

MOTION

On July 13th, the Downtown Women's Center (DWC), in conjunction with the Los Angeles County Homeless Initiative, unveiled the findings from the 2022 Los Angeles County Women's Needs Assessment (Needs Assessment).

Written in partnership between DWC, the Urban Institute, and HUB for Urban Initiatives, the report - which was based on surveys completed by 580 individuals and listening sessions with nearly 100 women from across all eight Service Planning Areas (SPAs) in Los Angeles County - represents the single most extensive research effort ever conducted to understand the unique needs of unaccompanied women, who are experiencing homelessness without children or other dependents.

Per the 2022 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count, there were 14,403 unaccompanied women - constituting 68% of all female-identifying individuals experiencing homelessness - without stable housing in the Los Angeles Continuum of Care (CoC).

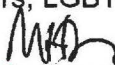
Amongst the most striking themes from the report is the emphasis on safety, and its relative absence, for unaccompanied women both experiencing unsheltered homelessness and those moving through the rehousing system. Safety was one of the single most important criteria for housing, and the most common barrier to accessing shelter cited by respondents was concerns for personal safety. These findings are particularly salient in light of the fact that 90% of respondents noted some history of victimization in their lifetimes.

The report also uplifted the pernicious nexus of domestic and intimate partner violence (DV/IPV) and homelessness. The most common reason for leaving permanent and stable housing, cited by 29% of respondents, was DV/IPV.

The City has taken important steps to better infuse a gender equity lens into its homeless response systems, including its recognition of unaccompanied women as a unique homeless subpopulation and the dramatic success of Project Safe Haven to house 3,000 DV/IPV survivors during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. This Needs Assessment, however, points to the yawning gaps in our rehousing and homeless services systems when it comes to addressing the unique needs of historically-overlooked subpopulations.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council instruct the Community Investment and Families Department (CIFD) and the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) to report back within 90 days on recommendations to enhance City programs currently serving female-identifying individuals experiencing homelessness and survivors of domestic/intimate partner violence (DV/IPV), based on the findings of the 2022 Los Angeles County Women's Needs Assessment.

I FURTHER MOVE that City Council instruct CIFD, LAHSA, and the Los Angeles Housing Department (LAHD) report back within 90 days on any current protocols or requirements regarding client/resident safety at City-funded shelter, interim housing, and permanent housing facilities, and to prepare recommendations for increasing safety measures, with an emphasis on non-punitive efforts, that account for the specific needs of DV/IPV survivors, LGBTQIA+ individuals, and female-identifying individuals.


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