



Collective Impact Case Study:

Home For Good



The Collective Impact Forum, an initiative of FSG and the Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions, is a resource for people and organizations using the collective impact approach to address large-scale social and environmental problems. We aim to increase the effectiveness and adoption of collective impact by providing practitioners with access to the tools, training opportunities, and peer networks they need to be successful in their work. The Collective Impact Forum includes communities of practice, in-person convenings, and an online community and resource center launched in early 2014.

Learn more at www.collectiveimpactforum.org



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This data from this study draws primarily on the research study "[When Collective Impact Has an Impact](#)," conducted through collaborative effort between Spark Policy Institute of Denver, CO and ORS Impact of Seattle, WA.

Spark Policy Institute is dedicated to helping companies focus on social impact and develop approaches to solve complex challenges. We help the public and social sectors do good, even better through research, consulting, and evaluation. For more information, visit [sparkpolicy.com](#).

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Summary

HFG is a community-driven initiative to end homelessness in Los Angeles County. The collective effort seeks to ensure that homelessness is brief, rare, and non-recurring by monitoring data, investing funds, improving systems, and empowering the public.

Problem

Homelessness is a long-standing issue in Los Angeles County. In 2007, the homeless count encompassing the Continuums of Care (COCs) in Los Angeles, Pasadena, Glendale, and Long Beach reached 73,702.¹ Los Angeles had developed a widespread reputation for its lack of collaboration in serving the homeless community. Though the county had quality programs and was actively piloting new strategies, there were not yet any broad-based initiatives to connect the efforts being made across the system. A cost study showed that the county spent nearly \$1B a year on emergency services and short-term solutions without serious investment in permanent solutions.² Scarce public resources prevented meaningful local investment by the City or County toward

Key Facts

Initiative/backbone name: Home For Good

Year initiative was formed: 2010

Mission: To eradicate homelessness in the Los Angeles area by providing adaptive, permanent, and supportive housing

Geographic scope: Los Angeles County

¹ Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority: "2007 Greater Los Angeles Homeless County". Accessed Aug 2019. http://documents.lahsa.org/planning/homelesscount/2007/HC07-full_report.pdf

² United Way of Greater Los Angeles: "Homeless Cost Study". October 2009. Accessed Aug 2019. <http://homeforgoodla.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Homeless-Cost-Study.pdf>

homelessness. All of these factors made it clear that stakeholders needed to come together and begin developing a systems approach to ending homelessness.

Getting Started

In 2009, a small group of business leaders concerned about the social and economic impacts of the growing homeless population in LA County came together. This small group evolved into the Business Leaders' Task Force on Homelessness (Task Force), which was made up of members from the LA Area Chamber of Commerce and the United Way of Greater Los Angeles. To more deeply understand the financial challenges posed by homelessness, they conducted and released the *2009 Cost Study*, which found that it was 43% cheaper to house the chronically homeless than to leave them on the streets. This expanded the case from social justice to include an economic perspective that fundamentally shifted the narrative around solving homelessness and made the case for adjusting the distribution of local resources.

Over the year, the Task Force explored best practices across the country, and in December 2010 the Task Force officially launched Home For Good (HFG), an action plan to end chronic and veteran homelessness in LA County by 2016 through the collaboration of partners across the city and county. At the same time, several local, state, and federal initiatives were also increasingly focused on the issue, and milestones were set to match federal goals. In 2011 the Hilton Foundation provided a \$1 million challenge grant to seed the Home For Good Funders Collaborative, a group of 24 public and private funders in Los Angeles who leveraged a total of \$105 million in resources toward ending chronic homelessness.³ Since HFG's launch, the number of partners involved has steadily increased. At present, it includes public agencies addressing homelessness issues, city and county government, philanthropic and business partners, and community groups. While the initial action plan identified the target populations of veterans and those experiencing chronic homelessness, the initiative has since developed the broader goal of ending all homelessness in Los Angeles County.

