



## Proposal to Address Homelessness in the South Bay Cities

We at PATH firmly believe that the best way to end homelessness—both in the South Bay and throughout the United States—is to directly connect people living on the streets with permanent, affordable housing linked with critical supportive services. This comprehensive approach is especially effective when it has the full-fledged support of local leaders, service providers, businesses, and community members.

PATH proposes to implement a region-wide homelessness initiative in the South Bay, in partnership with the South Bay Cities Council of Governments (SBCCOG), to establish a dedicated community outreach and mobile case management team, implement region-wide meetings focused on ending homelessness, further develop and refine a homelessness strategy specific to the SBCCOG region, create a dedicated local hotline, partner with local service providers, and engage local landlords to make their units available to people moving off the streets. This approach will ultimately result in increased community engagement, a larger stock of permanent affordable apartments, and a decrease in local street homelessness.

The enclosed proposal outlines the need for such a program, as well as the specific steps PATH proposes to implement the program in the South Bay community.

### Homelessness in the South Bay

There are approximately **5,811 people experiencing homelessness** in Los Angeles' Service Planning Area (SPA) 8, which encompasses the South Bay region, according to the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA)'s 2013 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count. The vast majority of these individuals (90%) are single adults. Approximately 28% of these individuals are considered chronically homeless, defined as individuals who have been homeless for more than one year, or who have experienced at least four episodes of homelessness within the last three years and have a disability. This represents a higher occurrence of chronic homelessness than in the County as a whole (25%).

People experiencing homelessness often struggle with additional issues that either led to, or exacerbate, their situation. In the South Bay, approximately 35% of the homeless population struggles with **substance abuse**, 32% are living with **mental illness**, 18% have **physical disabilities**, and 9% are victims of **domestic violence**. With the exception of cancer, obesity, and stroke, homeless adults are also far more likely than the general population to have **chronic medical conditions**, and are more likely to suffer complications due to their lack of regular medical care and stable housing. These serious conditions also make homeless individuals

disproportionately susceptible to **premature death**; the average life span of a person living on the streets is 30 years shorter than that of housed individuals.

Approximately 12% of people experiencing homelessness in the South Bay were **veterans** in 2013, a drastic decrease since the previous Homeless Count in 2011 (43%). Chronically homeless veterans face a variety of unique physical and mental health issues in addition to those experienced by the general homeless population. According to the 2010 Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness, homeless veterans have especially high rates of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Traumatic Brain Injury, and sexual trauma, compared to their non-veteran peers. PATH's comprehensive Veteran Connections program works with veterans and their families throughout Southern California to connect them with specialized services and housing resources. The decrease in veteran homelessness is a result of major focused efforts locally and nationally to provide critical services and housing dedicated to veterans. With the efficacy of these efforts becoming apparent, it is a prime opportunity to begin promoting similar efforts to reduce homelessness among non-veteran populations.

The signing of AB 109 in 2011 has also led to an increase in the number of **ex-offenders** living on the streets and entering shelters. In order to adapt to the effects of the bill, PATH has worked diligently to form close working relationships with local law enforcement in the regions where we provide services, and has increased our focus on hiring staff who have experience working with high-needs populations like ex-offenders. These two strategies allow us to more effectively identify ex-offenders who are living on the streets, and connect them with the specific services they need in order to move into appropriate housing and reintegrate into the community. As part of the proposed program, we will ensure that all program staff and relevant SBCCOG representatives are trained in how to appropriately engage with homeless individuals who have a criminal history.

## **Proposed Steps**

The SBCCOG region needs to address homelessness—and, more specifically, the lack of viable affordable, permanent housing options—in its community. Establishing a successful strategy in the region will require the support and partnership of the South Bay's cities and community members. As such, PATH recognizes the need to educate and engage city leaders, business owners, community groups, and residents around the issue of homelessness prior to the implementation of services in the region.

