19%
4. Metro LA	7,234	49%
5. West LA	1,994	37%
6. South LA	6,142	68%
7. East LA County	573	13%
8. South Bay	1,778	43%

Source: Estimates from the 2017 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count for the LA CoC.

Sheltered Status

As reported in the 2017 Homeless Count, the vast majority of Black people experiencing homelessness were unsheltered (69%). However, as demonstrated in **Graph 2**, compared to other race groups, a slightly higher share of Black people experiencing homelessness were sheltered (31%, compared to 24% of those in other race groups).

GRAPH 2: Sheltered Status of Population Experiencing Homelessness, by Race, Los Angeles Continuum of Care, 2017



Source: Estimates from the 2017 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count for the LA CoC.

Household Composition

According to the 2017 Homeless Count, the majority of Black people experiencing homelessness were individuals (80%). However, families with children made up a larger share within the Black population, when compared to other race and ethnic groups. Twenty percent of Black people experiencing homelessness were members of families with children, compared to 12% among non-Black people experiencing homelessness.

TABLE 2: Household Composition of Black People Experiencing Homelessness, Los Angeles Continuum of Care, 2017

HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE OF BLACK PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS
Individuals (those not in family units)	**16,739**	**80%**
Chronically Homeless	6,566	31%
Veterans	1,808	9%
Unaccompanied Minors (under 18)	38	<1%
Family Members	**4,183**	**20%**
Chronically Homeless	159	<1%
Veterans	90	<1%

Source: Estimates from the 2017 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count for the LA CoC.

Gender Identity

As indicated in **Table 3**, of all Black people experiencing homelessness identified in the 2017 Count, 66% were male; 34% were female; and less than 1% (an estimated 186 individuals) were transgender.

TABLE 3: Gender of Black People Experiencing Homelessness, Los Angeles Continuum of Care, 2017

GENDER	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE OF BLACK PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS
Male	13,747	66%
Female	7,056	34%
Transgender	129	<1%
Do not identify with any of the above	26	<1%

Source: Estimates from the 2017 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count for the LA CoC.

Age Distribution

According to 2017 Homeless Count estimates, over 53% of Black people experiencing homelessness were between the ages of 25 and 54. Individuals age 55 and older comprised 26% of the total population, as **Table 4** demonstrates.

TABLE 4: Age of Black People Experiencing Homelessness, Los Angeles Continuum of Care, 2017

AGE GROUP	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE OF BLACK PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS
Under 18	2,342	11%
18–24	1,178	6%
25–54	11,692	56%
55–62	3,939	19%
62 and over	1,809	9%

Source: Estimates from the 2017 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count for the LA CoC.

Institutional Biases in Upstream and Mainstream Systems

The following section summarizes the key insights that emerged from the Committee's examination of upstream systems that contribute to the overrepresentation of Black people in the population experiencing homelessness. As outlined below, the Committee focused attention on understanding the impacts of: structural and institutional racism, discrimination, and implicit bias; cost of living and lack of employment opportunities; criminal justice system involvement and re-entry; and foster care and child welfare system involvement. The Committee examined these issues both by reviewing existing research and data analysis, and by learning from the expert voices of those involved in these systems, through listening sessions and focus groups.

Structural and Institutional Racism, Discrimination, and Implicit Bias

In response to the question "Why do you think Black people are overrepresented in the homeless population?" community listening session participants overwhelmingly identified generations of racism as the root cause of homelessness.

"African Americans are disproportionally represented in homelessness because they are [over]represented in every area of disparity in our country. And that goes back to our roots of racism, oppression, and institutional racism. It doesn't change with the category. It is almost expected."

BLACK WOMAN

South Los Angeles listening session participant

I have a Black boyfriend. When we look for apartments, I have to go alone because they always turn us down when he is around. We have to try to trick them into giving us the apartment before they find out he is Black. We both have bad credit but "for me they are willing to make an exception; for him they are not.

WHITE YOUTH

Paraphrased from Homeless Youth Forum of Los Angeles (HYFLA) focus group participant

According to analysis conducted by the Center for Social Innovation regarding American homelessness, "although Black people comprise 13% of the general population in the United States and 26% of those living in poverty, they account for more than 40% of the homeless population, suggesting that poverty rates alone do not explain the overrepresentation."[4]

Indeed, the circumstances that lead Black people to disproportionately experience homelessness cannot be untangled from the impact of institutional and structural racism in education, criminal justice, housing, employment, health care, and access to opportunities. Institutional and structural racism impact Black people experiencing homelessness on a daily, life-long basis, from renting an apartment, to seeking employment, to the trauma of living in an anti-Black society.

Fifty years ago, in 1968, the Fair Housing Act legally outlawed landlords and real estate companies, municipalities, and banks from denying people housing based on their race in response to rampant redlining[5] and exclusionary zoning.[6] However, according to a recent report by the National Fair Housing Alliance, the federal government has overwhelmingly failed to enforce the law, and in turn, racial discrimination in housing continues to be a pervasive problem across the country.[7] A recent analysis of Home Mortgage Disclosure Act data gave evidence that Black people continue to face housing discrimination despite policy efforts to prevent discriminatory lending practices.[8] The analysis found that Black borrowers were charged higher fees and interest rates than White borrowers, making credit less affordable to Black borrowers. Further, mortgage loan denial rates showed that Black applicants were denied far more often than White applicants in some of the country's largest cities.

As a result of the vestiges of redlining and exclusionary zoning, Los Angeles County ranks as one of the most segregated metropolitan areas in the United States. According to Richard Rothstein, author of *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*, data show that more than half (60%) of Black people in Los Angeles live in neighborhoods where few White people are present.[9]

Segregation is associated with lower homeownership, lower wealth accumulation, and higher rents. Over the past two decades, Black homeownership has declined at nearly five times the rate of White homeownership, according to a study by the Urban Institute.[10] The same study found that, while homeownership rates have increased for every other group over the past 50 years, Black homeownership has fallen to levels similar to those *before* the passage of the Fair Housing Act. Another nationwide study focused on renters found that while neighborhoods with concentrated minority populations have a median income that is 28% below the metro-wide median, their rent is only 12% below the metro-wide median, suggesting that people who live in segregated neighborhoods are more likely to have higher housing cost burdens.[11] In Los Angeles specifically, a 2016 report found that White households have a median net worth of $355,000 compared to just $3,500 for Black households.[12] As discussed further in the subsequent section of this report (focusing on cost of living and employment-related challenges), these economic impacts of discrimination and segregation contribute to increased risk of homelessness for Black people, further compounding the disparity.

Racial discrimination has also persisted locally, according to a recent Resident Fair Housing survey conducted by the City of Los Angeles and the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) from late 2016 to early 2017. Twenty-eight percent of survey respondents reported being discriminated against based on race/ethnicity; of those, approximately half were Black. According to the Los Angeles Housing Rights Center, who presented to the Committee in September 2018, racial bias (particularly against Black men and boys), lack of tenant protections, lack of access to subsidized housing, and the use of criminal records in tenant screening practices cause or maintain segregation.[14]

"Structural racism is the issue here. Los Angeles doesn't acknowledge this. How can we have the conversation if we don't acknowledge we live in a racist Los Angeles?"

PARTICIPANT
San Pedro listening session

Despite evidence of pervasive racial biases, small but important steps are being taken to address racial bias and institutional and structural racism in governmental agencies, educational institutions, provider organizations, and philanthropy. Initiatives such as the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) provide opportunities for government entities to address racial disparities and advance equity. Locally, Los Angeles County has introduced implicit bias and cultural competency trainings for county employees, and several county departments have established equity initiatives to provide focused attention to eliminating disparities within their systems of care.

Burdens and Benefits

A key component of the Toolkit approach is the identification of benefits and/or burdens, based on the information learned through data analysis and stakeholder engagement. By identifying existing barriers and (where applicable) highlighting promising practices and improvements, this step in the Toolkit process serves to lay the foundation for development of targeted recommendations.

Based on the data and stakeholder feedback outlined above, as well as additional insights shared through community listening sessions and focus groups, the Committee identified the following burdens:

- Racial bias affects every aspect of a Black person's life, and it is impossible to untangle the pervasive effects of institutional racism from other system failures that together cause a person to experience homelessness.
- Black people have been historically and systematically precluded from housing opportunities, including through redlining, exclusionary zoning, and other forms of discrimination codified by federal, state, and local law. While laws have changed, the effects of these previous policies are still pervasive.
- Black people are too often precluded from housing due to racial discrimination on the part of the property owner, leasing agent, or property manager. Homeless service providers participating in community listening sessions shared that it is more difficult, and sometimes impossible, to find housing for their Black participants.

The Committee identified the following benefit:

- Awareness of entrenched structural bias is increasing. Locally and nationally, initiatives such as GARE have begun to help government agencies highlight the importance of elevating issues of race and equity and implicit bias, both in policy and in practice.

Recommendations and Current Efforts

As evidenced throughout the Committee's work, structural and institutional racism create systemic barriers for Black people experiencing homelessness. To establish a framework for efforts to eliminate disparities for Black people experiencing homelessness, the Committee identified several overarching principles that should guide all aspects of decision-making and service delivery. Examples of these principles include:

- Shift the paradigm in the approach to funding and serving people experiencing homelessness to focus on systemic challenges and inequities, rather than individual challenges, and to acknowledge the current crisis and disparities as a product of decades of systemic issues and structural racism. Acknowledge that solutions will require sustained support and funding over an extended period to course-correct.
- Ensure that existing racial equity, implicit bias, and cultural competency efforts within the city and county are expanded to all aspects of homeless strategy implementation and the homeless service delivery system.

The Committee also developed targeted recommendations aimed at advancing equity through specific actions. Recommendations fell into several categories, including cross-system coordination, funding, data collection and research, advocacy and policy change, training, and programs and service delivery. The Committee's recommendations that aim to address the specific burdens outlined above include the following:

- Enact a civil and human rights ordinance for both the City and County to provide for the development of civil rights policies and mechanisms for investigation of and enforcement against discriminatory practices in housing and employment.
- Develop and launch a racial equity initiative at LAHSA to further its commitment to advance racial equity within its workforce and within the homeless crisis response system.
- Enhance and require ongoing trainings for relevant provider, LAHSA, City, and County staff in areas such as implicit bias, cultural competency, and the history and impacts of racism and discrimination against Black people.

The full set of overarching principles and recommendations put forth by the Committee are outlined in Part III of this report.

In line with these recommendations, LAHSA has committed to launching a racial equity initiative to further advance racial equity within its workforce and the homeless service delivery system. This will be an ongoing initiative and will focus on ensuring equity in hiring and contracting practices; developing and providing cultural competency, racial equity, and other relevant training to staff; and fostering the use of a racial equity lens in all aspects of the organization's work.

Cost of Living and Lack of Employment Opportunities

A theme acknowledged throughout the Committee's work was that in Los Angeles County, the high cost of living, rising housing costs, high unemployment rates, and low-wage jobs converge to increase the risk of homelessness and particularly impact Black people.

Analysis from the California Housing Partnership Corporation indicated that the average rent in Los Angeles County increased by 32% from 2000 to 2015, while the annual median income of renters decreased 3% during the same period, when adjusting for inflation. This problem is exacerbated by high rates of unemployment and low wages among Black people. According to a report by the University of California, Los Angeles Labor Center, the Los Angeles Black Worker Center, and the UCLA Institute for Research on Labor and Employment, 17% of Black workers in Los Angeles County were unemployed, compared to 9% of White workers.[16] The study found that while education helped bridge the gap, it did not completely erase it, because 9% of Black workers with at least a bachelor's degree were unemployed, compared to 7% of White workers. Racial bias was evident in the study's findings and consistent with listening session comments: whether working full- or part-time, Black workers earned less than three-quarters of what White workers earned. For women, the pay gap was even greater, with Black women earning only 67% of what White men earn.[17]

According to the same study, 30% of all Black full-time workers in Los Angeles County were low-wage workers—people who earned less than $13.49 per hour. (The median wage in Los Angeles County is $20.24.) Moreover, Black households in Los Angeles County also had the lowest median income and were more likely to live in poverty than any other racial group.

"I am a paycheck away from being homeless myself."

BLACK WOMAN, SOCIAL WORKER
Venice/Santa Monica listening session participant

"So, I came here; eventually I got a job; I got into school. There is a lot of help here, but it is not really for Black people… Now it is time for me to get a job. How am I going to get hired? Everybody else in that work was not Black, and they wanted their people in it. I went through that, and it was very difficult for me to get a job there. I got the job, but it wasn't nearly enough to cover half of the rent they were charging me."

BLACK WOMAN
Venice/Santa Monica listening session participant

Employment and cost of housing captured the attention of many community listening session participants, including individuals who were employed. Repeatedly, participants commented on the prohibitive cost of renting a one-bedroom apartment.

In addition to high cost of living, Black people also face systematic discrimination in the labor market. Research shows that resumes with names more often associated with Black people receive fewer callbacks. A study conducted by the National Bureau of Economic Research revealed a 50% gap in resume callback rates between Black-associated names and those with names traditionally associated with White people.[18] Furthermore, companies with organizational diversity statements were not any less likely to discriminate on the basis of race in the hiring process.[19] Community members also voiced their struggle with employment discrimination and the hurdles of finding employment, even low-wage jobs.

Listening session participants highlighted the critical role that strong vocational training programs with effective wraparound services can play in addressing employment challenges—particularly for Black people experiencing homelessness. Participants cited the lack of existing job training programs that prepare individuals for living wage employment, in addition to the limited funding available to bolster current trainings. Moreover, people experiencing homelessness pointed to the difficulty of accessing training programs when crucial supportive services, such as transportation or childcare, are not available for training participants.

One participant identified the former Job Corps program as a promising model of an effective program that led to job placement by offering temporary housing, training, and in some cases, training certifications upon completion. Others pointed to the effectiveness of targeted job fairs in matching employers to prospective employees. Participants and Committee members also noted the importance of incubating entrepreneurship opportunities, which has been a long-standing method of income generation in Black communities, to counter being locked out of mainstream, salaried employment.

Burdens and Benefits

Through an analysis of relevant studies referenced above, as well as additional information gleaned from listening session and focus group participants regarding challenges related to employment, the Committee identified the following burdens:

- Employment discrimination based on race contributes to high unemployment rates for Black people, which often lead to housing instability.
- Racial and gender bias work to create barriers to employment for Black people, often resulting in lower-paying jobs with less opportunity for career advancement.
- Black workers in Los Angeles County experience higher rates of unemployment and earn wages less than three-quarters of those earned by White workers.
- Income from full-time minimum wage jobs is not enough for an average one-bedroom apartment in Los Angeles.
- There is a lack of sufficient job training programs that lead to living wage jobs. Different types of job training are needed.
- Some homeless service organizations offering job training programs rely solely on private funding. Limited funding decreases the capacity of providers to train more participants.

- Training programs and workforce development services are often not easily accessible to people experiencing homelessness. Furthermore, it is difficult to seek educational or job training opportunities without childcare, stipends, and other accommodations.
- Stronger connections are needed between the homeless service delivery system and the workforce development system.
- Employment specialists (serving people experiencing homelessness) often do not have sufficient training and education to provide employment counseling.
- Housing and employment are intertwined. Housing and wraparound services are needed to support the transition from unemployment to employment.

Similarly, the Committee also identified the following benefits, based on promising practices highlighted by employment experts and listening session and focus group participants:

- Innovative vocational programs with wraparound services, as well as initiatives that foster small business and entrepreneurship opportunities, can lead to living wage employment.
- Students are empowered in learning environments that are safe, creative, nurturing, and that lead to employment. To ensure that prospective students can participate, training programs require supportive services including childcare, living stipends, transportation assistance, and housing.

Recommendations and Current Efforts

The Committee's focused attention on the barriers to employment, particularly for Black people experiencing homelessness, produced several recommendations in the areas of fair hiring, enforcement, and employment discrimination, as well as training for job seekers. Several recommendations of note are listed below. For a full listing of recommendations relative to employment and workforce development, see Part III.

- Continue to enhance and expand existing fair hiring practices to reduce barriers to employment, including legislation to restrict the use of criminal history records. Ensure legislation is accompanied by funding and a provision for credible community partnerships to support implementation (through measures such as public awareness campaigns, education, lessor/lessee trainings, and enforcement).
- Ensure that living-wage workforce development programs and employment training programs are aligned with major growth sectors in the Los Angeles region, adequately funded, accessible to people experiencing homelessness (e.g., proximate locations, transportation and childcare assistance, low-barrier eligibility requirements, compensated through stipends, etc.), and offer services tailored to Black people experiencing homelessness—particularly Black youth. Program development should include a broad range of opportunities, including entrepreneurial and small business opportunities.

Some promising steps in alignment with the Committee's recommendations are being taken at the state and local level in the areas of employment and workforce development. The Los Angeles County Chief Executive Officer (CEO), with support from the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH), has convened the Employment and Homelessness Taskforce to identify ways to strengthen the employment services provided and available to people experiencing homelessness, and to more closely align the homeless services and workforce development systems. The taskforce is a collaboration among the CEO, the CSH, LAHSA, DPSS, and WDACS. The goal of the taskforce is to produce recommendations around four key issues: coordinated service delivery and system alignment, increased capacity, business engagement, and leveraged funding opportunities.

"It is nearly impossible to house Black people with criminal histories."

BLACK WOMAN
Service Provider, San Pedro listening session participant

"If you are a Black Male, you are going to jail. If you are here on Skid Row and you are on this sidewalk, they are going to make obstacles for you."

BLACK MAN
Skid Row listening session participant

At the state level, the California Fair Chance Act (Assembly Bill 1008) went into effect in January 2018, ensuring job applicants with past criminal records are fairly considered by both private and government employers. The "Ban the Box" law mandates that employers must wait to conduct a background check until after the conditional job offer. Locally, the City of Los Angeles adopted a similar hiring ordinance in January 2017—the Fair Chance Initiative for Hiring. Enforcement measures began in July 2017. The enactment of such laws aims to address one of the primary barriers for formerly incarcerated individuals seeking to successfully reintegrate back into the community. While these recent efforts represent noteworthy progress, further policy changes are needed to ensure equitable opportunity for Black people.

Criminal Justice System Involvement and Re-entry

One of the key areas the Committee's work explored was the intersection of homelessness and criminal justice system involvement. A recent study found that Black Americans across the United States were incarcerated in state and federal prisons at more than five times the rate of White Americans.[20] In Los Angeles County, Black people represented 30% of the overall population in county jails.[21] According to the Los Angeles County Office of Diversion and Reentry (ODR), which presented to the Committee in June 2018, nearly 20% of the Los Angeles County jail population was homeless.[22]

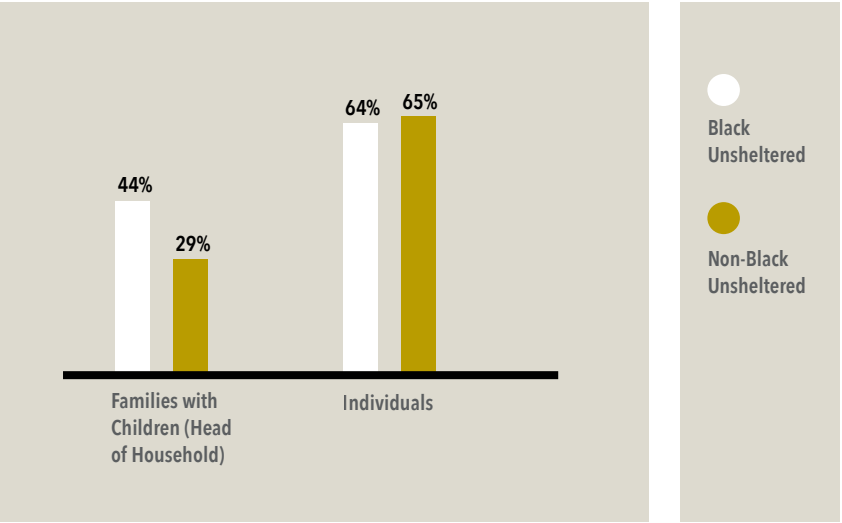
The toll of a criminal justice system that has disproportionately impacted Black people has a secondhand consequence. A large share (64%) of unsheltered Black individuals experiencing homelessness reported involvement with this system, according to the 2017 Homeless Count. The rate of criminal justice system involvement was disproportionately high for Black families with children, as shown in **Graph 3**. In 2017, 44% of Black families with children reported involvement with the criminal justice system, compared to 29% of families in other race and ethnic groups. When one family member is incarcerated, particularly the primary wage earner or head of household, the entire family unit is at risk of homelessness. The interconnectedness of incarceration and homelessness creates a revolving door that only serves to make the plight of homelessness more challenging and complex.

In an analysis of data for the city of Los Angeles, Million Dollar Hoods, a research team from the UCLA Ralph J. Bunche Center for African American Studies, reported that the arrest rate for people experiencing homelessness in the city of Los Angeles was more than 50 per 100 people, 17 times the arrest rate for the general population.[23] Given the overrepresentation of Black people among the population experiencing homelessness, this compounded impact of homelessness, criminal justice system involvement, and race is especially concerning. Even as total arrests in the city of Los Angeles declined from 2012 to 2017, homeless person arrests rose at a rate faster than the growth of the homeless population, according to the Million Dollar Hoods report. Additional analysis of data from the first half of 2017 shows a continuation of this trend. According to the report, the Los Angeles Police Department made 7,740 homeless person arrests between January 1 and June 30, 2017, pushing these arrests from 17.5% of total arrests in 2016 to 19.6% of total arrests during the first half of 2017.[24]

"In 1999, I got out of jail, and I couldn't get a good job, so now when we are homeless, it is hard for us to get a place because they want to do a background check. If I have a felony, what does that have to do with me just trying to have a place to stay? No, I can't get a job, and I can't get an apartment. You are doing a background check on me for what I [already] paid for."

BLACK MAN
with lived experience

GRAPH 3: Criminal Justice System Involvement Among Unsheltered Families with Children vs. Unsheltered Individuals, Los Angeles Continuum of Care, 2017



Source: Estimates from the 2017 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count for the LA CoC.

Over 50% of all homeless person arrests were related to nonviolent offenses, including charges for failure to appear (22%), possession of a controlled substance (10%), violation of supervision (8%), petty theft/shoplifting (7%), and trespassing (6%). These relatively minor offense arrests can result in a revolving door for Black people from incarceration to homelessness and back again.

Community listening session participants spoke about the multiple impacts of incarceration. Criminal justice system involvement causes trauma, fractures families, removes a primary income earner from the household—too often leaving families homeless—and creates lifelong barriers to housing, employment, and education. At one community listening session, a pastor told the story of a Black man living in Skid Row who was arrested 13 times in one year, creating additional delays and barriers to obtaining housing.

Black people with lived experience and providers serving formerly incarcerated individuals shared the challenges associated with transitioning back into their communities, which too often results in experiences of homelessness.

Committee members, expert presenters, and service providers at community listening sessions consistently emphasized the importance of practices such as housing with wraparound services, mentoring and coaching by people with lived experience, and job and life skills trainings that show positive results.

We can't just try to give them a voucher and tell them to go; they have to have other services that meet their needs so they can get out there and feel empowered. They still feel hopeless with a voucher in their hand.

BLACK MAN
Paraphrased from Service Provider, formerly incarcerated

Shifting Investments Towards Supportive Housing

According to the California Legislature's Nonpartisan Fiscal and Policy Advisor, a year in state prison cost an average of $71,000 in 2016–2017.[25] Million Dollar Hoods reported that the estimated cost of incarcerating a mother of two in Los Angeles jail is $245,000 per year, when accounting for the booking charge, daily jail bed rate, and child placement daily costs.[26] By contrast, A New Way of Life Reentry Project (ANWOL), an organization dedicated to serving formerly incarcerated women reentering community, reported that for $16,000 per year, ANWOL can provide housing, transportation, clothing, food, job services, social work engagement, and therapy to a formerly incarcerated woman.[27]

ODR, which is housed within the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services (DHS), was created with a mission to "develop and implement countywide criminal justice diversion for people with mental and/or substance use disorders, including people who are homeless."[28] One of the ways in which ODR accomplishes this mission is by providing permanent supportive housing (PSH) to the justice-involved population, in recognition that over a quarter of the jail population has a mental illness, and housing is key to maintaining connection to treatment. An evaluation of DHS's Housing for Health PSH program (which only served patients within the DHS system of care experiencing homelessness during the evaluation period) found that the average cost of county services per participant the year prior to housing was $38,146; however, in the year after providing housing and services, the total service utilization cost per participant came to just $15,358.[29] Even after accounting for PSH costs, this represented a 20% net cost savings. Additionally, the county realized a 76% reduction in costs for inpatient medical services, a 67% reduction in emergency medical services, and a 59% reduction in crisis stabilization services. These cost savings and positive outcomes bolster the argument for shifting law enforcement investments to funding for permanent housing.

