



DOWNTOWN **WOMEN'S** CENTER

For Immediate Release: January 30, 2020

STAGGERING DATA ON WOMEN'S HOMELESSNESS RELEASED IN LANDMARK STUDY FROM DOWNTOWN WOMEN'S CENTER

LOS ANGELES — The Downtown Women's Center (DWC) — the only organization in Los Angeles focused exclusively on serving and empowering homeless and formerly homeless women — **today** is releasing the [Los Angeles Women's Needs Assessment](#). Published in partnership with the USC Sol Price Center for Social Innovation, this is the first report of its kind to study the needs and conditions of homeless women across the City of Los Angeles.

DWC will host a press event on **Thursday, January 30 at 10:00 a.m. PT** to mark the new report's release. Mayor Eric Garcetti, Supervisor Hilda Solis and other leaders will give remarks.

"If we truly want to confront the homelessness and housing crisis in our city, we must ensure women receive the services and support they need to stay safe and secure," said **Mayor Eric Garcetti**. "The Downtown Women's Center is at the heart of our work to lift up homeless women and put them on a path to healing, housing, and hope — and this landmark report will help us understand the magnitude of this challenge and ultimately solve it."

The report release comes at a time when women's homelessness has reached crisis conditions. Nearly 11,000 [women are experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles City](#), which represents a 13% increase in just the last year (2019 Homeless Count). The Los Angeles Women's Needs Assessment finds that homelessness is a dangerous, traumatic experience for women, and there is a critical shortage of services and housing available to them.

The community-based report surveyed 305 women in LA, and provides crucial data including:

- **Homeless women frequently experience gender-based violence**, with a majority (60.2%) having experienced some form of violence in the last year.
 - More than half of women surveyed (53.2%) have experienced domestic or interpersonal violence in their lifetime.
- **Women of color are disproportionately affected by homelessness**. While Black women make up [10% of the population of Los Angeles City](#), they accounted for nearly one-third (28.7%) of women surveyed. A majority of newly homeless women were women of color: 24.1% were Black, and 35.4% were Latina.
- **LGBTQ women are more likely to have experienced sexual assault or sexual violence**. More than one-third (35.7%) of LGBTQ women surveyed reported experiencing sexual assault in the last year, compared with 27% of women surveyed.
- **Housing continues to be the most critically needed resource yet also the most difficult to access**. The vast majority of women (82%) indicated they have struggled to access permanent housing.



DOWNTOWN **WOMEN'S** CENTER

- **Homeless women are more likely to be older than the general population of women in Los Angeles.** Nearly half of women surveyed (48.9%) were age 51 and older.
- **Accessing necessary medical services remains a challenge.** Although 84.2% of women indicated they had some form of health insurance, a majority (63.2%) reported visiting the emergency room within the last year, suggesting they are not accessing primary or preventative care.

“We must address this shameful ‘crisis within a crisis’ of women experiencing homelessness across Los Angeles,” said **Amy Turk, incoming Chief Executive Officer of the Downtown Women’s Center**, “These new data show that women continue to endure the harsh indignities of homelessness while remaining invisible and often forgotten on the streets. It’s time we provide housing and services that directly meet their needs. These women deserve to be seen and to be heard.”

Women’s homelessness has expanded beyond Skid Row and is now prevalent in every community in Los Angeles. While homelessness is still concentrated in Skid Row, women’s homelessness increased dramatically in other communities, including [35% in South LA](#) within the last year (2019 Homeless Count).

“Women living in poverty are stigmatized,” said **State Senator Holly Mitchell**. “It is imperative that we invest in collecting the right data to develop sound policy to derail the cycle of homelessness for women.”

The Downtown Women’s Center led this project and developed survey questions with input from partner organizations, other service providers and women who have experienced homelessness. The University of Southern California Sol Price Center for Social Innovation conducted the data analysis for this report as part of the university’s demonstrated commitment to ending homelessness in Los Angeles. The report culminates with a series of critically needed policy and resource recommendations to address women’s homelessness.

Funding for the project was made possible by the City of Los Angeles, Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, and the Blue Shield of California Foundation.

###

*The **Downtown Women’s Center (DWC)** is the only organization in Los Angeles focused exclusively on serving and empowering women experiencing homelessness and formerly homeless women. DWC envisions a Los Angeles with every woman housed and on a path to personal stability. Our mission is to end homelessness for women in greater Los Angeles through housing, wellness, employment, and advocacy. For more information, visit www.downtownwomenscenter.org.*

Contact: Lorena Sanchez
lorenas@downtownwomenscenter.org
213.706.5559