

Incorporating Voices from Those with Lived Experience

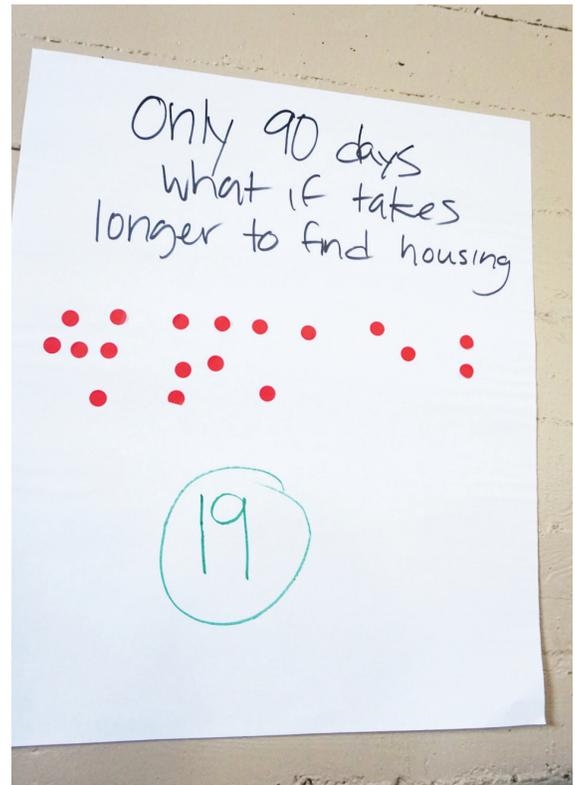


CITY OF POMONA
MAY 2018

Executive Summary

People who are currently or formerly homeless have unique insight on how to create policies, programs, and practices that can help to prevent and end homelessness. When engaged in a meaningful way, they can be an integral part of homeless systems and services planning, policy design, and ongoing process improvement. Their insights are also necessary to meet the person-centered standard required within a Housing First approach. As part of its ongoing efforts to address homelessness, in Spring 2018 the City of Pomona recently engaged people who have experienced homelessness through a summit and a focus group to provide feedback on the design of a year-round crisis shelter site and what supports they would need to end their homelessness and be successful in their own home.

The development of a year-round crisis shelter was among the short-term strategies identified in the City's comprehensive plan to end homelessness, *A Way Home: Community Solutions for Pomona's Homeless*, when the plan was adopted in January 2017. Since then, the City has been pursuing the development of a site that would allow not only for crisis shelter beds, but also for outreach and engagement, coordinated entry system services, behavioral health, primary care through a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC), and array of other supportive services. To ensure that the shelter's design would meet the needs of individuals who have experienced homelessness, the City engaged LeSar Development Consultants (LDC) to facilitate a Lived Experience Summit (Summit) with individuals in the City's winter shelter program and to conduct a focus group with individuals who are already in their home or are very close to move-in. These planning activities were funded through a City Homeless Planning grant provided by the County of Los Angeles to support cities in creating or enhancing their homeless plan.



Input from Summit participants affirmed many of the strategies the County of Los Angeles is pursuing to combat homelessness. For example, Summit participants echoed the need for enhancing services and operations within the emergency shelter system, provide employment support, assist individuals with accessing public benefits, perform criminal record clearing

services, encourage landlords to rent to homeless households, and conduct many of the activities funded under the Coordinated Entry System, such as housing navigation and location services and support with gathering necessary documents.

Summit participants also had specific ideas about which services and amenities the shelter should offer. Specifically, participants stressed the need for Wi-Fi access on-site, opportunities for employment, and larger and increased storage opportunities. However, many participants struggled to articulate what a permanent housing situation could look like after exiting services. Once facilitators helped make that vision more concrete, many described their needs in basic terms: a place where they felt safe, secure, and “at home.” Some described this setting as having their own place while others mentioned have a roommate or sharing a room in a house.



Individuals who had successfully exited homelessness shared that having the support of a caring, non-judgmental staff member who was knowledgeable about resources for finding housing and rental assistance was essential to helping them navigate the path to their home. Many said that homelessness was a daily struggle, which made it hard to see the future. Having someone to provide hope and walk them through the process to get back in a stable place was extremely beneficial. Participants also shared that ongoing support and follow-up was critical to keep them in housing. Other key factors related to participants’ housing stability were access to primary care and behavioral health care and having an array of community-based social support systems, such as a life skills group, AA, NA, and Tri City Mental Health’s Wellness Center in Pomona. Lastly they said finding time for themselves whether that was through doing activities such as prayer or meditation and remembering to live every day at a time was mentioned.

Again while much of the input from Summit and focus group participants mirrored many of the strategies identified in the County of Los Angeles Homelessness Initiative, participants also brought forward several new ideas—including the idea that people experiencing homelessness may find it difficult to envision what their permanent home will look like.

This idea underscores the point that homeless systems need to engage the people they serve as early and as often as they can in all aspects of planning and ongoing implementation of homeless assistance programs. The feedback from the Lived Experience Summit and focus group participants shared will greatly influence the development of the new proposed shelter site, as well as other strategies outlined in Pomona’s plan. In addition, the City of Pomona needs to continuously provide individuals with lived experience with opportunities to participate in homeless system policy decision making and in informing programming and services. These individuals are the true experts who understand the challenges and needs of being homeless, and what it will take to end homelessness in Pomona and throughout Los Angeles County.

