

### **Institutional Structure**

#### **1. Describe actions taken during the last year to overcome gaps in institutional structures and enhance coordination.**

Several departments undertook activities to improve the City's overall and grant institutional structure during 2005-2006 that as a result had a direct and positive bearing on the ability of these departments and related City agencies to meet specific Action Plan program and project activity goals.

1) Starting in the 30<sup>th</sup> Program Year, the Housing Department took over administration of the City's Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG), and the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funded contracts with the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA). This has facilitated better coordination of homeless services with housing production programs as well as policy development.

The Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) is the largest manager of affordable public housing in Southern California and coordinates with LAHD and a variety of other agencies on a wide variety of housing-related issues and housing supportive services. For example, HACLA administers three key programs to address the needs of the homeless. HACLA coordinates with the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority and homeless contractors such as Skid Row Housing Trust in applying for annual Super NOFA funding for both the Shelter + Care and Section 8 Single Room Occupancy (SRO) Moderate Rehabilitation programs.

These HUD-funded programs address the permanent housing needs of the homeless, and demonstrate the ability of two major City agencies to integrate institutional resources and services in achieving two goals: helping the homeless to self-sufficiency and promoting affordable and decent housing. HACLA, the Los Angeles County Office of AIDS Programs and Policy, and the HOPWA unit of the Los Angeles Housing Department are coordinating implementation of *Connections*, a national three-year study to research the impact that stable housing assumes in the progression and management of HIV.

An example of a successful and sustained collaborative effort to overcome gaps in the City's grant institutional structure and enhance coordination of programs can be found in the City's AIDS Coordinator's Office (ACO.) The ACO works closely with the California State Office of AIDS, and relationships continue to be established with a broad range of HIV prevention contractors, community-based AIDS treatment and services organizations, and social service, faith-based, research, and business institutions outside of the traditional AIDS service organization community. These collaborative efforts allow the ACO to plan, implement, and improve appropriate HIV/AIDS programs for the City and ensures continuous cross communication regarding improvement and refinements to current HIV prevention strategies, treatment, and social services provided to residents.

The ACO also staffs the Mayor's AIDS Leadership Council and as such helps guide community input from service providers and other experts in the field. Through a seat on the Los Angeles County HOPWA Advisory Committee (LACHAC), the AIDS Coordinator's Office also plans and coordinates with the City Housing Department's Housing Opportunities Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) program regarding housing and supportive services assistance programs for persons living with HIV/AIDS. The Housing Department filled the HOPWA Coordinator position in the first quarter of 2006. As a result, the AIDS Coordinator's Office and the HOPWA Coordinator have been better able to coordinate programs across the continuum of care.

Through these relationships, the ACO integrates and disseminates HIV/AIDS prevention messages through City departments and the Neighborhood Council structure, and assures that federal funds are not used for duplicated efforts.

Another example is the Pro-Active Code Enforcement (PACE) program, which is a unique, inter-departmental project. Staff of the PACE works in close coordination with other City agencies, including the Mayor's Office, City Council offices, Department of Public Works, Department of Transportation, Recreation and Parks, Housing Department, Police Department, and City Attorney's office to eliminate blight, gain compliance, and educate the community on code enforcement issues and remedies.

**A major challenge to development of a strong institutional structure and avoiding service gaps is the sheer size and extent of need in the City.** Consolidated Plan resources are insufficient to fill the gap. Future reductions to CDBG and other HUD Entitlement grants will have a strongly adverse effect on the City's ability to provide needed services to residents. Despite an improving economy, the majority of jobs created are in the low-paid service sector; the large and growing number of working poor in the City assures that demand will be sustained for public services in the future.

**Key to a strong institutional structure is the ability to develop and share data on the progress and status of beneficiaries through the development of integrated information systems.** In previous CAPER reports, both the ISIS and Workforce Development Center systems were described. However, there are now several other data information systems in place that to various degrees track the progress of a variety of beneficiaries from initial intake, through provision of services, and to completion of participation.

For example, since 2001, LAHSA has pursued a collaborative strategy to coordinate planning with stakeholders within the Los Angeles Continuum of Care (CoC) as well as with three other CoC systems in Los Angeles County to ensure the development and implementation of a Countywide Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Software has been selected, the first pilot implementations completed, and the second begun. Discussions have begun to determine the feasibility of linking the HMIS with other information systems in the City and County.

**Another obstacle is that institutions that play a role in delivery of community development programs often have different requirements, and therefore have different priorities and strategies to achieve them.** Requirements are most often imposed by Congress, and reflected through the regulations of federal funding agencies. In several cases, goals may overlap or conflict. Work is continuing at the federal level to standardize performance reporting, particularly through the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART), developed by the federal Office of Management and Budget, will play an important role in evaluating federally funded housing and community development programs and pinpoint similarities and overlap in them, which will undoubtedly result in increased streamlining of such programs, development of standardized, measurable, and verifiable priorities and strategies for use of these funds; and in encouraging regulatory relief.

**A major obstacle to stable delivery of services through a variety of institutions is the continuing trend in reduction of federal and state funds for a variety of needed programs while the demand for public services remains sustained.** In addition, foundation giving continues to decline dramatically in Los Angeles, given a flat economy and the movement of large corporations out of Los Angeles, which are traditionally large givers. There are no ready answers for this dilemma; as of this writing, the future of the CDBG program is in some doubt; for the 2006 Federal budget, the President proposed folding the program in with several other, smaller economic development programs into a new initiative, Strengthening America's Communities (SACI), and has proposed a 25% reduction in CDBG funding in the 2007 budget.

