

Ad Hoc Committee on Black People Experiencing Homelessness

Presentation to the California Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council
Monday, October 26, 2020



LAHSA: A Joint Powers Authority of the City and County of Los Angeles

Joint Powers Authority: Governed by City and County of Los Angeles

- Allows for regional coordination across 85 cities, unincorporated areas

Pooling of resources, financial and physical, across the CoC—both between agencies and departments and between jurisdictions

Platform for execution of regional strategies

- Strategies funded: Rapid Re-Housing, Shelter, Mobile Showers, Prevention and Problem Solving, Outreach, Access Centers, and more

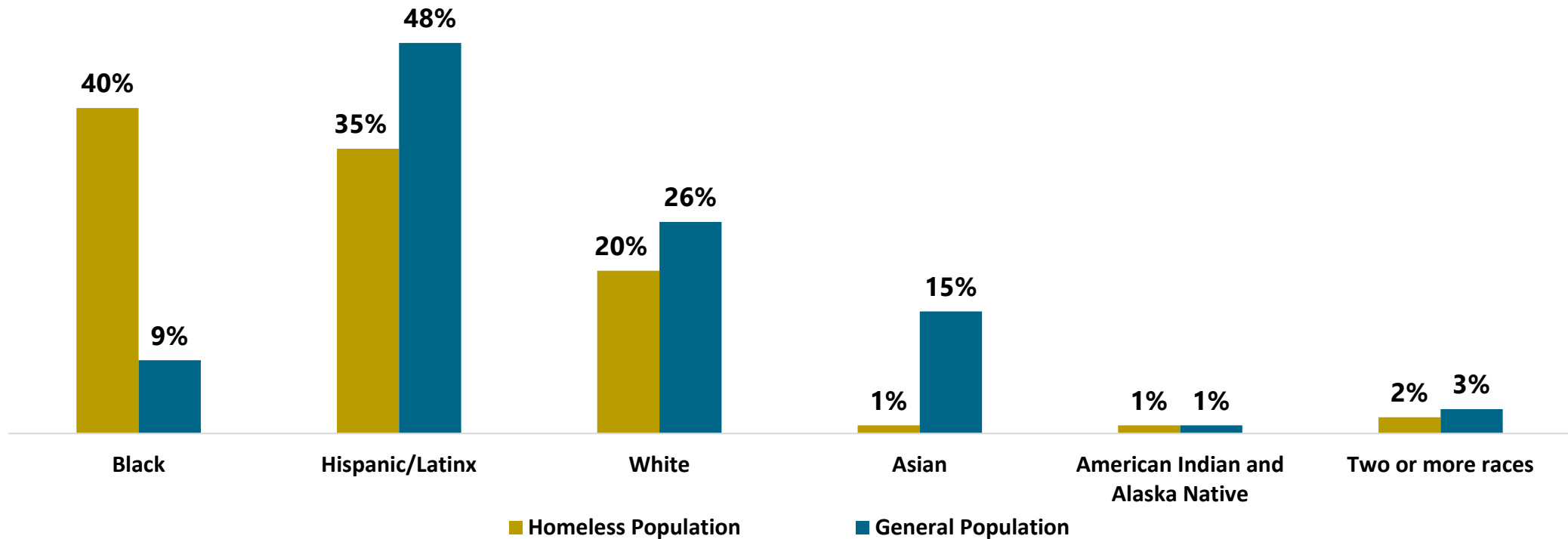
Over 21,500 housing placements in 2018—up from 11,900 in 2015

Budget Growth:

- 2015: \$64 M (mostly federal)
- 2020: \$400 M (local, state, and federal)

Prevalence of Black Homeless Population: 2017 PIT Count

**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) and excludes the Glendale and Pasadena Continuums of Care. General population data taken from the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2017 5-Year Estimates for Los Angeles County.

Committee Formation & Purpose

LAHSA Commission launched the Committee in April 2018 in response to:

1. The persistent overrepresentation of Black people experiencing homelessness, and
2. The impact of the Ad Hoc Committee on Women & Homelessness

The Committee's purpose 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.

Committee Members

LAHSA Commission Committee Members

Jacqueline Waggoner, Chair

Kelli Bernard, Vice-Chair

Committee Members

Dr. Va Lecia Adams Kellum

St. Joseph's Center

Chancela Al-Mansour

Housing Rights Center

Reverend Eddie Anderson

McCarty Memorial Christian Church

Dr. Jack Barbour

Southern California Health & Rehabilitation Program

Wendell Blassingame

Skid Row Resident/Veteran

Rachel Brashier

LA City Councilmember, Marqueece Harris-Dawson, Council District 8

Reverend 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 Experience

Pete White

Los Angeles Community Action Network

Dhakshike Wickrema

Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, Second District



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.

STEP 1. Set Outcomes

STEP 2. Involve Stakeholders and Analyze Data

STEP 3. Determine Benefit and/or Burden

STEP 4. Advance Opportunity or Minimize Harm

STEP 5. Evaluate, Raise Awareness, and Be Accountable

STEP 6. Report Back

Overview of the Process

The Committee engaged in monthly, thoughtful discussions exploring the impacts of structural and institutional racism.

