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Case Study: Permanent Supportive Housing in Los Angeles

Public-private collaboration to end homelessness in Los Angeles includes services to address trauma for children.

What was the problem?

Los Angeles (LA) County, like the rest of California, faces a housing crisis with [75,000 individuals and 10,700 families](#) experiencing homelessness; many of these families include young children.

The long-term consequences of homelessness are severe for young children. The absence of basic needs impairs healthy development and exposes children to early adversity and trauma, which has implications for children in their early years. This is especially troubling as 90 percent of brain development occurs by age 5.

3,000

[children under age 6 experience homelessness](#) on any given night

2-3X

higher rate of [future mental and physical health challenges](#) for children experiencing homelessness

2X

greater likelihood to [repeat a grade or be diagnosed with a learning disability](#) for children experiencing homelessness

What was accomplished?

Brought together by **United Way of Greater Los Angeles** (UWGLA), a group of nonprofits, city and county officials, funders, and housing contractors and developers collaborated on a multipronged strategy to address homelessness through trauma-informed approaches. These efforts have made meaningful progress in housing and supporting families, helping approximately 100,000 people over the past five years through:

- **Public investment in permanent supportive housing.** Spurred by pilot investments from local nonprofits and philanthropy, in 2016 Los Angeles voters approved [Proposition HHH](#), which allowed the city to issue \$1.2 billion in housing bonds. As of December 2025, [12,121 total new units had been constructed](#), 8,513 of which were funded by Proposition HHH. The city has surpassed its goal of building 10,000 units by 2026.
- **Private investment in affordable housing.** UWGLA's **Affordable Housing Initiative** has mobilized [\\$175 million in private and philanthropic capital](#) to create more than 1,000 affordable housing units. By securing private financing from banks, corporations, and foundations, the initiative bypassed the processes that make publicly funded housing difficult and expensive to produce, reducing development cost by [40 percent and construction time by 50-75 percent](#).
- **Strengthened public homeless services systems.** Through UWGLA's **Home For Good** initiative, a coalition of actors strengthened the county's systems for transitioning all individuals, including children, into housing by:
 - Developing LA County's Coordinated Entry System, which assists in coordinating and prioritizing existing resources for unhoused individuals.
 - Passing [Measure H in 2017](#), which resulted in \$355 million annually going directly to homelessness prevention and supports, including mental health care and job training, for 10 years. This was followed by [Measure A in 2024](#), which replaced Measure H to channel over \$1 billion annually, in perpetuity, for housing, homelessness prevention, and mental health supports.
 - Developing a model for integrated, trauma-informed service delivery to assist homeless families and training county agencies to implement the model.

What role did philanthropy play?

Key backers included both local California-focused funders and national funders who focus on addressing homelessness and its associated impacts. Philanthropic resources went toward:

- **Attracting new private and public investments.** An initial \$1 million matching grant led to an additional \$62 million in philanthropic funding from the **Home For Good Funders Collaborative**, in turn driving \$5 billion in public investment.
- **Piloting innovative projects.** Philanthropy invested in several innovative programs, including the UWGLA's Affordable Housing Initiative, which funded new affordable housing units and the evaluation of programs for children and families and incentivized new cost-effective development methods.
- **Building government capacity.** Philanthropy has invested in new roles within government, providing dedicated capacity to coordinate the effort, train case managers, and expand the county's new Coordinated Entry System.
- **Supporting advocacy efforts.** Philanthropy provided 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) funding for the organizing and advocacy work that led to the successful passage of Proposition HHH, Measure H, and Measure A.

What were key milestones?

Within five years of launching the Home For Good Collaborative, LA County made historic investments to develop more affordable housing. The public and private sectors continue to collaborate to end homelessness.

- **2011** The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation used a matching grant of \$1 million to attract additional funding for the Home For Good initiative. The coalition coordinated efforts across stakeholders to advance the effort to increase access to affordable housing.
- **2011-2020** Social sector organizations and initiatives conducted pilots that served as the foundation for public programs. For example, First 5 LA allocated \$35 million to create 86 new affordable housing units and a rental assistance program for families with children under age 5. Evaluations of the pilot demonstrated its positive impact on child and family well-being and highlighted the need for greater coordination of public services, including trauma and mental health counseling.
- **2016-2017** In 2016, Proposition HHH passed, enabling Los Angeles city officials to issue \$1.2 billion in bonds to support the development of permanent supportive housing units. The following year, Measure H passed, complementing Prop HHH by directing public funds to homeless service systems.
- **2021** UWGLA launched its Affordable Housing Initiative, raising private capital to streamline the development of affordable housing. The initiative partnered with housing developers owned or led by women, people of color, and LGBTQ+ residents to help low-income community members find safe and stable homes.
- **2024** Los Angeles voters pass Measure A, increasing the tax-generated funds from the previously passed Measure H, and removing the 10-year expiration date on the funding.

How was this achieved?

The coalition for affordable housing in Los Angeles leveraged four key elements to enable success:

GRASSROOTS ADVOCACY	INCREASED FUNDING	COORDINATED EFFORT	GOVERNMENT CAPACITY
Local organizations and individuals mobilized to engage and educate voters about Proposition HHH, Measure H, and Measure A.	Philanthropic funding unlocked additional capital from other philanthropists and public institutions.	Social sector leaders organized under one initiative to strategically coordinate their efforts and allocate resources.	Government agencies strengthened their program capabilities by adding positions, improving training, and updating systems.

Who made it happen?

A cross-sector coalition contributed to the effort's success, each bringing unique assets and roles:

ANCHOR ORGANIZATIONS	PARTNERS ACROSS MULTIPLE SECTORS	COMMUNITY VOICES
<p>UWGLA houses the Home For Good initiative that is advancing solutions to homelessness broadly in Los Angeles.</p> <p>First 5 LA is leading targeted efforts to address homelessness in young children.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City- and county-level elected officials coordinated with Home For Good to advocate for Proposition HHH and Measures H and A to expand the housing supply and Los Angeles's homeless services system. • Private and public investors made up the Home For Good Funders Collaborative, the largest effort of its kind, which funded the coalition's efforts. 	<p>Families, community members, and direct service providers provided testimony and advocacy.</p>