

## COMMUNITY HOMELESS AWARENESS DEVELOPMENT

- Provides a consistent set of information for the general public
- Started with “Homelessness ‘101’ City Training” module, developed by LA County CEO/Homeless Initiative Office, selected cities and COGs in SPA 3/San Gabriel Valley and SPA 8/South Bay
  - Modified the “city staff” version to reflect the different audience
- This briefing available to any community organization
  - Can modify it, with recommendations to just remove some “myth busters” slides for time
  - Can tailor to reflect homelessness in their city

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## Debunking Homelessness Myths

*A community guide on the nature of homelessness and how to connect services to those in need*



Prepared by the  
South Bay Coalition to End Homelessness  
Website: [sbceh.org](http://sbceh.org), Email: [contactSBCEH@gmail.com](mailto:contactSBCEH@gmail.com)

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## OVERVIEW

- What homelessness looks like in the South Bay
- Causes of homelessness
- Homelessness Facts vs. Myths
- LA County's response to homelessness and how to connect people to services
- Closing Thoughts
- Appendix: Contact Information for South Bay Services

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## What Homelessness Looks Like in the South Bay



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## WHO IS CONSIDERED HOMELESS?

People who do not have a fixed place to live, including those who live:

- On the sidewalks, in tents, makeshift shelters cobbled together with tarps
- In vehicles, including cars, campers and RVs
- In shelters, or motels where government is paying for the stays



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## HOW DO WE KNOW HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE AFFECTED BY HOMELESSNESS?

We get our homeless statistics from the County's annual **Homeless Count** conducted at the end of January

- Results become the official record of homelessness
- The Count captures demographic information along with what type of dwelling people are using
- The stats help to determine the type of resources needed in each region across LA County



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## CHARACTERISTICS OF SOUTH BAY HOMELESSNESS

- Homelessness has been **increasing since 2013**, mirroring the rise throughout LA County
- **Virtually every city** has unhoused people, with the **City of Los Angeles' portion of the South Bay historically having about 35-40%** of the overall number of homeless persons



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## CHARACTERISTICS OF SOUTH BAY HOMELESSNESS

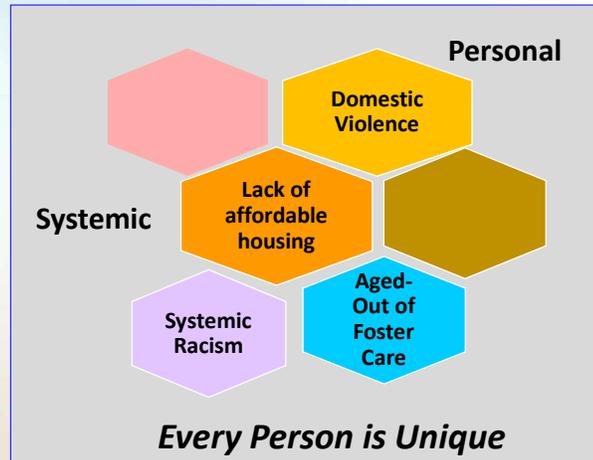
- About 40% of those experiencing homelessness are **living in vehicles**
- **Most are male**, making up about 2/3's of the overall number
- In terms of age, the vast majority – about 60% - **are between the ages of 25-54**
  - Homelessness among **seniors (55+)** is a **growing segment**, with about 25% falling into this age group



Visit [lahsa.org](http://lahsa.org) for all the detailed stats

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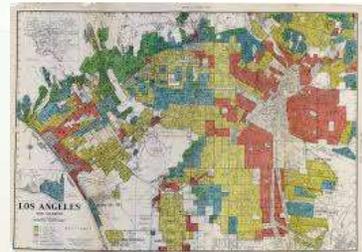
## Causes of Homelessness



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## CAUSES OF HOMELESSNESS: Systemic Challenges (partial list)

- Severe lack of affordable housing
- Unemployment & low wage jobs
- Wages not keeping pace w/rising rents
- Poverty
- Gender, age, sexual discrimination
- Insufficient public assistance program
- Gentrification that causes a sudden and drastic increase in local housing costs
- Systemic racism, especially in the housing sector (e.g., “redlining”)
- Individuals with implicit bias, such as landlords and lenders



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## CAUSES OF HOMELESSNESS: Personal Factors Causing Homelessness (partial list)

- Low income, including having a fixed income; loss of income
- Domestic Violence
- Human Trafficking
- Physical or Mental Health challenges
- Substance Use
- “Aged out” of foster care
- Sexual orientation causing family conflict
- Unresolved trauma, including Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome
- Prison or jail release
- Immigration

