

# Domestic Violence and Homeless Services Coalition

Survivor Focus Group Report

October 24, 2018

South Bay Homeless Coalition

Report out by the Client-Centered Services Workgroup



## Today's Presentation

- Methodology
- Demographic data
- Key findings
  - Personal reflections for individuals with lived experience
- Recommendations
- Women's Needs Assessment
- Call to Action

## Methodology

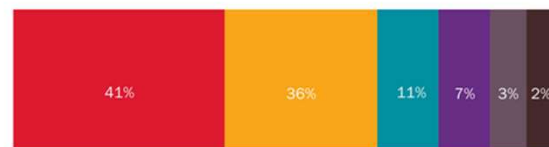
- Participants and Procedures
  - DVHS solicited the help of different domestic violence and homeless service agencies to provide facility space and recruit focus group participants
  - Anyone who identified as a woman who had experienced domestic violence and has been or are at risk of homelessness was asked to participate
  - 12 focus groups were conducted throughout all 8 SPA's of Los Angeles with 81 participants
    - Language and cultural specific groups
- Facilitators
  - Using open-ended interview protocol, members of the client-centered workgroup facilitated groups with the assistance of graduate level interns, and community partners
- Data Analysis
  - Preliminary qualitative analysis and summary report from individual focus groups was done to understand the data and its meaning. Once individual reports were complete, the data was further analyzed across all focus groups and organized into four overarching themes with related subthemes.

## Demographic Data

### AGE



### RACE & ETHNICITY



## Demographic Data

### HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION

- 24% graduated from High School
- 11% graduated from High School or Obtained GED
- 24% received Associates Degree and/or attended some years of college
- 9% graduated with 4 year degree
- 11% currently in school
- 4% obtained or had some years of higher education (master's, PhD, etc.)
- 10% did not graduate from high school
- 8% did not answer



## Demographic Data

### HOMELESSNESS

#### HISTORY OF HOMELESSNESS

- 89% have experienced homelessness
- 10% have never experienced homelessness
- 1% did not respond

#### CURRENTLY HOMELESS

- 65% are currently homeless
- 34% are not currently homeless
- 1% did not respond

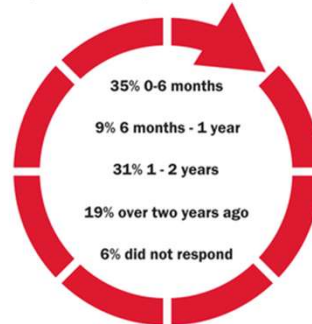
#### DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT SITUATION

- 8% have been homeless less than 1 month
- 21% have been homeless between 1-12 months
- 18% have been homeless for at least a year
- 23% have been housed in the last three years, but it was temporary.
- They have been homeless at least 4 separate times within the past 3 years
- 20% are no longer homeless
- 11% did not respond



### LAST EXPERIENCE WITH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

(physical, emotional, financial, and/or sexual)



## Demographic Data

### MONTHLY INCOME



AVERAGE INCOME OF  
PARTICIPANTS IS \$649.48

### TYPES OF INCOME



56%	CalWORKs
19%	Employment
15%	SSI
8%	Child Support
6%	No income source
5%	General Relief
3%	Did not respond
1%	receive SSDI
1%	Unemployment Benefits

## Key Findings

- Myriad of Barriers Exist to Accessing Services and Safety Leads to Feelings of Hopelessness, Re-Traumatization, and Disconnection
- Survivors Need Advocacy and Support Navigating the Complex Housing Continuum and Service System—from Emergency Shelter, to Permanent Supportive Housing, to Landlord Engagement
- Survivors Shared a Deep Desire to Stay Connected to Their Communities and Social Networks, and a Desire to Advocate for Change on Their Own Behalf
- When Survivors do Receive Trauma-Informed Safe Housing and Support, They Report Feeling More Empowered and Regain Trust in Themselves and the System

**Key Finding 1: Myriad of Barriers Exist to Accessing Services and Safety Leads to Feelings of Hopelessness, Re-Traumatization, and Disconnection**

- Perceive feeling judged and that their experiences are questioned by police and service providers when they are seeking services, often resulting in the women altering their personal narrative for the purpose of receiving services.
- Challenging to access services when needed. Women feel hopeless when services are not available. Intake processes, waitlists, and program guidelines are frequently re-traumatizing.
- Desire for more awareness, access, and easier navigation of impactful services, especially for women whose needs are culturally specific
- Extensive trauma histories and complex experiences when surviving violence and housing instability.
- Living with multiple health complications attributed to domestic violence.

