



Policy Brief: Examining Three Encampment Resolution Efforts in Los Angeles: Lessons Learned and Looking Forward

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Over the past decade, homeless encampments in Los Angeles have grown and spread to areas such as highway on-and off-ramps, busy intersections, industrial areas, and along public parks and waterways. In 2022, as encampment resolution efforts were scaling across Los Angeles and the state of California, the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation engaged Abt Global to study three homeless encampment resolutions being implemented in Los Angeles County. The purpose of the research was to understand the unique approaches service providers used in responding to encampments and moving people inside. As the Los Angeles' region's elected officials, funders, homeless service system leaders and providers, and other community organizations continue to invest in efforts to bring people living in encampments indoors using non-punitive methods, this study offers several key findings to consider.

- **The encampment resolution efforts successfully moved clients inside quickly, keeping them engaged and providing safety and privacy in interim housing.** Despite the common perception that people experiencing chronic or persistent homelessness are hesitant to move indoors, resolution efforts quickly moved clients into interim housing.
- **Intensive outreach and continuous engagement with people living in encampments resulted in high levels of trust.** The three encampment resolution efforts included in this study used a different approach to outreach and engagement than what is traditionally offered. Each of the encampment resolution teams conducted sustained outreach to people living in the targeted encampments. During most weeks provider teams visited the encampments daily, bringing food, water, hygiene supplies, and anything else the encampment resident asked for (e.g., blankets, tents, RV supplies). Each of the service providers had a small group of staff members (i.e., usually 3 or 4) who consistently interacted with encampment residents. This purposeful staffing model helped to build strong relationships between resolution clients and homeless outreach staff, which can make clients more likely to engage with services and accept the offer of housing.
- **A shortage of permanent housing complicated efforts to move clients from interim housing.** A lack of permanent housing (both units and rental subsidies) delayed efforts to move clients into permanent

Encampment resolutions are a promising model that successfully move people indoors but lack a clear pathway to permanent housing without dedicated resources.

Encampment resolutions provide an opportunity to quickly move people indoors and connect them with resources and public benefits while working to secure permanent housing. ***This study shows the importance of having permanent housing (subsidies and units), because without it, people exit back to unsheltered homelessness or remain in interim housing for long periods of time.*** Without a defined, clear pathway to permanent housing, encampment resolutions are limited in reaching their ultimate goal – resolving homelessness. Los Angeles officials need to continue to invest in permanent housing so that people participating in encampment resolutions can progress from interim to permanent housing and not experience interim housing as a path back to homelessness ultimately losing trust and hope in the homeless service system.

housing after staying in interim housing. Many clients remained in the motels and later exited back to unsheltered or sheltered homelessness when the lease on the motel ended. All providers described the need for more permanent supportive housing in their community that could provide encampment residents with long-term, stable housing and intensive supportive services. Ensuring that clients not only enter but maintain permanent housing requires considerations such as location (e.g., neighborhood or proximity to certain services, family, or other support systems), type of unit, ability to bring pets, and eventual rental cost.

Los Angeles' Response to Homeless Encampments

Over the past five years, leaders in Los Angeles County and City have established non-punitive processes to clear and close encampments to both meet the needs of encampment residents and respond to the concerns of community members that live near encampments. County and City responses to encampments since 2020 included:

- The development of protocols for cleaning and clearing encampments;
- Pausing encampment closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Implementing Project Roomkey, a state program that moved people experiencing homelessness into motels and hotels during the pandemic; and,
- Augmenting street outreach to provide place-based responses, called encampment resolutions.