Many causes of homelessness have **nothing** to do with personal choice

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## Homelessness Facts vs. Myths



Homeless

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## FACTS VS. MYTHS

*Myth: “All homeless people have a mental illness or are on drugs”*

**Fact:** Based on the Homeless Counts, year-to-year **approximately 25-30% of the those experiencing homelessness have a severe mental illness, and approximately 30% have a substance use disorder**

- Many self-medicate with drugs or alcohol as a coping mechanism for surviving on the streets, with research showing **substance use is more likely to be a result of homelessness, rather than a cause**



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## FACTS VS. MYTHS

*Myth: “People on the streets don’t want help, they like this lifestyle and the freedom”*

**Fact:** No one wants to be homeless: **it’s dangerous, stressful, and humiliating.** Living on the streets statistically shortens one’s life, “aging” people by 20 years. In recent years, over 1,000 people have died on the streets of LA County.

### Some people choose to sleep outside rather than go into a shelter for several reasons

(Note: these do not apply to all shelters):

- Only a limited amount of their belongings are allowed
- Pets are not welcome
- Feeling unsafe among strangers (women and young adults especially)
- Feeling closed-in as beds/cots might be arranged closely
- Feeling not welcomed because of serious physical or mental illness
- Shelter is several miles from their neighborhood
- Families fear separation

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## FACTS VS. MYTHS

*Myth: “Homeless people are dangerous” and  
“They are all criminals”*

**Fact:** People who are homeless **are more likely to be victims of a crime** than to commit a crime, especially among women and young adults

- There is an alarming trend in the South Bay that they are becoming the targets of gangs
- It is important that we not vilify people without homes, but instead, see them as neighbors in need of shelter and housing

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## FACTS VS. MYTHS

*Myth: “Arresting the homeless is the best solution”*

**Fact:** It is **not against the law to be homeless**

- The 2019 “Boise” court decision upheld the Ninth Circuit’s 2006 ruling that persons experiencing homelessness **cannot be punished for sleeping on the streets when there are not adequate local shelter options**
- Arresting people for petty “nuisance” crimes might take people off the streets temporarily, but they are quickly released from jail
- This cycle burdens the justice system and provides no real, lasting solutions



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## FACTS VS. MYTHS

*Myth: "They just made bad choices"*

**Fact:** People's actions are often **influenced by circumstances beyond their control**, such as losing a job, being a victim of domestic violence, and having a physical or mental disability



- People experiencing homelessness live in **"survival mode"** day-to-day, finding it very difficult to make longer range plans
- Their daily frame-of-mind is often about how to find food and water, and **how to stay relatively safe** avoiding dangerous street situations

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## FACTS VS. MYTHS

*Myth: "People experiencing homelessness are just lazy and need to get a job"*

**Fact:** Many have full-time jobs but do not earn enough to pay for the high cost of LA housing. According to recent Homeless Counts, **about 60% of newly homeless individuals cite economic hardship for the reason they become homeless.**

### Barriers to Employment

- Disabling conditions
- Criminal record
- Inconsistent access to showers
- Transportation challenges
- Lack of a permanent address
- People of color often experience prejudice and hidden racism

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## FACTS VS. MYTHS

*Myth: “We did not see any families during the Homeless Count, so there must not be very many experiencing homelessness”*

**Fact:** Families **know how to stay well-hidden** because they are afraid their children will be taken from them. Unsheltered families are more commonly living in vehicles than in tents.



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## FACTS VS. MYTHS

*Myth: “Most people experiencing homelessness are from out of town”*

**Fact:** The annual Los Angeles Homeless Counts **consistently show that LA is home to the vast majority of those experiencing homelessness:**

- Approximately 80% of unsheltered Angelenos have been here for more than 5 years
- Approximately 70% have been in LA County over 10 years



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## FACTS VS. MYTHS

*Myth: “Homeless people don’t need cell phones which is considered a luxury”*

**Fact:** People experiencing homelessness typically have a **basic cell phone** that they received free through government programs. Like us, phones are the way they stay connected to the world.

- They access the Internet where it is free, such as in libraries, fast food eateries, and coffee shops
- Phones are a lifeline to their case manager, and to employment and housing opportunities



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## FACTS VS. MYTHS

*Myth: “We don’t know how to end homelessness”*

**Fact:** The good news is we **do** know how to end homelessness. Using a proven method called “**Housing First**,” we know through several national and local studies, that getting people into stable housing **without preconditions** and then **following up with supportive services and treatment** provides successful long-lasting solutions.