There are also many external barriers that affect the full institutional growth of the City of Los Angeles in a number of areas.

- **Geographic and Demographic Factors**

Several barriers that are relatively uncontrollable include the sheer size, ethnic, language, and racial diversity and population of the City of Los Angeles, coupled with high rates of poverty. The attractiveness of the year-round climate is an important factor in determining in-migration and the concomitantly greater need for services.

The size of the City and its influence on neighboring cities and counties prevents isolation of community development needs from other jurisdictions, such as homelessness, difficult. Poverty, overcrowding, inadequate transportation, and lack of basic services are issues that cross city boundaries. Organizations such as the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) recognize the regional nature of housing and economic development, and encourage regional planning among its member cities wherever possible.

- **Language Barriers**

The City's practice has always been to fund nonprofit organizations to provide services because the City believes they are better able to reflect and therefore serve the many diverse communities in Los Angeles. It is estimated that over 140 languages and dialects are spoken in the City and nearly 100 in the city's schools. English as a Second Language classes (ESL) are often oversubscribed, and social service providers are overtaxed by translation requirements. Many low-income residents are discouraged from seeking needed services, including housing and job assistance, by language barriers. The Human Services Delivery System, using CDBG and CSBG resources, funds several ESL, literacy and citizenship programs through local agencies. The City is also re-establishing funding (May 2006) for the Office of Immigrant Affairs in the Mayor's Office, which will facilitate the movement of new residents into the Los Angeles mainstream, including provision of referrals to available supportive services.

- **Private Sector Investment**

There are several conditions that limit private sector investment in distressed areas of the City, thereby negatively affecting its ability to successfully leverage Consolidated Plan funds for needed affordable housing and economic development projects. Some of the barriers include the sheer extent of blight and toxic contamination, time required for development, the cost of assembling and clearing sites, the scarcity and cost of available, buildable sites, obsolete infrastructure, cost of development in relation to risks, and incompatible land uses. Affordable housing subsidies are steep, requiring substantial public dollars and proposals of such developments often encounter strong neighborhood opposition.

- **The Number of Homeless in Los Angeles**

The homeless estimate and count are vital tools for determining the appropriate provision of housing and services to the large number of persons, in various demographic categories and regions that find themselves homeless. In 2005, HUD mandated that all continuums conduct a biennial homeless count during the last week of January. LAHSA conducted its first enumeration in January 2005. This homeless census was the largest community enumeration ever performed, and the first for Los Angeles County.

The 2005 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count was performed by using HUD-recommended practices for counting homeless persons and estimating the number of homeless people on any given time and over the course of a year. This comprehensive study included a (1) street count, (2) shelter and institution count, (3) general telephone survey, and (4) a sophisticated statistical analysis used to project homelessness in non-enumerated areas.

The 2005 Count resulted in an estimate that in the Los Angeles CoC there were approximately 88,291 homeless persons on any given night and 221,236 homeless persons over the course of a year. The County of Los Angeles covers approximately 4,000 square miles.

## City of Los Angeles, California

Due to the large geographic area enumerated, budget constraints, and to minimize the potential effect of duplicate counting, it was necessary to conduct the count over a period of three days. Los Angeles County is divided into eight distinct Service Planning Areas, also known as SPAs. Three SPAs per day were enumerated on January 25 and 26, and two SPAs were enumerated on January 27. Of the 1,829 census tracts in the LA CoC, 510 were fully enumerated. Additional statistical methods were used to project the balance of the Continuum's homeless population.

The typical profile of homeless people resembles the characteristics of many low-income families and individuals with fragile safety nets. In addition, the homeless population is geographically dispersed across the County and not just concentrated in the Downtown Los Angeles area. Results from the report indicate that many homeless people were functioning members of society, but experienced tragic events in their life or barriers that led them to their current situation.

Based on the report, 24% indicated the loss of job or unemployment was the primary cause of their homelessness and almost half (47%) were either renting a home or apartment prior to becoming homeless. Almost 35% were experiencing a physical disability, and 34% were experiencing a mental disability. In terms of education, 38% had a high school degree or GED and 16% had some college education but had not received a degree. And, finally, 44% of all respondents indicated they were not receiving any money from government sources.

Recently, there has been momentum to begin addressing homelessness in Los Angeles. After the announcement of LAHSA's initial key homeless count findings in June 2005, the County Board of Supervisors of Los Angeles committed \$24.6 million for shelter and services. The County has also made a commitment of \$9 million in service funding for homeless families since January 2005. In November 2004, the voters in the State of California passed Proposition 63, which will provide much needed funding to address mental illness, particularly for homeless people.

Mayor Villaraigosa has made a commitment on behalf of the City for \$50 million for housing and services to homeless people, along with supporting a \$1 billion bond measure to develop more affordable housing citywide. These initial commitments can be seen as a down payment towards the leveraging of many more resources to help address the homeless crisis in Los Angeles.

The data provided by the 2005 Count serves as a baseline of the number and characteristics of homeless people in the LA Continuum of Care. The census and survey data presented in the study furthers the understanding of likely causes and contributing factors to homelessness. The data will help to evaluate our current strategies for addressing homelessness as well as to develop new approaches. This data is considered vital to the implementation of the countywide 10-year plan to end homelessness.

The experience gained by LAHSA in managing the 2005 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count has provided a foundation upon which future enumerations will be designed and conducted.