PATH proposes the following steps to establish and maintain support from the cities and constituents in the SBCCOG region, while setting the stage for a comprehensive and effective homelessness strategy:

### **1. Establish a dedicated mobile outreach and case management team.**

PATH will hire staff and establish a mobile team to perform focused community outreach and engagement throughout the SBCCOG region. These staff members will actively and individually connect with local service providers, businesses, community groups, faith groups, and concerned

community members to share information about homelessness and PATH's services, gather contact information, and encourage participation in community meetings to discuss and develop an approach to homelessness in the region. These efforts will ultimately result in the compilation of a local membership database, which will allow PATH to easily distribute ongoing information regarding homelessness, program developments, upcoming community forums, and important action items.

PATH's mobile team uses the "Navigation" approach, which prevents high-needs clients from falling through the cracks. The concept blends two time-tested strategies—street outreach and case management—with two evidence-based approaches, peer support and harm reduction, alongside recovery principals, motivational interviewing, and kinship. Case managers provide permanent housing-focused case management to all clients in the program while utilizing a Critical Time Management (CTI) model to help them reintegrate into the local community by developing independent living skills and building support networks.

## **2. Implement region-wide collaborative meetings.**

In order to engage local organizations and leaders, PATH will implement monthly region-wide collaborative meetings, to consist of PATH, SBCCOG leaders, local homeless service providers, community groups, and other relevant entities in order to facilitate effective coordination and establish a learning environment.

Such meetings will encourage ongoing engagement while providing PATH and SBCCOG leaders with regular opportunities to present updated information about homelessness in the region, address questions and concerns presented by partners and community members, and solicit community input and support for upcoming initiatives.

## **3. Coordinate and develop service strategy.**

In partnership with SBCCOG leaders, local businesses, community groups, faith groups, and community members, PATH will develop a comprehensive strategy to address homelessness in the SBCCOG region. Based on our experience providing similar services in the Gateway Cities region, we propose the following strategies:

- **Assessment & Engagement.** Upon implementation of the program, PATH's mobile case management team will conduct a thorough assessment of homelessness in the SBCCOG region, including demographics (as much identifying information as possible), geographic locations, migration patterns, indications of places where homelessness persists, documentation of all contacts, and referrals/services provided. Outreach staff will engage with these individuals on a regular basis to establish rapport and offer access to services and housing placement activities.
- **Intensive Street Outreach & Case Management.** Through regional efforts aligned with local Coordinated Entry System (CES) initiatives, our comprehensive, mobile team will

provide support throughout each individual's entire journey by helping him/her develop a plan to address barriers, increase their income, and maintain/sustain permanent housing.

- **Partnership with Local Law Enforcement.** PATH's mobile team will partner with local law enforcement officials to identify homeless "hot spots," develop relationships with members of the local homeless population, and connect homeless ex-offenders with critical services. Additionally, PATH staff will provide "Homelessness 101" education for police officers, to ensure that our staff and local law enforcement are truly working together to address homelessness in the most effective way possible.
- **Dedicated Outreach Hotline.** PATH will establish a centralized entity / contact / referral line for all reports of concentrations of homeless or community concerns related to homeless activity within the South Bay region. This hotline number will be provided to local stakeholders through one-on-one engagement efforts (Step 1), collaborative meetings (Step 2), and via informational pamphlets/cards that will be distributed by outreach staff and made available through local participating businesses and groups.
- **Housing Placement.** PATH will establish and implement housing strategies for homeless individuals throughout the life of this contract. The emphasis of these activities will be to place homeless individuals identified in the local "hot spots" into permanent housing coupled with supportive services.
- **Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH).** Over the life of the contract PATH will work to increase the stock of PSH units within the region by encouraging the development of affordable housing units, master leasing of existing units, and issuing of rental subsidies.

The steps outlined above will be presented to local leaders and community members through the collaborative meetings described in Step 2. At these meetings, participants will be provided with an opportunity to review the proposed interventions, ask questions, voice concerns, and propose alternative approaches.

#### **4. Partner with landlords.**

Dedicated housing navigators will identify local landlords in the South Bay, establish relationships, and partner with them to identify affordable, local scattered-site units that can be made available to homeless individuals.

