



EVALUATION OF THE Conrad N. Hilton Foundation Chronic Homelessness Initiative 2017 ANNUAL REPORT: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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Executive Summary

Chronic Homelessness Initiative: Phase II

Since 2010, the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation has been working on addressing homelessness in Los Angeles through its Chronic Homelessness Initiative strategy. Central to this Initiative is the idea that chronic homelessness can be eliminated through the successful creation and operation of permanent supportive housing (PSH), when those most vulnerable (people who are chronically homeless or homeless and medically fragile) can access and remain housed in those units. Starting in September 2011, the Foundation contracted with Abt Associates to evaluate its Initiative, with the goal of answering the overarching question: ***Is the Chronic Homelessness Initiative an effective strategy to end and prevent chronic homelessness in Los Angeles (LA) County?***

Now in Phase II of the Initiative, the Foundation actions are even more intertwined with the broader community; hence the evaluation is structured around measuring countywide progress in ending chronic homelessness, rather than examining a subset of actions specifically tied to Foundation action. Nonetheless, the Foundation is interested in critically examining its direct and indirect contributions and understanding how it can best advance local progress. The evaluation framework depicts the major areas the evaluation team have identified in which stakeholders must focus over the next five years to make a significant impact on the desired goal: political will, scaling up the housing and service resources, building a countywide prioritization system, and understanding the impact of inflow on the population.



The illustration reflects the notion that progress in any key strategy area is intertwined with and dependent on progress in any other. At the beginning of the Initiative, when ***political will*** was still minimal, the evaluation team expected that significant progress would need to be made in educating elected and public officials *before* progress could be made toward ***increasing resources*** and developing a pilot ***prioritization system***. Now that public and elected officials are invested in ending homelessness – and often leading the charge – the evaluation team no longer has an expectation of sequential progress. ***Instead, all forces will need to push with singular intensity toward the goal so as not to lose the momentum built in Phase I.***

This evaluation report provides a status update on **goals**, detailed updates in each **indicator** area, and initial perspectives on the effectiveness of the **Foundation's impact**. Each section includes key evaluation **recommendations** for community stakeholders to enhance progress, as well as recommendations for the Foundation to support that progress. This year's report focuses on the calendar year 2016, the first year of Phase II of the Initiative, and is primarily informed by interviews with local stakeholders and review of administrative records for that timeframe.

Major takeaways are summarized in the **Community Dashboard** on page *iv*.

Political Will

During Phase I of the Chronic Homelessness Initiative, the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation supported strategic education and advocacy with local, state, and federal public officials through several of its grantees and partnerships, including direct engagement and support to the United Way's "Home For Good" partnership to end homelessness. As the Initiative entered Phase II, the community's momentum including efforts from Home For Good and community partners culminated in the development and adoption of joint City and County homeless strategies and significant ballot measures to fund them.

Recommendations for the Community:

1. *Ensure implementation of the City and County plans are well organized, appropriately governed, and actively monitored so that the billions of dollars being invested achieve their intended purpose.*
2. *Hold public officials accountable for executing the City and County strategies, including siting PSH and other housing developments throughout the County.*
3. *Strategically combine local resources with state and federal resources to fully resource the City and County plans.*
4. *Create and implement a strategic communication plan to proactively inform the public about the efforts underway to implement the City and County plans and the time needed for results to become visible so public support for PSH and related efforts does not wane.*
5. *Develop a legislative strategy to influence state policymakers to protect at-risk subsidies and increase funding for PSH, including services.*

Scaling up the Resources

The population of people experiencing chronic homelessness in Los Angeles is larger than in past years and appears to be growing. In order to see dramatic reductions in this population, significantly more permanent supportive housing resources are needed to house those already chronically homeless as well as those at-risk of chronic homelessness. Over the next ten years, Proposition HHH, Measure H, No Place Like Home, and other new public funding streams give LA the opportunity to significantly scale up housing development and supportive services. To achieve the full impact of this local funding, supportive housing developers will also need to rely on federal funding for project-based rent subsidies and additional capital investments that are tied to federal policy (e.g. Low Income Housing Tax Credits), as well as Medicaid financing for health care and supportive services in housing.

This new development alone will not likely meet the need for PSH, nor meet it quickly enough. Providers will need to use federal and locally-funded subsidies to rent housing in the private market. The Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles and the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles have increased the allocation

of their Housing Choice Vouchers to people experiencing homelessness. In addition, the County Department of Health Services' Flexible Housing Subsidy Pool continues to expand local funding for housing subsidies. Tenant-based housing commitments allow the community to quickly increase the pace of placements, although housing providers are hampered by a shortage of modestly priced rental housing. Continued efforts to work on state-level affordable housing policy and funding are needed to address broader concerns around the limited rental housing supply and skyrocketing costs.

