

# New Approaches To Combat Homelessness

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## Overview

- The LA County Homeless Initiative http://priorities.lacounty.gov/homeless/
- Video "This Was Our Home"
- Preventing Family Homelessness
- Increasing Homeless Family Income By Increasing Employment Opportunities
- Stabilizing Housing For Homeless Disabled Individuals
- Striving to Serve the Hardest To Serve: The Foundation For Excellent Homeless Services

# What is the Los Angeles County Homeless Initiative?

Board approval of a comprehensive plan to combat homelessness.

2. There are 47 Strategies, grouped into 6 major categories.

# What is the Los Angeles County Homeless Initiative?

3. Of the 47, there are 12 "Phase 1" initiatives that commenced implementation by June 2016. The remaining will be implemented by July 2017.

4. DPSS has the lead in 5 Strategies and play a support role in 25 Strategies.

## **Six Strategy Categories**

- A. Prevent Homelessness
- B. Subsidized Housing
- C. Increase Income
- D. Provide Case Management & Services
- E. Create a Coordinated System
- F. Increase Affordable/Homeless Housing

## **Six Strategy Categories**

- A. Prevent Homelessness
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- F. Increase Affordable/Homeless Housing

## Putting a Face on "The Homeless"

Video - "This Was Our Home"

https://vimeo.com/lacountynewsroom

# Homeless Prevention Program For Families

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#### PROGRAM GOAL:

 Develop and implement an integrated, comprehensive homeless prevention program for families that draws on the existing Homeless Family Solutions System (HFSS) model and builds upon current available County homeless prevention funding sources.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION DATE:**

- Phase 1: May 2016
- Phase 2: November 2016

#### **FUNDING:**

- \$5.0M one-time CalWORKs Fraud Incentives
- On-going Single Allocation

#### **POPULATION:**

#### **CalWORKs Families**

 1 or 2 parent (including needy or non-needy caretakers) households with at least one aided minor child receiving CalWORKs.

#### **Non-CalWORKs Families**

- 2 parent households with at least one unmarried minor child in the household that is either a U.S. born citizen, legal resident or a trafficking victim
- 1 parent, 2 parent, needy or non-needy caretaker households with a least one unmarried teenager (13yrs – 18yrs old) in the household that is either a U.S. born citizen, legal resident or a trafficking victim.

#### **OTHER ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA:**

- Families must be imminently at risk of homelessness.
- Families must be at or below 50% of the Area Medium Income (AMI)

# Building On Our Existing Program Model

# **Current CalWORKs Homeless Prevention Services:**

- State Permanent Homeless Assistance (Rent Arrearages)
- County Emergency Assistance to Prevent Eviction (EAPE)
- County Moving Assistance
- County 4-Month Rental Assistance

The above mentioned services are available in all 24 CalWORKs Offices across L.A. County and provided by Eligibility Staff.

# **Building On Our Existing Program Model (continued)**

# Current Homeless Prevention Pilot and Partnership with the Los Angeles County Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA):

- Case management
- Rental payments for rent arrears
- Time-limited Rental Assistance
- Security/Utility Deposits (new rental unit)
- Housing search and location
- Utility payments for utility arrears
- Moving Assistance
- Diversion assistance

The services listed above are provided through eight Family Solution Centers (FSCs) across the County. In addition to FSC case management staff, each FSC has collocated staff from other agencies which allows for quick, warm referrals to:

- Mental Health Clinicians;
- Substance Use Counselors;
- LA Unified School District Homeless Liaisons;
- Additional supportive services coordinated through community networks.

## **Outcomes for The Existing Program**

#### **December 2015 – June 2016:**

- 225 families were enrolled in the homeless prevention program:
  - 21% (47) CalWORKs WtW
  - 47% (105) CalWORKs Non-WtW
  - 32% (73) Non-CalWORKs

But many families on the brink of homelessness go unserved or do not have access to other services they need to avoid a housing crisis.

What Is Missing In Our Program?

# Strengthen The Program By Enhancing Prevention Services

#### PHASE 1 Implemented May 2016

- 1. CalWORKs family referrals from 24 CalWORKs Districts to the eight Family Solution Centers (FSCs) for families at-risk of homelessness but ineligible for CalWORKs homeless prevention services;
- Implement a new screening triage tool (Prevention SPDAT) to assess at-risk families referred for prevention services.

