

San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments  
Regional Homeless Services Strategy

**Phase I Report Summary**

The Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) and its project partners, Shelter Partnership, Inc., Urban Initiatives and McDermott Consulting, were awarded a contract by the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments (SGVCOG) to undertake a planning effort to identify the existing services for the homeless in the San Gabriel Valley, assess the unmet needs of homeless residents and conduct a consensus building process to develop an integrated plan that addresses those unmet needs.

**Key Phase I Findings**

***Location and Characteristics of Homeless Persons in the San Gabriel Valley***

Overall, the face of homelessness in the San Gabriel Valley is not markedly different than the larger county profile. Statistics gathered from service providers in the valley show that, of the homeless adults, 61% are men and 39% are women. Families with children constitute 36% of the population. More than one-third of the homeless adults report suffering from physical and/or mental disabilities. Nearly 8% of the homeless adults are veterans. And of the single adults, approximately one-third are “chronically homeless”, meaning that they are disabled and have been homeless for more than one year or have experienced repeated stays in the streets, emergency shelters, or other temporary settings four or more times in the past three years. These individuals tend to cycle between homelessness and hospitals, jails, prisons, and other costly emergency systems. Due to eligibility requirements, many chronically homeless individuals in Los Angeles County are often not served by year-round emergency shelters or other programs in the homeless service delivery system and, thus, remain unsheltered.

The characteristics of the homeless population within sub-regional areas of the San Gabriel Valley do vary greatly, especially in terms of gender, ethnicity, and percentage of individuals versus members of families.

***Homeless Services in the San Gabriel Valley***

Within the San Gabriel Valley, there are currently 10 emergency shelter programs providing 108 emergency shelter beds for single clients and 178 emergency shelter beds for family clients. There are also 19 transitional housing programs providing 149 transitional housing beds for singles, and 165 transitional housing beds for families. In addition, there are three winter shelter programs operating in the San Gabriel Valley providing temporary shelter during the winter months.

The San Gabriel Valley has 217 units of permanent supportive housing. The majority of these units (156) are scattered across the region in privately owned rental housing that is subsidized with Shelter Plus Care rental vouchers (which function similar to the Section 8 voucher program). There are five permanent supportive housing developments with a total of 61 units in the SGV region. Four of these projects, totaling 46 units are located in Pasadena. The other is a 15-unit building in Pomona.

Although there is currently an array of services, shelter, and housing programs for the homeless operated throughout the San Gabriel Valley, the levels of coordination and service delivery are highest around Pasadena in the West and Pomona in the East.

Among San Gabriel Valley cities surveyed through this study, fourteen of respondents reported some investment of local dollars to provide homeless services and housing totaling \$1,348,986 valley-wide during the current fiscal year. Six of those cities reported investing in housing for homeless people. These local investments came primarily from Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG), HOME, Redevelopment area tax increment, and general funds. The city survey respondents reported a total of 25 affordable housing developers active in the San Gabriel Valley.

### ***Homeless Estimates for the San Gabriel Valley***

In order to establish a locally generated estimate of the number of homeless persons the study team worked with city representatives, service providers, the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), and other appropriate entities. By analyzing the data from the various sources, based on local experience and perceptions, the team established an estimated number of 5,043 homeless persons on any given night in the SGV.

The significant difference between the two homeless estimates of 10,911 persons, derived from the Pasadena and LAHSA homeless counts, and 5,043 persons, derived from local input and data, reflects variations in the methodologies used by LAHSA and this study. The numbers derived through this study reflect a combination of two things – 1) the perception of the magnitude of homelessness among local policy makers and emergency responders such as law enforcement and 2) the limited numbers of homeless individuals and families that existing providers in the San Gabriel Valley are able to serve due to funding and capacity constraints. This smaller number is significant to the extent that it establishes a minimum baseline of need about which local stakeholders can agree and begin planning for action to reduce homelessness across the San Gabriel Valley.

The two assessments provide a high and a low range estimated number of homeless persons in the San Gabriel Valley with the lower population estimate establishing a minimum baseline of need about which local stakeholders can agree and begin planning to reduce homelessness across the San Gabriel Valley. The report's analysis

of gaps in the current homeless delivery system are quantified using the mid-point of this range.