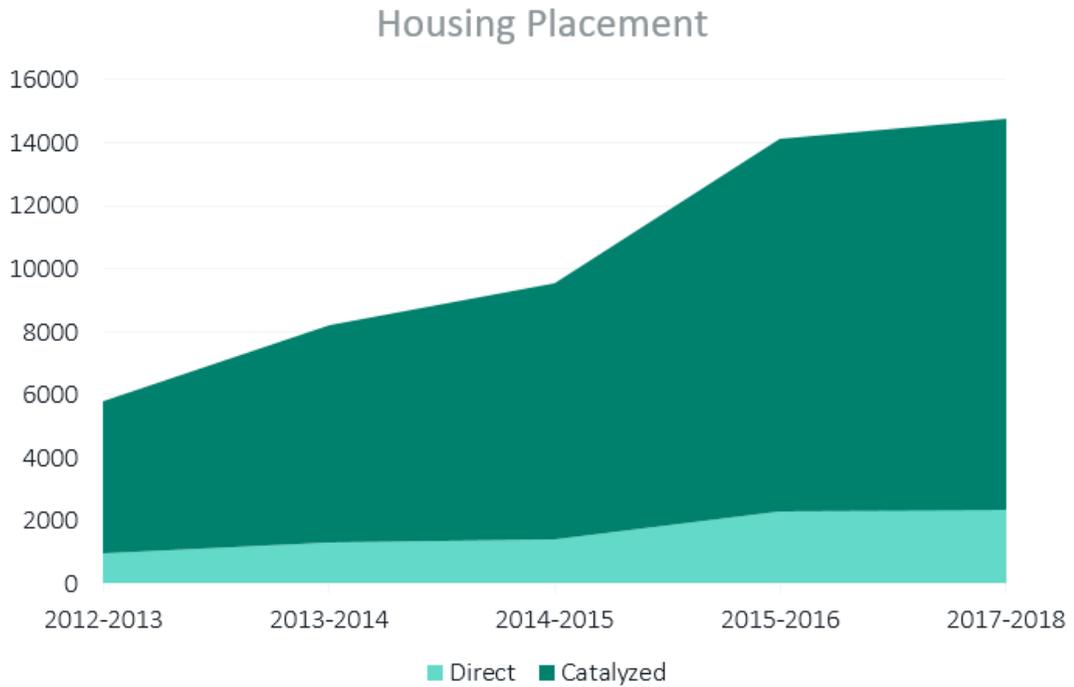
Structure

The United Way of Greater Los Angeles holds the backbone role for Home For Good. The backbone staffs each of the working groups (Policy, Funders, Data, and Advocacy) and co-convenes the Regional Homelessness Advisory Council (RHAC). The RHAC, which serves as the overall leadership structure of the initiative, is a cross-cutting group that contributes to the overall Los Angeles County Homeless System by offering oversight and vision toward system alignment. Please see Appendix 1 for a more detailed snapshot of the Los Angeles County Homeless System Map.

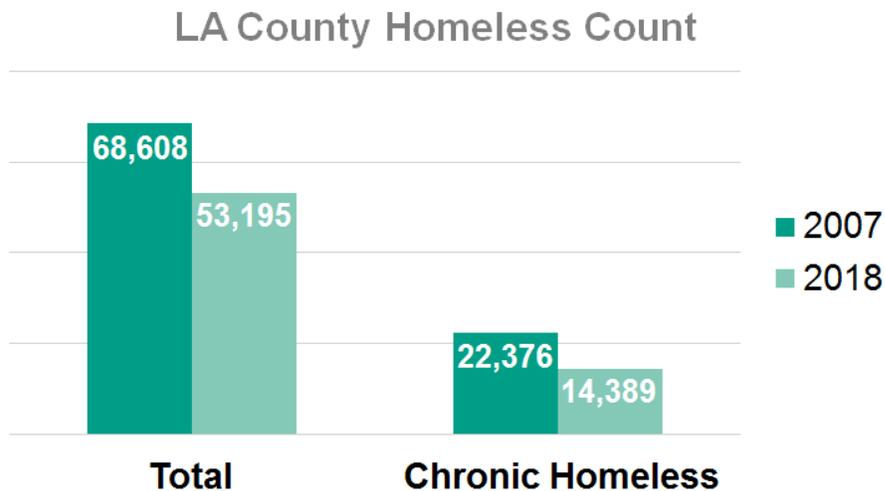
³ Hilton Foundation: "Hilton Foundation Announces..". Accessed Jan 2019. <https://www.hiltonfoundation.org/news/85-hilton-foundation-announces-7-8-million-grant-to-end-chronic-homelessness-in-los-angeles-county>

