
The City of West Hollywood
Five-Year Plan to Address
Homelessness in Our
Community

**HELP IS
WITHIN
REACH.**





Planning Context

In June 2017, the County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors (Board) approved Measure H funding allocations in support of the County's Homeless Initiative (HI) strategies to prevent and combat homelessness in the County. The Board also allocated funding for individual cities to develop plans to address homelessness in their respective cities, in collaboration with the County and its contractors.

Note: Since The City of West Hollywood's Five-Year Plan to Address Homelessness in Our Community was created and approved, the City received the official results of the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority's 2018 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count. This is the annual point-in-time count that takes place in West Hollywood on the last Thursday in January. The official West Hollywood count for 2018 was 100; down from 105 in 2017.

The City of West Hollywood is located in Service Planning Area (SPA) 4 (Metro/Central LA) and in Supervisorial District Three (3).

West Hollywood has a population of approximately **36,000** and in the 2017 Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) point-in-time count, the homeless count was **105**, up from 81 in 2016. According to the 2017 demographic survey of homeless community members, those who are homeless in West Hollywood have higher rates of trauma history, substance abuse, mental health issues and HIV infection. A comprehensive demographic survey of homeless community members was conducted again in 2018, with an analysis that was presented to the West Hollywood City Council in August 2018.

Since its incorporation in 1984, the City of West Hollywood has recognized its role, historically and currently, as a refuge for LGBT individuals who are rejected by their families and home communities.

Youth and adults come seeking safety and self determination, but lack an adequate support network and end up without housing.

The City of West Hollywood has continuously committed funding and staff resources in support of a robust social services program to address the needs of its most vulnerable community members, including outreach, substance abuse treatment, mental health programming and housing for homeless individuals. The City's 2017-2018 budget included **\$4.8 million** in contracts with social services providers, of which **\$1.2 million** was allocated to services to address homelessness. Contracts include outreach teams staffed by Ascencia, Step Up on Second, APLA Health, the Los Angeles LGBT Center's Youth Program, and Friends Community Center Substance Abuse Program. The City helps fund homeless outreach services, including showers, at the Saban Community Clinic and at the Youth Center on Highland. The City

In September 2016, the City Council adopted the following Guiding Principles to shape its response to homelessness.

The City's response to homelessness should be guided by the following principles:

1. Work to ensure safety for our residents, businesses, visitors and for those who are homeless.
2. Recognize that the primary responsibility for addressing homelessness belongs to the County, but acknowledge that homelessness requires all levels of government to participate in regional efforts.
3. Accept that homelessness cannot be solved by one entity; rather, promote partnerships between different government agencies and the private sector, including non-profit organizations and volunteer service providers.
4. Approach the issue of homelessness with compassion for those who are homeless as well as those in the community who are impacted by homelessness.

QUICK FACTS

About People Experiencing Homelessness

105
homeless

people were counted in 2017 by LAHSA point-in-time count. Up from 81 in 2016.

18.1%
of people

who were homeless were living with HIV.

2017-2018 Budget

\$4.8
million

in contracts with social service providers is included in the City's 2017-2018 budget.

\$1.2
million

was allocated to services to address homelessness.

Diverse Housing Stock

1,067
units

are owned and operated by nonprofit housing corporations and the housing authority.

reserves interim housing and treatment beds at Ascencia, Safe Refuge, Tarzana Treatment Center and McIntyre House and has created a Rapid Rehousing fund with Brilliant Corners. A contract with Housing Works supports case management. Additional City funding supports the West Hollywood Sheriff's Station's COPPS Team, a patrol unit dedicated to homeless outreach.

West Hollywood city policy promotes the development and preservation of a diverse housing stock. To achieve this goal, the City reserves units for the community's most vulnerable households: seniors; those with very low-income; individuals with disabilities, including people living with HIV. In a city of 1.9 square miles, there are **1,067 units** that are either owned by non-profits (551), the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles Housing Authority (366), or profit entities accepting housing vouchers (150). Of these 1,067 total units, **783 units** are designated for older adults (including six identified for formerly homeless seniors), **182** are specifically for people with disabilities (including 16 identified for transitional age youth with mental health illness) and **102 units** are allocated for very-low and low income households. In addition, the City of West Hollywood has a Rent Stabilization Program and a strong inclusionary housing program that produces new affordable low income and moderate-income units that are privately owned, but City regulated.