Incorporating Voices with Lived Experience

Incorporating the perspectives and “voices” of people with lived experience is extremely important

across of the spectrum of human services systems including health care, behavioral health care, foster care, and housing and services dedicated to individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Individuals who have gone through or are currently experiencing homelessness and who are accessing homeless services need to be viewed as “experts” by the professionals who are supporting them. Increasingly, service providers and individuals with lived experience have established a movement to ensure that people with lived experience are involved in all aspects of the homeless delivery system. In many cases, homeless programs and other sectors, such as healthcare, are creating advisory boards comprised of those with lived experience and employing individuals to serve in peer support roles. The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) recently stated:

“Creating that inclusion (of those with lived experience) enriches the systems we are building and drives our strategies. Many of our best innovations, such as Housing First, were born from the lessons of people who have experienced homelessness. And now, because of national, state, and local work to involve people with lived experience, we have the benefit of understanding how our response can best reflect the insight and expertise of these critical voices. The first step is to ensure that there is a shared commitment and framework to include everyone — especially people with lived experience — in planning, implementation, and evaluation. To sustain this effort, communities



should measure and report how effective they have been at including people with lived experience throughout their systems.”¹

Although including the voices of those with lived experience is imperative, any effective and sustainable approach must translate into meaningful participation in decision making at all levels. At a system level, those with lived experience can be extremely beneficial in providing input on homelessness policy decisions, crafting new policies and program design, as well as becoming strong advocates by telling their story. Equally important, at more local or programmatic levels, those with lived experience should be involved in providing feedback on how they are experiencing services and what services are needed, and to raise issues and concerns with programs in which they are participating. As with other communities across the country, the City of Pomona (City) recognizes the value of including perspectives and input from individuals who have experienced homelessness in current and future planning efforts, ensuring that they move forward in addressing homelessness in a compassionate, respectful, and person-centered manner.

¹ United States Interagency Council on Homelessness. (2016). People with Lived Experience Must Be Meaningful Partners in Ending Homelessness; blog by Amy Sawyer, USICH Regional Coordinator.

A Way Home: Community Solutions for Pomona's Homeless

The City has been actively working to address homelessness in Los Angeles County since 1999

when the City Council decided to form the Pomona Continuum of Care Coalition (PCOCC) to advise the City and coordinate efforts on homelessness. Still active today, the PCOCC includes stakeholders from a variety of settings, including homeless services providers, local government representatives, advocates, faith-based organizations, local citizens, and individuals with lived experience. In 2000, the City of Pomona also created a dedicated homeless liaison position to coordinate services on the City's behalf and engage the community at large on the issues surrounding homelessness. The City also has a Homeless Programs Unit embedded in the Pomona Housing Authority. This unit administers grants and works with community agencies to coordinate homeless services throughout the City. In 2015, under the umbrella of Pomona's Promise—the City's community-based approach to support youth and family services, the City created the Homeless Advisory Committee and initiated the process to develop a comprehensive community-wide strategy to end homelessness. Although individuals with lived experience were encouraged to participate in the plan development, the City struggled with engaging these individuals in a meaningful way. In January 2017, the City adopted the final plan, A Way Home: Community

Solutions for Pomona's Homeless, which included four overarching goals:

FOUR OVERARCHING GOALS

1. Reduce the Number of Pomona's Unsheltered Homeless
2. Reduce the Negative Impacts on Community Neighborhoods and Public Spaces through the Coordination of Services
3. Have an Engaged and Informed Community Regarding Homelessness and Homeless Solutions
4. Balance the Needs and Rights of Homeless Persons and the Larger Community through Updated Fair, Legal, and Enforceable Policies and Ordinances

Similar to efforts across Los Angeles County, the City has been focused on addressing those living unsheltered. Within goals 1 and 2 above, the City's plan identified three key urgent strategies:

THREE URGENT STRATEGIES

1. Establish a Year-Round Shelter Able to Provide for Multiple Populations
2. Establish a Service Center for Centralization and Coordination of Services
3. Establish a Communal Kitchen for the Provision of Food Services





To date, the City has purchased a site for the creation of a Homeless Services Center (HSC), which will serve as a year-round shelter providing crisis beds, as well as essential services such as access to meals, restrooms, and showers for those living unsheltered. The site will also serve as an access site for the Coordinated Entry System (CES) in the eastern region of the San Gabriel Valley, and include an array of behavioral health services and primary care services through an on-site community clinic. Key site partners have been established and include Volunteers of America Los Angeles (VOALA), Tri-City Mental Health Center, and East Valley Community Health Center.

Although many of the core services have been established to adhere to available funding requirements for the HSC, the City is still actively developing the detailed policies, protocols, and amenities required to launch the site. Reflecting on the difficulty engaging individuals with lived experience in the homeless plan

development process, the City wanted to ensure that individuals currently experiencing homelessness within the City and those who have been successful exiting homelessness were actively engaged in informing the development of the HSC and providing input on addressing homelessness, which could then be incorporated into updates to the City's homeless plan.