- The primary challenge in ending homelessness in LA County is the severe lack of affordable housing, making it difficult to find units for rent.
- There is also a severe lack of rental subsidies for people who need them.



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# Homeless Services and How to Connect People to Them



## HOMELESS SERVICES

- There are many **publicly-funded homelessness programs** and for those at-risk of becoming homeless
- Many cities also have **privately-operated programs** such as food pantries, meal programs, clothing closets, free services at local laundromats, temporary shelter and more -- often operated by the faith community



**Reducing homelessness takes everyone working together**

## LA COUNTY'S HOMELESSNESS RESPONSE SYSTEM: Coordinated Entry System (CES)

- CES provides a **unifying formal framework and coordination of services** among regional agencies and County departments
- CES also partners with community stakeholders such as local cities, law enforcement, schools, faith community, medical centers, and more

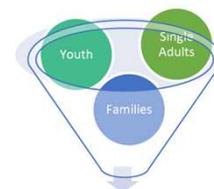


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## CES STRUCTURE

- Because of their unique characteristics, CES has a separate system for:
  - **Adults** ages 18 years and older
  - **Youth** ages 18-24 and under, often referred to as Transitional Age Youth (TAY)
  - **Families** with minor aged children, or pregnant with first child
- Each system provides case managers to walk along side participants to help them navigate the complex homelessness network



Coordinated Entry System

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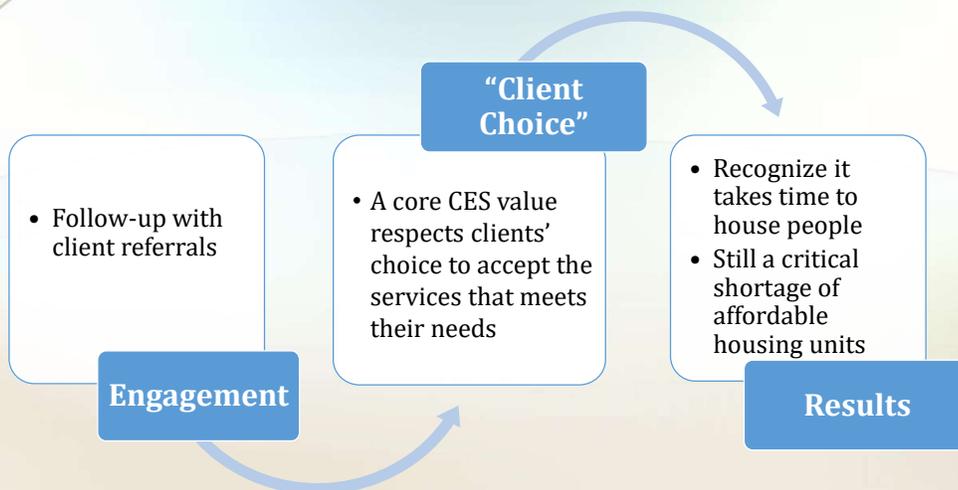
## CES SERVICES

- The CES systems provide the following services:
  - ✓ Homelessness Prevention
  - ✓ Street Outreach
  - ✓ Interim Housing
  - ✓ Mental Health Programs
  - ✓ Substance Use Programs
  - ✓ Permanent Housing
  - ✓ Domestic Violence Programs
  - ✓ Housing Stability Case Mgmt
  - ✓ Legal Services
  - ✓ Employment Services
  - ✓ County and Federal Benefits Enrollment

CES is all about **moving people into housing** and working with them to ensure their stability so they do not become homeless again

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## WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT WITH CES?



**Thank you for your understanding and patience that this process can take months or longer**

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## UNIVERSAL REFERRAL SYSTEM: HOMELESS OUTREACH PORTAL, [la-hop.org](http://la-hop.org)



- This countywide program is designed to assist people living “unsheltered” - on the streets, in tents or makeshift shelters, or in vehicles - by first connecting them to street outreach staff
  - They in turn will make referrals on their behalf to the CES services they need



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## HOMELESS OUTREACH PORTAL [la-hop.org](http://la-hop.org)

- **Everyone is encouraged to use this reporting portal**, including city officials and staff, law enforcement, the business and faith communities, and the general public
- It provides:
  - A centralized system to coordinate the region’s outreach staff
  - An understanding of where street outreach services are needed
  - A single point of contact for making referrals, relieving you of having to determine someone’s situation or health conditions
- This portal is used only to dispatch street outreach teams
  - For connections to other services like Prevention programs and assistance for people staying in motels, please contact a CES member agency

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## HOW DOES la-hop.org WORK?