# Strengthen The Program By Enhancing Prevention Services

#### PHASE 1 (continued)

- 3. Increased CalWORKs Emergency Assistance to Prevent Eviction lifetime limit from \$2,000 to \$3,000 for eligible families;
- 4. Increased the CalWORKs Rental Assistance limit from four to eight months for WtW families who are enrolled in Family Stabilization.

# Strengthen The Program By Enhancing Prevention Services

#### PHASE 2 To Be Implemented November 2016

- 1. Additional FSC case managers in order to assist more at-risk families;
- 2. Additional funding to support various types of direct housing assistance in the existing program customized to each family's needs.
- 3. Legal services to prevent families from being evicted and to increase the safety of at-risk families fleeing violence

### **Performance Measures**

- Contract Performance Measures:
  - 75 % of families assisted who will not exit to crisis housing;
  - 75 % of families assisted will retain permanent housing
- Data Tracking on Services Provided To All Participating Families

# Enhanced CalWORKs Subsidized Employment Program for Homeless Families

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#### PROGRAM GOAL:

 A flexible subsidized employment model that focuses on the unique needs of CalWORKs homeless participants interested in working.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION DATE:**

Target: November 2016

#### **FUNDING:**

 CalWORKs Expanded Subsidized Employment Funds and Single Allocation

#### **POPULATION:**

- 500 participants who are:
  - CalWORKs homeless, or at risk of being homeless;
  - Non-CalWORKs families served by both Departments of Children & Family Services and Public Social Services who have Family Reunification (FR) plans, and a recent housing subsidy.

# Building On Our Existing Program Model

- Eight month assignment
- Participants are paid minimum wage (\$10.50 an hour)
- Participants referred through a Work Source Center / America's Job Center of California and placements in:
  - Paid Work Experience or
  - On-the-Job Training
- Administered Under Contract With South Bay Workforce Investment Board (SBWIB)
  - SBWIB is the employer of record

# **Building On Our Existing Program Model (continued)**

#### **Paid Work Experience**

- Participants are placed in government or non-profit agencies;
- DPSS pays 100% of the costs;

#### **On-the-Job Training (OJT) Design**

- Participants are matched to the needs of the employer;
- Participants are placed in private for-profit, or non-profit agencies;
- Participants may work up to eight months, earning at least \$10.50/hour or employer-selected wage;
- For first three months: DPSS pays 100% of the costs;
- For last five months: Agency/employer pays wages, and Workers' Compensation and FICA costs.
- Employer Reimbursements:
  - \$350 per month per participant working 20 to 29 hours per week;
  - \$550 per month per participant working 30 or more hours per week.

## **Outcomes for The Existing Program**

#### FY 2015-16 Data:

- 3,443 participants were placed in subsidized employment;
- 461 of the participants were homeless;

But more than 1/3 of the homeless participants drop out of the program within the first three months.

What Is Missing In Our Program?

# Strengthen The Program By Enhancing Homeless Services

- Subcontract Partnerships with Community-Based Organizations that specialize in working with homeless families to:
  - Conduct More Thorough Family Evaluations To Identify All Needs;
  - Provide (or make referrals to) basic services homeless families may need such as personal care items, showers, storage, laundry, etc.
  - Offer an accelerated job readiness curriculum to better address families' unique situations;
  - Offer short-term training/workshops to enhance skills that may enable a family to be more successful in a subsidized placement.

# Strengthen The Program By Enhancing Homeless Services

(Continued)

- Offer Transitional Work A flexible period of time in which participants can learn/apply proper work habits in a supportive learning environment through an accommodating schedule that can start at 20 hours/week and transition to increased hours;
- Place in <u>unsubsidized</u> employment;
- Provide more intensive follow-up with the family contact the family every 30 days (at least) over the first 90 days of unsubsidized employment;
- Offer a Work Incentive to Families

### **Performance Measures**

- Contract Performance Measures:
  - 35% unsubsidized job placement rate for those who complete program
  - 50% retention rate (after 90 days) for those placed in unsubsidized employment
- Data Tracking on Services Provided To Participating Families

# Subsidized Housing For Homeless Disabled Individuals Pursuing SSI

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#### PROGRAM GOAL:

 Maximize the number of homeless individuals applying for SSI who are placed in subsidized housing, retain housing during the SSI application period, and who are eventually approved for SSI.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION DATE:**

- Phase 1: June 2016
- Phase 2: October 2016

#### **FUNDING:**

- \$3.75 M one-time Homeless Prevention Initiative funding;
- \$4.0 M one-time AB 109 funding
- \$1.0 M one-time SB 678 funding

# HOUSING SUBSIDY POPULATION

 Unemployable General Relief Participants who are homeless, disabled and pursuing SSI.