**Key Finding 2: Survivors Shared a Deep Desire to Stay Connected to Their Communities and Social Networks, and a Desire to Advocate for Change on Their Own Behalf**

- Expressed need to live in a community of choice, even if still near former partner. Desire to maintain support network as much as possible, even when fleeing an abusive partner.
- Desire to give back to others in similar situations and participate in advocacy efforts to effect systems change. Increased knowledge about DV dynamics and resources made them feel more empowered to make informed choices for themselves and their children

**Key Finding 3: Survivors Need Advocacy and Support Navigating the Complex Housing Continuum and Service System—from Emergency Shelter, to Permanent Supportive Housing, to Landlord Engagement**

- Resounding need for more assistance to locate safe and affordable housing in a timely manner that coincides with shelter stay.
- Need additional support to ensure landlords do not take advantage of them or discriminate, especially for women without documentation.

**Key Finding 4: When Survivors do Receive Trauma-Informed Safe Housing and Support, They Report Feeling More Empowered and Regain Trust in Themselves and the System**

- Lengthy process to regain trust with others, including themselves, friends/family, and service providers.
- Feeling that safety increased when helpful services were obtained; feeling safe and that their voice was regained once they were free from the abuse, received adequate legal assistance, and were provided with other needed services.

*“Even if I am not completely independent,  
I feel much stronger than before.”*

## Focus Group Recommendations

- Increase access to permanent housing for survivors
- Reduce barriers and increase access to services
- Understand trauma and it's impact
- Increase domestic violence advocacy and education
- Reasonable accommodations for survivors with unique needs

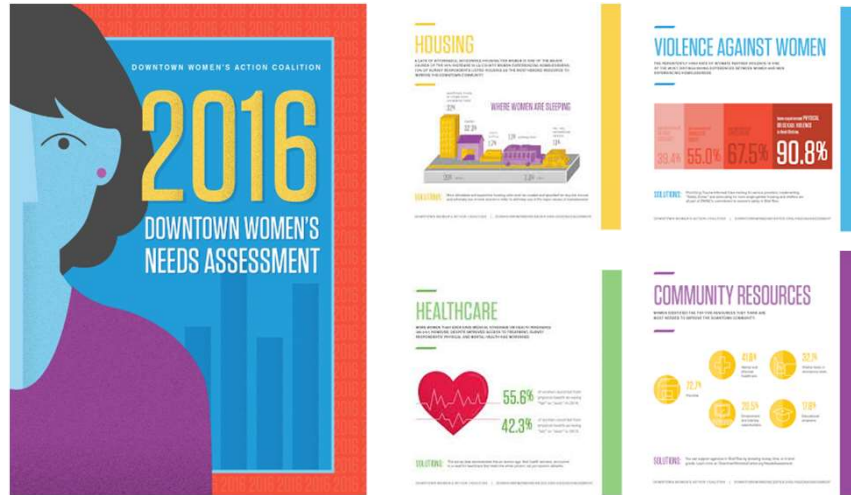


## Full Report



<https://www.downtownwomenscenter.org/dvhsc/>

## Downtown Women's Needs Assessment



## Let's Take Action TOGETHER!

- Los Angeles Women's Needs Assessment
  - Help facilitate listening Sessions
  - Help administering needs assessment survey in Spring 2019



## Thank You!

- Client-Centered Services Workgroup Members:
  - Victoria Hurtado, Martha Delgado, Araceli Patino, Ambe Regina, Rachel Kassenbrock, Ann English, Amy Turk, Jerry Jones, Sylvia Williams, Larae Cantley, Lucia Pena Corral, Jacqueline Luna, Linda Arnold, Araceli Mendoza, Laura Estrada, Quiana Jackson, and Cristina Cortes
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  - The People Concern, Special Service for Groups, Downtown Women's Center, Peace Over Violence, The Salvation Army, Jenesses, Rainbow Services, Door of Hope, Valley Oasis, PATH, Little Tokyo Service Center, and Center for Pacific Asian Family
- Evaluation:
  - National Alliance for Safe Housing