In January 2009, the next homeless count will be conducted throughout Los Angeles County. Cities should encourage local participation in order to both ensure a more comprehensive enumeration within their jurisdiction but also as a means to engage the public around the issue of homelessness.

### ***Service Gap Analysis: Addressing Unmet Needs to End Homelessness in the San Gabriel Valley***

Non-profit service providers, along with faith based organizations, cities, and county agencies work diligently to meet the needs of homeless individuals and families, however, their efforts can be hampered because of a lack of coordinated planning, information sharing, and housing placement resources.

Currently, there is no SGV-wide system for referral and resource information sharing. This deficiency could be addressed with technological solutions and will also necessitate interagency coordination specifically for the purpose of improving service delivery and for knowing where to refer clients. Such coordination would also support public-private efforts to coordinate and leverage existing resources and facilitate sharing of best practices amongst providers.

While inefficiencies in the current system should be addressed, there exists an insufficient number of both short-term housing beds and permanent supportive housing units available in the San Gabriel Valley to address the current need. Regardless of how coordinated the system is, without sufficient capacity to facilitate the movement of individuals and families out of homeless and into permanent housing and self-sufficiency, the system will not achieve meaningful outcomes nor decrease the number of homeless persons. This fact, and weakness in the current system, was reported by a majority of service providers as well as many city officials throughout the San Gabriel Valley.

The valley lacks an adequate number of emergency shelter and transitional housing programs that enable temporarily homeless individuals and families to quickly stabilize their lives and end their homelessness. In addition, a subset of the homeless population suffering from mental and physical disabilities and other barriers to housing stability require longer term support to stabilize their lives and end their homelessness. National data shows that this subset of the homeless population takes up about half of the shelter resources meant to address temporary homelessness. The San Gabriel Valley is not unlike other parts of the country in this regard. Data collected through this study reveals that 30% of adult clients in short-term housing programs in the San Gabriel Valley reported their previous residence to be another short term housing program. Similarly, 22% of adult clients leaving short term housing programs were discharged into another short term housing program. The San Gabriel Valley lacks an adequate supply of permanent supportive housing to meet the needs of this

subpopulation and as a result, the short-term and emergency housing system becomes “clogged” by repeat users and unable to fully serve its intended purpose of quickly stabilizing and re-housing those who find themselves temporarily homeless due to financial or domestic crisis.

Rental subsidies such as Section 8, Shelter Plus Care, and Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing tenant-based rental vouchers can be better utilized with the existing privately owned housing stock in the San Gabriel Valley in order to increase the availability of permanent supportive housing as well as to strengthen local housing markets. Some of these rental subsidy programs have been underutilized in San Gabriel Valley and should be tapped to quickly expand permanent supportive housing options.

Longer term solutions to expanding the supply of supportive housing for homeless persons in the San Gabriel Valley can be achieved by:

- (1) Building on and strengthening the capacity of the dozens of service providers and affordable housing developers that are currently active in the region;
- (2) Leveraging federal, state, and local resources currently available to subsidize the cost of capital development, operating, and service delivery in that housing; and
- (3) Establishing production goals based on realistic assessment of these opportunities and constraints

San Gabriel Valley city governments by themselves do not have the financial or staff resources to “solve” homelessness. However, each city properly has a role to play with the County, non-profit, and faith-based organizations. By planning and organizing across jurisdictions at the sub-regional level, cities are better able to design and implement plans that accurately reflect local priorities, share and leverage existing resources, and achieve economies of scale in strategies adopted.

The existing coalitions and consortiums are key to strengthening the network of services and providers and should serve as a means to better engage the faith-based community in order to better coordinate their efforts with more established service programs in their community.

## **Next Steps**

Determining supportive housing production goals and developing an adequate homeless services delivery system can be approached in two ways. It can be based on a calculation of need or based on a calculation of available resources. A principle thrust of our work in Phase II of this project will be to begin working directly with municipalities and other local leadership in the San Gabriel Valley to: 1) develop consensus on the findings contained within this report; 2) determine housing and service delivery models consistent with community context and preference; and 3) identify Federal, State, and local resources available for financing the implementation of these locally determined goals.