As a starting point to incorporating voices of those with lived experience, the City engaged LeSar Development Consultants (LDC) to facilitate a summit at the current winter shelter program and to conduct a focus group with individuals who have successfully exited homelessness and currently reside in their own homes.

The following report summarizes the highlights from these two events as well as key takeaways and recommendations for the City.

Lived Experience Summit at the Winter Shelter

On February 23, 2018, the City held a Lived Experience Summit (Summit) at the Pomona Armory, the site of the current emergency winter shelter, to elicit feedback from individuals who were living in the shelter as well as individuals living on the streets of Pomona on the proposed HSC, what they ultimately need to end their homelessness, and how they City can support those needs (See Appendix A for a list of questions). The Summit was facilitated by LDC with assistance from City and VOALA staff.

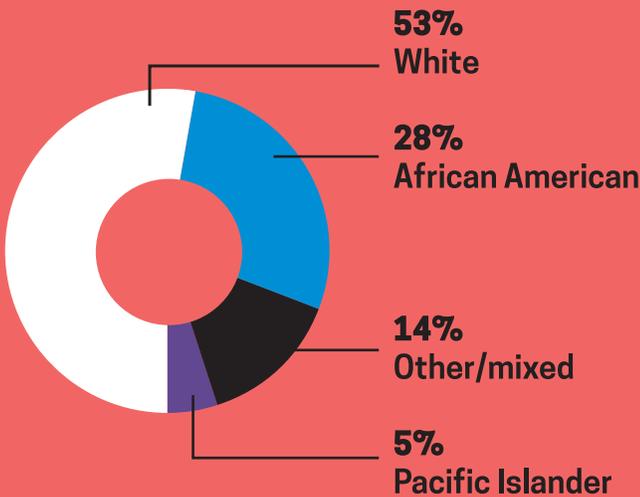
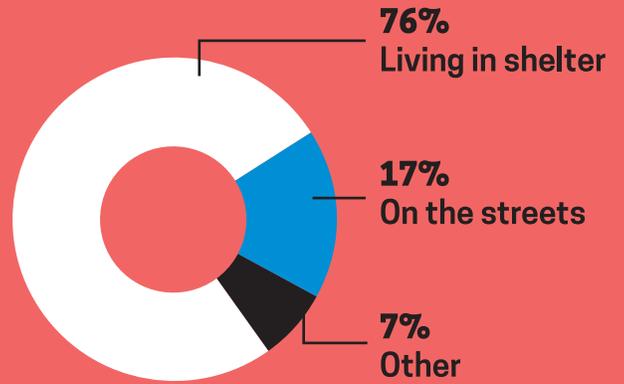
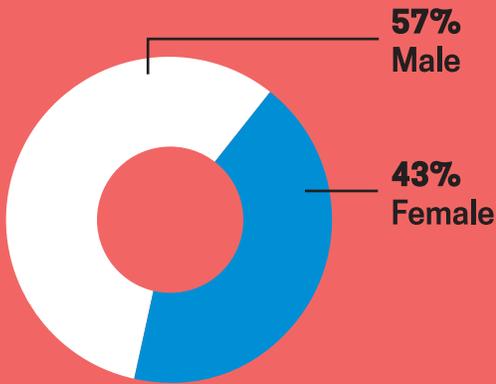
In the days leading up to the Summit, the shelter operator, VOALA, encouraged the individuals staying

in the shelter to attend the event and had their outreach teams within the City ensure that those living outside were aware and encouraged participation. Individuals who participated in the summit received gift bags that included various necessities, as well as a hot breakfast and lunch, and raffle prizes.

In total, 95 individuals participated in the Summit. Each individual who arrived for the Summit was asked to fill out a survey to help the City understand who was participating in the event. A total of 88 individuals completed the survey and returned them to Summit organizers (See Appendix B for a copy of the survey.)



Basic demographics and responses of those who completed the survey:



49%
Reported this was their **first time homeless**

51%
Reported they originally **became homeless in Pomona**

26%
Reported they **previously had a house or apartment in Pomona**

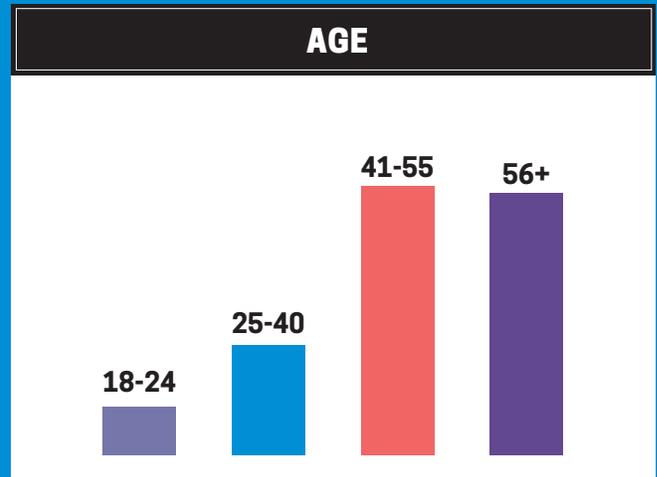
6%
United States Veterans

78% 
Reported having **health insurance**

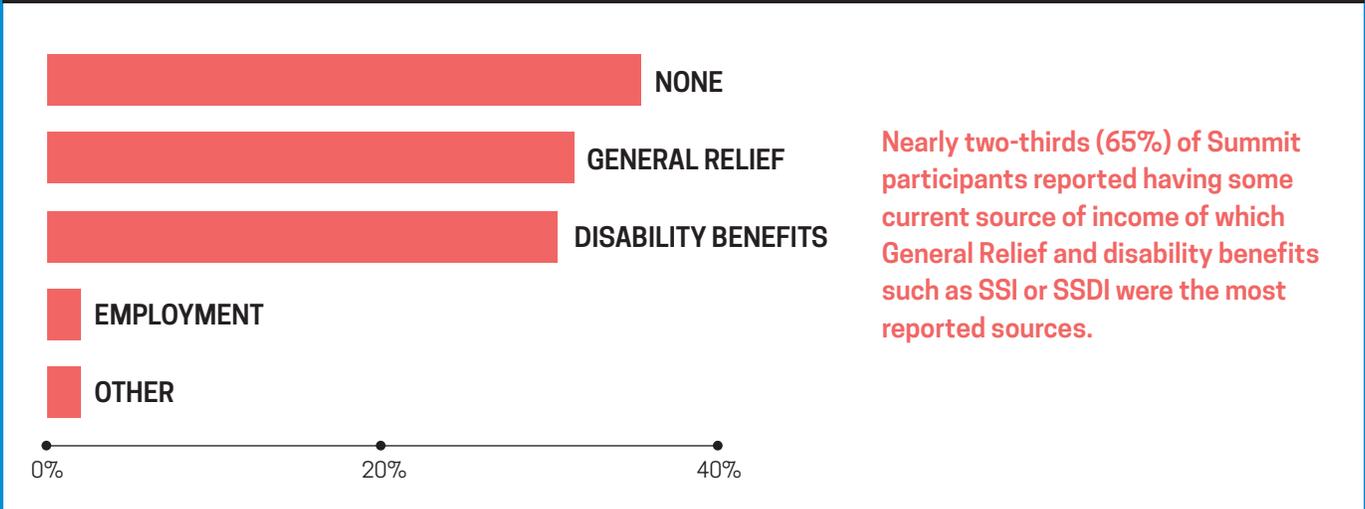
43% 
Reported having **CalFresh benefits**

29% 
Said they believe **people choose to be homeless**

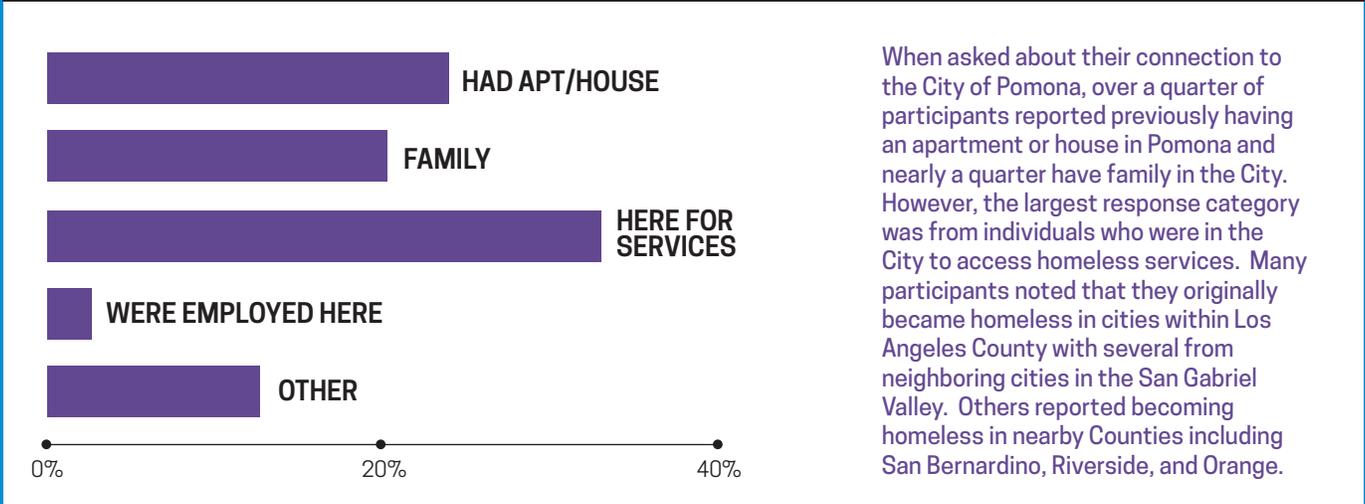
The following charts provide additional information regarding the participants who participated in the Summit, who ranged in age from 19 years old to 74 years old



INCOME SOURCES



CONNECTION TO POMONA



Feedback on Centralized Service Center

The first half of the Summit focused on eliciting feedback on the proposed HSC. The City's Neighborhood Services Director, the person at the City who has been leading the creation of the HSC, provided a brief overview of the plans for the shelter and key services. Following the presentation, participants were asked about their initial thoughts or impressions. The most pressing concern voiced immediately after the presentation was whether they would be able to transition to the new site. At the current time, the winter shelter program has no maximum time limit that a person can stay and participants wanted to know if they would be the ones having first access to the new shelter beds. Although the participants living at the shelter understood that their current situation was not permanent, they were extremely concerned about the potential loss of not having a place to sleep, even if only a shelter bed.