The community also has implemented several comprehensive service strategies, providing an opportunity to enhance the quality of services and housing retention rates in PSH. The Department of Health Services intensive case management services model uses a "whatever it takes" approach to providing services and payment for clients at different acuity levels as long as they need services in housing. Whole Person Care pilot programs also promise to provide integrated health, behavioral health, and housing support services for vulnerable populations. These models are expected to continue to influence the community approach to services.

Recommendations for the Community:

- 1. Adopt a system modeling approach and expand the housing gaps analysis to examine subpopulations, length of homelessness, type of housing interventions, and geographical regions.*
- 2. Work to ensure the pace of PSH development increases significantly by passing the LA City PSH Ordinance and continuing to provide special attention to PSH projects.*
- 3. Increase the availability of private market housing for PSH by supporting state or local legislation to prohibit landlord discrimination against voucher holders.*
- 4. Proactively align the funding needed for operating PSH and providing services to residents with the development process.*
- 5. Work with other partners in the affordable housing field to develop long-term solutions to improve affordability of the housing market in Los Angeles County for formerly homeless and low-income households, including state legislative action.*
- 6. Continue to support innovative solutions to obstacles that are hindering service providers through the Home For Good Funders Collaborative.*
- 7. Improve the accuracy and utility of the Housing Inventory Count (HIC). This resource has the potential to drive not only County-, City- and Service Planning Area (SPA)-wide planning, but also support SPA-level coordination among providers and ensure the current PSH stock is fully leveraged and the PSH pipeline is understood.*

Evaluation of the Chronic Homelessness Initiative: Community Dashboard for 2016

Goal: Secure commitments from local elected and public officials to implement the community plan

The countywide strategies to end homelessness reflect goals related to ending chronic homelessness	Public agencies and elected officials clearly define and delegate roles and responsibilities	Elected officials, public agencies, and the public invest in the community strategy to end homelessness
Rapid Progress	Suitable Progress	Suitable Progress

The City and County of Los Angeles each passed comprehensive, aligned strategies to address homelessness at the scale necessary

On Track

Goal: Leverage development funding to create additional PSH inventory

The countywide strategies define a PSH creation goal for new development, new subsidies, and turnover commitments	Decrease time from PSH predevelopment to permitting; increase utilization rates for PSH vouchers	The community secures funding commitments to scale up PSH inventory through development and subsidies
Suitable Progress	Suitable Progress	Rapid Progress



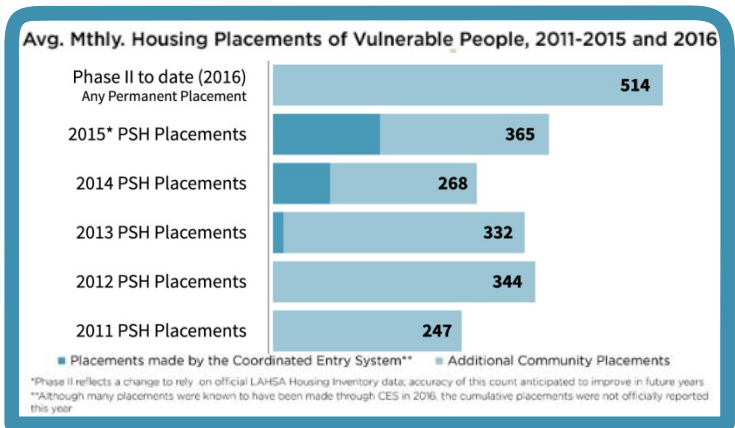
Goal: Secure as many new subsidies, subsidized units, and service commitments as needed to meet the defined goal (set at 14,708 in 2016)

The countywide strategies define a service resource goal based on both the PSH unit goals and an analysis of population needs	Providers seamlessly access local and countywide service resources to pair with housing	Public and private funders have committed resources to provide services for identified population needs
Rapid Progress	Suitable Progress	Suitable Progress



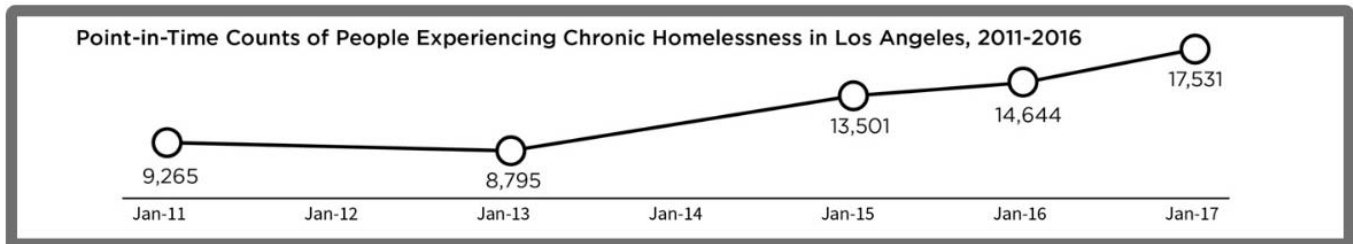
Goal: Place chronically homeless individuals in PSH through the countywide prioritization system at the rate needed to meet community goals