The policy takes a creative approach to increasing the housing stock, supporting adaptive reuse of existing structures for residential purposes, co-op housing, micro units, and other flexible housing types. In December 2017, the City Council amended the City's zoning ordinance to expand the permissibility of accessory dwelling units (ADUs) as a response to the shortage of affordable housing. ADUs must be rented for a minimum of 30 days, and no additional parking is required since all R-1 lots in West Hollywood are within one-half mile of public transit.

Rationale for West Hollywood Homeless Plan

During the months of January through April of 2018, a wide range of stakeholders were engaged in the planning process, sharing their experiences, their ideas, and their commitment to help shape the goals presented in this plan.

In January, the City Council held a comprehensive study session that included presentations and dialogue with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), the County's Homeless Initiative staff, Supervisor Sheila Kuehl's office, Step Up on Second, Ascencia, the Los Angeles LGBT Center, Tarzana Treatment Center, and the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles. Members of the public presented testimony at this meeting.

The West Hollywood Chamber of Commerce has a Committee on Homelessness that leads efforts to educate the business community about how to respond to homelessness in the City, and to coordinate assistance to people who are homeless in West Hollywood, including job opportunities with local businesses. Planners met with the Chamber's committee, which agreed to be a partner in the implementation of the plan.

The planning process was presented to the City's Human Services Commission and Public Safety Commission. Members of both commissions provided input into the plan, and members of the public offered comments at each session.

Meetings were conducted with City staff in Facilities and Recreation Services and Public Works departments. These staff members provided unique perspectives on issues, challenges, and solutions to inform the plan.

The City contracts with Block by Block to staff its Security Ambassadors program. These individuals interact regularly with persons who are homeless on the streets of West Hollywood, and brought important information into the planning process.

The City holds regular collaborative meetings with homeless service providers and HIV and substance abuse service providers. These meetings served as focus groups for the discussion of issues and proposals for new and continued City attention to the barriers faced by individuals who are homeless in West Hollywood. In February 2018, the planning team engaged individually with **30 people** experiencing homelessness in West Hollywood during the City's Homeless Connect Day at West Hollywood Park, where more than **60 people** received health assessments, service intakes, substance abuse counseling, HIV tests, Hepatitis A and flu vaccines, and haircuts.

Two public meetings conducted by the City of West Hollywood's Rent Stabilization and Housing Division provided opportunities to solicit resident comments and ideas to inform the plan. An interview was conducted with the executive director of the West Hollywood Community Housing Corporation, a partner with the City in the development of permanent affordable and supportive housing.

In addition to meeting with the Sheriff's Station's COPPS Team, planners participated in an outreach effort to observe the team in action.

This process described West Hollywood's homeless community as diverse, with a variety of needs.



YOUTH & YOUNG ADULTS

Many youth and young adults come to West Hollywood because they are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, or are otherwise isolated or rejected by their home community or family due to their gender identity. These individuals are at serious risk of HIV and trafficking; the 2017 demographic survey found that **18.1% of people** who were homeless in West Hollywood were living with HIV, compared with 1.8% countywide.

During 2017-2018, the City funded the addition of an HIV specialist from APLA Health to conduct street outreach among homeless people in West Hollywood.

CHRONICALLY HOMELESS

Chronically homeless individuals are defined as having a disabling condition, and have been homeless for a year or more, or have had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years. These individuals are well known to the West Hollywood Sheriff's Station personnel, businesses, and other City and County staff members at parks and the West Hollywood Library, and often have co-occurring substance use and mental illness. Outreach workers have been successful in engaging many of these individuals, moving **22 people** from homelessness to housing during the 2016-2017 social services contract year.

IMMINENT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS

People at imminent risk of homelessness are often encountered by staff members at the library, parks, and City Hall, and include seniors who have changes to their fixed incomes, people experiencing disruption of their housing, and individuals whose declining health results in a sudden loss of income. The City funds a rapid rehousing program, and a number of options are in place to provide assistance to help people either remain in their existing housing, or move to a more affordable option.

An aerial photograph of West Hollywood, California, showing a dense urban landscape with various buildings, streets, and green spaces. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. In the foreground, several large, modern buildings are prominent, including a distinctive circular structure. The background shows a hilly residential area under a clear sky.

Goals of The City of West Hollywood Five-Year Plan to Address Homelessness in Our Community

GOAL #1

Provide support and resources to City staff and contractors in responding appropriately, safely, and effectively to persons who are experiencing homelessness in West Hollywood.

