



LA's HOPE

Homeless Opportunity Providing Employment

The Need:

On any given night in Los Angeles County, there are an estimated 83,000 homeless persons living on the streets or shelters of Los Angeles County. Of this number, 35,000 are chronically homeless individuals, who have been homeless continuously for a year or more or who have had four or more episodes of homelessness in the last three years. Thirty-four percent of these individuals are diagnosed with mental illness.



Background:

LA's HOPE (Los Angeles's Homeless Opportunity Providing Employment) was born out of a grant opportunity that was part of the President's New Freedom Initiative to end chronic homelessness in 10 years.

The City of Los Angeles received funding from the Departments of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), and Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to provide housing and employment services to 76 chronically homeless individuals with psychiatric disabilities.

Partners:

The City of Los Angeles Community Development Department (CDD) responsible for employment services, and the Housing Authority (HACLA) are the fiscal agents on the project. *LA's HOPE* collaborates with seven other public and private agencies, each playing a unique role within the grant. The partners include: Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (DMH), Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), Goodwill Southern California (Goodwill), Portals House, Inc., San Fernando Valley Community Mental Health Center, Inc., Shelter Partnership, Inc., and South Central Health and Rehabilitation Program.

Design:

Outreach & Housing

Outreach workers from Portals, SCHARP and SFVCMHC identified *LA's HOPE's* 76 homeless participants at three LAHSA-operated, overnight emergency shelters. These participants receive services through an existing mental health program (AB2034) to stabilize their mental health issues and address co-occurring disorders (e.g. substance abuse, physical health issues). The AB 2034 program is a comprehensive State-funded initiative established to provide wrap-around services to individuals who are homeless with mentally illness. Housing specialists from these agencies help the participants to secure permanent, affordable housing with supportive services in the private market using their federal housing certificate to pay a portion of their rent. Upon enrollment, *LA's HOPE* participants receive mental health

services, including medication support, 24/7 crisis counseling, case management, and move-in assistance.

Employment

Goodwill's staff, in partnership with their AB2034 case-manager, begins developing and implementing a customized employment plan for the participant once the individual moves into housing. Goodwill begins the initial discovery process by assessing the participants skills and abilities, work history, and areas of interest in relation to employment. When the participant is ready and able to move forward with their plan, they are referred to the City's Work-Source Centers (One-Stops) for case management services, job placement services and follow-up. Goodwill, with their expertise in serving persons with disabilities, remains connected with the participant and acts as a liaison and technical assistant with the One-Stop and AB2034 agency staff. Other participants may choose to attend school; complete GED requirements or participate in paid work experience, volunteerism or vocational training programs prior to job placement. Funding for these employment-related services are available under this five-year grant.