Burdens and Benefits

The Committee's consideration of data highlighted above, as well as additional expert and community feedback illuminated the following burdens:

- Black people are disproportionately impacted by criminal justice system involvement.
- Homelessness increases the risk of criminal justice system involvement; likewise, criminal justice system involvement often results in homelessness, creating a cyclical impact.
- Families can fall into homelessness when a parent is incarcerated, and future family reunification is often predicated upon housing.
- The use of criminal records in employment and housing create barriers for formerly incarcerated Black people in securing jobs and housing.
- When Black people experiencing homelessness are waiting for housing assistance, their eligibility for some housing resources may be impacted if re-incarcerated for an extended period of time due to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) definition of homelessness. This can create significant barriers and delays in obtaining housing.[30]
- Rehabilitation that occurs in jail or prison is often insufficient. As a result, people are not adequately prepared to re-enter their communities.
- Transitioning formerly incarcerated individuals to their communities may require housing with wraparound services, job training, mental health care, mentoring, and coaching. Housing alone is not enough.

Presentations to the Committee identified the following benefits:

- ODR is creating and implementing innovative programs and services for individuals involved in the criminal justice system. In particular, its re-entry programs include working with probation and parole offices, in advance of release, to anticipate and address the needs of the individual. Services include, but are not limited to: housing, physical and mental health care, job training, and job placement. These wraparound services increase the likelihood of a successful transition.
- Community organizations like ANWOL provide services to formerly incarcerated women for successful community re-entry, family reunification, and individual healing. ANWOL reports that approximately 70% of women who leave their facilities after one year are employed.[31]

Recommendations and Current Efforts

In light of the benefits and burdens highlighted above, the Committee identified several strategies to address the confluence of homelessness and criminal justice system involvement. One of the Committee's top recommendations was to conduct a global landscape analysis within City and County governments to identify existing and potential relationships, as well as current efforts, related to criminal justice reform and re-entry initiatives. Based on the results of this analysis, the Committee recommended consideration of several actions to improve outcomes through policy and advocacy, enhanced funding, changes to programs and services, and additional cross-system coordination. Other recommendations included the following:

- Fund and build capacity for programs that support people who are formerly incarcerated and who are or are at risk of experiencing homelessness by:
  - > Hiring Black people who are formerly incarcerated and/or have lived experience of homelessness,
  - > Utilizing effective wrap-around service models, and
  - > Employing trauma-informed care training and practices.
- Assess current service provider practices and explore the most equitable and culturally competent ways to assess, triage, and ask what people need, to ensure justice-involved Black people experiencing homelessness are connected to the most appropriate housing and services.

The full set of recommendations pertaining to criminal justice system involvement and re-entry can be found in Part III of this report.

Some efforts currently underway serve as important first steps to addressing some of the burdens identified by the Committee's work. LAHSA is working to implement a supplemental CES Triage Tool to more accurately reflect vulnerabilities unique to incarceration and to ensure that justice-involved individuals are connected to appropriate housing and services. Implementation is expected to commence in early 2019.

In addition, ODR launched a new division in November 2017, the Youth Diversion & Development division, to advance an evidence-based, collaborative model for youth diversion and development in reducing the prevalence of justice-system involvement among 12 to 17 year olds in Los Angeles County. The division plans to focus on pre-arrest diversion opportunities for minor youth and to integrate housing questions into intake paperwork.

The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors also recently approved two measures aimed at improving access to services to help women exiting incarceration to achieve and maintain stability after re-entry. In October 2018, the Board established a Jail-Based Job Center at the Century Regional Detention Facility, which will provide vocational training and career pathway guidance to help women achieve stable employment upon re-entry. In November, the Board also approved the development of a new Women's Wellbeing Center to provide mental health services to formerly incarcerated women who have chronic and persistent mental illness. Each of these measures serves as a promising step toward removing barriers to re-entry and reducing the risk of homelessness for individuals exiting incarceration.

Foster Care and Child Welfare System Involvement

Another important focus of the Committee's work was on the intersection of homelessness and child welfare system involvement, and the disproportionate impact on Black youth and families with children. According to the U.S. Children's Bureau, Black youth are disproportionately represented in the child welfare system. As of 2014, Black youth in the United States made up 24% of children in the foster care system and only 14% of the total population under the age of 18.[32] The bureau cites studies in various states documenting biases among caseworkers in the assessment of risk that led to the disproportionate removal of Black children from their families, and lack of access to court-appointed special advocates and other services in Black communities.[33, 34]

Child welfare system involvement also intersects with homelessness and housing instability in a number of ways. A study in Philadelphia found that families with one instance of homelessness were nine times more likely to have involvement with the child welfare system (37%) than others who did not experience homelessness (4%).[35] Numerous studies have also found that child welfare system involvement is associated with increased risk of homelessness in youth. A recent study in Washington State found that 28% of youth who exited the foster care system experienced homelessness at some point during the year following their exit (on par with other studies conducted in recent decades), and that Black youth were 1.8 times more likely to be homeless than their peers. [36] Furthermore, for youth attempting to return to their families, unstable or inadequate housing can often delay family reunification.[37]

Foster Care System Involvement

In Los Angeles, Black people experiencing homelessness have a significantly higher rate of involvement with the foster care system than their counterparts of other races. According to the 2017 Homeless Count, 16% of Black unsheltered families with children reported foster care system involvement, compared to 2% of unsheltered families of other races/ethnicities, as shown in **Graph 4**.

In July 2018, the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) reported that Black children comprise 24% (8,230) of the child population served by the department.[38] Of the children whom the department had placed in Out of Home Care at the end of June, 27% (5,643 children) were Black.[39]

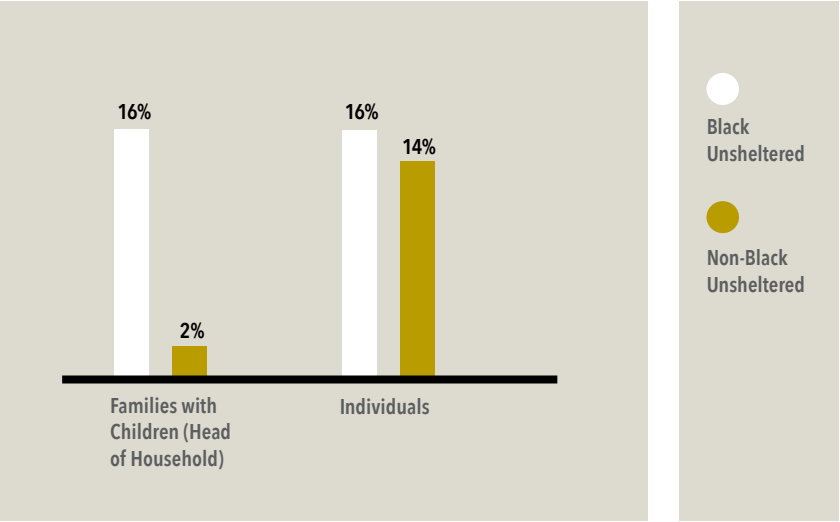
The Committee explored the impacts of separation and barriers to reunification for Black families, as well as the impacts of foster care involvement for Black youth and young adults transitioning to independence. Youth focus group participants shared about the challenges of navigating foster care, the need for better support in transitional living programs, and barriers to accessing appropriate interim housing—particularly for Black transgender youth.

"I was homeless with my whole entire family, but as a stigma we were like, 'We are not going to get help.' We were going to figure it out. As a community, we don't want to get help because we have been conditioned to look at it as a handout. Really, it is to help you get back on your feet and improve your future. Until we put that focus out there to re-unify and re-educate, we are going to always be homeless."

BLACK WOMAN

South Los Angeles listening session participant

GRAPH 4: Child Welfare System Involvement Among Unsheltered Families with Children vs. Unsheltered Individuals, Los Angeles Continuum of Care, 2017



Source: Estimates from the 2017 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count for the LA CoC.

Issues impacting families and children more broadly also arose at most listening sessions. Participants noted the intergenerational cycle of poverty for too many families and the pain of family separation. The Committee discussed the impacts that these cycles can have on housing stability—not just for an individual family, but also extended family members and a broader social network. The Supporting Partnerships for Anti-Racist Communities (SPARC) team has termed this phenomenon n*etwork impoverishment*.[40] Listening session participants also shared their experience and stigma of family homelessness.

Child Protection Involvement Among Families with Children Experiencing Homelessness

The Children's Data Network (CDN), a data and research collaborative focused on linking and analyzing data across public agencies to generate knowledge aimed at improving the well-being of children, shared preliminary data from an ongoing analysis to better understand the characteristics of families receiving homeless services in Los Angeles County, including the prevalence of child welfare involvement. The study examines both families with children that have an adult head of household and families in which the head of household is between the ages of 18 and 24 (known as transition-age youth or TAY). According to CDN's analysis, nearly half (48%) of the parents accessing homeless services during the period studied (2013–2016) were Black; among TAY parents, 53% were Black.[41]

Among all parents accessing homeless services during the study period, nearly two-thirds (65%) had at least one child who had been referred to Child Protective Services (CPS) for alleged maltreatment. One-third (33%) had at least one child with a substantiated claim, and 18% had a child placed in out-of-home care. In most instances, CPS involvement occurred before the parents' first encounter with the homeless services system. CDN noted that this finding underscores the importance of providing trauma-informed services to families experiencing homelessness, and the value of cross-system coordination in the provision of those supports. Moreover, CDN emphasized that preventative efforts to support and strengthen families

could have helped to resolve family problems at an earlier stage, potentially preventing later entry into homelessness.[42]

Transition Age Youth

According to the 2017 Homeless Count, there were an estimated 2,782 transition-age youth experiencing homelessness in the Los Angeles Continuum of Care (LA CoC), 42% of whom identify as Black. Young adults engaged through the Committee's work reported challenges navigating within and between different systems of care as they transition to adulthood. Several transition-age youth shared that because the Los Angeles County CES prioritizes youth with the highest acuity, they often feel the need to make unfounded claims in order to obtain services.

Young adults also emphasized the need for more comprehensive transitional living support, including assistance in securing housing and dealing with housing discrimination.

A service provider serving transition-age youth observed that in many cases, basic life skills have not been sufficiently developed to live independently. Providers pointed to the need for programs that support the development of such skills to prepare youth to transition to adulthood. The Rites of Passage Program was identified as a promising program model that served this function.

Some young adults shared that rather than obtaining guidance and support for accessing the programs and services they desire, too often they are placed in existing programs that may not fit their needs or interests.

The system wants Black people to be at risk and vulnerable in order to obtain services. Individuals who are deemed 'able-bodied' are discriminated against [by not being prioritized for services].

BLACK YOUTH
Paraphrased from HYFLA focus group participant

We need more preparation to be independent of the system. For the most part, there are no real steps to assist Black young adults that are receiving services to sustain their independence. It's like, you've reached 25; you've been here two years. What do you have saved? What's next? There needs to be more support over the course of transitional services. We should have navigators to assist with securing housing and confronting housing discrimination.

BLACK YOUTH
Paraphrased from HYFLA focus group participant

Burdens and Benefits

The Committee's review of data presented above, as well as additional insights shared by listening session and focus group participants, illuminated the following burdens:

- Implicit bias and discrimination often impact how Black children and families are treated and can either lead to system involvement or impact system involvement outcomes. For example, Black parents may be evaluated differently from White parents in reporting of parental misconduct, which can lead to Black families being separated and children placed into protective custody.
- Homelessness often creates a barrier for families seeking reunification.
- The lack of support and services for families in distress often results in family separation or keeps families from reuniting.
- Some families fail to seek services for fear of adverse consequences (such as children being removed from the home) or because they do not want to be stigmatized for seeking and receiving services.
- Parents expressed that lack of childcare prevents them from furthering their education, seeking job training, or securing employment.
- Transition-age youth shared they are often placed in programs that are not tailored to their individual needs.
- Transition-age youth also voiced that those needing less resources feel penalized for their success. For example, one participant shared she was saving money in anticipation of upcoming living expenses (post transition) but was required to pay for her own dental care, depleting her savings account.

"There is no conversation as to what the youth needs; the programs are prescriptive. If I am competent and succeeding, don't take away resources because of it. Ask what we need rather than assume what we need."

BLACK YOUTH
HYFLA focus group participant

"Working with people of color, one thing I noticed is the lack of education and life skills that are not being taught, generation after generation. So even with my TAY clients, which is 18-24, I am getting a lot of adults that do not know how to do basic things. They do not know how to properly speak to the landlord or get their needs met or how to go and get services from the county. They do not have the life skills to go and access them."

BLACK WOMAN
Service Provider

From expert presentations and provider feedback, the Committee also identified the following benefits within existing programs and services:

- DCFS launched a racial equity working group within its department, with a commitment to focus on and eliminate racial disparities within the population it serves. This effort is likely to have a positive impact in advancing equity in its policies, programs, and procedures.
- In January 2017, DCFS began offering a rapid re-housing (RRH) program for families seeking reunification with their children in DCFS care, where homelessness is the sole barrier to reunification. From January 2017 through March 2018, the program permanently housed 79 families, 24% of whom were Black families, and 173 children.
- TAY programs that offer wraparound services allow for an umbrella of services and care for each participant.

Recommendations and Current Efforts

Through the Committee's attention to the benefits and burdens of youth and families with child welfare system involvement, the Committee identified several recommendations—many of which focus on cross-system coordination with DCFS. Several of the Committee's recommendations are highlighted below. For the full list of recommendations, see Part III.

- Coordinate and work with DCFS, homeless service providers, parent advocates, parent defender advocates, and other relevant partner agencies to leverage resources and maximize services, expertise, and outcomes.
- Enhance DCFS support systems for families involved in the child welfare system, with an increased focus on providing services to families at the outset of child welfare involvement to address the traumas of system involvement and potential family separation.
- Improve system coordination and ensure transition planning commences with sufficient time to achieve best outcomes for youth exiting foster care.

While much work is still needed, LAHSA and the county have begun to take steps toward disentangling cross-system barriers for Black families and youth. LAHSA recently collaborated with DCFS, Los Angeles County Probation, the Home for Good initiative, the Center for Strategic Partnerships, and Alliance for Children's Rights, to operate three pilots aimed at creating new linkages between Youth CES, the child welfare system, and the juvenile justice system. The pilot programs focused on forging relationships through co-location of staff, integrating Youth CES into discharge planning processes, and increasing housing access for youth in extended foster care through new Supervised Independent Living Placement strategies.

Additionally, DCFS recently launched an African American community engagement model, creating a formalized partnership with faith-based organizations to provide services to families by way of cultural brokers, visitation support, respite care, and other supportive services. The pilot will build upon the work of an existing African American Community Engagement program, which supports families with multigenerational involvement in the child welfare system through faith- and community-based resources with an intensive and crisis-oriented approach. The goals of this specialized multidisciplinary program are twofold: reducing out-of-home placements while simultaneously decreasing racial disproportionality among African American children within the foster care system.

"We need to stop these systems that are forcing us to lie. Have you ever had to lie on an application or the social worker told you to lie unless you won't get this program? How do you think we feel after we lie and walk away? You are talking about lowering our self-esteem; it effects our spiritual life. I am already in a bad place, and I have to lie on top of it. Sleeping on someone's couch, and I have to lie and say I am sleeping on the street. It doesn't make sense."

BLACK WOMAN
South Los Angeles listening session participant

Experiences and Outcomes Within the Homeless Services System and in Permanent Housing

In addition to racial biases faced in various systems and institutions that lead to the overrepresentation of Black people in the population experiencing homelessness, the Committee also focused on the experiences and outcomes of Black people within the homeless services system and in permanent housing more broadly. The following section summarizes the Committee's analysis of the Los Angeles County CES—from initial outreach and assessment through permanent housing placement and services—and of housing beyond the homeless services system..

Coordinated Entry System Access and Assessment

The Los Angeles County CES brings together programs and resources with the goal of connecting people experiencing homelessness to the most appropriate housing and services based on their needs. A core component of the Committee's analysis of this system focused on the "front door" of coordinated entry—including assessment, outreach, and interim housing. Committee and listening session discussions also focused on case management and the quality of services and care within CES more broadly.

CES Assessment Process

CES assessment refers to a process of collecting sufficient information from participants to: 1) understand their strengths, needs, and the nature of their housing crisis; 2) make prioritization decisions consistently; and 3) facilitate access to housing and supportive services. The Los Angeles County CES uses a standardized assessment process and tools to enable consistent, fair decision-making across different regions, access points, and staff. The assessment process has multiple components, including crisis assessment and engagement, intake and initial assessment, and comprehensive assessment and development of a housing plan. CES Triage Tools are one key part of the assessment process and aim to assist in prioritizing the most vulnerable participants for scarce housing resources. The CES Triage Tools are based on the Vulnerability Index-Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT) for adults, and related tools for families with children (VI-FSPDAT) and youth (Next Step Tool), which are the most commonly used tools by coordinated entry systems across the country.

Historically, entrenched implicit bias in public assistance systems has long created inequalities for communities of color—resulting in overrepresentation in the more punitive systems or underutilization of resources in safety net systems. Standardized tools aim to mitigate this bias by enabling consistent assessment and decision-making; however, despite the benefits associated with standardized assessment practices,[43] studies have found racial bias in student achievement tests and clinical mental health assessments due to bias in both test questions and the administrators or assessors.[44, 45]

The work of this Committee underscored the need to conduct targeted research to 1) evaluate the effectiveness of CES Triage Tools at mitigating implicit bias, and 2) better understand whether the existing CES Triage Tools appropriately measure and account for unique vulnerabilities experienced by Black people. Limited research has been conducted on the effectiveness of the VI-SPDAT in measuring vulnerability more broadly. One study found that some questions were not strongly related or were related in an unexpected way with the concept of vulnerability. Due to the current limited research on the tool, the study called for: 1) additional research into the VI-SPDAT, 2) the consideration of removing or adding certain questions to improve the tool, and 3) an examination of how vulnerability is defined.[46]

"The [VI-SPDAT] is very lengthy. A lot of times clients come in; they are overwhelmed; they are stressed out; they are frustrated, and they are at their wits end. For us to service them properly we have to literally go through a 25-page assessment. It is question, after question, after question…It is very insensitive to the clients' needs and situation. If we begin to actually have conversations with the client and figure out a way to shorten the [VI-SPDAT], perhaps we can start building relationships and formulate [lines] of communication."

BLACK WOMAN
Service Provider, South Los Angeles listening session

At multiple community listening sessions, participants (including provider staff and persons with lived experience) raised concerns about the assessment process and CES Triage Tools—particularly around the scoring and prioritization component and around the length and intensity of the questions asked. Individuals with lived experience and service providers shared that the CES Triage Tools' scoring components often leads participants to feel they need to provide false information or make higher acuity claims—such as mental health issues or substance abuse—in order to be prioritized for scarce housing resources.

Service providers and community members alike also voiced concerns about the length of the CES Triage Tools and the timing of the assessment. It was noted that both the CES Triage Tools and the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) forms are lengthy questionnaires and seem to contain duplicative questions. Perhaps more concerning, however, is the timing of the assessment at initial encounter. Providers shared that at these first encounters, a relationship has not yet been established, and participants are frequently in crisis or in turmoil. Moreover, the questionnaires seek personal information that under these circumstances may seem ill-timed and inappropriate, and as such, counter to a trauma-informed approach. These factors can serve as barriers to establishing relationships and ensuring effective and meaningful engagement.

Outreach Engagement and Staff Diversity

In addition to concerns about the length and content of CES Triage Tools, community listening sessions brought many concerns to the forefront about the diversity, experience, and expertise of outreach staff. In particular, people with lived experience shared that outreach staff "should look like me" and have lived experience in order to provide meaningful care.

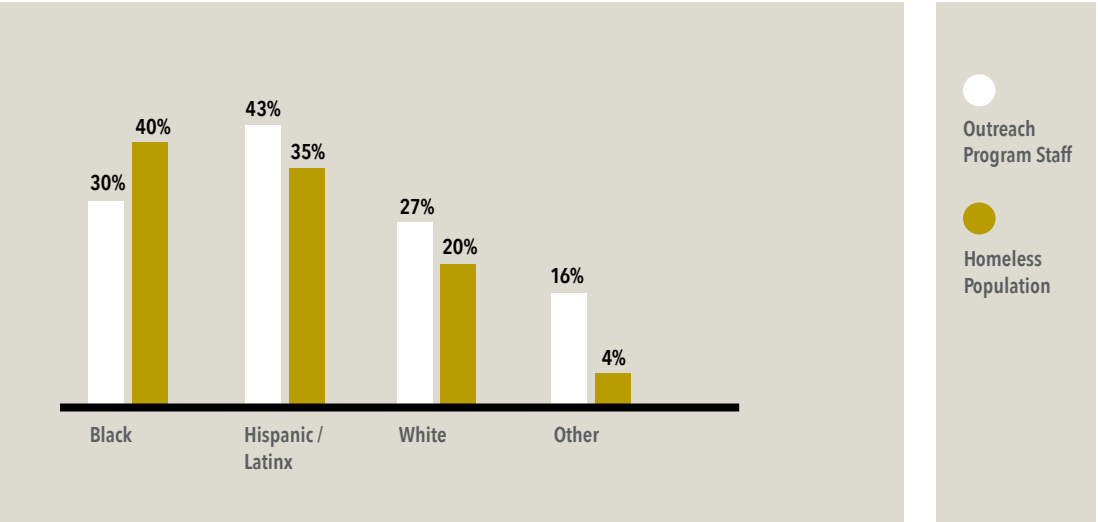
In August 2018, LAHSA conducted a survey to learn more about the diversity of outreach staff countywide—including teams at LAHSA, service providers, and other county partners. While the survey was not mandatory, and some elected not to respond, the data collected provided a helpful estimation of the race, ethnicity, and other characteristics of outreach staff. As seen in **Graph 5**, survey results demonstrated that outreach

"Sitting across the table of someone that looks like you, and at the very least can understand what it is like to experience the world the way you experience it, makes a huge difference. It opens you up to be more willing to support care. Until we get people that look like us in these positions, we are not going be able access it. It not going to seem like something that is safe."

Black Woman
West Adams listening session participant

teams represented a diverse workforce. Of the 168 survey respondents, 30% identified as Black. Twenty-five percent of Black survey respondents were in management or supervisory positions (compared to 28% of respondents of other races). The survey also demonstrated that Black outreach workers were more likely than their counterparts of other races to have lived experience of homelessness (63% and 44%, respectively).

GRAPH 5: Outreach Program Staff vs. Homeless Population, by Race & Ethnicity, Los Angeles Continuum of Care, 2017



Sources: Outreach program staff data taken from an August 2017 survey of outreach program staff operating within the Los Angeles County CES. Because staff identified with multiple ethnicities, percentages total to greater than 100. Homeless population data represent estimates from the 2017 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count for the LA CoC.

The Committee also examined data about outreach services and outcomes by race and ethnicity. As shown in **Graph 6**, of all people experiencing homelessness engaged by countywide CES outreach teams, 34% were Black, a rate slightly lower than the proportion of the total homeless population that identifies as Black, per the 2017 Homeless Count (40%). Among those engaged with outreach teams who were then connected to housing and other services, Black participants represented a share that is consistent with their representation among the total population experiencing homelessness. Black participants represented 42% of those placed into interim housing, 41% of those linked to permanent housing resources, and 42% of those placed into permanent housing.

Interim Housing

Individuals experiencing homelessness may be placed into interim housing as a temporary housing solution while seeking more permanent housing and services. In Los Angeles, some interim housing facilities are reserved, while others are filled on a first-come, first-served basis. According to the 2017 Homeless Count, an estimated 52,442 people experience homelessness across the LA CoC on any given night, yet there are only an estimated 11,200 interim housing bed units in operation across the LA CoC, according to the 2017 Housing Inventory Count. Of the total bed units, approximately 60% were funded by LAHSA and/or other public agencies, while the remaining 40% were privately funded.

"They wanted to put 400 people that all had histories of trauma into one place. ...Until homeless services really integrate trauma-informed care and deal with it from the perspective that looks at the whole piece—that looks at the racism—we are going to continue to repeat and spend money in ways that is not going to change the system."