Results

The initiative has fostered a wide range of early and systems changes, which resulted in the **population changes** of increased housing placements of chronic and veteran homeless and the reduction of street homelessness (see figure below and Appendix 2 for more details).



“Direct” housing placement data was collected specifically through the Funders Collaborative, while “catalyzed” housing placement data showcases county-wide housing placement data. In 2016-2017 the catalyzed number is a projection due to transitions involving local veterans data.



The most important **early changes** cited by the initiative include increased collaboration across agency partners; increased public support for homelessness solutions; and increased sharing and understanding of data.

Several important **systems changes** contributed to the population-level changes that HFG has been able to achieve. Program practices have aligned toward a system-wide effort through the adoption of a [coordinated entry system](#) across all agencies in the county.⁴ Two ballot measures passed which brought in new local resources and attracted additional state and federal funds. There has also been significant growth in the development of supportive housing, a critical solution for chronic homelessness, HFG had set a goal in 2015 to increase average supportive housing development from 300 to 1,000 units, and production in the city of LA had doubled even before the ballot measures were passed. Following the ballot measure, and through philanthropic investment, the city of LA alone has over 4,000 supportive housing units in the pipeline at the time of this report. The city is tracking supportive housing developments through [Proposition HHH](#).

Five Conditions of Collective Impact

Common Agenda

The initiative established a shared mission to eradicate homelessness in the Los Angeles area by providing adaptive, permanent, and supportive solutions. A collaborative plan, initiated by the Task Force in 2010, brought together partners across the city and county of Los Angeles to collectively address homelessness in the area. Though the initial focus was explicitly on veteran and chronic homelessness, the plan has evolved over time to include work on systems and solutions across all homeless populations. Its development was facilitated by the HFG staff and was based on U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) parameters for serving homeless clients, as well as input from a growing number of partners across municipalities: a funders collaborative, the business task force, and people with lived experience. The common agenda has also been integrated into the Los Angeles City and County homeless plans.

Shared Measurement

The initiative has a strong shared measurement system to track long-term progress. The initiative developed the infrastructure to collect and report data related to their overall outcomes and established a data-sharing effort called [The Los Angeles Homelessness Analysis Collaborative \(HAC\)](#). The HAC was the first public dashboard on housing placements across the County and now centralizes the most up-to-date data and research concerning homeless people in Los Angeles, brings focus to the most relevant statistics and trends, and simplifies the conversation around data by emphasizing accessibility and impact.⁵ The collaborative displays the shared measurement system through [robust public-facing data dashboards](#)

⁴ United Way of Greater Los Angeles. Coordinated Entry System. Accessed Aug 2019. <http://ceslosangeles.weebly.com/>

⁵ The Los Angeles Homelessness Analysis Collaborative. Accessed Aug 2019. <https://hacollab.weebly.com/the-hac.html>

online. These can be disaggregated by veteran status, whether or not homeless status is chronic, and by geography. The backbone employs a staff member to manage and report the data, which is then used to target and prioritize the initiative's resources and strategies. For example, data from the HAC dashboards was used to identify gaps in resources and served as the basis for the initiative's campaign to support key policy efforts. The HAC meets quarterly at the offices of the United Way of Greater Los Angeles to discuss data topics such as tracking housing placements, identifying and measuring performance metrics, and dashboards/data toolkits.

