Executive Summary

Under a September 2011 contract with the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, Abt Associates has been conducting an evaluation of the Hilton Foundation’s Chronic Homelessness Initiative with the goal of answering the overarching question: Is the Chronic Homelessness Initiative an effective strategy to end and prevent chronic homelessness in Los Angeles County? The evaluation is designed to provide both interim milestones related to improving the systems for serving people experiencing chronic homelessness and estimates of the effect of permanent supportive housing (PSH) on its residents and on the problem of chronic homelessness. Since the beginning of the Chronic Homelessness Initiative, the Foundation has distributed more than $42.3 million in multi-year grants to 21 nonprofit groups working in LA. The LA grantees include nonprofit groups working on regional systems change and capacity-building, as well as local groups providing direct services to chronically homeless individuals, PSH developers, and public policy advocates.

In this report, the third of the annual updates, the evaluation team documents the significant progress that has been made on each of the six primary Hilton Foundation Chronic Homeless Initiative goals, summarized in the table below. Many of the five-year goals have been exceeded, and most others are on track to be reached within the next two years. These accomplishments are impressive; even more notable is the extensive systems change that has occurred, which promises to ensure continued success.

Summary of Progress on Hilton Foundation Initiative Goals, August 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation of the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation Chronic Homelessness Initiative</th>
<th>2014 Report</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Progress Toward Goal To Build Demonstrated Action by Elected and Public Officials To Support Addressing Chronic Homelessness</td>
<td>Significant progress was made over the first three years of the Initiative in engaging public officials in addressing chronic homelessness. However, elected officials, especially newly elected leaders, will need to be proactively and continually engaged over the last two years of the Initiative to maintain progress in this area.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Progress Toward Goal To Leverage $205 million in Private and Public Funds for Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)</td>
<td>As of August 2014, $13.75 million in private funds and $277 million in public funds had been leveraged or aligned through the Home For Good Funders Collaborative. Public resources have been committed through the Home For Good Funders Collaborative at an unparalleled pace and the public funding goal has already been surpassed. Noteworthy progress was also made on the private goal.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Progress Toward Goal to Create 5,000 Units of PSH</td>
<td>Through the Funders Collaborative as well as direct grantmaking, the Foundation has supported the creation or dedication of 3,736 units of PSH for chronically homeless people (75 percent of the five-year goal). Due largely to the availability of public resources for housing vouchers, the scattered site unit creation goal has already been surpassed, and the Initiative is making steady progress on its project-based unit creation goal.</td>
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<td>Progress Toward Goal to Establish a System of Prioritizing Chronically Homeless Persons for PSH</td>
<td>Over the course of the last year, the coordinated entry system (CES) has expanded from the Skid Row pilot into all areas of the county, and providers and community leadership have demonstrated buy-in. Progress has been achieved appropriate to the third year of the Initiative, but there is still work to do to systematize the approach and align it with the resources necessary to support prioritization and expedient housing placement.</td>
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<td>Progress Toward Goal to Increase Capacity of Developers and Providers to Effectively Provide PSH</td>
<td>To end chronic homelessness, PSH providers must have capacity to provide services effectively. PSH providers are showing improvement in all measures identified on the “capacity scorecard,” created for the 2013 Report from the Home For Good Standards of Excellence.</td>
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<td>Progress Toward Goal to House 1,000 Most Vulnerable Chronically Homeless Persons in PSH and Prevent 1,000 Persons from Becoming Chronically Homeless</td>
<td>The Foundation has directly supported the placement of 2,367 chronically homeless individuals in PSH, more than double the original placement goal of 1,000. The direct Foundation-funded efforts fall far short of the 1,000-person prevention placement goal. In the absence of clear community-wide strategy to address chronic homelessness prevention, it seems unlikely that the number of people experiencing chronic homelessness will reach zero as those who are on the streets age into chronic homelessness and people who are vulnerable continue to become homeless.</td>
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Primary Recommendations

A number of recommendations for improvement emerged from this year’s evaluation. Activities in all of these areas are already under way at some level within Los Angeles, but we provide the following recommendations to reinforce their importance to the Initiative. Further details are provided for each recommendation in Section 3.

1. **Develop a political engagement strategy** that reinforces support among existing champions and cultivates understanding and support among new leaders. In particular, consider re-engaging existing signatories to Home For Good, especially local leaders, and evolving the Home For Good leadership structure to formally engage the public and nonprofit agencies in the governance process.

