

SOMEWHERE TO EXIST

DAYTIME SERVICES STUDY: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In Los Angeles County, more than 69,000 individuals are experiencing homelessness on any given night. Life on the streets can be hostile and unforgiving. To help guide future investments, UWGLA commissioned RAND to explore the daytime service provision landscape, including access to food, health and social services, personal hygiene, respite, storage, and technology. RAND identified over 700 entities that provide daytime services. Providers completed surveys (n = 320) and interviews were conducted with providers (n = 27) and clients (n = 21) to answer key questions about the array of organizations providing services including key challenges related to service quality and expansion.

KEY FINDINGS

- Daytime services are provided within a complex landscape of jurisdictions by organizations that vary dramatically in size, resources, service area, staff, and physical capacity with differences in organizational missions, motivations, values, and service models.
- Providers rely on a patchwork of short-term funding sources with varying restrictions. The majority (74%) were interested in expanding their service capacity, 61% wanted to improve service quality, and 50% wanted to expand the range of services offered. The top three investment priorities were reliable and long-term funding (51%), financing for capital assets (46%), and funding for administrative work and overhead (43%).
- No particular geographical gaps in service provision were found, as shortcomings were identified across LA County. Gaps were more pronounced on weekends. Over two thirds of surveyed organizations offered basic services such as food, bathrooms and showers, but fewer than half offered a place for daytime rest or personal storage space. Case management was mentioned by 75% of respondents, while services such as health and peer-led support were offered by fewer than half.
- Gathering and sharing client data can improve provision and outcomes. However, a quarter of interviewees felt that data collection was inadequately resourced. Overall, data gathering and sharing were perceived as fragmented and inconsistent. Respondents who used LA County's Homeless Management Information System praised its intentions, but identified a range of problems that affect data accuracy, continuity, and coordination.
- Inter-organizational collaboration can help providers with complementary capabilities to be more comprehensive and effective. Nearly all respondents engaged in some form of collaboration. Interviewees suggested that collaboration may vary by capacity, with larger providers having more complex and expansive arrangements, while smaller providers focus on more local efforts.
- Among clients, the services used every day were food, clothing, bathrooms and showers, health care, and phone charging. Access challenges included overcrowding, distance, and service hours. Staff attitudes (e.g., perceived discrimination) discouraged service use. Help finding housing was seen to be the biggest service gap, with food provision and other daily priorities also mentioned.

Based on these findings, strategic and tactical recommendations are offered, relating to services offered and physical capacity, human resources, data use, inter-organizational collaboration, and client experience.

DAYTIME SERVICES STUDY: RECOMMENDATIONS

SERVICES OFFERED & PHYSICAL CAPACITY	CLIENT EXPERIENCE	HUMAN RESOURCES	INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL COLLABORATION	USE OF DATA
<p>STRATEGY Increase availability of drop-in centers.</p>	<p>STRATEGY Strengthen and expand the culture of mutual respect and dignity between clients and service providers.</p>	<p>STRATEGY Make better and more rewarding use of individual skill and expertise in different areas, across different types of provision.</p>	<p>STRATEGY Better capitalize on the collaborations that currently exist, to shape and expand synergistic collaborations to deliver better quality and coverage.</p>	<p>STRATEGY Build a culture that appreciates the benefits of data to ensure the appropriateness & continuity of data acquired along with robust security of personal details.</p>
<p>TACTIC ONE Help fund providers who already have know-how for collaboration, and who already offer multiple services. For instance: help to add new services, help to extend their current services, such as longer hours or more days; or help to improve quality of services, such as staff training.</p>	<p>TACTIC ONE Direct funding to organizations that can demonstrate they have a client-centered focus, which may include policies, training, and involving clients in decisionmaking.</p>	<p>TACTIC ONE Encourage collaboration with focused funding, such as prioritizing joint applications from organizations with complementary capabilities, and that intend to share human resources.</p>	<p>TACTIC ONE Encourage collaboration with focused funding, such as prioritizing joint applications from organizations with complementary capabilities, and that intend to share capital assets, space, that intend to co-locate, etc.</p>	<p>TACTIC ONE Provide specific and adequate funding for data collection and analysis, to ensure the necessary time, training, and resources are available, and wherever possible, encourage inter-organizational consolidation for a more unified, comprehensive, and disciplined approach.</p>
<p>TACTIC TWO Fund training on how to set up drop-in centers. A how-to manual with checklists, case studies, reference links, and also possibly including video training assets, could make it much easier for organizations to expand drop-in center availability.</p>	<p>TACTIC TWO Fund success through monitoring client-reported outcomes, garnered, for example, through satisfaction surveys. Ideally, such surveys would be standardized to help meet our recommendation for data consolidation.</p>	<p>TACTIC TWO Train organizations to identify sources of specialized help, such as how to partner with universities, where students studying medicine, law, and social work need practicum</p>	<p>FURTHER RESEARCH We also recommend formal monitoring of these collaborations over time and further research to evaluate their effectiveness, and hone best practice.</p>	
<p>FURTHER RESEARCH Monitoring and measuring success in this area is likely to be beneficial. Further research should extend beyond self-reported data to acquire and analyze objective metrics of organizational capacity, service provision, and utilization.</p> <p>A second research note would be to expand further research to understand funders' perspectives and how they perceive effectiveness in their investments.</p>	<p>FURTHER RESEARCH Deploy evidence-based models, such as Experience-Based Co-Design, to understand how a client-centered approach could deliver practical ongoing improvements in day-to-day services.</p>	<p>TACTIC TWO Help fund volunteer drives and campaigns to encourage more people to fill expertise gaps, such as IT or legal, or to plug service gaps in the weekly cycle, such as evenings and weekends.</p>		

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