Mutually Reinforcing Activities

Initiative partners are working together to implement the collective plan of action. Due to the work that's been accomplished, the City and County of Los Angeles have adopted parts of the broader HFG plan of action, which outlines specific strategies, timelines, goals, and objectives that partners work together to achieve. For example, partners adjusted practices and policies to better align their work with the collective action plan, which included using a universal funding approach, coordinating systems, and launching joint campaigns. Partners have also engaged in a matching funds pool; developed public-private partnerships to leverage and increase resources; conducted comprehensive assessments of client needs; pursued public education and awareness through campaigns; collected and utilized data to inform further decisions in the sector; and collectively supported policy shaping. In particular, the initiative advocated for the passage of a \$1.2B housing bond that supports Prop HHH, a supportive housing loan program that was approved by voters in 2016. HFG also advocated for a complementary measure (Measure H) which created a one-quarter of a cent sales tax to generate funds for the purposes outlined in the County homelessness plan for funding homeless services and short-term housing. These funds are directly budgeted and overseen by the HFG Regional Homelessness Advisory Council. The development of this resource stream through policy demonstrates the collaborative effort of the initiative's four work groups (Policy, Funders, Data, and Advocacy), which aligns with the core strategies outlined in the plan and uses data to hold all groups accountable to strategies and goals.

Continuous Communication

The initiative developed a number of processes and structures to facilitate communication, both internally and externally. In addition to regular workgroup meetings, the backbone facilitates communication between partners through multiple channels, including initiative-wide meetings, networking with partners, informal calls, and other contacts to assist partners. As HFG staff members host and are present at several tables involved in solving homelessness, they are capable of carrying challenges and learnings strategically across different stakeholder groups efficiently and consistently. Additionally, the backbone's ongoing ability to translate information between agencies, as well as between direct service providers and municipal/state agencies, helps facilitate informal communication between partners. Taken together, the clarity, timeliness, and integrity of communications within the initiative makes it easier for partners to collaborate and implement the collective plan of action. For example, the initiative creates internal communication through a joint design process that solicits input from the frontline staff using a coordinated entry system.

In terms of external communications, the initiative undertakes a number of activities to engage with the public, including awareness campaigns, media releases, an annual HomeWalk event, homelessness summits, a website, a public-facing data dashboard, and “needs sensing” in participating communities to ensure the HFG approach is responsive to community needs. One major evolution of HFG’s communications work was the launch of a countywide community organizing campaign called Everyone In. This was launched in March 2018 to educate and activate the quiet majority of individuals who voted “yes” on HFG-supported ballot measures. The campaign has reached over 100,000 individuals and has yielded over six million media impressions. It has also employed 14 field organizers to continue to train and organize community advocates.

Backbone Support

HFG has a strong and dedicated backbone, which has grown over time to keep pace with the initiative.

The backbone includes dedicated staff who perform key functions of the initiative to drive the work forward, including the implementation of data collection, management, and reporting; facilitating communication between partners to increase collaboration and coordination; facilitating dialogue at meetings; staffing workgroups; co-convening the overall leadership committee; creating and implementing feedback loops; and acting as advocates for service providers with city and county agencies. Over time, HFG has worked proactively to promote a distributed leadership model. Because the city and county adopted the HFG action plan, some backbone and leadership functions are also distributed to the city and county to increase sustainability. More recently, the initiative established a new Regional Homelessness Advisory Council (RHAC) as an overall leadership structure that provides oversight and supports implementation and planning. In addition, regional coordinators were empowered to implement the initiative’s action plan at the local level, disbursing funding and coordinating the work of homelessness service providers.