BLACK WOMAN

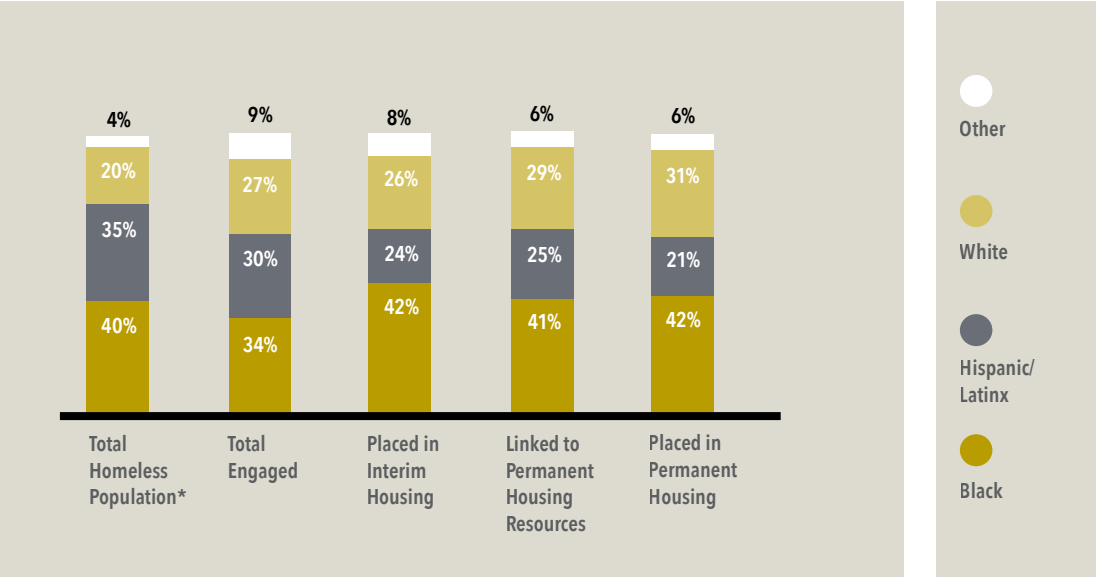
Service Provider, South Los Angeles listening session participant

I work with shelters in South LA. A lot of shelters extend their stay without holding them to a higher standard—to find jobs, get connected to resources. Shelters could do a better job at helping them find resource."

BLACK WOMAN

Paraphrased from Service Provider and San Pedro listening session participant

GRAPH 6: E6 Outreach Services Engagement vs. Homeless Population, by Race & Ethnicity, Los Angeles Continuum of Care, 2017–2018



Sources: Total homeless population data represent estimates from the 2017 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count the LA CoC. Outreach program engagement data taken from HMIS and comprise engaged persons actively enrolled in E6 outreach programs during FY 2017–2018.
*Total homeless population serves as a point of reference for the outreach program engagement data report.

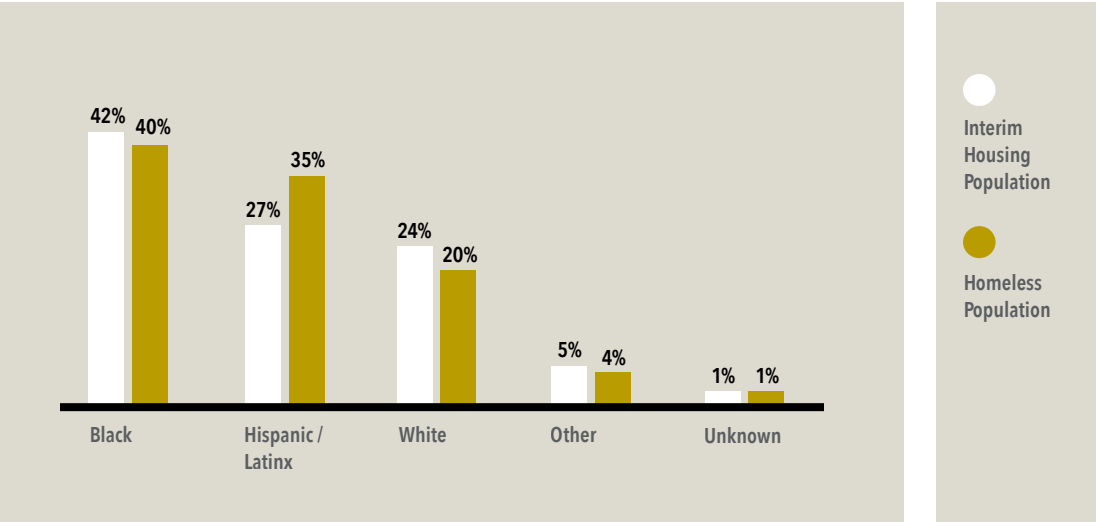
Community listening sessions provided ample feedback about interim housing facilities. For many, interim housing facilities are re-traumatizing places that feel unsafe, over-crowded, and lacking in sufficient services. In the words of one man, "Shelters must be more attractive than living in a tent."

Members noted that due to limited availability of permanent housing, people live in shelters for long periods of time, awaiting long-term supportive housing.

"You also have to care about Black people. You have to care about all people, but you have to have a level of care and respect for that community. It sounds so basic, but I don't think we would be having this conversation if everyone had that level of care and respect for Black people."

BLACK WOMAN
Service Provider, South Los Angeles listening session participant

GRAPH 7: Population Accessing Interim Housing vs. Homeless Population, by Race & Ethnicity, Los Angeles Continuum of Care, 2017



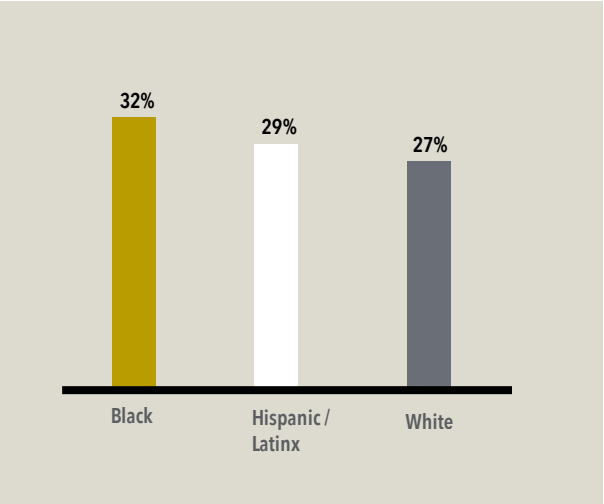
Sources: Interim housing data taken from HMIS intake data at time of 2017 point-in-time count. Homeless population data represent estimates from the 2017 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count for the LA CoC.

According to analysis conducted by HPRI and the California Policy Lab (CPL), as demonstrated in **Graph 7**, Black people experiencing homelessness represented 42% of those accessing interim housing, a slightly higher proportion than the share of Black people among the general homeless population. One explanation for this higher rate may be related to the proximity of shelters located in areas with higher concentrations of poverty (such as SPAs 4 and 6), which are also areas of high concentrations of Black people experiencing homelessness. According to further analysis of HMIS intake data, Black individuals were more likely than White and Latinx individuals to return to interim housing within a year after exiting. **Graph 8** demonstrates the rates of returns for single adults (who comprise 85% of those living in interim housing) by race/ethnicity.

"As an agency, we need to do more training for our staff, and not just policy, procedures, and program rules. We need to start gearing our training towards empathy, ways to converse with clients, and behavioral trainings. We can learn to interact with all types of people—White, Hispanic, Asian, gay, lesbian, trans—it doesn't matter, because now we are into behavioral trainings versus policy and procedures."

BLACK WOMAN
Service Provider, South Los Angeles listening session participant

GRAPH 8: Returns to Homelessness* for Single Adults Exiting Interim Housing, by Race & Ethnicity, Los Angeles Continuum of Care, 2010–2017



Source: Data taken from the Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS), 2010–2017.
*Percentages reflect the share of single adults (age 25 and older) exiting interim housing who returned to homelessness within one year after exit.

Quality of Case Management and Service Delivery

Community listening sessions and the Committee's discussions around each of the components of CES access and assessment also focused on issues around case management and service delivery more broadly. Community listening session participants shared concerns that can best be summarized as a lack of feeling cared for or valued. Repeatedly, community participants and provider staff discussed the quality of case management (overly burdened case managers, lack of follow-through, excessive turnover rate, lack of lived experience, etc.) and the need for racial and cultural competency training. Participants described feeling the need to fit into pre-existing programs and voiced the importance of wraparound or customized services to fit their needs, with assistance from Black staff who have lived experience of homelessness.

Community members and service providers voiced concerns about the lack of empathy and compassion and the need for trauma-informed care, cultural competency, and implicit bias trainings.

Service providers also acknowledged the need for more staff training.

Providers shared that when serving new participants, several factors are critical: building trust with the participant, assuring the participant help is available, taking the necessary time to complete the assessment, and demonstrating a sense of caring.

Burdens and Benefits

CES Triage Tools

Through data analysis, presentations to the Committee, and information learned from listening session participants, the following burdens emerged:

- Adequate research has not been conducted to understand whether the CES Triage Tools adequately measure vulnerability and acuity of Black people experiencing homelessness.
- The CES Triage Tools are often the first interaction the participant has with the homeless service delivery system. The tools are long questionnaires delving into personal issues. Providers advised that efforts to first build a relationship, establish participant trust, and respond to the participant's immediate emotional or mental state should take precedence over completing the CES Triage Tools or HMIS forms during the first interaction.
- The CES Triage Tools are lengthy, and many questions seem duplicative of HMIS intake questions, which is insensitive to the participant.
- The CES Triage Tools measure a person's acuity, which, in turn, is one component used to determine the priority for homeless services and housing. As a result, participants in need of services often feel pressured to claim mental health or substance abuse issues to raise their acuity score to obtain services.

Similarly, the Committee identified the following benefit:

- The Los Angeles County CES utilizes a standardized assessment process and tools to enable consistent decision-making.

Outreach, Case Management, and Service Delivery

Data analysis and community feedback also illuminated burdens pertaining to outreach, case management, and service delivery, including the following:

- There is often a perceived lack of empathy or care. Across communities, participants shared their feelings of being alone, of having no one by their side to navigate the road from homelessness to home. Participants reported that their challenges and struggles would have been more manageable with someone who understood their plight and was there to help guide, mentor, and coach them.
- Each person experiencing homelessness is unique and requires assistance and services that fit their particular needs. A cookie-cutter approach to services is not helpful to the participant.
- Providers experience high caseload ratios and a high turnover rate for caseworkers, which negatively impacts participants as well as staff.
- Providers do not always have the requisite trauma-informed care training or an adequate awareness of cultural competency, institutional racism, and implicit bias to best assist Black people experiencing homelessness.
- There is a need for greater responsiveness and timely follow-through among outreach and other provider staff. For instance, participants offered that too often phone calls are not returned; providers do not provide information in a timely fashion; and participants feel they have little recourse.
- Many caseworkers lack lived experience and may not understand the participant's needs or desires. Too often, the provider staff may have the academic qualifications, but not the requisite life experience or expertise.

The following benefits were also identified:

- A service infrastructure exists to engage and provide services to a large number of people experiencing homelessness, with the goal of permanent housing.
- While the need in Los Angeles County continues to outweigh the availability of resources, additional funding has and will continue to provide for additional staff and housing resources to more effectively and efficiently meet the needs of participants.
- A large share of outreach workers in Los Angeles County has lived experience of homelessness.
- Well-trained and caring outreach workers can have a positive effect on those seeking homeless services.
- LAHSA has implemented the Centralized Training Academy to provide ongoing training for staff in a wide range of areas.

Interim Housing

Through data analysis and community feedback, the Committee identified the following interim housing-related burdens:

- Interim housing can be over-crowded, unsanitary, and inadequately staffed. Some participants voiced that shelters were often re-traumatizing experiences and that living outside was preferable to staying in a shelter.
- Participants reported that shelters are not always safe environments and, in some instances, can expose residents to verbal and physical abuse.
- Due to lack of sufficient permanent housing resources, some participants have long stays in interim housing.
- A high percentage of interim housing bed units are privately funded, which in turn, decreases the ability that LAHSA and other public agencies have in ensuring there are appropriate management and oversight supports.

Through this process, the Committee learned of the following benefits within existing initiatives:

- Learning communities among interim housing providers create an opportunity for shared learning and best practice guidance, to strengthen service delivery.
- A recently launched bed availability app (in a pilot phase) provides real-time bed availability data to facilitate referrals to crisis housing.
- Additional interim housing was created within the both the city and county of Los Angeles over the past year, and additional units are expected to be added in the coming year.

Recommendations and Current Efforts

The “front door” of Los Angeles County’s CES plays a central role in assessment, outreach, and interim housing for the homeless service delivery system. The Committee’s analysis of the benefits and burdens resulted in several key recommendations, as listed below. To view the full list of CES-related recommendations, see Part III.

- Conduct rigorous and robust data analysis to examine and evaluate the efficacy and appropriateness of the existing CES Triage Tools for capturing the vulnerabilities of Black participants experiencing homelessness and connecting Black participants to appropriate housing and services to end their homelessness.

- Designate funding to provide outreach teams and an expanded network of traditional and nontraditional sites access to one-time financial/housing assistance that can prevent homelessness further upstream by serving those whose needs are less acute and who may not otherwise access support through the homeless services system.
- Using a racial equity lens, examine the funding and services structures of interim housing programs and consider increasing the bed rate to allow for a higher level of case management support and standard of care and more culturally relevant services (considering the trade-off that this may reduce the total number of beds funded).

Though much future work is needed, the Committee's work has spurred initial steps to begin addressing some of the Committee's recommendations in this area. LAHSA is procuring trainers to incorporate implicit bias, cultural responsiveness, and trauma-informed care trainings into curricula offered through the CTA. The 2018 Request for Training Provider Qualifications includes each of these topics among the course content areas for which LAHSA is seeking qualified trainers.

Efforts are also underway to address many of the concerns raised about interim housing facilities and services. In November 2018, the LA County Board of Supervisors approved an ordinance that establishes a new public health permitting category and accompanying health and safety standards for interim housing facilities. The county is also working to establish a centralized grievance hotline to support funders in addressing concerns that arise within publicly funded interim housing facilities. Additionally, LAHSA has been collaborating with interim housing funders and providers to develop common practice standards for service delivery within publicly funded interim housing countywide. These standards aim to increase consistency and quality of service delivery and are expected to be approved by the CES Policy Council[48] in early 2019.

In alignment with the Committee's recommendation to carefully examine the effectiveness of the CES Triage Tools, LAHSA has also engaged independent researchers to begin an analysis to understand the tools' effectiveness at capturing vulnerabilities among Black people and at recommending appropriate housing and service interventions.

Finally, in September 2018, the CES Policy Council formalized an evaluation policy that mandates an annual evaluation of the quality and effectiveness of the entire coordinated entry experience, as well as quarterly performance monitoring. Key to the forthcoming evaluation plan's framework is an analysis of system impact, which will closely monitor whether and how policy implementation ensures equity in service delivery. Evaluation methods will include data analysis, as well as participant interviews and focus groups. The results of this annual evaluation and quarterly performance monitoring will be made publicly-available and will be reviewed by the CES Policy Council, as well as other relevant LAHSA, City, and County stakeholders.

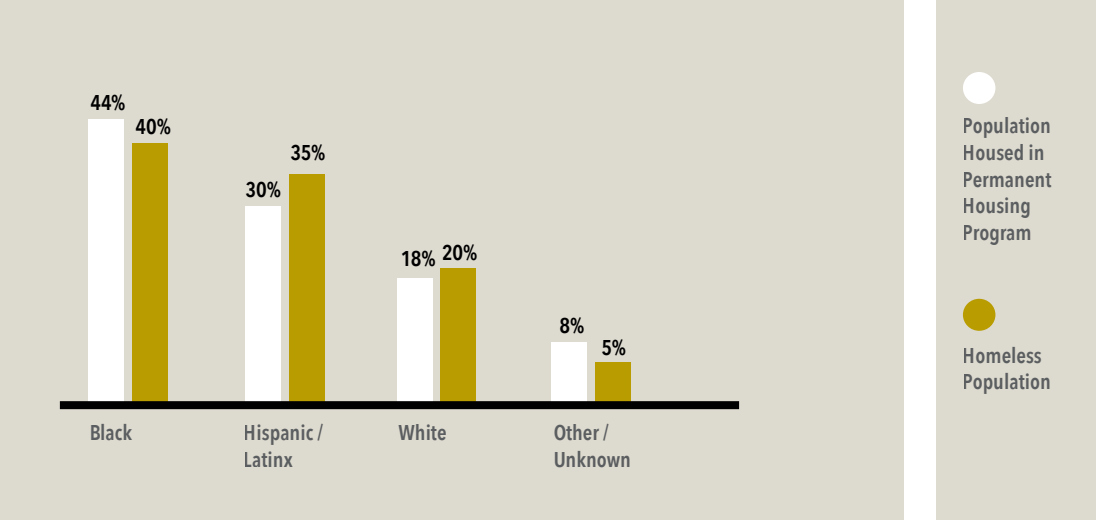
Permanent Housing and Retention

Another central area of focus for the Committee was permanent housing—both permanent housing programs and services within CES, and public and affordable housing beyond CES. Community members consistently raised the issue of an inadequate supply of affordable housing in Los Angeles County, as well as the permanent housing resources within CES (particularly for those who have fixed or no income, such as seniors and people with disabilities). The California Housing Partnership estimates that Los Angeles County needs to build an additional 568,000 affordable rental housing units to meet current demand.[49]

Despite ambitious current and future housing development plans, the number of CES participants in need of permanent housing (over 21,000 as of October 2018) greatly exceeds the amount of permanent housing resources available within CES (approximately 9,500, according to fiscal year 2017–2018 estimates of new and turnover units expected to become available within a one-year period). As a consequence of this housing imbalance, CES participants in need of permanent housing often experience long stays in interim housing or remain in unsheltered living conditions while seeking permanent housing.

The Committee engaged researchers at HPRI and CPL to examine equity within CES permanent housing programs. This analysis found that Black people represented a comparable (even slightly higher) share (44%) of those housed through CES permanent housing programs, compared to their share (40%) of the overall population experiencing homelessness, as **Graph 9** demonstrates. However, despite this promising finding, as the Committee explored outcomes for Black participants within both PSH and RRH programs (outlined below), further analysis demonstrated that there were notable disparities in returns to homelessness. Although permanent housing programs placed Black people experiencing homelessness into housing at comparable or higher rates (relative to overall enrollment) than White or Latinx homeless populations, Black people served through these programs experienced a higher rate of returns to homelessness than all other groups. This points to a significant need for further research to better understand what is causing this disparity and what additional supports are needed to improve housing stability and retention for Black people served through CES permanent housing interventions.

GRAPH 9: Population Housed in Permanent Housing Programs vs. Homeless Population, by Race & Ethnicity, Los Angeles Continuum of Care, 2017



Sources: Permanent housing program data taken from HMIS intake data at time of 2017 point-in-time homeless count.
Homeless population data represent estimates from the 2017 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count for LA CoC.

PSH is an intervention that combines affordable housing assistance that is not time-limited with supportive services to help people experiencing homelessness.

TABLE 5: Permanent Supportive Housing Enrollment Data and Returns to Homelessness for Single Adults, by Race & Ethnicity, Los Angeles Continuum of Care*

PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING ENROLLMENT DATA	BLACK	HISPANIC/ LATINX	WHITE
Share of Total Enrollments	51%	23%	22%
Overall Exit Rate	28%	21%	23%
Rate of Returns to Homelessness	14.2%	8%	7.3%

Source: Data taken from HMIS, 2014–2018. Data comprises single adults aged 25 and older.
*Rate of returns to homelessness is computed for people who exited PSH programs between 2010–2016.

In the analysis outlined in **Table 5**, the rate of returns to homelessness is defined as the rate at which those who exit a housing program return to an interim housing or outreach program within a year after their exit date. The analysis found that Black single adults returned to homelessness after exiting from PSH programs at a rate (14.2%) nearly double that of White single adults experiencing homelessness (7.3%). As seen in **Table 6**, this trend was amplified for families with children exiting PSH. The rate of returns to homelessness (13.5%) for Black families with children exiting PSH was more than three times the rate for White families with children (3.7%). This disparity highlights a need to examine permanent housing programs and learn from program participants to identify the barriers driving these high rates of returns, and additional supports needed to improve equity in outcomes.

TABLE 6: Permanent Supportive Housing Enrollment Data and Returns to Homelessness for Families with Children, by Race & Ethnicity, Los Angeles Continuum of Care*

PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING ENROLLMENT DATA	BLACK	HISPANIC/ LATINX	WHITE
Share of Total Enrollments	54%	33%	8%
Overall Exit Rate	58%	48%	58%
Rate of Returns to Homelessness	13.5%	4.2%	3.7%

Source: Data taken from HMIS, 2014–2018. Data comprises family heads of household.
*Rate of returns to homelessness is computed for people who exited PSH programs between 2010–2016.

The analysis also examined outcomes for those enrolled in RRH programs, an intervention designed to provide time-limited rental assistance and supportive services to help individuals and families quickly exit homelessness and return to permanent housing. The Committee analyzed rates of successful placement into housing (among those enrolled in RRH), as well as the length of time to placement (time between enrollment in RRH and placement into housing). Although placement rates for Black people enrolled in RRH programs were consistent with that of White and Latinx populations, Black people nevertheless experienced a longer time to placement, on average, when compared to White participants. For Black single adults enrolled in RRH programs, the average time to placement was 70 days, compared to 65 days for White single adults, as seen in **Table 7**. Black people exiting from RRH programs experienced similar rates of returns to homelessness compared to their White and Latinx counterparts

TABLE 7: Rapid Re-Housing Placement Data and Returns to Homelessness for Single Adults, by Race & Ethnicity, Los Angeles Continuum of Care, 2014–2018

RAPID RE-HOUSING PLACEMENT DATA	BLACK	HISPANIC/ LATINX	WHITE
Share of Total Housing Placements	55%	19%	20%
Housing Placement Rate	56%	54%	55%
Time to Placement (in Days)	70	75	65
Rate of Returns to Homelessness	3.4%	2.5%	3.7%

Source: Data taken from the HMIS, 2014–2018. Data comprises single adults who received services through RRH.
Time to placement is the number of days between enrollment and move-in date.

For Black families with children, the average time to placement was 95 days—nine days longer than White families with children (**Table 8**).

The Shelter-Plus Care program is good, but "where is the care?" The permanent care facilities only have staff working from 9am to 4pm. A lot of the staff have credentials…but they have no idea how to help individuals experiencing homelessness.

BLACK WOMAN

Paraphrased from Advocate with lived experience, LAHSA Lived Experience Advisory Group focus group

TABLE 8: Rapid Re-Housing Placement Data and Returns to Homelessness for Families with Children, by Race & Ethnicity, Los Angeles Continuum of Care, 2014–2018

RAPID RE-HOUSING PLACEMENT DATA	BLACK	HISPANIC/ LATINX	WHITE
Share of Total Housing Placements	50%	37%	8%
Housing Placement Rate	52%	48%	52%
Time to Placement (in Days)	95	92	86
Rate of Returns to Homelessness	1.8%	0.8%	1.8%

Source: Data taken from HMIS, 2014–2018. Data comprises families with children who received services through RRH.

While community members voiced strong appreciation for supportive housing and wraparound services, they also shared critical feedback about quality of care and limited hours of support, including the need for assistance in obtaining a living wage job to sustain housing.

Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers

Another option for rental assistance is through the Section 8 housing choice voucher program, the federal government's major program for assisting very low-income families, the elderly, and the disabled to afford housing in the private market. Households in Los Angeles who apply for vouchers face numerous obstacles, including extreme difficulties in securing a voucher. In 2017, HACLA reopened its waiting list for Section 8 housing choice vouchers for the first time in 13 years. Prior to this, no new families had been able to apply for the program since 2004.[50]

Furthermore, even after securing a voucher, many individuals face challenges identifying an available unit and a landlord willing to accept the voucher as payment. Landlords are not required to accept Section 8 housing choice vouchers under California law. A recent study conducted by HUD found that voucher holders in Los Angeles had to review more than 50 property listings on average before finding one that would potentially accept a voucher. According to the same study, landlords in Los Angeles denied housing to voucher recipients 76% of the time—the second highest denial rate of the five cities studied.[51]

Numerous community participants also shared feedback about the voucher program, including concerns that the wait is too long, the voucher amount is not competitive in Los Angeles's tight housing market, and there is a lack of available tenant-based properties. One participant noted that he applied for a voucher in 1998 and finally received it in 2015.

"I think the Section 8 program needs to be revamped because a lot of the landlords do not want to even take the program. As well as pre-inspections, people shouldn't have to go and get a voucher and then go wait to see if the place is going to be approved. It should already have a certification that it passed, so when the people come, they know this place is available, safe, and certified. I had to sue seven landlords on the Section 8 program because the ones who do take the vouchers are slumlords."