- A street outreach team will be sent to the location you provide within 72 hours
  - Depending on the request, a team with specialized team may be deployed (e.g., one that has a mental health or substance use clinician)
- They will try up to three times to find the person
- If you optionally provide your name and contact information, they may try to reach out to see if you have additional information to help locate them
- The unhoused individual will not be informed as to who used la-hop.org to request services for them

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## GENERAL REFERRAL: CALL “2-1-1”

- LA County provides this “211” number – along with its companion website at [www.211la.org](http://www.211la.org) - as a guide to services, resources, and information about shelters and housing, food programs, mental health programs, healthcare, reentry programs, and more
- **Families with minor aged children access CES homelessness services through “211”**



- Please note there can be long hold times.

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## EMERGENCY REFERRALS

- For medical and mental health **emergencies, call “911” immediately** instead of using LA-HOP.org or “211”
- If you are concerned about **illegal activity, please call your local law enforcement agency**
- For those **fleeing a domestic violence situation**, contact a local South Bay DV agency below, or use the LA countywide number: 800-978-3600

### South Bay Domestic Violence Agencies’ 24-Hour Hotline Number

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| ✓ <b>Rainbow Services</b><br>310-547-9343 (English & Spanish)                                  | ✓ <b>1736 Family Crisis Center:</b><br>213-745-6434 (English & Spanish)  |
| ✓ <b>Center for the Pacific Asian Family</b><br>800-339-3940 (Asian/Pacific Islander dialects) | ✓ <b>Women Shelter of Long Beach</b><br>562-437-4663 (English & Spanish) |

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## CLOSING THOUGHTS

**We invite you to learn more from homelessness staff and the newly housed to deepen your understanding**

### Videos

- Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority Myths Video (10 minutes)  
<https://www.lahsa.org/videos?v=236-countering-myths-of-homelessness>
- KNBC Myths Video (under 3 minutes) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9IuDiXjOvcw>

### Written Success Stories

- Los Angeles County Homeless Initiative  
<https://homeless.lacounty.gov/stories/>
- Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority <https://www.lahsa.org/news?article=642-housing-success-story-henry>

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# APPENDIX:

## SOUTH BAY CES CONTACT INFO

### CES for Families

To Get Connected: Call "211," LA County's Information and Referral Line

- Households with legal custody of 1+ minor age child(ren).
- Households currently without minor age children where the mother is pregnant.
- Households with qualified dependent over age 18 who are (a) incapable of self-sustaining employment by reason of mental or physical disability, and (b) are dependent upon the head of household for support and maintenance.
- Literally homeless, including living out of a vehicle. If housed, currently in a housing crisis.
- Income at or below 50% annual Area Mean Income.
- Callers will be asked to complete a quick survey to determine the best options for their family.
- CES is a countywide program so the operator will send a referral to the closest CES for Families provider.



#### HARBOR AND CENTRAL AREA HUB

*Includes: Avalon, Carson, Harbor City, Harbor Gateway, Lomita, Palos Verdes Peninsula, San Pedro, Wilmington, Torrance, Redondo Beach, Hermosa Beach, Manhattan Beach, El Segundo*

**Hub Coordinator: Sharon Stewart**  
Email: sstewart@harborinterfaith.org

**Staffed by Harbor Interfaith Services**  
599 W. 9<sup>th</sup> St., San Pedro, CA 90731  
Hours: Monday-Friday,  
8:30 am-12:30 pm, 1:30-5:30 pm  
Phone: 310-831-0589

#### LONG BEACH HUB

*Includes: Long Beach*

**Hub Coordinator: Veronique Johnson**  
Email: vjohnson@ccharities.org  
**Staffed by Catholic Charities**  
123 E. 14<sup>th</sup> St, Long Beach, CA 90813  
Hours: Monday-Friday, 8:30 am – 4:00 pm  
Phone: 213-251-3432

#### NORTH HUB

*Includes: Alondra Park, Del Aire, Gardena, Hawthorne, Inglewood, Lawndale, Lennox*

**Hub Coordinator: Andrew Hyvonen**  
Email: andrewh@epath.org

**For anyone fleeing a domestic violence situation, contact either**

**Rainbow Services**  
**24-Hour Hotline: 310-547-9343**

**1736 Family Crisis Center**  
**24-Hour Hotlines:**  
**562-388-7652 or 310-370-5902**

### Service Planning Area (SPA) 8 South Bay

### Coordinated Entry System (CES)

**For youth, individuals, and families experiencing homelessness**

A collaborative of



## CES for Individuals

### What is CES?

The Coordinated Entry System (CES) brings together existing regional programs under one collaborative framework connecting youth, adults, and families experiencing homelessness to the best resources that meet their needs. It is implemented throughout Los Angeles County, ensuring a consistent response and complete coverage of those experiencing homelessness no matter where they live.