Adoption of Principles of Collective Impact

Cross-Sector Collaboration

HFG has created strong relationships across a variety of sectors. The initiative embodies a true cross-sector partnership with government, businesses, philanthropy, and nonprofit organizations working together to achieve the overarching mission. Buy-in from the business sector, particularly in the early phases of the work, was key to the success of HFG, and the implementation of an annual HomeWalk event has been important for engaging the general public. HFG is also exploring opportunities to more fully engage with additional community groups, such as the faith community, in regular meetings and mutually reinforcing activities. As the initiative is currently complex and involves many cross-sector partners across the county, there is an ongoing effort to refine governance structures, such as who is leading the work and when, to help partners best collaborate with each other.

Data Use

The initiative values using data to inform strategy and support accountability. Home For Good maintains several data dashboards to help partners understand specific aspects or geographies of the homeless system of care. This endeavor brings together data systems that are distinct and typically disconnected by design. Through [The Los Angeles Homelessness Analysis Collaborative \(HAC\)](#), data from the Homeless Initiative Dashboards, Homeless Count Dashboards, Coordinated Entry System Dashboards, and Proposition HHH Dashboard has been used to direct strategy and support accountability. HFG's commitment to data was featured in a Collective Impact Forum Virtual Coffee Webinar called "[Using Data and Shared Measurement in Collective Impact.](#)"

The Eight Principles of Collective Impact

- Design and implement the initiative with priority on equity
- Include community members in the collaborative
- Recruit and co-create with cross-sector partners
- Use data to continuously learn, adapt, and improve
- Cultivate leaders with unique system leadership skills
- Focus on program and system strategies
- Build a culture that fosters relationships, trust, and respect across participants
- Customize for local context

Looking Ahead: Areas of Future Focus

Equity

HFG is exploring integrating an equity lens throughout all aspects of its work. The initiative does prioritize some equity strategies, including regularly tracking key indicators and disaggregating data by race/ethnicity and other characteristics; intentionally focusing on creating the coordinated entry system that does not disproportionately disadvantage certain groups; prioritizing directing services to the most vulnerable group (i.e. the chronically homeless); and having a commitment to meaningfully engage people at all levels of the homelessness services system. HFG is pursuing further avenues to tailor services, policies, and practices to address inequities that may exist along racial, linguistic, or regional lines. HFG has also increased regional