<p>The countywide strategies define a service resource goal based on both the PSH unit goals and an analysis of population needs</p>	<p>Providers seamlessly access local and countywide service resources to pair with housing</p>	<p>Public and private funders have committed resources to provide services for identified population needs</p>
<p>Suitable Progress</p>	<p>Limited Progress</p>	<p>Limited Progress</p>



Off Track

Goal: Decrease annual counts of individuals experiencing chronic homelessness



Off Track

Note: This report focuses on the calendar year 2016, the first year of Phase II of the Initiative, and is primarily informed by interviews with local stakeholders and review of administrative records for that timeframe.

Countywide Prioritization of the Most Vulnerable

A countywide prioritization system is a universal assessment and prioritization approach to providing homeless assistance. This simply means that every person experiencing homelessness is assessed and prioritized for access to housing and services based on a standardized set of criteria and identified level of need. The idea is that the most intensive resources are reserved for the people who need the most help, and those with limited needs are offered only nominal help to resolve their homeless experience.

Over the past several years the community has made significant investments in developing a countywide prioritization approach, as well as enhancing and supporting coordination at the regional and SPA levels to fully implement the approach. Resources from the Funders Collaborative, LAHSA, and the Foundation have supported dedicated staff positions to oversee coordination overall and within and across-SPA outreach teams and housing location and matching efforts. However, between the growing pains of the expansion process and the limits of the strained housing market in Los Angeles, people are not able to be placed as quickly as needed to reduce the count of people experiencing chronic homelessness. For those clients who do get housed, providers report that they struggle to provide appropriately intensive services to their increasingly vulnerable and chronically homeless client population, particularly when people move away from their SPA of origin to access more affordable housing.

Recommendations for the Community:

1. *Enhance centralized policy guidance for SPA-level CES implementation to SPA leads and partners to ensure shared understanding of CES staff roles, responsibilities, access, and authority over coordinating available resources.*
2. *Solicit feedback from people who have experienced homelessness to understand clients' interactions with the CES and how to streamline and make system navigation more user-friendly.*
3. *Ensure HMIS data, community-level reports, and housing inventory data are available and accessible to community providers, CES regional coordinators, funders, and policy makers to support the countywide prioritization process.*
4. *Adopt flexible models for funding long-term supportive services aligned with clients' service needs, such as the DHS intensive case management service model, instead of a "one-size fits all" approach that assume clients need the same intensity of services for the same duration of time.*
5. *Develop funding and service delivery models for serving clients who move from one SPA to another.*

Inflow into Chronic Homelessness

The increase in people becoming chronically homeless has a huge impact on the pace of ending chronic homelessness. In Phase I, the focus of the Initiative was to prioritize individuals experiencing chronic homelessness for PSH and where possible move people out of homelessness quickly and efficiently, to prevent their homelessness from becoming chronic. But rising inflow into chronic homelessness makes clear that preventing people from staying on the streets for long periods of time is also critical. Inflow into chronic homelessness is different from inflow into homelessness overall, and there is little research or best practices in targeting resources to individuals most likely to fall into chronic homelessness. During Phase II, the Foundation has set a goal to understand the issue and examine potential solutions to prevent the experience of people aging into chronic homelessness.

Recommendations for the Community:

- 1. Dedicate resources for crisis response for the unsheltered population based on countywide system modeling gaps analysis.*
- 2. Enhance partnerships with mainstream resource providers, scale up existing diversion programs, and advocate for improved housing, health care, and labor conditions for all populations.*

Over the past six years the Los Angeles community has made substantial progress in furthering support for and prioritizing permanent supportive housing as a solution to chronic homelessness. Specifically, over the past year, there have been great efforts around the community to obtain dedicated funding for supporting the community's homeless initiatives, developing new PSH units, and scaling up flexible programs to house highly vulnerable persons. Now that there is significant funding through Proposition HHH and Measure H to support the work needed to combat homelessness, political will, and public will, the community has more opportunity than ever to drive change towards ending and preventing chronic homelessness.



Photo Credit: Conrad N. Hilton Foundation