Once participants overcame their initial fear and understood that they would most likely be transitioning to the new site, participants asked simple questions regarding program operations, such as whether they would have to leave during the day or whether they would have the option to stay at the site, what the curfew was, and whether there would be rules about bringing their pets. Below are some participants' direct concerns on the proposed HSC:

“Will we be able to stay inside during the day? Is it open 24 hours a day?”

“What do people do after 90 days in shelter are done? What happens if I have not found a place to live?”

“Will I have support with maintaining my sobriety after I leave the program?”

“Some residents have health issues and are sick, how will the program ensure our safety and health?”

“Will my pet be able to come with me? Will they be able to stay on my bed with me?”

“The new site will need to continue to have policies for zero tolerance of abuse (verbal, physical, theft, etc.).”

“The new site must be accessible for people with disabilities.”

When participants raised concerns, the City and VOALA did their best to field the questions; however, some questions prompted the need for additional discussion and potential changes that may need to be made. When participants were asked to rank their biggest concern with the new site, they were most concerned that the program offered shelter for 90 days and were fearful of what would happen to them if they did not find housing within that timeframe.

“What do people do after 90 days in the shelter are done? What happens if I have not found a place to live?”

—Summit participant when asked about concerns with new site.

What Services Are Most Important to You?

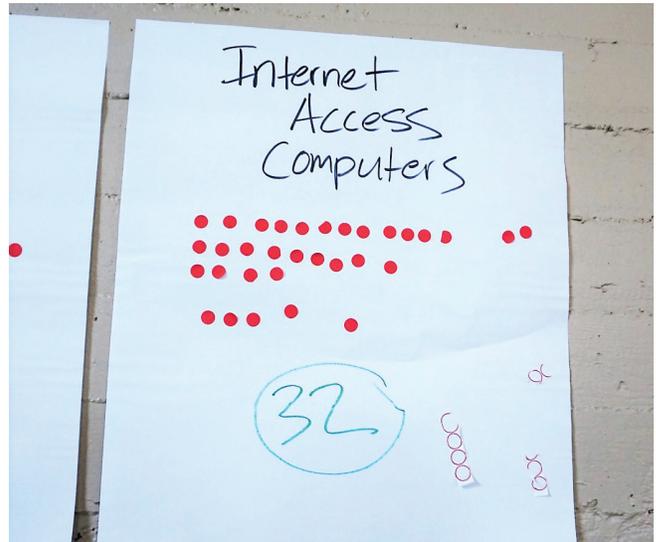
After some initial discussion and input on the rules and operations, participants were asked what type of services would be most beneficial to them at the site. Participants noted essentials, such as having 24/7 access to showers and the facility, as well as having access to laundry and hygiene supplies, eye-glasses, and hot meals. Many expressed gratefulness for the current storage units that the City has provided at the Armory and were happy to hear that the Storage Center would be moving to the site. Many also hoped for expanded storage space, including storage space in the close proximity to their bed.

When asked about specific services that they would want to access, many expressed strong interest in having employment services such as job training, job search assistance, access to computers, and transportation for job searching, and several participants asked about potential opportunities for employment at the HSC. Other services mentioned included assistance with obtaining disability benefits, support resolving legal barriers, and assistance with credit checks and credit repair.

MOST REQUESTED SERVICES FOR THE SITE

1. Support finding housing
2. Wi-Fi and high speed internet access
3. Employment assistance and job training
4. Expanded storage opportunities

Besides basic needs and employment services, the most sought after site service or amenity was a request for Wi-Fi, high speed internet access, and places to charge cell phones. Nearly all individuals at the shelter have a phone or device and expressed a strong desire



to have access to the internet for a variety of needs, which included job and housing searches, staying connected to family and friends, and access to social media. Along these lines, some participants voiced a need to have a garden where they could go for quiet time or to relax.

Lastly, when asked to rank the services that they would need the most, the highest ranked request was, "Support with finding housing." This sought after service aligns with their most pressing concern of what happens after 90 days in the program and ultimately demonstrates that what they would like most is a place of their own. This data also shows that people will need and want assistance finding a suitable place to live that is affordable to them, because navigating that process can be difficult for participants.

Input on What They Will Need to End Their Homelessness

The latter half of the Summit focused on understanding what participants will need to end their homelessness, as well as identifying what their ultimate permanent housing situation would look like and any perceived challenges with obtaining that goal. Participants were also asked what the general public should know about homelessness and how they would respond to people who think that they choose to be homeless.

The services that participants mentioned as things they would need to end their homelessness closely mirrored the list that was identified earlier in the day as what they would want at the HSC. Top services again included support finding housing, employment assistance, legal services, and transportation. To elicit different responses and new ideas, participants were asked about current challenges they encounter when trying to access a place to live. One of the immediate responses was that housing was just too expensive; however, people did mention more concrete challenges such as not having enough money for first and last month's rent, having poor credit and outstanding loans, and having prior evictions on their record. Participants also identified challenges related to prospective landlords accepting vouchers or other forms of rental assistance such as Rapid Re-housing as well as the ability to have their

pet with them. Lastly, some people noted that their criminal history was a barrier to accessing a place to live, and a few people stated that their undocumented status made finding housing difficult.

