

Los Angeles Chronic Homelessness Initiative Strategy Summary

Homeless persons are among the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in the U.S., experiencing damaging health and personal outcomes and representing high economic costs for society. In February 2010, the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation board approved a program strategy to guide its work in this area over the next five years. The Foundation will work with a wide range of public, philanthropic, private and nonprofit partners to help end chronic homelessness in Los Angeles County.

The Challenge

Chronic homelessness in L.A. is significant, urgent and costly. Los Angeles has nearly 50,000 homeless people every night. Approximately one-quarter of L.A.'s homeless are considered chronically homeless. People in this group typically suffer from a variety of disabilities and illnesses—often including mental illness—that go largely untreated. They also use a disproportionate amount of health and other public services. Nationally, the chronically homeless represent 18% of the overall homeless population, yet they consume 64% of homeless system resources. A recent study in Los Angeles found that the annual costs to society of each chronically homeless individual total approximately \$35,000.

The Hilton Foundation's Historical Role

Conrad Hilton's charge to the Foundation in his last will and testament was to use its funds to "relieve the suffering, the distressed and the destitute." Twenty years ago, this mandate led the Foundation to examine the issue of homelessness. Since that time, the organization has supported efforts to end long-term homelessness—especially among the mentally ill—across the nation. Through partnerships with other funders and key organizations, such as the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH), the Foundation has sought to advance compassionate and cost-effective solutions to homelessness. Since 1990, the Foundation has granted approximately \$30 million to address homelessness, primarily by advancing permanent supportive housing (PSH) as the solution to long-term homelessness. In addition, the Foundation has worked with other foundations, public leaders and service providers to develop solutions to homelessness across the country. Over time, the foundation's work in this area has increasingly focused on Los Angeles County.

The Foundation's Vision and Strategy

Building on recent successes the Hilton Foundation's seeks to help end, not just manage, chronic homelessness in Los Angeles. The vision for this strategy is to:

Eliminate chronic homelessness in L.A. through the successful creation and operation of supportive housing, by ensuring that the most needy are housed and stay housed in these units, and through efforts to prevent additional individuals from becoming chronically homeless.

To realize this vision, the Foundation will work through three **initiative areas**:

- 1. Facilitating systems change to create an enabling environment for PSH**
Work to align funding and build consensus among public, private, nonprofit and philanthropic stakeholders on goals around supportive housing, approach to achieving impact, and specific roles, timelines and funding commitments.
- 2. Strengthening targeted programs, pilots and providers through leveraged grants**
Provide leveraged funding for targeted initiatives, providers and pilot programs that encourage coordination, alignment, innovation, efficiency and build capacity within the supportive housing system (both single-site and scattered-site projects). Support efforts to prioritize the most needy and costly chronically homeless for PSH and prevent chronic homelessness through discharge planning from "feeder institutions."
- 3. Developing and disseminating knowledge for the field**
Support research, evaluation and data systems that enhance the system's ability to maximize the effectiveness of PSH by prioritizing the most needy and tracking progress.

Hilton will work across these initiative areas both through grantmaking and other strategic tools, such as convening public and private stakeholders, advocacy, and disseminating research findings and promising practices.

Results

Through this strategy, we expect the following results in Los Angeles County from Hilton's investments over the next five years:

- 3,000 new PSH units constructed or in the development pipeline
- 1,000 scattered site PSH units made available with necessary operating and service funding
- 1,000 persons prevented from becoming chronically homeless
- Increased public and private sector funds directly leveraged and aligned toward PSH
- A system of prioritizing chronically homeless persons for PSH in place
- Demonstrated action by elected and public officials to support systemic approach to addressing chronic homelessness
- Increased capacity of developers and providers to effectively provide PSH