BLACK WOMAN

Advocate with lived experience, South Los Angeles listening session participant

Burdens and Benefits

Through the analysis highlighted above, as well as additional insights shared by experts and listening session participants, the following burdens emerged:

- Racial discrimination prevents Black people from securing rentals of their choice.
- Black people experiencing homelessness (including adults, youth, and families with children) who are placed into housing through CES permanent housing programs have a higher rate of returns to homelessness than other race and ethnic groups. Housing must be accompanied with effective wraparound services to increase the likelihood of a successful transition.
- There is a large gap between the number of affordable housing units available in Los Angeles County and the number of low-income households in need.
- Despite increased local investment, the amount of permanent housing available within CES is still insufficient to serve all those in need of housing.
- New housing developments are often not being built in historically Black neighborhoods, and information about new affordable rental opportunities is often not well-disseminated to Black community members.
- To obtain housing, Black people experiencing homelessness often must leave their community and move to areas where they have no friends or family.
- People often wait years to obtain a housing choice voucher, and the subsidy amount is often too low for Los Angeles rental rates.
- The housing choice voucher program inspection process also creates challenges, as some failed inspections are for minor repairs, and the inspection is performed after an exhaustive search and a property owner has agreed to accept a voucher.
- RRH participants often face challenges affording the rent following the subsidy period.
- People who are placed in housing must also receive assistance to obtain employment (with wages sufficient to maintain the housing).
- There is a lack of sufficient housing options for people with a high risk of long-term unemployment or who are living on a fixed income, such as the elderly, disabled, and chronically homeless.
- Overly restrictive rules and requirements or punitive actions for minor violations can create barriers to housing stability and retention for Black residents within permanent housing programs.
- More sufficient protection from evictions is needed across Los Angeles County.

The following benefits also emerged from the Committee's examination of permanent housing issues:

- Based on available data analysis, Black people appear to be placed into housing through CES permanent housing programs at proportional rates.
- Los Angeles County's Homeless Initiative Measure H Strategy D7 provides supportive services and rental subsidies to bolster existing PSH and create new PSH countywide.
- Housing programs that include supportive services result in better outcomes.

- Housing programs that include supportive services result in better outcomes.
- Prevention programs provide participants with financial assistance and housing stabilization services to avoid falling into homelessness.
- Representative payee programs provide money management for people experiencing homelessness, or formerly homeless residents of permanent housing.
- The Homeless Incentive Program provides landlords with incentives to rent their units to tenant-based voucher recipients being served through homeless assistance programs.
- LeaseUp, a new initiative of People Assisting the Homeless funded by Measure H, assists in matching private landlords to homeless service providers seeking units for permanent housing program participants.
- New local funding will create more affordable housing.

Recommendations and Current Efforts

To reach the Committee's goals of eliminating racial disparity both within as well as beyond the homeless service delivery system, the Committee recommended several strategies specific to addressing racial disparities in permanent housing and retention. Key recommendations include the following:

- Continue to advocate for policies (e.g., inclusionary zoning) and enhanced funding to support further affordable housing development, to address the deficit in the supply of affordable housing. Apply a racial equity lens to ensure thoughtful and strategic investment that considers the needs of disenfranchised communities.
- Continue to expand tenant protections at the local level, and advocate for changes at the state and federal level where applicable, to ensure more robust protections within the private market as well as within public housing and voucher programs, including: protections against Section 8 and other housing subsidy discrimination, expansion of just cause eviction requirements to all residential rental housing, implementation of broader rent control measures, and prohibition of criminal background checks in tenant screening.
- Increase the quality of housing retention services in PSH and RRH through training, data collection, and evaluation.

For the full list of permanent housing and retention-related recommendations, see Part III.

Racial equity efforts at the local and state level, relative to permanent housing and retention, have begun addressing issues that contribute to the prevalence of Black people experiencing homelessness. The governor recently signed AB 686, which would require cities and counties across California to continue their implementation of Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) rules—an important step to ensure local jurisdictions continue implementation of AFFH, even as HUD seeks to suspend these rules.

LAHSA is also collaborating with the Los Angeles City Council, HACLA, the Housing and Community Investment Department, and the City Attorney's Office to develop an ordinance that would prohibit source of income discrimination. This type of discrimination is currently a barrier to many households seeking to use housing vouchers, RRH, and other tenant-based assistance programs that connect people to housing. The ordinance is expected to move through City Council by early 2019.

Recommendations

This section outlines the complete set of recommendations the Committee developed, aimed to address the burdens identified throughout the Committee's work. Recommendations address each of the issue areas that the Committee explored in depth, as outlined above. The Committee also established a set of overarching recommendations that cut across the various issue areas and systems the Committee explored.

PART III Recommendations

Throughout the course of its work, the Committee identified several overarching principles that must guide all cross-system efforts to advance racial equity. These principles include the following:

- Ensure that existing racial equity, implicit bias, and cultural competency efforts within the City and County are expanded to all aspects of homeless strategy implementation and the homeless service delivery system.
- Ensure that budgetary, programmatic, and policy decisions (made by LAHSA, the CES Policy Council, City and County departments, and other relevant bodies) are aligned with the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee and based on careful consideration of racial equity impacts, rigorous data analysis, and input from key stakeholders.
- Shift the paradigm in the approach to funding and serving people experiencing homelessness to focus on systemic challenges and inequities, rather than individual challenges, and to acknowledge the current crisis and disparities as a product of decades of systemic issues and structural racism. Acknowledge that solutions will require sustained support and funding over an extended period to correct course.
- Ensure that people with lived experience of homelessness (including youth and young adult advocates) are included in program and policy design and implementation.
- Within all relevant entities (including LAHSA, the LAHSA Commission, the CES Policy Council, City and County departments, and service providers), create an organizational culture that centers on racial equity, cultural competency, and humility where all staff, including staff with lived experience, feel safe, valued, and supported, and where executive leadership is informed by staff at all levels.
- Ensure that culturally competent staff employs a "targeted" strategy approach when developing programs and services by incorporating Black person-centered trauma-informed care models.
- Promote participant choice by providing programs and services based on the participant's needs and preferences whenever possible.

The tables below outline the specific recommendations the Committee developed, organized by the various issue areas and systems the Committee examined. For each recommendation, the tables identify the recommendation type (e.g., cross-system coordination, hiring and training, funding, data and research, or programs and services), the estimated time frame for accomplishing the intended outcome, and the key entity or entities responsible for implementation. The timeframes indicated in the table below include short-term (S)—less than one year; medium-term (M)—between a year and two years; and long-term (L)—between three and five years.

The LAHSA Commission will provide oversight to ensure that appropriate steps are taken to implement each of the Committee's recommendations. As the tables below indicate, some recommendations fall squarely within LAHSA's purview, while other recommendations will require advocacy and collaboration with appropriate agencies within the County and City governments, as well as service providers. The LAHSA Commission will direct its advocacy efforts to elected officials, agency leaders, and other relevant entities in order to advance recommendations that require legislative action or countywide/citywide adoption.

Overarching

RECOMMENDATION	TYPE / TIME FRAME		LAHSA	CITY	COUNTY	PROVIDERS
1. Develop and launch a racial equity initiative at LAHSA to further its commitment to advance racial equity within its workforce and within the homeless crisis response system.	Cross-system coordination	S	X			
2. Establish a countywide racial equity initiative to provide enhanced coordination and oversight for existing and emerging efforts to advance racial equity across systems and county departments, in order to holistically address intersections across systems of care.	Cross-system coordination	M			X	
3. Conduct a racial equity analysis on LAHSA, provider, City, and County contracting requirements, hiring practices, and job requirements to: • Identify strategies to make contracting requirements more equitable and to encourage and support smaller organizations in the contracting process, including the use of joint venture models (in lieu of sub-contractor models). • Identify any existing barriers for Black people and/or people with lived experience (e.g., language requirements, degree requirements, etc.). • Develop a plan and process to increase the recruitment and hiring of Black people and people with lived experience. • Promote racial diversity at all organizational levels, including leadership, management, boards, and commissions. • Analyze job classifications and pay scales of the homeless service workforce across gender and race. • Ensure that lived experience is a desired and valued qualification in hiring processes. • Ensure that management staff is appropriately trained in cultural competency to effectively manage staff with high vulnerabilities and experiences of trauma. • Create opportunities for education and mentorship to support the development of Black people in staff and board leadership.	Funding / hiring and training	M	X	X	X	X

Recommendations Continue

TIMEFRAME: *short-term* **(S)**; *medium-term* **(M)**; *long-term* **(L)**

RECOMMENDATION	TYPE / TIME FRAME		LAHSA	CITY	COUNTY	PROVIDERS
4. Continue and enhance efforts to create, provide, and require ongoing trainings (using experienced trainers, including Black trainers and people with lived experience) for relevant provider, LAHSA, city, and county staff in: • cultural competency • trauma-informed care • implicit bias • institutional racism • the history of racism and discrimination, specifically against Black people, its economic impact, and the resulting trauma for Black people with lived experience • the needs of diverse homeless populations, especially Black LGBTQ individuals • case management approaches to engage people experiencing homelessness by understanding each person's unique situation and particular needs and interests, and by focusing on a human resiliency model	Hiring and training	M	X	X	X	X
5. Involve people with lived experience, Black people, and service providers in conceptualizing, planning, and conducting research, including by engaging people who have been unsuccessful in accessing appropriate housing and services to understand barriers; participants who have had successful outcomes to determine success factors; and participants who have returned to homelessness to understand causes.	Data and research	M	X	X	X	
6. Advocate for funding and engage researchers to use a racial equity lens to conduct quantitative and qualitative research (including partnered and community-based research that is driven by and engages community members) into the factors that contribute to: • Black people in Los Angeles County experiencing homelessness at disproportionately high rates • Black people avoiding homelessness • high rates of returns to homelessness among Black people housed through CES • Black people housed through CES remaining housed	Data and research	M	X	X	X	

Recommendations Continue

OVERARCHING CONTINUED

RECOMMENDATION	TYPE / TIME FRAME		LAHSA	CITY	COUNTY	PROVIDERS
7. While upholding data privacy standards, enhance data collection practices to improve the quality of homeless services system data and ensure that there are sufficient, useful, and available data and metrics on homelessness and system involvement among Black people (especially focusing on the criminal justice and child welfare systems). Efforts should include: • advocating for additional data collection and/or improved data-sharing partnerships between relevant systems of care, as needed • ensuring frontline staff have sufficient time, training, and support to enter complete and accurate data • clearly demonstrating the link between robust data collection and improved services by sharing results of ongoing data analysis and evaluation	Data and research	M	X	X	X	
8. Enact a civil and human rights ordinance in the City and County to provide for the development of civil rights policies and mechanisms for investigation of and enforcement against discriminatory practices in housing and employment.	Policy and advocacy	L		X	X	
9. Reconvene the Ad Hoc Committee on Black People Experiencing Homelessness on a biannual basis to review progress of the implementation and execution of recommendations.	Policy and advocacy	S/M/L	X			

TIMEFRAME: *short-term* **(S)**; *medium-term* **(M)**; *long-term* **(L)**

Cost of Living and Lack of Employment Opportunities

RECOMMENDATION	TYPE / TIME FRAME		LAHSA	CITY	COUNTY	PROVIDERS
10. Continue to enhance and expand existing fair hiring practices to reduce barriers to employment, including legislation to restrict the use of criminal history records (such as the California Fair Chance Act and City of Los Angeles' Fair Chance Initiative for Hiring Ordinance). Ensure legislation is accompanied by funding and a provision for credible community partnerships to support implementation (through measures such as public awareness campaigns, education, lessor/lessee trainings, and enforcement).	Funding/ policy and advocacy	L		X	X	
11. Establish and expand upon existing local hiring preferences for capital development projects (including affordable and supportive housing development, considering cost implications and potential impacts on the total number of units funded) that include the training and hiring of people experiencing homelessness.	Policy and advocacy	L		X	X	
12. Establish a process to collect employment data related to people experiencing homelessness to include: employment status (full-time, part-time, seasonal, day laborer), industry type, name of employer, wage, length of employment, and location. Use data to better understand trends and industry sector patterns and explore opportunities to involve employers in public-private partnerships to address housing and employment needs for Black people experiencing homelessness.	Data and research	M	X	X	X	
13. With input from community organizations with successful program models, advocate for and fund the establishment of a cross-agency community partnership that provides a holistic approach to addressing employment barriers—including employment training and placement, mental health services, leadership training to advocate for workers' rights, and mentorship opportunities.	Funding/ cross-system coordination	L		X	X	
14. Ensure that living-wage workforce development programs and employment training programs are aligned with major growth sectors in the Los Angeles region, adequately funded, accessible to people experiencing homelessness (e.g., proximate locations, transportation and childcare assistance, low-barrier eligibility requirements, compensated through stipends, etc.), and offer services tailored to Black people experiencing homelessness—particularly Black youth. Program development should include a broad range of opportunities, including entrepreneurial and small business opportunities.	Funding/ programs and services	L		X	X	
15. Advocate for reform of state and federal benefit programs to prevent loss of subsidies while people are working to increase income through workforce development programs.	Policy and advocacy	M	X	X	X	

Criminal Justice System Involvement and Re-entry

RECOMMENDATION	TYPE / TIME FRAME		LAHSA	CITY	COUNTY	PROVIDERS
16. Conduct a global landscape analysis within City and County government to identify existing and potential relationships as well as current efforts related to criminal justice reform and services to those transitioning to community. This analysis should be conducted in collaboration with re-entry service providers and include a review of Los Angeles County's ODR, Project LEAD, and Jail In-Reach program, among other initiatives currently in place.	Cross-system coordination	S	X	X	X	
17. Advocate for reform of state and federal benefit programs to remove barriers to accessing public benefits and financial aid for those exiting incarceration.	Policy and advocacy	L	X	X	X	
18. Fund and build capacity for programs that support people who have been incarcerated and who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of experiencing homelessness by: • hiring Black people who have been incarcerated and/or have lived experience of homelessness • utilizing effective wrap-around service models • employing trauma-informed care training and practices	Funding	M	X	X	X	
19. When making policy and funding decisions, support the development and growth of community-rooted programs, providers, and networks owned and/or led by formerly incarcerated individuals to guide successful re-entry.	Programs and services	M	X	X	X	
20. Assess current service provider practices and explore the most equitable and culturally competent ways to assess, triage, and ask what people need in order to ensure that justice-involved Black people experiencing homelessness are connected to the most appropriate housing and services.	Programs and services	M	X			
21. Through improved system coordination and targeted funding, ensure youth re-entering society after juvenile justice system involvement are provided with adequate supportive services and access to resources to support their successful transition.	Funding / cross-system coordination	M	X	X	X	

Recommendations Continue

TIMEFRAME: *short-term* **(S)**; *medium-term* **(M)**; *long-term* **(L)**

CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM INVOLVEMENT AND RE-ENTRY CONTINUED

RECOMMENDATION	TYPE / TIME FRAME		LAHSA	CITY	COUNTY	PROVIDERS
22. Based on the results of the global landscape analysis, consider establishing and/or enhancing existing cross-system partnerships, including by • strengthening working relationships between law enforcement, criminal justice, re-entry, homeless service, and housing providers • championing the criminal justice system to be homeless- and housing-informed and operate with an anti-racist lens • creating opportunities for collaboration between homeless service providers, re-entry agencies, economic development organizations, community colleges, and unions to provide educational programs, job trainings, and apprenticeships and to create a hiring pipeline for formerly incarcerated individuals with lived experience of homelessness	Cross-system coordination	M	X	X	X	X
23. Based on the results of the global landscape analysis, consider advancing efforts to enhance funding, such as: • conducting a system-wide fiscal, cost, and racial equity analysis of criminal justice investments, with the goal of redirecting high-cost system expenditures (e.g., criminal justice system spending) to housing and service investments to help those exiting long-term incarceration, formerly incarcerated individuals, and people with lived experience of homelessness thrive in the community • engaging the philanthropic community to leverage funding and strengthen new and existing partnerships, specifically to support formerly incarcerated individuals and/or re-entry efforts • coordinating with appropriate agencies to target and leverage any housing dollars to support those living with criminal history and those exiting long-term incarceration	Funding	M	X	X	X	

Recommendations Continue

CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM INVOLVEMENT AND RE-ENTRY CONTINUED

RECOMMENDATION	TYPE / TIME FRAME		LAHSA	CITY	COUNTY	PROVIDERS
24. Based on the results of the global landscape analysis, consider advocating for policy changes, such as: • preventing nonviolent arrests from being used to remove individuals experiencing homelessness from City- and County-controlled housing placement lists • expanding allowances for removal of past convictions from individuals' records • expanding access to occupational licensing for long-term career opportunities (e.g., fire fighters, social workers, IT and coding, etc.) • establishing a law enforcement policy that diverts all homelessness-related bookings to services rather than jail (in jurisdictions where this is not already the case)	Policy and advocacy	M	X	X	X	
25. Based on the results of the global landscape analysis, consider implementing enhancements to programs and services aimed at better supporting those exiting incarceration, such as: • broadening and deepening the scope and scale of criminal justice diversion programs provided by ODR • increasing the network of reception/transition hubs with culturally relevant services • ensuring rental and housing search/stability assistance is readily available for those exiting from incarceration • expanding funding for the existing re-entry navigator programs to provide peer-to-peer mentorship, guidance, and support for re-entry populations in accessing housing, employment, healthcare, and education services • expanding the use of restorative justice programs	Programs and services	M	X	X	X	

TIMEFRAME: *short-term* **(S)**; *medium-term* **(M)**; *long-term* **(L)**

Foster Care and Child Welfare System Involvement

CATEGORY	RECOMMENDATION	TYPE / TIME FRAME		LAHSA	CITY	COUNTY	PROVIDERS
GENERAL	**26.** Enhance education and coordination between the child welfare system and homeless services system, to improve access to services for families and youth.	Cross-system coordination	M	X	X	X	X
	27. Coordinate and work with DCFS, homeless service providers, parent advocates, parent defender advocates, and other relevant partner agencies to leverage resources and maximize services, expertise, and outcomes.	Cross-system coordination	L	X	X	X	X
	28. Strengthen connections and collaboration with the faith-based community in order to understand what resources and services currently exist (including an understanding of resources by geography and faith affiliation) and to identify ways to coordinate and offer linkages for families and youth seeking faith-based services.	Cross-system coordination / programs and services	L		X	X	
FAMILY PRESERVATION AND REUNIFICATION	**29.** Identify strategies to increase the capacity of community-based supports—particularly mental health and behavioral health services—to strengthen families and enhance family stability (including for foster care and kinship care families, as well as families not connected to the child welfare system).	Cross-system coordination / programs and services	L	X	X	X	
	30. Conduct research to identify interrupters of intergenerational cycles of homelessness and develop appropriate coaching strategies to model desired healthy behaviors and essential life skills.	Data and research / programs and services	L	X	X	X	
	31. Ensure that family reunification programs and services are reflective of low-barrier principles, with an emphasis on providing housing assistance with limited requirements or barriers to entry.	Programs and services	L			X	

Recommendations Continue

TIMEFRAME: *short-term* **(S)**; *medium-term* **(M)**; *long-term* **(L)**

FOSTER CARE AND CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM INVOLVEMENT CONTINUED

CATEGORY	RECOMMENDATION	TYPE / TIME FRAME		LAHSA	CITY	COUNTY	PROVIDERS
FAMILY PRESERVATION AND REUNIFICATION	**32.** Enhance the Homeless Initiative Strategy B6 (Family Reunification Housing Subsidy) to include broader supports, such as co-locating CES agency staff at the dependency courthouse (Edmund D. Edelman Children's Courthouse) to support families whose children have been detained and those who are attending with open DCFS cases, to prevent detainment of children.	Cross-system coordination / programs and services	M	X		X	
	33. Increase investments in family preservation initiatives and expand supports to include housing specialists and rental assistance for parents involved in the child welfare system for the purpose of keeping families together or helping those parents displaced because of child welfare involvement and court orders mandating family separation.	Funding	M			X	
	34. Enhance DCFS support systems for families involved in the child welfare system, with an increased focus on providing services to families at the outset of child welfare involvement to address the traumas of system involvement and potential family separation.	Cross-system coordination	L			X	
	35. Reinstate and restore funding for the Rights of Passage program as an effective model for preparing youth for successful transition to adulthood.	Funding / programs and services	M			X	
	36. Expand the use of "cultural brokers" and/or peer navigators to support families in navigating the child welfare system.	Programs and services	L			X	
	37. Increase the number of Black foster care families by offering incentives and supports.	Programs and services	L			X	
	38. Increase targeted investments in appropriate supports for current and former foster care youth, including permanent housing and higher education and/or vocational program scholarships.	Funding	L		X	X	

Recommendations Continue

TIMEFRAME: *short-term* **(S)**; *medium-term* **(M)**; *long-term* **(L)**

FOSTER CARE AND CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM INVOLVEMENT CONTINUED

CATEGORY	RECOMMENDATION	TYPE / TIME FRAME		LAHSA	CITY	COUNTY	PROVIDERS
FAMILY PRESERVATION AND REUNIFICATION	**39.** Improve system coordination and ensure transition planning commences with sufficient time to achieve best outcomes for youth exiting foster care.	Cross-system coordination	M	X		X	X
	40. Broaden the extended foster care program to include youth up to age 24 to provide comprehensive, person-centered services including housing, education, and employment.	Programs and services	M	X		X	
	41. Advocate for a change in federal policy to extend eligibility for independent living programs to age 24.	Policy and advocacy	L	X		X	X
	42. Explore ways DCFS can assess for housing stability at the outset of engagement and continually and use a problem-solving approach to assist youth in accessing safe and stable housing.	Programs and services	L			X	
	43. Identify available DCFS resources that can be utilized to support housing stability for youth exiting foster care.	Funding	M			X	

TIMEFRAME: *short-term* **(S)**; *medium-term* **(M)**; *long-term* **(L)**

Coordinated Entry System Access and Assessment

CATEGORY	RECOMMENDATION	TYPE / TIME FRAME		LAHSA	CITY	COUNTY	PROVIDERS
GENERAL	**44.** Provide training to decision-making bodies (including the CES Policy Council) on implicit bias, and ensure that, in all phases of decision-making and prior to implementation of any policies or protocols, these bodies consider racial equity and the impacts of broad decisions on vulnerable populations. In particular, as CES prioritization and matching policies are implemented, evaluate for impact on Black people experiencing homelessness.	Policy and advocacy	M	X	X	X	X
	45. Utilizing a human-centered systems design approach, develop a roadmap for Black community members to understand how to connect to services within CES.	Programs and services	S	X	X	X	X
EARLY INTERVENTION	**46.** Examine opportunities to train mainstream systems of care (Mental Health, Public Social Services, Children and Family Services, Health Services) so that there can be greater opportunities to help clients involved with these mainstream systems to avoid the homeless services system and connect them instead to appropriate, culturally-sensitive services before they become homeless.	Cross-system coordination	M	X	X	X	
	47. Partner with traditional and nontraditional sites frequented by Black people that function as points of prevention and early intervention (beauty/barber shops, churches, community colleges), and use these partnerships as opportunities to inform and educate about available services and to engage.	Cross-system coordination	M	X	X	X	X
	48. Use a racial equity analysis to determine how to strengthen and expand homelessness prevention programs that include and benefit Black individuals and families with children.	Programs and services	S	X	X	X	
GENERAL	**49.** Provide funding/resources (potentially including the Department of Mental Health's (DMH) Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Prevention and Early Intervention funding) and training directly to faith institutions and nontraditional sites (beauty/barber shops, community colleges) that are already interacting with people experiencing homelessness, to enable these entities to directly provide targeted services in coordination with CES and mainstream systems. Consider ways to add elements of outreach/in-reach to connect these sites intentionally to the larger systems of care.	Funding / cross-system coordination	M	X	X	X	