2. Refine the PSH housing and services funding model and **identify sustainable sources of funding to support PSH services and operations**. Analyze data to better understand the actual costs of delivering PSH housing and services and the feasibility of engaging mainstream service system in supporting long-term PSH clients. Based on findings, develop funding projections and an investment strategy for Funders Collaborative grantmaking, complementary private funding, and funding from public agency partners.

3. Support strategies to **expand capital resources** for PSH unit creation and preservation, including development strategies by subarea so elected and public officials can build support for targeted investments, advocating for the city and county of Los Angeles to dedicate a portion of redevelopment agency “boomerang” funds to PSH development, and aligning funding to help PSH developers secure capital resources needed to modernize or improve older PSH projects.

4. Support strategies to **increase the supply of scattered site PSH** by establishing formal arrangements between housing authorities, CES, and service providers in a coordinated effort to increase the use of homeless limited preferences to provide access to Housing Choice Vouchers and increase use of Shelter Plus Care vouchers for chronically homeless people, including those prioritized and matched through CES.

5. Establish formal arrangements between **housing authorities, CES, and providers** to ensure CES coordinators and community-based organizations are able to be responsive to an influx of vouchers and housing authorities are able to accept CES clients while still operating within HUD and Fair Housing requirements.

6. Continue to support efforts to **bring CES to scale**, including exploring use of CES as a platform for accessing aligned initiatives and specialized housing. Cultivating an effective inventory management system and clear means of consistently identifying and prioritizing individuals for housing based on their vulnerability and need will both improve access to housing and promote a greater understanding of need and housing supply. As the technology platform of CES improves, it may also be possible to further use CES in conjunction with aligned initiatives and specialized housing such as 10th Decile Projects.

7. **Leverage grantmaking resources to strong community agencies by funding their engagement in underserved areas.** This would allow for continued support of strong agencies while expanding their reach systemwide and creating a community of practice.

8. Coordinate with relevant stakeholders to create a **chronic homelessness prevention strategy**. Without a clear understanding of the scope of need and a clear strategy to address the problem, we anticipate the community will continue to see inflow into chronic homelessness. Consider dedicating resources to an in-depth study of the issue and developing a community-wide strategy for appropriately responding to highly vulnerable populations, including the possible development of an additional, discrete PSH inventory target to meet the identified need.

Significant progress has been made in achieving the five-year goals of the Chronic Homeless Initiative. Consideration of the evaluation recommendations may help to advance efforts by building off prior successes and learning from less fruitful experiences. While the five-year goals remain important markers of progress, the next step for the Initiative will be to look ahead past the end of the Initiative in 2015. In planning for future goals and activity, the evaluation team recommends that the Foundation and Home For Good consider the overall unmet need for PSH for both high and lower priority populations and identify the number of units and funding commitments needed to fill that gap countywide and locally.
**CES Pilot Phase Process and Results (through August 2014)**

1. **Establish System**
   - Results
     - Expanded CES from one pilot community in 2013 to 14 communities in 7 service planning areas (SPAs) in spring 2014
     - Funded expansion throughout all 8 SPAs in summer 2014

2. **Assess Clients**
   - Results
     - Assessed 4,779 chronically homeless individuals
     - 50% of clients are “3s” or “4s” on the prioritization scale
     - 35% are women
     - 10% are veterans

3. **Housing Navigation**
   - Results
     - 1,044 chronically homeless clients are ready to apply for housing (collected all primary documents and have a Housing Navigator)
     - 22% of those assessed

4. **Access Bridge Resources**
   - Results
     - CES applicants have identified 347 temporary or “bridge” housing units that will be set aside for individuals waiting for a housing match

5. **Match to Housing**
   - Results
     - Established client and vacancy tracking via Google platform in 2013
     - Coordinating closely with LAHSA to transition client, inventory, and vacancy tracking to HMIS in 2014-2015

6. **Apply for Housing**
   - Results
     - CES applicants have identified 1,080 voucher-supported housing units (project- or tenant-based) and an additional 298 affordable housing units that will fill vacancies through the CES

7. **Place in Housing**
   - Results
     - In the two pilot 100 day campaigns, 156 people were placed in housing (37 during the Skid Row pilot and 119 during the expansion pilot period)

**Recommendations**

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Further details are provided for each recommendation in the *Evaluation of the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation Chronic Homelessness Initiative 2014 Report*. 

*Proposed commitments; actual commitments may change based on final funding levels.*

*Source: United Way Greater LA; Community Solutions*