PATH will leverage its existing team of 12 housing locators, who are specifically focused on cultivating and engaging landlords and matching homeless clients with appropriate units. They work with housing authorities, property owner alliances, realtors, developers, and affordable housing networks to identify units and advocate for clients. They also reach out to faith networks, neighborhood councils, and community groups to identify property owners willing to lease to our clients and refer notices of available units in their areas. Housing locators work directly with clients to determine their housing needs and help them locate and secure appropriate units.

## **How PATH Will Partner With Local Providers**

Our mobile team will use a “whatever it takes” approach to help our clients navigate and access local services, including identifying specific services each client needs, making appointments with local providers on the client’s behalf, providing transportation, and conducting follow-up with the provider to ensure the service was appropriately accessed.

PATH has several active partnerships with local providers in the SBCCOG that we will incorporate into our work in the region. We are subcontracting under Harbor Interfaith, a homeless service provider located in San Pedro, to provide services to homeless families through SPA 8’s Family Solutions Center. This resource provides coordinated assessment, service provision, and permanent housing to families experiencing homelessness in the South Bay. Additionally, we are active participants in the Coordinated Entry System initiative, which will allow people experiencing homelessness in the South Bay to access housing and services in a systematic and efficient manner.

At the monthly region-wide meetings to be established by PATH, local service providers will be asked to share information about available resources to ensure program staff are aware of and taking advantage of appropriate services for clients. We will also invite recognized specialists to these meetings to discuss specific needs and services (e.g. health care professionals, legal professionals, financial professionals, etc.) and educate staff and SBCCOG leaders about local resources.

## **Organizational Experience**

Over the last 30 years, PATH has pioneered bold and effective approaches to assisting people experiencing homelessness. The opening of our Regional Homeless Center in 2002 revolutionized the way communities respond to homelessness by bringing together 98 beds of transitional housing with our innovative PATH Mall multi-service collaborative, through which homeless individuals gain access to more than a dozen supportive services in one convenient location. From 2009 to 2012, PATH oversaw the Homelessness Prevention & Rapid Re-Housing Programs for Paramount, Bellflower, Lakewood, South Gate, and L.A. County, making the organization one of the largest providers of homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing services in California. At the end of 2012, PATH was also contracted by the Department of Veterans Affairs to administer the 2012 allocation of HUD-VASH vouchers on behalf of the Los Angeles and Long Beach VA Medical Centers. Combined, these account for 1,100 housing vouchers from Orange County all the way to San Luis Obispo, and represent partnerships with nine different housing authorities.

PATH has coordinated numerous targeted outreach efforts in communities throughout Los Angeles County. Since 2012, PATH has served as the lead agency of an initiative to coordinate services and housing in the Gateway Cities region and beyond, known as the Gateway Connections program. This collaboration between PATH and its local service partners Helpline Youth Counseling, Whittier First Day, Our Place Housing Solutions, and the City of Long Beach—in partnership with the Gateway Cities Council of Governments—has served 1,500

unduplicated homeless individuals to date, 212 of whom have moved into permanent homes. Due to a lack of affordable housing, we have utilized a combination of creative approaches to get clients housed in this region, including move-in assistance, public benefits, shared housing, HUD-VASH vouchers, and developing personal relationships with landlords.

From 2011 to 2013, we were contracted by the City of Los Angeles to operate the innovative Vehicles to Homes program on the Westside of Los Angeles (Council District 11). This program focused on reaching out to individuals and families living in their cars in the Venice community, and provided comprehensive case management, supportive services, and help finding and moving into permanent housing. During the final program year, which ended on June 30, 2013, PATH's Vehicles to Homes team provided services to 41 homeless individuals (34 adults and 7 children), 13 of whom were placed in permanent housing.

We have worked with the Westwood Village Improvement Association since January 2012 to provide street outreach, housing, and supportive services to people who are chronically homeless in Westwood Village. Since the program began, PATH has worked with 63 individuals experiencing homelessness in Westwood Village, placed 9 individuals into interim housing, and helped 4 individuals move into permanent homes. Additionally, PATH currently partners with Kaiser Permanente's Los Angeles Medical Center (LAMC) to provide strategic outreach in the area surrounding the hospital, as well as within the hospital itself. The hospital in question has the second highest number of homeless visits per month in Los Angeles County. The partnership has shown impressive results to date; during its first year, which ended September 30, 2013, PATH made contact with 462 homeless individuals (321 in the community, 141 in the hospital), placed 46 clients in shelter beds, and moved 5 clients into permanent housing, drastically exceeding our initial goals. Within the initial six-month pilot of the program, LAMC saw a total reduction of 79 ER visits for clients engaged by the program, resulting in an estimated savings of \$171,272 (\$2,168 per visit).