Recommendations Continue

TIMEFRAME: *short-term* **(S)**; *medium-term* **(M)**; *long-term* **(L)**

PART III Recommendations

COORDINATED ENTRY SYSTEM ACCESS AND ASSESSMENT CONTINUED

CATEGORY	RECOMMENDATION	TYPE / TIME FRAME		LAHSA	CITY	COUNTY	PROVIDERS
EARLY INTERVENTION	**50.** Designate funding to provide outreach teams and an expanded network of traditional and nontraditional sites access to one-time financial/housing assistance that can prevent homelessness further upstream by serving those whose needs are less acute and who may not otherwise access support through the homeless services system.	Funding / programs and services	M	X	X	X	
	51. Examine the key factors contributing to the success of the DHS multi-disciplinary team outreach model (shown to be a promising practice with a robust structure and flexibility that is ideally suited to help clients in a trauma-informed, culturally competent manner) and identify ways to incorporate these factors into all outreach teams, as appropriate.	Programs and services	M	X	X	X	
INTERIM HOUSING	**52.** Using a racial equity lens, examine the funding structure and services structure of interim housing programs and consider increasing the bed rate to allow for a higher level of case management support and standard of care and more culturally-relevant services (considering the trade-off that this may reduce the total number of beds funded). Some service providers have suggested that $60/bed for LAHSA-funded 24/7 interim housing operations would help enhance services and would provide more resources to connect clients to stable housing. Consider the impacts of funding and programmatic decisions on Black people accessing interim housing.	Funding / programs and services	L	X	X	X	
	53. Create more culturally competent, trauma-informed interim housing across the entire county (ensuring geographic distribution).	Funding / programs and services	S	X	X	X	X
	54. Analyze data to understand the characteristics, experiences, and outcomes of those accessing interim housing, including: characteristics of those referred to the different types of interim housing (DHS, DMH, Substance Abuse Prevention and Control (SAPC), LAHSA, private), how long Black people are staying in the different types of interim housing, the characteristics of long-term stayers vs. those more quickly exiting interim housing, destinations to which people are exiting, characteristics of those returning, where are they returning and why. This analysis should also identify any gaps in resources to help people more quickly exit to stable housing and should result in targeted interventions for both long-term stayers and participants who frequently move from shelter to shelter (and/or return to shelter).	Data and research	M	X	X	X	

Recommendations Continue

TIMEFRAME: *short-term* **(S)**; *medium-term* **(M)**; *long-term* **(L)**

COORDINATED ENTRY SYSTEM ACCESS AND ASSESSMENT CONTINUED

CATEGORY	RECOMMENDATION	TYPE / TIME FRAME		LAHSA	CITY	COUNTY	PROVIDERS
ASSESSMENT	**55.** Conduct rigorous and robust data analysis to examine and evaluate the efficacy and appropriateness of the existing CES Triage Tools (VI-SPDAT, VI-FSPDAT, and Next Step Tool) for capturing the vulnerabilities of Black participants experiencing homelessness and connecting Black participants to appropriate housing and services to end their homelessness. The analysis should examine the design of the tool, cultural appropriateness of the questions, and cultural humility with which it is administered, and should include an analysis of how Black participants score and what services they are prioritized for compared to participants with similar characteristics in other race and ethnic groups.	Data and research	M	X		X	
	56. Based on the results of the CES triage tool analysis, consider identifying supplemental tools (post-CES triage tool) that could help providers gather all information necessary to identify and link participants to the most appropriate housing and service interventions and effectively manage caseloads.	Programs and services	M	X			
	57. Analyze data to examine the effectiveness of the CES assessment process, including how long it takes to assess people, how often people are assessed, the length of time between assessment and enrollment into housing and services, and how long Black people (of different acuities) stay on the streets.	Data and research	M	X			

TIMEFRAME: *short-term* **(S)**; *medium-term* **(M)**; *long-term* **(L)**

Permanent Housing and Retention

CATEGORY	RECOMMENDATION	TYPE / TIME FRAME		LAHSA	CITY	COUNTY	PROVIDERS
TENANT PROTECTIONS	**58.** Continue to expand tenant protections at the local level and advocate for changes at the state and federal level where applicable to ensure more robust protections within the private market as well as within public housing and voucher programs, including: • efforts to remove barriers to eligibility and expand access to public housing • protections to preserve and enhance the rights of tenants living in public housing • protections against Section 8 and other housing subsidy discrimination, • expansion of source of income discrimination protection • expansion of just cause eviction requirements to all residential rental housing • prohibition of criminal background checks in tenant screening • broader rent control measures • right to counsel and financial assistance for eviction proceedings • stronger protections against landlord retaliation	Policy and advocacy	M/L		X	X	
	59. Enhance funding for Fair Housing investigations and enforcement (to include Section 8 and other sources of income discrimination) and for ongoing education about tenants' rights.	Funding	L		X	X	
CES PERMANENT HOUSING	**60.** Increase the quality of housing retention services in PSH and RRH through training, data collection, and evaluation.	Data and research / programs and services	L	X		X	X
	61. Ensure that RRH programs provide the maximum support needed to adequately prepare and support people through their transition to independent housing stability.	Programs and services	M	X		X	X
	62. Continue efforts to strengthen housing location and landlord engagement practices to support permanent housing programs (both within CES and other public and affordable housing programs).	Programs and services	L	X	X	X	

Recommendations Continue

TIMEFRAME: *short-term* **(S)**; *medium-term* **(M)**; *long-term* **(L)**

CATEGORY	RECOMMENDATION	TYPE / TIME FRAME	LAHSA	CITY	COUNTY	PROVIDERS
HOMEOWNERSHIP	**63.** Implement targeted efforts to support homeownership and other wealth-building initiatives, including by linking Family Support Service Programs to homeownership programs (e.g. funded by federal HOME Program, Southern California Homeownership Financing Authority, or California Mortgage Credit Certificate programs), and by linking participants to homebuyer and financial literacy education. Advocate to protect existing federal and state resources and infrastructure to support this.	Cross-system coordination / policy and advocacy	L		X	X	
	64. Implement targeted efforts (particularly to seniors) to prevent loss of home-ownership, including education around financial literacy and investment, education to protect against scams, and access to resources to prevent foreclosure. Advocate to protect existing federal and state resources and infrastructure to support this.	Cross-system coordination / policy and advocacy	L		X	X	
AFFORDABLE HOUSING	**65.** Continue to advocate for policies (e.g. inclusionary zoning) and enhanced funding to support further affordable housing development, to address the deficit in supply of affordable housing. Apply a racial equity lens to ensure thoughtful and strategic investment that considers the needs of disenfranchised communities.	Funding / policy and advocacy	L		X	X	
	66. Continue, fund, and prioritize efforts to establish a centralized system for accessing affordable housing and engage key community partners—both traditional and non-traditional (e.g., faith-based organizations, local libraries, shelters, etc.)—to disseminate information and enhance the cultural sensitivity and effectiveness of information dissemination about available affordable housing, particularly within Black communities.	Funding / cross-system coordination	M		X	X	
	67. Expand current efforts to ensure accountability and transparency around the disbursement of affordable housing funding by providing clear, complete, user-friendly information to the community (through both traditional and non-traditional communication strategies, including web-based and non-web-based platforms, and working with key community partners for information dissemination).	Funding / cross-system coordination	M		X	X	

Next Steps

Areas for Future Research

LAHSA is partnering with HPRI's Race Equity working group to improve data collection, analysis, and collaborative research to better understand and track issues affecting Black people experiencing homelessness. HPRI is a countywide effort that includes over 30 scholars and policymakers collaborating on research to end homelessness in Los Angeles County. HPRI's Race Equity working group is dedicated to conducting research to understand and reduce inequities in and around the homelessness system, with a purposeful emphasis on racial inequities.

In alignment with the Committee's recommendations, the research process will be collaborative, involving people with lived experience, Black people, and service providers in conceptualizing, planning, and conducting research, including by engaging clients who have had successful outcomes to determine success factors, and clients who have returned to homelessness to understand causes. In order to conduct the necessary research, HPRI and LAHSA will seek funding to support both quantitative and qualitative analyses into the issues identified by the Committee.

Analysis of the CES Triage Tools' equity impacts is one of the Committee's initial priorities. This analysis will build on previous research focused on the youth triage tool's application in several cities across the country, examining the relationship among tool results, recommended intervention, and success in that intervention—and whether there are specific characteristics (including race) that influence outcomes in particular intervention types. LAHSA's partnership will allow for not only the expansion of this body of research beyond the youth population to include adults and families, but also a deeper understanding of local trends in both the accuracy of CES Triage Tools to predict successful outcomes in various interventions and in the equity of these outcomes.

Next Steps Required to Advance Racial Equity Outcomes

To reach the Committee's racial equity outcome, local government leadership must advance racial equity and work in collaboration with regional and national partners, both within government, with community partners, and across sectors. Already, Los Angeles City, Los Angeles County, and LAHSA have begun to take actions to address some of the structural issues that too often contribute to Black people experiencing homelessness, as highlighted throughout the report. Critical next steps are highlighted below.

Capacity building: Implementing racial equity strategies—whether providing trainings to direct service providers, collecting and analyzing data, creating new and/or expanded programs, or hiring additional case managers—require adequate resources. Advancing racial equity is reliant on appropriate funding and adequate staffing. Whether it is new funding or a reallocation of current resources, LAHSA and its City And County partners must ensure that sufficient long-term resources are available to implement the recommendations contained within this report. Additionally, funders must commit to ensuring that their budget review process includes an examination of racial equity impact and that budgetary decisions consider and advance racial equity goals.

Establishing methods for evaluation and measurement of racial equity efforts: Working with governmental and community partners, LAHSA will establish methods to evaluate the varied recommendations selected for implementation. No matter how well intended it is, not every recommendation will, in fact, meet its objective; thus, evaluation and measurement processes must be developed to ensure policies and programs are producing the desired outcome. Each initiative, from the development of new trainings, to offering more comprehensive, wrap-around services, to funding more supportive housing units, must be subject to objective quantitative and qualitative analyses to determine: 1) whether the particular policy or program is working as intended and advancing racial equity, and 2) if not, what adjustments are needed to ensure effectiveness or what other strategy is better suited to accomplish the objective.

Accountability and report-back: The evaluation of policies and programs, as discussed above, is a critical aspect of accountability. Evaluation results—both racial equity gains and disappointments—must consistently inform government leaders, agencies, community partners, and the public. Ongoing community report-back engagement serves multiple purposes. First, it is responsive to the community's desire for transparent, straightforward, timely, and consistent information regarding homeless services efforts. Second, it provides an infrastructure for community feedback and for data collection. Most importantly, reporting back sends a powerful message: those responsible for government services are accountable to those experiencing homelessness. Ultimately, the report-back function provides the basis for building trust and relationships with the community, which are critical to creating real and lasting change.

Building the movement for racial equity: Responsibility for and commitment to racial equity remains relatively new to government agencies. LAHSA's racial equity efforts and commitment to sharing its successes and challenges, while learning from its partners and community, supports the movement for racial equity that is growing locally and across the nation. LAHSA's opportunity is to advance the use of a racial equity toolkit approach in all areas of its work, to collaborate on and promote other racial equity efforts within government, and to serve as an important voice for racial equity within the homeless crisis response system.

Appendix I: Committee Members

LAHSA Commission Committee Members

Jacqueline Waggoner, *LAHSA Commission, Chair*
Kelli Bernard, *LAHSA Commission, Vice-Chair*

Committee Members

Dr. Va Lecia Adams Kellum, *St. Joseph Center*
Chancela Al-Mansour, *Housing Rights Center*
Dr. Edward Anderson, *McCarty Memorial Christian Church*
Dr. Jack Barbour, *Southern California Health & Rehabilitation Program*
Wendell Blassingame, S*kid Row Resident/Veteran*
Rachel Brashier, *LA City Councilmember, Marqueece Harris-Dawson, Council District 8*
Dr. Oliver Buie, *Holman United Methodist Church*
Chela Demuir-Cartier, *Unique Woman's Coalition*
Robin Hughes, *Abode Communities*
Janet Kelly, *Sanctuary of Hope*
Monique King-Viehland, *Community Development Commission of the County of Los Angeles*
Veronica Lewis, *SSG/HOPICS*
Juataun Mark, *Los Angeles County Department of Health Services*
Nova Mirari, *Homeless Youth Forum of Los Angeles*
Anita Nelson, *SRO Housing Corporation*
Alisa Orduna, *City of Santa Monica*
Molly Rysman, *Supervisor Sheila Kuehl, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, Third District*
Suzette Shaw, *Skid Row Resident/Human Services Advocate with homeless lived experience*
Brenda Shockley, *Office of Mayor Eric Garcetti*
Lola Smallwood Cuevas, *Los Angeles Black Worker Center*
Sean Spear, *City of Los Angeles Housing + Community Investment Department*
Reba Stevens, *Advocate with homeless lived experiencee*
Pete White, *Los Angeles Community Action Network*
Dhakshike Wickrema, *Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, Second District*

Consultant Support

Patricia Lally, *Lead Equity Consultant*
Earl Edwards, *Co-Facilitator*

LAHSA Staff Support

Sarah Mahin, *Director of Policy & Systems*
Erin Cox, *Policy Supervisor*
Marisa Conner, *Policy Analyst*
Eileen Bryson, *Commission Liaison*

Appendix II: Summary of Community Listening Session and Focus Group Insights

Executive Summary

The LAHSA Commission established the Ad Hoc Committee on Black People Experiencing Homelessness to address the issue of sustained overrepresentation of Black people experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles County. The purpose of the Committee is to provide focused attention to better understand the factors contributing to the overrepresentation of Black people among the population experiencing homelessness, identify opportunities to increase racial equity within the homeless service delivery system, and develop recommendations to more effectively meet the needs of Black people experiencing homelessness.

To that end, in May 2018, the Committee began a series of listening sessions and focus groups to learn firsthand from those who have experienced homelessness, those who serve people experiencing homelessness (service providers, faith community, governmental agencies), as well as other interested parties. These sessions were held in various locations across the county, and a full list of meetings and locations can be seen in Appendix IV. At each listening session, participants offered critical, clear, feedback to six guiding questions. Despite unique aspects of each session, across listening sessions and neighborhoods, common themes emerged. These themes are highlighted below.

Institutional and structural racism, discrimination, and implicit bias: Participants overwhelmingly view homelessness as the result of generational racism. The impact of institutional and structural racism (in education, criminal justice, housing, employment, and access to opportunities) precedes homelessness, exacerbates homelessness, and must be dismantled across agencies and across systems to eliminate the racial disparities impacting Black people experiencing homelessness—and to ultimately end homelessness.

Housing (permanent and interim): Participants consistently raised the issue of inadequate supply of permanent housing (including for those who have no income, seniors, and people with disabilities). Providers noted the challenges of providing needed services when housing cannot be secured for a client. One mental health case manager shared that it is nearly impossible to stabilize a client who remains homeless.

Participants raised concerns with various interim and permanent housing programs. For example, providers shared that RRH can be an effective tool to end homelessness; however, absent job training and meaningful employment, too many people return to homelessness when the subsidized period concludes. Participants also repeatedly voiced concerns about the quality of shelters, including safety, poor treatment by providers, and lack of sufficient services.

Cost of living and lack of employment opportunities: Participants lament that as the cost of housing continues to skyrocket in Los Angeles, finding affordable housing, using Section 8 housing choice vouchers, and living in their neighborhood of choice is less and less possible. While cost of living continues to rise, employment opportunities for Black people continue to lag behind others. Employment discrimination, inadequate training and apprenticeship programs, poor education, and criminal justice involvement result in high unemployment and limit employment options to minimum wage jobs. Repeatedly, participants noted that an average apartment in Los Angeles requires a $33 per hour full-time job.

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Criminalization of homelessness, incarceration, and challenges associated with re-entry: Mass incarceration of Black men (and to a lesser degree, Black women) has fractured families; removed the wage earner, too often leaving families homeless; and created lifelong barriers to housing, employment, and education. Inadequate services and support for those transitioning from incarceration and re-entering community creates a revolving door between homelessness and incarceration. Emerging practices such as housing with wrap-around services, mentoring from individuals with lived experience, and job and life skills trainings show positive results.

Service delivery deficiencies: At every session, participants focused heavily on program and service shortcomings. A basic concern expressed in many different ways can best be summed up as a lack of feeling cared for or valued. Repeatedly, community participants and provider staff discussed the quality of case management (overly burdened case managers, lack of follow-through, excessive turnover rate, lack of lived experience, etc.) and the need for racial and cultural competency training. Participants described feeling the need to fit into pre-existing programs and voiced the importance of wrap-around or customized services to fit their needs with assistance from Black staff who have lived experience of homelessness.

Family issues, childcare, and family support: Although not as frequent, issues associated with families and children arose at most listening sessions. Participants noted the intergenerational cycle of poverty for too many families and the pain of families being separated (often the result of incarceration). Older participants shared their experience and stigma of family homelessness, while youth shared about the challenges of navigating foster care, the need for better support in transitional living programs, and barriers to accessing appropriate interim housing—particularly for transgender youth.

CES access and assessment: Client and provider staff uniformly shared concerns about the assessment process and the length of CES assessment tools, particularly when a relationship with the client has not been established and the client is often in turmoil or crisis. Participants and providers also shared that the assessment scoring can result in clients feeling the need to make false claims (such as mental health issues or substance abuse) in order to be prioritized for services. Some providers shared the following critical factors when serving new clients: building trust with the client, assuring the client help is available, taking the necessary time to complete the assessment, and demonstrating a sense of caring.

This report captures these common themes (organized by topic) as well as specific comments from the listening sessions. We have relied on extensive note taking as well as transcriptions of audio recordings to capture the community's concerns, insights, perspectives, and recommendations.

HYFLA provided rich, comprehensive, and multi-faceted perspectives about the challenges of navigating homelessness. Their feedback is captured in a separate section of the report to maintain the integrity of their views and also to highlight the unique challenges facing Black youth and young adults experiencing homelessness. Issues specific to the Skid Row community were also collected and reported in the "A Focus on Skid Row" section, as were issues specific to the Antelope Valley community in "A Focus on the Antelope Valley."

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SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSION AND FOCUS GROUP INSIGHTS

Structural and Institutional Racism, Discrimination, and Implicit Bias

"I have been a part of this for a long, long time. The policies and systems we designed were not developed with Black people in mind. The policies were developed by White people and were developed in a way that dealt with the problem of the White alcoholic individual that only needed certain things. Now we have a different situation; we have a new situation since the 80s with the crack epidemic and those systems didn't evolve to deal with these new things." —*Black Man, Former Service Provider Administrator with lived experience at South Central listening session*

Structural racism is the issue here. LA doesn't acknowledge this. How can we have the conversation if we don't acknowledge we live in a racist Los Angeles? —*Paraphrase of participant comment at San Pedro listening session*

"African Americans are disproportionally represented in homelessness because they are misrepresented in every area of disparity in our country. And that goes back to our roots of racism, oppression, and institutional racism. It doesn't change with the category. It is almost expected." —*Black Woman at West Adams listening session*

"I want to talk about the systemic oppression in this country that existed since the Africans were brought here from Africa on the slave trips. They were enslaved and prevented from reading and learning. The system was set up against Black people, since we got here. When you talk about moving forward —it is hard to move forward without looking back. Since the sixties, it was deemed that it was two Americas —a White America and a Black America. I will argue to this day that there is a brown America. White America profits on the demise of Black America. It is hard to break it down to individuals to say how can Blacks overcome their oppressive situation when this White America is benefiting greatly off their demise." —*Black Man, Advocate with lived experience at Skid Row listening session*

"I am not originally from here; I am from Oakland. I was riding the bus the other day near Avalon and what surprised me when I transferred on to that bus in that area is that the bus was ugly. I have been riding the bus all throughout Los Angeles looking for work and when I am riding in certain areas, you can tell. The bus companies put their worst buses in certain areas. I was in a nice bus down here, and I get to a different area and you can see the streets look different, the neighborhoods look different, and even the buses look different. That tells you that not even the companies that are existing on the dollars of those communities don't even give a [expletive]." *—Latino Man at South Central listening session*

"I think it is because of the policies that we have had for so long. When you think about every bad list or anything you look at, as it relates to education or whatever, Black folks are always on the top of that list. There is a reason because of how the system is set up. When you think about the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, people were able to buy a home for $8,000, but Black folks couldn't live in White neighborhoods. Remember, the government built segregated housing at the time. The cycle continues to perpetuate itself. White folks could live in the suburbs, but because of racism, Black folks couldn't move to the suburbs; that is why they built the projects." *—Black Man, Pastor at South Central listening session*

"One of the things we have to look at is that gentrification and homelessness are intertwined. If you look at the communities that have a lot of development going on, a lot of those areas that have development are the areas where people still live on the streets." *—Black Man, Service Provider at Venice/Santa Monica listening session*

"Access to education, employment, and opportunities that exist for others [are] reasons why Black people are overrepresented]. It is a catch-up game for many individuals who do not have the access for opportunity." *—Black Man, Service Provider at Antelope Valley listening session*

Permanent Housing

Lack of Affordable Housing

"It is discouraging for me because I know we are talking about solutions, but I know we still need 500,000 affordable housing units, and I know when we look over in South Park where the Staples Center is, there is a 12% vacancy over there. We got housing, we just don't have it for poor folks or for Black folks. The greatest issue is not being dealt with: folks can't pay their rent, and equity firms own most of these single-family homes that they took away from folks in 2008. Most of that was Black folks who lost their homes; nobody got their homes back. I get real emotional about that stuff because I feel like nothing will be solved until we deal with the housing." *—Black Man, Pastor at South Central listening session*

"You give these people the power to develop in this town and not build affordable housing, even with government money. With government money, you have 100 developers coming out of the country to take federal money to allow our government to be their business? So, can they give us 10%?" *—Black Woman, Outreach Worker with lived experience at Venice/Santa Monica listening session*

"I think the fair market rate needs to increase. It is nearly impossible to find a place, even when you can help a client under the fair market rate. The rates that landlords are charging, people are not getting their money's worth. They increase the rate to meet the fair market rate and then the apartment is like a box, or a closet, or a shared restroom. It is unfair." *—Black Woman, Service Provider at South Central listening session*

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"If you find permanent housing, it has to be within 80% of your total monthly household [income]. If your income is $500 because you are only getting funding from DPSS, a family of two cannot find a house for $400. I think the programs need to be reevaluated from the federal government because it is not helpful to the population that are needing the services. This causes people to commit fraud because they want to get the money, but they really cannot find a place for that amount of money, so it is just a revolving door. They just keep coming back." *—Black Woman, Social Worker at Venice/Santa Monica listening session*

"So, speaking as someone who dealt with the homeless issues since the 80s, I experienced it myself, and now with my wife and kids. We got four kids. In 2006, my sister and I lost our duplex because of the adjustable mortgage rate. So that is the first thing. We always talk about mental health people, people with drug issues, but there is also another category of people who actually work, went to school or whatever, and are homeless." *—Black Man, Advocate with lived experience at Venice/Santa Monica listening session*

"The developers are responsible for creating affordable housing in many of the buildings that are coming up across the city. I have stumbled upon the fact that [the developers] have said that they would rather pay the penalty than to give the affordable housing away. It is a penalty called the linkage fee. I don't know where that penalty is going. I don't know who is overseeing it and making sure it is received. If that is going to position for the developers that are building in our city, that they will pay the fee versus diversifying the property, then I think the fee and penalty needs to be higher." *—Black Woman, Service Provider at South Central listening session*

"I know for a lot of the affordable housing units, they have a tax credit. They have that 15 or 20-year clause that they can remain at low-income. At the 15 or whatever the term is, they can raise the rents up to fair market rates. It is important to ensure that these new units being built are not under that same clause because I think in the 90s and 80s a lot of the affordable housing units were built. In 2010 most of these units went to fair market rent. We don't want to revisit that come 10 or 15 years from now." *—Black Man, Service Provider at South Central listening session*

"We need to make affordable housing truly affordable. It is not affordable." *—Black Woman at West Adams listening session*

Housing Discrimination

I have a Black boyfriend. When we look for apartments, I have to go alone because they always turn us down when he is around. We have to try to trick them into giving us the apartment, before they find out he is Black. We both have bad credit but "for me they are willing to make an exception, for him they are not. *—Paraphrased from White Youth at LAHSA Homeless Youth Forum of Los Angeles focus group*

"The criminalization of the mentally ill and being criminalized for using addictive substances are making it hard for people to get homes. Even if you have first and last [month's] rent, the first thing they are going to do is a background check. If you have been incarcerated, you are not going to be able to get that apartment." *—Black Man, Service Provider at South Central listening session*

"Housing discrimination plays a major role. When we talk about policies and when we talk vouchers, etcetera, one of the things that happens is that our housing policies do nothing to develop our communities. The issue is that we give vouchers to individuals for a place to stay, but the money is going to the landowner. The landowner is usually not anyone of the community." *—Black Man, Former Service Provider Administrator with lived experience at South Central listening session*

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"More than 50% of the population is Latino. Some of these people are landlords, or they are involved with the management side of the property. When you call and leave messages —and maybe they speak two languages on the machine or you can tell by the accent or something like that —these are not the people who are calling back. I just happen to believe it is because I don't have an accent. I am not speaking in Spanish on the machine. I feel discriminated against invisibly and someone can say it is in my own head, but I don't think it is in my own head." *—Black Woman, Advocate with lived experience at Venice/Santa Monica listening session*

Concerns with Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program

"Around 1998, I went to the housing authority and applied for Section 8 —that didn't come through until about 2015 —damn near 20 years later. When I got my voucher, I went around looking for places, and even in the jungles we found a lot of the property that used to be mostly Black, were now being managed by non-Black people. What we found was that they were only taking vouchers from non-Black people. Now you see a lot of non-Black people over there in that area. I finally found a place on my last extension and the inspector came out and failed the place for things like screws missing on drawers and stuff, so I ended up losing my voucher." *—Black Man, Advocate with lived experience at Venice/Santa Monica listening session*