Action 1a. Develop protocols for City staff members, library staff members, and contractors so they have guidance in responding to people who are homeless.

Action 1b. Develop an in-service training program for City staff members to learn protocols and referral sources, and provide the training to all City staff members during new employee orientation, and annually.

Action 1c. Review security at the West Hollywood Library, and work with other cities to obtain additional resources from the County, including social workers, in County libraries.

Action 1d. Support the interest of library staff members in developing programs for creative engagement and assistance to library patrons who are homeless, such as computer assistance, reading groups, and arts activities.

ASSOCIATED POLICY CHANGES

- Incorporate new protocols and training requirements into Human Resources policies

GOAL MEASUREMENT

- New protocols completed by **June 30, 2019**
- 100% of City staff members trained within three months of employment
- Meeting held with other Westside (COG) cities and County to discuss County staffing at libraries

GOAL OWNERSHIP

- Homeless Initiative Project Manager
- Human Resources Manager

LEVERAGED CITY RESOURCES

- **Staff time:** Homeless Initiative Project Manager (5% FTE), Human Resources Manager (5% FTE), Social Services Division Manager (5% FTE)

TIMELINE

- Protocols finalized by **6/30/19**
- All City staff trained by **12/31/19**
- COG discussion by **12/31/18**
- Library proposal received by **12/31/18**

GOAL #2

Support businesses and residents in responding appropriately, safely, and effectively to persons who are experiencing homelessness in West Hollywood.

Action 2a. Continue Homeless Not Hopeless campaign with quarterly updates to referral contact and program information.

Action 2b. Work with Chamber of Commerce to disseminate "Best Ways to Help."

Action 2c. Promote "Real Change" donation meter giving.

Action 2d. Support Chamber in engaging businesses in creating local job opportunities for individuals who have experienced homelessness.

Action 2e. Continue to strengthen City-funded outreach programs that specialize in the intersections between homelessness and individuals living with HIV, those experiencing substance abuse, youth, people who identify as LGBTQ, and others in our community experiencing homelessness.

GOAL MEASUREMENT

- Homeless Not Hopeless website (www.weho.org/homeless) updated quarterly
- Homeless Initiative Project Manager meets with Chamber committee monthly
- "Real Change" donation meter program has visible signage
- When successful, Chamber job initiative publicized through City news release
- Agendas of quarterly collaboratives (homeless, HIV/SA) reflect attention to intersection of HIV, substance use, and homelessness

GOAL OWNERSHIP

- Homeless Initiative Project Manager
- Social Services Staff

LEVERAGED CITY RESOURCES

- **Staff time:** Homeless Initiative Project Manager (5% FTE), Social Services staff (5% FTE), Communications staff (5% FTE)
- Cost of website, printing, and signage

TIMELINE

- Website updated quarterly beginning **9/18**
- Printed referral cards updated annually beginning **10/18**
- All other activities **ongoing**

GOAL #3

Establish bridge housing and day center facilities in West Hollywood to serve people who are homeless in the City.

Action 3a. Identify a space to locate a day center. Equip the space with storage, gender neutral restrooms, showers, laundry, medication cabinets, offices, and meeting rooms for peer support.

Action 3b. Explore possible locations for a temporary bridge housing facility to provide accommodations for individuals who are actively engaged in services leading to permanent housing.

Action 3c. Establish one or more “safe parking” locations, where people who live in vehicles are able to park overnight, use restrooms, and have access to services designed to move them into permanent housing options. Possible locations include the City-owned lot at Crescent Heights and Santa Monica Blvd.

Action 3d. Continue to partner with a variety of service providers to assist homeless individuals with public benefits, housing location, substance abuse treatment, and other critical services.

ASSOCIATED POLICY CHANGES

- Location and staffing of day center
- Location and staffing of bridge housing facility
- Location and staffing of safe parking location

GOAL MEASUREMENT

- Council decision on proposal for facilities

GOAL OWNERSHIP

- Homeless Initiative Project Manager
- Social Services Division Manager

LEVERAGED CITY RESOURCES

- City property
- **Staff time:** Homeless Initiative Project Manager (15% FTE)
- Social services contracts \$1.2 million/year

TIMELINE

- Identify bridge housing site within **60 to 90 days**
- Conduct studies and formulate plans during **FY 2018-2019**
- Report to Council by **10/1/19**

GOAL #4

Continue the City's support for the Rapid Re-Housing program to prevent homelessness among West Hollywood residents.