In addition to County and City approaches to clearing and closing encampments, Los Angeles area homeless service providers in conjunction with local philanthropists and the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), piloted the ***"Encampment to Home" resolution model*** for larger encampments. This non-punitive approach combined high-touch outreach services to engage people living in the encampment during a set timeframe with dedicated housing units for them to move into. Introduced in 2021, the state of ***California's Encampment Resolution Fund (ERF) program*** provides additional resources to communities to respond to



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large encampments and meet the needs of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness. Over five rounds of grants, ERF has provided over \$900 million dollars in funding for encampment response.ⁱ In December 2022, Mayor Karen Bass introduced the ***"Inside Safe Initiative,"*** a City-led approach to quickly conducting engagement in encampments and leveraging City-owned property for temporary and permanent housing. In August 2023, Los Angeles County introduced its own encampment resolution program, ***Pathway Home***.

These efforts, along with daily street outreach conducted by homeless service providers, LAHSA, the

County's Departments of Health Services and Mental Health and other community organizations, have helped thousands of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness move into shelter and housing. Over the past two years, Los Angeles County and City have seen a decrease in unsheltered homelessness. The 2025 Point-in-Time Count showed unsheltered homelessness decreasing by 9.5 percent in the County and 7.9 percent in the City of Los Angeles.ⁱⁱ

However, recent changes to the federal landscape may affect local responses to encampments. The U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Grants Pass v. Johnson* in 2024 allows cities and counties to pass and enforce anti-camping laws.ⁱⁱⁱ Fearing punishment, people in encampments may resist engaging with outreach workers and refuse the offers of assistance. In response to the *Grants Pass* ruling California, in May 2025 Governor Newsom released a model ordinance for California cities and counties, encouraging them to "address unhealthy and dangerous encampments."^{iv} In July 2025, President Trump signed an executive order that moves to punitive approaches for people experiencing unsheltered homelessness, including enforcing camping bans and expanded forced commitment and treatment practices. Changes in state and local policies related unsheltered homelessness, including camping bans and other punitive approaches, may disrupt outreach and engagement to people living in encampments.

Three Place-Based Encampment Resolutions in Los Angeles

Abt researchers studied three place-based encampment resolutions between 2022 and 2024, using a mixed methods research design collecting and analyzing both qualitative and quantitative data. This section describes the three place-based encampment resolutions.

City of Long Beach. The City of Long Beach's Homeless Services Bureau (HSB) received an ERF grant and a grant from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation to conduct outreach and engagement and provide interim housing for encampment residents in two city neighborhoods, the East Anaheim Corridor and Downtown Long Beach. Outreach workers from HSB conducted outreach at the two encampments for about one month and then moved encampment residents into interim housing in nearby motels. While in the motels, encampment residents received daily case management, housing navigation, referrals to other services such as medical care, and assistance applying for public benefits. Additionally, encampment residents from the Downtown Long Beach encampment received daily meals and harm reduction supplies, as well as on-site mental health counseling when they were moved to the motel.

San Fernando Valley. LA Family Housing (LAFH) and West Valley Homes Yes! (WVHY) received funding from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation to respond to tent and RV/vehicle encampments across Los Angeles County's Service Planning Area (SPA) 2. LAFH responded to large encampments near the North Hollywood Metro station, the intersection of Roscoe and I-405, and Paxton Park. WVHY focused on RV and vehicle encampments and continued responding to encampments across SPA 2 where they had been conducting ongoing outreach. In 2022, LAFH and WVHY jointly responded to a large tent and RV encampment in Chatsworth, and in 2024 they began outreach at several encampments in Sylmar. The service providers conducted outreach and engagement in each of these encampments for 90 days to one year. Outreach

workers began building rapport by offering food and water, connections to medical care, transportation to medical appointments, and pumping RV sewage and assisting with minor RV repairs. Once the outreach workers enrolled clients into the LAFH and WVHY programs, they offered case management, referral to other services, housing navigation, placement in interim housing, and worked to identify sustainable permanent housing placements.

Los Angeles River Basin. LA City Council District 4 (CD4), in conjunction with People Assisting the Homeless (PATH), used ERF funding to respond to encampments along the LA River Basin. CD4 and PATH staff conducted outreach to people living in encampments along the river for six months. Outreach and engagement in the LA River Basin encampment resolution efforts included case management, housing navigation, development of housing plans, and referral to medical and mental health care services. Encampment residents also received food and grocery gift cards. Encampment residents received offers to move into city-funded interim housing sites, motel rooms, or in substance use treatment facilities. Some encampment residents entered permanent housing.