"The Section 8 program is broken, and I think there is a lot of favoritism within that program. I believe that a lot of individuals that first get to Skid Row lose their hope when they are told, 'If you just stay in this [PROVIDER] property or this Skid Row housing and trust property for a year, you will automatically receive your Section 8 voucher.' That is not happening. There needs to be some sort of oversight over the Section 8 program." *—Black Woman, Advocate with lived experience at Skid Row listening session*

"I was born and raised in South Central. We need to build some affordable housing. They build all these buildings in this community at market rate. They aren't taking Section 8 vouchers. I have a friend, he is military. He has a Section 8 voucher and can't get an apartment of anything around here." *—Black Man, Community Member at West Adams listening session*

"I think the Section 8 program needs to be revamped because a lot of the landlords do not want to even take the program. As well as pre-inspections, people shouldn't have to go and get a voucher and then go wait to see if the place is going to be approved. It should already have a certification that it passed, so when the people come, they know this place is available, safe, and certified. I had to sue seven landlords on the Section 8 program because the ones who do take the vouchers are slumlords." *—Black Woman, Advocate with lived experience at South Central listening session*

"We have HACLA, the Section 8 for the city, same thing just City and County. Then at the same time all of those agencies are competing to find…there is not a structure. LAHSA wants to house this amount of people, but there is no guidance. The expectation is not real. We need to be realistic and speak honestly. We have 54,000 homeless people in LA. We don't have enough housing. We have more Section 8 tickets than we have housing. We talk about vacancies, but how many of those vacancies are Section 8?" *—Latino Man, Service Provider at South Central listening session*

CES Permanent Housing Programs

"Rapid re-housing is a great program, and it does work for some people, but for other people who only have 221 or SSI, they are never going to increase their income. After we pull out, 10 times out of 10 they will be homeless. We have to figure out a way to help those people." *—Black Woman, Service Provider at South Central listening session*

"I had rapid re-housing recently, and I went to a place in Bellflower. The agency gave the landlord a deposit, and I brought the contract because these agencies don't care. They gave LAHSA's money and did not put it on the lease. When I asked the landlord how much my deposit was, he told me $300 and I told him I was going to take him to the Feds. Then I told the company, [PROVIDER], to send a copy of the lease because I wanted to see if it was the same one that I had. I was relying on them to make sure everything was right, and they let me down. *—Black Woman, Advocate with lived experience at Skid Row listening session*

The Shelter-Plus Care program is good but, where is the care? The permanent care facilities only have staff working from 9 am to 4 pm. A lot of the staff have credentials (from USC) but they have no idea how to help individuals experiencing homelessness. *—Paraphrased from Black Woman, Advocate with lived experience at LAHSA Lived Experience Advisory Group focus group.*

Interim Housing

Concerns with Interim Housing

"It is not about the organization at all; it is about the structure and the system that they have to work with. For all the providers in here, you are going to get mad at me, but I do want to say that we have — and I have —been a part of it, so I can't exonerate myself. We have created a system for homeless care that is not more attractive than a tent on the sidewalk. Think about that. It tells me that there is something that our system is failing to do especially for Black people. What we have to do is begin to enlist not only our service providers but also Black people in terms of what they need. Our customers need to be served, and we are not serving our customers in the manner they want to be served." *—Black Man, Former Service Provider Administrator with lived experience at South Central listening session*

"I am a part of a social service provider. We run some of the largest homeless shelters in the county, and I talk with people every day, and I try to understand why they do not want to come in. We have to improve. We have to make a product that consumers want to take part in." *—Black Man, Social Service Provider at West Adams listening session*

"There's no current information in shelters around what's happening regarding housing. People are blind. How do we get this information so one can begin to be hopeful? The more we know, the more we'll share the information. Should we start sharing on radio? Infomercials? TV? Providers may have the info but how does it get to the community? Give the information to us. Empower us with the information. Who's monitoring the shelters? An independent organization needs to do this work." *—Black Woman with lived experience, San Pedro listening session*

"I have been living in the shelter for almost a year now. They want you to save your money, and they are supposed to have a system for you for when your car breaks down or you have another emergency, but I have been waiting for several months. People in position to help you are not doing their jobs. They tell me, 'Come back tomorrow.' They have too many people working down there not doing anything." *—Black Man with lived experience at West Adams listening session*

"I am not Black, but the money —the money is being mismanaged, mishandled; there is something scandalous going on. There is so much money, and yet I have toured buildings where there is mold in the common bathrooms, caked on the shower curtains. Rats running around all over the place. All of them are a failure." *—White Man with lived experience at Skid Row listening session*

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I work with shelters in South LA. A lot of shelters extend their stay without holding them to a higher standard —to find jobs, get connected to resources. Shelters could do a better job at helping them find resources. *—Paraphrased from Black Woman, Service Provider at San Pedro listening session*

"They wanted to put 400 people that all had histories of trauma into one place. Most of the folks I talked to said, 'Don't put me in a shelter with 400 other people —I am afraid.' Until homeless services really integrate trauma-informed care and deal with it from the perspective that looks at the whole piece —that looks at the racism —we are going to continue to repeat and spend money in ways that are not going to change the system." *—Black Woman, Mental Health Service Provider at West Adams listening session*

"You go into a shelter needing or wanting peace, and what I got was more PTSD." *—Black Woman with lived experience at West Adams listening session*

"We have walked into many shelters, and people are so disrespectful. Why would you want to go? The one place that is supposed to help you, the one beacon, and there is more racism, more disrespect. Why the hell am I here?" *—Black Woman with lived experience at West Adams listening session*

"I was living in shared housing, and I was able to get placed at a job at [PROVIDER]…two or three weeks of working, I started purchasing clothes and getting my sense of style back together and getting self-esteem back, and then the woman in the house turned on me: 'You think you are cute?' My car was damaged within two weeks of getting it. They started stealing my food and they broke into my room and stole from me. I got flyers about me having STDs and pieces of glass slid under my door. Eventually my life was threatened. I was reporting all of this to the property manager, who is White, and he did nothing." *—Black Woman with lived experience at West Adams listening session*

"Some people do not want to go into shelters because there is trauma in those shelters." *—Black Woman at South Central listening session*

"I just want to say, piggybacking off her pain and no one coming to her aid, made me want to speak about being pepper sprayed in a shelter while supposedly being in a 'safe place' and breaking my nose in two places. I have a broken wrist. I didn't find out that my wrist was broken until a couple of weeks ago. It is not fun and it is scary. The 'safe place' where I spent the night. I arrived there; there was an ambulance; there was a fire truck and the paramedics. To this moment, I do not know what happened but I know at 1:35 this morning, the same thing occurred, and I am afraid. So, I am living in fear. I felt safer in my car." *—Black Woman with lived experience at Venice/Santa Monica listening session*

"I didn't have a place to go; I feared joining the shelter. I stayed in the car. I stayed in a garage unbeknownst to the people, and there weren't the resources that I wanted." *—Black Woman, Advocate with lived experience at Venice/Santa Monica listening session*

Motels

"We then went to motels and found that we were spending $3,000 plus a month for a motel." *—Black Man with lived experience at Venice/Santa Monica listening session*

"My friends came on a short notice. They have been part of the CES system. They have been calling and asking for help. They cannot get help because they can afford to pay for a motel. They have two children. What the heck is that?" *—Black Woman, Community Member experiencing homelessness*

"I know some of the programs through the state; I work for DPSS. The hotel funding is like $65 a night, and you really can't find a hotel for that amount. From what I understand, that amount is going to increase, but these are the numbers that the state gives us to give to our participants." *—Black Woman, Social Worker at Venice/Santa Monica listening session*

Cost of Living and Employment

"Jobs are real big and a part of the issue. A lot of folks want to work; we see that in Skid Row. You talk about the people out here hustling —they want to work." *—Black Man, Service Provider at Skid Row listening session*

"I am a paycheck away from being homeless myself." *—Black Woman, Social Worker at Venice/ Santa Monica listening session*

"You are pushing them into housing, knowing that they are only going to make $12.50 [an hour] and now they are saying two or three months later they have to pay 100% of their own rent. You are just recycling the poor." *—Black Woman, Service Provider at West Adams listening session*

"People need to also see that there is a connection between housing and jobs. If you do not have a job, it is impossible for you to be able to afford, maintain, and sustain that living." *—Black Woman, Service Provider at South Central listening session*

"Hosing minus employment is a disaster. I can get you a job making $12 [an hour] but that's not sustainable if we are talking about the rapid re-housing program." *—Black Woman, Employment Specialist at West Adams listening session*

"I went from working to receiving a notice of layoff to homeless within 60 days. I suffered with bouts of anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts." *—Black Woman, South Central listening session*

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Employment Discrimination and Job Training Programs

"Definitely, job discrimination—that is why I remain homeless. Then also the services that are provided like unemployment that runs out, things like emergency housing, things like shelter plus care. So that is another level of stress. If you survive all of that and get an apartment, you have to think about, 'Well, if I get an apartment, am I going to have to retire on Section 8? Is this going to be forever?' It is very stressful." *—Black Woman with lived experience at Venice/Santa Monica listening session*

"Do you leave the area because you can't find a job? I know so many people driving Uber with PhDs and master's degrees. How is that possible? Find those people and employ them. Be creative. We can do something but there is a bureaucracy preventing it. Maybe we need to change the people in the bureaucracy." *—Black Woman with lived experience at West Adams listening session*

"We have redlining; we have lack of access to employment; certain groups are being hired into management positions. Black people tried to get hired into entry level positions and they can't even get those jobs." *—Black Woman at West Adams listening session*

"So, I came here; eventually I got a job; I got into school. There is a lot of help here, but it is not really for Black people. There wasn't a lot of help for Black people here. I saw little Black people here. Now it is time for me to get a job. How am I going to get hired? Everybody else in that work was not Black and they wanted their people in it. I went through that, and it was very difficult for me to get a job here. I got the job, but it wasn't nearly enough to cover half of the rent they were charging me." *—Black Woman with lived experience at Venice/Santa Monica listening session*

"I have about 25 certificates and they won't hire me. I have a tech background and when I came downtown, I had a job. So, when I came down here, they made me feel like I did not [do enough] to get help." *—Black Woman, Advocate with lived experience at Skid Row listening session*

"Spanish, because I am not bilingual. I go on craigslist and they say, 'bilingual preferred,' 'bilingual required;' these are problems right here. When you start eliminating that factor and bring it back to how back in the day you had to hire a certain amount of people; I don't want to get hired because of my color either. I would like to get hired because of my intelligence, but that notion becomes a problem too. You do not want to hire that person because you are worried about them taking your job or them doing something that you cannot do." *—Black man with lived experience at Skid Row*

"There are plenty of jobs in Los Angeles. In 2016, Angelinos made a big decision that the future of Los Angeles would be great, but they are making it and leaving our children, our young people, our next generation out. Now Measure M, $130 billion dollars, it promises 479 thousand jobs. Why are we not re-opening our trades workshops in our schools and preparing our children for this next generation that is coming? So, when you say, 'What is the problem?' Too many programs in the community that don't work for us." *—Black woman, Advocate with lived experience at Venice/Santa Monica listening session*

"When we think about sustainability, we need to be looking at the skillsets that can help funnel kids into careers of the future. We need training programs in and near our community rather than having the community going up to the valley." *—Black Woman, Employment Specialist at West Adams listening session*

Black people are trained in a plethora of fields; however, completing training programs does not lead to guaranteed jobs that offer a living wage. Additionally, even when Black people are placed in jobs via training programs, the programs are not held accountable for the retention of their trainees at job sites. *—Paraphrased from Worker Advocate, focus group at Los Angeles Black Worker Center*

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"While Los Angeles County has over 30 county-administered workforce development and training programs, none of the programs directly (or indirectly) target participants based on racial demographics. The programs' priority populations are based on income (low), veteran status, disability, criminal record, and age. As such, the program enrollment data and results are not disaggregated by race or ethnicity, which does not allow for detection and analyses of potential racial inequities." *—Program Director, focus group at Los Angeles County Department of Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services*

"Specific to the hospitality industry, Black people face several major challenges: the hospitality workforce has shifted away from Black workers, thus convincing Black workers to go into the hospitality industry is a challenge and takes substantial time and resources; Black workers face alienation and discrimination from the Latino-dominated workforce, causing the Black worker to quit due to the mistreatment they endure by their co-workers; and qualified Black candidates are often turned down because of their criminal record as many employers have strict policies that prevent a person with a criminal record from being hired." *—Service Providers focus group at the Hospitality Training Academy*

"As an employment service provider, we have to elevate our thinking about the type of jobs we are matching our unemployed clients to. A minimum wage job is not sufficient to pay for housing. We need better job training options, better relationships with potential employers, and more time to work with our clients to prepare them for higher paying jobs." *—Black Woman, Employment Specialist, interview*

Criminalization of Homelessness, Incarceration, and Re-entry

"I had a gentleman that went to our church who was arrested 13 times in one year. We are in Skid Row. Every time he got arrested, he would lose his place for housing." *—Black Man, Pastor at South Central listening session*

"I think we need to take into consideration the criminalization and incarceration rates in the communities. Not only does it remove an adult from the family, it also removes an income, and creates other barriers. I think it is worth mentioning the criminalization and our justice system." *—Woman at Venice/Santa Monica listening session*

"It is nearly impossible to house Black people with criminal histories." *—Black Woman, Service Provider at San Pedro listening session*

"Everyone knows that there is an issue now since it is being brought to the forefront about mass incarceration and how it affects our communities, but I also think for the programs that are out there, there needs to be more to address the issues of the formerly incarcerated. It doesn't matter if you have a voucher or not in your hand, if you have been gone or down for 12 or 15 years, you have no history as far as where you lived prior. Even if you had that, just the fact that you are a felon, that is another added stigma on to you to prevent you from getting housing." *—Black Woman, Service Provider at South Central listening session*

"I was in prison for 35 years and I got out —me and a whole bunch of other people went to [PROVIDER] and signed up, but guess what they told us? 'You can't get our services. You know why? You do not have a permanent address. Number two, you were in prison, and number three, you are not the right person. You do not fit the model.'" *—Black Man, Advocate, formerly Incarcerated with lived experience at West Adams listening session*

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"In 1999, I got out of jail, and I couldn't get a good job, so now when we are homeless, it is hard for us to get a place because they want to do a background check. If I have a felony, what does that have to do with me just trying to have a place to stay? No, I can't get a job, and I can't get an apartment. You are doing a background check on me for what I paid for." *—Black Man with lived experience at West Adams listening session*

"When they're coming out of jail, the biggest problem they have is getting a job. [It's] frustrating when you're on probation and you have to do something that you can't do. They feel like there's no hope; [that's] why there's recidivism. If you don't have a job, you can't pay for housing." *—Black Woman, Service Provider at Antelope Valley listening session*

"Many people leaving prison are reluctant to receive help from outreach workers or mental health service providers. It's important that service providers understand how to engage individuals who are in re-entry, using language that the client can accept like: being a member versus a client, offering tools versus help or placement, or empowering people versus finding what services they need." *—Black Man, Service Provider, formerly incarcerated, interview*

Service Delivery Systems

"Care" Is an Essential Component of Service

"I think the main barrier is the value of a dog compared to the value of a Black person. A value of a dog! Compared to a Black person! It doesn't compare. And so, my point is that lack of love, so the ultimate barrier, I would say is just the lack of love." *—Black Woman, Advocate at Venice/Santa Monica listening session*

"You have to have the people that have the passion, then help people get the capacity you need. We have to start investing in programs where it is not a big business for them." *—Black Woman at South Central Los Angeles listening session*

"I live in a [PROVIDER] building. I have been there for three years. I can tell you this, since I moved in there, I have not had one day of peace. There is a serious problem with [PROVIDER] staff. You get cursed out. You are mistreated." *—Black Woman, Advocate with lived experience at Skid Row*

"I have been to a lot of these programs and the people there are just there for the money. You see from the bottom up. You can tell the top people do not care, because they would not have kept those type of people to stick around." *—Black Woman, Advocate at Skid Row listening session*

"You also have to care about Black people. You have to care about all people, but you have to have a level of care and respect for that community. It sounds so basic, but I don't think we would be having this conversation if everyone had that level of care and respect for Black people." *—Black Woman, Service Provider at South Central listening session*

"It's not about money. It's about someone who cares, who you can be vulnerable with. What [a provider says] is critical. Really listening is important. Is there time for providers to really connect with people? I didn't want to be a case number, we don't want that. That's why we don't want to be served because we'll just be a number." *—Black Woman with lived experience at San Pedro listening session*

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"[I had a conflict] with my case manager because I needed her to meet me as me —at where I was coming from. Because I wasn't coming from the street, because I wasn't drug addicted, because I didn't have all of those stipulations connected to me. My only ordeal was that I do not have a place to live, but she couldn't align with me. Instead, she had to put me into the case with everybody else that came through the door. And when she started telling me, 'If you don't do this and you don't do this, then you don't have a bed.' I said, 'I am not doing that, not because I am not wanting to do it. I am not doing it because I don't need to.' I need you to see me as me. All I need is a house to live in; I need to upload my resume; I need to contact these people; I need to re-certify my drug and alcohol education; I need these things to carry on." *—Black Woman, Case Manager with lived experience at Skid Row listening session*

"As far as people understanding what trauma looks like, because people are always looking for a cut, people are always looking for you to be in that gutter life, smoking that pipe. If you have a cute dress on, you got your hair done, then there is nothing wrong with you. Or if you had some schooling, you just need to 'woman up.' So, this is what is happening to some of the programs and the people running these programs. They pathologize who these women are when they go in for the services. They want to pathologize us, instead of listen! Listen! Listen! Listen!" *—Black Woman, Advocate with lived experience at Venice/Santa Monica listening session*

Training Needs

"As an agency, we need to do more training for our staff, and not just policy, procedures, and program rules. We need to start gearing our training towards empathy, ways to converse with clients, and behavioral trainings. We can learn to interact with all types of people —White, Hispanic, Asian, gay, lesbian, trans —it doesn't matter, because now we are into behavioral trainings versus policy and procedures." *—Black Woman, Service Provider at South Central listening session*

"I was getting $600 every two weeks, so I couldn't get an apartment because it wasn't permanent income. I went to almost every facility in the area, and I was mistreated, and they were not trained. Finally, I ended up moving in with somebody (shared housing) but once I was not needy, I was put back on the streets. I realized that I would rather sleep under the bridge and help myself, and that is what I did. I didn't have a license. I had 16 points against my license. I had been in jail. I cleaned my own record up. They do not have enough resources. They do not have enough people that know enough to direct the people in the right places. If you are not strong, you will not get through it." *—Black Woman, Advocate with lived experience at Skid Row listening session*

"[They] get jobs, and lot of times they do not necessarily have the passion or the skills." *—Black Woman, Advocate with lived experience at Skid Row listening session*

"The other thing about it is that we do not train our people to understand their own bias and their own baggage. That goes to women dealing with Black men in terms of the stigmas that comes with that like, 'Oh, my god, I am scared of him' or whatever may be the case. We have to understand how this baggage comes out. [The provider is here to serve the individual and not the other way around]. They are not interested in building the quality relationships necessary to provide quality services. A lot of times they are sitting there working for the system rather than working for the individual." *—Black Man, Former Service Provider Administrator with lived experience at South Central listening session*

There has been an increase in people doing service outreach in the community; however, those individuals are poorly trained (USC kids) with good credentials. Many of the new hires leave in less than four months and ruin relationships with the houseless people they were attempting to support. *—Paraphrased from Black Woman, Advocate with lived experience at LAHSA Lived Experience Advisory Group focus group*

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I worked on an outreach team, and the team member left. He had 75 people on his caseload that we had to attempt to support in addition to our own caseload. —*Paraphrased from Black Woman, Advocate with lived experience at LAHSA Lived Experience Advisory Group focus group*

Hiring Black People with Lived Experience

"If thousands of us [Black people] are experiencing homelessness, then why aren't thousands of us working within the departments that deal with homelessness?" —*Black Woman with lived experience at West Adams listening session*

"They are hiring those who look like them [White] for management, and it is obvious." —*Black Woman at West Adams listening session*

"I think we need to stop making housing policies and programs using White middle-class values for the framework. We let the programs be informed by the people with the lived experiences. Often, we do develop these programs and policies that sound good and look good, but access becomes a problem. Like you said, lack of culturally appropriate training for those folks that are placed. So, to really get the change —right now White is the normativity we operate from, so when we develop programs and policies according to those values, we are erasing ourselves from process." —*Latino Man at Venice/ Santa Monica listening session*

I worked as an outreach worker, and I spent a lot of time talking to my clients making sure they knew me. I checked on them every day, gave them my cellphone, and made sure I provided them with whatever they needed. Some of these White women caseworkers are scared of their clients. They need a couple of men with them to provide any type of services to people on Skid Row. I am not afraid. I would go there myself and meet my clients where they were and as a result they trusted me. —*Paraphrased from Black Woman, Advocate with lived experience at LAHSA Lived Experience Advisory Group focus group*

"Sitting across the table of someone that looks like you, and at the very least can understand what it is like to experience the world the way you experience it, makes a huge difference. It opens you up to be more willing to support care. Until we get people that look like us in these positions, we are not going be able access it. It not going to seem like something that is safe." —*Black Woman at West Adams listening session*

"When there is so many people running programs that do not look like us, and for some reason that only seems to matter, in other ethnic communities that you have people who are understanding. And then Black people too often —I am sorry to say this —that do get the job, then according to Joy DeGruy Leary, sometimes end up being like 'Stephanies' and 'Stevens.' " —*Black Woman, Advocate with lived experience at Venice/Santa Monica listening session*

Responsiveness

"The case managers do not answer their phones. The case managers —their voicemails are blocked up. When you call to get help, you can't get in touch with nobody." —*Black Woman, Advocate with lived experience at Skid Row listening session*

"There is a horrible breakdown in communication. It is like you call a number, it goes into a hole —even if somebody answers. Most of the time it is an answering service, and you do not get calls back, so how do you help? Help me! We are here, you are talking to us, but still nothing changes in terms of the systematic breakdown in communications. We are not communicating properly because you have funds that don't get to people that need them." *—Black Woman with lived experience at Venice/Santa Monica listening session*

"Staying on the street, looking for a place, talking to a case manager, and then next time you call, they do not answer or they are not there. Those are stressful situations. You want to fight somebody; you want to fight yourself because you know you done what you are supposed to do and here you are on the bottom." *—Black Woman with lived experience at West Adams listening session*

"You have to become a part of it, and you have to meet people exactly where they at. And be diligent about it. Don't come in and reach a person one day and then you don't see this or they don't see anybody else for a year." *—Black Man, Outreach Worker at Skid Row listening session*

"LAHSA does not call people back. You do not get calls back. We have had a fire. I have a degree in engineering. We have been homeless for four years. We had a fire. We can't get help. We don't qualify. No person going through [the homeless] experience should have to do it alone. Every day you have to have someone you can call." *—Black Woman with lived experience at West Adams listening session*

Insufficient Funding Opportunities for Smaller Organizations

"There is a disconnect right there, between what is happening at the top and the grassroots. The money is not getting down to the organizations like African Town Enterprise, African Town Coalition, who are out there every day on the ground trying to rent property and working with people on the street." *—Black man, Advocate and Service Provider at Venice/Santa Monica listening session*

"This is a half a cent tax. This is our money. So, I just put together a budget two days ago, just to see what would be the minimum expense to sustain the program that is working at Mount Tabor without funding from LAHSA, without funding from [PROVIDER] you have all been invited. It cost a little under half a million dollars the whole year, operating at five days. Peter Lynn makes $200,000 dollars. Now how many people has he saved? How many lives has he changed? Two, Peter Lynns would fund our program." *—Black Woman, Advocate and Service Provider at Venice/Santa Monica listening session*

"There are a lot of little non-profits, like myself; we go to LAHSA, and it is really hopeless because … all of those [larger] organizations are going to continue to get the funding. Maybe LAHSA can open an RFP just for the community. Small faith-based and community organizations and the big ones cannot apply." *—Black Woman, Veteran, Community Member with lived experience at South Central listening session*

Family Issues, Childcare, and Family Support

"The ladies can't go to work if they cannot get anyone to watch their children, and there are so many restrictions on that. They need to lift some of them or give them some type of money. LAHSA, when they are doing the allocation, put something in there for childcare, so these young girls can get to work." *—Black Woman, Veteran, with lived experience at South Central listening session*