# **Our Existing Program Model**

#### **Current General Relief Housing Subsidy:**

- Maximum subsidy of \$400/month for one person plus a \$100 contribution from the monthly GR grant;
- Maximum subsidy of \$800/month for couple cases plus a \$200 contribution from the monthly GR couple grant;
- Subsidy and GR grant contribution is paid directly to the landlord;

## **Our Existing Program Model**

#### **Guidelines:**

- Participation is voluntary;
- Homelessness determined by self-declaration: i.e., no permanent, fixed and regular nighttime residence;
- Must meet General Relief eligibility requirements;
- Subsidy is limited to three occurrences in a life-time.

#### **General Relief Eligible Populations:**

- Unemployable participants who are pursuing SSI or Veterans Benefits;
- Employable participants with a work history within last 12 months;
- Transitional age youth (18-24) who have received a high school diploma or equivalent, regardless of employment history.

# **Outcomes for The Existing Program**

 In FY 2015-16, 1,260 General Relief participants received a housing subsidy and applied for SSI.

But there are many more homeless individuals, potentially eligible to SSI, who need stable housing and/or access to support services.

What Is Missing In Our Program?

# Strengthen Access To Housing Subsidies

- PHASE 1 Implemented June 2016
- 1. Expand the availability of housing subsidies to all 14 General Relief Districts;
- 2. Strengthen targeting to those homeless individuals who are strong SSI candidates.

# Enhance The Subsidy and Support Services

- PHASE 2 Implemented October 2016
- 1. Expanding the County Department of Health Services (DHS) programs that provide the following to more complex homeless cases:
  - More intensive supportive services and case management;
  - Larger and longer-term housing subsidies.
- 2. Screening and referral process from County Departments to DHS housing programs

### **Performance Measures**

- Increase the number of individuals pursuing SSI who receive a GR housing subsidy;
- Increase the number of individuals who maintain housing during the SSI application period;
- Increase the number of individuals approved for SSI;
- Increase the amount of rental subsidy costs recovered through Interim Assistance Reimbursement (IAR) for individuals approved for SSI.

# The Foundation For Excellent Homeless Services

# Responsiveness

Listening to our customer

 Engaging our customer in a conversation

Avoid routine

#### **Patience**

 Families/Individuals in crisis will be in an agitated state

Poverty impeded cognitive functioning

 Don't let our hectic pace dictate our customer's needs

## **Expertise**

 Engagement helps understand the problem, but getting positive outcomes can resolve the problem

 Expertise is less about having all the answers, more about knowing how to connect people with the right services in the right way.

## **Tenacity**

Never give up!

 Take adversity and difficulties as challenges that can be beaten

 You have partners in the fight...including the person you are trying to help.

# Creativity

Find different paths in reaching your goal.

 Creativity isn't about re-invention, but about thinking beyond the ordinary.

 Saying the same thing in different ways can "nudge" folk to making better decisions

### **Self-Awareness**

 Are you projecting what you think you're projecting?

 Are you managing your own stress level?

 Are you staying healthy and ensuring your team members are as well?

## **Empathy**

em·pa·thy

/empaTHe/

noun

the ability to understand and share the feelings of another.

#### R-E-S-P-E-C-T









## R-E-S-P-E-C-T



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#### **Questions?**

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- Homeless Prevention Program For Families
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- Enhanced CalWORKs Subsidized Employment Program For Families AliciaOropeza@dpss.lacounty.gov
- Subsidized Housing For Homeless Disabled Individuals Pursuing SSI LyricNash@dpss.lacounty.gov
- Social Services Related Homeless Strategies Overview BillTaylor@dpss.lacounty.gov