By asking about the challenges people experience, the City can identify issues and help craft policies and solutions to address them, as well as guide resource allocation.

What Does Your Ideal Home Look Like?

When asked what their ideal housing situation looks like, participants responded with an approximately two-minute moment of silence. The difficulty participants had with responding revealed that they had a hard time envisioning what they would actually want. When asked why people were having a hard time describing their ideal housing situation, one man replied, "It's hard to see. Been too long since I had my own place." Another mentioned, "Hard to imagine it's possible because it's too expensive." On the other hand, some people responded with a stereotypical perfect vision that included a large house, white picket fence with a yard, and a nice car.



CURRENT BARRIERS TO ACCESSING HOUSING

- Lack of affordable housing opportunities
- First and last month's rent
- Landlords not willing to accept vouchers or other rental assistance
- Poor credit, outstanding loans, prior evictions
- Criminal background and undocumented status

To help to get people to envision their home, the facilitator asked a simple question to the crowd, "What would you be cooking for dinner?" From there, people began thinking about the meals they would prepare—

“It takes an extraordinary amount of energy to survive every day.”

—Summit participant when asked what you would like people to know.

fried chicken smothered in BBQ sauce and macaroni and cheese were shouted out. Once a few people began to open up, participants acknowledged that first and foremost they want a place that is their “sanctuary” where they feel safe and secure. Some mentioned that it does not have to be much and could be fairly simple, but wanted it to serve as a “solid base” for them to tackle life’s stressors and take care of responsibilities. Some mentioned that they would be happy having roommates and living in a shared home or having a small apartment in a complex where they could interact with their neighbors.



What Would You Like People to Know?

Participants were asked a few questions on what they would want people such as the general public and local elected officials to know. Specifically, they were asked: What would you say to people who believe that homelessness is a choice? Several responses are as follows:

“Try being homeless. It’s not pretty. It’s a struggle. Have them come sleep on a cot for a week.”

“It takes an extraordinary amount of energy just to survive every day.”

“Being a homeless Veteran with PTSD, I need time to acclimate to housing. Homelessness exacerbates my PTSD.”

“Sometimes we run into financial struggles or situations or just other problems in our life that we may need some help.”

“Not everyone is homeless because of drugs or alcohol. I lost my job and was not able to pay my rent after that and didn’t have anywhere to go.”

“The resources are limited out here. It’s hard to get the things you need. Many times I don’t qualify for things because I don’t have a mental illness, I’m not a veteran, I don’t have a drug problem.”

The last question that was asked was what would they like the City and/or the County to know? Someone offered the following simple statement:

“We’re people just like them. They shouldn’t judge. We should be able to use restrooms and all other things they can do. We want to be productive members of society. We want a hand up.”

Perspectives from Those Who Exited Homelessness



In addition to the Summit, which focused on gaining insight and feedback of those currently experiencing homelessness, the City also sought feedback from those who have been successful exiting homelessness. To gather their feedback, LDC facilitated a focus group with individuals who are in their own housing or who soon will be entering permanent housing and currently attend a group VOALA offers to help provide coaching on things such as essential life skills. These group members primarily consisted of individuals who were on some form of disability benefits or permanent fixed income and were in some type of subsidized affordable or supportive housing, although some individuals were employed. LDC staff joined the group on April 13, 2018, and facilitated a session to gather input from approximately 25 group members. The questions focused on two main areas: understanding what was important to be successful with getting into their own place and what steps they are taking to remain stable in their housing situation (See Appendix C for a list of

questions). Lastly, City staff were present and asked additional questions about what these individuals thought was most important to consider with Pomona's new shelter site as the majority of participants previously had gone through the winter shelter program.

“Making the decision to make finding housing a priority and then taking opportunities as they came.”

—Focus Group participant

Although many were successful alumni of the winter shelter program, the group is diverse in that some people have been living in their own place for several years while others have only been in their home for a few months. However, despite the varying lengths of time in housing, their experiences with being homeless still connects them all, and they share something that many will never know. Collectively, the input voiced during the focus group was echoed among the participants either by verbal acknowledgement or head nodding.

What Helped You Get into Housing?

When asked questions about their journey from homelessness to a home, many said that the most important thing was making the initial decision to get out of homelessness. This sentiment was not described as though they had been choosing to be homeless and were finally making a decision to get out of that situation, but rather that their experience being homeless was a day in and day out struggle just to survive. Some mentioned that they had developed



“I was hesitant about going to the shelter. Never been in this situation before. I was trying to find a place on my own and after a week in the shelter someone let me know that they (shelter staff) had people there to help me find a place.”

—Focus Group participant

tremendous survival skills to endure each moment of each day but when all of their focus and effort went to surviving, they were not in the mindset to make plans to get out of their situation.