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"Single moms or parents in general have a hard time finding housing because they want to know where the other parent is or why you have all these kids, or how old are they, or are they going to mess up my property." *—Black Woman, Service Provider at South Central listening session*

"I'm a mother, but I fear moving because my son is a young Black man. But property owners may see my son as a 'bad asset' to the community. We cannot leave out youth and Black children." *—Black Woman, Advocate with lived experience at LAHSA Lived Experience Advisory Group focus group*

"When you talk about families being separated, sometimes the parents are out of the home because they have to work. If something happens and your kids are home, people think it is some kind of neglect. That is another reason why families are being separated and it is causing homelessness." *—Black Woman, Social Worker at Venice/Santa Monica listening session*

"We are going to sleep in a park tonight. There isn't anything positive when you have to look at your children crying every day. You know, where are we going to sleep next? When you are eating cups of noodles every day, and then you might not be able to eat that." *—Black man, Advocate with lived experience at Venice/Santa Monica listening session*

"Working with people of color, one thing I noticed is the lack of education and life skills that are not being taught, generation after generation. So even with my TAY clients, which is 18 to 24, I am getting a lot of adults that do not know how to do basic things. They do not know how to properly speak to the landlord or get their needs met or how to go and get services from the county. They do not have the life skills to go and access them." *—Black Woman, Case Manager at South Central Los Angeles*

"[There is a] need [for] more programs in inner cities for parenting so we can train children when they are young. I grew up in projects and was exposed to drugs, prostitution, etc. We did not have role models. I was lucky enough to have teachers who mentored me, but [we] need more of that. Only a few peers actually made it out and became successful." *—Black Woman, LAHSA Lived Experience Advisory Group focus group*

"It is important that we are catching youth when they are younger because a lot of times young people age out of foster care and it turns into a cycle. So, [we need] programming that is dealing with the childcare issue, providing mental health services so they are not consistently in the spiral of homelessness." *—Black Woman, Service Provider, at South Central Los Angeles listening session*

"I was homeless with my whole entire family, but as a stigma we were like, 'We are not going to get help; we were going to figure it out.' As a community, we don't want to get help because we have been conditioned to look at it as a handout. Really, it is to help you get back on your feet and improve our future. Until we put that focus out there to re-unify and re-educate, we are going to always be homeless." *—Black Woman with lived experience at West Adams listening session*

"Lack of resources and education starting at young ages. Things like financial literacy [are needed]. It is hard to get back once you are in that situation. Families are being torn apart. Lack of knowledge as to what is available to them. Sometimes people don't use the services because they don't know about them. There is a stigma about using services in the Black community." *—Black Woman at Venice/ Santa Monica listening session*

CES Access and Assessment

"We need to stop these systems that are forcing us to lie. Have you ever had to lie on an application or the social worker told you to lie unless you won't get this program? How do you think we feel after we lie and walk away? You are talking about lowering our self-esteem; it affects our spiritual life. I am already in a bad place, and I have to lie on top of it. Sleeping on someone's couch, and I have to lie and say I am sleeping on the street. It doesn't make sense." *—Black Woman with lived experience at West Adams listening session*

"Not everyone has a drug problem or an alcohol problem. But these programs, to get in them you got [to lie]. 'Yeah, I have a drug problem. You know what I mean, if it is going to get me housing.' 'Yeah, I [need mental health services] if it is going to get me housing.' So, these programs down here are formulated for people who have problems, and if you don't have no problems, you are going through what that woman went through [not qualifying for services]." *—Black Man with lived experience at Skid Row listening session*

"I am a little bit stuck. So [let me know] whatever programs there are or the options for me-or [do] I have to lie somewhere and say I am homeless just to get move-in money or pretend to go to a shelter somewhere just to get move-in money? I don't want to do that. Another thing is —well something I experienced, period, was reverse discrimination. So maybe because I am cute or maybe because I had my hair done, or maybe because I had on an inexpensive pretty dress, then someone wants to believe I don't need help." *—Black Woman, Advocate with lived experience at Venice/Santa Monica listening session*

"We have wonderful, effective outreach in the Antelope Valley. LAHSA and others are working hard to help people. However, the eligibility criteria are pretty extreme. If you don't have a mental health diagnosis, you can't get into a program." *—White Man, Service Provider at Antelope Valley listening session*

"That data is being kept in whatever computer. They say they are going to give you housing and check back with them, but check back with who? I don't even have your number, and the number you gave me is not the individual that took my CES information. I hear this every day in Saint Julian Park, where I sit, from individuals trying to use my phone. When they call over there, the first thing they ask you is, 'What is your CES information?' If you are not a mental health [client] or you [are] not coming from a drug program, they really do not want to assist you. So, what I am saying to you is that you asked for what doesn't work—it is the program that they mandated everyone who is homeless must go through … to even be classified housing. Your number ranges from one to 20, and hell, if I have been on the streets for five years and I am not a drug addict, my number would be one. If you go to mental health [services], we are going to knock you up to 10. Are you a drug addict? Well, now you have 15.
If you are being treated? We need to conduct an evaluation of the CES program." *—Black Man, Advocate with lived experience at Skid Row listening session*

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"When we do not have a place to go, I usually go to the park and the library because that where you can find people with families. My friends came on short notice; they have been part of the CES system; they have been calling and asking for help. They cannot get help because they can afford to pay for a motel. They have two children. What the heck is that?" —*Black Woman with lived experience at West Adams listening session*

"The SPDAT is very insensitive. If you are trying to SPDAT this person on initial intake, which is basically what every program must do before you put them into a program, you already isolated them; you already made them feel below, so they don't want to receive our services. Nine out of 10 that would be the same as me coming up to you after this meeting and asking, 'Hi, have you been diagnosed with HIV? Are you gay and fleeing domestic violence?' You are not going to tell me that. But the way LAHSA set it up is that you have not allowed us to develop the relationships to the people so that they feel welcomed to come and talk with us." —*Black Woman, Service Provider at South Central listening session*

"The SPDAT is very lengthy. A lot of times clients come in; they are overwhelmed; they are stressed out; they are frustrated, and they are at their wit's end. For us to service them properly, we have to literally go through a 25-page assessment. It is question, after question, after question, and if you read the SPDAT and you compare it to the HMIS intake, the questions are the same. So now you have to sit through 25 pages of the SPDAT, to then only sit through 10 to 15 pages of the HMIS enrollment. It is very insensitive to the clients' needs and situation. If we begin to actually have conversations with the client and figure out a way to either shorten the SPDAT, perhaps we can start building relationships and formulate [lines] of communication." —*Black Woman, Service Provider at South Central listening session*

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Intersectional Challenges Highlighted

Race and Age Intersectional Challenges

"After working in social services and then having to go to DPSS, you are talking about sucking up a lot of pride. And people think that is easy, but until you have been on the other side, you do know what it is to have had a car, to have had an apartment, to not be a substance user. It is humiliation. There is no age limit. I would like to hear more about seniors being unhoused and poorly housed." —*Black Woman with lived experience at West Adams listening session*

"We are talking about Black homelessness; most of the people on Skid Row are Black males. Here is the thing that we forget: a lot of those people cannot work. A lot of them are senior citizens, and they can't work. So how do we deal with that issue as well? It was just an issue when I was trying to get someone a room at [PROVIDER] and there was only a top bed bunk, and he is 65 years old. He can't climb up the top bunk. We have lost a whole generation of Black males on the streets of Skid Row. There are individuals that will not be able to work, ever. How do we deal with that?" —*Black Man, Pastor at South Central listening session*

"Yes, I think it is a culmination of all of that: lack of resources, education, financial literacy, which only further exacerbates one's [circumstances] —especially the older that they get —and that is trauma. Then people are physically, mentally, and emotionally worn down by the time they enter into their 20s or 30s and then the 40s and 50s and so forth —hence the fact that we have an overabundance of middle aged elderly Black folks here in Los Angeles." —*Black Woman, Advocate with lived experience at Venice/Santa Monica listening session*

"In this arena, seniors are competing with those with children, and we don't compete well. Our energy levels are lower; our resilience to going here and going there wanes quickly. I am not making excuses; this is just reality. We are older. It doesn't mean that we are uneducated because education is fine as long as you have access to the resources and the communication that is necessary in order for you to get the result." —*Black Woman with lived experience at Venice/Santa Monica listening session*

Mental Illness Intersectional Challenges

Without housing, it is impossible to stabilize a person with mental illness. —*Paraphrased from Service Provider focus group at a Los Angeles mental health community organization*

A Black male mental health client was incarcerated multiple times over a span of 25 years because of behavior related to untreated mental illness. With appropriate mental health care, he was able to secure housing and stay clear of the criminal justice system. — *Paraphrased from Black Man, mental health client interview*

A Black woman experiencing homelessness struggles with mental illness. She has used her last motel voucher and is unaware of any other resources that may be available to her. — *Paraphrased from Black Woman, mental health client interview*

People suffering from mental illness do not always see themselves as needing assistance — they think their 'issues' are something other than mental illness. As a consequence, some of our clients remain homeless because their mental illness continues untreated or the treatment is sporadic. The challenge is to coax a client towards ongoing treatment and other support services. —*Paraphrased from Service Provider focus group at a Los Angeles mental health community organization*

Black Woman Intersectional Challenges

"We have all of these single Black women, [who are] middle-aged, elderly [and] are the number one demographic living in poverty and homelessness. Not just year after year, but decade after decade. What has the system done to address the fact that we have all these single Black women living in poverty [and] homelessness? You are letting us die out here on these streets because the system is not set up [correctly]. You do not have people [who] understand that the needs of a Black woman are not necessarily the same as maybe a White woman or a Mexican woman or so on and so forth. So that is why it upsets me." *—Black Woman, Advocate with lived experience at Skid Row listening session*

"For Black women, we have the highest mortality rate during child birth. A lot of that comes from generations and generations of trauma and pain and hurt we are carrying on top of creating life. For us to access care, there has to be some level of trust. Being a Black person, you are not going to be trusting of the many systems. They haven't given us a reason to trust them." *—Black Woman at West Adams listening session*

Black Man Intersectional Challenges

"As a Black man, I do not have a problem. As a Black man, America has a problem with me. Everywhere I go, there is a problem. Whether it is law enforcement, whether it any kind of institutional system, whether it is the school system as a child growing up. Sports and sport coaches, the entertainment industry, there is always some type of issues going on with me being a Black man. Then to be labeled the angry Black man, only because I am speaking up for what I believe in and what my mama taught me to be true. So now there is this reverse psychology like I am the problem. I am not the problem; the problem is White America." *—Black Man, Advocate with lived experience at Skid Row listening session*

"We are at a place in our society —we call them obstacle courses. If you a Black male, you are going to go to jail. Let's keep it 100. If you are in Skid Row and you are out here on this sidewalk, they are going to find obstacle courses for you. Your job is to jump over those." *—Black Man, Advocate with lived experience at Skid Row listening session*

Black Transgender Person Intersectional Challenges

[See "On the Intersection of LGBTQ Discrimination and Race"in "What We Learned from Young Adults Experiencing Homelessness" on page 90.]

A Focus on Skid Row

"What is the first thing that comes to your mind when you say homeless down here on Skid Row? The first thing that comes to people's mind when they [see] a homeless man —they think is he drug addicted; he has mental health issues, and that is how these programs are formulated. They are formulated for people down here who have problems, but everybody down here [does] not have a problem." *—Black Man, Advocate with lived experience at Skid Row listening session*

"I was at the United Way women empowerment event a few weekends ago, and one of the things I noticed [was] that there were people speaking from all over the world regarding women issues, but Mayor Garcetti talked for the women of Skid Row, and other people talked for the women of Skid Row, but…I wasn't invited to talk on behalf of Skid Row. Why was I not invited to talk to the women of Skid Row? … Why can't we talk for ourselves?" *—Black woman, advocate with lived experience at Skid Row listening session*

"So just thinking about myself, I have been down here for 14 months and I think it is about feeling and it is really weird to say this but, it is about feeling freedom. That is a crazy thing to say down here but down here, the people down here can do what they want to do. There are rules you have to follow if you stay in the shelters, which I stay in a shelter. You stay in those tents, you can do what you want to do." *—Black Woman, Advocate with lived experience at Skid Row listening session*

"They gave me the job, or God gave me the job; y'all know how it goes. I am one of 310 people from Skid Row that have gotten jobs. I am one in this community because they gave me a grant, and thank God the grant is still going because they found out there are people here that do want to work." *—Black Man, Caseworker with lived experience at Skid Row listening session*

Many are refusing services or housing and are selling drugs, which contributes to the oppression of other people in surrounding areas; while many come to Skid Row to seek services, many come to sell drugs. *— Paraphrased from Skid Row listening session*

"Look at empowering people and communities. Stop criminalizing poverty and homelessness. [There is a] need to identify and pay Skid Row ambassadors to represent themselves and the residents of Skid Row." *—Advocate with lived experience at Skid Row listening session*

Many people have been on Skid Row for years, and sometimes new people who have only recently arrived are already getting housed. *— Paraphrased from Skid Row listening session*

"Disabilities bring even greater difficulties, and Skid Row is a historical dropping-off point." *—Skid Row listening session*

A Focus on the Antelope Valley

"For me, it's the lack of resources. I've never had to work so hard to help people. We lack everything here. Now, it's almost ten years and the lack of resources is terrible." *—Black Woman, Service Provider at Antelope Valley listening session*

"We are a strong, cohesive community. Providers do whatever it takes to get the job done without resources from Los Angeles County. We haven't seen our fair share; because of that, the city has gone their own way. We're part of Los Angeles County but are not getting our fair share from the county." *—Unidentified speaker at Antelope Valley listening session*

"The 'good old boy' attitude [is a barrier]. [City officials] don't apply for [homeless services/housing] funds. There were funds sitting there. We need a winter shelter here. There's no church, no city; no one has come onboard to see it here. We have so much land, but the NIMBYs of the cities don't want [shelters]. They have their own idea of what Lancaster and Palmdale [should be]." *—Black Man, Service Provider at Antelope Valley listening session*

"You [have to] get the city to give you a business license, and they have to inspect [your unit]. There's some red tape you have to get through versus what you have to do in LA. [There are] incentives in LA for providers and government to work together to provide housing; that's absent here." *—Black Man, Service Provider at Antelope Valley listening session*

"The bus transportation system is not as good as LA. People in the Antelope Valley can't get to appointments on the weekend. They either have to call an Uber or walk for miles." *—Black Man, Service Provider at Antelope Valley listening session*

Appendix II

SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSION AND FOCUS GROUP INSIGHTS

"Clients would literally have to get bussed way out there [for services]; it's a two- to three-hour bus ride." —*Black Man, Service Provider at Antelope Valley listening session*

"We have been trying to get [health care] services that they have in Los Angeles. USC and UCLA won't travel up here, or they'll stop at Santa Clarita. No one will come up here, so we try to do what we can in collaboration with the rest of the providers." —*Latina Woman, Service Provider at Antelope Valley listening session*

What Is Working or What Might Work Better

Programs That Provide Employment Opportunities

"Vocational programs: we have a vocational program that uses technology to help women who are low-income or are homeless. [We have changed our recruitment model to bring in people who might otherwise be left out. We have found] that when you put them in an environment that is safe, creative, nurturing, and supportive with wrap-around services, they become empowered to move forward themselves." —*White Woman, Service Provider at South Central listening session*

"I remember Job Corps used to have a program where they would train you. I know they are building a school on Vermont and we need some like a Job Corps where they house you, train you, and give you several certifications while you are there." —*Black Woman, Community Member experiencing homelessness at South Central listening session*

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SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSION AND FOCUS GROUP INSIGHTS

"We currently have a point of view that focuses on their deficits, and if we change that perspective we create more training programs where people are welcomed and feel included." —*Black Woman, Community Member with lived experience at South Central listening session*

"If you are trained and have employment, your self-esteem goes up. When you don't have employment, your pride —even though you are out there hustling on the streets —you are still losing your self-esteem until you get employment. We, the Downtown Neighborhood Council, did a job fair last month. I had over 31 different agencies come out and table. Out of those 31 agencies, over 600 people out of Skid Row came to the park, and over 100 of them got a job. So, you can't say employment is not important." —*Black Man, Advocate with lived experience at Skid Row listening session*

Affordable Housing with Supportive Services

"The affordable housing programs with supportive services is what helped me get out [of homelessness]. I have been personally housed going on two years —and it wasn't a quick one. Sometimes we have to be willing to sit down in the place, especially [interim] housing, and that process took four to six months." —*Black Woman, Outreach Worker with lived experience at Venice/Santa Monica listening session*

Transitional Housing Programs for Youth

"What seems to work with probation and foster youth once they turn 18 is independent living programs. They are all clamoring for it as soon as they turn 18 because these are programs that often pay them to be there. And they get an academic advisor, some that are just going to help them get financial aid and get into school. They provide them with all of the school materials they need. They have an employment specialist that goes and helps them get a job, and they go through career training. They also have a therapist who addresses their mental health issues and their substance abuse issues. They are given bus passes, so they can get from wherever they need to go around the county and the city. So, they address these students' issues holistically. They provide education resources, employment resources, therapy resources, and they are paying the kids to be there. The kids do not have to focus on how they are going to live or where they are going to eat. They can just focus 100%, like any other kid who is in college or trying to live and being supported by a parent. The independent living programs for kids seems to be doing really well." —*White Woman, Service Provider at South Central listening session*

"For transitional-aged youth, it is important to continue funding transitional age housing. We have been able to support youth in a way that when they pay their rent, which is one-third of their income, it goes into a savings account, and they get all of that money back. We also have been able to extend how long they are in the program, from two years to three years. So, imagine paying your income for two to three years and being able to get it back for when it is time to move into an apartment or move out. We also have education specialists, workforce development. Having that three years with all the that support sets the groundwork for them to be able to succeed. That is a positive from what I see Measure H had been able to do." —*Man, Service Provider at South Central listening session*

"I could have used the same style of support [wrap around services for youth]. And the difficult piece is that as an adult it is challenging, and it is uncomfortable to tell some to treat me like you treat the youth because that is where I really am. We should look across so that everyone can get the support and be lifted." —*Black Woman, Community Member with lived experience South Central listening session*

Better Staff Training and Client Care

"Very well-trained outreach workers, and the second thing that I know that works is very well-run crisis housing. Those things actually do work." —*Black Man, Former Service Provider Administrator at South Central listening session*

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SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSION AND FOCUS GROUP INSIGHTS

"How you treat clients matters. The more dignity and respect. We all need tenderness. We think of kids, we think of treating them with tenderness, we think of transition-aged youth. We all need love and tenderness. That does transform the heart. I used to run and I developed a transitional living program and it was all based on love folks with our whole heart and expecting a lot from them. I do believe philosophically, that heals people. You can't expect that from employees, if you don't treat your employees well. If you empower and respect your employees, it trickles down to the clients. It is transformative, and it works." *—Black woman, Service Provider Administrator at South Central listening session*

Improved Communication and Coordination

"I think we need to do public service announcements just like we did when we had the droughts and how we had commercials and the billboards up. I think we need to have community education, so people can be educated that these homeless people are not just bums on the street. They are people that made bad choices in life, but these are human beings. This could be your neighbor that is about to lose her house and be homeless. This could be your daughter's teacher that lives in her car. So, I think money needs to be spent on marketing. Once people understand the problem, then you can put a solution forward." *—Black Woman, Service Provider at South Central listening session*

"There are lot of small entities that are not as well-known; it is helpful is to have a lot more community centers host forums like this. There are a lot of people who are newly homeless; they are not connected, and shame keeps them from asking. If you are out in the community and have a venue which they can come, it breaks the isolation for them." *—Black Woman, Service Provider at South Central listening session*

"I am a nurse executive that just recently retired. I ran six hospitals in the greater Los Angeles and San Fernando Valley. The coordination of all of the various services is really complex for those who seek healthcare, even for us to refer them into the agency. There is so much going on and I like the idea of the smaller community centers, but how do we coordinate and understand these [multiple] points of access for those who have no place to go?" *—Retired White Woman, at West Adams listening session*

"I just want to offer one thing that we did in the Bay Area. I am originally from LA but I was in the Bay Area for like four years with our organization. We created a community advisory board; the community advisory board was from the people. It was formerly incarcerated folks making up this community advisory board. . .that is how you coordinate. You create these types of coalitions and advisory boards, and we meet all of the time. They have regular meetings and all of these smaller organizations come, and we figure it out. Alameda Valley created a manual together with the different organizations for how to address certain issues." *—Black Man, Service Provider, formerly incarcerated, at South Central listening session*

Improved Service Delivery Models

"The intensive case management model has really worked well because it is not a pretty picture. [There is a need for someone to serve as] an advocate that is teaching you along the way, sometimes taking baby steps. Even teaching them how to use a microwave; those are baby steps; those are life skills. It works for us, but we need more. It is not enough." *—Latina Woman, Service Provider at South Central listening session*

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SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSION AND FOCUS GROUP INSIGHTS

"I work with the formerly incarcerated. We house the formerly incarcerated. We are talking about people that have served 20 or 30 years in prison and are coming home. They need wraparound services. In many cases, they couldn't read or write, or they didn't have a GED when they came home and now they got that. They got training or now that they are certified to do something to empower themselves—that programming has to be there. It can't be just give them a house or give them some place to go. They have to have other services that meet their needs so they can get out there and feel empowered. Because they still feel hopeless with a voucher in their hand because they can't help themselves." *—Black Man, Service Provider, formerly incarcerated at South Central listening session*

"What I have seen that works is a program for homeless vets. That is what I have seen work. Somebody needs to follow what they are doing. They are getting employed; they are being educated; they are becoming homeowners." *—Black Woman, Veteran, Service Provider at South Central listening session*

"DMH full services partnership. I think they help the population getting out of jail. They have coaching programs; they have weekly group counseling or post-modern coaching. I believe that really, really works." *—Black Woman, Community Member experiencing homelessness at South Central listening session*

"More outreach to homeless people. Start doing preventative measures by conducting outreach to communities. Advocating for legislation and making sure schools are well funded. Focus on policy and legislation that are key to be focused on now." *—Black Woman at Venice listening session*

"Homeless incentive program provides landlords with incentives to hold their units, so we can provide them with direct referrals. We have housed over 900 families in Los Angeles County. We helped roll out the program along with other housing authorities. We give the owners incentives to hold their vacant units. They are funded through Measure H." *—Black Woman,* Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles *representative at Antelope Valley listening session*

What We Learned from Young Adults Experiencing Homelessness

(Paraphrased from Young Adults serving on HYFLA)

On Racism, Discrimination, and Dismantling Racism

Institutionalized Racism

The country is set up in a way that doesn't support the Black community or the advancement of the Black community. The system oppresses people of color. There is a difference between wanting to help Caucasian people experiencing homelessness and Black people. White people are prioritized over others.

Institutional racism is how the county is set up. There is no support for the advancement of Black people. It is a tool to continue to oppress Black people.

Discrimination

I have gone to see an apartment after one of my White peers went, and I was told I would have to pay a higher rent.

We need to understand the legacy of racism and its impact on society today. Need to understand how redlining pushed Blacks into South Central Los Angeles and how there is no accumulation of wealth.

Appendix II

SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSION AND FOCUS GROUP INSIGHTS

We experience macroaggressions from a lot of these service providers, and they are quick to use our housing against us.

On Programs and Services

The current model is not a 'human-centered design.' It is more about completing a checklist vs. building the capacity of people.

Organizations need Black people to seek services in order to obtain funding. But some of these organizations are not necessarily the appropriate providers and do not understand or have training on how to best serve Black people.

The system wants Black people to be at risk and vulnerable in order to obtain services. Individuals who are deemed 'able bodied' are discriminated against [by not being prioritized for services].

There is no conversation as to what the youth person needs, the programs are prescriptive. If I am competent and succeeding, don't take away resources because of it. Ask what we need rather than assume what we need.

Organizations try to steer youth towards a particular activity. They want to place youth in already funded programs.

Community-based restorative practices should be created for domestic violence, criminal justice, school incidents, etc. The city of Los Angeles should re-direct police funding to youth violence prevention programs.

There is a trend to exploit youth in this work. Things like paying youth for their time. Since service providers know youth are homeless, they provide gift cards/movie tickets but no incentive or resources to stabilize their lives. Also have agencies that hold housing over the youth's head by demonstrating power over the youth. Sad that agencies are receiving a lot of money, but on the floor, the youth don't see it.

There is a need for trauma-informed care, mental illness care. People with mental health could die because there is no trauma-informed care, police don't know how to handle mental illness or traumatized people.

It took nine months to help find housing —response time needs to be addressed.

Lack of accountability for agencies in terms of administering programs. How do we know if they are doing a good job?