Action 4a. Continue City outreach to landlords to encourage their participation in this program.

Action 4b. Educate City staff, County staff, and others who interact with people who are at risk for homelessness about the availability of rapid re-housing services.

GOAL MEASUREMENT

- Conduct at least one landlord outreach event annually (Rent Stabilization and Housing Manager)
- Include rapid re-housing on resources card and website.

GOAL OWNERSHIP

- Social Services Division Manager
- Rent Stabilization and Housing Manager

LEVERAGED CITY RESOURCES

- **Staff time:** Rent Stabilization and Housing Manager (5% FTE), Social Services Division Manager (5% FTE) City of West Hollywood Plan to Address Homelessness
- Contract with social services providers, up to \$25,000/year

TIMELINE

- **Ongoing**
- Funding renewed annually with City budget

GOAL #5

Increase the number of supportive housing, special needs housing, and other permanent housing options in West Hollywood for people who have experienced or are at risk of homelessness.

Action 5a. Continue City support for new permanent housing options through use of the City's Housing Trust Fund, the West Hollywood Community Housing Corporation, the City's inclusionary housing program, and other mechanisms for housing creation.

Action 5b. Promote new policies (adopted 12/4/17) that encourage the development of accessory dwelling units (ADUs) to create new housing opportunities.

Action 5c. Conduct an assessment to determine whether there are opportunities for the City to support the purchase and conversion of motels into supportive housing.

Action 5d. Conduct an inventory of sites that are available for housing development, and recommend the best uses for each site, including the Metro-owned site, the LAUSD site on Fairfax, and property owned by Congregation Kol Ami.

Action 5e. Work with West Hollywood Community Housing Corporation to ensure that they have adequate funding to provide supportive services to tenants who have a history of homelessness.

ASSOCIATED POLICY CHANGES

- None; all goals are consistent with current City policy

GOAL MEASUREMENT

- Annual report to City Council on housing production
- Report to City Council on opportunities for motel conversion and other possible housing development sites
- Letters of support to potential funders on behalf of WHCHC applications for services funding

GOAL OWNERSHIP

- Rent Stabilization and Housing Manager

LEVERAGED CITY RESOURCES

- Rent Stabilization and Housing Manager (20% FTE)
- Housing Trust Fund allocations City of West Hollywood Plan to Address
- City real estate inventory

TIMELINE

- Annual report each May
- Promotion of ADUs: ongoing
- Report on housing development opportunities by **12/19**

GOAL #6

Strengthen partnerships with other cities and with nonprofit organizations to support regional and individualized solutions to homelessness.

Action 6a. In partnership with other cities in the Westside Cities Council of Governments Homelessness Committee, advocate for County services to address homelessness.

Action 6b. Coordinate with other Westside cities to establish services and housing opportunities for people experiencing homelessness.

GOAL MEASUREMENT

- Participation in Westside Cities Council of Governments Homelessness Committee by City Council and staff members
- Reports by Council members on meetings with County officials

GOAL OWNERSHIP

- Homeless Initiative Project Manager

LEVERAGED CITY RESOURCES

- **Staff:** Homeless Initiative Project Manager (10% FTE)

TIMELINE

- Ongoing with reports at each Council meeting

GOAL #7

Prevent homelessness among West Hollywood residents, especially seniors, individuals living with disabilities, and vulnerable families.

Action 7a. Work with City and County staff members, including Parks and Library staff members, to identify West Hollywood residents at risk of homelessness, and help connect them to resources offered by the Jewish Free Loan Program, NCJW Rental Assistance, the Alliance for Housing and Healing, APLA Health, Bet Tzedek Legal Services, and the City's Rapid Rehousing Program.

Action 7b. Establish a collaborative of contracted and partnering social services providers to advise the City Council on early identification and intervention with West Hollywood residents who are at risk of homelessness.

GOAL MEASUREMENT

- Report on quarterly meeting of homelessness prevention collaborative

GOAL OWNERSHIP

- Social Services Division Manager

LEVERAGED CITY RESOURCES

- **Staff time:** Social Services Division Manager (5% FTE)

TIMELINE

- Quarterly beginning in **1/19**

City of West Hollywood Homeless Initiative

WEHO.ORG/HOMELESS

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