



HOMELESS
FOCUS GROUP - I

3/8/04

A focus group comprised of residents of a winter shelter in South Los Angeles was brought together by the LA Coalition to End Hunger & Homelessness to provide recommendations to Bring LA Home – 10 year plan to end homelessness.

This is the first of five focus groups to be convened in March 2004. The attendees for this focus group were all residents of the winter shelter and participants of various programs at People Helping People. This report is intended to serve as recommendations which will be submitted to be considered for the draft plan.

The following is a summary:

Location: 5701 S. San Pedro St., LA, CA

Time: 1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Date: March 8, 2004

Subject	Comments
<i>“Follow Up Teams”</i>	<u>Rec:</u> Shelter programs need to create an after care component for people when they move on into permanent housing. Follow up teams should provide support, mentoring, build trust, teach life skills, help set priorities, build self-esteem through home visits and, after a period of time wean off the services. These after care services should last 3 years for the person to be fully integrated into society after having been homeless.
<i>Civil Rights</i>	<u>Rec:</u> Monitor police activity and abuses of the homeless population.
<i>Clothing Donations</i>	<u>Rec:</u> Give large corporations incentives to donate clothing to shelters with employment programs so people can look clean and well dressed when they apply for jobs.
<i>Educational Opportunities</i>	<u>Rec:</u> Create more education opportunities to people who utilize the shelter system.
<i>Employment Issues</i>	<u>Rec:</u> Every time the Community Redevelopment Agency uses public dollars to fund a project such as, shopping centers, airport expansion, etc, near a shelter site with an employment program. Homeless program participants completing employment training should be given priority and must be hired at a living wage. <u>Rec:</u> Fund programs to build/lease/rent larger facilities specifically for training and employment.
<i>Expand Services</i>	<u>Rec:</u> Increase services in South Los Angeles. There are not enough services and people are tired of having to go to Skid Row to get the services they need.
<i>Federal Food Surplus Programs</i>	<u>Rec:</u> Re-instate dairy surplus give away to support low income individuals.

<i>Food Programs</i>	<p><u>Rec:</u> Fund more food programs in areas without enough services. This is important in South LA because there are not enough services for people on the streets and housed people on benefits whose food stamps are not enough.</p> <p><u>Rec:</u> Allow food donations from large companies and film crews to homeless and low income families by changing laws to decrease liability for companies that donate.</p>
<i>GR Assistance and Shelter Extension</i>	<p><u>Rec:</u> GR and emergency shelter time should be extended to one year so that people living in shelters can save the money they have received over the course of one year. This way they will have some funding as they exit the facility to use towards a security deposit, utilities set up, etc.</p> <p><u>Rec:</u> Create at least two to three, year round, 50-bed, 24/7 shelter sites per SPA.</p>
<i>Homeless Peace March</i>	<p><u>Rec:</u> Organize a peaceful homeless march in Los Angeles and Sacramento to make legislators and housed residents aware and also to create a unified voice to support jobs, housing, outreach, etc.</p>
<i>Housing Assistance</i>	<p><u>Rec:</u> Re-instate the Housing Authority's program of providing first and last month rent funding.</p> <p><u>Rec:</u> Shorten waiting list for Section 8.</p> <p><u>Rec:</u> Create a housing clearinghouse with information about where affordable units are available.</p>
<i>Money Management Assistance</i>	<p><u>Rec:</u> The County, the state or another entity should become the payee for homeless, mentally ill clients in need of money management so they can have their rent and utilities paid every month and remain housed. The remainder of the money could be used how they choose.</p> <p><u>Rec:</u> All shelters county-wide must have a money management program so that residents can begin to save money and also learn how to save money.</p>
<i>Permanent Housing Expansion</i>	<p><u>Rec:</u> Expand permanent housing by utilizing vacant buildings all over the city and county of LA. They can be rehabilitated to SROs and other types of housing (shelters, etc).</p> <p><u>Rec:</u> Have funding available to non-profit organizations so they can rehabilitate HUD homes to be used for affordable housing with support services.</p> <p><u>Rec:</u> Need more SRO housing for individuals and housing for couples <u>without</u> special needs.</p>
<i>Public Service/Public Education Campaign</i>	<p><u>Rec:</u> Need to create an awareness of the programs that exist by advertising them as well as making others aware of the current homeless crisis.</p>
<i>Street Outreach</i>	<p><u>Rec:</u> Increase street outreach teams.</p>
<i>Training</i>	<p><u>Rec:</u> Set training standards for service providers in the areas of mental health, substance abuse and customer service. All staff levels of agencies providing homeless services must be trained in how to treat the homeless population with dignity and respect - this <u>cannot</u> be overlooked any longer.</p>

<i>Transportation Subsidies</i>	<u>Rec:</u> Create a special category with reduced fare for bus/transit passes for people on GR and/or homeless individuals without benefits.
<i>Voting</i>	<u>Rec:</u> Mandate that a minimum of 1 voting site per LA city council district should be located at a homeless shelter. This is important because lack of transportation to polling sites makes it difficult to go vote. More of the homeless population would vote if this was done.