Agencies need equity training and must understand the difference between equity and equality. Equity can tear down racial disparities if more agencies are operating under that lens. There needs to be cultural competency, racial equity, and trauma-informed care trainings offered by Black trainers.

Hire more Black staffers for shelters. Most staff are White and straight out of college. There should be more Black staffers with lived experience.

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SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSION AND FOCUS GROUP INSIGHTS

Hire more Black staff at higher levels of power at agencies to influence policies. Having more Black people at the table to make changes is an important step. Too often POC [people of color] staff are there to just fill a quota. They are put in case management positions to fill a quota and for representation.

On the Intersection of LGBTQ Discrimination and Race

Black families are pushing kids out of their homes because of their sexual orientation or identity.

Black and Queer people are experiencing homelessness because of [race and sexual identity] intersections. Some LBTQ youth are not accepted by their families, have mental health issues, and may have experienced incarceration.

There are not a lot of housing programs for LGBT youth. There is only one place I know that offers LGBT housing and they are not welcoming to Black youth. I went there and they saw me as a threat. Everyone looked at me as if they were scared of me. I walked in that one time for help and never went back.

I was staying at a shelter in Hollywood and had to do everything for myself. I felt exploited and tokenized because of my age.

I was in a Hollywood shelter and I was looking into a work program. I asked my case manager, but I didn't receive any support, so I looked on my own. I spent weeks researching programs and I found this program all the way in Long Beach, so [I] spent hours getting there to see the van of the shelter I was staying at in their parking lot! My caseworker failed me! Once I was accepted into the work program, the shelter then tried to take credit!

There is no safe place for Black transgender youth. Services are denied based on racial and gender discrimination.

The LGBTQ community is White dominated. They are always featuring their success. Intersectionality (Black and gender) is problematic.

Institutionalized racism. Within the queer community, lots of representation of White identities and their success instead of Black identities. It can definitely affect a person's success. If you don't fit the status quo, you won't see the success. Difficult to find support groups, mental health, and housing.

Only one place that offers LGBT specific housing. That agency is a powerhouse in LA, and they receive a lot of philanthropic funds. When it comes to distributing resources, the environment is not welcoming to me. As a Black male, you are expected to be vulnerable in a certain way, expected to be incarcerated, and if not, you're not as vulnerable as you need to be. Being a Black transgender man, there is no safe place. Places that are supposed to be safe are not safe. I am denied services based on my gender identity and the fact that I'm Black is another layer on that. I walked into the agency and was asked if I was a drug user. What is my mental capacity? The more acute, the more willing they were to help. I felt uncomfortable.

On Transitional Living Programs and Assessment

There are a lot of Transitional Living Programs (TLP). Overall, these programs discriminate against able-bodied people. "Since you can do this, go figure it out on your own." For people put into TLP, they are placed in an internship or temporary job and it's like recidivism. They were not given sufficient support and it's back to square one for the youth. We need longer, more sustained support, including life skills support.

We need more preparation to be independent of the system. For the most part, there are no real steps to assist with Black young adults that are receiving services to sustain the independence. It's like, "You've reached 25, you've been here two years, what do you have saved, what's next?" There needs to be more support over the course of transitional services. We should have navigators to assist with securing housing and confronting housing discrimination.

TLPs should link and connect youth to other programs. Don't focus on money and funding, focus on what youth need first. They are not human-centered. It's more about money for the bodies.

TLP is saying you now have to do everything on your own and views it as moving towards independence. If you need a medical device, TLP won't pay for it because the young adult has money saved even though the savings are needed for living independently.

I am currently hopping from TLP to TLP, when I should be in housing. Agencies give up on youth so quickly but it makes for a poor transition. You have nowhere to go from age 23–25 because you've been hopping from shelter to shelter.

Assessments / Tools

There seems to be a concern that funding will be lost because a client is not of high enough acuity. Most people who score higher have been homeless multiple times. We want stability and want to avoid being homeless multiple times.

You are telling me, I have to live on the streets longer or develop a mental illness before I can get housing services?

Appendix III: Community Listening Session and Focus Group Schedules

Community Listening Session Schedule

Friday, May 18, 2018 | 3:00–5:00 PM
James Wood Community Center, 400 E 5th Street, Los Angeles

Thursday, June 7, 2018 | 3:00–5:00 PM
Broadway Manchester Service Center, 8525 S Broadway, Los Angeles

Thursday, June 14, 2018 | 6:30–8:30 PM
Holman United Methodist Church, White Hall, 3320 W Adams Blvd, Los Angeles

Friday, July 13, 2018 | 9:30–11:30 AM
St. Joseph Center, 204 Hampton Drive, Venice

Friday, July 13, 2018 | 9:30–11:30 AM
Harbor Interfaith Services, 670 W 9th Street, San Pedro

Wednesday, August 15, 2018 | 10:00 AM–12:00 PM
Chimbole Cultural Center, Manzanita Ballroom, 38350 Sierra Hwy, Palmdale

Community Report-Back Session Schedule

Tuesday, September 25, 2018 | 6:30-9:00 PM
Holman United Methodist Church, White Hall, 3320 W Adams Blvd., Los Angeles

Wednesday, September 26 | 2:00-5:00 PM
James Wood Community Center, 400 E 5th Street, Los Angeles

Focus Group and Interview Schedule

Friday, May 4, 2018: Homeless Youth Forum of Los Angeles
LAHSA

Friday, May 4, 2018: Lived Experience Advisory Board
LAHSA

Wednesday, June 13, 2018: Re-entry Service Provider
Timelist Group

Tuesday, August 14, 2018: Mental Health Service Providers
Southern California Health & Rehabilitation Program (SCHARP) Oasis House

Appendix III

COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSION AND FOCUS GROUP SCHEDULES

Thursday, August 16, 2018: Mental Health Clients
Southern California Health & Rehabilitation Program (SCHARP) Oasis House

Thursday, August 16, 2018: Employment Training Provider
St. Joseph Center

Friday, August 17, 2018: Senior Employment Specialist
People Assisting the Homeless (PATH)

Tuesday, September 11, 2018: Administrator and Program Manager
Los Angeles Black Worker Center

Friday, September 14, 2018: Program Directors
Los Angeles County Department of Workforce Development, Aging, and Community Services

Friday, September 21, 2018: Employment Service Providers
The Church Without Walls
The Hospitality Training Academy
UNITE HERE

Appendix IV: Committee Schedule and Meeting Topics

Monday, April 19, 2018 | 1:00-5:00 PM
Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, 811 Wilshire Blvd, Los Angeles
- Orientation
- Training on Implicit Bias & Racial Equity Toolkit Application

Meeting Agenda & Supporting Documents: www.lahsa.org/documents?id=1934-4-16-18-ad-hoc-committee-on-bpeh-agenda-supporting-documents.pdf

Monday, May 21, 2018 | 2:00-4:00 PM
Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, 811 Wilshire Blvd, Los Angeles
- Introduction to LAHSA & the Coordinated Entry System (CES)
- Examining Equity in the Homeless Service Delivery System through Data

Meeting Agenda & Supporting Documents: www.lahsa.org/documents?id=2113-05-21-18-ad-hoc-committee-on-black-people-experiencing-homelessness.pdf

Monday, June 18, 2018 | 1:00-4:30 PM
Constituent Service Center of Councilmember Marqueece Harris-Dawson,
8475 S. Vermont Avenue, Los Angeles
- Re-entry & Criminal Justice System Involvement

Meeting Agenda & Supporting Documents: www.lahsa.org/documents?id=2091-6-18-18-ad-hoc-committee-bpeh-agenda-supporting-documents.pdf

Monday, July 16, 2018 | 1:00-4:30 PM
A.C. Bilbrew Public Library, 150 E. El Segundo Blvd, Los Angeles
- Child Welfare System Involvement

Meeting Agenda & Supporting Documents: www.lahsa.org/documents?id=2168-7-16-18-ad-hoc-committee-bpeh-agenda-supporting-documents.pdf

Monday, August 20, 2018 | 1:00-4:30 PM
James Wood Community Center, 400 E. 5th Street, Los Angeles
- Coordinated Entry System (CES) Outreach, Assessment, and Interim Housing

Meeting Agenda & Supporting Documents: www.lahsa.org/documents?id=2250-8-20-18-ad-hoc-committee-bpeh-meeting-agenda-supporting-documents.pdf

Appendix IV

COMMITTEE SCHEDULE AND MEETING TOPICS

Monday, September 17, 2018 | 1:00-5:00 PM
LA Trade Tech College, WorkSource Center, Rm 106 in Tom Bradley Hall,
400 W. Washington Blvd, Los Angeles

- Employment & Workforce Development
- Permanent Housing

Meeting Agenda & Supporting Documents: www.lahsa.org/documents?id=2290-9-17-18-ad-hoc-committee-on-black-people-experiencing-homelessness-agenda-supporting-documents.pdf

Monday, October 22, 2018 | 1:00-4:30 PM
LA Child Guidance Clinic, 3787 S. Vermont Avenue, Los Angeles

- Final review of recommendations

Meeting Agenda & Supporting Documents: www.lahsa.org/documents?id=2598-10-22-18-ad-hoc-bpeh-agenda-supporting-documents.pdf

Appendix V: Racial Equity Toolkit

The Racial Equity Toolkit used to guide the Committee's work was created in 2008 by the Seattle Office for Civil Rights' Race and Social Justice Team. The purpose of the Toolkit is to "center race" with the goal of eliminating racial disparities and advancing racial equity. The Racial Equity Toolkit is a process and set of guiding questions the Committee implemented to inform and assess how the homeless service delivery system's policies, programs, and budgetary decisions benefitted and/or burdened Black people experiencing homelessness. More information can be found here: www.seattle.gov/civilrights/programs/race-and-social-justice-initiative/racial-equity-toolkit.

The Toolkit process as applied by the Ad Hoc Committee on Black People Experiencing Homelessness, is outlined in detail below.

STEP ONE: SETTING RACIAL EQUITY OUTCOMES

Set key community outcome for racial equity analysis. The Committee chose to conduct a racial equity analysis to better understand the racial inequities impacting Black people experiencing homelessness, and the unique barriers Black people may face when trying to exit homelessness by accessing services and affordable housing. The Committee chose the following outcome to guide its work: **Eliminate racial disparities impacting Black people experiencing homelessness by ensuring racial equity within the homeless crisis response system.**

STEP TWO: INVOLVE STAKEHOLDERS AND ANALYZE DATA

Gather information from community, staff, service providers, and experts on how the current homeless crisis response system benefits or burdens the community it attempts to serve. The Committee gathered data and involved stakeholders to better understand factors contributing to racial inequities and barriers that may uniquely impact Black people at risk of or currently experiencing homelessness. In this process, the Committee endeavored to be people-focused and data-informed. Both qualitative and quantitative data were understood to be equally valuable and integral to advancing improved outcomes. The information gathered includes both qualitative community input (including feedback from service providers and youth and adults with lived experience of homelessness) as well as quantitative data and analysis presented and/or provided to the Committee throughout the course of the Toolkit process.

To complete this analysis, the Committee engaged a broad range of stakeholders, including homeless service providers, representatives from local elected offices, representatives from key City and County agencies, as well as people with lived experience, community activists, and faith leaders through its monthly public meetings and community listening sessions. The Committee intentionally chose to hold its meetings and community listening sessions in neighborhoods with high concentrations of Black people experiencing homelessness (Skid Row, South Los Angeles, San Pedro, Venice/Santa Monica and the Antelope Valley). Community listening sessions, focus groups, and individual interviews considered racial impacts and other challenges related to the current homeless service delivery system.

STEP THREE: DETERMINE BURDENS AND/OR BENEFITS

Analyze issues for impacts and alignment with racial equity outcomes. Based on the qualitative community input and quantitative data gathered, the Committee identified the benefits and/or burdens associated with current and anticipated policies, programs, and service provision. To complete this step, the Committee reviewed data presented by experts and community members during the monthly meetings, while also incorporating each member's expertise and experience on these topics.

Appendix V

RACIAL EQUALITY TOOL KIT

STEP FOUR: RECOMMENDATIONS

Develop strategies to create greater racial equity or minimize unintended consequences. At the conclusion of this process, the Committee developed a set of recommendations for the LAHSA Commission, the County, the City, homeless service providers, and other stakeholders. Recommendations emerged from Committee member discussions and community input and were vetted by community members through report-back sessions. Committee members then formed working groups, according to their specific areas of expertise, to further refine and prioritize recommendations. These recommendations aim to ensure that a commitment to advancing racial equity, examining racial barriers, and meeting the unique needs of Black people experiencing homelessness is at the forefront of policy and budgetary decision-making, particularly throughout the implementation of the City and County's comprehensive homeless strategies.

STEP FIVE: EVALUATE. RAISE RACIAL AWARENESS. BE ACCOUNTABLE.

Track impacts on Black people experiencing homelessness over time. Continue to communicate with and involve stakeholders. Document progress and unresolved issues. Commission will provide oversight to ensure that appropriate steps are taken to implement the recommendations that have emerged from this Committee's work. Some recommendations fall squarely within LAHSA's purview, while other recommendations will require advocacy and collaboration with appropriate agencies within the County and City governments. The LAHSA Commission will direct its advocacy efforts to elected officials, agency leaders and other offices and individuals in support of recommendations that require legislative action or countywide/citywide adoption.

LAHSA will be responsible to develop a plan to efficiently and effectively evaluate recommendations and report on progress, challenges, and impacts on racial equity over time. While not every recommendation will bear success, acknowledging any barriers and considering other strategies based on additional information are important aspects of the evaluation and reporting functions.

To ensure internal and public accountability, LAHSA will provide public updates on progress to the LAHSA Commission and will work to engage community organizations, service providers and community members throughout the process of recommendation implementation.

STEP SIX: REPORT BACK

Share information learned from current Committee racial equity analysis as well as future efforts to eliminate racial disparities that impact Black people experiencing homelessness. LAHSA and the Committee began their report-back efforts before the conclusion of its analysis by conducting community report-back sessions in September 2018, at two different community locations (Skid Row and South Los Angeles). The purpose of these meetings was to inform community stakeholders of the Racial Equity Toolkit process to date, to share draft recommendations, and to seek feedback related to the draft recommendations. Information gleaned from these events was shared with members of the Committee for their consideration before final recommendations were approved and offered to the Commission.

LAHSA is committed to developing a communication plan that provides critical information to stakeholders and to the community at large about its racial equity advancement and challenges, progress on the implementation of the Committee's recommendations, and its ongoing efforts to eliminate racial disparities that impact Black people experiencing homelessness.

Appendix VI: Recommended Reading and Viewing Materials

Racial Justice and Incarceration

Alexander, M. (2010). *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New York, NY: The New Press.

Bain, B. (2012). *The Ugly Side of Beautiful: Rethinking Race and Prison in America*. Chicago, IL: Third World Press.

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Appendix VII: Glossary of Key Terms

Access
The entry point or process that allows persons experiencing a housing crisis to be engaged and potentially enroll in a crisis response service in the Los Angeles County CES. Access is a function of CES performed by a CES participating agency with the goal of initiating or continuing contact with prospective CES participants, such as creating a record in HMIS, or starting the standard assessment process.

Assessment
The stage in the coordinated entry process when coordinated entry workers gather information about a person presenting to the crisis response system to understand and document participants' housing related needs, history, and preferences. Assessment includes a standardized set of questions and tools to document the barriers the person faces to resolving their homelessness and any characteristics that might make them more vulnerable while homeless. Assessment is often a progressive process; that is, multiple layers of information are collected over time as persons progress through the coordinated entry process.

CES Policy Council
The CES Policy Council is made up of members who have knowledge of resources and system decision points, including stakeholders such as service providers, County health agencies, public housing authorities (PHAs), persons with lived experience of homelessness, and the philanthropic community. The group meets monthly to review and revise or approve policies and procedures for the Los Angeles County CES.

CES Triage Tools
The CES Policy Council is made up of members who have knowledge of resources and system decision points, including stakeholders such as service providers, County health agencies, public housing authorities (PHAs), persons with lived experience of homelessness, and the philanthropic community. The group meets monthly to review and revise or approve policies and procedures for the Los Angeles County CES.

Chronic Homelessness
A single individual (or head of household) must have a disabling condition and have either experienced literal homelessness for more than a year or experienced homelessness four or more times in the last three years, adding up to 12 months.

Continuum of Care (CoC)
Continuum of Care refers to a regional or local planning body that coordinates housing and services funding for homeless families and individuals. The Los Angeles Continuum of Care (LA CoC) includes all of Los Angeles County except for the cities of Pasadena, Glendale, and Long Beach.

Appendix VII

GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

Coordinated Entry System (CES)

Facilitates the coordination and management of a crisis response system's resources that allows users to make data-informed decisions from available information to efficiently and effectively connect people to interventions that will rapidly end their homelessness. CES seeks to ensures that the highest need, most vulnerable persons in the community are prioritized and matched to available housing and connected to supportive services and that available resources are used equitably.

Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) practices a uniform service delivery model to improve child safety, reduce reliance on out-of-home care, and increase child and family well-being.

Department of Health Services (DHS)

The Department of Health Services (DHS) is an integrated system of providers, clinics, and hospitals that streamlines the provision of timely and compassionate health care for the people of Los Angeles County.

Department of Public Social Services (DPSS)

The Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) is a department of the County of Los Angeles. The mission of the Los Angeles County DPSS is to serve the community through programs established to alleviate hardship and promote health, personal responsibility, and economic independence. Services include health care coverage through the Medi-Cal Program; CalFresh Nutrition Assistance; CalWORKs financial, homeless, employment and supportive services assistance via Welfare-to-Work programs; In-Home Supportive Services; and financial, homeless, and employment assistance to indigent adults through the General Relief program.

Fair Housing Act (FHA)

The Fair Housing Act protects people from discrimination when they are renting or buying a home, getting a mortgage, seeking housing assistance, or engaging in other housing-related activities. The FHA applies to prospective tenants looking for housing and in-place tenants who already have housing. Additional protections apply to federally-assisted housing. The FHA is a core component of existing fair housing laws, which together prohibit discrimination in housing because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, physical and mental disabilities, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, marital status, immigration status, and source of income (excluding Section 8 housing choice vouchers). The FHA covers almost all housing, including some homeless interim housing and transitional housing; however, in very limited circumstances, the Act exempts owner-occupied buildings with no more than four units, single-family houses sold or rented by the owner without the use of an agent, and housing operated by religious organizations and private clubs that limit occupancy to members.

Families

A family is either a household that is comprised of at least one individual 18 years or older and at least one minor 17 years or younger or a household comprised of at least one member age 18-24 (Transition Age Youth) who cares for at least one other member under the age of 18.

Appendix VII

GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA)

The Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA), as one of the nation's largest and leading public housing authorities (PHAs), provides the largest supply of affordable housing to residents of the City of Los Angeles. HACLA owns and manages housing units and administers monthly housing assistance payments for individuals and families throughout the city.

Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles (HACoLA)

The Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles (HACoLA) is a federally funded agency responsible for administering housing assistance programs in the County of Los Angeles for eligible low-income families, people with disabilities, and seniors. HACoLA's jurisdiction includes all of the unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County and the 70 incorporated cities in Los Angeles County that do not have their own housing agencies.

Housing/Service Provider

Any agency providing housing or services to persons who are literally homeless or at imminent risk of literal homelessness within the Los Angeles Continuum of Care (LA CoC).

Housing and Community Investment Department (HCID)

The Housing and Community Investment Department (HCID) is a department of the City of Los Angeles that promotes livable and prosperous communities through the development and preservation of decent, safe, and affordable housing, neighborhood investment and social services.

Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

HMIS is a computerized data collection system designed to capture client information over time on the characteristics, service needs and accomplishments of homeless persons.

Homeless Youth Forum of Los Angeles (HYFLA)

The Homeless Youth Forum of Los Angeles (HYFLA) is a group of young people with lived experience of homelessness convened by LAHSA to facilitate authentic collaboration between youth and the homeless services system.

Implicit Bias

Biases people are usually unaware of and that operate at the subconscious level. Implicit bias is usually expressed indirectly.

Intake

Capturing basic client data into a database upon entry into a program (e.g., capturing and loading required data to HMIS upon entry to emergency shelter). This process should also begin to identify a participant's service needs and lay the foundation for a housing plan to return the participant to stable housing.

Appendix VII

GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

Interim Housing

Interim Housing is an intervention that provides people experiencing homelessness with temporary housing intended to resolve their immediate experience of unsheltered homelessness, to connect participants to permanent housing opportunities in their communities, and to provide various other services. Interim Housing includes Crisis Housing, Winter/Seasonal Shelter, Bridge Housing, Recovery Bridge, Recuperative Care, Stabilization Housing, and Safe Haven programs.

Literal Homelessness

An individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. This may include those who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not meant for human habitation; are living in a publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state, and local government programs); or are exiting an institution where they have resided for 90 days or less and who resided in a shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution.

Lived Experience Advisory Board (LEAB)

The Lived Experience Advisory Board (LEAB) is an advisory group of adults with lived experience of homelessness convened by LAHSA to provide their perspective and expertise to enhance the homeless services system.

Outreach

Outreach services work to locate, identify, and build relationships with individuals experiencing homelessness who are unsheltered/street-based to engage them for providing immediate support, linkages to services, and connections with housing navigation resources aimed at ending homelessness.

Office of Diversion and Reentry (ODR)

The Office of Diversion and Reentry (ODR) was created by the Board of Supervisors in September 2015 to develop and implement countywide criminal justice diversion for persons with mental health and/or substance use disorders, including persons who are homeless.

Permanent Housing

Community-based housing without a designated length-of-stay in which formerly-homeless persons live as independently as possible. Permanent supportive housing (PSH) and rapid re-housing (RRH) are two primary types of permanent housing assistance provided by the Los Angeles County CES.

Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)

Permanent housing with long-term leasing or rental assistance paired with supportive services to assist families with children, individuals, and youth experiencing homelessness with high level of service needs. The goal of PSH is to assist participants with a long-term rental subsidy and/or supportive services.

Appendix VII

GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

Racial Equity Toolkit

Racial Equity Toolkit is a six-step process and set of guiding questions designed to guide, inform, and assess how policies, programs, and budgetary decisions burden and/or benefit Black people experiencing homelessness (see Appendix V).

Rapid Re-Housing (RRH)

A program type that connects families with children, individuals, and youth experiencing homelessness to permanent housing through a tailored package of assistance that may include the use of time-limited financial assistance and targeted supportive services. RRH programs help persons experiencing homelessness to solve the practical and immediate challenges of obtaining permanent housing while reducing the amount of time they experience homelessness, avoiding a near-term return to homelessness, and linking to community resources that enable them to achieve housing stability in the long term.

Re-entry

Re-entry refers to the process of people returning to the community upon exit from foster care, criminal justice facilities, mental health facilities, and in-patient hospitalization.

Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVs)

Section 8 is a federal housing choice voucher program for assisting very low-income families, the elderly, and the disabled to afford decent, safe, and sanitary housing in the private market. Housing assistance is provided on behalf of participants who can find their own housing, including single-family homes, townhouses and apartments. Housing choice vouchers are administered locally by public housing agencies (PHAs). The PHAs receive federal funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to administer the voucher program.

Sheltered

An individual or family living in a publicly or privately-operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state, and local government programs).

Structural Racism

A history and current reality of institutional racism across all institutions, combining to create a system that negatively impacts communities of color.

Transition age youth (TAY)

Individuals 18–24 years old.

Trauma-Informed Care (TIC)

Trauma-informed care is an approach to service provision that realizes the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery, recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and other involved with the system, responds by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices, and seeks to actively resist re-traumatization.

Appendix VII

GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

Unsheltered

An individual or family whose primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not meant for human habitation.

Vulnerability Index Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT)

The VI-SPDAT is an assessment tool that is utilized to recommend the level of housing supports necessary to resolve the presenting crisis of homelessness. Within those recommended housing interventions, the VI-SPDAT allows for prioritization based on presence of vulnerability.

Youth

Includes transition age youth (TAY), unaccompanied minors, and young families. TAY are individuals 18–24 years old; unaccompanied minors are individuals under the age of 18 without a parent or guardian, and young families are families comprised of at least one member age 18–24 who cares for at least one other member that is under the age of 18; all family members must be 24 years of age or younger.

Endnotes

1. The term "Black" was chosen intentionally in naming this committee and is used throughout this report as a term that is inclusive of African Americans as well as Black Africans and others who identify as Black.

2. Los Angeles County is comprised of 88 cities, including the city of Los Angeles, and approximately 120 unincorporated areas.

3. The Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count is an annual point-in-time estimate of the number of people experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles County.

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52. In March 2017, Los Angeles County voters approved Measure H, a quarter-cent sales tax expected to raise approximately $355 million annually for services and programs to prevent and combat homelessness in the region.