Public meeting topics included:

- ✓ Criminal justice system involvement and re-entry
- ✓ Cost of living and lack of employment opportunities
- ✓ Foster care and child welfare system involvement
- ✓ Coordinated Entry System (CES) access and assessment
- ✓ Permanent housing and retention

The Committee developed 67 recommendations, informed by community leaders and advocates, service providers, policymakers, and people with lived experience of homelessness.

Key Insights & Recommendations:



Key Insights: Structural and Institutional Racism

Institutional barriers across agencies and systems must be dismantled to eliminate the racial disparities and systemic racism impacting Black people experiencing homelessness.

“African Americans are disproportionately 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

“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



Recommendations: Structural and Institutional Racism

Data & Research

Advocate for funding and engage researchers to use a racial equity lens in conducting qualitative and quantitative research driven by the community.

Cross-System Coordination

Establish a countywide racial equity initiative to provide enhanced coordination and oversight across systems of care.

Hiring & Training

Enhance and require ongoing trainings in areas such as implicit bias, cultural competency, and the impacts of discrimination against Black people.

Key Insights: Coordinated Entry System Access and Assessment

Including Black people with lived experience in program and policy design, implementation, evaluation, and service delivery, is critical to ensuring services meet the needs of Black people experiencing homelessness.

The quality of interim housing varies across facilities, and for some, living in a shelter can be a traumatizing or re-traumatizing experience.

Sufficient research has not been done to understand whether CES Triage Tools adequately measure vulnerability and acuity of Black people experiencing homelessness.



“They wanted to put 400 people that all had histories of trauma into one place.... Until homeless services really integrates trauma-informed care and deals 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***

Recommendations: Coordinated Entry System Access and Assessment

Data & Research

Conduct data analysis to evaluate the efficacy of the CES Triage Tools for capturing the vulnerabilities of Black participants experiencing homelessness and connecting them to appropriate housing and services.

Funding

Provide resources and training for nontraditional sites that frequently interact with people experiencing homelessness to provide direct, targeted services in coordination with CES and mainstream systems of care.

Programs & Services

Fund outreach teams to provide one-time financial assistance in preventing homelessness further upstream, by serving those with less acute needs.

Key Insights: Permanent Housing and Retention

Rates of return to homelessness are higher for Black people than other race groups, despite being housed in CES permanent housing at comparable rates.

There is a large gap between the number of affordable housing units available in LA County and the number of low-income households in need.

Racial discrimination prevents Black people from securing rentals of their choice. More sufficient protection from evictions is needed across LA County.



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

-Black Woman, South Los Angeles Listening Session Participant

Recommendations: Permanent Housing and Retention

Policy & Advocacy

Continue to advocate for policies and funding to support further affordable housing development, to address the deficit in supply of affordable housing.

Funding

Fund and prioritize efforts to establish a centralized system for accessing affordable housing and engage key community partners to enhance the cultural sensitivity and effectiveness of information dissemination.

Data & Research

Increase the quality of housing retention services in permanent supportive housing (PSH) and rapid re-housing (RRH) through training, data collection, and evaluation.

Progress to Date & Next Steps



LAHSA Progress to Date

Racial Equity Initiative

- ✓ Contracted with Dr. Ange-Marie Hancock Alfaro and the Racial Equity Team (RET) to lead implementation of the Committee's recommendations across Los Angeles County.
- ✓ Created a Director of Equity role to oversee design of racial equity programs and contracted with the National Innovation Service (NIS) to lead equity work until this role is filled.
- ✓ Entered second year of our Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) membership.

Equitable Contracting and Hiring Practices

- ✓ Completing procurement modernization and will recognize racial equity in contractor qualification process.
- ✓ Refined the agency's hiring practices and job requirements to expand the diversity of applicants.

Training and Capacity Building

- ✓ Developed internal staff trainings on holding inclusive conversations about race and equity. Increased resources to train decision-making bodies on implicit bias and cultural competency.

Enhance Data Collection Practices

- ✓ Infused robust race and ethnicity data collection, reporting, and transparency to monitor trends and adapt strategies to reduce and eliminate disproportionality.

Examine and Evaluate the CES Triage Tool

- ✓ Selected research partner in February. The project will inform refinements to advance equity, improve system flow, and increase confidence in the system to support appropriate service connections.

Feasibility Analysis

- The Racial Equity Team conducted a feasibility analysis to help prioritize a subset of the 67 recommendations for pilot implementation.
- Factors analyzed included time, cost, complexity, and public traction.
- The analysis identified 21 “Hot Start” or early win opportunities that will now be prioritized by the implementation workgroups.

Workgroups

- By December, the Racial Equity Team will convene a series of workgroups that are each focused on implementing a set of recommendations.
- Workgroup membership will include government agency collaborators, community-based organizations, and lived-expertise partners.