Some mentioned that going to the shelter allowed them the opportunity to get out of that daily survival way of living, because it provided a safe and reliable place to rest their head each night although it was just a bed in a shelter. Another mentioned that while initially hesitant to go to the shelter since she had never been homeless before and was scared, she was able to receive support finding a place to live, and had not known that was available to her.

A handful of participants mentioned that having access to various services, such as mental health services and substance use disorder services were critical in taking those first steps getting their own place; however, the most important aspect participants mentioned was having a compassionate and trusting staff member helping them to navigate through the process of getting back into a home. Some mentioned that being able to trust someone to help them through the process was initially difficult, but once they engaged, having that staff member with them throughout the process was the main reason why they had their own place.

Overwhelmingly, participants mentioned specific staff members and said that the person always kept them on track with making appointments and managing a schedule, held them accountable for following up on items such as getting their identification card or Social Security card, and provided encouragement that having a place to call home was possible. They mentioned that these staff members made housing the priority for them, were persistent, and acted with a sense of urgency.

What are you doing to remain stable in your place?

After being asked what things participants were doing to remain stable in their homes, initially people mentioned just ensuring they are “Taking care of the basics.” When asked specifically about these basics, participants mentioned paying their rent on time and keeping their place clean so it would pass inspection. Others mentioned making sure that they follow the rules of their lease agreement and being a good neighbor.

Doing the “basics” was followed with staying connected to their case manager who some mentioned helped them with the basics, especially with remembering when their inspection was coming up and providing budgeting support for paying their rent. One person mentioned that when budgeting, they really have to weigh their “wants versus their needs.” Participants acknowledged the support that their ongoing case manager provides, and not just with assisting with budgeting, keeping them on track with appointments, and connecting them to other services, but with overall support, encouragement, and having a smiling face in their life who genuinely cares. It was also observed during the focus group that all of the participants were using a personal calendar to keep track of upcoming important events and appointments. Some participants were using their phone as their calendar while others had a small calendar book and used a pen or pencil. This idea of keeping a calendar was in stark contrast to what participants shared earlier about how when they were homeless they lived in the moment and focused on surviving the day.

Other services participants mentioned as important to remaining stable was consistent and proactive participation in health care services. All participants raised their hand when asked if they had a primary care doctor who they regularly see. Many also said that they are consistent with attending appointments for their mental health care and that addressing their mental health challenges has been critical in being successful. Another critical success factor mentioned by participants was having a network of support systems in their life. These ranged from the life skills group they were participating in the day of the focus group to other supports such as AA/NA, church, and the Tri-City Wellness Center in Pomona.



**“I trusted them
and believed
they would deliver.”**

—Focus Group participant

Lastly, several participants mentioned the idea of “Having gratitude for my situation.” Many members say they take each day at a time but that having time for themselves whether it was “quiet time” or “meditation or prayer” was important. One person mentioned “Just having consistency in my life” was essential and having the ability to give back. It should be noted that part of the Life Skills Group is to volunteer as peer mentors for those who are currently experiencing homelessness and living at the shelter. When asked what they thought was needed at the new shelter site, many suggested having a someone like a mentor or a peer who could help shelter participants through that process and provide advice from the perspective of someone who has previously gone through that experience.

Recommendations

When considering the key takeaways from the Summit as well as the focus group with formerly homeless individuals, many of the suggestions, concerns, and feedback are well known to policy makers, homeless services providers, and advocates. In many cases, the input from individuals with lived experience in Pomona affirms multiple strategies identified in the County of Los Angeles's Approved Strategies to Combat Homelessness. For example, County strategies such as enhancing the emergency shelter system that makes shelters open 24/7 and provides more supports closely align with the feedback of homeless and formerly homeless people in Pomona. Other County Homeless Initiative strategies around employment, assistance accessing public benefits, support addressing a criminal record, encouraging landlords to rent to homeless households, and many of the activities funded under the Coordinated Entry System, such as housing navigation and location services and support gathering necessary documents, were all highlighted by those currently experience homelessness and formerly homeless in Pomona.

While much of the feedback from those with lived experience aligned with County priorities and strategies, several new ideas emerged. Specifically, participants proposed having Wi-Fi, larger storage areas and lockers, and assistance dealing with poor credit and unpaid loans were voiced. Also, it was very apparent that people had trouble initially envisioning what their ultimate housing situation would look like. Therefore, staff need to be trained and thoughtful about helping people to articulate their goals and motivating change. Strategies such as ensuring frontline staff are trained in Motivational Interviewing (MI) and trauma-informed approaches are critical. County funding for many homeless system activities require the use of best practices such as MI, trauma-informed care, and Housing First so systems need

to ensure that staff receive training and develop their skills in these areas. Also, as people started to articulate their housing goals, many mentioned that they saw themselves in a shared bedroom or living with roommates, so homeless system needs to find ways to better implement approaches to shared housing whether that involves matching up homeless individuals to live together as roommates or working with homeowners who may have a spare room in their house to rent out to homeless individuals.

Once in a place, participants' stability will depend on having an ongoing relationship with people who can support them in covering the "basics," such as paying their rent, complying with a lease, and passing inspections if necessary are achieved. Housing-based case managers that can fulfill this role and assist with other life skills tasks such as budgeting all in a non-judgmental and compassionate way are critical. Staff also need to focus on ensuring people are accessing community-based health care, including primary care and behavioral health if needed, and that each person has a strong network of social supports that fosters ongoing participation and that they can access in a time of need.