## **Proposed Budget**

We anticipate that providing the proposed services in the South Bay COG region will cost a total of approximately **\$800,000**. Of this amount, an estimated 20% (\$160,000) will be used to support program oversight and community engagement endeavors. The remaining 80% (\$640,000) will support direct service costs and move-in assistance for clients moving into permanent housing.

PATH estimated this amount based on a percentage of the budget for our current efforts in the Gateway Cities region, taking into account the size and scope of the South Bay COG region in comparison to the Gateway Cities COG. We are open to discussing this amount in order to reach a final budget that is agreeable to both PATH and the South Bay COG.

**PATH Responses to South Bay Council of Governments**  
**August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2014**

**The South Bay cities all have different homeless challenges and differing policies will be needed to address them.**

PATH is deeply committed to creating appropriate solutions that are customized to each community in which we work. As part of our existing work in the Gateway Cities region, we partner with 28 different cities. Each city has its own unique challenges relating to homelessness, and each prefers to approach the issue in an individualized manner. Our role in this collaborative has been to oversee the various approaches to homelessness in the region, educate the many partnering cities about homelessness and the evidence-based approaches that are proven to be effective, and mobilize local leaders and community members. As part of these efforts, we have partnered closely with city leaders, local law enforcement, social service agencies, businesses, and faith groups to help them develop effective solutions to homelessness appropriate to their communities. We anticipate utilizing a similar approach in the South Bay to ensure each city's needs are appropriately addressed, while also maintaining a coordinated approach throughout the region.

**As such, the COG and PATH will need to understand that the individual South Bay Cities will most likely *not* want a single area wide policy or approach to addressing the needs of the homeless in their respective city.**

PATH understands that a customized approach is necessary in order to successfully end homelessness in any community. However, our experience in the Gateway Cities has shown us that these efforts must also be intensely coordinated across the larger region in order to be truly effective. The homeless population is, by nature, transient. Consequently, people experiencing homelessness often travel from community to community within a region such as the South Bay. In order to effectively address the needs of these individuals, PATH has found that it is critical to ensure that each city's efforts are linked and synchronized under a single overarching plan, even while working with each city to customize the approach and ensure that its individual needs are met.

**In the proposal, there is a great deal of mention about "critical support services" but no specific mention of funding health services and mental health services for the homeless.**

Our navigation teams are able to directly provide mental health services to individuals living on the streets. We plan to adopt a modified Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) model in the South Bay, which incorporates direct delivery of field-based case management, health, and mental health services in the field. Our navigation teams include both MSW- and BA-level case managers. MSW-level case management staff have knowledge and experience working with highly vulnerable, chronically homeless populations, and provide psychosocial rehabilitation-focused services to help homeless individuals overcome their mental and functional barriers to long-term stability. BA-level case managers possess mental health experience *and* training in

either substance abuse treatment or as an EMT/RN. Specialty services occur within each case manager's individual scope of practice, and include: 1) harm reduction-focused substance abuse information, treatment, and care; 2) medical care, including basic wound care and triage; 3) individualized health education; and 4) housing stabilization and psychosocial rehabilitation case management services.

Additionally, we will leverage the robust County resources that are available to us to provide ongoing health and mental health services to South Bay clients. A huge percentage of homeless individuals in L.A. County are eligible for and receiving services through the Department of Health (DHS), with whom we enjoy a robust partnership. DHS offers substantial housing resources for homeless individuals who use their services. We also currently work with the Department of Mental Health, and will continue to make use of this partnership as part of our work in the South Bay. Case managers will help people experiencing homelessness to successfully access and navigate these public systems, so that they are able to stabilize their health and achieve permanent housing.

All services mentioned here are included in the estimated cost identified in our original proposal.