### What are Regional "Hubs"?

The South Bay is divided into regional hubs to better serve the entire South Bay. A lead agency covers the communities within its assigned hub.

#### STREET OUTREACH

Specialized teams go to where people are living: on the streets, in encampments, in their vehicles.

**To report someone in need of  
Street Outreach**

Go online to [www.LA-HOP.org](http://www.LA-HOP.org)

Or email [outreach@harborinterfaith.org](mailto:outreach@harborinterfaith.org)

#### CRISIS HOUSING

This provides 24-hour emergency housing. Specialized crisis housing for women, men, and families is also available for those with a history of domestic violence or human trafficking.

**Veterans and Male Adult Individuals**

**Contact: US Veterans Initiative (Inglewood)**

Phone: Kevin Kinsey, 310-863-5837

After Hours: 310-486-0025

**Persons with Domestic Violence or  
Human Trafficking History:**

**Contact: 1736 Family Crisis Center**

24-Hr Line: 562-388-7652 or 310-370-5902

#### HARBOR HUB

*Includes: Avalon, Carson, Harbor City, Harbor Gateway, Lomita, Palms Verdes Peninsula, San Pedro, Torrance, and Wilmington*

**SPA 8 Regional Coordinator:**

**Breanna Jajairam**

Email: [bjajairam@harborinterfaith.org](mailto:bjajairam@harborinterfaith.org)

Phone: 424-276-3602 x294

Access Site (Adults and Youth)

**Harbor Interfaith Services**

599 W. 9<sup>th</sup> St, San Pedro, CA 90731

Weekdays 8:30 am-12:30 pm, 1:30-5:30 pm

Phone: 424-276-3602

Access Site (Veterans)

**MHA Operation Healthy Homecoming**

Christian Douglass

Phone: 424-570-0241

#### NORTH HUB

*Includes: Alandra Park, Del Aire, Gardena, Hawthorne, Inglewood, Lawndale, Lennox, and Westmont*

**Hub Coordinator: Mary Agnes Erlandson**

Email: [maerlandson@ccharities.org](mailto:maerlandson@ccharities.org)

Access Site (Adult and Youth)

**St. Margaret's Center**

10217 S. Inglewood Ave, Lennox, CA 90304

Weekdays 8:30 am – 12:00 pm, 1:00 – 5:00 pm

Phone: 310-672-2208

Access Site (Veterans)

**US Veterans Initiative (Inglewood)**

733 Hindry Ave, Inglewood, CA 90301

Monday-Thursday, 8:30 am – 3:00 pm

Friday: 8:30 am – 12:00 pm

Phone: Kevin Kinsey, 310-863-5837

#### LONG BEACH HUB

*Includes: Long Beach*

**Hub Coordinator: Marjorie Solorzano**

Email: [msolorzano@mhala.org](mailto:msolorzano@mhala.org)

**Mental Health America Los Angeles**

Phone: 562-437-6717 x287

Access Site (Veterans)

**US Veterans Initiative (Long Beach)**

2001 River Ave, Long Beach, CA 90810

Weekdays 8:30 am – 5:00 pm

Phone: 562-200-7300

#### BEACH CITIES HUB

*Includes: El Segundo, Hermosa Beach, Manhattan Beach, and Redondo Beach*

**Hub Coordinator: Lisa Gray**

Email: [lgray@harborinterfaith.org](mailto:lgray@harborinterfaith.org)

Phone: 310-770-0761

#### CES for Youth (ages 16-24)

*Includes: The entire South Bay/ SPA 8 Region*

**Coordinator: Chris Jenne**

Email: [cjenne@harborinterfaith.org](mailto:cjenne@harborinterfaith.org)

Harbor Interfaith Services

Access Sites

**The Good Seed**

1230 Pine Ave, Long Beach, CA 90813

7 Days a Week 9:30 am – 6:30 pm

Phone: 855-Youth-LB (855-968-8452)

Sanctuary of Hope

13245 Hawthorne Blvd, Hawthorne, CA 90250

Weekdays: 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

Phone: 424-374-8038

St. Margaret's Center

10217 S. Inglewood Ave, Lennox, CA 90304

Weekdays 8:30 am – 12:00 pm, 1:00-5:00 pm

Phone: 310-672-2208

**Youth Street Outreach (ages 12-22)**

**1736 Family Crisis Center**

Phone: 310-871-1950