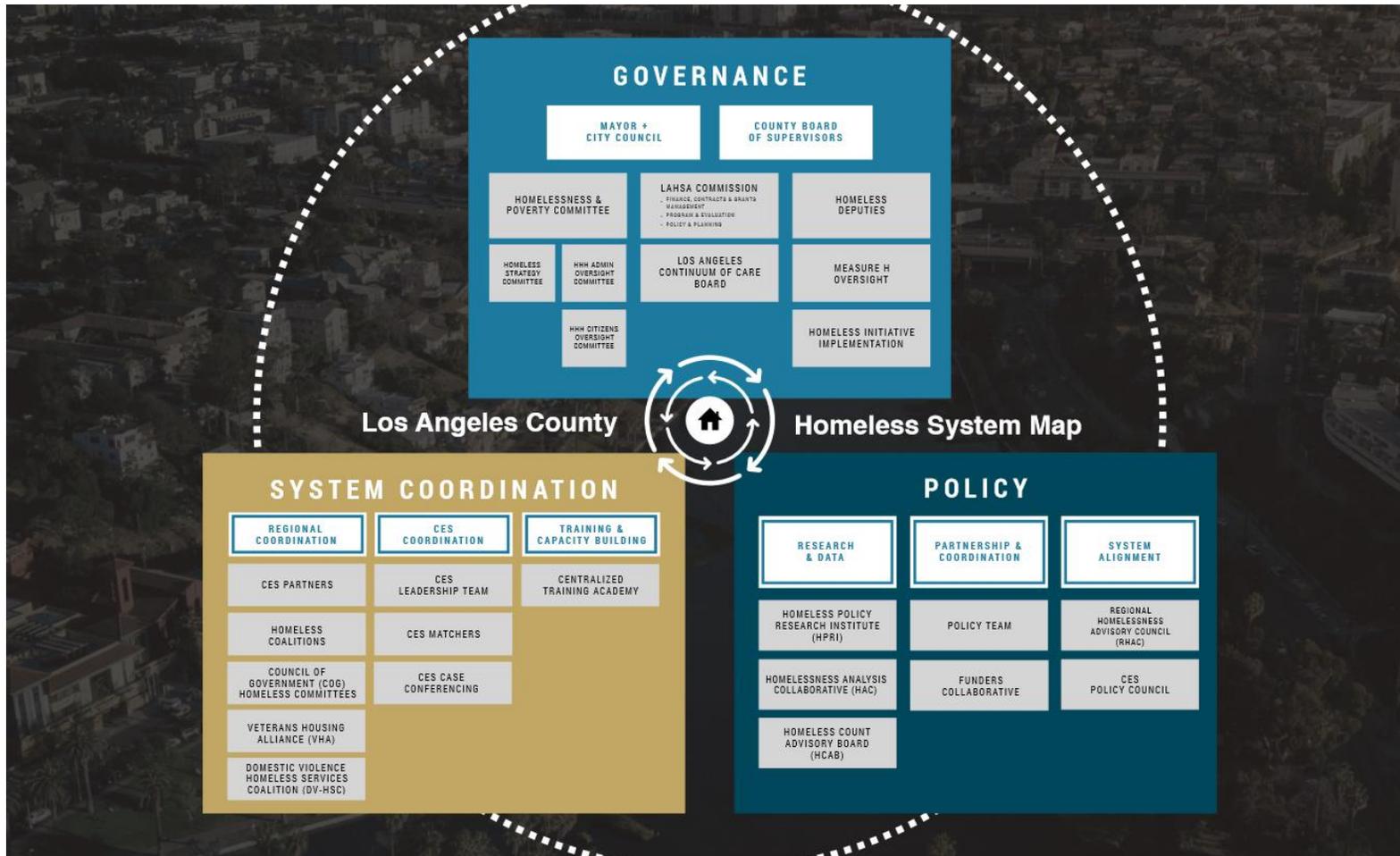
representation and expanded collaboration across diverse groups, which has given providers and community groups more seats at the table.

Since publication of *When Collective Impact Has an Impact*, LA County has also created an Ad Hoc Committee on Black People Experiencing Homelessness that has studied embedding equity in the work. Additionally, the Homelessness Policy Research Institute, a partnership between USC Price Center for Social Innovation and HFG, is coordinating a table of leading researchers in LA to look at the issue of black tenant retention in supportive housing. One of the primary modes of current engagement of those with lived experience is through the local storytelling events and rallies central to the Everyone In campaign. These ensure that community stories are both uplifted and connected to broader policy change and system solution conversations. HFG is continuing to intentionally engage and empower people with lived experience, non-joiners, disenfranchised groups, and other community members in leadership and implementer roles within the initiative.

Leadership

HFG cultivated regional leadership but continues to pursue clearer structures and communications due to the complexity of the initiative. The backbone organization provides strong leadership by conveying information, providing trainings, and supporting relationship development. Overall, the initiative cultivates regional leadership at multiple levels to drive the work forward, ensures alignment through Regional Coordinator Positions, and supports leadership development among partners. However, distributed leadership models can create confusion about who is leading the work and making decisions, and the complexity and diversity of Los Angeles County make identifying representative leadership a challenge. HFG is therefore exploring pursuing more structures and processes that can provide clarity around the distributed leadership model.