Lastly, the process of engaging those with lived experience, soliciting feedback, and hearing their rich insight about what is needed and what has been helpful, affirmed the importance of including people who are currently and formerly homeless in policy, program, and practice development in a meaningful way as early as people. The City of Pomona and other cities across Los Angeles County need to create ongoing opportunities and platforms for people with lived experience to provide input, be engaged, and participate in advisory and decision making roles, because those who have experienced homelessness are the experts in what is needed and what works.

Appendix A.

Questions from Lived Experience Summit

Input on HSC site:

1. What are your general thoughts about the site?
What are some of your concerns?
2. Would you be interested in going there? Why or Why not?
3. What services at the site are most important to you?
4. Are there services that were not mentioned that you would like to see there?
5. Are you interested in employment opportunities at the site?
6. What is important for City and shelter operators to hear?



General Input

1. What services are you in need of the most?
2. What services do you have a hard time accessing in Pomona?
3. What are the challenges with accessing housing right now?
4. When I say permanent housing what image comes to your mind? What do you see yourself living in? Apartment, shared room in a house, with family or friends? Mobile home? House?
5. If you can imagine this goal, what are current barriers for you with achieving this? What would you need help with to achieve this goals? What would you be willing to do to achieve this goal?
6. How many of you have a hard time envisioning yourself in a permanent place? Why? Why don't you think this will happen?
7. There are many members of the public that feel that persons who are homeless are resistant to accessing any services. If they were standing here right now, how would you respond to them?
8. What are the most important things for the City of Pomona and those working on addressing homelessness across the County should know about homelessness?

Appendix B.

Lived Experience Summit Survey

City of Pomona Lived Experience Summit Participant Survey

Thank you so much for participating in the summit. We value your input to help us better meet the needs of individuals experiencing homelessness in the City of Pomona. As part of the Summit we are hoping to gain a better understanding of who you are. We are hoping that you can complete the survey below. **Please DO NOT put your name on this.**

Gender:	<input type="checkbox"/> Female	<input type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/> Gender Non-conforming
	<input type="checkbox"/> Trans Female	<input type="checkbox"/> Trans Male	
Race:	<input type="checkbox"/> American Indian or Alaska Native	<input type="checkbox"/> Asian	<input type="checkbox"/> Black or African
	<input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	<input type="checkbox"/> White	
Ethnicity:	<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino	<input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic/Latino	
Veteran:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Age: <input type="text"/>

HOUSING

1. Where are you staying right now?

- Street Emergency shelter (including hotel or motel paid for with emergency shelter funds) Other

a. Did you sleep in Pomona last night?

- Yes No

2. Is this your first time being homeless?

- Yes No

3. How long have you been homeless this time?

4. How many times have you been on the streets, in Emergency Shelters, or Safe Havens in the past 3 years?

5. How many months have you been homeless on the street, in Emergency Shelters or Safe Havens in the past 3 years?

- Less than 1 month 1-3 months 4-6 months 9-18 months More than 18 months

6. What do you think is the primary reason for your homelessness?

INCOME

7. Do you currently have a source of income?

- Yes No

a. If yes, what is the source of your income, and how much do you receive every month?

Source of income: _____ Amount received per month: _____

8. Do you have any of the following non-cash benefits?

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)

9. Do you have health insurance?

- Yes No

LIVING IN POMONA

10. Did you become homeless in Pomona?

- Yes No

a. If not, where did you become homeless? _____

b. How long have you been homeless in Pomona? _____

c. If you could live anywhere in Los Angeles County, where would you want to live?

11. What is your connection to Pomona?

- Had house/apartment here Family/ friends here Used to be employed here
- Used to go to school here Pomona has good homelessness service Other (Please specify)
- _____

12. What type of assistance would be most helpful for ending your homelessness?

13. Which of the following types of assistance have you already received?

- Outreach (which agency?) VI-SPDAT Assessment Help obtaining docs
- _____

- I use the Transitional Storage Center lockers I have been asked if I would like housing Help finding work or getting benefits

- I don't want services Other (Please specify) _____

14. Do you think people choose to be homeless? Why or why not?

- Yes No

Explain: _____

Appendix C.

Questions from Focus Group of Housed Individuals

Pre-housing

1. Tell me about how you were able to secure your own place?
2. What were key things that happened to you that allowed you to be successful?
3. What hurdles or challenges did you have to overcome?
4. What were important services that you participated in to get into your place?
5. Was there specific people or staff that helped you? What did they do?
6. What motivated you to get your own place and exit homelessness?
7. Are there things that you wish would have been available to you to make transition from homelessness to housed?

Post-Housing

1. What kind of place are you in now? What is the rent?
2. Do you receive any type of rental assistance? Section 8, supportive housing, rapid re-housing?
3. Do you have a case manager currently? What do they assist you with?
4. What are the key things that are ensuring you are stable in your place?
5. What do you do or who do you reach out to when you have challenges?
6. What things have you been able to do now that you have a home?
7. Are there things that you need?

Incorporating Voices from Those with Lived Experience



CITY OF POMONA
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