Photograph Credit: Abt Global

Approaches to Outreach, Engagement, and Case Management

A primary component of encampment resolutions is the outreach and engagement of encampment residents. ***The service providers leading the encampment resolution efforts focused on building strong relationships with encampment residents to help them navigate the homeless service system and move indoors.***

Outreach teams used existing information from previous outreach to the targeted encampment area and data from the local Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to identify people eligible to participate in the resolutions. Outreach staff began by talking with encampment residents to gauge their interest in participating in the resolution and moving inside. Outreach teams visited the encampments daily or weekly to continue engagement, assess needs, and provide food, water, blankets, tents, and hygiene items.

Each lead homeless service provider had 3–4 staff members that consistently interacted with encampment residents. ***This approach allowed encampment residents to build trust and rapport with provider staff.*** After encampment residents moved into motels or interim housing, service provider staff shifted from outreach to case management activities, connecting people to benefits, making referrals to other services, or continuing housing navigation.

Interim and Permanent Housing Options and Client Outcomes

The three place-based encampment resolutions moved people inside using interim housing, most often in the form of private motel rooms.

Permanently housing encampment residents proved a significant challenge for all three efforts. While the Long Beach resolution planned to have U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Emergency Housing Vouchers for clients to transition to, these ultimately were not available. As a result, clients remained at the motel for more than a year waiting for an available long-term housing subsidy. While some Long Beach residents secured subsidized housing through other channels, many ultimately exited back to homelessness. Service providers in the San Fernando Valley and Los Angeles River Basin resolutions struggled to find permanent housing placements for their clients. The tight housing market across Los Angeles County meant that even for clients that secured a housing voucher or time-limited subsidy, it was very challenging to find a unit to rent. Also, delays in the completion of new permanent supportive housing units meant that clients could not be placed immediately into these units. Instead, they had to enter interim housing or stay in their encampments until the units opened.

Interim vs. Permanent Housing

Interim housing is any type of short-term shelter such as crisis housing, motels, bridge housing, and emergency shelter.

Permanent housing includes Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), which is housing couple with supportive services, Time-Limited Subsidies (TLS) that provide short-to-medium term rental assistance, and federal housing vouchers. Vouchers target rental assistance to specific populations that can allow families or individuals to find their own housing in the private rental market.

HMIS data shows the housing situation of encampment resolution clients when they exited from each of the three resolutions. *Housing outcomes for resolution clients highlighted a significant need for more permanent housing, as many individuals returned to unsheltered homelessness or transitioned into other temporary situations after exiting the program.*

- In Long Beach, 38 percent of clients returned to unsheltered homelessness after exiting the motel, while another 35 percent exited to temporary housing situations including emergency shelter (15 percent), living with friends or family (12 percent), and transitional housing (8 percent). Twenty-five percent exited from the resolution to permanent housing through an ongoing rental subsidy. Two percent exited to a long-term care facility or nursing home.
- In the San Fernando Valley, 48 percent of clients returned to unsheltered homelessness after exiting the encampment resolution and 28 percent exited to temporary housing situations including emergency shelter (26 percent). Twenty percent of clients in the Valley exited to permanent housing, primarily with an ongoing housing subsidy such as a housing voucher (17 percent). Three percent exited to an institutional setting, including long-term care or nursing facilities, jail or prison, and substance use treatment.
- The Los Angeles River Basin resolution also had high rates of people remaining homeless (61 percent), though some of those clients chose not to engage in the resolution effort. About a third of clients from

this resolution exited into permanent housing with an ongoing subsidy. Only a small portion exited the resolution to interim housing (5 percent).