Appendix 1: Los Angeles County Homeless System Map



Appendix 2: Snapshot of Change

Collective Impact Conditions	Strategies	Early Changes	Systems Changes	Population Changes
<p><i>Common Agenda</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The problem addressed is reducing homelessness in LA county—in particular, veteran and chronic homelessness - Goal is to eradicate chronic and veteran homelessness in LA area by providing adaptive, permanent, and supportive housing - The overall approach focuses on high-quality, coordinated services, advocacy, and targeted funding - Agency and government partners share the common vision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Engagement of communities in addressing homeless issue through matching funds pool b. Unified and targeted funding strategy across funders c. Public-private partnerships to leverage and increase resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Increased collaboration across agency partners b. Stronger organizational capacity to serve homeless clients more effectively c. Increased public support about and for homelessness solutions d. Increased trust and informal communication among partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Adopted and scaled Coordinated Entry System (CES) across all agencies in the county b. Opened access to public-facing data dashboards through the Los Angeles Homelessness Analysis Collaborative (HAC) c. New Standards of Excellence (SOE) adopted and implemented to improve services d. Advocated for ballot measures which directed new resource flows to the initiative’s Regional Homelessness Advisory Council (RHAC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Increased housing placements of chronic and veteran homeless from 2011 to 2017 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 39,040 housed: 19,858 veteran homeless, 19,182 chronically homeless
<p><i>Mutually Reinforcing Activities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The initiative has a collective action plan, the 2015 Action Plan - Four working groups: Policy, Funders, Data and Advocacy - Partners are actively working together and have adjusted practices and policies to better align their work (wholesale adoption of CES, unified funding) - Partners use data to hold each other accountable for strategies and goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> d. Comprehensive assessment of client needs to better target and align services e. Public education and awareness raising through campaigns (such as HomeWalk or HomeCourt) f. Collecting and utilizing data to inform decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> e. Increased advocacy for homeless policy f. Increase in public will and awareness of homelessness issue in LA and surrounding communities g. Changed community/collective understanding around best 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> e. Philanthropic and public funding and other resources aligned to initiative goals f. Agencies changed policies to improve systems efficiencies and align to the CES and SOE g. Influenced philanthropic investment to double the pipeline for supportive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Reduction of street homelessness
<p><i>Continuous Communication</i></p>				

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regular workgroup and steering committee meetings (monthly or bi-monthly) - Frequent informal communication among partners - Regular engagement with media and public through social media sites, website, and the development team’s conversations in the field with the general public, workers, and businesses about the work and needs of the community 	<p>and continuous improvement of the sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> g. Supporting policy shaping, advocacy for enactment, and implementation 	<p>practices, shared outcomes, and expectations and strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> h. Increased sharing and understanding of data i. Increased movement into key sector positions spearheaded by the initiative 	<p>housing development in the City of LA</p>	
<p><i>Shared Measurement System</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LA Homelessness Analysis Collaborative collects data on homelessness counts from cities and county agencies and manages all the tracking and progress data - Dashboard of homeless counts released online and regularly updated - Data are used to communicate gaps in resources, scope of the problem and progress toward reducing homelessness, how systems are operating, and what interventions and innovations would work for different populations 				
<p><i>Backbone Infrastructure</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - United Way of Greater LA is the backbone organization - The backbone staffs each of the working groups, co-convenes the Homeless Advisory Council, coordinates work among the partners, convenes stakeholders 				

<p>around creating change, provides advocacy support for key initiatives (shaping, advocating, and implementing policy), and coordinates accessibility to and usability of data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Regional Homelessness Advisory Council serves as the overall leadership structure of the initiative 				
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*This snapshot of change represents the work of the coalition through 2018

Join the Collective Impact Forum

The Collective Impact Forum exists to meet the demands of those who are practicing collective impact in the field. While the rewards of collective impact can be great, the work is often demanding. Those who practice it must keep themselves and their teams motivated and moving forward.

The Collective Impact Forum is the place where they can find the tools and training that can help them to be successful. It's an expanding network of like-minded individuals coming together from across sectors to share useful experience and knowledge and thereby accelerate the effectiveness, and further adoption, of the collective impact approach as a whole.

Join us at collectiveimpactforum.org