Findings from the Study's Public Perception Survey

As part of this study, the Abt team conducted two online surveys of housed residents surrounding the three encampment resolution areas. The survey asked respondents about their interactions with and observations of homeless encampments in their neighborhood.

- Most survey respondents observed encampments in their neighborhood.
- More than half of survey respondents felt sad and worried of encampments and their residents. Less than a third felt angry about encampments.
- Social media played a key role in how 18–39-year-olds received information about homelessness in their community.
- More than half of the respondents felt that building more housing was the solution to homeless encampments.
- Most respondents believe that it is the responsibility of the state government to address homeless encampments, followed by the LA County government.

The Use of Punitive Approaches to Encampments

Responses to homelessness encampments have shifted in recent years, with elected officials questioning whether law enforcement should be involved in responding to encampments. For the three encampment resolution efforts included in this study, law enforcement did not play a meaningful part in moving encampment residents into housing. The City of Long Beach was the only site that planned to use police officers in their initial encampment outreach. The City of Long Beach has a team of Quality of Life police officers who receive specialized training to assist people experiencing homelessness in the community, including helping with outreach and conducting encampment clean-ups. However, the team from the City's HSB did not need them to the extent they initially planned.

Some communities across the country, including Los Angeles, have created specialized teams of police officers who are trained responding to people experiencing homelessness.⁹ In these communities, homeless service system leaders have thoughtfully and meaningfully engaged with law enforcement to respond to encampments. Officers receive training in mental health, substance use, and trauma informed care, and their goal is to connect people experiencing homelessness to the homeless services system. Frequently, these specially trained officers work in partnership with outreach staff to help move people in encampments into housing. In LA County, the Sheriff's Department deploys officers with LAHSA's outreach teams to engage with people experiencing unsheltered homelessness living in certain areas of the county, including flood prone areas.

Looking Forward

There is wide criticism across various audiences that more people do not reach permanent housing as a result of encampment resolutions. However, encampment resolutions were not designed as a pathway to permanent housing. They were created in response to political pressures and concerns from housed residents about the visibility of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness in their community. While permanent housing options have been limited in these resolutions, the findings from this study highlight that the resolutions can successfully engage people living in encampments, bring them indoors, and connect them with services. The study also shows that more permanent housing resources are needed (both subsidies and units) to move people to housing permanency. Many question if the City and County should continue to invest in encampment resolutions if there is not a clear path to permanent housing for encampment residents. Are encampment resolutions a temporary fix if residents move into interim housing only to exit back to the streets in a few weeks or months? Is it harder to engage encampment residents a second or third time if the first encampment resolution did not lead them to permanent housing? As the City and County face tightening budgets with the loss of state and federal resources, they will need to make tough decisions about their encampment resolution programs and investments in interim and permanent housing.

The full study report along with case studies can be found on the [Conrad N. Hilton Foundation website](#).

For more information about the study please contact the Project Director, Nichole Fiore. (Nichole.Fiore@abtglobal.com)

ⁱ Legislative Analyst’s Office, Oversight of Encampment Resolution Funding, <https://lao.ca.gov/Publications/Report/5007>

ⁱⁱ Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority. 2025 Los Angeles Point-in-Time Count Press Conference Presentation. <https://www.lahsa.org/documents?id=9370-2025-greater-los-angeles-homeless-count-press-conference-presentation>. July 14, 2025.

ⁱⁱⁱ United States Supreme Court, City of Grants Pass v. Johnson, https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/23pdf/23-175_19m2.pdf

^{iv} Governor Gavin Newsom, Model Ordinance for City Response to Encampments, <https://www.gov.ca.gov/2025/05/12/governor-newsom-releases-state-model-for-cities-and-counties-to-immediately-address-encampments-with-urgency-and-dignity/>

^v The U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness and The Council of State Governments Justice Center. (2019). *Strengthening Partnerships Between Law Enforcement and Homelessness Service Systems*. Accessed on August 22, 2025 at [Law-Enforcement-and-Homelessness-Service-Partnership-2019.pdf](#)